

the lake has no beach; but I think it probable that ducks, herons, and pelicans frequent the lake in the dry season when the water has fallen perhaps full five metres and large portions of the shore are above water. We found the water very deep everywhere, and therefore used only oars and never poles. Returning from the southwest arm, we skirted the

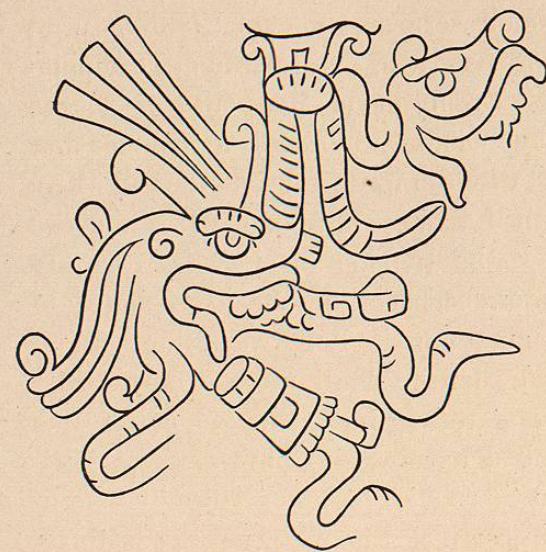


FIG. 9. — LAKE PETHÁ: ROCK PAINTING. $\frac{1}{4}$

southern shore and the inlets on that side, and came to an exceedingly beautiful southern passage, which led back to the main or large eastern basin. Along this passage — on our left as we passed through — we again saw great cliffs rising perpendicularly from the water. These we also investigated in the hope of finding pictorial representations, and to our great joy we discovered three separate large pictures. The central picture appeared to me to be the most interesting and the best preserved. At a height of one and one-half metres above the surface of the water (in September) a drawing was visible executed in bold black lines, which I conceived to be the representation of the jaws of a monster (the eye was especially distinct) in the act of swallowing a man head foremost.

On the right (from the beholder) a smaller grotesque face develops out of the upper scrollwork, and on the left or at the back the head of the monster terminates in plumage (Fig. 9). The drawing is fifty-two centimetres high and fifty-seven wide. About one metre above this picture a diminutive man (about forty centimetres in height) is very crudely painted, also in black. Further up, a little to the right, are daubed large red hands (Fig. 10).

At the right of the central picture, in spite of the washing away by torrents of rain and the luxuriant vegetation, three and one-half metres above the surface of the water, we could discern the picture of a yellowish foot on a red ground (that is, a picture of the sole of the foot, with the toes pointing upward), and above this in red outlines on a yellowish ground an overturned pot (?) covered with red dots, from the lower edge of which



FIG. 10. — LAKE PETHÁ: ROCK PAINTING. $\frac{1}{4}$



project four comblike droppings. This little picture most resembles certain perforated vessels in which the women wash the maize, which has been soaked in lime water. There are several more red hands above the perforated pot and the foot at a distance of about seven metres above the surface of the water. Is it possible that this picture on the rock indicates the grave of a woman?

This simple symbolic picture may be interpreted thus: The footprint may indicate that the beloved woman has gone "upward." The overturned washing-pot probably shows that she never again will go to the river to wash out her *nixtamal* (softened maize), to make *tortillas* for her husband and children. . . . The red hands raised toward the sky may indicate the last greetings of those she left mourning on earth, when she ascended to celestial regions.

The representation at the left of the central picture is composed of large, broad red stripes, which run high up on the cliff, mostly in vertical lines and form large scrolls here and there. There are also two white or light yellow hands recognizable on a red ground, and adjoining this there is also a series of black lines, which, however, have become very indistinct.

After we had passed through the strait of the picture-rocks, with its poetic beauty, we turned into a bay on the southern shore where a second waterfall, shaded by tall trees, plunges foaming over the rocks into the lake. Then — as night was already approaching — we crossed the large eastern basin to our camp on the northern shore, where in the mean time our meal had been prepared, and we soon resigned ourselves to calm repose. The fact that we had explored this glorious lake even to its remotest corner without the aid of the Indians and without arousing the suspicion of these people, usually so crafty, and that, in addition, we had made use of their own cayucos, was a source of great astonishment to us. It seemed like a dream!

The entire length of the lake from the eastern margin of its large round basin to the extreme end of its western ramifications we estimated at six or seven kilometres. The diameter of the round basin, to which its name *Pet-há*, = *Agua circular*, refers, may be two kilometres, while the width of the western arms varies from two hundred to four hundred metres. We found the water of such great depth everywhere that steamships could easily sail on this lake, probably even in the dry season, when the water doubtless falls about five metres.

