The investigation of the material traces of past practices and routines sets archaeology apart from “history” as a discipline, though various schools of historiography are often brought to bear in interpreting these traces (e.g., whether, historical materialism, Annales). Household archaeology in particular excites the imagination in its potential to more holistically reconstruct past historical realities by focusing on how quotidian practices structured diverse social formations. Indeed, household archaeology is often championed as providing one of the few means of interpreting the lifeways of majority, lower-status communities and even the resistive practices of oppressed groups who were excluded from the production of “written” history (see Cutright, Johnson, Zobler, this volume). As Billman intimates in his review in this volume, household archaeology privileges bottom-up perspectives in explanations of social processes and historical change—a method opposed to event-based, teleological, or “big-man” interpretations of history (see also Zobler, this volume). In a sense, household archaeology encapsulates a quintessentially anthropological approach to the writing of history.

Although archaeologies of the everyday arrived late to the Andes and was even temporarily sidelined in the 1990s by the discovery of sensational tombs and temples (see Billman, this volume), the collective chapters in this volume showcase the significant advances that have been made in this subfield of archaeology on the north coast of Peru during the last twenty years. The authors demonstrate how a focus on routine practices, residential architecture, domestic modes of production, and
materialized ideologies of place, family, and community is permitting historically sensitive understandings of the alternate political worlds created by Precolumbian Andean communities. In this concluding chapter, I focus on these political worlds by taking stock of an important revelation that emerged from the chapters—the remarkable diversity in the physical configuration and social organization of household units in the ancient north coast of Peru. In the first four sections of this review, I argue that this diversity forces us to critically assess models of historical change and to rethink coastal political, religious, and economic institutions. The rich empirical data presented by the authors reveal that we should also question taken-for-granted assumptions of house, home, identity, and social difference as well as their relationship to macropolitical forces, whether understood in terms of cities, states, or larger exchange networks. The authors of the volume make an important contribution by scrutinizing the relationship and often blurred boundaries between the quotidian sphere and seemingly higher-level political arenas.

Of course, the notable diversity in constructions of place framing quotidian lifeways often correlated with remarkable variability in social and economic organization. In this chapter, I offer interpretations of this variation and also consider some commonalities in everyday routines in different North Coast polities. As a complement to Billman’s outline of good practices, my review concludes with a short discussion of method. The formulation of viable explanations for why North Coast households differed in spatial and social composition must rely on the creative playing off of different datasets. Ultimately, investigations of this kind will need to contextualize the material corpora of quotidian life as forming part of more encompassing political landscapes.

**BEYOND DUALISMS OF HOME AND STATE: A CRITIQUE OF MATERIALIST AND STRUCTURALIST INTERPRETATIONS OF HOUSEHOLDS**

Anthropologists have long recognized that the configuration of residential space is fundamental to understanding the ingrained cultural values and structures of practice that define a particular society. Pierre Bourdieu’s (1973) famous ethnographic study of the Kabyle house demonstrated that the spatiotemporal framing of daily activities played a critical role in socialization and the reproduction of misrecognized power relations. In contrast, public ritual spectacle, political institutions, and specialized production have often been contrasted with the domestic setting by social scientists who espouse either materialist or structuralist viewpoints. Ritual celebrations in particular are equated with active ideological production, “discursive consciousness” (sensu Giddens 1984), and subject formation while the common household is identified with the taken-for-granted, “practical consciousness”
(habitus), and the a-political (but see Hodder and Pels 2010; Marcus 2007; Swenson 2015; Swenson and Chiguala 2018). However, the contributors to this volume expose the simplicity of this dichotomy and challenge the assumption that the “household” refers to a universal spatial and social phenomenon (see also Hendon 1996; Robin 2002; Robin and Rothschild 2002).

