

Impressions in Metal: Reconstructing Burial Context at Loma Negra, Peru

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Most Pre-Columbian objects in museums and collections have no archaeological context attached to them, having arrived at their resting places through the art market. Whereas they are still valuable to art historians for stylistic and iconographic studies, their value to archaeologists is far less, for only when the burial context of these pieces are known can a good overall picture of an ancient society's social and economic structure be reconstructed.

In certain rare instances, information regarding burial context for non-provenienced objects can be gleaned from a close study of the objects themselves. Such is the case with metal objects, particularly silver and copper ones. The nature of these metals is such that, as they corrode, the impressions of objects in contact with them are left on the corrosion products, even if those neighboring objects disintegrate over the ensuing years.

The large number of metal objects from Loma Negra, a Moche site in the Department of Piura in far northern Peru, offers a rare opportunity to apply this methodology in an effort to formulate a better picture of their original burial context. These objects consist primarily of face and body ornaments such as earplugs, nose ornaments, necklace beads, headdress ornaments, and masks. Most of the rest decorated staffs and probably walls, doorways, thrones, daises, litters, and possibly shields. The metals used are gold, silver, copper, gilded copper, and silvered copper. Briefly, what is known of the provenience of these objects is as follows.<sup>1</sup>

### The Loma Negra Find

The site of Loma Negra is on a low sand hill of the same name (but also called Pampa de los Ovejeros) in the semi-desert region of the Piura River Valley. It is located about 3 km southeast of Cerro Vicús and occupies an area of at least 50 m by 300 m. The site is said to have been discovered by two huaqueros in early January of 1969, and soon thereafter hundreds of them are said to have worked simultaneously in broad daylight at digging out the objects buried beneath the sandy soil. The surface of the hillside shows no apparent signs of a cemetery beneath, nor is there in the vicinity evidence of ancient habitation, subsistence, or monumental architecture that can be directly linked to the site.

Several hundred shaft tombs were uncovered here, and many of these were 10 to 12 m in depth. Both the testimonies of huaqueros here and the findings of scientific excavators working at Moche sites elsewhere agree that the deeper the tomb shaft and the larger the chamber at its base, the richer the tomb contents and, thus, the more important is presumed to be the individual buried therein.

The bulk of the metal objects from these tombs was brought out by huaqueros and marketed within a relatively short span of time, and at last count these numbered over 700. This makes the cemetery of Loma Negra one of the most important ones in Peru and the group of objects, which have a coherent style and iconography, one of the most comprehensive mortuary collections.

In contrast to the richness of the metal finds, the ceramic finds from Loma Negra number only a few, and these are not indisputably from the site. These all have the Moche I-II stirrup-spout shape, but a

definitive placement in standard Moche chronology is still uncertain. This lack of ceramic material could be due either to its actual scarcity in the tombs or to its destruction by huaqueros as a result of either its poor quality or its lesser importance in the face of so many metal objects.

Equally scarce at the site is evidence of skeletal material. Two possibilities have been suggested: (1) that preservation here is not as complete as in the coastal areas due to somewhat moister conditions (which were not, however, so moist as to destroy the copper or silver), resulting in the disintegration of the bodies; or (2) that the burials are secondary or cremated (which is the pattern in Ecuador and Colombia just to the north), resulting in very few remains to begin with. This question will have to await an answer in future controlled excavations in the area.

Having reviewed the little that is known of the context in which these Loma Negra metal objects were found, let us now turn for more information to the objects themselves and the stories that their surfaces reveal.

#### Missing Objects: Textiles, Feathered Objects, and Beaded Objects

The first thing one notices about the copper, gilded copper, and silvered copper objects from Loma Negra is the blue-green layer of corrosion products that covers all of their surfaces.<sup>2</sup> The next thing one notices is the frequency of textile impressions on these surfaces. An estimated 95% of these "copper" objects show textile impressions of some sort, though in most cases these textiles have now disintegrated. This high level of frequency dispels any likelihood that textiles were just casually thrown in on top of metal objects or vice versa. On the

contrary, instead of being an accident, this juxtaposition of the two types of objects appears to have been a common practice deliberately carried out. As the textile remains appear on all sides of an object, it seems that these objects were either wrapped in cloth or that cloth was put between them, possibly to protect them from neighboring objects.<sup>3</sup>

These textile remains vary greatly in their state of preservation. In a few instances actual fragments still remain stuck to the "copper" object. In the remaining majority either enough remains of the threads to distinguish them clearly as textile elements (see for example Lapiner 1976:149) or regularly spaced knobs of extra-bright blue-green residue indicate the last vestiges of a textile (*ibid.*:156, Fig. 379, the scorpion in the center of the back row).

Except in the latter cases it is possible to distinguish the spin and weave of these textile remains. All but one of the examples examined utilize threads of S-spun single-ply cotton. The exception is a warp- or weft-faced textile found on the pair of objects in Figure 2; the fine, tightly packed warp or weft threads are single and S-spun, but the threads going at right angles to these consist of two threads Z-ply together. This textile may originally have been tapestry weave, but no color remains on the threads and the fine single threads are too far gone to discern slits or doubling-back, either occurrence of which would offer proof.

