

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PERUVIAN TOMB POTTERY,
AND
SOME OBJECTS OF GOLD FROM SOUTH AMERICA,
IN THE MUSEUM OF JOSEPH MAYER, ESQ.,

F.S.A., &c., &c., &c.

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POTTERY, which did not excite by its nature the rapacity of the Spanish conquerors, has been better preserved than many other objects of Peruvian antiquity.*

If we examine the principles of plastic art among different nations, we find that although the artists intended to represent a whole figure, yet, wanting in skill, they exaggerated the relative size of the parts, so in this Peruvian modelling the nose and ears are above their natural size. Among the Egyptians, long figures predominate; among the Peruvians, short and bulky ones. In most of the Peruvian specimens the head forms the principal part, indicating that the artist exhausted upon it all his skill: the body is a deformed mass, and the extremities are appendages of least importance. As regards the head, one of the best illustrations is that of a *Chimu chief* from Trujillo, as seen in the frontispiece to my book on *South American Antiquities*:† the original I have deposited in the British Museum.

It would appear that the plastic art originated at the time when nations, leaving their fundamental or monotheistic re-

* See Rivéro and Tschudi *Peru. Antiq.* translated by Dr. Hawks.

† Antiquarian, Ethnological and other Researches in New Granada, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, with Observations on the Pre-Incarial, Incarial and other monuments of Peruvian nations. Trübner, London, 1860.

ligion, became converted to polytheism. Among the Peruvians we discover in their Huaqueros, sacred or tomb pottery; beginnings of the art, and in them and the vessels destined for the sacrifice of the deities we trace its progress. A critical examination attests that the works of art of the country governed by the Chimus (on the coast), and those found in Cuzco, far in the interior, at more than 10,000 feet above the sea, the capital of the Incas, are much more perfect than those which are seen in the Sierra and on the coast of central Peru.

The moulded works of the Peruvians have a peculiar character which distinguishes them from those of other American nations. Some of them bear a certain resemblance to the forms presented by the old continent—especially the most simple; such are some seated figures, which have an Egyptian type; vases which may pass for Etruscan; blackish vessels, resembling those of the Celtic-Germans.

The skill of the Peruvian potter was laid out upon the manufacture of the Huaqueros, which they placed with the bodies (*mallquis*) in the tombs (*machay*).

The cooking pottery and other vessels are very simple and without art. The material used was of coloured clay and blackish earth, which they prepared so well, that it resisted fire, and did not absorb liquids. It seems that they did not burn the vessels, since the substance of these differed materially from burnt clay, and judging from appearances, they dried it in the sun, after having prepared and mixed it in a manner of which we are ignorant.

The greater part of the sacred vessels buried with the bodies, and destined to receive the chicha of sacrifice (a drink prepared from Indian corn) on feast days, have an enlarged neck, placed ordinarily near the handle, with a hole to pour out the liquid, and an opposite opening for the air to escape when the vessel is filled. Many are double, quadruple, sextuple and octuple; that is, the principal vessel is surrounded with regular ap-

pendages, which communicate among themselves with the principal vessel. The double ones were made in such perfection, that, when filled with liquid, the air escaping produced at times musical sounds; the sounds sometimes imitated the voice of an animal which was represented by the principal part of the vessel. Sometimes vases, which being filled with water through a hole in the bottom, on being turned over lose not a drop of water—the water coming out, when it is wished, by simply inclining the upper part of the vase; which proves that the Peruvian artists had perhaps some knowledge of atmospheric pressure.

On many of the sacred vessels there are designs and painting, which give an idea of the progress of the art of design among the Peruvians. The architectural designs with straight lines are correct and even beautiful. Some of the painting, as seen at p. 203 of my book, on a vase from Berué (Trujillo), is probably the Chimú god of war. There is another worthy of notice, which is seen very often, either painted on vessels of clay, or engraved on their arms, or worked in raised work in gold or silver, and represents a man with the arms open, holding in his hand staves or lances (*chuquis*), and the head covered with a broad cap. There is no doubt that these figures represent deities; others have long garments, and on their head a species of mitre, probably intended for Priests of the Sun. These last are Incarial.

I find no account of the employment of the potter's wheel or table in Peru. None of the ancient Peruvian Pottery that has come under my observation is glazed (although they had plenty of salt and even salts of borax). I suppose that the sacred vessels found in the tombs were made by, or under the superintendence of, the priests. The household pottery (*manca*) was made by the working potter, who was called Saña Camayoc.

