

Whistling Jars

The Peruvian artifacts shown at the Wilson Museum are unique in this area; they were acquired fifty or more years ago when, in exceptional circumstances, such items were allowed to leave Peru; such national treasures can no longer be obtained. The collection includes a number of fine jars representative, for the most part, of the ceramics of a people who reached their cultural peak about 1,100 A.D. — three hundred years before the advent of the Incan civilization.

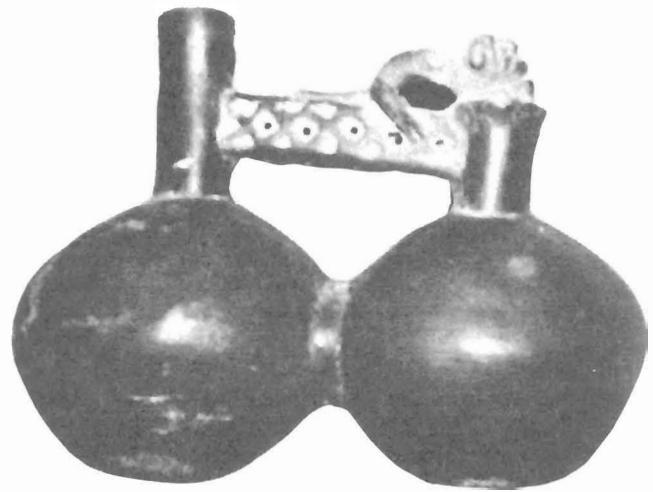
Funerary jars or Huacos have been found throughout Peru, with much evidence of local and regional variations. Huacos were made to hold the liquid believed essential for the dead in the subterranean afterlife, a belief which pervaded the entire country. The best known and most extensive examples of Peruvian ceramics are from the Chimú culture of approximately 900-1,500 A.D. The majority of these vessels have been found in the tombs at Trujillo, near the ancient capital, Chan-Chan, on the north coast of Peru.

Chimú pottery was influenced by earlier cultures, principally the Chavín and Mochica. The Chavín of the north and central coast were in an established religious position from about 800 to 500 B.C. thus influencing both existing southerly cultures as well as later northern cultures. Elements of Mochica ceramics found in correlation with sites dating from 400 to 700 A.D. in the Moche and Chicama valleys persisted through the period of Tiahuanaco influence and were again noticeable in the pottery of the Chimú.

Developing throughout the entire Classical Period Chimú pottery maintains a pervading sense of naturalism in the portrait heads as well as in the stirrup-spouted vessels. For the most part the style is distinctive and easily recognizable. Rarely painted, the vessels are generally of a polished blackware showing a somewhat metallic luster. The spouts of the jars are usually squared off and an animal figure may be placed on the arch. Feline and fang motives from the Chavín culture and lizard, snake and pelican themes from the Mochica were common.

Jars were made by one of two methods, paddle and anvil or pressmolding. Pressmolded jars were made by pressing clay into partial molds then joining the pieces. The potter's wheel was unknown in the Americas.

The whistling jar, developed in the late Chimú period, was originally conceived with an animal or human figure holding a whistle, later the whistle was

