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HANDBOOK  
OF  
SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

JULIAN H. STEWARD, *Editor*

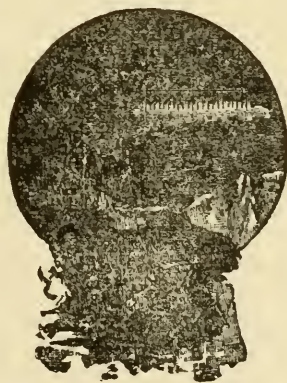
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Volume 4

THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN TRIBES

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# THE ARCHEOLOGY OF PANAMA

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By SAMUEL K. LOTHROP

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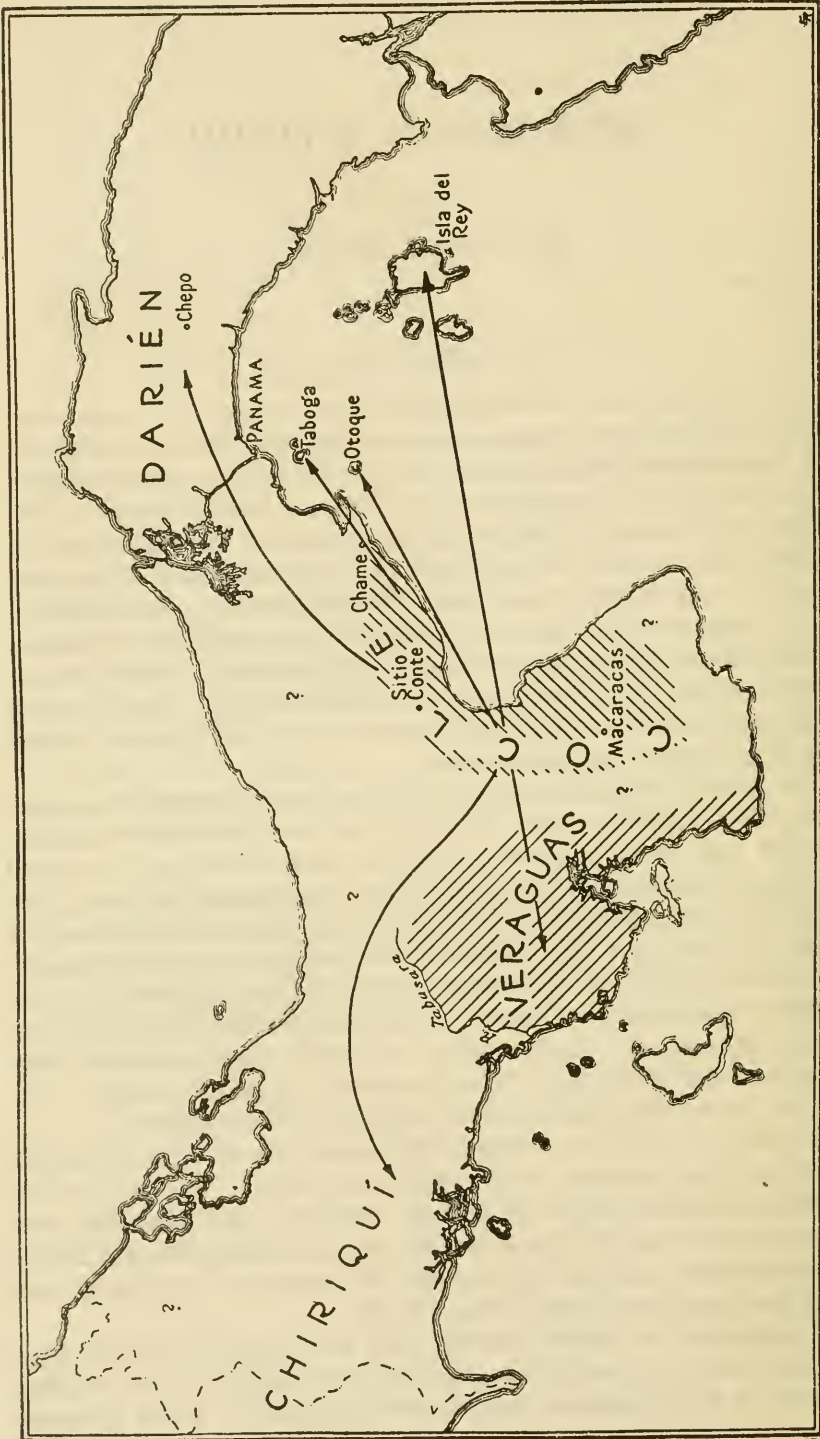
## INTRODUCTION

For many years the primitive inhabitants of Panamá were known only through archeological remains discovered in the Province of Chiriquí, and it was generally supposed that a more or less uniform culture extended throughout the Isthmian region. Since 1930, however, evidence has come to light which radically changes this picture, and at present we can distinguish four or more cultures in Panamá. In spite of the small area they occupied, each culture was radically distinct from the others, although features were sometimes borrowed, as might be expected among neighbors. From continental South America to the west the principal culture areas are named Darién, Coclé, Veraguas, and Chiriquí (map 4). Several regions in Panamá are archeologically still unknown, and it is definitely possible that other cultures may be discovered.

The cultural diversity disclosed by Panamanian archeology is in accord with early historical accounts. These indicate that a fairly uniform speech, physical type, material culture, and social organization once extended throughout Darién from South America to a point beyond the Canal. The town of Chame, which still exists, is given as the limit of Darién culture in the 16th century. From Chame to the west both speech and physical type varied greatly. It is constantly stated in Spanish documents that neighboring aboriginal settlements could communicate with each other only through interpreters. Unfortunately, no ancient vocabularies have come down to us, and so we cannot know the extent of linguistic variation. Today the few surviving Indians speak *Guaymí*, a *Chibchan* dialect.

Regarding physical type, various 16th-century observers point out that there was great variation in skin color and in stature. At least two accounts exist of the natives of Escoria, who were both taller and more heavily bearded than the Spaniards. We can say nothing about the beards, but excavations in Coclé have revealed the presence of individuals who must have stood over 6 feet (1.9 m.) in life.

A suggestion of cultural diversity with wide implications arises from the description of a native ball court (*juego de pelota*). This definitely was not of the Mexican or Central American type, for it was compared



MAP 4.—The archeological cultures of Panamá in the 16th century. (After Lothrop, 1942, fig. 486.)

to the *Arawak* ball courts seen by the Spaniards in the West Indies, which differ radically from those of the mainland.

Any discussion of Panamá must consider the question of antiquity, because Panamá is the most obvious route to South America and because man must have passed through the isthmian region, even if he did not permanently settle there, in the remote past. It has been suggested that a crudely chipped celt found by Linné on the Atlantic coast may be of great antiquity. This seems improbable, because chipped celts or chipped and partly polished celts were manufactured both in Panamá and Costa Rica until the time of the Spanish Conquest. It is fair to state, therefore, that no proved trace of man in the far past has yet been found in Panamá or, in fact, nearer to Panamá than Nicaragua.

The cultures to be described may be regarded as historic; that is to say, they were flourishing when the Spaniards came. Evidence obtained from excavations in Coclé suggests that Coclé culture was blooming at least two centuries before the Conquest. The complexity of the oldest known remains, dating only from the early 14th century, is such that a fairly long past must be postulated. This is especially true of the intricate symbolism shown in pottery designs. The prototypes, however, remain to be found.

#### DARIEN

The term Darién applies geographically to the portion of Panamá lying between the Canal and continental South America. Archeological research in this area commenced in 1522 when Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, later the royal historian, opened "certain sepulchers which were inside a hut," with the hope of finding gold. Present knowledge of archeological remains, however, is based largely on the work of S. Linné (1929), who conducted excavations on both coasts of the Isthmus.

