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

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# Locating MacGregor in the field: a study of labels, markings and inscriptions in the Official and Personal collections

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Sir William MacGregor’s field activities in British New Guinea are revealed through the many hundreds of despatches he wrote to his superiors between 1888 and 1898. And yet, the acquisition of artefacts specifically for the Official collection is rarely mentioned. This lack of documentation makes it difficult to connect objects in the assemblage to particular collecting events, something which is further complicated by the fact that MacGregor made multiple visits to some places. We argue that by analysing a previously underutilised body of evidence associated with MacGregor’s field collections – the labels, markings or inscriptions which are still preserved on artefacts – it may be possible to reconstruct the social contexts during which objects were obtained. We show how this material archive can add to our current knowledge about key elements in the formation of the assemblage – collector, place and date – all essential data for identifying and reconstructing the types of cross-cultural encounters which underlay the acquisition of the objects that comprise the Official collection.

□ British New Guinea, Sir William MacGregor, Queensland Museum, ethnographic collections, field collecting, labels, inscriptions, markings

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## INTRODUCTION

Sir William MacGregor assumed his post as Administrator of British New Guinea on 4 September, 1888. Within weeks he was in the field, making collections of geology, natural history and ethnology. Within a year he had begun making arrangements for artefacts collected on official duty to be deposited in the Queensland Museum (Quinnell 2000:83). MacGregor's passion for collecting the material culture of the indigenous peoples of the colony did not wane and by the time he left the colony in mid-1898, he had amassed a collection of around 14 000 artefacts. While we are able to establish the private (c.3 000 items) and public (c.11 000 items) components of the assemblage (hereafter referred to as Personal and Official), little is known about the circumstances surrounding their acquisition. Take, for example, the Official collection which MacGregor consigned to the Queensland Museum between 1892 and 1898. The field acquisition of objects for this vast assemblage of Papuan material culture is poorly documented through MacGregor's official reports (e.g. MacGregor 1892a:7; MacGregor 1892–93:8; MacGregor 1897a:55; MacGregor 1899a:25; MacGregor 1899b:39; MacGregor 1899c:46, 47–48). Without supporting documentation, it is extremely difficult to establish when a particular artefact, or group of artefacts, may have been obtained, especially since MacGregor visited some places on multiple occasions and sometimes more than once in a single year.

The photograph in Figure 1 exemplifies the challenges facing researchers when encountering the Official collection for the first time. A fascinating array of indigenous artefacts from British New Guinea (BNG) are depicted in this image, but there is no supporting documentation which tells us where these objects originated from or who collected them. Does this group represent the field acquisitions of some intrepid explorer or natural history collector? Where were they acquired, exactly when, and who was the collector? Were these objects freely exchanged or are they

the product of a punitive raid? Was this group put together from multiple events or a single occasion? Without knowing where and when these objects were obtained and by whom, it is difficult to determine the nature of the social interactions which underlay their acquisition.

A closer look at the lower left-hand corner of Figure 1 reveals the number '141' which allows us to identify the photograph as one taken by Port Moresby's first resident missionary, Rev. W.G. Lawes.<sup>1</sup> Upon further inspection it is evident that many of the objects in the image derive from Sir William MacGregor's field collections, and, in particular, the Official collection. Since the procurement of artefacts specifically for the Official collection is rarely mentioned in government reports, the information on small pieces of paper like those affixed to the objects might tell us where and when they were acquired. With some forensic work, it may be possible to determine the person who labelled and may have collected specific objects and perhaps the date when this occurred.

Based on analyses of the Official collection, now dispersed among three Australian and two overseas museums (Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume; Davies, Chapter 2 this volume) and MacGregor's Personal collection (see Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume), we show that through integrated analyses of labelling (i.e. labels, inscriptions and markings) and handwriting, it is possible to identify MacGregor's presence in the field, and to connect objects to specific collecting events. The role which several other government officers played in acquiring objects for the Official collection is also revealed, a contribution largely overlooked previously. The dated collecting episodes identified through the study give researchers the potential to focus on the types of social encounters during which objects were acquired for the Official collection. Moreover, the set of data and illustrations of the labelling appended to this volume (Tables 1, 2, 3 in Appendix 5) provides an important means of identifying additional Official collection material that may have lost its original association.



FIG. 1. Photograph depicting a group of indigenous cultural objects from British New Guinea, most of which derive from the Official collection. The number '141' at bottom left confirms that the photograph was taken by the missionary, Reverend W.G. Lawes, c.1890. Andrew Goldie Collection, Museum of the Cumbraes, Millport, Scotland, Courtesy of the North Ayrshire Heritage and Cultural Services.

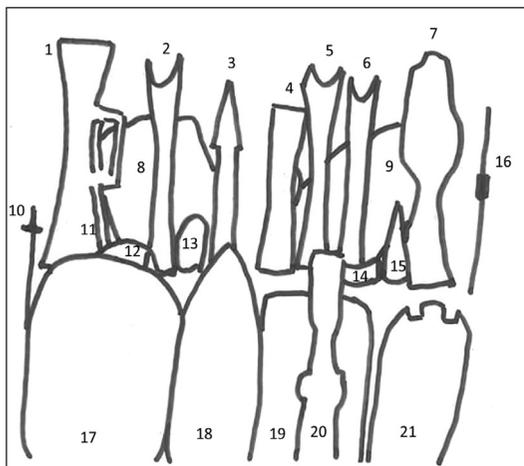


FIG. 1. Key: Official collection items. See Table 7.

## SITUATING THE STUDY

Myriad studies focus on the Europeans who made ethnographic collections in the nineteenth century, but relatively few incorporate systematic analyses of the rich data that can be obtained from the labelling associated with the objects. The papers presented at the Museum Ethnographers Group's 2011 conference, 'Objects and Words: Writing On, Around, and About Things' (*Journal of Museum Ethnography* 2012: No. 25), exemplify previous research on this topic.<sup>2</sup> Several papers from the conference demonstrate the kinds of useful information that can be extracted from a collection when the documentation associated with it is examined carefully. For example, Ayres (2012) shows how a study of labels, museum registers, correspondence and handwriting

helped to establish the identity of the individual who collected an unprovenanced but historic collection of ethnographic objects from the French Congo now in the Pitt Rivers Museum (PRM) (Oxford), whereas Coote (2012) draws attention to the benefits as well as the pitfalls of studying labels and other markings. Through the example of an inscription which survives on a Maori fish-hook in the PRM, Coote (2012:11–13) shows how historic labelling can be easily misinterpreted. While his view that labels and inscriptions on objects constitute and provide ‘clues,’ it is his remarks on a Middle Palaeolithic stone hand-axe in the PRM which particularly resonate: ‘what I see when I look at it is a much-used specimen on which curators, scholars, and researchers have – deliberately or accidentally – left traces of their engagements’ (Coote 2012:11). In this study we focus on the ‘traces of engagements’ left on objects in the form of labels, markings and inscriptions, as a way of revealing the identity of those individuals who either played a major part in the acquisition and/or labelling of objects in the Official collection, either in British New Guinea or later within the Queensland Museum.

## THE OFFICIAL COLLECTION

The Official collection, comprising approximately 10 959 objects, was deposited in the Queensland Museum (QM) through eight consignments between 1892 and 1898 (Transfer numbers 46, 47, 52, 55, 60, 68, 70 and 74) (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume). Objects from these consignments may be traced through their registration in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) (see Davies et al., Table 1 in Appendix 2 this volume). Five categories of information were recorded in this register: registration number; object type (sometimes with a lengthy description); measurements; transfer number and collection locality (not always present). Since no lists of contents appear to have accompanied any of the ethnological consignments which MacGregor forwarded to Queensland Museum, we assume that localities entered in the museum register at the time of registration were based on some sort of label attached to an artefact or groups of artefacts.

Curator Charles de Vis’s report on the first consignment of ethnology which arrived at the Queensland Museum in late October 1892 (assigned Transfer 46) provides evidence that labels existed (De Vis 1893). In January 1893, de Vis informed the Museum Trustees that the collection contained 2886<sup>3</sup> pieces and comprised ‘all kinds of weapons, tools, dresses, trinkets, domestic appliances, toys, musical instruments, raw materials, &c., &c.’. He remarked that the value of the collection was ‘impaired’ by the fact that ‘no label is attached to a considerable number of the articles’ (De Vis 1893).<sup>4</sup> Presumably the labels that did exist documented the locality from which an object had been collected.

On closer inspection of the register, the presence or absence of labels can be inferred on the basis of how de Vis recorded locality data. Precise designation of place presumably reflected the presence of a label of some sort, while entries consisting of blank spaces, question marks, or the text ‘loc?’ suggest that none was present at time of registration. For example, the entry associated with the first item registered in 1892 as part of Transfer 46 (ER8700) shows that de Vis transcribed locality data directly from what was written on the object.<sup>5</sup> This hafted stone adze had different localities recorded for the stone head and the haft. De Vis noted this anomaly in the locality column.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the assumption that the localities recorded in the museum register in the 1890s provide key evidence of whether an object was originally labelled or not, the register was used to assign locality data to objects where possible. Precise localities were noted for 4 711 objects or nearly 43 per cent of the collection. This finding suggests that this information was provided by some kind of label (in some cases bundles or groups of objects from the same place may have been served by a single label). Further analysis shows that the provenienced objects are linked to one of around 200 different localities recorded in the register, comprising a mix of islands or island groups, mountain ranges, rivers, bays, and occasionally, villages (See Table 1 in Appendix 2 this volume).<sup>7</sup> Repeat visits are indicated for places associated with more than one transfer number. In addition, an acquisition date was noted in association with 13 localities (Table 1).

TABLE. 1. Dated collecting episodes in the Official collection as recorded in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* during registration of the assemblage between 1892 and 1898.

Locality and date of acquisition	Transfer Nos.	Notes	No. of objects
Dyke Acland Bay 4/10/93	52	Also known as 'Dyke Ackland Bay'	31
Puneavuru 1/5/95	55		1
Mambare R 21/8/95	55		1
Kumusi 1/10/95	55	Date probably 21/10/95 not 1/10/95	22
Mambare R 24/10/95	55; 60		3
Bugeri 5/96 [Tugeri 5/96]	60	Tugeri 5/96 likely misread as 'Bugeri 5/96'	4
Boirave, Inland of Oranger Bay. 7/ 96	60		1
Dufaure Isd 7/96	60		2
Mambare R Aug/96	60		4
Mambare R 1896	60		1
Mirowa 1896	60		1
Moni/96	60		1
Neneba 11/96 or Nov/96	60		2

## LABEL FORMS

Having argued that labels were present on Official collection material, we now turn to an analysis of the diverse forms that have survived. The data are largely derived from c.8000 objects, inspected in the Official collection currently held in QM, Australian Museum (AM), Museums Victoria (MV), British Museum (BM) and the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (PNGNMAG) excluding bows and arrows due to difficulties with access. We also consulted the holdings of MacGregor's Personal collection at the University of Aberdeen, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, and the Museum of Anthropology, University of Cambridge, to see if artefacts were labelled in a similar manner.

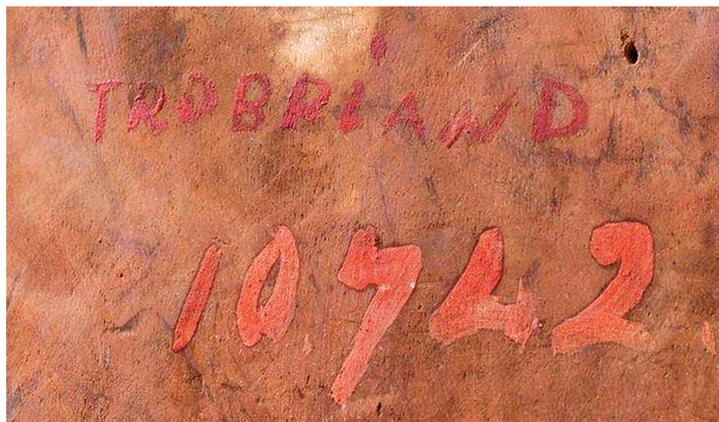
Official collection objects were either physically inspected for the presence of labels or when this was not possible, photographs, coloured slides, register entries and catalogue sheets were examined for either signs of a label or inscription or a written record regarding their possible existence. Photographs taken by *Excavating MacGregor* team members in Aberdeen, Oxford and Cambridge in 2015 and supplemented by photographic and database records kindly provided by University Museums, University of Aberdeen staff and Eve

Haddow (National Museum of Scotland 'Pacific collections in Scottish museums: unlocking their knowledge and potential' project) formed the basis of our analysis of MacGregor's Personal collection.

Our study identified several different forms of labelling in use in British New Guinea: inscribed (red paint, black or white ink, or pencil); notebook paper; manufactured paper (double-line black borders) and card (notebook covers and/or stiff card) (Table 2). Inscribed forms in red paint or black ink were especially prevalent (Figure 2a, b). Many hand-fashioned paper labels were also observed, of which the majority are comprised of rectangular-shaped pieces of paper that were probably cut or torn out of notebooks (or perhaps single sheets of notebook paper). Given their various sources, the notebook paper labels vary considerably in size (Figure 3a–f). Two distinct manufactured paper types exist. One features a double black line border on the upper and lower horizontal axes, while the other has the same border on all four sides (Figure 4a–b).<sup>8</sup> A few card labels of differing sizes were noted (Figure 4c–f) as well as a large label constructed from a notebook cover (Figure 5a). White ink and pencil inscriptions are also represented (Figure 5b–c), but these are relatively uncommon. Incised forms also exist but these are extremely rare (Figure 5d).

