Ancient Households on the North Coast of Peru

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After the Moche collapse, household life went on in the coastal valleys of northern Peru, in many ways unchanged from previous centuries. In the subsequent Middle Horizon and Late Intermediate Periods (LIP), the household continued to be a focus for agricultural and craft production, social reproduction, and ritual. Household life was intensely local, based on the rhythms of irrigation agriculture, and households were linked in wider networks of kin and community.

However, households on the North Coast were confronted with new sociopolitical configurations at the valley and regional levels during the Late Intermediate Period. Coastal political strategies in the middle valley, and an end to the political fragmentation of the Late Moche Period, created new economic and political opportunities for households. The coalescence and expansion of the Chimú Empire reshaped the political landscape and imposed new economic demands on rural and urban households. Household strategies in conquered territories changed to meet these new demands while at the same time conserving key elements of household organization and daily life. In this chapter I examine the strategies of Late Intermediate Period households based on two examples from my own research in the Jequetepeque Valley. I argue that these households exhibited considerable resilience but that this resilience could manifest itself as adaptation and change or as continuity in household organization and practice.
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN NORTH COAST HOUSEHOLDS

Theorizing Household Resilience

Households, especially lower-class rural households, have often been cast as essentially conservative and resistant to change. Marshall Sahlins (1972), for example, argues that peasant households resist intensifying production beyond subsistence levels. In this view, traditional households were oriented toward internal consumption and were essentially self-sufficient, inward-looking units. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) identifies the household as a site of enculturation through embodied practice, and Ian Hodder and Craig Cessford (2004) have employed practice theory to suggest that repetition of daily tasks in household spaces at Çatalhöyük helped to reinforce cultural norms and maintain long-term continuity. Patricia Crown (2000) has argued that cuisine, a central component of daily household life, is deeply conservative, as it draws on deeply held notions of identity, family, and memory.

However, households do change, and it is too simplistic to think of them as merely a tradition-bound, timeless substrate upon which more complex social configurations are constructed. Households adapt to larger political, cultural, and environmental contexts (Hirth 1993; Wilk 1991). This adaptation may maintain continuity, minimize risk, diversify patterns of production, or reshape family organization, participation in community institutions, cuisine, or other dimensions of household practice. As households respond to changing regional conditions, some aspects of domestic life may be more dynamic or more subject to change while others resist change (Bermann 1994, 1997; Falconer 1995; Wilk 1991). For instance, Marc P. Bermann (1994, 238) argues that as the community of Lukurmata experienced the expansion of the regional Tiwanaku polity, household architecture changed the most through time, signaling changes in the allocation of space to different activities. In contrast, artifact assemblages and, by extension, the set of tasks performed in households were relatively stable through time. Households pursue different strategies based on factors such as available resources, size and membership, status and class, and location, so all households should not be expected to respond to change in the same way.

In thinking about continuity and change in Late Intermediate Period households, I take what Richard R. Wilk (1991, 9) has referred to as a “historically sensitive cultural-ecological approach.” In other words, I investigate how households adapted to local economic, political, and ecological conditions, constraints, and possibilities. In this chapter I consider two case studies of household continuity and change in the Jequetepeque Valley to explore some dimensions of household response to the sweeping regional changes of the Late Intermediate Period North Coast.
Post-Moche Continuities

During the Early Intermediate Period and into the Middle Horizon, the north coast of Peru was united by a broadly shared Moche culture. Reconstructions of Moche political organization vary: researchers have seen the Moche as a pristine state (e.g., Billman 2002; Moseley 1992), as three distinct politically opportunistic spheres (Castillo Butters 2010), or as a loose confederation bound by a shared religion or political ideology (Bawden 1995; Quilter and Koons 2012), among other models. Jeffrey Quilter’s (Quilter and Castillo Butters 2010; Quilter and Koons 2012) syntheses of recent data in the context of models for Moche political organization emphasize political fragmentation and spatial and temporal diversity in the expression of Moche politics and religion and likely in what it meant to be Moche.

