

PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN EASTERN CUBA

By Theodoor de Booy.

The contents of the following paper are the results of a preliminary survey of the Cape Maisi district of Cuba conducted by the writer in the months of October and November 1914. It was not the object of this trip to carry on extensive archeological excavations or to make a systematic exploration of the numerous caves with which this region abounds: the nature of the work being more that of a reconnaissance to determine the best localities for future operations. This later work was conducted by Mr. M. R. Harrington, ^(another member of the staff) of the Museum of the American Indian-Heye Foundation- when the writer found himself unable to return to Cuba, owing to a prolonged trip to the north coast of Venezuela and the island of Trinidad. Mr. Harrington's survey of this eastern part of Cuba was successful in the extreme, so that the collections of the Museum of the American Indian-Heye Foundation- from the island number thousands of specimens, which will be described in detail, when Mr. Harrington publishes his ~~exhaustive~~ ^{the} report on Cuban archeology. of Eastern Cuba. -----

While a certain amount of literature exists on the archeology of Cuba and more especially on that of the eastern district of this Republic, the author is unaware of the existence of any description of a typical Cuban kitchen-midden. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if heretofore any systematic excavations have been conducted in Cuba on a pre-Columbian village-site: the praiseworthy efforts of the Cuban anthropologist, Dr. Luiz Montané, having been more especially confined to anthropology and cave-explorations. The writer believes, therefore, that a short report on certain kitchen-middens encountered in the extreme eastern peninsula of Cuba--known as the Maisi district--may be of interest to archeologists and to students

of pre-Columbian remains in the Greater Antilles: more especially so, as the study of a Cuban village-site enables one to draw comparisons between this and those of the neighboring islands of Hayti and Jamaica.

Thanks to information given the writer by Dr. Luiz Montañó, Director of the Anthropological Museum of the University of Havana, he decided in February 1914, while passing through the island of Cuba on the way to Santo Domingo, to make a short visit to the region around the village of Sabana. Figure 1. This district is the same as that visited by Stewart Culin of the University of Pennsylvania Museum in 1901, whose report¹ deals fully with the various points of

¹ Culin. Stewart. "The Indians of Cuba". Bulletin of the Free Museum of Science and Art. University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia. Vol. III. No. 4. May 1902.

interest in this country but contains little of value to archeologists.

Proceeding from Santiago de Cuba by coastal steamer of the Herrera Line to Baracoa, famous as the first Spanish settlement on the island of Cuba, the writer thence travelled on horseback to Sabana, a small pueblo on the high table-land near the mouth of the Yumuri River.

Figure 1. Eastern Part of Cuba.

Thanks are due to Mr. A. Soler, the U.S. Consular Agent in Baracoa, for assistance shown to the writer in many ways, not only on his hurried visit in February, but more especially for that given him in October and November 1914. Those who have travelled in Spanish-American countries will know what it means to have someone help in the way of procuring

guides, hiring horses etc. and the kind assistance of Mr. Soler was a factor which contributed not a little to the success of the two trips made.

On the first trip, the author was fortunate in meeting in Sabana Mr. Casiano E. Lores, a coffee-planter of this district and a friend of Dr. Montañé of Havana: Don Casiano also was of great assistance to the author, and the Museum of the American Indian-Heye Foundation is indebted to him for the gift of various pre-Columbian specimens.

In Sabana, the writer also met Mr. Antonio Rey, and it is to this latter gentleman that the success of the archeological survey of eastern Cuba really is due. On the first trip, Mr. Rey accompanied the author to various localities in order to collect specimens and on the second trip not only made him a welcome guest in his home but added to this innumerable other favors. The kind hospitality of Don Antonio, his worthy wife Doña Concha and his four children, not only made the writer's stay in the Gran Tierra de Maya a pleasant one, but their assistance served to make his sojourn most profitable from an archeological point of view.