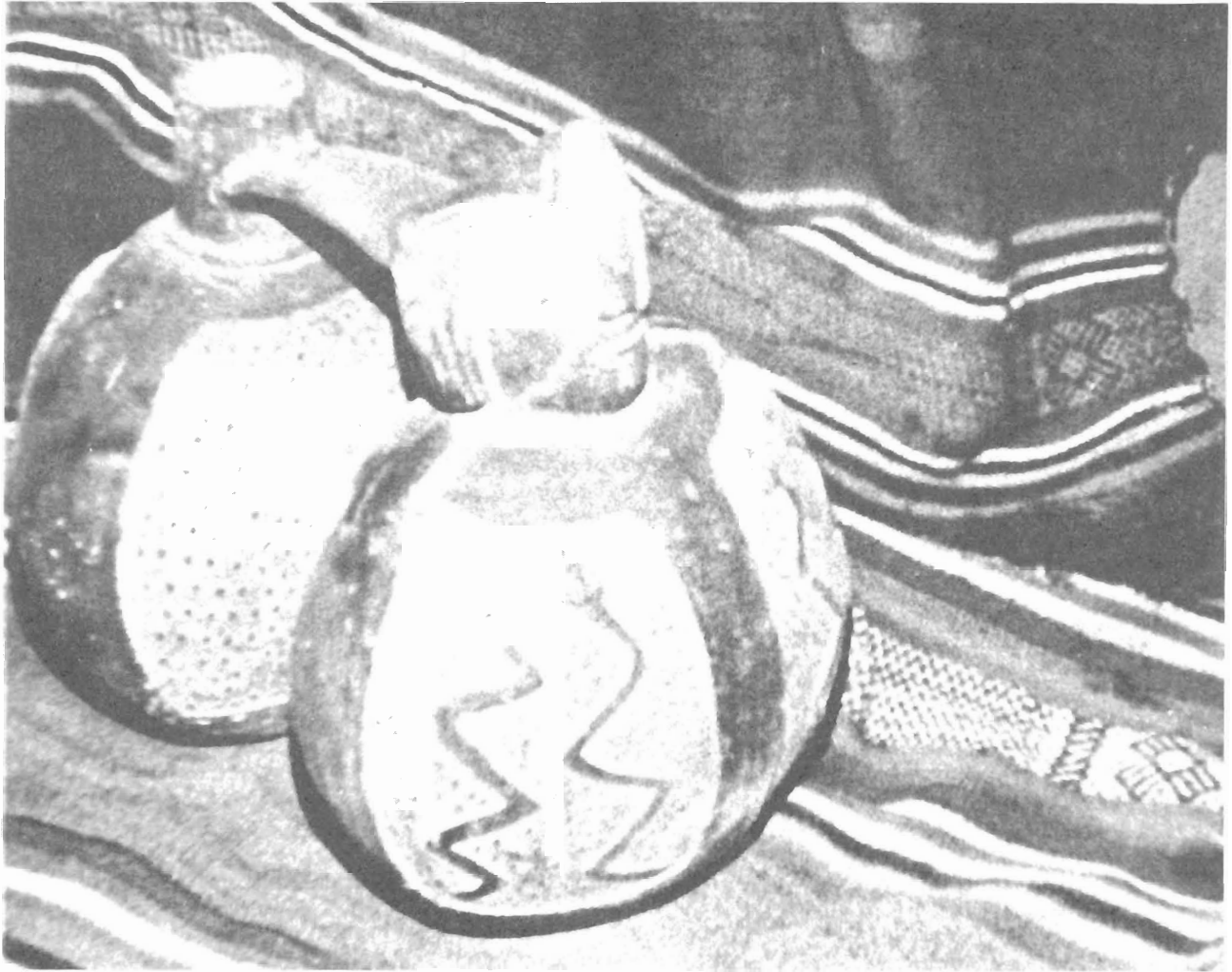


Above: Chimú polished blackware vessel with double spout and monkey figure on the arch.

often concealed in the vessel. The "whistling" is made by air which is drawn in and down as liquid is poured out. Late Chimú pottery lacks modelling and style, indicating degeneration due to mass production from Mochica type molds. Variations from more southerly ceramics, specifically early Nazca geometric and highly stylized motifs, were probably due to the conquest of the entire coastal area by the Incan Empire and the resultant merging of cultural styles.

Nazca burial ceramics, found in the Pisco, Nazca and Ica valleys on the southern coast and dated from approximately 100 B.C. to 700 A.D., are usually polychrome buff-on-red ware. A very moist combination of clay and pigment was applied to the unfired clay pot, this slip gave a semi-glaze to the fired vessel. Clearly Nazca ceramics, unlike Chimú vessels to the north, rely on color rather than modelling for interest; vivid oranges, reds, blacks and white are present on the Nazca pottery exhibited at the Wilson Museum; pieces in all colors but blue are known.

Nazca ceramics incorporate both mythological and ritualistic motifs; stylized forms of the fox,



Above: Chimu vessel exhibiting portrait head and snake motif.

condor and spider are widespread. Geometric designs and the mouth mask are dominant Nazca motifs, as is the spotted cat which is probably a portrayal of an early Nazca feline deity.