Anthropologists have often implicitly approached the house as having conveyed little conscious meaning (“hyposignificant”) or as having served instead as a totalizing symbol, that is, as “hypersignificant” (see Choay 1986). In the former, the house is interpreted first and foremost as the vehicle that fulfills basic subsistence and social needs and epitomizes routines of the everyday to the extent that it rarely constitutes the subject of religious and philosophical exegesis. The household imbued with hypersignificance likewise emphasizes the physical house and its constituents as crucial for social and economic reproduction but stresses in turn the symbolism and cosmological meanings of the residential space—for instance, as a microcosm *writ small* (Nash 2009, 206; Rapaport 1969). Surely, the physical “house” often serves as a powerful metaphor of ideal bodies, social orders, and cosmic forces (Banning 2011; Blier 1987; Boivin 2000; see Spence Morrow, this volume). Although such viewpoints recognize the ideological representation of the household as a reified thing (“social fact”), homologous correspondences of this kind would fail to account for the highly varied permutations of the house in different North Coast polities or among distinct status groups documented in this volume. Obviously, the two polarized interpretations are simplistic, and the somewhat artificial contrast drawn here serves to remind archaeologists that the specific *significance* of the domestic setting must be understood not according to universalist criteria, whether materialist or symbolic/structuralist, but within culturally particular frameworks of practice (see Swenson and Chiguala 2018).

Nevertheless, materialists tend to deemphasize the household nexus as critical to macroeconomic relations; production and exchange defining certain social formations are more commonly investigated in the context of the market, specialized workshops, or related public forums—the locus of the “political economy” as opposed to the “domestic economy” (which is commonly perceived as largely determined by the former) (Blanton 1994). However, as Chicoine and his coauthors note in their analysis of household organization in the Middle Horizon site of Caylán in the Nepeña Valley, specialized craft production and domestic living were inextricably intertwined in the elaborate compound structures of this center (see also D’Altroy and Hastorf 2001). They note: “It is indeed significant to nuance the traditional view that households typically engage in self-sufficient, low-intensity production while high-intensity production involved full-time specialists working from largely non-residential spaces.” Similar conclusions have been reached by the
investigators of Huacas de Moche (Chapdelaine 2001, 75; 2009; Uceda Castillo and Armas 1998). Intensified forms of food production were also noted by Cutright at the site of Pedregal during the Chimú occupation and by Pacifico at the Late Intermediate Period (LIP) center of El Purgatorio.

Comparable to materialist perspectives, structuralists often relegate the domestic setting to the conceptual realm of the private, female, and cyclical and downplay the political or public aspects of household social organization (Bowser and Patton 2004; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Guengerich 2014; Lyons 2007; Nash 2009). In fact, it is important for archaeologists to realize that a one-to-one correspondence does not always hold between the physical form of the dwelling and the social relations it mediated and materially represented. Fundamental social affiliations are not necessarily confined to the household space and may even have been deliberately misrepresented by the latter (see Chicoine et al., Duke, Pacifico, and Spence Morrow this volume). Spence Morrow, for instance, argues that the ideals of kinship, household, and territory found more explicit ideological expression in the rituals and ceremonial constructions of Moche elites than in the diverse dwelling architecture documented in urban and rural settings. Thus the aesthetics of residential constructions do not unambiguously reflect underlying social ideals, ideologies of private or public, or beliefs concerning home and identity. For instance, Bill Sillar (1996) has argued that cosmological principles of death, fertility, and regeneration symbolically linked the form and use of Inka open sepulchers (chullpas) with colcas, the famous storage constructions built of stone. The former served as repositories and drying houses for mummified ancestors, and the latter functioned as depósitos for potatoes, corn, and other materials. In this instance, an analogy between the “house of the living” and “house of the dead” (whether as homology or inversion) cannot be drawn—and the specific meanings of the chullpas would be lost if compared exclusively with classic household forms (i.e., wherein the house is uncritically accepted as a totalizing symbol, as documented in some other societies; see Blier 1987; Bradley 2005; Hodder 1984).

