University of Aberdeen Museums
Torres Strait Islands Collection

COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Torres Strait Islands collection, Aberdeen University Museums
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Head of Museums, Library, Special Collections & Museums
Date Completed	17th August 2014

There are 305 items from the Torres Strait Islands.

The collection contains 303 arrows with composite shafts incorporating carved areas and sections bound together with plant fibre. A number of the arrows have bone points. They were donated by Sir William MacGregor in 1898. MacGregor was Administrator then Lieutenant- Governor from 1888-1898 in what was then known as British New Guinea.

There is a composite mask of turtle shell, decorated with five shells suspended from the bottom of the mask and *Abrus precatorius* seeds, most of which have become detached. The mask is decorated with red and white pigment and it appears some further attachments of turtle shell may be missing. It was collected by Arthur J L Gordon around the 1890s.

The collection also includes what has been described as a child's spinning top made of clay formed into a semi-circular shape and decorated with orange and blue paint with a spindle through the centre. It is however possible this is a drill. This item is part of a larger donation of material from the Pacific from Lord and Lady Stonehaven who travelled in the area in 1925-31 when Lord Stonehaven was Governor General of Australia.

Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.

Hunt, C (1981), *Shark Tooth & Stone Blade: Pacific Island Art from the University of Aberdeen*. University of Aberdeen (ABDUA:63589)

Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), *Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the United Kingdom and Ireland*. UNESCO.

Kwasnik, Elizabeth (ed.) (1994), *A Wider World: Collections of Foreign Ethnography in Scotland.* National Museums of Scotland