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Author(s): Justin Jennings

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## UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE HORIZON PERU: HERMENEUTIC SPIRALS, INTERPRETATIVE TRADITIONS, AND WARI ADMINISTRATIVE CENTERS

Justin Jennings

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*During the Middle Horizon (A.D. 600–1000), the Wari state extended its influence over much of Peru. One popular view of the Wari expansion is that the state constructed a system of administrative centers that ruled through an idiom of generalized reciprocity and extracted, stored, and redistributed goods from local groups. This paper considers how this model of the Wari periphery was constructed over the last 100 years, and argues that interpretations that fit within this model have been given added weight in academic literature because they fit our expectations of what the past should be like. I suggest that there are significant problems in this understanding of the Wari periphery that need to be addressed, and offer an alternative model that better fits the available evidence.*

*Durante el Horizonte Medio (600–1000 d.C.) el estado Wari extendió su influencia sobre gran parte del Perú. Una visión popular de la expansión Wari es que el Estado construyó un sistema de centros administrativos que gobernaba a través del lenguaje, de la reciprocidad generalizada y extraña, almacenaba y redistribuía bienes de y hacia grupos locales. En el presente artículo se analiza cómo fue construido este modelo de periferia Wari en los últimos 100 años, y se plantea que las interpretaciones que se ajustan a tal modelo fueron destacadas en la literatura académica dado que concuerdan con expectativas de lo que el pasado debería ser. Sugiero que esta conceptualización de la periferia Wari acarrea problemas sustantivos que deben ser afrontados, y ofrezco un modelo alternativo que se ajusta mejor a la evidencia disponible.*

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**D**uring the Middle Horizon (A.D. 600–1000), an architectural and ceramic style known as Wari spread throughout much of Peru. For most Andean archaeologists, the reason behind the dissemination of these styles is the expansion of the influence of the Wari state.<sup>1</sup> While scholars debate the degree of Wari political, social, and economic control over the periphery (Glowacki 1996a:26–56), one of the more widely held views is that the Wari state ruled much of Peru through a network of regional administrative centers that organized the extraction, storage, and redistribution of local resources through an idiom of generalized reciprocity. This view of Wari, often implicitly used, guides recent interpretations of the Wari state (e.g., D’Altroy and Schreiber 2004; Schreiber 2001, 2005; Williams and Isla 2002), including my own (Jennings and Craig 2001), shapes comparative analyses of ancient states (e.g., Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997:43; Marcus 1998:76;

Smith and Montiel 2001:249), and pervades general archaeology texts (e.g., Bruhns 1994:252–257, Fagan 1999:304; Moseley 2001:237–238; Scarre and Fagan 2003:504–505; Schreiber 1996: 743–744; Stone-Miller 1995:137–150).

I suggest that this model of the Wari periphery, based on a one hundred year old interpretative tradition, may be flawed (Isbell 1995; Schaedel 1993). Although archaeologists change their understanding of the past based on new data (i.e., Hodder 1992), I argue that our understanding of Wari has often been constrained within an interpretative tradition that influences how we view the past. Ideas that fit within the tradition are given added weight, while those that do not face higher levels of scrutiny. This paper considers how the dominant model of the Wari periphery has been constructed, suggests that there are significant problems in the model that need to be addressed, and offers an alternative model that I feel better fits the available evidence.

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**Justin Jennings** ■ Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen’s Park, Toronto, ON, M5S 2C6, Canada (collota@gmail.com)

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### Hermeneutic Spirals and Interpretative Traditions

In the 1980s, some post-processual scholars questioned the ability of archaeologists to study the past without imposing their own worldviews (e.g., Hodder 1986; Shanks and Tilley 1987; Tilley 1985). While a few authors suggested that archaeologists were playing make believe (e.g., Patrik 1985), most of these scholars only suggested that our preconceptions influenced to a degree how we interpret our data. Even Shanks and Tilley (1987:20), for example, did not argue that “objectivity is necessarily sacrificed to subjective whim” when we study the past. Instead, the authors argued that archaeology is a form of storytelling that forges an “expression of the past congealed in objects and their relationships” (1987:19). Nonetheless, post-processual scholarship ran counter to the positivism of the New Archaeology, and produced a “skeptical crisis” within the discipline (Watson and Fotiadis 1990:618). Although traumatic at times, this crisis led some archaeologists to more closely consider the relationship between their data and their interpretations (e.g., Brumfiel 1996; Hodder 1992).

Ian Hodder (1982, 1986, 1992) has written extensively on the data/interpretation dialectic and perhaps best captured how the past is constructed. He suggested that archaeological interpretation can be understood as a hermeneutic spiral that develops as we change our ideas to fit new data. In this model, we approach the archaeological record with preconceptions about what we will find and what our findings will mean. Our preconceptions, however, are continually checked by the data that we recover. These checks necessitate shifts in our reasoning that over time create interpretations that are a closer and closer fit with the available evidence. Though Hodder envisions an interpretative enterprise where it is “endlessly possible to follow new spirals, to realize new spin-offs” (Hodder 1992:239), I suggest spin-offs are often more sharply curtailed than he suggests.

Interpretations often change as data are analyzed, but initial preconceptions of those data likewise frame interpretations. Ideas that fall outside of this frame, Hodder’s new spin-offs, may often go unrecognized—not only because an archaeologist might fail to see them, but also because this kind of innovation can be curtailed within the dis-

cipline. Despite depictions to the contrary, lone archaeologists do not wrestle one-on-one with their data. Instead, research is conducted in the midst of conflicting demands of colleagues, the general public, academic institutions, governments, and the objects themselves (e.g., Dolby 1996:28–30; Latour 1996, 1999:106–108). These outside forces embed research programs (and hence the spirals that occur in these programs) into a handful of meta-hermeneutic spirals. I refer to these larger spirals as “interpretative traditions.”

I argue that interpretative traditions in archaeology limit hermeneutic spin-offs in at least three ways.<sup>2</sup> First, interpretative traditions have a significant degree of inertia because scholars, politicians, and readers become increasingly invested in particular interpretations of the past (e.g., Arnold 1990; Kohl and Pérez Gollán 2002; Kuklick 1991; Tomášková 2003; Van Reybrouck 2002). Second, the academic pathways to professional archaeology require students to read articles by and do fieldwork with archaeologists who follow particular interpretative traditions (Embree 1989:63–68; Meltzer 1989:11–12). Therefore, students who become professionals tend to continue working within the same traditions as their teachers. Third, older and more established scholars are the gatekeepers of archaeological knowledge because they sit on editorial boards and tend to be chosen to peer-review article and book manuscripts (Christenson 1989:164; Trigger 1985:221). Such individuals may favor those studies that support their views of the past, or require more data and stronger analytical reasoning from those studies that do not.

Although sometimes grudgingly, scholars are more likely to consider alternative models of the past in those regions where there are several mainstream interpretative traditions. New ideas, of course, are not inherently better than old ones, but these new thoughts produce an intellectual climate within which traditions of thought must be more rigorously defended. In contrast, regions that are dominated by a single interpretative tradition tend to lack the stimulation of contrasting ideas and will therefore likely foster fewer interpretative innovations. As a tradition becomes more entrenched over time, it has a tendency to form “tacit knowledge” that archaeologists do not often “formulate discursively” (i.e., Giddens 1979:59). Interpretive spin-offs do not *feel* right and face a greater burden of

proof because they run counter to the region's "practical consciousness" (i.e., Giddens 1984:7). In the Andes, I argue that a dominant interpretive tradition has framed our interpretations of the Middle Horizon, and influenced the way that we view Wari influence outside of the state's heartland.

