DENVER ART MUSEUM

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DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN ART

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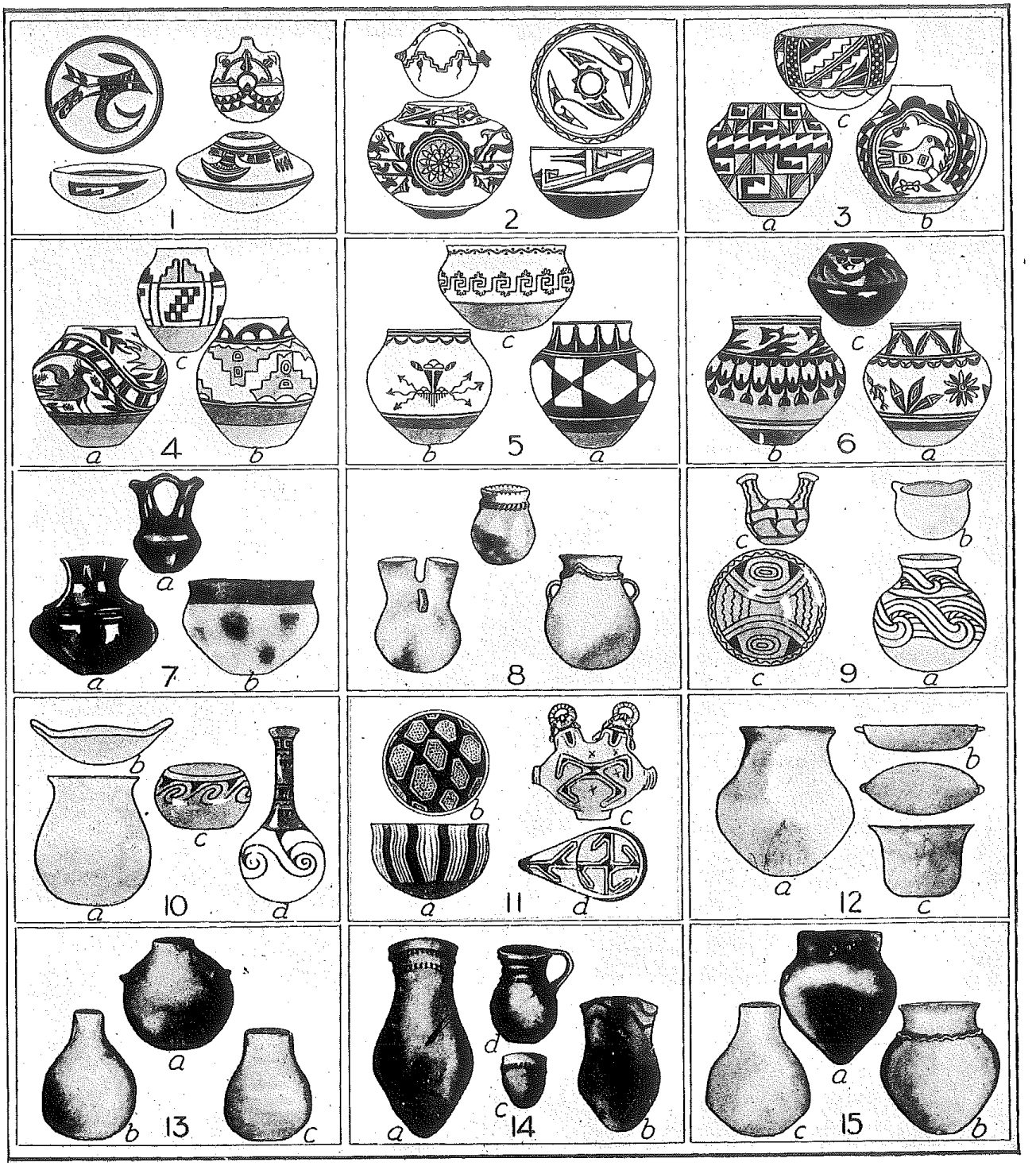

POTTERY *of the* SOUTHWESTERN TRIBES

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1. INTRODUCTORY. Pottery making in the Southwest has been widespread throughout the area and still is an important craft among some tribes. Four major branches may be distinguished: Basketmaker—Pueblo; Hohokam; Athabascan; and Shoshonean. This last group does not include the Hopi because they are Puebloan in culture despite their Shoshonean language. The Basketmaker—Pueblo branch includes the prehistoric Basketmaker race and both prehistoric and modern Pueblo tribes. The tree ring dating system shows that this branch began to make pottery about 300 A. D. The Hohokam branch includes the prehistoric non-Pueblo peoples of southern Arizona called today the Hohokam, and the following modern tribes; Pima, Papago, Maricopa, Yuma, Mohave, Cocopa, Walapai, Havasupai and Yavapai. The beginning date for the pottery of this branch is as yet undetermined, though it was being made early in the Christian era. The Athabascan branch includes the Navaho and Apache, and the Shoshonean, the Ute and Paiute. Information as to the age of their pottery processes cannot be given definitely. The subject is considered in reference 4. The Athabascans have been in the Southwest for six or seven hundred years and either brought pottery making with them or learned it soon after arrival. Nothing very definite can be said about the Shoshoneans.

