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

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Viewing cross-cultural interactions through assemblage analysis of the late nineteenth century Official collection from British New Guinea

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In the absence of indigenous voices in historical documents relating to British New Guinea, the Official collection made between 1888 and 1898 provides an invaluable record of how local communities in this new colony actively negotiated their relationships with representatives of the British government. Conceiving the Official collection as an archaeological assemblage creates the opportunity for making inferences about the kinds of social relationships embodied within the collection and the ways these entwined local communities in British New Guinea with William MacGregor, the most senior British government officer at that time. To attract and encourage interaction with the British government party largely for the purpose of obtaining access to trade goods, objects were made explicitly for trade with westerners and/or were carefully selected from artefacts in use. In addition, some items stored for traditional exchange and special occasions were repurposed to facilitate gifting and exchange with MacGregor. This first of four chapters that have adopted an archaeological approach to assemblage analysis focuses on how indigenous groups actively structured their engagements with MacGregor and his agents. Subsequent chapters consider the impacts of contact history on choices made by Papuans and describe components in the Official collection derived from punitive action.

□ Sir William MacGregor, British New Guinea, cross-cultural engagement, ethnographic collections, indigenous agency, assemblage, archaeology

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INTRODUCTION

A very large group of ethnographic objects from British New Guinea, brought together largely by Sir William MacGregor in his role as Administrator and Lieutenant Governor (1888–1898) and now known as the ‘Official collection’, is an invaluable material record of the early phase of colonisation because it is the embodiment of cross-cultural relationships in which objects played seminal roles (see Torrence et al. Chapter 1, this volume). As described at length by Davies (Chapter 2 this volume), the Official collection, now largely housed in the Queensland Museum (QM) and the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery (PNGNMAG), comprises 10 959 items registered in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) (see Table 1). Quinnell (2000) notes that trading with local communities was an integral part of MacGregor’s inspections across the colony, partly to acquire food for his party, but also because ‘the act of collecting (and the reciprocal relationship established) became a pragmatic procedure, part of his methodology for the spread of *Pax Britannica* at these first meetings between *Goverman* and villagers’ (Quinnell 2000:84–5). Although MacGregor often depended on the local inhabitants for food, shelter, carriers, and guides, the contemporary perspectives of the people he met were only rarely noted in the *British New Guinea Annual Reports* (ARBNG) and other official correspondence. As social interaction in colonial settings around the world was frequently mediated through the exchange of goods (Thomas 1991; Phillips & Steiner 1999; O’Hanlon & Welsch 2000; Clarke & Torrence 2011; Gosden & Knowles 2001; Davies 2011; Philp 2009; 2013), the Official collection can be conceptualised as the material consequences of negotiated interactions between Papuans and MacGregor and his agents (Edmundson 2021). Consequently, this large assemblage provides the opportunity to gain rare insights into cross-cultural relationships in late nineteenth century British New Guinea.

Building on the insights of previous studies (Thomas 1991; 1994; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Torrence 2000;

Gosden & Knowles 2001; Newell 2006; Gosden et al. 2007; Edmundson 2021), the approach employed here turns on its head the assumption that MacGregor and his agents were solely or even primarily responsible for choosing the objects that comprise the Official collection. This study is guided by the simple observation that the substantial number of items comprising this assemblage embody the concrete material consequences of social negotiations between local people and the British explorers, government officials, police, etc. who visited them. Although some material was acquired by MacGregor and his party following punitive actions, the bulk of the Official collection was obtained through social exchanges in which both parties played active roles.

The ways in which MacGregor acquired objects from local communities through gifting, barter, and scavenging following punitive raids is well illustrated by Davies’ (Chapter 4 this volume) account of several ‘tours of inspection’ during his first year in the colony (see also Connelly 2016; Edmundson 2021). By applying a combination of anthropological and archaeological theory to develop a methodology for reconstructing the character of the social exchanges between MacGregor and the local community, I make a series of hypotheses about the kinds of behaviour that may have been responsible for the formation of the Official collection. Anthropologists have written extensively about the intimate connections between the way that exchange takes place and the social relationships that result from it (e.g. Sahlins 1972; Appadurai 1986; Thomas 1991; Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992). Drawing on these, the archaeologically informed analysis of the material attributes of the Official collection helps address the paucity of historical documentation by offering complementary information from which inferences can be drawn concerning how indigenous Papuans structured their interactions with MacGregor and his agents.

The enormous size and complexity of the collection assembled by MacGregor (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume) makes it an ideal set of data for investigating cross-cultural relationships. As a first step in teasing out the wide variety of social

relationships that linked local communities in British New Guinea with MacGregor and his associates, this study considers the Official collection as a single entirety. To assist further research on the Official collection by the descendants of the people who contributed to it as well as through comparison with other contemporary collections, the chapter also serves as a basic introduction to the variety of material brought together by MacGregor and his assistants. This broad sweep also provides background information for analyses in subsequent chapters. Torrence and Davies (Chapter 7 this volume) extend the assemblage-focussed approach by interrogating subsets of the Official collection to investigate how the length of contact with outsiders influenced the types of objects made and offered for exchange, whereas Torrence et al. (Chapter 8 this volume) and Torrence and Davies (Chapter 9 this volume) analyse specific cases that illustrate the characteristics of material in the Official collection obtained through opportunistic collecting following punitive actions by British government representatives.

BARTER AND CROSS-CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS

As essential background to the methodology adopted here, I begin with a discussion of the theoretical links between the way exchange is conducted and the character of the social relations that derive from it. As argued by anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (1972:185–275), there is a close connection between the character of exchange in terms of the relationships among the participants, requirements concerning equivalence, the nature of goods involved, and the social connections formed or enhanced through the transaction. He proposed a continuum beginning at one end with exchanges in which the equivalence of the goods offered by the two parties is not relevant because a return is not expected, a form he designated as ‘generalised reciprocity’ or ‘pure gifts’. His typology then ranges through ‘balanced reciprocity’ in which equivalent value is essential for exchange and moves on to situations in which actors attempt to achieve or even maximise gains, as in bartering. Sahlins’

scheme ends up with ‘negative reciprocity’ in which the most extreme form is theft. As illustrated by Davies’ (Chapter 4 this volume) description of events that took place during MacGregor’s first six months in British New Guinea, the Official collection resulted from a mix of the exchange types described by Sahlins, signalling the multiplicity of cross-cultural relationships that characterised this colony in the early part of its history.

Occasionally, MacGregor and/or members of his team acquired material for the Official collection as gifts from individuals they encountered face to face. More commonly, objects were exchanged in a formalized fashion with little or no discussion or bartering. One person would simply put forward an object and another would offer something in return (see MacGregor 1890a). At other times, either locals or MacGregor’s group deliberately placed gifts in conspicuous places for others to find. Subsequently, return gifts were left behind by Papuans (so-called ‘silent trade’) (Quinnell 2000:87; MacGregor 1892:15). Although the social context was not the same as a face-to-face meeting, both parties would have achieved their aims through the interaction conducted through exchange.

As described in the *Annual Reports on British New Guinea*, exchanges were frequently brokered through barter, a process in which objects such as hoop iron, nails, metal tomahawks, cloth, glass beads, tobacco, called ‘trade’ in the vernacular of the time (Figure 1), were offered in return for food items or cultural objects (see Philp 2009; Davies 2011; Connelly 2016), but on some occasions people refused to engage in trade with MacGregor, presumably because they did not want to engage in a social relationship with him (Davies Chapter 4 this volume; Quinnell 2000:87; Edmundson 2021:37). Overall, however, most people were very eager to obtain trade goods and tobacco and, consequently, may have given away items that took them much time and effort to produce. There is no evidence in the historical accounts that within the context of bartering, Papuans were coerced into giving up materials against their will. In fact, in many incidents, locals initiated the exchanges, were very eager to be



FIG. 1. Objects incorporating western trade goods: a. woven headdress with coix (Job's tears) seeds and a large handkerchief, Unknown provenience, ER19736 (MAC 2811); b. wrist guard with red trade cloth, Western Division, ER9730 (MAC2881); c. necklace with glass beads, Unknown provenience, ER18891 (MAC4388). Scale bars: 1 cm. Queensland Museum photography, Peter Waddington.

involved, and were satisfied with the outcome. For instance, on a visit to Kitava Island in the Trobriand group, MacGregor noted that 'I was visited by nearly all the people on this very populous island. Some hundreds of them were ardently bent on trading. Prices have risen some 300 per cent since my first visit there' (MacGregor 1894a:19).

As described in Davies (Chapter 4 this volume), Torrence et al. (Chapter 8 this volume) and Torrence and Davies (Chapter 9 this volume), not all encounters were peaceful and balanced. There are notable incidents when 'negative reciprocity' contributed to the Official collection. On several occasions, the British stole personal property

left behind when people fled following a violent encounter. In other cases Papuans were not averse to stealing from MacGregor's party. For example, MacGregor (1894b:xiv) described people from the village of Koriki in the Papuan Gulf region as 'thievish' and reported the theft of four American steel axes. This encounter ended badly. As the threat of violence escalated, the British fled the village firing their guns in self-defence.

The dynamics of barter within cross-cultural contexts are especially interesting because each participant (Papuan and British) would have had their own objectives in engaging in transactions and it is unlikely that they shared similar notions about the value of the materials involved. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones (1992) have argued convincingly that in encounters where a commonly accepted medium of exchange has not been adopted, barter can only be conducted if both parties are satisfied with what they receive. Each participant weighs up the value of what they offer and if the return is not considered of equal value, then the transaction does not go ahead, but in most cases all participants are satisfied with the result. An excellent example is provided by Gammage's (1998) account of trading relations between an Australian patrol and the Enga, a local group in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

The Europeans thought food cheap, shell worth two or three shillings buying a thousand pounds of *kaukau* or a fair-sized pig. Enga thought the line paid amazingly well: a kina for a big pig, priceless salt for mere vegetables. . . The profits were enormous. People took care not to show that they were being overpaid, but fifty years later they recalled the trading gleefully (Gammage 1998:58).

In another example Gosden et al. (2007:183) describe the problems Charles Seligman faced in January 1904 when attempting to make an ethnographic collection in British New Guinea. They conclude that 'on this, and most other occasions, it is clear that the locals were controlling trade, bringing out the objects that they were prepared to part with, and then demanding specific payment.'

