

# **Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland**

## **Volume 3**

### **Items collected from McDonnell Electric Telegraph Office, McIvor River, Mapoon and the Pennefather and Wenlock Rivers, Maytown, Mentana, Mitchell River, Morehead River, Moreton Electric Telegraph Office and Musgrave, in 1897–1903**

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## Preface

This is the third in a series of four catalogues on the Roth collection of Aboriginal artefacts from Cape York Peninsula, held at the Australian Museum. These catalogues will make it easier for people to gain access to this material which was gathered together over 100 years ago.

Information presented here is from both the objects and the 18 Roth Bulletins and Reports, published between 1898–1910. Like most 19th and early 20th century writings, the Bulletins are written in a manner that is at times difficult to understand and there is no index. Production of these new regional catalogues by the Australian Museum should make the older works easier to understand and use.

The regional catalogues were compiled with the assistance of John Day and Bridget Ohlsson (photographers), and Fiona Duncan, Sara Knuckey, Tania Cleary, Jane Bible and Kelly Bona (cataloguers). Additional photographs have been taken by staff of the Photography Section of the Australian Museum, Ric Bolzan, Carl Bento and Stuart Humphreys.

Funding support for the project was provided by both State and Federal Governments. During the 1984 financial year \$45,855 was received from the Commonwealth Employment Program (CEP) towards the cost of employing some of the above people. From 1985 to 1992 the Australian Museum gave \$22,100 from its Consolidated Revenue Funds towards this project.

The first volume was produced in 1993 as part of the Museum's participation in the International Year of the World's Indigenous People.

Ian Loch of the Malacology Division of the Australian Museum and Philip Colman, previously of the Malacology Division, but now Research Associate of the Australian Museum, kindly checked scientific names of shells mentioned in the Roth Bulletins. Peter Hind of the National Herbarium, Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney was most helpful in checking botanical names. Dr Betty Meehan made many helpful suggestions when the project was in the conceptual stage. Geoff Wharton, consultant historian has

offered critical advice. Staff of the Australian Museum Library gave me invaluable assistance when I was pursuing obscure references.

A special thanks to Dr Val Attenbrow in the Branch of Anthropology at the Australian Museum who spent long hours over the manuscript and offered many useful comments and constructive criticisms, and to Dr Shane McEvey for his editorial assistance.

## Introduction

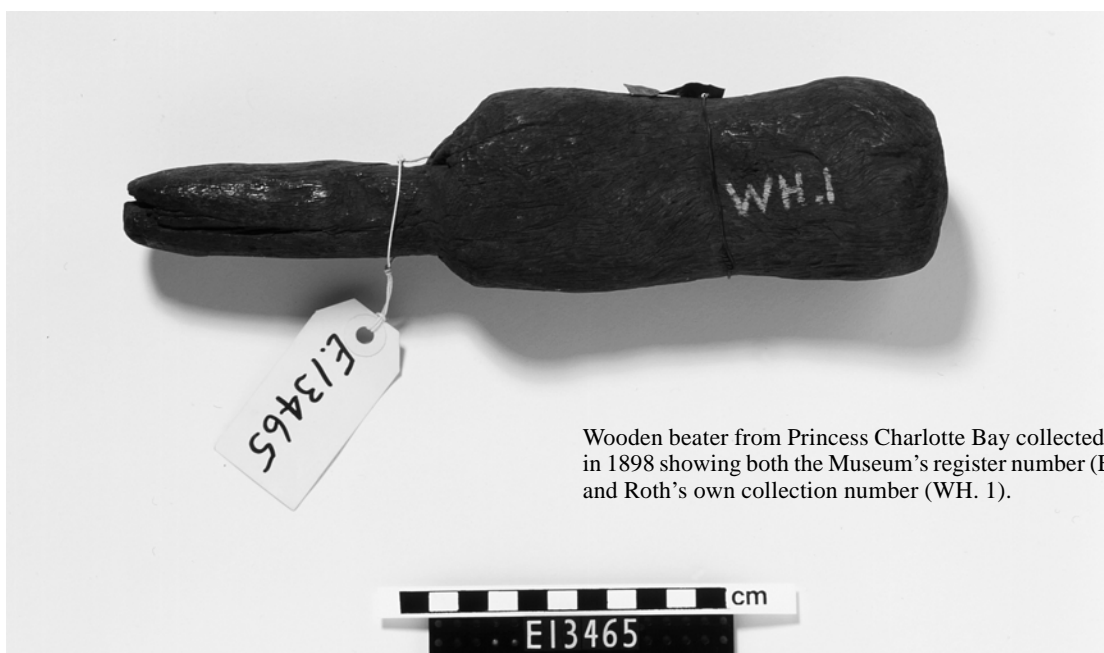
These catalogues are about the Roth collection from Cape York Peninsula—a collection of Aboriginal artefacts gathered together by the First Protector of Aboriginals in north Queensland, Dr Walter Edmund Roth between 1898 and 1904.

Some 2000 artefacts (from Queensland, the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania) and 308 photographic negatives were purchased by the Australian Museum from Dr Roth on 25 February 1905 for 450 Australian pounds. The Museum also holds other north Queensland material collected by Roth which was either donated or sold to the Museum on other occasions. These artefacts also have been included in the Cape York Peninsula catalogues.

When artefacts arrive at the Museum they are given register numbers. This number is written on the object in permanent black or white ink and painted over with a coat of clear varnish to protect it. The same number along with descriptive and locational information is written in a large, leather bound register, on catalogue cards, and into the computer database.

From then, when this artefact is in storage, on exhibition, being conserved or on loan, its whereabouts can be traced through its personal number.

Collectors often give their own numbers to objects while they are collecting them in the field. When Roth did this, his own collector's number is shown after the Museum registration number in the Collection information section.



Wooden beater from Princess Charlotte Bay collected by Roth in 1898 showing both the Museum's register number (E.13465) and Roth's own collection number (WH. 1).