

One of the trades that stood out most, due to the great technical and artistic ability in ancient Peru, was metallurgy.

The oldest mine in the Andes is in Chile and dates back some ten millennia, but the most remote evidence is a gold necklace from 2000 BC from Jiskairumoko (Puno). B.C. from Jiskairumoko (Puno), which means that Andean metallurgy dates back four millennia.

During pre-Hispanic times, metals such as gold, silver, copper, bronze, platinum, among others, were the result of the intense and skilled work of miners of our past. They used taruca bones and antlers to open wells and explored the sediments of the rivers in search of metals. They also used mercury (quicksilver), which they found in cinnabar, to obtain gold.

The metals were then transported to workshops where they were heated to 1,300 °C in small furnaces (wayras), leaving behind slag and tools made of metal, wood and stone. They were also able to make alloys by smelting, except for gold, which was usually used in native form.

The processing techniques were varied: hammering, rolling, embossing, moulding, tumbaga (copper and gold alloy), they even made welds and were able to sinter (fuse metals).