ARCHAISM, FORM AND DECORATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CASE STUDY FROM THE PERUVIAN MONTAÑA

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The aim of this paper is to review a debate in South American archaeology over whether vessel form or surface decoration is paramount as an indicator of cultural continuity and comparability. It will do so by using a specific ethnographic instance of archaistic innovation, based on a related archaeological tradition, in the Peruvian montaña. A possible resolution of this question will be offered in a processual model of an art/craft continuum.

Thesis and Antithesis: The Vessel Form Versus Surface Decoration Debate

The debate over whether surface decoration or vessel shapes bear a more meaningful relationship to the conceptual categories of the people who make ceramics had its genesis in a clash between the two major competing models of Amazonian culture history. These models were propounded by Betty J. Meggers and Clifford Evans, on the one hand, and Donald W. Lathrap on the other. Based on a low opinion of the tropical forest, as an undifferentiated biome, to generate or sustain complex levels of socio-cultural integration,[1] Meggers and Evans postulated a series of waves of migration from areas of higher cultural attainments into the tropical forest.[2] These immigrant cultures, they believed, were then doomed to gradual devolution as their new ecological base proved unable to sustain their previous levels of complexity.

To counter this reconstruction of the tropical forest as a hostile and backward receptor of intrusive cultural development, Lathrap emphasized the productivity of the land along the Amazon and its major tributaries like the Ucayali River, the so-called "new alluvium."[3] He then proposed that in addition to being able to sustain high levels of cultural complexity, this portion of the tropical forest was able to generate such developments and send them forth into the traditional areas of high culture such as the central Andes [4] and coastal and highland Ecuador.[5] In his paradigm, then, the tropical forest was not so much a receiver, at least in the earliest periods, as a donor of cultural complexity, the center and not the backwater of innovation, migration and cultural development.

Meggers and Evans had based their reconstruction on an extension of Kroeber's "Horizon Style" concept.[6] Their horizons, like the "Zoned Hachure" or the "Polychrome" horizons, were likewise defined by giving priority to decorative technique as a key index of comparability. Lathrap countered by using a shared vocabulary of vessel shapes as the most important indicator of historical relationship or cultural affiliation.[7] His giving of priority to vessel form categories then allowed Lathrap [8] to draw upon both Meggers and Evans themselves [9] and Patterson [10] to argue that one could determine rates of ceramic change based on vessel form replacement. This, in turn, could be used as a way

of demonstrating the antiquity of tropical forest traditions, such as Tutishcainyo, in the face of both a paucity of absolute dates for these early complexes and Megger's opinion that cultural development in the lowlands was late and derivative.

The disparity of these views with regard to form and decoration can be exaggerated, since neither party to the dispute is completely consistent when faced with archaeological data. Meggers and Evans used rim form as an ancillary category in their lowland style horizon formulation.[11] Similarly, Lathrap, among other instances, compares Cumancaya and Mojocoya Trichrome solely on the basis of design layouts although the vessel shapes are totally dissimilar.[12] Generally, however, the differences of opinion are real and color their interpretations of archaeological complexes such as Valdivia.[13]

One can recall many instances supporting Lathrap's position, where vessel shapes, tied as they are to relatively conservative technological function, have not altered, although new, borrowed designs have appeared on their surfaces. Modern Cocama pottery is a case in point and parallels the Ticuna example Lathrap illustrates.[14] In the Ticuna case a conservative form, probably related to the chomo (fig. 3),[15] is covered with clearly European-derived floral designs. A similar case is shown in fig. 4. This figure represents a chomo-like jar in the University Museum collection, Philadelphia.[16] Mistakenly labeled Conibo in the catalog there, this jar is probably Canelo. Here again, at least on the lower part of the vessel, European floral designs are grafted onto an otherwise aboriginal shape current throughout much of the Ecuadorian and Peruvian tropical forest in Late Prehistoric and Historic times.

However, not all instances which can be marshalled show the primacy of vessel form over surface decoration. Indeed, the Shipibo case (fig. 1) to be reported below shows the opposite effect. In that case, the foreign vessel shape (or, more accurately, a shape which had long dropped out of the tradition) was borrowed and the surface decoration of the receiving tradition retained. At the very least, the Shipibo anomaly indicates that the debate has revolved around too simple a statement of the case, and may indeed be obscuring crucial variables. These variables, I will argue, if identified, could inject some predictability into this welter of conflicting data. Since stylistic diffusion is really the subject at issue here and the case which will serve as a fulcrum for attacking it is an instance of archaism, archaism must first be defined from the viewpoint of style.

Archaism: Recursive Acculturation

Archaism can be a phenomenon of style. It is a special case of innovation. Archaism derives from the conscious use of old creative solutions as models for later aesthetic expression. It can occur between or within stylistic traditions. Specifically, it represents a kind of recursive acculturation; diffusion through time rather than through space. Within Peru, the geographical locus of this study, the concept of archaism has played a significant role in an understanding of prehistory.[17] Although archaeologists have used the concept of archaism

for the south coast and for the highlands and north coast of Peru,[18] it was clearly a more general phenomenon. This study will attempt to extend its currency into the montaña. It will also provide one of the few documented instances of this process at work within an ongoing stylistic system.[19]

Archaism: The Shipibo Case

The Shipibo, together with the closely related Conibo, are a populous, fairly acculturated slash-and-burn agricultural and fishing tribal people of Panoan linguistic affiliation. They are adapted to the new alluvial niche of the Central Ucayali River, Peruvian montaña. Their largest, and most accessible, settlement is San Francisco, located on the oxbow lake of Yarinacocha, near the Peruvian frontier city of Pucallpa. The Shipibo possess one of the most complex systems of decorative art in aboriginal America today in its elaborateness and application to a wide range of media from textiles to ceramics and from face painting to woodcarving. It is an intricate geometric style which has excited the admiration of tourists and anthropologists alike since the first decade of this century. The art has continued to survive until today, when a flourishing internal demand is coupled with an intensive tourist trade, particularly in the most accessible villages.

As is the case among all of the Panoans, women are the potters and artists among the Shipibo. One of the most technically and aesthetically brilliant of the Central Ucayali Shipibo potters is Casamira Cumapa of San Francisco de Yarinacocha. She is also one of the most receptive to new stimuli, as the novel series of vessel shapes that make up her repertoire indicates. These novel forms include Spanish-style pitchers and plates in addition to normal Shipibo vessel shapes. Besides making pottery for local demand, she can sell all the pottery she cares to make to the tourists who frequent her end of the long, linear village.

The main part of the village is situated on a relatively high bluff which is separated from the lake by a short walk through seasonally inundated low, flat land. During 1971 I had taken up residence in a remote section of the village some distance away from the bluff on that lower lying land to analyze archaeological collections I had recovered from the site of Cumancayacocha, UCA-22, on the Upper Ucayali.[20] I had excavated the site in an effort to delineate more fully a 9th century A.D. ceramic complex there called Cumancaya. Lathrap had earlier sketched the outlines of this culture in his detailed chronological sequence for the area.[21] With one exception, all my field technicians were Shipibo men from San Francisco. In addition to analyzing the archaeological materials in the modern Shipibo village, I also engaged, again following Lathrap, in investigations of present day arts and crafts at both San Francisco, and upriver at the Conibo/Campa village of Shahuaya.[22] I concentrated upon the elaborate Shipibo-Conibo ceramic tradition flourishing in those villages.[23] This combined approach proved very productive in analyzing the abundant archaeological materials because of the many parallels between the ancient and modern ceramics. Those similarities were so detailed, ranging as they did from

vessel shape and decorative treatments to a very specific ceremonial artifact found only among the modern Panoans of the area,[24] that they indicate an impressive amount of cultural continuity within the same geographical area for over some 1,000 years. It is important to remember these continuities in the discussion which follows.

