



# Inuit Knife, Woman's knife

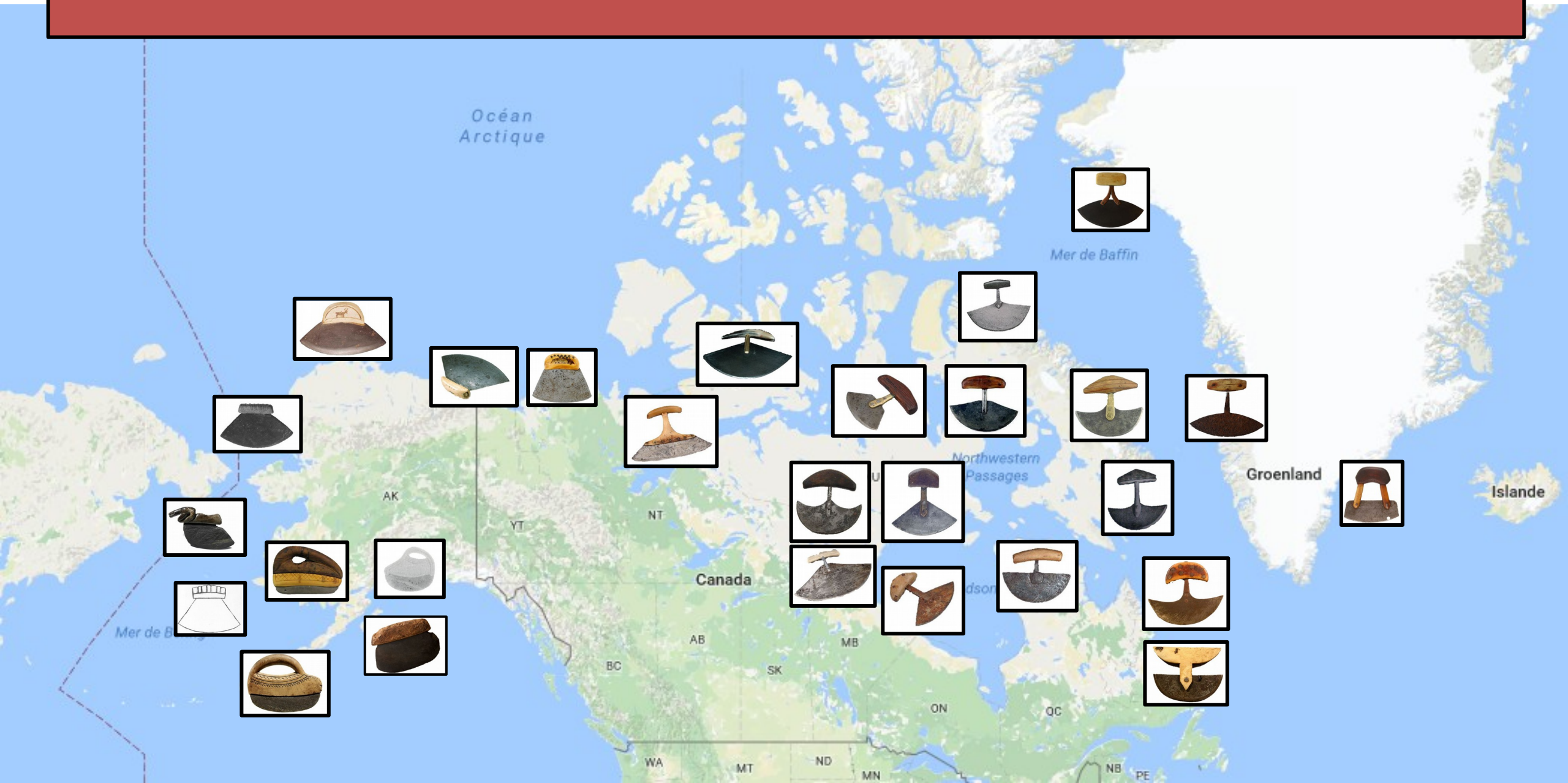
*A study of ulu in Greenland*



