

# A LAND OF MYSTERY

*by H. P. Blavatsky*

selected excerpts

As regards prehistoric buildings, both Peru and Mexico are rivals of Egypt. Equalling the latter in the immensity of her cyclopean structures, Peru surpasses her in their number; while Cholula exceeds the grand pyramid of Cheops in breadth, if not in height. Works of public utility, such as walls, fortifications, terraces, watercourses, aqueducts, bridges, temples, burial-grounds, whole cities, and exquisitely paved roads, hundreds of miles in length, stretch in an unbroken line, almost covering the land as with a net. On the coast, they are built of sun-dried bricks; in the mountains, of porphyritic lime, granite and silicated sandstones. Of the long generations of peoples who built them, history knows nothing, and even tradition is silent. As a matter of course, most of these lithic remains are covered with a dense vegetation. Whole forests have grown out of the broken hearts of the cities, and, with a few exceptions, everything is in ruin. But one may judge of what once was by that which yet remains.

With a most flippant unconcern, the Spanish historians refer nearly every ruin to Inca times. No greater mistake can be made. The hieroglyphics which sometimes cover from top to bottom whole walls and monoliths are, as they were from the first, a dead letter to modern science. But they were equally a dead letter to the Incas, though the history of the latter can be traced to the eleventh century. They had no clue to the meaning of these inscriptions but attributed all such to their unknown predecessors; thus, barring the presumption of their own descent from the first civilizers of their country. Briefly, the Inca history runs thus: — Inca is the Quichua title for chief or emperor, and the name of the ruling and most aristocratic race or rather caste of the land which was governed by them for an unknown period, prior to, and until, the Spanish Conquest. Some place their first appearance in Peru from regions unknown in 1021; others, also, or conjecture, at five centuries after the Biblical “flood,” and according to the modest notions of Christian theology. Still the latter theory is undoubtedly nearer truth than the former. The Incas, judged by their exclusive privileges, power and “infallibility,” are the antipodal counterpart of the Brahminical caste of India. Like the latter, **the Incas claimed direct descent from the Deity, which,** as in the case of the Suryavansa dynasty of India, **was the Sun.** According to the sole but general tradition, there was a time when the whole of the population of the now New World was broken up into independent, warring, and barbarian tribes. At last, **the “Highest” deity—the Sun**—took pity upon them, and, in order to rescue the people from ignorance, sent down upon earth, to teach them, his two children **Manco Capac**, and his sister and wife, **Mama Ocollo Huaco**— the counterparts, again, of the Egyptian Osiris, and his sister and wife, Isis, as well as of the several Hindu gods and demi-gods and their wives. These two made their appearance on a beautiful island in **Lake Titicaca** —of which we will speak further on—and thence proceeded northward to **Cuzco**, later on the capital of the Incas, where they at once began to disseminate civilization.

Collecting together the various races from all parts of Peru, the divine couple then divided their labour. **Manco Capac** taught men agriculture, legislation, architecture and arts; while **Mama Ocollo** instructed the women in weaving, spinning, embroidery and housekeeping. It is from this celestial pair that the Incas



claimed their descent; and yet, they were utterly ignorant of the people who built the stupendous and now ruined cities which cover the whole area of their empire, and which then extended from the Equator to over 37 degrees of Latitude and included not only the western slope of the Andes, but the whole mountain chain with its eastern declivities to the Amazon and Orinoco. As the direct descendants of the Sun, they were exclusively the high priests of the state religion, and at the same time emperors and the highest statesmen in the land: in virtue of which, they, again like the Brahmans, arrogated to themselves a divine superiority over the ordinary mortals, thus founding like the “twice-born” an exclusive and aristocratic caste— **the Inca race**. Considered as the son of the Sun, every reigning Inca was the high priest, the oracle, chief captain in war, and absolute sovereign; thus, realizing the double office of Pope and King, and so long anticipating the dream of the Roman Pontiffs. To his command the blindest obedience was exacted; his person was sacred; and he was the object of divine honours. The highest officers of the land could not appear shod in his presence; this mark of respect pointing again to an Oriental origin; while the custom of boring the ears of the youths of royal blood and inserting in them golden rings “which were increased in size as they advanced in rank, until the distention of the cartilage became a positive deformity,” suggests a strange resemblance between the sculptured portraits of many of them that we find in the more modern ruins, and the images of Buddha and of some deities, not to mention our contemporary dandies of Siam, Burma, and Southern India. In that, once more like in India, in the palmy days of the Brahmin power, no one had the right to either receive an education or study religion except the privileged Inca caste. And, when the reigning Inca died, or as it was termed, “was called home to the mansion of his father,” a very large number of his attendants and his wives were made to die with him, during the ceremony of his obsequies, just as we find in the old annals of Rajasthan, and down to the but just abolished custom of Sutti.

