THE MOCHE OF NORTHERN PERU

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INTRODUCTION

The Mochicas (also called the Moche) developed as independent and interacting polities in the northern valleys of coastal Peru between AD 200 and 850 (Figure xxx.1). As with most coastal societies, the Mochicas can be understood as a truly successful adaptation to the coastal environment, where maritime resources were combined with an advanced agriculture based on irrigation technology. The large, northern, multi-river Piura, Lambayeque and Jequetepeque valleys contrast with the much smaller southern Chicama, Moche, Virú and Santa valleys. This influenced historical processes, that were quite distinct, and are only now coming into focus as a result of long term archaeological research projects.

The Mochicas inherited a long cultural tradition, quite distinct from other traditions in the Central Andes. From the precocious coastal societies of the Late Preceramic through Cupisnique (Chavin's coastal spin-off), and into a number of small and locally constrained societies such as Salinar, the Mochica tradition experienced a history of success and failure, adaptation and environmental catastrophe, technological mastery in metallurgy and irrigation, and great achievement in art and religious architecture. But because the Mochicas were not one but many independent polities not all achievements,

nor every trait or characteristic – be it art or technology – can be attributed to the whole of the Mochicas. The distribution of Mochica cultural features varies from time to time, as do some of their regional expressions.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the Mochicas were not alone on the north coast, but interacted throughout their history with peoples of local, commoner traditions such as the Virú (also called Gallinazo) and probably even Salinar. The Mochicas themselves apparently arose from this old and lower class substratum when large scale irrigation technology created a new source of wealth. To a lesser degree, but nevertheless important for their cultural configuration and identity, the Mochicas interacted with societies that flourished at the same time, such as Recuay in the neighboring highland Callejón de Huaylas, Cajamarca and Chachapoyas in the northern highlands, and Vicús on the far north coast.

All knowledge about the Mochicas is based on archaeological research and even though there is a great deal of continuity with their successors, the Lambayeque and Chimú, and even with modern coastal societies, sharp differences and cultural disruptions are evident. The story of the Mochicas, thus, is the story created by the archaeology done at

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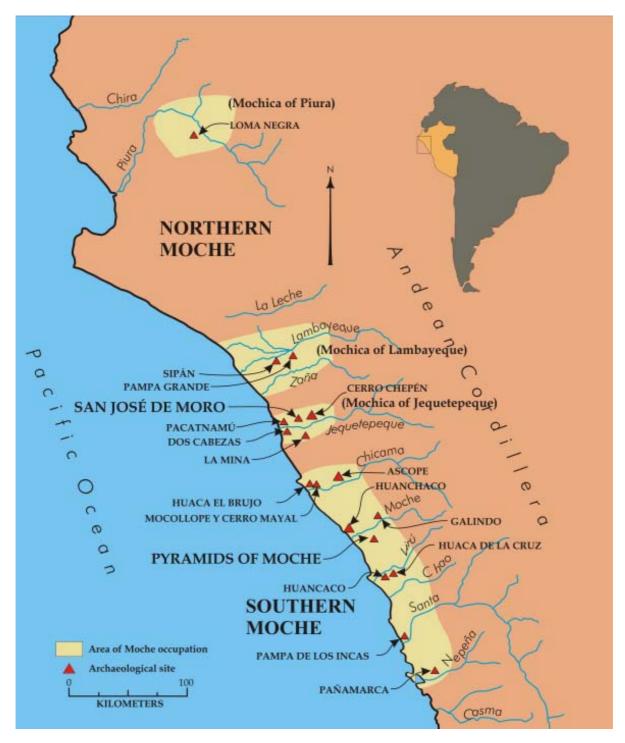
Figure 1: Moche regions in the Peruvian north coast.

Mochica sites, the ideas of the researchers who have worked in the region for the last one hundred years and the materials that have become available through field research and museum collections. The intellectual history of north coast archaeology has molded our understanding of ancient Mochica society, and future research will continue shaping and reshaping it.

In the last twenty years Mochica research has been one of the most popular fields of investigation in the Central Andes, with many long term excavations in places such as Sipán (Lambayeque Valley), Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna (or, the Huacas of Moche, Moche Valley), San José de Moro (Jequetepeque Valley), Dos Cabezas, (Jequetepeque Valley) and El Brujo (Chicama Valley), conducted

by both Peruvian and international research teams. The astonishing amount of information produced and being generated by this current research makes it almost impossible to write an accurate and up-to-the-minute account of what is going on, or more properly, what went on with the Mochicas. Even by the time this volume is published, and certainly a few years from now, we are sure that archaeological understanding of the Mochicas will have changed.

MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOCHICA STATES

In spite of what is commonly affirmed, Andean archaeology still conceives of the development of political systems as linear and unidirectional processes. Complexity and, ultimately, political evolution leading to the formation of states is seen simply as a cumulative, and at times, unavoidable process. Societies accumulated institutions and ro-les, legal systems and social divisions that led them from fragmented and regionally based polities (chiefdoms), to centralized and hierarchical states. The increase in complexity is merely the aggregation of more layers of institutional components, where taxation replaces tribute, bureaucrats take the functions that before were in hands of kinship-based authorities, and state-controlled production replaces local manufacture. Change comes both from internal and external sources. Internally, change is motivated by the accumulation of small adaptations and «mutations» within the system. It is historically motivated by the circumstances of a given society attempting to maintain a status quo in a changing social and natural environment, and by apparently innocuous and cumulative changes, such as those that affect the evolution of artistic styles. Externally generated change is perceived as being more abrupt, as environmental disruptions or foreign threats; thus it is a disruption of the developmental tendencies of the society. But, as we have learned, exogenous forces of change, even when catastrophic, such as ENSO (El Niño) rains or foreign invasions, can seldom be the only explanation for cultural and social change. More frequently external influences take the form of commercial interactions or ideological influences.

Sustained archaeological research has demonstrated that the reality of societies in the past is far more complex than any model or theory can predict, particularly because it is quite difficult to reduce a historical process that lasted more than half a millennium to a single description. The past is clearly not merely a reflection of the present, or of conditions that describe a more primitive state of affairs. Flexibility—in the sense of images that can fit more variability than regularity, where individuals do not necessarily follow or lead, where negotiation is more likely than domination or resistance—seems to be the way to understand the evolution of societies. The approach we advocate for studying the Mochicas takes into account singular or specific development, difference in regional expressions, and multiple paths that lead to the same result.