After the conquest, Spain supplied earthenware to its colonies; China a considerable quantity, by way of the Philippine

Islands; but in our own times, England principally manufactures for South America.

There is a potter's clay in Quito having a delicate fragrance. A similar clay is met with in Chile, and in some of the convents in the capital there are made from it jars, bowls, cups, &c., which are painted, gilt and varnished; these vessels communicate a pleasant smell and flavour to the water put into them, said to proceed from some bituminous body in the clay. I have some of this pottery, but it appears to me that the greater portion of the fragrance has been given to it by cloves, vanilla, or such like aromatics.

I now come to the examination of the interesting collection of Peruvian pottery in Mr. Mayer's Museum.

FROM HONDURAS.

There are three Tasas, on tripods of earthenware, from the island of Ruatan. These were found on the top of a high hill, among what appeared to the finder, Captain Fraser, the ruins of an altar. The tripodal arrangement is met with as far south as Chiriquí (100 miles north of Panamá), but I have not noticed such from further south. (Plate III.)

PERU.

From this country there is a large collection of sacred pottery; however, the only one labelled is from Trujillo, north of Lima, the land of the ancient Chimu chiefs, who were conquered by the later Incas. In my work I give some particulars of this district, rich in antiquities; and I am now preparing some observations on the ruins in that region, particularly as regards the large mound tombs (some of which, I have no doubt, contain rich objects in gold and silver), and the ruined palaces and walls of the city of the Chimus, so different from the Incarial and other Peruvian monuments.

The object from hence is a double vase composed of two pelicans. It is ornamented with fourteen smaller ones, and has a lizard at the spout. (Plate III.)

I will now advert to the red coloured pottery, which may have been manufactured principally by the coast nations (not Incarial). These have been extracted from the Huacas or tombs, and in many of the vessels was deposited the drink chicha.

The next important object is that probably of a priestess : it is a sitting figure. (Plate IV.)

There is a small stone head, the bust of an Orejon, Chief, or Inca. (Plate IV.) These stone remains are rather rare. At p. 203 of my book I describe two stone busts from Huamanchuco, in this district. There are vases, slightly painted with ornaments. There are two crucibles, evidently for the melting of metals ; also many vases in imitation of various fruits.

The black pottery may be called Incarial—some doubtless from Cuzco, particularly those vases with figures of men, called Chuquis. One of these has also a deity, with the head of an animal : this is a rare representation. A grotesque figure, covered with heads of maize—these were the deities that guarded their fields of Indian corn ; models of shells ; human figure carrying a deer—the head of this figure has a very receding forehead ; the huacamayo, or sacred parrot ; a priest or priestess, with the llautu or Incarial fillet round the head ; water-fowl ; vase, with shell-fish of the lobster species ; pineapple : Indian corn ; lizards, &c.

The black pottery is of Quichua or Inca origin ; but there is an object which may be of the Aymara nations (conquered by the Incas) ; it is a small idol in red clay, with four black bands on the body.

To every student of ancient Peruvian history (which has yet to be written) the examination of the collection of pottery, as well as of the interesting series of coloured drawings, some

fifty in number,* in Mr. Mayer's Museum, will be found most instructive and suggestive.†

GOLD OBJECTS.

THE ancient Peruvians were much advanced in the art of refining and casting metals. They knew gold, silver, copper, tin, quieksilver and lead, but iron was unknown to them, save probably some casual specimens of meteoric iron. Gold, although it was among them the most esteemed metal, they also possessed it in greater quantities than any other. It is believed that the day will soon come when Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, in particular, will have withdrawn the veil which now covers great riches. One of the routes to this treasure is by the Amazon and its tributaries.

The Peruvians called gold "tears which the sun shed." They extracted it from mines and washings of the rivers. The silver they took from the mines only. They used the precious metals as offerings to their deities, to make idols and sacred vessels, and as tribute to the Incas. They knew how to melt the metal, cast it into moulds, to inlay it, solder and hammer it. The moulds were made of clay mixed with gypsum. The moulded metals are chiseled with such perfection, that we cannot discover in them the slightest inequality resulting from the mould. In some of these moulded figures, we discover bits of copper, silver and gold, so well inlaid that they seem to form a whole. It is generally thought that those objects handed down to us are of inferior workmanship. They had artificial gardens, the soil of which was made of small pieces of fine gold, and this was artificially sowed with different kinds

* These are, "A Series of Vases found in the graves of the ancient Peruvians, drawn from the original by W. B. Cooke." Some of these are engraved, I think by Mr. Ackerman.—W. B.

