Chapter **5**

Competitive Feasting, Religious Pluralism and Decentralized Power in the Late Moche Period

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INTRODUCTION

Ritual plays a fundamental role in the creation of political subjectivity and the materialization of ideological struggles, and its inextricable relationship to power has been the subject of productive anthropological inquiry (Bell 1992, 1997; Bloch 1989; Cohen 1981; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, 1993; Kelly and Kaplan 1990; Kertzer 1988). Indeed, the analysis of religious practices, as best inferred from the material record, is critical to interpreting power relations in prehistoric societies (Brumfiel 1998; A. Joyce et al. 2001). Ritual performance and the manipulation of ceremonial space articulated differing political dispositions in the ancient Andes that variably shaped hierarchical socioeconomic systems (Moore 1996a). Therefore, political and ideological structures in prehistoric Peru can only be fully understood through archaeological investigations of the ritual mediation of power by different communities comprising a given polity.

Such an approach is of particular relevance in deciphering the wide-ranging political, economic, and ideological transformations characterizing the north coast of Peru during the Late Moche Period (AD 550–800). Pervasive social unrest and environmental perturbations inaugurated the Late Moche era, and these developments appear to have resulted in the collapse of the Middle Moche state based at Cerro Blanco (Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la Luna) in the Moche Valley (Bawden 1996). The exacerbation of social tensions, the emergence of inland urban centers, and the adoption of new religious and ideological systems further define this period (Bawden 1996, 2001; Castillo 2000, 2001; Shimada et al. 1991). Political and economic disruptions are thought to have led to the reconstitution or outright rejection of traditional Moche belief systems in different regions of the north coast (Bawden 1996; Castillo 2000, 2001). In fact, religious transformations of the Late Moche Period are usually portrayed as reactive: as reflexive (or adaptive) responses to social and ecological trauma (McClelland 1990; Shimada 1994: 232–234). It is increasingly clear, however, that religious ideology, differently wielded by various agents, directly shaped the formation of alternative political and economic systems in the Late Moche Period. This is especially evident in the lower Jequetepeque Valley (also referred to as the Pacasmayo region), located 100 kms north of the

Moche capital, which witnessed the anomalous proliferation of ceremonial sites in its hinterland and the emergence of distinctive social and religious organizations during this time (Dillehay 2001).

In this paper, I argue that feasting, conducted within specialized ceremonial constructions, was implicated in localized strategies of political empowerment in Jequetepeque during the Late Moche Period. These strategies, directed by lower level kin groups, subverted elite authority and urban-based social control in the region. The archaeological data indicate that Late Moche Pacasmayo was characterized by political decentralization and intense ideological production directed by multiple, dispersed, and relatively autonomous social groups. Therefore, an apparent "religious pluralism," defined here as widespread ritual expression unregulated by state institutions, distinguished Jequetepeque during the early Middle Horizon. The evidence runs counter to the generally held view that the north coast as a whole experienced rapid political centralization, the elite monopolization of religious authority, and intensified social stratification during the Late Moche Period.

I support this interpretation in part through a proxemic analysis of ceremonial constructions located in the hinterland of more prominent centers of the region. Proxemics, related to phenomenology and architectonics, examines the social dimensions of spatial interaction, communication, and perception (see Hall 1966; Moore 1996a, b). For archaeologists it provides an especially powerful tool in assessing the political implications of architecturally staged ritual performance. Analysis reveals that rural communities in Jequetepeque promoted divergent spatial ideologies and liberally appropriated and recontextualized corporate religious programs. The archaeological evidence suggests that widespread feasting rites and the localized celebration of elite religious traditions by hinterland groups reinforced parochial political identities while simultaneously contributing to the popularization of Moche ideology in the region as a whole.

Ultimately, the Jequetepeque archaeological data are of value in interpreting and theorizing the politics of religious experience, a subject crucial to Andean archaeology and of considerable relevance to anthropology writ large. The inventive emulation of Moche iconography and sacred architecture in the Pacasmayo hinterland cannot simply be interpreted as a crude archaeological measure of state hegemony. Nor can it be viewed as signaling the widespread acceptance of a dominant religious ideology disseminated from urban centers. Rather, an important theoretical implication of this paper is that the manipulation of corporate religious and ideological programs by non-elite groups (and the horizontal dissemination of ideological complexes through space) is often complicit in the creation of decidedly local political subjects and sectarian social dynamics.

ARCHAEOLOGY OF RITUAL, IDEOLOGY, AND POWER

Ideology is increasingly understood not simply as false consciousness mystifying exploitative economic conditions and promoting dominant interests (see Eagleton

1991). Instead, it is viewed as polyvocal and conflicting, the politicized practice of diverse factions comprising a given society (Roseberry 1988; Scott 1990). Even Marx and Engels (1967) did not narrowly conceive of religion as the exclusive ideological tool of the upper class but recognized its force in promoting class solidarity (in a manner reminiscent of Durkheim's interpretation of the integrative functions of ritual) (Morris 1987: 44–45). Engels, for instance, expressed interest in millenarian cults as subversive organizations, while the later Marxist theorist, Karl Kautsky, (1972) analyzed Christianity in the Roman Empire as a movement among the impoverished and disenfranchised. In a similar manner, Weber contrasted the political motivations of state-instituted priests with anti-establishment prophets. He further contended that the idea of salvation appeals to lower status groups and women in particular but is little embraced by the privileged; notions of salvation arise to ameliorate the impact of social and economic exploitation (Weber 1965: 107).

Jean and John Comaroff (1991, 1993) similarly explore how ritual praxis is the site of experimentation, transformative action, and "subversive poetics." In fact, scholars have investigated numerous examples of resistive political practices which have taken the explicit form of religious movements (Comaroff 1985; Kertzer 1988; Stern 1982). In struggles of representation ritual is paramount. At the very least it can secure for its practitioners a redemptive foothold within hegemonic and oppressive social structures (Bell 1992).

Ritual is inherently political (and hence ideological) given that agents consciously situate and scrutinize their place within the world through ceremonial acts (Bell 1997; Geertz 1973; Gluckman 1963; Smith 1987; Turner 1967). Ritual's inextricable relationship to power is also a consequence of its perceived efficacy; it ultimately "empowers" participants in transformative states made possible through contact with divine influence (the ultimate source of power and measure of difference) (Bloch 1992; Swenson 2003; Valeri 1985).

It is precisely the inherent force in the perceived sanctity, timelessness, and supernatural essence of religious practice that renders ritual a formidable vehicle of political control (Bloch 1988; Godelier 1978, 1986). The condensed dramaturgy and affective symbolism characterizing religious rites stimulate a heightened aesthetic awareness that serves to legitimize elite authority and subversive political practices alike (Bloch 1989; Kelly and Kaplan 1990; Kertzer 1988: 86). Indeed, ritual constructs political dispositions through formalized performance, which conflates the emotional and sensual with the traditional and authoritative (whether hegemonic or resistive) (Bloch 1989; Dirks 1994; Lincoln 1994; Tambiah 1990). Moreover, ritual crystallizes cultural conceptions of space and time and is instrumental in structuring identities of place and association (Bourdieu 1994; Dillehay 2004).

Religious and political ceremonies in Late Moche Jequetepeque (which would have included feasting, formal exchange of objects, human sacrifice, ritual warfare, peregrination, canal maintenance, ancestor worship, temple construction, dancing, singing, supervised production of corn beer, and shamanistic intercession, among other activities) reified social identities and ideological worldviews while

structuring economic relations of production. Such performative acts inevitably contributed to the conceptualization, transformation, and contestation of prevailing sociopolitical orders. Therefore, archaeological analyses of ritual production in varied material settings offer an important means to interpret complex ideological dispositions that affected broader shifts in prehistoric economy, ecology, and politics.

Significantly, the last two decades have witnessed important developments in archaeological studies of power, ritual, and ideology. Archaeologists are moving beyond analyses which simply explore the dominant ideology of elites and their religious structures of authority. Social inequality is not merely identified in the material record but is examined in a more holistic and relational framework of power which emphasizes the totality of the social, as comprised of competing and often opposing factions (Alcock 1993; Brumfiel 1992; McGuire 1992; Miller and Tilley 1984; Miller, Rowlands, and Tilley 1989; Paynter and McGuire 1991; Wylie 1992). Since ritual is fundamental to identity politics, it represents an accessible domain for the examination of differential value systems coexisting in prehistoric society. Indeed, the analysis of divergent ritual regimes can disclose the ideological worldviews of the majority lower class populations and permit a more probing analysis of their essential role in historical process (Brumfiel 1998, 2001; R. Joyce 1993, 2000; A. Joyce et al. 2001).

Reconstructing parallel or competing ideologies from the archaeological record is a daunting task. It requires sensitive interpretation of the full range of material patterns and their interrelationships in order to formulate robust inferences supported by the empirical record. The analytical "playing-off" of diverse ritual contexts, such as tomb structures versus temples or domestic space, has proved insightful in deciphering varied ideological strategies and contradictions, as well as in interpreting the full historical trajectory of power relations (Bradley 1991; Braithwaite 1984; Dietler 1995; Miller and Tilley 1984). It is in this spirit of examining the intimate relationship between power, religion, and ideology that I set out to analyze the non-elite ceremonial architecture in the hinterland of the Jequetepeque Valley.

