

## SOUTH AMERICAN TROPICAL FOREST MATERIAL



This brief survey is intended as a general introduction to the collections and objects<sup>1</sup> from the Native Peoples of the South American tropical forest region held by the Pitt Rivers Museum. No attempt has been made at any analysis of the material but rather this is a preliminary step to any future detailed study, as well as being an introduction to the collections. It has been

necessary to make an arbitrary decision about where the boundaries of the tropical forest lie. For example, where does the tropical forest give way to the Andean region? It may be that some readers will regard certain groups that have been included here should not have been, and vice-versa. Likewise, by restricting the survey to the tropical forest rather than lowland South America, the peoples of the Gran Chaco and Pampas are excluded.

One of the difficulties in preparing this survey has been deciding on the mode of presentation. Three possibilities were considered. The first, which was by collector, was quickly dismissed because, whereas there are a few major collectors, the great majority of collectors are associated with very few items or the identity of the collector is unknown.

The Second possibility was to present it by ethnic group. This form had much in its favour as it reflected the native reality, but once again the ethnic provenance of many objects is unknown. The third way was by country. Although there are exceptions, in the majority of cases there is no doubt about which modern South American country any particular object came from; accordingly that is the scheme selected to order this survey. Even so and as will be obvious, this has its drawbacks. The most serious of these is the

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the word 'object' is used here and throughout, in fact the reference is to database entry which is what most researchers will use. The reason for this is that a single entry may well cover a number of objects, e.g., a basket and its lid will constitute two objects or a quiver full of blowpipe darts perhaps as many as 31 objects. It should, however, be noted that this is not always the case; there is an example of a shaman's rattle of which each item of its contents (pebbles and seeds) has its own entry. Even so the overall result is that there are more objects than database entries. In the case of South America the database has 8,574 entries covering 10,330 objects.

fact that ethnic groups are not restricted to national territories but overlap frontiers. Where the bulk of a collection comes from one country and fewer items from the neighbouring territory, the latter have been included with the former.

The bulk of the collection is of an ethnographic nature. There is very little archaeological material which, not surprisingly, dominates the collections from the Andean and Pacific coastal regions. It should be mentioned, however, that this is not a genuine reflection of the tropical forest situation since there are museums, such as the Goeldi Museum in Belém do Pará, that hold collections of magnificent ceramics that should undoubtedly be classed as archaeological finds. The collections surveyed here are on the whole dominated by the following objects: hunting weapons, that is bows and arrows, blowpipes and their darts, and associated accessories; basketry objects which include a huge range of domestic objects including all those used in the processing of cassava, the staple crop through much of the region; musical instruments, particularly flutes; and feather ornaments, including elaborate headdresses and armbands. Also featuring strongly are pottery items, hammocks, clubs, and women's bead or seed aprons. There are as well a number of more esoteric items such as shaman's rattles and shrunken heads.

## **GUYANA**

Guyana, having been the former British colony of British Guiana, is not surprisingly one of the best represented South American countries among the Pitt Rivers Museum collections the total number of objects from there is 1044, virtually all of which are of undoubted Amerindian origin. Two collectors dominate; they are Audrey Butt Colson's with 310 objects from the Akawaio and closely related neighbouring groups, and the Reverend James Williams' with 196 objects, all from the Macusi.

Audrey Butt Colson's collection was mainly made during two periods of fieldwork among the Carib-speaking Akawaio of the Upper Mazaruni River region; the first during 1951-52 while researching for her doctorate at Oxford and the second in 1957 when she was a Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum and a Lecturer in Ethnology. The majority of the objects

(293) is from the Akawaio, a figure which includes 12 objects from the Akawaio in Venezuela and seven from the Akawaio settled in Brazil. To these can be added a further 54 objects from neighbouring Carib peoples, the Arekuna, Kamarakoto and Taulipang. As might be expected the collection is comprehensively representative of Akawaio material culture and is very well documented. Butt Colson has published widely and extensively on her fieldwork in Guyana and Venezuela, mainly in academic

journals and concentrating on religious and philosophical questions, although more recently on Amerindian land rights

There are a further 29 Akawaio items that reached the Museum in 1994 via Audrey Butt Colson, having been donated by Mrs Daphne Seggar. Her husband, William Seggar, was District Officer in the Upper Mazaruni Region, based at Kamarang from 1946 to 1960.

However, these objects were not collected by the Seggars themselves, but given to them by Father Leslie Rooney who obtained them while on a visit to the Upper Mazaruni in 1949-50 in order to investigate the possibility of setting up an Anglican mission.

To these may be added a further eight objects given by seven donors. Butt Colson was involved with one of these; two reels of 16mm film shot by Bassett Maguire, Head Curator of the New York Botanical Garden, with Butt Colson's help in 1952. They show daily life and activities. There is one item, a ritual whip and almost certainly not 'horse furniture' as suggested in the catalogue, from Pitt-Rivers' Founding Collection, and another ritual whip transferred from the Ashmolean Museum as a part of the large exchange of objects that took place in 1886 as a result of a re-organization of the University's collections. J W Lester, curator of reptiles at London zoo, presented a bundle of blowpipe darts, collected while he was involved with the making of *Zoo quest*, one of David Attenborough's earliest BBC natural history programmes, in 1955. The BBC itself presented a sound recording of Akawaio music and songs made in 1961 with Butt Colson's assistance. A Mrs M Harlow donated a hammock in the 1980s; she was the widow of Professor Vincent T Harlow who collected it. Vincent Harlow was Beit Professor of the History of the British Commonwealth at Oxford University and a Fellow of Balliol College. He was a Commissioner for constitutional reform in British Guiana 1950-1, and wrote on Raleigh's expeditions among other topics.

