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

PO Box 3300, South Brisbane 4101, Australia
Phone: +61 (0) 7 3153 3000
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Regional differences in the Official collection: a pilot study of contact histories

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Robin TORRENCE and Susan M. DAVIES

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The archaeological methodology introduced in Chapter 6 of this volume is used further here to identify aspects of cross-cultural interaction embedded in the Official collection assembled in British New Guinea by William MacGregor, Administrator and later Lieutenant Governor between 1888–1898. The aim of this pilot study is to explore the effects of variable contact histories on how Papuans resident in four regions of the colony selected the kinds of objects they offered when engaging in exchange with William MacGregor and his officers and to trace variations in their choices through time. Although overall assemblage structure is generally stable throughout the relatively short period when the Official collection was acquired, temporal differences in the character of the material acquired in the North-East Division, where many communities were experiencing westerners for the first time, illustrate how people altered the character of the goods offered to MacGregor to increase their access to trade goods. .

❑ Papua New Guinea, William MacGregor, Official collection, assemblage analysis, ethnographic collections, cross-cultural interaction, contact history

Robin Torrence | Australian Museum | University of Sydney
Robin.Torrence@Australian.Museum

Susan M Davies | Queensland Museum
susiedavies255@gmail.com

IDENTIFYING INDIGENOUS AGENCY

Although the goals and aims of indigenous groups are difficult to extract from colonial historical documents, there is another source of information that can be mined to help counter the absences in the written accounts: objects offered up for exchange and now housed in ethnographic collections. Studies of cross-cultural interactions surrounding the gifting and barter of ethnographic objects among societies around the world have shown that indigenous groups are active agents and make reasoned choices about what to offer and/or make for exchange with westerners (e.g. Philips & Steiner 1999; Schindlebeck 1993).[1] Building on these studies, Torrence and Clarke (2013; 2016; Clarke & Torrence 2011; 2015) have developed an archaeologically informed methodology for inferring the character of indigenous participation in cross-cultural exchange based on the material attributes of the ethnographic museum collections that embody the outcome of the transactions. Their studies of museum collections identified practices by local Papuan communities from the Central Division of British New Guinea in their dealings with westerners during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The use of archaeological method and theory for studying cross-cultural relationships on the basis of ethnographic objects held in museum collections was developed further by Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume)[2] and applied to the Official ethnographic collection assembled by William MacGregor in British New Guinea between 1888–1898 (Torrence et al., Chapter 1 this volume)[2] Considering the Official collection in its entirety, Torrence found that actions by indigenous communities can be placed along a continuum, ranging on one end from planning well ahead of time and deliberately crafting objects designed to tantalise westerners, through simply mobilising whatever was close at hand, to theft at the other extreme. The aim of this chapter is to expand Torrence's (Chapter 6 this volume) analysis of the Official collection to explore how social relations played out across areas of the colony with varying histories of dealing with westerners. Over time Papuan indigenous groups devised a rich variety of strategies to acquire the material possessions and social connections they desired, while simultaneously brokering the cross-cultural social relations necessary for ensuring transactions were successfully completed.

Communities in British New Guinea maintained regular social intercourse with other groups, both within their local region and with exchange partners often long distances away. For example, Seligman (1910: 311–319) describes a plethora of social relations among the Mekeo speakers and their neighbours. These included intermarriage, regular markets among neighbors, and bartering of clubs and stone axe-adzes with people they met only rarely. In other areas long distance trading systems such as the *hiri*, which operated along the south coast of Papua (Barton 1910; Oram 1982), or the *kula* among island groups in the Massim region in the east (Malinowski 1961) combined ceremonial gifting between long term trading partners with bartering in which strangers competed for profits. Through the relatively high frequency and variety of exchange relationships in which people were regularly integrated, they were experienced in weighing up the amount and nature of things (e.g. raw materials, foodstuffs, utilitarian objects, specially made trade goods, and valuables) with the nature of the social relations formed and strengthened through the transactions.

Besides variations in the traditional exchange networks in which villages were integrated, a second factor that must have conditioned the character of artefacts offered to MacGregor by local groups in British New Guinea was the nature and length of his hosts' previous experience in dealing with outsiders and particularly with westerners. The groups who created and decorated objects with the specific aim of bartering them must have built up their knowledge about the desires of westerners through multiple encounters. In contrast, when selecting the items they were prepared to give away in return for establishing a social link with total strangers, people encountering westerners for

the first time are likely to have made very different choices from those who had been engaged in more regular social intercourse with outsiders. For example, occasionally people in very remote areas decided there was no benefit in engaging with MacGregor and they simply refused to participate in trade (e.g. Quinnell 2000: 87; Davies, Chapter 4 this volume). Here we explore how previous experiences of contact with westerners shaped the composition of the Official collection.

For this pilot study British New Guinea was divided into four regions that approximate the boundaries of the administrative 'Divisions' established under MacGregor or shortly after (Figure 1). The number of divisions and their names altered as the British extended their exploration of the colony (Joyce 1971: 131, 147), so we have chosen those used in the *British New Guinea Annual Report* (1900), reflecting the situation at the end of MacGregor's administration: Eastern, Western, Central and North-East. The Western region approximates the boundaries of contemporary Gulf and Western Provinces, whereas Central matches the province that still maintains that name. The North-East Division takes in contemporary Oro Province and the portion of contemporary Milne Bay Province in the northeastern area of the mainland. Our Eastern region combines the 1899 Eastern and more recent South-East Divisions. It is equivalent to the island and southeastern mainland region of Milne Bay Province. In terms of the length of contact with westerners, the Divisions can be ranked from longest to least as follows: Eastern, Western, Central, North-East. The nature of social interaction with outsiders in each region, however, was quite variable as discussed below.[3]

By the time MacGregor made his first visit of inspection in 1888, people living in the Eastern region would have had prolonged and substantial experience of foreigners. Whalers had been operating in this region from at least the early nineteenth century and they were quickly followed by *bêche de mer* traders, gold miners and pearl traders (Connelly 2016). Although Captain Owen Stanley had surveyed the south coast of Papua in the HMS *Rattlesnake* and interacted with villagers in 1849 (Philp 2009; 2013), due to the treacherous coastal reefs, people in the Central Division did not experience prolonged interaction with westerners until after 1873, when Captain John Moresby guided

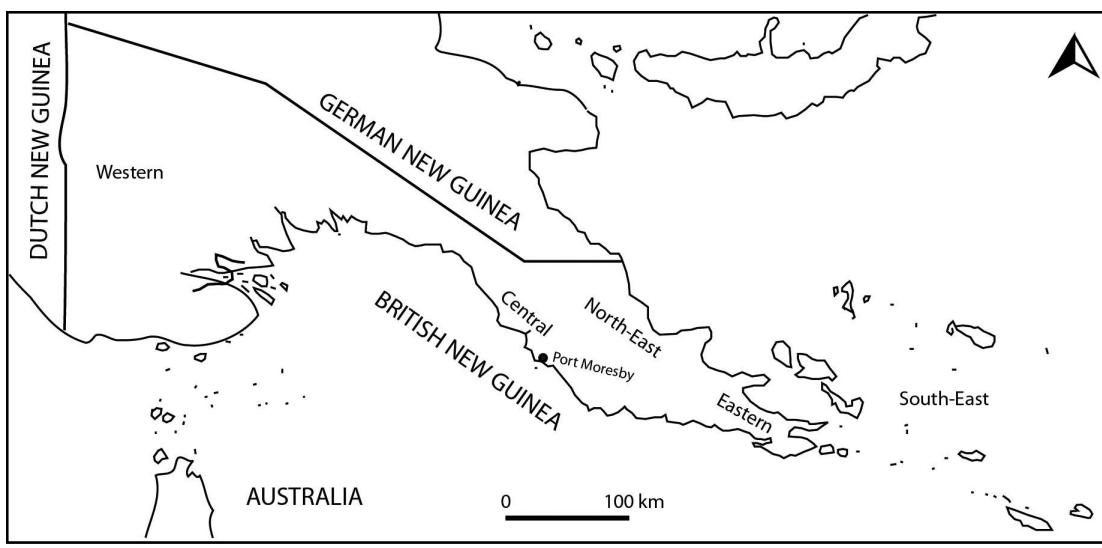

FIG. 1. Map of British New Guinea shows the location of the administrative Divisions for British New Guinea in 1899 (Anon. 1900). Drawing by Pamela Swadling.

