
The Symbols of Late Moche Social Transformation

Author(s): GARTH BAWDEN

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The Symbols of Late Moche Social Transformation

Scholars have long realized that major change occurred in all areas of Moche society in its latest phase (A.D. 600–750). While the material and environmental aspects of this change have long been intensively studied, its more inaccessible ideological elements have received less attention. This situation is changing, however. Recently, scholars have begun to meet the challenge posed by Christopher Donnan's (1978) splendid iconographic research to explore more intangible aspects of Late Moche history. These studies mostly interpret local developments from the viewpoint of Moche rulers and their political responses to disruption. In so doing they have made important contributions to our understanding of the ideological changes that occurred at the apex of Moche society as leaders strove to maintain their power at a time of growing vulnerability. Such periods of widespread change also affect subject populations who are less visible in the archaeological record. Indeed, their reactions to social stress may well play a crucial role in shaping wider social response. Clearly, then, this issue holds important implications for fuller understanding of local and regional social dynamics in the Late Moche period.

In this paper I examine the general process of change that affected Late Moche society at the end of the sixth century A.D. More specifically I study the role played in this process by changing relations between rulers and ruled at the town of Galindo in the Moche Valley.

This settlement has long been regarded as a material expression of the pan-Andean changes that heralded the Middle Horizon period. Once interpreted as the physical evidence of an invasion by the Wari, an expansionist state based in the southern highlands, its innovative features are now recognized as products of Moche society in its final phases. The location, settlement plan, architecture, funerary practices, and ceramics, all attest to the profound nature of social change at this time and, significantly, permit examination of the disparate quality of this change in the contrasting social arenas inhabited by the rulers and the subject population.

I examine the material inventory of Late Moche culture at Galindo in its full temporal and spatial contexts. I regard this inventory as the residue of a complex network of symbolic communication through which elite and commoner groups constructed and asserted new forms of identity in the context of severe social disruption. The distinctive interests of the two groups and the disparate resources at their command determined that they utilized very different strategies in search of their common goal. Rulers tried to build a new political ideology around which to consolidate their position. Commoners, excluded from this process, faced the more fundamental need to recreate their group identity without recourse to the processes and symbols of political power in a hostile urban setting that alienated them from their traditional social

Aerial photograph of Galindo, Moche Valley
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supports. These twin endeavors increasingly separated the Galindo population from the discredited belief system that had for so long integrated Moche society. At the same time they drove a wedge between the two groups and created internal tension that must have contributed to the early demise of Galindo. Together they mark the first steps in the construction of a social identity that, while no longer "Moche" in the traditional sense, was still far from comprising a well-integrated successor.

Social Identity

I develop my study in the context of the social discourse that on the one hand incorporated the political ideology of Moche leaders, on the other the collective identity of commoners. These groups occupied very different arenas, each the center of a network of social interaction that provided the conceptual basis for the construction of power. Here I define power broadly, viewing it as the domain of social practice where human agents mobilize the conceptual and material resources at their command to generate consequences whose precise outcomes they may or may not foresee. In this sense power is inherent in all human interaction whether individual or institutional. However, here I focus on its role in effecting social reproduction and change in the context of the endeavors by different interest groups to establish their social autonomy.

Social identity is the legacy of history. In the broadest sense it is an outcome of the reflexive interaction between a human group and the particular circumstances that it encounters in time and space. This unceasing process leads to the development of a discrete set of structural principles that engender the rules and values whose implicit acceptance promotes social cohesion and the appropriate forms of speech, behavior and material symbolism that manifest them in daily life. Constantly asserted and reconstituted through social interaction, these unique assemblages of conceptual, behavioral, and material constructs generate the recognition of shared membership that becomes the self-ascribed foundation of collective identity.

Societies are not simply accumulations of identical human units. They use their

common structural legacy in different ways. Thus, except in times of external threat, people forge their strongest active connections, not with the macrocommunity, but with various smaller groupings within it. Corporate, civic, ethnic, kinship and religious organizations, among others, provide the direct focus for communal activity and both nourish and assert the distinct objectives and philosophies of their members. While the deep structures that cross-cut all population segments create the shared mental language within which social negotiation can occur, the conscious realities constructed by individuals and groups from these shared structures represent different understandings of their experience and are central constituents of lived identity. It is at this conscious level that people mediate their lives. The dogmatic verbal and literary assertions through which individuals and groups strive to establish their agendas, together with their associated practices, symbols and institutions, collectively comprise the discursive arena of active social statement. Together social statement and deeper structure comprise the reality within which individuals construct their identities and contest their social locations (Fish 1989: 34; Harman 1988: 125–126). More specifically, such contestation occurs through the agency of ideology.

Ideology

I regard ideology as that specialized formulation of social statement that promotes the interests of its advocates in the wider community. Ideology is thus the possession of all interest groups in a society. Within this broader ideological context, dominant ideology, which seeks to promote cohesion in the interests of established social order, represents its most prominent expression. Dominant ideology achieves its impact by narrowing and condensing the discourses that represent reality for its adherents and communicating these to the public at large through the established agencies of communication and participatory ceremonies. In its Marxist sense dominant ideology is frequently regarded as a set of ideas used by rulers to hide repressive reality behind a persuasive façade which proclaims the universal benefits of the existing social order and

naturalizes any inequalities that may exist within it. This usage has been justly criticized because of its necessary assumption of the existence of some deeper truth that ideology seeks to mask, rather than being itself an interpretation of perceived reality (Foucault 1984). Moreover, it overly emphasizes the powerlessness of the masses and their passive acceptance of tenets that may well oppose their interests (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980). In fact history makes clear that this does not usually happen. When ideological discourse and group interest fall into opposition, dominant ideology may be discarded speedily. During those periods when unitary ideology prevails, it is because it successfully reproduces notions of social reality and advantage espoused by society as a whole. In such instances prevailing ideological discourse does not mask deeper truth—shared perception *makes* it social reality for all.

Even within its own epistemological logic, however, dominant ideology encounters challenge. In stable conditions, negotiation and adjustment are contained within the conceptual boundaries set by its dogma. But at times of stress, when large segments of a population become convinced that their social order is causing adversity, the situation intensifies. In extreme circumstances perceived contradiction between ideological substance and individual self-interest can lead to fundamental challenge to the ruling order. It is now that lived reality is discerned as being detached from ideological “truth.” Criticism is not long confined within the hegemonic framework of dominant dogma and expands into areas incompatible with its structural logic. In this process the ideological discourses of subordinate groups come more directly into play as in-place locations for social opposition. Here alienated groups use their own social realities to define more clearly their own distinct identities and in so doing create the foundation for wider power. Inimical to the discredited system of domination, these actions serve to neutralize its power over them and to create the dynamic for major modification of the existing order or, in more extreme instances, profound social transformation.

Symbolism as Social Action

Symbols are important agents in the social and ideological negotiation that I discussed in the previous section. While they have been studied in various ways (see, for example, Firth 1973; Leach 1976; Mach 1993; Ricoeur 1974), most scholars would agree that symbols include a wide range of conceptual, behavioral, and material forms, whose meanings are rooted in the cognitive world models of their related cultures. This culture-specific character of symbolism plays a central role in the construction of individual and group identity by organizing people's experience, asserting their particular values, ideologies and stereotypes, and directing their relations with others. These qualities clearly possess the potential for power construction at all levels of the social ladder. It is this issue that principally concerns me here.

In the context of religious and political ideology, symbols are most successful when they confine and focus partisan meaning, thereby lessening the potential for individual interpretation and heightening their value as agents of authority. Here symbols suffuse explicit ideological values and goals with an emotional force that stimulates involvement and mobilizes people to act on behalf of the communicated message (Turner 1967: 30). It is, then, not surprising that they are essential players in arenas of social control where they may be used to assert the prestige of and stimulate support for dominant ideology and its proponents. In complex societies of the central Andes such as the Moche this role is expressed through rich iconography executed in a variety of media.

