Finch & Co



A THULE TRADITION ALASKAN ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY TOGGLING HARPOON HEAD

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SMOOTH GLOSSY BROWN PATINA
1000-1500 AD
SIZE: 19CM LONG – 7½ INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE ESKIMO BELIEVED THAT THE SEA MAMMALS WERE DISPLEASED WHEN ATTACKED WITH UGLY WEAPONS. THEIR HARPOON HEADS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH HUNTING MAGIC, AND WERE CAREFULLY CRAFTED WITH ELEGANT PROPORTIONS TO PLEASE THE SPIRITS OF THE SEALS AND WALRUS ON WHOM THEY DEPENDED FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. DIFFERENT SIZED HARPOONS WERE USED TO CAPTURE DIFFERENT SIZED PREY, AND TOGGLING HARPOONS WERE ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE FOR HUNTING AT BREATHING HOLES. THEY WOULD BE TIPPED WITH STONE, BONE OR WALRUS IVORY POINTS, AND LATER WITH TRADED IRON AND COPPER POINTS. THE LARGER TOGGLING HEADS WERE MOST PROBABLY USED TO HUNT SEALS AND BELUGA.