

# **HISTORICAL AND TECHNICAL REPORT**

## ***WAHAIKA PARAOA WHALEBONE CLUB***

**X65.1423**

**FOWLER MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UCLA)**



**REPORT PRODUCED BY  
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MAY 2025**

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## KUPUTAKA/GLOSSARY

Kupu ē-kaupapa/Term	Whakamāramatanga/Definition
Haerenga	Journey
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Haehae	Parallel lines used in carving designs
Hītori	History
Iwi	Tribe
Kaiwhakairo	Carver
Kakau	Handle
Karu	Eye/s
Kaumātua	Respected elders
Kawa	Protocols of practice, how things are done (see also tikanga)
Paraoa	Whalebone
Pūrākau	Stories, oral history
Mātauranga	Traditional knowledge
Rangahau	Research
Rangatira	Chief or chiefly in nature
Rauponga	Combination of haehae lines and pātaki.
Taonga	Cultural treasure or artefact
Tāhuhu Kōrero	Background story
Tikanga	Correct procedure or custom (see kawa)
Tinana	Body
Tūpuna	Ancestors
Te Ao Māori	The Māori World or Māori worldview
Uhi	Chisel
Uri	Descendants
Waewae	Legs
Whakanakonako	Embellishments
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whānau/Whanaunga	Relative/s

## KUPU WHAKATAKI/PREFACE

*‘Ko te manu e kai ana i te miro nōnā te ngahere, ko te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōnā te ao.’*

The forest belongs to the bird who feasts on the miro berry, the world belongs to the bird who feasts on education.  
Māori Whakatauki/Proverb

The *whakapapa* (genealogy) and *hītori* (history) of *taonga*, or the provenance and history of cultural treasures, are as important as the items themselves. Whenever the term *taonga* is used within this report, the author is referring to cultural treasures, although Western practice usually refers to them simply as artefacts or objects.

*Mātauranga* (knowledge) of who the *kairaranga* (weaver) or the *kaiwhakairo* (carver) was, the *iwi* or *hapū* (subtribe) from which they affiliate, the identity of the receiver, and the reasons for the gifting – are also *taonga* and unfortunately, far too much of this information has been lost to time.

Māori *taonga* rest in countless institutions around the world, museums, galleries, libraries, and private collections, and although the author does not take issue with this as such; he does feel that far too many *taonga* are displayed, or held, without an appropriate level of cultural and historical context. After visiting several museums in Europe, the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom, the author noticed that several of our *taonga* had either minimal information, no cultural context, or worse, some information panels bore the terms ‘Unknown’ or ‘Unidentified’ and the name of the collector or collection was more prominent than the *taonga* itself.

As a weaver, a novice carver, and a Māori historian, the author felt that he was able to examine select *taonga* from institutions in countries to which he travels and produce documents that would provide these institutions with a general level of historical and technical information. The author has been fortunate to have undertaken extensive international travel, for work, research, and holidays, and has recently begun integrating museum and gallery visits into these trips; contacting institutions prior to any of his *haerenga* (journeys), to ascertain what *taonga* they have, and what he might want to access and examine – or what they would like to know more about.

By no means does he claim to be an expert in the study of Māori *taonga* and feels that there are others of greater standing within the field; however, he offers his knowledge, as best as he is able, to produce research documents that provide substantially more information than is currently held on these specific *taonga*.

The compilation and provision of these reports serve several purposes: to do the *taonga* justice by visiting and spending time with them; to examine them and promote their whereabouts; make their locations known to Māori (and other interested persons); and to uncover their *pūrākau* (stories) and bring them back to life. This third practice of uncovering their *pūrākau* achieves several outcomes, these being: to reunite them with *uri* (direct descendants) and *whanaunga* (relatives); to provide the institutions with a credible and informative record of the respective *taonga*; and ensuring their stories are not forgotten – *ka maumahara tonu tātou kia rātou*.

The word ‘*wahaika*’ translates as the ‘mouth of the fish’, because of the weapon's notched convex side; and this particular *pūrākau* focusses on a *wahaika paraoa* (whalebone club) that was collected in Auckland in the 1930s by Belgian archaeologist André Louis Henri Chocqueel, and eventually became part of the Fowler Collection.

## HAURONGO/BIOGRAPHY



The author's cultural background sees him affiliated with the *iwi* (tribes) of Ngāpuhi, Ngāi Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, and Te Whānau-a-Apanui, as well as having connections to Alveston in Gloucestershire, Bloomsbury in London, and Helsingborg in Sweden – all of which he has visited.

He is ex-military, having served in the army as a paratrooper and then military police officer; before studying a Bachelor of Arts, and then a Master of Teaching degree, and becoming a history teacher, and a military and Māori historian.

The author is a cultural practitioner: *kairaranga* (weaver), novice *kaiwhakairo* (carver), and *kaihaka* (performer).

He is a published author, producing articles, reports, and story books; produced a historical short film; delivered lectures around the world; and contributed towards exhibitions in institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia.

The author's research has been referred to in the media; mentioned in legal cases; used on government websites; presented in museums; stopped the sale of *taonga* at auction and assisted in the repatriation of *taonga* back to Aotearoa New Zealand.

He has also appeared on television and radio in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, as a *tumu kōrero* (historian), in documentaries, news, and cultural programs.

The author is a husband, father, and grandfather, who believes in the importance of teaching his *whānau* (family) *mātauranga* and *toi Māori* and including them in his *kaupapa rangahau* (research projects); taking them with him on these *haerenga* (journeys) if the opportunities allow.

It is his goal to contribute toward *Māoritanga* and *Te Ao Māori* (The Māori World) in a positive and impactful manner and hopes that this report goes some way towards achieving this objective.

## ARA RANGAHAU/RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



The author discusses aspects of a *taonga* with Isabella Kelly-Ramirez – Manager Collections, at the Fowler Museum, UCLA, Photograph courtesy of Rachel Raynor (2025).

This report was compiled by the author, utilising: online and library/archive-based research; consultation with curators; conducting interviews with *kaiwhakairo* (carvers); as well as carrying out a physical examination of the *wahaika paraoa* itself. The physical examination of the artefact was undertaken at the Fowler Museum, UCLA on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The online and library-based research was undertaken between July 2024 - December 2024. The consultation process and interviews with Māori academics and *kaumātua* began in August 2024, and are ongoing, as per Māori *kawa* and *tikanga*.