Rafael Larco Hoyle, the founder of north coast archaeology, conceived of the Mochicas as a single, unified and centralized society that originated in the Moche and Chicama valleys (Larco 1945). The Mochicas had a single capital, the Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna site, with an urban center between the two monuments, and from which an omnipotent elite ruled the entire north coast, combining coercion and conviction, military power and a powerful ideology based on elaborate religious liturgy, tem-ples, and ceremonial artifacts that legitimized the dominant regime. A unified Mochica society could only have had a single developmental sequence, in which the extension of the state first grew steadily to control the valleys north and south, and then declined, losing control of these territories until finally it was subsumed by a foreign power. A unified developmental sequence would also translate into increasing complexity of its institutions, scope and use of technologies.

Irrigation and metallurgy, two of the most advanced technologies, grew in impact and scope. To sum up all these tendencies, Larco proposed the evolution of fine Mochica ceramics into five consecutive phases (Larco 1948). Mochica pottery is incredibly realistic and rich in images of deities interacting in myth and ritual, as well as humans performing all sorts of activities, religious and mundane. This iconography has been the ultimate source of information about this society, but its developmental change was also the means for timing the events that marked Mochica history (Larco 2001). It has taken roughly seventy years to learn that Larco was partially wrong, and that not all phenomena, be they the origin, development or collapse, the use of technologies, the artistic and material cannons, and even the ritual practices, were as homogeneous as he had thought. In this heterogeneity rests the clue for

Figure 2: Moche ceramic sequence in the northern and southern regions.

unraveling the mysteries of Peru' ancient north coast societies.

A unified society had to have been the result of a single developmental process, so, for Larco, the Mochicas were the heirs to the old and prestigious Cupisnique tradition, the formative civilization to all north coast cultures. Cupisnique, also known as coastal Chavín, had evolved into Mochica in the first centuries of the Common Era, through the intermediation of cultures such as Salinar and Virú (Larco 1944, 1945). Larco was never specifically interested in mechanisms responsible for the origins of the Mochicas, but instead studied them from the standpoint of the development of their material culture, particularly the ceramic sequences (Larco 1948). Mochica ceramics display, in forms and decorative motifs, evidence that many Cupisnique features passed smoothly from one to the other, implying a cultural continuum. Whether this transition happened once and in only one place, or in multiple occasions and locations generating multiple derivations, was not addressed by Larco. For him, once the culture originated, the Mochicas followed a single line of development, growing in size, and becoming more complex and refined in every aspect of life, particularly the arts. But the Mochicas were not alone. At the same time they were developing in the Moche Valley, another complex society, the Virú or Gallinazo, was developing in the Virú Valley, only 40 km south of the Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna site. The Virú phenomenon was, in Larco's interpretation, slightly earlier than Mochica, even

closer to the Cupisnique origin, but limited to the southern valleys that eventually were incorporated into the Mochica realm through military conquests (Larco 1945)

Shortly before Larco's death in 1966, Early Moche ceramics began to show up in great quantities in the far northern valley of Piura, in conjunction with the «unsophisticated» Vicús style (Larco 1965, 1967). Larco's interpretations had not predicted this co-occurrence, and thus it contradicted his ideas. The Vicús phenomenon, within which the Mochica evidence had been found, contained a strange mélange of ceramic styles, including Virú and Salinar. It seemed possible that the far northern region of Piura could have been an area of interaction for all north coast cultural traditions (Makowski 1994). But the Mochica-Vicús people were much more complex than expected. For instance, their metallurgy was impressive when compared to what was then known of Mochica metallurgy (Jones 1992, 2001). In addition, the Moche-Vicús ceramic sequence was quite different than the one Larco had postulated for the south (Figure xxx.2). Makowski (1994) has convincingly divided this Piura ceramic tradition into three phases, Early, Middle and Late (Figure xxx.2). Early Moche-Vicus ceramics are of remarkable quality, resembling quite closely the finest Early Moche ceramics from the Jequetepeque Valley in the modeling and decoration of the pieces, in colors and surface treatments (Donnan 2002) (note that in referring to the ceramic phases and temporal periods the term *Moche* is more commonly used in English-language publications, although Larco called his phases *Mochica*). Following these beautiful Early Moche-Vicús ceramics, simpler and coarser ceramics developed in the Middle phases, Makowski's (1994) Vicús-Tamarindo A & B. Decorated Middle Moche-Vicús ceramics feature one dominant form, long necked bottles, with small side lugs, decorated with coarse lines employing purple paint. Iconographic motifs are reminiscent of Early Moche designs, although created with much lesser quality and care. These quite rare Middle Moche-Vicús wares were not followed by any Late Moche ceramics—it is as if the style had drifted away, becoming something quite different from Moche.

In contrast to the Southern Mochica region, and contradicting Larco's sequence, no signs of Moche III and IV ceramics could be found in Piura following the elaborate Early Moche wares. While Larco saw in this ceramic style a probable origin for the

Mochica, Lumbreras (1979) explained this anomaly as a colonial development. The Mochica from the core valleys of Moche and Chicama had founded a settlement in the far north, certainly for commercial purposes. The «Vicús abnormality» could not be explained under Larco's paradigm of centralized political organization. To complicate matters, an undetermined number of wealthy burials were found in Loma Negra, an elite cemetery in the core of the Vicús region. Even if we accept that the Mochicas could have established a colony in the distant north, it still made little sense to bury royals, or extremely wealthy individuals, so far away. Why not bring them back to the motherland for burial? In conjunction with these peculiar burials—regrettably not excavated archaeologically—Middle Moche ceramics took an unexplainable turn to low quality and poor decoration. These contradictions could not be resolved with the data available in the mid 1960s and would have to wait almost thirty years to be understood.

A second source of confusion and a new challenge to Larco's sequence and thesis of unification surfaced when Heinrich Ubbelohde-Doering's 1938 excavations of Mochica burials at Pacatnamú were published in 1983. This unique set of Jequetepeque burials contained pottery that was nothing like the Moche ceramics from the Larco Museum that so precisely fit into the five-phase sequence. Not counting a few examples of southern style Moche V ceramics found in Burial MXII, Moche ceramics from Pacatnamú were much coarser, with higher than normal frequency of face neck jars. Furthermore, they were found next to unusual numbers of Virú style ceramics. were generally placed on the necks of vessels, and were not done with fine lines, but instead with thick lines. Clearly, Larco's five-phase ceramic sequence could not be used to date this collection. Donnan's excavations of a low class cemetery at the same site in the early 1980s produced a new collection of the same variety of ceramics, thus confirming the existence of a different sequence (Donnan and McClelland 1997).

