

PARTIAL PLAN OF LAS MERCEDES, BY ALANSON SKINNER

## APPENDIX IV

### NOTES ON LAS MERCEDES, COSTA RICA FARM, AND ANITA GRANDE

By ALANSON SKINNER

(Mr. Skinner, who was killed in August, 1925, in an automobile accident while engaged in field work in North Dakota for the Museum, explored certain sites in northeastern Costa Rica during the winter of 1916-17. While he had generously permitted the writer to make use of his notes, it seems but fitting that publication of this work should be made in his own name. Mr. Skinner had prepared some years ago an account of exploration at three archeological sites, which he intended to combine with a description of the objects discovered. This plan did not materialize, but below we incorporate his discussion of the excavations, together with plans which have been prepared from his sketch maps.—S. K. L.)

#### CEMETERY NO. 1, LAS MERCEDES (PL. CCIII)

This cemetery lay about 150 yards north of the railroad and about the same distance southwest of Cemetery No. 3. It differs from Cemeteries Nos. 2, 3, and 4, and the sites at La Virginia and Anita Grande, in that the graves were wholly unmarked, lacking both the *lajas* [flat capstones] and the cobble walls. The graves were shallow, averaging  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep, seldom more or less, and were distinguishable solely by the deposits of pottery or by an occasional cairn. No trace of bone occurred. Many of the pottery deposits were in or under a stratum of pebbles which had the appearance of having been washed over them. This grave layer did not seem ever to have been disturbed by the Indians digging through it, although the six inches nearest the surface had been displaced by plowing. While this pebble layer had the appearance of being a river-washed stratum, perhaps brought down by a freshet of the nearby brook, it is also conceivable that it might have been brought from elsewhere by the Indians as a covering. Corroborative evidence was found in cases in the other cemeteries where the stone-walled tombs were partially filled in by fine river sand, unquestionably brought to the spot for this use. It must be said, however, that the pebble stratum in Cemetery No. 1 was firmly and evenly distributed, of far coarser variety, and bore the appearance of a washed deposit.

The pottery vessels were nearly always found in groups, varying from two or three to as many as a dozen. Occasionally, a few jade or bluestone beads occurred with them. Several whole or broken stone human images [pl. ccv, a] were found, along with a double-ended flint warclub head, fragments of mortars, a single celt, and a beautiful jade idol. No gold was encountered.

The vessels were all small, none of the larger ollas of the other burying grounds occurring; neither were there any of the highly painted or enameled jars. Nearly all the decorations were incised or in relief; in fact, most of the pots were plain in color and relied on their form for decorative effect. Effigy styles were by no means uncommon. A type of vessel peculiar to this cemetery,

though occasionally found in the others, is a tripod jar with a delicate, gracefully rounded body with pointed bottom, supported by three very long legs, which usually bear a series of exquisitely made birds, men, or mammals, at the juncture with the body [fig. 227]. On account of their extreme fragility, the legs being hollow and bearing clay balls within, the poorness of the connection between, and the fact that the black or dark-colored clay of which they were made did not seem to acquire the firmness of the material used for other vessels, it was well-nigh impossible to remove these elegant vases except in crumbling fragments. The fact that the ground was continually wet from the incessant daily rains which fell at that season also militated against the explorer. The percentage of these vessels encountered, therefore, was much higher than is represented in our collections.

It must be said also that many of these vessels had been broken before interment, as some were found minus one, two, or even all three legs, the breaks being old and there were no traces of the fragments. Sometimes stones were seen lying on the pieces of one to half a dozen vessels, to all appearances deliberately cast on them as they lay in the grave.

The other pottery was of several forms. In general it is covered with a bright-red, almost scarlet, wash or sizing. Rarely yellow or purple figures appear. One three-legged bowl has a purple swastika in the center. A purple wash, however, was commonly applied to the graceful tripod type. A few vessels were found in which the natives had punched holes in the bottom, evidently with the idea of "killing" the jar, as is so often observed in some localities in the United States.

The vessels occurred in groups on the same level, piled in heaps on top of one another, nested, a large jar with one or more smaller ones inside, one vessel in normal position with another inverted over it, with or without smaller ones inside and on edge, mouth to mouth.

Nothing except one broken fragment of jade or serpentine was found in any vessel, save when other smaller vessels were placed inside. Jade or serpentine beads or pendants were found beneath vessels, however. A number of well-made clay whistles, rattles, and one clay and one stone cloth stamp were obtained.

The area of this cemetery was not more than forty feet square, but from this point west we encountered at intervals other similar cemeteries at varying distances, but in no others did we find the overlying gravel stratum, which again points toward its artificiality, as the adjacent burial grounds seemed similar in every other respect. Of these small cemeteries we located at least four. None were of any greater extent than Cemetery No. 1, nor did any different objects occur. Doubtless there are many of these scattered all over the area, for north of the railroad on Dos Novillos farm, nearly three-quarters of a mile away, another was encountered. It must be mentioned, however, in the case of the latter, that several walled graves occurred, though sporadically, in the neighborhood.

#### CEMETERY NO. 2, LAS MERCEDES

Cemetery No. 2 was situated about fifty yards north of the railroad and the same distance south of the knoll, known later as Cemetery No. 3, where Alpizar



*a*



*b*

LAS MERCEDES, COSTA RICA  
*a*—RETAINING WALL OF MOUND SOUTH OF CEMETERY 3. *b*—TWO-STORY GRAVE IN CEMETERY 4

[who dug during many years for Mr. Minor C. Keith] discovered the deep tombs. It was bounded on the east by a small brook, partially dry, and on the west by the Oklahoma tramway. Cemetery No. 2 occupied a small knoll, and was somewhat less than an acre in extent. Other searchers had considerably damaged portions of the site, the open holes still being in evidence.

The greater number of the graves in this cemetery were well made, furnished with floors and sides of river cobbles, and not infrequently with a covering composed of thin slabs, averaging three and a half feet by two, and three or four inches thick. These slabs are called *lajas* by the natives.