No more is it an explanation to say that “Manco Capac is the almost exact counterpart of the Chinese Fohi, the Hindu Buddha, the terrestrial Osiris of Egypt, the Quetzal-coatl of Mexico, and Votan of Central America”; for all this is but too evident. What we want to learn is how came these nations, so antipodal to each other as India, Egypt, and America, to offer such extraordinary points of resemblance, not only in their general religious, political, and social views, but sometimes in the minutest details. The much-needed task is to find out which one of them preceded the other; to explain how these people came to plant at the four corners of the earth nearly identical architecture and arts, unless there was a time when, as assured by Plato and believed in by more than one modern archaeologist, no ships were needed for such a transit, as the two worlds formed but one continent.

Dr. E.R.Heath, of Kansas (U S.A.), thinks that “long before Manco Capac, the Andes had been the dwelling-place of races, whose beginning must have been coeval with the savages of Western Europe. The gigantic architecture points to the cyclopean family, the founders of the Temple of Babel, and the Egyptian pyramids. The Grecian scroll found in many places is borrowed (?) from the Egyptians; the mode of burial and embalming their dead points to Egypt.” Further on, this learned traveller finds that the skulls taken from the burial-grounds, according to craniologists, represent three distinct races: the **Chinchas**, who occupied the western part of Peru from the Andes to the Pacific; the **Aymaras**, dwellers of the elevated plains of Peru and Bolivia, on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca; and the **Huancas**, who “occupied the plateau between the chains of the Andes, north of Lake Titicaca to the 9th degree of South Latitude.

"To confound the buildings of the epoch of the Incas in Peru, and of Montezuma and his caciques, in Mexico, with the aboriginal monuments, is fatal to archaeology. While **Cholula, Uxmal, Quiche, Pachacamac, and Chichen** were all perfectly preserved and occupied at the time of the invasion of the Spanish banditti, there are hundreds of ruined cities and works which were in the same state of ruin even then; whose origin was unknown to the conquered Incas and caciques as it is to us; and which are undoubtedly the remains of unknown and now extinct peoples. The strange shapes of the heads, and profiles of the human figures upon the monoliths of **Copan** are a warrant



for the correctness of the hypothesis. The pronounced difference between the skulls of these races and the Indo-European skulls was at first attributed to mechanical means, used by the mothers for giving a peculiar conformation to the head of their children during infancy, as is often done by other tribes and peoples. But, as the same author tells us, the finding in “a mummy of a foetus of seven or eight months having the same conformation of skull, has placed a doubt as to the certainty of this fact “And besides hypothesis, we have a scientific and an unimpeachable proof of a civilization that must have existed in Peru ages ago. Were we to give the number of thousands of years that have probably elapsed since then, without first showing good reasons for the assumption, the reader might feel like holding his breath. So, let us try.

The Peruvian guano (huano) is that precious fertilizer, composed of the excrement of sea-fowls, intermixed with their decaying bodies, eggs, remains of seal, and so on, which has accumulated upon the isles of the Pacific and the coast of South America, and its formation are now well-known. It was Humboldt who first discovered and drew the world’s attention to it in 1804. And, while describing the deposits as covering the granite rocks of the **Chincas** and other islands to the depth of 50 or 60 feet, he states that the accumulation of the preceding 300 years, since the



Conquest, had formed only a few lines in thickness. How many thousands of years, then, it required to form this deposit 60 feet deep, is a matter of simple calculation. In this connection we may now quote something of a discovery spoken of in the Peruvian Antiquities. “Buried 62 feet under the ground, on the Chinca islands, stone-idols and water-pots were found, while 35 and 33 feet below the surface were wooden idols. He—who can determine the centuries necessary to deposit thirty and sixty feet of guano on these islands, remembering that since the Conquest, three hundred years ago, no appreciable increase in depth has been noted—can give you an idea of the antiquity of these relics.”

