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**Excavating MacGregor:
reconnecting a nineteenth century
collection from Papua New Guinea**

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Becoming a collection (1892–2001): challenges and practices in the curation of the Official collection at the Queensland Museum

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This chapter focuses on the Official ethnological collection assembled by Sir William MacGregor (1846–1919) during his time as Administrator (1888–1894) and Lieutenant-Governor (1895–1898) of British New Guinea. This assemblage, comprising nearly 11000 items, was transferred to the Queensland Museum between 1892 and 1898 through eight consignments. Significant gaps in the corporate history of the documentation for this collection seriously limit its current use. Several factors have contributed to this situation, including the initial registration (1892–1898) of the assemblage which was neither sequential nor without error, poorly documented dispersals, and a twentieth century re-registration process. The latter procedure entangled the assemblage with multiple, unrelated collections and transformed it into a different entity: the MacGregor Collection. This chapter charts the complicated registration history of the Official collection in the museum explaining how this unique assemblage became entwined with unrelated collections. It uses primary registration data to construct a comprehensive list of contents for the Official collection. The detailed analysis of the registration history of the Official collection shows that in order to obtain accurate information about historic collections, it is essential to consult primary documentation and registers rather than rely on later sources, such as secondary registers or computer databases based solely on them.

□ history of collections, museum documentation, ethnography, forensic analysis, Sir William MacGregor, British New Guinea

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INTRODUCTION

As part of his wider responsibilities in British New Guinea as Administrator and later Lieutenant Governor (1888–1898), Sir William MacGregor made extensive collections of natural history and ethnology (Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume; Philp, Chapter 3 this volume; Quinnell 2000; Torrence et al. 2020). He referred to the ethnological component of the assemblage as the ‘British New Guinea Collection ... the official collection of this Colony’ (MacGregor 1897). The transfer of ‘official collections’ of natural history and ethnological items made during the course of MacGregor’s administration of British New Guinea to the museum was approved by the Governor of Queensland in 1889 (Quinnell 2000: 83). Overall, nearly 11 000 artefacts were forwarded to the Queensland Museum (QM) between October 1892 and October 1898. The history of registration for the ethnological component of the assemblage, which MacGregor described in official correspondence and reports as the ‘official’ (hereafter Official) collection, is the focus of this Chapter.

MacGregor’s motivations for making an ethnological collection and the history of subsequent repatriation to Papua New Guinea between 1979 and 1992 have been well documented by Quinnell (2000; cf. Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume; Knowles et al., Chapter 15 this volume). This Chapter examines a further aspect of the biography of this important assemblage, namely the history of the Official collection in QM. It contributes new information about the assemblage, its curation in the museum, and its subsequent transformation into the ‘MacGregor Collection’ through a process of re-registration in the twentieth century.

One of the aims of the Australian Research Council funded *Excavating MacGregor* project was ‘to re-assemble and re-connect’ MacGregor’s private and public ethnological collections which are now dispersed through three Australian museums and six overseas museums (see Torrence et al. 2020; Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume). Based on previous research undertaken by Michael Quinnell (Curator of Anthropology at QM 1968–2008), it

was evident that in order for the project to proceed with analysis of the Official collection, an accurate list of contents was required. In conversation with the research team, Quinnell had highlighted the immense difficulties involved in unravelling the long and convoluted history of the collection and the current state of the collection management system of the assemblage. Indeed, it was clear that the current QM collection management system (Vernon) does not accurately represent the original holdings of the Official collection because it is based on flawed secondary (twentieth century) rather than primary (nineteenth century) registration data.

The secondary (re-registration) process of the Official collection from 1915 is an important episode in the biography of the assemblage. Its purpose was to bring Official collection material into a new register: *Register of the “MacGregor” Collection of New Guinea Ethnology (MacGregor Register)* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) (Quinnell 2000: 93–95). This document, usually referred to as the *MacGregor Register*, has been shown to be a poor record of the Official collection. To begin with, the register omits more than 2500 items which were either distributed as duplicates or exchanged out between 1894 and 1910. It also contains more than 1000 items from multiple unrelated collections as well as an additional further c.350 items which cannot be linked to the Official assemblage because of illegible or missing registration numbers. Multiple errors were also made in recording the localities from which items originated. Therefore, neither the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) nor Vernon provide an accurate summary of the Official collection.

The research team decided that the best way forward was to analyse the history of curation of the Official collection and identify the errors and confusions that had occurred. This Chapter also describes the attempt to recover original information and, as far as possible, use these data to compile an accurate list of the objects that MacGregor sent to the Queensland Museum between 1892 and 1898. It is argued that primary sources, such as nineteenth-century museum registers and archival records,

provide the key to making a reliable contents list for the Official collection. These are used to chart the complex registration history and curation of the assemblage (1892–1898). Three defining phases or moments in the biography of the collection in the museum are carefully documented and examined: initial registration (1892–1898); dispersals (1894–1910); and re-registration (from 1915). Each is carefully documented and, where applicable, an attempt is made to explain how elements of the collection became entangled with unrelated collections. The Chapter demonstrates that to obtain accurate information about historic museum collections and their contents, it is essential to consult primary documentation and registers, rather than rely on secondary source material, such as secondary registers or computer databases based on secondary sources.

DOCUMENTATION RELEVANT TO THE OFFICIAL COLLECTION

Documentation relating to the Official collection is spread through a diverse range of primary and secondary sources that include registers and archival correspondence. Table 1 provides a summary of the registers which have been used to document the history of the Official collection in QM (i.e. receipt, primary registration, dispersals and re-registration). A review of inwards and outwards correspondence in the Queensland Museum Archives pertaining to the period of MacGregor's tenure in British New Guinea (1888–1898) was also undertaken to ensure that relevant archival correspondence had not been missed through an earlier survey¹. A summary of correspondence relevant to the Official collection based on this work appears in Appendix 2 (this volume).

As Table 1 shows, the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899) provides a record of the date that shipments were received from MacGregor and/or his agents as well as the inwards governmental transfer numbers subsequently assigned to each consignment. This register also documents any later outwards transfers, exchanges or loans of

Official collection material between 1894 and 1899. The subsequent registration of the assemblage is contained within the two volumes of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). As it represents the primary registration record of the assemblage, the latter register was assumed to be the most reliable and accurate source for establishing the contents of the Official collection.

Dispersal of objects from the Official collection occurred from 1894. Normal museum practice was that dispersals be assigned an outwards exchange or transfer number, although this procedure was not always followed. These numbers were usually recorded in the relevant column (Exchange or Transfer) of the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899) and a record was made against the relevant register entries in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). Outwards exchanges were also documented in the *Exchange (OUT) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884–1907), although the registration numbers for objects were not always recorded. The selection and distribution of several thousand 'duplicates' from the Official collection in 1897 is chronicled through the register known as the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898). A second group of duplicates selected in 1898 was recorded but never distributed. Based on entries in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899), the distribution of duplicates in 1897 were treated as outwards transfers.

The majority of the Official collection remaining in QM at the beginning of the twentieth century was subsequently re-registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). This register was thoroughly scrutinised because this process has led to the entanglement of the Official collection with material from different sources. The recognition that objects from different acquisitions had been mixed together highlighted how important it was to establish exactly what constituted the Official collection and to be able to separate it from other Papuan collections held by QM.

Table 1 shows that some items from the Official collection were also re-registered into either the *Register of Ethnology* (E Register) (Queensland Museum 1911–ongoing) or the *Register of New Guinea Ethnology* (also known as *N.G.E Register*) (Queensland Museum 1914–1966). These items were found in the museum with no previous registration history. While most of these items have been since re-registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) there are some exceptions.

The process of charting the history of the Official collection based on analyses of archival correspondence and museum registers uncovered various irregularities during initial registration (1892–1898), subsequent dispersals (particularly in 1897), and later re-registration (1915–1920). Occurring during formative phases in the biography of the Official collection, these anomalies were compounded over time, leading to later confusion about the original composition of this historically significant assemblage. Following the path that the Official collection took through QM highlights these problems and reveals the complexities of dealing with museum records from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, long before procedures were standardised, let alone computerised.

RECEIPT AND REGISTRATION (1892–1898)

Queensland Museum archival records indicate that MacGregor transferred eight lots of ethnological material to the museum between 1892 and 1898. Items from this assemblage became known as the Official collection and were often shipped together with natural history specimens. The receipt of such collections was usually (but not always) noted in the museum's *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899). This register shows that consignments of ethnology and natural history received from MacGregor were considered inwards governmental transfers and therefore each was assigned an inwards transfer number. Table 2 provides a list of the transfer numbers relevant to the shipments

containing ethnology (Transfers: 46, 47, 52, 55, 60, 68, 70 and 74) and records the dates that the consignments were received and the total number of objects they contained. Table 3 contextualises the ethnology material received within the broader framework of all the consignments (natural history and ethnology) which QM received from MacGregor between 1889 and 1898 and details the transfer numbers assigned to each.

Having identified the relevant transfer numbers associated with the Official collection, the subsequent registration of this material was then tracked through the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). Close study of this register shows that the registration process of some consignments was occasionally interrupted by re-registrations of earlier Papuan collections held by QM. Such breaks in registration seem to have caused some objects from the Official collection to be set aside and, consequently, lose their association with MacGregor. A table summarising the contents of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) highlights the complex history of this documentary source (Table 4).

The first consignment of ethnological artefacts forwarded by MacGregor arrived at QM on 25 October 1892. A single line entry in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899) marks the receipt of this collection which was subsequently assigned Transfer 46 (Figure 1). Since more than three years had passed since MacGregor had negotiated a home for artefacts gathered under his administration of British New Guinea, the accumulating collections of cultural material in Port Moresby had reached staggering proportions.² When the ethnological portion of Transfer 46 was fully registered, it was reported to number 2875 items (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings*, Trustees Minutes (Queensland Museum 1876–1907):2 December 1892).³ Curator Charles de Vis later described the 1892 collection as 'comprising all kinds of weapons, tools, dresses, trinkets, domestic appliances, toys, musical instruments, raw materials, ... food bowls, spears, shields, and canoe carvings' (de Vis 1893) (Figure 2).

Transfer 46 appears in the first volume of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) between registration numbers ER8700–9219 and ER9230–11586.

The process of registering nearly 3000 objects would present challenges for any contemporary museum let alone a nineteenth-century institution with few

qualified staff. To make matters worse, it seems no list of contents accompanied the material. Undeterred by the magnitude of the task, de Vis managed to register the whole collection within six weeks with help from the museum ‘collectors’ (likely Kendall Broadbent and C.J. Wild) (de Vis 1893:2).⁴ There is also evidence that MacGregor himself may have provided some

TABLE. 1. Queensland Museum Registers relevant to the Official Collection

Register	Period covered	Remarks
Primary registration 1892-1898		
<i>Donor Register (1887-1899)</i> <i>Donor Register (1899-1909)</i> <i>Donor Register (1910)</i>	1887-1899 1899-1909 1910	Used to trace the initial receipt of natural history and ethnological consignments from MacGregor as well as any subsequent outwards exchanges or dispersals. The register covers a broad range of museum activity: Donations, Collections made for the museum, Purchases, Exchanges, Transfers and Loans
<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea), c.1889-1910, vols 1-2</i>	c.1889-1910	Contains the primary registration record of the Official collection. Also includes other Papuan collections acquired by the museum between 1881 and 1892, some of which had been previously registered in the <i>General Catalogue, 1883-1887</i>
<i>Exchange (OUT) Register, 1884-1907; Exchange (IN) Register; 1884-1907</i>	1884-1909	Documents outwards exchanges of Official collection objects from 1894-1909. Items QM received in return for outwards exchanges are documented through the inwards exchange register
<i>Ethnological Control Register 1897-1898</i>	1897-1898	Commenced 2 June 1897 to record the selection and distribution of ‘duplicates’ from the Official collection. Each object was assigned a ‘cn’ number (control number). Most of the cn numbers were subsequently entered in the <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> in red ink against the relevant registration numbers
Secondary registration 1911-2001		
<i>Register of Ethnology (E Register) 1911-ongoing</i>	1911-ongoing	One of several new registers introduced in 1911. Scope is Australian (excluding Queensland) and Foreign Ethnology. The E Register contains items found in the museum with no previous registration history (NPR). Includes some items from the Official collection, the majority of which have been re-registered into the <i>MacGregor Register</i> .
<i>Register of New Guinea Ethnology (also known as N.G.E Register) 1914-1966</i>	1914-1966	Contains NPR material, some likely from MacGregor consignments.
<i>Register of the “MacGregor” Collection of New Guinea Ethnology (MacGregor Register) 1915-2001</i>	1915-2001	Secondary registration (re-registration) of Official collection material remaining in QM, from 1915-2001. Includes both ethnology and natural history specimens. Represents the re-registration of items previously registered in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> c.1889-1910. These items were on display when the re-registration process began in 1915. Register contains no record of more than 2500 items which were either exchanged or transferred out between 1894 and 1909. More than 1000 items not related to the Official collection were also accessioned into the <i>MacGregor Register</i> in error. Also included were objects without legible registration numbers. A few Torres Strait items appear in the register (some relating to a collection deposited by Prof. A.C. Haddon in 1889)

TABLE. 2. Consignments from MacGregor which included ethnology 1892-1898

Date received	Transfer No. (assigned by QM)	No. of ethnological items in shipment	Notes
25 October 1892	46	2 970	First shipment containing ethnology
c.4 March 1893	47	129	
1 August 1894	52	1900	
c.1 August 1894	52?	90	Various unsourced objects (including 63 bark cloths); some with specific localities indicating a connection with MacGregor consignments. Refer to discussion in this chapter and Appendix 2 for reasons why they are considered to be part of the Official collection
11 January 1896	55	442	
c.11 January 1896	55?	35	Whip-like rods (34) and another object (14868#) with no source details. Whip-like rods probably represent those originally registered 14362 (Transfer 55) but not found.
1 March 1897	60	4 315	
29 December 1897	68	499	
11 February 1898	70	2	
10 October 1898	74	505	
c.10 October 1898	74?	72	Represent items not marked "T74" at top of page but appears to be a simple recording omission by de Vis. See discussion in this chapter.

TABLE. 3. Consignments of Ethnology and Natural History specimens received from MacGregor 1888-1898.

Transfer No.	Date	Contents	Reference	Remarks
T32 (in)	31 July 1889	Birds	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899: 40)	
T33 (in)	28 March 1890	Miscellaneous collection	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899: 54)	
T34 (in)	10 May 1890	Skins of mammals and birds	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899: 56)	T34 is annotated 'Vid. Transfer No. 33' in <i>Donor Register</i> . It is unclear if this Transfer existed (there are no entries in the <i>MacGregor Register</i> (1915-2001) for 'T34')
T35 (in)	27 August 1890	Mammals, birds, reptiles	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899: 60)	T35 appears out of sequence in the <i>Donor Register</i> . Moreover, T35 had already been assigned on 21 February 1890 (see p. 52 of <i>Donor Register</i> - gold medal from Melbourne Exhibition Commissioners).
T36 (in)	3 July 1890	Mammals, Reptiles and insects	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899: 59)	

TABLE. 3. cont. Consignments of Ethnology and Natural History specimens received from MacGregor 1888-1898.

Transfer No.	Date	Contents	Reference	Remarks
Ex100 (in)	26 May 1891	Reptiles, insects and fish	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:70); Exchanges (IN) Register (1884-1907:126)	Consignment erroneously recorded as an inwards exchange rather than as an inwards transfer
T43 (in)	16 October 1891	Zoology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:76)	
T45 (in)	7 September 1892	Birds and insects	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:93)	
T46 (in)	25 October 1892	Zoology and Ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:95)	Represents the first ethnological consignment
T47 (in)	c. 4 March 1893	Ethnology and natural history	MacGregor 1893; <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c. 1889-1910, vol. 1:116-121; 'T47' indicated as source). <i>Minute Book</i> (7 April 1893).	No record in <i>Donor Register</i> relating to the receipt of T47 from MacGregor. T47 was previously assigned on p.95 of the <i>Donor Register</i> to a map from British New Guinea, from the Surveyor General's dept. Some of the contents of T47 match those in a letter from MacGregor to de Vis, 4 March 1893). De Vis subsequently reported receipt of a collection of 'Natural history specimens and objects of aboriginal manufacture' to the Board of Trustees on 7 April 1893 (<i>Minute Book</i> , 7 April 1893).
T51 (in)	4 May 1894	Zoology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:115)	
T52 (in)	1 August 1894	Zoology and Ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:117)	
T55 (in)	11 January 1896	Ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:134)	
T58 (in)	18 August 1896	Birds from Boirave & Mt Scratchley	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:143)	
T59 (in)	30 December 1896	Birds, reptiles & insects, & c.	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:145)	
T60 (in)	1 March 1897	Ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:149)	
T63 (in)	30 July 1897	Birds & Spirit Specimens	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:155)	
T68 (in)	29 December 1897	Birds and Ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:160)	
T70 (in)	11 February 1898	Insects, shells, 1 box of charms	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:161)	
T74 (in)	10 October 1898	Curios and birds	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-1899:169)	

TABLE. 4. Summary of contents of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) relating to the Official collection and other Papuan collections. Transfer numbers are indicated where applicable.

Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Vol. no.	Transfer No.	Year of Transfer	Remarks	Additional notes
7862-8688	1	N/A	N/A	7862-8688 comprise initial registrations or re-registrations of objects from at least 21 different collections received by the museum between 1881-1890	Many objects from range 7862-8688 were later accessioned into the <i>MacGregor Register</i> (1915-2001) in error
8689-8699	1	Pre-MacGregor	N/A	Numbers never allocated	No entries
8700-9219	1	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	First MacGregor consignment	Duplicated numbers (8074-8077), previously allocated to some clubs (see page 11 of the register).
9220-9229	1	N/A	N/A	Numbers missed in sequence	Omitted numbers
9230-11586	1	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	MacGregor consignment	
11587-11714	1	Transfer 47	c. 4 March 1893	MacGregor consignment	
11715-11781	1	Pre-MacGregor	N/A	Re-registrations of material from at least 5 different collections which the museum acquired between 1881 and 1890	Not associated with MacGregor consignments
11782-13475	1	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	MacGregor consignment	
13476-14062	1	Pre-MacGregor	N/A	Arrows, not marked T52 in register (pencil annotation 'T52' on some pages is of a much later date, probably c.1914-35)	Arrows (except 13931-2) within range 13476-14062 were erroneously assumed to be Official collection. Some were inadvertently distributed as MacGregor 'duplicates' in 1897. The arrows appear to be those recorded as surplus '8/94' at the back of the register (volume 1).
14063	1			Entry crossed through in register and appears later on in Volume 2 (see no.14294)	Appears to be a simple error (not de Vis' handwriting); staff member not realising that volume 2 had already been commenced. Same handwriting appears in association with later re-registration of this object (see 14294 in volume 2)
14063-14186	2	Pre-MacGregor		More surplus arrows re-registered.	Associated with various pre-Macgregor collections which QM received between 1881 and 1890
14187-14250	2	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	MacGregor consignment. 'T52' clearly marked half -way down p.004 in Register (volume 2). Shows re-commencement of registration of Transfer 52	Continuation of registration of Transfer 52

TABLE. 4. cont. Summary of contents of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) relating to the Official collection and other Papuan collections. Transfer numbers are indicated where applicable.

Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Vol. no.	Transfer No.	Year of Transfer	Remarks	Additional notes
14251-14296	2	Pre-MacGregor		Re-registration of miscellaneous objects from several pre-MacGregor collections	Several objects in this range later given MAC numbers in error. Numbers 14282-14296 later duplicated
14297-14358	2	Transfer 52?	?	Bark cloths, no source details but possibly represent a package from T52 opened and set aside	14297-14358 numbers duplicated later on in register
14359-14377	2	Probably MacGregor		Localities associated with some items in this range (e.g. Trobriands and Laughlan Is) are only associated with MacGregor consignments T46 & T52.	14359-14377 numbers duplicated later on in register
14378-14381	2	Likely MacGregor; one pre-MacGregor		14381 is pre-MacGregor (T28); rest are from localities associated with MacGregor	
14282-14293	2	Pre-Macgregor (T28) and probably MacGregor (associated with Transfers 52 or 55)	1894 or 1896	4 baskets from 'Duau'; locality suggests that even though not marked T52 or T55 in register they are part of MacGregor consignments	14282-14381 duplicated number series begins here. 14282 should have been 14383. Several items (14284-86 are T28; not MacGregor) "Duau" locality only associated with MacGregor transfers. Consider the baskets (Duau) within this range MacGregor
14294-14309	2	Purchase 139	23 July 1895	Purchased from Isles, Love & Co,	14294 is the same object previously allocated 14063 previously (see last page of volume 1; but crossed through)
14310-14689	2	Transfer 55	1 January 1896	MacGregor consignment. 'T55' clearly marked three-quarters of way down on p. 11 of register and continues throughout to 14689	Within Transfer 55 are 14310-14381, a series of duplicated numbers (see above). Numbers 14683-14689 – paddles-are crossed through (some are re-registrations of paddles already registered) but 14683-5 seem to exist as well. A further entry for 14683 after 14689 is crossed through. Two baskets within this range (14375-76) require further investigation to ascertain if they are part of T55.
14684	2	Tryon	5 March 1896 (Donation no. 7782)		14684 is a duplicated number

TABLE. 4. cont. Summary of contents of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) relating to the Official collection and other Papuan collections. Transfer numbers are indicated where applicable.

Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Vol. no.	Transfer No.	Year of Transfer	Remarks	Additional notes
14685-14868	2	Purchase 146	16 March 1896	Hartmann collection	Hartmann collection arrived after Transfer 60 (MacGregor consignment) but was accessioned before it; Later got mixed up with Official collection and some items dispersed
14869-18671	2	Transfer 60	1 March 1897		Beginning and end clearly marked T60 in register as well as pages in between. Ditto marks for T60 for 18671 not visible but likely obscured by the addition of the later MAC number in red ink
18672-18690	2	Pre-Macgregor	Various dates	Includes some Murray Is, Torres Strait arrows	Some later assigned MAC numbers in error
18691-18717	2	Likely re-registration of group of objects (hair-whips) from Transfer 55		Probably hair whips from Merrane, Cloudy Bay district (part of T55) but later re-accessioned here without any data	De Vis requested more information on this group of objects in his report to the collection assigned T55; possibly they were set aside and their association with MacGregor forgotten about. There is no other QM collection to which they could be belong at this period
18718-18719	2	Pre-Macgregor?		No data	18718-9 assigned MAC numbers at a later date; no evidence they are part of MacGregor consignments
18720-18754	2	Transfer 60	1 March 1897	Clearly marked "T60" at top of p.138, from 18720-18754	
18754-19157	2	Transfer 68	29 December 1897	MacGregor consignment	Clearly marked "T68" except for a group of arrows on p. 146 (18989-19019 which are marked "T60" (probably an error and should have been marked T68)
19158-19159	2	Transfer 70	11 February 1898	MacGregor consignment	
19160	2	Mrs Lenneberg donation		No data	
19161-19700	2	Transfer 74	10 October 1898	Last MacGregor consignment	Two pages not marked "T74" (19594-19665) (probably a recording error and should have been marked T74)
19701-19704	2	Purchase 332	23 March 1901	Sir JR Dickson estate	
19705-19728	2	Purchase 341	11 June 1901	Isles, Love & Co.	Some articles later assigned MAC numbers in error

TABLE 4. cont. Summary of contents of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) relating to the Official collection and other Papuan collections. Transfer numbers are indicated where applicable.

Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Vol. no.	Transfer No.	Year of Transfer	Remarks	Additional notes
19729	2	Purchase 341	12 June 1901	Glenn	
19730-19765	2	Donation 11056 [11058]	1 August 1901	Captain FR Barton	Incorrect Donation no. recorded in register [D11056=D11058]. Some articles later assigned MAC numbers in error
19766-19770	2	Exchange 219 (in)	10 August 1901	Sir H M Nelson	Ex 219 (in): 7 shields; 1 wooden sword and 9 boomerangs (Exchanges Register (in)). Wooden sword is 19767; rest of numbers do not match description of objects above and possibly are not associated with Ex219 (in)
19773-19774	2	Geo Soc Exp		Previous MacGregor consignments?	Entry in curator Charles de Vis' handwriting; described as "Rough bark cloth probably mentioned An Rep British New Guinea 1889-90 p.89" Locality entered is "Amoamo-M Yule". Possibly represent Official collection items found later on in the collection by de Vis. Currently missing in QM collections
19775	2	Donation 11056 [11058]	1 August 1901	Captain FR Barton	
19776-19794	2	Donation 11206	4 November 1901	Captain FR Barton	Some items assigned MAC numbers in error
19795-19818	2	Donation 13109	12 July 1906	Mrs AM Masters	
19819	2	Donation 13747	11 October 1907	Master Frank Rickard	
19820-19829	2	Purchase 848	15 June 1908	H Phillips	Possibly Henry Phillips, Chief Engineer, SS <i>Merrie England</i> (8/8/1889-?)?
19830-19836	2	Donation 14069	29 June 1908	P S Lindeman	African material; crossed out and transferred to another register
19830	2	Donation 14785	6 Dec 1909	D R McConnell	Fishing net
19831	2	R6197 (old General catalogue no.)	c. April 1886	RGSA 1885 Exp	R6197 = gourd from RGSA 1885 expedition
19832	2	Exchange 289 (In)	18 August 1910	H Phillips	Possibly Henry Phillips, Chief Engineer, SS <i>Merrie England</i> (8/8/1889-?)
19833-19840	2				No entries made.

DATE	Boats	Gifts	Purchases	Exhibs	Transf.	Lot	NAME	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	LOCALITY	095	Serial	Number
October 20 th	7410						Brughart, F. G.	Soloncurry	Fossil fish	Coasts E. of Glenelg			
" 17 th			159				Wild, C. J.	Museum	Beetles & Ants	Glenelg			
" 20 th	7411						D. Davidson, Esq.	Glenelg	Birds	Glenelg			
" 21 st	7412						Under Secretary, Dept. of Agric.		Publication	on Australia			
" 21 st	7413						Borcham, J. W.	Dunwich	Insects	Stradbroke Id.			
" 22 nd						49	Wallmann, H. F.	Suedel Water St	Rockslides				
" 22 nd	7414						Indian Museum	Calcutta	Publication	on India			
" 22 nd	7415						Royal Society of Tasmania		Publication	on Tasmania			
" 23 rd					46		MacGregor, Sir W.	B. N. Guinea	Zoology & Ethnology	British N. Guinea			
" 26 th	7416						Manf. J. H.	Bundaberg	Prod. of Mollusca	Coast off Bundaberg			
" 26 th	7417						Muston, A.	Sussex Street	Ethnological	Queensland			
" 25 th	7418						Dept. of Mines	Biological Station	Publication	on N.S. Wales			

FIG. 1. This page in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899:95) shows the receipt of the first collection of ethnology from MacGregor in October 1892. A single-line entry records the receipt of the collection as Transfer 46 (see column titled 'Transfer'). Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.



FIG. 2. Canoe Ornament, Upper Fly River, collected by Sir William MacGregor, c. January 1890: ER10745 (MAC4487) Queensland Museum Photography. Peter Waddington.



FIG. 3. A group of clubs arranged on top of two crates, one belonging to the government steamer, 'S.S. *Merrie England*', c.1890. Rev. George Brown Collection Australian Museum, AMS318/V06862. Photo ©Australian Museum.

assistance in overseeing the unpacking and rough cataloguing of the collection during his time in Brisbane on official business (de Vis 1893:2).

Cataloguing such a large group of objects in less than six weeks was a huge accomplishment. To begin with, objects needed to be unpacked from crates or other storage containers (Figure 3). Each artefact was subsequently assigned an identifying number (i.e. registration number, hereafter referred to with an ER prefix⁵), which, together with a short description, measurements, and any locality data derived from field labels, were entered in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) (Figure 4). A close look at the register shows that de Vis was responsible for filling in these details. At the same time, registration numbers had to be applied to objects in some way. Small paper tags sufficed for most bags, body ornaments and coverings, although some grass skirts had their registration number written in red paint/ink on small, rectangular-shaped metal (zinc) tags which were usually affixed with short pieces of twisted wire. It is not clear when these metal tags were introduced because some are definitely associated with duplicate selection procedures in 1897 (see Davies et al., Chapter 5 this volume).

In contrast, lime spatulas had their registration number stamped into the wood, a method which de Vis had introduced in c.1890 prior to the arrival of the first instalment of the Official collection.⁶ For larger wooden objects like drums, clubs, bowls and shields, thick red paint was used to apply the registration number (see Figure 2A Davies et al., Chapter 5 this volume, for an example of the practice). The use of the unsightly red paint to number objects is a significant marker of MacGregor consignments (especially Transfer 46) and was eventually phased out.

At first glance, registration of the first instalment of the Official collection (Transfer 46) looks to be relatively sequential and largely without error. However, a closer look at the register reveals that there were some glitches. For instance, there was duplication of registration numbers (ER8074–8077) previously assigned to objects from other collections.⁷ Ten registration numbers were also missed entirely in the sequence (ER9220–9229). A handful of objects also appear to have been omitted (see discussion below).

A second group of 129 ethnological artefacts arrived at the museum in March–April 1893. MacGregor had informed de Vis of the impending arrival of the consignment, which included natural history

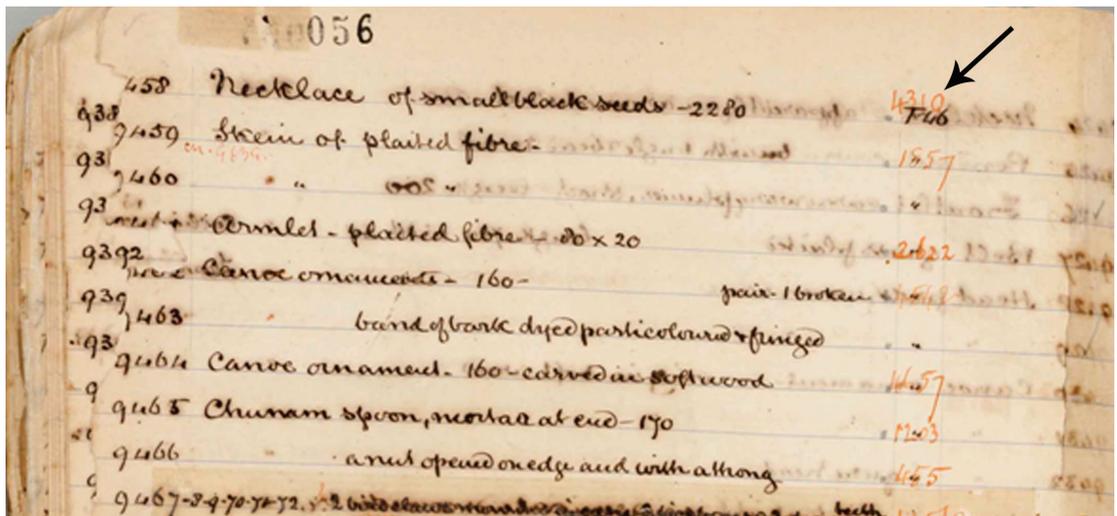


FIG. 4. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum, c.1889–1910, Volume 1:56). The numbers at the far left are registration numbers assigned to objects (e.g. 9465). Transfer numbers are seen at the top of each page (see arrow), in this instance 'T46' (Transfer 46). Blanks to the right of this column indicate that the object had no accompanying locality information. Red ink numbers are 'MAC' numbers assigned to objects from 1915. Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

specimens and ethnological material (MacGregor 1893). De Vis subsequently reported receipt of the mixed collection to the Board of Trustees on 7 April 1893 (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes* (Queensland Museum 1876–1907):7 April 1893). Despite this, various record-keeping irregularities occurred with documenting this assemblage through museum registers. Firstly, receipt of the consignment was never recorded in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899). This procedural error was compounded by another, which resulted in the ethnological component being erroneously assigned Transfer 47 (see *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910, vol. 1:116–121). This inwards governmental transfer number had been already allocated to a map from British New Guinea (*Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899:95)).⁸ A junior staff member, Arthur Preston, was probably responsible for the series of errors which occurred.⁹ De Vis does not seem to have been aware of the problems, perhaps because he was otherwise preoccupied with dealing with a set of instructions from MacGregor regarding the scientific specimens (MacGregor 1893).¹⁰ Transfer 47 is in the first volume of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) between registration numbers ER11587 and ER11714.

