



National Museums Scotland Easter Island Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Easter Island (Rapa Nui) collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Chantal Knowles
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	21 January 2014
<p>There are twenty-five items from Easter Island (Rapa Nui). This is a comparatively large collection as there are few items from Easter Island in Scottish museums.</p> <p>The collection comprises 19th century material and was acquired from several sources including: a purchase from George Darsie, second husband of Titaua of Tahiti (7 items); a gift from Lieutenant Dundas (1 item) and a donation from Harry Beasley (5 items). The remainder of the collections was purchased from dealers including Hecht in Hamburg; Webster; and C M Pleyte (Zembsch Collection). Notable are the seven items purchased through Williamson and Watt of Edinburgh, collected by Dewar of Vogrie House, who travelled on the yacht <i>Nyanza</i> to Rapa Nui between 1887 and 1890.</p> <p>A.1880.14.1 is a fine example of a club staff and important for its association with Lieutenant Colin M Dundas who visited Rapa Nui for a week in 1868 as part of the crew of HMS <i>Topaze</i>. A communication by him was read at the Scottish Antiquarian Society and published in their <i>Proceedings</i> of 1870. Dundas donated 2 obsidian blades to the society which are illustrated in the <i>Proceedings</i> but are not currently identified in the National Museums Scotland collections.</p> <p>The figurative sculpture in the collection is very fine, in particular the male emaciated figure <i>moai kavakava</i> (A.1894.381); the naturalistic male figure <i>moai tangata</i> (A.1954.100); and the female figure <i>moai paapaa</i> (A.1895.373). The latter figure is less fine than comparable pieces and may demonstrate a late example, even one of the last examples made (perhaps to order). It is nonetheless important in the understanding of figurative wood carving on the island.</p> <p>Although the Rapa Nui collection at National Museums Scotland is the foremost collection in Scotland, it does not contain any examples of dance paddles. The Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, however, has a fine Cook voyage example (E.348).</p> <p>Associated Archives: A series of log books or journals kept by Lieutenant Dundas during his voyages as a naval officer are held in the National Library of Scotland (Acc.10719)</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	
<p>Aldred, C (1949), <i>Primitive Arts of the South Seas</i>, Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (with the collaboration of the Arts Council of Great Britain) (A.1894.381; 1895.373)</p> <p>Combalia, V (2004), <i>El Primer Eros: Africa, Oceania, America</i>. Barcelona: Lunweg (A.1894.381; 1895.373)</p>	

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Dewar, J Cumming (1892), *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*. Edinburgh: Blackwood (A.1924.332; A.1924.333; A.1924.335)

Heyerdhal, T (1976), *The Art of Easter Island*. London: Allen and Unwin (A.1895.373)

Hooper, S (2006), *Pacific Encounters: Art and Divinity in Polynesia 1760-1860*. London: British Museum Press. (A.1954.100)

Idiens, D (1982), *Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum*. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.1894.381; A.1895.373)

Musee de l'Homme (1972), *La decouverte de la Polynesie*. Paris: Musee de l'Homme. (A.1894.381)

Wardwell, A (1967), *The Sculpture of Polynesia*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago (A.1894.381)

Wingert, P (1962), *Primitive Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (A.1894.381)

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