

ARQUEOLOGÍA MOCHICA NUEVOS ENFOQUES



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FIGURINES, HOUSEHOLD RITUALS, AND THE USE OF DOMESTIC SPACE IN A MIDDLE MOCHE RURAL COMMUNITY

Jennifer E. Ringberg*

This paper explores the functions and meanings of mold-made figurines in the daily lives of the inhabitants of Ciudad de Dios, a Moche Phase III-IV habitation site located in the middle Moche Valley. The figurines are analyzed and compared based upon contextual information, stylistic elements, and manufacturing techniques. The people of Ciudad de Dios engaged in a variety of household-based tasks, including food production and consumption, coarseware pottery manufacture, and metal working. I will examine to what degree and in what contexts ritual use of figurines articulated with other activities that took place at the site. Additional topics include the possible origins of manufacture of the Ciudad de Dios figurines, the range of subject matter and ideological repertoire expressed in the figurine assemblage, and contextual information that may reveal clues about gender and social status as they relate to the use of domestic space at the site. Investigators found no molds for figurines or finewares at Ciudad de Dios, and stylistic similarities indicate that these objects may have been produced at centers like the Huacas de Moche or Cerro Mayal. Comparisons are also made with figurine manufacture and use in this and other valleys on the North Coast, in particular the civic/ceremonial and manufacturing sites mentioned above. I expect that this and future investigations at Ciudad de Dios and other rural household sites will reveal how participation in the state ideology was personalized to the needs of individuals, families, and communities.

Esta investigación explora las funciones y significados de las figurinas moldeadas en la vida cotidiana de los habitantes de Ciudad de Dios, un sitio habitacional perteneciente a las fases Moche III-IV, ubicado en la zona norte del valle medio de Moche. Las figurinas son analizadas y comparadas basándose en información contextual, elementos estilísticos y técnicas de producción. La gente de Ciudad de Dios se ocupó de una variedad de actividades domésticas incluyendo la producción y el consumo de la comida, la fabricación de la alfarería doméstica y las últimas etapas de la producción metalúrgica. En ese sentido, examino a qué extremo y en qué contextos se articuló el uso de dichas figurinas con otras actividades que ocurrieron en el sitio. Temas adicionales de la investigación son los posibles orígenes de fabricación de las figurinas encontradas en Ciudad de Dios; el rango de temas y el repertorio ideológico expresado en las figurinas; así como información contextual que puede revelar claves sobre el estatus social y el género relacionado con el uso del espacio habitacional en el sitio. Cabe resaltar que no encontramos moldes para figurinas ni moldes para la cerámica fina en el sitio y las semejanzas estilísticas indican que estos objetos posiblemente fueron producidos en centros como las Huacas de Moche en el valle de Moche o Cerro Mayal en el valle de Chicama. Por ello, establezco comparaciones con la fabricación y el uso de las figurinas en este y en otros valles de la costa norte del Perú, en particular en los sitios cívico-ceremoniales y centros de producción mencionados anteriormente. Esta investigación y las que realizaremos en el futuro, en Ciudad de Dios y otros sitios habitacionales rurales, revelarán cómo la participación en la ideología estatal fue personalizada de acuerdo a las necesidades de individuos, familias y comunidades.

Despite the growing number of Moche scholars engaged in studies of the household, there is still a need for studies focusing on Moche households within communities located in the countryside (Bawden 1982; Chapdelaine 2002; Cruz *et al.* 1996; Dillehay 2001; Jáuregui *et al.* 1995). Understanding how rural households were affected by the ideological influences and economic demands of the larger polity is key to explaining how Moche rulers maintained or failed to manage their productivity. Explorations of the effects of Moche political economy and ideology at sites of a

variety of sizes and functions in the countryside will complement the current, in-depth studies of political, economic, and ideological phenomena at the larger ceremonial centers such as the Huacas de Moche, the Complejo El Brujo, San José de Moro, and Pampa Grande (see for example Castillo 2001; Franco 1998; Franco *et al.* 1996; Galvez and Briceño 2001; Quilter 2002; Shimada 1994; Uceda and Armas 1997, 1998; Uceda and Mujica 1994; see also Bernier, this volume; Pimentel, this volume; Prieto, this volume; Rengifo and Rojas, this volume; Tello, this volume).

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In this paper, I focus on one aspect of potential state influence on rural household life by looking at material manifestations of ideology in the form of fired clay figurines. I examine the ways in which these mold-made figurines might have been used by the residents of Ciudad de Dios, a Moche Phase III-IV (A.D. 400-600) community located in the middle Moche Valley (figure 1). I also explore the significance that these objects might have had for individuals in the site's households as they engaged in a variety of tasks, including agricultural activities, food processing and storage, plainware pottery production, and metal working. I summarize an investigation of style and contextual data for the assemblage of figurines found at the site, and discuss how figurine function and meaning may have articulated with the daily activities in which the inhabitants of Ciudad de Dios engaged. Many Moche fineware and figurine fragments were recovered during excavation, but no evidence for their production was found at the site. I hypothesize that residents of the community engaged in political-economic interaction or obligations with people who were somehow connected to centers that managed and supported centralized production of these items, such as the Huacas de Moche in the Moche Valley (Uceda and Armas 1998) or Cerro Mayal in the Chicama Valley (Russell and Jackson 2001). I discuss possible indicators of ties to these centers, and discuss how aspects of this overarching ideology may have been personalized and enacted in household rituals within the community.

