

A MIDDLE HORIZON TOMB, ICA VALLEY, PERU

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The sequence of pottery styles from the Ica Valley on the south coast of Peru constitutes the reference standard for the periodization of Andean prehistoric chronology. Yet even today certain parts of this long ceramic record are known only from small samples and scant archaeological associations. The Pinilla style of Epoch 3 falls in this category. In 1966, Patricia J. Lyon, reporting on the styles of the latter part of the Middle Horizon in Ica, was unable to make a clear distinction between the Pinilla style and the preceding Ica-Pachacamac style of Epoch 2B.¹

Key associations for the solution of this problem are provided by a tomb at Pinilla, near Ocucaje in the middle Ica Valley, which was excavated by the 1952 Columbia University expedition to the south coast of Peru under the leadership of William Duncan Strong. Some time has passed since this work was done, but its intrinsic importance warrants a description more exhaustive than the brief note which appeared in the expedition's summary report.² The purpose of this article is to present the particulars of the Pinilla tomb as fully as possible from the evidence now at hand.

The tomb consisted of two underground adobe-walled chambers, one lying directly above the other. The field notes mention that "it seems likely that [the] tomb was just part of a callejón [or trench] and other tombs continue to the west. We have been told that this was a common practice in the later periods."

The upper chamber, a rectangular structure measuring 2.40 meters from east to west, 1.10 meters from north to south, and 75 centimeters deep, had walls built of large rectangular mold-made adobes laid on their flat faces, six courses high and two courses wide. The average measurements of the adobes were 45 x 30 x 9.5 cm. No burial was found in this chamber, but spondylus shell fragments, some drilled, apparently for suspension, a small crude pottery cup (fig. 6), and an oval pottery smoother were found, suggesting that it was a looted tomb, an interpretation made more likely by the fact that there was a gap about 50 centimeters wide in the west wall.

About 30 centimeters below the floor of the upper chamber lay the upper surface of a log roof, or barbacoa, composed of 21 logs laid parallel, oriented north and south. These logs formed the roof of the lower chamber. The roof extended horizontally in all directions beyond the base of the walls of the upper chamber: 3 logs beyond the east wall, and 4 to the west, while each end of each log extended beyond the north and south upper walls. Thus the lower chamber, about 3 meters long from east to west, and more than 1.5 meters from north to south, was larger in absolute dimensions than the upper chamber. None of the upper walls lay

directly above a lower wall; rather, the middle of the upper chamber seemed to be centered above the middle of the lower one.

The 10 logs of the eastern end of the roof lay horizontally in the earth, but the 11 western ones dipped sharply down at their southern ends, so that the southern end of each western log lay about 50 centimeters lower than its northern end. The west end of the south wall had probably collapsed before the tomb became filled up.³ The walls of the lower chamber were made of the same flat-faced adobes as those of the upper chamber.

On the floor of the lower chamber lay two skeletons in flexed position, heads west, facing south. Burial 1 lay in the center of the west half of the chamber; Burial 2 lay under the east wall of the upper chamber (fig. 1). The skulls and lower jaws were covered with red ocher, and there was an area of white clay, probably burned, under each burial. Both skeletons disintegrated during removal, precluding their further study.

The disposition of 15 pieces of pottery and some shell and metal ornaments on the floor of the chamber suggests very strongly that each skeleton was associated with a specific and mutually exclusive assemblage of grave goods. In the southwest corner of the tomb, to the southwest of Burial 1, lay a group of 5 pottery vessels, while in the region over the skull were a copper pin and an embossed silver band (fig. 2). These vessels which, following the field notes, we shall call Cache B, consisted of a cumbrous bowl (figs. 10a, b), a flaring sided deep dish with a bodiless eagle head painted in six colors (purple, red, cream, gray, black and white) (fig. 11), a sharply incurving bowl, decorated with bilaterally symmetrical disembodied feline heads in colors of red, cream, gray, black and white (fig. 7), and a pair of spheroid, incurving black slipped bowls with horizontal red and white chevron rim bands (figs. 8 and 9).