The Darién first seen by the Spanish explorers was very different from the Darién that exists today. Owing to advanced agricultural practices, much of the now-prevalent jungle evidently had been cut down. Descriptions exist of huge and beautiful houses, giant canoes inlaid with mother-of-pearl—in short, a scale of material culture much more advanced than the surviving archeological remains indicate. A suggestion of ancient cultural complexity, however, comes from the mythology and ritual of the present *Cuna* Indians, ably studied by Nordenskiöld (1938), Ruben Néle, and Pérez Kantule. (See also, this volume, p. 257.)

**Burial custom.**—History and archeology alike indicate considerable variety in the burial customs of Darién. Oviedo y Valdés, (1851–55), the best historical authority, states that burial was a rite reserved for the nobility as well as for such wives, retainers, and captives as were selected to accompany their lords to another world. The living destined for the

grave either took poison voluntarily, were buried alive while stupified by intoxication, or were killed in some unspecified manner. Bodies of the common people were abandoned to the beasts and birds.

In Darién it was customary among certain ruling families to bury the wives and servants in the ground but to desiccate and preserve the body of the chief. To this end the body was dried out by means of surrounding fires. It then was disposed of in one of two ways. Some families maintained a special house or room where their ancestors were seated in order along the walls. In other instances the bodies were wrapped in mantles and placed in hammocks. Linné (1929) points out that the *Cueva* today place the dead in hammocks slung in pits, which subsequently are filled with earth, and he has published a map showing the distribution of various types of mummification.

Linné's excavations revealed the presence of secondary urn burials on the Atlantic coast of Darién and of inhumations in deep graves on the Pacific.

**Ceramics.**—The pottery in general is coarse. Decoration consists of modeling, filleting, and incising (pl. 19, *c-e*). Tall annular bases are typical. Sufficient material is not available for close comparisons, but the pottery may be described as definitely Isthmian in character with stylistic links both to the south and north.

On the Pearl Islands, Linné discovered typical Darién pottery associated with round house sites and also polychrome pottery of Coclé style associated with rectangular house sites. He demonstrated by microscopic studies that both were manufactured locally and suggested that the polychrome ware was produced by Indians transferred from the mainland after the Conquest. Stratigraphic studies in Coclé endorse this opinion.

**Stone objects.**—Objects of stone are not common in Darién. The elaborate metates typical of western Panamá have not been found east of the Canal, but small mortars occur (pl. 20, *b*). Celts usually are small and are polished (pl. 20, *a*).

#### COCLE

The aboriginal culture which takes its name from the Province of Coclé occupies the Pacific watershed of Panamá to the southwest of the Canal. It is found chiefly in Coclé Province and the adjacent Asuero Peninsula, including the Provinces of Herrera and Los Santos. This well-watered region in large part today consists of open plains and is dedicated to cattle raising, but to the south and west the land is hilly and increasingly more rugged. To the north lies the little-known Cordillera and the continental divide. Archeological remains in the area here outlined are better understood from a technical point of view than are those from other parts of Panamá because detailed records of excavation have been published and because much material with accurately recorded provenience exists.

The Spaniards first reached Coclé and the Asuero Peninsula in 1515 and continually raided it for several years thereafter because the natives possessed gold in greater quantity than hitherto had been encountered in the New World. The discovery of even greater wealth in México and western South America, however, soon attracted the stream of adventurers to those regions, leaving this part of Panamá in an isolated desuetude from which it is only today emerging. The few surviving Indians now live in the high mountains.

No remains exist today above ground of the old Indian settlements except occasional lines of stone columns, the function of which is still unknown. Refuse beds, however, have been disclosed in the banks of rivers to indicate the sites of primitive villages. Many of these contain burials accompanied by funeral furniture in great quantity.

**Burial customs.**—Burial in the ground, as in Darién (q.v.), was a right confined to chiefs, the nobility, and their wives and retainers. In 1519 the Spaniards discovered and described the body of the Cacique Parita prepared for burial in sumptuous array, including gold ornaments which weighed 355 pounds.

The most famous burial ground, today known as Sitio Conte, is situated on the Río Grande de Coclé. Here scores of graves have been opened and carefully plotted and their contents recorded. These graves are of several types, one of which evidently represents the burial of chiefs. In these, the main occupant was seated on a stone slab, on which his body seemed to have been desiccated by fire, surrounded by the extended bodies of his retainers (fig. 27). Above and around the bodies, funeral offerings and jewelry were piled in great abundance. Over 200 pottery vessels were found in several graves.

Excavation of these graves presented a difficult technical problem. In many cases the funeral offerings were several layers deep and had been trampled into a compacted mass before the grave was closed. At times graves were reopened and the contents pushed aside to make room for more bodies. Frequently, in digging a grave, an older burial was encountered. This might be robbed for the benefit of the new burial or it might be cut through and the contents scattered, and so the deeper burial actually is the more recent.

The contents of the grave are so complex that we can merely list the more frequently found types of objects. Tools and implements include metates, sharpening and grinding stones, polishing stones, crudely chipped stone blades, bone points, stingray points, bone spear throwers, stone shaft straighteners, drills, mirrors, and chisels of gold or stone. Two types of celts are characteristic of the locality. One is pear-shaped with a polished blade and roughly chipped poll (fig. 28). The other is wedge-shaped and polished all over (pl. 20, c). Stone artifacts with the exception of jewelry are crudely made.