More serious problems arose during the registration of the third consignment from MacGregor in August 1894 (Transfer 52). Since a break in the registration process occurred, Transfer 52 was spread across the two volumes of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) (ER11782–13475; ER14187–14250). De Vis' subsequent report (30 August 1894) on the shipment is incomplete because he noted that it was 'impossible to render a detailed account of so great a number of objects' (de Vis 1894a:98–99). Table 5 summarises the contents of de Vis' 1894 report. The categories in the table are those which de Vis assigned in his report: 'Domestic Utensils'; 'Dress and Ornaments'; 'Food Supply'; 'Weapons'; 'Sundry Arts and Tools'; 'Luxuries, Amusements, & Superstitions' and 'Navigation'. Likewise, the object names used in the table are a direct transcription from the report. A tally of items mentioned by de Vis

in his report totals about 1620 items but registration data indicates that Transfer 52 comprised around 1900 items. This finding is hardly surprising if one considers de Vis' statement that he could not detail everything in the report. Nevertheless, the existence of duplicated registration numbers relating to some bags, food stirrers, drums and carved boards for houses or canoe ornaments, show that registration errors were occurring more frequently than before. The duplicated registration numbers are listed in the 'Notes' column of Table 5.

A closer look at the register entries situated either side of the break in registration of Transfer 52 raise further questions about the reliability of de Vis' 1894 report and highlight the difficulties involved in determining what constitutes Official collection material in the museum register. One group of objects, comprising 710 arrows and 1 bow from earlier (pre-MacGregor) collections (ER13476–14186) requires further explanation.¹¹ These objects filled a break in the registration of Transfer 52. They represent an attempt by de Vis to standardise recording by bringing all the museum's Papuan collections into the one register. A small annotation at the back of the register about 'surplus' items awaiting registration as at '8/94' likely contributed to later confusion about the provenance of these objects as they were later erroneously assumed to be part of Transfer 52. Close scrutiny of the localities associated with arrows (ER13476–14185) and bow (ER14186) suggest that the vast majority are those described as 'surplus' in August 1894. However, a few arrows originate from localities only associated with the Official collection suggesting that in 1894 there was some mixing-up of Official collection and non-Official collection arrows.¹² For example, a 'curious two-pronged arrow from the Purari River' mentioned in de Vis' 1894 report was mistakenly accessioned within the range of non-Official collection arrows.¹³ A second round of re-registration of arrows (and axe blades) from earlier collections just after Transfer 52 (ER14251–14296) further compounded the issue. Included in this last group was one axe blade (ER14287), from Collingwood Bay, a locality only associated with MacGregor consignments.

TABLE. 5. Contents of Transfer 52 determined from de Vis (1894a).

Category (De Vis 1894a)	No. (De Vis 1894a)	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c.1889- 1910) Vol. 1 or Vol. 2	No. found	Notes
Domestic utensils				
Wooden Food Bowls and Platters	95	11784-11873; 14204; 14209-210; 14246-250	95	
Brown Pottery	22	12246-260; 14197-8; 14242-45; 14418	21	One not found
Pot Stands	3	13120; 14233	2	One not found
Cocoon Water Bottles	24	12783-87; 12789-90; 12793; 12795-98; 12800-804; 13047	18?	5 missing
Mats of pandanus leaf	2	13121-22	2	
Baskets	8	12900-906; 13119	7	One missing?
Bags of mat and sennit work	46	12675; 12678; 12693; 12715-17; 12725-39; 12776; 12811; 12814; 12895; 12925; 12952-53; 13008-22; 14220; 14230	44	13014 duplicated
Razors, of obsidian	2	13319-20	2	
Food Stirrers, with long handles	15	13132-150 [18]; 13307-09 [3]; 13310 [2, number duplicated]; 13311-18 [8]	31	
Dress and Ornaments				
Women's Dresses	15	12907? [1]; 13151-162 [11]; 14205-206 [2]; 14232 [1]	12	
Corsets of Coix seed on netted fabric	8	12469; 12505-11	8	
A cap of similar material, very elaborate	1	12512;	1	
Widow's chemise of interlace braid	1	13083;	1	
Men's Head-dresses	316	Too many to list but seems to be 582 not 316	582	Difference may be that bundles of necklaces and similar things were counted as single pieces rather than as multiples
Food Supply				
Fishing Nets	25	12472-73 [2]; 13006-7 [2]; 13053-55 [3]; 13058 [1]; 13171 [1]; 13197 [1]; 13321-335 [15]	25	
Fish Trap	1	13194;	1	
Shark Hooks	5	12289; 12291-93		
Sago Mattocks	2	Possibly among the Food stirrers above	Not found	
Weapons				
Bows	7	13285; 13292; 13302-06	7	
Arrows	93	13204-13266 marked T52 [62]; 13267-84 [17]; 13294-13301 [8]	95	13267-84 and 13294-13301 are all on same page of the register (p. 167) are marked T32 rather than T52. This appears to be a simple error of recording
Spears	113	13336-46 [10]; 13359-13456 [97]; 14191-196 [6];	113	

TABLE 5. cont. Contents of Transfer 52 determined from de Vis (1894a).

Category (De Vis 1894a)	No. (De Vis 1894a)	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c.1889- 1910) Vol. 1 or Vol. 2	No. found	Notes
Clubs	86	12194-12244 [50]; 12214 duplicated [1]; 12261-12288 [27]; 12268 duplicated [1]; 12302 [1]; 13457-60 [4 club heads]; 13470 [1]; 14189-14190 [2]	87	Includes 4 club heads
Shields	43	12439-61 (24) includes 12440a; 12779 [1]; 14224-5 (2); dance shields 13352-54 [3] and 14207-08 [2]; carved boards 12313-4 [2]	See notes	Appears to be an error when counting shields in 1894. 27 shields found but it is possible that de Vis also included dance shields (5) which were included in a separate category later on. If the dance shields and two carved boards are added then total would be 34 (perhaps written as 43?)
Swords	29	11874-11899 [25]; 12304 [1]; 14199-14201 [3]	29	
Man-catchers	2	14187-88	2	Kerepunu
Gauntlets for bowman, of rattan	not given	14214; 14218	2?	
Daggers	3	12381-2; 14213	3	
Slings	2	13077-78	2	
Beheading Knives of Bamboo	3	12399-12401	3	
Sundry Arts and Tools				
Cloth Boards	3	11900-11903 [4]; 11904-11909 (mallets)=6; 12514-15 [2]	12	
Netting needles	5	12395-98; 12939	5	
Fibre samples	31	Various examples found, including cordage; difficult to list as some samples of twine were cut in one, two, three or four pieces in 1897 for distribution as duplicates	31	
Braid and Sennit Work, samples	20	Various examples found, including cordage; difficult to list as some samples of twine were cut in one, two, three or four pieces in 1897 for distribution as duplicates	20	
Adzes and Axes	296		303	303 total may include hafts which got separated from blades
Grindstones	2	11782-3	2	
Shell cutter	2	13065-66	2	
Rasps	3	12898-99; 13057	3	
Drills	2	13079-80	2	
Luxuries, Amusements, and Superstitions				
Lime gourds with stopples	11	12709-14; 12799; 13126-29; 14237-38 (stopples)	13	Includes some stopples. De Vis may have omitted to count stopples which he registered in the second volume of the register

TABLE. 5. cont. Contents of Transfer 52 determined from de Vis (1894a).

Category (De Vis 1894a)	No. (De Vis 1894a)	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c.1889- 1910) Vol. 1 or Vol. 2	No. found	Notes
Lime-spoons	67	12318-368; 12492-12502; 12503-4; 12940; 14202; 14239-40	68	12501-2 considered lime-spoons by de Vis
Betel Trays, of cocoanut	2	11872-3	2	
Mortars and Pestles	6	12375-77; 12941-49	More than 6	There are more mortar and pestles than those which de Vis counted.
Tobacco pipes	3	12392-94	3	
Dancing Shields	7	13352-54; 14207-8	5	Two missing
Drums	33	12407-38; 12513; 14203	34	One extra drum found
Battle Charms	9	12383-89; 12471; 12827	9	
Penates	7	12369-74; 13081	7	
Carvings for Canoe and House decoration	37	14211; 14215-16; 14223	43	Extra six found may be because 12301 and 13349 registration numbers were duplicated and those four (14211; 14215-16; 14223) in second volume of the register were perhaps not counted.
Navigation				
Models of Canoes	8	13198-13203; 13350-51	8	
Balers	2	12405-6	2	
Pulley Blocks	2	13074-75	2	
Paddles	39	13132; 13139-42; 13172-93	26	

Several factors probably contributed to the inadvertent errors that led to the mixing of Official and unrelated collections in 1894. In the previous year an economic downturn had forced the museum to retrench several staff members. This reduction in staff, together with the fact that some of those who retained their jobs had their positions redefined, must have impacted heavily on core museum business. Only four staff members remained in August 1894 when the consignment later designated Transfer 52 arrived at the museum: Charles de Vis (curator), Arthur Preston (clerk), Kendall Broadbent (attendant, previously a paid collector) and C.J. Wild (messenger, formerly paid collector and later acting curator, 1905–1911). It is therefore hardly surprising that the registration of Transfer 52 went awry.

Noticeable changes in handwriting in the register show that in 1895 additional, unidentified, staff members were given the opportunity to register some general museum collections. This was to have

lasting repercussions because one person's errors set in train a series of duplicated registration numbers which were then continued by Arthur Preston and de Vis.¹⁴ As a consequence, part of MacGregor's next ethnological consignment (Transfer 55: 11 January 1896: ER14310–14689) was registered within a range of duplicated numbers.¹⁵ Some items within this series of duplicated numbers, such as a 'Bundle of 24 lots of human hair made up into parcels by bark strips & wound round' (ER14362), seem to have been set aside (probably because de Vis requested some additional information about them) and re-registered between ER18691 and ER18717 as 'Whip-like rods human hair bound with bark'.¹⁶ By this point their association with the Official collection and Transfer 55 had been completely lost.¹⁷

A list detailing the contents of Transfer 55 was compiled by de Vis (31 January 1896) not long after the collection entered the museum, but a series of anomalies question its reliability (de Vis 1897a). For

instance, there were some errors in tallying object numbers. More bracelets, breast ornaments, charms, bags, disc clubs, ear ornaments, necklaces, paddles, shell pendants, sennit shirts, slings, sling-stones and bark cloths exist than were recorded on de Vis' 1896 list. Table 6 provides a summary of the contents of Transfer 55 and compares de Vis' 1896 report with primary registration data. It shows that there were problems associated with a group of paddles (ER14683–89), some of which were registered twice within Transfer 55. Although de Vis realised the mistake at the time and corrected the register entries to indicate the error, some of the paddles which he crossed through in the register do exist.¹⁸

A group of 56 'tapa cloths' from Musa noted in de Vis' 1896 list warrant further discussion. Registered between ER14564 and ER14620,¹⁹ they appear to be those which MacGregor alluded to in a letter to de Vis in mid-December 1895 (MacGregor 1895).²⁰ Another group of 63 bark cloths which are listed in the register (ER14297–14358) prior to these lack reference to their source. These last mentioned would seem to be those 'already in the general collection' referred to by de Vis in late January 1896 (de Vis 1897a). Stylistically, these 63 bark cloths originate from the same general region as those 56 [60] from Musa recorded as part of Transfer 55.

Archival sources indicate that MacGregor obtained examples of bark cloth from the Musa River on two separate occasions (10 April 1894 and 30 August 1895) (MacGregor 1894:36; Green 1892–1896: Letter dated 13th September 1895).²¹ Since there is no indication that between 1876 and 1895 QM received New Guinea bark cloth from any source other than MacGregor, it is likely that this second group are part of the Official collection and connected with either Transfer 52 (1 August 1894) or Transfer 55 (11 January 1896). While de Vis made no mention of bark cloths in his report on items received as part of Transfer 52 (30 August 1894), it seems unlikely that MacGregor would have waited more than a year and a half to forward the bark cloths obtained 'for the public collection' in April 1894. Perhaps they were part of the consignment designated as Transfer 52 (1 August 1894), but for some reason were not registered at the time? Register entries show that

they were registered before Purchase 139, a collection the museum purchased through the auctioneers, Isles, Love & Co., on 23 July 1895. This places the registration date for the unsourced bark cloth between 31 August 1894 and 23 July 1895 and supports the idea that they may have been part of Transfer 52 but set aside for some reason.

Many of the registration errors which occurred in 1894–96 are likely to have been made by less experienced staff. A closer look at the general situation of the museum at the time reveals that the strain of managing and accommodating the steadily accumulating Official collection was beginning to impact on its day-to-day business. Two officers normally responsible for the curation of the museum collections (as well as door-keeping and cleaning) reportedly spent most of their time in 1896 looking after the New Guinea collections (Norton 1897:1). The New Guinea Gallery was over-filled in 1896, with 'no small part of the exhibits ...piled up out of sight on tops of the cases' (Norton 1897:2). A photograph of a crowded display case in the New Guinea Gallery in May 1897 illustrates the point (Figure 5).

MacGregor forwarded four more consignments of ethnology to the museum between December 1896 and October 1898 (Transfers: 60, 68, 70 and 74). The largest of these arrived on 1 March 1897 (Transfer 60). Comprising 4315 objects, this collection was registered between numbers ER14869 and ER18671 and ER18720–27. Like Transfer 52, the registration process seems to have been disrupted as some arrows from much earlier collections (pre-Transfer 46) were accessioned between ER18672 and ER18690.

Registration of two collections received from MacGregor in 1897–98 (Transfers 68 and 70) were largely unproblematic (except for a couple of duplicated numbers and one page of arrows which is labelled 'T60' instead of 'T68'). The latter is probably a simple recording error. The last lot of ethnological material which MacGregor deposited in QM arrived on 10 October 1898 (Transfer 74). Containing approximately 505 objects, this assemblage was registered between ER19161 and ER19700. While two pages of the register are not

TABLE. 6. Transfer 55 from de Vis (1897a) compared to *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (c. 1889-1910) entries.

Description from de Vis' 31 January 1896 Report (De Vis 1897a)	No. (De Vis 1897a)	Locality	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> Vol.2	No. found	Notes
Axe	11	Kumusi	14323-14333	11	14331 is annotated 'Collingwood Bay' by de Vis later in margin or register. 14323-14333 are described as adzes in register.
Axe-blades	3	Baimala	14497-98; 14500	3	
Axe-blades	1	loc?	14499;	1	Field label indicates from Baimala as well.
Axe-blades, in rough	2	loc?	14409; 14433	2	
Baskets	7	loc?	14412-16; 14375-76	7	Two baskets (14375-76) are reputedly from earlier museum collections. Catalogue record sheets suggest that both are from Collection 18 (Lawrie). However, after reviewing all the documentation surrounding MAC4517 which was assigned 14376 on the basis of a questionable label: '14376?' The status of this object requires further investigation. Therefore, 14375-76 could be part of T55.
Belts	1	Kumusi	14313;	1	
Belts	1	Mambare	14439;	1	
Belts	5	loc?	14394; 14441-2; 14555; 14558	5	
Betel-mortar	1	loc?	14446;	1	
Bowls	5	loc?	14350-51; 14381; 14526; 14534	5	14351 locality is recorded as 'Musi'
Bracelets	14	Kumusi	14315a-g [7]; 14317a-b [2]; 14320a-e [5]	14	
Bracelets	2	Upper Kumusi	14422a-c [3]; 14423a-d [4]; 14438 [2]	9	Error made when reading numbers; 14422 ['three'] and 14423 ['four'] counted as 2 instead of 7. Two additional arm ornaments found under 14438 from Upper Kumusi River (missed by de Vis). Extra 7 Bracelets [arm ornaments]
Bracelets	3	loc?	14397.1-2 [pair]; 14553	3	14397 (MAC2517) recorded as a pair of shell rings; assigned 14397 but de Vis considered as two items
Breast ornaments	2	Kumusi	14316; 14319	2	
Breast ornaments	1	Upper Kumusi	14421;	1	
Breast ornaments	4	loc?	14395; 14407-08; 14540; 14509	5	14509, described as a 'Charm for breast' from 'Maisima' does not appear in de Vis' 1896 list.
Bundle of 24 whisps human hair	24	Merrane	14362; [later re-registered between 18691-18717?]	32	De Vis requested further information about these objects (see de Vis 1897a). Probably put aside and later re-registered between 18691-18717 as whip-like rods of human hair. There was some double numbering within this range: see 18703; 18706; 18708; 18710; 18716
Charms, battle	1	Dugari	14529;	1	

TABLE 6. **contd** Transfer 55 from de Vis (1897a) compared to *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (c. 1889-1910) entries.

