

Two Preceramic and Formative Period
Occupations in the Cordillera Negra:
Preliminary Report

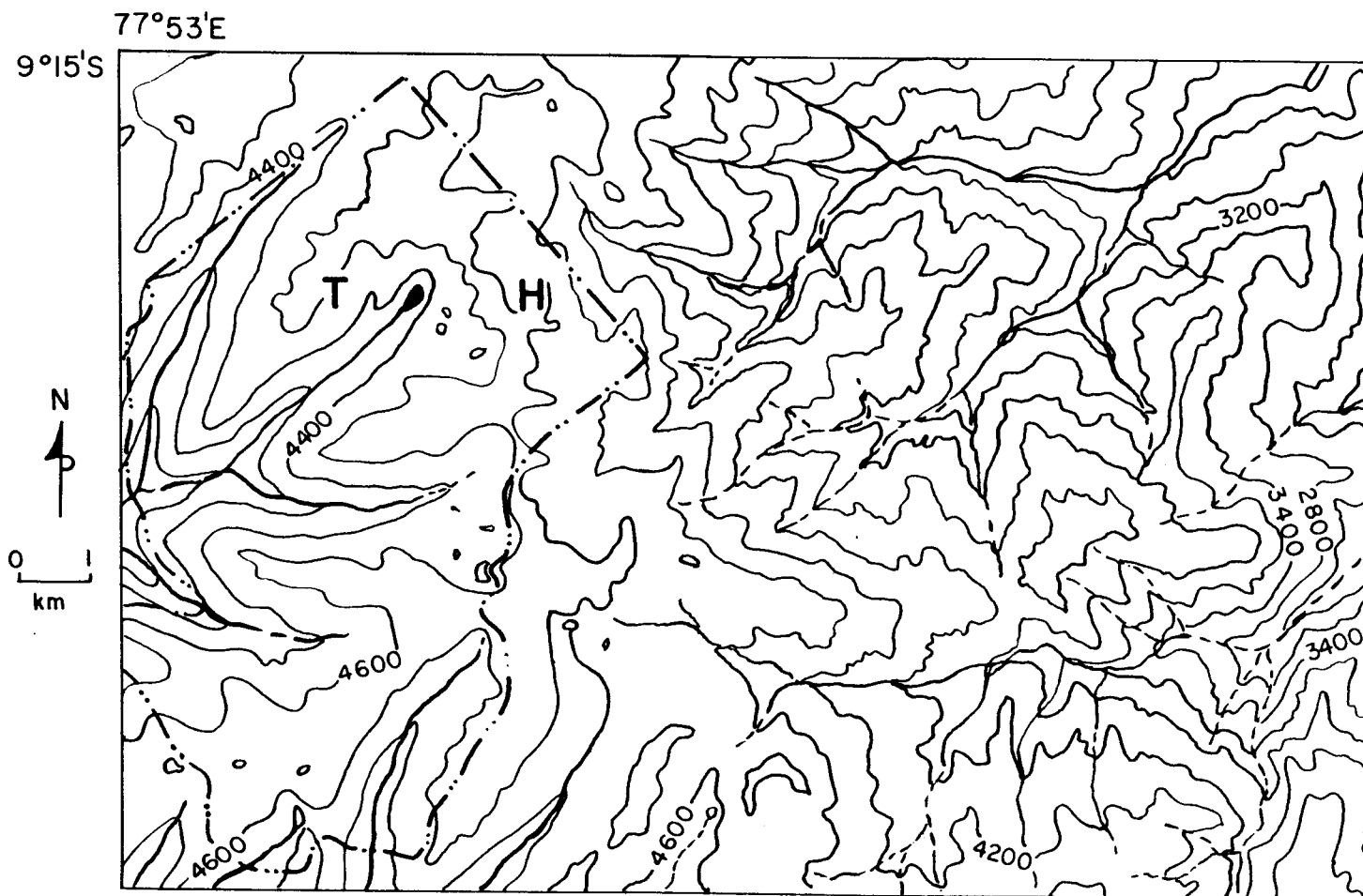
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General Introduction

This report presents the preliminary results of text excavations carried out in two rockshelters located in the Cordillera Negra, Peru. These rockshelters were located during a survey of the summit region carried out in 1981 as part of more general research concerning highland-coastal interactions. The two rockshelters, Huachanmanmachay and Tecliomachay, lie on opposite sides of the summit, the former in the drainage of the Callejon de Huaylas, the latter in the upper Sechin River drainage. Both are located in the puna zone at altitudes above 4500 m above sea level (Map 1).

Vegetation in the area of the two rockshelters today consists almost entirely of ichu grass, with scattered small shrubs in protected areas. This zone is presently unoccupied, and is only used seasonally for herding sheep, cattle and horses by members of the community of Pucapo, a small hamlet located farther down the eastern side of the mountains. Water resources are available year round in several lakes in the region. Potential wild food resources include deer, vizcacha, foxes, several species of birds and formerly camelids.

Huachanmanmachay is located at 4500 m above sea level overlooking a high meadow formed by the intersection of Huachanman Punta, the ridge from which the site gets its name, and the main crest of the Cordillera Negra. It is approximately four linear kilometers from Tecliomachay, and almost directly above Guitarrero Cave, which can be reached easily in a several hour walk.



--- Boundary of survey area
H HUACHANMANMACHAY
T TECLIOMACHAY

Tecliomachay is located in the Cercocancha Quebrada overlooking Laguna Teclio (Tecllo), which on Instituto Geografico Militar maps is called Canchiscocha. This lake forms the headwaters of the Sechin River, which drops rapidly in altitude until it reaches Quillo on the coastal plain. The rockshelter is approximately 4650 m above sea level.

