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Rituals of the Past

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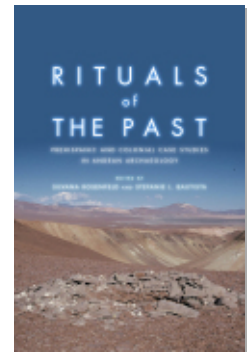
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Ritual and everyday practices in the modern Andes maintain permeable boundaries, showing a recursive relationship between the extraordinary and the mundane (Insoll 2004). Every day, quotidian activities such as starting a workday in the agricultural fields may involve simple, almost systematic ceremonies, while important religious and calendar dates deserve more elaborate services. The study of this varied spectrum of cultural practices allows us to understand how rituals, regardless of their scale, produce and reproduce social dispositions within a society (Bourdieu 1977).

Throughout this chapter we intend to move beyond the dualistic distinctions that segregate ritual and domestic as two apparently incommensurable realms of social life (Angelo 2014) by exploring ritual as a relational practice. In doing so, we propose that ritual practices are better understood from a multi-scalar approach that emphasizes the way meanings, social rules, and relations are embedded within the recurrent practices that produce and reproduce their material habitus (Bourdieu 1977; Hodder and Cessford 2004). In this way the nature of ritual can be seen as a process in which repetitive actions socialize people into particular dispositions; in turn, these dispositions establish a recursive relationship with rituals in which social meaning is produced and reformulated through repetition.

This study focuses on the multiple facets of ritual practices at Cerro de Oro in an attempt to explore how everyday mundane practices, such as disposal

*From the Domestic
to the Formal*

*A View of Daily and
Ceremonial Practices from
Cerro de Oro during the
Early Middle Horizon*

FRANCESCA FERNANDINI AND
MARIO RUALES

activities, as well as sacred ceremonies, such as large-scale closure practices and intrusive burials, form part of the ritual spectrum. Following this line of argument, emphasis is placed on how the recurrence of these practices defines ritual as a relational process that produces and reproduces social meanings throughout time.

Cerro de Oro, located in the Lower Cañete Valley, is a large monumental settlement that presents continuous occupation from the end of the Early Intermediate Period (EIP) (AD 500–600) to Early Republican times (AD 1540–1600) (Fernandini 2015; Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 2004; Ruales 2000). Its denser occupation is associated with a continuous period between the end of the EIP and the start of the Middle Horizon (MH) (AD 500–800), a period that has been labeled the *Cerro de Oro occupation* (Fernandini 2015; Fernandini and Alexandrino 2016). The architectural and cultural contexts of Cerro de Oro are concentrated over a large mound that spans 145 ha (figures 8.1, 8.2). The majority of Cerro de Oro occupation contexts are located toward the south and northeast sections of the mound, while the Late Intermediate Period (LIP) (AD 1000–1475) and Late Horizon (AD 1476–1534) contexts are located more in the north and northwest sections. Moreover, a late period intrusive cemetery area intrudes the *Cerro de Oro occupation* contexts in the south.

Though many archaeologists recognize Cerro de Oro as an important settlement for the development of social complexity on the Peruvian South Coast (Engel 2010; Kroeber 1937; Menzel 1964; Ruales 2000; Stumer 1971), Cerro de Oro has been markedly underrepresented in academic research. During the early twentieth century, archaeologists such as Tello in 1923 (Kroeber 1937; Stumer 1971; Tello 1923) and Wallace in 1958–59 (Wallace 1963) performed sporadic excavations at the site without proper documentation and with limited publications. It was not until the early twenty-first century that investigations continued at Cerro de Oro with the Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica Cerro de Oro (PIACO), led by Ruales (2000), focusing mainly on the Southwest Area of the settlement (*ibid.*). Following this investigation, Fernandini (2013, 2014) led the Proyecto Arqueológico Cerro de Oro (PACO) between 2012 and 2015, which centered on the Southeast Area (Southeast Plain and Southeast Ravine; see figure 8.2). Both PIACO and PACO documented EIP and MH (*Cerro de Oro occupation*) contexts, showing a continuous occupation between these periods. This continuous occupation was characterized by a sequence of floors that extend from the modern surface to bedrock.

The *Cerro de Oro*¹ *occupation* revealed a series of changes in the artifact assemblage as well as in the usage of space. Architecturally, this occupation demonstrated a radical increase in monumentality and settlement size. Numerous