HOUSEHOLDS AS LYNCHPINS OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE ANCIENT NORTH COAST OF PERU

If places of residence and daily social interaction frame the cyclical routines of life, it would also stand to reason that the search for and interpretation of sociopolitical change must foreground household economies and social organization (see Billman, this volume; Costin and Earle 1989; D’Altroy and Hastorf 2001; Robin 2003, 2013). The real effects of imperial conquest, ecological perturbations, political revolution, social upheavals, religious revitalization movements, or technological innovations
are best gauged through detected shifts in household size, layout, and composition as well as through notable changes to utilitarian artifacts, diet, private ritual, materials of construction, and the placement of residential units within settlement systems (see Billman, Pacifico, Zobler, this volume). Although this approach has yielded fruitful results, it tends to imply that politics and the forces of change are to be found outside the household (see critique in Cutright 2010, 2015). In other words, the domestic realm is rarely viewed as a fulcrum of such transformations beyond serving as instruments to naturalize political and economic norms deriving from outside the residence. As Brenda Bowser and John Q. Patton note (2004, 158), “It is necessary to . . . avoid naturalizing the domestic context as a place of socialization while the real business of politics occurs outside of the home” (see also Billman, this volume; Guengerich 2014). It is often assumed that since the spaces of the everyday (e.g., dwellings, fields, privies, shared common areas) structure the routines and daily rhythms that make existence bearable—where society is unconsciously “reproduced”—these places must have been inevitably more static, conservative, and even amenable to universalizing theories of behavior. To be sure, all humans must eat, sleep, raise children, cooperate, seek leisure, and so forth to survive—and such routines can become either a refuge or a prison.

As implied by the last statement, however, routinized practices and social arrangements can be actively political (and, of course, structuring), and the contributions to this volume reveal that they were far from uniform or constant in different North Coast communities. Zobler’s analysis of household strategies of endurance at the center of Talambo in Jequetepeque shows that the reach of Moche authorities was limited and that the presumed upheavals following the collapse of Moche polities failed to disrupt the lifeways and domestic economies of Talambo residents who refused to participate in Moche and Cajamarca exchange systems. In this regard, the continued production of beads in both the Moche and Transitional households at Talambo is as equally illuminating as the disappearance of Moche religious iconography in understanding sociopolitical developments in Middle Horizon Jequetepeque. Complementing Zobler’s critique, Alfredo González-Ruibal (2014, 28–33) contends that the anthropological understanding of history as “transformation” betrays neoliberal biases, and he argues that the deep temporalities of quotidian routines and things (e.g., millennial traditions of grinding corn with batanes) illustrate the resiliency of fundamental structures of practice. The maintenance of these activities could often have been explicitly political, resisting sublimation to the realm of the doxic and unquestioned as Bourdieu (1977, 1990) would have it (perhaps even materializing a kind of communally guarded “cultural capital” as discussed by Billman in this volume) (see also Joyce 2009, 43–44, 50–51; Swenson 2017; Swenson and Roddick 2018). Therefore, in interpreting the
household data from Talambo, Zobler compellingly argues that “households often resist the cause-and-effect characterizations that are the hallmark of archaeological narratives of collapse and regeneration.” Cutright similarly notes that despite rather abrupt changes in elite architecture and fine ceramics, an array of cooking pots used to prepare feasting foods continued to be made in Jequetepeque well into the Chimú Period at sites such as Pedregal, pointing to important continuities in social and economic organization during the Late Intermediate Period.

