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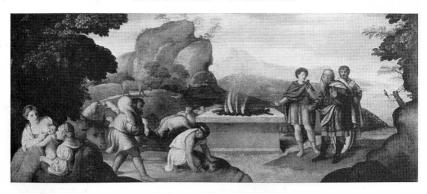
FEBRUARY, 1927

No. 5



Portrait of a Young Woman
ATTRIBUTED TO PARIS BORDONE. VENETIAN SCHOOL. 1500-1571

SOME RECENTLY ACQUIRED PICTURES OF THE VENETIAN SCHOOL



The Sacrifice of Noah
PALMA VECCHIO—VENICE. ca. 1840-1528

The painting of Venice, and in a larger sense the whole art of that city, has always occupied a particular position in comparison with the art of the rest of Italy. Until the fourteenth century Venetian painting was entirely under the influence of Byzantine art, and even when, in the late fourteenth century, long after Giotto had created his master works in the neighboring city of Padua, Giottesque elements of form and composition entered into Venetian painting, it remained in technique and in its feeling for color, more or less Byzantine. It was only in the fifteenth century that the Byzantine influence completely receded, little by little. Then there began a unique development of Venetian painting proper, which reached its brilliant height in the great masters of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth century, and later again received a new impetus in the eighteenth century, especially in Tiepolo. In spite of many influences from other schools, the painting of Venice always remained greatly different from that of other Italian art centers. It is more "picturesque" in the proper sense of the word than any other painting of Italy. Nowhere in Italy did the sense of opulence and delicacy of color develop to such an extent as in Venice. It is as though the colored glow of the Orient, whose most precious products the ships of Venice carried to the West, had condensed with the shimmering haze of the lagoons into the palettes of the Venetian painters.

Until the beginning of last year the Museum owned only a few Venetian paintings. Cima and Previtali represented the school of Giovanni Bellini, the leading master of the late fifteenth century, while the painting, Nymph and Salyr, gave only a limited idea of Titian's outstanding art. There was, to be sure, from the eighteenth century, the wonderful picture, Alexander and the Wives of Darius, by Tiepolo (acquired in 1925), a small but unfortunately slightly damaged Guardi, and a painting of the Canaletto school.

By the very fortunate purchase of the three-figure painting from the collection of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg¹ (for which the subject *The Struggle of Creusa and Medea for Jason*² has recently been suggested), three of the leading masters of the Venetian High Renaissance, Giorgione, Titian and Sebastiano del Piombo, have found a thoroughly dignified representation in our collection.

Later in the year five other Venetian paintings of high quality came into the

¹Described by Dr. Valentiner in the March issue of the Bulletin. ²Paul Schubring, "A Surmise Concerning the Subject of the Venetian Figure Painting in the Detroit Museum," Art in America, Vol. XV, 1926, p. 35 ff.



The Drunkenness of Noah
PALMA VECCHIO—VENICE. ca. 1480-1528

possession of the Museum: two altar panels with male saints, by Girolamo da Santa Croce; two pictures with scenes from the life of Noah, which were presented to the Museum as a gift of Mr. Colin Agnew, under the name of Cariani, but which were recently correctly attributed by Baron von Hadeln to Palma Vecchio; and finally a female portrait until now attributed to Palma Vecchio, but which is presumably by the hand of Paris The time of their creation Bordone. varies less than their stylistic character would lead one to believe. They all date from the first half of the sixteenth century -to be more exact, from about 1515 to 1540. In their very different conception and manner of execution alone, they illustrate the richness and the varied ability of the Venetian painting of that period.

The two panels by Girolamo da Santa Croce are the oldest in style. We do not know the date of the birth of this painter, but from other notices we have about him he must have been born about 1480 or a little later, in the village of Santa Croce, near Bergamo. In 1503, he is mentioned as a pupil of Gentile Bellini in Venice, and we know that he worked later in the studio of Cima da Conegliano. His first signed work known, the *Madonna and Child*, of the Ryerson collection in Chicago, is dated 1516. He died in 1556 in Venice.

