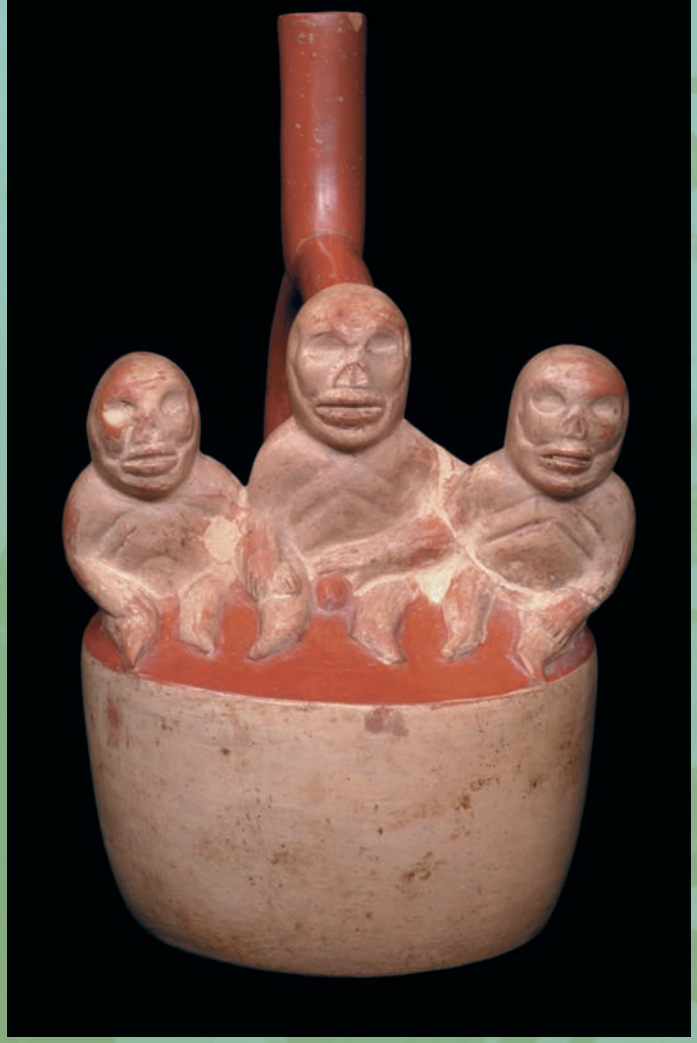
Sex, Death, and Sacrifice in Moche Religion and Visual Culture



Steve Bourget

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To Julie

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PREFACE

The genesis of the following study is twofold and covers nearly ten years of iconographical study and archaeological fieldwork. The backbone of the first section on sexual representations was provided by a chapter of the Ph.D. thesis that I submitted in 1994 to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Montreal (1994a). This first foray (Bourget 1995) into the subject of Moche sexual representations has been greatly transformed and expanded, not only with new examples but also with information found in archaeological contexts. In a way, this new study of sexual scenes led naturally to the subject of death and burials. It thus became apparent that this important aspect of Moche social life and religion was probably intimately related to the first and that a certain form of consubstantiality existed between death, sex, and fertility. In fact, I have used the conceptual tools developed in the first investigation on sexual representations to explore scenes associated with death and funerary rituals. Moche iconography contains many references to these activities, and scholars have designated the most complex scenes depicting a funerary ritual as the Burial Theme (Donnan and McClelland 1979).

In 2001, Christopher B. Donnan came to the University of Texas to deliver a magisterial keynote lecture on Moche portraiture during the opening night of the Maya Meetings.[1] For me, this was a golden opportunity for discussion with the foremost specialist of Moche iconography. The following day, I used casually, and perhaps imprudently, the term "World of the Ancestors."[2] A response was not long coming, as Chris immediately retorted, "How do you know that the Moche believed in Ancestors?" I had to admit that he was right and that the existence of a world of the ancestors in Moche religions could not be supported at that time by my rather incomplete demonstration.

Reconstructing an ancient system of beliefs from a society that did not possess a writing system is, to say the least, a dangerous undertaking, fraught with difficulties. Beliefs concerning such ontological and fundamental ideas regarding death and its processes or outcome, such as conviction in an afterlife or the lack thereof, does not readily leave traces in the archaeological record. What are usually left behind are the products and remnants of these beliefs such as burial sites and evidence of rituals and ceremonies such as libation activities and sacrifices. It would appear that in addition to these contexts, the Moche have provided us with numerous representations of rather extraordinary subjects involved in a vast array of ritual activities. Thus, the first part of this research will be based on the visible and tangible evidence in conjunction with a detailed analysis of the iconography. The second part will be more speculative, as I attempt a form of paleoethnography by trying to reconstruct the possible existence of an afterlife in Moche religion. If I have managed to provide, even partially, some answers to the fundamental relationships between life, death, and the afterlife, my task will be complete.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book represents a decade-long journey in the field of Moche studies. In the process, numerous individuals have been involved in this project. I am particularly thankful to all the friends and colleagues who have patiently listened to my ideas and who made insightful and very helpful comments.

I am especially grateful for the generous cooperation of the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia and the Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera in Lima, Peru. The bulk of the objects presented in this study have been provided by these two museums. Indeed, this undertaking would not have been possible without the complete access to the Rafael Larco Herrera special collection of Moche vessels depicting sexual activities. The current director, Andrés de Álvarez-Calderón, has shown great enthusiasm for this project. I am also deeply in debt to a number of private and public collections in Peru, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States who allowed me to photograph and study their Moche ceramics.

Very special thanks are also due to the late Donna McClelland, who graciously provided most of the numerous fineline drawings used in the volume. The state of research in Moche visual culture would not be where it is now without her talent as an accomplished artist and dedication as a scholar.

I am profoundly grateful to Elizabeth P. Benson and Christopher B. Donnan, who have acted as reviewers for the University of Texas Press. As is customary among Moche specialists, they sometimes share very different positions from those expressed in this book, but they nevertheless acknowledged and welcomed other views and interpretations. They also greatly contributed to the volume by providing me with examples from their personal archives.

My research and fieldwork was made possible by financial support from the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas and the Walter and Gina Ducloux Fine Arts Faculty Fellowship. The preparation of this volume was also made possible by grants from the Sainsbury Research Unit and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Last but not least, I want to thank Hazel Taylor and Kimberly Jones, who have proofread the manuscript.

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1 • More Questions than Answers

The Moche inhabited what is now the Peruvian north coast for nearly seven hundred years, between the first and the eighth centuries of our common era. Their origin, their history, and the nature of their political and religious structure are still a matter of debate. But greater advances than ever before have been made in the past two decades or so, and the picture of a complex and fascinating society is slowly emerging from their sand-covered sites and from the shelves of museums where thousands upon thousands of their exquisitely modeled and painted ceramics are waiting to be rediscovered. Thanks to a number of large-scale excavations and long-term archaeological projects, we now know that this ancient Andean society, perhaps the first one to attain the level of social complexity of a state, constructed cities with elaborate monumental edifices; specialized centers for the production of textiles, metallic objects, and ceramics; sectors for the elite and for the commoners; and numerous cemeteries.

These people, following a long tradition of irrigation engineering, diverted the flow of rivers into canals and reclaimed arable land from the arid coast. They developed a subsistence economy based on the agriculture of maize, beans, yucca, potatoes, camote, peanuts, squash, chili peppers, and a host of other plants of lesser importance. Various kinds of significant crops such as cotton and gourds were grown for the production of fishing nets. They very successfully exploited nearby marine and freshwater resources such as crustacean, mollusks, and fish. This bounty accounted for an important part of their dietary proteins. They raised ducks and guinea pigs and used domesticated animals such as dogs and llamas. They also hunted wild game such as deer and sea lions and collected other natural resources such as land snails and wild plants for food.

They possessed neither a writing system nor a clearly defined market economy. They actively participated, however, in long-distance

exchange relations for the import of luxury goods seemingly crucial for their craft activities, sumptuary regalia, and rituals. The goods imported probably included lapis lazuli from the south, and *Strombus,* conus, and *Spondylus* seashells from the warm seas to the north around the gulf of Guayaquil, Ecuador. From the Amazonian lowlands may have come parrot feathers, certain plants, and seeds. Many of these techniques and exchange systems were already well in place long before the Moche culture emerged in Peruvian prehistory.

The Moche themselves are most often remembered for their elaborate ritual ceramic vessels and for the creation of outstanding depictions of humans, animals, and beings with supernatural attributes.[1] Larco was the first investigator to divide Moche ritual ceramics into phases (1948). His five-phase chronology (Phase I–V) is based on morpho-stylistic changes and overall decoration noted on ritual ceramics, especially the stirrup spout bottles. Although the beginning of this seriation remains to be clearly defined, the sequential nature of Phase III and Phase IV has been firmly established at the Huacas de Moche site (Chapdelaine 2003). For these two phases the calibrated dates obtained at the site range from AD 250 to AD 700. Although the stylistic sequence established by Larco presents problems, especially with regard to the first two phases, Moche scholars still utilize it as the established chronology for fineware vessels (Donnan and McClelland 1999). The early part of Larco's seriation will only be resolved by future investigations. If we disregard the Burial Theme representations, which are exclusively from Phase V, 90 percent of the examples used in this essay belong to the Phase IV stylistic period.

Moche Visual Culture

Moche iconography is certainly one of the most intriguing and dynamic systems of representation from ancient Peru. With their striking iconography replete with a realism never surpassed in the Andean world, the Moche have inhabited our mindscape for more than a century. During this period, this system of representation has been perceived as a portal to their way of life, their customs, and their religious beliefs. This perception has probably more to do with the degree of realism of their beautifully painted and modeled ceramic vessels than with the very nature of the representations. Until recently, very little archaeological research had been done, and these highly suggestive and evocative scenes were one of the only sources of knowledge about the Moche culture itself.

The archaeology on the Moche is relatively recent. Notwithstanding the pioneering work of Max Uhle at the Huacas de Moche site in 1899, field investigations really began only after World War II (Kroeber 1925; Uhle 1913). Since the landmark discovery of high-ranking

burials at the site of Sipán in 1987 (Alva 1988, 2001; Alva and Donnan 1993), a number of other long-term projects have been or are still being carried out at Moche sites such as the Huacas de Moche (Uceda et al. 1997, 1998, 2000), Huaca Cao Viejo (Franco et al. 1994), Dos Cabezas (Donnan 2001a, 2003a), and San José de Moro (Castillo 1996, 2001; Donnan and Castillo 1994) (figure 1.1). These contributions are providing us with a wealth of information concerning the Moche social and political organization, their urbanism, their economy, and, perhaps more importantly for the present study, their rituals and religion.

As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, publications appeared on the subject of Moche iconography. Since then, dozens of contributions have been published on subjects as wide ranging as warfare, human sacrifice, craft activities, way of life, folk healing and shamanic practices, agricultural calendar, funerary practices, and rituals. The methods of analysis and the resulting interpretations of the material are almost as diverse as the number of authors and the seemingly infinite variety of representations. Indeed, not only our approaches were in some cases radically different but also our interpretations of the same scenes were sometimes situated at opposite ends of a distorted spectrum. The main reason for these discrepancies is possibly that Moche figurative pottery presents at the same time a seductive invitation to the analyst and a formidable challenge.

The complexity and the diversity of the representations, especially the fineline paintings, often make it possible to tackle a given image from a staggering variety of different and often divergent angles. For example, a scene representing warriors leading nude males (figure 1.2) has been interpreted as a depiction of Moche martial activities geared towards the expansion of their state-level society (Wilson 1988: 335) or, alternatively, as the outcome of ritualized battles leading eventually to rituals involving the sacrifice of the defeated Moche warriors (Bourget 2001a). How can this be? Is one of the theories wrong and the other one right? Can Moche iconography operate simultaneously at symbolic and political levels? Before even attempting to answer these issues of methodology and interpretation, some general and agreed-upon notions regarding the structure of this system of representation must be presented.

The main objectives of this essay are to explore concepts related to death, fertility, liminality, and afterlife in Moche funerary rituals and iconography. To do so, I will concentrate mostly on two broad subjects: the sexual representations and the scenes seemingly related to funerary rituals, commonly known as the Burial Theme (Donnan and McClelland 1979). Customary within the Moche iconographic system, specific subjects such as those found in the Burial Theme tend to have multiple roles and relate to more than one activity. To obtain a better idea of the subject's multiple roles, it becomes necessary to ex-

Figure 1.1 Map of the north coast of Peru.

Figure 1.2 Fineline painting of warriors and sacrificial victims. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

plore all avenues to document more thoroughly the subject under scrutiny. Therefore, I will touch upon a number of representations pertaining to other domains such as sacrificial rituals and maritime activities. Yet I hasten to say that these secondary subjects will not be examined in great detail. They will be used primarily to document better the themes and the subjects of the present study.

Subjects, Themes, and Narratives

Even if a cursory look gives the impression that this iconography is comprised of an infinite number of subjects and activities, that is not the case. Preliminary analyses reveal that there are relatively limited numbers of scenes and actors. The most complex activities usually consist of elaborately painted scenes often involving numerous individuals in sets of recurring actions such as the scene of warriors escorting eventual sacrificial victims already mentioned (figure 1.2).

Christopher Donnan (1975) initially developed the thematic approach. By tackling one of the most complex scenes, which he labeled "The Presentation Theme," he demonstrated that, in some cases, this representation can be shown in its entirety (figure 1.3), or parts of it can be depicted alone or in various combinations.[2] As one example, he argued that the bird priest in the Presentation Theme, individual B in figure 1.3, can also appear as a separate subject in a sculptural form (figure 1.4). This realization led him to recommend that "present-day researchers should be encouraged to go beyond a simple explanation of a given piece and to search for a basic theme to which it belongs" (Donnan 1975: 162).[3]

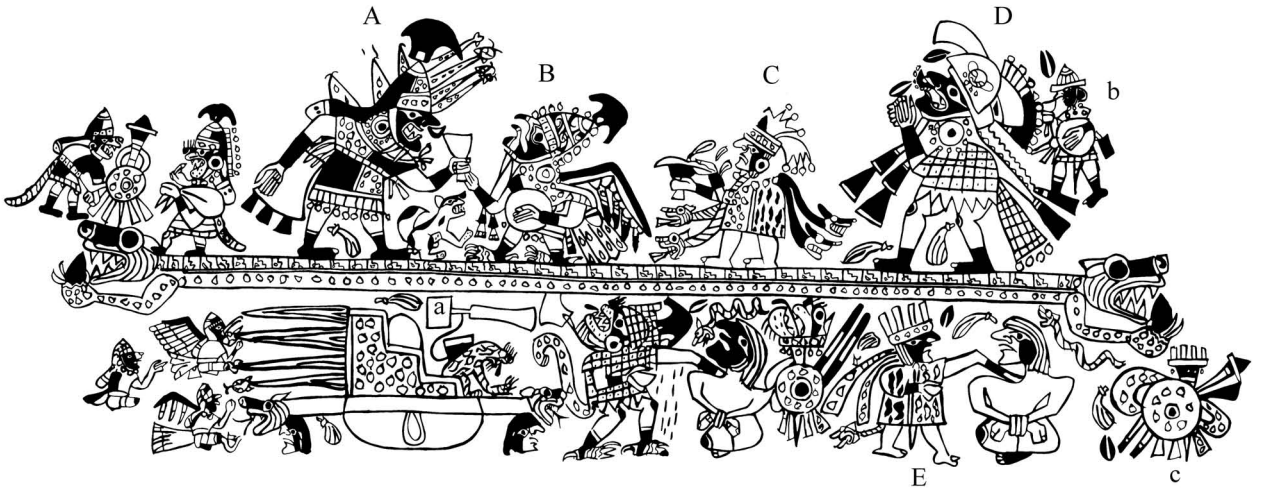

Figure 1.3 Fineline painting of the Presentation Theme, Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 1.4 Bottle in the shape of an anthropomorphized owl holding a disc. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (55.2317).

With the scant archaeological record currently available to us, it remains unclear why certain elements of a given complex theme are susceptible to being singled out and represented on their own on an individual vessel. When isolated, the subjects are commonly treated in three-dimensional form. Were such isolated units of a given theme then reunited in a single tomb? Or were they distributed among different but related burials? Could just one element standing on its own, such as the bird priest (figure 1.4), have been sufficient to trigger the memory of the whole scene? Because of the extensive looting suffered by Moche temples and cemeteries, we may never be able to answer these questions properly. As it will rapidly become apparent, however, the internal system of relations between the diverse elements depicted in the iconography attest to its high degree of cohesiveness.

Although there seems to be a certain degree of arbitrariness as to what constitutes a given theme when we compare it to another, to date I have identified about forty-five complex themes or scenes (Bourget 1994a). This number probably arose from a concern for exhaustiveness, since slightly fewer than twenty basic themes are generally recognized (Hocquenghem 1989: 21). The main reason for this discrepancy arises because specific themes are sometimes created in relation to the investigator's own objectives and methodology. For example, the sexual representations are usually organized in only one or two great ensembles; in the context of this study and for the sake of clarity, however, I have separated them into nine distinct groups: sodomy, masturbation, fellatio, sexual depictions on libation vases, anthropomorphic genitals, copulation between animals, copulation between animals and women, copulation with sacrificial victim, and copulation between Wrinkle Face and women. Regardless of this problem of definition, it appears true that a fairly restricted number of subjects are involved in specific sets of recurring activities. Furthermore, the separations between certain themes become less definitive than it would seem. For example, particularly during the terminal stylistic phase (Phase V), more than one theme might be depicted in an unusually complex fineline representation (figure 1.5). Moreover, what at first appear to represent unrelated themes may appear on distinct parts of a single vessel, especially on Phase IV ceramics.

These additions and juxtapositions suggest that some themes may represent parts of a much greater and elaborate story or narrative. These narratives are perhaps the most difficult aspect to investigate and to demonstrate convincingly. They offer the possibility that many complex representations may not just depict a posture or an activity frozen in time but may recount a lengthy ritual, an elaborate myth, or both at the same time. In some cases, such as in the complex scenes of vaginal copulation and the Burial Theme, a sequence of actions appears to have been represented, one frame at a time, almost

Figure 1.5 Complex representation involving the taking of prisoners, the sailing of tule boats, and the exchange of cups. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

like a storyboard. In other situations, it is also possible the story may have been conflated so that actions taking place at different moments within the sequence are depicted all together in a single representation. These are important aspects that will be explored in much greater detail later, because they will provide insight into the interconnections between themes as well as some methodological grounding for the resulting interpretations. Although opinions differ as to what constitutes a narrative or what any given narrative may represent, most investigators acknowledge their existence.[4]

Even though these scenes and themes have often been studied in isolation, the reality is that they form part of a complete symbolic project. As briefly mentioned earlier, in the most complex scenes, recurring sets of actors appear performing different tasks. For example, in the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3), a number of subjects Donnan (1975) labeled individuals A, B, C, D, and E are also depicted in scenes of warfare, carried on litters, or standing in reed boats, indicating that these actions formed part of their realm of activities or that these scenes may be depicting the crucial moments of a more complex narrative.

Apart from the subjects depicted in the Presentation Theme, there seem to exist at least two other important groups of actors. The first group, a pair usually represented together, includes an individual with a wrinkled face, possessing prominent fangs in his mouth and wearing a snake belt that terminates in fox heads (figure 1.6). He is often seen wearing a tunic with a step motif and an elaborate headdress made of a semicircular fan with long feathers and adorned with an animal effigy, usually a spotted feline or a fox. His companion

takes the guise of an anthropomorphic iguana. Iguana generally sports a long tunic, a bulging cloth tied around the waist or the neck, and a headdress made with long feathers and a bird effigy, usually a condor (figure 1.6). Both are consistently depicted in the scenes of vaginal copulation and in the Burial Theme. In most scenes where the pair is depicted together, Iguana seems to be subservient to Wrinkle Face, and as such, Iguana has usually been perceived as the assistant. The second group, perhaps as frequently shown as the first, contains skeletal beings and individuals with their lips and nose missing (figure 1.7). These subjects also constitute an integral part of the themes explored here.

Figure 1.6 Fineline painting depicting Wrinkle Face accompanied by Iguana. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

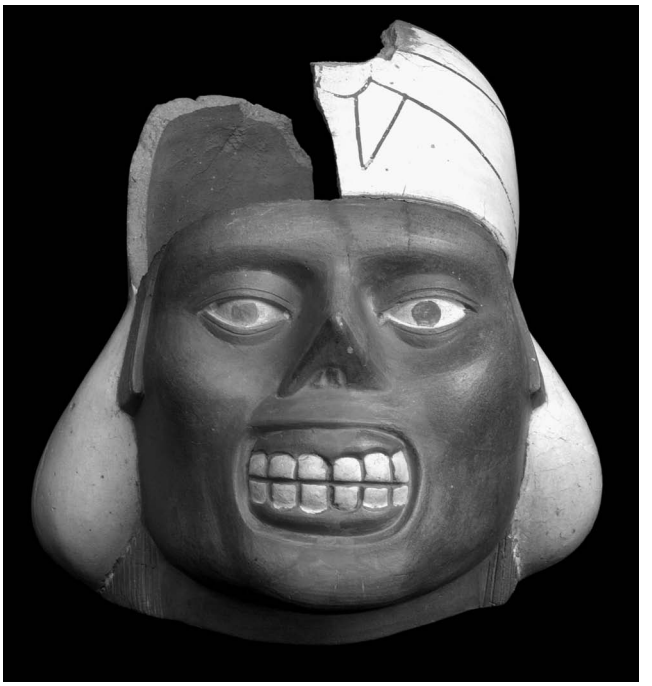

Figure 1.7 Portrait vessel of a mutilated individual. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna, Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-788).

Ideally, because of the interrelationships between these two broad themes and the rest of the iconography, they cannot and should not be isolated from the rest of the corpus to be studied productively and understood correctly, as this would run the risk of obscuring the meaning of these scenes and rendering the resulting analyses misleading. It would thus appear that selecting one or two themes and treating them somewhat separately would constitute if not an impossible project, most probably a fruitless one. Keeping this caveat in mind, I would nevertheless propose that the cluster of scenes loosely associated with sexual representations, and the second one apparently depicting funerary activities, can be studied together. Indeed, their analysis will show that these scenes often portray similar actors and activities, suggesting that they may have been perceived as conceptually and cognitively related.

