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THE ANDEAN AREA, IN A NUTSHELL

The Peruvian or Andean Area, archaeologically defined, is: that area lying between 2°50' North (near Esmeraldas, Ecuador), 38°50' South (near Concepcion, Chile); between the Pacific Ocean and the Lowlands bordering the eastern Andes.

The following resume is a combination of my own observations with those of others. I believe them sound, and I hope that they may give at least an idea of the higher spots of the more salient aspects of the Peruvian area which is the Mecca of some, and of interest to all, but which is rather fabulous with distance from home.

The Andean Area is a world compressed. It embodies all forms from tropical to arctic; from dusty plains to rain-soaked mountains. Longitudinally, it falls into three natural regions: the Coast, the Sierra, and the Montana, which are separated by merely hours of travel; latitudinally, it is divided into North, Central and South.

The Coast is narrow, averaging about 20 miles in width in the central and southern parts, and going but 60 miles inland in the north, where it is the widest portion of the Pacific Coast. It is, in general, rather unprepossessing and commonplace.

The climate of the coast varies from a humid hot in summer (December-March) to cool in winter (June-August). The period from May to September is characterized by dense fogs, which hide the sun for days at a time. Rain is rare. The Coast is fundamentally unhealthy.

The region of the Sierra is the Andean Cordillera. The Andes are in an early stage of geologic Youth, and have all the ruggedness and angularity which it implies. They smack of awe, and of majesty. They lack softness. Although quite like the American west in many respects, they are, in some way or other, more coldly impersonal.

The Montaña, which is east of the Andes, and which I, as yet, know only from pictures and from reading, is a lower land, soaked with rain, damp with humidity, and choked with verbage. Scores of species crowd each other to get into the range of a single photograph. It is dubbed by some as "The Green Hell," which they "go into" and "come out of" as a man "goes into" and "comes out" of prison. It is a vast storehouse of wealth, in metallic and agricultural richness, which is little exploited as it is a region hostile to human health. It, perhaps, of all Peru, holds most promise of a colorful future.

Throughout, the area has suffered grossly from the shovel in layman hands. The ruin surfaces are strewn with pieces ripped in cold blood from the ground. Pieces which should tell stories, but which are now mute. Ruins are opened not only for "treasure" and vessels, but for their ready supply of finished adobes, too. Although despoilment of ruins is theoretically illegal, it is a legitimate business in practice. The knowledge of many specimens corresponds remarkably to the market value of the type.

Basically, Andean Archaeology is no different from that of the rest of the world. It has the three regular kinds of archaeological testimony: 1. Existing remains not yet properly studied, if studied at all.

2. Culture elements that have been "pothunted" and scattered in museums all over the world.
3. Those remains scientifically excavated and studied.

And, in addition, for one specific culture, i.e., the Incaic, it has the more or less dependable Spanish Chronicles. The first kind

holds the most prospect for the future, the second is by far the most used to date, and the third, in the light of actual labor expended, is comparatively little.

Much has been written, and considerable is known about the area, but it is still wide open for investigation. It is still virginal. It is surprising to note how large the volume of our printed knowledge is drawn from study of collections brought promiscuously together by purchase from huaqueros * (U.S.S.W. pothunters). Full fledged, scientific, large-scale excavation is still rare.

The Peruvian Area, however, is not a land solely in the realm of archaeology. The variety of its possible contributions to science places it, indeed, in the entire realm of Anthropology; for, although it has a noble past, it likewise has an interesting present. Still, from the viewpoint of the archaeological specialist, if that is what we be - we must put special emphasis on the aspects of Archaeology and of Geography. The greater the command of these two departments on the part of both field and laboratory worker, the more valuable a man he will be. A caution, too -- there is no need for those souls who fly the banner of archaeological Science but whose main ambition is to cram the museum! And still another point -- as study of the area is still in an early phase and as foreigners will undoubtedly play their part in its future development, it is to be hoped that the gratifying local humane attitude of the present will not be swept aside, i.e., that it be remembered that human beings - people like ourselves - are responsible for the things we study. May the Lord deliver the area from the purely, "Ah, yes, Type #4, red on black on white culture. Put it on the left shelf," system of development.