One day, just after I had finished reconstructing a very elaborate Cumancaya pedestal-based bowl (fig. 2), Casamira came by to visit. The vessel was still sitting on the work bench. She was evidently quite impressed by it, and stopped by the table. She looked at the bowl intently for about ten minutes, walked around it several times to get different views of the specimen, finally exchanged pleasantries and left. I did not attach any great significance to the episode at the time, but several days later I heard that she was making a replica of the vessel (fig. 1).[25] She requested another look at the original Cumancaya bowl in order to compare her version with it. I carried the ancient vessel up to her hut and got a look at her creation. It was amazingly like the original in shape and style, even down to the appliquéd nubbins on the base. The only physical difference between the two was a slight variation in proportion. Casamira's copy was squatter, having a shallower upper section, than the Cumancaya prototype.

This instance of archaism is by no means unique among the Shipibo. Other incidents, although based on nonrelated archaeological styles, have occurred. Roberta Campos reports that in the Shipibo settlement of Nueva Edén on the Río Pisqui, a modern Shipibo potter has copied from an illustration of an archaeological vessel pictured in her child's Peruvian textbook.[26] Lathrap has convincingly argued that a popular tourist form in modern Shipibo pottery, the _joni chomo_, or liquid storage/transport jar with a realistic human face modeled on the neck, was inspired by Caimito archaeological anthropomorphic burial urns.[27] However, the instance reported here is the best documented, and it comes from a related archaeological complex. Before the Casamira example is analyzed, it will be necessary to take a closer look at the two complexes involved in that instance: Cumancaya and Shipibo.

Cumancaya

Only Cumancaya fine ware will be discussed here. It is very elaborate and is characterized by complex-silhouette, biglobular, constricted orifice vessels and pedestal, ring- and flat-based open bowls. All these vessel shapes carry fine-line incision which serves to define bands of complex geometric designs painted with red and yellow pigments. The bowls carry, in addition, appliquéd fillets and nubbins on the exterior and negative-resist scorched organic black designs on the interior. The particular specimen in question is still impressive. In its original condition, it must have been almost gaudy. It possessed a tall, graceful S-shaped pedestal base with vertical rows of appliquéd nubbins defining separate panels of fine-line incised designs on the base. Different fine-line incised designs covered the upper section of the bowl. The incision originally outlined yellow post-fire crusting, a hydrous limonitic oxide, which was protected by a clear resinous varnish. To complete the picture, finger-dragged and thumb-printed polka-dots executed in scorched organic black negative-resist decoration covered the interior.

Shipibo

In contrast, modern Shipibo fine ware carries polychrome-painted geometric designs, also protected by a clear resin lacquer, together with some vestigial ultrafine-line incision cut through the white slip. On certain classes of open bowls, a shiny interior black scorching covers all of the interior. Fine-line incision without paint is today confined to the necks of utilitarian vessels.

A Model of Borrowing

From either an archaeological or an ethnographic perspective, an art style can be most profitably studied from two points of view, both of which are processual and not typological: that of the observer who analyzes the style, and that of the artist who produces it. The former requires a modal-analytical strategy of breaking down the resultant artifact into dimensions, or lines of formal variability, and clustered choices, or modes, along each dimension. The latter requires a grammatical strategy [28] where each artifact is reduced to a particular constellation of minimal formative elements together with a set of rules for their recombination.[29] These two views are complementary, not contradictory. The first focuses on output while attempting to derive the culturally conditioned choices that generated the artifact. The second centers on input, the ideas that will govern the shape and form of the output/artifact. I suggest that borrowing is most likely to occur over a wide range of phenomena between cultures that share similar dimensions-modes/grammars. In such a context small order creative reinterpretation is likely to step in and mold the alien artifact into more familiar patterns through a process of subtle transformation and accomodation. Clearly, in those instances appreciation is the first step toward adoption.

As an explanatory instance of this case I will mention a small experiment in cross cultural aesthetics that I performed with the Shipibo. In 1975, on my way to Peru, I purchased a small set of eight molas of the San Blas Cuna Indians in Panama. I was careful to select one geometric pattern in addition to the other more usual anthropomorphic or zoomorphic representational designs characteristic of the modern Cuna style. The other seven fabrics were in that representational style. At the time I was doing an ethnographic study of Shipibo textile art, specifically the designs which occurred on the woman's tubular skirt, or chitonte, the single piece woman's shawl, or racote, and the man's poncho, or tari. I was curious to see how the Shipibo women would react to the art of the Cuna female artists. I showed the molas to a group of women, including the subject of this paper, Casamira, who lived in the matrilocal compound where I was then working. I explained that the molas came from another tribe of South American Indians like themselves and inquired which one of the eight samples the Shipibo women liked best. I was somewhat surprised to see the excitement and interest the molas caused. Indeed, they were more of an attraction and caused more comment than all the normal appurtenances of the modern technological age I usually bring with me to the jungle such as 35 mm. and Polaroid cameras, tape recorders, etc. After much discussion it was finally decided that

the geometric mola (fig. 5) was the "best," although the others were very interesting as well. Fig. 6 shows a typical representational mola from that same set. I then asked which one was most like their own art, and was promptly informed that, of course, the geometric one was. Fig. 7 depicts a typical Shipibo geometric pöntïquënë, or rectilinear, design layout from among the pieces of fabric art I commissioned as part of my project. It seems quite clear that the similarity of the aesthetic syntactics of the geometric mola to the geometric art of the Shipibo led them to prefer it over its representational brother, whose grammar is totally alien to the Shipibo tradition.

If, as in the case of the representational mola, no shared grammatical aspects exist, I suggest that the new item will be unintelligible (mere noise) and therefore not adopted, at least in its original context, even though it may be regarded with amusement or even interest. Pursuant to this point, I should mention that I afterwards gave two of the representational molas to my two best informants. I half hoped that they would either sew them on their skirts as appliqué, as they already do with cloth strips to make the finest class of Shipibo skirt (even though the Cuna mola is a decorative panel on a blouse and not a skirt device), or innovate new Shipibo designs based on the Cuna prototype. Unfortunately for my visions of a Shipibo woman strutting about in a Panamanian design layout at a fiesta in San Francisco de Yarinacocha, the molas were carefully packed away in the old beat-up cardboard suitcases which serve to house a Shipibo family's few material treasurers, and I have not seen any influence of them yet, despite a revisit in 1976.

Alternatively, the alien item may be adopted wholesale and in a contextless way precisely <u>because</u> it is unintelligible, as useful exotica.[30] The examples of incandescent light bulbs being used as earrings by women, or fountain pens as nose ornaments by men in the highlands of New Guinea are but two of the many examples of this process that come to mind. In such a case, I further argue, that if a mediocre artist does the borrowing, the borrowed trait will display no major modifications other than those which are a direct byproduct of either the lower technical skill of the borrower or, more interestingly, his failure to understand the grammatical complexities of the borrowed style. As an example of the latter case, one need only cite the case of the anachronistic rendering of a Charles Edenshaw Haida bracelet by a recent Queen Charlotte Haida artist mentioned by Holm.[31] If, on the other hand, the artist who does the borrowing is capable and self confident, the archaistically or otherwise diffused item will be radically changed from the status of a literal copy to a remote, but seminal inspiration. The fantastic private residence in California in the style of a Mayan temple that was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1920 is but one example of the latter possibility.[32] Obviously, where grammars are very similar changes will be minimal while radical changes may mark exchange where the respective grammars are very different.

