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During the 1984 field season at Pacatnamu, the skeletal remains of fourteen young males were found buried in a deep defensive trench outside the entrance to the principal ceremonial complex of the city. The remains represent three groups of individuals who appear to have been ritually sacrificed and mutilated before being deposited in the trench. This paper presents the preliminary results of the excavation and analysis of this material.1

Location and Context

The mass burial was discovered just east of the primary entrance to the Huaca 1 Complex, in the bottom of the defensive trench that extends along the north side of the Inner Wall (Fig. 1; Donnan, City Walls, this volume). The skeletons were found while clearing the east face of the causeway that crosses the trench at this location. Today the trench is filled with sand, melted adobe, and wall collapse, capped by a layer of windblown sand that has banked up against the north side of the wall (Figs. 2,3). The fourteen human skeletons were found in three superimposed groups in the bottom of the trench in a matrix of sand, rubble, and refuse. The stratigraphic relationship of the skeletons suggests that individuals were placed in the trench on three separate occasions. For this reason they will be described below as Groups I, II, and III.

Group I

The uppermost group consists of four skeletons that lay approximately 2 meters below the present-day ground surface (Figs. 4-6). Associated with these skeletons was a fragmentary plain weave textile found under the pelvis of Individual 1 (possibly the remains of a loincloth) and several fragments of rope encircling the ankles of Individuals 1 and 2 (Figs. 7,8). The rope was poorly preserved, making it difficult to ascertain its original length or

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Figure 1. Isometric view of the northern portion of the Huaca 1 Complex (looking southeast) showing the location of the mass burial.

Figure 2. Plan of the northern entrance to the Huaca 1 Complex. The location of the profile in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Profile of the trench approximately 2 meters east of the causeway, indicating the stratigraphic position of the skeletons.
Figure 5. Group 1 (Individuals 1-4). The straight line at the top of the figure marks the eastern face of the causeway across the trench; the irregular vertical lines indicate the contour of the trench walls at the level at which the skeletons were found. The postcranial skeleton of Individual 4 is indicated by dotted lines because it extends beyond the original 2 x 3 meter excavation unit (see Fig. 6). Note the splayed position of the skeletons, and that all four individuals are missing the left radius.
Figure 6. Group 1, Individual 4, found furthest east from the walkway across the trench. An isolated human femur lies under the right forearm. Isolated bones that could not be associated confidently with any particular individual are indicated by letters in the illustrations. Note the absence of the left radius and the location of a cluster of bones from the left hand lying midway up the forearm.
the way it encircled the ankles. However, the position of the feet of Individuals 1 and 2 indicated that the rope did not bind the ankles tightly together (Fig. 5). Although the purpose and function of the rope is conjectural, it may have served to hobble the individuals or to restrict their movement in some way.

Each of the four skeletons in Group 1 shows evidence of multiple wounds. Numerous perimortem fractures and punched-out lesions are present on the vertebrae and ribs, indicating that the individuals were stabbed repeatedly in the chest and abdominal region with a pointed object (Figs. 9,10). The number of stab wounds each individual re-

2. "Perimortem" refers to wounds that occurred at or around the time of death of an individual. With reference to injuries to bone, a perimortem wound is one that occurs while the bone is still fresh or "green."
Figure 10. Reassembled vertebral column of Individual 3. Pins are inserted in the punched-out lesions of the vertebrae to indicate the location and orientation of the wounds. In addition to five penetrating wounds, two glancing blows can be seen on the ventral aspect of vertebrae T8 and T11. Note the variety of angles of the entry wounds, suggesting that more than one individual was involved in stabbing the victim. Note also the cluster of wounds in the vertebral levels T6-T9. If the wounds were delivered by a spear or javelin, as is suggested in the text, considerable accuracy of delivery is indicated by such a tight grouping. Perhaps not coincidentally, the heart is located between vertebral levels T5 and T9.
Figure 11. Right: Two sharpened bone fragments found in direct association with the skeletons of Individuals 1 and 2. Left: A larger sharpened bone object found in another excavation unit at Pacatnamu. It may represent a more complete example of the type of object used to stab the victims. Scale is 5 cm.

