

Gallinazo, Vicús and Moche in the development of complex societies along the north coast of Peru



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Without having agreed to do it in advance, the majority of the participants in the present symposium arrived at the same general conclusions regarding the nature of the Gallinazo (or Virú) phenomenon and its relation with Moche (Larco Hoyle 1945, 1948). Christopher Donnan (this volume) was probably the most emphatic of all, arguing that what we call Gallinazo is nothing more than the popular material culture produced on the north coast before, during and even after the development of Moche states. Only negative-painted vessels, in the form of Gallinazo Negative and Carmelo Negative ceramic types (Ford 1949), would represent distinct elite styles, easily differentiated from artifacts used by the popular substratum (Figs. 1 y 2).

All the participants to this symposium, at least to some extent, were in agreement with this interpretation, contributing evidence to support the idea that the Gallinazo did not disappear with the irruption of the Moche phenomenon, having coexisted and even in some cases survived its collapse. In the better-documented studies, as in Dos Cabezas and Mazanca (Donnan, this volume), and in the La Le-

che Valley (Shimada and Maguiña 1994) the preexistence of Gallinazo as a crucible in which the Moche identity was forged, is indisputable. It seems that with this agreement we can at last explain the strange, yet not so rare, presence of Gallinazo ceramics in Moche burials and other contexts. Until now the only plausible explanation for such occurrences was that Gallinazo objects were ancient ceramic reused by the Moche or Moche copies of Gallinazo wares. Now we can assume that the presence of Gallinazo ceramics inside rich Moche graves simply correspond to a «contamination» of lower status items.

Since there is near unanimity on this crucial point, it seems that we have arrived to a consensus and that we can all go home satisfied with the results of this magnificent conference. However, there are still loose ends in this formulation; some things are left unexplained, and new hypothesis will need to be explored in the light of the new paradigm. Here I would like to highlight those aspects which I believe still need to be addressed. Ultimately I would like to argue that there was more continuity between Gallinazo and Moche than we had originally believed.

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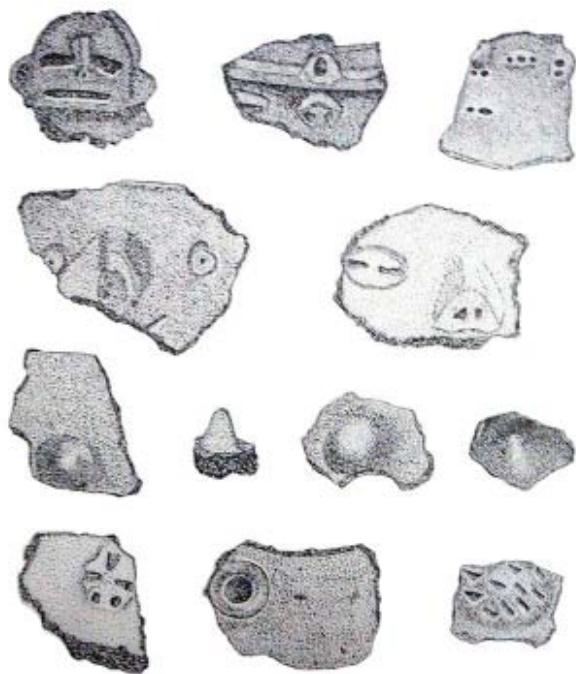


Fig. 1. Castillo Negative sherds registered at Huaca de La Cruz. From Strong and Evans 1952.



Fig. 2. Carmelo Negative sherds registered at Huaca de La Cruz. From Strong and Evans 1952.

