



Ipiutak Toggle / Amulette

E 244) A shaman's transformation amulet or toggle. It represents the head of a polar bear in profile yet when seen from above it shows a "multiple-reading" image of both the head of a moose (or elk) with enlarged nostrils and a human skull with exaggerated eyeholes, bared teeth and an extended tongue. The toggle is pierced in various directions several of which connect to each other.

Old Bering Sea, possibly Ipiutak, Northern Coast of Alaska, USA. Mineralized walrus tusk with a fine patina of age and light wear. 5 x 3 cm. Circa 100-600 AD.

Literature:

See Donald Ellis Gallery, Canada for a similar example (Inventory # E4405) excavated at Deering on the Kotzebue Sound and others in the Department of Ethnography, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, Cat. No. P4109. Wardwell, Allen. Ancient Eskimo Ivories of the Bering Strait. New York: Hudson Hills, 1986, pg. 114, pl. 149, for a very similar head excavated in 1940 by Helge Larsen and Froelich Rainey at the Ipiutak site near Point Hope, Alaska