The bulk of the textiles are 1:1 plain weave with the weave varying widely in evenness and tightness. Less prevalent, but not uncommon, is basket weave (2:2 plain weave). Asymmetrical plain weaves are rare; there are only a few examples of 1:2 or 2:1 and only one example of a

3:2 or 2:3. Most interesting is a 3:2 twill, found on both sides of a fragmentary headdress ornament of once-large size. Not only is the presence of twill unusual in this sampling, but the fabric is woven with paired warps and wefts as well. Also interesting is a tiny fragment of what looks like supplemental weft used with paired ground warps and wefts, but this fragment is so small the identification should be held in question.

Textiles are not the only now-missing objects to have left their impressions on the Loma Negra objects, though they are the most numerous. Feather impressions are found on an estimated 5%. This relative infrequency implies that feather objects were rarer in the burials (and presumably in real life) than were textiles. This corresponds well with the relative frequency of these two kinds of objects in scientifically excavated Moche burials at other sites.

No actual feathers have been preserved on these objects, but clear and not-so-clear impressions remain on their surfaces. These impressions show two different kinds of feather patterning. The first consists of many small feathers in an overall arrangement all facing more or less in the same direction (see Lapiner 1976:156, Fig. 377). The implication is that small feathers were sewn in many rows onto a base fabric to make an especially decorative textile. This technique is the more common of the two kinds of patterning. The second--much rarer--consists of a few long feathers again facing all in the same direction but in only one clearly discernible row. Whereas these long feathers could again have been sewn onto a base fabric to cover part of the surface of the textile, they could also have been sewn onto a band to form, say, a headdress ornament. The one example that shows the attachment point of

a row of such feathers (Figure 6) is not clear enough to indicate what the resulting object looked like.

Fabrics with feathers sewn onto them could have been used, as were plain fabrics, to wrap the metal objects or to pad them in some way. However, the preciousness of feather objects in general would seem to make this use rather inappropriate, though not impossible. Most likely the juxtaposition of feathers and metal was more accidental than purposeful. It should be noted, though, that the three examples of long feathers all occur on the backs of gold or silver nose ornaments, which hardly seems coincidental.

The rarest kind of missing object to have left traces of its existence behind on the metal surfaces is that of beaded objects. Only three Loma Negra objects have beads stuck to their surfaces. This roughly .3% frequency would seem to reflect an extreme rarity of beaded objects in general in Moche burials, but such is not the case (see Summary below); they apparently did not usually come into contact with metal. The three objects in question are all large, elaborate discs.<sup>4</sup> As the patinas on two of these discs match, and as the beads stuck to them are identical in size and shape, it is likely that these two were buried together in close proximity to one another and in contact with some beaded object or group of matching beaded objects.

The existing beads are of white and pink shell and turquoise stone. On one of the discs (Figure 1) a good number of these beads are still stuck together in clumps in adjacent rows: seven rows on the front and six on the back. Fragments of string still exist in several places, including through the centers of many of the beads; these strings all consist of two thin threads of cotton Z-plied together for greater

strength. The existing rows of beads form diagonals across the front and back of the disk, leading to the speculation that either one beaded object (perhaps a wide necklace or collar) was draped diagonally around the disc on both sides or that two similar ones were in contact with it both above and below. To my knowledge, this pattern has never been encountered before in a Moche burial. Without more evidence it would be impossible to say whether this juxtaposition of beaded and metal objects was a deliberate and meaningful one or merely an accidental one.

#### Relationships between Metal Objects: Proximity, Direction, and Stacking

One of the main features of the Loma Negra group of objects is its seriality; that is, a large percentage of the objects come in matched pairs or series of identical objects (see for example Lapiner 1976: Figs. 369, 376, 378, 379 and Disselhoff 1972:Abb. 1, 2, 20, 22). Objects within each pair or series usually show identical color and texture on their surfaces. While this is most evident in the case of "copper" objects (Lapiner 1976:loc. cit.), it is also true of gold and silver ones. This similarity of patina amongst closely related objects makes sense, as they were probably displayed, worn, or used together originally and thus buried together at the same time. When the patinas on the front differ slightly from those on the back, it can be safely assumed that they were all laid down facing in the same direction--either face up or face down--and in close proximity to one another. As most of the "copper" surfaces show textile impressions, this implies that series of identical objects were wrapped up together in a cloth or laid down together, perhaps side-by-side, between layers of cloth.

Three special cases of this situation can be singled out. The first involves a pair of gold and silver condor earplugs published in

Lapiner (1976:159, Fig. 389). These exhibited identical patinas before cleaning, implying close proximity and same direction. As earplugs, when encountered, are usually found in male burials flanking the head, indicating that the deceased was buried wearing them,<sup>5</sup> it is possible that this pair of earplugs was also originally in situ on the corpse.

Another special case involves a series of seven small crescent ornaments.<sup>6</sup> Usually crescent ornaments are unique--that is, not one of a pair or series--and usually they are much larger. All but two of these small serial ones have remains of string in their attachment hole, whereas normally with the larger ones there is no trace of string at all. A likely explanation for this is that these small crescent ornaments were still attached to their base object (a fabric?) when buried, whereas the larger unique ones were taken off their base object (a necklace?) prior to burial.

