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Making a huaca

Memory and praxis in prehispanic far northern Peru

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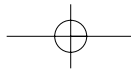
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ABSTRACT

Recent studies exploring social memory have led to a growing literature on the ‘archaeology of memory’ which examines the ways material culture is deployed to make cultural statements about the past by modern, historic, and prehistoric societies. Nonetheless, the archaeology of memory encounters significant theoretical problems and terminological vagaries, shortcomings resolved by an inclusive and more robust theoretical position, the theory of practice. These issues illuminate recent archaeological data from the site of Santa Rosa, Department of Tumbes, Peru, where a specific place – a class of sacred spaces known in the Andes as a *huaca* – was the locus for ritual acts from circa BCE 3550–2700 until CE 1470. Although Santa Rosa exhibits a spatially recurrent significance, the distinctive material signatures are separated by substantial hiatuses and fundamentally different cosmologies. While Santa Rosa might appear as the locus of social memory, the archaeological patterns are better explained by reference to a theory of practice.

KEYWORDS

archaeology of memory • Department of Tumbes, Perú • funerary practices • prehispanic Andes • theory of practice



When you dig into the huaca, will you harm the pueblo and cause the children to cry?

(anonymous resident, pueblo of Santa Rosa, 9 March 2007)

■ INTRODUCTION

Recent archaeological studies have addressed a suite of theoretical issues regarding social memory, leading to an emergent 'archaeology of memory' (Alcock, 2002: 27; Mills and Walker, 2008; Pauketat, 2008; Van Dyke, 2009; Van Dyke and Alcock, 2003). Positioned at the intersections of multiple lines of social theory (for overviews see Cattell and Climo, 2002; Connerton, 1989; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Carsten, 2007), these approaches, as Van Dyke and Alcock (2003: 2) point out, 'engage with *social memory*, the construction of the collective notion (not an individual belief) about the way things were in the past'. As Mills and Walker (2008: 3) describe, archaeological approaches to memory focus 'on ways in which material culture engages in the transmission of memory and how archaeologists use knowledge of these interactions to interpret identity, ritual practice, political action, and other facets of past societies'. Social memory may be associated with a variety of material objects, including artificial mounds (e.g. Dillehay, 1990, 1995; Pauketat, 2008; Pauketat and Alt, 2003) and funerary structures (Hastorf, 2003; Moore, 1996, 2005). In the Andes, such elements in the built landscape are commonly referred to as *huacas*, derived from the Quechua *waka*, and broadly applied to indigenous sacred places. As such, an archaeology of memory would seem relevant to understanding huacas as a class of archaeological remains.

I critically examine approaches to the archaeology of memory in light of recent (2007) archaeological data from the Department of Tumbes in far northern Peru (Figure 1). I contend that the concept of 'memory' is ill-applied in archaeological analyses, confusing recollection with active, cultural creation. It is useful to realize that all traditions are invented, recollections of the past are recreated in the present, and all re-presentations of the past are simultaneously the products of cultural structures, individual agents, and historical contingencies – in other words, the results of practice rather than 'memory'. 'Social memory' is a concept whose definition has become 'so broad that it becomes increasingly impossible to discern the boundaries of the notion' (Berliner, 2005: 202). I argue that the analytical terrain covered by 'social memory' is more effectively subsumed by a theory of practice, which provides the added advantage of triangulating relevant domains of inquiry – into agency, cultural structure, and historical contingency – that an archaeology of memory leaves vague and unspecified.

In the following, a discussion of concepts and issues regarding memory studies and archaeologies of memory is followed by an overview of Andean huacas, a culturally constructed form that – at first glance – would appear

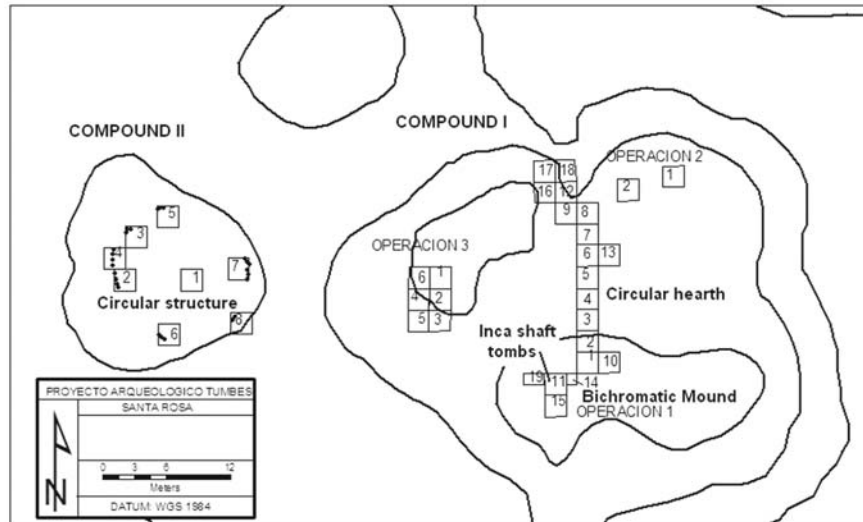
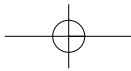


Figure 1 Location of Santa Rosa, Department of Tumbes, Peru

to be a conceptual and material expression of social memory (Nielsen, 2008). Turning to evidence from the Department of Tumbes, I discuss recently revised chronological and analytical frameworks for the prehistory of far northern Peru, and then summarize a complex archaeological record from the site of Santa Rosa. The archaeological data from Santa Rosa are intriguing because they indicate a series of ritual practices anchored in a specific spatial locus, and yet reflect events separated by millennia and represent significant dis-junctures in ritual practice. In essence, the site of Santa Rosa was a space – a huaca – that exhibits a recurrent sacrality that apparently was *not* the product of social memory. Rather than reflecting an archaeology of memory, I contend that these data from Santa Rosa are better explained by an archaeology framed by a theory of practice that can subsume ‘an archaeology of memory’ within a body of theory of greater subtlety and more robust explanatory power (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990, 2000; Ortner, 1984, 1989, 2006).