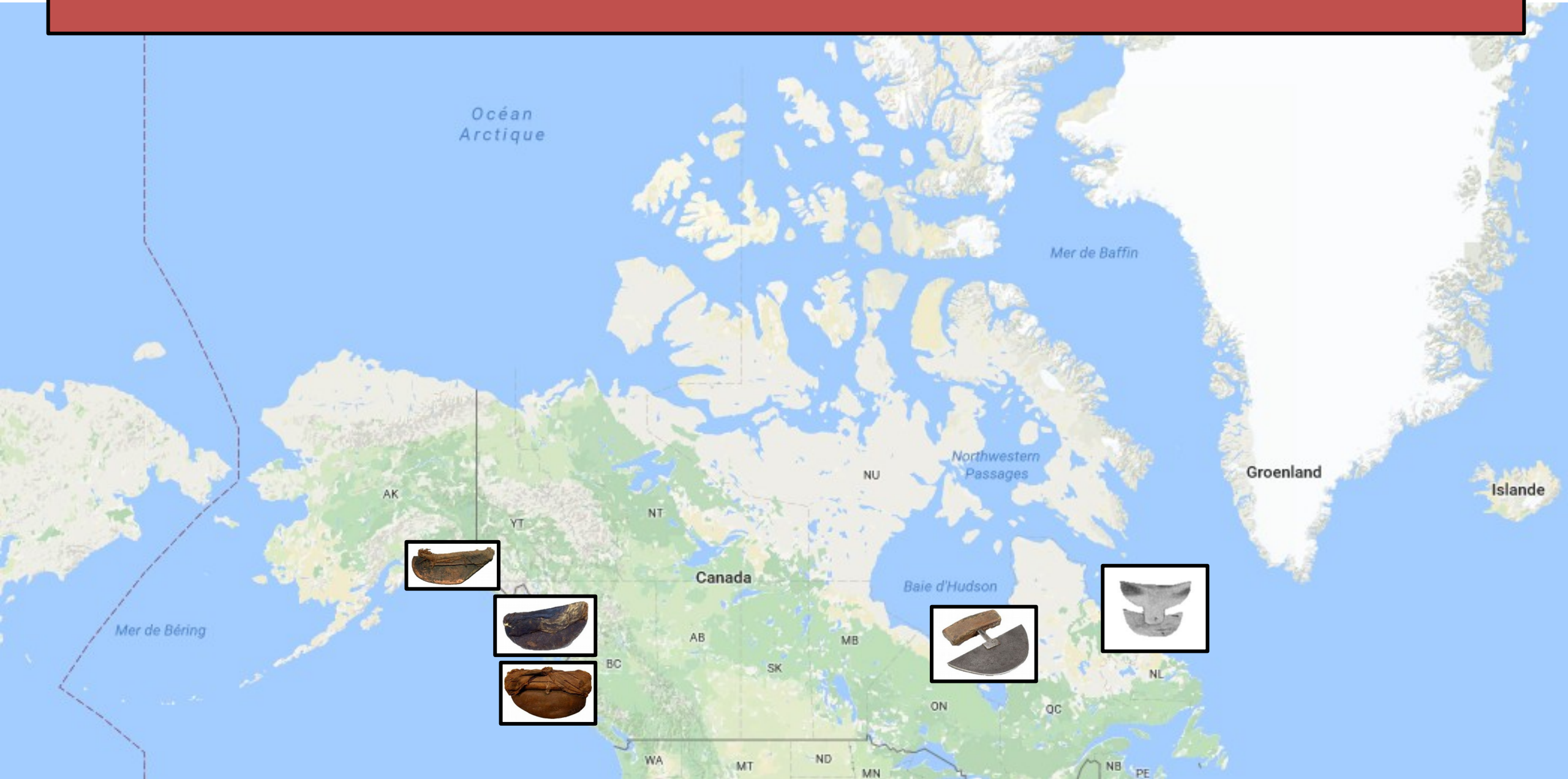
« Heritage in the changing Arctic »  
Ilisimatusarfik  
Nuuk - Septembari 14-iat 2016