THE JEQUETEPEQUE VALLEY IN THE LATE MOCHE PERIOD

The lower Jequetepeque Valley or Pacasmayo region is situated 600 kms north of Lima in the northern Moche sphere. This region constitutes one of the larger and more productive river valleys of the Peruvian coast and its archaeological landscape is characterized by complex irrigation systems, vast agricultural infrastructures, road systems, and monumental architecture dispersed in the desert or concentrated in civic-ceremonial centers such as Pacatnamú, Dos Cabezas, Cerro Chepén, Farfan, Cañoncillo, Talambo, and San José de Moro (Castillo 2001; Dillehay and Kolata 2004; Donnan 2001; Donnan and Cock 1986, 1997; Eling 1987; Hecker and Hecker 1985, 1990; Keatinge and Conrad 1983; Ubbelohde-Doering 1967, 1983). The valley is situated at a critical geographical and cultural juncture, forming an

important route to the sierras and representing the southern limit of the northern Moche subregion (Castillo and Donnan 1994a; Kosok 1965). Inhabitants of Jequetepeque contributed to the florescence of Cupisnique, Salinar, Moche, Lambayeque, and Chimú cultures, and recent survey work conducted by Dillehay and Kolata (Dillehay 2001; Dillehay and Kolata 2004) confirms earlier observations (Castillo and Donnan 1994a; Hecker and Hecker 1990) that the majority of archaeological sites in the lower valley date to the urbanized Late Moche and Late Intermediate Periods (AD 550–1470).

One of the more outstanding features of Jequetepeque archaeology is the striking number and variety of seemingly non-elite ceremonial sites distributed throughout the lower valley. Such settlements first emerged and proliferated during the Late Moche Period. The Late Moche era (AD 550–750) represents a time of dramatic transformation in cultural norms, settlement patterns, and belief systems throughout the north coast (Bawden 1996, 2001; Castillo 2000, 2001, 2003; McClelland 1990; Shimada 1994). These changes represent a notable deviation from the preceding Middle Moche Period (Phases III and IV), considered the apex of Moche cultural production expressed in more homogenous political and ideological systems (Bawden 1996; Conklin and Moseley 1988). Importantly, the Late Moche Period witnessed the collapse of the multi-valley southern state which wielded considerable influence over much of the north coast.

The transformations of the Late Moche Period (Moche V) have been interpreted as responses to social discord and environmental catastrophe and indirectly to the encroachment of highland cultures (Bawden 1996; Castillo 2000). Geomorphological analyses have linked severe droughts and El Niño floods to onset of this Period (Shimada et al. 1991). Scholars have argued that new religions were adopted wholesale during this time to cope with ecological disruption and sociopolitical realignment (Bawden 1996; Castillo 2001). Bawden (1996, 2001) contends that the Moche V period witnessed a form of iconoclasm in the Moche Valley in which traditional modes of narrative art and the established pantheon of deities were systematically rejected by elites and commoners alike. Similarly, Castillo (2001) argues that in the Jequetepeque Valley political instability and social crisis are evident in elite emulation of foreign artistic canons, as identified in the extravagant tombs of elite priestesses buried at San José de Moro. Castillo contends that new value systems were adopted to shore up elite legitimacy and reinforce tarnished political and religious systems which were discredited as a result of ecological perturbations and social turmoil.

Urbanization represents the hallmark of the Moche V transformation; the large centers of Galindo and Pampa Grande emerge at the valley necks of the Moche and Lambayeque Valleys respectively, while settlement generally collapsed in the lower portions of these two regions (Bawden 1996, 2001; Shimada 1994). Bawden and Shimada interpret these developments as symptomatic of heightened insecurity, conflict, and social stratification. They also contend that the nucleation of settlement in the valley necks reflects elite attempts to exert greater control over the distribution of irrigation water and to facilitate surveillance of aggregated populations.

However, the Jequetepeque region deviates from this trend toward centralization; rural settlement and population expanded in the lower valley during the Late Moche Period (Castillo and Donnan 1994a; Dillehay and Kolata 2004). In fact, the unfortified cult center of San José de Moro near the modern-day town of Chepén represents one of the premier Moche V sites on the north coast but lacks the urban characteristics of Pampa Grande and Galindo, mainly agglomerated populations and dense and diversified city architecture. The elite priestesses interred in adobe platforms at the site and supported by a retinue of skilled craft specialists appear to have secured the religious devotion of far-flung communities, possibly attracting pilgrims and valued gifts from neighboring polities (Castillo and Donnan 1994b; Castillo 2001; Donnan and Castillo 1994). However, the numerous forts and ceremonial locales dating to the Late Moche Period (Dillehay 2001; Dillehay and Kolata 2004), including the massive nearby settlement of Cerro Chepén, indicate that the priestesses exercised little direct coercive or economic control in the greater Jequetepeque region. Certainly, the continued reenactment of the Sacrifice Ceremony by elite figures and the production of fineline wares celebrating Moche religious values at San José de Moro (Castillo and Donnan 1994b) reveal that the Jequetepeque region became central to the perpetuation of "traditional" though reconstituted theocratic principles associated with Moche ideology. Nonetheless, the following analysis demonstrates that ideological innovation reshaping Moche religious production was far from restricted to this Jequetepeque center.

THE CEREMONIAL SITES OF THE JEQUETEPEQUE HINTERLAND

The Late Moche Period in Jequetepeque is marked by the emergence and proliferation of intermediate-scale ceremonial sites in the rural hinterland of the valley (Figure 5.1) (Swenson 2002, 2004). These sites were rare prior to the Late Moche Period and are usually found in close proximity on coastal hills overlooking productive infrastructures such as canals and field systems. The settlements are readily distinguishable by their size but could not be hierarchically classified in terms of architectural distinction. The numerous ceremonial platforms in the large settlements of San Ildefonso or Catalina (discussed below) were comparable in scale, elaboration, and quality to structures within smaller sites in the sample. The lack of salient architectural distinctions in the countryside reflecting status differences suggests that power relations were more fluid and fragmented in Jequetepeque during the Late Moche phase.

"Hinterland ceremonial site" is an intentionally broad category that encompasses settlements built in ostensibly rural sectors of the lower valley, mainly secluded pampas and hillsides overlooking agricultural fields. The presence of elaborate and often multiple ceremonial constructions distinguishes this settlement type from the more common and smaller residential hamlet. The ritual architecture of the hinterland sites, although impressive in design and architectural conception, is constructed of earth and stone and contrasts with the monumental adobe pyramids dominating the typical Moche urban center. Domestic terraces and surface debris

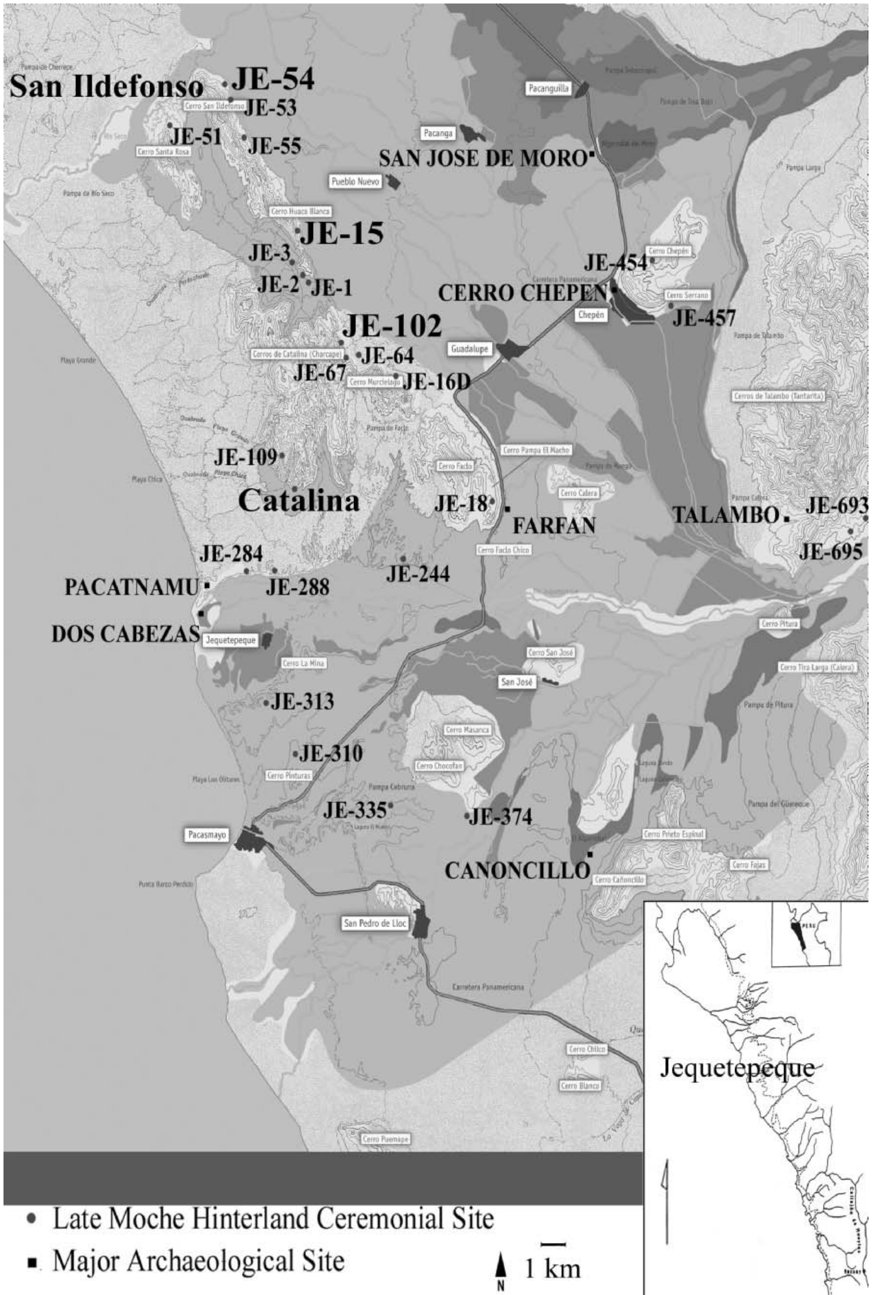


Figure 5.1. Map of the Lower Jequetepeque Valley illustrating the location of ceremonial sites dating to the Late Moche Period. Settlements mentioned in the article are shown in larger print.

reveal that people lived at these hinterland sites, either continuously or episodically. Therefore, ritual production was not an exclusive function of this class of settlement but appears to have been one of the more important activities. These sites are often built on the slopes of coastal hills, and they may have been related to the veneration of supernatural forces or huacas associated with sacred mountains. Twenty-five ceremonial sites in the hinterland dating to the Late Moche and Late Intermediate periods (of an identified sample of 72) were mapped with a total station and systematically surface collected (Figure 5.1) (Swenson 2004). Excavation was also conducted at selected settlements.