† See old Spanish Authors, Rivero and Tschudi "Antiguedades Peruanas," and English translation, by Dr. Hawks of New York.

of maize, which were of gold, the stems, leaves and ears of silver; and they were so firmly planted, that although they had strong winds, they were not torn up. They had llamas and their young of gold, and the shepherds with their slings and crooks guarding them made of this metal. Their Zodiac, or lunar calendar was engraven on gold. There were large jars, containing gold, silver and emeralds; vases like earthen pots, and other vessels of gold. The service of the Inca's palace was of gold and silver, except some parts which were of silver and copper, for the sake of strength. The Inca had in his withdrawing room hollow statues of gold, which were gigantic; and elsewhere figures of natural size, resembling animals, birds, trees, fish &c. There were imitations of grass ropes, sacks, baskets and knapsacks, all of gold and silver; heaps of sticks of gold, in the form of billets of wood for burning.

In the palace of Tumbamba, within the apartments, were bundles of gold straw, and on the walls were sculptured llamas and their young, birds and other things. They had many rich blankets, embroidered in silver and white "glass" beads—these were probably of rock crystal, as glass was unknown to them. There were, in gold and silver, viscachas (like the rabbit), lizards, snakes, butterflies, foxes, deer and fawns, pumas and jaguars (lion and tiger, or leopard, of America); birds of all descriptions, some placed on the trees as if singing, others flying about and sucking the honey. The Inca seated himself generally in a seat of massive gold, called the tiana; it was the third of a yard in height, and was placed on a square block of gold; it was 16 carats fine, and became the prize of Pizarro. The model of the sun was an immense mass of gold.

The following is a description of objects in gold, from South America, belonging to Mr. Mayer, and deposited in his Museum.

MEXICO.

A very fine and large specimen of Mexican workmanship,

in gold. It is a double-headed human figure, and may represent Ho and Thaloc, two of the Mexican trimurti (supposed), or other idols. (Plate V.)

NEW GRANADA.

Two articles, in gold, of frogs or lizards (Plate V); these were venerated by the Chibchas or Muizcas of Bogotá. The frog or toad was symbolic of water, rain and other things, as the number one; also played a curious part in their lunar calendar, which was generally an engraved pentagonal stone. I have given some readings of these engraved stones in my book on South American Antiquities.

There are also two figures, in gold, from the ancient tombs; they have been cast flat, the lower part of the mould having had the figure cut out in it. (Plate V.) Such are peculiar to this region. One is of pure gold, and has a staff, surmounted apparently by the guacamayo, or sacred parrot; these were taught to speak, then sacrificed. The other is of that sort called Guanin gold, probably a natural alloy; some specimens gave 63 gold, 14 silver, 9 copper. There is another figure, human, with head like guacamayo. There are also some gold earrings, having a stud, which was introduced into a perforation in the ear; also nose-rings; these are from Indian tombs at San Juan, in the province of Antioquia. The stone chisel is a good piece of workmanship. (Plate V.)

In the first section of my work, there are details of great treasure, in gold, taken from the tombs in New Granada.

PERU.

Two hollow figures, in silver, male and female—most probably from Cuzco. (Plate V.)

Mr. Mayer has been good enough to allow me to examine several objects in gold, from Peru, purchased in Lima by Joseph Hegan, Esq.

1. Is what I have called a similar one, a "gold mask," at p. 92 of my work; but, as Mr. Mayer has observed to me, we may look upon this object as a large ear-pendant. It appears to be the fellow to the one I have described and figured at p. 93 of my book, as coming from Cuenca, in Quito or Ecuador. The face is embossed, hollow rings are attached, and something like hieroglyphs cover the face; this may represent the war deity. The one I describe weighs 4oz. 19dwts.; its specific gravity is 14.07 (pure gold being 19.3); it is of light colour, owing to alloy with silver, but whether alloyed by the natives, or found in this state, is a question; if the latter, then we may look upon it as an aururet or electrum. Gold from Titiribi, in Colombia, gave gold 76.41, silver 23.12. These and other gold objects are found, after the rainy season, on the low lands—they are washed from the ridges of the mountains where the tombs are. This may have come from Cuenca, which is in 2° 57' S., 29' W. of Quito, from the beautiful country of the Cañaris, a nation contemporary with the Cara dynasty of Scyris, ere Quito was conquered by the Incas. The face of this gold object may be compared with that of the stone statue from Timaná in 2° N. (See p. 41 of my book for drawing.) (Plate VI.)