Facsimiles of original documentation, provided by the Fowler Museum during the research process, included: Fowler Museum Argus Report, and the Wellcome Collection index card for A130.411. Information from, and images of these documents, are either provided by, or taken, by permission of the Fowler Museum. All physical descriptions, including measurements, and any condition notes, were obtained during the author's examination of the *taonga*.

## HE MIHI/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks, and acknowledgment goes to the following people and institutions for their support and assistance: Fowler Museum (Silvia Forni – Director, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez – Manager Collections, Rachel Raynor –Director of Registration and Collections Management, Jeanette Saunders – Registrar, Patrick Polk – Lilly Endowment Curator of Art and Religion, and Carlee Forbes – Mellon Curatorial Fellow).

# **PŪRONGO KŌRERO O NEHE**

## **HISTORICAL REPORT**

# TĀHUHU KŌRERO/BACKGROUND STORY

***‘Ana tā te uaua paraoa.’***

*‘Behold the strength of the sperm whale.*

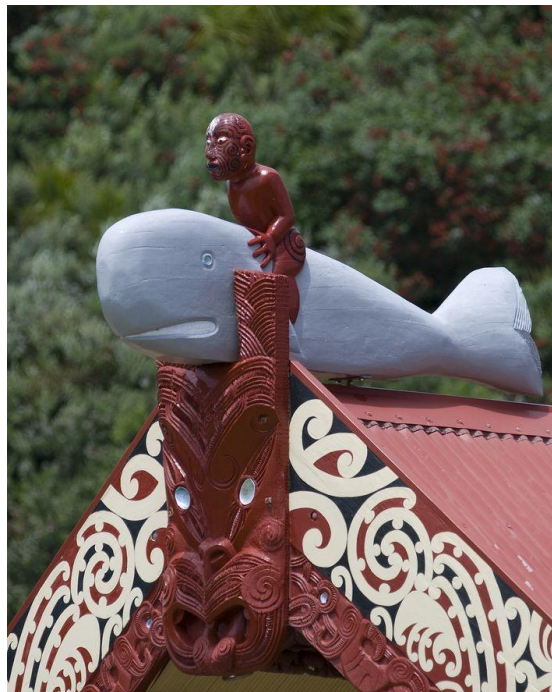
*I am powerful – attack me at your own peril.’ – Māori whakataukī*

## **Physical and metaphysical whakapapa**

The Māori people have a long and meaningful relationship with *tohorā* (whales)

‘It is said that whales guided the canoes that brought the first people to New Zealand. In one story, the Tākitimu canoe travelled behind a pod of whales during a storm. In another, a water spirit, thought to be a whale, calmed the waves for the canoe of the Tainui tribes. Priests who navigated called on sea animals to guide the canoes and protect them from storms.’<sup>i</sup>

In traditions, there are many Māori who rode whales, one of these *pūrākau* (stories) tells of Paikea, the youngest son of Uenuku, a chief from Mangaia in the Cook Islands.



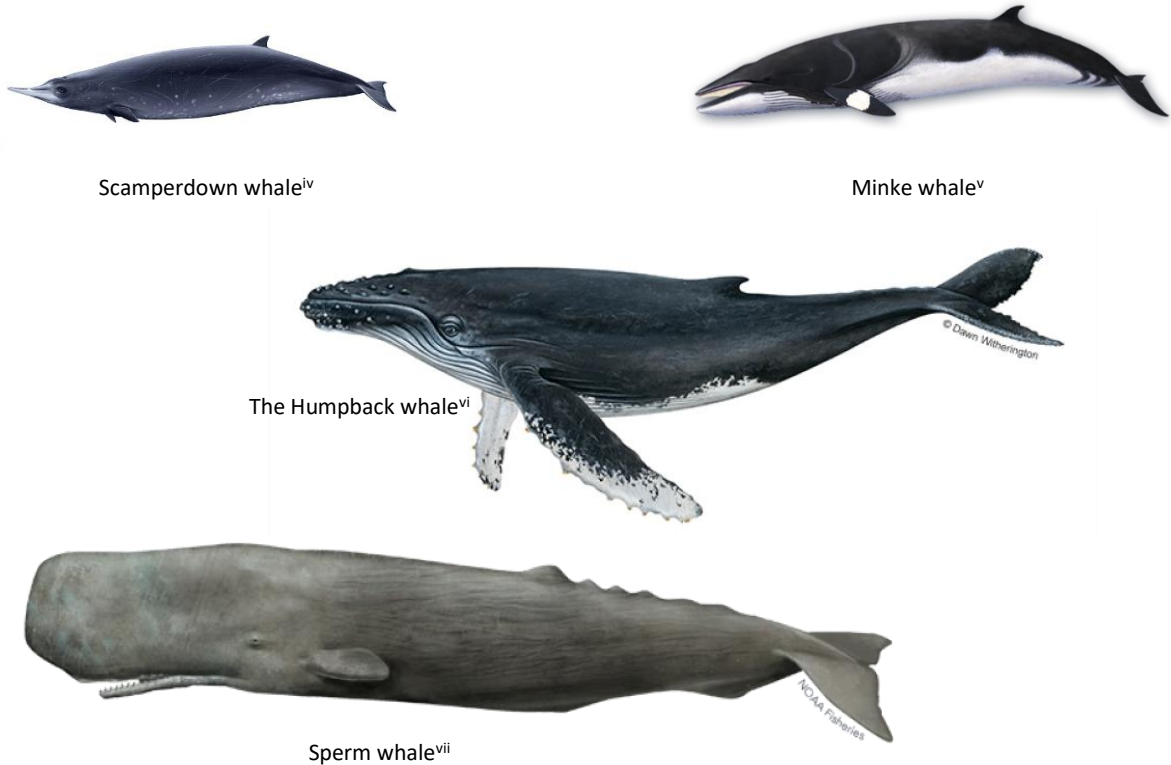
This carving of Paikea, the whale rider, was made by the well-known East Coast carver Pine Taiapa. It sits at the roof apex of Whitirēia marae in Whāngārā. Paikea is the ancestor of the Ngāti Konohi sub-tribe, here at Whāngārā, as well as the Ngai Tahu people of Te Wai Pounamu (South Island).<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>iii</sup>Paikea was the youngest and favourite son of the chief Uenuku from the island of Mangaia in the present day Cook Islands. This favouritism made Paikea's elder brothers extremely jealous. They conspired to kill Paikea while fishing offshore and tell Uenuku he drowned. But the night before the trip Paikea feigned sleep and overheard his brothers plotting. When far out to sea Paikea foiled their plan by deliberately sinking the canoe and drowning his brothers.

