The (In)Alienability of Objects and Colonial Acquisition: The Case of Maasai Ethnographic Collections at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin

LAIBOR KALANGA MOKO, Berlin

Abstract. This paper proposes a methodological approach to the study of ethnographic collections from colonial contexts using Weiner's theoretical concept of (in)alienability. This concept is an important alternative to a biographical approach for analysing the acquisition of collections from the viewpoints of the so-called source communities. It helps anthropologists studying a complex socio-cultural context to understand how objects are owned, valued and circulated or not circulated in order to explore how they were acquired during the colonial period. The paper presents an application of the concept of (in)alienability in exploring selected Maasai objects at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin. Further, it presents my interlocutors' perceptions about how objects were acquired and taken to the Museum, as well as their reactions to those objects being in the Museum.

[Colonialism, ethnographic collections, (in)alienability, Maasai objects, museums]

Introduction

The acquisition and the possible ways in which ethnographic objects were transferred to museums in Europe during colonialism have become highly contested aspects of ongoing public debates. The contestation is triggered by the colonial nature of collecting and the multiple possible ways in which objects may have been acquired. Some scholars argue that objects were violently appropriated or looted, for example during anti-colonial resistance wars (Sarr and Savoy 2018, van Beurden 2018). Others, conversely, claim that some of the objects were acquired through trade, exploration, gifting and academic research (Basu 2011). Research on the provenance of objects acquired and brought to museums has not been easy. This is because provenance has relied on inadequate and incomplete colonial records to link objects with the contexts in which they were acquired. Inadequate and incomplete information is a result of colonial collecting activities which paid more attention and placed more emphasis on material objects and showed less interest in people and information (Ivanov 2007).

Anthropologists and historians have been grappling to fill the gaps in the missing information using a biographical approach, which follows Appadurai's concept of "object biographies" (Appadurai 1986) and Kopytoff's "social life of things" (Kopytoff 1986). Hoskins (2006: 78) distinguishes two major forms of the biographical: the first approaches object biographies by beginning with ethnographic research and exploring the way objects are perceived by those persons to whom they are linked, while the second begins with historical research and interrogates the objects themselves. The second form empowers objects to speak by "placing them in a historical context" and studying them in relation to available records such as diaries, archives, store inventories, trade records and other publications (Hoskins 2006: 78). The first approach, according to Hoskins (2006), has been followed by anthropologists, while the second has been the domain of art historians, historians and archaeologists. A biographical approach to the provenance of colonial collections has been criticized for overemphasizing the "routes" of an object while neglecting its "roots" (Tinius 2018: 18). An emphasis on the routes tends to frame the trajectory of an object as a succession or chain of ownership (Tinius 2018). A historical approach to object biographies is also biased towards the moment of acquisition of an object, for in-

stance, by a European agent (that is, when, where and who collected the object); it therefore neglects the perspectives of the so-called source communities.

In this paper, I intend to add to the ethnographic approach Anette Weiner's (1992) analytical concept of (in)alienability as an important theoretical construct for understanding the acquisition of ethnographic collections from colonial contexts and the possible ways in which they were brought to museums in Europe. The concept of inalienability referred to in this paper is based on Weiner's book *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (1992). Weiner (1992) developed this theoretical concept through analysis of the Trobriand Islanders' concept of *mapula*, Marcel Mauss's (2002) distinction between "movable" (*meuble*) and "immovable" (*immeuble*) property, and criticisms of Western exchange theory (see also Kovacevich and Callaghan 2013). Weiner's focus on *mapula*, a concept first wrongly defined by Bronislaw Malinoski as "repayment, equivalent" (Weiner 1992: 24), which later influenced Mauss (2002), helped her to develop the concept of inalienable possession. Weiner defined *mapula* on the basis of the following statement from one of her research informants and interpreters:

> If my father gives me [*mapula*] a coconut palm and several years later a strong wind comes and knocks down the palm, my father will give me another one. If I go to the trade store and buy a kerosene lamp and later the lamp breaks, do you think Mr. Holland will give me back my money? *Mapula* is not the same as *gimwali* [to buy and sell]. If anything ever happens to that coconut palm, my father will always replace it [*mapula*]. When my father dies, his brothers will come and give me money and take the palm back. If they do not do this, I continue to use the palm until I die. Then someone from my father's matrilineage must come and make a payment for the palm tree. If no one comes, the palm is lost to them, and my own matrilineal relatives will get the palm. (Weiner 1992: 25–26)

From this extract, Weiner conceives of *mapula* as an action in a 'complex series of transactions' which is more than "repayment" or "equivalent" (Weiner 1992: 26). It denotes an inalienable possession which, although it is circulated as a gift, is at the same time kept by the members of a group down the generations (Weiner 1992: 26). Mauss's distinction between "immovable" (*immeuble*) and "movable" (*meuble*) property among the Maori, Trobriand Islanders, Samoan and North-West Coast societies furthered Weiner's conception of inalienable possession. It is "immovable" property such as Maori valuables, Trobriand *kula* shells, Samoan fine mats given at marriage and North-West Coast coppers that she classifies as examples of "inalienable possession". They are inalienable because, unlike food and crafted goods (movables), they remained attached to their original owners, despite the circulation (Weiner 1992: 46). Through a critique of Western exchange theory for being based exclusively on the norm of reciprocity, Weiner also calls for an account of inalienable possession as a source of difference and hierarchy (Weiner 1992: 49).

I argue that, unlike the biographical approaches that build on the routes of objects, the role of collectors as well as the Western exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, the concept of (in)alienability provides us with a useful analytical tool for assessing ethnographic collections from colonial contexts. As the "most ancient and powerful economic classification" (Weiner 1992: 17), it helps anthropologists 1) privilege source communities in order to classify objects on the basis of their (in)alienability, 2) assess the ways in which they are differentially valued in their original context beyond Western exchange theories, 3) examine how the value of an object relates to its (in)alienability, and thus 4) analytically examine the possible ways objects were acquired and brought to museums. The concept of (in)alienability, unlike the most recent Western economistic perspectives, which build on the capitalistic dichotomy between commodity and gift (Mauss 2002, Gregory 1982) or the movement between the two (Appadurai 1988), can be suitably em-

ployed to study ethnographic objects collected during colonial times in the context of a source community. For instance, it is through the concept of (in)alienability that my Maasai interlocutors assessed the status of the objects treated in this article and their legitimacy of their being in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin rather than the object's actual biography. Similarly, the acquisition of objects and the perceived ways in which they got to the museum were generally seen by my interlocutors from the vantage point of their (in)alienability. Whereas alienable objects such as a three-legged wooden stool, a storage bag or a community medicine are perceived as objects that could have been given away in an appropriate context, powerful inalienable objects such as an ear pendant, a fly whisk, a necklace of blue-beads and many others are perceived to have been acquired in controversial contexts. The controversy emanates from the power that is inherent in these objects, their cultural value and their connections with the bodies of their previous owners.

By focusing on the roots of objects (the source community), I locate them in the complex socio-cultural system to understand their inalienability and my interlocutors' perceptions of the ways in which the objects were acquired. My focus on the roots of objects adds to previous biographical approaches the conception of what the objects substantially are in the context of their origin. I argue that the (in)alienability of specific objects is contingent on a group system of ownership and a social identity which they serve to authenticate, their power (sacredness and use in rituals), and their connectivity to the bodies of previous owners. Inalienable objects, for instance, unlike alienable objects, are not mere "things" but rather powerful objects sometimes with an agency of their own. It is this value of an object in the socio-cultural context rather than their circulation that is conceived and assessed by my Maasai interlocutors. This is to say, it is important to my interlocutors to consider the ways objects are valued rather than their biographies. Further, I argue that most objects in the studied list are inalienable and that their acquisition and the ways in which my interlocutors perceived how objects got to the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin are controversial issues. In my interlocutors' views, the acquisition might have involved the use of force or warfare, deceit or illicit trade. Conversely, alienable objects are mere things which can be given away in any form, the fact that they are kept in the Museum not being an issue.

Community Age and Gender Categorization of Objects' Ownership

In order to fully comprehend the question of the inalienability and alienability of objects in the Maasai community in which I undertook the study on which this paper is based, one has to be familiar with the community's system of property ownership. This system is embedded in the social organization of the community, particularly its age-set and gender organization.

The Maasai pastoral community is divided into two moieties, the house of the red oxen and the house of the black cattle (Kipuri 1983). The two moieties are further subdivided into major clans with sub-clans. According to my interlocutors, the major clans in Oltukai village are Ilaiser, Ilmollelian, Illaitayok, Ilmamasita, and Ilmarmai. This division somewhat supports Hurskainen's (1990: 82) classification of four major clans, Ilaiser, Ilmamasita, Ilmollelian and Ilmarmai, in his study of the Maasai of Olkesumet area in the Kiteto district of Tanzania. The Ilaiser clan has several sub-clans, such as Inkidong'i, Ilparkeneti, and Ilpartimaro. This is the case for the other major clans as well. I have presented this division because of the presence of an object (a medicine horn) in the list of objects I studied which belongs to a sub-clan of diviners (Inkidong'i) of the Ilaiser clan.

Apart from the clan organization, the community is also socially organized into an age-set and gender system. An age-set comprises a group of male individuals with a range of ages who are formed into a group of peers with their own identity different from other

groups (Hurskainen 1990, Spear and Waller 1993). To avoid confusion in the anthropological literature, the term "age-set system" in this context has both structural and social elements (Morton 1979: 81). The age-set is created through an initiation ritual, and initiates advance with their peers to senior elderhood, with clearly defined responsibilities and conduct governing relations between the age sets (Morton 1979, Spencer 1993). A table below gives a chronology of age-groups and the periods during which they served as warriors (see also Mol 1996).

Table 1. Age-set Names and Dates they served as Warriors

Age-set Name	**Years as warriors**
Iltalala	1881 – 1905
Iltuati	1896 – 1917
Iltareto	1911 – 1926
Ilterito	1926 – 1948
Ilnyankusi	1942 – 1959
Ilseuri/Ilchololik	1957 – 1975
Ilkishumu	1973 – 1985
Ilkidotu/Ilking'onde	1983 – 1996
Ilkorianga/Ilmirishi	1997 – 2015
Iltuati/Ilnyankulo	2011 – Present

Source: adapted from Mol 1996.

Whereas women do not belong to an age-set system, they are socially organized in their own grades going from young girls *(entito/intoiye)* to old grandmothers *(koko)*. In age-grades, individuals are assigned successive statuses in the course of their lives (Spear and Waller 1993).

This social organization, based on age-sets, age-grades and gender, functions to differentiate categories of persons, their roles, rights and responsibilities (Hodgson and Hodgson 2001). The age-set system also has political and ritual functions (Jacobs 1965, Galaty 1983, Baxter and Almagor 1978). Social organization based on age and gender is reflected in property relations within the community. The ownership of objects, access and rights to use are based on the age and gender categories of persons. As a result, objects serve to visibly establish a group identity. At the local level, therefore, cultural objects establish one's position in terms of age, age-set, gender, marital status and other social statuses (Klumpp 1987, Wijngaarden 2018), while at the general level they function to construct the ethnic identity of being Maasai as opposed to non-Maasai.

On special occasions, use rights but not ownership of some inalienable objects can be granted across groups. However, there are objects that specifically belong only to consecrated men from the diviner's clan (Inkidong'i) which forms the property of the group or clan. For this purpose, ownership and use rights are restricted to consecrated members of the clan. While this group's form of ownership excludes and differs from the individualistic or private system in the liberal model, and the group has the right to regulate and supervise its own property, individual persons have different kinds of rights, including the decision to share and dispose of property within or across group(s). This relationship with respect to objects conforms to the anthropologist's metaphor of "bundle of rights", which is used to refer to the totality of property rights and responsibilities, as well as to a specific form such as ownership that can be thought of as a bundle (von Benda-Beckmann, von Benda-Beckmann, and Wiber 2006, 15). This group's system of ownership can be thought of as a "bundle of rights" given the fact that different kinds of rights may be held in the same thing (Hann 2005, van Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999). In this case,

an object can be a property of the group (*iloopeny*); this means that the group, such as an age group, owns and has rights to regulate, supervise and present objects with outside relations. Similarly, an individual has the right to ownership (*olopeny*), use, share and dispose of objects within or across groups.

Based on gender, a differentiation is made between objects that belong to male Maasai and those that belong to female Maasai. This, however, excludes objects that belong to children, for which there is no specification on the basis of sex or gender. While this is the broadest categorization of ownership, subcategories are made for each group. With objects that belongs to men, the subcategorization is made on the basis of the age-set system. In this respect, the ownership of objects is subcategorized into those that belong to the recluse (new initiates before a shaving ritual transferring them into warriorhood) or *isipolio*, warriors' objects, elders' objects and objects shared by men (except with the recluse), including those shared with young and not yet initiated boys.

The ownership of objects that belong to women is subcategorized on the basis of a culturally determined age-grouping system. I call this culturally set "age grouping" because it does not necessarily adhere to any formalized age order. For instance, from my experience and in my interlocutors' views, a person more than eighteen years old is considered a girl *endito/intoyie* unless she undergoes initiation. Likewise, the opposite is true for those under eighteen years of age who have undergone initiation. Classification of the ownership of women's objects, unlike those of men (excluding those that belong to young boys), subcategorize ownership into objects that belongs to young girls (not yet initiated), young women's *isiangikin* objects (from initiation throughout fertility period) and old women's *ingokoon/koko* objects. There are also objects that are shared by both young and old women.

The ownership of some of the studied objects falls out of the gendered and age-set system of categorization. These include a community medicine and a sacred object which belongs to consecrated medicine men from the Inkidong'i sub-clan of Ilaiser. From this local categorization of the ownership of objects, it is evident that the community system of ownership of objects is complex, being embedded in the social organization and social relations between individuals and groups in the community. This is different from the classification established in immediately precolonial and colonial times in today's Ethnologisches Museum (and other museums worldwide), which is based on differentiating the "natural" others ("Naturvölker") from the "civilized". This colonial classification most often differentiates between different categories of use, such as figurative sculptures, household articles, agricultural tools, hunting weapons, other weapons, clothing and adornment, etc. Further, the inalienability and alienability of objects is determined by a number of factors, including the meaning of an object, its ownership and whether it conveys the social identity of the group, its power (sacredness and ritual value), and connectivity with the body of the original owner.

