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WILLIAM LOUIS ABBOTT IN KASHMIR AND LADAKH (1891-1915)

Expeditions of an American Naturalist Collector

Paul Michael Taylor*

Abstract: This paper introduces an important group of unpublished ethnographic and archival materials deriving from nine separate expeditions to Kashmir and Ladakh, between 1891 and 1915, by the American naturalist collector William Louis Abbott (1860-1935), and re-assesses the importance of this region to him and to Smithsonian scientists of the time. The ethnographic collections from Kashmir and Ladakh Abbott assembled, along with his archival correspondence and field notes, form a little-known and largely unpublished resource at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Abbott is better known for biological collections he brought to America's "national museum," the Smithsonian, from those expeditions; his ethnographic collections and fieldnotes remain largely unstudied. Abbott's trips to Kashmir and Ladakh are unlike his visits to other regions, because he returned so many times after his first trip, over a 24-year time span interspersed by many expeditions elsewhere. His collecting goals changed over time. This paper assesses the role Abbott and other "naturalist" collectors of this period played within the history of anthropology and museums, and points to some of the many new 21st-century uses of "legacy" collections and records of the kind he assembled about this region.

Keywords: Kashmir; Ladakh; William Louis Abbott; museum anthropology; naturalist.

INTRODUCTION

This paper surveys a little-known resource for the history of anthropology and museums, as well as for the cultural history of Kashmir and Ladakh – the unpublished ethnographic and archival collections of the Smithsonian Institution deriving from nine separate expeditions to the Himalayan regions of British colonial-era India, between 1891 and 1915, by the American naturalist collector William Louis Abbott (1860-1935). Abbott is better known for biological collections he brought to America's "national museum," the Smithsonian, from those expeditions; their study and detailed publication began soon after their arrival in the Museum (e.g. True 1895; Richmond 1896; Holland 1896). Yet his ethnographic collections and fieldnotes remain largely unstudied and unpublished. Abbott's trips to Kashmir and Ladakh are unlike his visits to other regions, because he returned so many times after his first trip, over a 24-year time span interspersed by his expeditions elsewhere. His archival correspondence reveals the relative importance of this region to him and to Smithsonian scientists of the time. This paper also assesses the role Abbott and other "naturalist" collectors (i.e., experts in "natural history" which in America includes anthropology and geology as well as biology) played during this period

* Research Anthropologist & Curator; Director, Asian Cultural History Program, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., USA

for the history of anthropology and museums, and concludes by pointing to some of the many new 21st-century uses of "legacy" collections and records of the kind he assembled about this region.

At the time of his death in 1936, Dr. William Louis Abbott had the distinction of being the largest single donor of collections to the United States National Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution). This millionaire Philadelphia native, who learned but never had to practice medicine (M.D., U. Pennsylvania, 1884), eschewed publicity and published almost nothing himself. This paper is largely drawn from the author's archival research and compilation of Abbott's widely scattered field-notes and correspondence (see Taylor *in press*), primarily with his family and with Smithsonian officials, regarding his lifelong series of expeditions which began in East Africa, and continued in South and Central Asia, with many of his greatest collecting years spent in the tropics of Southeast Asia before returning again to the Indian Himalayas. William Louis Abbott's collecting and donating were entirely self-financed, since at the age of 26 (in 1886) Abbott received a large inheritance upon the death of his father. His papers are now found in two of the Smithsonian's major archives (National Anthropological Archives, and the separate Smithsonian Archives which include early Registrar's records for the National Museum of Natural History), and in field records stored in the Smithsonian's Mammals Library and its Botany Library; all four of these repositories contain archival material relating to his travels in Kashmir and Ladakh. These archives and the biological and ethnographic collections represent an under-utilized and little known research resource for the cultural history of that region.

Figure 1: William Louis Abbott (1860-1936)
National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

As part of the present research, Abbott's scattered archival correspondence and field-notes have been carefully transcribed by the author, with the help of volunteers trained over a period of years to interpret his difficult handwriting. The resulting documents were brought together chronologically, checked again against original manuscripts, and annotated, to produce a compilation of his correspondence and field-notes.[1]

Information about Abbott's collecting mission and purposes can be inferred from his archival correspondence and field notes, alongside the collections he assembled. As Taylor (2015a:29) has noted, Abbott considered the role of the naturalist collector as separate from that of the naturalist who was a curator and scientist. Just as biologists "wrote up" descriptions of the new species of birds and mammals he collected, he seems to have expected ethnologists (not himself) to describe and study the ethnographic materials. In a 1911 essay "The American Hunter-Naturalist," published in the popular magazine *The Outlook*, the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt praised the typical unpaid volunteer spirit of America's explorers and naturalists. Yet he compared Abbott unfavorably with naturalist and author Charles Sheldon, upbraiding Abbott for recording but not publishing his notes:

> It is exasperating to think of certain of our naturalists and hunter-naturalists the value of whose really extraordinary achievements will wholly or in part die with them unless they realize the need of putting them on paper in the proper form. […]
>
> Dr. Abbott's feats as a naturalist and explorer in Africa and in Asia have been extraordinary, but they have not been of more than the smallest fraction of the value that they should have been, simply because they have not been recorded. There are very few men alive whose experiences would be of more value than his, if they were written out. (Roosevelt 1911:855)

Efforts by Abbott's Smithsonian correspondents encouraging him to publish formal accounts of his expeditions were to no avail, though Abbott continued an extensive personal, handwritten correspondence. On March 2, 1896, for example, mammalogist F.W. True sent Abbott a letter following up on suggestions from Smithsonian Assistant Secretary Goode, about preparing "some account of the results of your explorations in Africa and Asia published in the Report of the

[1] Some information presented here about Abbott's background and that of his Smithsonian correspondents is drawn from material previously presented in regional reports on Abbott's Indonesian, Thai, and Madagascar collections (Taylor 2002; Taylor 2014; 2015a, 2015b) and on his Turkestan expedition of 1893-1894 (Taylor 2016). This paper adds new information not only for the cultural history of Kashmir and Ladakh, but also for the broader history of anthropology, on the role of "hunter-naturalist" collecting, based on the study of Abbott's Kashmir and Ladakh expeditions, whose initial primary stated goals involved trophy-game hunting, during the course of which ethnographic collections were also assembled as he developed his collecting methods over time.

Museum."[2] True offered Abbott an outline of such a narrative. Sending with his letter a copy of W.W. Rockhill's (1895) "Notes on the ethnology of Tibet: based on the collections in the U.S. National Museum," which had recently been published by the Smithsonian, the mammologist inquired whether Abbott might consider authoring a similar account of his travels including Kashmir and Ladakh, which could be published alongside papers like those True himself had published on mammals (True 1895) and other papers then still in preparation on the region's birds (Richmond 1896) and its butterflies and moths (Holland 1895). In this letter, True also referred to Abbott's correspondence with the Smithsonian's curator of anthropology, Otis Mason, about material he was sending from Kashmir. Mason's research on basketry weaving techniques within his studies of the evolution of human societies encouraged Abbott to assemble collections of basketry and plaiting wherever he traveled (see Figures 2 and 13a). True proposed that Abbott author this multi-part narrative of his collection, for which "Each separate expedition would be taken up in turn, and the scientific results in every connection dwelt on at sufficient length to bring out their importance." Into this narrative, the various zoologists could insert lists of species, and specialist reports "on the new forms discovered by you."

Figure 2: Plant fiber woven pad worn on back for carrying loads, seen in Smithsonian collection storage. Collected by W.L. Abbott in Kashmir, 1897. Ethnology catalog no. 178134. (Length 28 cm.) At top are a paper label with bar code and catalog number (from a recent inventory), along with the original paper label with Abbott's own hand-written notes: "Back pad for protecting back when carrying load. Kashmir. Kashmiri name Kánwoort."

[2] All transcriptions of original archival correspondence are from the 4-part compilation, Taylor *in press*. Original documents within Smithsonian archives can be located within Abbott's correspondence by referencing the date and correspondents' names as given in the text. Letters Abbott sent "home" were to his mother, S.F. Abbott.