the HMS *Basilisk* through a gap in the reef into the natural harbour of the area where modern Port Moresby is situated. A year later the missionary Rev. William Lawes took up permanent residence there and shortly afterwards an almost continuous stream of explorers, gold miners and missionaries began visiting Port Moresby and the surrounding region (Oram 1976). For example, Andrew Goldie arrived in 1876 to collect botanical specimens, but shortly afterwards established a permanent base in Port Moresby for trading with the local population (Mullins et al. 2012). In 1884 the British Protectorate government established their permanent headquarters in Port Moresby.

Meanwhile, the Western Division had experienced contact with groups from Southeast Asia coming to hunt birds of paradise since the seventeenth century (Swadling 1996: 153–165) and then interacted with Europeans far earlier than first contact in Central Division because of the proximity to the Torres Strait, which was a thoroughfare for foreign traders from Europe as well as Southeast Asia. Despite its longer exposure to outsiders, however, the nature of cross-cultural social relations in the Western Division was more sporadic and less intense than in the Port Moresby area. In addition, most of the interaction with westerners was focused on the coast, whereas the inland groups were quite isolated.

By the time MacGregor began his 'visits of inspections' and finally discovered a north/south route across the island, the North-East region had had only minimal experience of westerners, largely comprising a few miners. In summary, by the time MacGregor arrived in British New Guinea, the length and intensity of contact in the four regions can be roughly ordered as Eastern, Western, Central, North-East but keeping in mind the very large disparities in experiences between coastal and inland groups, especially in the Western region. The question pursued here is whether and how these distinct histories of contact can be related to variations in the assemblage composition and structure of the Official collection.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Using the methodology described in Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume), items in the Official collection obtained from the four regions are compared in terms of the number (assemblage composition) and proportions (assemblage structure) of the different kinds of objects acquired by MacGregor and his agents. Bows, arrows, arrowpoints and spears were excluded for this study because the large quantities overwhelm the sample (see Table 1 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume). In addition, cultural differences across British New Guinea in the use of bow and arrows versus spears also have the potential to skew the results (MacGregor 1897: 59, 60; Haddon 1900: 427–429). For example, since arrows are lighter, people tended to carry larger numbers of individual items than those who preferred spears, thereby adding another potential source of bias. Finally, since the locality where the object was acquired is recorded in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) for less than half of the Official collection, the sample size used here is much reduced (4848), although it should be large enough to be indicative of Papuan responses to cross-cultural encounters. The results of this study should therefore be useful for pointing out topics and aspects of the collection that would benefit from more in-depth research.

One of the important advantages of the Official collection for understanding cultural interaction is that regular shipments were made from British New Guinea to the Queensland Museum (QM) in Brisbane. This means that it is possible to track changes through time in the kinds of things acquired. Each of the eight shipments, called 'transfers' in Queensland Museum documentation, are roughly dated as follows: Transfer 46 (1892); Transfer 47 (1893); Transfer 52 (1894); Transfer 55 (1896); Transfer 60 (January 1897); Transfer 68 (December 1897); Transfer 70 (February 1898); Transfer 74 (October 1898) (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume)[4]. Since it is not known exactly how the shipments were organized in British New Guinea, we cannot be certain that every artefact included in

each transfer had been collected in the period that had elapsed since the previous transfer. However, it seems safe to assume that this chronology is broadly accurate.

The cultural objects were classified into categories chosen to reflect their primary role in daily, social and ceremonial life, as discussed by Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume). Objects with multiple roles were placed in the category representing their most common use. Most of the functions are transparent, but the group *Attractors* has been especially created for our study of colonial interaction. Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume) created this category to encompass objects that were especially highly valued by westerners, as reflected in written records and in popular auction and sale catalogues: e.g. stone tools, beheading knives and shields (Clarke & Torrence 2015). The *Objects Made for Sale* group as including items such as wooden bowls, canoe ornaments, lime spatulas, and tobacco pipes that were decorated to appeal to westerners, as well as man-catchers that appear to have been specifically designed to conform to western concepts of 'savages' (O'Hanlon 1999). Many of these items were used in traditional contexts, but significant additional quantities were made specifically for trade with westerners. The *Exchange* category refers to objects that were frequently used in traditional trade among local British New Guinea communities: e.g. pottery, tapa cloth, dogs' tooth necklaces and skirts.

BRIDGING A CULTURAL DIVIDE

It is important to consider whether the frequency of intercourse between MacGregor and indigenous groups was the major factor in shaping the quantity and nature of goods made available to him. Surprisingly, there is an inverse relationship between the proportion of time that MacGregor spent in a region (based on the MacGregor Itinerary in Appendix 1 this volume) and the quantity of objects acquired for the Official collection (Table 1) (Quinnell 2000: 88). For example, MacGregor was rarely in Port Moresby for extended periods, but overall, nearly half of his time in British New Guinea was spent within the broader area of Central Division (45 per cent). Despite the large amount of time spent among the communities there, he acquired the least number of objects from Central Division. In contrast, items from the North-East Division make up 42 per cent of the components of the Official collection with known provenience, but MacGregor was only in that region for 13 per cent of his time in the colony. The inverse relationship between total length of visits and quantity of objects is not consistent across the collection, however, since the second largest group of objects were obtained in the Eastern Division which ranks second in terms of the number of days that MacGregor was there (Table 1). For the Eastern and Western Divisions, the number of objects and length of visits are positively correlated.

The small number of objects acquired from Central reflect a major change in how people in this region interacted with westerners rather than a paucity of items available for exchange. Prior to MacGregor's arrival in British New Guinea, very large numbers of items had been obtained from the local population, as reflected, for example, in the size of the collections from Central Division that were acquired by the Australian Museum between 1875–1886 (859) compared to those during and after MacGregor's time in British New Guinea (115) (Clarke & Torrence 2013: Table 2). Among these are two very large collections made by commercial enterprises headed by Andrew Goldie (244) and the Mason Brothers (376) illustrating that prior to MacGregor's arrival, the local population was very eager to give up their personal items for European trade goods and tobacco[5].

TABLE. 1. A comparison of the percentage of time MacGregor spent in each Division with the percentage of artefacts in the Official Collection acquired.

