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1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Cabécar, Chibchan, Talamanca

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com):

cjp

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

9°59'47"N 84°7'0"W

1.4 Brief history:

The Cabécares are believed to be of Talamancan descent. In fact, much of their language is of Talamancan origin (5). There are three Talamancan groups located in southeastern Costa Rica, of which the Cabécares are one. The other two groups are the Bribri and Boruca. "The Bribri and Cabécar are in the townships Buenos Aires, Turrialba, Matina, and Talamanca." (5). Currently, there are six Cabécar reservations: "on the Atlantic, Nairi-Awari, Chirripo, Tayni, Telire, and Talamanca-Cabécar; on the Pacific side, Ujarrás." (2). Additionally, many Cabécares live among the Bribri due to intermarriage (2). The earliest possible date of contact could have occurred in 1502 when Columbus landed in Limón (5). However, the Spanish conquistador, Juan Vásquez de Coronado certainly contacted the Talamancan Indians by the mid 16th century (2). At which point the Indians were organized into chiefdoms (2). They managed to retain traits of their ancestral chiefdoms until the mid 20th century (2). In the 20th century land disputes arose, and in response, the establishment of reservations by the Costa Rican government (2).

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

Until the 1970s, the Cabécares did their best to isolate themselves from the developing schools, churches, businesses and foreign people around them (2). But today, Cabécares have begun to acculturate into modern Costa Rican ways of life: "They are people in varied stages of acculturation, but many are now taking part in the national environment and life of the republic." (1). This includes attending mass (1). Additionally, Cabécar residences have begun to transform: "With the increase in population and the shortage of land for cultivation, as well as the reduction of the forests, the patterns of Bribri and Cabécar settlements more and more resemble those of the Spanish towns." (2).

1.6 Ecology:

"For about 1,800 meters above the plain of Talamanca is rain forest where many edible fruits, nuts, and medicinal plants are found. Inland, behind this zone and extending over the continental divide, is an area of cloud forests broken only by small patches of paramo on the highest crests. It is extremely rugged country with the south side being steeper than that of the Caribbean." (1)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density:

Population of 9,860 in 2000 (2). The Cabécar do not live in "villages" in the European sense of the word (1). In fact, there is no term for "village" among these people (1). "The Bribri and the Cabécar traditionally preferred a more dispersed pattern of homesteads than did the Boruca. Until the 1970s, they did not really have a "village" because they distanced their homes from schools, chapels, and other public buildings." (2). With regard to density, "They live in neighborhoods; they cannot be called villages, the houses being scattered over an extensive area and at distances of from one to several hundred yards apart." (3).

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

The Cabécares depend on maize, beans, manioc, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, peach palms and cocoa (2).

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

Hunting and fishing supplement their highly agricultural lifestyle (2). Additionally, since contact, Cabécares have relied on domesticated pigs, chickens, turkeys and ducks to supplement their diet (2).

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

They utilize bow and arrow technologies: "Their bows and arrows are described as similar to what I have seen elsewhere, except that the arrows are not supplied with any harder points than those furnished by the pehi balla wood." (3). Blowguns are also used: "the blow gun, a tube longer than the person, is in constant use." (3).

2.4 Food storage:

Baskets are used to store some forms of food in the house: "Suspended from the roof are baskets of from one to three cubic feet capacity. They are usually made of a peculiar, very hard, and very flexible vine. These are the trunks of the people, and in them are kept their clothing and all of their little personal treasures and ornaments. They are also used for storing corn or other seeds, like beans, the basket being then lined with leaves to prevent spilling. The women also use them for carrying water calabashes." (3).

2.5 Sexual division of production:

Men are in charge of clearing the land, and raising the livestock (2). Women are expected to participate with men in planting, harvesting and transporting crops (2). Typically, as men clear land, a woman will follow close behind often carrying goods (2).

2.6 Land tenure:

Villages in the European sense of the term have never existed for all Talamancan groups (1). Instead, clans control land and provide for their members (1). Although families formerly owned all land, individual ownership has become the norm due to government administration (2). Reservation land is held by the Indian development associations, but individual property rights of Indians is recognized (2). "Keeping land in Indian hands has been a very complex and conflictive issue." (2).

2.7 Ceramics:

These people do use ceramic pottery (3).

