OHA STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Mo‘omeheu

Ka Ho‘iho‘i ‘Ana o Nā Mea Makamae Pili Kanaka

The Repatriation of Precious Treasures Related to Hawaiians Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts

FIGURE 1. Makau 18782

FIGURE 2. Hi‘a

FIGURE 3. Ipu kuha

BACKGROUND

Seven makau (human bone fishhooks) and one hi‘a (human bone net needle) were returned to Hawai‘i from the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts. Initially, Dr. Yoshi Sinoto, an eminent archaeologist at the Bishop Museum, was unsure about whether all the items at PEM were made of human bone and thought one fishhook (E16729) may have been Marquesan. Through consultation with Kamuela Kumukahi, a cultural expert and fisherman from South Kona, it was determined that the modified bones were human and solely originated from Hawai‘i. Thanks to their joint expertise, these cultural objects were successfully recognized and are now curated at the Bishop Museum. In addition, the Bishop Museum is presently holding an ipu kuha (spittoon) with human teeth[ii] placed into the wooden bowl that was returned by the Peabody Essex Museum in May 2005.

PROVENANCE OF THE MEA MAKAMAE (PRECIOUS TREASURES)

The Makau (Fishhooks) and Hi'a (Needle)

The earliest acquired fishhook (cataloged as E5425) from Hawai'i at the Peabody Essex Museum was donated by John Derby in 1800 A.D. Human remains (i.e., bone) of an unknown individual were carved into the shape of a fishhook. Captain William Bunker later gave the Peabody Essex Museum an additional fishhook (cataloged as E5402), fashioned from human remains in 1802, which represented one unidentified individual. There are no accompanying funerary items available (Notice of Inventory Completion, 2001).

Decades later, the Museum of the American Indian of New York (also known as the Heye Foundation) presented human bones representing one person in the form of a fishhook (cataloged as E16729) from Hawai'i to the Peabody Essex Museum in 1916. Then in 1922, human bone in the shape of a fishhook, extracted from Hawai'i and representing an unidentified person, was given to the Peabody Essex Museum by the Worcester Historical Society for safekeeping. This fishhook (cataloged as E18782) was later donated by the Worcester Historical Society to the Peabody Essex Museum in 1996. There were no accompanying funerary items available (Notice of Inventory Completion, 2001).

Although collected prior to 1868 by Rev. Asa Thurston, an American missionary to Hawai'i, human remains representing an unknown individual in the form of a fishhook (cataloged as E19697) were donated to the Peabody Essex Museum by Stephen Phillips. Phillips had acquired the hook from the family of Mrs. Lucy Goodale Thurston, Thurston's wife. No funerary objects were present (Notice of Inventory Completion, 2001).

Lastly, F. Walter Bergmann recovered human remains from Hawai'i between 1928 and 1932 that represented three individuals as two fishhooks and a fishing net needle (hi'a). Bergmann presented these items (cataloged as E34796, E34797, and E34661) to the Peabody Essex Museum in 1957 (Notice of Inventory Completion, 2001).

The Ipu Kuha (Spittoon)

Thurston acquired the ipu kuha sometime before 1868. The bowl eventually made its way to the Goodale family in Marlboro, Massachusetts. Stephen W. Phillips of Salem, Massachusetts, bought the Goodale collection in 1925, and on Aug. 24, 1925, he donated it to Peabody Essex (Notice of Inventory Completion, 2001).

The bowl (cataloged as E19710) has a diameter of 19.3 cm and is 11.5 cm high. It is inlaid with human teeth. On June 30, 1998, the Collections Committee of the Peabody Essex Museum's Board of Trustees voted to repatriate the bowl as human remains[iii] under NAGPRA. The bowl was transferred to Hui Mālama i Nā Kūpuna 'o Hawai'i Nei, Ka Lāhui Hawai'i, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs on Aug. 25, 1998. The bowl was stored at the State Historic Preservation Division until publication of the Federal Register Notice and completion of the 30-day notice period. It is currently on loan to the Bishop Museum.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Makau (Fishhooks)

Fishhooks are among the most prevalent artifacts discovered in Eastern Polynesian archaeological digs, according to Sinoto, who is also an adviser for the Peabody Essex Museum cultural objects. Sinoto's and others' study of Hawaiian fishhooks was an early attempt to create a relative chronology that could be used as "one of the indicators of cultural sequence" (Sinoto, 1962, p. 162), indicating that the first wave of settlers to Hawai'i came from the Marquesas and that the second wave came from the Society Islands (Tahiti). Sinoto's extensive work with makau qualified him as one of the mutually agreed upon experts tasked with determining whether the fishhooks were eligible for repatriation under NAGPRA.