After the Moche collapse, the North Coast saw the rise and fall of several complex societies. To the north, the Middle Sicán polity coalesced at Batán Grande, then collapsed dramatically several centuries later; valley wide power was transferred to Túcume and other centers during the Late Sicán Period (Shimada 1981; Tschauner 2001). The Casma Polity emerged around the same time to the south, maintaining political control as far as the Chao Valley to the north (Vogel 2012). During this time, the Zaña, Jequetepeque, and perhaps Chicama Valleys were locally autonomous but participated in a shared Lambayeque tradition (Mackey 2011). To the south, the Chimú State emerged in the Moche Valley around AD 900 and then expanded beginning around AD 1300 to conquer the Lambayeque in the Jequetepeque, the Casma Polity to the south, and eventually the Late Sicán in the Lambayeque-La Leche Valleys to the far north.

Despite clear evidence of political and ideological changes at the regional level, many aspects of daily life remained stable throughout this period. Ilana Johnson (2010) argues that the basic worldview and organization of the Moche household did not change much through time. Domestic architecture consisted of multiroom complexes constructed of locally abundant materials that housed several families. Quotidian domestic activities such as eating, sleeping, child rearing, household rituals, and basic production tasks such as processing food and spinning and weaving cloth took place in kitchens and living rooms. Johnson (2010) also identifies a fundamental distinction between rural households and households in urban neighborhoods, which she argues gave up autonomy upon integration into socially and economically heterogeneous urban environments.

Post-Moche North Coast households could easily be described in these same broad terms, even while recognizing diversity at valley and community levels. At rural villages such as Pedregal in the Jequetepeque Valley and urban centers like Pacatnamú and Chan Chan, Late Intermediate Period households were characterized by rectangular, agglomerated domestic architecture and carried out a set of
basic reproductive and productive activities similar to those described for Moche households (Cutright 2009, 2015; Gumerman 1991; Topic 1982). Urban domestic compounds, such as those documented by John R. Topic (1982) in the lower-class neighborhoods of Chan Chan, were generally larger; households there engaged in a wider variety of craft production activities but were less self-sufficient in terms of food than rural farming households.

Moche, Lambayeque, and Chimú societies coped with similar environmental risks within the framework of broadly analogous agricultural regimes and available resources. Rivers on the western slopes of the Andes run out of the foothills and across a narrow coastal plain before emptying into the Pacific. Lower valley residents relied on irrigation from the river to water the coastal desert and grew corn, beans, cotton, squash, and tree fruits. This system faced periodic risks of flooding during El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events, which could be strong enough to wash out canals and seriously disrupt agricultural production. Farmers also faced risk from less predictable events such as multidecadal droughts, which occurred several times during the period in question (Shimada et al. 1991; Thompson et al. 1994). In addition to farming, coastal communities also relied on marine resources like fish and shellfish throughout these periods.

At other key moments of social transition in the Andes, such as the emergence of irrigation agriculture or the Spanish conquest, newly available products and technologies shifted the subsistence system, and local household economies saw clear changes (e.g., Kennedy and Van Valkenburgh 2016). In contrast, the transition from Moche to Chimú may seem unlikely to have been accompanied by much change at the local level, and in fact the broad outlines do demonstrate a good deal of continuity. However, regional political processes such as the Moche collapse and Chimú imperial expansion did spur changes at the household level.

Post-Moche Changes

Between AD 650 and 900, the Jequetepeque Valley rural landscape was politically and religiously fragmented and agriculturally decentralized (Dillehay 2001; Dillehay and Kolata 2004; Duke, this volume; Swenson 2007a). The Late Moche Period settlement pattern consisted of a few large urban communities and scattered clusters of villages in the rural hinterlands. Sites like Huaca Colorada (Swenson and Warner 2016) were cyclically abandoned and then resettled and renewed. A profusion of Late Moche fortified hilltop settlements suggests a concern with defense, perhaps linked to increased factionalism or competition. Tom D. Dillehay (2001) and his team registered evidence of localized ENSO-related flooding across the Jequetepeque during the Late Moche Period; flood deposits were often followed
by at least temporary site abandonment. Overall, this pattern indicates a preference for localized administration, political factionalism, and strategies for dealing with environmental risk that emphasized mobility and population dispersal (Dillehay 2001; Duke, this volume).

