



National Museums Scotland Austral Islands Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

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| Title of the Collection | Austral Islands collection, National Museums Scotland |
| Author(s) | Eve Haddow |
| Curator responsible for collection (if different from author) | Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa |
| Date Completed | 11 th June 2014 |
| <p>There are forty-one items from the Austral Islands.</p> <p>The collection dates largely from the 19th and 20th centuries with some items collected in the early 19th century, likely being made in the 18th century. There are twenty-nine carved ceremonial paddles of wood. Eight of these were from the collection of Sir Thomas Brisbane who was Governor of New South Wales, Australia from 1821-5. Brisbane's collection also includes two wooden stools used in food pounding. These were donated in 1826 to the Edinburgh University collection which was later transferred to the Royal Museum in 1854.</p> <p>Acquired through this transfer, in addition to the Brisbane material and four ceremonial paddles, is a neck ornament formed of red and green feathers on coconut fibre and a large feather headdress on barkcloth over a cane frame ornamented with pearl shell. A partner to this headdress was exchanged with Otago Museum in New Zealand in the 1920s. There is another almost identical large headdress which has lost its acquisition information (A.1968.390). It is thought they are from Rurutu.</p> <p>There are three ceremonial scoops or ladles, similar in style to the carved paddles. There are three long wooden staffs, two have carved figures at the top and the other has a top section in a narrow paddle shape. There is also a finely carved 19th century long upright cylindrical wooden drum from the island of Raivavae.</p> <p>A finely carved fly whisk with coconut fibre binding topped with a pair of figures has historically been attributed to the Society Islands and is included in that collections level description. It is, however, of Austral Islands style so may have been made by Austral craftsmen (A.UC.403).</p> | |
| Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available. | |
| <p>Hooper, S (2006), <i>Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia 1760-1860</i>. London: British Museum Press. (A.UC.403)</p> <p>Idiens, D (1982), <i>Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum</i>. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum. (A.UC.352; A.UC.426; A.L.357.12; A.1968.390)</p> <p>Richards, R (2012), <i>The Austral Islands: History, Art and Art History</i>. New Zealand: Paremata Press (A.UC.403; A.UC.439)</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> | |

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

