

## **Contested Points about the Cultural Evolution of the Lurín Valley during the Early and Late Intermediate Periods**

This text attempts to briefly address the chronological, stylistic, and contextual problems that emerge when archaeologists deal with the cultural sequence of the Lurín Valley. Influenced by culture-historical approaches, some researchers have trusted ceramic stylistic evidence and sequences as the principal source for investigating the political configuration of the Lurín Valley. Frequently, this results in considering the presence of a specific style as a direct indication of certain political manifestations and social developments. As detailed in the following paragraphs, we propose instead a contextual approach to this topic, which is supported by evidence recovered during the excavations at the sites discussed in the article.

The first issue we need to consider in order to understand the complex political configuration of this valley is the extent of centralization that the Lima culture exerted, if it did at all, on the Lurín area, and in what time period this may have occurred. Although it has been proposed that the Lurín population had been completely integrated into the Lima cultural milieu by Middle Lima times, evidence found during our excavations leads us to propose the existence of more independent groups who had indirect ties with the Lima elites from the Rímac and Chillón valleys. Initial work, such as Patterson's, suggests that the presence of Middle Lima ceramic scatters in the Lurín Valley is proof enough of the political presence of this society in Lurín. We consider that although the presence of ceramics does indicate contact between the regions, any other relations should not be assumed. Rather, they need to be confirmed by other archaeological data.

Another important aspect to discuss is whether the factors that led to the formation of the Lima state were related to external or internal processes. Makowski (2002:116) argues:

“There is no doubt that the Lurín valley was inhabited by different populations at the beginning of the Early Intermediate Period ... however, the presence of a mosaic of ceramic styles does not necessarily indicate political fragmentation, nor an “archipelago” model of spatial organization... It seems far more probable that there was a complex cultural system based on direct and indirect kinship as well as on an awareness of a common origin. This system allowed a cohesive ethnic group to dominate the valley. It is also likely, following the thesis advanced by Earle, that the diffusion of the Lima style through the coast and toward the headwaters of the valleys can be explained by the rise of a new form of political organization: the state. Nonetheless, this new organization appears relatively late in the chronological sequence and is probably related to conquest. The elite of the Lima state identified with a foreign pottery style and distinctive funerary ritual” (Makowski 2002:116).

The presence or absence of a specific ceramic style cannot directly be related to the social or political configuration of the Lurín Valley. That is to say, it is insufficient evidence to indicate the presence of centralized authority from the Lima culture. For us, the presence of Middle Lima ceramics in Lurín could represent cultural relations that do not necessarily imply direct or hierarchical political relations with Rimac. The evidence based on the changing layout of the Lote B site is proof in our eyes that there was a political change in the Late Lima period and that this came with growing political and economic centralization.

Makowski (2002) suggests that the Lima culture had a cohesive political system during this middle period, but we think that there is not enough evidence to support this.

Even if we were to try discussing the political formations present in the Lima culture in Makowski's terms, where emphasis is placed on complex religious ceremonies and kinship lineages as evidence of the emergence of a "power system," these lines of evidence are too speculative and we do not have enough reliable evidence in the archaeological record to work with.

The only article dealing with settlement patterns in the valley during the Early Intermediate period is the work of Patterson et al. (1982). This is a pioneering example of digital organization and synthesis of archaeological data, but a detailed analysis of the information reveals inadequacies in the presentation of the archaeological materials. For example, Patterson and colleagues present very general maps that make it impossible to identify site locations and they demonstrate an overreliance on a stylistic chronological scheme with nine phases that has been rejected by most of the researchers working on the Central Coast.

By complementing this work with a review of the field notes from Patterson's survey, we were able to see that, with the exception of Pachacamac, Patterson did not find monumental architecture from Middle Lima times. It also becomes evident that there were several small sites without decorated pottery around the agricultural frontier. This suggests that Patterson (1982) forced the identification of sites according to his own chronological scheme by comparing the ceramic shapes of decorated and undecorated fragments. In line with this evidence, we think that the Middle Lima occupation in the Lurín Valley was not as strong as in the Late Lima period. By contrast, in the Late Lima period there was an evident increase in monumental architecture and amount of decorated ceramics associated with the Lima culture. This process is similar to those reported for the Chillón and Chancay valleys and the middle part of the Rímac and Chillón valleys.

It has been mentioned that the lack of the local ceramic styles in Lote B is evidence that the site is a Middle Lima settlement. But this statement fails to consider that there are several different “local” styles and that neither their absolute nor their relative chronological positions are clear. Therefore, at this point we do not have a clear idea of what the local style was in the Lurín Valley before the Lima culture.

In general, it is difficult to apply Patterson’s chronological proposal to the context of the Lurín Valley, since the current line of thinking suggests that his divisions do not represent chronological differences and that there has been excessive division of a rather homogenous ceramic style. Furthermore, stratigraphic excavations do not support the stylistic division. Almost all articles published after 2000 question Patterson’s nine-phase chronological scheme. It is also worth noting that the presence of a Middle Lima platform in the Old Temple of Pachacamac is clear evidence of the symbolic role of Lima ceramics, independently if the Lima polity have or not direct control over the valley.

The fact that Middle Lima ceramics have been recovered from this building, but not in 343 rural sites found by Patterson. And the building it is at the core of the Pachacamac Sanctuary actually talks about the especial symbolic character of the building. If the building were the head of a provincial system in the valley, we should expect more Middle Lima ceramics founded in buildings at second or third tier sites.

Based on our continuous investigations throughout several sites in the valley, we suggest that the elite inhabitants of Lurín who in fact were under the cultural influence of Lima used their ceramics as symbol of prestige, but preserved their independence until the beginning of the Middle Horizon. There is plenty of literature from all around the world that shows how foreign ceramics and other sumptuary objects are used by local elites to justify their position of privilege, without meaning this foreign polity had political control

over local elites. Examples include Flannery (1968), Renfrew (1975), Mary Helms' (1979) seminal work on emulation models in Panama, or Gil Stein's analysis of Mesopotamia. Even in the Andes these ideas are not new. See, for example, Goldstein's (2000) work on the relationship between Tiwanaku and Moquegua.

In the specific case of Panquilma and the Late Intermediate to Late Horizon transition, most critiques are based on the assumption of a direct relationship between the introduction of foreign-style ceramics and changes in local political organization. We have discussed the shortcomings of this perspective early in this note. Quite to the contrary, in this article we actually propose that, in order to understand sociopolitical changes in rural communities during the transition between the Late Intermediate and Late Horizon period, we need to complement data regarding the presence of Inka-style ceramics with other lines of evidence.

A study of regional social dynamics based exclusively on the reconstruction of stylistic changes in ceramics runs the risk of obscuring the particularities of each local scenario, resulting in an impression of monolithic imperial control. In fact, there are many other scenarios and numerous examples in the literature that have successfully explained the minimum presence of Imperial-style ceramics in provincial contexts, rather than arguing that it was due to direct imperial control. This is the body of literature to which we are trying to contribute with this research.