

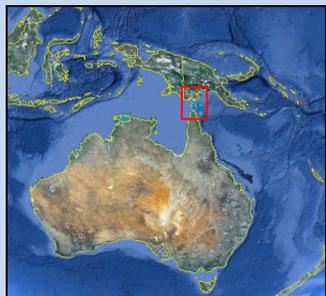
What do the National Museum of Natural History's collections from A.C. Haddon's first voyage (1888-9) to the Torres Strait tell us about Haddon and local Torres Strait communities' trade relationships and agencies?

Background: Alfred Cort Haddon (1855-1940) went to the Torres Strait Islands in 1888 to examine marine biology and reef systems. Transformed by the experience, Haddon returned in 1898 as head of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition, which revolutionized anthropological field methodologies and helped establish British Social Anthropology (Herle & Rouse 1998).

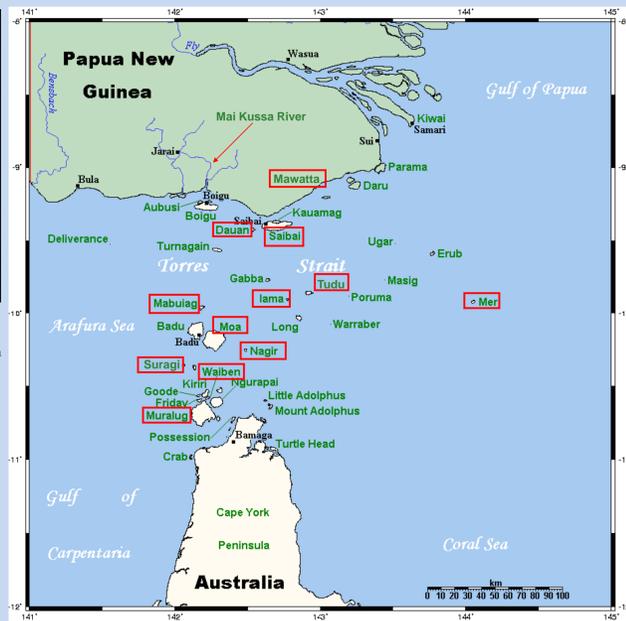
Located between Cape York Peninsula and the south coast of New Guinea, the Torres Strait has long been part of a dynamic regional exchange network. Since the 1860s these networks transformed as the Torres Strait became a colonial and missionary center, and the site of global commercial bêche-de-mer and pearling fishing (Lawrence 1994). Haddon's interest in anthropology developed out of his impression that Torres Strait Islanders were rapidly changing under European influence, and that aspects of their society must be "salvaged" before it was too late (Herle & Rouse 1998). Haddon undertook ethnographic and biological collecting, asked locals to make objects and restage customs, which he documented in still photographs, drawings and notes. To make his collection in 1888-9, Haddon collaborated with islanders, members of the London Missionary Society (LMS) and colonial government officials on the Islands and in Southern Papua. Tracing these relationships through the objects now in the National Museum of Natural History allows for a contextualization of the intersecting histories between Torres Strait communities, Haddon, and early museum anthropology.

The Collections: Consisting of three accessions of "duplicate specimens", Haddon's collections were received in 1891 (accession 24726) and 1895 (accession 29310, 30002). Predominately collected in Torres Strait and New Guinea, at least 6 objects are noted by Haddon as having been made in a different locality than where they were collected. Some objects were also collected in localities that Haddon never personally visited, but obtained from other Europeans.

In his shift to become an anthropologist, Haddon used his 1888-9 collections as a means by which to establish scientific connections and obtain specimens from the National Museum. In December 17, 1890 he requested "2 or 3 [identified] polyps" of the genus *Mammilifera* for his zoological work and later "copies of the Annual Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology" (Accession 24726, 29310).



Map from Google Earth (above), and map of the Torres Strait from Wikimedia Commons (right). Contemporary names of localities are used, and places visited by Haddon are boxed in red.



1888 - 1889 Expedition Timeline

Based on information from Haddon (1901), Herle and Rouse (1998), Philp (2004), and Quiggin (1942). Contemporary names of the Torres Strait Islands are used.

July 1888: Haddon leaves the UK on the S.S. Taroba from Tillsbury

August 8, 1888: Haddon arrives on Waiben, stays with Queensland Government Resident Mr. Hugh M. Milman (1845-1911)

August 8, 1888 - August 18, 1888: Haddon visits islands of Nagir, Suragi, Tudu, Iama/Yam, Dauan, Saibai, Mabuia and Mawatta on the New Guinea mainland with Milman during government rounds

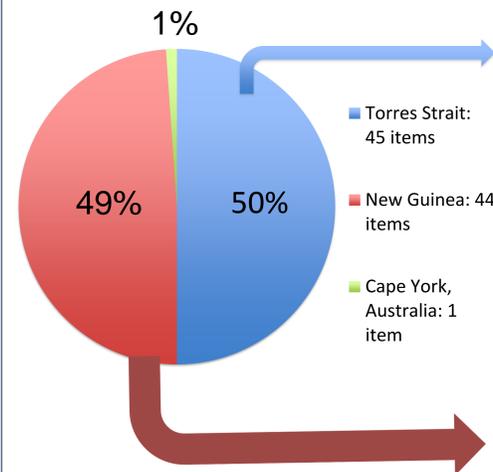
August 18, 1888 - October 26, 1888: Haddon stays at the mission station on Mabuia doing research

September 1888: Haddon returns to Waiben for some time, visits Muralug and Moa

October 1888-April 1889: Haddon stays on Mer with LMS missionaries A.E. Hunt and E.B. Savage

