

# The Early Ceramic Periods of Moquegua: A Reappraisal

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The Moquegua Valley has been established, through the work of the Programa Contisuyu and affiliated researchers, as an important area for the testing of models of the 'vertical economy' in south-central Andean prehistory. Research has demonstrated that colonies were maintained in the valley by the Middle Horizon Tiwanaku and Wari polities, and later by the Aymara señorios of the Titicaca Basin.

Preliminary reports on the earliest ceramic periods of Moquegua, the Huaracane and Trapiche phases, suggested that these occupations might represent earlier instances of such vertical control. Feldman proposed that the Huaracane phase, the first ceramic phase in the valley, characterized by a small but consistent percentage of fiber-tempered sherds, could be remains produced by Formative Period colonists from the Titicaca Basin. These hypothetical colonists would have been employed in the production of agricultural products not available in the altiplano, such as maize, ají and coca, for which the climate and soils of the Moquegua valley are well-suited. The presence of fiber-tempered ceramics in Huaracane sites led Feldman to suggest that these colonists were affiliated with the 'Chiripa Culture', known from the site of the same name in modern Bolivia.

The Trapiche phase was identified by the presence in a limited number of Moquegua sites of zoned-incised ceramics related to the Late Formative Titicaca Basin Pukara style. It was thought that this phase was perhaps later than Huaracane, and represented Pukara colonists similarly involved in vertical economic relations with the altiplano center.

The time is now ripe for a reevaluation of the early ceramic periods of Moquegua. Recent work by the Moquegua Archaeological Survey, under the direction of Paul Goldstein, has provided a wealth of new information that will allow us to evaluate, in a preliminary manner, the veracity of these models.

Goldstein has developed a framework for archaeologically identifying highland colonies in lowland zones. He utilizes two criteria, RESIDENCE and IDENTITY, both of which must be satisfied in order to demonstrate the existence of a colony. The archaeological correlates of direct colonization, are, therefore: a) evidence of domestic habitation, and b) material evidence of maintained identity, through cultural and social links to a highland center. The failure to meet both of these conditions would signify a socio-political configuration other than a colonial "archipelago". Domestic habitation WITHOUT clear evidence of highland identity would indicate a resident population of a local tradition. Conversely, isolated objects of highland identity without evidence of residence would suggest non-colonial patterns such as long distance exchange.

The work of the Moquegua Archaeological Survey allows us to effect a more adequate evaluation of these criteria as they pertain to the Huaracane and Trapiche phases. The Huaracane ceramic evidence has already been discussed by Kayoko Toshihara. I will now discuss the settlement and mortuary evidence for the Huaracane and Trapiche phases.

### **Settlement and Architecture**

Huaracane habitation sites are typically small, averaging just under .5 hectares in area. Valley-wide, 161 such domestic occupations have been encountered, for a total of 74 occupied hectares. Although the term ' Huaracane phase' probably collapses over 1000 years of early ceramic occupation, this nonetheless represents a considerable resident population. Huaracane sites are invariably located on the immediate margins of the valley floodplain, and the spacing between them is quite regular. This regular spacing is maintained even in very unlikely situations. M147, for example, is in a rather inaccessible location, above high cliffs. It' s location, however, is consistent with the regular spacing of Huaracane domestic sites, and seems to represent strict adherence to an ideal model of spatial organization.

Huaracane domestic sites consist of small groups of tightly-packed terraces. Terraces invariably lack stone facing, instead being rectangular or ovoid excavations into moderate to steep slopes. Terrace dimensions seem to be smaller than those of later phases in the valley, averaging under 10m in length. The width of terraces is somewhat difficult to estimate, due to colluvial deposition. Their small size suggests possible functional differentiation between terraces, as was discovered by Bruce Owen in his excavations of sites of the closely-related Algodonal Early Ceramic phase in the Ilo area. This possibility is further indicated by the fact that only a limited number of terraces in a given site are associated with dense midden refuse.

The density of cultural material on the surface of these sites is generally quite low. Surface material is, however, entirely consistent with domestic activity, consisting mostly

of stone flaking debris, utilitarian ceramics, and the remains of foodstuffs and construction material.