Assistant Secretary Goode must also have written to him directly on this (original letter not located); Abbott responded to him from Trang in lower Siam (July 15, 1896), "I must thank you very much for your kind letter of last January, in which you spoke of publishing some of my work in book form. I sent you from Penang a month ago, the notes of my Turkestan trip, they are the only notes of any of my trips that I had with me & have mislaid the others." That field journal of Abbott's travels via the Ladakh route to Turkestan is in fact the only such journal among Abbott's papers (Taylor 2016); other expeditions are known from his archived correspondence, object labels, and collections, but no field journals. In this letter Abbott especially downplays the importance of his travel in Kashmir and Ladakh, referring to earlier published expedition narratives by Dunmore (1893) and Cumberland (1895) when he writes (underlining in original):

> Besides there really is nothing new about it, as almost the same ground was written about by Lord Dunmore & Major Cumberland the past two years. About Kashmir I am rather sorry that Mr. Richmond worked up my collections (birds) from there. I discovered scarcely any thing new. & besides I am not finished there yet. I want to put in at least one more season in Ladak. (W.L. Abbott to F.W. True, July 15, 1896.)

We find later, self-reflective documents within Abbott's archival papers giving further reasons for not publishing. In 1904 Abbott wrote to Mason, "I am afraid I can't write much myself for various reasons. I am a very bad observer, particularly of men. It is the new comer to the East who sees things. I have been out too long, and it is the West which seems strange to me." (W.L. Abbott to O. Mason, March 30, 1904.) Yet in Abbott's extensive archival correspondence we find no shortage of insightful observations, and Abbott was both at-home and out-of-place in every place, east or west.

THE AMERICAN NATURALIST, WILLIAM LOUIS ABBOTT, IN KASHMIR AND LADAKH

By the time of Abbott's first visit to Kashmir in 1891, this area was already well known as an ancient locus for the development of both Hinduism and Buddhism, and also for its Islamic and Sikh populations and history; Abbott's unpublished correspondence includes many observations about the region's religious and ethnic diversity and sometimes tensions. Upon his first visit in June 1891, after arriving at Rawalpindi by train from Lahore then transferring to the two-wheeled, pony-drawn "ekka" for his subsequent travel to Baramul, as he took a boat up the Jhelum River toward Srinagar, he writes to his mother (June 17, 1891):

> Cows are sacred in this country, none are allowed to be killed. If a European kills one, he has to leave the country. This protection does not extend to any other animal. The law is due to the ruling family being Hindu, but the people are Mohammedan & cordially hate the government of the Maharajah. The country is awfully poor & taxes very oppressive.

From this first 1891 visit the importance of Kashmir's growing integration into the global economy is evident; in that same letter en route to Srinagar Abbott writes home, "We meet numbers of bullock carts & camels on the road laden with European cloth & goods for the markets of Kashmir & Central Asia, & the same conveyances on their way out laden with grain."

One thing that never changed is Abbott's impressions of the region's beauty, compared to his extensive travels in the Americas, Europe, and Africa. In his first letter home from Srinagar (June 21, 1891) he wrote:

> The Vale of Kashmir is certainly by far the most beautiful place I have ever beheld. It is over 5,000 feet above sea level, & in every direction one's vision is bounded by vast snow mountains. The Vale is beautifully fresh & green; meadows & fields worthy of England dotted with Ponies & Cattle. The villages are very Swiss like in architecture. The climate is lovely, there are plenty of rivers, lakes, & canals, & the Vale is well cultivated. One can easily understand how the Old Moguls used to go wild over its beauty, especially living as they did in the scorched plains of India. We crossed a large lake, the Woolar [Wular], its surface covered with water plants & lotus.

These expeditions occurred during a period of rapid change and development in Kashmir and Ladakh; Abbott feared that railroads, deforestation for building, and other encroachments of modernity would over time spoil the region's natural beauty.

Though his ability to explore the region as a sport hunter or scientist surely benefitted from Britain's colonial presence, Abbott himself was a lifelong opponent of colonialism. His second trip to the Himalayas and Central Asia (1893-1894) was the one that included his only journey into Chinese Turkestan, after which he returned to Kashmir where he heard about the outbreak of Madagascar's war of independence with France. Upon hearing this news Abbott rushed to Calcutta and bought supplies to take with him to Madagascar, where he volunteered to fight alongside the indigenous Hova (Merina) in their unsuccessful battle to maintain independence from the French (see Taylor 2015a), before returning again to Kashmir (September 1895 to January 1896), his third trip. His letters home are filled with

evidence of his anti-colonial stance. From a collecting station in southern Thailand, between his third and fourth trips to the Himalayas, Abbott received news in May 1896 of the recent victory of indigenous Ethiopian forces over Italian troops in the battle of Adwa, where an estimated 7,000 Italian troops were massacred. Using the unacceptably derogatory American slang word "Dagos" (meaning Spaniards or Italians), Abbott wrote to his mother on May 6, 1896:

> Was immensely pleased with the news of the defeat of the Dagos in Abyssinia. I wish every white man in the continent of Africa was butchered the same way–none of them have any business there–only to rob, plunder & steal–& what is more nearly every one who has been in Africa admits the truth of it when he is cornered up–unless it be some lying hypocrite […]. Every European power is looking for some weaker nation which it may bully & rob with impunity […]

Other observations reflect this period of the so-called "Great Game," in which for most of the 19th century the British and Russian Empires competed with others for political and diplomatic control of Central Asia and the Himalayas, where sport hunting and scientific collecting took place in an often uneasy political and military climate:

> The Russians slowly but surely advance their boundary towards the Kashmir & Afghan frontier, so the British are preparing for the war which must one day come, probably in the distant future however. They are extending the R.R. [railroad] through Quetta, in Baluchistan, towards Kandahar, in Afghanistan; & in this direction are building a military road to Gilgit. The "closed" districts are splendid hunting grounds for Ibex & the grand Markhoor goat so there is much "Kussing" [cussing] on the part of sportsmen. (W.L. Abbott to S.F. Abbott, July 18, 1891)

In the same letter Abbott noted that at Bandipur on Wular Lake, he had come across two regiments of "Kashmiri troops encamped, intended to be marched to Gilgit where there is a bit of row threatened," and regretted that he could not go collecting in places closed "by British order" including "Gilgit Astor, & the Guraiz [Gurais]."

Gulab Singh, an official who had sided with the British, had obtained Kashmir under the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846. He became the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, which was the second largest princely state in British India. The rule of such princely states was conducted under British paramountcy, involving the maintenance of treaties with the British Crown which would last until the mid-twentieth century. Abbott visited the region during the reign of Gulab's grandson,

Pratap Singh. As Maharaja, Pratap Singh made extensive attempts at modernization: road-building ventures, vaccination campaigns, as well as various educational and agricultural projects, many of which are also noted in Abbott's correspondence. From Leh, Ladakh, he wrote home from his second expedition, "A large part of the population of Ladak are monks & Nuns, who are celibates. These monasteries were formerly wealthy & owned most of the country, as they now do in Thibet [Tibet], but here they were mostly deprived of their possessions when the Sikhs conquered the country." (W.L. Abbott to S.F. Abbott, July 2, 1893.)

Though obviously only reflective of one person's observations, the future full publication of Abbott's records will be an important added source of this region's historical information, considering the paucity of such first-hand accounts. Abbott often noted that his personal observations differed from public or official records; for example, arriving in Calcutta after his fourth trip to Kashmir he summarized the conflict with the Afridi (a Pashtun tribe):

> While up in Kashmir I did not have a very clear idea about the progress of the frontier fighting further than judging from the newspaper accounts. I thought all was going on flourishing, but on reaching Pindi [Rawalpindi] everyone told me just the opposite. There is a great deal of sickness. Over a thousand mostly British troops are at the base hospital at Pindi & of course many thousands more at the hospitals nearer the front. Although most of the other tribes have submitted, the Afridis are still holding out & so far have very much the best of the fighting. They lie up behind rocks & pot the troops during the day at every opportunity, while the latter can rarely get sight of anyone to fire at. They creep up on the camps at night & snipe at every light visible—Hitting many & wearing the men out by increased outpost duty & want of sleep[.] Meanwhile Typhoid & dysentery have been raging among the troops & now Pneumonia is very bad owing to the troops being insufficiently clothed with the temp. at night 10° to 20° Fahr[enheit]. In many cases the men have had to lie out all night without either blankets or overcoats—& this in some cases among men who have been rotting for years in the hot plains of India. The native troops particularly Sikhs & Gurkhas have of course done much better than the Europeans. (Letter to S.F. Abbott, Dec. 2, 1897.)

