A Museum and its Mummies

The Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde stand on Human Remains and the views of its personnel

Maria Patricia Ordoñez

NAME: Maria Patricia Ordoñez Álvarez
ADDRESS: Anna Maria van Schurmanstraat 6, 3521XC, Utrecht- The Netherlands
Rio Zamora y pasaje Sanchez, #3ª, Quito-Ecuador.
TELEPHONE NUMBER: +31 0619195634 +593 0999242301
E-MAIL: mpordonezalvarez@yahoo.com; mpordonez@gmail.com

A Museum and its Mummies

The Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde stand on Human Remains and the views of its personnel

Maria Patricia Ordoñez
S1446312

MA Archaeology- ARCH 1044WY

Supervisors: Dr Van Broekhoven

Specialization Museum Studies

University of Leiden, Faculty of Archaeology

Leiden, 15th June 2014

Final Version

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank for their help:

Dr. Laura Van Broekhoven and Dr. Marianna Francozo for their help and valuable input during the development and writing of this thesis. Martin Berger for his help and counsel during the write up process and her guidance while working with the collection. Also my thanks to the personnel of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde for giving me their time and honest interest during the interview process.

Finally to my parents, because without their love and support none of this would have been possible; to my sister Soledad, my extended family in The Netherlands Edward and Gerda, and to my friends (around Europe and back in Ecuador) for their laughter, encouragement and help.

"When I visit a museum, I see people—
people concerned about and interested in objects,
or people persuaded, even coerced,
by the meanings that other people
have read into objects."
(Handler 1993,33)

Introduction.

This research project will address the role of human remains collections within an ethnology museum, such as the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde (RMV) in Leiden, as viewed by its personnel – curators, inventory and reserve managers, education and public relations departments, as well as museum floor personnel (museum group guides, sales assistants and security guards)-.

Though the topic of human remains in museum collections has been discussed at length for the case of the UK (e.g. Cassman Odegaard 2004; Lohman and Goodnow 2006), the United States (e.g. Brown 2011; Jenkins 2008) and as a preoccupation for international associations like ICOMOS and the World Congress of Archaeology (WAC), the particular view of Netherlands Museums on the subject has been treated within the framework of "Codes of Ethics", dependent on each individual museum. The Netherlands Museum Association for example includes the "advise on issues such as the exhibit of human remains" as part of the tasks of their Ethical Code Commission (webpage Netherlands Museum Association 2013). The link between this codes of conduct and the actual practice of museums in regards to human remains in The Netherlands needs to be further explored.

The results of this project provide an insight into the points of view and interests of some of the different groups that make up the museum, in regards to human remains collections, as well as a framework for museum policies and discussion on the subject. A comparison between personal and professional views of the museum personnel in regards to the topic has also been drawn, in

order to relate them with the policy making process. On a larger scope, the results of this research can help construct the picture of the state of the question of human remains in museum collections for the particular case of The Netherlands.

In that context, the main problem that is addressed with the present research has to do with the question: *What are the views and discussions that the museum personnel at the Museum Volkenkunde have regarding their collections of human remains and how do they relate to exhibit creation and managing, the creation of museum policies and the museum code of ethics?*

It should be stated that the conducted research focused for the main part on the collection referred to as the "Pre-Columbian Mummies Collection" housed at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde. This collection includes human remains from the Andean region, as well as various artefacts associated with them at the time of their introduction on the Museum Inventory. A contextualization of the remains was conducted as part of the author's internship in the RMV.

These pre-Columbian human remains include the mummies of 6 individuals – two adults and four infants-, and two semi-mummified skulls. They were part of the permanent exhibit at the museum until 1992 but have not been seriously researched or used in exhibits since then. The reasons behind the permanence of these human remains in the storage facilities, and not on exhibits, will be explored as part of this research. The lack of contextual information for the remains motivated the internship that was the starting point for this work, as did ethical discussions regarding their display.

To better understand the scope of this research it would be useful to explain the reasons behind it. This project had as a starting point the interest and need of the RMV to get a proper contextualization of the human remains in their South American collection. Over the last few years several attempts to contact archaeologists and researchers who could provide the RMV with information regarding the mummies have been conducted. According to the curator for Middle and South America Dr Laura van Broekhoven, several emails have been sent to archaeological institutes in Chile, Argentina and Peru in hopes to get a definite contextualization of the collection and to invite people to come and do research with it. There was hope as well for ethical advice regarding the display, or not, of the mummies in the museum. Most of the emails however remained unanswered and despite brief contact with members of the pertinent

institutions from the Argentinian government, no further communication was established. In that context, the work presented in this report is the first systematic research conducted with the Andean mummies collection with inventory number 4857, at the RMV.

The more specific research question was prompted by the author's previous experiences in museums in regards to the handling and exhibition of human remains. Though admittedly this previous work was conducted from a forensic anthropology and osteology perspective, the experience ha by the author in other museums had incited questions about how mummies and other human remains were regarded within museum collections, not only from a professional point of view, but on a more personal level. In consequence, one of our main goals was to see what a group of museum professionals thought of the subject of human remains in museum collections and if the museum itself, as cultural institution, provided some of the framework for how its personnel related to these human remains.

In that sense, the work with the mummies provided the perfect opportunity to start documenting these relationships, and to approach the subject of how people, in different areas of work within a museum, think and feel about the human remains in their collections. As mentioned before, this research started from a personal experience point of view, and as such was guided by previous assumptions. It is from this assumptions that the hypothesis and objectives for the research were formed.

The first of said assumptions was that not everybody has the same reaction to handling human remains. Stronger reactions were expected from the personnel who don not deal with human remains in a continuous basis, as opposed to specialists who purposely choose to work with them, as the author does. Secondly, it was assumed that the more people were in contact with the remains the less they would react to handling them, becoming desensitized in a way. Thirdly, we assumed that there would not be a marked difference when considering objects made of human remains, skeletonized human remains and mummies. It was expected that all types of human remains would be regarded equally. Finally, it was assumed that the professional and personal views on the subject of human remains would be very similar, encased mainly in ethical or religious views regarding death. Most of these assumptions were proven erroneous after the

interviewing process was conducted. The results are presented and discussed in chapter 4 and further conclusions will be presented after that.

This thesis is organized in four main chapters. The first one is concerned with the state of the matter on the discussion about human remains in museum collections around the world, and the accords that have been implemented internationally to address this issue. The second chapter focuses on the RMV and its collections, an initial short explanation of the museums mission statement, its policies regarding human remains and its internal structures will be attempted, followed by an extensive description of the Pre-Columbian mummies collection housed at the museum and their contextualization. During the third chapter the interviews with the personnel are presented. The fourth chapter is a discussion of the finds of chapter 3 in light of the information presented in the other chapters as well as the objectives set for this thesis. A brief conclusion follows.

Before entering a description of the methodology and techniques used during this thesis, we will first note the hypothesis, objectives and working definitions that are the framework for our research.

Working Hypothesis

To tackle the problematic of this thesis, four main working hypothesis have been formulated:

1) The personal opinions of the museum staff of the RMV are represented by the policies adopted by the museum- from national and international organisms- regarding the exhibition of human remains.
2) The museum's personnel have shaped their opinions regarding the exhibition of human remains by the previous practices and discussions within the RMV on the subject.
3) There is an explicit distinction made between skeletonized and mummified human remains when considering them for display in the RMV exhibits.
4) The personal and professional opinions of the museum staff of the RMV regarding the exhibition of human remains are in agreement with each other.

Objectives

This research is based on the following three general objectives:

Objective 1: Analyse the museum's practice regarding their collections of human remains, in light of their Code of Ethics and the explicit policies they have adopted on the subject.

Objective 2: Discover if conflicting points of view exist between the museum personnel, regarding the handling of the human remain collections.

Objective 3: Situate the case study at the Museum Volkenkunde within the broader Netherlands Museum Association discussions regarding human remains.

The conclusions for this research were gained from the resolution of this objectives, in view of the data collected during field work.

Working Definitions and Theoretical Framework

On first instance, we have identified all museum personnel as museum stakeholders. We adhere to the notion of stakeholders as crafted by heritage management specialists. A stakeholder is a person who is interested and affected by the decisions regarding a particular site, object, tradition, and whose opinions and views help shape the cultural significance/value of said site, object, tradition. *"There are several sources of heritage value: community and other culture groups, the market, the state, conservators, other experts, property owners, and ordinary citizens"* (Mason in Fairclough et al. 2008, 112). It is clear that museum personnel fit within this description, both as members of the community/museum goers, and as experts who hold a stake in what happens inside the museum.

Secondly, this research's working definition for "mummy" follows the definition made by Cockburn: *"The term mummification will be used here to refer to all natural and artificial processes that bring about the preservation of the body or its parts"* (Cockburn et al. 1998,155), hence all human remains in the collection have been considered as mummies, even when two of them are not complete bodies, and other two have not been examined outside of their bundles.

Another important definition arises from the discussion regarding the determination of natural and artificial mummification. For the present study, we refer to Cockburn's distinction between artificial, intentional/natural and natural mummification, used to classify all human remains found in archaeological contexts (Cockburn et al. 1998,156). The main variance between them is the

intentional use of preservation techniques for the remains- be those applied balms, organ removal, drying out of the remains, etc.- versus the effects of temperature and soil conditions on the preservation of remains. There is some debate in archaeology whether the extended use of certain sites and burial types by a particular, and the refinement of burial deposition in regards to body conservation can be seen as examples of intentional use of natural mummification conditions (Arriaza et al. 2008; Cockburn et al. 1998).

For the particular case of the Andes, there is only one case of reported artificial mummification, that of the Chinchorro mummies. The rest of the remains found have been classified as natural or intentional/natural depending on the region and the temporal depth of a burial tradition (Cockburn, et al. 1998,156). Given that the remains in the Andean collection did not have specific contexts, it is very hard to establish a possible distinction of intentional/natural and natural mummifications. To all intents and relevant purposes of this examination then, all the remains that make the Andean mummies collection are considered to have mummified naturally, and not artificially. It is interesting to note here that on first examination of the remains three different tissue mummifications were observed. These differences pointed to at least three different origins for the mummies since the degree of variation among them is not consistent with one single context.

This leads us to archaeology's definition of "context". Here, the word context will be used not only with reference to a geographical location and cultural affiliation but in regards to the relations between objects and the broader museum collections. As defined clearly by Butzer: *"For archaeology, context implies a four-dimensional, spatial temporal matrix that comprises both a cultural and non-cultural environment, and that can apply to a single artefact or to a constellation of sites"*(Butzer 1980,418). The removal of and object from its context has been considered as the removal of its archaeological value.

We understand the value of an archaeological object in terms of its cultural significance; following what Article 6 of the Burra Charter has established for archaeological sites, cultural significance is regarded as "*the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations"* (International Council on Monuments and Sites and Australia ICOMOS 1999,4)

Human remains, more so than artefacts, store a great deal of information that can help contextualize them in detail. Either from the materials associated to their burial or from the biological analysis of the remains in themselves (e.g. Arriaza et al. 2008). The techniques utilized for the contextualization of the human remains of the Andean collection of the RMV will be further explained in the methodology subsection of this chapter, and further detailed in the description of the remains in chapter 3.

There are multiple sources in Andean archaeology dedicated to the description of textiles in funerary and non-funerary contexts (e.g. Brommer (eds.) 1988; Dauelsberg 1972; Hora 2000; Reid 2005; Millones and Schaedel 1980) The same can be said for the metal artefacts of the region (e.g. González 2003; Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980 [1615]; Mignone 2010; Reinhard and Ceruti 2005) however in this case the most relevant source was one of the oldest: the work of the Inca Guaman Poma de Ayala. Written in the 1600s, Guaman Poma de Ayala's "Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno" (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980 [1615]), includes descriptions in detail of the clothing and ornaments worn by the Inca in the different suyus (regions of the empire). This proved particularly useful when considering the probable cultural association of the diadems that were part of the artefacts sold with both adult mummies.

It is important here to clarify that the mummies and artefacts were explicitly indicated by the seller as to be part of the same burial. This association had already been considered as problematic by members of the museum (Martin Berger, personal communication), which is why one of the main goals of the examination of the remains during the internship was to be able to determine their provenience, and in some measure, their authenticity. The same consideration should be extended to those textiles or ornaments that accompany the remains that could be easily placed or removed.

The definition of authentic for archaeology is an extensive and on-going discussion (e.g. Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999; Jones 2010; Smith 2001) and its relation to the determination of authenticity in museum contexts is further explored by Geurds and Van Broekhoven, addressing the fact that *"Objects and their interpretations are so pliable as to eventually overcome being branded "inauthentic" by achieving a sufficient degree of authenticity, thereby breaking the binary*

debate of authentic versus inauthentic, instead creating degrees of authenticity" (Geurds and Broekhoven 2013,2).

Given these issues, we limit our working definition for "authentic" in this report to the proximate claim to originality of the objects (Smith 2001,443). In other words, we use the term authenticity to reflect the implicit assumption that what we are seeing is a direct reflection of how it was found in its original context, without intentional modification of content and position, and more importantly, that the relation between two objects (in this case the human remains and their associated artefacts) has not been disrupted (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999).

Methodology and Techniques

1) Museum Ethnography and Participant Observation

The overall methodology used for this research can be placed within the branch of Museum Anthropology. One of its main characteristics is that it uses knowledge from areas such as archaeology, history, biology and linguistics, in order to better understand the different types of collections exhibited and stored in museums (Handler 1993). Museum Anthropology has been concerned with understanding, among other subjects, the relation between collections and the institutions they are housed in; the way such collections have come to be; the relationship between source communities and museum collections; the way museum displays and exhibits portray objects and collections; the way the public relates to such exhibits; and the interactions between the public and museum personnel (e.g. Bean 1994; National Museum of Australia 2011; Bernstein 1989).

The main technique used for this thesis is that of museum ethnography. Developed within the branch of Museum Anthropology, museum ethnography allows researchers to understand museums as social institutions that work within a specific historical and cultural context. The information for this research was obtained mainly on the basis of participant observation; this was done through the observation and careful recording of interactions between the members of a group (in this case the personnel of the RMV), as well as by engaging in semi-scripted conversation and interviews with these actors.

This method allowed the researcher to learn through practice and close contact with the people or groups involved in this study. Indeed, the technique was particularly useful to understand the relation between discourse- as presented in the Codes of Ethics and viewed by the previous conduct of the museum as an institution towards human remains- and the views of the museum personnel - both professionally and at a personal level.

The timeframe for the research was determined by the duration of the internship conducted by the author in the museum from December 2013 until April 2014. Short individual interviews with the personnel and two group interviews on the subject of the museum's collections of human remains and personal opinions regarding the exhibition of human remains in museum contexts were also held during this period.

Informants from two different areas of museum work were selected, the management area and the administrative area. The management personnel includes people in charge of policy and exhibit making (curators, exhibits specialists, educational specialists, collections specialists, public relations specialists), and the administrative personnel those employees in daily contact with the exhibits (ticket sales representatives, tour guides and museum security guards).

2) Interviews

Interviews with the informants were conducted by means of structured or unstructured dialog. In this way the informant's opinions could be recorded and analysed according to key themes or views; this opinions can later be compared.

The method selected to conduct the interviews was that of *semi-structured interviewing.* This method requires the creation of an interview guide or loose script on which to base the questions asked (Bernard 2011, 212). It is recognized as the most useful when dealing with limited chanced to interview informants and use their time efficiently. The interview guide will allow for the relevant variables to be addressed and produce reliable, comparable qualitative data (Bernard 2011, 212). This type of interview allows for probing, engaging the informant and stimulate responses, without leading the interaction or reflection the researchers opinions in the data. The interview guide was tailored according to the variables listed earlier and to the informant interviewed.

3) Discourse Analysis

Finally, all interviews were analysed following the methodology detailed by Bernard regarding Discourse Analysis (Bernard 2011,463) taking as basis the "grounded-theory approach". Developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (Glaser and Strauss 1967 in Bernard 2011,492), this approach has been widely used in sociology and anthropology to analyse the data collected in interviews. It consists of "*a set of techniques for: (1) identifying categories and concepts that emerge from text; and (2) linking the concepts into substantive and formal theories*" (Bernard 2011, 492). In order to do so it is necessary to transcribe all the interviews conducted, read through the text and identify "themes" or categories useful for analysis. All interview transcriptions can be found as part of Appendix 1 of this thesis.

These themes create the basis for the collection of specific data from each interview and form the comparable categories used in the discussion. Themes are discussed in terms of individual value and the links between categories. The main data presented in the discussion are "exemplars" or quotes from the interviews that aid to illustrate the themes.

In practice, a list of keywords linked to those themes is produced and search for in the transcribed interviews. These keywords highlight quotes or paragraphs useful to prove or disprove the working hypothesis and suggest new direction for research. It is of especial importance here to include those keywords that represent contrary data as well as the normal or expected data (Bernard 2011, 492).

Having detailed the methodology and techniques utilized during this research, it is necessary to indicate the limitations found during field work, as well as of the scope of this research.

<u>Research limitations</u>

Most of the limitations encountered during this research have to do with the time constraints inherent to a thesis project of this nature, especially in terms of length of interviews and informant availability. Having said that, we believe more informants and more interviews will not change significantly the results obtained, and would therefore have little impact on the conclusions gathered. It would be useful however, in the future, to interview more people who have had direct contact with the Andean mummies, or to present interviewees with photos, medical digital images or the opportunity to see the mummies for themselves. These images or

direct contact would provide the opportunity to have collection specific data, and it would potentially allow us to see if opinions presented by the informants would change in any way afterwards.

Similarly, in regards to the language used by members of the museum from different areas, it would be interesting to conduct a series of surveys or short interviews with all the members of each group in order to know if this differences in language are indeed related to professional preferences, as it is suggested by our current data, and if so, why do this preferences occur.

Small problems were encountered during inventory searches for human remains and human bone artefacts. This was due to the lack of classification under those terms of the RMV inventory, both online and in the RMV computer network – even though the categories exist and have been included in the thesaurus, they are not being used. This issue is further detailed in chapter 3 of this thesis. Another problem was the lack of systematization of the archival documentation or "communication archive" that comprehends all letters and correspondence between curators and external contacts of the museum (e.g. collectors) after 1960, though the organization process is under way it was not completed by the time this research was conducted.

In terms of the information available for the Andean collection, the main source on their history was the thesis written by Edward de Bock in 1981. This manuscript was written in Dutch, did not contain much archival information, and some of references used in text were not listed in the bibliography or available for consultation, such is the case, for example, of the letters between de Bock and Argentinian and Chilean archaeologists.

The authenticity of the associated artefacts to the mummies and the position in which they were originally photographed was also a confusing issue. After a meeting with de Bock in early June, it was ascertained that the remains were sold in the same condition as they were originally photographed (and exhibited in the museum prior to 1992). However, before the RMV bought them an examination of the mummies was conducted by a team of doctors who opened the bundles to determine their authenticity and preservation. In consequence, even if the remains were later carefully re-bundled some degree of shifting and alterations to the original conditions must have taken place (Edward de Bock, personal communication).

Chapter 1. Human Remains in Museum Collections, an overview.

The problem suggested in this research project is directly linked with two subjects: the notion of human remains as part of museum collections, and the dialog between the museum as an institution and the people that make it.

Much has been written regarding the ethical considerations of human remains in museum collections; an on-going debate on the use and display of these remains in a museum context has existed since 1990 (e.g. Albertti et al. 2009; Buikstra 1981). Three main issues have been addressed through this debate and will be the centre of our discussion: 1) the exhibiting of human remains in museum contexts; 2) the conservation and protections of human remains in museum contexts; and 3) the claims for repatriation and reburial of human remains that are part of museum collections.

On the subject of the relation between museums and their personnel however, there are few studies that specifically address the professional and personal views of museum staff regarding their exhibits, and they normally focus on the staff's relation to the educational elements of those exhibits (e.g. Worts 2006). In fact, most of what has been written are guidelines for museum interaction (e.g. Gilmore and Rentschler 2002; Swartout et al. 2010), planning and policy making (e.g. Gilmore and Rentschler 2002; Octobre 2001), the relation of museum visitors and museum staff (Hein 1995), museum work as a profession (challenges and preparation) (e.g. Emery 1990; Overduin 1986) and exposure of museum personnel to fungi, dermatitis producing agents and pests (e.g. Valentín 2007).

Only one example was found were the effect of an exhibit was studied in the personnel that worked on its preparation, that of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the United States (McCarroll, Blank, and Hill 1995). The emphasis of this study was psychological effects in a context were traumatic events are visited on a daily basis. That is, by far, not a comparable theme with that of human remains in most museum. Nevertheless, this study highlighted the direct relationship of an exhibit's content the museum staff that work on it. It also reflects on how direct and prolonged contact with an exhibit will impact on the museum personnel view of the topic addressed by the exhibit (McCarroll, Blank, and Hill 1995,66).

This literature review will hence focus on the legal literature and academic debate of the use and display in museum exhibits and collections around the world. The subdivision of subjects has been done according to geographical areas, and to similitudes in the process of handling with human remains. For example, in the case of Europe, the majority of the debates have happened within the UK, and the topics addressed there have followed a similar line with those presented in Germany and the Netherlands and that follow strictly the recommendations by ICOM. The US, Australia and New Zealand, though geographically distant, have dealt with the same type of discussion regarding human remain, given the high importance that the voice of Native groups have had on those nations since the 1990s, and therefore will be covered in another subchapter together.

We will start with and overall description of the main legislation/treaties on the topic, and expand the subject by region from them. Finally we will try to summarize, with examples, the most relevant current issues surrounding human remains in museum practice.

World treaties

There are three pieces of legislation or treaties drafted by world organizations in regards to human remains research, conservation, exhibition and preservation. Of those, the proceedings of the World Archaeology Congress (WAC) meeting in 1989 in South Dakota- US, named The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains, was the first ("The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains" 1989). This accord covers in six points the ideals represented by WAC regarding the importance of human remains, highlighting dialog with native communities and the consideration of research value of contested human remains. A year later at WAC's meeting held at Barquisimeto-Venezuela, the issue of human remains and archaeological practice was addressed again, this time as part of the Code of Ethics of WAC.

In the Barquisimeto meeting, a range of ethical principles for approaching the study of human skeletal material was proposed, including a series of mentions to the joint and collaborative work of archaeologists with the indigenous populations descendant from the remains studied.

The main keyword in The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains is respect. Out of the 6 principles outlined, numbers 1 thru 4 start with the word "respect", and aim to create a reflective view in

regards to the intrinsic deference owed to all human remains, irrespective of origin, as well as the respect for the wishes of the dead themselves, their surviving ancestors (as represented by local communities and relatives), and respect to the value given to human remains by the scientific community (when demonstrated) ("The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains" 1989).

Articles 5 and 6 deal with the necessity of agreement through negotiation on the disposition of human remains, in order to address the concerns of the involved groups (native and scientific communities alike) ("The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains" 1989).

The Vermillion Accord serves as general guidelines to abide by when excavating and handling human remains, as well as the relation between the scientific community and the source communities. There is however no specific providence regarding the exhibition of human remains or their continued storage within museum collections in this document.

This public discussion lead to a pronunciation from the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 2001, again within its Code of Ethics, regarding the curating and exhibiting of human remains in museum collections. There have been changes to the articles that make up the Code of Ethics over the years, the current version was revised in 2013 and we will refer to it on this thesis. Of the many articles in the code, there are four that directly address the topic of human remains, whilst two supplementary ones refer to the issue of repatriation of culturally sensible objects, of which human remains are part (articles 6.2 and 6.3 address the Return of cultural property and the Restitution of such property to source communities, respectively) (ICOM Code of Ethics 2013).

The four articles mentioned are article 2.5 on "Culturally Sensitive Material" regarding the care and housing of human remains or materials with a sacred significance, where recommendations on following source communities beliefs for this process are made; article 3.7 on "Human Remains and Materials of Sacred Significance" that aims to highlight the importance of communication between source communities and scientific professionals dedicated to the research of such materials; article 4.3 deals with "Exhibition of Sensitive Materials", here again professional standards and source communities collaboration is stressed, as well as the need for respect and tact when exhibiting these materials; lastly, article 4.4 on the "Removal from public Display" emphasizes that requests for removal from exhibition for materials such as human

remains or sacred objects must be addressed “expeditiously, with respect and sensitivity” (“First Code of Ethics Barquisimeto” 1990).

Lastly, in 2006 the Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects was adopted in Osaka-Japan. Having been drafted a year earlier in the WAC congress in New Zealand, this new treaty addresses the steps necessary for an institution to be able to display or exhibit human remains or sacred objects within their collection (“The Tamaki Makau-Rau Accord” 2005). On six articles, the accord details the need to ask and obtain express permission from the source community or communities where the remains or objects come from, the need to respect the source communities decisions as well as creating an exhibit that is culturally appropriate.

It is within the framework of these treaties, especially the first two described, that the dialog and discussions regarding human remains are currently happening around the world. These treaties have been signed by members of the institutions where they were created, and are meant to be a general code of practice and conduct for archaeology and museum professionals. However, treaties are not laws that can be enforced but voluntarily adopted; they are subject to the willingness of the signatories to ascribe to them. In the case of the documents mentioned here, most signatories are professional associations and individuals, for example in ICOM those signatories include over 20 000 museums and 30 000 experts in 136 countries and states.

North America, Australia and New Zealand

The real breaking point for the debate about human remains in museums, universities and private collections was the creation of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the United States in 1990. This law is a national attempt to enforce the rights of indigenous people to decide on the state of human remains and sacred objects in museum collections, university and national institutes, have a say on the research conducted on said remains and objects, and demand their repatriation, restitution and reburial. NAGPRA built on the Native Museum of the American India Act (NIAMA), drafted by the Smithsonian institution in 1989 and that required and inventory of all human remains and sacred objects in their collections for repatriation.

The decade of the 60s marked in the United States the consolidation of the Civil Rights movements, among which was the Indigenous Rights Movement. This movement would start in the following decades the first claims for the repatriation of cultural remains from federal institutions in the United States and Canada (Page 2011).

The acceleration of archaeological projects in Government land in the United States started in 1970s with the creation of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) strategies. As the numbers of archaeological digs and finds increased exponentially, so did the potential for conflict with the surrounding communities. Cases such as that of Maria Pearson who demanded the State of Iowa rebury the remains of Native Americans that had been dug out during road works (and handed over to a museum while the white remains where reburied immediately) (Pearson 2005), and the looting of the Slack Farm burial site in Kentucky (where human remains were destroyed whilst graves were looted), brought the issue of human remains to the attention of a wider audience (Jenkins 2010; "Purifying the Slack Farm" 2014). Even more so, the advances in genetics, opened the discussion regarding human remains in collections and the issue of positive location of descendants for these human remains.

From that point on many organizations, museums and universities in the United States, starting producing their own codes of ethics and protocols to deal with the repatriation claims from Native American groups, and to define protocols and codes of conducts when dealing with human remains, from prehistoric and anthropological contexts, during professional practice.

Examples of such codes have been made public by the Society for American Archaeology (Society for American Archaeology 2013), the National Parks Service, the Corps of Engineers for Cultural Resource Stewardship, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne (Cassman and Odegaard 2004; Page 2011); though the major museums such as the American Museum of Natural History, The Natural History Museum at the Smithsonian Institution and The Field Museum in Chicago have not made public claims on the subject and deal with requests and claims on an individual basis. Furthermore, these topic have been analysed by specialists trough several publications that address the theme in general (Jenkings 2012) as well as particular issues like that of curating human remains (Page 2011), exhibiting human remains (Albertti et al. 2009;

Brown 2011) and repatriation (Abraham, Sullivan, and Griffin 2002; Page 2011; Fforde, Cressida 2004).

Australia and New Zealand are two of the first countries to bring this discussion to national and international committees (Abraham Sullivan and Griffin 2002,36), South Africa has also been trying to come up with a national consensus on the subject (Sealy 2003). In this last country mentioned, some of the biggest human remains collections are housed, and they are under some of the more strict regulations for research. Starting with a classification in for the remains that can come from, in terms of context: 1) archaeological (over 100 years old), 2) victims of conflict, 3) ancestral graves, 4) royal descent and traditional leaders and 5) historical graves and burial mounds (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,505). Similarly, permits must be granted for excavation, handling and housing of human remains but a South African national authority. Furthermore, proposed exhumation of graves must be announced in local newspapers, in an article that states the intent both in English and at least one of the common additional official languages of the area. These step is considered a preventive measure to invite possible objections, but an effort to contact and identify probably related groups or communities to the area and ask for their permission to continue with work are also necessary (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,505).

In Australia, even though all museums hold collections of human skeletal remains, they also all have “policies to repatriate aboriginal remains and are actively doing so”(Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,636). The link between aboriginal groups, archaeology and museums is covered under The Department of Environment, Conservation, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), this institution is responsible for protecting aboriginal skeletal remains. The official law that mandates this arrangement is section 90 of the “National Parks and Wildlife Act” in place since 1974. Odd as it may seem, given that the articles refer to human being and not animals and landscapes as the rest of the Act, the rights of the aboriginal people are still considered under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, however this legal tool has aided in the repatriation of several collections of remains back for burial in Australia since its conception (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,636).

In New Zealand the guidelines for archaeological practice and museum practice with human remains are found in the Historic Places Act of 1993. Here the immediate reburial of excavated

human remains from research projects or accidental finds is mandated. This law also covers the protocol for repatriation claims and has been widely successful thanks to the participation of representatives of native identities, such as the Maori, with the government (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,650).

Europe

Publications from world organizations such as ICOMOS and the World Archaeology Congress, explicitly address models of conduct and treatment of human remains from archaeological and anthropological contexts in museum collections. Both previously quoted bodies of work have been a starting point for the debate regarding the subject in Europe. Such is the case with Germany, and the Netherlands were the equivalent to each national museums associations have presented similar Codes of Ethics to those presented by ICOMOS. Other countries like France, Spain and Italy where many human remains are housed within museum collections have yet to produce similar documents (Jenkings 2012,456).

Most European human remains collections are under the protection of a Cultural Heritage Law, that will redirect finds to either a National Museum or to universities that are working in the area (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011; Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004). When remains from areas of war or historical conflicts are discovered, for example remains from the first and second World Wars, each individual country will apply its national laws regarding human remains (Cox 2008). This is the case for Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Portugal, Spain and Sweden (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011). In the last two there are several museums that actively display human remains and where *"A number of exhibitions including human remains have received positive feedback from the community"* (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,431).

Two different cases are those of Norway and Malta. In the first there is an on-going national register of skeletal finds (NIKU), as part of the actions of the Institute for Cultural Heritage. There are also two laws that deal with human remains specifically, the Cultural heritage Act of 1978 and the Burial Act of 1996, this last one also deals with the reburial aspect (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,319). Given the strained relationship between the Sami native group and the government such laws were created early on, and a National Committee for Evaluation of

Research Involving Human Skeletal Remains has recently been added to create and ethical framework to address both archaeological and museum practice.

In the case of Malta, there is a particular consensus applied nationally to minimize the exposure of human remains in museums, managed by the Superintendence of Cultural heritage, this institution build upon the 1925 Antiquities Act and the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002. Though this country has never received human remains from abroad, there are frequent reburials of human remains from archaeological provenance over the islands (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,279).

The two cases mentioned above, Norway and Malta, are the only countries that have taken specific measures regarding the display of human remains in museums and the inventory of human remains that come from archaeological excavations. The state of Israel for example prohibits the recovery or exposure of any human remains and is primarily concern with reburials of those remains that are discovered during construction processes (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011, 615).

The situation of the status of human remains in most European countries is quite uncertain. In the UK the situation cannot be more different. Not only have national treaties been drafted on the subject of human remains display and conservation in museums, but almost all museums that have human remains in their collections have created a Code of Ethics specific for the subject (The Welcome Trust 2008). There are two main national treaties for the UK; The Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museum Collections produced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports in 2005 (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2005), and the Tissue Act of 2004 (Jenkins 2010). The Museum of London, Manchester Museum, The Welcome Trust Foundations and the museum member of the Museums Association- such as the Natural History Museum and British Museum- have all produced documents on the subject (Roberts and Mays 2011).

Again, like in the case of the US, many archaeologists and museum specialists have dedicated their time to produce a considerable amount of research on the topics of curating and exhibiting human remains (Kilmister 2003; Jenkins 2012; McBrien 2006) from the curators perspective (Cassman and Odegaard 2004; Lohman and Goodnow 2006) and the visitors perspective (Abraham, Sullivan, and Griffin 2002; Fforde, Cressida 2004; Brown 2011; Kilmister 2003), as well

as repatriation claims (Abraham et al 2002; Fforde 2004) and the use of non-contested remains (Roberts and Mays 2011).

Given the amount of discussion surrounding the topic of human remains in the UK, we would expect there to be a consensus for museum practice. However, that is not the case. The exhibition of human remains is considered on a case by case basis; access for research with extant human remains collections is increasingly harder to obtain (as evidenced by the applications processes at the British Museum and the Duckworth Collection in Cambridge for example ("The British Museum Policy on Human Remains" 2014; "The Duckworth Collection" 2014); and in some instances human remains have been taken off online museum catalogues making them harder to find or know about (e.g. Natural History Museum, London ("Natural History Museum. Human Remains Policy" 2014).

Latin America

The discussion surrounding human remains has been almost untouched in Latin America. Very few countries have entered the debate from an archaeological or museums perspective, of those Mexico is the only one in the northern area, whilst Chile, Argentina and Uruguay are the most active in the south (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011). Surprisingly, the last three have the less number of indigenous populations from the continent, due to their particular colonial history, where genocide and disease decimated these native populations in relative higher numbers than in other areas of America (Boccara 1999; Pereña 1992; Lenton 2012).

In Mexico the topic is handled by the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) and subsequently by the National Direction for Physical Anthropology and the national university UNAM (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011). However, no provision has been made in regards to reburial or repatriation of remains to any source community or indigenous representative organization.

In Argentina, National Law 25,517 deals with those human remains of indigenous origin housed in museums and private collections. In article 3 for example, it states that *"all scientific research that involves aboriginal communities and their heritage should have the express consent of such communities"* (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011, 582), whether this is indeed followed or just a

provision for law remains to be seen, as so far only two restitutions or repatriation of human remains have been approved (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011).

Chile has supplemented Indigenous Law 19,253 to the National Monuments Law of 1970 in order to establish the need for prior consent by indigenous communities for excavation of human remains. However, there is no provision in this law for research with these remains, or guidelines for its exhibition(Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,599). Many museums in Chile are still exhibiting the human remains in archaeological contexts such as in Arica, and a recent study on visitor perception emphasizes the complicated subject in a country with little representation by indigenous communities (Cordova González and Bernal Peralta 2001).

Lastly, Uruguay has a specific Repatriation Law, number 17,256. This Law was put into place after the debates for repatriation with France of the remains of an indigenous Chief who was taken to Europe forcibly and died there. His remains were kept at the Musee de L'Homme until the claim was made and were later returned to Uruguay (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,607). However, there are two issues with the application of this law. Firstly there is a small number of people who recognize themselves as indigenous in Uruguay (less than 4% according to the most recent census)(Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2010); even when these 4% of the population recognizes themselves as indigenous, the country has been through and extensive miscegenation process that identifying particular indigenous groups by DNA is a complicated matter (Sans 1997). All in all, proving the relation between living descendants and human remains to a specific community becomes difficult in those instances (as described for the US by Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004).

