

Petroglyphs near Huancor*

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Ten leagues inland from Tambo de Mora there are petroglyphs in the valley of Chinchá river between Huancor and Santa Rosa near Yauri-tambo, which last name means "copper harbor" in Quechua. A hill slopes from the right, about 160 m. to the southeast, down to the river bed. The bed has an elevation of perhaps 270 m. above sea level, and a road runs some 10 m. higher. Blocks of rock lie at the foot of the slope. There is an old copper mine about 90 m. above the road, and traces of coal 30 m. higher. As the copper has been worked in Spanish times, traces of the ancient Indian mining are obliterated, but there can be little doubt that the petroglyphs found over an area of 60 m. in width and some 50 m. directly below the mine had reference to the latter. The petroglyphs, which occur on various faces of the scattered blocks, measure from about 20 cm. to 130 cm. in height. Some of the finest are among the smallest. The drawing of these petroglyphs is, of course, not fine. They are lighter in color than the rock surface, pecked or gouged into shallow hollows, and nowhere deeper than 2 mm. Some seem to have been refreshed by scraping over. Some are possibly of recent origin, but the majority of the 200 figures must be pre-Spanish (Fig. 1 and 2).

The following are some of the more notable figures:

A mythical, feathered, worm-like animal,¹ curved like certain monkey patterns on pottery,² though this figure is probably not a monkey. The body bears a tail, a crowned human head, apparently with lip plug, and human arms and legs. It holds an instrument or weapon, and a smaller fish-like figure is attached to the body. The whole is about 25 cm. high. I believe the period of this figure to be old, certainly older than Incaic.

An instrument, curved like a tobacco pipe, in two of the figures may represent a large trumpet.

One figure holds two instruments or scepters. I have the impression that the one in the right hand is a spear-thrower, the other a dart.

A barbarous deity holds in its left hand the hair of a small figure or human head. The square head of this figure is characteristic of the older periods of Peruvian civilization.

Other petroglyphs show the sun, a snake, an owl, a curious quadruped, and a falling man.³

These petroglyphs seem to have originated with reference to the copper mine at the spot, since there are none anywhere else in the vicinity. That the name Yauri-tambo is Quechua, does not preclude the mine having been worked in pre-Inca times; in fact, none of the petroglyphs impress me as Incaic in style; while many of them seem typical of older periods.

* From "Explorations at Chinchá" by Max Uhle. *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* Vol. 21, No 2, pp 57-94. A. L. Kroeber (ed.). Issued September 19, 1924. This section are from a report dated at Ocucaje, February 26, 1901.

¹ Probably the small figure in middle foreground of Figure 1.

² Middle Inca style.

³ The figure appearing most frequently in plate 22, human, with left arm raised over the head, is not mentioned by Dr. Uhle.



Figura 1. Petroglyphs ten leagues inland from Tambo de Mora. Photo by Max Uhle (1924).