ABBOTT AND HIS HIMALAYAN EXPEDITIONS WITHIN THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND OF MUSEUM COLLECTING

Abbott's contemporaries at the Smithsonian and beyond recognized his enormous contributions as a "naturalist" (i.e. scientist of natural history, including biology

and anthropology) and as a collector; and more specifically a "hunter-naturalist" – one whose collecting gear included hunting rifles – sometimes for specimens new to science but often for the same trophy game sought by other sport hunters (Roosevelt 1911; Altherr 1978). In his essay on "The American Hunter-Naturalist," quoted above, President Theodore Roosevelt (1911) regretted that Abbott did not usually publish his scientific explorations and discoveries; and as also noted above, Smithsonian scientists sometimes encouraged him to do so.

Abbott's only authored, published work is an article on his ethnographic collections from East Africa (1887-89) within the Smithsonian's annual report for 1892. That publication (Abbott 1892) included a catalogue of 247 objects, grouped into categories such as "Dress and Adornment," "Culinary Utensils," etc. Abbott never prepared such a catalogue for any of his biological collections, nor ethnographic collections from any other place, though he personally assembled these collections with extensive associated labels, notes and correspondence.

As Taylor (2015a) has noted, Abbott therefore stands as a counterexample to the widely accepted generalizations Kuklick (1997) presents about the 19th-century origins of fieldwork within anthropology and related disciplines. She writes that "Aristocratically conceived natural history was predicated on the assumption that scientific labor should be divided along class lines." The intellectual elites analyzed data that had been collected by others; fieldwork was physical, dirty, distasteful work. "In sum," she concludes, "fieldwork was not gentlemanly activity" (1997:54). Kuklick then cites mostly European and British sources indicating that better science was thought to result from a strict division (along these class lines) between fieldworkers and scientists (ibid.). Fieldworkers (from lower levels of society) might be tempted to collect only what was consistent with theory if they understood theory; theorizing scientists might be tempted to give their own field data undue preference if they collected it themselves.

Yet none of these generalizations applies in Abbott's case. His status among the upper class of Philadelphia and America was unquestioned even as his lifelong contributions from field collecting were recognized and respected. He corresponded from the field (about data and theory) with scientists at the highest levels throughout his life. He did author an article on Kilimanjaro region ethnographic collections that he personally collected, and was repeatedly (albeit unsuccessfully) encouraged to author or co-author other museum publications.

The study of Abbott's correspondence from his Kashmir and Ladakh expeditions indicates for the first time a possible explanation for this wealthy scientist-collector's extensive personal involvement in his field collecting, namely a colonial code of ethics that was especially well-developed among Euro-American sport-hunters in British India's Himalayas. This explanation would be consistent with several recent

studies of colonial sport hunting there which -- as described by Hussain (2010) and Mani (2012), had already by the eighteenth century become an activity of elites, like hunting in Britain itself. Both authors note that by the late nineteenth century, British (or other Euro-American) sportsmen in the Himalayas relied on an extensive pool of *shikaris* or local Himalayan trackers and guides intimately familiar with the region and its wildlife, who though essential to find the most prized game were considered poor and unschooled sportsmen themselves. A moral code developed around this gentlemanly pursuit, which devalued any game not personally shot by the sportsman.

Historians have described a similar "code of sportsmanship" among American hunter-naturalists (Altherr 1978).[3] Abbott's correspondence abounds with numerous examples of this; and also makes clear that his travels in the Himalayas, more than any other place, were organized as expeditions for rare examples of trophy game. Those trophy specimens were included alongside much larger numbers of ethnographic and important biological collections purely for scientific study (insects, plants, small mammals, birds). Only trophy animals (including heads or horns of rare mountain sheep) were collected primarily for display rather than study in storage. For example, Abbott often writes of honorable sportsmanship at the springtime "race" among colonial hunters for the best hunting valleys (or "nullahs"). From the Lolab Valley of Kashmir Abbott writes home:

> Saw a "Sahib" (European) yesterday 1st in 2 weeks. He reached this village after I did, so he had to move on to another place. The rule in K[ashmir] is that the first comer has the right to that nullah or shooting ground. It does not matter, there are always plenty. But some are better than others, & in the spring there is a terrific race for some of the favorite Ibex and Markhoor [Markhor] nullahs in Baltistan. Some sportsmen have gone night and day to win the race. (W.L. Abbott to S.F. Abbott, July 12, 1891.)

In Abbott's scientific collecting, whether collecting basketry for Mason (cf. Mason 1908), or birds and small mammals, he collects a range of variation,

[3] Kuklick (1997:54) cites examples of collectors from lower classes gathering material for scientists from upper classes; yet we can also find many apparently opposing examples (besides Abbott) of wealthy sport hunters as naturalist collectors for museums, who were also scientists and authors. Roosevelt's (1911) essay cited above praised especially Charles Sheldon and C. Hart Merriam (considered primarily a mammologist but also entomologist and ethnographer, see Sterling 1974); D.T. Hanbury who traveled with Abbott in Central Asia (Hanbury 1904), as well as Theodore Roosevelt himself -- writer, hunter, and collector for museums (Brinkley 2009); see Altherr 1978 for a survey of other hunter-naturalist collectors. Abbott sponsored collecting expeditions by naturalists H.C. Raven and Cecil Boden Kloss (the latter, after joining Abbott on collecting expeditions in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands [Kloss 1903], became director of the Raffles Museum in Singapore); both assembled large ethnographic collections.

recognizing its usefulness to science; by contrast, his trophy game hunting follows expectations of sportsmanship, thus he eschews hunting females and young males of Ibex and various mountain sheep, writing home in a letter from Daru Nullah in Baltistan (Dec. 1, 1891) that he'd found "[p]lenty of females & young males which of course are no use…," and continuing, "Also saw a bunch of Shápu (Ovisvignei) but all ewes. Am sure of some sport before long. Am certainly working hard enough to get it." (ibid.)

Of particular relevance are letters decrying those who do not follow the sportsmen's code, for example two "Globe trotters" at the Kunjerab Pass in Baltistan who "bought most of their best heads from the Khirguiz [Kyrgyz], & splashed blood on them to make them look newly killed"[4] – seemingly an example what Hussain (2010:114) calls indigenous efforts to "profit from these European sportsmen's fetishes or obsessions with trophy heads" which Hussain considers to have "made a mockery of the hierarchy of distinction being crafted in the rules of trophy hunting and display" (ibid.). Nevertheless, such passages also illustrate the importance of the wealthy hunter-naturalist's personal hand in assembling the collections, which makes it possible that this tenet of behavior among sportsmen affected Abbott's presumption that the hunter-naturalist himself (not his paid servants or field guides) should be the one primarily responsible for the public service of scientific collecting.[5]

Roosevelt's essay on the American hunter-naturalist admiringly extols the ideal of this "unpaid" public service. The hunter-naturalist collector is one who "is obliged to spend far more than he receives, so that he actually pays for the privilege of rendering the public a service," often in "lands difficult and dangerous of access…." (1911:854). Such naturalists "not only made no money out of their explorations, but have had to pay heavily for the privilege of doing work of incalculable risk and hardship." (ibid.)