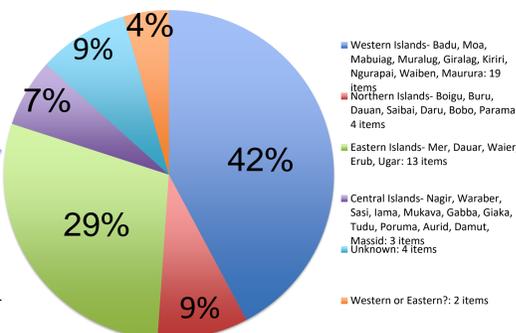
April 1889: Haddon spends some time in Victoria and New South Wales (Australia) on his way home

General Makeup of the Alfred C. Haddon Collections at the Smithsonian

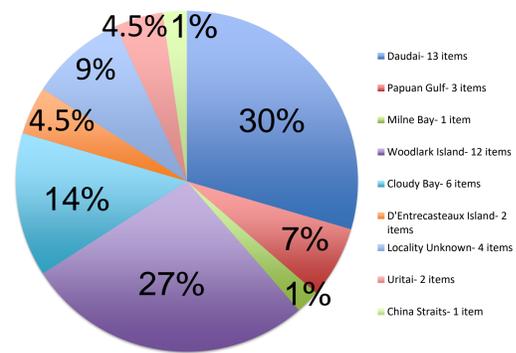


An overview of the 90 ethnographic items donated by Alfred Haddon to the National Museum in Accession No. 24726, 29310, and 30002

Localities of Torres Strait Collections



Localities of New Guinea Collections



An example of the network of relationships found in Haddon's collections is seen in a series of objects connected to dugong. An integral part of local diet, dugong are found throughout the region and feed on sea-grass. Haddon (1901: 148-53) details the capture of the two dugong by boat at Mabuia (see Fig. 1). Upon discovering that they were traditional harpooned from platforms, Haddon asked his friend Waria to construct one for him (Fig. 2). In his photograph Waria stands holding a harpoon and twine that were used to injure and drown dugong. While too small to be seen, Haddon asked Waria to hang a dugong charm from the platform. Though the charm Waria used was a larger one from Moa, the charm in NMNH's collection is a similarly designed object from Mer (Fig. 3). Dugong charms, harpoons and hunting magic were traded between island communities.



Figure 1: Mabuia chief Nomoa with the two dugong harpooned and killed in 1888. Courtesy of the National Anthropological Archives (NAA).



Figure 2: Waria on the dugong platform ("nath") he constructed upon Haddon's request. Mabuia, 1888. Courtesy of the NAA.



Figure 3: E152757-0: Deger (dugong charm) collected by Haddon in Mer, Eastern Torres Strait, and given to the National Museum in 1891. Traces of red ochre visible on the fin and tail (Acc. 24726).



Figure 4: E152778-0: Sugub Morap (tobacco pipe) collected by Haddon in Mowat, Daudai, New Guinea. Given to the National Museum in 1891 (Acc. 24726). Inscribed with the local name for bamboo "morap", and the locality on the Mai Kussa River in New Guinea (see map) where it was cut, Haddon obtained this pipe from Gabea on August 16, 1888 (see Haddon 1894: 20-1). This is likely the same "Gabia" Haddon met with Milman in August 1888. The pearlsheller Edward Beardmore, who worked in the area, helped to mediate their interactions and exchanges. Gabia was made chief during their visit (Haddon 1901: 111; Beardmore 1890: 464), and following this a dance was staged for Haddon. At its end "barter commenced, and I was fortunate to obtain a number of interesting objects" (Haddon 1901: 114). This object most likely emerged out of these interactions and speaks to both local networks of exchange and understanding, as well as the colonial encounter.

Analysis and Findings: The dugong charm, tobacco pipe, and related photos show how objects in the Smithsonian collection can be used to aid in retracing Haddon's interaction with locals (e.g., Waria and Gabia) and Europeans (e.g., Milman and Beardmore) stationed in the area. The histories of these objects, and their movements, give us a glimpse into the trade relationships between the seafaring Islanders, New Guineans, and Cape York Aboriginal communities in addition to the customs Haddon sought to "salvage" through his work. The objects themselves speak to the transforming material realities of the region, and the ways in which islanders incorporated external materials in their shifting practices (Fig. 5).

An overview of the collections in light of Haddon's movements in 1888-9 also points to further relationships. Other than the Dauai material, it is likely that Haddon obtained his New Guinea objects through the Rev. James Chalmers and Robert Bruce of the LMS and perhaps other resident Europeans. These social relationships allowed Haddon to obtain a great variety of objects which fed into his mapping of the material culture of southern New Guinea (Haddon 1894).



Figure 5: Bundle of makamak, leglets made of plaited roots of coconut palm with knots of turkey red and grey yarn tied to them which were collected on Muralug by Haddon on September 1888 following local dances. The inclusion of calico, turkey red cloth, yarn and new pigments shows how foreign materials were made local. Given to the National Museum in 1891 (Acc. 24726).

Further research:

1. Consult Haddon's notes held in Cambridge to refine the timeline, list of Haddon's activities and people encountered
2. Use this and information found in, and about, his other collections from 1888 to contextualize the photographs and objects in the Smithsonian
3. Make links between objects in the collection and those in Haddon's photographs in the NAA and elsewhere
4. Trace how these objects came to be in Haddon's possession
5. Use this information combined with research on other collectors, and ethnographic work with communities to reach broader conclusions about the Melanesian Networks in Haddon's time

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