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Arbeit/Links to the Past

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The bowls are of various sizes from two Gallons to a quart, they are made of the red Koa tree exceedingly neat and well polished & to appearance are as perfect around as if they had been formed in a lathe. Some of them are made with images to them & these are their Ava bowls, the feet of the Images are made to support the bowl & a hole is made for the Liquor to flow out of their Mouths, & in some of them out of their back sides; these Ava bowls are very scarce being only in the Possession of their Kings, the others are in every house & used to hold their Provisions.

David Samwell, surgeon on Cook's third voyage

[Kava bowls] are usually about eight or ten inches in diameter, perfectly round, and beautifully polished. They are supported by three, and sometimes four small human figures, in various attitudes. Some of them rest on the hands of their supporters, extended over the head; others on the head and hands; and some on the shoulders. The figures ... are accurately proportioned and neatly finished, and even the anatomy of the muscles, in supporting the weight, well expressed.

James King, commander on Cook's third voyage

During our stay at Atowaie [Kaua'i], ... we observed the king and his fighting general made use of spitting boxes inlaid with the teeth of their enemies slain in battle.

John Turnbull, traveller, 1802

... a third [attendant of Kamehameha] carried his spit-box, which was set round with human teeth, and had belonged, as I was told, to several of his predecessors.

Archibald Campbell, sailor (in Hawai'i in 1809)

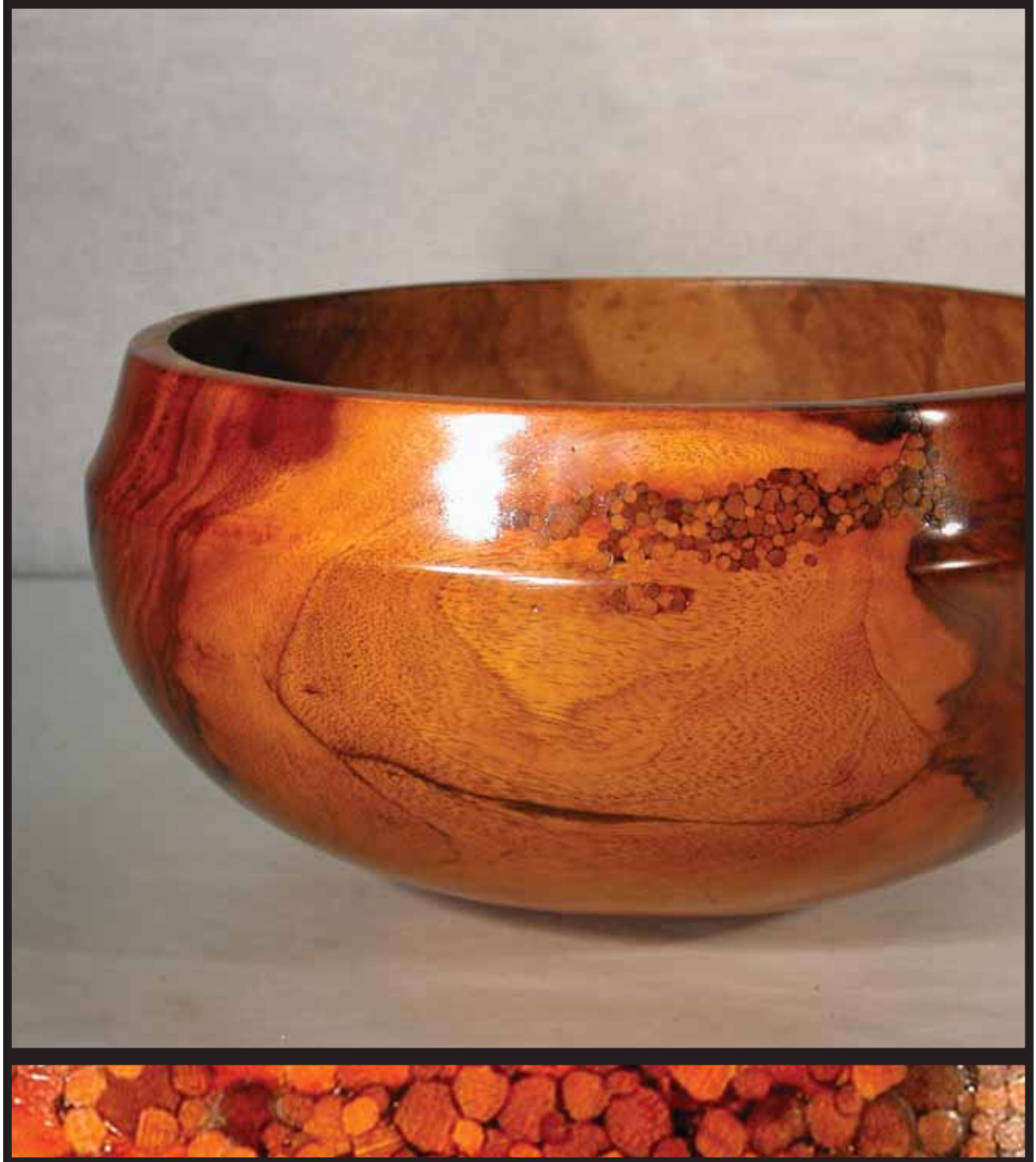
Behind [each chief] ... a servant sat or kneeled ... holding ... a small round bowl of dark polished wood, filled with the leaves of an aromatic vine, for a spittoon.

