

SPEARS WITH INCISED ORNAMENT.

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IN 1897, I fully described* an Australian Spear with incised ornament, extending nearly the whole length of the weapon. I further commented on the rarity of this form of sculpture amongst Aboriginal spears, and the general absence of illustrations in works of reference. In working through the store collection of Ethnology, I met with four additional examples, so far similar, that nearly the entire surfaces are covered with ornamental incisions, but all differing in the motive, and three of them greatly so, from the spear referred to.

The first is of the same length as the already described specimen, viz., eleven feet nine inches, but lacks the colour bands near the point or apex. The serpentine longitudinal grooves are five instead of six in number, and extend from within two feet three inches of the point, and nine inches of the butt. The grooves are toothed in a similar manner, but instead of the serrations looking backwards, *i.e.*, towards the butt, they are presented forwards towards the point of the weapon; furthermore, the interstices between the serpentine grooves are occupied by V-shaped and bird's feet ("broad arrow") incisions, or simple oblique nicks, arranged with a certain degree of order, like with like. The ornament at the butt is finished off by four feather-like incised tags, consisting of a central groove margined by oblique nicks, reminding one of the feathered shaft of an arrow. This spear is said to have come from the Paroo River District, but from which side of the border I am unable to say.

The three remaining spears are much shorter weapons, being each a trifle over seven feet in length. On the first the sculpture is spiral, consisting of two bands, extending from the butt to within two feet of the point. The bands are each defined by two grooves, the interspaces being cross incised, thus giving them greater prominence and effect, but the apical two feet is variously occupied. First, proceeding upwards from the termination of the spiral bands, a rude representation of the human form is seen, with one arm only, and above this an oval body, both infilled with cross incisions. These are succeeded by sundry serpentine and meandering bands similar to the spiral already described. The interspaces are occupied by V-shaped incisions, oblique nicks, and what not.

* Rec. Aust. Mus., iii., 1, 1897, p. 6.