The Gallinazo Phenomenon

One peculiar thing about Gallinazo is that many archaeologists working in the North Coast of Peru feel uncomfortable defining it as a culture, a society, or a style. As a result—and until we find a better term—it is simply described as a «cultural phenomenon,» which developed in multiple regions along the north coast during the first millennia of the present era, materializing in artifacts, particularly ceramics, which share forms and decoration elements and techniques. But how was this homogeneity achieved? We do not know if there existed some form of coordination between the different entities which produced Gallinazo objects, a coordination that could be blamed for the shared forms and decorations. Traditionally we have assumed that the Gallinazo phenomenon had no strong internal cohesion nor that it was coordinated throughout the north coast. Given these assumptions, it seemed constraining to conceive the Gallinazo as a culture or as a society, since we assume that the different nuclei were not integrated under a common organizational structure, that they lacked centralization, that their populations did not live inside large settlements, that their burials did not reflect great social complexity and that their art was not especially elaborate. Although Heidy Fogel (1993) argued several years ago but without much evidence, that there existed a «Gallinazo State,» most scholars have been reluctant to accept that the state-level of socio-political organization was achieved before Moche times (see Castillo 1999). As new evidence clearly shows (this volume in particular), the Gallinazo phenomenon occurred throughout the north coast of Peru, thus achieving one important condition of complex societies, a far reaching extension and a large population. As we will discuss, this last statement is limited by the lack of detailed information about each of those independent developments.

It is now time to address the organizational nature of this phenomenon, its level of complexity, and its institutions. Were the Gallinazo a number of complex chiefdoms (*cacicazgos*) which were independent and isolated from each other? Were they articulated through some form of still uncertain cultural mechanism, process or institution? Or, as Larco and Fogel suggested, was Gallinazo an expansive and territorial state? A comparison with the Moche can be quite illustrative to address these questions.

One critical point to acknowledge is that recent breakthroughs in the study of the Moche were

heralded by a better understanding of its political and social organization. Recognizing that the Moche had been organized in multiple interacting polities, (Fig.2) each one developing through distinct historical processes (see Castillo and Uceda 2008, Quilter 2002) has had two main effects. First, it has refocused the study of the Moche on its regional expressions, since each one was a political entity with a particular historical development, more or less integrated to the Moche phenomenon by ritual performance and social interactions of the elites. Second, this new perspective has made the centralized and hierarchical model of the Moche inconsistent and full of contradictions (Bawden 2001, 2004, Castillo and Donnan 1994, Dillehay 2001, Shimada 1994). If Moche was a unique, centralized state, it could hardly have been embodied regionally by the presence of totally different ceramics styles. Similarly, it is hard to see how the «state styles» (for example, Moche IV fine-line ceramics and portrait jars) could have only been ubiquitous in some regions but not in others. Finally, it is difficult to understand how the development processes—materialized in the speed and direction of the formal and stylistic changes—could have been so different from one region to another. One important aspect of the intellectual process that lead to the new and complex theoretical



Fig. 3. Map of the North Coast showing the most important Mochica Sites.

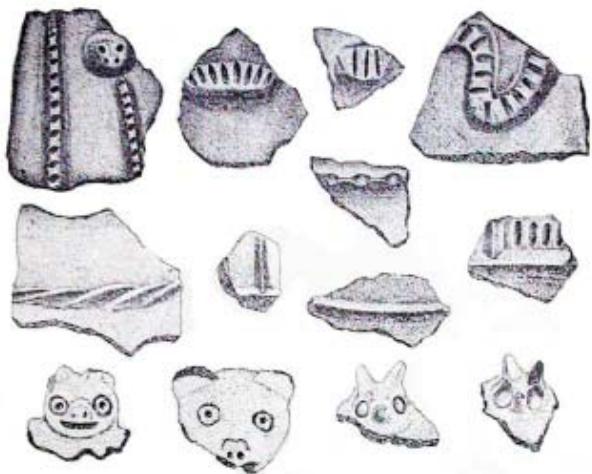


Fig. 4. Castillo Modeled sherds registered at Huaca de la Cruz. From Strong and Evans 1952.

