

Spatial Patterning and the Function of a
Huari Architectural Compound

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In 1977 and 1979-81 archaeological research was carried out in the Moraduchayuc sector of Huari, which is located near the center of the architectural core of the site. The Moraduchayuc sector, which covers an area of about half a hectare, was wall trenched to reveal the architectural plan. This revealed most of a walled architectural compound and portions of adjacent architecture (Figure 1). The compound covers an area of about a quarter of a hectare, and is bounded on the north, east and south sides by what appear to be walled streets. Access to the compound is limited to a main entrance in the southwest corner and two secondary entrances on the north and north-east sides.

The internal structure and composition of the compound can be illustrated by a graph (Figure 2), in which the nodes represent rooms and the edges represent the access between rooms. The rooms within the compound are of two types: large, unroofed courtyard areas (which are represented on the graph as squares); and long, narrow, multi-story rooms, which I will refer to as corridors (corridors are represented by circles on the graph). The graph illustrates that the compound is composed of at least seven virtually identical clusters of rooms, each consisting of a central courtyard area and a set of satellite corridor rooms. Each of these room clusters, or Cells, is a semi-independent unit, with access between Cells being quite limited. The only major architectural difference between the Cells is that relatively few have direct external access.

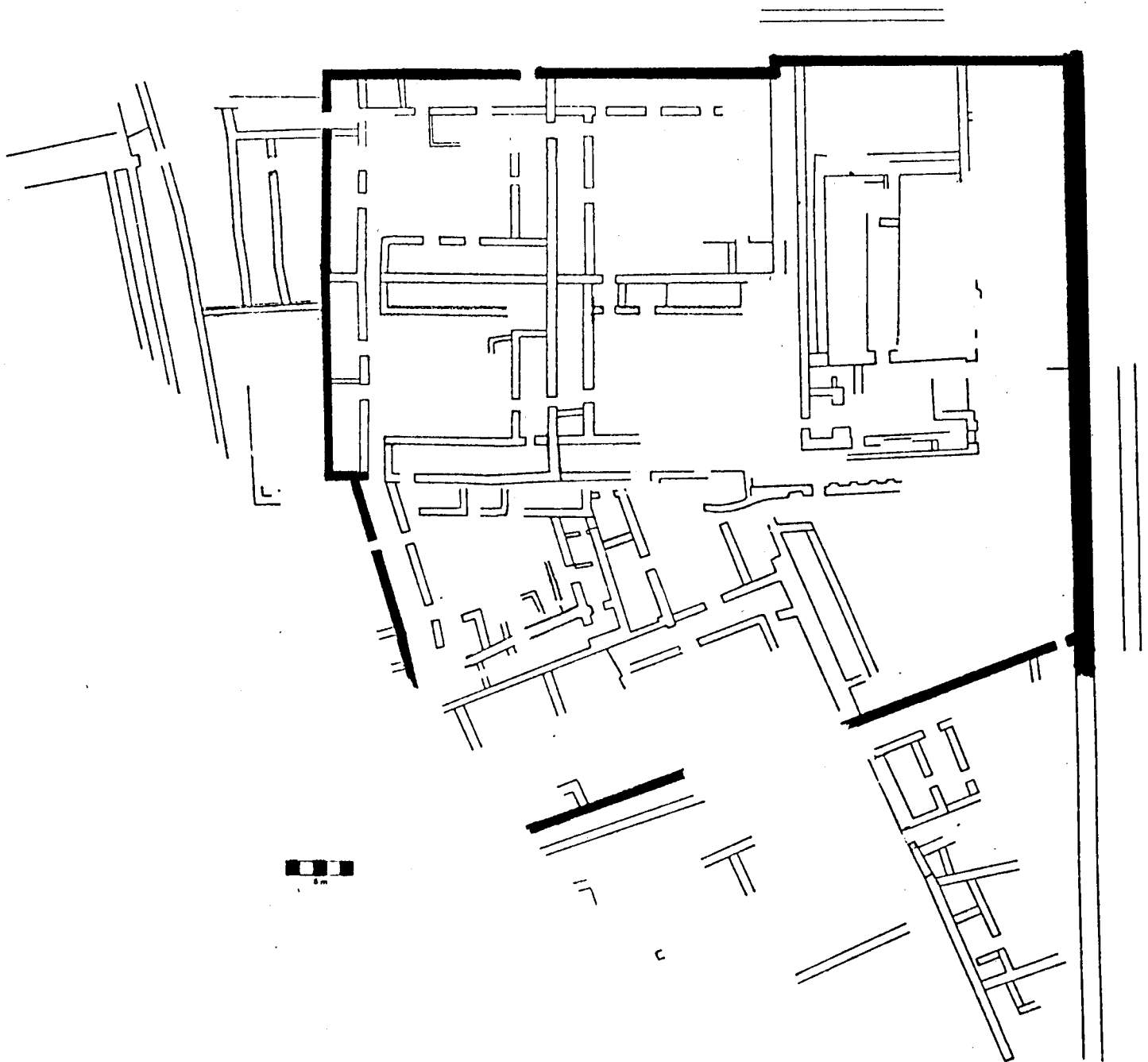


Figure 1. Architectural plan as revealed by wall trenching and excavation in the Moraduchayuc sector of Huari.

The northeastern corner of the compound is architecturally distinctive, since it is not composed of courtyards and corridor rooms, but instead contains a stone-filled platform and an unknown number of associated rooms. On the graph this area is represented by a triangle. This area is somewhat isolated from the rest of the rooms in the compound, having direct access to none of the Cells. In addition, it is located at the maximum distance from any of the entrances to the compound.

Examination of the architecture reveals three other features of importance in reconstructing the function of the compound. These are: that it was built using corporate labor; that it was built in the style of Huari administrative architecture; and that it includes features suggesting that the occupants and/or activities carried out in the compound were of at least moderately high status.

