

53 COLOMBIA c) San Agustin, pre-Hispanic  
stone sculpture

The first description of this large center of pre-Hispanic culture located on the headwaters of the Magdalena River in the vicinity of the present-day village of San Agustin, from which its name was taken, is found in a book by the Spanish friar Juan de Santa Gertrudis who visited the region in 1757.

Subsequently visited and described by travelers of various nationalities, the region was first seriously studied by the German archeologist, Konrad Theodor Preuss, who worked there from 1913 to 1914. In 1935, the Colombian Ministry of Education purchased a large tract of land in order to put the principal ruins under government protection, thus establishing an Archeological Park.

In spite of the great amount of attention it has received, the San Agustin culture is still little understood. Its beginnings go back to the 6th century B.C. and the area covers several hundred square kilometers.

The main archeological features found at these sites are earthen mounds, megalithic temples and shrines, tombs and sepulchral chambers and large monolithic statues, some of which are shown in these slides.

The statues are distinguished by their fierce and menacing mien and monumental size and by the variety of ways in which the human eye is represented. Several statues have a so-called alter ego representation, a second figure crouching on top of the head, or shown as if climbing over the back and shoulders of the statue. While most of the figures are of humans with disproportionately large heads, a variety of animals is also represented.

- 53A Figure with snake in its hands
- 53B Figure with round eyes with protruding pupils and fangs
- 53C Figure with weapons in both hands
- 53D Figure with square eyes and rectangular mouth
- 53E Figure with square eyes and rectangular mouth
- 53F Figure with round eyes, protruding pupils
- 53G Figure with oval eyes, holding another small figure in both hands
- 53H The Archeological Park
- 53I Another view of figure 53D and 53E
- 53J Figure with semi-circular eyes in the foreground and alter ego representation in the background

Bibliography:

G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, Colombia, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1965.

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51 COLOMBIA a) San Agustin, pre-Hispanic  
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- 51A Alter ego representation
- 51B Alter ego representation
- 51C Predatory bird in the foreground, another view of figure no. 1.
- 51D Figure with semi-circular eyes
- 51E Monolithic figure holding a baby by the legs with its head hanging down
- 51F Figure with round eyes as in slides Nos. 6, 14, and 16.
- 51G Figure with oval eyes, also shown in no. 29
- 51H View of the Archeological Park
- 51I Predatory bird with snake in its mouth, also shown in no. 3
- 51J Figure with alter ego representation

Bibliography:

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52 COLOMBIA      b) San Agustin, pre-Hispanic  
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- 52A Figure with weapon in each hand
- 52B Full figure with feet, "toeing in", grasping staff in each hand
- 52C Warrior with protruding round eyes and weapons in each hand
- 52D Round-eyed figure with hands clasped over waist
- 52E Predatory bird with snake in its mouth
- 52F Figure with square eyes and rectangular mouth
- 52G Figure with elongated eyes
- 52H Monolithic figure
- 52I Figure with eyes formed by a half-circle
- 52J Crescent shaped eyes and eyebrow, square mouth and with both hands clasping a weapon

Bibliography:

G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, Colombia, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1965.