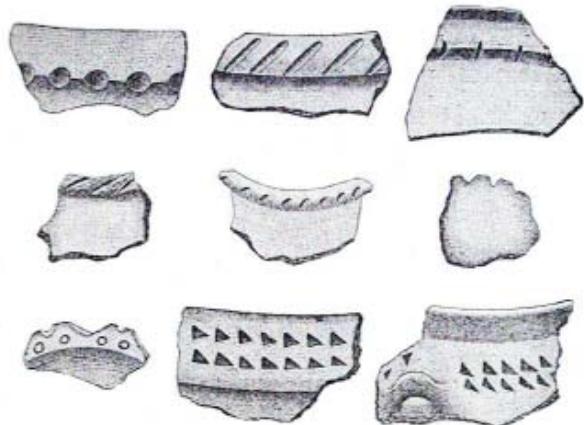


Fig. 5. Castillo Incised sherds registered at Huaca de la Cruz. From Strong and Evans 1952.

conception of the Moche (a complex of independent states that had followed different developments) was that it was formulated while we still lacked all the empirical data to support it, and thus, the model led the search for the evidence (Fig.3). It has been quite interesting to see how as a better understanding of social and political organization arose, many other elements (for instance, the distinctions in arts and iconography, the evolutions of their styles, the developments and uses of ideology, stratigraphic and metric chronologies, the differentiated process that led to their decadences and collapses) all fall in their right place, producing a more coherent and diversified vision of the Moche.

While trying to establish the politic and social nature of Gallinazo, it is essential to question its origin and cultural homogeneity, or maybe we should first

try to define if such homogeneity existed, if there is a universe of forms and designs that would correspond to a grand Gallinazo tradition. Now that we are certain of the multiple incarnations of the phenomenon, a detailed, comparative study of its forms, techniques and decorations is in order. The ceramics that we usually call Gallinazo is surprisingly similar all along the north coast and throughout almost a millennium—particularly so with regard to medium-quality ceramic objects. But agreeing that Gallinazo was a popular style (in the sense of the «style of the people») along the north coast for a large part of the Early Intermediate period does not explain the reasons behind this formal and stylistic homogeneity. In other words, it does not explain why and how the production of a large number of people along the coast over several centuries could have come to harmonize itself and why and how it came to share so many common traits. The most popular and domestic ceramics consider under the Gallinazo banner, the Castillo Plain, Castillo Incised, and Castillo Modeled styles, are so similar in all the regions where we find them, thus sharing a great stylistic coherence, that could not have been the result of chance, nor the product of a phenomenon of cultural convergence (Figs.4 y 5). We should expect that in one thousand years many production units (for example, ceramic workshops) would have «drifted» into differentiated styles.

The existence of homogeneity among the multiple Gallinazo compels us to consider the existence of harmonizing mechanisms. If there exist similarities between artifacts that we call Gallinazo over 400 km of coastal landscape, between the Piura Valley to the north to the Santa Valley to the south, it is necessarily because there existed some form of connection or channels of communication between the different people that inhabited these regions and produced those objects. It seems acceptable to me to assume that this connection was the result of some form of affinity—something common and shared by all—that could have had a political, economic or ideological character, but was, anyhow, articulated through norms that harmonized the production, most likely mechanisms of social interaction such as regional commercial exchanges and ceremonial activities or exogamous marriage and bridal exchanges.

Taking into account that the subject matter of Gallinazo ceramics art are generally not divinities, supernatural beings, priests or members of the elites, but rather ordinary men and women without sumptuous attire, it would seem that there was no

need to represent the characters of their religious cosmos. The absence of such characters, more directly connected with the realms of ideology or politics, would deny the objects produced in this style the condition of materializations of a dominating ideology, and as the instrument of a strategy of control and manipulation. This «low profile» of Gallinazo iconography reinforces what Donnan (this volume) described as the «popular character of this ceramic». In this perspective Gallinazo objects would express the identity of the lower classes, without other function than to express their aesthetics, and conventions.