### **An Interpretative Tradition of the Wari Periphery**

At least 20 sites in the Wari periphery have been found that contain buildings that follow aspects of a rigid architectural canon that appears to have derived from the state (Blacker 2001; Isbell 1991; Jennings and Craig 2001; Schreiber 1978; Spickard 1983). Many of these sites also boast rich, diverse collections of Wari-style ceramics, figurines, and textiles (Knobloch 1991). These sites are often interpreted as part of a network of Wari administrative centers that directly controlled local populations, organized the extraction, storage, and redistribution of local resources, and ruled through an idiom of generalized reciprocity. This model is based within a deeply rooted interpretative tradition in Andean archaeology that begins with Max Uhle's work at the site of Pachacamac on Peru's central coast (1991[1903]).

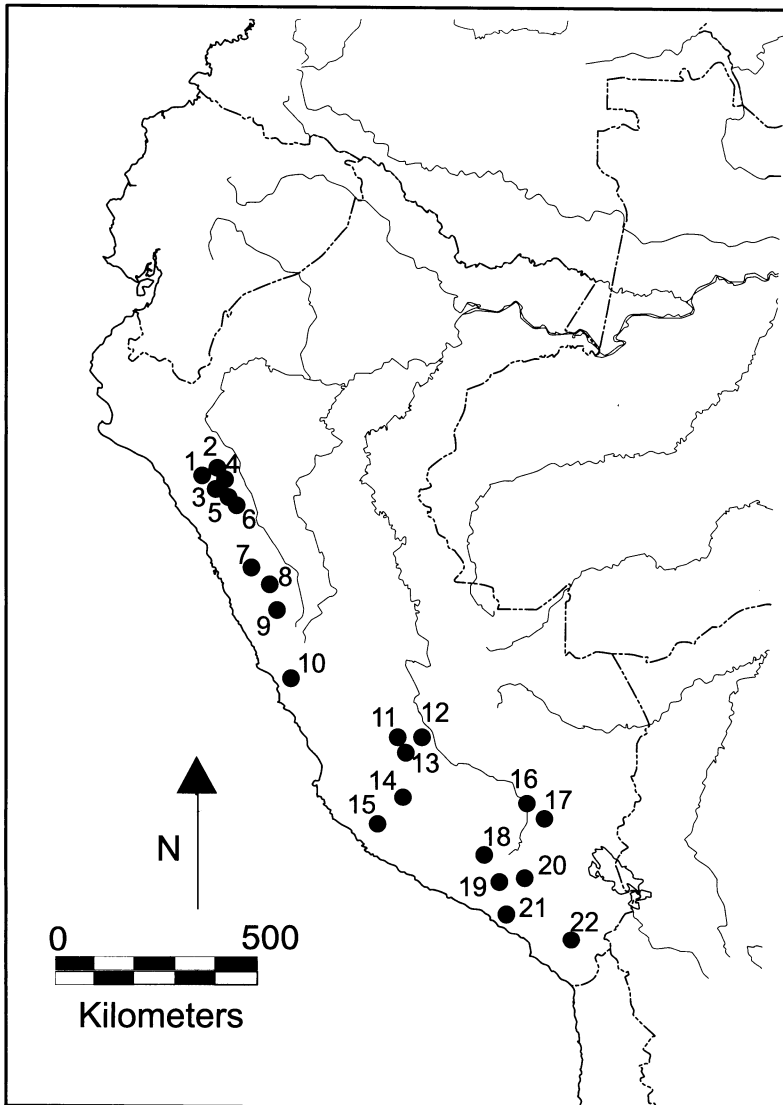
During Uhle's excavations of graves at the site, he uncovered pottery, textiles, and woodcarvings that he suggested were derivative of the Tiahuanaco style of the Lake Titicaca region (1991[1903]: 26–32), a style that he helped to define a few years before (Stübel and Uhle 1892). Uhle argued that the style marked the spread of a culture across the Andes (1991[1903]:35), and in 1931, Julio C. Tello's excavations at the immense site of Wari in the Ayacucho Valley of the Peruvian highlands showed that the city was the source of the style (Tello 1942:682–684) (Figure 1). The work of Alfred Kroeber, John Rowe, Gordon Willey, and other influential scholars confirmed Tello's suggestion of pan-Peruvian culture centered at the site of Wari (Kroeber 1930, 1944:115; Rowe et al. 1950; Willey 1945:55).

This interpretation was built upon as scholars gathered more data on Wari influence in areas throughout Peru. John Rowe, Donald Collier, and Gordon Willey (1950:23), for example, noted that the architectural styles of two immense, planned, sites on opposite sides of Peru, Viracochapampa and Pikillacta, might be derived from the architec-

tural forms found at Wari. Rafael Larco Hoyle (1948) and Gordon Willey (1953) suggested that the north coast of Peru was conquered and subjugated by Wari, and John Rowe (1956) defined a southern Wari frontier based on ceramic distributions. The presence of intrusive Wari architecture in some locations was interpreted as remnants of state facilities, and scholars began to make cautious suggestions that Wari was a centralized empire similar, if only in broad strokes, to the Inca Empire (Willey 1948:13; Rowe et al. 1950).

Limited work at Viracochapampa (McCown 1945) and Pikillacta (Harth-Terre 1959; Sanders 1973) reinforced interpretations that the centers were highly planned, intrusive installations. Scholars were particularly struck by five groups of small rooms with raised doorways at Pikillacta that appeared to be storage facilities (Rowe 1963:14; Sanders 1973:399; Schreiber 1978:160). The room groups at Pikillacta, a similar group at Azangaro (Anders 1991), and a group of possible Wari store-rooms not far from Viracochapampa (Topic and Topic 1984:45–50) was used by scholars as evidence that Wari administrative facilities organized and stored local resources (Lumbreras 1974a:168; MacNeish et al. 1975:57; Menzel 1964; Rowe 1963:14; Sanders 1973:399; Schreiber 1978:160).

Scholars working within this interpretative tradition then drew upon general theories of the state (e.g., Cohen and Service 1978), settlement pattern analyses from Mesopotamia (e.g., Adams 1966; Johnson 1973), and research on the Inca state (e.g., Morris 1967; Murra 1980) to promote a model of a network of hierarchically organized administrative centers in the periphery that collected, stored, and redistributed goods (Isbell and Schreiber 1978:386; Schaedel 1978:40). The model was supported by evidence for Wari manipulations of settlement patterns and agricultural practices around Pikillacta (McEwan 1984, 1987, 1991, 1996), and by work in and around the previously unknown Wari centers of Jincamocco and Cerro Baúl that also pointed toward direct state control and surplus production (Moseley et al. 1991; Schreiber 1978, 1987, 1991, 1992; Williams 2001; Williams and Nash 2002). During the 1980s and 1990s, more sites with Wari architecture were found in the periphery and these sites were used as further evidence for a Wari administrative network (Jennings and Craig 2001; Schreiber 1992, 1999).



**Figure 1.** Map of Peru showing the following sites discussed in the article: 1. El Palacio, 2. Santa Delia, 3. Huacaloma, 4. Yamobamba, 5. Ichabamba, 6. Virachochapampa, 7. Pariamarca, 8. Honcopampa, 9. Tocroc, 10. Socos, 11. Azangaro, 12. Jargampata, 13. Wari, 14. Jincamocco, 15. Pataraya, 16. Pikillacta, 17. Huaró, 18. Collota, 19. Número 8, 20. Acachiwa, 21. Sonay, and 22. Cerro Baúl and Cerro Mejía.