As summarized by Maria Luz Endere (Endere in Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004,271) , there are two main obstacles for the repatriation, reburial and restitution of remains in these countries. The first has to do with "the need to prove that the claimants were legal heirs (Legal Department of the Administración de Parques Nacionales, Case Catriel" (Endere in Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004,271), the second with the need for a law that changes the status of collection of indigenous human remains that are, so far, under the control and ownership of national authorities and cannot be claimed by individuals on the basis of private interest.

It would be useful here to emphasize that the lack of interest in terms of human remains in other countries has to do specifically with those that come from archaeological contexts and are in museums. There are plenty of laws that regulate excavation and research on human remains in countries that have dealt or are dealing with armed conflict and civil war in Latin America. Such is the case of Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina (Marquez-Grant and Fibiger 2011). However those provisions deal exclusively with forensic contexts and are therefore not of the particular interest of this research.

Rest of the World

There are other areas of the world were the issue of human remains has been addressed, in different contexts and degrees of impact. In Egypt for example, there are no specific laws that regulate the use or exhibit of archaeological finds of human remains, considered to be older than 100 years. However, the decision to take the royal mummies from display in the 1970s and to later display them in a separate vault room with new cases and a refurbished room henceforth is a specific example of how there is some sensitivity or thought behind the exhibit of human remains in Egyptian museums (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,497).

The other extreme of the scope is made patent for the case of Israel. There many permits and regulations need to be obtained before starting research that could potentially uncover human remains. If they are indeed uncovered then immediate reburial is mandated, with provision to the rituals of faith of the recovered remains (Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004,87). The religious tint of the country in itself has permeated to the discussion and there for there is no room for museum displays of human remains. That been said, the case of reliquaries and other objects made from human remains are still the exception.

A completely different case is that of Thailand. In the past, entire skeletal collections have been excavated and then transported outside of the country for research and as interesting specimens, especially during the decades of the 70s and 80s (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,625). Over the last 20 years some of them have been repatriated through individual claims but not as part of a national effort. In fact, it has been argued that given that Thai Buddhist believe that the dead body is non-sacred, this translates to the practice of looting of prehistoric grave goods and the consequent damage to human skeletons. *"Related to this non-sacred view of human remains is*

the establishment of open air museums, whereby sites are excavated and burials left in situ" [for viewing] (Marquez- Grant and Fibiger 2011,627).

Current Topics and Discussions

Since the 1970s a series of claims for repatriation of remains have been registered with different museums by groups of indigenous people, who are direct descendants or have affiliations with the remains housed in museums, this has been particularly the case for the United States and Europe, where the majority of these collections are housed (Quigley 2001). Most of the claims did not particularly concern human remains but sacred objects that had been looted or sold to private collectors and museums, either by indigenous people in need of money or by professional looters (Quigley 2001). Though these are objects, the issues regarding repatriation and the right of source communities to make claims for them are the same as those regarding human remains (Gulliford 1992), hence their inclusion within the same articles of the Tamaki Makau-rau Accord, for example ("The Tamaki Makau-Rau Accord" 2005).

Though these requests were, in the beginning, few and far in between as the cases of the 1958 Kwakiutl villages at the north end of Victoria Island claim of illegally seized potlatch objects sold to the Museum of the American Indian in New York (McKeown and Hutt 2002, 428) or the Pueblo Zuni objects reclaimed from a private auction house in 1971 (McKeown and Hutt 2002, 428); however, the introduction of new legislation created a change in the number of petitions and the way these were processed (Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004; Jenkins 2010). By 1989 for example, in the United States, the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA) embodied a series of policies, codes and laws that encouraged other museums to be sympathetic towards the requests of native American groups to have artefacts and human remains returned. This act gave way to the creation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). It is from 1990 where the debate regarding human remains in museum collections reached a public audience, and from there several changes have been instituted as parts of museum policies and archaeological policies in regards to human remains (NAGPRA 1990). In particular in 1992 protests and debates regarding the rights of Native Americans and indigenous populations in the rest of the Americas reached a high point on occasion of the 500 years of the Spanish Conquest (Meisch 1992; Kubal 2008).

The results of the implementation of NAGPRA in the US, after 24 years, are clear. All institutions that receive federal funds are obligated to have an updated and publicly accessible inventory of the cultural and human remains of their collections. This includes not only big museums like the Natural History Museum in New York, and The Smithsonian Institution (and consequently the National Museum of the American Indians), but also those collections in public universities or universities that receive public grants for research. All research conducted in federal lands must consult with representatives of Native American nations if the research is contemplating the finds of cultural remains of traceable Native American origin, or if remains are uncovered unexpectedly (NAGPRA 1990- art. 3). Something similar is echoed in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, with this last two countries leading the number of successful repatriation and reburial claims since the 1990s (Abraham, Sullivan, and Griffin 2002).

The debate now centres in two main argument: the grounds for exhibiting the remains, and the acceptance or denial of repatriation claims.

Repatriation

In this framework the role of the Museum as an institution that has to negotiate between the demands of the public and of the native communities is only becoming more complicated. The fear that Museums have of losing what are perceived as unique specimens to repatriation claims also makes this discussion complicated (Fforde 2004; Abraham, Sullivan, and Griffin 2002). Clear example of these issues are the case of the remains of Kennewick man and the Na Iwi O Na Kupuna O Mokapu vs. Dalton case. In the first one members of the anthropology professional community sued the United States Government for its intent to repatriate to Native American communities the remains of and Holocene man for reburial, claiming that NAGPRA was not applicable in this instance and that valuable scientific information would be lost. A court ruled in their favour in 2004 (Bruning 2006). On the second case, the Hawaiian Native Americans of the Na Iwi O Na Kupuna O Mokapu tribe sued the Bishop Museums, in 1995, for not returning the remains expeditiously and for conducting additional scientific research on the remains, viewed as desecration, since under Hawaiian tradition human remains are spiritual beings that have the same traits as a living person (Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004, 109). This was done after the museum complied with NAGPRA's requirement of conducting an inventory of the remains housed

at the museum and making it available to the public. It has been cited in other repatriation lawsuits as examples why complying with NAGPRA can be problematic for institutions (Kosslak 1999).

It is clear, from the discussions posted on the NAGPRA's website that the determination of what claims are legitimate and which ones are not is also a very delicate and conflictive subject. All claims for repatriation to museums around the world, have to do with the determination of "cultural affiliation":

> *"a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced historically or prehistorically between a present day Indian Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group (NAGPRA Sec. 2(2))"* (NAGPRA 1990)

Though there are several successful cases, as the repatriation of Maori tattooed heads held in the Quai Branly Museum-France in 2012, there are still many claims that are unsuccessful such as the claims to the University of Massachusetts (UMass) by the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers Cheryl Andrews-Maltais of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head, Aquinnah; John Brown III of the Narragansett Indian Tribe; and Sherry White of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians in May 2008; or the claim to the Museo de la Plata for reburial of the remains of cacique Inakayal by the Tehuelche people in Argentina, started in 1970 and still on-going (Fforde, Hubert, and Turnbull 2004). And many more that are hard negotiate such as those made by the Honouring the Ancient Dead group in the UK ("Honouring the Ancient Dead" 2014).

Furthermore, the assessing the claims for repatriation of human remains is a complex matter involving permutations of three variables: the age of the skeletal material, the time at which the material was unearthed (ranging from the present to, most commonly, the 18th and 19th centuries), and the manner of death (at its extremes either natural death or murder). These three variables can be thought of as three independently operating sliding scales (Page 2011; Jenkins 2012).

The significance of archaeological and anthropological remains outside of the groups to which they belong to, has been quoted as a reason to *"question the wisdom of handing back remains to indigenous groups"* (Quigley 2001, 210). This is further reinforced by opinions such as the one by

Jane Buikstra, a preeminent forensic anthropologists, who argues that *"in addition to piecing together the past, collections of human remains are necessary to train forensic anthropologists to carry out identification procedures"* (Buikstra 1981, 26)

The history of collections of human remains, particularly in Europe and the US, have to do with the housing of specimens for medical examination and anthropological studies (Quigley 2001). The fact that these collections are still in use for ends different than archaeology complicates the applicability of NAGPRA and similar laws and expands the debate of repatriation to a case by case basis, taking into account not only the legality of the claims but the value ascribed to remains by the scientific community. Such is the case for example of the remains of Charles Byrne held in the Hunterian Museum in London whose own last wishes of being buried are not honoured by the medical museum on account of them representing a unique specimen (Dalrymple 2014). Is in those specific cases were the Vermillion Accord and subsequent agreements are particularly relevant. However, the fact remains that *"In some European museums, the skeletal collections are not at risk of being lost, but in danger of not being fully utilized"* (Quigley 2001,124).

Exhibition Challenges/Visitor Studies

The debate around the exhibition of human remains is held between two arguments: education and entertainment. While most museums will emphasize the educational value of the display of human remains like Egyptian mummies and Bog mummies, there is an increasing trend of showcasing the human remains for entertainment value. That is the case for example of exhibits like “Mummies of the World” or “Body Worlds” (Page 2011).

The popularization of forensic anthropology by T.V series like Bones and C.S.I have also had an impact on public opinion regarding human remains and their value. Several surveys conducted in museums show that over 60% of the visitors in archaeological museums, expect to see human remains (Kilmister 2003,57, Brown 2011). For the particular case of the UK for example:

> *“The vast majority (82.5%) of 300 respondents questioned in the summer of 2002 at three British museums displaying ancient Egyptian human remains supported the idea of having these remains on display”* (Kilmister 2003, 57) However, in the same study, it was shown

that: "*Of the 80% of respondents who were comfortable viewing ancient remains, over half (54.7%) of these would be sensitive to viewing modern remains"*(Kilmister 2003, 61).

Arguments in favour of displaying human remains have to do with increasing interest of an audience in topics such as archaeology, history and science. This has been shown from visitor studies conducted during exhibits such as that of Lindow man at the Manchester Museum (Brown 2011), the surveys conducted by Kilmister at the British Museum, Manchester Museum and Petrie Museum (Kilmister, 2003); and the analysis of visitors to the Body World Exhibit of 2007 in London (Albertti et al. 2009).

It has also been argued that modern societies in the West have increasingly distanced themselves from death, and in consequence displays with human remains bring discussions related to our own mortality back to the table. As Albertti et al. say: "Exhibits of human remains are still just exhibits of humans, shown to be mortal: it is simply Death" (Albertti et al. 2009,139). This argument has been refuted on the grounds that human remains behind glass cases or vials are presented to visitors in a suspended animation state, extirpated of odour and decay, and can hardly convey the reality of death (Brooks and Rumsey 2006, 138 in Cassman et al. 2006), limiting their educational value.

The main argument against the display of human remain in museums is that, through exhibition, we transform bodies into things, people into objects (Brooks and Rumsey 2006,138 in Cassman et al. 2006). Furthermore, the contexts in which we display them have been manufacture and can only serve the purpose that the curator has decided for them (Albertti et al. 2009,137).

Another relevant argument has to do with article 2 of the Vermillion accord. The displaying of the dead is most of the times a direct disregard to the wishes of the deceased themselves, though admittedly for some archaeological traditions it could be harder to establish. As articulated by Brooks and Rumsay:

"*Bodies in museums are 'recontextualized human remains' – they have been removed from their place of burial into what is seen as 'another sacred context where they are preserved for a different function"* (Brooks and Rumsey 2006, 261 in Cassman et al. 2006).

Exhibits can display human remains in a respectful and informative manner (like the Egyptian mummies at the British Museum) or they cannot (as is the case of the "Mummies" exhibit in the Drents Museum in Assen). Despite the arguments in favour and against the use of human remains in museum exhibits, ultimately it should be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account that it is the research process behind an exhibit the one that dictates *"when, where, if and how the dead should be displayed"* (Albertti et al. 2009,144).

This chapter has tried to summarize the current discussions and issues that surround human remains in museum collections. We will extrapolate these issues to the treatment of human remains in the Netherlands in following chapters. Though some exceptions have been noted, and will be addressed in the discussion, the case study of the RMV is a prime example of how legislation and current debates are taken into practice in a contemporary ethnology museum in this country. It is of interest to see if the personal opinions of the museum staff will hence be in line with the policies delineated by the museum as an institution, and if they fall into the same reflexions that visitors and staff elsewhere have made, regarding the display and conservation of human remains in museum collections.

Chapter 2.- Case Study: The National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum Museum Volkenkunde)- Leiden[1].

The research for this dissertation was conducted at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde (RMV) in Leiden, The Netherlands. Though the particular history of the creation of the museum is not the main topic of this work, a brief background on the formation of the institution and the state of the current collections is of importance to frame the discussions and the case study presented.

The RMV was formed in 1837 by a combination of three private collections, those of Phillip Franz Balthazar von Siebold (1796- 1866), Jan Cock Blomhoff (1779-1853) and Johannes Gerhard Frederik van Overmeer Fischer (1800 – 1848), all formed by Japanese objects collected during their respective stays from until 1829 in the country. Together these three collections formed the core of the first "Ethnographic Museum" in Leiden (Effert 2008). Years later, during the second half of the 19th century, the restructuring of the collections of the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague and the trespass of all non-classic period archaeological objects from the National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) in Leiden, allowed for the consolidation of the National Ethnology Museum. During these years and until today the collections have been expanded with objects from the Americas, Indonesia, the South Pacific, Siberia, Africa, etc. In fact, after 175 years of collecting, the RMV now has one of the largest collection of ethnographic objects in the Netherlands (Effert 2008).

The RMV has had several changes in its exhibit halls over its history, the last one being the complete change of the museum in 2010, brought up by a restructuring of the main building (Interview Laura van Broekhoven). The current museum has around 240.000 objects in its collections of which around 4% are exhibited. These objects come from nine regions of the world and have been arranged in eight halls. These include the already mentioned Japan collection, as

[1] The merger of three national ethnology museums, The National Museum of Ethnology, The Tropenmuseum and the Afrikaa museum, into the new "Museum of World Cultures" took place in April of this year. The new museum will now have a collection of over 400 000 objects and more than 1 million photographs. "De drie musea versterken elkaar aanzienlijk op het terrein van publieksbereik, educatie, wetenschappelijk onderzoek, internationale samenwerking en ondernemerschap. Het museum zal een collectie beheren van zo'n 400.000 objecten, die behoort tot de wereldtop" www. volkenkunde.nl/nl/fusie-volkenkundige-musea. The implications of this merger process on the structure of the National Museum of Ethnology will be addressed later in this chapter.

well as African, Asian, Korean, Chinese, Indonesian, Oceanic, Central and South American and North American and the Artic collections (The Collections of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde 2014). The official collections housed at the museum are organized geographically. They are the Insular South-East Asia collection, the South and South-East Asia collection, South-West and Central Asia collection, Africa collection, Middle and South America collection, Native North America collection and the Circumpolar Regions collection (The Collections of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde 2014).

As the National Museum of Ethnology, the RMV is also part of the "Museum Association" (Museumvereniging), a newly formed institution that started work in January 2014 and that is the result of the merger of the Association of National Museums (NMV by its acronym in Dutch) and the Dutch Museums Association (VRM by its acronym in Dutch). The RMV is required to upheld the general policies and codes of ethics published by said association (www.museumvereniging.nl) to continue its membership. However, it is only subject to review by the Ministry of Culture by means of the Raad voor Cultuur.

> "*The Council for Culture is the legal adviser of the government in the fields of the arts, culture and media. The Council provides recommendations regarding the cultural policy in the Netherlands, whether it is requested of them or not. Usually, the Council provides a recommendation at the request of the Minister of the OCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). Every four years, the Council presents its recommendations on the perennial, government-subsidised, cultural institutions. The recommendation is not binding; the Minister has the final decision about which institutes are eligible for subsidy"* (Raad van Cultuur 2014).

However, since the creation of the Netherlands Foundation Ethnographic Collections (SVCN), in 1995, the RMV and the other eight ethnology museums part of this organization have established a series of codes of practice and an Ethical Committee to deal with the particular issues that affect Ethnological museums in the Netherlands. The museums that are part of the SVCN are the Museon, the Nusantara Museum, the National Museum of Ethnology, the World Museum, the Tropenmuseum, the Africa Museum, the Nijmegen Ethnography Museum and the Ethnographic Collection of University of Groningen. The SVCN aims to support joint projects between this institutions in terms of collection managing, conservation and research. One of the main projects

of the SVCN is the creation of a Thesaurus in use for all its members, as well as a digitalization of the collections and a joined fund for purchases. The joint collections under the SVCN include over 400,000 objects.

The creation of the SVCN Ethical Commission in 2004 provided this organization with the means to tackle ethical issues that have great impact in Ethnology museums, those have been summarized as follows:

> *"The ethnological museums are unanimous in working to combat the illegal trade in items of cultural significance. This is achieved by, among other things, categorically refraining from purchasing, acquiring, having on loan or exhibiting items of cultural significance if there is even the slightest doubt about the legality of the manner of acquisition. The Ethics Committee of the SVCN was set up in 2004. Its members include representatives of the ethnological museums and a representative from the commercial community in addition to the independent chair (a lawyer).* ***The committee advises SVCN museums about questions concerning human remains****, the possibly illegal origin of artefacts and repatriation of objects or collections. For this purpose, the committee monitors the objects that the various ethnological museums acquire or receive on loan each year. This is recorded in a report. Indeed, the ethnological museums of the Netherlands already tackle these matters as if the UNESCO Convention of 1970 and the UNIDROIT Convention of 1995 were ratified by the Netherlands. The Netherlands will probably only accept a more extensive version of the UNESCO convention."*[2] *(*SVCN 1999 in Beumer 2008, 24)

The Ethical Commission of the SVCN will address issues on a case by case basis, however there are specific guidelines and codes of practice regarding the use of human remains by the Ethnology museums:

> *"In May 2002, a symposium on the treatment of human remains had been organized amongst the associated ethnological museums. As a result of the symposium, a (draft) ethical code on the treatment of human remains was formulated. The code applies to the treatment of human remains ranging from their acquisition, management, research,*

[2] The emphasis on the phrases is mine, not part of the original.

presentation and restitution and refers to the ICOM Code as starting point"(Lubina 2009, 396).

The draft to which Lubina refers was officially adopted by the SVCN on the 27th of June 2003 and has been in use by the RMV since then.

The following chapter has been divided into two main topics. The first part of this chapter is the description of the organizational structure of the RMV. In that framework, the description of the decision making practice at the Museum Volkenkunde helps to recognize the main actors/participants of the policy making process and the level of involvement of the different areas that make part of the museum, as well as the assigned roles and levels of collaboration expected, for example, at the time of exhibit preparation.

Furthermore, understanding the organization of the RMV is vital in order to answer the main questions of this research, that is if the notions and opinions of the museum personal are or not reflected by museum policies. The first part of this chapter attempts to cover both, the organization of the Museum as presented to the general public by means of its webpage and the internal structure and processes. This internal processes will be exemplified by means of the steps to create an exhibit.

The second part of the chapter is dedicated to the Human Remains in the RMV. This section has in turn been separated into two sub-sections, one referring generally and briefly to the human remains found at the museum collections and a second one dedicated exclusively to Andean Mummy collection. The case study of the Andean Mummy collection is the main goal of this research. As it has been explained earlier, the collection was studied as part of the Internship conducted by the author from December 2013 to June 2014 at the RVM. The subchapter dedicated to it therefore includes the history of the collection, its contextualization process, as well as the discussions of repatriation that have risen around it.

The organizational structure of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde.

It is argued that a Museum is understood by way of its mission, and that the people that make up the institution are aware of said set of values (Visitatiecommissie Rijksmusea 2012,3). The mission statement of the RMV before the merger reads:

> *"We zijn een dynamisch museum in een international netwerk, dat met verrijkende ontmoetingen rondom onze wereldvermaarde collectie een groot publiek wil inspireren on met een blik te kijken naar de wereld, de mens en diens cultuur." (Visitatiecommissie Rijksmusea 2012, 4)*

This mission addressed the intention of the museum to present their collections as a gateway to inspire visitors to look at the world, people and their culture. It's main goal is to reach a broad audience through and international network, and encourage enriching encounters between cultures.

Now that the merger with the Tropenmuseum and the Afrikaa museum has taken place, a new mission is being drafted, following this lines:

> *"De missie van het nieuwe museum is onverminderd actueel: bijdragen tot een open blik op de wereld. De komende jaren zal daartoe in samenwerking met het publiek, culturele, maatschappelijke- en commerciële partners gewerkt worden aan spraakmakende en aansprekende tentoonstellingen, educatieve programma's, wetenschappelijk onderzoek en publieksprogramma's" (www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/fusie-volkenkundige-musea)*

The goal of contributing to an open view of the world is still the main concern of the new Museum of World Cultures. Emphasizing compelling exhibitions, educational programs, research and public programs. In accordance with both mission statements, the creation of engaging exhibitions that will showcase the museum's collections and attract a varied public is the RMV main goal.

To further understand the museum structure it is worthwhile to describe the process involved in the creation of exhibits. There have been several changes in the way exhibits are created in the RMV over the last 10 years, both in order to improve the practical process, and to adjust to the goals set for the museum by its the General Director.

According to its webpage, the current Museum of World Cultures will maintain Stijn Schoonderwoerd, who had been the director of the RMV since 2012 as its Director General. The division of departments in the individual museums remain the same, in the case of the RMV the departments of Exhibitions and Education, Collections, Research, Commerce and Facilities. There

is a great degree of collaboration between the departments in order to take care of the collections that make up the museum, maintain the permanent exhibits and create new ones, as well as encourage research (*www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/fusie-volkenkundige-musea)*.

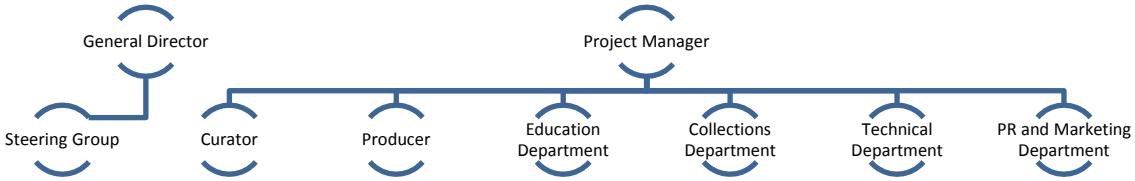
As of December 2012 a "Project Agency" was created and a new scheme for exhibit planning was launched. In this system, once an exhibit has been approved and included in the programming by the Programming Committee, a Project Manager, member of the Project Agency, is appointed.

The daily working of the museum, exhibition planning and programming takes place within the Programming Committee. Though the General Director always has the final saying regarding controversial decisions, all members of the Committee have equal voices and place within it. Concerns and points of contention can be raised by any of the members of the Committee, but most of the decisions are taken democratically. As a member of the Committee puts it: "[..]no one can veto [an issue]" (Interview Laura van Broekhoven).

Some of the topics that the Programming Committee can discuss are related to external exhibit proposals (for example itinerant blockbuster exhibits that are offered to the museum for display), the relevant issues regarding the planned temporary exhibits, changes in the permanent exhibits, the creation of new museum policies and the evaluation and editing of existing museum policies (such as acquisition policies, human remains policies and conservation practices).

Simultaneously, a "Core Group" is created to develop the exhibit. This Core Group is made up by at least one curator, a producer, and one member each for the collections department, education department, the public relations and marketing department and the technical department (Organization Chart 1).

Organization Chart 1. Exhibit Creation Structure.



Though the Project Manager is involved in all stages of the process, the main information for the exhibit and the basic outline for its design are created between the curator and the producer. Together they will decide on what objects they would like to display, and a general "script" for the exhibit. The script will be written primarily by the curator, explaining information on the topic exhibited as well as some of the choices made for it, the producer in turn will condense the information of the script presented by the curator and think of ways to present it to the education department as well as the objects labels and the exhibits dialog boxes later on in the process (Interview Laura van Broekhoven; Rapti Golder-Miedema personal communication).

From there, the curator and producer will consult with the other members of the core team in order to create the exhibit and the material around it. The objects that have been previously selected or thought of to be used in the exhibit will have to be presented to the collections department representative, who in turn will advise on the possibility of their use. On a later stage, these suggestions will be complemented by the views of the exhibit designers who will help decide what is the most appropriate way of exhibiting them.

The education department will create activities for the young age groups and can also suggest or ask for suggestion for topics that should be addressed by the exhibit that had not been included in the initial script. Furthermore, the PR and Marketing department will also collaborate in order to make sure that visitors will be engaged with the proposed exhibit and so that the advertised exhibit will indeed provide what has been marketed. All in all this is the most collaborative step of the process, all areas involved in the core group will have extensive discussions on their recommendations and ideas in order to make the exhibit work (Interview Laura Van Broekhoven).

Once this has been done the Project Manager will send a full report to the General Director for consideration. If there are issues that need to be further addressed, for example ethical issues on how to display items, or if there are concerns of how some material will be presented "Steering Group" was installed. This provision however has been abandoned for the new organization of the National Museum of World Cultures (Laura van Broekhoven, personal communication).

It is important to note here that the actual exhibit design, in terms of architectural elements, exhibit cases and other exhibit material components that will be used to present the objects, will be carried out by contract companies outside of the RMV. Through this process the Project

Manager and sometimes the curator will have direct contact with the exhibit designers, who mainly work from the concepts presented by the story line in the script that has been agreed for the exhibit. According to one of the interviewees, this process involves someone external from the museum creating their own ideas and concepts of how the exhibit should look like, these ideas are not always in tune with what the curator and producer might have thought about (Interview Laura Van Broekhoven).

Further discussions between the curator and exhibit designers will sort out major disagreements. There will also be several discussions between the collections department and the exhibit designers regarding where and how to display certain objects. While exhibit designers might want to "put items on display without showcases […] or use areas of the museum that are not generally used, the collections department will always perform condition checks and ensure that the objects are displayed under optimal conditions for their conservation" (Interview Laura van Broekhoven; Rapti Golder-Miedema personal communication).

Finally, an external company will be in charge of editing the texts. Once they have been approved for content by the producer and curator, they are laid-out by the designers and a final editing process is set up. The exhibit now goes into the production process where texts, audio-visual aids and interactive modules are set up and showcases instilled by the collection management department. Once all this steps are completed, an exhibit can open to the public.

Human Remains in the Volkenkunde Museum Collections

Before entering into a more detailed discussion regarding the particular Andean mummy collection of the RMV, it is important to note two things: first, that the mummies of the Andean collection are by no means the only human remains present in the RMV collections; and second, that these human remains at the RMV are divided largely between those that come from archaeological excavations conducted by members or former members of the RMV as part of research projects, and those present as part of acquired collections.

The human remains that are part of the archaeological excavation collections come from very specific contexts, have a known provenience and are for the most part not used in exhibits because several reason such as state of preservation and completeness, because the museum is

acting only as a guardian of the collection (as for example in the case of the human remains from the Dogon valley of Mali), but mainly because of an ethical reason. The museum upholds a policy not to include human remains in its displays if it is not needed (Laura van Broekhoven, personal communication).

The human remains part of the RMV's main inventory come from multiple regions of the world and varied contexts – not all of them are mortuary elements, one can find ceremonial objects adapted from human remains as well-. In fact, from a brief search in the RMV online inventory one can find the collections are made up of stand-alone pieces like a Mixtec mosaic skull, to groups of trophy heads or decorated skulls that belong to a particular culture or geographical region.

There is one big problem when locating human remains in the RMV inventory, that is they are not all described as "human remains". Each individual element is described in terms of its function/use, the materials that make it up and the region where it comes from. For example, a search for the word "skull" will bring up objects that have human skulls as part of their construction (like baskets, masks and statues), trophy heads, decorated skulls and jars with hair samples (Profile of the Collections of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde 2008). The search results however will not include all objects that are indeed skulls, but only those that have been described as such by the museum personnel.

Furthermore, the words used to describe similar objects are not usually the same. Not all trophy heads have been classified as trophy heads, to be able to find them all one has to comb through the database with as many related words as possible, as well as using the geographical locations of known trophy heads in the collection – that was for example the case for known Nazca trophy head that was classified/described as "head of a female mummy"- (www.volkenkunde.nl). Though the museum is aware of these issues and has set into place a project in order to correct them, by the time this thesis was written the inventory showed the problems described above.

Nevertheless, at least sixty one (61) objects that either were or contained human remains have been identified from the RMV online inventory, including those of the Andean Mummies collection. A full list, including their inventory description can be found in Appendix 2. That is not to say that there are no more human remains in the RMV's collection, by any means, but it does

show a good example of the terms useful to locate such entries and the difficulties found (See Appendix 2).

Of the total remains listed, few have been identified by the author as part of the permanent displays of the RMV[3]. Three "offering plates" (inventory numbers 2220-1, 2065-1a and 4723-79) in the Southeast Asia-Tibet area of the exhibit halls, and a Mixtec skull (code 4007-1) in the Mesoamerica exhibit hall. The fact that these three displayed human remains are all very decorated should be noted, this coincides with the distinction made among curators between human remains that have been clearly used for the fabrication of other objects (decorative or functional) and the human remains that are part of a burial or have fulfilled a mortuary function. A clear example of this is the object described as a "ritual dance belt", made with human bones by Buddhist monks, and exhibited in the Asia-Tibet hall (inventory number 2851-1). Another two objects made with or from human remains on the permanent exhibit but not found on the Inventory search are a trumpet made with a femur (code 2739-31), also on the Asia-Tibet exhibit hall; and a wooden statue built around a skull or skull Korwa in the Oceania hall (code 2442-2). This last one is described in the exhibit interactive touch screen as coming part of an ancestor burial.

Among collections of human remains as those described above, the Pre-Columbian mummy collection is a particularly especial case. It is made up by several individuals that have similar comparable characteristics. These remains have been registered in the inventory clearly as human remains and have undoubtedly come from a mortuary context. They are well preserved and are known by many museum employees.

Aside from these reasons, the Andean mummies became the centre of this thesis because of a combination of the museum's interest on studying the collection and the author's previous experience working with Andean remains, and her knowledge on contextualization of similar bundles. The museums interest in the collection was highlighted by the previous work conducted by assistant curator Martin Berger and chief curator Dr Laura van Broekhoven in relation to the repatriation possibilities for the bundles, as well as their questions regarding earlier research

[3] It is important to note here that in the Afrika exhibit hall, in the area for the exhibits about the Dogon valley, there is a movie and a photo of burial contexts; in this case caves that serve as mass graves for the population. Many skeletonized individuals are visible as well as loose remains.

results and the uncertainty this results generated regarding the mummies provenience, cultural/historical context and biographies.

The Andean Mummies Collection

On the following pages the Andean Mummies Collection of the RMV, with inventory number "4857" is described. The collection is formed by 69 objects in total, including the mummies as well as earthenware, clay figurines, wood objects (harpoons, weaving instruments, a comb and a wooden spoon), reed baskets, seashell and bead necklaces, cord and slingshots, as well as silver and gold objects. The seven mummies here examined have different stages of preservation and individual traits.

The contextualization of the Andean Mummies Collection was conducted as part of an internship done by the author from December 2013 until June 2014 at the RMV. The main emphasis of the work was to identify a possible provenience for the mummies and give an overview, when possible, of sex and age of the individuals. First a brief story of how the collection came to be part of the RMV is presented, including the previous study conducted with them. After that a more in-detail description of the remains follows.

History

The collection was introduced into the museum in the 1974, bought from Amsterdam antiques dealer Henry Schouder. It was originally shipped from Argentina and sold as part of one funerary context (de Bock 1981,51). Before their purchase, the bundles were opened and examined by a team of Doctors contacted by the museum (Edward de Bock, personal communication). The official letter that accompanies the mummies, provided by the seller, reads: "*the grave in its totality is collected by Mr Aparacion, archaeologist from Buenos Aires , around 1910, in the border of Peru and Chile , and [?] in the region of Arica"*[4] (Letter on register 1976 in de Bock 1981,2). They are officially introduced to the main inventory of the RMV on February 16, 1976[5].

[4] The original is in Dutch, the translation is mine. Original reads "Het graf in zijn totaalheid is verzameld door Mr. Aparacion, archaeoloog uit Buenos Aires, rond 1910 in het gresgebied van Peru en Chili en wel in de omstreken van Arica"

[5] registration 228/R.129 dd. Feb 16. 1976

The first work dedicated to the mummies takes place in 1981, when a previous curator of the museum E.C. de Bock, wrote his doctoral thesis on his examination of the collection. The original work entitled "Pre-Columbian mummies in the National Museum of Ethnology at Leiden" has been written in Dutch, and is an extensive description of the mummies original state as well as a complete inventory of the associated artefacts (de Bock 1981). De Bock initially believed that the mummies came from Argentina, as they were first bought by Schouder in that country. However, further inspection of the ceramic artefacts associated to the bundles led him to establish that at least part of the collection came from the Arica region of Chile- specifically from the "Gentilar" [6] culture area. De Bock also attempted to pair the vases recovered with the three child mummies, aided by descriptions of common burial practices in the region, and concluded that the three mummies and the vases were consistent with three different graves (de Bock 1981,46).

De Bock tried to contact several archaeologists from the region in order to contextualize the adult mummies. He stated for example that: *"The numerous letters with detailed photographs and drawings that I have sent to archaeologists in South America, [for] all but one remained unanswered"(de Bock 1981,3)*[7]*.* What this answering letters might have said is not further explained in the 1981 publication, but De Bock does remain convinced that the two adult mummies come from the North-east area of Argentina and he goes as far as suggesting they might belong to the Tiahuanaco or Inca traditions, namely to the Late Horizon period (De Bock 1981,51).

It is unclear if the mummies where exhibited from the point or their inclusion to the inventory or after de Bock's research, however, they reportedly were on display until 1992. That year they were removed from the permanent exhibit for two reasons: the first was that it was thought that adequate conservation and preservation for the mummies was not possible while in the glass

[6] The classification of "Gentilar" refers to a specific stylistic horizon in the Late Horizon of the archaeology of the Arica region. The Late Horizon is situated after 1000 a.C, between the Tiahuanaco Horizon and the Late Inca Horizon. Given the range of variation in the style presented by the museum sample there are some pieces that also belong to the contemporary "San Miguel" stylistic horizon. In view of this range we will refer to the pottery of the mummies collection as belonging to the Late Horizon of the Arica Region, in general.

[7] The original is in Dutch, the translation is mine. Original reads: "De talrijke brieven met uitvoerig fotomateriaal en tekeningen die ik naar archeologen in Zuis Amerika heb gestuurd, zijn alle, op één na, onbeantwoord gebleven.

cases in the permanent exhibit; and the second was the strong smell that came out of the cases and that posed an inconvenience both to curators and visitors (interview Anne Marie).

That been said, the lack of specific registry for what was on exhibit before the year 2000 does not allow this information to be confirmed or detailed. The collection as such has not been on display in any permanent or temporary exhibit held at the RMV since the year 2000, and there is no immediate plans to do so.

The collection is currently in a freezer in the RMV reserve in s-Gravenzande, under very controlled temperatures between 13ºC and 16ºC, as well as regular inspections for insect activity (interview Margrit). They are all housed in the same location and in the same type of containers (see photo 1).