Division	% Days	% Objects
Central	45	13
Eastern	24	32
Western	18	13
North-East	13	42

The negative correlation between amount of interaction and size of artefact assemblage acquired from the Central Division during MacGregor's tenure in the colony suggests that as the British government representatives and local people became acquainted with each other, goods had a less direct and different role in brokering cross-cultural relationships. In a gross sense, the less knowledge and familiarity that MacGregor and communities had of each other, the more they depended on the concrete act of exchange to create and maintain channels of communication that would foster social relations. Once both sides were well acquainted, as in Central which had the largest number of resident outsiders (e.g. missionaries, traders, government officers, etc.), there was less need to foster and cement social links through exchange of objects. In fact, relationships between local people and outsiders were becoming so well established in the Central Division that formalized types of colonial behaviour were gradually becoming adopted on the part of both the English and the local groups, as discussed by Gosden and Knowles (2001). In direct contrast, in the North-East where few people had prior experience of westerners, let alone someone who claimed to be their 'Government,' a symbolic action was needed to initiate social intercourse. In the absence of a shared language, the giving and receiving of objects was a crucial first stage in initiating interaction.

Is the Eastern Division an exception to the rule that objects play a lesser role in cross-cultural exchange as groups develop increased familiarity? In this case the number of days spent by MacGregor and the number of objects obtained are both relatively high when compared to other regions. Unlike in the Central region, where a significant number of westerners were long term residents, especially within Port Moresby, people in the Eastern area had had a very different experience of cross-cultural interaction. In their case outsiders generally came to the region specifically to obtain natural resources (whales, pearls, etc.) and only stayed for brief lengths of time (Connelly 2016). Local people developed ways to take advantage of the opportunity to acquire trade goods from these short-term visitors by creating products that could be sold. The nature of the exchange relationship was largely based on negotiation over prices rather than a way to ensure peaceful interaction as in the North-East Division. Consequently, as described in Davies (Chapter 4 this volume), when MacGregor travelled in many parts of the Eastern region, people with extensive experience

FIG. 2. Carved from light woods and then elaborately painted, objects usually referred to as 'dance wands' were often used on ceremonial occasions: **a.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9586 (MAC4810, PNGNMAG); **b.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9579 (MAC4816, PNGNMAG); **c.** Trobriand Islands, Eastern Division, ER9578 (MAC4792, PNGNMAG); **d.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9584 (MAC4809, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

of brokering with westerners were generally keen to trade indigenous objects with him. In fact, locals were extremely eager to engage with him to obtain the trade goods, especially tobacco, with which they were well acquainted (e.g. Connelly 2016:177). Through time the objects they used to secure the desired trade goods were increasingly designed to attract the attention and desires of westerners. The elaborate decorations on many of the Eastern objects available 'for sale' (e.g. Figures 2, 3) were specifically designed to appeal to westerners, so it is not surprising that MacGregor was highly attracted to them.

CRAFTING FOR TRADE

The substantial impact of contact history on the assemblage composition of the Official collection is clearly demonstrated by differences in the kinds of objects offered to MacGregor for exchange in each of the four regions. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, the clearest contrast in assemblage composition is between the two regions with the largest divergence in the length of time in which they had interacted with westerners: i.e. Eastern versus North-East. The Eastern assemblage is the most concentrated on

FIG. 3. Expertly carved and painted ornaments for canoes were among the earliest of objects possibly made to attract trade with westerners: **a.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9567 (MAC4662, PNGNMAG)); **b.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9568 (MAC4549); **c.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER10489 (MAC4608, PNGNMAG); **d.** Panaeti Island, Eastern Division (ER13167 (MAC4693, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 2 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

a single category, with 61 per cent of the artefacts classified as *Made for Sale* (Table 2). In addition, Eastern items comprise 86 per cent of the total *Made for Sale* objects in the Official collection as a whole. This observation is not unexpected as Weiner (1982: 67) noted that 'since 1860 Trobriand Islanders have been inventing styles and forms expressly for Europeans'. MacGregor's observation that many of the islanders were addicted to tobacco (Connelly 2016: 177), implies they had developed a dependence on western trade goods. MacGregor also notes that people from this region had become very good at marketing their products and raised their prices as much as 300 per cent between his visits (Quinnell 2000: 88). Items that were made for sale in the Eastern region during the late nineteenth century include carved and inlaid bowls and swordclubs (BOX 7.1), lime spatulas (Figure 16 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume; Haddow, BOX 14.1 this volume), carved wooden objects such as dance wands (Figure 2) and canoe ornaments (Figure 3). Many of these objects are still produced for sale to tourists and art collectors. One item probably not made for sale, but of particular appeal for westerners, are small carved human statues, which are very rare in the Official collection (BOX 7.2).

It is notable that all the mortars and pestles (for processing the lime required for consuming betel nut) in the Official collection for which a provenience was recorded in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) were acquired in the Eastern region (Figure 4). Although

TABLE. 2. Variation in assemblage composition and structure among regions as characterized by the numbers and percentages of objects belonging to different categories.

Object Category	Division				Totals	%
	Eastern	Central	Western	North-East		
Attractor	109	313	122	639	1183	24
Social	281	97	212	575	1165	24
Made for Sale	941	43	34	77	1095	23
Exchange	41	114	102	354	610	13
Mourning	3	2	51	275	331	7
Utilitarian	166	44	97	101	397	8
Magic/Sorcery	1	23	22	21	67	1
Total	**1542**	**636**	**640**	**2042**	**4848**	**100**

TABLE. 3. Regional differences in the types of objects included in the Social category.

Type of Object	Division				Totals
	Eastern	Central	Western	North-East	
Carved board	0	0	18	0	18
Clothing cape	0	0	0	1	1
Container, lime	16	1	1	3	21
Drum	43	16	30	35	124
Figure, carved	9	0	3	1	13
Mortar	83	0	0	0	83
Musical instrument	0	6	2	1	9
Ornaments, Body	75	74	158	534	841
Pestle	55	0	0	0	55
Total	**282**	**97**	**212**	**574**	**1165**

we were initially hesitant to classify these objects in the *Made for Sale* group, it seems quite likely that many of the decorated mortars and pestles acquired for the Official collection in the Eastern region had been made in expectation of trade with westerners.[6] If mortars and pestles were reclassified as *Made for Sale*, the contribution of the Eastern assemblage to this category would increase to 88 per cent of the total number of artefacts in the Official collection with information on provenience. Overall, the makeup of the Eastern assemblage shows that people had invested much time and energy into making objects intended for commercial dealings with outsiders.

On the other hand, the Eastern assemblage comprises the smallest contribution of all the regions to the *Attractor* category, comprised of stone weapons and other artefacts that were particularly attractive to European collectors at

FIG. 4. Mortars and pestles used for crushing lime which was mixed with betel nut were popular with MacGregor and other westerners, presumably because they are often highly decorated with designs and carvings that are familiar, such as these human figures and faces: **a.** mortar, Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9980 (MAC1166, PNGNMAG); **b., c.** mortor and pestle, Woodlark Island, Eastern Division, ER10468 (MAC1209, PNGNMAG); **d.** pestle, Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9984 (MAC1155, PNGNMAG); **e.** pestle, Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9992 (MAC1114, PNGNMAG); **f.** pestle, Woodlark Island, ER9357 (MAC1104, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

this time (see discussion in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume). It is important to note that 70 per cent of the axe-adzes in the Eastern sample consists of stone blades rather than complete artefacts. The deliberate selection for exchange with outsiders of objects that were not currently in use supports MacGregor's observations that across the Eastern region stone axe-adzes had largely been replaced by metal tools (e.g. Thomson 1892: 16, 23; Davies, Chapter 4 this volume). It is also interesting to note that a large proportion of the axe-adzes from the Eastern region are described in the registers as 'currency axes,' referring to the very large blades manufactured on Woodlark Island and distributed throughout the region through local trading systems, such as the *kula* (e.g. Bickler & Turner 2002) (See Figure 14 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume). If these were reclassified as *Exchange* items, then the *Attractor* category would be further reduced, demonstrating that people in the Eastern area rarely offered items used in everyday life within their trade with westerners.