Because earlier excavators found very few artifacts at Pikillacta and Virachochapampa, the activities that took place within Wari peripheral sites remained largely unknown until the 1970s. Katharina Schreiber's work at Jincamocco revealed high percentages of cooking, fermenting, and serving vessels at the site and some evidence for specialized food preparation and consumption areas (Schreiber 1992). Data collected during subsequent work at Honcopampa, Pikillacta, and Cerro Baúl documented similar patterns (Glowacki 2002:279;

Isbell 1989:183–184; Nash 2002:62). This evidence was used to suggest that feasting occurred at these sites (Cook and Glowacki 2003; Knobloch 2000:400; Nash 2002), and the feasts were often conceived of as large events held by the state to reciprocate for labor rendered to the state (Cook and Glowacki 2003:197; Nash 2002:262–263).

The model of a nested network of Wari peripheral administrative centers that directly controlled local populations, organized the extraction, storage, and redistribution of local resources, and ruled

through an idiom of generalized reciprocity is rooted in Max Uhle's contention of a culture that swept across the central Andes during what would become known as the Middle Horizon. This model is the result of a hermeneutic spiral that took place (and continues to take place) between past ideas, new data, and new analogies from the Inca and other groups. The model has considerable merit and a good case can be made for a Wari peripheral political economy following this model (e.g., Cook and Glowacki 2003; Schreiber 1992, 2001, 2005). Nonetheless, I argue that this model is more deeply flawed than many imagine because, in part, it has developed without significant challenges that have forced scholars to more vigorously defend their ideas.

This is not to suggest that this model has escaped criticism. Scholars have denied that a Wari state existed (e.g., Bawden and Conrad 1982:31–32; Shady Solís 1982:63–64), limited the state's territorial extent (e.g., T. Topic 1991:244), and offered other models of Middle Horizon Peru. For example, Ruth Shady Solís (1982) has argued that Middle Horizon Peru was made up of actively trading regional polities, Daniel Shea (1969) has argued for loosely tied, oracle-dominated federations during the period, and John and Teresa Topic (J. Topic 1991) have suggested that Wari was part of a multi-lineage confederation that dominated the region. This opposition to the dominant model of Wari, however, tended not to challenge extensively core concepts of Wari's engagement with the periphery. In most cases, the state's borders were simply shifted or erased, and in other cases alternative explanations were left underdeveloped and rotted on the vine. The alternative conceptions of Shady Solís, Shea, the Topics, and others (e.g., Kolata 1983; Paulsen 1989) should be more critically considered, but these models have gone largely unexplored because of the weight of a dominant model that has over the years been supported by research by many of the most influential archaeologists in the field.

### **Reconsidering the Wari Administration Model**

Models, of course, are also widely held because they most accurately fit the available data. In this section, I explore some of the evidence that has been used to support the established model of the Wari

periphery, and suggest that evidence for this model is weaker than its prevalence in the literature would suggest. In particular, I examine the basis of this representation by exploring the evidence for local administrative centers, an administrative site hierarchy, large-scale storage, and patron-client feasting. Critically reevaluating these data raise significant problems with a model based on a nested network of state administrative centers. This reevaluation reinforces and extends recent critiques (e.g., Topic 2003; Topic and Topic 2000), and opens interpretive space for other visions of the past.

#### *Wari Local Administration and Direct Control*

Soon after peripheral sites with Wari architecture were identified, scholars built upon Uhle's interpretative tradition of the spread of a unified culture to suggest that these sites were state installations (Rowe et al. 1950). Excavations at several major sites confirmed their Wari affiliation, and surveys around Jincamocco, Cerro Baúl, and Pikillacta demonstrated Wari direct control over local populations. Based on this work, scholars extended these findings to suggest that all sites with Wari architecture could be interpreted as administrative centers that held sway over an area (Isbell and Schreiber 1978; Isbell 1986; Schreiber 1992, 2001). Most of those sites are much smaller than Pikillacta and Viracochapampa. Ranging in size from .25–15 ha, these smaller sites have been conceived of as local Wari administrative centers, and used as evidence for pockets of direct state control within an extensive network of peripheral administration (e.g., Malpass 2001; Schreiber 1992; Williams and Pineda 1985).

The Wari affiliation of many smaller sites, however, is doubtful. The only sites in this group that have been extensively excavated are Jincamocco (Schreiber 1992) and Cerro Baúl (Nash 2002; Williams and Isla 2002). These are the largest of the proposed local administrative centers (Jennings and Craig 2001), and excavation data strongly suggests that they were state installations. Other possible Wari sites, however, are known only from air photos, surface remains, or, more rarely, from limited test excavations. These understudied sites vary in size between .25–5 ha, contain few or no true Wari style ceramics, and sometimes depart significantly from the architectural forms found at the larger Wari centers. I suggest that the evidence for

Wari affiliation of these sites is much weaker, and that many may be better interpreted as sites that were built by locals in emulation of Wari forms. If this is the case, then the density of Wari sites in the periphery, and thus the areas of state direct control, may be significantly overestimated.

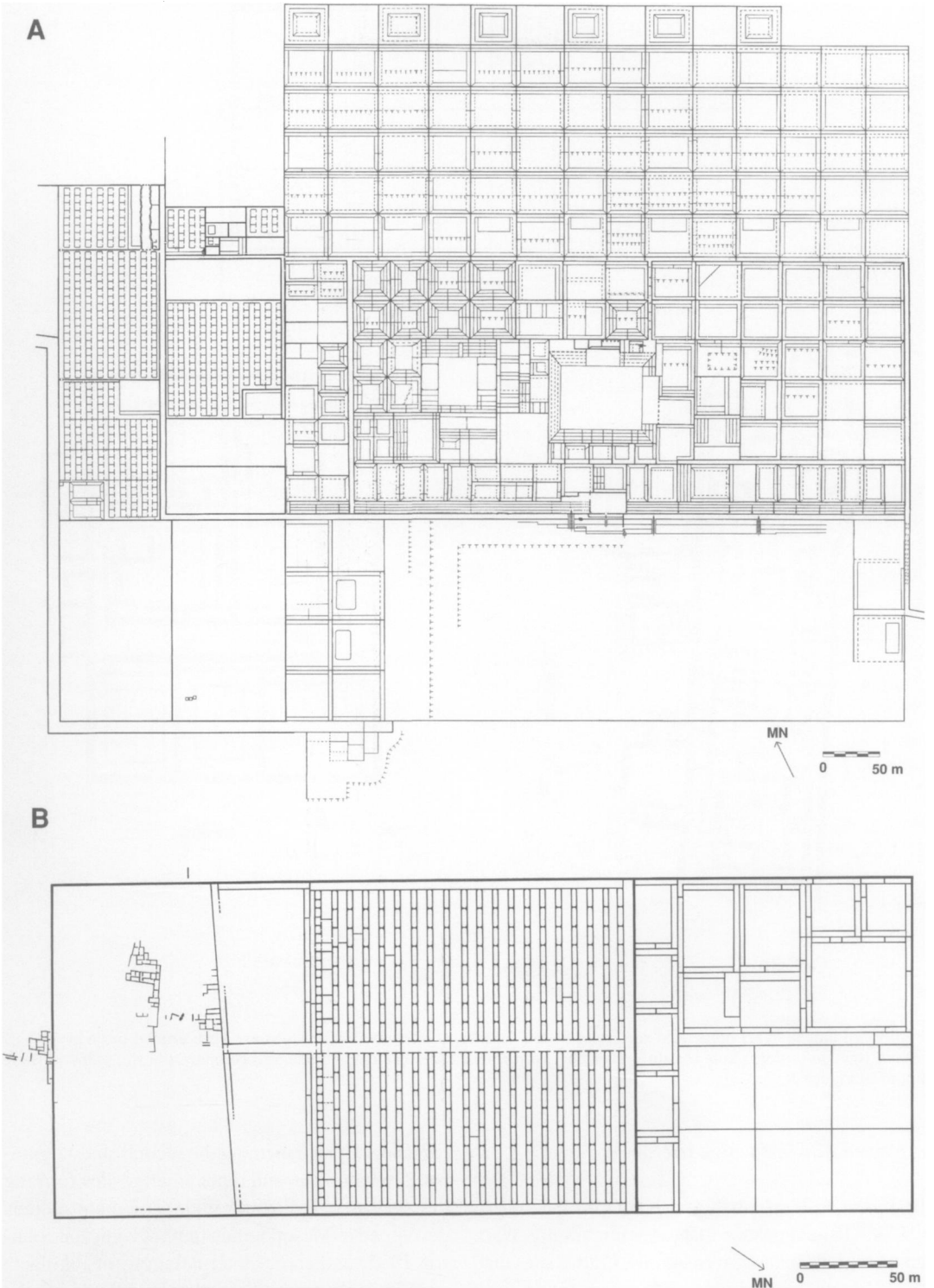
Socos, Sonay, and Collota are three sites that have been interpreted as local administrative centers (Figure 2), and can serve as examples of centers whose Wari affiliation has not been strongly demonstrated. Socos is located in the Chillón River valley of Peru's central coast. The site covers at least 13 ha, and some areas contain rectangular compounds that emulate aspects of Wari architecture (Isla and Guerrero 1987). Based on the architecture, and the presence of Wari artifacts, the investigators suggested that the site "had a control and administrative character, similar to other period sites found at distinct points in the sierra" (Isla and Guerrero 1987:10, author's translation). The architecture, however, departs significantly from the state canon in how the site is subdivided and in the placement and form of storage units (Figure 3). Many of the Wari ceramics and textiles are local emulations of heartland styles. The presence of Viñaque sherds is perhaps the strongest indication of Socos' Wari association (Menzel 1964:36). Yet recent research suggests that the Viñaque style may be better conceived of as number of related local styles (Glowacki 1996a:187), and neutron activation analysis confirms that some Viñaque sherds at Pikillacta were from locally manufactured pots (Glowacki 1996b; Glowacki and McEwan 2001; Montoyo et al. 2002).