Finally there are two Akawaio cassava sieves from the large collection of William Stephen (or Stephen William) Silver. He was a businessman who had his own private museum at his home near Wantage, Oxfordshire, to house his collection which had originated from frequent visits he made to London docks from the 1830s onwards. On his death in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, his widow gave a large number of objects from his museum to Oxford University, some of them directly to the Pitt Rivers whereas others were passed on by the University Natural History Museum. The total number of objects from the Silver collection in the Pitt Rivers is 309, of these 66 are from South America and of those 35 from Guyana. The latter are all of Amerindian origin although only the two Akawaio objects have a specific provenance. Of the non-Guyanese objects, not all are of Amerindian or Lowland South American origin. The majority are

from Peru (13) and Brazil (6), and nine are simply listed as from South America. Silver had a printed catalogue of his extensive collection, dated 1876, of which the Bodleian Library holds a copy (G.A.Berks 8<sup>o</sup> 39), but it is not very informative.

The Macusi live on the Rupununi Savannah in the interior of Guyana and on the neighbouring plains in Brazil. Williams first visited them in 1907 when he made an exploratory tour of their country. From 1908 to 1913 he was priest-in-charge of the district with his headquarters at Yupukarri on the Rupununi River, the eastern end of the portage between the Essequibo and Amazon basins. As well as the large collection of Macusi objects he also made a study of their language which was published as 'Grammar notes and vocabulary of the language of the Makuchi Indians of Guiana' (*Collection Internationale de Monographies Linguistiques*, 8 (1932)). He had previously worked among the Warao of the Orinoco delta, and although he published a vocabulary of these people (*Journal de la Société des Americanistes*, 20 (1928) and 21 (1929), he does not appear to have made any other sort of ethnographic collection among them. He was an Associate of King's College London and a Fellow of Royal Historical Society. He died at 19 St Margaret's Road, Oxford on 28 November 1940 and his collection was donated to the Pitt Rivers Museum the following year by his widow, Gwendoline.

In addition to Williams' collection there are a further 38 Macusi objects held by the Pitt Rivers Museum. Ten of these, two of which came via Tylor, are to be found in the collection made by Everard im Thurn (1852-1932) who gave 67 items during the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Im Thurn was in British Guiana from 1877 to 1899, during which time he was Curator of the British Guiana Museum, then Stipendiary Magistrate in the Pomeroon District, and afterwards Government Agent for the Northwest District. He was employed on the Venezuelan Boundary Commission in 1897-9. His later career with the Colonial Office took him to Ceylon, the Western Pacific and finally to be Governor of Fiji and a knighthood. He travelled very widely through British Guiana and published a large number of works, of which *Among the Indians of Guiana* (1883) is best known. It is the first serious study of the native peoples of the colony. As well as the Macusi objects his collection consists of 15 Arawak objects, 5 Warao and 4 Carib. The remaining 32 objects lack any specific group provenance although they all appear to be of Amerindian origin.

The rest of the material from the Macusi comes from a range of sources, none of the donations amounting to more than six items. Pitt-River's Founding Collection includes six items, all but one of these having been in the Bethnal Green Museum and thus collected before 1874. It is not known from whom Pitt-Rivers obtained the objects, mainly hunting weapons. A Miss E C Bell gave five objects, one, a headdress, in 1905,

and the rest in 1913. They were collected by her, and she may have been related to Archibald Graeme Bell, a civil engineer with the Public Works Department who was in British Guiana from 1891 to 1907. The Rev. Walter Grainge White was a missionary among the Macusi for several years from 1913 and wrote a book *At home with the Makuchis* (1944). He donated a woman's apron in 1925 and the Museum purchased another four aprons from him in 1939. All five objects were collected by him. He records in his book (p.34) that he also gave to the Pitt Rivers the 'things' of a shaman who converted to Christianity, but these objects, if still in the Museum, have not been identified. He is, however, best known for his work *The Sea Gypsies of Malay* (1922) with a foreword by R R Marett. Peter Rivière donated, on behalf of the Oxford and Cambridge Expedition to South America 1957, three items that make up a headdress. It was obtained from Edward 'Tiny' McTurk a long time resident at Karanambo on the Rupununi River and descended from an old colonial family.

In 1917, Marguerite Muriel Culpeper Pollard donated two Macusi objects collected by her or her uncle; it is not clear which of them. Nothing is known about either of them, other than at the time of the donation she was living at 14 Banbury Road, Oxford. Two further objects, women's aprons, were donated by Mrs E M Melville in 1948. They had originally been collected by her husband and sent to the 1924 Wembley Exhibition. According to Michael Swan in *The Marches of El Dorado* (1958) it was H P C Melville, the founder of the clan of Melvilles on the Rupununi Savannah, who organized the aboriginal section of the British Guiana pavilion at the Wembley Exhibition. He had retired to Scotland leaving behind his two wives, a Wapishana and a Patamona, and, according to Swan, married again. It was presumably this third wife who donated the aprons.

Three objects were purchased from the Ipswich Museum in 1966, and originally collected by Robert Schomburgk, the 19<sup>th</sup> century explorer of British Guiana and its boundary surveyor. There is, however, some doubt surrounding one of the items, a necklace made from seeds, which, in contradiction to the stated cultural group, the Macusi, is described in the primary documentation as originating from the Pianoghotto of Surinam, a subgroup of the Trio. This latter accreditation is almost certainly the correct one.

There is a similar doubt about the single Macusi item, donated by Mrs William Clark in 1908. This object forms part of a collection of 43 items that had been collected by her husband, which in turn forms part of a larger collection of 106 objects, mainly from West Africa where Clark was Attorney-General in the Gold Coast. It is not clear what he was doing in British Guiana although he may have been a colonial servant. Another donor of a single item is Amanda Cornford, who, via the Saffron Walden

Museum, donated a bead apron in 1990. It had been collected by George Dixon Aked in the 1930s and had formed part of his very extensive collections from all parts of the world. Finally there is a Macusi headdress collected by Father Rooney in the 1940s which reached the Museum via the Seggars and Audrey Butt Colson in 1994. None of the documentation relating to Macusi objects is very thorough.