C.S Stewart, missionary, 1823–5

The most highly esteemed and favorite calabashes had chants composed for them as though they were human beings, and when they were placed on the table one would hear their owners, with proud countenances, chanting of the celebrated deeds of those for whom they were named.

Henry Kekahuna, 19th-century Hawaiian cultural historian

WOODEN BOWLS



Wooden Bowls

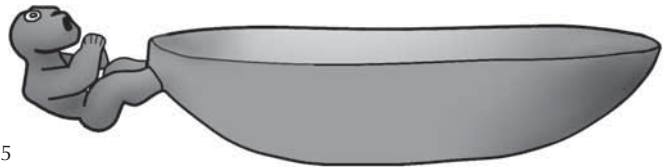
'Umeke lā'au, pā ipu

Most wooden bowls were made for chiefs. Except for a few specialized platters, such as those for pounding poi or attracting sharks, commoners made do with coconut and gourd vessels. Seasoned *kou*, *milo*, and *kamani* wood were used for the best bowls and *'ōhi'a* for those of less importance. Bowls were made from trees that were consecrated when cut down. They were shaped with a variety of stone adzes and sharktooth knives that were also consecrated, then finished with abrading stones, burnished with dried leaves or ochre, and finally treated to remove bitter flavors. The majority were used for serving or storing poi. Storage bowls were covered with a lid that sat neatly on the gentle recurve of the upper part of the otherwise convex container. The lid snapped smartly into place when hung in a knotted net.

Bowls ranged from cup sized (*'umeke māna 'ai*, *puaniki*) to large enough to contain a whole dog (*lawalawaihonua*). They were low (*pālewa*), low and wide (*pākākā*), medium sized (*puahala*), medium sized and deep (*kū'oho*), had a thick base (*'umeke palapa'a*), or were deep with a thick base (*kūmau*, *kūmauna*). Their shapes were developed to meet specific needs. For instance the *'umeke ipu kai* had a shape that was similar to, but more elaborate than, the *pākākā* to accommodate the salting of food, and the lidded *kūmau* was especially suited for storing poi. Poi bowls were thin, round, and deep; fish platters were small and long, and dog or pig platters large and long, sometimes with legs. Spittoons, scrap bowls, and chamber pots usually had handles and thick walls. Kava mixing bowls (*kā'awa*, *kānoa*, *kānoa 'awa*) took various shapes. Most spectacular are the bowls with figures and those inlaid with the teeth of vanquished enemies.

After contact with Europeans, Hawaiian artisans developed two types of bowls unique to their islands: finger bowls with internal nubs for wiping off grease and, on Maui, bowls with combinations of curved and flat surfaces (horizontal bands, vertical panels, shaped facets).

Collected during Cook's third voyage (1778–1779)