The excavations of burials at Sipán (Lambayeque Valley) and La Mina (Jequetepeque Valley) in the late 1980s produced multiple examples of Early and Middle Moche ceramics and extraordinary metal jewelry that again challenged the hypothesis of a single origin and a single developmental sequence for the whole Mochica phenomenon. In both sites the ceramic collections were more similar to those found in Loma Negra

(Piura Valley) and Pacatnamú (Jequetepeque Valley) than to ceramics found in the Moche Valley. Furthermore, the burials at these two sites, in addition to the burials at Loma Negra, contained remarkably wealthy individuals, presumably members of royal families that had ruled their valleys. If there was evidence for royal houses in the three northern valleys, then the idea of a single, centralized government based at Moche's Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna site was also questioned (Donnan 1988, 1990). It seemed that—at least during Early and Middle Moche times—royal families or lineages, and their corresponding burial grounds, had existed in at least four locations, each in different valleys.

The last and definitive piece of evidence to challenge the unified paradigm was found in the late 1990s in Donnan's excavations at Dos Cabezas and other sites in the lower Jequetepeque Valley (Donnan 2001). Donnan found burials that included remarkable Early Moche ceramics and metals, both of outstanding quality and design, in conjunction with domestic Virú ceramics. It seemed that Early Moche and Virú were two expressions of the same cultural phenomenon, one related to the elites and the other to the general populace (Christopher Donnan, personal communication).

Considering all the evidence, it became clear that Larco's five-phase ceramic sequence was not working in the northern north coastal valleys. There was a notable absence of Moche phases II and IV wares, with no cases of flaring bowls and portrait vessels reported. Even the phases that appeared to be represented in the far north, Moche I, III and V, showed remarkable differences from the southern ceramics with which the sequence had been built (Castillo 2003). Early Moche ceramics, found in Loma Negra and Dos Cabezas was much more complex in the north than in the south, while Late Moche ceramics, found primarily in San José de Moro, showed a reduced iconographic repertoire, and was accompanied by polychrome wares (Figure xxx.2). In synthesis, ceramic differences are not only in form and iconographic content, but also overall quality (Castillo 2000).

Based on the mounting evidence it was obvious that Larco's hypothesis of a single Mochica origin, a centralized political organization and a common developmental sequence was untenable. At best, centralized models postulated by Larco (2001), Ford (1949), Willey (1953), Strong (1952) and others described only part of what might have happened in

the Southern Mochica valleys, but even for this region old models had to be carefully reexamined. For the Southern Mochica realm, at this point, it seems more plausible that there were several origins in different parts of the Moche and Chicama valleys, harmonized in their developments by means of elite integrating ritual practices. The harmonization effect of a shared ceremonialism could have resulted in the evening out of different speeds of development, homogenizing cultural traits among the ruling elites (Christopher Donnan, personal communication). But harmonization did not necessarily produce identical developments, or even identical material culture. There might have been huge differences in the way artifacts were produced and in their iconographic content that have, so far, gone unnoticed for lack of a proper theoretical framework. It is likely that throughout their seven hundred years of existence, the Southern Mochicas experienced periods of more or less centralization and fragmentation; that at some points their centralized political system broke into regional polities coordinated merely by means of ritual practices, centrally celebrated in ceremonial centers like Moche´s Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna site. Social, political and economic developments in each region and locality could have been different, at least during periods of fragmentation. Nevertheless, in the Southern Mochica realm, ceramic sequences, and in general the evolution of all forms of material culture, follows more closely the model proposed by Larco, particularly during phases III and IV, when more centralization seems to have been present. Moche V, the late and decadent phase in Larco's view, could have been a regional phenomenon of the Chicama Valley, that developed there once this valley broke away from the Southern Mochica core, and then expanded south to a stronghold in Galindo (Bawden 1977; Lockard 2005) and north to Pampa Grande (Shimada 1994).

Considering all the preceding arguments it seems more likely that the rise of the Mochicas was a case of multiple origins, happening in several different locations of the north coast, at different moments and most likely generated by different preconditions. In all cases the Mochicas appear to have evolved from their ancestors, a post-Formative Period tradition identified either as Virú or Salinar, first as an elite tradition that branched out from the main cultural component. It seems likely that the general setting for this diversification within the north coastal societies was the extension of agricultural fields due

to better and more reliable irrigation technologies. Eling (1987) places the extension of irrigation systems in the Jequetepeque Valley in this early period, and although later societies would have made irrigation more efficient, the original extension would have created unseen opportunities and wealth. Larger and more advanced irrigation canals would have produced higher agricultural yields and thus opportunities for personal enrichment. A new and wealthier elite could easily develop in this environment, creating opportunity and need for social differentiation, as well as a higher dependency on culturally produced resources. Ceremonialism, the need for bigger and more elaborate temples, and the development of more refined ritual objects and paraphernalia all materialized an ideology that needed to emphasize social division and status differentiation (Earle 1987, 1997). The Mochicas developed at this time, under these opportunities and circumstances. It is likely that at first, during the Early Moche Period, only the upper levels of society could be regarded as Mochica, the rest of the population being of the Virú or Gallinazo tradition. But as time passed many of the traditions, rituals, and artifacts originally developed for the elites, and surely produced by elite craftsmen, trickled down to lower social strata, eventually to influence and shape all aspects of society.

But this process need not have been the same in every valley or region, nor was it conditioned by the same factors. It is likely that in some regions the process could have been motivated, or even accelerated, by the influence of what was going on in neighboring polities. It is also likely, as absolute dates point out, that the process started and ended in the time span of three centuries. It is not true, either, that all north coast societies had to follow in this same process. Both in the northern Lambayeque Valley (Shimada and Maguiña 1994) and in the Virú Valley (Bennett 1949) the Virú tradition did not take the Mochica direction ; quite the contrary. In both places Virú culture seems to have flourished until the Mochicas incorporated them to their territory, arguably by military means (Willey 1953). Finally, the processes that led to the rise of the Mochicas do not seem to have had the effect of articulating all these regions under a single political authority. It is more likely that each valley, and even sectors within them, followed similar developmental paths, never achieving political centralization.

The rise of the Mochicas, having transpired in different places and times, and without central political coordination, should have led to the development of completely independent traditions, making each process a case of cultural drift. This diversifying trend seems to have been the case in Piura, where an early Mochica tradition drifted away to become a cultural development in no way resembling that of the Mochica from either north or south. At the same time the other regions— Lambayeque, Jequetepeque and Moche-Chicama— achieved a high degree of homogeneity, to the point that we can identify all of them as Mochica. It is likely that inter-polity mechanisms existed that prevented cultural drift and differentiation. We are inclined to believe that the integration and harmonization factor was elite rituals of power that incorporated the rulers and their courts to a common, shared tradition, and that promoted for interactions that included social exchanges and sharing of materials and technologies. Elites in the three core regions (Lambayeque, Jequetepeque, and Moche-Chicama) must have been connected, particularly during the early and late phases when we see the most shared elements. Through these processes the Mochicas developed independently, but always interconnected and interacting, sharing knowledge and ritual practice, but facing different challenges and reacting in different ways.