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

There are two prescribed feast occasions: "The feasts are of two classes; the death feast already described, and re-unions for labor. In the latter case; when a person wants to do an extraordinary piece of work, like clearing a piece of forest for a plantation, he provides a suitable quantity of food, and especially of chicha. On the day appointed his neighbors unite early at his house, or at the spot designated, and work industriously until about noon. All then repair to the house, and, after a good round of chicha drinking, food is served, followed by more chichi." (3).

2.9 Food taboos:

Various food taboos apply to pregnant women, these include: eating from a pot, leaf or plate. Failure to adhere to these taboos can cause the death of the unborn child (2). Tapir meat is also taboo, and is to be avoided by pregnant women, lest their child be "stricken dumb" (2). Additionally, three periods of fasting are observed: "The first is only when ordered by the U-se'-ka-ra on great public occasions. This is general and simultaneous over all the country. Sufficient food is prepared beforehand to last for three days, the usual time fixed. During those three days, no fires are lighted; the food is served and eaten in silence; no unnecessary conversation is allowed; the people stay strictly inside their houses, or if they go out during day time, they carefully cover themselves from the light of the sun, believing that exposure to the sun's rays would "turn them black"; no salt or other condiment is used in the food; no chocolate is drunk, and even tobacco is forbidden. The second kind is similar, though less rigid than the first, and is voluntary; the same restrictions are observed with reference to fires and food, but the people may talk and go out, avoiding, however, carefully all chance of contact with bu-ku-ru'. The third is still more limited, and is the individual fast already referred to for cleansing from bu-ku-ru'." (3).

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

These people use canoes to hunt fish (3).

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

Anthropometric data for this group proved hard to come by in the ethnographic record, but one source did include some measurements: "The following measurements taken from my servant, a full grown man, who is not more than an inch, if so much, under the average height, will give a fair idea of their build. He measures in height, 5 ft. 1½ in., circumference of chest, under the arms 35¾ inches; of hips 34 inches, of waist 33¾ inches, length from axilla to tips of the fingers, 24½ inches; leg, from the groin to the ground, 29 inches." (3).

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

This is not mentioned in the ethnographic record.

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

Menarche typically occurs between the ages of 12 and 14 (2).

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

Birth statistics (inter-birth interval, average age of parents at birth) are not covered in the ethnographic record.

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

No exact numbers are present in the ethnographic record. However, most sources provide a summary of the family along these lines: "Bribri-Cabécar children are welcome, and children of relatives are easily adopted, but, as with the Boruca, the traditional preference may have been for small families." (2).

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

Birth statistics (inter-birth interval, average age of parents at birth) are not covered in the ethnographic record.

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

Age at first marriage arrives with the onset of menarche in females (thus, on average between the ages of 12 and 14) (3).

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

Either party can initiate divorce: "the marriage lasts as long as it suits the convenience of the parties. In case of infidelity on the part of the woman, or undue cruelty on the man's part, they may separate. Sometimes, if the woman is unfaithful, the man whips her severely, and perhaps returns her to her family, or she, in a fit of resentment, leaves him. This may be for a year or so, or may be final; but during such separation either party is at liberty to make new connections, thereby remaining permanently apart." (3).

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

Polygynous marriage is the norm (1), (2). Man is expected to marry his bride's sisters (1). Simultaneously, however, "there are several cases among the Cabécares of a woman and two or three men living in the same house. The woman washes and cooks only when she feels like it. When she doesn't the men take care of her." (1).

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

It is expected that when a man marries a woman that: "the couple lives from eight days to one year in trial marriage in the house of the girl. The boy works for her family cultivating the land, chopping wood, etc., until he takes his woman away to his parents' home. He must also give the girl material for dresses, which she makes into clothes. If he already has a wife then he gives a present of food or animals to the new woman's family and visits her periodically until he feels it is time to take her to his home or his parents' home." (1).

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

Inheritance patterns have changed through time among these peoples: "The property understood as individual and which can be handed down at death pertains to personal effects and the house. When a man dies his property goes to his brothers and sisters. If he has a mother they go to his mother. When she dies they go to whomever she wants to leave them, a son, daughter, etc. Today, however, everything goes to the children—not to the wife. The wife remains as guardian for the children. When a man dies without leaving an

adult son, his head wife receives everything, but she is obligated to take care of the other wives until they remarry. The eldest son receives the greater portion, but all children have a share.” (1).

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

This is not mentioned in the ethnographic record.

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

Homosexuality is not mentioned in the ethnographic record.

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

There is a pattern of exogamy (persons of the same clan may not marry) (3).

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized?

“A child originates from the mother, while the father is only a sower of seed.” (4). Paternity is not partible, and only one father is recognized.