Methods

The study was conducted in Monduli rural district, in which the Maasai section of Ilkisongo resides. As I undertook the study during the COVID-19 pandemic in my community (Oltukai village), I utilized a remote ethnographic approach to data collection. As a native or, in Lila Abu-Lughod's (1996: 469) word, a "halfie", doing research in my community made access to the research area, interlocutors and research assistants fairly easy. Auto-ethnography was made possible by utilizing the idea of positionality (Abu-Lughod 1996) with the aim of gaining enough distance from researching my own material culture and society. The study was guided by a "feeling and thinking through things" methodology (Bens, Ivanov, and Moko 2021), that is, considering things in their

agency of arousing feelings, emotions and other reactions in their encounters with people, as well as considering them "as they present themselves, rather than immediately assuming that they signify, represent, or stand for something else" (Henare et al. 2007: 2).

Based on my own knowledge as Maasai, I selected for further research the twenty artefacts presented here in the Maasai collection of the Ethnologisches Museum, which counts around 500 objects in numbers. With the aid of my research assistants, I conducted twenty-two semi-structured interviews with both men and women of different age groups, including medicine men and traditional leaders. In addition to semi-structured interviews, I used photo-elicitation or photo-based interviews (Pink 2013, Harper 2002) as one of the visual methods with which to uncover information and feelings about objects from my interlocutors. Photo-elicitation was so evocative in a way that, in most cases, it changed the interview format into narrative interviews, as my interlocutors stimulatingly elicited much of the expected information without waiting for predetermined questions.

Using smartphones as a digital mobile technology, direct calls were made to those interlocutors who owned such devices, while my research assistants reached out those without smartphones and connected them individually to the researcher. Both video and audio calls were made through WhatsApp, Skype and Facebook Messenger, though internet connection was poor.

Inalienable and Alienable Maasai Objects

The concept of inalienable and alienable possessions or "objects" is connected to the anthropological literature on exchange theories that dichotomizes exchange items into commodities and gifts (Gregory 1982, Mauss 2002). On the one hand, inalienable possessions are described under the category of gift and refer to objects which cannot be disposed of by the owner because of an absolute value they acquire beyond exchange value (Weiner 1992). They are things that cannot easily be given away (Weiner 1992: 6). Paradoxically, and as Weiner states in her book, *Inalienable possessions: the paradox of keeping-while-giving*, inalienable objects can frequently be circulated as gifts. However, this is not considered as alienation since inalienable objects given away as gifts will remain attached to their original owners (Weiner 1992: 11). Weiner, for instance, provides an example of a spirit or *hau* that is embedded in an object given as gift which tends to find its way back to its place of origin and thus create a return (Weiner 1992: 45; Mauss 2002: 14). It is therefore an inalienable object because it remains attached or connected to its original owner, to whom it always finds its way back (Weiner 1992). Other anthropological literature in exchange theory has dealt with the contrast in terms of exchange between a gift and commodities in a market economy (Gregory 1982, Godelier 1999).

Marcel Mauss in *The Gift*, for instance, has described inalienable possessions comparatively among the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest (Mauss 2002). In his analysis of the feast of the potlatch, he discusses the gift given as an inalienable possession in the context of the obligation to reciprocate (Mauss 2002). Family objects such as "talismans, emblazoned copper objects, blankets made of skins", and "cloth bedecked with emblems", which are circulated at marriage among the Kwakiutl and Tsimshian, are examples of inalienable objects (Mauss 2002: 55). For Mauss (2002: 55), "it is even incorrect to speak in their case of transfer. They are loans rather than sales or true abandonment of possessions". Although these works deal with gift exchange as involving the circulation of inalienable objects, this does not mean than all gift exchange involves inalienable objects (Gell 1992, cited in Mills 2004). Similarly, not all inalienable objects are given away: some are kept out of circulation entirely (Kovacevich and Callaghan 2013). That is, they are not given away at all. In the context of the acquisition of colonial collec-

tions, I use the concept of "inalienability" in its broader sense to refer to objects that cannot be completely given away outside their socio-cultural context.

Alienable objects, on the other hand, fall under the category of commodities, which are conceived as goods that are easy to give away or exchange in the market. Weiner, for instance, writes:

> Some things, like most commodities, are easy to give. But there are other possessions that are imbued with the intrinsic and ineffable identities of their owners which are not easy to give away. Ideally, these inalienable possessions are kept by their owners from one generation to the next within the closed context of family, descent group, or dynasty. (1992: 6)

Alienable possessions are therefore things which, unlike inalienable objects, can easily be circulated outside the closed context of the family, a descent group or a dynasty simply as commodities.

The inalienability and alienability of the Maasai objects I have studied depends on a number of factors, including the system of ownership, the socio-cultural value of an object when used in the construction and authentication of a social or other collective identity, use in ceremonies and rituals, use in warfare, the sacredness of an object, an object-body connection (i.e., being used or worn on one's body), and the possible effects of losing an object. In many cases, the alienability of these objects binds them to the kin group. That is, many of these objects can only be inherited or circulated among kinsmen and women. As the inalienability or alienability of objects depends on these factors, and since little is known regarding ownership, cultural value, sacredness or the connections of objects to the body, I will discuss these together through a detailed account of each object or group of objects. I will pursue this by following the community's categories of the ownership of objects based on gender and age.

Warrior's Objects: Spear, Shield, Sword, Ostrich Feathers and Rattle Bell

From my interlocutors' point of view, warriors or *ilmurran* form a core group in the age-set system of the Maasai community. This is because of the position they occupy as chief protectors of the community. This position provides them with the sole responsibility for protecting the community, its land and livestock. Warriors protect cattle, for instance, from raids and attacks by wild animals. For this reason, most of their objects falls under the category of weapons (*irruparen* or *inareta*), though they can also be used in ceremonial events. The warrior's weapons include spear, shield, swords, ostrich feathers or headdresses, and war bells.

All objects that belong to warriors are inalienable objects. This is because warriorhood is intrinsically imbued in these objects. A real warrior is perceived as someone who is furnished with all these weapons. However, the weapons also give warriors a social identity and are owned by the group. Weiner (1992: 33) asserts that some inalienable possessions result from their exclusive and cumulative identity with particular owners and the tendency accordingly to keep them out of circulation or movement. It is this group system of the ownership of war objects and the social identities they convey to the group that make them inalienable. In the age-set system, for instance, the warrior's objects function to distinguish warriors from other groups of men, such as elders and young boys. The recent declining use of some of these objects by warriors is associated with the weakening of the warrior institution, as Parkipuny expressed it:

> When you see a warrior with the spear, shield, sword and the feathers headdress, he is a full-fledged and a real warrior. This is because it is all these weapons that were used

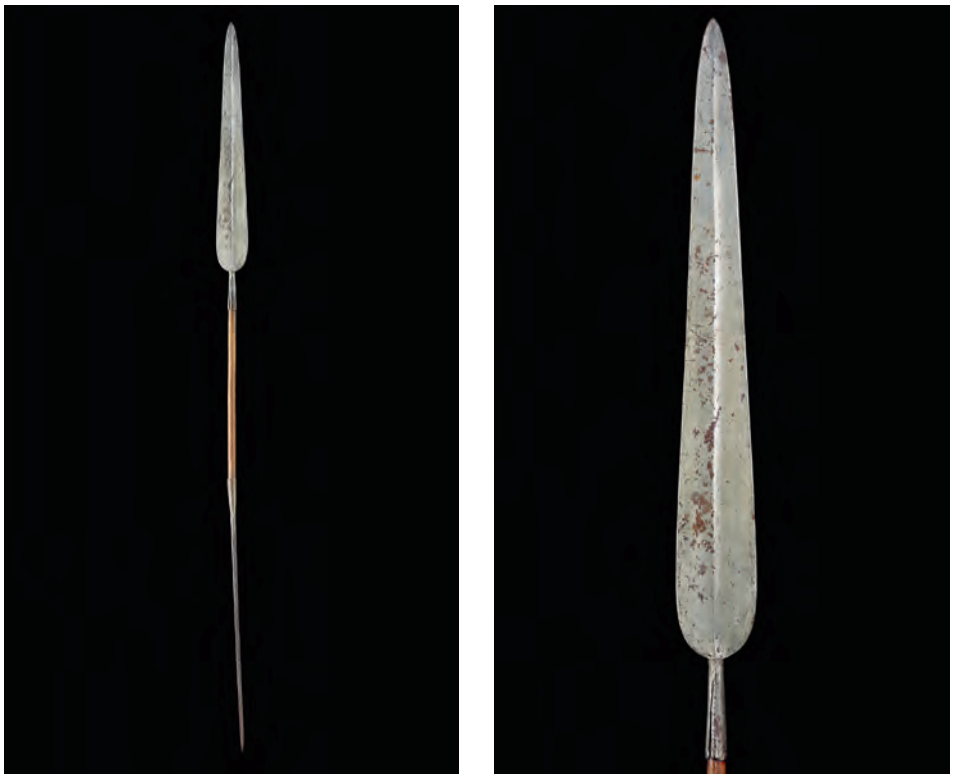

Fig. 1 Spear, collected by Friedrich Kallenberg, iron, wood, 1,98 × 8,70 x 2,90 cm. III E 3347, acquired 1894, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

> to identify and define warriors as they carried them along all the time. This tendency is disappearing, and it has become difficult to differentiate a warrior from a junior elder.
>
> (Parkipuny, m 66)

Warrior's spear: III E 3347 (Fig. 1 a, b)

This spear, made from iron and wood, was collected by Friedrich Kallenberg and acquired by the Berlin Museum in 1894. The spear belongs to Maasai warriors and gives a warrior his identity. It is a weapon that the warrior needs to have throughout his warriorhood, a period which lasts for fourteen or fifteen years (Spencer and Waller 2017, Spencer 1993, Kasfir 2007). In the life-cycle of warriorhood, the spear stands as an important part of the transition into and out of this stage. In bringing in and officiating for a new warrior group, for instance, an outgoing group symbolically gives spears to the new warriors in an arranged meeting. In this meeting, the retiring warriors tell their incoming successors about the role of the spear in protecting cattle and why they should have it with them at all times. Although young boys (not yet initiated) who graze cattle and elders can use spears to protect cattle against predators, this depends on the type and design of the spear. In most cases, boys' and elders' spears are made completely from iron materials and have a short blade. In contrast, warriors' spears have long blades fixed onto a wooden shaft.

My interlocutors reported that people in the community do not make spears on their own; instead, they purchase them from a blacksmith. This is the case for most metal objects because most Maasai not only lack the skills of metal smiths but also do not like to work iron (Bleeker 1963). The available literature mentioned Il/Kunono as specialized blacksmiths from whom Maasai acquire metal objects such as spears, swords, arrows,

Fig. 2 Shield, collected by Kurt Johannes, wood, leather and plant fiber, 107 × 58 × 8,50 cm. III E 11907, acquired 1906, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

Fig. 3 Shield, collector unknown, wood, leather, 99 × 50,50 cm. W 64/66, acquired 19th century?, Deutsches Historisches Museum. Working photograph by Martin Franken.

bells, branding irons, iron jewelry and many others (Bleeker 1963, Klumpp 1987, Galaty 1982). Whereas Bleeker (1963: 74) refers to the Kunono as a separate Maasai group belonging to the Kipuyoni clan, Galaty (1982: 11) does not consider them Maasai at all. Likewise, this study found that, the community in Oltukai village purchases spears from non-Maasai others to whom they referred as Orkokwet, which means "the furnace". These are people from outside the Maasai ethnic group. My interlocutors reported that it is only the metal part of a spear that is bought from the blacksmith: the wooden shaft is carved by men from the Maasai community.

Since cattle-raiding has been outlawed by the Tanzanian state, the common function of the spear nowadays is to protect cattle from animal predators such as lions, leopards, hyenas, wild dogs, fox and others. However, the spear is also used for self-defense and as a weapon for fighting with other people, including among warriors themselves. It is used during cattle raids with other ethnic groups, however rare this has become. In cultural celebrations, my interlocutors reported that warriors use spears while singing for entertainment.

Warrior's shields: III E 11907 and W 64/66 (Fig. 2, Fig. 3)

The shield or *elong'o* is one of the proudest objects of the Maasai warrior. In most of the interviews I conducted, warriors are referred to as the "shield of cattle". This expresses incorporation of the shield into the warrior's body as a significant object for the accomplishment of his roles and responsibilities. It is a war object for the protection of the warrior.

Unlike metal objects that are obtained outside the community through trade, the shield was made by the warriors themselves. My interlocutors reported that shields were made

locally from buffalo and eland hides before the Tanzanian government criminalized the killing of wild animals and possession of their products (hides, ivory, etc.). Warriors pre-arranged the killing of buffalos to make durable shields, as Lesome explained:

> Yes, we killed buffalos ourselves. Even the one I had and the other one my young brother had, we made them together through killing buffalos. And this was the same for other colleagues when we were warriors. It is not an easy task to kill the buffalo as you need to be careful not to destroy the skin or parts of the body that are good for making a nice shield. It was a risk to possess a shield because one has to get closer to a buffalo [and] you may be attacked by it to death. We used to kill old buffalos because they have the best hide for making a durable shield.
>
> (Lesome, m 59)

Hides from these wild animals, unlike cowhides, are thick and hard enough to resist an arrow, a sword or a spear from hitting the warrior's body.

Nowadays, because of shield's continued cultural importance in the warrior's rite of passage or *eunoto* and demand in the tourism market, people make counterfeit shields from cowhides and goatskins. This was criticized by my interlocutor from the Ilkidotu age-group:

> Things have changed a lot because I nowadays see here in a rite of passage, like when your age group [referring to my age group Ilkorianka] went to the Eunoto, they made simple shields from goatskins. This is the same for the present warrior group [Ilnyangulo] – they used shields from goatskins in their *eunoto* ceremony.
>
> (Sululu, m 47)

Shields play an important role in the *eunoto* rite of passage into junior warriorhood, which involves seizing the horn of an ox or bullock – a sacrifice to be offered. Warriors from different Maasai sections meet to compete to find the winner in seizing an ox horn, a sacrifice for the promotion of young warriors into junior warriors (Spencer 1993: 145). This competition features a real fight among the warriors of different sections to demonstrate the section's strength, and every warrior need the shield to protect himself. The prohibition on the use of shields by the Tanzanian state has affected the way in which shields are used in *eunoto* ritual. Nowadays, counterfeit shields made from goatskin are used as a substitute for the genuine shields that were used in the past.

Notwithstanding the reduced use of the shield in inter-ethnic warfare resulting from cattle-raiding, warriors from Oltukai village where the study was conducted still need them for self-protection. However, the rarity of ethnic wars has to a large extent reduced a shield to a ceremonial object used for entertainment in ceremonies such as the *eunoto* rite of passage, children's initiation and community rituals. Interviewed warriors reported that they feel good and proud when they play elegantly with shields to demonstrate their abilities and skills in using them.

Before smartphones were introduced in the community, warriors used a shield to make a rallying call such as when invaded by another ethnic group. A shield was struck, and warriors rallied together at a specific place. Similarly, the shield was hit to rally all warriors at a time to attend the *eunoto* ceremony. During lion-hunting, a shield is hit to confuse the lions and kill them more easily with spears.