Iconography, Archaeology, and Identity

The problem of determining if the activities depicted in Moche iconography were the representations of rituals or myths has been one of the major subjects of research. The main question is, Were these the representations of activities that really existed, or were these scenes relating to supernatural subjects and activities? Hocquenghem (1989) and Makowski (2000) suggested that in some cases, two types of representations were present, some of them depicting real people performing specific rituals, and others depicting deities or beings with supernatural attributes involved in some kind of mythical activities. Of course, to discern what may have really taken place and what may have been part of a mythical realm is of critical importance to bring this iconography into the social sphere. At this stage of the investigation, I do not think that it is possible to clearly delimit these boundaries or even to demonstrate convincingly their existence. Nevertheless, important progress has recently been made in the field of archaeology, especially concerning the identity and reality of some of the most important subjects and rituals of the iconography.

Since the 1950s and especially over the past twenty years, a series of propositions have been made concerning the identity of a number of high-ranking burials and the possibility that the individuals buried in these elaborate tombs could have been the real-life counterparts of some of the people depicted in the iconography. I will review, albeit briefly, these identifications and the basis for them. The aim of this section is not to resolve the issue of the interrelations existing between real people and representations; that would take us on a different path than the one being pursued. Rather, the section will provide the conceptual framework needed to explore in the present essay what roles the main subjects perform.

Presentation Theme

In 1987, the chance seizure of golden artifacts looted from the site of Sipán led to the discovery and excavation of extremely complex Moche burials. Due to the periodic appearance of exquisite Moche metal artifacts in the illicit antiquities market, archaeologists had long suspected that such funerary contexts existed; until then, however, looters and antiquity dealers had always beaten the archaeologists to the finishing line. Over a period of about twelve years, Walter Alva and his crew unearthed in a small platform the tombs of at least ten high-ranking individuals buried with a retinue of people and numerous ceremonial artifacts (Alva 1990, 1994, 2001; Alva and Donnan 1993). On the basis of the corresponding objects such as headdresses, bells, golden backflaps, and scepters, two of the buried individuals, both male, Donnan eventually identified as the main protagonists, A and B, of the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3; Alva and Donnan 1993).

The association is particularly convincing between individual A and the person in Tomb 1, an adult male between 35 and 45 years of age, who was found with similar golden crescent headdress, circular earspools, and numerous crescent-shaped backflaps (figure 1.3, A; Alva and Donnan 1993: 55–125). The relative size of the objects even matched those depicted on the individual in the representation of the Presentation Theme. Furthermore, a metallic rattle terminating in a sharp chisel and found in the right hand of the buried male is very similar to the object depicted just above the litter in the lower section of the scene (figure 1.3, a). This litter can be assigned to individual A, given the close resemblance between its decoration of rays terminating in animal heads and those that surround him. The low-relief scenes etched around the four trapezoidal faces and the top section of the golden rattle found in the burial depict the same subject. They illustrate an elaborately garbed warrior bringing down an opponent with a blow to the face. The vanquished is already shown as a prisoner, with his hands tied behind his back. This depiction may be part of a conflated narrative, representing in a single scene a ritual battle between two opponents, the capture of the defeated warrior, the removal of the opponent's clothing, and finally the display of the vanquished, with his hands tied behind his back. Each of these actions is usually found on distinct scenes, and Donnan has convincingly demonstrated that they belonged to a very precise sequence of events:

> Once captured, some or all of the opponent's clothing was removed, a rope was placed around his neck, and his hands were sometimes tied behind his back. The victor then held the rope tied to the prisoner's neck and marched him off the field of battle. The prisoners were taken to a place where they were formally arraigned. One scene shows them being brought into a ceremonial precinct, defined by large pyramids with tem-

ple structures at their summits [figure 1.8]. Following arraignment, there was a ceremony in which the prisoners were sacrificed. Their throats were cut, and their blood was consumed in tall goblets. (1997: 52–53)

Although the description of the sequence Donnan suggested is likely, most scenes depicting warriors leading nude males do not represent them as captured prisoners in this way. They usually depict them with a rope around their necks but with their hands doing specific, highly ritualized gestures, such as a raised fist or with the defeated warrior usually pointing in the direction of his captor (figures 1.2, 1.8). Such gestures are often associated with rituals of sacrifice, suggesting that the eventual sacrifice of the warrior may already be embedded, or conflated, in the parading of these defeated warriors. The conflation of narratives is thus an important device used to convey complex stories in a single representation.

The identification of individual B with the main person buried in Tomb 2, an adult male also 35 to 45 years of age, is based on the presence of an owl headdress, a backflap, and a copper cup lying near his right hand (Alva and Donnan 1993: 163). It is thus worth noting that, in this case, a living being has been related to an iconographical subject consistently depicted with supernatural attributes, such as the one possessing the head and the wings of a nocturnal bird (figure 1.4). The great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) may have provided the model for this subject. The identification between a bird-being and a real person can have profound consequences for the understanding of representations depicting what have often been perceived as su-

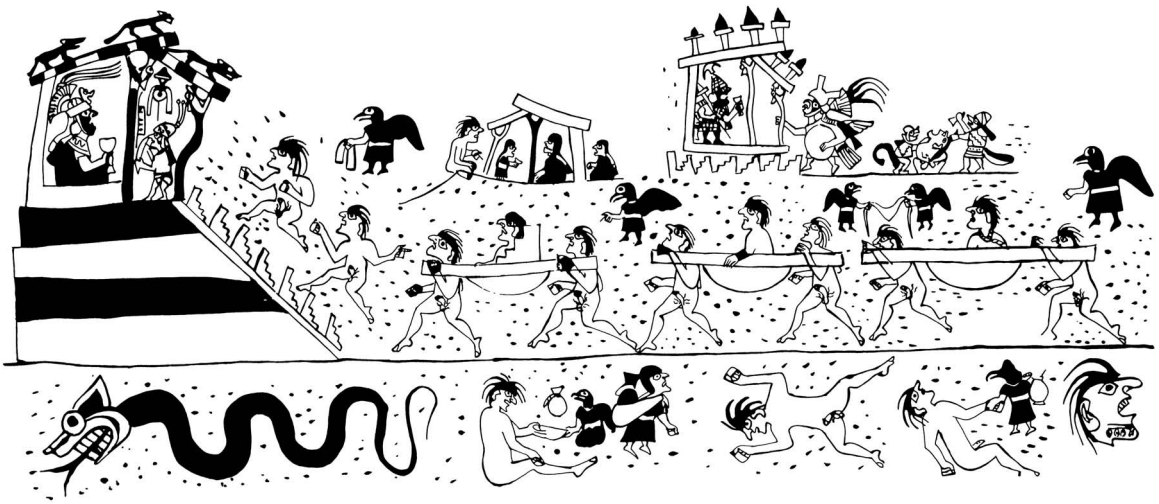

Figure 1.8 Fineline painting representing the arrival and eventual sacrifice of male victims. American Museum of Natural History, New York. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

pernatural subjects and their relations with rituals that may have existed.

On the basis of human remains and ritual artifacts found near the burials already mentioned, Alva and Donnan stated that this "Sacrifice Ceremony" had really taken place at the site:

> Moreover, the ritual offerings of amputated hands and feet that we excavated on the south platform strongly imply that the Sacrifice Ceremony was actually performed at or near this pyramid, and that the remains resulting from its enactment were ritually buried in the pyramid itself. For the first time, then, we have been able to make a direct correlation between a ceremonial event depicted in Moche art and the individuals who performed that ceremony, the place where it was enacted, and the disposal of ritual remains after the ceremony was completed. (1993: 223)

Although it is not the place here to present the full analysis of Tomb 3, found in the earliest construction phase of the same platform, I would suggest that this burial of a man in his late forties, also known as the Old Lord, may have in fact been the living representative of individual D on the illustrious lineup of the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3). In this case, this individual could be recognized by, among other attributes the animated scepter standing just behind him. This anthropomorphized object is holding a disk (figure 1.3, b [upper right]). The actual object found in the right hand of the Old Lord was a gold rattle that terminates in a chisel (Alva and Donnan 1993: 181, fig. 195).

It is thus interesting to note that individuals A and D would both have been buried with scepters, constituting not only some sort of badge of office but also very efficient tools for human sacrifice. The blades of these chisels are considerably narrower than those of the usual crescent-blade knives, suggesting that they may have been employed during specific sacrificial activities such as cutting arterial veins for collecting blood. The crescent-blade knife, commonly known as *tumi,* is a rather crude implement that may have been used more extensively for decapitation and dismemberment.

A few years later, at San José de Moro in the Jequetepeque Valley, Donnan and Luis Jaime Castillo (1992, 1994) discovered two elaborate burials of women, each of whom was eventually linked to individual C of the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3).[5] Since then, they have been known as the priestesses of San José de Moro. Their cane coffins, rectangular boxes made of six cane panels tied together with ropes, had been given anthropomorphic features by the addition of legs, arms, and a sizeable mask, all made of a silver copper alloy. Tassels of the same metal, acting as headdresses, had once been planted on each side of the mask. The general form of these decorations is in many respects almost identical to the serrated-edge extensions or

plumes worn by individual C in the Presentation Theme scene (figure 1.3). Furthermore, in the ritual paraphernalia found with the buried women, ceremonial goblets identical in form to the one exchanged between individuals A and B were found. In the tomb of the first woman, excavated in 1991, the ceramic goblet had been decorated with a fineline painting associated with war and sacrifice. It depicts the procession of a series of anthropomorphized shields and clubs holding a cup in their hands (figure 1.9).

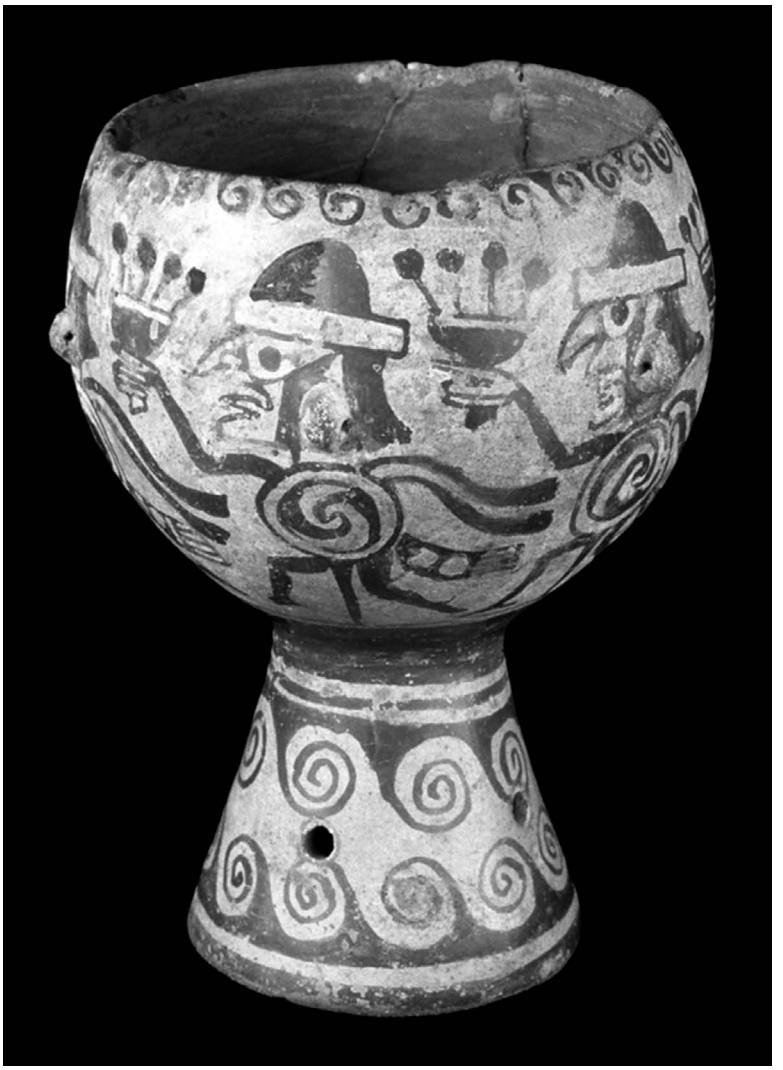

Figure 1.9 Ceremonial goblet decorated with a painting depicting anthropomorphized war implement holding cups. Proyecto Arqueológico San José de Moro. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

The burial of the second priestess is particularly important to us, as it contained a rare burial scene found in its original context. During the burial, ritual attendants had carefully placed the bottle depicting a Burial Theme into one of the niches of the funerary chamber. We shall return to this burial later and discuss in some detail its contents—especially the spatial organization of some of the artifacts, including this bottle (Chapter 4).

Finally, the reanalysis of a tomb, Burial 10, excavated in 1946 at the site of Huaca de la Cruz in the Virú Valley permitted the identification of an additional subject of the Presentation Theme (Strong and Evans 1952: 147–149). The burial contained the body of a middle-aged woman in a cane-wrapped bundle with a wooden staff resting upon her pelvis and chest. The staff led Daniel Arsenault (1994) to identify her as individual E, the figure performing a human sacrifice on the lower register of the Presentation Theme scene (figure 1.3). The well-preserved staff measures 71 cm in length and has carved in its upper section a woman sitting on a raised dais (figure 1.10). Her back is resting against the base of the four prongs. Two smaller human figures are seated in front of her knees. Similarly, individual E in the Presentation Theme appears as an anthropomorphized staff drawing blood from a man with bound hands. The four prongs form part of her headdress, and the extremity of the staff can be seen as a sharp point appearing between her legs (figure 1.3, E). This identification is further reinforced by the depiction of a four-prong staff in association with a war club and a shield immediately to the right of individual E (figure 1.3, c). Although it has not been possible to elicit the exact function of the buried staff, in the iconography it appears to be clearly associated with the practice of warfare and human sacrifice.

The relation of the feminine gender with sacrifice is further strengthened by the presence of a second burial, Burial 5, situated in the vicinity of Burial 10 (Strong and Evans 1952: 141–145). It contained the cane-wrapped body of an adult female in her twenties, along with a sacrificed llama and sixteen vessels. Among the ceramic offerings, three deserve mention in the context of this research. The first one is the portrait-head vessel of a man wearing tubular ear ornaments and an elaborate headdress or head ring decorated with the heads of two falcons (figure 1.11). The second object is a rattle-pedestal base goblet almost identical to the one found in the tomb of the first priestess at San José de Moro (Strong and Evans 1952: pl. XVI, i). The third is a jar decorated with a fineline painting depicting two anthropomorphic war clubs. The first club, on the left, has a square shield and is holding a white goblet. He is toasting with another war club, to the right, also holding a goblet that is painted red (figure 1.12). The different colors of the cups suggest that one is depicted as empty (white) and the second one as filled perhaps with

blood (red). Incidentally, the animated club on the right has a disk in his left hand, indicating that this representation may be part of the Presentation Theme as well (figure 1.3, B).

It is thus possible that the women found in Burials 5 and 10 were intimately connected to rituals of human sacrifice. These two burials belong to the Phase IV stylistic period. Moche women, as shown both in the iconography and in the archaeology, may have actively been involved with rituals regarding the collection of blood and its presentation, during perhaps the most elaborate ceremonies in which humans

Figure 1.10 Wooden club with a sculpture of a woman sitting in front of two smaller figures. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (MO-0879).

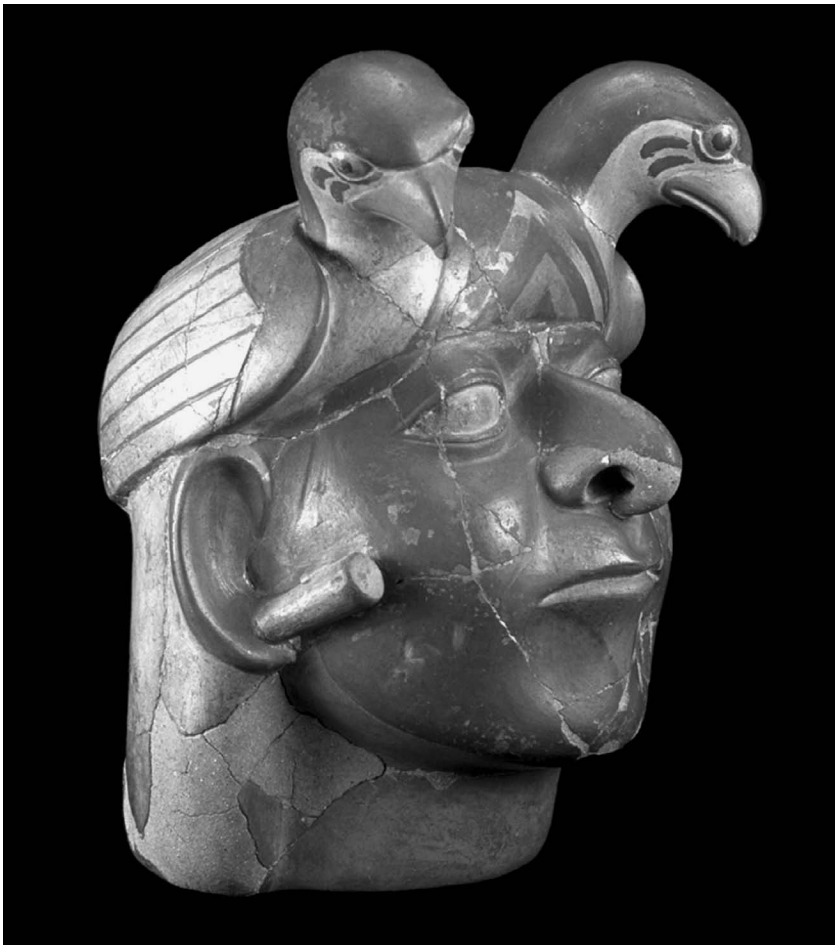

Figure 1.11 Portrait-head vessel. Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York. Photograph by C. B. Donnan.

Figure 1.12 Jar with a depiction of toasting anthropomorphized clubs and shields. Redrawn from Kutscher 1983: fig. 269.

were sacrificed. The identification of the two subjects in the Presentation Theme as women is strengthened by the fact that they both wear the same tunic, long braids that terminate in animal heads, and identical facial paintings (figure 1.3). The archaeological contexts from Huaca de la Cruz would thus reinforce previous identifications of the figures as female that were made some years earlier, solely on the basis of the iconographical representations (Hocquenghem and Lyon 1980).

With the discovery of cups in the tombs of the San José de Moro priestesses, and their ubiquitous presence in numerous representations, it became of critical importance to assess if such objects may have been used to contain human blood. To test for the presence of blood, we carried out an analysis of two pedestal base cups, one from the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin, and the other from the Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia de la Universidad de Trujillo. The objects, albeit without secure provenience, were tested by immunological analysis, and we found that they once contained human blood (Bourget and Newman 1998). The cup from Berlin is decorated in low relief and depicts a complete sequence of battle, defeat, and capture (figure 1.13). Like the cups discovered in the burials of San José de Moro and Huaca de la Cruz, the representation circumambulating the cup reinforces the strong connection that may have existed between ritual warfare, capture, and blood sacrifice, as mentioned above.

The main question regarding these discoveries thus becomes: Have sacrificial ceremonies similar to those depicted by the iconography really taken place? One has to acknowledge not only that representations of most of the individuals have been found at various other Moche sites but that many objects that could have been used during these rituals also have been located in situ at other sites or in numerous collections: chisels, cups, circular disks, staffs, and other objects. Furthermore, some of these objects, analyzed by Margaret Newman, tested positive for the presence of human blood (Bourget and Newman 1998). It is thus very likely that ceremonies involving these individuals may have been carried out at spatially and chronologically separated Moche sites.

The burials found at San José de Moro date to the early eighth century, considerably more recent than those of Sipán, which apparently date to around the fourth century. In 1958, a mural depicting the Presentation Theme was found nearly 300 km to the south of Sipán at Pañamarca in the Nepeña Valley, the southern limit of Moche territory (see, e.g., figure 4.44; Bonavia 1985). Donnan likewise mentions a mural depicting a series of anthropomorphized shields and clubs holding a goblet, located at La Mayanga in the Lambayeque valley (1972; 1978: 173, figure 255). This motif closely resembles the scenes painted on the San José de Moro cup and the jar from Huaca

Figure 1.13 Ceramic goblet with a depiction of ritual warfare. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (VA-47985).

de la Cruz (figures 1.9, 1.12). The images at La Mayanga possibly date to the late Phase V (Bonavia 1985: 99–104). The breadth of time and space spanning these representations and associated objects thus confirms that during a period of at least three hundred years, the ritual activity depicted in the Presentation Theme may have been regularly enacted all over the region under Moche control by high-ranking individuals wearing similar regalia and using the same paraphernalia. Regarding this striking diachronic and synchronic homogeneity, Alva and Donnan mention that

> the fact that the Sacrifice Ceremony was so widespread in both time and space strongly implies that it was part of a state religion, with a priesthood in each part of the kingdom composed of nobles who dressed in prescribed ritual attire. When members of the priesthood died, they were buried at the temple where the Sacrifice Ceremony took place, wearing the objects they had used to perform the ritual. Subsequently,

other men and women were chosen to replace them, to dress like them, and to perform the same ceremonial role. (1993: 226)

The remarkable consistency shown both by the iconographical representations and by those acting in the role of these individuals reveals the pervasiveness and the importance of the Presentation Theme. It further implies that ceremonies involving human sacrifice, especially the taking and partaking of human blood, were central to Moche religion and ideology. Such iconographic and ritual conservatism attested in the identifications of high-ranking individuals reinforces the view that Moche iconography maintained a high degree of coherency, providing ample justification for detailed analyses of further related scenes and subjects. Therefore, I will now attempt to establish the physical identity of four other subjects of the iconography within the social world of the Moche.

Wrinkle Face and Iguana

Wrinkle Face and Iguana are among the most prominent subjects of Moche iconography (figure 1.6). Apart from the Presentation Theme, they frequently appear in other complex activities. They are of course deeply involved in some of the most important scenes of sexual activity, and their presence is ubiquitous in the Burial Theme. But could these two individuals, consistently represented with supernatural attributes, have real-life counterparts such as the individuals we saw associated with the Presentation Theme? I will begin by assessing their presence at the Huaca de la Cruz site and then turn my attention to the Huacas de Moche (figure 1.1). Huacas de Moche includes the Huaca de la Luna, the Huaca del Sol, and the urban sector.

Huaca de La Cruz

In 1946, during their last day of fieldwork at Huaca de la Cruz, Duncan Strong and Clifford Evans encountered the most complex Moche burial found until the discovery of the Sipán mausoleum some forty years later (1947; 1952). This large burial, Burials 12–16, also known as the Warrior-Priest tomb, contained the remains of five persons, along with a vast array of offerings (Strong and Evans 1952: 150–167). I will describe this tomb in some detail, as it will provide us with a number of elements directly related to the present study.