The other mutually agreed upon expert was Kamuela Kumukahi, a fisherman from 'Okoe,[iv] South Kona, living in Hilo. Officials from the Bishop Museum transported

FIGURE 4. Makau E34796, E34797, E5425

the fishhooks to Hilo so Kumukahi could look at them. Before Kumukahi performed the examination, he presented and explained the origins and use of each makau from a box of fishhooks he had received from his kūpuna (ancestors). When asked to identify the makau at issue,

FIGURE 5. Makau E5402, E19697, E16729

he immediately divided the hooks into groups and ruled out three of them as not being composed of human remains. Sinoto had trouble identifying some of the hooks, but the experienced fisherman was able to do so quite easily (E. Ayau, personal communication June 2, 2023).

All the larger islands had pigs, dogs, and people, though pigs may not have been present on Lānaʻi. The only mammals with bones that were the right size, shape, and quantity to be used as a raw material for fishhook production, it seems, were these three species (Pfeifer, 2001, 171).

We can look to the history of Lonoikamakahiki (Lono), a chief from Hawaiʻi Island and a direct descendant of Keawenuiaʻumi, to better comprehend the significance of using human bone for fishhooks. When Lono visited Oʻahu, he engaged in numerous high-stakes competitions with Kākuhihewa, the island's aliʻi nui (paramount chief). The Oʻahu chief's counselors told Kākuhihewa to go fishing because Lono was not skilled at fishing. They intended to entice Lono to the fishing grounds of Akāka off Kailua. They predicted that Lono would follow and request a line and hook, and that the Oʻahu chief would decline, thus winning the competition. However, one of Lono's devoted servants foresaw the trap and warned the chief that if he insisted on pursuing Kākuhihewa out to sea, he would have to kill a man and use his thighbone as a hook and intestines as a fishing line. That man, Loli, was actually the guardian of Lono since birth, and was known for his mana (supernatural power) and loyalty. Lono did, indeed, follow Kākuhihewa and called upon Loli, now in the form of hook, line, and sinker: "E Loli e! E Loli ka ia maka ole. I paa ka kaua ia e. *Say, Loli! Say, Loli ,the fish without eyes. Catch a fish for us Loli.*" Lonoikamakahiki miraculously caught an ʻahi (tuna), a fish not common to Kailua (Fornander, 1916, pp. 290-204). This story illustrates how an individual's mana permeates an object and empowers its owner. The kind of hook and line that Kākuhihewa used to hī ʻahi (troll for ʻahi) would have been similar to the one shown in Figure 1.

Hiʻa (Netting Needle)

Bone, whale ivory, kauila wood, and naio wood were used to make netting needles and shuttles. They were made of a shaft with a big slit eye at either end, and the gap between the eyes was thinned out to form two curved arms that enclose a sphere or ellipsoid. To allow the cordage for winding between the eyes, the eye ends were slit. Compared to those constructed of bone or whale ivory, wooden shuttles were typically larger (Krauss, 1933, p. 35).

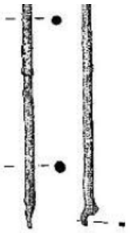


FIGURE 6. Hiʻa netting needle. Courtesy: Trustees of the British Museum

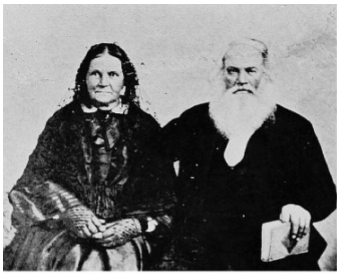
Hiʻa kā ʻupena

FIGURE 7. Threaded hiʻa

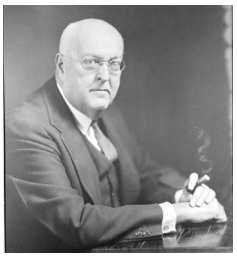
Ipu ʻAina (Scrap Bowl)