Figure 12. One of the sharpened bone fragments (Fig. 11, below right) inserted into a penetrating wound in a vertebra of one of the victims. Its size and cross-sectional shape closely match the wound.

Figure 13. Left: Distal end of the left ulna of Individual 2 showing multiple fractures, cut marks, and a styloid process that has been partially cut away (arrows). Right: The scaphoid bone (left) and distal end of the left ulna (right) of Individual 1. The scaphoid bone shows numerous cut marks on its proximal articular surface (arrows). The styloid process of the ulna is broken away (arrow).
ceived can be conservatively estimated from thrusts that struck bone. Based on a count of individual lesions on the ribs and vertebrae, it is estimated that each of the four victims was stabbed a minimum of five to nineteen times (see Appendix).

The orientation of the fractures and penetrating lesions indicates that each individual was stabbed from several distinct angles in the front and sides of the chest and abdomen (Fig. 10). The large number of wounds and the variety in their orientation suggest that more than one person was involved in stabbing the victims. The wounds appear to have been delivered with great force; the location of the lesions indicates that the penetrating object frequently transversed the entire thoracic cavity before imbedding itself in bone on the opposite side of the body. This would suggest that the victims were not standing freely as they were repeatedly stabbed, since they would either have collapsed from the severity of the wounds or have been knocked down by the force of the blows. Presumably, the victims were stabbed while they were lying on the ground or fixed to some supporting object. Perhaps the ropes found around the ankles of Individuals 1 and 2 were used to tie the victims to a rack or post.\(^3\)

Two sharpened and polished fragments of bone, each approximately 2 centimeters in length, were recovered from matrix directly beneath the skeletons of Individuals 1 and 2 (Fig. 11, on right). These appear to have been points from weapons used to stab the victims. Comparison of their size and cross-sectional shape with the punched-out lesions of the victims’ vertebrae reveals a good match (Fig. 12). These bone fragments show a fractured edge at the end opposite the sharpened tip, suggesting that they were points broken from larger objects. One bone object found elsewhere at Pacatnamu (Fig. 11, on left) has a similar sharpened point and may represent a more complete example of the type of object used to inflict the stab wounds.

\(^3\) A number of depictions of individuals tied to racks are known from Moche ceramics. Several examples can be seen in Donnan 1978:figs. 137,147,148.
Figure 15. Group II, Level 1. Note that the left legs of Individuals 7 and 8 are missing, and that Individual 6 is disarticulated from the waist up. Note also the fractured left forearm of Individual 8 and the scattering of isolated bones and skull fragments (B-F) in the southeast quarter of the unit.
Figure 16. Group II, Level 2. Note the decapitated skeleton of Individual 10 and the two partial isolated legs (G and H). The left leg of Individual 9 is missing. Individual 12 consists of only an articulated sacrum, pelvis, and femora. Note the vulture skeleton (V1) at the feet of Individual 10.
Presumably, these bone points were originally hafted to a javelin or spear shaft; a bone point held in the hand could not have inflicted wounds of such depth.

In addition to multiple stab wounds, all four individuals in Group I have the radius missing from the left forearm (note in Figs. 5,6). Evidence of trauma is visible on the distal end of the left ulna of each individual, the styloid process having been fractured or cut off in each case. In Individual 2, the distal end of the bone is badly fractured and shows multiple cut marks (Fig. 13, on left). In Individual 1, cut marks can also be seen on the scaphoid bone where it articulated with the radius (Fig. 13, right). These fractures and cut marks indicate that the radius was intentionally removed from each of the victims. In three of the four individuals, the hand bones were found in proper anatomical position, indicating that the radius had been removed without completely severing the hand. In the case of Individual 4, however, the bones of the left hand were found lying halfway up the forearm, as though the hand had been either partially or completely severed (Fig. 6).