Now adrift in a great ocean, Paikea clung to a canoe plank and awaited his own death. It was then that Tohorā the whale appeared and lifted Paikea onto his great back. Tohorā took Paikea south to New Zealand and the settlement of Whangara just north of present-day Gisborne. Here, Paikea began a new and prosperous life.’

Te Tahi-o-te-rangi rode a whale from White Island to the Whakatāne River. And the priest Tūnui rode his pet whale at Cape Kidnappers in Hawke’s Bay.

A generic name for whale is *tohorā*, however, there are names for specific varieties, such as: *Hakurā* or *Iheihe* – Scamperdown whale; *Paikea* – Southern humpback whale, or a whale with a white belly and deep grooves along its length; *Pakake* – Minke whale; *Ūpokohue* – blackfish or pilot whale; and the much sought after *Pāraoa* – Sperm whale, hence the use of the word *pāraoa* when attached to whalebone *taonga*.



Māori harvested food and materials from whales that occasionally stranded on their shores. This sustainable, low-impact whaling began changing in the late 1700s, when foreign ships from Western nations came to hunt the large pods of whales in Pacific waters; with a few Māori becoming involved in the later 1700s, such as famed Ngāti Kahu chief, Ruatara, who worked onboard the Sperm whaler the *Argo* as it travelled around the South Pacific. In the mid-1800s, Māori were working in the shore stations or commanding the whaleboats, as did the author’s Ngāpuhi *tupuna* (ancestors) who invested in a pair of whaling vessels and plied their trade in the waters of Ipīpiri (Bay of Islands).

The author is drawn to *rakau paraoa* (whalebone weaponry), having personal connections with this *taonga*. As mentioned above, the author's *tupuna* (ancestors) were whalers, having purchased a pair of ‘clinkers’ and whaling in the waters of *Te Pewhairangi* (The Bay of Islands) in the latter half of the 1800s. Unfortunately, two of three chiefly brothers, Rewiri Tarapata, and Witeria Taawhi,<sup>viii</sup> lost their lives in a storm off the coast of *Rakaumangamanga*; a mountain that was sacred to the *hapū* of *Te Patukeha* and *Ngāti Kuta*, to which the author identifies as being one of his *maunga* (mountains).

## Mau Rakau/Māori Weaponry

A *wahaika* is an effective striking weapon for use in close combat, a preferred method of warfare.<sup>ix</sup> The word '*wahaika*' translates as the '*mouth of the fish*', because of the weapon's notched convex side. The *wahaika parāoa* has a concave point on one side of the blade and a notch on the other. The principal striking edges are the convex distal tip and the concave point where the blade curves back towards the handgrip. Usually carved from whalebone or wood, opponents' weapons can be parried or caught and deflected using the curved, notch area of the club.

These types of weapons were used in battle, of course, but also used in speeches to accentuate the delivery of a particular point where *Rangatira*/Chiefs wanted people to pay attention.<sup>x</sup>

This particular *pūrākau* focusses on a *wahaika paraoa* (whalebone club) that was collected in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1930s by Belgian archaeologist André Chocqueel, who resided there twice between 1906-1908, and again between 1911-1918.

\*For more information – see the Provenance section pp. 25-27.



Tawhiao Matutaera Potatau Te Wherowhero, by Gottfried Landauer.<sup>xi</sup>

# **PŪRONGO KUPU Ā-KAUPAPA TECHNICAL REPORT**

## Pūrongo Tīariari/Existing Report

Fowler Museum - Argus Report

Object

X65.1423



MERE | MAORI | NEW ZEALAND | WHALEBONE | SHELL | WAX | CARVED | POLISHED | INLAID

`Mere' - whalebone, carved "tiki" figure, inlaid red wax and shell, damaged. BOX CW-1078.

Remarks by David Simmons, director of the Auckland Museum, who visited UCLA in Nov. 1973:

Genuine. Mid 19th century "wahawhaika" made of whalebone. Central North Island.

A130411

5/19/1933

Purchase Date

Wellcome Purchased from André Louis Henri Marie Chocqueel (Ostend)

L: 4.25 in, H: 14 in

Collector: André Louis Henri Marie Chocqueel, Donor: Sir Henry Wellcome, Wellcome Trust

Donated to the Fowler by Wellcome Trust in 12/5/1965

Gift of the Wellcome Trust.

## Taipitopito tirohanga/Examination details

**Initial Examination Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Confirmatory examination date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**Examination location:** Center for the Study of Regional Dress, Fowler Museum, UCLA.

**Staff present at examination:** – Silvia Forni – Director, Rachel Raynor – Director of Registration and Collections Management, Isabella Kelly Ramirez – Manager Collections, Syoni Puliady - Curator of Textiles of the Eastern Hemisphere, and Carlee Forbes – Mellon Curatorial Fellow.

