

## The Men Who Have Bags in Their Mouths

Algunas de las figuras, designadas por G. Kutscher – y de ahí en adelante – como guerreros forasteros, llevan colgados o sujetan entre los dientes bolsas rectangulares. Estas pueden ser identificadas como bolsas para coca. El complejo guerra-coca señala quizás beligerancias históricas de los mochicas de la costa con los recuay del Callejón de Huaylas. Sin embargo, tampoco puede desecharse la interpretación ritual y mitológica de tales representaciones.

Gerdt Kutscher published (1950: Abb. 24, Taf. 73, left; 1954: 20, 54, Taf. 21) a roll-out drawing of a painted Moche IV stirrup-spout pot in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (Lührsen Collection), showing a two-level scene, with nine pairs of warriors in battle.<sup>1</sup> In 1950, Kutscher observed that

„Die Gegner, mit denen die Chimú [Moche] der Gegend von Moche in so blutige Kämpfe verwickelt wurden, sind vor allem durch eine grosse Stirnlocke und Keulen mit sternförmigem Knauf gekennzeichnet. Am eigenartigsten aber wirkt eine schildartige Devise, die mit kleinen menschlichen Kopftrophäen geschmückt

1 Since the original version of this paper was written in 1977, this vessel has received a great deal of interpretive attention. Yuri Berezkin (1978) discussed this subject, and Immina von Schuler-Schömig (1979, 1981) used this vessel as the beginning of a detailed discussion of the “foreigners”. Because she has covered the material so thoroughly, my paper has been somewhat revised.



ist. In der Regel hängt diese grosse Schmuckplatte an einem Band auf den Rücken herab, doch hält der Anführer der fremden Krieger noch eine zweite Platte mit den Zähnen fest.“

In 1954, Kutscher wrote that the scene depicted the single combat of warriors commonly found in Mochica battle scenes, noting also that it was one of the few examples of fighting against foreigners. He further stated that

„Die fremden Krieger zeichnen sich durch eine Reihe charakteristischer, den Chimu [Moche] fremder Attribute aus: die Keulen mit kugel- oder morgensternförmigem Knauf, den in der Regel nackten Oberkörper, die kurzen, vom Radkragen herabhängenden Streifen, eine Gesichtsbemalung in Form mehrerer dunkler Scheiben, die quastenförmige Stirnlocke, die barock geschweiften Helmzierate und vier strahlenförmig angeordnete menschliche Hände als Kopfschmuck. Das hervorstechendste Attribut der Fremdkrieger bilden jedoch die viereckigen auf dem Rücken getragene Platten, die mit kleinen, also wohl künstlich geschrumpften menschlichen Kopftrophäen ... geschmückt sind. Der besonders reich gekleidete Anführer der Feinde (obere Reihe, 1. Figur) hat das Tragband einer zweiten Trophäenplatte mit den Zähnen gepackt ...“

He goes on to cite other examples of these enemy strangers, as published by Baessler, Fuhrmann, Tello, and d'Harcourt and Nique.

It has been widely noted (Benson 1976, 1979; Berezkin 1978; von Schuler-Schömg 1979, 1981) that the attributes of these “foreign” warriors are those seen in Moche art with men chewing coca leaves with a little lime to activate the coca. The leaves were carried in a bag, and the lime in a gourd. Kutscher pointed out as characteristics of the foreigners the pendant-disk ear ornaments that are seen on dozens of coca-associated figures, and the headdress composed of human hands. Headdresses with raised elements – hands, jaguar paws, simple “ears”, or *ullucho* fruit – are part of the coca-associated garment repertory (Benson 1976). The shirt with a yoke and vertical rectangles apparently pendant from the yoke is another garment noted by Kutscher on the Lühsen pot, where it appears on two of the foreign warriors, one of whom has five light-colored pendant rectangles, whereas the other has four dark ones. A vessel, which Donnan (1976: 37, Fig. 21) suggests may be painted by the same hand as the Lühsen vase, depicts three warriors wearing this garment, again with a five-light-four-dark combination. Baessler (1902 – 1903, Fig. 182) published a roll-out drawing of two figures wearing a short garment with yoke and pendant rectangles, one with four rectangles, one with five. There seems to be significance in the numbers four and five for these rectangles. Not all of the examples show these numbers, but they are common enough to suggest a pattern.