MacGregor's (1890a) account of his exchanges with a band of Marind-Anim people illustrates that bartering could be successful even in situations with very little shared language and when the participants were calculating value in very different ways (also see Torrence et al., Chapter 8 this volume). Similarly, Davies (Chapter 4 this volume) describes a range of encounters varying from those in which locals were eager to engage in exchange and pleased with the trade goods they received to others where MacGregor's party could not even obtain yams because the owners were not satisfied with what was offered (also see descriptions of exchanges in Bonshek, Chapter 11 this volume). If people were not comfortable with establishing a social relationship through exchange, they simply left. It is also worth stressing that although MacGregor had modern weapons and was usually accompanied by local police, he was not always in a position of power. He often travelled on foot and his party was frequently outnumbered by the locals he met. For example, Davies (Chapter 4 this volume) recounts an incident on Normanby Island when MacGregor's party of between five to ten men were met by a group of about 100 people as their boat landed on the beach.

Given Humphrey and Hugh-Jones's (1992) discussion about barter, it is important to begin by considering what the goals of the people involved in cross-cultural exchanges might have been. Beginning with MacGregor's aims,¹ he spent most of his ten years in British New Guinea visiting and exploring the new territory with the goal of establishing and reinforcing peaceful and productive relationships with communities, some of whom had had little, if any, previous contact with westerners. A second objective of his travels was to assess the potential of natural resources to assist future economic development. In the course of his journeys, MacGregor frequently initiated exchanges with the indigenous inhabitants because he was in need of essentials such as food, water, and directions (Quinnell 2000: 84). As noted previously by Quinnell (2000:84–5), the exchange of items was a critical part in broaching and cementing social connections, an essential precursor to his primary goal of

establishing peace under British control. In most cases, MacGregor would have had little choice in the nature of the items offered to him, although when dealing with communities that had experienced previous interactions with foreigners, he could become embroiled in prolonged negotiations (see Connelly 2016).

Thirdly, MacGregor's own personal desires and tastes would have influenced what he acquired for the Official collection.² He had become well acquainted with ethnographic collecting during his previous post in Fiji (1875–1888), where he became friends with world traveler and collector, Baron Anatole von Hügel, and where he acquired cultural objects for his personal collection (Joyce 1971:22; Thomas 1991:167–170; see Torrence et al., Chapter 14 this volume). His experience in Fiji acquainted him with the rapid speed of cultural change in the colonies and the need to obtain collections before it was 'too late' (Quinnell 2000:83). On his trips throughout British New Guinea, MacGregor was often accompanied by Europeans who were active in collecting natural history specimens or cultural objects (Quinnell 2000:84; Philp 2021; Philp, Chapter 3, this volume; Davies, Chapter 4 this volume). Through time, he became very friendly with several collectors such as Enrico Hillyer Giglioli, Director of the Royal Zoological Museum in Florence (Torrence et al., Chapter 14 this volume). As an amateur collector himself, MacGregor would have been aware of the types of objects that were highly valued and frequently pictured in contemporary sale and auction catalogues in England (see Clarke & Torrence 2015; Torrence & Clarke 2011; Harrison 2011). It is therefore not surprising that 'MacGregor was captivated by the virtuosity and aesthetic appeal of Trobriander and Massim artefacts' (Quinnell (2000:88) as these are often characterized by ornate and colourful decorations (Figure 1 and Figures 2 and 3 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 7 this volume).

Among his wide interests, MacGregor collected natural history specimens. Quinnell (2000:86) notes that the Official collection 'was subsidiary to MacGregor's personal pursuit of bird species'

(see also Philp, Chapter 3 this volume). Following on from his scientific and medical background, the choice of what to obtain for the Official collection was probably influenced by a desire to capture the full range of variation in 'types' of cultural items, in the same way that biologists sought to capture all the species in the natural world (Quinnell 2000:82–83). Given MacGregor's hypothetical aims, one would expect the Official collection to encompass a comprehensive sweep of artefact categories then in use by indigenous groups. An exception would have been the material culture from Port Moresby and nearby regions where he felt traditional culture was in decline due to prolonged contact with western civilization (Quinnell 2000:88).

Turning from British aims to the other side of the exchange relationship, villagers across British New Guinea probably had differing motivations for engaging in exchange with MacGregor and his party, although most probably shared the goal of establishing a social relationship with outsiders to prevent physical conflict. As described by Davies (Chapter 4 this volume) some communities were familiar with and eager to obtain western trade goods (Figure 1) (see also Davies 2011; Philp 2009). In areas with little prior personal experience of westerners, particularly in the North-East Division, local people did not always appreciate the value of the goods MacGregor offered and, consequently, refused to participate any kind of trade (Quinnell 2000:87; Macgregor 1890b:41). When conducting patrols, MacGregor frequently encountered people who were not expecting him. On many occasions, the only things they hand on hand to offer for exchange were items of food they were carrying (Quinnell 2000:87).

It seems plausible that some individuals would have attempted to enhance their social position by controlling access to MacGregor (and trade goods) and may have offered special or rare items to form a special relationship with him. It is also possible that Papuans were pleased to rid themselves of culturally dangerous objects used in magic and sorcery by giving them to missionaries and other foreigners like MacGregor who would remove them



FIG. 2. Bark belt with incised and infilled design from 'Domore', Western Division is a good example of the ornately decorated items that were highly attractive to western collectors, especially when they included a face motif: ER10333 (MAC3042). Queensland Museum Photography.

from the community (see Küchler 1987; Barker 2001; Torrence & Clarke 2013; 2016). As the consequence of exchange brokered through the push and pull of negotiation between people with differing aims, whether silent or face-to-face, the mix of different kinds of things that ended up in the Official collection offers an intriguing source of data about the social relations between the early British colonisers and the local population.

ASSEMBLAGE ANALYSIS

Having introduced the main principles of social exchange and considered the reasons why MacGregor and Papuans engaged in barter with each other, I now turn to the methodology used to infer kinds of exchange using the material properties of the Official collection. Gathered from across British New Guinea over a period of ten years,

the Official collection entails a large, but poorly documented assortment of artefacts. The process by which objects in the collection were accumulated has similarities to the way artefacts build up over a long period of time within what eventually becomes a modern entity: the archaeological site. The analogy between ethnographic collections and archaeological sites has introduced new questions and methods to historic ethnographic collections (see Gosden et al. 2007; Torrence & Clarke 2013:173–4; Torrence & Clarke 2016; Harrison 2013; Wingfield 2013). Archaeologists use the concept of 'assemblage' to describe a group of interrelated objects, such as the Official collection, that shares a spatial or temporal association (Champion 1980:11; Harrison 2013:18–19). As defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Archaeology*, an assemblage is 'an associated set of contemporary artifacts that can be considered as a single unit for record

and analysis' (Darvill 2008). Although a group of objects brought together by one or more actors is often referred to as a 'collection,' the concept of an 'assemblage' is perhaps more appropriate for the material which MacGregor acquired. The descriptor 'collection' fosters the assumption that the material was intentionally and carefully selected by a single agent. Although that may be appropriate in other circumstances, it is clear from the historical accounts that, although MacGregor certainly had a conception about what he wanted to achieve, he obtained much of the material in the Official collection incidentally and as the consequence of a wide variety of social circumstances (Quinnell 2000; Edmundson 2021; see also Chapters 3, 4, 7–9 this volume).

The very large size of the Official collection as well as the considerable variation in the kinds of objects represented makes it an ideal case for analyses of *assemblage composition* (presence and absence of object types) and *assemblage structure* (relative proportion of different functional categories of objects). In the forensic approach used in archaeology, the nature of past behaviour is inferred from the similarity of material traces in the assemblage with those which have been observed to be a consequence of processes that occurred in the present or recent past. Using this reasoning, the character of historical cross-cultural relationships is interpreted from the mix of things present in ethnographic museum assemblages enhanced by studies of artefact production and decoration (see Phillips 1999; Gosden & Knowles 2001; Torrence 2000; Gosden et al. 2007; Harrison 2006; 2011; Philp 2011; Clarke & Torrence 2011; Torrence & Clarke 2011).

This study builds on previous archaeological approaches to ethnographic assemblages from what is now Central Province, Papua New Guinea. In association with historical documents, Clarke & Torrence (2011; 2015; Torrence & Clarke 2013; 2016) used the composition and structure of museum collections to infer behaviours adopted by local communities to broker their relationships with westerners³ during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They noted that strategic

gifts were made by local inhabitants to create or strengthen links with key outsiders such as missionaries or government officials. For example, Papuans quickly realised that objects highly appealing to British collectors, such as stone clubs, were effective in leveraging trade goods from westerners (Torrence & Clarke 2011:46–47). In addition, novel artefact types, such as man-catchers, were created for the specific purpose of maximising opportunities for trade (O'Hanlon 1999)⁴ (Figure 3). Enhancing the visibility of objects offered for exchange to westerners (e.g. tobacco pipes, wooden bowls, or lime spatulas) by increasing their size, elaborating the decoration applied, or including understandable designs like human faces or figures increased their attractiveness (Graburn 1976; 1999; Silverman 1999; Torrence 2000; 2015; Clarke & Torrence 2015) (Figure 2). Finally, it was noted that artefacts with very high values within indigenous social and ceremonial spheres were often withheld from foreigners (Torrence & Clarke 2013:188–193).

Three approaches are woven together in this study to infer the kinds of cross-cultural social relations in early British New Guinea based on an archaeologically informed analysis of the Official collection. The first is a study of *assemblage composition*. It begins by setting up a classification of the objects in the Official collection into functional 'types' based largely on their physical properties,

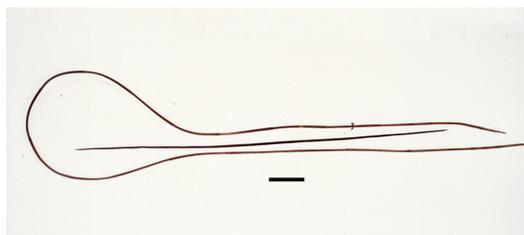


FIG. 3. Man-catcher from Kerepuna, Central Division: ER10905 (MAC4840). These unusual hoops with an embedded sharp point and a long handle were possibly not functional tools but were made specifically to attract trade by appealing to westerners' notions of the 'savage' (O'Hanlon 1999). Perhaps this poorly made item contributed to MacGregor's (1897a:61) suspicion that these were not traditional items. Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

although historical and contemporary data about how they were used is also considered: e.g. arrows, bowls, shields, belts, lime spatulas, etc. (Table 1). The presence or absence and relative abundance of a selection of artefact types is then analysed in terms of the goals and aims of both MacGregor and local communities as described previously. Finally, inferences are made about the kinds of social interaction implied by the relative contribution of these items to the whole assemblage: i.e. the Official collection.

