



National Museums Scotland Cook Islands Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Cook Islands collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Chantal Knowles
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	18 March 2014
<p>There are eighty-one artefacts from the Cook Islands.</p> <p>The collection comprises material acquired in the early twentieth century, with a small number of items arriving in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Of note are the purchase of 4 items from George Darsie, second husband of Titaua of Tahiti which includes the significant and well documented feast bowl from Atiu (A.1895.359); an exchange with Otago Museum in 1938 (22 items); and a contemporary collection made by Dale Idiens (former Curator at NMS) with the assistance of Don Melvin of Island Crafts, Rarotonga (A.1982.693-9 & A.1985.567 -.578).</p> <p>In addition to these collections there is a fine Rarotongan staff (A.1968.406) which is most likely from the early 19th century and came via the Edinburgh University Museum. One of only two known (Hooper 2006: 222), the upper portion is carved and the finial is in the form of a turtle supported by four figures. Also from the former University collection is a god image (A.UC.420); a complete Rarotongan staff god (A.UC.425); and a necklace (A.UC.352) of carved whale ivory pendants, coir and hair, attributed to Mangaia, although this type is more often associated with the Austral Islands. The fisherman's god (A.1923.360) has, like many other examples known in collections, been emasculated.</p> <p>The Cook Islands collection at National Museums Scotland is the largest in Scotland. Other collections of early carving are found at the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, including an early figurative sculpture (E360) and a rare and early adze (A.1977.20) at Glasgow Museums.</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	
<p>Published collections:</p> <p>Buck, PH (1944), <i>Arts and Crafts of the Cook Islands</i>. Honolulu: Bernice P Bishop Museum (Bulletin 179). (A.UC.455)</p> <p>Combalia, V (2004), <i>El Primer Eros: Africa, Oceania, America</i>. Barcelona, Lunweg (A.UC.455; A.UC.352)</p> <p>Hooper, S (2006), <i>Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia 1760-1860</i>. London, British Museum Press. (A.1968.406)</p> <p>Idiens, D (1970), 'A Recently discovered Figure from Rarotonga', <i>Journal of the Polynesian Society</i>, 65 (3), pp.359-366. (A.UC.455)</p> <p>Idiens, D (1982), <i>Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum</i>. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum. (A.UC.455; A.UC.420; A.1930.735; A.1923.360)</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

Idiens, D (1990), *Cook Islands Art*. Princes Risborough, Shire Publications Ltd. (A.UC.352; A.UC.455; A.UC.465; A.UC.480; A.1895.359; A.1902.73; A.1904.170; A.1923.360; A.1926.65; A.1926.66; A.1930.735; A.1939.146; A.1939.151-152; A.1956.1028; A.1968.406; A.1985.559; A.1985.560; A.1985.562+A; A.1985.563; A.1985.564; A.1985.565; A.1985.567+A; A.1985.571; A.1985.691-692)

Skinner, HD (1939), 'Maori and other Polynesian Material in British Museums', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 48 pp.126 (A.1895.359)

Richards, R (2012), *The Austral Islands: History, Art and Art History*. New Zealand: Paremata Press (A.UC.352)

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:

Mackintosh, F J.(2011), *From the South Seas to the North Sea: the story of Princess Titaua of Tahiti*. Anstruther: Kilrenny and Anstruther Burgh Collection