4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”)

The mother is considered to be the main source from which the child springs; it is the father’s role that is downplayed (4).

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

This is not mentioned in the ethnographic record.

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

No mention of rape, or sexual coercion is recorded in the ethnographic record.

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

There is no preferential category of spouse, however one must marry outside of one’s clan distinction (3).

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

Although marriage is typically arranged for women by the time they come of age, they have the liberty to divorce their partner (3).

Furthermore: “during such separation either party is at liberty to make new connections, thereby remaining permanently apart.” (3).

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

Although “infidelity is not rare” (3), the giving of gifts to extramarital partners is not covered by the ethnographic literature.

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

This is not addressed in the literature.

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

This is not covered in the ethnographic record.

4.22 Evidence for couvades

Couvades are not mentioned in the ethnographic record.

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

There is no evidence for the recognition of multiple fathers.

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

Brother-sister avoidance taboos are enforced (2).

4.24 Joking relationships?

Joking relationships are not addressed in the ethnographic literature.

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

This group follows the matrilineal pattern of descent (4).

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

There are strict taboos against sexual relations among brothers, sisters, and cousins. “Cousins, even to a remote degree, are called brother and sister, and are most strictly prohibited from intermarriage. The law, or custom, is not an introduced one, but one handed down from remote times. The penalty for its violation was originally very severe; nothing less than the burial alive of both parties. This penalty was not only enforced against improper marriage, but even against illicit intercourse on the part of persons within the forbidden limits.” (3).

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

There is no formal ceremony for marriage (3).

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

One author reveals the ways in which one can be named: “The matter of names is very loose and arbitrary. It is almost impossible for a stranger to learn the true name of an Indian, directly from the person himself, although his friends may divulge it, and this is looked upon almost in the light of either a breach of confidence, or a practical joke. After long acquaintance, they may be prevailed upon, but even then are more apt to give a false name than to tell the truth, so great is their reluctance. One fellow, who was my servant for over three months, after always denying having a name, at last told me a pet name, or “nick-name” that he had had as a child. It is customary for children to have provisional names, or to be called only “boy” or “girl” as the case may be, until the whim of an acquaintance or some equally arbitrary circumstance fixes a title to them. Besides the native name, generally derived from some personal quality, or not seldom the name of some animal or plant, almost all of the Indians possess a foreign name, by which they are known, and which they do not hesitate to communicate. Among themselves, when the name is unknown, a person is called by the name of the place where he lives.” (3).

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

Marriage typically occurs within the community (1), (2). However, marriage of the Cabécar to the nearby Bribri is not unheard of, although those who do chose to marry Bribri do not remain in Cabécar territory (1). The only strong taboo that exists with regard to marriage is that one cannot marry any of one’s mother’s relatives (i.e. one cannot marry within one’s matrilineal clan) (1).

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

The matrilineal clan controls marriage: "one cannot form a union within a blood group related to one's mother. The control of the family falls to the mother if she is alive." (2).

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

One ethnographer notes instances of conflict: "the man visits his prospective wife three times. He asks her parents' permission to marry and, particularly on the Pacific side, he asks his parents. There have been a few cases in this area when permission was denied. Then, the couple ran away to other indigenous communities of different tongues, for example, the Cabécares among the Bribri or vice versa." (1).

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

Although the Cabécar are known to have had some instances of warfare, exact percentages of casualties have yet to have been reported.

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

One author notes the extremely low amount of ingroup violence: "Few, if any fights occur" (1). Outgroup violence, most notably the war with the Terribis has occurred (before historic contact), but seems to be low as well (1).

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

This is not covered in the literature.

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

The Cabécar are in contact with two neighboring groups, the Terribis, and the Bribri (1), (2), (3). There is a history of conflict with the Cabécar and Terribis (1). The Cabécar have also been subject to the rule of the Bribri at various points in their history as well (1), (2).

4.18 Cannibalism?

No evidence of cannibalism.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

No exact data exist on group size. The ethnographies all note that the Cabécar do not live in villages, and instead they: "traditionally preferred a more dispersed pattern of homesteads." (2).

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

This group does not practice seasonal mobility, and is largely sedentary (1). Their homes are known to last up to 10 years, and they are known to stay nearby when constructing a home (1).