The second approach examines *assemblage structure*. In this methodology information from ethnographic and historic sources is used to group artefact types into broader 'functional' categories that relate to their supposed uses within indigenous society (e.g. utilitarian, social, exchange, etc.) (see Table 1). The relative proportions of the functional classes in the Official collection are then discussed in terms of cross-cultural interaction. Finally, the third set of inferences builds on the study of *assemblage*

TABLE 1. Official collection: assemblage composition based on artefact types and functional categories that reflect their role in Papuan societies (based on the Master List in Appendix 2, this volume).

Type	Analysed Assemblage	Bag contents	Total	Functional Category
Axe-adze	837	8	845	Attractor
Arrow	2803	1	2804	Attractor/Exchange
Arrow point	31		31	Attractor/Exchange
Bag	128	2	130	Exchange/Utilitarian
Bag/basket with contents	31		31	Exchange/Social
Barkcloth	184		184	Exchange/Utilitarian
Barkcloth beater	27		27	Utilitarian
Basket	67		67	Exchange/Utilitarian
Belt	176	9	185	Social/Exchange
Belt, bark, carved	6		6	Social
Belt, coix	46		46	Mourning
Bow	98		98	Attractor
Bowl, coconut	27	21	48	Utilitarian
Bowl, shell	5		5	Utilitarian
Bowl, wooden	285		285	Made for sale
Bowstring	5	2	7	Utilitarian
Bullroarer	1		1	Magic/Sorcery
Canoe baler	9		9	Utilitarian
Canoe ornament	150		150	Made for sale
Canoe paddle	99		99	Utilitarian
Carved board	20		20	Utilitarian
Charm	71	42	113	Magic/Sorcery
Clothing, cape	7		7	Social
Clothing, mourning	34	3	37	Mourning
Clothing, skirt	95		95	Exchange/Social
Club	531		531	Attractor
Container, lime	91	1	92	Social/Made for Sale
Container, other	19	9	28	Utilitarian
Container, water	22		22	Utilitarian
Cordage	74	13	87	Utilitarian
Dagger, cassowary	9		9	Magic/Sorcery
Door	1		1	Utilitarian

TABLE. 1. cont. Official collection: assemblage composition based on artefact types and functional categories that reflect their role in Papuan societies (based on the Master List in Appendix 2, this volume).

Type	Analysed Assemblage	Bag contents	Total	Functional Category
Drill equipment	22		22	Utilitarian
Drum	133		133	Social/Exchange
Figure, carved	20		20	Attractor
Fire-making equipment	4		4	Utilitarian
Fish trap	30		30	Utilitarian
Fishhook	43		43	Utilitarian
Fishing kite equipment	11		11	Utilitarian
Fishing line/float/lure	60		60	Utilitarian
Fishing net	67		67	Utilitarian
Grindstone	10		10	Utilitarian
Hammock	7		7	Utilitarian
Head carrier	2		2	Magic/Sorcery
Headrest	7		7	Utilitarian
Human skull or tooth	9		9	Magic/Sorcery
Hunting, animal	37		37	Utilitarian
Knife, bamboo plain	15	20	35	Utilitarian
Knife, decorated, beheading	9		9	Attractor/Magic/Sorcery
Man-catcher	6		6	Made for sale
Mat	5		5	Utilitarian
Model, house or canoe	18		18	Made for sale
Mortar	86		86	Social/Made for Sale
Musical instrument	29	3	32	Social
Needle	26	14	40	Utilitarian
Netting needle	19		19	Utilitarian
Ornament, arm	298	43	341	Social
Ornament, arm, conus	14		14	Exchange/Social
Ornament, breast	55	1	56	Social
Ornament, ear	209	60	269	Social
Ornament, forehead	171	9	180	Social
Ornament, head	228	6	234	Social
Ornament, head, comb	22	5	27	Social
Ornament, neck	32	12	44	Social
Ornament, neck, coix	319	26	345	Mourning
Ornament, neck, glass	10		10	Social
Ornament, neck, shell	178		178	Social
Ornament, neck, teeth	54		54	Exchange/Social
Ornament, nose	6	2	8	Social
Ornament, other	35	24	59	Social
Pestle	63		63	Social/Made for Sale
Pot rest	5		5	Utilitarian
Pottery	112		112	Exchange/Social
Pounder	24		24	Utilitarian
Raw Material, animal	19	59	78	Raw material

TABLE. 1. cont. Official collection: assemblage composition based on artefact types and functional categories that reflect their role in Papuan societies (based on the Master List in Appendix 2, this volume).

Type	Analysed Assemblage	Bag contents	Total	Functional Category
Raw material, glass	0	3	3	Raw material
Raw material, human hair	0	2	2	Raw material
Raw material, metal	1	12	13	Raw material
Raw material, mineral	11	9	20	Raw material
Raw material, pigment	1	8	9	Raw material
Raw Material, plant	46	103	149	Raw material
Raw Material, shell	28	130	158	Raw material
Sawfish sword	3		3	Attractor
Shield	139		139	Attractor/Exchange
Shield, cover	1		1	Utilitarian
Shield, dance	32		32	Social
Skirt cutting board	6		6	Utilitarian
Sling	16		16	Utilitarian
Sling stones	40	2	42	Utilitarian
Spatula, lime	418	15	433	Made for sale/Social
Spear	503		503	Attractor
Spear, fish	12		12	Attractor
Sword club	198		198	Made for sale
Taro stirrer	68		68	Made for sale
Tobacco pipe	59		59	Made for sale
Tobacco pipe, bowl	5	6	11	Utilitarian
Tool	74	30	104	Utilitarian
Toy	2		2	Social
Whisk, cassowary	3		3	Social
Wrist guard	59		59	Utilitarian
Totals	10243	716	10959	

TABLE. 2. Goals and agency embedded in the Official collection in comparison to the incidence of functional categories (see Table 1).

Functional Category	Objects	%Total	% Arrows as bundles of 25	Goals and Agency
Attractor	4985	49	30	Entwined
Made for Sale	1442	14	19	Entwined
Social	1326	13	18	Mixed
Exchange	987	10	13	Papuan
Utilitarian	904	9	12	MacGregor
Mourning	399	4	5	Papuan
Raw Material	106	1	1	MacGregor
Magic/Sorcery	93	1	1	Papuan
Totals	10243	100	100	

structure by making links between the functional categories and the assumed goals of the participants. Bringing the three sets of analyses together this way offers further insights into the cross-cultural relationships whose material traces have been preserved in the Official collection (Table 2).

ASSEMBLAGE COMPOSITION

The necessary first step in the analysis of *assemblage composition* of the Official collection is the creation of standardized descriptors or 'types' for the myriad of items registered by de Vis. The choice of the 105 standardised types listed in Table 1 was constrained to keep them at a manageable number, but at the same time maintain a measure of neutrality regarding the values held by their original owners or the British collectors. The intention

was to create groups with more than a few cases, although exceptions were made when the objects were clearly unique, such as a bullroarer, a door, or a shield cover. Several large types were subdivided when specific roles could be identified. For example, within the larger class 'ornament, neck,' objects in the subgroup 'ornament, neck, teeth' are likely to have been ceremonial valuables used in exchange such as bride price, whereas 'ornament, neck, coix' were probably part of a mourning costume (Figure 4). Unfortunately, the specific roles played in social and ceremonial life by the large variety of body ornaments in the collections are not well known, so it is not always possible to identify which objects were worn in daily life versus those restricted to special occasions. Further research on the roles of many of the object types in the Official collection would provide a richer interpretation than is possible with this exploratory analysis.



FIG. 4. Necklaces made from dogs' teeth or coix seeds (Job's tears) were important exchange items in many parts of British New Guinea, a. dogs' teeth neck ornament, Unknown provenience, ER15967 (MAC3016 PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch; b. coix seed (Job's tears) neck ornament, North-East Coast, ER12533 (BM Oc, MCG.154). ©Trustees of the British Museum.

A component of the total assemblage is comprised of objects that arrived at the Queensland Museum either attached on the outside or concealed within 31 bags or baskets of varying sizes and types (716 items or 6.5 per cent) (Table 1). Nearly half the objects that had been stowed away in the bags were unmodified pieces of human hair, plant, animal bone, shell, metal, glass or pigments consisting of 75 per cent of the total number of raw materials in the Official collection as a whole. As many of the bags had been abandoned when their owners fled from a violent encounter with MacGregor's party (described at length in Torrence et al., Chapter 8 this volume), the container was the main object acquired for the collection rather than the contents. To avoid potential bias, the bag contents have been listed in Table 1 but are excluded from the analysis of *assemblage composition*, although many are considered in depth in Torrence et al. (Chapter 8 this volume) and Torrence and Davies (Chapter 9, this volume).

OVERVIEW OF TYPES

As illustrated by the list of contents in Table 1, the *assemblage composition* of the Official collection brought together under MacGregor's leadership is notable for the exceptionally diverse representation of material culture from late nineteenth century British New Guinea. Like other collections of this period, which largely comprise weapons and body ornaments (Clarke & Torrence 2011; Davies 2012), this assemblage contains large quantities of objects used in physical combat or hunting such as bows, arrows, spears, shields, and stone clubs. Part of the reason for the bias in objects related to these male activities is that most of MacGregor's meetings took place outside villages on riverbanks, seashores or on paths in the bush, where he had fewer opportunities to meet women. Even when he did encounter groups that included women and children, the written sources suggest that their male companions protected them by dominating and controlling the social interactions.