The graves occurred in several forms. First, fully walled, floored, and covered, as noted above; second, the same type lacking only the *lajas*; third, walled with or without a *laja* cover, but having no floor; fourth, with *lajas* and no walls; fifth, with cover, cobble walls, and *laja* floor; sixth (but only one case of this was observed in this cemetery), with sides of *lajas*; seventh, with several floors of cobbles or *lajas*, each containing an interment; eighth, with the graves marked by quadrangles of cobbles on the surface alone and no stones beneath; ninth, with floor and sides of cobbles that did not reach the surface. There were also unmarked graves as in Cemetery No. 1, but with different contents.

Graves occurred singly, in groups of one or two, touching (always laterally), and in lines of as many as seven, with adjoining side walls. This seems to be a horizontal variant of the perpendicular several-storied graves. It is notable that all graves in this cemetery headed approximately east and west.

So much material was found beneath the general black soil of one knoll, on the original barren reddish surface, or grouped about boulders on the original earth and between the walled graves, as to make the conclusion inevitable that the knoll was an artificial mound, at least in part built up around the walled graves, which once stood above the old surface. Vessels were encountered in the surrounding loam at various levels above the reddish bottom earth, as though ceremonially deposited there during the erection of the mound. No skeletal remains were found, but the preponderance of objects unearthed in the western ends of the graves suggested that the head of the deceased may have been placed here.

The deposits were usually as follows: *A*, One lot of vessels, etc., in the western end. *B*, One lot, the larger, in the western end, a smaller deposit in the eastern end. *C*, Equally balanced deposits at both ends; this was especially true when two stone *salvillas* or like objects were encountered. *D*, Objects arranged all around the borders of the grave. *E*, Stone relics, celts, heads, idols, pendants, etc., were nearly always in the eastern end of the grave, and two cylindrical stone ear-plugs, to be described and illustrated hereafter, were found about five inches apart in the east portion of a tomb, indicating the position of the head of their wearer.

The pottery from this cemetery was on the whole the finest collected on the expedition. Suffice it to say that but little of the delicate tripod type of Cemetery No. 1 was unearthed, but many beautiful painted and enameled receptacles were obtained. Whistles and rattles were both uncommon, and so were incense burners.

In stone, celts were by far the most abundant. A small table, two beautiful *salvillas*, a tiger mortar, stone beads, three flint knives, a lozenge-shape flint warclub of the usual style, some edged pieces of iron ore (meteoric?), possibly used as gravers, a perforated disc, many jade beads and one exquisite amulet, and six small stone idols of the squatting type were found. No whole standing idol was discovered, but fragments of beautiful stone objects of unknown use, broken tiger mortars, a large four-legged mortar with the bottom knocked out, and a few other things, were discovered. This is a relatively small showing, considering the richness and variety of the pottery.

A single small gold armadillo pendant was obtained, not in a grave, but resting on the original surface of the earth beneath the black loam, and close to a boulder. A copper bell also came from this cemetery, found in a stone-walled grave.

The cemetery seems to be typical of the stone-walled grave culture of this portion of Costa Rica, and therefore we append a list of the graves, with their measurements and contents, together with a rough field map [pl. cccii].

#### NOTES ON GRAVES

*Grave 1.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 1 in. long, 5 ft. broad, 4 ft. 9 in. deep. Contents: Twelve pottery vessels, some whole and others broken, distributed about the walls of the grave on all sides.

*Grave 2.* Adjoining Grave 1. Dimensions: 6 ft. by 2 ft. 3 in. by 5 ft. Contents: Eight pottery vessels, two incense burners, one stone disc, four meteoric iron gravers, three flint knives, two ear-plugs of greenstone in the west end. Near the west end, and about where the breast of the body would be, a beautiful carved jade ornament.

*Grave 3.* This grave was the first of a series of seven tombs touching each other on the north and south sides, and separated by double walls of cobbles. Dimensions: 6 ft. 6 in. by 4 ft. 8 in. by 4 ft. Contents: Several pottery vessels in west and east ends, mostly broken.

*Grave 4.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 3½ in. by 3 ft. 9 in. A deposit of pottery vessels, whole and broken, and a copper bell, at west end.

*Grave 5.* Dimensions: 4 ft. 9 in. by 3 ft. 5 in. by 2 ft. 5 in. Broken and whole pottery and a pottery object like a small yoke, in west end.

*Grave 6.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 8 in. by 3 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. 3 in. Contents: Only four small pots in west end.

*Grave 7.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 3 in. by 2 ft. 8 in. Contents: A large pot, a broken stone table, and a celt in the west end; eight pots in the east end, mostly broken.

*Grave 8.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 2 in. by 2 ft. 10 in. by 3 ft. Contents: Broken pottery in west and east ends.

*Grave 9.* Dimensions: 6 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. by 3 ft. Contents: Nothing. At a depth of two feet was a floor of *lajas*, and six inches beneath this a slab floor with two pots, one in each corner of west end. This ends one line of seven graves.

*Grave 10.* Dimensions: 6 ft. by 2 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft. Contents: Five poor pots (in west end two, and south side near west end three). This was the third of a line of standing graves; the other two had been destroyed.

*Grave 11.* Dimensions: 6 ft. by 2 ft. 5 in. by 2 ft. 8 in. Six broken pots in west and east ends. This grave was apparently intended as a part of the same series as No. 10, but was somewhat out of line, running almost into the previous group, which was about six feet away to the west. East of this line, about six feet, was another parallel line of at least five graves, all but one of which had been destroyed.

*Grave 12.* This was the last grave in the line first referred to, and was disturbed. Dimensions were unobtainable, as it was broken in on the north side, and the east and west ends were ill-defined. It was 4 ft. deep and contained three celts at the east end, nothing else.

*Grave 13.* Though separated by a number of unmarked graves, extending fifteen feet from Graves 3 to 9, it was in a line with them, and is probably part of the same series. Dimensions: 6 ft. 5 in. by 3 ft. 1 in. by 4 ft. Contents: Finely made stone head in northwest corner, two very large pots in southwest corner, celt in east end, and three small broken jars with the celt.

*Grave 14.* Six feet south of No. 13, and, though a little out of line, in the same series. Dimensions: 7 ft. by 3 ft. by 2 ft. 9 in. Contents: Four pots, one in each corner.