Girolamo, like the older Francesco da Santa Croce, with whom he was seemingly associated and probably related brother?) belongs among those followers of Giovanni Bellini who, without particular creative talent but with solid technique—though a little dry in manner -imitated the greatest models of their He remained more or less at a standstill, and advanced but little from the style in which he had been trained in his youth. Even in the forties of the sixteenth century, when the leading masters, especially Titian, had long since arrived at a broad impasto and a sublimely differentiated and harmonized coloring, he still painted in the hard manner and variegated color of the late Quattrocento. His pictures are therefore sometimes hanging in galleries under the names of great masters of the earlier period. Using as their basis the signed and dated works of Girolamo. modern critics of style have alone been able to correct some of these attributions.

Our two pictures come from the Heilbuth collection in Copenhagen, whence they can be traced back to the Nicolle collection in Paris, the Crespi collection in Milan, and the Albani and Noli collections at Bergamo. They were published incorrectly by Crowe and Cavalcaselle as works by Francesco da Santa Croce, and later under their right name by Adolfo Venturi and Carl Madsen.³ On one panel are

³History of Painting in North Italy, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol. III, p. 443, London, 1912; La Galeria Crespi, Milan, 1900. p. 161-163; Carl Madsen, Catalogue of a Collection of Paintings, Copenhagen, 1920.

represented Saint Paul and Saint James the Elder, on the other Saint Matthew and Sebastian, all dressed in rich, colorful garments-especially St. Sebastian, who appears as a young Venetian nobleman in the gorgeous costume of the epochthough not particularly expressive in carriage and face. In style the pictures show strong dependence on Cima da Conegliano. They might therefore belong to the early period of the master—that is. about the second decade of the sixteenth In their clear contours, and century. broad planes of color, they have an excellent decorative effect and may help to give an idea of the school of Giovanni Bellini. who unfortunately is not himself represented in our collection.

Of nearly the same age as Girolamo, possible even a little older, was Palma Vecchio. Jacopo Palma the elder was born about 1480 at Serinalta near Bergamo. He must have come to Venice at an early age. At any rate, in his art he is entirely Venetian. He might have been a pupil of Giovanni Bellini and we know that he was influenced later by Giorgione and Titian. On the whole, however, he is an absolutely original artist who has him-

self influenced the very greatest of his contemporaries, for instance Titian, in an unmistakable manner. Together with Giorgione and Titian he shares the honor of having led Venetian painting to the peak of the High Renaissance. His drawing is firm and fluid. A new dignity and a grandeur of gesture characterize his figures which, full and ripe, have nothing in common with the slender and somewhat artificial figures of the Ouattrocento. His colors are not so rich and differentiated as those of Titian, but are always warm and bright, and the pearl-like quality of the skin of the women is particularly master-Celebrated, also, are the smiling landscapes of his backgrounds, which became models even for masters like Giorgione and Titian.

Our pictures show the painter at the height of his art. We see on one of them Noah and his household preparing a sacrifice to the God who had rescued them. The ark can be seen in the background and to the right the receding waters. Birds are singing and cattle are grazing happily in the fresh green of the meadows. The other painting gives the story of the aged Noah who, drunk with new wine, has



The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel
BY PALMA VECCHIO
IN THE DRESDEN MUSEUM

⁴He is called *The Elder* to distinguish him from his nephew Jacopo Palma il Giovane (Venice, 1544-1628).



St. Matthew and St. Sebastian GIROLAMO DA SANTA CROCE— VENICE. ca. 1480-1556

fallen asleep under the tree and is found by his sons. There is the farmhouse he has built, and in the background some ruins of castles telling of the devastating catastrophe which has swept over the country. The arrangement of the whole composition, as well as the details into clearly defined planes, the types of the figures (especially the women), the characterization of the landscape, the drawing of the trees, and finally the whole coloring, are identical with the most clearly authenticated works by Palma from 1512 to 1515. To make a comparison, we might point to the beautiful picture, *The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel*, in Dresden, in which, beside the points we have mentioned, a somewhat accidental form of two fighting rams is almost identical. The Dresden piece can be dated about 1515. Our pictures might have been painted a little earlier than that.