On the other hand, the Official collection incorporates a much broader representation of items from the

domestic, social, and ceremonial spheres than many other contemporary ethnographic collections from British New Guinea (e.g. Clarke & Torrence 2011). Although we do not know who offered these items to MacGregor, it is obvious that many of the domestic tools he acquired would have been made and used by women. Utilitarian tools, such as stone axe-adzes (Figure 5), fishhooks, needles, coconut bowls, and even a variety of locally manufactured twines (e.g. Figure 6 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 7 this volume), are well represented, along with larger items like pig catchers, fishing nets, and sago strainers (Figure 6). Body ornaments and drums associated with ceremonies are relatively common in the assemblage as are traditional exchange goods including pottery (see Bonshek, Chapter 11 this volume), fibre skirts, bark cloth (Figure 7) and woven bags (Figure 8). The assemblage also incorporates objects used in social activities, such as betel chewing and tobacco smoking. An especially notable characteristic of the Official collection is the broad range of items used in daily life but absent from most nineteenth century collections from British New Guinea, such as fire-making equipment; skirt cutting boards; bamboo knives; and hammocks (Figure 9). Many objects are undecorated, whereas others exhibit elaborate patterns in the bindings, are adorned with attachments of feathers and other



FIG. 5. Stone axe-adze from Moni Valley, Northern Division with a green blade like those MacGregor thought resembled jade: ER16237 (MAC196). Elaborate binding has been used to encase the stone blade in a wooden socket and then additional binding secures it to the handle. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 6. The Official collection is unusual because of the inclusion of many examples of everyday, utilitarian items: a. woven sago strainer from Koriki, Western Division, ER12732 (MAC2961). Queensland Museum photography; b. fishing net with wooden floats and shell sinkers, Holnicote Bay, North-East Division, ER14231 (BM Oc, MCG.86) ©Trustees of the British Museum; c. pig catcher, Unknown provenience, ER14559 (MAC665). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.



FIG. 7. Bark cloth from Collingwood Bay, North-East Division: ER15899 (MAC4962). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 8. Selection of woven objects: a. Dromore, Western Division, ER10384 (MAC1316); b. Cloudy Bay, Central Division, ER13009 (MAC1366); c. Mamba River, North-East Division, ER18916 (MAC1351); d. Koriki, Western Division, ER12726 (MAC1365). Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 9. Hammocks, such as this one from Neneba, Central Division are rare items in ethnographic collections from British New Guinea, ER15870 (MAC4954). Scale bar: 10 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 10. Tobacco pipes were often decorated to attract the attention of westerners (cf. Torrence & Clarke 2016: 185–187): a. Woodlark Island, Eastern Division, ER9269 (MAC572); b. Unknown provenience, ER9270 (MAC571). Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

objects, or are ornamented by painted, burned, or incised and infilled designs (Figures 2 and 10). The extraordinary diversity of objects in the Official collection supports the hypothesis that MacGregor sought to acquire the full range of extant material culture types among the groups that he encountered.

ARROWS

By far the most common item in the Official collection are arrows (2803), constituting 27 percent of the total assemblage (Table 1) (see Philp, Chapter 12 this volume for an analysis of the arrows). When evaluating the overwhelming dominance of this single type of artefact, it is important to note that a significant number of the arrows (565), equal to 20 per cent of the total and comprising more than half of those for which the provenience was recorded in the register, are thought to derive from one incident

in 1896 involving a violent confrontation with a raiding party of men known to MacGregor as the ‘Tugeri’. Following gunfire from the Armed Native Constabulary, the Marind-Anim warriors dropped their belongings and fled (MacGregor 1897b:52–6). Over a thousand of their discarded items were collected and later added to the Official collection (Quinnell 2000:87; Torrence et al., Chapter 8 this volume). The contribution of so many arrows from a single event has the potential to skew an analysis based on assemblage composition.

An additional factor to consider when thinking about the abundance of arrows is that they were often registered in bundles, rather than as single arrows, although it is not entirely clear whether they were offered to MacGregor in that form. Subsequently, many of these packages were broken up, either in the colony or when they were

registered at the Queensland Museum (Davies, Chapter 2 this volume). The mean number of arrows recorded for groups listed in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) is 25. Removing the arrows acquired during the raid on the Marind-Anim warriors and then dividing the remainder (2238) by 25, the Official collection would contain only about 90 bundles. Using that number, arrows would not be so overwhelmingly dominant and their position in the list in Table 1 would be much lower. The number of bundles would also be just about equivalent to the 98 bows in the Official collection. Since it is plausible that a bow and a bundle of arrows were often acquired together, it makes sense that these two kinds of objects would be equally represented in the assemblage.

The abundance of arrows in the collection is still somewhat of a puzzle if they were mainly acquired through exchange (see Philp, Chapter 12 this volume) because MacGregor banned Papuan weapons from his camp, as he makes clear in a Despatch describing his trip up the Morehead River in 1896.

Bows and arrows I would not allow into camp. I found a constable playing, contrary to my orders, with some natives in camp, trying to shoot with their bows and arrows. I took the bow and broke it and threw it away, and sent the constable to his tent. Next day no native brought a bow with him when he visited our camp (MacGregor 1897a:43).

NOTABLE ABSENCES

Turning from abundance to absence, an important aspect of *assemblage composition* are the items missing or very poorly represented in the Official collection. For example, there are only 20 items made with metal components, such as tomahawks, iron nails or bolts. Among these 18 were not offered in a peaceful context but recovered from punitive raids (see Torrence et al., Chapter 7 and Torrence & Davies, Chapter 8 this volume). It is possible that MacGregor was not interested in obtaining these objects because they were not ‘traditional,’ but the scarcity of metal objects or artefacts incorporating them obtained

through face-to-face interactions may also imply that these items were so highly valued by Papuans that they were deliberately withheld from exchange with MacGregor and his associates.

Arm ornaments made from conus shell provide stronger evidence that people withheld some items from MacGregor and his agents. As discussed by Swadling et al. (Chapter 9 this volume; see also Swadling and Bence 2016; Swadling et al. in press), special cone shell armbands such as *toea* or *mwali*, both key cultural objects among the Motu and other coastal and island groups in southeastern British New Guinea, are referred to as ‘valuables’ by anthropologists. Among many groups they were a critical component in the negotiation of social position within one’s clan, village or between groups, such as in marriage payments or exchanges involved in the achievement or confirmation of status (Seligman 1910:88–89; Oram 1982:16–17; Malinowski 1961:86–99; Pl. XVI, XVII; Lawrence 1994). Torrence and Clarke (2013:188–193) propose that the scarcity of items that denote status and prestige in historic ethnographic collections from Central Province in Papua New Guinea signifies that local people actively refrained from giving them to outsiders. It is likely that they did not want to include westerners within their indigenous social networks because this could create obligations that could conflict with traditional values and practices. The rarity of these special objects in the Official collection confirms this hypothesis. It seems likely that even such a powerful and prestigious individual as Sir William MacGregor was frequently excluded from participation in local social and political affairs.

SATISFIED PARTICIPANTS: AXE-ADZES, CLUBS, AND SPEARS

Several components of the Official collection provide especially strong examples of how Papuan and British actors both achieved favourable outcomes through barter. Apart from arrows, the three most numerous objects in the Official collection are objects described in the register as adzes or axes



FIG. 11. A wide variety of stone clubs is represented in the Official collection: a. pineapple type with red cloth attachment and fine binding from Mambare River, North-East Division, ER14875 (MAC9563); b. star club with 4 points from Moni, North-East Division, ER15021 (MAC3582); c. star club with 8 points and red paint label 'St. Joseph River,' Central Division, ER9299 (MAC3617); d. large disc club from Hokeko, Western Division, ER11616 (MAC3591). Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 12. Spears are among the most numerous objects in the Official collection, but they have been largely overlooked by scholars, despite the large variety of points, methods of manufacture, and styles of decoration: a. Spear, Unknown provenience, ER16301 (MAC7497); b. spear, Unknown provenience, ER11073 (MAC7525); c. fish spear, Dyke Ackland Bay, North-East Division, ER13418 (MAC9010); d. pig spear, Ketekerua Village, Dyke Ackland Bay, North-East Division, ER13429 (MAC9549). Scale bar: 10 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

(Figure 5), stone clubs (Figure 11) and spears (Figure 12). We use the term axe-adze because in British New Guinea similarly shaped stone blades were hafted both as adzes (at right angles to the shaft) and as axes (in line with the shaft). In some cases the haft was made so that the blade could be twisted back and forth between the two positions (Williams 1930:84; Chan 2018:48–51). The very large number of these tools in the Official collection appears to be in perfect harmony with the contemporary tastes of European collectors, with whom MacGregor was familiar. During the period when MacGregor was in British New Guinea, stone artefacts were very popular among antiquarians and collectors of ethnographic curios. The relatively high prices advertised for stone implements in contemporary sale and auction catalogues, such as those put out by London entrepreneurs W. D. Webster and W. O. Oldman, demonstrate their high value. In a detailed

study of prices in catalogues dating between 1895–1913, Torrence and Clarke (2011:46) found that stone tools were advertised for an average price of 26 shillings each, significantly above the mean of 17 shillings for the entire list of goods.

While the contribution of stone artefacts to the Official collection undoubtedly reflects British tastes, 837 stone axe-adzes seems excessive, especially since there is much duplication of shapes and types of stone among them. It is also important to ask why local people were willing to give up such large quantities of axe-adzes, when these played a fundamental role in their daily lives. Although some groups had adopted metal tools and were therefore happy to give away stone objects in return for trade goods, many communities were still dependent on stone implements. To answer this question more fully, it is useful to look closely at the physical properties of the artefacts in this category. Whereas most of the tools entail a stone blade lashed to a wooden handle (e.g. Figure 5), the considerable number of 350 items, making up 42 per cent of the total axe-adzes in the Official collection, consist of only a stone blade, representing a nonfunctional tool or spare part (Figure 13). Since only 30 hafts missing the stone blades were registered, most of the single blades in the Official collection could not have been components of a functional tool that had become detached from the handle during transport to the Queensland Museum. There is also no evidence to suggest that MacGregor's party was limited by the number of objects that could be carried back to his base or that the weight of loads needed to be reduced by removing hafts. For instance, MacGregor collected large numbers of spears that are at least as heavy and difficult to transport. Weighing up the evidence, it seems most likely that unhafted stone blades were deliberately offered and/or sought after in substantial quantities.