Stone tools and ceramics from several periods were identified. In addition, both of these rockshelters yielded quantities of camelid and cervid bones, which have been identified by Alfredo Altamirano E. of the Paleoethnozoology Laboratory of San Marcos University. His analyses indicate heavy reliance on camelids, presumably domesticated llamas for the most part, although hunting of deer was also carried out. Archaeobotanical analyses are in progress.

Huachanmanmachay

Huachanmanmachay is long and narrow, being roughly 22 m wide at the mouth, but only four meters deep at its greatest point. It is divided into two discrete areas, an upper shelter, which is mostly in steep slope and affords little protection from rain, and a lower shelter, which is only 16 m² in area, but flat-lying and well-protected. The two are divided by a large bedrock outcrop.

A 2x1 meter test pit was laid out roughly in the center of the lower shelter. The pit was excavated using a combination of natural and arbitrary levels. The upper levels were naturally discrete, due to mixing of various modern and prehistoric deposits. Below roughly 35 cm, the deposits became a uniform black color and loamy texture, and hence were excavated in arbitrary levels. Excavations were done

by trowelling, and all levels with cultural remains were sifted through a quarter-inch mesh screen. Depth of excavation was reached at 105 cm in the rear of the test pit and at 135 cm in the front.

Stratigraphically, the first two levels of the deposits were mixed dung and soil. These contained few artifacts. A large disturbance was noted at the rear of the test pit. This disturbance extended to 80 cm below the surface. Below these mixed levels, the soil matrix was a gray to black loam, with abundant coarse rock fragments and burned grass concentrations. The difference between the gray and black strata in the profiles is due to the lower levels being saturated with water (Figure 1). This difference was first noticed during excavations when the soil below this level became markedly wetter and more difficult to screen.

As the excavation approached bedrock, the number of angular rocks increased in the soil matrix. A light tan and culturally sterile sand rested on the bedrock in the west and deepest part of the test pit.

Throughout the excavation, small patches of burned ichu grass and shrubs appeared. These were neither horizontally contiguous nor vertically discrete enough to classify as significant features. While they probably represent human activities, the nature and significance of these activities are uncertain.

Because there was no natural stratigraphy, the presence and absence of temporally discrete occupations were identified on the basis of the pottery and stone tools present in the arbitrary levels. Steve Wegner and Richard and Lucy Burger tentatively identified Recuay, White-on-Red, Early Horizon and Late Initial Period pottery among the sherds. These were frequently found in the same levels, indicating the deposits had

been mixed prehistorically. However, there was a general trend discernible from the lower to the upper levels: Recuay pottery was only found in the levels above 85 cm, whereas ceramics tentatively assigned to the Initial Period were restricted to the levels below 50 cm. Thus, the archaeological sequence in general appears to be preserved, but the specifics have been lost due to human and other disturbances.

The stone tools also support this conclusion. All the ground stone projectile points were found in the levels above 100 cm, whereas thirteen of the nineteen chipped stone points from stratigraphic contexts were from deeper than 100 cm (Table 1). In addition, lithic chipping debris increased dramatically toward the bottom of the test pit as pottery decreased.

Concerning the chipped stone projectile points, virtually all of the specimens from the lowest levels were of a single large-stemmed type. These points are very similar to the Paijan points found in the lower Casma valley (Malpass 1983a, 1983b). They also bear resemblances to the Paijan points from the North Coast (Ossa 1973). Both the patterns of breakage and the general shapes of these examples mirror those of the Casma tools (Figures 2-7). While the raw materials used for each are different, this is seen as due to the utilization of local materials in each area. Elsewhere (Malpass 1984), I have suggested the presence of these points indicates short term occupations of the puna by hunting groups from the lower valley. The lack of such points at other highland sites (Lynch 1970, 1980) supports such a suggestion as well.

Other tools were scarce in the excavated levels of the rockshelter. Two or three willow leaf projectile points suggest later preceramic occupations of Huachanmanmachay. Some beaked tools, gravers, burins

<u>provenience</u>	<u>projectile points</u>	
	<u>chipped stone</u>	<u>ground stone</u>
Level 4	3	3
Level 5, 70-85 cm	0	7
Level 5, 85-90 cm	0	1
Level 5, 90-95 cm	1	0
Level 5, 95-100 cm	2	2
Level 6, 100-105 cm	2	0
Level 6, 105-110 cm	2	0
Level 6, 110-115 cm	0	0
Level 6, 115-120 cm	3	0
Level 7	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
total	19	13

-Table 1-

and unifaces were recovered, but relatively few in relation to the number of projectile points. While chipping debris was common, no cores or large bifaces were found, suggesting that the preliminary work of roughing out the projectile points was done elsewhere. It is also possible that such specimens might have been recovered with a larger excavation.

The ground stone projectile points are of types found at other Formative sites in the Callejon de Huaylas (Lynch 1970; Wegner, personal communication). There are three basic types, divided on the basis of the kind of bevelling present along the edges. The first type has a single medial ridge down both faces of the tool, which creates a diamond-shaped cross section (Figure 8). A second type has two lateral ridges on either side (Figure 9). The third type may be viewed as a combination of the others: a single medial ridge starts at the tip, but bifurcates several centimeters posteriorly into two lateral ridges. Combinations of these basic forms on the obverse and reverse sides of the same tool are also found. It is uncertain whether these variations are functional, stylistic or temporal.

The majority of the ground stone points from Huachanmanmachay have the two lateral ridges, although the other two types are found as well. All of the points were broken, although two were nearly complete (Figure 9).

Of the 441 bones recovered, only 81, or 18.4%, were identifiable. Of those, 66 (82%) were camelid and 15 (18%) were cervid. While it is uncertain whether the camelids were wild or domestic, it seems likely that the majority of the bones, which came from the middle to upper levels, were from domesticated llamas. The region around Huachanmanmachay today is used for dry season herding, and it seems likely that earlier

groups used it for similar purposes. That some hunting was done is attested to by the cervid remains.