A digging stick was the first object encountered in the fill during the excavation at 1.75 m below the surface. The archaeologists mentioned that this wooden tool could have been used during the preparation of the burial and discarded afterwards. The whole burial lay directly underneath this stick, at a depth of 2.85 m to 3.40 m. The uppermost burial just on top of the main coffin was that of a strongly built man in his forties. He was resting on his back with his knees and ankles tightly tied together. Copper and cotton offerings had been

placed in his mouth and on his wrists. Three ceramic vessels and eight gourd bowls filled with maize, beans, and unspun cotton had been placed alongside the body. At the head of the burial was a flaring bowl containing a bat-effigy cup. A sea lion–effigy jar was also placed nearby.

Wedged in between this first burial and the main burial beneath it were the bones of two decapitated llamas. The bodies were still articulated but their heads were nowhere to be seen. Five vessels were associated with the animals. Two of those are of particular interest. The first one is a second bat-effigy cup almost identical to the first one described above. The second one was the body of a bottle with the stirrup spout missing. It was painted with a depiction of a club and two spears covered by a shield. A bird is standing to the right side of the war implements.

The main coffin in the burial contained the remains of an adolescent boy and the so-called Warrior-Priest, flanked by two women. The first woman, a person in her thirties, was placed in a seated position in the lower right corner. Her back was against the north wall of the tomb. A stirrup spout bottle lay on her lap (figure 1.14). A small figure with legs spread apart and both hands clasped in front of the mouth was modeled on top of the bottle (figure 1.15). As to the woman's cause of death, a cotton sash wound around her neck led the investigators to suggest that she may have been strangled (Strong and Evans 1952: 152).

The second woman, who was also in her thirties, was in a similarly cramped position, but she was situated diagonally across from the previous one, at the head of the main coffin at its left-hand corner. Although her chest was now slumped over her knees, she too originally probably had her back against the wall of the tomb. Three vessels were associated with her. A stirrup spout bottle with an effigy on top of the bottle was resting close to her hands. A portrait vessel and another stirrup spout bottle were nearby. The bottle by her hands depicts a small figure in a seated position on top of the chamber of the vessel, with hands resting on its knees (figure 1.16). The sex of this figure is probably male. On the vessel in front of this person, three funerary offerings are painted: two stacked gourd bowls filled with food and a stirrup spout bottle on the right side of the bowls.

The main coffin, a rectangular box made of reed canes lashed together, had been covered with a textile decorated with anthropomorphic bean warriors, each holding a round shield and a club (Strong and Evans 1952: pl. XXIX). Inside the coffin, the corpses and diverse elements had been divided into two levels by a cane platform separating the bodies and some of the offerings (figure 1.17).

Upon the cane platform lay the body of a boy eight to ten years of age. He was covered with a vast array of grave goods such as boxes, feather plumes, ceramics, and a bird headdress. The headdress was a

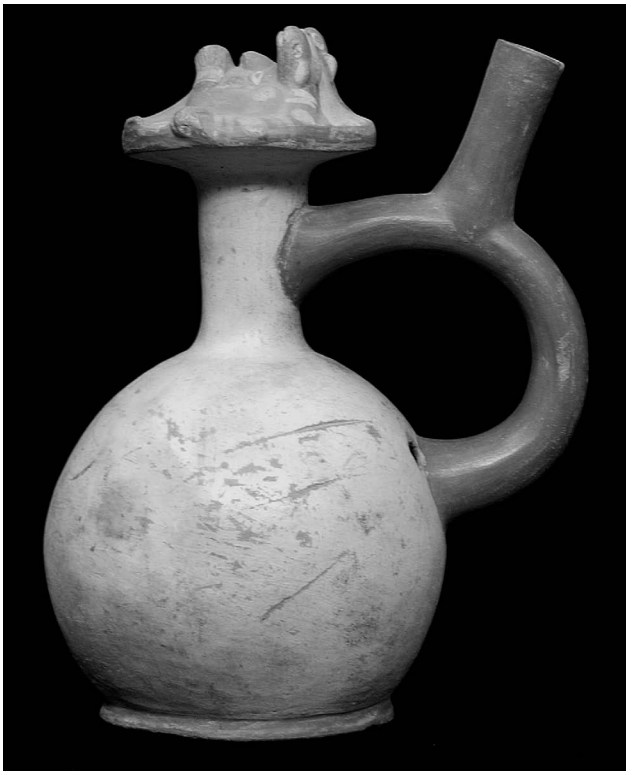

Figure 1.14 (*left*) Bottle with a figure with clasped hands modeled on top. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03618).

Figure 1.15 (*below*) Close-up view of the figure with clasped hands (detail of Fig. 1.14). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03618).

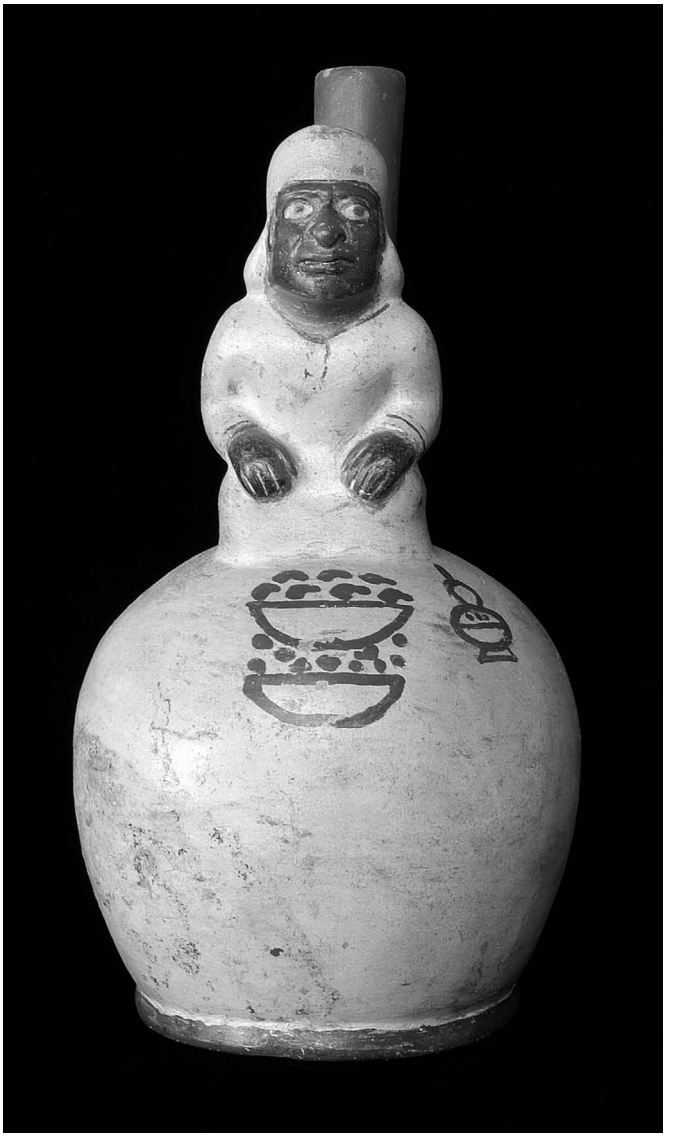

Figure 1.16 Bottle in the shape of an individual sitting in front of funerary offerings. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-3119).

complex artifact made of a ring of split fibres, cloth, and feathers of different colors and of two imitation bird heads, one on each side (figure 1.18). An inverted V-shaped design made of feathers was still well preserved on the front part. As this headdress has been deposited directly on the chest of the child, it is entirely possible that this object belonged to him and had been worn during his lifetime. The headdress with the inverted V-shaped design in the center is similar to the headdress depicted on the portrait vessel found in Burial 5, which contained the body of the woman with the goblet, mentioned above (figure 1.11).

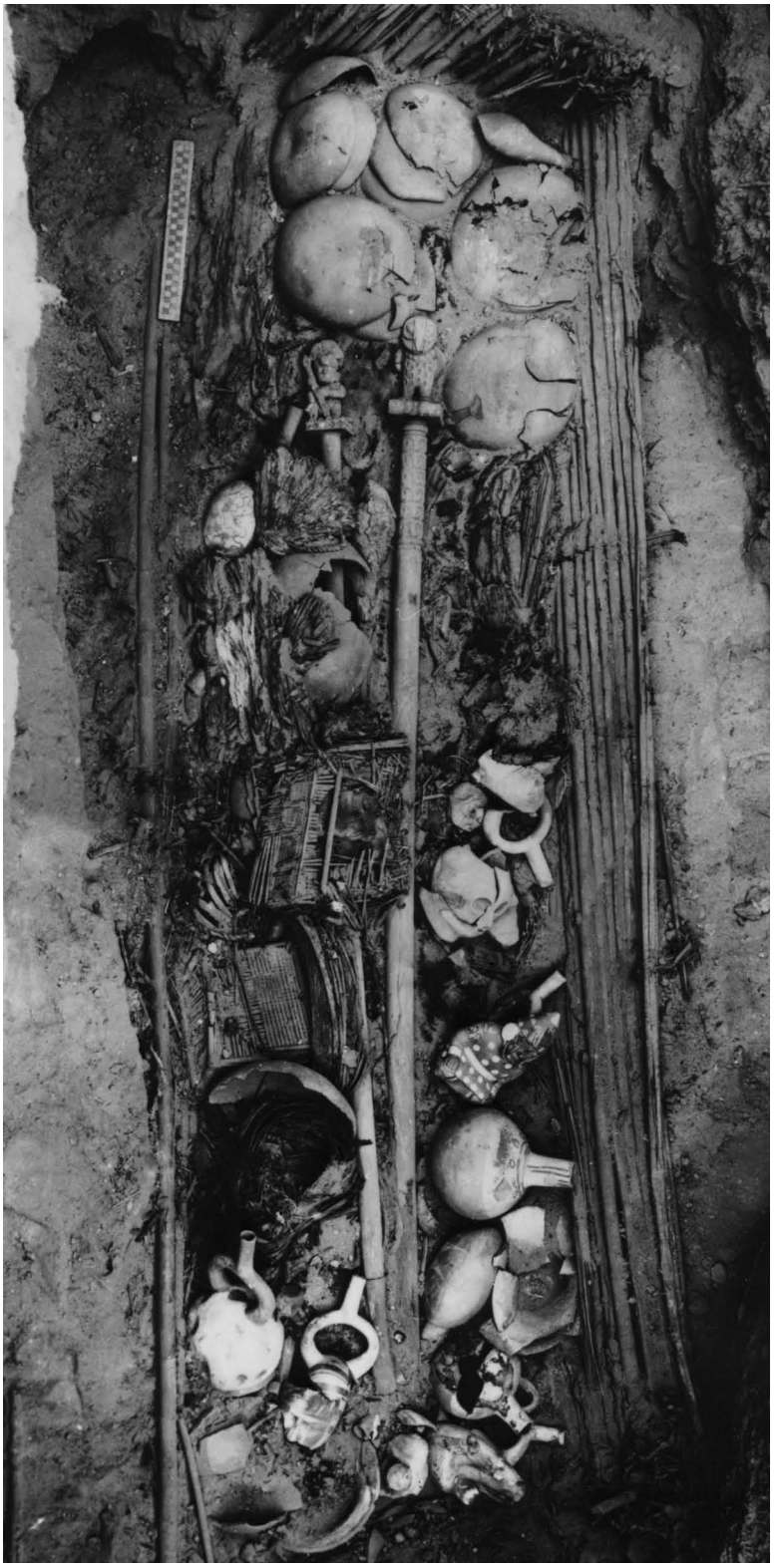

Figure 1.17 View of the Warrior-Priest tomb at Huaca de la Cruz. After photograph by W. D. Strong and C. Evans Jr. Courtesy of B. J. Meggers.

Figure 1.18 Bird headdress. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. After photograph by W. D. Strong. Courtesy of C. B. Donnan.

Figure 1.19 Head bottle in the shape of a potato. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-02926).

Four vessels were directly associated with this young individual: a flaring bowl, a dipper, and two portrait vessels. The first portrait was that of an adult male, and the second one was that of a child. The latter, a head bottle in the form of a potato, is certainly one of the most intriguing vessels found with him (figure 1.19). The artist has used the natural deformities of the potato to form a childlike portrait. It also has a facial decoration consisting of a Maltese cross running through the center of the face, with a protuberance on the forehead, and a dot decorating each corner of a triangular mouth. The "eyes" of the potato have been cleverly used to form the eyes and the mouth of the portrait. Although we can only speculate that the artist was trying to capture the features of the boy in life, it is striking to see that this contorted portrait of a child accompanied a young individual with an equally deformed cranial face:

> The skull was deformed, with a pronounced lateral parietal flattening that caused the occipital to bulge out. The supra-orbital ridges, mastoid processes, and teeth were all massive for a child. The upper medial and lateral incisors were prominently grooved and shovel-shaped. The eruption of the second molars was incomplete. The jaw was extremely heavy with a pronounced overbite. (Strong and Evans 1952: 155)

This boy was resting on the lower right side of the main individual, an old man who was also resting on his back. He was covered and surrounded by numerous offerings. Three elaborate wooden staffs lay across his chest. On top of the first, a finely carved owl is standing in an upright position on top of a series of six wave patterns (figure 1.20). The second staff is a bulbous-shaped mace. All around the head of the club there is an elaborately carved scene of ritual warfare leading to the capture of three prisoners (figure 1.21).

The third staff is certainly the most important one in determining the identity of the principal occupant of the tomb. The top of this object depicts Wrinkle Face holding a long staff in his hands and standing on what appears to be a series of furrows (figure 1.22). He seems to be breaking the ground with the stick, while a child standing on his right side is carrying a bag across his chest and is dropping seeds in the furrows. The seeds are made of three small turquoise pieces glued onto the left hand of the child. The tip of this object, with the sculpture on its summit, is made of a flat copper blade, 19 cm in length by 4 cm in width. It is thus likely that this ceremonial digging implement may have been used over many years during agricultural rituals.

In addition to this staff, a number of other elements seemed to connect the principal occupant of the tomb with Wrinkle Face. Near his head, an animal-effigy headdress made of animal bones, fur, and metallic parts was found. It appears that the jawbones of a desert fox (*Lycalopex sechurae*) had been used to fashion this headdress. Found in association with a sort of round pillow and a fan made of feathers,

Figure 1.20 Wooden club with a sculpture of an owl. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (MO-1022).

Figure 1.21 Wooden mace with a complex depiction of ritual warfare. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (MO-10226).

it is almost identical to the one worn by Wrinkle Face on the third staff. The old man also had a copper disk placed on his face, measuring 16 cm in diameter. This object, embossed with a series of raised circles all around the outer edge of the disk, is identical to those of ritual runners frequently depicted on ceramics (figure 1.23), which Strong and Evans already noted (1952: 160).

Three of the ceramic offerings also referred to Wrinkle Face. The first one is the Mountain Sacrifice Ceremony, a well-known activity in which Wrinkle Face and sometimes Iguana are involved in a sacrificial activity that takes place in a mountain setting (figure 1.24). Painted

Figure 1.22 Wooden club with a sculpture of Wrinkle Face with a child. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima.

Figure 1.23 Fineline painting of ritual runners. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

on the body of the second stirrup spout bottle, Wrinkle Face is about to decapitate a long fish with a *tumi* knife (figure 1.25). A person, also with fangs in his mouth, helps him to secure the fish. On the third example, Wrinkle Face has caught a fish at the end of a fishing line. He now wears the two-pronged headdress associated with individuals involved in marine scenes (Strong and Evans 1952: pl. XXVIIIB). Among the other ceramic vessels found within the main burial with the Wrinkle Face ceramic images were a deer-hunting scene, a portrait-head bottle, and a warrior wearing a conical helmet (figure 1.26).

On the basis of numerous similarities noted between the artifacts and the main individual in the tomb, Strong and Evans surmised that the old man may well have been the living representative of the fanged deity so prominently displayed in the iconography:

> Thus, from these major artifacts alone, it can be concluded that the old man buried beneath these offerings not only represented in his own person the great tusked deity of the Mochica but that in this incarnation he had to assume the economic roles of an agricultural deity, a priest, a war leader, and a councillor as well. This combination of vital roles, plus many more, for the most-often depicted Mochica deity will surprise no one who has studied the very numerous ceramic and other portrayals of this god gathered together by Larco. However, to find direct evidence of a human being who, in his own lifetime, appears to have assumed these roles in the eyes of his people, makes the record written in ceramics and other portrayals even more vivid. (1952: 199)

I would entirely agree with the authors as to the identification of the male individual as Wrinkle Face. This identification has not been made only on a few elements but on a vast array of artifacts such as headdresses, staffs, ceramics, and other objects. At the time—1952—this came as a bold statement, as no other identification had yet

Figure 1.24 Bottle in the shape of a mountain. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03301).

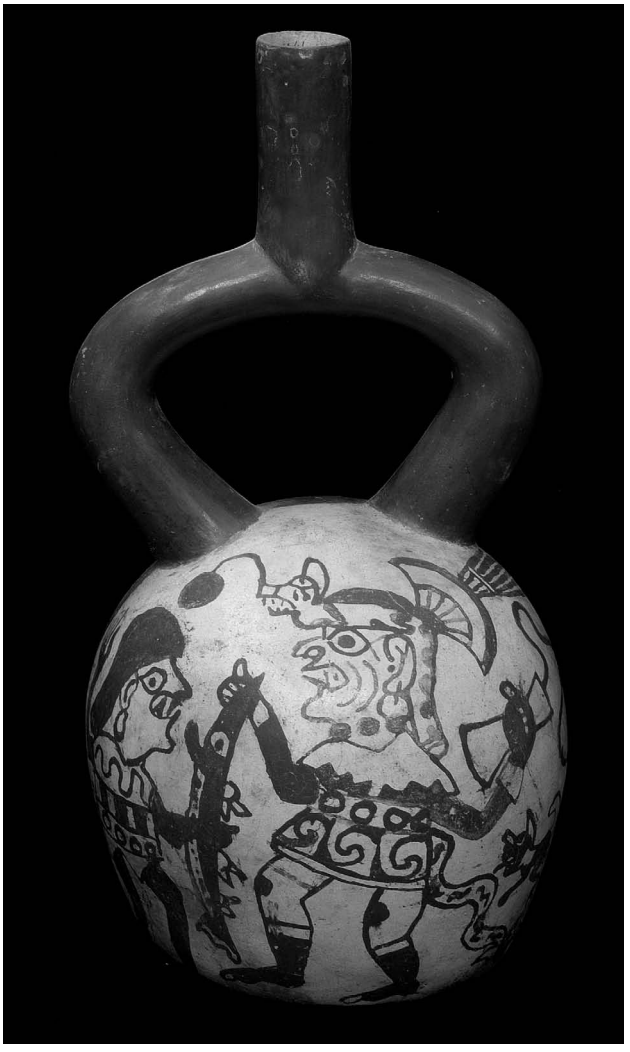

Figure 1.25 Fineline painting of Wrinkle Face decapitating a fish. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-04378).

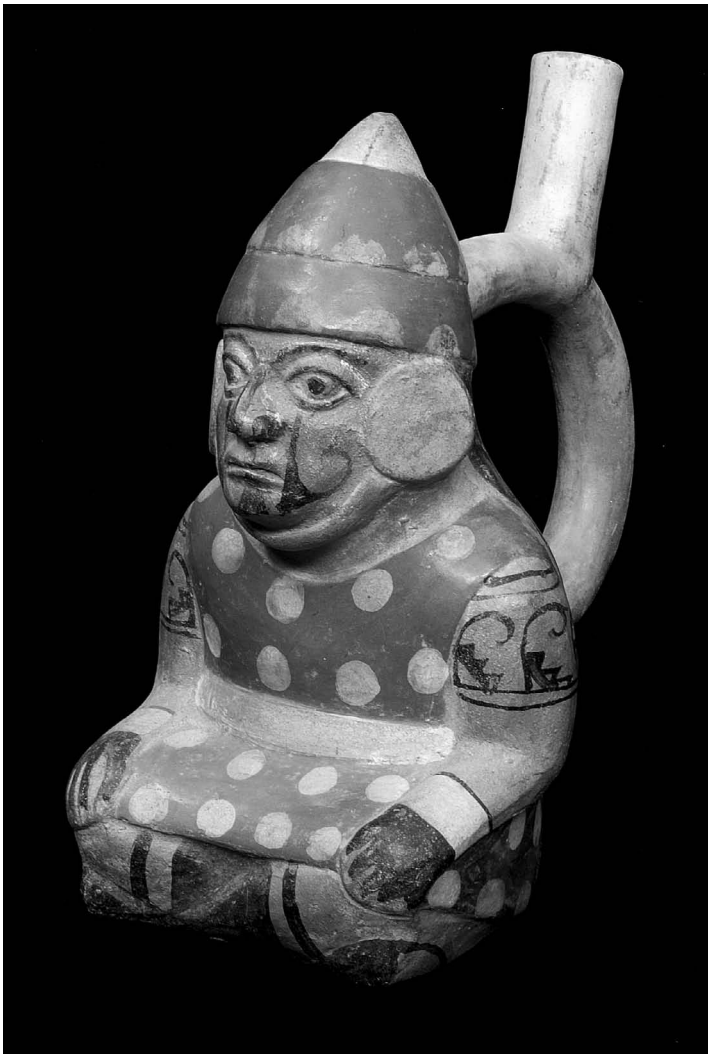

Figure 1.26 Bottle in the shape of a warrior with a conical helmet. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-5436).

been convincingly established between a living representative of Moche society and iconographical representations. Strong and Evans also hinted not only that this old man may have personified during his life this "Tusked Deity," or "Wrinkle Face" as he is known today, but that this impersonation may have taken its roots in the past during the Early Horizon: "That he represented in his own person the, even then, very ancient lineage of the tusked god seems certain" (Strong and Evans 1952: 198). This is an interesting and important idea, as the facial features of this subject clearly existed before the Moche period and are especially prevalent during the Cupisnique period (500–200 BC; Campana and Morales 1997).

Although as solid a case cannot be made as to the exact identity of the child, I would suggest that he may have been associated with Iguana, the main assistant of Wrinkle Face in most contexts. This identification derives from the presence of the bird headdress resting on the chest of the child (figure 1.18). Iguana always wears bird headdresses, which is by far the most distinctive element of this subject.

Huaca de la Luna

At Huaca de la Luna, four tombs bear a number of similarities that may indicate that these were the final resting places of Wrinkle Face priests as well. In 1899 Max Uhle excavated the first pair, F-12 and F-26, in an adobe structure situated on the eastern side of the Huaca main platform (1913). Unfortunately, the field notes do not give any detailed information as to the human remains or the exact content or the organization of the burials (Kroeber 1925). Nevertheless, a number of ceramic vessels found in these burials are iconographically similar in many respects to those found in other tombs with a more secure context (Table 1.1, Platform Uhle).

