

GOLD OF ANCIENT AMERICA BY REBECCA HINSON

(HISTORY/NONFICTION)

Questions for *Gold of Ancient America* by Rebecca Hinson

LEVEL 1: What does it say?

General Understanding

- Quote accurately from the text to describe the use of gold in ancient Colombia.

Key Details

- Identify two gold construction techniques as described in the text.
- Explain the similarities and the differences in the way the Spaniards and the indigenous peoples valued gold as described in the text.
- Explain how the ancient peoples of Colombia used gold to connect with the supernatural world.
- Explain depletion gilding as described in the following text.

El Dorado The Gold of Ancient Colombia

Many objects which appear to be of pure gold are actually made of tumbaga with a high copper content. . . . some form of depletion gilding was used. This produces a yellow surface on an object containing gold as one of its constituents. The alloy is treated chemically to remove the base metals from the surface and to leave the surface gold untouched. The result is a surface film of relatively pure gold which completely conceals the base metal tumbaga core.

LEVEL 2: How does it work?

Vocabulary

- Determine the meaning of ritual, adornment, transformative, cacique, shaman, cosmos, trance, drought, negotiate, ancestor, artisan, diadem, pectoral, chisel, poporo, elders, divine, funerary, corpse, status, alluvial, mining, alloy, tumbaga, concave, convex, repoussé, feline, emerge, brittle, cast, beeswax, metallurgy, crescent, and filigree.

Structure

- Both *Statue of Liberty* and *Gold of Ancient America* explain the processes of metal construction. Compare and contrast how construction is explained in the two texts.

Author's Craft

- Analyze *Gold of Ancient America* and the following excerpts, noting important similarities and differences in the points of view they represent.

Beyond El Dorado power and gold in ancient Colombia

Early Spanish explorers of this region brought back to Europe fabulous tales of gold, encapsulated in the story of El Dorado, 'the golden one.' From the 1530s the region attracted many treasure seekers; in their eagerness to obtain gold they paid scant attention to the objects into which it was fashioned. They had no interest in how or why such items were crafted, or in the archaeological contexts in which they were found; treasure seekers looted burial mounds and often melted down the gold items that they found. *Beyond El Dorado* explores the story of ancient Colombia – a series of remarkable societies whose skills and beliefs are still now only partially understood. The knowledge that we have accrued about these societies and the objects they made comes from four main sources; the writings and drawings made by early Spanish chroniclers; more recent archaeological research; analogies made with indigenous Colombian societies today; and studies of the material properties of the objects themselves, now located in museums such as the Museo del Oro in Bogotá.

The Art of Gold The Legacy of Pre-Hispanic Colombia

The astonishment and curiosity that the Spaniards' armour, lances and silver Christ figures produced in the sixteenth century inhabitants of America was in sharp contrast to the European fascination at the sight of men and women who glistened in the tropical sun, decked from head to foot in gold, feathers and multi-coloured beads. This was a confrontation between two different concepts of the world, two systems of thought, two ways of life. The prehispanic societies that the Europeans found in the territory currently known as Colombia created their own symbolic, iconographic and visual universe, which was represented masterfully in objects made by their goldsmiths.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIYpB2Vilew&fbclid=IwAR06pNTq3g17-xOHhvBImN1sJgu8SpkxuMpbo_JY09QrJGaoj5ATonppu58

LEVEL 3: What does it mean?

Author's Purpose

- What particular evidence supports the author's assertion that gold objects created by ancient societies of Colombia have glorious complexity of design and meaning?

Intertextual Connections

- Draw on information from the following links to explain the controversy surrounding the Quimbaya treasure.

<http://thecitypaperbogota.com/news/colombia-considers-another-showdown-over-ancient-treasure/11645>

<https://www.latinpost.com/articles/112629/20160201/colombia-obliges-spain-return-nation-quimbaya-indigenous-treasure.htm>

- What reasons and evidence do Ed Buckley and KJ Mariño (in the links above) use to support Colombia's claim to repatriate the Quimbaya Treasure?

LEVEL 4: What does it inspire you to do?

Opinion with Evidence or Argument

- Integrate information from the links below in order to write or speak about your opinion regarding the cultural patrimony of the treasure-laden San José galleon knowledgeably.

<https://www.inverse.com/article/45164-san-jos-galleon-how-tiny-dolphins-confirmed-holy-grail-of-shipwrecks>

<http://thecitypaperbogota.com/news/colombia-high-stakes-battle-over-high-seas-treasure/11287>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2018/07/news-san-jose-shipwreck-colombia-salvage/>

https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2019/03/07/Colombia-delays-treasure-recovery-from-San-Jose-shipwreck/6711551984735/

Sources

Leon Auerbach, *El Dorado The Gold of Ancient Colombia*

Ed Buckley, *the city paper*

Rebecca Hinson, *Statue of Liberty*

Elisenda Vila Llonch, *Beyond El Dorado power and gold in ancient Colombia*

KJ Mariño, *The Latin Post*

Roberto Lleras Pérez, *The Art of Gold, The Legacy of Pre-Hispanic Colombia*