*Grave 15.* Two feet south of No. 4. Dimensions: 5 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft. 3 in. by 3 ft. 2 in. Contents: Twelve fine pots, all around edges, also a celt.

*Grave 16.* Adjoining No. 15 on south of the same series. Dimensions: 5 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in. Contents: Four pots in east end, one in center. First floor was two feet deep; a second, six inches under cobbles, had no relics.

*Graves 17-19.* This was a group of graves twelve feet to the north of the line 3 to 7, and apparently of the same series, though separated from Grave No. 3 by unmarked graves. These graves were all of the same length and were marked by stones laid on the surface only; their dimensions were 2 ft., 3 ft. 3 in., and 1 ft. 3 in. broad, respectively, by 6 ft. 10 in. long and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deep. They contained much pottery in the east and west ends.

*Graves 20-22.* Dimensions: 6 ft. by 4 ft. by 3 ft. 2 in. This grave, which was unusually broad, contained two stone salvillas, one with thirteen human faces around the rim. These were on opposite sides of the east end. In the west end were six pots and a celt. In the northwest corner a small, well-defined passage was found in the cobbles which led into what appeared to be a child's grave, No. 21 (dimensions: 3 ft. by 2 ft. by 3 ft.), which contained a small pot and some broken rubbish. In removing the floor of Grave No. 20, at a depth of 1 ft. was found another grave, older than No. 20, and disturbed when No. 20 was dug. This grave, which overlapped to the south, was Grave 22, 7 ft. by 4 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in.; it contained five pots in the west end, all of fine workmanship, but all badly broken by the weight of the floor of No. 20 or by the Indians in digging the former.

*Grave 23.* A well made cobbled grave covered with lajas but opened and disturbed so that measurements were impossible.

*Grave 24.* A cairn, covering five pots around the edges, and an incense burner. Dimensions: 6 ft. by 4 ft. by 3 ft. 2 in.

*Grave 25.* A well-made grave covered with large and very regular lajas. Contents: Eight broken pots, and in one a jade ornament, also a long jade object with two perforations on one side. The grave was destroyed by workmen before its dimensions could be recorded.

*Grave 26.* Probably a child's grave. Dimensions: 4 ft. by 2 ft. by 5 in. Contents: Several pottery vessels (one large, one small), two pottery toys, a lozenge-shape flint club and a celt, all in west end; also in the same corner a small squatting stone idol.

*Grave 27.* Dimensions: 7 ft. by 2 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. Contents: Five broken pots on the south side and a broken stone salvilla. The east and west ends of the grave were marked by very large boulders.

*Grave 28.* Dimensions: 4 ft. 11 in. by 2 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 2 in., covered with closely laid lajas. Contents: Two pots in west end.

*Grave 29.* Dimensions: 5 ft. 10 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. Contents: Six pots in west end.

*Grave 30.* Dimensions: 6 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 3 in. Contents: Three pots in west end.

*Grave 31.* Dimensions: 4 ft. 2 in. by 2 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft., covered with well-laid lajas. Contents: Five pots—three in west end, two in east end.

*Grave 32.* Dimensions: 4 ft. by 4 ft. by 3 ft. 6 in., covered with lajas. Contents: Five pots in west end.

*Point A.* At this point a very large vessel was found in the ground, probably a ceremonial deposit. It was upright and had no accompaniments.

*Point B.* A small gold armadillo was unearthed in the general digging. Ceremonial deposits of vessels, beads, and especially small stone squatting idols [pl. CXLII] were found throughout the knoll, and may have been with unmarked burials. From the preponderance of these idols (none was found elsewhere by us at Las Mercedes) the writer believes it possible that the interments in Cemetery No. 2 all belonged to one group or clan to which this type of object was peculiar.

In addition to the methods of placing vessels in the graves noted in Cemetery No. 1, the following forms were noted: Vessel in normal position with a number of small pots (as many as seven in one case) inside. A large vessel in normal position with smaller one inverted over mouth. As before noted, often fragments of stone objects were encountered in graves, apparently to symbolize entire objects.

### CEMETERY NO. 3, LAS MERCEDES

Cemetery No. 3 lies about a quarter of a mile north of the railroad and begins close to the Oklahoma finca tramway. It occupies a heavily wooded knoll between a small stream and Dos Novillos river.

This site is the scene of the greater part of Alpizar's work for Mr. Keith, and has also been excavated by peones in the employ of Mr. J. H. Wilson of Guápiles, and by many others, so that at present it is thoroughly despoiled and





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*b*

STONE FIGURES. LAS MERCEDES, COSTA RICA  
*a*—CEMETERY 1 (HEIGHT, 10.5 IN.). *b*—CEMETERY 4 (HEIGHT, 14 IN.)

our utmost exertions served only to locate eight or ten isolated graves, none of which contained objects of much value.

It was on this knoll that the deep graves, possibly those of caciques, were found and from which so many pieces of gold, stone tables, sacrificial slabs, and other fine objects were taken. The pottery that we found differed in no way from that of the shallower graves in the other cemeteries near at hand, even the poorer class of ware being abundant. Alpizar, however, states that in his work in the deep graves he obtained no small amount of the beautiful polychrome ware which seems related to that of the Province of Chiriqui, Panama, and which is abundant in Nicoya. This ware we found to be scarce in the shallow graves. While we unearthed no sacrificial slabs or tablets in the lesser tombs, seats, salvillas, and occasional objects of jade, gold, and copper occurred in them.

Alpizar declares that the sacrificial slabs found by him were laid flat in the southwest or northwest ends of the deep graves, and were accompanied by an idol placed erect near them, pottery of the finest class, and frequently gold objects. These graves were invariably covered with lajas of the largest size. The peones, Juan and José Mora, who obtained a good sacrificial slab for Mr. Wilson, corroborate Alpizar's statement, although they say that it was in a grave not more than six feet deep. The large "Piedra de Sacrificio," generously presented to the Museum by Señor Don Jacinto Xirinach [pl. cxxxix], however, was found by him at Anita Grande, standing upright above the surface. The lower part was firm in the earth, but the upper half was broken off and was recovered by digging at the base of the standing portion.

