

EARLY HORIZON CERAMICS IN THE CAÑETE VALLEY OF PERU

Dwight T. Wallace

In his 1957 site survey of the Cañete Valley, done on a Fulbright grant, Louis M. Stumer found a few sherds which suggested the incised styles common to the coast in the Early Horizon. During my work in the valley late in 1958, also done on a Fulbright grant, my assistant, Jorge Esparza, located various sites which had surface sherds which could be dated unquestionably to the Early Horizon because of their similarities to other early styles of the valleys to the south--Chincha, Pisco, Ica, and Nasca, in north to south order. These sherds are the first known from Cañete for the Early Horizon and can be shown to represent part of a transitional phase in the local development from Paracas to Topará style ceramics in the Cañete-Chincha-Pisco area.

The sites in Cañete having the Paracas-related sherds are located in the upper part of the valley where the river begins to emerge from its mountain gorge. The sites are all on, or just at the base of, the steep slopes that border the valley in this area and are quite close to the river, since the valley is only about half a kilometer wide at this point. The distance up valley from the sea is about 19 km., or 16 km. from the Panamerican Highway. A few kilometers above this narrow part the valley again widens somewhat, and cultivated fields line the river far upstream, past Lunahuaná.

The type site, Los Patos (PV54-48), is on the south side of the river, a short distance below the garita del estado of the Toma Palo. The site is in a small draw in the very steep slopes of the bordering hills. There are a number of indications of stone construction on the lower slopes in the draw. In the base of the draw are some small mounds which look suspiciously like backdirt from some sort of old excavations; whatever the case, there are indications of cultural refuse in this area also. From the surface indications it is difficult to say more than that it was an occupation site of not inconsiderable size, approximately 30 meters square. About 100 meters to the east, on a very steep talus slope running down the cliffs and reached by a path from the main site, is another area with relatively heavy surface refuse and a few exposed stone walls.

One of the other sites with early materials (PV54-47) is about 1 kilometer down river from the type site, near a point where the road crosses the main irrigation canal and runs along the outer edge of the valley floor. Two other sites (PV54-49 and 51) lie across the valley on the north side of the river; they are only slightly down river from the previous sites. The last three sites mentioned have only the barest surface indications of occupation and yielded only a few diagnostic sherds each.

The surface sherds at all the sites were in a relatively poor state of preservation, and even the type site yielded only about fifty sherds, all that could be gleaned in a few hours of intensive searching by Esparza,

myself, and Olga Linares, my field assistant in Cañete. Only the decorated sherds, those that indicated vessel shape, and a sample of the plain wares were collected. Because of the small number and poor condition of the sherds, the following description cannot be taken as a complete representation of the types which would be recovered in excavations. All the sherds obviously fall into one general ceramic style for which the name Patos seems appropriate.

Patos sherds show two general types of paste: a coarse brown ware and a fine orange ware. The brown ware has the following characteristics: medium texture; medium to large amount of sand temper; thickness about 5.5 mm.; smoothed, unpolished exteriors, with some cases of crude polishing leaving marks of the polishing tool ("pebble polished"); interiors either unevenly smoothed or wiped, the wiped surfaces having many fine striations; and surfaces which are often dark in color, gray-black or gray-brown. The fine orange ware has a fine texture, small amount of fine sand inclusions, a thickness of about 3.5 mm., and exteriors smooth and medium well polished. The interiors of open bowls are finished the same way. Fine orange ware is not frequent except in the form of graters. These graters have some peculiarities of their own, however. They are not as well finished, on the average, as the other orange ware pieces and are somewhat thicker (4 mm.). The orange ware is fairly well fired, although gray and black cores are not uncommon in graters.

Only three decorative techniques occur: incision, red slipping, and negative painting. Fine line incision, overall red slipping, and negative painting occur on fine orange ware, but not on the same sherd. Red slip bands and fine to medium line incision occur together on graters. Medium line incision occurs on coarse brown ware sherds.

Fine line incision occurs on the exterior of fine orange bowls and of a closed form, possibly a double spout and bridge bottle. From the evidence provided by the four sherds that show much incised decoration of this type, designs on bowls appear to be restricted to small rectangular units or narrow bands at the vessel rim. The decoration on the closed form is apparently larger. The incisions are narrow and relatively deep.

The red slipped type is represented by two sherds from a closed shape, either a jar or a bottle, slipped red on the exterior, and two sherds from open bowls which apparently are not graters, since the red extends far into the base of the bowl.

Negative painting is represented by only one sherd. The design consists of dots about 1 cm. in diameter and placed less than a centimeter apart.