### **Momo Taonga/Type of Object:**

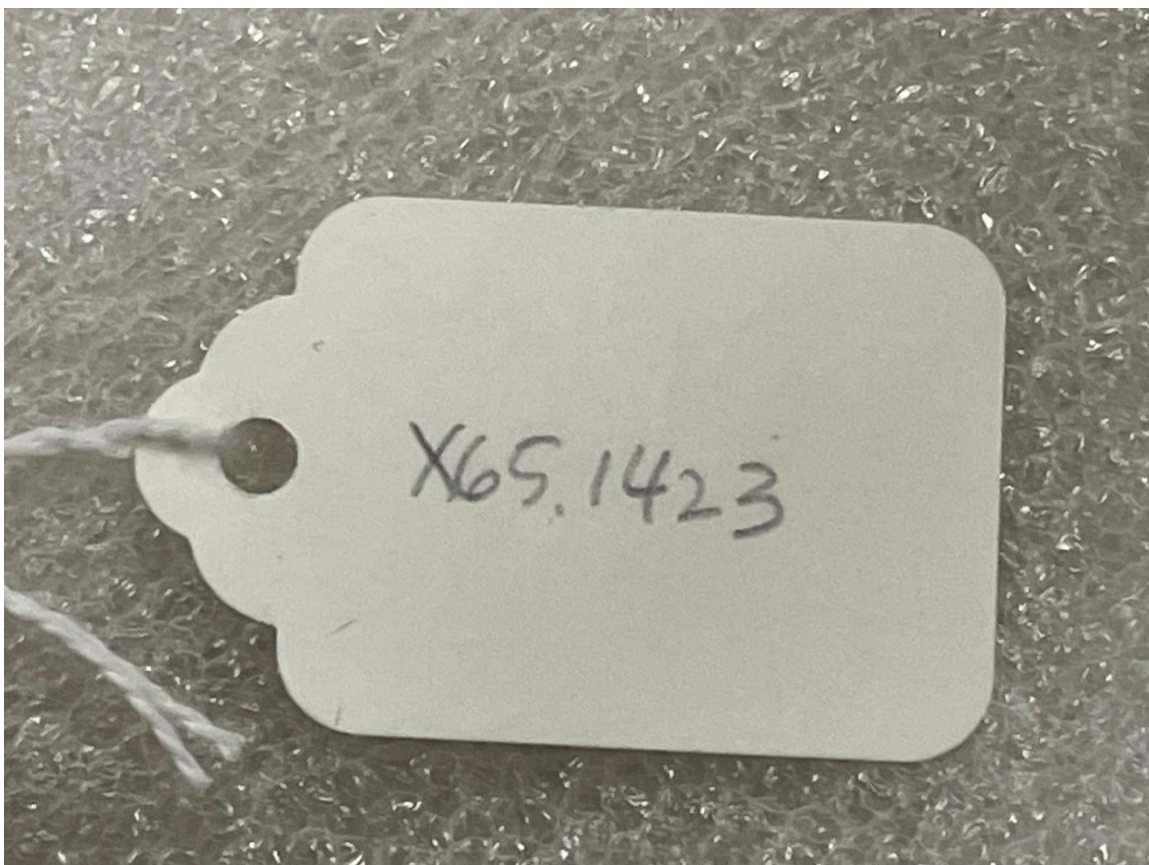
*Wahaika Paraoa* – Whalebone hand club.

### **Accession Number:**

X65.1423

### **Pinetohu/Labels, tags:**

There is currently one identifier regarding this *taonga* (artefact/cultural treasure). This being a small white cardboard identification tag, bearing the following details 'X65.1423', which is tied to the *wahaika paraoa* with a string.



Fowler Museum Identification tag.

### Whakaahuatanga/Description:

This *wahaika paraoa* appears to be a pre-contact or early-contact artifact, crafted from *pāraoa* (whalebone). The patina is as would be expected from a *taonga* of its estimated age, with staining and discolouration which has leached into the whalebone itself. The *reke* (butt/pommel) of the *wahaika* is decorated with a *whiti*, an *ūpoko* (head) of a *manaia* or *taniwha* (supernatural guardian). There is a *pūkaiora* (figure) on the front, concave edge, with a basic carved design which runs horizontally across the centre of the *rau* (blade) at its narrowest point. One of the *karu* (eyes) on the right profile of the *ūpoko* on the *reke* has a *pāua* inlay, whilst the other appears to be missing and a small amount of red wax can be seen in the recess where the *pāua* would have been. The dimensions are consistent with a functional weapon, and there appears to be a small measure of damage to the leading edge, which may have occurred during battle.



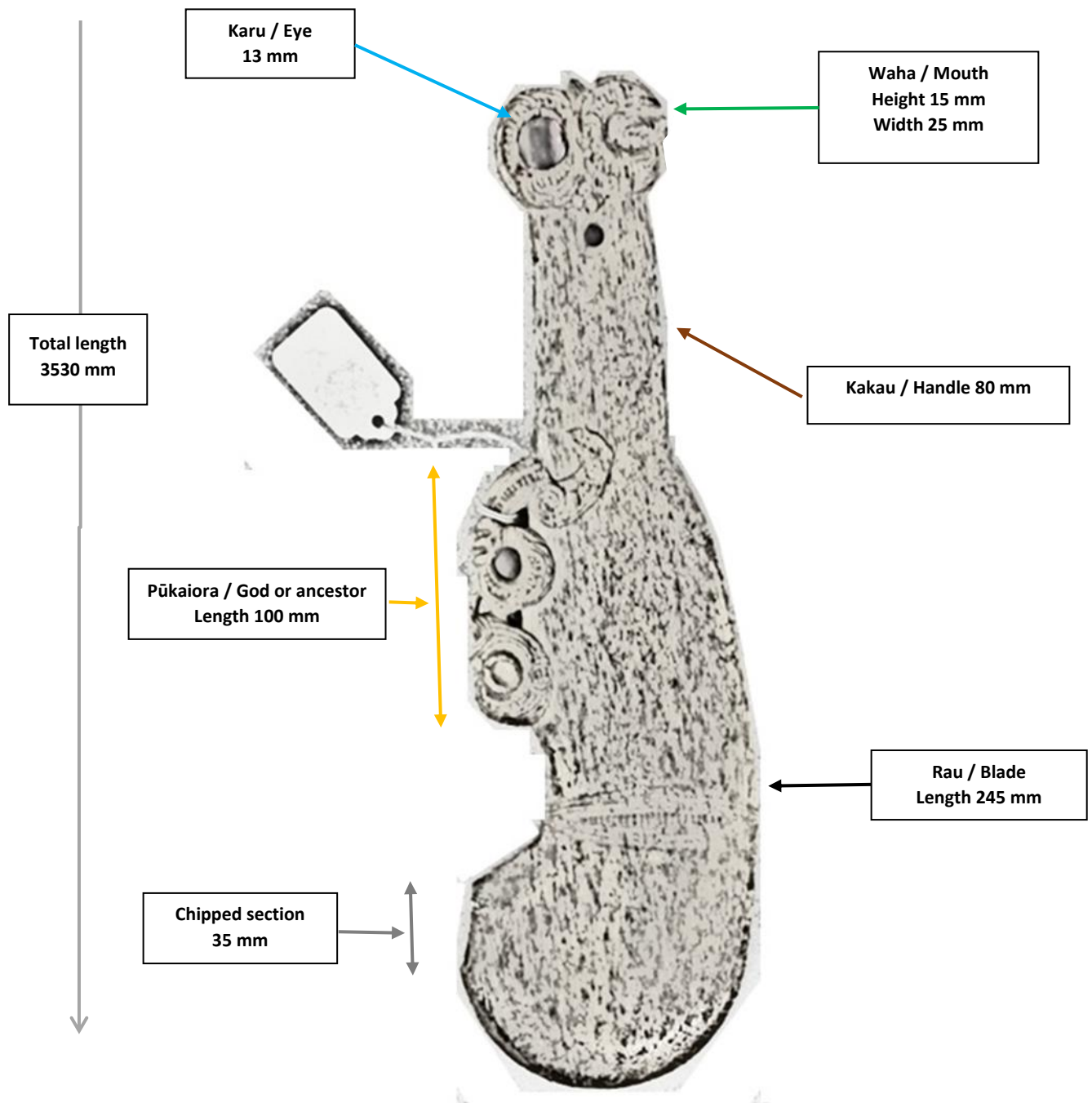
Left profile.