The economic articulation and interdependence of Gallinazo political entities, and the production and distribution of goods among and between them would seem to have been the least important factor producing an harmonization of material culture. It is likely that autarkic models were the norm among Gallinazo communities and that the most important economic complementarities were developed vertically with the highlands. Jean-François Millaire (this volume) maximized the political, ideological and economic fragmentation of Gallinazo society, arguing that the political configuration of those societies could have corresponded to a «city-state system:» political entities that were internally strongly articulated but essentially independent from one another—each evolving inside a limited sphere and possibly engaging in confrontation and competitions with their neighbors. It is also improbable that there would have been a political or economic integration between the different regions where this phenomenon appeared, whereby individuals would be constantly in such contacts that a homogenization of their ceramic styles would result. Thus, the Gallinazo style could not be the result of political action or the effect of the coordination from a leader or from a supra-community entity.

If Gallinazo style was not the materialization of an organized religion, nor was it forged by north-coast-wide politics or economics, and it was clearly not a state style, because a Gallinazo state is unlikely, then one remaining explanation for the high homogeneity between the multiple regional expressions of the phenomenon is that it was produced by «social interactions». By social interactions I think in opportunities in which Gallinazo individuals coming from more or less isolated communities, were in contact with fellow Gallinazo, having the opportunity to experience the life ways of the others, their traditions, products, technologies, aesthetics, etc. If these interaction were of a more permanent nature,

for example when an individual born and raised in a community moved into another, the interactions between local «cultures», their reciprocal influences and continuous and more frequent contacts should have had a stronger effect. For instance, activities involving a regional gathering such as exchange markets, traditional festivals or religious ceremonies sponsored by the state or regional authority that are still quite frequent in the central Andes, could have had a cultural harmonization effect for those involved. On the other hand, and equally plausible as an effect, participation in these events could have reinforced local identities and their expressions, for instance distinctions in clothing. Still today such events congregate people from different villages and are usually attended by traders and producers from remote places. For a ceramicist or a textile producer these events would provide ideal opportunities to observe and compare what other artisans were producing, the techniques and motives they were using to form and decorate pots and garments. If exchanges were possible, products obtained in these settings will later serve as sources of inspiration. Late Moche artisans, for example, were producing copies of polychrome Wari vessels short after these objects start to appear in their communities. Albeit the copies were not as good as the originals, it is interesting to note how much experimentation went on and how fast it occurred.

Even more important than the exchange of objects, regional gatherings have always been loci for social interactions and contacts leading to the inevitably mobility of people, particularly for the younger members of society, and assuming that exogamy was the rule. It is obvious that the most important source of stylistic influence comes from individuals, women and men, that are incorporated into a new community through matrimony or migration, contributing and «syncretizing» their own knowledge, iconography, techniques, manufacturing processes, understanding of materials, and their own aesthetics. The stylistic and formal homogeneity of Gallinazo domestic ceramics could have been one effect of such social interactions between different coastal communities.

Until now in this commentary, and throughout this volume, an assumption has gone unchallenged: that there existed a high stylistic homogeneity among artifacts produced by the Gallinazo from different parts of the north coast. That is precisely why we call all these expressions Gallinazo, and not other re-

gional names. This assumption has yet to be empirically proven, as it is essentially based on observed similarities between the most conspicuous artifacts in the archaeological record. We still need to define empirically if there was formal and stylistic homogeneity in the ceramic production from different regions, and if co-variations occurred—if variations in one region were coeval with variations in others. Clearly, we still lack detailed studies of Gallinazo ceramics in each region, as well as comparative works. Perhaps the similarities are more pronounced between certain regions and less between others. If at the end of this exercise we come to the conviction that there existed a large degree of homogeneity, consequently looking for its causes and its mechanisms will become even more imperative. Yet, stylistic homogeneity does not necessarily imply political integration. In Moche archaeology it took us nearly a hundred years to realize that the stylistic differences reflected in reality a highly complex political map composed of independent polities (Castillo ms1, Dillehay 2001).