Research Objectives

Several objectives guided this research. The first one was to define the total figurine assemblage. This included documenting what types of figurines were found and who or what was represented in the full range of images. Also considered were determinations of whether the figure was human or not, and, if human, whether artisans indicated gender, age, social rank, status, or other markers of identity on the figurines. The second goal was to reconstruct techniques of manufacture used to make the figurines. Different methods of manufacture may have

been connected to different styles or types of figurines or to the different contexts of use in meaningful ways. A third objective was to determine the contexts of use for the different types or styles of figurines. This included who might have used the figurines, how they were used, and the locations and duration of use. These were considered important factors in elucidating possible figurine functions and meanings. Hypothesizing about how figurines got to the site and where they came from is important too. Currently, there is no evidence that reveal that the figurines found at Ciudad de Dios were made at the site. However, the production technology of figurines found at Ciudad de Dios will provide clues about the levels of social organization, inter-community interaction, and economic complexity in which the site's residents participated.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical issues addressed in this study consider two main themes. The first concerns the figurines themselves and what they represent ideologically and materially to different groups of people in Moche society. The second deals with the effects of this materialized ideology on the lives of average citizens in households that were far removed from the civic/ceremonial centers where that ideology was focused. One important question in research on the effects of increasing sociopolitical complexity is whether the ideology of common people was compatible or in conflict with those groups attempting to gain social, economic, and political power (Dillehay 2001:262). For this research, the question is whether the increasing size, influence, and sociopolitical complexity of the Southern Moche Polity impacted daily life in rural communities such as Ciudad de Dios and, if so, whether these effects are visible in the archaeological record.

Households are seldom chosen as locations for studying the material remains of ideology and ritual, even though they can be thought of as microcosms of the broader principles and cultural attitudes of the larger society (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998:201). The identification of ritual in households has been described in the past as difficult at best

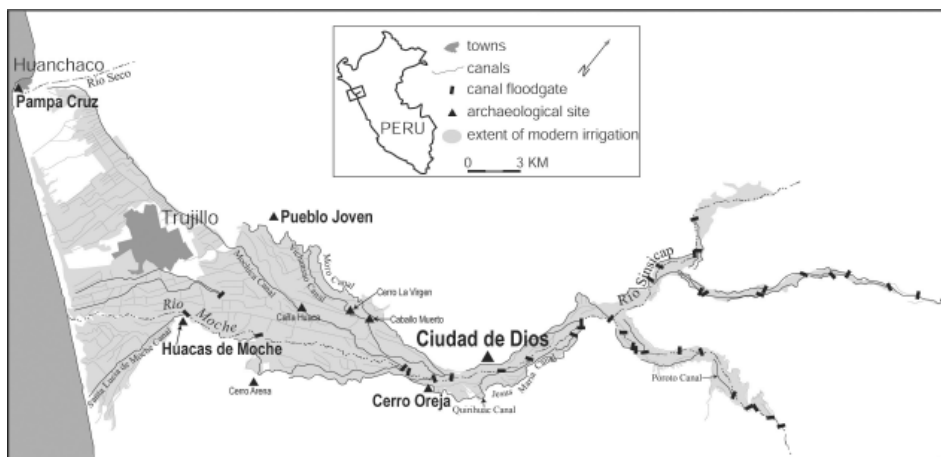


Figure 1. The Moche Valley, indicating the location of Ciudad de Dios and other sites discussed in the text.

(Flannery 1976:336). Yet, throughout the Andes, ethnographic and ethnohistoric accounts demonstrate that the household is a metaphor for the family, and there are numerous rituals surrounding it (Sillar 2000:40). For families and individuals in the past, ritual and religious life may have been inseparable from what modern Western society considers everyday domestic life. The presence of figurines, presumably used as focal objects or offerings in household contexts, is a good indicator that personal- and family-level rituals may have been essential to daily life.

Previous Research on Moche Figurines

This study is relevant to current research on Moche figurines because it adds to the reported cases of figurines in domestic contexts in the Moche Valley and other valleys considered part of the Southern Moche Polity (e.g., Prieto, this volume; Rengifo and Rojas, this volume). It complements the existing body of work on Moche figurines by providing information from a rural, smaller scale community, whereas most studies to date have been from major civic/ceremonial centers or production sites. Many reports on Moche archaeology have sections on figurines providing inventories, descriptions, and comparisons to other assemblages

(see for example Bawden 1977:316, 329; Chapdelaine 2002:66-68; Cruz *et al.* 1996; Strong and Evans 1952:181-183; Topic 1977; Uceda and Armas 1997:94-102, 1998:95-103). These provide information on the full range of styles and contexts in the total Moche figurine assemblage, as well as information on diachronic and spatial changes of these aspects. There are several studies that deal with figurines exclusively, most notably those of Rose Lilien (1956), Sophie Limoges (1999), Alexandra Morgan (1996), Alana Cordy-Collins (2001), and Belkys Gutierrez and Miguel Asmad (2002). Lilien (1956) and Morgan (1996) examine figurines from different regions and time periods in the Central Andes, while Limoges (1999), Cordy-Collins (2001), and Gutierrez and Asmad (2002) write exclusively about Moche figurines.

The Moche figurines from Lilien's study are from the Moche, Santa, Virú, and Chicama valleys (Lilien 1956). She observed several general trends in her research, including the use of molds rather than hand-modeling as the main method of figurine manufacture, and the absence of appliquéd decoration on figurines (Lilien 1956:100). She also notes that the use of paint or slip on Moche figurines increased from the northern to the southern valleys (Lilien 1956:100). Larger hollow figurines tended to be more elaborate and found more often in graves, while

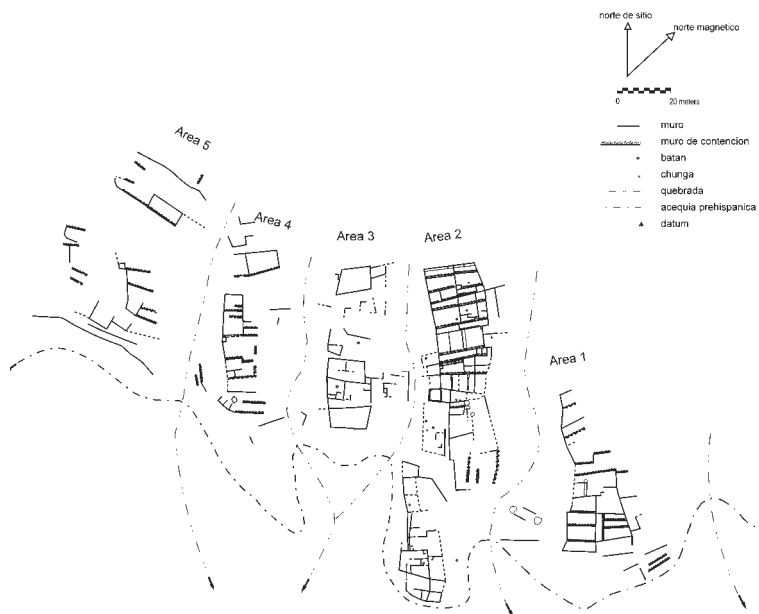


Figure 2. Plan view map of Ciudad de Dios.