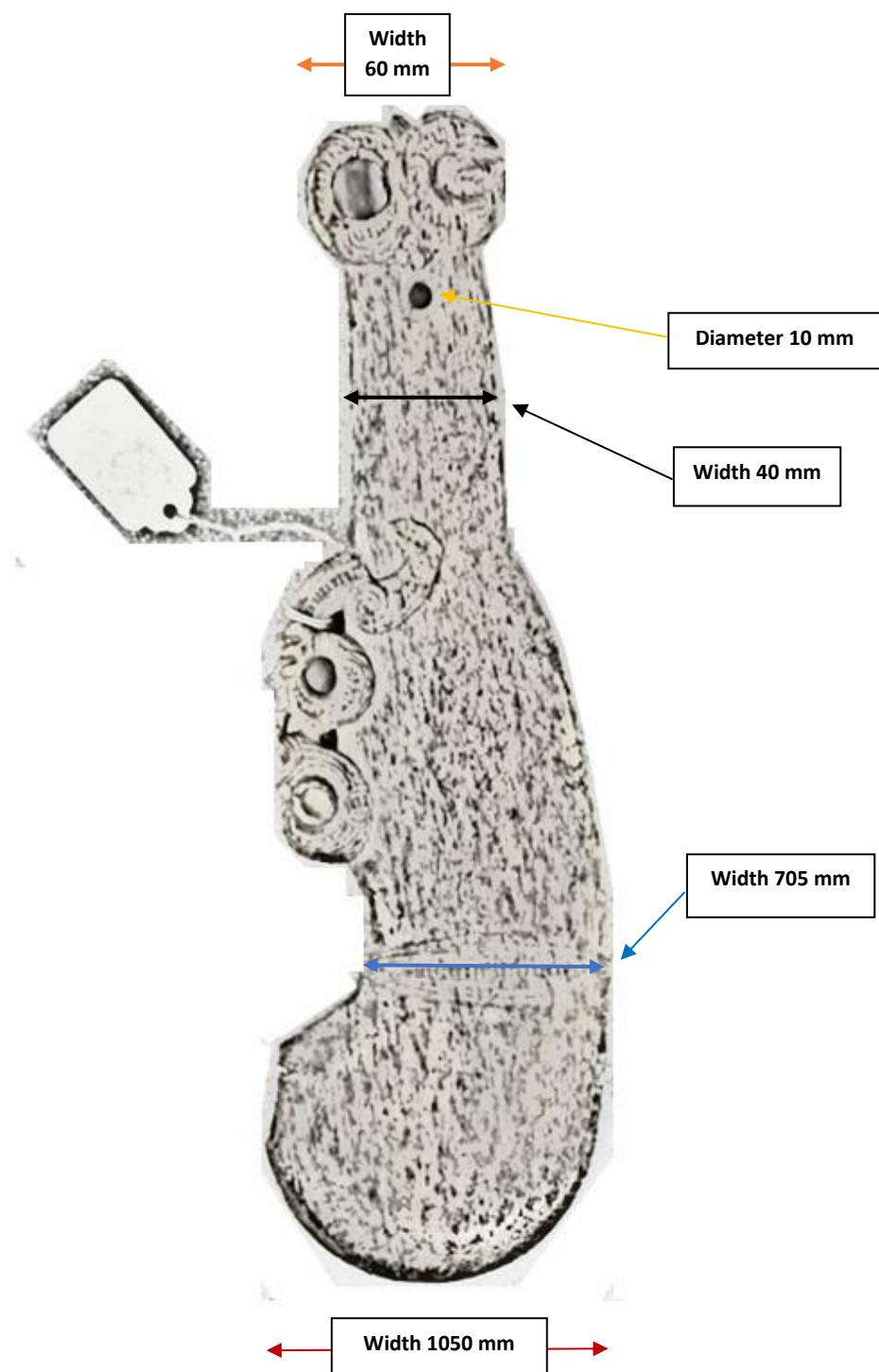


Right profile.

### Inenga/Dimensions:

The length of this *taonga* at the longest point is 3530 mm measured from the top edge of the *rau* (blade) to the bottom of the *reke* (butt/pommel). This *taonga* is also 1050 mm in width, at its widest point and 40 mm wide at its narrowest at the *kakau* (handle). The shape is highly irregular, with several different measurements at different points.





**Taimaha/Weight:**

This *wahaika* weighs 4237 grams.

**Rauemi/Materials:**

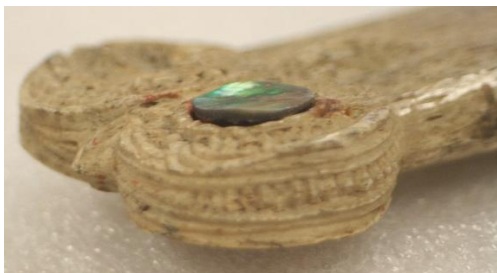
*Pāraoa* or whalebone is tough, durable, and aesthetically attractive material, and easy to work into a myriad of weaponry (*mere*, *wahaika*, *kotiate*, and *hoeroa*) and ornamental jewellery including ear and neck pendants (*titireia*, *heru*, etcetera).

Traditionally, Māori did not hunt *tohorā* (whales), viewing them as *aratohu* (guides) or *kaitiaki* (guardians); preferring to source their whalebone and *niho* (teeth) from whales that had stranded themselves. *The bones* were left to dry for a few years, to cure, before being utilised.

Māori did not have the bright scarlet red pigments until European contact, when they then gained access to coloured woollen threads, paints, and waxes. The traditional Māori ‘red’ consisted of a pigment known as *kōkōwai*, which was made by mixing ochre with liquids such as shark liver oil to produce a reddish-orange slurry or paste. Another traditional pigment that may have had a reddish-brown appearance could have been *tanekaha* (produced by boiling a type of tree bark), however, this is more of a brown than a red.