TABLE. 2. Forms of labelling in the Official collection 1888–1898.

Form	No. of dated examples	No. of undated examples	Notes
Paper (notebook) -cut or torn from notebook	43	116	Several different sizes exist
Red paint inscription	3	240	
Paper (manufactured)	4	16	Two forms with double line black border
Black ink inscription	4	228	
Card (notebook cover or stiff card)	1	1	
Card (stiff card) - small	0	16	
Card (stiff card or paper) – small and with trimmed corners	0	1	
Notebook cover, cut	0	3	
White ink inscriptions	1?	26	These were overwritten in white ink in 1970s
Blue ink [?] inscriptions	0	1	
Incised	0	3	
Pencil inscriptions	0	6	Pencil inscriptions sometimes appear underneath paper labels



a



b

FIG. 2. a. Red paint inscription ‘TROBRIAND’ attributed to MacGregor (note the lower case i) on shield: ER10742 (MAC4781). Red paint ‘10742’ is the Queensland Museum registration number. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington. b. Black ink inscription on club from Ikora, German New Guinea: ER14364 (MAC3632). The ‘G.N.G.’ part of the inscription refers to German New Guinea as MacGregor and Captain Jones of the SS *Merrie England* conducted a running survey of the NE coast between the Musa River and Ikore River in April 1893 and found that part of the mouth of the Ikore River lay within German territory. The club may have been collected in April 1893 or on a subsequent visit on 5 March 1894. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



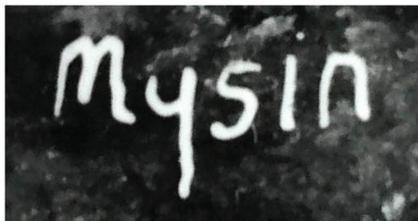
FIG. 3. a. Paper label probably cut from a notebook on adze, Rossel Island, 14 October 1888: ER8821 (MAC31). Queensland Museum Photography. b. Paper notebook label with faint line-rule, attached to coix-seed belt: ER9493 (AM E.006303). Photography, Gary Granitch with permission from the Australian Museum. c. Canoe ornament, Laughlan Island, 17 July 1890: ER9694 (MAC4594). Queensland Museum Photography. d. Adze, Baimala: ER14499 (MAC121 PNGNMAG). Label has been created by tearing a piece of paper, possibly from a notebook. Photography, Robin Torrence with permission from the PNGNMAG. e. Small paper label on adze blade, Kokoaru: ER15766 (MAC11 PNGNMAG). The 'x' at the end of the word probably relates to Camp 10. The blade is also labelled 'KOKUARU' in red paint. Photography, Robin Torrence with permission from the PNGNMAG. f. Adze blade with paper notebook label created by tearing a section out of a notebook: ER19450 (MAC142). The date on the label indicates it was collected during MacGregor's punitive expedition to the Mambare River. Photography, Kiri Chan.



FIG. 4. a. Manufactured label with double-line black border on upper and lower horizontal axes: lime gourd, ER16268 (MAC3236). Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington. b. Charm, St Joseph's River, May 1890 ER10701 (MAC3248 PNGNMAG). Same borders as a. but with dotted lines. Photography, Robin Torrence with permission from the PNGNMAG. c. Card label attached to canoe ornament from Boigu Island, Torres Strait, collected in May 1896: ER15214 (MAC3935). Photography, Susan M. Davies. d. Stiff card label with trimmed corners attached to bag collected from Oijaga Village, Mekeo district: ER11699 (MAC1981 PNGNMAG). Handwriting on this side of the label appears to be MacGregor's. Only example of this label style found in the Official collection. Photography, Susan M. Davies with permission from the PNGNMAG. e. Small stiff card label attached to coix-seed mourning jacket, NE Coast: ER12507 (MAC3986). Photography, Susan M. Davies. f. Small stiff card label on an ear ornament from 'Dyke Ackland Bay': ER12992 (MAC1410 PNGNMAG). Photography, Susan M. Davies with permission from the PNGNMAG.



a



b

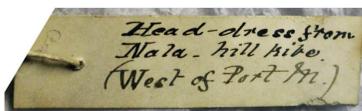


c



d

FIG. 5. a. Notebook cover cut to form label. 'His Excellency The Lieutenant-Governor, Samarai, British New Guinea' written in black ink. Label attached to fishing net: Fly River ER19263 (MAC5135). The 'Samarai' written on the label could refer to 'Samarai' village on Kiwai Island, Fly River, or the government station 'Samarai' in the Milne Bay district. The label may have led to later confusion about the provenience of this fishing net as it has been since reassigned to Milne Bay Province in museum records. Photography, Susan M. Davies. b. White ink inscription on adze from Mysina: ER8825 (MAC123 PNGNMAG). Original white inscription was overwritten in early 1970s but the letter 'a' at the end of the word was missed (it was also missed by de Vis in 1892). Queensland Museum Photography. c. Pencil inscription on canoe washboard from Woodlark Island: ER8796 (MAC6286). Photography, Kiri Chan. d. Club ER12210 (MAC3587) which has the word 'BANARI' incised directly into its shaft. Use of the lower-case letter 'i' with uppercase lettering suggests incision made by MacGregor. Sergeant Banari was one of the longest serving members of the Armed Native Constabulary. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



a



b



c



d

FIG. 6. a. Small stiff card label associated with headdress from Nala-hill tribe, West of Port Moresby: ABDUA:456. Reverse side of card has additional text in cursive script with the initials 'AM' indicating the label was probably written by Anthony Musgrave, a member of the colonial administration in BNG. Photography, Robin Torrence ©University of Aberdeen. b. Paper or card label with trimmed corners 'Fighting Charm of Astrolabe Range Natives Rigo 8.3.89'. Trimmed corners are generally associated with MacGregor's Personal collection (ABDUA:145 University Museums, Aberdeen). Photography, Robin Torrence ©University of Aberdeen. c. Lime spatula, Cape Nelson: ABDUA:230. This label form is not represented in the Official collection. Photography, Robin Torrence ©University of Aberdeen. d. Circular serrated label typical of MacGregor's Personal collection: ABDUA:143. A similar form of serrated label found in the Official collection was probably applied in the Queensland Museum and not in British New Guinea. Photography, Robin Torrence ©University of Aberdeen.

Many of the forms of labelling found in association with the Official collection (Table 1 in Appendix 5) are also extant in MacGregor’s Personal collection in the University Museums, University of Aberdeen (Table 2 in Appendix 5). For example, the same types of notebook paper label (ABDUA:1686), red paint inscriptions (ABDUA:57658, ABDUA:611, ABDUA:518), black inscriptions (ABDUA:1626), manufactured labels (ABDUA:821 and ABDUA: 607) and similar, rectangular-shaped card labels (Figure 6a) are represented. Like the Official collection, there is a mix of dated and undated examples. A type fashioned from notebook paper or perhaps stiff card with trimmed corners<sup>9</sup> appears to be a significant marker of MacGregor’s Personal collection (Figure 6b), while a rectangular-shaped, manufactured label with rounded edges is unique to MacGregor’s Personal collection (Figure 6c). There is also a small, circular-shaped paper label with serrated edges in the Personal Collection (Figure 6d). It is also found in the Official collection but in this case it appears to be solely connected to registration or duplicate selection procedures that took place in the Queensland Museum.

## DATED COLLECTING EPISODES

Multiple dated collecting events were identified through the combined study of labels, inscriptions and museum registers (Table 3).<sup>10</sup> A larger number of dated episodes are preserved on objects in the Official collection than is indicated in the museum registers. Registration data sourced from the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) reveal only 13 dated episodes, associated with three consignments received from MacGregor (Transfers 52, 55, 60) (see Table 1). Five additional collecting episodes were noted in the *Register of the “MacGregor” Collection of New Guinea Ethnology (MacGregor Register)* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) during re-registration of Official collection material between 1915 and 1919 (Table 3).<sup>11</sup> We found fifty-five definite examples and one uncertain example of dated forms in all shipments except for Transfer 70, which comprised only two objects.

Table 3 incorporates label data from MacGregor’s Personal collection in Aberdeen.<sup>12</sup> Careful examination of the images allowed us to identify additional

TABLE. 3. Forms of labelling in the Official collection 1888–98.

Locality and date of acquisition from labels, register, or catalogue sheet notes	Primary Source (label or inscription applied in British New Guinea)	Secondary Source (QM only)	Collection(s)	Notes
Rossel Island 14.10.88	Label – notebook paper	<i>MacGregor Register</i>	Official	Collecting episode noted in <i>MacGregor Register</i> in 1915
Rossel Island 15.10.88	Label – notebook paper		Official	
St Aignan Island 20/10/88	Label – notebook paper		Official	Undated paint inscription on object as well
Normanby Island [2?]/10/88	Label – notebook paper		Official	
Ferguson Island 31.10.88	Label – notebook paper		Personal	
Ferguson Island 1/11/8-	Label – notebook paper		Official	“Normanby” in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> and <i>MacGregor Register</i>
Rigo 5.3.89	Label – notebook paper; Red paint inscription	<i>MacGregor Register</i>	Official and Personal	Red paint inscription and notebook paper label
Rigo 7.3.89	Label – notebook paper; Red paint inscription		Official and Personal	Red paint inscription and notebook paper label
Rigo 8.3.89	Label – notebook paper or card, trimmed corners		Personal	Label reads: ‘Fighting Charm of Astrolabe Range Natives Rigo 8.3.89’

TABLE. 3. cont. Forms of labelling in the Official collection 1888–98.

Locality and date of acquisition from labels, register, or catalogue sheet notes	Primary Source (label or inscription applied in British New Guinea)	Secondary Source (QM only)	Collection(s)	Notes
Ferguson Island 31.10.89		QM Catalogue sheet notes	Official	Date may have been misread [31.10.88?]. There is also a red paint inscription indicating locality (undated)
Tugeri 3.3.90	Label - notebook paper faint line rule		Official	
Tugari 3/5/90	Black ink inscription		Official	Date likely 3/3/90 not 3/5/90
St Joseph River -.5.90	Label - manufactured with double line black border and dotted lines		Official	
St Joseph River 7.6.90 [7.5.90?]	Label - manufactured with double line black border and dotted lines		Personal	Date possibly 7.5.90 rather than 7.6.90
St Aignan Island 5.-.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	Date is likely 5.7.90
Trobriand Islands 8.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	
Rossel Island 11.7.90	Label - notebook paper faint rule		Personal	ABDUA:1656
Rossel Island 11.7.90		QM Catalogue sheet notes	Official	Probably same type of label as that affixed to ABDUA:1656 (see above)
Woodlark Island 15.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	
Woodlark Island 16.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Personal and Official (attributed to)	Example in QM (E8393) appears to have missed registration in the 1890s. Label confirms that it is part of the Official collection
Laughlan Island 17.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	Red paint inscription (undated) indicating locality on object as well
Woodlark Island 19.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	Object also has an undated red paint inscription (locality). See also shield (E3838 in AM; Rev. W.G. Lawes collection) with same type of paper notebook label, also dated 19.7.90.
Trobriand Islands 21. ...	Label - notebook paper		Official	Date is likely 21.7.90. There is also and undated red paint locality label
Woodlark 1890	Red paint inscription		Personal	
Collingwood Bay 30.7.90	Label - notebook paper		Official and Personal	
Port Hennessy ...8....	Label - notebook paper		Personal	Likely date is 1–2 August 1890
Holnicote Bay 5.8.90	Label - notebook paper		Personal	
Oro. N.E. Coast 3.8.90	Label - notebook paper		Official	
N. E. Coast 1890	Label - notebook paper		Personal	
From Baula 20.5.92	Black ink inscription		Personal	Believed to have been a gift from Chief Baula to MacGregor. It is inscribed on one side 'BAULA,' and 'from BAULA 20.5.92 on the other side
Laughlan Island 21.7.92	Label - paper	QM Catalogue sheet notes	Official	Catalogue sheet notes paper label existed but no image exists. Object also has an undated red paint inscription 'LAUGHLAN'

TABLE. 3. cont. Forms of labelling in the Official collection 1888–98.