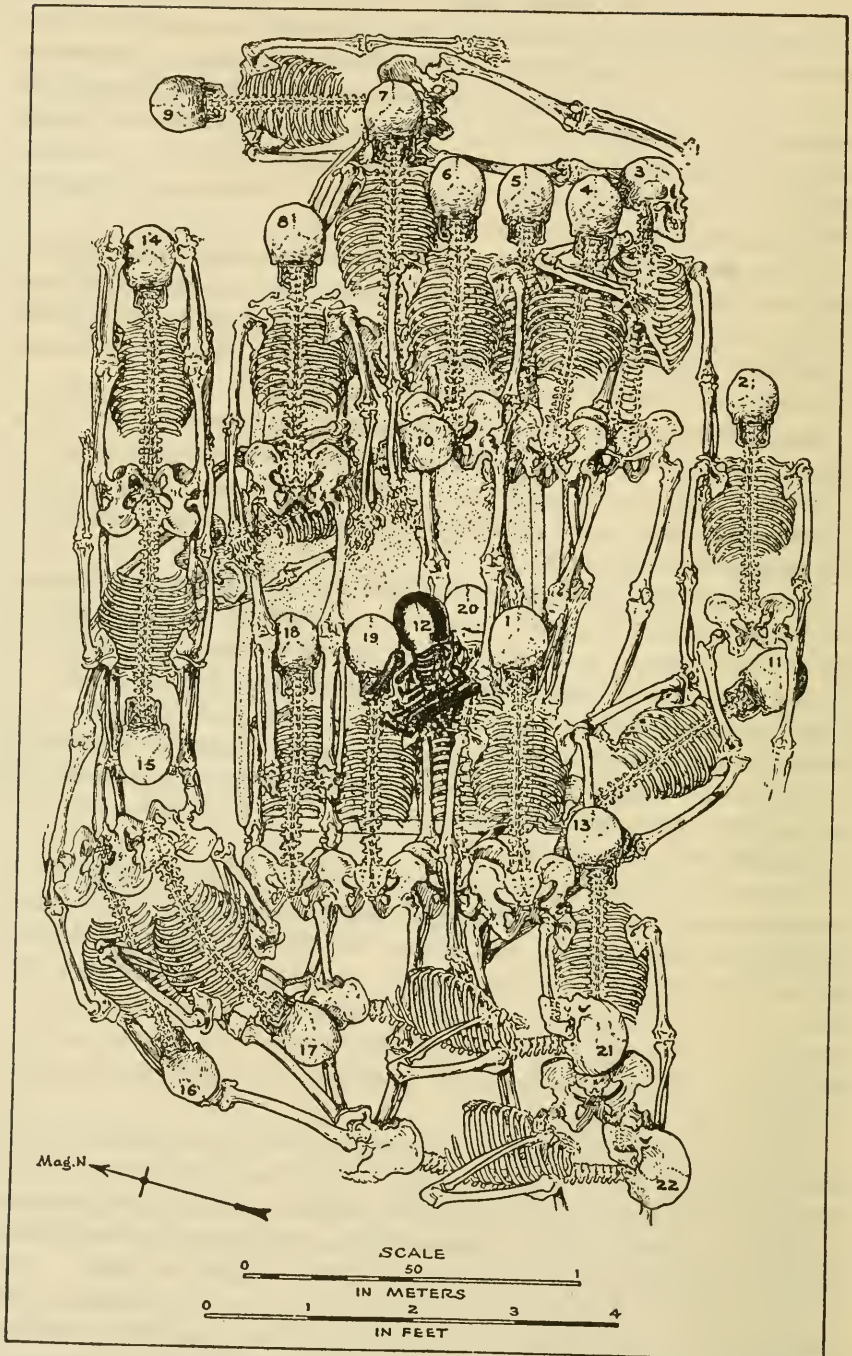


FIGURE 27.—Coclé grave plan. Skeleton 12, the owner of the grave, has fallen from a seated position. (After Lothrop, 1937, fig. 31.)

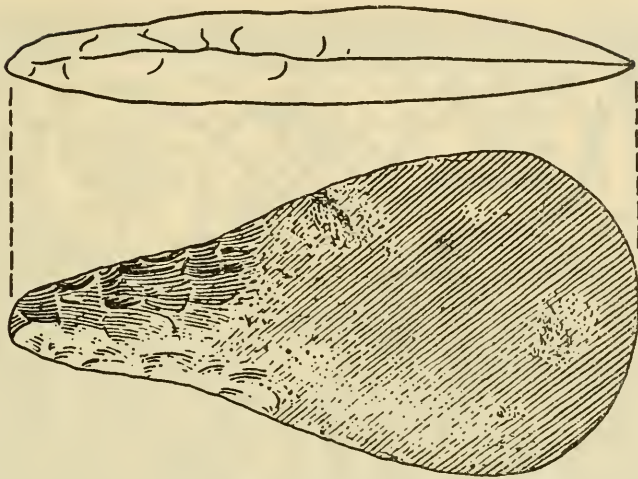


FIGURE 28.—Coclé stone ax ( $\frac{1}{3}$  actual size). (After Lothrop, 1937, fig. 53.)

**Ceramics.**—Pottery, found in abundance, is complex in character, for not only are there many distinct wares, but the designs are intricate and vary with period (figs. 29–36). Several ceramic shapes are typical only of Coclé. Among these are slightly curved plates about 12 inches (30 cm.) in diameter, deeper and smaller bowls with flaring walls, and carafes with globular or angular bodies and tall, flaring necks. Occasionally vessels are decorated with filleting or incising and suggest the pottery of Chiriquí or Darién, but the vast majority of vessels are purely local in character. Most of the pottery was coated with varnish, perhaps copal, which disappears when re-exposed to the air and light.

The outstanding pottery ware of Coclé is the polychrome (figs. 30–35). Colors include black, brown, dark red, light red, purple (which sometimes verges on blue or gray), and green. The designs typically depict various monstrous beasts which combine aspects of several animals. Attempts at naturalism either in painting or modeling are rare. Also typical are beautifully executed scroll patterns, of which there are a bewildering number.

**Ornaments.**—Jewelry and ornaments are scarcely less complex than the pottery. We may mention headbands and hats of gold. Shirts were adorned with golden disks with beaten designs (pl. 20, *d*), running up to 12 inches (30 cm.) in diameter, or with sets of smaller golden disks. In

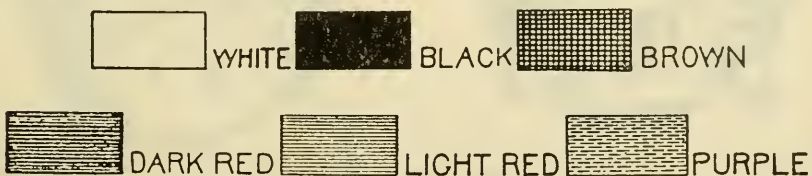


FIGURE 29.—Color key for Coclé pottery.



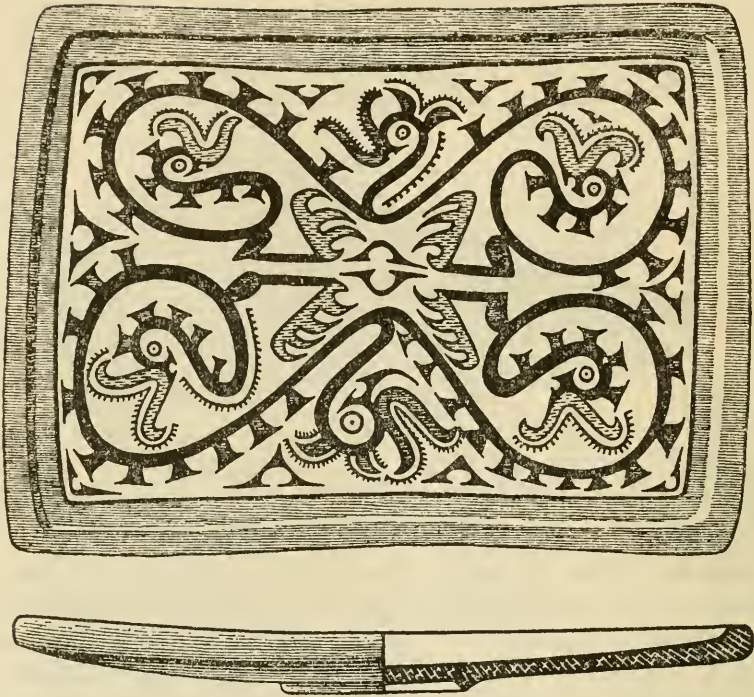


FIGURE 30.—Early Polychrome, Coclé. Tray showing crocodile-headed bird motifs (approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  actual size). (After Lothrop, 1942, fig. 7.)

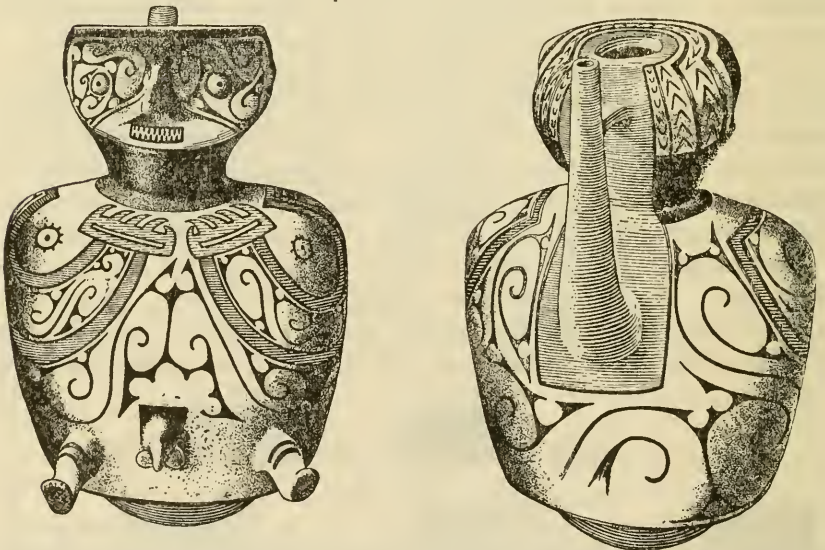


FIGURE 31.—An Early Polychrome spouted effigy vessel, Coclé. (Approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  actual size). (After Lothrop, 1942, fig. 123.)