The genuine warrior's shield is disappearing following the banning of cattle raids, prohibited killings of wild animals and the ending of social gatherings such as locally organized warriors' camps (*emanyata*/*imanyat*), as one of my interlocutors explained:

> Shields are slowly disappearing. For those warriors who still have shields, they are not really using them frequently. This is because cattle-raiding has become rare, and this is what caused wars. Another problem is that, if you are caught with the shield or

Fig. 4 Sword with scabbard, collected by Hans Glauning, wood, iron, leather, glass, 77,50 × 5,00 × 30,00 cm. III E 4982 a, b, acquired 1897, Ethnologisches Museums, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

> even a headdress by the government officials, you will be arrested and imprisoned. This is the reason most people sold them: they are afraid that they will be jailed if they are found with them.
>
> (Sululu, m 47)

Shields were decorated with unique paintings, which served to differentiate warriors from initiation sets, such as right-hand vis-à-vis left-hand circumcision groups (see Spear and Waller 1993: 141–143). The right-hand and left-hand groups are created through the initiation process: the first to be circumcised are known as the right-hand group. This group serves as junior warriors until the *eunoto* ceremony when they graduate as senior warriors. As the right-hand group nears the *eunoto* ceremony, the left-hand group is initiated (through circumcision) and become junior warriors after *eunoto* graduation by the previous group (cf. Tignor, 1972). Shields were also painted to differentiate warriors from different sections and places. Designs and the painting of shields differed across age-sets: some, for instance, were marked with an eye or o*long'u* (see the red-colored dot on the right side of Fig. 3) to indicate a brave warrior who demonstrated successful skills in cattle-raiding and fighting. This brave warrior is ironically referred as the bull of a raid (*oloing'oni len'jore*), that is, the leader of the raids. Some shields painted with a picture of a tree depict a place such as a big tree, where warriors and girls sat to shade themselves in the daytime.

Sword with scabbard: III E 4982 a, b (Fig. 4)

A sword, in the Maasai language an *alalem*, with its scabbard (*enchahur*) and belt (*engeene alalem*), is both a weapon and a tool. It is an important object for men of all categories (boys, warriors and elders). However, the sizes of swords and their purposes differentiate their ownership among different categories of men. Big and long swords, which are mostly used as weapons and tools for making cattle fences or kraals, belong to warriors. Elders and young boys can use small swords to slaughter cattle and provide themselves with beef. Young boys who are responsible for herding cattle use small swords for self-defense.

From conducted interviews, swords were and are still obtained from outside the community through trade. In the past, before the integration of money into the community's

economy, swords were bought in exchange for goats from "the furnace" or *orkokwet*. *Orkokwet* is a non-Maasai word also known to my interlocutors as *ormeeki* (*irmeek* pl.), which they use for all non-Maasai Africans (see also Hodgson and Hodgson 2001, 64). Information in the "main catalogue" ("Hauptkatalog") in Berlin's Ethnologisches Museum states that the sword was the work of the Wagogo ethnic group, of a craftsman from Nyangelo on the northern edge of the Maasai steppe. Though my interlocutors could not identify the ethnic group of the blacksmith where they buy their swords, they deny that swords are made by Wagogo. The sword handle, scabbard and belt are made locally from leather by men in the community, who decorate them with red ochre.

Warrior's rattle bell: III E 1168 (Fig. 5)

The warrior bell is both a war object and an object of celebration. The bell is oval in shape with elongated pointed sides at each end and a leather strip that warriors use to tie and untie it on the lower leg (thighs) on various occasions. This shape differentiates it from the cow's bell. Before cattle-raiding was banned, a rattle bell was worn to intimidate and confuse the enemy with the sound. Currently, it is worn during celebrations of rites of passage into warriorhood and celebrations following the successful killing of a lion. Together with a shield, rattle bells are used by warriors during the *eunoto* rite of passage, when forty-nine warriors might be selected to protect a sanctuary and an ox due for sacrifice are equipped with shields and rattle bells. This is similar to other group rituals, especially those summoned by an age group.

None of my interlocutors were aware of the origins of the rattle bell. Some said it was brought by the Europeans (ilaisungun) and that the Maasai bought them from local agents in local markets. Unlike spears and swords, rattle bells are not made by "the furnace" or "iron worker". Instead, many of my interlocutors called them the work of "professional people". However, Prestholdt (2008: 70) documents the reconfiguration of imported brass and iron wires by East African local coastal communities into bells, leg bracelets, necklaces, beads, armlets and other products which were sold to Maasai and other consumers. In addition, Fischer's report of his travels in in the Maasai country describes small bells as one of the necessary articles in expeditions that were exchanged with the Maasai (Anonymus 1884: 77). It is therefore most likely that rattle bells were introduced to Maasai communities from Europe.

Ostrich feathers headdress: III E 421 (Fig. 6)

The name *ngala* in the short description in the museum's main catalogue refers to a headdress collected by Johann Maria Hildebrandt and acquired in 1877. This is a warrior's headdress and, like the warrior's bell, is a war object and a ceremonial object. From my interlocutor's description, the headdresses were originally made by the warriors themselves from ostrich feathers, leather and beads. Unlike shields that are obtained from hunting buffalos and elands, ostrich feathers are obtained by collecting feathers that have fallen on the ground in the forest. They can also be gathered from dead ostriches killed by predators. This, however, contradicts Galaty (1998, 233), who claimed that Maasai warriors kill ostriches to obtain their feathers. At times of clashes with other ethnic groups as a result of cattle-raiding, warriors wore the headdress to intimidate the enemy. Similarly, this was one of the important objects in celebrating the killing of a lion, which is only considered successful and only celebrated provided none of the participating warriors was hurt by a lion during the killing. Recently, though rarely, headdresses have become objects of celebration in familial, public and age-set rituals and ceremonies.

To sum up, a warriors' weapons are insignia which not only act to identify them, they are also imbued with protective power. That is, warriors' objects are inherently powerful and act to protect them during a battle. A warrior's power to fight is also embodied in

Fig. 5 Warrior's rattle bell, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer, iron, leather, L: 12 cm. III E 1168, acquired 1882, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

Fig. 6 Headdress, collected by Johann Maria Hildebrandt, ostrich feathers, glass, leather, 58 × 45 × 4 cm. III E 421, acquired 1877, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

these objects. The protective power and function of an object is incorporated into the warrior's body in a way that the two cannot be disentangled. This was evident when my interlocutors referred to warriors as "shields of cattle". In this sense, a warrior is a shield because the two are interdependent and work together to protect cattle and the community. A painting of a warrior's eye on the shield (see the red-colored dot on the right side of Fig. 3) shows an entangled relationship between this object and the warrior's body. My interlocutors reported that no one is allowed to touch it. This is because touching it is the same as touching the warrior's eye and will result in fighting. Likewise, objects such as a sword and its scabbard cannot be given away due to their incorporation into the warrior's body. It is therefore this relationship between warriors and their weapons, the protective power of objects and the value of objects for a group identity that restricts these objects from being given away. As Sululu narrates of this example:

> I cannot give away my spear and sword regardless of the amount of money one wants to pay for them. I love them because it is what I use whenever our cattle are attacked by lions. Let me ask you, can the government soldier give away his gun? These are important weapons that protect us and our cattle, and it is maybe a mad warrior who can give them away. It is a shame and a curse to give away the thing that is protecting you and your cattle.
>
> (Sululu, m 47)

Elders' Objects: Fly Whisk, Tobacco Container, Blue Beaded Necklace, Wooden Stool, Bow and Arrows

The status of elder is the highest rank of authority one can achieve in the Maasai age-set system. The status is awarded through the performance of a ritual famously known as *olng'eherr,* a ceremony that Galaty calls "the ceremony of the 'Meat-Rack"' (1983: 368). This ceremony marks the final stage of the transition in an age-set system (Spencer 1993: 145). In this ritual practice, the bullock is sacrificed by being smothered, and its blood is mixed with milk and honey and drunk by all participants undergoing admission into elderhood stage. The bullock's meat is roasted inside an enclosure or sanctuary made from sticks and cowhides and thereafter is openly eaten by the senior warriors who are being admitted. The warriors eat the roasted meat together with their wives. This ritual involves blessing, welcoming and advice by the senior elders. In this ritual, objects that belong to elders are blessed and are given to the senior warriors who are being promoted. These objects constitute their identities in their new social position as elders. The objects are both the authority and seniority of the elder and sacred power for the family's creation and upbringing.

Being a Maasai elder means being responsible for a family and focusing on passing children through both family and community rituals. For this reason, most objects that belong to elders, unlike those of warriors, are called objects for rituals. Depending on the kind of ritual and ceremony, elders' objects are used in the birth of a child and a woman's after birth-shaving, child-naming, circumcision rites, shaving of an elder (man), slaughtering the wound's bullock (*orkiteng laarbaa*), the passing of men onto age-set rituals and many other occasions. The wound's bullock is the sacrifice given by an elder for the death and body injuries that he might had caused to other people when he was the warrior. Elders' objects comprise fly whisk, tobacco box, blue-beaded necklace (*enkonongoi*), bows and arrows, and a wooden stool. All these are given in the *olng'eherr* ritual except the wooden stool, which is given later in a separate ritual called "home of wooden stools" or *enkang' oolorikashi*.

Fly whisk: III E 1628 (Fig. 7)

A fly whisk or *ollenywa* for my interlocutors denotes the seniority, power and appropriate comportment for a Maasai elder. It also denotes maturity, wisdom, and important social standing. All graduating senior warriors receive a fly whisk during the *olng'eherr* ritual as one of the important objects for ritual use (*imahon*). It is an important object used in family rituals such as slaughtering a bullock for a child-naming ritual (*orkiteng' lendomono*), wound's bullock ceremony (*orkiteng' laarbaa*) and children's initiation. The fly whisk is locally made by women from the tails of dead wildebeests and giraffes brought by young boys from cattle-herding. Boys also collect the long hairs these wild animals leave on the ground when rubbing themselves on trees. The tail is crafted together with a wood handle and a leather strap for hanging the fly whisk. With the exception of a fly whisk that senior warriors receive from their wives or mothers at the time of the *olng'eherr* ritual, a fly whisk can be made later by an elder's married daughter, who receives a cow in return. A mother-in-law can also make a fly whisk for her son-in-law and be given a cow in return, this return signifying the fly whisk's cultural value.

In ritual practices, an elder must have a fly whisk with him throughout the celebration. Similarly, during boys' and girls' initiation, an elder holds a fly whisk all the time while seated with other elders at the gate of the kraal or *endaloshi.* Whereas this practice has not changed, senior elders' behavior in using a fly whisk all the time, including in times without celebrations, has changed, as Naimesoi complained:

> In the past, old men would always have a flywhisk with them all the time even when walking outside their homes. But, nowadays, things have changed as people do not

Fig. 7 Fly whisk, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer, animal hair, leather, wood, 47 × 8 × 5,50 cm. III E 1628, acquired 1884, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

> want to carry them along. They just use them during a ritual and keep them inside after celebration.
>
> (Naimesoi, f 90)

The cultural value of the fly whisk in family, individual, age-set and community rituals provide the ground for its persistent use by the community's elders. In addition to its use in ritual, a fly whisk is literally used to chase away flies instead of using the hands. In the words of one of my women interlocutors: "It is a shame for an elder man to use hands to kill or chase away flies like a child. He uses the fly whisk instead" (Siteyan, f 76). The leather strap hanging on the handle of the fly whisk is used to hang it up, as well as to discipline children when they misbehave.

A fly whisk is an inalienable object. This is because it is an object of authority, identity and power. As an object of power used in family rituals, it can only be inherited in the confines of the family, only by an elder's first-born son upon his death. The fly whisk has ritual power in family affairs, and this limits its circulation within the family lineage. It is used in children's or family rituals. It gives the family good luck for its children, and as a result its loss represents a loss of children. Weiner (1992: 37) argues that some possessions are connected with authority or high status in situations that differentiate them from things of the same kind. The fact that a fly whisk is associated with the identity of the elder and that it is incorporated as authority is another cause of its inalienability. The fly whisk can, however, be borrowed by elders' kinsmen in ritual events.

Tobacco containers: III E 10872 a–c, III E 1663 (Fig. 8 a, b)

The tobacco container (Fig. 8 a), like the fly whisk, is an object for ritual use. It is the social identity of an elder formally given to graduating senior warriors at the *olng'eherr* ritual. The tobacco container is also an object for social status. The higher social status given to the tobacco container by the community is evidenced by the access and use rights it gives to old women (*koko)*. Given the new social standing that junior elders achieve at this stage, they are formally allowed to chew or use tobacco. Although this is an individual decision, one must still have a tobacco container for one's use in various family and community rituals. Likewise, regardless of whether one chews tobacco or not, one is expected to keep the container filled with tobacco for other people. This is considered a blessing from other elders, especially when they can find tobacco anytime they visit a fellow's household. As Siteyan explained:

> It is good and a blessing to keep your tobacco container filled with tobacco for other elders. This is why, until now, even when her husband is not at home, a wife must keep his tobacco containers full of tobacco for other elders whenever they ask [for it].
> (Siteyan, f 76)

Similarly, in all family rituals, a container full of tobacco forms an important and obligatory part of the celebration, as access to it is allowed to all elderly men and women who chew tobacco. One of my interlocutors reported that "there is not an elder who will celebrate his family ritual without the tobacco container. For instance, when he is initiating his children, he cannot do it without the container filled with tobacco, the fly whisk and the blue beaded necklace" (Sinyati, f 58). An elder must wear the container around his neck with tobacco inside and share it with other elders.

Tobacco containers are locally made by Maasai women from the branches of a bamboo tree known to my interlocutors as *oltiani*/*iltian*. This bamboo tree is only available, at least for the Maasai of Kisongo, at a hill called "elders' hill" or *en'donyo ormorwak* located in Sikitari area of the Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania. In the main catalogue of the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, a small oval-shaped container with a slender conical neck is identified as a "small tobacco bottle made from ivory" ("Tabaksfläschchen aus Elfenbein. Massai") (Fig. 8 b). However, my interlocutors identified it being made from bamboo branches through photo elicitation. Other sources, however, observe that in the past Maasai carved tobacco containers from various other materials, such as ivory, bones, horns and hides (Turle 1992, Kalter 1978). Berntsen (1976), writing about Maasai and their neighbors, notes that Maasai purchased ivory and buffalo horns from hunters (iltorobo) from which they carved tobacco containers. In addition, my interlocutors identified this tobacco box as a snuff box used to store powdered tobacco. The snuff is sniffed up the nostril, unlike the tobacco leaves, which are chewed in the mouth. Furthermore, some of my interlocutors identified it as a gourd that elders use to drink mead during ritual celebrations. My observation and experience after visiting the Museum proved that the container is a small snuff box made from ivory. My interlocutor's wrong identification of the material is due to the fact that when showing photographs for purposes of photo-elicitation, it can be difficult to determine the exact size of an object.