Except for these two peoples the other major Amerindian groups of Guyana are not well represented. There are just 23 objects of Arawak origin listed in the catalogue. Fifteen of these objects came from Im Thurn and a further two, donated in 1901 by a Miss Grace Pelham (she gave her address as Trinity College, Oxford where her father, Henry Francis, was President), had been given to her by Im Thurn. The hank of fibre used for making hammocks donated by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1961 also came from Im Thurn. A completed hammock was given at the same time. Two baskets came from Mrs William Clark, although as mentioned above there is some doubt about their exact provenance, and these two objects are also listed as being possibly of Carib origin. In 1988, Grace Sutton gave a cassava sieve that had been made for her great-grandmother, Susanna Meyer, in the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century. Johan and Susanna Meyer were Plymouth Brother missionaries. Finally there is another cassava sieve, collected and donated by Robin Colson, the husband of Audrey Butt Colson.

The Caribs are slightly better represented with 42 objects. Twenty-nine of these were bought from the 1971 Cambridge expedition to Guyana, all them from the Baramita River region. A fair amount of information about these objects is contained in 'Cambridge University Expedition to Guyana, A Report 1971', of which the Balfour Library of the Pitt Rivers Museum holds a copy. Im Thurn donated four items and in 1908 a W Purnell, of 128 High Street, Oxford gave four loaves of cassava bread. Purnell was presumably one of the partners in the tailors and robe-makers Purnell, Phipps & Purnell, located at that address, although how he came by the loaves is unknown. The Founding Collection contained three objects. The two baskets from Mrs Clark may be, as already pointed out, equally of Arawak origin.

There are seven objects from the Warao who now live in the Orinoco Delta although they were within historical times more widely distributed. One of these formed part of Pitt- Rivers' Founding Collection and five came from Im Thurn, some of them via Tylor, and one, the bust of a boy, was made and given by Hannah Im Thurn, Everard's wife. It might be noted that the bulk of the Warao population lives in Venezuela but there are no items in the Pitt Rivers collections from there.

The other major Amerindian groupings are even more poorly represented. For example, the Wapisiana or Wapishana, who are the major Arawakan group in the

interior of the country and who have been in contact with Europeans for centuries, are represented by just six objects. Three of these are portraits by Edward Goodall, the artist who accompanied Robert Schomburgk's boundary survey, and formed part of the Founding Collection. Two puzzles were given by Don Moody, a biochemist and ethnobotanist, in 1962. The sixth is a hammock which was given to the Museum by Peter Rivière who had used it personally during the 1957 Oxford & Cambridge Expedition and during fieldwork among the Trio in 1963-4. There are also five items, all musical instruments, from these people living in Brazil which were probably from the collection of the Italian zoologist and anthropologist Enrico Hillyer Giglioli; they then belonged to Balfour and were bequeathed to the Museum.

There are eight objects from the Carib-speaking Waiwai at the headwaters of the Essequibo River. Five of these, three components of a headdress, an apron and a comb, were purchased from Diane McTurk, the daughter of Tiny McTurk who had collected them. Two objects, a basket and a cassava grater, were collected by Cenydd Jones who was government medical officer in the interior 1949-56. Jones went on to have an outstanding career with the Colonial Medical Service and was one of the first people to diagnose Ebola fever. These items reached the Museum via the Seggars and Butt Colson in 1994. Finally there is a single comb donated by the geographer Michael Eden in 1964. To these may be added one Waiwai object from Brazil, a rattle purchased by Zeina el-Khoury Klink in São Paulo in 1990 and donated to the Museum by Hélène La Rue.

The total number of objects for which a group provenance is known is approximately 626, which leaves a little over 400 for which no tribal origin is listed. It is very likely, however, that a large proportion of these objects are of Arawak or Carib origin, given that these peoples' locations are close to the coast where the main centres of European population lie.

Of these 400 objects, a quarter came from the Ashmolean Museum in 1886 as a result of a re-organization of objects between the various Oxford museums. The database lists 104 items but four were retained by the Ashmolean. Most of these one hundred objects come from two collections. There are 38 items (one of them is not of Amerindian origin) collected by William John Burchell between 1825 and 1830. Burchell is best known for his botanical and entomological collecting in South Africa earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the South American artefacts represent only a minute part of the total Burchell collection in the Museum. There must, however, be some doubt about whether these objects are from British Guiana. Burchell was certainly in Brazil in 1825-30 but there is no evidence that he ever visited British Guiana, and the closest he came to the country was Belém at the mouth of the Amazon. It is possible

that these objects have been assigned to the wrong country. The primary documentation with reference to some of the objects states 'used by Indians of Guayana ? [sic] (Guiana)', but Guayana is also the name of a subdivision of the Caingang who do live in the area of Brazil where Burchell travelled. Furthermore the Caingang bow is on average seven to eight foot long, and may be as much as nine feet, which fits with the description of the items in the Pitt Rivers.

The other largish collection from the Ashmolean, 36 objects (all but two listed as models), was made by a Lieutenant Westwood in 1812 on the banks of the Essequibo, and given to the Ashmolean in 1874 by John Obadiah Westwood. The latter was an entomologist and palaeographer and the first holder of the Hope Professorship of Zoology at Oxford. It is not known what his relationship to Lieutenant Westwood was.

The Ramsden collection was purchased by Oxford University in 1878 and after being housed in the University Museum of Natural History was then moved to the Ashmolean before arriving in the Pitt Rivers in 1886. Out of the collection of 244 objects from all over the world eight assorted objects, an arrow, necklace, headdress, cassava squeezer, etc., are listed as coming from Guyana. There are also a further seven items from South America, mainly arrows, from the Ramsden collection which are without specific country or ethnic group of origin. The owner of the collection was Robert Henry Ramsden but little is known about him.

Of the remainder, four objects originally came from the Trustees of Henry Christy, the archaeologist and friend of Tylor; two musical instruments from Greville John Chester, a clergyman best known for his Egyptian collections; another musical instrument, a rattle, from Sir (James) Everard Home, a naval officer (see also under Brazil); and two stone axes given to the Ashmolean in 1868 by either Sir Arthur Evans, archaeologist and Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, or the archaeologist and polymath Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) but not passed to the Pitt Rivers until 1949. Finally there are nine objects of which neither the collector nor the previous owner is recorded.

