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VOL. XII, PART V

CONVENTIONALIZED FIGURES IN ANCIENT PERUVIAN ART

BY

CHARLES W. MEAD

NEW YORK

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1916

American Museum of Natural History.

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PREFACE.

In the preceding sections of this volume my associate, Mr. M. D. C. Crawford has made a searching analysis of Peruvian textile technique. This paper is given to an analytic discussion of textile and pottery designs from the same source. It does not exhaust the subject, but presents the results of such observation as the writer's curatorial duties permitted.

The greater part of the material for this article was collected in 1905. Since that time a portion of it has appeared in contributions to the Anniversary Volumes presented to Professor Franz Boas and to Professor Frederic Ward Putnam and in a paper on "The Puma Motive in Ancient Peruvian Art" read before the Nineteenth International Congress of Americanists at Washington, D.C., December, 1915.

The matter here presented is based on a study of objects in the pre-historic Peruvian collections now on exhibition in the American Museum of Natural History, and from these, with a very few exceptions, the sketches used as illustrations have been made. Credit has been given for those taken from other sources.

August, 1916.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
PREFACE	195
INTRODUCTION	199
THE FISH IN ANCIENT PERUVIAN ART	204
Plate I	205
Plate II	207
THE BIRD	209
Plate III	209
Plate IV	210
THE CATS	211
Plate V	211
MAN AND MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS	213
HIEROGLYPH-LIKE FIGURES	214
MISCELLANEOUS DESIGNS	215
Plate VIII	215
REMARKS	217

ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATES.

- I. The Fish.
- II. The Fish.
- III. The Bird.
- IV. The Bird.
- V. The Cats.
- VI. Man and Mythological Characters.
- VII. Hieroglyph-like Figures.
- VIII. Miscellaneous Designs.

INTRODUCTION.

In the artifacts from prehistoric Peruvian graves the art student, whether painter or designer, finds a wealth of color schemes and conventionalized designs such as exists in few if in any other fields; and this is particularly true in regard to the textile fabrics and pottery vessels. In their decorative art the ancient Peruvians made use very largely of such objects and scenes as were familiar to them in their daily life, a large range extending from representations of the human figure to inanimate objects. While these representations are often very realistic, by far the greater number are more or less conventionalized.

Before entering upon a study of their art it may be well to say a few words concerning the country occupied by the people whose work is under discussion. Ancient Peru, at the time of the Conquest, comprised not only the region included within the present Republic of Peru, but also the greater part of Ecuador and Bolivia, and extended southward as far as the Maule River in Chile and was about half the size of the United States. Within these boundaries had lived and passed away, in prehistoric times, many tribes or peoples of whom we have little or no definite knowledge. Sir Clements R. Markham says:—

During cycles of centuries the natives of the Andean region were slowly advancing toward the highest type of civilization of which their race is capable. Ruined edifices of unknown date and origin built of enormous stones seem to point to a period when a powerful empire existed in Peru, long before the rise of the Inca dynasty. Tradition barely reaches to that remote past, and the ruins are almost the only witnesses to the existence of a forgotten but once mighty dominion. Its epoch may be distinguished as the megalithic period and its remains are met with throughout the length of the Peruvian Andes.¹

Sir Clements instances the ruins at Tiahuanaco, and Sacsahuaman above Cuzco, the remains at Ollantaytambo, Concacha near Apurímac, at Huíñaque, Chavin, Huaraz and Quecap (Kuélap), in Chachapoyas.

In studying Peruvian archaeology, it must always be remembered that the Inca were in possession of the coast region of the country but a comparatively short time before the arrival of Pizarro, and that a large part of the objects in museum collections was the work of their predecessors, generally spoken of as the megalithic people. The builders of Tiahuanaco

¹ *A History of Peru*, Chicago, 1892, pp. 17–18.

were of the megalithic people and their art is found to the northern confines of the Empire. In many localities the decorative motives of Tiahuanaco are found. The conventionalized puma head is a good example (Plate V, Figs. 15, 17). Fig. 15 represents the belt on the central figure on the great gateway at Tiahuanaco and Fig. 17 is part of a pottery vessel. Compare these with the two puma heads from Pachacamac (Figs. 18, 19). Fig. 13 is also from Pachacamac and here the two puma heads are connected by curved instead of straight lines as in Fig. 15. As has been said we find the forms and decorative designs of the megalithic people in widely separated localities, and generally differentiated to a certain extent in each place, as would naturally be the case.

The most important work that now confronts the Peruvian archaeologist is the determination of the different epochs through which Peruvian civilization had passed in prehistoric times, in the various culture areas. This can only be done by very careful and scientific excavations in the burial places. Too many of the collections in museums have been dug up haphazard and there is nothing to show whether a specimen was found near the surface of the ground or twenty feet below it. The locality from which it came is known, but nothing more. Now, there may have been near the surface a layer of Inca pottery, and below that a layer of older ware, and perhaps other layers still older and deeper in the ground; but the excavator was only after pots and mixed them indiscriminately together thus destroying a page in the history of prehistoric Peru.

During the last few years the importance of scientific excavations in determining the chronology of the different peoples who have inhabited Peru in the past has been better understood, and a good beginning has been made in this line, particularly by Dr. Max Uhle, at Pachacamac, Moche, Nazca, etc. It will require years of this serious research work before the relative age of each type of pottery can be known with any degree of certainty.

Many of the Peruvian textile fabrics are of great artistic beauty, due to the purity and richness of their colors, and the harmonious way in which these have been brought together. The strange conventionalized animal figures with which they are usually covered, while giving an added pleasure to the eye, serve also to give them a distinctive character of their own. The number of students, often large classes from various art schools, who now make use of the Museum's exhibit of these textiles in their studies of color schemes and conventionalized designs, shows that their value for this purpose is extensively recognized. Second only to the textiles, are the pottery vessels. Many of them have fine lines and are very artistically decorated in colors.

This paper deals with conventionalized designs. Those interested in the purely art side of the work of these prehistoric people are referred to the remarkable publications of Reiss and Stübel¹ and Arthur Baessler²; the first named for textile fabrics, and the second for pottery vessels and feather-work.

We know that the development of Peruvian civilization had been a very long one and that decorative art had reached a high degree of perfection before the country came under the sway of the Inca. Therefore, although the art of this region had passed through a number of periods, the present state of our knowledge makes it unprofitable to treat the subject otherwise than as a whole, and it may be roughly summed up under four heads, as follows:—

1. *Realism.* Representations of scenes and objects, animate and inanimate, familiar to them in their daily life.
2. *Conventionalism.* Conventionalized forms, mostly of animals, and parts of such forms, in which the degeneration does not appear to have been carried to the extent that the identity is wholly lost.
3. *Symbolism and Mythology.* Anthropomorphs, fish, birds, dragons, serpents, and other figures probably having a religious significance.
4. *Geometric Figures.* Scrolls, meanders, frets, and other geometric figures, most of which seem to have originated through the technique of basket work and are common to the decorative art of many peoples.

Realism was the chief characteristic of their art; and even in the textile fabrics, where the most highly conventionalized forms naturally occur, realism is apparently never entirely lost sight of; the kind of animal intended to be represented is still recognizable. I use the word "apparently" advisedly, as it is, of course, within the bounds of possibility that any of the numerous geometrical figures may have represented to the mind of the artificer some animal form.

Of the various theories that have been advanced concerning the origin and development of art, the one that appeals to me as being the most natural, and the one that seems to apply exactly to Peruvian art is that of "progress by degeneration." This theory was first formulated and clearly set forth by Professor F. W. Putnam in 1879.³ His "Conventionalism in Ancient American Art"⁴ followed a few years later. This latter contains a passage which seems to me so applicable to Peruvian art as we know it, that I give it below. He says:—

¹ Reiss, W. and Stübel, A., *The Necropolis of Ancon in Peru*, Berlin, 1880–1887.

² *Ancient Peruvian Art*, Berlin, 1902–1903.

³ *Papers of the Boston Society of Natural History.*

⁴ *Bulletin of the Essex Institute*, 1886.

Thus it is that we find in the lower stratum of human development many cooking-vessels, water-jars, dishes, and other utensils made of clay, that are of the same form and style of ornamentation; but after the particular form of vessel desired was attained, and the early methods of ornament by finger-marks, indentures, scratches, cross-lines, and the imprint of cord or fabric, had been carried to their full extent, one can easily understand that something higher would follow. This advanced step is represented in various ways by different prehistoric peoples, but it is when this step is taken that the imprint is given to the art of each.