Michael Malpass has suggested that Sonay, a .45-ha site in the Camana Valley, was a local administrative center (Malpass 2001). Like Socos, some elements of Sonay's architecture follow Wari architectural forms, and ceramics found in test excavations are derived from Wari styles. The architecture, however, departs from the Wari canon in the way in which the compound is subdivided, and the handful of ceramics found at the site are poor emulations of Wari examples (Malpass 2001:58). Furthermore, Malpass suggests that Wari settlers built an earlier settlement, and then razed this settlement to create the later rectangular compound built in the Wari style (Malpass 2001:65). This contrasts with construction techniques at centers with clearer Wari affiliation, where builders made the

compound first, and then constructed structures within subdivisions as they were needed (Schreiber 1978).

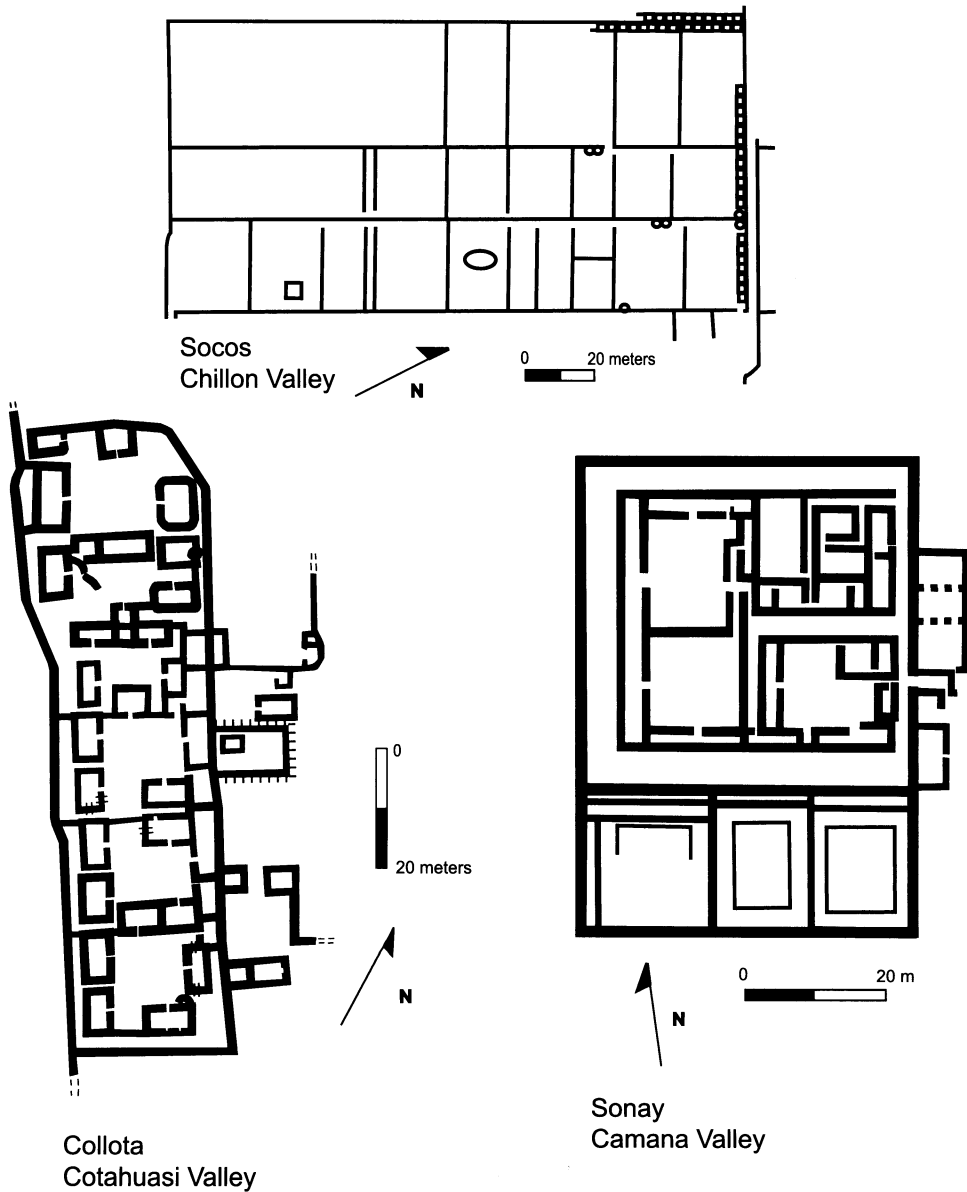
The site of Collota in the Cotahausi Valley of southern Peru has generally been interpreted as a Wari administrative center (Chávez Chávez 1982:86; Trawick 1994:72). Although I considered Collota a Wari site in earlier work (Jennings and Craig 2001:487), my subsequent work at the site with Willy Yépez Álvarez calls into question this affiliation (Jennings and Yépez Álvarez 2001a, 2001b). The site is dominated by three rectangular enclosures that contain elements of the Wari architectural canon and Wari ceramics are found on the surface in some portions of the site. Collota's site plan, however, is a local one that was embellished with Wari architectural features in subsequent construction phases. Some of this Wari influenced architecture likely dates to the Late Horizon period.<sup>3</sup> Most of the Middle Horizon ceramics at the site are local emulations of Wari styles, and the only Wari ceramics found at the site analyzed thus far are Viñaque wares that may not have been produced in the state's heartland.