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

According to one source, the Cabécar lack their own political system, and are entirely subjugated to the rule of the nearby Bribri tribe: The Cabecars have no chief of their own, but are entirely under the rule of the Bri-bri chief, and have been, from time immemorial. Their subjugation is, in short, complete." (3). Furthermore, "the Tiribis and Cabecars are under the political rule of the Bri-bris. The form of government is extremely simple. One family holds the hereditary right of chieftainship, and up to 1873 the reigning chief had theoretically full powers of government. The succession is not in direct line, but on the death of the incumbent, the most eligible member of the royal family is selected to fill the vacancy. Often a son is passed over in favor of a second cousin of the last chief. The present chief is first cousin of his predecessor, who was nephew of his predecessor, who was in turn a cousin to his." (3). Other sources however, note that it is clan distinctions among the Cabécar that makes up much of their status distinctions (1), (2).

5.4 Post marital residence:

Initially, the couple will follow a matrilineal or uxorilineal residence pattern after marriage (2). Typically this is followed by neolocality (2).

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

Territoriality is not highlighted in the ethnographic literature.

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

Social divisions by age and sex are not present (2).

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

The possible existence of joking relationships is not addressed in the ethnographic literature.

5.8 Village and house organization:

Villages are unknown among these people (1), (2), (3). Instead, "they live in neighborhoods; they cannot be called villages, the houses being scattered over an extensive area and at distances of from one to several hundred yards apart. The houses are low, consisting of a roof, pitching both ways from a ridge pole, and resting on very short but very thick posts. This is thatched with palm leaf and is entirely open at the ends and sides, under the eaves." (3).

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

Specialized village structures do not exist for the Cabécar, who's inhabitations consist only of dispersed homesteads (2).

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

They sleep in hammocks (3).

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

The Cabécares are divided into matrilineal clans which developed out of moieties (1).

5.12 Trade:

"Markets" as we know them are unknown among all Talamancan groups (1). However, trade was still practiced "among itinerant groups or in areas set aside for this purpose." (1). Common trade products include: "Products of the sea, such as salt and chaquirá, shell

beads which served as a medium of exchange, were important items in pre-Columbian times. Also in demand were gold, wild pigs, slaves, and cotton cloth.” (1).

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

Clans and “the professions connected with them” form social hierarchy (1). “Certain clans are still associated with professional or social standing.” (1). Food taboos are maintained by certain distinguished clans (1).

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

RCR plays a large role in the lives of the Cabécares. One ethnographer notes that children are taught important rituals, ceremonies and taboos early in life: “Parents also are responsible for teaching tribal customs, for example: the clans with which one can marry; tabus; the baptism of one's self with salt water when seeing the sea for the first time.” (1). Time allocation to RCR for shamans, and aspiring shamans is a great deal higher: “Although there is no fixed time required for preparing to become a medicine man, it usually takes from two to six years, depending upon the capacity of the novice's memory. The first six months are intensive. The apprentice goes for three days without eating. He makes a lean-to in the woodland out of all the herbs he can gather, edible and non-edible, and stays there for two days so as not to see the sun. At night he can go outside. During this period, the medicine man appears and teaches the ritual songs.” (1). No exact figures exist within the ethnographic record.

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

The principle practitioner of RCR among the Cabécar is the shaman (1), (2). He is to be seen for any cure to any bodily ailment, and also plays an integral role in all rituals (1). The shaman is a prestigious position, and requires training: “The position is not hereditary although a medicine man's son can become one and frequently does. Study and knowledge of forest lore are requisites, and any bright boy who wants to study and has enough money or produce to pay a teacher can, with time, become a medicine man. It is a question of attaching oneself to a recognized curer who is willing to teach and adhering to a strict training.” (1).

6.2 Stimulants:

The shaman uses tobacco during various rituals, and also facilitates its use among others (3). For instance, the shaman is said to blow tobacco smoke onto women who have just given birth to facilitate the healing process (3).

