

# Finch & C<sup>o</sup>



## AN IPIUTAK BERING SEA ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY TOGGLING HARPOON HEAD

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600-800 AD

SIZE 14CM WIDE – 5½ INS WIDE

## LITERATURE

DISPLAYING AN ELEGANCE THAT RESULTS FROM COMBINING ART AND TECHNOLOGY THE HARPOON HEAD HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE ARTIC OVER CENTURIES ESPECIALLY FOR HUNTING LARGE MAMMALS AND FISH LIVING IN THE OCEANS AND WHICH CANNOT BE TRACED OR INTERCEPTED AS LAND ANIMALS CAN. ONCE THRUST THROUGH THE ANIMALS SKIN AND BLUBBER THE LINE TIGHTENS AND THE ANGLED SPUR AT THE BASE OF THE HARPOON HEAD TURNS THE HEAD SIDEWAYS TOGGLING IT BENEATH THE BLUBBER. THIS HOLDS THE ANIMAL FAST AND INSURES IT CANNOT FREE ITSELF BY BREAKING OFF THE LINE END OF THE HARPOON ON A BLOCK OF ICE. THE TOGGLING HARPOON IS VERY EFFECTIVE FOR HUNTING AT BREATHING HOLES.

DIFFERENT SIZED HARPOONS WERE USED TO SECURE DIFFERENT SIZED SEA MAMMALS. THIS HARPOON HEAD WAS PROBABLY USED FOR LARGE SEALS AND BELUGA. THEY WERE TIPPED WITH STONE, BONE OR WALRUS IVORY POINTS AND LATER WITH IRON AND COPPER. NORTH OF THE BERING STRAIT WHERE THE SEA ICE PERSISTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TOGGLING HARPOON POINTS WERE THE PREFERRED WEAPON OF THE ESKIMO.