

Basic Detail Report



Adze Head Currency

Date

20th Century

Medium

Giant clam shell

Description

Island hopping across atolls and low islands forced Micronesian cultures to adapt to a lack of workable stone.

The most common solution was to create tools from animal remains. On Wuvulu, some coral stone was used in cooking and fishing, but most handheld implements like adzes had heads made of clamshell or bone. Island Oceania is divided into Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, but trade and migration have created a great deal of commonality among these cultural and geographic subregions. Despite being only 100 miles away from the coast of New Guinea, the center of Melanesian culture, most individuals on the island of Wuvulu are of Micronesian descent. Some of the earliest theories about the island’s connection to Micronesia were surmised from the use of similar shark tooth weapons to those used in the Gilbert Islands. To this day the unique functional and decorative objects produced on Wuvulu show influences from both Melanesia and Micronesia.

Dimensions

9 5/8 × 2 1/2 × 1 1/2 in. (24.4 × 6.4 × 3.8 cm)