Elite burials at San José de Moro show that foreign influence intensified as the Moche collapsed (Castillo Butters 2010). Fineware ceramics from Cajamarca, Chachapoyas, and the Central Coast appear at Late Moche sites such as San José de Moro (Castillo Butters 2010) and Huaca Colorada (Swenson and Warner 2016). A highland enclave was constructed atop Cerro Chepén (Rosas Rintel 2007), and extralocal genes made a significant contribution to local populations (Zobler and Sutter 2016). All these lines of evidence suggest that the end of the Moche Period in the Jequetepeque was marked by social, political, and environmental turmoil that resulted in new political configurations and strategies. While in some communities, such as Talambo (Zobler, this volume; Zobler and Sutter 2016), post-Moche life may have continued relatively unaffected by collapse, the new political situation in the valley likely affected daily life in many local communities.

In contrast to Moche strategies, Late Intermediate Period Lambayeque and Chimú polities adopted a strategy of centralized investment in irrigation infrastructure (Dillehay and Kolata 2004), which created new potential for intensive agricultural production and new interest in monitoring and controlling key points of the irrigation network (Keatinge and Conrad 1983). This kind of strategy might be expected to decrease the autonomy of households and communities, which would now be more tightly integrated into broader networks. The population moved away from hilltop settlements and from locations most likely to be damaged by floods or dune encroachment. At the same time, rural hinterland political and ritual practice remained heterogeneous despite evidence for more political centralization (Swenson 2007b). This could indicate that local autonomy counterbalanced increasing political centralization or that Chimú elites were not concerned with controlling religious expression in the countryside as long as they could monitor agricultural production.

From a household perspective, some aspects of Late Intermediate Period domestic practice represented a clear break from Moche antecedents. Utilitarian ceramics changed notably from the Moche to Late Intermediate Periods in functional as well as stylistic terms. Several forms such as the high face-neck jars of the Moche disappeared, and other forms such as ceramic bowls and plates appeared and became common in household assemblages (Cutright 2009; Swenson 2004). Interestingly, a similarly clear break in household ceramics did not occur after Chimú conquest. In fact, new techniques like paddle-stamping that appeared during the Lambayeque Period continued through the Chimú, Inka, and Colonial Periods and even into
contemporary ceramic production. If domestic ceramic assemblages reflect the culinary needs of households, then cuisine changed after the Moche collapse but remained fairly unchanged in Lambayeque, Chimú, and Inka households. This observation is consistent with a scenario in which Moche collapse was accompanied by a dramatic cultural upheaval, while Late Intermediate Period and even Late Horizon conquests were experienced as political and economic shifts but not necessarily cultural disruptions at the household level.

Another axis of household practice that shows a clear break between the Moche and Late Intermediate Periods is ritual, visible in the form of figurines generally representing female forms. These objects are often found in Moche households (Johnson, this volume; Ringberg 2008), suggesting that ritual linked to the home and to women’s roles in the home was a common component of Moche life. While domestic rituals also pervaded Late Intermediate Period households (Cutright 2013a), they no longer regularly featured figurines. This change in the gendered content of domestic rituals along with the culinary change discussed above hint that the lived experience of household members changed in profound ways after Moche collapse, despite broad continuities in the basic worldview and organization of North Coast households.

To further elucidate how households, especially rural households and those located far from political centers, responded to the shifting political landscape of the Late Intermediate Period, I will examine two communities in the Jequetepeque Valley: Pedregal and Ventanillas. At Ventanillas, middle valley elites took advantage of broader Lambayeque coastal affiliation as well as local political opportunities, while at Pedregal rural farmers endured increased demands of Chimú administrators for agricultural production while maintaining considerable continuity in household practice.