When the age-group is about to be admitted into elderhood, people go to collect some bamboo wood for making tobacco containers, which are then beaded and decorated by women. Recently, and because of depletion of the bamboo trees, Maasai have begun using plastic pipes together with bamboo wood to make the containers. The use of tobacco containers in ritual practices makes them permanently demanded objects in Maasai material culture. People still have and use plenty of tobacco containers, but nowadays they are kept inside the house, and many elders do not carry them around with them, unlike in the past.

The cultural value of the tobacco container as an object of power and authority makes it inalienable. Like the fly whisk, it can only be inherited by the owner's eldest son on the

Fig. 8 a Tobacco container, collected by Bruno Domke, bambus, iron, glass, leather, 2,30 × 3,10 × 3,10 cm. III E 10872 a–c, acquired 1904, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

Fig. 8 b Tobacco container, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer, iron, ivory, glass, leather, height x diameter: 9 × 3.50 cm. III E 1663, acquired 1884, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Claudia Obrocki.

former's death. Any objects used in family rituals are inalienable because their loss affects family members. That is, losing the tobacco container not only denotes a loss of power and authority on the part of the elder, it also endangers family life. Giving away a tobacco container that an elder has used for his children's rituals is believed to affect their physical health and life achievements. This is what Nasinyari explained:

> You cannot share the tobacco container among different households. It is not shared outside the family because somebody can take your children's good luck.
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66).

The children' good luck for life is measured by their success in establishing their own families and having children, as well as owning many cattle.

Blue-beads necklace: III E 4748 (Fig. 9)

This blue-beads necklace was collected in today's Tanzania by Kurt Johannes and acquired by the museum in in 1896. The blue-beads necklace or *enkonongoi* is a sacred object that belongs to Maasai elders. It can also be made from black beads. It is one of the objects given at the *olng'eherr* ceremony. While it also serves an identity function for an elder, it has sacred power for both the family and the community. In my interlocutors' views, it is the heart of both the family and the larger community. This view supports Galaty's observation (1983: 370) that a blue- or black-beads necklace given to the two appointed leaders (the "Strap Carver"/*Oloboru enkeene* and "the Planter"/*Olotuno*) at the *eunoto* ritual for an age-set office (which they hold for life) is the heart of their mates. The blue-beads necklace is the "heart" because of its power to give or take away someone's life. That is, like a women's ear pendant (see under women's objects), it functions to save people from death or will cause death if it is abused. For instance, an elder can revoke a curse from harming a person by spitting on this necklace. By the same token, however, he can cause death through reluctance to spit on it.

Fig. 9 Blue-beads necklace, collected by Kurt Johannes, glass, leather, 35,5 × 9 × 1,6 cm. III E 4748, acquired 1896, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken

The blue-beads necklace serves an important function in all family rituals. My interlocutors reported that, at the present time, an elder cannot celebrate any occasion without a blue- or black-beads necklace. The necklace also has a protective function for the human body when it is worn on it. This is why new initiates are adorned with the blue- or black-beads necklace and two ear pendants (nowadays hang around the neck) as amulets to protect them from harm and the evil eye. New initiates wear it throughout their period of seclusion, which last for a maximum of four months. This period is considered one in which the initiates are subject to the evil eye and other harms. The new initiates cease to wear it after the shaving ritual which ends the period of seclusion and marks the start of their warriorhood or of womanhood for girls.

According to my interlocutors, the blue-beads necklace originates outside the community. Beads are bought in local markets, and women make necklaces out of them. Similarly, the available literature shows that beads in general were and are still imported from Europe, particularly Italy, Czech Republic, Germany and the Netherlands as well as from other parts of the world, such as India and China (Wijngaarden 2018, Klumpp 1987, Vierke 2004).

A blue-beads necklace is an inalienable object for many reasons. First, it is a religious object imbued with sacred power. This sacred power makes it sensitive in such a way that it cannot be given away to any person. The sacred power imbued in it functions to protect the owner and his family. For instance, an elder's anger, which may lead to the death of the person at whom it is directed, can be revoked by spitting on a blue-beads necklace. As an object of sacred power, it is also used for blessings. Another reason for its inalienability is its cultural value in rituals. Like other elders' objects, this is also a powerful object

Fig. 10 Wooden stool, collected by Hans-Joachim Koloß, wood, 20,5 × 30,5 × 29,8 cm. III E 19960, acquired 1994, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

used in individual, family and community rituals. An elder, for instance, cannot celebrate any family ritual without the blue- or black-beads necklace. Its uses in rituals incorporate it into individual and family life and thus restrict its alienability to kin. It can therefore only be transmitted along lines of kinship when its owner dies. Other reasons for its inalienability include its embeddedness in the group's system of ownership as an object that belongs to all elders and its function in endowing the elder with his social identity. Similarly, the rank or social status of an elder is legitimized through possession of this sacred object (Weiner 1992). However, unlike the crowns of queens and kings that Weiner (1992: 6) treats as symbols of authority and power, this object and other elders' objects *are* authority and power. The objects can act and react, and this authenticates their inalienability. The fact that a blue-beads necklace revokes a curse makes it not a symbol of power but rather an acting power in its own right (Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007).

Wooden stool: III E 19960 (Fig. 10)

My interlocutors classified wooden stools into two types: three-legged wooden stools, and four-legged wooden stools. The one depicted in the image (Fig. 10), which is kept at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, is a three-legged stool, used primarily for sitting on. The three-legged stool is thus an ordinary stool compared with a four-legged stool. This is because it is not used for individual, family and community rituals. In contrast, a four-legged stool is a very important type because of its value in rituals, which makes it an appropriate stool (*olorika osinyari*) and an essential object for any household. The formal ownership of a four-legged stool by newly admitted junior elders is established through an age-set ritual called "home of stools" or *enkang' oolorikashi*. This ritual is performed after *olng'eherr*. In the "home of stools" ritual, a sample of stools are blessed and distributed to the participants, thus establishing ownership of a stool by all junior elders. After this ritual, it is forbidden for a newly admitted elder to acquire his first

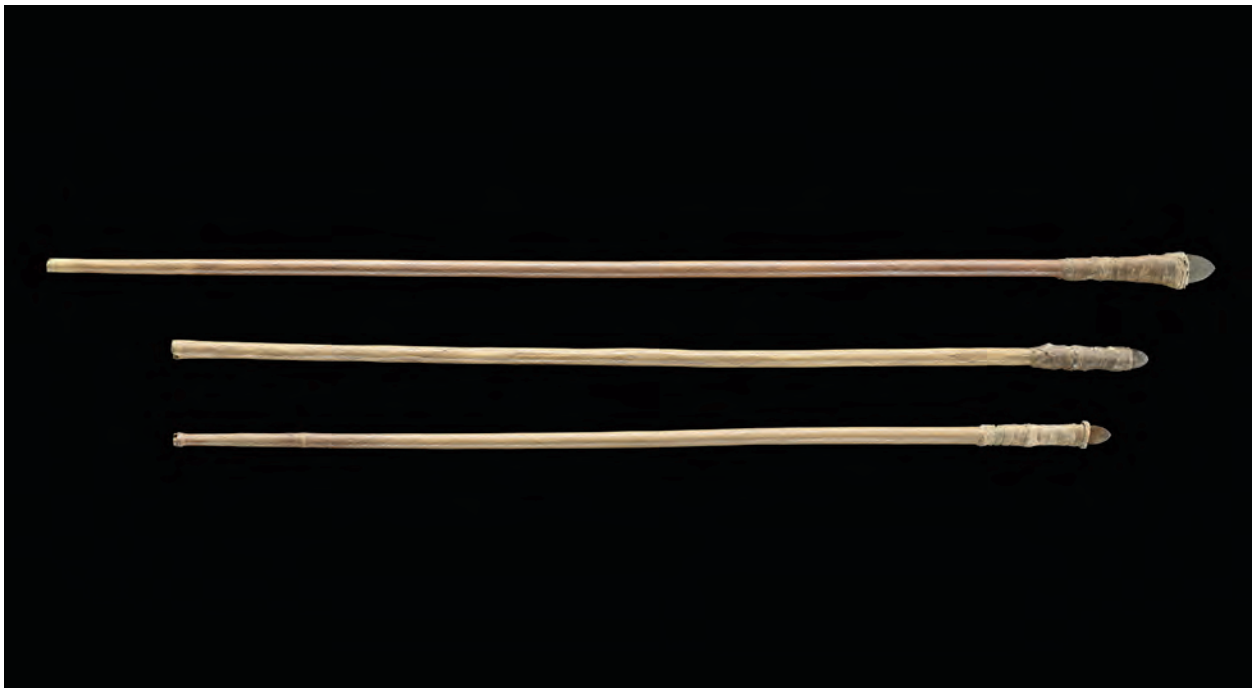

Fig. 11 Arrows, collected by A[lfred] C[laud.] Hollis, iron, wood, leather, (a) 52 × 1,7 × 1,2 cm, (b) 41,7 × 1,2 × 0,8 cm, (c) 43,5 × 1,2 × 0,9 cm. III E 12957 a–c, acquired 1908, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Marin Franken.

stool by carving it himself or buying it. Rather, he must get it as a gift from a fellow of the same age-set and in most cases reciprocates. However, my interlocutors stated that men from the community may originally carve stools themselves or buy them in local markets.

A four-legged stool is used in ritual practices for blessing, children's initiation, seclusion or *isipolio* shavings, a woman's after a birth shaving, *eunoto* and *olng'eherr* rituals. It is not, however, the case that each four-legged stool is appropriate for rituals. An appropriate four-legged stool must be a wooden one, unbroken, and with a circular seat. The appropriateness of a four-legged stool is likened to the number of cow's legs, as one of my interlocutors explained: "the common stool we use has four legs, and this is because even the cow has four legs, and so the four-legged stool is an appropriate one for rituals" (Sakita, m 78).

In all the above rituals, milk is poured onto the circular seat of the stool for washing and placing on hair during shaving before being properly kept inside the house. Other settings in which a four-legged stool is used includes the "wound bullock" ritual already mentioned. Besides being an elder's sacrifice for deaths or wounds he might had caused to other people when he was a warrior, a "wound bullock" ritual also cleanses other kinds of guilt one might have committed. In this ritual, an elder is blessed while seated on an appropriate stool. Further on, this type of stool is used in a blessing following the appointment of an individual to a traditional leadership position. In this setting, cow dung is mixed with milk and painted on the appointee's forehead and arms. Moreover, a four-legged stool is important when traditional healers mix charms and medicines during treatment of afflicted people. Similarly, the four-legged stool is used by warriors to place on ochre when they are painting their bodies. Although the stool traditionally belongs to an elder, everybody can use it for sitting on. The three-legged stool, although inappropriate for rituals, can be bought and owned by women. Since it is considered a normal stool, it can freely be owned by anybody.

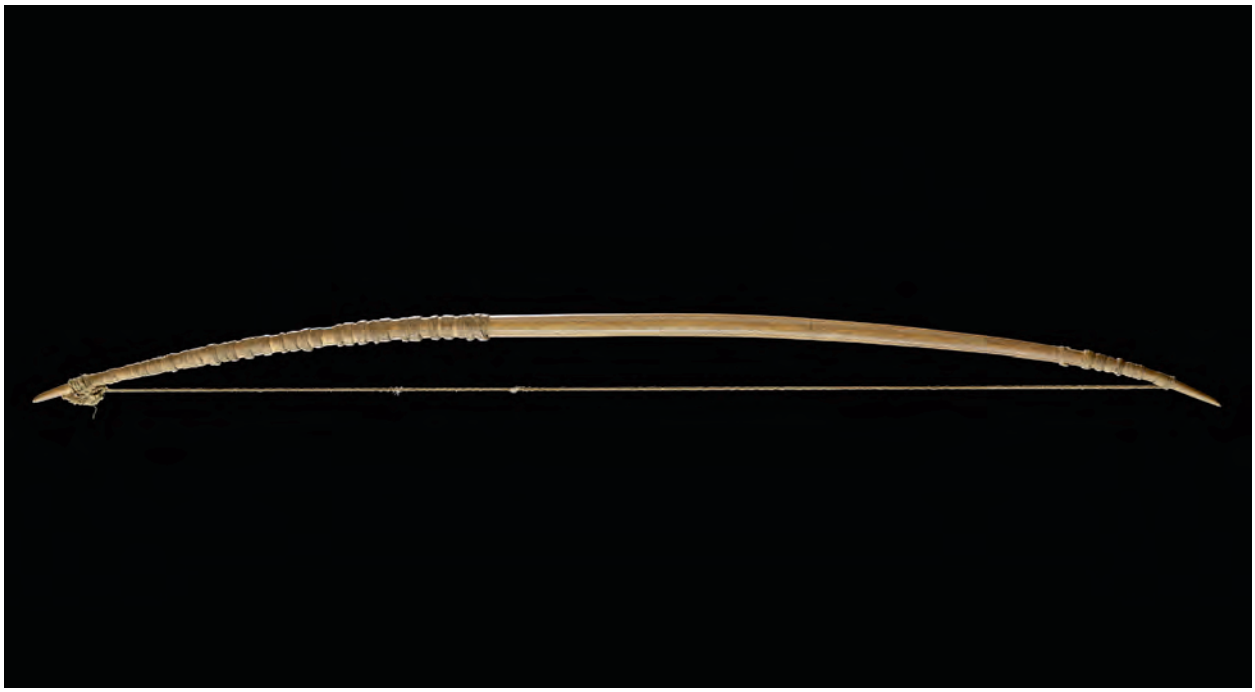

Fig. 12 Bow, collected by Wilhelm Joest, wood, leather, plant fiber, 128,8 × 2,5 × 8,4 cm. III E 1986, acquired 1886, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

The three-legged stool located at the Ethnogisches Museum Berlin is thus an alienable object. It can be given away to anyone because it is considered a normal stool and inappropriate for ritual practices. It is only for a sitting on, and it can be owned by anyone. Similarly, it is not associated with a group's identity, authority and/or any power.

Arrows and bow: III E 12957 a–c, III E 1986 (Fig. 11, Fig. 12)

Bows and arrows belong to elders. They are made by people from the community, though arrows can also be bought from the nearby local markets. People make arrows by improvising with metals torn out of spoons and other metal objects. The cultural value of bows and arrows at the present time lies in their use for draining blood from cattle for food or rituals. In the museum's main catalogue, a short description of arrows classifies them on the basis of the kinds of domestic animals from which blood is drained. The description asserts that the arrow with the broader head is used for cattle, the two with the smaller head are used for calves, sheep or goats. However, my interlocutors reported that people do not drain blood from calves, sheep or goats. Rather, all arrows are used to drain blood from cows and oxen.