Axe-adzes are an excellent example of how successful barter actively engaged both parties in a way that British and Papuan desires became intertwined. First, MacGregor must have been aware that stone tools were highly valued by British collectors (see Torrence & Clarke 2011:46). He had previously



FIG. 13. Stone blades made from a green stone were commonly offered for trade with MacGregor: Collingwood Bay, North-East Division: ER14287 (BM Oc,MCG.201). Scale bar: 1 cm. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

collected stone artefacts in Fiji (currently housed in the University Museums, University of Aberdeen). It is also notable that MacGregor made a special trip to the famous axe-adze quarry on Woodlark Island, ‘a spot I had been in search of for several years, the place from which the striped stone is obtained of which all the best stone axes in the eastern half of the Possession are made’ (MacGregor 1894c:18) (Figure 14).

Second, it seems likely that MacGregor was particularly attracted to the adze-axes made from stones resembling the highly priced ‘greenstone’ or ‘jade’ examples advertised in sale and auction catalogues. For example, all four axe-adzes from the Port Moresby region in the Stevens (1885) catalogue are described as ‘greenstone’. Similarly, the Webster (1895) catalogue advertises four axe-adze heads described as ‘jade’. It is also notable that in the published catalogue of MacGregor’s personal collection at the University of Aberdeen (Anon. 1912;

see Torrence et al., Chapter 14 this volume), some stone axe-adzes are also described as ‘jade,’ a term also used by MacGregor (e.g. 1892:13). Clearly, the green colour was a desirable attribute signifying a rare or valuable stone.

The seemingly large number of adze-axes in the Official collection cannot be accounted for solely by the tastes of British antiquarian collectors. This raises the important question of why local people in British New Guinea were willing to hand over such large quantities of tools integral to their livelihood. Papuans quickly became aware of the advantages of metal axe blades over their stone tools. Concurrently, they would have observed how eager the British were to acquire stone tools. Presumably, the loss of stone objects that were not in use and/or needed extensive repairs to gain precious metal items was a highly attractive option. In his report on the Rigo District A.C. English (1899:105) notes that ‘there are numerous villages in this district in which one is unable to purchase club or shield, both having long since been bartered away for a more useful implement’.

Knowing that the British were especially fond of stone weapons, it seems very likely that in some areas local people actively sought out metal and other trade items by offering MacGregor the broken or worn-out stone blades that are so common in the collection. Possibly these had been retrieved from caches in their houses or from other settings where they had been discarded. The opportunity to acquire highly valued metal axes for nonfunctional stone blades would have encouraged people to actively seek opportunities for barter with MacGregor’s party, in much the same way that twentieth century villagers in Papua New Guinea were eager to trade stone axe-adze blades for cash (White & Modjeska 1978). The very large number of individual stone axe-adze blades in the Official collection is an excellent example of how barter can negotiate successful interaction between parties who have very different objectives in the way described by Humphrey and Hugh Jones (1992) and Gammage (1998:58). Through the act of exchange the differing goals and aims of both MacGregor and his retinue



FIG. 14 Ceremonial axe recorded as from Kadawaga in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum 1889-1910), which is probably Kaduwaga village on Kaileuna Island, visited by MacGregor on three occasions (see MacGregor’s Itinerary in Appendix 1 this volume). The large, green striped blade was probably made at the important quarry on Woodlark Island where MacGregor (1894c: 18) made a special visit, ER11932 (MAC5956, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 10 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

became entwined with their indigenous partners and the Papuans involved achieved equal status, if only momentarily.

Following axe-adzes, the next two most common groups in the Official collection (Table 1) are stone clubs (Figure 11) and spears (Figure 12). The large proportion of these weapons in the Official collection (35 per cent, Table 1) is partly a result of the nature of the circumstances in which MacGregor interacted with people, but, as with axe-adzes, reflects the outcomes of interactions in which British and Papuan desires were entangled. During his travels around the new colony, most of MacGregor's dealings were with men who were armed. It therefore makes sense that the kinds of objects present during these occasions are the most abundant in the Official collection.

As in the case of axe-adzes, stone clubs acquired by MacGregor are the outcome of social interactions in which British and local participants were actively involved and eager to obtain a successful outcome. The nature of the engagement involving clubs was different from axe-adzes because only 27 stone clubs listed in the register are missing a haft, indicating that almost all were in use when they were bartered. As Haddon (1900:243–4) points out, however, not all the shafts on clubs offered for exchange were original. It appears that locals often made expedient handles for disused clubs to increase their value in exchange with MacGregor. The stone clubs probably had even more potential to 'dazzle' and 'enchant' British collectors (Harrison 2006) than the axe-adzes, due to the variety of shapes and sizes of the worked stone (e.g. ball, disc, star) (Figure 11) and the impressive amounts of skill and effort demanded in their production (Haddon 1900). The hafted clubs also had the potential for elaborate displays as indicated by the impressive spread illustrated in Edge-Partington (1902). In addition, many of the clubs were decorated with multitudes of colourful feathers and numerous skillfully woven attachments (Figure 15). Given MacGregor's fondness for finding new species of birds, the decorated clubs would have combined several of his passions.

Why were so many stone clubs offered to MacGregor and/or his staff? Unfortunately, very little is known about the functions of the stone clubs within the various indigenous groups in British New Guinea, except for their role as weapons in hand-to-hand combat (Blackwood 1950:36). Since the manufacturing process of clubs was described by Blackwood (1950:34–5) as extremely labour intensive, they could not be replaced easily.⁶ It seems likely that, as with the case of stone axe-adzes, people quickly realized that clubs were greatly valued by the British and therefore could leverage desirable trade goods. Another possibility suggested to me by Evare Gari⁷ (personal communication) is that the bird feathers, elaborate bindings and attachments played an active role in sorcery, thereby increasing the efficacy of the clubs in warfare. By giving these powerful objects to outsiders, people may have deliberately intended to harm them: a kind of silent warfare. A



FIG. 15. The feathers on the stone clubs were possibly viewed by MacGregor and other collectors as attractive decorations, but for Papuans the feathers and other string attachments may have been part of sorcery designed to harm the enemy: a, b: disc club, Ope River, North-East Division, ER14964 (BM Oc,MCG.88); c, d: pineapple club, Ope River, North-East Division, ER14924 (BM Oc,MCG.1). Scale bars: 10 cm. ©Trustees of the British Museum.

final factor is that in the areas where most of the clubs were obtained, people had not yet created objects especially made for exchange with outsiders and could only offer whatever was on hand to obtain desirable trade goods.

Spears are nearly as numerous in the Official collection as clubs (503 versus 531; Table 1), possibly in part because they also tantalised British collectors, for whom weapons fit their preconceptions of a heathen, uncivilized world (Figure 12). In addition, the various kinds of ornamentation in the form of elaborate barbs or carved panels on the spears might have attracted MacGregor and his agents. Notably 73 percent of the spears have some form of decoration. The large size of the spears also contributed to their popularity in England, where they were usually sold in bundles. Beginning with Webster's 1896 illustrated catalogue, the phrase 'suitable for decoration of Halls & Billiard Rooms' was commonly used to describe large, showy items and especially spears, although arrows were sometimes also included (Torrence & Clarke 2011:35, fig. 2.4). It is unknown whether MacGregor acquired spears in groups, but unlike the arrows, they were catalogued as individual objects in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910).

Apart from arrows, whose status requires additional research, the most numerous objects in the Official collection – axe-adzes, stone clubs, and spears – highlight how the entwined relationships between MacGregor and the local population created the overall character of the Official collection. While the British were influenced by antiquarian tastes fueled by notions of 'savage,' and 'stone age' ways of life, and were aware that these items were being replaced by metal tools and fast disappearing, Papuans seized the opportunity to obtain the trade goods they desired by substituting non-functional stone blades and, less commonly, hafts. The nature of the negotiations that resulted in MacGregor acquiring the remainder of the Official collection have a rather different character because participation was less equally balanced.

ASSEMBLAGE STRUCTURE

Turning now to the second methodological approach, an analysis of *assemblage structure* in the Official collection, the object types in Table 1 were grouped into larger 'categories' similar to those used in many museum catalogues (e.g. Gosden et al. 2007:2002–03; Clarke & Torrence 2013). The categories were chosen to monitor the roles of objects within late nineteenth century indigenous society in British New Guinea: Raw Material; Utilitarian; Mourning; Magic/Sorcery; Exchange; Made for Sale; and Attractor. The exception to the focus on indigenous uses in this typology is the Attractors category, which brings together objects that are assumed to have been extremely popular with British collectors based on studies of auction catalogues (Torrence & Clarke 2011; Clarke & Torrence 2015). The category that each type was assigned to is shown in Table 1 and the relative proportion of each category within the Official collection are reported in Table 2.

Boundaries between the categories are not completely rigid because object types often had multiple roles within Papuan societies. Consequently, several artefact types were assigned to two categories. The accuracy of the classification in Table 1 is constrained by the lack of ethnographic data about the function of many of the objects and the paucity of provenience data in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910). Although more extensive ethnographic and historical research would certainly improve the groupings, the approach yields some interesting insights into the nature of the social relations responsible for the creation of the Official collection.

ATTRACTORS

The *Attractors* category includes the stone axe-adzes and clubs that were very popular with British collectors together with weapons (bows, arrows, spears, shields, beheading knives), and carved human and animal figures that were actively sought

after by British collectors (see Table 1). *Attractors* comprise nearly one-half of the Official collection (Table 2). Even when an estimate of the number of bundles of arrows is used, rather than raw numbers, the *Attractors* group makes up nearly one-third of the total assemblage. The predominance of *Attractors* demonstrates that entwined interactions, those in which both indigenous groups and MacGregor and his assistants were equally invested in securing exchanges, played a key role in the formation of the Official collection.

MADE FOR SALE

The *Made for Sale* category, comprising 19 per cent of the total assemblage, also includes objects that were acquired through interwoven relationships between the British and local people, although the way these played out was quite different from the encounters in which *Attractors* were obtained. Motivated by a desire to obtain European trade goods, indigenous groups all over the world have learned through experience about the kinds of objects most attractive to westerners and then modified traditional material culture and/or created new items that would increase their participation in cross-cultural exchange and access to trade goods (e.g. Graburn 1976; 1999; Silverman 1999; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Torrence 2000). Whereas objects in the *Attractors* group were often obtained at casual, unplanned encounters and in regions with little experience of westerners, objects in the *Made for Sale* category were more likely to be offered to MacGregor by people accustomed to dealing with outsiders. For example, as described in Davies (Chapter 4 this volume; Connelly 2016), MacGregor's boat was often surrounded by canoes filled with people eager to engage in trade and bearing objects they thought would enable them to obtain the goods they desired.