Southwest of Burial 2, and in the southeast corner of the chamber, lay 10 pottery vessels grouped together, denoted in the field notes as Cache A. The region above the head of the burial produced 18 small trumpet or lily-shaped cones of copper, the stem of each of which was twisted through a perforation in a small gold disc (figs. 5a, b). Near the neck were fragments of unworked spondylus shell, as well as 9 "bifid" objects carved from spondylus (figs. 3 and 4). The latter were made from a portion of the shell just at the junction of its white and rose-colored zones in such a way that one flat face was all-over rose, while the face of the other side had rose-colored feet, but a white upper part. Each of these bifids was drilled with two holes, possibly for suspension on a double cord: the holes enter the white side and emerge through the narrow top face of the object.

Cache A included three cumbrous bowls (figs. 12 through 14), a deeply incurving spheroid bowl with a rim band of carelessly executed black-outlined geometrical figures (fig. 15), a spheroid bowl with a

white rim band painted with black step figures (fig. 16), a large cup with bulging sides, a small flat bottom, and a broad horizontally everted rim or lip (figs. 17a, b), two spheroid incurving black-slipped bowls with horizontal red and white chevron rim bands (figs. 18 and 19), and two plain, undecorated vessels: a flat-bottomed dish with vertical walls (fig. 20), and a small jug which originally had two strap handles (fig. 21).

Unquestionably, this arrangement indicates that each of the two burials had its own individually associated grave lot: Burial 1 had Cache B of 5 pots and two pieces of metal jewelry; Burial 2, Cache A, consisting of 10 vessels and a relative profusion of shell and metal ornaments.

Two hammered metal plaques -- one of gold, one silver -- embossed with designs of feline faces (figs. 22 and 23) were discovered at about the midpoint of the north wall of the chamber. Their central location makes it impossible for us to associate them specifically with either burial. They may be associated with the tomb assemblage as a whole, and if so may stand for the two individuals buried in the chamber.

The contents of the tomb thus clearly comprise two grave lots. The pottery from each cache is in every way stylistically dissimilar to that of the other cache, save for the occurrence in each of nearly identical red and white chevron banded black bowls. Moreover, the painted designs on the pottery from Cache B can be assigned, on stylistic grounds, to the Ica-Pachacamac style of Middle Horizon 2;⁴ those from Cache A, on the other hand, are not only attributable to the Pinilla style of Middle Horizon 3, but in fact have served to define that style.⁵

This stylistic disparity between the ceramics of the two caches is underlined by a comparison of their relative size and of their associated metal and shell ornaments. With only 5 pots, Burial 1 was accompanied by a copper pin and a silver band, while Burial 2, with 10 pieces of associated pottery, had also a commensurately larger complement of finery. Not one of the ornaments in one grave lot is duplicated in the other. Thus the relative size of the lots as well as the total dissimilarity in kind between their associated non-ceramic assemblages only serve to emphasize the difference between them.

It is thus quite clear that the two burials in the Pinilla tomb are not contemporary, although the excavators noted no signs of disturbance. Moreover, the stylistic differences between them may mean that Burial 2 was interred quite some time after Burial 1. In this connection, it is interesting to recall Kroeber's speculation about some Chincha burials: "the 'graves' were not literally such, but tombs or family plots in which a number of interments were made . . . Interments in such 'graves' may possibly have stretched over two or three generations".⁶

The situation in this tomb is an instructive one for archaeological theory: it demonstrates anew that the grave goods associated with a single body constitute a minimum unit of association, and thus a basic analytic unit in any archaeological excavation. Associations between two

such units do not necessarily indicate contemporaneity. Their chronological relationship must be finally ascertained by evidence extrinsic to the association. In the case of the Pinilla burials, such evidence exists now only after more than a decade of intensive research into the stylistic problems of the Middle Horizon.

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

- ¹Lyon, 1966, p. 52
- ²Strong, 1957, p. 41 and fig. 18.
- ³Robert L. Stigler, Jr., personal recollection.
- ⁴Menzel, 1964, pp. 63-64.
- ⁵Menzel, 1964, p. 65.
- ⁶Kroeber and Strong, 1924, p. 48.

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KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

Plates I-VII

All numbers beginning with 403- refer to numbers of specimens in the collections of Columbia University.

Plate I

Fig. 1. Plan of Tomb I, Pinilla.

Plate II

- Fig. 2. Embossed silver band, Cache B. 2.4 cm. wide, ca. 15 cm. long.
 Fig. 3. Carved spondylus "bifid," Cache A. ca. 2.3 cm. long.
 Fig. 4. Carved spondylus "bifid," Cache A. 1.5 cm. long.
 Fig. 5. Copper and gold ornament, Cache A. Dangling disc 1.8 cm. diameter.