Architecture, like any other artifact, can be symbolically laden. Local groups can emulate state designs in their own architecture, and acquire or copy ceramics, textiles, and other material culture, in a bid for the power and prestige that these artifacts represent (Schortman and Urban 1998:111; Wells 1999:203–204; Whitehouse and Wilkins 1989:109). The archaeological signature for built state infrastructure can be easily confused with signatures of culture contact. Of the 20 generally recognized Wari centers at the periphery, there is only strong evidence for six of them being built by the state. Like at Socos, Sonay, and Collota, we know very little about the remaining 14 sites.<sup>4</sup> The stylistic variability in architecture and ceramics can perhaps be conceived of as the state adapting to local environments. One can make a counterargument, however, that these sites were built and occupied by local inhabitants. Because the presence of an administrative center has sometimes been used as *de facto* evidence for administrative control, the argument for direct Wari control over large areas of Peru is substantially weakened if these centers are not Wari sites. More extensive fieldwork at these smaller centers is needed to better determine their function and cultural affiliation.



**Figure 2. Site plans of: A. Pikillacta and B. Azangaro. The sites are typical examples of what is considered Wari's administrative architectural canon. The blocks of small rooms found in each plan are often interpreted as storage units.**





**Figure 3.** Plans of Wari influenced sectors of Socos, Collota, and Sonay. These sites have been argued to be local Wari administrative centers. Note the differences between the architecture of each site and compare the site plans to those found in Figure 2.

### *A Nested Administrative Hierarchy*

In 1978, William Isbell and Katharina Schreiber (1978:376) suggested that sites containing Wari architectural elements were administrative sites that could be tentatively divided into a three-tiered hierarchical system with the site of Wari occupying the first tier, Pikillacta and Viracochapampa (and per-

haps now Huaró) forming the second, and Jargampata, Jincamocco, and other smaller sites forming the third tier. Following both settlement models developed in Mesopotamia (e.g., Wright and Johnson 1975) and earlier interpretations of Pikillacta and Viracochapampa, the authors suggested that the second-tier sites organized state business at a regional level and oversaw, at least to some degree,

the activities of third-tier sites that administered local affairs. Isbell and Schreiber's assertion continues to inform many interpretations, such that sites found with Wari architecture are classified as Wari administrative centers and are placed in their appropriate position within an administrative hierarchy spanning Peru (de la Vera Cruz 1987; Glowacki 2002; Glowacki and McEwan 2001; Isbell 1989; Malpass 2001; McEwan 1991, 1996; Schreiber 1992, 1999, 2001; Williams and Nash 2002; Williams and Pineda 1985).

Even if many of the smaller centers discussed in the previous section turn out to be administrative facilities, the evidence for a polity-wide administrative hierarchy is weak.<sup>5</sup> The Wari administrative hierarchy is premised on the existence of two, or possibly three, middle-tier regional centers in the site-size hierarchy. None of the three sites can easily be conceived of as regional administrative centers. While Pikillacta and Viracochapampa look like regional centers that boasted barracks, kitchen areas, and storage facilities (Isbell 1986:195), only a small portion of the sites were ever occupied. And while Huaró may have been large enough to serve as a regional center, the site seems to have more of the character of a diverse frontier city.

At 47 ha, Pikillacta is the largest Wari administrative complex found in the periphery. Although Pikillacta is often seen as a regional capital holding political and economic sway over much of southern Peru (McEwan 1987:69; 1991:118), research demonstrates that only a quarter of the site was ever occupied, and that the majority of the site was under construction at the time of abandonment (McEwan 1996:181–183). Because an elite group using Wari artifact assemblages occupied this portion of the site intensively over several hundred years (McEwan 1991:117), it is quite possible that the site served an administrative function. Yet at 12 ha, it is difficult to conceive of how the site could have effectively functioned as a regional center.<sup>6</sup> In comparison, the Inca center of Huánuco Pampa dwarfs Pikillacta's occupied area (the Inca site covers over a square kilometer and likely housed between 10,000 and 15,000 people [Morris and Thompson 1985:96; Morris 1992:155]), although the Inca facility served a similar function to that proposed for Pikillacta in the Wari administrative model.

Viracochapampa is the second-largest Wari

administrative complex and is located in the highlands of northern Peru. The 32-ha site has often been seen as the northern anchor of the Wari state that was put in place after the conquest of the powerful Huamachuco culture (J. Topic 1991:141). Limited excavations and field reconnaissance at the site by John and Teresa Topic, however, suggest that the site was still under construction when it was abandoned (Topic and Topic 1984, 1987; J. Topic 1991). The Topics interpret the limited occupation debris found at the site as the remains of workers' quarters used during the construction of the site (J. Topic 1991:152), and neither the excavations by the Topics nor the earlier work at the site by Theodore McCown (1945) have demonstrated that the site was occupied residentially before it was abandoned. If these interpretations are correct, then Viracochapampa did not serve as a regional, or even local, administrative center.

The final proposed second-tier site, Huaró, lies 17 km to the southeast of Pikillacta (Glowacki and McEwan 2001:282–283). Only recently discovered, fieldwork at the site has been limited and is only beginning to be published (Glowacki 2002; Glowacki and McEwan 2001). Preliminary estimates suggest that Huaró rivaled the Wari capital in size (Glowacki and McEwan 2001:32), with conservative estimates of 200 ha for Huaró's architectural core (Glowacki 2002:267) and 250 ha for Wari (Isbell et al. 1991:24). The site is not a planned rectangular enclosure like Viracochapampa and Pikillacta, and was apparently built organically through a series of phases like the Wari capital (Glowacki 2002:282). The surface remains of artifacts and architecture suggest that Huaró was occupied over a longer period than Pikillacta and that the site likely had more contact with the rival Tiwanaku polity than did any other Wari center. The layout of Huaró, its organic growth, the longevity of occupation, and its contact with Tiwanaku contrasts sharply with Pikillacta, Viracochapampa, and other Wari sites. Although it has been preliminarily construed as an administrative site (Glowacki and McEwan 2001:282–283), this interpretation may be premature. The available evidence suggests that the site could perhaps be better conceived of as a prosperous frontier city.

Pikillacta, Viracochapampa, and Huaró are poor candidates for regional administrative centers. Pikillacta and Viracochapampa were massive

enclosures that may have been envisioned as regional centers when construction began. The three sites speak to the ambitions of the Wari state and its ability to marshal large amounts of resources and labor. Yet the functions of these sites, and the relationship of the sites' inhabitants to the city of Wari, remain problematic. Excavation data strongly suggest that the sites could not have functioned as regional centers. Pikillacta's operational size was about 12 ha, and Viracochapampa was never occupied. Although more extensive excavations may reveal more habitation debris at the sites, these sites do not now appear to have occupied a second tier in an administrative hierarchy. Available evidence from Huaro suggests that the site was quite large, but it was different in character than all other planned Wari sites and its administrative function remains to be demonstrated.

The existence of an administrative site-size hierarchy is often used as evidence for both centralized control by the state and a systematic flow of information, goods, and people throughout the polity (Wright and Johnson 1975). If a site-size hierarchy for Wari does not exist, then an argument for a state-controlled administrative network becomes more difficult to sustain. Instead, we should consider the possibility that these Wari sites were more akin to colonies or outposts that were independent from each other and only loosely controlled, if at all, by the state (e.g., Stein 1999:69–73).

