

Book Reviews

Archaeology

The Moche. Garth Bawden. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996. 375 pp.

THOMAS POZORSKI
University of Texas–Pan American

Garth Bawden has written the first general overview of the Moche culture to appear in over 20 years. As part of “The Peoples of America” series currently being published by Blackwell Publishers, this book is a very welcome synthesis of the Moche culture that is based on iconographic analysis of pottery and other Moche artifacts; recent spectacular finds at Sipan, San Jose de Moro, Huaca de la Luna, and Huaca El Brujo; and less well known settlement and artifact studies. There is little in this volume that is truly new, at least to scholars familiar with the Moche culture. The real strength of the book lies in its cohesive, and at times provocative, overview garnered from published sources and ideas that have been presented at various meetings over the past 15 years.

In chapter 1, Bawden presents the sources of information (archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic) that prehistorians use to reconstruct and understand Moche culture. Bawden feels, with certain justification, that past studies have overemphasized the Moche “core area” centered around the Moche and Chicama Valleys, clouding the complexity of Moche culture that is only recently beginning to be understood. One notable error is the map on page 9 that shows both Galindo and the Huaca El Brujo Complex on the wrong side of their respective river valleys.

In chapter 2, Bawden includes a rather thorough environmental description of the areas that were directly or indirectly exploited by the Moche. The main flaw in this chapter is the overemphasis on environmental change and disasters (tectonic movements, tsunamis, and El Niño rains) that have supposedly plagued the Peruvian coast for centuries, periodically disrupting or destroying various civilizations. This environmental determinism point of view became popular in the 1980s among certain Andeanists but was never really supported by solid archaeological or geological evidence. Earthquakes and heavy rains do occur, but people and cultures survive and are more resilient than some scholars think.

Moche settlements are discussed in chapter 3. Most are believed to be small rural centers, often housing groups of specialists (farmers, fishermen, potters). Some archaeological evidence supports this, but much of the specialized center idea comes from later ethnohistoric documents, the information from which is projected backward several hundred years and applied to the Moche.

In chapters 4 and 5, Bawden discusses the symbols of power, represented by the iconography on pottery, metal objects, and architecture, that the Moche elite used and manipulated during reenactments of sacred myths to legitimize their elevated positions in Moche society in contrast to the majority of Moche people. One curious feature of chapter 4 is the discussion of major platform sites that, according to Bawden, were rather sparsely populated ceremonial centers until Moche V times. With the recent excavations at Cerro Blanco revealing a very dense urban settlement, this claim about empty ceremonial centers may be overstated. Ironically, this idea may stem from the lack of large-scale investigations at most major Moche sites, a bias that has distorted settlement patterns similar to the bias Bawden notes in the overemphasized studies of the Moche core area.

Chapter 6 contains a summary of north-coast archaeological cultures back to late preceramic times. Cultural continuity is emphasized, i.e., massive Initial Period mounds presaging later Moche pyramids. One point of contention that I have concerns statements made about large-mound construction, beginning in this chapter with Gallinazo mounds (p. 188) and repeated in later chapters (pp. 229, 294) for Moche mounds. For the Gallinazo and Moche, large mounds represent the capability of mobilizing large regional labor forces, implying centralized rule. However, such capability is denied the Initial Period people, even though their constructions were often much larger than those of later peoples. I suspect that Bawden downplays the possibility of centralized rule during the Initial Period because (1) no elaborate burials have yet been found to suggest class stratification and (2) strong centralized rule at 1500 B.C. does not correspond to theories dictating slow evolutionary development of complex societies.

In chapter 7, Bawden notes the problems investigators have had with Larco’s five-phase sequence, particularly in the valleys north of Jequetepeque. He envisions the Moche culture as arising out of multiple sources along the north coast, not the result of a single source expansion out of the Moche-Chicama area.

Chapter 8 concerns the florescence of Moche culture, corresponding to Moche III-IV, and the differences between the individualistic centralized rule of the Moche-Chicama area versus the myth-role-enactment type of rule in valleys to the north. In Bawden’s view, the latter type of rule was more tied to the community, and as a result, during Moche V and later times, the northern valleys suffered far less dramatic change than did the valleys from Chicama on south.

In chapters 9 and 10, Bawden recounts the collapse and reconstitution of Moche society during Moche V and later in the Middle Horizon. Causes for the changes in Moche society include outside pressure (though not conquest) by the Wari, envi-

ronmental problems, and internal stress. Bawden handles these two chapters quite well, despite the difficulty of obtaining concrete evidence of internal stress and an overemphasis on the seriousness of environmental factors. Again, in his view, the northern valleys fared better during this transitional period.

In the final chapter, Bawden cites the legacy that the Moche left on later cultures, including modern-day Peru. Examples of this legacy include Chimu blackware derived from Moche V blackware and reed boats that are still used along portions of the north coast. The most enduring legacy, however, is the practice of shamanism, which Bawden sees as directly tied to the Moche rulers' roles as shamans in maintaining a balance between the real world and the spirit world.

