

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

**Volume 4**

**Items collected from Nassau River, Night Island,  
Palmer River, Peak Point Electric Telegraph Office,  
Princess Charlotte Bay, Staaten River, Starcke River,  
Tinaroo, Tully River, Vanrook and Weipa (Embley River),  
in 1896–1903**

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## Preface

This is the fourth and final catalogue in this series 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. The catalogues were designed by the late Brian Bona of Studio B.

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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

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## 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 registered 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 on, 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. Where Roth did this, his own collector's number is shown after the Museum registration number in the Collection information section.

