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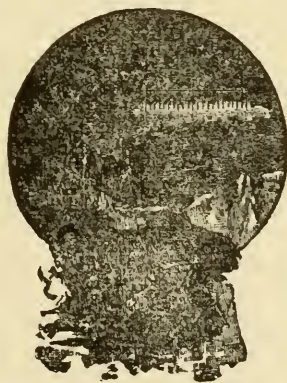
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Volume 4

THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN TRIBES

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## THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN TRIBES: AN INTRODUCTION

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By JULIAN H. STEWARD

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The tribes described in the present volume are on the whole perhaps the least known ethnographically of any in the areas covered by the Handbook. Whether insular or on the mainland, they were readily accessible from the coast and were quickly overrun by the Spanish conquerors. The great majority of them have long been extinct culturally if not racially. Practically all that survive today were dislocated from their aboriginal habitats to new and often drastically different regions, and for 400 years they have been subject to influence not only from the Spaniards but from the descendants of Negro slaves who penetrated most of the Caribbean islands and coast.

In the Colombian Highland and North Coast Lowland the tribes have entirely vanished as cultural entities, and the only peoples now classed as Indians are a few refugee groups in the low rain forests of the Atrato River and the Pacific coast regions, the much acculturated, cattle-raising *Goajiro* on the Goajira Peninsula, some scattered primitive groups in the llanos and jungle on the western tributaries of the upper Orinoco River in eastern Colombia, and various culturally modified tribes around Lake Maracaibo. In Venezuela the descendants of the aborigines north of the Orinoco River are much mixed racially and have lost most of their native culture, the main exception being a considerable number of *Warrau* in the swamps of the Orinoco Delta. The Antillean tribes may be said to be extinct. In Central America the principal surviving Indians are the *Cuna* of Panamá, a few remnant groups in Costa Rica, the *Mosquito* and their neighbors of the lowlands of eastern Nicaragua, and strongly Hispanicized Indians of Honduras, especially the *Lenca*.

The chroniclers of the Conquest left relatively few and very fragmentary accounts of these tribes, though it is probable that more systematic utilization of their writings, both published and archival, will supply fuller pictures of aboriginal ethnology. Few of the surviving tribes have been visited by ethnologists. Professional studies have been made, though not all of them have been published, only of the *Lenca*, *Guaymí*, *Cuna*, *Chocó*, *Cayapa*, *Cágaba*, *Ica*, *Goajiro*, *Macoa* (*Chaké* or "*Motilonés*"), *Yaruro*, and *Warrau*.

The Circum-Caribbean area has many archeological remains including mounds, burials, stone sculpture, ceramics, metallurgy, and other evidences of a rich culture. South of the *Maya* frontier in Honduras, however, these have received little more than superficial surveys. Coclé in Panamá and Tairona and San Agustín in Colombia (the last two described in vol. 2 of the Handbook) are exceptions. Only the Antilles have been worked with any thoroughness. Elsewhere the remains have not been dated sequentially in relationship to one another, and few have been identified with tribes occupying the regions at the Conquest. These materials, therefore, must be used with great caution in rounding out the ethnographic picture, for many of them may have great antiquity.

A comparison of data from the modern tribes with those from the earlier chroniclers and from archeology shows that all but the very backward and isolated tribes have suffered drastic changes. Gone are the intensive horticulture, the dense population, the large villages, the class-structured society, the mounds, temples, idols, and priests, the warfare, cannibalism and human trophies, the elaborate death rites, and even the technological and esthetic refinements evidenced in the early metallurgy, weaving, ceramics, and stone sculpture. The modern tribes who retain a predominantly aboriginal culture have come to resemble the Tropical Forest tribes (Handbook, vol. 3) rather than their own ancestors. They carry on small-scale slash-and-burn farming, and many of them now hunt and fish more than they till the soil. They live in small villages, weave simple cloth, and make only plain pots. Their society is unstratified, their religious cults are scarcely remembered, and the principal survival of former days is the shaman.

## THE BASIC CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN CULTURE<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

The tribes carried on intensive farming, which outranked hunting, gathering, and fishing in its productiveness and which supported a dense population and large villages. The typical community was a large, compact, planned village of several hundred to several thousand persons. It consisted of pole-and-thatch houses arranged in streets and around plazas, and it was surrounded by a palisade. In the village were temples, special residences for chiefs, and storehouses.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Paul Kirchhoff, who has been engaged in a thorough study of early accounts of the tribes around the Caribbean Sea, called attention to the fact that at the time of the Conquest there was great similarity between most of the tribes, attesting close historical connection. Unfortunately, his study could not be completed in time to utilize the results in the Handbook, but it is hoped that he may soon publish his detailed comparative survey of these peoples. The present summary is essentially a synthesis of the data in this volume and in the second volume of the Handbook, and it should be considered in connection with the comparable summary of the cultures of the Tropical Forest tribes given in volume 3 of the Handbook.

Society was characteristically stratified into three or four classes. The village chief stood at the social pinnacle, and in some areas he ruled over federations of villages or tribes. Characteristically, he lived in a large house, received tribute, had many wives and retainers (in Colombia he married his full sister, as among the *Inca*), wore special insignia and ornaments, was carried by his subjects in a litter, and at death his body was either mummified or desiccated and placed in a special house or temple, or it was buried, accompanied by wives and servants who were stupefied and interred alive (fig. 27), and often the chief's image was placed on the grave. There was rarely an organized priesthood, for in most of these tribes the shaman, and in some the chief, functioned as intermediary between the people and their gods. Similarly, the noble class tended to merge with that of the chiefs, except where extreme stratification occurred.

The basic social arrangement would have been one of chiefs and common people except for extreme development of warfare, which served the social hierarchy in several ways. Captive men were usually put to death for cannibalistic feasts and for human trophies, both of which enhanced their captor's prestige. Women were usually annexed to their captor's household, either as wives or servants, and their number was a measure of their master's social standing. Wealth was a major factor in the status of chiefs and nobles, and it was produced by these large households, together with some tribute from commoners and even from other tribes. It would seem, however, that male captives were seldom kept as permanent slaves except among the Antillean *Arawak*. Their ultimate fate and even that of the children they might breed in their captor's tribe was to be killed and eaten or sacrificed. Human sacrifice, therefore, made warfare also an important adjunct to religion in the Central American and Colombian tribes.

Social status was thus not entirely hereditary but depended partly upon individual achievement in warfare. Some Central American chiefs were elected. In many tribes shamans had great power. So far as status was hereditary in Colombia and Central America, titles and property tended to pass in the matrilineal line, from a man to his nephew, and in some cases matrilineal clans were interwoven with social classes. Sexual inversion of men, probably connected with shortage of women caused by polygyny, was common.

Religion centered around the temple cult. The temple was a special structure (it is uncertain how frequently it was set on a mound), which sheltered idols (pl. 89, *k*) to which offerings were made. Instead of a special organized priesthood, which was more common in Central America and may have come from the Meso-American tribes, the shaman seems usually to have been mediator with the deities; particularly he served as oracle and made sacrifices. In the Antilles, however, the *Arawakan* chief performed this function. The gods which were supplicated by the

Circum-Caribbean peoples are not clearly described, but those mentioned in myths and occasionally in ritual are usually celestial, the sun and moon being especially prominent and the stars frequently named. There is occasional evidence of a jaguar cult both in religious practices and in art motifs.

Considerable preoccupation with the dead is manifest in burial practices, and ancestors or ghosts are commonly named among supernatural spirits involved in religious beliefs. Urn burial (pl. 1, *bottom*) is Circum-Caribbean, and burial mounds occur everywhere but in the Antilles. Where archeological sequences are known these two methods seem to belong to fairly recent periods. Virtually all tribes disposed of a deceased chief with considerable ceremony, either desiccating the body (Antillean *Arawak*, where he became a god and temple idol; also, the Cauca-Atrato region of Colombia and Darién and Coclé in Panamá) or embalming it. When the chief was buried some of his retainers and wives were stupefied and interred with him, a practice found in all three areas.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

Several facts indicate the importance of farming among these tribes as compared with that of the Tropical Forest. Fields seem to have been much larger and more permanent, resembling plantations rather than the frequently shifting, slash-and-burn plots. Hunting and fishing were secondary, and, although the cultures rim the Caribbean Sea, few settlements were actually on the coast; by contrast, the Tropical Forest villages were characteristically riparian and coastal. Circum-Caribbean men seem to have devoted proportionately much more effort to farming than to hunting and fishing, and in many tribes they performed tasks of cultivation that elsewhere fall to women. By inference, the much larger and more permanent Circum-Caribbean villages must have required a more assured food supply.

Domesticated plants varied somewhat, and the greatest number of species was found in northern Colombia, where, in addition to maize, sweet manioc or yuca, beans, sweetpotatoes, and peppers, which were the usual staples, the tribes grew many fruits and cacao. Bitter manioc had a very limited distribution, its spread in this area evidently having been post-Colombian.

Hunting and fishing were practiced, and fish nets, fishhooks, fish drugs, harpoons (pl. 56, *right*), spears, stone axes, and bows and arrows (unfeathered among several tribes) were general in the area. As in parts of the Amazon Basin, the bow and arrow had evidently spread at the expense of the spear and spear thrower; these weapons have a strong negative correlation. Arrow poison was Circum-Caribbean with a few gaps, and the poison was generally of animal-derived, putrified ingredients in contrast to the vegetable poisons used elsewhere in South America.

The more important technological traits were: loom-weaving (pl. 40) of domesticated cotton, but ornamentation of cloth often by painting rather than by woven-in patterns; twilled and woven basketry (pl. 54, *e*, *f*); developed ceramics, especially with plastic, applied, and incised decoration, and in zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and tripod forms; dug-out canoes and water travel (most developed on the South American, Panamanian, and Antillean coasts; somewhat less so in the Sub-Andean areas and the remainder of Central America, where overland travel by roads was more characteristic); and stone axes, slings, and the weapons mentioned above. Metallurgy was best developed in Colombia and Panamá (pl. 20; figs. 37-40), where gold and copper were smelted and alloyed, but gold was probably worked in a few other parts of Central America, and in the Antilles gold was taken from placer mines. Gold objects, however, reached all tribes by trade.

Some technologies which characterize the Marginal tribes in various parts of South America survive with a restricted distribution among Circum-Caribbean tribes. The use of wild basts and a netting technique for making hammocks and carrying-bags is found among the *Lenca* and *Talamanca*, in northern Venezuela, in the region west of Lake Maracaibo, and probably among the Antillean *Arawak*. Coiled basketry is reported nowhere except among the *Chocó* (fig. 63). Bark cloth (pl. 53, *d*, *e*) extends from the western Amazon through the *Toro* and *Chanco* of the Cauca River and the tribes of the North Colombian Lowland to the *Talamanca* Division and Caribbean Lowland tribes in Central America, and stone bark-beaters are found archeologically (pl. 14, *d*, *e*) somewhat beyond this distribution in Nicaragua and northeastern Honduras, but they are comparatively late in the *Maya* sequence. There was also extensive use of decorated calabash containers (pl. 54, *c*), a Tropical Forest trait which tends to have a somewhat negative correlation with elaborated ceramics.

Garments were made of woven cotton, the most common being the woman's apron and the man's breechclout, but various mantles or cloaks were also worn. The skull was artificially deformed, usually frontally or fronto-occipitally, and the nose and ears, but not the lips, were pierced for ornaments. Ornaments were made of gold, even where gold was not worked, and of stone (precious and semiprecious stones in Central America), shell, and other materials.

In food preparation, the most common utensils used were stone metates, mortars, pottery jars and griddles, and babracots.

Among items of household furniture, carved wooden and stone stools (pls. 26, 49, *a*, *b*; 88, *l*; figs. 43, 44) were characteristic, the latter taking elaborate animal forms in the archeological sites of coastal Ecuador and Central America. The platform bed occurred throughout the area, but,

as in the Montaña east of the Andes, it seemingly was being replaced by the hammock in lowland areas; in most tribes both were found.

Among esthetic and recreational elements were chicha and chicha troughs (pl. 62), tobacco, coca, some form of game with a rubber ball which was probably played on special courts, hollow-log drums, skin drums (pl. 54, *a*), rattles, shell trumpets, panpipes, and flutes (pl. 68, *top, left*).