Somewhat surprisingly, items from the *Utilitarian* category take up a relatively high proportion of the Eastern assemblages. Most of the items in this group consist of balls of twine (Figure 5). The group from the Eastern Division comprise nearly half the total number of cordage objects among those in the Official collection for which locality is known. Perhaps MacGregor or one of his agents specially commissioned a 'type' collection of different kinds of bindings, a project that might be easier to achieve among people who were accustomed to and eager to work for payments in trade goods. Additional research is needed to fully understand the inclusion of the large group of cordage items from the Eastern region in the Official collection.

EXPEDIENT ENCOUNTERS

Moving from the Eastern region to the opposite end of the continuum of contact history, people resident in the North-East Division at the time of MacGregor's administration had experienced the least amount of interaction with westerners of all groups in British New Guinea. Not surprisingly, assemblage composition in the North-East is almost the reverse of the sample from the Eastern region. Many of MacGregor's meetings in the North-East were with people who had never seen non-indigenous people before and/or had never conducted exchange with them. Whereas objects obtained in the Eastern Division are dominated by items in the *Made for Sale* category, there are much higher proportions of objects in the North-East assemblage classified as *Attractors*. These include items highly desired by westerners, such as stone tools, bows, arrows, and shields (Figure 6) (see Table 2 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume). In this case, *Attractors* make up the largest component of the assemblage, followed closely by the *Social* category, which is almost entirely represented by body ornaments (Tables 2, 3). The third most numerous object group are items used in traditional exchange practices. It is also notable that 83 per cent of the total *Mourning* category in the the sample of the Official collection with known provenience was acquired in the North-East (Table 2). The picture that arises from these data is that in their interactions with MacGregor, people with the least experience of dealing with outsiders mainly offered objects that were close at hand. When they encountered MacGregor's party, the stone tools they were carrying with them were frequently used to facilitate exchange. Once people realized that MacGregor and his party were very partial to stone tools, however, large quantities were offered, presumably as a deliberate strategy to obtain trade goods. It is probable that as people became familiar with cross-cultural exchange and developed a desire for metal axes, they also sought out worn out or broken stone weapons to increase their opportunities for trade.

In other social contexts in the North-East, and especially when the meeting with the British government representatives took place in a village context, it appears that objects that had been stockpiled for future uses were mobilised for gifting and exchange. Available cached objects included items used in traditional exchange, for example

FIG. 5. Samples of cordage: **a.** Fly River, Western Division, ER9186 (MAC1866); **b.** Trobriand Islands, Eastern Division, ER12935 (MAC1887); **c.** Fly River, Western Division, ER9085 (MAC1890); **d.** Normanby Island, Eastern Division, ER14234 (MAC6068). Scale bar: 2 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

decorated bark cloth (tapa), pottery, and bundles of woven belts, but the largest component of expedient goods used in exchange with MacGregor in the North-East were body ornaments normally worn in ceremonies and especially those associated with the mourning rites widely practiced in this region *(Social and Mourning* categories in Tables 2 and 3) (e.g. Williams 1930: 210–229) (Figure 7). When the two types are grouped together, the expediently assembled materials far outnumber the *Attractors*.

A good example of the kinds of objects that would have been close at hand are necklaces made with loops of coix seeds and worn during the mourning period (Figure 8). These must have been considered expendable by their owners as they were given in very large quantities. The *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) lists 319 neck ornaments made with coix seeds. One might even suggest that Papuans in the North-East considered these items as mere 'trinkets' in the same way that Europeans valued the strings of glass beads transported to British New Guinea as trade goods. Overall, the pattern in the North-East Division is one in which most items used to broker interaction with MacGregor were relatively common and easily accessible. Through time this rather expedient approach to cross-cultural interactions was complemented by strategies to ensure access to western trade by increasing the numbers of stone items that were so highly desired by MacGregor and his associates.

Despite the intensity of contact with westerners experienced by communities in the Central Division, which hosted the location of the headquarters of the British administration in Port Moresby, goods made for sale to westerners never became a commercial industry in the same way as occurred in the Eastern Division. For example, tobacco pipes decorated with burned or incised clan designs were produced in Central from c.1880–1920 (Figure 9), but only six with known proveniences noted in the register were included in the Official collection, reflecting

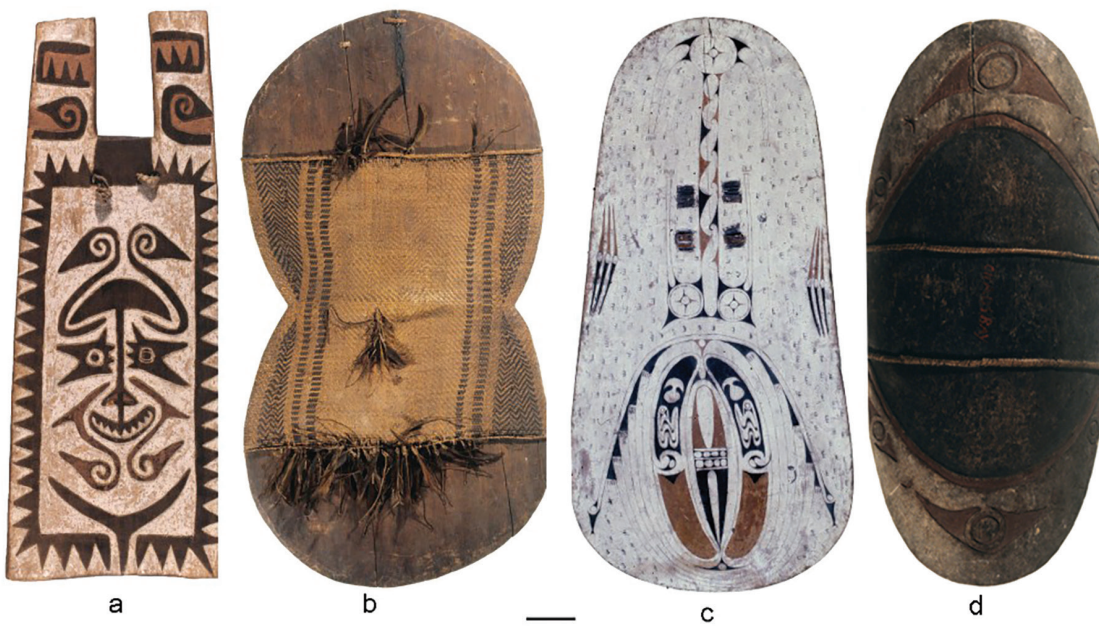

FIG. 6. From the perspective of the male westerner, shields were very attractive items and highly desired: a. Maipu, Western Division, ER12314 (MAC4652, PNGNMAG); b. Kokila, Central Division, ER14347 (MAC4708, PNGNMAG); c. Trobriand Is., Eastern Division, ER12452 (MAC4775, PNGNMAG); d. Chads Bay, Eastern Division, ER10867 (MAC4742, PNGNMAG). Scale Bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