Ideological discourse is not confined to the dominant political sector; rather it is central to the construction of group identity and power relations at all social levels. Common cognitive origin ensures that symbols carry at some level a certain degree of understandable meaning throughout their community. The potential for flexible interpretation, however, creates the opportunity for individual groups to manipulate this common heritage to further their own interests. Moreover, the readily accessible character of symbolic communication directly identifies it with the essential source of power—the ability to influence people and events. Each subgroup within

society possesses a distinctive set of symbols which potentially serve to assert its values and ideas in the public awareness. These properties are important factors in the competitive interaction between groups engaged in political and social struggle, where they may act to sustain the values of a subordinate group against dominant ideology, to mediate relationships among groups of equal political influence, or to impress the dogma of central authority on an entire community.

Cultures do not develop in isolation. Every society is to some extent influenced by its neighbors and adopts cultural elements from this contact. The question thus arises as to how foreign symbols have meaning in their receptor societies. Often, intercultural familiarity fosters adoption, reinterpretation, and absorption of such forms to the extent that they are no longer distinguishable as foreign. There are, however, fewer instances where symbols are intentionally adopted by a particular group to further its message. This is perhaps most common in the political arena, where it is not unusual for rulers to embrace foreign symbols to enhance their authority. These adoptions may merely carry the added prestige of admired exotic images. They may also carry a specifically religious or political meaning that transcends local beliefs and identifies the elite with a powerful universalist ideology. Such borrowing functions to focus authority on a single group but inhibits incorporation into the broader symbolic structure of society. In this situation, the very quality that accords them influence also raises the possibility that these symbols will be rejected upon the eclipse of their principal adherents.

Places as Ideological Discourse

Communal life has much to do with place. Human groups use buildings and the modified landscape around them to organize their social lives and the daily activities that this entails. Such constructions express the distinctive cultural ideals of their makers; these built environments constitute symbolically charged places that reinforce the individual and collective values of their users. While the architectural signifiers of place vary greatly in form from culture to culture they share two important characteristics. First, they deline-

ate the physical locations of social action. Second, as cultural manifestations they carry symbolic meaning in their own right and through the objects and activities associated with them. These places and the people who use them are part of the complex of physical, behavioral, and conceptual networks that together comprise the community. Whether temple, residence or plaza, they are the active settings where people negotiate their particular experiences of social reality to effect change or maintain stability. Together these settings and the symbols to which they gave meaning reveal the changing relationship between the central ideology at Late Moche Galindo and the diverging values of much of its population.

The urban built environment, the focus of this study, comprises a variety of components. Elite architecture asserts a powerful symbolic force reflecting dominant interests. Great architectural centers of government have throughout history projected the ideology of dominance in various ways. They inspire awe through their size and elaboration. Their inaccessible sancta, set aside for the activities of officials and priests, evoke the mystery and remoteness of elite rule. They act as powerful agents of social cohesion by providing places where rituals are held. They also communicate the content of central ideology through symbolic embellishment affixed to their façades and portable artifacts used in ceremonies. In the town of Galindo the places from which rulers exercised and asserted their authority included architectural forms associated with administrative, economic, and religious institutions, as well as residences and burial places of the rulers.

By contrast the architectural evidence of commoners is almost entirely confined to their homes and tombs. At the broadest level, domestic form and content manifest residential modes constituted in the historical and cultural experience of their society. They thus continually remind household members of the canons that govern appropriate domestic behavior (Bourdieu 1977; Rapoport 1982, 1990: 12ff) and play active roles in constructing boundaries to social action. Within these imposed limits, however, household members, through daily practice, may manipulate ideas embedded in residential structure to

effect change. By adjusting political and religious symbolism, by modifying domestic space and form, and by exploiting household ritual, people manipulate basic residential principles to support collective identity and strengthen social solidarity, thus creating the basis for local power. At times of social tension, the ability of subordinate groups to resist the demands of dominant opposition may be restricted to this private realm of household discourse.

Traditional Foundations of Moche Political Power

I now turn to the later Moche periods, when rulers and commoners alike used ideology, together with its related visual symbolism and places of social interaction, to consolidate their threatened social positions at a time of disruption and transformation. Within this apparently common goal, their diverging aspirations and strategies vividly demonstrate the fluid nature of power as it is differentially constructed in contrasting domains of social life. The resulting social contradictions may also be seen as dynamic mechanisms in the ultimate transformation of wider north coast social identity from Moche times to the ensuing Late Intermediate period.

The structure of traditional Moche political authority is most apparent in the great platform mounds that still dominate the coastal Peruvian river valleys. These edifices, together with portable items and funerary practices, comprise the material component of an ideological discourse that maintained Moche dominance on the north coast of Peru for centuries. Earlier archaeological investigations of the Moche culture indicated that their platform mounds were generally located in rather specialized centers, which possessed only limited residential occupation for the ruling elite and their retainers. This view must be modified to some extent as it applies to the southern part of the region in light of the work of Wilson (1988) in the Santa Valley and Topic (1982) and Chapdelaine (this volume, and 1997) in the Moche Valley. Their work suggests that while the bulk of the population lived in smaller settlements scattered through the valleys (a conclusion also reached by Billman in his 1996 Moche Valley

settlement survey), some major centers incorporated large population concentrations. Chapdelaine's work at the Moche site, however, also indicates that his "urban" population was mostly comprised of people of some status, and thus implies that the settlement was not regarded as the appropriate home by the largest lowest-status segment of the population. This demographic situation is of importance to my discussion, as it contrasts with that of the later town of Galindo in the same valley.

Through their great size, Moche platforms proclaim the ability of leaders to organize the labor of local communities. Furthermore, the segmentary platform construction technique suggests that this labor force was organized into a system of work teams drawn from specific locations in the southern Moche region (Moseley 1975). But platforms also played active continuing roles in affirming the dominant ideology of power. Their great bulk and height conveyed the power of central authority. As symbols they recreated the sacred mountains whose divinities provided the rivers that supported life. It was in their shadow that the general populace participated in ceremonies ensuring social integration. In their role as locations of sacred time and space their summits acted as stages where, in full view (Moore 1996), leaders conducted the rituals that manifested the tenets of north coast religious belief. Here they conducted sacrifice of prisoners taken in ritual combat (Bawden 1996; Bourget, this volume; Topic and Topic 1997; Verano, this volume). Occasionally this identification of rulers with the ritual centers of power transcended corporeal life when, as at Sipán, rulers were actually buried in the structures (Alva, this volume; Alva and Donnan 1993; Uceda, this volume). These tombs of ancestral leaders undoubtedly reinforced the sacred power of the monuments, and served as mortar for the continuity of the social order.

Thus, by identifying themselves with sacred places, Moche rulers stressed a shared conceptual history to enhance their own positions. As mediators with a supernatural past and present in the liminal space of ritual, the elite presented themselves as the powers responsible for cosmological balance.

In addition to the great architectural manifestations of power, Moche leadership was

also proclaimed through portable symbolism. Finely painted stirrup-spout vessels, objects of precious metal, and textiles all carried depictions of the rituals of power. In some instances, as in the case of the Sacrificer or Decapitator motif, the familiar meaning and form of this imagery linked Moche ritual with distant north coast antecedents (Cordy-Collins 1992), endowing its ideological message with the legitimacy of traditional cultural meaning. In other instances such as the Recuay Moon Animal (Menzel 1977: 62–63), powerful motifs were borrowed from neighboring cultures, infused with meaning from the north coast tradition and integrated into the Moche symbolic system. By these means portable symbolism promulgated the dominant ideology and reinforced the prevailing social order. The most elaborate material symbols, such as the striking portrait vessels (Donnan, this volume) whose realistic depiction proclaimed the high degree of power incumbent in individual members and positions of the ruling elite, were reserved for contexts of central authority. Simpler examples of this shared ideological symbolism, however, circulated in all arenas of daily life. Thus, in non-elite houses, stirrup-spout vessels and figurines replicated in abbreviated form the images of dominant myth, while the tombs of commoners usually contained items whose iconography reproduced the images most frequently used in the central locations of power.

