

Chukchee-style wood and pewter pipe, 19th century, Chukotka or St. Lawrence Island, 20.3 cm



Of all the Russian trade goods, tobacco held by far the first place. The Native's craving for it is aptly expressed in a story that was well known to all of the ethnic groups in northeastern Siberia, and that has been related by Bogoras (1909, p. 59):

“In the time of a tobacco famine, when all the people were nearly mad because they had nothing to smoke, one well-to-do reindeer breeder possessed a large pouch quite filled with tobacco, but would not share it with anyone. At last his own brother asked for a pipeful, and was refused. The next day he overtook the owner of the tobacco on the tundra, stabbed him from behind with his spear, ripped open his breast,

and took out his lungs, which he found covered in soot. He scraped away a part of this and used it to fill his pipe. The pouch he left untouched. When caught by the Cossacks and brought before the Russian magistrate, he showed him the big pouch and the sooty lungs, and was acquitted of the charge.”

The pipe shown above is a typical “Chukchee-style” example of their single-piece pipes that are ornamented with patterns inlaid with pewter or lead. As described by Bogoras (1909, pp. 202-203), “the bowl and mouthpiece are of pewter, and are cast in wooden mantles [see figure below]. The wooden part of the pipe, with its surface grooved for inlaying, is interposed between the end moulds, which are connected by a paper tube. The metal parts are thus all cast at the same time, the pewter being poured in the bowl-end of the mould. The pipe is afterwards finished with a knife and a file.”

Together with the pipe were kept an iron pin (attached to the stem by a leather strip) to clean the bowl and tamp the tobacco, and a small tobacco-pouch made of leather and sometimes decorated with crude embroidery. Most of the pipes have a small door-like piece fitted neatly into the bottom of the wood portion (see illustration above). This can be removed by the owner to obtain the accumulated nicotine, which is collected and mixed with chewing tobacco (Nelson, 1899, pp. 280-281). Essentially identical pipes were used by the Asiatic Eskimos and the Alaskan Eskimos of adjacent St. Lawrence Island, whereas the many varieties of mainland Alaskan pipes were almost all quite different (see Nelson, 1899, pp. 280-284 and Plate LXXXVIII).

Literature:

- Bogoras, W. (1909): *The Chukchee (Parts I-III)*, *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 40, Brill, Leiden.
- Nelson, E.W. (1899): *The Eskimo About Bering Strait*, Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, DC.

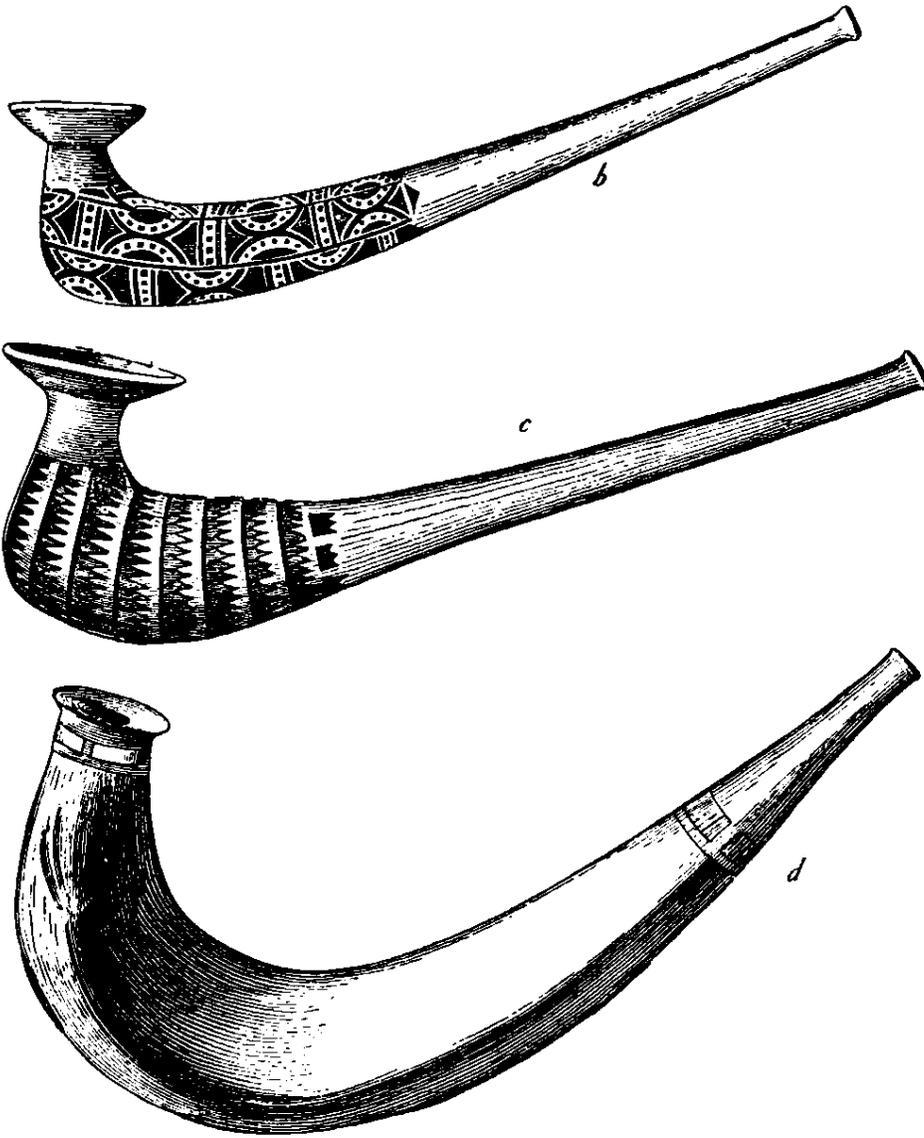


Fig. 119, *a* ($\frac{1}{17} \frac{0}{12}$), Pipe with a Tin Bowl (length, 17.5 cm.); *b* ($\frac{6}{17} \frac{0}{24}$), Ornamental Pipe (length, 26 cm.), Eskimo, Indian Point; *c* ($\frac{7}{8} \frac{0}{18}$), Ornamental Pipe (length, 23 cm.); *d* ($\frac{1}{8} \frac{0}{14}$), Wooden Pipe (length, 45 cm.).

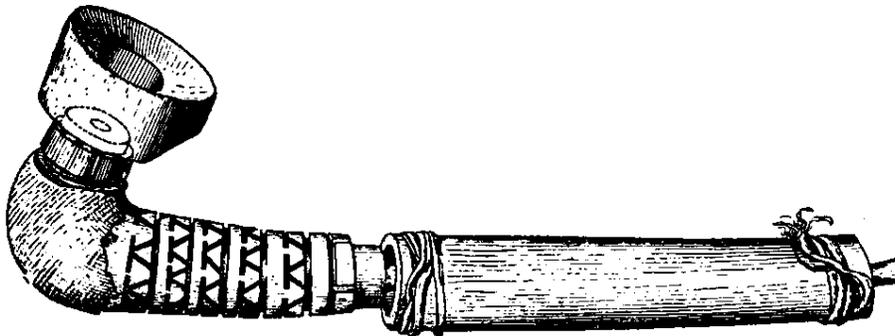


Fig. 120 ($\frac{1}{55} \frac{0}{5}$). Wooden Mantle for casting Pipe. $\frac{1}{4}$ nat. size.