#### ORIGINS OF THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN CULTURE

To understand the origins of the Circum-Caribbean culture it is necessary first to classify its general structure and content with reference to other South American cultures. Considered in general terms, South American cultures may be classed roughly in four types: (1) the hunting and gathering, or Marginal; (2) the Tropical Forest; (3) the Circum-Caribbean and Sub-Andean; and (4) the Andean.

The Marginal tribes had a sociopolitical structure, which lacked classes and was based essentially on kinship ties, and a material culture, which lacked certain key technologies found among the other three groups. They carried on no farming and, if ceramics, basketry, and weaving were present, their pots were crude, their baskets twined or coiled, and their fabrics twined or netted. The other three groups had farming, ceramics, twilled basketry, and loom weaving, and they differed from one another in the variety and esthetic patterning of their products rather than in the essential processes.

In addition, the Circum-Caribbean and Andean peoples resembled each other and differed from those of the Tropical Forest in their sociopolitical and religious patterns. Highly productive farming in the Andes and around the Caribbean Sea made possible a dense population and large villages which formed the basis of a class-structured society with chiefs, nobles, commoners, and slaves. In parts of Guiana and among the coastal and river *Tupí*, where resources of the sea and rivers supplemented farming, and in certain tribes of the Mojos-Chiquitos area of eastern Bolivia, a tendency to a similar class-structured society is evident. Characteristically, however, the Tropical Forest peoples, like the Marginal tribes, had small villages and an unstratified society, each community consisting of an extended lineage or being organized on other kinship lines. The Andean and Circum-Caribbean tribes also had a developed temple-priest-idol cult, whereas Tropical Forest religion, more like that of the Marginal peoples, centered around shamanistic practices, with only a few group ceremonies conducted by the shaman.

The Circum-Caribbean tribes differed from the civilized peoples of the Andes and México in the elaboration of the basic sociopolitical and religious patterns. Among the latter, social classes were more complicated, more fixed by heredity, and more strongly endogamous. In the Circum-

Caribbean area status was somewhat mobile and, though hereditary rank was not absent, status often could be attained through warfare. The civilized peoples had achieved political states, with rulers of dominions and even empires, and their warfare was directed toward conquest and tribute. The Circum-Caribbean tribes had only incipient states, and warfare furthered personal ambition rather than political ends. Its purpose was cannibalism, display of human trophies, capture of female slaves, and, in some cases, taking of sacrificial victims. In religion, México and the Andes had succeeded in separating shamanism from temple worship, and they had a special class of priests dedicated to community worship in temples. The Circum-Caribbean peoples also had temples, but their shamans performed not only as priests but also as medicine men.

In their material arts the civilized peoples of México and Perú excelled mainly in the elaboration of the processes which they shared with the Circum-Caribbean tribes. The greater variety of crops and better methods of cultivation made their farming more productive. Their pottery was better made and esthetically far superior, especially in painted decoration; their weaving involved many special techniques; and their handling of stones, whether in construction or in sculpture, outranked that of the Circum-Caribbean peoples. The Andes also had metallurgy, which became part of the Circum-Caribbean culture, and domesticated animals, which did not. The Circum-Caribbean cultures are distinguished from the civilized peoples not only by their lack of the latter's elaborations but also by their possession of certain material items probably derived from the Tropical Forest.

Other embellishments that distinguish the civilized peoples from those of the Circum-Caribbean are certain intellectual accomplishments, such as quipus and scales in Perú and writing and astronomy in México. Some Andean elaborations reached all the Circum-Caribbean peoples, and others reached those of Colombia and Venezuela, who are called sub-Andean to distinguish them from the peoples of Central America and the Antilles. Certain Mexican elaborations similarly reached Central America.

The classification of South American cultures into four general types has developmental implications. Hypotheses concerning the origin and spread of the traits and complexes, however, must take into account the ecological adaptations of human societies through exploitative techniques to a variety of natural environments.

That the Andean and Mexican civilizations differ from the Circum-Caribbean culture more in elaboration than in essential form or content means that they grew out of something generally similar to it and that each acquired its own emphasis. It must be postulated, therefore, that a Formative Period culture once extended from México to the Andes, and perhaps farther. This culture appears to have been an essentially High-



land one, though in certain localities it probably incorporated elements, particularly material ones, that were more especially adapted to the tropical rain forests.

To judge from the Circum-Caribbean culture, the Formative Period culture had the following general characteristics: There were fairly large and permanent communities that rested upon adequate subsistence, principally farming. Society was characteristically class-structured, and there may have been incipient states, though the Circum-Caribbean level of organization would suggest that warfare was directed more toward trophy taking (mainly head and bone trophies) and cannibalism, both being means of gaining social prestige, than toward conquest and tribute, features that go with a class system that is fixed by heredity. That chieftainship was well developed is implied in the complex early burial types found archeologically in many regions; elaborate burial for the chief is a feature of the Circum-Caribbean culture. In religion there was a temple-priest complex, but the shaman probably performed the priestly functions. The gods may have been represented by idols. A very wide inter-American distribution suggests that the principal deities were celestial ones, that place and animal spirits were important, that human sacrifice may have been practiced, and that offertories and shrines were used.

A fairly adequate subsistence based particularly on maize farming in the Formative Period is implied not only by the known antiquity and wide distribution of maize but by the evident size and stability of many early archeological sites. Agriculture was becoming man's task, and hunting and fishing were diminishing in relative importance. The latter, however, were practiced locally, and, to judge by their wide distribution in the hemisphere, devices available for hunting included traps, nets, snares, deadfalls, pitfalls, spears, and spear throwers, and for fishing included drugs, hooks, and nets. Hunting and fishing, however, affected the general patterning of these cultures only insofar as local abundance of certain species augmented or took the place of farming as the basis for a dense population and stable communities.

There is archeological evidence that construction of mounds, elaborate graves, and possibly of temples and roads were carried on in the Formative Period. Such features in turn presuppose fairly organized, stable populations.

Inter-American distributions, both archeological and ethnological, show that the essential technologies of the Formative Period included ceramics, especially with plastic and incised treatment, loom weaving, domesticated cotton, netting, stone metates, stone grinding and polishing, and coiled basketry.

On the basis also of archeological and ethnological distributions other material items available to the Formative Period culture, though not necessarily part of it in all localities, were: breechclouts, aprons or wrap-

around skirts, cloaks and mantles, sandals, ear and nose ornaments, necklaces, head deformation, body paint, tattoo, featherwork, mirrors, stone axes, wooden and stone-head clubs, panpipes, single-head skin drums, flutes, and rattles.

As the New World civilizations developed from the Formative Period culture, each acquired specialized features and styles; México became readily distinguishable from the Andes, and subareas of each became distinguishable from one another. It is at present difficult to ascertain to what extent localities differed in the occurrence of the essential Formative Period features and in the stylistic handling of them. Archeology has so emphasized style as a criterion of prehistoric cultural differences that localities may well appear much more unlike than they really were.

The Circum-Caribbean culture corresponds to the postulated Formative Period culture in the presence of the essential ecological adaptations, the socioreligious patterns, and the technologies and traits of material culture. It also has special traits and specialized handling of traits that are peculiar to the Mexican and Andean civilizations. In addition, it has several material items that are more particularly associated with a tropical rain forest environment. The following chart shows the interareal linkage of Circum-Caribbean traits with México, the Andes, and the Tropical Forest; also, differences.

LINKAGES OF ELEMENTS IN THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN AREA<sup>1</sup>

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Andean</i>	<i>South American Tropical Forest</i>	<i>Mexican</i>
Subsistence	Tropical fruits (plus maize, potatoes, quinoa, etc.)	Manioc Coca* Domesticated duck Meat smoked on the babracot	Domesticated turkey
Houses and furniture	Platform bed Stone stool	Pole - and - thatch construction Pile house Communal house Palisaded village Hammock Wooden stool	Wooden stool
Clothing and ornaments		Penis cover Labrets†	Leather sandal*
Technologies	Metallurgy	Bark cloth* Decorated calabashes	Bark cloth*
Weapons	Sling Mace-head club*	Vegetable arrow poison† Pellet gun or blowgun	Animal arrow poison* Sling
Social traits	Chief's litter†	Captives for cannibalism	Ritual cannibalism

<sup>1</sup> Elements marked with an asterisk are limited to South and Central America; those marked with a dagger to South America and the Antilles. (See also Kidder II, 1940; Nordenskiöld, 1930; Kroeber, 1939; Lothrop, 1940.)

LINKAGES OF ELEMENTS IN THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN AREA<sup>1</sup>—Continued

<i>Culture</i>	<i>Andean</i>	<i>South American Tropical Forest</i>	<i>Mexican</i>
Religious traits	Idols Stone-cist grave* Deep-shaft grave* Mummification or desiccation of body Burial of retain- ers with chief	Mound burial*	Idols Stone-cist grave  Ritual incense* Flayed-skin deities
Warfare	Flayed-skin trophies	Human sacrifice for cannibalism*	Flayed-skin trophies
Esthetic and rec- reational traits	Alter-ego mono- lith* Chontales mono- lith* Jaguar stool Manabí-type stone slab* Pottery ocarina*	Ball game with court Coca Chicha Wooden chicha trough Hollow-log drum	Ball game with court Chicha (pulque)  Hollow-log drum

<sup>1</sup> Elements marked with an asterisk are limited to South and Central America; those marked with a dagger to South America and the Antilles. (See also Kidder II, 1940; Nordenskiöld, 1930; Kroeber, 1939; Lothrop, 1940.)

This list shows that the preponderant linkage of Central America is with South America and inferentially that at least after the Formative Period the cultural flow in Central America was predominantly from south to north. The occurrence of *Chibchan* languages through Panamá and Costa Rica north to the *Ulua-Sumo-Mosquito* group seems clear evidence of tribal migrations from South America, and the failure of a number of Central and South American ethnographic traits, such as coca, manioc, palisaded villages, hammocks, bark cloth, blowguns, developed metallurgy, mummification, burial of a chief with his retainers, and many art styles, to extend to or at least to take hold in México points to the origin of the particular elaborations of the Central American-Circum-Caribbean culture in South America. Some of the Central American-Andean elements, however, such as alter-ego statues, Manabí-type carved stone slabs, deep-shaft graves, and others seem to have considerable antiquity in Ecuador (Handbook, vol. 2, p. 781), suggesting that the flow has been from south to north since the Formative Period traits began to assume specialized regional characteristics.

Méxican influence in Central America is not wanting, but most of it seems to have come fairly recently with the migrations of the *Nahuatlán* tribes from México, and its elements, such as tongue piercing, jade working, an organized priesthood, steam bath, ritual incense, Chacmool statues, Nicoya Polychrome pottery, and the game of voladores, have a limited distribution in Central America and did not reach South America.

The many traits assumed to have come from the Tropical Forest involve perishable materials, and, though some of them might have been preserved in sites on the arid coast of Perú, archeology elsewhere can throw no light on their antiquity or origin. It is likely that those that require forest materials, are adapted to a hot climate, and have an ethnographic distribution predominantly in the rain forest areas came from such regions. For some items, however, such an origin must be accepted with caution. The blowgun, for example, now has a Tropical Forest distribution, but it also has been found archeologically in the Early Periods of Perú.

The general inference of these considerations is that the Circum-Caribbean developed out of an early culture with characteristics that are thought of as Andean. Its class-structured society may represent a response to intensive farming and a fairly dense population coupled with pressures of warfare rather than a specific complex derived from some single center of origin. Many of its special elaborations, however, both in element content and in stylistic handling, are derived from the Andean and Méxican civilizations, especially the former. It even appears that its specific resemblances to the Andes may have been greater at some early prehistoric period than at the Conquest. Meanwhile, its distribution in tropical and semitropical regions made it receptive to many material items which the Tropical Forest added at some undatable period.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN CULTURE

The Circum-Caribbean culture is found in areas that are largely highland but that have neither the great altitude nor the continuous mountain masses of the Andes or the Plateau of México. To a great extent, the environment is tropical or subtropical.