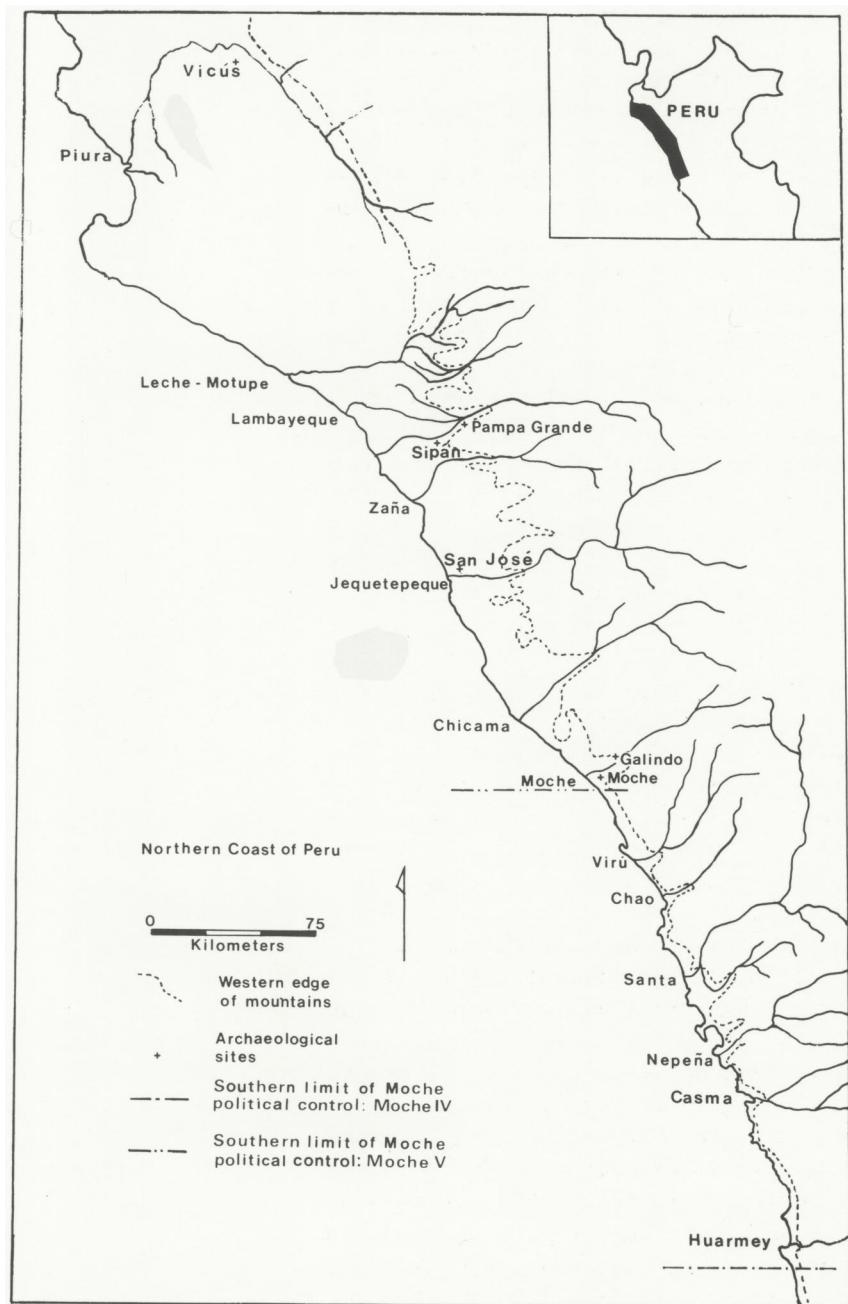
Burial practice represents another important context for ideological discourse through symbolic communication, and is of special importance to my study. Burials are especially sensitive to the interests of intracommunity groups. In all societies, preparation of the dead is shaped by the aspirations and relationships of their survivors as much as by the actual qualities of the deceased. The practices that surround death are in a real sense conditioned by the social and political needs of the living. Thus funerary ritual and burial practice are often regarded as potent symbolic activities through which real or desired social situations are illuminated in an attempt to influence the wider community. Commonly, such objectives include endorsement of a specific interest group and its values, sanction of the dominant social order, maintenance of communal traditions and origins, and rein-

forcement of territorial integrity by reference to ancestral lands and the sacred places associated with them.

Prior to Late Moche times the prevailing mortuary style was a rectangular tomb lined with adobe brick or stone capped by wood and cane roofing (for summaries of Moche funerary practices, see Donnan 1995; Donnan and Mackey 1978). People were without exception laid on their backs with arms and legs fully extended. Small pieces of copper were often placed at feet, hands, and mouth, a practice that dates to pre-Moche times (Fogel 1993: 281) and again links Moche ritual to traditional north coastal practice. The dead were almost always accompanied by grave goods that bore distinctive Moche iconography, a specific link to the dominant ideology. The majority of the burials were in cemeteries. The tombs of rulers were incorporated into special burial platforms and contained large amounts of elaborate precious stone and metal objects and fine ceramics.

In addition to formal cemeteries, burial locations included residential zones (Chapdelaine, this volume, and 1997; Donnan and Mackey 1978; Topic 1982). These burials were often placed in plazas outside of the residential spaces, and when located within the house perimeter they were never incorporated into the above-floor domestic architecture. In conformity with prevailing custom, the interred individuals were always placed in an extended supine position. Moreover, in virtually every instance, burial items of characteristic Moche form and iconography accompanied the interments. This occurred in places like Huanchaco (Donnan and Mackey 1978), where the interred represented a small fishing group of low social standing, and at the Moche site (Chapdelaine, this volume, and 1997), whose occupants were probably of significantly higher status. We will see that all of these traditional practices changed dramatically in Late Moche residential burial practice at Galindo.

Critical to any social order is a general acknowledgment by its adherents that it addresses their circumstances and needs. The accessibility of the central tenets of official ideology to the populace—whether ritually performed on great platforms emblazoned with the murals of traditional myth, proclaimed through symbolic household items,



1. Map of the north coast of Peru showing the reduction in the area under Moche influence at the end of the Middle Moche (Moche IV) phase

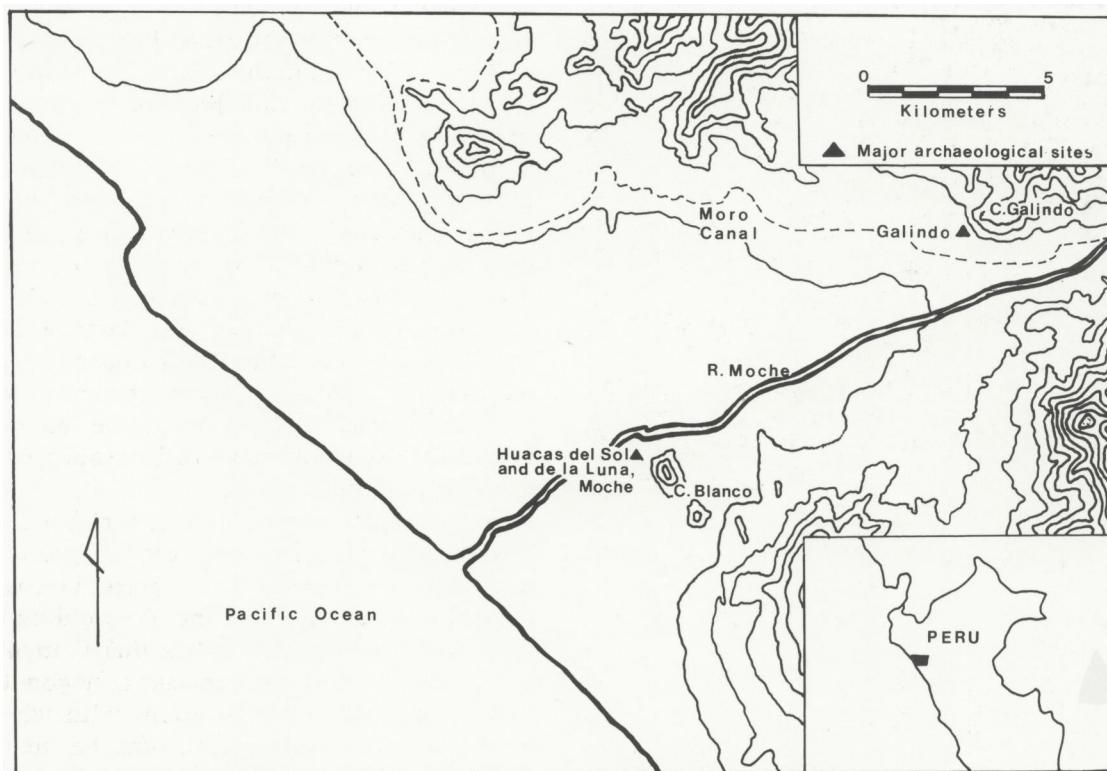
or embodied in shared burial practices—conformed to the pattern appropriate to a belief system that was largely shared by all social groups. To a high degree the success of this ideology appears to have stemmed from its grounding in traditional mythic and ancestral beliefs of a rural society organized by kinship ties. These structural foundations transcended specific political systems and linked people to the historic core of their social beings through the active agency of ritual and

symbolism. In these ways, by affording all people access to the beliefs and practices of social order and deriving these from shared local cultural conception, the earlier Moche ideological system was largely one of social inclusion. Through its symbols, dominant ideology asserted and justified the preeminence of the rulers and, importantly, largely represented the social reality of the entire population during a time of political and economic success.