Table 1.1. Symbolic and Ritual Elements in Wrinkle Face Tombs (m: metal)

Sites:	Huaca de la Cruz	Platform II		Platform Uhle	
Contexts:	Burials 12-16	Tomb 2-3	Tomb 1	F-12	F-26
Body: Old man	*	*	*	n/a	n/a
Body: Young boy	*	*	*	n/a	n/a
Conical helmet	*	*	*	-	-
Runner	* (m)	*	-	*	-
Ritual fishing	*	*	-	*	-
Deer	*	*	-	*	*
Cranium	*	*	-	-	-
Bean warrior	*	*	-	-	-
Shield and club	*	*	-	-	-
Portrait vessel	*	*	-	-	-
Serpent-fox	*	*	*	-	-
Tuber/Facial cross	*	-	-	*	-
Wrinkle Face	*	*	-	*	*
Wooden club	*	-	*	-	-
Ritual battle	*	-	-	*	*
Bat	*	-	-	-	*
Prisoner	-	*	-	-	*

The second pair of tombs—Tomb 1 and Tomb 2-3—came from the excavations of Platform II. This small platform is a solid mudbrick structure associated with a plaza, Plaza 3A, where a complex sacrificial site was discovered (Bourget 2001a). Although both sets of burials, Tomb 1 and Tomb 2-3, had been looted, they contained numerous elements linking them with the practice of ritual warfare and sacrificial rituals. They also show a number of similarities with the Warrior-Priest tomb of Huaca de la Cruz. For instance, both tombs contained the human remains of an old man associated with an adolescent boy. Tomb 1 had been severely looted in recent times; remaining in the burial chamber, however, is a bottle representing a warrior wearing a conical helmet and holding a bulbous-shaped mace (figure 1.27). A wooden club was also located in the looter's exit shaft (figure 1.28). The black residue covering the club was tested by immunological

Figure 1.27 Bottle in the shape of a warrior with a conical helmet and club. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-833).

Figure 1.28 Wooden club from Tomb 1, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo.

analysis, and it reacted to human blood antiserum only, suggesting that this implement had been repeatedly drenched in human blood. This led us to suggest that this club was one of the sacrificial tools used in the plaza below Platform II (Bourget and Newman 1998).

The second tomb consisted of two funerary chambers built side by side, also containing an old man and a boy. It is likely that these chambers had been looted during colonial times, because most of the ceramics, some of the finest found at Huaca de la Luna, remained in situ, but the metallic objects, except a small circular disk in gilded copper, had presumably been removed. Originally this metallic disk would have probably been sewn onto a textile adorned with hundreds of identical pieces. Of the vast number of elaborate ceramics excavated in this context, many of them closely match the subjects found in the Huaca de la Cruz tomb. Among the offerings were fifteen pairs of apparently similar vessels (figures 1.29, 1.30); a jar in the shape of a ritual runner (figure 1.31); three vessels in the form of individuals with conical helmets; a fineline painting of raptorial birds with shields (figure 1.32); clubs and cups painted on a flaring bowl; two portrait-head bottles, one of them with a mutilated face (figure 1.7); a fineline painting with an elaborate boat scene (figure 1.33); and finally, a bottle with Wrinkle Face fishing for a stingray (figure 1.34). Further associations with human blood and ritual warfare were marked by the presence of an anthropomorphic fox holding a chisel (figure 1.35), bone beads in the shape of *ulluchu* fruits (figure 1.36), and ceramic vessels depicting three prisoners, one of them shown here (figure 1.37). The human remains, the types of ceramic vessels, and the artifacts of interest for this analysis are listed in table 1.1.

Figure 1.29 Pair of effigy jars from Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-798, 799).

Figure 1.30 Pair of bottles with depictions of birds from Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-811, 810).

Figure 1.31 Jar in the shape of a ritual runner. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-786).

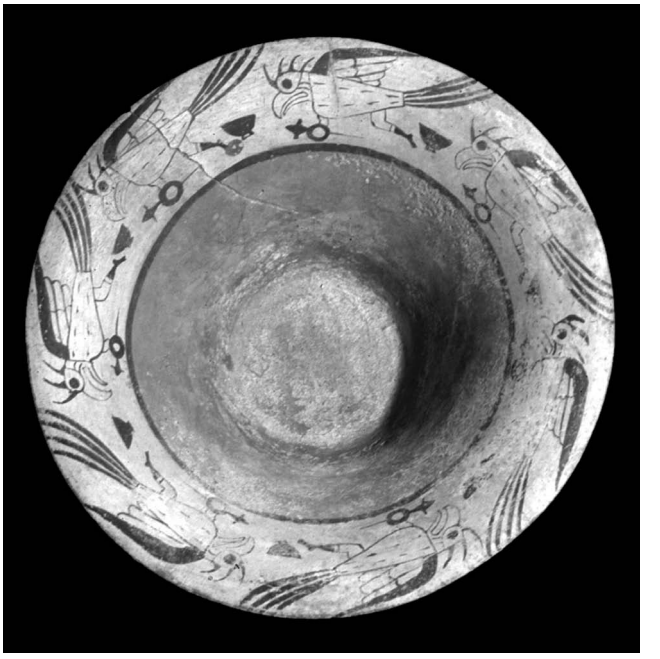

Figure 1.32 Interior of a flaring bowl showing raptorial birds with cups. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-761).

Figure 1.33 Fineline painting of a boat scene. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo (PII-785). Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 1.34 Bottle with a depiction of Wrinkle Face capturing a stingray. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-789).

Figure 1.35 Stirrup spout bottle in the shape of an anthropomorphized fox. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-787).

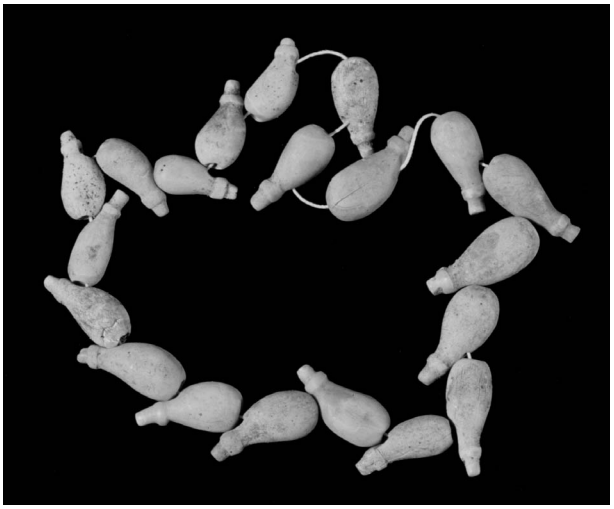

Figure 1.36 Bone beads in the shape of *ulluchu* fruit. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

Figure 1.37 Ceramic vessel in the shape of a captured warrior. Tomb 2, Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PII-793).

Ritual Runners

A disk or a shovel-shaped plaque adorning the central part of a headdress is the most diagnostic, identifying element of Ritual Runners in the iconography (figure 1.23). They are consistently depicted running bare chested (Donnan and McClelland 1999: 128). At the Huacas de Moche site, in the vast urban sector situated in between Huaca de la Luna and Huaca del Sol, a number of individuals have been found buried with copper disks, similar to those depicted in the iconography, indicating that they may have performed rituals closely associated with this subject. In the Chan Chan–Moche Valley Project, at least five burials have been excavated with male individuals possessing such disks that formed part of headdresses. On the basis of this context and a detailed reading of the iconography, Donnan and Mackey suggested that

> the group of burials within the mud-brick platform between the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon is distinct within the sample of Moche IV burials. The burials are all high status adult males, many of whom have large copper disc headdresses like those worn by certain individuals shown in Moche art. The concentration of these burials on the mud-brick platform suggests that this was a cemetery reserved exclusively for high status adult males who apparently shared an affiliation to a specific Moche ceremony. Within our sample of ancient burials from the Moche Valley, this is the only example of a cemetery reserved for a specific sex, age, status, and/or social group. (1978: 208)

It thus came as a great surprise when years later, during the excavations of the ZUM Project (Zona Urbana Moche), the tomb of a woman (Burial 7–9) was found with such a disk as a headdress. The burial was situated within a complex in the urban sector. She also had a ceremonial copper knife or *tumi,* suggesting that she may have played a role during sacrificial rituals (Chapdelaine 2001: 80). Her iconography, and thus her identification, is uncertain, but she may have been associated in one way or another with the ritual runners.

Ceremonial Badminton

A burial excavated in the same mudbrick platform, excavated by the Chan Chan–Moche Valley Project, contained the remains of possibly another significant iconographic subject. The burial was that of a male individual in his late forties. He had been buried with a round copper sheath and metallic crosspieces. The relative position of these objects in the burial suggests that they were once attached to a long shaft (Donnan and Mackey 1978: 154). A few years later, Donnan proposed that the presence of this object could perhaps indicate that this male had been a player of Ceremonial Badminton[6] (figure 1.38): "Perhaps this very individual participated in the ceremony, casting the staff with crosspieces skyward from the summit of the Pyramid

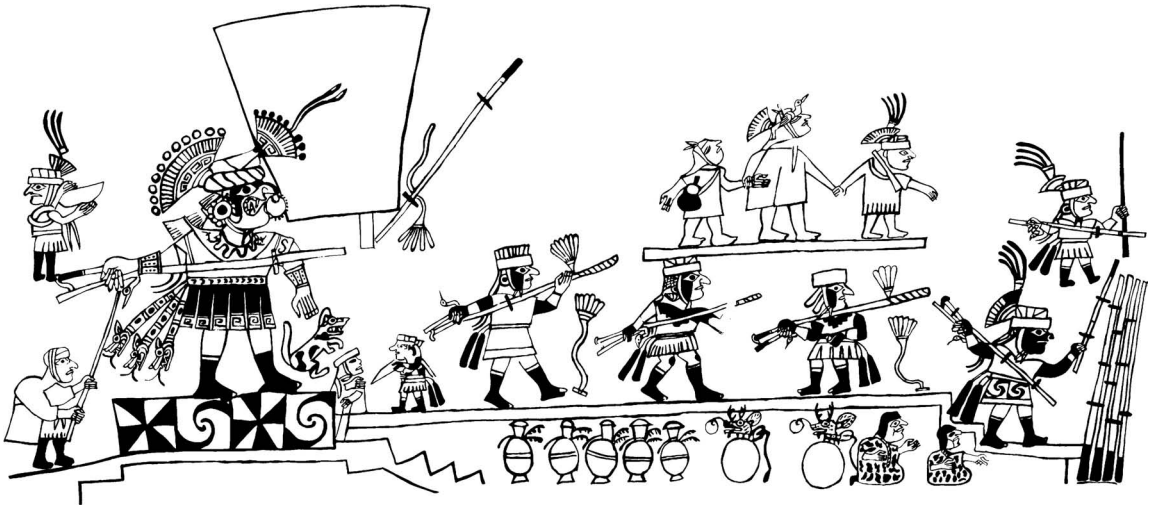

Figure 1.38 Fineline painting of a ceremonial badminton scene. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

of the Sun, and then watching the string unwind and float slowly downward over the very spot where he was eventually buried" (1985: 375). Interestingly, the burial also contained a stirrup spout bottle decorated with a fineline painting depicting a procession of anthropozoomorphic ritual runners. This suggests that both activities, ceremonial badminton and ritual running, were closely related and performed by the same individuals; hence the reason for burying this man in the same mudbrick structure as the others.

Coca-Taking Ceremony

In 1991 and 1992, during the excavation of the Huaca de la Luna main platform, two burials were discovered just alongside one of the principal murals of the complex (Uceda et al. 1994). It would appear that the two interred male individuals pertained to the Huaca de la Luna priesthood and, because of this association, had earned the right to be buried within the most important part of the building during one of its last phases of transformation. Both of them had close to their hands a copper bottle (figure 1.39). This object is, in many respects, identical to those represented in a scene identified as an activity of taking coca (figure 1.40). Furthermore, the individual in the second tomb possessed an animal effigy made of gilded copper that was almost identical to those worn by the standing figure in the fineline painting. On the basis of these elements, especially the two metallic bottles, I suggested that these were priests of the same type as those performing a ritual under a bicephalous arch (1994b). A few years later, a cache containing a similar but more elaborated effigy was located in the vicinity of these tombs (figure 1.41). It thus con-

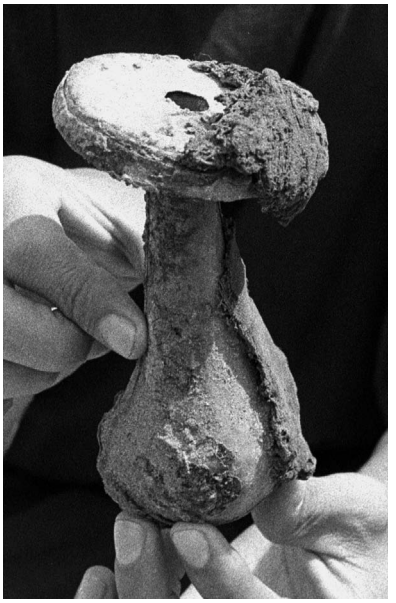

Figure 1.39 Bottle of gilded copper. Tomb 2, Platform I, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo.

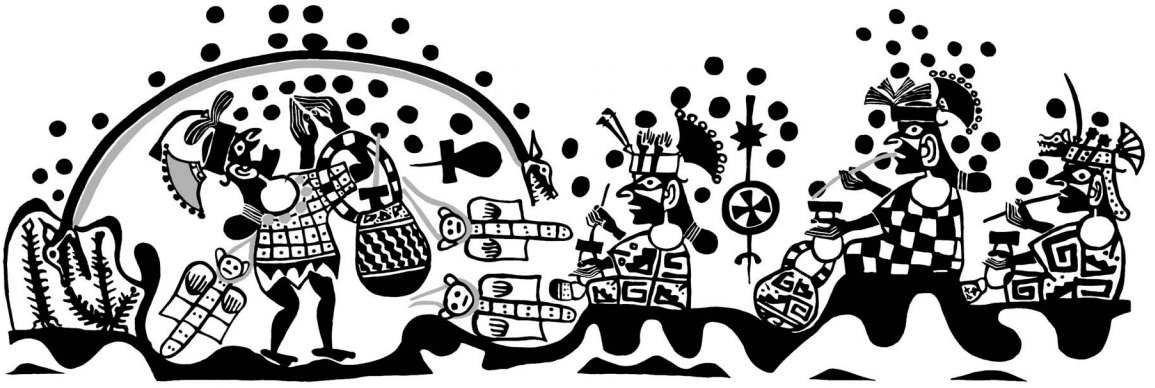

Figure 1.40 Ritual activity under bicephalous arch. Linden-Museum, Stuttgart. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

firmed once more an association between these specific individuals and the Huaca de la Luna main platform.

Prisoners and Portrait-Head Vessels

Perhaps the most interesting aspect that arose from the excavation of the Plaza 3A sacrificial site at Huaca de la Luna was the unmistakeable physical confirmation of the relationship existing between enacted ritual and the iconography. This interrelation did not have to be extrapolated from nonassociated artifacts and representations. Instead, the human remains had been supplemented by numerous offerings that clearly confirmed this link. At least seventy male individ-

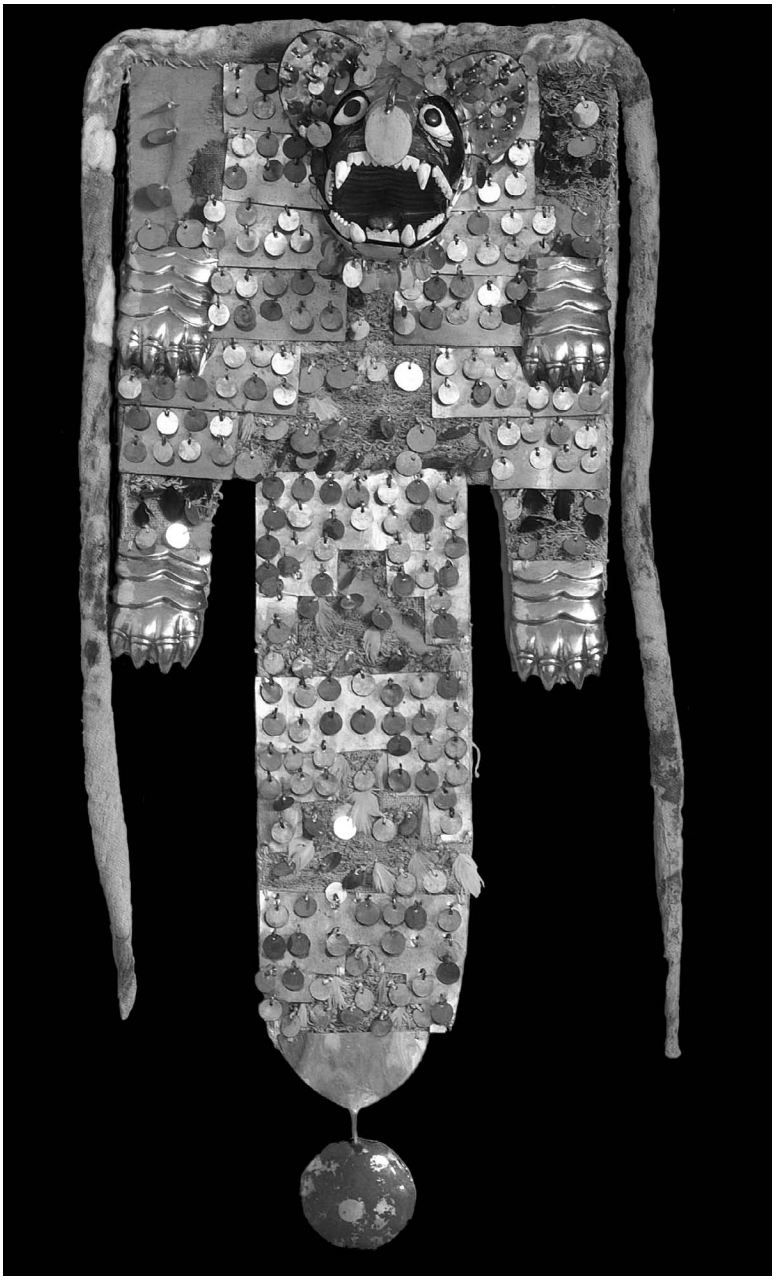

Figure 1.41 Animal effigy of gilded copper. Platform I, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo.

uals had been sacrificed over the course of a number of rituals (figure 1.42). The physical evidence of ancient, well-healed injuries as well as wounds suffered soon before death indicated that these men were probably warriors who had been captured during violent encounters (Verano 2001). Purposely destroyed and situated between these vic-

tims were more than fifty clay statuettes representing nude males in seated positions with ropes around their necks (figures 1.43, 1.44). These statuettes, up to 60 cm tall, represent three-dimensional examples of the captives usually depicted in fineline paintings (figure 1.45). The figures possess identical haircuts, and their bodies are adorned with similar, intricate designs.

Another important aspect of these statuettes is their close association with portrait vessels. Donnan (2001b, 2004) has demonstrated

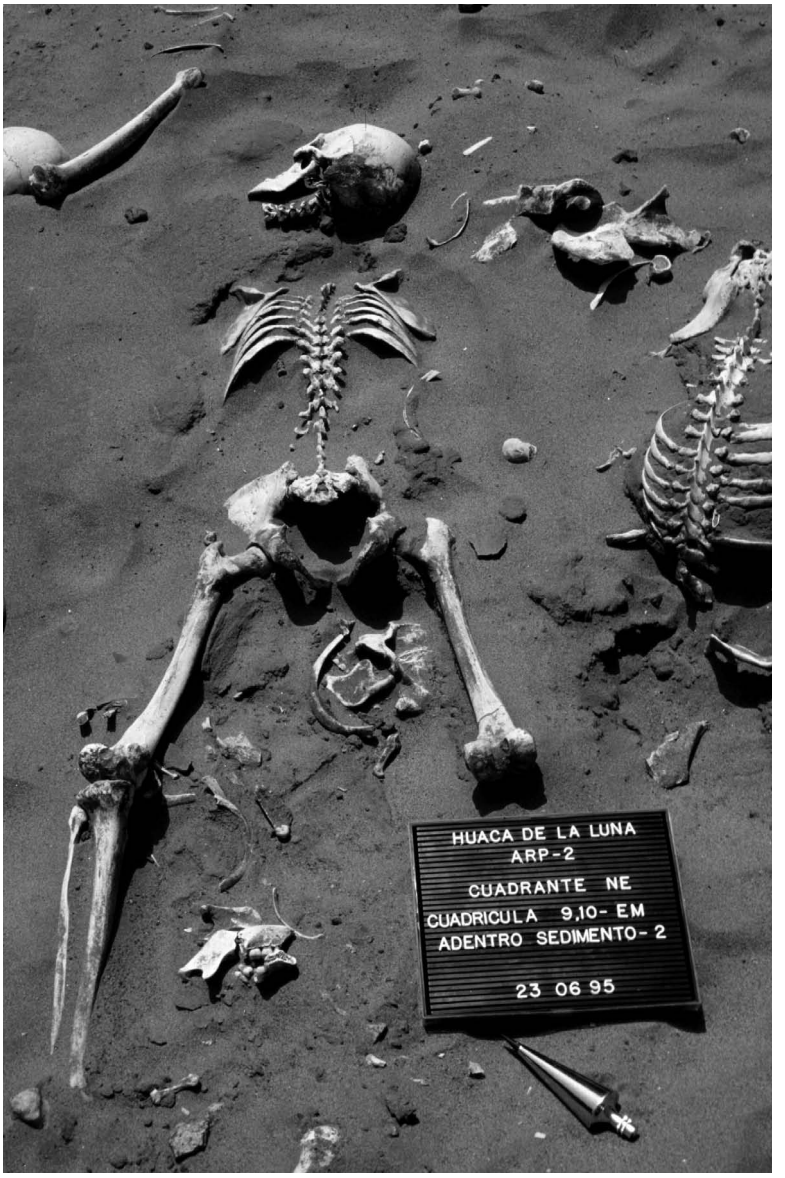

Figure 1.42 Human remains of sacrificial victims in Plaza 3A, Huaca de la Luna.