Enough specimens were collected on the hurried survey in February to more than convince the author of the advisability of returning to this part of Cuba for an extensive reconnaissance and as a consequence, the second trip was undertaken in October and November 1914. The writer's headquarters were on the plantation of Mr. Rey on the Finca Sitges, situated in the Gran Tierra de Maya, about 8 miles S.S.W. from the Cape Maisi lighthouse in a direct line. It may be added that the Gran Tierra de Maya is named after the Maya River and is situated on a coral limestone plateau of extreme fertility some 500 feet above sealevel. The climate of this district is delightful and the nights especially are very cool, with a commendable absence from mosquitoes and sandflies. The writer was here during the rainy season which

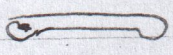
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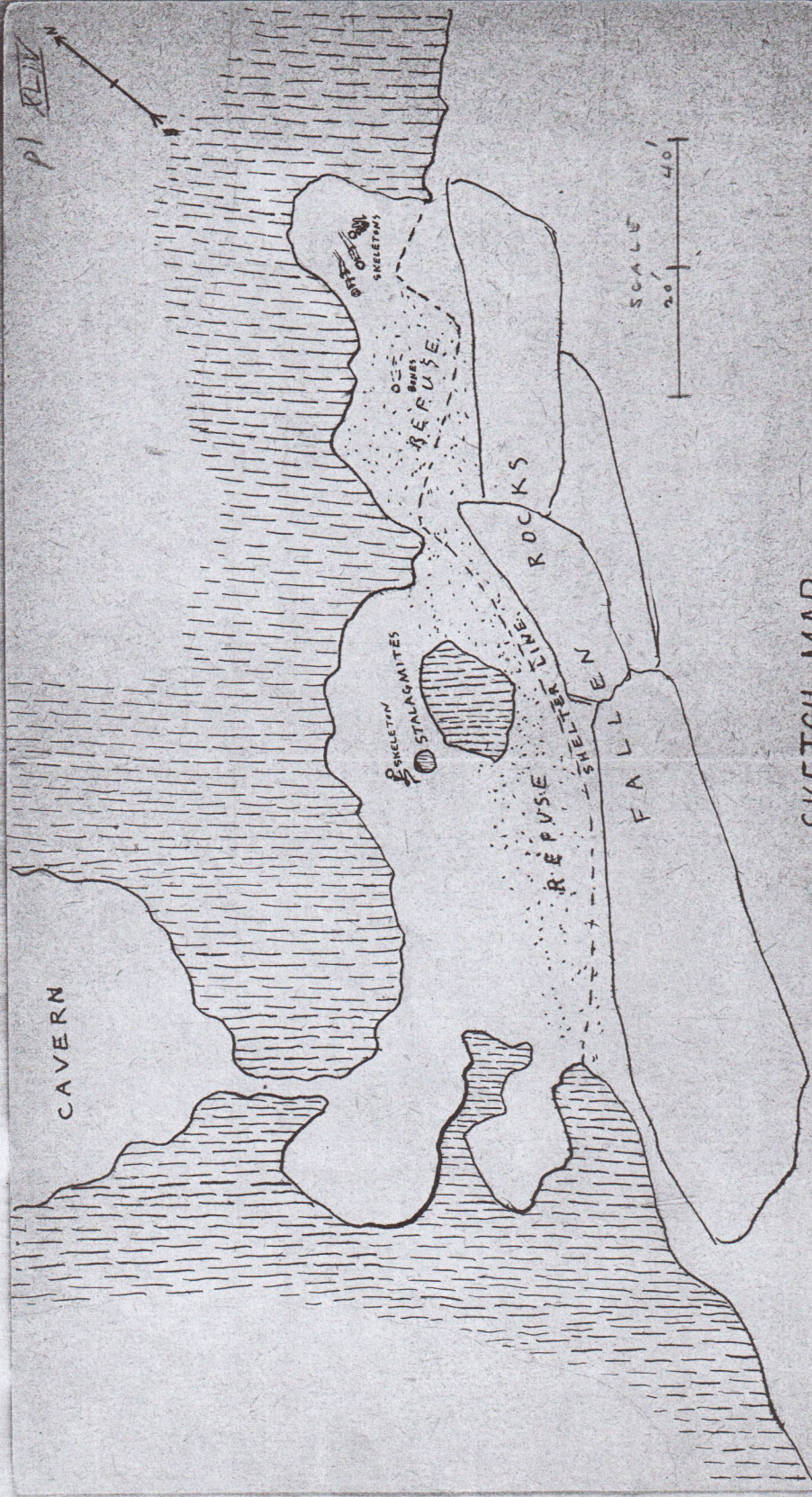
was somewhat of a hindrance to archeological work and interfered with several horseback trips. On the whole, however, it cannot be said that the rains were a serious obstacle.