POLITICS, POWER, AND LEGITIMACY IN THE FIRST STATE-LEVEL SOCIETIES OF THE ANDES: THE SOURCE OF MOCHICA SOCIAL POWER

As more data become available the nature of Mochica power starts to show more emphasis on ideology and on social relations than on coercion, military power, or even economic centralizations or dependencies. Following Mann's (1986) proposal for the study of power as the combination of different sources, it is apparent that for the Mochicas power was configured as strategies that combined different sources depending on circumstances, historical backgrounds, traditions and resources. Thus, to discuss Mochica power is to study the ways in which different Mochica elites, in different political settings and times, and under distinct circumstances used ideology, economics, politics and coercion to configure strategies to gain control and legitimize their

social position. Some of the things that we can be certain of are that the Mochicas were an elitist society, thus featuring social contradictions and unequal access to resources that were at any given time a source of social turmoil. Continuous and uninterrupted occupations of sites and long-term developmental processes, among other things, attest to the fact that Mochica power, in any of its configurations, was successful for long periods of time. The collapse(s) of the Mochicas ultimately can be attributed to the failure of the strategies that had worked for them, possibly because of bad calculations of circumstances and capacities, combined with unexpected and foreign factors (see final section).

Given the right circumstances any of the four sources of power could have become preeminent over the other. *Military* power must have been critical to face a foreign threat or to take advantage of the opportunity to conquer a week neighbor. *Economic* planning and control of resources must have been decisive in years of draughts or heavy rains. *Political* interactions between the elites of different regions must have been central in strategies of legitimacy. Marriages among royal houses must have been, at some points, more effective than military action. But among all sources of power the one that seems to be more permanent, and to which the other sources gravitate is *ideology* and its materializations. The Mochicas invested more resources in constructing and maintaining temples than any other infrastructure, and within these buildings they performed rituals that, according to iconographic evidence and archaeological data, required the investment of enormous amounts of resources. The production of
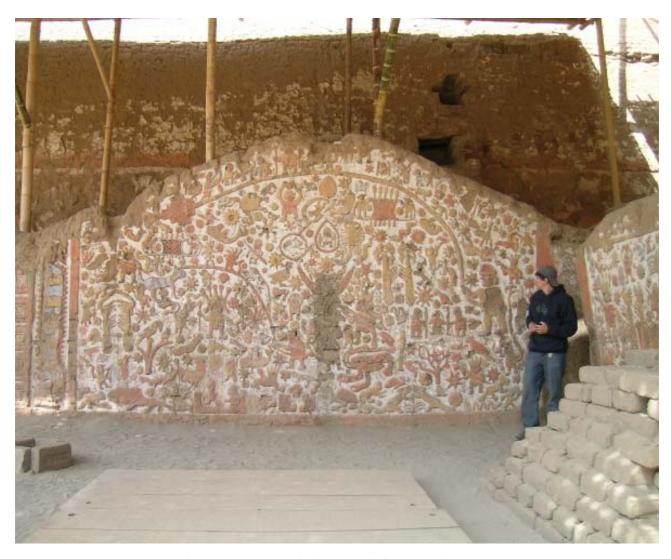

Figure 3: Complex polychrome walls in Huaca de la Luna.

ritual artifacts was one of the most prominent activities among the Mochicas and in relation to it technologies were advanced and commercial relations established. It was under ritual circumstances that war became ceremonial battle and taxation became a form of contribution for the wellbeing of society. The Mochica elites themselves became material expressions of their ideological system, impersonating the principal deities and supernatural beings in ritual performance (Donnan and Castillo 1994; Alva 2004).

The Mochicas of the North and the Mochicas of the South

Our discussion shows that Mochica polities originated in different valleys of the north coast at approximately the same time; that each followed a different developmental process, materialized in artifacts that changed through time following distinct evolutionary sequences; and that ritual and interactions between the elites of these polities seem to have made these processes convergent. In the early 1990s several researchers arrived at the conclusion that the Mochica realm could be divided in two distinct regions, Southern and Northern Mochicas, each one corresponding, most likely, to a different political entity (Bawden 1994, 2001; Castillo and Donnan 1994; Donnan 1996; Kaulicke 1992; Shimada 1994).

The Southern Mochicas

The Southern Mochica region, originally comprising the Chicama and Moche valleys, was the location for the polity described by Larco (2001), the Virú Valley Project (Willey 1953; Strong and Evans 1952), the Chan Chan Moche Valley Project (Donnan and Mackey 1978), Donnan (1968,1978) and several other projects/researchers. Larco's five-phase ceramic sequence describes properly the evolution of ceramic wares in this region, and the evolution of other representational systems, including mural paintings and metals (Larco 1948). The Huaca del Sol-Huaca de la Luna site of Moche has always been regarded as the capital of this region, an idea that remains unchallenged to this day. Recent work in the Huaca de la Luna (Figures xxx,3, xxx.4) and in the urban sector located in between the Huacas del Sol and la Luna have confirmed the site's status not only as the largest ceremonial center in the south

but also as a residential, production and civic center (Uceda 2001, 2004; Chapdelaine 2002) (Figure xxx.4). The El Brujo Complex and Mocollope, two large sites located in the Chicama Valley, could have been alternative capitals for their valley (Franco et al. 2001) or could have been regional capitals dependent on the Huacas of Moche (Larco 2001).

Starting in Moche III, the Southern Mochicas embarked on a southward expansion, incorporating the Virú, Chao, Santa and Nepeña valleys. The Mochicas' aim seems to have been the control of the lower Santa, the only coastal valley that has a year-round reliable water supply. Here, and to a lesser degree in the other three valleys, the Mochicas developed new lower valley agricultural fields based on a more efficient use of irrigation technology (Donnan 1968; Wilson 1985). Chapdelaine's work in El Castillo de Santa and Guadalupito has confirmed that the Mochicas in Santa were almost identical to the Mochicas of Moche, at least in their material culture and in their construction technology (Claude Chapdelaine, personal communication, 2004). South of these valleys we find a limited Mochica presence, and of a different nature, more likely functioning as enclaves or commercial posts. In all these regions the Mochicas encountered local cultures of the «Virú» tradition, that were gradually incorporated to the Mochica realm, but continued with the production of their own material culture while incorporating an increasing number of the Mochica cultural elements.

