

**ALPACA**, or **PA'CO** (Ar. *al*, the + Peruv. *paca*). One of the two domestic races of the Guanaco (*Lama huanacos*), a cameloid mammal of the Andean region. It is smaller than the llama and more nearly resembles the vicuña, although now considered to have been, like the llama, derived from the guanaco. (See LLAMA.) Its form is very sheep-like, except for the long, erectly carried head; and, although some have run wild, it is mainly known in great, semi-domesticated flocks kept by the Peruvian mountain Indians for the sake of the wool. These flocks graze on the pastures of the loftiest valleys, almost at the snow-line, which seem to be the natural home of the animal and where they have formed interesting instincts and habits of vigilance and protection against sudden storms and snowfalls. These flocks are said to be so careful to keep together that it is impossible to separate a full-grown individual, so that none can be truly tamed which is not taken when very young. Once a year the Indians drive their flocks to stone inclosures or huts and shear the wool, after which the flocks are again turned loose. This custom is prehistoric, and Squier says that many of the shearing huts about Lake Titicaca have stood there since long before the Spanish conquest. The alpaca is known from the equator to Tierra del Fuego, but is most common in Peru and Chile; its flesh is well liked as food, and the animal is occasionally used as a beast of burden. The alpaca's coat consists of a thick growth of woolly hair, varying from black to gray or yellowish, and reaching, when unshorn, a length of some two feet. The annually shorn fleece is about eight inches in length. The fibre is small but strong, elastic, very lustrous and silky, and highly valued for weaving warm and fine cloth. The natives of the Andes have made use of it from time immemorial for their ponchos or blankets, remains of which have been found in the oldest graves of the period of the Incas; but it was not until 1836 that the wool began to be exported to Europe and the manufacture of alpaca shawls, cloth, etc., regularly began. This was due to the sagacity and energy of Sir Titus Salt, whose mills at Saltaire, England, are regarded as the foremost in Great Britain. Now the imports of alpaca wool into Europe and America number many millions of pounds annually; but not all of the so-called alpaca cloth is really manufactured from that wool alone, or even in part. See GUANACO; LLAMA; VICUÑA, and Plate of CAMELS AND LLAMAS.