

Tahitian Mourning Dress in the Cook/Forster Collection, Göttingen

Abstract

This Tahitian mourning dress was one of many artifacts collected by the German traveler and naturalist Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–98), who took part in James Cook’s second expedition to the Pacific (1772–75). After Forster’s death, the dress was given to the Academic Museum in Göttingen by his heirs. The inventory list of Forster’s “South Sea Things” [*Verzeichniß der Forsterschen Südseesachen*] describes different parts of the mourning dress, i.e., a breastplate and other details made from mother of pearl, a collar made from pieces of the same material, and feathers from tropical birds. Similar dresses brought back from Cook’s voyages can be found in collections in Honolulu, London, Oxford, and Florence.

Source



Source: Cook/Forster Collection, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology and the Ethnographic Collection, University of Göttingen.

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