The evidence that the compound was built using corporate labor is clearest in the northern section, which was built first. In this section there is a standardization of room shapes and sizes, and a regular arrangement of rooms indicating that they were built according to a formal plan. Additionally, although there were two periods of construction in the compound, it is clear from the wall bondings that the original structure and the later addition were each built in a single stage. The irregularities in the arrangement of rooms in the later addition to the compound appear to be the unintentional result of attempting to accommodate rectangular rooms to an area which is trapezoidal in shape.

Associated with the territorial expansion of the Huari state are the intrusive regional administrative centers of Viracochapampa,

Pikillacta and Jincamocco (Isbell and Schreiber 1978). These sites all share distinctive features of plan and construction which represent the Huari administrative architectural style (Schreiber 1978). One of the major characteristics of this style is that it is planned, or contains regular arrangements of rooms of standardized shapes, and contains as a major component the repetition of architectural units consisting of a courtyard surrounded by serially arranged multi-story corridors. The Moraduchayuc compound shares not only these characteristics with the other examples of Huari administrative architecture, but various architectural details as well, such as similar types of floor construction and the presence of low benches around the perimeters of the courtyards. On the basis of these similarities I would argue that the Moraduchayuc compound was built in the style of Huari administrative architecture, and therefore that it was built to serve some administrative function.

The argument that the Moraduchayuc compound was built for relatively high status occupants and/or activities suffers from the lack of comparative data, but there are several features that indicate that this may have been the case. First, there is the presence of the stone-filled platform structure within the compound. This structure represents extra labor investment as well as a special function architectural feature which is noticeably lacking in other known cases of Huari administrative architecture. Secondly, there is evidence of sacrifices or at least offerings of human heads placed under the floors at the time of the construction of the compound. Only one such skull, which apparently had been wrapped in cloth pinned together by four copper tupus, was found in situ under one of

the courtyard floors, but the presence of other skulls and tupus in the fill of rooms with disturbed floors indicates that such offerings probably occurred in other rooms as well. Finally, clay-lined cists and shallow pits were found under the floors of several rooms. Most of these were empty, but a few contained luxury items such as worked pieces of shell, Spondylus, lapis lazuli, copper and silver. One such pit, located in the center of one of the courtyards, contained 82 pieces of worked Spondylus. Thus, the evidence suggests that the Moraduchayuc compound was built for relatively high status occupants and/or activities which were associated with the state administrative system.