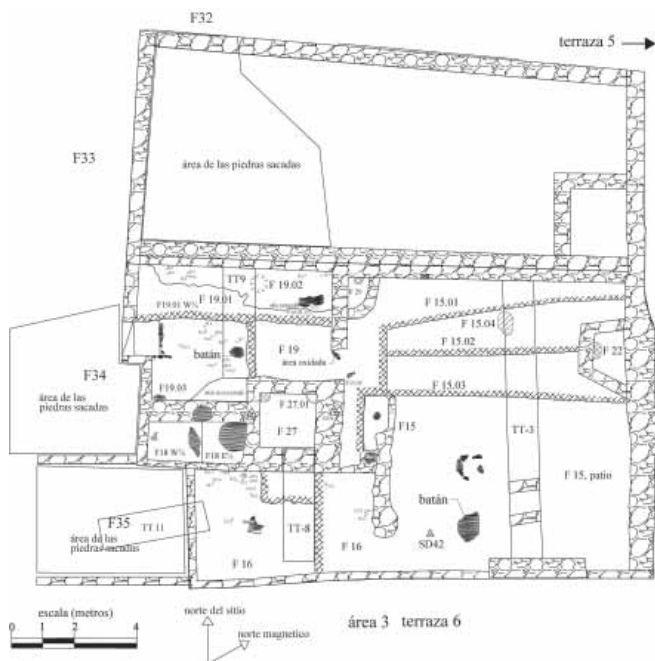


Figure 3. Plan view map of Terrace 6 in Area 3 at Ciudad de Dios (drawing by J. Pleasants).

smaller solid figurines were simply dressed or naked and were recovered from domestic households and trash middens (Lilien 1956:80). Finally, whistles in the form of human figures were more elaborately dressed, and only males were represented (Lilien 1956:97).

Many of the current studies that provide descriptions and analyses of Moche figurines have been produced by the Zona Urbana Moche (ZUM) project conducted by the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo and the Université de Montreal (Chapdelaine 2002; Cruz *et al.* 1996; Gutierrez and Asmad 2002; Jaúgeri *et al.* 1995; Limoges 1999; Uceda and Armas 1997, 1998). The most detailed study to result from this research is the thesis by Limoges (1999). In an area of multi-room living and work spaces and a ceremonial platform near the Huaca de la Luna, Limoges reported five main contexts for figurines recovered from excavations. These are: 1) storage rooms; 2) common living areas; 3) kitchen hearths (or often food refuse areas next to hearths); 4) multi-use areas like room antechambers and trash middens; and 5) ritual platforms and burials (Limoges 1999:128). The most common context for the figurines was hearths, followed by common rooms (Limoges 1999:128). A wide range of conventionalized anthropomorphic figures representing different social actors from elite personages to naked prisoners was found (Limoges 1999:93). Limoges combines contexts and subject matter to eliminate many previous interpretations of Moche figurine function. Because figurines are mass-produced items found mostly on the ground in residences and in domestic trash, she concludes that most likely they were not used as child's playthings, charms brought into battle by warriors, supplications for fertility, or sacred objects or idols (Limoges 1999:134). She instead focuses on the multiple roles of figurines in religious and socioeconomic life for people who lived and worked in the middle and upper classes of Moche society.

Deep traditions of figurine manufacture and use exist throughout the Central Andes (see Stocker 1991), but it is difficult to tell what cultural or technological antecedents might have directly influenced the development of the Moche mold-

made figurine tradition. In the preceding Gallinazo phase and Moche Phase I, figurines are rare and molds are not reported in the literature (Bennett 1950; Donnan and Mackey 1978; Lilien 1956:78; Strong and Evans 1952). The Ecuadorian figurine tradition is the most well-developed, containing elements that are widespread in the Andes, such as standardized poses and the use of clothing and ornaments to mark status, while down-playing other identity markers such as gender (Cummins 1994:162). Recuay, the Lima Style, and Nasca are contemporaneous traditions where, as with the Moche, the preferred and most elaborate medium for displaying ideological representations is the pottery vessel. However, figurine production for these traditions does not seem to have reached the same level as that of the Moche.

Research Setting

This article is part of a long-term research study of households in the Moche Valley directed by Brian Billman. Through his Moche Origins Project (MOP), field school students have worked at Ciudad de Dios, mapping and excavating the site from 1998 to 2002. One objective of the MOP at Ciudad de Dios was to create a detailed topographic map of the full extent of the site and its features. The goal of excavation was to explore a variety of contexts, including sampling within different types of architecture and other domestic features such as patios and middens. These methods were used to determine what types of functional and status-related differences were visible across the site, and to establish the duration of occupation and mode of abandonment (Billman 2000; Billman *et al.* 1999; Billman *et al.* 2001).

Ciudad de Dios is located on the north side of the middle Moche Valley, approximately 18 km from the coast (figure 1). There is no ceremonial or public architecture at the site. The habitations cover 3.3 hectares and rest on five «finger» ridges about 50 meters above the valley floor (figure 2). The ridgetops are designated Areas 1 to 5. This study focuses on excavations and materials from two of these residential areas – Areas 3 and 4. Area 3,

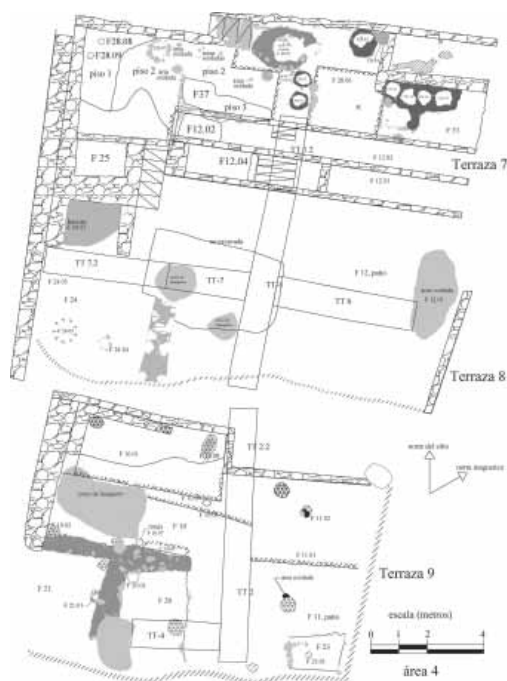


Figure 4. Plan view map of Terraces 7, 8, and 9 in Area 4 at Ciudad de Dios (drawing by J. Pleasants).