Figure 1. Containers used for the mummies of the Andean collection

In terms of the conservation of remains it was noticed that at least three of them would benefit from placing in a different type of container. Those are the cases for individuals 4857-62, 4857-63 and 4857-65. The first two are the babies still wrapped in their original bundles.

The current containers make it very difficult to access the remains for viewing or examination, and the lack of actual support (as in a hard surface to lay upon) can lead to a further disarticulation of small bones within the bundle. As it is, when the containers are moved or the

bundles are lifted it is possible to feel the movement of bones within them. We suggest placing them in hard wood or fortified cardboard boxes, such as is the case for bundle 4068-1. In regards to the adult mummy 4857-65 the problem is linked to the preservation of the back layer of the feather poncho. Given the shifting that can occur with the movement of the container some of the feather are peeling of or been bent by the fabric. Similarly, the crouched position of the remains could be better supported with firmer materials that those currently utilized.

Contextualization

As described earlier, the Andean Mummies collection is made up by seven mummies: three bundles, two possibly unwrapped bundles and two mummified human heads. One of the first things that was evident after an initial examination of the remains was that the mummies in the collection represent at least three very distinct types of mummification. Two juvenile bundles show skeletonized areas and very dry thin tissue, a juvenile and an adult have a more oily mummification with textile imprints clearly visible, whilst the other adult and the heads all present abundant dry tissue with very little to no skeletonized surfaces. The fact that three different types of mummification are present point to at least three different origins for the mummies.

Since the associated wrappings, artefacts and details of each mummy are different from one another, the identification of specific individual diagnostic traits for contextualization is necessary. The pinpointing of probable culture areas of origin for the remains has been done (where possible) taking into account the mummification type, textile patterns and materials, bundle position and in the case of the two adults, the metal objects associated. It is important here to clarify that the association between mummies and artefacts has been implicitly assumed to be authentic[8].

In order to better describe the collection each individual is defined not only in terms of its mummification type, but in regards to the probable area of origin and in association with any other remains of the collection that share common attributes. Age and sex are given when possible as assed by the author. A summary of what is described below can also be found in a

[8] For a definition of authenticity in this thesis refer to chapter the working definitions sub section in page 8.

table in Appendix 3. Some of the associated artefacts used to contextualized the remains, though sold with the mummies, could have been added at a later time to the assemblage in order to turn it more appealing for the buyer.

Of those associated artefacts the most notorious are the head bands of both adult mummies. In both cases the headbands can/could be easily replaced or placed on the mummies without altering the overall conservation of the remains. They both present similar weave types and materials and appear to be in a state of preservation that is very good (perhaps too much so when compared with the state of the poncho in mummy 4857-65 and the wrappings of mummy 4857-47). A contrary case to that posed by the headbands is that of the feather poncho of mummy 4857-65. In this case there is no visible way to either introduce or take out the poncho without damaging the mummy given her position at the time of burial. The same can be said for the breast-plate and the seashell necklace on the same mummy.

The metal objects associated with the remains pose a similar conundrum, they are reportedly found with the remains and have been placed later on them for the photo-shoot in Edward de Bock's thesis book. However it is not clear if the metal objects were found in those positions or if their arrangement was a decision made by de Bock or someone else. The comparison drawn between Guaman Poma de Ayala's descriptions of Inca attire are only valid if these gold diadems are indeed directly related to the remains and worn as indicated in the photos by Edward de Bock.

The Arica infant mummies (4857-62 and 4857-63)

The first two mummies described are those inscribed in the inventory with numbers 4857-63 and 4857-63. Both are wrapped bundles of infants and share similar textile characteristics, mainly between two or three textile layers. The outer layer is made up by reed rope placed around the body and part of the skull; the inner layers are an intricate wrapping of loose weaves (1x1 knitting pattern), a dark coarse fabric and a thinner fabric with beige, black and probably blue bands are visible in different places of the bundles (see photo 2).

The bundle wrapping is consistent with that described by Dauelsberg in his work about the Arica region (Dauelsberg 1972). More particularly to the Late horizon burial practices (1000- 1350 A.D)

of the Gentilar and San Miguel de Azapa traditions. Dauelsberg described a bundle as follows: "*The Mummy is enveloped in a intertwined [layer] of totora or wool, this is tied to the neck with a firm cord. This wrapping is of dark colour or its interior generally has a shirt of brown colour […]*[9]*"*(Dauelsberg 1972,166).

This description is especially accurate for bundle 4857-62, where a thick cord under the neck is visible. Dauelsberg continues to add to his description the common practice of attaching a mask to the head of the individual (Dauelsberg 1972,166), though no evidence of this practice is recorded in the case study.

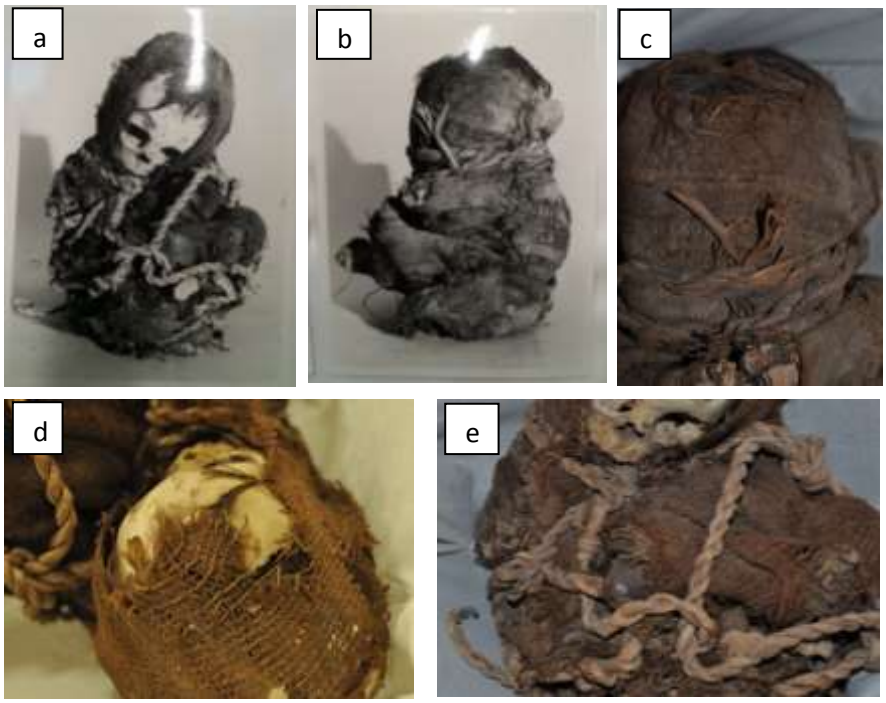


Figure 2. Arica mummies. a) 4857-63 original photo adapted from de Bock 1981, 68. b) 4857-62 original photo adapted from De Bock 1981, 68. c) detail of neck tie of 4857-62. d) detail of head and textile of 4857-63. d) overview of wrapping and head of 4857-63.

[9] In Spanish in the original, the translation is mine.

Similar bundles have been reported for the Museum of San Miguel de Azapa in northern Chile, even though most of what is in display at the museum's permanent exhibits is part of their Chinchorro mummies collection (as seen in www.uta.cl/masma/ and referenced in Cordova and Bernal 2001, 2).

Most of the collections ceramics and wood artefacts have been ascribed by De Bock to the mummies and this is indeed a logical association. Furthermore, Dauelsberg describes Arica bundles as including coral and beads necklaces in their mortuary objects; three necklaces of similar characteristics are part of the artefact collection under inventory numbers 4857-54, 5857-55 and 4857-58.

Both bundles are well preserved, but they are very fragile and should not be moved if possible in their current containers- when attempts to move them for examination were made the bundles changed shape and disarticulation of bones could be felt-. Age determination was attempted for individual 4857-63 on the basis of dental examination by the author, the presence of at least one molar fully erupted on the mandible led to the determination of an age range between 2-3 years. This type of examination was not possible for bundle 4857-62, but the comparable size and weight of the bundle to that of 4857-63 has allowed for a determination of a similar age range from 1-3 years of age. Given their young age and their wrappings it is not possible to establish their sexes.

The Inca mummy (4857-47)

The biggest bundle in the collection is that of an individual sitting in the "lotus position", meaning legs crossed and arms likewise crossed over chest. This mummy was originally described by De Bock as coming from North-west Argentina, and later as probably of Inca origin (de Bock 1981, 51)

Figure 3. Original photos by De Bock of mummy 4857-47 (after de Bock, 1981: 80)

The individual is wrapped in a bundle-manner from the neck down. We intentionally say bundle manner and not a bundle since the head is not covered. The individual has four textiles visible: 1) a headband in geometrical pattern, starting on the forehead; 2) a delicate weave internal poncho-like wrapping; 3) a coarser weave with beige and brown bands, outer-poncho layer; 4) and wool cord braided and wrapped around the body, as the outer most layer (see photo 4).

The mummification of the face and hands is consistent with highlands drying processes, the preservation of the textiles is also indicative of this. The position of the remains are in themselves out of the ordinary, besides burials from the Paracas region few bundles have been found in a cross-legged position (Ceruti 2004; Cockburn et al 1998; Isbell 1997; Mignone 2010). Another important consideration about these remains is the state of preservation of the textiles, only the bottom surface has signs of contact with soil and is therefore damaged, whilst the rest of the wrappings are not. This could indicate that the mummy has not been buried, but placed in a resting place like a cave or niche.

Figure 4. Current state of bundle 4857-47, with textile details.

Taking into account De Bock's initial considerations of this mummy as probably Inca, a more in detail research was conducted on the headband textile and mainly on the gold and silver objects associated with it. Among those there are several gold discs, a diadem/headband, a gold tumi-shaped disc and a silver pendant that resembled a lightning bolt (for a complete list see the table in Appendix 4). Though all of the metal objects are consistent with Inca metallurgic tradition, the most important for cultural affiliation turned out to be the gold hammered head band (visible in photo 3). This headband is identical to another reported from an Inca *Capac hucha*[10] context (Besom 2010,410; González 2003,83)[11], and it complies with the descriptions by Guaman Poma de Ayala of Inca attire of the *Collasuyu or Qullasuyu* provinces, today's Chile and North-west Argentina (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980,1,138 [1615]). It would be unwise however to state that mummy 4857-47 is also a *Capac hucha* without further evidence, though it is important to note here those similitudes in the mortuary objects as well as the sitting position and the preservation of textiles.

[10] Capac hucha or Capac cocha is the name given to the ritual conducted by the Inca's in honor to their most important huacas. In it a human sacrifice was made, either of a young boy, girl or a maiden. The most common sites linked to Capac hucha rituals are high mountains in the southern borders of the empire (e.g. Besom 2010; Bray et al. 2005; Ceruti 2004; Mignone 2010; Reinhard and Ceruti 2005).

[11] The headband referred to in both articles was recovered in the excavation in 1918 by Boman at the site of Salinas Grandes, Jujuy- Argentina. The headband was drawn and photographed but has been lost since 1997. The differences between that headband and the one from the RMV mummy is the position of the holes made to tie it to the head (Besom 2010,410-411).

Given the wrappings and the very few visible areas outside of the bundle, neither sex nor age could be determined for mummy 4857-47. However, since the mummy has long braids and this is customary only for females in Inca traditions it is possible that the individual is indeed a female.

The mummy with the feathered poncho (4857-65)

The individual is not part of a bundle but rather has two areas covered with textile, the rest of the body is uncovered. The remains come from a flexed burial, there is some textile imprints in the legs and arms, currently only a feather covered poncho is worn over the chest and back, and a bright-coloured headband is placed over the head (see photo 5). Another textile, probably a poncho is held in storage but is said to have been part of the mummy's attire originally (de Bock 1981).

In order to contextualize this mummy, it was necessary to look at the unique textiles worn. The head band with yellow, red and green colours in a geometrical pattern is similar to that worn by mummy 4857-47, and could belong to the Late Horizon (Brommer 1988). It is the feather poncho that provided most of the information regarding the possible origin of the remains. It is made up with two different coloured feathers –red and blue- that have been sawn to a simple wool weave (see photo 6).

Figure 5. Original photos of mummy 4857-65 (adapted from de Bock 1981, 69)

There are several studies specifically directed towards the description of feathered textiles in the Andes (e.g. Brommer 1988; Millones and Schaedel 1980; Michieli 1986; Hora 2000; Reid 2005).

The type of feathers used to construct the poncho of mummy 4857-65 seem to come from a parrot, and are more commonly seen in the areas of the Andes that have close contact with the amazon basin. It is interesting to note that a similar poncho to the one seen on the mummy has been found in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, and has been labelled as Chimu-Inca (Brommer 1988, 95). Under the poncho there is a seashell necklace that De Bock describes as made from *Turitella Cirgulata,* this species can be found all over the Pacific coast of South America, from Manta in Ecuador to Chiloé in Chile (www.macrofauna.cl/fi/Turritella_cingulata.html).

Associated to this mummy are also the gold breast plate and a gold three-piece diadem. They have been stored with the bundle, unlike the case of the gold and silver objects of mummy 4857-47. The breast plate is not diagnostic, however the diadem has a form that has been reported in other cases as imitating feathers- see photo 5- (Besom, 2010,410). This shape is reported by Guaman Poma as characteristic for the Inca's of the Antisuyu (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980,1,138 [1615]).

The combination of the gold artefacts and the feather poncho indicate that the mummy could belong to either Chimu or Inca cultures. Examination of the remains revealed they belong to a young female around 25 years of age. Though the teeth have some degree of abrasion there is no visible attrition, though one side shows a possible third molar the aperture of the mouth makes further identification difficult.

Figure 6. Mummy 4957-65. Details of textile view

The unwrapped infant (4857-64)

This mummy was sold without any wrappings. The mummification is oily as that of mummy 4857-65, but given that the remains are those of a baby rather than an adult, some fat wrinkles can be seen in the legs and arms. There are several places where textile imprints can be seen, including the forehead, arms and legs.

The remains are those of a female infant between 1 and 2 years of age, no molars have erupted but at least two incisors in the mandible are visible. The determination of sex could be done visually given the lack of wrappings.

The only distinctive traits of the mummy are the two braids, one at each side of her head, that are joined in the back by a green thread. There are few works dedicated to the hairstyles of pre-Columbian Andes (e.g. Arriaza et al. 1986), and the types of braids of mummy 4857-66 are not distinctive enough to provide a definite origin.

The mummified heads (4857-66 and 4857-67)

The last two mummies in the collection are two mummified heads. They have been separated from the remains post-mortem and have not been modified in any way. These heads are not trophy heads like those seen among the Nazca or Wari traditions.

Individual 4857-66 is mostly covered with dry tissue and has hair still in place. The hairstyle sported are two small braids on each side, wrapped with bright red string on the end. The sex could not be determined but given the gracile structure and mastoid process a probable female is suggested.

Individual 4857-67 is completely mummified and has a very intricate design around its head and hair. Two small braids have been braided in the front portion of hair, whilst the rest of the hair has been gathered in a longer braid that would have fallen past the shoulders. There are 4 bright colour cotton strings tied around the head: red, green, white and yellow (see photo 7). Though the hairstyle is interesting in itself no report of something similar was found in the literature. Sex and age could not be determined given the amount of tissue covering the diagnostic areas.

Figure 7. Detail of mummified head 4857-67 and hairstyle

Summary

The mummies that make up the Andean Mummies collection represent at least three cultural areas of the Andes: Arica, the south-east of Peru and Bolivia- the Inca Antisuyu-, and the north-west of Argentina – the Inca Collasuyu.

It has been established also that the collection is made up of three infants under the age of three, and 4 adults – two full mummies and two mummified heads. Of those there is one infant and one adult are female, two are probable females, and the rest could not be determined.

Plans/Issues for Repatriation

Over the last few years several attempts to contact archaeologists and researchers who could provide the RMV with information regarding the mummies have been conducted. According to the curator for Middle and South America, several emails have been sent to archaeological institutes in Chile, Argentina and Peru in hopes to get a definite contextualization of the collection and to invite people to come and do research with the collection. There was hope as well for ethical advice regarding the display or not of the mummies in the museum. Most of the emails however remained unanswered.

The RMV maintained contact during 2010 with the Argentinian embassy who redirected contact to the Ministry of Culture and from there with Claudia Cabouli, General Coordinator of the

Dirección Nacional de Patrimonio y Museos in Argentina. Contact was established initially by email and later by phone. Though the initial advice was that the remains should not be exhibited and that a probable repatriation claim would be made by them. From that point the RMV inquiry was to be transferred by the Argentinian authorities to the "Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas". Further contact however was not resumed from the Argentinian side, more emails were sent and phone calls attempted both by chief curator Laura van Broekhoven and assistant curator Martin Berger but no reply came (Interview Laura van Broekhoven).

During the process of creation of the exhibit "Tin-Tin in Peru" by the RMV van Broekhoven conducted research on exhibition practices in Peru, Bolivia and Chile (van Broekhoven 2003,32). As part of the research conducted for the exhibit some photos of the mummies were shown to archaeologists and at museums as well as the Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio. The research result were mainly used to inform the RMV's exhibitions practice (both for the Tin-Tin case and regarding the permanent exhibition) (Laura van Broekhoven, personal communication). Though interest was expressed regarding the textiles and mummies no further contact was attempted by either side.

Chapter 3. Interviewing the personnel of the RMV

On this chapter we will present an analysis of discourse (in anthropological terms) based on the interviews conducted with informants from the four main areas in charge of the Andean mummies and human remains in the RMV: collection management, curators, exhibit design and education, and public relations. As well as collecting the opinion of those employees of the museum (group guides, admin personnel and security guards) that have no direct impact on the museum policies or exhibit decisions but that are stakeholders of the RMV, some of them having daily direct contact with the exhibits.

The interviews whose opinions we will be analysing were, from the Management area: Chief curator Dr Laura van Broekhoven; Anne Marie Worlee, Head of Exhibitions and Education; Geke Vinke, Communications Manager; Rapti Golder-Miedema, Project Manager; Margrit Reuss, Conservation, Restoration and Loans; Martin Berger, Assistant curator for Middle and South America; Conn Barret, Collections Manager; Dick Dirkse, Collection Manager; Ester de Bruin, Collections Manager; and Harm Linsen, Collections Manager. From the Administrative area: Brechte, Museum Shop and Tickets; Wendy, Museum Shop and Tickets; and Evert, Security Guard[12]. We have used the interviewees initials as identifiers when transcribing the dialog. The author is identified in the text as MP.

The four main subjects to address, as portrayed by the relevant literature, are the opinions of the personnel regarding: human remains as means to illustrate educational subjects; the issue of context in exhibits and public expectations; the transformation of bodies into objects; and the issue of the dialog between the museum and source communities, taken also as the link from practice to repatriation and reburial.

Is there educational value in exhibiting human remains?

[12] The last names of the administrative personal are omitted at their request.

It has been argued that exhibiting human remains in museums allow for a double purpose: incentive curiosity and interest regarding archaeology, anthropology and history; and to touch on subjects such as death and mortality in an indirect way. For example Albertti argues that:

> "*Most museums, and museum professionals, recognize the value of human remains for learning about past peoples and, where treated appropriately and respectfully, the inclusion of human remains in research, educational and display programmes can be a positive benefit to a wide range of audiences*" (Albertti et al. 2009, 143).

This line of though also has to do with the shift in the role of the museum in itself. As addressed by Jenkins in her article "Who are we to decide"(Jenkins 2012), a self-reflexive article based on interviews to museum professionals in the UK regarding the debate about human remains in collections:

> *"The majority of the comments by interviewees about the treatment of human remains were situated in a broader discussion about changes to the purpose of the museum. Out of 37 interviewees, 33 commented that museums are changing the role that they play, moving away from a legislative role orientated to creating knowledge, towards a remit that is more socially responsible and with a therapeutic impact*." (Jenkins 2012, 461)

During the interviews with the museum personnel, these previously mentioned preconceptions proved not to be on the forefront of the consideration of the display of human remains in the RMV, at least not primarily. However, other educational reasons to display human remains were proposed.

Two different interviewees suggested that the history of collecting could be a reason why human remains are both kept and exhibited in a museum such as the RMO. For example one informant when asked regarding the issues of displaying and housing of human remains in museum collections commented:

> *GV: One thing I think is very important is that in the past, this museum has a very long past 174 years, it was common sense to collect those things, to collect all the information to do research [...]*

In those terms, the existence of human remains in old collections such as the one in the RMV should be taken as a remainder of previous collecting practices. Another informant when asked how, if in any way, she would accept the displaying of human remains in the RMV said:

> *AW: […] but maybe an exhibition about former time, how we collected, maybe it would be as an example of what we did in former times and how we should do now, like we gave back the skull of the Maori […]*

Here, the former and current practices of collecting are compared against each other, in terms of their views regarding human remains. The history of the collection is again reinforced, though this time it is challenged by current notions of source communities involvement and repatriation in the museum.

Similarly, for the curatorial areas, the display of human remains has been used and can be used to address the specific issue of human remains in museum collections. The ethical reasons to do so or not are then linked to the issues of looting and illegal trade of antiquities. Talking about the use of a mummy as part of the Tin-Tin to the Inca's exhibit, housed at the museums from September 24, 2003 to August 29, 2004 (Van Broekhoven 2003):

> *LvB: I said I could only agree with putting the mummy on display if we discuss the fact of putting mummies of display and we discuss it within the context of plundering, of looting.*

When asked why the use of only one mummy, from another museum, when other similar remains were available within the collection, the answer from the curator was:

> *LvB: We could tell the story with one mummy so why put up the rest, I preferred not to*

This emphasizes that even when human remains are considered as part of an exhibit where their display can be educational, the display is kept to a minimum, ensuring that there is balance between the need of the remains to addresses the issues discussed in the exhibit, and an ethical use of their display.

It is interesting to note here that, when discussing the reason why the public might be attracted and would have liked to see human remains in museum exhibits, only two informants linked it directly with perceptions of dead. One of them stated:

B: I think the problem of seeing mummies or skeletons is that they remind people of their own mortality

An informant from the education department addressed this topic by saying:

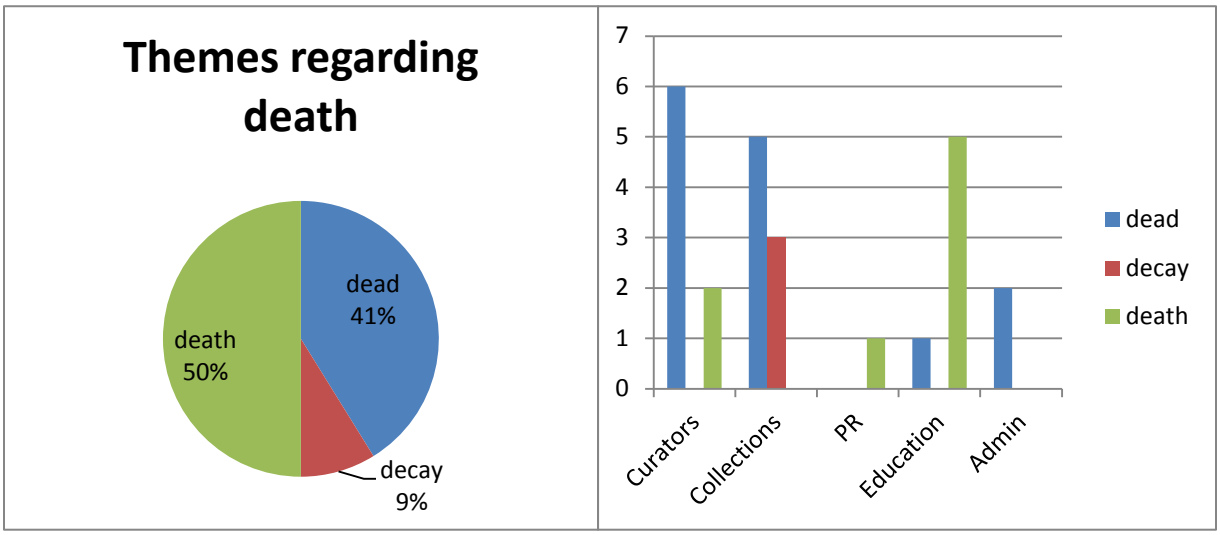
AW: I think we would like to show children about how people react to death, to burials and things like that in different cultures, because I think, in Holland, [in] burials and things like that children, that are more susceptible, are kept away. Children are kept away and, I think, that is so beautiful from other cultures, that life and death need to be in balance with each other and you have to deal with it or you won't be happy as a person, and well you also have to deal with death and yeah, so I think that we can learn a lot from other cultures to make it easier, also for our children to work it out, but I don't know if you need human remains for this

This response was part of her answer to the question on the type of content that should be available when discussing human remains in museums. Here, the views of death in western culture are directly opposed to a perceived notion of death in other cultures. It would be interesting to contrast this perceptions of different cultures views towards death with the source communities perceptions of death. This confrontation of two perceptions regarding death and the dead would lead to strengthening museum policies regarding the human remains in their collections, giving leeway for those remains that come from cultures were the display of the dead is not seen as desecration, for example the case of Thailand Buddhists mentioned in Chapter 1 and emphasized by Halcrow et al. (Halcrow et al. 2011).

It is worth noting here that the theme of death was used very little in the interviews conducted. Three words/concepts were used to refer to death during the interviews, that of "dead" as noun, the dealing with the moment of "death" and the relation of both with the idea of "decay" also present as "rotting" and "decomposition". In more than four hours of interview time these themes were mentioned only 34 times, in contrast, the themes for mummies were mentioned 132 times, human remains 68 times and those for source communities 74 times.

As can be seen in the graph below, of those 34 times mentioned, 50% refer to the moment of "death", 41% to dead as a noun, and only 9% to the idea of decay. This last theme in fact was only

used by informants from the collection management department, probably because of the relation between the process of decay with the state of preservation of the collections; the theme for “death” on the other hand is never used by the informants of the collections department, who mainly refer to the “dead”. It is also interesting to note that for the informant of the PR department only the theme for “death” was used, and not the other two. For the admin personnel on the other hand, only the noun “dead” was used during the interviews.



Graph 1. Use of themes regarding "death", "dead" and "decay" during interview time.

The use of some words instead of others by member of a specific area of the museum may indicate a professional preference to avoid using more colloquial or simple terms when addressing the subject of human remains. It could indicate a professional distinction within themes as well. It would be of further interest to conduct more extensive interviews or surveys with all the members of each group to know if this difference in language use is indeed related to professional preferences, as it is suggested by our current data, and if so, why do this preferences occur.

Bodies into objects

The notion that our minds somehow transform the bodies of the deceased into objects when they are placed on display is one of the topics that caused more reflection during the interview

process. There were three different questions that addressed this topic: do you think of mummies and human remains in the exhibits as people? do you feel any relation to the human remains on display? Do you feel differently/Is it different to see a mummy than a skull or an object made with human remains on display?.

As it has been stated during the introduction, one of the author's assumptions going into this research was that there would be no difference made by the interviewees between types of human remains (skeletonized, in objects or as mummies). It was assumed that all human remains would be regarded as human or maintained human-like qualities. This was not the case, however. There were several instances when the informants referred to human remains as objects. A distinction of human remains as a material was particularly evident in cases were skeletonized human remains are used to manufacture other objects.

The most notable answers that showed objectification of human remains came from informants in the collections department. One of the interviewees for example said:

> *HL: I don't have any special connection with this child or this person. There is no emotional response, for me no. I don't see like this is a human body, I have to think about it to realize it. Otherwise no.*

When asked to explain more about his point of view he pointed out that it is necessary for his profession to detach from the meaning of the object in order to be able to work with it and take care of it. In his words:

> *HL: But you know I am just working with it and it is just something I need to take care of and remind me that is my job and I have to do it good. So I am concentrating on what I have to do, and not concentrating on the person. I don't know there is like a moment when just "Click" now it is an object.*

Even when the first answer suggests it is a personal opinion regarding human remains on exhibits, the explanation for his reply alludes to a professional reason. I was further explained by another interviewee who, even though she does feel a strong connection with the remains when seeing them on display, realizes that this reactions change once there is a need to work with them directly. There seems to be a need to compartmentalize or separate the personal reaction to an

object or to human remains in order to be able to handle and work with and take appropriate care of them. Adding to the previous quoted comment, this second curator says, referring to that switching of perspectives (the "Click" mentioned by another informant above):

> *MR: well that is a bit what I have as well, cause some things that we have are so valuable. Like the Leiden plate, ahhh one million euros, if you let it drop, you know, big problem.*

Furthermore, the distinction regarding objects in the storage facilities from once they go on display seem to create a shift in perception. As one of the interviewees puts it, once the human remains are in display cases:

> *MR: [they become] objects in exhibition, it becomes an object, something on display, yes it is interesting.*

This point is further emphasized when addressing exhibits put on by the museum where remains had been used, in particular the Tin-Tin to the Inca's exhibit. The same interviewee while working with the mummies, and referring to the mummy she thought had been used then, said:

> *MR: is that I know that is has been on the exhibition, and I was there too, which makes me feel a bit more [uneasy].*
> *MP: so, when it was in the exhibit, you didn't get this feeling that you are getting now?*
> *MR: I wasn't handling it, I didn't put it into the showcase. And I saw it in the showcase already, behind glass.*

There seems to be a more direct connection between the interviewee and the mummy, when working with it, because it was seen on an exhibit previously. Here, the initial contact with the mummy is noted as less powerful because it was behind glass.

The same group of informants, collections management, offered opposing views. The most notable was given by the same informant who initially referred to human remains as objects, he later stated that:

> *HL: I do realize they are really people, you have to be respectful when handling them.*

Another informant expressed that he did see them as people, but that his reaction to them was different:

> *CB: I always start intoning Shakespeare when I see them. No, sing [to] them, [...].*

There was only one informant who stated there was no difference between her perception of any type of human remain:

> *B: Human remains, I do not see any difference between human remains and something that is made out of stone or wood or whatever, as long as the indigenous people where the object originally came from agree with [exhibiting] it then it is fine by me.*

It was interesting to note that, the rest of the interviews, apart from the ones presented above with the collections management informants, almost unanimously considered mummies to be "people" and their display had to be thought of under several ethical conditions. However, skulls, skeletonized parts of a body and more so, objects fashioned from human remains, were not really introduced into this "people" category. The conditions for their display are rarely seen as similar to those of mummies, and the reaction they elicit are similarly different.

This can be explained firstly because of the circumstances as well as preservation conditions in which the human remains are found. That view is expressed by one of the curators who stated that:

> *MB: [it] also [depends on] the environment, because when you are in a dig you [are more used to seeing bones] it is just like "oh, there is a bone", while here […] once they are disarticulated, the experience is very different for me.*

There were two informants that addressed this issue by arguing with their own initial responses. One example was during the interview with the exhibits and education department informant. To the question do you think there is a difference between the types of human remains? She answered:

> *AW: No, I don't think so, if it is a human remain it is a human remain, it is a vase or something of clothes it is still a piece of your ancestor, so it shouldn't be a difference.*

But during the follow up questions, she added:

> *[…] so there is a bit of difference between the mummies the bodies and the, you have a human bone that is a dress and the Tibetan monks dance with it, it is in a showcase and yeah it is from the bones of people, the soul is already gone, it is only the bones that they made an outfit of them, so I think, that is ok, cause they themselves used them.*

Another example was the answer of one of the curators who starts to answer the question regarding the issues he finds with exhibiting human remains by saying:

> *MB: I think that for me personally exhibiting human remains is a difficult thing, because I think it is basically something you don't do, you don't exhibit dead people […]*

And later adds:

> *MB: and I am also somewhat of an hypocrite in that I don't feel, I don't have the same feeling about this mosaic skull that I have been working on, that has been on exhibit and that, but I have been thinking for the last couple of weeks why is it that I feel differently about the mummies and the skull, and I am not sure why, to be honest, I think it has to do with the fact that the mummies are still for the large part in the same way that they were left on the mountain, they are still wrapped, the position is still the same and have objects associated. While the skull is not attached to a body, it has been taken out of this part […]*

The same reaction is seen by the informant form the Producers group:

> *RG: That is different, I mean for mummies is different of course. For me, I was just thinking about the skull of Indonesia, and I think for skull is different than for example bones. I know we have the bone skirt in the collection and it is on display. But it is a bit hypocrite to say it should not be while there is a difference between bones an skulls.*
>
> *MP: to you, what is that difference? How is the skirt different than a mummy?*
>
> *RG: I think for me it is perhaps just simple that the skull is a bit more like a person. It is strange but I think it is the most simple. I was thinking that maybe the skirt or the tantric way of dealing with remains, in a way with the Mixtec skull and Indonesia it is the same,*

for the culture it is very important, but for the people who buy it is different. But for example with the skirt because it is turned into a material like textile.

The difference between a complete human remain and its parts is then introduced as another issue to take into account when considering the exhibition of human remains. However, the biggest difference seems to be how much the remains exhibited still resemble the deceased. This is mentioned in the previous quote in terms of the completeness of the mummies, and was also found in the references to the Maori head that was repatriated by the museum on a previous year:

GV: I think with the head is different, maybe it is strange to see a head, on its own. And maybe with the mummy is different , because you don't see so much of a person, maybe […] it is very strange, that one object can be ok, an another one, for instance the head of the Maori, it would be very strange to see it. I understand that people want to show it, but it is a, kind of you go into a circus or something, to see another person, dead.

This last comment leads us to the next issue addressed in the interviews, if most of the personnel agrees on the need to evaluate why we put human remains on exhibits, but they also understand the appeal of human remains on exhibit, then what are the conditions, if any, that need to be met in case of display?

There are few cases were this distinction has been addressed in the literature. One of them is found in the Museum Ethnographer's Group Guidelines on Management of Human Remains, were article 1.1 clearly states:

"1.1 Human remains are defined as including both prehistoric and historic biological specimens as well as artefacts (i.e. items made from human remains which have been altered by deliberate intent) in ethnographic collections in British museums."(Museum Ethnographers Group 1994, 1).

Likewise, the Policy on Human Remains held by the University of Oxford's Museums (which include the Ashmolean Museum, the Museum of the History of Science, the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum) states on article 1.7 that:

> *"1.7 At the same time, the University recognises that certain human remains and artefacts made from or incorporating human remains have come in recent years to be regarded as of especial cultural sensitivity. […] The research and display value of human remains has to be balanced against the claims of genealogical descendants and cultural custodians."*(Oxford university 2006, 373)

An even more in detail, the German Museum Association (Deutscher Museums Bund) specifies in the recommendations for the Care of Human Remains in Museum Collections:

> *"2.2 Human Remains: For the purposes of these recommendations, 'human remains' means all physical remains belonging to the biological species Homo sapiens. All non-processed, processed or preserved forms of human bodies and parts thereof. This covers particular bones, mummies, bog bodies, soft tissues, organs, tissue sections, embryos, foetuses, skin, hair, fingernails and toenails (the last four even if they originate from living people) and cremated remains; all (ritual) objects into which human remains as defined above have been knowingly incorporated.*
>
> *They do not include: mouldings of human bodies or body parts, death masks, audio recordings of human voices, anthropological photographs; (ritual) objects previously associated with human remains, such as for example burial objects."*(German Museum Association 2013, 9)

No such distinction has been found for the Netherlands Museum Association, the American Alliance for Museums or individual Latin American museums.