### Reke/Butt or Pommel

Both sides of the *reke* (butt/pommel) display *whiti*, being the *ūpoko* of a *manaia* (guardian's head), carved using the *rauponga* pattern. This measures 60 mm across and 35 mm high. The *karu* (eye) on the right profile of the *whiti* has a circular *pāua* inlay with a diameter of approximately 13 mm. The *karu* on the left side of the *whiti* is missing the circular *pāua* inlay, and a small measure of red wax can be seen in the recess.



### Kakau/Handle

The *kakau* (handle) is uncarved and representative of the common style of *kakau* found on most *wahaika*, it is 40 mm in width, and 100 mm in length. There is a *kowhau* (hole) drilled into the *kakau* approximately 10 mm down from the *whiri* (*manaia* head) on the *reke* (butt or pommel), through which a *taura* (thong/cord) would have been threaded.



## Kowhau/Hole

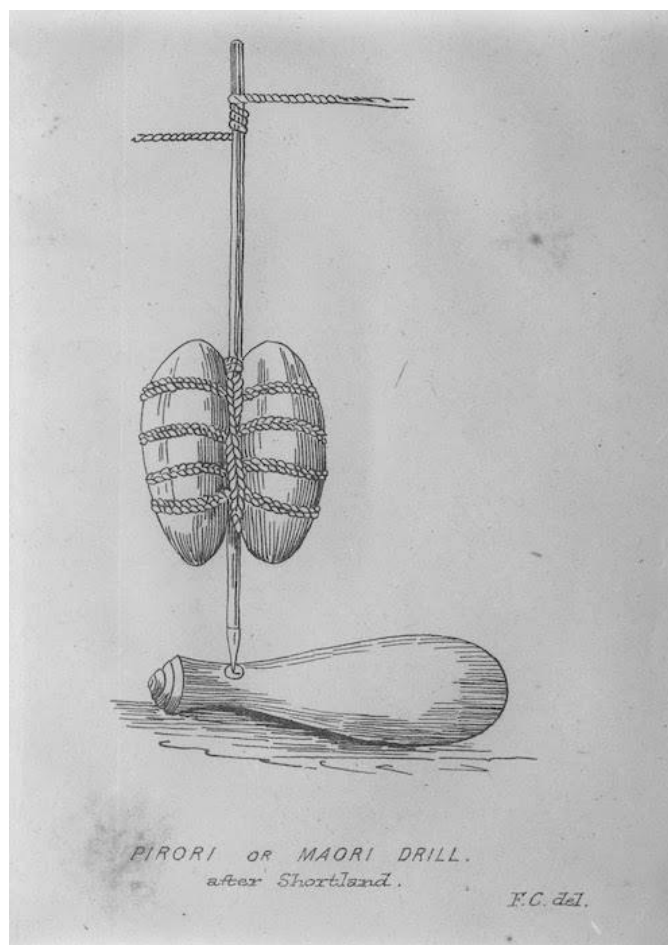
The *kowhau* (hole) serves as a point where a *taura* (thong) was threaded through, to ensure the security of the weapon. The *kowhau* appears to have been created using a *tūwiri* or *pirori* (traditional drill), the recessed grooves (hourglass shaped hole) bear evidence of this method of drilling. 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> century metal drills cut cleaner, cylindrical holes. The diameter of the *kowhau* measures 10 mm, and it is situated 50 mm from the *ihu* (nose) of the *whiri* (*manaia* head) on the *reke* (butt or pommel), and approximately 10 mm down from the bottom of the *whiri*.



The *kowhau* on the left profile of the *kakau*



The *kowhau* on the right profile of the *kakau*



A sketch of one type of *tūwiri* or *pirori* (traditional drill).<sup>xii</sup>

## Taura/Thong

There is no *taura* (thong), or evidence of one attached to this *wahaika* or in the storage area. *Taura* are usually plaited cords made from *harakeke* (Phormium tenax).



An example of a *taura* (plaited by the author) which would normally be found on this type of weapon.

## Pūkaiaora/Humanoid figure on edge of wahaika

The *pukaiaora* is a carved figure on the edge of the *wahaika* that represents either a sacred ancestor or Tūmatauenga - the god of war; whose purpose it was to protect the *toa* (warrior) in battle.

The *pūkaiaora* measures 100 mm in length from *ūpoko* to *waewae* (feet), and the spaces where the *karu*/eyes are situated, are void of any circular *pāua* inlays; so it is uncertain whether the *karu* were decorated or left as is.



## Rau/Blade

The *rau* (blade) 240 mm in length, 105 mm in width at the widest point (toward the top), and 75 mm in width across the centre, which is the narrowest point of the *rau*. The *rau* has both concave and convex edges. There are designs carved horizontally across the centre of the *rau* on both sides. There is no notch on the convex edge which can sometimes be found on other *wahaika*. Missing is a small portion of the front edge of the *rau*, and so, the exact original width of the *wahaika* at what would have been its widest point cannot be confirmed. The width at the point where the missing portion is located measures 102 mm, and following the probable curvature of both edges (where the concave and convex edges might meet) we could estimate that the original width may have been between approximately 107 mm – 108 mm.