Through the examination of the architecture and artifactual remains, it is possible to reconstruct the general history of growth and decline in the use of the Moraduchayuc compound. Construction of the north section, consisting of Cells B, C, E and F, and the area containing the stone-filled platform structure (Figure 3) was begun in Middle Horizon 1B. Somewhat later the number of Cells within the compound was doubled with the construction of an additional three to five Cells (including Cells A, D and G) on the south side of the original structure. At some later time, possibly at the end of Middle Horizon 1B or the beginning of 2A, the progressive abandonment of the compound began. The first Cell to be abandoned was Cell B, followed by Cells A and C, Cell D, Cell F and finally, Cell E. Each of these abandoned areas were used as dump sites for refuse generated within the remaining occupied areas of the compound. The order of Cell abandonment and re-utilization as a dump site appears to be related to the general accessibility of the Cell. That is, at each

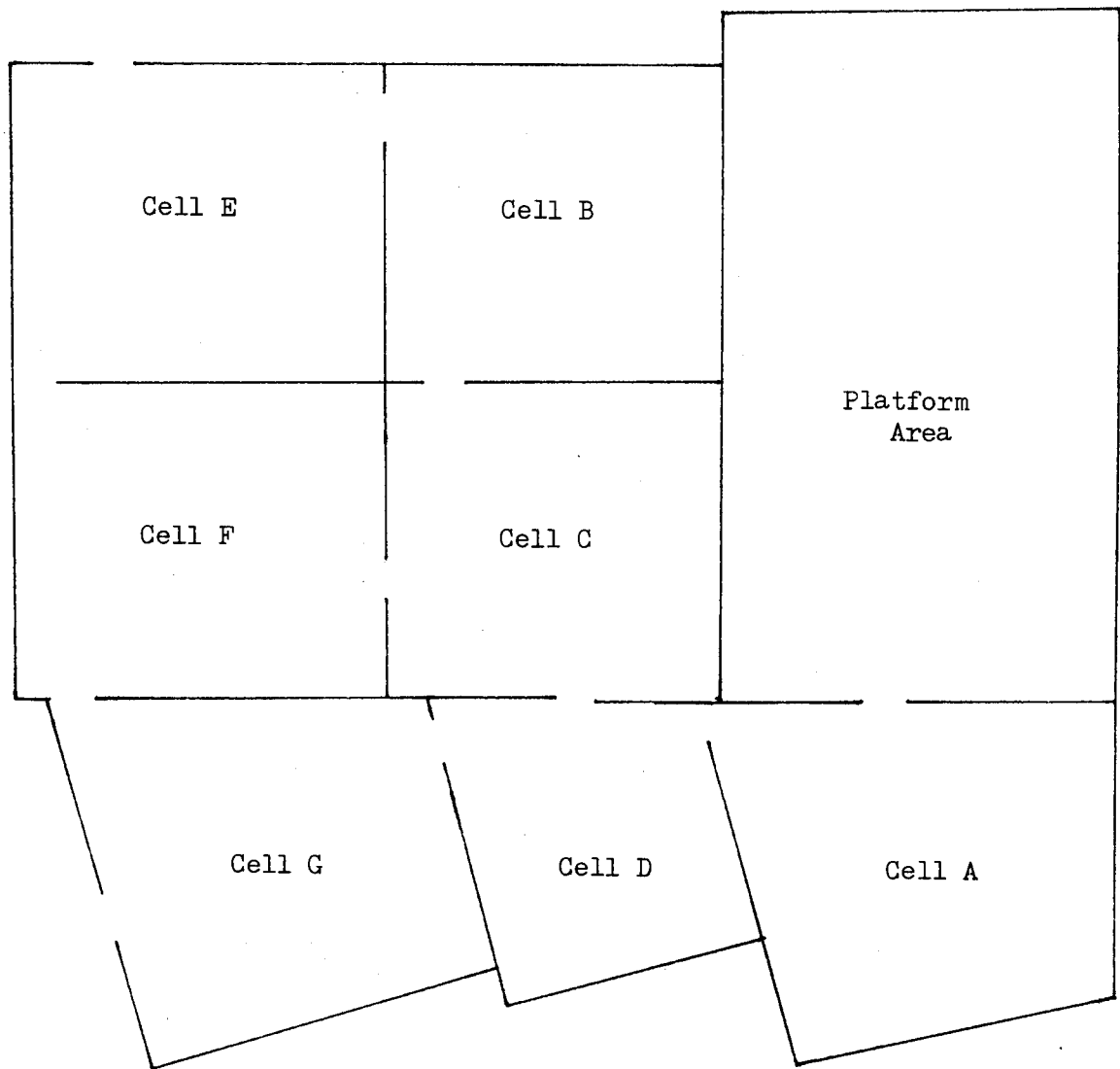


Figure 3. Architectural subdivisions within the Moraduchayuc compound.