Attracting visitors or emphasizing contexts?

Navigating between the need of a museum to attract visitors and the type of exhibitions that the museum is willing to put on display can be sometimes difficult, especially when dealing with sensitive issues such as human remains. Many studies have shown that visitors are interested and go to museums to see human remains on display (Kilmister,2003, 57; Albertti et al. 2009, 133), this is particularly true for Egyptian mummies, bog mummies and in recent years for exhibits such as Body World (Curtis 2003, 22). Even in museums that don't have a high number of visitors, the

display of human remains is counted as a point of attraction, this has been shown for Europe as well as for Latin America(Cordova González and Bernal Peralta 2001,3).

The personnel of the RMV is aware of the effect human remains may have on visitorship. To the question "Do you think people want to see human remains in museums?" All interviewees answered positively, an example is the answer given by one of the informants from the curators group:

> *LvB: I think visitor number show as that they do like them, that they are fascinated by mummies, by Egyptian mummies for sure, I don't know about other mummies, but I guess yeah, most people, many people like seeing mummies.*

Possible reasoning by the interviewees for this fascination or attraction to human remains on display were varied. At least two informants likened the viewing of human remains in museums to a circus or to a "freak show", like those existing in the early 20th century. For example, one informant said that people liked seen human remains in museums:

> GV: *Because there is a mysterious, spooky, spectacular thing about it that people like, how the past peoples like to go to annual markets where there are the woman with the beards and all that. I think that people are interested to see, like a kind of peep show*

It was understood from all interviews that the main point of comparison to the human remains in the RMV were the Egyptian mummies housed at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (RMO). This was made particularly clear when discussing the changing of the permanent exhibit has had over the last 20 years. When referring to the shift to "iconic" pieces that was the new theme for the museum displays in 2011, one of the interviewees mentions a conversation with members of various departments, when it was discussed that RMO has such high visitor numbers:

> *LvB: So then they asked all of us: so what are the icons of our collections? For example don't you have mummies? Why does everybody go to the RMO? Because of the Egyptian mummies. Don't we have mummies? Well, we do, but we don't want to put them on display. Because, 1) we don't know enough about them, and 2) we are not really sure whether ethically we should […]. This was not satisfactory for our commerce department. They asked us to do more research.*

In that respect, it is clear that for the research department and exhibition planning in the RMV it is necessary not only to create exhibits that will attract visitors, but to do so with content that would adhere to the museum policies. This point is further emphasized by another informant when she says that, through human remains:

> *AW: well I think we can attract a lot of people, and that it is important for the museum, […], I mean it is interesting but why should you do it, […] only to attract a lot of visitors? but there are many ways to attract many visitors.*

When the question; Do you think human remains should be exhibited in museums?, two interviewees replied that, if you had them in the collection they should be displayed, as long as the displaying context was done respectfully and not to create impact. One of the informants, from the collections department said:

> *HL: I think so, but I think for me the danger is always to when does it get done for the effects.*

The other informant that expressed this view is from the admin area, on her interview she emphasized the need of context:

> *B:If you have it you should display it, in a respectful manner, as long as the indigenous people agree with it […] oh yes! It is not like: here there is a mummy look at it, you need to explain to the audience what is it all about, and hopefully that would take away some of the fears to see the mummy.*

Though what this explanations regarding the mummy should be was not detailed, this comment does signal another problem that was addressed during the interviews, that is, if you already have human remains in your collections, such as the Andean mummies, but they are not been exhibited, then what is their place within the museum? Similar follow-up questions were asked by interviewees themselves. A clear example is the following paragraph, taken from the interview of one of the informants in the curators group:

> *MB: […]for me the best line is what purpose would this dead people serve here, if they are not on exhibit?, and if they are on exhibit then what purpose would they serve? is it really*

us wanting to exhibit mummies because you know it brings a lot of people, or is it an education effort as well .

It has been stated previously in this chapter that the idea of human remains in exhibits, for the personnel of the RMV, is necessarily linked to an exhibition context where they will serve the purpose to illustrate a clear point of view, be it regarding the looting of antiquities or the differences in collecting over the history of museums. When navigating this issue of what to say about human remains in museums and should we display them, these arguments come back to light. As one informant said:

AW: [Yes] we can show human remains, but not because they are human remains, maybe I have a story about burials, and maybe I would like to put some human remains there, maybe they could also be some faked, because it is more about the story and the context that I want to tell than to show them the authentic skull, or authentic bodies, that would be scary also for people.

This comment also introduces the subject of the use of casts, replicas or "fake" human remains in exhibits. This will be further addressed in the discussion portion of this theses, but it is useful to state here that, informants from the curators group and exhibitions department agree that there is no ethical problem with showing this replicas, but that the issue of context remains a valid argument even for the case of replicas. As can be seen in the paragraph below:

MP: Ok, and in the issue of replicas, is showing the replicas of human remains the same as showing human remains? To you?

LvB: No, I think that you can easily show replicas, I have no problem with that. But you must consider representational issues when it covers practices that our visitors do not know or cannot contextualize or might be framed within a context of exclusion or alienation.

For the interviewed personnel of the RMV the most important opinion regarding context and the validity of displaying human remains in any exhibit has to do with the perception/reaction to the subject from the source communities to which the remains originally belong to, and the visitors that are presented with this display.

Source Communities

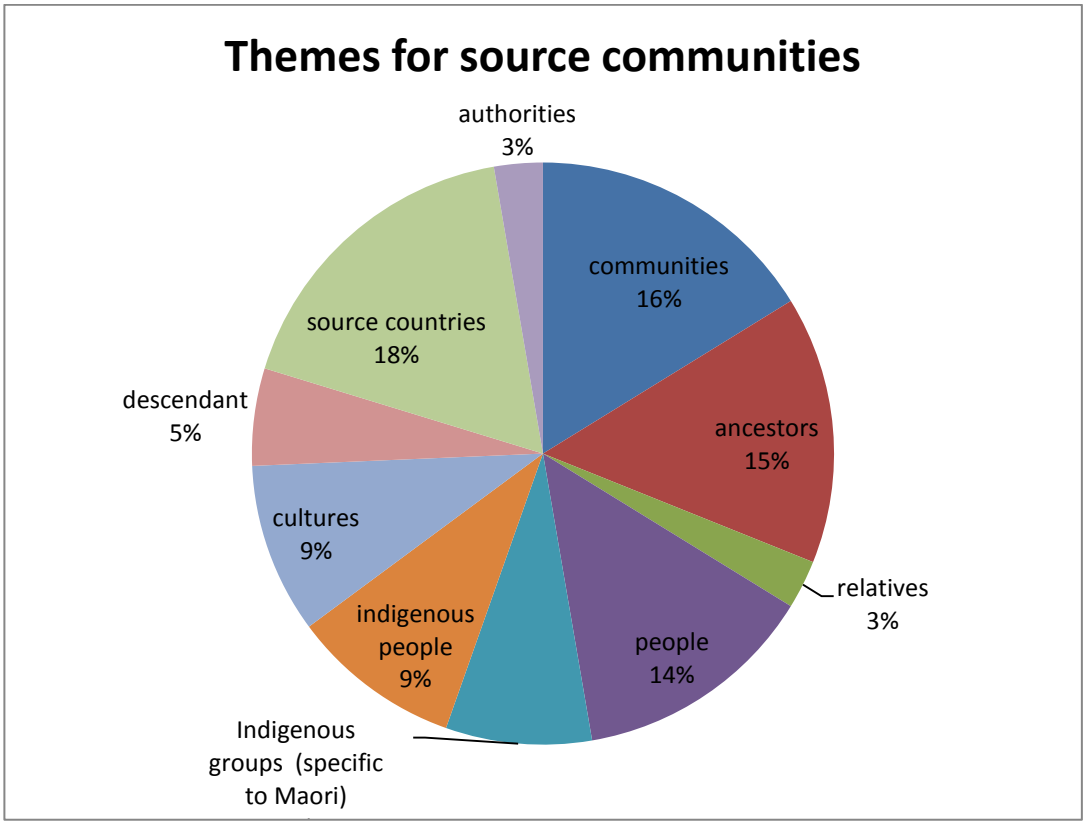
One of the most important themes found throughout the interviews was the reference by the personnel to the involvement of source communities in the decision of exhibiting human remains. When asked about the information that has been available regarding human remains in previous exhibits and the contexts in which human remains can or cannot be exhibited currently in the RMV- by means of explicit or implicit policies- one informant clearly stated:

> *AW: […] no one in this museum said " "we don't want this human remains because we don't show human remains", and I don't think we have this agreement in the museum that we don't show them, but the we should careful to inform ourselves and to know what the people from the countries, the original countries think about it.*

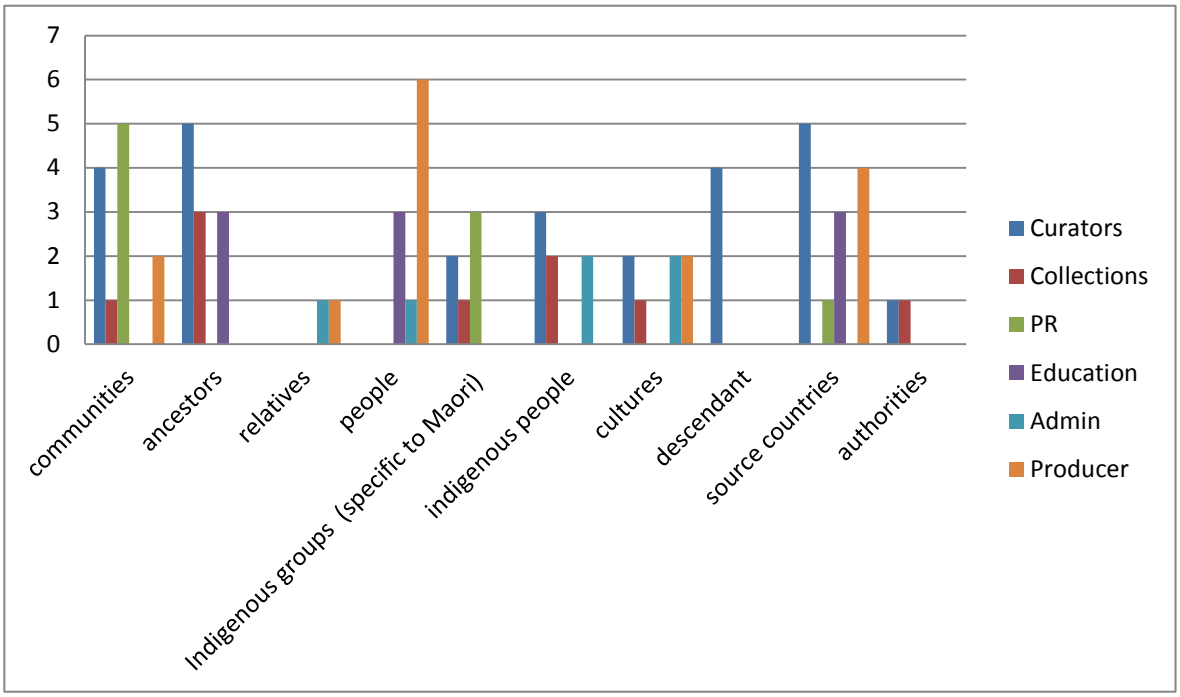
In numbers, the themes used to signify source communities were used 74 times during the interview time. The paragraphs that include those themes are also among the longest in the dialogs and seem to be the focus point of the arguments regarding the context of display and the disagreement for displaying human remains in the RMV.

The graph above shows the most popular themes used to reference source communities during the interviews. The three most common were "ancestors" with 15%, "communities" with 16% and "source countries" with 18%. There was similarly a high percentage of interviewees that directly mentioned "indigenous communities" with a 12%, and a further 10% referred specifically to the Maori as a source community and as an example of favourable repatriation practice regarding human remains in museum collections.

The use of this words can be further explored by group of interviewees. As can be seen in the graph below, some choice terms are used by curators department more than by the collections department or the admin groups. Such is the case for the terms "descendants", "ancestors" and "source countries". The term "communities" is more used by the PR department than any other groups; only the admin personnel use the term "relatives", whilst the Education department used the terms "people", "ancestors" and "source countries" almost interchangeably.



Graph 2. Themes and percentages used to refer to source communities during the interviews.



Graph 3. Themes of source communities, by area or group of interviewees.

The point of view of the museum regarding this consultation with source communities is summed up clearly in the following excerpt from the interview with the chief curator of the museum:

> *LvB: We usually have more general questions on this were people ask "should human remains at all be displayed" and we had discussion whether objects that are made with human remains, like flutes or the Mixtec skull, for example, should they be put on display? And to them usually my guideline there would be that I have said we don't need to be more roman than the Pope, we don't need to think for people, but in the case that there are descendant communities, let`s go to the descendants communities, and if they have already formed an idea then great, like the Maori or the Aboriginal communities they are pretty easy they have been very very clear, the Shuar have been clear on this too, and there is other people that have been very clear on it. In other cases it is much more difficult.*

It is important to notice here that, at least for the case of the Andean mummy collection, there is no specific law or policy regarding the exhibition of human remains, and though there is some initial outreach to stop the active display of remains from indigenous origins in Argentina and Uruguay, the actual practice of this initiative is almost null. This is further complicated by the issues of representativeness of political authorities and cultural institutions in regards to their indigenous populations, who may or may not be aware of the existence of human remains on display, or do not have a direct cultural link with the remains displayed[13]. This problem is especially noticed by the interviewees from the curators group, one curator notes for example:

> *MB: I would say there is a perceived cultural continuity, I find it hard to judge for Peru, but I would say for Mexico there definitely is.*

[13] A good example was the Ethical Committee case on 2010 regarding a Nazca trophy head that the RMV did not want to give out on loan, to be put on display, to the Capac-Hucha exhibit held at the Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam. Given the standing agreement between the ethnographic museums in the Netherlands to always agree to loan objects to each other, the Wereldmuseum went to the Ethical Committee and asked them to decide if the RMV had the authority to deny the request. In the end the ethical committee, having inquired regarding the law on the issue of displaying human remains from Peru as the source country of the trophy head, and being aware of the absence of such laws (though similar laws exist in Chile and in Argentina) ruled that there was no reason why the remains would not be put on display. By this point however, the Wereldmuseum had already found another trophy head that they could use on the exhibit and therefor no further requests were made to the RMV.

A similar perspective is stated in the following paragraph:

> *LvB: It is easier when the countries have an active policy on repatriation for example, like with Australia or New Zealand or the US. Because people would come […], people who have been hopefully put on to a certain position, where they have the authority to speak on those things [repatriation]. Because if I have to go look for the authority it will be a national authority. And many of the indigenous peoples do not feel represented by the national authority.*

And here, where the difficulties on ascertaining cultural ownership are acknowledged:

> *RG: I think that depends. Depends on the history, I think my preference would be that they would be returned to the people where they come from, but I can understand that sometimes it is too difficult to verify that someone owns the remains and in that case I think that if it is not possible to verify I think it is better to have them in museum collections than at the art market.*

Though on the last comment the topic of mummies and human remains as a whole is addressed, the topic of individual objects made from human remains is more complicated. The RMV however applies the same principal of consultation with the source communities. As described by the informant from the education department in the following dialog:

> *AW: For me the most important factor are the people, if the say we don't think of that as human remains anymore then we can show it […]*
> *MP: and this "people think" is who? The people in the museum or visitors or?*
> *AW: it is the people from the country that the objects are from, if they say this skull it is now actually a vase, then there is no problem that you show it to your public or that is in your collection, place in our storage, so yeah, I think that should be the most important thing.*

The input of the source communities has been considered especially important for the issue of repatriation addressed by the RMV, that of the Maori head. Not only because of the sensible nature of the remains repatriated, but because it was a topic discussed within the Netherlands,

and both the press and the public wanted to be informed about it. As the informant from the PR department describes:

> *GV: And it was a difficult decision cause all kinds of newspapers and national broadcasts are very eager to jump on the subject, and they all wanted an image, what are you going to give back?, what are you talking about?, and in this case we decided with the Maori that we would not give any photos of the head itself.*

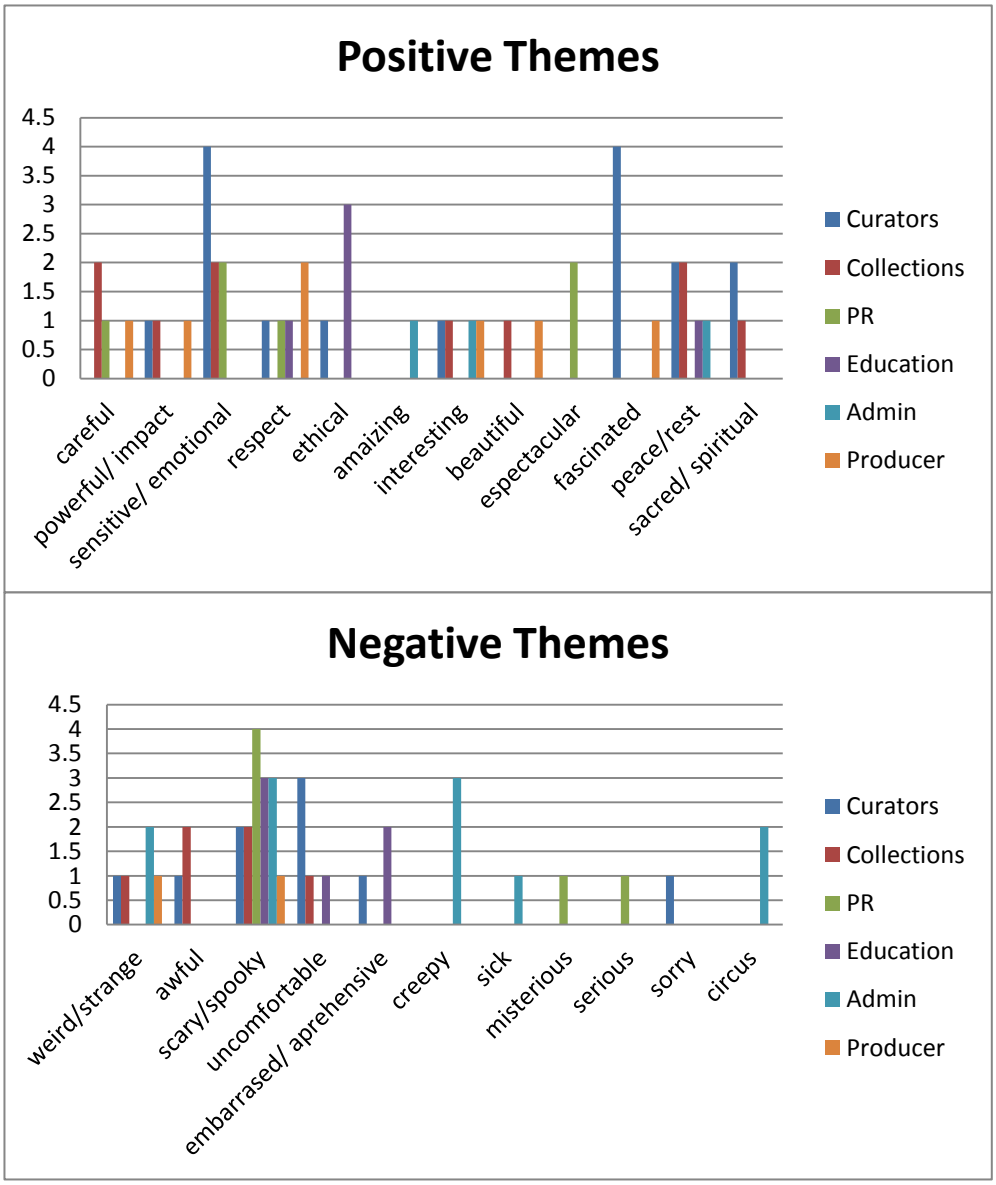
Instead of photos of the remains the RMV gave the press photos of paintings form the 19th century inspired in similar remains as well as photos of statues where similar tattoos were visible. In that case, the relationship between the museum and the source community impacted on a direct manner on the public, including people that could not have been part of the "museum visitors" category.

Themes

Besides the discussion topics addressed in previous pages, it was noticeable that the interviewees varied between themes of positive and negative connotations when referring to their personal views of the human remains. Positive themes include a sense of fascination, deep emotional responses and spiritual relation with human remains; negative themes include the idea of fear, embarrassment and sadness when talking about human remains – it was noted that more negative themes were used by the curators and collections informants that had a direct contact with the mummies than the informants from any other groups

It is interesting to note here too that only two people referred to human remains as "beautiful", and is the only direct positive adjective used to describe them- the rest of the themes refer to the feeling they create on the informant or their effect on visitors. The negative themes however include more direct adjectives such as "scary", "sick" and "creepy".

Both negative and positive adjectives to refer to human remains were used a total of 87 times during the interview time, of those the positive themes account for 54% whilst the negative themes account for 46%. Examples of the themes used, according to the group, can be seen in the graphs below (Graph 5).



Graph 5. Themes used by interviewees to refer to human remains.

Phrases that indicated a direct feeling regarding the human remains were taken as adjectives as well. Such is the case for example of the following quotes:

> *ED: I never look at them. Because they are a bit scary*

And,

> *W: […] the problem is to work with them that I get (makes mock screams, they both laugh). It is interesting because it is a little bit creepy.*

Examples of sentences or expressions that exemplify the feeling it evokes in the observer are:

> *MR: why, this is someone, it is supposed to be dead somewhere far away, why is it here in this pitiful position?*

Or,

> *LvB: I personally, every time I left the museum, during the time that this mummy was on display, I felt like: and now it sits here alone, decontextualized, away from its people. That is awful, you now?*
> *MP: after all this time…*
> *LvB: yeah, what is it doing here? and every time [I felt the same].*

The reasons for this use of language, as well as the use of the themes and discussion presented in this chapter will be addressed in the following pages.

Chapter 4. Discussion

The current chapter will deal with the results gathered from the research at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde and discuss them in light of the objectives traced at the beginning of this thesis. As an initial point to this discussion we detail the RMV policies regarding the research and exhibition of human remains, and the instances in which this policies have been taken into effect in the last 20 years.

The first proposed objective was to: Analyse the museum's practice regarding their collections of human remains, in light of their Code of Ethics and the explicit policies they may have on the subject. There are two explicit policies that the RMV follows in regards to human remains. First is the statement on ethical practice for museum exhibitions, made by the ethical commission of the Dutch Museum Association, to which the RMV ascribes, as has been mentioned in chapter 3. This statement echoes the statement of ICOM, and addresses the issue of human remains in museums clearly through two clauses, primarily in articles 3.7 and 4.3. The second, and the primary point of reference for Ethnology museums in the Netherlands are the policies drafted by the SVCN (see chapter 2).

On article 3.7 the terms for research and handling of the remains are stated, and on article 4.3 the conditions for displaying of such remains are detailed. Here the compliance with professional standards and the provision to take into account the interests and beliefs of the community, ethnic or religious groups to whom the objects belonged, are crucial. Similarly the importance of tact and respect for the general feelings of human dignity are emphasized.

Besides the explicit policy detailed previously, the RMV personnel implicitly follow the general guidelines of ICOM in terms of research, exhibit and repatriation. There have been two instances when this explicit and implicit guidelines regarding human remains have been taken into account by the RMV.

Chronologically, the first instance was the Tin-Tin to the Inca's exhibit (Met Kuifje naar de Inca's), held from September 24, 2003 to August 29, 2004. The exhibit presented a view of Andean culture through the use of two of Tin-Tin's comic book stories, *The 7 Crystal Balls* and *Prisoners of*

the Sun; and used the iconic pieces that Hergé himself got inspired by from the Museum of Ethnography in Brussels. Part of the pre-Columbian collections from Peru of the RMV were used, including pieces from the Moche, Huari, Tiwanaku ,Chimu and Inca collections. One of the most important pieces of the exhibit was the Andean mummy that inspired Hergé's drawing of "Rascar Capac"- the resurrected Inca mummy around whom the plot of The 7 Crystal Balls comic book centres around. The mummy was loaned out from the previously mentioned Belgian museum.

As it has been alluded to in previous chapters, the exhibit used one mummy, and the content that surrounded the remains addressed the issue of looting- emphasizing the looting of human remains- and illegal trafficking of antiquities. It was interesting to notice that even when the mummy display case was clearly marked in the exhibits plant map and mentioned in the published inventory, there is actually no photographic material of the mummy itself in said inventory or in the pamphlets and posters used to promote the exhibit (van Broekhoven 2003).

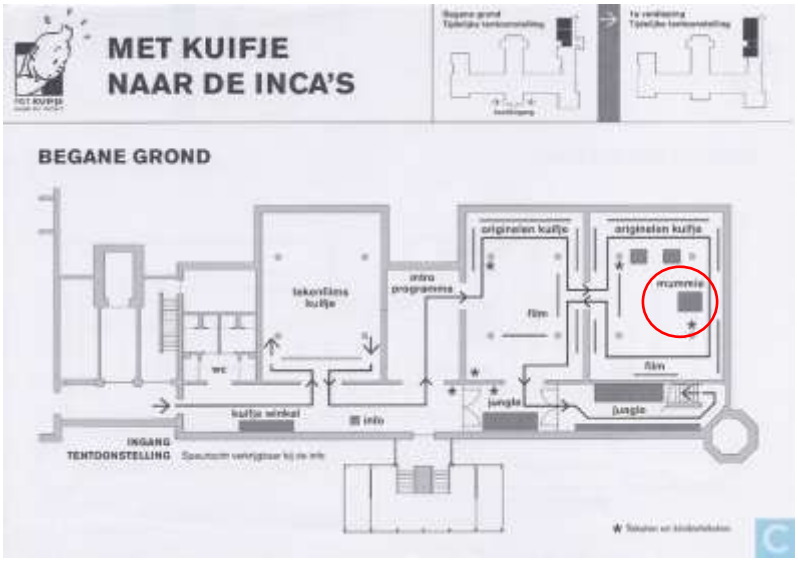


Figure 8. Plant map for the Tin-Tin to the Ina's exhibit at the RMV. Mummy display case highlighted in red.

Given that there are no photos of the display case or of the room during the exhibition there is little we can say regarding the way the remains were exhibited, though in conversation with the

exhibit curator Dr Laura van Broekhoven, it is gathered that the display was respectful and avoided becoming a “scary” or “intimidating” point within the exhibit.

The second instance when this explicit codes regarding human remains were put into practice was the repatriation of a Maori mummified head or Mokomokai. The repatriation request was made by the Te Papa museum in New Zealand, and received by the RMV in September 2002. Given that this was the first request for repatriation received by the RMV for human remains, the museum decided at the beginning of 2003 to asks for advice from the Dutch Ministry of Culture and the recently created SVCN, a collaborative foundation of all Ethnographic museums of the Netherlands, for advice.

It is known that *“The preparation of a recommendation on behalf of the Minister of Culture started with an internal survey of opinions held by the curatorial staff working at the National Museum of Ethnology”* (Lubina 2009, 394). After several meeting, permission was asked of the Ministry of Culture to repatriate and object that was part of the “Royal Cabinet of Rarities” and therefore belonged to the Nation.

After these, discussions, a list of concerns and requirements that the Te Papa had to comply with before repatriation was created, the most important of those been the certainty that the head would be stored in the museum indefinitely, not to be destroyed or exhibited in a disrespectful manner, and that it would be available for research (Lubina 2009,394). According to Lubina, the terms were accepted by both parties in 2003 (Lubina 2009, 398).

As a result of the consultations with the Ethical Commission it was also recommended that the RMV asked the Te Papa to prove their representativeness of the Maori people in an effort to legally prove the descendants part in the repatriation claim. In 2004 letters are exchanged between the RMV and the Te Papa and with the embassy of New Zealand in particular, for this purpose. The repatriation was done in 9 November 2005 when “the head was returned to representatives of the Te Papa during a small ceremony attended by curators, scientists, academics and journalists.” (Lubina 2009,400)

The two examples presented above clearly show that the RMV and its personnel follow closely their explicit and implicit policies on the display of mummified human remains. The case of the

Maori Mokomokai is a good example of repatriation practice and of consultation with source communities, in fact the entire process lead up to further joint work between the Maori and the RMV that culminated in the construction and presentation of the only Maori-waka (sacred wooden canoe) in Europe that has been given on a 99 year long term loan to the museum (Schouten 2010).

The case of the Tin-Tin to the Inca's exhibit highlights the respectful and specific use of a mummy on an exhibit display, where the content surrounding the remains was directed to addressing important issues for archaeology and museum practice, in other words the remains were contextualized by the exhibit and not the other way around.

It also emphasized the museums implicit decision to not display their own Andean mummies, both because the information available from the remains would be insufficient, and because the point that the exhibit wanted to get across was well represented by the use of the Belgian mummy and would not have benefited in any way from the display of the other remains.

Besides these two examples the implicit attitude of the RMV towards human remains is made visible by the scarcity of objects made from human remains and the adorned human skull that are on display in the RMV exhibits. The details of the cases have been presented in chapter three, and have been alluded to during the interviews as well.

It is interesting to notice that there is a separation between the human remains that the RMV has on display and what its personnel consider acceptable to be on displays, and those remains that are not. Mainly the human remains in the first category have no skin or hair, they are skeletonized and "clean"; they have been repurposed into objects as drinking vessels, clothing or vases; and they have been decorated in some way.

On the contrary, the human remains that are considered as unacceptable in exhibits -unless they comply with very specific conditions such as permission from source countries, aid in the presentation of context and content themes- are mainly mummified remains. That means that they have skin and hair, and have not been modified into objects but are still very human looking.

It is the authors opinion that this distinction between human remains is a consequence of two ways of perceiving human remains, one linked to death and to funerary contexts, and the other is

the reinterpretation on human bone as a material. In the later it is the object created from said material that is observed in terms of ethical issues for its display. A drinking vase made out of half a human skull that has been extensively adorned with silver or jewels stops being human remains and becomes just a drinking vase. On the contrary, remains such as the Pre-Columbian mummy collection or African trophy heads have been preserved almost without transformations, they retain their human qualities and have not become other things, they remain human.

The lack of a definition of what constitutes "human remains" by the SVCN and the RMV in particular allows for case by case interpretation of what should and should not be displayed, and what objects are or not subject to the Ethical Recommendations regarding human remains.

As denoted in the interview section, there is some tendency to objectivize human remains by the staff of the RMV, this is especially noticeable with remains that are skeletonized and have been repurposed. There is not enough information to establish with certainty why this happens or what makes the display of some human remains more easy to accept than others, however, from the interviews we can gather that the less the remains have been transformed and the more they conserve the appearance of a live human being, the less acceptable it is to display them. It would be interesting to conduct a larger scale study to try and discovered the moment when human bone stops been part of a person an becomes a material, for example.

It is important to note that there is one other area where the RMV does not completely follow the guidelines for human remains as suggested by the SVCN, mainly in regards to a database or inventory of the human remains that the RMV has in its collections. As Lubina notices when mentioning the guidelines of the SVCN regarding human remains:

> ***"According to paragraph 2 museums have to provide for*** *registration and documentation of existing collections of human remains****. […] Hence, the code does not foresee in a pro-active duty to provide source communities with information about human remains but*** *requires the members of the Foundation Ethnological Collections (SVCN) to keep (or bring)*

heir inventories and documentation up-to-date ***and to respond diligently to requests for information." (Lubina 2009,395)[14].***

During our research we tried finding a unified list of human remains in the museum collections, though there is the intention to create one, it has yet to be produced (Martin Berger, personal communication). Most curators are aware of the human remains in their collections if those are skeletonized, mummies, or trophy heads for example, however there is no such certainty regarding the objects made with human remains. Though this is a subject that was addressed briefly in chapter 3, it was purposely not included in the interview process, mainly because it is an issue that has to do specifically with inventory and the management of the collections inventory, and is therefore not an area that most of the interviewees have no knowledge about. The subject is interesting however because it reflects the RMV's case by case approach to the issue of human remains on its exhibits, but the lack of relevance it has at the level of collections inventory.

The second objective proposed by this thesis was to discover if conflicting points of view exist between the museum personnel, regarding the handling of the human remain collections. This objective built on the interviews presented earlier and focused on the most important differences found between the interviewees opinions. It is worth noting that not many opposing views were found and when they did appear further questioning revealed that the perceived differences were in reality much smaller than initially thought to be.

There were two main differences of opinion between the interviewees regarding human remains. One is regarding the circumstances in which the display of human remains would be acceptable in the RMV (including the issue of what human remains can or cannot be exhibited); and in relation with the types of contexts in which these displays would be situated. In simpler terms: when and how should human remains be displayed in a museum such as the RMV.

The question about when is linked by the interviewees directly to specific exhibits that can directly benefit from including human remains to emphasize contexts (as in the case with the Tin-Tin to the Inca's exhibit). Specially for the informants from the exhibits department as well as the

[14] The emphasis on the phrases is mine, not part of the original.

curators interviewed, real human remains can be used in exhibit only if the option of models, casts or recreations of them are not useful.

The most important condition for the "when to exhibit" was universally regarded to be the source communities approval of the use of the remains. However, it is recognized by the interviewed curators that given the not always clear position of source communities and source countries on the issue of human remains exhibit, it is best to err in the side of caution. The rest of the interviewees seem to leave the actual contact and agreement process to the research department- the curators-, one of them even stating that:

AW: If the research department doesn't make a complaint then it is ok.

All interviewees agree there has to be a particular reason to exhibit human remains, however, the issue of how strong that reason need to be varies between informants. There is a dividing line between informants: those who think human remains that are already in the collection should be exhibited, mainly because there is no point in having them if they will not be used in some way – the provision for research is also mentioned in one case-, and those informants who believe that human remains are better off reburied, repatriated and not exhibited.

Regardless of the informant position in the issue above, there was an overall acknowledgement that human remains should be displayed only when information about the cultural context of the remains and particularly the life and death of the individuals is available. Even when the amount of details needed regarding the remains varied between informants – the management area informants requiring a more in depth knowledge of the remains before showcasing them than the admin informants-, they all agreed that human remains are not to be exhibited without it.

What became apparent during the interview process then, is that human remains in the RMV are considered for display or research not as a uniform issue, but as individual cases. This decisions of highlighting human remains in the collections in different ways and present them in their different contexts reflects on what the personnel think should be the way to handle the remains, namely a case by case scenario. This is further emphasized by the different treatment different types of human remains have received in the last decade at the RMV. The following phrase

concisely summarizes what is seems to be the overall opinion of the personnel in the subject of when to display or not human remains:

> *GV: Maybe, it is not that I can say: you can do it or you cannot do it, but it depends on how you do it. I think it depends on the subject, every time can be different*

In that contexts, it is worth questioning what the value of formal policy, beyond the one already agreed upon by the RMV would be. There will never be specific provisions for all the possible cases that can come up regarding human remains in the RMV collections or in its exhibits.