Kutscher, astutely observing these traits, singled out a „schildartige Devisen“ or „Platten“ – distinctive rectangular objects attached by a cord to the necks of the foreigners at the back, or, in some instances, held by a cord in the teeth. In addition to the trophy heads or faces on these objects, there is a repeated V or W design that also appears alone on two other similar objects in the scene. All have patterns of grouped vertical lines in the bottom register. I believe that these plaques or shieldlike devices are some form of fringed bag – most probably a coca bag of uncommonly large size.

Coca bags are usually small, and have a rounded bottom and some pattern indicating weaving (these patterns are often seen also on the garments of coca-chewers); the bags frequently have fringe on the bottom (Rostworowski 1973: Foto 2). On innumerable modeled vessels, the bag is shown at the back, suspended by a cord around the neck, and resting against one shoulderblade (Benson 1976: Fig. 1; Donnan 1976: Fig. 44; della Santa n.d.: Pl. LXXX). They may also be hung over the wrist (Kutscher 1950: Taf. 34; Sawyer 1966: Fig. 33; Benson 1972: Fig. 3 – 25), or, more rarely, suspended by a cord at the front to hang over the chest (Sawyer 1966: Fig. 69). On fine-line vessels, where figures are seen in profile, the painting convention for depicting coca bags shows the bag flying out from the body so that it can be seen frontally, as on the Lühsen pot.

In a painted scene published by Kutscher (1954: 53, Taf. 18; Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin) four warriors in two kinds of dress are shown in procession. Two have an ordinary coca bag coming from the neck at the back; this has horizontal lines, but no fringe. The other two warriors have a larger, square object with a double-swirl motif and fringe; Kutscher described this object as having a baglike form. The two kinds of bags are shown alternately; the bag types are not consistently matched with the type of dress.

A vessel in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin (VA 47892), shows a seated man holding a square bag in one hand, with the other hand inside the bag; beside him is a lime gourd (Fig. 1). The bag has two swirl motifs and fringe. It is almost identical with the second bag on the vessel described above.

In another fine-line drawing (von Schuler-Schömgig 1981: Fig. 28), one warrior has a small bag with stripes, held by a string in the mouth. This looks like a normal coca bag; it is the only example I know of such a bag held by the teeth. A larger, square “bag” with a step motif and fringe is carried at the back by a string around the neck. The facing figure has in his mouth a “bag” with a continued-W motif. At his back hangs a larger version of this object with three dark, pendant rectangles at the bottom.

On a vessel in the Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley (Fig. 2), a warrior is shown with a square pendant hanging out at the rear. Half of the object is fringe; on the other half is a face. This is similar in design to an object on a globular effigy vessel (Berezkin 1978: Fig. 6, von Schuler-Schömig 1979: Abb. 31), where the object, looking very much like a large coca bag, is suspended by a cord over a warrior's chest. A similar object is shown suspended by a cord from the mouth of a profile warrior on a painted vessel in the Folkwang-Museum, Hagen/Westfalen, published by Fuhrmann (1922: Taf. 18) and referred to by Kutscher. In all of these instances, weapons occupy the hands of the warriors.

Kutscher mentioned similar objects shown in a modeled mountain scene (Fig. 3; Baessler 1902 – 1903: Fig. 197), where they are grasped in the mouths of three figures who hold weapons in their hands. A central, and slightly larger, figure has in his mouth a similar object, but with a larger head; it looks almost as if he were holding a trophy head in his teeth, with fringe/hair below it. The fringed bag gives a curiously bearded aspect to the figure. Kutscher also cites a vase (d'Harcourt and Nique 1934: Pl. II 1) depicting a warrior kneeling on one knee, holding a club and shield, wearing a headdress with what looks like a pair of raised work gloves, and holding in his mouth, not a bag or plaque, but a head with pendant-disk ear ornaments.