CASE 1: LOCAL ELITE STRATEGIES IN THE MIDDLE JEQUETEPEQUE VALLEY

The Jequetepeque River flows from the western edge of the Cajamarca Basin down to the Pacific, carving through the western slopes of the Andes until it passes the valley neck at Talambo, flows onto the wide coastal plain, and reaches the Pacific Ocean (figure 8.1). The lower valley had been intensively occupied since the inception of irrigation agriculture, by successive Formative, Moche, Lambayeque, and Chimú societies, and was eventually incorporated into the expanding Inka Empire around AD 1470 (Castillo Butters 2010; Dillehay et al. 2009; Hecker and Hecker 1990; Swenson 2004; Warner 2010). During the early part of the Late Intermediate Period (~AD 1000–1300), the Lambayeque polity occupied the lower Jequetepeque. Pacatnamú
was the primary Lambayeque ceremonial and administrative center (Donnan and Cock 1997). It sat at the apex of a complex settlement system that included smaller centers such as Farfán (Mackey 2006, 2009) and Ventanillas (Cutright and Cervantes Quequezana 2012, 2014), elite residences at Cabur (Sapp 2011) and San José de Moro (Prieto Burmester 2010), and smaller rural villages (Cutright 2009, 2015).

Despite some broad similarities to Lambayeque/Sicán architecture to the north, such as large adobe platforms (huacas), ramps, and rectangular compounds, Lambayeque architectural and stylistic patterns at Jequetepeque sites such as Pacatnamú, Farfán, and Cabur followed a locally distinct template (Sapp 2011). Huaca quadrangles at Pacatnamú contained a large platform mound with a central ramp, accessed from a walled plaza with flanking platforms and corridors. A large rectangular enclosure that was divided into U-shaped rooms with niches, storerooms, patios, and winding, baffled corridors was located behind the huaca (Donnan 1986). Other characteristic Lambayeque architectural features include altars with ramps and low U-shaped benches known as concilios (Mackey 2011). Lambayeque burials at Farfán (Cutright 2011) were similar to contemporaneous burials at El Brujo, in the Chicama Valley to the south (Franco Jordán et al. 2007). This evidence suggests that the Jequetepeque was locally autonomous but participated in a broadly shared coastal cultural tradition during this period.

The extent to which coastal polities’ influence extended past the valley neck into the middle valley is not yet well understood. Ongoing research (Cutright 2013b; Tsai 2012) indicates a Lambayeque presence in the middle Jequetepeque Valley beginning around AD 1000. Lambayeque occupation in the middle valley contrasts with a relative lack of prior Moche settlement in the region and suggests that the Lambayeque had a different set of strategic priorities or established new alliances.

Figure 8.1. The Jequetepeque Valley
with middle valley populations. One of the most visible manifestations of this interest is the site of Ventanillas, which overlooks the intakes of canals running into the lower valley and marks the confluence of two important routes from the coast to the highlands (figure 8.1). Ventanillas was a large community. It included an extensive public sector, composed of a large rectangular compound containing three adobe platform mounds, and two distinct residential sectors (figure 8.2). Stylistic comparisons with regional architectural and ceramic chronologies and radiocarbon dates from the Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica Ventanillas (Cutright and Cervantes Quezaza 2012, 2014; Cutright and Osores Mendives 2016; figure 8.3) suggest it was occupied between about AD 1100 to 1400, the period leading up to and spanning Chimú conquest of the Jequetepeque. While the dates (figure 8.3) cluster in two groups, the first between cal AD 1200 and 1300 and the second between cal AD 1300 and 1400, the stratigraphy shows no clear break in occupation, and the comparisons made here are synchronic across the site.

The monumental architecture at Ventanillas clearly references Lambayeque canons, featuring large adobe huacas with ramps, rectangular compounds, and narrow corridors. The two better-preserved platform mounds, Huaca 1 and Huaca 2, were constructed from adobes that fit general Lambayeque size and shape parameters (McClelland 1986). Huaca 3 has been impacted by a modern cemetery, looting, and