**Group II**

Approximately 15 centimeters below the first four skeletons lay a second group of eight individuals (Fig. 14). Because many of the skeletons lay
directly on top of one another, they were mapped in two levels (Figs. 15,16). The pattern of wounds in Group II is distinctive from that of Group I. There is no evidence of penetrating wounds of the type previously described, nor are the left radii missing. Instead, these individuals show evidence of a great variety of injuries, including fractures of the neck and limbs, deep slashes to the throat, and blows to the head (Fig. 17). One individual was decapitated, the left leg is missing from three, and two are largely disarticulated and the bones scattered (Figs. 15,16; Appendix). In addition to the human bones, the articulated skeleton of a black vulture lay near the right foot of Individual 10 (Rea, this volume).

Group III

Two more skeletons lay approximately 15 centimeters below Group II, and 10 centimeters above the floor of the trench. They rested on a thin deposit of sand and scattered cultural debris (Fig. 18). One of these individuals was decapitated (Fig. 19), and both appear to have had their legs forcibly pulled apart and their hips disarticulated (Fig. 20). The position of the arms of Individual 14 suggests that the shoulders were disarticulated as well. A second vulture skeleton was found in this level, lying over the right leg of Individual 14 (Fig. 18; Rea, this volume).

There are several similarities in the types of injuries seen in Groups II and III. One of the most distinctive is a pattern of injuries to the chest. This is seen in Individuals 5, 6, and 7 in Group II, and in both members of Group III. In all five of these individuals, the manubrium is bisected by an oblique cut extending from the jugular notch infero-laterally to the region of the left first intercostal space (Fig. 21). Associated with the bisected manubrium is a distinctive pattern of rib fractures. In each case many of the ribs show complete fractures at the neck. While fractured ribs were also found in Individuals 9 and 10 of Group II, the fractures were located in the midshaft region or at the sternal end of the rib rather than at the neck. Moreover, the manubria of Individuals 9 and 10 were not bisected.

The association of multiple cervical fractures of the ribs with a bisected manubrium in five different individuals suggests a relationship between
the two injuries. An incision deep enough to bisect the manubrium would almost certainly tear the underlying pleura, creating an opening into the chest cavity. Multiple fractures of the ribs at their vertebral articulations suggest that the rib cage was forcibly spread apart after an incision was made through the anterior wall of the chest.

Figure 22 illustrates the pattern of trauma observed in these skeletons and a hypothetical reconstruction of what this pattern may represent. According to the reconstruction, an incision was made at the jugular notch and extended downward and laterally, cutting through the spongy bone of the manubrium and avoiding the denser bone of the clavicle. The incision was then continued down the left side of the anterior aspect of the chest, severing the costal cartilages. Once the incision was complete, it would have been possible to grasp the opposing sides of the wound and pry the chest cavity open. The action of prying open the chest would put particular stress on the vertebral articulations of the ribs and could be expected to produce multiple cervical fractures. This means of opening an individual’s chest would have been swift and relatively easy.  

Temporal Relationships

The division of the fourteen individuals into three groups is based on the stratigraphic position of the skeletons and additional evidence that indicates temporal separation between different levels of the deposit. The skeletons of individuals in Groups I and II were separated by 10-15 centimeters of sand and rubble. In addition, the mandible of Individual 7 in the upper level of Group II and the ribs of adjacent Individual 8 show signs of bleaching and surface cracking, indicating that the bodies in Group II decomposed and lay exposed

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4. In a recently published Dumbarton Oaks volume, Robicsek and Hales (1984) present a review of ritual human sacrifice in the Maya area, including a reconstruction of the Mayan surgical approach to the thoracic cavity and a discussion of the practical aspects of chest opening.
Figure 22. The pattern of trauma observed in Individuals 5, 6, 7, 13, and 14.
A: Manubrium bisected by an incision extending from the sternal notch down to the first intercostal space. B: Fractured ribs. C: Hypothesized extension of the incision through the costal cartilages. An incision made in this manner would allow swift and easy access to the organs of the thoracic cavity.
on the surface for some period of time before being buried. How long these bodies lay exposed cannot be determined with certainty, but it is clear that some period of time (perhaps several months) elapsed between the deposition of the bodies in Groups I and II. The skeletons in Groups II and III were also separated by a thin deposit of rubble and sand. However, none of the bones in Group III show evidence of surface exposure.