From Gallinazo to Moche

The presence of Gallinazo ceramics in Moche contexts at Huaca de la Luna (Uceda 2001), Pampa Grande (Shimada 1994), Sipán (Alva 2004) and San José de Moro (Castillo 2001, 2003; Castillo et al. 2008; Del Carpio, this volume) leaves no doubt that the Moche traditions had a Gallinazo base, and that both traditions coexisted at least until the end of Moche. However, considering that the Moche themselves developed from the Gallinazo substratum into multiple polities, it is evident that the processes which led from Gallinazo to Moche were multiple and highly distinct, and were the result of different causes, conditions, opportunities and influences peculiar to each region of the north coast. In all cases, the Gallinazo materials are more frequent in the earlier phases of Moche development, leading us to the conclusion that the Moche evolved from the Gallinazo, and not that both evolved together from a common ancestor. But when and how did this evolution occur? And more important, what were the conditions under which and the reasons why this process took place?

Searching for the precise location or region where the Moche first appeared, that is to say, where the Gallinazo first transformed into the Moche, does not seem to be very productive. Subjective criteria,



Fig. 6. Gallinazo Pot registered at Dos Cabezas. From Donnan 2008.

as the apparent primitiveness of Moche artifacts from Piura, have been used as indication for the original mother land of the Moche (Kaulicke 1992, Klein 1967). It is evident now that the transformation were processes lasting for several hundred years, and happening simultaneously in many valleys of the north coast, , and thus, that each process has to be investigated independently. The Lambayeque, Jequetepeque, Chicama and Moche Valleys, all located in the core of Mocheland, seem to be the most likely candidates, and it is quite possible that each location cross-pollinated the others in a real co-evolution (Figs.6 y 7). The time frame for these processes is quite long, with dates that range the entire 200-500 a.D. period (Castillo and Uceda 2008).

Arguing too much about the time and location for this transformation could end up in an irrelevant competition that misses the most important question: Why did the Gallinazo transformed into the Moche? In my opinion, the window of opportunity that created the conditions for the development of the Moche from the oldest Gallinazo substratum was a sudden growth and development of Gallinazo groups between the first and second centuries before the present era, a growth such that a new elite, the Moche, defined by a new and distinct tradition. The only material basis that could have supported that kind of sudden development must have been an increase in resource availability due to better agricultural practices. This



Fig. 7. Gallinazo Pitcher registered at SJM in the Middle Moche Tomb.

should imply that either productivity was increased, that is that yields per hectare grew, or that the size of the available agricultural land was increased. But yields per hectare were probably at their maximum (considering the technology available at the time), so an increase in agricultural land seems to be the factor the supported social growth and development. There is plenty of reasons to believe that, at least in the Jequetepeque Valley, this period coincides with the extension of agricultural land through larger and better irrigation systems. In the first halve of the first millennium a.D., coinciding with the transformation of the Gallinazo into the Moche, the largest irrigation programs were started and completed in the Jequetepeque Valley with the incorporation of the northern Chamán Region (Castillo ms1.) (Fig.8). This process implied the construction of at least four mega channels and the necessary infrastructure for water distribution. Access to new lands, control of waters and irrigation systems, and development of strategies of control and administration of natural resources created the opportunities and conditions for increasingly more acute social, political, and economic differentiations (Castillo ms1). A new social class, which benefited from this new source of wealth, seems to have emerged in the core of the Gallinazo society. The Moche seem to have been this new social class, at first as a segment of Gallinazo, but slowly transforming the entire Gallinazo society into a new



Fig. 8. Map of the Expansion Stage of the cultivable lands in the Jequetepeque Valley showing the principal irrigation canals.

cultural phenomenon. New social classes and unequal economic relationships between social segments required an ideological superstructure to justify and legitimize the new social order. At the same time as the Moche were evolving from their ancestors a revolution was happening in the realm of ritual, performance and the production of the necessary materializations of these new ideas. Again the transition between Gallinazo and Moche was a time of extreme creativity and productivity that went into the production of both portable objects of unparalleled quality and craftsmanship, as well as monumental architecture to support the new rituals. The material expressions of this ideology served to differentiate the Gallinazo commoners from the Moche elites and legitimize their control over the new source of wealth (DeMarrais et al. 1996).

