



Metallurgical activity was present in Ecuador from at least 1500 BC; by around the beginning of the Common Era metallurgical manufacture and use had extended to most of the Costa and Sierra. Regional styles soon evolved giving rise to high levels of technical craftsmanship and to shaping particular iconographic and decorative patterns. Copper, gold, silver and platinum were mined, processed and converted into thousands of ornaments, offerings, tools and weapons extensively used both by elites and by the common people. By 1450, the Incas had invaded most of the Ecuadorian Sierra and eventually they integrated the diverse metallurgical traditions into their state-managed metallurgical industry. The European conquest in the sixteenth century deeply affected the native metallurgical activities, even though in some regions copper continued to be worked throughout the colonial period. The reconstruction of the general outlines of this fascinating historical process was made possible through the study of the collection of archaeological metal objects of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage of Ecuador, the compilation of previous archaeological references, laboratory analyses and C14 dating of museum objects. This work is the first one of its kind to be published on the ancient metallurgy of Ecuador.

Lleras Pérez

Metallurgy in Ancient Ecuador

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# METALLURGY IN ANCIENT ECUADOR

A STUDY OF THE COLLECTION OF  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL METALLURGY OF  
THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, ECUADOR

Roberto Lleras Pérez



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