Construction techniques and house plans remain elusive on the basis of our survey evidence. The frequent presence of wooden posts and thick layers of reeds in association with Huaracane terraces would suggest that structures were of pole and thatch construction, perhaps with quincha walls. Only one exposed domestic structure was encountered, in a bulldozer cut at site M73F. This structure, if it was round in plan, as its concave floor profile would suggest, was 5.25m in diameter and contained a central hearth. Remains of thatching material were present in a thick lens over the central portion of the floor. However, adequate characterization of Huaracane domestic architecture awaits future investigations.

In a limited number of cases, it has been possible to identify a specific type of special-function terrace. These terraces are located in the highest portions of a site, and contain elevated percentages of fineware ceramics and exotic lithic material. This could suggest some internal social stratification at the village level. Alternatively, these terraces could represent collective ritual space rather than elite residence.

Finally, one site group at Calaluna/Montalvo, is unique for its structure and artifact assemblage. A member of this group, M103, is one hectare in size and is demarcated by a dry moat with a restricted entrance, enclosing the remains of numerous stone structures. The site displays an unusually high frequency of Huaracane finewares, about 40%. This may indicate elite habitation or ceremonial activities and perhaps integration at a scale larger than that of the village.

The structure and distribution of Huaracane domestic sites indicates a village-based society reliant on floodplain farming. The remarkably regular spacing of sites would suggest restricted access to land, based on village affiliation, and a lack of extensive lateral canal construction.

It is clear, then, that the Huaracane phase clearly satisfies the criterion of residence. Due to the poor state of our knowledge regarding Formative domestic sites of the Titicaca Basin, it is more difficult to evaluate the criterion of identity. That is, data are currently unavailable to compare Huaracane domestic sites with Chiripa ones. However, some information is available on altiplano Formative mortuary traditions, and it is here that we must turn in order to effect a more adequate comparison.

## **Cemeteries**

Since burial and treatment of the dead is generally an important ritual preoccupation, funerary ritual should reflect any Huaracane identity with highland groups. If Huaracane settlement represents altiplano colonization, Huaracane funerary practice should conform

to altiplano prototypes such as that of Chiripa.

Fortunately, Chiripa burial traditions are somewhat better-known than is Chiripa domestic architecture. Bennett's excavations at Chiripa uncovered a number of interments under the floors of the houses. These were flexed, displayed cranial deformation, and were individually placed in oval cists lined with alluvial cobbles. Often the cists were capped with stone slabs.

Huaracane cemeteries, on the other hand, are normally separate sectors immediately adjacent to residential sites. In contrast to Chiripa and other altiplano traditions, the individual cist tomb is rare in the Huaracane phase. Rather, most Huaracane cemeteries are of one of two types.

The most common type is the "tumulo" or ' mound cemetery' , of which 43 examples have been located. Tumulos consist, as can be seen in this exposed section, of alternating layers of earth and stone and vegetal material. Huaracane tumulos are similar in form and construction to those of the contemporary Alto Ramirez tradition of the Azapa valley of northern Chile. Tumulos have also been reported by Bruce Owen for the Algodonal Early Ceramic phase of the Ilo area, and are present near Tacna, as well. Additionally, tumulos are characteristic of the poorly-known La Ramada phase in Arequipa.

The link to La Ramada is further strengthened by the find of low frequencies of an unusual double-spouted bottle form in Huaracane domestic sites. This form is characteristic of the La Ramada ceramic tradition and has no altiplano counterpart.

I would like to thank Karen Wise for pointing out that tumulo burial was probably a mode of interment reserved for individuals of special status. If this is the case, as is likely, we have encountered very little evidence of simpler mortuary practices. This is to be expected, however, since the surface indications of simpler interments would be transitory in nature. Be this as it may, it is apparent that tumulos, an important form of interment in the Huaracane Phase, cannot support the suggested direct link to Chiripa. Tumulos as a funerary form have no precedent in the Titicaca Basin Formative nor, indeed, in any period in the altiplano. Rather, their association with Algodonal Early Ceramic, Alto Ramirez, La Ramada and other coastal valley traditions suggests a "horizontally" rather than "vertically" distributed tradition.

The second form of Huaracane mortuary practice is represented by what are known as "Boot Tombs". Boot tomb cemeteries appear on the surface as irregular "rockpiles". These rockpiles have previously been interpreted as intentionally demolished masonry platform architecture. However, the finds of recently-looted boot tombs at several of these sites indicates that they are, in fact, cemeteries. The accumulated rock probably represents the remains of ruined masonry superstructures. Boot tomb cemeteries are far less common than tumulos, represented by only 7 examples.