Plate III

- Fig. 6. Specimen 403-A, plain vessel from upper chamber of tomb. 6 cm. high.
 Fig. 7. Specimen 403-11, Cache B. 7.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18J.)
 Fig. 8. Specimen 403-12, Cache B. 7 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18K.)
 Fig. 9. Specimen 403-13, Cache B. 7.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18L.)
 Fig. 10a. Specimen 403-10, Cache B. 19 cm. diameter. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18I.)
 Fig. 10b. Specimen 403-10, Cache B. 7.5 cm. high.
 Fig. 11. Specimen 403-9, Cache B. 7.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18H.)

Plate IV

- Fig. 12a. Specimen 403-2, Cache A. 17 cm. diameter. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18E.)
 Fig. 12b. Specimen 403-2, Cache A. 8.3 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18B.)
 Fig. 13a. Specimen 403-3, Cache A. 16 cm. diameter. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18C.)
 Fig. 13b. Specimen 403-3, Cache A. 6 cm. high.

Plate V

- Fig. 14a. Specimen 403-8, Cache A. 21 cm. diameter.
 Fig. 14b. Specimen 403-8, Cache A. 7 cm. high.
 Fig. 15. Specimen 403-6, Cache A. 10.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18F.)
 Fig. 16. Specimen 403-14, Cache A. 7.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18M.)

Plate VI

- Fig. 17a. Specimen 403-15, Cache A. 15 cm. diameter. (Strong, 1957, fig. 180.)
 Fig. 17b. Specimen 403-15, Cache A. 9.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18N.)
 Fig. 18. Specimen 403-1, Cache A. 7.5 cm. high.
 Fig. 19. Specimen 403-7, Cache A. 8 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18G.)
 Fig. 20. Specimen 403-5, Cache A. 4 cm. high.
 Fig. 21. Specimen 403-4, Cache A. 10.5 cm. high. (Strong, 1957, fig. 18D.)

Plate VII

- Fig. 22. Gold plaque, now in Museo Regional de Ica. 7 cm. diameter.
 Fig. 23. Silver plaque, in Columbia University collections. 9.5 cm. diameter.

Key to burial associations illustrated

Burial 1, Cache B (Ica-Pachacamac style)

embossed silver band (fig. 2)
 403-9 (fig. 11)
 403-10 (fig. 10a and b)
 403-11 (fig. 7)
 403-12 (fig. 8)
 403-13 (fig. 9)

Burial 2, Cache A (Pinilla style)

spondylus "bifid" (fig. 3)
 spondylus "bifid" (fig. 4)
 403-1 (fig. 18)
 403-2 (fig. 12a and b)
 403-3 (fig. 13a and b)
 403-4 (fig. 21)
 403-5 (fig. 20)
 403-6 (fig. 15)
 403-7 (fig. 19)
 403-8 (fig. 14a and b)
 403-14 (fig. 16)
 403-15 (fig. 17a and b)