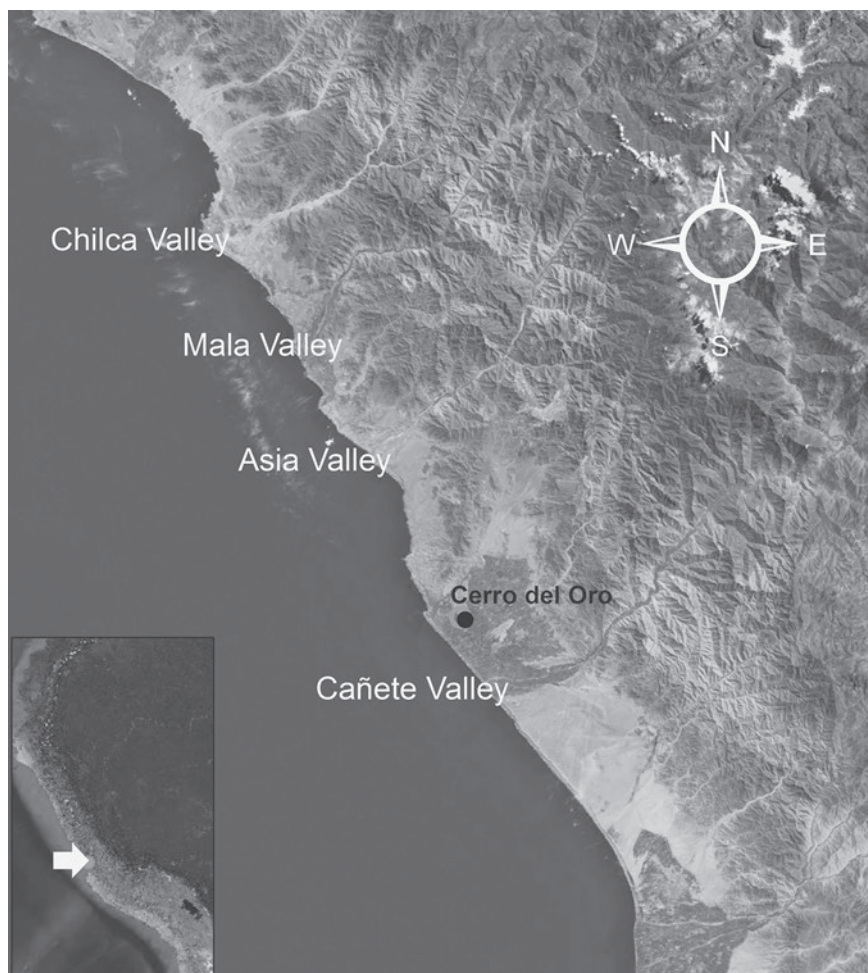


FIGURE 8.1. Map showing the location of Cerro de Oro and neighboring valleys

compounds, platforms, and monumental structures were constructed following a recurrent 240° orientation on east-west walls and a 60° orientation on north-south walls with relatively regular sizes and shapes of adobe (ca. $10\text{--}15\text{ cm} \times 10\text{ cm} \times 3.5\text{ cm}$), covering an area of approximately 80 ha. Most of these walls were stuccoed, while several were painted white and yellow and included numerous friezes (Ruales 2000). As a way to clarify the spatial configuration of Cerro de Oro, the settlement has been divided into different sectors and areas within those sectors. This study focuses on the South Sector, mainly on

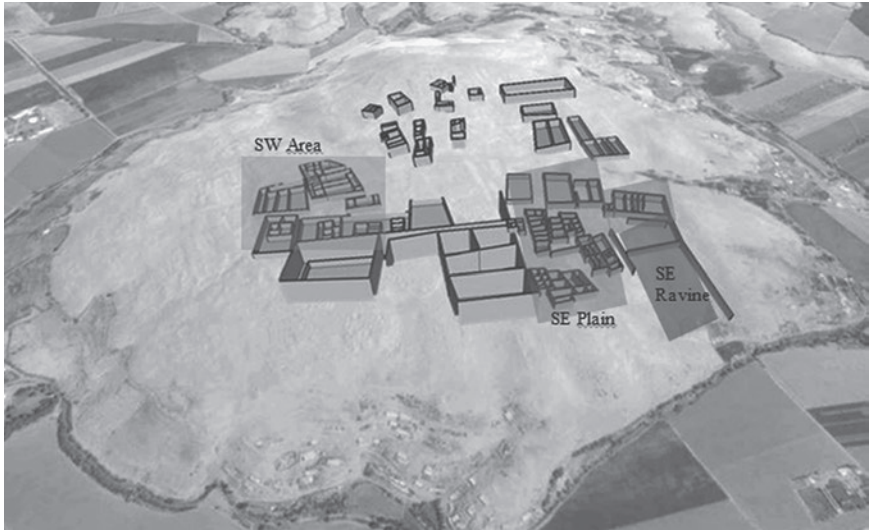


FIGURE 8.2. Map of Cerro de Oro showing SW Area (PLACO) and SE Area (SE Plain and SE Ravine) (PACO)

the excavations performed by Ruales on one of the compounds in the SW Area and on the research conducted by Fernandini on two compounds in the SE Plain and three platforms from the SE Ravine.

Research performed in these areas has brought light to some of the activities that took place in different spaces of the settlement. For instance, evidence from excavations has shown a marked difference between activities that took place in the compounds of the SE Plain and those performed in the platforms of the SE Ravine. This evidence shows that while the SE Ravine was associated mainly with food processing, cooking, and disposal activities, the compounds on the SE Plain point to storage and communal gathering and eating.

Likewise, the ceramic assemblage pertaining to the *Cerro de Oro occupation* shows a very standardized process of ceramic production in which paste composition seems to present very small variations. However, as the spatial configuration of the settlement was reshaped, a series of ceramic innovations also changed the ceramic repertoire. These innovations are reflected in the introduction of foreign designs and a new shape: the *colador* (sieve). New designs seem to have been introduced as a process of hybridization in which local ceramics were blended with elements from Nasca-, Chakipampa-, Lima-, Estrella-, and possibly Cajamarca-style traditions. This process seems to have been a local response to the highly interactive social context that characterized

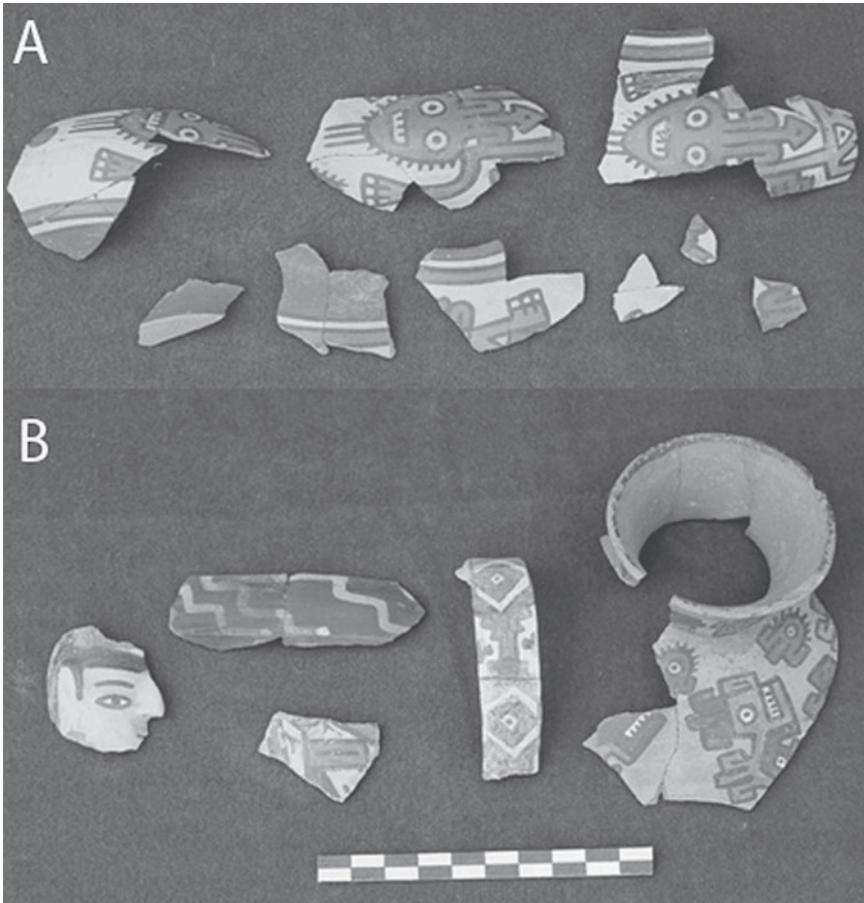


FIGURE 8.3A, 8.3B. Fragments from bowl showing the different blends of Middle Horizon 1 styles

the South-Central, Central, and South Coast during this time, showing that Cerro de Oro was part of its cultural milieu (figure 8.3). Moreover, coladores are elaborate vessels with thin walls and fine pastes that always present some type of decoration. Microbotanical evidence from residue analysis shows the remains of non-local beans,² reflecting the idea that these vessels could have been involved in the production of an important drink or food.