Before discussing the "how" of the case of Shipibo/Cumancaya archaism described above, I must interject the ethnographic fact that the similarities between the two traditions that emerged in that description are not just perceived by the outside investigator, but are recognized by the Shipibo themselves. The Shipibo-Conibo did indeed react to

Cumancaya pottery in a favorable fashion, as if it was intelligible to them. The Shipibo at Yarinacocha immediately identified Cumancaya materials as being similar to their own ceramics, persistently using Shipibo ceramic terminology to refer to analogous Cumancaya forms. On more than one occasion, Shipibo women potters actually mistook reconstructed Cumancaya corrugated utilitarian ware vessels for their own quënti, or cooking vessels,[33] ingenuously inquiring from which part of their modern village the vessels had come and who made them. In contrast, the Conibo at Shahuaya did not appreciate or identify with the much cruder, though later, Shahuaya style vessels. This partially reflects the fact that Cumancaya fine ware is elaborate and the Shipibo-Conibo, who themselves possess a very elaborate ware, can therefore appreciate it better. But the situation also reflects the strong grammatical continuities which appear to link the two complexes.

The model applied to the Shipibo/Cumancaya case: How?

In the light of the above discussion, what was not borrowed proved almost as interesting as what was. Since, unlike Cumancaya, incision is not used to border designs in modern Shipibo-Conibo art, the Cumancaya outlining incision was replaced by unbounded paint. Casamira made no attempt to execute a copy of the original Cumancaya fine-line incision. Instead, she was going to cover the surface of her replica with her own variations of traditional Shipibo painted designs like those shown in the figures. Similarly, despite the fact that the modern Shipibo make use of an interior scorching, they do not couple it with negative-resist designs as was the case in Cumancaya. Therefore, Casamira made no attempt to copy the Cumancaya interior negative-resist designs, although some of the components of the technology for so doing exist within the Shipibo-Conibo tradition today. Therefore, reasons exist to explain how certain aspects of technique were differentially adopted or omitted in the case of Casamira's archaism. Yet they do not explain why the complex and beautiful Cumancaya designs were not reinterpreted in the more acceptable painted Shipibo idiom.

The Art/Craft Distinction

One possible explanation of this apparent enigma may be sought in a distinction between art and craft. This distinction has long been recognized on the level of Euro-American folk taxonomy. Its more rigorous definition in anthropological terms leaves much room for improvement.[34] It still treats artifacts almost as givens, as natural objects which, like pretty sea shells, are to be weighed, measured and typologically described, but not understood. A new ideational and processual definition will be attempted here. It is based equally and cumulatively on Lathrap's routing diagram approach which analyzes artifacts as the output of a series of decisions within a modal framework, Raymond's addition to that approach of the notion of grammar, Munro's useful technique/technic contrast set which distinguishes between the technological vehicle (technique) and the aesthetic, or psycho-social (technic) intent of a work of art, and, finally, Armstrong's notion of the affecting presence quality of that technic and its separation from linguistic rationality.[35]

Subsuming the above, art is the elaboration of form above and beyond the necessities of technological function, such that the elaborations are produced by a decision program incorporating a duality-of-patterning mechanism which allows for creative play with the formative elements and the rules of their recombination. Aesthetic artifacts are products of an open system and can therefore be contrasted with what exists on the other end of the continuum and yet makes them possible, crafts. Craft involves a stereotyped and closed decision program involving the mechanical fulfillment of a preconceived template of rules and elements directed toward an artifact of primarily technological function. Art is creation, craft is replication. In this view, a rigorous distinction between what is art and what is craft is impossible from merely the external inspection of a finished artifact. Such attempts would be arbitrary and hence open to ethnocentric misidentification. Only by looking at the processes of the artifact's generation from the maker's viewpoint can such a distinction have any rigor while maintaining a fit with the reality of concrete decisions. If one purpose of science is to generate operational distinctions in a seamless reality, once made they should be used for something. In this case, our operational distinctions will be used for the analysis of the contrasting cases discussed earlier: conservative form and changing surface embellishment (the Ticuna, Cocama, and Canelo examples), and changing form with retention of surface embellishment (the case of Shipibo archaism).

The distinction applied to the Shipibo/Cumancaya case: Why?

A useful byproduct of this distinction is that it allows us to replace momentarily our own folk taxonomy of artifacts with a scientific one. In our folk taxonomy, pottery is relegated to the "lesser" or "minor" arts, loosely called crafts. As the distinction advanced here suggests, it is not what medium is used, but how it is used that determines which is art and which is craft. The Shipibo would seem to concur, for among them ceramics, specifically the fine ware, is paramount within the domain of art. However, within that domain, various subsystems may partake more of craft than of art production. As Lathrap has demonstrated, the generation of Shipibo-Conibo vessel shapes is fairly stereotyped in that certain standardized, named forms are regularly produced from discrete and named components.[36] This does not mean that no recombination occurs. The unusual square shoulder, or poro segment, of an otherwise classic chomo shape (fig. 8), or the pointed poro of another variant (fig. 9), shows that a certain amount of play is permitted in form generation. In general, however, the assembling of a Shipibo vessel form represents the craft portion of the system.

As I found by ethnographic work in San Francisco de Yarinacocha in 1975, using a transformational/generative grammatical approach, the elaborate painted polychrome geometric designs which are applied to the surface of those forms, are, on the contrary, the product of a very complex, open, and innovative design theory capable of an infinite degree of visual productivity. Hence, the surface decoration can be regarded as the art portion of the ceramic system. Based on this assessment, it becomes explicable why innovative modern Shipibo artists like Casamira would choose to borrow a vessel form and not its associated decoration. Reacting against the too obvious constraints of stereotyped form, and

taking advantage of the openness of her own system of surface decoration which already serves as an excellent vehicle for personal expression, she will obey the artistic imperative by expanding the realm of play. Art is thereby injected into the mechanical fabrication of vessel shape through the archaistic borrowing of novel forms.

This artistic imperative is not an imported bias read into the Shipibo situation, since there is ample evidence of the high premium placed on "creativity within bounds" by the Shipibo. Each competent artist has her own unique design repertoire, or, better stated, a unique personal configuration made up of standardized design layouts and their logical extensions. She works hard to realize these configurations. A woman will often think all night long about what kind of design she will paint the next day, composing the main aspects of its intricate machinery in her head even before execution is begun. She makes neither "pattern boards," like those used by Chilkat blanket weavers, nor preliminary sketches prior to the executing of a major design in this style. Moreover, women will often travel some distances to visit villages where well-known artists are producing and gather there inspiration for their own art. Through the process of creation a woman derives both aesthetic satisfaction and social approval.

One might object to the foregoing as evidence, not that innovation occurred in the realm of vessel shape because it was otherwise insufficiently complex to give enough room for expression as I have argued, but simply that to the Shipibo it appears that vessel shape is of no great concern. What it really proves, the counterargument goes, is that form really does not matter very much and therefore a foreign shape could be used as easily as a native form. A weak point in my presentation that lends credence to such a position is that Casamira copied the form of the Cumancaya bowl as exactly as possible, rather than attempting to recombine elements of it to form a new entity. On the subjective level, I could counter that the amount of interest I saw exhibited in her reaction to the specimen indicated to me that she was really excited about the new formal possibilities it suggested. This intuition is further strengthened by three independent lines of evidence:

1. There is a tight clustering of decisions around native-defined types, as evidenced by a modal analysis of the resultant vessels.[37] The existence of this tight patterning indicates that a great deal of care is exercised in their maintenance as form classes, and hence form must be of great importance to the Shipibo.

2. Non-native forms, some of them very standardized like the joni chomo, are used in trade whereas the orthodox forms are retained for internal consumption.