approximately 25 by 50 meters, has masonry construction and at least 35 rooms or patio areas (Billman 2000:6; Gumerman and Briceño 2003:234) (figure 3). Students recovered a large amount of fineware pottery sherds during the surface collection of Area 3. Area 4 is located further down the *quebrada* and covers an area roughly equal to that of Area 3 (25 by 55 meters) (Billman 2000:6) (figure 4). Area 4 architectural remains consist of low stone foundations for *quincha* wall construction, with little evidence for masonry buildings or walls. Areas 3 and 4 probably functioned as living, working, and storage spaces for multi-generation, extended families. The residents of Ciudad de Dios participated in a variety of tasks centered around both the subsistence and political economies within the sphere of influence of the Southern Moche Polity. Evidence for production of *chicha*, coarseware pottery, and finishing of metal objects exists within the rooms and patios of the habitation areas

(Billman 2000:21-41; Billman *et al.* 2001:28-44; Gumerman and Briceño 2003:238-239). It is clear that the population at Ciudad de Dios interacted and exchanged goods with people at the Moche political and religious centers, but the extent of the interaction and its impact on daily life in the settlement is as yet unclear.

Ciudad de Dios dates to the Middle Moche Period (ca. A.D. 400-600), corresponding to Phases III and IV of the Larco stylistic sequence. This is one of the most prosperous periods of expansion for the Southern Moche Polity, which was centered in the Chicama and Moche valleys. Construction of public works, including roads, monuments, and irrigation canals, occurred on an unprecedented scale, especially in the Moche and Santa valleys (Billman 1996:310). It was also a period of dramatic agricultural expansion and intensification. Large-scale construction continued at the Huacas de Moche, which became the largest site in the valley during this time. A new settlement hierarchy ensured that no site in the valley was more than about 5.5 km from an administrative center (Billman 1996:313). Paramount centers were established as part of a three-tier hierarchy of sites, and settlement shifted closer to the coast (Billman 2002:392, 1996:331).

Ciudad de Dios Figurine Data

Surface collection and excavation during three field seasons (1998-2000) at Ciudad de Dios recovered a total of 122 figurines. Only 95 figurines from primary and secondary feature contexts are included in this study (table 1). The assemblage is almost entirely fragmentary. In fact, only two whole figurines were recovered from excavation contexts. Breakage patterns are relatively evenly distributed among the different parts of figurines, although slightly more torsos and feet or bases (especially for the hollow figurines) were recovered from excavation. Archaeological evidence points to several possible explanations for the high amount of breakage, including post-discard trampling and other site formation processes. In addition, the majority of the assemblage consists of hollow figurines, which are

more prone to breakage than solid figurines. Intentional breakage may have also occurred when the residents of Ciudad de Dios used the figurines. Such intentional breakage of figurines, either during or after rituals, occurs elsewhere in South America (DeBoer 1998:121). Although Gabriel Prieto (this volume) suggests that breakage of figurines was a common ritual act in elite Moche households, there is currently no unequivocal evidence linking breakage directly to ritual at Ciudad de Dios.

In terms of method of manufacture and materials used, 70% of the assemblage is comprised of hollow figurine fragments. Hollow figurines were made of two pieces or slabs of clay. The front was constructed by pressing clay into a mold to a more or less uniform thickness. This molded front piece was then joined with a rounded slab of clay that serves as the back of the figure. Often the bases of the hollow figurines are flat on the bottom, and a small hole was punched into the clay on the bottom of the feet before firing. It seems likely that the holes in the bases were put there to promote more even drying and firing and to reduce the chances of breakage during those stages of manufacture.

Solid figurines were made in a press mold as well, but the mold was filled with clay and the back was smoothed flat. Most solid and hollow figurines were fired in an oxidizing atmosphere. Surface treatments, such as burnishing or the application of slip or paint, are rare. However, it appears that incised lines were often added to solid figurines in order to emphasize physical characteristics such as enhancing fingers and toes on human figures. Judging from the appearance of the incisions, this was most likely done after the figurines were removed from their molds but before the clay had completely dried.

All identifiable figurine fragments depict human beings. Human figures were identifiable as to sex mainly by primary sexual characteristics. Biological sex was easily determined on several figurines when female genitalia were readily apparent. Identification of gender as either male or female for clothed figurines is less certain. Figurines were assigned gender based on a variety of other characteristics, including hairstyle, headgear, clothing, ornamentation, and objects held in the figure's hands. Glenn Russell and

Area and Feature	Feature Type	Function	Count
Area 3, Terrace 6			
Feature 14	generic room		1
Feature 15	gen. room/ patio	poss. metal working	5
Subfeature 15.01	Bench		6
Subfeature 15.02	Bench		4
Subfeature 15.04	ash dump		2
Feature 16	generic room		1
Feature 17	generic room		1
Feature 18	masonry room	storage	1
Feature 19	large masonry room	cooking/living	24
Subfeature 19.01	Bench		3
Feature 27	generic room	storage	7
Feature 29	masonry room	storage	1
Feature 32	midden		9
Feature 33	extramural activity area		1
Feature 34	Patio		1
Feature 35	Patio		2
Area 4, Terrace 7			
Feature 28	generic room	chicha brewing/ storage	3
Subfeature 28.06	hearth or masonry ring		1
Area 4, Terrace 8			
Feature 12	Patio	chicha brewing/ storage	3
Subfeature 12.02	Bench		1
Feature 24	generic room	chicha brewing/ storage	6
Area 4, Terrace 9		cooking/living	
Feature 10	generic room	cooking area	1
Subfeature 10.01	Bench		1
Subfeature 10.03	trash deposit		3
Subfeature 10.08	Hearth		2
Feature 11	generic room		4
Subfeature 11.01	Bench		1
		Figurine total:	95

Table 1. Figurines from features in Areas 3 and 4 at Ciudad de Dios.