■ ARCHAEOLOGIES OF MEMORY: CONCEPTS AND CRITIQUES

As Van Dyke and Alcock (2003: 2) have observed, archaeological approaches to memory are ‘leaping onto a well-established bandwagon. Memory currently possesses a robust hold on the scholarly imagination’. In



part the current intellectual grasp of memory derives from the intersection of multiple lines of inquiry, as Olick and Robbins (1999) have usefully discussed: the Durkheimian examination of collective memory outlined by Halbwachs (1992[1952]), late twentieth-century interest in the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm, 1983) and the creation of identity (Anderson, 1983), and the shift from approaching memory as an individual operation to an ongoing social construction. Further, the current emphasis on memory broadly engages with historically contingent, *fin-de-siècle* pessimisms, doubts, and trauma. For example, Andreas Huyssen (2003: 2) argues:

Whatever the specific content of the many contemporary debates about history and memory may be, underlying them is a fundamental disturbance not just of the relationship between history as objective and scientific, and memory as subjective and personal, but of history itself and its promises. At stake in the current history/memory debate is not only a disturbance of our notions of the past, but a fundamental crisis in our imagination of alternative futures.

Notably, Pierre Nora, a leading theoretician in memory studies, has observed that 'We speak so much of memory, because there is so little of it left' (quoted in Olick and Robbins, 1998: 120–1). Nora writes:

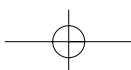
Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with a sense that memory has been torn – but torn in a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory. (1989: 7)

As has been long recognized (e.g. Binford and Sabloff, 1982), the theoretical contours of archaeological inquiry are not isolated from broader intellectual trends. It is worth acknowledging that current archaeological approaches to memory participate in this 'crisis of memory' (Cattell and Climo, 2002: 6) – although that does not inevitably compromise their relevance or utility (Alcock, 2002: 19–31).

Nevertheless, memory is a slippery concept and memory studies are poorly delineated. As Huyssen comments:

Of course, memory is one of those elusive topics we all think we have a handle on. But as soon as we try to define it, it starts slipping and sliding, eluding attempts to grasp it either culturally, sociologically, or scientifically. After more than a decade of intense public and academic discussions of the uses and abuses of memory, many feel that the topic has been exhausted. Memory fatigue has set in. (2003: 3)

Similarly, Cattell and Climo (2002: 4) write:



If it is impossible to fix this concept with a single name, it is also impossible to define it, though it has general contours recognizable across disciplines, substantive issues, and geographic areas. . . . Even if we cannot say exactly what it is, we seem to recognize it when we see it.

Whenever a variant of Justice Potter Stewart's definition of hard-core pornography is invoked ('I know it when I see it'), definitional difficulties lie ahead. More helpfully, Olick and Robbins (1998: 122–33) point to four domains of inquiry: 1) social memory and identity, 2) social memory and contestation, 3) social memory, malleability and persistence, and 4) social memory and the creation of individual reputation and bodies of knowledge. All of these domains are more usefully approached via a theory of practice.

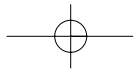
■ CONFUSING MEMORY WITH PRACTICE

As Mills and Walker have observed (2008: 5), recent archaeological interest in social memory occurs against the backdrop of a theoretical shift towards a theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Ortner, 1984, 1989, 2003, 2006; Moore, 2008a: 289–94). Mills and Walker (2008: 6) further emphasize the theoretical significance of individual agency and replace the term 'collective memory' with 'social memory'. They explain:

Although agency theory does not preclude the agency of groups, one of the most important historical shifts in memory studies has been in directing attention away from the Durkheimian idea of a 'collective memory' that is somehow separate from the memories of individuals. This term . . . is still used in the literature, although there has been a preference by many authors to replace it with 'social memory' to highlight the many social contexts in which memories are made and the role of individuals in the process of remembering. . . . Memory does not reside in, and is not transmitted by, cultures but in people as members of social groups. . . . The authors of the chapters in our volume also use the term 'social memory' instead of 'collective memory' to mark the importance of different social scales and the various roles of individuals and agency in memory work.

This suggests that practice is reducible to individual agency, and thus is a misreading of a theory of practice. As Bourdieu clearly outlined (1977, 1990: 52–65, 80–97; see also Calhoun, 2000; Postone et al., 1993), practice simultaneously involves three domains: individual agency, historical contingencies, and the generative social themes that Bourdieu called *habitus*. For example, Bourdieu wrote (2000: 148):

Thus, because *habitus* is, as its name suggests, a product of a history, the instruments of construction of the social that it invests in practical



knowledge [i.e. knowledge employed in practice] of the world and in action are socially constructed, in other words structured by the world that they structure. It follows from this that practical knowledge is doubly informed by the world it informs: it is constrained by the objective structure of the configuration of properties that the world presents it; and it is also structured through the schemes, resulting from incorporation of the structures of the world, that it applies in selecting and constructing these objective properties. In other words, action is neither 'purely reactive' in Weber's phase, nor purely conscious and calculated.

Ortner expands on this idea in discussing practice theory:

A theory of practice is a theory of history. It is a theory of how social beings, with their diverse motives and their diverse intentions, make and transform the world in which they live. It is a theory for answering the simplest-seeming, and yet largest, questions that social science seeks to answer: Why does a given society have a particular form at a particular moment – that form and not some other? And how do people whose very selves are part of that social form nonetheless sometimes transform themselves and their society? (1989: 193)

Practice is not reducible to individual agency – or to generative schemes or historical contingencies – but involves all three practical domains. The analytical power of practice is that it demands simultaneous attention to agency, structure, and history. A theory of practice triangulates our inquiries in ways that an appeal to 'social memory' does not. Further, an archaeology of social memory, in effect, presumes that the material record portrays a discursive engagement with the past, essentially delineating the explanatory field prior to archaeological inquiry. A theory of practice makes no such assumption.

