



National Museums Scotland Caroline Islands Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Caroline Islands collection, National Museums Scotland
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Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator of Oceania, Americas and Africa
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<p>There are seventy-six items from the Caroline Islands. This collection includes material that is from the Federated States of Micronesia and from Palau which are the two political groups that make up the Caroline Island archipelago.</p> <p>From Kosrae there are fifteen 19th century mats (<i>tol</i>) and a shoulder covering (<i>atvik</i>) all of woven banana fibre. One <i>tol</i> is attributed to two specific female makers on Lelu Island. Seven mats, along with two shell adzes, were collected in 1890 on Lelu Island by J Cumming Dewar of Vogrie House, Gorebridge, on his voyage on the yacht <i>Nyanza</i>, 1887-90. Also from Kosrae are two pandanus leaf bags and three adze heads of tridacna shell.</p> <p>From Chuuk Lagoon is a late 19th century waistband of black seeds and white shell discs. Four items from Chuuk Lagoon were acquired from the Harry G Beasley collection, including two turtleshell arm ornaments, a neck ornament of shell and coconut beads and a head ornament of orange and yellow plant fibre. There are also two 19th century wooden dance paddles from Nomoi or Mortlock islands which are part of Chuuk state.</p> <p>From Yap Island there is a canoe model decorated with carving, cowrie shells and red pigment. It is accompanied by both ordinary and steering paddles. A bowl of wood from Yap is carved in the form of a frigate bird and was acquired from the Beasley collection. Harry G Beasley himself obtained it in 1933 from Hamburg Museum fur Volkerkunde through Dr. Georg Thilenius. Dr Thilenius coordinated the 1908-10 Sudsee-Expedition to German territories in Melanesia and Micronesia. There are examples of shell and stone currency, two spears, and a neck ornament of black hibiscus fibre which apparently relates to a young person's development of status. From Fais island, part of the state of Yap, is a ceremonial cloth of woven banana fibre and hibiscus bast, acquired in 1899. There is a piece of netting in hibiscus from Woleai Atoll, also in Yap state.</p> <p>There are eleven items from Pohnpei including two items of male dress of dyed palm leaf. One is chiefly dress and has a border of red wool.</p> <p>From Palau there are three 19th century woven pandanus fibre mats. These were collected on Sonsorol island. Formerly in the Beasley collection are a dish and spoon of turtleshell.</p> <p>Fourteen items do not have specific provenance within the Caroline Islands including two ear ornaments of shell and examples of Micronesian currency. Two items were collected by J Cumming Dewar so are likely to be from Kosrae. Two adzes are from the collection of the University of Edinburgh which was transferred to National Museums Scotland in 1854.</p> <p>The largest single donor of Caroline Islands material is Frederick W Christian, a traveller and writer who was in Micronesia during the 1890s. He gave eighteen items in 1899 from Yap, Kosrae and Pohnpei.</p>	

Produced as part of *Pacific Collections in Scottish Museums: Unlocking their knowledge and potential* project 2013-2014. For full information and resources visit www.nms.ac.uk/pacific

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

Idiens, D (1982), *Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum*, Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.1892.84; A.1899.320; A.1914.201)

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

Related publications:

Christian, FW (1899), *The Caroline Islands*. London: Methuen & co.