Finch & Co



ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY DRAG HANDLE IN THE FORM OF A BOWHEAD WHALE

AN ESKIMO CARVED WALRUS IVORY DRAG HANDLE IN THE FORM OF A BOWHEAD WHALE
CIRCA 1840 – 60
SIZE: 2.5CM HIGH, 6.5CM DEEP, 3.5CM WIDE – 1 INS HIGH, 2½ INS DEEP, 1¼ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE INUPIAK SPEAKERS OF NORTHERN ALASKA LIVED IN A HIGH ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT AND DEPENDED HEAVILY ON SEA MAMMALS FOR FOOD AND CLOTHING. THE MOST IMPORTANT ANIMAL TO THEM WAS THE BOWHEAD WHALE, THEIR MAJOR SOURCE OF MEAT, OIL AND BALEEN. THE NORTHERNERS TOOK GREAT CARE IN HOW THEY DECORATED AND TREATED MATERIALS THROUGHOUT THE WHALING SEASON, SO AS NOT TO OFFEND THE SPIRITS OF THE WHALE WHOM THEY BELIEVED WAS NOT 'TAKEN' BY THE HUNTER, BUT PERMITTED ITSELF TO BE KILLED. THROUGHOUT DAILY LIFE THEY WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO PLEASE THE SPIRITS OF THE ANIMALS THEY DEPENDED ON FOR THEIR OWN SURVIVAL.