

## NOTES ON AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL STONE WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS.

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(Plates XI.-XIII.)

### XVIII.—*Tomahawks with Hafting Grooves.\**

Grooved tomahawks are far less common, than those unprovided with this adjunct to fastening a handle, in collections of Australian stone weapons and implements, and it is inferred that the manufacture of them by the Blacks was equally so.

I have already figured† a fairly good example from North Queensland, and referred to other figures extant. The first of the two specimens now described is from Gorman's Hill West, Lake Cudgellico, Co. Dowling, and for an opportunity of noticing it, I am indebted to Mr. G. A. Stonier, of the Geological Survey of N. S. Wales, who obtained it at that place.

This example of the grooved tomahawk differs from that already figured in these Notes in having the hafting groove far back towards the butt. On the other hand, it agrees in this feature with one figured by Smyth,‡ although the outline of the two weapons is different. The present implement is particularly well finished, with a strong hammer-headed butt, probably used for crushing, this appearance being intensified by the posterior position of the groove. Like the grooved tomahawk from North Queensland, the shape of the present example is ovate, convex on one face and

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\* I am indebted to Mr. G. W. Card, Mineralogist to the Dept. of Mines, for determining the petrological characters of the present weapons.

† P.L.S.N.S.W. 1891, vi. (2), p. 367, t. 31, f. 3 and 4.

‡ Aborigines of Victoria, 1878, i. p. 368, f. 183, p. 372, f. 195.

somewhat flattened on the other, especially towards the anterior. The cutting edge is much more regularly curved than in the generality of tomahawks, but the bevelled sides are unequal in consequence of the almost plano-convex section of the pebble from which the implement has been adapted. The hafting groove is wide, and rather less than two-eighths of an inch deep; it has been very regularly and equally prepared. The general surface exhibits a roughened more or less areolate structure, probably the result of weathering, the immediate cutting-edge being the only smoothed part. The latter is slightly chipped, and the surface of the hammer-headed butt indented or bruised. The longest diameter of the head is two and three-eighths inches, and the shortest one and four-eighths inches. The tomahawk is four and five-eighths inches long and three inches wide. Its weight is one pound three ounces. In colour it is brownish-black. Impossible as it is to spoil the implement by the preparation of a microscopic section, its petrological identity can only be surmised from macroscopic examination. The rock is regarded by Mr. G. W. Card as a finely crystalline igneous rock, possibly a diorite or diabase. Like the grooved tomahawk figured by the late Mr. McPherson, our specimen differs from the North Queensland example in the much more posterior position of the hafting groove, and thereby approximates to the implement figured by Smyth from a *Mirrnyong* at Lake Condah, Victoria, but the butt end in the present one is much flatter.

A very heavy grooved implement from Cape Hawke, N. S. Wales, is in the Australian Museum, presented by Mr. Hugh Breckenridge, and is again converted from a large pebble, also a finely crystalline igneous rock, probably a diabase, says Mr. Card. It is much heavier than either of the previous examples that have come under my notice, weighing three pounds. The hafting groove is not nearly so posterior in position as in that just described, or in the Queensland Museum specimen. It is also shallower and wider. The bevel has been produced, as usual, by grinding the surface rather more on one face than the other. The cutting-edge is well curved, and was before injury approach-

ing the semicircular. In this instance we find that the butt-end, which is convexly truncated, has been partially shaped by grinding.

The Cape Hawke tomahawk is a heavy and unwieldy implement, and when in use must have been mounted on an extremely strong handle, or perhaps simply held by a slender withy and used as a wedge. The acceptance of the latter view would no doubt account for the bruised appearance presented by the butt-end. The tomahawk is five and six-eighths inches long, three and seven-eighths broad, and two and a half inches in thickness.

So far, therefore, as our present knowledge of these grooved tomahawks stands, we have two types—

1. *Ovate type.*

a. With the hafting groove more or less central.

b. With the hafting groove posterior.

2. *Deltoid type.*

b. With the hafting groove posterior.