The rise of the Tiahuanaco Empire and the resultant merging of cultural styles along the Peruvian coast had a great impact on both the north and south coast ceramics. Whereas the Nazca of the south, and hence their ceramics were completely overpowered by the Tiahuanaco, the more northerly Mochica and their material culture were merely suppressed for a time, later emerging into the Chimu Empire. And to the Chimu we are indebted for the finely modeled and naturalistic ceramics so appealing to the modern viewer

M.J. Lightcap



Above: Nazca jar with arched double spout. Painted in black, white and shades of oranges and reds, the geometric designs are dominant on all Nazca vessels.

I am grateful to Dr. Diana Fane, Assistant Curator of the Brooklyn Museum, N.Y. and to Dr. Michael Gramly of the Maine State Museum for assistance in identifying a number of the Peruvian vessels at the Wilson Museum.

New England Feast and Fast Days

Given at the 1980 meeting of the Northeastern Anthropological Association

Early New Englanders, constrained by their Puritan heritage, noted few holidays or holy days. Church festivals, regarded as "Popish practices," were avoided and but two days, Thanksgiving and Fast Day, were generally celebrated. Thanksgiving was held on a November, and Fast Day on an April Thursday. It is natural to think of these as planting and harvest festivals, a relic of pagan times, suitably held on Thursday or Thor's day, as Thor was the "great fertilizing power, who sent rain and caused the earth to bear fruit . . . he it is who rules the thunder and lightning, wind and rains, fine weather and crops."*¹ However, as these festivals had been turned by the Christian church into its own holy days, memories of earlier celebrations were obscured, nor would pagan festivals have been more acceptable than Christian ones. How then did these days originate? If there is a human need to note the seasons' changes (and New England's seasons are eminently noteworthy) a period between the difficult winter and busy summer would have been most suitable.

A popular history,*² written a hundred years ago, describes feast and fast days of 17th century New England — "Fast and thanksgiving were the great public days. A fast was regularly kept at the season of annual planting; but days of fasting and prayer were often appointed on account of some special or threatened calamity . . . care, however, was always taken to avoid a fast on Good Friday as well as to keep clear of a feast on Christmas." This was still true during much of the 19th century. About 1900 Noah Brooks, remembering his youth of sixty years earlier, wrote — "New England people made almost no account of Christmas Day. The boys and girls . . . were at great pains to get ahead of each other to wish 'Merry Christmas!' and 'Happy New Year!' when these days came around; and on New Year Day there was some small exchange of presents; but Christmas presents were unheard of, and there were no festivities on that day. The great festival of the winter season was Thanksgiving Day . . . It was a day of feasting and of vacation from school . . . and (there was no vacation) after that except one day, Fast Day, later in the spring."*³

By the mid-nineteenth century Thanksgiving was well established on the fourth Thursday in November, Fast Day, however, continued to be held on various Thursdays in April. In 1799, Thursday, April 4 was proclaimed Fast Day by the Governor of the state while President John Adams made Thursday, April 25, National Fast Day. The proclamations*⁴ were similar — calling for a day of

"solemn humiliation, fasting and prayer" for "Ministers and People of every Denomination, to assembly on that Day, in their respective places of Public Worship" to pray that "the United States of America may be protected from the insidious designs of their enemies, as well as from open hostility" and "that the Nations of the Earth may be led to respect the rights of each other, and that on this basis an honorable and permanent Peace may be established." Usually there was but one April Fast day. In 1861, because of the Civil War, an additional fast day, appointed by President Lincoln, was held on September 26.

From diaries and personal journals of one small New England town*⁵ I have found notations regarding Fast Day for twenty-five of the fifty-two years from 1839 to 1890. The earliest Fast Day was April 4 in 1867 and the latest was April 30 in 1863. During these twenty-two years Fast Day was held once on Thursday, April 4, 6, 10, 15, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26 and 30; twice on the 11, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 21; it fell before and after Easter — one year the day before Good Friday; church services continued to be a part of the observance of the day. Its passing, about a hundred years ago, coincided with the beginning of the celebration of Christmas and perhaps of other church festivals. In the same journal in which the exchange of small gifts at Christmas was first noted (earlier these were given at New Years) written for April 17, 1890 was "Fast Day — relic of the Past."*⁶

The demise, then, of Fast Day is clear — but what was its origin and extent? How was the day chosen? In what did the fasting consist? — To these questions I have found no answer.