Due to this expansionist process it is likely that the Southern Mochicas achieved a high degree of centralization and that a powerful state crystallized at the Huacas of Moche site. It is likely that its Lords had control of all their territory through an administration based on a settlement pattern of subsidiary valley capitals and local centers, through a tight elite control of the territory and centralization of its resources. It is evident that in this process, religion and ritual played increasing important roles, with ceremonies such as ritual combats (Bourget 2001) and sacrifice of defeated warriors (Bourget 2001; graphically illustrated in Donnan 1988:552-553) that emphasized the extreme power of the rulers and their control over their territory.

In spite of the evidence in favor of a centralized Southern Mochica state, several incongruencies tarnish the otherwise monolithic hypothesis. Work by Bourget in Huancaco, the apparent Mochica capital of the Virú Valley, has revealed that this site, while sharing many architectural characteristics with the Huacas of Moche, has little resemblance in terms

of its artifactual components (Bourget 2003). Huancaco ceramics are quite different from ceramic forms and styles present in the Huacas de Moche site, resembling more closely the Early Moche ceramics. It is possible that an independent «Mochicoid» state—that is, a social and political organization that shared many aspects with standard Mochica culture, but reinterpreted in local terms—existed in the Virú Valley prior to the expansion of the Mochicas to this valley, or that an independent «Mochica of Virú» polity coexisted with the expansive Mochicas who controlled the valley.

The second incongruence is the origin and extension of the Moche V polity. The occupation of Huaca de la Luna, featuring Moche IV ceramics, seems to extend well into the AD 800s with no occurrences of Moche V wares on site (Uceda 2004; Chapdelaine 2003). In the meantime, Moche V wares are quite common in Galindo, dating back to AD 700, with little or no occurrences in the 800s (Lockard 2005). The distribution of Moche V ceramics appears to be restricted to the Chicama Valley, where Larco collected most of the specimens now housed in the Larco Museum; to the site of Galindo on the north bank of the Moche Valley, and to some odd contexts reported in and around the Santa Valley (Donnan 1968; Pimentel and Paredes 2003). It is our impression that the Moche V polity was restricted mainly to the Chicama Valley and that it evolved only after the fragmentation of the Southern Mochica into two polities (Castillo 2003). Further research in the Chicama Valley should prove or falsify this hypothesis.

The Northern Mochicas

The Northern Mochica region comprises three valley systems: 1) the upper Piura Valley, around the Vicús region; 2) the lower Lambayeque Valley system, comprising three rivers: La Leche, Reque and Zaña; and 3) the lower Jequetepeque Valley system, that includes the Chamán and Jequetepeque drainages. The Piura Valley, as argued above, was fully part of the Mochica phenomenon only during its Early Moche, or Early Moche-Vicús phase, developing non-Mochica traditions during the Middle and Late Moche phases. In contrast to all the other regions, Mochica occupation in Piura is not located in a coastal setting with access to maritime resources and focused on lower-valley irrigation agriculture, but in a fertile enclave up valley, thus adapted to, and exploiting a quite distinct environment.

The Piura Valley had a brief yet visible Mochica occupation centered around the region of Chulucanas, where the Vicús developed. The Mochicas and the Vicús seem to have coexisted, as most Moche ceramics were reported coming out of deep shaft tombs in conjunction with wares of the Vicús tradition (Makowski 1994). A small funerary mound at Loma Negra contained several rich burials from which looters removed a plethora of metal objects, including crowns, nose ornaments, bells and adornments for elite garments (Jones 1992, 2001). Although no contextual information is available, it is clear that the Loma Negra burials belonged to royal individuals, analogous in status and identities to those buried at Sipán (Alva 1998 inter alia) and La Mina (Narváez 1994).

Interpreting the Mochica presence in Piura has been a riddle for quite some time now. Lumbreras (1979) argued that the Mochicas had been a commercial colony in Piura, assuring themselves access to precious Ecuadorian resources such as *Spondylus* shells and gold. Makowski (1994) argues in favor of a multiethnic society, a point of encounter of several north coast traditions where the Mochicas coexisted and, apparently, shared their territory with other groups. It is also possible, that the Mochicas from Piura were none other than Vicús elites engaging in the same transformation process as the Virú or Gallinazo people of Jequetepeque, thus creating an elite material culture, with an iconography and style homologous to the one in use at the royal centers of Lambayeque and Jequetepeque. In any case, from these auspicious Early Moche origins, whether a colony, a component in a cultural melting pot or an elite culture, the Mochicas from Piura developed into something quite different from their southern relatives. The reasons for this cultural drift are not clear, and in actuality the archaeological record has not been analyzed from this standpoint. It is likely that the Mochica elites from Piura lost or ceased contact with the southern polities, or failed to impose their cultural cannons, and culturally drifted away.

The Lambayeque and Jequetepeque valleys were the scenarios for the development of the Northern Mochicas throughout the Early, Middle, and Late Moche phases. Due to their geographic and environmental differences, in each valley the process took on distinct characteristics. In terms of agricultural land and available water, each one of these two valley systems is equivalent to the extension of several of the Southern Mochica valleys put together (Shimada 1999). Consequently, internal or
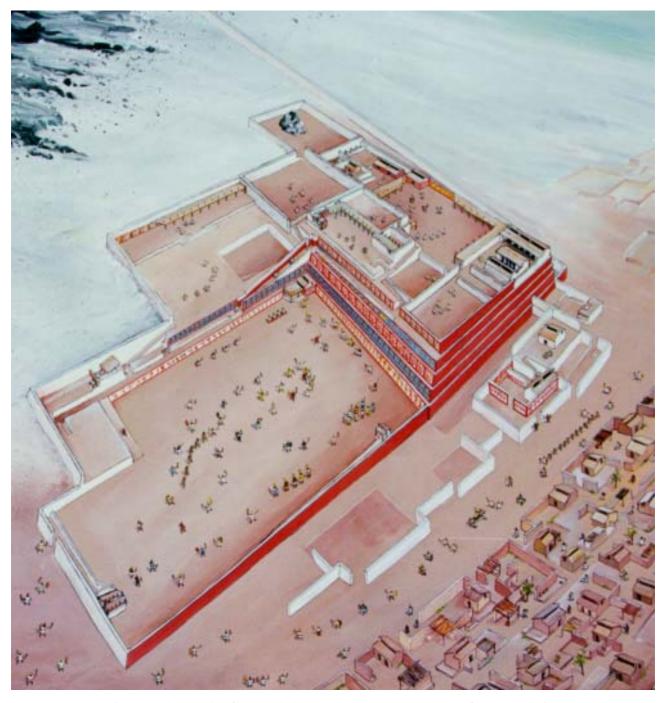
Figure 4: The temple of Huaca de la Luna and de urban nucleous of the Moche city.

intra-valley interactions are much more influential than inter-valley relationships. There is little or no evidence that either of these valleys attempted to overcome the other, or challenge the power of the Southern Mochicas. Quite the contrary, in terms of territory, in both regions the objective seems to have been the incorporation of new territories through larger and more efficient irrigation systems. In neither case does the limit of the irrigated area seem to have been reached, thus there seems to have been no need to engage in inter-valley conflicts to extend land holdings and gain access to more primary resources (staples).