Insect remains found in association with the skeletons provide additional information on the sequence of deposition of the three groups of victims. They were found in great numbers in the matrix surrounding the skeletons in all three groups, and represent scavenging insects that apparently entered the trench to feed upon the decomposing bodies. Analysis of the remains from the matrix around the skeletons of Groups II and III indicates that the bodies of these individuals were not buried immediately but were left exposed for a period of time estimated to have been between three weeks and several months (Faulkner, this volume).

**Physical Characteristics**

The fourteen individuals found in the trench constitute a homogeneous group in terms of age and sex, suggesting that they were not victims drawn at random from a mixed population. They are adolescent and young adult males, ranging in age from about 15 to 35 years, with an average age of approximately 21 years. All appear to have been in good physical health, and many show strongly developed muscle markings and robust skeletal morphology. Notable, however, is a high frequency of healed injuries on the skeletons of these individuals: two have healed rib fractures, two have pronounced osteoarthritis of the hip joints which may be the result of old injuries, and one has a

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5. Age determination is based on epiphyseal closure and morphology of the pubic symphysis. Sex determination in each case is based on pelvic morphology.
well-healed depressed skull fracture (Figs. 23, 24). Such a high frequency of old injuries suggests that as a group these individuals had a particularly active and hazardous life-style. If the healed wounds on their skeletons can be interpreted as "occupational" injuries, one might hypothesize that these are the skeletons of soldiers who perhaps had been taken prisoners of war.

However, evidence that the bodies were deposited in the trench in three temporally distinct episodes suggests that there may be some differences among the groups. Of the three, Group I appears to show the most distinctive characteristics. It has the highest average age, with all individuals estimated to be older than 20 years. It also has the oldest member, Individual 4, age ca. 35 years. In its pattern of injuries (stab wounds and removal of the left radii), Group I is clearly distinct. Although Groups II and III do not show an identical set of injuries, they share many common features (e.g., decapitation, disarticulation of joints, and opening of the chest), which suggest similar treatment of the victims. Morphological and metrical differences between the individuals in the three groups are difficult to evaluate, given such a small sample. There appear to be some differences in cranial morphology between Group I and Groups II and III, although at present this is only the subjective assessment of the author. Multivariate metrical comparison with cemetery populations from Pacatnamu may in the future provide some further information on group affinities of the victims.

**Chronology**

The approximate date of the deposit is based upon an assemblage of ceramic sherds recovered from around the skeletons and a radiocarbon determination on bone collagen from two of the individuals. Ceramics found associated with the skeletons include both Moche V and Chimu sherds. The latter indicate that the deposit corresponds to the Chimu occupation at Pacatnamu, after A.D. 1100. A combined sample of bone collagen from the femoral shafts of Individuals 2 and 4 from Group I yielded a radiocarbon determination of A.D. $1270 \pm 110^6$, which is consistent with both the ceramic material and the relative date for the construction of the Inner Wall and trench (Donnan, City Walls, this volume; McClelland, this volume). In terms of presently accepted chronology for the North Coast of Peru, the deposit dates to the early part of the Late Intermediate Period.

**Ethnographic and Iconographic Parallels**

References to methods of torture, execution, and human sacrifice in the pre-contact Andean area are scattered throughout many of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chronicles. While most writers refer to practices of the Inca, there are some references to pre-Inca peoples as well (Rowe 1946, 1948). References to human sacrifice are rare, but strangulation and cutting open the chest to remove the heart are two methods that have been described (Garcilaso de la Vega 1960[1614]: Book 1, Chap. 11; Rowe 1946:306).

A variety of punishments are known from the Inca Period for individuals accused of rebellion or other serious crimes against the state. These punishments include decapitation, dismemberment,

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6. Beta 10740. Unadjusted date: $680 \pm 110$ B.P. If this date is isotopically adjusted for a delta $^{13}C = -12.45$ 0/0, it is $880 \pm 110$ B.P.
Figure 25. A Moche IV fineline drawing showing a variety of activities involving nude male figures presumed to be prisoners. The central scene shows individuals being brought in litters (note rope around neck of individual at far right) before an elaborately dressed figure seated atop ceremonial architecture. Surrounding scenes show splayed bodies, a decapitated head (bottom, right) and depictions of what appears to be the ritual sacrifice of these individuals. Associated with these scenes are anthropomorphized black birds, possibly vultures.