It may seem too obvious to state, but not all acts of commemoration are remembrances of things past, whether individual or collective. Halbwachs clearly saw this, arguing 'that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present' (1992[1952]: 40). 'The collective frameworks of memory are not constructed after the fact by the combination of individual recollection,' Halbwachs insisted, but rather, 'Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society' (1992[1952]: 40). Although rarely monolithic and often multiple and contested, social memory refers to 'images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past', as Connerton (1989: 3–4) describes, 'conveyed and sustained by (more or less) ritual performances.' These concepts and practices are variously reflected in the archaeological record, as a wide array of material remains – monuments, heirlooms, mortuary treatments, written narratives, and places – may reflect commemorative ritual practices. Writing of monuments, for example, Holtorf (1998: 24) states:

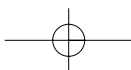
The particular behaviour of people towards ancient monuments, in a given social and historical context, is informed by their collective understandings of the past, or 'cultural memory'. . . . This cultural memory reveals its character at special occasions, such as commemoration days, or special places, such as ancient monuments, and can involve rituals and ceremonies. The cultural memory reassures the members of a society of their identity and supplies them with an awareness of unity and singularity in time and space, i.e., an historical consciousness. Cultural memory is hence not about giving testimony of past events, accurately and truthful, but about making meaningful statements about the past in a given present. Ancient monuments represent the past in the landscape and cultural memory gives them meaning and cultural significance. (Holtorf, 1998: 24)

■ ON HUACAS

In the Andes sacred places are commonly referred to as 'huacas', and they would seem to be perfect candidates for an inquiry based on an archaeology of memory. Within 20 years of Pizarro's 1532 expedition of conquest, *huaca*, derived from the Quechua *waka*, was broadly applied to indigenous sacred places (Moore, 1996: 92–3, 125). The term was used by Juan de Betanzos in his *Suma y narración de los Incas*, a treatise completed in 1551, to refer to a sacred place, a temple or a priestly residence – usages that emphasize the constructed nature of the place. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the definition of 'huaca' had broadened considerably, including burial places, shrines, mountain peaks, holy lakes – essentially extending to any place associated with indigenous concepts of the sacred. The fluidity of its meanings has led Staller (2008: 270) to broadly use it 'to refer to Sacred Places in the landscape, and how material objects, living things, including people, attain the status of huaca and have distinct symbolic meanings with reference to such places'. As documented in various Spanish handbooks for the persecution of native religion, such as Cristobal de Albornoz' 1555 *Instructions for the Discovery of all the Guacas of Peru* (Duviols, 1967) or Jose de Arriaga's 1621 *The Extirpation of Idolatry in Peru*, the sacred infused the Andean landscape. As the Jesuit extirpator, Arriaga (1968[1621]: 115) stated in a tone of resignation, 'Some of the huacas are hills and high places which time cannot consume.'

Yet a recurrent class of huaca was an architectural construction whose functions evolved through time. This was noted by the seventeenth-century chronicler Father Bernabe Cobo who wrote of the funerary huacas along the coast of Peru that:

were made with thick earthen walls, in the same form and design as the main houses of their caciques, on a square plan with many divisions and rooms. . . . These large guacas or tombs located on the plains are filled with earth, and some of them are even covered with large piles of small stones; as they buried their dead in them, they fill them in. (Cobo, 1990[1653]: 247)



In Cobo's brief description, two dimensions emerge in the creation of these sacred spaces: continuity and transformation. First, huacas anchor ritual practice over multiple generations. Second, huacas are transformed as the associated activities evolved and as their imputed meanings changed through human practice. As the opening epigraph – a concerned question a resident of Santa Rosa asked before excavations began – demonstrates, huacas were and are *mileux de memoire*, created through recurrent human practice; they do not gain their sacredness through remembrance, individual or collective. Instead, they are, as Mary Douglas observed in another context, 'media in which people make statements about their life' (1982: x).

Recent excavations at the site of Santa Rosa, Department of Tumbes, Peru, have uncovered evidence for the cultural transformations of a space – from residences to funerary architecture – providing detailed insights into how a huaca was made.

■ PREHISTORY OF TUMBES: ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

A brief summary is necessary to place Santa Rosa within its prehistoric context, since the Department of Tumbes is one of the least-studied regions in Andean South America. Only 13 sites had been recorded in Tumbes until 1996, when the Proyecto Arqueológico Tumbes was initiated with an archaeological reconnaissance that recorded 34 sites (Moore et al., 1997). At present, 200 sites have been recorded (Vilchez, 1996, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2004). Until recently, the only major systematic excavations in the Department of Tumbes were the University of Tokyo's 1958 and 1960 investigations at the sites of Garbanzal and Pechiche, which involved merely 13 days of excavation and recovered seven ¹⁴C samples that were the only absolute dates for the region (Ishida, 1960; Izumi and Terada, 1966; Mejía Xesspe, 1960: 207). Over the last five years this situation has changed. A modest 2003 testing program at the site of Loma Saavedra (Moore et al., 2005) was followed in 2006 and 2007 by more extensive excavations at four sites: Loma Saavedra, El Porvenir, Uña de Gato and Santa Rosa (Moore, 2010; Moore et al., 2008; Vilchez et al., 2007). These investigations have resulted in a number of important discoveries.

First, the regional chronology has been revised and refined, an essential precondition for addressing other research domains. Of particular significance is a clearer understanding of the Archaic and Formative Periods, as well as significant revisions of the late prehistoric sequence. Excavations at the site of El Porvenir uncovered the earliest known occupation in the region, a house floor dating before 4730–4000 BCE, and a series of subsequent occupations dating from BCE 1200–BCE 300 (Moore, 2007).