3. There are strong cultural values associated with particular form classes and these values have ramifications in other domains of culture.[38]

The Model and Cultural Causality

Why innovation occurs in this instance with form and not with decoration involves another variable in addition to these systemic considerations. On what might be called the sociological level, one should note that the Shipibo design system, transferred as it is with minimal modifications across a whole range of media until every aspect of their lives is graced with it, is, along with the Shipibo language itself, central to their self-identification as a certain kind of people. It serves to set them apart from both the related interfluvial Panoans and the surrounding Mestizo populations. To a very great degree, what it is to be a Shipibo, is to possess the characteristic Shipibo geometric style. Therefore, as long as this identity continues to be viewed as valuable for retention, any attempt to alter too radically the mainstay of tribal identity, the design system, will be socially discouraged. This, in turn, leads to a bias in favor of innovating with form rather than decoration. From the point of view of a hierarchy of culture, shape is not so central to identity, partaking as it does of a higher degree of technological utility. The progressive acculturation within Shipibo ceramic and textile technology illustrates this point. As great sections of the primarily functional utilitarian form vocabulary are being replaced by metal pots, pitchers, plastic pails and factory made cloth, the design system still lives on in the fine ware, even incongruously finding its way onto the front of a nylon windbreaker.

<u>Of tourists and natives</u>

However important a role such sociological concerns play in this instance of anachronistic form innovation, the specific concern here is with the role of style as a system in determining behavior. Further to refine causality in that context, one must distinguish between good and mediocre artists producing for external as well as internal use. To recapitulate, art is rule creation behavior. Hence the artist that adheres most closely to the artistic imperative of creation within bounds will be the best artist in a cross cultural sense. He or she will attempt to extend the imperative of choice into domains normally associated with rule fulfillment behavior to give free reign to his or her powers of creative expression. By a logical extension of this argument, and to the extent that the Shipibo conception agrees with this definition of the good artist, such an individual could even attempt to extend the conceptual plasticity of surface embellishment into the more rigid and technologically circumscribed area of vessel form construction. However, since these artists exist within the psycho-social constraints of a nonliterate traditional artistic system [39] where peer and audience pressures toward a certain core of conformity exist, they can best follow the artistic imperative within the context of the external tourist trade.

Because archaism is a special case of innovation, one must look at all aspects of innovation among modern Shipibo potters. In so doing one notices that the most innovative potters have the greatest tendency to exploit what plasticity there is in vessel form production to create distinctly aberrant forms, particularly in their tourist examples. If they have a technical mastery of the craft component of the ceramic art such women are regarded as the best artists by the other women of the

village. For example, the two nonstandard variants of the classic chomo already noted (figs. 8 and 9) were both produced for the tourist trade by Loterta, a well-known artist. On the other hand, and in accordance with the model offered here, the more pedestrian artists tend to be unimaginative, even in their tourist output. They stick to the standard Shipibo forms in an area where more deviation would be acceptable.

Until recently,[40] the role of tourist art was too often ignored as a fit subject of inquiry in its own right. However, here it forms a theoretically interesting parallel to protected deviation within the related Cashinahua art style.[41] There, women are constrained by the public opinion of the other women of the village to produce the normal and expected variations on full-sized cooking pots. Yet they can make wildly innovative toy pots for their female children to play with. These toy-sized versions then form an accepted means for safe experimentation. If another woman should happen by and remark on the beauty of the child's little toy, the mother will be encouraged to make a full-scale version of it, safe in the expectation of its receiving a favorable reception. Thus, a new variation enters the realm of normal Cashinahua cooking pots.

Tourist art can act as an analogous area of safe experimentation because of the extremely widespread tendency, current also among the Shipibo, to apply a double standard of aesthetic production to external consumption in contrast to internal use.[42] The first standard is generally inferior to the second. Since the tourists are outside the group and hence can be presumed to be ignorant of the subtleties of the style, they can be sold both technically inferior and/or technically proficient, but aberrant, forms. There is, of course, a feedback effect operating here which tends to satisfy the tourists who _expect_ "primitive" art to be crude or highly exotic. In the absence of a governor on the system in the shape of a flourishing parallel internal demand with high critical standards, one could argue that the system tends to go into negative feedback, spelling decay and the eventual extinction of the native art. Fortunately, the parallel market still exists in Shipibo ceramic art. Thus, the creative potter is allowed to use the tourist trade as an area where she can feel relatively free in indulging her passion for experimentation in a domain to which the opprobrium of her peers is not directed. However, even in this area she must be circumspect, for there are still constraints. Roberta Campos mentions the case of a Shipibo potter on the Pisqui hesitantly inviting her into her house during a quiet time of the day when few other people were about, to show the anthropologist several bizarre vessels which she did not dare show the other women of the village for fear they might make fun of her.[43] Although a kind of stylistic schizophrenia is produced when output for internal and external consumption seems to be dictated by different aesthetic criteria, there is some evidence for mutual influence between the two spheres in Shipibo art.

Synthesis: The Form Versus Decoration Debate Revisited

As in any debate, the dialectic of positions stated, attacked and defended sometimes obscures, through oversimplification, variables

which may provide insight into causality. After what has passed it might be very tempting to discard the whole episode as a sterile academic exchange. However, I believe there is a kernel of truth in both positions. Examples and cogent reasons can be advanced to support either position. Hence, a synthesis of the two positions can now be attempted:

> In those ceramic traditions where both vessel shape and surface decoration (particularly the latter) partake very heavily of craft processes, innovation through borrowing, perhaps in an archaistic mode, will tend to occur with surface decoration.
>
> In those traditions, such as the Shipibo, where only vessel shape generation is reasonably stereotyped rule replication behavior, innovation through borrowing, again perhaps in an archaistic mode, will tend to occur with vessel shapes.

<u>The level of technique</u>

Despite these considerations on what Munro calls the level of technic, one should not overlook technical problems as relevant intervening variables. This Shipibo instance illustrates just how crucial they can be. Here was a thousand-year-old vessel body form replicated by a modern Indian, probably for sale to tourists. If this form had met with success, Casamira might have made more of them, possibly even some for internal consumption, other potters might have followed suit, and an ancient form might have been reintroduced into the modern Panoan ceramic tradition. Unfortunately for this rather grand scenario, Casamira was not familiar with making vessels with a pedestal base, since the modern tradition has no counterpart, and the bottom fell out of the specimen during the drying stage. The vessel was then discarded. Alas for the anthropologist, ceramic history was aborted because of a technical flaw. Such difficulties on the level of technique are probably more the rule than the exception and form an obvious brake on borrowing. Motivation might not be great enough to repeat a process once initiated experimentally, but aborted technically.

The Possible Historical Background of Archaism among the Shipibo

It must be remembered here, however, that tourist trade has a long history among the Shipibo, dating back at least to the early decades of this century. Even in the sense of external tribal trade, this sort of stimulus in the exchange of ceramics is not a recent phenomenon. Farabee, for example, noted that the Piro acquired all their fine ware from the Conibo.[44] This process continues today, with the interfluvial Panoans like the Iskobakebu utilizing Shipibo fine ware.[45] Such openness to foreign models is central to the Shipibo-Conibo tradition itself, even to its very origin.

The Shipibo have long been exposed to archaeological specimens. In the flat riverine area they inhabit, the muddy, meandering Ucayali River migrates across a broad alluvial plain. Periodically, it runs into the hard raised bluffs of old alluvium which surround the active

flood plain. There it undercuts sections of the bluff, sometimes exposing archaeological sites in the process. Such sites may, like Sonochenea, take the form of burial urns or other features eroding out of the bank.[46] There they are readily visible to the passing Shipibo in their canoes. At modern Shipibo-Conibo settlements like Cashibocaño or Imariacocha, where the erosional power of the torrential tropical downpours is coupled to the equally devastating effects of constant sweeping caused by the Shipibo-Conibo passion for a clean plaza, the rims of burial urns sometimes emerge right out of the hard-packed earth between the village houses. In addition to these accidental confrontations with archaeological material, the Shipibo-Conibo actively search out archaeological sites to raid them of their quënquësh, the native term for archaeological potsherds. They do so because it is far easier to grind up the highly weathered, and therefore softer, ancient pottery, than their own hard modern ware to form the sherd temper used in their ceramics.

