

Ohio (Dean, 1904, 1909), this specimen exhibits evidences of the hypobranchial and segmentally arranged body musculatures.

The genotype of *Cladoselache* is derived from the Upper Devonian Olmsted shale of Ohio. The youngest occurrence of the same genus is based on the identification of a caudal fin, *C. pachypterygius*, Dean (1909), found in one of the phosphatic nodules from the base of the Waverly shale in Kentucky. No previous report of *Cladoselache* in Tennessee is known to these writers.

The specimen is deposited at the U. S. National Museum as No. 20675.

#### REFERENCES

- Dean, B. 1904. The preservation of muscle-fibers in sharks of the Cleveland Shale. *Amer. Geol.* 30: 273-8.  
1909. Studies on fossil fishes (sharks, chimaeroids, and arthrodires). *Mem. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* IX (v): 211-287, figs. 1-65, pls. XXXVI-XLI.

### CUNA UCHUS AND CATHOLIC SAINTS<sup>1</sup>

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When the Spaniards first explored Central and South America, they found so much in the religion of the Amerinds that superficially resembled Catholicism that they said St. Thomas, after visiting India, had sailed on to America and had converted the aborigines to Christianity. That idea was enticing because the Incas were found to have priests, nuns, and confessions. They used incense. Among many tribes there were saviors sent from heaven, even white and bearded ones, who preached morals and religion, and then went away promising to return. There were prophets. The sign of the cross was employed to subdue devils that possessed persons and places. There were heavens and hells, last judgments and punishments.

Not having delved very deeply into the details of these striking resemblances between Indian beliefs and Catholicism of the sixteenth century, the Spaniards of early conquest days believed the story about St. Thomas, and their descendants still tell the Cuna Indians, much against the protests of the latter, that their uchus (medicine dolls) are really Catholic Saints.

The problem of the Cuna uchus has been attacked several times. G. R. Fairchild, Jr., visited the Sassarti Islands in 1924 and gave out the "Old Scotch Doctor" story. According to this, the physician of Paterson's ill fated Scotch Colony at Ailodon Mutlu near Acla refused to leave when the Spaniards expelled

<sup>1</sup>This study resulted as a byproduct from a grant-in-aid provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.

the colony in 1799, casting his lot with the Indians. He healed among the Cuna of the Sassarti Islands for many years and his ability was so revered that after his death the Cunas made images of him and brought them to the hammocks of their sick that his spirit might restore them. Cuna uchus were alleged to be copies of the "Old Scotch Doctor." (See Tinker, *Travel*, March, 1927.) The Scotch Doctor story appears from time to time in the public press, as does the version that Cuna uchus are a Scotch Missionary. (See Feeney, *Nat. Geogr.* 79:203, 1941). The proof is the finding of male uchus in the garb of the late 18th century.

The Catholic Saint interpretation was examined by Norden-skiöld (Ethnographical Studies 10, Göteborg) who noted that uchus were both males and females. He observed that exceptional uchus bear the form of angels with wings, and one was actually enclosed in a box with a cross on the cover (undisputed Christian influence). He commented upon the importance of the kinds of wood out of which the uchus are made.

My first experience with the employment of uchus led me to question both explanations. At Mulatuppu, I watched preparations for retrieving a sick man's soul. Elsewhere I have described the uchus used.

"When Pasitto arrived to chant against the devils who had stolen Diomisio's soul, he brought with him all of his sacred stones and a huge retinue of personal idols in human form, taller than all the rest. He also brought large, brightly painted wooden birds and animals, idol weapons with sticky sap or poisonous juice running out of them, nakkruses and spiny branches. Many of these big idols had been made especially for him by friends of the family when he had been 'ordained'. These augmented the already overpowering population of wooden characters that stood about Diomisio's hammock in solid phalanx to do the chanter's bidding."

I reasoned that if many of the uchus were really animals this would refute both the theories described above. Maybe the nakkruses that accompany them are not Christian crosses at all, just as the Indians maintain.

At the outset, I asked Chief Ikwaniptippi, who knows most about the old Cuna culture. He and other Cuna authorities insisted that the Nakkrus is not a Christian symbol and that the Cunas employed it long before the time of Columbus, although they now use the Spanish name and the Spaniards always try to make them believe that it is the Christian cross. They are resentful of this allegation. Old Indians say that the nakkrus indicates the four cardinal points of the compass. This symbol may represent the old Sungod who controlled the four winds of heaven, a very common idea among many tribes of Indians.