Excavations at the nearby site of Uña de Gato documented the creation of modest-scaled public architecture at c. BCE 1500–1400 that continued until approximately 1000 BCE (Moore et al., 2008). During the second millennium BCE, Tumbes was integrated into long-distance exchange networks, for example, obtaining obsidian from the Mullumica source in the Ecuadorian highlands some 450 km northeast of Tumbes.

Based on the presence of exotic ceramics, Tumbes was in contact with groups using Valdivia 6–7 ceramics and also with societies located to the east in the Ecuadorian highlands (Guffroy, 2004; Pajuelo, 2008). Although the period between 500 BCE and CE 800 remains poorly understood, a clearer picture is emerging of Tumbes' late prehistory. Beginning at c. CE 900, contacts between Tumbes and the south seem to have intensified, and there is good though limited evidence of contact between Tumbes and the Lambayeque/Sicán polity (Pajuelo, 2006; Shimada, 1990). Later, the Chimú were in contact with the Tumbes region, as the presence of fine-ware ceramics from Santa Rosa and other sites suggests, but there is no evidence that the Chimú conquered or controlled the Tumbes region as has been proposed (Rowe, 1948; Hocquenghem, 1991; cf. Moore, 2008b; Moore and Mackey, 2008). Given that the Chimú Empire's northward expansion dated after c. CE 1400, it is assumed that the Chimú contact with Tumbes was correspondingly late, after c. CE 1400 but before the Inca conquest in CE 1470 (Moore, 2008b).

The Inca presence in Tumbes is well-established and intensive, involving a major Inca presence at the site of Cabeza de Vaca (Vilchez, 2003), a series of installations (Ricaplaya, Higuero, and Guineal) along the Inca road connecting the Tumbes valley to Upper Piura (Olaya and Rodríguez, 2004), and the distribution of Inca ceramics at other sites (e.g. Vaqueria, Loma Saavedra) in the region (Moore et al., 1997; Vilchez, 1996, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2004). At various points in antiquity, the archaeological signatures from Santa Rosa intersect with this still-evolving framework for the prehistory of the Department of Tumbes.

■ SANTA ROSA: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNATURES

The site of Santa Rosa was first recorded in 1996 and was described as a possible Chimú or Chimú period site based on a few diagnostic surface ceramics (Moore et al., 1997). Surface remains suggested the site contained one large rectangular construction, interpreted as the remains of an adobe walled compound (Compound I) approximately 22 x 20 m in area, and two much smaller mounds, Compound II and Compound III. Exposed cobble alignments suggested that walls were placed on stone foundations. In addition to this core area of the site, a diffuse area of surface materials to



the west was interpreted in 1996 as a possible residential area; much of this area is now destroyed (Moore et al., 2008).

Excavations in 2007 were designed to obtain basic archaeological data regarding chronology, subsistence, and inter-regional exchange in the context of a broader theoretical project that focuses on the cultural construction of space (Moore, 2005). To this end, excavation units were located to expose architectural features in Compound I and Compound II (Figure 2). The initial excavation strategy consisted of block excavations placed to cross-section walls and foundations, and to expose the corners of the compounds – a strategy based on the assumption that Santa Rosa was the remains of an adobe-walled compound whose walls had eroded over the centuries due to the 500 mm of average annual rainfall.

The actual archaeological record was much more complex than anticipated, especially in Compound I. Although this partially was due to post-depositional processes and preservation, the complexity of Santa Rosa's archaeological signatures reflects construction episodes and ritual activities that varied through time. These sets of activities fall into four broad phases: an Early Formative occupation dating to c. BCE 3550–2700, followed by a lengthy hiatus in the occupation until approximately CE 1300–1400. At this time, the site was reoccupied and adobe-walled structures were erected, but

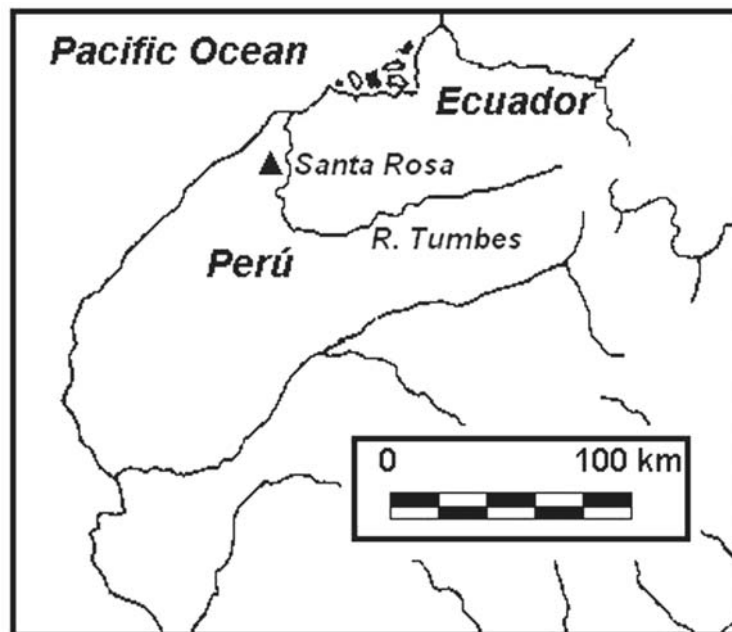


Figure 2 Santa Rosa, Site Plan and Excavations

then Santa Rosa was transformed into a funerary space marked by secondary burials in stone cairns. After c. CE 1470, two or more ceremonial mounds were constructed from alternating layers of fire-reddened earth and white clay and ash, and shaft tombs were excavated into the mounds where provincial Inca burials were placed. The following is a brief synopsis of this complex archaeological sequence.