After much labor in chopping and clearing brush from the knoll, an undisturbed grave was located near the north side of the woods, not many yards from the boulder which bears the carving of a woman. This grave was oriented east and west, and was 6 ft. 4 in. deep by 5 ft. 8 in. broad, by 10 ft. long. It had no lajas, and possessed no features of interest until a point eighteen inches from the bottom was reached. Here we found a layer of gravel six inches thick upon which were portions of two broken tiger mortars. This river gravel must have been carried by the Indians from the nearby Dos Novillos. Alpizar and his men claim such gravel layers are characteristic of the deeper graves.

Beneath the gravel deposit we again encountered the soft, moist, black loam of the grave, and on the cobbled bottom of the tomb, arranged about the stone walls, without order, were thirteen pottery vessels of common type, both whole and broken, a badly fired incense burner that crumbled into moist fragments at a touch, a pottery rattle of the parrot effigy style [pl. cxc, c], and a small circular clay rattle with a handle placed at right angles.

A little to the north another grave was located. This tomb was 4 ft. 8 in. deep, 4 ft. 8 in. broad, and 8 ft. 6 in. long. As usual, it had a cobbled floor and walls, but oddly enough the walls rose only a foot and a half above the floor and did not reach the surface. Its orientation was north and south, and it contained on the east side three pottery vessels and on the west side an incense burner.

Continuing beyond the western wall of this grave, we discovered that the

tomb was double, or at least separated from a second grave by only the low western wall. This grave was only 3 ft. 8 in. deep, 4 ft. 8 in. broad and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ft. long. On the western side was a deposit of a dozen pottery vessels, mostly broken, in the center of which was a large and well-made olla having handles in the form of long-tailed monkeys in bas-relief. A very thin circular ornament of gold, badly decomposed, was found in the mouth of the jar. Opposite this jar, on the eastern side of the grave, was another large olla, crushed to bits by boulders cast upon it. No *lajas* covered these graves.

Eighteen inches west of this grave was a deposit of three vessels which may have indicated another tomb. These were at a depth of 4 ft. 5 in. and all were badly broken. Near them was a disc of what seemed to be iron, badly rusted.

Much clearing and testing failed to locate any other untouched portion near this place. To the south, however, and near the wood path from the Oklahoma tramway, one of our trenches encountered a stone floor, apparently part of one of the several stone roads that seemed to traverse the site. It was at the foot of the raised wall or ceremonial parade, and north of the small mound in the center of which Alpizar found the large stone tapir altar. The road was paved with very large flat river boulders on or near the surface, then, beneath these, ten inches of river gravel. On removing the stones and gravel we found several small deposits of very plain pottery of poor quality, and with them celts and crude mullers. Three of these deposits occurred in an area about fifteen feet long by ten feet broad.

One hundred yards to the south, as soon as the brush was partly cleared off, Grave No. 1 was located by the stones on the surface, which perfectly outlined its shape. This grave was on the north slope of the mound (properly knoll), and was 6 ft. 3 in. long, 2 ft. broad, by 1 ft. 3 in. deep. It lacked *lajas*, but was completely walled in by large oval cobbles about one foot long and eight inches in greatest diameter. It was cobbled over the bottom with long narrow boulders closely laid. Both sides and floor contained small pebbles set between the larger ones to fill the spaces. The grave was oriented southwest by northeast. In the northeast end was a long, squared, narrow stone about two feet long by four and one-half inches thick, which possibly had once stood on end. The grave contained only one pot, with the rim lacking. This vessel was plain and round, with a potsherd over the top as a cover. There were no objects under the floor.

Situated twelve feet from Grave 1 was a large, irregularly circular pile of stones on the surface. Under them was a paved depression, six inches deep, with a cement-like surface, in the south end of which were the fragments of a large tripod pot of beautifully painted cream ware with parrot and dragon heads, exquisitely modeled, balancing each other. Three feet south was broken plain pot and a tiny, perfect, effigy pot in one of the spaces between cobbles.

A peculiar feature of some of the graves opened on this knoll and on a nearby mound, which we did not observe elsewhere, was that the *lajas* were not large enough to completely cross the lesser axis of the grave, but lay in two rows on an inclined plane pointing inward, as though they had once been upheld by a ridge-pole of wood which had rotted and fallen in. In other words, they seemed to have once formed a sort of pent roof over the grave.

The lajas were usually three to three and one-half feet long, three or more inches thick, and very irregular in breadth. They were almost never artificially shaped, though once or twice neatly rounded ones were seen. On other sites, indeed on other parts of the Las Mercedes site, very large lajas, some even six feet long by three or four feet broad, in a few instances sufficient for one alone to cover a grave, were observed. The natives declare that these lajas are of natural formation and must have been transported from a river-bed at least seven miles away.

### MOUND SOUTH OF CEMETERY 3

This is an oval mound of about an acre in extent, with a well-made stone wall on the north and south sides, but not entirely surrounding it [pl. cciv, a]. It was crossed on its east end by a stone road. We worked a week cutting a ten-foot trench from ground level and one foot below, which uncovered various occupied layers, proving it to be a domiciliary mound with only intrusive burials. We cut a line east-west across the top near the center. Several lajas covered stone graves. These had been exploited by Alpizar and only the holes remained.

One grave was found after many tests: it was a large and deep one of the best kind, covered by a dozen immense lajas and walled with great bowlders. At six feet a floor of lajas was found with a three-inch deposit of black muck with yellow streaks of bone-dust. Removing this, the grave went down three feet more, one foot below the walls, which at the bottom were flanked with lajas, the first instance of the kind I have known. At the bottom was found half of a poor pot, and a stone mano. These objects, a piece of a three-legged stone mortar, and nearly half of a stone seat or chair, were all that the grave contained. It was intact, however, and had never been tampered with by other explorers. Dimensions: 8 ft. long, 6 ft. broad, 9 ft. deep.