Nonetheless, in the author's opinion, there is a definite need for more cohesive and agreed upon guidelines regarding what human remains are acceptable in displays and why. Particularly because the current explicit agreements are not specific enough in terms of what human remains are being considered, the divide between mummies and other human remains that we mentioned above is an issue that should be addresses and should be added to the display design guidelines. This step implies that the discussion regarding when something is human vs. object are brought to the table and directly tackled by the museum personnel in charge.

The most interesting part of the research was the overwhelming importance in the minds of the personnel of the RMV of the place and role of source communities for the issue of human remains. It was interesting that even when the level of knowledge on the topic varies among interviewees, the level of relevance in every interview was comparable. It is the opinion of these source communities and countries that counts, not the visitors expectations. The issue of repatriation is viewed favourably overall too, it is likely that the experience with the Maori left a deep impression in most of the personnel that were part of the RMV when it took place, and it has therefore echoed in the opinions on the other human remains in the collections.

Lastly, the differences on the use of terms and themes referring to death is a topic that should be further explored. We suggest this language uses hint to an unconscious detachment from the human remains and perhaps another type of objectification of them.

Lastly, it was the goal of this research to situate the case study at the Museum Volkenkunde within the broader Netherlands Museum Association discussions regarding human remains. We first start with addressing the role of the Netherlands in regards with other European countries.

As it has been shown on chapter 2, except for the United Kingdom, most of the countries in Europe have a similar policy in terms of human remains as does the Netherlands, where the most important guideline are the conventions by ICOM and WAC, and from those guidelines the creation of particular Museum Association Codes of Ethics have taken place.

Indeed, in this particular case study, the RMV complies with all the points mentioned in the Code of Ethics of the Netherlands Museum Association, and fails to comply only with one of the suggestions of the codes of practice of the SVCN, that of the specific detailed inventory.

It has been repeatedly noticed in this discussion that the issue of context is the determining factor for the use or not of human remains in an exhibit. The interview process revealed that there are very few contexts accepted as valid for the display of human remains. This leads to questioning if there is no valid argument within an exhibit to introduce human remains, then should the human remains in themselves be the point of the exhibition?

There are 4 museums in the Netherlands were the issue of human remains has been touched upon, in all of them in a somewhat different way, those are the Tropenmuseum, the RMV, the RMO and the Drents Museum. The current study case at the RMV reveals a case by case practice in dealing with the topic. The case of the Tropenmuseum is similar in that human remains are not displayed but do exist in the collections, however, there has been an extensive process of inventory and research on those remains. The book "Physical Anthropology Reconsidered: Human Remains at the Tropenmuseum" is in fact

> *"[…] Based on an inventory of the museum's physical anthropological collection, collected between 1915 and 1964, and also refers to objects made from, or with, human remains, as well as to anthropological photographs, field notes and other archival sources. The idea behind this Bulletin is to contribute to the debate on the significance of physical anthropological collections kept in museums around the world, using the Tropenmuseum collection as a case in point"*(Van Duuren and Kate 2007, 11)

At the RMO there are many Egyptian mummies, most of them have been thoroughly researched- including extensive medical digital images- (Raven and Maat 2005), but there has not been an

open discussion in terms of the source communities issues, or the idea of repatriation as there has been in both the RMV and the Tropenmuseum.

The case of the Drents Museum is quite different. During the months this research was conducted and as this thesis is being written, the exhibit "Mummies of the World" is open at the Drents Museum in Assen[15]. This exhibit has prompted some discussion during the interview process regarding the use of death and the dead as exhibition themes in themselves. It will be interesting to know what the reaction of the other museums is to the exhibit presented in Assen, as well as that of the Dutch National Museum Association, nevertheless it does appear to be a clear different approach to the topic of displaying human remains in the Netherlands, especially contrasted with the other previously mentioned museums.

One of the interviewees gave this answer to the question "should human remains be displayed?":

> *GV: in context, always in context within the exhibition […] should we do death as an exhibition theme. And I don't have the answer yet.*

The phrase is a clear way to express how difficult it is to think of human remains in exhibits, either from ethnological contexts or from medical contexts, and it is particularly relevant when considering the use of collections such as the one held at the RMV.

[15] On February 20th 2014, the chief curator Dr Laura van Broekhoven, curator Martin Berger and the author went to see this exhibit by request of the Ethical Committee of the SVCN. A subsequent report was produced collecting the comments and observations regarding the exhibit.

Conclusions

We believe overall the objectives traced for this dissertation have been accomplished. They provided a general overview of the opinions and thoughts of the museum personnel regarding the human remains in the collections of the RMV, allowed us to contrast those opinions with the implicit and explicit policies by which the museum operates and, in a greater scale, permitted the comparison of the practices of the RMV with other Dutch museums that are known to have or house human remains collections.

This research can benefit for a more extensive interview process in order to further explore those issues that have come up as interesting and can provide a clearer picture of the way museum staff relate to the RMV. There are two important issues, one would be the language used when discussing human remains, in particular the lack of presence of death related themes; and the discussion of objectification of human remains in museum collections, a subject addressed in the literature, but that has yet to be specifically applied to museum personnel.

What we have learned is that museum practice and policies have a deeper personal impact on its personnel than is evident on a day to day basis. This is particularly true for the staff in the administrative area. We have also realized that personal and professional choices are not as separate as they were believed to be at the beginning of this research. If a person is not comfortable with handling human remains personally he/she will think about them the same way professionally; policies created by museum personnel will be influenced by their professional and personal views. It is important to remember that museum staff are also museum visitors, and what they expect and want to see is similar in both cases.

The issue of human remains is still a hard topic to discuss. The recognition of the role of source communities and the need for the respect of their wishes as well as the respect for the deceased themselves has changed at a steady pace over the years and is visible in case studies like that of the RMV. The continued display of human remains without that consent however is not unheard of in the Netherlands, but the introduction of the SVCN Ethical Committee gives hope to a more homogeneous treatment of human remains in all Dutch museums.

Abstract

This research will address the role of human remains collections within an ethnology museum as viewed by the museum personnel – curators, museum managers, catalog and reserve managers as well as education and public relations departments-. The research focuses in the specific case study of the personnel at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde in Leiden, The Netherlands. It has been conducted on the base of individual interviews and groups interviews with the museum personnel. The field work for this thesis took place over five months, and focused on the "Pre-Columbian mummy collection". The aim of this research was to present a case study of what curators in the Netherlands think in regards to human remains in collections and their use in exhibits and the relation between these opinions and the institutional policies followed in regards to human remains at the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde. The results show that personal and professional opinions of the museum personnel are closely related to museum policies and influenced by museum practices of repatriation and consultation with source communities. However, it became apparent that guidelines regarding the display an use of skeletonized human remains such as skulls and objects manufactured with human remains need to be discussed and agreed upon.

Bibliography

———. 2011. “Arqueologías Nacionales Y El Estudio Del Pasado En América Latina.” *JANGWAPANA* 10 (1).

----------2008. “Dead Bodies: The Changing Treatment of Human Remains in British Museum Collections and the Challenge to the Traditional Model of the Museum.” *Mortality* 13 (2): 105–18.

----------2010. *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections: The Crisis of Cultural Authority*. United States: Taylor and Francis.

----------2014. “Repatriation.” Accessed June 2. http://www.academia.edu/3106552/Repatriation.

Abraham, M.; T. Sullivan, and D. Griffin. 2002. “Implementing NAPGRA: The Effective Management of Legislative Change in Museums.” *Management Decisions* 40 (1): 35–49.

Albertti, S. J. M.M; P. Bienkowski, M. J. Chapman, and R. Drew. 2009. “Should We Display the Dead?” *Museum and Society* 7 (3): 133–49.

Andersen, L. 2010. “Exhibiting Human Remains in the Museum: A Discussion of Ethics and Museum Practice”. United States: George Washington University.

Andrushko, V. A., M. R. Buzon, A. M. Gibaja, G. F. McEwan, A. Simonetti, and R. A. Creaser. 2011. “Investigating a Child Sacrifice Event from the Inca Heartland.” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 38 (2): 323–33.

Arrate, J. 1984. “El Socialismo Autónomo Sudamericano: Sus Antagonismos Y Convergencias Con Europa.” *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 72: 95–106.

Arriaza, B., L. Cartmell, C. Moragas, A. G. Nerlich, W. Salo, M. Madden, and A. C. Aufderheide. 2008. “The Bioarchaeological Value of Human Mummies without Provenience.” *Chungara, Revista de Antropología Chilena* 40 (1): 55–65.

Arriaza, B., M.J. Allison, V. Standen, G. Focaccia, and J. Chacama. 1986. “Peinados Precolombinos En Momias de Arica.” *Chungara, Revista de Antropología Chilena*, 353–76.

Assies, W. and H. Gundermann Kroll. 2007. *Movimientos Indígenas Y Gobiernos Locales En América Latina*. San Pedro de Atacama: Línea Editorial IIAM.

Bean, S. 1994. “Museums and the Reformulation of Ethnographic Practice.” *American Ethnologist* 21 (4): 886–91.

Bernard, H. R. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. Rowman Altamira.

Bernstein, B. 1989. “Ethnographic Museum Collections and Their Use by Anthropologists.” *Museum Anthropology* 13 (1): 2–17.

Besom, T. 2010. “Inka Sacrifice and the Mummy of Salinas Grandes.” *Latin American Antiquity* 21 (4): 399–422.

Beumer, M. 2008. *Capturing Museum Knowledge. A Twenty Year Evolution in Digitally Recording the Tropenmuseum Collection.* KIT Publishers.

Boccara, G. 1999. “Etnogenesis Mapuche: Resistencia Y Restructuracion Entre Los Indigenas Del Centro-Sur de Chile (siglos XVI-XVIII).” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79 (3): 425–61.

Bray, T. L., L. D. Minc, C. Ceruti, J. A. Chávez, R. Perea, and J. Reinhard. 2005. “A Compositional

Analysis of Pottery Vessels Associated with the Inca Ritual of Capacocha." *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 24 (1): 82–100.

Brommer, B. (eds.). 1988. *3000 Jaar Weven in de Andes. Textiel Uit Peru En Bolivia*". Gemeente Museum Helmond.

Brown, P. 2011. "Us and Them: Who Benefits from Experimental Exhibition Making?" *Museum Management and Curatorship* 26 (2): 129–48.

Browne, D. M., R. García, and H. Silverman. 1993. "A Cache of 48 Nasca Trophy Heads from Cerro Carapo, Peru." *Latin American Antiquity* 4 (3): 274–94.

Bruning, S. B. 2006. "Complex Legal Legacies: The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Scientific Study, and Kennewick Man." *American Antiquity* 71 (3): 501.

Buikstra, J. 1981. "A Specialist in Ancient Cemetery Studies Looks at the Reburial Issue." *Early Man* 3 (3): 26–27.

Burden, G. 2014. "'A Centre of Scientific Work': Ronald Hamlyn-Harris and Ethnography at the Queensland Museum 1910–17." *Journal of Australian Studies* 38 (1): 87–102.

Butzer, K. W. 1980. "Context in Archaeology: An Alternative Perspective." *Journal of Field Archaeology* 7 (4): 417–22.

Cadena Montenegro, J. L. 2012. "200 Años de Independencia de Latinoamérica Y Su Evolución Geopolítica. Una Visión Desde Sudamérica."

Cassman, V. and N. Odegaard. 2004. "Human Remains and the Conservartor's Role." *Studies in Conservation*, no. 49: 271–82.

Cassman, V., N. Odegaard, and J. Powell. 2006. *Human Remains: Guide for Museums and Academic Institutions*. Rowman Altamira.

Ceruti, C. 2004. "Human Bodies as Objects of Dedication at Inca Mountain Shrines (north-Western Argentina)." *World Archaeology* 36 (1): 103–22.

Cockburn, A., E. Cockburn and T. A. Reyman. 1998. *Mummies, Disease and Ancient Cultures*. 2nd edition. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Cordova González, J. and J. Bernal Peralta. 2001. "FASCINACIÓN POR LAS MOMIAS, REFORZAMIENTO DE LA VIDA." *Chungará (Arica)* 33 (1).

Cox, M. 2008. *The Scientific Investigation of Mass Graves: Towards Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures*. Cambridge University Press.

Curtis, N. W.G. 2003. "Human Remains, the Sacred, Museums and Archaeology." *Public Archaeology*, no. 3: 21–32.

Dalrymple, T. 2014. "Why the Irish Giant's Skeleton Remains a Bone of Contention." Accessed June 2. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/8973135/Why-the-Irish-giants-skeleton-remains-a-bone-of-contention.html.

Dauelsberg, P. 1972. "Arqueologia del Departamento." In *Enciclopedia de Arica. Ensayo de Informacion General del Departamento de Arica*, 161–78. Santiago de Chile: Editorial de Enciclopedias Regionales Ltda.

Davies, S. M., R. Paton, and T. J. O'Sullivan. 2013. "The Museum Values Framework: A Framework for Understanding Organisational Culture in Museums." *Museum Management and*

Curatorship 28 (4): 345–61.

de Bock, E. K. 1981. *Pre-Colimbianse Mummies uit het Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde te Leiden.* not published.

Dominguez, V. R. 1986. "The Marketing of Heritage." *American Ethnologist* 13 (3): 546–55.

Effert, R. A. H. D. 2008. "*Royal cabinets and auxiliary branches: origins of the National Museum of Ethnology, 1816-1883"*. No. 159. CNWS Publications.

Emery, A. R. 1990. "Museum Staff: Defining Expectations." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 9 (3): 265–72.

Fairclough, G., R. Harrison, J.H. Jameson, and J Schofield. 2008. *The Heritage Reader*. Routledge. Routledge.

Fantini, M., S. Benazzi, F. De Crescenzio, F. Persiani, and G. Gruppioni. 2005. "Virtual Reconstruction of a Dismembered Andean Mummy from CT Data." In VAST.

Fernández, H., H. O. Panarello, and J. Schobinger. 1999. "The Inka Mummy from Mount Aconcagua: Decoding the Geographic Origin of the 'Messenger of the Deities' by Means of Stable Carbon, Nitrogen and Sulfur Isotope Analysis." *Geoarchaeology: An International Journal* 14 (1): 27–46.

Fforde, C, and J. Hubert. 2006. "Indigenous Human Remains and Changing Museum Ideology." In *A Future for Archaeology*, R. Layton, S. Shennan & P. Stone (eds), 83–97. London: UCL Press.

Fforde, C, J. Hubert, and P. Turnbull. 2004. *The Dead and Their Possessions: Repatriation in Principle, Policy and Practice*. Routledge.

Fforde, C. 2004. *Collecting the Dead: Archaeology and the Reburial Issues*. London: Duckworth.

Garret, J., and R. J. Harris. 1988. "Archaeological Human Remains. Scientific, Cultural and Ethical Considerations." *Current Anthropology* 39 (2): 253– 264.

Geurds, A., and L. Van Broekhoven. 2013. *Creating Authenticity: Authentication Processes in Ethnographic Museums*. Sidestone Press.

Gilmore, A., and R. Rentschler. 2002. "Changes in Museum Management: A Custodial or Marketing Emphasis?" *Journal of Management Development* 21 (10): 745–60.

González, L. R. 2003. "El Oro En El Noroeste Argentino Prehispánico. Estudios Técnicos Sobre Dos Objetos de La Casa Morada de La Paya." *Relaciones de La Sociedad Argentina de Antropología* 28.

Guaman Poma de Ayala, Felipe. 1980. *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. Fundacion Biblioteca Ayacuch.

Guillén, S. 2004. "Artificial Mummies from the Andes." *Collegium Antropologicum* 28 (2): 141–57.

Gulliford, A. 1992. "Curation and Repatriation of Sacred and Tribal Objects." *The Public Historian* 14 (3): 23–38.

Halberstma, R. B. 2013. *Scholars, Travellers and Trade: The Pioneer Years of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, 1818-1840*. Routledge.

Halcrow, S., N. Tayles, N. Pureepatpong, and K. Boonlop. 2011. "Human Remains from Archaeological Sites in Thailand: Legislative and Ethical Issues." *Muan Boran Journal* 37

(3): 143–48.
Hallam, E., and B. Street. 2013. *Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness*. Routledge.
Handler, R. 1993. "An Anthropological Definition of the Museum and Its Purpose." *Museum Anthropology* 17 (1): 33–36.
Handwerker, W. P. 2001. *Quick Ethnography: A Guide to Rapid Multi-Method Research.* Walnut Creek, California: Alta Mira.
Hein, G. E. 1995. "Evaluating Teaching and Learning in Museums." *Museum, Media, Message*, 189–203.
Holtorf, C., and T. Schadla-Hall. 1999. "Age as Artefact: On Archaeological Authenticity." *European Journal of Archaeology* 2: 229– 247.
Hora Tricallotis, E. 2000. "Diademas de Plumas En Entierros de La Costa Del Norte de Chile: ¿Evidencias de La Vestimenta de Una Posible Parcialidad Pescadora?" *Chungara, Revista de Antropología Chilena* 32 (2): 235–43.
International Council on Monuments and Sites, and Australia ICOMOS. 1999. *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.* Burwood, Vic.: Australia ICOMOS.
Isbell, W. H. 1997. *Mummies and Mortuary Monuments. A Postprocessual Prehistory of Central Andean Social Organization*. 1st edition. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
Jacobs, J. 2009. "Repatriation and the Reconstruction of Identity." *Museum Anthropology* 32 (2): 83–98.
Jenkins, T. 2012. "'Who Are We to Decide?' Internal Challenges to Cultural Authority in the Contestation over Human Remains in British Museums." *Cultural Sociology* 6 (4): 455–70.
---------- 2010. *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections: The Crisis of Cultural Authority*. United States: Taylor and Francis.
---------- 2008. "Dead Bodies: The Changing Treatment of Human Remains in British Museum Collections and the Challenge to the Traditional Model of the Museum." *Mortality* 13 (2): 105–18.
Jones, S. 2010. "Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves. Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity." *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2): 181–203.
Kilmister, H. 2003. "Visitor Perceptions of Ancient Egyptian Human Remains in Three United Kindom Museums." *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, no. 14: 57–69.
King, M. E. 1983. "Anthropology in Museums – A Bibliography." *Council for Museum Anthropology Newsletter* 7 (3): 6–14.
Knell, S. J., S. MacLeod, and S. Watson. 2007. *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*. Routledge.
Kosslak, R. M. 1999. "The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: The Death Knell for Scientific Study?" *American Indian Law Review* 24 (1): 129.
Kubal, T. 2008. *Cultural Movements and Collective Memory*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Lenton, D. 2012. "Los Dilemas de La Ciudadania Y Los Indios Argentinos 1880-1950." *PUBLICAR-En Antropologia Y Ciencias Sociales*, no. 8: 7–30.
Lohman, J., and K. J. Goodnow. 2006. *Human Remains & Museum Practice*. Vol. 918. Berghahn

Books.
Londoño, Wi. 2012. “ESPÍRITUS EN PRISIÓN: UNA ETNOGRAFÍA DEL MUSEO NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA.” *Chungará (Arica)* 44 (4): 733–45.
Lubina, K. 2009. “Contested Cultural Property.” *Katja Lubina, Maastricht*.
Marquez- Grant, N., and L. Fibiger. 2011. *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeological Human Remains and Legislation: An International Guide to Laws and Practice in the Excavation and Treatment of Archaeological Human Remains*. Routledge.
McBrien, M. 2006. *Remains to Be Seen?: The Practical and Ethical Issues Concerning the Display of Human Remains in Museums*. NUI. Department of Archaeology, UCC.
McCarroll, J. E., A. S. Blank, and K. Hill. 1995. “Working with Traumatic Material: Effects on Holocaust Memorial Museum Staff.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 65 (1): 66–75.
McKeown, C. T. and S. Hutt. 2002. “In the Smaller Scope of Conscience: The Native American Graves Protection &(and) Repatriation Act Twelve Years after.” *UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy* 21: 153.
Meier, D. 2001. “MUMMIES ON DISPLAY: CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS.” *Chungará (Arica)* 33 (1).
Meisch, L. A. 1992. “‘We Will Not Dance On the Tomb of Our Grandparents’: ‘500 Years of Resistance’ In Ecuador.” *The Latin American Anthropology Review* 4 (2): 55–74.
Michieli, C. T. 1986. “Textileria de La Cultura Calingasta (San Juan, Argentina). Comunicación Preliminar.” *Chungara, Revista de Antropología Chilena*, no. 16-17: 377–80.
Mignone, P. 2010. “Ritualidad Estatal, Capacocha Y Actores Sociales Locales: El Cementerio Del Volcán Llullaillaco.” *Estudios Atacameños*, no. 40: 43–62.
Millones, L., and R. P. Schaedel. 1980. “Plumas Para El Sol: Comentarios Sobre Un Documento Sobre Cazadores Y Cotos de Caza En El Antiguo Peru.” *Boletin Del Instituto Frances de Altos Estudios Andinos* IX (1-2): 59–88.
Moore, J. 1991. “Cultural Responses to Environmental Catastrophes: Post-El Niño Subsistence on the Prehistoric North Coast of Peru.” *Latin American Antiquity* 2 (1): 27–47.
Muñoz, A. 2011. “From Curiosa to World Culture. The History of the Latin American Collections at the Museum of World Culture in Sweden.” Gothemburg, Sweden: Univeristy of Gothemburg.
Museum Ethnographers Group. 1994. “Museum Ethnographer’s Group Guidelines on Management of Human Remains.” *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 6: 1–3.
National Council on Monuments and Sites, and Australia ICOMOS. 1999. *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.* Burwood, Vic.: Australia ICOMOS.
Octobre, S. 2001. “Construction et Conflits de La Légitimité Professionnelle: Qualification et Compétence Des Conservateurs de Musée.” *Sociologie Du Travail* 43 (1): 91–109.
Overduin, H. 1986. “Polarity in Museum Policy: Dutch Museums as an Expression of Present-Day Society.” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 5 (1): 65–72.
Oxford university. 2006. “Policy on Human Remains Held by the University of Oxford’s Museums.”

Oxford University Gazette 2 (4787): 373–77.

Page, K. M. 2011. "The Significance of Human Remains in Museum Collections: Implications for Collections Management". Master Thesis, Buffalo State College.

Pearson, M. 2005. "Give Me Back My People's Bones: Repatriation and Reburial of American Indian Skeletal Remains." *Journal of the Iowa Archaeological Society*, no. 52: 7–12.

Pensley, D. S. 2005. "The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990): Where the Native Voice Is Missing." *Wicazo Sa Review* 20 (2): 37–64.

Pereña, L. 1992. *Genocidio En América*. MAPFRE.

Pillsbury, J. 1996. "The Thorny Oyster and The Origins of Empire: Implications of Recently Uncovered Spondylus Imagery from Chan Chan, Peru." *Latin American Antiquity* 7 (4): 313–40.

Previgliano, C. H., C. Ceruti, J. Reinhard, F. Arias Araoz, and J. Gonzalez Diez. 2003. "Radiologic Evaluation of the Llullaillaco Mummies." *American Journal of Roentgenology* 181 (6): 1473–79.

Quigley, C. 2001. *Skulls and Skeletons. Human Bone Collections and Acumulations*. first edition. North Carolina, USA: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

Raven, M. J., and George J. Maat. 2005. *Egyptian Mummies: Radiological Atlas of the Collections in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden*. Brepols.

Reid, J. W. 2005. *Magic Feather. Textile Art from Ancient Peru*. Textile and Art Publication.

Reinhard, J., and C. Ceruti. 2005. "Sacred Mountains, Ceremonial Sites, and Human Sacrifice Among the Incas." *Archaeoastronomy* 19.

Rivadeneira, M., and E. R. Carmona. 2008. "A Late Pleistocene Macrobenthic Assemblage in Caleta Patillos, Northern Chile: Paleoecological and Paleobiogeographical Interpretations." *Revista Geologica de Chile* 35 (1): 163.

Roberts, C., and S. Mays. 2011. "Study and Restudy of Curated Skeletal Collections in Bioarchaeology: A Perspective on the UK and the Implications for Future Curation of Human Remains." *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 21 (5): 626–30.

Romney, A. K., S. C. Weller, and W. H. Batchelder. 1986. "Culture as Consensus: A Theory of Culture and Informant Accuracy." *American Anthropologist* 88 (2): 313–38.

Rosenthal, R., and R. D. Rubin. 1978. "Issues in Summarizing the First 345 Studies of Interpersonal Expectancy Effects." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 1 (03): 410–15.

Sans, M. 1997. "Estudio de Marcadores Genéticos En La Población Uuguaya Y Su Aplicación En El Análisis Del Mestizaje." *Estudios de Antropología Biológica* 6.

Schouten, H. 2010. "Out of a Shrunken Head, a Gian Idea." *The Dominion Post*, October 6, sec. News.

Sealy, J. 2003. "Managing Collections of Human Remains in South African Musums and Universities: Ethical Policy-Making and Scientific Value." *South African Journal of Science* 99 (June).

Sharamitaro, L M. 2001. "Case Study A Association Involvement across the Policy Process: The American Association of Museums and the Native American Graves Protection and

Repatriation Act." *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 31 (2): 123–36.

Shimada, I., K. Shinoda, J. Farnum, R. Corruccini, and H. Watanabe. 2004. "An Integrated Analysis of Pre-Hispanic Mortuary Practices: A Middle Sican Case Study." *Current Anthropology* 45 (3): 369–402.

Smith, A. D. 2001. "Authenticity, Antiquity and Archaeology." *Nations and Nationalism* 7 (4): 441–49.

Starn, R. 2005. "A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies." *The American Historical Review* 110 (1): 68–98. doi:10.1086/ahr/110.1.68.

Swain, H. 2007. *An Introduction to Museum Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press.

Swartout, W.; D. Traum, R. Artstein, D. Noren, P. Debevec, K. Bronnenkant, J. Williams, A. Leuski, S. Narayanan, and D. Piepol. 2010. "Ada and Grace: Toward Realistic and Engaging Virtual Museum Guides." In *Intelligent Virtual Agents*, 286–300. Springer.

Truscott, M., and D. Young. 2000. "Revising the Burra Charter: Australia ICOMOS Updates Its Guidelines for Conservation Practice." *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 4 (2): 101–16.

Tung, T. A., and K. J. Knudson. 2008. "Social Identities and Geographical Origins of Wari Trophy Heads from Conchopata, Peru." *Current Anthropology* 49 (5): 915–25.

Valentín, N. 2007. "Microbial Contamination in Archives and Museums: Health Hazards and Preventive Strategies Using Air Ventilation Systems." *The Getty Conservation Institute*.

Van Broekhoven, L.N.K. (red.) 2003. Met Kuifje naar de Inca's. Strijdbaar Heden Roemrijk Verleden. Hergé's onder- en voorwerpen gestript. Lannoo Uitgeverij – Editions Moulinsart.

Van Duuren, D., and M. Ten Kate. 2007. *Physical Anthropology Reconsidered: Human Remains at the Tropenmuseum*. KIT.

Visitatiecommissie Rijksmusea. 2012. "Rapport: Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde, Leiden". Visitatie rapport. Netherlands Museum Association. Not published.

Walker, P. L. 2000. "Bioarchaeoogical Ethics: A Historical Perspective on the Value of Human Remains." In *Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton*, edited by M. Ann Katzenberg and Shelley R. Saunders.

Walker, T. Jr. "Native American Protests Against 1992 Celebrations of 1942: A Sage-like Meaning of Solidarity."

Wetton, J., R. Leveson, M. Hallett, and P. Webb. 1995. "Trading Places: An International Museum Staff Exchange." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 14 (4): 409–18.

Worts, D. 2006. "Measuring Museum Meaning: A Critical Assessment Framework." *Journal of Museum Education* 31 (1): 41–49.

<u>Web Pages and Online Documents:</u>

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). 1990. http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/mandates/25usc3001etseq.htm. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Besterman, T. 2007. "Report to the Board of Trustees of The British Museum Request from Te Papa Tongarewa for the Return of Sixteen Māori Kōiwi Tangata to." http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/00%2022%20Tristram%20Besterman%20report%20dated%20April%2007.pdf. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport. 2005. *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Exhibits*. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/GuidanceHumanRemains11Oct.pdf. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

World Archaeology Congress. 1990. First Code of Ethics Barquisimeto. http://www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/site/about_ethi.php#code1. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

German Museum Association. 2013. *Recommendations for the Care of Human Remains in Museums and Collections*.http://www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/geschaefts/dokumente/Leitfaeden_und_anderes/2013__Recommendations_for_the_Care_of_Human_Remains.pdf. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Honouring the Ancient Dead. 2014. http://www.honour.org.uk/. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

ICOM. *ICOM Code of Ethics* .2013. http://archives.icom.museum/ethics.html accessed December 2013.

Instituto Nacional de Estadística. 2010. "Poblacion Según Ascendencia Racial Declarada." Encuesta Continua de Hogares 2010. Instituto Nacional de Estadística. http://www.ine.gub.uy/biblioteca/Encuesta%20Continua%20de%20Hogares/Publicaci%C3%B3n%20Principales%20Resultados%202010.pdf. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

International Repatriations - Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, NZ. 2014. http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/AboutUs/Repatriation/Pages/InternationalRepatriations.aspx Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Kuifje En Het Volk van Rascar Capac. 2014. *VK*. http://s.vk.nl/705167. Last accessed 24th April 2014

Kuifje Leidt Rond. 2014. *TROUW*. http://s.trouw.nl/1778740. Last accessed 24th April 2014

Library and Technology Services, Lehigh University. 2014. "Reel American History - Films - List". http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/reels/films/list/1_1_9_76. Last accessed 24th April 2014.

Ministry of Culture of the Netherlands, Raad van Cultuur; www.cultuur.nl/english/item138. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Museo San Miguel de Azapa. www.uta.cl/masma/. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

National Museum of Australia. 2011. "Understanding Museums - Ethnographic Museums and Collections." http://nma.gov.au/research/understanding-museums/JStanton_2011.html. Last accessed 8th June 2014.

Natural History Museum. Human Remains Policy. 2014. *Natural History Museum*. http://www.nhm.ac.uk/resources-rx/files/110523nhm_human-remains-policy-2010-update-final-98153.pdf. Last accessed 24th April 2014

Netherlands Museum Association. 2013. *Code of Ethics on Human Remains*. http://www.museumvereniging.nl/Portals/0/Assets/Voor%20leden/EthischeCode_20112006.pdf . Last accessed 24th April 2014

Profile of the Collections of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde. 2008. http://volkenkunde.nl/sites/default/files/attachements/Collectieprofielen.pdf. Last accessed 10th June 2014.

Purifying the Slack Farm. 2014. *Evansville Courier & Press*. http://www.courierpress.com/news/2007/may/24/slack-farm/ . Last accessed 2nd June 2014.

Rapport van de Visitatiecommissie Rijksmusea. 2012. "Visitatie Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde." http://www.derijksmusea.nl/visitaties. Last accessed 10th June 2014

Society for American Archaeology. 2013. *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Human Remains*. http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/GovernmentAffairs/RepatriationIssues/SAARepatriationPolicy/tabid/242/Default.aspx. Last accessed 10th June 2014

The British Museum Policy on Human Remains. 2014. *The British Museum*. http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/management/human_remains/policy.aspx. Last accessed 20th May 2014.

The Collections of the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde. 2014. http://volkenkunde.nl/nl/collectie-en-bibliotheek

The Duckworth Laboratory. Cambridge University. 2014. http://www.human-evol.cam.ac.uk/howtoapply.html . Last accessed 20th May 2014.

The Dutch Museum Association; www.museumvereniging.nl Last accessed 10th June 2014

The Tamaki Makau-Rau Accord. 2005. *World Archaeology Congress Webpage*. http://www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/site/about_ethi.php. Last accessed 10th June 2014

The Vermillion Accord on Human Remains. 1989. *World Archaeology Congress Webpage*. http://www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/about-wac/codes-of-ethics/168-vermillion. Last accessed 10th June 2014

The Welcome Trust. 2008. *Welcome Trust Policy on the Care of Human Remains in Museums and Galleries*.http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Policy-and-position statements/WTX033469.htm Last accessed 10th June 2014

Tropenmuseum, Afrika museum en Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde gefuseerd tot nieuw nationaal museum. *www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/fusie-volkenkundige-musea.* Last accessed 10th June 2014

Turitella Cingulata, species information; www.macrofauna.cl/fi/Turritella_cingulata.html . Last accessed 10th June 2014

Interviews (found in Appendix 1):

1) Interview with Dr Laura van Broekhoven, Chief Curator.
2) Interview with Anne Marie Worlee, Head of Exhibitions and Education.
3) Interview with Geke Vinke, Communications Manager.
4) Interview with Rapti Golder-Miedema, Project Manager.
5) Interview with Margrit Reuss, Conservation, Restoration and Loans.
6) Interview with Martin Berger, Assistant curator for Middle and South America.
7) Group Interview with Conn Barret, Ester de Bruin, Harm Linsen, Collections/Depot Managers.
8) Interview with Dick Dirkse, Collections Manager.
9) Group Interview with Brechte and Wendy, Museum Shop and Tickets.
10) Interview with Evert, Security Guard

List of Figures

List of Graphs

List of Appendixes

Appendix 1. Interviews

Interview Laura van Broekhoven

24/02/2014
Office-Volkenkunde Museum
Laura van Broekhoven
Museum Policy on human remains and the Andean Collection
Total time: 46 minutes
L (Laura van Broekhoven) M (Maria Ordonez)

M: Ok so basic background questions. How long have you been working for the museum?

L: since October 2001, and I started here with one day a week, while I continued to work with the university, and then I gradually changed thru the years, when I finished m doctorate in 2002, end of 2002, I started half time here, and then it became 4 days here and then 1 day at the university.

M: and you always have been associated with the Mesoamerican or Latin American collections? Or were you doing something else.

L: yeah, I started here as the curator for Middle and South American collections, and then I became chief curator in 2009. And that was going to be a temporary position until 2014, but then last year they asked me if I wanted to do this permanently. I had to think to very long and hard if I wanted to do this or not, because it is a very administrative position but on the other hand I like been part of the more visionary part of where the museum should go. So that is why I chose to remain in office as chief curator, and it also makes it possible for Martin to keep working here, which to me is important because it actually enables us to do more than if it was just me on our area of expertise.

M: ah, ok, and in the tie that you have been here, how many times has the permanent exhibit changed?

L: once. When I came here in 2001 I immediately wrote this note that I did not like the permanent exhibit and that I wanted to change, and so in 2010 when we decided, well, all the windows in the building had to be removed because they had not been removed… Cause in 2001 they had just reopened, so the hole permanent exhibit had been done by Gerard van Bussel who is the curator of Middle and South America in Vienna, and the former curator before me, he had decided that it should be for the next team that was going to come, cause he retired in 1999, but there was no one there, so they flew Gerard in for two weeks, and he had to do a permanent exhibit in two weeks, with is just really impossible obviously. So when I came in I wrote a whole report on why I di not like the exhibit and. And in 2010 when he had to do the remodeling of the windows of the building all the objects needed to be taken out anyway, so I figured we could also take, change everything, which we thought it was going to be expensive in the beginning but then I think at the end of 2010 we decided to do it anyway for the whole museum actually.