Summary

Huachanmanmachay appears to have been occupied briefly over a period of several thousand years. The earliest occupants are suggested as having belonged to a Paijan group who came up from the lower valley. It is probable that that occupation was of brief duration, perhaps a single season. Occupations by later preceramic groups are also indicated by the presence of a few willow leaf points. The purpose of these visits was probably to hunt the wild cervids and camelids that roamed in the area.

Later occupations by Initial Period, Early Horizon and Early Intermediate Period groups are indicated by the presence of the pottery of each. In addition, ground stone projectile points are associated with these later occupations. These groups were probably herding domesticated llamas and hunting wild deer. If the numbers of ceramics are any indication of the relative intensity of occupation, then it is suggested that Recuay groups used Huachanmanmachay more often than earlier groups. No Middle Horizon, Late Intermediate Period or Late Horizon cultural remains were found at this site.

Tecliomachay

Tecliomachay is located approximately halfway up the north slope of the Cercocancha Quebrada at an elevation of 4650 m above sea level.

Its location affords both good protection from the wind and a good view of the surrounding countryside. There is roughly 20 m² under the dripline, and the present floor is level. Rock paintings are found on the roof of the rockshelter in the form of a red cross and several red and green fingerswipes and smudges.

A 2x1 m test pit was excavated in the center of Tecliomachay using the same techniques that were employed in Huachanmanmachay. Excavations were carried out using natural features of the stratigraphy. These included color and texture of the soil and the relative amounts of rock in the strata. Below the first levels of mixed cowdung and soil, the matrix color became a uniform black, and remained so from the top of the column to the bottom (Figure 10). In the upper levels, abundant inclusions of lighter soil were originally used to differentiate strata, but these were subsequently found to be filled rodent burrows. Toward the bottom of the deposits, the number of angular rocks increased due to the proximity of bedrock. The soil descriptions and profiles suggest that all differences in the strata identified during excavations are due to natural events rather than cultural activities. Depth of excavation was reached at approximately 115 cm.

Two features were identified. The first is a rock-lined hearth that was located in the southwest corner of the unit between 32-64 cm. The internal stratigraphy of the hearth suggested at least two and possibly four distinct burning events took place (Figure 10). A radiocarbon sample from the lowest level of the hearth gave a date of 2310_±60 year BP (B-8556) indicating a late Early Horizon or early Early Intermediate Period occupation.

The second feature of the test pit was an ashy layer located in the south quarter of the unit, between 15-30 cm below the surface. There are three reasons for believing this layer is distinct from the hearth below it. One, there appears to be a thin layer of black soil separating the two in the south profile drawing (Figure 10). Two, The upper ash layer is much more extensive, covering an area considerably greater than the hearth. Three, a charcoal sample gave a radiocarbon date of 1750 ± 60 year BP (B-8555). This evidence suggests a later, temporary occupation of this site by an Early Intermediate Period group.

The artifacts from Teclimachay support the idea of a principal occupation by Late Initial Period people. The six diagnostic sherds found are all of types found in Late Initial Period occupations in the Callejon de Huaylas (Burger, personal communication). Of particular interest are two Huaricoto sherds of kinds found at the site of Huaricoto itself (Burger and Burger 1980 and personal communication).

The stone tool industry consists of 71 simple flake tools and 25 ground stone projectile point or knife fragments. Two chipped stone projectile points were also recovered. Beaked tools, graters, notches, burins and utilized flakes make up the basic flake tool industry. A few bone tools were also found. The most common type of ground stone projectile point was the single medial ridge variety. These points were almost twice as common at the other two types (Figure 9).

The two chipped stone projectile points are of the same form, size and material and exhibit the same breakage pattern as the stemmed points from Huachanmanmachay (Figure 2A). On this basis, they are also identified as Paijan. Both points were found in the deepest levels of

the deposits, close to bedrock. One was found below the hearth. As at Huachanmanmachay, these points were found in the levels in which there is an increase in the chipping debris. It is suggested that these points represent a brief, earlier occupation of Tecliomachay by preceramic hunters and gatherers who came up from the lower Casma valley. They may well have been the same group responsible for the points at Huachanmanmachay (Malpass 1984).

1,576 bone fragments were recovered from the excavations at Tecliomachay, of which 434 (27.5%) were identifiable. Of the identifiable remains, 91% were camelid, presumably domesticated, and 9% were cervids. One human bone was recovered.

Summary

The ceramic and stone tools, faunal remains and site stratigraphy support the view of an occupation of Tecliomachay principally by Late Initial Period groups from the Callejon de Huaylas who were engaged in domesticated llama herding, with some subsidiary hunting of wild deer. Paijan points in the lower levels of the rockshelter indicate earlier occupations by preceramic groups from the lower Casma valley. Finally, radiocarbon dates suggest brief occupations by Early Intermediate Period groups as well.

Conclusions

The results of these excavations, while admittedly tentative, do provide some information concerning the utilization of the high

altitude grasslands of the Cordillera Negra. Of some importance because of its uniqueness is the recovery of Paijan points in both of these rockshelters. This suggests that groups from the lower Casma valley did occasionally exploit the high puna for its game resources during preceramic times. The similarities between the points in both rockshelters suggest that the same group may have been responsible for all of them. A date of 9000-8000 yr BP has been estimated for the Casma Paijan occupations (Malpass 1983b), which might then apply to these sites as well. Because of the poverty of cultural remains and the small size of these rockshelters, it is suggested that the group responsible only consisted of three to four hunters, rather than a whole band (Malpass 1984). Occasional visits to Huachanmanmachay were made by later preceramic groups as well, as indicated by the presence of willow leaf projectile points in the middle levels of that rockshelter.