FIG. 7. Woven vest decorated with coix seeds worn during mourning: N.E. Coast, ER12509 (MAC3939). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

their short-lived popularity as items made for trade with westerners (Chan 2018:136–139; Torrence & Clarke 2013:184-188). Rather than create new items for sale, people in Central took a different approach to attract exchange with westerners. They capitalized on the seemingly insatiable appetite of British collectors for stone artefacts and especially clubs. The assemblage from the Central region has the highest concentration of *Attractors* of all the regions (49 per cent, Table 1). Although some of the clubs from both Central and the North-East may have been specifically made for sale to westerners, that practice, if it existed, must have been short lived, unlike the production of 'carvings' in the Eastern region which has continued up until the present day. A. C. English, who was the resident magistrate in the Rigo District, an administrative unit located to the east of Port Moresby, noted that through time stone clubs became very rare because

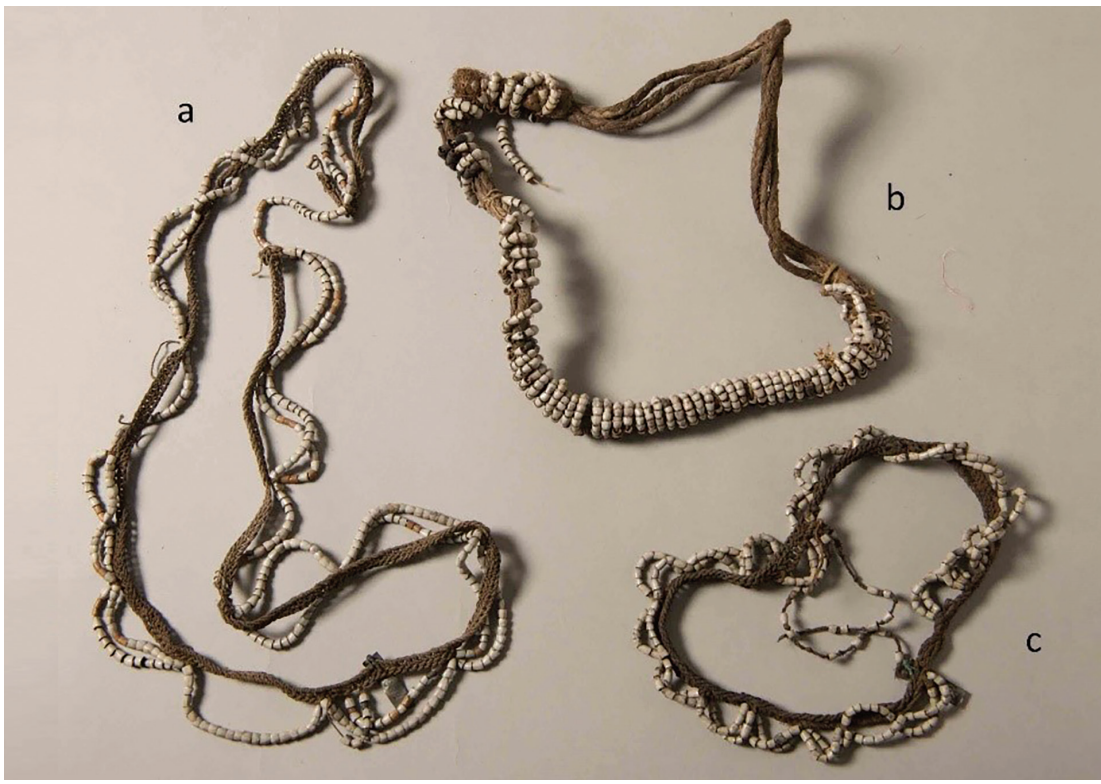

FIG. 8. Necklaces made of coix seeds and used in mourning ceremonies were offered to MacGregor in great numbers: **a.** North-East Division, AM E.006265); **b.** North-East Division, AM E.006315); **c.** North-East Division, AM E.006262). Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Australian Museum.

people offered them in trade to obtain more sturdy metal implements.

> They have certainly realised the fact that the Government will not permit them to indulge their murderous tendencies, and they have laid aside their spears and other weapons, to use them only for the purposes of trade. 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 (English 1897: 105).

The large proportion of stone artefacts in the Central component of the Official collection is somewhat surprising given that collections in the Australian Museum from that region dating to the same period are dominated by body ornaments and contain very few axe-adzes or clubs (Clarke & Torrence 2011: 439), although weapons had been the primary constituent of collections between c.1875–1885, before MacGregor arrived in British New Guinea. This contrast in assemblage composition between the Official and other contemporary collections emphasizes the importance of the entanglement specifically between MacGregor and local communities, who clearly responded to his seemingly insatiable desire for these artefacts and who must have benefited in return.

Despite its long history of contact with foreigners, people in the Western Division do not appear to have offered *Attractors* to the same extent as villagers

FIG. 9. Tobacco pipes with burned decoration typical of the Central Division: **a.** Mailu, Central Division, ER10787 (MAC 549); **b.** Unknown provenience, ER9271 (MAC583); **c.** Unknown provenience, ER9270 (MAC 571). Scale bar: 2 cm. Queensland Museum Photography, Peter Waddington.

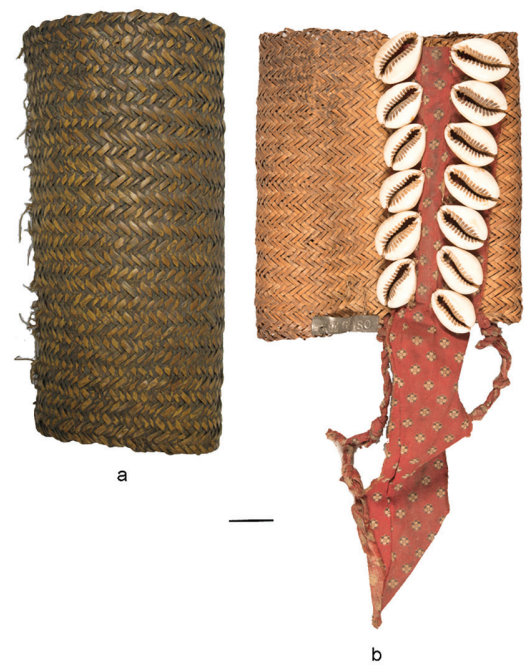

FIG. 10. Woven wrist guards or gauntlets, some incorporating trade cloth, make up a significant proportion of the objects acquired in the Western Division; **a.** ER Unknown (AM E.006282) Photography: Robin Torrence ©Australian Museum; **b.** Fly River, Western Division, ER8960 (AM E.006280) Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Australian Museum. Scale bar: 2 cm

in the Central region. Instead, the largest proportion of the objects exchanged to MacGregor and his agents were body ornaments. The number of these in Table 2 can be further increased if the 45 wrist guards classified as *Utilitarian* are reconsidered as body ornaments (Figure 10). As with communities in the North-East, the overall character of the response of local people in the Western region to exchange with MacGregor and his agents is perhaps best characterized as one of expediency: i.e. giving things that were easily on hand rather than developing specific ways to increase their interaction with westerners. This finding is puzzling. Historical documents indicate that groups in this region were as keen to obtain trade goods as in other areas (e.g. Davies 2011), but they did not adopt the *Attractor* or *Made for Sale* strategies adopted in the North-East or Eastern areas respectively.