Again, the showing of the object as held by a cord in the teeth of a two-dimensional figure and flying out in front seems to be a conventional way of presenting the object full face, whereas in the modeled, frontal versions the object is held directly in the mouth, as in the modeled vessels described above and in two effigy vessels published by Tello (1938: Láms. 41, 42) and cited by Kutscher, each of which shows a warrior, one of whom is seated on a stepped throne. Both hold a club and shield in their hands and have a "bag" in the mouth. Both "bags" have a head on them and one head is wearing pendant-disk ear ornaments.

The suspended objects on the Lührsens vessel are extremely large. Three out of six have two heads on them. One warrior, who holds a sling in one hand and a shield in the other, has one two-head bag coming out of the mouth and another, larger one trailing out behind. A bare-chested warrior with shield and spear has a single bag suspended behind him. All of these "bags" have a "W" motif above the heads and fringe below. The other two examples have two rows of the "W" motif, with fringe below.

Kutscher described the trophy heads on the "bags" on the Lührsens pot as „geschmückt“ (1950) or „geschrumpft“ (1954). They may depict actual shrunken heads, but they are perhaps more likely something like the thin metal faces that have been found in quantity at Loma Negra

(Anne-Louise Schaffer, personal communication; see Lapiner 1976: Pls. 349, 351, 355, 358). In some cases, the head or face on the bags seems to represent a "prisoner" or victim; in some cases, a characteristic coca-bag holder with a plain cap headdress and pendant-disk ear ornaments is seen; in other cases, as on the Lühsen vessel, the face has the mouth with exaggerated ends, found commonly on Loma Negra metal faces, that seems to indicate supernatural power in Moche art.

I believe that these plaques or shieldlike devices are a form of coca bag. They are suspended around the neck in the same way that normal coca bags are; they are shown in scenes with other coca-related accessories, that is, they are carried by warriors wearing the garments of coca-takers; they are generally similar to the bag seen on the Berlin pot (Fig. 1) that clearly is a bag; in size, shape, and usage, they are on a continuum with normal coca bags, for some bags that are clearly coca bags have the right-angled bottom of the large bag, and some clear-cut coca bags are shown as of abnormal size (Yacovleff and Herrera 1935: Fig. 32g). The fringe also suggests the cloth coca bag.

Some of the bags may have been made of metal. The bag-in-the-mouth pot published by Fuhrmann (1922: Taf. 18), noted above for the fringed bag with face, also has what I assume to be a fringed bag flying out behind; this has a metal-plaque design. In a scene with two figures under arching double-headed "sky serpents" (Larco Hoyle 1938 – 1939, I: Fig. 31), a gourd and lime stick are seen, and, flying out from the neck of each figure, a square bag with a single head and a pattern that probably represents metal plaques.

Elongated sheet-gold bags in the form of jaguars actually exist (Mujica Gallo 1959: Láms. XXXII, XXXIII), and similar bags, which probably depict bats rather than felines, are shown in coca-ceremony scenes on painted vases, just as the squarish bags are shown (Larco Hoyle 1938 – 1939, II: Lám. XXIX; Kutscher 1950: Abb. 26; Ubbelohde-Doering 1952: Taf. 172, 173). One of these feline- or bat-formed metal-plaque bags is suspended from the back of a solitary figure who has the fanged mouth of a supernatural, but, because he has no other supernatural attributes, may be a priestly or chiefly celebrant in a sacred occasion, shown under a night sky in "prayer pose" (Benson 1974), not a normal godly position. In these scenes, one or two other metal bags float, with a cord around the neck, along with lime gourds, a weapons bundle, bundles that may contain coca, and a jaguar headdress – a kingly or godly attribute. A conventional woven coca bag hangs over the wrist of the solitary figure, who wears pendant-disk ear ornaments. These scenes apparently take place in the mountains.

