

Latin-American Institute for Race and Culture Studies

THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM, THIRTY-THIRD AND SPRUCE STREETS, PHILADELPHIA

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LATIN-AMERICA is a region of culture contrasts. In Mexico, Guatemala and Peru we find the most highly developed archaeological civilizations of the New World; in the southernmost portion of South America, known as Tierra del Fuego, some of the most primitive groups of mankind; and in the tropical lowlands there are other tribes, equally primitive, who have never seen the white man. Wherever European civilization has taken firm hold great culture centers have been developed; but often within easy traveling distance we find savages as primitive and racially as pure as they were at the time of the discovery of the New World over four hundred years ago.

Our knowledge of the aboriginal peoples and cultures of Latin-America is highly defective. Research has never been so systematic and so intensive as in the rest of the New World. Especially rare are studies conducted with modern method and discipline. The need for extensive field work is so great that among anthropologists there is no more commonly expressed wish than that "something be done in South America," particularly among the still extant aboriginal peoples.

Latin-America is not an isolated region. Its problems of history, culture, and race are closely linked with those of the rest of the New World and in a general way to those of the other continents. Not only does it hold the key to various problems of origins and development of the American aborigines and of their cultures, but it is also a fertile field for the broader studies of culture and environment, racial

adaptations, and racial and cultural evolutions. It is truly a laboratory for those sciences which draw upon anthropology for their fundamental racial analyses.

Ethnology: Ethnology, the science that is concerned with culture, can best be studied with living peoples. For a large portion of Latin-America we have, unfortunately, to depend on cursory accounts of conquerors and travelers. To-day it is only in the

tropical lowlands that we find aboriginal people practicing their original culture. Everywhere else they have become highly acculturated or have disappeared altogether. The survivors await the student, and they hold the key to the solution of many cultural and racial problems of the continent. For instance, in South America there exist many groups to whom white people are unknown. Among these it is possible to study American aborigines in as pure a state as they were before the discovery of the New World. This fact becomes especially significant when it is considered that most

of the primitive peoples of the world became either greatly influenced by modern civilization or entirely extinct before anthropology developed into a disciplined science.

It is to be regretted, of course, that this ideal laboratory for culture studies existing in South America will not last much longer. Modern means of transportation make penetration into the interior a comparatively easy matter, and the unsettled state of the civilized world is tending to drive great numbers of people of European origin into the most remote re-

Purpose and Plan

For a long time students interested in the aboriginal peoples and cultures of Latin-America have recognized the need for the co-ordination and organization of research activities. It is believed that such a step will give impetus to the work, classify and catalogue research problems, and bring about fuller cooperation among the institutions and individuals concerned, and facilitate the dissemination of the information gathered by the various workers to those of the general public interested in this portion of the New World.

To satisfy these demands, the Latin-American Institute has been organized, and this leaflet will be published monthly as its general news letter. The primary purpose of this publication, which will be sent to all members of the Institute, is to disseminate news and information of general interest. Very often work is done in the field, and papers or books are published which do not come to the attention of those who are not technically interested in the fields of archaeology, ethnology, and related studies. It will be our policy to gather as much of this material as possible and in this way keep all interested informed on the current events in the Latin-American field. All recipients of this leaflet are urgently requested to send in any news items or comments that will be of interest to other readers.

Membership in the Institute does not call for the payment of dues, and imposes no obligations of any sort whatsoever, and this monthly leaflet will be sent to all members. An interest in Latin-American culture studies is all that is required to bring a name before the council to be considered for membership.

gions in search of a better living. It is too much to expect that history will fail to repeat itself in the case of the South American aborigines and that they will be allowed to continue their isolated existence and to continue to occupy their own lands. It is rather a certainty that our own generation will witness the complete disappearance of a large number of them. With their disappearance there will vanish forever numerous languages, rich stores of cultural facts and racial characteristics. Thus future generations will be forced to depend on archaeology and inferential methods to reconstruct that which is available in observable form today, unless we take advantage of present conditions to carry out our researches.

There are still in existence tribes whose study will be of immense help to the archaeologist in reconstructing historical sequences and cultures of peoples who have disappeared. Thus further research among the contemporary remnants of Maya peoples may give some clues to many phases of ancient Maya civilization that cannot be learned from a mere study of the ruins of cities. This is true also of the Peruvian area. Once these people disappear, as is inevitable, we shall have no means of gathering such valuable information.