E.W. Doudiet

1. The Golden Bough; Frazer, J.G.; MacMillan 1935; Vol. VIII pp 14-15.
2. Popular History, Barnes; 1886; p 93 (title page missing).
3. Lem: A New England Village Boy; Brooks, Noah; Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y. 1901; pp 180-181.
4. Castine Journal and Universal Advertiser; Waters, D.J. publisher; Castine; March 27, 1799 and April 10, 1799.
5. Diaries consulted — all of Castine — that of Abigail A. Hawes, Dr. J.L. Stevens, T.E. Hale and I.L. Shepherd.
6. Diary of A.A. Hawes.

Director's Report—September 1979-September 1980

Generally, winters of the 1960's and '70's found one paid and one or more volunteer workers in the museum several days each week: thus the Society's business and correspondence, the cleaning, preservation and filing of artifacts was kept up to date and necessary research done. The past winter, however, was the first in which the Society employed a full time qualified worker, Mary Jane Lightcap. Miss Lightcap was able to complete a duplicate file card index, to care for some of the collections including the antique books and guns. She also continued work on the building survey, initiated several years ago under the direction of Donovan Kvalnes, and on Castine, Brooksville and Penobscot geneologies. A number of requests concerning family histories have been answered, others remain in the "active" file.

Miss Grossman has, as in other years, supplied school study boxes to local schools. These boxes include minerals, Maine rocks, shells, botanical specimens and Indian artifacts.

Mrs. Doudiet was asked to give a paper at the Northeast Anthropological meeting in Amherst, MA: this paper *New England Feast and Fast Days* relies largely on Castine documents now in the Wilson Museum. It appears in this Bulletin: a paper given at the 1979 meeting, *Servicemen's Food During the American Revolution*, was printed in the winter 1979-'80 Bulletin.

Mrs. Alfred Bagot again organized the annual fund appeal, taking responsibility for new lists of names and for addressing and mailing letters. Douglas Sorrick of Michigan offered, last year, to provide mailing labels for the Bulletins, he also assisted in this way with certain of the appeals.

The Museum opened May 27 with an exhibit of prints and drawings by Robert Shetterly which remained through June. A reception July 6 opened an exhibit of paintings by Elizabeth O'Malley, Ruth Lyon's watercolors of Castine were shown during August and Margaret Manter's paintings in September. On exhibit throughout the summer were early daguerreotypes and photographs loaned by James Lightcap and 19th century sewing and embroidery loaned by Mrs. Hugh M. Parrish.

Hoyt Hutchins demonstrated at the forge in the Blacksmith Shop two afternoons each week during July and August. The John Perkins House was open at the same times and was staffed with volunteer guides under the direction of Mrs. Thomas Bergen. Mrs. Hollis Farnham and Mrs. Hugh Parrish arranged for craft workers. We are most grateful to Mrs. Bergen, Mrs. Farnham and Mrs. Parrish and to the reliable and competent guides and demonstrators in the Perkins House.

A fine antique dining table was bought with funds given in memory of Horace and Marie Leach: James and Leila Day, from whom the table was purchased very generously made it possible for us to buy this with the funds available.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Falk, Everett Russell and James Day began appraising furniture in the Perkins House. Dr. Richard Emerick, at the request of Mrs. Leonard Mead, gave a day of his time appraising various Indian and Eskimo collections.

Last summer John Kebabian, editor of the publications of the Early American Industries Association, asked if the Wilson Museum Bulletin for summer, 1973 was still in print as he wished to list it in the Association's newsletter, *Shavings*. This is the Bulletin on old houses, *When Was It Built?* We offered to mail it on receipt of a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope and have since sent it to fourteen states and two Canadian provinces (no stamps). Requests came from individuals, from historical societies, museums and building contractors.

Our Treasurer, Lucy Jane Grossman deserves our unending gratitude for her time consuming labors on sales tax, withholding tax and, especially, on Internal Revenue Services returns. Although we pay no income tax we do return twenty some pages of financial data each year.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the gas problem the North East coastal area had many visitors this past summer; so too did the Wilson Museum, the John Perkins House and the Blacksmith Shop. We were glad to see visitors from neighboring states and provinces — and from Maine — as well as tourists from abroad.

Ellenore W. Doudiet, Director



Castine, Maine 04421

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