Kutscher suggested that the homeland of the people shown as foreigners on the Lühsen pot was the mountainous hinterland of the north coast, citing the existence of trophy heads on the backs of sculpture in the neighborhood of Aija (Schaedel 1948). The frequent appearance of *cacti* and *tillandsias* in these scenes suggests an up-valley setting, as does, of course, the mountainous scene on the Baessler pot and other modeled pots, and the indications of hills in the painted scenes. Sculpture and pottery from the Callejón de Huaylas show figures with hands, often upraised, on headdresses (Bushnell 1957: Pl. 28; Larco Hoyle 1966: Pl. 110; Lumbreras 1974: Fig. 129, right). Particularly interesting in this context is a figurative sculpture from the Callejón, in the Museo Regional de Huaraz (Fig. 4; Anton 1972: Pl. 95), which has hands around its headdress band, and, on the back, a fringed “bag” with two faces, hung by a cord around the neck. A number of motifs found on Recuay pottery<sup>2</sup> appear as patterns on the garments or accessories of Moche coca-ritual figures, including the “W” motif seen on the large bags. Other traits shared by Recuay art and Moche coca-ritual figures are: the cap headdress, a headdress with a cross band, a headdress with wings on the side, layers of garments, an important garment border, square shields with relief heads on them, figures with no arms showing (Benson 1976), and figures possibly holding shirts.

Disselhoff (1956) published a short article, reinforcing Kutscher’s “foreigners” argument, in part by publishing a Recuay vessel with figures that have at their rears plaques with two heads on them. While the objects reinforce the association of the two-head motif with the uplands, they are puzzling because they are depicted in a manner unlike that of bags or shields.

As for the interpretation of the battle scenes and related ritual scenes, it is, of course, possible that they depict mock battles or initiation rites, as von Schuler-Schömgig (1979, 1981) has suggested, citing Hocquenghem (1978). That the Moche fought ritual mock battles was most probably true; but is this what they were depicting on their finest vessels? What is shown on the pottery should be a recreation of the same event that the ritual battles reenact, not a copy of the copy.

Scenes of battle against people who so clearly bear Callejón motifs suggest the retelling of history, which, mixed with myth, has become ritualized. The scenes on the pots discussed here may, on one level, record battles fought by the Moche people, or their ancestors, for control of coca in the highlands. Rostworowski (1973) mentions the growing of

2 I am grateful to Raphael X. Reichert for the opportunity to examine his extensive photographic archive of Recuay pottery.

coca up in these valley – notably the Chicama and Moche Valleys – at Contact time, and it seems quite possible that this was a long tradition and a very important one for the Moche. The coca theme is one of the most common in Moche art; there are hundreds of depictions of people with coca bags or lime gourds and pendant-disk ear ornaments. It is hard to believe that all coca-associated figures are foreigners; rather, the accessories depicted seem to be the paraphernalia of a particular ceremony rooted in an important historical event. These scenes may have to do with making claim to an ancient right, as we know was done in other places in the early Americas.

Other meanings are also suggested here. The large painted scenes show a two-headed serpent arching over the night sky. Throughout the Americas, two-headed serpents are generally considered to be “sky serpents”. Indeed, Kutscher (1950: 24), in his description of one of these scenes, states that „die grosse doppelköpfige Schlange den Himmel symbolisiert“. In Mesoamerica, where more is known of ancient beliefs, sky gods had great importance. Kutscher describes the solitary figure under the serpent as praying to the sky. Mountain settings for the coca-taking ritual scenes suggest not only going toward the sky and the place of coca origin, but going to the source of water and the rising sun, the most basic needs for agriculture. Schuler-Schömg (1979, 1981) also believes that these rituals had to do with sacrifices for agricultural fertility. Fertility and the rebirth of the earth are one part of this concept; the continuation of the life of the sun and of human beings is another. All of these notions point to the east.