FIGURE 32.—Early Polychrome, Coché. Plate interiors. *a*, Herringbone Pattern ( $\frac{1}{8}$  actual size); *b*, crocodile-headed bird pattern ( $\frac{3}{16}$  actual size); *c*, conventionalized bird and turtle motifs ( $\frac{3}{20}$  actual size); *d*, "S" scrolls ( $\frac{1}{16}$  actual size). (After Lothrop, 1942, figs. 15, 83, 50, 33.)



FIGURE 33.—Early polychrome, Coclé. (Approximate sizes:  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{6}$ , and  $\frac{1}{3}$ ). (After Lothrop, 1942, figs. 108, 11, 116, and 98.)

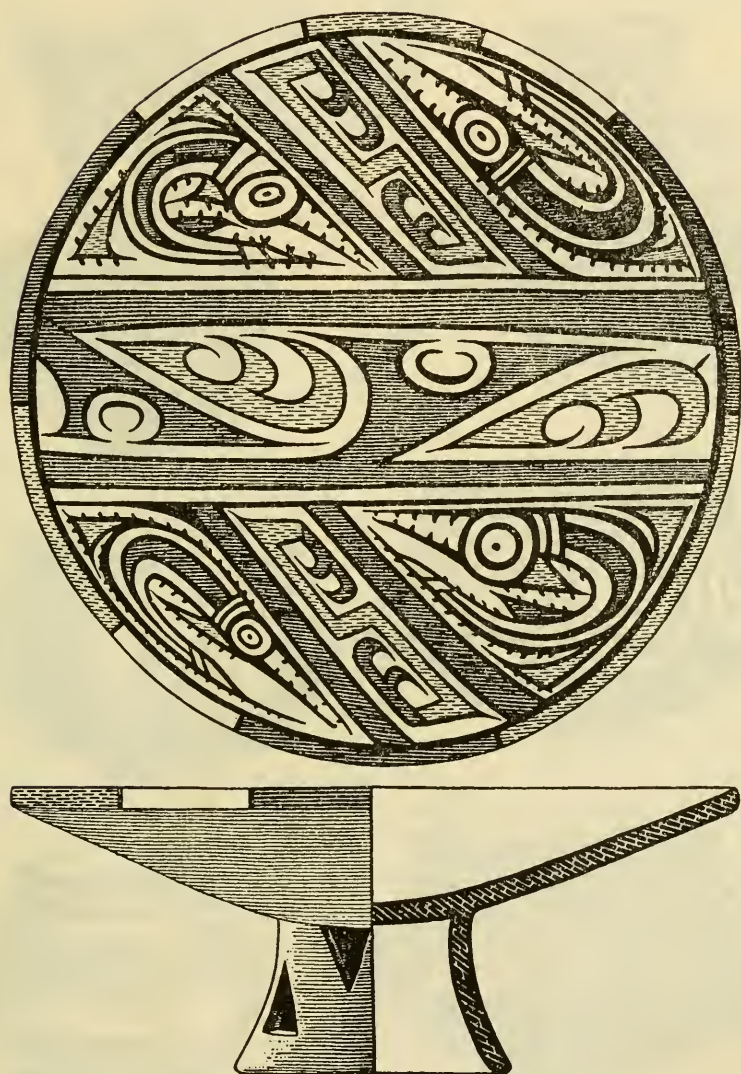


FIGURE 34.—Late Polychrome, Coclé. Fish and claw motifs from a pedestal plate (1/4 actual size). (After Lothrop, 1942, fig. 144.)



FIGURE 35.—Late Polychrome, Coclé. (Approximate sizes: carafes,  $\frac{1}{6}$ ; bowls,  $\frac{3}{8}$ ). (After Lothrop, 1942, figs. 10, 176, and 174.)



FIGURE 36.—Miscellaneous Coclé pottery types. *a*, Black-line geometric ware (approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  actual size); *b*, *c*, red-line bowls (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size); *d*, Late smoked ware (approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  actual size). (After Lothrop, 1942, figs. 237, 251, and 332.)

the nose, rings of gold, serpentine, or opal were inserted (fig. 37, *b*, *c*). Ears were decorated either with long rods of gold or stone or with large spoollike ornaments of gold (fig. 38; pl. 20, *e*). Necklaces were of hollow golden beads (one necklace is 3 m. (10 feet) in circumference) or of boars' tusks, sharks' teeth, dogs' teeth, serpentine, agate, shell, or bone. For fingers there were gold rings, and for wrists bracelets of gold, agate, or bone. Sometimes the forearms were encased in cuffs of gold, and there were golden greaves for the legs. There are many forms of pendants, shaped like men, birds, crocodiles, monkeys, etc., which may be of gold, agate, serpentine, whale-tooth ivory, or bone (pl. 20, *a*, *b*; figs. 37, *a*; 39). This is but an incomplete list with no attempt to describe the infinite variety of forms.

Peculiar to Coclé are composite pendants made of gold and some other material. Among these combinations are ivory, pottery or resin figures with overlays of sheet gold, and also various animals with heads of cast gold and bodies of emerald (fig. 40), agate, or quartz. Many objects of sheet gold are found which once were overlays on now rotted wooden forms.

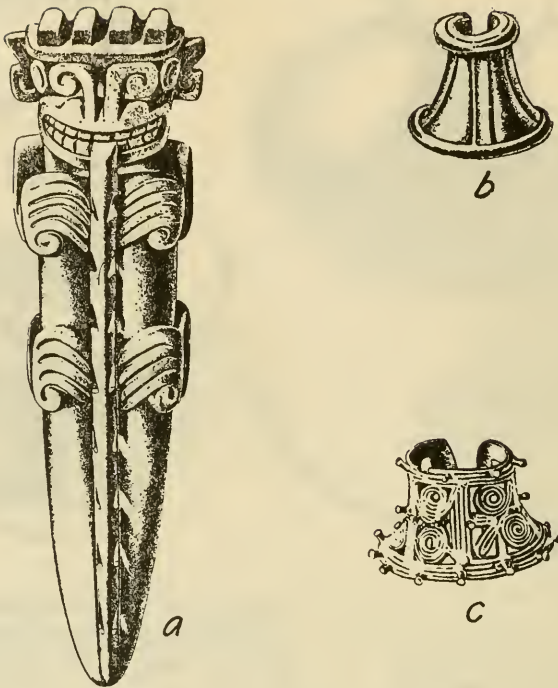


FIGURE 37.—Coclé ivory and goldwork. *a*, Ivory representation of crocodile god; *b*, *c*, gold nose clips (actual size). (After Lothrop, 1937, figs. 162 and 121.)

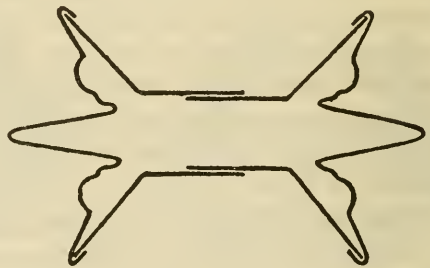
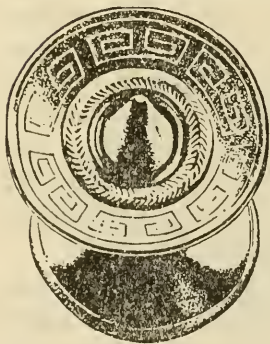


FIGURE 38.—Coclé ear ornament. At right is cross section of method of joining (actual size). (After Lothrop, 1937, figs. 128 and 127.)