Situating Cerro de Oro within its cultural and geographic setting shows that it was the largest settlement in the Lower Cañete Valley during the end of the EIP and the start of the MH (Chavez 2006; Ruales 2000). During

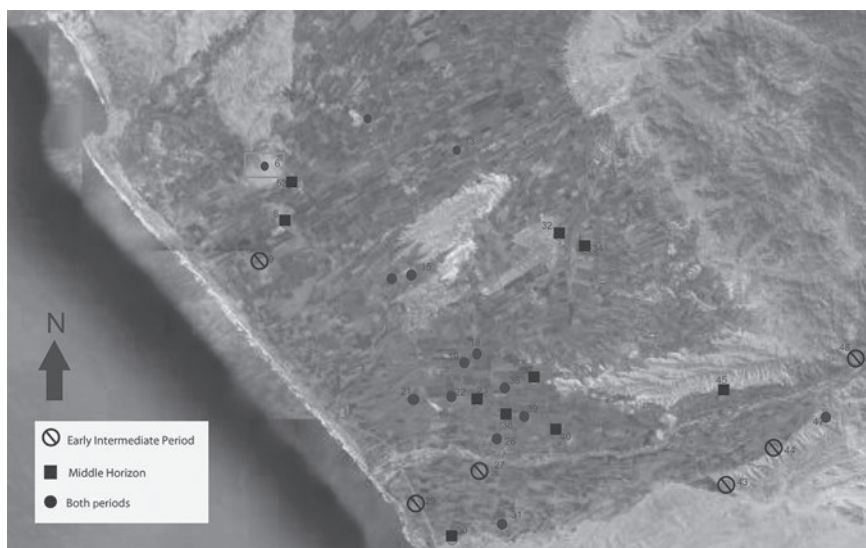


FIGURE 8.4. *Prehispanic settlements in the Lower Cañete Valley. Adapted from Chavez 2006.*

this time there seems to have been an increase in the number of settlements located 5 km or more from the Cañete River, with Cerro de Oro 13 km from the river (figure 8.4). This change in the area's settlement pattern has been interpreted in association with an expansion of the canal system, allowing for the enlargement of the agricultural frontier and the positioning of new settlements. Given that Cerro de Oro was the largest site and was the farthest from the river, it is possible that it could have been the prime mover behind hydraulic investments.

Neighboring valleys also experienced drastic changes in material culture during the end of the EIP and start of the MH, which seem to be associated with Cerro de Oro. Prior to this period, the Cañete, Asia, and Mala Valleys showed a cultural affiliation or unity reflected in a similar material culture as well as mortuary and settlement patterns (Ángeles Falcón 2009; Gabe 2000). During the end of the EIP and start of the MH, these inter-valley affinities became more noticeable, with Cerro de Oro playing a pivotal social and possibly political role. Ruales (2000) argues Cerro de Oro played this role given that it was the only monumental settlement in the Mala, Asia, and Cañete region that had a dominant presence in the landscape because of its location on a high mound and its highly visible painted walls. Also, the population size of

the *Cerro de Oro occupation*, calculated based on the number of domestic structures at Cerro de Oro and compared with evidence recorded through surveys conducted on the Asia and Mala Valleys (Ángeles Falcón 2009), seems to have greatly surpassed that of any neighboring valley. While a ceramic production center has yet to be recorded at the site, excavations by PACO yielded large amounts of ceramics that repeatedly show the same type of decorations, colors, and shapes. Based on this evidence, we suggest that Cerro de Oro maintained control of ceramic production and distribution; however, only further research will clarify this phenomenon. Furthermore, Ruales's (2000) finding of a *kipu* in a context associated with the main platform at Cerro de Oro hints at a complex management of resources at the site.

Excavations at Cerro de Oro have shown that the presence of Cerro de Oro-style ceramics was recurrently associated with the construction of high walls and platforms and the reorganization of internal divisions. Likewise, the shift toward monumentality and possible mass production of ceramics was also reflected in the Cañete and Asia Valleys through an increase in population, as revealed by a rise in the number and size of sites (Ángeles Falcón 2009; Chavez 2006) (figure 8.4). Moreover, the Asia Valley presents evidence for a hiatus in the use of the main funerary and ceremonial space, Huaca Malena. This site was used from the EIP through MH 2 (AD 800–1000), until the Cerro de Oro political organization declined (Ángeles Falcón 2009; Ángeles Falcón and Pozzi-Escot 2000). Therefore, we suggest that Cerro de Oro grew as a political center, with its presence resonating in the surrounding settlements.

Thus, we argue that from the end of the EIP and beginning of the MH, Cerro de Oro housed a ruling group that foresaw the enlargement of the settlement's size and appearance and the increase in ceramic production and that, to some extent, influenced the populations from the Cañete and neighboring valleys. Cerro de Oro appears to have been a short-lived but well-organized political center that exerted an important influence within the Mala-Asia-Cañete cultural unit. This influence has been recognized mainly through the recurrence of settlement patterns and funerary and ceremonial practices in contemporary contexts in these valleys (Ángeles Falcón 2009).

RITUAL PRACTICES AT CERRO DE ORO

EVERYDAY DOMESTIC PRACTICES

Cerro de Oro's urban-like characteristics and possible mass production of ceramics reveal a complex settlement in which people were organized in a physically controlled landscape that reproduced hierarchical structures

through the maintenance of a systematically planned environment and a consistent material culture. In this context evidence for homogeneous ritual practices in different sectors of the site reflects a systematic organization of ceremonialism. From excavations carried out by PIACO and PACO, it seems that these ceremonies ranged from regularly occurring small-scale rituals to closure or single-use ceremonies.

