

	Object:	Assagai
	Museum:	Museum Ulm Marktplatz 9 89073 Ulm (0731) 161-4330 info.museum@ulm.de
	Collection:	Project for the reappraisal of the collections from colonial contexts
	Inventory number:	2022.10967

Description

African spear, so-called assagai or assegai, with a wooden shaft and a symmetric, narrow leaf-shaped metal tip. The spearhead is slightly ribbed and put into the shaft by means of a tang. Below the tip, the shaft is wrapped with braided wire. The lower end of the shaft is thickened in form of a knob.

The assagai comes from the southern Africa, presumably Namibia or South Africa. The spear is either part of the collection of weapons from Martin Fehl that came as a gift into the Gewerbemuseum (Museum of Applied Arts) Ulm in 1920 or from the collection of Ulrich Hößle, which the families Hößle and Hettich dedicated to the museum as a loan in 1923. Due to the missing designation and the missing details in the description of the objects in the inventory a distinct attribution is not possible.

The assagai was a type of spear that was especially widespread in South Africa; it was originally a javelin. This one probably was intended for stabbing because of its short shaft and the big, heavy blade. Under the Zulu king Shaka, the assagai was adjusted and refined during a military reform (1816 - 1828). Thus, the form of a short spear for stabbing in close combats emerged that the warriors carried in one hand to use the other hand for the shield.

Basic data

Material/Technique:

Metal, wood, leather

Measurements:

L 116 cm, DIA 1,5 cm; W 4 cm (tip), L 37 cm (tip)

Events

Created	When	1880-1920
	Who	
	Where	Southern Africa
[Relationship to location]	When	
	Who	
	Where	Namibia
[Relationship to location]	When	
	Who	
	Where	South Africa
[Relation to person or institution]	When	
	Who	Martin Fehl (1860-1921)
	Where	
[Relation to person or institution]	When	
	Who	Ulrich Hößle
	Where	

Keywords

- Colonialism
- Colony
- Koloniale Kontexte
- Kolonialzeit
- Spear