Margaret Jackson use «formal characteristics previously established in the Moche iconographic corpus, generally costume elements» to identify gender (Russell and Jackson 2001:167). For women,

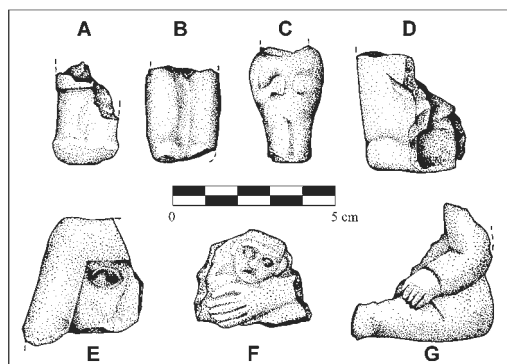


Figure 5. Figurines from Area 3 (C-G) and Area 4 (A and B) at Ciudad de Dios.

the most common gender identifiers are braids or other hairstyles, caps or hoods, and dangling, crescent-shaped ear ornaments (Jackson 2000:75). For men, the most common identifiers are headdresses and spool-shaped ear ornaments, objects related to war such as clubs and shields held in the hands, or elaborate dress such as tunics with pleats or possible representations of cotton armor. Of the figurines that are positively or tentatively identifiable as to sex and/or gender, 14 are female and one is male. For the females, identifications are based on primary sexual characteristics or costume elements. For the male, identification is based on warrior costume elements. Gender identifications on clothed figurines are tentative and intended to provide helpful categories for discussion.

Stylistic Data

Representations of human figures occur on several fineware vessel fragments at Ciudad de Dios. These are either painted in two dimensions or molded in low relief. Two other categories where human figures occur are figurines and musical instruments. Figurines at Ciudad de Dios are both hollow and solid, and occur in a general range of size classes that are discussed below. Musical instruments include whistles and rattles. Figurines occur far more often in the Ciudad de Dios assemblage than do musical instruments. Musical instruments are not included in this analysis because

subject matter and function differ from that of figurines. Musical instruments are mentioned, however, where their presence is significant in the contextual data of the site, or where comparisons with figurines are pertinent to the discussion.

Figurines were divided into three size categories during their analysis. These basic size classes may relate to aspects of figurine function. Obtaining accurate measurements was problematic because the figurines are almost all broken. Small figurines range from 4 to 8 centimeters tall and are solid, one-piece, press-mold items. None of the pendant-sized (3 centimeters or less) figurines Russell and Jackson describe (2001:168) for Cerro Mayal were recovered at Ciudad de Dios. Medium-sized figurines are estimated to be about 8 to 12 centimeters in height. The majority of these are made from a solid slab of clay pressed into a one-sided mold. Any figurine that was estimated to have exceeded 12 cm in height was categorized as belonging to the large size class. Large figurines are mostly hollow and are approximately 15 centimeters tall.

Three small figurines were found at Ciudad de Dios (figure 5, A-C). All figures are depicted standing upright with arms bent at the elbow and hands resting across the torso. The feet and hands of the figures are depicted very simplistically. One of these figurine fragments has an incised line across the legs suggesting a short tunic. Another fragment, a pair of legs broken off at the groin, has female genitalia.

Medium-sized figurines have a wider variety of ornamentation. The only two whole figurines are medium-sized solid pieces recovered from floor contexts in Feature 15, a patio area interpreted as a possible metal working area (figure 6, A and B). The figurines were made from solid, one-piece press molds. They are female and wear simple, short tunics, caps, beaded necklaces or collars, and large, dangling, crescent-shaped ear ornaments. Arms are bent across the torso and hands and feet are crudely depicted with no incised lines for fingers or toes.

One additional female figurine likely fits into the medium-sized figurine class. This figurine is solid and painted with white slip on the hair, the eyes, and in horizontal bands on the short tunic (figure 7, B). Female genitalia may be present just above

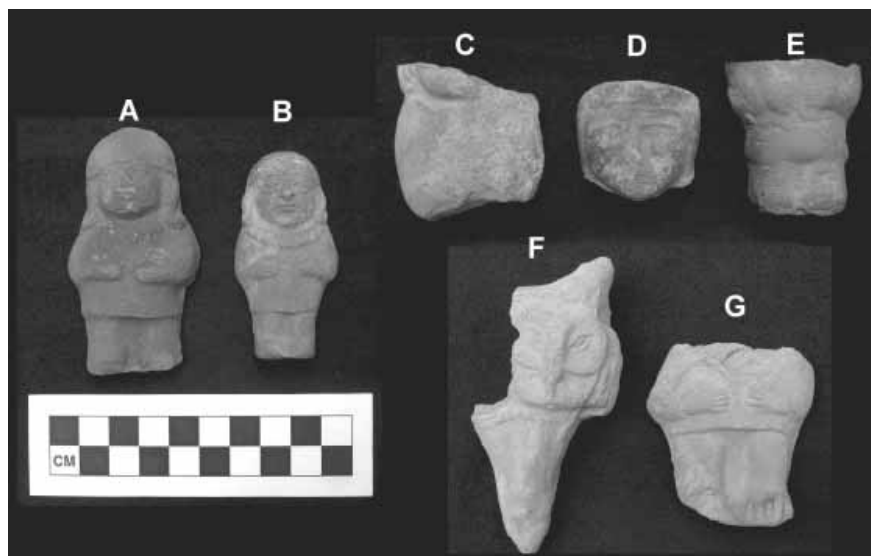


Figure 6. Figurines from Feature 15 (A-E) and Feature 27 (F and G) in Area 3 at Ciudad de Dios.

where the legs have broken, but the location of the break has obscured this detail. A single hollow figurine most likely belongs in the medium-sized category. This is a fragment of what appears to be a seated infant (figure 5, G). This piece is unique because it is three-dimensional and seems more naturally and realistically posed than any other figurine in the assemblage.