Still another valuable field of research is among those groups of African origin who during slave days fled to the jungle and reverted to their African mode of living.

Archaeology: This branch of anthropology differs from ethnology only in method. Its objectives are the same, but it meets with difficulties of a different sort. Its raw materials for the reconstruction of cultures and races consist only of what time and the natural forces of disintegration have left behind in the soil. In dry regions a great deal is preserved; in swampy or rainy country practically nothing is left in a few years except objects of stone, shell or pottery. However, even under ideal conditions only objects illustrating material culture last for any length of time.

Neither in the classical fields of Peruvian-Ecuadorian researches nor in the primitive Fuegian, Patagonian or Amazonian is our knowledge so adequate that we can with certainty reconstruct the cultural or racial history of the regions involved. Vague indeed is our knowledge of the earlier history of these regions.

The archaeological cultures of Latin-America are not to be despised from the point of view of artistic achievement. It is truly astonishing to what extent the genius of the aboriginal race carried them. The art is strange to the modern world in conception and in style, and the proper appreciation of it can only be acquired through knowledge of the cultural complexes present in Latin-America. A high degree of conventionalization, present, for instance, in the art of the Amazonian Valley, can only be understood

when it is studied in its association with the other phases of Amazonian culture. Nor does the art, whether it be that of Nazca, that of Tacarigua, or that of Marajó, fail to suggest new esthetic values to the student of evolutionary and comparative art. Subject matter and execution, with its attendant subordination and accentuation of elements, leading to intense characterization, have produced a vast field of art awaiting careful and well-merited study. The lack of adequate collections in the institutions where the student can study these matters at his leisure has made progress in this field slow and intermittent. Only intensive excavations can make for progress in this field.

There are, of course, purely historical problems awaiting solution, some of which are of local nature and some of intercontinental significance. The origins of the cultures involved is a matter of prime importance. For instance, along these lines of research the archaeologist wonders whether there is any connection between the Peruvian-Ecuadorian cultures and those of Mexico and Central America. There are numerous other problems of a similar nature that only careful excavations may solve.

Linguistics: In no other field of Latin-American anthropological research does so chaotic a state exist as in this one. Based on scanty vocabularies, for the most part, some eighty-seven linguistic stocks have been listed for South America alone. Many of these are no longer spoken, and have come down to us only in fragmentary form, or exist only in short vocabularies written down by the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. Many others are still spoken today by the tribes living in the interior. Not only can linguistics solve purely academic problems, but the evidence of linguistics is invaluable in historical reconstructions and cultural analyses. One of the most important questions in South American anthropology, that of the possibility of South American-Polynesian contact before the discovery, has drawn on linguistics for positive evidence.

Physical Anthropology: One of the problems this branch of anthropology attempts to solve is the biological connection of the particular people under study and the rest of humanity. It is called upon to solve the problems of types found in archaeological sites and also racial types found in living groups. For instance, there are the problems of racial similarity to the generalized Mongoloid race, possible Oceanic strains and even Australoid affinities. Given sufficient material, which at present does not exist, it ought to be possible to reconstruct the racial history of the New World. So far, because these stocks have been largely neglected, we have been unable to do so.

Research in Latin-America is not only important

locally, but is related to other continents and perhaps even holds the key to many of their problems and needs to be done on an intensive scale in all of the branches of anthropology. To give it impetus, to

foster it, to co-ordinate field studies, and to assure consistent research is the duty of the present day unless we are to see the disappearance of invaluable material, without having recorded it.

Peruvian Activities

BEFORE the Great War most of the archaeological excavations in Peru were undertaken and supported by foreign scholars and institutions. Since then Peru has gradually intensified its own interests in the aboriginal civilizations, and the last fifteen years have seen the movement for national scientific investigation and preservations of its archaeological treasures gaining momentum year by year. A number of competent and devoted scholars have been developed and the future for archaeology seems secure and very promising. Pillaging of sites by curio or treasure hunters has been stopped. It is especially gratifying that the policy of co-operation with foreign scholars is to be continued.