Crisis on the North Coast

In the last decades of the sixth century A.D. north coast peoples experienced profound disruptions that have variously been ascribed to climatic disaster, external invasion and internal tension (see Bawden 1996 for summary). Geographical and historic factors determined that the most severe impact fell on the polity based in the Moche Valley, which, in the previous period, had controlled a domain extending south to the Huarmey Valley (fig. 1). These extensive southern domains were abandoned and the valley itself was reduced to a small peripheral zone of the shrunken Moche culture area, vulnerable to now-hostile neighbors. Economically, loss of the resources of the south was exacerbated in the Moche Valley by inundation of agricultural land south of the river by wind-blown sand and possibly by the influx of displaced settlers from the southern valleys. In the face of this disruption the focus of settlement and subsistence shifted inland to the neck of the valley, to an area where irrigation agriculture was still possible.

Clearly the challenges to leadership in the wake of such disaster were immense, and generated responses that transformed Moche Valley society. A key element in this reorganization was the introduction of new ideological tenets, an attempt by rulers to reaffirm their shaken authority. The existing Moche system with its regional focus was dramatically modified, and some of its most important components were rejected. This shift was projected into the cultural landscape. At the largest population center, the great Huaca del Sol platform, a manifestation of Moche cosmology and political power, was abandoned, although large areas of the adjoining settlement continued to be occupied. In



2. Map of Moche Valley with sites mentioned in the text

an abrupt shift the historic pattern of dispersed rural occupation was rejected, and much of the population concentrated in the newly established town of Galindo in a social situation that differed drastically from that of the earlier period (fig. 2; Billman 1996: 292). Here radically new physical symbols of central authority were constructed to replace the rejected platforms. Large areas of the new town contained residential houses, whose small size, poor construction, sparse household content and limited access to food and water were a dramatic contrast to the households of the elite. This suggests the presence of a significant population living at a status level much reduced from their counterparts at the Moche site. Inevitably, these changes threatened the integrity of the low-status groups, drawn to the town from the surrounding countryside, by separating them from their ancestral rural lands and the kin-related community organization. They were congregated in an urban setting in which traditional ways of establishing their group identity were no longer possible. The subject populace confronted this structural crisis by manipulating the new social context, sepa-

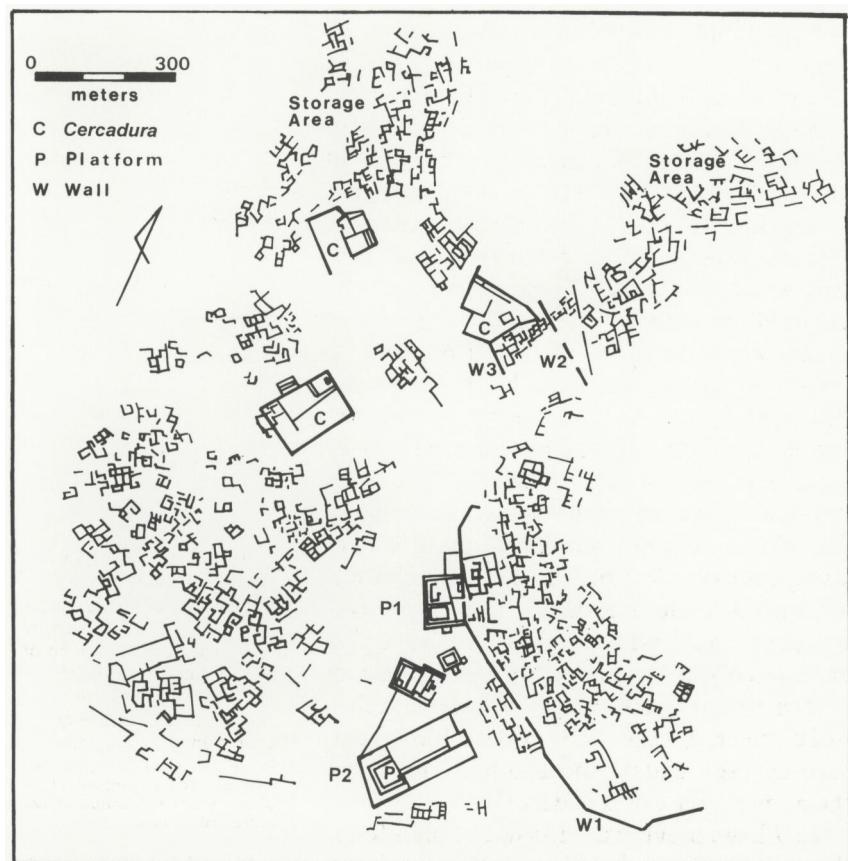
rated to an unprecedented degree from that of their rulers.

Two vital requirements for the construction of a dominant ideology are the ability of the ruling powers to persuade the majority of the populace of the benefits of their rule, and, in times of stress, to explain and effectively contain threats posed by historic circumstance. There can be little doubt that the earlier Moche system successfully met these needs, with the economic benefits accruing from domination of the southern valleys as a material advantage. It is equally clear that the disruptions of the late sixth century severely threatened existing political authority throughout the region. Response varied along the coast. In the northern areas the effects of disruption were less severe. In the Moche Valley, however, the magnitude of collapse was so great that the dominant social order, undoubtedly held responsible for the disaster by the general population, was overwhelmingly rejected, together with its ideological base and the rituals and symbols that were the active agents of its authority.

As I have previously noted, the manifestations of crisis included cessation of large-

3. Aerial photograph of Galindo, Moche Valley. Note the elite burial mound palace enclosure at bottom right, the small platform of traditional form directly above it, and the large *cercadura* enclosures at center and left center.
Image (no. 334935) reproduced by courtesy of the Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History.

4. Plan of Galindo



scale public construction in the Moche Valley, abandonment of the great Huaca del Sol, and a dramatic rise in the degree of urbanism at the expense of the rural occupation. Moche monumental architecture possessed much cosmological import. Thus the abandonment of the previous center of Moche society, together with rejection of its very form as a central symbol of social integration, reflects deep structural stress. It follows that with rejection of the cosmology associated with these centers, the authority of leaders who had based their ability to control their society on its ideological potency would be undermined. Power would have to be rebuilt on very different foundations.

With traditional strategies of social integration rejected, rulers and ruled strove to recreate their ideological supports in the unstable Moche Valley setting. They did this in very different ways. Rulers linked their authority to pan-Andean concepts that would free them from identification with the failures of their predecessors. In the very strength of this venture lay its weakness, however. Unless a new ruling order identifies with familiar beliefs rooted in the shared cultural cognition of the population, its acceptance is largely limited to the initiating group and it cannot become the focus of widespread social cohesion (Hobsbaw and Ranger 1983: 283). This was the situation at Galindo, where commoners were divorced from their erstwhile social supports. First, they experienced the failure and rejection of the previous ideological system that had ceased to provide wide social cohesion. Second, they were excluded from the new dominant ideological system that looked to foreign concepts for strength. Finally, they found themselves in the hostile urban setting of Galindo, separated from the familiar kinship foundations of their earlier rural life. The resulting sense of alienation directed them to construct their own bases of social identity. To do this, they drew support from their persisting structural beliefs—the principles that had been the foundations upon which the rejected superstructure of traditional Moche political ideology was built, and which remained the core of their threatened social beings. I suggest that the divergent interests and strategies of rulers and ruled—the former looking to rebuild political authority on an ideational

basis that transcended local traditions, the latter attempting to maintain their traditional social identity in the new urban setting—represented incompatible constructions of power. These differences ultimately exacerbated the social stress that characterized the Late Moche period in the south.