One of the rituals in which bows and arrows are used to draw blood from cattle is that following the birth of a child. When a woman gives birth, she is given blood to drink. The blood is drained from a cow's or ox's jugular vein depending on the sex of the child. If the child's sex is male, the blood is taken from an ox, if it is a girl child from a cow. The blood-draining ritual for a woman who has just delivered is done in a culturally special way, as Lesome clarified:

> When a woman gives birth, women will report the child's sex to the warriors for the blood-draining practice. If the child is female, warriors will suppose or pretend to draw blood from a steer (*olbung'ae*), but in actuality get it from the heifer (*endawo*). An arrow plays a big role in this act. If the baby is a boy, warriors do the opposite,

> and blood is in actuality drawn from the steer, mixed with milk and given to a woman who has given birth to drink. The remainder is given to young children to drink.
>
> (Lesome, m 59)

This example shows that an arrow and a bow are important for a family ritual. Also, from my experience and my interlocutors' description, warriors frequently drink blood mixed with the barks or roots of a traditional medicine (see community medicine below) to make their bodies strong and healthy. For this matter, they use an arrow and a bow to get blood from cattle. Similarly, this is the case for sick people, newly circumcised boys and girls, and people with wounds. An arrow and a bow are also used as tools in treating cattle with haemorrhagic septicaemia (*alakirkir*) by draining blood from the jugular vein.

The cultural use of bows and arrows in rituals for one's cattle and children make them inalienable. My interlocutors state that they are not even borrowed beyond kinsmen. This is because people with ill intentions can use the owner's cattle-blood leftovers and cattle exuviae on an arrow to take away the owner's good luck with cattle (*entooma*). When one's good luck is taken away, it will dispossess the owner of, for instance, his cattle and turn him into a poor person (*oltorroboni*). To be clear, the Maasai conception of the word *entooma* is broader, as it refers to good luck for life in general. Good luck for life is determined through intangible and tangible success such as reproduction through children, one's family's good health and the reproduction of cattle. Good luck for life is associated with the person being blessed by God (*emunyani*) and with one's fortune (*omom*), with which the person – but not everybody – is naturally endowed by God. It is this *entooma* that attracts things or possessions such as cattle, and once these are taken away the person becomes dispossessed. This luck for life is not restricted to the individual but broadly extended to the community's success as well. Therefore, the belief that one's good luck for life can be taken away through bows and arrows makes them inalienable objects.

Male Shared Objects: Iron Cattle Bell and Black-beaded Cloth

Iron cattle bells: III E 4742 (Fig. 13)

These cattle bells are among the objects acquired in Tanzania by Kurt Johannes and donated by him to the museum in 1896. Findings from conducted interviews have shown that cattle bells belong to men because cattle are owned by men. Men buy cattle bells from the market, and they belong to the owner of the herd or the one who bought it. They are therefore brought into the community from the outside. In the 19th century, the bells, like other iron materials, were reconfigured and circulated by the coastal artisans who had access to imports from the global market (Prestholdt 2008: 70). The cattle bells are used to trace the whereabouts of cattle and to protect them against predators. The herders, for example, can easily trace the whereabouts of cattle when grazing in the forest when the cattle go missing, as well as when they move out of the kraal at night. As the community has become more agro-pastoral, a cattle bell is important at night to hear cattle moving out of the kraal to feed and destroy crops in the farms. The sound from the cattle bells also chases away predators such as lions and hyenas when cattle are grazing in places with thick forest.

The bell is tied around the neck of the bullock but not the bull. This is because bulls, unlike bullocks, fight frequently with other bulls, and the bell may get lost. Also, the horns of the bulls may get trapped in the bell strip or belt and may lead to the death of the bull. Cattle bells provide strangers with home locations at night. This is because they can listen and follow the sound made by the cattle bells.

The cattle bells also have an aesthetic value for cattle. This is because my interlocutors, like the Suri of southern Ethiopia (Abbink 2003), have an affectionate relationship with

Fig. 13 Iron cattle bells, collected by Kurt Johannes, iron, leather, H:9,5/10 cm. III E 4742, acquired 1896, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

their cattle. As among the Suri (Abbink 2003: 343), the love of cattle is expressed through care, expressed in poems, body decoration, ear-cutting, lobe-piercing, branding etc. It is for this reason that cattle bells are used aesthetically to decorate and express love of cattle. For an attractive and appealing ox, women make decorated beaded belts for cattle bells in the same way they make them for their girls and warriors. This demonstrates the affection and value that my interlocutors and the community give to the cattle. The cattle are treated as humans. As Nasinyari stated, "It happens that you have a bullock that you love more than anything else. You want it to look beautiful and attractive as a human being. You therefore make a nice bell strap for it" (Nasinyari, f 66). Men and women also express their affection for cattle through songs and poems, praising cattle in songs by referring to skin colors, horns, cattle bells and brands.

The cattle bell also functions to identify the owner of the herd. This is because cattle bell sounds are not similar between homesteads. A cattle bell is medically significant in helping a fainted person regain consciousness. This is done by ringing the bell close to the person's ears, the resonant sound from the bell reawakening him or her. Similarly, it is applied to a fainted infant soon after a woman's delivery. Moreover, a cattle bell has the power of healing. It is, for example, put on to a cow that frequently aborts, has stillbirths or whose calves die soon after delivery. This overcomes the problem and prevents it from reoccurring.

Like the bow and arrows, a cattle bell is also inalienable object. Its inalienability, however, depends on whether it has been used for one's cattle. A cattle bell used for one's cattle, like those used on the human body, cannot be given away. For instance, my interlocutors considered it inappropriate to give cattle bells away because other people will

take the owner's good luck for cattle. This will dispossess the owner of his herd. Dispossession is based on the belief that: "It is not about who loves cattle, rather about who is loved by cattle" (Parkipuny, m 66 & Kalanga, m 63) who becomes wealthy in cattle. It is this good luck of being loved by cattle that is taken through things used on the bodies of your cattle and thus dispossesses the owner. This is why a cattle bell is inalienable, as one of my interlocutors explained:

> I have never seen anyone who gave away his cattle bell since I was growing up. Maybe if you have bought many bells and someone asks one before you have used it for your cattle. In this way you can sell or exchange it with a bullock. This is because a person's good luck for cattle can be taken away with the bell. The bell can also be used to perform sorcery for your herd, and you lose all the cattle.
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66)

A person with ill intentions can scratch out the body dirt that soils the strap of the cattle bell to make a good luck charm for his own cattle. Paradoxically, the cattle bell can be bartered with an ox, bullock or female goat, but not money, nor can it be given away as a gift. In this form of exchange, the cattle bell and an ox or goat can substitute each other. Similarly, if someone steals another person's cattle bell and get caught, he or she pays an ox or female goat as a penalty.

Black-beaded cloth: III E 1173 (Fig. 14)

A black-beaded cloth or *enkila*, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer and acquired by the museum in 1882, is a piece of cloth that belongs to men. A short description in the entry book of the Museum states that it is a "piece of cotton cloth in the shape of a blue triangle with a colorful beaded border. It was worn around the head by the [caravan] porters from Pangani when they enter the town after their successful return from the Massai country." ("Stück Baumwollzeug, blau dreieckig mit bunten Perlbesatz. Wird von den Trägern aus Pangani beim Einzug in die Ortschaft nach glücklicher Heimkehr aus den Massai-Landen um den Kopf getragen. Massai."). In this entry, the piece is identified as being of Maasai origin. While cotton clothes do not originate in the Maasai community, a black-beaded cloth is the modern extension of the original Maasai leather-beaded cloth. This leather-beaded cloth was made from black calfskin or goatskin before the introduction of cotton clothing to the community through caravan expeditions and trade (Anonymus 1884, Prestholdt 2008). This necessitated the adoption and remaking of the black cloth to fit a cultural context. The *enkila* from the black calfskin or goatskin was beaded by women for reasons of beauty, and strips were put on either side for tying it up and dressing with it in the Maasai fashion. The practice has been extended to black cotton clothes bought from the market. Similarly, women also had the same cloth but called *orkila* which was worn from the waist.

Enkila is worn on the body during ritual practices. Elders, for instance, wore it when they visited or returned from a visit to the medicine man for public rituals. Currently it is still used and is worn on various occasions, including by newly circumcised boys at a shaving ritual at which they enter into warriorhood, elders and warriors at a wedding, at the rite of passage into elderhood or the *olng'eherr* ritual, at a child's naming ceremony and on many other occasions for adornment. The community's use of a black-beaded cloth is based on a Maasai belief in the existence of two gods, the black and red god, of which the black god is good, the red malicious (see also Hollis 1905).

Whereas the information from the museum's main catalogue shows that this piece of cloth is worn by men when they come from long travels, this is not the case nowadays. However, my interlocutors reported that in the past, when elders were dressed in cowhides, they put *enkila* around their shoulders to protect themselves from the heat of the sun when travelling to distant places.

Fig. 14 Black-beaded cloth, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer, cotton, glass, 84 × 82 × 2 cm. III E 1173, acquired 1882, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

My interlocutors consider *enkila* an inalienable object. This is because all bodily worn objects are incorporated into the body and thus co-constitute the body. Through incorporation, an object becomes part of the body. The incorporation of an object into the body take place by the very fact of its being on the body. This is the case for both human and cattle objects. The incorporation of an object takes place through the impact of one's body dirt, excretion or exuviae (*oloirerio*) on objects. Through this incorporation of bodily worn objects into human and cattle bodies, social bodies are created (Strathern 1996, Wolputte 2004, Douglas 1970). It is this fact that makes a black-beaded cloth inalienable. To give away *enkila* constitutes a disincorporation from the physical body, a condition that can affect the body physically and mentally. My interlocutors, for instance, believe that a person's bodily worn objects, such as *enkila*, can be used by sorcerers to make good luck charms for other people and that this causes misfortune and mental illness to the owner. Conversely, individuals can also bring to the medicine man any of the afflicted person's bodily worn objects, including *enkila*, for diagnosis and ritual protection.

Female Objects

The categorization of women's objects by the community is based on the culturally determined age grading system. As stated above, Maasai women, like Samburu women, do not fit the established age-set system (see also Spencer 1993: 140), though their seniority is well established from the aging process. The age-grades place women in different social statuses, and objects plays an important role in their differentiation and identification. The age grading starts with girls (*entito*/*intoyie*), goes on to young women (*esiankiki*/*isiankikin*) following initiation and ends with elderly women (*koko*), a status attained after having grandchildren.

Fig. 15 Girl's beaded belt *engimeita*, collected by Bruno Domke, leather, glass beads, 15 × 43,5 × 2,2 cm. III E 10864, acquired 1904, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

Girl's beaded belt *engimeita*: III E 10864 (Fig. 15)

A short description in the Museum's main catalogue asserts that this object belonged to "a Masai woman" ("einer Massaifrau"). In fact, it belongs to girls and it is worn by grown-up girls before initiation. This serves to identify girls from initiated young women. However, women make them for their daughters using a piece of leather from the cowhide. This is decorated with beads of different colors for beauty. Beads were obtained through trade with *irmeek* (non-Maasai African) who had access to imports from overseas trade (Wijngaarden 2018, Prestholdt 2008). Nowadays, beads are bought from local markets through "Waarusha" traders. The "Waarusha" are people from the Arusha region, an agricultural Maasai community in northern Tanzania (Spencer 1993).

Girls wear the beaded belt around the waist to fix their clothes in place, as well as for ornamentation. When a girl undergoes initiation, she passes it on to another grown-up girl. The use right of the girl's beaded belt is given to the newly initiated boys (*isipolio*) during the seclusion period, in which the new initiates wear objects from other groups of the society such as ear pendants and black clothes from women, a replica of a bow and wooden arrows, and a blue-black beads necklace from the elders.

If a woman is infertile, the girls' beaded belt is used to solve the problem. An infertile woman wears the belt and participates in one of the boy's initiation preparation ritual known as *enkipaata*. In this ritual, boys throw cow dung at her, an act considered to heal the problem. For this practice, a woman asks her young sister for the beaded belt, which she will keep until she conceives and gives birth.

This is an inalienable object except within the boundaries of a kin group or a girls' age-group, who are the owners of the object. Its inalienability stems from the social identity of the girls it authenticates and its incorporation into her body. Incorporation into the body makes it part of it, and therefore, like other bodily worn objects, it can be used to harm the body.

Fig. 16 Young women's earring, collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer, lead, wood, glass, 18 × 5 × 0,8 cm. III E 1670, acquired 1884, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

Young women's earring: III E 1670 (Fig. 16)

This earring collected by Gustav Adolf Fischer is the property of young women. This finding contradicts the brief description in the museum's main catalogue that it belonged to a man ("Ohrring eines Mannes von Blech. Massai."). It is worn by young women following initiation and by brides (*esipoliei*) at the time of their marriage. It is hung on the right earlobe or recently around the neck to mark one's identity. It also accords young women the honor and respect that are associated with initiation and marital status. For instance, while girls mostly associate with warriors as their lovers, young women are excluded from this association. It is therefore through an earring that the new social status of being a young woman is indicated, and warriors are expected to show respect to them. Many of my interlocutors referred to it as a "head of one's husband". Regarding the two ends of an earring, one is kept long, while the other is short. The long end expresses love of her husband, as opposed to her previous lover when she was a girl.

Like other iron objects, earrings are bought in the local markets. It was introduced into the community from outside. However, a report of "Dr. Fisher's journey in the Masai Country" shows that these earrings were introduced through caravan expeditions, although they were made in Chagga land in the Kilimanjaro region (Anonymus 1884: 4). Nowadays, many young women do not wear an earring all the time as they did in the past. It has become an events-based object worn mostly during initiation rituals and weddings. Some conservative husbands at Oltukai village, however, still force their wives to wear it all the time. Similarly, conservative women prefer to keep them on their bodies at all times.

A young women's earring or *emonyorit*, being an object that belongs to women and gives them an identity, is restricted in its movement within the sphere of women, particu-

Fig. 17 Young women's spiral bracelet, collected by Kurt Johannes, copper, iron, 14,5 × 6,5 × 6,3 cm. III E 4743 a, b, acquired 1896, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

larly the kin group. For instance, at weddings relatives donate pieces of rings from their own earrings to make a complete one for the bride. As both a "head" of one's husband and one's love of him, as well as being restricted to marriage, it cannot be given away. An earring can only be shared among Maasai women.