# A COMMON TOOL / ATORTUT AVANNARLERNI



# A COMMON TOOL / ATORTUT AVANNARLERNI



# ULU'S FUNCTIONS / QANOQ ULU ATORNEQARSINAANERSOQ ?



An example of Utilization of ulu in Greenland :  
Nuuk, June 2016

# TERMINOLOGY / ATORTUUP TAAGUTAI



Different tools from East Greenland described as ulu or « woman's knife »  
in articles or museum Database

# TERMINOLOGY / ATORTUUP TAAGUTAI



« Tsakkeq » or « ulu » from East Greeland  
Nuuk, December, Kittat



scraber from Nuuk and East Greenland  
Nuuk, December 2014, Kittat

# A CHRONOLOGICAL AND TYPOLOGICAL MAP OF ULU / ULUT ALLANNGORANERA

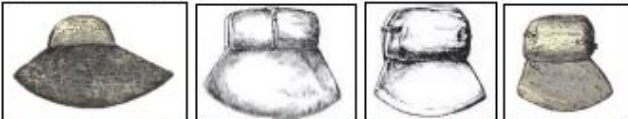
## COLLECTION FROM ALASKA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

### > NORTH SLOPE

Culture : Inupiat  
 Main villages : Point Barrow, Point Hope, Nuwuk  
 Ulu's name : uluaq (ACCC), uluvaggak (SI), ulure (Murdoch)  
 First remarks : Two main types of ulu can be identified. One with a semi-lunar blade and a semi-lunar handle. A second one with a semi-lunar blade and a trapezoidal handle. The handle of this second type can be composed of two different parts lashed with sinews. There is not significant variability of the dimensions between both types. Most of the blades are in slate, one of them is in jade. Handle are in antler, wood, ivory or whalebone. Handles with ornamental and artistic decorations.



- 1) Origin : Cape Smythe Culture : Inupiaq Datation : Raw Material : bone, slate Dimension : 3,2 par 4,6 par 0,8 inches Source : Young naturalist society - Burke Museum
- 2) Origin : Point Hope Culture : - Datation : 1905 Raw Material : Slate, bone Dimension : 6,9 X 10 X 1,5 cm Source : Clara G. Corser Churchill et par Frank Carroll Churchill - Dartmouth Museum of Art - 46.17.9591
- 3) Origin : Point Barrow Culture : Navagmiut Datation : 1800/1894 Raw Material : Slate, wood Dimension : 5,9 X 7,1 X 1,3 cm Source : Peabody Museum - Gift Frederik H Rindge
- 4) Origin : Point Barrow Culture : Navagmiut Datation : 1800/1894 Raw Material : Slate, antler Dimension : 5,9 X 9,7 X 1,6 cm Source : Peabody Museum - Gift Frederik H Rindge



- 1) Origin : Point barrow area Culture : Inupiaq Datation : 1892 Raw Material : ivory walrus Dimension : de petite dimension Name : ulure Source : Murdoch (161)
- 2) Origin : Point Barrow Culture : - Datation : 1885 Raw Material : Slate, antler, sinew Dimension : 7,6 cm Source : Captain Ray - Mason
- 3) Origin : Point Barrow Culture : - Datation : 1881 Raw Material : Slate, antler, Dimension : 7,6 cm Source : Captain Ray - Mason
- 4) Origin : Nuwuk Culture : Inupiaq Datation : 1892 Raw Material : slate, antler, sinew (market) Source : Murdoch

For each « ulu » :