**DIVERSITY IN THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL TASKSCAPES AND NORTH COAST POLITICAL REGIMES**

The chapters of the volume thus prove that the domestic realm exhibited formidable diversity on the North Coast in terms of its cultural construction, dependencies on suprahousehold structures of authority, and relationship to the social status and identity of its inhabitants. This diversity should not simply be interpreted as “microcosmic indicators of regional change where the dictates of elite centers were writ small” (Zobler, this volume) but as reflecting potentially contradictory political formations operating both within household units and beyond. Therefore, the chapters raise the important question of how macroreligious and political forces variably altered or were shaped in turn by local taskscapes and domestic economies—which, as mentioned, varied considerably throughout the North Coast during the Moche era and in subsequent periods (on taskscapes, see Ingold 2000; Swenson 2017). The value placed on mobility and the maintenance of temporary, seasonally occupied dwellings in Late Moche Jequetepeque (AD 600–850) (Duke, this volume) contrasts notably with the more sedentary settlement system documented by Christopher B. Donnan and his team at Dos Cabezas and Pacatnamú during the preceding Middle Moche Period (AD 400–600) (Donnan 1997, 12; 2007; McClelland 1997). I have argued that the establishment of the priestess cult at San José de Moro and transformations in gendered constructions of landscape and religious authority might explain the transition to more transhuman residential patterns and shifts in the political production of space (Swenson 2012). However, as argued by Duke, the settlement change may also reflect the newfound autonomy of local agriculturalists and fisherfolk to more flexibly renegotiate economic and political alliances during the Late Moche Period. Cutright (this volume) describes a similar scenario of political opportunism for the polity based at Ventanillas during the later Lambayeque Period. She argues that the elites of this mid-valley settlement promoted a hybrid identity of coast and highlands to maintain extensive interregional economic and kin relations. This interpretation speaks to a certain emphasis on shifting territoriality and the fluidity of emplaced identity distinct to this region.
of the North Coast. This particular scenario contrasted with conceptions of place and identity at Huacas de Moche, an urban settlement characterized by a multitude of permanent, multigenerational compounds that housed corporate groups of occupational specialists (Van Gijseghem 2001). Santiago Uceda Castillo (Uceda Castillo and Armas 1998), Claude Chapdelaine (2001, 2002, 2009), and others argue that Huacas de Moche was a synchronic city of middle-class residents, and the hypothesized absence of primary producers sets this premier Moche city apart from some of the sites discussed in the volume.

A consideration of the diversity in Moche household organization presented in this volume (see Duke, Johnson, Zobler, this volume) should even prove critical in resolving ongoing debates on the meaning of the Moche label and the degree to which Moche polities were centralized and territorially integrated. The fixed and orthogonally planned residential complexes of the urban centers of Huacas de Moche differ significantly from the more evanescent and seasonally occupied domestic constructions of Middle Horizon Jequetepeque explored by Duke. Evidently, the comparison demonstrates the absence of a generalizable grammar of domestic space that could be identified as unequivocally Moche. Of course, the stark differences in the household configurations of Galindo and Huacas de Moche have long been recognized, and the chapters in this volume lend further support to models that question the centralized and overreaching power of monolithic Moche states (Bawden 1996, 2001; Lockard 2009; Quilter and Koons 2012). Zobler argues that the opportunistic states of Jequetepeque during the Late Moche Period relied primarily on religious ideology rather than on political economic control, as reflected by Talambo’s eschewal of Cajamarca tableware and Moro finelines despite its prominent location at the juncture of the valley’s massive irrigation system. The somewhat more permanent and continually occupied constructions of Talambo contrast with the ephemeral temporales that proliferated throughout Jequetepeque and speak to the coexistence of distinct lifeways or “alternate social worlds” in the same river valley (see Zobler, this volume). This juxtaposition of permanent and temporary architecture has also been recorded at the large Late Moche center of Cerro Chepén in the Jequetepeque region. Possibly intrusive highlanders lived in much more elaborate and permanent stone structures in the high monumental district of the site, while the more than 700 domestic terraces documented in the lower zone (sector Bajo) appear to have been occupied by pilgrims or lower-class dependents, who perhaps resided here seasonally as indicated by the shallow stratigraphy encountered in excavations (see Cusicanqui 2010, 48, 54; Johnson 2012, 57; Rosas 2010, 547, 590).

Evidently, the adoption of Moche ideologies in different regions of the North Coast did not necessarily translate to the alteration of ingrained, embodied routines
or everyday perceptions of reality (as seems to have been the case at Talambo).
Johnson’s examination of Moche female figurines also shows that the ritual prac-
tices and spiritual preoccupations of lower-status household dwellers often diverged
from elite religious programs. Still, she recognizes that certain dimensions of
Moche ideology must have been drawn from everyday concerns of fertility, health,
and parturition (and perhaps “home” and “territory,” as argued by Spence Morrow
in this volume) (for a similar argument in Maya archaeology, see Lucero 2003). The
shared aesthetic conventions of Moche elite and commoner ritual paraphernalia
would further suggest that the intimate rituals conducted by the inhabitants of the
Southern Piedmont at Pampa Grande cannot be simply understood as a “hidden

