

Epilogue: Reflections

With the wealth of archival and object collections and the litany of published works that emanated from the late nineteenth-century work of Haddon and his Cambridge expedition, what more can there be to learn from these personal journals? Can they tell us anything new or answer any of the many questions Islanders continue to ask about our past and how our things and people were collected?

Given that each reader will bring their own knowledge to the journals there will be details only recognisable to some. Of interest to many will be Haddon's descriptions of people and places, allowing readers to see into the various contexts Haddon operated in during his two visits to the Torres Strait.

The journals reveal a great deal about the lives of Islanders, primarily from a male perspective, including how Islanders related to and treated outsiders and how Islanders were in turn treated. Haddon's informal style of writing and the diary chronology also puts the reader alongside Haddon as he describes his daily activities, his observations and excitements, even what he sits down to eat. In his descriptions of wind direction and tides, the presence of birds or insects and what is in the sea we can also discern how time was measured by our ancestors.

Readers will also get a sense of the broad social and political context of those times, and also of Haddon himself. We can read how missionaries, colonial government representatives and officials, policemen, traders and others assisted his work by integrating Haddon into their own networks, provisioning him with food and transporting him and his equipment around the region. We can tune in to how the coupling of science with ethnography emerged in his work. We will see how Haddon developed close relationships with Islanders but witness too his frequent disparagement of them. The influence of the era's negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people can also be read in Haddon's interactions with Gudang people in Cape York. The very brief film segment in 1898, the

earliest ethnographic film made, records Aboriginal and Torres Strait people together in the late nineteenth century on Mer.

The judicious use of the journals will in time add depth to old conversations, inspire more nuanced engagements with the materials Haddon collected, and hopefully provoke a scholarly re-valuing of Islander knowledges. These are some of the reasons why I anticipate this publication will be tremendously generative.

By way of example, as I write this, I am researching the trading or taking of ancestral remains from Erub in the decade prior to Haddon's first visit to the region in 1888. What can Haddon's journals add to this? Importantly, they present the reader with a view of the European's fascination with the skeletal remains of the colonised 'native' that Haddon was part of. Haddon's own efforts in the collecting of ancestral remains is revealing of the circumstances in which human material was requested and surrendered in these times.

Most crucially for Haddon's purposes, *kole* (Europeans and Anglo-Australians) mediated his swift access to our ancestors and their things. How quickly Haddon became enmeshed in the network of *kole* is demonstrated by a journal entry that shows on August 13, within a week of his arrival on Thursday Island, he travelled with the Government Resident to Naghir, where he requested and was presented with a human skull. By the end of August, on another island Haddon writes that he is 'anxious to get some whole skeletons of natives' and worries that he might not succeed at this. Being able to read Haddon's journals alongside his and other published work can augment our understanding of the grim 'business' of collecting human remains that played out across Australia in the colonial era. These are some of the ways the journals can answer our existing questions about this period of our past.

Away from raking over the past and answering our existing questions, perhaps the greatest gift will be the new questions and directions the journals will provoke. This publication should inspire new ways to think about and grapple with how knowledge about us was discerned and given scientific credence through Haddon's work. It is my hope that the significance of these journals will be revealed in the varieties of histories and stories that Islanders and others will tell and write. In finding these stories, we will need to read closely, looking carefully underneath and inside the words of Haddon to see the silences and the spaces that make writing-back a necessary act of recovery. And in our engagements, we won't be burdened by the station Haddon assigned to our ancestors in his writings, but motivated to revise, re-write and re-present our untold stories as genealogies, in songs, art, dance and drama, in print and on screen. They will be stories and creative work that will both speak back and say much, much more about who we were and are always becoming.

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