The mythic or supernatural nature of the coca-battle complex is illustrated on an unpublished vessel in the British Museum, where two bare-headed figures wearing pendant-disk ear ornaments and the yoked shirt with pendants (one with five light pendants, the other with four dark ones), sit in prayer pose, each before an enormous, attacking monster with fierce teeth, a forked tongue, a strombus shell on its back, scales, and a tail that ends in a smaller head of the same type. The open mouth of each tail-head touches the top of one human head; the mouth of the large head of the monster threatens the other figure. Between man and monster there is a weapons bundle with a star-shaped club. This monster, frequently depicted alone, is shown on another vessel (Donnan 1976: Fig. 92) being attacked by what is probably the major Moche deity, a figure with jaguar headdress, snakehead ear ornaments, and a belt with snake projections.

A remaining question concerns the curious traits of holding in the mouth a bag that usually has a head pictured on it. This is done always by a warrior, and usually in a ritual context. In the background of much Pre-

Columbian thought, there is the notion that deities – especially sky deities – are nourished with the blood of human sacrifice. The god, or a proxy of the god, consumes the sacrifice. The trophy-head cult in the Andes fits in with this kind of belief. The coca ritual appears to be a sacrificial ritual. It is also a rite in which coca is taken into the mouth; depictions often show the lime stick raised to the lips. Such ideas seem to be related to the depictions of the bags with heads on them that are held in warriors' mouths.

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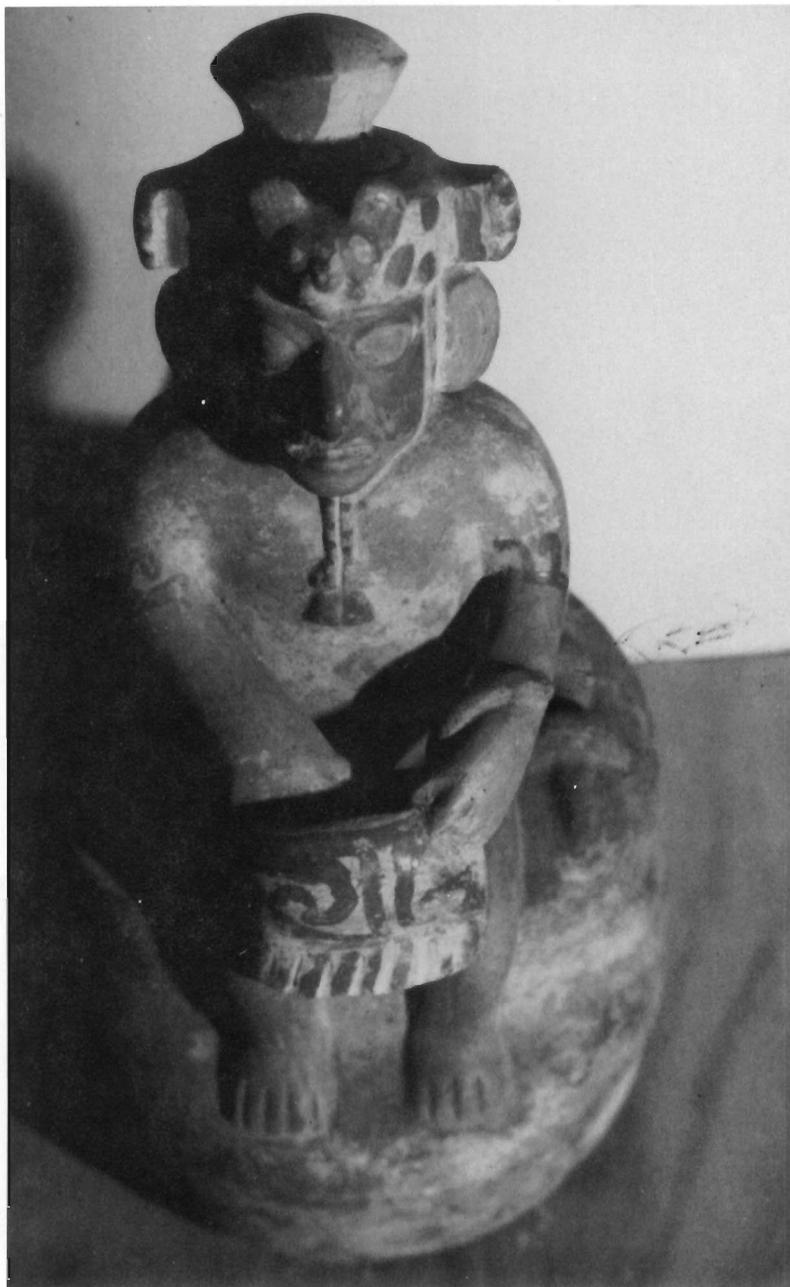