PLATE 19.—Artifacts from Darién, Panamá. *a*, Stone celt, Puturgandi (much reduced). *b*, Stone mortar, Pearl Islands (much reduced). *c*, Pottery vessel from La Gloria (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size). *d*, Vessel from Puerto Pinas, Río Juan Domingo (approximately  $\frac{1}{12}$  actual size). *e*, Vessel from Garachine, Santa Barbara (much reduced). (After Linné, 1929, figs. 2, 40, 45, 12, 29.)





PLATE 20.—Artifacts from Coclé, Panamá. *a*, Agate pendant (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size). *b*, Gold pendant (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  size.) *c*, Stone celts (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size). *d*, Gold disk representing the crocodile god (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size.) *e*, Gold-covered ear ornament (approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size.) (After Lothrop, 1937, pl. 3, figs. 56, 90, 124.)

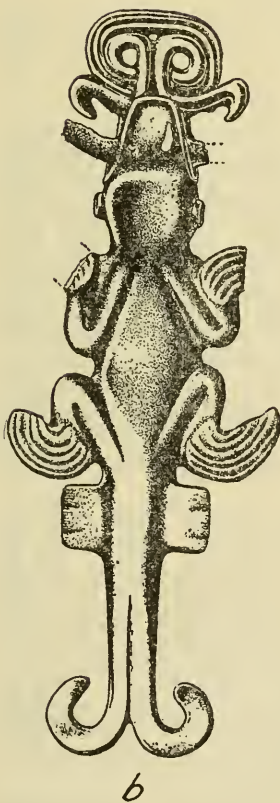
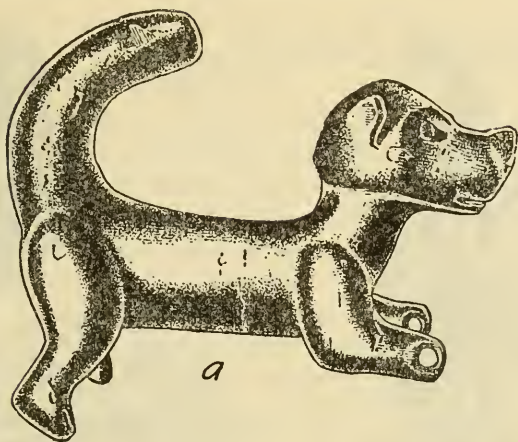


FIGURE 39.—Coclé gold pendants. *a*, Curly-tailed monkey; *b*, crocodile; *c*, woman. (All actual size.) (After Lothrop, 1937, figs. 170, 155, 148.)

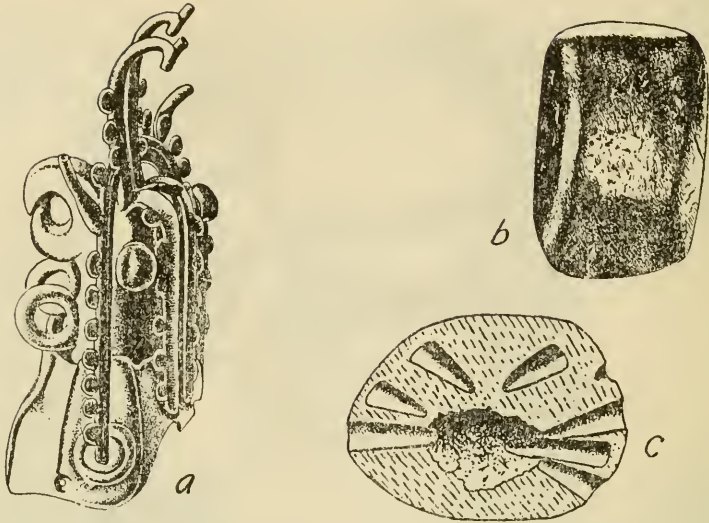


FIGURE 40.—Gold and emerald pendants. *a*, Gold setting; *b*, emerald from setting; *c*, emerald in cross section, showing systems of drilling. (All actual size.) (After Lothrop, 1937, figs. 181 and 180.)

**Metallurgy.**—From a metallurgical point of view the artifacts of Coclé are most closely related to those of the western Isthmus (Chiriquí and Veraguas) and Colombia. The chief metallurgical processes are casting, hammering, welding, soldering, and gilding. Many objects were hollow-cast over a clay core by the *cire-perdue* method, which makes possible the creation of elaborate filigree work. Gilding was chiefly by the *mise-en-couleur* process. Alloys are combinations of gold and copper with silver present as an impurity (*tumbaga*). Relatively pure copper objects are found, but most of the pieces which now appear to be copper actually contain some gold and originally were gilded. Ornaments made by cold-hammering are relatively more numerous than in any region except the former *Inca* Empire.

**Trade.**—The Coclé area was unusually active in trade, and the *Coclesano* maintained commercial relations with distant lands. For instance, agate, which came to Coclé apparently from northern Colombia, was manufactured in products of Coclé style and then shipped toward Central America. Coclé pendants of agate have been found not only in Veraguas and Chiriquí but as far away as Oaxaca in México. Coclé received objects of gold from the *Sinú* and *Quimbaya* regions in Colombia, emeralds from Colombia or more probably Ecuador. Gold pendants from Coclé, on the other hand, have turned up in Yucatán.

This trade activity in part explains the basis of Coclé art. Beyond that, however, are stylistic traditions from farther away, from the Amazon Basin and Perú. These must have blended with a cultural current from

the north, responsible chiefly for the introduction of polychrome pottery. Cultural links cannot be explained in greater detail without further elucidating the problem of cultural origins.

**Antiquity.**—Coclé culture evidently is not of great age. The remains now known probably all date within two centuries of the Conquest. This statement is based partly on trade contacts with other areas and partly on internal evidence, such as the rate of accumulation of refuse, stratification, and the chronological interrelationship of graves as demonstrated by the identification of individual pottery styles.

**Collections.**—Large collections from Coclé may be seen in the Peabody Museum, Harvard University; the Museo Nacional de Panamá; and the University Museum (Philadelphia). Smaller collections exist in the American Museum of Natural History; the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation; and the Peabody Museum, Yale University.

#### VERAGUAS

The Province of Veraguas, which fronts on both oceans, has a width of little more than 50 miles facing the Pacific. Flanking this area are the vigorous cultures of Coclé and Chiriquí. In the intervening territory one might expect a blending of the two, but this is not the case. On the contrary, in southern Veraguas there flourished a radically distinct culture, extending an unknown distance into the interior. No village sites or refuse beds have been discovered as yet, but many graves have been opened and rifled, largely for the benefit of the tourist trade.

**Burial customs.**—Veraguas graves usually are located high up on the mountain ridges. Their presence is indicated by a slight depression in the ground, at the edge of which a few small boulders were sometimes placed. Excavation reveals a tubular grave shaft, a meter or more in diameter, extending to a depth of 3 to 7 m. (10 to 23 feet). The shaft usually is not verticle but slopes slightly. At the bottom there is a chamber, made either by enlarging the grave shaft or by digging a short horizontal tunnel. On the floor of the grave is a bed of river boulders on which the body evidently lay in an extended position. No skeletal remains are found, but the position of the body is sometimes outlined by objects placed around it, rarely present in large numbers. The grave shaft is filled with the earth excavated from it or sometimes with stones.

The type of grave here described has no counterpart in Central America or the Isthmian region, but it corresponds closely to the deep-shaft graves found in Colombia.

**Stone objects.**—Artifacts of stone generally are unlike those of Coclé or Chiriquí. Celts, for instance, are shaped like an elongated bell in outline and are diamond-shaped in cross section. Small chipped blades with a tang form an equilateral triangle in cross section. Metates are rectangular or oval and have three or four legs. The 3-legged metates sometimes have a carved panel suspended below the grinding surface, a curious

form found also in the vicinity of San José de Costa Rica. Four-legged metates may be jaguar effigies with protruding head and tail, similar to a type found in Chiriquí and Costa Rica, but the Veraguas specimens are very much larger and relatively thinner than those found in other regions.

