



Club (Mougalaulau)

Date

mid 19th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

Tongan clubs were mostly collected in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Unfortunately, information about their carvings and iconography was not collected at this time which has led to difficulties in interpreting the meaning of their designs. The clubs were used primarily for warfare and secondarily for sports, dances, religious activities, and as everyday accoutrements of the chiefs. This club was left unfinished and it is unclear what the reasoning behind this decision is. Based on a section of lower-quality carvings on the unfinished side, it is speculated that the original creator and designer of this club may have died in the middle of carving the decorations and the job was taken up by a less skilled individual in order to try and finish this club's design. Even with these efforts, the club was later abandoned in the middle of carving and was never finished. Although many Tongan clubs have carvings of animal or human figures, this one does not seem to have any evidence of these motifs on the club. We cannot know

if these figures would have been included in the original carver's finished design, but their absence would serve as another unique feature of this club.

Dimensions

45 1/8 × 5 1/2 × 1 7/8 in. (114.6 × 14 × 4.8 cm)