The third special case involves a pair of three-dimensional monster heads (Figure 2). The sides illustrated in the drawing show the remains of a warp- or weft-faced textile, whereas the sides not illustrated show those of a balanced plain weave textile. Thus, the two heads were buried resting on opposite sides. As I have reason to believe that these heads were used to decorate the ends of a litter pole, it is possible that they were buried intact with the pole. However, though litter sections from the Chimú culture have been found buried, I know of none from the Moche culture. More likely such metal decorations were removed from their base objects prior to burial, particularly if the latter were large in size.

The stacking of metal objects on top of each other with nothing in between is another relationship that can be discerned from the impres-



sions on the surfaces of these objects. In some cases this appears to be accidental, as in cases involving two dissimilar types of objects. For example, the back of the disc in Figure 1 has stuck to it a small tumi-shaped piece of metal. The smaller piece seems to be intact--that is, not broken off anything else--but nothing else quite like it exists in the Loma Negra corpus. How it came to be buried next to the disc and the beaded object(s) is a mystery.

Another case of seemingly accidental stacking of metal-on-metal is seen on the front surface of an elaborate silver and gold nose ornament (Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> An object with a right-angled corner and at least three rows of paired elements has left an impression on the silver surface. The paired elements are clearly the markings left by the wires that hold dangles to the front side of an object. There are three nearly identical gold objects still extant which could have made this impression. Each is a roughly rectangular sheet of gold decorated with five rows of six gold dangles each; their use is unknown. If one of these did make the impression in question, its back surface would have been resting on the front surface of the nose ornament. Though this match looks likely, it can be certified only by bringing the objects physically together and seeing if all of the elements coincide. In any case, it does not seem as if the juxtaposition of these two objects has any real significance.

In contrast, the stacking of similar objects on top of each other would seem to indicate a deliberate attempt to keep together objects that were probably displayed, worn, or used together before burial. These could have belonged to either an individual, family, clan, or cult. Huaqueros did report a case of such stacking which involved two sets of kneeling warrior figures (see Disselhoff 1972:Abb. 1, 2). There

are eight figures in all: six large ones and two small. It was reported that these were found layered together like sandwiches, piled upon one another as in a warehouse (op. cit.:46).<sup>8</sup> The similar surface texture and color of these figures bears out this report, though in this case textiles must have separated the figures, as their remains are on both sides of each piece.

Many of the large silver and gold crescent-shaped nose ornaments supply direct, rather than heresay, evidence for deliberate stacking of similar objects. These nose ornaments are slightly convex and made of very thin metal. This curvature would normally limit the way these objects were stacked--that is, all facing up or all down--but the metal was more pliant originally, making it possible for a piece to be "popped" into its opposite shape, as if it were being turned inside out. This, indeed, occurred in one instance (see the third example below and Figure 6). Another peculiarity of these nose ornaments is that most of their septum prongs show no bends or wrinkles. Considering how thin the metal is, this would seem to indicate that they were never worn; possibly they were made exclusively for show and/or burial.<sup>9</sup> The rather frequent incidence of stacking, particularly amongst the plain nose ornaments, lends some credibility to this theory.

Four existing nose ornaments (two silver, two gold) bear the imprint of another nose ornament on one of their surfaces, but no extant piece seems to match up to these imprints. There are three cases, though, where two existing nose ornaments do have matching imprints, indicating that they were buried in direct contact with each other. The first (Figure 4) involves a plain silver nose ornament and a silver one

with an attached gold rim decorated with 10 repoussé snails (see Lapiner 1976:161, Fig. 392). The front of the plain nose ornament bears the imprint of a rim which seems to match up with that on the snail nose ornament. But, as with the pieces in Figure 3, a sure identification can only be made if and when the two objects are physically brought together.

The second example of direct stacking involves three plain, square-pointed nose ornaments (Figure 5), two of which are silver and still extant. The corrosion products on the back of 1978.412.244 match up with those on the front of 1978.412.243, indicating that they were stacked in the same direction and with 1978.412.244 on top. The imprint on the front of 1978.412.244, which unfortunately does not match up with any existing piece, gives evidence that there was a third such nose ornament on top of it.

The third and last example of the stacking of nose ornaments is the most complicated and interesting (Figure 6). The distinctive and colorful corrosion products present on the fronts of the two extant silver nose ornaments match, indicating that one was placed face down in the burial (in the diagram Cat. No. 92 is arbitrarily indicated as facing downwards). To rest comfortably this way and be in contact at all points of their surfaces, one of them would have had to have been "popped" as described above. The back of Cat. No. 90 bears clear remains of a row of long feathers, possibly attached to a band; the feathers have now degenerated to a purple and green mass. As was mentioned previously, it is unclear to what type of object the feathers were originally attached. The back of Cat. No. 92--i.e., its "top"--bears the imprint of another object whose identification is not positive but which could have been another nose ornament. Thus, with these two objects alone a series of

four objects, two now missing, can be reconstructed.