Therefore, the instance I have described was by no means the first acquaintance of the Shipibo with archaeological pottery, and this sort of archaistic response could have happened at other times and at other places on the Ucayali. Indeed, there is some tantalizing evidence that it did. Rather infrequently, the modern Shipibo make curious multiconvex-bodied chomos or quënpos (fig. 10) or other forms.[47] The tendency among students of the Shipibo-Conibo ceramic tradition has been to view these aberrant forms as the nonstandard products of the tourist trade, and therefore of no great interest. However, since the discovery of complete Cumancaya pots with elaborate multiconvex bodies (fig. 11), and a penchant in the Cumancaya style for generating a bewildering range of vessel forms through the stacking and resorting of vessel shape components,[48] another intriguing set of possibilities emerges. Either these scattered modern examples are a manifestation of an old bias in the tradition toward complex silhouettes, or they are the results, at least initially, of archaistic form innovation based on related Cumancaya prototypes. As a possible stimulus for innovation, archaistic solutions cannot be ignored.

Summary and Conclusions

The debate over the primacy of vessel form categories or the surface decoration applied to them may have obscured more important variables. These variables can only be identified if a processual method of analysis is used, whether it be modal/componential or transformational/generative grammatical. The variables include the degree to which either component partakes of social self-identification, e.g., ethnicity, or, the degree to which emphasis is placed on form or decoration along a behavioral and cognitive continuum between art and craft in the culture of the group involved. If art is a realm considered worth pursuing, the artistic imperative will inject innovation, archaistic or otherwise, into the realm most characterized by technical rule replication, whether it be vessel form as among the Shipibo, or surface embellishment. Hence the paramountcy of either vessel form or of surface decoration cannot be assumed *a priori*, but must derive from an examination of the specific cultures involved from either an archaeological or an ethnographical viewpoint, or both.

Acknowledgements

The research upon which this study is based took place initially in 1971 and was supported by the University of Illinois, Summer Research Grants. The University of Delaware, through its Grants-in-Aid program, made possible a return to San Francisco de Yarinacocha in 1975 and again in 1976 to formulate additional points.

The author is indebted to many individuals for their help in making this study possible. Donald W. Lathrap with his many stimulating discussions with the author on the phenomenon of style and the Shipibo-Conibo ceramic tradition, Warren R. DeBoer with his perspective on change within that tradition, Roberta Campos with her illuminating comparative material and Robert Braun for generously allowing the use of specimens from his personal collection, all helped in the analysis of the Shipibo data. For both theoretical and editorial aid, the author is grateful for the patience of John Howland Rowe and Patricia J. Lyon, and for the critical advice of his wife, Hiroko Horikoshi. Thanks also go to Peter Weil and Norman Schwartz for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, to Margaret Petry for her very competent renderings of the preliminary sketches for figs. 3 and 8 (all other preliminary and finished renderings are by the author), and finally to the individual without whom this study could, quite literally, not have been done, Casamira Cumapa, village of San Francisco de Yarinacocha, Peru.

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NOTES

[1]Meggers, 1954; it should be noted that Meggers has now substantially modified her original position to take into account the two major ecological zones of the tropical forest which she calls by their Portuguese names, <u>várzea</u> and <u>terra firme</u> (Meggers, 1971). These terms correspond to Lathrap's new alluvium and old alluvium respectively (Lathrap, 1970).

[2]Meggers and Evans, 1961.

[3]Lathrap, 1970.

[4]Lathrap, 1971.

[5]Field Museum of Natural History, 1975.

[6]Meggers and Evans, 1961, p. 373; Kroeber, 1944.

[7]Lathrap, 1970, p. 110.

[8]Lathrap, 1971, p. 80.

[9]Evans and Meggers, 1960, pp. 241-242.

[10]Patterson, 1966.

[11]Meggers and Evans, 1961, p. 374, fig. 1.

[12]Lathrap, 1970, p. 143, fig. 31.

[13]Compare, for example, Meggers, Evans, and Estrada, 1965, pl. 189 to Lathrap, 1973, p. 1762.

[14]Lathrap, 1970, pl. 71.

[15]Chomo is a Shipibo form class designation. It refers to a liquid storage/transport jar with a bulbous body, flat base, a tall and constricting neck to an everted rim. The exterior of the vessel is covered with a white slip, sometimes with very fine-line incision through the slip, and with black and red overpainting protected by a clear resinous lacquer. The interior has a different type of resin lacquer for waterproofing.

[16]Catalog number SA/1449.

[17]The first documentation of a case of archaism in Peruvian archaeology was Means, 1935 (John H. Rowe, personal communication, 1976).

[18]Lyon, 1967; Menzel, 1960; Means, 1935; Rowe, 1971.

[19]Dockstader, 1973, p. 123; Brew, 1972, pp. 114-115.

[20]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, pp. 8-53.

[21]See Lathrap, 1970, pp. 136-144.

[22]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, pp. 111-132.

[23]Spahni, 1966.

[24]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, pp. 34-51.

[25]It should be pointed out that there is no native functional equivalent to the open bowl or plate, which Casamira archaistically borrowed, in use among the Shipibo today. There was an analogous form class, of which the nane ati, or flat, open bowl for holding the Genipa americana paint used for body painting during the ani shrëati, or major female puberty rite (Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, p. 51, fig. 29a) but the bowl and the ceremony have now largely passed out of currency. Today the functional equivalent is the imported enameled steel plate, an item which is used when western-style foods are prepared. In native cuisine, the solid-food bowl, or quëncha, and the liquid-food bowl, or quënpo, suffice for serving ware.

[26]Campos, personal communication, 1975.

[27]Lathrap, personal communication, 1970.

[28]As will become clear later, I am using the term "grammatical," not in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of a

phenomenon having a duality-of-patterning type of organization.

[29]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, pp. 21-34.

[30]Rowe, personal communication, 1976.

[31]Holm, 1965, p. 82, fig. 66.

[32]Blake, 1976, photographs on pp. 358 and 359.

[33]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, pp. 46-47, figs. 25c and 26.

[34]Merriam, 1964, p. 227.

[35]Lathrap, ms.; Raymond, 1972; Munroe, 1963, p. 370; Armstrong, 1971, p. 16.

[36]Lathrap, ms.

[37]Lathrap, ms.

[38]The chomo is one such form. Shipibo culture is very marked, as are many South American Indian cultures, by a strong sexual division of labor. A Shipibo man, for example, will not under any circumstances be caught carrying water up to the village in a chomo. Women are charged with that task, which they accomplish by balancing a middle-size mode chomo elegantly on their head. However, now that plastic pails are a common sight through acculturation, it is not unusual to see a man carrying a heavy pail of water for his wife after they come back from bathing. Apparently, the plastic pail form is sufficiently new and free from female associations, unlike the chomo, that it can be used to fulfill one of the latter's functions without fear of stigma.

[39]It is important to emphasize the nonliterate aspect of the Shipibo case since from an information theory point of view a nonliterate culture has the capacity to store, retrieve and recombine fewer data bits than one possessing writing. One has only to note the existence of publications such as the Dover Design Series where designs from such diverse sources as Guinean war clubs, Islamic tracery patterns, and pre-Columbian Mexican cylinder seal impressions are reprinted as pattern resources for artists, decorators and hobbyists to see how information breeds more information. The zeal with which practicing commercial artists collect everything from restaurant place mats to clippings of magazine advertisements as grist for their imaginative mill in that competitively innovative field further attests to this process. It is true that many such pattern books restrict the prose of the original report from which they are abstracted to a minimum, but it is also true that they would not exist had not the necessity for writing dictated the invention of printing in the first place. Hence, literacy should be conceived of in the broadest sense, to which museums, galleries and libraries are all monuments. Because large scale and rapid artistic deviations are possible only where the artist has literate access to many other traditions, the art of nonliterate peoples will be characterized by slow, incremental changes of circumscribed magnitude. Hence, a framing problem will be

created by a superficial observer coming in from the outside and as a member of a literate tradition who reads the small deviations of a traditional system as representing no deviation at all. Thus, the common notion of the primitive artist as mere copyist arises. This difficulty may be circumvented by a close analysis of a traditional system like that of the Shipibo. Although all Shipibo art may look alike to the novice, within its tighter limits it represents no less an artistic system, in the sense used here, than its modern literate counterparts.