Description from de Vis' 31 January 1896 Report (De Vis 1897a)	No. (De Vis 1897a)	Locality	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> Vol.2	No. found	Notes
Charms, battle	7	loc?	14530-1; 14535-39; 14396 (Charm?)	8	An additional 'Charm?' which appears in the register (14396) not counted by de Vis. It is described as a row of pieces of root threaded and was part of contents from bag 14398.
Clubs	5	Kumusi	14352-56	5	
Clubs	1	Kauapa	14357;	1	
Clubs	1	Ikora	14364;	1	
Clubs	1	Mambare	14365;	1	
Clubs	1	Bopoa	14366;	1	
Cocoanut zone	1	loc?	14452-53	2	De Vis (1897a) requested further information about this item. One extra specimen of cocoanut zone found (14453)
Collars	2	Kumusi	14428; 14427?	2	Upper Kumusi' in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> for 14428; One missing could be 14427 described as a throat ornament from Upper Kumusi
Collars	5	loc?	14519-14523	5	
Cuscus skin strips, bundle	Bundle	Kumusi	14322a-e	5	Originally a bundle; seem to have comprised 5 rather than 4 strips as suggested in 1896 list.
Dancing shields	3	loc?	14501-03	3	
Dillibags	1	Kumusi	14312;	1	
Dillibags	3	loc?	14384; 14510; 14551	4	Extra bag found in register: 14398
Disc Clubs	1	Gewadura	14367;	1	
Disc Clubs	1	Puneaouru	14369 and 14373;	2	Extra disc club (14373) from same locality found
Disc Clubs	1	Kumusi	14370; 14372;	2	Extra Kumusi disc club found (14372)
Disc Clubs	1	Dusa	14371;	1	
Disc Clubs	1	loc?	14368 and 14372	2	Extra unlocalised disc club (14374) found
Drills, quartz	2	Duau	14472-73	2	
Drums	1	Musa	14383;	1	
Drums	8	loc?	14334-14381	8	
Earrings or Nose rings	1	Upper Kumusi	14429;	1	
Earrings or Nose rings	11	loc?	14388-93; 14447 [3]; 14557 [2]	15	14388-93 were contents from bag 14398, removed by de Vis during accessioning process. 14447 incorrectly read as one object but comprised 3 according to de Vis entry in register. 14557 was missed by de Vis when tallying ear ornaments; 2 ear ornaments were found with this number during re-registration in 1918-19.

TABLE. 6. **contd** Transfer 55 from de Vis (1897a) compared to *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (c. 1889-1910) entries.

Description from de Vis' 31 January 1896 Report (De Vis 1897a)	No. (De Vis 1897a)	Locality	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> Vol.2	No. found	Notes
Flutes	1	Maisima	14532 or 14533?	1	Made of bamboo; probably 'flutes' in de Vis list. Neither have locality in register
Flutes	1	loc?	14532 or 14533?	1	Made of bamboo; probably 'flutes' in de Vis list. Neither have locality in register
Fringes, leaf	5	loc?	14448; 14449 [2]; 14450-51	5	14449 appears to have been 2 separate items; second fringe numbered 14449 was found inside a bag (MAC6116) in 1984. Bag MAC6116 is from a later transfer (T60)
Frontlets	1	Upper Kumusi	14426;	1	
Frontlets	4	loc?	14443; 14528; 14554; 14556	4	
Handnets	2	loc?	14342-43	2	14342-3 'tied to 14340' [drum]
Lime-gourds	3	loc?	14382; 14437; 14633	3	
Lime-spoons	1	Musa	14363;	1	
Lime-spoons	2	Maisima	14405-06	2	
Lime-spoons	3	Kepara	14430-32	3	These are ladles rather than lime-spoons
Lime-spoons	2	Daua	14490-91	2	
Lime-spoons	12	loc?	14517-18; 14541-50	12	
Necklaces	3	Kumusi	14314; 14318; 14321	3	
Necklaces	2	Upper Kumusi	14424-25	3	Extra necklace under 14425 (described as two necklaces in register)
Necklaces	1	Mambare	14440;	1	
Necklaces	11	loc?	14386-87 [2]; 14401-02 [2], among contents of bag 14398); 14403 [15]; 14404 [9]; 14410-11 [2]; 14420 [1]; 14444-45 [2]; 14525 [1]; 14630-32 [3]	37	26 extra necklaces found. 14403 was 15 necklaces not 1; described in register as a bundle of 15; 14404 comprised 9 necklaces not 1.
Obsidian	1 lump	loc?	14377;	1 or 2?	It is possible that a second lump of Obsidian exists also numbered 14377
Paddles	2	Bent Island		Not found	Two paddles from Bent Island [Lydia Bentley?] not found in register entries associated with T55. Locality is problematic as it is not associated with MacGregor consignments. However, Bentley or Lydia Bentley Island is associated with W.C. Lawrie collection in QM. The two paddles mentioned in de Vis list may possibly represents two from Lawrie collection which may become inadvertently mixed up with T55.

TABLE 6. **contd** Transfer 55 from de Vis (1897a) compared to *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (c. 1889-1910) entries.

Description from de Vis' 31 January 1896 Report (De Vis 1897a)	No. (De Vis 1897a)	Locality	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> Vol.2	No. found	Notes
Paddles	11	loc?	14358-14361 [4]; 14622-629 [8]; 14683-89 [3]	15	Entries for paddles 14683-85 are annotated 'error' in the register. However, paddles with these registration numbers have been found in the collection. Paddles 14686-14689 represent re-registrations of paddles under numbers 14625; 14624; 14623 and 14622 respectively. The error was realised by de Vis at the time and the register entries for 14686-89 annotated accordingly.
Pigcatchers	5	loc?	14559-14563	5	De Vis (1897a) requested further information about these items
Pendants, shell	3	Duau	14469-71; 14524 (extra, not on list or from Duau)	4	Extra shell pendant found (no locality): 14524. Not included on de Vis 1896 list
Quartz, scissors, and flakes	1 +?	loc?	14489;	1	
Pots	9	loc?	14379-80; 14417; 14511-12; 14514-15; 14527	8	One less pot than on list
Shells (spondylus) for manufacture of ornaments	1	Islands	14310;	1	Unclear exactly how many shells were under 14310. Registers suggest one.
Shirts, sennit	2	loc?	14399-14400; 14385	3	Extra shirt (14385) appears to have been missed by de Vis when compiling 1896 list. All three are associated with bag 14398 (i.e. part of contents from bag). Examples of mourning clothing.
Shoulder-knots	1	Musa	14311;	1	De Vis (1897a) requested further information about this item
Shoulder-knots	2	loc?	14552?; 14621?	2	De Vis (1897a) requested further information about these items. 14522? (described as a shoulder-cap in register); 14621? (but is tapa cloth, but described as like '14522'; i.e. shoulder cap)
Shields	2	Kokila	14347-8	2	
Shields	8	loc?	14344-46 [3]; 14504-08 [5]	8	
Slings	3	Kaiboda	14434-36	3	
Slings	6	loc?	14513a-g	7	Extra sling found
Slingstones	30	Kaiboda	14454-14468; 14474-14488	32	Two extra slingstones; 14454 and 14463 numbers duplicated
Spears	7	Kokila	14634-14640	7	

TABLE. 6. **contd** Transfer 55 from de Vis (1897a) compared to *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (c. 1889-1910) entries.

Description from de Vis' 31 January 1896 Report (De Vis 1897a)	No. (De Vis 1897a)	Locality	Registration numbers <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> Vol.2	No. found	Notes
Spears	11	Phillips Island	14641-14651	11	
Spears	31	loc?	14652-14679 [14673 duplicated]	29	Two less than on 1896 list. Includes extra spear under reg. no. 14673
Sword clubs	5	Kirewina	14492-96	5	
Sword clubs	1	Kaibaw	14682;	1	
Sword clubs	1	loc?	14680;	1	
Tapa cloths	56	Musa	14564-14620	60	Four extra cloths found, double registration of numbers 14568; 14591; 14600; 14620
Tapa mallets	2	loc?	14378; 14516	2	
Trumpet shell	1	loc?	14349;	1	

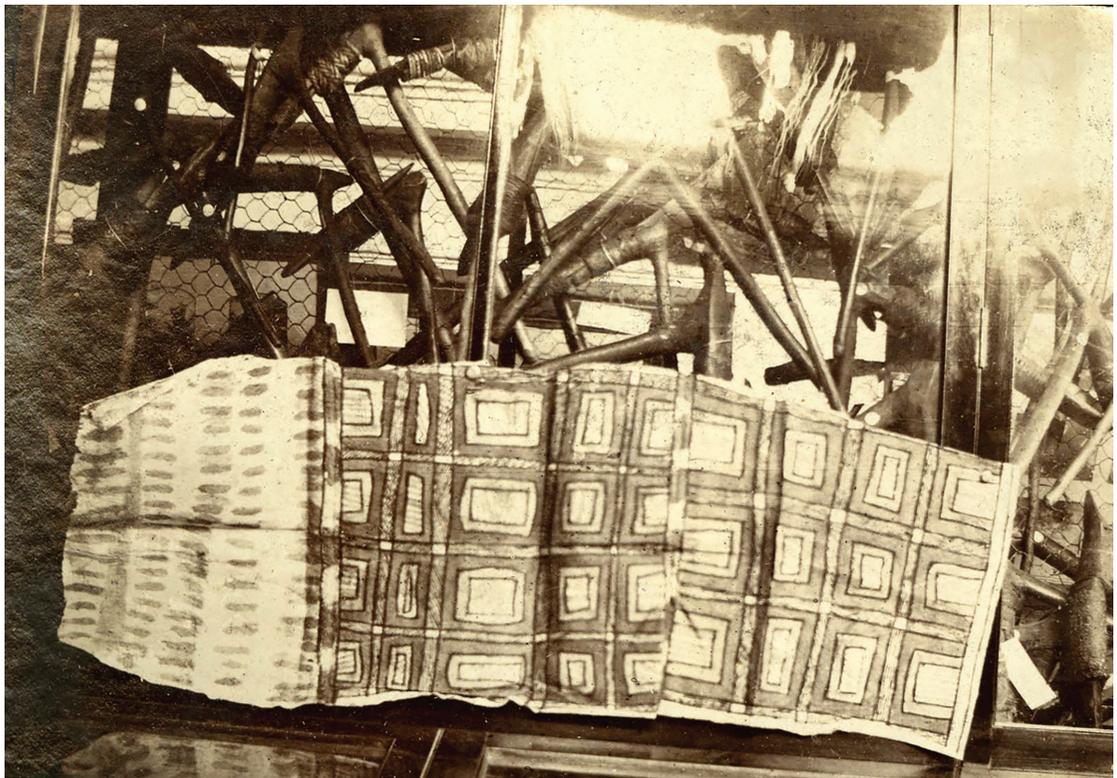


FIG. 5. Photograph taken in the New Guinea Gallery at the Queensland Museum by the British ethnologist James Edge-Partington in May 1897, Oc,A9.61. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

marked 'T74', it seems plausible that de Vis was in a hurry and simply neglected to record the transfer number. Consequently, those objects (72) registered between ER19594 and ER19665 should therefore be considered part of Transfer 74. Several pieces of evidence support this interpretation. Firstly, objects within the range ER19594–19665 are similar to other articles from Transfer 74 and some items, such as slings and coix-seed armlets, are represented in other MacGregor consignments. Moreover, a series of breast ornaments not marked 'T74' (ER19594–19595) were part of a group clearly noted as 'T74' (ER19591–19593) on the previous page. Likewise, the unsourced necklaces registered between ER19660 and ER19665 are likely to belong to the series (ER19666–82) on the following page marked 'T74'. None of the objects within the range ER19594–19665 bear any markings which indicate that they could originate from other Papuan collections held by QM.²²

While the initial registration of the Official collection was interrupted at times and not without error, it is evident that de Vis was particular in his work. Close examination of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) shows that he was very precise in the way he recorded breaks which occurred in registration (Figure 6). The registration errors which occurred in the mid-1890s largely appear to have been those of untrained, or perhaps, inexperienced staff. The enormous quantities of material contained in some consignments inevitably impacted on the smooth running of the museum. No doubt de Vis needed assistance to complete basic registration tasks associated with such huge volumes of material and enlisted the help of others, who sometimes made mistakes.

DISPERSALS (1894–1914)

Once registered at QM, the Official collection did not remain intact. As summarised in Table 7, several of the recipients of outwards exchanges or transfers dating between 1894 and 1906 had strong personal connections with the administration of British New Guinea. The first documented outwards exchange

Item No.	Description	Registration No.	Transfer No.
14160	Arrow		M 5027
14169	Pencil		
14170	Bottle	ER 19594	T 28 E 9594
14171	Bottle	ER 19594	M 9002
14172	Bottle	ER 19594	
14173	Bottle	ER 19594	
14174	Bottle	ER 19594	
14175	Pencil		M 77 67
14176	Bottle		
14177	Bottle	ER 19594	T 28 E 9595
14178	Bottle	ER 19594	
14179	Bottle	ER 19594	T 28 E 9601
14180	Bottle		
14181	Bottle	ER 19594	M 83 27
14182	Bottle		
14183	Bottle	ER 19594	
14184	Bottle		
14185	Bundle of arrowheads		
14186	Bottle		
14187	Beads	ER 19594	T 28 E 9628
14188	Bottle		
14189	Bottle		
14190	Bottle		
14191	Spear - triangular head	ER 19594	
14192	Acute comb	ER 19594	
14193	Lithic	ER 19594	

FIG. 6. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum, c.1889–1910, Volume 2:4). See 'T52' entry to indicate re-commencement of registration of Transfer 52 (half way down page). Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

of Official collection material occurred in July 1894 and comprised a bird-of-paradise plumed headdress (ER9717) which was sent to Charles Kowald (government agent of the Mekeo District, British New Guinea).²³ Similarly, Sir Hugh Nelson, who received 32 'New Guinea' objects in 1901, was connected with the administration of the colony through his role as Premier of Queensland (1893–1898) (Waterson 1986).²⁴ Moreover, Nelson visited British New Guinea in 1898 (Nelson 1899). The objects received by Nelson in 1901 were destined for the Kilmarnock Museum in Ayrshire, Scotland, and likely included some Official collection material.²⁵ Nelson was accompanied on his 1898 trip by the 2nd Baron Lamington (then Governor of Queensland) who received a 'fishing kite in glass case' (probably ER19699) as part of an outwards transfer on 2 January 1899 (*Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899, Transfer 77 Out). Perhaps the most interesting of all the outwards transfers is that which occurred on 20 October 1898 (*Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899, Transfer 76 Out). This comprised a 'jade' adze blade (ER16225) which was 'handed' to MacGregor along with two

TABLE. 7. Dispersals: exchanges and transfers out from the Official Collection 1894-1910.

Exchange/ Transfer No.	Date	Person /Institution	Contents	Reference	Remarks	No.
Ex 137 (out)	25 July 1894	Charles Kowald	Plumed headdress (9717; T46)	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899: 117)	Exchanged for a human skull from Goodenough Island	1
Ex 140 (out) – later noted as a retransferred to MacGregor	21 August/ 28 August 1894	Andrew McIlwraith (at request of Sir William MacGregor)	Mixed collection of ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899: 117)	Later re-entered as a retransfer to Sir William MacGregor on p. 118 but no transfer number allocated.	43
T62 (out)	30 July 1897	Australian Museum	Mixed collection of ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899 :154)	Duplicates -sent to Australian Museum	c.943
T64 (out)	6 August 1897	National Museum, Melbourne (now in Museum Victoria)	Mixed collection of ethnology	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899 :155)	Duplicates -sent to National Museum, Melbourne	c. 721
No number assigned (out)	23 September 1897	British Museum	Mixed collection of ethnology	De Vis 1897b	Duplicates -sent to British Museum	c. 817
Ex 193 (Out)	8 October 1898	Canterbury Museum, Christchurch [Frederick Wollaston Hutton	Ethnology 12 (11 BNG, 1 Australian)	<i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i> (1884-1907), no. 193: 1 pipe, 2 bowls, 1 Club, 1 Shield, 1 axe, 3 blades, 1 Basket, 1 Woman's dress	Possibly contained Official collection material but no registration numbers recorded	11
T76 (out)	20 October 1898	Sir William Macgregor	2 bird specimens and 1 jade axe (16225)	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899: 169)		1
Ex 194 (out)	31 October 1898	Archibald Meston	1 [2?] plumed headdress; 1 drum?	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887-99); Ex194, 31 Oct 1898 = "Sundry plumes Paradisea raggiana" for an Aboriginal spear and knife". There are 2 raggiana plumed headdresses: 9718 (T46) and 10075 (T46) currently not accounted for, they could have been among the plumes exchanged out under Ex194.	10817 (Drum from Normanby Island, T46) was "Exchanged with Mr A. Meston". Annotation against entry in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c. 1889-1910) but no date given). Drum could have been part of Ex 194 as well	3?
T77 (out)	2 January 1899	Governor of Queensland	Fishing kite in glass case	<i>Donor Register</i> (1887- 1899: 173)	Probably 19699 (T74)-a fishing kite currently unaccounted for	1

TABLE 7. **contd** Dispersals: exchanges and transfers out from the Official Collection 1894-1910.