Young women's spiral bracelet: III E 4743 a, b (Fig. 17)

The spiral bracelet is an ornament for young women. It is worn on the forearm at marriage and in community and family celebrations. In my interlocutors' views, the spiral bracelet is made by Europeans (*Ilaisungun*) and was brought to the market by non-Maasai African (*irmeek* or *irmang'ati*) traders. This supports Prestholdt's (2008: 70) assertion that brass and iron wires were formed into armlets, leg bracelets, bells, necklace beads, rings, knives and other forms of decoration by local artisans in Unyanyembe before being sold to consumers. Paradoxically, my interlocutors reported that people bought uncoiled brass and copper irons and coiled them into different designs of their choice. In family celebrations such as children's initiation, women adorn themselves with spiral bracelets. They can also be worn without any celebration for purposes of adornment. This, however, has become rare for most women in the Oltukai community.

My interlocutors refer to spiral bracelets using different local names such as *armaamboi*, *osuyai*/*isuyan* or *orpurukati*. While the spiral bracelet belongs to young women, old women can also use it for ornamentation, as Nasinyari explained to me:

> We, old women of my age, can wear spiral bracelets on our forearms but not on our legs. I have them on my arms. Don't you see? It has nothing to do with rituals. Rather, it is the only good thing for decoration that makes women looks beautiful. We believe that God loves a woman who wear the spiral bracelet. However, nowadays this generation has changed a lot and become non-Maasai Africans (*irmeek*).
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66)

It is easier to find the spiral bracelet among old women who see themselves as the custodians of Maasai culture against the threat of modernization than among young women. This is as how one of a young female interlocutor expressed to me:

> Old women like my mother still have and wear spiral bracelets all the time. But it has become rare for us young women. My mother still wears spiral bracelets on both her arms and ankles. But most young women do not have them because people have abandoned many cultural things.
>
> (Kokolenye, f 42)

Among young women the spiral bracelet has been replaced by the creation of beaded objects of different types, including armlets and anklets. Many young women prefer beaded objects to spiral bracelets. This is because, with beaded ornaments, they can manipulate the mixing of beads to make different attractive designs. As Noongipa narrated:

> Nowadays, people here use more beaded ornaments to adorn the bride. In the past people did not have beads for making many of the objects they currently do. Maasai mostly had these brass and iron coils of white, red and light green colors, and these are the things parents bought for their daughters at the time of marriage.
>
> (Noongipa, f 56)

Conversely, some of my interlocutors condemned the formal education system and Western religion for the discarding of the spiral bracelet and many other cultural objects.

> It is in the past few years that young women have declined to wear spiral bracelets. When we were warriors and at the time the Ilkishumu age-set were marrying, brides were decorated with spiral bracelets. The reason for the disappearance of the spiral bracelet is education and religion. People are marrying educated girls and are sending children to school, and this is why they do not like to wear them anymore. It is because of education and religion that people do not love their culture anymore. But it is only for beauty, so there is no problem with discarding it.
>
> (O, m 65)

Although this object can be discarded or exchanged among women, its movement is bounded to the kin group. This is because of its relation to the body of the owner. As a bodily worn object, it is incorporated into one's body in a way that can be used to harm the body. Likewise, as a bodily worn object, one's *entooma* can be taken away through it. This is what makes it an inalienable object.

Young and old women's ear pendants: III E 4747 a–f (Fig. 18)

Acquired by the museum in 1896 from Kurt Johannes, these are the spiral ear pendants made up of two thick brass wires connected by a flexible and adjustable leather strap. The ear pendants or *isurutia* are the traditional objects of both young and old women. Like the spiral bracelet, they were bought from the local market uncoiled and reconfigured into flat spiral shapes of different sizes. Nowadays, traders sell coiled brass pendants in local markets. The ear pendant has sacred power and is a ritual object. As a sacred power, it is a life force for women's biological reproduction and the continued creation of generations. It is linked to a woman's fertility, as Naimesoi explains: "*isurutia* is woman's reproduction because we wear it together with *mporo* in rituals of marriage, birth and initiations" (Naimesoi, f 90). In the words of another interlocutor, it is through an ear pendant that a woman's fertility occurs. "…God attends women in fertility, and biological reproduction matters through *isurutia*" (Matei, m 75). It is this procreation power of the ear pendant that makes it a sacred object of power.

The sacred power of an ear pendant in biological reproduction justifies its continued use in the community. It is given to a bride at marriage. Until now, women could not celebrate ritual practices without an ear pendant. This is especially the case for the so-called "offspring rituals" or *endomono*/*indomon*. The major offspring rituals consist of women shaving following birth, child-naming and initiation.

Fig. 18 Young and old women's ear pendant, collected by Kurt Johannes, brass, leather, (a) D: 10,6 cm, (b) D: 10 cm, L: 42 cm (both ear spirals incl. leather cord), 17,5 × 23 × 3,3 cm. III E 4747 a–f, acquired 1896, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

An ear pendant is also a sacred powerful object for women's prayers. They believe that it is through it that God hears and responds to their prayers. Because of its cultural value to the present day, and since many women do not pierce their earlobes anymore, the ear pendant has been remade as a necklace pendant. It is hung around the neck instead of from the earlobe.

The sacred power of an ear pendant widens its use across gender, especially in family rituals and as a charm for protection. This makes it a very important object for everyone in the community, as stated by Kalanga:

> It is a very important object to everyone in the community because it is used throughout one's lifetime. It starts to be used when a child is born throughout his or her adulthood. It impacts on the lives of every one of us from childhood, and so it is an important object in our culture.
>
> (Kalanga, m 63)

Both new male and female initiates put on ear pendants in their period of seclusion until a shaving ritual introduces them to warriorhood or womanhood. Male initiates wear two around the neck, while female initiates wear one. New initiates wear an ear pendant for protection. This is because my interlocutors believe that they [the initiates] can easily be harmed by the evil eye during the period of seclusion. The protective power of an ear pendant therefore keeps them safe from harm. They wear it together with a blue- or black-beads necklace for protection. Apart from its protection value for new initiates during their period of seclusion, the ear pendant is also considered important for one's well-being. For the men who did not wear ear pendants in their period of seclusion, disorders are always expected, as Naishoki explains:

> For instance, for anyone who had not worn an ear pendant at initiation, something must be wrong with his well-being in his life. He is not healthy because that is the tradition that every Maasai should participate in order to become a good person.
>
> (Naishoki, f 50)

Likewise, an ear pendant has multiple functions for women, including protecting them from the evil eye and other harms.

Elderly men also wear ear pendants on special occasions. When initiating children, for instance, an elder customarily wears a number equal to the children he is initiating and dresses them immediately after initiation. Also, they wear it when slaughtering a "wound's bullock". Moreover, an appointed elder who leads young warriors to the *eunoto* rite of passage is also adorned with ear pendants. This leadership position is named after *isurutia*, that is, *oloosurutia* or "*isurutia* wearer".

An ear pendant has also medicinal value. It is applied, for instance, to a swollen part of the body of both humans and cattle. This is done by rubbing a swollen part with an ear pendant. Despite the cultural value of an ear pendant in the community, it has become an object occasionally worn by women, unlike in the past, where they wore it all the time.

Being a sacred object as well as an object for rituals, an ear pendant is inalienable. To many of my interlocutors, it constitutes the "religion of the community". This is because of its value in prayers and as a charm for protection. As a sacred power for prayers, a woman cannot blow milk up to the sky while milking cows without an ear pendant. For clarity, Maasai women perform a milking ritual in which prayer plays a part. At the start of milking, a woman throws into the sky the first small quantity of milk drawn from her milking gourd (Ibrahim 2001). She prays to God as she throws the milk into the sky to the four cardinal directions of east, west, north and south. It is this sacred power that makes an ear pendant an inalienable object.

The value of an ear pendant in children's rituals is another reason for its inalienability. In this sense, giving it away is giving away one's fertility or ability to reproduce, and this might result in frequent miscarriages, stillbirths and even infertility. It is therefore inalienable, as Kilae explained:

> An ear pendant is my fertility because it is through it that God gives me children. It is my generation (*enkishon*), and how can someone give away her generation! It is a taboo for a woman to give away her *enkishon*.
>
> (Kilae, m 55)

The ear pendant is also inalienable because of its protective power and use in other rituals such as children's initiation and shaving rituals following a child's birth. The ear pendant, however, can be borrowed among women for ritual practices but not completely given away. A complete giving away can only take place between blood kin, going, for instance, from a woman to her married daughter or sister, or from a grandmother to her married granddaughters.

Storage bag: III E 10879 a (Fig. 19)

A skin bag, referred by my interlocutors as *esambur* or *em'bene*, also belongs to women. It was traditionally made in the community. Like Maasai leather clothing, it was made by women from calfskin or goatskin. The short description in the museum's main catalogue shows that this bag contained medicine substances ("Daua. Die Rinde ist gegen Durchfall. Die Wurzel wird bei Fieber gekaut und die Körner werden gegen Durst und für Verdauung von Fetten gegessen."; see the discussion about community medicine III E 10879 c below). However, this storage bag had multiple storage functions and was not restricted to storing medicines, but could be used by women to carry and store things such as maize flour, traditional medicines, cattle medicines, and other own and men's properties. The function of this skin bag is different from the larger bag called *olbene* or "donkey's bag", which in my cultural knowledge and my interlocutors' description was used to transport luggage with donkeys during migration. This classification of skin bags contradicts Klumpp's (1987) differentiation of *olbene* from *em'bene*. For Klumpp (1987: 67), the *olbene* is big in size and is intended for married women who have given

Fig. 19 Storage bag, collected by Bruno Domke, leather, 15 × 8,5 × 4 cm. III E 10879 a, acquired 1904, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

birth to many children, while *em'bene* is small and is for the bride. Skin bags have been completely replaced by modern bags, metal boxes and the repurposing of sulphate storage bags for other cultural uses.

The storage bag is an alienable object, and this is because it is only for storage. Individual owners are not restricted with regard to the group in which they circulate the object. In addition, its movement does not affect the owners in any way.

Medicinal objects

Community medicine: III E 10879 c (Fig. 20)

Some objects such as medicines used for the treatment of various ailments are communally owned, that is, they are accessible to every member of the community. This community medicine is well-known by the local name o*rmukutan*. The medicine belongs to the community, and everybody in the community has access to it in the forest. It is an important traditional medicine for the treatment of ailments and the maintenance of the body weight and health. The short description in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin's main catalogue states: "Daua [kisw. *dawa*, "medicine"]. The bark is against diarrhea. The root is chewed in case of a fever, and the grains are eaten against thirst and for the digestion of fats" ("Daua. Die Rinde ist gegen Durchfall. Die Wurzel wird bei Fieber gekaut und die Körner werden gegen Durst und für Verdauung von Fetten gegessen."). Despite this brief description saying that it is used to treat diarrhea, my interlocutors denied this. The medicine is not given to the person suffering from diarrhea because it

Fig. 20 Community medicine, collected by Bruno Domke, bark, 25,5 × 5 × 3,5 cm. III E 10879 c, acquired 1904, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photograph by Martin Franken.

will exacerbate the condition. Instead, it is used to induce diarrhea or vomiting to get rid of bile in the gallbladder and dirt in stomach, an excess of which is said to be the cause of diseases. The medicine is therefore used to treat various ailments and maintain body weight and health. It is used to treat ailments such as stomachache, cold/fever or influenza, typhoid, pneumonia, gonorrhea, syphilis and malaria through induced vomiting or diarrhea. It is used to release bile from the gallbladder, as well as body weight and disease control for pregnant women to ease the delivery. However, pregnant women are not allowed to use the barks of the roots. It is also used for deworming.

The barks of a stem (branch) or of the roots are carefully and properly administered to the person in various ways. For deworming, a small dried bark of a root is chewed, and the liquid that comes out of it is swallowed. The chewing can be done with or without fresh milk. There are two common ways of preparing this medicine. The first is by extracting a piece of bark from a root or a stem and placing it in water, boiling it and then drinking it. The second is by soaking a dried bark of the stem or of the roots in water, keeping it for a while until it gets soft and then drinking it. In both cases, the medicine provokes vomiting and diarrhea shortly after being drunk. It is administered carefully and properly because it is very strong and can cause death if one takes an overdose of it, as Tate attested:

> We have some *ormukutan* trees: for instance, when you go to a place called Manyara Ranch, people have fenced them with thorny tree branches so that nobody should use it. This is because they are too strong and had caused death.
>
> (Tate, m 46)

Warriors mix the medicine with blood to keep their bodies strong and healthy. In the forest retreat or *orpul*, a healing retreat practiced by Maasai men (Burford, Rafiki, and Ngila 2001), warriors mix the medicine with other herbs, boil it and drink it. It is also used to burn fats in the body by mixing it with little fats, boiling it and then drinking it.

This medicine is alienable and can be given both within and outside the cultural context. It is accessible to all people and does not carry anyone's identity.

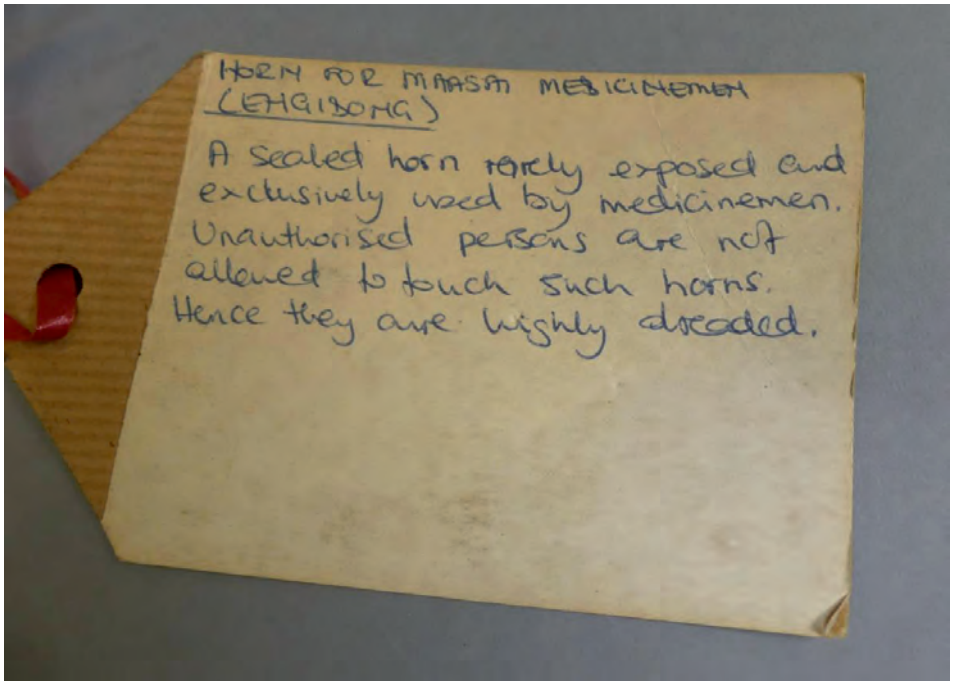

Fig. 21 a, b Inkidong'i medicine horn, collected by Hans-Joachim Koloß, horn, iron, 31,5 × 8,3 × 8,5 cm. III E 19957, acquired 1994, Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Professional photograph by Martin Franken, working photograph of the object's description by Myriam Perrot. The working photograph depicts the object's information from Bushfriend Safari Boutique, Arusha (Tanzania).