If we confine ourselves to a strictly arithmetical calculation, then allowing 12 lines to an inch, and 12 inches to a foot, and allowing one line to every century, we are forced to believe that the people who made these precious artefacts lived 864,000 years ago!

In his Peruvian Antiquities, Dr Heath, of Kansas City, sums up his impressions of the Peruvian relics in the following words: —“Three times the Andes sank hundreds of feet beneath the ocean level, and again were slowly brought to their present height. A man’s life would be too short to count even the centuries consumed in this operation. The coast of Peru has risen eighty feet since it felt the tread of Pizarro. Supposing the Andes to have risen uniformly and without interruption, 70,000 years must have elapsed before they reached their present altitude.”

“Who knows, then, but that Jules Verne’s fanciful idea regarding the lost continent Atlanta may be near the truth? Who can say that, where now is the Atlantic Ocean, formerly did not exist a continent, with its dense population, advanced in the arts and sciences, who, as they found their land sinking beneath the waters, retired part east and part west, populating thus the two hemispheres? This would explain the similarity of their archaeological structures and races, and their differences, modified by and adapted to the character of their respective climates and countries. Thus would the llama and camel differ, although of the same species; thus the algoraba and espino trees; thus the Iroquois Indians of North America and the most ancient Arabs call the constellation of the ‘Great Bear’ by the same name; thus various nations, cut off from all intercourse or knowledge of each other, divide the zodiac into twelve constellations, apply to them the same names, and the Northern Hindus apply the name Andes to their Himalayan mountains, as did the South Americans to their principal chain. Must we fall in the old rut, and suppose no other means of populating the Western Hemisphere except ‘by way of Behring’s Strait’? Must we still locate a geographical Eden in the East, and suppose a land, equally adapted to man and as old geologically, must wait the aimless wanderings of the ‘lost tribe of Israel’ to become populated?”

Go where we may, to explore the antiquities of America— whether of Northern, Central, or Southern America—we are first of all impressed with the magnitude of these relics of ages and races unknown, and then with the extraordinary similarity they present to the mounds and ancient structures of old India, of Egypt and even of some parts of Europe. Whoever has seen one of these mounds has seen all. Whoever has stood before the cyclopean structures of one continent can have a pretty accurate idea of those of the other. Only be it said—we know still less of the age of the antiquities of America than even of those in the Valley

of the Nile, of which we know next to nothing. But their symbolism—apart from their outward form—is evidently the same as in Egypt, India, and elsewhere. As before the great pyramid of Cheops in Cairo, so before the great mound, 100 feet high, on the plain of Cahokia,—near St. Louis (Missouri)—which measures 700 feet long by 800 feet broad at the base, and covers upwards of eight acres of ground, having 20,000,000 cubic feet of contents, and the mound on the banks of Brush Creek, Ohio, so accurately



described by Squier and Davis, one knows not whether to admire more the geometrical precision, prescribed by the wonderful and mysterious builders in the form of their monuments, or the hidden symbolism they evidently sought to express. The Ohio mound represents a serpent, upwards of 1,000 feet long. Gracefully coiled in capricious curves, it terminates in a triple coil at the tail. “The embankment constituting the effigy, is upwards of five feet in height, by thirty feet base at the centre of the body, slightly diminishing towards the tail.” The neck is stretched out and its mouth wide opened, holding within its jaws an oval figure. “Formed by an embankment four feet in height, this oval is perfectly regular in outline, its transverse and conjugate diameters being 160 and 8 feet respectively,” say the surveyors. The whole represents the universal cosmological idea of the serpent and the egg. This is easy to surmise. But how came this great symbol of the Hermetic wisdom of old Egypt to find itself represented in North America?