**Figure 8.2.** The site of Ventanillas
trash disposal and is harder to reconstruct but seems to face east upvalley rather than west toward to coast like the other platforms. Despite intensive looting, a honeycomb pattern suggestive of chamber-and-fill construction can still be observed at the summits of all three platform mounds. The top of Huaca 1 was accessed by a ramp that wrapped around the west and north sides. Huaca 2 had a more complex configuration—a short T-shaped ramp provided access from the middle of the western face onto a lower tier that was partially enclosed on the north and south sides. A higher tier ran across the eastern half of the platform and was faced with stone cobbles toward the slope of Cerro Ventanillas. Though a large open area now extends west from Huaca 1, this feature was created in the 1960s or 1970s when the area was bulldozed to create a soccer field. Both huacas are more similar to Late
Sicán platforms at Chotuna, in Lambayeque, than to contemporaneous architecture such as the huaca-quadrangle pattern in the Jequetepeque (figure 8.4). Parallels with northern architecture raise the possibility that Ventanillas was an administrative outpost imposed by an expanding Lambayeque or Late Sicán State. Evidence from three seasons of fieldwork, however, is beginning to suggest a more complex picture in which local political dynamics were central to Ventanillas’s development. Neighborhoods do not seem to have been organized by ethnic group, as might be expected if Ventanillas was an intrusive coastal administrative center, and higher status does not seem to be spatially associated with either coastal or highland styles as in a scenario of colonization and control. Instead, vessels associated with the middle valley, such as Coastal Cajamarca bowls, made up almost identical proportions of surface collections from domestic areas at the foot of the huacas (Sector D) and from the residential terraces on the north side of Cerro Ventanillas (Sector C) (Cutright and Cervantes Quequezana 2012). Carinated ollas, a utilitarian form associated with the coast, were likewise evenly distributed across both residential sectors. In other words, surface collections hint that Ventanillas residents across the site were drawing on coastal, middle valley, and possibly highland
tradições as they prepared and served daily meals. Given the lack of chronological control over surface collections, however, this evidence could also suggest that Ventanilla’s cultural or political affiliation changed through time, from coastal to middle valley or vice versa.

To begin to test these distinct scenarios, in 2013 we placed ten 2 m × 2 m excavation units in Sector D, five in each of two compounds (CA-2 and CA-3, figure 8.5). Although they are located directly behind Huaca 1, these compounds lack characteristic features of the huaca quadrangles of Pacatnamú. Access is not restricted to a single entryway, no U-shaped rooms with niches or storage complexes seem to be present, and excavations revealed artifacts and features associated with domestic activities. The compounds were well constructed from plastered stone and adobe walls, and excavations encountered a higher concentration of metal fragments and objects such as tweezers, needles, and spindle whorls than in contemporaneous rural villages (Cutright 2009; Cutright and Osores Mendives 2018), lending an impression that wealthy or high-status families engaged in textile or copper production resided here. Each compound contained a maze of agglutinated rooms and open areas, and each featured a similar architectural configuration: an open patio next to a low adobe mound and a narrow flanking room (figure 8.5). This configuration recalls in a basic sense the platform-plaza pattern at Pacatnamú, described above, but lacks other characteristic features like niches and altars with ramps.
Over 1,300 diagnostic sherds were recovered from these excavations, reflecting a domestic assemblage concerned with wet cooking in ollas, serving and consuming food in bowls, and preparing, storing, and consuming liquids. High concentrations of grater bowls, jars, and large storage/chicha-preparation vessels recovered from two excavation units placed next to the patio in Compound 2 suggest that this area was a focus for food preparation and consumption during the Chimú Period and probably the earlier Lambayeque occupation as well. It may be the case that feasts or other celebrations were hosted in these patio-mound areas and that this activity took place in each of the compounds. Since these spaces were replicated in multiple household compounds, feasting and hosting could have been an arena for competition among extended family household groups.

Excavations revealed that coastal and middle valley/highland ceramic styles and food resources were not spatially or temporally separated either within household compounds or between the two compounds tested in 2013 and the Sector C terrace contexts excavated in 2016. Families across the site had access to coastal seafood as well as abundant middle valley resources such as land snails, tree fruits such as avocado and guanábana, and, of course, maize. Slight but significant differences existed between the two Sector D compounds in their use of coastal as opposed to middle valley resources, indicating perhaps that each family mobilized extended kinship ties differently to obtain exchange items. Table 8.1 compares the botanical and shellfish assemblages from the two compounds; CA-2 relied more heavily on local snails (Scutalus proteus) and the tree fruits that remain abundant in the middle valley today, while CA-3 apparently had greater access to marine species and maize.