Fig. 1.: Vessel showing a man with his hand inside a fringed bag. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin, VA 47892. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 3ab: Open-spout vessel showing a ritual scene in the mountains. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Völkerkunde,



Berlin. Photographs courtesy by Christopher B. Donnan and the Archive of Moche Art, University of California, Los Angeles.

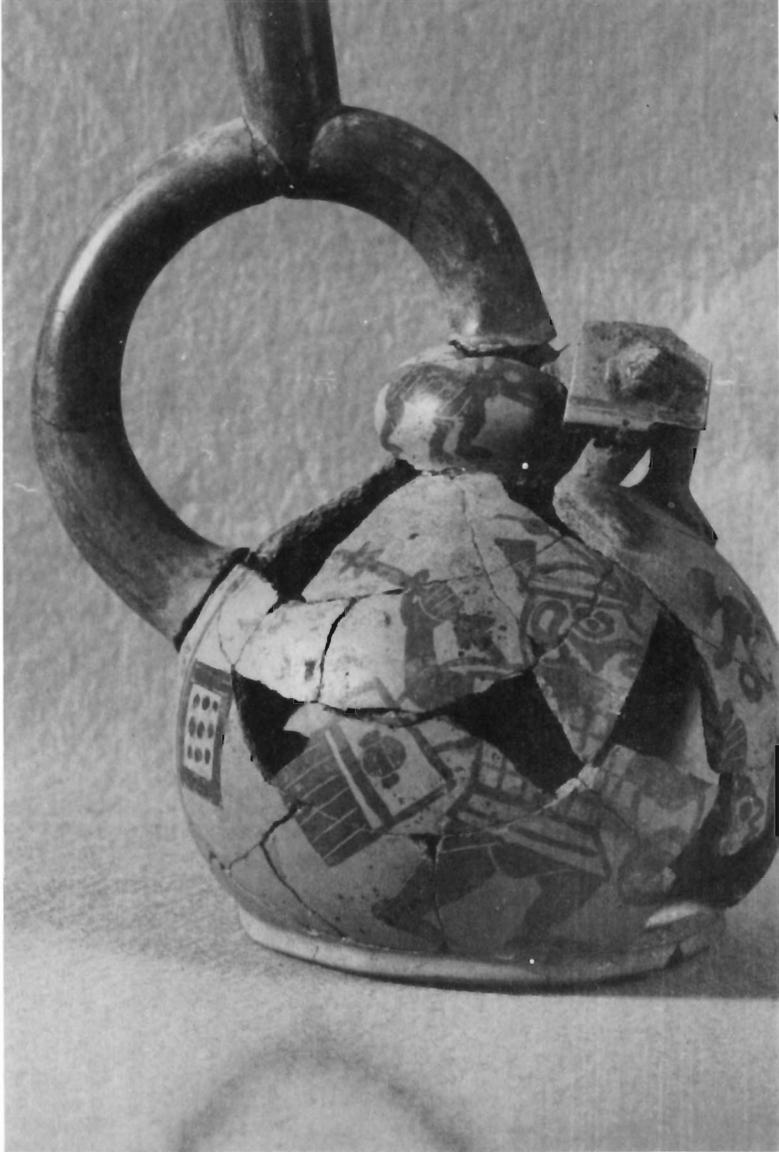


Fig. 2: Vessel showing a square, fringed object, with a human face on it, attached to the neck of a warrior in battle. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley. Photograph courtesy of Christopher B. Donnan and the Archive of Moche Art, University of California, Los Angeles.



Fig. 4: Stone sculpture showing the rear of a figure with hands on the headdress and a probable bag with two faces. Museo Regional de Huaraz, Huaraz. Photograph courtesy of Ferdinand Anton.