mutilation, and exposure of the corpse to scavengers (Basadre 1937:207-210; Cieza de Leon 1984[1553]:Chaps. 19,52,70; Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980[1614]:ff. 163,164,187,190,311,314; Santillan 1927[1563]:No. 15; Valcarcel 1971 I:636). Unfortunately, it is difficult to associate a particular form of punishment with a single situation or crime. There appears to have been considerable variability in the treatment of war captives and traitors during the Inca period, and this may have been true for pre-Inca cultures as well.

Rowe (1948) has reviewed and summarized the major ethnohistoric documents for the North Coast of Peru. Donnan (1978) and Cordy-Collins and McClelland (1983) have since presented evidence that certain North Coast cultural traditions described during the Colonial Period can be extended back in time. It could be argued in this context that one of the longest established traditions on the North Coast was the engagement in warfare and the taking of captives. Depictions of bound prisoners and scenes that appear to depict the ritual sacrifice and mutilation of prisoners can be seen in both Moche and Chimú iconography (Fig. 25). Examples that may be roughly contemporary with the mass burial at Pacatnamu include a group of painted textiles from the Viru Valley depicting bound, naked prisoners and decapitated and mutilated bodies (Lapiner 1976:279-282) and wood figurines of bound captives from Huaca El Dragon in the Moche Valley (Fig. 26).

Desecration of corpses by exposure to vultures and other scavengers is mentioned in several Chronicles as a punishment for rebellion, treason, or other serious crimes (Basadre 1937:207-210; Cieza de Leon 1984[1553]:Chap. 70; Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980[1614]:ff. 187). With reference to the North Coast, exposure of the body to vultures was described by Calancha (1975-1982 [1638]) as part of the punishment for a curer who lost a patient through negligence. The two vulture skeletons found with the mass burial are particularly interesting in this context. Fresh wounds on the skeletons of both vultures indicate that they were intentionally killed—in the case of Vulture 2, by multiple penetrating wounds to the head (Rea, this volume). Whether these vultures played an active role in the mutilation of the human victims is a subject for speculation, but the iconographic and ethnohistoric data discussed above make such a scenario plausible.

7. The provenience of the "Prisoner Textile" illustrated in Lapiner is not certain. Lapiner attributes it to the Viru Valley.
Figure 26. Above: Three wood figurines found at the Huaca El Dragon in the Moche Valley that probably date to the Late Intermediate Period (ca. A.D. 1000-1470). The two figures on the left have their hands bound behind their backs; the cord binding the hands, feet and passing around the neck is still preserved on the first figure. The figure on the right does not have its hands bound, but is pierced by two holes, one in the upper left chest area and another in the back. The holes are painted red on their margins, suggesting that they were meant to depict wounds (see alternate views, below). All three figures wear only loincloths and their bodies are decorated with painted or tattooed designs. The bound figures appear to represent war captives, the third may be a sacrificial victim.
Concluding Remarks

Although the mass burial at Pacatnamu represents three temporally distinct events, common features shared by each of the groups of skeletons emphasize a single underlying pattern. The most obvious feature common to all is the location in which the bodies were deposited and the treatment the corpses received (i.e., exposure rather than prompt burial). The abandonment of the exposed corpses at the northern entrance to the Huaca I Complex suggests that the bodies were meant to be prominently displayed for some period of time. Another feature common to all three groups is some form of mutilation and dismemberment of the bodies. In Group I this takes the form of the removal of a particular bone; in Group II the left leg is frequently missing; in Group III the hips are disarticulated. No individual in any group appears to have been simply dispatched and tossed into the trench; all evidence suggests some form of ritual involving the execution and mutilation of the victims and desecration of the corpses.

There is presently no evidence to indicate where the killing and mutilation of the victims took place. It seems unlikely that it occurred either on the causeway or within the trench itself. It also seems unlikely that the victims were killed at some distant location and later carried to the trench. Since the bodies were deposited outside the northern doorway of the Huaca I Complex, it is quite possible that the execution and mutilation occurred close to this entrance. The northern courtyard of Huaca I with its two altars (Fig. 1) is an obvious possibility, but no physical evidence has yet been found to link the mass burial with the altars.

