

Memoirs of the Queensland Museum | **culture**

Volume 8  
Part 1

# Goemulgaw Lagal: Natural and Cultural Histories of the Island of Mabuyag, Torres Strait.

Edited by Ian J. McNiven and Garrick Hitchcock

**Minister:** Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

**CEO:** Suzanne Miller, BSc(Hons), PhD, FGS, FMinSoc, FAIMM, FGSA, FRSSA

**Editor in Chief:** J.N.A. Hooper, PhD

**Editors:** Ian J. McNiven PhD and Garrick Hitchcock, BA (Hons) PhD(QLD) FLS FRGS

**Issue Editors:** Geraldine Mate, PhD

© Queensland Museum  
PO Box 3300, South Brisbane 4101, Australia  
Phone: +61 (0) 7 3840 7555  
Fax: +61 (0) 7 3846 1226  
Web: [qm.qld.gov.au](http://qm.qld.gov.au)

National Library of Australia card number  
ISSN 1440-4788

## VOLUME 8 IS COMPLETE IN 2 PARTS

### COVER

Image on book cover: People tending to a ground oven (*umai*) at Nayedh, Bau village, Mabuyag, 1921.  
Photographed by Frank Hurley (National Library of Australia: [pic-vn3314129-v](http://pic-vn3314129-v)).

### NOTE

Papers published in this volume and in all previous volumes of the *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* may be reproduced for scientific research, individual study or other educational purposes. Properly acknowledged quotations may be made but queries regarding the republication of any papers should be addressed to the CEO. Copies of the journal can be purchased from the Queensland Museum Shop.

A Guide to Authors is displayed on the Queensland Museum website [qm.qld.gov.au](http://qm.qld.gov.au)

**A Queensland Government Project**  
Design and Layout: Tanya Edbrooke, Queensland Museum  
Printed by Watson, Ferguson & Company

## **KRAR: Nineteenth century turtle-shell masks from Mabuyag collected by Samuel McFarlane**

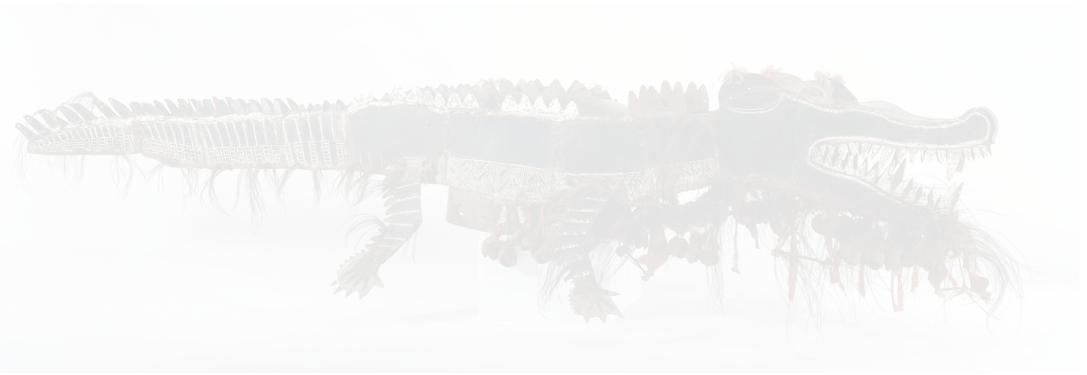
Jude PHILP

Philp, J. 2015: *Krar: Nineteenth century turtle-shell masks from Mabuyag collected by Samuel McFarlane. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum – Culture* 8(1):99-125. Brisbane. ISSN 1440-4788.

From 1874 until 1886 a significant collection of Goemulgal spiritual objects were assembled by the London Missionary Society's Samuel McFarlane. The majority of items were *krar*, turtle-shell masks. This paper uses archival resources to present the circumstances of the transactions between McFarlane and European museums which purchased the *krar* from him in the late nineteenth century to answer the question – why did McFarlane collect such things? After concluding that he predominantly sold material for profit, the paper pursues questions as to how and why he may have acquired these from individuals on Mabuyag. To answer these questions the paper investigates what the ethnographer A.C. Haddon concluded about them. Haddon is relevant for this research as his first expedition (1888) to Mabuyag took place just one year after McFarlane retired from the New Guinea Mission. Haddon details the particular histories of some of these masks in the *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*. Finally through a brief visual analysis of these 12 *krar* it is argued that these kinds of objects need to be taken into consideration when writing about the past lives of the people of Mabuyag, as they point to a dynamism in spiritual and ceremonial life quite different to that expressed in the historical record.

□ *History, material culture, museum studies, art, turtle-shell masks, Torres Strait Islanders.*

Jude Philp  
Senior Curator Macleay Museum, Sydney University Museums  
The University of Sydney  
jude.philp@sydney.edu.au



The Reverend Dr Samuel McFarlane<sup>1</sup> of the London Missionary Society (LMS) was responsible for forming the first large collection of cultural objects and animal specimens relating to the people of Mabuyag Island in the Torres Strait region of Australia. Little has been written about him beyond histories of his missionary work and so little is known as to why he amassed these collections, or how he got them. This paper is a preliminary examination of these collections, which today predominantly reside in Britain's British Museum (BM) in London and the Museum für Völkerkunde in Dresden, Germany. McFarlane himself did not write about the material he sent across the seas during his 16 years as pioneer of the New Guinea Mission (1871-1887). Some correspondence to the BM does however record the movement of cultural objects and natural history specimens from Torres Strait to London, while more detail can be found in the registration records of the museum. The first half of this paper is concerned with these archival records to establish how the transactions between McFarlane and the BM were conducted. The second half concentrates on the *krar* (masks) that McFarlane sent back to Britain first from his base at Somerset, Cape York, and then during his years based at Mer in the east of the Strait.

In total McFarlane collected twelve *krar*<sup>2</sup> from Mabuyag between 1874 and 1886 (Table 1). Using the ethnographic investigations of A.C. Haddon, whose work in the Torres Strait started just a year after McFarlane retired from the New Guinea Mission, I will investigate what Haddon's research on Mabuyag was able to reveal about these *krar*. This paper is not written to describe the uses or practices that these objects relate to, but to make obvious how the masks went from Mabuyag and where they now reside.

There were literally hundreds of animal specimens sent by McFarlane to the Natural History Museum, and these bugs, beetles, birds, snakes, fish and other creatures from across the Torres Strait and south-east coast of Papua New Guinea represent the majority of his collecting activities. McFarlane also acquired the contents of two 'skull houses' (see below) from Mabuyag. Only a handful of other kinds of cultural objects were collected from Mabuyag. Those in the BM relate strongly to spiritual aspects of Goemulgal life and include carvings in wood and stone used to aid gardening and fishing practices. In addition are a javelin and a harpoon (*wap*). Overall there is an obvious bias within the Torres Strait material collected by McFarlane for things relating to spirituality. This bias is

not present in the material that he collected from Papua New Guinea. Perhaps this demonstrates an intention by Goemulgal to willingly divest their island of markers of their non-Christian beliefs. Perhaps it shows a bias common in Europe for ethnographic objects that represented ceremony, warfare and magic (to use the terms of the age). Today, for a number of European museums, the *krar* are regarded as world ‘masterpieces’. The view from Mabuyag is somewhat different.

### **MCFARLANE, THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND THE NEW GUINEA MISSION**

‘wherever there are men, missionaries are bound to go!’

(Tupesi, Erub 3 July, 1871 in McFarlane, 1873: 360; and Murray, 1873: 450)

The London Missionary Society first set its sights on the islands of the Torres Strait and southern coast of the island of New Guinea following the accounts of the loss in 1834 of the passenger ship the *Charles Eaton*. The accounts of the violent deaths of many of its passengers, the survival of two children, Ireland and D’Oyly, under the care of the Meriam-le families of Duppa and Oby respectively, and the trial of three of the *Charles Eaton* crew who managed to reach Timor made for popular sensationalist reading in the newspapers of the day<sup>3</sup>, and in more formal ways in published accounts in the late 1830s (Brockett, 1836; King, 1837; Ireland, 1838). The story was also published in flamboyant style in the London Missionary Society’s *Chronicle* of 1837.

The wreck of the *Charles Eaton* was to have considerable influence on the course of history for Islanders in the eastern Strait well before the arrival of the LMS as it further enhanced the usefulness of Erub as a safe watering place for European shipping (Jukes, 1847; MacGillivray, 1852). Such accounts

also tended to note the presence of useful commodities for European traders.<sup>4</sup> Left largely out of these accounts of the Torres Strait were the people of Mabuyag, Mua and Badu and those of Boigu, Saibai and Dauan.

The peoples of the Torres Strait, divided by particular histories, languages, warfare, trade alliances and practices, do acknowledge a shared culture which over the centuries has brought them together for particular social, cultural and economic purposes. It stands to reason that across this vast area these excellent navigators brought news to each other of uncommon events – such as the incursion into their waters of Europeans in ever-increasing numbers from the 1790s. Some English speakers, shipwreck survivors, lived for years on the islands. The two *Charles Eaton* survivors – Ireland, or Wak as he was called, and D’Oyly, called Uass – lived at Mer for two years. Barbara Thomson, called Gwiom by her protector-father Peaqui, lived with Kaurareg people for five years and a man named Winnie (according to Thompson) lived at Badu for even longer.<sup>5</sup> The Goemulgal (people of Mabuyag) may not have had the same access to these foreigners, and indeed asserted that any foreigner on Mabuyag would be killed (Haddon, 1904: 277-278). They were probably familiar with the stories of outsiders and to the customs and practices of the men on board the boats that frequented the Strait – from the sicknesses they left in their wake to the useful trade goods they carried.

From this slow incursion of foreigners in the Strait a dramatic change happened in 1864 when increasing numbers of strangers from Europe and the South Seas came in search of pearl-shell (Mullins, 1995). Until the economic potential of the entire Strait was realised by the Queensland Government and annexed in 1879 only the lower western islands fell under its control; the ‘outer islands’ were left to accommodate the foreigners as best

they could (Ganter, 1994: 278, ft1). In relation to Mua, McFarlane noted in 1874 that half the population had been blackbirded for pearlshell work or killed by new diseases and that the remaining 250 people were living in the interior (Council of World Mission Archives. Envelope 10, Box 1: 1874).