### *Storage*

In 1950, John Rowe, Donald Collier, and Gordon Willey (1950:23) noted that the architectural plans of Viracochapampa and Pikillacta suggested an administrative function in part because of massive blocks of small rooms with raised doorways. Subsequent work at these sites, and at the site of Azangaro in the Wari heartland, better documented these room blocks and further crystallized interpretations of these rooms as evidence for state storage facilities (Lumbreras 1974a:168; MacNeish et al. 1975:57; Menzel 1964; Rowe 1963:14; Sanders 1973:399; Schreiber 1978:160). The existence of these facilities is used to argue for a large-scale system of state storage in which local staple goods were extracted, stored, and redistributed (Isbell 1986:195; Schreiber 1987:94; 2001:89–91), and underpins arguments of Wari-sponsored agricultural intensification in the periphery (Brooks 1998;

Cardonas Rosas 1993; de la Vera Cruz 1987, 1988; García Márquez and Bustamente Montoro 1990:39; Isla and Guerrero 1987: 10; Schreiber 1999; Sciscento 1989; Williams 2002:364).

Based solely on architectural design, the argument for large-scale storage is convincing (Earle 1992:336). At the site of Azangaro in the Ayacucho Valley, for example, the central sector of the site is composed of 20 rows of small rooms with low, raised doorways and subfloor passages that could have allowed for greater air circulation (see Figure 3). Nonetheless, research at Azangaro, Pikillacta, and Viracochapampa over the last 20 years has raised doubts concerning how these room blocks were used after they were built. This is not to suggest, of course, that Wari sites had no storage. There are storage facilities found at each of the Wari administrative sites that have been excavated (e.g., Isbell 1977; Schreiber 1992; Williams 2001), but these facilities are not extensive and likely largely served the subsistence needs of the people living at the sites. If large-scale state storage at administrative centers did not exist, then it becomes difficult to understand how the sites functioned within a staple economy.

At Azangaro, Martha Anders' work in the central sector of the site revealed that the rows of rooms previously interpreted as storehouses contained domestic debris such as hearths, botanical remains, and utilitarian pottery (Anders 1986). Although her interpretation of the rooms as a calendrical system remains largely untested (Anders 1991:194), the rooms that she excavated were either generally not used for storage at the time of the site's abandonment or served multiple functions at that time. Since Anders only excavated a small portion of the rooms in the sector, it is possible that other room blocks could provide evidence for storage. The ultimate function of the rooms documented by Anders, moreover, may not accurately reflect the primary function of the room in earlier phases of the site. Nonetheless, the available evidence does not support an interpretation of the Azangaro room blocks as storehouses.

As described earlier, Viracochapampa was probably abandoned before it was finished and occupied (J. Topic 1991:151). The blocks of small rooms that may have been designed for storage at the site were therefore likely never put to use. If some of the rooms were used for storage, then the few per-

manent administrators stationed at the site could have effectively managed and controlled only a small portion of the room blocks. There is more promising evidence for large-scale storage near Viracochapampa, where a complex of 24 storerooms is found at the Middle Horizon shrine of Cerro Amaru. At least some of the storerooms were used to store corn, and the excavators tentatively suggest a Wari affiliation (J. Topic 1991:154–155; Topic and Topic 1984:45–50). The Wari affiliation, however, is based solely on architectural similarities to two storage units in Jargampata, a small Wari site near the capital city. If the storehouses are Wari, then they appear to form part of a ritual center that incorporated both local and Wari beliefs (Thatcher 1977; J. Topic 1991).

There is evidence that suggests that the room blocks of at Pikillacta were put to use during the Middle Horizon although only a portion of Pikillacta's small room blocks was utilized during the site's occupation (McEwan 1991, 1996, 2005a). The few rooms with material remains contain ceramics, animal bones, and more rarely hearths. Excavators believe that the rooms were used only occasionally, if at all, used for storage (McEwan 1996:183, 2005b:158), and instead interpret the structures as living quarters (McEwan 1991:117), ritual spaces (Glowacki 1996a:365–369), or as repositories for mummy bundles (McEwan 2005b:159). Like at Azangaro, it appears that at least at the time of abandonment, the room blocks at Pikillacta did not serve exclusively as a storage facility.

There is no strong evidence for large-scale storage at peripheral Wari sites. One can continue to argue for storage units located somewhere in or near Wari sites because stored goods often left few material traces, goods were probably consumed or stolen as sites were abandoned, and no chemical tests or other techniques have been used to test the soils of possible storage units (McEwan 1991:117; Schreiber 1987:94, 2001:90). Yet, the excavators of Azangaro, Viracochapampa, and Pikillacta felt that the room blocks were not extensively used for storage, and no evidence for other storage facilities has yet been offered. Without such facilities, a model of Wari statecraft built upon staple finance is untenable because massive, specially designed storage facilities are required to collect, store, and redistribute the surplus production drawn from the

neighboring area (e.g. D'Altroy and Earle 1985). One alternative explanation of Wari statecraft might involve greater reliance on the exchange of prestige goods and esoteric knowledge with local elites.

### *Feasting*

As the architectural plans for the peripheral sites of Pikillacta, Viracochapampa, and Jincamocco became better known, William Isbell (1986:195) tentatively suggested that kitchen areas at the sites might have been able to support large-scale labor parties. His assertion fit with Andean conceptions of administration gleaned from studies of the Inca Empire (Cavero Carrasco 1986; Morris 1979; Murra 1980), and, as more Wari sites were excavated, archaeologists noted high percentages of cooking, fermenting, and serving vessels at most Wari administrative centers and some evidence for specialized food preparation and consumption areas (Anders 1991:168–171; Brewster-Wray 1989:23–24; Glowacki 2002:279; Isbell 1989:183–184; Nash 2002:62; Valdez 2002; Valdez et al. 2001). Those data were often interpreted as evidence for events analogous to the large feasts held at Inca administrative centers to reciprocate for labor rendered to the state (Cook and Glowacki 2003:197; Nash 2002:262–263).

Although this evidence suggests feasting occurred at these sites and that the ceremonies surrounding these events were integral to the functioning of these centers (Cook and Glowacki 2003; Knobloch 2000:400; Nash 2002), most of the feasts may have been diacritical feasts. Archaeologists often divide state-sponsored feasts into two types: patron-client feasts, where patron hospitality is used to “legitimize institutionalized relations of social power” (Dietler 2001:83), and diacritical feasts, where different foods and styles of consumption are used to “reify concepts of ranked differences” in the social order (Dietler 2001:85). While diacritical feasting occurred in the Inca Empire (Bray 2003b:96), the massive feasts held at Inca administrative centers are best classified as patron-client feasts because Inca rule centered upon the provisioning of copious amounts of food and drink to guests at a number of events throughout the year. At these events, the Inca was not only able to fulfill his reciprocal duties for the labor service rendered to the state, but also reaffirm his position of power by putting laborers in his debt by the sheer

quantity of food and drink that he provided (Bray 2003a:18–19; Hastorf and Johannessen 1993:118–119; Moore 1989:685; Morris 1979:32).