The next occupations noted in these rockshelters were by Late Initial Period groups. It has been suggested that the majority of the cultural remains at Tecliomachay reflect occupations by those people, owing to the absence of other pottery types. While Late Initial Period remains have also been identified at Huachanmanmachay, they do not appear to be as extensive. Perhaps these people, at least some of whom were affiliated with Huaricoto groups in the Callejon de Huaylas, preferred the more abundant water resources of the Laguna Teclio area and thus camped more frequently on the west side of the Cordillera Negra summit.

Subsequent to the Initial Period, Tecliomachay appears to have been reoccupied briefly by Early Intermediate Period people. Later White-on-Red and Recuay pottery appears at Huachanmanmachay, indicating that occupations continued on the eastern side of the summit as well.

After the Early Intermediate Period, occupation of the puna rockshelter seems to have drawn to a close. Whether this indicates abandonment of the puna as a resource zone or simply occupation of different areas is unknown. Several other small rockshelters were located in the vicinity, but only a single ground stone projectile point was recovered from any of them. There is a large, walled site at the peak of Cerro Huachuchuarmiti overlooking the main pass between the Sechin valley and the Callejon. While the site is undated, I would guess it is probably Early Intermediate Period in age or later. This site suggests that conflicts between groups in the lower Casma valley and in the Callejon de Huaylas might have caused an abandonment of this zone. Some hilltop sites were located lower down on the ridges descending to the Santa River as well.

Besides the conflicts that may have occurred, it is probable that later occupations simply did not use rockshelters to the same degree as earlier groups did. This is supported by modern uses of the puna zone. Present day herders prefer to live lower down and bring their herds up daily.

The pattern of seasonal hunting or herding on the high puna recognized in other areas of Peru thus is also indicated for the study zone here. While the presence of coastal groups in this region is heretofore unreported, we may assume these groups occupied this area for the purpose of hunting wild deer and camelids. These occupations were probably for a few days or weeks only, after which the people returned to the lower valley, possibly with a supply of charqui (dried meat) made from the game killed. Later preceramic groups also hunted in this area, as they did along the crest of the Cordilla Negra farther south (Lynch 1971).

We may also assume that the later Formative groups probably came to these rockshelters with herds of domesticated llamas to take advantage of the water supply and pasture during the dry season. However, hunting was also practiced, as evidence by the deer remains found. This pattern of herding continued sporadically for several hundred years, probably until sometime during the Early Intermediate Period. Subsequent to this, occupations were either located in other areas of the puna, or more probably lower down on the slopes of the Cordillera Negra.

Acknowledgments

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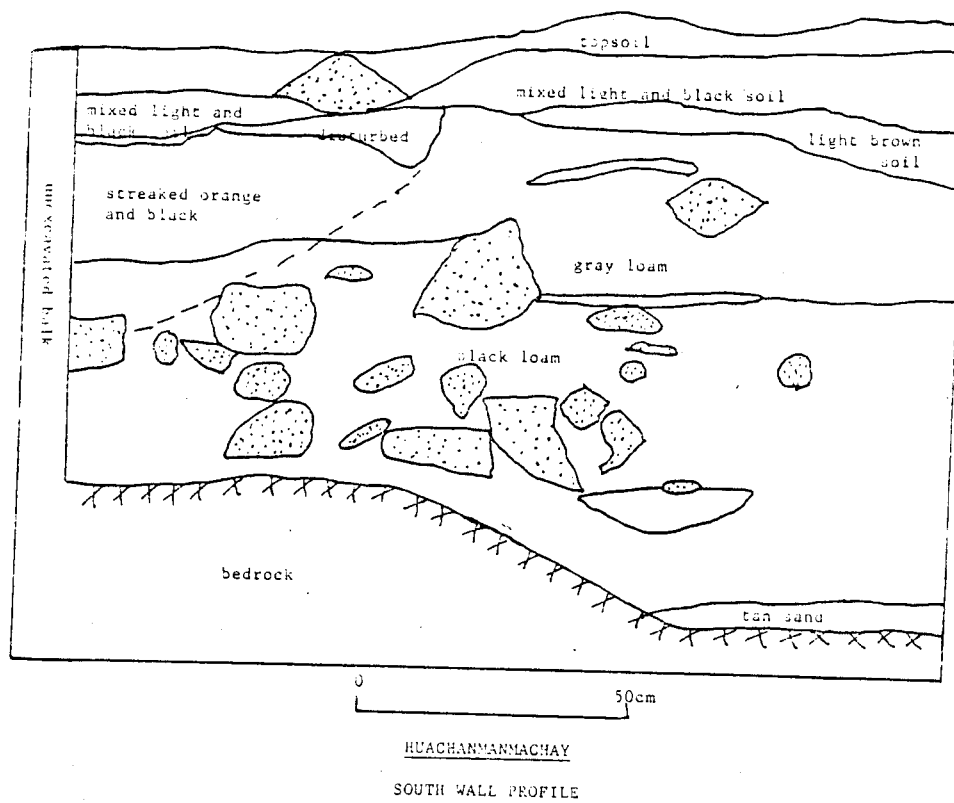


Figure 1.