The establishment of the settlement at Somerset, and following that of Thursday Island, had more to do with the protection of traders and with providing a haven for those shipwrecked against attacks from Islanders than protection of Islanders themselves. As Police Magistrate Henry Chester wrote in 1870:

a settlement on [Hammond Island] would effectually hold in check the natives of the surrounding group, & the Banks and Mulgrave islanders who at present congregate there in large numbers every season in readiness to swoop down upon any vessel that may have the misfortune to run aground. (Chester to the President of the Queensland Marine Board cited in Nicholson, 1996: 242).

In the traders' wake came the London Missionary Society. Their presence for many marked the ultimate watershed moment of change – the moment between 'bepotaim' and 'pastaim'.<sup>6</sup> The most extensive written literature which supports this view is the *Reports* edited by A.C. Haddon which includes the ethnographic, physiological and linguistic analysis of the 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, along with a significant number of short pieces from Islanders across the Strait on pieces of knowledge owned and controlled by them (Haddon, 1901-1935).<sup>7</sup> The *Reports* were conceived as a history of Islander culture. Haddon's work emphasised a dramatic change in cultural knowledge and practice between the pre-colonial and colonial periods. He was

no doubt influenced by Goemulgal and Meriam-Le who repeatedly asserted that the past ways were rapidly disappearing and much was 'lost' completely (e.g. Haddon, 1890: 302, 328).

Samuel McFarlane himself was not new to mission work when he arrived at Erub on 1 July 1871. Although he was just 37 when he arrived at Erub, he and his wife Elizabeth had already spent considerable years at Lifu (1859-1871) – one of the Loyalty Islands off New Caledonia which was annexed by the French in 1853. An uneasy relationship existed between the French colonists, local populations, and English-speaking traders who worked in the area. McFarlane encouraged British relations as a way of mediating French and Roman Catholic influences. He intruded into international politics during a tense period in French-British relations. The French government called for his removal from the mission, the LMS conceded to pressure from the British Government, and McFarlane was removed (see Mullins and Wetherall, 1996). It was this failed involvement in international politics that directly led to the establishment of the mission to New Guinea.

Within two years and after much planning at Lifu, the LMS party set out and arrived on the *Surprise* at Kemus Beach (Traacherous Bay), Erub late in the afternoon of 1 July 1871 where they were greeted by an elder named Dabad. With the two missionaries, McFarlane and Archibald Murray, came eight teachers from Lifu, Maré and Uvea: Tepeso, Elia, Mataika, Gutcheng, Kerisiano, Simene, Josaia and Waunaea (who would pioneer teaching at Mabuyag). Those who were married were accompanied by their wives. Four children are also noted in McFarlane's correspondence with the LMS Board (Envelope 1, Box 1: 1872). 1872 and 1873 saw McFarlane, his wife Elizabeth and their two sons sail back in England.

When he returned McFarlane noted of the Mabuyag mission: 'they are pleased to have a teacher living among them, and are beginning to make plantations and build better houses' (Envelope 10, Box 1: 1874). With the Government station's move to Thursday Island and the inadequacy of the Somerset settlement realised, William Lawes (who replaced Archibald Murray), determined in 1874 to establish the mission at Elevara and Hanuabada villages in what is today Port Moresby. Samuel McFarlane moved permanently to Mer in 1877, and in 1878 Elizabeth McFarlane and the two boys returned to England. To travel between the islands and New Guinea the missionaries first relied on the kindness of government officers such as Francis Jardine and the Tudu island-based traders William Banner<sup>8</sup> and Joseph John (aka Tongatabu Joe). Thanks to the gift of Miss Baxter, a Dunedin-based LMS supporter, travel after 1874 was carried out regularly between stations on the mission steamer, the *Ellengowen*. Tudu-Katau connections remained important with Joe and Maino (at Katau<sup>9</sup>) assisting as mediators and translators.

McFarlane was not especially liked by his fellow missionaries William Lawes (based at Port Moresby) and James Chalmers (based at Saguine, Fly River). He openly criticised Lawes' use of stick tobacco for trade in New Guinea, and his near-constant requests to the LMS for further supplies of tobacco and ammunition to assist and protect the many missionary teacher families in their work in Papua New Guinea. Lawes, Chalmers and McFarlane also disagreed on the issue of where the base of the mission should be located.

McFarlane firmly believed in the usefulness of a mission station in the Strait, a healthy base from which to teach and train the future missionary teachers of New Guinea (McFarlane, 1885: 285). He had had success at Mer with hundreds of men sent from across the Strait, 23 from Mabuyag in one year

(Envelope 2 Box 3: 16 June 1882). McFarlane was also aware of just how long it had taken to establish the mission at Mer – this progress, he argued, should be built upon for it would be many years before Lawes would be able to achieve the same at Port Moresby. The argument would continue until McFarlane retired from the New Guinea mission in 1886.<sup>10</sup> Once he left, LMS missionaries of the New Guinea mission visited the teachers and their congregations in the Torres Strait from their bases in Port Moresby and Saguine.

### **McFARLANE AND THE BRITISH MUSEUM**

In the archival records of the BM are a number of letters and notes that mark the beginning of McFarlane's work collecting specimens and objects (Figures 1-2). There are only two objects originating in Lifu held in the Museum (neither collected by McFarlane) so I assume his collecting started with the New Guinea mission. The many traders, opportunists and collectors<sup>11</sup> that passed through Somerset and New Guinea would have made obvious to McFarlane that money could be made in collecting. By dealing with such an esteemed museum as the BM with government connections, this service to Queen and Country put his dealings on a reputable footing. The LMS had its own museum established in 1814, which displayed the natural and cultural life of the various lands where the LMS missionaries had been posted. The museum at Missionary House was useful for '[a] display of missionary exhibits ... can be a means of bringing home to people the need of the heathen for the Gospel of Christ' (LMS Chronicle, 1911: 215). Certainly McFarlane and his contemporaries were obliged to return to England from time to time on speaking tours to engage with fundraising and the spread of the Gospel message (indeed this is probably how a young A.C.



FIG. 1. *Dabar* (king-fish) or *mugarir* (mackerel) turtle-shell mask. British Museum, London: Oc1978,Q.383. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

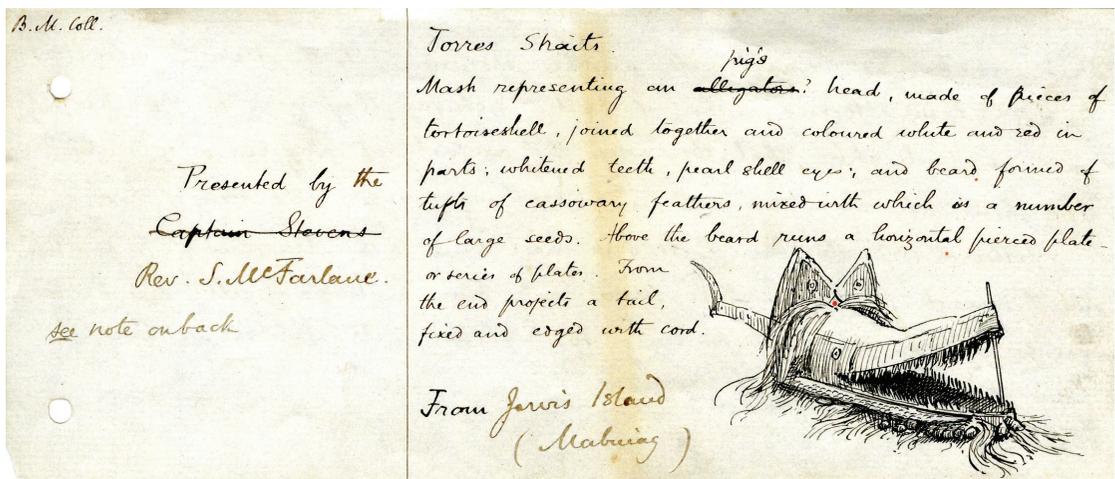


FIG. 2. British Museum original documentation for Oc1978,Q.383. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Haddon came to know McFarlane). Whether McFarlane used images or objects to illustrate his talks is not known – but he does not seem to have donated specimens or objects to the LMS museum, preferring instead to deal with the most prestigious museum of his time, The British Museum.

A complication for tracing objects and specimens collected by McFarlane is that correspondence to the BM is held by individual departments so it is necessary to understand a little about the history of the institution to know where to look. The BM was established in 1753, founded

on the private classical antiquities and natural history collections of Sir Hans Sloane and expanded considerably through the exploration and expansion of the British Empire. In 1851 an independently wealthy Cambridge graduate Augustus (later Sir) Wollaston Franks was taken on as Assistant, then Keeper, of the department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography. He was influential in acquiring the collection of the wealthy Henry Christy for the BM. Christy bequeathed his large collection of ethnographic material and antiquities along with £5,000 (towards upkeep and expansion) to four trustees. Franks, one of the four trustees, convinced his fellow trustee's that the material should go to the BM. This was achieved in 1863. Because of its size, and the need to produce a catalogue prior to its move to the BM, the collection stayed for many years at Christy's house under Frank's direction. To augment and expand the collection, Franks purchased items with the Christy fund, as well as with his own money (Joyce, 1925: 1). For this reason items in the BM ethnographic department are often catalogued as coming 'from Christy' or 'donated by Franks' although in many cases this is purely a note of a financial transaction (see Caygill and Cherry, 1997).

Meanwhile, things at the BM were changing. In the late 1870s, under the direction of Richard Owen, the departments dealing with specimens of natural history split from the BM. By 1881 the Christy collection moved from Christy's former home and into the BM. Natural history specimens, and the letters, registers and other documents pertaining to them, were removed to the new Natural History Museum in South Kensington which opened its doors in 1881. For the BM 'Natural History' also included the study of humans through skeletal (predominantly cranial)

material and thus human remains also went to the NHM. This is the reason that today, even though McFarlane wrote to curators at the BM, the majority of letters about the collections are in the NHM. Some of these letters have details about cultural material, and some letters in the BM have information about natural history specimens.