### CEMETERY NO. 4, LAS MERCEDES

This small cemetery lies about 150 yards southwest of Cemetery No. 1 and is separated from it by the railroad track, the excavation for which destroyed the northern end of the plot. The burial ground occupies part of a little knoll and is less than forty feet square. The knoll had apparently been used for interments for a very long time, the later graves often cutting into and partially destroying the older tombs. So puzzling and irregular was the entire mass that it was impossible to make accurate measurements except in a few instances. The graves were fairly deep, but varied considerably. There was, moreover, no fixed rule of orientation. Throughout the soil of the knoll, in the free dirt and jumbled about with the graves, was an unusual number of fragments of stone idols, mortars, pestles, manos, seats, etc. In some cases enough fragments were recovered to restore some of the objects; in other cases only a few bits were found, widely scattered or in separate graves. In one area, about ten feet square, nearly twenty pieces of jaguar mortars, plates, and statuettes, were found—almost as many as in all of Cemetery No. 2. An exquisite, small female figure, of the type standing with arms akimbo and hands

on abdomen, came from a deep, unmarked grave. Several others, much larger and in varying conditions, were also unearthed.

Few of the graves had lajas. Two were circular, about three feet deep and three in diameter, and laja-covered. In one of these was found a fragment (the trunks) of a statue representing twin figures clasping hands. Beneath one of the bottom stones of a disturbed wall that had once surrounded a grave was found a gold frog. Under a solitary boulder were a gold disc and a jade monkey pendant. Another gold frog, more elaborate and larger than the first, was found in the angle of another subterranean stone wall, which did not seem completed, nor even intended as an enclosure.

An interesting feature was the discovery of several ceremonial deposits of pottery vessels. The smallest of these contained twelve vessels of small size and ordinary types; others consisted of twenty, thirty, and fifty. These vessels had been heaped in piles, and in every case masses of heavy stones had been thrown upon the vessels, breaking all, or nearly all of them. One lot lay under the big cobble wall of a grave; this may have been a deposit put down before the grave was dug. Small pots were found in crevices of grave walls and in other queer hiding places. A small stone platter, supported by three human figures [fig. 209, *b*], was found surmounting a little cairn at a depth of three feet from the surface. Another and much cruder type of stone vessel was found in an ordinary shallow grave associated with pots of clay.

A double idol representing two male figures side by side, clasping right and left hands between and in front of them, was found. Probably this twin idol would have been three feet high, but it lacked the heads, the feet, and the outer arms. It apparently had been thrown carelessly into a beautifully made grave with lajas, in which were four pots, only one whole. The grave, about 3 ft. by 4 ft., and 2½ ft. deep, was irregular, but roughly oval.

Another grave, six feet north of this, three and one-half feet in diameter, and nearly circular, was found. It contained nothing.

These two circular laja-covered graves were near the center of the knoll.

At another spot an idol, about 21 in. high, was found lying on its face, headed east, in the general digging, at a depth of three and one-half feet. This is a standing idol with arms akimbo, hands on breast holding a rope or bandolier that suspended a small head behind the back. A number of other idols, also with arms akimbo, and hands on the abdomen or supporting breasts, were found in fragments.

A stone-walled grave with four separate floors or levels was encountered. This grave was puzzlingly irregular, the two upper layers being headed east and north, the two bottom layers southeast and northwest. The first floor was one foot from the surface and contained a number of pots and the upper part of a well-made red stone idol, lacking the legs. This figure is that of a female with a long braid of hair which it holds in one hand, and also tattooing (?) on the arms [pl. ccv, *b*]. The second floor, two feet from the top, contained pots, including a huge spherical tinaja. This double section was 4 ft. broad, 6 ft. 2 in. long, and 2 ft. deep. The third floor, eighteen inches deeper, contained ordinary pottery; but eighteen inches below this, at the true bottom at a depth of five feet, was the most important layer. Here in the southeast end were

found the legs of the female statue. In the southwest end were two small but exquisitely carved round stone tables, one supported by four human figures, the other by three long-tailed monkeys. The tables were flanked by a deposit of legged pottery platters, all broken by the weight of the earth. In cleaning the grave near the northwest center, a small gold image of an eagle was obtained. These last two sections were 4 ft. 7 in. broad and 5 ft. 7 in. long.

A small grave, twenty feet northwest, was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. long by 2 ft. wide and 3 ft. 10 in. deep. It was walled with large stones covered by very heavy *lajas* and contained two floors made of *lajas*. In all three stories the floors were six feet apart. Pots of inferior quality were found in each story. [Pl. *ccv*, *b*.]

In the general digging a large gold frog was found at a depth of five and one-half feet near a sunken stone wall which seemed purposeless. The frog bore conventional horns, possibly decorations solely. A gold disc of no great size, with two perforations and line-and-dot border, was also unearthed in general digging. A jade dog, or more probably monkey—a rather large amulet perforated for suspension—was found beneath a stone. This, with a small jade bead and a gold frog, makes the third object found under a stone in this spot.

Forty feet west of where digging began, graves ceased, but three beautifully made stone-walled graves, all *laja*-covered, were found in a line fifty feet west of the plot. These, headed east and west, were a fairly accurate six feet apart. All were single-floored; they measured from north and south: 7 ft. by 3 ft. by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft.; 6 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft.; 6 ft. 1 in. by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. by 3 ft. 2 in. All contained pottery, and the center one three celts.

Directly south of Cemetery No. 4 a similar plot was found, with many burials, in the general digging, but none of importance. In general digging also several short pestles, a few flint chips, and the fragments, including one large torso, of several stone statues, were found. The most interesting feature of the site, which was apparently distinct from No. 4, was a series of nearly twenty well-made stone graves, some with *lajas*, some with double floors, all averaging 3 ft. by 3 ft. by 3 ft., all headed east and west in three rows, and with few exceptions entirely empty. The exceptions had broken pots, sometimes with the fragments widely scattered. I believe the graves had been looted in Indian times. Stone statue fragments were found in several. The north end of this plot, which was about the same size as that of No. 4, had been greatly disturbed. We opened fifteen graves, *Salvatierra* possibly ten.

### COSTA RICA FARM SITE

Near the Rio Frio branch of the Guápiles-Siquirres railroad, on Costa Rica Farm, in the dense humid jungle, is a site consisting of two large circular mounds and a great stone-walled enclosure (fig. 289).