Phase I: Early Formative Midden, Prepared Floor and Ceremonial Hearth

The initial occupation in Santa Rosa dates to the Early Formative, c. BCE 3550–2700, as indicated by a buried midden deposit, a large structure indicated by an elliptical cobblestone ‘foundation’ and a circular ritual hearth associated with a specially prepared white floor. The deeply buried midden was partially exposed in excavations in Compounds I and II, although it is not known if it is also located in the intervening areas. The midden is a dark gray ashy layer containing a moderate density of shell representing the exploitation mollusks collected from sandy beaches, mudflats and mangrove habitats, and faunal remains including Virginia deer and dog. Despite the relatively diverse fauna, the artifactual materials are sparse, limited to two fragments of ground-stone; no ceramics were found. Two radiocarbon samples resulted in calibrated absolute dates of BCE 3350–2910 (4440±60 BP) and 3330–2900 (5010±60 BP, adjusted for local reservoir effect, 4790±70 BP).

A large structure was exposed in Compound II in the western portion of the site; the elliptical structure measured 12.8 x 11.9 m and was delineated by a carefully made alignment of cobblestones placed into a clay mortar and four postmolds from large upright timbers with diameters of 25–30 cm and 45–48 cm (Figure 2). With a radiocarbon date of 4560 ±40 BP, the calibrated date of the structure at two sigmas is alternately 3490–3470, 3370–3270 or 3240–3100 BCE. These dates make the Santa Rosa structure coeval with Early Valdivia Phases 1 or 2, although it is much larger (119 m²) and more substantial than contemporary Early Valdivia structures known from southern Ecuador (Moore et al., 2008: 252–60; cf. Damp, 1984).

In addition to the midden and the structure, two other intriguing archaeological features date to the Early Formative. A well-made white floor was constructed in the southern area of Compound I; incompletely exposed, it covers a minimum area of 8 x 5 m. Although no postmolds or other structural features were found associated with the floor, the floor had been protected from the elements as it is very fragile yet in excellent condition. Associated with this floor was a well-made, circular hearth (Figure 3). The hearth has an exterior diameter of 2.25 m, an interior diameter of 1.4–1.5 m, and a maximum depth of 35–40 cm. The pit is carefully made, with carefully plastered sloping sides and a rim of smoothed

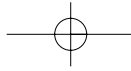


Figure 3 Santa Rosa, Compound I, Operación I, Unit 4, Ceremonial Hearth

clay. When encountered, the surface of the feature was covered by a compact layer of ash, 4–11 cm thick, underlain by a 5–14 cm thick layer of bright red, burned earth. Charred human bones were found on the top of the ash layer and a burned human molar was found adjacent to the feature. Given that the ash and fire-reddened earth were unmixed, the body or defleshed skeletal remains may have been placed on top of or nearby the hearth. A lens of charcoal was found at the bottom of the pit, consisting of charred algarrobo wood. This charcoal dated to 4440 +/- 60 BP or 3350–2910 cal BCE, and thus the deep midden, elliptical structure, and circular hearth are contemporary features.

Phase II: Residential Use

Apparently, Santa Rosa was abandoned for the next 2600 years, at which point one or more residences were constructed on the site. The remains of rectilinear structures were found in the northern and eastern zones of Compound I. Although no complete buildings were found, the foundations measured 90–100 cm in width. No standing walls were preserved, but *in situ* adobes made from light gray (10 YR 7/2) clay were found on top of the walls. Portions of two rooms were exposed, suggesting a multi-room

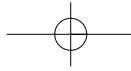
structure; the presence of burned sherds of cooking pots (short-necked ollas) and shell (*Donax peruvianus*, *Chione subrugosa*) probably indicates that this was a residence. Fragments of Chimú style press-molded blackware and paddle-stamped ceramics associated with the wall foundations indicate an occupation at c. CE 1400–1470.

Phase III: Secondary Burials and Cairn Construction

After the construction of rectilinear residences, Compounds I and II became loci for constructing secondary burial cairns. During this period, low mounds were built by scavenging materials from the earlier constructions and piling up layers of wall rubble and foundation stones to form cairns. The cairns are 1–4 m in diameter, 50–80 cm tall, and associated with two different ritual acts. First, thorny oyster (*Spondylus* sp.) shells were placed in the upper layers of the fill, thrust into the mud matrix while it was still damp. The thorny oyster was a widely esteemed object in the Andes, deployed in a variety of ritual contexts, and often worked into beads and votive offerings (*mullu*) (Marcos, 1978; Paulsen, 1974; Pillsbury, 1996). At Santa Rosa, the *Spondylus* are whole or single valves, rather than worked shells or finished artifacts. The shells often are found standing upright, although they are also found on their sides, but they are always tightly bonded into the mud matrix. Some of these offerings were associated with Chimú blackware ceramics, which again points to a CE 1400–1470 date, but after the residential occupation.

Secondary burials were placed on the upper portions of these mounds. The human remains principally consist of teeth, especially of molars, although fragments of crania and other bones were also found. Dr John Verano provided an initial examination of 26 samples of bone, looking for evidence of cremation (personal communication, 10 June 2007). While most of the skeletal material had various discolorations – from manganese or other mineral staining – four samples showed evidence of burning. None of the burned samples were calcined, indicating that the bodies were not cremated, nor did the bone show warping or fracturing that might indicate burning of fleshed corpses. There is no evidence of fire-reddening in the mud matrix associated with these skeletal remains, suggesting that whatever burning occurred took place elsewhere and indicating that the cairns are associated with secondary burials. Artifacts associated with the human remains include copper needles, sheet copper, utilitarian vessels and fragments of Chimú fine-ware vessels including sherds from stirrup spout vessels.

These activities were localized in Compound II and on the northern and eastern side of Compound I, but subsequently the southern portion of Compound I became a focus of ritual activity.