The recorded distribution is now as follows :—

1. North Queensland (*De Vis*).
2. Tilligerry Creek, Port Stephens, N.S.W. (*McPherson*).
3. Cape Hawke, N.S.W. (*Breckenridge*).
4. Lake Cudgellico, Co. Dowling, N.S.W. (*Stonier*).
5. Lake Condah, Co. Normanby, Vict. (*Smyth*), where they are known as *Pur-ut-three*.

XIX.—*Tomahawk of the Gad-shaped Type.*

A very fine example of what I have termed the “Gad-shaped” type has been presented to the Mining and Geological Museum by Mr. W. A. Cuneo, of Thirlmere, where it was found. It consists of an oblong pebble, either diorite or diabase, Mr. Card thinks, decreasing in diameter towards the butt. The longer edges in the anterior or fore part of the tomahawk are practically parallel, one of the sides moderately convex, the other flattened in the middle. The cutting-edge is regularly curved and the bevel almost equal on both faces, with the striæ resulting from the grinding still visible, passing diagonally across the faces.

Towards the butt the sides rapidly attenuate to a suitable circumference to render the implement of a fit size to be held in the hand ; and there is the possibility, therefore, of the members of this group having been so used, although I did not suggest this in a former paper when dealing with similar tomahawks. The butt-end is rounded and shows traces of abrasion and chipping. The length of this remarkably fine implement is eight and a half inches, the breadth two and five-eighths, greatest thickness one and three-eighths inches, and the weight one pound fifteen ounces.

The surface is roughened by weathering.

xx.—*Toy Tomahawk.*

I am indebted to the Rev. J. M. Curran for a very extraordinary little implement. It is from the west, probably the Bogan country, and consists of a greenish-coloured rock agreeing in hardness and specific gravity with serpentine, according to Mr. G. W. Card. It is a flake and not a pebble, thickest at the anterior end and thinning off to a mere nothing at the butt. The cutting edge is only very slightly curved, whilst the bevel is remarkably short and abrupt on each face, bounded posteriorly by sharp ridges, instead of graduating insensibly into the body of the implement.

The dimensions of this little toy are—Length one and a half inches, breadth one and one-eighth inches, thickness seven-sixteenths of an inch, and weight three-quarters of an ounce. It is difficult to conceive that this little implement could have been put to any utilitarian purpose, and I can only regard it, with the present knowledge I possess of Aboriginal stone implements, as a picanniny's tomahawk. We know that amongst the Aborigines the children were provided with miniature weapons and implements, as a part of juvenile instruction. Mr. Smyth remarked\* : "The toy weapons which are made for the use and amusement of the children, the care that is taken in teaching the boys to throw the spear, to use the stone tomahawk, the shield, and the club . . . make them when even young quite accomplished bushmen."

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\* Aborigines of Victoria, 1878, i. p. 49.

*Note.*—A second child's tomahawk has been lent me by Mr. J. H. Maiden, from the Goulburn Technological Museum. It was found at Cowal, Forbes District, and is even smaller than that from the Bogan. Like the latter, it is a flake instead of a pebble. Mr. G. W. Card says—"it has all the appearance of being a fragment of lydian stone—the 'touchstone' of jewellers." The little specimen is one and a quarter inches long and three-quarters of an inch wide. The weight is about half an ounce.

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### EXPLANATION OF FIGURES.

#### PLATE XI.

Fig. 1.—Tomahawk with hafting groove (side view) ; Cape Hawke.

Fig. 2.—The same (edge view).

#### PLATE XII.

Fig. 1.—Tomahawk with hafting groove (edge view) ; Lake Cudgellico.

Fig. 2.—Gad-shaped tomahawk (edge view) ; Thirlmere.

#### PLATE XIII.

Fig. 1.—Tomahawk with hafting groove (side view) ; Lake Cudgellico.

Fig. 2.—Gad-shaped tomahawk (side view) ; Thirlmere.



Etheridge, Robert and Melo-Costa, Wanessa de. 1894. "Notes on Australian aboriginal stone weapons and implements." *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 8, 295–299.

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