

Finch & C^o



A NEW ZEALAND MAORI LURE FISH HOOK 'MATAU'

A NEW ZEALAND MAORI LURE FISH HOOK 'MATAU' , WOOD , PAUA SHELL , BONE AND TWISTED FLAX FIBRE

19 TH CENTURY

SIZE : 11.5 CM HIGH – 4½ INS HIGH

LITERATURE

FISH WAS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF FOOD FOR THE ANCESTRAL MAORI AS THEY ORIGINALLY CAME TO THE TEMPERATE SOUTHERN LAND OF NEW ZEALAND WITHOUT PIG OR JUNGLE FOWL .

IN THE NORTH ISLAND THE FISH 'KAHAWAL' WAS CAUGHT WITH UN-BAITED TROLLING OR SPINNING HOOKS SUCH AS THIS EXAMPLE TOWED AT SPEED BEHIND CANOES . THE WOOD SHANK WAS SET ON THE INSIDE WITH A PLATE OF PAUA (HALIOTIS IRIS) SHELL WHICH SERVED TO LURE THE FISH ONTO THE BONE POINT . THE SUCCESS OF THIS METHOD OF FISHING CAN BE GAUGED BY THE FACT THAT IT WAS RETAINED EVEN WHEN METAL BECAME AVAILABLE .