Although McFarlane corresponded with a number of curators at the BM-NHM, he needed assistance to get the material from the ships, pay any government duties owed, and co-ordinate with the Museum.<sup>12</sup> In addition the BM was not always willing to accept material sent to them and furthermore they would not take responsibility for the return of any specimens or objects. An intermediary was needed. The first well documented group of material was sent by McFarlane via Captain Stevens of the *Barracouta* (Figures 1-2) but soon all transactions went through the London-based intermediary, Edward Gerrard junior, a private taxidermist as well as clerk at the BM. Gerrard evidently bolstered his own income as a clerk by offering this service to a number of collectors.

Two short letters about a collection from Fiji, written in 1870, document Gerrard's role. The first is addressed to Franks at 31 College Place, Camden Town and reads:

Sir,

Mr Ross has brought another lot of implements from the Feegee & Solomon Ids. He wants £18 for the whole collection. I shall be glad to send them for your approval or show them to you if convenient.

I am, Sir, Yours respectfully,

Edwd Gerrard Junr

(BM Inletters pre1896, 9 May 1870).

The answer written by Frank's clerk Thomas Gay<sup>13</sup> and headed 'Christy Collection', reads:

Dear Sir,

Mr Franks returns to you Two bead belts, One spoon, Two knives & sheaths with [piercers?] attached, One dagger & sheath. He has kept [a s]tool at 6. 0; [stool] 5. 0; scent 15.0; club 4.6; [club] 4.0; axe 5.0 [total] £1.19.6. Your messenger prefers that you should make out a bill for them. So if you can send it here tomorrow, or you will find Mr Franks at the British Museum on Saturday, whichever suits you best.

I remain, Yours obedtly [sic],

Thomas K Gay

(BM Outletter pre1896, Nov 24 1870).

Using this system of an intermediary to get collections from the Torres Strait assessed by the BM's curators, McFarlane sent hundreds of specimens and objects to the BM between 1874 and 1889. His letters, predominantly filed as part of the Christy collection correspondence, record his slow understanding of what the BM wanted from him, particularly in terms of natural history specimens. Here he needed not just to capture specimens new to science, but to learn how to preserve them and understand what information was needed to make them an asset to the BM. As Langmore (1989) has noted in her study of Christian missions in the south Pacific, the LMS drew its missionaries from the poorer members of British society. Rarely did the missionaries have any formal schooling beyond the age of 10, and most were trades people – McFarlane himself trained in a railway machine shop (Langmore, 1989: 17). Many were 'self-improved' through reading and studying in their quiet times (Langmore, 1989: 26).

An additional complication in the BM's dealings with McFarlane was money. As mentioned (above) most of McFarlane's

collections came into the department for British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography curated by Franks. Many have a provenance or history given as 'Collected by Rev S Macfarlane; Collected by Edward Gerrard & Sons; Donated by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks' which is the provenance given for Oc+3280, a *mawa*-type wooden face from Mabuyag. Another way to read this is that the object was collected by McFarlane, shipped to Gerrard, offered for Franks' consideration and purchased in 1886 through the Christie fund. Just how much money was also paid to Gerrard for his services has not yet come to light.<sup>14</sup> An entry in the Register at the National Museum of Scotland, which acquired New Guinea and Torres Strait collections at a cost of over £20 from McFarlane via Gerrard, indicates a sum for each item. Here, in August 1885, £6 was paid for a turtleshell mask (1885.83 see below), with £3 each for wooden *mawa* masks and smaller amounts for other articles.

It is in the natural history files that information can be found about what McFarlane did with the money he received for the objects and specimens, and this is not terribly clear. Elizabeth McFarlane did not live long in the humid conditions of the Torres Strait with her husband but returned to England with their two sons. While some of McFarlane's own pay must have gone to support them, the cost of life in England was no doubt somewhat higher than that in the mission field. From a letter addressed to the Keeper of Zoology, Albert Günther, numbered 351 and dated May 20 1878 (below) it seems that McFarlane acquired collections in his scant spare time to sell in England, using the money raised to support his wife and sons.

Murray Island, Torres Straits, May  
20th 1878

My dear Sir,

I am sending you by this mail a pretty large collection of snakes, lizards, Beetles etc. which I trust will reach you safely. One jar is from SE end of New Guinea, the others are from islands in Torres Straits. Unfortunately the native collectors have got them mixed so that I cannot say which are from Carwallis, which from Banks Is. which from Murray Is. But I will guard against this in future. They are in three packages – one oil drum & two cases. The oil drum I had made in Sydney. You had better return it filled with spirits of wine, with four or five others from the Museum. They are the best and simplest for preserving and transmitting specimens and will soon reach me by the Torres Straits mail. We have succeeded in establishing branches of our missions at South & East Capes, where I can get natives to collect as I shall for some time be spending a good deal of my time in that locality. Therefore please to send as soon as possible these drums which I hope soon to fill & return. Address to me at Thursday Island, Torres Straits, Queensland.

What about the things I have already sent? I have not yet had a line from Mr Higgins.<sup>16</sup> Indeed I have to do with you not him. My wife is going to England by the mail after the one that takes this letter with our two boys, where she will remain for a time till I get this pioneering work done, and the mission thoroughly established. She will call upon you at the British Museum, and you will oblige by seeing that which is due to me be handed over to her. She will require the needful in the old country! I hope we may find something new

about East Cape. Kindest regards to Mr Sharpe, tell him I have no time for birds yet, must wait till I settle down somewhere, at present I must keep on the move superintending our native pioneers. Anything I can put with spirits does not interfere with my work and that must be my first consideration. Remember me also very kindly to Mr Currathers [sic]. What botanical specimens I get I forward to Baron von Muller<sup>17</sup> he says it is no use sending them to the British Museum, because they have more on hand now than they can examine for the next two years!

Hoping you will find this an interesting & valuable collection  
I remain Yours very truly  
S McFarlane

While McFarlane was funding his family through collecting activities, he may have paid his 'native collectors' small monies for their role, or simply relied upon his position to request certain things. A consistent grumbling of all of the LMS missionaries was the inflation of costs of local assistants brought about by commercial collectors and insufficiently briefed explorers. From this one can assume that any monies the LMS missionaries paid for collecting, of a natural or cultural nature, was low. Cultural objects such as masks relating to non-Christian ceremonies and beliefs may also have been given to McFarlane as an outward token of a conversion to the Christian faith. This may particularly be so once the Niuean and Samoan teachers arrived for mission work. For them the destruction of cultural objects was an outward and visible act of their Christian conversion (Nokise, 1983: 113-116; Mullins, 1995). It is in relation to the destruction of a sacred house that the first hints of where the masks originated from occur. McFarlane did, according to Gizu,

Anthony Wilkin and Haddon, destroy the skull house<sup>19</sup> at Goemu (Gumu), although there is some confusion between the houses of Bau and Goemu in the *Reports* (Haddon, 1904: 305-307). It is likely that McFarlane may have taken advantage of the destruction of this structure, so resonant with non-Christian acts, to also take masks stored in it or nearby.

Another indication that the 'sacred house' was on Mabuyag is provided in Haddon's (1901) publication *Headhunters: black, white and brown*:

All the sacred relics of Kwoiam were burned at the instigation of Hakin<sup>20</sup>, a Lifu teacher at the time when the Rev. S. McFarlane was on Murray Island. The Mamoose<sup>21</sup> gave his consent to their destruction, but only a South Sea man, Charely Mare, dared destroy these *auguds*; he burnt them on the spot. ...that same night Charley's body swelled up, and he was sick for a fortnight' (Haddon, 1932: 84).

The 'sacred house' where these masks were kept is evidently not tied to Kuyam, which underlines the likelihood of it being one of the spiritual places of Goemu.

Whichever way it happened, the disclosure of non-Christian ceremonial and spiritual objects played to McFarlane's advantage and many extraordinary creations of turtle-shell were sent to the British Museum. Not everything was taken in by the BM. In the 1880s six masks were acquired by the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden, and one, in 1885, by the then Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museum of Scotland). One of the most useful resources used in the following section is *Torres Strait Sculpture* by Douglas Fraser (1978). Although in analysis it is slightly dated, Fraser took great pains to identify and document every turtle-shell

mask provenanced to the Torres Strait in the world. His work reveals that three masks were exchanged out of the Museum für Völkerkunde and subsequently auctioned in the early 1990s. Fraser's book also holds a caution: 'Recently ... a number of forgeries have been appearing on the market; some are now in museums and private collections' (Fraser, 1978: 205). This is also true for the twenty-first century and this author is aware of two masks, near-identical in form to those depicted in Fraser's publication (plates 65 and 66), which have been recreated by persons unknown. It is Fraser who made clear the links between Gerrard and McFarlane. Using his study, a table of all Mabuyag turtle-shell masks acquired by McFarlane has been compiled (Table 1).

Before turning to examine what Haddon found about the *krar* that McFarlane sent to Britain, it is useful to note that McFarlane also sent other kinds of masks to Britain, both from Mabuyag and Saibai. These seem to be the only two islands that McFarlane acquired masks from. Although stationed at Mer for ten years he only sent a needle and a *dhari* from there. From Saibai, McFarlane obtained four *mawa* masks and from Mabuyag a pair of this kind of carved and overpainted wooden mask relating to gardening.<sup>22</sup>

The following section investigates the history of the twelve *krar* collected by McFarlane and outlined in Table 1, focussing particularly on a group of five masks with more detailed provenance. These five were documented by Haddon as coming from the 'sacred house' at Goemu, a site on the coast of Mabuyag to the south of the LMS mission station. As noted by McNiven and Wright (2008: 134), drawing from the *Reports*, 'Goemu is the settlement focus of the southeast district of the *kaigas* (shovel-nosed shark), *waru* (turtle) and *umai* (dog) totemic clans. ... Apart from houses, structures at Goemu once included a skull-house (*kuiku-iut*), a ceremonial *kod*

Table 1. Turtle-shell masks collected by Samuel McFarlane in museums.