The Lambayeque Valley system was, during Middle Moche times, the seat of the Lord of Sipán (Alva 2001:243) and possibly of other small Mochica kingdoms. During Late Moche its south eastern side was the location of Pampa Grande, the presumed capital of the regional Moche state. Yet our knowledge of how the Mochicas developed in this

valley is quite incomplete due to lack in field research. Almost all the known Mochica sites in Lambayeque are located on the south side of the valley, on the banks of the Chancay-Reque River (Sipán, Saltur, Pampa Grande, Santa Rosa) and the Zaña River (Cerro Corbacho, Ucupe). The northern section, irrigated by the La Leche River, seems not to have been occupied by the Mochicas, but by local Virú or Gallinazo populations (Shimada and Maguiña 1994). Only two sites, Sipán and Pampa Grande, have been studied intensively enough to reveal significant aspects of the organizational principles employed by the Mochicas of Lambayeque. Sipán has shown us unexpected characteristics of Mochica leadership and wealth, particularly the funerary treatment of higher status individuals in Mochica society (Alva 2001). What archaeologists see in these burials is an image of great social and political complexity, with a sizable body of higher elite consisting of rulers and high officers of different statuses who were bestowed with the right to accompany their lords after death. All were costumed in the regalia and garments that they used in life to perform their ritual roles in religious or civil liturgies. In all cases a special link was established between the individuals and the objects that defined their function and ceremonial role that, evidently, continued after death. The officers and their «objects» developed an «inalienable relation,» such that these objects, produced for them under special conditions and times, would not appropriate for others. Thus, they died with their owners, were buried with them, and would still function with them in the afterlife to continue providing for the society of the living.

Sipán corresponds to the Middle Moche phase in the Lambayeque Valley, a time of probable expansion and growth. Saltur, the other monumental complex apparently contemporary with Sipán, has not been excavated. One possible piece of evidence is that both Sipán and Saltur were built next to the Collique canal, the intervalley irrigation system that provides water to the lower Zaña Valley, to the south. It is likely that the wealth of Sipán was connected with the expansion of the agricultural lands after incorporating the Zaña Valley.

Pampa Grande, one of the largest Mochica sites anywhere, occupies more than 400 ha at the neck of the Chancay River, where the irrigation canals have their intakes. The site was laid out and built in a short period of time, and combines an enormous ceremonial complex, including Huaca Fortaleza, the tallest ceremonial platform in Peru, storage facilities, specialized workshops, shrines of different sizes and kinds, living quarters and corrals (Shimada 1994). It is unlikely that the site gradually grew to its actual proportions, but instead it seems to imply a population-reduction strategy. People from all over the Lambayeque Valley appear to have been concentrated at Pampa Grande for purposes and reasons that remain uncertain. However, this social and political experiment lasted only a short period, and by the end of the seventh century the site had been abandoned. Shimada argues that Pampa Grande, where «Gallinazoid» ceramics are quite frequent, was developed because the Mochicas forced the Gallinazos to live there and work for the Mochica state, in conditions analogous to slavery (Shimada 1994). Social tensions within the site erupted late in the occupation, when a popular revolt might have burned the temples and ousted the elites. The biggest paradox about Pampa Grande, nevertheless, is the preeminence of Moche V ceramics, with identical forms and decorations as the ceramics from the Chicama Valley and Galindo. What were the Moche V doing in Pampa Grande, and why do we have a discontinuous distribution of this style? Moche V is almost nonexistent in the Jequetepeque Valley that lies between Chicama and Pampa Grande.

The Mochica occupation of the Jequetepeque Valley system has been the subject of intensive and extensive research, making it the one of the best known regions of the north coast. Multiple valley-wide surveys have been conducted and excavations have been carried out in numerous sites. The most prominent Mochica sites excavated in the Jequetepeque Valley are Dos Cabezas, La Mina, and Pacatnamú, located close to the ocean; and Cerro Chepén, Portachuelo de Charcape, San Idelfonso and San José de Moro, in the interior, northern part of valley, corresponding to the Chamán River drainage. Stratigraphic excavations conducted in San José de Moro have produced a ceramic sequence of three phases, Early, Middle and Late Moche, that constitute a tradition quite distinct from the one described by Larco. Only the most elaborate elite ceramics resemble forms and decorations found in the south, while domestic ceramics show a completely different assemblage of forms, technique and decorations. Differences between the Jequetepeque and Southern Mochica traditions are most obvious in funerary practices, where rich chamber burials with niches, middle-range boot shaped shaft tombs, and poor and shallow pit tombs are the typical forms, in contrast to small chamber and pit burials common in the south.
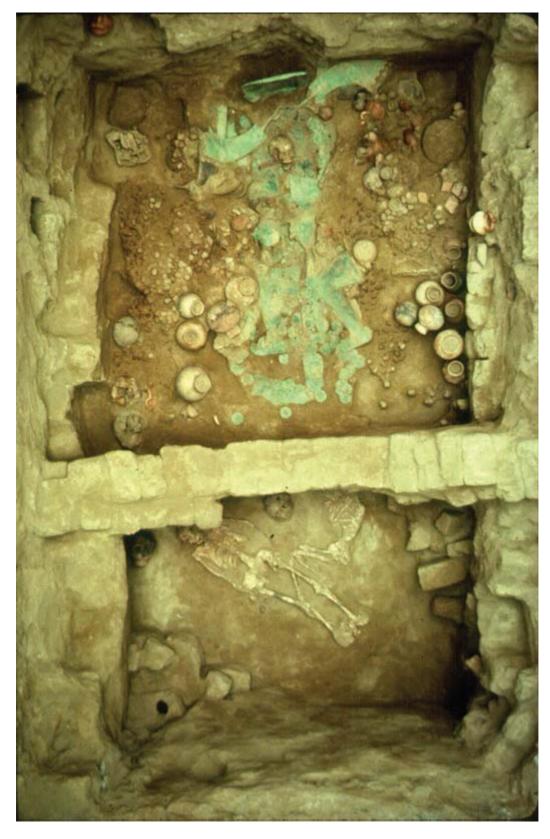
Figure 5: Burial of the Priestess of San Jose de Moro

In spite of these differences the Mochicas from Jequetepeque shared with their southern neighbors a common religious liturgy, and participated actively in the core Mochica ceremony, the Sacrifice Ceremony (Alva and Donnan 1993; Castillo 2000). Elite tombs found in San José de Moro featured burials of high-status females surrounded by artifacts associated with the Sacrifice Ceremony, and particularly to the female role or figure in it, who is commonly called the Priestess (Donnan and Castillo 1994; Figure xxx.5).

