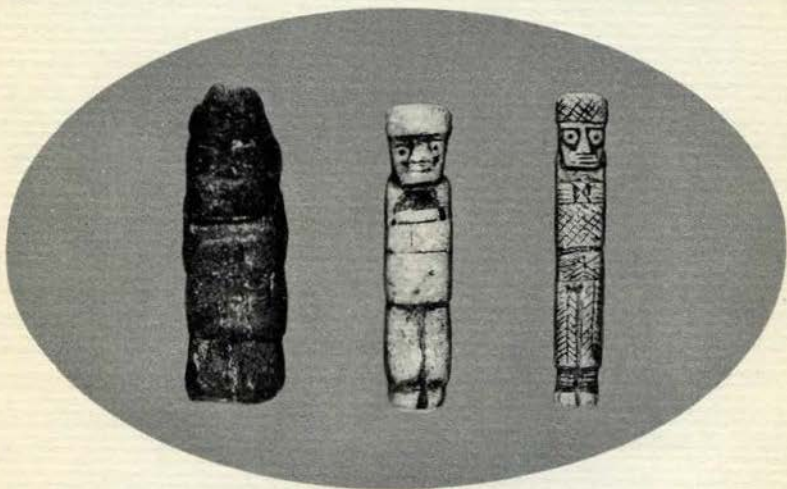


TAINO FIGURINES

WHEN Columbus landed on the shore of the New World the natives greeted his messengers with the cry "Taino! Taino!" meaning "Peace! Friend!" The name Taino has been applied ever since to these Antillean Arawaks and their culture.

These islanders, members of the widely spread Arawak stock were agriculturists and as such looked to the elemental gods for assistance: Sky-god and the more important Earth-mother-goddess.



A wind and water goddess had two messengers, one beneficent, bringer of rains, one maleficent, maker of floods. The gods were represented by statues of wood or stone, often placed in sacred caves. Small amulets of stone, bone or shell had a peculiar use in protecting the wearer by their magic powers. According to Peter Martyr: "These images the inhabitants call *zemis*, whereof the leaste, made to the likenesse of young devilles, they bind to their foreheads when they goe to the warres against their enemies."

The University Museum has recently acquired three tiny figurines, erstwhile cultus objects of the Antillean Arawaks. They were found in a cave not far from Puerto Plata on the island of Santo Domingo. Two are of shell and one, thicker and less delicately carved, is of stone.

This latter shows a personage seated with knees drawn up, upper arms pressed to the sides of the body, and hands meeting on the chest. A broad belt is indicated and possibly a headdress, though the carving may have been meant to show the hair in two plaits from the forehead to the nape of the neck. Traces of a black coating remain, but this and the more delicate lines have been obliterated.

The two figurines of shell represent individuals identical or akin to one another. Both are standing in the same attitude, arms pressed to side, hands on chest, above the broad belt. The headdress, however, differs: the shorter and thicker of the two wears a disc-like cap, while the headdress of the other is wedge-shaped, its front decorated by cross-hatching, its back bearing a design associated with the world symbol of the eight directions. This, the finest of the three figurines, is delicately incised: the features, the cross-hatching of the belt, the design of linked diamonds on the abdomen, the fronds on the front of the legs show that red paint was part of its decoration. There are lines between the hands which may represent a cup. This little figure was found broken in two and encased in a tiny gourd. The decoration of the companion figure is mostly obliterated, but there still remain traces of black and red coloring.

Since the little figurines here described are not perforated, they can hardly be thought to belong among the war amulets. It is possible that, if they are properly to be grouped together, they represented the water goddess and her two messengers, and were the possession of a Boii, priest, specializing in that cult.

H. N. W.

EXPEDITION NOTES

THE sixth season of the Piedras Negras Expedition has been arranged and the field staff will have reached the site by the time this issue of the *Bulletin* appears. The personnel of the Expedition consists of Linton Satterthwaite, Jr., Field Director, assisted by Margaret Satterthwaite, Francis M. Cresson, Jr., and Tatiana Proskouriakoff. Their season will extend into June and work will be especially concentrated upon the architectural problems of the temple complexes which heretofore have yielded so richly in information bearing on the history of Maya building development.