Fine orange bowls include examples with diverging, straight, or slightly concave sides, and a wide mouth bowl with an incurving rim. No base sherds were identified.

The grater, as found all over the south central and south coasts in early periods, is generally an open hemispherical bowl with a roughened, incised, or punctate interior and usually a red slip band around the inside of the rim. Patos graters also are generally hemispherical and the sides are convex in outer profile, but there is some variation in detail. The rims may end almost vertically or flare out at an angle. Both incised and punctate interior designs occur on the Patos graters. Interior incision includes

a variety of designs including vertical parallel wavy lines, short horizontal parallel lines, and a large incised star covering the bottom of the bowl and filled with a series of parallel diagonal-jab punctations. The punctations are sometimes found outside the star also. The interior red slip band varies in width from 5 cm. to 2 cm. It sometimes extends slightly over the rim onto the exterior of the bowl.

Only one coarse brown ware shape could be identified from the sherds. It is a globular olla with a wide mouth and a simple, direct rim which is almost horizontal at the mouth. Occasionally the rims are very slightly thickened; the lip is rounded with a very slight ridging, probably produced from the smoothing of the lip. The profile of the lower part of the olla body is unknown; it could be elongated or subglobular. These ollas may be decorated with medium incision or punctation, the decoration being confined to a zone at the rim. The designs include a row of incised triangles pendant from the rim, filled with diagonal lines or short vertical dashes; a double row of short horizontal lines; and rows of vertical-jab circular punctations around the rim.

Coarse brown ware is considerably more frequent than fine orange ware among surface sherds. Undecorated coarse brown ware ollas are more common than decorated ones, but the decorated ones are not rare. Grater bowls are relatively frequent, more so than in any of the other styles in which they occur. Other types of fine orange ware are infrequent.

I suggested at the beginning of this paper that the Patos style had certain resemblances to the Paracas tradition. Two specific features of the Paracas style occur among the Patos sherds: the negative circle design and the dot ending an incised line (fig. 1 a). Both these features occur only once in the present sample. A somewhat less specific resemblance is provided by the zigzag line design on one sherd and the small rectangular units at the rim on the exterior of two of the sherds. These traits occur in the Paracas T-2 phase in Ica. However, some of these traits occur also in the immediately preceding and succeeding phases. Other features shared by the Patos sherds and Paracas style ceramics are of a more general nature: fine line incision, graters, a red slip type, globular ollas with direct rims, pendant triangles filled with dashes at olla rims, and some of the methods of surface finishing. These features are all found in one or another of the Paracas style phases, but they also occur in the Topará style which developed in Chincha, Cañete, and Pisco contemporaneously with the later phases of the Paracas style in Ica and Nasca. In addition, specific traits shared by Patos and Topará ceramics include the diagonal-jab punctation on graters, the simple punctate and incised designs around olla rims, including the pendant triangle design, and fine line incision without post-fired painting. A general description of Topará ceramics has not yet appeared in print, since the style was only recently identified by Edward P. Lanning and myself.

The position of the Patos style is made clearer by other recent findings. During my work in Chincha in 1957-58 I identified a ceramic style called Pinta which shows very close relationships to the Paracas style of Ica and Nasca, particularly in the extensive use of post-fired painting. Other Paracas-related ceramics were found in an excavation in occupation debris at the San Pablo site (PV57-52) in Chincha which Lanning and I made in 1958. The style termed San Pablo which was found in this excavation is

very similar to the Patos style. Since the Paracas trait of post-fired painting did occur in Chincha, it is clear that the San Pablo style represents a transition in the development from the Paracas to the Topará style, rather than just an areal variant. Local differences may, of course, be involved also; the San Pablo style should probably be regarded as a local Chincha development out of a Paracas style but with some influence from the contemporary Paracas ceramics in Ica. Since San Pablo and Patos share many traits, it is likely that they have similar historical relationships. Nevertheless, the two ceramic units are not identical. Patos has the pendant triangle design on coarse brown ware ollas, a trait found in the first Topará phase in both Cañete and Chincha but not in San Pablo or the preceding Paracas ceramics in Chincha as far as is yet known. In contrast, San Pablo has a white slipped plainware, a Topará and not a Paracas trait. Therefore it seems likely that there are some temporal or regional differences between Patos and San Pablo.

In Ica and Nasca the transition between the post-fired painting of the Paracas style and the slip painting of the Nasca style is a development similar to that which took place in the Cañete-Chincha-Pisco area between the Paracas and Topará styles. The two developments are connected by the fact that the Topará tradition had a very strong influence on the Ica-Nasca area at the end of the period of post-fired painting there, so the indications are that the northern development took place first.