point in time the Cell which was abandoned was that which had the fewest number of occupied Cells directly accessible to it, and was the Cell furthest from the entrance/exit of the compound. As rooms and Cells were abandoned they were occasionally blocked-off. Specifically, the doorway providing access between Cells B and C was blocked, as well as that providing access between Cells D and G. The last areas to be abandoned were the one Cell located at the main entrance to the compound (Cell G) and the area containing the platform structure. This conclusion is based on the fact that both areas are fairly clean of refuse. It is possible that the relatively small amount of material associated with these two areas represents that which was abandoned by the occupants when they left the compound. As such, the artifacts may reflect the types of activities carried out in the specific rooms, a situation which is obviously not the case for those areas which were used as dumping sites.

The one feature that stands out immediately when the material from the various dumps is compared is the similarity in the frequencies of different artifact types. Basically the only difference between the various dumps is in the density of the refuse, which is a product of differences in their length of use. These similarities in the composition of the dumps suggests that there were no major changes in the types of activities associated with the compound, at least during the period of its progressive abandonment. This would suggest that the functions of the compound remained the same during the period of its progressive abandonment, but that, through time, they were being performed on a smaller scale.

In all the dump deposits the frequency of individual serving

vessels (bowls and cups) is about 70% of the ceramic assemblage. While we lack comparative data from Huari, we do have some data from an early component at the Middle Horizon site of Jargampata (Isbell 1977). In this assemblage, representing domestic refuse, the frequency of individual serving vessels is only 50%, which is considerably lower than that for the Moraduchayuc compound. These differences suggest that serving activities were being carried out on a larger scale than the purely domestic within the Moraduchayuc compound. The types of jars associated with the compound also support this interpretation. The associated jar forms are almost all those associated with serving functions (bottles, larger narrow-necked jars, and pitchers), or those used for the fermentation and short-term storage of chicha (large, wide-mouthed jars). Vessels which are extremely rare in the material associated with the compound are large storage jars and cooking vessels (as indicated by the presence of sooting). However, the possibility that cooking or food preparation was carried out within the compound cannot be completely ruled out, as the dump deposits do contain a fair amount of ash and two areas which may have been hearths were found, as were a few large tripod bowls which from the extensive sooting on their interiors appear to have functioned as braziers. Based on the present data all that can be concluded is that food preparation and cooking does not appear to have been a major activity carried out within the compound.

With respect to non-ceramic artifacts, the bone in the dump deposits is virtually all from camelids, and there is an under-representation of skulls, vertebrae and ribs. The vast majority of the bones are long bones, which is the portion of the animal which

contains the most meat. This would suggest that the animals were being butchered outside the compound, with the more choice parts being brought into the compound for consumption there.

Chipped stone from the dump deposits consists solely of broken tools and small chips from the reworking of tools. There are no cores or other debris indicating the manufacture of chipped stone tools within the compound. This suggests that only finished tools were brought into the compound.

Shell, copper and Spondylus, while present in low frequency in the dump deposits, occurs solely as finished items and unworked pieces. Virtually no debris from the manufacture of these items was found in the refuse deposits within the compound.

Thus, the ceramic and non-ceramic artifacts found in the refuse generated within the compound indicate that the activities carried out were, in the main, involving consumption and use of finished products rather than their production.