Among other ways, this higher expression seems to be shown in the realistic representation of inanimate and animal objects, often of a mythological or historical character. In the course of time, as art attained increased power of expression, it progressed beyond mere realism, and led to the representation of an object by certain conventional characters, without that close adherence to nature which was at first necessary to a clear understanding of the idea intended to be conveyed. Thus conventionalism began. Side by side with this conventional representation of objects are found realistic forms; conservatism, which is such a strong characteristic of primitive peoples, leading to both methods of expression at the same time (pp. 155-156.)

An almost ever present factor in Peruvian decorative art are the geometrical designs which owe their origin to the technique of basketry; to the interlacing of twigs, grasses, roots, vegetable fibers, etc. These designs were later copied in decorating all classes of objects and are particularly prominent in pottery vessels and on cloth. In the latter they form quite a part of the mass of decoration by serving as connecting links to the conventionalized animal figures, and often as parts of the animals themselves. They are also used separately to balance the composition.

We are studying the decorative art of a people who had no written language, and whose descendants retain little or no knowledge that can be of assistance to us. The ancient Peruvians have left us a wealth of material in the remains of their structures and in the contents of their graves; and what is revealed by these, together with such meager information as has been handed down to us by the early writers, constitutes our entire knowledge of this people.

In viewing a collection of Peruvian antiquities the visitor's first question almost invariably is "How old are these things?" This question cannot be definitely answered, but this much can be said: that all antedate the Conquest; that they vary greatly in point of age, covering a period beginning in dim antiquity and extending down to the time of the advent of the Spaniards under Pizarro in 1532. Internal evidence of the best kind is not wanting to prove that man had lived and toiled in this region for a great length of time. Inside the wrappings of the mummy bundles, in cloth bags hanging from the necks of mummies, and in vessels of pottery and gourd placed with the bodies in the graves, we find Indian corn or maize (*Zea Mays*)

which had been brought to a very high state of cultivation. Botanists tell us that this could have been accomplished only by careful and systematic labor during many centuries. Alphonse de Candolle¹ remarks: —

Men have not discovered and cultivated within the past two thousand years a single species which can rival maize, rice, the sweet potato, the potato, the bread-fruit, the date cereals, millets, sorghums, the banana, soy. These date from three, four or five thousand years, perhaps even in some cases six thousand years.

Robert E. Coker, lately Fishery Expert to the Government of Peru, while writing of the great shell-heaps and islands and causeways of shells in the estuary region of the Gulf of Guayaquil says: "A thousand years of the present oyster fishery would not leave a trace comparable to these."²

The greater part of all Peruvian archaeological collections comes from the coast region which is for the most part a barren sandy desert where rain is all but unknown. The only inhabitable places were the fertile valleys of the small rivers rising in the Cordilleras and flowing into the Pacific Ocean. In these valleys they lived and usually buried their dead outside in the desert where the dry nitrous sand has so perfectly preserved them and the articles placed with them. So well are many of the textiles preserved that they are as strong and their colors apparently as bright as on the day they were taken from the primitive looms. Many pieces of cloth, especially those in tapestry, show great skill in weaving and a fine sense of color effects. Indeed if we judge these productions of the ancient looms by present-day standards we shall be forced to admit that for fineness of workmanship, beauty of designs, and artistic management of the colors, they have never been surpassed.

In the products of their looms we have another evidence of the antiquity of man in this region; for it was a very long step indeed from the first attempts at weaving to the production of such beautiful fabrics as have been found in the Peruvian graves.

Throughout the coast region the decorative motives oftenest employed are derived from the human figure, fish, birds, and the great cats; and these four forms will be considered separately.

¹ *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, New York, 1902, p. 451.

² "The Fisheries and the Guano Industries of Peru," *Bull. Bureau of Fisheries*, Vol. XXVIII, Washington, 1908.

THE FISH IN ANCIENT PERUVIAN ART.

The fish as a symbol and as a decorative motive has played a prominent part in the religions and arts of many peoples. Thus we read: —

The Fish was the earliest, the most universal of the Christian emblems, partly as the symbol of water and the rite of baptism, and also because of the five Greek letters which express the word Fish form the anagram of the name of Jesus Christ.¹

In the various arts of the prehistoric peoples of the Peruvian coast region, numerous species of fish and their many conventionalized forms are of very common occurrence. They are either absent or at least only occasionally to be met with in other parts of the country. Pottery vessels were often modeled into fish forms, or decorated with fish painted or in relief. Wooden vessels in this form are numerous, as are also fish forms cast or hammered in gold, silver, copper, and bronze.

It is not uncommon to find painted representations of fish on cloth, particularly on such large coarse pieces as were often used to cover the mummy bundles; but these painted representations are few compared to the great number of conventionalized forms where the fish motive, in various colors, enters into the woven fabrics.

That the prehistoric inhabitants of the coast region of Peru should worship the sea would be natural and in accordance with what we know of other peoples similarly situated and in a like stage of development. The fish would be the natural symbol of the sea, and the frequency with which it appears in all the arts of these peoples would certainly indicate for it a religious significance.

Garcilasso de la Vega, in his chapter entitled "Of the Idolatry and Gods which the Ancient Incas adored, and Manner of their Sacrifices," tells us: —

The Inhabitants near the Cordillera worshipped that Mountain for its height, those of the Coast made the Sea their God, which in their language they call Mama-choca, and is as much as to say the Mother Sea; the Whale for its prodigious bigness was in no less Veneration than the rest, and every sort of Fish which abounded amongst them was deified, because they believed that the first Fish in the World above them takes always care to provide them with a number of the like sort or species sufficient to maintain and nourish them.²

¹ Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, London, 1866, vol. 1, p. 24.

² *The Royal Commentaries of Peru*, Ed. Rycaut, Book 1, Chap. 4.

Among the woven fabrics the greatest number of conventionalized figures are found in the vicuña borders of ponchos and in such long, narrow pieces of cloth as were used as headbands, belts, etc. In these the fish motive occurs much more frequently than any other. The head is triangular, and its identity not to be mistaken by any one at all familiar with the fish figures painted on cloth, or represented in relief on pottery vessels. The other parts of the design are usually so arranged as to suggest the outline of a fish, as seen from above.

In the woven designs we almost invariably find the pattern to consist of two fish, turned in opposite directions, making what we may call the "interlocked fish design," with the whole so arranged, as I have said above, as to suggest the outline of a fish as they commonly represent it (see Plate I, Figs. 5-7).

Where such a wealth of material exists, it is difficult to make a selection; but I have endeavored to picture such as might perhaps be called types of a class, and in the textiles, where their decorative art reached its highest development, to show some few of the steps by which the realistic representation of fish may have degenerated into highly conventionalized forms. No one at all conversant with the subject would attempt to follow step by step the degeneration of an animal figure in any field of prehistoric art.

The series of fish figures, or any other series that may be given later, representing different stages of degeneration is not presented as the actual progression in conventionalization, but in the belief that the figures will lead to the recognition of the animal represented even after degeneration has run its full course and left but an almost unrecognizable skeleton, at least beyond identification by anyone who had not seen it fading away by stages from a more realistic form.

In cases where it is evident that an attempt at realistic representations had been made, little need be said. It is with the conventional forms of their higher decorative art that I shall concern myself at present, and trust that I shall be able to show that many of the designs which have hitherto been described as animal figures, designs derived from animal figures, and the like, are, in fact, conventional fish forms.

In the attempt to establish the correctness of my identification, I shall begin with such figures as are unmistakably derived from fish, and, by calling attention to some intermediate forms I hope to carry the eye, step by step as it were, from those that depart but slightly from the realistic to the higher forms.

Plate I. Fig. 1 shows a small wooden vessel in fish form, the cavity was undoubtedly used to rest the end of the spindle in while it was being twirled. Small vessels of pottery and gourd are similarly used today.

Fig. 2 is from a large piece of coarse cloth which formed the outside wrapping of a mummy bundle. The figure is painted in black, except the openings at the gills and the fins, which have been left white, the color of the cloth. The fish is represented as seen from above, the six white squares in the center representing a dorsal fin.

Fig. 3 shows another painted design from the covering of a complete mummy bundle. In this a decided change has taken place. The curved lines representing the gill-openings have become straight lines and parts of the body are represented by zigzags making the projecting points which are so characteristic of most of their conventionalized forms of animals, particularly of the bird and fish.

