

## A FLUTED "FISHTAIL" PROJECTILE POINT FROM LA CUMBRE, MOCHE VALLEY, PERU

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During the examination of La Cumbre, Moche Valley, Peru, in 1970 one artifact was collected which differed markedly from the others found at the site.<sup>1</sup> This projectile point (fig. 1), though broken at both the stem and tip, appears to have the major characteristics of the, now well described, fluted "fishtail" projectile point class.<sup>2</sup> This class of artifact has been found in various widely separated parts of South America and appears to be one of the characteristics of an early preceramic horizon.

The projectile point is made of a light green chert, a material of excellent flaking properties which was decidedly rare among the materials used for making artifacts at La Cumbre. A source has not been located for the chert.

In his review of the "fishtail" projectile points from southern Chile and Ecuador, Bird noted six major areas of similarity among the artifacts.<sup>3</sup> Since we have only one specimen, it is difficult to assess where the true similarities of the La Cumbre specimen lie.

Using Bird's categories the similarities are:

Similarity 1: The function of the La Cumbre site has not been completely determined, other than a major use as a lithic workshop. The site cannot be related to the "fishtail" projectile point horizon except by this one specimen. Similarity cannot be determined.

Similarity 2: It is impossible to determine with full certainty on what sort of blank the La Cumbre specimen was made. It is highly likely, though, that it was a thin flake. A probable similarity.

Similarity 3: Both sides of the La Cumbre artifact have been fluted.

Similarity 4: The stem of the specimen is broken, so it is impossible to determine whether its edges were ground or not.

Similarity 5: The form of the La Cumbre projectile point is within the quite wide range of variation of the artifact class. Of the various measurements that Bird designed for comparing the form of these artifacts the following were determinable:

minimum stem width	ca. 17.0 mm.
maximum blade width	29.6 mm.
maximum blade thickness	5.9 mm.
maximum stem thickness	ca. 4.6 mm.

These measurements are all within the known range for this class.

Similarity 6: The La Cumbre artifact is broken transversely across the stem, forward of the narrowest portion, a particularly common break among the other known specimens of the class. The tip is also missing.

The main point of this note is that a fluted "fishtail" projectile point has turned up, though not in the best context, at a lithic site in Peru in an area where both mastodon and horse are known to have lived during final Pleistocene and/or early post-Pleistocene time. This helps confirm Bird's hypothesis that there may be some connection between the Ecuadorian and south Chilean materials if similar materials are found in the area between.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ossa and Moseley, 1972.

<sup>2</sup>Bird, 1969.

<sup>3</sup>Bird, 1969, pp. 54-58, 61-64.

Similarity 1, the site is a habitation site, pp. 54-55.

Similarity 2, the manufacturing blank is a thin flake, p. 55.

Similarity 3, fluting is common, pp. 55-56.

Similarity 4, marginal grinding of the stem edges is common, p. 56.

Similarity 5, various measurements defining a regular form, pp. 56-57, 61-64.

Similarity 6, a common breakage pattern, pp. 57-58.

<sup>4</sup>Bird, 1969, p. 54.

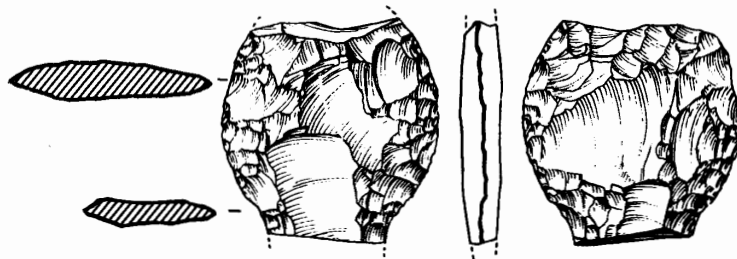
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0 3 cm.

Plate XXXVII. Fig. 1, the fluted "fishtail" projectile point from La Cumbre, Moche Valley, Peru.