A few crescent ornaments bear impressions on their lower--i.e., crescentic--halves which indicate stacking similar to that of the nose ornaments just described (see Lapiner 1976:148, Fig. 347). Stacking them would be easy to do, since they are flat except for the very slight repoussé bumps in their top halves. These instances of stacking occur on the normal-sized, unique crescent ornaments rather than on the small serial ones. As was mentioned previously, since strings almost never remain in their attachment holes, they seem to have been removed from their base objects (most likely necklaces) prior to burial; some of them also seem to have been stacked on top of each other. In no case, though, can any of these impressions be matched up with extant objects. This is mostly because the corrosion products of copper are much coarser than those of silver, making positive identification through matching details impossible. The impressions on crescent ornaments are also not as numerous as those on nose ornaments, this lower frequency possibly indicating that the practice of stacking was not as widespread amongst them.

#### Controlled Excavations of Moche Burials

Having seen the main types of context that can be gleaned from a close study of the surfaces of the Loma Negra metal objects, let us now compare this information to what is known about metal objects found in controlled and published excavations of Moche burials.<sup>10</sup> The following is a synopsis of general Moche burial practices on the coast synthesized from data spanning 76 years: from the first excavations of Max Uhle in the Moche Valley (1899-1905) to the more recent ones of Christopher Donnan and Carol Mackey also in the Moche Valley (1969-1975).

The Moche usually buried their dead in rectangular shaft graves;

the richer the grave, the deeper it tended to be. Rich graves also tended to have adobe-lined tomb chambers and to have a cane coffin for the body of the important deceased. This cane coffin seems to have been lowered into the deep shaft by means of ropes.<sup>11</sup> Grave goods--especially pottery--were heaped up around the body and coffin in a seemingly random way.<sup>12</sup> The amount of these goods tended to be higher for adult males. In a particularly rich grave subsidiary human burials and/or sacrificial llama burials could be placed outside or inside the coffin.

The body of the dead person was usually laid out extended on its back (see Strong and Evans 1952:Pl. XXII). The head most often faced south, but the direction depended to a great extent on the site. Textiles were used to wrap the coffin, body, and head, in the latter case often serving to keep an inverted gourd bowl or metal disk or mask in place over the face of the deceased. Symmetrical plain weave fabrics were the most common textiles, and these were used for the inner wrappings; stronger twill weave fabrics were less common and used for wrapping the coffin or cane-stiffened bundle. Spun yarns might also be used to wrap the hands (Ubbelohde-Doering 1966:76-77). Feathered objects--especially fans and fan-like plumes of feathers--were only rarely put into the grave. Necklaces and wristlets of beads were sometimes put around the neck and wrists of the deceased. Occasionally a wooden staff, often having attached metal parts such as sheathing or a point, was interred also, lying to one side of the body (see Donnan and Mackey 1978:154-155 and Strong and Evans 1952:153, Pl. XXI).

When metal objects were placed in burials, they were most often of copper and rarely of gold or silver. They were usually placed in the mouth, in the hands, near the feet, on the face, or near the head. Ob-

jects in the mouth and near the four extremities were usually amorphous lumps of metal or deformed objects such as folded sheets of metal or broken or bent functional implements (e.g., chisels or needles). Those in the mouth were further wrapped in a textile or a wad of unspun cotton. Undeformed objects were put into graves less frequently and tended to be put near the head and on the face; these were usually headdress ornaments, face masks (crude and otherwise), and earplugs. Earplugs were worn by their male owners to their graves. Occasionally a tweezer or bell was put near the head or hand. Other metal items put into burials ranged from clubs and rattles to small discs for decorating a helmet to soles of sandals.

#### Summary

How well does the information gleaned from the Loma Negra objects compare with the above burial evidence? The direct association of textiles with metal and the frequency of this occurrence are well documented in the literature, particularly in Donnan and Mackey (1978).<sup>13</sup> The S-spin of the threads and the predominance of symmetrical plain weaves is likewise consistent with known excavated examples.<sup>14</sup> The rarity of twill weave in the Loma Negra sample is logical, considering that twill was usually reserved for the outer wrappings in a burial and would very infrequently come into contact with the metal objects inside it.

Feather objects are much less frequent in Moche burials than are textiles. As they were precious objects put near the body of the deceased, though, there was a chance that they would come into contact with metal objects put there also, but I know of none so far that have been used to wrap or pad metal pieces. The types of feather objects reconstructed from impressions on the Loma Negra metal pieces correspond

to some degree to those found. Excavated objects covered all over with small feathers include a bird headdress and a cone (Strong and Evans 1952:159, 166, Pl. XXVc, d) and a blue feathered cape (Ubbelohde-Doering 1966:76-77). Excavated objects made of long feathers include two yellow feather plumes mounted on copper handles and a green parrot feather fan (Strong and Evans 1952:166). I know of no excavated Moche object, however, that has long feathers in a single row.

Shell and stone beaded necklaces and wristlets are sometimes found in place on bodies in Moche burials.<sup>15</sup> More often, though, large numbers of beads are found in piles near the neck and wrists instead.<sup>16</sup>

The scant evidence for beads in the Loma Negra group of objects implies that metal objects did not normally come into direct contact with beaded objects in burials, even though both would normally have been put on the inside of a coffin or bundle near the body.