Locality and date of acquisition from labels, register, or catalogue sheet notes	Primary Source (label or inscription applied in British New Guinea)	Secondary Source (QM only)	Collection(s)	Notes
Vikaiko 20.11.92	Label - notebook paper (Large piece)		Personal	Probably Wikaiko village
Dyke Acland Bay 4/10/93		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Entry associated with 31 objects. Dated label presumably detached or lost since registration in 1894. There is an undated 'Dyke Acland Bay' card label associated with at least one object from this group
Puneavutu. N.E. from Velerupu. For Official Collection. J.G. 15.95.	Red paint inscription	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode noted at time of initial registration. Initials 'J.G' indicate collector was John Green
Mambare 21/8/95		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	
Kumusi 1/10/95		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	
Mambare 24/10/95		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	
Boigu Island - B.N.G. (Near Wassi Kassa R.) May 1896	Label – card rectangle		Official	Date omitted in <i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i> but is on label
Bugeri 5/96		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Label probably misread by De Vis. Probably 'Tugeri 5/96'.
Boirave Inland of Orangery Bay B.N.G. July 1896	Label - manufactured with double line black border on upper and lower horizontal axes	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration
Dufaure Is 7/96		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode noted at time of initial registration
Mirowa Bamu River 1896	Black inscription, stripped surface	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration
Mambare River 1896	Black inscription, stripped surface	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration
Mambare R Aug/96		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	ER15798 (MAC208) has an undated manufactured border style label. Label may have been like that on MAC8937 which was entered in register as 'Mambare R Aug/96' (see below)
Mambare River N.E.C. B.N.G. August 1896	Label - manufactured with double line black border on upper and lower horizontal axes	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration

TABLE 3. cont. Forms of labelling in the Official collection 1888–98.

Locality and date of acquisition from labels, register, or catalogue sheet notes	Primary Source (label or inscription applied in British New Guinea)	Secondary Source (QM only)	Collection(s)	Notes
Moni 1896	Black ink inscription, date underscored	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration
Neneba, Mt Scratchley 11.96	Label - manufactured with double line black border on upper and lower horizontal axes	<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	Dated episode also noted at time of initial registration
Neneba Nov 96		<i>Ethnology Register (New Guinea)</i>	Official	
Sikube, Upper Vanapa, March 1897		<i>MacGregor Register</i>	Official	<i>MacGregor Register</i> entry for MAC646 (ER18726) reads "Ticket attd. says "2 bamboo ear ornaments. "Sikube, Upper Vanapa, March 1897". Label cannot be associated with ER18726 because the objects arrived in Transfer 60 (1 March 1897), before Giulianetti visited Sikube in late March 1897. Label was probably associated with two bamboo ornaments from Sikube in Transfer 68 (ER18776) which are currently missing.
Sikube Upper Vanapa March 1897	Label - paper notebook, large piece		Official	
Mambare River April 1897	Label - paper notebook, medium size pieces, torn from notebook	<i>MacGregor Register</i>	Official	Two different styles of handwriting are evident on the label type. <i>MacGregor Register</i> records six objects with this dated episode but more objects with labels indicating the April 1897 episode have been found in the Official collection
Shield used by BAURA people attacking AW-ATENUMU on July 16 1897.	Label - notebook paper or card, trimmed corners		Personal	Similar style of label to that connected with Rigo 8.3.89 episode.
Goodenough Island Nov. 1897	Label - notebook paper, large piece		Official	
Cape Nelson. 25.5. 98	Black ink inscription, stripped surface		Official	
Cape Nelson N.E.C. 25.5. 98	Label - notebook paper, large piece;	<i>MacGregor Register</i>	Official	
Cape Nelson N.E.C. 25.5. 98	Black ink inscription		Official	
Cape Nelson. N.E.C of B.N.G. 25.5.98	Label - notebook paper, large piece		Official	
Cape Nelson. N.E.C of B.N.G. 25.5.98	Label - notebook paper, small		Personal	

collecting events (e.g. Ferguson Island 31 October 1888, Rigo 8 March 1889, Holnicote Bay 5 August 1890). A direct correlation to dated episodes represented in the Official collection was also noticed (e.g. Rigo 5 March 1889, Rigo 7 March 1889, Collingwood Bay 30 July 1890). The latter finding confirms that some objects in MacGregor's Personal collection were acquired on the same day as items in the Official collection.

Dated paper notebook labels sometimes appear together on artefacts with either dated red paint or black ink inscriptions (Appendix 5 Table 2: ABDUA:892 and ABDUA:57468). In addition, dated paper notebook labels also occur with undated forms (usually inscribed in red paint), the former typically providing the place and date of acquisition while the latter often comprised only a place name (Figure 7). This practice appears to have been limited to the period 1888–90 and is useful for establishing a chronology of undated label forms.

## WHO WROTE THE LABELS?

Similarities in handwriting were observed among paper notebook labels and red paint inscriptions as well as some black ink forms. The information written on manufactured paper labels with black double line borders also seems to have been



FIG. 7. Adze. ER10673 (Oc,MCG.193). Paper notebook label 'Rigo 7.3.89' and red paint inscription 'RiGO'. On closer inspection it seems that the paper label has shifted slightly over time or has been reglued so that a very small part of the QM registration number '10673' appears underneath. Scale bar: 5 cm. © Trustees of the British Museum.

written by one individual. This pattern is repeated for undated labelling, although in that assemblage there is more noticeable variation in the handwritten black ink forms. These observations suggest that one person was responsible for writing most of the paper notebook labels and red paint inscriptions, but that several individuals may have been responsible for the black ink forms. Since we assume that MacGregor played a key role in assembling the Official collection (Quinnell 2000), he probably also labelled objects. To test whether MacGregor wrote labels and to identify other people who may have been involved in the field acquisition of artefacts and perhaps, labelling of objects, the handwriting on dated examples was analysed.

Working on the premise that labels represent a type of 'document,' we adopted methods used by forensic experts to identify an individual's handwriting. In particular, we have applied basic principles of handwriting identification described by Koppenhaver (2007:Appendix B:259). We specifically concentrated on looking for examples where there are sufficient common characteristics of writing habits and no basic structural differences. Koppenhaver's premise that hand printed script and numerals can be identified was encouraging. Also important was the need to find multiple clues rather than make an identification on the basis of a single characteristic.

We began by recording the label form (e.g. paper, red paint), handwriting style (e.g. cursive, uppercase etc), and the way dates were abbreviated (Table 4). Several common, but distinctive characteristics were found to be well represented. These include the use of uppercase printed letters (i.e. block letters), the latter often occurring in conjunction with a lowercase letter 'i'. Some uppercase letter forms were quite distinctive (e.g. G, W, D, T). The way in which dates were written proved to be a very prominent stylistic feature. Most noticeable is the use of full stops to abbreviate dates (e.g. 'Rossel I 14.10.88') (see Figure 3a). The group of shared, but idiosyncratic characteristics outlined above suggest that one individual was probably responsible for writing a large proportion of the labels.

TABLE 4. Label form, handwriting style, distinctive characteristics and method of recording dates on dated labels in the Official and Personal collections.

Label form	Dated examples	Handwriting style	Distinctive characteristics	Method of recording the date
Paper (notebook)	1888	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Paper (notebook)	1888	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by back slashes
Red paint inscription	1888	Uppercase (with lowercase i)	Lower case i Distinctive G	Date abbreviated by full stops
Paper (notebook)	1889	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Red paint inscription	1889	Uppercase (sometimes with lower case i)	Lower case i	Dates abbreviated by full stops
Card	1889	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops; underscored locality
Paper (notebook)	1890	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Paper (notebook)	1890	Uppercase (except lower case i and y)	Lowercase: i and y Distinctive G, W and D	Dates abbreviated by full stops
Paper (notebook) line ruled	1890	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Paper (manufactured)	1890	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Red paint inscription	1890	Uppercase with lower case i;	Lower case i	Year followed by full stop (e.g. 1890.)
Black ink inscription	1890	Uppercase		Dates abbreviated by full stops; underscored locality
Black ink inscription	1890	Cursive		Date abbreviated by back slashes
Paper (notebook)	1892	Cursive and uppercase		Dates abbreviated by full stops; unusual style of abbreviating month
Red paint inscription	1895	Uppercase and lowercase		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Paper (manufactured)	1896	Uppercase and cursive		Uppercase single word; remaining text in cursive; Month and year written in full
Paper (manufactured)	1896	Uppercase and cursive		Uppercase single word; remaining text in cursive; Month/year abbreviated like 11.96
Card	1896	Uppercase & cursive		Uppercase single word; remaining text in cursive; Month and year written in full
Black ink inscription, stripped surface	1896	Uppercase & cursive		Uppercase single word (or words), remaining text in cursive script; year written in full
Black ink inscription	1896	Uppercase		Year underscored
Card or stiff paper	1897	Cursive		Date written in full as follows: month, day, year
Paper (notebook)	1897	Cursive		Object type; followed by place, month and year
Paper (notebook)	1897	Printed (neat writing)		Month and year written in full
Paper (notebook)	1897	Cursive (messy writing)		Month and year written in full
Paper (notebook)	1897	Cursive		Month abbreviated like 'Nov.'; year in full
Paper (notebook)	1898	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Black ink inscription	1898	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops
Black ink inscription, stripped surface	1898	Cursive		Dates abbreviated by full stops

The next step was to compare these distinctive characteristics with the handwriting of people we suspected might have written the labels. We began by inspecting samples of MacGregor’s handwriting across a range of archival sources. A field notebook which he kept during his explorations of the Owen Stanley Range in 1889 and one of his extant diaries comprised our primary sources (MacGregor 1889; MacGregor 1890–1892). Based on these documents, a list of distinguishing features associated with MacGregor’s handwriting was compiled (Table 5).

MacGregor’s 1889 Owen Stanley field notebook contains a landscape sketch (Figure 8) with European names for topographical features printed in uppercase (block letter style) in the same manner as many dated (and undated) labels and inscriptions (Table 5) and some of his letter forms are very distinctive (e.g. F, G, S, T). Moreover, MacGregor’s

style varied even within the same document. His diary entries are even more revealing for they show that he typically wrote the names of villages in uppercase<sup>13</sup>, but often with a lowercase letter ‘i’. Sometimes both forms are seen on the same page (Figure 9). Another significant feature evident in MacGregor’s diary is that he invariably abbreviated dates with full stops (see Figure 9). Taken together, these attributes correspond with the set of unusual characteristics seen on some labels and inscriptions (see Table 4) and thus provide compelling evidence that MacGregor was responsible for writing most of the dated examples. It is also important to note that his style changed over time. This conclusion is supported by equivalences between the vast majority of dated labels and the actual dates when he visited certain places as recorded in MacGregor’s itinerary 1888–98 (Appendix 1, this volume). The

TABLE. 5. List of distinguishing features associated with MacGregor’s handwriting based on the Field Notebook of his explorations in the Owen Stanley Range (MacGregor 1889) and Diaries (MacGregor 1890–1892).

Letters	Place Name or word	Source	Figure (this chapter)	Notes
<b>UPPER CASE</b>				
A	Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	
B	BETERE	MacGregor (1890–1892)	9	
C	DICKSON	MacGregor (1889)	8	
D	DICKSON; Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	Distinctive D
E	WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	
F	Mt KNUVSFORD	MacGregor (1889)	8	Distinctive F
G	Mt GRIFFITH; WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	Upper case; Two types
H	WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	
I	WINTER HEIGHT; DICKSON	MacGregor (1889)	8	Upper case
J		No examples		
K	DICKSON	MacGregor (1889)	8	Distinctive K
L	Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	
M	Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	
N	WINTER HEIGHT; Mt KNUVSFORD	MacGregor (1889)	8	
O	Mt KNUVSFORD	MacGregor (1889)	8	
P	DICKSON PASS	MacGregor (1889)	8	
Q		No examples		
R	Mt GRIFFITH; WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	Two forms: see Mt GRIFFITH and WINTER HEIGHT. Latter has a flourish on bottom

TABLE 5.contd List of distinguishing features associated with MacGregor’s handwriting based on the Field Notebook of his explorations in the Owen Stanley Range (MacGregor 1889) and Diaries (MacGregor 1890–1892).

Letters	Place Name or word	Source	Figure (this chapter)	Notes
S	Mt KNUTSFORD; Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	Two forms; see Mt KNUTSFORD and Mt DOUGLAS
T	Mt KNUTSFORD; WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	Two forms: one is angular while the other has curled ends. Latter form is seen on some undated red paint inscriptions
U	Mt DOUGLAS	MacGregor (1889)	8	
V	Mt VICTORIA	MacGregor (1889)	8	
W	WINTER HEIGHT	MacGregor (1889)	8	
X		No examples		
Y	YOGOBA	MacGregor (1890–1892)	9	Angular; almost appears to be lower case but probably intended to be upper case. Very distinctive Y. Seen on many undated labels
Z		No examples		
Lower case letters				
i	iUMANUMU	MacGregor (1890–1892)	9	iUMANUMU is written in two forms on the same page: one contains lower case i the other is in uppercase.
t	Mt DOUGLAS; Mt VICTORIA	MacGregor (1889)	8	Two forms: one is angular like in Mt VICTORIA while the second form is curled at bottom. Form of ‘t’ in Mt Douglas is seen on some red paint NE Coast labels (undated)
Other features				
Date	24.12.90	MacGregor (1890–1892)	9	Sample of MacGregor’s style of abbreviating the date with full stops

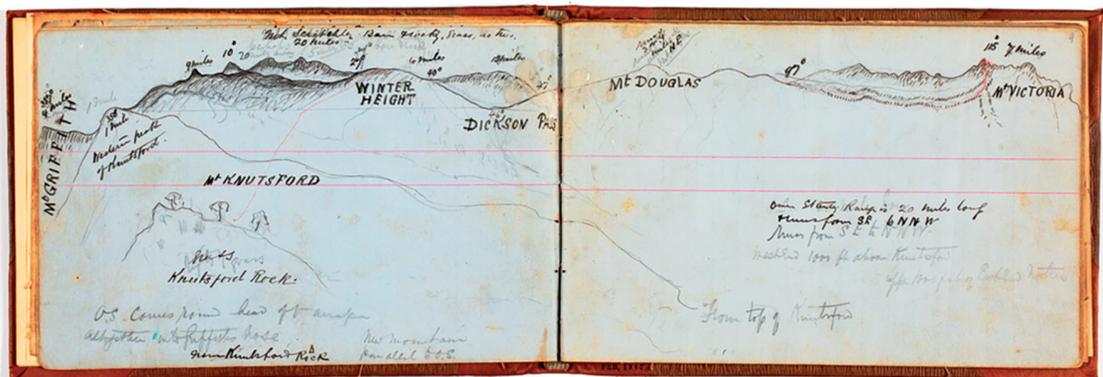


FIG. 8. Two pages from MacGregor’s field notebook that depict his explorations of the Owen Stanley Range also illustrate his handwriting. (MacGregor 1889). Courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW.