[40] Graburn, 1969; 1970; Kassovic, ms.

[41] Kensinger, 1975, p. 64.

[42] Boas, 1927, p. 130; Bohannan, 1961, pp. 86-93; Thompson, 1968, p. 45. To cite just one of the many instances of a double aesthetic standard among the Shipibo, I will relate an incident that happened one day when I was sitting on a house platform with three women while they were painting fabric for the traditional wrap-around tubular skirt, or chitonte. A German tourist happened by and became so attracted to a certain skirt that she immediately expressed a desire to buy it. After some hesitation, its owner agreed. After the tourist left, the women practically fell off the house platform laughing. A mud fixative is used to set the vegetable paint and the dress in question had not yet been passed through that stage. Therefore, the design would smear in the folding and the design would be ruined by the time the tourist later unpacked it. No Shipibo would sell or give another Shipibo a dress in that condition, but it was all right to do it to an unsuspecting tourist. More is involved here than duping the tourist. The incident also relates to a real notion of craftsmanship current among the Shipibo. Such a dress is not merely incomplete, but is also wrong, even if the defect escapes notice for a time. In support of this statement I cite the hushed tones of outrage in which the husband of one of my informants told me that his wife had noticed a young girl who I had commissioned to make some painted textile samplers using carbon black from a kerosene lantern instead of the native, plant-derived dye appropriate in such a context. The fact that the museums of the world are full of the most deplorable Shipibo-Conibo pottery ever produced (lopsided, uneven vessel walls, ungainly proportions, sloppy painting) is not just a testament to the imperfect taste of their collectors. Such specimens would not be there if the Shipibo-Conibo were interested in parting only with their best, or even most representative, work.

[43] Campos, personal communication, 1975.

[44] Farabee, 1922, p. 56; such may have been the case in 1907-1909 when Farabee collected his data, but my recent investigations into Piro design theory indicate that all their more recent material is a product of their own reworking and simplification of one aspect of the Shipibo-Conibo style. Accordingly, the later Piro materials are indigenously produced and are not a direct product of trade.

[45] Braun, personal communication, 1975.

[46] Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, p. 56, fig. 33.

[47]A quënpo is a short decorated bowl with a relatively constricted orifice. Its inside is covered with a resinous lacquer so that it can fulfill its functions as a liquid-food bowl.

[48]Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, p. 18, fig. 7, p. 23, table 1.

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KEY TO ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate XXVI

Fig. 1. Archaistic pedestal based bowl with appliquéd nubbins on the base. This vessel was inspired by the bowl in fig. 2, and was to have carried painted polychrome decoration on the order of that shown in fig. 3. Artist: Casamira, San Francisco de Yarinacocha.

Fig. 2. Cumancaya fine-line incised, pedestal based bowl with interior negative-resist decoration, appliquéd nubbins on the base, exterior yellow post-fire crusting. 800 A.D. Cumancayacocha site, UCA-22, capping vessel, Feature F, L5-3, secondary urn burial. This vessel capped that shown in fig. 11. (See Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, p. 13, fig. 5).

Plate XXVII

Fig. 3. Middle-size mode Shipibo <u>chomo</u>. Artist: Francisca, now residing in Santa Clara, she has recently arrived there from the Aguaytía River. Collection of the author.

Fig. 4. Probable Canelo polychrome jar (mistakenly labeled Conibo). University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, SA/1449.

Plate XXVIII

Fig. 5. Modern San Blas Cuna <u>mola</u> with a geometric design layout, Panama. Collection of the author.

Fig. 6. Modern San Blas Cuna <u>mola</u> with a representational design layout, Panama. Collection of the author.

Fig. 7. Modern Shipibo painted dress sampler commissioned by the author with geometric <u>pöntïquënë</u>, or rectilinear design layout. Collection of the author.

Plate XXIX

Fig. 8. Middle-size mode Shipibo <u>chomo</u>. Artist: Loterta, San Francisco de Yarinacocha. Collection of the author.

Fig. 9. Middle-size mode Shipibo <u>chomo</u>. Artist: Loterta. Compare this example with her other chomo (fig. 8) to get some idea of her range of vessel shapes. San Francisco de Yarinacocha. Collection of the author.

Fig. 10. Middle-size mode Shipibo <u>quënpo</u> with aberrant biglobular shape. Artist: unknown, Callería River. Collection of Robert Braun.

Fig. 11. Cumancaya fine-line incised biglobular bowl with exterior yellow post-fire crusting. 800 A.D. Cumancayacocha site, UCA-22, principal vessel, Feature F, L5-3, secondary urn burial. This vessel capped by that shown in fig. 2. (See Raymond, DeBoer, and Roe, 1975, p. 13, fig. 5).