Thus, the presence of the nakkrus, that has all the power of an uchu, does not necessarily represent Catholicism.

There are other kinds of spirits besides those of anthropomorphic and zoöomorphic uchus that are sent into the earth to retrieve the lost soul of the sick one. For example, the cocoa bean, the hot pepper, and the yellow akwa nusa (stone mouse) that represents menstrual lumps of the great, original Earthmother (Mu, Olokukurtilisop).

It is rather difficult to distinguish between the use of uchus with a special chant to restore the soul of the ill person and the use of preventive "medicine" to drive away evil spirits attempting to attack the patient. However, among Cuna medicines one finds skulls of various animals used to combat and route their evil spirit counterparts that normally reside in the underworld. Thus, the horrible spirit animals that crowd around and not



I a.

I b.

Fig. 1a. Common forms of household uchus made of special woods, used for seeking out the souls of sick persons from the evil spirits who stole them and carried them down into the earth.

Fig. 1b. Three uisi (armadillo) uchus and a four-headed anthropomorphic uchu with "baby" owned by Nele Yorki of Mammituppu.

only injure but succeed in killing one third of Cuna women in labor, may be driven away by skulls of those corresponding animals in the collection of the remote control obstetrician.

Again, in nature, predatory animals may destroy certain creatures harmful to man, and so if you have the spirit of the predator on your side he may be used to attack certain other spirit animals, their natural prey, in the underworld. Thus, the spirit of Wekko, the Snake Catcher, may be employed to chase devils in the form of snakes.

I have small, clay images of a tapir, a bird, a manatee and a turtle in the "medicine" category from Ailigandi.

Household and exorcising uchus on certain islands, such as Ailigandi, Tupili and Narkana, ordinarily have the forms of men and women in various garbs whereas animal forms are not present. However, this seems to represent a recent trend away

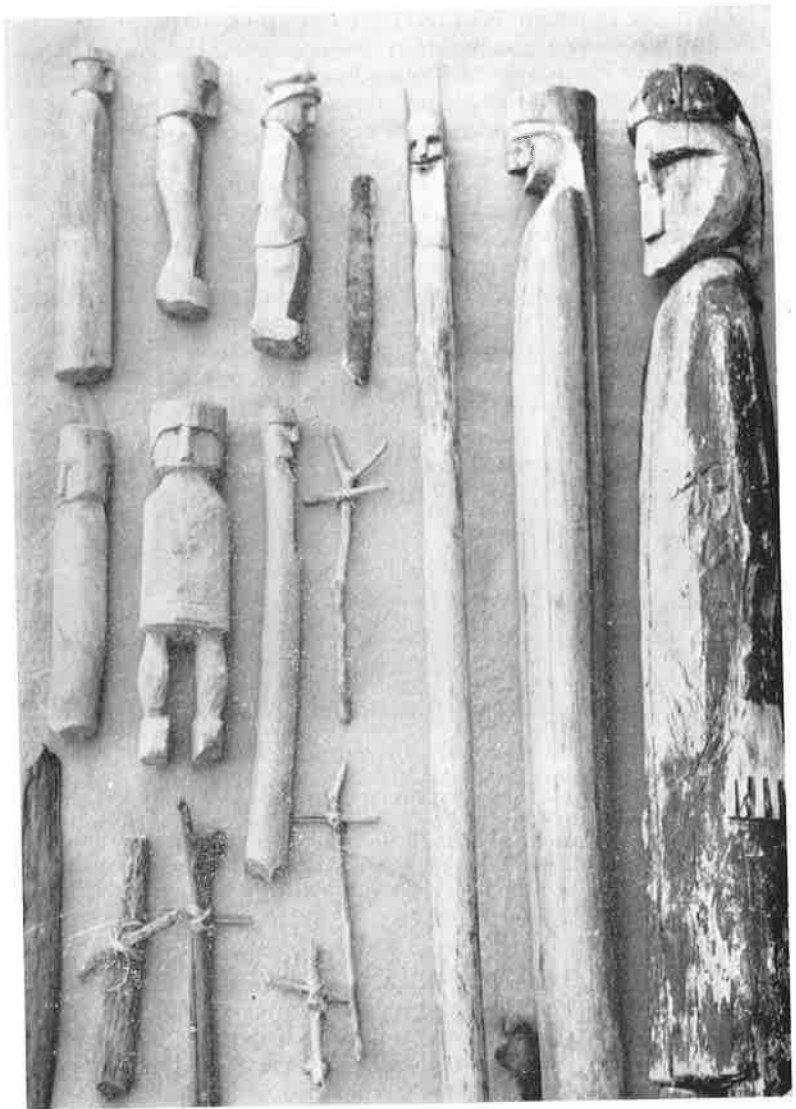


Fig. 2. Temporary balsa wood uchus and nakkruses for exorcising evil spirits at Ailigandi. The long, slender uchu is armed with miniature spears.

from conceiving of many devils in the forms of animals and a growing tendency to look upon them as anthropomorphic. (See figures 1 and 2).