**Ceramics.**—The pottery very rarely is painted, with the exception of vessels which obviously were imported from Coclé or from the Asuero Peninsula. It is improbable that the inhabitants of Veraguas did not know how to fire colors, as their close neighbors were adepts. Evidently they preferred, or had inherited, the tradition of adorning pottery vessels by incising and flilleting.

Several pottery shapes apparently were developed locally. Among these are globular jars with huge, flaring strap handles. A curious and common variant is a vessel with a flat base and top constructed to resemble the upper half of the vessels just described. Another characteristic type is shaped like a small barrel placed horizontally with a tall tubular neck protruding from its side. There are a number of effigy bowls with double walls (gutter rims), a feature also found at Santarém in the Amazon Valley and, very rarely, in Peruvian pottery of *Inca* style. Tripod legs are not uncommon, but, unlike those found in other areas, they usually consist of looped ribbons of clay.

The relationship between Veraguas pottery and that of adjacent areas may be summarized as follows: Trade took place to the south and east for at least two centuries before the Spanish Conquest. At first Veraguas purchased from Coclé, but later Veraguas exported pottery as well as acquired it. On the other hand, there is little evidence that Veraguas traded pottery with Chiriquí, but the potters of the later region sometimes copied Veraguas types in the local clay. Veraguas did, however, export objects of metal to Chiriquí in large quantity.

**Metallurgy.**—Veraguas metalwork with authenticated provenience has reached museums in such quantity that it may be discussed with some assurance. It consists largely of cast pendants representing birds, frogs, fishes, jaguars, and men. A stylistic peculiarity of the region is that the protruding eyes often are tiny bells. In Coclé cast objects usually were hollow or had a clay core. In Veraguas, however, hollow-casting was not practiced and the artifacts invariably have an open back. Metallurgical analysis indicates that almost all objects are of tumbaga, a gold-copper alloy. Frequently the gold content is so reduced that the metal has oxydized and appears to be copper. When cleaned, however, a gilded surface appears, originally obtained by the *mise-en-couleur* process. Analysis reveals also that the native gold of Veraguas differs from that of Coclé because it contains a higher content of silver as an impurity.

**Collections.**—Comprehensive collections of Veraguas archeological material exist only in the Museo Nacional de Panamá and the Peabody Museum (Harvard University). There is a small but authenticated metal collection in the University Museum (Philadelphia).

## CHIRIQUI

The Province of Chiriquí has given its name to an ancient culture that flourished in western Panamá and the southern half of Costa Rica. Boundaries cannot be defined with precision, but in general the present political division between the Provinces of Veraguas and Chiriquí corresponds to the southeastern archeological frontier. To the north this culture extends through the central Cordillera of Costa Rica as far as El General. Archeological remains from Chiriquí exist in great abundance owing to the fact that gold was discovered in the ancient graves nearly a century ago. During the period of greatest exploitation in the 1860's, it is reported that gold ornaments to the value of £10,000 annually were melted down by the Bank of England.

No technical archeologist has made detailed studies of the remains of Chiriquí in situ. Hence our knowledge of this culture is based on popular articles published many years ago and on the detailed and well-illustrated studies of museum collections published by Holmes (1888) and MacCurdy (1911). A paper by Osgood (1935) reclassifies the ceramic remains on a more modern basis and, so far as is possible, correlates them with various types of graves.

No evidence of Chiriquí culture exists above ground, except a few pictographs, vaguely South American in style (fig. 41), and stone columns which mark the sites of graves.

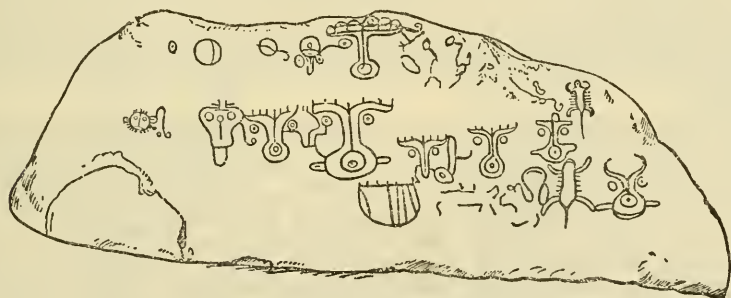


FIGURE 41.—Pictograph, Chiriquí country. The piedra pintal at Caldera. (After Holmes, 1888.)

**Burial customs.**—The popular literature of the 19th century, reviewed by MacCurdy, indicates that two principal types of tombs are found in Chiriquí: rounded or rectangular in outline, both with rough stone walls (fig. 42). There was no distinct floor, and the tombs were covered either by a layer of river boulders or by flat slabs. Several variant forms may be defined which, at present, are not of archeological significance. Skeletal remains usually have disintegrated, but the size of the graves suggests that they normally contained a single body, interred a meter or two below the ground level. In type, size, and depth the Chiriquí graves may be vaguely compared to the so-called *Guetar* burials in northern and north-

eastern Costa Rica, but they are totally unlike the deep graves of Veraguas or the multiple burials of Coclé.

Artifacts are not found in quantity with individual Chiriquí burials, and so the great number that have come to light is the result of opening many thousands of graves. Perishable materials, such as wood or bone, have

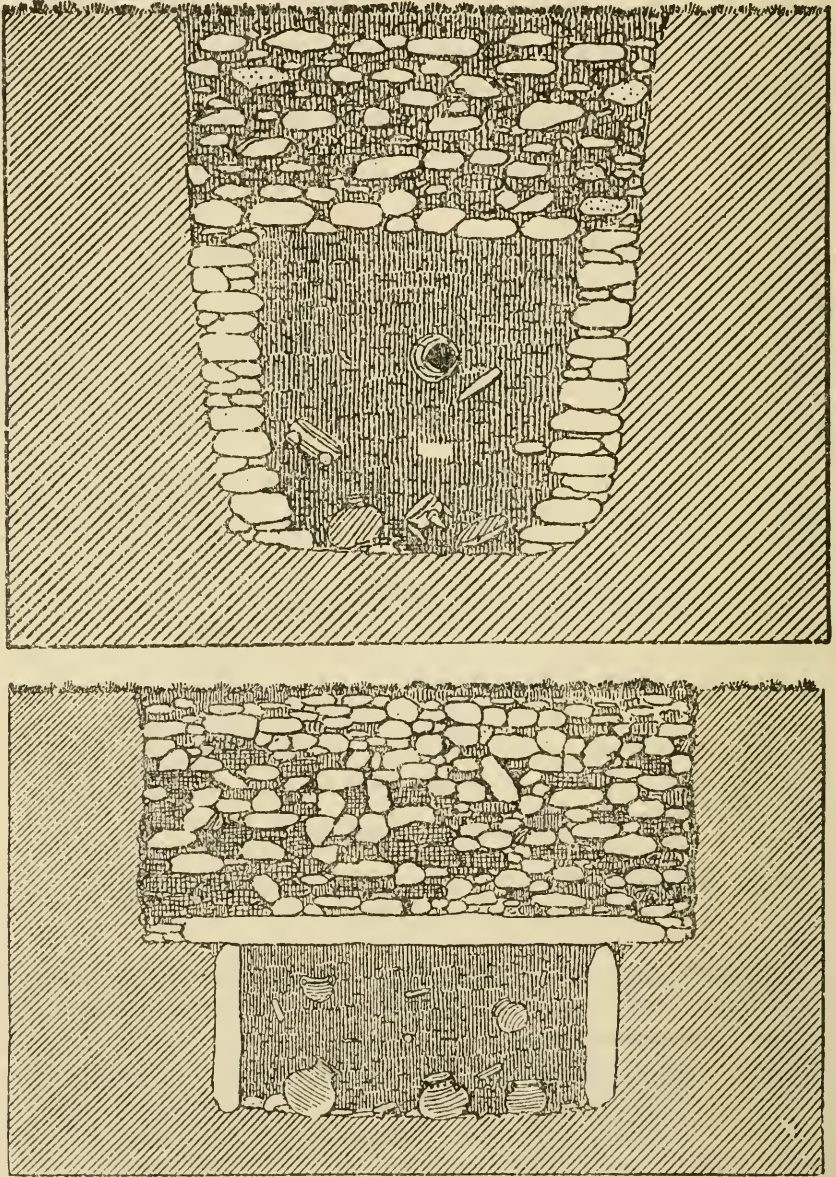


FIGURE 42.—Chiriquí grave types. *Top*: Oval. *Bottom*: Quadrangular, showing surface pack of river stones and positions of grave artifacts. (After Holmes, 1888, figs. 1 and 2.)

totally disappeared, and the surviving objects are of stone, pottery, or metal.