A particular practice that has drawn our attention is the recurrent presence of pits on cultural floors associated with cooking or disposal spaces, which have been interpreted as part of a quotidian ritual practice. Ruales (2001) recorded this type of practice in a compound located in the SW Area of the settlement, while Fernandini (2015) encountered it in the domestic platforms of the SE Ravine. Although Ruales recorded the majority of these pits in Late Intermediate Period (ca. AD 1000–1300) contexts, a significant amount of them are clearly associated with *Cerro de Oro occupation* contexts based on their stratigraphic location and the presence of Cerro de Oro ceramics.

The *Cerro de Oro occupation* contexts excavated revealed a pattern in which materials seem to have been selected and placed intentionally in different pits. We suggest that a type of organized disposal practice was performed using specially selected material such as partial/complete animals, decorated sherds, musical instruments, and frieze fragments, among others. For example, Unit 11 presents a series of pits with different combinations of organic materials (e.g., human hair and a fish head). Unit 9 presents a pit with partial adobe bricks, organic remains, and an *ocarina* (a type of whistle). Unit 5 includes twelve pits filled with soil, clumps of clayish soil, fragments of white plaster, and a piece of cloth with dark resin attached to it. Early stratigraphic layers from Unit 18 reveal a pit that contained a complete pelican, while a later context in Unit 23 shows a pit containing an adult guinea pig (*cuy*) and a bag with unidentified non-organic white powder. Most noteworthy is a large burning area in Unit 6, which shows successive burning events evidenced by seven different pits or hearths (Ruales 2000). The events are labeled A–G based on their stratigraphic location, with A the most recent finding. This context is particularly interesting since the contents of each layer tentatively show the remains of a large meal. Table 8.1 provides a description of these contexts. All of these contexts seem to be intrinsically associated with the presence of cooking and storage areas, establishing a particular link among unconsumed, consumed, and disposed food. Likewise, the stratigraphic record shows that this organized disposal practice was recurrent throughout the *Cerro de Oro occupation*. Moreover, the size of these contexts seems to reveal that while some of these pits show the remains of small meals, others

TABLE 8.1. Stratigraphy of the burned contexts at Cerro de Oro

<i>Layer</i>	<i>Description</i>
A	Charcoal, partially burned shell, ceramics, and camelid bones
B	Very dense fill of ceramics, including the face of a figurine
C	Small amounts of charcoal and a large concentration of organic remains, mollusks, and the remains of small animals
D	Large quantities of feathers, mollusks, and organic remains
E	Shells, small animal remains, different vegetal remains, and ceramic fragments
F	Small quantities of organic remains, which include hair, fiber strings, and ceramic fragments
G	Small amounts of organic remains and some ceramic fragments
H	Earth-packed floor that had three pits, one with ceramic fragments and one with organic remains; the other one was empty

reflect large meals possibly associated with communal gatherings or feasts (Fernandini 2015).

Fernandini (2013) excavated a similar context on a domestic platform in the SE Ravine (see figure 8.2) in which six different pits intruded into a thick clay floor. These pits included small amounts of organic materials, clumps of soil, and some ceramic fragments. Based on their paste and iconographic attributes, these ceramic fragments have been cataloged as Cerro de Oro fine-ware. The sherds recovered from these pits were the most finely decorated ceramics from this platform. Similar to the contexts excavated by Ruales described above, these pits were in close proximity to a delimited burning area that showed successive burning events.

The persistent practice of excavating pits close to cooking areas and filling them with different materials has been interpreted as part of a quotidian ceremonial practice. We suggest that this practice formed part of a routinized domestic activity in which embedded meanings regarding the use of space and the social practice of food consumption were recurrently reproduced in different areas of the settlement. The rituality of this seemingly anodyne practice is seen in its repetition and consistency throughout space, reflecting how dispositions are socialized and internalized through the involvement of people in the reproduction of their habitus (Bourdieu 1977).

Moreover, the quantity of pits increases depending on the size of the cooking space, with large contexts such as those recorded for Unit 6 tentatively suggesting communal feasting events. If this context in fact does represent a communal event, then the quotidian domestic practice of pit disposal grows

in scale, becoming ingrained within a larger ritual practice. In this way the scale of the ritual grows, yet the nature of the practice remains the same: always establishing an inextricable relation between food and its disposal in a recurrent and significant way. The recurrence of pits associated with possible cooking areas has also been recorded in archaeological sites other than Cerro de Oro. At Conchopata, an important Wari center in the Ayacucho heartland, similar contexts were recorded in several domestic structures. Ochatoma Paravicino and Cabrera (2000) distinguished the placement of cuys with worked *Spondylus* shells in small pits within cooking or storage areas as a type of ritual offering at the site. In addition, they reported a series of pits inside a patio closely associated with the cooking area that were filled with burned human and camelid bones, small figurines, obsidian knives, and ceramic fragments. Rosenfeld (2012) also reported the presence of a complete young camelid and thirty-two complete cuys in a floor intrusion inside a cooking area in Conchopata. Conchopata is also characterized by the presence of large-scale and recurrent ritual ceremonies that involved sacrificing large ceramic vessels as well as people within the sacred D-shaped temple as part of the religious program (Isbell 2000). The presence of these two types of practices in this important settlement is an example of the broad spectrum of ritual that ranges from small-scale domestic practices to large-scale ceremonies.

CLOSURE AND ABANDONMENT PRACTICES

While the domestic practices mentioned above demonstrate evidence for quotidian ceremonialism at Cerro de Oro, both Ruales (2001) and Fernandini (2015) recorded archaeological evidence that reveals other types of ritual practices. This second set of practices points to a ritual event that was recurrently recorded in different areas of the settlement, seemingly embedded within the process of its abandonment.

Sealing practices are unique events that “prepare” spaces for their abandonment or reuse. The practices described below show how Cerro de Oro people selected certain spaces of the settlement to perform a series of actions categorized as a “closure practice.” This preparation seems to have had the intent of producing a deliberate, targeted, and systematic act whose main objective was to prevent the further use of that specific space (*sensu* Capriata Estrada and López-Hurtado, this volume).