Another example of how naturalist collectors may have been exceptions to today's predominant narratives about the history of anthropological collecting involves the growing current literature on "colonial" collections or on colonial discourses in 19th-century anthropology (Thomas 1994:33–65), or on 19th-century and later efforts to collect and display African art (Berzockand Clarke 2011; Geary and Xatart 2007; Schildkrout and Keim 1998). Though Abbott sometimes expresses aesthetic judgments, his ethnographic collections were presented to

4 W.L. Abbott to S.F. Abbott, June 2, 1894.

5 In some cases Abbott also purchased for donation collections assembled by others, or funded other naturalists to carry out collecting expeditions. These were separate forms of his museum donations, distinct from his own collecting activities.

museums as scientific specimens for study; neither for display nor to be understood or used as artworks. They supplied Mason and other scientists with the data that would help identify the evolutionary path of societies worldwide, from savagery toward civilization, just as his biological collections helped specialists determine evolutionary paths of animals or plant species and the range of life forms that have resulted. Clearly, this collecting philosophy was informed with evolutionary narratives of hierarchy that were also associated with colonial collecting, though Abbott saw no contradiction between that and his anticolonial politics or his insistence that indigenous governments were preferable to colonial ones.

By contrast, Schildkrout and Keim note the importance of scientific exploration and the competitive "scramble" for collections within colonial Africa. "Accurate descriptions of the landscape and people were seen as prerequisites to an array of colonial programs including the extraction of resources, the spread of civilization and political control, and the salvation of souls," they note (1998:21–22), pointing also to the development of museums or exhibitions of African art, which spread positive images of the colonial projects. Yet Abbott's correspondence shows no indication that he expects his ethnographic collections to be put on display, any more than his biological ones (other than rare trophy game).

Despite the inherently hierarchical view of societies underlying the evolution-based science for which he collected, ample archival evidence shows Abbott favored self-governance and opposed colonialism throughout his life. Abbott also opposed America's colonial governance of the Philippines, writing to his sister about America's own new colony:

> Am very glad to see that so many decent people in America take the same view of the Philippine question that I do. They regard the whole war as an outrage upon the personal liberty & rights of the Filipinos. I have the heartiest sympathy for the latter. Am feeling sure that the fighting was most unnecessary & brought about for political reasons in America. (Letter to Gertrude Abbott, May 3, 1899.)

Nevertheless, Abbott shared with contemporary collectors and colonialist thinkers an inherently hierarchical view of societies along an evolutionary path, and he made special efforts to collect for Smithsonian anthropologists the technology of peoples at the presumed earliest stages of societal evolution. In this Abbott was encouraged by Smithsonian anthropologist Otis Mason, who sought to interpret stages of human evolution through advances in material culture, based on classification of pre-industrial material culture into "types" that became more complex in more advanced societies.

Abbott also sought to collect examples where similar needs produce similar inventions, without diffusion or borrowing; such "convergent evolution" was also important to Mason's evolutionary theories. They indicated that mankind passed through stages of evolution everywhere, and that laws governing evolution could be sought apart from particular historical circumstances of each people. Though such ideas can be recognized in many passages of his correspondence (Taylor 2015a:38), and provided a theoretical underpinning for his collecting, they are never developed in Abbott's correspondence into any theoretical system.

The fact that evolution could be studied through material culture reflects a basic presumption of Mason (and contemporary Smithsonian ethnologists): material culture and ideational culture evolved together as one passed from savagery to barbarism to civilization. Both could be studied through the establishment of typologies, and the study of the cultural-historical sequences in which those types developed throughout the world. Information about material culture could predict ideational culture, and vice versa (Hinsley 1981:esp.87-98).

One marked influence of these evolutionary ideas on Abbott's collecting strategy, and on the collections assembled, is that he saw the valleys of Kashmir and Ladakh as regions that to some extent were able to evolve in isolation, where both biological species and human ethnic groups could evolve separately and distinctively. Thus comparative collections from the various semi-isolated areas within a larger region might enable scientists to understand the processes of societal evolution from common ancestors, along divergent paths of evolution. This was not a consideration during Abbott's initial expeditions, which as mentioned above were organized more as trophy game hunting trips with ancillary scientific activities. But over time, as Abbott increasingly recognized that new and truly valuable contributions to science could most often be found among smaller and less conspicuous rodents and other wildlife, he also came to develop his interest in the geographical distribution of variation in biological as well as cultural forms. On his first trip to the region he followed well-known paths seeking trophy-game hunting grounds, moving on when unsuccessful attaining the "sport" he sought. But by his 5th trip in 1910-1911 he was consciously and systematically circling through a sequence of valleys trying to identify the boundaries and distribution of biological species and cultural forms.

Admittedly, scientific interests were not the only push and pull factors for the sequence of Abbott's expeditionary interests. Early in his collecting career he often followed well-trodden paths of other hunters, but as time passed he especially wanted to find new things or go to previously unexplored places. Though willing to make great sacrifices for both science and "sport" or adventure, he also enjoyed beautiful

places as well as comforts when available. As noted above, he considered Kashmir and Ladakh exceptionally beautiful places; but they were cold. He was often torn between his love of the mountains and of the tropics. From Nagmarg (Kashmir), on Nov. 30, 1895 (his third trip) he wrote about the magnificent birds he collected there, yet complained of the poor sport-hunting success and the cold:

> Intend to stick it out here until the first of the year & then I am off for the tropics again & I hope I may never be ass enough ever to leave them again. I might be down in the Malay archipelago in Borneo or Celebes with thermometer at 90° & where existence itself is paradise & here I am fool enough to waste time up here in this infernal northern climate. There is very little chance of my coming to America this spring I am never going to leave the Tropics again. This is simply wasting time in Kashmir. Life is easy & pleasant & healthy, but shooting is done for as far as I am concerned. I have never had any decent sport here from some cause or other. Hot climate always suits me & makes me energetic while cold always sucks the life & energy right out of me. Most Europeans do not do well in the Tropics because they will not keep clear of alcohol &dont take sufficient exercise. (W.L. Abbott to S.F. Abbott, Nov. 30, 1895)

In fact after 1895 he dedicated himself primarily to collecting in the Southeast Asian tropics, returning briefly for his fourth trip to Kashmir (1897) between two trips to southern Thailand (1896-7 and 1899), the second of which got delayed by the outbreak of the Spanish-American War (1898). Abbott returned to America and briefly visited Washington and the Smithsonian in his rush to Tampa (Florida) to volunteer for the Cuban invasion in the "irregular" (volunteer) cavalry of his friend and fellow gentleman-scholar W.A. Chanler. As Taylor (2014) noted, Abbott found his native country still impossible to live in, as he expected; he thought its weather unbearable and the masses of its people vile. Longing to return as possible to distant jungles and unexplored places, he had decided by the time he returned to Singapore in December 1898, en route to his second trip to Thailand, to outfit a schooner in Singapore. In fact that schooner, which he named the *Terrapin*, would later become his moveable base of natural history collecting operations for the ten years following his return to Singapore from the second Lower Siam expedition (thus until 1909). His return to the Himalayas on trips beginning again in 1910 followed upon his disposal of the badly damaged schooner (May 1909), his advancing blindness, and his generally poor health that he thought could better be cured by returning to the colder Himalayan climate. Furthermore his transformation from a big game hunter to a scientific collector seeking new finds among less showy and conspicuous

species or less well known populations, all combined to make Abbott the more mature scientist with a new personal and professional scientific mission: he would return to the British Indian Himalayas, to seek out and collect the biological and ethnographic "specimens" illustrating how both species and societies had separately evolved in the beautiful, health-inducing nullahs of Kashmir and Ladakh.