In the forenoon of September 6th we went again to the *Roca de las Pinturas*. I took some tracing paper with me in order to make a tracing of the well-preserved black drawings. A large *Kommehen* (wood-destroying insect larvæ) nest, which was attached to the cliff below the drawing, we cut to pieces with our machetes. Having thus cleared the drawing, I fastened

over it with small pieces of wax a large sheet of the transparent paper, and standing on a projecting rock, as best I could, I proceeded to make the tracing. Scarcely had I finished this somewhat trying task when my men told me that an Indian boat was coming toward us. I told the men to quietly await its arrival. I should have preferred not to encounter the Indians at the picture rocks, but there was not time to go elsewhere, and therefore I seated myself on the projecting rock to wait for the cayuco, which was not within my circle of vision. Suddenly the cayuco came around the rocks, and our friendly calls soon brought it alongside of our own. In it were a man, his wife, an infant, and two older children. Hardly had the man noticed that I was standing directly under the picture on the rock than, exhibiting signs of extreme terror, he called out to me in broken Spanish, "No hombre—quírate de ahí—es mi santo—es el Cristo—María de nosotros—cuidado hombre—te come el tigre—vámonos hombre—por eso mucha agua por el mal corazon de mi santo—por eso muy crecidos los rios y la laguna—vámonos—vámonos."

I pacified the man as well as I could, assuring him that we too held this "saint" in great veneration, and had brought him a small offering, so that he would grant us fine weather and abundant maize. After this I stepped into my cayuco, gave my hand to the man and asked him his name. Chankin, — *chichan*, abbreviated *chan* (*tšičšan*, *tšan*) = small; *kin* (*k'in*) = sun, priest, — he answered. Then I explained to him that we had come to see the lake and to visit his countrymen who were living in its vicinity, and also that we would like to purchase a few pretty things as well as food of them, for which purpose we had brought with us useful articles: knives, fish-hooks, handkerchiefs, mirrors, and salt, of which they never have a sufficient supply. On telling him that in our search for their dwellings we had come across a large group of houses full of all kinds of utensils, but without inmates, Chankin replied that the houses were those of his brother who had died recently. And what did he die of? "Quien sabe, Señor?—Por el mal corazon de su santo," the man answered angrily.

Chankin, who had learned a little Spanish in his frequent intercourse with the neighboring monterías, was a robust man in middle life, and was dressed in a shirt-like garment of coarse cotton. Long raven-black hair surrounded his beardless face, which was of a genuine Indian cast. His wife was of smaller frame, and was also dressed in cotton; her face and arms were badly bitten by flies. A fine set of bow and arrows wrapped in bark lay on the bottom of the cayuco. I asked the Indian to sell them to me, which he did for two pesos.

We rowed now to the landing-place on the south shore, where we fastened the boats. I was firmly resolved not to lose sight of the man at any price, for otherwise we might forever miss the opportunity of coming in contact with the Indian settlements of Pethá.

Chankin first took a path to the large waterfall. The river, which was very full at this season, rushed with tremendous force downward over terraced rocks into the lake. Our Indian took his way unconcernedly through the midst of this mass of water. I had had a stout walking-stick cut for myself, and there was nothing for me to do but to follow the man or to stay behind. Bracing myself firmly with my staff against the rocks, I too walked through the waterfall in extreme danger of being hurled into the foaming depths by the impetus of the rushing water. Taking off their shoes, three of my men followed very reluctantly. We then went on over desperately rough trails, soon reaching the same river (as I have reason to suppose) at a spot where it was spanned by the long and thick trunk of a tree, which at this time was about eighty centimetres below the surface of the water. At this place the river was several metres deep and impassable; so our Indian went straight over the smooth tree-trunk, in doing which the prehensile power of his toes was of great advantage to him. By the aid of a long pole in one hand and a shorter staff in the other, I succeeded with extreme difficulty in crossing. My men also made their way across by the aid of poles. Soon we had to cross the river for a third time, and again on the long and thick trunk of a tree, which this time, by way of variety, was suspended high above the water. We also successfully passed through this third and last Orphean ordeal to which Chankin subjected us.

On our way, however, between the first and second tree-bridges, we had caught glimpses among the trees on our right of "the dead brother's" large milpa, and I told my grumbling men that we should under no conditions go back over the frightful path by which Chankin had brought us, but that on our return we would clear a path to this milpa and then return to our landing-place by the trail we already knew.

After crossing the river for the third time, the path improved. We might have travelled about an hour, when we heard the barking of dogs and the hollow sound of conch-shells, *Strombus gigas*, with which the Indians greeted our arrival. The forest opened. We entered a milpa of tall and luxuriant maize, and from its group of huts Chankin's brother-in-law, *el suegro*, named Māx (*mās*) came to meet us surrounded by other Indians, including women and children. I saluted Māx, and explained my purpose in coming, while Chankin reported to him in Maya all the circumstances under which he had found us, so that I had no doubt that Chankin had been despatched to reconnoitre, purposely taking with him his wife and little children to cover his intentions.

Māx was not at all overjoyed at our arrival, but resigned himself to the inevitable. He promised us provisions—maize bread, *potsol*, *māccal*, etc.—for the next day, when I was to visit him again with my men. For the present I found myself compelled to return as quickly as possible to the camp, as the day was near its end and we were threatened with a down-