As in the case of the *Attractors*, westerners were particularly captivated by certain kinds of traditional objects: especially those that matched their expectations of 'savagery' (Figure 3). Items with colourful and ornate decorations (Figure 2)

were also quite popular with the explorers, whalers, miners, missionaries and government officials who had been visiting some parts of British New Guinea for decades prior to MacGregor's arrival. The strategy most commonly adopted by Papuans to attract trade with westerners was to alter or increase the kinds of decoration applied to traditional objects. For example, although the tobacco pipes used by indigenous people were mainly plain, those offered to westerners commonly had elaborate decorations (e.g. Chan 2018:136–139; Torrence & Clarke 2013:184–186; Torrence & Clarke 2016:185–189) (Figure 10). Lime spatulas (Figure 16), various parts of canoes (see Figure 2 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 7 this volume), wooden bowls, sword clubs, taro stirrers, and models of boats and houses were also enhanced to increase opportunities for exchange and solicit larger payments (e.g. Torrence & Clarke 2013:188–189; Chan 2018:4–7, 24–31, 143). It is notable that Mutuaga, possibly the most famous carver in nineteenth century British New Guinea, had a thriving business during MacGregor's administration (Beran 1996). Although there are no examples of Mutuaga's artwork in the Official collection, MacGregor did acquire several lime spatulas made by him for his Personal collection (Haddow, BOX 1 Chapter 14 this volume). As an indication of the importance of the entangled interactions between MacGregor and Papuans that underlie the Official collection, it is worth emphasizing that lime spatulas are the fourth most common object type in the entire Official collection. MacGregor seems to have just caught the beginning of the production of lime spatulas as items made specifically for the European market. Their popularity in sale and auction catalogues continued to increase into the twentieth century (Clarke & Torrence 2015).

Papuans also invented new kinds of objects to suit the tastes of potential consumers and therefore increase their returns (for examples in other parts of the world, see Graburn 1976; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Torrence 2000). As noted above, the man-catchers in the Official collection are a good example of the type of object invented or modified specifically to



FIG. 16. The elaborate carved and in-filled designs and human faces on many lime spatulas were very attractive to western tastes: a. Woodlark Island, ER9653 (MAC879); b. Unknown provenience, ER9898 (MAC1062); c. Unknown provenience, ER9929 (MAC1053); d. Woodlark Island, ER9648 (MAC774); e. North-East Coast, ER12363 (MAC844); f. Trobriand Is., ER12331 (MAC2039). Scale bar: 2 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.



FIG. 17. Wooden sword club from Kiriwina in the Trobriand Islands, Eastern Division, was decorated using local incised and in-filled motifs, but the shape was probably modelled on a metal cutlass within a scabbard, ER14492 (MAC413 PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch.

dazzle British sensibilities (O’Hanlon 1999) (Figure 3). Another artefact created for sale to foreigners like MacGregor are carved wooden objects that resemble western cutlasses stored within a scabbard (Figure 17) (Jarillo de la Torre 2022; see White & Torrence, BOX 1, Chapter 7 this volume).

BUILDING A TYPE COLLECTION

As noted previously, the large number of items in the Utilitarian category is a unique characteristic of the Official collection when compared with other contemporary ethnographic collections from the region, as these focused mainly on stone tools or decorated items (see Clarke & Torrence 2011; Torrence & Clarke 2013). Writing in an official dispatch, MacGregor wrote that he hoped to create a collection ‘really representative of New Guinea’ (Quinnell 2000:83). To achieve this goal, it would have been important to acquire ordinary, everyday tools in addition to the kinds of objects normally desired by antiquarians and curiosity collectors. The relatively large proportion of *Utilitarian* items in the Official collection (12 per cent) shows that MacGregor made a deliberate effort to collect this class of objects, probably to achieve his goal of having a complete type collection of all the kinds of tools used by indigenous communities in British New Guinea. Some items are particularly notable for their rarity in contemporary collections: e.g. skirt cutting boards; pig catching nets; unusual kite fishing equipment (Chan 2018:92–95); and fish nets (Figure 6).

MacGregor’s motivation to make a scientific, comprehensive collection of ‘types’ is especially well exemplified by the 74 rolls of twine in the assemblage (See Figure 6 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 7 this volume). Taken together, these cordage samples appear to comprise a comprehensive collection of binding materials. A wide range of plant fibres are represented and the group also encompasses a variety of techniques for twisting or plaiting them into string. This impressive array of twines may also have been assembled to explore the potential for exporting economically

useful fibres from the colony, in much the same way that the axe-adze blades constituted a record of potential mineral resources.

The *Raw Materials* category is made up of a highly diverse group of unmodified plant, bone, stone, glass, and metal items whose functions are largely unknown. Like Utilitarian items, some of the *Raw Materials* group may have been deliberately sought after by MacGregor. Since MacGregor was concerned to discover future paths of economic development for the new colony, he was constantly on the lookout for natural resources that could bring economic benefits. He regularly sent geological and plant specimens to experts. The large quantity of stone axe-adzes in the Official collection is partly a product of his attempt to discover new economic resources. Many are composed of a metamorphic green-coloured stone which he may have suspected was jade or another mineral with economic value (Figure 13). A selection of the stone blades was also sent to the Geological Survey of Queensland for identification. Like many of the European scientists and adventurers in British New Guinea at that time, MacGregor was keen to discover new species of animals. The presence among the raw materials in the Official collection of shells, pigment, minerals, and plant materials possibly reflects MacGregor’s desire to contribute to scientific scholarship by collecting types new to science.

PAPUANS SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGE

The remainder of the assemblage entails the consequences of initiatives taken by either MacGregor to obtain objects that particularly interested him or by Papuans keen to engage with the senior representative of the British administration, or ‘Goverman’, as he was called by locals. The *Exchange* category, make up 13 per cent of the assemblage, includes items traded within and between local groups generally within ceremonial contexts such marriages, funerals, initiations and peace-making. Some artefacts, such as drums and shields were mainly used locally, but in some areas

could also be traded between different language groups. For example, pottery was produced for trade, particularly between the Motuan speakers in the Port Moresby region and groups in the Gulf region as well as among communities in northeastern British New Guinea, but ceramic items also played key social roles within some groups in the latter region (see Bonshek, Chapter 11 this volume). Also included within the *Exchange* category are valuables, such as conus shell armbands (Swadling et al. Chapter 10 this volume) and dog's teeth necklaces (Figure 4). In addition, seemingly mundane items such as fibre skirts, string and woven bags, baskets, and barkcloth also circulated among clans as well as larger social groupings (Figures 7 and 8).

It seems doubtful that such a large quantity of traditional exchange items would have been gifted to MacGregor as a way for incorporating him within the local social group. A clue to understanding the abundance of indigenous trade goods in the Official collection may be provided by bundles of banana leaves sewn together (Figure 18). Although no locality was noted in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910), the most probable source is the Trobriand Islands where these items comprise women's wealth. Throughout the year women would prepare these objects (newly made examples were called *yawovau*) and store them in preparation for ceremonies in which considerable numbers were distributed to people who had participated in the mourning rites



FIG. 18. A bundle of prepared banana leaves (*yabwabogwa* in Kiriwina) from the Trobriand Islands, Eastern Division was an item of women's wealth used in ceremonial exchanges (e.g. Weiner 1988: 118), ER13151 (MAC3955). Picture on right is close-up of other side. Scale bar: 1 cm. Photography, Gary Cranitch ©Australian Museum.

for a deceased individual (Weiner 1976:91–120, Appendix 2; 1988:118–123). It is highly unlikely that these undistinguished looking objects would have attracted a western gaze. How did they become included in the Official collection?

One can imagine MacGregor and his party arriving at a village in the Trobriand Islands unannounced. Women, or more likely their male relatives, eager to obtain trade goods from him, could have used the stockpile of banana bundles to offer as gifts since they were used for that purpose within local contexts. Weiner (1988:118) notes that the old bundles (*yabwabogwa*) had lower values, so these might have been the most expendable. In the same way, it seems plausible that throughout British New Guinea other items stored up for future events in which traditional exchange took place, such as skirts, bags or, in some cases pottery, were mobilised to enable one-off exchanges with outsiders whose presence was not anticipated. Following on from this hypothesis, it is plausible that woven belts, particularly common in the North-East Division and frequently described in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) as occurring in groups

bundled together, were also distributed in ceremonial contexts. These could have become convenient gifts to MacGregor. Drums and shields (Figure 19) were also exchanged among local groups (Beran & Craig 2005). Some may have also been used in barter with the British government representatives, although these large items are less abundant in the collection than smaller objects, such as belts and skirts.

The suggestion that some items in the Official collection were acquired as the consequence of expedient choices on the part of Papuans is also likely to be applicable to the substantial number of objects worn in the context of *Mourning* rituals, particularly those used by groups resident in what was then known as the North-East Coast. Items of clothing and body ornament worn during mortuary rituals are highly distinctive because large numbers of seeds from the *Coix lacryma-jobi* plant, often referred to as Job's tears, were used in their decoration (e.g. Bonshek 2015; Williams 1930:33–34) (Figure 20). For example, among the Orokaiva (who lived in the area roughly equivalent to modern day Oro Province) new widows were required to withdraw from daily life. They would sit quietly



FIG. 19. Since shields were traded among local groups in many areas of British New Guinea, it seems likely that they were also traded to MacGregor and his associates: a. Central Division, ER19290 (MAC4719); b. Oro Bay, North-East Division, ER12445 (MAC4733); c. North-East Division, ER9005 (MAC4723); d. Central Division, ER10480 (MAC4753). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

inside the house making a special sleeveless mourning jacket, a cap onto which numerous coix seeds were sewn, and abundant coix seed necklaces they wore to signify their status. After some months in seclusion, they would reappear in the context of a special ceremony. Afterwards they could rejoin the community. The widows and, in some places the widowers as well, would continue to wear the mourning jackets and other items for some considerable length of time. Relatives of the deceased person might also wear mourning jackets or a range of body ornaments including armbands and necklaces also decorated with coix seeds (Williams 1930: 33–34; 217; 220–222).