As a hunter seeking trophy game (on his first trips), Abbott could set traps for small mammals and could purchase ethnographic collections but would surely have been less successful with much scientific collecting. Abbott expressed this frustration in that same Nov. 30, 1895, letter from Nagmarg, "Am tired & sick of this business—Out day after day & getting nothing. You see I cant fire a gun off at smaller animals or birds for fear of scaring off the stags. As you see I get no sport at all." He writes about this transformation in many passages of his correspondence in subsequent years, prefiguring his developing ideas for the later series of expeditions as early as a May 14, 1904 letter to the Smithsonian's curator of mammals, Gerrit Miller. Written on his schooner off eastern Sumatra as he sailed toward Bangka Island, he is already referring to the Himalayas' potential for improving his poor health, his interest in trapping little-known small mammals rather than hunting trophy game (not yet mentioning the advancing blindness he described later), and his growing interest in assembling comparative collections illustrating animal speciation (and human ethnic diversity) among nearby valleys within a single larger region:

> I will most likely run over to America in another year. Am in fair health but very thin. Am always seedy in America. Probably shall have to go back to the Himalayas to get pulled together. Any way there is an unlimited amount of work to be done trapping in Kashmir. From what I know the place is comparatively unworked. & it would be very interesting to work up the different forms & species separated by deep gorges or Cañons many thousands of feet deep. As the valleys of the Shyok & Indus. (W.L. Abbott to G.S. Miller, May 14, 1904)

ABBOTT'S NINE EXPEDITIONS TO KASHMIR AND LADAKH

Before concluding with a summary of information about the collections Abbott obtained and their importance (then and now), it is important to summarize briefly the nine expeditions and their routes, based on a study of his correspondence. Each is here illustrated with a map, based on information in correspondence or field notes, except for his eight "expedition" in 1914 which consisted only of traveling by ship then rail to Srinagar, arriving in September of 1914 (aged 54), where he wrote again to the Smithsonian's curator of mammals:

> Am very sorry I came up here. War broke out while we were at sea […]. If I were not too old & too blind, should have joined the British army before this, but being perfectly useless, the best place for me is in America, & the best thing I can do is to go around at home & work against the peace fanatics. (W.L. Abbott to G.S. Miller, Sept. 4, 1914)

He returned to America until his last Kashmir expedition, from October to December 1915. (The U.S. entered World War I in April 1917.) The expedition notes and maps[6] provided here summarize this author's chronological reconstruction of Abbott's travels in the Kashmir and Ladakh region, based on his correspondence, field notes, and collection records in all repositories examined.

Abbott's fist trip (May 1891 - June 1892) began with hunting in the valleys around Srinagar, after which he traveled up the Sind and Indus River Valleys to Skardu, exploring the area near Askole from November 1891 until January 1892. Disappointed with his trophy-game hunting there (bears, Ibex, mountain sheep), he continued to the Haramosh region before returning to Srinagar in April where he became ill with fever, recovering there until he could leave for Bombay in June 1892.

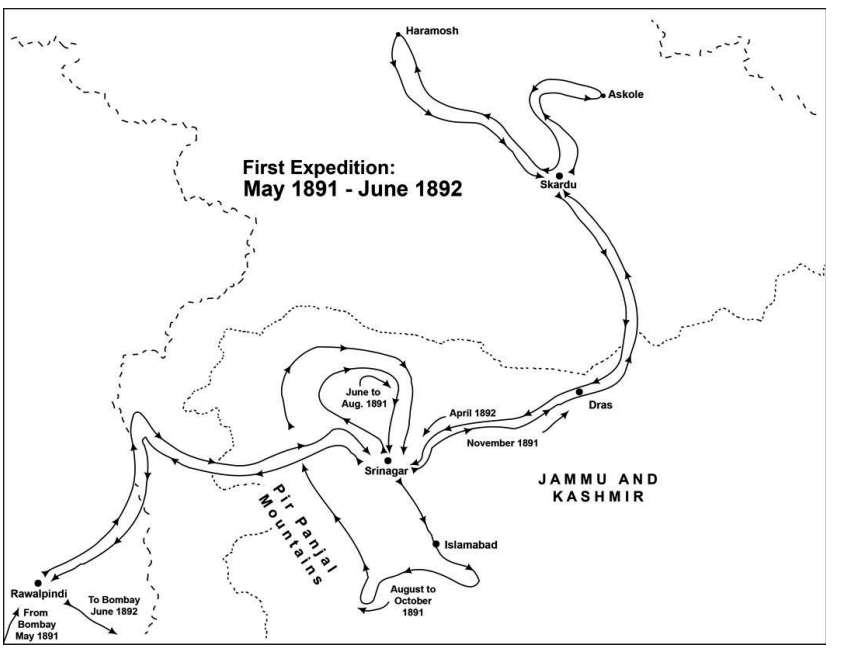

Figure 3: Abbott's first expedition

6 These schematic maps are only to indicate Abbott's expedition routes; they use regional outline sketches based on U.S. State Department maps (e.g. Blood 1995; Heitzman and Worden 1996), without intent to express or endorse any opinion on national boundaries. Various authors (e.g. Schwartzberg and Bajpai 1992)provide maps of the changing boundaries of South Asia during Abbott's time.

Abbott's second trip had the primary purpose of visiting Chinese Turkestan (see Taylor 1916), but Abbott had received permission to enter and leave via the "Ladakh route" thus on this trip he made further observations in Kashmir and Ladakh, adding collections as he returned to Srinagar via the Kilian Pass and Leh in September 1894, until he left the area for Calcutta in November 1894.

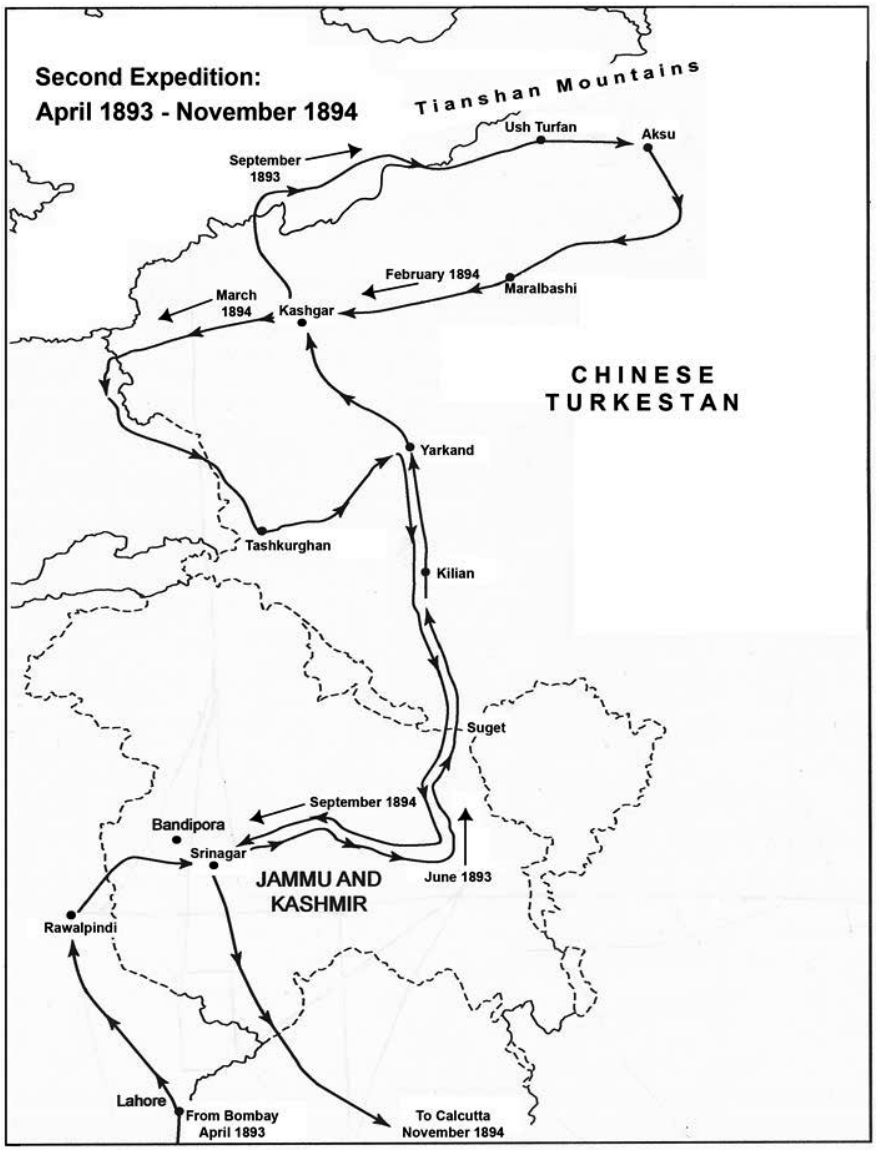

Figure 4: Abbott's second expedition

Abbott's third collecting trip was a short, four month expedition from September 1895 until January 1896.