Based on stratigraphic analysis, it seems that the end of the early MH occupation at the site was marked by an intensive pluvial event. Evidence for this climatic event has been recorded in different contexts of the SW and SE Areas.

TABLE 8.2. Stratigraphic sequence for Unit 22W at Cerro de Oro

<i>Layer</i>	<i>Description</i>
A	LIP material culture
B	LIP material culture
C	Associated with dismantling of walls
D	Semi-compact layer with large amounts of human coprolites
E	Thin layer of sand and debris with no cultural material
F	Laminated clayish soil with no cultural material (40 cm)
G	Cerro de Oro (Early MH) material culture

Based on Ruales 2001.

In the SW Area this evidence has been found mainly in Unit 22W, where the tops of the northwest and southeast walls had signs of water erosion and their lateral surfaces showed signs of water runoff. Table 8.2 describes the sequence of layers evidencing this major climatic event.

Similarly, evidence for the atypical presence of water runoff on adobe architecture has been found in the west sector of the compound, in Units 1, 12, and 23. These units had a very fine-grained and compact clayish layer (20 cm thick) over the structure's occupation floor. These sediments had been deposited through a filtration process, evidencing the presence of large quantities of water. Coincidentally, evidence for this pluvial event could only be found in contexts that were not part of the access routes leading to the lower part of the settlement. This lower part has been associated with the more consistent LIP occupation that reused earlier adobes in the construction of new structural elements, such as rooms and ramps. Based on this evidence, it can be argued that later occupations might have altered the evidence of water erosion.

Similar environmental phenomena have also been recorded in contemporaneous settlements throughout the Peruvian central and North Coast. For example, research at Cajamarquilla has demonstrated that settlement construction was intrinsically related to an increment in water availability in the Huaycoloro or the Jicamarca Quebrada (Mogrovejo and Makowski 1999). During excavations within Sector I of the Julio C. Tello architectonic complex, Segura and Mogrovejo recorded a stratigraphic hiatus similar to the one recorded at Cerro de Oro (Mogrovejo and Llanos 2000). This hiatus showed clear signs of flooding temporally associated with Middle Horizon 1-style ceramics such as Chakipampa. Consequently, Narváez Luna attests the presence of a layer composed of sandy silt covering a cultural layer with

ceramic remains pertaining to MH 1A, such as Lima 8 or 9 (Narváez Luna 2006), which he found while investigating a different sector (XI) of the Tello complex. Tentatively, it seems that these authors date these events sometime between MH 1A and 1B (AD 550–700). Similarly, recurrent flooding events reveal an extremely wet period at Huaca 20 in Complejo Maranga that led to the temporary abandonment of part of the settlement around AD 600 (Mac Kay 2007). According to Mauricio (2011), the stratigraphic record shows clear evidence for high precipitation rates that created flood deposits and aeolian sand accumulation. Furthermore, Franco and Paredes (2000) present evidence for similar contemporaneous events in Pachacamac, where they recorded thick muddy layers over EIP occupational floors. We have interpreted the architectural modifications that occurred on top of these muddy layers as a shift in cultural tradition and propose that these “heavy rains” marked the transition between the EIP Lima occupation and the posterior Wari associated evidence.

Additional evidence for a wetter than usual period between the EIP and the MH has been recorded in several other archaeological sites along the North Coast, such as Alto Piura, Pampa Grande, and Huacas de Moche (Dillehay and Kolata 2004; Kaulicke 1993; Shimada et al. 1991; Uceda and Canziani 1993), which further supports the hypothesis for an unstable climate between the end of the EIP and the start of the MH. Moreover, paleoenvironmental records from the Quelccaya ice cap, located in the southeastern Peruvian Andes, reveal a particularly wet year in AD 572 followed by a wet period between AD 602 and 635 (Kaulicke 2000; Shimada et al. 1991; Thompson, Mosley-Thompson, and Morales Arnao 1984).

We see the evidence for this atypical environmental event as a temporal marker that divided the activities associated with the abandonment of the settlement from the actual occupation of these buildings. Within the events that preceded the abandonment of the settlement, we recorded the recurrent practice of dismantling architecture, filling previously used areas with the dismantled materials as well as with other elements, and placing deceased individuals on top of this fill (table 8.3). While excavating the compounds placed on the main platform in the SW Area, Ruales revealed the recurrence of this type of fill, with examples ranging in size from 160 cm to 50 cm. These fills were composed of organic material, complete and partial adobes, broken decorated vessels, and a higher than usual amount of decorated ceramic fragments. One of these contexts included the remains of two friezes (one black and white and the other black and pale orange), while two other similar contexts had clay blocks with leaf imprints interpreted as roof remains. These fill contexts were constantly associated with dismantled architecture, particularly

TABLE 8.3. Schematic description of occupations at Cerro de Oro

<i>Period</i>	<i>Description</i>
Late Horizon	Tapial architecture in N sector, reoccupation of MH architecture for funerary purposes
Late Intermediate Period	
Late Middle Horizon	Intrusive architecture and tomb
Early Middle Horizon	Abandonment
Early Middle Horizon Early Intermediate Period	Multi-step closure event: dismantling of walls, fill, intrusive tombs
	Pluvial event
	Offerings in pits
	Internal divisions of space within compounds, Cerro de Oro-style ceramics
	Monumental architecture forming architectural compounds, geometric decorations on ceramics
Late Formative?	Conical adobes

of thick, tall, slipped walls. Stratigraphic analysis shows that the fills were created concurrent with the dismantling and burial of preexisting structures but before the placement of deceased individuals.

The funerary contexts intruding these fill contexts had similar funerary structures, while age, sex, and associations varied in each case. For instance, on the headway of the main perimeter wall of the compound, Ruales recorded five intrusive tombs that ran parallel to this wall. All of these contexts included a rectangular or square adobe funerary structure with variable sizes that ranged from 1 m × 1 m to 70 cm × 50 cm. Inside these structures, individuals were placed in a fetal position with their heads close to their knees and oriented toward the northeast. In one case, the individual had been tied with a thin fiber rope, a diagnostic practice found in the Nasca Valley associated with Middle Horizon tombs (Silverman and Proulx 2002).

