

The subject of feather-work in America has not received the attention it deserves. While it was widely distributed over both continents, reaching its highest development in South America and in Central America, it retained the same characteristics from north to south. The art also flourished in Polynesia, the natives of which are often considered as ethnically related to the Americans. This Museum has from time to time, in connection with general ethnological research, collected material illustrating feather-work among North American tribes, especially those of California and the Plains. While no systematic study of the technique of such feather-work has been made, a few types have been described in previous publications of the Museum. The following paper is an attempt to furnish details, from a study of the collections now on exhibition in this Museum, in the technique of some feather garments and ornaments of the South American Indians. It was the original intention of the writer to present the details of the featherwork of the ancient Peruvians only; but later it was thought advisable to add a few examples, for comparison, of the work of such modern Indians as is represented in the Museum collections. The examples selected are from the Chamacoccos and Guato of Paraguay, the Karaja of Brazil, the Aymara of Bolivia, and the Canoe (Yahgan) Indians of Tierra del Fuego. All the ancient specimens described come from graves in the coast region of Peru. From the foot-hills of the Cordilleras to the Pacific, a desert stretches the entire length of the country, broken only by a few fertile valleys which are watered by streams flowing from the mountains to the ocean. In this desert, where rain is almost unknown, are found the huacas, or burial-places, of the ancient Peruvian dead; and to the absence of rain and the dry nitrous character of the sand in which the (Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and do not occur in the book.)

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