Almost daily trips were made to various points within a 5 to 10 mile radius of the Finca Sitges and the writer, through purchase, was able to collect a considerable number of specimens. While it is more especially the purpose of this paper to treat upon the excavation of a Cuban kitchen-midden, it may be well to state here that the entire district around Cape Maisi abounds with caves, in numbers of which aboriginal specimens and skeletal remains can be found. Mr. Harrington, who devoted a great deal of the time spent by him in this region to cave-exploration, found what undoubtedly can be classified among the best specimens of Antillean workmanship, in these limestone grottoes and shelters. And while the writer was in the district for too short a time to be able to explore many of these, he was able to afterwards furnish Mr. Harrington with data, enabling the latter to save the time and labor entailed by the preliminary explorations.

Unlike on other West India islands, the author was not successful in purchasing a large number of petaloid celts. To his mind this was due more to the fact that the field-laborers in Cuba do not entertain the same amount of superstitious awe for these stones as do their neighbors on the other islands and do not trouble to notice them or to pick them up when found on their plantations. That the Cuban aborigine used the same type of celt as the inhabitant of Jamaica and Hayti can be proven by several specimens found in various collections: in fact, the Cuban celt would appear to be of even better workmanship than that from the other islands, if one can judge from the ~~specimens~~ specimens in the Museum of the American Indian-Heye Foundation-. The only celts collected on the second trip were a fragmentary specimen found in a kitchen-midden and one or two specimens from Cape Maisi. Mr. Harrington

Pieces of Indian specimens
left with Sr. Antonio Rey.

Whole vessels according to size and work	2 ⁰⁰ to 10 ⁰⁰
usually	3 ⁰⁰ & 4 ⁰⁰
Whole plates	1 ⁰⁰ - 3 ⁰⁰
all or nearly all the pieces of a plate vessel	.50 - 2 ⁰⁰
" " " " " " " " plate	.25 - 1.00
Stone hatchets according to size and work	.50 - 5 ⁰⁰
usually	1 ⁰⁰ - 3 ⁰⁰
Zemi or image, small, of stone or shell	2 ⁰⁰ - 5 ⁰⁰
Shell bead	.05
Stone bead	.10
Large stone bead	.15
Shell jingles with face (Juddy)	1.50 - 2.50
Shell " plain	.10
" ornament 	.20
Stone axe in wooden handle	25 ⁰⁰ - 50 ⁰⁰
Dujo or seat of wood with four feet	25 ⁰⁰ - 50 ⁰⁰
Decorated plate of wood	5 ⁰⁰ - 15 ⁰⁰
Wooden paddle	3 ⁰⁰ - 15 ⁰⁰



