



Club, wahaika form

Not on display

Title/Description: Club, wahaika form

Born: 1800 - 1850

Object Type: Club

Materials: Whalebone

Measurements: l. 432 x h. 125 x d. 14 mm

Accession Number: 185

Historic Period: 19th century - Early

Production Place: East Coast, New Zealand, North Island, Oceania, Pacific

Cultural Group: Māori

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

This is a whalebone variant of the *wahaika* 'billhook' form of club, differing from 186 in its broader blade, 'sinus' indent and straight butt terminal. The treatment of the lateral figure is notable for the regular three-toed feet and the triple projections which extend from the forearms.

Whales were not hunted by the New Zealand Maori, but bones and teeth from stranded specimens were used for making weapons and ornaments. These materials became increasingly available after the arrival of European whalers and traders towards the end of the eighteenth century. This club is comparatively thin and appears to have been carved from a whale's jaw bone or shoulder blade.

Despite the acquisition of firearms by the Maori in the early nineteenth century, indigenous short and long weapons continued to be used in inter-cultural and anti-colonial combat until the 1860s. Thereafter, clubs were made for sale or exhibition purposes and tended to be clumsy and elaborately carved over the entire surface of the blade (see Hamilton, 896: pl. XXXIII for several examples).

Steven Hooper, 1997

Entry taken from *Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Vol. 2: Pacific, African and Native North American Art*, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997) p. 13.

Provenance

Acquired by the Sainsbury Family in 1949. Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