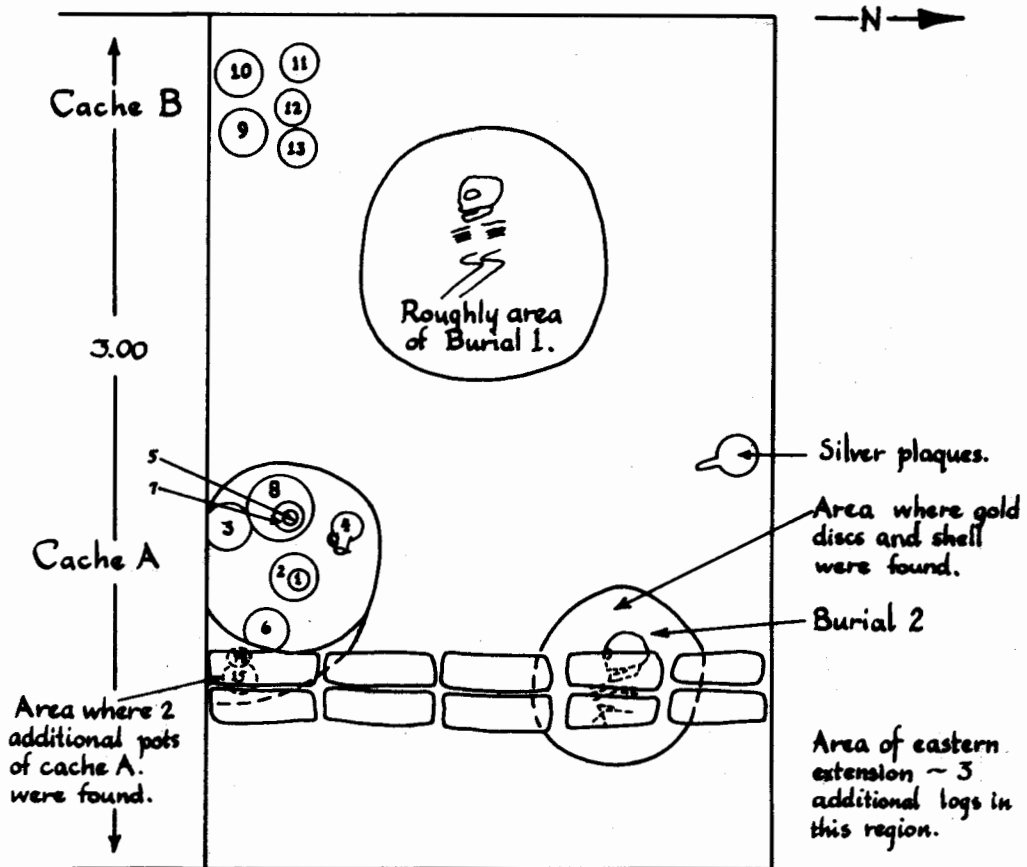
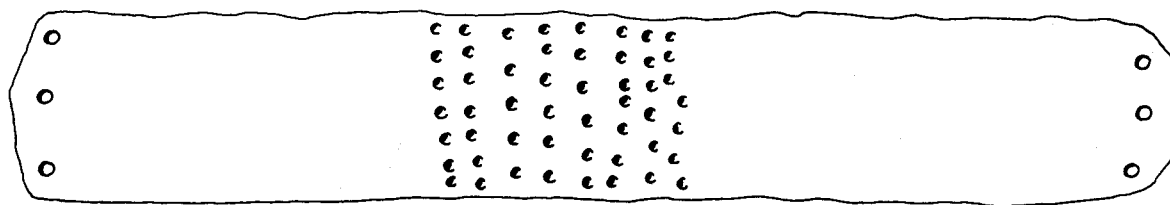
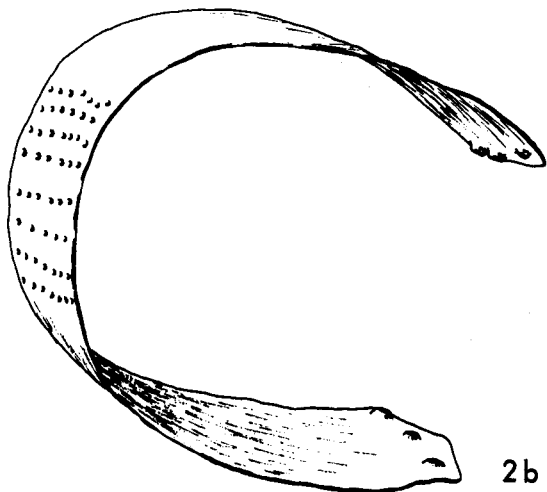


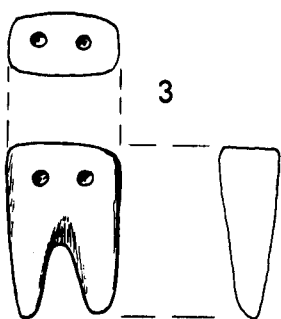
Plate I. Plan of Tomb I, Pinilla, showing bottom of lower chamber with superimposed wall of upper chamber (sketch based on the field notes of the Strong expedition).



2a



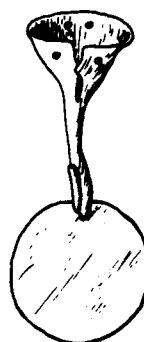
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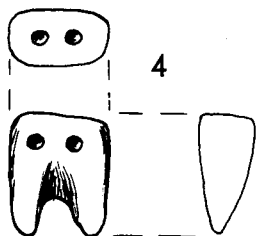
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5a



5b



4

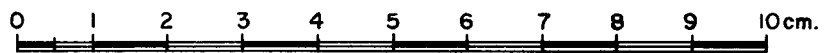


Plate II. 2a, b, Cache B; 3, 4, Cache A; 5a, b, from above head of Burial 2.