Two solid figurine fragments probably fit into the large-size category and were classed as such. One is a head fragment of a warrior wearing head gear that wraps around the chin and has a small head (possibly a trophy head) on the forehead (figure 6, C). The other is a large, flat piece of a torso depicting a beaded necklace and a hand holding a braid (figure 6, A). This figurine fragment was identified as a woman because of the braided hair.

Hollow figurines all fit into the large size category with the exception of the seated figurine discussed above. The fragments are more numerous than for the solid figurines, but the hollow fragments are considerably smaller. A greater amount of breakage may have occurred for the hollow figurines because of their thinner walls and method of manufacture. Seven hollow figurine fragments are unidentifiable

as to part of the body. Five fragments of feet/legs are present in the assemblage, as well as four hat or cap fragments, two partial head fragments, and one torso. The only hollow figurine that is close to being intact is a female with the head broken off (figure 7, H). The figure wears her hair in long, stylized braids. She is clothed in a short tunic with a hem just above the groin revealing female genitalia. She also wears a necklace of rectangular-shaped beads. This could also be a collar on the tunic woven in a rectangular pattern. The feet are flat and the figure stands securely without support.

Contextual Data

The ninety-five figurines recovered from features at Ciudad de Dios came from a variety of domestic contexts on Terrace 6 of Area 3 and Terraces 7, 8, and 9 of Area 4 (table 1). These areas were originally chosen for excavation because of the differences in the style of architecture for each area. Where possible, the functions or uses of space were identified by Billman *et al.* (2000, 2001) and corroborated by others working with the MOP (Gumerman and Briceño 2003; Mehaffey 1998;



Figure 7. Figurines from Feature 28 (A and B), Feature 24 (C and D), and Feature 10 (E-H) in Area 4 at Ciudad de Dios.

Tate 1998). These functions included cooking areas, common rooms, patios, storage rooms, special-use areas such as *chicha* production or metalworking, and middens.

Contextual data for Area 3 focused on Features 19 and 15, located on Terrace 6 (figure 3). These features are interpreted as a cooking area and patio, probably intended to house a single family (Billman 2000:36). Overall, this terrace had relatively well-preserved interior features and floors. Substantial labor was invested in the construction of Terrace 6 (Billman 2000:36). Feature 19 was the largest masonry room in Area 3 and yielded the highest number of figurines ($n = 27$ or 28%) for any of the feature contexts. Downslope erosion from a large flank midden (Feature 32) just north of Feature 19 is most likely a significant factor in the large number of figurines and other artifacts recovered from this area (Billman *et al.* 2001:32). Domestic trash containing figurine fragments was also used in the construction of the room's walls and large bench (Feature 19.01) (Billman *et al.* 2001:32).

Interpretation of Feature 19 as a cooking and living area was based on a number of variables

including the presence of a hearth, a bench, a water jug with pot-rest, a large *batán*, and a large number of finewares and everyday cooking vessels (Billman *et al.* 2001:36). Although many of the figurine fragments in Feature 19 were small and difficult to identify, the bench (Feature 19.01) had a few larger pieces, including three hollow bases with feet and legs present, plus one hollow part of a cap or cranium. One of the bases included the groin area and showed the figure to be female (figure 5, D). The Feature 32 flank midden north of Feature 19 contained three fragments of hollow figurines (figure 5, E-G). The first is a head with either a hood or long hair with bangs, which was classed as female. The second hollow fragment depicts an arm holding a doll or infant. The third is the hollow figurine depicting a seated infant.

As previously mentioned, the Feature 15 patio area associated with Feature 19 contained the only two whole figurines in the assemblage (figure 6, A and B). These were the medium-sized, solid figures that, based on costume elements, were identified as women. One of these figurines was recovered from a thin layer of fill on the patio surface. The other was found *in situ* on the floor.

An ash dump, benches, and a possible hearth for finishing stages of production of metal objects were all located in the Feature 15 patio area (Billman *et al.* 2001:29-30). Within the fill of the Feature 15.02 bench, a small, solid figurine with its head broken off was found (figure 5, C). The Feature 15.07 hearth contained a pottery vessel with the bottom punched out. This pot was buried on its side and covered with stone slabs, and may have served as a metal working bellows (Billman *et al.* 2001:30). No figurines were recovered from the Feature 15.07 hearth.

Finally, in Area 3, two well-constructed masonry rooms, Features 18 and 27, are adjacent to the kitchen and patio and are interpreted as storage rooms (Billman 2000:38). Feature 18 contained three hollow figurine bases. Feature 27 contained a two-headed owl rattle and a small solid figurine in a short tunic (figure 6, F and G).

In Area 4, field school students and staff excavated three contiguous terraces. These were designated Terraces 7, 8, and 9 (figure 4). Terrace 9 was probably a family residence, while Terraces 7 and 8 have been interpreted as living and working spaces, including a possible *chicha* brewing and storage area (Billman 2000:40-41). Two rooms on Terrace 7, Features 28 and 31, are the proposed locations for brewing *chicha*. The floors of these long, narrow spaces contained many oxidized areas and hearths, as well as rings of stones that could have served as supports for large pottery vessels (Billman 2000:41). No figurines were found in Feature 31, but Feature 28 contained three, two of which are females (figure 7, A and B).

These rooms look down on the Feature 12 patio area that comprises most of Terrace 8. Excavation revealed an area of intense oxidation (Feature 12.01) on the eastern part of the patio, but it did not contain any figurine fragments. The room adjacent to the patio, Feature 24, seems to have been used mainly for food preparation because it contained a hearth (Feature 24.05) and a large amount of guinea pig coprolites on the floor (Billman *et al.* 2001:44). The room was later used for disposal of domestic trash, mostly llama bone, fish bone, shellfish remains, and potsherds. This

trash also contained some unusual items, such as a copper needle, three small, gold-plated copper discs, spondylus and turquoise beads, and quartz crystals (Billman *et al.* 2001:44). The fragment of the warrior figurine with the 'trophy head' headdress was also found in this trash deposit.