SKETCH MAP

CUEVA DE LOS INDIOS, OVANDO

BARACOA CUBA

Scale 1 inch = 20 feet

Pl. Z. 107/1



BURIAL CAVE #1 LA PATANA
 BARAGOA CUBA

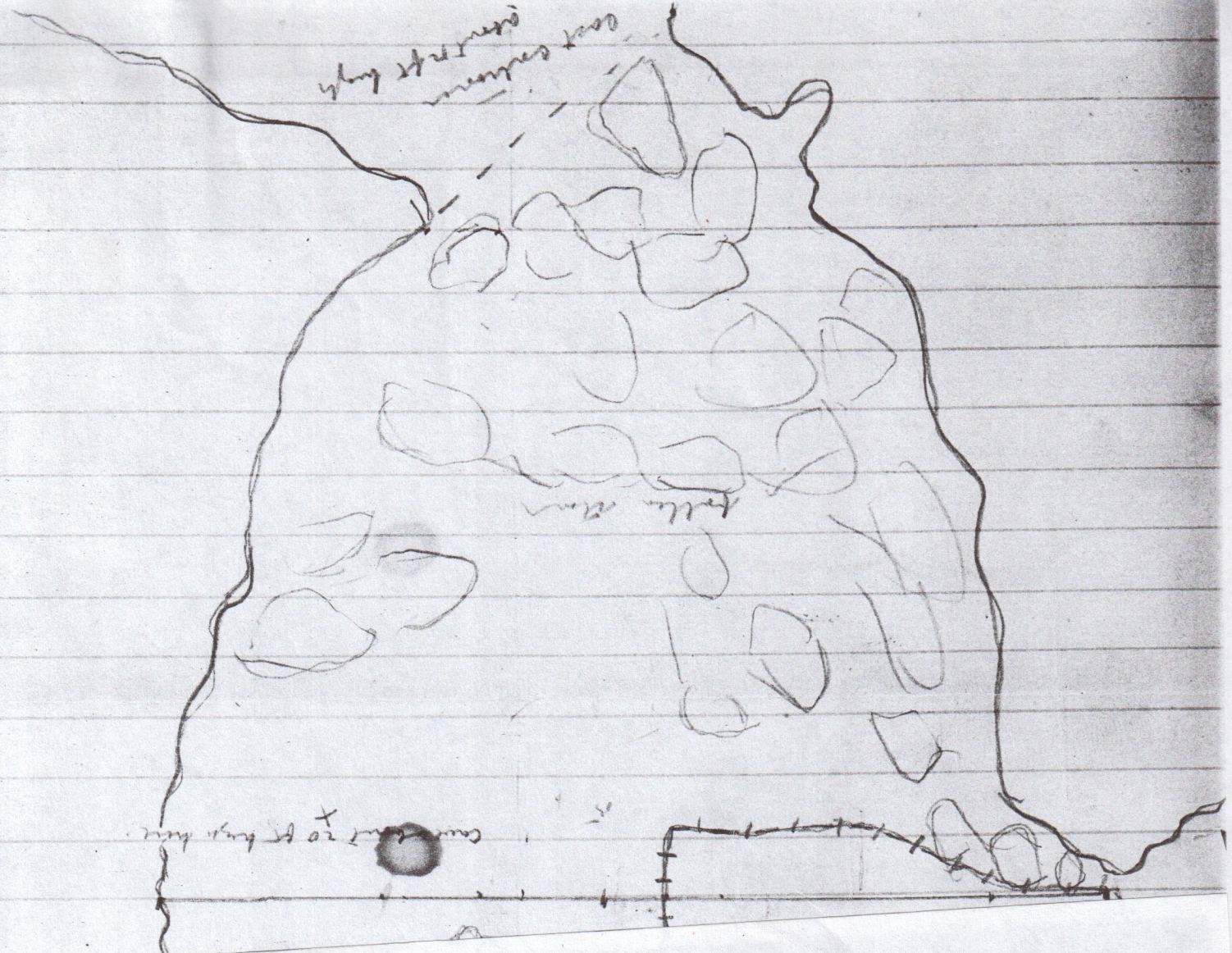
Draw from scale

Scale 1 inch = 10 feet
 ○ = Fire place

east entrance
to high

camp 10 ft high

fall line





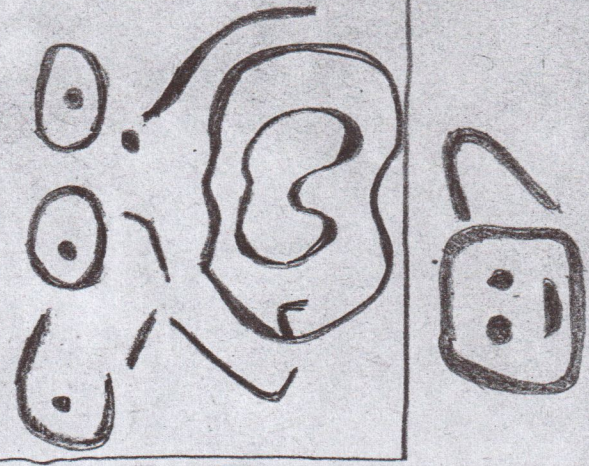


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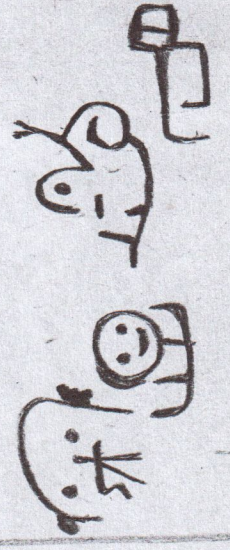
Looking North Centre



