



National Museums Scotland Samoa Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Samoa collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	12 th September 2014
<p>There are eighty-eight items from Samoa.</p> <p>Twelve artefacts are associated with Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson. These were brought to Scotland by his mother and donated after her death by her sister, Miss Balfour, in 1897. This includes four fans, three pieces of barkcloth (<i>siapo</i>), a woman's girdle of woven hibiscus, and a woven mat. There is a mat of woven leaves, fringed and bordered with red feathers, which belonged to Tupuola, chief of Tanugamanono village, Upolu (A.1897.188.1). The chief laid it on the bier at R L Stevenson's funeral in Samoa in 1894.</p> <p>In addition to the above barkcloth there are another ten pieces in the collection. Three of these are specific items of clothing: a fringed poncho, a sash worn by Miss Western Samoa 1994, and a chief's <i>lava lava</i> worn around the waist. A wooden printing board used for creating a pattern on barkcloth was collected by J Cumming Dewar of Vogrie House, Gorebridge, on his voyage on the Yacht <i>Nyanza</i> (A.1924.350). It is illustrated in his account of the voyage as collected in Samoa in 1888 although has for some time been attributed to Tonga.</p> <p>There are twenty-one clubs of wood categorised as arms and armour. One is from the University of Edinburgh collection, dating it pre 1854. Six were collected by J Cumming Dewar in 1888 with a carved wooden spear. There are two wooden dance clubs in the collection purchased in the early 20th century.</p> <p>There are two brow ornaments (<i>pale fuiono</i>) of pieces of shell sewn onto blue cotton, both collected in the late 19th century. Nine combs are mainly 19th century. There are also two ceremonial fly whisks of plaited coir on a wooden handle. One of these is a contemporary example gifted in 1994 and the other was acquired from Frederick W Christian in 1899.</p>	
<p>Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.</p>	
<p>Idiens, D (1982), <i>Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum</i>. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.1966.402)</p> <p>Dewar, J Cumming (1892), <i>Voyage of the Nyanza: Being the Record of a Three Years' Cruise in a Schooner Yacht in the Atlantic and Pacific, and her Subsequent Shipwreck</i>. Edinburgh: Blackwood</p> <p>Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), <i>Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the United Kingdom and Ireland</i>. UNESCO.</p> <p>Kwasnik, Elizabeth (ed.) (1994), <i>A Wider World: Collections of Foreign Ethnography in Scotland</i>. National Museums of Scotland</p>	