Wednesday 24.12.90 to Port Moresby.  
 We got up at daylight. Sober Mearns slept  
 under my fly & I had no sleep what he  
 knew him & the fleas which remained in my  
 bed. I started off first to reach the Piss  
 ridge when the road crosses, on foot.  
 A shower came on & met me & the skin  
 & we had rain for nearly an hour.  
 From that point to where our road crosses  
 Waurata 108<sup>3</sup>/<sub>3</sub>; to top of first hill above  
 Javai'dano not 141<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>; to Matabitu 276<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>  
 Ipenuma - each end 309°, Waurata to  
 102° - 126°. Peak of Piss 170°, 153°.

Then from the road 1 mile  
 from IUMANUMU hill. Road crosses  
 Waurata @ 103°, Waurata 99° - 111°  
 Ohina top 57° - 85°, Uetua 51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. At  
 about 1 mile from us are the hills  
 YOGOBA 275°, IUMANUMU 261°, Waryou<sup>237</sup>  
 BETERE 193°. From top of hill above  
 Kammahada to end of Waurata 79°. Ipa  
 -numu 67° - 69°. Ueana 245°. Matabitu 337°.

I rode after the first mile valley  
 but the ground was slippery & we had to  
 dismount after. It became fair & dry  
 before we got more than 3 miles. In  
 the valley above Port Moresby both ends

FIG. 9. MacGregor's diary entry for 24 December 1890 shows two styles of script for the village name lumanumu. One is written in uppercase while the other is written with a lowercase letter i. The page also illustrates MacGregor's method of punctuating dates with full stops. (MacGregor, 1890-1892. Diaries of Sir William MacGregor, 1890-1892 (Nov. 1890 to Aug. 1892), MS 38, Courtesy of the National Library of Australia, Canberra. (Unpublished).



FIG. 10. a. Red paint label, 'FOSSIL Fiji.' on stone adze: ABDUA:57202. b. Red paint label 'Fiji COAST' on stone adze: ABDUA:57198. ©University of Aberdeen..

relationship between red paint and MacGregor is strengthened further by Fijian objects in his Personal collection in Aberdeen which are also inscribed in red paint and in the same style observed on artefacts in the Official collection (Figure 10a–b).

### TRACES OF MACGREGOR'S ENGAGEMENT

Our analysis of handwriting indicates that MacGregor was responsible for 416 examples of labelling preserved on 394 objects in the Official collection (Tables 1, 3 in Appendix 5 this volume).<sup>14</sup> We attribute 218 red paint inscriptions; 90 paper notebook labels; 78 black ink inscriptions; 25 manufactured labels; 2 card labels and 3 incised forms to MacGregor.

A few artefacts in the Official collection bear inscriptions which suggest the object was acquired from a particular person or resulted from a specific occasion that MacGregor wanted to record. For example, the word 'BANARI' incised into the shaft of a club (see Figure 5d) may refer to Sergeant Banari, one of the longest serving members of the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC) who is mentioned in the *Annual Reports on British New Guinea* (ARBNG) on several occasions.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the club represents a



FIG. 11. Club inscribed in black ink 'BOPOU ↑ KILLED A MAN of GIRA', Broad arrow symbol: ER14366 (MAC3578 PNGNMAG). Photography, Robin Torrence with permission of the PNGNMAG.

token of friendship; a gift from Banari to MacGregor, who subsequently carved Banari's name on the club as a reminder of the relationship which existed between them?<sup>16</sup> In contrast, another club in the collection would appear to record a sombre event. The black ink inscription on the club reads 'BOPOU KILLED A MAN of GIRA' (Figure 11). Examples of labelling which may record the use of an artefact in a particular event also exist in MacGregor's Personal collection. For instance, the label affixed to shield ABDUA: 58582 documents its use during intertribal conflict on 16 July 1897 (see Figure 18 in Chapter 14).

Sixty-two dated labels or inscriptions attributed to MacGregor on the basis of the style of the handwriting (Table 6) show that he was involved in labelling artefacts from the beginning of his administration of the colony. Analysis of examples in the Official collection reveal that MacGregor probably also wrote some of the labels for items acquired by other government officers. The manufactured paper label affixed to a lime gourd (Figure 12) provides a good example of this practice.<sup>17</sup> The text written on the label indicates that the gourd was collected from the village of Boirave (inland from Orangerie Bay) in July 1896. MacGregor could not have collected the gourd since his itinerary places him in other parts of the colony at that time (Appendix 1 this volume). The travelling

TABLE. 6. Dated labels or inscriptions in the Official collection attributed to MacGregor.

Years	No.	Types or Forms	Notes
1888	2	Notebook paper, rectangular shape – small	Created by cutting from a notebook; from October 1888
1889	8	Notebook paper, rectangular shape – small and/or red paint	
1890	21 [27?]	Notebook paper, rectangular shape – small (23); Manufactured paper label with double line black border (1); Notebook paper, rectangular shape, line ruled – small (2 [3?]);	Among the 23 labels cut from notebook paper are six labels with partial dates and/or style which are consistent with dated 1890 examples
1891	0		
1892	1	Notebook paper, rectangular shape – small	Label possibly misread and could be 1890 not 1892
1893	0		
1894–95	0		MacGregor absent on extended leave from Sept 1894–May 1895
1896	10	Manufactured paper label with double line black border (6); Black ink inscription over rectangular shaped stripped surface (2); Card rectangle (cut from notebook cover?) (1); Black ink inscription (1)	
1897	8	Notebook paper, rectangular shape -large	Large pieces, torn from notebook
1898	6	Notebook paper, rectangular shape -large (4); Black ink inscription (1); Black ink inscription over rectangular shaped stripped surface (1)	

agent Amadeo Giulianetti, however, actively collected at Boirave in July 1896 (Giulianetti 1897; Giulianetti 1898: 68-69). Since other labelling attributed to Giulianetti is fashioned out of large pieces of notebook paper (sometimes lined-ruled)<sup>18</sup> (see Figure 10 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 9 this volume), we are confident of MacGregor's authorship of the manufactured paper labels associated with the lime gourd. MacGregor's act of labelling collections made by others demonstrates not only the value of forensically evaluating labels and establishing their authorship, but also linking them to the historical record of MacGregor's activities. This case also shows that MacGregor was very concerned about the collection and ensured that it was well documented and curated.

While the majority of labels with dates appear to have been written by MacGregor, there are some notable exceptions. For instance, there is a paper notebook label on which the date is abbreviated by backslashes (ER9307<sup>19</sup> (MAC7555 PNGNMAG)), Table 1 in Appendix 5) instead of the full stops that represents a significant marker of MacGregor's style. Basil Thomson (later Sir), who served as private secretary to MacGregor from September 1888-February 1889, appears responsible for this



FIG. 12. Lime Gourd from 'BOIRAVE, Inland of Oranger Bay B.N.G. July 1896: ER16267 (MAC3205). Collected by Amadeo Giulianetti, July 1896 but later labelled by MacGregor. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

handwriting. Some artefacts which Thomson collected during his time in British New Guinea are now in the British Museum and many have paper (notebook) style labels similar to those in the Official collection. These usually include locality and date, the latter abbreviated with backslashes. One example confirms Basil Thomson's particular style as his initials 'BT' appear on the bottom right corner of the label (BM Oc1931,0722.50).<sup>20</sup> In this instance, adding his initials to the label confirmed that the object belonged to his private collection.

### ADDITIONAL AGENTS

Around 650 objects in the Official collection bear inscriptions or paper labels which provide clues to their source locality, but they are undated.<sup>21</sup> The same general types recorded in the dated assemblage are most common (e.g. notebook paper; manufactured paper with double line black borders; red paint or black ink inscriptions) along with four additional kinds: incised; pencil; card rectangles; and white ink (see Table 1 and Table 3 in Appendix 5 this volume).

Although the handwriting observed among the group of undated black ink inscriptions is highly variable, four distinct styles can be identified. One form displays characteristics typical of MacGregor's handwriting (i.e. uppercase or block letters; sometimes with lowercase letter i). Since MacGregor's tours of inspection and field explorations were typically group affairs, often comprising a mix of government officers and collectors, it is likely that some of his assistants may have helped with collecting and labelling duties. On the basis of certain idiosyncratic features of the cursive or printed script, two other forms may be attributed to the government officers John Green and Albert Charles English. Samples of their handwriting were sourced from a file<sup>22</sup> which contains original handwritten reports and vocabularies submitted to MacGregor by various government officers for later publication in the ARBNG in the mid-1890s (Green 1896a; 1896b; English 1896).

Albert Charles English (1864–1945) served as government agent of Rigo Station in the Central district from 1890–1907. English's 1896 handwritten report on the Rigo District provides multiple examples of his cursive and printed script (English 1896). In particular, he had a distinctive way of printing the letters 'N' and 'U' (Figure 13a). Based on these stylistic features, we are reasonably confident in attributing to English the black ink inscriptions observed on a number of clubs and adzes from Moni, Kumusi and Goromani (e.g. Table 1 in Appendix 5: ER14929 (MAC3564); ER19218 (MAC3557); ER19054 (MAC5442)). While we are able to place English at the scene of a punitive attack on Goromani villagers in September 1897 (see Torrence & Davies, Chapter 9, this volume), it is more difficult, however, to determine precisely when the Kumusi and Moni items were obtained because MacGregor did not always record the names of the government officers who toured with him. Moreover, individuals who went into the field with MacGregor may have travelled with him to one place but were then instructed to go elsewhere.

John Green (d.1897) was appointed government agent for the north-east coast in September 1895. Approximately 66 clubs in the Official collection have undated black ink locality inscriptions which we attribute to Green based on a careful examination of his handwritten vocabulary relating to local people of the Mambare River (Green 1896a) and his handwritten report for the north-east coast (Green 1896b). Certain features, such as the way in which Green wrote the letter 'r', together with the frequent usage of a full stop at the end of a word (e.g. 'Erero.') are firm indicators of his authorship (Figure 13b). Together, these documents provide examples of Green's handwriting for place names such as Erero, Mambare River, Ope River, Orya and Kome. Green's neat script is clearly evident on many of the clubs in the Official collection which originate from these localities (see Table 1 Appendix 5 for some illustrated examples).

Green acted as MacGregor's private secretary briefly in 1895 before he was appointed government agent and gold warden for the north-east coast in September of the same year. Sixteen months later he was killed



FIG. 13. a. Club from Moni, believed to have been labelled in black ink by A.C. English (note style of letter 'N'). The surface of the club has been stripped back to create a rectangular-shaped space like a label on which to write the locality: ER14929 (MAC3564 PNGNMAG). b. Club showing John Green's handwriting 'Eroro: ER 14901 (MAC5421 PNGNMAG). Photography, Robin Torrence with permission of the PNGNMAG.

while working at Tamata station on the Mambare River (MacGregor 1898a: XIV). Since Green is known to have collected privately while on official duty<sup>23</sup>, how certain can we be that the 66 clubs in the Official collection which we believe were labelled by him in black ink were not originally part of his private collection, especially since only three of the 66 clubs arrived at the QM before his death (14 January 1897)?<sup>24</sup> Had the 63 clubs received after his death been recovered from among his belongings at the Mambare River station?<sup>25</sup> This hypothesis is highly unlikely, however, since the 55 clubs in Transfer 60 were received by the museum on 1 March 1897, more than a month before MacGregor's punitive mission even reached the Mambare River (MacGregor 1898a: XIV). Moreover, the first government officer to reach the station on 14 March reported to MacGregor that everything except for the framework of a new house had been burnt to the ground (MacGregor 1898b: 25).<sup>26</sup> We are less certain about the eight clubs in Transfer 74 (10 October 1898) because they could have been retrieved during punitive patrols in the district between April and June 1897 (MacGregor 1898b; MacGregor 1898c).<sup>27</sup> Alternatively, they may represent items which should have been sent with Transfer 60 but for some reason were omitted from the earlier consignment.

Many of the same trends observed in connection with dated labelling are replicated by the undated assemblage. For instance, MacGregor seems to have written the majority of undated paper labels (notebook and manufactured) and red paint inscriptions. Based on our study of handwriting, at least 26 per cent of undated black ink inscriptions is in MacGregor's handwriting. A further 31 per cent of undated black ink inscriptions can be attributed to John Green and 10 per cent to A.C. English. Currently, about 33 per cent of undated black ink inscriptions cannot yet be ascribed to a particular individual.