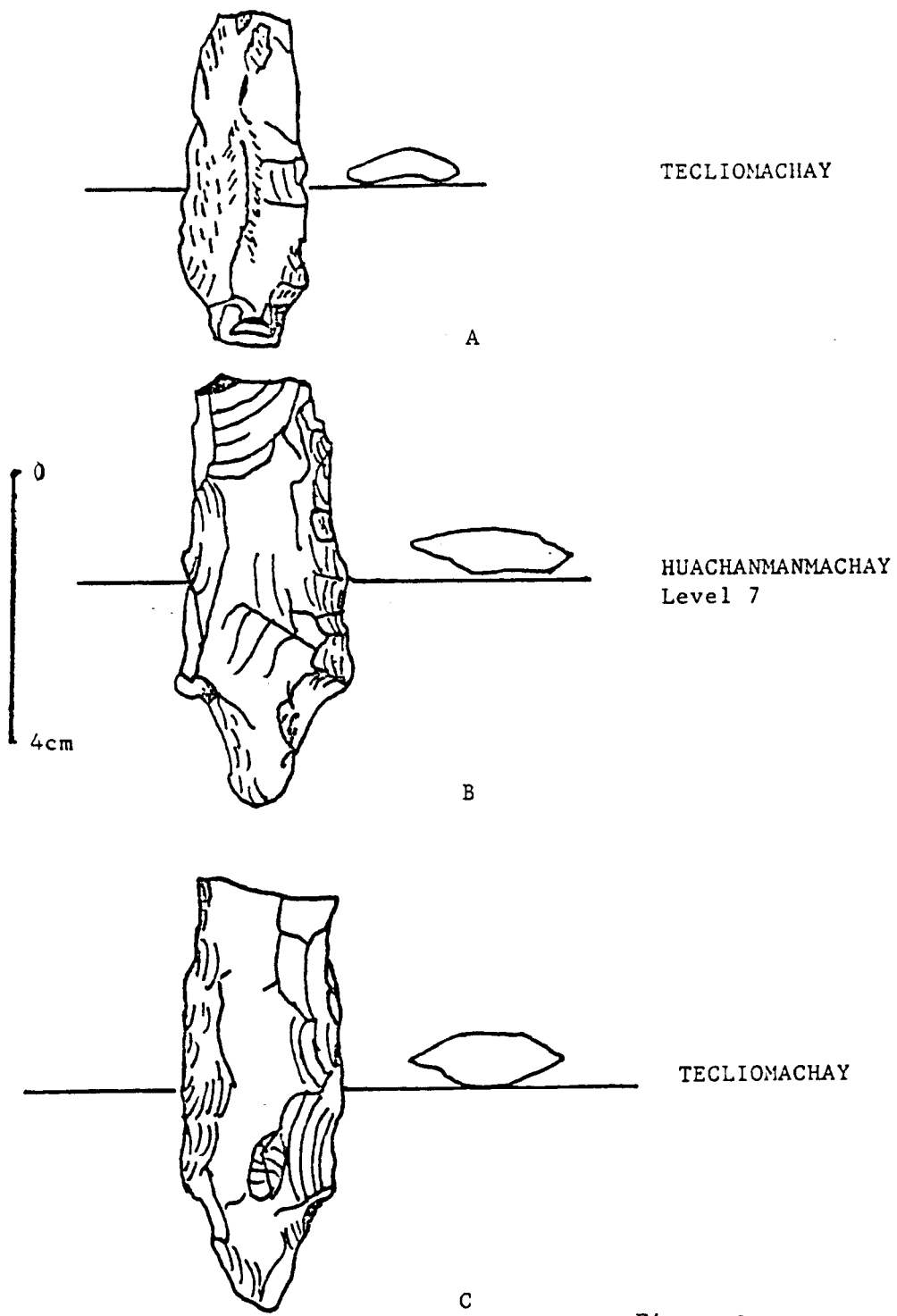
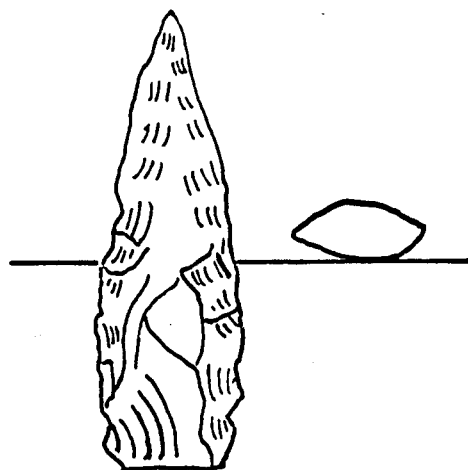
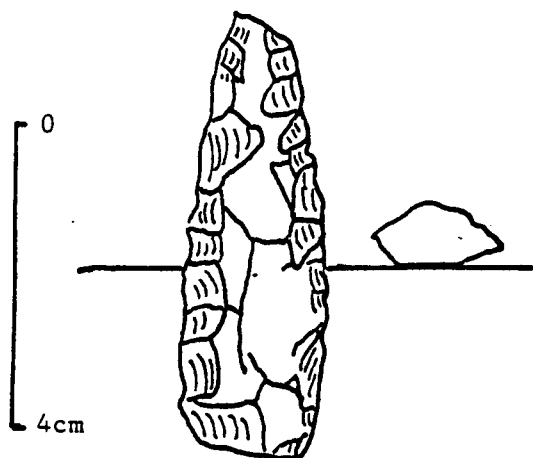


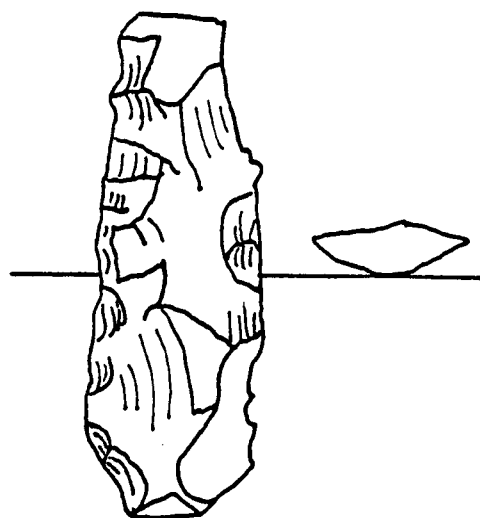
Figure 2.