The portions of Colombia where the Andean Cordillera breaks down into a series of smaller mountain blocks with comparatively low valleys between them are more or less coincidental with the distribution of Sub-Andean cultures. The tribes of the Southern Colombian Highland (Handbook, vol. 2, p. 911) really belong to this class. To the north of them tribes of the upper Cauca River were essentially Sub-Andean, though lacking a few characteristic features. The peoples of the Cordillera Central between the Cauca and Magdalena Rivers and of the Cordillera Occidental west of the Cauca also belong in this group. Farther west, the *Chocó* of the Pacific Coast lowlands are definitely Tropical Forest in culture. The North Colombia lowlands on the Atlantic coast are Sub-Andean, and a very similar culture continues through Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras to the *Maya* frontier in northwestern Honduras. The greater part of Central America is mountainous, but there are no great continuous mountain masses. It is possible that some less-developed peoples had survived in certain parts of Central America, for example, the *Sumo*, *Jicaque*, and *Paya* of the East Coast Lowlands

of Nicaragua, but the Conquest Period culture is not sufficiently well known to clarify this point.

Where the Cordillera Oriental branches off from the Cordillera Central in southern Colombia, the Sub-Andean culture continues north through the *Pijao* and *Panche* to the *Chibcha* (*Muisca*), whose culture is Andean primarily in having achieved political states (Handbook, vol. 2, p. 887), and its distribution continues to the north of the *Chibcha* toward Lake Maracaibo. Approaching Venezuela the mountain chain forks again southwest of Lake Maracaibo, and, as Kirchhoff points out in "The Northeastern Extension of Andean Culture" (this volume, p. 349), one branch runs west of Lake Maracaibo to the Sierra de Perijá and onward toward the Sierra de Santa Marta, and the other runs northeast skirting Lake Maracaibo on its southeast side and becoming the Cordillera de los Andes in Venezuela. The tribes of the Cordillera Oriental north of the *Muisca* (*Chibcha*) are little known except for a few data on the *Lache*, who adjoined the *Muisca* on the north, and on the *Chitarera*, somewhat farther north. These peoples were definitely Sub-Andean or Circum-Caribbean in their general culture elements and patterns. East of the Andes, the *Betoi*, *Achagua*, and other tribes of eastern Colombia are Tropical Forest.

The group of tribes extending northward to the Sierra de Santa Marta and the Goajira Peninsula, west of Maracaibo, seem to have lacked most of the essential features and should probably be considered Tropical Forest peoples. The *Timotean* peoples of the Venezuela Andes, however, were definitely Sub-Andean, and, despite breaks in its continuity, marked even by hunting and gathering tribes of northern Venezuela, the Circum-Caribbean culture is somewhat resumed among the *Carib* tribes who were spread along the north coast of Venezuela to the Delta of the Orinoco. A break is again encountered in the Lesser Antilles, which had been invaded by the *Carib*, probably in the last century before the Conquest, but the Circum-Caribbean culture is found again among the *Arawak* of the Greater Antilles, and it extended as far as Cuba and Haiti, where the primitive hunting and gathering *Ciboney* still survived.

A general hypothesis is offered to explain this distribution. In the first place, it is probable that the fundamentals of this culture were spread from a single source. The occurrence of such specific items as gold-embellished litters among the Antillean *Arawak* as well as in the Andes and of definitely Colombian art motifs in Central America cannot be explained by independent invention. They imply intertribal contact so strong that it must have facilitated the diffusion of many other traits. At the same time, the social and political patterns required a basis of intensive farming that supported large permanent villages. If diffusion of the Circum-Caribbean culture from a single source is postulated, therefore, it must have involved the essential technologies and subsistence as well as the sociopolitical and religious features.

Theories of the origins of American civilizations have always tended to push the ultimate origin to the area that is least known scientifically. The basis of Mexican culture was sought first in México and then in the Andes, and when developmental stages were not found in Perú, ultimate origins were again pushed to the least-known areas, the jungles east of the Andes. That many individual Highland traits were ultimately derived from the jungle is quite probable. That the essential sociopolitical patterns and esthetic elaborations of the basic technologies came from an area that still can support only slash-and-burn farming and small communities organized on a simple kinship or unstratified basis is highly improbable.

The alternative hypothesis is that the patterns characteristic of the Circum-Caribbean cultures were Highland-derived and that at one time they formed a substratum which extended from the Andes to the Mexican Highlands. This substratum probably included the elements listed for the Formative Period culture. Out of it grew the Mexican culture, which emphasized the temple cult and war achievements, and the Peruvian civilization, which elaborated sociopolitical structure and material arts. A corollary hypothesis is that at a fairly early period, perhaps when the culture was less environmentally specialized than later or when it had greater vigor and adaptability, it thrust widely into regions where it later ceased to exist sometime before the Conquest. It failed particularly in savanna and tropical rain forest areas. This hypothesis not only helps explain such breaks in the distribution of high cultures as that between the Central Andes and the *Chibcha* of Colombia or that between South America and México, but it accounts for gaps in the occurrence of the Circum-Caribbean culture, such as those west of Lake Maracaibo, in northern Venezuela, and between the north coast of Venezuela and the Antillean *Arawak*, and it also explains certain archeological remains. In the llanos of eastern subtropical Bolivia are mounds and causeways that antedate the historic people. In the same area the social classes and the temple-priest complex found among the Mojos-Chiquitos tribes and even as far east as the *Xaray* on the upper Paraguay River (Handbook, vol. 3) may represent survivals of an early Sub-Andean complex. Stirling (personal communication) reports large mounds on the lower Marañón River of eastern Perú where only primitive tribes were found in the historic period. In Colombia, east of the Cordillera Oriental, are ancient stone structures, and great causeways are found in the llanos of eastern Colombia nearly to the Orinoco River. Ethnologically, the occurrence of mummification among the *Piaroa*, east of the upper Orinoco, and idols among the *Sáliva* suggests earlier Highland influence. Stone-faced terraces and stairways of large monolithic stones in the Sierra de Santa Marta, neither built by the historic *Cáqaba*, are evidence of a thrust northward, west of Lake Maracaibo. If the stone structures of the *Tai-*

*rona* area along the coast north of the Sierra de Santa Marta can be attributed to the *Tairona* themselves, they may represent a local survival in strength of the earlier culture. In the southern Colombia Highlands, the elaborate stone sculpture and architecture of San Agustín is apparently fairly old, and surpasses anything attributable to the peoples found at the Conquest. The general style and the alter-ego motif of this sculpture is found widely on stone statues in Central America north to Nicaragua.

These threads of evidence are at present very tenuous and await archeological verification in the rain-forest areas. It is purely speculative to maintain that all these thrusts were contemporary. On the other hand, there would seem to be some causal connection between the thrusts of a Highland culture into the lowlands or forests at many different places and their consistent failure. If cultures of an Andean or Sub-Andean type were carried by actual movements of peoples into sparsely populated lowlands or tropical forests, they would at first find little opposition. The culture, however, seems to depend upon dense populations clustered in large stable villages. This is difficult to maintain in tropical rain forests, where slash-and-burn farming is carried on, and it is perhaps significant that the *Maya*, who were unique in maintaining a high civilization outside a Highland area, had settlements dispersed around religious centers. As the lowland became more densely settled owing to better farming, intensified warfare would not only be a factor requiring more highly nucleated settlements but it would add to the precariousness of their tenure.

Present data, therefore, could be interpreted to mean that the Circum-Caribbean culture originated from an early Sub-Andean stratum that may have been carried in part by migrations of peoples into thinly populated areas. Population pressure and the necessity of adapting to non-Highland environments eliminated some of the more typical Andean traits, but the basic patterns and many specific elements survived in simpler but unmistakable form.

In historical terms, this hypothesis may be extended to account for the origin of the Tropical Forest culture. In Volume 3 it has been suggested that the Tropical Forest complex has the technologies which characterize the Circum-Caribbean peoples and that these technologies appear to have spread down the Guiana coast and by water up the Amazon. The Circum-Caribbean cultures near the mouth of the Orinoco would supply a source for these traits; indeed, archeology of the lower Amazon yields pottery that in many respects is surprisingly like the Circum-Caribbean.

This thesis suggests that subsequent to the early expansion of the Highland cultures there may have been some deculturation which was checked at a Circum-Caribbean level. The Circum-Caribbean culture retained the general form of the Highland culture, and even added material items from the Tropical Forest, but it was not able to maintain the sociopolitical,

religious, and material elaborations of the civilized peoples. The Conquest initiated another period of drastic deculturation which eliminated all but the bare technological processes, and, though the cultures may still be regarded as essentially aboriginal, the modern peoples resemble those of the Tropical Forests rather than their own ancestors. Loss of lands, wars of the Conquest, and European diseases contributed to a reduction of the population, and influence from both Spaniards and Negroes modified the cultures. In a more fundamental sense, however, it would seem that the class-structured society, the temple-idol complex, and the wars for slaves and for victims for sacrificial rites and human trophies formed strongly interrelated patterns which were destroyed by European religion and by laws which prohibited many of the key practices. With the loss of these patterns, the artistic refinements that were expressions of them also perished. What was left was simple technologies—farming in unfavorable areas, weaving plain cloth, manufacture of unadorned ceramics, canoe making, and the like—and unstratified social groups with weak chiefs, with warfare reduced to mere defensive fighting, and with religion reduced to shamanistic practices without temples or idols. In short, the culture stepped down to the Tropical Forest level.

#### THE SUB-ANDEAN TRIBES OF WESTERN COLOMBIA

The peoples described in Hernández de Alba's articles in this volume on the "Tribes of the North Colombia Lowlands," "Tribes East of the Cauca River," "Tribes of the Cauca-Atrato Region," and "Tribes of the Upper Cauca River" conform to the general Circum-Caribbean pattern, but were Sub-Andean in the possession of certain specific Andean items, such as liana bridges, salt working, copper smelting and alloying with gold, construction of roads and hilltop forts, war banners, marriage of a chief to his sister, and other features not found elsewhere around the Caribbean Sea. Archeology reveals traits not reported for the Conquest Period tribes. Some of these traits, such as the carved stone statues of San Agustín and Tierradentro, evidently belong exclusively to a very early period. Other archeological traits, such as shaft-and-chamber burials, stone-cist burials, and negative-painted and monochrome-incised ceramics, have specific stylistic resemblances to Early Period remains of the North Highlands of Perú, but in generalized form they may well have survived to the Conquest among some Colombian tribes.

Although the great ethnographic diversity in Western Colombia undoubtedly reflects to some degree the fragmentary information of our sources, archeology suggests a comparable local difference, and there seems little doubt that Colombia's extreme local geographic diversity has been an important factor in splitting the area into cultural provinces.



## SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

All tribes of Western Colombia, except the *Chocó*, a Tropical Forest people, were sedentary, intensive farmers who lived in large planned and probably palisaded villages. The village, and in some instances the tribe or dominion, was controlled by a chief of exalted status and great power. Under the chief were nobles, commoners, and slaves. Among the *Carapa*, *Picara*, and *Paucura*, the chief married his sister, a system which the *Inca* used to preserve the purity of the emperor's divine descent. The chiefs seem usually to have been succeeded by their sons, but a matrilineal tendency is evident in the frequent marriage of a chief to his sister's daughter. The *Fincenú* even had female chiefs. Evidences of the chief's high position are his very large number of wives and retainers, his special insignia and ornaments, the gold-adorned litter in which he was carried, the special obeisance and etiquette accorded him, and the burial of a number of his wives and retainers with him. Development of states through federation or imperialism, though less advanced than among the *Chibcha*, is recognizable among the *Quimbaya*, *Tolú*, *Cenú*, and *Mompox* of the North Colombia Lowlands, the *Lile* of the upper Cauca River, and the *Ancerma*, *Catio*, and other tribes of the Cauca-Atrato region. In several cases, the chief received tribute from federated or subjugated tribes.

Subchiefs and nobles evidently comprised a distinct and somewhat endogamous class, and below them were the commoners and finally the slaves. Warfare was essential to this class system, for cannibalism and the display of human trophies were means of gaining prestige, and captives constituted a slave group. The extent to which the upper strata were really warrior classes is not clear, but the existence of regular armies and the frequent reports of female warriors, who acquired military fame no less than the men, show the great importance of warfare. Human trophies consisted of flayed skins and even arms and legs stuffed with ashes (*Lile*, *Gorrón*, *Ancerma*, and some tribes east of the Cauca) and skulls that were either painted (*Ancerma*) or had their features restored with modeled wax. These trophies were displayed on poles. Cannibalism is reported among all tribes except possibly those of the North Colombia Lowlands. East of the Cauca River, prisoners were fattened before they were killed and eaten, and in the Cauca-Atrato region, the *Caramanta* ate not only captives they had taken but slaves bought from other tribes for the sole purpose of eating them. East of the Cauca River and in the Cauca-Atrato region, captives were also used as sacrificial victims in religious rites.

