

Article XVII.—AN ANCIENT FIGURE OF TERRA COTTA FROM THE VALLEY OF MEXICO.

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PLATES XXIII AND XXIV.

The Valley of Mexico still presents an inviting field to the archæologist, and from time to time important specimens of Nahuatl culture are brought to light. In the immediate neighborhood of the modern city of Texcoco much of great interest has been discovered, but unfortunately by far the greater number of objects found are either broken or lost by the Indians, or find their way into private collections, and thus are practically reburied so far as their being of service to archæology. This is also the case throughout Mexico and Central America, where many priceless relics of the past may be seen in private hands. These are of little scientific value, inasmuch as the circumstances of their discovery, and the place where they were found, have been either forgotten or never ascertained.

The terra cotta figure about to be described was found by an Indian in a cave near the modern city of Texcoco, and is now preserved in the American Museum of Natural History. It was broken in a number of pieces when found, and with these fragments were portions belonging to two other figures of a similar character. The figure is approximately life size¹ (see Plate XXIII), and represents a man with arms extended and mouth opened as if singing or shouting. The hands show that each formerly grasped some object; the ends of the fingers are broken off. The figure was made hollow and in three sections. The head is in one piece, and fits into the body by means of a tube, which is a continuation of the neck. The middle section com-

¹ The following measurements, made by Dr. A. Hrdlicka, are given: Height, 150.9 cm.; height of external meatus, 141.4; of the chin, 130.6; of the root of neck, 124.8; of centre of umbilicus, 95.2; of inferior plane of left forearm, 92.8; of the summit of angle between the thighs, posteriorly, 60.0; of left external malleolus, 11.6; of knee-cap (centre), 37.7. Circumference of the head (middle of forehead—horizontal), 55.3 cm.; of the neck, 32.0; of the body at about the xiphoid, 86.5; of the right fore arm, between the wrist and the styloid, 23.5; of the right leg, just below the armor, 37.5. Breadth of the shoulders, 46.0 cm. Diameter antero-posterior of chest, at about the nipples, about 19.0 cm.; transvers* of chest, at about the nipples, about 28.0; biauricular (under the lowest notch of hair, in front of the ear), 16.8; bimaistoid (the region of mastoids behind the ear), 15.0. Separation of external canthi, 9.7 cm.; of internal canthi, 2.7.

prises the main part of the body, and fits into the lower section forming the lower part of the trunk and the legs.

It was painted only on the parts representing the skin, which is of a dark red color, showing traces of a high polish, such as is found on the well-known red ware of the Valley of Mexico. The image is shown as clothed in garments of a dingy brick-red shade, mottled black in places, the result of burning in firing. It was evidently modeled on a frame of some sort, but there are no traces of such a frame to be found inside. The garments consist of a short jacket *uipilli*, with sleeves, tied at the back in two places, the ends of the jacket not being brought together. On the arms, just below each shoulder, are straps tied around with the ends hanging down. Around the waist below the jacket are the remains of a loin cloth *maxtlatl*. There was undoubtedly joined to this a covering similar to that in the figure shown in Plate XXIV. The legs were covered with leggings reaching a little below the knees and tied there with straps. In the fragments of the other figures these leggings do not reach the knees. The feet are shod with sandals, having protections on either side of the ankle, and held on the foot by two straps, one passing between the first and second toes, and the other between the third and fourth toes, and tied in front.¹

The head of the image shows the ancient custom of artificial flattening of the frontal and occipital bones. The ears are pierced for ear ornaments commonly seen in Mexican sculptures. The nose contains an ornament which was usually the mark of distinction of the highest ancient Mexican war chief. The hair is arranged in a peculiar wig-like fashion. On the top of the head is a small ring which may have served as a means of lifting the head from the body by a cord, but it was more likely used to fasten a head-dress of some light material, as seen in Fig. 1.

There are holes bored in the arms, shoulders, and chest near the shoulders, which seem to have been to hold cords after the arms had become cracked or broken, and were strengthened by being tied to the body.