At the same time, it cannot be discounted that the propagation of certain Moche
cults, perhaps even sectarian in nature, could have resulted in the transformation of
long-standing dispositions, leading to new material realities and naturalizing novel
experiences of time and place. The emergence of transient or “peripatetic” popula-
tions in Jequetepeque (see Duke, Spence Morrow, this volume; Swenson 2012) dur-
ing the Late Moche Period was likely related to the allure of elite organized feasts
and Moche-inspired ceremonies sponsored by different centers such as San José
de Moro and Huaca Colorada. The constant movement of peoples among fields,
cemeteries, hamlets, and ceremonial centers—resulting in makeshift and temporary
residential constructions—was dictated in part by the adoption of Moche religious
liturgies, calendars, and gender ideologies (see also Swenson 2012; Swenson and
Warner 2012).

Cutright further notes that radical shifts in everyday life coincided with the fall
of the Moche religious complex in Jequetepeque and elsewhere. These changes
appear to have been much more profound than the transformations wrought by
the Chimú and Inka conquests of the North Coast, given significant alterations
in food production and utilitarian ceramic assemblages toward the close of the
Middle Horizon Period. In other words, this abrupt transformation in daily mate-
rial culture differs notably from the remarkable continuity in ceramic repertoires
spanning the Late Intermediate and Late Horizon Periods. However, the demise of
the Moche did not lead to the abandonment of corporate households at Talambo,
as Zobler’s research would indicate. Therefore, both the penetrating reach of
Moche value systems and the eventual disruptions caused by the Moche collapse
were clearly uneven in different regions of the North Coast.

To be sure, many of the authors of the volume argue that the impact of supra-
local institutions on the domestic sphere and rural life was often minimal. As
discussed above, Zobler refers to the resilience of households at Talambo, empha-
sizing the considerable continuities in domestic activities between the Late Moche
and Transitional Periods. She even posits that this strategically important site rejected (or at least ignored) the ritualized exchange network centered on San José de Moro and Cerro Chepén. On the basis of her analysis, it appears that domestic constructions at Talambo became more fixed and permanent in the Transitional Period. However, it is also worth considering whether the earlier Moche occupants of the site may have maintained more temporary dwellings, burial grounds, and kin shrines at other sites in the valley, including San José de Moro, Pacatnamú, or Huaca Colorada. In other words, could Talambo have been the site of specialized administrative functions, perhaps explaining the absence of diacritical artifacts related to ritual feasts and celebrations? Were the Moche inhabitants of Talambo as mobile as the residents of JE-64 discussed by Duke (but possibly living at Talambo—as a kind of home-base community—for longer periods of time)? Certainly, the continuities in bead production within the same dwelling structure point to the long-term maintenance of a shared corporate identity.

Cutright’s analysis of continuity and change in Late Intermediate Period households in Jequetepeque similarly affirms that the spaces and rhythms of quotidian tasks, including farming, child rearing, food preparation, and so forth, were intensely local and resilient. Thus Chimú imperialism never led to the colonization of everyday routines and dispositions at sites such as Pedregal. Still, Cutright rightly claims that households cannot be viewed as “a tradition-bound, timeless substrate upon which more complex social configurations were constructed.” Her research at Ventanillas and Pedregal reveals that residential contexts serve as sensitive barometers of sociopolitical transformation. Household configurations may have changed little over the course of the Late Intermediate Period, but the extractive political economy of the Chimú resulted in significant shifts in diet, as indicated by the intensified consumption of domesticates (especially maize) at Pedregal after AD 1300. Zobler and Cutright similarly contend that continuities in household constructions between the Moche and later periods represent conscious strategies by local communities. Hence, continuities in domestic practices cannot simply be interpreted as reflecting cultural conservatism or the inertia of unconscious habitual practices and technologies (see above and González-Ruibal 2014).

