

Disembodied and Displaced: An Archaeological Enquiry into the Historical Colonial South Trade of Indigenous Human Remains and Artefacts, and the Contemporary Repatriation and Rehumanisation of Indigenous Australians from South Africa

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Iziko Museums of South Africa holds the crania of six Indigenous Australians, three with mandibles, and an associated stone implement. These were all accessioned between 1907 and 1916 and provenanced only to Australian state level (namely SA [3], WA [2] and Vic. [1]). Their partial and largely unprovenanced status makes their planned repatriation problematic, both practically and ethically. South African-based research has been conducted on the identification of these individuals, identifying two named donors for the Victorian individual and stone implement, and one South Australian individual. Here, this research is advanced by undertaking Australian-based archival, genealogical and museological research. The Western Australian Museum textual archives and relevant records were examined, but contained no identifiable information pertaining to the Western Australian individuals. Interstate museums' records were not accessible online and therefore were not analysed. Compiling details found in genealogical records and historical newspaper social pages, genealogical timelines were created for the two named donors, tracking

their movements through their respective states to highlight potential collection locations for the two skulls and associated stone implement. Non-invasive anatomical techniques for determining familial relatedness were discussed as potential future directions.

This thesis builds upon the limited literature of how archaeology can aid to repatriate and rehumanise the disembodied and displaced. I considered what non-invasive and invasive techniques may offer—and at what cost. Subject to proper consultation with relevant Indigenous and government bodies, scientific archaeological techniques may be useful tools for repatriation and aid in rehumanisation through assigning provenance, which is crucial to Indigenous Australian cultural identity. I also investigated cultural methods of rehumanisation through previous repatriation case studies.

An unexpected product of my research was the extensive trade in Indigenous artefacts and human remains between southern hemisphere extensions of the British Empire, here termed the 'Colonial South'. Previously, this trade has been under-researched, instead focusing on that driven by the Empirical northern hemisphere, the 'Colonial North'. I examined museum archives and historical Australian newspaper articles detailing additions to Australian museums. Museum textual records indicated that the Colonial South trade [n=6] was not as prolific as that of the Colonial North [n=101]. This was greatly contradicted by historical newspaper records, which indicated that trade within the Colonial South [n=177] far outweighed that of trade with, or within, the Colonial North [n=8]. Many of these articles provided provenance details, coming from Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand and Africa. This indicates that such newspaper articles could provide valuable information regarding unprovenanced human remains held in Australian museums.