28.6cmL Vienna 175



Pearl shell eyes, bone teeth. 45.5cmL BrM Oc,Haw.46

Collected during Cook's third voyage



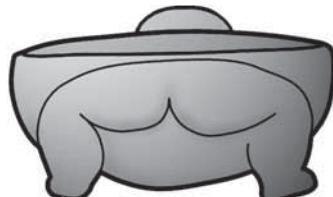
21cmD 8cmH Vienna 174



20cmD Florence 269



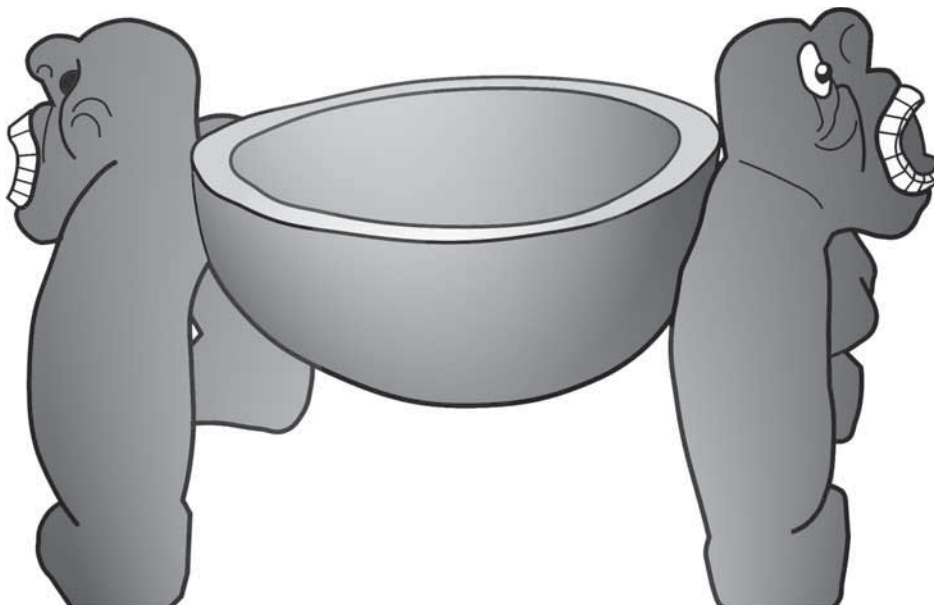
17cmH Vienna 173



Shell eyes, pouring-spout mouth.
14.5cmD 7.5cmH CUMAA 1922.916



23.5cmD Florence 268



Pearl shell eyes, bone teeth. 42cmL private

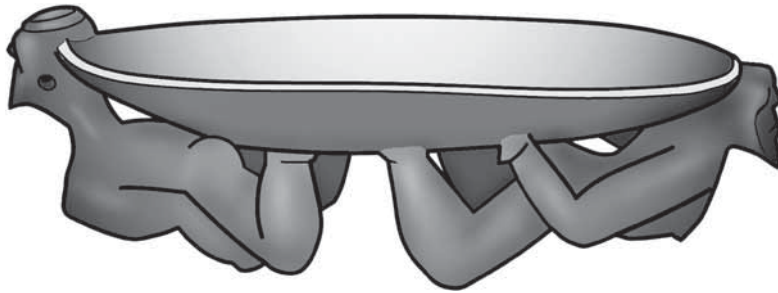
Wooden Bowls



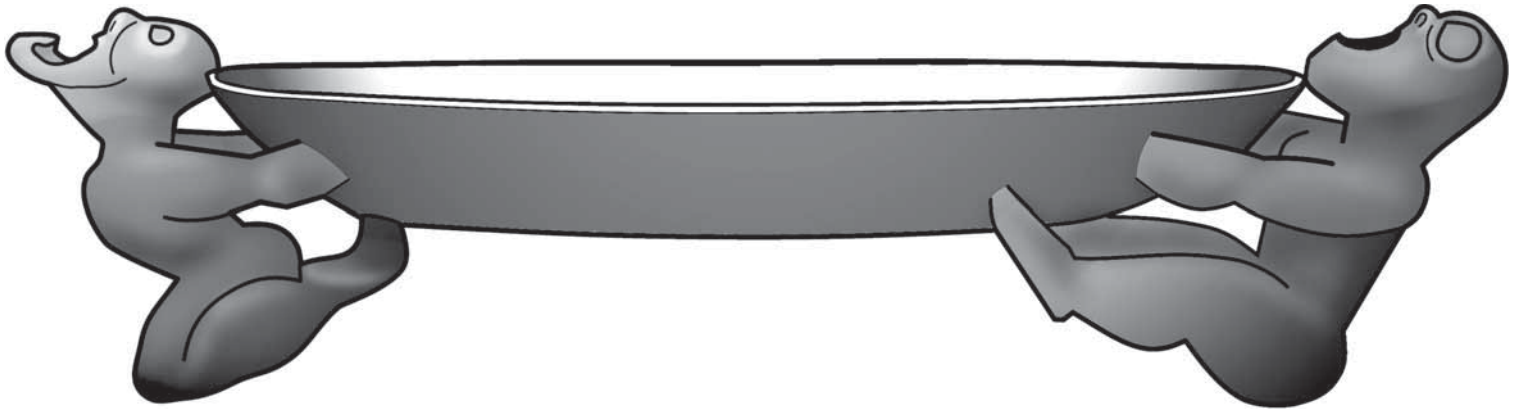
31cmL PH 53571H



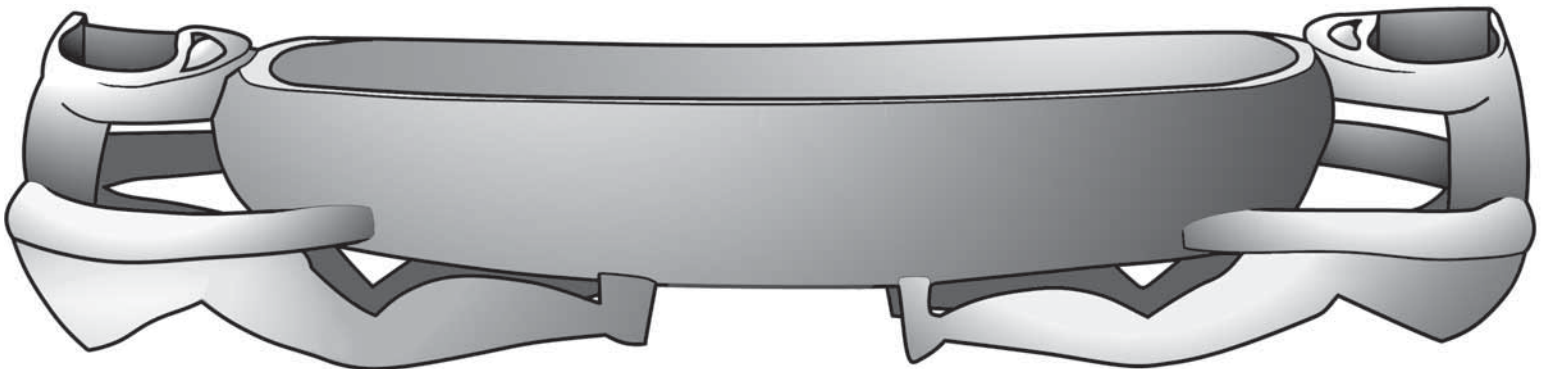
Said to have been owned by Kamehameha II.
Had pearl shell eyes.
17.8cmL Waimea, Kaua'i 57cm BPBM 5181