Among the further 300 objects which are lacking any group provenance might be mentioned 32 items given by Im Thurn in addition to those already mentioned for which the ethnic origins are unknown. It is a similar story with 43 items from British Guiana donated by Mrs William Clark in 1908 that had been collected by her husband. As mentioned above, one of these is listed as Macusi and two as either Arawak or Carib, but the provenance of the other 41 objects is unknown although they all appear to be of Amerindian origin.

In 1948, Margaret F Irvine presented 20 objects to the museum which had



been collected by her uncle, Thomas Lowndes Bullock in the 1880s. Bullock was Professor of Chinese at Oxford University but it is not known what he was doing in British Guiana in 1882. The collection consists entirely of basketry which is obviously of Amerindian manufacture but its exact provenance remains unknown.

The next largest collection was donated by G E B Moullin of Magdalen College, Oxford in 1939 and consists of 17 objects. The donor is almost certainly Eric Balliol Moullin, who was an electrical engineer and a Fellow of Magdalen College. He was later Professor of Electrical Engineering at Cambridge. One of the objects is a blowpipe and the other 16 are fragments of pottery. The latter are described in the primary documentation as Carib but there is no idea how they came into Moullin's possession, although the blowpipe was collected by the Hon. Judge John Hewick in 1912 about whom nothing has been found out.

At various dates in the 1920s and 30s a total of 12 objects, mainly clubs and aprons, were bought from the dealer James Thomas Hooper of Littlemore, Oxford. There are a number of other items in the Pitt Rivers collections from various South American countries from the same source. Seven assorted objects were bought in 1891 from the dealer George R Harding of Charing Cross Road, all of which had been collected by John Spencer Noldwritt. A further seven objects, one rattle and six arrows, were obtained from Stevens Auction Rooms in the 1920s and 30s.

All the remaining donations consist of fewer than 10 objects and in many cases a single item. We may note, however, a further four objects, in addition to the two Macusi items already referred to, collected by Marguerite Culpeper Pollard or her uncle. Five objects were presented by the Gloucester City Museum in 1936, that museum having received them from a Major W P Thackwell in 1923. There are three items from British Guiana on loan from the Bodleian Library that form part of a slightly larger collection of Asiatic material presented to the library by J B Elliott of Patna, India.

The objects to be found in the collections from Guyana are typical of those from the tropical forest peoples of other countries in South America and thus deserve a brief survey. We find that basketwork of one sort or another is heavily represented with 157 items. Given the wide variety of purposes for which basketry is used, especially in the preparation of food, for storage, and for transportation this is not surprising. The second is arrows, 104 of various kinds, and 33 bows. The other main hunting weapon, the blowpipe, which has more limited distribution in the country, is represented by seven examples with a further 12 associated accessories and sets of darts. There are 37 clubs and, whereas some of these can be classified as weapons, many were simply for ceremonial purposes. There are 83 items made of feather work

of which 23 are listed as head ornaments. There are 82 musical instruments including flutes, rattles and trumpets. There are 52 women's aprons, the majority of beadwork. Pottery is represented by only 48 objects and stone tools and weapons by 27. The majority of the stone objects are associated with either the Founding Collection, or Sir John Evans or Sir John Lubbock.

## **SURINAM**

There are 336 objects from Surinam in the Pitt Rivers Museum of which some 77 are of Maroon rather than Amerindian origin. The Amerindian material is dominated by two collections. There is Butt Colson's material from the Carib-speaking Wayana, consisting of 95 objects, to which should be added 38 objects listed as being from French Guiana, making a total of 133 objects. All the items were collected from villages on the Maroni River which forms the frontier between the two countries. The collection was made by Audrey Butt- Colson in 1963 when she was a Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum and a University Lecturer in Ethnology. The documentation of the collection is full.

Then there is Peter Rivière's collection from the Carib-speaking Trio who live in the far interior and across the frontier in Brazil. This collection is composed of 144 objects, to which may be added two seed necklaces which were purchased from the Ipswich Museum in 1966 and which had been collected by Robert Schomburgk in 1843, and the necklace referred to under the section on the Macusi above which is probably from the Pianoghotto, now usually considered a subgroup of the Trio, in the headwaters of the Corentyne River. A full account of the process of manufacturing these beads was given by Schomburgk – see *The Guiana Travels of Robert Schomburgk 1835-1844*, Volume II, p. 185. Rivière made his collection in 1963-4 in the course of doing doctoral fieldwork. It is fully documented and backed up by a large photographic collection to be found under 2001.33 in the photograph database.

Amerindian objects without definite provenance include a bow and a set of 12 arrows from the Indians of the interior and bought for 15/- (75p) from Stevens Auction Rooms, an old established business located in Covent Garden, London. The Pitt Rivers Museum has a very large number of objects from Stevens and this lot was bought on 17 November 1903.

There is also a set of two bows and nine arrows donated in 1979 by Lieutenant-Commander C J Templeton of the Royal Australian Navy, which had been collected by his father in the 1920s; there is some doubt about whether these are of Amerindian or Maroon manufacture. From the Founding Collection there is a fish arrow or harpoon, also of doubtful provenance, and a bow donated by Balfour in 1907, which

may have come from any of the three Guianas.

The non-Amerindian material is almost entirely Maroon, from the Aukan, also known as Ndyuka, living on the Maroni and Lawa Rivers. Butt Colson collected 26 objects from the Aukan, one of which is listed as coming from French Guiana. To this Aukan collection is to be added a further 39 objects donated by the Cambridge Expedition to Langa Tabiki in 1965. The remaining four objects consist of three Maroon items (a musical instrument and two calabash spoons) donated by Mrs Beatrice Braithwaite Batty in 1917. She was the author of *An English girl's account of a Moravian Settlement in the Black Forest* (1858), *Forty two years among the Indians and Eskimo* (1893), and numerous other works. Finally there is a pottery vessel in the form of a cockerel donated by Edward Archibald Parry, Bishop of Guiana, in 1908.