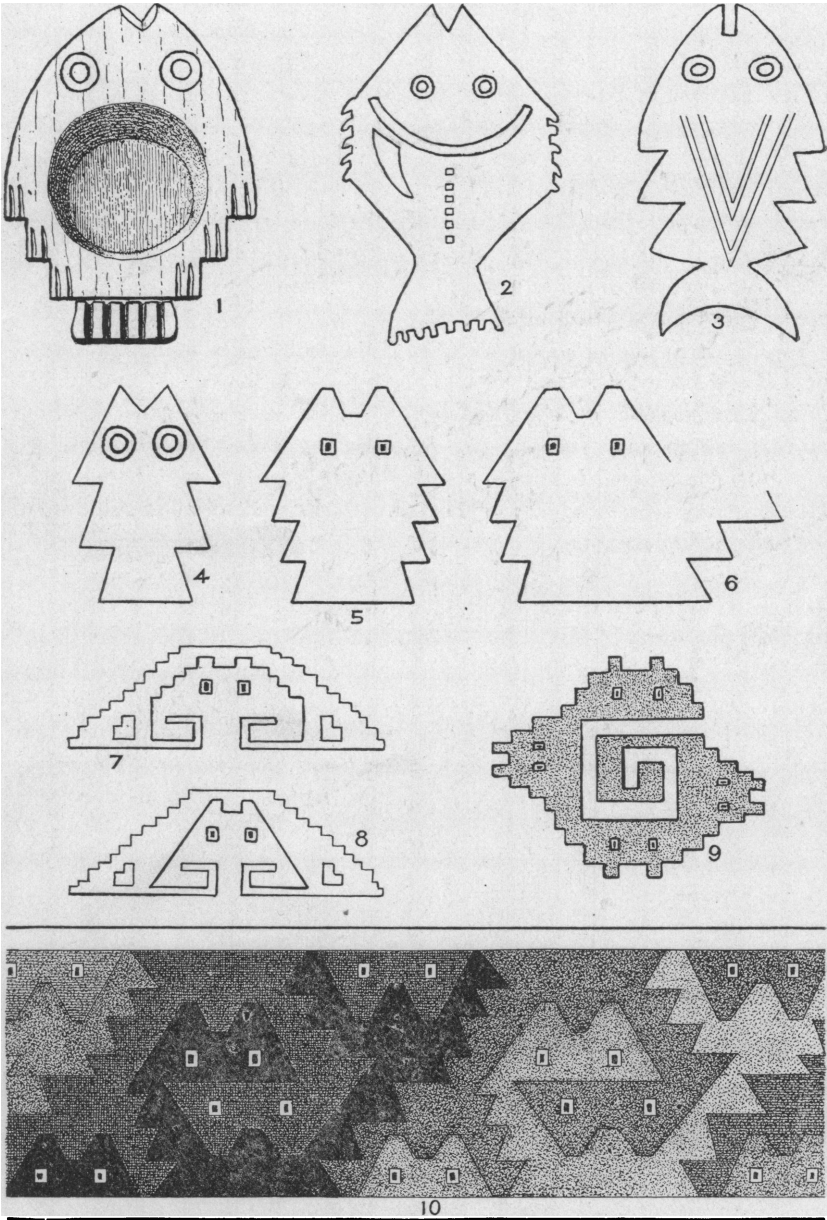
Fig. 4 is from a long belt or sash of vicuña cloth. The figure is repeated a number of times in different colors and is part of the woven fabric. Although unmistakably a fish, the degeneration has proceeded to the extent that nothing remains but the general form, eyes, and the characteristic projecting points seen in Fig. 3. In this figure, together with Figs. 5 to 9, I think we have the key to all the higher conventional forms of fish designs shown in the illustrations.

Fig. 9. Here we have a design consisting of four colored fish heads with a fret in white in the center. To satisfy ourselves that these are conventionalized fish forms we have but to examine the two sketches, Figs. 7 and 8. Fig. 7 is from another piece of cloth, but is the same form. If we draw straight lines from the mouth downward, to eliminate the step form arising from the technique of the weaving, the result is shown in Fig. 8. We now have exactly the same head as in the other fish figures above. These step form lines in woven fabrics often disguise a form which if drawn in straight lines would be recognized immediately.

Fig. 10 is a section of a vicuña border of a poncho. It shows what we call the interlocked fish design, which in some one of its great variety of forms is oftener to be met with on these borders than any other form of ornamentation. In this example the black fish is interlocked with one of red. These two colors form one of the diagonal bars in the design which will be presently described.

If we have any doubt that these interlocked figures represent fish forms, Figs. 5 and 6 will dispel them. Fig. 6 is a tracing from the black fish in the design. The two sides cannot be symmetrical as the line on one side of each fish must be carried away to form a part of the next fish to the right or left. In Fig. 5 the right hand side of Fig. 6 has been made to correspond with its left side and this gives an undoubted fish.

I will here call attention to an important feature of Peruvian decoration that applies particularly to these vicuña borders. This is a rhythmic



THE FISH.

repetition of six units, each being of the same size and design, but varying in color. Commonly each square, band, or diagonal bar, or any other form constituting a unit, is different in color or colors from the one preceding and the one following it; but it often occurs with three all colored alike, followed by three in some other color, also alike, four of one and two of another, etc. In whatever way these units are arranged, the next six will be a repetition of the first series, and so on indefinitely. In another place I have described and illustrated this feature of their art.¹

Plate II. Fig. 1 shows a very common fish design on borders, belts, etc. During years of almost daily contact with students of design, who have drawn from the Museum's collection, I have seldom known one to see the fish motive in this form until pointed out by sketches like Figs. 7 and 8 on Plate I, when it was immediately recognized. The step form lines of the weaver led them astray, and prevented their seeing the true character of the design, which they considered a purely geometric one.

Figs. 2, 3, and 4 have the whole design in one continuous line with the exception of the eyes. The interlocked fish heads are apparent in Fig. 2. In Fig. 3 they are triangular, like those of Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13. In Fig. 4 we have the familiar head and a part of the sides of each fish.

Fig. 5. Here is shown the same form of fish head shown on Plate I, Figs. 5 to 10. This is another very common decoration on borders, belts, etc.

Fig. 6 is from a belt or sash eight feet long and two and a quarter inches broad. The sketch shows only two complete units of the six-unit design which extends over its full length. The ground color is deep red and in this piece the lower fish figures of each pair are in dark yellowish-green. The upper ones, interlocked with them, are of the following colors: white yellow, pink, white, yellow, and pink. This makes the six units of the design. Where the character of a design left considerable areas undecorated, these were commonly filled in with a figure or part of a figure, generally highly conventionalized, of the same animal represented in the decoration. This sketch shows four such figures, two filling undecorated spaces above the main design, and two below it.²

¹ "The Six-Unit Design in Ancient Peruvian Cloth," *Boas Anniversary Volume*, 1906.

² I shall always remember a pleasant incident connected with the drawing of this figure some ten years ago. I had but just finished it when a well-known anthropologist came in. He looked at it and said: "The design is certainly the interlocked fish. Now you know and I know that those figures that look like stone arrow points above and below are conventionalized fish, but how will you convince people who are unacquainted with such matters that they are fish?" Then I showed him a poncho of alpaca wool with the embroidered design of a pelican holding a fish in his mandibles (See Plate IV, Fig. 1). He looked at it, saw that the fish the bird had caught was identical with those in my drawing, and said with emphasis: "That settles it."

It will be seen that each pair of interlocked fish is connected with the next pair by an extension from the tail, consisting of a form bounded on one side by a straight line and on the other by a zigzag. This was a favorite device, as it gives a connected appearance to the whole design and balances the composition by filling space, where something is needed.

Fig. 7 is a gourd bowl about six inches in diameter, with the design burned in. Examples of decoration by pyrography are numerous in any large collection from the coast region, and it was the medium commonly employed on gourd vessels, many of them showing work of no mean order. In this interlocked fish design, although the workmanship is crude, we have again the triangular head, with the other parts represented by a straight line and a zigzag. A number of the fish forms with triangular heads are shown on this plate.