**INTERPRETING SOCIAL DIFFERENCE, IDENTITY, AND ALTERNATE POLITICAL FORMATIONS FROM ANCIENT NORTH COAST HOUSEHOLDS**

Questions of identity and inequality constituted another overarching theme of the volume. Analyses of domestic contexts can provide the interpretive means to move beyond simplistic analyses of power as predicated on a reductive, bimodal playing field of elites versus nonelites or urban versus rural communities (see Pacifico,
Spence Morrow, this volume). The diversity of household social organization also challenges common understanding of the home as well as conventional typologies of larger political formations, including cities and states.

In her study of gendered spaces and domestic practices among the Moche, Johnson notes that the material assemblages of residences did not simply reflect social relations and political dependencies but actively created them. In fact, conceptions of “domesticity” among the Moche were likely far removed from idealized Western understandings of the house or home (Guengerich 2014; Spence Morrow, this volume). Therefore, the case studies point to alternative modes of being, dwelling, and habitation that challenge storied theories on how attachments to place are predictably implicated in the creation of subject positions. As Duke notes, variations in Moche household constructions and residential mobility in Jequetepeque call into question some of our basic assumptions of complex, sedentary societies. Indeed, identity and status were far from fixed but changed in accordance to the different places experienced by mobile social groups (see also Spence Morrow, this volume; Swenson 2012, 186–187).

Unsurprisingly then, the chapters demonstrate that different domestic spaces often configured historically particular fields of social distinction and political action. Pacifico’s research on residential architecture at the LIP site of El Purgatorio in Casma reveals a political world far more complex than simplistic models of elite domination and nonelite resistance or compliance. Although status differences are expressed in the three distinct types of domestic structures at this center, inhabitants of Sector B South ate comparable diets, leading Pacifico to conclude that inequalities actually decreased when rural communities rapidly relocated to the capital—a possible consequence of an instituted redistributional economy put in place by the settlement’s leaders. It would be interesting to consider whether the three different structural types might also reflect a developmental cycle of household social units. Perhaps members of affiliated houses moved from one structural form to another as people married, had children, aged, or died. Such household development cycles have been documented in the Andes and elsewhere and point to the mutable and contingent nature of status differences rarely considered by archaeologists (Goodman 1999; see also Billman, this volume; Goody 1971; Prossor et al. 2012).

Pacifico’s study is worth comparing with Cutright’s argument that rural communities, defined by more informal domestic structures, exercised greater political and economic autonomy than households residing in nucleated urban centers—the implication being that people were freer in the countryside. This perspective is reminiscent of Peter J. Wilson’s (1991) controversial argument that the adoption of more formal and regimented residential architecture imposed severe constraints on people’s dispositions, activities, and perceptions of the world. However, Pacifico’s
and Chicoine and coauthors’ research reveals that urbanization does not predictably result in increased inequality or powerlessness. Despite the planning and formal construction of the more than forty compounds documented at the Early Horizon center of Caylán, the repetition of semipublic patios and the privacy the *cercaduras* afforded point to the considerable autonomy of multifamily corporations comprising the larger settlement.

Turning to Spence Morrow’s chapter, even though house types differed considerably across the Jequetepeque landscape, he raises the fascinating question of whether an “ideal house” may have underwritten Moche ideologies of place and political affiliation. Spence Morrow’s chapter was refreshing, for it considered Moche conceptions of house and home. Following Henri Lefebvre (1991), archaeologists have much to gain in examining how everyday practices structuring residential spaces complemented or contradicted ideal representations of both public and intimate places. Comparisons of this kind would allow for more probing analyses of how political identities were fashioned through the production of real or imagined attachments to place. The summit of Huaca Colorada appears to have served in part as a residence for religious specialists and political leaders. Still, I remain uncertain whether the *société à maison* sociological model can effectively explain the great variability in Moche settlement and residential constructions, and Johnson’s and Zobler’s chapters indicate the coexistence of a number of competing discourses on place among the Moche.