The earliest inhabitants of Mexico, of whom history has any knowledge—more hypothetical than proven—are the **Toltecs**. These are supposed to have come from the North and believed to have entered **Anahuac** in the 7th century A.D. They are also credited with having constructed in Central America, where they spread in the eleventh century, some of the great cities whose ruins still exist. In this case it is they who must also have carved the hieroglyphics that cover some of the relics. How is it, then, that the pictorial system of writing of Mexico, which was used by the conquered people and learned by the conquerors and their missionaries, does not yet furnish the keys to the hieroglyphics of Palenque and Copan, not to mention those of Peru? And these civilized Toltecs themselves, who were they, and whence did they come? And who are the Aztecs that succeeded them?

Nearly all the mounds in North America are terraced and ascended by large, graded ways, sometimes square, often hexagonal, octagonal or truncated, but in all respects similar to the *tocallis* of Mexico, and to the *topes* of India. As the latter are attributed throughout this country to the work of the five Pandus of the Lunar Race, so the cyclopean monuments and monoliths on the shores of Lake Titicaca, in the republic of Bolivia, are ascribed to giants, the five exiled brothers “from beyond the mounts.” They worshipped the moon as their progenitor and lived before the time of the “Sons and Virgins of the sun?” Here, the similarity of the Aryan with the South American tradition is again but too obvious, and the Solar and Lunar races—the Surya Vansa and the Chandra Vansa—re-appear in America.



The remarkable ruins of **Tiahuanaco** by the lake of Titicaca in Bolivia are without any doubt aboriginal monuments pertaining to an epoch which preceded the Inca period, as far back as the Dravidian and other aboriginal peoples preceded the Aryans in India. Although the traditions of the Incas maintain that

the great lawgiver and teacher of the Peruvians, **Manco Capac**—the Manu of South America—diffused his knowledge and influence from this centre, yet the statement is unsupported by facts. If the original seat of the Aymara, or “Inca race” was there, as claimed by some, how is it that neither the Incas, nor the Aymaras, who dwell on the shores of the Lake to this day, nor yet the ancient Peruvians, had the slightest knowledge concerning their history? Beyond a vague tradition which tells of “giants” having built these immense structures in one night, we do not find the faintest clue. And, we have every reason to doubt whether the Incas are of the Aymara race at all. The Incas claim their descent from Manco Capac, the son of the Sun, and the Aymaras claim this legislator as their instructor and the founder of the era of their civilization. Yet, neither the Incas of the Spanish period could prove the one, nor the Aymaras the other. The language of the latter is quite distinct from the Inichua— the tongue of the Incas; and they were the only race that refused to give up their language when conquered by the descendants of the Sun, as Dr Heath tells us.



“The ruins afford every evidence of the highest antiquity. Some are built on a pyramidal plan, as most of the American mounds are, and cover several acres; while the monolithic doorways, pillars and stone-idols, so elaborately carved, are “sculptured in a style wholly different from any other remains of art yet found in America.”

Hence, all these relics are unanimously ascribed to the same “unknown and mysterious people who preceded the Peruvians, as the Tuluatlacas or **Toltecs** did the **Aztecs**. It seems to have been the seat of the highest and most ancient civilization of South America and of a people who have left the most gigantic monuments of their power and skill” . . . And these monuments are all either **Dra-contias**—**temples** sacred to the Snake, or temples dedicated to the Sun.



Of this same character are the ruined pyramids of **Teotihuacan** and the monoliths of **Palenque** and **Copan**. The former are some eight leagues from the City of Mexico on the plain of **Otumla** and considered among the most ancient in the land. The two principal ones are dedicated to the Sun and Moon, respectively. They are built of cut stone, square, with four stories and a level area at the top. The larger, that of the Sun, nearly equal to that of the great pyramid of Cheops. And yet, the pyramid of **Cholula**, higher than that of Teotihuacan by ten feet according to Humboldt, and having 1,400 feet square at the base, covers an area of 45 acres! The four walls of the enclosure of

the temple correspond with the cardinal points. In the centre of this gigantic area arose the great temple, an immense pyramidal structure of eight stages, faced with stone, 300 feet square at the base and 120 feet in height, truncated, with a level summit, upon which were situated two towers, the shrines of the divinities to whom it was consecrated — **Tezcatlipoca** and **Huitzilpochtli**. It was here that the sacrifices were performed, and the eternal fire maintained. Clavigero tells us, that besides this great pyramid, there were forty other similar structures consecrated to various divinities. The one called Tezacalli, "the House of the Shining Mirrors, sacred to Tezcatlipoca, the God of Light, the Soul of the World, the Vivifier, the Spiritual Sun."