In any event, as was stated previously, the Loma Negra discs provide the only examples of this juxtaposition in a Moche burial of which I know. With regard to the type of beaded object(s) reconstructible from one of these discs, multi-strand necklaces are known from burials (witness the twelve-strand necklace in Strong and Evans 1952:142), whereas beaded collars such as those of the later Chimú culture are not.

The seriality of the Loma Negra metal pieces is paralleled by only four cases from controlled excavations. A set of 34 copper bells in the shape of human heads was found by Max Uhle in 1899 at Moche, Site F, at the foot of the main terrace of Huaca de la Luna (Kroeber 1944:130, 150, Pl. 47A, B, C). It is unknown whether these came from a tomb or a cache, however. Uhle also found a set of matched gold and turquoise

jewelry at Site A, on the south platform of Huaca del Sol, which included three matching hollow figurines (and the head of a fourth) that were meant to be strung together as a necklace (Menzel 1977:38-39, Figs. 87-88; Kroeber 1944:132-133, Pl. 44). This was not a tomb burial but a small offering cache, and very likely this jewelry all belonged to one individual. Ubbelohde-Doering (1966:81) found three large copper rattles with wedge-shaped handles on the right shoulder of a man (burial a) in Chamber Grave M XII at Pacatnamú. And in coffin h of Grave E I at Huaca 31 he found four rectangular copper sheets mounted on a reed backing, which he interpreted as a shield since the object lay over the left hand (ibid.:30).

Two other parallels involving objects in series do not come from scientific excavations. The first is a cache of copper rattles (8) and goblets (21), 26 of which were acquired by the American Museum of Natural History in 1961<sup>17</sup> (see Donnan 1976:125-127, Fig. 113, Pl. 12). This set is said to have come from a tomb, but its provenience is unknown. The objects were undoubtedly used together in some ceremony, perhaps by a cult or sect, and then buried together. The second parallel is a set of nine large gold necklace beads decorated with frogs and snakes in repoussé (Jones 1979:60-61), which has no provenience either but clearly belonged to one individual.

From this small sample of six occurrences, it seems that objects in series either (1) formed one larger object (such as a necklace) that belonged to a single individual or (2) formed a set of objects (such as rattles) that belonged to one individual or a group of several individuals. In all cases these objects were worn or held by people; this is in direct contrast to most of the Loma Negra serial objects (see Final



Observations below). Except for the two examples given by Ubbelohde-Doering, none of these six include evidence of the details of their burial, such as how close the pieces were to each other and in what direction they were facing. In addition, none of the six say whether there was evidence of textiles below, above, around, or on the metal pieces.

The deliberate stacking of similar metal objects on each other is documented in only one case--in Donnan's excavation of Burial 17 at the Pyramids of Moche in 1972 (Donnan and Mackey 1978:180 and 182, Fig. A). Three copper discs were found covering the face of the deceased. The upper one "had traces of red pigment and was covered with textile impressions. ... On the lower side of the bottom disc were traces of red pigment, textile fragments of plain-weave (with S-twist yarns), and an unwoven felted textile" (*ibid.*:180). Since textile impressions were on both sides of this "sandwich," it is possible that these three discs were wrapped in one cloth before being laid on the face. This being the only instance of stacking reported from controlled excavations, there is obviously no case of nose ornaments being found stacked together as they were at Loma Negra.

It should be noted that deformed bits of copper normally found in coastal Moche burials are lacking from the Loma Negra group of objects. This is to be expected, though, since the huaqueros would not have bothered to have saved them. Most of the Loma Negra objects are in reasonably good condition considering the brittle nature of copper, and none show deliberate bending, folding, or other deformation.

#### Final Observations

We have seen that the burial practices of the Moche of the Loma Negra area did not vary drastically from those of the coastal Moche,

though some differences did indeed exist. The nature of the metal objects found in the burials of these two areas, however, do differ significantly in two ways.

First, over half of the 700-plus objects from Loma Negra are elaborate personal adornments of the sort that have been found in controlled excavations but not in such large numbers. The high concentration of so much metal in such a small area is one of the unusual aspects of the Loma Negra site.<sup>18</sup> As with the site of Batan Grande and the entire Lambayeque Valley, metal seems to have been the favored mortuary furniture. It is possible that metalwork was made in these areas largely for burial, just as textiles seem to have been in the Paracas culture and fine pottery amongst the coastal Moche.<sup>19</sup> That many of the nose ornaments show no signs of wear around the septum prongs lends some credence to this theory. These areas were obviously very rich in metal, and the cultures occupying them chose to put a sizeable percentage of it out of circulation through burial.

The remaining number of Loma Negra metal objects are discs and two- and three-dimensional animal, human, and deity figures. Nothing like these have been found before in Moche excavations or, indeed, from the coast at all. As they are generally of medium size and made to be fastened onto a flat vertical surface, they most likely decorated litters, daises, thrones, doorways, or walls. Warriors, trophy-head taking, and predatory animals dominate the subject matter of these pieces (as well as the items of personal adornment). These facts seem to point to a warrior society, or perhaps cult, with furniture or architecture decorated with rows of identical figures. For some reason these were stripped from their bases and buried in a cemetery populated partially or

wholly by a select group of high-ranking individuals.<sup>20</sup> Whether this was done to save them in the face of some catastrophic event, to mark the natural demise of the society or cult, or to honor the death of an important member of this society or cult is open to speculation. We should be thankful, though, for whatever caused it, for it allowed us many centuries later to admire the workmanship of their culture and to puzzle over its many mysteries.