And then that was when first, our permanent exhibit was going to be the part that was going to be opened first, remodeled first, but then there was some problems also with the roof, that also had to be taken out and so it was a hurried job that Martin and I had to do, because it appeared that we were going to be the first ones to open because the north American gallery didn't have to be changed, but then they needed to, because of asbestos in the Japanese storage which is up the stairs from the northamerican, directly upstairs from the north American permanent galleries, there was a misshap with the asbestoss and it went downt

into the north American gallery, which meant the we couldn't re install our galleries, because we have to go thru the north American galleries, and they had to close that for half a year or ¾ of a year. So everything went differently , the whole drawing and planning had already been done, we had chosen the objects. I think we both are very happy with the way the Mesoamerica gallery came out, Martin and I, and we like the way the tropical/Amazonian part came out, that was done together with Jimmi Manst, but then we are not very happy with the Andean part, it is ok, kind of, but there was going to be… the discussion about what was going to happen with the last part of that roo centered around if we were going to expose mummies or not. And that is why we in 2010 decided to do this study and we decided to take contact with the Argentinian embassy, but we will get back to that later.

M: so, to your knowledge, have this mummies been exhibited before? Either in the permanent exhibit or in the collections?

L: yeah, I think they have. You should be able to check that.

M: yeah, but so, they were not by the time you were here and then you had decided what to do with them put them back or not.

L: yeah our commercial, are we going to touch on that? Should I go into that?

M: yes, go into that

L: so the whole idea of re-doing the whole museum, that is why I had to tell that little bit about yes or no doing that, was that there was a new commercial director, and the commercial director decided kind of like, addressed the issue, and the comments that we had already gotten from our visitors in general was that the building and the whole general steup of the gallery, although I won all kinds of design prices and awards, it kind of had the feeling that everything was very similar. SO without the proyections on the walls, you never been here before right? There were no projections on the wall, it was very gray, very darkish, it almost felt like an office building, it was all very, like you would go from one department of the bank lets say, to another department of the bank and everything had the same feel. Which kind of gives a homogeneity of the museum, which is nice cause it feels like it is very designy and is very type 90s minimalist design, lets say, not white yet, but grayish. And that, the commercial director said we need thestories to be told more iconocally lests say. By icons, so you need to have more objects that tell the story without needing to tell it, lets say, its just going to be obvious that once you get into the Japanese galleries that there is certain stuff that the say Dishima, japan and asia DIshima, cuase that was the dutch post in japan for a long time we were the only ones we could trade. Indonesia, we need certain thing that people can say "ah the …". So we kept, kind of set out to, and I think that was a good idea cause apart from bringing more visitors we also wanted to set out more the story of peoples. We are Volkenkunde which mans the knowledge of peoples, and there were hardly any people in our museum, didn't even say who made the objects, ect. That kind of information was in our data base but it was not anywhere, so you could not say either landscapes or people, so that is one of the changes we wanted to show. We wanted to put in more stories.

So then they asked all of us: so what are the icons of our collections? So in the Andean region you can say mummies, and why do everybody go to the RMO? Because of the Egyptian, mummies, don't we have mummies? Well, we do, but we don't want to put them on display. So, 1) we don't know enough about them 2) we are not really sure whether ethically we should, so there were many reasons why we weren't. So we went into this argument, and we decided that we needed to do more research. So one of the thing that John Samessberg, who is our commercial editor really wanted to have this mummies on display, cause he said everybody goes to see the mummies in the RMO we need to get more public, visitors will ocme to see mummies. So that is what happened with the room, and that is when we started to do more research on them.

M: and that is when all the research the E de Bock had done came to light or did you know about that before?

L: we new it had been done and we started looking into it a bit more.

M: and then you say at this point you tried to contact south America, or in this case, argentina. And what happened with that content. What was the first ideas you had?

L:we just wanted to have their advice, cause supposedly the mummies came from argentina. So we wanted to have a group of people, specialists, come and visit the collections and do research on the collection, invite them to do research, and ask them advise on how etically they would consider the best way to deal with the mummies. So we contacted them, we phoned them.

M: who is this them especifically?

L: I called the embassy and I asked who to call and they told us who to call which was from the ministry of culture, and then they gave us, I would have to check that, it was a long time ago. So we called this person, here (after looking thru some papers), la licienciada Claudia Cabulli, Coordinadora General del Patrimonio Cultural y Museos.

M: and this was in what year?

L: 2010. And then she was, when I got here on the phone, she said… First she said: "yeah, I advise against putting them on display, and if you really are going to put on a claim, or ask for an advise, then you can expect to get a repatriation request." And I said that is fine, so I had already sent the mail, so I formally want to present this request and I really do want to have this investigation going on and I really do want to… So she said she was going to transfer our questions to the Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas and the Consejo de Participación Indígena. And then, we didn't hear anything, and we tried to contact her again and againa and…

M: Ok, so from the second time you tried contacting her

L: there was no more things. So we had this conversation, we sent the email… maybe you should ask Martin, he got a hold of her again, but we have been sending emails and nothing.

M: so it could be that political changes happened and she is no longer there?

L: Yeah, well this was also around the time that the president died, so it could be, yeah. It could be a lot of things. But even if this person no longer works there she could send and email back, or there is no automatic reply, which is strange, because if someone doesn't have an email anymore it would bounce back. SO anyway, we actually thought it was going to be an interesting project to work with Argentina in this, cause we thought we could get people interested in doing research. So we sent also pictures of the mummies, but they never really told me. I did actually go with pictures of the mummies. In 2003 we had an exhibit, on Tin Tin and the Inca's, so I went to Peru, and I went to Chile and I went to Bolivia, we didn't have bolivia mummies but… And I talked to the national institutes there, and I should them the pictures and I left pictures of everything that we have, and specially in Peru, specially cause they had this red textile…

M: the feathers?

L: no, not the feathers, there is a red unku that we have, so they were interested in that, cause it looked like Inca, but I never heard anything else back, And in Chile they were working pretty much on the policy of not exhibiting them anymore, in Argentina they said the same, in Peru there was no policy at all, they were

still putting mummies on display when we were there. And in Bolivia they were also putting mummies in display. But that was before Evo Morales.

M: I think the policies remain the same even now in Chile and Argentina, they still display mummies I think. So more in the point of these ones. After this, they have just been stored in freezers in s-Gravenzande, were they always stored away, or were they closer? Before the restructuring of the museum.

L: I think before they must have been here, but I am not sure.

M: More to the organizational side. What are the difficulties that you have found, as a curator, and talking to the rest f the people in the museum regarding the mummies.

L: So we haven't really had issues in terms of the mummies. We did have to decide in 2003 whether we wanted to have a mummy on display, so we decided to put the mummy from Brussels on display, at that time, which was something that was very well addressable with everyone here. We didn't have this new commercial department, and I guess that if I would have said no mummy… the thing is, I said I could only agree with putting the mummy on display if we discuss the fact of putting mummies of display and we discuss it within the context of plundering, of looting. What we did, so we had this room. So we had that the first room that you come on to it was this room on Peru in general, so you had the information on the hallway, then you went in to the first room really of the museum and that is where it was all about human remains, whether human remains should be here. There was one big picture of what would you think if there is one intro… from Tin Tin where this guy says: What would we think if our royal remains were put on display. We should leave these guys alone, that was the big picture, this is the catalogue that we published, and it is all in Dutch, sorry, and it has one part on mummies, and there is, so it says, things like "this is going to go wrong, think about Tutankamon, Tin Tin" and then it says "you dog of a stranger, how did you get it [this was about stuff that he found] as your people always do, you have robbed the grave of our forefathers". This is the whole topic of that album. When I was, they told me that I had to do an exhibit on Tin Tin and the Incas, because we had done and exhibit about Tin Tin in Tibet at it had been successful, my husband is a great Tin Tin collector, an I said ok I am willing to do a Inca exhibit do it but I need to go there once, cause I have never even been to this areas, so we went, and when I heard that the exhibit was going to go thru, I actually went through Tin Tin just mentally and tried to remember what were the big issues. And all the big issues are addressed in Tin Tin. The big ethical issues. So that was a good thing that we could discuss looting, mummies, so, poverty, etc. all of that built into tin tin.

M: ok, and you told me before that you specifically didn't want to show the mummies here but you wanted to the mummy that had inspired Herge

L: well actually, the whole story of Tin Tin revolves around one mummy, and I think that well, if we are going to tell that story, we should have that mummy, and top of that, the exhibit came from Brussels, but in Brussels the way the mummy had been displayed I didn't like it. It was very much like this, this cabinet of scary things, so you had, so it was a dark room and you had like a cristal ball, and if you would touch it all kinds of like electricity would come, and I was standing in front of the mummy, in this dark room with the mummy that had inspired Herge was standing, and this is exactly the same stand, cause this is the mummy that has been in exhibit in Brussels, where Herge would go into the museum and get inspired by objects that he would see in the museum and then he would draw, then he would make his cartoons. So then, it seemed logical that we put that mummy and not another one. So what we decided to do was, first, tell people, look, you are going to be seeing a mummy, how normal is that? That mummies are in museum collections. And then the next room was part of the whole, we had the video of National Geographic of Walter Alba telling the story of Tupac Amaru, and the cotton king, and the cemetery, and the whole looting story, and then we had objects, archaeological objects and tourist objects and showing that if you buy turist objects being replicas, you would actually stimulate the economy, while buying looted objects then you

would be destroying the historical background and destroying people's ability to ever now about their past. So that was kind of the story we were telling ,and that was where the mummy was standing, so people wher actually like "hmm yeah", so they were kind of felt sorry for the mummy, and many people tought it wasn't a real mummy, they tought it was a mummy which it wasn't. and then we went up and t was more on Inca an all that.

M: ok, but this exhibit seemed like a good time to decide if you wanted to exhibit the rest of the mummies, given that some of them look very similar to the one that was exhibited, to the point that some people in the conservation area thought that it was one of the museum mummies.

L: but yeah, no we decided against that cause there was no need. We could tell the story with one mummy so why put the rest.

M: So you wanted as well to create some sort of reflection on human remains. So from that lets go to your personal opinions. Do you think that mummies are something that people normally want to see in a museum, that they are attracted to n a museum or not.

L: I think visitor number show as that they do like, that they are fascinated by mummies, by Egyptian mummies for sure, I don't know about other mummies, but I guess yeah, most people, many people like seeing mummies.

M: and do you have any idea why that is?

L: because I guess it is very close encounter with people that have been buried and I think it just, the fact of mummification it seems far away from what people do know, and I guess kind of speaks to the imagination of people, and it is not an ordinary thing in life. You are either in the cemetery and there is no people there. There is a different [shield], but in a museum is the only place where you can see a corps that up close, and not having to give apologies [condolences], and not having to be confronted with the smells and all that.

M: ok, and to you, do you look for mummies in places and go to a museum and are interested in the part of them exhibiting mummies?

L: Do I like looking at mummies? no, no. I am very in the scientific results of the study of mummies, I think it tells us a lot. Specially in ancient DNA and science that has been used and dietary issues, and issues of gender relations and issues of demography, I think that is super interesting. But after that, to me, once they have been studied, to me mummies are, I think they have been buried for a reason it's a whole process to mummify a body, and there is a whole worldview behind it, an usually it is not that you want your ancestors to be put on display. I personally, every time I left the museum, during the time that this mummy was on display, I felt like: that is awful, you now?

M: after all this time…

L: yeah, what is it doing here, and every time… that is also why I wanted to be in contact with Argentina also, cause I thought, Ok, so ok first let's just see if everybody says, of course these mummies were on display at many times, and there were already the oldest mummies on display in the 16th century in lima at this hospital, and at that time people wanted to go see them too, certainly the Spanish but there was a number of visitors, but they were also on display in the Inca times, but that was a whole, that was part of a way of life, of a ritual purpose, and that was actually part of the whole mortuary ritual, way of dealing with the dead, and death in general. But is putting this mummies on display for the western gaze and for people to come and look at them and have their relationship with them, was that part of what anybody was thinking about, does that mean that you are not allowed to do it? I don't know, I only have questions about this, but I personally do not feel like…

M: and do you feel that if they were to be exhibited in a not so western context, in the Andes in themselves, would they still be done in a western view…

L: from what I have seen for this Juanita and some of the other displays… it is purely western museography, an I guess there might be other ways to do that, here there are still villages where you carry the dead in certain ways to and I know that in some of the villages I have worked in other areas like in Mesoamerica this whole secondary burial rituals they found ways to deal with that which incorporates the laws for prohibiting that, it actually found ways to use different items to remember the dead. So I guess that is kind of, so in the ways that I could, form what I saw when I went there in 2003 to make a study on whether yes or no should we put human remains on display, cause that is a topic that I wanted to address at that time, and just to see if we could put them on display, it did not feel like the people who felt like had an ancestry with this human remains were included in the discussion. There was no authority which was given to them, worst even with the Juanita, it was clear that the people from the mountains she came from were not at all in agreement with the display. And for example the museum for the Tumbas Reales in Peru actually took that as a reason why they did replicas, they do not put human remains on display, which to me was an indication that was a whole other issue in Tumbas Reales outside of Sipan and…

M: Ok, and in the issue of replicas, is showing the replicas of human remains the same as showing human remains? To you?

L: No, I think that you can easily show replicas, I have no problem with that.

M: so your specific problem would be the actual human being

L: the actual human being, that was interred by his family, to be interred in that way so he could in peace and could actually go to the next life or the next world, or whatever that they want for this people to go to. I think that should be respected. And I have no problem… I actually think that specially because many of the descendants communities are also very interested in what the research is on this mummies, I don't have a problem with that, but then after that let them get to rest.

M: Have you ever had any direct contact with the mummies, with you touching or handling them?

L: no, I avoid that as much as I can. I had that with the tsan tsa heads, where I would go to the collections just to get to know the collections, its gives a very strong reaction to me, but I think that it is just, not someone into physical anthropology, and if I was I would not be an osteo archaeologist I never was, I never had any sense at all that I wanted to be working with human remains

M: and in the specific topic of the tsan tsas ofr example, since they were made for display, would you have different considerations?

L: they were usually given to the dogs to play, they were not made for display

M: yeah but they would also put them in poles and all that

L: but for a little time, and then thrown away: They were not meant to be kept except for tourist attractions.

M: would you feel differently about exhibiting them then?

L: no, especially because the shuara today have said explicitly that they don't want them to be exhibited. so yes, and that is why my… we usually have more general questions on this were people ask "should human remains at all be displayed" and we had discussion whether objects that are made with human remains, like flutes or the Mixtec skull, for example, should they be put on display? And to them usually my guideline

there would be that I have said we don't need to be more roman than the Pope, we don't need to think for people, but in the case that there are descendants communities, let`s go to the descendants communities, and if they have already formed an idea then great, like the Maori or the Aboriginal communities they are pretty easy they have been very very clear, the shuara have been clear on this too, and there is other people that have been very clear on it. In other cases it is much more difficult. In Argentina for example, where we thought these mummies come from, it is much more difficult cuase how can I get in contact, with who should I get in contact, we are not even sure about it. We have this objects, and it is the same with the Mixteca-Puebla skull, who do we get in contact with, are this the… this object probably came from Puebla, should I look for people in Puebla, should I look for the Mixtecs, should I look for the Nahualt? So yeah it is much more difficult. I also think for objects which were made to put on display it is different than with the ones that were not. But with the tsan tsas I do not agree that they were made to put on display. They were meant to put on display for a very short time and then thrown away, and that is what happened, what was meant to happen to them, they were meant to just not even be enough to be on display, so this "terrible people" this enemies, they had to be punished and then disappear. What do we do, we keep them, but most of the tsan tsa, maybe not most of them but most are fake, and then it is even worst, because well some of them are monkeys but some of them are Europeans! Yeah, and it is totally unclear how this people got to that [turned into tsan tsas] but it is probably from the tourist market, and if these were murdered people or people who had already died we don't know, so that is, I don't know if worst but bad…

M: going back to the subject of repatriation and… now that you know that the mummies are probably from different countries, how does that change your perspective on repatriation, would you try and contact each person individuallym what are your plans now.

L: We have always said that we don't want to actively repatriate, we wont to be reactive, not proactive in repatriation, and so, when we contacted Argentina, we decided to be proactive, cause this was a case were we wanted to know more about if we could put them on display and then they said well you can expect a repatriation, but so, in this case I don't really know what to do right now. I think on the one hand, so Peru has already asked us years ago 2005 maybe, yeah because of this exhibit, 2002-2003, they asked us to give to the embassy and they would send it to the National Institute of Culture in Peru, a list of everything we have from Peru, so we sent that, a whole database, but then we never hear anything again after that. And It really depends on the embassador how much contact we have. I think the embassador at the time we had a lot of contact, good contact ith the Peruvian embassy, now we don't have that much contact with the Peruvian embassy. So you were saying Peru, Chile and possibly between Peru and Bolivia, and I would be very interested to know if they would be interested. It is easier when the countries have an active policy on repatriation for example, like with Australia or New Zealand or the US. Because people would come you know to, people who have been hopefully been put on to a certain position, where they have the authority to speak on those things. Because If I have to go look for the authority it will be a national authority. Which many of the indigenous people do not feel represented by the national authority, so in the case, so of course it is a bit strange to say ok I need to wait for politics to happen on these places, but there is very little we can do. We tried in 2010 and this was because of the Capackocha exhibit in Rotterdam , they asked us to give one of our Nazca trophy heads on loan and I felt uncomfortable giving the trophy head on loan to put it on display in a display that I could not at all control its content. So with this mummy in the 2003 exhibit I could control the context, cause I was the curator, with the mummy in Rotterdam, I heard all kinds of stories on how they were going to put it on display, I knew they were going to be a puppet made a la madam tusseaud, where there ws going to be a puppet holding a head with its tongue hanging out and there was going to be a stick with all the tongues pierced so, I knew it was going to be, so I had a problem with the whole museography and with the whole way the mummy was going to be represented the Nazca trophy head, but so we, or Rotterdam went to the ethical committee, to decide if we had the authority to say no, because within the agreements that we have between the ethnographic museums in the Netherlands, we said that we would always give loans to each other, and in the end the ethical committee, they wanted to know what is the law in this, from Peru, so we said Chile in Argentina this is the law, in Peru

and Bolivia there is no law. So they said well, if there is no law there is no real reason for them no to be put on display but of course every museum can choose if they want or not to put on display those objects. And our director said, well, I don't agree with you not agreeing with the loan of the head, but in the end they had already found from [name] the collector, another head but yeah…

[discussion on a private collector from Antwerp and the customs seized collections]

M: Do you think it also has to do with the fact that all museums are under the National Museum Association, and there you have an ethical script about human remains, do you think the fact that it is not an actual policy and it is only a recommendation, do you think that has an impact on what gets exhibited or not? And in regards to traffic as well

L: In the Netherlands? Well traffic is a law […] it is really difficult to make legislation on what to display. Because like I said there are lots of people who don't have a problem with it. There is people all around the world, and Dutch people, who have no problem with displaying human remains. So I don't think you can do anything… I would help if somehow, indigenous people in the American Andean cultures where this mummies are made would agree on what they think should happen. That would happen in Canada, in New Zealand, in Australia, but then it is up to us if we want to listen or not. But then It would be a law, and I wouldn't have to fight from here with all kinds of people who want to put mummies on display to get the visitorship, and I would have to Assen yes or no should this mummies be on display. It is difficult, there are all sorts of people, but like, the people there have other things in their minds that for them is more important or threatening, like territorial rights, soberany. It is logical that that is not on their minds.

M: I had other questions that are not specifically related to the human remains, but more of how the museum works in a sense. So I was looking online and you have a little organizational… organogram, and I wanted you to tell me how you see this organogram, and from the point of the curator what happens afterwards, with things like for example an exhibit with human remains, what would happen. So where does the first person tells you: "well I would like this to be exhibited", where does it go to… the chain of command.

L: So how we decided and what is the chain of command from there. It is a complex story, I guess. Lets imagine that this is not an idea that comes from us, but comes from outside, cause I would not pur an idea of putting mummies on display.

M: ok, so let's say the national museum association asked you or something

L: let's say the mummy exhibit from Mannheim was offered to us. What would happen is that it would go into, right now, as it is now, it would go, cause that is what I am going to limit myself to that, I am not going into the past and how we did..

M: no, no, now

L: So now it would go to the programming, which is already the way it is going to work in the merge situation with the Tropen museum and the African Museum, I would go to the Programming Committee, it would actually go to AnneMarie, who is the head of exhibitions in our museum. If you would go get in the African Museum or the Tropen museum it would got to their programming people. And then she would probably contact me (head curator) and say: hey Laura I got this proposal. And then either if the proposal is something we are not going to be doing at all or… I can say: I think that this person or this museum or this researcher we can't work with them for lalalala, it could actually die there. But what if AnneMarie said, yeah well I still think this could be something. Then I would put it to the programming committee. So we

have a programing committee now, I don't know I the new schedule has been put online, I don't think so. And in this programming committee you have the three people of the exhibitions department of the African Museum in Berg en dal, the Tropen Museum and our Museum, so that is AnaMarie, Ingrid and Mariel, so the three of them, and then we have our director, the commercial director Jhon, me and for now still the commercial director of the Tropen Museum. And Wayne, we try to have Wayne in there to, he is going to be the director of the research department but he is not officially in that committee. And then we'll discuss it there.

M: pros and cons?

L: the pros and cons, so it might be that because I have a strong personal opinion on this, it might be that it would help for it not to be exhibited, but it might be like: "yeah well actually, democratically we think it is a good idea". And then it would go, we would have to make a decision. If the director said: "look we really need the visitor ship and I think this exhibit is just going to be great and it will" then we would have, I have to decide what I want to do, continue along this lines and continue working with this exhibit and working here or if I shouldn't… yeah I guess if that would still be decided, all the curators would work on the exhibit, or some people would be chosen to work on the exhibit and then we will still…

M: yeah, but would you make changes to it, you would have to keep it that way or?

L: yeah, well it is not a really good example, because in this case it would be only mummies, and in that case I would just not be able to work on that as a curator, and I think that will be for all the other curators as well. So maybe we can take another example, where it would be one mummy or two mummies. And then we would be able to do something to make it work.

M: and then you would do something as you did with the Tin-Tin.

L. Make it into a way that you can find it acceptable to still have the mummies on display, but make them as a… use them to address certain issues, issues which are ethically relevant…

M: And in this programming committee, there is no pecking order or there is?

L: well the museum director is always the one who would is always decide.

M: but whithin then the other people, it would be very horizontal

L: hmmm yeah.

M: and talking about this merger with the Tropen museum, there are a lot of human remains in that collection as well, the policies that you have here…

L: from the Andean region?

M: yeah or well that is what I have heard from Martin, I don't know. Would you be keeping the same standards then, would you be trying to… repatriation or…

L: yeah. There, there is no middle or south American curator, so I would still be deciding on that, together with martin. But I think Mratin and me we kind of stand on the same…

M: same grounds

L: I think in this cases usually the curators do have a strong say. But in general if other more, with human remains is still pretty well, stuff has been written in all, its been well documented. People now that human

remains are an issue. With other things which are more representation or sacred objects, it is much more fluid…

M: gray areas?

L: gray areas, much more gray area. And I think that for human remains everybody knows it is an issue, for everybody, all around the world it is an issue human remains, people can relate to that more easily. But I guess it is more difficult to put some, like you will see in the Jimmy Nelson we are going to have right now, there is really representation, it's really all kind of issues, that are huge issues to us as curators, there has been a year of discussions about this exhibit and how we can. To us, it is: how can we do damage control?; to the commercial department let's say, or the exhibits department they say: how can we still be really attractive. And that is a constant battle, between… So once it has been decided in the programming committee: ok we are going to do an exhibit on the Buda or Jimmy Nelson or whatever, there is no way that someone can Veto I think, in the programming committee an exhibit, except for the director. In the end the general director is the one that is going to decide, really. He can always say…

M: and he takes the recommendations from…

L: And he takes recommendations, so he will say. We have this happen, not wheter or not an exhibit should be taken yes or no, though I can imagine that it would happen, but more on certain parts of exhibits, where he will take all the recommendations of the different people who were you know, not agreeing with each other, and then decide what was going to be.

M: so for example, in this Jimmy Nelson exhibit t where there is really polemic photos, and I know that or example you took out the Huaorani photo, so what you have now is negotiations between the PR department and the curators, and in that sense is there a pecking order, between the two? Would the PR department be able to say: there is no way we are taking that, cause that is the money maker, that is the one that is going to attract visitors, we can't take it out from the exhibit.

L: Again here is the general director who is going to decide, if you really want to know this more in detail, which you should because of your topic, you should talk to someone from the project bureau, in the new... It used to be that we would just sit with each other and just argue, endlessly. And then for a long time in the past when Agnik was still here, , she used to be head of the exhibitions department, but she died in a tragic accident, she would be the one in the end saying yes or no. Then after her death, AnnaMarie took over, and she is much more a person that tries to bring the parties together

M: negociate

L: negociate and see how we can still work out the best way to do this. But at times, I guess, it would be the project… after that we got the project bureau installed, and the project manager is the one who is going to, who actually needs to prepare all the decisions that need to be made, and then the general director. So first the "Core team" of the exhibit's group, will decide on what they think should happen

M: and that is you?

L: it is not me, that would be the curator who is involved, one or two curators depending, in Jimmy Nelson there where two curators.

M: so it depends in who has been named the director of this

L: the project manager, he is not the director he is the project manager

M: and that changes every time or is it…

L: there is a couple of now, there are three people now who are project managers, and there will be a couple of people more coming

M: complicated strategy

L: yeah, well, it used to be that the curators where always on the defensive because they felt they were not been heard and many times the exhibition manager, who was also the exhibition maker many times… I need to draw this to explain… So we used to have a long time ago, before I started to work here, there was a curator and that person would decide what we were going to put on display, as people would put it so the curator was a little king to his territory, and his territory was his region… so that was kind of how it used to be before the reorganization, and you now the re-installment of the museum. Then Steven Engelsman, became the director, and he decide to install something that was called the exhibition makers team, so this were people who were going to… So you had curators, which are regional curators in that case, and you have within the research department, which right now I am the head of now. And then the exhibitions department and you would have there, three exhibition makers, exhibition producers let's call them producers. And then you have here the director (on top) who is now Stan, it used to be Steven Engelsmans who is now in Vienna. With Steven this (head of exhibits departmet) is now AnnaMarie, it used to be Annick. Steven and Annick decided to do this producers idea, and during Agnnick, she was the right hand of Steven, and that is why the producers had a lot of power, and the curators, who used to be the ones who had power and authority, felt like: Ok, half of the stuff that I say, it doesn't really matter because the producers are the ones deciding, so for a while, when Stan came he was like: so who is making decisions here?. Cause it wasn't clear anymore, and many times AnnaMarie, who was also one of the producers, but was also the head of the exhibitions department… so with every exhibit AnnaMarie would be the one to decide, well to be the project leader let's say, and then there would be a curator, one of the producers, and you would have the technical people, and you would have the collection management people, and then they together they form this core team.

M: ok, something that is not clear. So, the producers what background do they have?

L: they usually are form the Reinward Academy, that is the Museum Academy here in the Netherlands, the one in Amsterdam, so they would have studied there [explanation of the people who make up the department, two are form this academ, the other is an anthropologist]

M: so this is more of the museology-museography department

L: yes, they are the museology department. So what happens is usually this two people (curator and producer) really make up the story line.

M: so the content that the curator gives goes to the producer who decide how to put it?

L: yeah, they kind of do it together. It is really a team where you discuss: how should we do this. And you as a curator you start explaining stuff, you write stuff so they can read, and then get everything so: how are we going to put this up, but whithout doing this… So they kind of that is the producer. And at time you will get together with the hole team, technical.. educational people are also into the team, the collection management people are into it, who else PR and marketing, they are all into that team. And so it used to be that AnnaMarie who was the head o the exhibition department, but she was also a producer didn't feel like, so what Stan noticed is: it's a bit strange here who is… in the end the decisions are been made by someone who is not neutral. So, why don't we put, take AnnaMarie from that, she will become another producer so she can be put into a team and who is going to be is a project manager, so he installed a project bureau which is a new thing, from last December…

M: oh, so just a year ago?

L: yeah, so project bureau [three people involved, one takes care of the winter exhibit, another of the summer exhibit and another one takes care of moves and things like that].

M: ok, and their background is what?

L: Eida was in RW academy, Rapti studies Indonisean studies so in the research department, and Ninja I think she did art history.

M: ok, so they are from a wider range than the producer where

L: yeah. Then apart from that we have the collection management. And then we have all the finances and technical. But I think this are the main pillars. And so what we do is we work in project themes, cause we used to not do that, and I think it is a great thing that we do that, the old authority is very confuse and very difuse, but the story line. So the story line, most of the story line discussion are between this two people (curator and producer) and most of the production decisions need to be made with collections management also, which objects can be used, can we not use, how much its going to cost how are we going to display them. And then the rest is all arranges around this things, but when PR for example, with the example you were giving, says: We need to have a clearer story of what you are doing

M: a clearer piece or whatever

L: yeah, a clearer piece or a clearer , we need to know what this whole story is going to be build up around, and we need to be sure that what we are promising people is really going to happen. Those things I think usually with education they also say: we cant put anything in education with this if you are not going to address this and this and this issue… so that is just constant conversations going on. And then apart from this team which is the core team, there are a number of, there is also something that is called the "steering group", you can say that though that is probably not the name, that I am in, so all the managers are in there, so at a certain point and time when the core team has made certain decisions or certain proposals, they send them…

M: they send them to the project manager?

L: no the project manager is always involved, they send it to the steering group. The project manager is always taking notes and preparing all the [documents]. So if there are issues, the steering group are the ones that are going to decide: well this is what we are going to do with them. And so from the steering group it goes to the general director and the project manager reports with the general director, and the general director makes the decisions in the end.

M: ok, so let's say in the case of human remains you would decide, and since it is a controversial issue it would go to the steering group. And from the Steering group the recommendations would go to the General director, as well as the decisions from the Project Manager and then he would decide?

L: yes! And then after all this, when we are all in agreement, the designers come in.

M: oh, ok, so the designers are not the producers?

L: no, the exhibit designers, and this sometimes is awful, this is how our museum changes, the way it looks, the way our permanent exhibit look very much are product of the exhibit designers. SO this are companies, in the Netherlands, there are usually not internal

M: so you don't have a team that designs the exhibits? And are they architects, artists?

L: They are architects mainly and designers who have gone to design academies.

M: so you would tell them: I need this here and they would be like: ok I'll put this thing around it… or?

L: no, what happens is we give them the story line, and we give them all kinds of imagery and they form an idea of what it should look like, and that many times gives a big, you know.., so what sometimes happens, what used to happens is that AnnaMarie would be the one in contact with the exhibit designers and that would be for us as curators very frustrating, cause sometimes it is just easier if you can work with the designers

M: because in terms of content you would know

L: you would know more and if they say: ah, it is like this and this and this, you can say: no, it is more like that and that and that, so you can actually already correct any problems, while producing this exhibit. And this is now, and those where really issues. And then for the texts there is also a texts writer, editor.

M: and that is not the education department?

L: no, they really the education department makes educational products for kids

M: only for kids then? Education has nothing to do with adults?

L: no, just kids. And there used to be text editors, text is now much more internal. So this days AnnaMarie looks this. SO the curator write a lot of things, longer than it is going to get into the exhibit. So in the exhibit is going to be what the producer will do, cause they will make 120 words texts. While the curator will make 500 or more 1000 words text, they comprise it, make it much more simple, and then we get that fight going on, once the texts are been produced. So we have fights about fights. We first have conversations about the storylines, then we have conversations about the objects: this really need going and no and etc., this is usually the conversation between the curator and collection manager, we usually are pretty much in agreement. And then you have the producer and the collections manager, and specially once the exhibit is actually coming, because sometimes the exhibit designers want to put something on display without showcases, they want to be able to put, use certain areas of the building which cannot be used according to the collections management, so they have their issues on that, and then you have the text editors, that I am really glad that has been taking out or some of times now we use people that we know, we think that they know what they are doing, we all, that they understand what we are talking about, so they don't just see the file they don't just come up with their own ideas because they have been to Indonesia ones, you know, stuff like that that has happened in the past. So…

M: so now they are more for style corrections than they are for content?

L: Yeah, exactly yeah. So then this (project manager scheme) is a close process, and this (design exhibit) is also a process , and this is is between the hole team (exhibit design) and this is between the producer and the curator (project manager scheme).

M: so the curator would have already decided what objects to use?

L: yeah, but the producer can say: yeah but can we use this to tell that story, and all that.

Interview Martin Berger

18/02/2014
Volkenkunde Museum
Martin Berger
Total time: 22 minutes, 33 seconds
MB (Martin Berger) M (Maria Ordonez)

M: Just as a background, how long have you been in contact with the remains?

MB: let me see, with this specific mummies, I think I started working here four years ago, and that is how I, just browsing thru the collection saw them, there was such a thing as an Andean mummy in the museum. In term of actually seeing them in real life, I think that was one of the first time I went to the depot in s-Gravenzande, so I went to the freezer then and saw them. Before this I worked in an archaeological project in Peru, much of the work included digging up burials, and actually mass graves, probably from an epidemic, so I have already worked with human remains in an Andean context.

M: do you know if they have been used in exhibits before?

MB: I must say I really don't know much about that, cause it is not registered in our system, but I understand that they were in several exhibits. So they were in the [tin tin] exhibit which Laura mounted in 2007 and from what I understand from Kohn they were in the permanent exhibit also but I don't have any information.

M: If there would be information where could I find it?

MB: good question I was wondering that too. So I looked in the museum system and I didn't find it there, I think one of the things we can do, is see in the annual reports, or look at old museum tour guides, to see if they are mentioned there.

M: Ok the current museum was changed in what year?

MB: it was changed in 2012, no, yeah 2012.

M: and by this point they were not on exhibit?

MB: yeah by the first exhibit I saw in 2001 they were already not there.

M: Have there been any other exhibits with human remains in the museum that you know of?

MB: for middle and south America or for the whole museum?

M: for the museum and then in particular for middle and south America.

MB: from what I understand in the African gallery there is some exhibit that include human remains like some objects. For middle and south America we have this human skull, Mesoamerican human skull. But in the Andean region we don't have any human remains.

M: OK, and of the total of the human remains for Mesoamerica and south America, besides the skull that you have worked with, have any of them been studied previously?

MB: they have been studied but not in depth, actually we have not a very much human remains in our collections, especially compared to the Tropen museum, they used to have a physical anthropological

cabinet so they really have large collections. We don't really have much, we have some bones from excavation on the Caribbean mostly, which were studied during the excavation pretty extensively which was in the beginning of the 20th century. And then apart from that we have the mummies that were part of a doctoral thesis or MA thesis in the 80s that you know about, but that also the focus was in the materials associated with the mummies not the mummies themselves, and I think in terms of research for the human remains I think that is it, as far as I know.

M: in terms of catalogue then, the human remains that come from excavations and the ones that have been bought are catalogued separately or how are they?

MB: Basically we catalogue everything be series number, so the way it comes in, in the sense that all this stuff that came with an excavation is under one series, with excavation materials and shreds. The mummies are in their own series, yeah.

M: Ok, so there is no intentional separation of them, but they are in separate collections. So more on a personal level, what do you think are the difficulties you had when working with the mummies or approaching them?