Origin	Krar description	Museum	Museum ID	Date into museum	Transactors	Size (centimetres)
? <i>Mudu kap</i>	Face	Völkerkunde, Dresden	6367	Pre-1889	McFarlane → Gerrard	Height 138
? <i>Mudu kap</i>	Face	Völkerkunde, Dresden	6363	Pre-1889	McFarlane → Gerrard	Length 28
? <i>Mudu kap</i>	Face	British Museum	Oc+3277	1886	McFarlane → Gerrard → Franks	Height 25
Goemu	Hammerhead	Völkerkunde, Dresden	6375	Pre-1889	McFarlane → Gerrard	Length 125
Goemu	Shovel-nosed shark	Völkerkunde, Dresden	6362	Pre-1889	McFarlane → Gerrard	Length 106
Goemu	Crocodile or fish-face	Völkerkunde, Dresden now in Barbier-Mueller, Switzerland	6361 now 4244	?1874	McFarlane? → Völkerkunde Dresden? → Barbier-Mueller	Length 50
Goemu	Saw-fish-face	Völkerkunde, Dresden now in De Young, USA	6396 now 2001.62.11	1886*	McFarlane → Gerrard → Völkerkunde Dresden → Auction → Friede → De Young	Length 80
Goemu	Shovel-nosed shark-fish-fish-bird	British Museum	Oc+3278	1886	McFarlane → Gerrard → Franks	Length 122
Pedia	Hawk-fish	British Museum	Oc+2490	1885	McFarlane → Franks	Length 139
Unknown	Crocodile	British Museum	Oc+2489	1885	McFarlane → Franks	Length 213
Unknown	Crocodile-fish	British Museum	Oc+N/N.154	1878	(donation) McFarlane → Stevens	Length 109
Unknown	Figure	British Museum	Oc+3397	1886	McFarlane → Gerrard	Height 58. This object represents a whole figure.

Compiled from Fraser (1978). Two masks, Oc+3277 and Oc+2489, were not included in his survey.

\*This date for a Gerrard sale is given in Friede's catalogue (Friede *et al.*, 2005: 170).

(special men's area) and the *wiwai* turtle-hunting shrine' (italics inserted). It is not clear which of these structures is meant by the term 'sacred house' used by Haddon so his usage 'sacred house' will be continued here.

### **KRAR, THE MASKS**

Naga of Nagir knew how to make the urui *krar*, or masks in the form of animals, he instructed the men in singing and dancing and in everything relating to the kwod. Naga taught men how to 'make taiai'. He was unmarried, and did not live in the Taiai kwod, but in his own kwod.

Waiat of Mabuyag came to Nagir to learn how to beat the drum and Naga taught him. Then Waiat stole a famous mask. After this Naga gave a mask to the men of Tutu, another to those of Waraber, a third to those of Moa, and he kept one mask in Nagir. Naga gave akul [Cyrena] shells to all the islands, Muralug, Waraber, Tutu, Yaru, Moa, Badu, Mabuyag, Masig, Paremar, Aurid, so that the men in these islands might in future make their own masks.

Naga was very angry because Waiat stole his mask. (Kuduma of Nagir quoted in Haddon, 1904: 49).

From Kuduma of Naghir we learn that the practice of making masks originated in Naghir Island in the long-distant past. By the nineteenth century the Goemulgal were masters in manipulating turtle-shell into forms which dramatically held the knowledge of their ancestors and their lands. This is evident by the large number of masks, both old and new collected by McFarlane and deposited in European museums: twelve in total. Haddon, knowing both McFarlane and

cultural experts at Mabuyag, and having an interest in the history of such objects, was uniquely situated to document these *krar*.

From fieldwork in Mabuyag and communication with McFarlane, Haddon documented seven masks as having a relationship to particular sites or people. This information is spread across three volumes of the *Reports* and it is necessary to patiently plot between them, through footnotes and asides, to establish which mask is related to what place or person. This obscuring of relationships between the masks and the places and people they related to is because Haddon was interested in cultural forms – such as 'dance', 'warfare' or 'art', rather than explaining the dances, warfare or traditions of manufacture as an interrelated whole (see Herle and Rouse, 1998). He also discussed masks in relation to knowledge of Goemulgal specifically, and in relation to the culture of Torres Strait Islanders generally. With each volume written at different times, over a period of 30 years, information may have come to light by 1935 (Volume I) that was not available in 1904 (Volume V) or 1912 (Volume IV). These three things – Haddon's perspective on culture, the time over which the *Reports* were written, and the aim to document both specific and general aspects of Islander life – account for the dispersal of information.

Two masks identified by Haddon illustrate the different ways he obtained and used information. Both *krar* were purchased by Franks for the BM possibly directly from McFarlane when he was in England on leave in 1885. One is a *koedal* (crocodile) mask (Figure 3) made by Nigi. It is well over two metres long and is masterful in the obvious control of the turtle-shell medium to create a form which, in years following, would be principally attempted in wood. Here the additional information supplied by Haddon seems to have come from both



FIG. 3. *Koedal* (crocodile) turtle-shell mask British Museum, London: Oc+2489. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum).

McFarlane and Goemulgal. In his papers in the archive of Cambridge's Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology is a sketch showing a man wearing this large crocodile mask (Figure 4). In the catalogue records of the BM, in Haddon's hand, are notes that it was made for McFarlane. He says the same in the *Reports* and could mean that the mask was made with the intention of giving it to McFarlane, or commissioned by him.

Curiously the *koedal* mask is not included in Fraser (1978) which is presumably an oversight rather than an assumption that it was 'fake'. Could such a mask have been made for McFarlane? The brief comment 'Dr Macfarlane took it away' at the bottom of Haddon's sketch of the mask is ambiguous. It is evident it is not solely a 'decorative' piece, its form includes gor seeds, cassowary feathers, human jawbones, wool, cloth, wood and cord made from vegetable fibre which carefully binds and holds the elements together at strategic points. One possibility was that it was given to him in 1885, prior to his return to Britain in recognition of all that he had done to encourage and spread the gospel among the peoples of Mabuyag. A similar thing had happened at Saibai where Islanders had given to him a large *warup* ('hourglass') drum covered with careful lime-filled incised sketches of totems and fishing scenes – it was also sold to the British Museum the following

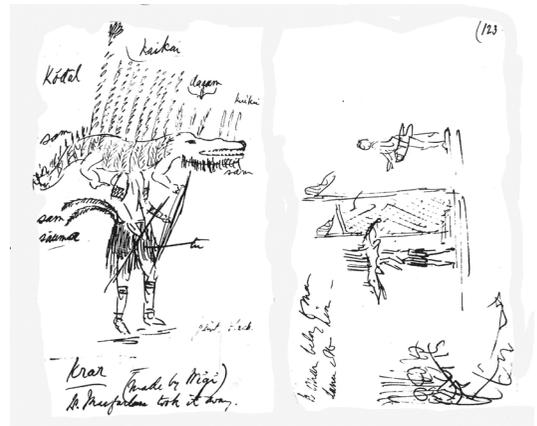


FIG. 4. Haddon's 1888 sketch of the *koedal krar*, Oc+2489 made presumably at Mabuyag. Image courtesy Cambridge University Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology.

year through Gerrard.<sup>23</sup> The *koedal* mask may have been made by Nigi for a ceremonial event, but then given to McFarlane – as it was made as something to be worn having the rounded hollow 'base' for a head to support it. Even if this *koedal* mask was never worn, it is useful to bear in mind Haddon's observations on Islanders' attitude towards masks made of turtle-shell in 1888 and 1898: 'there is no doubt that certain masks at all events were regarded as sacred objects, probably they varied in this respect. On more than one occasion I have known natives to refuse through fear to put on a turtle-shell mask, as it was not the right occasion so to do' (Haddon, 1912: 927).

As well as consulting McFarlane, Haddon took with him in 1888 a number of pictures of masks from the British Museum in order to acquire further information about them from Islanders. On one occasion he 'got lucky' with information about one of the most composed and astounding masks that came into McFarlane's hands (Figure 5). When Haddon showed a picture of this mask to Goemulag 'I was told that it represented the head of a hawk and the body of a fish. It was dreamt of by an old man named Pēdia and made by Nigi and Anaii of Mabuyag (V. p. 345) ... the pattern along the body was called *kutikuti niinar*, mark of the *kuti* (a kind of shark)' (Haddon, 1912: 299-300).

By being in the right place at the right time Haddon was able to connect these two masks back to an occasion at Mabuyag, the creation and making of *krar*. That both of these highly complex sophisticated compositions were made by Nigi suggests that here was a master craftsman. Whether both were formed through dreams by Pēdia is not known, nor is the context in which they were worn recorded in an obvious way.

#### FIVE KRAR TAKEN BY MCFARLANE

In Volume IV (1912) of the *Reports*, Haddon footnotes an important piece of historical information. Drawing attention to a mask made from tin, wood, turtle-shell, pearlshell and feathers representing *kaigas* (shovel-nosed shark) now in the Dresden Museum (Figure 6), he writes 'This mask and the four mentioned on pp. 298, 299 were obtained from Dr S. McFarlane, they were taken from a "sacred house" in Mabuiag' (Haddon, 1912: Footnote 1, p.301). At first glance the statement appears straight forward enough, five masks in total taken from a 'sacred house' and obtained by McFarlane. However, noting just the masks originating in Mabuyag mentioned on pages 298 and 299 there appear to be no less than seven.



