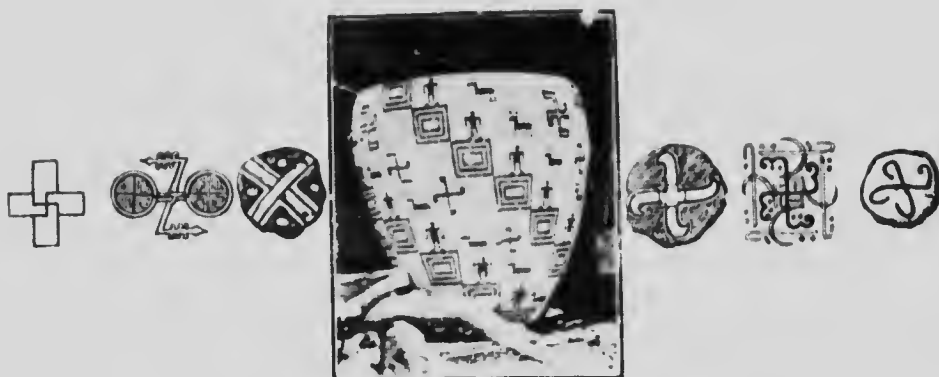




THE PRE-CHRISTIAN CROSS

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In the volume embracing the papers read before the International Congress of Anthropology (Philadelphia, 1893) there is a learned disquisition on "Various Supposed relations between the American and Asiatic races," by that eminent anthropologist, the late Dr. Daniel G. Brinton. After reviewing the reckless statements made by a few writers, who endeavoured to find analogies between the Eskimoan and Ural-Altai races and establish an Asiatic origin for the American Indian, Dr. Brinton continues: "But the inner stronghold of those who defended the Asiatic origin of Mexican and Central-American Civilization is, I am well aware, defended by no such feeble outposts as these, but by a triple line of entrenchment, consisting respectively of the Mexican calendar, the game of Patolli, and the presence of Asiatic Jade in America." In conclusion, he declares that: "Up to the present time there has not been shown a single dialect, not an art or an institution, not a myth or a religious rite, not a domesticated plant or animal, not a tool, weapon, game, or symbol, in use in America at the time of the discovery which had been imported from Asia, or from any other continent of the old world."

I may add that this expression of Dr. Brinton's belief is applauded by many eminent American Antiquaries, who, with him, have now abandoned the search for Egyptian, Babylonian, or Chinese influences underlying the ancient civilization of Central and South America as profitless, if not a waste of time.

But is not Brinton's creed too positive and dogmatic, face to face with the bewildering similarities between the cultures of Asia and America? The great German, Von Humboldt, tells us in his "*Voyages aux régions Equinoxiales*": "Nouveau Continent" that he found among the tribes of the Western Continent things and ceremonies similar to what he afterwards saw in parts of Asia. Professor Culin in his paper "America the Cradle of Asia" writes: "We find in America things not only similar to those of Asia, but precisely identical with them." He instances as an example the "Straw Game or Indian Cards" played by the Hurons and among tribes from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, as identical with the Japanese Yeki and the Chinese Yi. Towards the end of his address he makes this startling statement: "The games of the Eastern Continent—and I speak now of what we know of the remote past—are not only similar to, but practi-