A000- Am,C-Taino-Cemi-Itiva Tahuvava-Porphyritic Rhyolite-1000 CE



Figs. 1. Am,C-Taino-Cemi-Itiva Tahuvava-Porphyritic Rhyolite-1000 CE

**Case No.: 18**

**Accession No.**

**Formal Label:** Am,C-Taino-Cemi-Itiva Tahuvava-Porphyritic Rhyolite-1000 CE

**Display Description:**

### ****Itiva Tahuvava--****Goddess of Mother Earth. Mother of quadruplets representing the four cardinal points which are indicated on the back of her head. This sculpture of a cemi of a pregnant anthropomorphic deity is a concomitant of YaYa, the Taino unknowable and hidden deity, Like O‘ Theos or YHWH. However, Yaya can be known simultaneously through the effects she has on the material world through her emissaries like ****Itiva Tahuvava****. Taíno religion, therefore, just as in Hebrew religion or Roman Catholicism there is need for intermediaries between the known and the unknowable, and these are the *cemís*, which are known and have been represented in their material form, providing another very important window on the spiritual world of the Taíno.

**Taino Cemi’s were embodiments of the** hidden god, YaYa, who was believed to be an immaterial spirit and whose name is a double superlative of the Arawak *Ia*, “spirit, essence, primary cause of life” or IaIa or YaYa, which can be translated as Spirit of Spirit (C. H. de Goeje, *The Arawak language of Guiana,* Amsterdam, 1928, pp. 45, 142, 204), and whom Father Pané says his “name is a name they do not know” (Pané, Account, ch IX). This is a sophisticated approach to a metaphysical entity that simultaneously exists as a primary cause and is unknowable. The Taíno believe that this entity “is in heaven [an Indo-European, Roman Catholic concept which has no immediate cognate in Taíno] and is immortal and that no one can see it and that it has a mother [which means a genesis] but no beginning” (*Relación* 21). This last statement if put in its stark simplicity it would be: “YaYa has a genesis but no beginning.”

**Taíno Cemieism and Taino Religion.** 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).

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.

According to Pané there were twelve orders of spiritual entities that exemplified energies of a Supreme Being. These energies were encompassed in *cemís* which were intermediaries, much like Judaeo-Christian angels or Roman Catholic Saints. Since the repertoire of stone artifacts has now been relatively exposed to scientific scrutiny, each of the cemís spirits can be paired with its wood, stone, shell or textile material representation (Arrom 1975). The Taino also had a tripartite cosmos recorded by Pané which encompassed the sky, the earth and a lower world. These layered divisions are indicated on their most prominent artifact, the Three-pointed Sculpture.

**LC Classification: F1909**

**Date or Time Horizon: 1000 CE**

**Geographical Area: Caribbean**

**Map:**



Fig. Major cultural groups in the Caribbean, ca. 1492 (after Reid 2009: T-p.).

**GPS coordinates:**

**Cultural Affiliation: Taino**

**Medium: rhyolite**

**Dimensions:**

**Weight:**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance: from an old 18th or 19th c Russian collection**

**Discussion:**

**References**

Bower, B

1994 Maya Beginnings Extend Back at Belize Site. Science News 145(18):279.

Bullen, R. P.

1976 The Preceramic Periods of Florida and the Lesser Antilles. In Proceedings of the First Puerto Rican Symposium on Archaeology, edited by L. S. Robinson, pp. 9-23. Fundacion Arqueologica, Antropologica e Historica de Puerto Rico, San Juan

Callaghan, R. T.

1990 Possible Pre-ceramic Connections between Central America and the Greater Antilles. Proceedings of the Eleventh Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology,

1985, pp. 65-71, Puerto Rico.