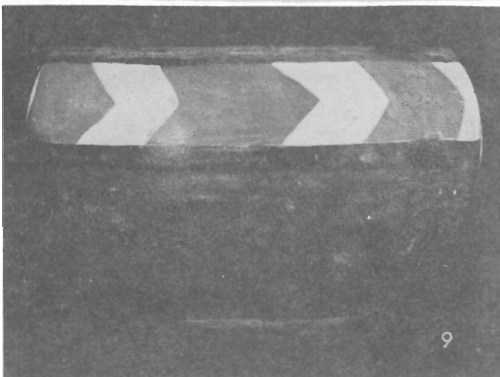
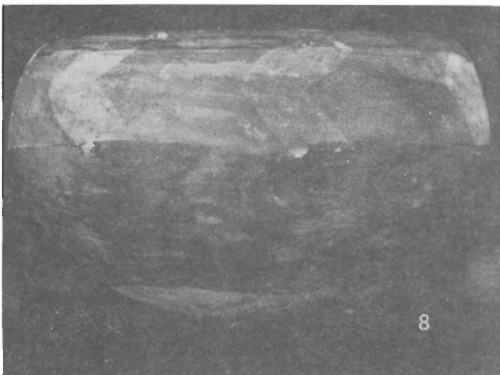
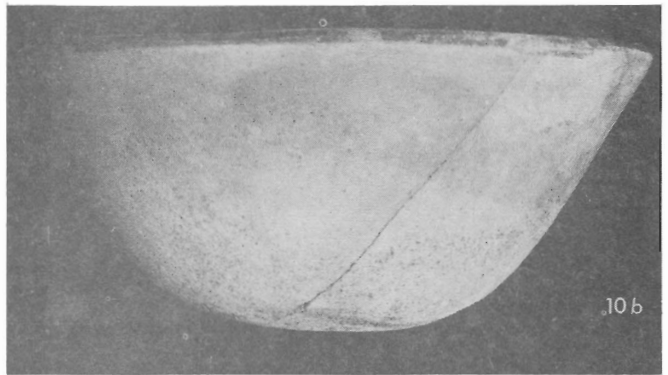
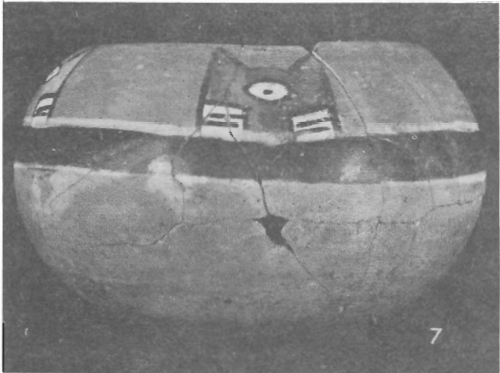
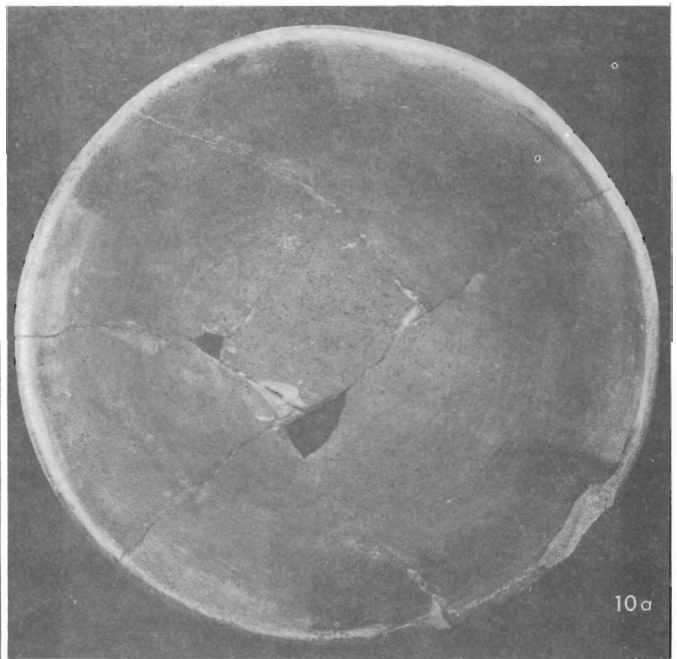
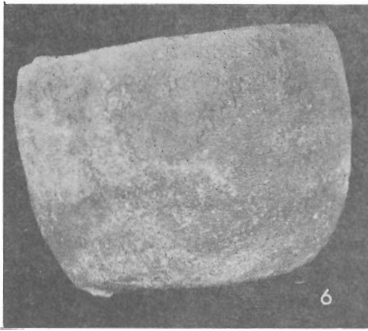


Plate III. 6, from upper chamber of tomb; 7-11, Cache B.