- Origin : *Point Barrow*
- Culture : *Inupiat*
- Datation : *1894*
- Dimension : *6 par 9,7 cm*
- Raw Material : *antler, slate*
- Name : *Uluaq*
- Maker : *unknown*
- Collector : *unknown*
- Museum : *Peabody M.*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
	NBASE	CODIFICATION TYPE	NOM GNERIQUE	NOM VERNACULAIRE	PAYS	REGION	LIEU	CULTURE	DATATION	
1	1		"women's knife"		Alaska	Detroit de Bering, Région	Stugunugumut	Central Yup'ik - KAIALIGAMUT	1877/1881	NELS
2	2		"women's knife"		Alaska	Detroit de Bering, Région	Kouigunugumut	Central Yup'ik - KUSKOKWAGAMUT	1877/1881	NELS
3	3		"women's knife"		Alaska	Detroit de Bering, Lower	Yukon	Central Yup'ik	1877/1981	NELS
4	4		"women's knife"		Alaska	Detroit de Bering, Lower	Yukon	Central Yup'ik	1877/1981	NELS
5	5		"women's knife"		Alaska	Detroit de Bering		Central Y'pik	1877/1981	NELS
6	6		"women's knife"	"ulure" little ulu	Alaska	Point Barrow		Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
7	7		"women's knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow,	Pernya	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
8	8		"women's knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow	Nuwuk	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
9	9		"women's knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow	Nuwuk	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
10	10		"women's knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow	Nuwuk	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
11	11		"women's ancient slate-bladed knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow	Nuwuk	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
12	12		"Large knife of slate"		Alaska	Point Barrow		Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR
13	13		"Arctic hope handle for woman's knife"		Alaska	Point Barrow	Utkiauviu	Inupiat (des côtes nord alaska)	1881/1883	MUR

# ULU FROM NORTH WEST GREENLAND - ULUT AVANNAANIT



- *Ulu from north west Greenland Iron, Ivory, copper, 14, 2 cm (blade)  
National Museum of Greenland*
- *Ulu from North West Greenland, Wood, Iron, 14,3 cm (blade)  
National Museum of Greenland*
- *Ulu, 1892 Peabody Museum 5,8 / 4,5 cm, Ivory, Metal*