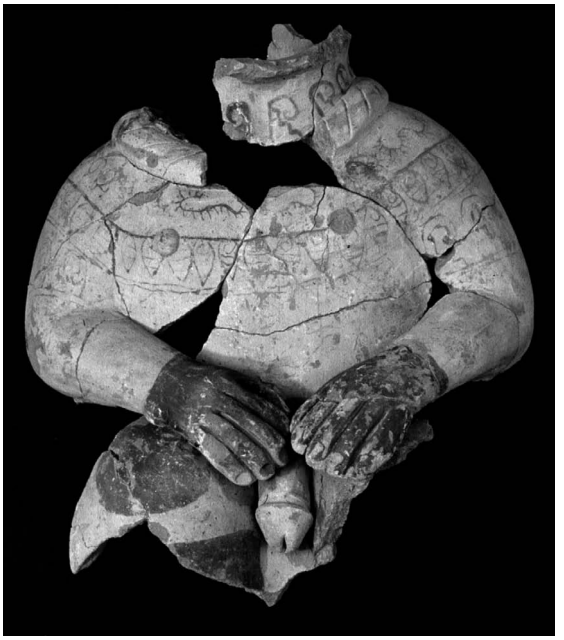

Figure 1.43 Clay effigy of a nude male from Plaza 3A, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo.

Figure 1.44 Fragment of a clay effigy from Plaza 3A, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo.

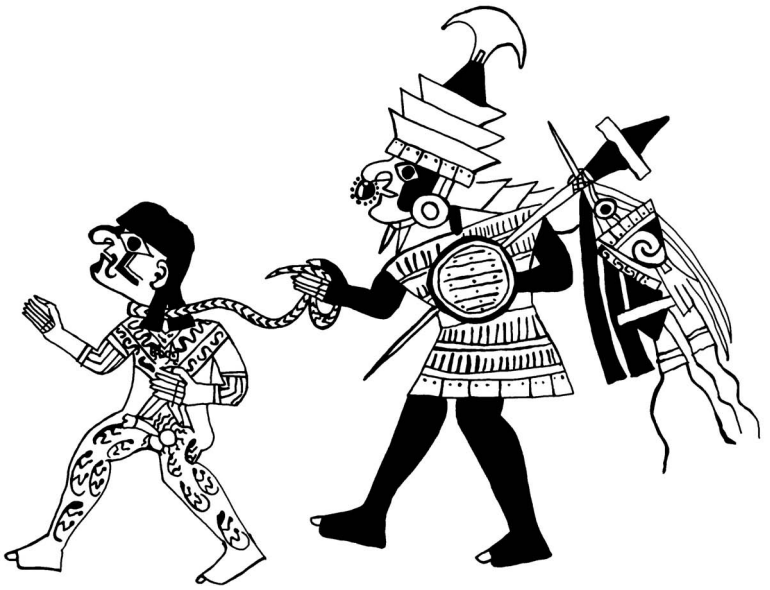

Figure 1.45 Fineline painting of a warrior and an eventual sacrificial victim. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

that the same individual can be successively represented as a high-ranking individual wearing an intricate headdress and fancy ear-spools, as a warrior holding war implements, as a captive with his hands tied behind his back, and, finally, as a sacrificial victim completely nude with a rope around his neck and with his hands resting on his knees. It is this very posture that the clay statuettes represent. Thus it can be suggested that portrait vessels may have been directly associated with the activity of ritual warfare, a point of view equally shared by Donnan:

> It is more likely that the combat in which the individuals engaged was not military, but ceremonial, and took place within the three valleys [Chicama–Moche–Virú] where the portraits are known to have been produced. The ceremonial rather than militaristic nature of Moche combat has been proposed by various scholars. Capture and sacrifice of some of the participants would have been the predictable outcome of involvement in this activity. The Moche appear to have been using portraiture as a means of commemorating the capture and sacrifice of specific individuals whose role, status, and appearance were well known in Moche society. (2001b: 137–138)

Although more research will need to be carried out to assess all the roles performed in the iconography by the individuals represented in portrait vessels, it appears that ritual warfare and sacrifice provide the main conceptual frameworks for these activities. At Huaca de la

Cruz, the association between portrait vessels and sacrifice seems to be reinforced by the presence of such a bottle in the tomb of the woman buried with a sacrificial goblet, Burial 5, and the scene depicting anthropomorphized war clubs exchanging sacrificial goblets (figures 1.11, 1.12). At the same site, two additional portrait-head bottles were also found with a woman and a child in the tomb of a person possibly personifying Wrinkle Face. Furthermore, another portrait vessel was found in the tomb of one of the two priests buried in Platform II, the mudbrick structure associated with the sacrificial site.

It remains for the moment impossible to ascertain to which class of society the individuals immortalized in the portrait head vessels belonged. Yet almost like badges of office, they exhibit a limited range of physical attributes and adornments that may provide us with a means of exploring their range of activities. Their headdresses commonly consist of a decorated head cloth occasionally maintained by a strap passing under the chin. In some cases, this head cloth is adorned with head rings incorporating animal effigies such as felines, foxes, monkeys, and birds (Donnan 2004). Donnan also mentioned that although the range of headdresses and adornments is too great to give a precise indication of role and status for the individuals depicted in the portrait tradition, the headdresses and the ear ornaments worn by these people are also frequently worn by individuals holding prisoners, Badminton players, coca takers, snail gatherers, and sea lion and bird hunters (Donnan 2004: 72).

Copulation with Wrinkle Face

A ceramic jar depicting a copulation scene between Wrinkle Face and a woman was found along with twenty-one other ceramic offerings in the burial of a woman in Plaza I of the urban sector alongside Huaca de la Luna (figure 1.46) (Chapdelaine 2001). Among the other cera-

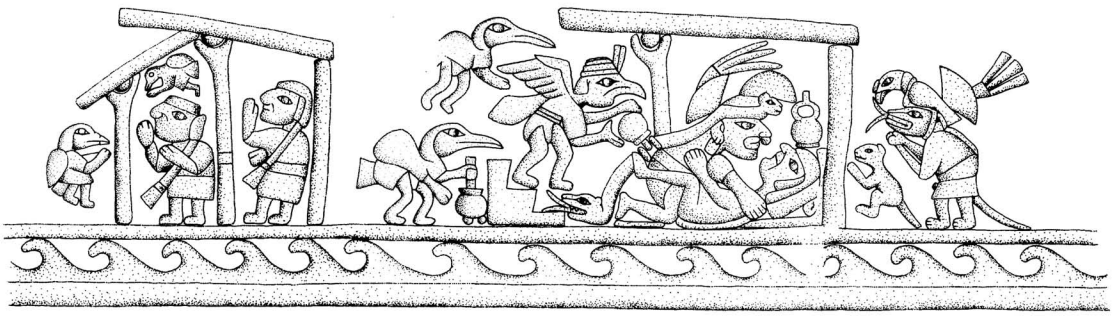

Figure 1.46 Low-relief depiction of a ritual copulation. Urban Sector, Huaca de la Luna. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo. Drawing by Jorge Sachún.

Table 1.2. Roles and Identities of Subjects

Presentation Theme—Individual A	Sipán	Male
Presentation Theme—Individual B	Sipán	Male
Presentation Theme—Individual C	San José de Moro	Female
Presentation Theme—Individual D	Sipán	Male
Presentation Theme—Individual E	Huaca de la Cruz	Female
Wrinkle Face	Huaca de la Cruz	Male
Iguana	Huaca de la Cruz	Male
Ritual Runner	Huacas de Moche	M/F
Ritual Badminton	Huacas de Moche	Male
Coca Taker	Huaca de la Luna	Male
Prisoner/Portrait Vessel	Huaca de la Luna	Male

mic offerings was a stirrup spout bottle with a ritual runner modeled on top. Another one, a spout-and-handle bottle, was decorated with a fineline painting of ritual warrior accoutrements: a conical helmet, a chinstrap, a tunic, a round shield, and a club. It may be surprising to encounter ceramic vessels depicting subjects and objects usually associated with male individuals in a female's tomb. But caution should be exerted when associating too rapidly these elements only with the masculine gender, since women appear to take an active role in sacrificial activities. As suggested by Claude Chapdelaine, it is further tempting to infer a relationship between the woman in the burial and the one in the copulation scene (2001: 81); such a suggestion remains to be corroborated by at least one other mortuary context containing a similar scene with a female individual.

Summary

As Table 1.2 indicates, at least eleven different subjects of the iconography have been matched with real-life counterparts with various degree of confidence. The identifications between real individuals and subjects depicted in the iconography induce a closer relationship between the two domains than envisaged even just a few years ago. It can now be said that, when encountering intact, high-ranking Moche burials, the task will be to deduce with what subject within the iconographic schema they are associated. The focus then necessarily becomes what to make of the actions being performed by these individuals in the iconography. In many respects these activities may appear to be of a supernatural nature, such as Wrinkle Face fighting anthropomorphic crabs or individual A being carried in a litter by soldiers who are in the guise of a hummingbird and a raptorial bird. Since we contend that living people may have been portrayed in the iconogra-

phy with animal or inorganic attributes and that supernatural attributes may have been ascribed to real individuals, I would argue that we have to assume that many of these scenes—as supernatural and fantastic as they may appear—may have had real-life components that could have been ritually performed as well. In general terms, mythical discourse is often referred to during ritual performance, and certain performative gestures often allude to parts of these myths.

Within the overall scholarly community there is no consensus as to what could have been part of the physical reality of the Moche and what could have been part of their mythology. Anne Marie Hocquenghem suggested that the iconography systematically depicts both mythological accounts performed by beings with supernatural attributes and their ritual counterparts performed by human beings (1989: 23). She argues that the scenes of deer hunting represent rituals performed by human beings, whereas the supernatural depictions of individuals with fangs fighting crablike beings or stingrays (figure 1.34) are the mythical counterparts for such rituals. It is an interesting proposition, but it has proven a difficult if not impossible undertaking to separate into discrete units what could be mythological and what could be ritual. It would appear that in many cases, the dynamics are far more intertwined and that both aspects—mythical and ritual—may coexist in the same representations.

Context and Methodology

One of the principal problems severely limiting the study of Moche iconography—and for that matter, the visual culture of most ancient American societies—is context. The majority of the ceramics and artifacts are without provenience, as they came to light overwhelmingly from looting activities. In most cases, the primary context of these objects has thus been lost forever. Although Donnan and McClelland are in agreement with me that most of these objects, if not all, came from burial sites, they stated that they were not created as grave goods:

> Although we can be confident that nearly all of them came from graves, they were not made for funerary purposes. They were made to be used by the Moche, and most show signs of wear—abrasion, chipping, or mended breaks—that occurred prior to their placement in graves. It is likely that only a small percentage of the total number of fineline painted vessels produced by the Moche were ultimately put in graves. Most were probably broken while in use, and their sherds simply discarded along with other trash. These sherds are sometimes found in Moche refuse deposits, usually at important centers that have associated pyramid and palace complexes. (1999: 18–19)

This statement suggests that the placement of ceramics in burials is almost incidental after their use as some sort of fancy utilitarian object:

> Most of the vessels are bottles which could have been used to contain liquid. They may have been for chicha, a mildly fermented beverage that is generally made of maize. Jars, dippers, and bowls that were decorated with fineline painting also may have been used for storing and serving chicha. (Donnan and McClelland 1999: 19)

If we accept this argument, the Moche would not necessarily have made a conscious effort to select ceramics and associate them with certain people since the primary use of these objects was not funerary.

The debate about the *real* function of these ceramics is not new. In his closing remarks at the Dumbarton Oaks conference entitled "Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America" held in 1973, Michael Coe mentioned that

> in the cult of the dead in Pre-Columbian America there is a tremendous difference between ordinary artifacts and funerary material. I have asked the Peruvian experts Clifford Evans and Gordon Willey if the Mochica pottery that we are so familiar with and think of as being typically Mochica does or does not occur in the ordinary household debris. They replied in the negative." (1975: 194)

I have to agree with Evans and Willey, as Moche fineware has rarely been found on the floors of the vast urban sector surrounding the Huaca de la Luna, and this after more than eight years of continuous excavation.[7] Upon analyzing 419 ceramics vessels originating from thirty-two tombs excavated in the urban sector of the Huacas de Moche site, Ricardo Tello and colleagues (2003: 175–176) concluded: "In general terms, these ceramics were completed to be deposited as offerings since none of them show evidence of domestic use. They were mass-produced through the use of molds as well as for consistent decoration. A few sculptural pieces are then distinguishable from the former by their high quality and beauty."[8] The high density of fine ceramic sherds littering the surface is directly related to the intense looting of burials carried out at the site over a period of at least ninety years (1900–1992). A rejection of the primary context of these objects would severely limit the scope of any iconographical analysis that takes into account the relations that may have existed between these objects and their funerary destination.

Since those who traffic in Pre-Columbian antiquities allow for only the best pieces to reach the shelves of private and public collections, we have to assume that the one hundred thousand or so examples presently found in these collections are only a small percentage of the total number of ceramic objects initially present in these looted buri-

als. For example, the stirrup spout bottles often making up the bulk of any collection constitute only a fraction of the ceramic paraphernalia found in burials. The less marketable ceramics would have been left behind by the looters. To date, nearly seven hundred Moche burials have been excavated by archaeologists (Millaire 2002). This number may appear impressive, but it is almost insignificant when we consider that tens of thousands of tombs must have been destroyed in the name of greed.

On the basis of the iconographical studies and contextual analyses that I have carried out so far, I suggest that even if most of these vessels were used before being buried with the dead, the funerary dimension and destination are absolutely critical to understanding their use, the meaning of the iconography, and their presence in burials. I would even reverse the proposition made by Donnan and McClelland by suggesting that before the ceramics were placed with the dead, they must have been intimately related to a vast symbolic system associated with religious beliefs concerning death and the afterlife.

The perverse situation associated with looting and collecting has at least one benefit: the numerous objects consequently available for study allow for the organization of an important corpus. For this study, I have attempted to constitute the most exhaustive corpus of research. In all, more than 400 pieces depicting sexual activities have been examined, and 97 of these will be illustrated in this book. Although it is impossible to evaluate the exact number of Moche ceramics pertaining to the theme of sexual representation, I suggest that the examples used in this study are representative and should provide an adequate range of the variability that could be encountered.

The reticular organization of the scenes indicates that Moche iconography is probably a unified system in which most of the complex scenes are somewhat interrelated, with some of them occasionally represented together on a single vessel. It is thus methodologically difficult to isolate one group of scenes from the rest of the iconography. Nevertheless, the categories presented above can be used more fully to explore the concepts finely interconnected by recurring actors and diverse symbolic elements. To alleviate the problem of segregating these themes from the rest of the iconography, a number of more closely associated themes and subjects will also be investigated.

Another methodological problem lies in the choices made by the analyst. For example, is it justified to bring under a single all-encompassing subject, such as the sexual representations, all the scenes that appear to depict sexual activities or individuals with their genitals showing? Would the Moche have recognized such a selection, or is it just a mental artifact of the analyst? This question is probably impossible to answer. Is there a way to validate these analytical choices

without propping up the analyses and interpretations with analogies taken from diverse cultural formations dating from later periods?

To explore the broad and still ill-defined concepts of sex, death, and afterlife, I will initially adopt a contextual approach. This approach will operate on two distinct but interrelated levels. The first level will consist in creating a corpus by bringing together scenes depicting the same type of activities. This will provide us with comparative material so that the range of a given subject can be explored and understood. Corpuses of seemingly related activities will then be compared to determine if smaller groupings exist within the corpus, what Lévi-Strauss has called micro-pantheons (1985: 149). The second step will aim at locating these images and iconographical information within the social and ritual world of the Moche provided by the archaeology carried out so far. This will probably be the most difficult and somewhat speculative aspect of the analysis, as a fair amount of the information is missing because of the extensive looting and limited archaeological research.

The interpretation of Moche scenes often has been carried out by the use of analogies taken from written information dating from after the European contact: ethnohistorical documents, ethnographical data, myths, and stories. This lack of clear continuity and contiguity between Moche iconography and the information used in analogy makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to assess the validity of the resulting interpretations. To avoid this problem of disjunction, I will incorporate a multidisciplinary approach in the second part of the methodology. This approach will utilize information taken from the social as well as natural sciences to understand better some of the reasons for the choices made in the iconography. For example, is there any physiological reason that may help us to explain the presence of penile erections on skeletal beings?

Before proceeding with the analysis, two broad and overarching concepts still must be discussed, as they will provide the conceptual framework for the entire undertaking. The first one is the concept of symbolic duality. The second assesses the validity, if not the existence, of a tripartite framework of Moche religion referring to Life, Death, and Ancestor. These three terms, often labeled as the "World of the Living," the "World of the Dead," and the "World of the Ancestors," have frequently been used, almost interchangeably, to describe certain scenes of the iconography.

A Dualist System

Perhaps one of the most complex enterprises in the study of the Moche religion and belief system is to define whether this society possessed any belief in an afterlife and, if in the affirmative, to see whether it is represented in the iconography. One way of exploring

this issue is to begin with the concept of symbolic duality and then to proceed to the nature of the actors and the actions depicted in the iconography.

Symbolic duality is a pervasive system in Moche religion. It has been detected in ritual performances—funerary and sacrificial—in the iconography as well as in the architecture. To paraphrase Victor Turner, duality in all its forms would have been used to impose a cosmos on Moche society and its religious system (1992: 107). This dualism appears to encompass everything that is meaningful in the Moche symbolic system. It is necessary to define the important dichotomy between life and death.

Symbolic duality is one of the first basic constructs that came to light during the excavations of high-ranking burials at Sipán (Alva and Donnan 1993), especially through the intentional pairing of almost identical gold and silver objects. The golden objects were consistently placed to the right side of the main individual, whereas the objects in silver were located on his left side. Furthermore, the numerous attendants found in Tomb 1 and Tomb 2 appeared to display the same propensity to dualist principles, as they were consistently placed in an inverted position on either side of the main individual.

At Huaca de la Luna, the dualist concept seems to go much further than just funerary assemblages. It appears to encompass the whole ritual program, including the buildings, the murals, the burials, and the sacrificial site. On murals, symbolic duality is expressed first between the representations on the external face of the Huaca and those inside the building. Those depicted on the north wall of the Huaca, which were public in nature as they could have been seen by the people living in the urban sector adjacent to the building, are covered with the actors of ritual warfare and animal subjects from the mountain or the terrestrial world. Depictions inside the temple, which were situated in a clearly more private setting and could only have been scrutinized by those authorized to enter the area, portray exclusively subjects from the bottom of the sea or the mouth of rivers.

The central subject on the main mural inside the edifice is probably one the most important figures of the whole iconographical program at Huaca de la Luna. This figure (figure 1.47), repeated on the four walls of a quadrangular room some 60 meters square, has been identified by a number of epithets such as *degollador,* or throat cutter, and more recently as the deity of the mountain (Uceda 2000). Although the face possesses a general resemblance to the so-called mountain deity, I would argue that this particular figure bears no connection with the mountain whatsoever but rather with the sea.

Two bottles found in burials located on the western base of the Huaca de la Luna by Max Uhle in 1899 can help us identify the subject. On the upper part of the body of the first vessel (figure 1.48), a clear representation of an octopus-being has been rendered in low re-

lief, with its long tentacles displayed around the central head. The suckers have been painted as white dots all along these tentacles. The face in the center is in many respects similar to the one on the mural, with the same biglobular ears; staring eyes; and large, open mouth with prominent fangs. Uhle excavated another bottle in a nearby burial; the bottle depicts Wrinkle Face with an octopus headdress, staring eyes, large fangs, and biglobular ears adorned with earrings in the shape of catfish heads (figure 1.49). The small human head decorating the central part of the headdress has a haircut associated with representations of captured warriors and sacrificial victims (figures 1.37, 1.44, 1.45). A similar haircut can be seen with the octopus-being mentioned above (figure 1.48).

Surrounding the mural is a geometric design set against a dark background (figure 1.47). This motif is usually interpreted as a stylized serpent. If we compare this motif with others treated in a more natural style (figure 1.50), it becomes apparent that it is probably not a serpent but rather the stylized head of a species of catfish, locally

Figure 1.47 Detail of painted relief from the Great Patio in Platform I, Huaca de la Luna, Moche Valley.

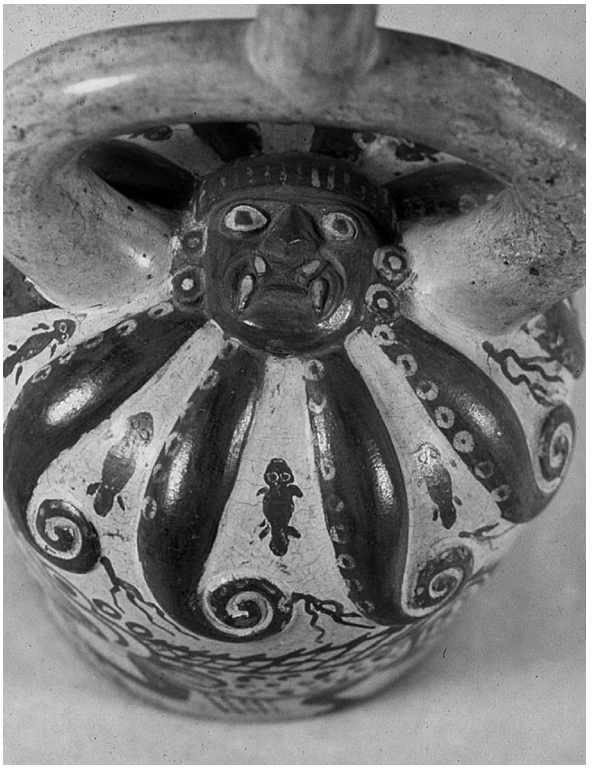

Figure 1.48 Octopus-being modeled on top of a bottle. Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley (4-3111).

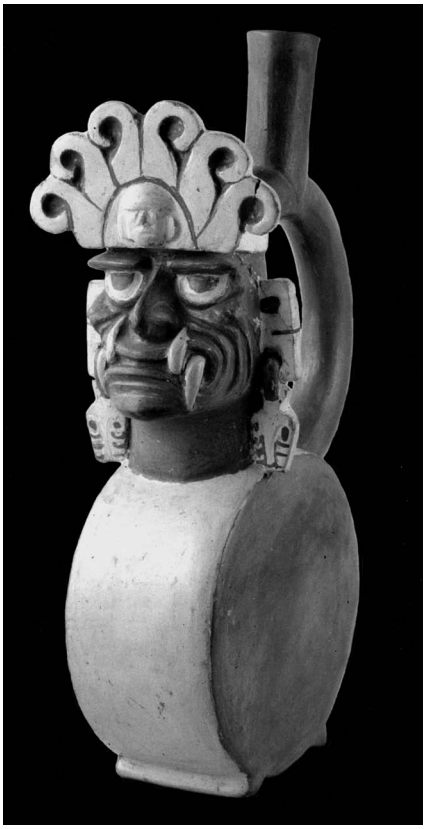

Figure 1.49 Bottle depicting the head of Wrinkle Face with an octopus headdress. Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley (4-2862).

known as *Life* (*Trichomycterus* sp.). Thus it would appear that duality is played on two different registers of the mural, with the octopus, a saltwater animal modeled against a white background, and the catfish, a freshwater animal depicted on a black background. Color symbolism also may have been associated with dualist aspects.