The individuals whose handwriting (black ink forms) cannot currently be identified probably include private secretaries, government agents, resident magistrates and European officers associated with the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC) who were routinely instructed to gather artefacts for the Official collection during the course of their official duties. A set of instructions which MacGregor left for Giulianetti in 1897 indicates what was expected of a travelling government agent. Aside from collecting specimens of natural history, Giulianetti was ordered to take photographs and acquire ethnological specimens

which were to be transmitted by returning carriers (MacGregor 1899a: 36). As illustrated by the orders given to Bingham Hely in 1891 (21 July 1891), resident magistrates were also expected to contribute: 'Obtain where you can any good specimens for the Museum. Buy any ebony that comes in the way, whether manufactured or not' (MacGregor 1892–93:8).

Even when MacGregor was absent from the colony for extended periods of time, government officers were expected to obtain artefacts for the Official collection. Striking evidence of this is provided by the red paint inscription on a club which reads 'Puneavutu. N.E. from Velerupu. For Official Collection. J.G. 1.5.95.' (Table 1 in Appendix 5: ER14373 (MAC3883) PNGNMAG). MacGregor was absent on extended leave at this time but official reports place John Green at Puneavutu in early May 1895 where he and Captain Butterworth (Commandant of the ANC) were involved in an unsuccessful attempt to surprise the village and its residents (Winter 1896:16). Having failed in the mission to capture villagers alleged to have been involved in a recent massacre, it would seem that some of the Europeans in the party, such as John Green, decided to help themselves to artefacts they found lying about in the deserted village.<sup>28</sup> We propose that the club referred to above falls into this category and thus represents not only a field acquisition for the Official collection by a government officer but also an article stolen as part of punitive action.

## SPECIAL MARKINGS

Besides the conventional labelling, some artefacts in the Official collection have markings on them which may be directly related to field activities. For example, the shape of an arrow was drawn in black ink on two clubs (see Figure 11).<sup>29</sup> We suggest that this mark represents the 'broad arrow', a symbol frequently used to mark British government property in the nineteenth century (Davies & Taçon 2013:105–106).<sup>30</sup> The emblem appears to have had multiple and unexpected uses in British New Guinea. It was widely used in field settings to mark the route of a journey and/or campsites (Thomson 1880–1917:13 October

1888; Kowald 1894:113). For example, MacGregor reported that the 'broad-arrow' was carved into a tree together with the letters 'B.N.G.' at one of the highest points reached during his explorations of the Fly River in 1890 (MacGregor 1890a:61). Camping-sheds or other temporary structures built in the field were also frequently marked with the symbol (Giulianetti 1899:31). The emblem was a pervasive sign of government authority in the colony. A contemporary reference attests to its use on the calico loin-cloths of prisoners (Green 1892–96:21 September 1892). Clearly, the broad arrow was recognised by remote communities for there is evidence that Papuans even appropriated the symbol for their own use on occasion. In 1896, A.W. Butterworth, Commandant of the ANC, reported that when a local man taken captive by another tribe was handed over to him, he noticed that the prisoner had a broad-arrow painted in red on his body (Butterworth 1898:66). While we only found two examples of the broad arrow inscribed on clubs, some geological specimens also had this marking (Rands 1890:56, see nos. 35–40).

In contrast to the example provided above, there is a curious marking inscribed in black ink on a club which seems to be of a more personal nature and might represent a monogram for William MacGregor: 'WM' (Figure 14). The black inscription on the club indicates that it originates from 'IKORA G.N.G' (Ikora, German New Guinea). MacGregor and Captain Jones of the SS *Merrie England* conducted a running survey of the North East coast between the Musa River and Ikore River in April 1894 (MacGregor 1894:30–31). They found that part of the mouth of the river lay within German territory (hence the 'G.N.G' of the inscription). MacGregor notes that he interacted with locals in the region whose weapons included spears, gothic-shaped shields and stone-headed clubs (MacGregor 1894: 30–31). The monogram is the only example we have found in the Official collection, but there is a lime spatula in MacGregor's Personal collection which is marked in the same manner (see Figure 22 Box 14.1 in Chapter 14). The black ink inscription on the lime spatula (ABDUA:347) reads 'from BAULA 25.5.92' and appears together with MacGregor's



FIG. 14. Special marking on a club from 'Ikora', German New Guinea, collected c. April 1894. The marking may represent William MacGregor's monogram. The locality is inscribed on the club with black ink in MacGregor's handwriting in three different places: ER14364 (MAC3632). Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

initials (monogram). The inscription confirms our interpretation that this form of black ink inscription is connected with MacGregor's labelling practices.

## EVIDENCE OF CATALOGUING IN BRITISH NEW GUINEA

Another form of marking are large numerals written in white or black paint or red crayon (or possibly chalk) placed on the undecorated side of carved boards, shields and canoe ornaments or fittings in the Official collection (Figure 15a–c). A small, square-shaped manufactured paper label with serrated edges on at least two sides and usually with a three-digit number written on it (e.g. 223) was also recorded (Figure 15d). In addition, single letters of the alphabet written in white chalk were observed on some carved boards, shields and canoe ornaments or fittings (Figure 15e).

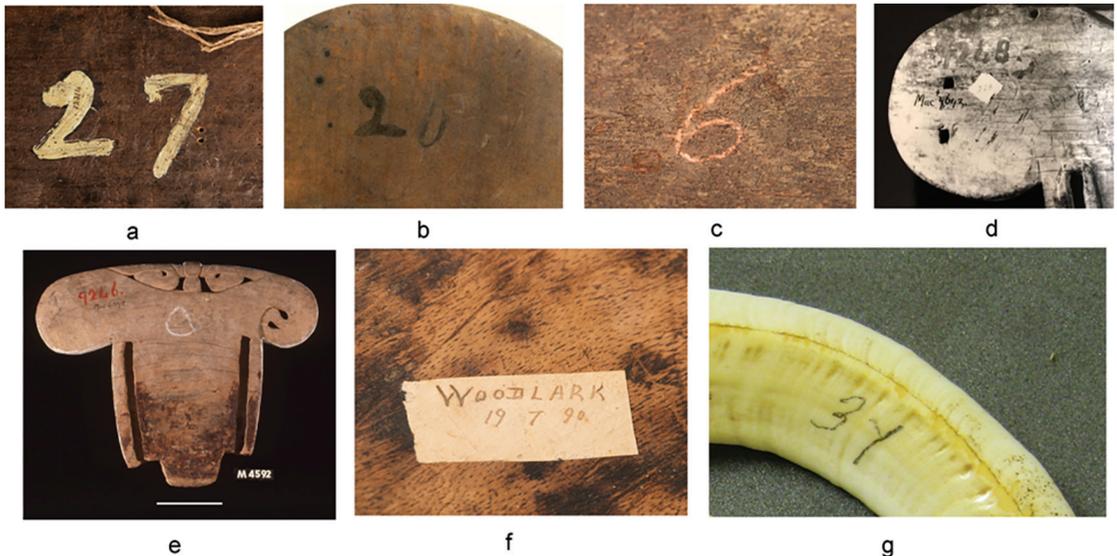


FIG. 15. a. Shield. The QM registration number '12314' appears over the top of a large white paint '27': ER12314 (MAC4652 PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch. b. Shield from Cloudy Bay with large black paint '20' on reverse side: ER12455 (MAC5103). Queensland Museum Photography. c. Shield with red chalk crayon '6' on reverse: ER11705 (AM E.007057). Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission from the Australian Museum. d. Canoe washboard has a small paper label with serrated edges on two sides with the number '273' written on it in black ink. The label possibly represents a form of numbering applied in BNG: ER9246 (MAC4642 PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography. e. Canoe ornament with large white chalk letter 'D' on reverse (upside down): ER10490 (MAC4592). Scale bar: 10cm. Queensland Museum Photography. f. Paper notebook label on shield from Woodlark Island, collected 19 July 1890. Presented to the Australian Museum by Rev. W.G. Lawes in 1893 (AM E.003838). Label attributed to MacGregor. Compare with FIG. 3c. Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission from the Australian Museum. g. Boar's tusk ornament with pencil '37': ABDUA G85+6 (2). ©University of Aberdeen.

The painted numerals were probably applied in British New Guinea because on one shield the number '27' in white paint is overlain by the QM registration number '12314' in black ink (see Figure 15a).<sup>31</sup> The large red crayon numbers which appear on the reverse side of some shields (see Figure 15c) were also probably applied in British New Guinea because a similar example has been found on a dance-shield in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen (ABDUE:515) (Figure 15f). A shield which the missionary Rev. W.G. Lawes presented to the Australian Museum in 1893 is also similarly marked with a large red crayon numeral (see Figure 1 in Torrence & Philp Chapter 14 this volume).<sup>32</sup> We presume that Lawes obtained the shield from MacGregor because it also has a paper notebook style label which reads 'WOODLARK 19.790.' The dated paper label places it amongst a group of items which MacGregor acquired during his visit to Woodlark Island in mid-July 1890 (compare with ER8799

(MAC6302) and ABDUA:63449).<sup>33</sup> The letters of the alphabet may represent some sort of typological arrangement but we do not know if they were applied in British New Guinea or at the Queensland Museum (see Figure 15e).

We propose that the numbers observed on shields, carved boards and canoe ornaments may represent some sort of cataloguing process in British New Guinea.<sup>34</sup> This is not an unreasonable assumption given that a visitor to Government House in Port Moresby in 1897 noted that there was 'a very valuable collection of native weapons and implements' displayed there 'every piece is carefully numbered and catalogued' ('New Guinea News' *The North Queensland Register* 12 May 1897, p. 7). A photograph taken by the Rev. George Brown in around 1890 appears to capture a small part of this collection *in situ* (Figure 16). The numbers visible on the adzes (top

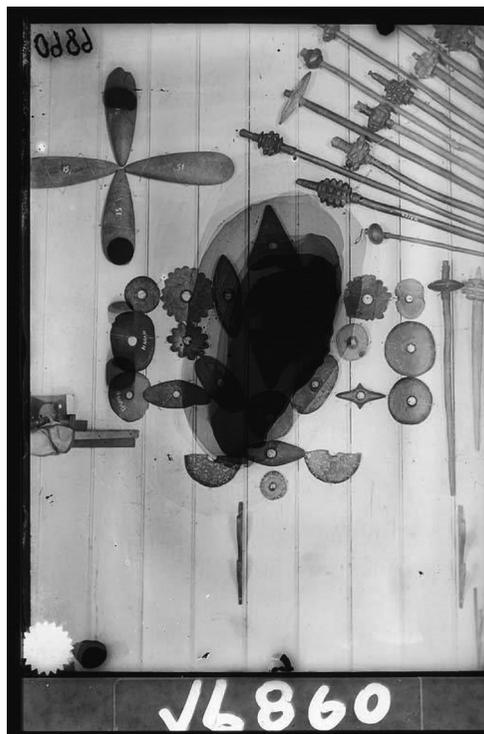


FIG. 16. Photograph taken by the Rev. George Brown in c. 1890 shows what appears to part of Sir William MacGregor's Personal collection on display in Government House, Port Moresby, BNG. The large ('Kiwai' type) adzes at top left are numbered. The style of labelling on the stone club heads is probably red paint (AMS318/V06860). Courtesy of Australian Museum Archives.

left) in Brown's photograph would seem to have been applied in paint rather than crayon. Further evidence of numbering of the collection is provided by the pencilled numbers which appear on some boar-tusk ornaments and shell armlets in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen (Figure 15g).

The fact that the same type of red crayon numbering appears on items in both the Official and Personal collections suggests that some material was selected for the Official collection after numbering had occurred and perhaps after exhibition at Government House. Perhaps the shields were first numbered and then MacGregor chose what he wanted to keep and what he was prepared to exchange or gift, with the leftovers designated for the Official collection.

### POTENTIAL TO DISTORT OR OBSCURE PROVENIENCE

Distinguishing museum labels and inscriptions from those applied in British New Guinea is an important outcome of our project. We found that, when taken at face value, labels derived from museum practices have the potential to distort or obscure an object's original provenience. The small, circular-shaped labels with serrated edges and made from manufactured paper that are connected with certain object types in the Official collection illustrate the point. We suggest that this label type most likely derives from curatorial practices in the Queensland Museum because we can match the majority of the various handwriting styles represented on objects in the Official collection to those in either the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910), or the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898). The occurrence of the same label type on articles unrelated to the Official collection, but registered by de Vis around the same time confirms that this particular form was in use in QM in the mid-1890s.<sup>35</sup> While some examples in the Official collection likely relate to initial registration procedures (Figure 17b), most were probably applied during the duplicate selection process in

1897 (e.g. ER12060 (BM Oc,MCG.53)).<sup>36</sup> The latter form were then later mistaken by museum staff to constitute original documentation and the localities written on them were subsequently recorded in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) (e.g. ER9795 (MAC1022), ER9810 (MAC1013)). Unfortunately, this practice has corrupted the data relating to the source communities from which objects were acquired and has since been transferred to the QM museum database (Vernon).

