



The Chauvet/Roudillon Eskimo Harpoon

A superb harpoon (unaaq) for hunting bears, walrus and seals, decorated on the handle with a finger rest carved in the form of a miniature seal head with inlaid eyes. The long, powerful point carved from walrus ivory was intended for hunting bears from the ice floe. This large, straight point devoid of barbs is grooved on the top and sides in order to increase the bleeding of the wound causing the rapid weakening of the beast and allowing the animal to be attacked repeatedly with the harpoon. At the other end of the harpoon is a large whalebone ballast and point holder beautifully adorned with three finely carved, high relief rings. The two elements at each extremity are held to the wooden shaft with skilful ligatures made of tendons and marine mammal skin of remarkable quality of execution. The shaft is made of a long driftwood shaft.

Eskimo, Western Alaska.

Wood (cedar or pine), walrus tusk (*Odobenus rosmarus divergens*), bone, leather and tendons all with a superb and old patina of use (a few old worm holes).

Culture Thule circa 1800-1900 AD

181.5 cm

Literature:

See other examples of less beautiful quality in the collections of the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts including 00.200.354 which has the same type of ring ornamentation.