The code of the Aztecs, says Prescott, "evinces a profound respect for the great principles of morality, and as clear a perception of these principles as is to be found in the most cultivated nations." Some of these are very curious since they show a similarity to some of the Gospel ethics. "He who looks too curiously on a woman, commits adultery with his eyes," says one of them. "Keep peace with all; bear injuries with humility; God, who sees, will avenge you," declares another. Recognizing but one Supreme Power in Nature, they addressed it as the deity "by whom we live,



Omnipresent, that knoweth all thoughts and giveth all gifts, without whom man is as nothing; invisible, incorporeal, one of perfect perfection and purity, under whose wings we find repose and a sure defence." And, in naming their children, says Lord Kingsborough, "they used a ceremony strongly resembling the Christian rite of baptism, the lips and bosom of the infant being sprinkled with water, and the Lord implored to wash away the sin that was given to it before the foundation of the world, so that the child might be born anew."

The ruins of Central America are no less imposing. Massively built, with walls of a great thickness, they are usually marked by broad stairways, leading to the principal entrance. When composed of several stories, each successive story is usually smaller than that below it, giving the structure the appearance of a pyramid of several stages. The front walls, either made of stone or stuccoed, are covered with elaborately carved, symbolic figures; and the interior divided into corridors and dark chambers, with arched ceilings, the roofs supported by overlapping courses of stones, "constituting a pointed arch, corresponding in type with the earliest monuments of the old world."

Within several chambers at **Palenque**, tablets, covered with sculptures and hieroglyphics of fine design and artistic execution, were discovered by Stephens. In Honduras, at **Copan**, a whole city—temples, houses and grand monoliths intricately carved—was unearthed in an old forest by Catherwood and Stephens. The sculpture and general style of Copan are unique, and no such style or even anything approaching it has been found anywhere else, except at **Quirigua**, and in the islands of Lake Nicaragua. No one can decipher the weird hieroglyphical inscriptions on the altars and monoliths. With the exception of a few works of uncut stone, "to Copan, we may safely assign an antiquity higher than to any of the other monuments of Central America with which we are acquainted," says the New American Cyclopaedia. At the period of the Spanish conquest, Copan was already a forgotten ruin, concerning which existed only the vaguest traditions.



To refer all these cyclopean constructions then to the days of the Incas is, as we have shown before, more inconsistent yet, and seems even a greater fallacy than that too common one of attributing every rock-temple of India to Buddhist excavators. Another strong objection to the idea lies in the fact that the Incas were destitute of a written language, and that these antique relics of bygone ages are covered with hieroglyphics. "It is granted that the Temple of the Sun, at Cuzco, was of Inca make, but that is the latest of the five styles of architecture visible in the Andes, each probably representing an age of human progress."



The hieroglyphics of Peru and Central America have been, are, and will most probably remain for ever as dead a letter to our cryptographers as they were to the Incas. The latter like the barbarous ancient Chinese and Mexicans kept their records by means of a quipu (or knot in Peruvian)—a cord, several feet long, composed of different coloured threads, from which a multi-coloured fringe was suspended; each colour denoting a sensible object, and knots serving as ciphers. "The mysterious science of the quipus," says Prescott, "supplied the Peruvians with the means of communicating their ideas to one another, and of transmitting them to future generations..." Each locality, however, had its own method of interpreting these elaborate records, hence a quipu was only intelligible in the place where it was kept. "Many quipus have been taken from the graves, in excellent state of preservation in colour and texture," writes Dr Heath; "but the lips, that alone could pronounce the verbal key, have for ever ceased their function, and the relic-seeker has failed to note the exact spot where each was found, so that the records, which could tell so much we want to know, will remain sealed till all is revealed at the last day."

Thus Dr Heath's conviction that America was once united with Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, seems as firm as our own. There must exist geological and physical cycles as well as intellectual and spiritual; globes and planets, as well as races and nations, are born to grow, progress, decline and—die. Great nations split, scatter into small tribes, lose all remembrance of their integrity, gradually fall into their primitive state and—disappear, one after the other, from the face of the earth. So do great continents.



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