Papuans in the Western Division may have used a similar strategy to those in the North-East in terms of leveraging disposable items to facilitate exchange with MacGregor. In the North-East case, body ornaments that had been used in mortuary rites were offered in large quantities. In a similar manner people in Western may have re-purposed elaborate masks that were normally discarded following ceremonies. MacGregor was unlucky that he was not in the area during or just after major ceremonies and so was not able to obtain the now famous masks made by the Elema people in the Gulf area (Quinnell 2000: 88). He did, however, acquire 18 'carved boards' (Figure 11) from groups further to the

FIG. 11. Carvings known as 'ancestral boards': **a.** Maipu, Western Division, ER12308 (MAC4653); **b.** Maipu, Western Division, ER12301 (MAC4578, PNGNMAG); **c.** Maipu, Western Division, ER12296 (MAC4650); **d.** Baimura, Western Division ER11661 (MAC4577, PNGNMAG). Scale Bar: 10cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

west which may represent the early stages of 'attracting' interaction through offering carved and painted objects, as in the Eastern Division. Although these objects were not specifically made for sale, local people may have observed that these kinds of items could attract the desired trade goods. Additional research is required to thoroughly evaluate this hypothesis.

CHANGING STRATEGIES

The regional differences in cross-cultural interaction identified by the kinds of objects collected can be interrogated further by tracking chronological change in the North-East Division. This is the most appropriate area for investigating change because people living there experienced a significant increase in interaction with outsiders during MacGregor's ten years in British New Guinea. Local communities witnessed a period of rapid change as British pacification and wider influence was strengthened and deepened through MacGregor's active campaigns and expeditions. In addition, his activities created a follow-on effect that led to an increasing presence of outsiders seeking their fortunes through mining, trade, scientific exploration, etc. As noted previously, the assemblage composition and structure of objects acquired in the North-East are distinctly different from other areas in British New Guinea. Taken as a whole, the assemblage acquired in the North-East is dominated by stone axe-adzes and clubs (*Attractors*) together with a large component of body ornaments (*Social*). In addition, a significantly large proportion of the mourning costumes in the entire Official collection were acquired in the North-East Division (Tables 2, 3). This gross pattern is slightly deceptive, however, because it masks marked changes in cross-cultural interaction that resulted from MacGregor's vigorous push to explore and pacify this poorly known part of British New Guinea.

The pattern of chronological change in assemblage structure documented in Table 4 shows that although objects classified in the *Social* category (largely body ornaments) comprise a significant part of the North-East assemblage overall (Table 1), their contribution declines through time. The necklaces and arm ornaments that make up a large component of this category are likely to have been components of dance costumes brought out from storage to facilitate exchange with MacGregor and his agents. In conjunction with the *Social* group, the proportion of objects specifically related to *Mourning* rituals also decreased through time.

Among the obvious contenders for objects in the North-East that might have been considered as appropriate for trade with westerners were items that were already used in exchange with local groups: e.g. bark cloth, belts, drums, pottery. These might have been stockpiled by households in expectation of use in future occasions where exchange played a role, such as ceremonies associated with rites of passage (e.g. initiation, marriage, and death). As shown in Table 4, in the North-East Division the *Exchange* category fluctuates through time, but the overall trend is upward (Table 4).

The most marked change in assemblage structure in the North-East is the increase in the *Attractors* category. During the nearly ten years over which the Official collection was put together, the proportion of the assemblage in the North-East region made up by *Attractors* rose from 10 to 94 per cent (Table 4). Interestingly, the character of the axe-adzes, the largest component of the *Attractors*, also responded to the increased frequency of exchange. The proportion represented by a complete axe-adze – composed of a stone blade attached by an elaborate binding to a handle – decreased in favour of isolated stone blades, which made up an increasingly larger proportion of the axe-adze category through time (Figure 12). Beginning with 20 per cent in Transfer 46, axe-adzes rise to 40 percent in Transfer 52, and, finally, comprise the majority of the total number objects in Transfer 74 (63 per cent). As most of the axe-adzes in the North-East assemblage with a known provenience were obtained through exchange with groups in the Collingwood Bay region, the pattern is highly significant since the pattern traces change in one area. Clearly, indigenous groups in the North-East deduced which objects were most desirable to MacGregor and his party and consistently offered them for trade. Given the large

TABLE. 4. Chronological change in assemblage structure in each British New Guinea Division as measured by the percentage of items in each category, beginning with the oldest Transfer 46.

Transfer	46 Oct. 1892	47 Mar. 1893	52 Aug. 1894	55 Jan. 1896	60 Mar. 1897	68 Dec. 1897	70 Feb. 1898	74 Oct. 1898
EASTERN								
Total number	**572**	**0**	**411**	**20**	**20**	**62**	**0**	**15**
Attractor	16	0	4	10	25	2	0	7
Exchange	2	0	4	0	0	3	0	0
Made for sale	67	0	53	35	65	0	0	13
Magic/Sorcery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mourning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raw Material	0	0	5	10	5	0	0	0
Social	8	0	14	15	0	84	0	7
Utilitarian	6	0	20	30	5	11	0	73
CENTRAL								
Total Number	**186**	**4**	**2**	**113**	**55**	**4**	**220**	**47**
Attractor	60	100	0	17	61	50	56	38
Exchange	16	0	0	29	9	25	8	55
Made for Sale	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Magic/Sorcery	4	0	100	4	4	0	2	0
Mourning	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Raw Material	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Social	8	0	0	39	16	25	17	4
Utilitarian	7	0	0	9	7	0	17	2
WESTERN								
Total number	**279**	**32**	**176**	**0**	**44**	**34**	**0**	**44**
Attractor	4	47	40	0	32	3	0	27
Exchange	11	25	11	0	0	0	0	0
Made for sale	1	0	0	0	0	9	0	25
Magic/Sorcery	1	6	2	0	0	3	0	0
Mourning	10	0	2	0	27	9	0	0
Raw Material	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Social	35	0	17	0	5	76	0	0
Social/Exchange	11	3	9	0	23	0	0	16
Utilitarian	24	19	19	0	14	0	0	32
	100	100	100	0	100	100	0	100
NORTH-EAST								
Total number	**352**	**1**	**745**	**191**	**450**	**88**	**0**	**183**
Attractor	10	0	26	17	40	8	0	94
Exchange/Social	3	100	3	4	8	10	0	3
Exchange/Utilitarian	1	0	1	31	9	8	0	0
Made for sale	4	0	3	3	1	1	0	0
Magic/Sorcery	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0
Mourning	32	0	18	3	7	9	0	0
Raw Material	0	0	1	0	0	17	0	0
Social	47	0	44	25	30	25	0	2
Utilitarian	3	0	4	17	3	18	0	1

FIG. 12. Large numbers of axe-adze blades made from green coloured stone and many with damaged edges, were offered to MacGregor and his agents by people in Collingwood Bay, North-East Division: **a.** ER12131, AM E.007107; **b.** ER12128, AM E.007110; **c.** ER12150, AM E.007114. Queensland Museum Photography, Gary Cranitch with permission of the Australian Museum; **d.** ER12153 (MAC44). Scale bar: 1 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

quantities of adze blades acquired in the North-East Division, it seems likely that people raided their caches and scoured their surroundings to find disused blades to use in exchange. The latter seems the most likely since so many of the blades are worn down or have irregular surfaces that have not been fully ground and polished.

