



Examples of Maori carving at the Brooklyn Museum, New York. The tekoteko at left is in the style of an East Coast carver working around Wanganui about 1850-60, and the tekoteko (right) with diagonal decorative work on the body, was carved with a steel tool, probably by an Arawa carver in the Bay of Plenty about the 1850's.

Not all the pieces went to North America direct. Some artefacts took 100 years to change hands from collections brought to England by Captain Cook, to museums in England, and then to private collections in the United States.

The largest single piece is a complete meeting house from Tokomaru Bay now housed in the Field Museum, Chicago, along with 600 other items of Maori Art.

Considerable interest has been shown in the North American catalogue since its publication.

As well as its use by museum staff, researchers, archaeologists, and Maori craftsmen, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has copies in overseas embassies as reference material.

Says Mr Simmons; "There is great interest in Europe particularly. Individual items can be traced through to the present day, and the history of whole collections followed".

The catalogue contains many examples of art styles which have not survived in New Zealand. One colour photograph shows a complicated Taniko cloak, 'Kaitaka' collected about 1812 in the Bay of Islands. The Bay of Islands tribe does not now practise that style of weaving, but the picture of the cloak provides inspiration for Maori artists wanting to recapture the patterns.

The extent of the overseas collections surprised Mr Simmons. "I found some pieces which were not known to be in existence. Cloaks, in particular, were in good order considering their age".

Mr Simmons says many of the artefacts were not on display, just stored in "very good conditions".

Eyewitness accounts



These photographs are from 'Early Eyewitness Accounts of Maori Life 1, Extracts from the Journals of the Ship St Jean Baptiste, 1769' by Captain J.F.M. de Surville.

Published by the Alexander Turnbull Endowment Trust in association with the National Library of N.Z., Wellington 1982, the book is printed in both French and English by the Government Printer.

The extracts relate to the visit to New Zealand of the French ship, in December 1769 under Captain de Surville's command.

While the comments in the Journals about noble savages may seem odd in today's eyes the sketches of fishhooks, bailers and other implements as well as moko are first-rate.