

Basic Detail Report



Pipe

Date

1000-1700

Primary Maker

Canalino

Medium

Steatite and clam shell bead

Description

This is a steatite and clam shell bead pipe from the Channel Islands of California from roughly 1000-1700. Catalina's later pre-contact residents were commonly referred to as Cataliños. The mainstay of the island was its soapstone (or steatite), quarried in several locations centered around the site of the modern-day airport. From this easily worked stone, the island's material culture was carved. Bowls, pendants, charmstones, and pipes, the subject of this post were all carved from the easily workable rock. This work was essential to the islanders who needed to trade for many of the items which could not be procured on their small island. The result was that the works became part of an extensive trading network which sprawled across the southern Californian coast, often exchanged for pelts or harder stones such as obsidian which found better use as a tool than as a workable medium. All of this is to explain how the Chumash living far to the north of Catalina would have obtained a soapstone pipe. Like this pipe, many Chumash objects were decorated with small clam shell beads. Often these beads lent features to zoomorphic forms. Here we see that it functions as a geometric design.

Dimensions

1 1/2 × 1 × 12 1/4 in. (3.8 × 2.5 × 31.1 cm)