FIG. 5. Turtle-shell mask with hawk, unidentified fish and shark representations. British Museum, London: Oc+2490. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The seven Goemulgaw masks mentioned are as follows: two 'face' masks relating to *Mudu kap* (dance), a composite saw-fish mask, a composite shovel-nosed shark-fish-eagle mask, a composite fish-face mask, a *koedal* mask (above), and a *kursi* (hammer-head shark) mask<sup>24</sup> (Haddon, 1912: 298-299). From these it is necessary to find which four relate to Goemu. The two 'face' masks are proposed by Haddon to relate to a ceremony called *Mudu kap* but he states that he does not know where this was held. Gizu, however, sending Haddon further information via the trader John Cowling, asserted they were the dugong dances of Dabangay at the northern extremity of Mabuyag, the opposite direction to Goemu (Haddon, 1904: 340-341). With this information from Gizu, and the information about the *koedal* mask, it would seem that the five masks of the 'sacred house' are all composite animal masks. Their form, the materials they are made from, and the occasions of their manufacture as far as they known are different, and thus reflect the use of the 'sacred house' over a long period of time up to the mid-1880s. Four of these were purchased by the Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden and published by their curator A.B. Meyer in 1889. One was purchased through Gerrard by Franks for the British Museum.

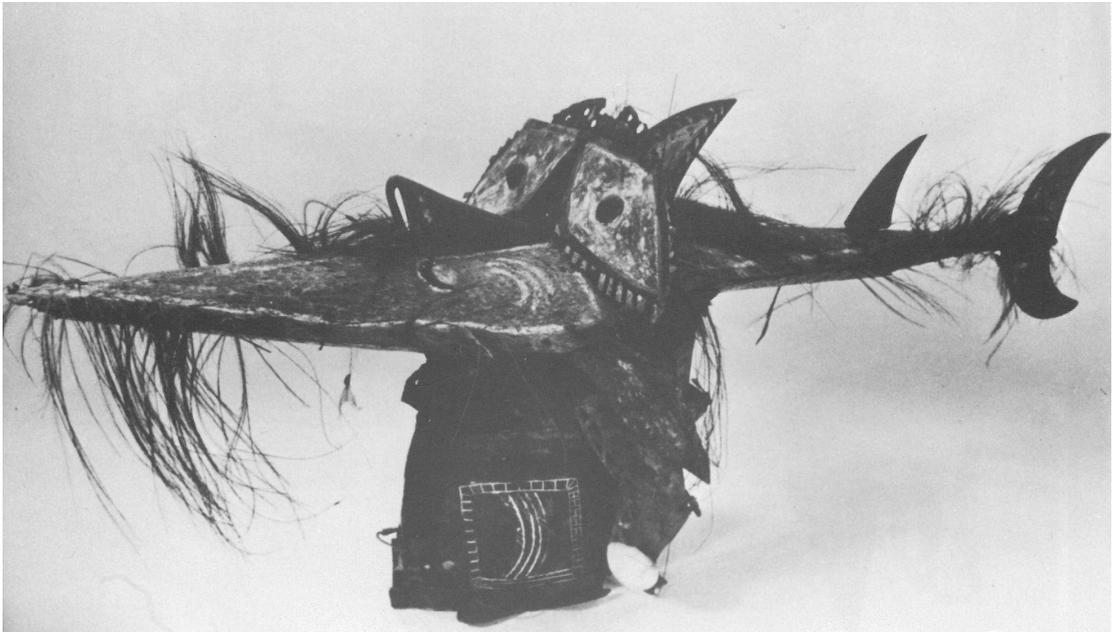


FIG. 6. *Kaigas* (shovel-nosed shark) turtle-shell mask. Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden: 6362. Image from Fraser, 1978: Plate 6.

The most likely date for the auction or sale is 1886, although not all the published records reflect this. Each will be addressed in greater detail below.

Another part of Kuduma's history of Goemulgaw *krar* (above) is given by Waria. His lengthy account extends the information about Waiat's exploits in stealing the knowledge about the masks from Naghir (Haddon, 1904: 49-54). During his account Waria tells that:

[w]hen Waiat arrived at Nagir he did not go at first to the village, but went in the bush to the clear place where the men danced, and saw plenty of things that belonged to the dance. *Baidam* (shark), *kursi* (hammer-headed shark), *koedal* (crocodile), *kaigas* (shove-nose skate); in the corner were two grass fences or screens with a space between them, Waiat went through the gap and

saw something like a king fish, *dēbu'* (Waria quoted in Haddon, 1904: 51).

Waria goes on to tell how Waiat then stole the *dēbu* taking it to Mabuyag.

Gizu and Sunday drew for Haddon three of these masks taken by Waiat from Nagir to be kept in the 'sacred house' at Goemu: a *baidam* (shark) mask, the *dēbu* (king-fish) mask and a *kursi* (hammer-headed shark) mask (Figure 7). In volume IV, Haddon (1912: 299) confirms that the *kursi* mask with a *pukai* (ray) extending from the jaws of the shark, and figured in Meyer (1889), is the *kursi* mask formerly kept at Goemu. He further relates it back to Gizu and Sunday's drawings. The dimensions of the mask he gives (1.25 m in length) also confirms that this is one of the five McFarlane brought to England in 1885. The photograph of this *kursi* mask (6375) from Meyer's publication is shown in Figure 8. Judging from Meyer's photograph this mask is older than the others. It is bereft of

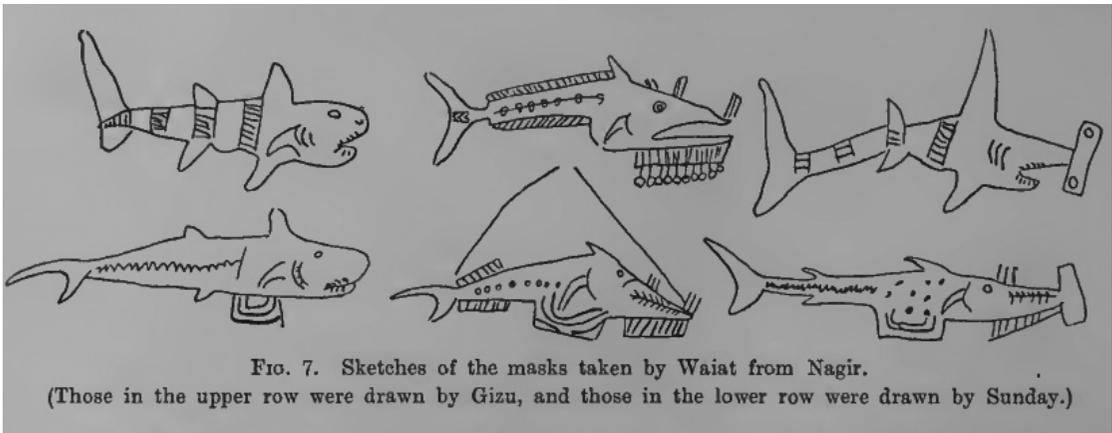


FIG. 7. Gizu and Sunday's drawing. Image from Haddon, 1904: 54.

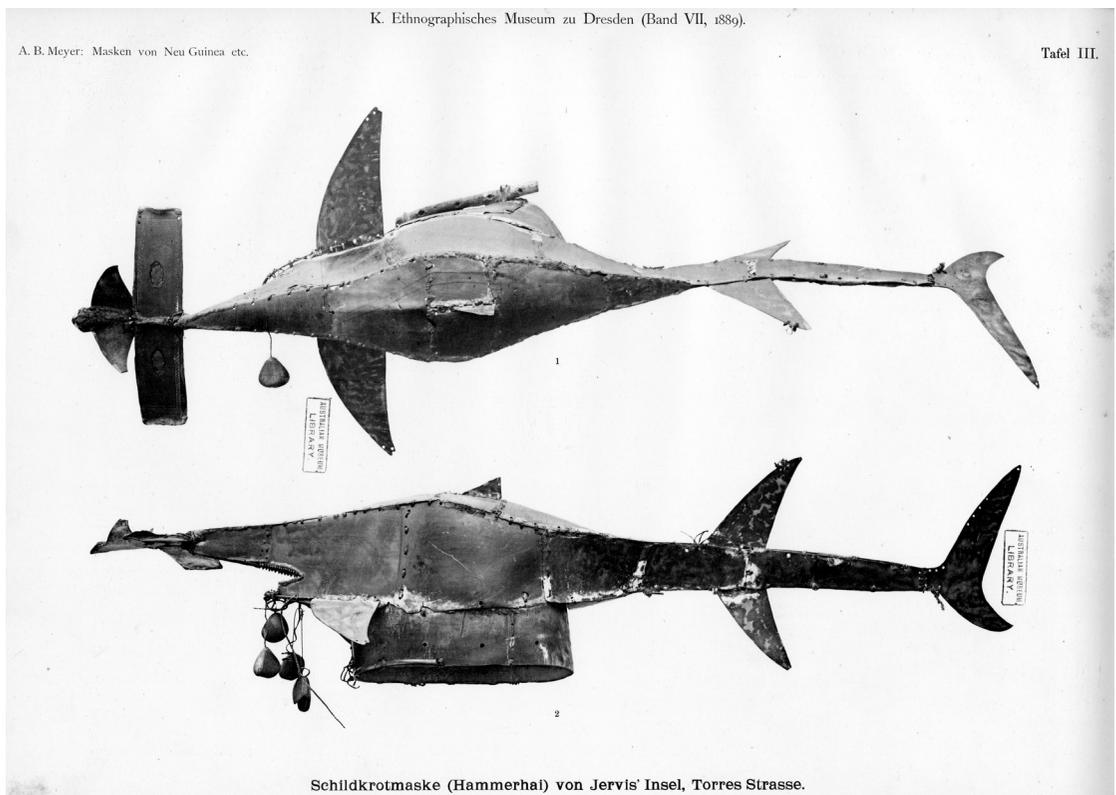


FIG. 8. *Kursi* (hammer-headed shark). Turtle-shell mask from Mabuyag. Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden: 6375. Image from Meyer, 1889: Plate 3.

the usual ornamentation of feathers, cloth, bone and pearlshell, suggesting it had not been worn for some time.