The most common form of ceremonial architecture identified at the Moche hinterland settlements are multi-terraced platform mounds with prominent ramps (Figure 5.2). Bawden (1982) refers to such structures at the contemporaneous urban center of Galindo as “tablados.” Despite their diminished size in comparison to urban pyramids, these ramped structures were important symbols of religious and political authority (Bawden 1982; Shimada 1994). The dais-like platforms appear to be miniature versions of the massive pyramids that dominated Moche cities, and structures of this kind are commonly portrayed on Moche pottery (Bawden 1982). For instance, the fanged deity of the Moche pantheon is commonly shown presiding over ritual acts such as the presentation of a goblet from dais-ramp complexes (Figure 5.2a, b). The ramp leading to the dais upon which the deity is seated generally parallels the configuration of space of many of the platforms analyzed in the Pacasmayo hinterland.

In other iconographic depictions, dignitaries are shown supervising ceremonial and redistributive activities from the summit of such platforms (see Donnan and McClelland 1999: 19, 59, 167, 270). Further representations underscore the symbolic importance of this architectural form as a stage of ritual and administrative performance. For instance, a U-shaped ceramic model recovered from a burial at San José de Moro is strikingly similar to Structure C at Portachuelo de Charcape (JE-1) (Figure 5.3), located several kilometers to the northwest of San José de Moro (Castillo, Nelson, and Nelson 1997).

The models and iconographic data indicate that the structures conveyed profound symbolic significance related to religious authority and sanctioned ritual practice. In fact, the formal layout of these structures reveals that this class of architecture most likely represented an “authorized and authorizing” space (Lincoln 1994). That is, important politico-religious rites were conducted and legitimated on these platforms which conferred authority on their users. Furthermore, the ramps are more ornamental than functional; they often connect terraces that could be effortlessly ascended as steps. Clearly these ramps served to direct and formalize movement, enhancing the procession of important figures. Such scripted movement generates important dramaturgical effects which likely contributed to the consecration of an event or activity. The formality and non-instrumentality of ramps accentuated the sacred and authorizing symbolism of these structures.

Comparable ramped platforms were among the most important architectural forms at Galindo and Pampa Grande, the great urban centers of the Moche V Period (Bawden 1982, Shimada 1994, 2001). However, they are usually restricted

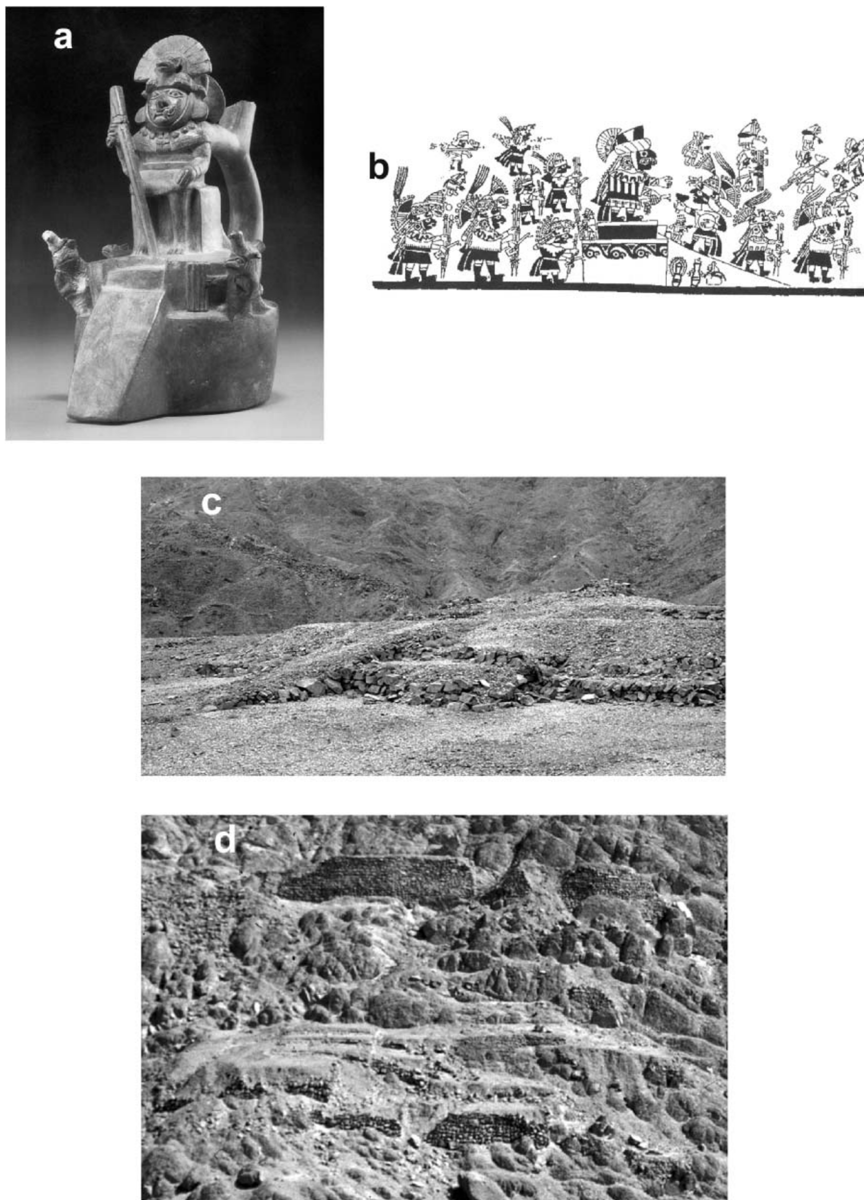
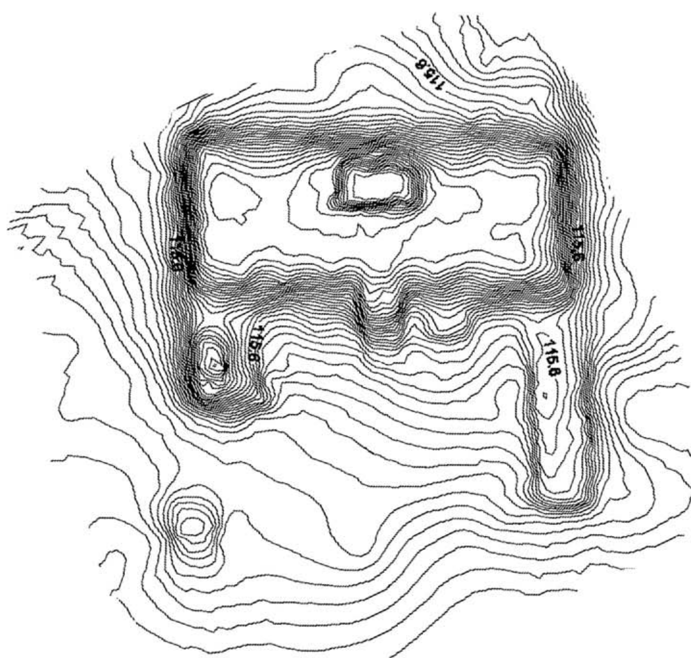


Figure 5.2. A Moche molded vessel (Makowski 2000: 139) and a fineline illustration (Hocquenghem 1989: fig. 2C) portraying the Fanged Deity situated on a platform with ramp and dais (a and b respectively). These structures depicted in Moche iconography are similar to platforms found in the Jequetepeque hinterland (photographs c and d).

a



b

Figure 5.3. Ceramic model of a platform recovered from a burial at San José de Moro, and a map of a similarly configured structure at Portachuelo de Charcape (JE-1) located several kilometers south of San José de Moro.

to the civic-ceremonial core of these principal cities, within or at the juncture of elite precincts (Bawden 1982, 1996, 2001; Shimada 1994, 2001). In contrast, ramped structures are more accessible and widely distributed in the Jequetepeque Valley. Unlike the tablados of the center, they are constructed of stone and earth and are usually found independent of decidedly elite architectural contexts. In other words, the intense ritualization of the Jequetepeque landscape defied the centralized exclusivity of ceremonial space evident in neighboring valleys. Indeed, the ubiquity and architectural redundancy of sacred space in Jequetepeque appear unprecedented in the Moche sphere.