This life-sized figure is believed to be unique. I have reproduced a figure of somewhat the same general character but of

¹ On the subject of ancient Mexican and Central American sandals, see Mason's monograph, in Report of U. S. National Museum, 1894, pp. 364-5.

miniature size (Plate XXIV). This has been described by Dr. Uhle in 'Veröffentlichungen aus dem Königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde,' Berlin, Oct., 1888, pp. 15, 16, Plate X, where the figure is given natural size, being 28.8 cm. in height.¹ It is of terra cotta, made in one piece only, and was found in Yucatan. It is now preserved in the Maya collections of the Berlin Ethnographical Museum. In details the figure is markedly different from the larger specimen. An interesting feature is the head distorted by flattening. The sandal on the right foot shows the toe-straps passing between the first and second and fourth and fifth toes. The flesh, furthermore, is not painted, the whole figure being of a uniform shade.

The personage represented in the Mexican valley specimen is probably that of an ancient war chief dressed in an armor of quilted cotton. In the Lienzo de Tlaxcalla² are many representations of soldiers, and on Plate 52 is the figure of one of their leaders herewith reproduced (Fig. 1). This figure shows the warrior holding in the right hand the *maquahuatl*, a saw sword made of wood with a row of obsidian knives set in each edge, and in the left hand the *chimalli*, or shield. It will be observed that the hair is arranged in practically the same manner as in the terra cotta figure, over which is a kind of head-dress apparently made of rope and feathers. Rising above the warrior's head, in the original picture, is the large war eagle, which has been drawn of heroic size, and I have not reproduced it in the figure. In many of the plates of the Lienzo de Tlaxcalla the warriors are clothed with trousers of the same material as the jacket. These garments, according to Torquemada, were called *ichcaupilli*, which was an armor of quilted cotton, and so strongly was this made that many of the Spaniards early adopted it as a protection against the darts and swords of the Indians.³ Representations are also to be

¹ A profile view has also been published by Dr. P. Schellhas in his paper, 'Vergleichende Studien auf dem Felde der Maya-Alterthümer,' in Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, Bd. III, 1890, plate xvii, p. 5.

² A contemporary history of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, painted in pictures by a native Tlaxcallan soon after the conquest. This remained unpublished until 1892, when it was published by the Mexican Government in 'Antigüedades Mexicanas,' edited by Alfredo Chavero.

³ Cubiertas de cuero de venado, y dorados, coracas de algodón tan gruesos, como el dedo, que llamaban *Ichcauhuitziles*, de los quales, se aprovecharon despues los Castellanos, porque los hallaron provechosos par flechas, y para el mucho trabajo, que padecian, que con armas de yerro, y acero no pudiesen sufrir.—Torquemada, Monarchia Indiana, Tom I, lib. 4, cap. xxxi, pag. 423.

seen in the Codex Mendoza, in the celebrated tribute roll of Montezuma.¹ The terra cotta figure has, furthermore, red bands on each side of the face extending from the hair downward across the eye to the lower part of the face. This mark is also found



Fig. 1.

in the Mexican manuscripts in the delineation of warriors who have their hair fixed in the same manner as in the figure.

In conclusion, it seems evident that we have in this remarkable specimen of art in terra cotta, the actual portrait or statue of some distinguished war chief of the old Alcolhuan tribe, dressed in armor, and very probably having in his hands his sword and shield.

¹ See Lorenzana 'Hist. de Nueva Espana,' Plate II, and better given by Peñafiel in 'Monumentos del arte Mexicano Antiguo,' Plate 237. Also Nombres Geográficos de México. A. Peñafiel.

"La figura representada en el jeroglífico no se parece á los huipiles femeninos que hay en el libre de los tributos y en otros manuscritos aztecas; corresponda más bien al *ichcahuipilli*, armadura colchada para la guerra, de color amarillo *cosauhqui*, que en composición se cambia en la radical cozo, 'o en coza, como en *cosalli* (*cocalli*), comadreja, cuadrúpedo amarillo; *hui-pile*, significa dueño de *huipilli*, y can lugar de; la interpretación de toda la palabra, lugar de dueños de *ichcahuipilli*, 'o de los que usaban esas armaduras,' p. 87.



TERRA COTTA FIGURE FROM VALLEY OF MEXICO, One-tenth natural size.

(A. M. N. H. ³⁹/₁₉₅.)



TERRA COTTA FIGURE FROM YUCATAN.

One-half natural size.

(Original in Berlin)