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

With the onset of menarche, the Cabécar perform a very specific ritual: On this first occasion a house of plantain or banana leaves is constructed apart from the dwelling and so arranged that light is not permitted to enter. The girl is fed only by her mother and follows a strict diet consisting almost entirely of fruits, with the exception of bananas, and no salt. Furthermore, she cannot drink water other than that from a well or a place where the water is not flowing. When her period is over, she bathes in a spring that is almost dry. The medicine man gives her copal (*Protium Costarricense* [Rose] Engler) bark to chew and a drink made from plants and roots. This beverage prevents menstruation for two months. After that the flow comes regularly. At no time when menstruating can the girl serve men at meals, and during this period she must stay aside even in her home, abstain from salt, and drink from a gourd apart from the rest.” (2). However, the most important rituals during the life cycle of an individual come after death (1). There are two ceremonies connected with death: “The first takes place when the individual dies, and the second and most important is held about a year later and can be called a bone funeral as well as burial. During each there is a feast at which the remains of the deceased are present.” (1). Furthermore, “The principal figure in these rituals is the medicine man, known in Bribri and Cabécar as the jawá. Next in importance today is the Burier who handles and wraps the dead. Then follow the Singers whose place is now generally taken by the medicine man as well as that of the Preparer of Feasts. A medicine man, particularly on the Pacific side, functions in all of these positions. Among the Cabécar, there is a minor group known as the já, and among the Bribri the arich(ə)k, who need no special training but who prepare the things for the dead to take with them without touching the body.” (1).

6.4 Other rituals:

See above.

6.5 Myths (Creation):

The Cabécar have a very distinct creation myth: “At the beginning of the world, there was only rock and no people. *sibu* passed and noticed excrement in which plants were rooted. It occurred to *sibu* that this was good to cover all the rocks so that there might be animals and plants of every kind. He hunted all over the rock to find what had left the excrement and discovered a vampire which had feet like a bird and walked like a bird. *Sibu* asked the vampire what he ate which caused his excrement to raise plants. The creature replied that he nourished himself on the blood of a little jaguar which he sucked when the mother was not present, and that this animal was to be found very deep below the rock. *sibu* wanted the vampire to accompany him to see the young jaguar, but he could not penetrate the stone. He called his cousin, Thunder, to use his enormous shotgun. Thunder told *sibu* to kneel down and to close his ears. Then he shot three times at the rock and broke it. It was then that *sibu* saw that the little jaguar had his umbilical cord tied to his grandmother. *sibu* quickly cut it and carried him away. He rubbed the small animal on the rock and the creature went to pieces easily. When the little jaguar's mother returned, she noticed that her son had disappeared and commenced to search for him. *sibu* had been prepared for such a move, however, and built a wooden deer which immediately turned into a real one and cried like a little jaguar. The mother, thinking it was her beloved son, ran to meet him. When she found that she had been deceived, she stretched the legs and the neck. This is why deer have long necks and legs. And this is how earth was made.” (1).

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

The Cabécar have musical instruments (drums, rattles) which are used in times of mourning after a death (1). Toys often include: “mostly diminutive copies of the tools and weapons of more advanced age. The machete of the man is represented by a good sized knife, often the only article worn by the boy; the long hunting and fishing bow is foreshadowed by one a yard long, perhaps made of a simple piece of wild cane; the blow gun, a tube longer than the person, is in constant use; and I have seen some few actual toys such as

a top made of a large round seed with a stick through it; and a rattle differing only in the degree of care in the making, from those used by the priests in their incantations.” (3). Decorative and representative art are not covered in the ethnographic record.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

Only males can become shamans (1). Furthermore, all of the positions held in the aforementioned death ceremonies are male (1).

6.8 Missionary effect:

According to one source: “The early Spanish recognized the Bribri and Cabécar linguistic groups, but treated them as a single nation because of their very close similarities in language and institutions. Both groups managed to retain a high degree of independence and isolation from European influence well into the twentieth century.” (2). As such, many Cabécar have maintained their cultural practices in ritual and ceremony. However, an increasing presence of the Catholic church in Costa Rica has led to the conversion of some, and the alteration of some traditional customs (1).

6.9 RCR revival:

Not applicable, the Cabécar have maintained their RCR traditions in spite of an increasing Catholic presence in their area.

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

The Cabécar believe that in the year following the death of an individual, that individual’s spirit: “prowls around, living on wild fruits, of which the wild cacao is the only one of which I know the name, although others were also pointed out to me. At the end of that time, when the funeral fire is kindled, the spirit is thus attracted to the feast, whence it departs on its final journey. When I asked an Indian where it went, he responded, to the country of Si-bu’, and in reply to the question; where is that? he pointed unhesitatingly to the zenith. On inquiring where the road was, he told me it was invisible to the eyes of the living, but that the spirit (wig'bru) could see it.” (3).

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

There is no recorded evidence of a taboo of naming the deceased.

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

There is no recorded evidence of teknonymy.

