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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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FIVE TRIANGULAR ADZES FROM HAIKU, MAUI,  
HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

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In the collection of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum are five unfinished adzes with triangular cross-sections from Haiku, Maui, Hawaiian Islands. On loan from Maunaolu College, the adze blanks were found together in a cache on the property of Mrs Isa Lindsay. As triangular adzes are an extremely rare, and probably early, form in Hawaii, it seems appropriate to provide a description of these specimens, and to offer a hypothesis for their connection with adze assemblages from other East Polynesian islands.

The adzes are all of the same material, a dense, grey basalt, probably dike stone. The roughing out stage of manufacture had been completed, but the adzes have not been ground or polished. Flaking was the only method used in shaping the artifacts. There is considerable size variation, as indicated in Table 1. The three larger specimens are tanged; the tang was formed by a frontal reduction of the butt. There is a slight "up-curving" at the poll. One of the tanged specimens (L3692) is shown in Figure 1.

The common, typical Hawaiian adze is quadrangular and tanged. Emory (1968: 162) noted that "no place in East Polynesia exhibits such a steadfast adherence to one form of adze as Hawaii". Emory continued: "The discovery of nine finished triangular tanged adzes . . . and the recovery on Maui of a cache of five in the rough, of the same form (the same cache described here), have alerted us to the possibility that the settlers of Hawaii brought this central East Polynesian type with them" (1968: 164, Fig. 3, No. 6).

Cognates to these Maui adzes occur in the Marquesas, Pitcairn, Chathams, New Zealand, Kermadecs, Southern Cooks, Societies, Tuamotus, Raivaevae, and Rapa Iti (Figueroa and Sanchez 1965: 197). Figueroa and Sanchez feel that the similarity of specimens from New Zealand, Pitcairn, and the Marquesas "suggests close resemblance to the Eastern Polynesian prototype" (1965: 197).

Triangular adzes have also been reported from Samoa, where they are present throughout the entire prehistoric sequence (Green and Davidson, 1969: 32). These adzes, however, are all untanged. Hence it appears that the development of the tang occurred in East Polynesia.

In sum, the adzes from Maui, although devoid of stratigraphic context, provide excellent documentation of the earlier presence of the tanged triangular adze in Hawaii. As with several other adze types found in early Hawaiian sites, the triangular adze did not survive, and was supplanted by the tanged quadrangular adze.

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TABLE 1

No.	Length	Width	Thickness at Midsection	Thickness at Butt	Weight	Tanged
L3690	14.5 cm	2.7 cm	3.1 cm	3.1 cm	180 gr	No
L3691	16.7	2.9	3.2	3.2	245	No
L3692	17.8	3.8	4.3	2.9	420	Yes
L3693	23.5	4.7	4.9	4.0	840	Yes
L3694	28.4	4.9	4.9	3.9	1105	Yes

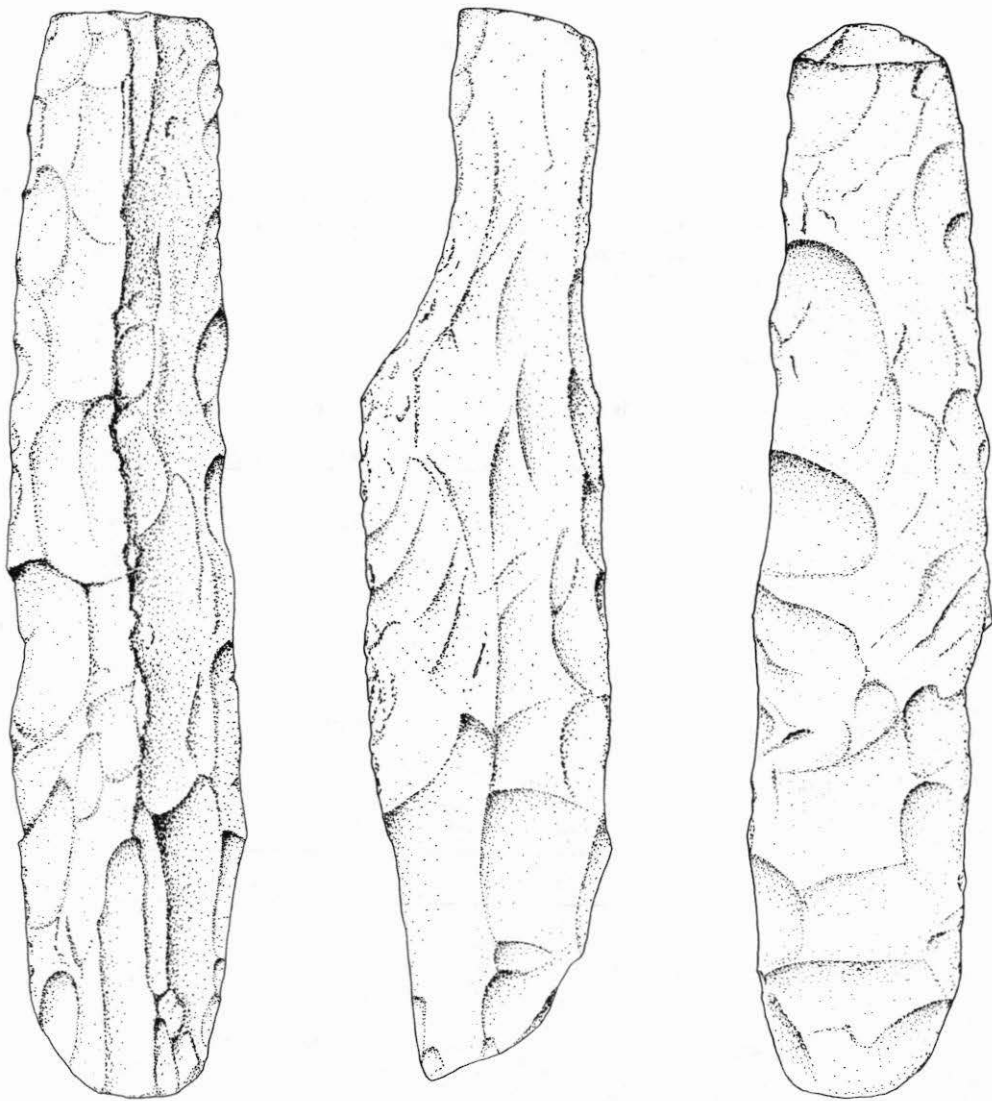


FIGURE 1