# ULU FROM NORTH WEST GREENLAND – ULUT AVANNAANIT



Ulu,  
NKA, KNK L16 5016  
East Greenland  
Archaeological find

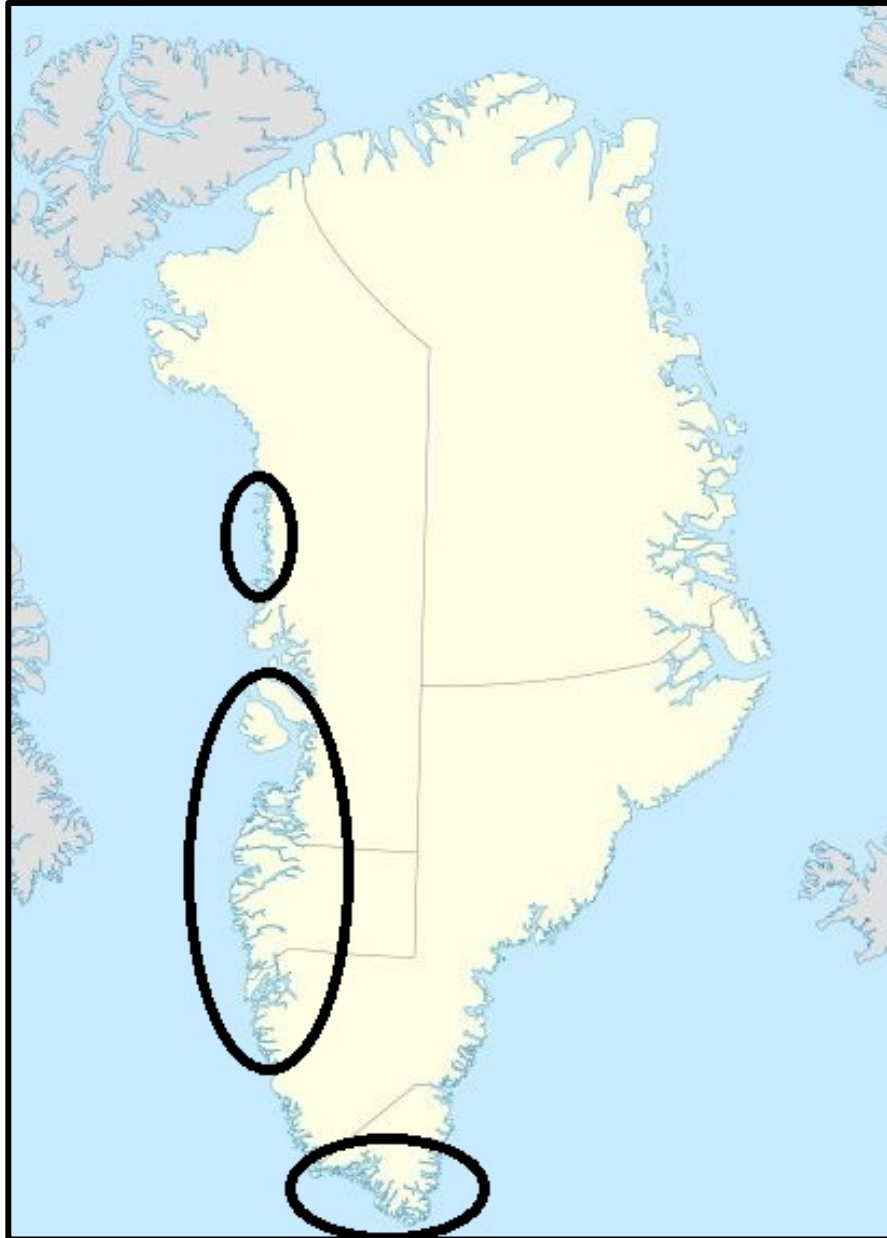


Ulu, Canada  
Canadian Museum of History  
Unknown Datation



Scraper  
Sisimiut, 2016

# ULU FROM WEST COAST AND SOUTH GREENLAND



-Ulu from west Greenland, 1898/1914 10,7x13,9 cm – Iron, Ivory or bone  
- Ulu from Disko Bay, 10,2X8,2 cm – Iron, Wood  
National Museum of Greenland



-Ulu from Disko Bay,  
-« ulu » (?) blade from Haabetz, 1721/1728, 14,1X12,5 cm  
National Museum of Greenland

# ULU FROM WEST GREENLAND – KITAANI ULUT



Nuuk  
Kittat (2010)