Symbolism of Urban Transformation

The new social structure that emerged in the Late Moche period relied on concentration of the previously dispersed valley population in the new town of Galindo (Billman 1996: 292). Replacement of the rural part of the settlement pattern that had dominated the Moche Valley in earlier times by a new town drastically altered the social environment of its occupants and the relationships that structured their lives. The dynamic political and demographic changes involved in the transition to urbanism usually demand major modification of preexisting community structure (Gailey 1987: 36–38). Differentiation by status, economic power, and ideological practice replaces local kinship relationship as the dominant organizing rule of society. At Galindo, in a situation of crisis, these qualities were present to an extreme degree. Unprecedented levels of social separation, coercive control, and explicit population hierarchy replaced shared beliefs, kinship-based organizational principles, and rituals of public participation as the foundation of political authority. Galindo's founding marks a major discontinuity in Moche social organization and the concurrent rise of internal structural stress, which is most evident in the physical remains of the town.

Just as their predecessors centuries before adopted central components of the powerful Chavín religious complex to confront local weakness (Burger 1992: 183ff), the rulers of Galindo appear to have looked outside their region for the ideological foundations of authority. They found them in the expansive highland Wari polity that had influenced many parts of the Andean region by Late Moche times. In a general sense the urban innovations at Galindo evoke the physical forms introduced in the Wari-influenced areas and may reflect the principles of government associated with them as the new basis for authority.

Galindo may be seen as a symbol of the changed social circumstances (figs. 3, 4). The 6 km² settlement, located along the lower slopes of Cerro Galindo, is comprised of an extensive residential area and several monumental architectural structures. Extreme differentiation of population groups and urban functions is apparent in residential, storage, and governmental architecture to an extent not seen in earlier Moche periods, even in comparably large settlements such as that at Moche. Residential occupation was segregated according to size, content, and distance from water sources. A dense zone of low-status houses extends across the steep hill-slopes and adjacent plain, much of it separated from the rest of the settlement by a massive wall (fig. 4, W1). This wall was probably built for defensive purposes early in the town's existence, suggesting that unrest afflicted the Moche domain in the late sixth century A.D. (Topic 1991). The small elite residential area, adjacent to the site's most elaborate public architecture, is also shielded by tall stone walls (fig. 4, W2, W3). This emphasis on population segregation suggests that social tension, a consequence of collapse, prevailed at Galindo to such degree that rulers were constrained to rely on coercion to assure their authority.

A large area of storage terraces, whose access was regulated by walls was located on the sides of ravines at the northern periphery of the town (figs. 3, 4). Establishment of this unprecedented public storage facility may reflect the resolve of rulers to control the much-reduced food resources still available to them, and indicates the straightened economic circumstances that demanded such a measure. Indeed, Galindo's very location at the valley neck underscores the pressures on Moche V subsistence economy. Here, relatively protected from outside intrusion, its government could most easily regulate the movement of water to the surviving agricultural lands north of the river. Moreover, accumulation of most of the valley's agricultural workers at the site assured central regulation of production to a degree not previously possible or necessary.

The monumental architecture at the site displays the same qualities of hierarchical separation and control. Three walled complexes, known as *cercaduras* (fig. 4, C), stand

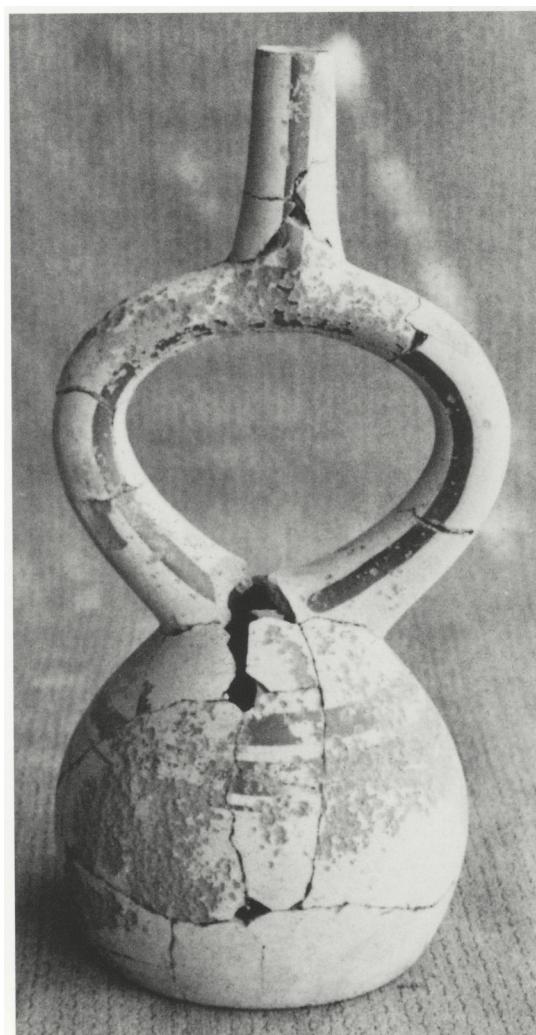
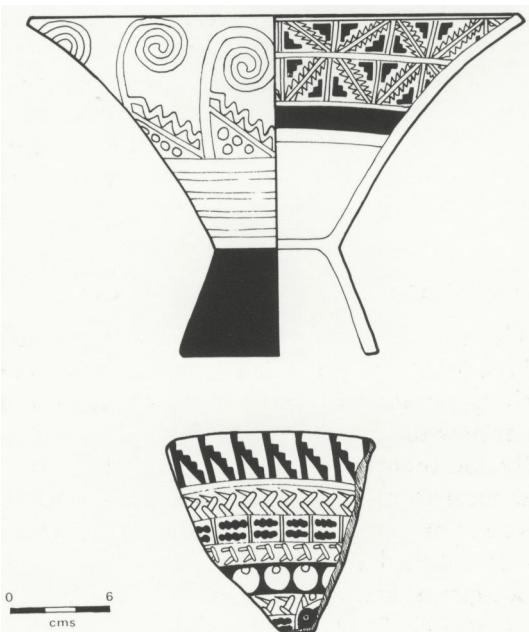
in the center of the town. They contain courts and ramped terraces, upon which secluded daises mark loci of supreme authority. The new *cercadura* forms, although clearly differing in detail from Wari counterparts, do reflect the same emphasis on physical enclosure, functional separation, and ideological exclusivity (Isbell and McEwan 1991). I have noted that these same qualities accompany segregation of the various residential status areas at Galindo. With the elimination of a dominant ideology grounded in the common conceptual history of society as a whole, power inevitably came to be founded on strict control rather than consensus. At Galindo the activities of government were obscured by *cercadura* walls, and the public participation of earlier times was explicitly denied.