Ramped platforms at Pampa Grande were associated with decorated face-neck jars used to prepare and decant maize beer or chicha. In fact, Shimada (1994: 221–224, 2001: 187, 192) argues that these structures served as the locus of supervisory rites involving chicha production and consumption. Significantly, a large quantity of mold-impressed face-neck jars were discovered at hinterland ceremonial sites in the lower Jequetepeque Valley (Figure 5.4) (Swenson 2004). These face impressions often distill Moche religious imagery, such as depictions of the fanged deity, wrinkled face, and warriors. These vessels share stylistic and thematic similarities with those of Pampa Grande despite distinct design elements (Swenson 2004: 757–759). Statistical analysis reveals that the ramped platforms were associated with a significantly high proportion of chicha jars and decorated ware at several sites in the study (Swenson 2004). Clearly, activities central to feasting and commensalism, involving the use of decorated jars and generous consumption of chicha, were staged on the platforms of both Pampa Grande and sites in the Jequetepeque hinterland. Figurines, talismans, and clay flutes were further collected in the vicinity of ceremonial structures (Figure 5.4). Music likely accompanied ritual spectacles orchestrated on these platforms.

PROXEMIC ANALYSIS OF LATE MOCHE SETTLEMENTS

In this paper, two of the larger ceremonial sites of the Jequetepeque hinterland are discussed and compared. The settlements of San Ildefonso (JE-279) and Catalina (JE-125), both located on the north side of the Valley, are analyzed in terms of their peculiar spatial configurations and the unique proxemic properties of their ceremonial architecture. Examples of site-specific architectural variability at other settlements are also briefly described to support my main argument. The spatial and archaeological evidence indicate that ritual production, and competitive feasting in particular, became an important vehicle of political advancement in rural Jequetepeque. Ultimately, the data suggest that numerous communities in the hinterland reformulated the symbolic capital of urban elites and constructed locally-inflected Moche political subjectivities as a means of ideological self-definition.

San Ildefonso (Figure 5.1) is located on the northern end of Cerro San Ildefonso directly south of the Chaman River drainage. Its considerable size, over 50 ha, suggests that it could be interpreted as a small urban settlement. However, its location on a defended coastal hill and the nature of its constructions reveal important

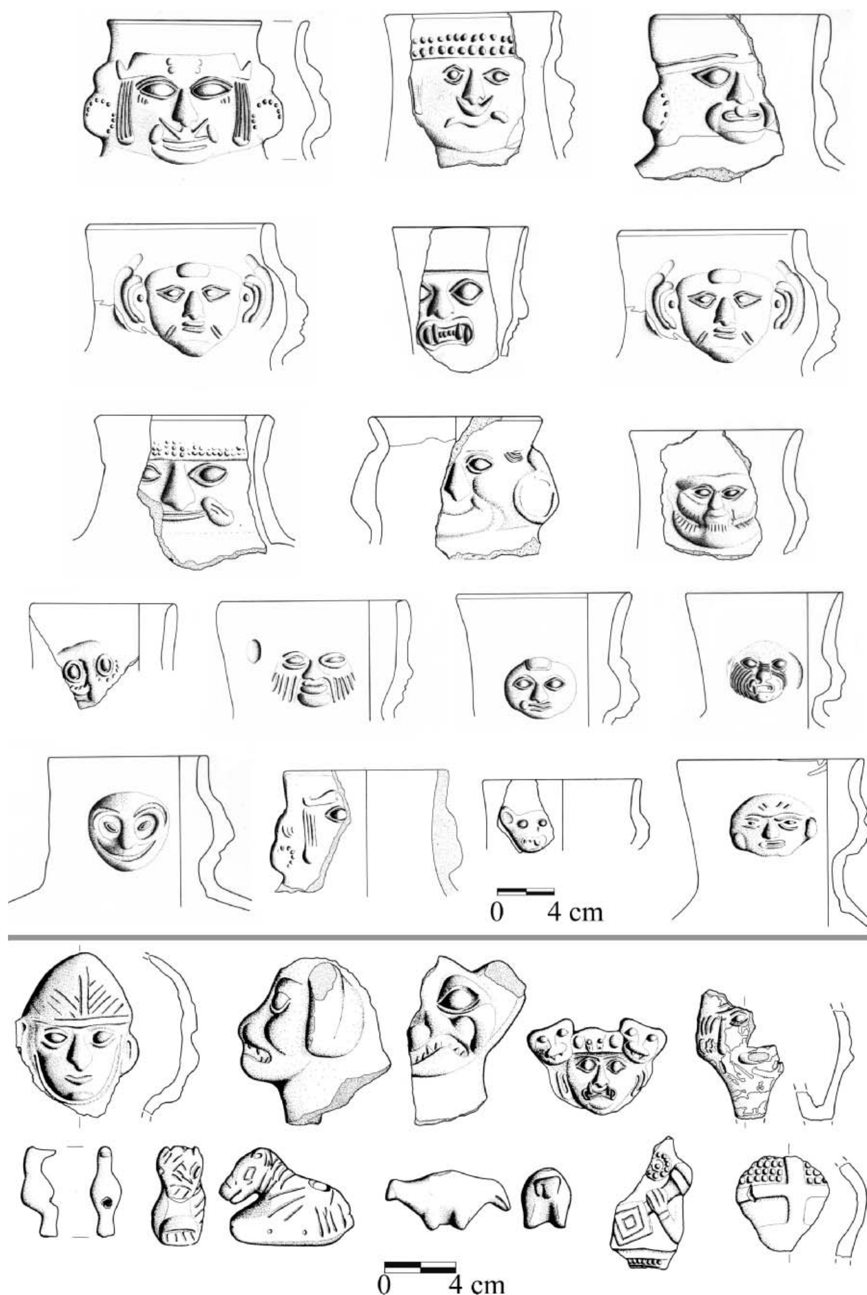


Figure 5.4. Decorated face-neck jars (upper five rows), figurines and musical instruments (lower two rows) in Moche style collected from various ceremonial sites of the Jequetepeque hinterland.

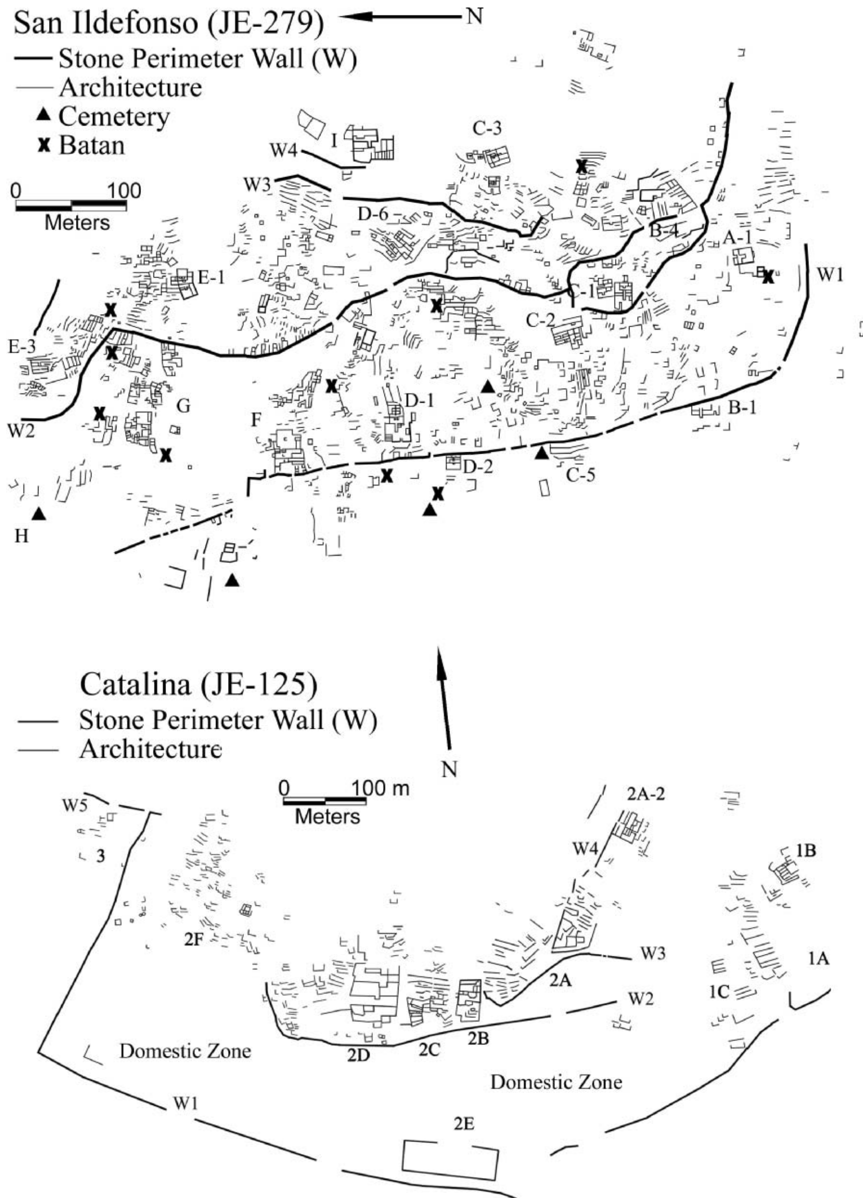


Figure 5.5. Site maps of San Ildefonso and Cerro Catalina. Labeled sectors contain one or more ceremonial platforms.

commonalities with the smaller ceremonial sites in the hinterland (Figure 5.5). For instance, terraced constructions made of stone and earth predominate at San Ildefonso, while adobe buildings are entirely lacking. Unlike the urban centers of Pampa Grande or Galindo, no one construction unequivocally dominates the

settlement as the focus of political authority or religious preeminence. In fact, the configuration of space at San Ildefonso was clearly dictated by an aesthetic which deviated significantly from the spatial ideologies inscribed in the physical layout of typical Moche urban centers.