The Fourth Centenary of Cuzco: During 1934 was celebrated the fourth centenary of the founding of the modern city of Cuzco. In connection with the festivities and as an important part of the program the various activities in archaeology, linguistics, and ethnology were given national attention, coordinated, and put on a permanent basis. It was indeed an appropriate occasion for the formal recognition of a renaissance of interest in Peru's own contributions to culture. In our opinion this is the greatest tribute that could have been paid to the magnificent civilization so sadly destroyed by the Spanish conquerors.

The celebration was marked by two special features: the formal uncovering of many Inca ruins whose abundance and artistic merit aroused Peruvian enthusiasm to the point of referring to Cuzco as the archaeological capital of the South America; and a display of aboriginal arts, which through vocal and instrumental music, and dances in costume, well demonstrated the virility of the Quechua people and culture in the face of a four century-long period of European domination and influence.

The festivities at the famous site of Sacsahuaman, fortress and retreat for the priesthood of the Incas, were typical. In the same place where before the coming of the Spaniards the Incas held many of their festivals personally attended by the rulers, with the ruins of the fortress and temples rising on all sides, dramas and popular comedy were enacted, poetry was recited, Inca invocations were made in the Quechua language, and groups of natives in the traditional costumes of their ancestors paraded to the accompaniment of ancient music which has

survived among Quechua peoples living in the more remote districts.

Interesting in themselves, nevertheless these festivities would have remained but gracious gestures in recognition of the past glories of Peru had not other steps been taken to perpetuate for posterity the still existent records of their achievements. The most important was to proclaim the archaeological sites national monuments. The excavations which have been made were listed and plans made to continue them in the future. Nor were the arts of the living aboriginal groups forgotten. Exhibits of them were established at various places in the country. Finally a congress of aboriginal groups was held, and proper interest was taken in their future development and welfare.

Archaeological Activities: An archaeological institute has been organized which will take charge of the collections, organize the museum and conduct further field work. The ruins of Cuzco have been largely cleared of debris and many of the ancient monuments have been restored, and it is hoped to continue this work until the entire city has been cleared. Sacsahuaman, fortress and retreat on the outskirts of ancient Cuzco, has also received great attention.

The same work has been done at Machu Picchu. This city, fortress, and religious retreat, cleared away in 1910 by Dr. Hiram Bingham, had been allowed to become covered by jungle vegetation so that it had again become quite inaccessible. New paths have been cleared and the site is again open to view. The visitor can now climb the some three thousand steps to the retreat and to the royal palaces, which are in a remarkable state of preservation, and literally be transported to the world of the Inca rulers and priests before the coming of the Spaniards. The neighboring peak of Huayna Picchu, which itself contains interesting ruins and from whose height one can obtain a magnificent view of the dead city extending below, has also been made accessible.

Most of the excavations have been done under the supervision of the competent scholars, Dr. Luis E. Valcarcel and Dr. Julio C. Tello.

Exploration: There has also been some exploration of Peru from the air. The use of the airplane in locating and photographing archaeological ruins has been most successful in Peru. The dry western portion of the Andes and the dry coastal region has

yielded photographs from which for the first time an adequate idea can be formed of the plans and extent of fortresses and cities of the ancient Chimu civilization. One of the most outstanding finds has been made in the Santa Valley: a great wall running from the coast into the mountains for about forty miles apparently built by the Incas to protect the empire from the invasions of the barbarians of the north.

Travel Facilities: In order to attract visitors to view these archaeological sites the Peruvian government has launched a program for building roads to them. It has even discussed the feasibility of linking the most important by automobile roads. Passport regulations will be modified so as to make entrance into the country easier for foreign tourists. Adequate hygienic hotels are to be built and in some cases have already been established to house the visitors at these points. There is to be strict supervision of commercial activities so as to avoid any exploita-

tion of the tourists on the part of merchants. Also special attractive rates will be offered to make the trips within the means of a larger body of people. Expositions of regional industries and arts and even local and indigenous music will be offered as an additional inducement.

Protection for the Aborigines: Brazil, for many years, has had an Indian Service which has protected its aborigines against the aggressions of frontiersmen, pacified belligerent tribes, and undertaken

gradually to fit the primitive for modern life. Recently Peru and Colombia have taken similar steps. They have jointly recognized their responsibility and duty to concern themselves actively with the welfare of the primitive aborigines inhabiting their respective adjacent territories, to protect them and assist them to become civilized. They have agreed also to prohibit the recruiting of compulsory labor. This agreement was embodied in the protocol settling the dispute over the Leticia region.



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