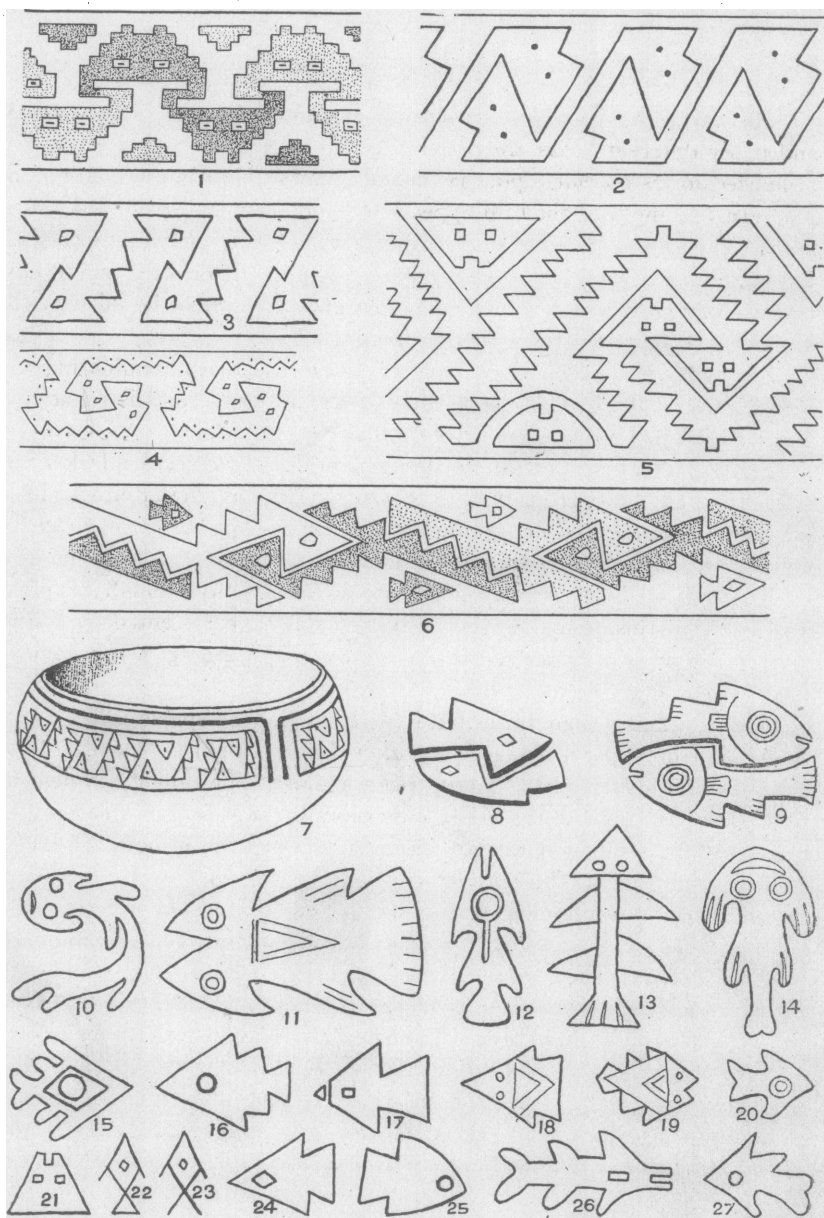
Figs. 8 and 9 represent two forms in relief, on pottery vessels, and show their fondness for the interlocked design.

Figs. 10-14 show fish forms common on pottery vessels, sometimes painted, but oftener incised or in relief.

Figs. 15-27 are forms of fish woven or painted on cloth, painted on grave tablets, and most of them will also be found on pottery vessels, with a great variety of modifications.

As I conclude this description of the designs on the two fish plates it comes over me that the number of figures shown gives but little idea of the vast variety found in the Museum's collections, where the fish is used as the motive. I trust, however, that a sufficient variety of the forms has been shown to give a pretty good idea of the character of this side of Peruvian art.

I do not claim to have discovered in these designs any series representing an historical sequence. My object has been to show to what extent fish forms appear in all the arts of the prehistoric peoples of Peru, and to attempt the identification of the conventionalized figures.



THE FISH.

THE BIRD.

The bird as a form of decoration was in great favor with the Peruvians, and many different kinds are represented in an endless variety of conventionalized forms on cloth, pottery, metals, wood, bone, gourds, and stone. Notwithstanding that the bird appears oftener as a decorative motive than any other, it has suffered less in the processes of degeneration than its great rivals, the fish and cat, or even the human figure. It never seems to have reached a stage where it is not easily recognized, or could be mistaken for any other animal, or a purely geometric figure.

Plate III. Figs. 1-4 show parts of four scrolls each terminating in a bird's head, probably representing the king vulture. No. 3 is painted on a grave tablet, the others are painted on pottery vessels.

Fig. 5. The light part of the design represents yellow, the darker part red. Here the birds are turned in opposite directions, the interlocked idea which we have seen to be so common in fish designs. Figs. 7, 8, and 10 are good examples of this form of design.

Fig. 6 shows birds turned in opposite directions, their mandibles joined into one. In this design the bodies of the birds are represented by a figure bounded on one side by a straight line, the other by a zigzag: a very common form in textiles.

Fig. 7. This design varies but little from the one shown in Fig. 5. If we look at the upper bird's head we find it fairly realistic. From the head, the neck first goes to the left, and then turns at a right angle and descends to the body, which like the bird's body described above consists of a figure bounded by a straight line and a zigzag. In this form of body whether of bird or other animal the number of points, or in other words, the length of the zigzag, is determined by the length of the space to be decorated.

Fig. 8 shows the designs on a piece of vicuña cloth as it is commonly called. The warp threads are of cotton crossed by a weft of vicuña wool which completely covers them. The ground color is a deep reddish-brown, with the decoration in yellow. The effect produced is extremely pleasant and artistic, and has made this textile one of the favorites of art students who have many times copied it in color. It also affords a fine example of the influence of basket work on the art of these people. A greater part of the decoration, the lines bounded by zigzags, is plainly copied from the work of the basket maker. The birds' necks rise and depend from these basket designs.

Fig. 9 shows one bar or unit of a six-unit design. Each of the units is in two colors, but no two alike; yellow birds on red ground, red birds on yellow ground, red birds on black ground, etc. The influence of the technique of basket work is evident enough in these bird figures.

Fig. 10 shows the decoration on a large shawl-like garment. The color of this textile is indigo blue with the designs woven in white in broad stripes. The bird heads are very similar to those in Fig. 9 and the whole design shows unmistakably that it owes its origin to basket technique.

Fig. 11 is a part of a belt or poncho border. The bird decoration is in squares, only two of which are shown. This textile is a curious example of their ingenuity in weaving a number of animal figures into a design, as each square shows four bird heads. The two larger central ones show plainly. These are in black and red. The other two heads are easily found by the eyes at the upper right hand and lower left hand corners, in the light colored (yellow in the original) band that borders the square. If we place a finger on this light-colored band directly over the end of the light projection below the eye, we see a bird head of the same type as those shown in Fig. 8.

Plate IV. Fig. 1 shows a pelican that has just caught a fish. The design is a part of the woven fabric.

Fig. 2 is another large bird that has also been successful in catching a fish. This bird is not woven into the cloth but is in relief. It is made by sewing narrow pieces of braid on the cloth.

Fig. 3 is a bird form not uncommon in tapestry borders to ponchos.