2. TECHNICS. Southwestern pottery can also be placed in two grand divisions on the basis of technic. In one, coiling is used—See Leaflet 6—and in the other coiling plus paddle-and-anvil is the method. The difference lies in the method of shaping and smoothing the vessel walls. When coiling alone is used the work is done with fingers and gourd scraping tools. By the paddle-and-anvil method the walls are roughly built up with superimposed coils or rings and given a final form by striking the outside with a wooden paddle against a rounded stone or clay implement, the anvil, held inside the wall. Coiling is the method of the Basketmaker-Pueblo, Athabaskan and Shoshonean branches, and paddle-and-anvil that of the Hohokam branch with the exception of the Yavapai, who use the coiling method.

3. SLIP. This word refers to a thin mixture of colored clay and water applied to pottery to create a monochrome background and a smooth surface capable of being polished by friction, or suitable for receiving a painted decoration.

4. HOHOKAM. It is not absolutely certain that the modern tribes listed here under this heading are descendants of the ancient race of southwestern Arizona, though the available evidence indicated a possibility that this is true for some of these tribes. The term is used here as a convenient means of grouping those modern tribes whose wares are united by similiarities of design and technic.

5. PREHISTORIC POTTERY cannot be discussed in this leaflet because of limited space. Between 300 and 1800 A. D. the Pueblo group produced something like 500 varieties of pottery and from an undetermined date up till about 1800, the Hohokam created another large series of varieties. Both

branches reached their greatest heights of excellence in the 13th to 15th centuries, A. D. The prehistoric period ended among the Pueblos in 1540, but so little is known about the pottery made between then and about 1800 that in this leaflet the modern period about which anything is known begins at that date. The same holds true for the Hohokam.

PUEBLO—BASKETMAKER BRANCH

6. HISTORICAL NOTE. Up till 1700, when the Spanish conquest was finally completed, the field of Pueblo pottery making had been divided up into a number of large areas within which the various towns made wares which had a general regional similiarity. But after the reconquest of 1700 each of the surviving towns began to make its own types of pottery, a practice which persists today. For details about the varieties made today see Leaflet 53-54, and for details of Pueblo pottery making see Leaflet 6, preferably the second edition. For a list of modern Pueblo towns see Leaflet 45-46.

7. MODERN POTTERY. About 40 types of decorated pottery are made or have been made until recently in the existing Pueblo villages. These have been described in more detail in Leaflet 53-54. Undecorated cooking or utility wares are made in a number of towns. The groupings of these types in their relationship to prehistoric types will be discussed in a future leaflet. Thanks largely to the demands of commerce, pottery making is an active art in most pueblos, and in a number of towns vessels are still made for use in the native homes. A brief summary of the chief modern wares follows:

Starting in the western part of the Pueblo area we find the Hopi of northern Arizona making a ware (1) characterized by the presence of an unslipped background mottled in the cream-to-orange range of color. Red and white slipped wares are also made. All are decorated with black and red designs largely made up of highly conventionalized birds or parts of birds, with geometric elements much used as small details. The designs show a wide range in variety and invention. South of Gallup, New Mexico, lies Zuñi. Here the more usual decorated pottery (2) has a white slip bearing black designs sometimes combined with red. A small group of elemental designs is used in a limited number of combinations. Life forms, both conventionalized and semi-realistic, are usually present, although the basic treatment is geometric. At Acoma (a and b), Laguna, and Isleta (c), lying between Gallup and Albuquerque, New Mexico, are made closely related wares (3). These have white slipped backgrounds on which are painted, in combinations of black, red, brown, yellow and orange, elaborate organizations of small geometric elements. At Acoma two rather realistic bird forms, representing the parrot (b) and the road-runner, are often used.