**Stone objects.**—Stone tools consist of a few simple forms. There are small chipped blades, triangular in cross section—a form also typical of Veraguas. Celts may be pear-shaped in outline, with polished blades and roughened polls—a type also found in Coclé. In addition, there are celts with a flaring blade, polished all over. Stone chisels have narrow blades and thick, roughened handles.

Metates, or grinding stones, usually are effigies representing a jaguar. The grinding surface is either rectangular or oval, and often it is surrounded by a small raised flange. In addition, there are circular grinding stones (sometimes called stools) supported by Atlantean figures or latticed columns. These forms, illustrated in figs. 43 and 44, are equally

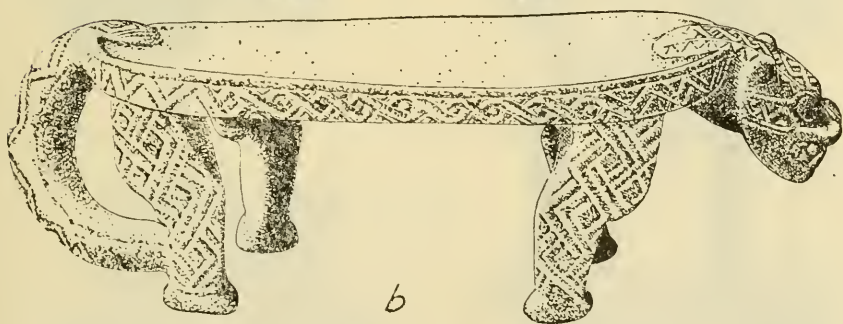
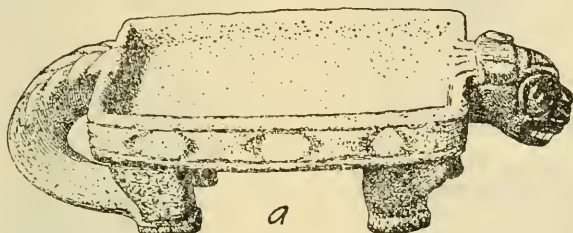


FIGURE 43.—Chiriquí stone metates. *a*, Jaguar metate with rectangular top; *b*, jaguar metate with guilloche ornamentation. (Size:  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  actual, respectively.) (After MacCurdy, 1911, figs. 26, 28.)

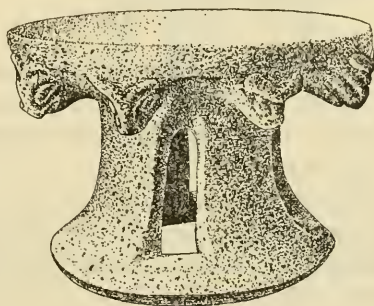
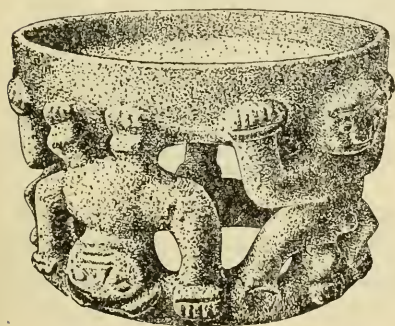


FIGURE 44.—Chiriquí stone metates or stools. (After MacCurdy, 1911, pl. 4.)



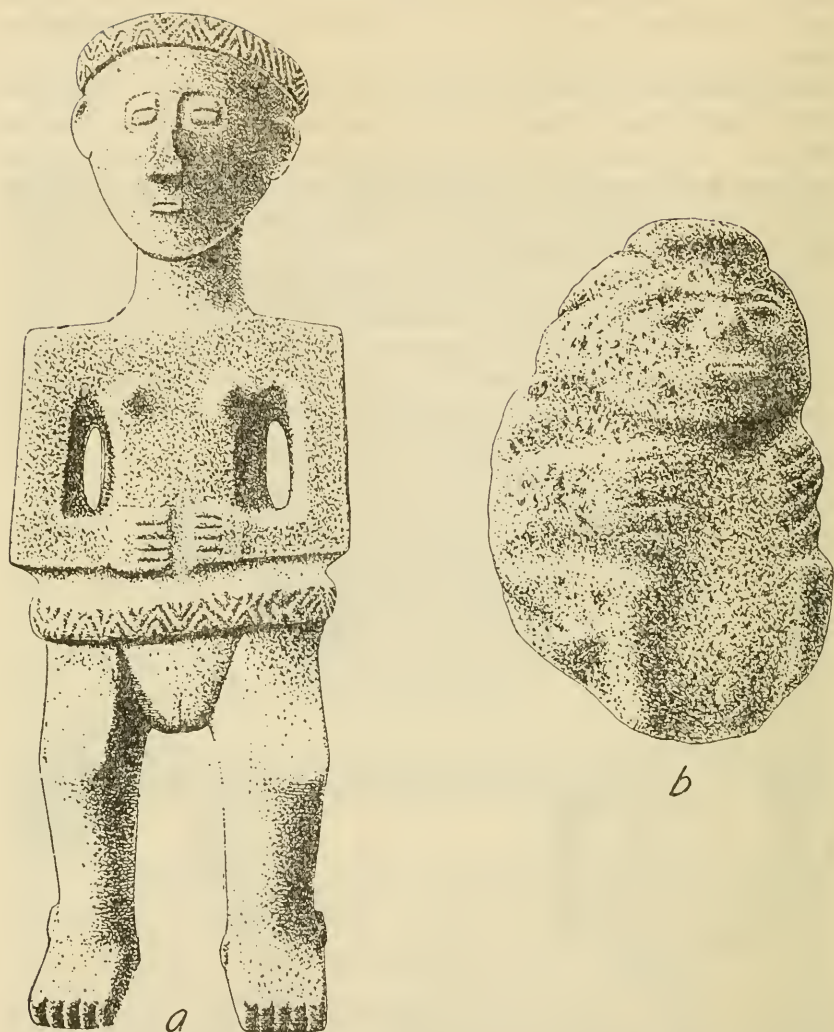


FIGURE 45.—Chiriquí stone statues. *a*, The "Panama Venus" ( $\frac{1}{6}$  actual size); *b*, crude human image from Bugarita ( $\frac{1}{4}$  actual size). (After MacCurdy, 1911, figs. 40a and 38.)

typical of the *Guetar* area to the north in Costa Rica but, with some exceptions in Veraguas, do not occur to the east and south of Chiriquí. Small stone statues, usually crudely carved, also recall the *Guetar* area (fig. 45).

Stone jewelry in Chiriquí consists largely of objects obtained by trade. These include jade pendants from the Nicoya Peninsula in northwestern Costa Rica as well as agate beads and animal effigies, typical of Coclé and northern Colombia.