MB: I think that for me personally exhibiting human remains is a difficult thing, because I think it is basically something you don't do, you don't exhibit dead people, it not necessarily has anything to do with what source communities feel about it, I just feel uncomfortable with exhibiting someone who was left as a dead person by people who love them, and then putting them in a museum, that is weird for me. That is not necessarily a professional opinion, based on the literature or whatever, but based on my own feelings. On the other hand I understand how, everybody is fascinated by human remains, and I am also somewhat of an hypocrite in that I don't feel, I don't have the same feeling about this mosaic skull that I have been working on, that has been on exhibit and that, but I have been thinking for the last couple of weeks why is it that I feel differently about the mummies and the skull, and I am not sure why, to be honest, I think it has to do with the fact that the mummies are still for the large part in the same way that they were left on the mountain, they are still wrapped, the position is still the same and have objects associated. While the skull is not attached to a body, it has been taken out of this part, this is not a scientific thing again this is just for me personally, but I do see for myself that this is not a consequent position, how I can say this is and this isn't, yeah but I don't really feel comfortable with exhibiting human remains.

M: and would you say, as a junior curator, would you say those feeling change the way your create and exhibit or curate and exhibit?

MB: yeah, I would say so, I would not be totally opposed to putting a mummy in an exhibit if that is what other people want. In a sense that other people, been other curators or from the exhibits department, but I do think that the only way you can do that is if you are sure that people will feel an emotional connection to this mummies, to this human beings, and that there is enough information, you are okay with that. You can always say that while we follow the ICOM code of ethics, because the ICOM code of ethics says you have to do it [exhibit] in a respectful way, but obviously a respectful way is wide an everything, is very vague, so yeah I think it does. For me, if I was the sole person deciding on the exhibit I would not put in the mummy. But I would include the skull.

M: going back to that, you said you wouldn't have a problem if people would like to see. So would you say in most museums or museums in general, people want to see mummies?

MB: yeah, my impression is that, then again not based on research, is that a lot of people are, as I am, fascinated to see a human being that has died, but has been preserved in a corporeal form , from like 1500 years ago I mean it is really impressive and fascinating and it really impacts you, but, yeah so I do think that there is an overall thing that most people do want to see them.

M: and again going to your previous comment, you would display them if there was enough information about them What is the information that you would like to see and that you think other people would like to see?

MB: for me personally what I would think would be the bare minimum, would be to know at least more or less what kind of culture this person belonged to, where they lived, when they lived, and specially know why they are here now and how they came here, because in the end they were all looted from their graves, so there is different ways to put this as well. For the people who come to the museum I find that really hard to judge, you know, if I want to make a caricature I would say there are probably people who want to know how come they still look like this, how did they die, why did they die, where they sacrificed, that is something that is always associated with middle and south America, yeah but I find it hard to judge.

M: Have you ever though like, if I had to display them, this is what I would say or??

MB: yeah, I think If I would have to display them what I would do is include information about who this people were, include information about the looting of graves and looting in the Andean region, just in general, and also about different sensibilities that exist about speaking of certain things, and source communities, though they might not be objectively linked to this people, I mean if you have a mummy that is Chimu, who are the descendants of the Chimu, but do feel this sort of emotional contention, it is all about authenticity in the end.

M: so in those terms, what do you feel, both professionally and personally, think the museum should do with the mummies?

MB: My strong preference would be for them to go back to where they came from, if we really have good ways of finding out where they came from. Because I think the display of human remains in exhibits is a dying practice, at least for ethnographic mummies, the Egyptian mummies might be different because there is no emotional attachment to them, no one sees themselves as a descendant. I think the exhibition of mummies in ethnographic museums, because of the colonial past, is a problematic thing in itself, increasingly been seen as such as well. So I don't think there are many opportunities when you can display a mummy as such. Having said that if we do never display the mummies, why would we keep them in a freezer in s-Gravenzande, it doesn't belong there, it has nothing to do there, it serves no purpose, once your research is done, maybe people 100 years from now would use different techniques to find more things about them, but I mean, what is the use, so for me preferably they would just go back, be buried there, if someone is interested there, obviously, because someone has to be able to feel responsible you know, in Peru, or Chile or Argentina to be able to take care of the mummies.

M: let's go back a little to what you said, you mentioned how displaying mummies in ethnographical museums is a dying practice, however these are archeological mummies in an ethnographic museum, how do you feel about that as well?

MB: I think that many if not, not all, but many ethnographical museums are also archaeological museum. Because I mean if we talk about ethnographic museums what are the mains things, in Mesoamerica: Maya, classic Maya stuff, if you go to the Qui Branly, or to the Museo Nacional de Antropologia e Historia in Mexico, it is the archaeology, supposedly the anthropology the living countries [what is shown]. So it think it is hard to separate the ethnology museum and the archaeology.

M: and then going back to what you said again, let's say this report comes out or someone is working with them and it turns out the mummies are from different places and you have no response from the countries, that they want them back. How would you feel about the countries not wanting them back, and how would that change your view regarding the mummies here?

MB: I think, I could imagine the situation, where source countries would say no we don't want them, especially you know in Peru where it is difficult, but I think this is one of the problems that ethnographic museums have is that the nation state not necessarily represent all its people. These mummies are ancestors of indigenous people, who are not always represented in state institutions or in culture, and so, we would have to see if there might be a way around it as well. If there are other people who do feel attachment to this mummies and want to have something to do with them. If it turns out to be impossible then it is impossible, they would have to stay in s-Gravenzande. I mean ideally they would have to be buried, I think that is where they belong, on the other hand if no on wants them then that is that.

M: anything else you want to add on a more personal level, in terms of the difference when thinking about human remains and working with them, hands on?

MB: I think it is interesting how, you know, having worked before on quite a lot of archaeological excavations, where I was in contact with human remains and had to dig up people, once they are disarticulated the experience is very different for me. When I had to dig up cemeteries here [NL] and in Peru, you know the first days maybe it was a bit weird, but after it was well: skull, fibula, whatever, in some ways that goes for the Mixtec skull as well. Whereas when we went to see the mummies, we actually touched them, I felt very uncomfortable, because you can still see how they looked like before, the skin is still there, and I think, and this is something I just realized now, that part of that, you know, apprehension on touching them, maybe is because I might be afraid of breaking them, while if you have a loose bone there is no chance of breaking them.

M: and would that have more to do with your responsibility as curator, or would it have to?

MB: It has to do with both, my responsibility as a human being not to brake someone's body, but also my responsibility as a curator, in charge of the collection as it is, that shouldn't be disturbed and kept in this conditions. I would say, I was going to say more the second than the first.

M: Do you think there is a different way of experiencing human remains as a curator that it is for the people that work at the reserve?

MB: I think that is more a personal thing than a position. Also has to do with the fact of how much you know about a cultural background of a person, person being the mummies, and about the cultural sensitivities around them. I mean once you have been to Mexico and talked to people who feel attached to human remains that can be clearly shown not to be related to them, it is a different experience than if you just go with a European mindset, saying it is only a dead person. So it is personally in your background.

M: and you think Dutch perception of human remains dug out in the Netherlands would be different than in regards to those of south American people would feel about remains dug out there?

MB: I don't know if I would dare to generalize that way. I think Dutch people, especially when it comes to remains that are not Dutch or not European, they are like, cool bones let's look at them. If it would be the same for the remains dug out in Eindhoven which went to the 1860, so let's face it there might be someone still alive descendants still alive, it might be different, though I didn't feel like it was, having visitors come in, I cannot judge for south America, but looking at Mesoamerica, traditionally human remains and ancestors are sacred, there is a spiritual connection… though thinking about it I wonder if that goes for young people as well, or has globalization and the western mind set come in and changed the way they see their own ancestors. But yeah I don't know.

M: So one last questions, talking about repatriation and political representation, do you think the issue with human remains is an ethical issue or a political issue?

MB: this is a lame answer, but it is both If you look at NAGPRA for example, that is a very political issue, but a t the same time it is a very ethical issue, coming from the genocide, but at the same time is about respect and ethical issues. But you can't see them apart from politics.

Interview Margrit Reuss and Martin Berger

05/02/2014
S-Gravenzande Reserve for the Volkenkunde Museum
Margrit Reuss (MR), Martin Berger(MB)
Total time: 49 minutes, 54 seconds
Y (Maria Ordonez)

Y**:** So how long have you been working, in general with the collection?

MR: I started at the beginning of 98 in a freelance project in this museum.

Y: Ok, and have you ever seen the mummies out of their crates as well?

MR: Not this specific one, there was one of them that was used in the "Tin Tin in Tibet" Exhibition.

B: It was actually in there?

MR: It was in there

B: it was the one with the feather… you'll see later on.

MR: yeah. It is one of those…

Y: Ok, the one that doesn't have one of those ponchos, or anything

MR: Yeah, I think. [looking at Martin] Why was it there?

B: I don't know, I wasn't here yet.

MR: But… I do remember the discussion on why on would or wouldn't put human remains… And I do see it as a part of conservation responsibility as well to think about what, how you deal with your materials and what type of objects one uses for what purpose. And I think human remains are always something that needs to be really thought about very carefully.

Y: and why were they using this mummy in this Tibet exhibit?

MR: no, no it wasn't a Tibet exhibit, it was "Tin Tin in Peru" exhibit

MB: in Peru

MR: yeah no, it doesn't make sense at all, yeah in Peru.

Y: and it was like in a case?

MR: it was in a case, had a lot of explanation around it, why…, so that the topic of displaying human remain, yes or no, was made, was discussed at that topic, and also the hole topic, in another showcase, the hole topic on elicit traffic.

Y: oh, that's good

MR: and that is Laura who was curator.

[looking at mummies and moving them]

Y: like I said, so no one else has been tinkering with them?

MR: Not as far as I know.

MB: they have been here for quite a bit so…

MR: and they did get this, well you can see, they get this tray in 95.

Y: oh, that was in 95?

MR: yeah, I mean it says, what this red point says is that it has been,

Y: 7/95 yeah

MR: before 95 they use low oxygen, hydrogen something, instead of freezing them, I don't think they would have put them into the freezer… the hole storage was moved into here and in this process objects were clean when possible, whether they had some insect damage and objects with the red dot, they have been treated for insects.

Y: Ah! OK, and the insect damage would have been in the exterior, because they haven't opened it to see…

MR: no, no, no, they wouldn't… but any doubt, you want to have a clean collection, so you have to start clean, so anything, the hole insects infest management we call here, is to try to have a clean storage, so anything that comes in from the outside, even the objects, are looked at whether they show any signs of any, any signs of insect damage, and something like this [points at mummy bundle 47) is so complex you wouldn't be able to say, so in a preventive measurement you would have… I would think it was nitrogen.

[Moving around and talking about the mummy age, and background while taking measurements]

Y: I don't know how much I can take measurements, how much can I move it? Cause I would like to take some skull measurement.

MR: That would be difficult. Especially here [points at the forehead] it looks like it falls apart, so I think we have to be… it looks more complete on the top.

Y: the measurements I need to take are maximum cranial length and breath, just to see if it has cranial deformation, I don't think that I will be pushing it. But the tricky part is that I need to get really close.

MR: I will stay like a cm away.

MB: it is also about relative sizes right [talking about ACD]

Y: you get an index, yes [talking about ACD]

MR: I do realize I feel uncomfortable with the whole…

Y: touching of it?

MR: yeah, with the whole…

MB: yeah, me too, last time we were here I was like "this is very powerful " , like when we were looking, at them…

Y: but does it make you feel squeamish?

MR: yeah, like it makes me like, I would like to pray almost

Y: really?

MB: I have the same thing, I am a totally unspiritual person, but and I have worked with a lot of human…

MR: I feel like why, why am I touching it, why, this is someone, it is supposed to be dead somewhere far away, why is it here in this pitiful position?

MB: why is it s-Gravenzande, on a table

Y: being poked around by people?

MB: it is funny cause I have worked on a lot of archaeological digs with bones, and…

MR: maybe it's the measuring

Y: really, the measuring specifically?

MR: maybe because, really the whole history of measuring people, as such a

Y: does this measuring make it more medical, does it make it more about human?

MR: I don't know, didn't read enough about it in the books, but it seems like this measurement of skulls and people is so connected to the way was looked like…

Y: inferiority?

MR: yeah the way that people was looked at like, oh yeah well its just a measurement.

Y: and not as people?

MR: yeah…

MB: but it is funny because I have worked in a lot or archaeological digs, I worked a lot with bones, and I didn't feel any problem with that, at all..

Y: so bones is different than a human been?

MB: yeah, for me yeah. And also the environment also, because when you are in a dig you know there is just like "oh, there is a bone", while here it's like…

[taking measurements]

Y: well actually what I am doing now is not trying to measure it's skull capacity or anything. But just to see if it was deformed artificially, like maybe when she was little she had a cradle or a board…

MR: is she a child?

Y: no, young, not a child but young. And I am saying it is a girl but I don't know really until we open it or x-ray it.

[talking about the mummy's braids and age]

Y: How would you feel about x-raying them? Would it be worse than just than taking measurement like I am, or would it help get a picture of it?

MB: Do you think that is something you would feel comfortable with?

MR: not in a general way. It really comes down to this human part, to me it is..

Y: is this process offensive to you?

MR: yeah, yeah, I would have to really, doesn't it mean x-raying means that it affects C14?

[talking about x-raying and effects on samples]

MR: I thought that the C14 measures the radiocarbon and the half life and not sure if that would affect it.

MB: well I don't think we would want to do C14…

MR: but then with what

Y: yeah that would be complicated.

MB: it would have to think about that and isotopes for them to be repatriated

Y: I wanted to ask that, because now that I am doing the research and you know they come from different places, would that matter for the repatriation purposes?

MB: It would really complicate matters if they are form different countries.

Y: we already have at least two different countries, Peru and Chile... thought at the beginning we thought they all were Argentinian.

MR: and that is due to your research that we know that?

Y: yeah.

[talking about provenance of the mummies and Edward de Bock]

Y: have you ever worked with Egyptian mummies?

MR: well since we don't have them here no

MB: everything that is Egyptian and those kinds of things they all go to the RMO

MR: and there of course it is very normal to x-ray and do lots of stuff to the mummies

Y: right, so been in an ethnology museum is totally…

MR: I think because of the ethnology history of looking at other people… Egyptians have always been big Egyptians back then… and I don't know if the Egyptians now

MB: there is no cultural continuity between the Egyptians and all… that is one of the things

Y: but then, do you think there is cultural continuity between Peruvians now and…

MB: I would say there is a perceived cultural continuity, I find it hard to judge for Peru, but I would say for Mexico there definitely is.

MR: There they are Inca or Maya and they see their own roots, don't they

MB: Like I said I find it hard to judge for the Andean area, but I know that in Mesoamerica people feel and emotional attachment

Y: so it would make it harder to exhibit them given that they are attached let's say to this…

MR: I think not without the involvement of the community, whoever would be the ones who can speak about them.

MB: obviously this is the one thing that you have to struggle with, it's who represents indigenous people. Now for example we obviously contact with people in the embassy, who obviously do not represent the people. Like I was talking to the ambassador for Guatemala last year and he was like the most anti indigenous person I have ever met, even though I think 80% of Guatemala are indigenous people.

Y: So then, who would be entitled? Let's say this mummies would be put on an exhibit, who would be entitled to say "yes, let's do it"?

MB: What we would do is in the case of an actual exhibition is just contact different people, like we have a lot of contact with indigenous organizations, so just contact them and organize something like a round table and ask them, what do you think? Do you think this is disrespectful so why? What can we do to switch that? if no, can we just exhibit? Are people entitled to … Obviously I mean if you say this is Chimu then who are the modern day Chimu?

Y: exactly, who is going be actually attached to them right?

MB: But I mean Inca obviously is a different matter, I mean there are a lot of people who speak kechua. So obviously it is a complicated thing…

MR: and how would that relate to us

Y: in concepts of ownership, do you think the museum "owns" the mummies?

MR: No, if anything it is the state who owns this collection, but we only are, we maintain it. We have the right but also the duty .

Y: and it applies the same to this [pointing at the mummies] than to a vase?

MR: to this, I would even go further, that is in my personal feeling… I think that, and also the state of the Netherlands can say we own, this mummies got here. If there is somebody, I would feel that if somebody comes here and says "this is our ancestors" that is why they should go back, I think well like who should stop you.

Y: would they be reburied?

MR: that is the decision of whose ancestors they belong to. I don't think I have the right to say something about this, as been an authority.

MB: I agree… the only thing I thinks is that is for me the best line is what purpose would this dead people serve here, if they are not on exhibit, and if they are on exhibit then what purpose would they serve is it really us wanting to exhibit mummies because you now it brings a lot of people, or is it an education effort as well or…

MR: Could be an exhibition of different dead people…

[taking more measurements and talking about mummies and the state of preservation of the bundle]

[Put mummy 47 back and take mummy 65 out]

Y: How cold is it? [the freezer]

MR: It is 16ºC now, but I think it is between 13ºC and 16ºC

Y: I thought it was colder, it feels colder

MR: let's put it on the ground first and see how we want to take it out. He was just sitting up right before

MB: yeah in the exhibit and in the book as well. But it is sitting in some kind of wooden block thing

MR: yeah, maybe he will just stay. So he does need something. But you want to get it out… we can also find one bigger cushion to put under so it has something soft to support.

[looking for cushion]

Y: oh here are the pieces that come with it… I am guessing it is not gold, because all the other pieces are in the safe right?

MB: yeah, all the other piece are in the safe

Y: or was it cause it was in the exhibit and then they separate this objects from the rest.

MR: we don't separate anything when we do, I think, we want to keep thing s together as much as possible, so this is not super high gold content. It could be that it was separated in the exhibit.

[arranging the pillows]

Y: we probably need to put our hands under it for support?

MR: let's see. [after first trying to lift it and noticing the movement in the pelvic region] oh no, yes.

Y: I'll put my arms under it. So I want to know how this handling will make you feel, because it is a little more personal handling of it…

MB: this one is really unstable right?

[mummy on the table]

MB: its hard right? [referring to MB's face expression after handling the mummy]

MR: is that I know that is has been on the exhibition, and I was there too, which makes me feel a bit more…

Y: so, when it was in the exhibit, you didn't get this feeling that you are getting now.

MR: I wasn't handling it, I didn't put it into the showcase. And I saw it in the showcase already, behind glass. WE have to be careful because this feathers in the back yeah… uh

Y: it is a very delicate one

MR: yeah I think if anything we would want to put it in an sit up position.

[taking measurements]

MR: when I was in the National Museum of Brasil, in Rio, they also had this room with the mummies, and it was like, all this kids "ah look at this, alalala", I stepped back for a little bit just to see what their reaction was and yeah, it is just attraction, it's not…

MB: people want to see

Y: were there adults around?

MR: yeah, with their parents.

Y: and do the parents do/explained anything about it?

MR: no they were like “yeah”, and there was a child mummy as well, weird, maybe I’m just sensitive.

[MB shows MR pictures of a wedding he went to that weekend]

MR: are you trying to distract me from this?

[looking at mummy again]

MR: do they prepare the mummies in some ways? It looks emptied

Y: no, it is all there… [explanation about mummification]

MR: how much water did we lose, the 70%...

MB: this shells this, sea shells

Y: necklace from what I read.

MR: yeah from the back the feathers, this is not a great way of storing it [some feathers are falling apart from the textile]

Y: so it should be standing up?

MR: yeah, but that also… there is no good solution for this. To support it.

[taking measurements of skull, second time is easier for MR than with the first mummy]

Y: look at the teeth inside, the molars, very well preserved. The lower incisors are a bit worn. I can’t see the third molars, I would estimate younger than 21, but if I can x-ray I would know the range between 18 or 25 by the root of the molar. [touching the head shape] Apparently she has an occipital deformation. This is shorter than the other measurement.

MB: but you don’t notice because it is down you can’t really see it.

Y: you can compare it to the other one [comparing measurements out loud]It seems to be occipitally deformed.

MR: what is that?

MB: this part of the head [pointing at the back]

MR: and this is something that had been done after someone has died or?

Y: no, you can only deform a skull up until someone is 4 years old, it should have been done before that.

MR: for beauty?

Y: maybe beauty maybe something else.

MB: this is relatively… I mean this is not as extreme as it comes, there are skulls that are very bad…

Y: yeah and actually there are Dutch skulls that are deformed

MB: yeah the “Marka” skulls

Y: yeah because of the hats, the really tight hats, and because of where you sleep. It seems like a foreign thing but…

MB: yeah in France they also did it up until the 16th century.

[talking about the effects of ACD to the brain function]

[talking about taking isotopes samples from the teeth]

Y: So let’s compare it to the other one, when you see it without textiles, is there a difference in how you feel about them?

MR: The other was kind of, more closed, this makes me even more ashamed.

Y: so the other one seems like it was taken from a grave, this one seems like you have undressed it?

MB: But when this person was buried, she was naked except for the cloak? Or did she have something else on…

Y: that is really interesting. I don’t know really, there should be a textile on top of this for sure, but I am not too sure. The textile pattern is still here, but I am not entirely sure if this would have gone on top of anything else, cause this is the fancier textile you are going to have, so something on top yes.

MR: somebody with a big…

Y: So you can see here [looking at de Bock’s book] there should be this other textile, but this will still not be the outer textile, there should be something else around it, and then he would have another textile on top. WE have at least 1 or 2 textiles missing

MR: from when it was sold? Seems possible, you would make it seems more exciting if you just dress her down.

[looking at the mummy’s labels to try and figure out if it was treated for insect activity]

[looking at the artifacts that were attached to the mummy]

Off time, introduction to the other human remains collections housed at the museum: The Mali archaeological remains.

Y: They are treated very differently, ah?

MR: but they are also, how can I say, they are not cultural objects, they are not, they all come from excavations

Y: oh, so they are not in the catalog as objects?

MR: no, they are in the catalogs as bones

Y: ah, ok so that is very different.

MR: and I think there is also, by one of our curators, ex-curators, and they were also talking about that sending them back to Mali but Mali is not doing too well right now.

[talking about the mummy with no wrappings and how hard it is to contextualize it, age and possible provenance]

MB: do you want me to hold it up so you can see the hair. It looks like not her hair

MR: it is a lot of hair, like a wig. So you make it an adult by putting long hair

Y: hmmm, maybe, let's see.

[noises of discomfort as they lift the mummy for examination]

Y: no, it's her hair, at least here you can see it's her hair.

[more discussion on the mummies hair]

MR: which one you want to do next [taking out bundle 6]

Y: can we lay it on the table?

MR: there is no cloth with this one. It looks like it is very fragile

Y: let's e how it holds, I am not sure I can even do head measurements with it

MB: is this original hair or? [picking up a strand of loose hair over the mummy]

Y: I don't know but it looks like it. It is not mine, it has a full dry root

MR: we can do DNA on in… oh stop it [awkward voice]

[description of Arica bundles]

Y: you would have this cord here [points at cord] is to keep your head from falling away from your body once you...

MR: that's more ritual or really more physical falling off?

Y: ah, physical falling off. I guess it's just preparing the dead that way.

MR: this is only part of the body?

Y: no, this is the entire body it's just older

MB: big headed baby

Y: yeah this one would be older that the one we just saw. [looking at the mummy to see if skull measurements can made]

MR: why would the skin not be preserved and the textile would?

Y: maybe because it was exposed. Or bugs…

[trying to get a maximum length measurement, the coronal suture has separated the skull]

MR: but it is true, you see the skin up until the opening

[looking into the mouth cavity to see if there are any teeth loose inside]

MB: you can see there were teeth there

Y: yeah you can see sockets, so they could have fallen inside. I can see molars, one on the back over there that's a molar

[decisions about what other bundles to see, all the rest are closed so no more examinations]

Y: would you say that the smell bothers you? Do you think that's the mummies that make the smell?

MR: yeah I think its deteriorating…

Y: but would they? Deteriorate more, that's and interesting…

MB: more like the seal blubber skins that are there

Y: this are the first mummies I have encountered that have any sort of smell

MR: oh yeah? That's interesting

Y: so it makes you think of decay, of bodies decaying?

MB: I'm not sure it's the mummies

MR: what smell the same is all the stuff that comes out of the [Mali] digs, its caves not out in the open. But if you open the showcase in the Africa Gallery it reeks the same.

Y: it smells the same? Are there any cats or animal pelts in the Africa part. To me it smells like cat pee

MR: it does but… [talking from a distance about similar odors]

MR: If you go into that case it's really like… its awful. That's why I though its decay…

[laughs, moving back the mummy to the storage]

MR: objects in exhibition, it becomes an object, something on display, yeah its interesting

Y: yeah I wonder if that is the case. If most of the people who are comfortable when they are behind the case but would feel uncomfortable if they have to measure them

MB: definitely so, I think so, especially people from the public

MR: that's also what makes it so fascinating… its scary

Y: I wonder, if you x-ray them and you put the x-rays next to them, would that make them more human or less human? Because you've seen x-rays of yourself, I am assuming

MR: yeah, yeah, my dad was actually a radiologist

Y: oh, ok so…

MR: it becomes medical I think

Y: would medical make it more human or not?

MR: yeah, maybe because all of the sudden, it's like, you…

Interview Geke Vinke

17/03/2014
Volkenkunde Museum
Geke Vinke (GV)
Total time: 12 minutes 43 seconds
M (Maria Ordonez)

M: First some basic questions, your name and how long have you been working for the museum?

G: My name is Geke Vinke, at the moment I am the manager of communication, that is my function, and I have worked in the museum since December 1992, so almost 22 years, it was my first job, and I liked it so much that I have stayed.

M: so, during your career in the museum, you have worked with several human remains, would you like to summarize which ones have been the most relevant that you have worked with, for example the case of the Maori head…?

G: yeah there have been different mummies. The repatriation of the Maori head was a very important one in the history of the Museum also, because also the minister of culture and the government was involved. Another one was the exhibition with Tin-tin and the Inca's, there was discussion about should the mummies, the albums of herge, we had perhaps most general in the permanent exhibition when it as acceptable to show human remains in different situations, I think those are the most important situations.

M: ok, and what were your thoughts on the Tin-tin exhibit specifically ,what was your involvement in the process of creating that exhibit?

G: well it was very carefully organized process, on a way it was about the one element, spectacular element in the exhibition, on the other hand it was very elementary getting to know the source communities, the source countries, how they react on showing or display this kind of objects, so all those steps were taken very seriously and I think in the end it was a very carefully taken decision and right decision to show this on the exhibit. And there was also some discussion with the education department, do we have to warn the people about it, but I think it came out right.

M: Do you think personally, that many people like to see mummies in museums? Why do you think that is?

G: yeah, yeah. Because there is a mysterious, spooky, spectacular thing about it that people like, how the past peoples like to go to annual markets where there are the woman with the beards and all that. I think that people are interested to see, like a kind of peep show

M: How about you. Are you interested in seen human remains in museums, or now that you know about repatriation and source communities do you feel differently?

G: no, actually no, cause my curiosity goes beyond this scary thing. When I was a child I used to live nearby […] and every year, every spring holiday, I was allowed to choose what museum I would like to go with my father, and every year I would choose to go to the National Museum of Antiquities here in Leiden, every year, not to see just the mummies and be spooked, but because I was very interested and had many books at home, it goes beyond just the scary part of it.

M: When you are planning this types of exhibits, what are the things that you think about telling the public and not telling the public? Is this a marketing aspect that you think about or also a sensibilities aspect?

G: Yeah, both parts are concern in this project. And also that is a good thing about working in a project team here in the museum, of course my first responsibility is the marketing part, but of course I have to reckon with the research teams and the collections department and the all the aspects that I involve in the discussion, and I think that is the best thing about working in such projects, that together we make the best fit, discussing and listening to each other, and trying to get to a middle ground.

M: and what are the issues that you have found in this discussion, mainly, that maybe curators or collections mangers have, that you would like to get around or would like to change?

G: A very important part for me is the social part is what the source communities have to say, but on the other hand it is also a very complicated discussion what is the source community who has to say something about it, what is the right thing to do? And one thing I think is very important is that in the past, this museum has a very long past 174 years, it was common sense to collect those things, to collect all the information to do research, etc. etc., for example we have a large collection from the Dogon valley in Africa, and I saw it a long time ago, an enormous amount of bones that what are we going to do with them? I would plead to give them back or bury them because it is never going to happen that we can show them in the exhibition, because it adds nothing to what we know, what we have, actually it Is such almost anonymous information.

M: in that case, would you make a difference between the human remains that come from excavations, digs that were from people of the museum, and the human remains that we have in the collection like for example the Andean mummies?

G: I think so, but not very sure of how to?

M: So in a more personal level again, do you think human remains, would it be good to exhibit them here or not?

G: in context, always in context within the exhibition

M: but on themselves not unless they have a a context of an exhibition around them.

G: yeah, like at the moment, you must have heard about it the Assen Museum in Drents, we want to visit in a few weeks, I am very curious to now, It is all about mummies and all about human remains in the exhibition, should we do death as an exhibition theme. And I don't have the answer yet.

M: And in this context, what are the thing you would like to know about human remains, that not only would be of interest to you but for other people?

G: The whole story about, is it kind of a coincidence, like the swamp mummies, you can't call it a coincidence but of course at that time they didn't know that they would be conserved as they are, it is a completely different story than the Egyptian mummies for example, so why, what was known about it, what was the purpose or not, that is very interesting to know cause that makes the understanding lots more easier.

M: and to sum up a bit in terms of the repatriation issue. You say to you source communities are very important in the discussion of displaying or not human remains, lets talk about the repatriation you have the Maori head.

G: It was a very carefully planned process, because the government was involved and they took all the procedures etc. etc., a very important step was that the cooperation of the museums here and there, where there was an enormous team of research from the Maori origins. And it was good to work with them and sense that we did a good thing, restore there, for them not to present it in a museum and say look what we got back from Europe, but It went directly to the community and it was good, organized, yeah. So it was a very important thing, also the community itself was involved, there was a team of Maori here in the museum and they performed so rituals etc. etc. and gave it a very serious and emotional context to it. It was very important for us, for the guests that were in the ceremony to see it was very well done, and organized, and we can trust our team, it was a very important part for me. And it was a difficult decision cause all kinds of newspapers and national broadcasts are very eager to jump on the subject, and they all wanted an image, what are you going to give back, what are you talking about, and in this case we decided with the Maori that we would not give any photos of the head itself, so we had paintings of Maori in the 19th century that looked like the same thing, statues were you can see the different tattoos in the head. We didn't give the photos free of the head, and I think it was a very good decision that we had to explain of course but it was exactly the issue, why we would give it back, do it respectfully.

M: And do you find also that the press gets very eager on this topic normally?

G: yeah, I pops up every year in what we call the “cucumber time” where there is nothing to write about, every year it pops up.

M: lets talk a bit about, have you seen the Andean mummies, in the collection, what do you know about when they were exhibited before?

G: yeah, I have seen them. I think they were not exhibited when I started here in the 1990s but before yes it must have been on display.

M: did you have any particular feeling about them?

G: no, nothing.

M: ok, thank you very much

Interview Anne Marie Woorle

21/03/2014
Volkenkunde Museum
Anne Marie Woorlee (A)
Total time: 20 minutes 51 seconds
M: Maria Ordonez

M: Some background questions here, your name, how many years have you been working here and your background?

A: Im Anne Marie Woorlee I am head of the Department of Exhibitions and Education. I am working for the museum for 29 years I think now, and I followed the Rijwnward Academy, is for museology, and when I finished my studies I worked for about 3 years in Surinam, and then I cam back to Holland, I started with the museum as a volunteer for about 1 year I think, I worked at the education department here for some years, and then at the exhibitions, well there was a lot of development in this museum, and then for the permanent exhibition that was the largest part actually my career, I really like to work on it, so how should this museum present the collections, what topics, what items.

M: so what while you have been working here, the permanent exhibit has changed twice, or more than that?

A: no, more than that, I think beacuase we started this more smaller part, more departments and part of the museum in 2001 we removed everything and the whole building was renovated from the inside, and then in 2011 we started to redecorate a little bit of the walls and make some master pieces more visible, and make put a little more context into the permanent exhibitions

M: yeah, this change towards the iconic you wanted to show?

A: yeah we did the entrance and the visitor information desks.

M: in those changes you were telling me there were some human remains like the mummies, in exhibit, but afterwards they weren't, do you know why this change happened.

A: Well, we removed the mummies because we couldn't conservate them, there was a terrible smell coming from the showcase, also for the public you know, and I was also involved in the discussion, so I don't know it was the same time if it was ethical to present this human remains, and Laura has said some of the people don't mind, it is respectful then it is OK, and yeah I think for the museum that is good to know, if you contact this people to know how they feel about it, yeah some people they ask for human remains back, and they go back, but other people don't say it is not too bad then yeah we can show them. Like the mummies in the museum of antiquities, they are still there.

M: that was my second question, in terms of the exhibits, do you have any policies on when and when not to display human remains or not?

A: I think the, in my opinion, and I think also for the research department to know that, because they are the curators , they have the most contact with the people were the countries were the remains are from, and that is not my task, I will show the public, and we can show human remains, but not because they are human remains, maybe I have a story about burials, and maybe I would like to put some human remains there, maybe they could also be some faked, because it is more about the story and the context that I want to tell than to show them the authentic skull, or authentic bodies, that would be scary also for people.

M: that leads to my next questions, what sort of info should or has been presented when you have human remains on display, here in the museum, so for example the tin tin exhibit, the maoris, what sort of information has been exhibited or should be exhibited when talking about human remains?

A: yeah, in the tin tin exhibit, let me think, there was the mummy, it was a real mummy wasn't it? It is because there we told the story from the book, and since it is such a preeminent part of the book I think it comes from the museum in Belgium, and it was in their original showcase, and yeah. I think if it was a problem with the people were the skeleton was from then I wouldn't have done it, but actually this exhibition was made by Herge, the foundation Herge, and it was in the package, and no one in this museum said "we don't want this human remains because we don't show human remains", and I don't think we have this agreement in the museum that we don't show them, but the we should careful to inform ourselves and to know what the people from the countries, the original countries think about it.

M: so there is a difference between the exhibits tha come "pre-packaged" and the exhibits that are curated here?

A: yeah, I think if it come prepackaged in were only skull were there because they are human remains then we wouldn't have taken the exhibition, but this was in the exhibition and it was an Inca mummy, yeah if the research department doesn't make a complain then it is ok. I mean it is spectacular no? if it was shown in Belgium why cant we show it in the Netherlands?

M: SO do you think actually that people want to see human remains in exhibits?

A: yeah, I think a lot, I haven't seen it yet that exhibit in the east of Holland, in Assen yes, and I think people like it, I don't know how many people come there but there are a lot of people who come because they like

it, it's a bit scary, its horror things, public likes that, but we are dealing with little culture, so I dont think I would put that accent in an exhibition that is about human remains, please come and look because I need so many visitors and only because it is scary. No I don't think I would do it, that is like a step too far.

M: and as head of education department you also have to think about what children would say. What do you think the reactions of children would be towards human remains in exhibits.