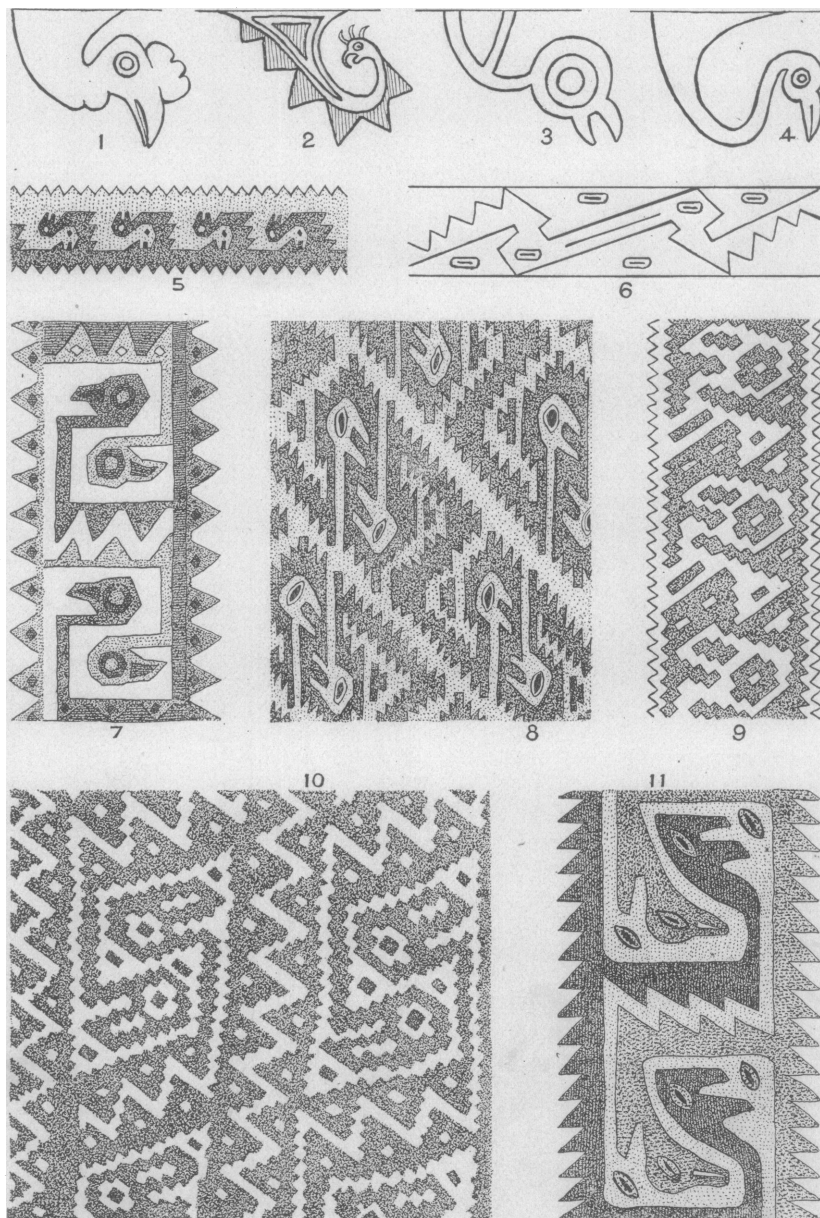
Figs. 4 and 5 are very common bird forms and are found in hundreds of woven fabrics in the collection. Fig. 5 can be taken as the typical conventionalized bird in Peruvian decorative art: a fairly realistic head and neck with the body represented, as we have seen in previous cases, by a design bounded on one side by a straight line and on the other by a zigzag producing chevrons or points.

Fig. 6. In this bird figure the same design is used for the tail feathers and the crest on the head. This gives a well-balanced effect to the design, and in a row of such birds there are no large undecorated surfaces to be filled in.

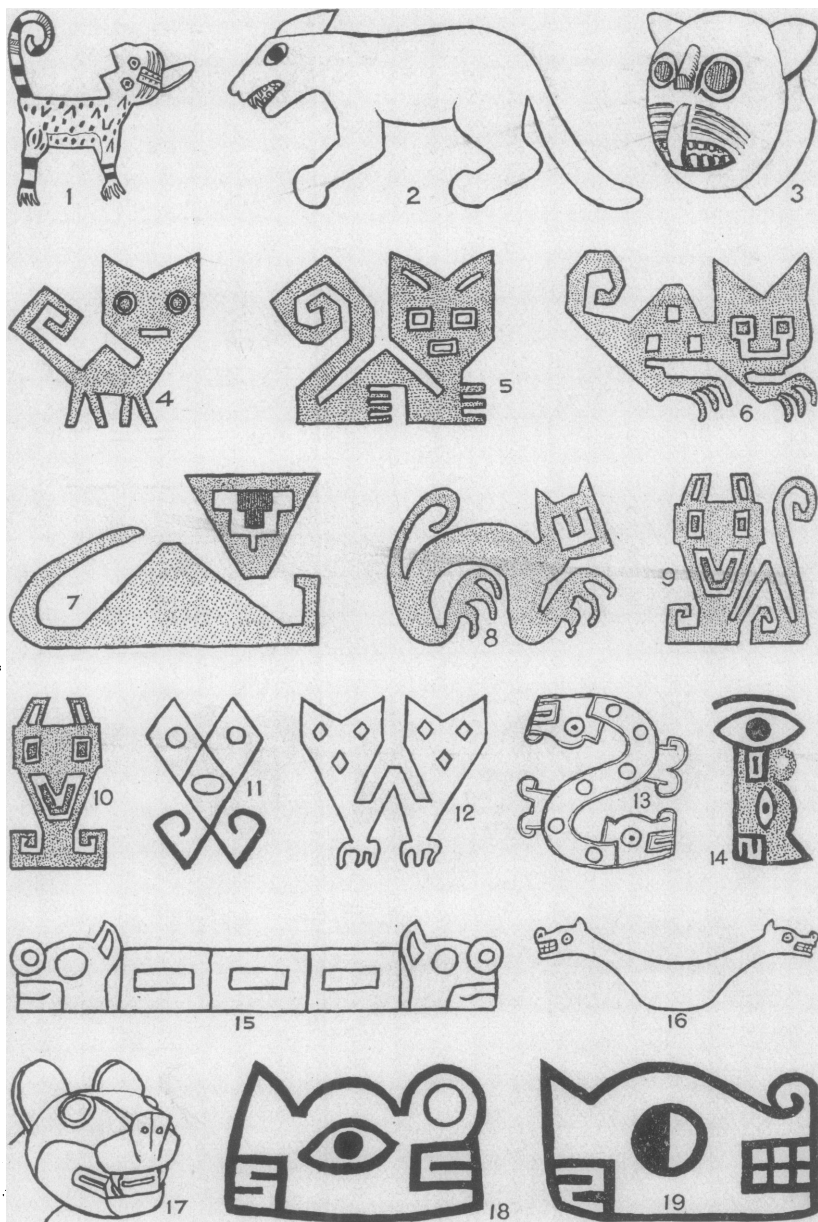
Fig. 7 probably represents a duck and is common both on cloth and pottery.

Figs. 8 and 9 are varieties of frets. It would seem that a great resemblance to some of their conventionalized bird forms was noticed and an eye was inserted.

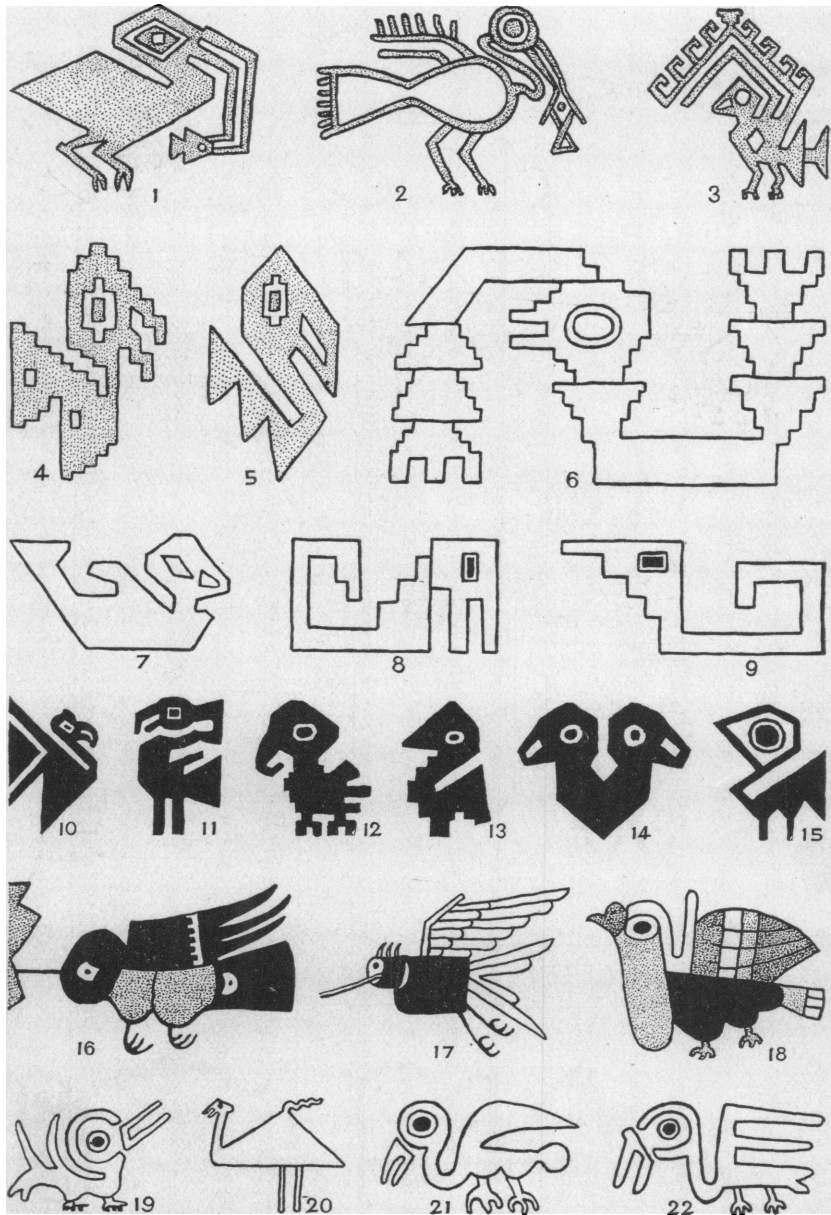
Figs. 10-15 show bird forms which can be found in any considerable collection of Peruvian textiles and require no special comment.