## **FRENCH GUIANA**

The collection from French Guiana comprises 40 objects, 38 of which are from the Carib-speaking Wayana, and, as mentioned above, collected by Audrey Butt Colson in 1963 and given to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1964. Of the other two objects, one is a winnowing tray from the Aukan, also collected by Butt-Colson and which has been referred to under 'Surinam'. The other item is the bow, given by Balfour, also already mentioned and which may have come from any of the three Guianas. In other words French Guiana is barely represented in the Museum.

## **VENEZUELA**

There are 290 objects from Venezuela in the Pitt Rivers collections, almost all of Amerindian origin. The majority of these, 185 items, are from the Sanumá or Sanemá, a subgroup of the Yanomami, living in Southern Venezuela. They were purchased in 1981 from Marcus Colchester who had collected them during doctoral fieldwork in 1979-80. Colchester went on to become the Director of the Forest Peoples Programme. His collection consists mainly of basket work, weapons and feather ornaments. There is fairly comprehensive documentation. Thirty-one objects are those from the Akawaio and Pemon collected by Butt Colson and already referred to under 'Guyana', to which may be added a further 32 objects donated by Butt Colson but collected by someone else. Fr Cesáreo de Armellada, a missionary who worked among the Pemon on the Gran Sabana for 50 years, was the source of 29 Pemon objects. Three Panare baskets were bought from Paul Henley. Finally a carved wooden bird from the Warao of the Orinoco delta was obtained by Butt Colson herself.

Besides these two collections there are a further eight items which can be identified as coming from tropical forest Amerindians. Three arrows of unknown provenance came from the Abingdon Museum being part of the Morland Family Collection of 125 items, mainly from India. The Morlands were well known brewers in Abingdon, best known for their 'Old Speckled Hen' beer, but no member of the family was able to provide any information about its origins when the transfer of the whole collection was arranged by Beatrice Blackwood in 1969. A George Wood gave two pieces of basketry, one from the Yanomami and the other from the Carib-speaking Yekuana (Makiritare) which he had collected in 1993 while on a business trip; and a Mrs Digby gave a bow and two arrows from the Orinoco that her late husband, Admiral Digby, had collected prior to 1925. No further information is available on either of the last two donors.

## **BRAZIL**

There are 589 objects listed on the database as coming from Brazil, of which approximately three-quarters are definitely of Amerindian origin. The size of the country and the large number of different Amerindian groups in it are reflected in the nature of the collection, with many groups represented by few or just a single object. It is noticeable that there are no single collections from Brazil on the scale of those recorded for Guyana, Surinam and Venezuela.

There is, however, a noticeable concentration of items from Central Brazil, and in particular from the Gê-speaking peoples. There are 48 objects from the Serente (more usually spelt Sherente or Xerente), all of which were collected by David and Pia Maybury-Lewis in 1955-6 and purchased by the Museum in 1957. David Maybury-Lewis obtained his doctorate at Oxford and the rest of his career was spent at Harvard University. He was instrumental in setting up the indigenous rights organization, Cultural Survival. The Serente collection was followed by another of 17 items from the Shavante made in 1958 and purchased by the Museum in 1959. To these are to be added a further 15 objects collected by Maybury-Lewis in 1958 and donated to the Museum by his mother in 1978. There are also a further 13 items donated by Peter Rivière in 1960 on behalf of the 1957-8 Oxford and Cambridge Expedition. This makes a total of 45 Shavante objects which cover a general spectrum of their material culture. There are 65 objects from the Gê-speaking Kayapó; 62 of these are children's drawings collected by Darrel Posey in the 1990s and bequeathed to the Museum in 2001. There are also notebooks and letters relating to these drawings held by the Museum. It should be additionally noted that the Pitt Rivers holds a collection of over 2500 photographs of the Kayapó donated by Posey's estate (see 2001.82.1-). Two

Kayapó clubs were donated by Adrian Cowell, the author of *The Heart of the Forest* (1960) and *The Tribe that hides from Man* (1973), in 1963, and a Txukarramae (a Kayapó subgroup) baby carrier was purchased from Zeina el-Khoury Klink, in 1990; she having purchased it in Brazil. Finally from the Gê people, there are three objects listed as Apinayé (Apinaje); two feather head ornaments were bought from Stevens Auction Rooms in 1900 and the third, a side blown trumpet, was transferred from the Oxford Natural History Museum, and perhaps before that it was in the Bodleian. Doubts that the last is not from the Apinayé nor even from Lowland South American were supported by Fatima Nascimento of the Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro; whereas side blown trumpets are found in the region its decorations, consisting of a 'grotesque human figure with mother o'pearl eyes and hands', is out of keeping with Lowland South America. In addition to these there are a further nine objects not listed under 'Cultural group' on the database but which are described under 'Primary documentation' as 'Apinages'. They were all purchased by Balfour during his visit to the Amazon in 1927.

The Pitt Rivers holds 31 objects from the Bororo who are often included with the Gé.

Of these 27 were collected by George Miller Dyott in 1928 while on an expedition to find Colonel Fawcett (see below). His account of the expedition can be found in *Man hunting in the jungle* (1930). Dyott was an early aviator who served in the Royal Naval Air Squadron in the First World War and then became an explorer. A further three objects were donated by Peter Rivière on behalf of the Oxford and Cambridge Expedition to South America. The remaining item was exchanged with Enrico Hillyer Giglioli of Florence in 1903-4, having been collected by a Salesian missionary. It might be noted that, in addition to the Wapisiana objects mentioned above, there are a further 92 South American objects in the Pitt Rivers collection that were acquired through exchange with Giglioli, but as they are all from coastal Peru they do not feature in this survey.

From the region known as the Upper Xingu there are 41 objects. Of these 34 were donated to the Museum by Peter Rivière on behalf of the Oxford and Cambridge Expedition, the majority of the items (23) coming from the Kamayura, but also four zoomorphic pots from the Waura. Hermann Meyer from Leipzig, who gave three Trumai items, led an expedition in 1896-7 to look for the sources of the Xingu River; a member of that expedition, on his first visit to the region, was Theodor Koch-Grünberg who went on to become a famous Amazonian ethnographer.