2. A pair of earlets, with one large ring; each is embossed in four compartments, having figures of animals on them (pumas). There are two nicely bored chalcedony beads in each. We do not know how this ancient people ground, polished or bored hard stones, particularly the emerald, which beautiful gem was in great abundance in Ecuador and New Granada. A large emerald was worn by the Scyri, or Chief of Quito, and was the royal insignia. (See pp. 20 and 84 in my book, on the subject of emeralds.) I made enquiry about precious stones when last in the New World, but could get no information in the districts I travelled over, except of the emerald. An Indian, of the province of Tarapacá (Peru)

brought me a rounded piece of stone, about the size of a pigeon's egg, or larger, telling me it was a diamond: on examination, it proved to be only rock crystal. Galvano, in the single volume of Hakluyt, gives an account of a large diamond, said to have been taken from an Indian in the region of Cumaná, in the province of Paria. I am not aware of any diamonds ever having come from this district. However, knowing as we do the geological character of the Brazilian diamond districts in the south (from 10° to 15° S., and 55° to 60° W.), an explorer might be repaid for his examination of Paria, on the Spanish main. Galvano says emeralds, sapphires and topazes exist in Terra Firme.

3. Plain round earlet.

4. Globular vessel, the lower half of silver, two inches in diameter. Some figures (human) I have seen made up of rings of gold, silver and copper.

5. Large hollow gold rings, ends closed.

6. Gold plate, nine inches in diameter.

7. Imitation of leaves of plants, one nineteen inches long, another ten and a half.

8. Eight pieces of gold—these are disks for ornamenting dresses.

9. Cascabels, or bells such as were worn by our morris-dancers.

10. A series of ten tubular objects joined; they appear to be intended for the guiding of strings.

11. Is a curious object, 1st, as showing the quantity of gold they had; 2nd, as a sample of their manufacture; and 3rd, their ornamentation, or depicting of something connected with office, or their religion of Inti or the sun. It is three and a half inches in diameter, two and a half wide, and has a place for the insertion of a staff.

12. But to me the most interesting is one labelled "Gold lining of an Inca temple from Tia-Huanacu, 15 leagues from "La Paz," in Bolivia. It weighs $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, $\frac{180}{100}$; is nearly a

square of $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. I may observe that at Tia-Huanacu, the ruins are anterior to the Incas (if we follow Garcilaso, who for the present is the safest guide, but Montesinos and others have to be critically examined on matters connected with the more ancient history of Peru, as to particulars of other dynasties than that of the Incas), for they looked upon the ruins of Tia-Huanacu with the same admiration as the modern Greek looks upon those wondrous monuments of old in his classic land. However, Maytacapac, the IV Inca, (died A.D. 1156) came to this spot, and after subjecting the people south of the Lake of Titicaca, he built a palace at Tia-Huanacu; thus I conclude that this piece of gold lining was most probably from the ruins of this said palace, and not from the old enigmatic ruins of Tia-Huanacu; which name was given to the spot, in consequence of the Inca Mayta saying to a Chasqui, or foot messenger, who had brought him news with great celerity, "Tia-Huanacu," rest thou, fleet as the Huanaco. But the original name of the country, or of the builders of these monuments here, some with symbols and hieroglyphs, is unknown.*

Thus it will be seen that gold was in great abundance then, as it still is; but in our times industry and population are wanting in Peru and Bolivia. The present population are too much engaged in grasping at power, which they have yet to learn how to use judiciously; this leads to continual civil wars. Then the Indians who were of the industrious races have dwindled away through the system of *encomiendas*, or grants of land with population on them; the cruel *mita*, or forced labour in the mines, and still more abominable *malaso*, or the assisting one tribe to war upon another, so as to take prisoners and sell them to the Spaniards. The Indian

* Lorente in his *Historia del Peru*, Lima, 1860, alludes to a tradition which gives the original name Tia-Huanacu to be *Chucabua*, and that it was built by a monarch named *Huyustus*.

has become apathetic, and may have lost all hope even of better times under the present republican governments.

The beautiful prayer of Ebenezer Elliot, commencing with

“When wilt thou save thy people—O God of mercy, when?”

has been heard from the Italian Peninsula: O when will it be heard from the long suffering Children of the Sun!

Unhappy, ill-fated America! Some, as in Mexico, first built altars to their own bloody gods, then they were dragged before similar tribunals the white man brought from Europe; and now the powerful vices and diseases of Europe are raging among many of these helpless creatures.