Although one can only speculate as to the identity of the fourteen individuals, their age distribution and sex, together with the evidence of numerous old injuries on their skeletons, makes it reasonable to assume they were war prisoners. Iconographic depictions of the ritual mutilation and sacrifice of war prisoners appear in both Moche and Chimú art. The mass burial at Pacatnamu may be the first actual evidence of such behavior found in a well-documented archaeological context.

APPENDIX:
Summary of Traumatic Lesions Observed on the Skeletons of the Victims

Group I

Individual 1: Two penetrating wounds to vertebrae (T8, T10: ventral aspect of centrum); single fractures and punched-out lesions on five ribs; three penetrating wounds through left scapula (entry from ventral aspect). Left radius missing; left ulna has fractured styloid process; left scaphoid has multiple cut marks on proximal surface.

Individual 2: Three penetrating wounds to vertebrae (T6, T7: ventral aspect of centrum; sacrum: right sacroiliac joint from dorsal aspect); penetrating wounds and single and multiple fractures on eight ribs; single penetrating wound through manubrium. Left radius missing, left ulna has multiple fractures of distal end.

Individual 3: Eight penetrating and glancing wounds to vertebrae (T6, T8, T9, T11, L2: all to ventral or lateral aspect of centrum), eleven ribs with fractures or penetrating wounds; single punched-out fracture through the left scapula (entry from ventral aspect). Left radius missing; left ulna has fractured styloid process and cut marks on head. Linear depressed fracture on dorsal surface of fifth metacarpal and proximal phalanx of left hand.

Individual 4: Eight penetrating wounds to vertebrae (T1, T3, T4, T7: all to ventral or lateral aspect of centrum); glancing blows to one rib; eight ribs show fractures at sternal end. Two penetrating wounds through right scapula (entry from ventral aspect). Left radius absent. Basal skull fracture, fractured nasals, cut mark on left malar.

Group II

Individual 5: All ribs except two (R1 and unidentified) absent on right side; two left ribs fractured. Manubrium sterni bisected. Neck vertebrae rotated to a degree suggesting forced disarticulation of intervertebral joints. Both arms missing, distal to humerus.

Individual 6: Torso and trunk largely disarticulated; skull not recovered with body. Multiple rib fractures; manubrium sterni bisected; multiple fractures of right scapula; right distal humerus fractured.

Individual 7: Multiple fractured ribs; manubrium sterni bisected; multiple cut marks on left transverse process of first thoracic vertebra and first rib; face heavily fractured; left leg missing.
Individual 8: Transverse cut mark across ventral aspect of body of sixth cervical vertebra; cut mark on superior surface of left clavicle at sternal end; left radius and ulna fractured at mid-shaft; left leg missing.

Individual 9: Multiple skull fractures; nine fractured ribs; multiple cut marks on sternal ends of both clavicles and on ventral aspect of manubrium; left leg missing.

Individual 10: Decapitated. Skull, mandible, first and second cervical vertebrae missing; third and fourth cervical vertebrae show fractured transverse and spinous processes; five ribs fractured.

Individual 11: Ten ribs (left 1-3, right 1-7) fractured at neck. Left first rib shows two cut marks lateral to fracture line on superior surface. Manubrium missing.

Individual 12: Most of skeleton missing. Present: pelvis, sacrum, and right femur (articulated); plus left femur and six vertebrae (T12, L1-5) found disarticulated but in association. Only visible pathology: multiple fractures of transverse and spinous processes of several of the vertebrae.

**Group III**

Individual 13: Decapitated (multiple cut marks on C3, C4); apparent blow to left cheek fracturing left malar, zygomatic process of left temporal, and left upper third molar at alveolus; nasals and nasal processes of maxillae fractured; manubrium bisected; multiple rib fractures; both femoral heads appear to have been disarticulated from acetabula.