Currently, I interpret the compounds in Sector D as local middle valley elite households drawing on coastal and highland ceramic, culinary, and architectural traditions to create a borderlands hybrid while taking advantage of a visible affiliation with powerful coastal polities. Ventanillas’s huacas are visually arresting to a traveler approaching from the coast or the highlands and command a clear view toward the lower valley. The fact that Huacas 1 and 2 more closely replicate architecture from Chotuna rather than nearby Pacatnamú is intriguing if it represents a local effort to draw on wider traditions and hints at considerable diversity in stylistic influence or social affiliation during this period. Excavations in the public architecture at the foot of Huaca 2 in 2016 did not uncover any classic examples of Chimú administrative architecture or of southern Lambayeque features like altars with ramps or concilios. However, they revealed multiple episodes of remodeling and renewal of walls, small mounds, and internal spaces, suggesting a continual concern with reshaping public space throughout the Late Intermediate Period.

Members of the higher-status households at Ventanillas would have participated in larger political and religious events carried out in the public sector, perhaps
Table 8.1. Botanical and shellfish remains at Ventanillas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>CA-2 %</th>
<th>CA-3 %</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botanical (percentage of total plant parts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>Zea mays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maize</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>13.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree/shrub fruits</td>
<td>Annona sp.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guanábana</td>
<td>76.55</td>
<td>56.74</td>
<td>71.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persea americana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avocado</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>2.85</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lucuma obovata</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lucuma</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.68</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inga feuillei</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>huaba</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psidium guajava</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guava</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bunchios armenaica</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ciruela del fraile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Capparis ovalifolia</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guayabito de gentil</td>
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<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capparis angulata</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zapote</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.43</td>
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<td>Other cultigens</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.46</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Gossypium barbadense</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cotton</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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continued on next page
reaffirming their coastal affiliation or carrying out Lambayeque policy in the middle valley. At the same time, elites also facilitated local dynamics of celebration and competition by hosting feasts around family platforms. The emergence of a complex Lambayeque polity in lower Jequetepeque, its participation in wider exchanges of styles and ideas, and its interest in expanding beyond the valley neck may have offered new political possibilities for middle valley elites. Ventanillas residents responded by drawing on broad Lambayeque public architecture traditions, perhaps to emphasize a coastal political affiliation, but also by integrating coastal and highland products, styles, and technologies into a hybrid middle valley lifestyle that continued even after Chimú conquest of the lower valley.

**CASE 2: RURAL STRATEGIES IN A LANDSCAPE OF CONTROL**

Chimú conquest of the Jequetepeque around AD 1320 (Mackey 2011) imposed a new set of concerns on local households. Recent research summarized elsewhere (Cutright 2015) has called into question how much centralized control over local

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**Table 8.1—continued**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>CA-2 %</th>
<th>CA-3 %</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
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<tr>
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<td>cane</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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<td>wood</td>
<td>0.05</td>
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<td></td>
<td>unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total plant parts</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,034</td>
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<table>
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<th>Species</th>
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<th>CA-3 %</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
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<td><em>Scutalus proteus</em></td>
<td>70.21</td>
<td>54.44</td>
<td>62.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Coast</td>
<td><em>Donax obesus</em></td>
<td>23.04</td>
<td>33.75</td>
<td>28.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Platyxanthus sp.</em></td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Prisogaster niger</em></td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Polinices uber</em></td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other/unknown species</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MNI</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>1,896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
populations the Chimú State really exerted. The Chimú made highly visible political statements in the valleys they conquered by altering settlement patterns and establishing provincial administrative centers. Aside from intensifying agricultural production, however, they exerted little economic control over lower-class populations.

Evidence from the rural agricultural village of Pedregal (see figure 8.1), where I conducted excavations in 2006, has revealed that focus on agricultural staples such as maize and cotton increased through time during the Chimú occupation (Cutright 2009, 2015). One of the inferred motivations for Chimú expansion to the north was the potential for agricultural production in these wide, well-irrigated valleys (Kolata 1990), so increased agricultural output at Pedregal could have been directed to state coffers or to fund state activities at the nearby provincial center of Farfán. As I have argued elsewhere (Cutright 2009, 2015; table 8.2), Pedregal households were incorporated into the extractive economy of the expansive Chimú Empire and responded by intensifying production of bulk staples.