The worker in Andean cultures has, as a rule, a vastly greater array of material wealth than most of the hemisphere offer to help him on his way, and to please his soul. He has elaborate mummies (dissicated, not embalmed) as well as skeletal material, and metal tools as well as those of stone, of wood, and of bone. He has pottery that depicts the contemporary life of its time as well as that which is purely decorative; and he has intricate textiles which supplement his pottery. However, do not think that all in Peru is fine, or even well developed! There are ~~remains~~ remains as crude as the crudest of our own Southwest as well as massive Inca temples. There were cultures definitely nomadic and savage as well as those definitely crossed through the threshold from barbarism into civilization.

There are three grand periods of pre-Columbian history

- here :
- | | | |
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| 1. Archaic | Early | |
| 2. Classic | or Middle | |
| 3. Incaic | Late, | and two phases: 1. Coastal |
| | | 2. Mountain. |

About a dozen cultures spread throughout the area offer a broad and varied choice to a prospective worker. Of these, the Chavin; Muchik, Nasca; Chimu, Chincha, and Inca, are the largest and best known of their respective epochs.

The Coastal phase is much better known, but is at present somewhat stalemated. It now depends upon further investigation, not so much in its own area as in the mountains, where correlations are believed to be hidden, which may explain some of the problems met to date. There remain whole regions all but un-

* Vessels are called "huacos", and mounds, or ruins are called "huacas." "Huacas" are also animistic gods or spirits that still rule in the mountain fastness.

known, and others rather incompletely known, due to their inaccessibility. These are entire areas offering Archaeology-making knowledge, and the joys of pioneering advancement. A golden opportunity for some altruistic soul to contribute an airplane and plenty of juice to make it go!

The local museums are small, and overcrowded. They are financially poor, but they do good work. Their publications are limited, and confined largely to newspaper reports.

The local public interest is overwhelmingly for the spectacular and the sensational; the scientific interest is limited to a very small nucleus.

The prices of most Peruvian commodities are fully as high as are those of the States, and for many things, even higher. The only low prices that I can quote are those of urban transportation, and those of the native crafts, the latter the rates of the provinces, at that.

In closing, may I suggest a few things which might be considered as absolute fundamentals, that should be secured before setting foot off U.S. shores, in order to assure an easy, tranquil, and purposeful jaunt around Peru. At least a Bachelor's degree, a broad anthropologic foundation, an interest in the area, a command of the Spanish language, plenty of money (at least fifty dollars a month for traveling even as lightly as we do), unlimited time; and last, and far from least -- a goodly supply of tobacco!

William J. Appel
Lima, Peru.

In a recent letter, Bill Appel writes from Calle Rifa 338, Lima, Peru, and gives a good idea of the way things are going down there. He has not been going to school regularly throughout the year but has been working at odd jobs from carpentering to selling "diet and calorie pamphlets to undernourished Peruvians". He does not recommend the last. Bill will be going home sometime in June and we should see him here next fall.

Things are very expensive in Peru; Bill says "The price of tobacco is heartbreaking. I now pay 40¢ American for a tin, and at that I am buying contraband at a little hole which an Englishman topped me off to."

Concerning the state of archaeology at San Marcos University and throughout Peru, Bill has plenty to say: "There are about 200 Anthropology students at San Marcos, but it is highly doubtful if there are 3 who are serious (statement of one of the professors My tentative opinion, based on interrogations of a number of students is that they do not know straight up". Bill should have his opinion well crystalized soon. He is about to attend classes at both San Marcos and Católica Universidad. Bill bewails the fact that in spite of the amount of wealth that is to be found in Peru, so very little goes for archaeological work. He confirms that which most of us had felt; that the dictator Benevides, is not forwarding the progress of his country. To use Bill's own words; "... this country is wealthy. The only element to benefit from it, however, is the War Department."

Few of us could read this paragraph in the letter without feeling mingled anguish and fury. I have seen six archaeologists read it so far and the results have been similar; a stricken look followed by lurid profanity. I quote verbatim: "Early in the year, a ruin up to the north yielded a number of gold idols and vases set with emeralds--- beautiful things!!-- the most gold that I have ever seen. They must weigh pounds all told, and with