San Ildefonso is delineated by four nested perimeter walls that survive to nearly 2 m in height in several sectors. Piles of sling stones are placed at varying intervals on the surface of the ramparts and it is clear that the settlement had a defensive function (possibly involving ritualized forms of warfare given the predominance of ceremonial architecture within the site) (Swenson 2004: 859–868). The walls roughly but inconsistently delimit functionally distinct architecture at San Ildefonso. The majority of storage and drying terraces are found in the highest reaches of the site, and low lying entrance platforms commonly front the first perimeter wall. San Ildefonso is further characterized by expansive domestic zones distinguished by residential terraces, rectilinear compounds, and contiguous and free-standing room-block units.

The replication of ceremonial platforms in different sectors of the site is San Ildefonso's most remarkable characteristic. Seventeen such structures were recorded here ranging in size from 15 to 45 sq m (Figure 5.5). The various platform mounds with ramps were built behind all four perimeter walls, indicating that "authoritative" architectural forms were not restricted to any one zone of the site. The most prominent platforms are free-standing structures on elevated mounds of earth and stone (from 3 to 6 m high; Figures 5.2, 5.6). They are usually comprised of a front patio for circumscribed public gatherings and symmetrical, ascending terraces that culminate in a high dais (Figure 5.6). The different platforms exhibit variability in scale and terrace orientation despite overarching formal similarities such as long perpendicular ramps and sunken entrances.

The platforms as a whole structured unencumbered axial movement along prominent, centrally-placed ramps. Movement progressed from lower patios to higher landings, and the experiential change in elevation, almost always proceeding east toward the hilltop, was undoubtedly integral to the performance of ritualized acts. Furthermore, sight lines within these platforms were unobstructed, suggesting that activities conducted at different elevations of the structures were fully synchronized (Figure 5.7). More precisely, visual perception and bodily movement, as dictated especially by the ramp, converge on centrally placed apical daises. Ritual expression at San Ildefonso seems to have been predicated on integrated suites of presentation, procession, and possibly supervision. This architectonic configuration corresponds well with the depictions of equivalent structures in Moche iconography. Three-dimensional plans illustrate the synchronized structure of visual communication on platform summits, as well as their limited potential for axial bodily movement (Figure 5.7).

The proliferation of ritual architecture at San Ildefonso suggests a pluralistic social and political milieu that is paralleled by the multiplicity of ceremonial sites in the lower valley as a whole. Radiocarbon samples obtained from three different platforms in the site suggest that the structures were built and used contemporaneously (Swenson 2004: 699). Whether or not the site can be partitioned into discrete "barrios," centered on a platform mound and its surrounding domestic zone, is

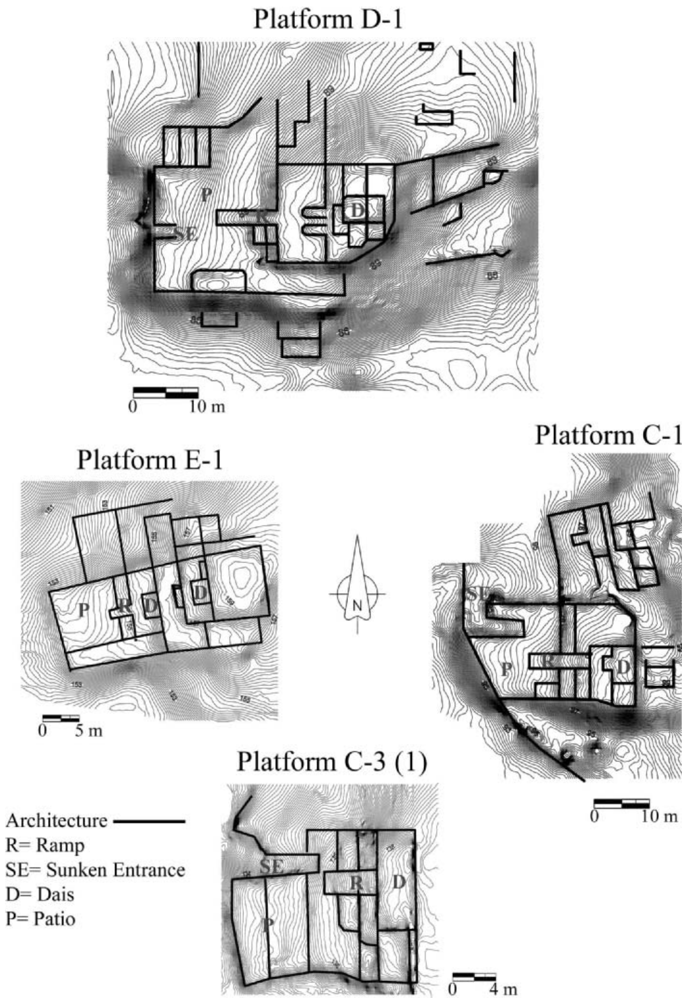


Figure 5.6. Architectural plans of platforms at San Ildefonso.

difficult to determine; distinct ceramic assemblages indexing specific communities did not differentiate sectors within the site. Interestingly, the most prominent structures are usually separated by 100 m or more. Although each platform exhibits subtle architectural differences, they do not appear significant enough to suggest functional variation. Moreover, excavation confirms that the multiple platforms served as stages for feasting rites. Specialized hearths, often identified on lower patios or adjacent to ramps, were laden with diverse food remains. Moreover, decorated cántaros used to decant chicha concentrated in significantly higher percentages with the numerous tablado-like structures than with domestic architecture and rectilinear precincts (Swenson 2004: 784–792). Small-scale feasts, most likely

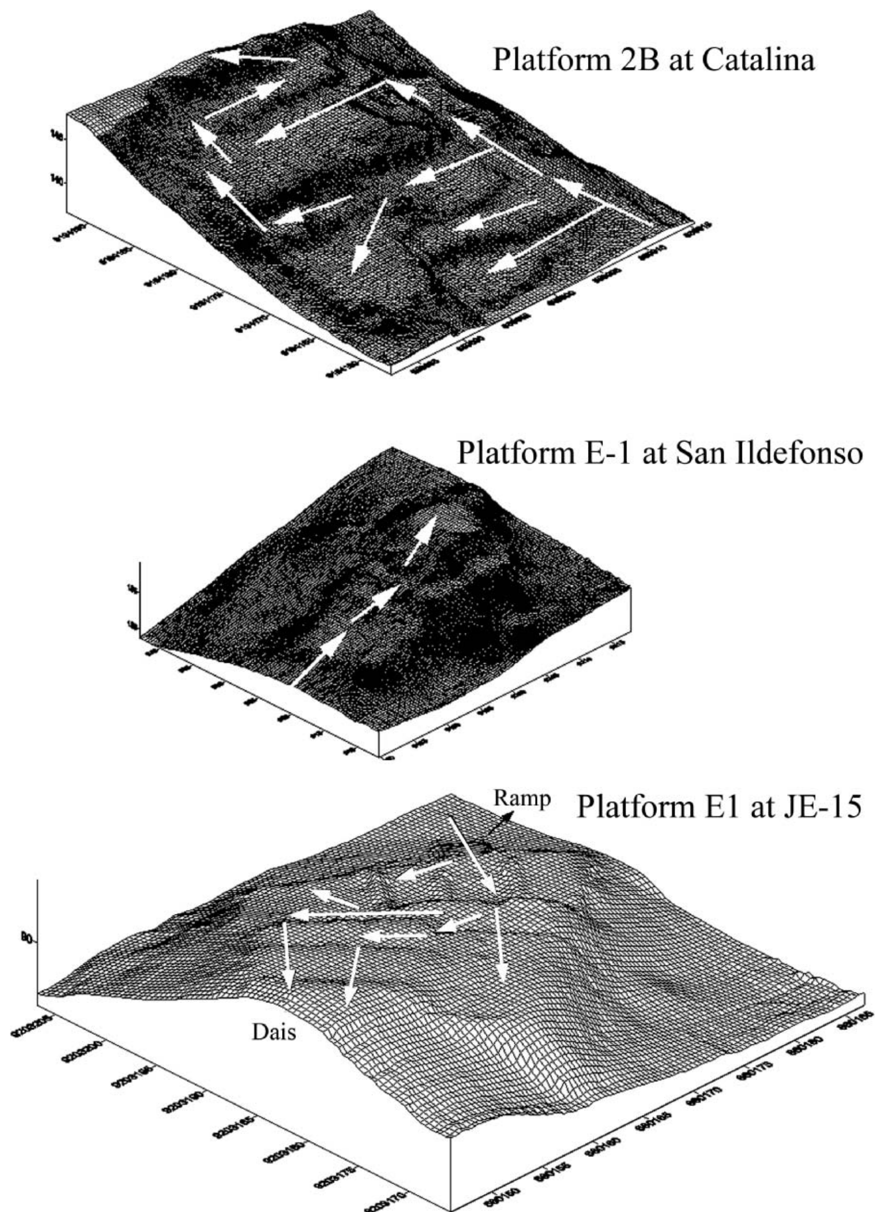


Figure 5.7. Three-dimensional plans of Platform 2B at Catalina, Platform E-1 at San Ildefonso, and Structure E-1 at JE-15. Arrows illustrate differences in access patterns and proxemics within ceremonial architecture of the Jequetepeque hinterland.

sponsored by particular patrons or lineage groups in charge of a specific platform, appear to have mediated political and economic relations within the site.

