



National Museums Scotland Vanuatu Collection



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COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Vanuatu collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	20 th August 2014
<p>There are 547 objects from Vanuatu.</p> <p>This large collection includes items from the islands of Aneityum, Tanna, Futuna, Eroomango, Malekula, Ambrim, Epi, Efate, Ambae, Maewo, Torres Islands, Pentecost, Espirito Santo, and the Banks Islands. The majority of the collection was acquired in the late 19th century by Scottish Presbyterian missionaries working in southern Vanuatu. It is the largest collection from Vanuatu in Scotland.</p> <p>243 items were donated by Reverend James Hay Lawrie of Edinburgh a missionary on Aneityum from 1879-96. His wife also donated a basket, and his son a bone spoon. Reverend Lawrie's collection comes from a number of islands. It includes six ornaments of feathers, some of them chiefly, five combs, thirteen baskets, seven clubs used in warfare and two for dance, and various items associated with religion and beliefs including nine sacred stones. There is a seaweed neck ornament which incorporates human hair cut by sub-chief Numrang of Aneityum from his beard and given to his successor. Photographs taken by Lawrie document this. He also gave a slit gong drum from Malekula and a larger slit gong from Efate which has incised designs and a depiction of a European ship on the exterior. There are two tree fern grade figures and a grade figure of wood. The largest fern figure is of a high grade decorated with green and red pigment. Lawrie also donated two communion tokens made for use on Aneityum.</p> <p>Other missionaries associated with the Vanuatu material include Reverend and Mrs Watt, Reverend Peter Milne, Reverend R.M. Fraser, and Reverend E.K.M. Raff. Raff gave thirty-three objects, originally on loan, including an unusual modelled clay pig likely to be from Malekula.</p> <p>There are twenty-four wooden food knives, one, from Tongoa, has chiefly status. Six are from the collection of Harry G. Beasley and were acquired with two beaded arm ornaments collected by Admiral Henry Meggs Davis, an armguard acquired from Reverend Hall, and a piece of Espirito Santo <i>wussi</i> pottery.</p> <p>The collection includes four pieces of barkcloth. Two are Efate style, both adorned with feathers, and one with a geometric patterned boarder. Another piece is from Erromango, and the fourth is a binding once used in the funerary process on Aneityum. There are eight woven mats in the collection associated with both men and women, including finely made examples from the late 19th century and a modern <i>qana hunhune</i> from Ambae made in 2010.</p> <p>There are five ceremonial masks, one with matted spider web attached. Three from the 19th century are directly attributed to Malekula and the other two are of Malekula style with no direct provenance. There is male figure from Malekula of pigmented earth on a plant fibre frame from the collection of Kilmarnock born Sir Hugh Muir Nelson who was Premier of Queensland, 1893-8.</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

Associated Archives:

An album of photos taken by Reverend James Hay Lawrie is at National Library of Scotland (Acc.7548/F/19). Further albums are held by the State Library of New South Wales, Australia, and the Bishop Museum, Hawai'i.

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

Skinner, HD (1916), 'Origin and relationship of Hani, Tewha-Tewha, and Pou-Whenua', *Man*, Vol 16 (Nov) pp161-4, Fig.15 (A.1897.229.11)

Idiens, D (1968), 'New Hebrides Pudding-Knife (Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh), *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.110, No.782 pp274 & 276 (A.1966.693)

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

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