Feature 10, located along the back edge of Terrace 9, is interpreted as the main cooking area (Billman 2000:40-41). Six of the seven figurines recovered from Feature 10 were associated with an internal bench and deposits above and beneath the bench. Feature 10 also contained trash that had come out of the adjacent Feature 24 room on Terrace 8. This trash deposit contained a mix of domestic refuse, such as broken plainware and fineware pottery. Three fragments of warrior whistles were present in the trash fill from Feature 24 on the Feature 10 bench (figure 6, E-G). Below the trash deposit, a trench-shaped hearth (Feature 10.08) contained a hollow female figurine that appears to have had the head intentionally broken off (figure 7, H). The figurine was also burned *in situ* (Billman 2000:41).

Discussion

Art and images were important vehicles for political and religious life and were used prolifically, probably as a means to promote cultural ideals and social cohesion in Moche society (Russell and Jackson 2001:159). The challenge for members of Moche society seeking to maintain or increase their own social position was to encourage interdependence and cooperation among communities that were disconnected from each other and largely self-sufficient (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996:31). One obvious method was to facilitate creation of and access to infrastructure in the form of irrigation and road networks (Billman 2002:372). Another strategy of Moche elites may have been to co-opt or create a moral/religious belief system and then legitimize it by restricting the rest of the society's access to the wealth, resources, and knowledge associated with it to varying degrees. Although elites might have gained more social and material benefits from such

transactions, those providing labor or resources would have also benefited enough to have made participation truly worthwhile.

Although fineware pottery vessels were the primary medium for conveying a broad range of messages to a selected audience in Moche society, figurines would have been ideal vehicles for elites desiring to communicate social and religious ideals to a broader spectrum of society. Figurines were relatively inexpensive to produce, and artisans would have been able to make large numbers of them relatively quickly. Their small size and portability and their simple, stylized, standardized images imparted messages specific enough to indicate clear markers of identity, as well as to suggest roles or behaviors. At the same time, the subject matter depicted in figurines would have been general enough so that different individuals could find ways to interpret these messages and fit them into their own personal needs and experiences.

According to current knowledge of Moche Phase III-IV fineware and figurines, production occurred in special locations such as the Huacas de Moche and Cerro Mayal (Russell and Jackson 2001; Uceda and Armas 1997, 1998; Bernier, this volume). This would have increased their desirability and 'effectiveness' as ritual objects, but their inexpensive and mass-produced nature would have made it relatively easy to obtain many different figurines for multiple uses around the home. However, the use of molds may have also enabled restriction of figurine production. Tom Cummins (1994) and Margaret Jackson (1993) have demonstrated that the use of molds may have been more than a step intended to save time or aid in mass production. Molds may have been a means for elites to ensure that everyone who had access to figurines received the same set of standardized iconographic messages. Also, as patrons, elites may have been able to increase or decrease production, thereby affecting value. Figurines may have been received as small gifts from elites or administrators, or they could have been obtained on visits to ceremonial centers where figurine and fineware production took place (Bernier, this volume).

The residents of Ciudad de Dios seem to have comprised a largely self-sufficient farm community capable of producing their own food and plainware pottery (Billman *et al.* 2001). However, evidence also indicates that some households may have belonged to local-level elites who participated in the administration of the Southern Moche Polity (Billman 2002; Gumerman and Briceño 2003; Mehaffey 1998; Tate 1998). This participation may have been in the form of growing maize and producing *chicha* for consumption beyond the household, such as for work parties or other social events. Compared to data from nearby Late Gallinazo/Early Moche households, the residents of Ciudad de Dios grew and processed an increased quantity and variety of corn at the expense of other crops such as beans (Gumerman and Briceño 2003:236; Tate 1998:66). Also, a large quantity of camelid bone was recovered, which may indicate that people in the settlement had relatively ready access to llama meat as a food source (Gumerman and Briceño 2003:237). Large quantities of potsherds from *tinajas* and a wide variety of cooking *ollas* also indicate that the residents of Ciudad de Dios were capable of preparing and storing relatively large quantities of food or drink (Mehaffey 1998:129). Thus, during a period of unprecedented expansion and development of infrastructure in the middle Moche Valley, households at Ciudad de Dios could have participated in and benefited directly from such growth. Families at the site may have increased their social and economic standing by providing banquet foods for polity-sponsored work crews in the vicinity. One of the many possible ways administrators may have fulfilled their obligations to contributing households was by giving compensation in the form of valued items such as fineware pottery and figurines.

Subject matter and physical characteristics of the Ciudad de Dios figurines are very similar to those found at the ceramic workshops at Cerro Mayal and the Huacas de Moche, although as yet no exact matches to molds or figurines from either of these production areas have been found among the Ciudad de Dios assemblage. Subjects represented among all the human figures recovered from the site include

women, children, war or warrior regalia, musicians, mythic or religious beings, and possibly status or wealth (depicted as ornamentation). Figurines depicting male captives are absent in the Ciudad de Dios assemblage, but appear in domestic contexts at the Huacas de Moche (Limoges 1999:93; Prieto Burmester, this volume), as well as other contexts elsewhere (Russell and Jackson 2001:167; Strong and Evans 1952:182, figure 32). Interestingly, male warrior figures comprise five of the seven pieces identified in the category of whistles. No female forms are found among the whistles and rattles in the Ciudad de Dios assemblage. There are no representations of animals among the figurines, but among whistles and rattles two owls, a waterfowl, and a possible llama are present.

In agreement with Sophie Limoges' conclusions (1999:149), Moche figurines are social actors epitomized by certain physical features, elements of dress, or objects carried in the hands. Such markers of identity would have been immediately recognized on sight at a reasonable distance when worn or carried by individuals in real life. Social status appears to be a major component of figurine ideology as it is for other Moche iconographic representations. It does not seem that the Moche valued figurines that depicted or symbolized qualities of being ancient, foreign, or exotic, like present-day healers on the Peruvian North Coast or the Chachi of Ecuador (De Boer 1998:126; Joralemon and Sharon 1993:19-24). Rather, they seem to have focused on figures from their own social and religious sphere (Limoges 1999:148). For the Ciudad de Dios assemblage, males hold or wear objects associated with a social position or office such as warrior or nobleperson, while women are identified by physical characteristics such as hairstyle and genitalia, or by clothing and ornaments that signify social status. Although all figurines found at the site were probably used by individuals or on a household level, only whistles depicting warriors or musicians obviously represent social roles that extend beyond the household.