In the Jemez river valley northwest of Albuquerque lies another group of three villages which produce related wares (4). These are Tsia (a), Santa Ana (b) and Jemez (c). Of these, Tsia is the most productive of pottery, the art having been almost entirely abandoned at Santa Ana and existing at Jemez

only through the efforts of a few Tsia women who live there. The pottery of this group displays, on new pieces, a white or tan slip. At Tsia black, red, orange and yellow paints are used. In the other towns black and red, alone or in combination, appear. Tsia design, beside a basic geometric system, has rather massive combinations of conventionalized and realistic life forms. Long legged and long necked birds and realistic flowers are notable. At Santa Ana broad red bands in rather geometric organizations were the rule.

Along the Rio Grande valley in New Mexico are three town whose pottery has much in common (5); Santo Domingo (a) and Cochiti (b), between Albuquerque and Santa Fe; and Tesuque (c), somewhat north of Santa Fe. In these towns a cream slipped ware with rich black designs is made. Details of design differ widely. Santo Domingo has bands of severe geometric figures, Cochiti shows rather scattered organizations of elements largely taken from heavenly phenomena and plant forms, and Tesuque favors simple, curvilinear elements and narrow bands executed with a notably thick line and often surrounded with outlines of dots and worm-like lines.

Related in design to the wares of these towns are the many kinds of pottery made at San Ildefonso, north of Santa Fe (6). Besides a black-on-cream pottery with designs having a general family resemblance to the wares just discussed, this town makes a cream ware with black and red designs (a), a black-on-red ware (b), plain polished red and plain polished black, a few pieces of pink and white on red and white-on-red, and much dull black on polished black (c). This last is the pottery which has brought fame to Marie Martinez and several other women. The available space does not permit even brief notes on these many wares.

Near San Ildefonso are Santa Clara and San Juan (7). The standard wares of these towns are plain polished red and plain polished black, Santa Clara favoring the latter, and San Juan, the former of these types. At Santa Clara the slip covers the whole vessel (a), while at San Juan it comes only to a little below the middle (b). A little very simple relief modeling is the only decoration on these wares. San Juan has recently been making unslipped, unpainted pots decorated by incising or carving, in the manner of prehistoric pieces from the nearby ruin of Pioge.

At Taos and Picuris, some 75 miles north of Santa Fe, pottery is made of a mica bearing clay which burns to a mottled color (8). The ware is not decorated except by the placing of molded fillets or scallops of clay around the necks of pots. This form of decoration is possibly due to influence derived from an Jicarilla Apache source.

HOHOKAM BRANCH

8. PIMA AND PAPAGO. (9) Pottery making was not a highly developed art among these tribes of southern Arizona. It appears that a little known tribe of the Piman stock, the Kwahadk, which has long been closely affiliated with the Pima and Papago, has produced the best pottery in the group and

strongly influenced the other two tribes. Large, rather tall globular jars with flaring rims were made for water storage (a). Pots of similar shape but shorter were used in cooking. Other forms were canteens, shallow trays for parching grain, and bean pots (b) having the rim horizontally expanded in two places into lug handles. The water jars were either buff with an unslipped, rather rough surface and with red designs principally made up of groups of curving lines, or plain red, somewhat polished. Forms to be brought in contact with fire were undecorated.

In more recent times smaller vessels in many shapes have been made. They have a red (c) or, less often, a cream background, polished to some extent and bearing simple designs in a brownish black. They have a general likeness to modern Maricopa ware, but are less highly finished. Informants say that the designs are adapted from those found on prehistoric Hohokam pottery and have no significance.

9. MARICOPA. (10) Pottery making is and long has been very common in this and two associated tribes, the Halchidoma and Kohuana. While large quantities of pottery are made for sale and home use, the ware is not considered to be of very good quality. The older forms were wide mouthed, more or less globular pots and jars (a), shallow trays (b), cups and ladles. Spoons have been made in modern times. Cooking vessels were not decorated. Water jars and ladles were plain red. Bowls and small forms were red or white with simple black designs. In former times decorations were not common.

In recent times much pottery has been made for the tourist trade in a wide variety of shapes, mostly rather small (c and d). This ware has a somewhat dark red slip, highly polished, bearing black designs. Cream slip is also used and often both red and cream are used in one piece (d). The designs, usually groups of curving lines with small areas of solid color, are derived from Hohokam pot sherds. This modern Maricopa ware and related types from the Pima and Papago can be distinguished from Pueblo pottery by their combination of a highly polished red or cream slip with black designs. No Pueblo black-on-red or black-on-cream wares have this high polish.