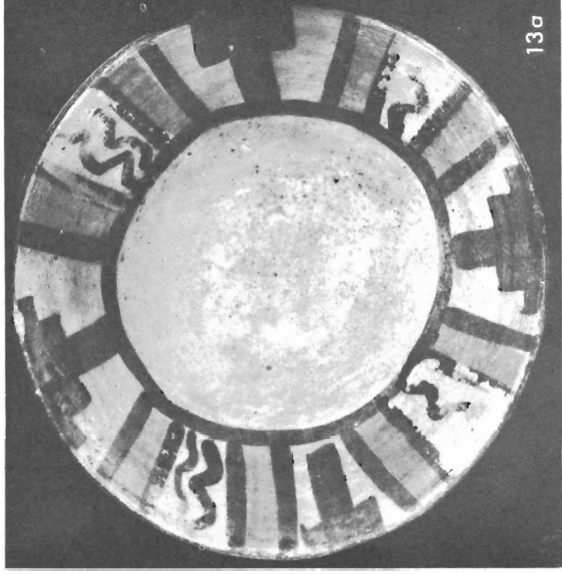
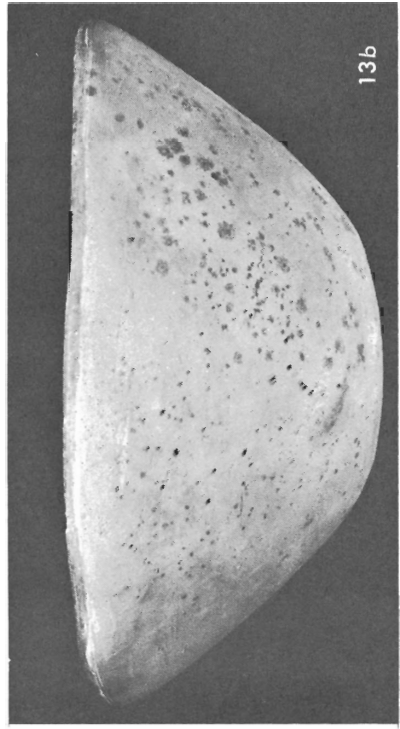
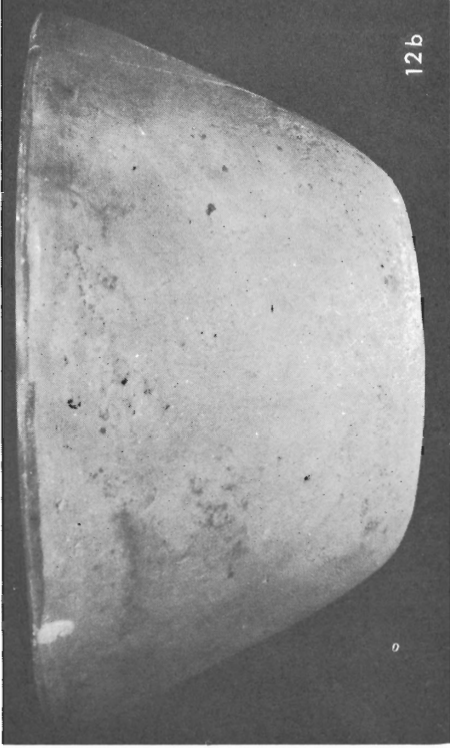
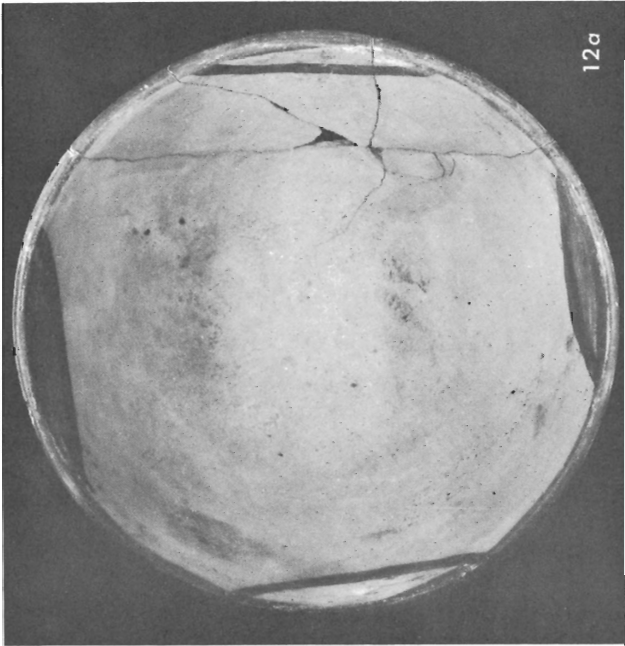