Clan objects

Inkidong'i medicine horn: III E 19957 (Fig. 21 a)
Medicine horns are the property of traditional healers from the Inkidong'i sub-clan of the Ilaiser clan. This horn was acquired by the former curator of the museum's Africa collection, Hans-Joachim Koloß, in 1993. The medicine horn or *enkidong'* is made from the bullock's right-hand horn and constitutes one of the traditional healers' divining paraphernalia. The medicine horn can only be used by the consecrated traditional healers

or *oloiboni*/*iloibonok*, people endowed by God with clairvoyance power or in Maa *enaibon* (Galaty 1982: 12). The traditional healers use *enkidong'* and sacred stones to perform divination, diagnosis of infliction and ritual protection (Galaty 1982). The medicine horn is locally made from an ox-horn by people from the community. Warriors, for instance, take a horn to the traditional healer when they go to the retreat or *orpul*. The appropriate horn for making a medicine horn should be from a bullock that has been intentionally slaughtered and not one dead from disease. It is used together with stones and a goatskin bag in which these sacred stones are placed during the divination practice.

The medicine horn is identical with the sacred power of the traditional healer: without it, divination cannot be performed. As sacred charm, the horn is incorporated into the traditional healer to make the divination and preparation of charms and medicines possible. As stated in the notice reproduced on Fig. 21, which is attached to the horn in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, and was apparently acquired together with the object, a medicine horn is untouchable to the unauthorized: no person outside the Inkidong'i clan is allowed to touch it. The sacredness and untouchability of the medicine horn led many interlocutors during photo elicitation to disbelieve that the object being shown to them is a medicine horn. Rather, many thought it is a "child's horn", an object used to store and feed butter to young children. This was believed not because of latter's alienability, but rather because of the untouchability of the medicine horn. The brief description in the museum's main catalogue asserts that this medicine horn was acquired from Bushfriend Safari Boutique in Arusha ("…Erworben am 1.12.1993 in der Bushfriend Safari Boutique, Arusha."). Its acquisition on the tourist market suggested to some of my interlocutors that it was a counterfeit made to be sold.

The fact that the medicine horn is untouchable and has sacred power is a reason for its inalienability: it is a sacred and godly object that is bound only to the traditional healer who owns it and to the Inkidong'i clan for the practice of healing and divination. It can only be inherited within the clan's genealogy. The sacred power imbued in the medicine horn can perform vengeance for the traditional healer who owns it if it is alienated from him. As Matei, one of the traditional healers we interviewed, reported:

> The medicine horn is the heart of the traditional healer. We care for it as if it is human. We slaughter (sacrifice) a male goat every month to care for it together with the sacred stones. There is no way it can be taken away from the owner except through killing him. It is cared for more highly than anything because people can bewitch you with it if they steal it.
>
> (Matei, m 75)

My interlocutors from the Inkidong'i clan argued that the medicine horn is a very sensitive object which is carefully handled and kept and therefore cannot be alienated. It is also incorporated into the body of the traditional healer in a way that can inflict harm on it.

Some Notes on the (In)alienability of Objects

Following this account of the inalienability and alienability of selected Maasai objects located in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, I now reiterate my argument that many of the objects in the list are inalienable: they are objects that are intrinsically incorporated into the community's complex system of ownership based on age-set, gender and clan (e.g., the medicine horn), a situation that restricts the alienability of many objects to kin groups. The fact that objects function to authenticate the social identity of various group inhibits their alienability outside the community. Other factors in the inalienability of objects include their use in ritual practices, the sacred power with which they are imbued, their incorporation in or corporeal attachment to the body, and the effects or

consequences of losing an object. Conversely, objects that not serve these functions or are not imbued with sacred power are alienable. Similarly, alienable objects are not connected to the body, and giving them away is unproblematic. These include the three-legged stool, community medicine and the storage bag.

Now that it is clear from my interlocutors' views that many objects are inalienable, the question remains of how they think the objects were acquired and taken to the Museum. In relation to the inalienability of objects, my interlocutors perceived that objects had been inappropriately acquired and taken there. This is as discussed in the following section.

The Acquisition of Objects and Perceptions of their Routes to the Museum

The study on which this paper is based is concerned to research ethnographic collections mostly acquired in colonial contexts and dating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of the main findings of the study was that many of my interlocutors have limited memories about Maasai–colonial encounters in this period. Only a very few elders can recall the past generation's narratives of Maasai involvement in World War II, and not in any way relatable to the acquisition of objects by British colonial agents and collectors. Maasai elites, particularly those with basic or primary and ordinary secondary education (mostly young men), recall colonialism from their past history classes at schools, but not precisely their community–colonial encounters or acquisition of objects.

My interlocutors' perceptions of the ways in which objects got to the Museum is therefore generally based on the concepts of the inalienability and alienability of the object in question. While it is believed that alienable objects such as the three-legged wooden stool, the storage bag and the community medicine have possibly been given away in an appropriate context, many others are perceived to have been acquired in controversial circumstances because of their inalienability. My interlocutors perceive that inalienable objects were inappropriately acquired and taken to the museum through various routes, including acquisition in war contexts – such as community involvement in inter-ethnic wars during cattle raids, World War II and unknown wars with Europeans –, deceitful acquisition by postcolonial European investors who had befriended the local people, and illicit selling under the influence of neo-liberalization.

Acquisition in war contexts

Although many of my interlocutors do not have memories of colonialism and its collecting activities, they are of the belief that the objects could not have been given away outside the community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In their view, this is not only because of the inalienability of objects but also because in those times the culture, unlike recently, was still being upheld strongly. As a result, my interlocutors perceived that inalienable objects must have been forcefully acquired in the context of warfare. Based on their memories and experience of community involvement in inter-ethnic wars through cattle-raiding, many of my interlocutors believe that objects could have been taken through these wars. It is through wars that people were killed by their enemies and had their objects taken away and sold, as Parkipuny put it:

> I am not convinced that people sold these objects over such a long time. I would agree if they had been taken in the past ten years or today because Maasai people have come to love money more than culture, and thus they would not care about selling the objects. But it is possible that these objects were taken through wars because there was so much open fighting between the Maasai community and other ethnic

> groups. So, the Maasai may have lost the fight and surrendered their objects, or they were killed and had the objects taken. For instance, warriors may have been killed during raids and had their objects taken from them.
>
> (Parkipuny, m 66)

My interlocutors do not recall any encounters with Europeans in the form of trade. Rather, people obtained European goods through non-Maasai traders and "Waarusha". However, there are narratives of unknown wars fought between Maasai and Europeans (*ilaisungun*) which, together with the World War II, are associated with killing of people and the likely taking of objects, as Nasiti narrated:

> We were told at our young age that there was a death [in Maa *muta*] crisis in the Maasai community in which many people died. In this period, Europeans came to Maasai homesteads and killed people. It was perhaps at this time that they also took the objects because it was long ago.
>
> (Nasiti, f 73)

Historically, the major death crisis that claimed the lives of many people and cattle in the Maasai community happened at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of a rinderpest epidemic. In 1897, for instance, writes Normile (2008, 1607), the virus killed 90% of the cattle, sheep and goats in sub-Saharan Africa. The death of livestock brought about mass starvation in which an estimated two-thirds of the Maasai of Tanzania died (Normile 2008: 1607). Nasiti's narrative refers to German colonialism at around the same period, in which she claimed people were killed and objects were taken away, including many of the objects studied here.

Another interlocutor, who had heard about World War I, said:

> I heard about the people called *Ildashi* [Germans] who were here [in Tanzania]. These people entered into war with *Ilngeresa* [British], in which they lost the war and went back to their country. So, maybe it was at this time that they took the objects with them.
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66)

Talking about the same war, Parkipuny described how the Maasai were involved:

> I think those objects were taken to that place through wars. When Germany and Britain were at war, the Maasai were persuaded by the Germans to participate in fighting the English by telling them that they are the children of hunters (*iltorobo*). So, the British were angry and killed many Maasai, and I think it was perhaps at that time that they also took the objects.
> (Parkipuny, m 66)

Befriending and the deceitful acquisition of objects

In spite of the lack of memory about the Maasai's colonial encounters and their possible relation to the acquisition of objects, people have memories of the presence of some Europeans in the 1920s. Some of them invested in community land by establishing ranches and remained there later after independence. These investors established close friendships with people in the community. Some of my interlocutors thought that some of them might have tricked people to get the objects. For example, one of my interlocutors said:

> When we were young boys, there were few Europeans here like the one who was operating Manyara Ranch. He integrated himself into the community here and was given the ranch to raise cattle. He was very close to the people and frequently visited their homes. This was also the case with many others, and I think most of these objects

> were deceitfully acquired through this friendship. This is because I have never heard about any war in the past between the Maasai and Europeans.
>
> (Kalanga, m 63)

The rapport that existed between the Maasai and Europeans is perceived by many other interlocutors to have resulted to the appropriation of objects.

Economic liberalization and the illicit trading of objects

My interlocutors claimed that certain objects were taken away between the late 1970s and 1980s. This was a time of economic liberalization in Tanzania following the agrarian crisis (Lofchie 1978, Liviga 2011). Many small-scale private businesses were opened and operated, particularly in the mid-1980s, when Tanzania, under President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, formally adopted an economic recovery program. My interlocutors therefore believed that many objects were stolen and sold in this period, for instance, being secretly sold to privately run cultural tourism business centres located in areas such as Mto wa Mbu. Mto wa Mbu is a small town in Monduli district located at the entrance to Lake Manyara National Park. My interlocutors believed that objects may therefore have found their way to the museum through illicit trade with these private centres. Interestingly, people from the community, particularly the Ilkishumu age-group (see Table 1 above), are condemned by many of my interlocutors as having engaged in this illicit trading. This was perhaps used as a strategy to deal with the negative impacts of the economic crisis.

Here is an extract from an interview with one of my interlocutors on the stealing and selling of objects in this period:

> In my memory, it was between the 1970s and 1980s that people started to sell these objects, and to my mind I would think it was in this time that Europeans acquired them. It was the time when my age-group were warriors. There was illegal selling of cultural objects in Mto wa Mbu. The stealing of objects was very high in Losirwa village (a village close to Mto wa Mbu). For instance, when Maasai strangers went to this village, thieves stole their objects at night. So, I think it was at this time that objects were taken and not so long ago. Maasai could not give away these objects in that time (before 1980s) because people strongly embraced and maintained the culture.
>
> (Kalanga, m 63)

These cultural business centers are perceived by my interlocutors as having played a big role to the acquisition and selling of objects, which were illegally sold to European tourists. In particular, my interlocutors blame the money economy for having spoiled people in the community and thus their culture. This has facilitated in their view illegal acquisition and eventually the acquisition of objects by museums. As one interlocutor complained:

> My child [referring to me], you don't need to think deep how all these things got there. It is money that has brought problems to our culture. With money, even nowadays people sell everything, including sacred and ritual objects. The money has sold the heart. It was not possible to give away the object you are using on your body, let alone sacred objects you have used for your children's rituals.
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66)

The negative reaction to money economy emanates from the problems it has caused in how people value cultural objects. To Nasinyari, people have placed much value in money in a way that is devaluing culture. It is this great value placed on money that has caused the selling of sacred cultural objects, which to Nasinyari equals selling one's heart.

Community Reactions to Maasai Objects Being in the Museum

My interlocutors' reactions to objects being in the museum were directed towards the disincorporation and decontextualization of inalienable objects. With regard to disincorporation, the museum is seen as holding parts of human bodies. This is particularly the case for those objects that carry signs of use by their previous owners. The objects are considered body parts because of the inalienable connectivity they have to the body. Their being in the museum is therefore an injury both to the objects and the bodies of the owners. The disincorporation of sacred objects such as the medicine horn, the blue-beads necklace and the ear pendant and their being in the museum affects part of the life forces of the community. That is to say, living subjects are being kept in the museum, in what represents the continued infliction of vengeance on the families of the previous owners. This is because the sacred power and the spirits embodied in these objects do not cease in inflicting their revenge on the descendants of the previous owners. For example, the presence of the ear pendant in the museum may have caused generational infertility to the descendants of the previous owners. This, however, depends on the context in which it was acquired from the original owner in the first place.

The decontextualization of objects from the community in the museum is perceived by my interlocutors in terms of an inheritance of the Maasai people (of the community) that was taken by the Germans. Here my interlocutors understand this inheritance in a general sense as an action of inheriting (*ajung'*) which applies to both people and objects. Objects can traditionally be inherited at death, for instance, among kinsmen and women. Paradoxically, albeit for evil purposes, individuals and thus a whole community can be inherited by taking away their inalienable cultural objects. The taking of inalienable objects such as those that are considered part of the life forces and that therefore function to sustain the community's life is thus identical with inheriting the people themselves. It is in this sense that the museum's possession of inalienable objects that were once used in the cultural setting is an inheritance of the community by other people [the Germans]. In turn, this inheritance of the community by other people [the Germans] is thought to harm its well-being. Talking about inheritance by others, Naimesoi said:

> It is not good that objects are there [in the museum] because that is other people [the Germans] inheriting us [the Maasai]. It is as if our life has been taken by other people, and they have already inherited us, since all our important objects are there [in the Museum]. This is the reason our people do not love and uphold culture anymore as they used to.
>
> (Naimesoi, f 90)

The fact that the objects are in the Museum represents an appropriation of the community's good luck for life. This is because the community's success, health and sustenance are imbued in the cultural objects, particularly those that serve as part of its life forces. It is therefore believed that their decontextualization and dislocation affect the life of the community. This is because of the absence of, for instance, sacred and ritual objects which supposedly function to protect people from suffering and death. As Nasinyari sadly laments in this extract:

> I don't know, because what I can say is that our generations have been wiped out by the Europeans. This is because those are things used for people and cattle, and most of them should only be here with the community. Everything has been destroyed, and maybe that is the reason for all the hardships we are facing and the frequent deaths of people. It is because our luck for life has been taken away by others to those countries.
>
> (Nasinyari, f 66)

My interlocutors also expressed the fear of epistemic violence, as shown by a concern for the spoiling of culture through misinterpretation and misrepresentation. It is a concern for the kind of information that the museum issues about the objects when it comes to their exhibition. There is also a concern over the handling of the objects and showing respect to them in the same way they are valued in the community. This reaction was caused by the fact that most objects are still in use and are of high cultural value. This fear of epistemic violence led my interlocutors to call for collaboration with the museum to ensure that adequate and relevant information is available on each object. By the same token, my interlocutors discouraged the exhibition of sacred religious objects and insist on their proper handling and respect.