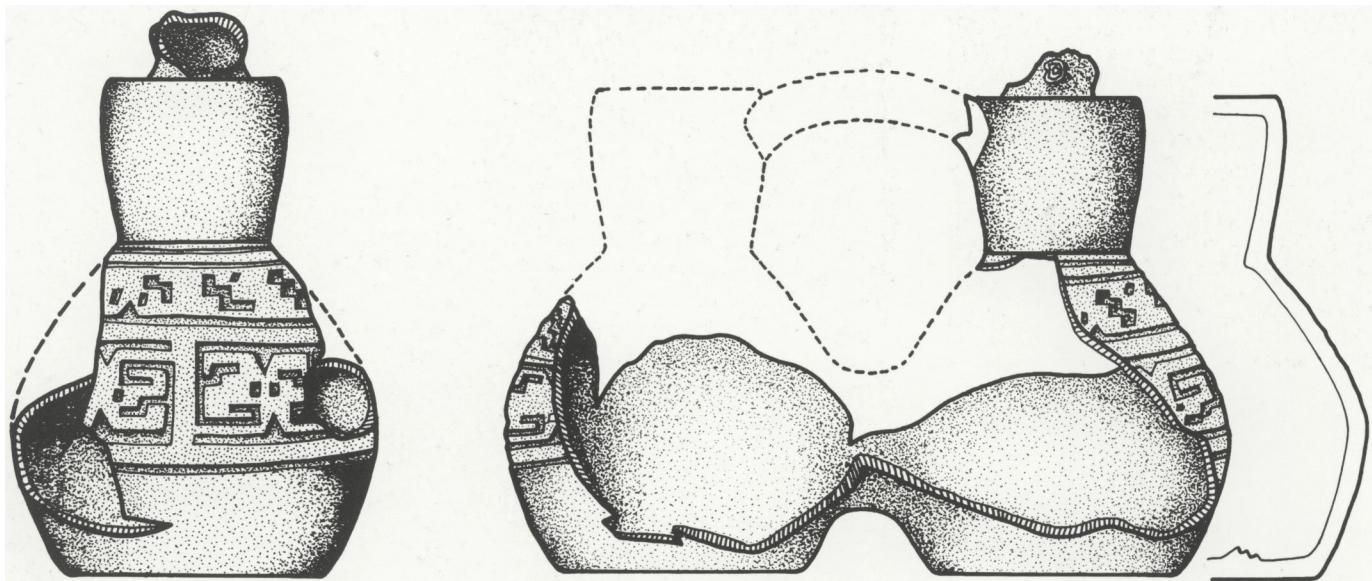
The *cercaduras* are in many ways similar and possibly antecedent to the Chimú *ciudadelas* of Chan Chan (Conrad 1974: 226). As with the later *ciudadelas*, *cercaduras* combined administrative, residential and funerary purposes. In one instance (fig. 4, P2) the enclosure was part of a unique architectural complex incorporating elite residential quarters that probably served as the palace of a ruler and a burial platform in which this paramount personage may have been interred. Other elite burials were found in clusters of stone-lined rectangular chambers, strictly segregated from lower-status burials and located near the central symbols of authority—the *cercaduras*.

Absent from Galindo are the majestic platform mounds that for centuries had dominated the Moche social scene. In fact most Galindo platforms are little more than modifications of the ground surface, located well away from the central *cercaduras* near the periphery of the site. The traditional platform appears to have played a secondary role in the overall sociopolitical scene at Galindo. I suggest that in the new order it denoted a measure of continuity with the past, but given the overwhelming prominence of new, more central locations, the platforms probably lacked the powerful ideological meaning that this type of architecture once had in earlier times. Their transformed and diminished state relative to the *cercaduras* signifies an interruption in the Moche tradition of social integration.

5. Traditional ceramic *florero* from a high-status residential context
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo

6. Traditional ceramic stirrup-spout vessel from a low-status residential context
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo





Iconography of Ideological Change

The new ideological orientation was also proclaimed through changes in the portable symbols of authority. At Galindo decorated ceramic vessels comprise the majority of examples of portable symbolism and, as with the architecture, ceramic styles changed in the Late Moche period. The changes were twofold. First, while the traditional Moche stirrup-spout bottles and bowls, decorated with red ochre over cream slip, continued to be used at Galindo, the representational iconography that had identified earlier Moche rulers with central political power virtually disappears. This powerful body of visual symbolism had represented the explicit symbolic language through which earlier Moche leaders had infused an ideological message drawn from the north coast cultural experience with the emotional force of myth and history. Most drastic was the total abandonment of the portrait vessel. This form had been one of the most vivid symbols of dominant ideology in earlier Moche times and represented what we presume are the likenesses of specific leaders (Donnan, this volume). These portraits emphasized the leaders' special roles in rituals of social order and asserted their authority. Almost as marked as the disappearance of portraiture is the virtual absence of narrative art at Galindo. Scenes painted on ceramic vessels depicted rituals where leaders

played their central roles as arbiters with the supernatural on behalf of their communities, thus reinforcing their position on religious grounds. With the rejection of this rich tradition of narrative symbolism Late Moche elite ceramic decoration at Galindo came to rely largely on abstract geometrical imagery (figs. 5, 6). Such major modification of the traditional iconography of power cannot simply be ascribed to stylistic development. Rather, it reflects rejection and abandonment of a discredited ideology and the elimination of its material symbols of communication.

This reduction in the iconographic inventory was matched by concurrent innovation in other areas of ceramic production. I have described additions to the Late Moche inventory in detail elsewhere (Bawden 1994). The innovations include a number of dark brown and blackware forms, mostly new to the Moche tradition, produced by oxygen-reduced firing. Most are embellished with registers of impressed geometrical design. Of special note are the double-chambered form (figs. 7, 8), the square bowl (fig. 9), and the neck jar with large elliptical body (figs. 10, 11). These forms are all embellished with bands of relief decoration drawn from a restricted group of abstract geometric designs. These include pairs of facing squared spirals, step designs, and stylized fish and bird heads. In addition two undecorated polished blackware bowl forms—the form with sharply

7, 8. Innovative reduced-ware double-chambered from high-status burial (drawings of side and frontal views)
Instituto Nacional de Cultura,
La Libertad, Trujillo



9. Fragment of innovative reduced-ware square bowl from high-status residential context
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo

10, 11. Innovative reduced-ware vessel with elliptical-shaped body from a high-status residential context (drawing and photograph)
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo

12. Innovative reduced-ware angle-rimmed bowl from a high-status residential context
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo

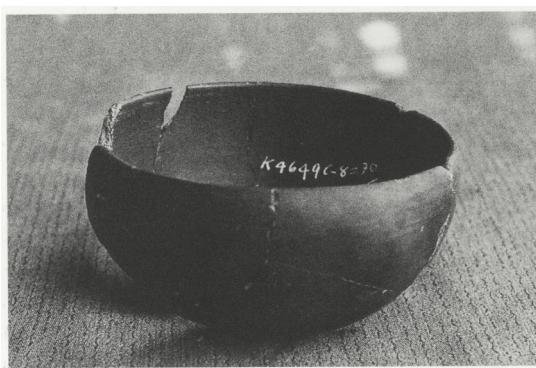
13. Innovative reduced-ware round bowl from a low-status residential context
Instituto Nacional de Cultura, La Libertad, Trujillo



angled rim, and the rounded form (figs. 12, 13)—complete the Galindo innovations.

These innovations show both continuities and disjunctions with earlier Moche practice. The double-chambered vessel has a long history on the north coast, and was especially common in the earlier Gallinazo culture. Earlier examples, however, almost always incorporated a modeled human or animal figure on one of its chambers. The Galindo blackware examples do not have this feature. In general the new blackware forms and relief designs relate to similar styles that appear in the Middle Horizon period, particularly those of the Wari-influenced central coastal (Menzel 1977). At Galindo a regional elite introduced symbolic features inspired by distant but broadly influential Wari ideology. Thus the Galindo rulers, as with their counterparts along the coast, linked their power base to pan-Andean ideas. In so doing, they adopted a broadly shared system that largely ignored and transcended the preexisting local ideologies.

Greater continuity is present in ceramic decoration. The squared spiral with its



associated step design appears occasionally on earlier Moche vessels (see, for example, Bankes 1971: fig. 7; Kroeber 1925: pls. 54h, 55e). The stylized fish head has an even more extensive history in traditional pottery, appearing on Gallinazo vessels (see, for example, Willey 1953: pl. 59) and quite frequently in the Moche inventory (for example Bankes 1971: figs. 8a, 35; Donnan 1978: fig. 189; Kroeber 1925: pl. 58b; Kutscher 1955: pl. 76; Strong and Evans 1952: pl. IX, M). The pendant bird head similarly has clear Moche antecedents (Bankes 1971: fig. 37; Strong and Evans 1952: pl. XVI, E; Willey 1971: fig. 3-64). It is important to realize that continuity goes beyond any mere sharing of motifs to include their stylistic organization. The regular bands of relief decoration of the Galindo forms are anticipated in earlier Moche ceramic painting. Their appearance here as a major decorative theme, however, marks an important stylistic departure.