The multiplication of ritual constructions suggests that distinct groups congregated at San Ildefonso for joint ceremonial activities centered on numerous and likely competitive commensal tournaments. Each platform could have accommodated a relatively small number of participants and observers (no more than 50 to 75 people). Therefore, it seems that the structures were limited to "consultative," or "public-near" modes of ritual communication (Moore 1996a: 156). That is, at San Ildefonso, ceremonialism was predicated on intimate encounters involving a limited number of participants and spectators. In fact, an important function of San Ildefonso might very well have been to create a political and ideological arena for inter-group social exchange, reciprocity, and conflict resolution. Such practices likely enhanced the identities of sub-groups while promoting the ideological goals of the larger society assembled.

Although the replicate platforms of equal elaboration at San Ildefonso point to the maintenance of sub-group identity within the site, the architectural evidence nonetheless suggests that its inhabitants were in the process of forging a broader political community associated with San Ildefonso as a whole. In other words, a specific spatial aesthetic defined ritual practices at this settlement and materialized the emergence of a new social ethos transcending (but far from erasing) sectarian identity politics. That is, the platforms at San Ildefonso share important architectural elements which distinguish them from ceremonial constructions recorded at other Late Moche settlements, such as the Catalina site located 15 kms to the south.

Catalina is the impressive counterpart to San Ildefonso in terms of size and architectural elaboration (Figure 5.5). It is of special analytical significance for it shares many features with San Ildefonso, mainly location on the slopes of a coastal hill, tiered fortification walls with sling stones, and multiple terraced platforms. However, the differences between these settlements are equally illuminating, pointing to divergent architectural and ceramic traditions within the Late Moche Period (Swenson 2004). Five radiocarbon dates procured from each of the two sites attest to their contemporaneity (approximately AD 600–750; see Swenson 2004: 699).

Catalina is located on the southern slope of Cerro de Catalina overlooking the expansive plain of Pampa de Faclo to the south (Hecker and Hecker 1990: 12; Eling 1987: 396) (Figure 5.1). This site is of considerable size, measuring nearly 30 ha in area. Catalina possesses massive stone perimeter walls that encompass and delimit the settlement (Figure 5.5). They often survive to more than 3 m in height and run east-west for over 500 m along the coastal hill's length. The first rampart encloses a large residential zone that consisted of perishable cane huts identified by dense concentrations of ceramics, shell, and other organics. Grinding stones used to process maize are also frequent in this zone.

The second perimeter wall follows the edge of Cerro Catalina and separates the main suite of ceremonial platforms ascending the hill from the expansive domestic zone on the pampa below. Thus, there is a pronounced separation of domestic and ritual space and a clearer internal architectural hierarchy at Catalina. This configuration contrasts markedly with San Ildefonso, where the ramped platforms

were found distributed throughout the site near residential areas (see Figure 5.5). Although the multiplicity of platforms at Catalina finds parallel at San Ildefonso, divergent spatial ideologies dictated the production of authoritative space at these two Late Moche settlements.

The ceremonial structures of Catalina are similar to those at San Ildefonso in that they consist of discrete platforms with ramps ascending the hillside (Figures 5.2, 5.8). However, the platforms here are usually comprised of elongated landings, which lack the crescendo of narrowing terraces and long ramps. Many of the terraces appear to have been designed expressly for movement along lateral rather than perpendicular axes. Well-delineated patios fronting the main ritual complex are also rare, and the prominent central ramps of San Ildefonso, leading to a raised dais, are absent at Catalina; here smaller, offset ramps predominate (Figure 5.8). In other words, the phenomenological differences distinguishing the two sites are immediately evident. This is clearly demonstrated in an examination of three-dimensional maps of structures from these settlements (see Figure 5.7).

Flow patterns on platforms at Catalina were structured as a combination of perpendicular, staggered, and lateral movement. The unified synchronization of activity is thus much less apparent here than at San Ildefonso. At Catalina, ritual experience was predicated on diffuse lines of sight and communication. Ritual practice within the ample platforms was likely more compartmentalized and varied as compared to the structures of San Ildefonso. Nonetheless, excavation reveals that feasting rites were orchestrated on the individual platforms at both San Ildefonso and Catalina, notwithstanding their idiosyncratic forms. Thus the substantive content of rites appears to have varied little between these ceremonial settlements despite divergent experimental frameworks structuring ritual performance.

Ritual constructions at other Moche settlements built along hills in the north valley also exhibit salient inter-site variability in architectural form and design. For instance, several platforms at JE-15 located on the southeast side of Cerro Huaca Blanca display a unique combination of architectural styles encountered at San Ildefonso and Catalina (Figure 5.9). A monumental ramp serves as a formal entrance to Platform E1 (an unusual feature absent at San Ildefonso or Catalina) that leads to a broad terrace instead of a commanding dais. Access patterns to higher landings within this structure rely on both direct (axial) and lateral forms of movement. Similar to Catalina, visual communication and flow patterns were somewhat staggered, and sight lines do not appear to converge on any one feature within Platform E1, except initially on the frontal ramp. However, the elaborate balustrades aligned with the monumental entrance indicate that visually integrated ritual activities were staged toward the front of the structure in a manner similar to the platforms at San Ildefonso (Figure 5.9). Nonetheless, ritual spectacles at the two sites were realized in notably divergent spatial frameworks.

JE-54, located on the east side of Cerro San Ildefonso several kilometers north of JE-15, further underscores the diversity of Late Moche architectural traditions in the Jequetepeque hinterland. For instance, Structure B represents an unusual combination of ramped platform and compound; this is a construction rarely noted elsewhere (Figure 5.9). Synchronized performances converged toward the front

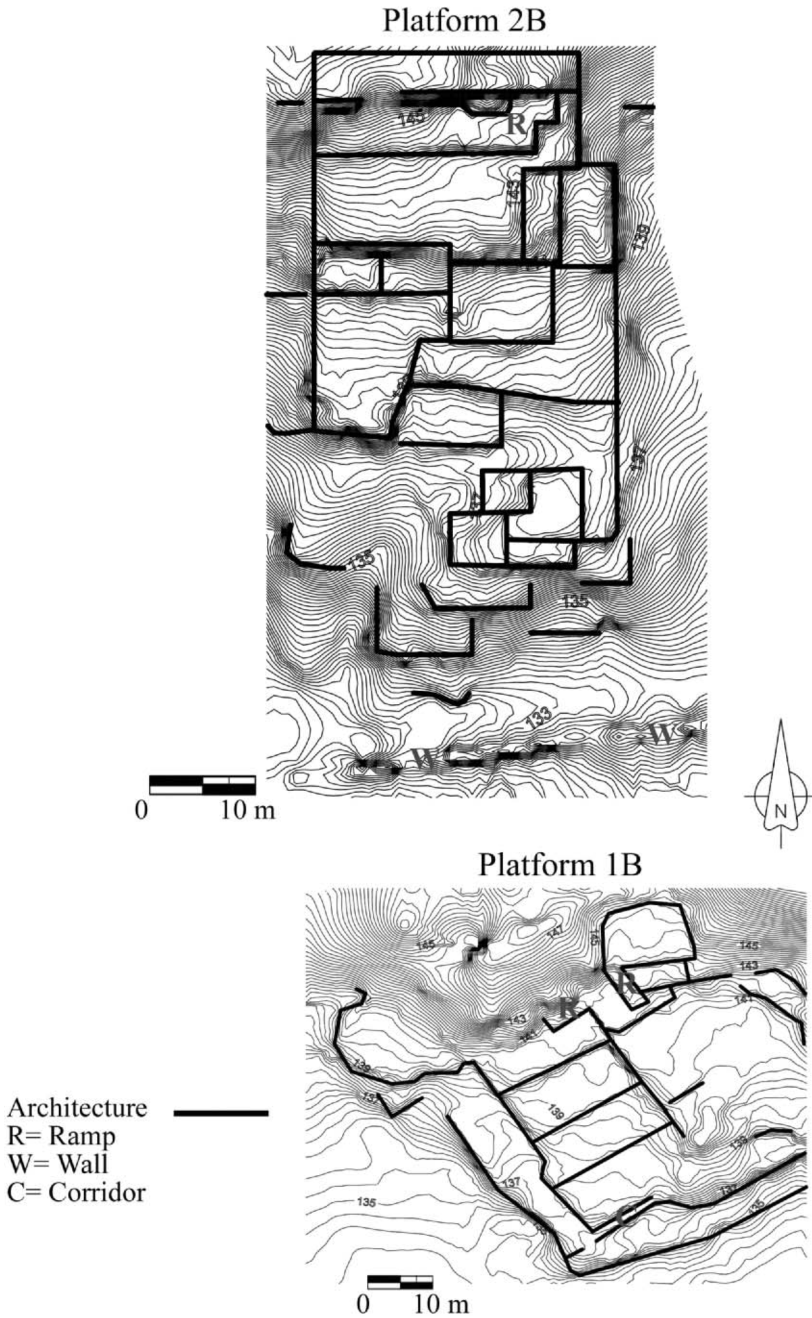


Figure 5.8. Architectural plans of two platforms at Catalina.

