



Type: Magazine Article

Old America - Ancient Peru (Continued) (9)

Author(s): G.M. Ottinger

Source: *Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (15 March 1876), pp. 63-64

Published by: George Q. Cannon & Sons

Abstract: Series of articles dealing with archaeological, anthropological, geographical, societal, religious, and historical aspects of ancient America and their connections to the Book of Mormon, which is the key to understanding “old American” studies.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

ANCIENT PERU.

(Continued.)

EIGHT habitable and considerable islands are clustered in Lake Titicaca. Of these, the largest, called Titicaca, bare and rugged in appearance, some six miles long and from three to four miles in width, is called the sacred island of Peru. Here, according to tradition, Manco Capac and his sister-wife, Mama Oella, the children of the sun, commenced to instruct the savage tribes surrounding their peculiar religion and the arts of civilization. Upon this island, the birthplace of the Incas, are still remaining ruins and other vestiges of the ancient inhabitants. These ruins consist of remains of a temple of the sun, a convent of priests, and a royal palace. The site of the palace is beautifully situated on a terraced hill, protected with facings of stone and overlooking the lake. Mr. Squires describes the building as rectangular in form, fifty-one by forty-four feet, and two stories high. He says: "The front on the lake is ornamented or relieved on the lower story by four high niches, the two central ones being doorways. On each side are three niches, the central one forming a doorway. It is divided into twelve small rooms, of varying sizes, and connected with each other in a manner which can only be made intelligible by reference to the plan. There are altogether four sets of rooms, two groups of two each. These rooms are about thirteen feet high, their wall inclining slightly inward, while their ceiling is formed by flat overlapping stones, laid with great regularity. Every room has its niches, some small and plain, others large and elaborate. The inner as well as the exterior walls were stuccoed with a fine, tenacious clay, possibly mixed with some adhesive substance and painted. Some patches of this stucco still remain, and indicate that the building was originally yellow, while the inner parts and mouldings of the doorways and niches were of different shades of red. The second story does not at all correspond with the first. Its entrance is at the rear on a level with a terrace extending back to the hill, and spreading out in a noble walk, faced with a niched wall, and supporting some minor buildings, or 'summer houses,' now greatly ruined. It appears to have had no direct connection with the ground story by stairs or otherwise. The rooms, which are also more or less ornamented with niches, are separated by walls much less massive than those below, and do not seem to have been arched as those are, but to have been roofed with thatch, as were most of the structures of the Incas. The central part of the front of the second story was not enclosed, although probably roofed, but formed an esplanade twenty-two feet long and ten broad, flanked by rooms opening on it. Two niches raised just enough to afford easy seats appear in the wall at the back of the esplanade, whence may be commanded one of the finest and most extensive views in the world."

The island of Titicaca was consecrated to the sun and directly opposite the ruined palace just described is the island of Coniti, consecrated to the moon. On this island stands the famous palace of the virgins of the sun, built around two altars or shrines, dedicated respectively to the sun and moon. These buildings are still in a remarkable state of preservation. The island of Soto was the resort of the Incas as a place of fasting and humiliation. It was called the Isle of Penitence. Many

remains of ancient architecture are found on this island. The peninsula of Copacabana not far distant was in ancient times no less a sanctified place than it is at present. The idol that gave it fame and lent to it its sanctity was, according to the chroniclers, made of beautiful blue stone, representing the human face. It was buried by the natives on the arrival of the Spaniards, but was afterwards disinterred by the latter and broken into pieces. The word Copacabana signifies "a precious stone from which one may see, or which gives vision." But little remains of the temples of which early writers speak as being located at this place can now be found. At Acora, three days' journey from Copacabana, covering a great plain, are found rude monuments, circles and squares of unwrought stones planted upright in the ground and sometimes sustaining others overlapping them, forming chambers. They are said to be in character and appearance almost identical with the "cromlechs" of Europe. From the numerous "chulpas" or buried towns found here and in the vicinity Mr. Squires infers that these ruins were sepulchral in origin. "Chulpa" is the Aymara word for tomb. A description of one by Mr. S. will illustrate the general character of all:

"It is seventeen feet square and twenty-four feet high, and rises from a platform of cut stones twenty-two feet on each side, and raised a foot above the ground. Three feet below its top is a projection or cornice, two feet deep, projecting about a foot on every side, forming a severe but effective ornament or finish to the structure. There is a square opening eighteen inches high and broad in the eastern face on a level with the platform. Crawling into this with difficulty, for it was obstructed with rubbish, I found myself in a vault or chamber eleven feet square and thirteen feet high, the sides of which rise vertically to the height of eight feet, where the stones begin to overlap, forming a kind of pointed arch. At the height of three feet from the floor of the vault is a niche three feet and a half high and eighteen inches deep, with sides inclining towards each other at the top. The entrance is immediately under one of these niches. I found nothing in this dark vault except some human bones, fragments of pottery, and the gnawed bones of animals dragged here probably by dogs, for whom this had evidently been a favorite retreat."

The same author says: "These chulpas are common in the Titicaca region, usually standing in groups of from twenty to a hundred, and almost invariably occupying some rocky ridge or spur of the hills and mountains, or some rugged eminence in the plain. Occasionally they occur singly or in pairs. There is hardly a view to be had in the habitable districts around the head of the lake in which one or more groups do not appear."

The lake of Uruyo near Titicaca is famous as the rendezvous of the powerful chiefs of the Collao before their subjugation by the Incas. Here was situated their capital city Hatun-Colla. On the peninsula of Silibani is a group of the best built burial towers in Peru. Here the Incas built an edifice, probably religious, the ruins of which are now called the house of the sun. Some of the "cromlechs" at this place are more elaborate than those of Acora. One consists of a circle of upright stones, one hundred and twenty-four feet in diameter, with an opening five feet wide on the east. It encloses two larger upright stones, at one third of the diameter of the circle apart. Outside of the upright stones are broad stones lying flat, having grooves three inches deep cut in them, forming a platform four and a half feet broad. The adjoining edges of these stones are on radii of the circle. Mr. Squires says, "Here we find quadrangles defined by great unheaven stones, worn and frayed by time, and having every evidence of the

highest antiquity, side by side with other squares of similar plan, but defined by massive stones cut with much elaboration as if they were the works of later and more advanced generations, which, however, still preserve the notions of their ancestors, bringing only greater skill to the construction of their monuments. Every student of antiquity will recognize as true that the square was often associated with the circle in solar symbolism, and in the worship which seems to have been, throughout the world, the earliest adopted by its inhabitants."

Tradition affirms that part of the area now covered by the bay back of the peninsula of Sillustani was the site of the city of Hatun-Colla. Mr. S. says: "Certain it is that walls as if of buildings may be discerned beneath the water and here and there projecting above it."

RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME.

BY C. R. SAVAGE.

CHAPTER VI.

"**T**IRE away, gents! Ha'-penny a shot! Forty in the bull's eye!" shouts a man with a large board and a pile of hazel nuts. A small gun, with an arrow, fired by a percussion cap, is provided for the sportsman to shoot at the mark with, and he gets the usual return—less than his money's worth. A small ring in the central part of the board indicates forty nuts; just outside of it, ten. Once in ten times the sport hits the central ring.

"Pickled winkles—ha'-penny a plate!" squeals out an old woman, as she displays to the public her stock in trade, consisting of "winkles," or periwinkles, small shell fishes, very much like snails.

"Now then, gentleman," says the well dressed, flashy describer of the merits of a great menagerie in huge yellow-painted dens, "walk up, and see Wombwell's menagerie of wild and trained animals! All that you see on the canvas on the outside, you will see on the inside, and alive—alive! Enquire of the thousands who have visited this exhibition as to its merits! Let me enquire of this old lady descending the steps as to how she likes it. Madam, do you like the show?"

The old lady, who has a squeaky voice, replies, "I think it is all stuff and nonsense, and not worth the money."