#### Footnotes

1. The data given in the following section comes primarily from Alan Lapiner, who visited the site in 1969, and James M. Vreeland, in a letter to the author written in 1981.
2. For photographs of Loma Negra objects in color see Lapiner (1976: 134, 137, 149-154, 156, 158-161) and Disselhoff (1972:47). These two sources, plus Jones (1979), are the three best published references for photographs of and information on these objects.
3. Disselhoff (1972:46, 48) also mentions that textile impressions often exist on metal objects found at Vicús, leading him to the conclusion that they were either wrapped in cloth or were laid on top of the clothing of the deceased.
4. A "disc" is a flat circular piece of sheet metal ranging in diameter from 26.5 to 29.0 cm with one hole at top center for attachment and usually some kind of decoration on the front side. The use for these discs, which are relatively rare, is unknown, but it is possible that they were used as heraldic devices on thrones, daises, or walls. They are known only from the Vicús area.
5. See Donnan (1976:71, Pl. 6a) and Ubbelohde-Doering (1966:81, 93) for two particularly clear examples of this. Donnan and Mackey (1978:132-133, 180-181) describe two other burials showing the same situation, and Jones (1979:59-60) mentions several other pairs found in situ.
6. A "crescent ornament" is a flat piece of sheet metal with a cut-out figure or figures on the upper half and a crescent shape on the lower half. It has one hole for attachment at top center and ranges from 10.0 to 12.5 cm in width. The exact use for these ornaments is not known, but they were probably used as the central element of a necklace. Like discs, they are known only from the Vicús area.
7. This nose ornament is the most often illustrated object from Loma Negra. The impression of the rectangular element is seen clearly

in photographs, both black-and-white and color. See any of the following references: Boltin and Newton (1978:202-203), Donnan (1978:16), Jones (1979:100), Lapiner (1976:160, Fig. 390).

8. "...die Figuren wie Sandwiches aneinanderhaftend gefunden wurden ...als Depot aufeinandergestapelt..."
9. Jones (1979:75, 78) also suggests that the large Moche fox head-dresses may never have been meant to be worn, but may have been "made for some specific purpose, such as burial, where great size could be impressive but would not render the object unusable."
10. The statements made in this section are based on data from the following references for the sites indicated:

Menzel 1977 and Kroeber 1944 (for Max Uhle's excavations at Moche and Cerro Blanco in the Moche Valley from 1899 to 1905);

Ubbelohde-Doering 1966 (for his excavations at Pacatnamú in the Jequetepeque Valley from 1937-1939, 1953-1954, and 1962-1963);

Strong and Evans 1952 (for their excavations in the central part of the Virú Valley in 1946);

Donnan 1973 (for his excavations in the Santa Valley from 1965 to 1967); and

Donnan and Mackey 1978 (for their excavations at the Pyramids of Moche and nearby sites in the Moche Valley from 1969 to 1975).

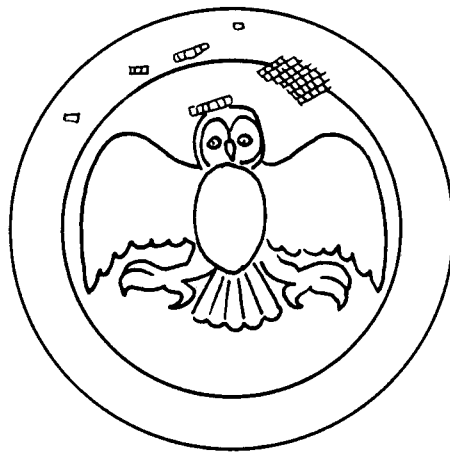
Jones (1979) was also consulted for an overall view of metal found in these excavations and Donnan (1976) for scattered bits of general information. Not included in this section is the newest (unpublished) data from Donnan's excavations at Chotuna in the Lambayeque Valley from 1979 to 1981 and at Pacatnamú from 1983 to the present.
11. This has been depicted by the Moche themselves in fineline drawing on several ceramic pots illustrating a burial scene (see Donnan and McClelland 1979:Fig. 13 and elsewhere).
12. See Ubbelohde-Doering (1966:62, 64, 65) and Strong and Evans (1952: Pls. XIX-XXI) for good clear photographs of this.
13. "The copper objects provide further evidence that a variety of perishable materials was originally placed in some of the Moche IV graves. Many of the copper objects have textile fragments adhering to them or exhibit textile impressions on their corroded surfaces, suggesting that they were buried in direct contact with textile materials" (Donnan and Mackey 1978:209).
14. See Kroeber (1944:127) for the site of Moche, Disselhoff (1971: 51-53) for Vicús, and Donnan (1973:108-111) for the Santa Valley.
15. See for example the two-strand necklace in Donnan and Mackey (1978:

- 180), the wristlets and necklace also in Donnan and Mackey (1978: 132-133), the multi-strand necklace in Ubbelohde-Doering (1966:81), and the two-strand necklace in Strong and Evans (1952:147).
16. See Kroeber (1944:125, 134, 136), Donnan and Mackey (1978:66-68, 150-151), and Strong and Evans (1952:156, 166).
17. The accession numbers are 41.2/5409 through 41.2/5431.
18. On the other hand, "This wealth of material may, in part, be an accident of archaeological preservation...[since] the graves at Vicús were deeply buried and had escaped detection for many years..." (Jones 1979:91), whereas those on the coast had been plundered for centuries, with the result that metal objects, when found, were usually melted down and thus destroyed.
19. James M. Vreeland in a letter to the author written in 1981.
20. Donnan and Mackey (1978:208) excavated an area between the two pyramids at Moche which seemed to be reserved for the burials of high-status adult males, many of whom had large copper disc headdresses of a type known from Moche pottery designs. They suggest that these males "shared an affiliation to a specific Moche ceremony."

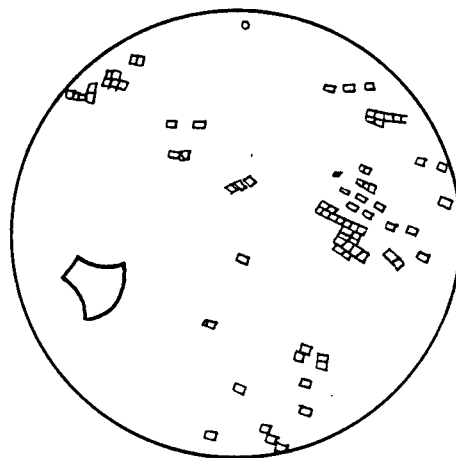
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Front view

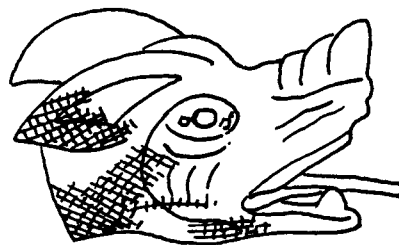


Back view

Figure 1. Gold and silver disc with frontal owl. Diam. 26.4 cm. Arnold I. Goldberg Collection, New York City, Cat. No. 121.



1982.392.7



1982.392.6

Figure 2. Profile views of a pair of three-dimensional copper monster heads. H. 6.0 cm, L. 9.9-10.8 cm, W. 7.4-8.6 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Gifts of Jane Costello Goldberg from the Collection of Arnold I. Goldberg.

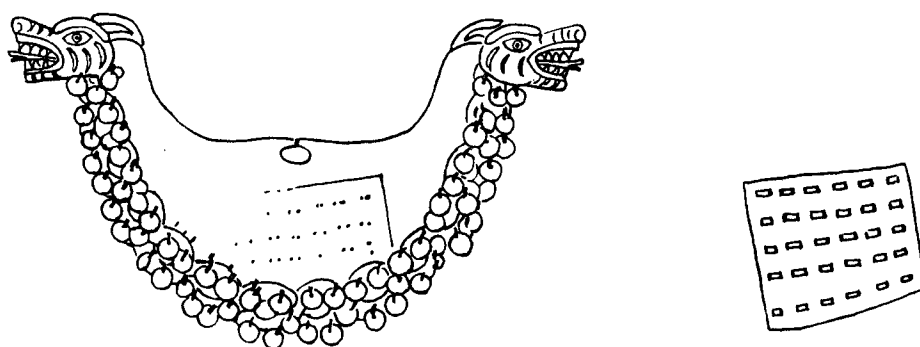


Figure 3.

Front view of gold and silver nose ornament with double-headed serpent. W. 20.8 cm, H. 12.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Cat. No. 1979.206.1225, The Michael C. Rockefeller Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Back view of one of three gold rectangles with 30 dangles on the front. W. 5.6 cm, H. 6.2 cm. Private Collection, USA, Cat. No. P-164.3.

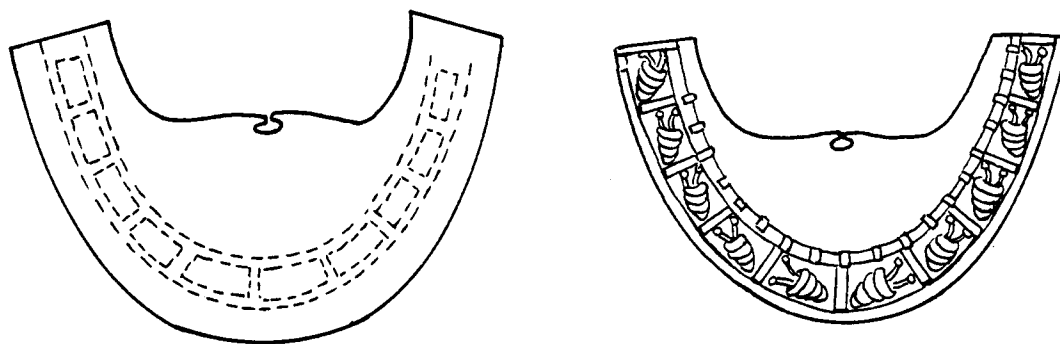


Figure 4.