At the same time that maize and cotton production and processing within households increased, emphasis on wild foods (nonagricultural plants, shellfish, and fish) decreased compared to domesticated resources (Cutright 2009, 2010). This could indicate a tradeoff in household labor or a shift in culinary preferences during the Chimú occupation. The overall range of foods consumed and activities carried out in Pedregal households did not constrict over time (Cutright 2009). While floor plans were changed and domestic spaces remodeled through time, there is no evidence that household size or makeup changed (Cutright 2009). Household and community ritual operated in similar ways throughout Pedregal’s occupation (Cutright 2013a). Thus in this case, households did not lose self-sufficiency or autonomy even as they were incorporated into wider imperial systems. Intensification of production occurred without a radical reorganization at the household level.

This situation contrasts to what happened at Pedregal after Inka conquest around AD 1470. The Inka pursued conciliatory political strategies with local
Lambayeque lords at nearby Farfán (Mackey 2011) but placed an intervalley road through Pedregal (figure 8.6). The road cut through one of Pedregal’s low platform mounds and bisected a residential compound. If the compound was still occupied, its use would have been dramatically reshaped by the construction of the road. Unfortunately, because of general continuities in household ceramics, it was not possible to identify the locus of Inka Period occupation, but Inka Period ceramics, including a fragment of a classic Chimú-Inka aryballoid vessel, were present in small quantities from later occupational strata across the site (Cutright 2009). Assuming that the site was still occupied, the impact of the road on this community must have been dramatic. Even as local lords enjoyed a resurgence of power under Inka rule at Farfán, as Carol J. Mackey (2011) has argued, at least some local communities were altered by Inka conquest, and previous strategies for preserving household traditions or community autonomy may have proved ineffective. The example of Pedregal, in context of the broader Chimú Period Jequetepeque, shows that local experiences of and responses to conquest were highly variable even during the same time period in the same valley and depended on location, resources, and status.

**Figure 8.6.** Inka road cross-cutting public and domestic architecture at Pedregal
TIMELESS HOUSEHOLDS, SHIFTING TERRAIN?

In this chapter, I have presented two examples of Late Intermediate Period households dealing with the broader regional process of state expansion into new territories. One commonly held view when considering the relationship between households and the state is that households, especially those in rural hinterlands or political peripheries, were simply isolated from bigger political shifts. According to this view, conservative, inward-looking households would not necessarily alter economic or political strategies in a changing regional context unless such changes were forced on them.

However, my research at Ventanillas and Pedregal does not bear this view out. At Ventanillas, elite middle valley households strategically allied themselves and their community with a powerful coastal state and emphasized their new coastal affiliation with large-scale monumental architecture that is strikingly unique in the middle valley. They also invested in local dynamics such as textile production and kin-based competition, including feasting in household patio-mound areas. This kind of active alignment with new systems may have been more accessible to elites than to commoners, who may have been better situated to diversify economic or political strategies or who might have found themselves in the role of local intermediaries through which state control was articulated (Elson and Covey 2006; Hirth 1993). Additional work to identify the strategies of lower-class residents of Ventanillas may help confirm whether new opportunities were available only to relatively high-status or wealthy households.

Pedregal was so close to Farfán and the field systems stretching between Pacatnamú and Farfán that it would have been the first to be impacted by state policies to extract surplus and reorganize local communities. Yet at Pedregal, farming households adapted to new tribute demands while changing few other aspects of their organization. The example of Pedregal raises the possibility that the continuity we can observe from Moche to Late Intermediate Period households was in some cases the result of active or conscious strategies on the part of households and communities rather than representing a sort of “default setting” for North Coast households.

These two cases call into question a conservative, homogeneous view of Late Intermediate Period households. I argue that ancient households were not simply a passive substrate on which regional polities were constructed, a timeless “lo doméstico” that can be identified across the Andes throughout the past. Instead, households adapted in diverse, locally significant ways to the shifting political, economic, ideological, and ecological landscapes of particular historical moments. Their strategies varied along lines of socioeconomic status, location in the valley vis-à-vis state centers, and available political and economic opportunities in a given regional political context. These strategies, in turn, shape broader archaeological signatures of settlement, subsistence, and political economy. In other words, as Cynthia Robin (2013) points out, everyday life matters in our reconstruction of the past.
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