Coix seed (Job’s tears) necklaces (Figure 4) are the fifth most common object type in the Official collection (Table 1) and comprise the bulk of the objects in the mourning category (80 per cent). As relatively abundant and easy to replace, some Job’s tears neck ornaments may have been given a novel function: exchange with westerners. Since the mourning costumes required much labour in their production, those worn by the relatives for a short period may have been stored away and recycled for use on another occasion. For example, three vests decorated with numerous coix seeds (Figure 20) were acquired as contents in two separate bags: ER14384 (MAC1308 PNGNMAG) and ER14398



FIG. 20. A woven bag containing components of mourning costumes was acquired for the Official collection, probably from the North-East Division: a. woven vest decorated with coix (Job’s tears) seeds, ER14400 (MAC3940 PNGNMAG); b. woven vest decorated with coix (Job’s tears) seeds, ER14385 (MAC3948 PNGNMAG); c. woven vest decorated with coix (Job’s tears) seeds, ER14399 (MAC3942 PNGNMAG); d. earrings decorated with coix (Job’s tears) seeds, ER14389 (MAC1431 PNGNMAG); e. woven bag which contained all the other objects, ER14398 (MAC1984 PNGNMAG); f. earrings decorated with coix (Job’s tears) seeds, ER14390 (MAC1413 PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery.

(MAC1984 PNGNMAG)⁸. Like exchange objects, the repurposed mourning clothing and ornaments may have been pragmatic choices for objects in barter with MacGregor and his accompanying group.

The *Exchange* and *Mourning* categories illustrate the kinds of decisions made by local people who had not experienced regular or sustained contact with westerners. Eager to engage with MacGregor and his retinue, these villagers may have drawn on stores of objects stockpiled for later use or items close at hand that were no longer desirable or relatively easy to replace. Unlike the casual meetings with MacGregor on a path or along a river, occasions during which weapons were the most common object of exchange, items in the *Exchange* and *Mourning* groups were probably offered to MacGregor within a village context and in situations where the interactions may have involved women as well as men.

EXPELLING DANGEROUS ITEMS

The largest category in the Magic/Sorcery category are artefacts identified as ‘charms’ in the initial *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) or the later *Register of the ‘MacGregor’ Collection of New Guinea Ethnology (MacGregor Register)* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001)⁹. These include well known examples such as the carved coconut shells from the Orokolo area called *marupai* (Haddon 1894:PL. VIII; Seligman 1910:PL XXVII; Williams 1940:22, 105–6), objects decorated with red *Abrus precatorius* (L.) seeds from Central and Northern Divisions, known as ‘fighting,’ ‘face’ or ‘mouth’ ornaments or ‘battle charms’ and called *musikaka* or *semsem*¹⁰ (Turner 1878; Bonshek 2013:16; Torrence & Clarke 2013:178–179) (Figure 21; also see Figure 4 in Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume). Another ‘battle charm’ composed of boars’ tusks was also held in the teeth during fights or dances to create a fierce



FIG. 21. Wooden ornaments decorated with *Abrus precatorius* L. seeds and bordered by boars’ tusks. Known variously as ‘fighting charms’ or ‘face ornaments,’ they were worn around the neck and then held in the mouth when challenging an enemy: a. Unknown provenience, ER14536 (MAC2410); b. Dugari, North-East Division, ER14529 (MAC1393). Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

visage. Some consist of tusks arranged in the shape of a 'V' (Figure 22), whereas others are made from two to four tusks mounted in semi-circles (e.g. Chan 2018:72–75). Also identified in the registers as 'charms' are smooth, water-rolled pebbles that might have been part of magic for increasing the production of garden produce, especially yams and bananas. Sorcerers are reported to have used 'charm stones.' Many of the examples described by Seligman (1910:173–176; 282–288) were composed of a quartz crystal of which there are two present in the Official collection. Except for the charm stones and various enigmatic pieces of twisted or braided pieces of twigs or rushes with animal jaws or seeds attached, all of which were acquired following a

punitive raid on the Marind-Anim warriors (Torrence et al., Chapter 8 this volume), many of the objects in the Official collection that can be associated with magic or sorcery appear to have been given freely, but we lack definitive evidence for this suggestion. A notable exception is a 'fighting charm' made of 57 boars' tusks that was taken from a house following a punitive raid at Goromani village (Torrence & Davies, Chapter 9 this volume).

Also included in the Magic/Sorcery group are objects listed by English (1894:68) as 'distinctive marks by which a man who has taken a life may be recognised' or what later became known as 'homicidal insignia' (Williams 1930:177–179; Beaver 1920:97–98). Examples



FIG. 22. Worn around the neck and held in the teeth to scare enemies, this object made with boars' tusks was often referred to as a 'battle charm', 'fighting' or 'mouth ornament'. It was acquired along with other ceremonial items stored in a netted bag acquired in Collingwood Bay, North-East Division, ER15967k (MAC2988, PNGNMAG). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery.

include head ornaments comprised of a hornbill skull and feathers or a string of several hornbill beaks (Bonshek 2013:15), a cluster of white cockatoo feathers worn in the hair, and a headband made with strips of cuscus (possum) skin (Chan 2018:8–11; 56–59) (Figure 23). The final component within the *Magic/Sorcery* category are human teeth collected following the punitive raid against Marind-Anim warriors (Torrence et al., Chapter 8 this volume). The teeth had probably been stored within bags carried as personal gear, but had become separated from them during the skirmish. The function of the teeth is unknown. Finally, two human skulls from Mt Scratchley, which are illustrated in MacGregor (1898: between pages 7 and 8), had been mounted onto a carved and decorated handle, presumably for use in ritual or ceremony: ER15436 (MAC6295) and ER15437 (MAC6296 PNGNMAG).

Although the *Magic/Sorcery* category makes up only a relatively small proportion of the Official collection, the number and variety of objects is unusual when compared to contemporary collections (Clarke & Torrence 2011). The occurrence of these items in the Official collection provides an important window into cross-cultural relationships. Why would Papuans give away objects that had significant power and special meaning? Although it is possible that the lure of trade goods was responsible for the exchange of these culturally significant objects, there is another intriguing possibility. During his anthropological fieldwork among the Maisen people in Collingwood Bay, Barker (2001) discovered that people in the local community had gifted ritual objects to missionaries, in this case not to show their allegiance to the church, but because it was a successful strategy for removing dangerous objects from the community. Based on this study, Torrence and Clarke (2013:178; 2016:9) proposed that some of the objects associated with magic and sorcery in ethnographic collections had been deliberately given to powerful men like MacGregor as a method of protection. For example, objects that belonged to a deceased sorcerer had the potential to harm others. These could be safely disposed of by gifting them to an ignorant westerner who would take them far away. At the same time, some of the objects in this group



FIG. 23. Objects referred to as 'homicidal insignia' (e.g. Williams 1930: 177-179; Beaver 1920: 97-98): a. cockatoo feather headpiece, Unknown provenience, ER19513 (MAC1660), Queensland Museum Photography; b. necklace of hornbill beaks, Unknown provenience, ER19657 (MAC2784), Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington; c. hornbill skull and skin, Unknown provenience, ER15108 (AM E.006361), Photography, Gary Cranitch ©Australian Museum; d. strip of cuscus (possum) fur from Kumusi, North-East Division, ER14322 (MAC1649, PNGNMAG). Photography, Gary Cranitch ©Australian Museum.

were especially sought after by British collectors because of their association with so-called ‘savage’ practices. Regardless of their attraction to the British, however, agency for the existence of these objects in the assemblage must be assigned to the local people who created a mechanism for removing these problematic objects from their possession.

RITES OF PASSAGE

Given current uncertainties about the local values of many items, it is difficult to propose a regular relationship between giver and receiver for many objects in the *Social* category (13 percent Table 2). Although ‘Social’ is a convenient name for the grouping, it is somewhat of a misnomer since all objects made and used by Papuans had a social component. The primary role of the artefacts in this category is assumed to have been their use in ceremony and exchanges occurring within rites of passage, such as birth, initiation, marriage, death and ceremonial occasions. Further ethnographic

research focused on the roles of these objects might help clarify the nature of the cross-cultural relationships that led to their incorporation within the Official collection.

Agencies responsible for how items in the Social group found their way into the Official Collection would probably have been mixed. Some may have been deliberately sought out by MacGregor for his type collection or because of the way they were decorated, whereas others might have been offered in the context of unplanned encounters. For example, some drums would have been attractive to English tastes, due to their ornamentation and/or their association with ceremonies that were considered as pagan practices (Figure 24). At the same time, drums were exchanged among some Papuan groups. Consequently, some may have been stored in anticipation of exchange events and were simply diverted to the British group rather than local trade partners, as in the case of other objects in the Exchange category.



FIG. 24. D24. Drums. a. Mirowa, Western Division, ER15167 (MAC3283); b. Cloudy Bay, Central Division, ER12431 (MAC3197); c. Mailu, Fly River, Western Division, ER8886 (MAC3184); d. Fergusson Island, Eastern Division, ER8765 (MAC3287); e. Trobriand Islands, Eastern Division, ER12413 (MAC3310). Scale bar: 10 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

Another possibility is that in the context of an unanticipated meeting with MacGregor, some of the material classified in the *Social* category was easily accessible and simply offered as expedient gifts. A likely group would be the equipment related to betelnut chewing, such as mortars, pestles (see Figure 4 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 7 this volume) and lime containers (Figure 25) as all the adults had a set handy and they were not difficult to replace. The largest component of the *Social* group are body ornaments (Figure 26). Many of these were family heirlooms and might have been stored securely in the roof of the house or above the hearth (Chan 2018:43), but others may have been brought out as expedient gifts for MacGregor. What is unknown, and most likely varied from place to place, is the relative value attributed by local communities to particular cached body ornaments versus material put away for traditional exchange.

GOALS AND AGENCIES

Based on the incidence of artefact types and categories of objects in the Official collection, this large assemblage of ethnographic material was created through the actions of both MacGregor and the local Papuan communities with whom he and his party interacted. Although British and indigenous participants had different aims and objectives, in most circumstances the process of exchange brokered a satisfactory outcome for all participants. To further explore the nature of interactions preserved in the Official collection, four kinds of goals or agencies can be associated with the functional categories of artefacts, as shown in Table 2. *Entwined* agencies are those in which both sides of the relationship were actively involved in seeking out the transactions. These relate to the *Attractors* and *Made for Sale* categories. The choice of 'entwined' for describing certain kinds of cross-cultural interactions rather than 'entangled' as used by Thomas (1991) or 'entanglement' by Hodder (2012) is deliberate because the emphasis in this stage of the analysis is on the outcomes of exchange, i.e. the relationships forged between the humans, rather than the interactions among the participants and the objects.