Lower Casma Valley

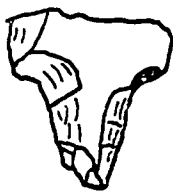


HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 6



HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 6

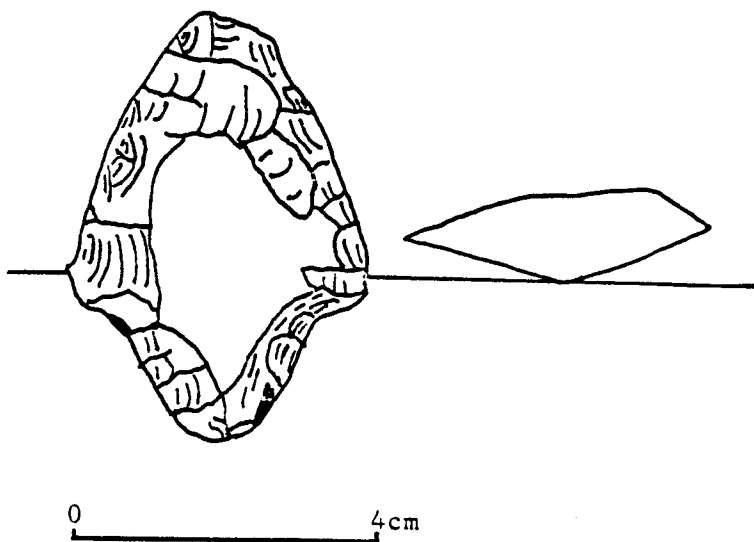
Figure 3



HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 7

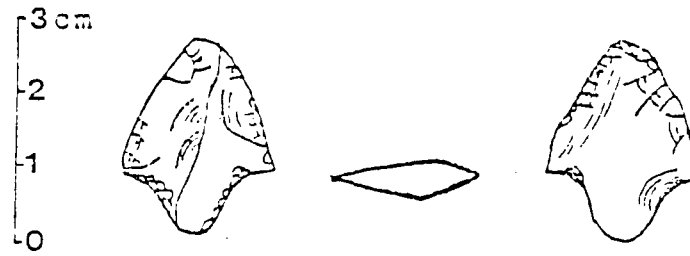


HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 7

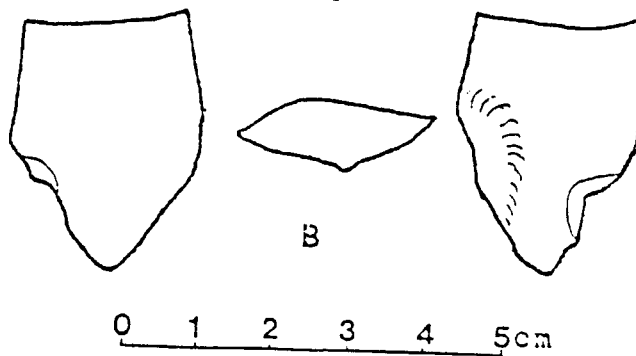
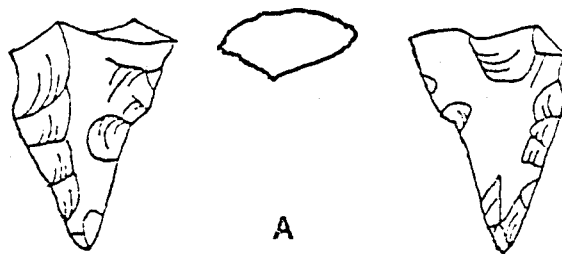


HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 6

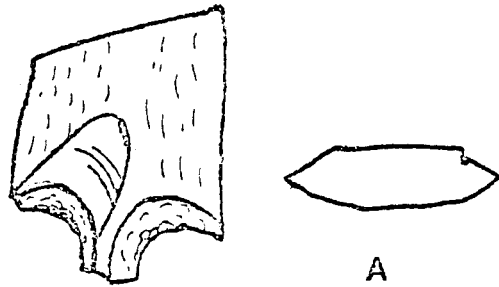
Figure 4



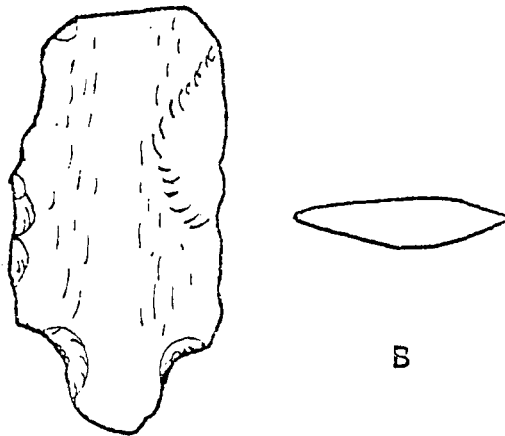
Lower Casma valley



Lower Casma valley
Figure 5



0 1 2 3 4 5 cm



Lower Casma valley

Figure 6

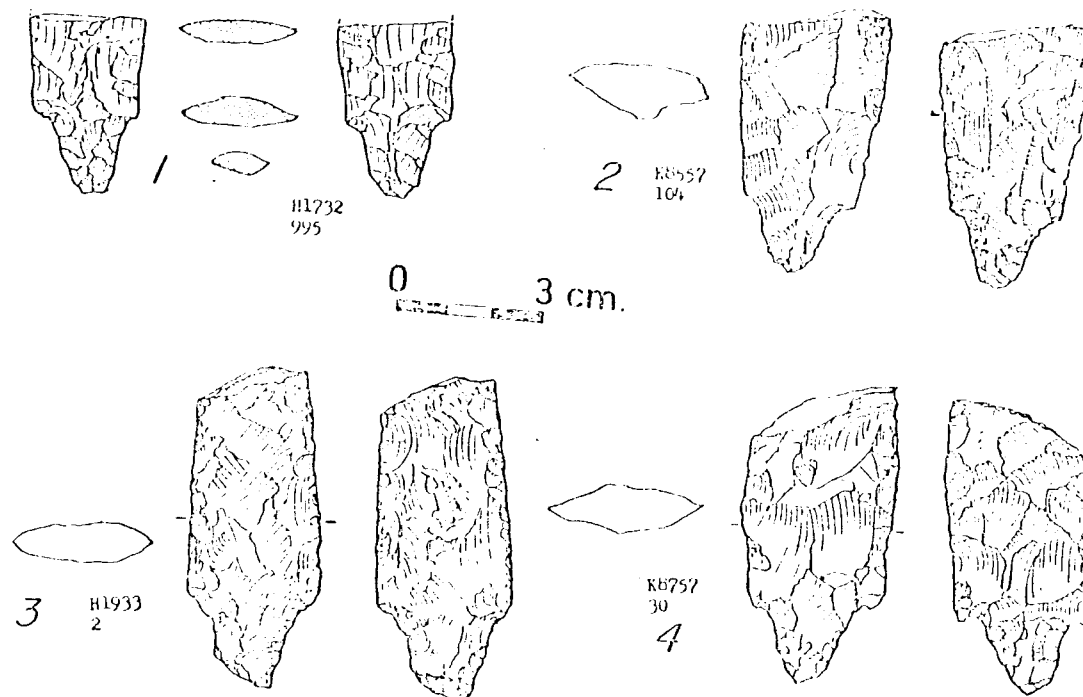
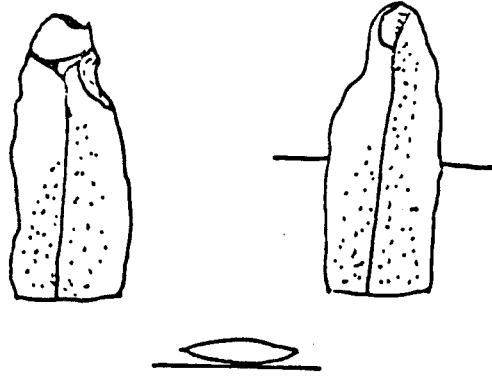
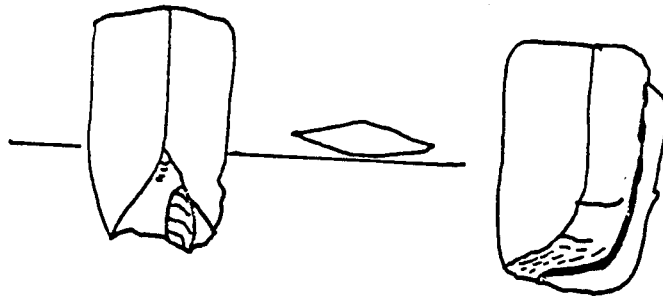


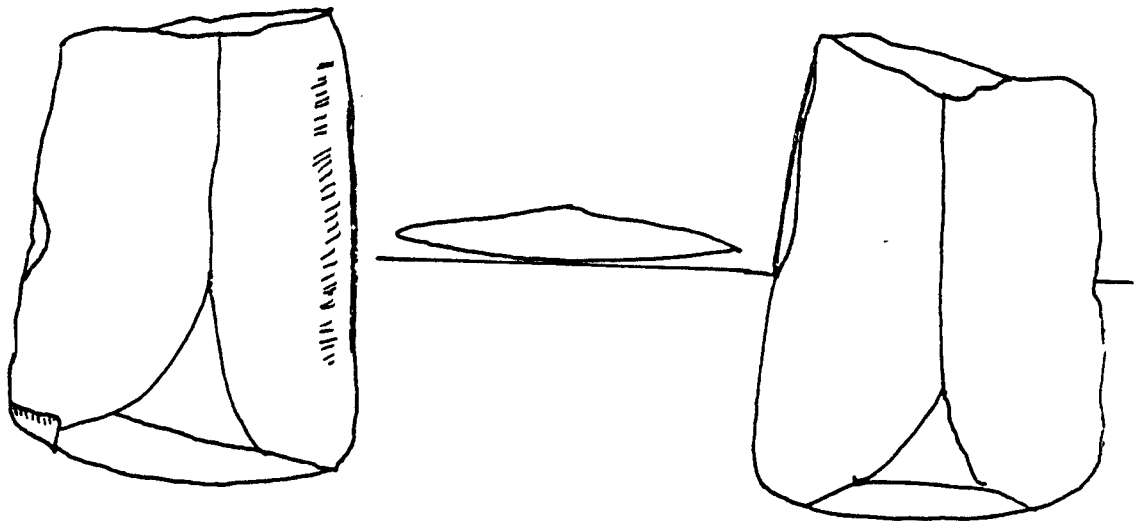
Figure 7. Moche valley Paijan points (from Ossa 1973)



