



Vessels of polished obsidian excavated at Tepe Gawra during the 1935 Season

A certain number of characteristics seem to tie up these *mira-toro* with the stone images of Easter Island. The long ears, resulting from artificial enlargement of the lobes, is markedly emphasized both on stone statues and on wooden figurines. Goatees occur in three or four stone statues and in the head relief on *Motu Nui*.

The conventional ring on the small of the back is puzzling, yet it is found on some of the older wooden carvings and some of the stone statues. One stone image has an extra ring on each of the buttocks corresponding perhaps to the "warts" of the figurines. These rings persist in the culture of the modern natives. Thus, Mrs. Routledge cites the case of a man whose tattooing design included the ring motive on the back. The "Bird Child," one of the most important personages in the annual "First Egg" ceremony, has a similar design painted on his back.

The low relief decorations on the head of the wooden statues furnish another possible link with the stone carvings. The double birds touching each other with their beaks are quite the fashion of the well-known bird motive of "script" tablets and stone carvings. The lizard of our figurines (Figures A and B) is important in the folk-lore of Polynesia in general and likewise occurs both in the "script" and the stone engravings of the older art.

Further comparative study may explain the presence of these splendid carvings in an otherwise artistically poor culture. The technical perfection of execution, the unusual and bold treatment, places them among the finest examples of primitive art.

E. A. G.

OBSIDIAN VESSELS FROM TEPE GAWRA

INTRUSIVE in Level 11 of the Great Mound were discovered last year a number of Libn tombs described from time to time in the *Bulletin*. These tombs were built sometime between the two occupations of Levels 8 and 9—they undoubtedly date about 3500 years before Christ. In one of these tombs were over twenty-five thousand beads, of which nearly eighteen hundred had been cut and polished from natural volcanic glass or obsidian. Besides these obsidian beads were two vessels of obsidian. (Plate IX.)

In the Near East the chief source of obsidian lies in the Caucasus mountains probably the point of origin of the raw material of these astonishing products of ancient obsidian carving. It must be remembered that the artisans who shaped these vessels were equipped only with the most primitive instruments, such as reed drills, bone chippers and flakers and sand as an abrasive. Obsidian, like artificial glass, is very brittle and hard. The amount of labor expended on these two objects must have been tremendous.

The vessels are finished and polished and because of this fact they are unique. The only other complete obsidian vessel from Mesopotamia of any period was discovered three years ago at Arpachiyah, a nearby site, by Mr. Mallowan of the British Museum. That piece has not been polished and the outside has the irregular surface produced by flaking only. Fragments of other obsidian vessels have been found at Warka, but the discovery of these two superb vessels at Tepe Gawra was required to show the complete mastery of this difficult medium which was attained in these early times.

C. B.

THE HOW-TO-MAKE-IT CLUB

IN December the How-To-Make-It Club begins its third year. Organized to bring to a larger group of boys and girls an appreciation of Museum things the Club now boasts eight hundred members from all over the United States and some foreign countries. During the coming year it is hoped that the number of members will reach several thousand.

Each month, except during the summer, members of the How-To-Make-It Club receive a gift package containing all the materials and full directions for making some exciting object from an ancient time or a primitive race. It may be a mirror used by the Pharaohs of Egypt or a mask worn by our own American Indians. From the extensive collections of the Museum, the Club endeavours to choose gifts that the members will not only really enjoy making, but that will be interesting or amusing to play with when completed. Plate X illustrates the objects to be made by Club members during the coming year.

The materials correspond as nearly as possible to those used in the original objects and even such items as needle and thread and paste are furnished when required for the making. All the details are carefully worked out by the Educational Department of the Museum.