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

There is a belief in powerful spirits, and a “God” (1), (2), (3). With regard to “gods” or spirits: “Of Gods, deities, spirits, or devils, there are as follows; the “great spirit” or principal superhuman being is called Si-bu’ by the Bri-bris and by the Cabecars; by the Tiribis he is called Zi-bo’, by the Terrabas Zü-bo’ and by the Borucas, Si’-büh. A good spirit, from whom nothing is to be feared, he receives a sort of passive respect, but no adoration or worship. He is rather looked on as the chief of the good country, of the future state, but as not troubling himself much about mundane matters.” (3). The evil spirits, or devils are “are minor personages, who receive no worship of any kind. They are called, Bi, by the Bri-bris and Cabecars.” (3). There is also a belief in magic, which is where the shaman derives his power (1), (2), (3).

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

“Painting is somewhat in vogue, to assist in the adornment of the person, but is not confined to either sex. The commonest manner is to color each cheek with a square or parallelogram, about an inch across, either solid or made up of bars. This is done with the dark reddish-brown sap of a certain vine, and the pattern resists wear and tear, and water for a week or more. Anatto is also used, but more rarely, and is applied in bars or stripes to the face, according to the skill or taste of the artist.” (3).

7.2 Piercings:

There is no mention of piercings in the ethnographic record.

7.3 Haircut:

“Both sexes are marked by an almost perfect absence of hair from all parts of the person except the head; where there is a dense growth of coarse, straight black hair. This the women plait with considerable taste. The men wear theirs cut moderately long and of an even length all round; or a few retaining an older fashion, have it a little over a foot long, apparently its entire natural length, and either let it stream loosely over the shoulders, gather it into two plaits, or twist it into a roll, bound with a strip of mastate, and coiled at the back of the head in a round flat mass.” (3).

7.4 Scarification:

There is no mention of scarification in the ethnographic record.

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

Feathers are used among males in adornment: “The men sometimes wear head dresses made of feathers. The most highly prized are the white downy feathers from under the tail of the large eagle. Others are made from chicken feathers, or are worked in rows of blue, red, black, yellow, &c., from the plumage of small birds. I have seen one head-dress made of the long hair from the tail of the great ant-eater, in the place of feathers. The feathers are secured vertically to a tape and extend laterally so as to reach from temple to temple, curling over forward at the top, the tape being tied behind, so as to keep the hair in place.” (3).

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

Various occasions called for variations in adornment: “on festive occasions, during short periods of group work in building a house, clearing forests, hauling logs for a clan grave, etc., men still wear headdresses made of white feathers and of macaw and eagle feathers. Formerly the *usegLa* wore necklaces of jaguar teeth. Today, boys use these necklaces “to get them used to hunting and take away fear of the jaguar.” Beads made from sea shells are mixed with these teeth.” (1). Headdresses are also worn by prominent males during burial ceremonies (1).

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

Men and women wear various ornaments, these can include: “The eyes of the fish hawk give the future fisher the power to see his prey beneath the water; the teeth of the tiger (also worn by both sexes for purely ornamental purposes), when used as an amulet makes the

future hunter swift and strong in the chase; the hairs of a horse make him strong to carry loads, and a piece of cotton pushed inside of her girdle by a white man, is certain to make the child of a lighter complexion.” (3). Males will also frequently wear teeth of hunted animals around his neck, as well as using feathers for headdresses (3). With regard to female adornment: “they use great quantities of glass beads. I have seen fully three pounds of beads around the neck of one old woman, and she was the envy of all her friends and neighbors. Even little girls are often so loaded down that the weight must be irksome to them. Money is often worn by the women.” (3).

7.8 Missionary effect:

As mentioned previously, the Cabécar have managed to maintain many of their traditional practices in spite of a growing Catholic presence in their area (1). The quote from the previous question refers to traditional adornment practices that were observed by an ethnographer in the early 1990’s.

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

Not applicable, the Cabécar have maintained their adornment traditions in spite of an increasing Catholic presence in their area.

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

Cabécar kinship terminology is “bifurcate merging for the first ascending generation; sibling-cousin terminology is of the Iroquoian type; second ascending generation and second descending generation use reciprocal terms that distinguish Ego’s mother’s side from Ego’s father side, and sex. Siblings address each other by the same term when the sex is the same (sister to sister or brother to brother) but vary the term when addressing siblings of the opposite sex.” (2).

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

In years past, “the practice of sororal polygyny was widespread – and more acceptable than the occasional occurrences of it in recent years.” (2).

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

Sibling-cousin terminology is of the Iroquoian variety (2). Additionally, the Talamanca have practiced bilateral cross-cousin marriage. (2).

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

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