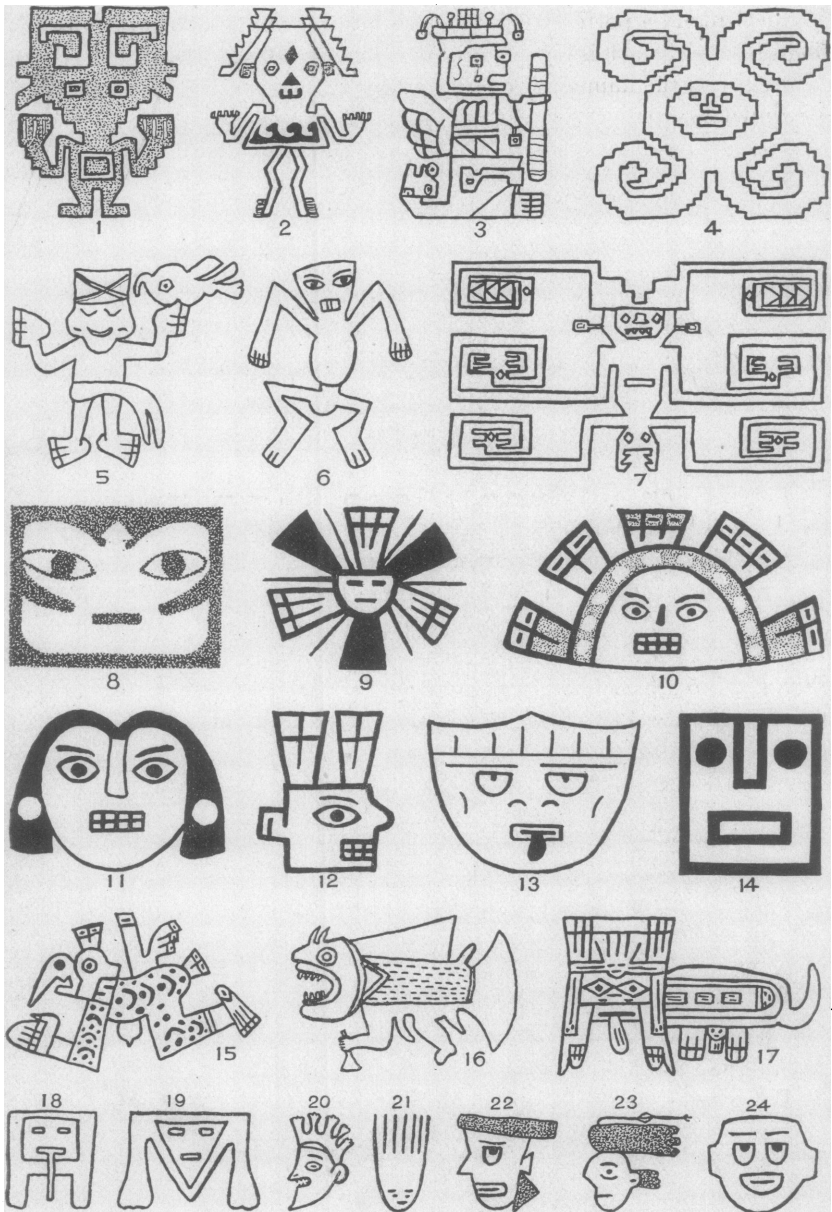
THE BIRD.



THE CATS.



THE BIRD.



MAN AND MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS.

Fig. 16 is a humming bird of Nazca pottery. A row of these birds is painted around a pottery vessel. Each bird is sucking honey from a star-shaped flower, which is only partly shown in the illustration.

Fig. 17 is the humming bird on northern coast pottery. This example is painted on a pottery vessel from Trujillo.

Figs. 18-22 show five bird forms painted on Nazca pottery.

THE CATS.

Three members of the cat family, the jaguar, puma, and the *Titi* or mountain cat played an extensive rôle in their decorative art. The puma is found as a decorative motive on pottery and textiles in all parts of the country.

Plate V. Fig. 1 shows a jaguar on a poncho of the Inca period from the Island of Titicaca.

Fig. 2 is a puma from a painted pottery vessel from Chimbote.

Fig. 3 shows the moulded head of the *Titi*. It projects from the side of a pottery vessel. This specimen comes from Caudevilla, near Lima.

Figs. 4-14 are found in the coast region within fifty miles of Lima. Figs. 4 and 5 are common forms in tapestry. In common with other primitive peoples, the Peruvians, when representing an animal form show some prominent characteristic of that animal. In these cat figures we see the raised back common to the cat family.

Fig. 6. The most noticeable thing about this figure is the manner of representing the nose, eyes, and mouth. The technique of weaving seems to have been responsible for this form as Hasluck shows the same device in a lion woven in an old goat-hair carpet from Persia,¹ and certainly no one will claim contact between the prehistoric Peruvians and the Persians. Variations on this device are found in the next four figures.

Fig. 7 shows a highly conventionalized form with the triangular head detached from the body. The characteristics of the cat family, the humped up back and the tail, leave no doubt as to its identity.

Fig. 8 speaks for itself and requires no comment.

Figs. 9 and 10 are forms often met with, especially in textiles from Ancon. In Fig. 9 we see the raised back and tail. Fig. 10 is plainly but a modification of this.

¹ *Decorative Designs of All Ages for all Purposes*, London, Paris, New York, Toronto, and Melbourne, 1908, p. 128.

Fig. 11 is a design common on cloth, pottery, and in metal objects.

Fig. 12. We have seen, in various fish and bird designs, their fondness for joining two or more animal figures or parts of such figures in the same design. We have illustrations of this in Figs. 12, 13, 15, and 16. In this figure the two cats have a raised back in common.

Fig. 13 shows two conventionalized puma heads joined by a curved band. The design is painted on a beautiful pottery vessel from Pachacamac. These and the balance of the puma heads on this Plate are of the Tiahuanaco style. At first glance the S-shaped band might suggest a serpent, but I have never seen on any Peruvian artifact a serpent head that in any way remotely resembled these. Such puma heads are very common to the Tiahuanaco style as found in Pachacamac. Compare these heads with Figs. 18 and 19 which, as far as I know have always been identified as conventionalized puma heads. If space permitted, a hundred of these heads could easily be shown, each varying in some way from all the others.

Fig. 14. This figure shows a form of facial decoration. It is taken from a vessel from Pachacamac which has for decoration a large human face, painted in colors. One eye and the puma decoration under it is shown in this sketch. In these highly conventionalized puma heads the nose is generally represented by a ring and the mouth by a parallelogram of white enclosed in black or colored lines, with a line through the white surface. This head faces the eye, and the mouth and nose of the puma are against its under side. At the back of the head, that is, at the lower end to the left, is seen a white square enclosed by black lines. Into the white space project two black lines, one from above, and the other from below. This either forms the ear or denotes the opening of the ear. This has been commented on at some length by Dr. Arthur Baessler who styles it "a misdrawn ear."¹ This form of an ear will also be found in painted representations of the human head. See Plate VI, Fig. 12.

Fig. 15. This shows the belt on the central figure on the great monolithic gateway at Tiahuanaco. At either end is seen the typical conventionalized puma head of the Tiahuanaco style. Variations on this form of head are found wherever the influence of Tiahuanaco art was felt. This belt was copied from a plate in the magnificent work of Stübel and Uhle.²

Fig. 16. This design is from a pottery vessel from Pachacamac and is painted in colors. If we examine these heads carefully and compare them with others on this plate we find they have the nose of one, the mouth of another, the eye of another, and the same form of ear as in Fig. 15.

¹ *Ancient Peruvian Art*, Ed. A. H. Kean, description of Plates 136-139. New York, 1902-1903.

² *Die Ruinenstaette von Tiahuanaco*.