Previously-reported excavations by Goldstein of a boot tomb cemetery at the Omo site flesh out our view of this burial type. A typical boot tomb consisted of a shaft between two and three meters in depth, opening into a horizontal chamber containing multiple interments. Tombs were marked on the surface by substantial stone rings up to 4 m in diameter with wattle and daub superstructures. Virtually all of the boot tombs encountered were looted and their surface structures destroyed in antiquity.

Boot tombs seem to contain individual of more than ordinary social standing, to judge from the offerings included with the mummies, including large quantities of beads, fine textiles and examples of metalwork. Additionally, Goldstein encountered an example of a Paracas embroidered tab at Omo, suggesting far-flung trading links.

While the boot tomb is undoubtedly an indigenous Huaracane mortuary form, several lines of evidence conspire to suggest a relatively late date for the practice. The first is the fact that the majority of boot tomb cemeteries appear to be associated with Middle Horizon centers. Examples include cemeteries at Omo M10, Cerro Trapiche, Cerro Echinique, and the Rio Muerto complex.

Certain cemeteries suggest an unusual local mortuary practice that seems unique to Moquegua. A few boot-tomb and tumulo cemeteries show evidence of the manipulation of water through aqueducts and reservoirs. One example is the Aguas Sagradas site (M182A/B), which consists of looted boot tombs which were watered by stone-lined aqueducts connecting the tombs to five reservoirs or tanks.

Of chronological interest is the fact that these waterworks are observably connected by a short feeder canal to an extensive lateral canal system which seems to have been constructed in the Chen Chen phase, that is during the second episode of Tiwanaku colonization in the valley.

This may indicate that the Huaracane tradition survived well into the Middle Horizon. Alternatively, it may represent the honoring of an aboriginal sacred landscape on the part of the Tiwanaku colonists. In either case, however, it would seem to suggest that boot tomb cemeteries were constructed late in the Huaracane sequence.

Whatever the chronological position of boot tomb cemeteries, it is clear that, like tumulos, they have no counterpart in altiplano mortuary traditions. Indeed, it is difficult to find any comparable funerary form, though they may be related to a generalized South Coast (that is, Paracas/Nasca) tradition of elite burial in subterranean chambers. The criterion of identity is clearly not supported by the mortuary evidence.

### **The Trapiche Phase**

Thus far, survey work has located only seven Trapiche phase sites, containing between

them a handful of Pukara-related ceramics and a few fragments of tapestry textile. The distribution of these materials is informative. Of the seven sites with Trapiche material, six are Huaracane phase. Of these, three are high-status cemetery contexts, and one is the previously-mentioned special site of M103. Indeed, the Trapiche phase type site of M7C is now understood as a Huaracane boot tomb cemetery.

In light of this association of Trapiche ceramics with Huaracane sites, and particularly, with high-status cemetery contexts, these wares must be interpreted as valued trade objects. This situation is nicely illustrated by a camelid wool tapestry fragment, found in association with a disturbed Huaracane infant burial. The piece, which we believe to be of altiplano origin, had been repeatedly repaired with cotton thread prior to its ritual discard, indicating that it may have been curated as a rarity among Huaracane people.

### **Conclusion**

Returning to the original criteria for a "vertical archipelago", Moquegua' s Huaracane occupation seems to more than satisfy the "residency requirement" but clearly fails the "identity" test. Just the opposite seems to be true of the Trapiche phase, the other candidate for early colonialism. The Trapiche phase represents a convincing presence of Pukara tradewares, but includes no evidence of residential occupation.

To conclude, then, a brief consideration of Huaracane settlement and mortuary evidence has demonstrated that the Huaracane phase must be considered as a local tradition interacting with altiplano, as well as coastal groups, yet maintaining a distinct local identity. It is possible that Huaracane interaction with the altiplano included an export of lowland agricultural products in exchange for highland wool, as well as prestige goods. Some religious beliefs may also have been transmitted. But the exchange of wool, trade ceramics, tapestry textiles or even religious beliefs does not demonstrate the existence of highland colonies. Clearly, the vertical archipelago in Moquegua originated in the Middle Horizon.