

ABORIGINAL FISH-HOOKS*

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Four years ago the writer contributed an article which was published in Science on pre-historic fish-hooks, which he believes to have been the first description of the true aboriginal fish-hooks from this section of the country. Many of the specimens figured and described as "fish-hooks" are, doubtless, nothing more nor less than ornaments which were worn in the ears of the natives. This is true of Fig. 1, and possibly Fig. 2. The first was manufactured from haliotis shell, and the cut is the size of the original, which is true of all the specimens figured in this paper.

It will be observed that the point of the specimen first figured comes so near the shank that when the end of the line was looped upon it and cemented with asphaltum, which was universally the case, the space would be filled and certainly it would be out of the question to hook it into the mouth of a fish.

This may also be argued against Fig. 2. But from the fact that the latter specimen contains a barb, some archaeologists claim that it is a fish-hook. Yet it is by no means clear to my mind that it was designed for anything but an ornament for the person.

The true fish-hook, of what is known as the Santa Barbara stock of Indians, is represented in Figs. 3 and 4, and was manufactured from bone. Two slightly curved and doubly pointed pieces of bone were tied together at one end, the larger piece being used for the shank on which the line was fastened, and the shorter piece to pierce the mouth of the fish. Its form is similar to that still in use by the South-sea Islanders and manufactured from the shell of the pearl oyster.

Fig. 5 represents a metal fish-hook which the writer found in an Indian grave on the Conejo plateau, in this (Ventura) county. The shank was fastened into an olivella shell which had been notched as represented in the engraving. The shell was, doubtless, designed to attract by its glistening and shiny appearance. The specimen is somewhat restored in the cut, the original having been eaten with rust, but

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is still sufficiently perfect to show the outline and character of the implement.

On San Miguel Island, and in other places in this section, the writer has found the rude tools by which ornaments like Fig. 1 were made, and the specimens in various stages of development. The study of this kind of aboriginal work is invested with much interest.

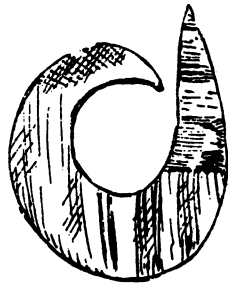


Figure 1.

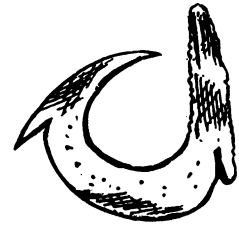


Figure 2.

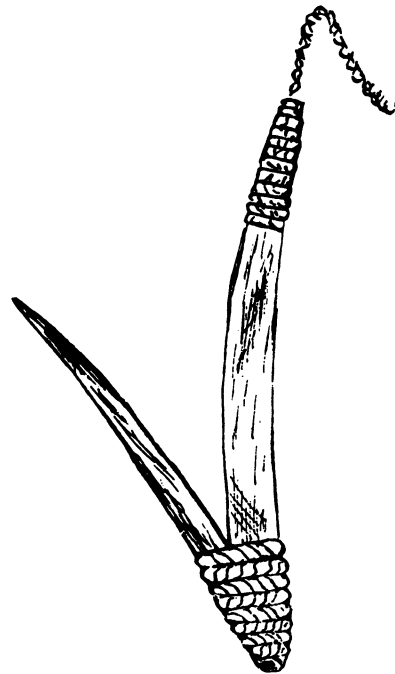


Figure 3.

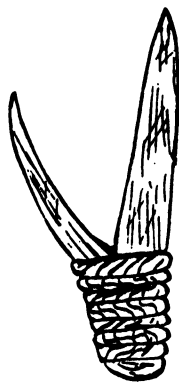


Figure 4.

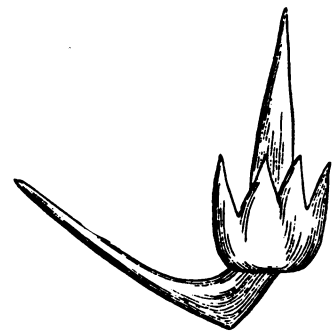


Figure 5.