

incredible that any contact sufficient to affect the religious customs of Mexico or Central America could have occurred without the introduction of a stringed instrument of some kind.*

In the Ceremonial Usages of the Chinese (1100 B. C.), a work already referred to, one may find allusions to a number of forms of wheeled carriages, with directions for their construction. Minute details even are given as to material and dimensions, such as measuring the spoke holes in the rim with millet seed (reminding one of the modern method of ascertaining the cubic contents of crania), all indicating the advanced development of wheeled vehicles. If from this early date in China up to the fifth century A. D., any people had found their way from China to middle America, one wonders why the wheel was not introduced. Its absence must be accounted for. It was certainly not for lack of good roads or constructive skill. Its appearance in this hemisphere was synchronous with the Spanish invasion, and when once introduced spread rapidly north and south. Like the plow, it still remains to-day the clumsy and primitive model of its Spanish prototype.

The potter's wheel is known to have existed in Asia from the earliest times; the evidence is not only historical, but is attested by the occurrence of lathe-turned pottery in ancient graves. We look in vain for a trace of a potter's wheel in America previous to the sixteenth century. Mr. Henry C. Mercer regards a potter's device used in Yucatan as a potter's wheel, and believes it to have been pre-Columbian. This device, known as the *kabal*, consists of a thick disk of wood which rests on a slippery board, the potter turning the disk with his feet. The primitive workman uses his feet to turn, hold, and move objects in many operations. The primitive potter has always turned his jar in manipulation rather than move himself about it. Resting the vessel on a block and revolving it with his feet is certainly the initial step toward the potter's wheel, but so simple an expedient must not be regarded as having any relation to the true potter's wheel, which originated in regions where other kinds of wheels revolving on pivots were known.

It seems reasonable to believe that had the Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans visited the Mexican coast in such numbers as is believed they did, we ought certainly to find some influence, some faint strain, at least, of the Chinese method of writing in the hitherto unfathomable inscriptions of Maya and Aztec. Until recently it was not known whether they were phonetic or ideographic; indeed, Dr. Brin-

* Since the above was written Dr. Brinton and Mr. Saville have called my attention to such evidences as would warrant the belief in the existence of a pre-Columbian stringed musical instrument. The devices are, however, of such a nature as to indicate their independent origin.