In sum, Garth Bawden has provided a thorough and stimulating volume that offers much food for thought concerning one of ancient Peru's most interesting civilizations. Overall, the book is well done. My major complaint is that the half-tone reproductions are of poor quality, often too dark to discern much detail. Despite this reservation, this book deserves a place on the bookshelves of all persons, scholars, and laypersons alike who have an interest in ancient Peru. ♦♦

Archaeologica Peruana: Prehispanic Architecture and Civilization in the Andes. *Elisabeth Bonnier and Henning Bischof*, eds. Mannheim, Germany: Reiss-Museum, 1997. 236 pp.

JERRY MOORE
California State University-Dominguez Hills

Sometimes the best thing an archaeologist can do is to draw a good map, and this is amply illustrated in *Prehispanic Architecture and Civilization in the Andes*. The outgrowth of a symposium at the 1988 International Congress of Americanists, the volume contains 11 papers in Spanish and English edited by Elisabeth Bonnier and Henning Bischof.

As Bonnier observes in the introduction (p. 10), the symposium unintentionally exposed two different trends in archaeological approaches to architecture: "The European archaeologists were giving more attention to formal analysis and definition of construction sequences . . . [whereas] their American colleagues . . . would rather focus on settlement patterns and the social and economical aspects of the architectural study." Five authors (Wurster, Reindel, Fuchs, Bischof, and Tellenbach [unfortunately, most of Dr. Tellenbach's article was missing from my review copy]) emphasize formal analysis and construction techniques, three authors (Shimada, Cavallaro, and Greider) discuss social and economical aspects, and Bonnier contributes two articles, one from each approach. One article falls outside of this very loose framework; Elera provides an excellent overview of the Peruvian Formative Cupisnique and Salinar cultures, but scarcely mentions architecture.

Before discussing individual articles, I must emphasize the high quality of the publication. Architectural studies depend on their illustrations, and the authors and the Reiss-Museum are to be thanked for the excellent photographs, plans, and sections. Some illustrations are actually beautiful, and all the artwork is competent and useful to archaeologists.

The papers focusing on formal analysis and construction techniques include Fuchs's detailed discussion of building stages at Cerro Sechin in the Casma Valley, Peru. Long-known for its bas-reliefs showing ax-bearing warriors and their mutilated victims, scant chronological data about Cerro Sechin have been available. Fuchs's detailed construction sequence spanning ca. 2500–2300 B.C. to 300–200 B.C. (pp. 157–159) is a welcome addition to Andean archaeology. Similar in its focus on building sequences, Reindel suggests a sequence for North Coast monumental architecture based on changes in adobe bricks and morphological changes in building plans. Although interesting, it does not produce a chronological alternative to ceramic sequences, which is Reindel's stated goal (p. 91).

Bischof's article on the site of Cerro Blanco, in the Nepeña Valley on Peru's coast, is an excellent photographic survey of the site. Historic photographs culled from hacienda archives show various stages in the site's excavation—and its deterioration. Bischof examines iconographic motifs depicted in now nearly destroyed polychrome reliefs and argues that coastal sites like Cerro Blanco contain important information about the religious and sociopolitical dimensions of the Early Horizon's Chavin tradition.

Bonnier, in her article on construction sequences at the Late Preceramic (ca. 3000–1800 B.C.) site of Piruru, shows the complex history of ritual architecture at the site and expands her discussion of the Mito religious architectural style. Bonnier's comparison of Piruru and other sites (Kotosh, La Galgada) suggests the Late Preceramic Mito religion unified the north-central Peruvian Andes.

Wurster presents architectural and settlement data from the little-known Topará Valley, located on the south coast of Peru. Wurster's brief article only hints at the rich data he and his colleagues have obtained. The majority of the Topará Valley sites date to Late Intermediate period (ca. A.D. 900–1470) and Late Horizon (ca. A.D. 1470–1530). The largest site, Huaquiná Este, is an architectural complex covering some 500 x 200 meters with dwellings, public plazas, and multiroom compounds used for both residential functions and funerary rites. Wurster's superb architectural plans are an important contribution to Andean archaeology.

Cavallaro critiques serializations of the large royal compounds (*ciudadelas*) at Chan Chan, the Late Intermediate period capital of the Peruvian Chimú Empire. Although Cavallaro's research has been published elsewhere, this version is particularly clear. Cavallaro concludes that at best one can separate the royal compounds into Early, Middle, and Late *ciudadelas*, not a unilineal sequence. This section of Cavallaro's article is tightly argued, but there is no reason to think—as Cavallaro does—that the difficulties of serializing Chan Chan's *ciudadelas* indicate dual political organization. The penultimate section of the article offers an unconvincing analysis of dual organization at the Inka site of Huánuco Pampa that does nothing to advance Cavallaro's claims.

The weakest paper in the volume is Terence Grieder's article, "On Two Types of Andean Tombs," which contrasts above-ground funerary structures (*chullpas*) and subterranean shaft and chamber tombs. In a free-form use of South American ethnography that blithely hops across millenia, Grieder argues that the shaft and chamber tombs symbolized wombs and that the *chullpas* are phalli, and that a supposed shift in funerary forms