10. MOHAVE (11), **YUMA AND COCOPA** (12). Pottery making among these tribes is nearly extinct today. The ware has a reddish buff unslipped background bearing designs in red paint. The shapes are wide mouthed jars and pots in several sizes (12a, Cocopa), quite deep bowls (11a; 12c, Yuma), shallow trays (11b; 12b, Yuma) and ladles (11d). Vases with curious, high-nosed human faces crowning the necks are a local specialty (11c). The heads have earrings and necklaces of china beads. Many of the designs are all over repeat patterns such as deep zigzags with the angles filled in solid, hexagons in outline, groups of concentric oblongs, solid triangles and squares, solid squares with a T-shaped outline, and solid swastikas. Lines paralleling the main figures and dots between the designs are very common. Sometimes these elements are placed in isolated positions with blank spaces between them. The outsides of bowls are commonly decorated with vertical

parallel lines. Among the Mohave the designs are named for objects in nature such as spider, rain, coyote tooth and fish backbone. Both the shaping and painting of the pottery are inferior in quality when compared with the best Pueblo work. The Mohave used much more decoration than the Yuma or Cocopa.

11. HAVASUPAI, WALAPAI AND YAVAPAI. (13) None of these tribes ever attained much skill in pottery making and the art is extinct today, though a few old people remember the process. The pottery was relatively crude and of a natural earth color not covered with slip. The Havasupai used no decoration and the Walapai painted a few simple red designs suggestive of Mohave work but inferior to it. The Havasupai made only a globular cooking pot (a). The Walapai made jars and pots, bowls, spoons and pipes. Both Walapai and Yavapai mixed cactus juice with the clay.

The accounts of Yavapai pottery differ. The older describes the ware of the northeastern and western bands. This ware was made of red clay and was thin and brittle. The shapes were large shallow bowls, cook pots (c), and globular water jars with small necks (b), all decorated with straight or zigzag lines darker or lighter than the background. Saliva was mixed with the clay and the hands were kept wet with saliva. The newer account, describing the southeastern band, says that there were no designs and that the clay was sometimes colored with red mineral pigment. The shapes were the same as above, but the use of saliva and cactus juice is not mentioned.

ATHABASCAN BRANCH

12. NAVAHO. (14) Pottery of today is made in very few shapes, all closely related. The most common form is a deep slender pot with a rather conical bottom, slightly constricted mid-section and somewhat flaring, long neck. The larger shapes, (a), 20 to 30 inches high, have the most sharply marked angles and were used for dye pots. The smaller forms (b) are often almost cylindrical and were cooking utensils. These pots may be turned into drums by stretching skin over the mouths. Small deep bowls (c), and pitchers (d) formed by adding a handle to a small cook pot are sometimes seen. The pottery is reddish-brown and shiny with a coat of pinyon gum when new, but use soon turns it a sooty black. The only decoration is given by one or two molded fillets around the neck. These fillets have more width than height and have coarse corrugations. The outer surface of most pieces is scored with a corn cob while still wet. Vessels of these types are still made by the Navaho, largely for ceremonial use.

Formerly a painted ware was made in several shapes, bowls, canteens and dippers. According to reference 17, this ware was decorated with designs in color after baking, a most unusual practice. The designs were bird, animal, plant and cloud forms. The few pieces of this painted ware which have survived have a tan slip with black designs.

13. APACHE. (15) Very little is known about Apache pottery, which has not been made for many years and is very rare. That of the western Apache

of Arizona is known from only a dozen or so pieces. These are shaped something like the pots of the Navaho but have a somewhat larger upper section (a). They are black and smooth inside and out. The ware is quite thin and is undecorated. The juice of a plant, *Sphaeralcea emoryi*, was mixed with the clay and rubbed over the surface before firing. The pottery of the New Mexico Apache, apparently largely Jicarilla, is made of a micaceous clay of a coppery color which soon blackens with use. The outer surface is often scored before drying. There appear to be two common forms, a rather tall globular pot with a wide mouth and a narrow flaring neck (b), and a pear shaped bottle with a small neck and mouth and a slightly flaring rim (c). The only decoration is in the form of fillets molded on the neck or shoulder. In contrast with similiar fillets on Navaho pottery, these are higher than wide or of equal dimensions, have a wavy crest rather than a corrugated one and often appear in isolated sections instead of a continuous band.

SHOSHONEAN BRANCH

14. UTE AND PAIUTE. These two tribes belong more to the Plateau area than to the Southwest, but are such close neighbors that they are mentioned here. Because of lack of investigation little can be said about their pottery except that rather crude cooking pots with conical bottoms were made. They were brownish-black and undecorated. See reference 22 for recent findings.

Compiled from the following sources by F. H. Douglas:

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Illustrations. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23 and 24.

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