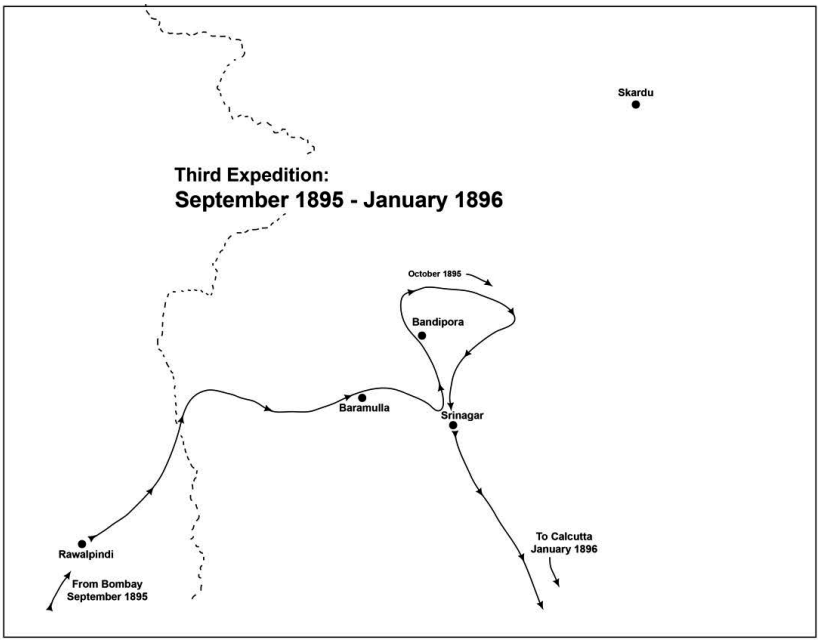

Figure 5: Abbott's third expedition

Abbott's fourth trip extended from June 1897 until July 1897, as he returned to Kashmir between the first two of his trips to Southeast Asia. After this, and a brief return to America to join in fighting the Spanish-American War, he returned to Southeast Asia and began an intense and productive decade of tropical collecting in the schooner *Terrapin*, mostly in Indonesia, until 1909 (see Taylor and Aragon 1991; Taylor and Hamilton 1993).

Abbott returned for his fifth trip from May to December 1910, more interested now in scientific collecting than trophy game hunting, and at age 50 hoping to recover some of the health he had lost in years of tropical collecting. His interest in the comparative study of biological speciation (and ethnic diversity), within a large region's separated valleys, led him to collect in a series of radiating expeditions to surrounding areas. Though his collecting focus in his fifth through ninth trips seems entirely to be on biological specimens, his ethnographic observations and fieldnotes continued. His explorations of the valleys in Kashmir included the central Karakoram and the Deosai Plains (May-July), the Wangat (July) and Sind Valleys (August), before returning to Srinagar in September. Then he set out for areas east of Srinagar (October-December), returning to Srinagar in January 1911 before setting out to collect in the Lolab Valley, north of the Wular Lake in the northeastern

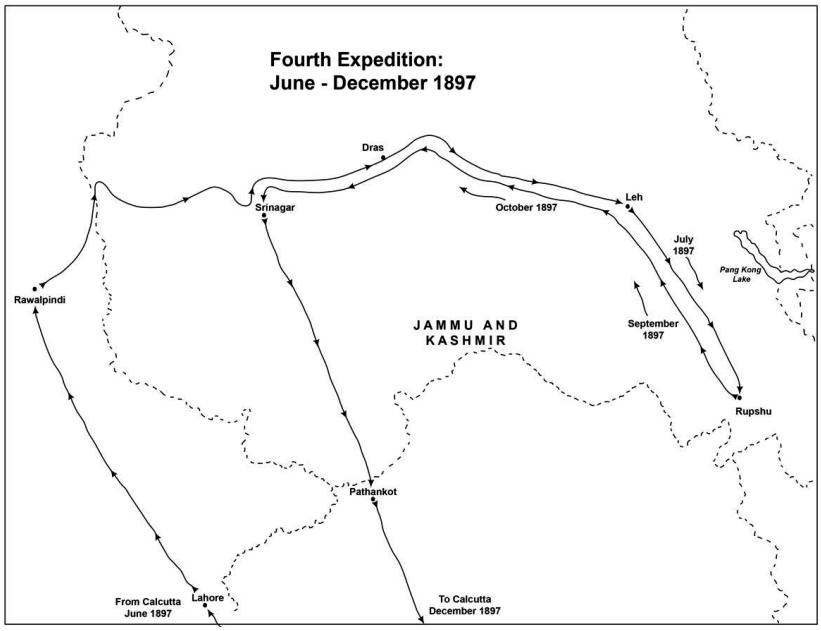

Figure 6: Abbott's fourth expedition

part of the Vale of Kashmir. After a brief return to Srinagar, he traveled south to Khistwar from March 1911 until July 1911.

Abbott's sixth trip, mostly to Baltistan but also to Kashmir, had begun by July 1912 and continued to December that year, though there is a gap in his correspondence in all repositories examined, from January 2012 (when he had stopped in London en route to India) until his next letter written July 25 at "Dassoo. Tormik nullah" [Dasso, Turmik nullah], Baltistan. He returned from Baltistan to Srinagar in November, from which he left (December 2012) for Germany, having received his permission to visit Ladakh beginning in the following May.

Abbott's mother had passed away sometime between when he saw her in London ("very feeble," as he wrote in a letter from there Jan. 20, 1912), and his return to India, so his previous frequent correspondence to her ends, leaving us without the detailed accounts of his travels and observations that we have for earlier trips. From Srinagar on Dec. 15, 1912, Abbott responds to a letter he has just received from his sister Gertrude, telling her he is "glad the funeral went off satisfactorily." But he adds, "On no account ever do anything of the sort with my body if I die abroad, as in all probability I shall. Let my body lie where I die, & no religious service." The last sentence quoted, however, was completely crossed out (perhaps by his sister Gertrude), sometime before it arrived with his other family correspondence donated by her to the Smithsonian's archives.