Front view of plain silver nose ornament. W. 21.4 cm, H. 13.3 cm. American Museum of Natural History, New York City, Cat. No. 41.2/6739.

Back view of gold and silver nose ornament with snails. W. 19.9 cm, H. 12.6 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Cat. No. 1979.206.1228, The Michael C. Rockefeller Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller.



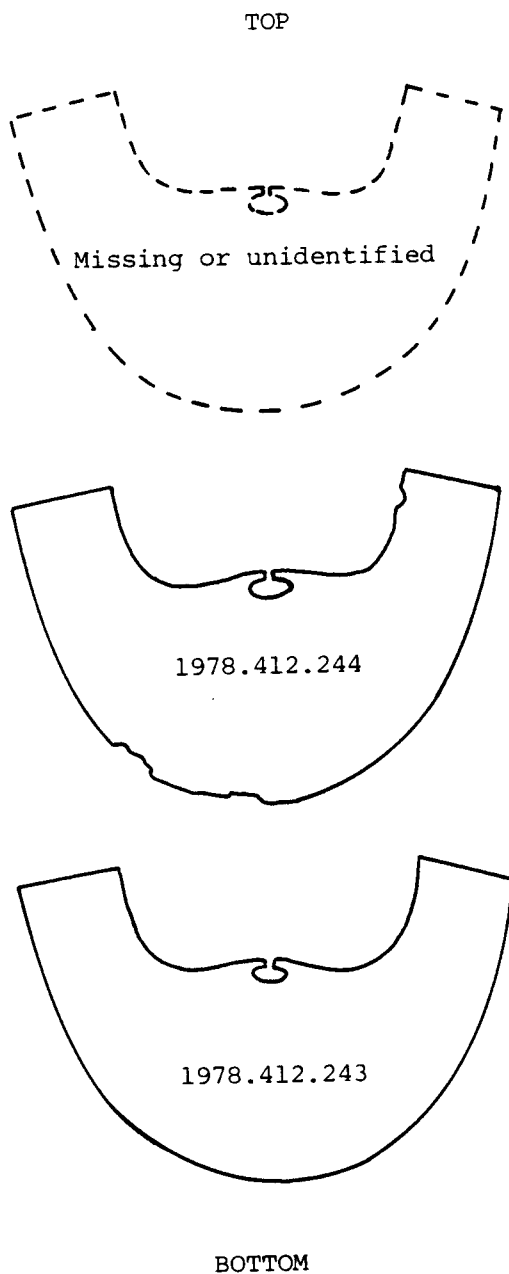


Figure 5. Reconstructed relationship between one missing nose ornament and two extant plain silver ones. W. 21.4-21.8 cm, H. 14.0 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, The Michael C. Rockefeller Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller.

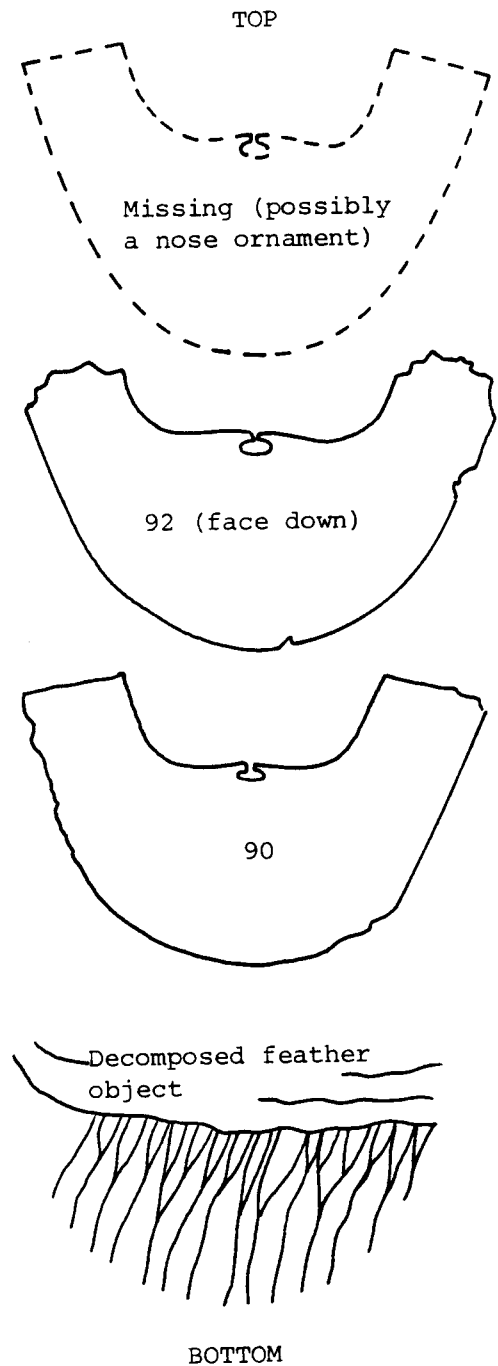


Figure 6. Reconstructed relationship between two plain silver nose ornaments, one other missing metal object, and one missing feather object. W. 20.0-23.2 cm, H. 12.9-14.8 cm. Private Collection, New York City.