Finch & Co



A BERING SEA ESKIMO THROWING HARPOON

A BERING SEA ESKIMO THROWING HARPOON
WITH DETACHABLE WALRUS IVORY HARPOON SECURED WITH SINEW TO A WOOD SHAFT WITH AN IVORY SOCKET PIECE.
USED FOR HUNTING THE WHITE BELUGA WHALE AND LARGE BEARDED SEALS 'MUKLUK'
MID 19TH CENTURY
SIZE: 170CM LONG – 67 INS LONG (MAX.) HARPOON TIP: 46CM LONG – 18 INS LONG

LITERATURE

THE WHITE WHALE HAS A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE BERING SEA PEOPLE AND IS ACCORDED THE UTMOST RESPECT. WHEN A BELUGA IS CAUGHT A SONG IS OFFERED TO ITS SPIRIT AND IT WAS CUSTOMARY IN MANY REGIONS NEVER TO HUNT FOR THESE WHALES WITH IRON BLADED HARPOONS NOR CUT THEM WITH IRON KNIVES. BELUGA AND BEARDED SEALS ARE HUNTED WITH LARGE HARPOONS THAT ARE CAST BY HAND AIDED BY AN IVORY FINGER REST. FULL GROWN MALE BEARDED SEALS KNOWN AS 'MUKLUK' TO THE ESKIMO'S CAN WEIGH BETWEEN 600 AND 800 POUNDS AND ARE IMPORTANT IN ADDITION TO FOOD FOR THE MANY PRODUCTS THEY PROVIDE INCLUDING RAWHIDE THONG, BOOT SOLE LEATHER, KAYAK COVERS, BLADDER FLOATS AND GUTSKIN FOR CLOTHING.