We can address the significance of these innovations in ceramic vessels by examining the specific nature of the changes and the social contexts of their use. First, it is important to remember that although the new styles and forms clearly depart from the Moche ceramic tradition, they do this in a way that incorporates a degree of continuity. The continuity, however, is limited to designs that played relatively minor roles in earlier ceramics, as borders on the portrait and narrative vessels whose purpose was to proclaim the ideology of power through precise representation. At Late Moche Galindo this narrative visual language was abandoned, and its subsidiary decorative component was expressed in a new stylistic context. Clearly the meaning conveyed by such abstract motifs was very different and more generalized than the varied detailed messages of earlier times. I suggest that the ruling order of Galindo intentionally selected this restricted component of traditional elite symbolism as best suited to their new ideology. By so doing they associated themselves with the esteem of the communal past while eliminating the more specific signifiers of their predecessor's rejected political system. In many ways this parallels their use of the architectural symbolism of the platform mound, albeit with changed meaning, for the same purpose.

The new ceramic forms appear almost exclusively in locations associated with the exercise of authority. They are restricted to the most elaborate residential structures at Galindo. With the single exception of the small round bowl (fig. 13), which seems to have filled a more general utilitarian function, they never appear in the homes of the general population. Elaborate examples of the new forms also appear in the *cercaduras* and the palace complex. Finally, they were interred in elite burials. None have been found in non-elite burials.

In summary, it appears that Moche Valley leadership transformed the nature of symbolic communication by eliminating those central elements that had asserted the specific language of traditional ideology and by ascribing different meaning to others that they retained. This heralded the adoption of an exclusive ideology of power associated with influential pan-Andean concepts. In a general sense this was part of the Middle Horizon phenomenon, which involved the differential spread of tenets drawn from a more universalist ideology. By linking themselves to this broader system, rulers might have attempted to create a supragroup authority base while rejecting the localizing strictures of the past. It is important to note, however, that some traditional features of elite material technology and art did persist as links with the Moche cultural past. Thus, it seems that leaders attempted to combine the broadly legitimizing authority of a modified traditional discourse with the new pan-Andean features, in order to construct an effective ideological system to replace its discredited predecessor. This attempt failed ultimately, probably as a consequence of the extreme social alienation inflicted upon the non-elite population by the dramatic transformation to urban life with its enhanced social stratification and economic deprivation.

Symbolism of Social Reconstitution

To this juncture I have described changes initiated by Moche Valley leaders that adversely affected many of their subjects. Human groups are rarely helpless in the face of social transformation, however. It was left to the commoners to accept the profound transformations of the new order or to use the

potential for power offered by regional structural principles to reconstruct their own social identities. The material record indicates that they chose the latter course. While manifestations of the dominant ideology are obviously more prominent in the archaeological record, signs of the ideological systems of subordinate social groups are less apparent because their proponents were denied access to such highly visible means of communication. It follows that evidence of strategies devised by these groups to confront the Late Moche urban crisis is best revealed in the restricted social arena that remained largely under their control—the household.

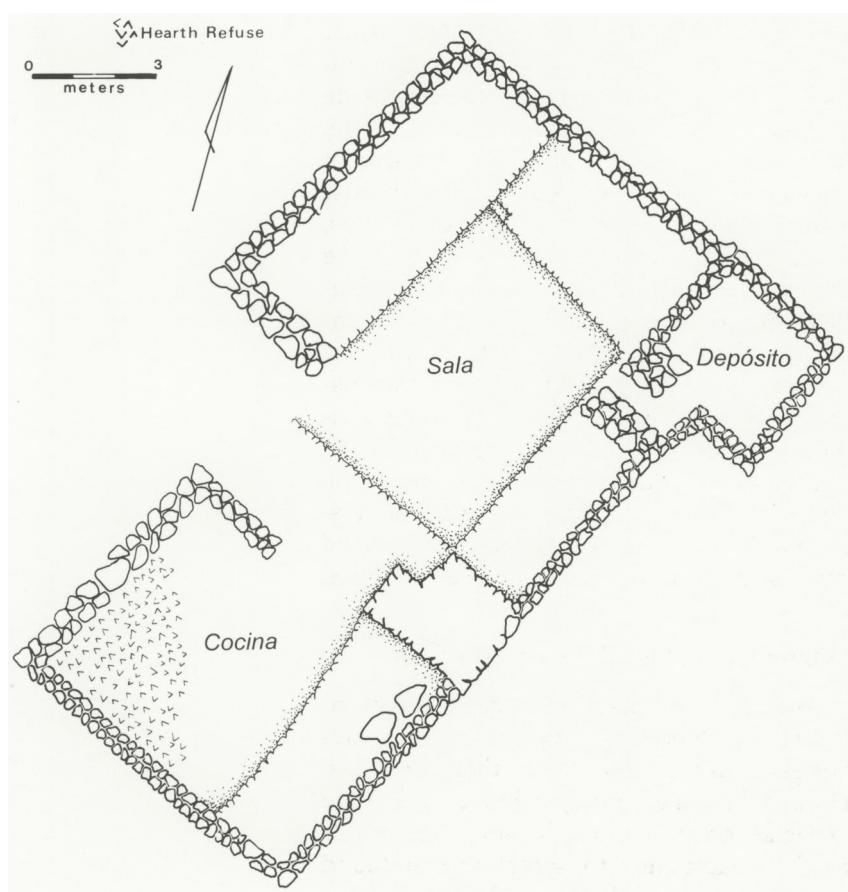
At Galindo ideological construction by subordinate groups is most visible in low-status domestic occupation and through its distinctive associated funerary ritual. The basic residential house consisted of three rectangular spaces separated by walls: a food preparation area (fig. 14, *cocina*), general living area (fig. 14, *sala*), and small storage area (fig. 14, *depósito*). The living space was a

rectangular room with stone-faced benches of rubble lining the walls and enclosing a small patio. Bench surfaces offer plentiful evidence of spinning and weaving, food consumption, and use of finer pottery, suggesting that this was the general living and sleeping location of the occupants of the house, with food preparation, cooking and tool construction being conducted in adjacent areas. This space also served another important purpose. Galindo commoners were buried here *within* the benches.

Residential burials were generally modest in form and content. A sample of eleven excavated structures on the level terrain at the foot of Cerro Galindo and a larger number of partially destroyed hillside examples reveals that they were formal interments rather than casual disposals. Burials were either in roughly lined adobe and stone chambers (figs. 15, 17) or simple pits incorporated into the rubble fill of the bench interior (fig. 16). In several instances the body lay at a level above that of the adjacent house floor, suggesting that the bench was reopened following original construction (fig. 16). In every instance, however, the bench was carefully closed and its surface used for general domestic activities, demonstrating that burial occurred during the active life of the house. The deceased rested on their backs, or by contrast with earlier times, on their sides, with adults being placed in mostly extended position while children were usually flexed. The few grave goods that accompanied the dead included simple textile wrappings and small pieces of copper placed at the head and feet.

Although, as I have previously noted, residential burials were quite common in earlier valley sites, the new Galindo practice differs in almost all respects from the traditional pattern. Earlier Moche residential burials appear to have had no specific canons governing their placement and are found in a variety of locations under house floors or outside of the residential space. By contrast, Galindo burials are almost invariably carefully built into the above-floor benches that line the chief domestic space—the *sala*, suggesting a ritual governed by well-defined physical and conceptual rules. Burial content displays the same measure of consistency. Although the Galindo population at all levels had access to nonutilitarian items of metal and pottery

14. Plan of low-status residential structure located at base of Cerro Galindo





15. Adult male burial within room bench of low-status residential structure

16. Child burial within room bench of low-status residential structure

17. Child burial within room bench of low-status residential structure

(albeit the low-status inhabitants had lower-quality items), grave goods were invariably absent from burials, with the single exception of pieces of copper placed at the head and feet of the deceased. This single feature represents a connecting link to the north coast funerary tradition both during and prior to the Moche period (Fogel 1993: 281). The burial inventory again contrasts with earlier practice, where even the low-status Huanchaco burials included a variety of grave goods (Donnan and Mackey 1978), and strongly suggests that intentional choice governed the restricted selection of such items. Finally, the placement of the dead on their sides in a partially flexed position marks yet another general change from existing Moche practice. Together these features identify a new funerary ritual with its formal set of procedures and rules.