The house society heuristic may hold some potential for interpreting the multiple compounds at Huacas de Moche but perhaps less so for Sipán, San José de Moro, and other sites defined by lordly mausoleums. Nevertheless, Spence Morrow’s theory is certainly worthy of consideration, and his thought-provoking study demonstrates that there is much to be gained by examining ideologies of home and territory and testing models derived from ethnography to our archaeological datasets, including theories on house societies. The dispersed *temporales* could be interpreted as expressing the general lack of rootedness among the peripatetic populations of Late Moche Jequetepeque (see Duke, this volume). However, as Spence Morrow argues, mobile communities possibly forged a strong sense of place and community belonging by affiliating with a lordly temple dwelling that was visited during religious festivals. These celebrations might have involved the exchange of marital partners, sacrifices for group renewal, consultations with oracles, joint worship of revered huaca ancestors, and the reestablishment of social and political alliances. Feasts sponsored by possibly semidivine lords would have economically and ideologically united disparate communities, including the fisherfolk and agriculturalists discussed by Duke—perhaps as members of one extended and imagined “household.” As Spence Morrow argues, “The *huaca* . . . served as a sign embodying the
connection between the wider community and a deified elite through incorporative acts of construction, sacrifice, and dedicatory termination rites.” In fact, social identity in the Andes has traditionally been negotiated in terms of pulsating cycles of dissolution and confederation among different peoples, places, wak’as, and things (as expressed, for instance, in the notion of tinkuy) (Allen 1988, 205–206; Harris 1994, 47; Sallnow 1987, 136; Skar 1994; Swenson and Jennings 2018). In the south-central Andes, Peter Gose (1991) similarly describes the practice of dual residence and the seasonal disbandment and reconstitution of domestic groups—an analogy that might have relevance to understanding the particulars of the Jequetepeque settlement data. As Spence Morrow intimates, the archetypical house may have constituted an all-important master symbol for Jequetepeque communities, for the ideal house was so rarely built, seen, or experienced.

Finally, the notable variations in household social organization and their varied articulations with institutions of authority expose the limitations of our standard political typologies. The case studies presented in this volume demonstrate that searching for the material correlates of cities, chiefdoms, or states would tell us very little about the multifaceted political, social, and economic practices of North Coast households, ranging from the multifamily compounds at Caylán and El Purgatorio to the smaller but prosperous residences at Ventanillas. To take just one example, the domestic practices of Late Moche Jequetepeque, as explored in the chapters by Duke, Spence Morrow, and Zobler, were equally as complex as the Moche and Lambayeque Valleys, dominated by their massive urban centers. Jequetepeque was characterized by high populations, sophisticated religious and agricultural infrastructures, a cosmopolitan international style, and flexible corporate structures that negotiated local and global political networks comparable to urban households and neighborhoods documented at Huacas de Moche. The unique social geography of the region was the product of specific religious and political ideologies that were materially fashioned at various (and often overlapping) scales of sociospatial interaction, including ephemeral households, more permanent residences, neighborhoods, elite temples, and cemeteries. In sum, North Coast households were more than passive receptacles or reflections of higher-level political institutions but were integral to their realization.

CONCLUDING NOTE: CONTEXT MATTERS

The chapters in this volume prove that domestic practices cannot be divorced from the cultural constructions of broader landscapes in which they formed a part. In this sense, the archaeological interpretation of the alternate political (even ontological) worlds materialized in quotidian life can only proceed through systematic
contextual analyses of interrelated datasets. Thus residential layouts and occupation histories must be systematically compared with changing artefactual distributions and other dimensions of the built and natural environments. As illustrated in the case studies presented in this book and briefly summarized above, whether temporary hamlets built in the vicinity of agricultural fields in the Jequetepeque Valley or the planned precincts of Caylán, patterned variation in the form, quality, and configuration of dwelling architecture does not necessarily correlate with generic, vertical differences in social status but points instead to the distinct political regimes that structured the social formation in question and the ideologies of religion and identity that underwrote these regimes.