It seems unclear whether or not this agrees with other analyses of gender in Moche art, especially for earlier Moche iconography where women's

representations are more limited compared to men's (Arsenault 1989; Benson 1988). The number of female figurines is much greater than the number of males at Ciudad de Dios, as it seems to be with other Moche figurine assemblages (Lilien 1956:80; Limoges 1999:87; Russell and Jackson 2001:167; Strong and Evans 1952:181; Prieto, this volume). It may be simplistic to assume that individuals only owned and used figurines of their own gender, but to do so in this case may provide some insight into gendered uses of space in Moche households that warrant further study. The *chicha* brewing areas and the hearths in Areas 3 and 4 contained only female figurines. These are areas of the household that have been strongly associated with women in the Andes (Allen 1988:68; Bawden 1996:84; Brush 1977:135; Sillar 2000:36; Weismantel 1988:169). *Chicha* production has been associated with women throughout the Andes from prehistory to the present (Bawden 1996:90-91).

Also, the two whole figurines found on the floor of the Feature 15 room/patio were representations of very similar-looking higher status females. These figures might have been associated with metal working activities that may have taken place in this space (Billman 2002:29-30). If the space was in fact used for metal work, then the interpretation of the figurines as noblewomen is interesting. Representations of metal smiths in Moche art have been identified as men (Donnan 1978:12, figure 15; Shimada 1994:203, 272, note 127). However, there are ethnographic examples of households engaged in metallurgy on the south coast of Ecuador where production involved women artisans (Bruhns and Stothert 1999:141-143). It is possible that different stages of the metal processing had particular gender associations (e.g., men smelted metal and women did more intricate finishing work). Andean ethnography of households demonstrates that even though every household task has a formal gender association, such associations are not adhered to in daily practice (Allen 1988:73; Brush 1977:137; Hamilton 1998:186; Sillar 2000:36; Weismantel 1988:176).

Because of their size, simplicity, and disposable nature, figurines seem to be one of the most flexible

and familiar ritual items in Moche households such as those at Ciudad de Dios. The meanings of iconographic messages conveyed by Moche figurines may be similar to Joan Gero's interpretations of Early Intermediate Period Recuay iconography and ideology (2001:51). If we assume that elites sponsored production to some degree, figurines could have been stylized representations of what was most important to Moche leaders about the identities and roles of individuals in the state-administered society. For rural households such as Ciudad de Dios, the roles and messages suggested by figurines may have been aimed particularly at women. On the other hand, the ideology of figurines may not have been the intellectual property of the state's leaders, even though the leaders may have sponsored centralized production of the ideas and objects that were part of ritual life of households. Figurines represented the roles and ideas that common folks idealized at the most personal level, but many of these ideas may have been important before elites rose to power. Figurines, which are mainly female, also proliferated at a time when women's kinship- and family-centered roles may have been superceded by men's increasing participation outside the household in the new political-economic order (Gero 2001:49). Thus, figurines could have functioned on many levels, from vehicles for wishes of household and personal well-being to a means of reinforcing ideas about the roles of household members in a changing social, political, and economic landscape.

It is unclear from the contextual data on figurines at Ciudad de Dios whether they were intended for personal use by individual household members, or if they were items intended for the household in general. Size may be related to function in that small and possibly medium-sized solid figurines are an ideal size to be tucked into clothing or held in the hands, and may have therefore been intended for personal use (Russell and Jackson 2001:167). Large figurines, especially those that are hollow and could stand unaided, may have been placed in common areas and would have been more likely intended for household use prior to disposal. However, it appears that figurines at the site may have been, for the most part, relatively short-term

or single-use items based on disposal patterns. The data from Ciudad de Dios do not yet reveal any patterns distinguishing whether or not figurines were used or broken as part of specific household rituals. However, disposal appears to be the most common outcome of household use.

Overall, the contexts of figurine recovery in the household terraces at Ciudad de Dios are multifarious. Similar to Limoges' study, storage rooms, common rooms and benches, hearths, vestibules attached to living spaces, and trash deposits represent the range of figurine contexts found at Ciudad de Dios (Limoges 1999:128). For Limoges's sample, by far the largest amount was found in hearths (Limoges 1999:128). At Ciudad de Dios, on the other hand, only two figurines were found in hearths. The greatest number was recovered from domestic trash deposits. Figurine fragments recovered from domestic refuse do not have soot, indicating that they were probably not burned prior to disposal. Many were also found as part of the construction fill in the benches and walls of living, cooking, and storage areas. In one instance, excavators found an intact figurine in direct contact with a plaster floor. The only other intact figurine was located nearby, a few centimeters above the same floor.

It seems likely that, before disposal, most figurines were placed in areas that were out of the way, yet visible or accessible on a daily basis, such as along walls on benches or in niches in spaces where families worked or interacted. Many of the hollow figurine fragments have flat feet or bases and appear to have stood up unaided. Solid figurines could have easily been propped upright against a wall. The size range of the figurines also made them easy to handle, move, and store. Others may have been used for a particular event or purpose, and then were either stored, displayed, or discarded. In some aspects, the uses of figurines in the household seem similar to offerings of perishables like food and beverages. In several instances, figurines were found buried within or underneath floors and benches. These could have been part of the construction fill, or may have been offerings made at the time these features were constructed. Harry Tschopik (1989:208) and

Catherine Allen (1988:179) both note ethnographic cases in the southern Andes where figurines were stored in small niches in the floors of houses to be brought out on special occasions. Cristóbal Campana notes wall niches as a location for display or storage of Moche figurines (Campana 1983:21).

Conclusion

In conclusion, relatively few archaeological studies of households in the Central Andes devote attention to the ritual life of the household, even though Andean ethnography shows us that all aspects of the household, including the physical structure of the house, the individuals within it, and all their associated economic activities, are alive with and centered upon religion and ritual. The people of Ciudad de Dios used figurines in ways that showed their concern for the prosperity and well-being of the household. The interests of individual family members would have been inextricably tied in with the household as a whole. Perhaps Moche leaders understood this and attempted, successfully or unsuccessfully, to add their own influences to the rituals of daily life that were already in practice in rural households. It is important for archaeologists to pay close attention to evidence for household ritual, no matter how the ideology and iconography associated with it may have been interpreted and used by the household's original residents.

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