Temples and idols probably occurred everywhere except on the upper Cauca River. In the North Colombia Lowlands, the "great temple" of the *Fincenú* accommodated 1,000 people, and in the Cauca-Atrato region, the *Ancerma* temple was on a large hill ascended by bamboo stairs. In both cases, the temple was entered only by priests and chiefs. Idols of

painted or gold-sheathed wood were kept in these sanctuaries, but among some tribes, such as the *Caramanta*, *Pozo*, and *Arma*, who built no temples, people kept idols in their own dwellings (as among the Antillean *Arawak*) and made offerings to them on special altars.

There seems to have been no special priesthood. On the upper Cauca and among the *Evégico*, shamans communicated with the deities, who were not represented by idols. "Priests" are mentioned among the *Ancerma*, but it is possible that they were shamans, as seems to have been the case among the North Colombia Lowland tribes. In any case they served as oracles and made offerings to the idols.

The nature of the deities and the purposes of the temple or idol worship seems to have varied considerably. The *Fincenú* apparently had animal idols, including the jaguar. The *Carrapa* lacked idols but made offerings to the Sun. The *Ancerma* principal deity, Xixarama, was the parent of the sun and moon. The *Nutibara* god, Guaca, was represented as a jaguar, and the *Catio* had celestial deities.

Human sacrifice is recorded for the *Pozo*, *Arma*, *Quimbaya*. *Picara*, *Paucura*, and *Caramanta*, but its nature and purpose are seldom revealed. The *Arma* and *Quimbaya* performed the rite on a special platform. The *Caramanta* cut out the victim's heart to control the weather, and the *Pozo* made sacrifices before going to war.

The shaman served as doctor as well as priest. In the North Colombia Lowlands, he seems to have treated patients in the temple with the help of the gods, using tobacco for purification. The *Ancerma* shaman massaged and sucked his patient and blew the sickness into the air.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

Western Colombia had the essential Circum-Caribbean traits of material culture: pole-and-thatched houses, often on piles (Cauca-Atrato); planned, compact, palisaded villages; wooden stools (upper Cauca); stone metates; hammocks (North Colombia Lowlands, *Quimbaya*); platform beds (*Ancerma*); dugout canoes; gold mining and goldworking; calabash containers; pottery, often with negative-painted designs; woven cotton textiles; breechcloths, aprons, and cloaks or mantles; featherwork; ear and nose ornaments, especially of gold; skull deformation (*Pozo*, *Quimbaya*); matting; probably basketry but techniques not known; the chief's litter; spear and spear thrower (east of Cauca, Cauca-Atrato, Province of Aburrá); the bow and poisoned arrow (more northern: Province of Aburrá, east of Cauca(?), North Colombia Lowlands); darts; slings (North Colombia Lowlands, east of Cauca, Province of Aburrá); clubs, harpoons; flutes; drums; shell trumpets; coca; and chicha.

Specifically Andean traits found here but rarely encountered elsewhere around the Caribbean Sea are: manufacture and trade of salt; copper smelting and alloying with gold (upper Cauca and east of Cauca) and

many specialized metallurgical processes; road construction (*Arma, Catío, Abibe, Nutabe, Urezo, Aburrá*); liana or vine suspension bridges; aqueducts (*Aburrá*); rain gutters and storage vessels (*Catío*); gold pincers (*Quimbaya*); war banners (east of the Cauca); maces (Province of *Aburrá*); balsa canoes (*Cenú*); markets; wrapped funeral bundles (*Gorrón*); and a system of weights and measures.

The Tropical Forests may be the origin of the following Western Colombian traits that had a limited distribution in the Circum-Caribbean area: cultivation of the pixiuva palm; bark cloth (*Chanco, Arma*); labrets (*Pozo, Arma*); ligatures around the arms and legs; and the use of deadfall traps, boiling water, and pitfalls with sharp stakes in house defense (*Antiochia*).

Special features of more restricted distribution were: wells (North Colombia Lowlands); artificial fish ponds (*Gorrón*); the rearing and fattening of young peccaries (*Urabá, Yamici*); mute dogs (?) (*Aburrá*; cf. Antillean *Arawak*); pottery ocarinas (east of the Cauca); and gold armor (?) (*Arma*).

The only information about crisis rites concerns burial, the more complicated forms of which were reserved for chiefs. The *Cenú* and *Yapel* of the North Colombia Lowlands and the *Nore, Gauca*, and probably the *Catío* and *Guazuzú* of the Cauca-Atrato region buried a chief in a mound-enclosed vault but gave commoners ordinary earth burial. The *Ancerma* and *Caramanta* of the Cauca-Atrato region and the tribes east of the Cauca and of the upper Cauca buried chiefs in a deep pit. The *Ancerma* first desiccated the body, but the *Quimbaya* cremated it and buried the ashes. It is not certain whether these pits correspond to the shaft-and-chamber burials found archeologically in the *Quimbaya*, upper Cauca, *Tierradentro*, and *Nariño* zones. Many of the latter may belong to a very early period.

#### THE NORTHEASTERN SUB-ANDEAN TRIBES

The Highland tribes in the Cordillera Oriental north of the *Chibcha* and in the Andes which stretch toward the coast on both sides of Lake Maracaibo not only seem to represent a marked break-down of Sub-Andean culture but fail to supply many essential links with the north coast of Venezuela to the east and with the Antillean *Arawak*. One has the feeling that the data are too fragmentary to give a coherent picture. It is possible, of course, that tribal movements, for example, of the *Caribbean Motilones* and their neighbors, may have broken the continuity. Even the *Timote* of the Venezuelan Andes, who have the strongest Sub-Andean complex, do not wholly fill the bill, for they seemingly lacked such an essential trait as metallurgy. Archeology has not yet corrected the difficulty, for metallurgy has not been found in Venezuela. Arche-

ology does, however, provide evidence of Andean influence in the stone terraces and rock-lined tombs of the Andes south of Lake Maracaibo and in the mounds and causeways in the llanos of Colombia west of the Orinoco River. It also suggests that the culture of the northeast coast of Venezuela was formerly more like that of the Orinoco and West Indies.

#### THE CORDILLERA ORIENTAL AND VENEZUELAN ANDES

The *Lache* and *Chitarera*, immediately north of the *Chibcha*, and the *Timote* of the Venezuelan Andes seem to have had the most complete Sub-Andean culture. Some of the tribes between them, such as the *Zorca*, were perhaps more typically Tropical Forest.

These tribes cultivated the essential food plants, including a considerable number of fruits. The *Timoteans* had permanent, often terraced fields, and used water-storage tanks and irrigation ditches. Large, planned, permanent, and perhaps palisaded villages were also characteristic of the *Timoteans*, *Corbago*, and *Lache*; one *Lache* town had 800 stone houses. *Chitarera* and *Zorca* villages, however, were small. The large communities would seem to have afforded a basis for developed chieftainship and a class structure on the Circum-Caribbean pattern. The only evidence of this is a reference to noblemen and the statement that some *Timotean* chiefs ruled whole valleys. There is no reference to special burial for chiefs, or to litters. Evidence of a temple cult comes from the *Lache*, who built a "House of the Sun," like the *Chibcha* temple, and from the *Timoteans*, who had a temple in the center of every town. These latter temples held idols made of pottery, wood, stone, or cotton thread, and they were entered only by the priests, who made offerings of manufactured objects, foods, beads, and deer parts to the gods. More specifically Andean was the *Timotean* belief in gods of mountain peaks and lakes, and their rituals performed on mountaintops and in caves. But human sacrifice was missing.

Virtually nothing is known of the war complex, though warfare seems to have been of some importance. There is evidence of somewhat regimented military operations in the Cordillera Oriental and of taking prisoners among the *Timoteans*. Cannibalism is not mentioned, and the straw-stuffed human heads, arms, and legs found among the *Corbago*, though suggesting the war trophies of Western Colombia, may have been the tribe's own dead.

These Sub-Andean tribes lacked metallurgy but had some of the other essential Circum-Caribbean material traits: loom-woven textiles of cultivated cotton; ceramics; cotton tunics and mantles (*Timote* women pinned theirs at the left shoulder with a wooden or gold pin): necklaces and breastplates, especially of bone; liana suspension bridges; clubs; spears; apparently either the bow and unpoisoned arrow (the *Chinato*

poisoned theirs) or else the spear thrower, but not both; shields; shell trumpets; drums; rattles; chicha; coca; tobacco taken in jellylike form; and metates. Hammocks are not mentioned.

#### TRIBES WEST OF LAKE MARACAIBO

In the area west of Lake Maracaibo there seems to have been great local cultural variation. Traces of Sub-Andean culture are not wanting, but most information comes from the modern *Chaké*, *Cágaba*, and *Goajiro*. These tribes are definitely not Sub-Andean and conform more nearly to the Tropical Forest patterns, but the *Chaké* and *Cágaba* may have changed during the historic period. Some use of stone construction in the *Tairona* area suggests a limited survival of Sub-Andean culture.

The modern *Chaké* cultivate a considerable number of plants, but their fields are not permanent. As a corollary, their villages are small and their society unstratified. Their religion evidently lacks any trace of the temple cult; a harvest festival with chicha drinking and castigation of one another with bow staves is reported. In the Sierra de Santa Marta, archeology suggests the earlier presence of more advanced agriculture, but the modern people make only rough stone terraces and practice elementary irrigation. Modern *Cágaba* villages are small and lack social strata and chiefs. They are governed by priests, who wear spirit masks and conduct seasonal ceremonies in the village temple, which also serves as the men's house, but there are no idols. Supernatural beings include various spirits and human ancestors. The *Goajiro* have been so completely modified by their early adoption of cattle that little trace of aboriginal culture remains. They are intensive nomadic herders, with farming secondary. Wealth, represented by cattle, gives social status, but the basic social structure is matrilineal sibs. So far as is known, the *Goajiro* had no trace of a temple cult, and their religion is limited to beliefs in a culture hero, bush spirits, and a god or gods of thunder, lightning, and drought. They have shamans who function solely as medicine men, performing with the aid of a spirit-helper. The *Goajiro* had some warfare, and possibly slaves were taken, but cannibalism, human sacrifice, and human trophies are not recorded from any of these tribes.

Burial customs give no hint of the elaborate Circum-Caribbean methods used in disposing of deceased chiefs. The *Chaké* expose the body and later bundle up the bones and place them in a cave, perhaps a reflection of Andean procedures. The *Cágaba* and *Goajiro* practice primary earth burial, and the *Goajiro* rebury in an urn.

Weaving is done on the true loom by the *Chaké*, *Cágaba*, and *Goajiro*, the first two with agave fibers and domesticated cotton, the *Goajiro* with wild cotton. The *Cágaba*, *Chaké*, *Arhuaco*, and *Goajiro* also make netted carrying bags. The *Chaké* make a variety of twilled and woven baskets,

but the *Cágaba* make only a few mats and boxes, the *Goajiro* no baskets. Crude pottery is made throughout the area. Metallurgy is not reported. Other elements present are: bows and arrows (unfeathered among the *Chaké*; poisoned with animal-derived ingredients, *Goajiro*); fish drugs (*Chaké*); fish nets (*Cágaba*); babracot (*Chaké*); and metate (*Chaké*, *Cágaba*). The pre-Columbian presence of dogs is doubtful. The *Chaké* are un-Andean in shunning salt. The platform bed is absent, but the *Cágaba* and *Goajiro* use the hammock, and the *Cágaba* have wooden stools. The long cotton tunics of the *Chaké*, the cotton blankets worn by *Goajiro* women and by the *Coanoa*, and the *Cágaba* gowns are Andean traits, and so are *Coanoa* nose and ear ornaments made sometimes of trade gold. *Goajiro* men wear breechclouts. The *Chaké* and *Cágaba* use carrying baskets; canoes are not ascribed any of these tribes. The *Cágaba* make complicated log bridges. Coca, chicha, tobacco, drums, hollow-log drums (*Goajiro*), flutes, trumpets, and rattles are found.