Exchange/ Transfer No.	Date	Person /Institution	Contents	Reference	Remarks	No.
Ex 202 (out)	21 August 1899	W H Knowles	2 clubs (14935; 14961) plus 8127;1070 (non- MacGregor)	<i>Donor Register</i> (1899- 1909: 2); <i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i> (1884- 1907: No. 202)	Date of exchange is from Donor Register. Annotations in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c. 1889-1910) 'Ex203' against 14935 and 14961 is an error; should be Ex202. It appears that club 14935 was not sent (see MAC3618).	2?
Ex 219 (out)	10 August 1901	Sir Hugh Nelson (for Kilmarnock Museum, Scotland)	Ethnological specimens as per <i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i> , no. 219 (32 items listed from New Guinea)	<i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i> (1884-1907: No. 219)	Ex 219: 32 items, some of which are possibly Official collection items. No registration numbers recorded	2
Ex 245 (Out)	30 July [June?] 1906	Rev Harry Johnson	2 or 5?	Registration numbers are difficult to read in <i>Donor Register</i> (1899- 1909: 120). Similar problem in <i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i>	Not all Official collection; the full set of numbers is: 2610, 2611, 8507, 8567, 1900? 11894, 12441, 13815, 14056, 19195. Of these, 11894, 12441 and 19195 are definite Official collection items. Exchanged for South African Ethnological specimens and shells (Ex245in).	2 (possibly more)

bird specimens.²⁶ This occurred a few days before MacGregor left Australia to take up his appointment as Governor of Lagos.

MacGregor acted as the intermediary for one outwards exchange (Exchange 140). Table 8 documents the contents of this dispersal. Initially selected for A. Mcllwraith²⁷ of London, the record associated with Exchange 140 (22 August 1894) was later amended as a re-transfer to the Administrator of British New Guinea (i.e. MacGregor).²⁸ No outwards transfer number was ever recorded.²⁹ One possible explanation for the amendment is that there is no record of any incoming exchange from Mcllwraith.³⁰ Thus it was probably simpler to correct the record as a retransfer to MacGregor

since he had requested the items for Mcllwraith in the first place. On September 7, de Vis reported to the Trustees that 'at the request of Sir W MacGregor he had retransferred to him a collection of New Guinea curios and a collection of New Guinea birds for presentation to Mr. A. Mcllwraith and Sir James Garrick respectively' (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes (Queensland Museum 1876-1907): 7 September 1894*).³¹ The date of the retransfer to MacGregor occurred on 28 August 1894, the same date on which Sir William and Lady MacGregor (and family) left for Naples on RMS *India* ('Shipping. Departures', *The Brisbane Courier*, 30 August 1894, p. 3.). Archival correspondence shows that the consignment of artefacts re-transferred

TABLE. 8. Contents of Exchange Out No. 140, 1894 (later recorded as a re-transfer to Sir William MacGregor).

Reg. No.	Object type	Original Source	Date received from source	Locality using spelling in (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910)	Notes
8181	Drum	JW Potts	c. January 1886	Fly River	Not associated with the Official collection
8476	Tobacco Pipe	R6156	c. April 1886	-	Not associated with Official collection. R6156 is a <i>General Catalogue</i> number indicating that the object was part of the Royal Geographical Society Expedition of Australasia (1885) collection.
8546	Skirt	None given	Before 25 October 1892	-	Not associated with Official collection. Registration no. 8546 indicates that the skirt was in the museum collection before the arrival of the first MacGregor consignment in 1892
8712	Stone Adze blade	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	Official collection
8794?	Baton	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	8794 is part of the Official collection. 'Ex124' annotated against 8794 in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c. 1889-1910) is presumably an error as there is no Ex124. Two sword clubs were noted as selected for Ex140 (likely 8794 and 9166). Staff member may have confused Ex 124 with Ex 142 (on page opposite Ex140 in <i>Exchanges (OUT) Register</i>)
8975	Arm Guard	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Fly River	Official collection
9032	Stone Adze	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Collingwood Bay	Official collection
9166?	Baton	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Troubriand?	9166 is part of Official collection. See notes to 8794 above.
9291	Stone disc Club	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Rigo	Official collection
9320	Stone Adze	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Rigo	Official collection
9538	Stone Adze blade	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	Official collection
9697	Canoe ornament	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Laughlan	Official collection
10334	Belt	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	Official collection
10669	Bowl	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	Official collection
10756	Dish	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Troubriand	Official collection
10829	Drum	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Troubriand	Official collection
10906	Mancatcher	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Kerepuna	Official collection
10907	Mancatcher	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Kerepuna	Official collection
11277	Arrow	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	Fly River	Official collection
11515	Arrow	Transfer 46	25 October 1892	-	Official collection
11643	Bow	Transfer 47	4 March 1893	Bailala	Official collection
12206	Toothed Club	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	N.E. Coast	Official collection
12386	Fighting Charm	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Central Coast	Official collection
12488	Boars tusk breastplate	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	[Collingwood Bay]	Official collection
12565	Coix collar	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	N E Coast	Official collection
12680	Necklace	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Holnicote Bay	Official collection

TABLE 8. **contd** Contents of Exchange Out No. 140, 1894 (later recorded as a re-transfer to Sir William MacGregor).

Reg. No.	Object type	Original Source	Date received from source	Locality using spelling in (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910)	Notes
12700	Melo shell fig leaf	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Holnicote Bay	Official collection
12731	Bag	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Koriki	Official collection
12743	Armlet	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Koriki	Official collection
12783	Carved Coconut	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Passim	Official collection
12900	Basket	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Duau	Official collection
12957	Breast ornament	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Collingwood Bay	Official collection
13010	Bag	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Cloudy Bay	Official collection
13093	Necklace	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Duau	Official collection
13096	Necklace	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Duau	Official collection
13157	Womans dress	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Troubriands	Official collection
13330	[Fishing net]	Transfer 52	1 August 1894		Official collection
13338	Spear	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Troubriand	Official collection
13391	Spear	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Troubriand	Official collection
14191	Spear	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Cape Killarton	Official collection
14193	Spear fish- 9 prongs	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Cloudy Bay	Official collection
14195	Spear	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Troubriand	Official collection
14208	Dancing shield	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Troubriand	Official collection
14222	Head dress	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	Koriki	Official collection
14228	Head dress	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	N. E Coast	Official collection. Entered as Ex124 in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c.1889-1910). Presumably an error as there is no Ex124
14229	Head dress	Transfer 52	1 August 1894	N. E Coast	Official collection. Entered as Ex124 in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> (c.1889-1910). Presumably an error as there is no Ex124

to MacGregor (but for Mcllwraith) was forwarded to England by the SS *Jelunga* in September 1894 (see *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887–1899:118); de Vis 1894b).

Interestingly, the selection of objects for Mcllwraith occurred only three weeks after Transfer 52 (1 August 1894) was received at QM. As previously noted, there are signs that the registration process of Transfer 52 was disrupted in some way because the collection was not registered sequentially. While the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) shows that the Transfer 52 objects selected for Mcllwraith were chosen across

both volumes (1 and 2), it is possible they were set aside during unpacking of the collection. Moreover, since other articles selected for Mcllwraith were presumably removed from showcases (Exchange 140 included items from Transfers: 46, 47 and 52), there is a strong likelihood that some mixing of registered and non-registered items occurred. For instance, a man-catcher originally registered in 1892 (ER10905) was inadvertently re-registered about 1894 (ER14361),³² probably because it had been removed from display and placed among non-accessioned items.

While outwards exchanges from the Official collection were relatively few given the overall

size of the assemblage, a large selection of so-called 'duplicates' were distributed in 1897. Like other museums of the period, QM was in the habit of routinely exchanging 'duplicate' material with interested parties (see Torrence & Davies, Chapter 13 this volume). The practice enabled institutions to increase their holdings in particular spheres of interest by exchanging scientific specimens and cultural artefacts already well represented in their collections. There is evidence that a selection of duplicates of New Guinea material was made in 1894 because the Chairman of the Museum Trustees reported in early 1895 that, 'The gallery set apart for New Guinea exhibits is now over-filled, notwithstanding that numerous duplicates have been stored away in readiness for distribution to other museums' (Norton 1895).³³ This selection likely included Official collection material because in early August 1894, de Vis reported to the Trustees on a conversation he had had with MacGregor 'relative to the dispersal of duplicates' (Quinnell 2000:89). Later correspondence shows that MacGregor firmly disapproved of the concept (Quinnell 2000:89-93). The 1894 selection was possibly triggered by the actions of the British Museum which laid claim to a share of the 'duplicates' in the New Guinea Gallery in May 1894 (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes* (Queensland Museum 1876-1907:4 May 1894)).³⁴

MacGregor was vehemently opposed to the idea of breaking-up the Official collection but eventually reconsidered his position (Quinnell 2000:89-93). In 1897, approximately 4 070 'duplicates' supposedly selected from the Official collection, were divided between the British Museum; Australian Museum (Sydney); the then National Museum of Victoria (now Museums Victoria) and QM.³⁵ The Queensland Museum received a larger share of the duplicates in recognition of its work in preparing and maintaining the collection (Quinnell 2000:91) and its larger financial contribution to the administration of British New Guinea compared to the colonies of New South Wales or Victoria. Objects distributed in 1897 were chosen from Transfers 46, 47, 52, 55 and 60. Since the last consignment (Transfer 60) comprised more

than 4 000 objects, de Vis was probably pleased to see some of it leave the premises.

An *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898) was commenced at QM on 2 June 1897 to record the selection of 'duplicate' material from the Official collection (Figure 7). A control number (cn) was assigned to objects selected (see Appendix 3 Table 1) and these were later written in red ink in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) against their corresponding registration numbers.³⁶ Three different styles of handwriting are discernible throughout the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898): De Vis, who was responsible for most of the data entry in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910); A.J. Norris, appointed Clerical Assistant towards the end of 1896, appears to have been responsible for entering some of the localities. Finally C.J. Wild, who survived a round of retrenchments in 1893 is also represented.³⁷

Close examination of the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898) reveals that record-keeping associated with the selection of duplicates in 1897 was very problematic (see Appendix 3, Tables 1-8). For instance, objects were sometimes assigned to more than one museum; occasionally the same object was assigned twice to the same institution. Other objects were selected and then un-selected (i.e. crossed through in the register) (see Figure 7). There were also mistakes in recording registration numbers and/or object type. Information concerning the locality from which an object originated was sometimes incorrect or entirely absent. A more serious error involved the selection and distribution of around 419 objects (mainly arrows) that did not belong to the Official collection (see Appendix 3, Tables 4-8).³⁸ In addition to the c.384 arrows from various collections which were inadvertently distributed were 35 objects, of which the majority derive from a collection which QM purchased in March 1897 (Hartmann collection, Purchase 146: 16 March 1897). Even a cursory glance at the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) at the time would have revealed that these artefacts were not part of

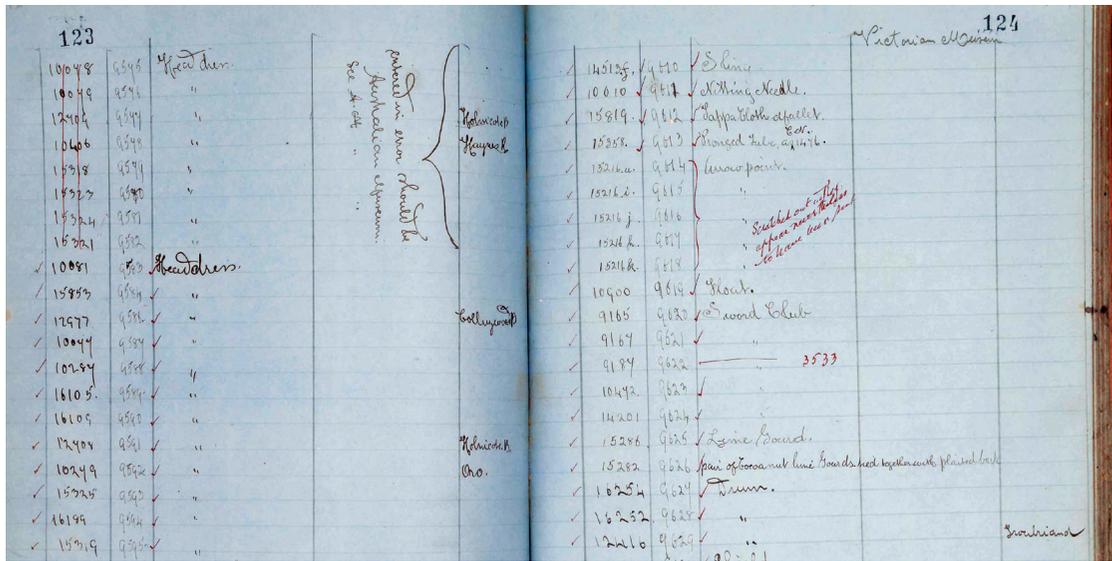


FIG. 7. *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-98:123-124). Two pages showing a selection of ‘duplicates’ for Victoria. The register numbers at far left represent *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum, c.1889-1910) registration numbers. Those immediately to the right (second column) are control numbers assigned to objects. The remarks column contained localities but some of these do not match the corresponding entries in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum, c.1889-1910). Note the group of headdresses crossed out top left. Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

the Official collection. Errors associated with the 1897 duplicate selection are presented in detail in Appendix 3 Tables 1-8.

Duplicates sent to each museum were accompanied by a typed list of contents (e.g. Figure 1 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 13 this volume). These lists are unreliable given that curators responsible for unpacking and registration made various corrections to them (Torrence et al. 2020). In addition, a number of objects recorded in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898) as having been selected for a particular museum either remained in Queensland or ended up in a different museum.

Some objects in the duplicate selection, in particular adzes and adze blades, retain circular-shaped paper serrated labels with pertinent details (e.g. localities) written on them (Figure 8). In addition, large ‘Q’, ‘B’, ‘V’ and ‘A’ (often in red or blue crayon) were written directly onto objects (or onto the circular-shaped serrated labels) (Figure 8), indicating the designated museum. Some of

these labels would seem to have been applied during the initial phase of sorting out duplicates in 1894. Interestingly, certain objects, such as twine and fibre samples, were deliberately cut up in 1897 so that each museum would receive an example of each type (Figure 9).

The 1897 distribution of ‘duplicates’ to the Australian Museum and the National Museum of Victoria were subsequently recorded as outwards transfers (T62 and T64 respectively) (see Table 7).³⁹ The latter collection was later transferred to the Public Library of Victoria (Torrence et al. 2020:117) and is now part of Museums Victoria. Duplicates selected for the British Museum were forwarded in September 1897 although no outwards transfer number was ever recorded (De Vis 1897b). Another selection occurred in January 1898 but was much smaller in size and comprised objects from Transfer 68 (arrived 29 December 1897). As before, duplicates were assigned control numbers, but the items never left Queensland (see Appendix 3, Table 1). Labels on several wooden bowls from Transfer 74 (10 October



FIG. 8. Example of the kinds of labelling applied to an adze assigned duplicate status prior to sending to the British Museum in 1897 where it is currently housed (BM Oc.MCG.136). The black ink registration number '12063' was applied during initial registration in QM in 1894 while the two circular-shaped labels were applied in 1897. The paper label with the blue 'B' indicates the object had been selected for the British Museum while the one to the right has 'Collingwood Bay' written in black ink. The handwritten 'Collingwood Bay' matches the handwriting in the corresponding entry in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898) confirming that it is a label applied in QM in 1897, probably by C.J. Wild. ©Trustees of the British Museum.



FIG. 9. Twine sample from 'Villages near Styx River' showing cut marks: ER12467 (MAC1878). The entry under cn1575 in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-98:43) which gives 'Troubriand' as the locality is an error. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

1898) suggest that a third choice of duplicates was made for either the Australian Museum or the National Museum of Victoria towards the end of 1898.⁴⁰ However, the process apparently went no further for no details were ever entered into the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898).

While the overall size of the Official collection remaining in QM was reduced through a series of outwards exchanges or transfers from 1894, and the duplicate distribution in 1897, this does not seem to have alleviated the problems surrounding the management of the collection. In 1898, the Chairman of the Trustees reported that while 'a large number of duplicates culled from the ethnological collection of British New Guinea' had been distributed they had 'been compelled to withdraw from exhibition the whole of the New Guinea collection belonging to the Museum, and pack it away in a shed' (Norton 1898:1). How long the Papuan collections languished under these conditions remains unclear. When the museum moved to new premises in 1901, however, the British New Guinea display on the first floor was one of its main attractions (*The Queenslander* 2 March 1901, p. 424).