Let us analyze what is currently known of the formal and stylistic processes which led north coast ceramics from Gallinazo to Moche in some key regions. In Piura, the Gallinazo substratum evolved into an elaborate Early Moche style that we associate with the Loma Negra tombs and with Moche-Vicús ceramics. During the middle phase, Vicús Moche Medio, artifacts of all kinds stemmed-off the Moche style and became a style of its own with forms, techniques and singular decorative motifs (Makowski 1994).

In the Lambayeque region it is clear that Gallinazo political entities coexisted with Moche polities during both the Early and Middle periods. Izumi

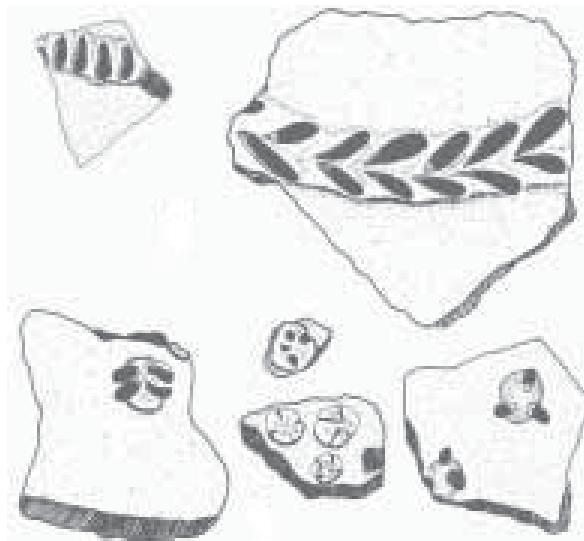


Fig. 9. Gallinazo Negative sherds registered at Huaca de la Luna. From Gayoso and Gamarra 2008.

Shimada and Adriana Maguiña (1994) proposed to divide this region into two, with the Gallinazo population in control of the La Leche Valley, to the north, while Moche seems to be represented on sites located in the Chancay-Reque Valley, to the south. During the Late Moche period both late Gallinazo ceramics and Moche V ceramics are found together at Pampa Grande (Shimada 1994). This is quite odd because Moche V was circumscribed to the Chicama Valley (Castillo and Uceda 2008).

In Jequetepeque, work by Donnan (2001) has showed that the Moche style derived in its early stage from a solid and well-established Gallinazo style. During the Middle Moche period, the Gallinazo style declines to the advantage of Moche-style ceramics, which by then start to include utilitarian forms. By the Late Moche period, the Gallinazo style had nearly disappeared in this region.

In Chicama and Moche, evidence indicates the coexistence of Gallinazo and Moche ceramic traditions during the Early and Middle Moche periods, but we still lack data to argue that one tradition derived from the other or that they simply coexisted side by side. Santiago Uceda, Henry Gayoso and Nadia Gamarra (this volume) and Gabriel Prieto (Prieto 2004) have demonstrated that at Huaca de la Luna the coexistence of both ceramic styles, Moche represented in ceremonial and decorative wares and Gallinazo represented in utilitarian wares, was continuous and could not be the product of two distinct societies, but rather of two distinct ceramic production

RELACIÓN DE LAS HUACAS

1.- Huaca de Santa Clara	10.- Huaca de La Plata
2.- Huaca de Virú Viejo	11.- Huaca de Huancaco
3.- Huaca de Napu	12.- Huaca de Tanta Caujin
4.- Huaca de Mochan	13.- Huaca Larga
5.- Huaca de Las Colcas	14.- Huaca Tanta Luchu
6.- Huaca de Calanga	15.- Huaca María
7.- Grupo de Santa Elena	16.- Huaca El Castillo
8.- Grupo de Las Vilas	17.- Huaca de San Juan
9.- Grupo del Gallinazo	18.- Grupo de Soraque