TECLIOMACHAY



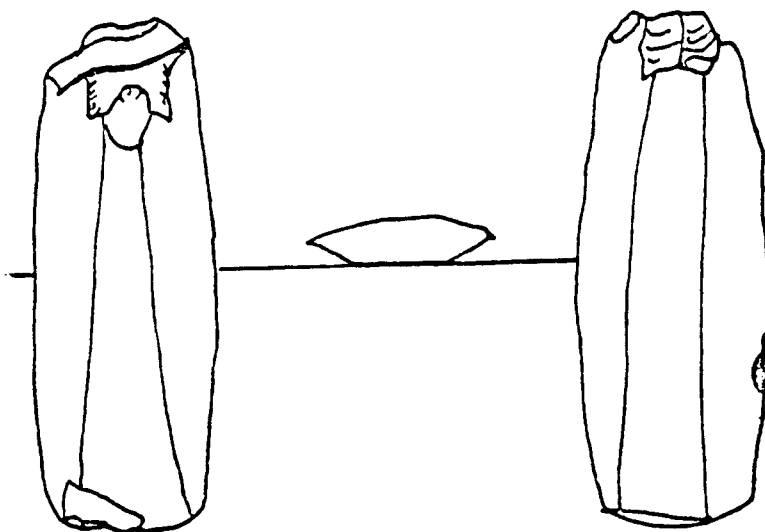
TECLIOMACHAY



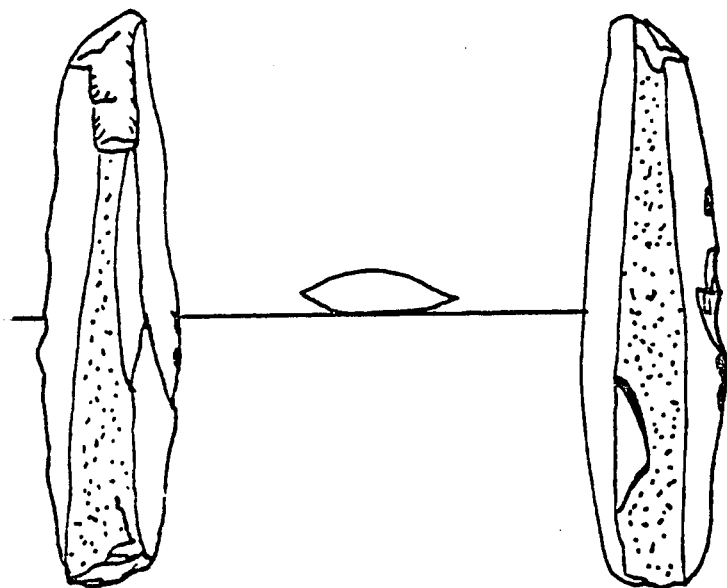
TECLIOMACHAY

0 3cm

Figure 8



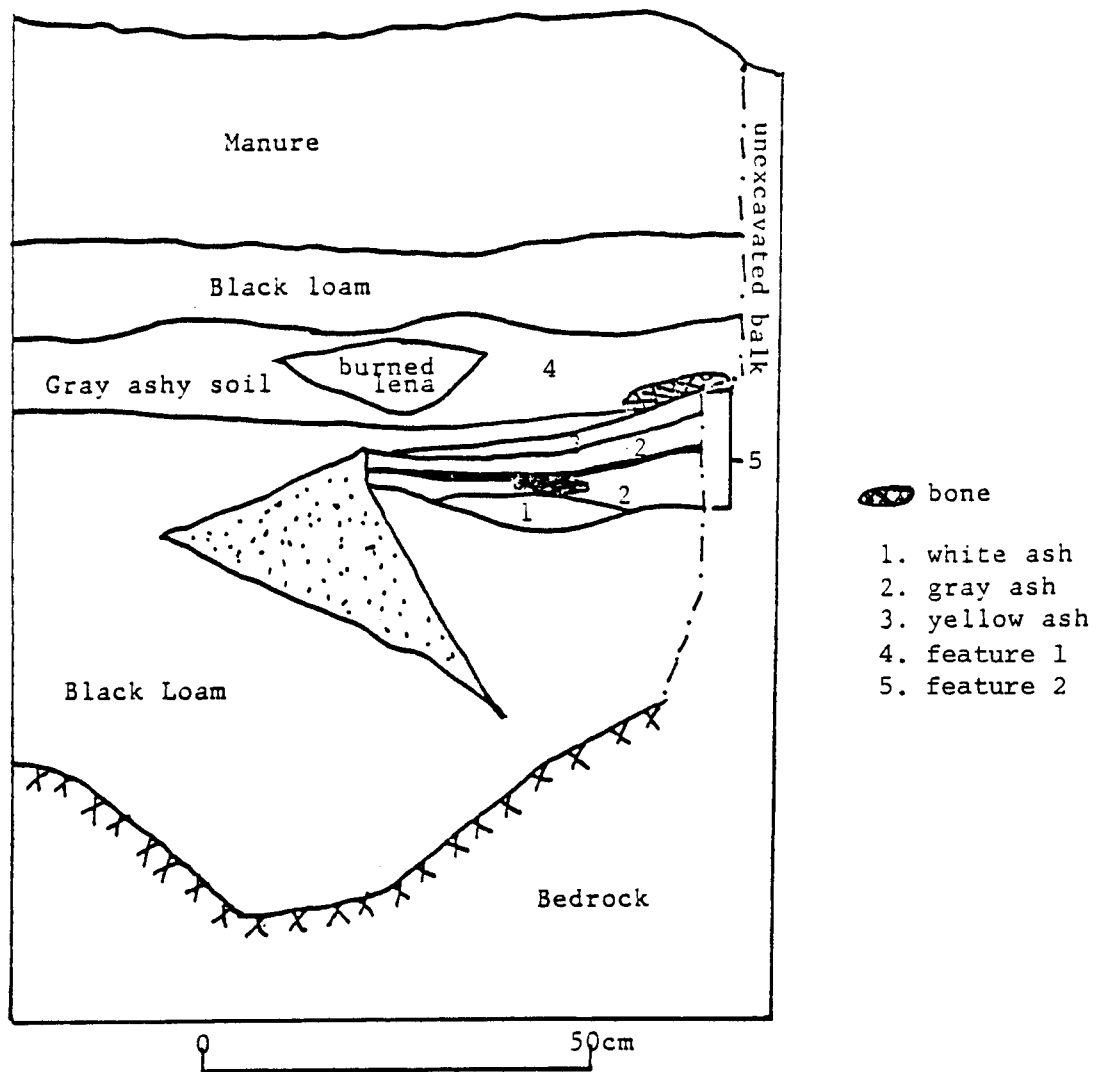
HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 5, 70-85cm



HUACHANMANMACHAY
Level 4

0 3cm

Figure 9



TECLIOMACHAY

SOUTH WALL PROFILE

Figure 10