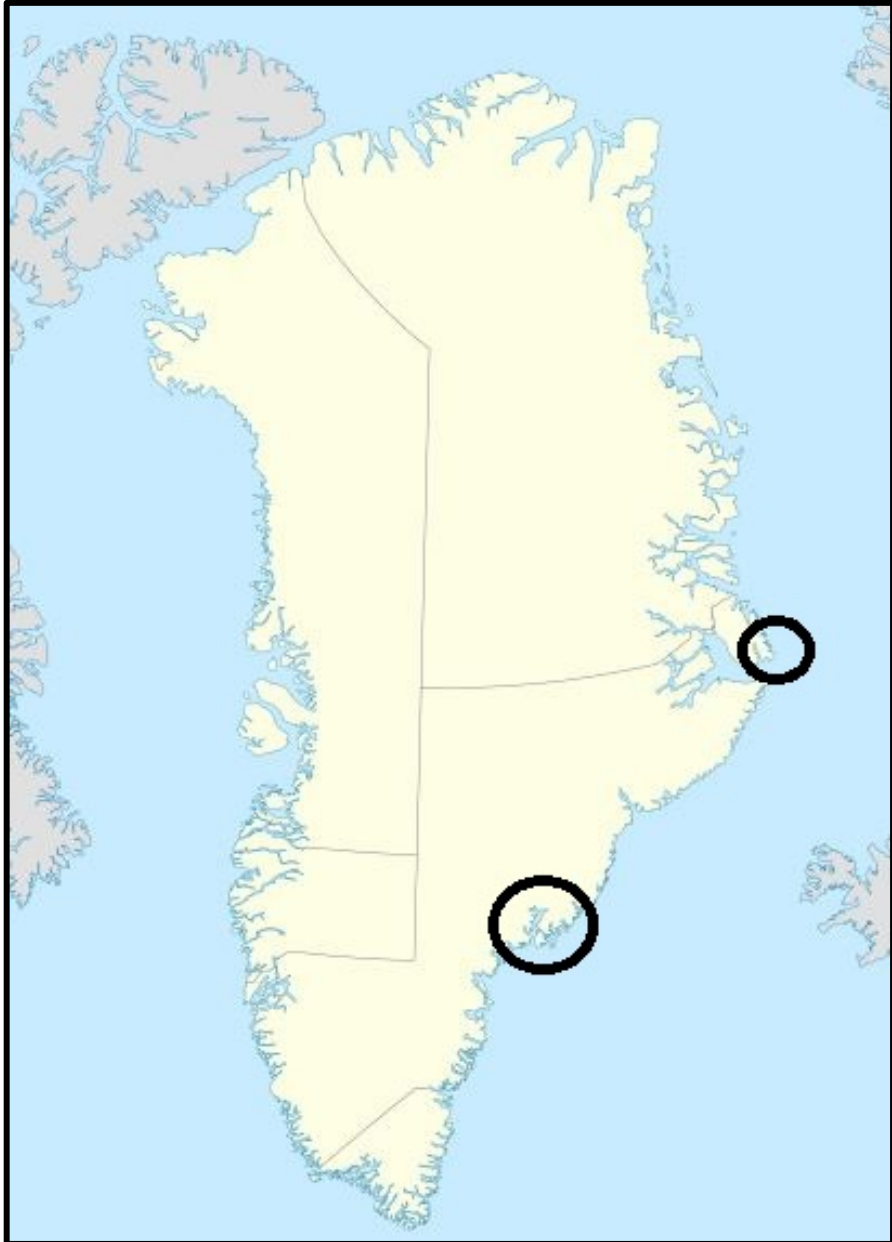


East Greenlandic ulu  
(Tsakkeq) used in Nuuk  
2016



East Greenlandic ulu  
(Tsakkeq) used in Sisimiut  
2016

# ULU FROM EAST GREENLAND – TUNUMIUT ULUI



« Tsakkeq »,  
Iron, Wood, Ivory  
Museum of Quai Branly



« Tsakkeq »,  
Iron, Antler, Bone  
National Museum of Greenland



Ammassalik, 1934/1935  
9,2 X 13,3 X 2,3 cm  
Museum of Quai Branly (Paris)

# A CHRONOLOGICAL AND TYPOLOGICAL MAP OF ULU



Miniature « ulu » from North West Canada,  
Canadian Museum of History  
Slate, around 1,5/2 cm  
Thule Culture



Miniature « ulu » from, Slate,  
Thule Culture, East Greenland, 2,1 X 1,9 cm  
National Museum of Greenland



Handle, Bone, Canada,  
Canadian Museum of History  
Thule Culture



Handle, Bone, Northwest Greenland  
National Museum of Greenland,

# HOW TO STUDY THE TOOL / SUNA MALUGINIASSALLUGU MISISSUINERMI

For archaeological and ethnographical collection :



National Museum of Greenland

- Raw material Handle
- Raw Material Blade
- Dimension Handle
- Dimensions Blade
- Handle morphology
- Blade morphology
  - Cutting edge morphology
  - Edge bevel
    - Hole
  - Use-wear



National Museum of Greenland

# RAW MATERIALS / ATORTUT ASSIGIINGITSUT



Blade from ulu  
East Greenland,  
9, 2 par 4,8 cm  
National Museum of Greenland  
**SLATE**



Ulu, Ammassalik  
Museum of Quai Branly  
**IRON FROM SAW**



Ulu, Ammassalik  
Leiden Museum  
**BONE**



Ulu, Ammassalik  
Museum of Quai Branly  
**WOOD**

# MORPHOLOGY / ILUSIT ASSIGIINNGITSUT



—  
1 CM



Ulu blades (slate)  
East Greenland,  
Dødemandsbugten  
From 1,9 to 6 cm  
National Museum of Greenland

Ulu blades (slate), NKA  
East Greenland,  
Dødemandsbugten  
National Museum of Greenland





1



Ulu Blade,  
National Museum of Greenland  
East Greenland,  
slate, 9, 2 par 4,8 cm



2

X50



Kittat  
Nuuk



Kalaallisuuliornermik Ilinniarfik  
Sisimiut



Workplace  
Kangaamiut



# BUTCHERING THE SEAL



Using an ulu to buthering a seal.Others kind of knives can also be used.