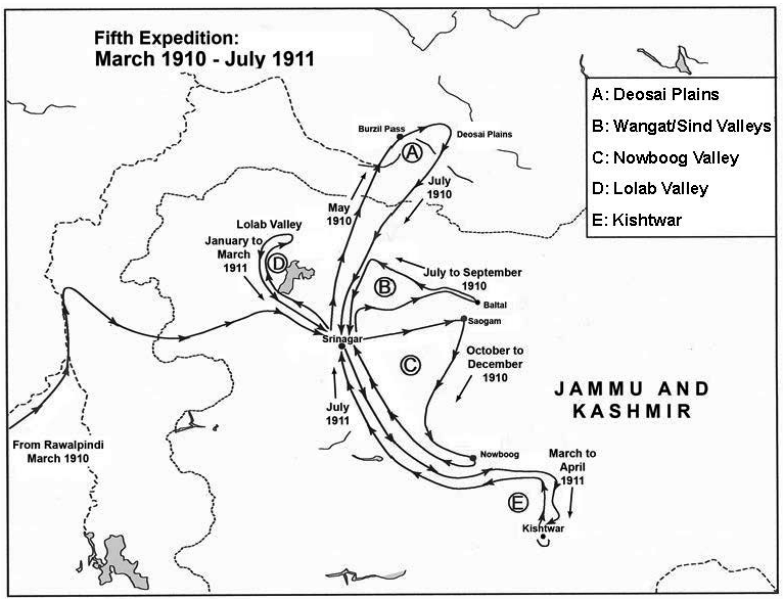

Figure 7: Abbott's fifth expedition

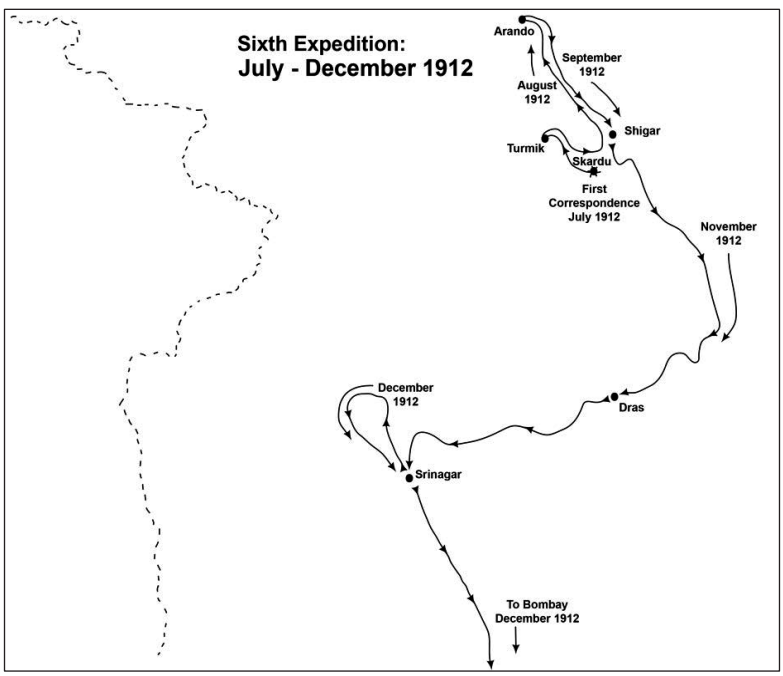

Figure 8: Abbott's sixth expedition

Abbott's seventh trip to the region began in May 1913, as he traveled from Srinagar up the Sind valley to Leh, trapping animals and collecting in another round of comparative, radiating trips from Leh -- first north to Panamik then to Pang Kong Lake, before returning from Leh to Srinagar, leaving the region in November 1913.

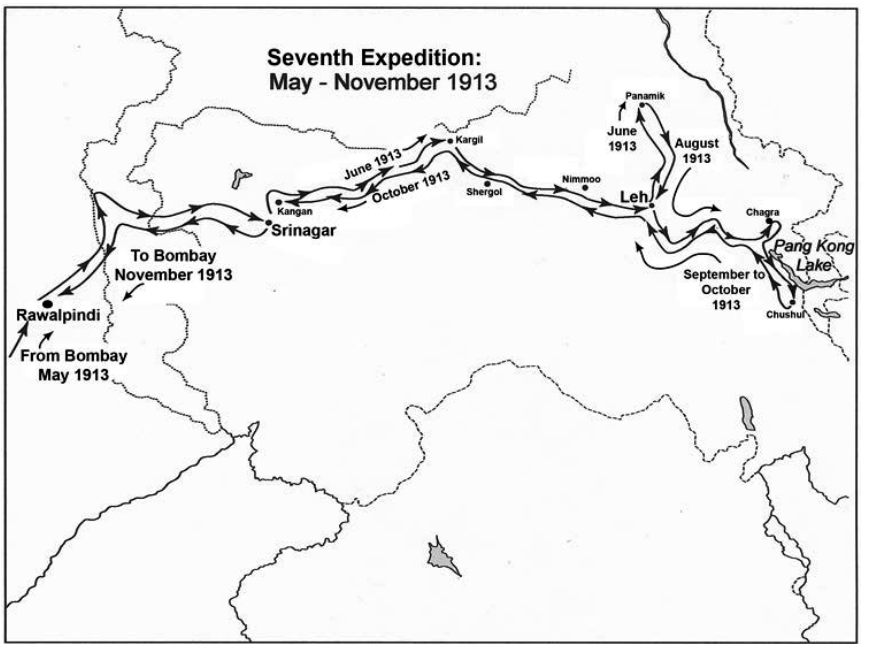

Figure 9: Abbott's seventh expedition/

Abbott's eighth trip to Kashmir was very short; he arrived on September 2, 1914 and on September 4th wrote that he regretted coming and would abandon the trip to return to the U.S.A., since war had broken out while he was en route to Kashmir. As noted above, he considered himself "too old & too blind" to fight, thus felt he should return to "work against the peace fanatics" (letter, W.L. Abbott to G.S. Miller, Sept. 4, 1914). [No map.]

Abbott's ninth and final trip to Kashmir occurred from October 1915 until December 1915. His first correspondence from this trip came from Dandwar, at the southern end of the Vale of Kashmir. After a brief trip to Srinagar, he continued to Dandwar and followed a route through other valleys, and visited Achibal, before leaving Kashmir by way of Rawalpindi and Karachi in December 1915. He returned to live permanently in the United States, first living in his family home in Philadelphia, then moving in 1924 to Elkton, Maryland until his death at age 76 in April 1936. During these years, despite his partial blindness, he made a series of

short biological and ethnographic collecting trips to the Caribbean (7 trips to the Dominican Republic in 1916, 1919, and 1920-24; 3 trips to Haiti in 1917, 1918, and 1920).

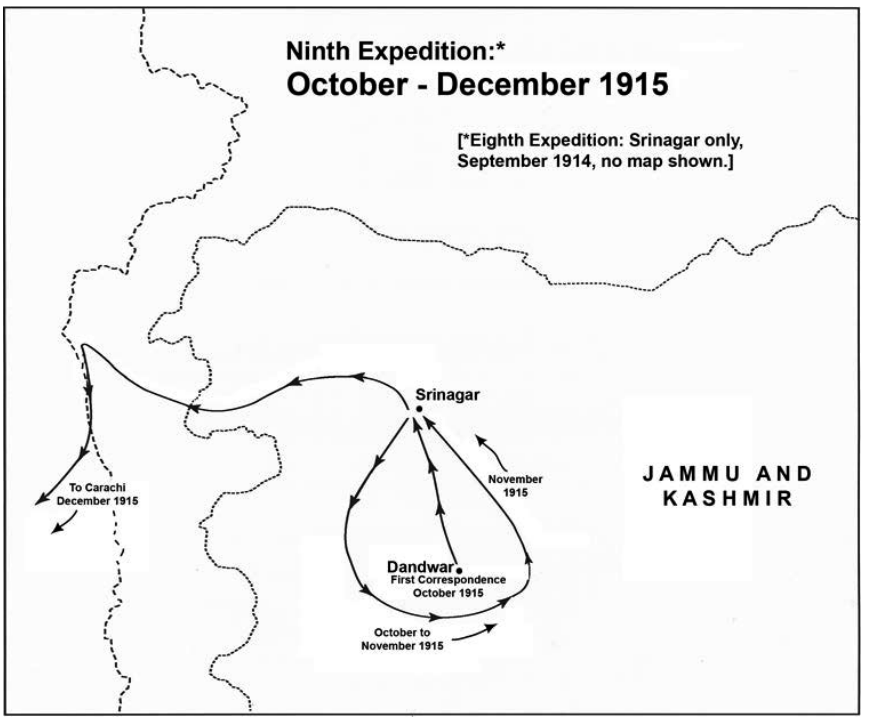

Figure 10: Abbott's ninth expedition

ABBOTT'S ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS FROM KASHMIR AND LADAKH

As mentioned above, the archival records of Abbott's Kashmir and Ladakh expeditions are spread among multiple locations including the National Anthropological Archives, the separate Smithsonian Archives (which stores the Registrar's records for the National Museum of Natural History), the Mammals Library and the Botany Library. To this we may add the handwritten labels, including many that can still be found that seem to be in Abbott's original handwriting, tied to the ethnographic and biological specimens themselves. While some standardized information from those object labels (especially date of collection and locality) has been recorded within currently used digital databases of museum collections, other non-standard information, including local folk names for objects, birds, or mammals, has not been recorded and can only be found by seeking out the objects in collection storage.

The Kashmir and Ladakh collections within the Anthropology department of the Smithsonian have not previously been published and have had little visitation or use. The move of the collections from the main museum building in Washington, D.C. to a dedicated, spacious research and storage facility (the Museum Support Center) in Suitland, Maryland, involved extensive conservation work and re-housing of the collections, however, during a period in which the use of paper catalog cards was superseded by digital databases allowing for easier public search of collections, making access to information about these collections much easier and more efficient.