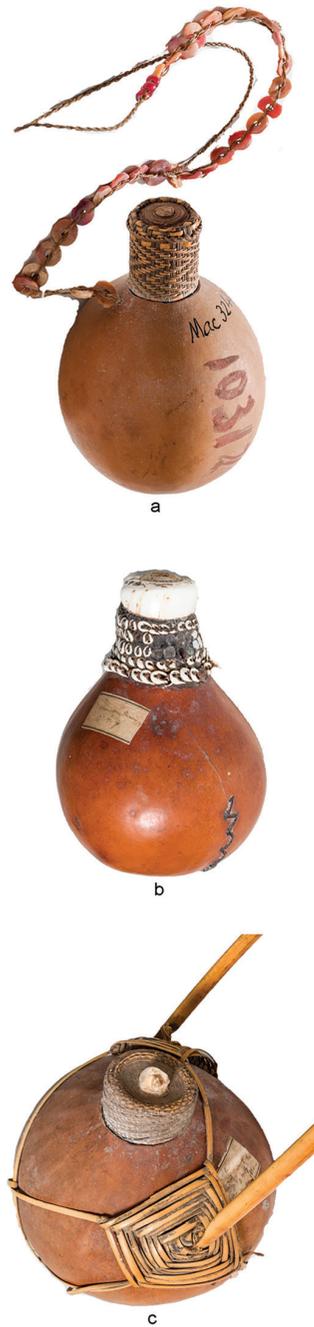


FIG. 25. Decorated gourds used for storing lime: a. Northern Division, ER10312 (MAC3241); b. Mambare River, North-East Division, ER16268 (MAC3236); c. Boirave, Orangerie Bay, Central Division, ER16267 (MAC3205). Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.



FIG. 26. Necklaces and wristbands were among the body ornaments most commonly offered to MacGregor for exchange: a. shell necklace, Unknown provenience, ER10030 (BM Oc,MCG.144), ©Trustees of the British Museum; b. shell necklace, Unknown provenience, ER unknown, Oc,MCG.174, ©Trustees of the British Museum; c. shell and plant necklace, Collingwood Bay, North-East Division, ER15967m (MAC4453 PNGMAG), Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery; d. shell necklace, Collingwood Bay, North-East Division, ER15967i (MAC2880 PNGMAG), Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery; e. cane wrist band, Unknown provenience, ER Unknown (AM E.006362), Photography, Gary Cranitch ©Australian Museum; f. wrist band with coix seeds, Unknown provenience, ER12836 (MAC2541 PNGMAG), Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery. Scale bars: 2 cm.

Agency considered to be associated with *MacGregor* are best represented by the Raw Material and Utilitarian groups, whereas *Papuan* agency is expressed through the Exchange, Mourning and Magic/Sorcery categories because in these situations they selected the goods. Finally, the Social category is not easy to assign because the roles of the objects in nineteenth century Papuan societies are poorly documented. The agency is therefore described as *Mixed*. The various goals are reflected in the Official collection by the following proportions: *Entwined* (63 per cent); *Papuan* (15 per cent); *MacGregor* (10 per cent); and *Mixed* (13 per cent)¹¹.

By far the largest contribution to the Official collection are *Entwined* relationships in which both MacGregor and local people initiated and actively participated in the choices of objects. As noted previously, large quantities of stone axe-adzes and weapons so attractive to MacGregor and those travelling with him were frequently offered in return for trade goods highly valued among local groups. Even worn out or broken tools were brought out to increase the numbers of items available for exchange. In addition, a range of goods was made specially to dazzle foreigners and increase opportunities for trade. At the same time *Papuan* goals are exemplified when people took advantage of unplanned opportunities to engage in exchange by repurposing stores of items put away for future ceremonies. They also deliberately gave away powerful and dangerous items to ensure that their removal from the community. Alongside the *Entwined* social relations, a smaller and highly variable group of items were specifically sought out by MacGregor to ensure that he had a comprehensive 'type' collection of material culture from the colony.

By recognising that different kinds of agency motivated and structured cross-cultural interactions in early colonial British New Guinea, it becomes obvious that the Official collection is not solely the product of a colonial officer. Instead, it comprises a unique record of the complex mix of desires and objectives underlying social interactions between Papuan locals and British government officials over a ten-year period. Given that successful barter requires the satisfaction of all participants, it is not

surprising that the *Entwined* category dominates the Official collection. The large contribution of these items also challenges the notion that MacGregor dominated most situations when exchanges took place. Although he was clearly satisfied with the large number of arrows and axe-adzes that he received, it was only through the coincidence that local people were pleased to offer them that they could be obtained.

EXPANDING THE APPROACH

The analyses of *assemblage composition* and *assemblage structure* have revealed the ways that MacGregor and the local communities he visited became enmeshed in a web of social relations that signal the initiation of a unique colonial culture in British New Guinea that eventually arose out of these interactions (Gosden & Knowles 2001; Torrence & Clarke 2013). Future research using additional archaeological concepts and techniques could interrogate the hypotheses proposed here and extend the study further. Moving beyond *assemblage composition* and *assemblage structure*, additional focus could be placed on the material attributes of the objects themselves. Detailed studies of the size, methods of manufacture, and styles of decoration of artefacts made for sale in the periods before, during and after MacGregor's time in British New Guinea is an additional method for monitoring the way people structured their response to new opportunities afforded by contact with outsiders (see examples in Schindlebeck 1993; Schildkrout & Keim 1998; Phillips & Steiner 1999; Torrence & Clarke 2013; 2016). Studies that test for reduction in size, standardization of physical properties, simplification of decorative styles or shifts to a repertoire appealing to others could be usefully applied to canoe ornaments, decorated wooden bowls, sword clubs, lime spatulas, tobacco pipes, etc. (Graburn 1976; 1999; Phillips 1999; Silverman 1999; Torrence 2000). Additional analytical approaches could apply microscopic and chemical techniques, for example, to examine whether objects such as stone clubs had been heavily used before they were exchanged to MacGregor (see Kononenko et al.

2010). Hopefully, future scholars will devise additional creative methods of artefact analysis that further expose the material responses that local communities in British New Guinea made when dealing with the new interactions they faced during the early colonial period.

A MATERIAL RECORD OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

The combined analyses of *assemblage composition* and *assemblage structure* showcase the Official collection brought together by Sir William MacGregor (1888–1898) as a remarkable material record of the myriad of social relations forged between a representative of the British government and local communities during the first decade of the British New Guinea colony. The archaeologically informed analysis of the material attributes of the Official collection helps address the paucity of historical documentation by providing rich complementary information from which inferences can be made drawn concerning how indigenous Papuans structured their interactions with MacGregor and his agents. As the product of actions and choices made by both indigenous people and MacGregor, the largest component of the collection embodies the consequences of bartering, a practice that creates equality, at least during the transaction. Whereas MacGregor set out to make a comprehensive ‘type’ collection of material culture from the colony, Papuan groups sought to establish peaceful social relations, obtain trade goods, and expel spiritually dangerous objects. When they encountered MacGregor, a common strategy adopted was to offer up objects that were easily to hand and considered expendable. In many cases the goods selected were exchange goods or body ornaments stockpiled for future ceremonial or ritual occasions or used items left over from previous ceremonies or mourning rituals. To increase interaction and access to trade goods, over time groups developed a range of strategies that included selecting objects for barter that they had learned through previous encounters were highly desirable to westerners. Communities with long experience of observing westerners also produced

objects specifically made and designed for use in commercial transactions with outsiders.

With the notable exception of material obtained through violent engagements, the Official collection can be envisaged as a kind of collaboration played out unwittingly between the British colonists and the people they sought to pacify and control. This assemblage contains beautifully crafted, rare items as well as ordinary, everyday objects. Each artefact has a unique story to tell about its maker and users. More importantly, the collection also plays an especially important role in preserving evidence of the strategies used by early Papuans when negotiating the rapidly changing world of the late nineteenth century. In the absence of written records of the indigenous voices of people that MacGregor encountered, the material items that they made, used, and exchanged is a precious resource for their descendants and for others interested in understanding the entwined social relationships characteristic of early colonial contexts.

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□ ENDNOTES

1. For the purposes of this research, I have followed Quinnell (2000:85) in assuming that most objects in the Official collection were acquired when MacGregor was present. By combining historical documentation and the analysis of handwriting on the labels, it has been possible to identify additional agents (Davies et al., Chapter 5 this volume). It is, however, a reasonable assumption that since these collectors were acting largely under instructions from MacGregor, their actions also reflect the broader process of cross-cultural exchange.
2. Additional biographical information about Sir William MacGregor is provided in Torrence et al. (Chapter 1 this volume). See also Joyce (1971; 2006).
3. Although at the end of the nineteenth century most of these people came to British New Guinea from Europe (mainly England), there were many others from Australia and some from Asia. The term 'westerners' is therefore used to encompass the variety of non-Papuan people who interacted with the local population.
4. MacGregor was suspicious of these items as genuine. 'The man-catcher is perhaps never used in the field. As a weapon it would probably be inferior to a walking-stick' (MacGregor 1897a: 61). As noted in Torrence et al. (Chapter 8 this volume) some of the so-called 'pig catchers' used by Marind-Anim people are very similar in size to man-catchers and may be the proto-type for those made in other areas of British New Guinea for sale to outsiders.
5. 'Coix' is commonly used to refer to a type of grass seed (*Coix lacryma-jobi*) that was widely used to decorate ornaments and apparel worn mostly by women during mourning.
6. MacGregor (1898: 4) was clearly fascinated by the stone clubs. He describes the method for making a hole for the shaft and reports that he acquired the tool used in this process along with the club, but we have not been able to identify these in the collection.
7. Senior Technical Officer, Conservation, Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery.
8. 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: PNGNMAG is the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery; AM is the Australian Museum; BM is the British Museum.
9. See Davies (Chapter 2 this volume) for a summary of the registers used in the Queensland Museum for the Official collection.
10. These are just two examples of local names. Other language groups who used these types of ornaments would have had their own language terms.
11. If arrows are taken as bundles, the figures are *Entwined* (49 per cent); *Papuan* (19 per cent); *MacGregor* (13 per cent); and *Mixed* (18 per cent).

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