The identification of the Patos style enables us to say that the Cañete Valley shared with Chincha and Pisco not only the full development of the Topará style but also an earlier phase in which the traits of the previous Paracas tradition were still quite evident. The Patos style also marks Cañete as being the northernmost point to which the direct influence of the Paracas tradition can be traced, aside from the occasional trade sherds which have been found much further north. It now seems likely that earlier and even more closely Paracas-related ceramics will be found in Cañete.

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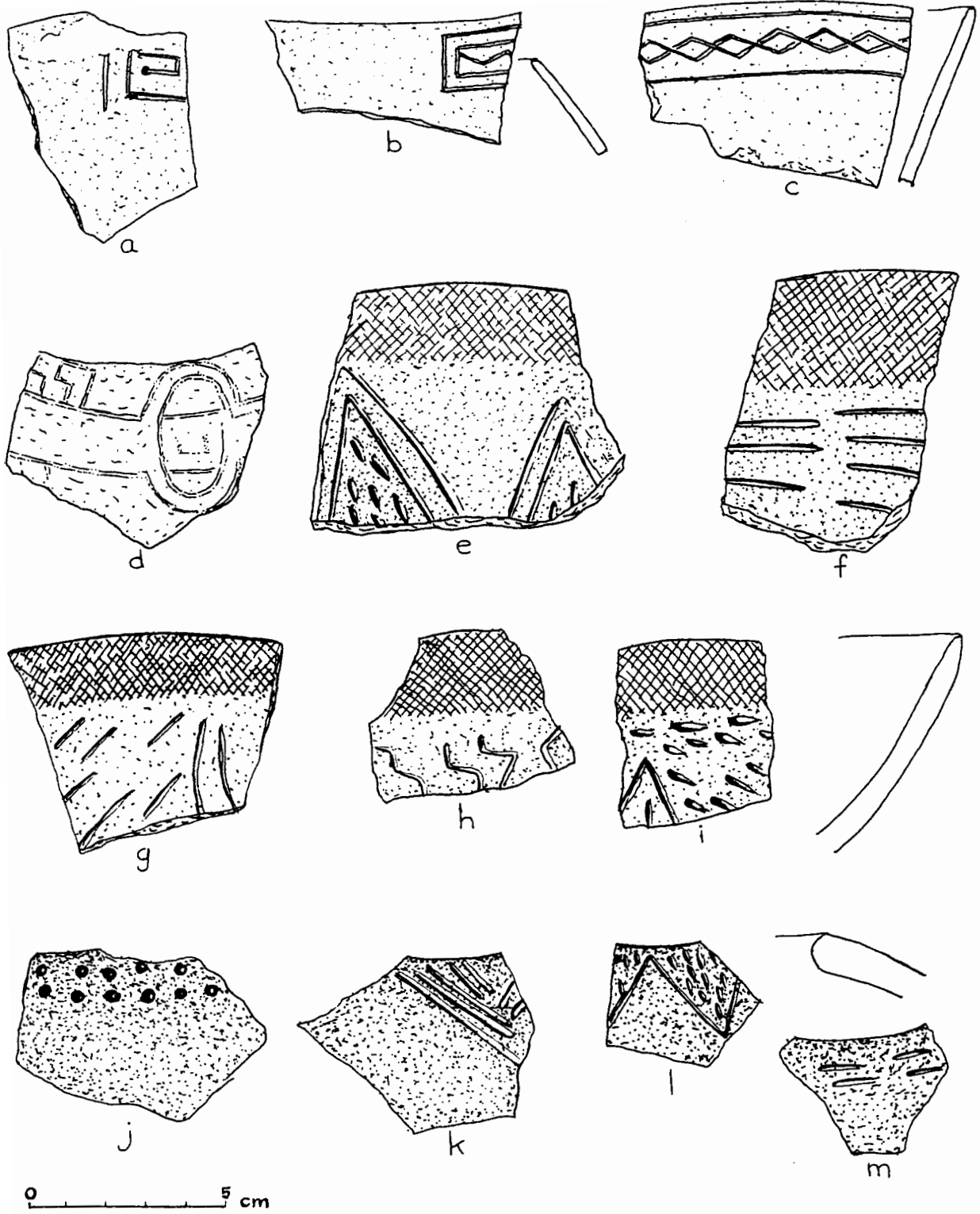


Plate VI. Fig. 1, sherds from the Los Patos site, Cañete. a-d, fine-incised type; e-i, grater type (interior incision and red-slip). j-m, coarse-incised type. a, c, e, i, open bowl; b, incurved bowl; j-m, globular olla.