TRANSFORMATION (1915-2001)

The Official collection retained in QM underwent re-registration from 1915-1920 (except for arrows and spears).⁴¹ This process followed a request from the Commonwealth Government in 1913 that a catalogue of the Official collection be made 'for the information of the Government of the Territory' because there were concerns that some artefacts were at risk of being exchanged out (Quinnell 2000:94-95).⁴² The Commonwealth Government subsequently agreed to cover the cost (£50) of producing a catalogue. Two copies of a new register: *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001), were specially printed for the purpose of registering the assemblage (Figure 10) (Quinnell 2000:94). The re-registration procedure which followed not only further entangled the assemblage within a maze of unrelated

collections, but also transformed what remained of the Official collection in QM into one solely associated with MacGregor himself. The ‘public’ collection which MacGregor had assembled for the colony of British New Guinea was given ‘MacGregor’ status through a renumbering system which assigned a ‘Mac’ prefix to objects. As discussed in Torrence et al. (Chapter 1 this volume), with this change in registration, the agency of the original Papuan makers and owners of the material was obscured.

Work began on March 15, 1915 with the accession of 149 adzes/axes from the Official collection into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). These objects were given the prefix ‘Mac’⁴³ followed by an abbreviation of the year of registration (e.g. ‘Mac15/1’ [1915/1]), but re-registration was short-lived, lasting less than a week. More than two years later, director Hamlyn-Harris offered to return the £50 ‘for working up Sir William MacGregor’s collection’, noting that no attempt had been made to spend the money (Hamlyn-Harris 1917). Hamlyn-Harris did not mention the re-registrations which had already occurred. Since these were presumably

by a museum staff member, no additional cost would have been incurred. His successor, Heber Albert Longman (acting-director 1917; director 1918–45), was similarly committed to safe-guarding the Official collection, now reconceptualised as the ‘MacGregor’ collection, and it was under his tenure as director that re-registration was resumed.

In 1918, Longman hired Rowland Illidge whom he described as a ‘well-known local naturalist’, to re-register the collection on a part-time basis (Quinnell 1986:211). As previously, a sum of £50 towards the catalogue production was provided through the Commonwealth Government (Hunt 1918). From 24 September 1918, Illidge worked systematically through showcases in the Gallery, recording the location of objects (e.g. upper or lower section). His register entries reveal that in 1918 many shields, paddles and man-catchers were displayed on the walls of the Gallery. Between 1918 and 1919, Illidge was responsible for re-registering a total of 6164 ethnographic objects (MAC150–6314).⁴⁴ Unfortunately, several hundred items from unrelated collections were inadvertently assigned MacGregor

FIG. 10. *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001:59). The numbers on the far-left side of the page are ‘MAC’ numbers (e.g. MAC2333). Numbers on the right side are registration numbers assigned by Charles de Vis or other QM staff in the 1890s; these can be cross-referenced against the *Ethnology Register* (*New Guinea*) (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) (e.g. MAC2333; original registration number was 12568). Crossed through entries represent items later found not associated with MacGregor’s Official collection (e.g. T28). Of the 26 entries shown here, only eight are part of the Official collection. Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

status during the process (these are detailed in Appendix 4 Tables 1–4). One cassowary-plumed frontlet (MAC6315), registered at a later date is also not part of the Official collection.

As previously noted, the re-registration process involved assigning each object a new registration number with a ‘Mac’ prefix. ‘Mac’ numbers were either written directly onto objects (usually in black ink, white paint or blue chalk) or ‘stamped’ onto ‘tin slips’ which were affixed to objects. Previous registration numbers (*Ethnology Register*, New Guinea) (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) were recorded in the new register as well (if legible). Card-cataloguing and indexing also occurred. The displays of the collection were also refurbished and a special room in the basement was set aside for duplicates and other specimens (Longman 1919). An annotation in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) by ‘H.A.L.’ [H.A. Longman] in around 1919–1920 shows that an estimated 3447 arrows, 595 spears and 68 bows remained to be re-registered, although Longman noted that many of these probably did not belong to the ‘MacGregor’ collection (*MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001:182).⁴⁵

In July 1919, Longman reported that with ‘the exception of the spears and arrows and a few specimens whose original numbers cannot be traced’, the entire collection had been re-registered (Longman 1919). He also noted that the ‘MacGregor Collection’ was ‘segregated, whereas formerly many specimens were mixed with Museum material’ (Longman 1919). He was in error since approximately 555 objects from at least 19 unrelated collections were inadvertently accessioned by Illidge into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) between 1918 and 1919 (Appendix 4 Table 3; also see Figure 10).⁴⁶ A further c.303⁴⁷ objects registered during this period are of uncertain status because they have no legible registration number which could link them to the Official collection.⁴⁸

That so many objects from other collections were accessioned into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) between 1918 and 1919 is surprising since in 1914 some effort was made

to identify the museum’s general Papuan holdings through consulting the earlier *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). A faint, small pencil ‘M’ was assigned to specimens in the register to indicate that they belonged to the museum rather than the MacGregor assemblage (Longman 1914a).⁴⁹ However, this work seems to have erroneously assumed that two collections (Transfer 12 and Transfer 28) assembled by officers associated with the British New Guinea Protectorate government (1884–1888) were part of MacGregor’s Official collection of British New Guinea Ethnology (1888–1898). This was not the case since both collections were gathered prior to MacGregor’s arrival in the colony in September 1888. Transfer 12 and Transfer 28 represented collections assembled for display at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition (London) and 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition respectively. Neither collection is associated with the field collections made under MacGregor’s administration of the colony of British New Guinea.⁵⁰

A great deal of knowledge concerning the Official collection was likely lost when the then 76-year-old Charles de Vis was forced to retire as director in 1905 (de Vis stayed on as consulting scientist until 1910).⁵¹ Dr. Ronald Hamlyn-Harris was appointed director in the wake of Robert Etheridge’s damning report on the state of the museum (Etheridge 1910) (see Knowles, Chapter 15 this volume). In 1913, when the Commonwealth Government first approached the museum about producing a catalogue of the collection, there was a scramble to locate records about the Official collection and its distribution to the other museums (Hamlyn-Harris 1914a).⁵² A series of correspondence in 1914 suggests that corporate knowledge about the Official collection had been lost in the period since de Vis retired.⁵³ Not even 20 years had passed since the duplicates had been distributed and yet supporting documents were found to be ‘most incomplete’ (Hamlyn-Harris 1914b). These factors suggest that when Illidge began re-registering Official collection material from 1918, he was faced with a large collection of objects, the provenance of which had been obscured over time. Indeed, in 1919

Longman reported that 'We have had great difficulty with much of the work owing to the need for tracing each specimen with its original record' (Longman 1919).

The *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) represents a twentieth-century attempt to record what remained of a very large assemblage of objects which had moved through a number of different physical spaces during its time in the museum. Table 9 provides a summary of registrations and collections in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). The first 6315 entries relate to ethnology (MAC1-6315), with bird specimens added to the register from

July 1920 (MAC6316-7107). Further scientific specimens were added between 1946 and 1958 (MAC7108-7307).

In 1965, Eleanor Crosby (Curator of Anthropology, 1965–1967) found the state of the museum's anthropological collections in dire need of attention, with objects scattered all over the museum; some stored in galvanised iron storage tanks (Quinnell 1986:214). Crosby discovered what she supposed were 'MacGregor' items in the collection and from 1966 began re-registering them into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). This practice was followed by Crosby's replacement,

TABLE. 9. Summary of registrations and collections in the *MacGregor Register* (1915–2001).

MacGregor Register No. (‘MAC’ prefix)	Collection type	Period of registration	Remarks
1-149	Ethnology	1915	Re-registration 15-19 March 1915. Objects were prefixed ‘Mac 15’ (e.g. Mac15/1). Prefix indicating year of re-registration did not continue after 1915. Note that QM Vernon database uses ‘MAC’ not ‘Mac’.
150-6314	Ethnology	1918-1919	Commenced 24 September 1918. Mac2630-2669 missed on p. 66 but appear between pp. 67-68. Some items on p. 161 may have been entered in 1920 as Illidge's signature appears underneath Mac6314 with date of 11 May 1920. Large number of unrelated collections were assigned MacGregor status in error during this period.
6315	Ethnology	c.1920 (or 1960s?)	This entry appears underneath dated Illidge signature and in a darker black ink.
6316-7107	Natural History	1920-1922	Annotation on p. 182 of <i>MacGregor Register</i> (below MAC7107) shows that an estimated 3447 arrows; 595 spears and 68 bows remained to be registered in 1922 but that many probably were not part of MacGregor [i.e. Official] collection.
7108-7111	Natural History	1946	Bird specimens re-registered into the <i>MacGregor Register</i> during September 1946. Later corrected to reflect actual (probable?) date of field collection (1891 or other) rather than date of register entry.
7112-7121	Natural History	1947	Corrected like those birds noted above.
7122-7123	Natural History	1950	Corrected like those birds noted above.
7124-7179	Natural History	1957	
7180-7307	Natural History	1958	
7308-7366	Ethnology	1966	Includes some non-Official collection objects, largely from Transfer 12 and Transfer 28.
7367-7809	Ethnology	1967-1971	Re-registration of various objects with registration numbers indicating that they were part of the Official collection. Included some spears, bows and arrows which had not been registered by 1922 (some of which were not associated with the Official collection).
7810-7816	Natural History	1972	
7817-9817	Ethnology	1972-2001	Re-registration of various objects from the Official collection (e.g. spears, arrows, bags etc.). Includes some non-official collection objects from Transfer 12 and Transfer 28

Michael Quinnell (Curator of Anthropology 1968–2008) although he soon realised that some of the collections in the register were not in fact associated with the Official collection. Quinnell attempted to correct the mistakes made by Illidge during 1918–1919 by re-registering items in the *Register of Ethnology* (E Register) (Queensland Museum, 1911–ongoing). This practice was ceased during the lead-up to the repatriation of a portion of the Official collection to the National Museum in Port Moresby (Quinnell 2000:96). Over a period of nearly 30 years (1973–2001), Quinnell aided by assistants and volunteers meticulously re-registered Official collection material he found in the museum as well as the vast majority of outstanding arrows and bows referred to by Longman more than 50 years earlier.⁵⁴

The last entry in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) is MAC9817, an unfinished nephrite club-head which was among MacGregor's last consignment of ethnology (ER19460, Transfer 74). This unfinished club-head provides an example of how some objects from the Official collection came to be disconnected from their source for many years. First registered in 1898 (ER19460), the club-head was apparently on display with the mineral collection in around 1911 before transfer to the Education Department in the 1980s. Eventually making its way back to the Anthropology Department, it was re-registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) on 30 July 2001.

RECONSTRUCTING THE OFFICIAL COLLECTION

Charting the history of the Official collection in QM demonstrates the importance of primary sources in unravelling the complex registration and dispersal histories typical of many museums. Records for the Official collection held in QM's current database (Vernon) are unreliable because they are based on the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) rather than the primary source of its registration, the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). Comprising Official collection material as well as more than

1000 items which the museum acquired from other, unrelated sources between 1880 and c.1910, the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) does not reflect the true purpose for which it was designed. With no reference to those objects exchanged or transferred out from 1894, or duplicates dispersed to other museums in 1897 (more than 2500 items), it is a misleading and inaccurate record of the assemblage of artefacts which MacGregor consigned to the museum in the 1890s. Following a comprehensive and critical analysis of the circumstances surrounding the recording of ethnographic material at QM, it was decided that a new listing of the contents of MacGregor's multiple consignments was required. The *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) proved to be the most reliable source for ensuring that the 'Master List' (Appendix 2, this volume) used in this research project is a most accurate record possible for the Official collection.

Disentangling the Official collection from other Papuan collections held by QM was a priority, especially since some objects originated from localities where MacGregor also actively collected. An earlier database (MACANTH) made by Michael Quinnell combined with digitization of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) greatly assisted the transcription and checking process. Catalogue sheets (and photographs) produced during the lead up to the repatriation of 3297 'MacGregor' items to the National Museum of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby between 1979 and 1992, were particularly useful for cross-checking and verifying data, especially that pertaining to localities.⁵⁵ The catalogue sheets are currently filed in black folders by object category and are stored in the Anthropology Laboratory on Level 5 of QM. Copies of the catalogue sheets are also held in the PNGNMAG.

Transcribing data from the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) was a laborious process often hindered by the physical state of the documents. The first volume (c. 1889–1894) proved especially problematical largely because the poor condition of some pages created significant challenges in determining localities and registration

numbers. Although in better condition, the second volume (c. 1894–1910), included numerous duplicated numbers which required careful unravelling (Figure 11). A list of duplicated registration numbers is included in Appendix 2.

The process of creating a Master List (Appendix 2) of the Official collection involved careful transcribing of data from the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) into an Excel file. The Master List comprises 12 columns (see Appendix 2). Registration number, object type and locality (if recorded) were the primary focus of transcription efforts. While some objects have lengthy descriptions, complete transcriptions would have extended the project beyond the available resources

and so, a decision was made to omit these details from the Master List (Appendix 2). Researchers interested in accessing the descriptions may consult the digitised copies of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) held in the Queensland Museum Research Library. Control numbers assigned during the 1897–98 duplicate selection are also included in the Master file, this data is derived from the entries in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898).

Obscured by a maze of dispersals, duplicated registration numbers, re-registrations and mix-ups, it is difficult to accurately determine the contents of the Official collection. Nevertheless, a reconstruction of the original contents has been achieved by

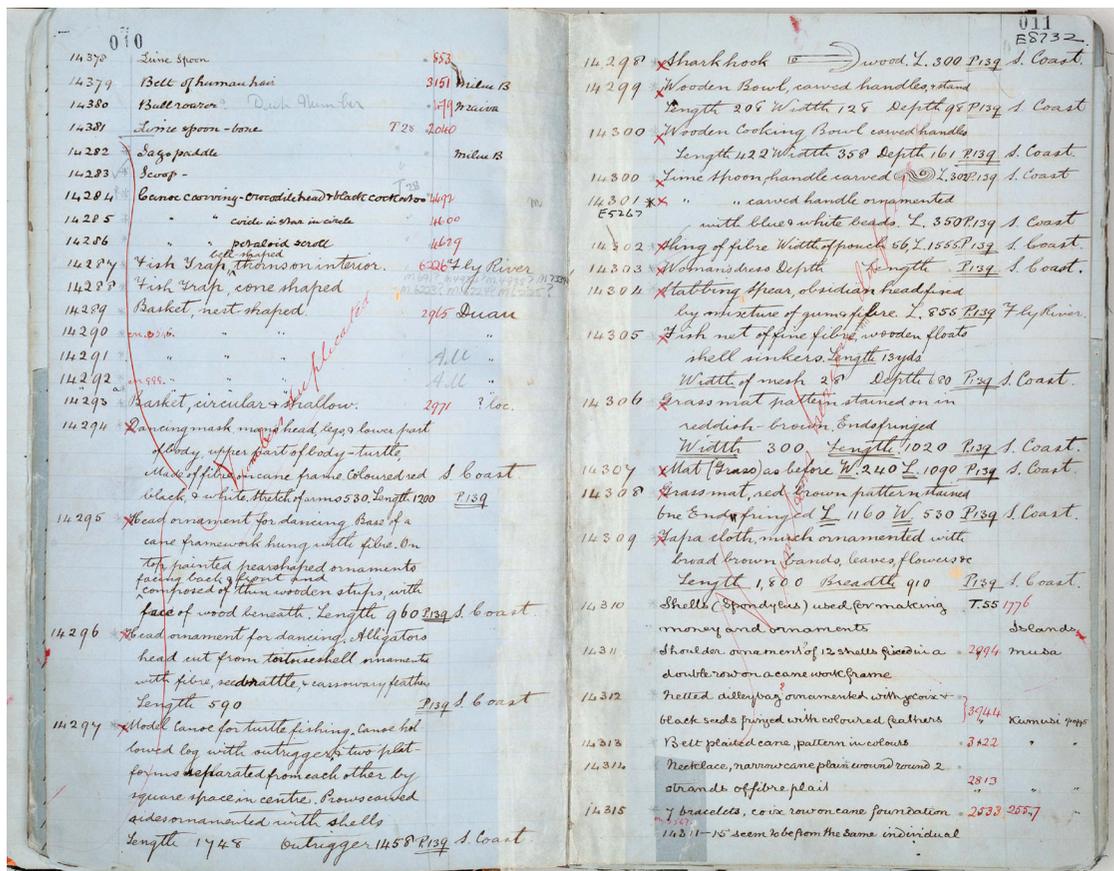


FIG. 11. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910, Volume 2:10–11). These pages show the duplication of registration numbers 14282–14315 which occurred c.1894–1896. Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

carefully tracing the complicated history of this important nineteenth-century collection through a range of museum registers and archival sources. The construction of the Master List (Appendix 2, this volume) is one of the major outcomes of the *Excavating MacGregor* project. The central place of this key source of data in research on this ethnographic collection demonstrates the importance of consulting the primary sources and registers.