#### TRIBES OF NORTHWESTERN VENEZUELA

The tribes of the northwestern portion of Venezuela between Lake Maracaibo and Cabo Codera (p. 469) seem to have formed a somewhat tenuous link in the Circum-Caribbean culture between the *Timoteans* and the tribes north of the Orinoco River. In religion and political organization the *Arawakan Jirajara* and *Caquetío* have certain specific resemblances to the *Arawakan Taino* of the Antilles.

The political unit was the village, which had its own chief, but the *Jirajara* had a tribal war chief and the *Caquetío* had a tribal chief of general power and prestige. The *Caquetío* chief was accredited with supernatural power to control natural phenomena and plant growth, he was carried in a hammock, and he received special treatment at death. Under the chief were nobles, warriors, and rich men, each forming a special class. At death, leading men were burned and their ashes drunk, but the head chief's body was desiccated, placed in his house in his hammock with a wooden image below him, and later cremated and his ashes drunk.

These tribes were extremely warlike, but the functional role of warfare in sociopolitical life is not known.

There was some kind of community temple (adoratorio) where offerings were made by shamans to the sun and moon and where shamans practiced divination with tobacco ash and communed with spirits while taking tobacco and a narcotic herb. Each house was also a place of worship in that it had its own idols. Human sacrifice was practiced: young girls were beheaded and their blood offered to the sun in order to obtain rain. Shamans not only served as priests but they also cured illness by sucking out the disease-causing object.

Agriculture was best developed among the *Caquetío* and *Jirajara*. Near Barquisimeto, irrigation was carried on. Salt was manufactured and

traded. Items of material culture reported include: pile dwellings; clubs; bows and arrows (poisoned among the *Jirajara*); fish drugs; hammocks; women's front apron, skirt (*Jirajara*), or a string passed between the legs; men's calabash penis cover or string to tie up the penis; body paint; chief's feather, gold, and pearl ornaments; dugout canoes; carrying bags; ceramics; woven cotton bags, garments, and hammocks (the weaving technique unknown); trumpets; tobacco; masato, which may have been fermented, i.e., chicha; and a maguey drink, perhaps similar to pulque.

#### TRIBES OF NORTHERN VENEZUELA

Connections between the Andes and the Antilles, though somewhat broken in the Cordillera Oriental and the Cordillera de Mérida, are partly resumed among some of the *Cariban* tribes of the area between the Orinoco River and the north coast of Venezuela (p. 481). The linkage, however, is mainly in material and social features; the temple cult is lacking. As archeology suggests that resemblances of this area and the Antilles were somewhat greater at an earlier period, the historic inhabitants may not have transmitted the Circum-Caribbean culture to the Antilles; possibly they merely acquired it by contact with those who did transmit them.

#### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

Intense farming is indicated not only by a considerable list of plants, including bitter manioc and rows of fruit trees, but by irrigation (*Cumanagoto*) and in some tribes the performance of the main labor by men. Villages were very large (as many as 200 houses among the *Aruacay*), carefully laid out, and surrounded by one to three palisades. (*Piritú* villages may have been smaller, for they were abandoned at a death.) Social classes were well developed, with a powerful chief and frequently various subchiefs; and there were some federations. The chief was carried in a gold-adorned litter, and on the Unare River he had a harem of 200 wives (attended by eunuchs, according to the chroniclers!). His decrees were promulgated from an artificial mound, and he had power of life and death over his subjects. Often these chiefs had magical power and were also shamans. The *Caracas* had graded military classes with distinctive insignia. Traces of Sub-Andean death practices are found here, though it is not clear whether they were restricted to chiefs: desiccation of nobles and hanging the body in the house (*Chiribichi*); roasting and burial, with subsequent reburial or cremation (*Piritú*); burial in a clay and log tomb with an image on top (*Aruacay*). The *Cumaná* dried the body and drank the bone powder and fat. Little is known of commoners or slaves, except that the latter, who probably were war captives, were objects of trade. There was considerable warfare, carried on with fairly well organized armies which included female warriors. The principal weapons were bows, arrows with animal-derived poison, spears,

shields, clubs, and, on Trinidad, spear throwers; these were kept in arsenals. The *Cumanagoto*, *Marcapana*, and *Palenque* were cannibalistic, and the *Piritú* drank powdered enemy hearts in chicha. The only record of human trophies is *Piritú* flutes of human bone. Human sacrifice is not reported.

Religion lacked the temple cult. The sun and moon were supreme beings. Ceremonies had some connection with deer and fish, and offerings of first fruits and of various valuable objects were made to the earth and ocean. The *Palenque* had hunting and fishing magic. The shaman, who had great power and social prestige and frequently was also the chief, came nearest to performing priestly functions when he served as oracle, communicating with spirits in caves so as to learn the future. He cured sickness by sucking out or causing the patient to vomit the disease-causing evil spirit. Witchcraft and divination with "yopa," a narcotic snuff, are reported. The *Piritú* used flagellation in battle magic and the ant ordeal in girls' puberty rites.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

Material culture includes the following elements: textiles of woven wild cotton; pottery; basketry; salt making; dugout canoes; hammocks; excellently carved wooden stools; the calabash penis cover, penis thread, or breechclout for men; the apron, breechclout, or drawers for women; head deformation; profuse ornaments of many materials including trade gold and pearls (the *Guaiqueri* had pearl fishing); tattooing; domesticated turkey, Muscovy duck, and bees; fish harpoons, nets, traps, and hooks; bird snares and bird lime; the babracot; chicha; tobacco; hollow-log drums (?); flutes; shell trumpets; and rattles (used by shamans).

#### THE ANTILLES

Three waves of cultural influence had swept the Antilles: first, the primitive hunting and gathering *Ciboney* coming probably from Florida; second, the *Arawak*, who were typically Circum-Caribbean and came from South America; third, the *Carib*, who were Tropical Forest rather than Circum-Caribbean, and also came from South America. At the Conquest the *Ciboney* occupied part of Cuba and Haiti. The *Arawak* held the remainder of the Greater Antilles, but they had been driven from most of the Lesser Antilles by the *Carib*, probably in a very recent prehistoric period.

#### THE ARAWAK

##### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

The *Arawak* lacked some of the more important Circum-Caribbean cultivated plants but nonetheless depended more upon farming than on fishing, and they tended to live away from the seacoast. Their villages,



which consisted of as many as 3,000 persons, were carefully planned, and each enclosed a ball court. Commoners occupied communal houses, but the chief, who had great prominence, lived in a special house of his own. In the hierarchy of chiefs, the head chief ruled a province, which was divided into as many as 30 districts, each under a subchief, and a district consisted of 70 to 80 villages, each with a headman. A chief had power of life and death, and he controlled civil, military, and religious affairs, there being no separate priesthood. He bore titles, was treated with special etiquette, and, to complete the parallel with Colombia, he was carried in a gold-decorated litter and upon his death he was either disemboweled, dessicated, and kept as an idol (*zemi*), or he was buried, accompanied by several of his wives. Ranking below the chief were the nobles who formed a council, the commoners, and the slaves. The society had matrilineal inheritance but lacked clans.

It is probable that the slave class came from war captives, but the *Arawak* evidently departed from the Circum-Caribbean pattern in lacking cannibalism and human sacrifice. There was some warfare, however, and on St. Croix Island, female warriors are reported.

*Arawakan* religion had the functional equivalent of the priest-temple-idol complex, but the elements and organization were somewhat distinctive. Evidently combining the guardian spirit concept with fetish worship, there was a large number of idols called *zemis*. These were made of different materials, and they represented plant, animal, and human spirits, often those seen in dreams. A common type found archeologically is a three-cornered stone. Each *zemi* served a special purpose, and every person had one or more in his house. The *zemis* were offered food, and people fasted and took emetics and snuff while invoking their help. Because the chief's *zemis* were the most powerful in a community, he conducted group celebrations in their honor.

A more specific Circum-Caribbean trait is the public *séance* which shamans held in caves to communicate with *zemis* and other spirits. In addition to *zemis* there was belief in nature spirits and in human ghosts, which were feared. Celestial deities are mentioned, and the sun and moon were connected with the myth of human emergence from a cave. Shamans conformed to the ritual pattern in taking snuff and emetic before singing, shaking a rattle, and sucking the cause of disease from a patient.

The dead were usually buried in the ground or placed in a cave, but the head was always kept in a basket in the house. Children sometimes received urn burial.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

The *Arawak* material and technological culture seems to have included most if not all the Circum-Caribbean elements. With the aid of irriga-

tion, they grew potatoes, peanuts, beans, and arrowroot, but they evidently either lacked hard-kernel maize or ate their maize before it matured. This may explain why they used the mortar but not the metate. They also had bitter manioc and squeezed the poison out of it with the tipiti, but these traits may have been acquired in the historic period. The pepper pot was a characteristic dish. The *Arawak* hunted with clubs, dogs, bird decoys, drives, and corrals, and they used calabash masks for taking ducks. The absence of the bow, except among the *Ciguayo* (who used featherless arrows that were sometimes poisoned), and the presence of the spear thrower suggest that the spread of the former at the expense of the latter elsewhere may have been comparatively recent. In warfare, clubs and stones (on Trinidad, the sling) were also weapons. Fishing devices included the usual items: nets, weirs, hooks, harpoons, and baskets. The domesticated parrot is of local interest, and the somewhat puzzling mute dog may be related to a similar animal ("perro mudo") of the *Aburrá* of Colombia.

Other typical Circum-Caribbean traits found among the Island *Arawak* are the woman's apron, frontal head deformation, ear and nose piercing, the platform bed for chiefs and hammocks for commoners, carved stools of both stone and wood, dugout canoes, carrying baskets, twilled basketry, pottery with plastic forms and with one-, two-, and three-color positive and negative designs, and wooden bowls. Metallurgy was restricted to gold, which was taken from placer mines and worked by hammering, but objects of gold-copper alloy were obtained by trade. The presence of true weaving is uncertain; hammocks, bags, and aprons may have been netted of cotton. The rubber-ball game, cigars, hollow-log drums, gourd rattles, shell trumpets, chicha, and coca (?) are all Circum-Caribbean, but the use of emetics and of snuff taken through a Y-tube is exceptional.

#### THE CARIB

The *Island Carib* were very similar to the *Arawak* in material culture, but their social and religious patterns were more like those of the Tropical Forests, and their ferocity and cruelty in warfare were very reminiscent of the *Tupí*. They made continual raids and took female captives as wives, but tortured, killed, and ate male captives and made trophies of their bones. Socially they were extreme individualists and attached little importance to rank or to chieftainship. Prestige was acquired by achievement, and a boy's powers were tested in his puberty rites. Although captive wives were kept in a slave status and occasionally a slave was buried with his or her master, the children of captive women were freemen. Lacking social classes, kinship relations were of great importance, and the village tended to consist of an extended matrilineal family.

A reflection of *Arawakan* religion is seen in offerings made to guardian spirits, which were not, however, represented by idols. The importance attached to the dead people is shown not only in the great fear of ghosts but also in the shaman's practice of keeping his ancestors' bones as a source of power and the belief that his ancestor's spirit assisted him in obtaining a spirit helper. Shamans cured by means of sucking. They also held public séances. Ritual elements included fasting, scarifying—both were present in boys' and girls' puberty rites—and feasts with much use of chicha. Among mythological supernatural beings were an unnamed power in Heaven, various astral beings, especially the sun and moon, and a culture hero from heaven.

The *Carib* usually practiced earth burial, but sometimes they cremated a chief and drank his ashes with chicha.

In material traits the *Carib* differed from the *Arawak* in making great use of bitter manioc, which they prepared with the manioc grater and the tipiti, in their failure to use salt, in the certainty that they wove cotton, and in their expert navigation in large, planked, dugout canoes. Their weapons included bows and poisoned arrows, javelins, and clubs. The *Carib* lacked the ball game and had other athletic contests instead, but they used cigars, single-head skin drums, gourd rattles, conch-shell trumpets, and one-string gourd instruments.