Further evidence for the dismantling of architecture, the preparation of a closure fill, and the placement of a funerary context (table 8.4) was recorded by Fernandini in different places within the SE Area, mainly the SE Plain and the SE Ravine (see figure 8.2). In the SE Plain, Fernandini (2013, 2014) recorded a fill composed of approximately 2 m of broken adobe, organic material, textile fragments, and thousands of decorated and undecorated ceramic vessels, all pertaining to the final phase of the *Cerro de Oro occupation* (Fernandini 2015; Rodríguez 2015). Within this fill, two intrusive funerary contexts, CF06 and

TABLE 8.4. Description of the funerary contexts (CF = Contexto Funerario) at Cerro de Oro

CF	Associations	Unit	Individuals	Observations
1	Various textiles, a clay figurine, <i>Spondylus</i> beads, and early Middle Horizon ceramics	22	1	
2	No associations	22	1	
3	Fiber sewing kit, a clay figurine, and a small cotton bag	22 Ext.	0	
4	Gourd with three carved bone figurines and a <i>Spondylus</i> shell inside, a <i>Spondylus</i> bead tied to a thread, a carved figurine, chaquira beads, a small tapestry with red, yellow, and black designs of waves and concentric circles, and a group of plain bags tied to each other	23	2	Tied bags are common at Cerro de Oro and appear to be restricted to the Early Middle Horizon Period. Bags are usually found inside funerary bundles between wrapping textiles.
5	Fiber sewing kit, a fiber bag, and part of a sandal close to the fiber bag	11	1	
6	Gourd, maize cobs sewn onto the funerary bundle	D1	1	Unidentified metal object placed above the skull
7	Maize cobs sewn onto the funerary bundle	D1	1	This funerary bundle was recorded below CF06 and had no adobe structure.

CF07, were placed in the corner of a compound. CF06 was a funerary bundle placed in a structure identical to the ones recorded by PIACO. CF07 was a funerary bundle placed directly underneath CF06 and did not present a structure. X-rays performed on these funerary bundles have revealed that the individuals had modified elongated craniums. Likewise, CF06 revealed an unidentified metal object approximately 10 cm × 10 cm, recorded above the skull.

Moreover, a similar context was recorded in the SE Ravine, yet this closure practice was not intended to prepare a compound for abandonment; rather, it was oriented toward the sealing of a domestic platform where food was processed and disposed of. Similar to the other contexts, this closure practice was located close to structural walls. The fill recorded was 60 cm thick, covering an area of 12 m², and was composed of a series of complete and partial adobes and high quantities of organic materials such as cotton, corn, beans, human hair, and isolated adult and infant bones, including mandibles, crania, femurs, and humeri. Over 3,000 ceramic fragments that included partial remains of at

least six highly decorated vessels and hundreds of textile fragments had been included in this fill. The textiles showed a wide range of techniques, such as tapestry, sewing parts together, double fabric, and embroidery, among others. Intrusive to this context was a partially complete individual with its cranium, both femurs, and one humerus intact. The individual was found associated with several plain ceramic fragments and an embroidered double fabric band. This funerary context had no architecture; while no evidence of modern disturbance was recorded, it is not clear if the human remains were placed while the flesh was present or when only bones were placed as an offering. Very close to this context, part of a leg and paw of a small dog was placed over a textile fragment.

Taking this evidence as a whole, it seems that the dismantling of architecture, the preparation of the fill, and the placement of intrusive funerary contexts alongside walls demonstrate evidence of a methodically planned closure ritual. The ritual practice of preparing these spaces for their abandonment seems to have occurred only once yet was recurrently evidenced in different areas of the settlement. Moreover, based on the particular contexts in which they were recorded, it seems that the scale of these practices also varied from context to context. While complete individuals placed in funerary adobe structures were recorded within compounds, a partially complete individual placed directly into the closure fill was recorded in the domestic area of the SE Ravine. This evidence points to a practice that seems to have varied regarding the place in which it was performed, showing that greater investment in funerary structures and in the size of the fill was made in compounds, while the ritual was reproduced at a smaller scale within the domestic SE Ravine.

This varied set of closure rituals shows that while this type of practice may have varied in size and place, its ritual nature is attested in the recurrence as a social practice that represented the actions of a community. In a way, the presence of this closure ritual in different parts of the settlement can be extrapolated as a settlement-wide process that prepared the settlement and particularly the community for the abandonment of their homes.

POST-ABANDONMENT

After the structures pertaining to the *Cerro de Oro occupation* were abandoned, a series of post-abandoned events was recorded in selected compounds within the Cerro de Oro hill. Post-abandonment events at Cerro de Oro are characterized by the construction of rectangular rooms that intrude into the *Cerro de Oro occupation*. The floors of these rooms were found 2.5–3 m below the surface. While some of the rooms lacked diagnostic material culture, the

act of constructing intrusive rooms seems to have been a recurrent practice evidenced in different parts of the settlement. In the SW Area, PIACO recorded several rooms with offerings, while PACO recorded three in the SE Plain, located in the SE Area of the settlement.

PIACO recorded rooms composed of four walls without any opening for an access way. Most of these rooms had tall walls and were similar in size, approximately 1.80 m × 1.20 m. The walls were mud-slipped and in some cases painted white. While most of the rooms lacked diagnostic material culture, two of them included offerings inside. The first of these rooms was painted white and contained a camelid burial. The camelid was complete, but its cranium had been removed and placed backward and its legs had been switched, placing the anterior legs in the posterior position and vice versa. The second room contained a textile bundle with attached metal plaques, which was placed intruding into the pluvial layer mentioned above. The rest of the rooms were excavated right next to this one, yet the only remains found in the rooms were filled with only soil and partial adobe bricks. While no evidence of funerary remains was found in these rooms, they seem to have been contemporaneous with funerary-related intrusions in the SE Plain.

The rooms excavated by PACO in the SE Plain were located within one compound associated with the *Cerro de Oro occupation*. Three rooms were labeled A, C, and G based on the project's labeling of internal divisions within compounds. The dimensions of these rooms were Room A, 120 cm × 80 cm; Room C, 255 cm × 1.75 cm; and Room G, 100 cm × 130 cm. Similar to the rooms recorded by PIACO, these rooms also intruded into the *Cerro de Oro occupation's* sequence, had mud-slipped walls, and were located approximately 3 m below the surface. Yet unlike the rooms excavated by PIACO, these rooms had entranceways on the northeast wall as well as a series of niches. The entrances for the three rooms were sealed with a layer of adobe constructed in a less polished manner, contrasting with the fine finishing of the rest of the room. The entrance for Room C was directly connected to three steps that descended from the top of the walls (40 cm below the modern surface). This characteristic seems to point to recurrent reentering before its closure. Furthermore, while Rooms C and G were found empty, they record evidence that shows that they were once used as a funerary chamber (Fernandini 2015), while Room A did present a complex funerary context (figure 8.5).