ANOMALIES

The process of creating a new Master List (Appendix 2) for the Official collection has exposed a number of glitches that occurred during its initial registration at QM. The most obvious irregularities are the omission and duplication of registration numbers. There is also evidence that a few objects which MacGregor forwarded to the museum between 1892 and 1898 were not registered immediately. These items cannot be linked to any registration number associated with the eight MacGregor Transfers (See Table 2). Since the failure to fully register incoming material was a feature of other collections received by the museum, the problem was not solely connected to the MacGregor consignments.⁵⁶

Three objects especially exemplify how it was possible that some could miss out on registration. The first is a piece of shell reputedly used in the manufacture of nose ornaments (E8393). This object has a rectangular-shaped paper label which shows that it was collected on Woodlark Island on 16 July 1890. Since this type of label is only associated with the Official collection, and in particular with objects from Transfer 46 (see Davies et al., Chapter 5 this volume), it is highly likely that the object was part of that consignment but was not registered at the time (see Appendix 5 Table 1 this volume for an illustration of E8393 and multiple examples of the type of label).⁵⁷ A second object, a toy (E8626) inadvertently omitted from the first consignment but forwarded to the museum a few weeks later, was not registered before it was put on display (Chester 1892; Edge-Partington and Heape 1898: Plate 74, No. 10) (BOX 2.1).

Perhaps the most fascinating of all missed registrations is the third example, described as a 'mosquito net' (Figure 12) which was probably received as part of Transfer 46 (1892) but remained unregistered until the second decade of the twentieth century. Made of bark cloth and shaped like a bag with suspension cords, the 'net' was extremely large ('15 ft. 5 in x 5 ft. 3in') (Hamlyn-Harris 1913a:7). The earliest record of its registration dates from 1913 (E13/315) when it was registered into the *Register of Ethnology* (E Register) (Queensland Museum, 1911–ongoing). By then its connection with the Official collection had been long forgotten. Interestingly, it was MacGregor, then Governor of Queensland, who drew attention to the 'rare and unique specimen' and restored 'its identity which had been lost many years ago' (Hamlyn-Harris 1913a:7).⁵⁸ The mosquito net was re-registered MAC7337 in 1966.

The finding that certain objects were not registered when received at QM in the 1890s highlights the possibility that there might be others with the same history. For example, potential candidates are two bark cloths (ER19773, ER19774) registered about 1901 (*Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910, vol. 2:171).⁵⁹ They exemplify this issue because de Vis noted in the register that they were probably the bark cloths mentioned in MacGregor's report (MacGregor 1890a:89). This reference to one of MacGregor's despatches certainly points to a likely association with the Official collection but it is the very specific nature of the register entry which gives credence to the notion that they are associated with that assemblage. De Vis provided a precise source and locality for the items: 'Geo Soc Exp' [Geographical Society Expedition?] and 'Amoamo-M Yule' [Amoamo village, Mt Yule]. The entry suggests that de Vis was transcribing what was recorded on a field label attached to the bark cloths at the time of registration. Since the items have not been identified in QM, we can only assume that de Vis found them unregistered in the museum and proceeded to rectify the situation.

MISSING ELEMENTS

That some items were not registered by the museum when received is perhaps not surprising given the huge quantities of material contained within some consignments (see Table 2). Of more concern are the estimated c.800 items from the Official collection which are not currently accounted for. The status of these objects came to light through the verifying of the contents (10 959 objects) of the Master List (Appendix 2) by checking against current QM's holdings of 'MacGregor' material.

Careful cross-checking of the contents of the Master List (Appendix 2) against records of outwards exchanges, transfers and duplicate dispersals indicates that at least 2531 artefacts left QM between 1894 and 1910 (see Table 7).⁶⁰ Archival correspondence and museum records indicate that no further outwards exchanges occurred between 1911 and 1913 (Hamlyn-Harris 1913b). This suggests that around 8 428 objects should have remained in QM in 1915 when Official collection material began to be re-registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). These objects



FIG. 12. 'Mosquito Net' made of bark cloth and shaped like a bag with suspension cords, ('15 ft. 5 in x 5 ft. 3in'), Mekeo District, British New Guinea. Identified as part of the Official collection by MacGregor in c.1913 (Hamlyn-Harris 1913a:7). The net probably originated from the village of Akabara in the St. Joseph River district which MacGregor visited on 26 April 1890 and where he noted that 'In each house lay a large bag, made of thick native cloth, which the whole family enter at night as a mosquito net.' (MacGregor 1890a:76). (MAC7337; formerly N.G.E.13/315). (Illustrated in Hamlyn-Harris 1913a, Plate III). Courtesy of the Queensland Museum.

should have been assigned a 'Mac' [MAC] number (i.e. *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) accession number) from this time onwards. As previously noted, the current whereabouts of an estimated c.800 objects from the Official collection is not known. Some of the missing items may be among those objects with no legible registration number (c. 360 items) which populate the pages of the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001).⁶¹ However, it should be noted that those objects without legible registration numbers in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) could also originate from one of several other collections held by the museum which also have missing elements.⁶² That so many items could have lost their registration numbers within two decades of their receipt at the museum is perhaps indicative of a number of factors which plagued the institution: e.g. dwindling resources and staff numbers, as well as inadequate spaces for the display (and later storage) of objects.

Crammed display cabinets were probably a major contributing factor to the loss of important registration data. In 1897, the naturalist-collector Dr Lamberto Loria was so troubled by the manner in which the New Guinea collections at QM were displayed and cared for that he subsequently wrote to MacGregor about the matter: 'the Museum is rather small and there is certainly not room for your numerous collection [sic.] ... the objects are very often put in a heap with great possibility of deterioration.' (Loria 1897).⁶³ Displayed under such settings, registration numbers and labels, especially those which were written on paper and tied onto objects, could easily have become inadvertently separated from their source. Detached labels were sometimes later affixed to the wrong object. This is well exemplified by a label which was found attached to a Papuan Gulf style mask (E4555) in 1966. The mask was found with no previous registration record (NPR) and is certainly not from the locality from which the label indicated. The locality which was written on the label, 'Fish Village, Boundary River', is unique to Official collection material in QM.

Museum records show that towards the end of 1897 the Official collection was removed from display and

placed in storage (Norton 1898:1). Together with previously described crammed display conditions, this physical relocation probably contributed to further loss of registration tags. From 1911, articles found without any previous registration history were usually designated 'NPR' and subsequently re-registered into either the *Register of Ethnology* (E Register) (Queensland Museum, 1911–ongoing) or the *NGE Register* (Queensland Museum 1914–1966). Systematic review of NPR holdings through the *E Register* and *NGE Register* should help uncover some missing portions of the Official collection but is unlikely to resolve the matter entirely.⁶⁴

Poorly documented outwards exchanges may also account for some of the missing items. In 1901, Sir Hugh Nelson received 32 'New Guinea' objects as part of an outwards exchange in 1901 (see Table 7). The registration numbers associated with these objects, which were destined for the Kilmarnock Museum, Ayrshire, Scotland, were not recorded at the time but it is highly likely that some Official collection material was included. New Guinea 'curios' were also sent to the Imperial Institute (London) in March 1893 but museum records of items sent are illegible.⁶⁵

Another scenario is that MacGregor removed some items from the Official collection. He is known to have facilitated the transfer of a group of New Guinea objects, including Official collection material, to Andrew McIlwraith in 1894 (see Table 8). Four years later, in 1898, he was the recipient of three items (two bird specimens and one adze) (see Table 7; Transfer 76 Out). The bird specimens comprised the Glossy-mantled Manucode and Curl-Crested Manucode (both species of bird-of-paradise).⁶⁶ Museum records show that the jade adze blade (ER16225) was 'handed' to MacGregor on 20 October 1898. A scientific specimen of the Curl-Crested Manucode (Reg. No. 1979.1.61) now in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen has an original de Vis handwritten label⁶⁷ which suggests that these items may have ended up in MacGregor's Personal collection (see Philp, Chapter 11 this volume). Perhaps there were other transfers of Official collection material to MacGregor which were not properly documented?

There is some evidence that private collections belonging to MacGregor and some of his staff moved through QM periodically. For instance, a natural history consignment forwarded to QM in February 1890 included a large blue crane which was described as MacGregor's 'private property' (Kowald 1890).⁶⁸ In the following month, birds belonging to MacGregor's private secretary, T.H. Hatton-Richards, were sent to the Museum for mounting along with some butterflies which were to be mounted for Lady MacGregor (Hatton-Richards 1890a). More than three years later the birds belonging to Hatton-Richards still remained in the museum (Hatton-Richards 1893). Given these examples, one wonders if any of MacGregor's private ethnological material may have ended up in QM by mistake.

Cases of ethnographic material not associated with the Official collection appear to have been occasionally shipped to QM in error. A case of 'curios' sent to the museum in late April 1890 possibly represents such an example for there is no record of such a collection ever being registered let alone received in 1890 (Bromley 1890).⁶⁹ Moreover, exhibition space for the receipt of ethnological material from New Guinea was not ready until May 1892.⁷⁰ Perhaps the case belonged to one of MacGregor's staff, or even MacGregor himself?⁷¹ Shipments did sometimes go astray for enquires were made in April 1897 about a case addressed to Mrs H. Cave of Melbourne which may have been among the ethnographic and other specimens recently forwarded to the museum (Musgrave 1897).

One object in QM suggests the possibility of some unintentional mixing of artefacts between MacGregor's Personal and the Official collection. This is a dance shield (ER9571 (MAC4797) on which is hand written in black ink 'J.W.ASKEW SYDNEY...' (see Appendix 5 Table 1).⁷² The label suggests that the item was not intended for the museum but rather an individual. Moreover, the handwritten text bears striking similarities to MacGregor's handwriting and a recent study of labelling associated with the Official collection supports this interpretation (see Davies et al. Chapter 5 this

volume). Perhaps the item was overlooked during the packing of MacGregor's first consignment of ethnology in Port Moresby in 1892 and the item was sent to QM in error?

REORIENTATING THE FOCUS

The process of tracing the history of the Official collection through museum records and registers highlights the complex nature of nineteenth and early twentieth century museum records, a product of nascent recording practices. Through careful examination of historical records and museum registers, however, it has been possible to reconstruct the original composition of the material sent to QM by MacGregor to make up the Official collection and with perhaps less accuracy, to track the separation and distribution of its contents through a series of outwards exchanges and duplicate dispersals. While the initial registration process (1892–1898) and duplicate distribution (1897) were not without error, these can probably be attributed in part to the reduction in staff numbers caused by the economic depression of 1893. The enormous size of some consignments (3 000–4 000 items) would pose a challenge for any museum to register let alone one which also lacked the technological advantages of the present day.

Re-assembling the contents of the Official collection into a single database based on primary rather than secondary registration data has produced a valuable tool for further research. Every object associated with MacGregor's multiple consignments and registered in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) appears in the Master List (Appendix 2), including those items exchanged or transferred out from 1894 (more than 2500 items). A more comprehensive picture of the Official collection emerges because the compilation of the Master list has restored the assemblage back to its original form. This perspective is long overdue since re-registration of the Official collection during the twentieth century transformed what remained of the assemblage in Queensland to the 'MacGregor' collection. The shift from public (Official) to private

(MacGregor) status changed the emphasis of the collection from one assembled as a representative type collection for the colony of British New Guinea (see Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume) to one associated with MacGregor, an individual with high status in society. The Master List (Appendix 2) is an attempt to restore the collection back to its original configuration and therefore greatly enhance the potential for extracting information about the objects made and exchanged by Papuan communities.

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ENDNOTES

1. A spirally bound ledger comprising copies of 151 documents dating from 1888-1922 relating to the 'MacGregor Collection' known as the 'Blue Book' (Quinnell, n.d.) provides important background history to the Official Collection.
2. Quinnell (2000:83-84) gives further details regarding the arrangement between the Queensland Museum and MacGregor.
3. A different total is given in the *Queensland Museum Annual Report* for 1892 with de Vis reporting that the collection comprised 2886 items (de Vis 1893). More recent research indicates it is more likely that Transfer 46 comprised 2970 items.
4. Kendall Broadbent and C. J. Wild were active collectors for the Queensland Museum around this time. Broadbent was a bird-collector of some repute. He collected natural history specimens and ethnographic artefacts in New Guinea in 1875-76 (Stone 1880).
5. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) registration numbers are indicated throughout this volume with an ER prefix (e.g. ER8700). This prefix reflects current Queensland Museum collection management practice and does not appear on objects.
6. This occurred in about 1889-1890 when accessioning lime spatulas previously exhibited at the 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition (Transfer 28).
7. A group of adzes from Transfer 46 were incorrectly assigned numbers ER8074-8077 which had been previously allocated to clubs relating to earlier Papuan collections held by the museum (*Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910), vol. 1:11).
8. The map was sent by the Surveyor General's department in November 1892.

9. Arthur Preston joined the Museum staff as Clerical Assistant in c.September 1891. An example of Preston's handwriting may be found on his undated application for employment (Preston 1891). Preston seems to have been responsible for maintaining the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899) in March 1893. Discernible changes in handwriting in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) suggest that Preston largely accessioned Transfer 47 (119 of 129 objects). Entries for registration numbers ER11587-11596 are in de Vis' handwriting whilst ER11597-11714 are in Preston's handwriting.
10. De Vis was instructed to send the insects and shells to Sydney, to study the snakes and keep the lizards. MacGregor believed that one of the lizards was a new species, and if so, de Vis was to name it after MacGregor's wife, who should be allowed to draw it.
11. Significantly, the pages in the registers associated with these numbers (ER13476-14186) do not have 'T52' marked in the column as before. A pencil annotation 'T52' in the upper right corner of these pages is of a later date, probably 1914-1935 period.
12. For example, the locality 'Daudai Mamadauan Govt Station' associated with registration numbers ER13688-13714 (arrows) suggests that they may be associated with the Official collection.
13. Two examples of this type of arrow were received in 1894 (see ER13931, ER13932).
14. ER14379-14286 (unknown writer); ER14287-14309 (Preston); ER14310-14682 (de Vis; Transfer 55). The duplication of numbers begins at ER14282 which should have been ER14382. Sometime later the error came to de Vis' attention and the register was annotated accordingly. The annotation reads '14282 to 14381 in duplicate see below' (*Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910), vol. 2: 7).
15. For example, ER14310-14381 are duplicated numbers and part of Transfer 55.
16. De Vis requested further information about the 'Bundle of 24 whisps human hair' in late January 1896 (de Vis 1897a). He annotated the entry in his list 'N.B. Information Requested'.
17. The whip-like rods of human hair bound with bark (ER18691-18717) appear in a section of the register sandwiched between Transfer 60 and Transfer 68 and with other objects that are not associated with the Official collection and without source details. Some of the other objects in this group are from Murray Island (Torres Strait) and are clearly part of Queensland Museum's earlier (pre-1892) collections. It seems likely that a group of objects were found without registration data and therefore re-accessioned.
18. Paddles ER14683-ER14685 were crossed through in the register by de Vis but have been located in the collection.
19. Registration numbers ER14568, ER14591, ER14600 and ER14620 were duplicated and thus 60 rather than 56 bark cloths originate from Musa.
20. MacGregor wrote that he considered the bark cloth from Musa River 'to be of very great value... the patterns quite uninfluenced by anything introduced by Europeans'.
21. MacGregor obtained 'many specimens' of bark cloth for the 'public collection' on 10 April 1894 during his first explorations of the Musa River (MacGregor 1894:36). A second lot of bark cloths were procured through trade on 30 August 1895. John Green (then acting as MacGregor's private secretary) wrote that MacGregor sent him ashore to buy curios on 30 August 1895 (Musa River). Green 'spent about half an hour in their village buying stone clubs, adzes, native cloth & all sorts of things' (Green 1892-96: Letter dated 13 September 1895). Presumably the group of bark cloth in Transfer 55 are those collected by John Green in August 1895 and referred to by MacGregor in his letter to de Vis (15 December 1895) which he regarded as 'well worth careful study' (MacGregor 1895).
22. Pre-1892 collections can be identified in various ways. For example, objects from Transfer 12 (received in 1887) are usually marked 'T12' in red crayon or chalk while Transfer 28 objects are identifiable by a handwritten square-shaped serrated label or a metal tag with 'T28' impressed. Sometimes 'T28' was written on objects in red crayon or chalk.
23. See *Exchange (OUT) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884-1907), No. 137 (25 July 1894). In return, QM received a human skull from Goodenough Island (*Exchange (IN) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884-1907), No.137).
24. *Exchange (OUT) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884-1907), No. 219.
25. While a list of objects is supplied in the *Exchange (OUT) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884-1907), no registration numbers were recorded. Even so, it is likely that some objects from the Official collection were included as part of the exchange. Nelson had strong connections with Kilmarnock for it was his place of birth. Nelson was later lieutenant-governor of Queensland 1904-1905.
26. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910), vol. 2, entry for 16225 annotated by de Vis 'handed to Sir W Macgregor 20/10/98'.
27. This was likely the London-based shipowner and frozen meat trade exporter, Andrew McIlwraith (1844-1932) whose brother, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, served as Premier of Queensland three times (1879-1883; 1888 and 1893).
28. See *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899: 117). Entry (21 August 1894) records Exchange Out 140 to A. McIlwraith of London. See also, *Exchange (Out) Register (1884-1907)*: No. 140 (22 August 1894). Entry later amended 'retransferred'.
29. A single-line entry in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899:118) records the retransfer of 'Birds & Ethnology' to MacGregor on 28 August 1894. No transfer (out) number was recorded.