## CENTRAL AMERICA

### DISTRIBUTION AND ANTIQUITY OF THE CIRCUM-CARIBBEAN CULTURE

In instances when early documents and the archeology of the protohistoric period give a reliable picture of the aboriginal peoples, the cultures are so strikingly different from those of the modern tribes that it is difficult to recognize that the latter are descendants of the former. In the absence of Conquest period data, this drastic deculturation makes it extremely difficult to ascertain the native distribution of the Circum-Caribbean culture.

The *Cuna* who live between the Panamá Canal and Colombia must once have had a Circum-Caribbean culture, for, though their modern sociopolitical organization is of a Tropical Forest type, archeological remains of the late prehistoric period and documents of the early post-Conquest period supply many of the missing traits. The tribes southwest of the Canal, who probably belonged to the *Guaymí* group, had a culture very similar to the aboriginal *Cuna*. The chroniclers describe these people as cultivating many large cleared areas where today there is jungle and as having a stratified society.

The *Talamanca* Division is also undoubtedly classifiable as Circum-Caribbean, though they have a few traits, such as netted bags, bark cloth, clans, boys' puberty ceremonies, and communal houses, that are usually associated with less-developed cultures. It is possible that in some instances these features occurred in isolated, culturally retarded tribes, but on the

whole they appear to have persisted in true Circum-Caribbean contexts. Archeology of the general *Talamanca* area, however, reveals unexpectedly developed features: house and burial mounds, courtyards, and monoliths in the Pacific region and grouped burial and habitation mounds in the Highland. Associated with these are carved stone statues, many of them with the alter-ego motif or other features linked with South America. There is also archeological evidence of metallurgy in gold and of three-legged or four-legged stone zoomorphic metates or stools. These archeological materials have not been interrelated sequentially, and none but a few ceramic types have been identified with modern tribes. Though animal-form metates were used by the historic tribes, there is no certainty that they were not taken from old sites. At least one mound group appears to have been occupied at the Conquest. Perhaps it is assignable to the Meso-American tribes, for it does not fit the ethnographic picture of the *Talamancan* peoples. Many of the other mounds and stone carvings could well antedate the historic tribes.

Among the tribes of the Caribbean Lowlands of Nicaragua and Honduras, ethnological data show the Circum-Caribbean complex in greatest strength among the *Mosquito* of the Eastern Coastal Plain and among the *Sumo*. This impression may merely reflect insufficient information about other tribes, though the *Jicaque* and *Paya* appear to have been on a distinctly lower level. Archeology discloses definite *Maya* influence in the Ulua-Yoja region, but this influence is not manifest in the culture of the *Jicaque* who occupied this region at the Conquest. On the northeast coast of Honduras and the Eastern Coastal Plain of Nicaragua the archeology has a non-Mexican character, and the monoliths and stone statues are of South American types. In *Jicaque* and *Paya* territory there are a great many indications of a high culture, such as mound groups, paved roads, canals, monoliths, stone statues, and offertories, but their age and relationship to the Conquest Period tribes are uncertain. If certain stone-faced mounds can be assigned to the Sula-*Jicaque* and the *Paya*, the post-Conquest deculturation of these tribes must have been very great. On the Eastern Coastal Plain the mounds, monoliths, goldwork, and stone animal-form metates seem congruent with the cultural level of the *Mosquito*, but here too the archeological materials are undated and many of them may represent a much earlier period. The same holds for the Highland area with its burial and habitation mounds, its alter-ego, chacmool, and various small stone statues, its stone-cist and mound burials, its carved stone slabs, and its stone metates and stools. The region of the Caribbean Lowland tribes has the modeled and tripod ceramic complex of Stone's Central American "Basic Culture" (p. 169), which apparently persisted from a fairly early period to the Conquest, but the only correlation with historic tribes is that Luna polychrome and incised Zapatero monochrome, both associated with urn burial, were made by the *Ulva*,

and that the Bold Geometric polychrome and North Coast Appliqué styles probably pertain to the *Lenca*, *Jicaque*, and *Paya*. These wares, though distinctly non-*Mayan*, extended to the *Maya* frontier in the Ulua-Yojoa district, where they blended with *Mayan* styles.

In the Northern Highlands the modern *Lenca* have lost most traces of a Circum-Caribbean culture, but if the site of Tenampua in Central Honduras really belonged to them, they had a very high culture at the Conquest. This hilltop site is fortified with stone walls and has a ball court and numerous terraces and mounds, some of them stone-paved. This and other hilltop sites may be connected with the supposed *Lenca* pilgrimages in the last century to their aboriginal village sites and with their modern custom of visiting hilltop shrines to commune with the spirits. But the ceramics of these sites have not yet been identified with the Bold Geometric and Bold Animalistic polychrome and North Coast Appliqué pottery styles that were probably made by the Conquest period *Lenca*. If the structural complex represented at Tenampua is actually Conquest Period *Lenca*, the Circum-Caribbean culture must have existed in some strength in Highland Honduras, and it may have considerable antiquity, for the ceramic traditions of the *Lenca* are fairly old in the area.

#### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

**Panamá.**—Aboriginal villages of the *Cuna* are not described, but communities southwest of the Canal had as many as 1,500 people, were palisaded with living fences, and each had a large, many-roomed, and well-provisioned house for the chief. Modern *Cuna* villages are seemingly much less impressive. The Conquest Period *Cuna* had four social classes, though today they have merely extended matrilineal households. Southwest of the Canal the aboriginal classes were: (1) The head chief, who controlled several villages; (2) the nobles, who captured their retainers in war or inherited them; (3) commoners, who might marry nobles; and (4) slaves, who were war prisoners. Ceremony attending the chief is not fully described, except that he was carried in a litter and had many wives and slaves. A chief or noble was either buried with wives and retainers who had been stupefied, or his body was desiccated and seated in a room or placed in a hammock. Similar burial is indicated in the Coclé area, and Sitio Conte had archeological evidence of burial of a headman with many wives and quantities of gold and other valuable objects. Secondary urn burial is reported archeologically on the Atlantic Coast and deep-grave burial on the Pacific.

Warfare was well developed and there were standing armies. Captives were taken, and the early *Cuna* killed male enemies so that the sun might drink their blood; a man accredited with 20 such victims received a title. Southwest of the Canal acquisition of territory as well as prestige were war objectives.

There are no records of a temple cult, except what human sacrifice and the shaman's fetishes (see below) suggest. There was formerly sun worship. The modern *Cuna* are Christians. They have a considerable ceremony for girls a year after their puberty confinement. The priest or shaman burns cacao in a brazier, smokes cigars, and chants with the aid of a mnemonic board. These elements enter other shamanistic activities, and the shaman also uses wooden fetishes, perhaps survivals of or derived from an idol cult. With their aid he prognosticates, finds lost objects, and cures disease, sending his fetish's soul to bring back that of the patient.

The mnemonic boards bear a kind of conventionalized system of pictures and symbols, but they are not true writing in any sense inasmuch as the symbols are peculiar to the individual and cannot be interpreted by other shamans.

**The Talamanca Division.**—Farming in the *Talamanca* Division was more important at the time of the Conquest than today, and it supported palisaded villages which consisted of a large house or a group of houses, possibly some of them communal, to judge from modern dwellings. Early documents report feudal states among the *Guaymí*, the *Talamanca* Division, and the *Guetar*. The *Bribri* even conquered the *Terraba* in the early 19th century, and they exercised political control over the *Cabecar*. *Bribri* chieftaincy rests in a single family and must be a survival of an older class system, though the main *Bribri*, *Cabecar*, and *Terraba* headmen were said to be elective war chiefs. Chiefs wore gold ornaments and special insignia. The *Guetar* had nobles, commoners, and slaves, the last being captive women and children; captive men were sacrificed.

Social stratification among the Circum-Caribbean tribes seems generally to have been at the expense of clan systems, and this was certainly true of the Mexican and Andean civilizations. The *Bribri*, however, had exogamous matrilineal clans and moieties, and the modern *Guaymí* evidently have exogamous clans. Evidence of avuncular marriage and matrilineal descent appears among some of the West Colombian Sub-Andean tribes. Though usually superseded by classes, a clan system is not incompatible with them, as shown by the Northwest Coast culture of British Columbia and Alaska, which combined a strong class system with matrilineal clans and moieties. Perhaps in Central America we have traces of an old *Chibchan* clan organization.

Warfare was an important feature of social life, for its purpose was to obtain women and children as slaves and men as sacrificial victims. *Bribri*, *Cabecar*, and *Terraba* warriors formed a special class and received special burial.

Kinds of burial accorded chiefs and nobles are not reported, but some of the usual practices were present: embalmed bodies placed in mortuary buildings (*Guetar*), inhumation, and various kinds of secondary burial

Whether archeological deep-shaft graves in Veraguas and stone-cist graves in Chiriquí were connected with the historic tribes is not known; the latter are thought to be late prehistoric.

The temple cult is not mentioned, and concepts of supernatural beings are not known, but the *Bribri* and *Guetar* are accredited with a formal priesthood. The *Guetar* sacrificed human beings at every moon and at burial feasts.

An unusual *Guaymí* feature, reminiscent of more primitive tribes, is a secret ceremony in which boys are instructed, their faces painted, and their teeth chipped (Negro influence?), after which they may marry.

**The Caribbean Lowlands.**—The modern Caribbean Lowland tribes have a considerable list of cultivated plants (p. 220), but their farming is slash-and-burn. Their early villages consisted of 100 to 500 people living in one or more communal houses. Sociopolitical features are little known. The chief, though elected by the elders, had supreme power. A hereditary, matrilineal tendency is evident among the *Mosquito*, but no clans are mentioned. A *Mosquito* chief was sewed up in a mat, and slaves, servants, and sometimes a shaman were buried with him. That mummification was practiced is uncertain. The *Sumo* may have made gold and clay masks of deceased chiefs.

Warfare was well developed among the *Mosquito*, *Sumo*, and perhaps the *Paya*. The first two tribes accorded military rank and insignia to all men, and they subjected boys to tests as part of their puberty training. The *Mosquito* fought wars to take captives and the *Sumo* to kill their enemies, make trophies of their teeth and fingernails, and reputedly to eat them.

There is no record of a temple cult, and only the shaman is reported in recent times. His main function is to cure sickness, which he does by means of trances, dancing, singing, using painted sticks and carved figures, and driving the disease-causing spirit out of the patient. He also placates evil spirits. Among supernatural beings are the sun, moon, various astral gods, and a remote sky deity called "Our Father."

At death, the corpse is left in the hut, which is abandoned. A *Mosquito* wife exhumes and carries her husband's bones, and there is an anniversary mourning ceremony.

An unusual ritual element is the steam bath for pubescent girls and mothers of newborn infants, a North American trait, and circumcision among the *Sumo*.

**The North Highlands.**—Little information on the Conquest Period ethnology of this area has been assembled, and the modern *Lenca* reveal scant traces of the Circum-Caribbean socioreligious culture. They now seem more Honduran than Indian. Their villages and houses are of the modern Honduran type, but if hilltop forts and mound groups such as Tenampua (above), belonged to the *Lenca*, a very developed

Circum-Caribbean community type with characteristic social and political features must have been present. Some towns still have hereditary chiefs, and the modern two-class system may be a modified vestige of native social stratification.

Warfare in recent times usually has involved boundary disputes, but at one time a warrior ate the heart of his slain enemy to obtain his valor.

There is no evidence as yet that associates any complicated methods of burial with the *Lenca*.

A few native religious elements are recognizable today: pilgrimages to sacred hills to commune with spirits; great veneration of the sun; agricultural ceremonies with drinking of chicha and offerings of burned copal; shamanistic curing through offerings of white chickens and copal to crosses on sacred hills; divination by shamans, who throw colored beans from a calabash; ritual chicha drinking; copal burning as an offering; and fumigation of persons. Some of the archeological hilltop sites may be old *Lenca* religious centers, evidencing a very rich native religious complex.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

The material culture of the modern tribes of Central America has lost the intensity and esthetic refinements of the Conquest Period, but the essential technologies are present.

The principal crops are maize, sweet manioc, sweetpotatoes, peppers, kidney beans, lima beans, gourds, calabashes, and several fruits. Bitter manioc was not pre-Columbian. It reached the *Cuna* and the Caribbean Lowlands in the 17th century; the latter probably obtained it from the *Carib*. Whether irrigation was practiced must be ascertained archeologically. Two *Talamanca* subsistence traits that are found also in northern Colombia are the cultivation of the pejibaye palm (*Guiljelma utilis*) and the raising of wild peccaries. The Muscovy duck may have been kept by the Caribbean Lowland people and by the *Lenca*. Domesticated turkeys are kept by the *Lenca*, but their pre-Columbian distribution is not known. Apiculture in the Caribbean Lowlands is an exceptional feature. The aboriginal presence of the dog is uncertain.