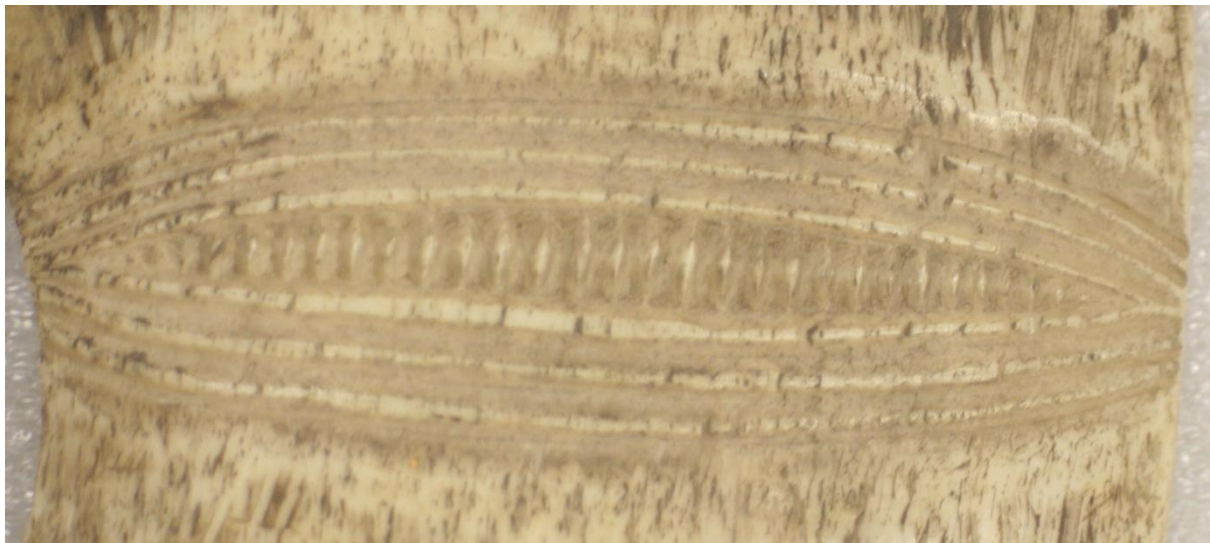


### Whakanakonako/Decorations and embellishments:

'The design depicted horizontally across the *rau*/blade of the weapon of this *wahaika*, is the *rauponga* pattern, which is comprised of *haehae* lines either side of *pākati* (dog's teeth) or *niho taniwha*; and this design can be seen on both sides of the weapon at the same location. This design is located across the narrowest portion of the *rau* with the entire pattern sitting approximately 230 mm – 260 mm from the base of the *reke*/butt or pommel, being 30 mm in height and 75 mm in width.

The patterning used to create the *manaia ūpoko*/head on the *reke*/butt or pommel also consists of the *rauponga* designs.

The *pūkaiora atua*/god or *tupuna*/ancestor figure sees a combination of *haehae*, *pākati*, and *rape*/double spiral designs utilised.



The carved horizontal *rauponga* designs across the left (above image) and right (below image) profiles of the rau/blade.



### Pakarutanga/Condition:

Overall, this *taonga* appears to be in good condition, with one chip on the front top edge of the *rau* (blade) and missing one of the *pāua* inlays which comprise the large *karu* (eye) on the left side. It is possible that the *karu* (eyes) on the figure were also *pāua* inlays, however, further examination may confirm. The patina of the *taonga* itself is indicative of its estimated age (circa 19<sup>th</sup> century), and the chip on the top front portion, as well as the small fracture on the top edge, could very well have been sustained in battle.



The portion of damage to the top front of the *taonga*.



A small, fractured portion of the top-right edge of the *rau*/blade.



The *pāua* inlay is missing on the left side *karu*/eye.

## Whakaaturanga, Whakahaumarutanga rānei/Display, Storage:

The *wahaika* is currently in storage along with the other *taonga*. It is stored in an open drawer within a consolidated Spacesaver unit.

‘Museum collections are carefully monitored in a pest free environment at 70 degrees +/- 2 degrees, 50% RH +/- 5%, with the added provision that RH is at 50% +/- 5% except in extreme Santa Ana desert wind conditions (generally November through March) when the range can be 45% +/- 10%<sup>xiii</sup>

For additional information regarding storage requirements, refer to the *University of California, Los Angeles The Fowler Museum at UCLA Collections Policy* (Last Revised: March 15, 2024).

## Whakapapa/Provenance:

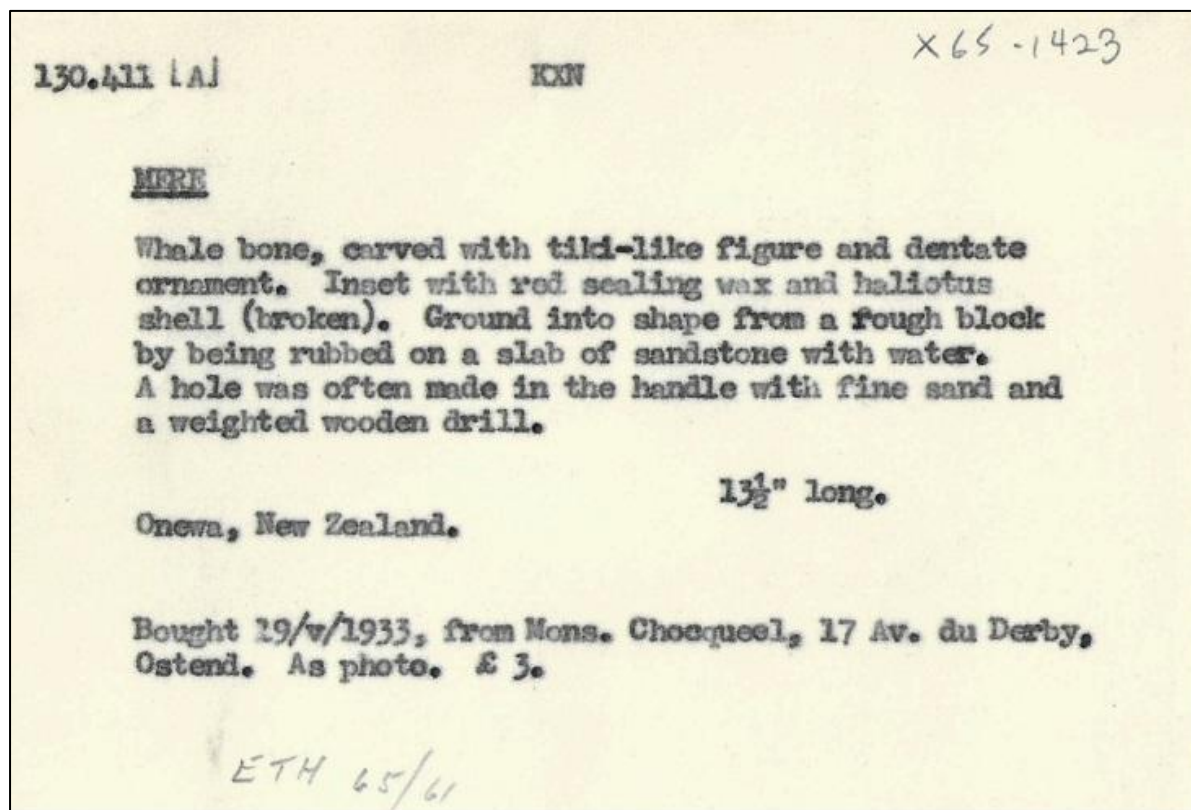
Chocqueel was born in Bergues, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France in May 1880, and completed his Matricules Militaires<sup>xiv</sup> in his early twenties. He married Marie Thérèse Demasure in June 1906, and they both relocated to Hamilton, New Zealand; with André travelling ahead of his wife to purchase property in Whatawhata and Koromatua. They returned to Belgium in 1908 before returning to New Zealand in 1911, where André purchased a tobacco factory in Hamilton proper. The couple also owned land within the town, which they subdivided in 1912; the new street created was initially named Chocqueel St. however, within a year was re-named Princes St.<sup>xv</sup> After a few years of ill health, Marie passed away on Christmas Eve of 1918. Chocqueel returned to Brussels and married Eugénie Merquin in July 1920, selling his lands in New Zealand in April 1921, and relocating to Oostende, Belgium until his passing in 1957.