The political configuration of the Jequetepeque Valley describes a development process where evidence of political centralization competes with evidence for fragmentation and factionalism. A model of gradual development and decline cannot explain the evidence, which seems to better suit a model of political oscillation, where periods of fragmentation were followed by periods of more centralization to take advantage of opportunities or circumstances brought about by the environment or by inter-polity interactions. In the Early Moche phase a small and centralized state centered in Dos Cabezas developed on the margins of the Jequetepeque River. By Middle Moche times population pressure should have forced the Mochicas to expand their territory into the adjacent northern and southern deserts. The southern sector, what is now the San José and San Pedro districts, was developed though a single and centralized irrigation system. The northern sector, the Chamán drainage, was irrigated by a set of four irrigation canals that in effect create four independent jurisdictions: Chanfán, Guadalupe, Chepén, and Talambo. It is likely that the expansion of the irrigation system created autonomous regions that eventually became independent polities. These polities seem to have engage in factional competition and developed hostile relationships that required self defense, and thus the construction of defensive sites such as Cero Chepén, San Idelfonso, and Ciudadela-Cerro Pampa de Faclo. There are few signs that political integration was the norm among these northern Jequetepeque polities. Greater and lesser integration seems to have transpired at certain moments, taking advantage of opportunities or confronting needs and threats. Signs of interaction can be found in San José de Moro, where all these polities seem to have participated in regional ceremonial activities, and buried their elites. It needs to be stressed that in the northern Jequetepeque the process of political fragmentation doesn't appear to be an effect of a weakened state, unable to prevent its regions from gaining autonomy, but a consequence of how the northern valley was developed since the foundation of its outlying regions. Key to understanding the process of political configuration in Jequetepeque is the way the irrigation system was developed through time, with autonomous and redundant irrigation networks, each one leading to what seem to have been rather self-sufficient sectors of the valley. Colonization of the northern Jequetepeque, through these irrigation systems, seems to have been the result of «entrepreneurial» factions and not a state-sponsored endeavor (Castillo, ms).

THE STRUCTURE OF MOCHICA SOCIETY

Mochica social organization has been studied through the analysis of domestic contexts, iconographic representations and burials. All three sources coincide in portraying a complex social organization comprising many divisions and segments, with groups that show a high degree of specialization, sexual and gender differentiations, clustering of individuals of similar status, and qualitative differences between social strata. In general terms three groups can be identified: the ruling elite, the commoners, and the poor. Mochica ruling elites, comprising males, females and children of royal lineages, were buried in royal tombs located in small funerary platforms, generally in chamber burials, surrounded by fine objects of metal, ceramics, semiprecious stones, and multiple retainer burials. Elite burials were not only rich and complex, they usually included multiple objects loaded with iconographic representations, and ritual paraphernalia including attires and instruments that allowed them to participate in ceremonies and to recreate mythical narratives. The burials of Mochica rulers at Sipán, and of Priestesses at San José de Moro are some of the most conspicuous examples of Mochica ruling elites. Their household dwellings are usually large and well fitted adobe constructions with multiple rooms, and can be located inside or in connection with temples. Mochica elites are conspicuously portrayed in portable and monumental art in leading roles, as military commanders, receiving offerings inside roofed structures, or as deities participating in mythical events and ceremonies. Funerary and iconographic evidence coincide in presenting the elites with extremely elaborate costumes, including not only fine garments but many precious ornaments:

crowns, feathers, nose ornaments, collars, bracelets, and multiple metal artifacts such as scepters, weapons, banners, and litters.

Below the royal elites was a fairly large social segment including individuals who were neither rich nor poor: the commoners. This segment represents the largest number of burials and households studied and within it we can observe a high degree of variability. Their burials are usually contained inside small chambers with niches in the southern area, and in boot-shaped shaft tombs in the northern region. These can include multiple ceramics objects, even some with complex iconographic representations, but fewer metal objects. It seems that Mochica commoners had access to representations of ceremonies and myths, but could not participate in leading roles in their recreations. These burials frequently contain sets of objects related to specific crafts, for example textile production in the case of females, or metal work in the case of males. There seems to be an intentional representation of the functional aspect of their identities at the time of burial. Commoner households are much smaller than the elite ones.

The Mochica poor are the least understood and studied. Donnan's and McClelland's (1997) study of a fishermen cemetery in Pacatnamú and Bawden's (1994) excavations of small dwellings in the foothills of Galindo are examples of the lower class settings. In many cases the poor were treated in ways quite different from other Mochicas. For instance, in San José de Moro, the poor people, particularly women and children, were disposed of summarily in pit burials, with few or no associations and in conjunction with areas where they had been laboring in the production of chicha (maize beer). Their burials do not correspond—either in form, orientation of the body or disposition of the elements—to the funerary treatment of elites or commoners. Small children are quite abundant among this kind of burials, as if children had not been conferred with the social status of their elders and were always treated as poor. In Pacatnamú, Donnan (1997) found a cemetery composed of 28 males, 27 females and 29 children of low status. Although in this cemetery burials were more organized in terms of position and orientation, and most were even placed inside cane coffins, their associations show that relatively, these individuals had a very restricted access to goods and resources. Garments, in many cases, showed excessive wear, reducing them to rags with multiple patches. Low status houses, studied in Galindo and other sites, are

narrow structures, built with stone walls and located on hill slopes, with limited access to resources and many times separated from the rest of the community by walls. It is likely, though, that these low status houses are in reality refuge dwellings for the community in case of attacks. Frequent associations in these houses are storage vessels, water containers and piles of sling stones. It has been argued that the Mochica poor could have had closer relations with the Gallinazo tradition, or that they might even have been enslaved Gallinazo people (Shimada 1994). This assumption seems to be wrong given the new understanding of Gallinazo as the underlying cultural tradition, that is to say that all Mochicas were Gallinazo in their quotidian tradition, something that was more apparent among the poor.

Mochica social organization was not only complex but was divided by economic, functional, gender and age divisions. It has been argued that Late Moche was a time of social crisis, with multiple indications of social clashes that resulted in true revolts, and even the burning and destruction of elite Mochica symbols (Shimada 1994; Bawden 1996; Pillsbury 2001). Although social tension could have been worst during Late Moche due to climatic instabilities, it is quite evident that a society with such social gaps, exclusions, and divisions must always have been rife with social confrontation. Much of Mochica ideology is about legitimizing social differences and establishing roles that, although assuring sustenance, gave much to few and little to most.