George Dyott, who has already been mentioned in connection with the Bororo,

also collected 16 objects from the Nambikwara (Nambikuára) while on his expedition in search of Fawcett. Colonel Percy Fawcett, also the source of a number of items in the Pitt Rivers, disappeared without trace in the centre of Brazil in 1925. This final expedition had been preceded by a number of explorations, and the 19 objects from Brazil connected with him are probably from the Maxubi (Mashubi) or Arikapú (Aricapú) whom he visited in 1914. These objects had been on loan to the Royal Geographical Society and were then donated to the Pitt Rivers by his widow in 1931.

There are 55 items transferred from the Ashmolean in 1886, of which 44 were collected by Sir James Everard Home in the first half of the nineteenth century. Three of these are not of Amerindian origin, and the other 41 consist of a quiver and 40 blowpipe darts. They were collected at Cametá, near the mouth of the Tocantins River which flows into the Amazon just west of Belém. However, there must be some doubt that it originated from this region as the local Amerindians have not been reported as possessing this weapon. Sir James Everard Home was the second baronet, son of Sir Everard Home, a surgeon. He was a naval officer who rose to the rank of captain and presumably visited Brazil during the course of his service. A further seven items, all arrows and also from the Tocantins, were originally presented to the Ashmolean by a Lieutenant Henry Lister Maw, who was also a naval officer. Maw travelled across the continent in 1827-8 and wrote an account of his journey, *Journal of a passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic* (1829). Finally there are two Amerindian objects collected by William John Burchell in 1826-29; one a Karajá lip ornament from the River Araguaia and the other a club, simply listed as coming from Pará. They were presented to the Ashmolean by his sister, Anna, in 1865. Comments on Burchell's visit to South America can be found above under 'Guyana' where it is suggested that the items catalogued as coming from that country probably come from Brazil.

There are four further items from the Karajá from three different sources. One of these, a pottery figurine, is one of four Amerindian objects collected from various parts of Brazil by Alasdair and Laura Burman and given to the Pitt Rivers by Marian Wenzel in 1981.

Seven bows and ten arrows were purchased from Juan Hamerly in 1926; they are from the Chiquitos people of Mato Grosso, although these people mainly live in Bolivia. Hamerly also sold to the museum a much larger collection – 114 objects – from the Lengua of Paraguay, but these people, from the Gran Chaco, do not belong to the tropical forest so fall outside the focus of this review.

Pitt-Rivers' Founding Collection contained 23 objects listed as coming from Brazil, although one, a painting by Edward Goodall of a Maopityan, is also listed as from Guyana. Four of the objects are not of Amerindian origin and nine have no group

provenance but come from many different parts of the country. There are five stone implements collected in the region of Santos, the port of São Paulo, by Richard Burton, and four Botocudo items also collected by him. Burton was British consul in Santos in the 1860s and travelled widely in South America. There are a further three Botocudo objects in the collections, two of which had originally come from Enrico Hillyer Giglioli's collection (see above) but was purchased by the Pitt Rivers from William Ockleford Oldman of 77 Brixton Hill, London SW, a well known collector of Pacific material. One of these objects, a flute, reached the museum as part of the Balfour bequest.

There are in total 23 objects from Brazil which came from Balfour. As well as the Botocudo flute just mentioned there are the five Wapishana musical instruments already covered in the Guyana section. A further musical instrument is listed as coming from the Uanema on the Rio Branco; these people have not been identified. Most of the items, 15, were bought by Balfour during his visit to the Amazon in 1927. Of these nine are those from the Apinayé as already mentioned (spelt Apinages and not entered under 'Cultural group' on the database), two from the Urubu in Maranhão and the remaining four simply from the Tocantins River.

There are 10 objects collected by A J Chivers; six of these are identified as coming from the Rio Içá, a left bank tributary of the Amazon which becomes the Putumayo in its middle and upper reaches where it forms the boundary between Peru and Colombia. The objects were collected in 1906 at the height of the rubber boom. It has not been possible to find out further information about Chivers or what he was doing in Brazil at that time. It may be noted that he also donated objects from Bolivia (see below), a collection of bird skins simply listed as South American, 14 objects from the Ashanti of Ghana and one from China.

There are eight objects from the Silver collection but all without group provenance and a further six from Stevens Auction Rooms (not including the two Apinayé objects mentioned above) that equally lack exact provenance. There are six objects from the Cainguá (Kaingua) of Southern Brazil, presented to the Pitt Rivers in 1913 by Federico Christian Mayntzhusen and sent by the Director of the Städtisches Völkermuseum, Frankfurt.

The rest of the Brazilian material in the Museum comes, in small collections, from a variety of groups and regions. From the Guarani there is an unusual anklet designed to protect against snake bites, donated by Andrew Pride of the South American Missionary Society in 1903; the Norwegian Baron Erland Nordenskiöld collected and donated a musical instrument from the Palikur of Amapá and a fire stick from the

Parintintin of the Rio Madeira; these items formed part of an exchange with the Göteborgs Museum in 1926. A gourd cup from the Bora of the Rio Juruá, a major right bank tributary of the Amazon, was presented by Robert William Theodore Gunther in 1911. Gunther was a zoologist, a Fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, for many years, a founding force behind Oxford's History of Science Museum and its first Reader in the History of Science. He donated a large collection of miscellaneous objects from all over the world to the Pitt Rivers but there is no evidence he ever went to South America or indeed to many of the other places from which the objects originate. As well as the two objects collected by Zeina el-Khoury Klink already mentioned (one Waiwai, one Txukarramae), there are a further seven objects from different groups all over Brazil. Eva Cutter, or Mrs William Downing Webster, sold a flute to the Museum in 1896 which came from the Manaos of the lower Rio Negro. This is one of 16 objects from South America, mainly from Chile, that reached the Pitt Rivers via Eva Cutter, whose husband was a dealer. Two objects from the Aché of the Brazil-Paraguay frontier came from Federico Christian Mayntzhusen and the Städtisches Völkermuseum, Frankfurt. A Tapirapé mask was purchased from Borys Malkin from the Museum für Volkerkund, Basel in 1967. Malkin was a Polish- American entomologist and ethnographer who died in Warsaw in 2009. From the dealer James Thomas Hooper, already mentioned under Guyana, there are four items listed as coming from Brazil. Three of these are without group provenance and the fourth, a blowpipe, is stated as being of Aguaruna origin. If that is the case it comes from Peru where the Aguaruna are a division of the Jívaroan people. This is supported by the fact that it is said to come from the Rio Santiago, which is a tributary of the Marañon in Jívaroan territory. Finally there is a bark cloth costume from the Tukano of the Rio Japurá, a left bank tributary of the middle Amazon, bought from Christie's in 1981 for £120.