The 'saw-fish' mask is quite different. Here the feature of the saw-fish (identified as referencing one of the *Pristis* genus by Haddon) is minimised to a symbolic 'saw' at the front of the mask, the most prominent element that of the human face – in this way it is similar to at least one mask made at Naghir by Gizu through the dominant emphasis on the human face element.<sup>25</sup> Meyer notes that this mask originally included a shark's mouth under the saw (Meyer 1889: 3). This *krar* is possibly of contemporary production to McFarlane, as all the elements of cassowary feather, shell, gor seeds, calico adornments and the extensive fretwork of turtle-shell cushioning the face are

intact and in 'mint' condition. Once in a state-run Museum für Völkerkunde in Dresden (Figure 9a) the mask was eventually sold through auction and purchased in the 1990s by the private collector John Freide who subsequently donated it to the De Young Museum in San Francisco (Figure 9b).

A near identical mask is today in the Barbier-Mueller Museum, Geneva, Switzerland (Figure 10a). Their on-line documentation records it as originating in the Museum für Völkerkunde Dresden (Figure 10b), acquired from McFarlane in 1874 (<http://www.barbier-mueller.ch/collections.html>). This would make it the earliest mask to go from McFarlane to Europe (it may also be an error in documentation). Like the saw-fish mask it is heavily ornamented with extensive



FIG. 9a. 9 *Waiitutu* (saw-fish) turtle-shell mask. Formerly in Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden: 6396. Image from Meyer, 1889: Plate 2.



FIG. 9b. *Waiitutu* (saw-fish) turtle-shell mask. The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of Marcia and John Friede, 2001.62.11. Image copyright John Bigelow Taylor.



FIG. 10a. Composite turtle-shell mask. Musee Barbier-Mueller, Geneva: INV.4244.



FIG. 10b. Composite turtle-shell mask. Dresden Ethnographisches Museum: Nr. 6361. Image © Frobenius Institute. All rights reserved.

fretwork, feathers, shells and seeds. The grimacing face is this time sitting above a sharp-toothed crocodile or fish the top of this animal is flattened, possibly it is another representation of the *waiitutu* (saw-fish). Unusually, the back of the mask is made from a hard rounded piece of lime-ornamented bark. This kind of bark ornamentation is commonly associated with bark belts from the Gulf Province of PNG and was probably inspired by or traded from there. In the Barbier-Mueller photograph of the *krar* red embroidery brocade can be seen across the forehead of the face. As it is not present in either the image published in Fraser (1978), or that published in by Frobenius (1898), I assume it is a later addition.

The mask of the shovel-nosed shark or *kaigas* at Dresden is quite different again (Figure 6). The triangular form of the *kaigas* dominates the frontwards plane of the mask, the back tapers into a shark fin and tail. At the centre are two large triangular forms in the shape of human eyes, below this is a human-style nose next to which are two cut-out crescents which would be necessary to see through if a dancer was wearing this and tilting his head forward. The whole sits flat upon the circular helmet for the head. It combines tin with turtle-shell, feathers and wood.

An entirely different style of the shovel-nosed shark or *kaigas* mask came into the BM via Franks and Gerrard from McFarlane in 1886. Over one meter long, here a whole *kaigas* is represented sitting on-top of a sharp-toothed fish with gills, and flanked by small fish made in turtle-shell. A bounty of cassowary feathers and shells hide from view a wooden frame consisting of two rods each of which culminates in a bird's head (Figure 11). From a purely visual analysis it is remarkably similar to the work dreamt by Pédia (Figure 5) and may also have been made by Nigi and Anaii. Certainly the treatment of the surface of the turtle-shell has the same glistening



FIG. 11. *Kaigas* (shovel-nosed shark) turtle-shell mask. British Museum, London: Oc+3278. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

translucent quality, suggesting a similar age of the material (the turtle-shell of masks made at Erub and collected in the 1840s have a mottled patterning from age). The way that some fins have been over-painted with yellow ochre is also similar. Astonishing in both is the subtle use of innovative materials, such as nails, to highlight spots on the turtle-shell – worn in full sunshine or in the evening by the light of a fire or kerosene lamp these elements would glint and sparkle.

These five *krar* (two *kaigas*, one *kursi*, one saw-fish, one fish-face) connected to the Goemu 'sacred house' appear to have been made at different times and with quite different materials. For the *kaigas krar* dreamt by Pēdia a rough date can be found through the ages of Nigi and Anaii which indicate it was probably made between the late 1860s to early 1870s.<sup>26</sup> Some *krar* are constructed from the fauna and

flora of the islands and nearby New Guinea – pearlshell, turtle-shell, cassowary feathers, bone, wood, gor seeds, ochre and lime. Others have introduced materials such as tin, cloth, yellow ochre and planed timbers. These may have been available at Mabuyag through trade and warfare as early as the late 1790s as foreign shipping increasingly crossed through the Strait. In 1873 Murray (1873: 151) records pearlshell and iron goods as the chief articles of barter used by Goemulgal with coastal New Guinea trading partners.

From a purely visual analysis there also seems to be a marked difference in style between the Goemu *krar* which suggests a variety of periods for their making. Some will have been made before and some after the LMS arrived. All point to vibrancy or perhaps an urgency in the 1870s of pre-Christian cultural life for Goemulgal. Despite

the harsh realities of the pearling era, the effects of introduced diseases, the Coming of the Light, the destruction of things of great spiritual importance relating to Kuyam, and the large numbers of foreigners who engaged with Goemulgal, these people maintained and pursued those aspects of *kastom* vital to their own lives and those of their descendants.

#### KRAR WITHOUT A KNOWN ORIGIN

Haddon does not refer to the first mask acquired from McFarlane by the BM (Figures 1-2 Oc+1978,Q.383) but he does briefly discuss a near-identical mask held in the Horniman Museum (London). This, he suggests, may depict a king-fish, *dabar* or a mackerel, *mugarir*. In the BM's note (Figure 2) on Oc+1978,Q.383 the provenance details 'Rev. S. McFarlane' and 'Jervis Island (Mabuiag)' have been added at a later date. Indeed, the identity of the animal portrayed appears to have been confused from the start with 'alligator head' crossed out and 'pig' inserted. Haddon assumes the Horniman's *dabar* or *mugarir* mask is related to Nagir and Waiat (above) because of its similarity to masks drawn by Gizu and Sunday (Figure 7). By this association it could be assumed that this 'pig' mask is also connected to this tradition (Haddon, 1912: 300). A similar mask (D52) was donated to the Otago Museum (New Zealand) by McFarlane's colleague James Chalmers in 1894 and said to be from the Fly River (Fraser, 1978: 117). Neither has Haddon referred to a seemingly unique figure which came from McFarlane, to Gerrard then to Franks (Figure 12, Oc+3397). It is not strictly a mask at all but a flat-cut face with beard atop a figure with a three dimensional body with shapely cut legs. It came into the BM in 1886, with two of the masks originating from Goemu. Either within the BM or before hand it suffered damage and separation so that it was only in the late 1970s that the face and body were realised to be part of a complete figure.

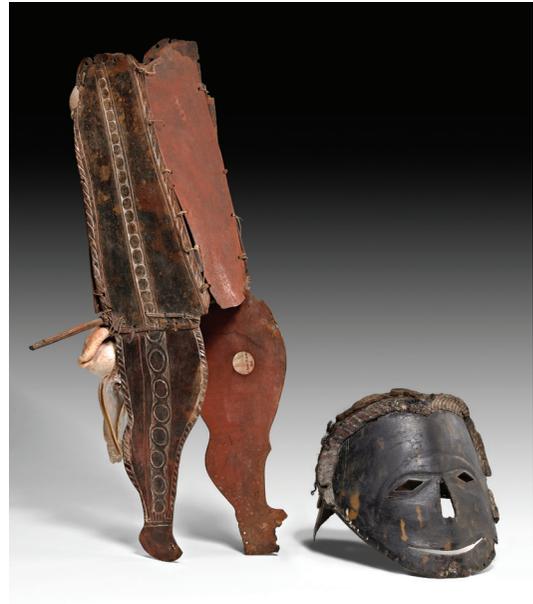


FIG. 12. Turtle-shell figure from Mabuyag. British Museum, London: Oc+3397. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Two of the face masks relating to the *Mudu kap* (dance) are held in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden. Gizu and Waria appear to be the main authors of information about the *Mudu kap* which was held at the arrival of the morning star, *kek*, and the beginning of the south-east winds, *waur*. This event involved three nights of dancing with turtle-shell masks named as *mudu*, *dibubuang* and *wamedebu*, all in the form of a human face. Gizu (Haddon 1904: 340) draws these, along with images of the daytime dance. From his discussions with Gizu and Waria, Haddon identified two masks collected by McFarlane as relating to these performances, both were purchased 'at Gerrard's Auction' according to Fraser (1978: 221, 223). Both have red 'tears' of ochre streaking from the eyes and over-modelled lips with no teeth. One *krar* in the Museum für Völkerkunde is a flat oval face of roughly stitched turtle-shell plates surrounded by a delicately made fretwork of turtle-shell (Figure 13). It is quite unlike any

other masks known to originate at Mabuyag.<sup>27</sup> The second mask of the *Mudu kap* (Figure 14, 6363) is different in form – being round and having a crown and beard of heavy turtle-shell lattice. It was also sold through Gerrard to the BM (via Franks) in 1886. A near identical mask is in the BM (Figure 15, Oc+3277) and together these two masks highlight a common aspect of Mabuyag ceremonial dance which is obscured by the travels of these *krar*. That is that while some dances have an individual dancer, many more involve pairs of dancers. William Rivers documented that brothers-in-law would wear the mask made by their in-law. Each in-law would place their mask on their in-law's head (cited in Haddon, 1904: 149).

