



WALL BUILDER

A likeness of one of the prehistoric Indians who built the Great Wall of America—a Chimu Indian, as portrayed on a carving on a Chimu vase.

Great Wall of Peru were the Chimu Indians.

All the circumstantial evidence points to the Chimu. The Great Wall lies within their 400-mile strip of kingdom. They were living in the region when the Great Wall must have been built, for they occupied the coast from very early centuries of the Christian era. If further argument is needed, the Chimu were skillful at construction—they built steep pyramids of sun-dried brick, some taller than modern ten-story buildings. And the Chimu were fierce and aggressive fighters.

There is a famous Chimu vase painting which shows a whole row of hand to hand combats between Chimu warriors and some opponents. Such a scene gives a pretty good idea of what Indian fighting must have been like along the Great Wall of Peru.

In the series of duels painted on this vase, the best dressed contestant, the Chimu warrior, is winning every time. And that is no wonder. For the winners are protected about the head by pointed helmets of wood and cotton with chin straps and ear plates and a flap down the back of the neck. These warriors wear armor jackets, probably made of slats of wood laced together. And they are loaded down with shields, battle

axes, wicked-looking maces, and other accessories for close combat. War paint on faces and legs completes the fighting outfits.

Some of the enemy in this fight have helmets to wear. But most of them have only tasseled caps to save their heads from bludgeon blows, and those bobbing tassels are proving bad war psychology. A winning Chimu may simply grab an enemy by the tassel of his cap and drag the captive off, helpless. These enemy soldiers have little or no body protection. And while their shields and maces look like good equipment, still the armored opponents have the best of every contest. By use of dotted lines, the artist shows how blood spouted from the wounded.

The hard question for science to answer about the Great Wall of Peru is: How old is the wall? If archaeologists can dig along the foot of the wall and inside of its forts, they may find tools or pottery lunch dishes and drinking cups belonging to the workmen who built the Great Wall. Or they may dig up some of the war clubs and battle axes of the soldiers who defended and attacked it. Studying the types of such articles would greatly aid in discovering the age of the wall.

From what is known of the Chimu Indians, a Great Wall would have come in handy at almost any period of their busy career. When the Chimu were a young and rising tribe in north coast Peru, they were engaged in fighting civil wars among their own neighbors and as the stronger groups dominated, a kingdom came to be welded into shape, and the borders of the kingdom were pushed out to new limits along the Pacific coast.

Chimu Put Up Big Fight

Later, the Chimu had to defend themselves against Indians from the highland of Peru. And then, somewhere between 1000 A. D. and 1300 A. D., the Chimu had to put up the fight of their lives for their kingdom and its ruler, the Grand Chimu. For the conquering Incas, or "nobles," came marching across the mountains, determined to add Chimuland to their great Indian empire.

Experts on Peruvian archaeology differ in their views as to which age of Chimu fighting brought the Great Wall into existence. Dr. R. L. Olson of the University of California suggests that the Great Wall may have been a defense structure built by the early Chimu, as they extended their territory to north and south.

Prof. Marshall Saville of the Museum

of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, theorizes that the wall was built by the Chimu to prevent neighboring Indian tribes from gaining access to the Santa River.

The Santa Valley was densely peopled, he points out. If nearby tribes succeeded in diverting the stream, the Chimu people of the valley would have been in a desperate plight.

One Spanish historian states that the Incas finally conquered the Chimu by cutting off the water supply. And another historian says that it was in the Santa Valley that the Chimu ruler finally surrendered to the Incas. Prof. Saville points out these two historic references, and suggests that possibly the Great Wall was built in the last stand of the Chimu against the victorious Incan siege.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1932

ARCHAEOLOGY

Tomb Wall Built on Dead Man's Chest

A SECOND tomb of Monte Alban, eclipsed when it was discovered by the sensational find of treasure in another, is described as of great scientific importance in an official report being prepared by archaeologists of the Mexican National Museum.

A buried underground chamber lined with stone, entered through a passageway, first revealed remains of two pairs of leg bones. A transverse wall had cut the skeletons at the ribs. When it was removed, it disclosed a second room with the skulls on the other side of the wall, as if the partition had been built upon their chests.

The skulls rested on a pair of large pottery incense burners with long handles like dippers. Between them sat an idol-urn of a god thought to be Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, painted red with cinnabar, the Mexican funeral color. His headdress is of plumes, his tongue bifurcated like a serpent's and his upper jaw is like a tiger's. His ornaments are seashell symbols appropriate to Quetzalcoatl.

One door jamb of the tomb has unreadable Zapotecan glyphs, and a great quantity of pottery and other objects was contained in the tomb. A curious thing was a big pottery pipe two feet long and five inches in diameter. Similar tubes were found in other graves. In five out of the six intact tombs explored, plural burials had been made by the ancient people.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1932