\* \* \* \* \*

The remaining four countries whose territories extend into the tropical forest, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, also have an Andean Highland region. Anthropology has traditionally distinguished between these regions although the distinction is increasingly being recognised as artificial and the boundary between them arbitrary. The collections in the Pitt Rivers Museum are mainly from the Highlands and of an archaeological rather than an ethnographic nature and fall outside the purview of this survey.

## **BOLIVIA**

The total number of objects in the Museum from Bolivia is 273. This country has three



quite distinct ethnographic regions. In addition to the Tropical Forest Lowlands and the Andean Highlands, there is the region of the Chaco. Neither of the last two is covered by this survey and it is from them that virtually all the objects originate. Furthermore there is some doubt about the remaining items and only a few are unambiguously from the Tropical Forest area. There are six items collected on the Río Beni by A J Chivers, whose name has already come up in the section on Brazil where it was noted that nothing is known about him. Four of these objects are listed as coming from the Lechos and two from the Waraya, neither of which people has been identified although the former may be the Leco. Of the 14 items collected by Colonel Fawcett in Bolivia, at least seven are definitely not from the Tropical Lowlands, and of the remaining six only one definitely is. That is a club from the Guarayú, a group descended from the Guaraní of Paraguay and living in the Río Blanco region of Eastern Bolivia. There is one further object from these people; that is a toy arrow collected by Baron Erland Nordenskiöld and obtained as part of an exchange with the Gothenburg Museum in 1927. Finally from Bolivia there is an arrow from the Yuracare who live in the headwaters of the Río Marmoré. It was bought from dealer James Thomas Hooper in 1931, but it not known who collected it or when.

## **PERU**

The total number of objects from Peru in the Pitt Rivers Museum is 2,558, but the great majority of these is from the Highland and Coastal regions and a large proportion of those is archaeological rather than ethnographic. The collections from the Lowland region are dominated by those of Major Ronald Hawksby Thomas who travelled through Peru, Ecuador and Colombia in 1922-23. Relatively little is know about Thomas; he attended Lincoln College, Oxford, was in the Royal Engineers and died in 1940. He does not appear to have published any account of his travels in South America but the Related Documents File in the Pitt Rivers contains an 18pp typescript of notes on the people he visited, a diagram of a Jívaroan house with its fighting tower, and a 9pp vocabulary of native words. The number of items collected by him in Peru totals 374 and they come from a variety of groups. The Jívaroan people are best represented. These people, divided into six distinct sub-groups, live either side of the Peruvian-Ecuadorean border, mainly in the valleys of the Pastaza and Marañon Rivers. The objects collected by Thomas in Peru derive from three of the subgroups, the Aguaruna (50 objects), Huambisa (159) and Achuar (70). There are a further five Achuar items collected by Thomas who presented them to Lincoln College, Oxford, which, in turn, donated them to the Pitt Rivers following his death. The Achuar collection includes one of the shrunken heads owned by the Museum. The other

groups represented in Thomas's collection are the Yagua (26), a Peban group living in the Napo and Putumayo river basins; the Huitoto or Witoto (12), also from the Putumayo and Caqueta river basins, partly in Peru and partly in Colombia. From the Ocaina or Okaina, a Witotoan group, there is a jaguar tooth necklace. The Asháninca or Asháninka (11), often referred to as the Campa, are one of the Arawakan groups living in the headwaters of the Madeira and Ucayali Rivers. The Panoan Shipibo and Conibo, also from the Ucayali River basin, are represented by 22 items, although there is some confusion here as these objects are also listed as possibly from the Iquito. The last are not Panoan, but one of the Zaparoan groups living between the Napo and Tigre Rivers, not far from the modern Peruvian city of Iquitos. There are a further 14 objects listed as just Iquito. The remaining objects in Thomas's collection are from the region but their provenance is not given and at least two are not of Amerindian origin.

Besides Thomas' collection, objects from Peruvian tropical forest reached the Pitt Rivers from a variety of different sources, none of them of major importance in numerical terms. There is another example of an Achuar shrunken head, which was bought from a Mrs Sanders in 1911. There are four Asháninca items and an Iquito bowl collected by James Archibald Douglas, Professor of Geology at Oxford, 1911. There are also two objects listed as Asháninca in Pitt-Rivers' Founding Collection but there must be some doubt about their provenance and both items are archaeological rather than ethnographic in nature. Also in the Founding Collection there are five items from the Shipibo and Conibo, plus possibly a club that is simply listed as from the Ucayali River, and a spear that may well be of Lowland origin. Other Shipibo-Conibo items are a bow and a spear purchased from Miss Eva Cutter, and a bow and 17 arrows from Stevens Auction Room that had been owned by a Mr Tucker; there is a ceremonial baton purchased from Stevens Auction Rooms from the Piro who are another Arawakan group of the region. Balfour is associated with 49 objects of which perhaps two arrows may be from the lowland region. There are 35 objects collected by the naval officer, Lieutenant Maw (see above under Brazil), consisting mainly of bows, arrows and blowpipes. Some of these appear to be from the Peban groups and others from the Ucayali River in 1827-8. As with the objects previously referred to in the Brazilian section, these items were passed from the Ashmolean to the Pitt Rivers in the re-organization of 1886. Another item that came from the Ashmolean is a pot containing curare collected by someone called Bartlett, although it is not certain whether this the same Edward Bartlett who collected a spear and a shield from the Shipibo-Conibo and formed part of Pitt-Rivers' Founding Collection.