Duality is further expressed in burials and the sacrificial site recently found behind the main platform. In tombs, duality is usually represented by the pairing of vases, and in the sacrificial arena, by the pairing of human bodies (Bourget 2001b: 114). Tomb 2-3 of Platform

II, briefly discussed above, contained the body of an old male accompanied by an adolescent boy and at least fifteen pairs of ritual vessels. A superficial look at the vases from the first example (figure 1.30) suggests that these are two identical bottles, but this is not the case. Paired bottles always present differences. In this case, the bottles have been fashioned slightly differently, and the pairs of birds, even though they are on the same position on the vase, are dissimilar. In another pair of vases (figure 1.29), the difference resides not in the decoration but in the firing: one jar has been fired, and the other one has remained unfired. All these intentional differences suggest a complex form of duality.

Among the ceramic offerings found in the same funerary context (Platform II, Tomb 2-3) was an intriguing portrait vase (figure 1.7). It depicts the head of a man with his nose and lips excised. This form of mutilation is not rare, and numerous individuals appear like this in the iconography. They are usually depicted riding a llama, sitting in front of a building or, more rarely, performing sexual acts. I suggest that this type of facial mutilation has been created to transform the

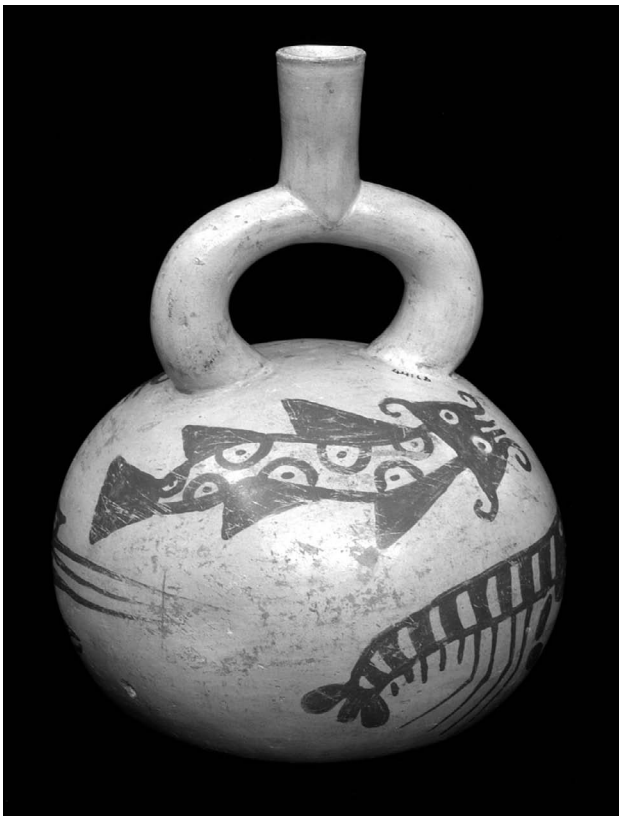

Figure 1.50 Stirrup spout bottle with a depiction of a catfish. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-04355).

face of a living being into that of a skull, a sort of authentic living-dead.

This interplay between life and death is often created between a monkey and a human skeleton or skull. For example, the frontal view of a figure on a jar (figure 1.51) appears to represent a skeletal individual holding a panpipe. Yet upon closer inspection, the right side of the jar shows a very peculiar shoulder-blade articulation, along with the tail of a monkey (figure 1.51). Thus the jar shows a double duality occurring between life and death and between a monkey and a human. In a portrait vase, the double-play between human and animal and between life and death is expressed with a face bearing at the same time human, monkeylike, and skull-like features (figure 1.52). A similar type of tension resulting from the transition between two states may have been created with another portrait vessel showing a one-eyed person (figure 1.53). In this case, vision in one eye and blindness in the other would express the dualist concept of life and death. This symbolism is also conveyed by individuals who cover one of their eyes with a hand (figure 1.54).

Figure 1.51 Jar in the shape of a skeletonized monkey. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo (U-3219).

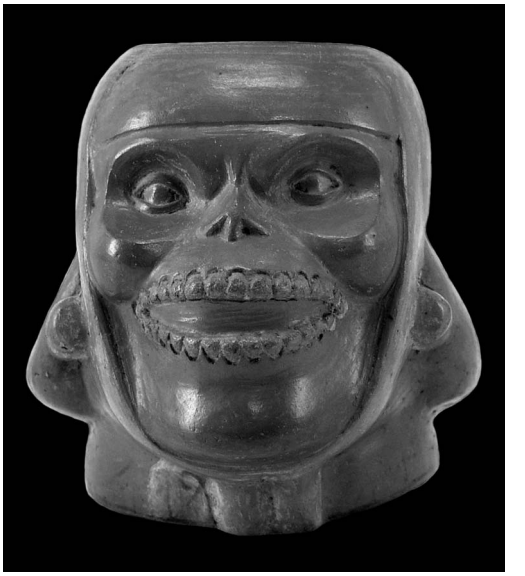

Figure 1.52 Portrait-head vessel of a skeletonized person with simian characteristics. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004305).

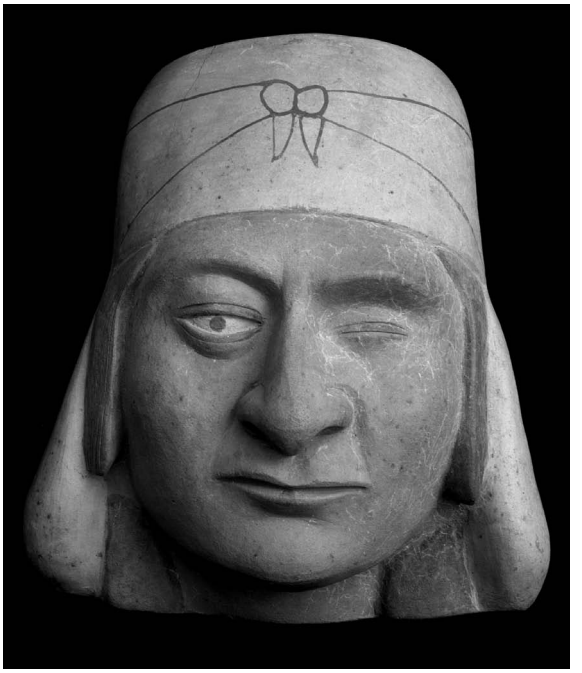

Figure 1.53 Portrait-head vessel of a one-eyed man. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo (PT-002).

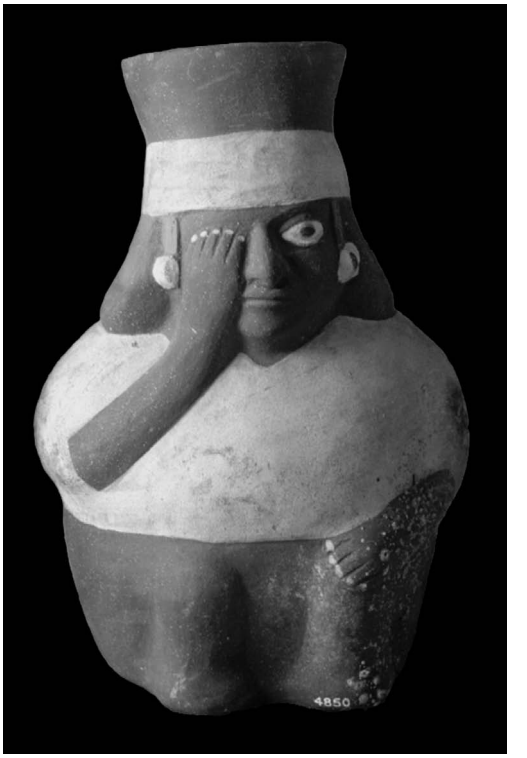

Figure 1.54 Jar in the shape of a man. Field Museum, Chicago (4850).

The three subjects just discussed—mutilated face, skeletal face, and one-eyed man—wear headdresses, haircuts when the hair would have been visible, and occasionally tubular ear ornaments similar to those on portrait-head vessels (figures 1.7, 1.52, 1.54). There must therefore be a close relationship between those subjects and the portrait-vessel tradition. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, each of these "transitional types" plays a role in the sexual representations: the living-dead, the monkey-skeleton, and the one-eyed person. Scenes and subjects depicting sexual activities may have also been closely related to some form of transition or phase. This proposition remains, of course, to be investigated. As a research hypothesis, it can be suggested that in Moche iconography, a transitory stage exists between life and death, which seems to have been expressed by a number of symbolic devices and dualist subjects—or transitional beings—such as the living-dead, the monkey-man, and the one-eyed person.

Can we now make a case for the existence of a world of the living, a world of the dead, and a world of the ancestors? Would the creation of these categories represent a useful tool to understand some of the structural principles of this system of representation?

A Tripartite Organization?

The existence of a tripartite system of Moche iconography and religion, entailing a world of the living, a world of the dead, and a world of mythical ancestors—the last one peopled by beings with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic attributes—has already been proposed (Arsenault 1987: 157; Benson 1975: 140; Hocquenghem 1979: 94). Hocquenghem suggested that the Moche needed to journey across these three regions in the cycle of life and death (1979: 94). Yet separating Moche iconography into three discrete and different units such as Life–Death–Ancestors presents no easy task. Complex representations such as the Presentation Theme, for example (figure 1.3), will often contain what appear to be humans acting alongside beings with supernatural attributes.

Similar activities can be performed by individuals that may have existed in any one of the three "worlds." Examples occur with subjects who are carrying what we believe to be funerary offerings. The first subject depicts a human being holding a stirrup spout bottle in his right hand, a flaring bowl and dipper in his left hand, and balancing a jar on his head. He carries a small mat under his right arm and a bigger one on his back (figure 1.55). The second subject is a mutilated individual with his lips, nose, and feet missing. He holds a mat, a stirrup spout bottle, and a dipper (figure 1.56). The third one, taking the form of a skeletal being, carries two stirrup spout bottles and three jars on his back (figure 1.57). The fourth subject represents a bat-being holding two vessels (figure 1.58). The jar he holds with his right hand is tipped sideways on his shoulder. Painted on the body of the

Figure 1.55 Bottle in the shape of a man holding funerary offerings. Hernán and Milly Miranda Collection, Trujillo.

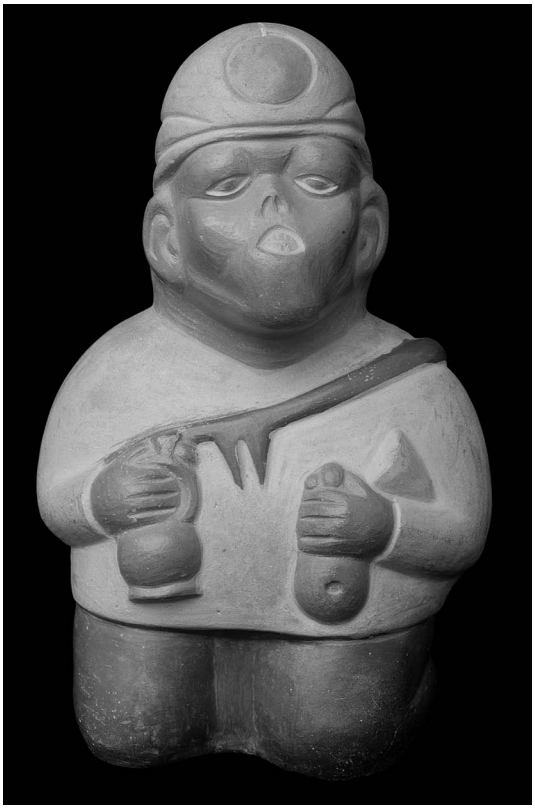

Figure 1.56 Bottle in the shape of a mutilated individual holding funerary offerings. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-001401).

Figure 1.57 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal being holding funerary offerings. Cassinelli Mazzei Collection, Trujillo.

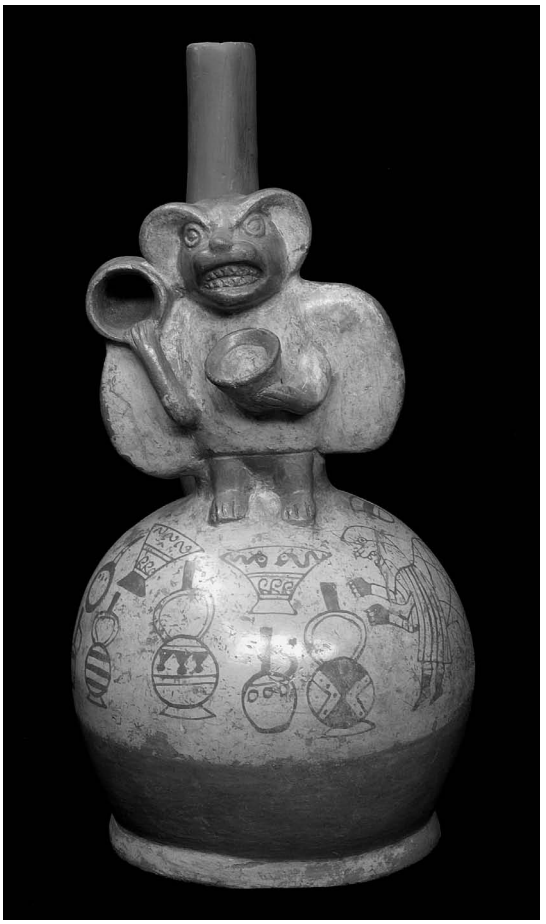

Figure 1.58 Bat-being holding vessels modeled on top of a bottle. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01225).

Figure 1.59 Ceramic vessels and anthropomorphized bat. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01225). Drawing by Donna McClelland.

bottle is another anthropomorphized bat with nine ritual vessels standing in front of and behind him (figure 1.59).

The gesture of emptying a jar is restricted to the bat-beings. Human and skeletal beings are portrayed only carrying the vessels. To my knowledge, bats do not carry mats in the depictions. Although it cannot be demonstrated with total confidence, it appears that these three actors can be divided into two great ensembles. The first one comprises the living, the mutilated, and the dead carrying the funerary paraphernalia: ceramic vessels and mats of different sizes. The second group, essentially represented by the bat-beings, holds only the ceramic vessels in a way that indicates they are emptying their contents. In a previous contribution, I noted a similar system with the bottles depicting human beings, skeletons and bats carrying children in their arms (2001b). The subjects of the first group—human beings and skeletons—consistently appear in the act of whistling, whereas the bats (the subjects of the second group) are usually shown with their mouth open, never whistling. On the basis of this information and other scenes associating the act of whistling with human sacrifice, I suggested that "whistling is possibly a sound produced to warn the ancestors of the human offerings to come" (Bourget 2001b: 113–114).

An attempt to create a rigid and complete separation between these three possible universes and the subjects associated with them may not be a very productive approach. As we have seen earlier, individuals possessing zoomorphic attributes or even organic components have been ascribed to living individuals at sites such as Sipán, San José de Moro, and Huaca de la Cruz. This does not mean that beliefs in a world of the ancestors or beliefs in the afterlife did not exist. On the contrary, some high-ranking individuals may have been perceived as originating from this region, thus blurring these ascribed

boundaries. Donnan has also stated that a clear distinction cannot easily be established between the living and the skeletal beings and that, in some cases, the groups perform activities separately or together: "But do the death figures belong exclusively to a supernatural realm? The iconographic evidence suggests that they do not, for there are many erotic scenes with death figures juxtaposed to and interacting with normal human figures" (1982: 102). For high-ranking individuals to personify living ancestors or special beings with zoomorphic attributes, there must have existed relations of continuity and contiguity between these three conceptually different regions. The three states of human being—alive, dead, or ancestral—would have been part of a certain continuum leading from life, to death, to the afterlife.

The term "world of the ancestors" poses a problem as it refers not only to a metaphysical place but also to a specific form of belief. An ancestor has been defined by Meyer Fortes as "a named, dead forebear who has living descendants of a designated genealogical class representing his continued structural relevance. In ancestor worship such an ancestor receives ritual service and tendance directed specially to him by the proper class of his descendants" (1987: 68). If we strictly follow this definition, a "world of the ancestors" would be a place where the dead relatives of a certain genealogical class would go after their death. Although some form of ancestor worship seems to have been widespread in the Andes, both in the recent past and at the time of contact, such a specific belief cannot be confidently demonstrated for the Moche at the moment. I will thus use the imperfect term "afterlife" to designate the belief in a certain form of life after death. Furthermore, the concept of a journey toward a certain destination after death seemed to have constituted an integral part of this belief system. The term "afterworld" will designate such a place.

Perhaps one part of the difficulty of separating these aspects into discrete units may reside in the very nature of this iconography. The world of the living as we understand it does not seem to be represented as such unless it connects to the profoundly religious and ritual aspects of Moche society. Everyday activities are totally absent from the iconography, and only highly ritualized activities such as warfare, sacrifice, funerary rituals, and the like are depicted (Benson 1972: 89; Donnan 1978: 174). In certain cases through a conflating technique, complex concepts containing at the same time ritual and mythological components may have been represented together. This is not unique to Moche iconography, given that other religious imagery such as that in Christian art, for example, often utilizes this technique.

In any case, it can be said that there exists in Moche iconography four great subject types:

- The first one consists of humans and animals treated in a natural form. They are usually rendered without any additional attributes. Fully domesticated animals such as the dog, the llama, and the guinea pig are never anthropomorphized.

- The second one contains subjects that I have labeled as transitional: the mutilated face (or living-dead,) the monkey-skeleton, the one-eyed man, and the skeletal beings. They perform a fairly specific number of activities such as attending a coffin, carrying funerary offerings, playing music, and dancing. As we will see in the next chapter, they are also prominently involved in sexual activities.

- The third type is represented by animals, vegetables, and objects, all of which have anthropomorphic attributes. They are usually involved in a vast array of activities, including ritual warfare, sacrifice, ritual running, badminton and Ceremonial, among others. A number of animals are part of this group, including fox, feline, deer, bat, rodent, lizard, owl, duck, hummingbird, hawk, scorpion, centipede, and spider.

- Finally, the fourth type accounts for most of the individuals that possess fangs in their mouths, snake-fox belts, and other seemingly supernatural attributes. These comprise the most important subjects of the iconography such as Wrinkle Face. They are centrally involved in the most elaborate rituals such as the Presentation Theme, the Mountain Sacrifice Ceremony, and the Burial Theme. Subjects of the third type usually associate with the activities performed by the individuals with fangs, but the former usually appear in a subservient position.

The separation between the third and the fourth type is not total, since individuals with fangs often possess zoomorphic, inorganic, or vegetal attributes and, likewise, anthropomorphized animals such as the owl impersonator shown earlier (figure 1.4) may possess fangs. In the following example, both types have literally been morphed together. In frontal view, this portrait vase represents an individual with fangs, whereas the side views show the face of a bicolor fox (*Lycalopex sechurae;* figure 1.60). The artist has cleverly used the same eyes to join the four faces together. In this case, the bottle shows that the fangs of the supernatural being and the canines of the fox are clearly related. This is of course contrary to the generalized idea that these fangs derived solely from those of a feline (Benson 1972: 28; Hocquenghem 1983: 60).

As a research hypothesis, I suggest that these four types can be regrouped into three clusters of beings: the natural beings (human and animals), the transitional beings, and the beings with supernatural attributes. When these subjects are found together in a given repre-

Figure 1.60 Bottle in the shape of human and fox heads. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (58.688).

sentation, humans are usually involved in battles or are being sacrificed under the guidance or supervision of a being with supernatural attributes. There thus exists a distinction between these subjects, with humans and transitional individuals being subordinate to beings with supernatural attributes.

The transitional beings seem to be especially associated with scenes and activities relating to funerary rituals and, to a lesser extent, to sacrificial performances. Consequently, I will use the still arbitrary categories of world of the living, world of the dead, and the afterworld, while at the same time acknowledging substantial fluidity between the three categories. In fact, the very mapping of this fluidity will form the main concern of this study.

2 • Eros

I will begin this essay with the representations depicting sexual acts and explore their multiple and complex relations with death, sacrifice, fertility, and the all-encompassing concept of the afterlife. Among the themes represented in Moche iconography, there exists a surprising repertory of vases representing sexual acts. Given the interest for this subject in the modern world, it might not be too surprising to realize that Moche sexual depictions have been written about the most.

This seemingly peculiar subject is not unique to the Moche, and most ancient Andean systems of representation such as those of the Salinar, Vicus, Gallinazo, Recuay, Lambayeque, Chimu, and Nasca display sexual activities or male and female genitals. But the range of representations of these cultures is somewhat more reduced and usually consists of depicting genital organs, scenes of anal and vaginal copulation, fellatio, and perhaps masturbation. It indicates, nevertheless, that across time and space, some of the beliefs associated with these activities must have been shared by a number of ancient Andean societies. Because of the inherent dynamism of their iconography, only the Moche went into such detail and narrative quality. Their elaborateness about that may provide comparative models that will eventually help us to understand the simpler depictions and their functions in other societies.

The numerous Moche scenes portray acts in solitary or various combinations of sexual relations between humans, skeletal subjects, animals, and what appear to be beings with supernatural attributes. Scenes of vaginal copulation are extremely rare, and the vast majority of representations depict acts of sodomy, masturbation, and fellatio as well as presentations of disproportionate female and male genitalia. Furthermore, apart from one example, there seems to be an al-

most complete dichotomy between those who perform these two broad types of sexual act: nonvaginal and vaginal.

In the first type, which refers to various sexual depictions and strictly nonvaginal copulations, the individuals involved are usually humans, skeletal individuals, or others displaying facial mutilations. In the second type, which is dominated by one specific theme of vaginal copulation, the male usually possesses supernatural attributes such as fangs in his mouth and snake belts with fox heads that identify him as Wrinkle Face. During the activity, he is surrounded by anthropomorphized birds and his companion, Iguana. Other cases included in this category depict animals and a sacrificial victim copulating with women.