The first and larger of the two mounds is half a mile north of the railroad. As stated, it is circular, with a cobblestone retaining wall. It rises from the surrounding level six or eight feet, and on the south a stone-paved graded way slopes to the ground. The top area of the mound covers perhaps a quarter of an acre, and it was no doubt a domiciliary elevation. There were, however, a number of graves well walled and with very massive *lajas* scattered irregularly about its surface. When visited by our party most of these had been excavated

by half a dozen local collectors. Our efforts succeeded in finding a few untouched graves in which we found pottery of poor quality, of the Las Mercedes-Anita Grande type, and a single clay double whistle of a type duplicated at Anita Grande. We could not learn that our predecessors had been more successful.

A few paces southeast is a much smaller mound of the same type, which has a graded way leading west at right angles with the ascent to mound A, and

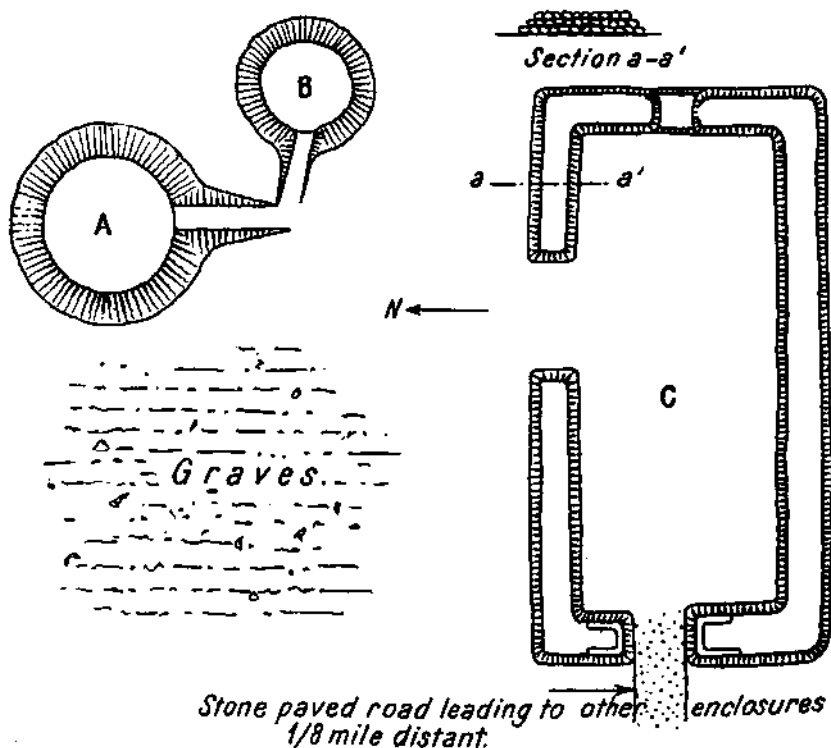


FIG. 289.—Plan of mounds and enclosure, Costa Rica Farm, Costa Rica. (From a sketch map by Alanson Skinner.)

joining it. Here, too, were well-formed, shallow, oval, and rectangular graves with immense *lajas*. These had all been opened by the Quesada family, who found pottery, together with a single standing stone idol of medium size.

A short distance farther south is a rectangular enclosure, oriented east and west, and covering about an acre. This corral is composed of a stone-sided earthen embankment with two openings: one in the center of the north wall, the other in the center of the west end. From the latter a broad, stone-paved roadway leads to several other small enclosures one-eighth of a mile east, in the direction of Anita Grande. Sr. Phillips, who many years ago cleared the forest covering the great enclosure, assures me that he found four large (pos-

sibly life-size) statues or idols of grotesque human form stationed one on each side of each doorway. These were removed for Mr. Minor C. Keith.<sup>1</sup>

The walls of this enclosure are very neatly made of river boulders, each of sufficient size to be a good load for an Indian. They are placed in parallel rows or steps along the side, retreating inward as they rise, so that the earthen top is narrower than the bottom of the wall.

Digging on the wall and cutting cross-sections revealed nothing, and trial pits and trenches within the enclosure showed no trace of habitation or graves. I am inclined to think that this was a ceremonial enclosure, and that possibly the stone wall was surmounted by palisades.

### ANITA GRANDE

This large site lies near the east bank of the Jiménez river, on the United Fruit Company's old banana plantation called "Anita Grande," and about a mile east of the site on Costa Rica Farm, before noted. It has been thoroughly looted by former treasure-seekers, and has yielded much pottery, stone objects, and two gold eagle effigies, the latter being obtained by Mr. Woodsum, assistant manager of the United Fruit Company at Puerto Limón. Señor Don Jacinto Xiranach, of Toro Amarillo and San José, kindly presented the Museum with a beautiful carved sacrificial slab [pl. cxxxix] and two fine stone metates which he obtained here when mandador of Anita Grande Farm. Some work was also done here by Alpizar.

About a quarter of a mile north of the Río Frio branch of the railroad is a mound of good size which was partly cut away on the eastern side by the workers on the banana tramway [fig. 290]. This site has been rather thoroughly excavated, yet we succeeded in locating a number of graves. The mound has a southern extension, which was untouched, and fifty feet west was a small natural knoll containing graves. Graves also were found in abundance on a natural knoll and on the surrounding flat extending from the mound in a westerly direction across the tramway.

All the objects found were similar to those at Las Mercedes and at Costa Rica Farm, but of course many Las Mercedes forms were absent. It is possible that there are still portions of this site that would repay excavation, although it is much smaller in area than Las Mercedes, and has been very roughly handled by treasure-seekers. In this cemetery few unmarked graves were found, and few dissociated deposits of vessels or other objects. However, the proportion of whole vessels to broken ones was unusually large, and the custom of sacrificing pottery does not seem to have prevailed to any such extent as at Las Mercedes, although the stone salvillas were generally broken before placing in the graves, the custom usually being to break them into four pieces and to put one fragment in each corner of the tomb.

*Grave 1.* Mound A was  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep by 6 ft. long by 5 ft. broad. It was oriented east and west and was covered by large lajas. It contained, in the eastern end, a female idol with arms akimbo and hands on the abdomen. This figure was standing upright, facing west. In the western end was a stone fish

<sup>1</sup> These statues are doubtless among those presented by Mr. Keith to the National Museum in Washington.—S. K. L.



effigy. Six pottery vessels were placed in rows of three on the north and south sides of the grave, respectively.