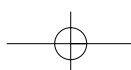
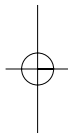
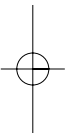


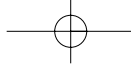
Phase IV: Mound Building and Shaft Tomb Burials

The southern portion of Compound I was the focus of another ritual practice, involving the creation of bi-chromatic mounds. The mound consists of 1.7–1.8 m of fill placed on top of the Phase I, Formative Period white floor, creating the tallest feature at Santa Rosa. Stratigraphic profiles clearly show layers of fire-reddened earth (7.5 YR 6/6) capped by compact layers of gray (10 YR 6/1) to pale brown (10 YR 6/3) anthropogenic sediments of ash and clay (Figure 4). The fire-reddened earth does not represent in situ



Figure 4 Santa Rosa, Compound I, Excavations of Bichromatic Mound.
(Note: Paper tags indicate alternating strata)





burning, but rather re-deposited strata. The careful interspersing of fire-reddened earth and grayish sediments indicate an intentional activity, a practice discussed further below (for an interesting North American case, see Pauketat, 2008: 65–77).

Two small shaft tombs were excavated into the mounds. The shaft tombs consisted of a pit approximately 50 cm in diameter at its mouth that flared out to about 100 cm at its base, with a depth of 100–120 cm (Figure 5). The interior surface of the pit was stabilized with a layer of gray clay and an internal retaining wall of fist-sized cobbles.

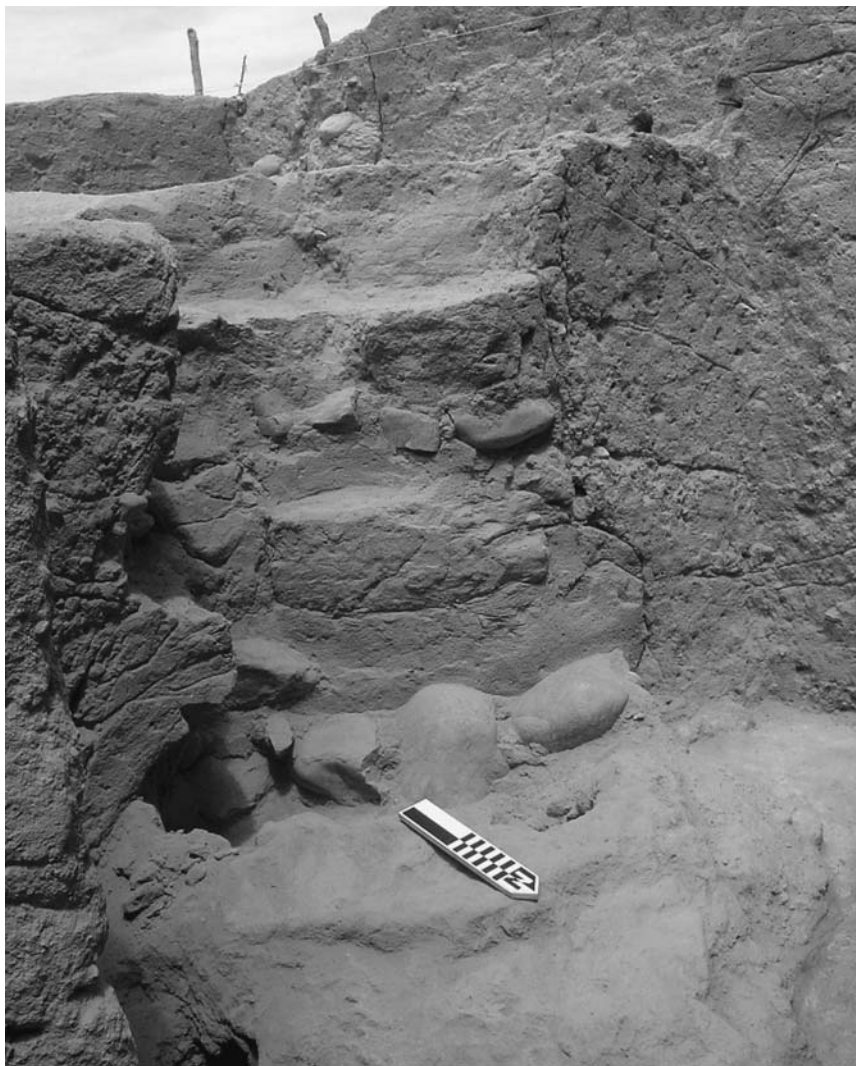
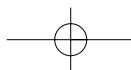


Figure 5 Santa Rosa, Compound I, Intrusive Shaft Tomb





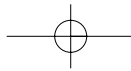
Shaft Tomb 1 contained the remains of an adult buried in a seated flexed position with its arms folded but uncrossed on its chest. The skeleton was largely complete, though in fragmentary condition, and clearly indicated a non-cremated, primary burial. The individual was wrapped in plain-weave cotton cloth (which had deteriorated to minute flecks and powder). The individual wore a copper bracelet on its left forearm, and was interred with a small provincial Inca aryboloid on its left side and a cantiflor on its right. The tomb had been carefully sealed with adobes and stones.

Shaft Tomb 2 contained the remains of two adults (Figure 6). The individuals were placed in flexed, seated position in the bottom of the shaft tomb. Five ceramic vessels were buried with the individuals: a Chimú-Inca style blackware stirrup spout bottle, a miniature olla, two miniature single spout vessels, and one or more strands of very small beads made from an unidentified black stone. An entire *Spondylus* was also placed in the tomb as an offering. No other grave goods were associated with the individuals.