The attribution of the fifth painting of this group is still problematic. It is the charming half-figure portrait of a blonde young woman clothed in violet, with a rich head dress of pearls, gold and ostrich feathers, seated on a couch of soft cushions. The picture has been sold under the name of Palma Vecchio. As a matter of fact, there is something in its conception and style to recall this master, who was fond of painting just such ideal portraits. On the other hand, the manner of the folds, the shape and expression of the face, and the coloring of the painting are rather different from Palma's. There are suggestions of Titian in that master's middle period; still more, however, of Paris Bordone-especially the folds, rumpled as though kneaded in soft clay, and the expression on the face, a little morose. This painter was born in Treviso and died there in 1571, after having spent most of his life in Venice. He was a pupil of Titian during the latter's most Giorgionesque phase, which could explain the few analogies of our picture to that master. Bordone is characterized by a most refined technical skill and an opulent and luscious saturation of color, which qualities, to be sure, are not generally combined with an equally perfect rendering of the character of the figures, which are mostly somewhat empty in expression. Our picture shows all these characteristics to a certain extent. We will therefore attribute it "by way of trial" to Paris Bordone. The style of the painting makes it probable that the time of its execution was about 1540.

—W. H.



Radha Awaiting Krishna
RAJPUT. KANGRA SCHOOL. XVIII CENTURY

SIX INDIAN PAINTINGS

Rajput painting is the Hindu painting of the northern provinces in the Himalayas: the Rajputana and the Panjab The painting, which is a tempera technique on paper, is an expression of Vaisnava culture under the patronage of local Rajput princes from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Historically and technically the school is a direct descendant, though late, of the Ajanta cave frescoes of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Certain archaisms suggest a culture in its primitive stage such as one finds in Italy in the thirteenth century. Stylistically, the grandeur of treatment combined with a vigorous directness. shows the Rajput school to be closely related to that of Ajanta.

On aesthetic grounds, Rajput painting in the sixteenth century exhibits grandeur and strength of composition and color, together with a sensitiveness of line which is characteristic of the Hill schools. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in the Kangra Valley schools, this art shows a charming tenderness and a delicate refinement, with little loss of original grandeur, although a certain boldness disappears.

By the generous gift of the Founders Society, the department of Oriental art has acquired from the collection of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, five examples of Rajput paintings and one example of Jaina art—two leaves from the Kalpa Sutra manuscripts. The gift comprises two important paintings from the Ragmala series of the Rajput Hill school, dating a early as the sixteenth century. These show the close correspondence between

music and painting in India, the Ragmala subjects being interpretations of corresponding musical technicalities. There is one distinguished painting from the Gita Govinda series from the Kangra school of the eighteenth century, which compares well with the superb example of a nearly similar subject in the Ross-Coomaraswamy collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Of the two other Rajput paintings, one belongs to the more severe Jammu school and represents a Diva slaving an Asura; the second, an exquisite drawing, represents Radha and Krishna on the veranda of the palace, and belongs to the Kangra school, dating in the eighteenth century and is from the Nala Damvanti series.

Generally speaking, the subject of Raiput painting is a pictorial interpretation of Vaisnava literature and philosophy in its two main aspects—epic and religious. the Ramayana being the basis for the former and the Krishna Lila for the latter. The Krishna Lila, of which we possess so splendid an example in Radha Awaiting Krishna in the Forest of Brindaban, was a devotional cult which found special favor in the sixteenth century, the object of devotion being the Brahmanical deity Krishna, who was incarnated as a herdsman. By his magic flute and his ardent wooing of the milk maids who left family and home, sacrificing all for his favor. they are charmed and brought to conversion. In painting, this cult gave expression to every phase of human and divine love. Symbolically, the soul of man is identified with the loved one. Radha. who is led to union with the Divine, as symbolized in Krishna.

This particular phase of Krishna's life is illustrated in our painting. The setting is in a forest of Brindaban; the season, spring time, with the trees in bloom and cranes in the branches. Krishna, who wears a crown, necklaces, armlets and wristlets, is standing at the left in the field among a group of milk maids who are his lovers, while in the right foreground Radha steps forward from under the

branches of the trees and listens to the tale of her confident who points in the direction of Krishna. It is in Radha's forgiveness of Krishna's unfaithfulness that there is symbolized the perfect union of soul and body.

The painting has a charming tenderness and a feeling of perfect repose and serenity. although the subject is actually activesome of the Gopis pulling at Krishna one way, others another. But neither physical action nor the mental distress of Radha is singled out for emphasis. These are communicated only by gesture and pose. In this sense Indian painting is abstract and intellectual, since it is non-representative of physical characteristics or emotional states. There is, moreover, a sensitive balance in this scene which leads the eye gradually from the group at the left by breaking it into two personages and then into three on the further side of the tree, and sending the eve down to the foreground in the picture, centering its interest upon Radha and her confidant, which is made more possible by their isolation. The spots of color are arranged so as to assist in carrying the eye through the picture easily. Further, one may observe that the personages are represented as belonging to and as identified with nature and are not considered as separate and peculiarly apart from her.

