

GUETAR ART IN STONE

WHEN the Great Admiral first touched the mainland on his final voyage to the western hemisphere, he found a numerous and semi-civilized people living in small settlements on the mountain slopes of that region which, for its golden treasure, he named Costa Rica. These Guetar, or Huetar, were farmers, artisans and traders, carrying their homely products into the gold-burdened country of their neighbors to the southeast, bartering the tapir, which they raised, for a string of shell beads, as long as a man's highest reach from the ground, while, for things of lesser value such as their filleted and their painted pottery, or fresh fish from the sea, measures of maize or of little cocoa beans served as currency.

They recognized local chieftains under one or two paramount chiefs, and they wove fine cotton cloth for garments and carved stone and wood with stone tools, for they knew no hard metals. Of gold they had comparatively little; the small figurines of men, alligators, lizards, crabs and spiders, cast in impure gold, which were worn upon the breast or bound on the arms of notables, were mostly imported from their neighbors and distant relatives, the Talamanca. Nevertheless, the labor of their hands and their burden-bearing backs meant wealth to the Spanish encomenderos, and so, very soon, they vanished from the earth. Today, the Guetar are known only by the meager account of their struggle to maintain their freedom and by the imperishable contents of their slab-lined graves.

The University Museum is fortunate in having acquired a small collection of Guetar objects carved from lava of varying fineness. Though nothing is recorded of their religion, save that they worshiped idols, practised human sacrifices and had chosen priests, who were wizards and seers, it may reasonably be assumed that the three statues represent deities. They are not large, standing only approximately fourteen, seventeen and ten inches, respectively. The female figure, erect with hands on breasts, is believed to image the goddess of fertility. The male figures are both shown in like posture, with right arm upraised and grasping a stone knife or other weapon, and the left hand holding a human head, presumably that of a sacrificed captive. The goddess is shown without clothing, and the male images wear only an ornamental belt (Plate XI). This lack of clothing must be attributed to ceremonial nudity, or a harking back to a time before weaving, or even the making of bark cloth, was



PLATE XI. Guetar Stone Statues, Costa Rica.



PLATE XII. Metates and Seat, Guetar, Costa Rica.



known. The Conquistadores found the Guetar wearing breech-cloths of bark cloth, but, being skillful weavers and dyers of cotton fabrics, they possessed for ceremonial occasions sleeveless tunics and mantles, examples of which they offered to the adventurers.

In the collection, there are three metates, or mealing stones, upon which maize and cocoa beans were ground with small flattish manos. All are highly ornamented and provided with four legs. One represents the jaguar, a beast which played an important part in the religion of all the peoples from Mexico to Peru. The other metates are slightly concave, broadly oval in outline, encircled by a series of small human heads, and with legs carved as standing human figures. It is believed that metates of this type were used not only as mealing stones, but served upon occasion as seats for the chieftains (Plate XII).

A more special form of seat is represented in the Museum's new acquisition. It is circular, with a relatively high annular base, and, ornamenting the rim, six jaguar heads. Stools of this class are occasionally found made of baked clay, and rarely one of wood has been preserved in a dry cave. It is recorded that the dignity of a chief required that he neither remain standing nor sit upon the ground during an interview. No seat being provided, a retainer brought a stone from the river, rubbed it well and placed it for his chief. Among Guetar stone statues are seated figures, but they are rarely represented as using a seat. These statuettes are generally small, and may have been mounted upon separate stools; which would suggest a use for stone and pottery seats of small size, found both in the Guetar country and in the Chiriqui region of Panama.

As an interesting associate of the Museum's Guetar statues, an unusually large figure of the seated type has been kindly lent by Dr. Samuel W. Fernberger, of the University's Department of Psychology. It may be noted that this figure is represented as seated upon a stool, that is oblong rather than oval, but distinctly of the metate type, although the four legs have not been carved out, nor even clearly indicated. Seats were a certain mark and privilege of rank. It is recorded of the Lord of Tecotegega that he and each of the notables of his household possessed a stool, presumably of wood, which each man kept at the head of his couch when not in use, and carried to the place where his meals were served, in tall tripod bowls resting on the ground.

The position of this image is one of repose, with elbows resting on knees and arms folded, as one deep in thought (Plate XIII). Like the erect statues, it is represented as nude. The lobes of the ears were pierced and a small pendant of polished greenstone was found in association. A curious headdress is indicated by three small lizards in relief carving, which encircle the head. The usual headdress for these Guetar statues is a conical cap, probably representing the pointed, wadded cotton helmet of the warrior. Neighboring tribes to the north carved an animal resting on the head of the human figure, its body trailing down the man's back. The presence of the lizards on Dr. Fernberger's specimen may be an indication of northern influence, modified, or itself the expression of a purely Guetar concept, of which the archaeologist must remain ignorant. Much of the basic culture of the Guetar links them to South America, and indeed, the linguistic affinities of this people were with the Chibcha of Colombia.

H. N. W.

CONVERSATIONS AND CALLS RECORDED ON THE WALLS OF THE TOMB OF KAIPURĒ

THE offering chamber of this tomb, which is located at the southern end of the lower Egyptian hall, was described by Cornelia H. Dam in an article in the *Museum Journal* of June, 1927, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, entitled "The Tomb Chapel of Ra-Ka-Pou."¹ As a supplement to that article I thought it would be interesting to interpret some of the inscriptions which have a particular interest because they represent calls, commands, or conversations between some of the persons depicted in the wall scenes. Inscriptions of this nature are naturally difficult to translate on account of our ignorance of the way the Egyptians talked, and the grammatical difficulties which always arise when the spoken language is written down.

On each side of the entrance passage are low reliefs of ships (Plate XIV). At the top on each side is a light skiff made of papyrus. Below this on the right are two large wooden sailing ships with cabins; each has a man seated on the roof of the cabin, turning the spar of the sail to catch the wind. Both these ships have rowers as well as sails: in the upper one the rowers are working, and in the lower one they are resting. Each ship,

¹ According to our present knowledge, this name is now rendered Kaipurē, ("Rē is my 'ka'"), although it is written Rē-ka (i)-pu. The tendency of the ancient Egyptians of placing the name of a god first is known as honorific inversion.



PLATE XIII. The Guetar Thinker.