Although the shaft tombs were cut into the mound of fire-reddened earth and grayish sediments, additional alternating strata were deposited after the shaft tombs were excavated. The stratigraphy indicates that the red and grayish strata were part of the cultural processes involved with the primary burials placed in the shaft tombs, as alternating red and gray layers capped the mouth of the shaft tomb. Further, the alternating layers of



Figure 6 Santa Rosa, Compound I, Provincial Inca Shaft Tomb Burial 2



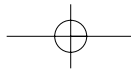
fire-reddened earth and ash/clay appear to be carefully salvaged from the Early Formative deposits at Santa Rosa. For example, a radiocarbon sample from the upper portion of the mound (i.e. Compound I, Operation 1, Unit 1, Level 1) produced a calibrated date of BCE 3520–3090, despite being from a stratum that post-dates the shaft of the Inca-period tomb. This material was obviously re-deposited, and it is possible that Early Formative hearth features – like the one described above – were the source of the mound materials.

Notably, mounds of alternating strata of red and white/gray materials are known from late prehispanic sites in Ecuador. Doyon (2002: 86) reports that late Cara phase (CE 1250–1490) burial pits at the site of Cochasquí ‘were filled with successive thin layers of clays and white tephtras piled well above the original surface to form a small mound’ and adds: ‘If glittering white tephtras were used to surface the mounds after any given stage of building, the effect would have been dazzling.’ It may be that creating mounds from successive layers of colorful soils and/or anthropogenic sediments was a late prehispanic funerary tradition associated with the shaft tombs containing provincial Inca burials.

■ MAKING A HUACA: PRACTICE AND RITE AT SANTA ROSA

The archaeological record of Santa Rosa is characterized by a remarkable spatial duration and marked temporal and conceptual discontinuities in ritual activities. First, the ritual activities at Santa Rosa were anchored to a specific locus. The mounds at Santa Rosa are the only funerary mounds known from the Tumbes river valley. They are distinctive anthropogenic features on an otherwise nondescript landform, the alluvial fan associated with Quebrada La Peña which is topographically similar to other nearby landforms. All the deposits described above occurred in an area of less than 50 x 50 m, with Compound I – measuring only 22 x 20 m – being an intensive spatial focus of ritual practice.

The archaeological evidence from Santa Rosa reflects dynamic processes of practice in which a given archaeological expression – a secondary burial cairn, bi-chromatic mounds, or a shaft tomb – was only one node in a complex chain of events. During the Early Formative Period, the large circular hearth pit was dug, slathered with clay on its interior and well-made border. Algarrobo wood was gathered, placed in the hearth, and fired. Human remains were placed on or nearby the hearth. Similarly, the secondary burial cairns involved a complex sequence of ritual practice: initial treatment of the corpse, collection of skeletal remains, collecting cobblestones, preparing the mud matrix, building the cairns, setting the *Spondylus* offerings into the mud matrix before it dried, and placing the skeletal materials

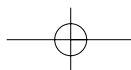
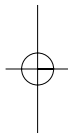
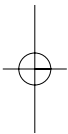


and grave goods in the cairns – a sequence of actions over time. In much the same way, building the red and gray mounds involved a complex set of events. The mound construction in the southern portion of Compound I required the collection of two types of fill, fire-reddened earth and gray clay and ash, and their careful placement in alternating strata. The late pre-hispanic shaft tombs followed a defined sequence of excavation, construction, interment, and closure. In each case, there is a complex, multi-stage, and intentional set of ritual practices expressed by distinct archaeological signatures, each marking a distinctive funerary *chaîne opératoire* (Moore, 2005: 173).

Despite their spatial rootedness, ritual practices at Santa Rosa diverged chronologically and conceptually. Approximately 4400 years elapsed between the last fire in the large circular hearth (c. 3350–2910 BCE) and the construction of the secondary burial cairns in the late fifteenth century CE; it is hard to argue that these events were linked by ‘memory’, whether individual or collective. Further, the ritual practices are conceptually divergent. The Inca shaft tombs followed a specific construction sequence that involved not only building the tomb – by excavating the flared pit, consolidating its interior sloping walls with a mud matrix – but also in placing the body and grave goods in a primary context, and then sealing the tomb by placing adobe blocks in the mouth of the pit, pouring a slurry of silt and water over the opening and then placing a line of fist-sized cobbles in the matrix. The dead were interred according to fairly common standards of Inca funerary practice: the bodies wrapped in cloth, adorned with copper ornaments and beads, and accompanied by ceramic grave goods. A principal objective of Inca funerary practice was the preservation of the body and the symbolic conservation of an ancestor, which is clearly represented in the shaft tombs at Santa Rosa. Distinct from ‘classic’ Inca burial treatments where the ancestral mummy was placed in a crypt and regularly venerated by kin (Doyle, 1988; Moore, 1996: 124–5; Nielsen, 2008; Rowe, 1946: 286–7), the Santa Rosa mummies were placed in a sealed shaft tomb. Despite the significant differences in funerary practices, the Santa Rosa burials were enacted to keep the body intact (Moore, 2004: 106–13).

The secondary burials at Santa Rosa are quite different and imply distinct conceptions of death. Admittedly, the secondary funerary practices at Santa Rosa are not completely understood, and (as far as I am aware) they are dissimilar to any practices currently reported in the archaeological or ethnographic literature from the equatorial Andes. Based on the archaeological evidence, it seems as if the human remains were not cremated, although after de-fleshing some of the skeletal remains were exposed to a lower heat, and then skeletal remains were placed in the cairns with offerings of *Spondylus* shell and copper.

While the details of ritual practice are incompletely understood, it seems reasonable that the secondary burials represented social conceptions of death different from the Inca primary burials; in other words, these are



distinctive, structuring schemes of habitus. Inca burial practices emphasized the preservation of the body and the need to provision the soul with items for the afterlife. In secondary burials, as Sullivan (1988: 510) observes, 'communities dispose of the dead several times over. . . . These acts are not redundant but represent steps in a serial process of refinement, each ending a different moment in the spiritual economy. The refinishing process . . . defines the limits of the dead individual vis-à-vis the universe and the living.' In short, the different practices at Santa Rosa are separated by time and by habitus, even though those practices took place in the same small area.