Ipu kuha (spittoon) and ipu ʻaina (scrap bowl), as the word ipu (calabash; Lagenaria siceraria) suggests, take their name from the shape of the gourds used for a variety of containers by the common folk of Hawaiian society. Wooden ipu kuha and ipu ʻaina, however, were made for aliʻi (chiefs), as the symmetry and smooth surface of the item required intense labor that was achieved, remarkably, with only the use of stone tools. According to Bishop Museum curator Sir Peter Buck (1957, p. 53), "Scrap bowls (ipu ʻaina) were made for chiefs, who deposited fishbones and scraps of food during meals." Because of the fear that the chief could be assassinated by sorcery, the attendants of the ipu ʻaina carefully disposed of the scraps and remains lest the material fall into the hands of a kahuna ʻanāʻanā (sorcerer). These food and bodily remains could be used as maunu (bait) to cast spells and cause the death of the person from whom the remains came. Another feature of many ipu ʻaina, is the "curious method of ornamentation by the insertion of superb human molar teeth" (Brigham, 1906, p. 176). The use of human bones for fishhooks was well known and meant to capitalize on the mana of the deceased and, in many instances, to insult the dead. "This is also shown in the insertion of teeth and bones in vessels of dishonor, such as spittoons (ipu kuha), slop basins (ipu ʻaina) and the like" (Brigham, 1906, p. 177).

ABOUT THE DONORS



Asa Thurston and his wife, Lucy Goodale Thurston, were among the first missionaries of the Protestant faith to be dispatched to Hawai‘i. Their mission was based in Kailua, Kona. In addition to translating 25% of the Bible into Hawaiian, Thurston oversaw construction of Mokuaikaua, the first church in Hawai‘i. It is not known how they acquired the ipu ‘aina and makau. **Stephen W. Phillips**, the ultimate giver of Mrs. Thurston's ipu ‘aina and makau, was from a privileged Massachusetts family. Following the American Revolution, his family played a significant role in Salem's merchant sailing history.



The Museum of the American Indian (also known as the Heye Foundation) was established in New York by Gustave Heye in 1916. In a trust agreement with the museum, Heye created "a museum for the collection, preservation, study, and exhibition of all things connected with the anthropology of the aboriginal people of the North, Central, and South Americas, and containing objects of artistic, historic, literary, and scientific interest" (National Museum of the American Indian, n.d.). The collection was later transferred to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. Collections from Hawai‘i and other non-Native American cultural objects were sent to Peabody Essex.

Worcester Historical Society. Founded in 1733, the Worcester Historical Society endures today in Landsdale, Pennsylvania. Its goal is to chronicle life in Worcester Township from the second half of the 19th century to the present. However, the Worcester Historical Society that donated the makau to Peabody Essex was probably the Worcester Historical Museum of Massachusetts located in the former Salisbury Mansion.

F. Walter Bergmann (1898-1970) was a painter and illustrator. He used the pseudonyms Walter and Franz Bergmann. It is believed that he purchased the two makau and hi‘a during one of his visits to Hawai‘i because there is documentation of him selling other antiquities.

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FOOTNOTES

[i] Dr. Yoshiko Sinoto's initial August 1999 visual assessment included 10 fishhooks. He had noted that it was very hard to identify whether fishhooks E34796, E34797, E5425, E34798. E3480, and E34799 were human. He indicated at the time that they could be human, pig, or dog bone. He also initially thought the fishing needle (E34661) could be made of whale bone. After consultation with Sam Kumukahi, E34798, E3480, and E34799 were determined not to be human and were subsequently not repatriated.

[ii] The ipu 'aina includes a total of 55 human teeth, representing at least three individuals.

[iiii] Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.2(d)(1), Peabody Essex Museum Officials determined that based on historical and anthropological evidence, the inlaid teeth were not freely given or naturally shed by the individuals from whose bodies they were obtained. Thus, the bowl was repatriated as an object incorporating human remains under NAGPRA.

[iv] 'Okoe is south of the more well-known fishing village of Miloli'i.