There are two paintings from the Ragmala series of the sixteenth century, both of the same title, Gauri Mallara Ragini (A Woman Playing Music to a Peacock). In one sense, Ragmala paintings are even more obviously late primitives than paintings from religious or epic subjects, inasmuch as archaisms in drawing and structure and a high conventionalization are immediately apparent.

Our first painting, dating about 1600, represents a Ragini holding a vina instrument and dancing upon a hillside, playing and singing to peacocks perched in the branches of the trees. Above are stormy clouds with spring rains falling through a darkened sky. The second, dating in the second half of the sixteenth century, repre-

References: Rajput Painting, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy; Catalogue of Rajput Painting in the Boston Museum of Fine Art.

sents a Ragini seated upon a lotus throne on a hillside, singing to the strains of a vina, with a peacock dancing to the music and a deer lying upon the turf listening. Two attendants with drums and cymbals are playing at the right. In the background is a stormy sky with lightning, and cranes in flight. Trees surround the hillside.

As stated above, such paintings are pictorial representations of a musical term, the Raga, which is the base of Indian music, and represents a selection of notes similar to our "musical phrase." Every Raga has a definite mood or spirit—generally associated with love and a particular hour of the day or night and a particular season. In painting, the Ragas and the Raginis (a modification of the Ragas) are personified as gods and goddesses and are subject to the same controlling emotions

based on the affections as we are. In quite another sense such paintings are supposed to interpret music to those who are not essentially musical. Aesthetically, the Ragmala paintings, particularly of the early sixteenth century, are apt to be bolder in color and more forceful and highly conventionalized in composition than other Rajput paintings.

Finally, the keynote of Indian painting with its objection to naturalism and its concentration on abstract, legendary and religious subjects, is beautifully expressed in the lines of the poet Kabir:

"Do not go seeking the garden of flowers; for the garden of flowers is in your heart; Take there your seat on the thousand petals of the lotus; there behold the perfect Beauty."

A. C. E.

MEXICAN AND PERUVIAN ANTIQUITIES

In the new building, the gallery connecting the Asiatic section with the American wing, will contain examples of the art of the ancient cultures of Mexico, Central America, and Peru, and a few types of another artistic center of more recent times—Melanesia and Polynesia. In this way we intend to show on one side the beginning of American culture, and on the other its link with the culture of the Pacific and the nations bordering it on the opposite side of the ocean, with which it is possible that it had some artistic connection.

Not only should museums of natural history exhibit such objects, but every art museum, especially in this country, should contain examples of the wonderful and indigenous art of ancient America; for a knowledge of these cultures helps to the understanding of the art of the American Indian of modern times, some of whose ancestral brothers, such as the Maya Indians, produced an art so superior to that along whose same lines their modern descendants are striving. In addition to this, their best creations present in them-

selves such high artistic merit that they should not be missing in any institution where one looks for the pure esthetic enjoyment of all periods and countries.

From the study of the discoveries of recent years, there can be no doubt that in certain fields, such as architecture, ceramics and textiles, the art of the early Peruvians and Mayas can take its place beside that of highly developed cultures in Asia and Europe. The theory that we had in these ancient American peoples only an arrested development of art and that this development was stopped by the conquest of the Spaniards-a theory still promoted in some art books-cannot be substantiated. For centuries this ancient art had, so it seems, a long and quiet development, less interrupted and less disturbed by outside influence than, for instance, any of the art centers of Europe, and when the Spaniards came, the height of ancient American art had long since been passed. As has been the case with the development of other cultures, we find that the conquerors coming from outside did not arrive until the older culture had begun



Jars in the Shape of Human Figures
PROTO-CHIMU (TRUJILLO AND VALLE DE CHICAMA)
NORTH PERUVIAN COAST

to weaken, thus exciting the invaders to the idea of conquest.