I went to Koetup accompanied by Peter Miller (teacher at Escuela Nipakinya on Mulatuppu) with the intention of

examining for distinct types the largest collection of household uchus I had ever heard of. Two years before I had been permitted to glance at this collection of the Kantule, but not to examine it. During my glance I estimated that there were about 350 images in this group taking up all the space on a table that ran half the length of the large house. These uchus were very old. But, alas, when I asked the Chief Aurelio Nukeli he told me that the Kantule had died and that all his uchus had been buried with him.

However, the Chief of Koetup was very obliging and permitted me to examine all the large balsa wood uchus of the appeasement ceremony for driving devils off the island. These are kept from year to year on Koetup. (On most of the islands they are disposed of and new ones made for each exorcising.) The exorcising idols of Koetup were kept on a second story



Fig. 3. Permanent balsa wood uchus for exorcising ceremonies at Koetup. Uchus in the forms of men, birds, mammals and an alligator may be recognized.

platform at one end of the council hall. The chief had a naked boy scramble up a pole to the platform and get out all the animal forms to show me. However, he feared the reaction of the curious inhabitants who began milling about asking questions, and so he would not allow me to move the uchus down to photograph them. He compromised by permitting me to take a slow exposure of them arranged on the platform (See figure 3).

The Chief identified all of the animals for me. They included three *sulepak* (eagles), two *sulup* (type of hawk), several *no* (hawks), several *uisi* (armadillos), a *taim* (alligator), a *wekko*

(snake catcher), several achus (wildcats or jaguars), an iskin (biting lizard larger than an iguana).

After the visit to Koetup we paddled to Tuwala where I told Supreme Chief Yapillikinya, of five years acquaintance, that I wanted to find out if once there were animal forms among their uchus. At first Yapillikinya was reticent about discussing the matter because he thought I wanted to buy his collection of household uchus. When I assured him that I only desired to talk about them, he cooperated very well.

Saikla Tummat Yapillikinya said that the styles in household uchus had changed a great deal during his lifetime and that formerly many of them had the shapes of birds and animals. Before the wooden ones, he said they had birds and animals of baked clay. Then he brought out his collection of uchus that were well carved of special woods and neatly painted. They appeared to be people in all walks of life, especially prominent being sailors, soldiers and policemen. He took me to the council

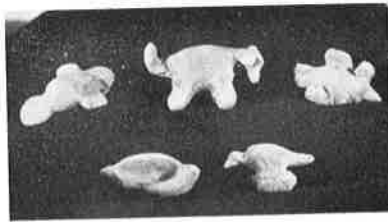


Fig. 4. Clay images used to keep away evil spirits that cause disease: a manatee, a tapir, a sea turtle, a canoe and a bird.

hall where he showed me the town collection of large uchus for the community appeasement ceremony.

The animals Yapillikinya identified as a sukku (sawfish), tapu (fish with inset teeth), ukka naipe (earth snake), taim (alligator), the red alligator (presumably a spirit animal).

At Mulatuppu I asked an old medicine man about the kinds of animals formerly among the household uchus of his island. He replied that they included misi (housecat), taim (alligator), sapur achu (mountain cat), naipe (snake), and iwi (a horrible grunting spirit creature in the form of an elephant that inhabits swamps and ponds.)

Some uchus represent Indians, both men and women. As to the presence of persons of authority among the uchus, such as policemen, soldiers and other "fighting men", they are chosen because of their aggressiveness and power. Among the household uchus the kind of wood of which they are made is important, as others have pointed out, especially prized being

woods that withstood the cataclysmic times which the Cuna believe to have followed the Creation.