Central American hunting techniques include bows and arrows, blowguns, spears, slings, traps, snares, game drives with nets (*Cuna*), and pitfalls. The spear thrower was used in the Darién region and occurred archeologically at Coclé, but it seems to have been superseded since by the bow and arrow. *Cuna* arrows are unpoisoned, but poisoned arrows were used southwest of the Canal and occasionally by the *Talamanca* Division. The Caribbean Lowland tribes used animal-derived poison, and their arrows were unfeathered. The blowgun was probably used everywhere to shoot clay pellets, but the *Cuna* adopted the blowgun with a poisoned dart in the historic period. Various chipped blades found



archeologically may have been knives. There were also axes and celts. The principal fishing devices were arrows, hooks, nets, traps, spears, drugs (Caribbean Lowlands, *Lenca*), and harpoons (Caribbean Lowlands). The production and trade of salt was of some importance.

The metate and mortar for grinding food and the babracot for smoking meat were used in food preparation. Pottery griddles occur in the Caribbean Lowlands. Three-legged and four-legged stone metates (or seats) occur throughout Central America, but whether they were made by the historic tribes is a problem for archeology.

Basketry was made by all tribes, but weaves are not described, except that the *Cuna* used twilling, wickerwork, and coiling, and the *Talamanca* a hexagonal weave. Bark cloth is reported for all areas except the North Highlands (*Lenca*), but archeological stone bark-beaters show that it was probably general. Loom weaving of domesticated cotton formerly occurred in all tribes, except perhaps the *Talamanca* Division, which now uses wild cotton. A wild bast and a netting technique were used for hammocks (*Talamanca* Division) and carrying bags (*Talamanca* Division, Caribbean Lowlands, *Lenca*). Ceramics, though now plain, were once predominantly of the plastic, incised traditions. There were, however, a few polychromes (e. g., at Coclé and the Bold Geometric ware of the *Lenca*, *Jicaque*, and *Paya* and the Luna polychrome of the *Ulva*). Negative-painted ware from Chiriquí and from Honduras may be ascribable to some of the *Talamanca* Division peoples. The negative-painted and the plastic-incised wares are probably part of the old Circum-Caribbean culture. Some authors attribute the polychromes to Meso-American influence.

In Panamá, metallurgy in gold and gold-copper alloys was highly developed as far as Veraguas, but it faded out in Costa Rica. Some gold is found archeologically in the Caribbean Lowlands, but it may represent trade objects. Approaching the *Maya* frontier, copper bells occur archeologically, perhaps originating from the secondary and comparatively late center of metallurgy in México. In the central part of Central America there is an apparent and unexplained gap in the distribution of metallurgy and negative-painted pottery.

Central American clothing includes: the penis cover (*Cuna*); men's breechclout (*Talamanca* Division, Caribbean Lowlands); the woman's wrap-around skirt; various mantles of bark cloth with painted designs (*Talamanca* Division) or of textiles with woven-in designs (Caribbean Lowlands); some skin garments (*Lenca*); sandals (*Lenca*); skin sandals (*Paya*); skin, moccasinlike footgear (*Mosquito*); ear, nose, and other ornaments of gold, precious stones, and feathers; head deformation (Caribbean Lowlands); scarification (*Talamanca* Division); tattoo as insignia of rank (*Cuna*); and chipped teeth (Caribbean Lowlands—Negro influence?). Mirrors were found at Coclé.

Household furniture consists of platform beds, hammocks (all but the *Lenca*), wooden stools, stone stools (?), and gourd and calabash containers. Dugout canoes in the Darién region were described as huge and pearl-inlaid; southwest of the Canal they had cotton sails. Dugouts also occurred in the Caribbean Lowlands. For carrying objects on land, the Panamanian tribes used carrying baskets and the balance pole, but the other tribes used netted bags. Paved roads, a conspicuous feature in the Honduran Highlands, may have been made by the historic tribes.

The aboriginal musical instruments were shell trumpets, panpipes, calabash rattles, flutes, musical bows (Caribbean Lowlands), skin drums, goblet-shaped drums (Caribbean Lowland), hollow-log signal drums (*Cuna*), whistles, and pottery ocarinas. Chicha and tobacco are general. Tobacco or coca was chewed in the *Cuna* and the *Talamanca* Division. Pottery pipes were used by the *Talamanca* Division, and cigars by the *Cuna*.

A ball game was played in a special court by the *Cuna* and, if Tenampua is a *Lenca* site, by the *Lenca* also.

#### THE MESO-AMERICAN TRIBES

The more important Meso-American tribes are a number of *Nahuatlán*- and *Chorotegan*-speaking peoples distributed principally along the Pacific coast of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. They are thought to have migrated to this region from México comparatively recently, some within two to four centuries before the Conquest and others even later. They are accredited with introducing certain polychrome ceramic wares to Central America, and some of their traits, such as the game of voladores, the custom of tongue piercing, and certain religious practices, are definitely Mexican, not Circum-Caribbean. On the whole, however, they seem to have adopted the Circum-Caribbean culture and to have contributed very little to it.

#### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PATTERNS

Meso-American communities consisted of houses arranged in streets around a plaza where temples and chiefs' "palaces" were built, often on low mounds. Society was stratified into three hereditary classes: (1) Chiefs, priests, and nobles; (2) commoners; and (3) war prisoners, who performed menial labor but were ultimately sacrificed and eaten. Acquisition of wealth, however, improved social status. Politically, a council had great power, and among the *Chorotega* it selected the chief. *Nicarao* chieftaincy was probably hereditary, though the council also had considerable power.

Warfare was highly developed, and there were trained armies. War was waged to settle boundary disputes and to obtain slaves for sacrifices

and for cannibalism. The taste for human flesh was so great that slaves were bred in order that they might be slaughtered.

The temple cult was served by a special priesthood, which performed ceremonies to the various gods on holy days, at the cacao harvest, and on such occasions as birth and death.

#### MATERIAL CULTURE

Many crops were cultivated, the most important being maize, cacao, and tobacco.

Weaving techniques are not mentioned; the fibers of cotton, agave, and palm were used. Ceramics were well developed and included polychromes of Mexican origin. The presence of metallurgy is uncertain. Dugout canoes and rafts were made. Clothing and ornaments included the men's breechclout and sleeveless tunic of woven cotton (*Nicarao*), women's skirts (*Nicarao*), the woman's decorated breechclout (*Orontiña*), gold beads, identifying tattoo marks, head deformation, and men's tongue and ear piercing.

Chicha was made, and coca was chewed with lime. The Mexican game of voladores was played, but the ball game is not reported.

#### THE TROPICAL FOREST PEOPLES

##### THE PATÁNGORO AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

In general, these tribes lacked the intensive farming, especially of fruits, and the salt making of northern Colombia. Their technology is little known. They made pottery but lacked metallurgy and apparently used no canoes. Villages were palisaded and were of fair size, consisting of 80 to 90 houses each, with a ceremonial building in the center. Highland traits present are the platform bed, head deformation, and liana bridges. Men went naked and women wore aprons. Unlike most Sub-Andean tribes, the *Patángoro* were organized in exogamous matrilineal clans rather than social classes. Warfare was strongly developed; weapons included the bow and poisoned arrow, lances, boiling water, deadfall doors, and sharpened stakes placed in pits. Captives were taken not for ritual purposes but for cannibalism, which was so strongly developed that human flesh constituted an essential food. All captives were killed at once, either being cooked or else cremated, ground, and mixed with chicha, an Amazonian trait. There is no evidence of a temple-priest complex, though the *Amaní* shaman concealed himself behind a wall to answer questions, which is reminiscent of the oracular functions of the Sub-Andean priest. Deities were celestial, including one which sent thunder and lightning. These tribes practiced earth burial and believed in an afterworld that was so pleasant that people sometimes committed suicide. Shamans apparently had both human and animal tutelary spirits, and they cured disease by sucking.

## THE GUAYUPÉ AND SAE

These tribes, occupying the llanos and forests on the eastern slope of the Andes south of the *Chibcha*, had a general Tropical Forest culture with perhaps a few Sub-Andean traits. They were farmers and lived in palisaded villages of multifamily houses arranged around a plaza that had a ceremonial building. They had no class system, but old men apparently had superior status and formed a council. Chiefs were elected, and their prestige is indicated only in their use of stools and feather blankets and their claim to half the bride price paid at each marriage. A deceased chief was cremated, and his ashes were ceremonially drunk in *chicha* by his successor.

There was much warfare, but slave taking, cannibalism (except *Sae* funerary cannibalism), and human trophies are not reported. At their initiation boys were whipped and pricked with lances to make them good warriors.

The special religious house was perhaps comparable to that of the Tropical Forests rather than to the Andean temple. The sun and moon, who were man and wife, were the gods, and the jaguar and other animals were evil beings. No ceremonialism is mentioned except shamanistic curing, which was accomplished by sucking out the disease-causing object.

Subsistence was based on farming, bitter manioc probably being one of the crops. The technology is not well known, but cotton was grown and must have been woven, though feather instead of cotton blankets are mentioned as articles of clothing. Except for these blankets and some gold, shell, and feather ornaments, people went naked. These tribes used hammocks, wooden stools, dugout canoes, spears, lances, clubs, bows and arrows, slings, and shields. They took coca and tobacco to obtain visions.

## THE BETOI AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

The *Betoi* and their neighbors may be classed as Tropical Forest in culture, although in some respects they were little more developed than the hunting and gathering tribes to their east in the llanos of eastern Colombia. They were farmers but carried on much hunting and fishing. Their villages were small and were frequently moved. Each consisted of one or more communal houses sheltering an extended family. In some cases the village apparently was limited to a single extended family, and local exogamy was therefore practiced. The village head man was the oldest person or one of the older persons of the community. An anomalous feature found among the *Airico* was hired laborers, paid with shell disk money.

Religion was limited to belief in a sun god (*Betoi*) and other mythological beings, but there were no priests or idols. The shaman performed as medicine man and used snuff of "yopa" powder. There were no

temples or group religious ceremonies, but each village had a festival house in which men assembled to drink chicha.

These tribes carried on warfare, using clubs, bows and arrows (poisoned among the *Lucalia*), axes, and lances, but the purpose and nature their fights are not known.

Female infanticide is reported. The dead always received direct earth burial.

Manufactures were limited to ceramics, bark cloth, mats (*Anabali*), calabashes, and dugout canoes. *Betoi* chiefs wore bark-cloth garments; *Jirara* and *Airico* women wore genital covers made of leaves. Bodily adornment consisted only of paint and feather crowns. Musical instruments mentioned are flutes, fifes, and wooden signal drums.

#### THE OTOMAC AND GUAMO

These tribes contrast sharply with their primitive hunting and gathering neighbors, and their presence in the area is unexplained. It is of interest that archeology in the llanos of Venezuela shows an early extension of an Andean culture nearly to the Orinoco River. Kirchoff (p. 439), however, likens these people to Central American tribes.

The villages were reputedly large, but chiefs seem to have controlled groups of houses, not whole villages. Though life was regimented with respect to warfare, there is no evidence of a class system. Warfare was mainly against *Carib* raiders, and women participated in battles, helping the men.

There was no temple cult. The moon, probably a supernatural being, had a special connection with women. The *Otomac* believed they were descended from stones. The shaman performed as medicine man and cured by sucking out stones. Curing was also accomplished by smearing blood on the patient; a child's tongue was pierced and his own blood smeared on his body. Circumcision was practiced at puberty. No Andean burial forms are reported; a body was given earth burial and later reburied in a cave.

Subsistence was based on fairly intensive farming which was done by men on flood plains, but food plants were limited to one kind of maize, sweet manioc, pineapples, and several roots. People slept on the ground under palm-leaf mosquito nets. Industries included the manufacture of finely woven cotton, ceramics, calabash containers, palm-fiber baskets and bags, and dugout canoes. Clubs, bows, and unpoisoned arrows were among the weapons. Feathers and other ornaments were worn in profusion, but there was no gold, and the only garment mentioned is men's wide cotton belts. In their festivities people drank chicha, took coca, played the trumpet, and bled themselves. They also played the rubber-ball game.

