

Graves of Inca Nobles Found

Archæology

Nearly 300 pottery vessels, chisels, axes and other tools of copper, bronze and stone, as well as gold earrings and a head-band of the same metal one-and-a-half inches wide and sixteen inches long that was once tied around the head of an Indian lord like a diadem, are among the objects recently found in an Inca cemetery at Copiapó in northern Chile while a man was digging on his property near a river bank.

Gualterio Looser, assistant curator at the Museum of Natural History at Santiago, has examined the site. The graves are placed in groups of ten to twelve, each group separated from the others by a wall of stone. Graves of ancient *caciques* or nobles of this part of the world were customarily segregated from common folks by masonry walls, and it was within these enclosures that the relics were

discovered, in graves about eight feet deep.

Although the cemetery is believed to have belonged to the Incas of the period shortly before the Spanish Conquest, some of the objects show styles of other and earlier cultures. The Incas were newcomers in Peru, like the Aztecs in central Mexico, and reached the height of their power only in the last few centuries before the discovery of the New World. The Inca empire once reached from Ecuador to central Chile, and within its boundaries a large number of different racial groups lived together in a remarkably advanced social state. But before the last Indian empire of South America reached its height, other great cultures and political organizations had prospered and disappeared.

Practically all the pottery objects found at Copiapo are patterned after

well-known prehistoric Andean models. The general tone is cream, and against this background the design is carried out in deep red or some other strong color. The vessels show no sign of use after they had been made, but many of them were broken when they were buried with the dead, a custom followed in many parts of the Western Hemisphere in ancient times, and called "shooting the quarry" by archaeologists.

The find revealed a number of unusual pieces, among them two funerary urns such as were used by the prehistoric people on the other side of the Andes in Argentina for burying infants. The upper part of these urns represents a bird, whose face, with a human expression, is on the front and the tail and feet at the back.

Science News-Letter, April 20, 1929

Fish's-Eye View

Zoology—Optics

Our cover this week is from an unusual painting made for the Buffalo Museum of Science by Wilfred Bronson, portraying an incident in the struggle for existence that goes on unceasingly beneath the quiet blue waters of the warm seas. One of a school of dolphins, the fastest fish that swim the sea, has taken a fancy to a bite of flying-fish for lunch. These living combinations of submarine and airplane have taken to their natural refuge from aquatic foes. Having broken water, they are gliding down the air on their expanded, wing-like fins, propelled by the inertia of the rush that carried them out of the water.

Their advantage over the pursuer does not end with their having entered a medium where he can not follow them. From beneath the surface the whole aerial hemisphere is contracted, by the refraction of light, into a comparatively narrow circle. While they are high overhead, the flying-fish can still be seen by the dolphin. But as they drop back toward the surface they are still seen, but in quite a different direction from where they actually are. And since by then they are some scores or even hundreds of feet from their starting point, they are out of the range of vision of their submarine enemy.

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