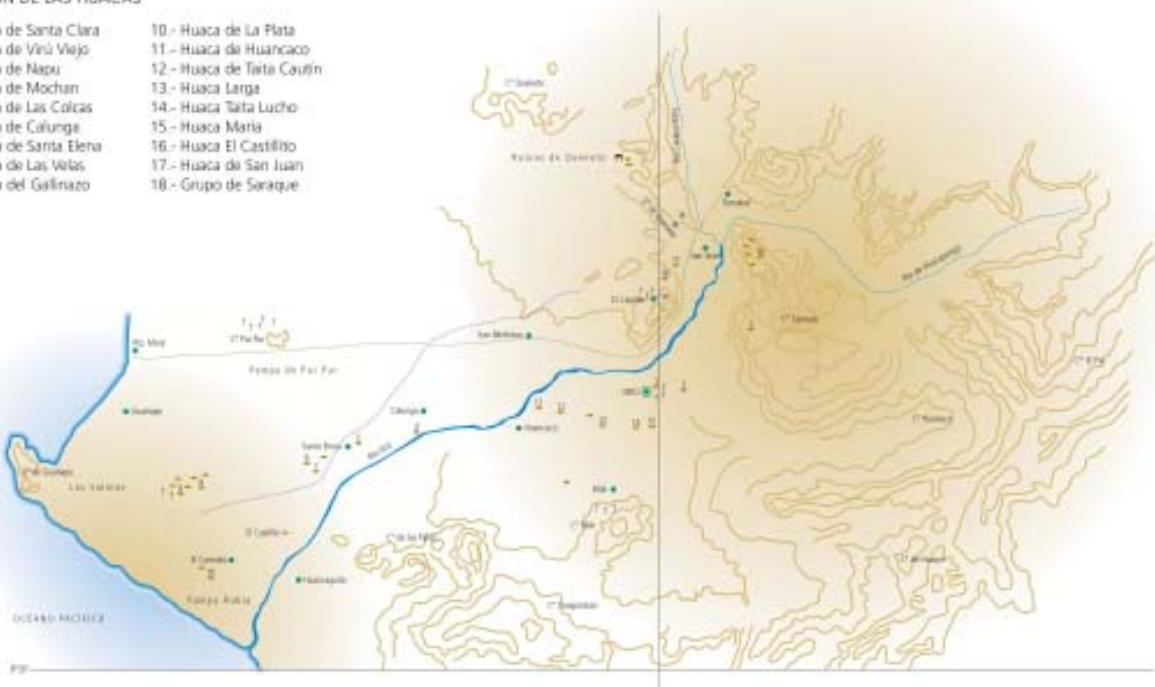


Fig. 10. Map of the Viru Valley indicating the most important archaeological sites. From Larco 1994.

units produced and used by the same people (Fig.9).

South of Moche, in the Virú and Santa valleys, a vigorous Gallinazo style existed, probably reflecting the existence of a more complex political formation than those that existed to the north —a true state with its capital at the Gallinazo Group (Bennett 1950; Fogel 1993; Strong and Evans 1952)(Fig.10). The latter was apparently incorporated into the Moche state based in the Moche and Chicama valleys through

a process of military conquests (Strong and Evans 1952; Willey 1953, 1974; cf. Millaire, this volume).

The reconstruction of the processes that lead from Moche to Gallinazo— or that permitted the coexistence of both traditions— does not necessarily imply understanding of the factors that produced those changes. It is common in Andean archaeology to describe a phenomenon, yet fail to understand its causes and conditions. In the case of the transition from Gallinazo to Moche, and the survival of Gallinazo as a popular component of Moche, the conditions remain unclear but the processes are clearly different in every region, yet in all of them the Gallinazo phenomenon shows a high degree of homogeneity. The Gallinazo phenomenon and its expression in domestic ceramics survived all the processes that transformed Gallinazo to Moche, which led to different political formations and which had distinct intensities depending on the region. Does it mean that the populations who produced those objects we call Gallinazo survived the transformations that led to the creation of the Moche with fairly little changes? Or that those persons, which were already fully «incorporated into the Moche culture,» maintained a few characters of their former tradition, particularly the production of domestic ceramics in the fashion of their Gallinazo ancestors?(Fig.11).