Available evidence points toward a greater importance of diacritical feasting at Wari peripheral centers (e.g., Topic and Topic 2000:182), or at least patron-client feasting on a much smaller scale than the feasts held at Inca administrative sites. I suggest this alternative explanation for smaller-scale, often more exclusive, feasting for three reasons. First, there appears to be insufficient storage to sponsor such large-scale events. Substantial outlays of ingredients and equipment are needed to produce the food and drink consumed at large feasts. For example, as much as 274 m<sup>3</sup> of storage would have been needed for the corn used to make chicha for a 1,000 person feast (Jennings 2005). Much more storage, of course, would be needed for other goods prepared for such events. Many of the storehouses of the Inca Empire were dedicated to stockpiling the material needed for their patron-client feasts (Jenkins 2001; LeVine 1992), and the volume of storage space at Inca centers dwarfs the capacities found at most Wari sites (e.g. Isbell 1977:27–28; Snead 1992:81–94; Williams 2001:74–75). The “storage” room blocks at Virachochapampa, Azangaro, and Pikilliacta could have supported feasting on an Inca scale, but, as I have discussed, the function of these room blocks has been called into question. Although participants may have brought some food and drink to a feast (Nash 2002:32) or plazas and patios within the sites may have been used for temporary storage before an event,<sup>7</sup> the standing storage capacity at Wari centers was insufficient to support large feasts.

The second aspect of Wari feasting that suggests that feasts were more commonly small-scale events is that feasting debris is confined within patio groups inside of administrative compounds (Cook and Glowacki 2003:195). The patio groups are usually made up of rectangular yards surrounded by narrow galleries on 3 or 4 sides (Isbell 1991:294). The sizes of these patios vary considerably, but the lengths of the yards typically range between 10 and 30 m (Isbell et al. 1991:29, McEwan 1991:105; Schreiber 1992:208). Wari yards are no more than one third the size of the central plazas (and often considerably smaller) that were used for patron-client feasting at Inca administrative centers (Hyslop 1990), where hundreds, if not thousands

of people, gathered for Inca feasts (Murra 1980). Because patio groups were rarely conjoining, large feasts encompassing several architectural groups would have been cumbersome events. Wari’s more intimate patios, located behind high walls, fit better into a model privileging exclusionary, small-scale feasting over one favoring large-scale patron-client feasting (LeCount 2001:936–937). There are of course larger open spaces within Wari sites that could have been used for feasts. Some of those open spaces, however, are likely the result of sites’ unfinished construction, and no evidence exists to suggest that these areas were used as feasting venues.

Ceramic assemblages can also be used to support an argument for the importance of smaller, exclusionary feasting at the centers. Compared to the rest of Wari domestic assemblages, Wari feasting vessels are of better quality and display more complex iconography (Cook and Glowacki 2003:195). The greater care taken in the manufacture of these vessels likely reflects their use by elites (Brewster-Wray 1990:393–395; Cook and Glowacki 2003:194–195), and the artifacts from Wari administrative centers in general suggest that the residents were materially better off than the people around them (Isbell and McEwan 1991). While these data could be interpreted as evidence that elites threw patron-client feasts using their own fine ware (Brewster-Wray 1990:393–395), high-quality vessels are often used to emphasize social differences in diacritical feasts (Dietler 2001:86) and the Inca, for example, employed a distinctive assemblage of culinary ceramics in their diacritical feasts to distinguish between commoners and elites (Bray 2003b; Cummins 2002). Wari feasting vessels are more easily interpreted as signaling social difference rather than social solidarity, and this signaling more comfortably fits within a model of diacritical feasting.

Scholars have suggested that some feasts at Wari sites may have been smaller affairs that occurred between groups of elites (Cook and Glowacki 2003:195), and Donna Nash in particular has eloquently demonstrated that feasting at the Wari sites of Cerro Baúl and Cerro Mejía occurred in a wide variety of settings (Nash 2002). Nonetheless, large-scale patron-client feasts are often considered central to the Wari political economy. These feasts, modeled after Inca examples, are seen as the means

by which the state reciprocated for subjects' labor (Cook and Glowacki 2003: 197; Nash 2002:262–263). I suggest that the available evidence points toward a much greater importance of diacritical feasting or small-scale patrol-client feasting at peripheral centers. Diacritical feasting frames social differences and is driven by a fundamentally different ethos than the reciprocal obligations of patron-client feasts. Smaller-scale patron-client feasts likely emphasized personal relationships with specific elites rather than the more distant state. In either case, Wari statecraft would have been fundamentally different than that expressed within the dominant model and likely depended on cultivating relationships with small networks of influential people (i.e., Feinman 2000).

### **An Alternative Model for the Wari Periphery**

Although aspects of the dominant model of the Wari periphery may be correct, I believe that alternative models can be offered that better fit the available evidence. To stimulate debate, I offer an alternative model of the Wari periphery that builds on earlier suggestions (Shady Solís 1988; Topic and Topic 2000). I suggest that Wari control over the periphery was isolated to a few largely independent colonies that exchanged prestige items manufactured in the core for locally available goods. The Wari centers in these colonies did not store and redistribute staple goods, and instead interacting with local populations through an ideology that accentuated social difference. By actively investigating these and other models of the Wari periphery, I argue that we have a better chance of a more accurate interpretation of Wari influence in the periphery and the nature of the state's political economy.

In my alternative model, I reinterpret the evidence to suggest that Wari exercised very little control over areas outside of the state's heartland. Instead, the spread of Wari material culture, including in some cases architecture, was linked to the polity's symbolic capital (i.e., Bourdieu 1977). The Middle Horizon was a period of great change in the Andes. The exchange of metals, obsidian, decorated ceramics, textiles, turquoise, specific marine shell (*Spondylus* spp. and *Strombus* spp.) and other objects increased in both scale and range during the period (Burger et al. 2000; Lechtman 1980; Shady

Solís 1988), and many of those items likely carried significant potential prestige value because of their exoticness, ritual significance, and/or intrinsic characteristics. Especially in southern Peru, these goods became available as population grew and social stratification intensified in many areas. Those items could be used as outside means to legitimate elite positions and Wari's pivotal role in their production, distribution, and consumption would have made associations with the state profitable for local elites. By trading for Wari goods and emulating Wari styles, elites made a connection to a foreign power that was difficult to duplicate by those without interregional connections (e.g., Helms 1988). I suggest that many of the smaller "administrative centers" were sites that were built, occupied, and maintained by local elites attempting to capitalize on the prestige of the Wari state and its material culture.

While the massive construction efforts at Pikillacta and Viracochapampa suggest that a network of peripheral administrative centers may have been planned (but see McEwan's recent interpretation [2005b] of these sites as centers of ancestor worship), there is only strong evidence for direct Wari control over the Sondondo (Jincamocco), Moquegua (Cerro Baúl and Cerro Mejía), and Cuzco valleys (Pikillacta, and possibly Huaró). The last intrusive Wari peripheral site, Honcopampa, does not appear to have controlled local populations (Lau 2002; Ponte 2000). In my model, a few Wari colonies were constructed in isolated pockets and were not well integrated with each other, or with the Wari heartland. As I argued earlier, there was no hierarchical administrative structure through which goods, information, and personnel traveled. Moreover, there are marked differences in architecture, site design, and material assemblages between known Wari peripheral sites.<sup>8</sup> These differences, combined with the period's linguistic diversity and regional trading zones (Shady Solís 1982, 1988; Torero 1974), can be used to argue for regional interaction spheres during the Middle Horizon. I suggest that each of the Wari centers established a unique relationship with local populations, and colonists situated themselves within evolving regional political and economic structures.

Just as in other early expanding states (Algaze 1993), the rapidly urbanizing Wari core demanded an influx of nonlocal goods. While people pro-

duced agricultural staples in the valleys surrounding the capital, less bulky, nonperishable goods likely came into the core from more distant regions (Jennings and Craig 2001). In most cases, this demand appears to have been satiated by extending and deepening exchange relationships with outside groups through down-the-line trade and the expansion of llama caravan routes. Because Wari-style goods were prestigious to groups across Peru, no coercive or redistributive mechanisms were necessary to stimulate the flow of goods into the state. This explanation better fits the available evidence because exchanges of this nature would not have required a built state administrative structure with large blocks of specially designed storage facilities.