Plate IV. Cache A.

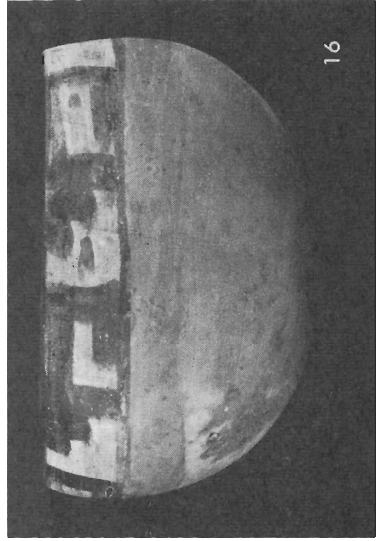
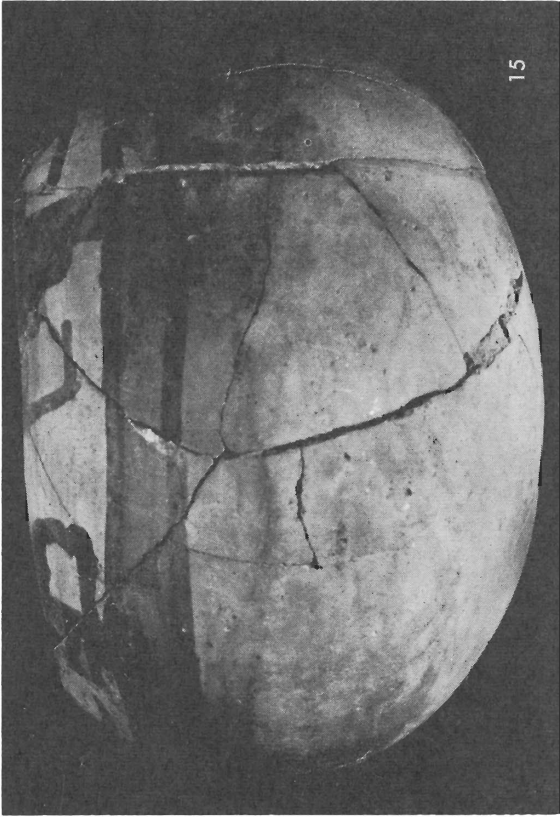
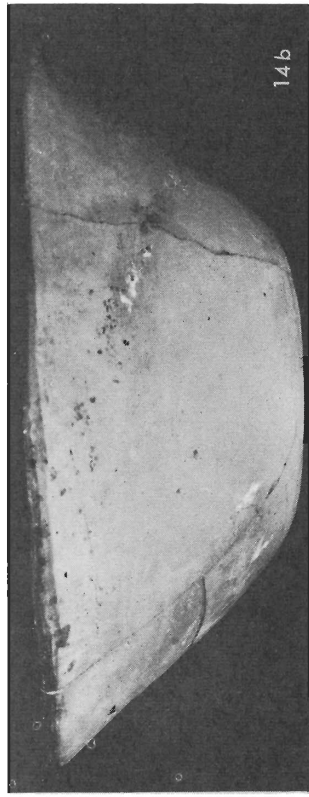
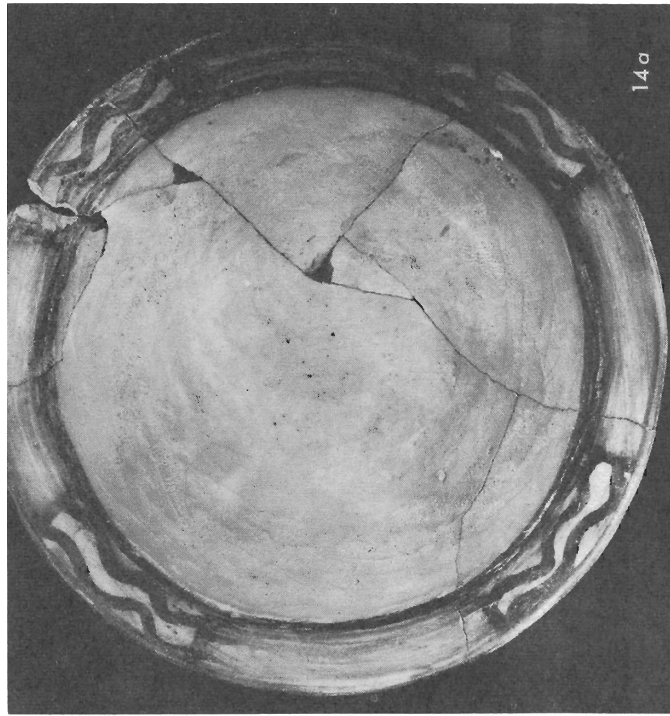