These issues bring us back to question the nature



Fig. 11. Gallinazo Face-Pitcher registered at SJM in the Middle Moche tomb M-U813.

of the Gallinazo phenomenon. Was Gallinazo an ethnic identity or simply a way of making ceramics shared by ethnically distinct populations? Was the stylistic homogeneity observed a result of cultural affinity? We have ruled out that the high degree of stylistic homogeneity could have been the outcome of a political integration, or the product of conscious decisions taken by the elites. Quite the contrary, Gallinazo appears to have been a popular substratum that wasn't controlled by political institutions nor influenced by the dominant ideology. And if this was the case, then how did the communication canals that allowed this homogeneity survived all orders of political and economic transformations? It seems that, beneath the formal practices and relations sanctioned by the state, there were networks of contacts and communications between popular segments of the populations, across the whole north coast of Peru and through an extended period of time. If we can confirm the existence of such an odd process, a popular culture that acts as a river that runs through and under the Moche state, that defies the logic of all our notion of political integration, we would still need to clarify, among other things, its nature, its units of action, its spheres of interaction, and its mechanisms of harmonization.

Investigation and Reconstruction of the Gallinazo Phenomenon

One of the limits that we face in reconstructing the Gallinazo phenomenon is the limited quantity of empirical information available from controlled conditions of investigation. So far, only a few investigation projects have specifically focused on Gallinazo. A majority of archaeologists have come to study this phenomenon in the process of conducting salvage projects or as part of wider investigations on north coast cultural history. After Wendell Bennett's investigations at the Gallinazo Group (Bennett 1950) more than fifty years ago, no excavations have been undertaken at this site, even though its importance for understanding this phenomenon is unquestionable. A new study of the Gallinazo Group is urgent, but this needs to be done as part of a long-term and large-scale project in order to gain access to the details of the site's occupational history, ceramic sequence and the activities and rituals that were performed therein.

Regrettably, a large part of north coast archaeology was based on surface surveys with little

or no systematic excavations. Even though Gordon Willey (1953) demonstrated the importance and the validity of settlement pattern studies precisely through his original work in the Virú Valley, this kind of research by itself does not solve all the problems, nor does it answer all the questions, and it is particularly ill equipped to deal with occupational and functional matters, or with social relations and activities. Though this method usually offers a broad picture, the quantity of information associated with each component is usually very small and lacks proper context. Long-term excavations programs, on the other hand, offer detailed images with an abundance of material, but which is limited to the sites under study. This dichotomy brings us to the ever-lasting academic paradox where it is unclear whether it is better to know a lot about a few things or little about a larger number of things. Studies based exclusively on surface surveys, surface collections and mapping, whatever the methods used, usually present a distorted image of the reality of the past. They are essentially based on what appears on the surface and what has not been reclaimed by later occupants of the site. On the other hand, research based exclusively in the a site, whether typical or exceptional, without a broad understanding of regional patterns of site distribution, their relations and interactions with the environment, as in the case of the excavations conducted in Sipan since 1987, is also not desirable.

Consider, for example, what we would know of Huaca de la Luna if this site had been investigated using only «superficial» methods, or through a small-scale excavation project. In fact, we know the answer to this question, since the site was studied in this way during the 1970s with results that were frankly deficient, particularly in light of the work conducted by Santiago Uceda and Ricardo Morales there since 1991 (Uceda 2001). It is clear that scale of the investigation and the duration of the projects are two factors that strongly influence our capacity of understanding the phenomena that we study. The scale of the excavations at Huaca de la Luna, El Brujo or San José de Moro provide archaeologists with complex images of a past and not only a collection of their most salient and «superficial» features.

It is imperative that more research projects are undertaken on Gallinazo sites. Those should be multidisciplinary projects dedicated to studying large parts of those settlements and last long enough so that the investigators' ideas and interpretations can mature and be confronted during subsequent field

seasons. With regard to Gallinazo, a lot still needs to be done in terms of field archaeology, including excavations of domestic and ceremonial settlements, tombs, temples, workshops and storage facilities. This type of investigation should produce the necessary data a serious attempt to reconstruct the «Gallinazo World.» Clearly, efforts like the ones which brought us to this conference, and the papers presented in this volume, are steps in the right directions.

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