

ANCIENT MEXICAN ART IN SPECIAL EXHIBIT DURING JULY



The arts and archaeology of ancient Mexico are the subject of a special exhibit to be on view in Stanley Field Hall from July 1 through July 31. The Museum's recent acquisition of an important collection of antiquities by exchange with the National Museum of Mexico has aroused such interest that some of the outstanding pieces have been selected for display.

This exhibit contains examples of pre-Columbian sculpture, ceramics, and lapidary art, including jade work, ranging in age from the Archaic period of 1000 B.C. to the Aztec period at the time of the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. In addition, unusual tobacco pipes of clay and sharp razor-like blades cut from green obsidian are being shown. These artifacts are significant for their aesthetic qualities as well as for what they can tell us of the lives of the ancient Mexicans.

KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

The clay mask (top left), about 1,450 years old, is from Teotihuacan. The Mixtec pottery vase (lower left), found in Oaxaca, was made about A.D. 1400. The "two-faced woman" (top right) was once part of a clay figurine made about 1000 B.C. at Tlatilco. The tripod vase with birds for supports (lower right), made about A.D. 500, is from Colima.



STUDIES OF SALAMANDERS UNDER WAY IN MEXICO

What is described as the world's richest field for herpetologists is being combed again by Clifford H. Pope, Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles. Curator Pope left June 16 for a region on the eastern edge of the Mexican highlands where he will continue studies and collecting of salamanders begun on a similar expedition last year.

Approximately 300 kinds of salamanders are known, and they are found chiefly in moist forested regions of Japan and China, the United States, and Central America. They are often mistaken for lizards. "Salamanders found in the United States became separated from those of Mexico tens of thousands of years ago by the big stretch of desert between the two countries, and the present Museum project offers opportunity to study the speciation that was caused by this isolation," Curator Pope said in explaining the objectives of his field work.

"The region we are going to is particularly good for studies of ecology and distribution of species because it's located where tropical jungle meets temperate mountain forests. There are deep canyons where salamander species have been isolated so long that they

are different in structure and habits from those found a few miles away. With the many different altitudes and climates we find a corresponding variety of species.

"This Mexican field is new, discovered only a few years ago, and it has been found to have a larger snake and salamander population than any other part of the world. It is very unusual for a field so rich in vertebrate fauna to be discovered at so late a stage in scientific exploration."

Insect-Hunter Returns

Henry S. Dybas, Associate Curator of the Division of Insects, recently returned from a six-week collecting trip to the Southwest and to the West Coast, where he was a guest at the Ralston White Natural History Reservation of the California Academy of Sciences. The purpose of the trip was to collect certain groups of small insects that, because of their small size, are poorly represented in museum collections.

Botanist from Honduras

Dr. Louis O. Williams, botanist at the Escuela Agricola Panamericana, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, recently visited the phanerogamic herbarium of this Museum. Dr. Williams is an authority on Mexican and Central American orchids.

HIGH FASHION IN CHINA UNDER THE MANCHUS

A life-size mannequin of a typical Manchu lady dressed in robes befitting her estate, with characteristic coiffure and adornments, is included in the Museum's exhibit of garments worn by Chinese royalty and nobility in the 18th century. The shoes in the figure are high-heeled in a fashion that outdoes the most fantastic French heel or platform-sole creations, for the heels are in the middle of the shoe sole and the wearer had to balance herself as though on stilts. Nevertheless the Manchu women are said to have developed a graceful walk. Beneath the slit dress of this costume are pantaloons that end with ornate garters at the ankles. Such foibles as rouge, lipstick, and powder were used by Chinese women for thousands of years, and the "compact" and "vanity case" of the modern girl are believed originally to have been Chinese inventions.

Survival of the Fittest

The survival of the fittest is the ageless law of nature, but the fittest are rarely the strong. The fittest are those endowed with the qualifications for adaptation, the ability to accept the inevitable and conform to the unavoidable, to harmonize with existing or changing conditions.—*Dan E. Smalley*



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