There are 12 items from the Stephen William Silver collection which consisting

of three blowpipes and related gear certainly suggest a Lowland provenance although the identity of the region, the Huacapa River, has not been located. Boris de Chroustchhoff, an archaeologist and antiquarian, donated a feather headdress from the Perené River in 1922. Louis Colville Gray Clarke donated a large collection of archaeological finds from the Highland and Coastal region, and two objects, a club and an ornamental dagger, from the Ucayali River. The same is true of Henry Ogg Forbes whose large Peruvian collection only contains one tropical forest object, a string bag, also from the Ucayali River region. Forbes was a botanist and ornithologist and was in Peru in 1911-12 to report on the sea birds which are the source of the valuable guano. Finally James Thomas Hooper sold the Museum a spear from somewhere in the Peruvian Amazon in 1922.

## **ECUADOR**

The Pitt Rivers holds 979 items from Ecuador although some of these are possibly from Peru. The collection is dominated by 507 objects from Manta on the Pacific coast collected by Louis Clarke and accordingly not relevant here. A relatively few items come from Ecuador's tropical forest zone and, as in the case of Peru, it is the Jívaroans, the Achuar and Shuar groups, who are best represented. There are 103 objects from these people although five of these, those collected by Thomas and passed on by Lincoln College, have already been covered in the Peru section. Once again it is Thomas who is the main collector, contributing 71 items. These are all from the Río Pastaza region and include a number of human and animal shrunken heads. There are a further three Achuar objects collected by Thomas which reached the Pitt Rivers via the Geology Department. There are 20 Achuar objects in the Founding Collection, including a shrunken human head and a sloth head. Another shrunken head was bequeathed by William Leonard Stevenson Loat and was obtained on exchange with the British Museum. It is not clear where Loat obtained this head and he is best known in the Pitt Rivers for his donation of 91 Japanese netsuke. The remaining objects came as single item donations including from George Dyott and Nicholas Guppy, a botanist best known for his book *Wai-Wai* (1958).

Thomas collected a shirt in the Putumayo River area from the Camsá or Kamsa. The question of this group is taken up further in the Colombia section, but a relevant point can be made by reference to another collection. The Museum bought 33 Secoya objects from the 1960 Oxford University Exploration Club Expedition to Ecuador. The Secoya are a Tucanoan people living on the Cuyabeno River. The notes provided by the expedition claim that the Secoya and Cofán, a neighbouring tribe are jointly known as the Cushmas. The Cofán is an isolated language and the likely reason that they

are jointly called by the same name is that they wear the same sort of dress; 'cushma' is the vernacular term for the long shirt-like garment which is standard wear in the region, There is one further item from the Cofán, a comb collected by an Elaine Fullard while on holiday in 1993. In 1904 the Museum purchased from the Stevens Auction Rooms a bow and six arrows collected by William Downing Webster on the Río Napo. Webster's wife was Eva Cutter, already mentioned as the source of objects from Brazil and Peru. Also from the Napo River is a feather ornament donated in 2000 by Merete Demant Jakobsen and Richard Ramsey. From the Silver collection there is another ornament that is likely to come from the Lowlands although no provenance is provided.

Finally, there are two further items collected by Thomas. From the Canelo, who, although a Quechua-speaking people, are normally regarded as belonging to the Lowlands, is the end of a condor feather used as a gold container, and from the Mayna (Maina), a Záporoan people of the Pastaza and Tigre valleys, a blowpipe.

## **COLOMBIA**

There are relatively few items from Colombia in the Pitt Rivers, the total being 420. The majority of these are from regions other than the Amazonian lowlands. Some of the objects from the last are also listed as being from Peru and/or Ecuador. Once again objects collected by Ronald Hawsby Thomas predominate. There are 26 objects from the Cofán, a group already referred to as living in the Río Putumayo basin on the Ecuador-Colombia border.

Most of the other objects from the Putumayo region have already been listed under the Peru section. There are eight objects from the Correguaje (Coreguaje or Korejawe) on the Caqueta. These people were described by Thomas as a subgroup of the Huitoto, but they are in fact a Tucanoan group; as are the Siona or Sioní who live on the upper Putumayo River and from whom there are two jaguar tooth necklaces. The Camsá or Kamsá have already been mentioned in the Ecuador section; there are a further 12 objects collected by Thomas from these people in Colombia, and one by Marianne Schimpff who obtained her doctorate at the Pitt Rivers Museum. The Kamsá, also known as the Coche, are a Chibchan people who live in the Sibundoy Valley in the upper Putumayo. Also from the Putumayo are two spears and a hammock from a group listed as the Teteye, but these people have not been identified. The two remaining objects from the Thomas collection are condor parts from the Inga, possibly Inca, of the Putumayo region, so it is not certain they belong in this survey. Finally from the Putumayo are four objects bought at Stevens Auction Rooms in 1909, but as is usual with objects from this source there is no further information about their provenance.

There are two pieces of basketry collected from the Río Guaviare near its junction with the Orinoco, by Linda Mowat of the staff of the Pitt Rivers Museum. They come from the Puinava, Curripaco or Piapoco, all of which inhabit the region and have similar material cultures. In fact the Puinava speak a Macú language, while the Curripaco and Piapoco are both Arawakan. Two fibre bags simply identified as from Amazonas and bought in a museum shop in Bogotá were also purchased from Mowat. From the Meta River, another Orinoco tributary, are four Guahibo or Hiwi objects collected by E A Wallace in 1885. Little is known about Wallace although he did publish an article in the 1887 issue of *Timehri: Journal of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society of British Guiana* describing the journey on which he collected the items and mentioning in it that he was a botanist.

\*\*\*\*\*

Out of the total number of nearly 300,000 objects in the Pitt Rivers Museum, 8,574 are listed as coming from South America. It is not possible to give an exact figure for those from Lowland South America, as many are listed as coming from one or more countries, but it can be estimated at around 2,500. This means that the South American tropical forest material represents a little under a third of the South American collections and less than one percent of the total collection. On the other hand the quality of the collection is on the whole high, especially since the major collections mainly derive from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, were made by professional ethnographers and are competently documented.

Authored by: Peter Rivière (2012)