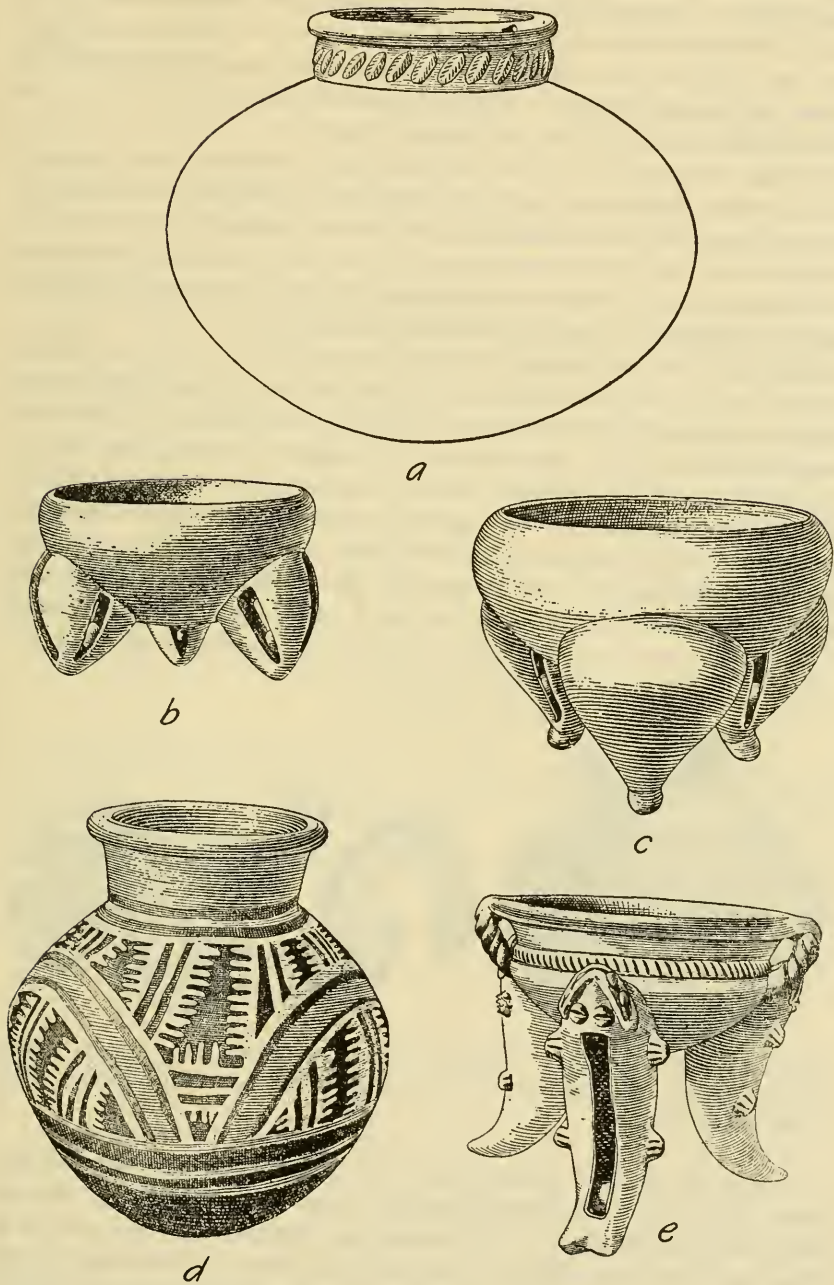


FIGURE 46.—Chiriquí pottery types. *a-c*, Armadillo ware (*a*,  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and *b, c*,  $\frac{2}{3}$  actual size); *d*, lost-color or negative painted ware ( $\frac{3}{8}$  actual size); *e*, tripod ware ( $\frac{3}{4}$  actual size). (After MacCurdy, 1911, fig. 85, pls. 6, 31, and 23.)

**Ceramics.**—Pottery vessels from the graves of Chiriquí exist by the thousands. In general, they are small and globular with relatively thick walls. Jars have no basal support, but bowls often have tripod legs. These may be conical and pointed or bulbous and mammiform, both shapes being typical of Central America. There are also tall, elongated tripods, a type with affinities both in Central and South America.

Holmes distinguishes 11 and MacCurdy 14 distinct pottery wares. The so-called Polychrome ware of both these classifications consists in fact of trade pieces from Coclé and the Asuero Peninsula, representing a culture not known at the time these authors wrote. The other wares may be divided into two groups, one being purely local in style, the other closely related to the *Guetar* pottery of northern Costa Rica.

Typical of the local groups is Armadillo ware, a thin buff ware distinguished by delicately rounded outlines (fig. 46, *a-c*). Decoration is confined to modeled relief on the neck, shoulders, or tripod legs. There also is an important pottery type decorated by negative painting (fig. 46, *d*). Except for the technique of adornment, this group shows little resemblance to the well-developed negative painting of northeastern South America, but slight links may be noted with the negative painting of the *Guetar* area. The so-called Alligator ware of Holmes and MacCurdy is really a local polychrome, painted in black and red on a white slip. The name comes from the fact that most the designs represent crocodiles or stylized elements derived from the crocodile (fig. 47).

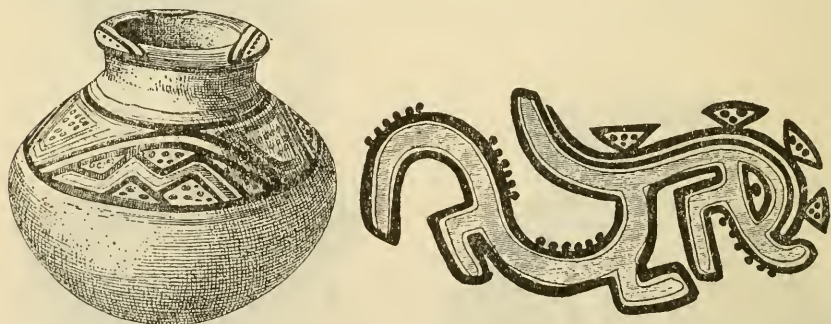


FIGURE 47.—Chiriquí pottery. Alligator ware. *a*, Vessel with alligator motifs (approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  actual size); *b*, alligator design. (After MacCurdy, 1911, figs. 235 and 208.)

Among the Chiriquí pottery types with *Guetar* affiliations are Red-line ware, White-line ware, Handled ware, Tripod ware (fig. 46, *e*), Maroon ware, and Chocolate ware. The resemblance between the two areas is so close that it is often difficult to tell the provenience of individual vessels unaccompanied by field data. Evidently the two cultures share in part a common base, but not enough evidence is available to discuss the question of origins.

Typical of the Chiriquí area are small pottery figurines with polychrome decoration. These often are hollow animal effigies with a whistle incorporated in them.

**Metal objects.**—Chiriquí metal objects almost invariably are cast, apparently of gold. This is about all that can be said at present, in spite of the numerous specimens in museums and private collections. The reason for this caution is that recent excavations have shown that a large part of the so-called Chiriquí gold is the product of trade with Veraguas. Until the local Chiriquí styles can be determined and their metallic content analysed, therefore, intelligent discussion is not possible.

**Antiquity.**—We have mentioned trade between Chiriquí and other regions, which include the Nicoya Peninsula and *Guetar* area in Costa Rica, as well as Veraguas, the Asuero Peninsula, and Coclé in Panamá. Correlation with chronological studies made at the Sitio Conte in Coclé indicates that the culture of Chiriquí was contemporaneous at least in part, and flourished for two centuries or more before the Spanish Conquest.

**Collections.**—Major collections from Chiriquí are housed in the following museums: American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Museum, Museum of the American Indian (Heye Foundation), Museo Nacional de Panamá, Peabody Museum (Harvard University), Peabody Museum (Yale University), University Museum (Philadelphia), United States National Museum.

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