"There," says the showman, "the old lady says it is worth double the money!"

This is a fair specimen of the sharp practice connected with exhibitions of this class that has not entirely died out yet.

The wild animals pictured on the canvas, engaged in the pleasant occupation of tearing each other to pieces, prove very tame when inspected on the inside of the pavilion. They slink into corners with a dejected air, and are sad commentaries on the wonderful specimens so eloquently described by the "touter," as the professionals call the gentleman who does the talking.

A fine brass band generally accompanies this kind of a show, and proves a great attraction. The musicians we saw at the "Brown Jug" are working away on the platform of a theatre. This affair is the chief attraction. It is a huge tent, square, with an elevated platform about six feet high in front. Previous to each performance the actors, male and female, go through a lot of silly nonsense under the direction of a clown and get the crowd around them. This effort is given out as a faint idea of the immense attraction within and as fast as the tent is filled tragedy, comedy and drama are run through in

twenty minutes, with plenty of shooting and killing to create a sensation. The plays have high sounding names, such as, "The Bandits of the Appennines," "Retribution, or a Tale of Blood" "Varney the Vampire," "Jack Sheppard" etc., which are announced on signs on the outside, painted in glaring red letters. Each day's programme is different. The stock company is made up of third class actors and supernumeraries from some of the large theatres in the cities. They are generally of the class that have theatres on the brain, and, not possessing the talents to rise where greater excellence is found, hang on the vain hope of becoming stars some day. Stage popularity feeds some minds, but a poor, worn-out actor is the worst off of any actor I ever saw. The actors composing the company who help the make up of the gaff are profligates, with large flashy watch chains and loud style, thinking themselves Forrests and Macreadys in embryo. They strut and put on airs like peacocks. The women appear sadly at a disadvantage on a cold day, dressed in tights; in fact, the life of a strolling player is a dog's life, with very little comfort and recompense for the hardships they are called upon to undergo.

We paid "tuppence" and ascended the platform. The touter with a long whip in hand was doing the polite to the ladies who were patronizing the show. All around us was a sea of gaping faces, some in ecstasies of laughter over the jokes of the clown, others listening to the talk of a rival show. Working men and their wives were there, gamblers, sharpers, pickpockets, frauds of every kind, thieves, drunkards and all the elements that go to make up the lower classes of society.

After the crowd had assembled and the theatre was filled, we took seats inside. The seats were rickety and unsafe like those of a traveling circus.

The musicians who were making all the noise they could outside, now appeared inside and took their fiddles.

Tinkle, tinkle, goes the bell. Enter first heavy villain, who struts across the stage calling for some other villain to engage in mortal combat. Three up and three down with the big swords and the first villain falls to rise—again, twenty minutes after. A lady now appears, and with lively screams makes things hot for the murderer who is seized by a band of friends of the dead hero, who decide that he must swing for the killing of hero number two. A rope is affixed to a hook on the villain's back concealed amid the ruffles and he is quickly out of sight, amid the thundering plaudits of the audience. One by one the characters are disposed of by poison, shooting, stabbing and hanging, until the persecuted hero of the play appears in a blaze of Dutch metal; and the curtain goes down on the first piece.

An extravaganza next follows. Enter clown with a doll baby, who goes through all the motions incident to dressing and washing a little baby. Harlequin now appears, and claims said baby. A mimic quarrel takes place. Harlequin now grabs the feet of the baby, the clown holds on to the head. They both pull on the India rubber baby until it is stretched out across the stage by means of India rubber attachments. Columbine, the supposed mother, now enters, and claims the baby, they do not relinquish it, when she chops the baby in halves, and the difficulty is settled. This takes with the boys immensely. A comic song by the clown next follows; the whole concludes with a screaming farce, made as ridiculous as possible.

During the performance of the farce the clown and pantaloons go outside and begin some more nonsense, the "touter" draws attention to the applause incident to the performance; and, as the delighted audience pour out, dilates upon the great