*Grave 2.* Mound A, oriented east and west, was 12 ft. deep by 6 ft. long and 5 ft. broad—more nearly square than usual. This grave had deposits of objects in both the east and west ends, the larger number being in the eastern

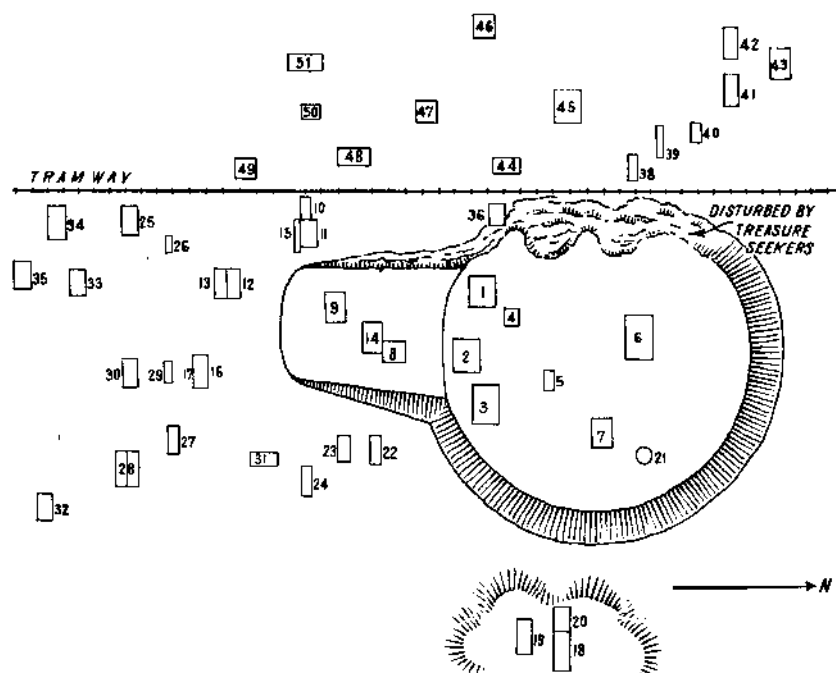


FIG. 290.—Plan of mound and graves excavated by Alanson Skinner, Anita Grande, Costa Rica.

part. In this end were six pottery vessels, while in the west end were two stone celts and a circular piece of pyrites. A finely made stone salvilla was also found, broken in four pieces and a piece placed in each angle of the grave.

*Grave 3.* Mound A, directed east-west, 9 ft. deep by 7 ft. long by 5 ft. broad. In the western end were several whole and broken pottery vessels and a broken stone seat.

*Grave 4.* Mound A: This tomb, which touched Grave 1 on the north side, was 10 ft. deep by 3 ft. 9 in. long by 2 ft. 9 in. broad, and contained in its western end a mass of potsherds. It was oriented east and west. All these graves were covered with lajas.

*Grave 5.* Mound A: This grave was 9 ft. deep, 3 ft. 10 in. long, 2 ft. broad. Probably like several others of small dimensions, it was a child's tomb and was covered with a single laja. In the west end on the cobbled floor were three clay jars.

*Grave 6.* Mound A: This grave was only 3 ft. deep, but was 8 ft. long by 5 ft. broad. In the western end were four pottery vessels. The tomb was laja-covered.

*Grave 7.* Mound A: This grave was 7 ft. 2 in. deep, 5 ft. long, 3 ft. 7 in. broad, and had three floors. The first floor, encountered at a depth of two feet, had three pottery vessels on the cobbled bottom in the west end. The next floor was found at a depth of four feet, and here were three more vessels, also at the west end. At the ultimate bottom, 7 ft. 2 in. down, six vessels were encountered near the western end. This triple grave had probably contained three bodies, as yellowish bone was found in the black earth near each floor. The grave had a laja cover.

*Grave 8.* This tomb, on the southern extension of Mound A, was 8 ft. deep, 4 ft. long, by 4 ft. broad. It had large lajas. In the western end were three jars.

*Grave 9.* This grave was headed north and south, unlike all the preceding. It had lajas over it and contained five vessels arranged around all four sides.

*Grave 10.* This grave, on the flat south of the extension of Mound A, was 2 ft. 8 in. deep, 4 ft. long, 1 ft. 9 in. broad, and had four broken vessels in its western end. Large lajas.

*Grave 11.* Touching No. 10 on the west end, this grave was 5 ft. long, 3 ft. broad, 2 ft. 2 in. deep, and covered with big lajas. In the western end was a pile of ten pottery vessels, mostly of toy size, and a miniature incense burner.

*Grave 12.* Dimensions: 3 ft. 6 in. deep, 5 ft. 6 in. long, 2 ft. 2 in. broad. In the western end, two vessels. Lajas.

*Grave 13.* Adjoining No. 12 and separated from it by the southern wall. This grave had nine vessels arranged around the four walls. Like all others, unless especially mentioned, these graves were radiated east and west.

*Grave 14.* Mound A: Southern extension. 9 ft. deep, 6 ft. long, 3 ft. 5 in. wide. In the western end, five vessels and three celts. No lajas.

*Grave 15.* Adjoining Grave 11, separated from it by a medial wall on the north side; 2 ft. 1 in. deep, 6 ft. long, 1 ft. 4 in. broad, covered with lajas. Two vessels in the western end.

*Grave 16.* A child's tomb or a cist, 2 ft. 6 in. long, 1 ft. broad, 6 in. deep; covered by a single small laja and containing no objects. Its floor, instead of being cobbled, was composed of a laja, found to be one of those covering Grave 17, which Grave 16 was imposed upon at about the center.

*Grave 17.* Directly beneath Grave 16; 2 ft. 7 in. deep, 6 ft. long, 3 ft. wide. It contained several whole and broken vessels in the east and west ends. Unfortunately, these were removed in my absence and their exact number was not noted by the workmen. Lajas.