At first glance, the innovative architectural setting and treatment of the dead breaks with existing regional traditions. Conversely, on a purely material level, the rectangular stone-lined tombs of the Moche elite, their burial with abundant fine ceramic accompaniments, and the placement of elite burials in small cemetery clusters, appear to follow cultural convention more closely. Closer scrutiny suggests that the reverse is true. I have already stressed that the rulers of Galindo adopted foreign-derived ideological symbolism in order to break with and transcend the discredited symbols and practices of the past. The incorporation of the material signs of this transformation into the highly charged symbolic setting of burial and the placement of elite burials near the new architectural centers of authority were part of this attempt to transform the Moche social order. By contrast, the household burial customs, while superficially innovative, as I will suggest below, reveal the attempt by a newly urbanized Moche Valley population to reconstruct group cohesion from beliefs embedded in traditional social principles.

The particular potency of funerary practice derives from the great power ascribed to the dead in most societies. Among the many important attributes assigned to them in various societies, ancestors may possess power to ensure fertility, authenticate communal property rights, effect healing, and promote social order. Ultimately they may guarantee the very balance between the spatial and

temporal aspects of human experience necessary for social renewal. Universally, proper funerary rituals are necessary to ensure that this potency is properly harnessed and directed on behalf of the living (van Gennep 1960 [1909]; Turner 1967). In this context belief and attendant ritual together constitute powerful social practice that may well affect the very continuance of a community.

Funerary customs, in common with all social constructs, acquire their form and meaning from the historic experience of their related communities. These customs are characterized by two important qualities. First, funerary practice plays as important a role in establishing and directing the relationships between living members of a society as in forging links between them and their dead. Second, funerary customs and the relationships and meanings that they incorporate can be manipulated by the living to provide a powerful vehicle for mediating group interests. It follows that variation through time and space in the material record will reflect these changing relational circumstances (for recent archaeological studies, see Hodder 1990; Kristiansen 1991; Parker Pearson 1993; Thomas 1993; Tilley 1996).

In order to interpret the paradoxical juxtaposition of major material change and conceptual continuity embodied in Galindo residential funerary practices, we must briefly review the implications of the Moche V transformation. Traditional north coast social organization, in accord with broader Andean practice, was based on local kinship-ordered groups attached to their ancestral lands. If we can project later Chimú practice into the past, it is probable that the southern Moche polity was organized according to an extended segmentary system in which local groups retained social autonomy and communal land privileges and were loosely integrated into the wider structure through reciprocal obligations to their own leaders and those of the larger polity (Netherley 1984, 1990).

This order was deeply grounded in principles that identified distinct kin-based groups with their ancestral lands through a combination of mythic association and sacred geography. At the core of this belief was the implicit acceptance that human groups exist at the juncture of their spatial and temporal

experience. In this sense the sacred space of communal lands represented the map on which social life was distributed. Place was embodied in communal being. Life equally gained meaning, however, in the context of its temporality. In a real sense it existed as a projection of the past, continually reinterpreted through myth and manifested in the social arena through beliefs and practices of social cohesion in which ancestral reverence firmly anchored it to its temporal axis. In this worldview time, space, and social reality were inextricably enmeshed, and occupation of ancestral lands was just one unquestioned denominator of human social being.

Undoubtedly ancestral spirits were active players in the daily affairs of the living, regularly manifested through ritual. It may be possible to study the ethnographic present to explore this theme further (Dover, Seibold, and McDowell 1992). Ritual in contemporary traditional north coast society seeks to mobilize supernatural forces on behalf of individuals and community. Traditional healers enter sacred time and space and mediate the assistance of ancestral and natural force in order to maintain the cosmological balance that is the necessary condition for social order (Joralemon and Sharon 1993). Moreover, such ritual inevitably involves places charged with spiritual force that define the geographical experience of the living community and link it with its past and future. In this sense ritual connects community members, their ancestors and descendants, with their wider natural and spiritual world. It is not surprising, then, that in the pre-Christian epoch the physical remains of the dead, whose spiritual force is of such importance in these beliefs and practices, were awarded special treatment and were themselves regarded as sacred beings or *huacas*.

The Late Moche disruptions threatened these basic structural foundations of daily life. On one hand the new urban order of Galindo removed the general populace from the vital physical center of their social lives. On the other hand the narrowly focused political ideology of their rulers, intended as it was to consolidate an exclusive position of authority, could not begin to replace the lost foundations of group cohesion. By merging previously separated communities in a common location and alienating them from the

sacred places that gave physical and spiritual significance to their daily lives, urbanism destroyed their collective boundaries and threatened the very social identities of their members. In response, people compensated for this disruption by reconstructing the familiar substance of their social identity in the new setting. Central to this endeavor was the need to integrate traditional sacred landscape and temporality in a radically different physical context. To accomplish this, people drew on past cultural experience for continuity of meaning, and on the structural basis of their communal being to reconstitute this meaning in their daily lives.

At Galindo the autonomous social space was reduced to the confined setting of the home. While residential space and its architecture always plays an important role in shaping the communal experience of its occupants, in the new setting it became in its own right the reduced counterpart to the wider sacred landscape from which Galindo inhabitants had been displaced. In this confined physical arena they created a system of ritual practice and belief whose material expressions ignored reference to dominant discourses of Moche power, past or present. Absent was the narrative symbolism that had suffused the common structural conception of north coast people with the tenets of earlier Moche dominant ideological discourse. Indeed, the only note of continuity was struck by the persistence of traditional forms intentionally devoid of such iconography. Even here, in the domestic arena new blackware bowls are testament to the hastened replacement of this tenuous symbolic link to the past. Even more conspicuously absent from domestic space and residential burial were innovative Late Moche ceramic forms decorated with the new symbolism of dominant ideology. Indeed, the burials diverged in every way from the traditional custom—in form, location, position of the dead and burial goods. Thus, the ideological focus of lower-status social identity totally rejected both symbolic continuity with the past and the present social order. Instead people turned for support to the fundamental ancestral precepts embedded in their basic communal history. By inserting their dead into the pivotal social space of the household as sacred *huacas* and spiritual presences, they reconstituted the

elemental relationships of their social being. Although not accessible in the archaeological record, we can assume that associated funerary ritual added the social domain within which households reconstituted their identities in practice, drawing together in liminal time the various threads that provided cohesion and continuity to their social lives.

Conclusion

My interpretation of the Galindo archaeological record as the symbolic record of transformation at the end of the Moche period sheds light on some otherwise puzzling contradictions. Paradoxically, the very different forms of material symbolism used by rulers and commoners can be attributed to a common determination to maintain identity through transformation. Deeper examination of this shared motivation shows that it took two very different directions according to the divergent goals of its proponents. In this time of economic and political disruption rulers strove to sustain their identity as dominant arbiters of power by separating themselves from the failure of the past and imposing a new and alien dominant ideology on the Moche Valley. To do this they drew on conceptual and symbolic signifiers that transcended local cultural experience to accord status, social distance, and power to their new order and attempted to legitimize them through association with a secondary level of earlier Moche material symbolism and social practice.

In response, commoners were faced with a very different, though equally urgent, concern. With the traditional kinship foundation of their social cohesion threatened, they were motivated by the need to sustain their identity as a group rather than striving for status or political authority. They did this through recombining the essential tenets of north coast social consciousness in the hostile setting of Galindo. While the rough household tombs can easily be regarded as benign alternatives to the burials of the elite, in fact, their very simplicity embodied separation and resistance. At the heart of this unpretentious household practice lay total rejection of the dominant ideological discourses that had led to the dislocation of their lives. The nature and form of their response led commoners in

a very different, conservative, direction from their rulers, one where household ritual became the mobilizing agency for social cohesion.

Inevitably as part of this process traditional Moche symbolic imagery lost its meaning as a major means of maintaining group identity. On one hand, as part of a necessary process of social renewal, commoners eliminated Moche symbolism from the household setting. On the other hand rulers replaced the rejected traditional forms with the symbols of a more effective ideology, introducing new material agents of communication for this purpose. Through these diverse means an entire society took the essential step towards construction of a social identity that is already at Galindo difficult to characterize as "Moche." In the diverse symbolism, which evoked a still vivid past but reached toward an uncertain future, we see the irrevocable beginnings of the ethnic transformation that would ultimately produce Chimú cultural identity.

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