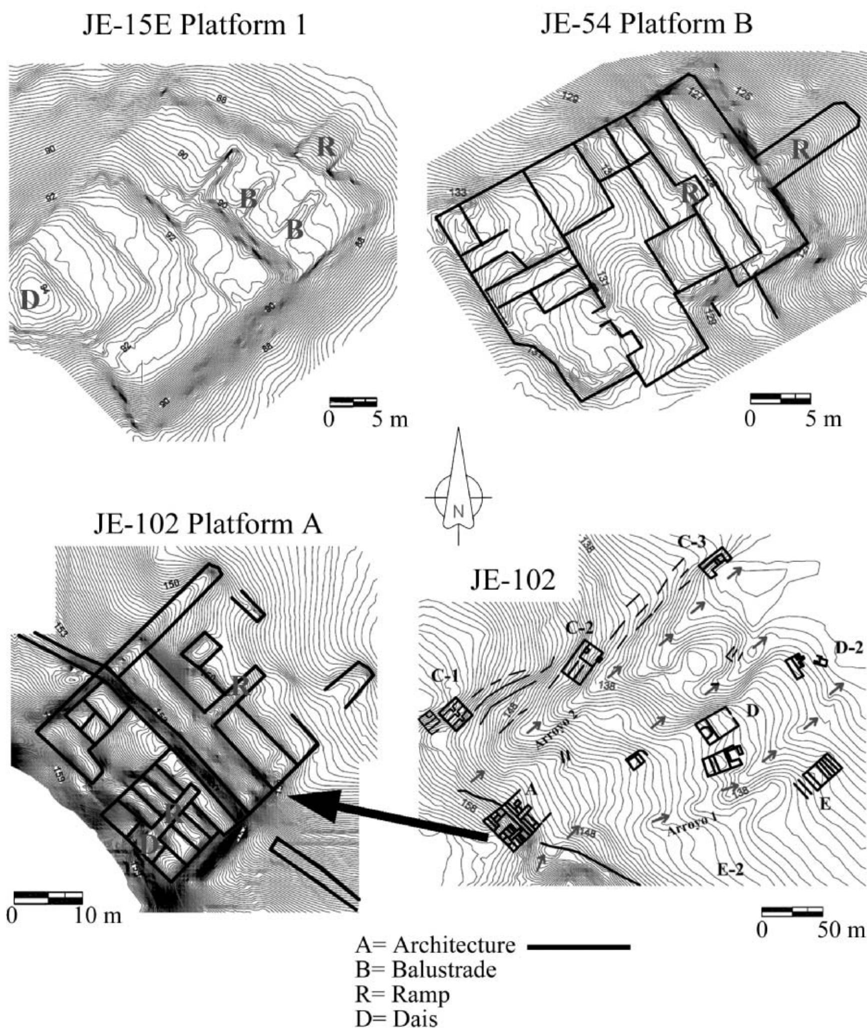


Figure 5.9. Architectural plans of platforms at JE-15, JE-54, and JE-102.

of the platform while compartmentalized and secluded activities characterized the small chambers toward the back. Here feasting spectacles performed near the front ramps and terraces (as indicated by a high quantity of serving jars associated with the edifice) may have regulated access to stored goods cached in the back chambers. This particular configuration contrasts with platforms analyzed at San Ildefonso which promoted unified movement toward the highest-back part of the constructions. Interestingly, the confining perimeter walls suggest more much restricted modes of ritual engagement, unlike the potential for at least small public gatherings at San Ildefonso, Catalina, and JE-15. The spacious front patios noted

at San Ildefonso are absent at JE-54, for instance, leaving little room for spectators or ritual participants.

Finally, JE-102, located on the east side of Cerro Catalina, is also characterized by a multiplicity of ritual constructions displaying site-specific architectural idiosyncrasies (U-shaped forms, uncommon elsewhere, predominate at this site) (Figure 5.9). However, unlike the internal site configuration of the other settlements, Platform A stands out in size, elaboration, and location (Figure 5.9). Although built of stone and earth and smaller than urban pyramids, it was visible from all sectors of the site and holds a commanding position within the settlement. Platform A was likely implicated in public spectacles involving a larger number of ritual participants (perhaps the entire assembled population) than did the more confined platforms within the other ceremonial sites discussed above. Unlike San Ildefonso or Catalina, a *primes inter pares* relationship of authoritative space distinguishes the ritual landscape of JE-102.

The comparison of ritual architecture at the different sites underscores the creative emulation of urban spatial templates by rural populations and the local determination of ritual politics during the Late Moche Period. Clearly, hinterland ceremonial sites cannot be forced into traditional scalar-settlement hierarchies that reflect the projection of centralized power or unidirectional information and resource flows (Wright and Johnson 1975). The distribution and internal spatial organization of the Jequetepeque ceremonial sites deviates notably from Inka and Chimú models of provincial administration (Keatinge and Conrad 1983; Mackey 1987; Morris and Thompson 1985). Contrary to expectations, rural ceremonial loci are found in close proximity, often three to five kilometers apart. The lack of standardized corporate architecture as well as the extraordinary redundancy of rural ceremonial loci point to the parochial political functions of the Late Moche settlements. Evidently these settlements did not serve as urban satellites in a centralized political economy directed by San José de Moro, Cerro Chepén, or Pampa Grande, nor do they represent secondary nodes of an elite-disseminated religious ideology. The hinterland ceremonial sites functioned as critical spaces for the creation and reproduction of *locally* empowered political subjects.

COMPETITIVE FEASTING IN LATE MOCHE JEQUETEPEQUE

Despite inter-site discrepancies in architectural design and ritual proxemics, the platforms of the different sites staged similar ritual spectacles rooted in feasting. Ceramic analysis along with the excavation of ten platform mounds at three sites (San Ildefonso, Catalina, and Portachuelo de Charcape) reveal that the celebration of feasts and consumption of chicha constituted the defining function of the hinterland platforms. The discovery of hearths adjacent to ramps or low patios (Figure 5.10) is one of the more salient patterns that emerged from the excavation program. Fires, which presumably transcended quotidian food preparation, were lit on the these ceremonial structures.

Excavation demonstrates that food consumption was closely linked with the use of the hinterland platforms; diverse faunal and marcobotanical remains were

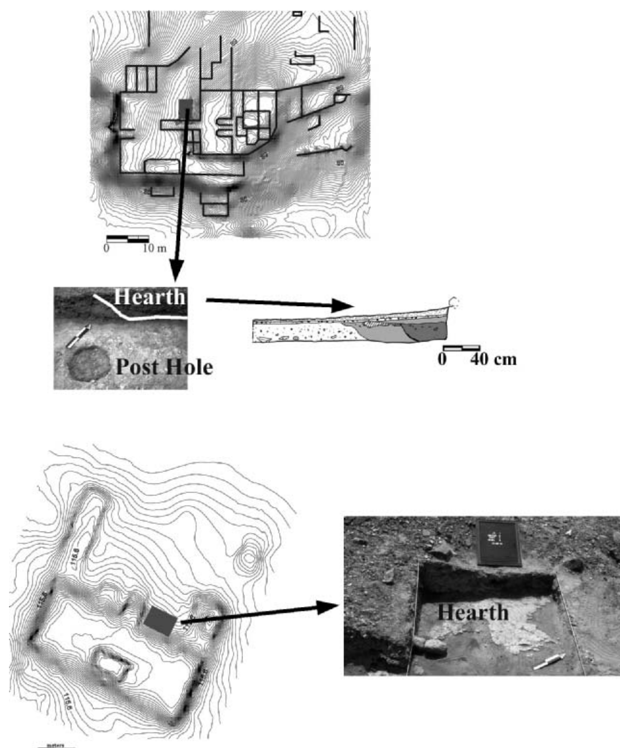


Figure 5.10. Hearths excavated on ceremonial platforms at San Ildefonso and Portachuelo de Charcape.

recovered from excavation units (Swenson 2004: 687–696,1159–1188). Llama, guinea pig, dog, sea lion, peanuts, beans, squash, fish, chili pepper, and shell were prepared and consumed in the vicinity of the excavated platforms. Significantly, maize was especially abundant, pointing to the importance of chicha production and consumption. And llama remains were found in almost every excavated platform. Extravagant feasts, involving the consumption of chicha and a rich and varied diet, were differently staged on the ramped structures dispersed throughout the Jequetepeque countryside.

The centrality of the feast in hinterland ceremonialism underscores the political aspirations and ideological strategies of rural populations in Jequetepeque. Feasting, or commensal politics, has long been recognized as the lynchpin of political relations in the Andes. The feast inextricably conflates ritual, ideology, and economics in the conception and exercise of power. Archaeologists working in many parts of the world have recently placed great importance in analyzing and theorizing the feast; valuable contributions have been made in investigations of the catalytic role of commensal politics in social stratification, gender relations, and colonial encounters (Bray 2003a, b; Dietler 1996, 2001; Dietler and Hayden 2001; Gero 1990, 1992; Lau 2002). In the Andes, as elsewhere, feasting was central

to political aggrandizement and social differentiation. Festive hospitality, a "sincere fiction of disinterested generosity" to use Bourdieu's phrase, was critical in reinforcing asymmetrical power relations (cited in Dietler 2001: 75). As is well known, regaling corvée labor with chicha-fueled banquets propelled the Inka political economy. In fact, the mit'a labor tax of the Inka state represented a distorted amplification of the bonds of dependency, reciprocity, and status linking traditional lineage chiefs with their kin (Morris and Thompson 1985: 91; Murra 1982). The feast dramatized authority by highlighting the generosity and legitimacy of the sponsor while incurring the respect, indebtedness, and compliance of participants.