The destroyers of the artistic culture of ancient America were not the Spaniards who conquered Mexico, Central America and Peru in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century, but military nations near them, who had found out long before, the beginning decadence of their artistic neighbors. Events in Mexico and Peru seem to have been similar in this respect. In both countries new neighbors arose in the highlands in the thirteenth and fourteenth centures: in Mexico the Aztecs, in Peru the Incas, both nations of despotic tendencies. They conquered the valleys along the coast where the artistic races lived: in Central America the Zapotecs and Maya Indians; in Peru, the Chimus and the inhabitants of the coast region as far down as Nazca. Like all more politically inclined nations, neither the Aztecs nor the Incas were artistically highly productive. The great achievements in the field of art lay before their time.

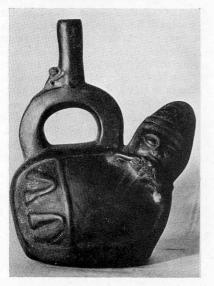
The first question of those interested in the objects of ancient America is always that of the age of these artistic productions. It has happened again and again that after the first discovery of past art cultures, students are inclined to date the

objects too far back and to spread out the length of the epochs during which they were created. We have only to mention the dating of the first discoveries in Egyptian art, in early Chinese art, and again in prehistoric European art. The more our knowledge of the many epochs which have succeeded each other since the beginning of human art activity increases, the more we find that the period between the foundation and the decline of a new style should be considered not in terms of thousands of years, but of centuries, and in more recent times, of generations; and that the height of each epoch is of comparatively short duration. If we believe that the height of the art development of Central America and Peru lasted not longer than perhaps one or two centuries before the military nations invaded the territory, we may say that the formation of this style falls most likely within the last centuries before the end of the first millenium, and that the apex came during the first centuries after this.

Those who are convinced that there are certain analogous developments all over the earth in a given period of human history, developments based upon rhythmic movements, possibly in connection with the earth's revolutions, have always been of the opinion that the height of Mayan

architecture is contemporaneous with the art of India and the Near East from the ninth to the thirteenth century and with the Romanesque period in Europe: that there is the same pleasure in abstract, geometric ornaments formed from combinations of human, animal and vegetable motives; the same inclination toward flat relief bound by two parallel planes; the same content of interchanging religious and demonic motives; the same broadness and heaviness of architectural forms. The dating of the Mayan monuments, which is now possible through the reading of the hieroglyphs, has proved the correctness of this view and the error of those who found similarity to early Egyptian architecture and sculpture-a similarity which exists more in the size than in the style of the monuments.

No dating is known as yet for the Peruvian objects, but we know now that their style, in so far as it is abstract and conventionalized and represents demonic types, has been influenced by, or is at any rate related to the style of the ancient Central Americans. Another factor seems to point to the last centuries of the



Black Ware. Late Chimu NORTH PERUVIAN COAST



Black Ware. Late Chimu NORTH PERUVIAN COAST

first millenium (A. D.) for the textiles of more highly developed technique. It has often been said that the tapestry and kelim technique of the early Peruvians is curiously similar to the technique of the Coptic weavings found in late Egyptian tombs from about the period of the fourth to the ninth century, A. D. It seems indeed improbable that such a difficult technique should have been discovered independently in so widely separated parts of the world. How was the connection possible between Egypt and Peru or Central America, where we also find occasionally textiles of this type? fantastic theory of the lost continent of Atlantis, so far as any connection with art is concerned, can be dispensed with. But trade travels enormous distances. know that certain motives in Chinese art of the Han and T'ang periods were derived from late Greek art, and that the Byzantine weavers learned silk fabrication from China, examples of which are also found in Coptic tombs. We find in Japan (in Nara, in the ninth century), fragments of Sassanian silks and of tapestry weaving whose technique must have traveled there from Egypt or Byzantium, where weavings in the Coptic style were also executed.

For the remaining part of the journey we can refer to the plausible theory of the connection of the art of the border races of the Pacific,1 which explains also the similarity of certain geometric ornaments and conventionalized animal found on some of the bronze vessels of early medieval Chinese art and on Mexican monuments. Altogether we may say that the ancient Peruvian art of the most highly developed style, as well as that of ancient Mexico, belongs to the early Middle Ages. How far the prehistoric art of these countries goes back (possibly a few centuries before Christ), is of less importance to us, for its artistic value is not so great.

