A000-AM,C-Taino-Cemi-Maquetaurie Guava-Lord of the Dead-Porphyritic Rhyolite-1000 CE



Figs. 1-4. AM,C-Taino-Cemi-Maquetaurie Guava-Lord of the Dead-Porphyritic Rhyolite-1000 CE

**Case No.: 18**

**Accession No.**

**Formal Label:** AM,C-Taino-Cemi-Maquetaurie Guava-Lord of the Dead-Manatee Rib Bone-1000 CE

**Display Description:**

This pendant has sunken eyes that are pierced at the nose ridge. There is a twin bird head symbol engraved at the top of the head. Arms are behind back with hands resting on subject’s bottom. Round ball feet suggest the pendant may have been used as a personal small pestle for grinding *cohoba* in the small mortars commonly associated with Taino ceremonial accessories.

The choice of porphyritic rhyolite was apropos of the subject since this color and its blotchy appearance due to crystal inclusions in the porphyritic rhyolite gives the appearance of a spirit.

This Taino cemi features Maquetaurie Guava-Lord of the Dead- with his exposed lipless mouth, indicating that he is in fact dead and requires nothing to ingest except other deceased individuals who have not entered his domain honorably. The depiction of Maquetaurie Guava-Lord of the Dead- is significant since one has to metaphorically die to one’s previous self in order to experience the effects of *cohoba*, a true *metanoia.* So, here is Maquetaurie Guava to act as a psychopomp to help us on our way.

Taíno cosmology, religion and its rituals is described in Fray Ramón Pané’s *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, the most important anthropological document on the Taíno that contains a wealth of information on this extinct culture. His commission from Columbus required him to record the Taíno beliefs and ceremonies as accurately as possible, and to that end he lived among the native Taíno population from 1493 to 1498. However, he was also a product of fifteenth century Roman Catholicism, and his primary goal was to convert the Taínos whom he regarded as heathens and idolaters. “[Some] were inclined to believe easily. But with others there is need for force and ingenuity because we are not all made of the same stuff. Although those people made a good beginning and a better end, there will be others who will begin well and afterwards will laugh at what has been taught them; with them there is need for force and punishment” (Pané p. 38).

**LC Classification: F 1909**

**Date or Time Horizon: 1000 CE**

**Geographical Area:** From Eastern Hispaniola, i.e., the Dominican Republic

**Map:**



Caribbean c 1500 after http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/maps/Ciboney-Taino-Carib-

**GPS coordinates:**

**Cultural Affiliation:** Classic Taino

**Medium:** Manatee rib

**Dimensions:** Length 7.9 cm. or 3.1 in.

**Weight:**

**Condition:** original, intact

**Provenance:** From Eastern Hispaniola, i.e., the Dominican Republic

**Discussion:**

Since this cemi has a “V” shape, it is possible that this was going to be drilled to act as a *cohoba* inhaler.

Pané was a Catalan a Hieronymite monk of the Order of St. Jerome. These hermit monks lived according to the Rule of Saint Augustine, which stresses chastity, poverty, obedience, worldly detachment, physical labor, fraternal charity, common prayer, fasting and abstinence. Saint Jerome, a fifth-century hermit and biblical scholar, formulated the rules of the order. In the eyes of the Spanish church hierarchy, Pané was a poor Hieronymite hermit, a Catalan peasant not of Castilian origins and was dismissed probably for these social reasons by the Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas (ca. 1484– 18 July 1566) as a “simple man” with “limited faculties” (Pané p. 57), whose efforts, “amounted to nothing more than to say the Ave María and Pater Noster to the Indians, and some words about there being a God in heaven who was the creator of things, according to what he was able to teach them with abundant flaws and in a muddled way” (Pané p. 57). However derogatory Las Casas’ criticisms of Pané are, Pané’s *Account* is still the best source of information on the Taíno.

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