Petroglyph
North
further in



Petroglyph
North
nearest entrance

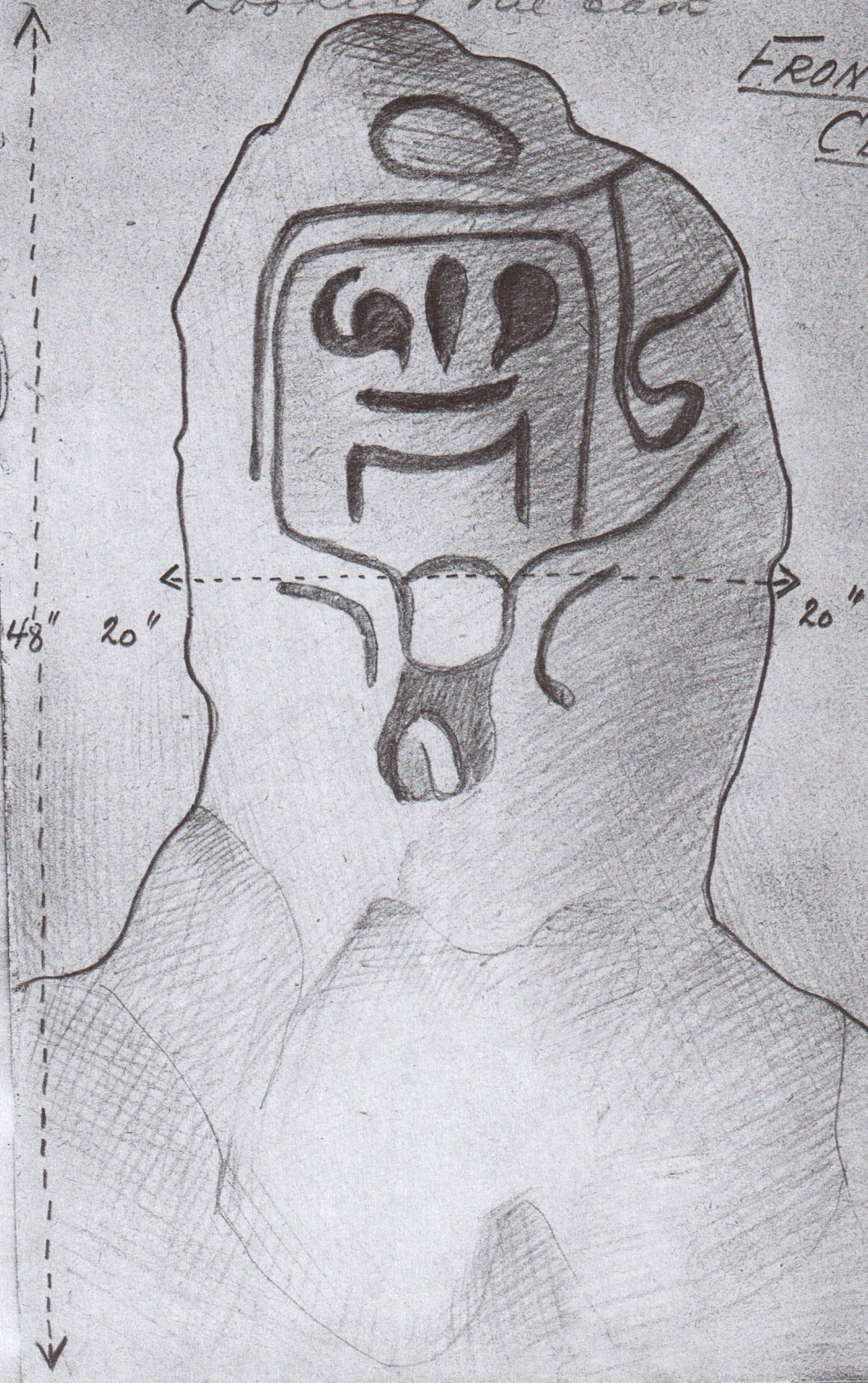


Cement
Next Piece

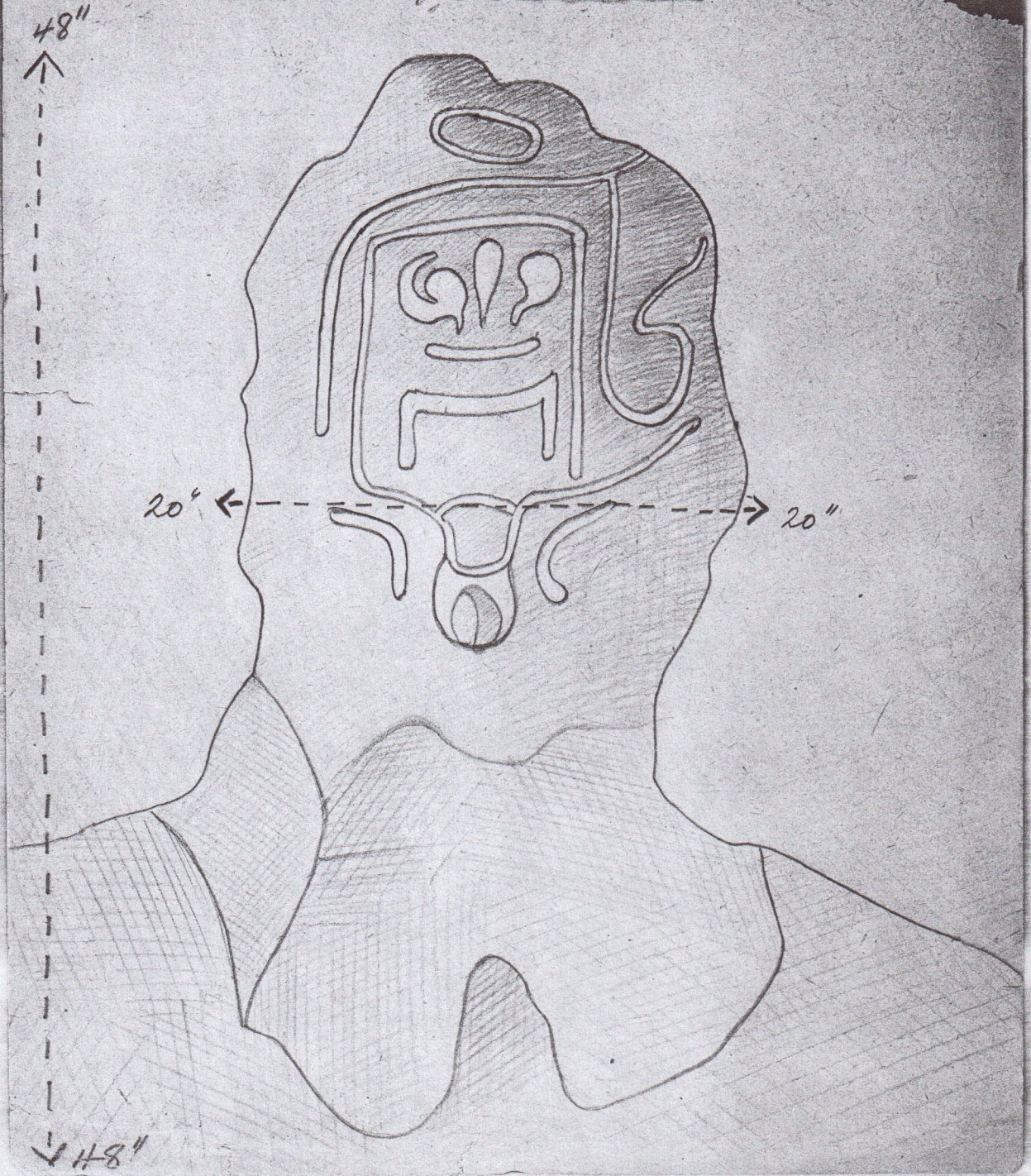


Color greenish grayish
material stalacemite limestone
Looking due East

FRONT VIEW
C'EMI



Front view Cerni
Color green-grayish / Malacomite limestone
Looking due East



Corn South Field