A: I think we would like to show children about how people react to death, to burials and things like that in different cultures, cause I think in Holland burials and things like that children that are more susceptible are kept away, children are kept away and I think that is so beautiful from other cultures that life and death need to be in balance with each other, and you have to deal with it or you wont be happy as a person, and well you also have to deal with death, and yeah, so I think that we can learn a lot from other cultures to make it easier, also for our children to work it out, but I don't know if you need human remains for this. Right now in the South American department we have this skeletons that is actually pretty impressive and pretty direct for children, why are there skeletons here, and they also look a bit happy and play music. So you tell about the day of the death and how people react to the death in mexico and they make skull from sugar and sweets, so I think you can tell the story in many ways, If you tell something of mummies and mummification then might need the mummy, but do you need the authentic mummy or do you need to use that to tell yous story. I also think that is easy to tell the children and also the adults that it is not very proper to have somebodies ancestor in the museum, so it should be in a grave or it shouldn't be there anymore, should be burnt or whatever, and then instead of showing them you can show them a film, or a fake or something, there are lots of ways to tell it, to visualize it.

M: in those terms, do you think there is a difference between the types of human remainsfor example between mummies or the skulls that you have here, have they turned to objects? Or a difference between the remains that you have from mali? Is ther a difference between them.

A: no, I don't think so, if it is a human remain it is a human remain, it is a vase or something of clothes it is still a piece of your ancestor, so it shouldn't be a difference.

M: so in terms of exhibits they shouldn be differentiated?

A: no, I think that if you have a policy on human remains then yeah, you better be, you have to make a policy about that. For me the most important thing it would be the people, if the say we ont think of that as human remains anymore then we can show it

M: and this "people think" is who? The people in the museum or visitors or?

A: no no, it is the people from the country that the objects are from, if they say this skull it is now actually a vase, then there is no problem that you show it to your public or that is in your collection, place in our storage, so yeah, I think that should be the most important thing.

M: ok, so I wanted to talk now about more of your personal opinions, so when you go to museums do you want to see mummies? Why?

A: no! I think human remains, everybody whose life is over, most of the time there is a ritual, and this ritual has to be performed, has to be done, and in most cases we don't know how the human remains are from or

how they came to the museum, and yes so there, actually, they are there actually, so there is a bit of difference between the mummies the bodies and the, you have a human bone that is a dress and the Tibetan monks dance with it, it is in a showcase and yeah it is from the bones of people, the soul is already gone, it is only the bones that they made an outfit of them, so I think, that is ok, cause they themselves did them. But if you ask my personal opinion, if I am really getting crazy because it is human remains then no, it is very beautifully made, but f it is made from bones from any body or it is made from plastic it is beautiful, and I like that, not the material no, why it was made and how it was used that interests me.

M: and then, again personally, have you seen the mummies in the Andean collection, have you had any contact with them? Any thoughts?

A: you feel like you're are looking at something very personal, that it is for friends and family of the people that are in that grave so you feel a little bit embarrassed actually, looking at those people who never gave you permission to show them and then there they are there, I don't know, I think this is a personal belief, that the soul is gone so it is couple of bones, and clothes, and some are a little child, and I remember it was two women and the children, so they were all in this six angles showcase, so I felt something to be embarrassed.

M: and in those terms, do you think the museum should keep them? What should we do with the remains that we have?

A: well I think you can ask the people if they want them back, if you know who they belong to or the communities were you got them from, because I don't think, yeah we can expose them or present them because we don't think that is proper, and then they are only in our storage rooms, but maybe yes they are interesting so maybe they can go to peru or mexico and do their research there, so I think the human remains should go to wherever they came from.

M: but as a museum you wouldn't like to showcase them?

A: well I think we can attract a lot of people, and that it is important for the museum and also, I mean it is interesting but why should you do it, that is only to attract a lot of visitors, but there are many ways to attract many visitors, I don't think people who are dead and should be in a grave or in their own grounds should be in the exhibits.

M: and do you think your point of view would be challenged or would have to be discussed with for example the PR department, or do you think the museum in general thinks this way?

A: I think the museum in general thinks this way, yeah, and maybe as part of an exhibition, but like, we were all a little surprised by Assen, a museum putting a whole display that is all about human remains, but maybe an exhibition about former time, how we collected, maybe it would be as an example of what we did in former times and how we should do now, like we gave back the skull of the maori, it was actually a second funeral that was given to the ancestor, so yeah there is an appropriate way in which this museum deals with human remains, and that is also because we have the research department who is very good and we also have the ethical commission yeah.

M: thank you very much, I think that is pretty much what I wanted to ask

Interview Rapti Golder- Miedema

08/05/2014
Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde
Rapti Golder-Miedema (RG)
Total time: 13 minutes 16 seconds
MP (Maria Ordonez)

MP: so the first thing would be some basic information, you name and how long have you been working for the museum?

RG: I am Rapti, and I have been working here for 5 years now. I started as an assistant curator for the Indonesia collection, and since 3 and a half years I have been working at the International Projects as coordinator or as Project Manager. Those are international exhibits and the Jimmy Nelson is my first project her in Leiden, I also did traveling exhibitions in other international partners.

MP: and in that background have you ever had to work on an exhibit that included human remains?

RG: no

MP: In the Indonesian collection did you have any challenges, any problems working with the human remains, since they are not in exhibit, more in terms of collections managing in general?

RG: Well we had with the two skulls of the collection that was the first time I was in contact with the human remains, more I have not.

MP: and more on your personal views, do you think human remains should be displayed on museum collections?

RG: Should be on display? or should be collected?

MP: on display first of all

RG: Me personally I also have difficulties with it, for me I don't think we should do it. I think it is because they are human remains and I think they should not be displayed, it doesn't depend on where they come from, they should be buried or at least be treated very carefully.

MP: and in terms of being in collections, what do you think about that?

RG: Yeah I think that depends. Depends on the history, I think my preference would be that they would be returned to the people where they come from, but I can understand that sometimes it is too difficult to verify that someone owns the remains and in that case I think that if it is not possible to verify I think it is better to have them in museum collections than at the art market.

MP: Do you feel like all types of human remains are equal? For example mummies, skulls, objects made with human remains? Are they all in the same categories

RG: That is different, I mean for mummies is different of course. For me, I was just thinking about the skull of Daiha (?), and I think for skull is different than for example bones. I know we have the bone skirt in the collection and it is on display. But it is a bit hypocrite to say it should not be while there is a difference betweenbones an skulls.

MP: to you, what is that difference? How is the skirt different than a mummy?

RG: I think for me it is perhaps just simple that the skull is a bit more like a person. It is strange but I think it is the most simple. I was thinking that maybe the skirt or the tantric way of dealing with remains, in a way with the Mixtec skull and the Daiak it is the same, for the culture it is very important, but for the people who buy it it is different. But for example with the skirt because it is turned into a material like textile.

MP: so it depends on the person that is seeing them now. And on that note, do you think the people who come to museums want to see human remains?

RG: yes, I think they do because it is very exciting. I think people are always attracted to mummies, they are very people, like Body World, it is in a way very fascinated.

MP: but you personally are not interested in human remains, like if you go to RMO are you interested in seing the mummies?

RG: No, not really.

MP: have you heard of the Andean mummies, in the south American collection?

RG: I have heard of them but have not seen them.

MP : do you think the source communities should have more to say about the human remains in the museum collections?

RG: I think this museum has very strong connection with the source communities, we respect them an fro this museum it is a very relation than in others. It is a very important thing, I wouldn't mind if there was more connection on terms of repatriation an reburial, but I think it would have to be in a way that we can all benefit from it.

MP: And in those terms, as a producer, what are the things you would have to think about or the conditions to show human remains in a exhibit.

RG: I think if, for example, I was working in an exhibition that we were thinking of displaying human remains I hope that we would work very closely with the source community and that it would always be in very good consultation and in a respectful way, and that if they agree to display the object and how they think it should be displayed. But I can also understand that with certain thing, like for example the bone skirt, I can imagine that maybe the source community will say: we want to put it on display because we want to tell something about it. But then we had to do it very well.

MP: And in terms of content, what do you think is the most important thing to mention when you are showing human remains?

RG: Depends first of all on what the topic is, the problem is if I see myself as a museum visitor, I would be interested to know that they are human remains, and then inform me on what way they are used, why are they decorated like this, more background information.

MP: What are your thought of presenting just mummies on an exhibit, lie the example of the Drents Museum?

RG: Yeah, for me it is not attractive, and from what I heard from other they are just mummies and that is it. What I meant to say before, I don't think my network is the general audience. WE are always looking at exhibits in a different way, always critical and looking for the background information and even looking for paint and exhibit cases, so it is different.

RG: I expected it would be easier to display a mummy than a skull. Cause I think that for example in the antiquities museums you can see them. But I can't remember seeing skulls on their own. And I must admit that I was a bit afraid of the skulls.

MP: really, why?

RG: specially in the Indonesian collection there is one that came in a sort of a box but just made with wood, and I opened it and then was scared. It was like: skull! I dint feel very comfortable. I didn't touch it or anything. And the other one it was only half a skull, decorated, I found it very fascinating, I still don't know why, but it was very beautiful with the decoration the feathers and so on, but the other just looked like a scary mask.

MP: have you seen the other skulls in the Asian hall that are in exhibit?

RG: No, I don't know about it. I think of my favorite object in Indonesia it is a statue, not of human remains made of wood, but it is also decorated with many, many skulls. DO you think maybe it would be a difference with an Indonesian skull, like the treasure or trophy skulls, than for example the mummies of Egypt that it was more common to mummify, would it be different if you know that they exist. But it is funny that you are looking at it from a different point of view, I would say that the trophy skull, if you have the relatives of the person that is killed they would not want it to be displayed. But the cultural habit of doing it, and also the context. It is very interesting, and I am sure during one conversation you can change your idea of what to exhibit and when.

MP: well thank you very much.

RG: I will go later to walk around the exhibits to see where the human remains are exhibited. And I would like to see what the other people in the museum are saying.

Interview Group Curators

7/02/2014
Volkenkunde Museum

Curators Lounge
Total time: 7 minutes 54 seconds
HL (Harm Linssen) CB (Conn Barret) ED (Ester Debraun)

HL: there is only textile, the one where you not really see it

M: oh, the one that is sitting?

HL: we were moving it for another thing, from the exhibition, and also one of the babies, you could feel it

M: you could feel something in it

HL: yeah, it was weird

M: did it scare you, what did you feel then?

HL: nothing, just have to be careful.

MR: you have to be careful

HL: I don't have any special connection with this child or this person. There is no emotional response, for me no. I don't see like this is a human body, I have to think about it to realize it. Otherwise no.

MR: when you start thinking about it nothing?

HL: no, no

CB: I always start intoning Shakespeare when I see them. Not sing them, I knew you well.

M: yeah, cause you were the one that warned me about the smell.

CB: yes well, they do

HL: I don't know them

MR: he says he doesn't know them so there is no emotion.

HL: I do realize they are really people, you have to be respectful when handling them.

M: would you feel the same if you went to a funeral with an open casket, of someone you don't know?

HL: no, that would be different, yeah I mean and the people will be down, the atmosphere. But you know I am just working with it and it is just something I need to take care of and remind me that is my job and I have to do it good. So I am concentrating on what I have to do, and not concentrating on the person. I don't know there is like a moment when just "Click" now it is an object.

MR: well that is a bit what I have as well, cause some things that we have are so valuable. Like the Leiden plate, ahhh one million euros, if you let it drop, you know, big problem

HL: disaster

MR: and that is also that step that you have to say: ok, I just have to be careful, so awful to work without looking inside

HL: yeah I always say… if you work with objects, it doesn't matter what you do, you treated like a painted glass, if you are not careful with a pane of glass it will brake, so I always consider this is a pane of glass a window, just like my way to be careful with that.

M: How about exhibiting, would you like to see mummies in other museums?

HL: I think so, but I think for me the danger is always to when does it get done for the effects, you create, and not only do it for the owe and stuff, and I mean the, I think if you have a good story, a good explanation and you can make people clear why you think it is important to show the mummy or any, and it adds to the story you are telling, cause that is always important, I think there is a way to do it, there is not in every occasion. Maybe not with every mummy even. I think if you have a good story it is possible, and I mean also you have to look at the cultures they come from, if you look at the cultures from Oceania, they have their loved ones are on the porch, maybe they will feel very honored if their ancestors get to know so many new people! I mean it is just a way of looking at things, and I think we should take that into account.

M: and how about you? You have worked with them a bit more, what do you?

ED: I never look at them. Because they are a bit scary

[laughs]

ED: it is [shivers] yeah, I think I would like to see that exhibition [Assen], want to see how they. The effect and all that. Now that I am thinking about it.

[general consent and laughs]

Interview Dirk Dirkse

05/02/2014
S-Gravenzande Reserve for the Volkenkunde Museum
Dick Dirkse (D)
Total time: 6 minutes
M (Maria Ordonez) MR (Margrit Reuss)

D: years ago the exhibition, that's all, then I was like this

MR: but if you know what he have done today, we took them out we looked at them

M: we measured them

MR: what does it do with you?

D: I don't know because they are wrapped in…

M: bundles

D: yes, I've never seen them you know? Not really

M: ok, and when you walk pass them you don't think: Oh there are some dead people in that locker

D: no, no. It is interesting because, yesterday the exhibition in Assen opened you know? Maybe I'll go

M: ??

D: you don't know? In assen there is a small museum, they opened yesterday in the 8th o'clock journal, it was in the television.

MR: what is the exhibition about?

D: it is about mummies, Egyptian and all over the world. I think it is very interesting.

M: so you would like to go see them then

D: yes, and i saw some mummies in Egypt, the famous Ramses II and Apsethsud…

M: and were you interested?

D: yes, I am very interested. And also I saw some mummies in Lima.

M: you told me you¡ve been to Ecuador too right?

D: yes I've been to Ecuador. I made a trip all the way from Buenos Aires, Paraguay, Bolivia. And I saw mummies in the museums.

M: do you think it is different the way they are showcases in Latin America from what your see here mummies in a museum.

D: oh, that is difficult to say, there are not so many mummies here, you know? In Egypt there are (moves han do signal all around)

M: and why do you think that is? Any ideas?

D: And also the trepanation, in Lima. And I had a very big discussion with Laura once

M: Laura van Broekhoven?

D: yeah, because [I said] show them you know, because the people are interested

M: you want to show them?

D: yes! But it is difficult question

M: would you, when your collegues are here, do you discuss if you want to show them, how would you show them? If you had to

D: natural

M: like in a glass box, or open…

D: I don't know, because how do you found them you know? I think you have to show them in a natural way.

M: so you would like to know more about where they came from and all?

D: yes, of course, we had you know at Schipol there was some smuglers whith you know some heads from peru.

M: oh really?

D: yes, beautiful. And you know they [are] illegal trades so they brought them here. And they were here for maybe two or three years I don't know. And there was a law, and he won, the dealer won the case!

M: and you had to give them back

D: yes

M: well, whenever you have seen mummies in exhibits do you remember how they where displayed? Could you touch them or…

D: No, no, in Egypt they were behind glass, the same in Lima

M: always from far. Do you think the ones here show be exhibited the same way? To protect what the mummy or…?

D: yeah, I think so. I have never seen them out of the box. Maybe a little but not really on the table, you know open. But I would be interested, why not?

M: and what do you think about the smell?

D: yes, but there are many articles here that smell as well.

M: yeah, cause I was talking to Margrit and she said that to her it seemed like the mummies were rotten and that's why they smelled, but what do you think?

D: I think is the human body that is always smelling a bit you know. I had to photograph some from Mali, some cloth and some artifacts, I put up a ventilator you know! Yeah really heavy smell, but it is normal

M: so it doesn't make you less eager to see them?

D: no

M: and do you feel any different about the babies than the big mummies? About exhibiting one over the other?

D: no, why [would I]?

M: ok, thanks, that is interesting to know.

Interview Brecht and Wendy

18/03/2014
Volkenkunde Museum
Brechte (B) and Wendy (W) (Tickets sales)
Total time: 9 minutes 13 seconds
M (Maria Ordonez)

M: So what I wanted to know, how long have you been working here?

B: I have been working here since May 1st 2001, so almost 13 years.

W: and I have been working here for 4 years

M: and in that time you have of course seen the exhibits, walked around. Have you ever noticed the human remains that we have in the exhibits? What do youo think about them? Do you think it is good to exhibit them or not and why?

B: Human remains I do not see any difference between human remains and something that is made out of stone or wood or whatever, as long as the indigenous people where the object originally came from agree with it [exhibit] then it is fine by me.

M: an you are thinking about the maori head an such?

B: yes, aha

M: and how about you?

W: well they explain the different cultures and remains are part of some cultures so they are part of the museum, and if they show this kinds of things then I am ok too.

M: Ok, how about at a more personal level, for example have you been to the RMO to see the Egyptian mummies, what do you feel when you see a mummy, a full mummy in comparison to for example the skull that we have in the Mesoamerican area. Do you think they are different, not?

W: I do think they are different, because the other is a full body

M: and do you think of them differently because of that?

W: yeah, but that is personal reasons, not to do with the museum itself. I know mummies you need to have a cooling system because it is rotting, with the skull it is just bones.

M: are they scary to you in any way?

B: to me they are objects, nothing special. Maybe I am very skeptical, very pragmatic, I know I am, but it doesn't bother my at all, whether it is just a piece of bone from a finger, or if it is an entire skeleton with organs and hair and skin still attached. It doesn't matter to me at all. It is very interesting, to know what peoples body looks like and how it works.

M: and loo like to know about its life? About how it died? What sort of things?

B: well if you can find out how old the person is, and where they lived, and how they lived and what they ate and what they look like, its amaizing what you can do with computers generated images and cgi to make them come to life, so it is not the bones you are looking at but can give the person a face, so maybe for some people it is kind of creepy, I can understand it is, but to me no.

M: and you feel the same or do you have any other ideas?

W: I mean is very interesting, only to have it here would be (shudders and says no with her head)

M: it would be scary? Scared about walking around in closing time and such?

W: yeah, because at the museum when it is closed I wouldn't like to walk around

B: in the Afrika department we have this [dolls], sometimes people do not like to go in this part of Africa because of the statues in there, and they do not like it, like I said I am very skeptical so I don't mind, it doesn't bother me at all if it is dark or light and the objects that are there. I think the problem of seen mummies or skeletons is that they remind people of their own mortality. I think that is a big problem and I think some people have a problem dealing with it, and it's a reflection of well, this is what you will happen to you in 50, 60 years, this is what you will become as well. So that is scary to a lot of people.

M: hm, but there is a lot of people that because they are scared they are more attracted to them. But you would be in the other group? The ones that would rather not see them if you can avoid them?

W: No, I am going to the RMO Friday, the problem is to work with them that I get (makes mock screams, they both laugh). It is interesting because it is a little bit creepy.

[explaining about the project and the Andean colelction]

M: would you think it would be nice of the museum to have those mummies in exhibit?

B: I think it would be excellent if we had those kinds of mummies here in our exhibit, you mean the ones that are like this (makes a crouching position).

M: yeah the crouched ones

B: ok, it would be wonderful, and of course not everyone will agree with it, not everyone will like it, some people do find it very creepy, but I think we should display it. If you have it you should display it, in a respectful manner, as long as the indigenous people agree with it, and like the Maori head, where did this come from, and have the people involved…

M: so you also have to have like the history of where they come from?

B: oh yes! It is not like: here there is a mummy look at it, you need to explain to the audience what is it all about, and hopefully that would take away some of the fears to see the mummy.

M: do you any time get comments from the visitors about what they have seen? Where you here in the Tin-tin in Peru exhibit?

B: Oh yes, yes, I was here, it was a temporary exhibit?

M: yes, and they had a mummy

B: ah yes, some people didn't like it, some people sais wow this is exactly like it was in the book, so they said it is true, it is not something the writer made up, it is real.

M: and normally do they comment on oh I liked this, or that, and do they ever mentioned the skull in the Mesoamerican area, or do they mention any specific.

B: sometimes small children will be excited, and say oh wow. And I know a colleague of mine Jim […] he gives tours for school children, many years ago he had a student in the group that said: oh they are sick people, sick people. Because they had the mosaic inlaid in the head and he said: those are sick people, why would you do that. Oh well, it all varies.

W: we did have a lot of comments on the Maori exhibition, they had a large painting of, well, all different kinds of people but also a woman giving birth…

B: oh yeah!

W: they were many people who were mad.

B: it was very graphic, her legs were spread and you can see the head. So she was in mid labor and not everyone liked that.

W: I think from what I can remember that was the most, ah, commented object. The last few years.

B: yeah that is true, it was graphic.

M: well thank you very much!

Interview Evert

18/03/2014
Volkenkunde Museum
Security Guards office- Evert(E)
Total time: 18 minutes 49 seconds
M (Maria Ordonez)

Talking about his painting school and art.

M: you have to sign in every single person that comes thru?

E: yeah, when they want a key or something like that. We have to know if they are allowed to go upstairs or not.

M: great, lets start, pretty quick questions first, what is your name and how long have you been working for the museum?

E: my name is Evert […] and I have been working here for six years, today is my first day that I am working here with a permanent contract (explaining about his contract terms)

M: Oh, congratulations! Ok, and among the things that you do here, I see you do security and surveillance, what are the things that you do?

E: yes, one of the things I do we have a band here, on the museums, we have much fun, when we have bbq and things like that we perform.

M: you get a long with every body in the museum?

E: yeah, that is the good thing, it is very nice, and since I work here from secutiry, we can practice here in the night, and I will lock everything .

M: Wow, and how is the museum at night? Is it creepy or not?

E: yes, because no one is here, normally we don't have to do anything at night. We have had some difficulties with the system, so it is the first time I have had to do it on Sundays and Monday the night shift. So normally we go home at seven something like this at night, and everything is secure.

M: but if your have a problem you have to be here.

E: I think 6 or 5 persons have duty for the night, so they have a telephone and when there is something wrong they will be called and they will say there is a problem there there and they would go to the museum to look.

M: ah, and do you normally wall around the collections and the exhibits?

E: yes

M: and what do you think about htem, in general?

E: I like them very much, cause I normally like going to museums, so, specially the last one, the Meca, I liked very much, I like to speak to the persons, to the Muslims, cause here normally you don't see Muslims in the museum, so I liked very much to talk to them about their religion and stuff. And they had this room the kishua [?], and I like it very much and then we can talk and with very large groups, I ask, you like to pray? Yes, then I know a better room to pray, it is easier with a bigger room, I know the direction of meca and all. I know people are thinking differently but I don't care.

M: so you like interacting with the visitors?

E: yes, I am learning the Arabic words.

M: and do you see many people from other places here too, like people from Asia..

E: yes, yes, Japanese people, Korean, sometimes you cannot tell where they are from but you can hear it when they talk.

M: ok, so lets talk a bit more about the research I do, that is mummies and human remains. In the collections right now there are a couple, so lets start with what do you think about exhibiting human remains?

E: it is very strange, because I know about the head of the Maori

M: what do you think about that, should it be in a museum, no, yes?

E: No,

M:Why?

E: maybe is different with a mummy, maybe, it's the same thing as the exhibitions with the real persons, with the bodies injected and all, because m brother he loves to go there and look, but so it is the remains of a human been, it is very strange to go. I think with the head is different, maybe it is strange to see a head, on its own. And maybe with the mummy is different , because you don't see so much of a person, maybe.

M: because it is covered?

E: yeah

M: what if it was uncovered?

E: I don't know, I would have to see it first

M: where you here in the Tin Tin in Peru exhibit?

E: I came later, some times I came here before I worked here, but I didn't see it.

M: And how about, there are a couple of skulls in exhibit, for example in the mexico area, there is a skull

E: turquoise?

M: what do you think about that one?

E: it is very strange, that one object can be ok, an another one, for instance the head of the Maori, it would be very strange to see it. I understand that people want to show it, but it is a, kind of you go into a circus or something, to see another person, dead. It is a very strange way of, and maybe, because when you see something like that, with the head of the Maori, you see more than only the… skull, it is more human. Maybe, it is not that I can say: you can do it or you cannot do it, but it depends on how you do it. I think it depends on the subject, every time can be different, sometimes I can say I can see the difficulties why you shouldn't exhibit here, and other times maybe I would say I wouldn't do that. Many people would say they are our relatives are just exposed here, people come to see my family in a way. It is the same here, I saw people from japan and they were looking at the swords, the samurai, and I heard that people came to see the samurai swords rom their family exhibit here in the museum, and they also have a feeling like "it's from us", but on the other hand, many thing will be gone if they wouldn't be here in the museum.

M: and do you think people in general, they like to see mummies and human remains in the museums?

E: yes, cause you are very curios of course, to see it in real.

M: have you talked to your colleagues about it. Is it fine for them and you to walk at night or next to the skull and everything?

E: yes, but there are not so many objects here from persons, human remains, only the skull there in south America. The difference, some weeks ago the friends of the museum where talking about the skull, and you know Martin, and I asked him if it was an idea to go at the end of the talk to the room. But I don't have anything wrong feeling with that skull, maybe if they put something in it. I think maybe before, but sometimes you need to expose, maybe sometimes, to show people what is going to happen when things go wrong, you know? But it is not every time. When you see what happen with the Jewish people in the war, you are not going to show how they were in the gas chamber and die, it is too horrible to show, its I got mixed feeling about showing, over different things.

M: ok and for example for the Egyptian mummies, have you seen them in the RMO, what do you think?

E: maybe cause you are used to the fact that people in Egypt were treated like that, and then it is not strange when you see them laying there, but is always weird. Here in Holland we have the Bog person, and you can see a real person there. People are curious and they want to see it, and at the same time you want to, cause it is a human been, you want to see them at peace. At times those things are things, that you think about when you see them, when you don't see them you don't.

M: for example, you were saying that you need to have reason to be exhibit the mummies. In your opinion, if we were to exhibit mummies from Peru that are very old, what would be the reasons and what would you like to know about the mummies.

E: hmmm, well they would have to tell me something about their life, other way I wouldn't like to see them. It is strange I used to have skull to paint and all that. And my wife didn't like them so I gave them away. A person gave it to me, they found them in zeeland, the land that they dry. [talking about zeeland]. I also

thought it is an object I don't want to paint so many times, also at those times I put it in a cupboard, but it is strange cause it was a human being.

M: So you do think when you see them: they were a human being, you don't see them as objects?

E: yes, yes, because sometimes you see the skeleton you sometimes how they were found, sometimes two persons next to each other, and I had to think, was the building that collapsed, ans I saw the picture of the man and the woman they were together and it was so emotional, sometimes you can find out what happened and how the people lived and know about it.

M: so you are more interested in knowing how human remains the life that people had or how they died.

E: no, both, on the bbc they show the skeletons of the people they had there in the past, and they show how they died in another way that they used to think they had died, so that gives another interpretation, but also how people lived, what they are wearing and the weapons that they used, and how they fight. So I understand about how you can learn a lot about them, and that is why the person in the BBC was telling what they learned about the people they had there.

M: SO you would be interested in seen human remains that had that kind of information, but not just a body?

E: with the head of the Maori is like a circus to me, cause you cannot learn from a dead head, I don't like.

M: so, quick questions, do you guys at any time talk about this things?

E: no, not all of us like to go to museums, and we don't think about this things, when you ask, I have to think but before no.

Appendix 2. RMV Inventory Search for human remains

RMV Inventory Search for Human Remains			
code	collection	description	observations
1977	Japan	jar with dry human skull	
360-5268	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
608-1	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
608-2	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
816-59	Insular South East	people skull	
929-774	Oceania	Skull in basket	
2065-1a	South Asia-Tibet	Skull sculpture	on exhibit Asia-Tibet hall
3070-428dub9	Oceania	Human skull	
3070-428	Oceania	Human skull	
3070-433	Oceania	Human skull	
3070-435	Oceania	Human skull	
3070-473	Oceania	Human skull	
3337-1	Oceania	Human skull	
3396-1	Oceania	skull sculpture	
3600-3380	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
3600-3381	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
3770-1	Oceania	Human skull	cultus- en andere heilige objecten
3790-442	Oceania	Human skull	
3790-443	Oceania	Human skull	
3790-444	Oceania	Human skull	
3790-445	Oceania	Human skull	
4937-57	Oceania	Human skull	
5248-21	Oceania	Human skull	
3600-BEV-110	unknown	Human skull	
427-22	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
615-16	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
781-313	Insular South East	Trophy skull	

844-22	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
2442-339	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
3600-3380	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
3600-3381	Insular South East	Trophy skull	
517-53	Oceania	Human skull	
929-771	Oceania	painted skull	
1852-1a	Oceania	portrait skull	
1852-2	Oceania	portrait skull	
1971-153	Oceania	portrait skull	
1971-1584	Oceania	portrait skull	
1971-1585	Oceania	portrait skull	
1971-1586	Oceania	portrait skull	
1971-1587	Oceania	portrait skull	
2220-1	South Asia-Tibet	Offering plate	on display
2491-1	Central and South America	tsantsa	
3684-1	South Asia and Mainland Southeast Asia	Basket	
4007-1	Central and South America	skull	on display, turquoise beads
4723-79	South Asia-Tibet	Offering plate	on display
B240-149	Oceania	ancestor skull	
03-968	Oceania	ancestor skull	
945-15	Oceania	remembrance sign	
945-23	Oceania	remembrance sign	
2596-1	Insular South East	coffin	
4857-66	Central and South America	head of six year old girl	Pre-Columbian mummie collection
4857-67	Central and South America	skull of a girl	Pre-Columbian mummie collection
4567-1	Central and South America	head of a female mummy	nazca
787-3	Insular South East	Human skull	

816-59	Insular South East	Human skull	
4068-1	Central and South America	Bundle Mummy of a child	peru
4857-47	Central and South America	Mummy of woman with silver and gold ornaments	argentina
4857-62	Central and South America	mummy of five year old girl	chile
4857-63	Central and South America	mummy of five year old girl	chile
4857-64	Central and South America	mummy of five year old girl	chile
4857-65	Central and South America	Mummy of woman with silver and gold ornaments	argentina

Appendix 3. Pre-Columbian mummies database

PRECOLUMBIAN MUMMIE DESCRIPTION CATALOG

Catalog number	De Bock #	Estimated Age	Estimated Sex	type of conservation	type of burial	textiles (Y/N)	id features	affiliation	associated finds	observations
4857-64	1c. Gentilar figures 23a, b.	De Bock: 5 years; MPO: 1-3 years.	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Mummified. No wrappings. Tissue shows an oily/adipocere texture.	Unknown	No	Braided hairstyle. Two braids one at each side, joined in the middle by a green thread.	Unknown		De Bock: Frolich disease ?? MPO: The type of mummification allows for fat in legs and arms to be visible. Oily and similar to 4857-65.
4857-62	1a. Gentilar figures 21 a,b.	De Bock: 5 years; MPO: 1-3 years.	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Some ossification visible/palpable. Exposed ossified knee joint (portion of femur and tibia) from the right side. Some hair visible on skull.	Flexed Burial; wrapped in a bundle	Yes.	One textile layer with three weeve colors (shades of brown). Two types of weeve visible. Coarse reed-like wrope tied around the neck (maybe to hold wrapping in place?)	Arica-Gentilar	probable association to the pottery, weeved baskets and artefacts from the collection	De Bock: Collapsed vertebrae; Artificial Cranial Def.
4857-63	1b. Gentilar figures 22	De Bock: 5 years; MPO: 2-3 years.	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Ossified. Skull visible, facial structure visible. Right and left knee joints visible.	Flexed Burial; wrapped in a bundle	Yes.	Two textile layers. 1) Loose weeve, dark cotton. 2) thinner fabric with beige and black bands. Reed rope placed around body and part of the skull (outer bundle layer).	Arica-Gentilar	probable association to the pottery, weeved baskets and artefacts from the collection	De Bock: "corn cob is placed [in the] abdominal cavity"

4857-65	40. Argentinae ?	De Bock: about 30; MPO: adult	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Mummified. Dessecated tissue, all over the body. Hair, nails, eyelashes still present. Oily texture of skin.	Flexed Burial; probably part of a larger bundle. Outer layer separated but kept in storage (see associated finds)	Yes.	Three textiles: 1) head band with yellow, red and green colors in a geometrical pattern; 2) feather poncho with two colored feathers sawed to a simple wool weeve. 3) textile underlayer of feathers.	Chimu-Inca	4857-25,28,37,38,39,40 41,42 (spindelwhorls?)56 (diadem), 61 (golden breastplate) 68 (poncho).	De Bock:K1 MPO: possible ACD, occipital flattening.
4857-47	32. Argentinae ?	De Bock: about 30; MPO: adult	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Mummified. Dessecated tissue, there is some ossification on the face and could be more covered with the textiles. Hair, nails, eyelashes still present.	Sitting lotus position. Wrapped in bundle manner from nech down. Posible Capakcocha.	Yes.	Four textiles visible: 1) headband in geometrical pattern; 2) delicate weeve internal poncho like wrapping; 3) coarser weeve with beige and brown bands, outer poncho layer; 4) wool cord braided and wrapped around body, outer most layer.	Inca	4857-48 (golden disc), 49 (gold disc tumi), 50 (human figurine), 51 (diadem), 52 (stylized feline hammered plate), 53 (silver jewelry with ragged edges), 57 (golden disk).	De Bock: "Woman sitting cross-legged with arms crossed on the chest."
4857-66	nd	not determined	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Mummified head. Adhering tissue. Sexing and aging traits covered.	head	No	No	not determined	none	Does not constitute Trohpy heads. No obvious transformation of remains after death.
4857-67	58a, b	not determined	De Bock: female. MPO: unknown	Mummified head. Adhering tissue. Sexing and aging traits covered.	head	Yes.	There are 4 bright colour cotton strings tied around the head: red, green, white and yellow	not determined	none	Does not constitute Trohpy heads. No obvious transformation of remains after death.

Appendix 4. Pre-Columbian mummies collection (gold ornaments)

Gold Objects Database			
Inventory	**Measurements**	**Description**	**Observation**
4857-51	14,2 x 17,1 cm; 0,45mm thick	Gold Diadem	Associated with mummy 4857-47. The headband is similar to one was recovered in the excavation in 1918 by Boman at the site of Salinas Grandes, Jujuy- Argentina. The headband was drawn and photographed but has been lost since 1997. The differences between that headband and the one from the RMV mummy is the position of the holes made to tie it to the head (Besom 2010)
4857-57	0.2 x 5 cm; 0,52mm thick	Gold Discs	Possible pendants.
4857-48	0.2 x 5 cm; 0,30mm thick		
4857-60	0.2 x 4 cm;0,52mm thick		
4857-50	8 x 5x 1cm; 0,52mm thick side discs; 0,30mm thick center disc.	Figure made of three gold discs.	Inventory description: An ornament consisting of three parts: two slices and a stylized human figure. Similar objects not found in literature.
4857-53	5,2 x 2,5 x 0,2 cm; 0,50mm thick	Gold/Silver Ornament	Oblong ornament with wavy sides. Possible ressemblance with "thunder" related figures and ornaments (Tamara Bray personal communication)
4857-52	3,8 x 8,3 x 0,3 cm	Gold/Silver. Probable nose ornament	Described in inventory as "Ornament in the shape of a puma". Probable nose ornament.
4857-49	11,5 x 8,5 x 0,5 cm; 0,59mm thick	Gold ornament	Tumi shaped gold ornament.