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TWO HAFTED STONE CHISELS IN GIGLIOLI'S COLLECTION

Gaetano Cofini
Rome
Italy

Giglioli's Collection at the Museum of Prehistory and Ethnography in Rome includes a large section dedicated to Maori material culture. Most of these pieces, collected at the end of the last century, are represented by lithic artefacts such as adzes, axes and chisels (Cofini 1992). Only a few of these preserve their wooden handles, thus providing information on hafting techniques. In particular two hafted chisels deserve attention because they are unusual.

The first hafted chisel (Fig. 1) has a blade made in nephrite, with rounded quadrangular cross section and oblique cutting edge. It was lashed using a traditional pattern to a round sectioned wooden handle using a fairly heavy cord. The blade is double-bevelled and finely polished. The chisel (blade and haft) is 13.7 cm long; the maximum width and thickness of the blade is of 1.2 cm and 0.9 cm. Giglioli tells us the Maori name of the artefact was *whao*, a generic term applied to chisels (Best 1974: 26) and that the chisel was very uncommon for its formal features. Although there is no information available to date the artefact, the type of cord used for lashing suggests a post-European origin. According to the catalogue notes, the tool belonged to the *Ngaitahu* and came from Timaru in the South Island. In 1886 it was given to Giglioli by Mrs Cowlishaw from Christchurch.

The second item is a very curious lithic chisel (Fig. 2). It is an adze head of Duff's type 4A, but it is hafted as a chisel in a bowl formed from a wooden node (knot) with a round-sectioned handle. The blade is of dark brown volcanic rock with isotropic microcrystalline properties (basalt) (Eugenio Cerilli, geologist, pers. comm. 1993). It has been mounted and secured with fibre bast, the blade finely polished at the cutting edge. The cross section is triangular with the apex up towards the butt shoulder. Towards the cutting edge it is sub-rectangular. Overall the chisel is 32.8 cm long, with a maximum width of 4.2cm and a thickness of 4.4 cm. Duff's type 4A adze heads are characterized by the presence of a marked grip (Duff 1956: 178). In this case the wooden handle portion does not enable us to verify the existence of this feature, although a reduction of the front could be assumed by traces of pecking in the mid section of the blade. In the catalogue *toki panehe* is recorded as the Maori name for the artefact, although this term otherwise seems to have been used for describing metal adzes or hatchets (Best 1974: 24). Giglioli informs us that the chisel belonged originally to the Te Uriwera and was collected in Tolaga Bay, North Island. In 1893 the Italian collector acquired the artefact from C. Gustav Schmitt of Auckland.