Conclusion

In this article, I have proposed using Weiner's concept of (in)alienable possessions to understand objects in their socio-cultural context. This approach helps the anthropologist focus on the meanings and valuation processes in which objects are embedded and as a result contributes to improvements in assessing their ethical status in light of the ongoing restitution debate. I have argued that the concept is a useful alternative to a biographical approach because it allows one to focus on a specific cultural context such as that of a community of origin when analyzing such objects, assessing how they are valued differently and how this valuation transcends the Western model of exchange theories. That is to say, the concept of (in)alienability is theoretically and methodologically useful for an in-depth understanding of the collections acquired in colonial times from the context of their origins. It allows to recognize and distinguish objects from these collections on the basis of their inalienability or alienability in the first place. It historically addresses the question of whether objects can be given away beyond their cultural contexts. Similarly, it places objects in today's context in the so-called source communities in order to explore their (in)alienability, ownership, value and other people–object relations.

In order to assess the inalienability or alienability of objects, it is important to consider multiple aspects in the contexts in which the objects were (are) made and used. These include the community' conceptions of objects in terms of meanings, ownership and value, and the kinds of bodily connectivity between humans and objects and the consequences of their disconnection. It is for this reason that the inalienability or alienability of an object depends on an interplay of these aspects. For instance, objects invested with sacred power and authority, those owned by an age-group, those used in ritual practices and those incorporated in the bodies of their owners are considered inalienable. Based on these aspects, it has become clear that many objects in the list of the Maasai collection at the Ethnologisches Museum studied here are inalienable.

Notwithstanding the lack of knowledge on colonialism and collecting activities, it has become evident that the acquisition and translocation of objects to the museum was controversial and questionable. My interlocutors viewed the taking of objects as possibly having involved violence or warfare and the deaths of people. This is because of the inalienability of many objects such as those with sacred power (e.g., blue-beads necklace, ear pendant, medicine horn) and protective power (spear, sword, shield and other warriors' objects), as rituals objects and objects worn on the body. It is therefore necessary to investigate the context of acquisition from the viewpoint of colonial sources in order to juxtapose this information with that from the community. This would involve taking a biographical approach to a thorough consideration of objects and the historical study of collectors and their collecting activities.

My interlocutors' concerns over epistemic violence are another important aspect that needs to be considered. From the in-depth exploration of objects, it has become evident

that the little information available in the museum database contains much misinformation. With regard to objects such as the girl's beaded belt, the earring, the black-beads cloth, the medicine and many others information and description from the museum's main catalogue ("Hauptkatalog") given in the database are at variance with my interlocutors' conceptions of them. To avoid misinterpretation and thus epistemic violence, my interlocutors asked for the active involvement of the community in order to provide information about the objects. It is therefore, important for the museum to collaborate with members of the community in a manner that allows an epistemological "pluriverse" and "multiperspectivity" (Scholz 2017) so that adequate, multiple and reliable information regarding their cultural objects can be provided.

Furthermore, community reactions to objects being in the museum call for a careful consideration of the cultural sensitivity of objects in question. Important in this regard is the fact that many of the objects are still being used in everyday cultural practices. That is, many objects in the list studied here are still integrated in a specific, living socio-cultural context of the community and are not simply the remains of the past as held in museums. It is therefore important to consider the sensitivity of objects in dealing with them, for example in the case of those imbued with sacred power. The aim must be to avoid the improper use, display and presentation of religious and ritual objects that are still of great sensitivity in the community given their continued use in the present.

Acknowledgement

My interest in researching the Maasai collections in the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin was born out of my constructive conversations with my brilliant research supervisor and curator for the East, North East, Central and South African collections at the Ethnologisches Museum, Paola Ivanov, which materialized during one of the meetings for our project, "A06: Contested Property" in the Collaborative Research Center "Affective Societies" of the Freie Universität Berlin. I therefore thank both Paola Ivanov and Jonas Bens for their fruitful suggestion that I spend my time during the COVID-19 lockdown working remotely on the Maasai collection. Their excellent inputs into this long article are therefore much appreciated. I would also like to thank Amani Kelembu, my wife Katarina Parkipuny and Mamus Toima for making possible the research on which this paper is based. They connected me with potential interlocutors with whom photo-interviewing was conducted. Last but not least is my heartfelt gratitude to Myriam Perrot for her support in studying the museum's collection as well as to Martin Franken and Claudia Obrocki for wonderfully photographing the objects.

References

Abbink, Jon
2003 Love and Death of Cattle: The Paradox in Suri Attitudes Toward Livestock. *Journal of Anthropology Museum of Ethnography* 68 (3): 341–364.

Abu-Lughod, Lila
1996 Writing Against Culture. In: Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, pp. 137–162.

Anonymus
1884 Dr. Fischer's Journey in the Masai Country. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 6 (2): 76–83. doi: 10.2307/1800440.

Appadurai, Arjun
1986 Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value. In: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 3–63.

Appadurai, Arjun
1988 *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*: Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Basu, Paul
2011 Object Diasporas, Resourcing Communities: Sierra Leonean Collections in the Global Museumscape. *Museum Anthropology* 34 (1): 28–42.
Baxter, Paul Trevor William, and Uri Almagor
1978 *Age, Generation and Time. Some Features of East African Age Organisations*. London: C. Hurst.
Bens, Jonas, Paola Ivanov, and Laibor Kalanga Moko
2021 Feeling Through Things: Toward a Material Culture Ethnography of Affective Practice. *Unpublished manuscript*.
Berntsen, John L.
1976 The Maasai and Their Neighbors: Variables of Interaction. *African Economic History* (2): 1–11.
Bleeker, Sonia
1963 *The Masai, Herders of East Africa*. Toronto: George J. McLeod Limited.
Burford, Gemma, Mohammed Yunus Rafiki, and Lesikar Ole Ngila
2001 The Forest Retreat of Orpul: A Holistic System of Health Care Practiced by the Maasai Tribe of East Africa. *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine* 7 (5): 547–551.
Douglas, Mary
1970 *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*: London: Routledge.
Galaty, John G
1982 Being 'Maasai'; Being 'People-of-Cattle': Ethnic Shifters in East Africa. *American Ethnologist* 9 (1): 1–20.
Galaty, John G
1983 Ceremony and Society: The Poetics of Maasai Ritual. *Man*: 361–382.
Galaty, John G
1998 The Maasai Ornithorium: Tropic Flights of Avian Imagination in Africa. *Ethnology*: 227–238.
Gell, Alfred
1992 Inter-tribal Commodity Barter and Reproductive Gift-exchange in Old Melanesia. In: Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones (eds.), *Barter, Exchange and Value: An Anthropological Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 142–168.
Godelier, Maurice
1999 *The Enigma of the Gift.* Cambrige, UK: Polity Press.
Gregory, Christopher Alan
1982 *Gifts and Commodities*. London: Academic Press.
Hann, Chris
2005 Property. In: James G. Carrier (ed.), *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Cheltenham UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, pp. 110–124.
Harper, Douglas
2002 Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation. *Visual Studies* 17 (1): 13–26.
Henare, A., M. Holbraad, and S. Wastell
2007 *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*. London: Routledge.
Hodgson, Dorothy Louise, and Dorothy L Hodgson
2001 *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and The Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Hollis, Alfred Claud
1905 *The Masai: Their Language and Folklore*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.
Hoskins, Janet
2006 Agency, Biography and Objects. In: Tilley, C., W. Keane, S. Küchler, M. Rowlands, and P. Spyer (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture*, London: Sage, pp. 74–85.
Hurskainen, Arvi
1990 Levels of Identity and National Integrity: The Viewpoint of the Pastoral Maasai and Parakuyo. *Nomadic Peoples* (25/27): 79–92.
Ibrahim, Fouad N
2001 The Drinking Ritual among the Maasai. In: Igor and Valerie De Garine (eds.), *Drinking: Anthropological Approaches.* New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 87–95.
Ingold, Tim
2010 Bringing things to life: Creative entanglements in a world of materials. In: *ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, NCRM Working Paper Series* 05/10. Retrieved from https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.475.3432&rep=rep1&type=pdf.
Ivanov, Paola
2007 ...to Observe Fresh Life and Save Ethnic Imprints of it. Bastian and Collecting Activities in Africa During the 19th and Early 20th Centuries. In: Manuela Fischer, Peter Bolz and Susan Kamel (eds.), *Adolf Bastian and His Universal Archive of Humanity: The Origins of German Anthropology* , Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, pp. 238–250.
Jacobs, Alan H
1965 *The Traditional Political Organization of the Pastoral Masai*. Oxford: Nuffield College, University of Oxford.
Kalter, Johannes
1978 *Die Materielle Kultur der Massai und ihr Wandel*. Bremen: Übersee-Museum Bremen.

Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield
2007 *African Art and the Colonial Encounter: Inventing a Global Commodity.* Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press.
Kipuri, N
1983 *Oral Literature of the Maasai.* Nairobi, Kenya: East African Educational Publishers.
Klumpp, Donna Ray
1987 *Maasai Art and Society: Age and Sex, Time and Space, Cash and Cattle* (Order No. 8809377). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (303464594). Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/maasai-art-society-age-sex-time-space-cash-cattle/docview/303464594/se-2?accountid=11004.
Kopytoff, Igor
1986 The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process. In: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 64–91.
Kovacevich, Brigitte, and Michael G Callaghan
2013 Introduction: Inalienability, Value, and the Construction of Social Difference. *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 23 (1): 1–13.
Liviga, Athumani J
2011 Economic and Political Liberalization in Tanzania and its Unintended Outcomes. *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review* 27 (1): 1–31.
Lofchie, Michael F
1978 Agrarian Crisis and Economic Liberalisation in Tanzania. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 16 (3): 451–475.
Mauss, Marcel
2002 *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge.
Mills, Barbara J
2004 The Establishment and Defeat of Hierarchy: Inalienable Possessions and the History of Collective Prestige Structures in the Pueblo Southwest. *American Anthropologist* 106 (2): 238–251.
Mol, Frans
1996 *Maasai Language and Culture: Dictionary.* Limuru, Kenya: Kolbe Press.
Morton, RF
1979 The Structure of East African Age-Set Systems. *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies* 1(2): 77–102.
Normile, Dennis
2008 Driven to Extinction. *Science* 319 (5870): 1606–1609.
Pink, Sarah
2013 *Doing Visual Ethnography.* London: Sage Publications Ltd.
Prestholdt, Jeremy
2008 *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
Sarr, Felwine, and Bénédicte Savoy
2018 *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics.* Paris: Ministère de la culture.
Scholz, Andrea
2017 Sharing Knowledge as a Step toward an Epistemological Pluralization of the Museum. *Museum Worlds* 5 (1): 133–148.
Spear, Thomas, and Richard Waller
1993 *Being Maasai: ethnicity and identity in East Africa.* London: James Currey.
Spencer, Paul
1993 Becoming Maasai, Being in Time. In: Richard Waller and Thomas Spear (eds), *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa*. London: James Currey, pp. 140–156.
Spencer, Paul, and Richard Waller
2017 The Maasai age system and the Loonkidongi prophets. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 11(3): 460–481.
Strathern, Andrew
1996 *Body thoughts.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Tignor, R
1972 The Maasai Warriors: Pattern Maintenance and Violence in Colonial Kenya. *The Journal of African History* 13(2): 271–290.
Tinius, J., Puzon, K., & von Oswald, M
2018 Otherwise: Rethinking Museums and Heritage. In: *Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH), Paper 1*.
Turle, Gillies
1992 *The Art of the Maasai: 300 Newly Discovered Objects and Works of Art*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

van Beurden, Jos
2018 Decolonisation and Colonial Collections: An Unresolved Conflict. *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 133 (2): 66–78.
van Meijl, Toon, and Franz von Benda-Beckmann
1999 *Property Rights and Economic Development: Land and Natural Resources in Southeast Asia and Oceania.* London: Routledge.
Vierke, Ulf
2004 *Die Spur der Glasperlen. Akteure, Strukturen und Wandel im europäisch-ostafrikanischen Handel mit Glasperlen.* Bayreuth: Dissertation, Universität Bayreuth.
von Benda-Beckmann, Franz, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann, and Melanie Wiber
2006 The Properties of Property. In: Franz von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet von Benda-Beckmann and Melanie G. Wiber (eds.), *Changing Properties of Property.* New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 1–39.
Weiner, Annette B
1992 *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving.* Berkeley: University of California Press.
Wijngaarden, Vanessa
2018 Maasai Beadwork has Always been Modern: An Exploration of Modernity Through Artifacts. *Cultural Dynamics* 30 (4): 235–252.
Wolputte, Steven Van
2004 Hang on to Your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 33: 251–269.

Research interlocutors

Siteyan Kilusu, 05.05.2020
Kokolenye Lesisian, 05.05.2020
Naishoki Kalanga, 09.05.2020
Kalanga Moko, 10.05/19.06.2020
Lesome Some, 11.05.2020
Tate Lekuta, 11.05.2020
Nasinyari Osopini, 14.05.2020
Pororian Sikiria, 11.05.2020
Sululu Sikiria, 11.05.2020
Nasiti Olonyokie, 14.05.2020
Parkipuny Olonyokie, 15.05.2020
Sakita Lomelock, 16.05.2020
Labulu Lendetia, 16.05.2020
Laambati Nooseli, 16.05.2020
L, 15.05.2020 (full name is in my archive)
Sinyati Moses, 19.05.2020
Noongipa Manie, 19.05.2020
Kilae Manie, 21.05.2020
Matei Lekitaha, 28.05.2020
O, 11.06.2020 (full name is in my archive)
Naimesoi Moko, 17.06.2020
R, 19.05.2020 (full name is in my archive)

Glossary

Endaloshi – the kraal's gate
Enkila – A black-beaded cloth. Formerly, before the introduction of cotton clothes in the community, *enkila* was traditionally made from calfskin and goatskin.
Entito/Intoiye – a girl
Esambur/em'bene – a handbag
Enkidong' – medicine horn
Enkang' oolirikashi – home of stools
Enkonongoi – A blue-black beads necklace
Imahon – rituals
Imanyat – locally organized warriors camps
Inkidong'i – traditional healers clan
Koko – elderly woman, grandmother
Olng'eherr – the ceremony of the meat-rack
Oltiani/iltian – Bamboo tree
Ollenywa – A flywhisk
Orkiteng' lendomono – a bullock for the child naming ceremony
Orkiteng' laarbaa – wound bullock
Ormeeki/irmeek – non-Maasai African
Osipoliei/isipolio – A recluse/A newly initiated