Fig. 17 shows a puma head from Tiahuanaco. Such heads project from the rims of vessels. Although puma heads, moulded in the round, are common on pottery all over the country, this particular type belongs only to Tiahuanaco. It would appear to be the parent of the legion of conventionalized cat heads in the so-called Tiahuanaco style, a few of which are shown on this Plate.

Figs. 18 and 19 illustrate two common forms on Pachacamac pottery, derived from the puma head. Compare these with that shown in Fig. 14 and it is evident that while they vary in some details they certainly all come from the same animal form.

MAN AND MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS.

On Plate VI are shown designs from the human form and mythological characters which are part man and part animals.

Figs. 1 and 2 are woven designs and require no comment.

Fig. 3 shows a woven design from Pachacamac. It is in the Tiahuanaco style and probably represents the so-called puma god. It is an example of their fondness for combining several animal figures in the same design. Note near the bottom, to the right, the bird's head and neck, and to the left of it a puma's head in the Tiahuanaco style, with its ring nose and peculiar ear.

Fig. 4. In this design the head remains while the other parts of the body have degenerated into scrolls.

Figs. 5 and 6 are from paintings on pottery vessels from Nazca.

Fig. 7. This and similar designs are found in various localities in the coast region. Here the arms, legs, and headdress have degenerated into frets.

Figs. 8 and 9 are from painted designs on Nazca pottery. The face shown in Fig. 8 is peculiar to Nazca and occurs on a great number of their vessels.

Figs. 10 and 11 were taken from paintings on pottery from Pachacamac. Fig. 10 has a headdress of feathers. A common way of representing feathers.

Fig. 12. This head is woven in cloth from Ancon. It shows a headdress of two feathers and the curious "misdrawn ear" of Dr. Baessler which has been noted in several of the designs discussed.

Figs. 13 and 14 show faces from Nazca pottery.

Figs. 15, 16, and 17. That these three figures represent mythological

characters of the pre-Incan people, I think there can be no doubt. They show the man-bird, the man-fish, and the man-cat, and are generally known as the condor god, the fish god, and the puma god. They occur in different parts of the country with such variations as they would naturally undergo through the local art of the people where found. Fig. 15 is from Pachacamac. Fig. 16 is found in various localities on the Coast and is often represented as following two men who are paddling a balsa, and Fig. 17 is from Nazca. All three are from paintings on pottery vessels.

Figs. 18-24 show various designs from the human form and head which were taken from paintings on Nazca pottery.

HIEROGLYPH-LIKE FIGURES.

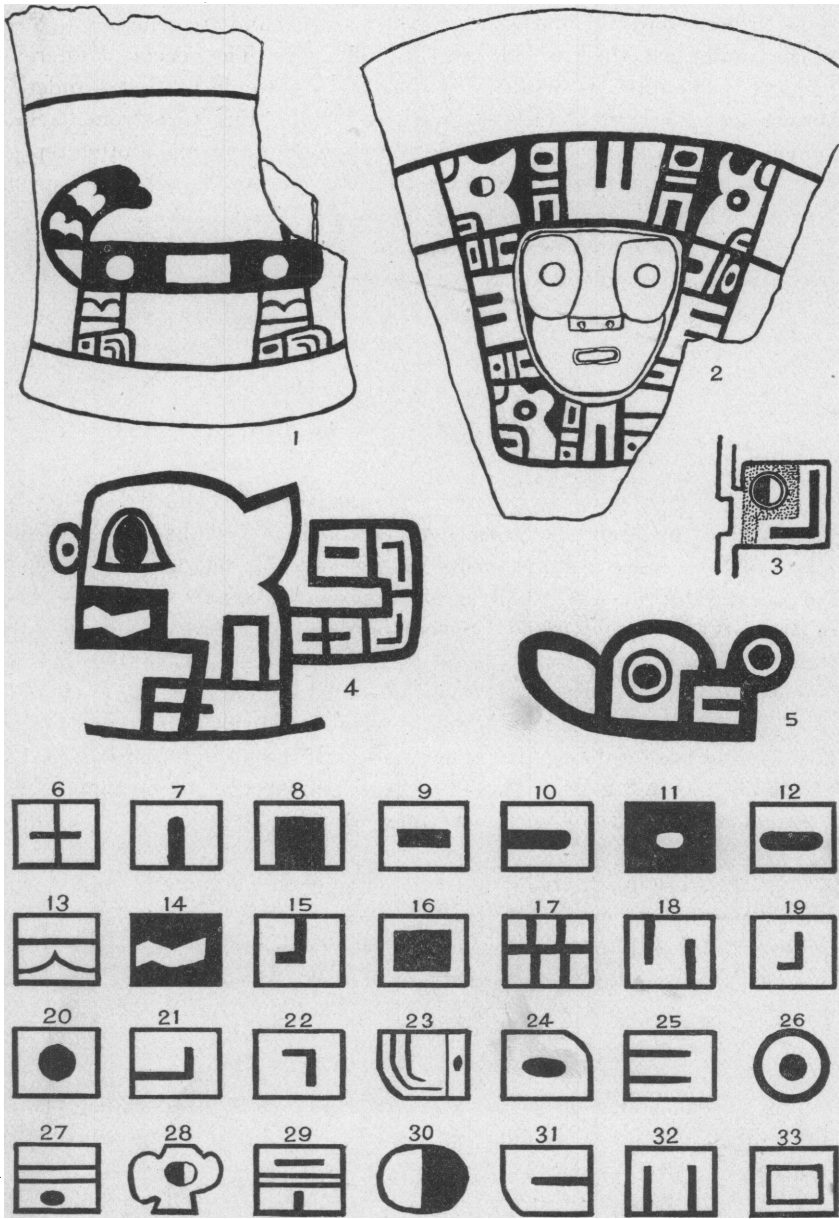
Plate VII deals with the curious glyph-like figures so common on pottery vessels from the Island of Titicaca, Copacabana, and Tiahuanaco. While many of these figures might easily be mistaken for hieroglyphs we shall see that most of them, if not all, are parts of conventionalized animal forms, or the markings on such forms. Several of these designs are usually grouped together on a vessel without, as far as I can see, any relationship one to another; sometimes turned one way and sometimes another.

Fig. 1 shows a broken kero or cup of terra cotta from Tiahuanaco. The puma figure has on its legs the same markings as will be found in Fig. 13, and the feet as in Fig. 23. These two figures make clear my meaning when I said above that they were sometimes turned one way and sometimes another.

Fig. 2 represents a large painted potsherd from Tiahuanaco, and it will be seen that quite a number of the glyph-like figures are depicted on it. On the upper curved line of decorations are two llama heads. The one on the extreme left shows a part of the ring nose (Fig. 26), the divided eye (Fig. 30), and the form of mouth shown in Fig. 31. The llama on the right has the ordinary form of eye. Another llama head is seen on the lower line to the left.

Fig. 3 is a puma head on a woven fabric from Pachacamac. The divided eye is like Fig. 30 and this way of representing the mouth will be found in Fig. 19.

Fig. 4 shows a puma figure painted on a clay cup from the Island of Titicaca. Its ring nose is like Fig. 26, its mouth like Fig. 14, and the four designs on the tail will be found in Figs. 6, 12, 19, 22.



HIEROGLYPH-LIKE FIGURES.

Fig. 5 is on a painted cup from Copacabana. The mouth is shown in Figs. 7 and 10, the eye and nose in Fig. 26. While studying the various conventionalized animal figures I have noticed that the eye is often represented as in Figs. 11, 16, 20, 26, 30, and 33; the mouth as in Nos. 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, and 31; the ear as in Fig. 18; and the feet as in Fig. 23. Spots on the tips of feathers are shown as in Figs. 9, 11, 12, 16, 20, and 33.

These glyph-like figures were copied from decorations on pottery vessels, but they are also common to the textile fabrics, as we should expect to be the case where freehand drawings were copied in woven designs, and woven figures, with step form lines from the technique of weaving, were in turn copied in decorations on their pottery vessels.

MISCELLANEOUS DESIGNS.