The same type of serrated label was also observed on a few objects in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen, but these are invariably marked 'M/P' (see Figure 6d). We suggest that the abbreviation may signify 'MacGregor/Personal' or perhaps 'MacGregor/Private'. Since we know that personal collections belonging to MacGregor and some of his staff moved through QM occasionally (Davies, Chapter 2 this volume), we suggest that MacGregor may have used existing supplies at the QM for his own use, labelling some objects from his Personal collection with a 'M/P' serrated label during one of his extended visits to Brisbane.<sup>37</sup>

There are a variety of other forms of labelling connected with the Official collection which derive from museum practices. Rectangular-shaped metal (zinc) tags were tied to various objects, including fishing nets, skirts, body ornaments, bags and cordage (Figure 17a). They usually record registration number and collecting locality. Because the style of handwriting frequently matches that which appears in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898), we assume that many of the zinc tags were applied during the duplicate selection process.<sup>38</sup>

Localities inscribed on objects in different coloured chalk or crayon (white, pink or blue) are also evident on many objects designated as duplicates (e.g. ER13127 (MAC8956 PNGNMAG), ER9182 (MAC3457 PNGNMAG) and ER8790 (AM E006477)). Based on the overwriting of an original red paint registration number '8774' on a sword club (ER8774 (MAC3504 PNGNMAG)) by pink chalk, we are confident that the use of chalk (or crayon) was the product of museum

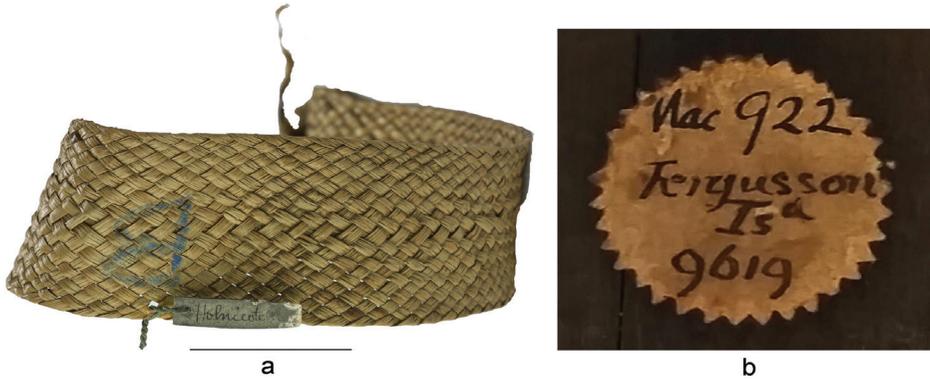


FIG. 17.a. Zinc tag affixed with wire to a woven belt: ER12762d (BM Oc,MCG.177). 'Holnicote Bay' is written in black ink on one side while '12762d' is inscribed in black ink on the reverse. The large blue 'B' (upside down) on the woven section indicates selection as a 'duplicate' for the British Museum. © Trustees of the British Museum. b. Serrated label on a lime spatula from Fergusson Island, collected c.1888–92. Since the lime spatula was not selected as a duplicate in 1897, we assume that the circular-shaped serrated label was probably applied during initial registration in 1892. Registration numbers were usually stamped (impressed) into the wooden surface of lime spatulas: ER9619 (MAC922). Photography, Kiri Chan.



FIG. 18.a. Battle Charm: ER14539 (MAC1331). b. The unreliability of the O.H.M.S. Queensland Museum luggage style tags is demonstrated by the example shown here. The locality, 'Dugari New Guinea,' does not match the corresponding entry in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c. 1889–1910) or de Vis' (1897) report on Transfer 55 objects. The tag reflects two later phases in the documentation of the Official collection. The text written in pencil predates the black ink 'Mac 1331' and probably dates to the second decade of the twentieth century. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

practices. The large white chalk 'MUSEUM' which appears over the top of a red paint 'TROBRIAND' on a food bowl (ER9756 (MAC6241 PNGNMAG) supports this interpretation. In contrast, the white chalk label on a wooden bowl is somewhat disconcerting because the 'TROBRIAND NEW GUINEA' resembles MacGregor's style of handwriting (see Table 3 in Appendix 5: ER11826? (X551)). However, since MacGregor was in Brisbane when the consignment containing the bowl arrived, it is possible that he actually labelled the bowl at that time.

The localities written on a luggage style tag which is found attached to some objects in the Official collection are unreliable. As the text 'O.H.M.S. QUEENSLAND MUSEUM' was printed on it (Figure 18), this label was clearly produced for use in QM. Since 'MAC' numbers were written over the top of the pencilled text on several examples, we believe that the label type came into use before the introduction of the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). The pencilled handwriting on the tags resembles that in a notebook reputedly written by T. C. (Tom) Marshall (Marshall & Jackson, n.d.), a member of QM staff. Marshall is known to have spent some of his time on MacGregor collection maintenance particularly while he was a cadet (c.1912–14) (Michael Quinnell, pers. comm., March 2021). As the example in Figure 18 shows, the information recorded on these labels needs to be treated with caution and not taken at face value. Like the other labels applied in QM, we consider these tags to be unreliable sources of information about localities.

Some of the nineteenth-century inscriptions applied to objects in British New Guinea have been obscured by later museum efforts to enhance their readability. For instance, white-ink inscriptions on adzes were overwritten in white ink in the early 1970s (Michael Quinnell, pers. comm., February 2021). Close inspection shows that the original white coloured ink inscriptions have faded considerably over time. Traces of the primary label written on the object are sometimes still visible underneath, and in some instances, a letter has been missed during the process of overwriting. A good example

of this is provided by an adze from 'Mysina' on which the letter 'a' is faintly visible but has not been overwritten (see Figure 5b).

## SHORTAGES OF TIME AND MATERIALS

Creative solutions to label artefacts were required in field settings. Sometimes, a knife or similar instrument was used to incise words or letters of the alphabet directly onto the wooden surface of clubs (see Figure 5d). At other times, rectangular-shaped 'label' spaces were created by stripping back the surface of wooden objects like clubs and drums prior to recording particulars relating to provenience (see Figure 13a). These practices suggest that paper was occasionally in short supply in the field. Paper shortages certainly occurred from time to time. When John Green accompanied MacGregor on his Musa River explorations in 1895, he wrote in one of his letters to his family that he was on his last sheet of notepaper and had had to lend some to MacGregor who had run out (Green 1892–96:15 September 1895).

Repurposing of a range of materials is a prominent feature of the labels in the Official collection. A similar trend is evident if we look at the labelling associated with geological specimens gathered by MacGregor or his agents in the field. For instance, newspaper scraps, parts of books and diary pages, coloured paper, paper bags, parcel paper, a bottle and even a piece of brown paper marked "Mail for Government House" were recycled as label bags for coal specimens in 1894 (Jack 1894:93–94).

Red paint was another material repurposed to record provenience details on objects. Two hundred and forty-three red paint inscriptions (or traces thereof) were recorded during our survey of labelling associated with the Official collection (see Table 2). As previously noted, we suggest that the use of the red paint for recording localities (and sometimes acquisition dates) is a significant marker that an artefact is associated with MacGregor's field activities. Whether red paint inscriptions were applied to artefacts in field settings, at sea, or in Port

Moresby is more difficult to ascertain.

When it was outfitted in England, the government steamer SS *Merrie England* (Figure 19) was equipped with stock of various types of coloured paints and pigments, including Red Lead and Vermilion (Chief Secretary's Department 1888–1891).<sup>39</sup> The vessel transported MacGregor from one end of the colony to the other and provided a mobile base. Together with a steam launch and other smaller vessels, it was used in river explorations. It is not implausible that MacGregor labelled items when the SS *Merrie England* lay at anchor. Indeed, Basil Thomson (1880–1917:15 October 1888) who sailed with MacGregor on the government yacht, *Hygeia*, in 1888, suggested

that many an evening was given up to sorting out collections on the schooner. As noted previously, the red paint inscriptions on objects are large and clumsily applied, suggesting their author was in a hurry and possibly constrained by space and time. The spelling mistakes are puzzling since we believe that the red paint inscriptions were written by MacGregor (Figure 20). Perhaps they are simply the product of a hurried application, although recurrent attacks of fever (malaria) may also have played a part.<sup>40</sup> A link between red paint and sea travel is more evident if we look at the localities recorded in red paint. These largely comprise coastal regions, islands and rivers, suggesting an association with voyaging by boat.



FIG. 19. 'B.N.G. Govt Steamer "Merrie England."'. Photograph taken by Albert Charles English, c.1890–1904 (AMS332/171). Courtesy of Australian Museum Archives.

Returning to Lawes' c.1890 photograph (see Figure 1), one of two striking canoe ornaments depicted in this image (No. 18 in Figure 1 Key) suggests a Port Moresby application for red paint labelling. Close examination of the canoe ornament identified as ER10746 (MAC4569) (Figure 21) shows that the red paint locality (Upper Fly River) had not been applied before the photograph was taken. And yet, in another photograph (Davies, Chapter 2, this volume: Figure 3), taken by the Rev. George Brown in Port Moresby c.1890, one of the clubs in the group is clearly marked 'KEREMA' in what appears to be paint, in a style consistent with MacGregor's handwriting.<sup>41</sup> The placement of the clubs on two crates, one of which the words 'S.S. *Merrie England*' are partially visible, suggests that they may have been recently unpacked from the vessel. Perhaps some red paint labelling occurred on board the *Hygeia* or the SS *Merrie England* but at other times it was applied in Port Moresby, in Government House? In any event, it is conceivable that MacGregor may have influenced curator Charles de Vis to use the same sort of red paint to apply registration numbers to many objects in the first consignment which the QM received in 1892 (Transfer 46) (see Figure 2a).<sup>42</sup> Indeed, de Vis' report on this shipment indicates that MacGregor took an active interest in the cataloguing process (De Vis 1893) (Davies Chapter 2, this volume).

### A DILEMMA OF PROVENIENCE

Not every label studied had a clear-cut provenience. The rectangular-shaped stiff card labels (see Figure 4e–f) affixed to some objects in the Official collection are a case in point. This kind of label is only connected to a consignment of objects received in 1894 (Transfer 52) and since it is well-represented among the duplicate holdings of Official collection material in the BM, it was initially assumed to be a type applied in QM during the process of assigning duplicate status in 1897. However, the label form is also associated with non-duplicate items in the Official collection (see Figure 4e). Moreover, the dirty appearance of some gives the impression of labelling applied in a field setting rather than in a museum



FIG. 20. Red paint inscription on bowl 'TROBRIND ISLAND' showing spelling mistake: ER9755 (MAC3752). Scale bar: 5cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 21. Canoe ornament ER10746 (MAC4569) showing that the red paint locality label was applied after Lawes' photograph (FIG. 1) was taken in 1890. Scale bar: 10cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

context (e.g. Figure 4f). Intrigued by the possibility that the label could represent a type applied in British New Guinea led us to investigate further.

Looking more closely at examples of the type in the BM, confirms that some of the information recorded on them certainly derives from curatorial practices in QM. Multiple examples exist on which the only information recorded is the registration number (e.g. ER12533 (BM Oc,MCG.154)). And yet, on closer inspection of those examples on which a locality is also recorded, a different interpretation is possible. The registration numbers which appear on these labels have been frequently applied in a different coloured ink (darker black ink) (the locality

is usually, but not always, written on the other side of the label) (Table 3 in Appendix 5: ER12808 (BM Oc,MCG.77), ER13103 (BM Oc,MCG.171) and ER 13016 (BM Oc,MCG.84)). Moreover, the handwritten localities associated with this form (registration number and locality) cannot always be matched to corresponding localities entered in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) or the *Ethnological Control Register 1897–1898* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898).<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it is not unreasonable to consider that some of the card labels may derive from labelling practices in British New Guinea. Perhaps in some instances de Vis added the registration number to existing labels? Photographs taken by the missionary Rev. W. G.