After an initial compilation, it became apparent that scenes of vaginal copulations are clearly underrepresented. They account for only a small percentage of the sample. There are thus a very high number of scenes that do not represent vaginal penetration, and the discrepancy in the actors and actions and between the types of actors and the types of actions will have to be considered. Before proceeding with the analysis, some of the research carried out by others will be discussed. This will permit me not only to show the spectrum and diversity of interpretations generated by this subject but also to show how the present research departs from or agrees with what has been previously stated.

Previous Contributions

Perhaps, because of the peculiar nature and vividness of their representations, the vases depicting sexual activities have attracted the attention and stimulated the imagination of many researchers since the beginning of the last century. Consequently, these suggestive scenes have also inspired the most varying interpretations, often reflecting the social attitudes prevailing at the time concerning the representation of sexually explicit activities rather than the nature of the corpus. Posnansky, for example, most probably the first to write about this subject, regarded these activities as acts of depravity following cerebral traumas triggered by the practice of cranial deformation (Posnansky 1925), notwithstanding that the Moche rarely practiced cranial deformation. Scholars on the subject since that unfortunate beginning can be grouped into two broad categories: those who adopted a pragmatic view and those who took a more symbolic and religious approach.

Scholars in the first group, after realizing that the majority of the sexual acts did not depict vaginal copulation, suggested that the sexual activities may have represented contraceptive techniques (Gebhard 1970; Kauffmann Doig 1978; Larco 1965) or even scenes of sexual education (Vergara 1990), a sort of ancient Andean *kāmā sutra*.

For those in the second group, consisting of a number of perhaps more anthropologically oriented scholars, the emphasis departed from a physiological explanation. Because of the seriousness or passivity of the couples, Feriz considered these copulations to be ritual acts (1966). Benson was probably the first to describe their diversity in some detail, and, although conceding that their exact meaning still eluded her, she considered most of them to be symbolic: "One needs to know much more, not only about Mochica attitudes towards sex, but about Mochica attitudes towards death" (1972: 148). In a number of other analyses, this iconography has also been considered to show scenes of fertility (Bolz 1975), to be sacred (Donnan 1976), as shamanic (Dobkin de Rios 1984), to be associated with death and renewal, or, in some cases, as intending to express some form of humor (Bergh 1993; Larco 1965).

Among those who wrote about the so-called erotic, the publications of Rafael Larco Hoyle, Anne Marie Hocquenghem, and Susan Bergh are worth mentioning in more detail, as they provide perhaps the most elaborate interpretations of this outstanding corpus.

Rafael Larco Hoyle

In 1965, Rafael Larco Hoyle, the owner of a private collection numbering around 45,000 objects, the bulk of which is constituted by Moche ceramic vessels, published a book exclusively dedicated to the subject of erotic pottery. The monograph was abundantly illustrated with pieces selected from his personal collection. In a perspective already made explicit in his previous articles, he organized his collection according to a typology dictated by a series of secular criteria. Among other ideas, he considered that the sheer diversity of representations of sexual acts discovered in Moche tombs was proof that the inhabitants of the north coast of Peru were sensual and lascivious (1965: 65). Within the framework of this analysis, he organized the representations into four groups.

The first group comprises the humorous vases represented by male and female individuals showing disproportionate sexual organs and anthropomorphized penises (figures 2.73, 2.82, 2.92). In these cases, Moche humor is expressed by the peculiarity that, to drink from these vessels, one has to put one's lips in contact with these oversized genitalia (Larco 1965: 81). The second group comprises representations with "moralizing tendencies." These vases, located in the tombs, would have been used to show that sexual excesses literally destroy the moral and physical fiber of the individuals (87). Moralizing examples are made of skeletal subjects masturbating alone or engaged in sexual acts with what appear to be living subjects (figures 2.41, 2.44). In other scenes seemingly related to this group, individuals are being executed for sexual misconduct. The third group comprises vases displaying religious eroticism. Included in this category

are almost exclusively acts of vaginal copulation between a woman and Wrinkle Face (figure 2.129). Lastly, Larco's fourth group comprises representations of natural copulations such as the anal copulation between man and woman (figure 2.1). After consulting with Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, Larco concluded that anal copulation was possibly practiced as a contraceptive measure (1965: 112).

Although most of these interpretations have aged badly, Larco was probably the first to recognize the specificity of this corpus and to organize it into a number of different sections on the basis of the type of actions depicted. Furthermore, he was possibly one of the first to reflect upon what relationships may have existed between these scenes and funerary rituals (1965: 44).

The Museo Rafael Larco Herrera in Pueblo Libre houses a special exhibit dedicated to this type of ceramics. Although diverse Andean cultures are represented, the vast majority (about 160) are Moche examples. This exceptional corpus provides the bulk of the pieces I use

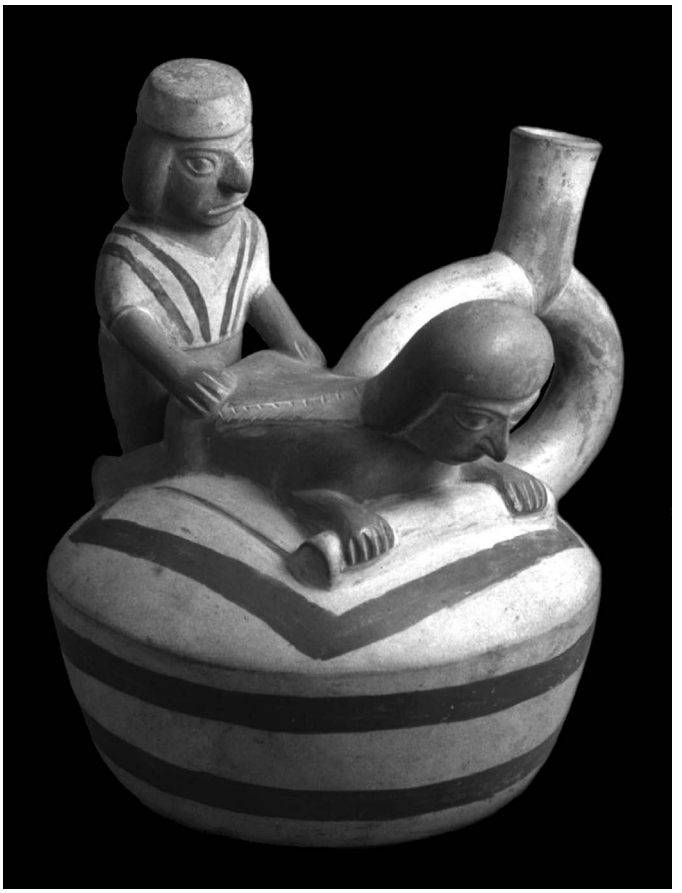

Figure 2.1 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (55.2683).

here to demonstrate my points, augmented by pieces from other collections when the Larco collection did not have an example.

Anne Marie Hocquenghem

In two articles published in 1977 and 1986, Anne Marie Hocquenghem proposed perhaps the most elaborate interpretations concerning these scenes.

The first article is largely descriptive, and she organizes her corpus into two main groups. In the first group, she links the scenes of mourning to a possible cult of the ancestors: fellatio, sodomy, and copulation with the mythical being. In the second group, she includes the rites of fertility: presentations of female and male genitals, sacrifice, woman and skeleton, copulation of toads.

In her second article, she offers a reinterpretation of the "erotic" by taking into account the Andean ceremonial calendar. Because she assumes a mythological and ritual continuity, her methodology consists in looking at the information concerning Inca and post-contact Andean rituals and using them to interpret Moche representations. In short, she reorganizes the scenes into two new groups. The first contains the sexual acts that lead to procreation (Hocquenghem 1986: 37), which she interprets as rituals celebrated at the equinox of the dry season. The second group comprises those acts that do not lead to procreation, such as scenes of masturbation and sodomy. They are associated with the second part of the year as rituals celebrated during the equinox of the rainy season (Hocquenghem 1986: 46).

More specifically, she describes a scene of copulation with a mythical ancestor as a representation of an agrarian ritual, the *Coya raimi,* performed during the equinox of the dry season (figure 2.129). In this example, she thus sees a direct relationship between an Andean ritual described in an ethnohistorical document dating to the seventeenth century and a scene found on a ceremonial vessel from the north coast dating from the sixth century. Her thesis and methodological validation rely upon the postulate that, from the very beginning, Andean farmers have always used a ritual calendar to mark the rhythm of the seasons, the preparation of irrigation channels, and the planting and harvesting season. Therefore, the people on the coast and the people in the Andes must have shared similar myths and rituals throughout the centuries, regardless of the time separating them and the difference in ecological conditions between the coast and the Andes.

This structuralist approach was inspired by Lévi-Strauss, who in 1958 studied a Nasca ceramic along with myths collected among Amazonian societies from the Gran Chaco region:

> Above all, it appears certain that in those areas of South America where high and low cultures have been in regular or intermittent contact for a

> long period of time, ethnographers and archaeologists can collaborate in elucidating common problems. The "serpent with fish inside his body" is only one theme among the hundreds which are illustrated almost *ad infinitum* in Peruvian ceramics. We can no longer doubt that the key to so many heretofore incomprehensible motifs is directly accessible in myths and tales which are still current. One would be mistaken to neglect these means which enable us to gain access to the past. Only the myths can guide us into the labyrinth of monsters and gods when, in the absence of writing, the plastic documentation cannot lead us any further. (1963: 272)

In 1986, Hocquenghem also wrote that the scenes leading to reproduction could have been related to the beginning of the agricultural season and to the annual renewal of life. This renewal would have been celebrated at the equinox of the dry season. The scenes of anal copulation and masturbation could have been associated with the second part of the year, and this period of the year would have been celebrated at the equinox of the rainy season. Additionally, while basing her assessment on ethnohistorical and ethnographical documents, she suggested that certain ritual inversions took place during funerary activities, such as the consumption of raw meat and the cutting of women's hair in the past, and more recently, the youth from the village of Vicos showing disrespect to their elders and having sexual relations in the fields during a wake over a corpse (1986: 38).

Ritual inversion would represent the ritual actions or symbolic concepts that are used simultaneously to unite and distinguish between two extreme but related conditions such as life and death. In certain Andean cultures, the consumption of raw meat during funerary rituals would constitute a ritual inversion of the consumption of cooked meat during everyday conditions. Likewise, a number of Andean communities, such as the Bolivian Laymi, consider that the underworld is inverted in comparison with the world of the living:

> Underneath (*manq"a*) is in some contexts synonymous with the land of the dead, and is the place where the sun goes when it is night on earth. This place is an inversion not only as regards diurnal alternation, but also of the seasons, for while the Laymi live through the rain it is dry beneath, and while on earth it is winter, the dead live through the season of agriculture growth. (Harris 1982: 62)

In the context of this essay, the structuralist approach by Hocquenghem and the resulting interpretations pose problems. This information, provided by Olivia Harris, formed part of Hocquenghem's analogical model, and she considers that the world of the dead is always perceived as being inverted in comparison with the world of the living (1989: 141). In our analysis, the scenes that Hocquenghem considers as depicting activities that lead to procreation can be associated with only three types of vaginal copulation: copulation be-

tween a female individual with Wrinkle Face, with animals, and with an eventual sacrificial victim, totaling about 20 examples; the other sexual acts, however, could be organized into five types—sodomy, masturbation, fellatio, depictions on libation vases, and anthropomorphic genitals—numbering nearly 380 examples. Indeed, the scenes depicting vaginal copulations count for only 5 percent of our sample. It is, therefore, surprising and probably contradictory to realize that what should be the most important season—related to the productive part of the year—is so underrepresented. Although the present analysis will constitute a departure from interpretations based upon a sacred calendar and historical analogies, the concept of ritual inversion and its relation with funerary rituals will be retained as a meaningful concept.

Susan Bergh

Susan Bergh (1993) also favored an analogical approach to discuss a number of vases and their relation with fertility, although she recognized that nonreproductive activities posed limits to this hypothesis. Drawing on information about the body/mountain metaphor collected among a number of Andean societies, she suggested that a mountain with its central peak in the shape of an erect penis (figure 2.78) could have represented a close relation between the reproductive fluid of men—semen—and the water descending the slopes of mountains to irrigate the agricultural fields (Bergh 1993: 82).[1] Using the same analytical technique, she further suggested that the scenes of anal copulation may have been related to the bowel and, as such, constitute a form of metaphor with death and decay: "Therefore, the submersion of the phallus, organ of vitality, origins, and continuation, into the bowel might be seen metaphorically to duplicate the process of burial into an earthly grave" (Bergh 1993: 86).

Such an argument would represent a conceptual departure from her earlier position regarding the penis as a perceived source of vitality and an apt metaphor for agricultural productivity. Bergh seems well aware of this departure, as she immediately proposed an alternative interpretation in which a relationship could have been established between the bowel and the earth, and "the phallus, whose semen was analogically related to irrigation water, then might be viewed as immersed in the earth, symbolized by the bowel, where it performs a renewing, fertilizing, and life-giving function" (1993: 86). In the context of the present analysis, these two positions are difficult to sustain, as they do not explain the other types of sexual activities in which a number of recurring elements such as the same types of individuals, the presence of the wave motif, or ceramic offerings would indicate that conceptually, at least, they form part of the same great ensemble. A third hypothesis must thus be sought that would explain these other scenes as well.

Diachronic versus Synchronic

It is understandable that, by using these diachronic approaches, Larco, Hocquenghem, and Bergh could attain a degree of interpretation seemingly much more elaborate than their predecessors. Because of the difficulty of going beyond mere description, the temptation to reflect upon these scenes using more recent information, be it ethnohistorical or ethnographical, becomes hard to resist. Consequently, numerous scholars have adopted this analogical method to discuss various aspects of Moche iconography.[2] The use of textual evidence is both tempting and dangerous: Tempting because, as we saw, by enriching considerably the depth of the discourse on Moche iconography, the analogical method gives to the analysis and resulting interpretation an almost ethnographical flavor. Dangerous because it is next to impossible to evaluate the validity of the relations established between the iconographical data and the written information, as they are often separated by at least a thousand years. At this moment, the data are lacking to evaluate properly the degree of continuity or disjunction between the successive social formations that inhabited the north coast of Peru during the last two millennia.

The analogies used by Bergh and Hocquenghem certainly suggest some form of continuity in various aspects of belief systems and mythologies. Regardless of similarities between these ancient scenes and information collected at a much later time, some form of continuity should not simply be assumed but rather must in some way be demonstrated if a reconstruction of Moche symbolism is to be attempted with this kind of data. This is easier said than done, since the dynamism expressed by the Moche system of representation is quite unique, and succeeding ceramic styles on the Peruvian north coast—Lambayeque and Chimu—do not display such complexity. In fact, by Phase V, a number of complex themes rapidly disappear from the iconography; others, however, such as the Boat and the Burial themes, gain in complexity and popularity (Donnan and McClelland 1999). During the Chimu period some subjects inherited from the Moche period are maintained and represented in clay. Although a detailed study of such continuity is still lacking, a rapid survey of *Moche-like* subjects on Chimu ceramics suggests drastic changes and omissions. The terrestrial subjects found throughout Moche iconography almost completely disappear in Chimu art. It is dominated by marine subjects (McClelland 1990). New information concerning Late Moche iconography suggests that this trend was already underway during Phase V, and that this transition may have occurred between Phase IV and Phase V (Donnan and McClelland 1999).

The present analysis will be quite different from that of Bergh and Hocquenghem, inasmuch as we will refrain where possible from using this type of textual information and ethnohistorical analogies to ex-

plain the scenes. I will rely mainly on the archaeological context of these objects and on the internal system of relation between these scenes. Secondary information will be used mainly to describe certain aspects of human physiology, animal behavior, and the ecology of the north coast.

Although some of these ritual vessels show a certain degree of wear and have been found once in a while on the floors of architectural structures, the vast majority have been found in both archaeologically and illegally excavated funerary contexts. Since funerary rituals are a culturally and symbolically complex activity, we have to consider whether the scenes on these vessels could be related to funerary beliefs regarding death itself—as a concept or even an entity—to its liminal aspects and to beliefs in an afterlife. As I said above, this does not mean that some of these vases were not used in other contexts such as libation rituals; I would argue, however, that regardless of any previous utilization and because of their final and definitive destination, the scenes and themes represented on these vessels must be symbolically and cognitively related with this specific context.

Partly in line with Hocquenghem, I will attempt to demonstrate that the scenes that do not depict vaginal copulation could be related to a concept of ritual inversion. As a research hypothesis, I suggest that the vast majority of the scenes represent inverted scenes of fertility related to beliefs concerning death and the passage into the afterlife. The majority would be associated with a specific set of actors distinct from those performing the vaginal copulations. This concept of inverted fertility does not mean anti-fertility. It must be understood in the global notion of duality.

In continuity with this first hypothesis, the scenes that depict vaginal copulations with a distinct group of actors, not represented in the previously mentioned group, would have been associated not with the transition to but with the afterlife itself. Again it must be stressed that the separation between these two categories is not based on the type of actions being performed as such but on the type of actors performing these actions. Moche attitudes toward sex and reproduction cannot be known archaeologically.

In order of importance, I will progress through the scenes of sodomy, masturbation, fellatio, depictions of sexual acts on libation vases, sexual acts with animals and, finally, vaginal copulation.

Sodomy

Scenes of anal copulations are the most popular type of this outstanding corpus. In our sample, six different positions have been recorded. One of the most frequent positions is the female resting on her belly and the male behind her, standing up or with his legs

slightly bent (figure 2.1). He often firmly holds the buttocks or shoulders of his partner. The second position is the woman on her side and the man maintaining the same position as before (figure 2.2). The third position depicts both individuals resting on their sides (figure 2.3). This is perhaps the most popular position. In the fourth position, the couple appears in a sitting position with the male behind the woman (figure 2.4). In the fifth position, the woman rests on her back with the male kneeling in front of her (figure 2.5). In the final position, the man is lying on his back with the female sitting on top of him (figure 2.6).

When the genitals are visible, which is frequently, the artists have made clear with minute detail that the sexual act consists of an anal copulation (figure 2.7).[3] In fact, no anatomical elements have been spared to represent very precisely the exact nature of the sexual act, and the female genitalia, including the labia and the clitoris, are often clearly delineated (figure 2.8). Hence, when the genital organs are not visible, but the general position is maintained such as in the example showing a seated couple (figure 2.4), it can be postulated with a certain degree of confidence that it refers to the same type of sexual act.

Figure 2.2 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with a spiral motif around the base of the bottle. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004226).

Figure 2.3 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with a wave motif around the base of the bottle. Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (L3200/1).

Figure 2.4 Bottle in the shape of a couple in a seated position engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004275).

Figure 2.5 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004214).

Figure 2.6 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004232).

Figure 2.7 Detail of bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation (detail of figure 2.3). Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (L3200/1).

Figure 2.8 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01661).

Although the gesture is not systematically carried out, the male frequently holds the chin of his partner (figures 2.4, 2.9). The holding of the lower jaw is also represented in one scene involving an eventual sacrificial victim and a woman (figure 2.10). The gesture of holding the lower jaw is sometimes depicted in scenes of ritual battles or, as in figure 2.11, by this individual holding a war club and standing in front of three anthropomorphized bats. Thus, it must convey more complex symbolic meanings, which will be explored in some detail later.

Figure 2.9 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Cassinelli Mazzei Collection, Trujillo.

Figure 2.10 Fineline painting of a man holding the lower jaw of a female. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-0921). Drawing by Donna McClelland (detail of figure 2.140).

Figure 2.11 Fineline painting of a human holding the lower jaw of a bat-being (detail of figure 2.122). Linden-Museum, Stuttgart. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

The base of jars that depict sodomy is also frequently decorated with a series of horizontal bands (figures 2.1, 2.8). These bands consist of alternating lines painted cream and ocher and often appear in other sexual scenes or on the sides of stepped platforms (figure 2.12). As proposed by Elisabeth Benson, this design could indeed symbolize the form of a Moche temple (1972: 138).[4] Thus, if these bands are meant to represent a monumental structure, their appearance with sexual scenes would emphasize the highly symbolic nature of the sexual act. In the next example (figure 2.13), the relationship with this symbol is even more clearly stated as a double-step motif that has been painted just underneath the couple. This motif may represent a double stairway, usually found in low relief on pots in the form of a building. For example, such a double stairway appears to have been depicted at the base of the architectural model shown above (figure 2.12). As it will be noted later, especially in the representations of fellatio or on the libation vessels, other elements in addition to representations of monumental structures have been used to mark the sacredness of these activities.

In many other scenes, it is not rare also to find a wave motif (figures 2.3, 2.14). This design carries an important symbolic content. It is usually depicted in maritime scenes that show reed boats ridden by beings with supernatural attributes and traveling above the wave motif (figure 1.33). In a recently discovered altar at the Huaca de la Luna temple, the steps of the structure are painted with a zoomorphic wave motif (figures 2.15, 2.16). Santiago Uceda has suggested that this structure may have been used for performing rituals visible

Figure 2.12 Bottle in the shape of an architectural model. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 2.13 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, frontal view. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004271).

to the local population standing in the Huaca main plaza (Uceda 2000: 101). It would thus seem that the step symbol (in the form of this stairway) and the wave motif are almost interchangeable and may carry related meanings. Interestingly, in both cases the wave design has been painted in an identical manner, with the upper part of the wave in a light color and the lower section in a darker color (figures 2.14, 2.16).

In another scene of sodomy (figure 2.17), the aquatic domain is even more conspicuous because of a catfish painted on each of the four faces of this quadrangular vase. A bottle shown in the preceding chapter portrays the catfish in a very similar fashion (figure 1.50). As mentioned earlier, the catfish design also prominently occurs on the walls of Moche temples such as Huaca de la Luna and Huaca Cao Viejo in both natural and geometric forms (figure 1.47). The close connection of motifs such as the step, the wave, and the catfish with some of the most ritually charged murals and architectural elements found so far in Moche temples demonstrates not only their prominence in this system of representation but, perhaps more importantly, the high degree of rituality conferred on the sexual representations. In sum, these sexual activities are ritual actions associated with some of the most fundamental symbolic elements in Moche religion. The rela-

Figure 2.14 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with a wave motif around the base of the bottle. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004253).