## THE ACHAGUA AND SÁLIVA

The *Achagua*, *Sáliva*, and probably some of the adjoining tribes, such as the *Puinave*, were well advanced above the *Guahibo* and their other hunting and gathering neighbors, but they had few Andean or Sub-Andean features. Their probable possession of patrilinear, totemic, exogamous sibs and an ancestor cult links them mainly with the *Tucanoan* tribes of the Northwest Amazon (Handbook, vol. 3).

These tribes were farmers, and they had fairly large, palisaded villages, many of which evidently consisted of a single communal dwelling and a separate men's clubhouse. The villages were probably impermanent, however, for they were moved at the death of an occupant. There is strong evidence that the *Achagua* had patrilinear, exogamous, totemic sibs, each perhaps localized. The village had a chief but accorded him few privileges except that of access to vestal virgins of some kind. A *Sáliva* chief had to endure a pepper and ant ordeal before taking office. There were no social classes. The main grouping outside the family was sexual: men foregathered and held drinking bouts in their clubhouse, from which women were barred.

Trophy taking, cannibalism, and capture of slaves and sacrificial victims are not reported, and there was no warrior class. The *Achagua* and *Sáliva* fought mainly defensively against predatory tribes, such as the *Carib*, *Caberre*, and others, which sought to enslave them.

Presence of the temple cult is suggested only by the *Sáliva* sculptured "demons," which were consulted as oracles. The *Sáliva* held ceremonies in honor of the Creator, and they also worshiped the sun and moon. *Achagua* masked men represented deities in a ceremony from which women were excluded. (Cf. the *Tucanoan* ancestor cult, Handbook, vol. 3, p. 889). The *Achagua* also had a first fish ceremony. Among their gods were a supreme being and special gods of cultivated fields, riches, fire, fate, and madness, and one that holds the earth. Witchcraft and divination were strongly developed in this area.

The *Sáliva* shaman sucked, blew on, and anointed his patient in order to cure him and purified people and objects with smoke from a cigar containing copal.

The *Achagua* practiced female infanticide. At a *Sáliva* funeral special paraphernalia and trumpets were used and later thrown into the river. The body was buried and subsequently disinterred, cremated, and the ashes drunk with chicha. The *Achagua* buried in a sealed grave.

The main items of *Achagua* material culture were: Bitter manioc and the tipiti; bows and poisoned arrows (the *Caberre* were the principal producers of poison); fish nets; fish drug (barbasco); basketry shields; well-developed basketry; netted hammocks and women's skirts, probably both of hemp or other wild bast, but no true weaving; men's breechclouts; ceramics in some variety of forms; calabash vessels; wooden stools; dug-

out canoes and pole rafts; body paint; shell bead necklaces (used also as money); necklaces and ear and nose ornaments of pearls; silver pins (post-Columbian?), but no goldwork; tattoo, but not as an insignia of status; hollow-log drums; trumpets; and "yopa" snuff used for divination.

#### THE PACIFIC COAST TRIBES

The low, densely forested and now unhealthy regions of the Pacific coast stretching from Ecuador to the junction of Panamá with South America was occupied by peoples with backward cultures. On the Colombia coast were the *Chocó*. On the Ecuadorian coast Andean influence from the Highlands and from the Peruvian coast had implanted advanced cultures (see Handbook, vol. 2, p. 780), which surrounded a primitive enclave, the *Cayapa* and *Colorado*, who adjoined each other on the western slope of the Cordillera.

#### THE CHOCÓ

The *Chocó* were slash-and-burn horticulturists, but they grew only food plants and lacked domesticated cotton and tobacco. They relied considerably on fishing, using nets, spears, arrows, and a drug, but no hooks, and on hunting with the blowgun and dart and the bow and unfeathered arrow. They made bark cloth, twilled and woven basketry, calabash containers, pottery, dugout canoes, one-piece wooden stools, men's loincloths, women's wrap-around skirts, ear and nose ornaments, and round pole-and-thatched houses, often on piles. They had coiled basketry, one of the few modern survivals of this technique which North and South American peripheral distributions and archeological evidence show to have been very old and once probably very widespread. They lacked metallurgy. Textile weaving was introduced only recently. Like the Andean tribes, they slept on the platform bed, but they had the hammock as a cradle.

*Chocó* society was not stratified; instead there were exogamous, patrilineal lineages that were probably clans. Chieftainship was weakly developed, there is no evidence of a war complex with trophies and cannibalism, and shamanism takes the place of the temple cult. Some Highland influence has crept into the local context, however, for the shaman's fetish staff, which is believed to contain his spirit helper, and the infant's doll, which is alleged to embody its guardian spirit, may well reflect the idol complex of neighboring tribes. Shamanistic curing through exorcising malignant spirits is a somewhat distinctive practice, and the wooden models of boats with spirit images used in training shamans are unique. Supernatural beings, besides guardian spirits and spirits' helpers, include the culture hero, good and evil spirits, and ghosts. A girl's puberty observance involved her isolation, as usual, but the use of the scratching stick is another old, widespread element that usually has survived only

in peripheral areas. The main musical instruments are the panpipes, flutes, skin drums, and hollow wooden drums. The ceramic art is anthropomorphic and zoomorphic.

#### THE CAYAPA AND COLORADO

The *Cayapa* and *Colorado* differ from the *Chocó* in specific elements rather than in the general organization of their culture. According to tradition, they descended from the Highland and thus may once have had a more developed culture. Information about them is comparatively recent, but there is little to suggest Andean patterns. Their culture, like that of the *Chocó*, is Tropical Forest in many specific elements. A trans-Andean spread of some of these appears very possible in view of the fact that the *Colorado* actually traveled across the Andes to the *Canelo* on the eastern slopes to obtain fish poison.

The *Cayapa* and *Colorado* cultivate not only food plants but cotton and coca (*Cayapa*), and they keep guinea pigs. The *Colorado* take fish with nets, traps, hooks, and drugs. Houses of both tribes are frame and thatch, those of the *Cayapa* being on piles. The *Cayapa* sleep in hammocks, the *Colorado* on platform beds. The bow and arrow and the dugout canoe were used by the *Colorado* but not by the *Cayapa*. Both have blowguns, but the former shoot darts from them, the latter clay pellets. Cotton weaving, twilled basketry, metates, and crude pottery are probably common to both tribes, but metallurgy is not reported for either. Calabashes somewhat replaced pottery among the *Cayapa*. Dress of earlier periods showed Highland influence, even the poncho being reported. Fronto-occipital head deformation was recently found among the *Colorado*.

Villages are small, those of the *Colorado* consisting of one house, those of the *Cayapa* of three or four pile dwellings, each sheltering several families. Perhaps the social unit inhabiting the *Cayapa* house is a patrilineal lineage, for there is some tendency to patrilocality. Chieftainship is not well developed, nor are there social classes, a temple cult, or a war complex. At the time of the Conquest, however, the *Colorado* were described as warlike and "idolatrous," but as lacking chiefs.

There are few data on puberty observances, except the *Colorado* nose-piercing and cayapi-drinking rite for boys. The games which the *Colorado* played as part of mourning wakes are a Highland trait. Both tribes bury their dead.

Musical instruments of probable aboriginal origin are panpipes, flutes, drums, and rattles.

Religion involves good and bad spirits; the latter cause lightning, thunder, and other evils. Among the *Colorado* and probably the *Cayapa*, shamans deal with these spirits. To cure disease the *Cayapa* shaman exorcises an evil spirit, and he also sucks. Two ritual elements link the



*Colorado* with the *Montaña*: the belief that disease is caused by the intrusion into the body of sharp spines, which the shaman "sucks" out, and the use of *cayapi* (*Banisteriopsis caapi*).

#### THE HUNTING AND GATHERING TRIBES

The principal distribution of the hunting and gathering, or Marginal, tribes is in the Gran Chaco, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego (Handbook, vol. 1) and around the perimeter of the Amazon Basin (Handbook, vol. 2). The second group includes the *Shirianá*, *Waica*, *Guaharibo*, *Auaké*, *Calianá*, and *Maracaná* of the Amazon-Orinoco watershed. Other primitive hunting and gathering tribes, who are described in the present volume, occupied the llanos or plains of the Orinoco Basin and a portion of the Antilles. The *Guaiquerí* and *Guamontey* were scattered along the lower Orinoco River; the *Guahibo*, *Chiricoa*, *Yaruro*, and others lived west of the upper Orinoco in western Venezuela and eastern Colombia; several groups lived in the plains around Barquisimeto near the Sub-Andean *Timoteans* in the Venezuelan Andes; and the *Ciboney* were a Marginal peoples of the Antilles.

These tribes unquestionably represent retarded groups, peoples who remained in dry plains, where farming was not suitable, or in isolated places, where the Circum-Caribbean and Tropical Forest cultures did not reach them. They have in common the absence of the technological and socio-religious features of the more advanced peoples rather than the presence of any characteristic complexes.

#### TRIBES OF THE ORINOCO BASIN

All these tribes were hunters, fishers, and gatherers. The *Yaruro* formerly cultivated a little maize but have now given it up. There were no permanent villages; the *Guaiquerí* and *Guamontey* lived in movable grass-covered houses; the *Guahibo* simply sleep under trees or portable mats or in hollow trees, and the *Yaruro* in temporary palm-covered shelters. The *Guahibo* sociopolitical unit is the band of about 30 persons, who hunt and make war under the leadership of a headman. They are described as nomads, leading a gypsylike life. The *Yaruro* social unit is the extended matrilineal family, but there are also exogamous moieties. In warfare it is possible that the pre-Conquest *Guahibo* took slaves to use in trade, but there was no cannibalism. Religion is virtually unknown. *Yaruro* mythology holds that the moon goddess, who is the sun's wife, is the creator, and there is a story of a culture hero. *Yaruro* shamans seem to get their power from the moon, which helps them cure sickness. In their performances they smoke cigars, drink chicha, and take a narcotic root.

Hunting devices include bows and arrows (which the *Guahibo* sometimes poisoned). The *Yaruro* use disguises, harpoon arrows, fish arrows,

and fishhooks. The *Guaikerí*, *Guamontey*, and the tribes around Barquisimeto used to cook in skin-lined earth ovens, and the *Guahibo* and *Yaruro* over a fire. The last two tribes use wooden mortars. The *Yaruro* have pots but rarely boil food in them. None of these tribes uses salt.

Few of the Circum-Caribbean and Tropical Forest technologies are present. The *Guahibo* and *Yaruro* make woven baskets, but there is no loom weaving. The only recorded textile manufacture is hammocks, and these are netted of palm fibers. Pottery is made by the *Guahibo* and *Yaruro*, that of the former being "beautifully" decorated. The *Guahibo* make decorated calabash containers.

The *Guahibo* use carrying baskets and dugout canoes, the *Yaruro* the carrying net and rafts.

Clothing is limited to the *Guahibo* men's penis cover and the *Yaruro* men's breechclout and women's girdles. The *Guahibo* have body paint but no ornaments; the *Yaruro*, labrets, arm and leg bands, and necklaces.

The *Guahibo*, *Yaruro*, and the tribes of Barquisimeto have the hammock; the *Guaikerí* and *Guamontey* used to sleep on skins on the ground.

The *Guahibo* use rattles, flutes, and panpipes, and they take parica snuff for magical purposes and when going to war.

#### THE CIBONEY OF THE ANTILLES

The little-known and now extinct *Ciboney* occupied the Guaicayarima Peninsula of Haiti and at one time the greater part of Cuba. They are thought to have come to the Antilles from Florida. They represented a marginal survival of very primitive hunters and gatherers, and they are known mainly through archeology.

These people depended primarily upon sea foods, lived in caves or temporary shelters, and practiced primary and secondary earth burial and cremation. They used clubs, various shell artifacts, chipped-flint daggers, clubs, stones (thrown with slings?), breechclouts, and shell ornaments. There is no record of their basketry and weaving, but they lacked farming, houses, pottery, metallurgy, metates, zemis, and other traits characteristic of the *Arawak* and did only a little work in ground or polished stone, which was manifest especially in stone mortars, axes, and balls. The bow is reported but may be post-Conquest.