A000-AM,C-Taino-Ceremonial Celt-Anthropomorphic-Bicephalic-Andesite-1000 CE



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**Case No.: 18**

**Accession No.**

**Formal Label:** AM,C-Taino-Ceremonial Celt-Anthropomorphic-Bicephalic-Andesite-1000 CE

**Display Description:**

This bicephalic Taino ceremonial celt embodies Janus themes, suggesting a certain timelessness of simultaneously looking forward and backward in time. Since the ceremonial celt is rare among the Taino, their ownership was probably restricted to prominent *Bohiques* and *Caciques.*

Cemi bicephalism was important to Taino cosmological inquiry. They were associated both with the afterlife and the future and in this respect Behiques would seek their aid during hallucinogenic ventures.

These celts are invariably fashioned from very heavy, dense, fine-grained andesite, which makes their surface very smooth when finished. Their subject matter ranges between anthropomorphic spirits to aviform spirits with large concave eyes, perhaps of owls. This suggests that these celts were used in ceremonies invoking the spirits of either deceased ancestors or the nocturnal, all-seeing owl.

Intricate detail on the heads of these celts may incorporate a series of concentric circles above the frontal region as in this example suggestive of superior enlightenment as the concentric circle is a symbol for the sun.

**LC Classification:**

**Date or Time Horizon:**

**Geographical Area:**

**Map:**

**GPS coordinates:**

**Cultural Affiliation:**

**Media:**

**Dimensions: L 11 in**

**Weight:**

**Condition:**

**Provenance:**

**Discussion:**

Ceremonial celts perhaps originated with the Olmecs (1400-400 B.C.E.) at sites like La Venta , where they depicted their most prominent deity, the god of maize. Post Classic Mayan traders (900-1698) interacted with many peoples of the Gulf of Mexico, probably including the Taino, whom they may have influenced to make their own ceremonial celts since Mayan ceremonial celts were an important part of their religious rites..

The ritual of cohoba was the most important ceremony Taino. The chiefs, male members of their class - nitaínos - and -chamanes- behiques participating in it to consult cemíes about important community events.According to He describes Dr. Rivero de la Calle (1986):   
Cohoba consisted of hallucinogenic powders, which initially was estimated obtained solely of snuff and is absorbed in an inhaler was introduced in the nose. This ceremony was preceded by a purification; which consists of a ritual vomiting, which was willing to let the individual to abosorber these powders. Overall the rite of purification; and inhalation of hallucinogenic powder was part of the most complex operations that performed the cacique and behique both for healing purposes, and the most important rites, from the collective point of view, through which they proceeded after to be in the appropriate state to guess toxic issues that were of interest to the community, especially for the cacique or behique (2).   
  
In the Ritual of Cohoba they intervened a toolkit or artifacts of a certain connotation. These were:   
.The Spatula vomica, with which caused vomiting.   
.The Tray where hallucinogenic powders were placed.   
.The Inhaler in the form of "Y", which was introduced in the nose.   
.The Duced or wooden seat where behique or cacique sat.   
.The Idol before which the ritual unfolded.   
It consisted of inhalation, preceded by a purifying vomiting, hallucinogenic substances that caused a state of ecstasy that allowed communication with deities or cemíes.

He described [Bartolome de las Casas](https://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=es&u=http://pueblosoriginarios.com/biografias/casas.html&usg=ALkJrhiEbDcTJHKW_RGwJDqX2B_AbcHbLg) in Apologetic History Summary (1559):

"The first thing the beginning was the master, and while he made ​​her all silent, took his cohoba (which is sniff the powders, as has been said), and tomábase seated on low banquets, but nicely styled which called duhos ... was a while back her head to one side and arms above her knees, then lifted his face to the sky speaking their certain words, they should be your prayer to the true God or who had God, answered all then quasi as when we respond to love, and this made ​​with big name voices and sounds, captándole benevolence and begging him to say what he had seen gave account of his vision, saying the Cemi had him. speaking and certificate of good times or adverse, or had had children, or that they had died, or had to have some containment or war with its neighbors. "

**References:**