COLLAPSES AND RECONFIGURATIONS OF THE MOCHICA POLITIES

In congruence with their multiple character, Mochica polities did not collapse all at once or for one single reason, but the collapses (plural) of the Mochicas (also plural) are clearly complex processes that occurred throughout three hundred years and by a combination of factors. The outcomes of these terminal processes were reconfigurations of the north coast societies, first by quite peculiar cultural processes, such as that documented in San José de Moro's Transitional Period (Rucabado and Castillo 2003), and ultimately by the establishment of two distinct regional cultures, Lambayeque, in the Northern Mochica region, and Chimú, in the Southern Mochica region. The environment (Shimada 1994;

Moseley and Patterson 1992), foreign invasions (Larco 1945; Willey 1953) and internal instabilities brought about by social conflict (Bawden 2001; Castillo 2001; Shimada 1994) are frequently blamed for the demise of the Mochicas. Close scrutiny makes any of these arguments, by itself, weak and incomplete, particularly those that place the origin of change outside the society. Our position is that if there has to be a common reason for the demise of the Mochica polities it must be the failure of a power strategy based predominantly on the manipulation of materialized expressions of ideology. Throughout the north coast, Mochica elites had connected their fates too tightly with the efficacy of ideology, the power of performance and representation, and the production and exchange of ritual objects. For much of their history this primarily ideologically based strategy, that also combined other sources of social power (Mann 19xx) had been successful, allowing all Mochicas to grow and prosper. But, starting in the seventh century AD it clearly did not work any more. Ideological discourse and materializations in rituals, monuments and artifacts, weakened by environmental instability and foreign threats, were unable to legitimate the structure of society, the unequal distribution of socially produced wealth and the monopoly that the elites had in the direction of society. The study of Late Moche sites such as Pampa Grande (Day 1978; Shimada 1994), Galindo (Bawden 1977; Lockard 2005) or San Idelfoso (Dillehay 2001; Swenson 2004) have produced quite differentiated pictures of the last days of the Mochicas. What follows is an account of the process as recorded in long-term occupation sites, the Huacas of Moche and San José de Moro, sites that not only account for the end of the Mochicas, but that place this process in a continuous occupation.

Excavations at Huaca de la Luna have revealed a peculiar configuration for the end of the Mochicas. Two occupational phases can be distinguished, the first one from the foundation to the year AD 600, and the second between AD 600 and 800. The first phase corresponds to the development and intensive use of the Huaca de la Luna, the performance of the Sacrifice Ceremony, and multiple transformations of the monument. A clear emphasis is given to ritual performance and enormous resources are invested in the construction and transformation of the monument. In the urban center, the lower layers of the occupation also reveal an emphasis on the production and manipulation of ritual artifacts and on burials of individuals costumed as ritual performers. This emphasis ceased around AD 650 when the Huaca de la Luna was almost closed and the Mochica population turned its attention to Huaca del Sol. The new building, produced in relatively little time and following a model of platform and ramp more common in the Northern Mochica region, marks a turn and transformation in practices and tradition. Mochica society in this second phase seems oriented to a more secular emphasis, with more attention placed on the production of household goods. We do not claim that this second occupational phase corresponds with a secular state, but that the tendencies towards secularity, more visible later on with Chimú, make their debut at this time (Uceda 2004).

The end of the Mochicas in San José de Moro, a ceremonial center and elite cemetery located in the northern Jequetepeque Valley, is quite dissimilar. It too implies the abandonment of Mochica traditions, particularly Mochica burial practices and ceramic styles, and conjecturably, of Mochica rituals that led to these burials and required these objects. Funerary practices and ceramics are two cultural features clearly associated with the Mochica elites, so their demise implied the interruption of their production. San José de Moro had been a regional ceremonial center, where elites and populations at large from the whole Jequetepeque Valley had gatherered for cere-monial events. Great quantities of chicha were produced and consumed and when required, buried with the dead. The regional integration and coordination role of the site continued after the Mochicas vanished—chicha was still produced there in large quantities, and members of the elites were still buried there.

The collapse of the Mochicas in San José de Moro, in contrast to the collaspe at Huaca de la Luna, is rather abrupt, even though the site was not abandoned, but was continually occupied during the Transitional Period when the local tradition was reconfigured. Relatively large quantities of foreign ceramics appear associated with local burials during the transition, including Wari, Nievería, Atarco, Pativilca, Cajamarca in several phases, and Chachapoyas styles. They participated in the formation of a proper Transitional style, a sort of post Moche tradition with many formal characteristics that coalesced in Lambayeque and Chimú. Foreign ceramics were incorporated in local burials as a small external contribution that, most likely, emphasized a peculiar aspect of an individual's identity. But within the Jequetepeque Valley we can detect many distinct

terminal processes. Wari ceramics, of excellent quality, are found almost only in San José de Moro, while Cerro Chepén exhibits what seems to be highland architecture (Rosas 2005). Other Late Moche sites, like San Idelfonso (Swenson 2004), or Portachuelo de Charcape (Johnson, ms), reveal a situation that seems to be more standard, that is to say, where the Mochica occupation ceased and the site was abandoned. These differences seem to be an outcome of the previously discussed fragmentary configuration of the valley, where each local polity was free to establish alliances and affiliations with local or foreign societies, and thus show different kinds and intensities of affinities in their artifactual compositions.

If the Mochica were, as Bawden has argued (2001), basically a political ideology, their collapse should have been the end of the efficacy of Mochica elite ideas and material expressions of the strategies of legitimization and control, of idiosyncratic ways of ritual performance, and of particularly Mochica social organization. However, in spite of the collapse of Mochica political institutions life continued on the north coast after they were gone: their the irrigation systems continued functioning, as many do today, as did the technologies they had developed for making copper look like gold. Of all things Mochica, religion was the one thing most dramatically transformed, as probably it—more than anything else—was associated with the way the Mochicas had ruled the land. We do not agree with the idea that the Mochicas simply melted down into the Chimú or the Lambayeque, or that we can recognize them in their heirs. Rather, the Mochicas—as a system, as a way to control the land and give sense to society, as an explanation for the universe—collapsed and disappeared, their leaders failed and vanished, many of their settlements and temples were emptied and abandoned. The collapse of the Mochicas implies that a reconfiguration was needed to bring order back, to return legitimacy and wealth to the north coast of Peru (Baines and Yoffee 1998). Furthermore, the Mochicas are not the Chimú or the Lambayeque. We can not study one extrapolating from the other. Finally, societies, both past and present, do collapse.

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