1991 Passage to the Greater Antilles: An Analysis of Watercraft and the Marine Environment. Proceedings of the Fourteenth Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology, 1989, pp. 64-72, Barbados

Coe, W. R., II

1957 A Distinctive Artifact Common to Haiti and Central America. American Antiquity 22:280-282.

Cruxent, J. M., and I. Rouse

1969 Early Man in the West Indies. Scientific American 221(5):42-52.

Gerrell, P. R., J. F. Scarry, and J. S. Dunbar

1991 Analysis of Early Archaic Unifacial Adzes from North Florida. The Florida Archaeologist 44(1):3-16.

Giménez Fernández, Manuel (1971). "Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Biographical Sketch". In Friede, Juan; Keen, Benjamin (eds). Bartolomé de las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and his Work. Collection spéciale: CER. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press. pp. 67–126.

Hester, T. R.

1994a An Introduction to the Colha Preceramic Project.

Paper presented at the 59th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Anaheim.

1994b The Archaeological Investigations of the Colha Project, 1983 and 1984. In Continuing Archaeology at Colha, Belize, edited by T. R. Hester, H. J. Shafer, and J. D. Eaton, pp. 1-9. Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas, Austin.

Hester, T. R., H. J. Shafer, and T. C. Kelly

1980 A Preliminary Note on Artifacts from Lowe Ranch:

A Preceramic Site in Belize. In The Colha Project Second Season, 1980 Interim Report, edited by T. R.

Hester, J. D. Eaton, and H. J. Shafer.

1992. Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas, San Antonio, and Centro Studi Ricerche Ligabue, Venezia. San Antonio.

Hester, T. R., H. Iceland, D. Hudler, R. Brewington, H. J. Shafer, and J. Lohse

1993 New Evidence on the Preceramic Era in Northern Belize: A Preliminary Overview. The Newsletter of the Friends of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory 1(2): 19-23.

Hester, T. R., H. Iceland, D. Hudler, and H. J. Shafer

1996 The Colha Preceramic Project. Mexicon XVIII (3): 50.

Hudler, D. B., T. R. Hester, and H. B. Iceland

1995 The Colha Preceramic Project: A Status Report.

Paper presented at the 60th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Minneapolis.

Iceland, H. B., and T. R. Hester

1996a The Colha Preceramic Project: A Status Report.

Paper presented at the 61st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans.

1996b The Earliest Maya? Origins of Sedentism and Agriculture in the Maya Lowlands. Preprints of the XIII International Congress of the Prehistoric and Protohistoric Sciences, Forli, Italy, September 1996, in press.

Iceland, H. B., T. R. Hester, H. 1. Shafer, and D. Hudler

1995 The Colha Preceramic Project: A Status Report. The Newsletter of the Friends of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory 3(2): 11-15.

Jacob, J. S.

1995 Ancient Maya Wetland Agricultural Fields in Cobweb Swamp, Belize: Construction, Chronology, and Function. Journal of Field Archaeology 22: 175-190.

Jones, J. G.

1994 Pollen Evidence for Early Settlement and Agriculture in Northern Belize. Palynology 18: 205-211.

Kelly, T. C.

1993 Preceramic Projectile-Point Typology in Belize.

Ancient Mesoamerica 4:205-227.

Lohse, 1. C.

1993 Operation 4046 Colha. Belize: A Reconsideration of a Lowland Archaic Deposit. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin.

MacNeish, R, S., and A. Nelken-Turner

1983 Final Report of the Belize Archaic Archaeological Reconnaissance. Center for Archaeological Studies, Boston University, Boston.

MacNeish, R. S., 1. K. Wilkerson, and A. Nelken-Turner 1980 First Annual Report of the Belize Archaeological Reconnaissance. Phillips Academy, Andover.

Mendez, Eugenio Fernandez. 1957. Crónicas de Puerto Ricao desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias. San Juan, Ediciones del Gobierno estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico.

Moore, C.

1991 Cabaret: Lithic Workshop Sites in Haiti. In Pro­ceedings of the Thirteenth Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology, edited by 1. Haviser and E. N. Ayubi, pp. 92-104. Reports of the Archaeological-Anthropological Institute of the Netherlands Antilles, No.9. Willemstad, Curacao.