Garcilasso says: —

Blas Valera a certain Author who in loose Papers wrote of the *Indies*, describes those Nations by distinguishing the former from the latter ages, and faith. That those who live in *Antis* eat Mens Flesh, and are more brutish than the Beasts themselves, for they know neither God, nor Law, nor Virtue, nor have they Idols, or any Worship; unless sometimes when the Devil presents himself to them in the form of a Serpent, or other Animal, they then adore and worship him.¹

Realistic representations of the serpent or any design originating from it is not characteristic of Peruvian art. However, in the region from Trujillo to Chimbote, pottery vessels have painted figures derived from the serpent, but they have undergone the change so common to serpents in primitive art and have assumed grotesque and monstrous forms. Outside of this region, with the exception of Cuzco, where serpents are sometimes carved on stone vessels, one but seldom finds anything resembling a snake.

Plate VIII. Figs. 1-2 are good examples of forms on Chimbote pottery derived from the serpent.

Figs. 3-10 show various ways in which the llama was represented in paint on pottery. Fig. 6 is one of many llama figures on the inside of a bowl, from ruins on the flank of Illimani Mountain, all the others are from the Island of Titicaca. The last four figures, although highly convention-

¹ *The Royal Commentaries of Peru*, Book 1, Chap. IV.

alized, have the long neck and manner of carrying the ears that stamps them as llamas.

Figs. 11-14. These figures are found among quite a number of illustrations given by Dr. Baessler¹ to show designs derived from the cuttlefish. Fig. 11 certainly represents a cuttlefish, and while I believe the other designs are derived from the tentacles of that animal I prefer to leave the responsibility of the identification on the Doctor's shoulders. The designs given are common on pottery vessels from Chimbote and Trujillo.

Figs. 15-18 and 28 show examples of decorative forms taken from plant life. Among the old Peruvian designs we occasionally find plant forms woven in cloth and painted on pottery vessels. Figs. 15-16 appear to represent plants of the *compositæ* family with roots, stem, leaves, and heads of blossoms. Both were taken from pieces of tapestry found at Pachacamac.

Fig. 17 shows water rushes (probably cypenes) painted on a jar from Chimbote. The original design has two bunches of these rushes and fish are shown swimming between them.

Fig. 18 is a highly conventionalized flower. Humming birds are sometimes represented in the act of extracting honey from such flowers. In the art of Nazca the humming bird is shown drawing honey from a flower represented by a six-pointed star. This has been figured on Plate IV, Fig. 16.

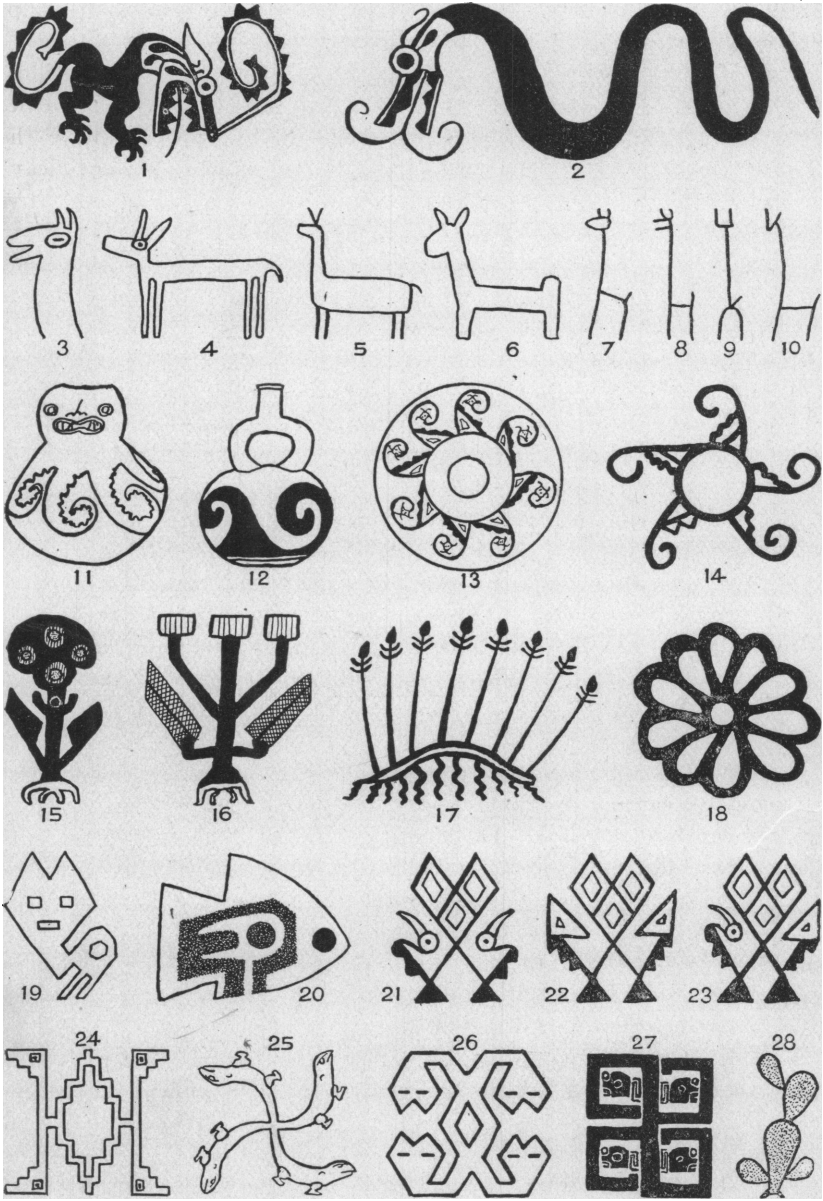
Figs. 19-23. The Peruvian artists' fondness for combining two or more animal forms in a design is shown in these figures. Figs. 19 and 20 are woven in cloth from Ancon. The first shows the cat and bird, the second the fish and bird.

Figs. 21-23 show designs burned into the sides of gourd vessels. The first shows the cat and two birds; the second the cat and two fish; and the third the cat, bird, and fish. The identity of the cat heads and of the birds in these three designs has always been recognized by art students using the Museum's collections; but in my experience few of them see the fish motive in this highly conventionalized form until their attention is called to other designs where practically the same form of fish is shown, but under conditions that make its true nature more apparent. See the lower or shaded fish form of the interlocked fish design in Fig. 6, Plate II.

Figs. 24-27 are examples of a rather common form in designs, where four of the same animals or parts of such animals are combined in a design. In Fig. 24 we have four bird heads. In Fig. 25 lizards are represented. Fig. 26 shows four cat heads of a familiar type, and Fig. 27 heads of the puma. This design is from the work of T. A. Joyce,² and is engraved on

¹ *Ancient Peruvian Art*, vol. 1, Plates 1-5.

² *South American Archaeology*, New York, 1912.



MISCELLANEOUS DESIGNS.

a portion of a stone cup from Tiahuanaco, in the collection of the British Museum. These heads have always been identified as puma heads, and are similar to those on the great gateway of Ak-kapana at Tiahuanaco. Various forms of this head will be found on Plate V, Figs. 13-19.

Fig. 28. This represents a cactus plant, and is from a painting on a jar from Chimbote.

In the northern coast region figures apparently representing various species of cacti are not uncommon on painted pottery vessels. As a rule, primitive peoples derive their decorative motives largely from such animals as they are acquainted with, and but rarely invade the plant world in search of designs. In what would seem to be the natural progression in the development of ornamentation, the frequent use of plants, or their derivatives, would indicate a considerable antiquity for the art of a people. While we find animal motives largely predominating in Peru, a very considerable number of plant forms are present.

REMARKS.

While it does not properly come within the scope of this paper, it may be well, in conclusion, to say a few words concerning the realistic side of Peruvian art, which went on side by side with the higher or conventionalized side. They were fond of representing objects and scenes familiar to them in their daily life and in the forms of their pottery vessels and decorations on them they have left us models of their houses, shelters used by shepherds in the fields, portrait vases, fishing and hunting scenes, groups showing ceremonies and dances, clothing and manner of wearing it, personal ornaments, their musical instruments, most if not all the animals known to them, and a great variety of fish and birds.

Of the fruits and vegetables eaten by the ancient Peruvians we have an almost complete record. Indian corn or maize was a favorite subject with these potters. Sometimes a mould was made from an ear of corn, a cast of clay made in it and this cast attached to the vessel before firing. Many of the so-called "corn-gods" were so decorated. Corn was carved and painted on pottery, carved in stone, and occasionally represented in textile fabrics. Moulds were also made from peanuts, and many vessels from Chimbote have their upper surfaces completely covered with perfect representations of this vegetable. Other vegetable forms in the Museum's collections, that can be positively identified are squashes, manioc, chirimoya, granadilla, palta, lucma, paccay, beans, chili peppers, and coca leaves which they chewed with lime.

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