



*Rasp used for carving soapstone bowls;
made from three deer jaws lashed together.*

did not let the tobaccos cure long enough, but an immediate test pool of adventurous museum goers moved the schedule up. We can unequivocally support the findings of William Strachey, who during the founding of Jamestowne remarked that the indigenous tobacco was “poor, weak, and biting of taste”. We believe he was being polite. That said, the Indians here in the Palisades apparently enjoyed the stuff. Pictured to the right is a stone pipe found at “Little Falls” (Smithsonian Collection) with an effigy head protruding from the bowl. The effigy face has been worn smooth perhaps by the anxious hands of a *Rustica* smoker.



A recent trip to the Dominican Republic opened my eyes to the island’s rich Taino Indian prehistory. I stayed on the Samana Peninsula at a great [hotel](#) where by chance the



proprietor keeps a wonderful collection of Taino artifacts. The Taino’s remarkable artistry suggests links to the Olmec and other Mesoamerican groups and is a little puzzling because major islands exist between Mexico and the Taino’s territory of eastern Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. The most obvious cultural connection is the existence of ball courts, where players used belts around the waist for hitting the ball. It is likely the first colonial ball game that appealed to the inhabitants of

the Dominican Republic; today it’s baseball. The other cultural preoccupation of the Taino was the cohoba ritual. Much of the pottery relates to a person in hallucinatory revelation, attained by grinding seeds of the Cohoba tree and then snorting the powder. As with other complex Indian societies (especially those with gold resources), Spanish colonization quickly decimated the indigenous people leaving us but peculiar artifacts.

Finally, running at the Sackler Museum for the next month is an [exhibit](#) featuring some of the first blossomings of Western Art. The Colchis culture, in what is today the Republic of Georgia, straddled both Greek and Persian influences and obviously found inspiration in their burgeoning wine-making industry. At some point in human history, we thankfully passed from the profanity of constantly scrambling for survival, to spending leisure time practicing the arts and throwing parties.

Cheers to all in the new year.

-Doug Dupin, Director