Plate V. Cache A.

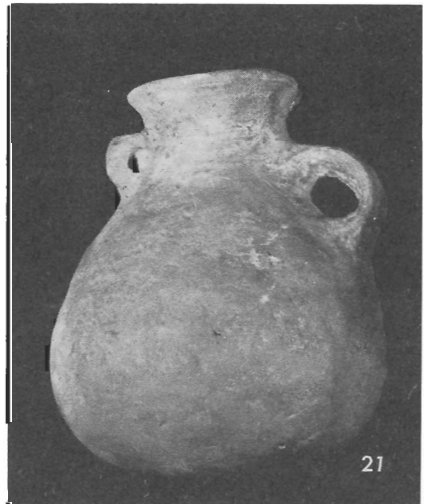
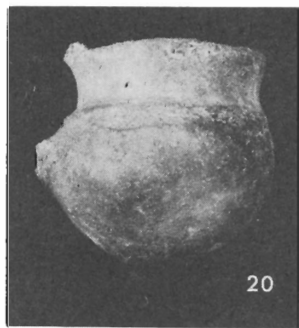
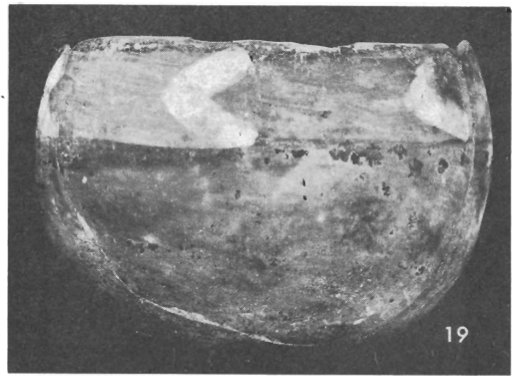
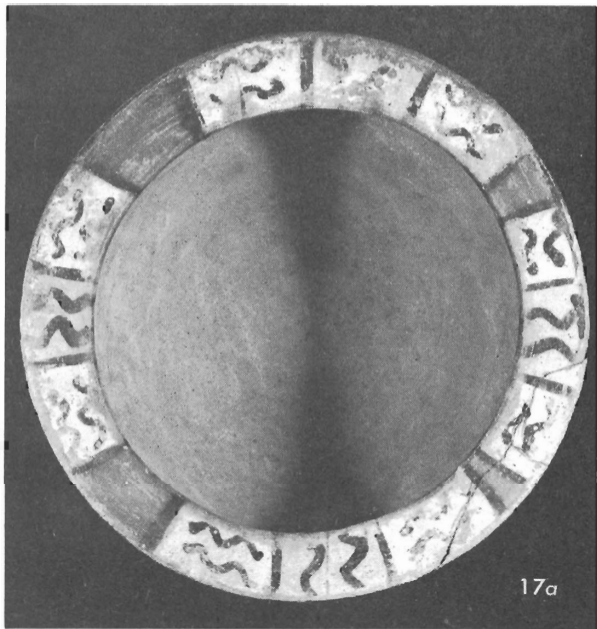


Plate VI. Cache A.



Plate VII. From midpoint of the north wall of the burial chamber.