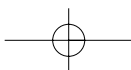
Despite being material expressions of commemoration, the patterns of ritual practice at Santa Rosa are not illuminated by 'an archaeology of memory', particularly one that privileges individual memory and agency. The situation at Santa Rosa seems analogous to the 'disjunctive memnonia' of Deir el Medina of which Lynn Meskell writes:

. . . the site became a numinous locale, without any recognition of its utilitarian purpose or, indeed, its past residents. *From a hermeneutic standpoint, the specificities of memory can only endure with sustained contexts.* Memory cannot be transmitted without continual revision and refashioning. This entails diverse moments of modification, reuse, ignoring and forgetting . . . and investing with new meanings. *Thus the socio-spatial disjunctures at Deir el Medina are not surprising, but they are potent reminders of the erasure of memory and the ontological difficulties in assuming coherence of memory over the long term. What may specifically appear to reflect continuity and memorization might instead represent a palimpsest of meanings and a protean attitude to locality.* (2003: 36, emphasis added)

Similarly, Littleton (2007) has studied over 1500 pre-contact aboriginal burials in southeastern Australia, and she has identified specific patterns in the topographic features where burials are placed (the tops of dunes, small hummocks and other raised features). Yet, even when a number of burials occur together, radiocarbon dates suggest that those interments were separated by centuries. This reflects, Littleton (2007: 1025) suggests, a situation 'where place persists but people do not. . . . Even if a group leaves an area and is eventually replaced by others, the landscape symbols attract similar but new stories and designs. . . . The significance of the landscape persists because people share a model of how to occupy and react to it, rather than a specific knowledge or memory.'

Confronting a lack of continuity and conceptual disjunctures at Santa Rosa, it seems unlikely that this complex palimpsest of ritual activities reflects 'social memory' as much as it does ritual praxis. Again, while some of the specifics of funerary practices at Santa Rosa are incompletely understood, it is plausible to interpret the ritual acts in terms of individual agency, historical contingencies, and habitus.

Just as the specific ritual enactments involved individual agency (e.g. the preparation of the corpse, the selection and placement of offerings),



the trajectories of those actions were structured via distinct sets of habitus (e.g. the preservation of the body in primary burials vs the refinement of the body in secondary burial, the use of *Spondylus* offerings, the creation of bi-chromatic mounds). In turn, these ritual practices were enacted within the contexts of historically contingent events: the Early Formative occupation of Santa Rosa followed by its abandonment, the reutilization of Santa Rosa as a sacred space, and the northward expansion of the Inca Empire, among others. Rather than an appeal to social memory, it is the intersection of these domains of practice – individual agency, habitus, and history – that focuses archaeological inquiry into the complex processes involved in making a huaca at Santa Rosa.

■ CONCLUSION

Recent excavations at the small site of Santa Rosa, Department of Tumbes, uncovered a surprisingly complex material record of ritual activities that occurred at various points over five thousand years. Beginning with an Early Formative (c. 3500–3100) occupation that (minimally) involved one or more extended families who employed large circular hearths (possibly associated with funerary customs), Santa Rosa was abandoned until c. CE 1400. After a relatively brief residential occupation, at c. CE 1400–1470, ritual use of Santa Rosa intensified as a locus for the creation of secondary burials associated with cairns in which offerings of *Spondylus* shell and copper were placed. This was followed by a new suite of ritual practices associated with the Inca influence on Tumbes and adjacent portions of highland Ecuador dating to CE 1470–1532. This new set of ritual practices involved the careful construction of earthen mounds made from alternating layers of fire-reddened earth and gray clay and ash possibly salvaged from the Formative period deposits, the excavation and preparation of shaft tombs, the placement of primary burials wrapped in cloth and accompanied by grave goods, the careful sealing of the shaft tombs, and then the completion of the mound by adding final alternating layers of red and gray fill.

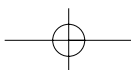
That such complex and distinctive ritual practices occurred in one very small locus might suggest that Santa Rosa held an enduring sacredness commemorated in acts of social memory, but the temporal and conceptual discontinuities evident in the ritual practices suggest that an appeal to ‘social’ or ‘collective’ memory is unwarranted. Rather, a theoretical approach that simultaneously acknowledges individual agency, the structuring schema of habitus, *and* historical contingency provides a more nuanced and materially attentive archaeological understanding of the ways ritual practice was employed to make statements about human existence at Santa Rosa and elsewhere in prehistory.

Acknowledgements

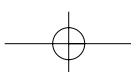
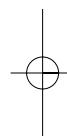
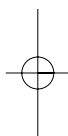
The excavations at Santa Rosa were conducted by members of the Proyecto Arqueológico Tumbes, under the authority of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura, Peru (Resolución Directoral Nacional No. 527/ 20 April 2007) and funded by the National Science Foundation (Grant No. 0549454). The 2007 field season was directed by Moore and Licenciado Daniel Dávila Manrique. I wish to thank Licenciado Rafael Díaz Montalvo and Licenciada Carolina Vélchez, INC-Tumbes, for their unwavering support for the Proyecto Arqueológico Tumbes over the years. In addition to Moore and Dávila, the excavations at Santa Rosa were supervised by the outstanding archaeologists Milagros Orbegoso and Bernardino Olaya Olaya. I also thank Dr John Verano, Tulane University, for examining a sample of the skeletal materials from Santa Rosa. I also appreciate comments on an earlier draft by Andrew Stewart and Janine Gasco, as well as the useful suggestions made by Timothy Pauketat and two anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of Social Archaeology*. Any errors of exposition or interpretation are solely my own.

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