In the case of coastal Peru, Arsenault (1992) argues that feasting was intimately connected to elite authority in the southern Moche state. The discovery of massive quantities of feasting ware and llama remains at Huaca del Sol at the Moche capital indicates that adobe pyramids were loci of ceremonial feasts. Furthermore, iconographic evidence suggests that a privileged corps of male religious specialists manufactured chicha and organized banquets on behalf of the state. Interestingly, the production and consumption of chicha were among the more important political rituals orchestrated at San José de Moro (Castillo 2001).

As Dietler (2001: 65) notes, feasts are important arenas "for the representation and manipulation of political power," and it is readily apparent that such arenas were not restricted to large centers or singular monumental complexes within the Jequetepeque hinterland. In fact, small-scale feasting at sites such as San Ildefonso and Catalina differed significantly from the centralization of commensal politics evident at Huaca del Sol. It also deviated from the Inka model, in which large provincial centers anchored state control over festive generosity and surplus labor appropriation (Morris and Thompson 1985). The use of such "authorizing" spaces was clearly regulated by centralized polities. Specialized structures were instrumental in visually articulating and legitimizing political privilege, and they were tightly guarded and often monopolized as a consequence. The appropriation of the feast and its diacritical space by rural communities in Jequetepeque reveals the audacious aspirations of lower-level chiefs who sought political privilege and social entitlement. Indeed, the archaeological landscape in Jequetepeque points to a veritable "competition among stages," demonstrating the fragmentation of authority in the region (Lincoln 1994: 138). Evidently, the social instability in the Late Moche Period enabled a greater number of actors to augment their political positions through the co-option of prestigious ritual programs and "empowering feasts" (Dietler 2001: 75–78).

Participation in ceremonial feasts was no doubt related to the reaffirmation of social identity and the mediation of economic relations engaging but competitively differentiating local groups. Feasts at sites such as San Ildefonso and Catalina appear to have been instrumental in ideologically defining and recasting power relations linking various social groups. The different hinterland ceremonial sites (and possibly platforms within larger settlements) likely symbolized "separate consumption communities"; however, these communities likely did not form strictly exclusive "commensal circles" (Dietler 2001: 94). Lesser chiefs may have attempted to expand their political influence by competitively soliciting the allegiance of different groups in the valley. As Lau (2002: 280) notes, "while

holding feasts 'catalyzes' potential for social differentiation, communal benefits may also be conferred." Thus, it is possible that the intensified ritual activities and political machinations of petty curacas, who competitively solicited the favor of potential followers, were advantageously manipulated by a large number of social groups residing in the hinterland.

The evidence for site-specific architectural variability strongly suggests that ritual production was "deregulated," the prerogative of local groups, likely defined by kinship or lineage affiliation. Again, this does not imply that ceremonial practice at these settlements was strictly parochial; rather, ritual architecture was built on local initiative, perhaps to mediate the interests of the community or more powerful individuals within the community who commissioned and used the monuments. The creative adoption of Moche ceremonial space reveals that local groups attempted to legitimize local political posturing by invoking widely recognized religious tenets. In fact, the Late Moche Period in Jequetepeque witnessed a veritable popularization of Moche religion.

Ritual in the Andes has traditionally articulated identity politics involving basic forms of kinship association and social organization (Rostworowski 1983; Salomon and Urioste 1991). Therefore, the individual ceremonial sites that proliferated throughout the Jequetepeque countryside may have served as the temples of lineage divinities, who were elevated in status through identification with Moche supernaturals. That is, separate kin groups or related sociopolitical associations which gained greater autonomy in the Late Moche Period constructed ceremonial monuments to commemorate community-specific supernaturals and their worldly representatives. San Ildefonso might represent the union of several lineage groups who competitively maintained distinct theaters of ideological self-expression, perhaps in honoring a more inclusive or regionally revered deity.

In fact, the nature of power relations at San Ildefonso and Catalina was perhaps reminiscent of the sociopolitical constitution of the Italian city during the Renaissance, wherein competing families vied for power through the manipulation of shared material symbols and practices. The many towers in San Gimignano, built to showcase the wealth of individuals families, is an apposite analogy. Kertzer also notes that the manifold churches of Sienna located within the fiercely proud neighborhoods (*contrade*) should not be interpreted as reflecting city-wide religious and ideological consensus based on shared Roman Catholicism. Instead, he rightly argues that "What is found in Sienna, then, is the solidarity that comes from common participation in ritual, but it is not the solidarity of an entire society, nor even of the entire community, but a solidarity that pits ritually marked neighborhoods of the same city against one another" (Kertzer 1988: 75).

Finally, it is worth noting that many of the Jequetepeque settlements are in close proximity to canals and field systems. Therefore, the groups that built and maintained these ceremonial sites may have resembled religious or hydraulic organizations defending usufruct rights to land and water through ceremonial feasting. Ritual feasts on specialized constructions materialized claims to resources and pooled the labor and productivity of participants. Such feasts were critical to the organization of production and to the local negotiation of political and economic relations.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I will touch on some of the broader implications of the Jequetepeque data. In a recent article, Arthur Joyce and colleagues (2001) working in Oaxaca, Mexico argued that the ideological practices of lower status groups could be identified archaeologically through the examination of differing strategies of ritualized resistance, avoidance, and engagement. Resistance can be detected through such material signatures as the defacement of elite religious monuments and the violent destruction of corporate temples. "Avoidance," on the other hand, refers to the maintenance of alternative politico-religious systems that evade state ideologies and authority structures. Avoidance denotes the existence of incongruous ritual programs that do not directly contest elite representations but rather imply a contrary and self-assertive religious ethos. Figurines and iconographic symbols valorizing female fertility in certain Mesoamerican domestic contexts have been interpreted as examples of avoidance (A. Joyce et al. 2001; R. Joyce 1999, 2001). Such practices are thought to have circumvented the androcentric orientation of state-sponsored religions grounded in warfare and human sacrifice. Finally, engagement refers to manipulation of the tenets of dominant ideologies by subordinate communities in order to counter oppression within the system.

Certainly, the different communities that built and maintained the hinterland sites "engaged" with and contributed to the transformation of a Moche ideology in the Late Moche Period. Moche divinities, warriors, and mythic themes are commonly depicted on hinterland ceramics, and the ramped platforms themselves are interpretive miniatures of the great urban pyramids. This engagement, however was clearly inventive, mostly independent, and likely strategic. That is, it cannot simply be understood as a reflexive reaction of subaltern groups maneuvering within the oppressive framework of a dominant political ideology. Rather, it entailed a creative reformulation of ideological practices that was critical to the dynamic continuity of Moche religion as a whole.

In fact, depictions of Moche warriors and elites with nose pieces, ear spools, and elaborate headdresses (Figure 5.4) indicate that the inhabitants of the hinterland settlements did not reject Moche-defined values of religious privilege and elevated status. These emblems of elite power, along with other symbols of Moche ideology (such as corporate fineline vessels found in many of the sites), suggest that the evident "pluralism" and decentralization of religious practice in Jequetepeque did not translate to the development of radically alternative political ideologies explicitly hostile to urban-based belief systems. This scenario contrasts markedly from the situation in the Moche Valley, where the former state religious complex was discarded and constituted anew by a centralized elite (Bawden 1996; 2001).

In Jequetepeque, communities competitively financed religious feasts and political rituals. These groups sought political privilege by appropriating and redeploying the preeminent religious practices of urban elites, particularly feasts. In other words, the symbolic capital that defined traditional Moche conceptions of status distinction, political centricity, and religious primacy was co-opted and consequently transformed by numerous communities in the Jequetepeque hinterland.

In the end, hinterland communities appear to have "re-centered" or "de-centered" political power and diminished the relevance of cities such as Pampa Grande or San José de Moro. Therefore, the opposition between urban and rural in Late Moche Jequetepeque is a construct of convenience; in fact it is questionable whether the ceremonial sites can be considered a "hinterland" at all in relation to neighboring urban centers. The negative connotations of the periphery as disempowered, subservient, and economically dependent are certainly inapplicable in this instance (see Schwartz and Falconer 1994).

The Jequetepeque evidence demonstrates that power relations need to be conceptualized beyond reductive dichotomies of domination and resistance. The scaled-down Moche temples in the Jequetepeque hinterland are not simply emblematic of hegemonic forces, whether in a cultural, religious, or political sense. Nor do they reflect the success of upper class lords in inculcating urban-based religious values and engineering the compliance of non-elites. Instead, it is clear that rural communities actively contributed to the reproduction of Moche religion. Even Gramsci, the foremost theorist on hegemonic cultural forces, noted that Catholicism in Italy "is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is one Catholicism for the peasants, one for the petits-bourgeois and town workers, one for women, and one for intellectuals which is itself variegated and disconnected" (Gramsci 1971: 419–420). Gramsci would stress that the tailoring of Catholicism by particular groups to meet immediate needs often strengthened unequal relations of production and impeded resistive organization. However, in the Jequetepeque case, the differential propagation of Moche ideology secured greater political, religious, and even economic autonomy for local communities. Rural inhabitants in Jequetepeque did much more than passively engage with or opportunistically comply with a dominant ideology forged exclusively in San José de Moro, Cerro Chepén, or Pampa Grande. The Jequetepeque data challenge the assumption common among Andean scholars that Moche denotes an exclusively elite political and cultural phenomenon (Bawden 1996). In fact, they demonstrate the vital agency of lower status groups in Andean prehistory.

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