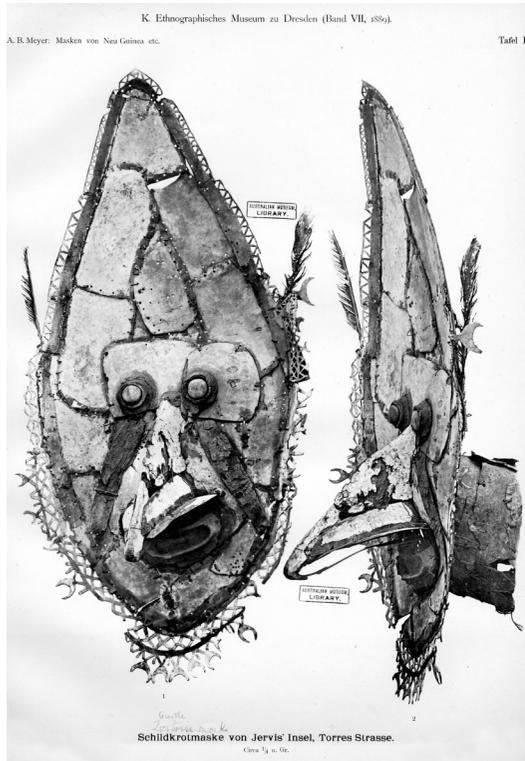


FIG. 13. *Mudu kap* turtle-shell mask. Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden: 6367. Image from Meyer, 1889: Plate 1.



FIG. 14. *Mudu kap* turtle-shell mask. Museum für Völkerkunde, Dresden: 6363. Image from Meyer, 1889: Plate 5.



FIG. 15. Possible *Mudu kap* mask. British Museum, London: Oc+3277. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In their use of materials these two masks are quite different. One (Oc+3277) uses innovative materials, iron, wood and Reckett's blue along with turtle-shell, the other (6363) is formed only from turtle-shell, wood and resin. Their form is so similar that they were possibly both connected to the *mudu kap*, or at least made through the same tradition. It is not the only pair collected by McFarlane.

Divided by the Atlantic Ocean is an almost identical pair of masks representing a human face surmounted by a flying eagle or frigate bird. Only one of these is documented as originating through the Gerrard Auction and is today in the National Museum of Scotland (Figure 16). Its pair was once at the Farnham Museum of Pitt-Rivers (Fraser, 1978: 223). This museum was established by the wealthy General Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers in 1885, following the donation of his first collection to Oxford University. The Farnham Museum housed the second collection Pitt-Rivers made and was dispersed in the 1970s. Today this mask is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, USA (Figure 17). There is no direct link to suggest that this pair of face-bird masks both came through Gerrard but it is possible Pitt-Rivers heard of the auction through his colleague and associate Franks.

#### FUTURES

These astounding collections of Goemulgaw objects were acquired by McFarlane over a thirteen year period. They relate to the *bepotaim* of the deep past talked of by Haddon, some possibly originate in antiquity. They also come from *pastaim*, those years of early conversion and Christian life contemporary with McFarlane's work in the Strait. They point to and emphasise a liveliness of cultural life and spiritual expression that many in the Strait today relate to the times of their ancestors in the 1870s and to more ancient times. These kinds of objects of the past should



FIG. 16. *Womer* (frigate bird) turtle-shell mask. National Museums Scotland: 1885.83. Image © National Museums Scotland.



FIG. 17. *Womer* (frigate bird) turtle-shell mask. Metropolitan Museum, New York: 1978.412.1510. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: ARTstor, NY.

not be overlooked as purely 'artistic' objects, an analysis that has dominated writing on them in the twentieth century. There is a great need for Goemulgal authorship about them to realise the public understanding of these as spiritually important, and in some cases spiritually potent, masks. They should also be considered as part of any historical analysis of Goemulgaw life in the nineteenth century.

The use of turtle-shell masks by peoples from across the Torres Strait has an unusual antiquity in written literature thanks to one brief encounter between an Islander wearing an *Ibur* (fish) mask (Figure 18) and Captain Tovar in the early seventeenth century.

a quantity of masks made of the said turtle, very well-finished, and a fish called an albacore imitated so naturally that it seemed to be the very thing, and a half man-half fish of a yard and a half high, also made as a good sculptor might finish it (Captain Don Diego Prado y Tovar in 1606 cited in Fraser, n.d.: 1)

This heritage is also carried through Islanders' oral traditions although today, as in the past, Goemulgal lament the loss of knowledge about their culture with each generation. Thanks to the enormous work of politicians and cultural knowledge holders over the last thirty years, people of the Torres Strait in this century, unlike the last, have the ability once more to access and seek out these works of immense cultural significance through actively engaging with



FIG. 18. Joani's drawing of a man wearing an *Ibur* (fish) mask (from Haddon, 1904: 54).

museums, through texts available through new media and through the creation of new works. Several people of Islander ancestry have carried out further research to begin the tasks of re-connecting this heritage with its knowledge holders. And artists such as Denis Nona, Vic McGrath and Alick Tipoti have had the opportunity to visit these works of their ancestors' times and learn from them. The most public aspect of this engagement is the revolution in Torres Strait art, which access to these *krar* and other objects have brought to the people of Goemulgaw heritage. Digital technologies, modern travel and increased prosperity for some in the Strait have meant that many are re-engaging with these masterpieces of their ancestors' knowledge and spiritual connections that many Goemulgaw assert to the lands and seas of Mabuyag.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Ian McNiven and those Goemulgal who suggested I write this paper, and to Michael Quinnell and Julie Lahn for their close reading and helpful suggestions of the draft. The many highly helpful library and curatorial staff at the British Museum, particularly Margorie Caygill, Natasha McKinney, James Hamil, Jill Hasell, Harry Persaud and Lissant Bolton were of great assistance. Similarly thanks to Daisy Cunynghame and Colin McCarthy at the NHM. Thanks too to Leone Lemmer at the Australian Museum Research Library for her assistance with Meyer's 1889 paper. For assistance with image reproduction thanks to Christina Hellmich and Sue Grinols at the De Young Museum; Jennifer Belt for the Metropolitan Museum image. Original research on LMS papers was supported by the ESRC and many thanks to Anita Herle and Marilyn Strathern my academic supervisors at this time for their continued encouragement. The late Ephraim Bani was generous with his time in explaining about things that one should know, and those that one should not. Thanks too to a number of Islander scholars whose ideas have helped shaped my own views, especially Terrence Whap, Leilani Bin-Juda, Alick Tipoti, Mary Bani and Leah Lui-Chivezhe.

## LITERATURE CITED

McFarlane's letters and LMS journals are held in the Council of World Mission Archives at the School of Oriental Studies, London University. The following were used in this paper: CWM/LMS, Papua, Incoming correspondence: 1872-1876 Box 1; 1877-1881 Box 2; 1882-1885 Box 3; 1886-1889. The Natural History Museum's Department of Library and Information Services hold some items relating to McFarlane in the DF ZOO series 1876-1879; others are held in the individual departments. The British Museum's Africa, Oceania and the America's Department archive holds correspondence from Edward Gerrard and Samuel McFarlane. The British Museum Archives hold Trustees Indexes. A.C. Haddon's papers (HP) including material from the 1898 Expedition are held in the Cambridge University Library and in the archives of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, microfiche copies are held at AIATSIS.

BARBIER-MUELLER MUSEUM. <http://www.barbier-mueller.ch/collections.html>, accessed 30/11/2011.

BROCKETT, W.E. 1836. *Narrative of a voyage from Sydney to Torres Straits in search of the survivors of the "Charles Eaton," in His Majesty's colonial schooner "Isabella," C. M. Lewis, Commander.* (Henry Bull: Sydney).

CAYGILL, M. & CHERRY, J. (eds) 1997. *A.W. Franks, Nineteenth-century collecting and the British Museum.* (British Museum Press: London).

CHAPMAN, W.R. 1991. Like a game of dominoes: Augustus Pitt Rivers and the typological museum idea. In S. Pearce (ed.), *Museum economics and the community*. Vol. 2. (Athlone, New Research in Museum Studies: London).

CRAIG, B. 2010. 'Scenes hidden from other eyes' – Theodore Bevan's collection from the Gulf of Papua in the South Australian Museum. *The Artefact* 33: 30-48.

FRASER, D. 1978. *Torres Strait sculpture: a study in Oceanic primitive art.* (Garland Publishing Inc.: New York)

FRIEDE, J. 2005. *New Guinea art: masterpieces of the Jolika Collection from Marcia and John Friede.* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco: San Francisco).

FROBENIUS, L. 1898 Ueber Oceanisch Masken 3e p82 In *Internationales Gesellschaft für Ethnographie* Volume XI (P.W.M. Trap: Leiden).

GANTER, R. 1994. *The pearl-shellers of Torres Strait: resource use, development and decline 1860s-1960s.* (Melbourne University Press: Carlton, Vic).

HADDON, A.C. 1890. Ethnography of the western tribes of the Torres Straits. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. 19: 297-442.

HADDON, A.C. 1901. *Head-hunters: black, white, and brown.* (Methuen: London).