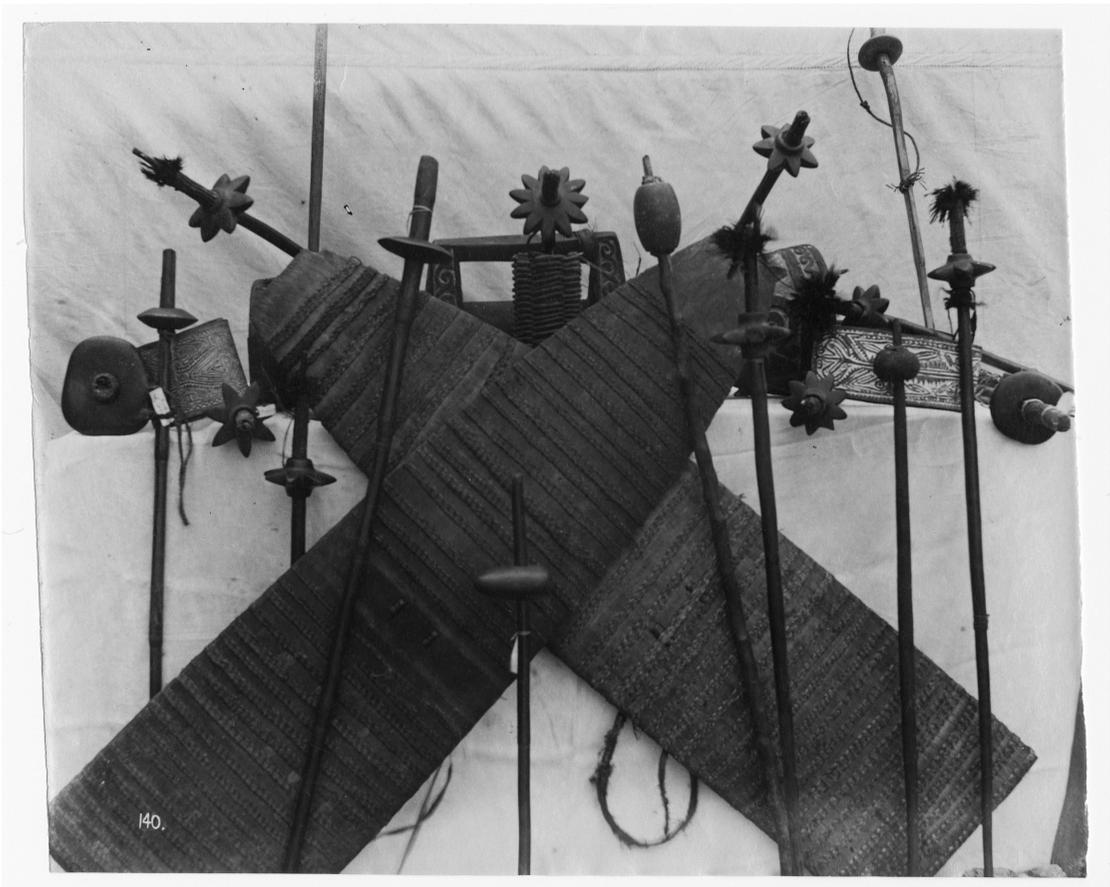


FIG. 22. Rev. W.G. Lawes photograph (No. 140) with shields and clubs and various other items. Note that the clubs have rectangular-shaped label tags: British Museum, Oc,B22.29. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

Lawes in c.1890 show that rectangular-shaped tags were used to label Official collection items in British New Guinea (see Figures 1, 22). A similar card label is also evident in MacGregor's Personal collection (see Figure 6a). Although rectangular in shape, the labels visible in the historic photographs would appear to be more like that attached to an ear ornament (see Figure 4f) than those represented by Figure 4e. We suggest that further research into rectangle card labels may reveal that there are subtle differences in size between those clearly applied in the museum context to those applied in British New Guinea.

## COLLECTING EVENTS REVEALED

After reviewing the labelling associated with the Official and Personal collections, we are in a better position to identify the places and source communities from which objects originate. While the precise collecting episodes revealed through the dated examples discussed above can be used to determine the types of cross-cultural social interactions which occurred at particular moments in time, it is still possible to glean something from those artefacts with undated locality labelling. Returning to the photograph which introduced this chapter (see Figure 1), we can use the labelling which still adheres to some of the objects to reconstruct the types of social contexts which may have facilitated their exchange. Since the same image appears in a photograph album which once belonged to the trader-collector Andrew Goldie (1840–1891), we are confident that Lawes took the photograph prior to Goldie's departure from British New Guinea in December 1890.<sup>44</sup>

Labels or inscriptions are preserved on several of the 15 objects identified as Official collection items in Figure 1 (Table 7). The labelling which survives on five objects (Figure 1 Key, nos 1, 7, 13, 18 and 21) provide important clues to the circumstances surrounding their field acquisition. The two drums (Figure 1 Key, nos 1 and 7) labelled 'TUGERI' in red paint were probably acquired by MacGregor through his social interactions with a group of men he identified as 'Tugere' and whom he encountered

on 3 March 1890 (MacGregor 1890c: 71; see Torrence et al., Chapter 8, Fig. 5d, this volume). Based on their extant labels, the headdress (Figure 1 Key, no. 13) and canoe ornaments (Figure 1 Key, nos 18 and 21) were probably obtained during MacGregor's explorations of the Fly River between 21 November 1889 and 13 February 1890. The locality written on its rectangular-shaped paper label shows that the headdress (Figure 1 Key, no. 13) was procured on Daumori Island. MacGregor's first visit there was on 10 December 1889 and his interactions with its inhabitants were facilitated by Sumai villagers who accompanied him from Kiwai Island. Before leaving he purchased a coloured shield which he described as representing 'a grotesque human face' which he thought was made for the prow of a canoe (MacGregor 1890d: 43–44).<sup>45</sup>

Returning to Daumori on 10 February 1890, MacGregor found the people friendly and keen to obtain tobacco, knives and other things in exchange for bananas and cultural artefacts (MacGregor 1890e: 64). We presume that the headdress (Figure 1 Key, no. 13) was obtained on one of these visits, perhaps on the latter occasion when more trading occurred. MacGregor's party then went further up the Fly River. On 20 January 1890, it was calculated that they had travelled a distance of some 600 miles from the mouth of the river. The labelling in red paint of 'Upper Fly River'<sup>46</sup> on the canoe ornaments (Figure 1 Key, nos 18 and 21) which are depicted in Lawes' photograph show that they were acquired at some point during this journey. Some unusual natural stone rings in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen are marked in red paint recording the 600-mile point of the trip ('Upper Fly River 600 miles') (see Figure 17 in Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume).<sup>47</sup> An approximate date of acquisition is provided by the inscriptions because MacGregor proceeded to call the camp which he established on 20 January 1890 'The 600 Mile Camp' (MacGregor 1890a: 59–60). Since MacGregor's report makes no reference to trading with local people around this date, we assume that the stones were probably found in the vicinity of the campsite. Illustrations of the labels

TABLE 7. Official collection items identified in Rev. W.G. Lawes photograph (see Figure 1).

Image Position	Object Name	ER No.	Museum Number	Locality	QM Transfer No.	Collection Date	Present Location	Label or inscription	Notes
1	Drum	10811	MAC3379	Tugeri	T46	March 1890	PNGNMAG	Red paint inscription 'TUGERI'	Drum appears in two other photographs taken by Lawes: Nos 118, 140
2	Drum								
3	Drum								
4	Drum	8808	MAC3833	Kiwai Island	T46	Dec 1889–Feb 1890	QM		
5	Drum	10813	MAC3840	Kiwai Island	T46	Dec 1889–Feb 1890	QM	Label visible in photograph but no longer present. Locality determined from museum register	
6	Drum	10814	MAC3663	Kiwai Island	T46	Dec 1889–Feb 1890	PNGNMAG	Label visible in image but no longer present. Locality determined from museum register	
7	Drum	10812	MAC3423	Tugeri	T46	March 1890	PNGNMAG	Red paint inscription 'TUGERI'	Drum appears in another Lawes photograph: No. 118,
8	Shield	10873	MAC4039		T46		QM		South Coast style
9	Shield	10871?	MAC4755?	Mailu / Vinibo	T46		PNGNMAG	Red paint "MAiLU" and "ViNiBO" on shield	
10	Club – stone head, disc	10882	MAC3593		T46	Dec 1889–Feb 1890	PNGNMAG	Tag (no longer extant)	
11	Fish trap	10912		Upper Fly River	T46	Dec 1889–Feb 1890			Likely to be ER10912 which museum register indicates is from Upper Fly River

TABLE 7. cont. Official collection items identified in Rev. W.G. Lawes photograph (see Figure 1).

Image Position	Object Name	ER No.	Museum Number	Locality	QM Transfer No.	Collection Date	Present Location	Label or inscription	Notes
12	Neck ornament – wallaby tooth	8932? 8936? 9473? 9475? 9476? 9477? 9478?		Fly River Fly River Tugeri Tugeri Tugeri Tugeri Tugeri	T46	Dec 1889– March 1890	AM PNGNMAG QM PNGNMAG PNGNMAG NF PNGNMAG	Tag visible in photograph	Likely to be one of the ER numbers given in column 3
13	Head ornament	8901	MAC1370	Domore Fly River	T46	Dec 1889– Feb 1890	PNGNMAG	Paper label found on object gives locality	The headdress appears in another photograph taken by Lawes: No. 118
14	Belt – coix seed				T46				Probably one of the 27 coix seed belts in T46 from Tugeri camp & Morehead River in QM, PNGNMAG, AM, MV.
15	Head ornament – conical	10722	MAC1310	Domore	T46	Dec 1889– Feb 1890	PNGNMAG		
16	Arrow	11504	MAC7630		T46		QM		SW Papua style ('Man-arrow')
17	Shield	10482	MAC4737	Toulon (Mailu)	T46		QM		
18	Canoe wash board	10746	MAC4569	Upper Fly River	T46	Jan–Feb 1890	PNGNMAG	Red Paint inscription 'UPER FLY RiVER' on object	
19	Shield	10482	MAC4737		T46		PNGNMAG		Massim style
20	Carved & painted anthropomorphic figure								No record in BNG Official Collection ER Register
21	Canoe wash board	10826	MAC4568	Upper Fly River	T46	Dec 1889– Feb 1890	QM	Red Paint "UPER FLY" on reverse	

associated with headdress ER8901 (MAC1370, PNGNMAG), drum ER10811 (MAC3379, PNGNMAG) and canoe ornament ER10826 (MAC4568) are in Table 1 in Appendix 5. One of the natural stone rings is in MacGregor's Personal collection (Figure 17 in Torrence & Philp Chapter 14).

## TOOLS FOR RESEARCH

The variety of labelling applied in British New Guinea provide important tools for identifying Official collection material which may still be in QM, but which has been re-registered into one of the more general museum catalogues. An example is provided by an artefact that was found in the collection in 1969 with no previous registration history and then registered into the *Register of Ethnology* (E Register) (Queensland Museum, 1911 ongoing) (E8393) rather than the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001). The style of paper notebook label, together with the partial locality and date written in black ink, confirms its association with MacGregor consignment material (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume and Table 1 in Appendix 5: E8393). Given that the current whereabouts of around 1800 artefacts from the Official collection remain unknown (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume; Table 1, Appendix 2 this volume), traces of red paint or other types of labelling may provide important clues that an object is part of the Official collection. Indeed, it is anticipated that the various forms of labelling described and illustrated in this paper, including those of museum origin, may be useful for identifying artefacts from either the Official collection or MacGregor's Personal collection which may be currently unidentified in other museum collections.

## FORENSICS UNCOVER MACGREGOR'S COMMITMENT

The forensic analysis of labels, inscriptions and markings associated with MacGregor's field collection from British New Guinea demonstrates that these

underutilised pieces of material evidence have the potential to greatly enhance our understanding of museum collections. Our research has highlighted the value of returning to the initial registration records associated with a collection rather than relying on secondary registers or computerised records. Not everything which appears in a museum database is necessarily accurate. While the same could be said for what is written on a label or inscribed on an object, we have shown that a more accurate picture emerges of an object and its provenience through fact-checking and tracing the chain of evidence back to its original source.

We acknowledge that what is preserved on objects in the Official collection does not necessarily reflect the entirety of the labelling which once existed. This gap has been mitigated to some degree by forensically examining the museum registers, especially the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910), which represents the primary registration for the assemblage. A measure of the labelling which once existed may be determined by a close study of this register because the localities recorded there appear to have been based on some sort of label which was applied in British New Guinea. In contrast, the locality data in the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) needs to be treated with caution because in some instances an object's original source locality has been either distorted or altered. Locality discrepancies have arisen because some labels applied in the museum context in the 1890s were later mistaken for labelling applied in British New Guinea.

Our study has demonstrated the importance of establishing the original source of the labels or inscriptions which appear on objects. This task helps to determine the physical setting in which such documentation was applied. Identifying the labels applied in British New Guinea gives some insight into field acquisition and labelling processes, while those affixed in the museum provide a framework for understanding curatorial practices and later redistribution of 'duplicate' material from the Official collection in the late nineteenth century.

The decision to include labelling observed in MacGregor's Personal collection in our study has produced some important results. Based on a study of the range of forms in that collection, we can be confident that certain types of labelling observed in the Official collection, such as red paint, black ink, notebook paper and manufactured paper with double-line black border, were applied in British New Guinea rather than in QM. As expected, however, there are some label forms which are unique to that collection. In addition, the recognition of labels with identical dates in the Official and MacGregor's Personal collections suggests that some acquisitions were split between the two entities.

Our study of labelling has helped identify MacGregor's active curation of the Official collection in the field and in Government House as well as to detect contributions of other, occasionally recognisable individuals. The existence of dated labels in the assemblage offers researchers a means of identifying specific collecting incidents which have the potential to inform our understanding of the nature of the social interactions which underlie the acquisition of artefacts. We suggest that by looking at these 'incidents' or 'episodes' in more detail, it could be possible to gain insight into the key role which cultural artefacts played in cross-cultural interactions between MacGregor, his agents and local communities.