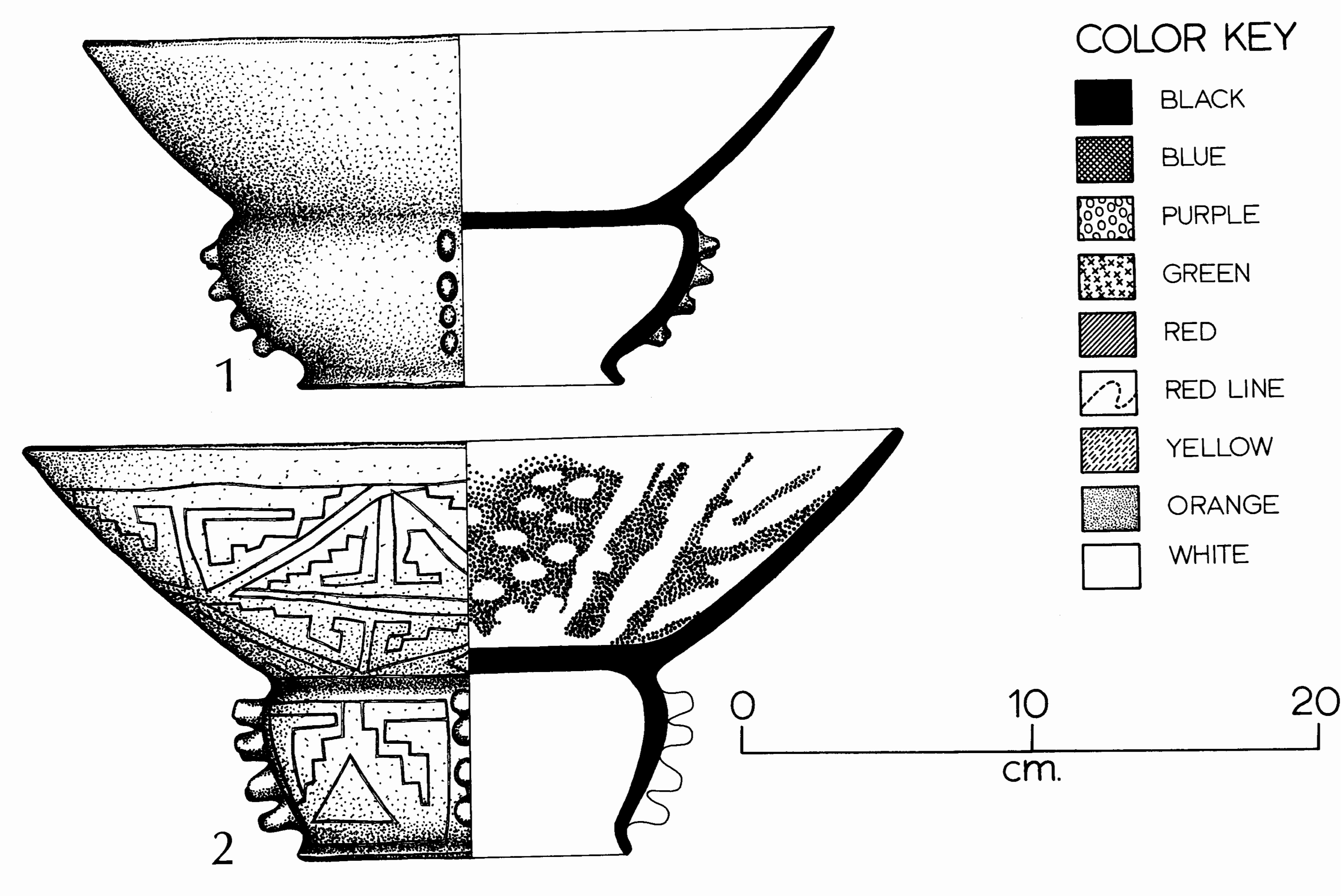
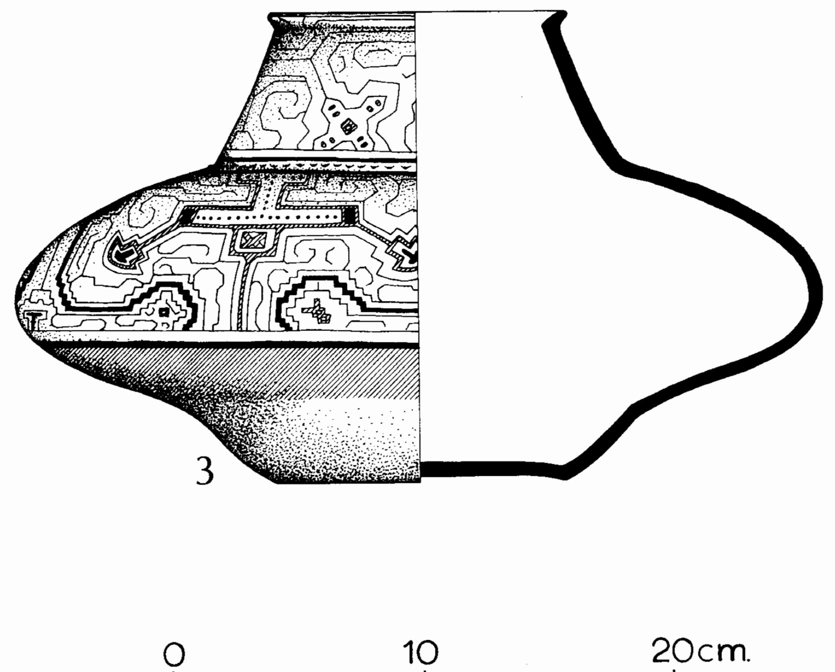
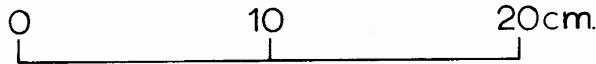


Plate XXVI. Fig. 1, archaistic Shipibo vessel; fig. 2, Cumancaya style vessel used as model for fig. 1. See Key to Illustrations.





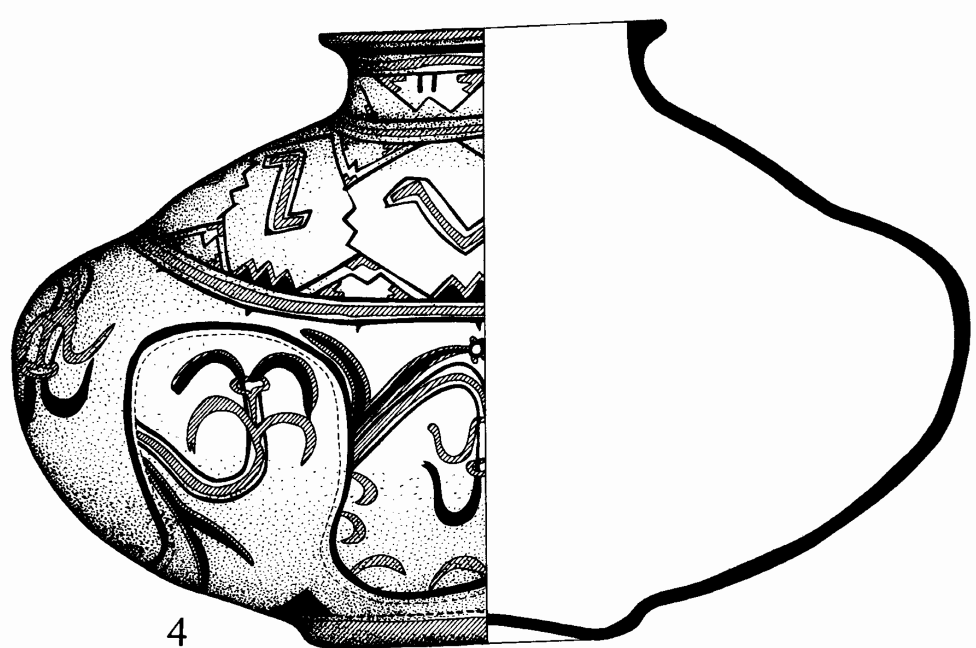
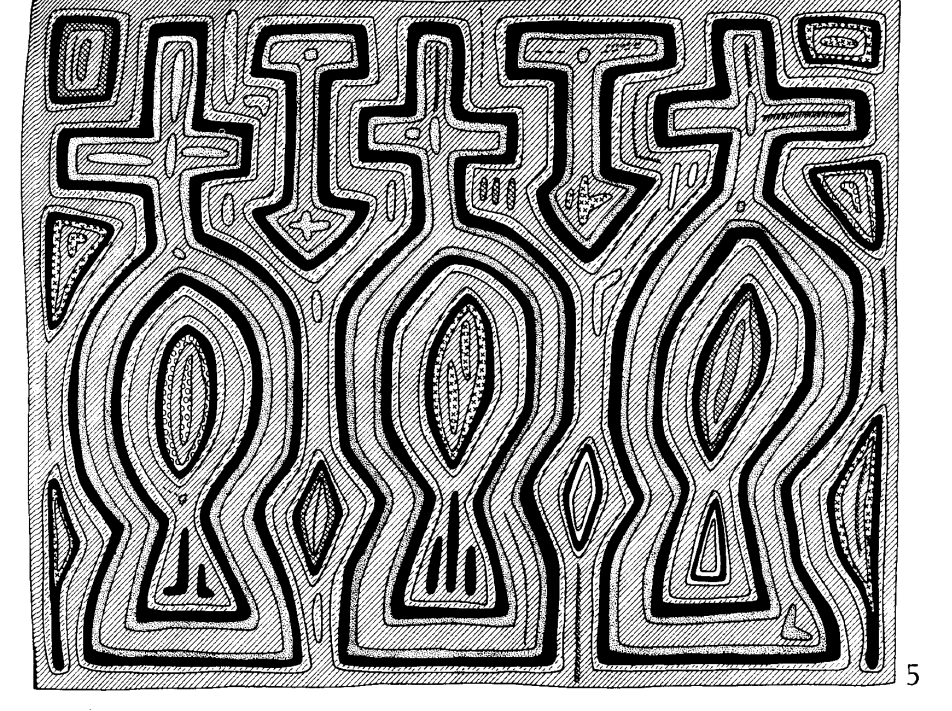