CONTACT HISTORY AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

Pulling apart the Official collection to look for differences in the kinds of objects acquired in each of four regions of British New Guinea illustrates the potential of assemblage analysis for revealing aspects of the social intercourse between MacGregor and his agents and the Papuan communities with whom they engaged. Even at the gross level targeted here, which is based on rather general typologies, variations in the material acquired across space and through time show that familiarity with outsiders was a major factor in the kinds of objects that were offered for exchange. This is an important outcome because the approach creates a way of seeing indigenous actions outside those reported by historical records that are coloured by western cultural perceptions. This pilot study of artefact assemblages in the Official collection enables a glimpse of how local people viewed their interactions and, in some cases also how, through the choice of goods, they actively attempted to structure the outcome of the cross-cultural encounters to achieve their own goals.

The data used in this study (i.e. artefact type and provenience) are admittedly coarse, but further studies could build on the basic approach. For example, detailed studies of the objects themselves should enlarge the number that can be assigned to a region, would enable better typologies, or could focus on the study of variability within single artefact categories. The provenience data used here, which is mainly derived from the Master List (Appendix 2 this volume), could also be markedly improved, for example, through systematic studies of objects lacking information in the register. Another strategy with high research potential would be to focus in on specific localities that MacGregor visited frequently or to analyse assemblages from places with well documented contact histories. At this stage, however, the study of assemblage composition and structure presented here and in Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume) show that museum collections, and, in particular, the large, diverse and reasonably well documented Official collection, can help uncover the responses of local indigenous communities to their experiences of cross-cultural relationships in colonial settings.

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❑ ENDNOTES

1. Although at the end of the nineteenth century most of the outsiders that people in British New Guinea came in contact with were originally from Europe (mainly England), there were many others from Australia and Asia. The term 'westerners' is therefore used to encompass the variety of non-Papuan people who interacted with the local population.
2. Torrence et al. (Chapter 1 this volume) provide relevant historical background information on Sir William MacGregor and the Official collection which is the source of data for this study. A detailed discussion of the conceptual reasoning behind the assemblage analysis is presented in Torrence (Chapter 6 this volume).
3. Although it would be preferable to use finer geographic distinctions for this study, as there were differences in contact histories within each region, particularly between coastal groups who had more interaction with westerners than the more isolated inland communities, this is not possible given the available information about where the objects were obtained. In support of our choices, it is clear from his long essay about cultures in British New Guinea, that MacGregor (1897) himself felt that there were clear differences among these four regions. His views would also have played a role in how he approached exchange in each area.
4. Due to the uncertainty about which transfer they belong to, items coded in the Master List (Appendix 2 this volume) as 52?, 55? or 74? were excluded from this analysis of change (see Davies, Chapter 2 this volume).
5. For example, see Goldie's account of being overwhelmed by eager Papuans at his headquarters in Port Moresby. 'You no sooner buy one curio than there is a dozen of like articles brought to you for sale, especially if it should not be held in esteem by them' (Mullins et al. 2012: 53)
6. This hypothesis could be tested through a detailed analysis of the mortars and pestles to determine if they had been used through a study of use-wear traces and microscopic examination searching for the presence of lime residues. It is also possible that as people increasingly took up tobacco, that they decreased their use of betal nut and therefore were willing to give up objects for which they no longer had a use.

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BOX 7.1

ATTRACTING EUROPEAN COLLECTORS WITH SWORDCLUBS

Peter WHITE and Robin TORRENCE

A distinctive artefact type commonly present in late nineteenth century collections from the South East Division of British New Guinea was known to Sir William MacGregor and his contemporaries as a 'swordclub' (Figure 13) (e.g. Edge-Partington & Heape 1890: 295). Although the origin of the name is uncertain, it is an appropriate description because these substantial objects do bear a resemblance to a European sword. They comprise a large, thin, blade c.60–100 cm. long and a distinct handle. Broad blades with a squared off end are the most common shape in the collections, but varieties with narrow blades, some of which are pointed or have serrated edges, were also collected (Figures 13–16). Most are quite heavy and unwieldy. Malinowski (1920) notes that they had a largely ceremonial role in the Trobriand Islands and were not used in formally organised warfare, although they might have been snatched up for an occasional spontaneous neighbourhood brawl. The main role of these highly decorated objects was in display during feasts, mortuary rites, and other ceremonies, when people from different communities were gathered together. Monckton (1922: 91), writing about the 1890's, also notes that the 'beauty of pattern and design [have] been far more considered than effectiveness as weapons'.

A large proportion of swordclubs were carved from hard woods such as ebony and then polished to yield an attractive dark, lustrous surface. The choice of wood probably depended on what was available in the local environment as those from some islands are made from a softer wood, lighter in colour (e.g. Figure 16c). As shown in Table 1, the most common form in the Official

FIG. 13. Common shapes of swordclubs from the Eastern Division: **a.** Broad blade with a squared base, ER9173 (MAC399, PNGNMAG); **b.** Narrow blade with a squared base, Fergusson Is., ER9060 (MAC3431, PNGNMAG); **c.** Narrow blade with a pointed base, possibly Rossel Is., ER9181 (MAC3436, PNGNMAG); **d.** Serrated blade, Fergusson Is., ER11899 (MAC3535, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 10 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

collection (66 per cent) is a broad blade with a squared off end, almost paddle shaped, with a hilt consisting of a pommel, grip and guard (Figure 13). The other end of the blade, where it is broadest, often bears a row of small holes to house attachments of leaves and fibres (e.g. Figure 3a in Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume). The hilt is occasionally similarly decorated, in one case with leaves and shells (Figure 14d). Incised designs infilled with white in the classic curvilinear Massim style (Figure 13a–c) are frequently carved on both sides of the blades. Similar designs are also seen on the wooden bowls (e.g. Figure 5 in Torrence & Davies, Chapter 13 this volume). Many of the examples in MacGregor's Personal collection are handsomely carved in this style and beautifully finished (e.g. Figure 3 in Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume). Several swordclubs are also decorated with palm leaves around the handle or secured under a slit on the face of the blade. Occasionally a raised line of wood down one surface of the blade ends in a serpent's head, a motif that is also often used in the infilled designs.

In addition to the broad blades with square ends, some blades are quite narrow along their full length and have rounded or pointed distal ends (e.g. Figure 13c, d). The hilts on the narrow forms are similar to the broad-bladed variety and many blades were decorated with incised and infilled decoration. The guards and pommels vary in size and are often carved. The most common motifs of the carved pommels are stylised birds, some quite elaborate while others are only in outline (Figure 15), although the majority are simple, rounded knobs (e.g. Figure 13a).

Another form of swordclub, called 'serrated' in Table 5, has a blade made from a single piece of wood in which opposing knobs or spikes have been carved. These have a long smooth handle at one end and are rounded off at the base. This variety lacks a defined grip and guard, although most have a pommel (Figure 13d, Figure 14). The form we have called a 'cutlass' is reminiscent of a metal sword with a pointed base that is stored within a scabbard (e.g. Jarillo de La Torre 2022; Figure 17 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume). Some examples in this

FIG. 14. Distal ends of serrated swordclubs from the Eastern Division were carved in a variety of forms: **a.** Unknown provenience, ER9065 (MAC3529, PNGNMAG); **b.** Normanby Is., ER9057 (MAC3531, PNGNMAG); **c.** Normanby Is., ER9055 (MAC3532, PNGNMAG); **d.** Rossel Is., ER9187 (MAC3533, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 10cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

group have a handle which has a clearly defined guard (e.g. Figure 16 in Torrence, Chapter 6 this volume), whereas others have a simple pommel. It seems likely that this type was copied from a metal sword and scabbard carried by a westerner who visited the region. For instance, Basil Thomson (1888: 20 October, 1888) had a sabre when he was travelling on Normanby Island with MacGregor in 1888. The item was stolen by one of the guides who disappeared with it. The cutlasses in both the Official and Personal collections are made from a light-coloured, soft wood. Interestingly, the cutlass form continues to be made in soft wood into the twenty-first century, while manufacture of the common shapes ceased early in the twentieth century.

