A1041 Mex-Colima-Vessel of squatting man-Terra cotta-300 BCE–400 CE

 

 



Figs. 1-5. Colombia-Colima-Southern Highlands, ca 200 BCE–400 CE - Vessel with squatting man.

**Case no.: 9**

**Accession Number: A1041**

**Formal Label:** Colombia-Colima-Southern Highlands, ca 200 BCE–400 CE - Vessel with squatting man

**Display Description:**

The **Western Mexico shaft tomb tradition** or **shaft tomb culture** refers to a set of interlocked cultural traits found in the western Mexican states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and, to a lesser extent, Colima to its south, roughly dating to the period between 300 BCE and 400 CE, although there is not wide agreement on this end-date. Nearly all of the artifacts associated with this shaft tomb tradition have been discovered by looters and are without provenance, making dating problematic. The first major undisturbed shaft tomb associated with the tradition was not discovered until 1993, at Huitzilapa, Jalisco

The Colima culture was the successive amalgamation of Ilama, Yotoco, Sonso, and Malagana cultures. This culture produced two distinct styles of funerary masks that applies to this figurine’s facial structure. One was with protruding cheeks and hollowed eyes as in this figurine, while the other style emphasized wrinkled skin and was painted reddish brown (Shelton 1996: 209-210).

**LC Classification:** F2270.2.C24

**Date or Time Horizon:** ca 200 BCE–400 CE

**Geographical Area:**

**Map:**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ancient_Western_Mexico_Archaeological_Sites.svg)

Western Mexico archaeological sites. The orange circles show archaeological sites. The larger green circles highlight the most important sites. Note that the sites form what has been called the "shaft tomb arc" which extends from northwest Nayarit through the central Jalisco highlands and down to Colima. After https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d3/Ancient\_Western\_Mexico\_Archaeological\_Sites.svg/525px-Ancient\_Western\_Mexico\_Archaeological\_Sites.svg.png

**GPS coordinates:**

**Cultural Affiliation:** Colima

**Media:** ceramic

**Dimensions:** H 97.31 mm; 6.35 in.

**Weight: 263 gm; 9 ¼ oz.**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** unknown

**Discussion:**

The four cultures that make up the Colima are:

1. Ilama culture

By 1500 BCE the Ilama culture, the first Agricultural-Pottery society, appeared along the Calima River, near the present day towns of Restrepo and Darien. Its society had a social structure of Cacicazgos (chiefdoms) that prevailed until the arrival of the Spaniards. The economy of Ilama was based on textile weaving, metallurgy, hunting, fishing, and agriculture. Yuca and beans were primary crops. The Chief or Cacique was the leader of the settlement. Other occupations were Chamanes (spiritual leaders), warriors, farmers, hunters, pottery men, and goldsmiths. Their ceramics were typically red and black, featuring religious imagery.

1. Yotoco culture

By 100 CE the Ilamas developed into the Yotoco Culture, which expanded their territory further into the Cauca River and the Pacific Ocean and to the south to the region of what is now the city of Cali.

The Yotocos prevailed in the region until 1200 CE and were a highly stratified society headed by caciques, which managed several settlements. The population had increased, forcing them to develop effective agricultural techniques to feed its population which also improved the techniques on pottery and metal works. They created polychrome ceramics and introduction of hammered goldware. The agriculture of the Yotocos was more varied than that of the Ilamas and was based on maize, yuca, beans, arracacha, achiote among others. The Yotoco started declining in the 6th century CE.

1. Sonso culture

Sonso culture (500–1200 CE) flourished during the Late Period I. Population increased, government became more centralized. Sonso culture was marked by fewer ceramic styles, and their goldware was lost wax cast tumbaga.

1. Malagana culture

The primary archaeological site for Malagana culture is Malagana. Dating from 300 BCE to 300 CE, the site was discovered in 1992, and an estimate four tons of artifacts were looted from it in a matter of days.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calima_culture#cite_note-2) This culture produced fine, burnished ceramics, predominantly white or terra cotta in color. Ocarinas, large bottles, and alcarrazas, double spout and bridge vessels, become common.

**References:**

Morand, Calima, Marie-Claude Marianne Cardale de Schrimpff; Theres Gähwiler-Walder; Fondation Pierre Gianadda. 1991. *Colombie précolombienne*. Lausanne: Editions Payot; Martigny: Fondation Pierre Gianadda

Shelton, Anthony Alan. 1996. “South American, Pre-Columbian sec. VIII, 4 (ii) Masks: Chronological and regional styles.” In *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner. London: MacMillan, v. 29: 209-210.

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