Abbott's fieldnotes, correspondence, and collections are supplemented by photographs in two repositories, the National Anthropological Archives and the Smithsonian Institution Archives (see Figures 11 and 12).[7]

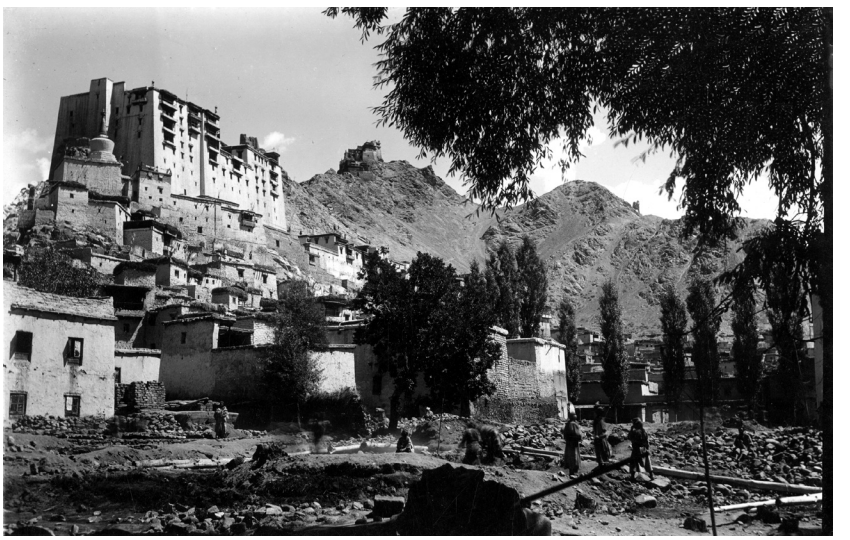

Figure 11: Leh, Ladakh. W.L. Abbott papers, Smithsonian Institution Archives. Probably purchased by Abbott at Srinagar in May-June 1893. (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7117).

The digital databases for ethnographic collections are currently stored within a museum system known as "Emu"; this records information about each cataloged "object." However one catalog number is sometimes given to a set of similar objects or a set of objects thought to belong together. Therefore the total number of actual objects exceeds the number of catalog entries. (Taylor 2006b discusses

[7] These photographs, deposited by Abbott's family at the Smithsonian along with his correspondence, may be from the two groups of photographs he referenced sending to them in May and June 1893 from Srinagar, in a letter to his mother dated June 8, 1893. Both images have stamped on the back: "As. 4 Per Copy" [i.e. 4 annas or ¼ of a Rupee], so presumably they were purchased. Abbott's handwritten caption on the back of the photograph in Fig. 11 states only "Leh."

this in detail with reference to Smithsonian collections from a 1926 expedition to the Netherlands East Indies.)

Figure 12: Photograph in W.L. Abbott papers, probably purchased at Srinagar in May-June 1893 by William Louis Abbott, whose handwritten caption on the back states: "Weaver at Leh Ladak [sic] with his wife" (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7117).

Abbott's ethnographic collections at the Smithsonian identified as being from Kashmir and Ladakh all came from his first four expeditions (to 1897). When he returned to Kashmir after the decade of tropical collecting, his ethnographic observations and notes continued but no further ethnographic collections at the Museum are recorded as having come from there, only biological collections (primarily mammals and birds). Perhaps this is partly because Otis T. Mason, Abbott's primary correspondent within the Museum's anthropology department, who had always so actively encouraged his ethnographic collecting, had died in 1908.

Ethnographic objects from his first through fourth trip arrived at the museum in six "accessions" (groups brought in together), from 1892 to 1898, with a total of 272 objects including those on trips that extended beyond this region to Turkestan or Baltistan, plus some objects purchased on this trip from elsewhere, e.g. Tibetan crafts purchased in Ladakh.

Much important information about this collection is not currently within the digital databases. Abbott's original labels are generally still found attached to the objects themselves, often giving the cultural or ethnic group of the people who made it, using contemporaneous terminology from Abbott's day, and sometimes locality or date along with other information. In this way, the handwritten labels Abbott tied to ethnographic objects are very comparable to the labels tied to the bird, mammal,

or other biological specimens collected. Other very important forms of information come from studying the still-unpublished archival correspondence and documents which often supplement or even correct information written on these labels.

The collections contain a wide range of ethnographic materials, including musical instruments; household utensils such as cups, spoons, a teapot, a rope, baskets, and slings for carrying items; engraved stones; wood carvings; wooden masks; religious items such as prayer wheels and rosaries; a small sword; and numerous textiles and articles of clothing, including boots, shoes, socks, a pair of "ear-protectors" (or warmers), caps or hats, lengths of woolen cloth, a "woman's cloak,", a "woman's dress," pair of "woman's trousers," and many other items. Such telegraphic terms used in museum's catalogs can lead to much better understanding when fuller sources of information are added, ideally within the context of historical and ethnographic study.

Note for example the simple object shown in Figure 13a, an earthenware brazier within a wicker basketry holder. This example among many illustrates that more context to these collections is provided by considering the entirety of Abbott's archival documents. Listed as "Body warmer. Jar" in the catalog records, its fuller original handwritten label explains: "Kashmiri Kāngri or warmer – This pattern is used in southern part of Vale of Kashmir." We also find explanatory passages within Abbott's correspondence and notes held in archival repositories. For example, Abbott wrote from Srinagar to his sister Gertrude on Dec. 15, 1912:

I am surprised to find everyone else (European) feels the cold more than I do, & go about all muffled up & wear long Gilgit boots (felt) even indoors. The natives dont do much of anything in the cold weather. Still they dont really suffer. They mostly go barefooted with grass sandals. Every Kashmiri carries a Kangri in winter, full of charcoal or hot ashes, underneath their voluminous smock frocks, right next to skin of abdomen. Burns on the abdomen are very frequent.

Figure 13: (a) *Kāngri* (earthenware charcoal brazier within wicker basketry holder). Collected in Kashmir, 1891-1892. Ethnology catalog no. E164970.

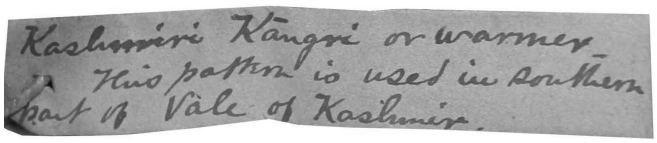

Figure 13: (b) W.L. Abbott's original handwritten label on Kāngri seen in Figure 13 (a) (Ethnology catalog no. E164970)

21ST CENTURY OPPORTUNITIES: THE USEFULNESS OF LEGACY COLLECTIONS TODAY

Abbott himself (like his Smithsonian correspondents, Mason and his successor Walter Hough) misunderstood the changing research priorities within contemporary anthropology, especially the strong movement away from studying material culture (and stages of societal evolution) that had begun by the turn of the century. This is seen in the proportional decline in museum anthropologists, and the rapid decline after 1900 of the percentage of anthropological publications concerned with material culture (see Sturtevant 1969:623-7). Abbott's vast ethnographic collections, like many others but quite unlike his and other biological ones from this period, have largely remained unstudied and unknown.

Yet as Taylor (2016:269-270) points out, a productive recent mode of scholarship consists of taking images and information about legacy collections (including those by naturalists) back to descendants of those who produced them, engaging them with their re-interpretation and presentation (e.g. Ames 1980, 1990; Rosoff 1998). "Re-visiting" historic expeditions now (cf. Taylor 2006a, b) provides opportunities to ask such descendants to help interpret objects, photographs, and archival narratives. Taylor (2014:164) points to many studies of Southeast Asian material culture using historically documented museum specimens to discover new ethnographic information and interpretations. Abbott's collections from Kashmir, Ladakh, and neighboring areas like Baltistan, would benefit greatly from reassessment with new ethnographic fieldwork (see examples of such reassessments of Abbott's and other legacy collections from Madagascar, in Taylor 2015a:41-42). Using legacy collections within studies of material culture now challenges us to interpret how historical textiles or objects participated within the formation and expression of social relationships and within a wide range of symbolic and socio-cultural contexts, and to explain how some historic practices continued and transformed in new contexts while others did not survive.

The transcription, study, and publication of Abbott's archives and collections will hopefully bring new interpretations and uses for these legacy ethnographic and biological collections he assembled. Hopefully contemporary ethnographers of Kashmir and Ladakh, as well as the descendants of the people Abbott visited and studied there, will be able to use this research resource in the region.

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