*Grave 18.* Dimensions: 3 ft. deep, 7 ft. long, 3 ft. broad. This grave contained several vessels and a broken stone salvilla. The fragments of the latter were distributed in the four corners of the grave and flanked by vessels. A piece was missing, showing that it had been broken away from the grave and the pieces afterward placed therein. This grave was interesting because, in-

stead of being built up with cobbles, it was walled by *lajas* set on end. It was also floored and covered with three narrow, flat slabs.

*Grave 19.* Size: 3 ft. deep, 6 ft. 6 in. long, 3 ft. broad; covered with heavy *lajas* and exceptionally well made. No artifacts.

*Grave 20.* The measurements of this grave were: 3 ft. 2 in. deep, 5 ft. long, 3 ft. broad; it was covered with *lajas*. No objects.

*Grave 21.* Mound A: This may not have been a grave at all, but seemed to be a cylindrical hole filled with large river boulders, as though a well or shaft had been filled in. The boulders were flattish and were set on edge. The deposit was 8 ft. deep and 3 ft. in diameter. No relics were found.

*Grave 22.* Dimensions: 3 ft. 5 in. deep, 5 ft. 7 in. long, 2 ft. 2 in. broad. No *lajas*. Contained one vessel in the western end.

*Grave 23.* Directed east and west. Unfortunately this grave was opened during the writer's absence on business at San José, and the usually careful foreman in this case neglected to note the necessary data. *Lajas*.

*Grave 24.* Dimensions: 3 ft. 7 in. deep, 5 ft. long, 2 ft. broad. Covered with *lajas*. Six vessels in the eastern end.

*Grave 25.* Dimensions: 3 ft. deep, 5 ft. long, 2 ft. broad. *Lajas*. Seven vessels in the eastern end.

*Grave 26.* Dimensions: 3 ft. deep, 3 ft. 4 in. long, 1 ft. 9 in. broad. *Lajas*. Six vessels scattered about the floor of the grave.

*Grave 27.* Dimensions: 2 ft. deep, 5 ft. 5 in. long, 2 ft. broad. Ten jars in the eastern end. *Lajas*.

*Grave 28.* A and B: A double grave separated by a dividing wall which formed the south side of A and the north side of B. Both were *laja*-covered. A contained four vessels in the eastern end and B two vessels in the same quarter.

*Grave 29.* Dimensions: 3 ft. 6 in. deep, 4 ft. long, 2 ft. broad. No *lajas*. In the western end were five pottery vessels, including one exceptionally fine human effigy jar.

*Grave 30.* This grave was 3 ft. 7 in. deep, 5 ft. long, and 3 ft. broad. No *lajas*. Six vessels in the west end.

*Grave 31.* Measuring 3 ft. 9 in. deep, 5 ft. long, and 2 ft. 6 in. broad. This grave was oriented north and south. No *lajas* present. Six pots and a celt in the south end.

*Grave 32.* Dimensions: 3 ft. 2 in. deep, 5 ft. 1 in. long, 3 ft. broad. No *lajas*. Six pots in the western end.

*Grave 33.* This grave was 3 ft. 1 in. deep, 5 ft. 2½ in. long, 3 ft. 6 in. broad. No *lajas*. Six vessels in the western end.

*Grave 34.* 3 ft. deep, 6 ft. long, 3 ft. 4 in. broad, with *lajas*. Six pottery vessels in the western end.

*Grave 35.* 2 ft. 10 in. deep, 5 ft. 2¼ in. long, 3 ft. 6 in. broad. *Lajas*. Seven vessels in the western end.

*Grave 36.* In the side of Mound A. This grave extended north-south and

contained eight pottery vessels, all around the sides. Depth, 3 ft.; length, 4 ft.; breadth, 3 ft. No lajas.

*Grave 37.* This grave also was oriented north and south. It was 2 ft. 6 in. deep, 7 ft. 2 in. long, 3 ft. broad. Lajas. No objects.

*Grave 38.* Depth, 3 ft.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in.; length, 5 ft.; breadth, 1 ft. 11 in. No lajas. Three vessels in the western end.

*Grave 39.* 3 ft. 6 in. deep, 6 ft. long, 1 ft. broad. Lajas. Five vessels in the western end.

*Grave 40.* Dimensions: 4 ft. long, 2 ft. 1 in. broad, 2 ft. 10 in. deep. No lajas. Six vessels in the western end.

*Grave 41.* 6 ft. long, 2 ft. 11 in. broad, 3 ft. 2 in. deep. Lajas. Seven vessels in the western end.

*Grave 42.* 2 ft.  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep, 6 ft.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, 2 ft. 10 in. broad. No lajas. Four vessels and a squatting stone idol of the "smoking" variety in the eastern end.

*Grave 43.* 5 ft. 6 in. long, 4 ft. broad, 4 ft.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep. No lajas. Six vessels in the western end.

*Grave 44.* 5 ft.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, 3 ft. broad, 2 ft. 11 in. deep. Extending north and south, it was covered with lajas and contained eleven vessels ranged around the sides of the grave.

*Grave 45.* Extending east-west, 6 ft. long, 5 ft. broad, 4 ft. 4 in. deep. No lajas. Contained four pottery vessels and two fine stone stools: one stool and two vessels in each end—a stool in the middle flanked on each side by a vessel.

*Grave 46.* Irregular and without stones. Contained nine pottery vessels.

*Grave 47.* Irregular in shape and without stones. About 4 ft. 6 in. deep and detected only by the softness of the soil. An incense burner, an unfired clay jar, and five ordinary pottery vessels were present. This grave differed from other unmarked graves only in depth.

*Grave 48.* 6 ft. 2 in. long, 3 ft. 4 in. broad, 1 ft. 6 in. deep. Lajas. Eight vessels in the western end.

*Grave 49.* 4 ft. long, 4 ft. 1 in. broad, 3 ft. deep. Three pots in the western end. Lajas.

*Grave 50.* 4 ft.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, 2 ft. 9 in. broad, 2 ft. 7 in. deep. Lajas. One vessel in the western end.

*Grave 51.* 6 ft. 5 in. long, 3 ft. 6 in. broad, 2 ft.  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. deep. Lajas. Six vessels in the western end.