Oliver, J. R. 2009. Caciques and cemi idols: the web spun by Taíno rules between Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Pané, Fray Ramón. *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians.* Trans. José Juan Arrom and Susan C. Griswold. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.

Pantel, A. G.

1988 Precolumbian Flaked Stone Assemblages in the West Indies. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee. University Microfilms, Ann Arbor.

1991 How Sophisticated was 'the Primitive'? Pre-ceramic Source Materials, Lithic Reduction Processes, Cultural Contexts and Archaeological Inferences. Proceedings of the Fourteenth Congress of the International Association for Caribbean Archaeology, pp. 157-169. Barbados.

1994 Prismatic Blade Technologies in North America. In Organization of North American Prehistoric Chipped ­Stone Tool Technologies, edited by P. 1. Carr, pp. 87-98. Archaeological Series NO.7. International Monographs in Prehistory, Ann Arbor.

Peterson, J. B., C. L. Hofman, and L. A. Curet. 2004. Time and culture: chronology and taxonomy in the eastern Caribbean and the Guianas, in A. Delpuech and C. L. Hofman, eds., Late Ceramic age societies in the eastern Caribbean (British Archaeological Reports international series 1273): 17-32. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Rouse, I.

1941 Culture of the Ft. Liberti Region, Haiti. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 26. New Haven.

1960 The Entry of Man into the West Indies. Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No. 61. New Haven.

1964 Prehistory of the West Indies. Science 144: 499-513.

1986 Migrations in Prehistory. Yale University Press, New Haven.

1992 The Tainos. Yale University Press, New Haven.

Shafer, H.

1991 Late Preclassic Formal Tool Production at Colha, Belize. In Maya Stone Tools, edited by T. R. Hester, H. 1. Shafer, and 1. D. Eaton, pp. 25-30. Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas. Austin.

Shafer, H. 1., T. R. Hester, and T. C. Kelly

1980 Notes on the Sand Hill Site. In The Colha Project Second Season, 1980 Interim Report, edited by T. R. Hester, 1. D. Eaton, and H. 1. Shafer, pp. 233-240. Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas, San Antonio, and Centro Studi Ricerche Ligabue. Venezia.

Steward. 1. H.

1948 The Circum-Caribbean Tribes: An Introduction. In Handbook of South American Indians, vol. 4, The Circum-Caribbean Tribes, edited by 1. H. Steward, pp. 1--41. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 143(4), Washington, D.C.

Stuiver, M., and R. S. Kra

1986 Calibration Issue, Proceedings of the 12th International 14C conference. Radiocarbon 28: 805-1030.

Stokes, A. v.. and W. F. Keegan

1993 A Settlement Survey for Prehistoric Archaeological Sites on Grand Cayman. Miscellaneous Project Report Number 52, Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville.

Veloz Maggiolo, M.

1976 Medioambiente y adaptacion humana en La prehis­toria de Santo Domingo. Universidad Autnoma de Santo Domingo, Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana.

Veloz Maggiolo, M., and B. Vega

1982 The Antillean Pre-ceramic: A New Approximation.

Journal of New World Archaeology 5(2):33--44.

Wilson, S. M.

1996 The Rise of Complex Societies in the Caribbean.

Preprints of the XIII International Congress of the Prehistoric and Proto historic Sciences, Forlf, Italy. September 1996.

Wilson, Samuel M., Harry B. Iceland and Thomas R. Hester 1998 Preceramic Connections between Yucatan and the Caribbean Latin American Antiquity, Vol. 9, No.4 (Dec.), pp. 342-352.

Wood, G. P.

1990 Excavations at OP 4046, Colha, Belize: A Buried Preceramic Lithic Deposit. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin.

Zeitlin, R. N.

1984 A Summary Report on Three Seasons of Field Investigations into the Archaic Period Prehistory of Lowland Belize. American Anthropologist 86:358--368.

Zeitlin, R. N., and 1. F. Zeitlin

1996 The Paleoindian and Archaic Cultures of Mesoamerica. In The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, edited by R. E. W. Adams and M. MacLeod. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.