Individual 14: Nasal bones and nasal processes of maxillae fractured; manubrium sterni bisected; multiple rib fractures; centra of T8 and L1 vertebrae fractured in half; fractured acromion process of left scapula; both femoral heads appear to have been disarticulated from acetabula; right innominate fractured through acetabulum and ischio-pubic ramus.

**RESUMEN:**

Un Entierro Masivo de Individuos Mutilados en Pacatnamú

En 1984, se encontraron los cuerpos de catorce adultos jóvenes enterrados en el fosos de la Muralla Interior, al este de la entrada al Patio Norte de la Huaca 1 (Fig. 1). Los cadáveres se hallaban formando tres grupos y su relación estratigráfica sugiere que fueron depositados allí en tres ocasiones diferentes.

**Grupo I**

Consiste de cuatro esqueletos (Figs. 4-6) que muestran evidencias de múltiples heridas, incluyendo dos (individuos 1 y 2) que estaban amarrados por el tobillo (Figs. 7 y 8).

Los esqueletos indican que cada uno de ellos fue punzado de 5 a 19 veces, con un objeto punta-agudo (Figs. 9 y 10), desde distintos ángulos, tanto en el pecho como en el abdomen (Fig. 10). Esto implicaría que más de una persona se vió envuelta en la muerte de cada uno de estos individuos.

Dos puntas de hueso, pulidas y filosas, fueron recuperadas debajo de los individuos 1 y 2 (Fig. 11); de las comparaciones de estos objetos con las lesiones en los cadáveres, se desprende que estas pudieron ser las armas con las que fueron muertos (Fig. 12). Además, todos los miembros de este grupo carecían del radio del brazo izquierdo (ver Figs. 5 y 6), habiendo evidencias de corte para extraer este hueso (Fig. 13).

**Grupo II**

Ubicado 15 cms. debajo del primer grupo, reunió ocho individuos que fueron registrados en dos capas (Figs. 14-16). El tipo de heridas era diferente al Grupo I, mostrando una variedad que incluye decapitamiento, fracturas del cuello y desarticulación, entre otras (Figs. 15-17). También se ubicaron los huesos articulados de un gallinazo negro (Rea, este volumen).

**Grupo III**

Consistió en dos esqueletos ubicados 15 cms. debajo del Grupo II y 10 cms. encima del suelo del foso (suelo estéril). Uno de los individuos estaba decapitado (Figs. 18-19), y ambos tenían los muslos desarticulados (Fig. 20). Un segundo esqueleto de gallinazo negro apareció en este nivel (Fig. 18).
Los individuos 5, 6 y 7 del Grupo II y los dos del Grupo III muestran cortes en el pecho, a la altura del manubrium, que va desde la yugular hasta el primer espacio intercostal del lado izquierdo (Fig. 21). Asociado a este corte, hay fractura de costillas, que implica que luego del corte, el pecho fue abierto a la fuerza. La Figura 22 ilustra cómo se realizó este corte.

Los restos de insectos recuperados en asociación con estos cuerpos, proveen valiosa información sobre la secuencia de deposición y exposición de los cadáveres (Faulkner, este volumen), los que habrían quedado a la intemperie por un largo período de tiempo.

Características Físicas

Se trata de un grupo homogéneo en términos de edad y sexo, con un promedio de 21 años de edad y todos varones. Muestran buena salud, marcas de músculos fuertes y esqueletos robustos. Esto sugiere que no se trata de víctimas tomadas al azar.

Hay una alta frecuencia de heridas óseas curadas, como fracturas de costillas y golpes en el cráneo (Figs. 23 y 24). Si ellas pueden interpretarse como heridas “profesionales,” entonces es probable que estos individuos fueron soldados, probablemente tomados como prisioneros de guerra.

Cronología

Una muestra de radiocarbono, da 1270 ± 110 DC, que correspondería con los fragmentos de cerámica recuperados en el fosfo, así como con el tipo de adobes y la construcción de la Muralla Interior (McClelland, este volumen; Donnan, Murallas, este volumen).

La iconografía Moche y Chimú, así como las fuentes etnohistóricas, contribuyen a pensar que estos individuos fueron prisioneros de guerra, y que ésta es, quizá, la primera evidencia proveniente de este tipo de personajes.