Within the three areas of direct control discussed above, Wari colonies were established in areas with little political complexity and/or low population densities. There is evidence for agricultural intensification around these colonies during the Middle Horizon. Although intensification was fueled in part by population increases (McEwan 1987; Schreiber 1992; Williams 1997), these sites (and perhaps the site of Pataraya in the Nasca Valley [Schreiber 2005:249–250]), likely stimulated intensification in agriculture for export. If the agricultural products and other resources produced in these valleys were transported using regularly scheduled caravans, no extensive storage facilities would have been needed. These caravans could also have delivered the Wari ceramics, stonework, and textiles found at the sites.

Evidence for feasting at the Wari centers in the three areas demonstrates the importance of small-scale, often exclusionary, events. Wari society seems to have been obsessed over social ranks (Cook 1992; Isbell 2000), and Wari rule appears to have been deeply tied to the veneration of one's ancestors (Cook 2001; Isbell 2004; McEwan 1998, 2005b; Valdez et al. 2002). Using diacritical feasting to emphasize difference, Wari feasting separated Wari personnel and Wari ancestors from local populations. I suggest that Wari power was based less on reciprocal ties between the masses and the state, and more on network strategies of rule (e.g., Feinman 2000:31) and essentialist arguments of a divine right to rule (e.g., Cook 1985). Because this strategy was divisive, it could have provided an outside mechanism for newly emerging local elites to associate with the state and separate themselves

from their kin. By inviting influential locals to feasts, exchanging gifts with those individuals, and/or extending fictive kinship ties to them, Wari personnel could have used Wari prestige to manipulate local political structures and create elites who were dependent on the state's continued affirmation of their social differences.

## Conclusions

In the mid-1980s, a radical fringe of the post-processual movement suggested that the past is constructed almost whole cloth from the minds of archaeologists (e.g., Patrik 1985). While this extreme view won few adherents, the work of these scholars did stimulate others to explore how archaeological interpretations are formed by considering the relationship between archaeologists and the material record (e.g., Brumfiel 1996; Hodder 1992) and how scholarship is shaped by historical contexts (e.g., McGuire 1992; Trigger 1984). In this article, I have shown how an understanding of the Wari periphery has developed over the last century. Following Hodder (1992), I suggest that this vision of Wari formed within a hermeneutic spiral that brought interpretations into a greater fit with the data accumulated from survey and excavation. Interpretative spin-offs, however, have been curtailed because of the primacy of the interpretative tradition within which the bulk of Wari scholarship was done.

The most widely held and best articulated model of the Wari political economy is that the state ruled much of Peru through a network of regional administrative centers that organized the extraction, storage, and redistribution of local resources through an idiom of generalized reciprocity. As I have briefly traced, this model is rooted in Max Uhle's interpretations of the dynamics behind the spread of what would become known as the Wari ceramic style. Over the years, some of the most influential Andean archaeologists built on Uhle's work to form a dominant interpretative tradition that has a powerful influence on the ways in which archaeologists see the Wari state. There is considerable merit for many of the interpretations based in this tradition, but the interpretations are not as well based in detailed, complex, and thoroughly examined datasets as one might imagine from its dominance in the literature.

To no small degree, the dominant model of the Wari periphery is supported because it meets pre-conceptions about what the past should be like (e.g., Isbell 1995, 1996). This model not only informs the interpretations of Andeanists, but shapes general interpretations of the state throughout the discipline and beyond. Evaluation of the evidence for Wari direct control, administrative hierarchy, storage capacity, and feasting activities raises doubts about how the Wari periphery has been commonly interpreted. The possible problems in the dominant model highlight the various lacunae in our understanding of Wari, demonstrates ambiguity of many of the datasets that we do command, and opens the door to alternative visions of the Middle Horizon. My proposed model offers one potential way to understand the evidence from this period, and I hope demonstrates the utility of reconsidering how we construct the past in the Andes and elsewhere.

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## Notes

1. In this paper, I purposefully sidestep the debate regarding the definition of Wari as a state. I feel that the existence of a Wari state is well demonstrated in the Ayacucho valley (Isbell 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988; Schreiber 1992), although much more work needs to be done in order to explain how this state was structured. More important, my concern in this paper is not the organization of the Wari polity within Ayacucho, but rather the impact of Wari outside of the state heartland.

2. This discussion of how archaeologists construct the past draws its inspiration from the work of sociologists of science like Thomas Kuhn (1962, 1977), Simon Schaffer (1989, 1996), and Bruno Latour (1987, 1996, 1999) who have explored the complicated pathways through which scientific knowledge and new technologies are produced.

3. Current excavations at Collota by Willy Yépez Álvarez

and the author suggest that the site was also occupied during the Late Horizon. Most of the structures on the plan depicted in Figure 3 date to this later occupation, although Middle Horizon fragments suggest an earlier occupation.

4. There are at least 20 sites outside of the Wari heartland that are considered by some scholars to have served as state administrative centers. There is only clear evidence for the Wari construction of Pikillacta, Viracochapampa, Jincamocco, Cerro Baúl, Cerro Mejía, and perhaps Honcopampa (Jennings and Craig 2001). We know very little about the other 14 sites (Acachiwa, Collota, El Palacio, Huacaloma, Huaro, Ichabamba, Número 8, Pariamarca, Patarya, Santa Delia, Sonay, Tocroc, Yamobamba, and Socos). Three of these sites, Pariamarca, Tocroc, and Ichabamba, have been identified as Wari centers based solely on air photos (Williams and Pineda 1985). In this list of sites, I do not include those sites conclusively shown to be of non-Wari design, such as Pampa de las Llamas (Pozorski and Pozorski 1987: 32), El Purgatorio (Pozorski and Pozorski 1987:38; Thomas Pozorski personal communication 1999), and Chimu Capac (Valkenier 1995:279) or numerous sites attributed to the empire, such as San Nicolás in the valley of Supe (Lumbreras 1974b:155), Yanahuanca in the Pasco Valley (Isbell 1988:186), and Wisajirca in Huanaco (MacNeish et al. 1975:60), that have been described only in passing.

5. While there are strong data supporting 2–4 level settlement hierarchies and administrative sites surrounding the site of Wari (Isbell 1985, 1987; Isbell and Schreiber 1978) and some of the peripheral administrative centers like Jincamocco

(Schreiber 1992), Pikillacta (McEwan 1987), and Cerro Baúl (Nash 2002; Williams and Isla 2002), these data speak to the relationship between these centers and local populations and not to the relationship that Wari centers had with other centers in different regions.

6. If one accepts 12 ha as the occupation size of Pikillacta, the peripheral Wari site with the largest inhabited area could be Jincamocco in the Sondondo Valley. The site's architecture covers about 15 ha, although it remains unclear what percentage of the site was occupied during the Middle Horizon (Schreiber 1992:175). While Frank Meddens has suggested the Jincamocco could have administered the neighboring Chica/Soras Valley (1991:230), no scholar has suggested that Jincamocco controlled a wide area of the Peruvian highlands. Most other proposed administrative centers ranged in size from .45–5 ha (Jennings and Craig 2001:483–488).

7. I thank Dr. Patricia Knobloch for this and other insightful ideas that she offered in her review of an earlier draft of this paper.

8. Scholars tend to emphasize Wari's stylistic unity, and this unity has been used to support arguments for Wari direct control over the periphery (see Glowacki 1996a:28–36). There are regional differences in styles, and in the frequencies of styles, that are only rarely discussed (but see Knobloch 1991; J. Topic 1991). Research needs to be done to more systematically analyze Wari stylistic variation across Peru.

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