Among the evidence for their use as funerary chambers is the fact that all of these rooms included a series of offerings directly associated with their entrances. The offering associated with Room A was a deceased child

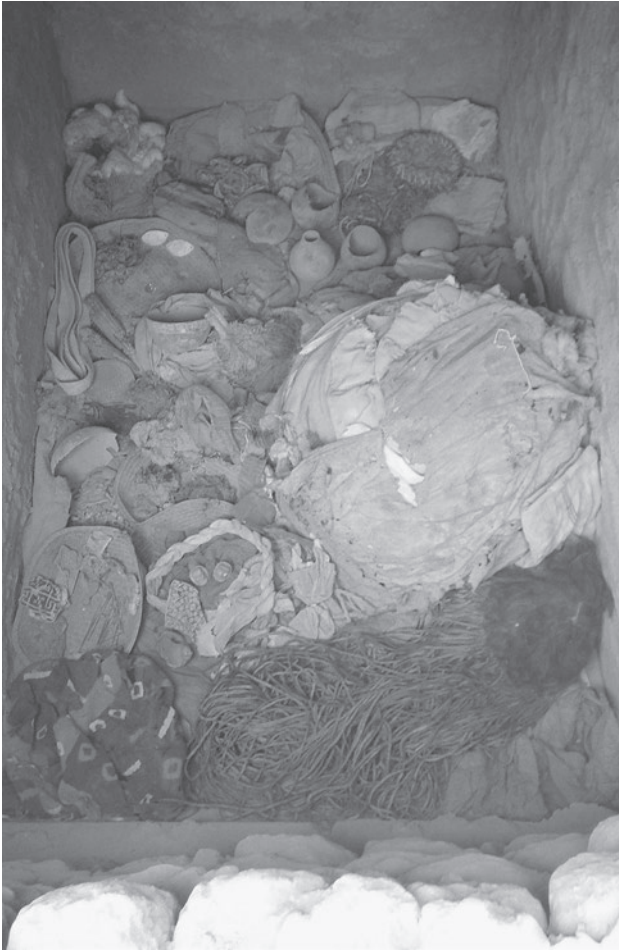


FIGURE 8.5. *Remains inside Room A*

approximately 9–10 years of age (Boza, personal communication, 2013) placed in front of the room's entrance, on top of a *Cerro de Oro* occupational floor that had been broken during construction of the room. The offering for Room C consisted of a spinster's spade, a metal ax, and a knitted bag filled with forty camelid gallstones. Finally, the offering for Room G was a young camelid placed directly on top of the bedrock in front of the entrance. Further evidence for the use of these chambers as funerary structures is found in the presence of small fragments of tapestries similar to those found associated with

the funerary bundle in Room A. It seems that at some point in time these contexts were intruded and their contexts removed, leaving only traces of their remains in Rooms C and G and leaving a false bundle in Room A.

When we performed excavations in Room A, the bundle we recorded only contained soil, yet a reconstruction process performed after analyzing the context in the lab has shown that this bundle originally contained an individual (the imprints of its head and the remains from tissue decomposition are clear in the textiles used to wrap him or her). This individual was wrapped in a bundle with twenty-nine textiles; the final layer was an *unku* (tunic). Moreover, based on the analysis of the associated remains found in the context, we propose that this bundle had a false head, a turban, and a wig. In association with this bundle were over 200 objects, most of them placed in reed baskets.

The most noteworthy funerary associations were (figure 8.6):

- A four-point hat made using knotted technique (figure 8.6a)
- A square hat made using knotted technique (figure 8.6b)
- A braided wig made of human hair (figure 8.6c)
- A pair of wooden ear pieces showing an anthropomorphic figure (figure 8.6d)
- A pair of miniature leather sandals (figure 8.6e)
- A wooden feline figurine (figure 8.6f)
- A tie-dye textile (figure 8.6g)

Based on the materials associated with the funerary context in Room A and the textile fragments from Rooms C and G, we have interpreted these rooms as belonging to the later part of the Middle Horizon, or MH₂, and the objects particularly associated with Wari society. While only contexts in the SE Plain present clear diagnostic material culture, the similarity in construction techniques and their stratigraphic location with contexts in the SW Area signal all of these contexts as pertaining to this period.

Moreover, evidence for intrusive funerary contexts has also been recorded in the nearby Huaca Malena (Ángeles Falcón and Pozzi-Escot 2000), as well as several examples from the Central Coast (Flores Espinoza 2005, 2013). All of these burials also intruded into abandoned settlements and present Wari-affiliated elements. Thus, the recurrence of these contexts points to the repetitive practice of intruding previous settlements to place their deceased. The common denominator within this recurrent practice is that all of these intrusive burials present Wari elements—some exclusively (as was the case at Cerro