The most important fields in the early Peruvian culture are those of ceramics and textiles. Of the ceramics, types from the most creative parts of the country—Valle de Chicama in the north, and Nazca in the south—and from less important centers like Pachacamac and Chancay, have been procured. The northern part,



Funerary Urn
ZAPOTEC, OAXACA, MEXICO



Polychrome Vessel With Geometric Ornaments

NAZCA. SOUTH PERUVIAN COAST

representing the Chimu culture, created pottery of splendid plastic effects, but with less pronounced color schemes. Usually we find in the early types only parts of a creamy white color applied to the warm terra cotta of the clay from which the pottery is modelled. In Nazca the pottery seldom has relief modeling but has always simple shapes of pure and beautiful outlines and of a rich surface color. Among the former are two of the famous portrait jars, which may be said to represent the highest type of Peruvian pottery. With their extraordinary characterization, they most likely represent individual portraits of the deceased in whose tombs they were found. A few other jars of the same technique and with stirrup handles show curiously wellobserved sitting figures: two of them sleeping old men; one a woman lost in thought, smiling peacefully; while other jars are in the shape of realistically rendered animals and birds, such as a parrot, a frog, and a monkey listening to the sound of a bottle which he holds to his

Still better represented is the black ware of the late Chimu culture with flat reliefs of geometric ornaments or scenes of human figures or landscapes. There are several examples of the characteristic twin whistling jars which produce a whistling sound by blowing into the small ear hole, the same effect being obtained

by pouring water down the spout. Other jars are in the shape of ducks and monkeys, and one of a well-represented seal. In other instances human figures are adapted to the shape of the vessels, the head having been used for the forming of the spout, while the short arms rest upon the enormous belly of the jar.

Of great charm are the clay vessels from Nazca, with their rich color scheme—beautiful shades of red, brown and orange—and their broadly conceived, conventionalized design. The forms, all modeled by hand, are exceptionally even and of beautiful outline, while the colors are usually applied upon a creamy white or reddish background and, it would seem, covered after the firing with a thin varnish which, in the well-preserved examples, gives a dull shine to the surface.

In some instances the design is still quite naturalistic, as in the fine saucer with a representation of a bird, very likely a condor, catching a fish. Others, of richer pattern, have strongly conventionalized types of demonic figures derived from birds or wildcats. Whatever may be their interpretation, it is quite certain that none of the abstract designs applied to these funerary vessels are meaningless, but express either prayers in favor of the deceased, in allegorical form, or charms to ward off the evil influence of the demons. Similar designs are found on the textiles. on which a special note will appear in the next Bulletin.

The art of the modern Mexicans is more difficult to represent in a museum, as its most important creations are in architecture. Of the three most characteristic cultures of ancient Mexico—those of the Mayas, the Zapoteks, and the Aztecs—we are able to show a few examples representing the art of the Aztecs: a stone god, a silver mask, and one of those stone masks which show their extraordinary skill in the treatment of hard surfaces by means of

stone implements; for although the ancient Mexicans understood the use of gold, silver and copper, there is nothing to show that they were familiar with iron implements.

Of special importance is the series of funerary urns which were acquired from the John Quinn collection, for which they were procured in Mexico by Mr. Walter Pach about fifteen years ago. From comparison with similar types of urns in the Field Museum in Chicago, and in the Berlin Museum, they are most likely of Zapotecan origin. This culture, the most important ruins of which are those at Monte Alban and Mitla, resembles that of the Mayan civilization of Yucatan more closely than that of the Aztecs-a resemblance which is also found in the religion and in the hieroglyphic system which, however, has not yet been deciphered. Their country was conquered by the Aztecs in the second half of the fifteenth century, and after the Spanish conquest, Cortez established his residence in the valley of Oaxaca. Among the most characteristic productions of the Zapotecan area are the funerary urns, of which we have acquired ten, some in gray, the others in brown clay. They represent sitting figures of a god wearing an immense ornate mask and head-dress. The receptacle behind probably carried food or drink for the deceased. The illustrious Zapotecan dead were buried in graves composed of sculptured stone slabs in the center of a mound of earth. Funerary urns, usually in groups of five, were placed in rows near the entrance of the sepulchre. They resemble the large sculptures with which some of the walls of the temples and palaces of ancient Mexico are covered, and in modeling as well as in their characterization are not less forceful than those found on the architectural monuments.