# FLESHING THE SEAL SKIN



Using an ulu to take off the blubber  
Nuuk, 2016



Using an ulu to take off the  
Subcutaneous tissue of the dermis  
Nuuk, 2016

# DEPILATING SEAL SKINS



Different ways of depilating a seal skins with an ulu.  
Others tools can be used  
Sisimiut, 2016

## STRETCHING THE SEAL SKIN



Using an ulu to make holes in the skin before stretching it on a wooden frame, Sisimiut 2016



# SEAL SKIN EMBROIDERY - AVITTAT



Using an ulu to thin the thickness  
of colored seal skin

Using an ulu to cut strips colored seal skin

# SHARPENING THE ULU / IPISSARIAATSIT ASSIGIINNGITSUT



Sharpening an ulu with a  
second ulu  
Nuuk, 2016



Sharpening an ulu with a  
scraper,  
Nuuk 2016

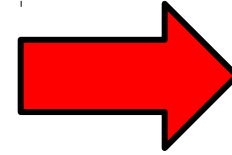


Sharpening an ulu with a  
knife sharpener,  
Nuuk 2016



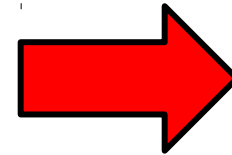


# PREHENSION



## PROXIMAL PREHENSION

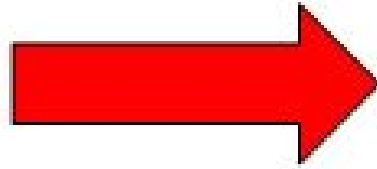
Butchering  
Scrabing skins  
Cutting skins



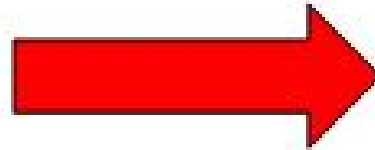
## LATERAL PREHENSION

Precision cutting  
Skin embroidery

# GRIP / TIGUMMERIAASEQ



« **Closed** » grip  
Butchering  
Cutting



« **Open Grip** »  
Scraping  
Thinning

# DIFFERENT UTILIZATION OF THE BLADE



**All the cutting edge is used**

Butchering  
Cutting  
Scrabing



**Use of one side of the cutting edge**

Scrabing  
Thinning



**Use of the end sides and lower side angles of the blade**

Precision cutting

# OTHER ASPECTS OF THE TOOL



Handles (wood), East Greenland,  
Dødemandsbugten  
National Museum of Greenland



Ulu, East Greenland,  
Kangaartik Wood, Beads  
National Museum of Greenland



Ulu, West Greenland,  
Antler, Iron  
National Museum of Greenland



Ulu, West Greenland,  
Nuuk, 2016,  
Antler, Iron

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE TOOL



Ulu from Kapisillit, (1970) Wood, Iron, Antler, Ivory, National Museum of Greenland

# ULU IN GREENLANDIC PAINTING / ULU QALIPAKKANI



Women using an ulu,  
Eva M. Kleist, 2008,  
Fresco (freske) Sisimiut

# ULU IN GREENLANDIC SCULPTURE / EQQUMITSULIANI ULU TAKUSSAAVOQ



Sperm whale teeth  
Greenland  
National Museum of Greenland









Anthon Berthelsen (1955)  
Nuuk Kunst Museum



Kristian Fly  
Nuuk Kunst  
Museum

# DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF REPRESENTATION

- **ART**  *Sculpture, Painting, Drawing, Performance Art, ceramic ..*
- **ARCHITECTURE**  
**URBAN FURNITURE**  *Street Art, Building's Decoration, entry ..*
- **FASHION/CLOTHES**  *Dress, Hat, Scarf ...*
- **HOUSE DESIGN**  *Furniture, Usensil, wooden accessories, lamp ..*
- **JEWELLERY** *Earing, Necklace, Bracelet, Brooch, Pendants ...*
- **INSTITUTIONS**  *Logo from political parti, school, association ..*
- **SEAL SKIN**  
**HANDCRAFT**  *Brooch, Bag, necklace,*



# ULU AS AN INUIT SYMBOL ?



Logo of the association  
Nunavut Tunngavik  
(Nunavut)



Logo of the Municipality of Arviat  
(Nunavut)

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