



University of Aberdeen Museums Vanuatu Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Vanuatu 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	18 th August 2014
<p>There are 175 items from Vanuatu (previously the New Hebrides)</p> <p>Ninety-seven artefacts were collected by the Presbyterian missionary Reverend Frederick Gatherer Bowie and his wife Jeannie Mutch. Fifty-seven of these are from Santo and three are attributed to the small island of Tangoa, south of Santo, where Reverend Bowie was based from 1896-1933. The other items are from the islands of Epi, Ambrim, Malekula, Futuna, Aneityum, Ambae and Nguna. Bowie collected a mask and club used in dance on Malekula. There are twenty-eight arrows, most of which are used for hunting birds or fish, and two are a feathered variety specific to Santo. There are two weather charms of stone. There are three artefacts directly associated with chiefly status on Santo: a hair ornament of a single shell; a wooden staff; and a lower jaw of a boar. Other notable items acquired via Bowie include a large pudding plate from Santo of carved wood with anthropomorphic handles at each end. He also donated a girdle of cowrie shells, stuffed with bark and strung onto vegetable fibre, and worn by a chief from Aneityum. Bowie collected three overmodelled human skulls connected with funerary ceremonies from Malekula.</p> <p>The Vanuatu collection includes other items collected by Presbyterian missionaries. There is a bow, arrows and wooden club collected by Reverend Peter Milne who was on Nguna, 1869-93. From Reverend Fred J Paton who was on Malekula from 1893-1908 is a stone used for bringing rain and another stone item which he describes as a child's doll and not a sacred stone, both from Onua, Malekula. Paton sent both to Lord and Lady Stonehaven in 1927 who gave them to the museum as part of a larger donation.</p> <p>A collection of thirty-nine artefacts was given in 1900 by Reverend W Ross including twenty-two arrows from north west Santo, a man's belt of bark from Ambrym, a waist mat of woven plant fibre with black and red pattern from Efate, and a turtle shaped wooden dish.</p> <p>Two pieces of undecorated barkcloth were acquired in 1929 from the collection of Professor Sir William Ogston including one piece from Aneityum attributed to a specific island.</p> <p>The Vanuatu collection also includes a large tree fern figure coloured with red, green and black pigment, and a carved wooden slit gong, both from Malekula. These were acquired in 1904 from Sir William Henderson, a Scottish merchant and philanthropist.</p> <p>Related archives: There are papers, a photograph album and loose photographs relating to the Reverend Frederick G Bowie collection held by University of Aberdeen Museums.</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	
Reid, RW (1912), <i>Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen</i> (ABDUA:3006; ABDUA:3007; ABDUA:3009; ABDUA:3010; ABDUA:3019; ABDUA:3021; ABDUA:3022; ABDUA:3024; ABDUA:3027; ABDUA:3029; ABDUA:3031;	

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ABDUA:3035; ABDUA:3038; ABDUA:3043; ABDUA:3046; ABDUA:3047; ABDUA:3049;
ABDUA:3050; ABDUA:3054; ABDUA:3055; ABDUA:3057-3062; ABDUA:3065-3068;
ABDUA:3071; ABDUA:3072; ABDUA:3086; ABDUA:3087)

Hunt, C (1981), *Shark Tooth & Stone Blade: Pacific Island Art from the University of Aberdeen*. University of Aberdeen (ABDUA:3071; ABDUA:3072; ABDUA:3075; ABDUA:3076; ABDUA:3077; ABDUA:3078; ABDUA:3079)

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