- HADDON, A.C. 1932. *Headhunters, black, white and brown* (abridged). (Watts & Co: London).
- HADDON, A.C. (ed) 1901-1935. *Reports of the Cambridge anthropological expedition to Torres Straits*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).
- 1904 Volume V Sociology, magic and religion of the Western Islanders
- 1912 Volume IV Arts and Crafts
- 1935 Volume I General Ethnography
- HERLE, A., PHILP, J. & DUDDING, J. 2015. Reactivating visual histories: Haddon's photographs from Mabuyag 1888, 1898. In McNiven, I.J. & Hitchcock, G. (eds) *Goemulgaw Lagal: Natural and Cultural Histories of the Island of Mabuyag, Torres Strait. Memoirs of the Queensland Museum – Culture* 8(1): 253-288.
- HERLE, A. & ROUSE, S. (eds) 1998. *Cambridge and the Torres Strait: centenary essays on the 1898 anthropological expedition*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).
- IRELAND, J. 1838. *The shipwrecked orphans: a true narrative, detailing the shipwreck and sufferings of John Ireland and two little boys, George and William Doyley, who, with their father and mother and thirty-two other persons, were wrecked in the Charles Eaton in the year 1834, on an island in the South Seas, inhabited by savages*. (Dean and Munday: London).
- JOYCE, T.A. 1925. *Handbook of the ethnological collections*. Second edition. (Oxford University Press: Oxford).
- JUKES, J.B. 1847. *Narrative of the surveying voyage of H.M.S. Fly, commanded by Captain F.P. Blackwood, in Torres Strait, New Guinea, and other islands of the Eastern Archipelago, during the years 1842-1846: together with an excursion into the interior of the eastern part of Java*. (T & W Boone: London).
- KING, P.P. 1837. *A voyage to Torres Straits in search of the survivors of the Ship "Charles Eaton," which was wrecked upon the Barrier Reef in the month of August, 1834, in His Majesty's colonial schooner "Isabella," C. M. Lewis, Commander. Arranged from the journal of the Commander by authority of His Excellency Major-General Sir Richard Bourke, K.C.B., Governor of New South Wales, etc., etc.* (E.H. Stratham: Sydney).
- LANGMORE, D. 1989. *Missionary lives: Papua, 1874-1914*. (University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu).
- LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1837. *The Missionary Magazine* XII (May), pp: 181-183.
- LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1911. Exhibitions for all. P. 215. In *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society: a record of its proceedings at home and abroad*. (J. Snow & Co: London).
- MCFARLANE, S. 1873. *The story of the Lifu mission*. (J. Nisbet: London).
- MCFARLANE, S. 1885. The Papuan Institute. Pp. 284-289. In *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society: a record of its proceedings at home and abroad*. (J. Snow & Co: London).
- MCFARLANE, S. 1888. *Among the cannibals of New Guinea*. (J. Nisbet: London).
- MACGILLIVRAY, J. 1852. *Narrative of the voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, commanded by the late Captain Owen Stanley, R.N., F.R.* (T & W Boone: London).
- MCNIVEN, I.J. & WRIGHT, D. 2008. Ritualised marine midden formation in western Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait). Pp. 133-148. In G. Clark, F. Leach & S. O'Connor (eds), *Islands of inquiry: colonisation, seafaring and the archaeology of maritime landscapes*. *Terra Australis* 29. (ANU ePress: Canberra).
- MEYER, A.B. 1889. *Masken von Neu Guinea und dem Bismarck Archipelago. Königliches Ethnographisches*. (Museum zu Dresden VII: Dresden).
- MOORE, D. 1979. *Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York: an ethnographic reconstruction based on the 1848-1850 'Rattlesnake' Journals of O.W. Brierly and the information he obtained from Barbara Thompson*. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies: Canberra).
- MULLINS, S. 1995. *Torres Strait: a history of colonial occupation and culture contact, 1864-1897*. (Central Queensland University Press: Rockhampton, Qld).
- MULLINS, S. & WETHERALL, D. 1996. LMS teachers and colonialism in Torres Strait and New Guinea 1871-1915. Pp. 186-207. In D. Munro & A. Thornley (eds) *The covenant makers: Islander missionaries in the Pacific*. (Pacific Islands Theological College and The Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific: Suva, Fiji).
- MULLINS, S., BELLAMY, S.M. & MOORE, C. 2012. Andrew Goldie in New Guinea, 1875-1879: memoir of a natural history collector. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum, Cultural Heritage Series* 5(2): 1-216.
- MURRAY, A. 1873. The Mission in New Guinea. Pp. 149-157. In *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society: a record of its proceedings at home and abroad, July*. (J. Snow & Co: London).
- MURRAY, A. 1876. *Forty years' mission work in Polynesia and New Guinea: from 1835 to 1875* (J. Nisbet & Co: London).
- NICHOLSON, I. 1996. *Via Torres Strait: a maritime history of the Torres Strait route and the ship's post office at Booby Island*. (Roebuck Society Publication: Yaroomba, Qld).
- NOKISE, U.F. 1983. The role of London Missionary Society Samoan missionaries in the evangelisation of the SW Pacific 1839-1930. Unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.
- THOMAS, O. 1885. Account of a collection of human skulls from Torres Straits. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 14: 328-43.
- THOMPSON, R.W. 1911. Dr. McFarlane: A pioneer in Papua. Pp. 57-58. *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society: a record of its proceedings at home and abroad*. (J. Snow & Co: London).

## □ ENDNOTES

1. Both McFarlane and MacFarlane have been used for his surname. McFarlane is used here as it is how he signed his name and authored his publications.
2. One of these is a figure (Oc+3397) made from turtle-shell rather than strictly 'a mask'. It is not recorded in what context this kind of figure was used. In form the face is similar to those that were made as part of masks and so has been included here.
3. Many articles appeared in the newspapers of the colony of NSW between 1836-9 (e.g. *Australian*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Colonist*; the story also made the papers in Britain).
4. For example in a footnote King explains the different types of beche-de-mer and notes: 'It is an object of considerable value to the Malays ... the price varies according to the sort, from five to one hundred rupees for the pekul of 133lbs' (King, 1837: 662-663).
5. Of ship-wreck survivor 'Weenie or Winnie, Thomson said he had (in 1848) lived at Badu for some years. He had several children, was 'owned' by two brothers Dagub and Koorier, and was prized for his skill at repairing canoes. 'Our people' said Thomson 'say they would like to get a white man who could mend their canoes in the same way as Weenie does for the Badoos' (Moore, 1979: 177). Thompson said she had been 'courted' by Badu Islanders to live there. Haddon asserts Winnie was called Ginau by his adopted brothers named Gabea and Mibu, and probably Malayan in origin (Haddon, 1904: 278).
6. *Bepotaim* is a Torres Strait Broken word meaning the era before 1871; Mullins (1995: 9) defines *pastaim* as the period beyond living memory, but after the acceptance of Christianity.
7. Volumes I, V and IV also include information from Aboriginal people of Somerset and Muralag and from people of the Papuan coast of British New Guinea (Haddon, 1901-1935).
8. Murray (1876: 452) asserts that Banner was already known to McFarlane at Lifu where Banner had conducted business.
9. Not to be mistaken for Kebisu's heir Maino of lama-Tudu who married a woman from Katau.
10. He continued to work for the LMS in Britain until retiring fully in 1894.
11. Explorer-collectors include N.N. Miklouho-Maclay and Luigi D'Albertis with whom McFarlane formed a partnership of sorts. Traders, such as Andrew Goldie and Theodore Bevan, supported plantation work or pearlshelling with collecting ethnographic material for museums and private collectors (Craig, 2010; Mullins *et al.*, 2012).
12. Haddon detailed his arrangements in 1889: 'Two large metal drums of specimens were consigned to my friend Prof. G. B. Howes of the Royal College of Science, South Kensington. The excise officer demanded a duty on the alcohol although all of it had been shipped from London to Torres Straits. Howes refused to pay anything and poured all the alcohol down the sink; the excise officer did not mind, and Howes filled up the drums with fresh spirit which was provided by the Department of Science and Art. Thus the Government lost both the duty and the value of the fresh alcohol and the specimens gained therefrom' (Haddon, 1935: xi).
13. Gay's successor was Henry Read who went on to become the Keeper for Ethnography at the BM. When working on the Christy collection his salary was funded by Franks (Chapman, 1991: 145)
14. An indication of the monies involved for natural history specimens generally (not specific to McFarlane) is in the Index to the Trustees Minutes of the British Museum, Vol 7 1873-1879 where it is noted purchases in 1876-1877 from Gerrard for Zoological specimens amounting to just short of £1000. To give a sense of the time, the Index notes for 1877-8 that the famous bird collector John Gould was paid £3000 for birds.
15. All items were originally provinanced to 'South Eastern New Guinea' but later updated by Haddon in 1921, with the turtleshell mask, 1885.83, provinanced to 'Jervis Island'. A further note links to an illustration in the Leiden's ethnographic journal of 1898 but there is no corresponding illustration. Thanks to Chantal Knowles at National Museum of Scotland for tracing this register entry.
16. Higgins appears to be Gunther's assistant.
17. Sir Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller (1825-1896) was Government Botanist in Victoria and acknowledged authority on all plant life of Australia and the region at the time.
18. Niuean teachers from 1876, Samoans from 1883 (Nokise, 1983: 104, 303).

19. There were two groups of crania taken by McFarlane and deposited in the NHM, one group from Goemu and the other probably from Pulu – ‘The skulls are from the sacred house of the Jervis Islanders which is situated on an islet close by’ (McFarlane quoted in Thomas, 1885: 238; see also Haddon, 1904: 305). All human remains from this area are part of a negotiated repatriation between the NHM, the Torres Strait Repatriation Working Group and Torres Strait Regional Authority.
20. See Herle *et al.* this volume for an image of Hakin and the LMS teachers.
21. Locally appointed Government representative.
22. Of the two *mawa* masks collected by McFarlane from Mabuyag, one is in the BM (Oc+3280), one in Dresden (6359). Collected by McFarlane in Saibai was a wooden *mawa* mask (purchased by Franks in 1885 for the BM). In the Scottish National Museum two more Saibailaig *mawa* masks were obtained from the 1885 Gerrard ‘auction’. Dresden acquired three from Gerrard (one of these is today in the De Young Museum, San Francisco).
23. These were the last years of McFarlane’s life in Torres Strait and New Guinea, he was in Britain in 1885, Torres Strait in 1886 and retired completely from the Mission in 1887 (Thompson, 1911: 58). The drum featured on the front cover of *Among the cannibals*, his book about the New Guinea mission (McFarlane 1888).
24. Haddon mentions a composite frigate-bird-face mask but does not say it comes from Mabuyag so I have concluded it is not one of the five from Goemu. A mask matching this description, provenanced to Mabuyag, is in the National Museum of Scotland (1885.83) purchased at Gerrard’s and collected by McFarlane. It is discussed below.
25. See Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology Z9397.
26. See Haddon (1904: 149, 370).
27. Fraser (1978: 47) asserts a strong association between this mask (6367) and another at the Peabody Essex Museum (E2135) in Salem, USA. They may well be a ‘singular’ pair.
28. The British Museum masks can be found on the British Museum’s on-line collection website. The late Ephraim Bani comments on some of the masks held in Dresden in Francis Calvert’s documentary film ‘Cracks in the Mask’ (1998).