It seems highly probable that André Louis Henri Marie Chocqueel acquired this *wahaika* during one of his two stints to New Zealand in either 1906-1908, where he was residing in Hamilton and then Waikato when he was posted to the Belgian/French Consulate in Auckland, or 1911-1920, where he returned as a businessman.



André Chocqueel aan het pootjebaden met zijn schoenen in de hand.<sup>xvi</sup>

Chocqueel was known as an archaeologist in Belgium, especially during the 1930s-50s, until his passing in 1957, after which the roadway 'Chocqueel St' was named in his memory in his hometown of Oostende.



Wellcome Collection Index Card.<sup>xvii</sup>

According to the Wellcome Collection card, mis-named as a 'Mere', this *wahaika* was purchased by Sir Henry Wellcome on May 29, 1933, for an amount of £3 (equivalent to £270 or NZD\$600 in 2024); from Chocqueel, who acquired it in Onewa (known today as Northcote), a northern suburb of Auckland, New Zealand. The Wellcome accession identification reference is 130.411 [A]. The local *iwi*/tribe from the Onewa *rohe*/tribal area is the *Ngāti Pāoa*, however, no evidence linking this *taonga*/object to them could be found; so, any connection to them would be circumstantial at this stage.

Sir Henry Solomon Wellcome was an American pharmaceutical entrepreneur. He founded the pharmaceutical company Burroughs Wellcome & Company with his colleague Silas Burroughs in 1880, which is one of the four large companies to eventually merge to form GlaxoSmithKline. He left a large amount of capital for charitable work in his will, which was used to form the Wellcome Trust, one of the world's largest medical charities. He was a keen collector of medical artefacts which are now managed by the Science Museum, London, and a small selection of which are displayed at the Wellcome Collection.<sup>xviii</sup>



Sir Henry Solomon Wellcome.<sup>xix</sup>

Wellcome initially collected medical-related objects, however, began branching out into textiles and ethnographic cultural artefacts, and amassed one of the largest collections in the world.

Wellcome passed away in 1933, only three years after acquiring this *wahaika*, and many of his pieces from his collections were distributed to museums across the United Kingdom, and then to museums across the United States of America. This *wahaika* was then donated to what was then known as the Museum and Laboratories of Ethnic Arts and Technology, being the Fowler Museum at the University of California (UCLA) along with many other objects. When received by the Fowler Museum on May 12, 1965, the accession identification reference was changed to X65-1423.

### **Hītori tanga/Publication history:**

There is no history of this *taonga* having been published within either in-house or external publications.

## Ngā tuhinga a te kaituhituhi/Author's notes:

As a former soldier, I am always drawn to weapons, especially those crafted from *paraoa* (whalebone). The difficulty of crafting *paraoa* as opposed to wood, especially softwood impresses me; with the clean, ornate patterns and designs being more challenging and taking a much longer period to create. Due to the bone structure, the density of *paraoa* hand clubs make them a solid, yet lighter weapon than *pounamu* (nephrite) or *onewa* (basalt) weapons of the same type, however, they can provide extremely sharp edges. As a former fighter (Kyokushin Karate and Muay Thai), the idea of close-quarter combat is something that I am versed in, and I am aware of the damage that combat with these types of weapons could inflict. This particular *wahaika paraoa* feels relatively light in weight and would have been used with extremely quick strikes and thrusts, as opposed to heavier weapons where the emphasis may have been more on causing blunt force trauma.

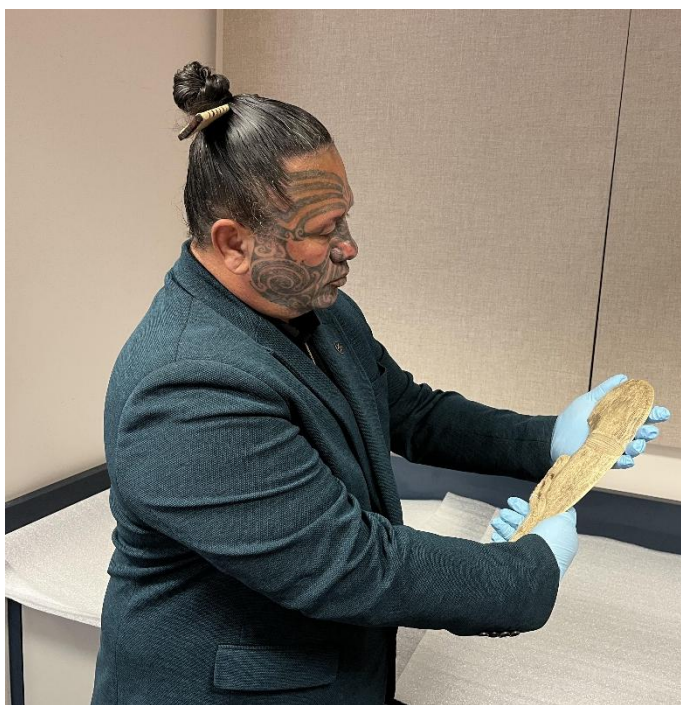
The opportunity to test weaponry such as this is an interesting proposition, however, the risk versus reward aspect is far too high to consider a possibility with this *taonga*.

I find this *taonga* an aesthetically attractive piece, with the combination of the design and patina giving it quite a striking appearance.

Knowing that this is a weapon of war, and that it may have taken lives reminds me of the reverence I must practice whenever I handle a *taonga* such as this, both as a former soldier, and a human being, the gravity of this is not lost to me.



The author at the School of Infantry 1996.



The author views the *wahaika* at the Fowler Museum (April 2025).

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- <sup>xix</sup> THE WELLCOME COLLECTION - PHOTOGRAPHS COPYRIGHT © THE WELLCOME TRUST. <https://www.lodgestpatrick.co.nz/wellcome.php> (accessed 6 December 2024).

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Tohu/Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Rā/Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2025