Plate XXVII. Fig. 3, modern Shipibo chomo; fig. 4, chomo-like jar with European derived designs. See Key to Illustrations.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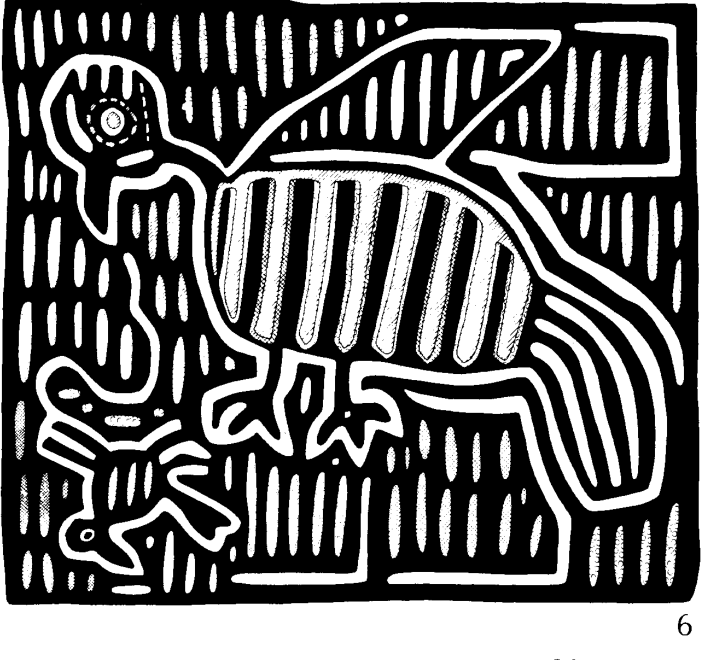

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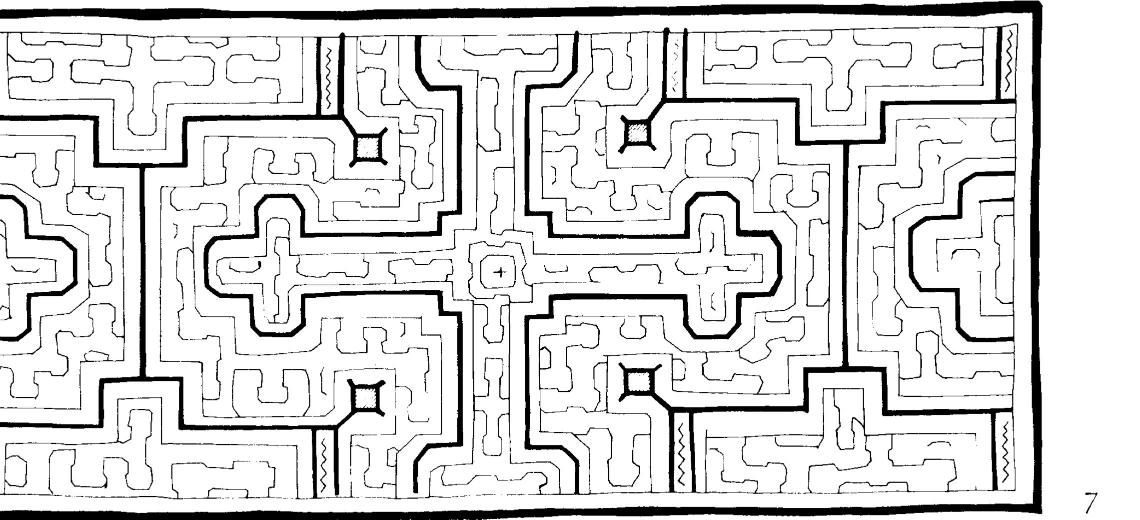
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Plate XXVIII.
Figs. 5, 6, modern San Blas Cuna <u>molas</u>.
Fig. 7, modern Shipibo painted dress sampler.
See Key to Illustrations.

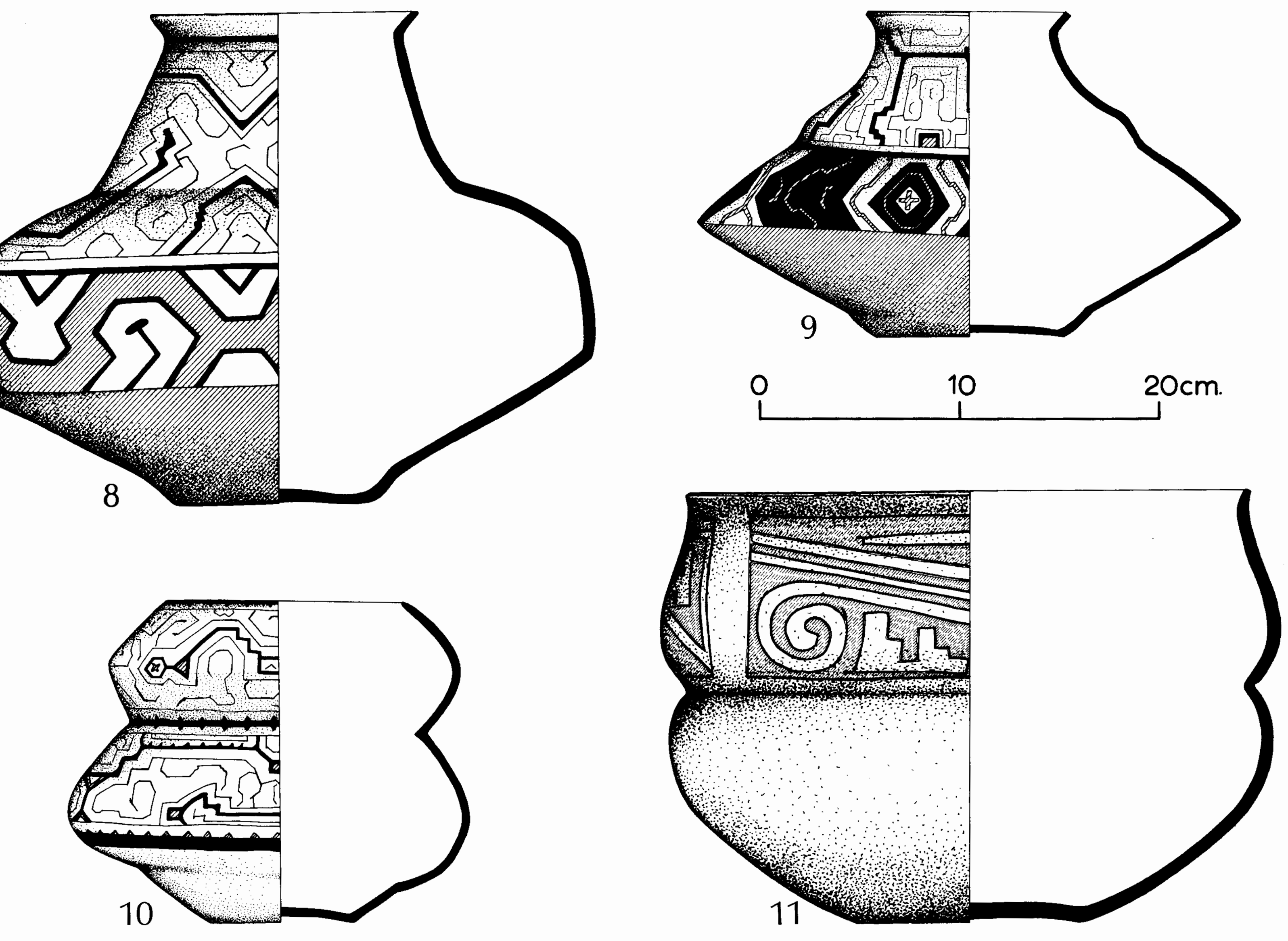

Plate XXIX. Figs. 8, 9, modern Shipibo <u>chomos</u>; fig. 10, modern Shipibo <u>quënpo</u> with aberrant shape; fig. 11, Cumancaya style biglobular bowl. See Key to Illustrations.