I concur with Billman that the interpretation of households must rely on multidisciplinary research based on the systematic screening of fill and occupation layers and the comparative analysis of multiple databases. Perhaps self-evident, but good contextual archaeology is grounded in identifying the conjunctions, disjunctions, and unexpected lack of fit between different suites of data. Examples of this approach are illustrated throughout the edited volume, methods that shed valuable light on the distinct socioeconomic and political foundations of quotidian life on the north coast of Peru. For instance, Chicoine and colleagues interpret the skewed ratio of surface batanes and chungos as evidence that food production was managed at the suprafamily cercadura level of social cooperation. In addition, Pacifico’s comparison of the distribution of organic remains with differences in the quality of residential constructions at El Purgatorio shows that social inequalities were surprisingly muted in the realm of food consumption. The data support his theory that a redistributive economy was in play at El Purgatorio and that the rapid migration to the center from rural zones was likely voluntary and motivated by the desire to secure access to dependable food supplies. Cutright also plays off culinary data with artefactual and spatial indices to show that the expansion of the Chimú Empire resulted in shifts to subsistence strategies and diet despite surprising continuities in house layouts and artefactual assemblages. She develops a strong case that the Chimú were concerned with overseeing the economy of the region and were little interested in the ritual observances and identities of local people.

In a similar manner, Spence Morrow compares iconographic depictions of architecture with excavated building plans to develop his thesis that Moche conceptions of home, territory, and community departed significantly from Western conceptions. Johnson’s analysis of female figurines and their changing distributions through time further indicates that the Moche label designates more than an elite political theology; various Moche-inspired folk religions were clearly in play throughout the North Coast, and, as Johnson notes, these traditions were not always aligned with state-instituted religious doctrine. It is intriguing that identical
figurine and whistle types cross-cut very different kinds of domestic contexts; for instance, the Labretted Lady has been recovered in residential debris at both Pampa Grande and Huaca Colorada. Therefore, despite notable differences in household organization and the degree of sedentism between separate river valleys, the religious observances of different communities may have been largely equivalent (dealing with parturition, female procreation, and similar concerns). In this regard, different taskscapes (rhythms of daily practice) do not always correspond to distinctive traditions of gender, constructions of personhood, or community organization. Once again, our reading of domestic remains must always be sensitive to the larger context in which they are embedded.

To provide one final example, a contextual approach of this kind can also help make sense of the role of ancient North Coast households in larger ritual economies. For instance, feasting played an important role in creating and emplacing both real and imagined communities in very different North Coast settlements (see chapters by Chicoine et al., Cutright, Duke, Pacifico). However, the scale of production/consumption and the degree to which feasting was centralized seem to have determined the size and physical contiguity of co-residential units as well as the value placed on privacy, enclosure, public gatherings, and so forth. Thus it is intriguing that mass public spectacles of feasting and sacrifice documented in Jequetepeque (Huaca Colorada, San José de Moro) coincided with a regional settlement pattern characterized by ephemeral and makeshift domestic constructions at a number of different sites (Castillo Butters 2010; Swenson 2012; Swenson and Warner 2012). In contrast, feasting appears to have been the prerogative of competing multifamily groupings in Caylán. This particular social arrangement could explain the multiplication of elaborate frieze-adorned compounds at this important Early Horizon center. In fact, the remarkable standardization of the cercaduras at this site was unlikely the result of centralized planning by a paramount authority; instead, it appears to have expressed the autonomy and fiercely protected identities of parochial cercadura alliances—perhaps comparable to the parish churches of the contrade of Siena or the multiple towers of feuding families in medieval Tuscan hill towns. In contrast and as argued by Spence Morrow, the little effort and few resources expended in many of the residential structures of Jequetepeque seem to have been offset by great spectacles of communion and collective effervescence at sites such as Huaca Colorada.

In the end, the case studies of this volume serve as a reminder that analogical inference can do much more than simply identify continuities in quotidian practices through time. As Alison Wylie (1982, 392–393) argued in her assessment of the Gould-Watson debate, analogy is not just about the search for equivalence between source and archaeological case study. Our mobilization of the analogue of “house,”
“home,” or “community” is meant to uncover and make sense of both commonalities and variation in past residential structures and everyday lifeways. The chapters in this volume do an excellent job of interpreting this variation, and the authors have significantly improved our understanding of the ancient civilizations of the north coast of Peru.

NOTE

1. Synchoritic urban formation refers to a city lacking resident farmers (Rowe 1963).

REFERENCES