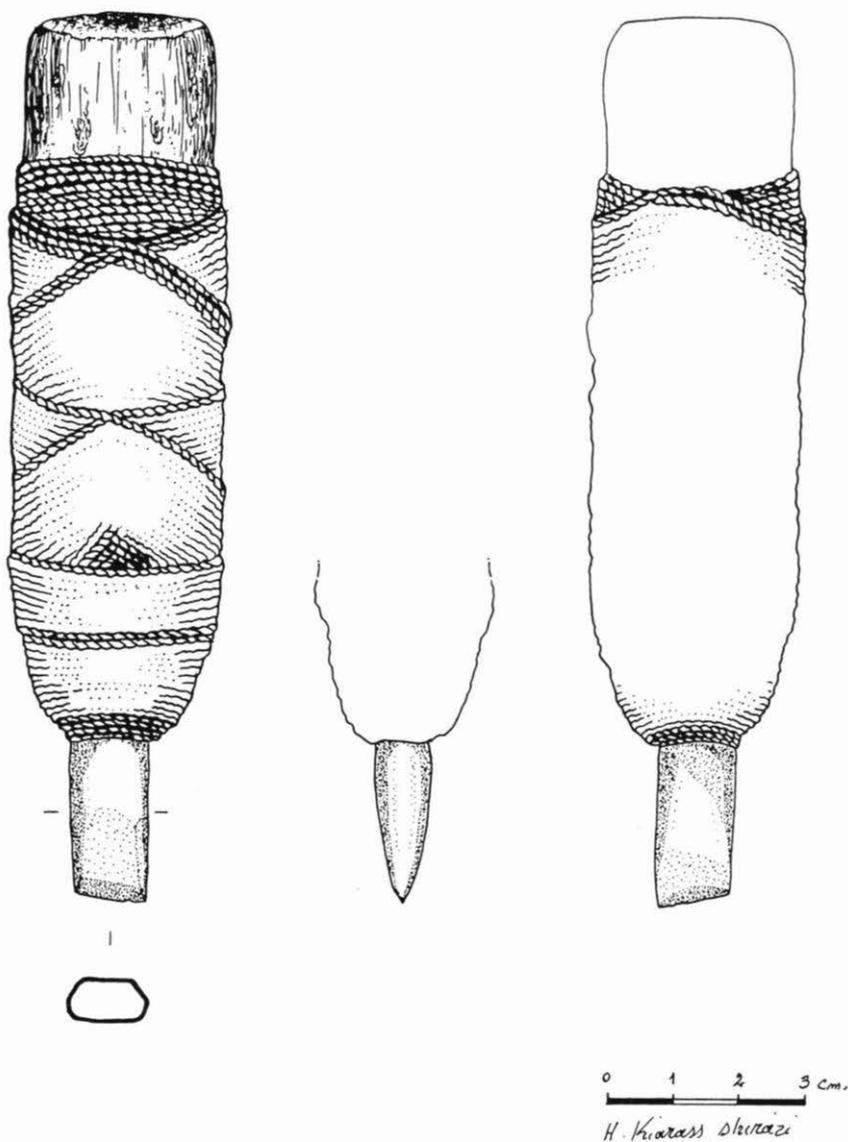


Figure 1. Hafted nephrite chisel from Timaru.

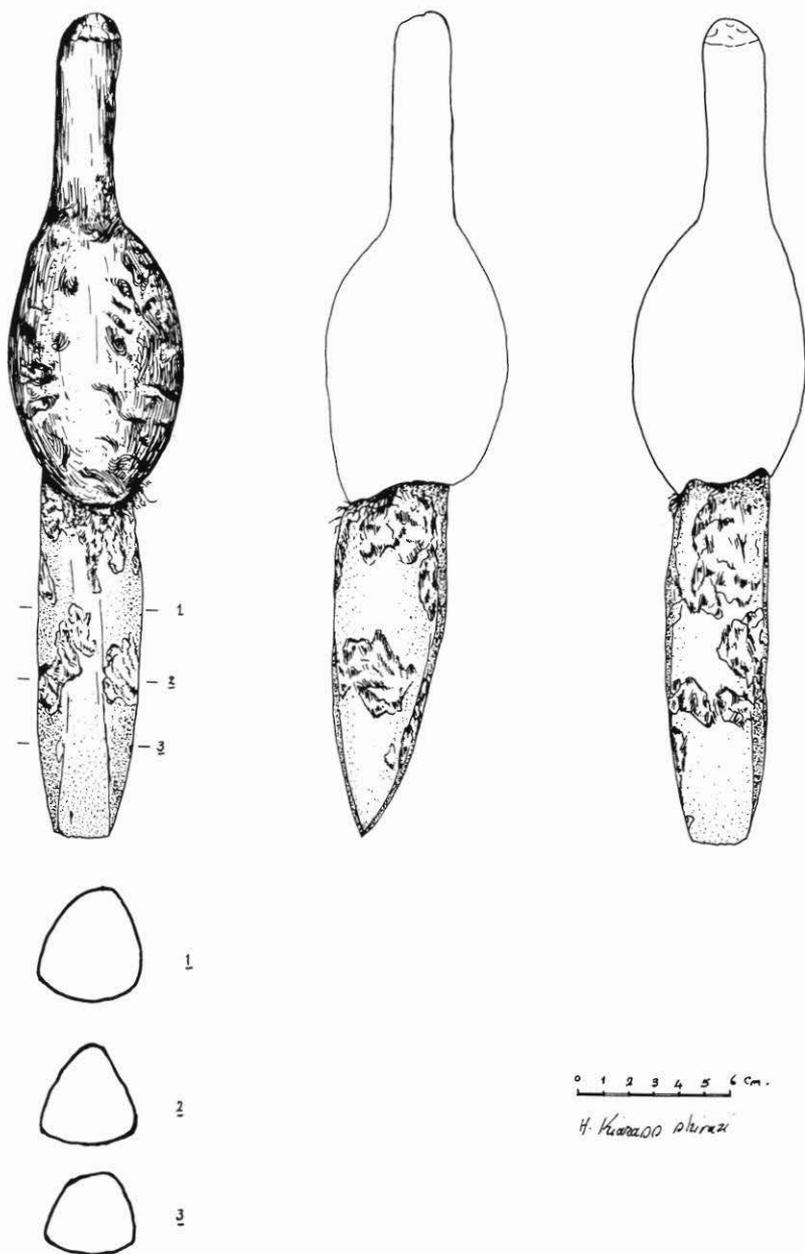


Figure 2. Basalt chisel hafted in a wooden node from Tolaga Bay.

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