The forensic analysis of handwriting on labels has revealed that MacGregor played a significant role in labelling artefacts. The pattern of idiosyncratic handwriting characteristics observed in connection with several label types suggests that the vast majority of dated field labels were written by MacGregor. This inference is supported by documentary sources which either provide examples of his handwriting (diaries and field notebook) or confirm his presence in the field at certain points of time (despatches). We infer from our findings that MacGregor was responsible for writing most of the dated labels as well as a significant proportion of the undated label assemblage (red

paint inscriptions, paper notebook and paper manufactured and black ink inscriptions). This is not surprising if we consider his commitment to the Official collection which is perhaps best articulated through one of MacGregor's written despatches to the governor of Queensland (4 January 1897). 'The first and most important point is to make this official collection as complete as possible...Its formation and preservation I have watched with jealous care' (MacGregor 1897b). Based on our findings, we suggest that labelling was probably just one aspect of the 'jealous care' which MacGregor exercised over the Official collection.

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## □ ENDNOTES

1. The number '141' corresponds with '141 Shields, Drums, &c.' on a 'List of New Guinea Photographs by Rev. W.G. Lawes.' The photographs on the list cover the period 1874–90, and were offered for sale by Henry King's Photographic Studio in Sydney (see Lübcke 2016: Vol. 2, Appendix 1:80; 107).
2. The conference was held at the Pitt-Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (14–15 April 2011). A list of the papers presented at the conference can be found in Coote (2012:16, Note 2).
3. A different total (2875) appears in the *Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes* (Queensland Museum 1876–1907): 2 December 1892. Our research indicates that Transfer 46 comprised 2970 items (see Davies et al., Table 1 in Appendix 2 this volume).
4. The Master List of the Official collection (Table 1 in Appendix 2) suggests that approximately 1284 items associated with Transfer 46 had no labels pertaining to their place of collection.
5. See Davies (Chapter 2 this volume) for details on the history of registration systems and numbers at the Queensland Museum. Both the original and later registration numbers are provided (ER and MAC). If no museum is given, then the object is currently housed in the Queensland Museum. If it is elsewhere the museum will be named as follows: Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (PNGNMAG); Australian Museum (AM); the British Museum (BM). The ER prefix reflects current Queensland Museum collection management practice and does not appear on objects or in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910).
6. The register entry indicates that the haft was marked 'Toulon [illegible]' and the stone head 'St Joseph's'. Haft '8700' (BM Oc,MCG.14) is marked 'Toulon Mailu' in black ink which corresponds with what is legible in the register. The blade could be Oc,MCG.58 which is inscribed 'St. JOSEPH RiVER' in red paint but which lacks any identifying QM registration number.
7. Quinnell (2000:88) previously identified 178 localities but this figure was based on secondary registration data (i.e. *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001)).
8. A near complete specimen of the four-sided label which still adheres to an adze (ABDUA:607) in MacGregor's Personal collection in Aberdeen shows the presence of printed dotted lines (see Appendix 5 Table 2 for an illustration of ABDUA:607).
9. Only one example of a label with trimmed corners has been found in the Official collection: ER11699 (MAC1981 PNGNMAG).
10. Table 3 is based on labels in the Official and Personal collections and two museum registers. The *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) contains the primary registration of Official collection items (1892–98), and the *MacGregor Register* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001) represents a subsequent re-registration of Official collection material. Catalogue sheets produced during the lead up to repatriation of Official collection material to the PNGNMAG between 1979 and 1992 were also consulted.

11. See adzes: ER8710 (MAC17 PNGNMAG); ER8821 (MAC31); ER19447 (MAC78); ER19436 (MAC105); ER19449 (MAC139 PNGNMAG); ER19448 (MAC140 PNGNMAG); ER19442 (MAC141); ER19450 (MAC142); ER19443 (MAC143); ER19451 (MAC144); ER19445 (MAC145 PNGNMAG); dance ornaments (ER18726 (MAC646.1-2 PNGNMAG)). The label connected with ER18726 (MAC646) may have actually belonged to ER18776.1-2 (See Table 3 notes). Three transfers are represented by this group of 13 objects: 46; 60 [68?] and 74.
12. Our data for MacGregor's Personal collection is based on images of objects available to the authors at the time of writing this chapter. It is expected that there may be additional examples of labelling (including dated forms) in MacGregor's Personal collection beyond those presented here.
13. Extant handwritten reports penned by several government officers in the mid-1890s show that it was standard procedure for village and local proper names to be written in uppercase letters. However, this style was altered when the reports were subsequently published in the ARBNG.
14. Twenty-seven of the 394 objects were found to have more than one form of label. The combination of paper notebook and red paint labels was especially noticeable, as for example shown in Figure 7. One club (ER14364 (MAC3632)) was found to have the locality from which it was acquired written on it in black ink in three different places (the same locality is written, but with slightly different variations).
15. Banari was recorded as the locality by de Vis in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) in 1894 but no such place name exists in the ARBNG. On the other hand, several references to Sergeant Banari were found e.g. MacGregor (1892b:61 (Enclosure in Despatch No. 46)); Butterworth (1896: 26); Guise (1894:82, 86–87).
16. Another example is provided by the fishing net (ER9738 (Not found)) which the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) indicates was marked 'Murua Jack's Village'. MacGregor (1892a:5) describes meeting a 'native of Murua named Jack, or Buioi, a member of the Wamana tribe' at Samarai. 'Jack' accompanied MacGregor to Murua (Woodlark) in July 1890 on an expedition to capture murderers of two traders at Murua.
17. For another example of the practice see the adze haft ER16178 (BM Oc,MCG.11).
18. The attribution of a particular style of line-ruled paper notebook label to Giulianetti is based on surviving examples of his handwriting. The cursive text on the labels attached to ER18754 (MAC1359, PNGNMAG) and ER18924 (MAC3947) matches that in Giulianetti's handwritten report (Giulianetti 1897). The locality and date 'Sikube, Upper Vanapa River March 1897' which is written on the label attached to the mourning jacket (ER18924 (MAC3947)) directly corresponds with Giulianetti's published accounts (Giulianetti 1899:33–34). He arrived at Sikube on 29 March 1897 and remained there for three days. Illustrations of the labels discussed here may be viewed in Appendix 5 Table 1.
19. ER number was not sighted on the object.
20. For an illustration of the object (Oc1931-0722-50) and its label, see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_).
21. Traces or remnants of red paint inscriptions and/or paper notebook labels which remain on some objects are in this estimate.
22. This file is held in the Queensland State Archives (see Green 1896) and contains manuscripts of material sent to the Government Printer, Brisbane, to be included in the New Guinea Annual Report (Gall Collection), 01/01/1895 – 31/12/1896. COL/480; SRS5330/1/2. Item ID 861020. (Handwritten manuscript) (Queensland State Archives).
23. Green was one of several government officers who made private collections of their own while on official duty (see Quinnell 2000:85). Others include Basil Thomson and T.H. Hatton-Richards, who served as MacGregor's private secretaries in 1888 and 1889, and A.C. English. Some of English's collections are held by the South Australian Museum. Among the 109 clubs in English's private collection now in the South Australian Museum, there are five from Musa River, three from Kumusi River, one from Mambare River and two from Mt Scratchley. English accompanied MacGregor on his Aug–Oct 1896 crossing of the Owen Stanley Range by way of Mambare River and Mt Scratchley.
24. The three clubs labelled in black ink attributed to Green which the museum received before his death include: ER12219 (MAC5553 PNGNMAG) (Transfer 52: 1 August 1894) and two clubs ER14365 (MAC5612 PNGNMAG); ER14367 (MAC3656 PNGNMAG) (Transfer 55: 11 January 1896). Transfer 55 also includes a club labelled by Green in red paint ER14373 (MAC3883 PNGNMAG).
25. Transfer 60 (1 March 1897) contained 55 clubs labelled by Green while Transfer 74 (10 October 1898) contained eight clubs labelled by him.
26. Resident Magistrate of the Eastern District, M. H. Moreton, was informed of John Green's death on 11 February 1897. He arrived at the Tamata Junction station on 14 March (MacGregor 1898b: 25). Some of Green's belongings and other European articles were later found scattered throughout several villages (MacGregor 1898b: 26–28).
27. Objects labelled 'Mambare River April 1897' in Transfer 68 (30 December 1897) and Transfer 74 (10 October 1898) were presumably acquired during this punitive expedition.
28. The impending arrival of the strangers had been detected by its inhabitants who had fled before Green and Butterworth's party reached the village, although two small children later wandered into the village while it was being occupied by the foreigners.

29. One of the clubs may have been used to kill a man from Gira (ER14366 (MAC3578 PNGNMAG)) (see Figure 11), while the second has the words 'KOUMA ↑ KAUNA' inscribed on it in black ink (ER14357 (MAC3891 PNGNMAG)) (see Table 1 in Appendix 5).
30. A drone pipe (*digeridoo*) (ETM.1080) collected from the Port Essington area of the Northern Australia between c. 1838–77 (formerly in the Macleay Museum now part of the Chau Chak Wing Museum, University of Sydney) also has what appears to be a depiction of the broad arrow on it (see Davies & Taçon: 2013:105–106).
31. Two Cloudy Bay shields of the same style ER12454 (MAC4752 PNGNMAG) and ER12455 (MAC5103) which both have '20' written in black ink or paint on the reverse might support this supposition.
32. The numeral '18' is written on the back of the shield in red crayon.
33. A Trobriand Island shield formerly in the private collection of the British ethnologist James Edge-Partington (U508) and now in the Auckland Museum (15714) has the same type of red crayon number ('73') written on it.
34. It is worth noting here that those objects with numbers in red crayon/chalk or paint (white or black) seem to be only associated with the first three MacGregor consignments (Transfers 46, 47 and 52).
35. For example, an adze (QM E8538) previously assigned the registration number 11750 in around 1893–94, features the same label. De Vis' annotation in the register indicates that the adze 11750 was associated with 'C18' (i.e. part of Collection 18, W. C. Lawrie). The handwriting on the label is that of de Vis.
36. The differing styles of handwriting seen on this serrated label type can be frequently (but not always) matched to corresponding locality entries in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898), a document which recorded the museum for which an object had been selected as a duplicate. The labels applied during the process of selecting and assigning duplicate status were often accompanied by another of the same type on which the intended destination was marked by the letters A, V, B or Q written in either blue, pink, red or black (?) crayon or chalk (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume; Torrence & Davies Chapter 13 this volume). A = Australian Museum; V = Victorian Museum; B = British Museum or Q=Queensland Museum.
37. This supposition may be supported by the serrated labels found on two objects in the Official collection from Koriki (ER12169 (MAC5778) and ER14219 (MAC7809 PNGNMAG)) on which the handwriting is extremely similar to MacGregor's.
38. Samples of twine distributed as duplicates in 1897 provide firm evidence that this occurred because the samples were originally registered as one object but were cut up into two, three, or four pieces during the selection process and tagged to reflect the allocation. For example, the twine sample assigned the single registration number 12932 in 1894 was divided into 4 pieces in 1897. A metal (zinc) tag with '12932d' is still attached to the portion sent to the BM (BM Oc,MCG.170). See Figure 3 in Torrence & Davies (Chapter 13 this volume).
39. pXRF analysis of the red paint 'TABORU' on a stone adze in Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge D 1903.126 shows that the paint has a high lead content (Michelle Richards to Robin Torrence, 20 May 2020).
40. Some insight into the prevalence of fever and how it impacted field activities can be gleaned from MacGregor's despatches. In 1889, MacGregor reported that if an administrative tour of inspection comprising ten men lasted a month 'all will have suffered from fever except one or two' (MacGregor 1890b:26).
41. Brown accompanied MacGregor on the government steamer SS *Merrie England* in mid-1890 and is known to have made collections during the voyage (Quinnell 2000:84).
42. The use of red paint to apply registration numbers to ethnographic collections in QM dates from the receipt of MacGregor's first consignment in 1892 (Transfer 46). Given that MacGregor appears to have taken some interest in the cataloguing process of the consignment, it is possible that he brought over supplies of red paint from the SS *Merrie England* for the museum to use. The vessel had brought MacGregor and the first consignment to Brisbane in October 1892.
43. When duplicates were assigned in 1897, there were only five staff members working at QM: de Vis (curator), A.J. Norris (clerical assistant), C.J. Wild (Sunday attendee), Kendall Broadbent (Sunday attendee) and doorkeeper (J. H. Spiller) (*Minute Book of Monthly Meetings, Trustees Minutes* (Queensland Museum 1876–1907): 3 May 1897). We have been able to identify de Vis', Norris' and Wild's handwriting in the *Ethnological Control Register* (Queensland Museum 1897–1898) (see Davies Chapter 2, this volume).
44. The same image appears in an album of photographs previously owned by Andrew Goldie, Museum of the Cumbraes, North Ayrshire Council, Scotland.
45. Four canoe ornaments (ER10744 (MAC4580 PNGNMAG); ER10745 (MAC4487); ER10746 (MAC4569 PNGNMAG); ER10826 (MAC4568) in the Official collection fit this general description but are reputedly from the 'Upper Fly River' according to existing labelling and/or museum registration records. However, their stylistic elements are more akin to the Fly River delta region where Daumori Island is situated.
46. 'UPER FLY RiVER' and 'UPER FLY' is written in red paint on ER10746 (MAC4569 PNGNMAG) and ER10826 (MAC4568) respectively.
47. For example, ABDUA:104 + 2 (12) is inscribed in red paint 'UPPER FLY RiVER 600 MiLES'.

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