As noted in Table 5, two-thirds of the swordclubs in the Official collection with locations noted in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c.1889–1910) are from the Trobriand Islands. Others were acquired from Normanby, Fergusson, Woodlark and Rossel Islands and Holnicote Bay. One blade each is from Truful, Kaibaw and Bararua, localities we have been

FIG. 15. Carved motifs that may represent birds are present on the pommels of many swordclubs: **a.** Fergusson Is., ER9059 (MAC3482, PNGNMAG); **b.** Normanby Is., ER9055 (MAC3532, PNGNMAG); **c.** Normanby Is., ER10773 (MAC3444, PNGNMAG); **d.** Normanby Is., ER8744 (MAC3502, PNGNMAG); **e.** Unknown provenience, probably Eastern Division, ER9070 (MAC5319, PNGNMAG). Scale bar: 5 cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

unable to locate, although the latter may be a Massim island spelled variously Banarua or Bonarua. The different shapes are not limited to a particular locality, except for the four cutlasses in the Official collection, all of which come from Kiriwina in the Trobriand Islands. As this was the residence of the most powerful chief, perhaps at some point carvers were asked to copy the weapon displayed by a ship's captain.

The large number of swordclubs in the Official collection (199) and in MacGregor's Personal collection (72) (see Torrence & Philp, Chapter 14 this volume) indicates that he found these artefacts especially attractive, but also that locals were willing to part with relatively large numbers of them in return for European trade goods and especially tobacco to which they had become addicted (Connelly 2016). For barter to be successful, both parties need to be satisfied with the outcome (Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992). In this case MacGregor or his agents might have been pleased to acquire highly decorated objects whose function as ceremonial swords was easily understandable given the role of similar objects in British military and regal rituals. Since locally they had a largely secular role within events that occurred infrequently, the islanders may have had little hesitation in offering these items for exchange with outsiders, such as MacGregor and his companions. Given the large quantities which MacGregor acquired, it is also possible that people were beginning to make these items with the intention of exchange for European goods. In particular, the cutlasses may have been designed specifically to attract potential trade with westerners.

Following the peak in their popularity in the late nineteenth century, the numbers of swordclubs in ethnographic museum collections decreased rapidly and disappear not long afterwards. Unlike carved wooden bowls, swordclubs are not among the beautifully carved and decorated objects still being produced in large numbers for sale to westerners. The role of swordclubs in attracting male buyers has been replaced by smaller and more elaborately carved walking sticks made from ebony or, more commonly, lighter wood stained black. However, swordclubs have not been totally forgotten. A single copy of a cutlass could be purchased at the Ela Beach Craft Market in Port Moresby in 2018 (Figure 16d). In this case the transition from a locally meaningful object used in ceremonial display to an object that that fits all of Graburn's (1976) criteria for commercial sale as a successful souvenir ('portable, dustable and understandable') is now complete.

TABLE. 5. Types and collection localities of swordclubs in the Official collection.

Location	Unfinished	Broad blade	Narrow blade	Serrated	Cutlass	Unknown	TOTAL
Unknown	4	20	5	2		7	38
Bararua		1					1
Fergusson			6				6
Holnicote Bay			3				3
Kaibaw			1				1
Kiriwina		1			4	1	6
Normanby		6	7	3		1	17
Rossel		4	2	1			7
Trobriand	1	97	8	2		9	117
Truful		1					1
Woodlark	1		1				2
TOTAL	**6**	**130**	**33**	**8**	**4**	**18**	**199**

FIG. 16. Some swordclubs resemble a cutlass stored within a scabbard. These were probably local reworkings of a metal prototype, although where these forms were originally observed is unknown. Kiriwina Island: **a.** ER14495 (MAC625); **b.** ER14493 (MAC415, PNGNMAG); **c.** ER14494 (MAC414). Queensland Museum Photography; **d.** Ela Beach Craft Market in Port Moresby, 2018. Photography by Peter White. Scale bar: 10 cm

BOX 7.2

PENATES: FREE STANDING CARVED HUMAN FIGURES

Robin TORRENCE and Michael QUINNELL

A small group of carved wooden figures acquired by MacGregor for the Official collection and his own use illustrates that Papuans had successfully identified a western predilection for something that combined familiar (human form) and exotic properties (nakedness, facial decorations) (Figure 17). Comprising a mix of genders (6 females, 9 males and 1 not recorded in the register; Table 6), the small statuettes of standing figures in the Official collection may have played a role within spiritual life. The majority of those for which locality was recorded were obtained in the South-East Division (Trobriand Islands and Woodlark Island).

The first group of standing wooden human figures to arrive at the Queensland Museum in late 1892 were described as 'wood' or 'wooden' images. By 1894 the first six registered from Transfer 52 were given the term 'penates,' which was used for all these objects in the later MacGregor Register. We presume that 'penates' references the gods associated with ancient Roman households. It may have been suggested by MacGregor, who was well versed in classical scholarship (e.g. Joyce 1971: 215).

MacGregor's use of 'penates' to describe the statuettes may not have been accidental. He may have been aware of their use among Trobriand Islanders for providing protection for households. In a review of free standing carved wooded figures identical to those obtained by MacGregor, Beran and Gerrits (2017) report information derived from historic sources and recent informants that the appropriate spells could induce a spirit with the powers to ward off evil spirits to inhabit the wooden carved figure and provide protection to those who kept these objects in their house, often by the bed or stored above the door. They also note that these wooden standing figures are very rare in museum collections, unlike the seated form which has been widely incorporated into lime spatulas made for sale to westerners. The 16 standing figures in the Official collection are therefore highly significant because they comprise one of the largest groups of this type from the nineteenth century. Clearly, there is a great deal left to be learned about these figures, the role they played in Papuan beliefs and ritual, as well as how MacGregor obtained such a large sample of the statuettes probably from multiple visits to the Trobriand Island.

FIG. 17. Carved human figures from the Trobriand Islands. **a.** ER12369 (MAC3923, PNGNMAG); **b.** ER12372 (MAC3921). Scale bar: 5cm. Queensland Museum Photography.

TABLE. 6. Free-standing human figurines listed in the *Ethnology Register (New Guinea)* (Queensland Museum c. 1889–1910) together with MAC number and height from the later *Register of the 'MacGregor' Collection of New Guinea Ethnology* (Queensland Museum 1915–2001).

ER	MAC	Transfer	Sex	Locality	Height (mm)
8868	3926	46	Female	Not given	385
9101	3927	46	Male	Not given	890
10007	3930	46	Female	Not given	350
10008	3931	46	Male	Not given	250
10009	3929	46	Male	Not given	240
10464	3932	46	Male	Woodlark	280
10465	3928	46	Male	Not given	395
12369	3923	52	Female	Troubriand	395
12370	3925	52	Female	Troubriand	510
12371	3919	52	Female	Troubriand	570
12372	3921	52	Male	Troubriand	520
12373	3924	52	Male	Troubriand	500
12374	3920	52	Female	Troubriand	785
13081	3933	52	Male	Not given	205
16528	3934	60	Human	Not given	1415
16529	3934A	60	Male	Not given	1760