30. The entry in the *Exchange (IN) Register* (Queensland Museum 1884-1907) for no. 140 reads simply 'See Exchange out 140'.
31. Sir James Garrick was associated with the planned Imperial Institute (London) in 1893. Following a request from Garrick (through the Colonial Secretary's office) some New Guinea 'curios' were sent to London in March 1893 (see *Minute Book of Monthly Meetings*, Trustees Minutes (Queensland Museum 1876-1907), 21 March 1893). Correspondence associated with this selection was reputedly in the Outwards letter correspondence but is now illegible. It is possible that some objects from Transfer 46 and Transfer 47 were among the 1893 selection. Exchange Out 140 (1894) may be possibly connected with further requests from the Imperial Institute for curios.
32. De Vis realised the mistake noting 'error = 10905' against 14361 in the register. 10905 was part of Transfer 46.
33. De Vis alluded to the possible selection of Official collection as duplicates in his report on the Ethnological collections, '... it is now becoming possible to see which examples of these can be spared for distribution without lessening the value of the remainder' (de Vis 1894a: 98).
34. There was also an earlier approach in 1893 by the British Museum to obtain New Guinea objects (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings*, Trustees Minutes (Queensland Museum 1876-1907:1 September 1893).
35. The figures associated with duplicates selected for AM (943), MV (821) and BM (721) are based on lists sent to these institutions rather than QM records (Torrence et al. 2020). In contrast, the QM share (1584) is based on the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897-1898). Since the selection process was problematic the overall figure of 4 070 is probably not an accurate reflection of the total numbers selected and shared.
36. It is unclear when the red-ink control 'cn' numbers were written in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910). Different handwriting styles suggests that there were at least two phases when they were recorded. For example, see entries for ER9329 and ER9345; the latter seems to have been written at a later date and is initialled (unidentified).
37. Norris is first noted as clerical assistant in the *Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes* (Queensland Museum 1876-1907): 5 Sept 1896. His handwriting is probably that in the *Minute Book* from 2 August 1897. For a sample of C. J. Wild's handwriting, see a letter which he and Kendall Broadbent wrote to the Chairman of the Queensland Museum Trustees (6 April 1896) asking for an increase in their salaries (Broadbent & Wild, 1896).
38. The arrows were largely among those registered between the two phases of registration of Transfer 52 (see ER13476-14186).
39. T62 (out); 30 July 1897 (to Australian Museum) and T64 (out); 6 August 1897 (to National Museum of Victoria). See *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899: 154-155).
40. For example, ER19238 (MAC2504) has large black paint lettering which reads 'Sydney NSW' and a smaller label 'AM Sydney' on the underside of the bowl.
41. Three spears or pointed sticks were re-registered between 1918 and 1919 (MAC539; MAC5399-5400). The remaining bows, arrows and spears associated with the Official collection were re-registered between 1967 and 2001.
42. There was an earlier query regarding the status of the collection in 1908 (Quinnell 2000: 93).
43. Current Queensland Museum collection management practice uses the prefix 'MAC' in the museum database (Vernon) rather than the prefix 'Mac' which appears in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001). Objects accessioned into the register between 1915 and 1920 (MAC1-6314) are physically numbered with a 'Mac' prefix. In around 1965, museum numbering practices changed and the prefix 'M' was used instead of 'Mac' (Michael Quinnell, pers. comm., May 2021). Thus, objects registered between c.1966 and 2001 will have an 'M' prefix written before the number (e.g. M7308).
44. The top of page 161 suggests that MAC6301-14 were registered in 1919. However, underneath MAC6314, Illidge's signature appears with the date 11 May 1920. This may have been added later on.
45. In July 1922, the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001) was duplicated by Illidge for the Papuan Government (*MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001:182); Quinnell 2000: 95).
46. An additional c. 494 items (mainly arrows) from unrelated collections were registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001) after 1964.
47. These may be identified through the omission of an 1890s registration number; such entries are typically marked '?' or 'No. illegible'.
48. A further c.56 objects without any legible registration number were accessioned into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001) between 1964 and 2001. Some have since been re-registered into the *Register of Ethnology (E Register)* (Queensland Museum 1911-ongoing). Details of these objects may be found in the Appendix 4 Table 4.
49. An explanation for the use of the letter 'M' is given in pencil at the top of the first page of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910): 'Entries marked M belong to Museum collection'. This work seems rushed and not complete.
50. MacGregor did facilitate the transfer of the assemblage of artefacts from the 1888 Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition to the museum in 1889 (*Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899:36). However, the items were not collected under his administration of the colony.

51. C.J. Wild who replaced de Vis as acting director (1905-1910) lacked intimate knowledge about the Official collection. He assisted de Vis on occasion, such as in 1897 when duplicates were selected, but had never been responsible for primary registration of the assemblage.
52. On 13 January 1914, Hamlyn-Harris sent a telegram from Melbourne requesting that a search be made through the museum archives regarding the New Guinea collection and relevant documents be forwarded registered mail to the National Museum of Victoria (Hamlyn-Harris 1914a). The two volumes of the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910) were forwarded along with some correspondence (Longman 1914a). See letter filed with inwards correspondence (see QM In:59/1914 filed with inwards correspondence).
53. See following correspondence in QM: Hamlyn-Harris (1914a, 1914b, 1914c) and Longman (1914a, 1914b, 1914c).
54. Approximately 261 spears were re-registered by Crosby in August 1967.
55. Since the repatriation process was based on items in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001), it included both Official collection and non-Official collection items (see Quinnell 2000: 96).
56. For example, a collection associated with Andrew Goldie in 1886 was only partly registered at the time (Davies 2012: 165).
57. The object was found unnumbered in the museum and assigned an E registration number (E8393) on 22 April 1969.
58. MacGregor told Hamlyn-Harris that during a visit to the Mekeo district, he had come across the mosquito net erected in one of the houses and had managed to secure it for the Queensland Museum (i.e. Official collection) (Hamlyn-Harris 1913a:7). The net probably originated from the village of Akabara in the St. Joseph River district which MacGregor visited on 26 April 1890 and where he noted that, 'In each house lay a large bag, made of thick native cloth, which the whole family enter at night as a mosquito net.' (MacGregor 1890a:76).
59. The registration date for ER19773-ER19774 is determined from the items which are registered immediately before and after (i.e. Donation 11056, Capt. Barton, 1901).
60. This takes into account those objects which left the museum through duplicate dispersals in 1897 (recorded as Transfers Out: 62, 64, (BM-no outwards transfer number recorded); Outwards Transfers (76 and 77) and well-documented outwards exchanges between 1894 and 1910 (Exchanges Out: 137, 140, 194, 202 and 245) (140 was later referred to as a re-transferred to MacGregor). Exchanges Out: 193 and 219 may have contained Official collection material but are not included as no record of registration numbers sent remains.
61. For example, c. 300 items with no discernible registration number were registered by Illidge between 1918 and 1919 into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001).
62. For example, 63 objects and '6 Bundles' of bows & arrows associated with an ethnographic collection supplied the collector-trader Andrew Goldie in 1886 cannot be accounted for (Davies 2012:156-157). A wrist ornament (Goldie No. 32) associated with Goldie's 1886 collection was found in Queensland Museum stores in 2016.
63. Loria also wrote to de Vis, informing him of the contents of his letter to MacGregor. He quoted what he had written to MacGregor as he was concerned that 'It is possible that you will feel the consequences of Sir William reading my letter'.
64. Since 1966, at least 145 artefacts found in storerooms and other parts of the museum with registration numbers indicating that they were part of MacGregor consignments have been re-registered into the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001). The total of 145 excludes arrows, spears and bows which were not accessioned by Illidge in 1918-19.
65. See *Minute Book of Monthly Meetings*, Trustees Minutes (Queensland Museum 1876-1907): 21 March 1893. Associated outwards correspondence is illegible. It is likely that some objects from Transfer 46 and Transfer 47 were among the 1893 selection for the Imperial Institute.
66. *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910), vol. 2, ER16225, entry was annotated by de Vis 'handed to Sir W Macgregor 20/10/98'. The outwards transfer (Transfer 76) is recorded in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899:169). The bird specimens were described as *Manucodia atra* and *M. Comrie*. Both are a species of bird-of-paradise.
67. The spelling of 'Comrie' on the label matches that in the *Donor Register* (Queensland Museum 1887-1899:169).
68. MacGregor also wrote about the consignment noting that the 'Goliath crane is my private property a present from his Majesty, the King of Saibai' (MacGregor 1890b).
69. Some natural history specimens were received 10 May 1890. It is possible that the case of 'curios' referred to in the shipping receipt forwarded by Bromley (Burns, Philp & Co.) of 29 April 1890 comprised that material.
70. De Vis wrote to MacGregor (6 May 1892) advising him that, 'that arrangements ... have made sufficient progress to allow the due display of the Ethnological objects which you were good enough to intimate had been collected under your instructions with a view to their ultimate transfer to the care of the Trustees. The Trustees ... look forward to the receipt of these objects with lively interest' (de Vis 1892).
71. For instance, Hatton-Richards had a small private collection of New Guinea curios in 1890 (Hatton-Richards 1890b:16).
72. A search of *Sands' Sydney & Suburban Directory 1892* reveals the existence of forwarding agents operating under the name of Askew & Co.

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BOX 2.1

LOST AND FOUND: RECONNECTING THE OFFICIAL COLLECTION

Susan M DAVIES and Michael QUINNELL

On 9 Dec 1892, Henry Marjoribanks Chester, police magistrate at Cooktown, wrote to curator Charles de Vis about 'a child's toy from the Trobriand islands' which he was forwarding to the museum at the request of Sir W. MacGregor (Chester 1892). The toy was supposed to have been included in MacGregor's first consignment of ethnology (Transfer 46, received 25 October 1892) but had been inadvertently left behind. No record of the toy's registration can be found in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889-1910). Found in the museum in the 1960s without any previous registration history, the connection between the object in Figure 13 and MacGregor was not realised at the time and so it was accessioned into the general *Ethnology Register (E Register)* (Queensland Museum 1911-ongoing) (E8626) rather than the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915-2001).

Careful historical research has, however, enabled a match between the lost object and the Official collection. Chester's 1892 description of the object is the first clue to its identification: 'The stick is strung as a bow, and the wooden bird travels down the bow string.' Another important lead is a sketch made British ethnologist James Edge-Partington who visited the Queensland Museum in May 1897 (Edge-Partington and Heape 1898: Plate 74, No. 10) (Figure 14). Nearly 130 years have passed since the toy was received at the museum and sadly it is not in the same condition as when Edge-Partington sketched it, but now at least we can firmly reconnect it with the Official collection.



FIG. 13. Based on historical research matching information in a letter and the sketch with associated text in FIG. 14, this carved and painted wooden bird from the Trobriand Islands (E8626) has been reconnected with the Official collection. Photography: Queensland Museum, Peter Waddington.

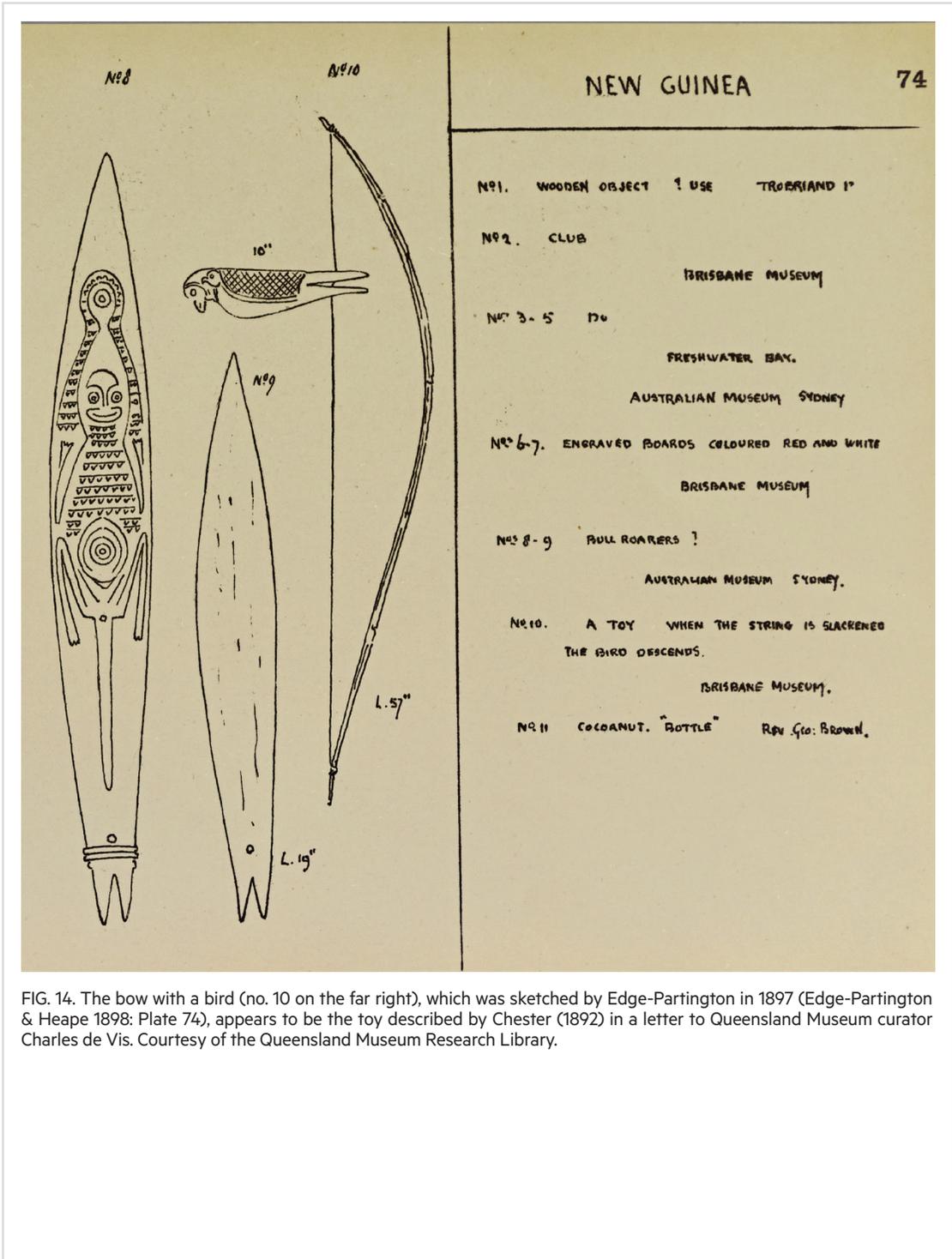


FIG. 14. The bow with a bird (no. 10 on the far right), which was sketched by Edge-Partington in 1897 (Edge-Partington & Heape 1898: Plate 74), appears to be the toy described by Chester (1892) in a letter to Queensland Museum curator Charles de Vis. Courtesy of the Queensland Museum Research Library.