

## Adena Pipe

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This wonderful carved pipe was found in the Adena mound in Chillicothe. It shows us an Adena man wearing typical clothing and jewelry.

The Adena Pipe, the State Artifact of Ohio, is an American Indian effigy pipe which was excavated from the Adena Mound in 1901. The Adena Mound is located about one and a half miles northwest of Chillicothe, Ohio, in Ross County. Ohio Governor Thomas Worthington chose this location in the Scioto River Valley to build his home, completed in 1807, naming his estate "Adena," which Worthington's diary claims comes from a Hebrew name that "was given to places for the delightfulness of their situations." The Adena culture (800 B.C. to A.D. 100) of pre-contact American Indian peoples, an archaeological culture referring to the peoples who produced cultural artifacts during this time, was named after the Adena Mound. The Native peoples (Adena) thrived in southeastern Indiana, southwestern Pennsylvania, and most prominently in the Scioto River and Hocking Valleys in southern Ohio and the Kanawha Valley near Charleston, West Virginia.

What we today call the Adena Pipe was originally buried with an adult male. Through archaeological investigation, we know this person was also buried with hundreds of shell beads which had been carefully attached to a loincloth. He was also buried wearing a bone and pearl beaded necklace as well as spear points, knives, and a raccoon effigy. These beautiful and lavish burial items placed with him suggest he was a very important person in the community. Tubular pipes are considered common to the Adena culture, as tobacco use was widespread, but effigy pipes are highly unusual and the Adena Pipe is a unique object. The pipe sculpture reveals what archaeologists believe to be wonderfully detailed indications of clothing, hair-style, and ornaments of the Adena culture, which archaeologists might not otherwise be able to ascertain. Or, perhaps the Adena pipe represents a mythological figure. We don't know enough about Adena sculpture and its stylistic characteristics to make these claims with confidence.

The figure on the Adena pipe wears a loincloth with a feather bustle. A similar bird fan-tail is shown on the Berlin Tablet, a stone tablet engraved with a stylized carving of a bird. Brad Lepper, Curator of Archaeology at the Ohio History Connection, has before stated that in wearing such a symbol, the man represented on the Adena Pipe may have been taking on the powers associated with a feathered spirit of the "Above World." Some archaeologists speculate that the effigy may represent a shaman or medicine man. Tobacco smoked by Native peoples had much more potent amounts of nicotine and could lead to hallucinations and altered states of consciousness, thus giving these individuals access to the "Above World." However, due to geographical barriers and lack of access, modern American Indian descendants have never before weighed in on these speculative uses for the Adena Pipe.

## See Also

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- [Adena Culture](#)
- [Chillicothe, Ohio](#)
- [Woodland Period](#)
- [Ohio's Prehistoric Timeline](#)
- [Adena](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Ohio History Connection](#)
- [Adena Mound](#)
- [William C. Mills](#)
- [Mississippian Period](#)
- [\[Early Woodland/Adena Culture\]](#)
- [\[Berlin Tablet\]](#)
- [\[Adena tubular pipes\]](#)
- [\["Excavations of the Adena Mound" by William C. Mills\]](#)

## References

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1. Mills, William C. "Excavations of the Adena Mound," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications*, Volume 10, pp. 452-479, 1902.
2. Reilly, F. Kent III and James F. Garber, editors. *Ancient Objects and Sacred Realms: Interpretations of Mississippian Iconography*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.
3. Lepper, Bradley T. "The Adena Pipe: icon of ancient Ohio." *Timeline* Volume 27, Number 1, pages 2-15. 2010.

4. Woodward, Susan L., and Jerry N. McDonald. *Indian Mounds of the Middle Ohio Valley: A Guide to Mounds and Earthworks of the Adena, Hopewell, Cole, and Fort Ancient People*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2002.