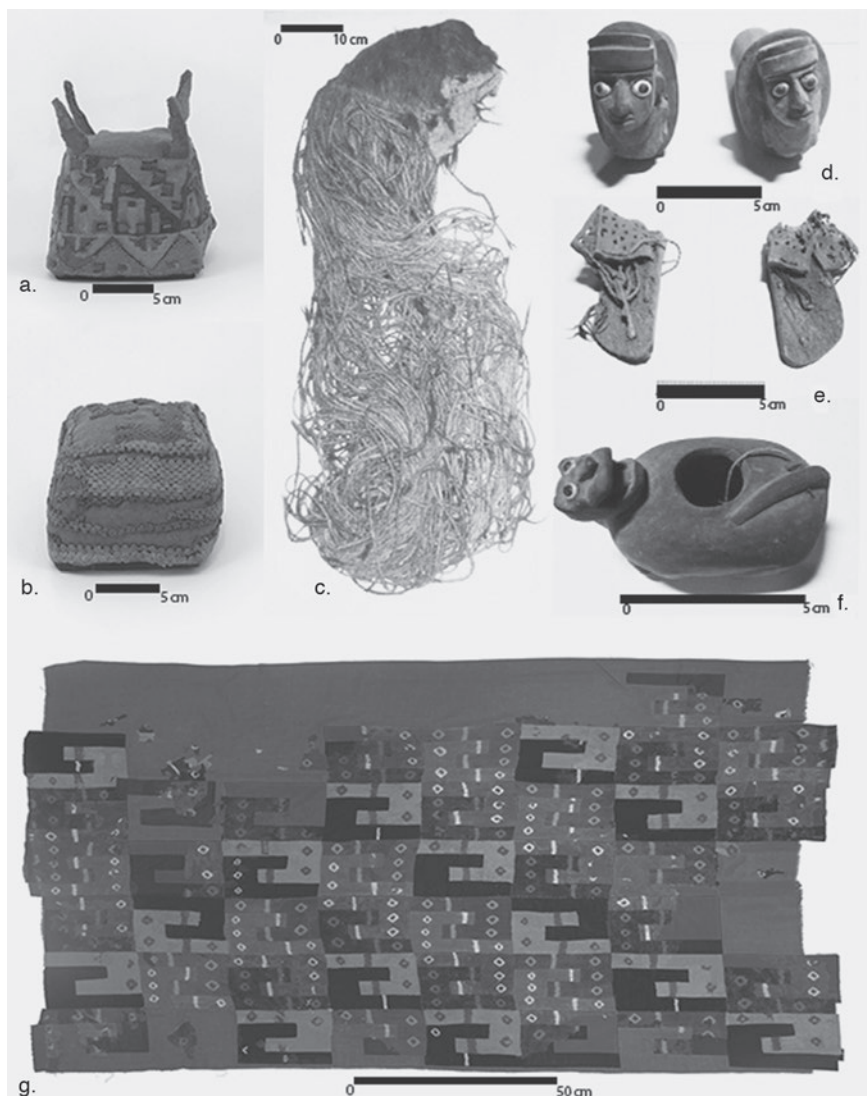


FIGURE 8.6. *Composition of funerary associations found inside Room A at Cerro de Oro*

de Oro) and others within a wider range of foreign and local objects (as is the case at Huaca Malena [Ángeles Falcón and Pozzi-Escot 2000]).

Given that residential settlements for this period do not show evidence of Wari presence, we propose that this practice of using abandoned settlements

to inter the dead with foreign emblematic objects can be considered a local attempt to reappropriate abandoned yet once-important settlements. Thus, this repetitive practice would be revealing a local reformulation of the social landscape. In this context the ritualistic nature of these practices can be seen in their recurrence throughout the area, showing that certain ritual dispositions can be shared and reproduced within larger contexts. In this sense, as this practice is reproduced in different areas of the South-Central and Central Coast, the dispositions of a regional shared ritual practice seem to have been reformulated within particular historical trajectories.

DISCUSSION

This study has focused on describing and analyzing a different set of practices with the objective of showing the permeable boundaries between the mundane and the eventful. While moving away from the dualistic perspective that segregates ritual from daily activities, we have presented a series of examples in which the nature of ritual is centered in the way social dispositions and meanings are embedded within repetitive practices.

In this way we have shown how the recurrent disposal of elements in a selective way can be considered a ritual practice in which individuals are socialized into a practice particularly linked to the consumption and disposal of food. Moreover, this simple yet meaningful practice of disposing has been recorded in different scales, from disposing the refuse of small-scale meals to discarding the remains from repetitive communal gatherings. However, the contexts show that regardless of the size, the rituality of the practice is evidenced in its repetitive nature as a disposition that becomes embedded in the way people do things throughout time, thus ritualizing everyday social action.

Moreover, evidence associated with closure practices shows that this was a ritual process, which seems to have been performed as a way to prepare the settlement for its abandonment. While this practice seems to have selected only particular spaces for sealing and invested more in compounds than in domestic platforms, the practice in itself seems to have involved the community in a consistent process of abandonment. This process prepared both the settlement and the community for abandonment. In this sense the ritualistic nature of this practice is evidenced in the way these repetitive actions instilled a particular reality into the population, integrating them in the process of reproducing the closing of a life cycle.

Finally, the final set of ritual practices focuses on the intrusive placement of burials dressed with foreign objects in the abandoned settlement Cerro

de Oro. These burials were placed with a clear notion of where previous rooms within the compound were located, establishing a possible connection between the present action and the building's past. Moreover, this practice has also been recorded in other settlements on the South-Central and Central Coasts, reflecting that it was a seemingly shared practice. We propose that this recurrent practice reflects the ritual appropriation of abandoned settlements by local populations. Following this line, this recurrent ritual can be seen as an example for the large-scale reproduction of social dispositions through the enactment of a shared practice.

In sum, evidence from Cerro de Oro has been used to present a multi-scalar approach that understands ritual practices through the repetitive actions that produce and reproduce social practices within a community. This view explores the ways rituals socialize people into particular dispositions. These dispositions can range from a community's reproduction of meanings established by the link between people, food and disposal practices, involved in the abandonment of their homes, to the shared practice of reappropriating abandoned settlements.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to explore the wide spectrum of ritual practices that took place in the settlement Cerro de Oro. This multi-scalar analysis has shown that the nature of ritual does not lie in the scale of the practice or in the role of its actors; rather, it can be found in the way its occurrence and recurrence instills a series of social meanings among the people who participate in the rituals. In this sense, analyzing rituals through their practice allows us to grasp often elusive meanings regarding a society's social orderings and actions.

In this way the analysis of ritual practices at Cerro de Oro has allowed us to introduce ourselves into the social context of the settlement, where we can follow the ways people produced and reproduced their own social dispositions through their participation. Thus, an exploration of the way people related to food and its disposal, how they internalized their own process of abandonment or the shared processes that occurred after abandonment can lead to an understanding of how people were involved in these practices. Thus, a focus on the ritualized actions people do every day and their involvement in grand ritual ceremonies allows us to enter the realm of the archaeologically intangible.

NOTES

1. Cerro de Oro is used to refer to the site, while *Cerro de Oro* is used to refer to the Middle Horizon occupation.
2. One colador had remains of *Erythrina edulis* (*mompas* bean). The tree that grows these beans is typical of the tropical Andes located over 1,000 km north of Cerro de Oro.

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