Pearl shell eyes. 35cmL Leiden 547-2



Chief Kahahani and his wife, Kekuapoio, support this meat platter. Their open mouths serve as salt bowls. 115.6cmL (±) BPBM 408



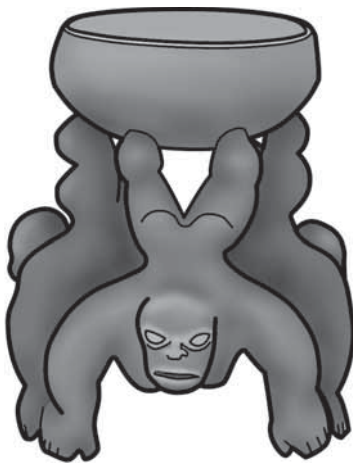
Meat platter. Mouths used for holding condiments. 21cmH 100.5L 22.4cmW (±) Paris 71.1880-75-2



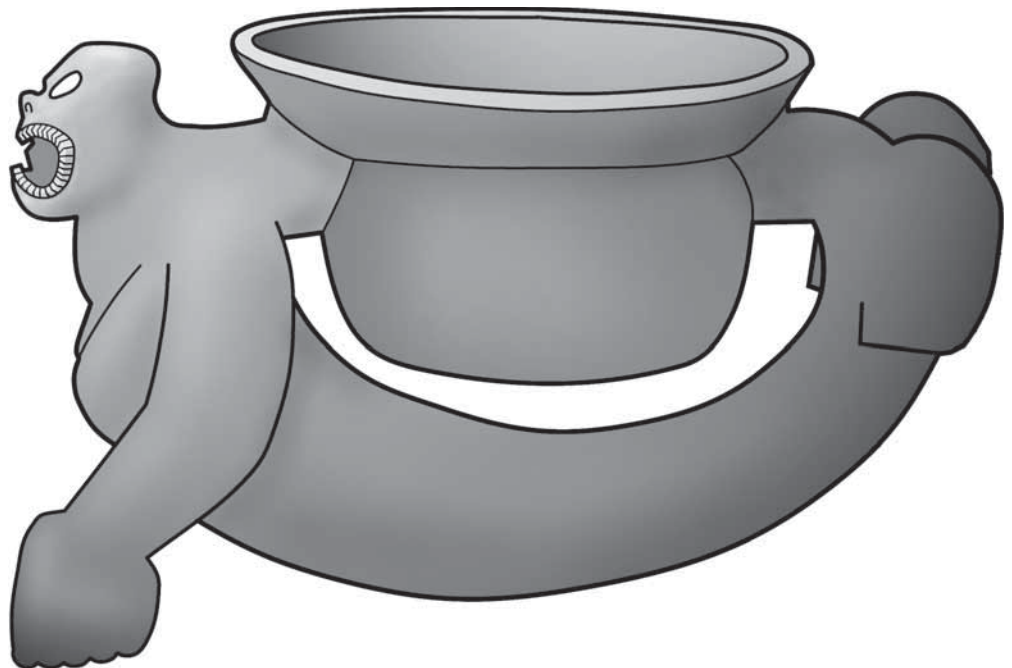
Brown tapa *malo*, human hair and feathers on head, shell disks.
27.5cmL BrM Oc,Haw.47



3 figures with human teeth and pearl shell eyes with seed centers.
Figures and bottom part of bowl are stained brown. 30.2cmH BrM
Oc,Haw.48



20.1cmH BrM Oc1854,1229.119



From an O'ahu cave.
44.5cmL BPBM D565