While the material from the dump deposits provides information on the types of activities carried out within the compound as a whole, it is of little use in determining the uses to which the different rooms were put. The last Cell to be abandoned, Cell G, was not used as a dumping area and the material associated with the rooms in this Cell may reflect the patterning of activities within the Cell. The eastern corridor and an adjacent portion of the courtyard were excavated in this Cell. The courtyard area was relatively free of material, which suggests that this area was probably kept clean. The corridor is subdivided into four small rooms by crosswalls. The two northernmost rooms, which do not have

direct access to the courtyard, contain little material, but what is there consists mostly of well-finished, elaborately decorated bowls and cups, and a number of miniature vessels. It is possible that these rooms served as storage areas for vessels used only occasionally, perhaps in ceremonial or ritual activities. The room at the southern end of the corridor is also not directly accessible from the courtyard, and contains the remains of five large, wide-mouthed jars, which were probably used for the fermentation and storage of chicha. The room in the corridor which has direct access to the courtyard seems to have been used for more day-to-day activities, rather than storage as seems to have been the case for the other rooms in the corridor. This room contains a high frequency of the less elaborate, 'domestic' wares, as well as some ash, a few sooted jars and pieces of a large tripod bowl which may have been used as a brazier. This suggests that food preparation was carried out in this area.

We are left with the question of whether the organization of activities within this corridor can be generalized to the other corridors within the compound. While this could be the case, it is also a fact that the corridors in the compound are not architecturally identical. That is, the corridor in Cell G is subdivided into four small rooms by crosswalls, yet other corridors in the compound are divided into two or three rooms, while some do not appear to have been divided into any smaller rooms. Because of these differences, it would seem unlikely that the other corridors in the compound were used in exactly the same fashion as this one. However, it seems likely that, in general, the courtyard areas were kept clean and used for transit, while the corridors were used for storage.

The architecture in the section of the compound containing the stone-filled platform structure is quite different from the pattern of courtyards surrounded by corridors found in the rest of the compound. This would indicate that the functions or activities carried out in this area were different from those carried out in the Cell sector of the compound as well. As was the case with the ceramic material associated with the Cell sector of the compound, there is a high frequency of ceramic forms associated with the consumption of food and drink found in the platform area. The major difference between the ceramics associated with these two areas (the platform area vs. the Cell sector), is that there is an even higher frequency of individual serving vessels (80% of the ceramic assemblage), and a considerably lower frequency of large jar forms in the deposits associated with the platform area. There is also a higher frequency of well-finished, elaborately decorated bowls and a lower frequency of less well-finished, undecorated bowls associated with the platform area as compared to those associated with the Cell sector. There are no cooking vessels associated with the platform area. As was the case with the Cell sector of the compound, there are only finished items and no debris associated with their manufacture or production in the deposits associated with the platform area. The major difference between the non-ceramic material associated with these two areas of the compound is that there is a considerably higher frequency of luxury items, especially Spondylus and lapis lazuli associated with the platform area. Thus, the high quality of the ceramic vessels, the absence of 'domestic' activities (such as cooking), and the high frequency of luxury items associated with the platform

area suggests that this area may have been used for ritual or ceremonial activities. The fact that the platform area is located so far from the entrances to the compound suggests that its use was restricted to the occupants of the compound.

In conclusion, the fact that the Moraduchayuc compound was built using corporate labor and in the style of Huari administrative architecture suggests that it was built to serve an administrative function. The artifactual material associated with the compound suggests that the range of activities producing refuse within the compound were fairly restricted. That is, the material remains indicate that most of the activities within the compound involved the consumption or use of finished products, rather than their production or manufacture. The ceramic assemblage associated with the compound contains 70% individual serving vessels, and the jars are primarily forms used for serving as well. Large storage jars and cooking vessels are extremely rare in these deposits. Also lacking are the kinds or amount of debris associated with the manufacture of either tools or luxury items. For these reasons I would argue that the compound served as the residence(s) of Huari administrators.

The construction of the compound was begun in Middle Horizon 1B, which is the period in which we first begin to find evidence of the regional expansion of the Huari state. The construction of the compound at this time could have been in response to a need for more administrative personnel at the state capital, as a result of the regional expansion of the state. Still within the period of the territorial expansion of the Huari state, an additional three to five Cells were built on the south side of the compound. Again, this

could have been in response to the need for more administrative personnel as the state continued to expand.

At some time later the progressive abandonment of the compound began. The least accessible Cells were abandoned first, and converted into dump sites for refuse generated within the still occupied areas of the compound. The abandonment of the compound was a fairly slow and gradual process. This would suggest that it was not the result of any drastic changes within the Huari administrative system. The progressive abandonment of the Moraduchayuc compound could be reflecting the slow decline of the Huari state, but it could just as easily be the reflection of other types of changes in the state administrative system, such as its progressive de-centralization. Obviously the answers to these broader questions can only be found through future research.

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