In my collection I have a household uchu in the form of Uncle Sam. It is made of Suruk walla wood that grew in the Cuna "Garden of Eden" on Mount Tarkarkuna before the Great Flood. At Ailigandi there was a large uchu bearing the form of General Douglas MacArthur, whose spirit had been captured and confined in it. He was the leader of a band of uchus made to drive off the island the evil spirit influences of World War II. At Koetup there is the copy of the figurehead of a boat called Mu Sekop (Grandmother Jacob) and she is the most powerful on that island. At Mulatuppu the island protector is a Kaopi (hot pepper man), who wears a tight fitting hat under which he keeps hot pepper incense. When he goes underground to chase devils he runs right into their midst and removes his hat. The smoke screen rolls out in all directions and chokes the devils. At Ailigandi it is Olokatwalilele who protects the island. It

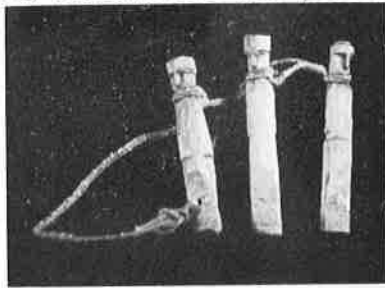


Fig. 5. A necklace of hot-pepper wood uchus, used to drive away the devils that cause childhood diseases.

appears that these protectors are not Catholic Patron Saints although Cuna men who have worked in Panama may even call the island protectors "Nuestros Santos" in describing them to foreigners.

The idea of retrieving the stolen spirit is a very old and a very general one. It extends from South America to Alaska. It is undoubtedly pre-Columbian and bears no relationship to Christianity. As a matter of fact, if the image of a Catholic Saint is placed in the box with uchus, as sometimes happens, the Cunas say that it creates confusion among them so that they cannot do their work well. The Saint and Angel forms figured and described by Nordenskiöld turn out to be so rare that, although a few Indians remember having seen one or two, I have never come upon one.

My next act was to go to Mammituppu, a very primitive island that seldom receives visitors. I gained entrance because the uncle of my friend, Atilio Rivera (teacher at Escuela Colman,

Ailigandi) is Nele Yorki, the famous chanter of Mammituppu. It was Nele's collection of uchus that I wanted to inspect. When we got there Nele's brother was away chanting on another island and had most of Nele's uchus with him. However, Nele said he not only had wooden uchus of animal form, but also ones of baked clay. I photographed three powerful armadillo uchus owned by Nele's brother, which he kept along with his little, wooden men.



Fig. 6. Olokatwalilele, Protector God of Ailigandi.

How about the Scotch Doctor Story? I inquired of the old men on Mulatuppu (Sassarti Islands) all of whom were living there at the time of Fairchild's visit. They had never heard of the Scotch Doctor, nor did their uchu boxes show anything that could have been taken for the Scotch Doctor, save an occasional late 18th century costume, just as there were some uchus in the 19th century clothes, and some reflecting the 20th century.

Because the people of the islands originally came from the mountains, we should investigate the types of uchus in mountain



towns that have had practically no contact with white men. It is also the old neles of the mountains to whom the young men of the coast have always gone to study, and then returned to the coast to practice on their own islands.

I asked a mountain Indian newly come from Narkanti Tolla who related that they had uchukana and suar mimmikana in the forms of animals in his town.

Then I went back to Chief Ikwaniktippipi who said that the neles of Walla still teach about and use the animal form uchus. The mountain town of Walla is possibly the oldest Cuna town in existence.

Until recently Sokopti was considered the oldest mountain town, but today it is abandoned. Its inhabitants settled Koetup (possibly the Sassarti Island Fairchild visited). The neles of Tuwala (Sassarti Islands) studied in Sokopti. We have already discussed the animal uchus found in those two towns.

The Nele of Mammituppu (a population recently come from the mountains) studied at Walla and, as would be expected, animals are present among the uchus of Mammituppu.

Chief Ikwaniktippipi says that about one hundred years ago at Okupsene (Playon Chico) there was a nele who introduced this form of service with animal uchus in the collection.

It all boils down to the fact that in time of need the Cuna will call on "every powerful spirit" he can think of to help "chase the devils of disease", or drive devils from his island. In former days the animal world impressed the Cuna even more than today, with mounting influence from Panama and the whole civilized world. Hence it is not surprising that animal forms are dropping out of collections of household and exorcising uchus today.

Taking all the above described evidence into consideration, I am forced to conclude that Cuna uchus are not Catholic Saints.

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A grant from the Arctic Institute of North America in the amount of \$5726 was recently made to Royal E. Shanks, Botany Department, University, of Tennessee, in support of research on the composition, structure and productivity of the tundra vegetation of northern Alaska. Dr. Shanks will be based at the Arctic Research Laboratory, Point Barrow, and will be assisted by John Koranda, a graduate student at the University of Tennessee and veteran of two former research expeditions to the Arctic.