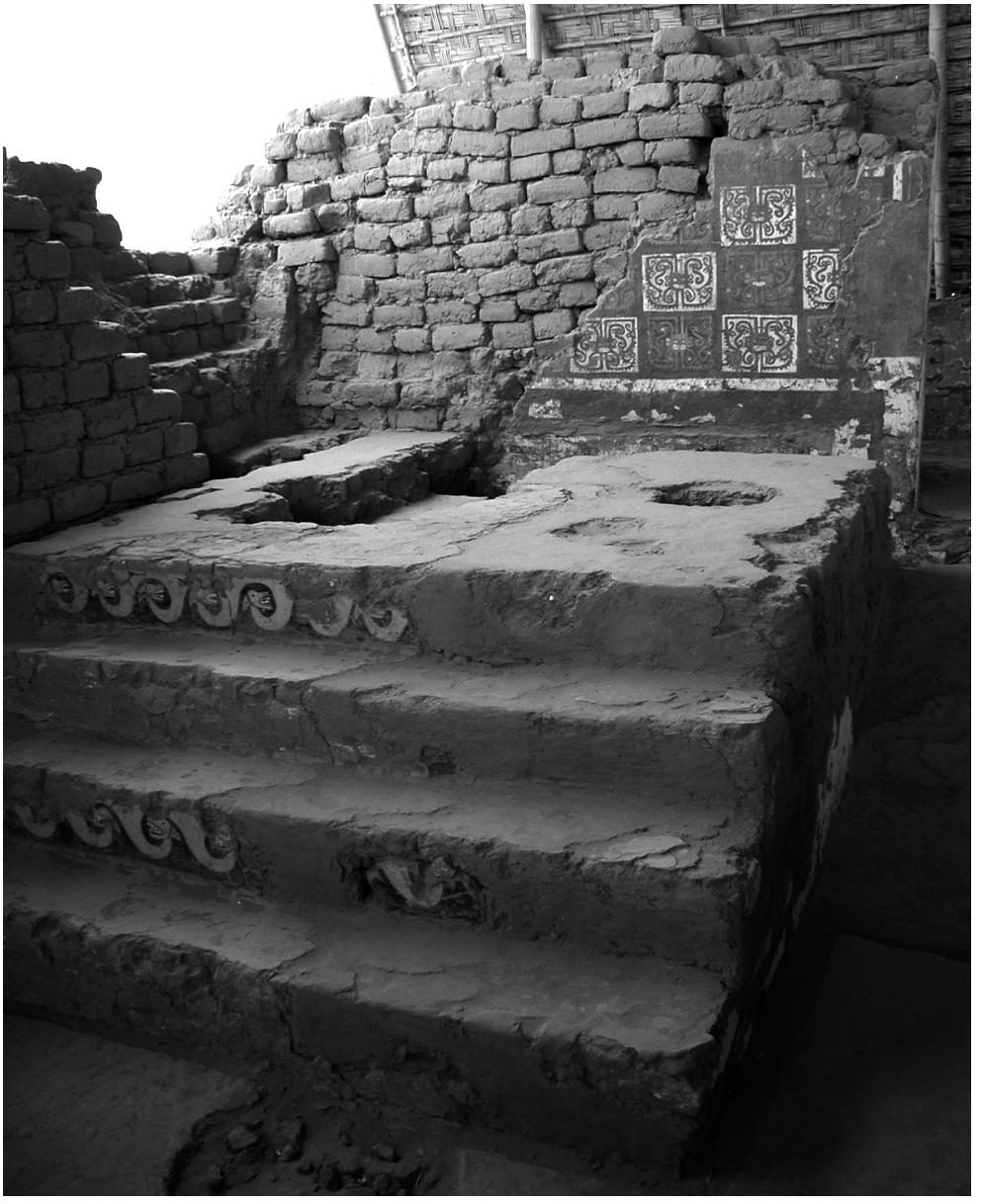

Figure 2.15 Ritual stairway decorated with polychrome murals. Platform I, Huaca de la Luna. Photograph by Steve Bourget.

Figure 2.16 Detail of a zoomorphic wave motif of the ritual stairway decorated with polychrome murals. Platform I, Huaca de la Luna. Photograph by Steve Bourget.

Figure 2.17 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with catfishes painted around the base of the bottle. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004273).

tionship of these motifs is thus meant to emphasize their high degree of interdependence.

Ritual Paraphernalia

In the following two examples, vessels and objects consistently found in funerary contexts are depicted in association with sexual activities. In the first example (figure 2.18), a couple is situated on top of the vessel in a seated position and seemingly performing an anal copulation, as they are in the standard posture with the male positioned behind his female partner and holding her lower jaw. Just in front of them, on the lower register, three jars are on each side of a stepped structure. On the upper part of the structure, rest (from left to right) a dipper, a flaring bowl, and a stirrup spout bottle. The second example portrays a woman masturbating a skeletal individual (figure 2.19). Painted just in front of them there are two stirrup spout bottles, two spout-and-handle bottles, and a flaring bowl with a rectangular object depicted on each side of it. The rectangular objects display lines crossing the middle section.

Figure 2.18 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with ceramic vessels painted around the base of the bottle. Cassinelli Mazzei Collection, Trujillo.

Figure 2.19 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a skeletonized being, with ceramic vessels painted around the base of the bottle. The National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C. (21/7950).

A similar rectangular item and a yucca plant can be found in low relief just alongside a couple engaged in an act of anal copulation (figure 2.20). The association of the rectangular object with a tuber such as the yucca plant (*Manihot esculanta*) is not fortuitous since the same object appears on both cheeks of a portrait head bottle, which takes the form of a potato (figure 2.21). These associations present a complex topic, because tubers such as yucca and potato and certain other crops that grow underground (e.g., peanuts) provide a number of important subjects of the iconography (Bourget 1990).[5] This subject matter will be treated in more detail in the section on animals.

Figure 2.20 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Museum of Natural History, New York (41.0/7303).

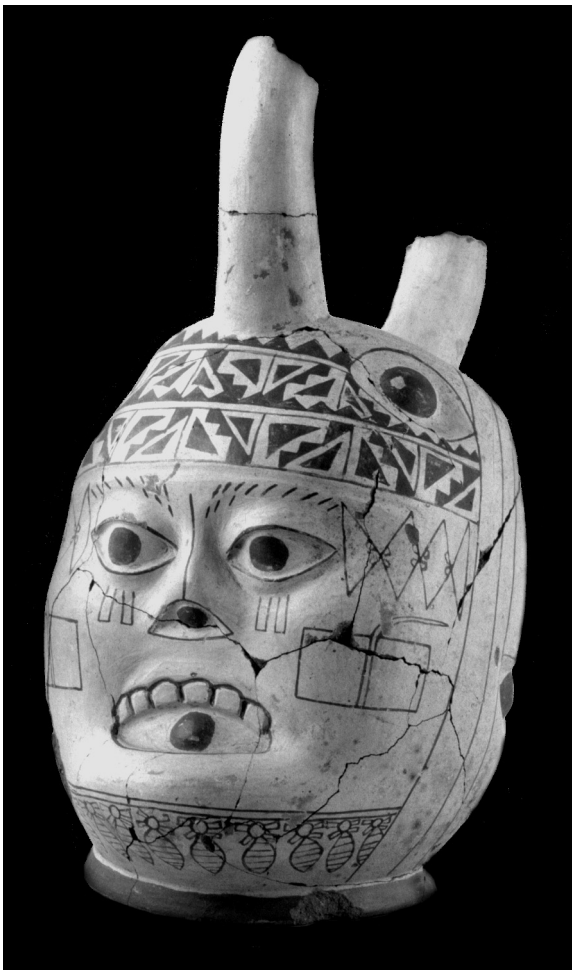

Figure 2.21 Portrait-head bottle in the shape of a potato. Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California, Berkeley (4-2814).

The portrait vessel with these rectangular objects on the cheeks depicts a mutilated being with his lips and nose excised (figure 2.21). He has a string of oval-shaped motifs painted on his lower jaw, along with lozenge designs on the temples just behind his eyes. Despite the paint having almost completely disappeared, a similar design alongside each eye socket is visible in the face of the one-eyed man shown earlier (figure 1.53). The diamond-shaped and oval-shaped motifs are also prominently displayed on the faces of clay statuettes destroyed with the male victims of the Huaca de la Luna sacrificial site (figure 2.22). In a previous contribution (2001a), I suggested that the designs on the lower jaws represented muscoid flies emerging from their pupal cases and, on the basis of ethnohistorical analogies, could have been associated with beliefs concerning life after death: a certain essence of the victims takes the form of flies emerging from the corpses left exposed to the elements in the sacrificial arena. This would help to explain the presence of a fly hovering above a group of dancing skeletons (figure 2.23) and the same insects in a scene portraying three warriors and an attendant leading two captives (figure 2.24). These symbolic elements painted on the faces of the portrait vessels would reiterate the transitional nature of captured warriors (or those who are to be sacrificial victims) and mutilated individuals. Conceptually, these types of individual would occupy a transitory position between life and death. The facial attributes of the mutilated

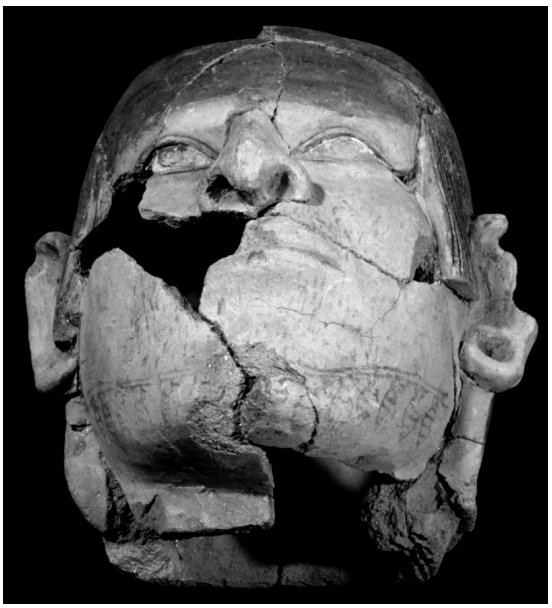

Figure 2.22 Fragment of a clay effigy from Plaza 3A, Huaca de la Luna. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

Figure 2.23 Fineline painting of dancing skeletons and a fly. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

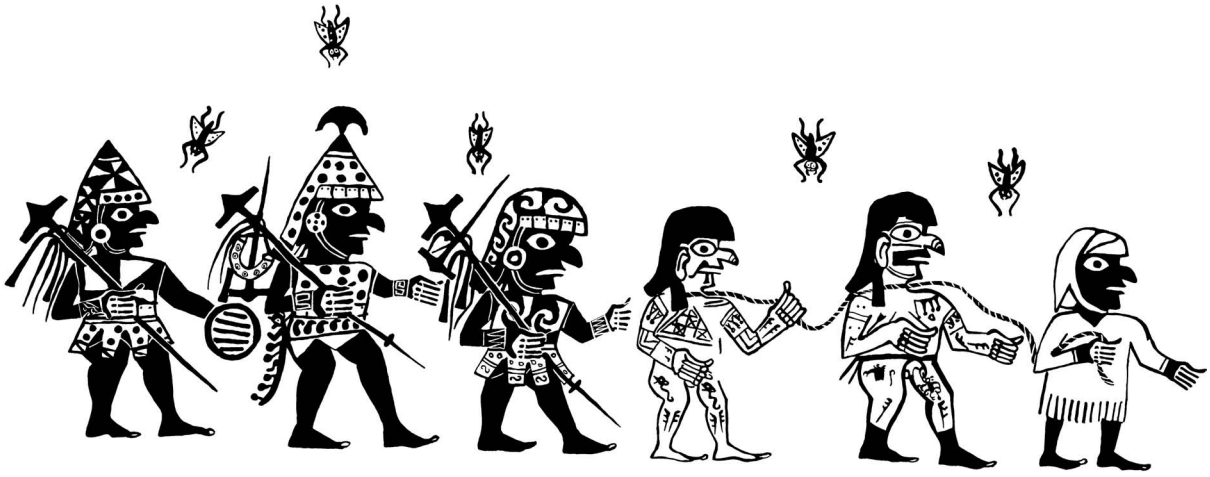

Figure 2.24 Fineline painting of captured warriors and flies. Museo Cholchagua, Chile. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

person would transform him into a sort of living-dead (figure 1.7), whereas captured warriors and eventual sacrificial victims enter this liminal position by being designated for sacrifice.

The symbolism associated with the rectangular object is also apparent on the following vessel (figure 2.25). On top of the bottle two figures are modeled side by side. The first one represents an anthropomorphic owl wearing a shawl. This garment is usually associated with the feminine gender (Bourget 2001b: 103). The second one resting on the left side of the owl figure is Wrinkle Face, the individual with fangs and snake-fox belt. He rests on his back underneath a blanket decorated with crosses (figure 2.25). A box appears to the owl's right, with rounded objects in it. Directly in front of her are four strands of beadlike elements, a pedestal vase containing four triangular objects, and, finally, a rectangular object similar to that depicted on the bottles in figures 2.19 and 2.20 (figure 2.26). The painting on the lower register of the bottle presents numerous painted elements, including a woman with her hands clasped, a row of four jars, and a llama tied to a post (figure 2.26). I would suggest that this complex

Figure 2.25 Bottle depicting owl-woman with Wrinkle Face. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (F-728). Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

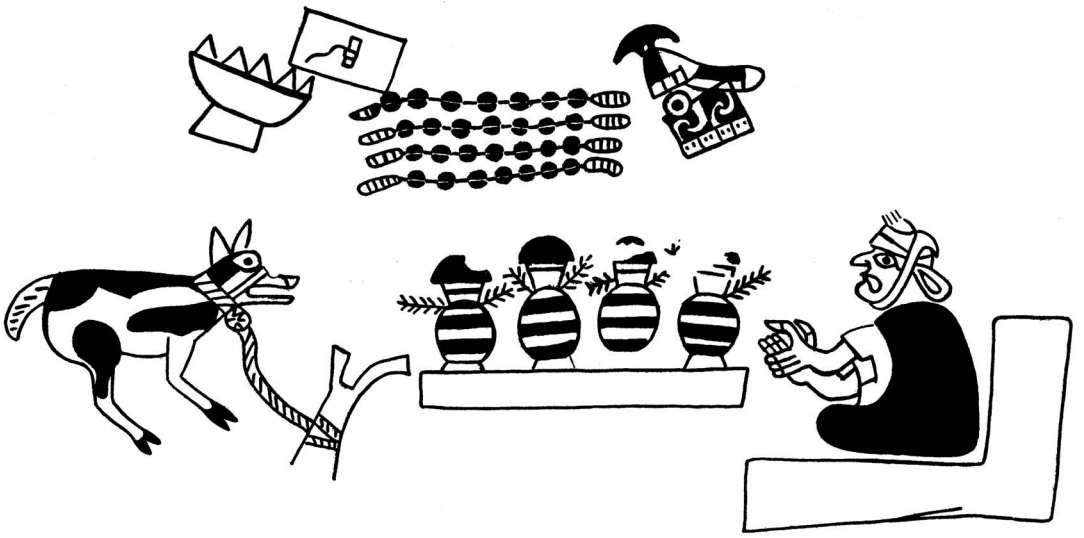

Figure 2.26 Fineline painting located underneath owl-woman and Wrinkle Face (detail of figure 2.25). Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (F-728), Redrawn from Kutscher 1983 fig. 306.

ceramic artifact illustrates the attention given to the body of a dead priest on the upper register and, on the lower register, the funerary and sacrificial offerings associated with his burial.[6] Although it is not possible at the moment to recognize all the elements surrounding the owl-woman, some of them have been consistently found in Moche funerary contexts such as the flaring bowl modeled in front of her and the row of four jars on the pedestal. High-ranking burials usually contain llama remains as well. These are the same type of vessels that are represented in certain scenes of sodomy and masturbation demonstrating the close relationship existing between depictions of sexual activities and funerary paraphernalia (figures 2.18, 2.19).

Furthermore, I propose that the rectangular object with a line painted across it, which we have noted resting alongside the couple's scene of sodomy (figure 2.20), painted on the cheek of a portrait vessel, and lying in front of the owl-woman (figures 2.21, 2.26), may also be an offering frequently found deposited in the hands or in the mouth of the deceased (Bourget 1996). It consists of a piece of copper sheet metal folded a few times onto itself and attached with cotton strings. In some cases it may also have been folded in a piece of cotton cloth. Such an object was found in the mouth of a male individual buried in a mudbrick structure on the eastern side of the Huaca del Sol: "One folded piece of gilded copper in the mouth. It was wrapped with unspun fiber and spun yarn" (Donnan and Mackey 1978: 154).[7] As I mentioned in Chapter 1, this individual had also been buried with a long staff that terminated in crosspieces. This object has cor-

rectly been identified as the same object used by the so-called badminton players (Donnan 1985). In the Ceremonial Badminton, attendants seemed to use these staffs as lances to snare objects that had previously been thrown into the air by another player (figures 1.38, 2.27). These objects take the shape of a rectangular piece attached to a flowerlike element. Along the same lines, De Bock (1998: 11) recently suggested that these rectangular objects may have been the same as the one represented in front of the owl-woman mentioned above.

A closer inspection of figure 1.38 reveals that in the ritual badminton, numerous subjects appear that are usually seen in depictions that have a clear funerary association. The first one has already been mentioned and consists of five stacked jars placed alongside two drums decorated with deer effigies. These objects are located on the lower register (figure 1.38). To the right side of these musical instruments, two women in a kneeling position wear spotted tunics similar to those worn by the women depicted in the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3, C, E). In the middle section, an individual with a mutilated face kneels at the foot of the high-ranking individual who stands on top of the temple. Finally, in the upper-right-hand part of the painting, there is a person leading two blind individuals by the hand. One of the blind individuals carries a stirrup spout bottle on a shoulder sling.

Although it is still speculative, it is possible that the badminton activity may have been part of certain funerary rituals and that, once snared, the metallic objects would have been detached, folded, and inserted into the mouth of the deceased. Two elements support this assertion. Funerary jars are consistently depicted in these badminton contexts, and, in one scene, an owl-being is clearly depicted just in

Figure 2.27 Ceremonial Badminton scene with anthropomorphized animals. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Drawing by Madeleine Fang.

front of the main individual standing on top of the structure (figure 2.27). Like the rows of jars depicted in the Ceremonial Badminton and in certain sexual activities, the presence of the owl-being reinforces the funerary connection of this ceremony.

As I suggested, the complex bottle described earlier may represent the preparation of the body of a priest posing as Wrinkle Face (figure 2.25). Although possibly pure coincidence, it is worth noting that, in the tomb of the old man at Huaca de la Cruz, the woman at the top of the coffin possessed a bottle depicting a person sitting in front of a stack of funerary vessels (figure 1.16). The woman at the base of the tomb had a bottle depicting an individual with hands clasped (figure 1.14). Thus, the position of the owl-woman sitting in front of offerings and the other person sitting cross-legged with her hands clasped are somewhat similar to the position of the women in the tomb and to the type of ceramic objects that accompanied them. Female retainers regularly accompany high-ranking individuals in their tombs (Alva and Donnan 1993). Consequently, it can be hypothesized that some of these women may have been involved in the final preparations of the corpse of the deceased. It is worth noting anew that Strong and Evans suggested that one of the women in the Warrior-Priest tomb of Huaca de la Cruz may have been strangled (1952: 152).

Another element consistently represented in scenes of sodomy may have also formed part of funerary paraphernalia. It consists of a partly rolled mat serving as a kind of pillow in a number of sexual scenes (figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.14, 2.20). Similar mats are often depicted in association with skeletal individuals playing panpipes (figure 2.28). Skeletal musicians playing the panpipes or hand drums are often depicted alone (figure 1.51), yet they sometimes appear in elaborate settings involving complex activities.

Skeletal beings, similar to those depicted on mats, are often involved in activities with a clear funerary content.[8] Another bottle (figure 2.29) displays such a subject with two different but related subjects. On its top, a number of skeletal beings appear to be involved in the preparation of a coffin decorated with a copper mask. Painted on three sides of this quadrangular bottle are six skeletal beings holding war clubs, and two smaller skeletons playing drums. Three jars are depicted on each side of this activity (figure 2.30). Four of these skeletal individuals are shown with penile erections, which reinforces that such sexual displays could be closely associated with a funerary activity. It is possible that the mats depicted in many scenes and, in some cases, the mantles with crosses (e.g., the one covering the body of Wrinkle Face [figure 2.25], the skeletal individuals [figures 1.51, 2.31], the pair of sodomites [figure 2.32], and the bats with ceramics [figure 2.33]) could be part of the funerary paraphernalia and symbolism as well.

Figure 2.28 Bottle in the shape of a skeleton playing panpipes. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (VA-64760).

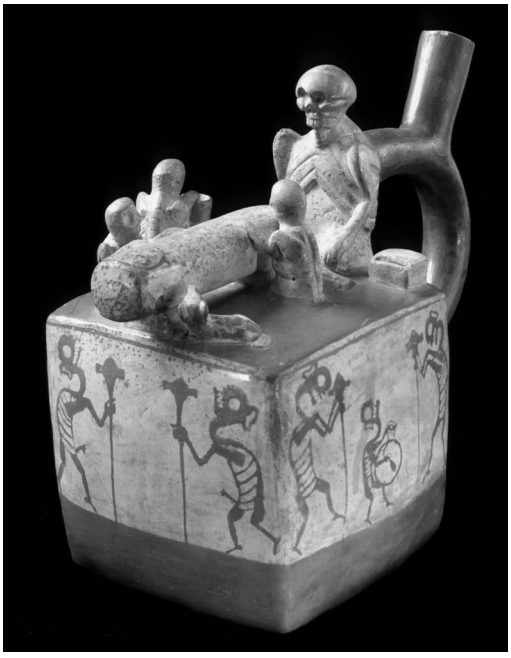

Figure 2.29 Bottle in the shape of skeletons attending a coffin. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (F-724). Photograph by C. B. Donnan.

Figure 2.30 Fineline painting of dancing skeletons (detail of figure 2.29). Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (F-724). Redrawn from Kutscher 1983, fig. 162.

Figure 2.31 Bottle in the shape of a skeleton-being holding his penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004324).

Two bottles illustrated in Chapter 1 depict subjects apparently carrying similar objects. The first one shows an individual carrying two mats (figure 1.55), one tied on his back and the other under his right arm. He carries the ceramic vessels used in Moche burials: a jar balanced on his head, a stirrup spout bottle, a flaring bowl, and a dipper. The second one shows a skeletal being holding a stick and a small mat under his right arm, a yucca tuber under the left arm, and on his back, a second mat, two stirrup spout bottles, and three jars (figure 1.57).

Such mats and funerary offerings have regularly been found in Moche burials. For example, a Moche III burial excavated on the summit of the Huaca del Sol contained two mats. The first one, measuring approximately 100 cm by 250 cm, had been placed on the ground of the burial. The body and the offerings were resting on it. Then a

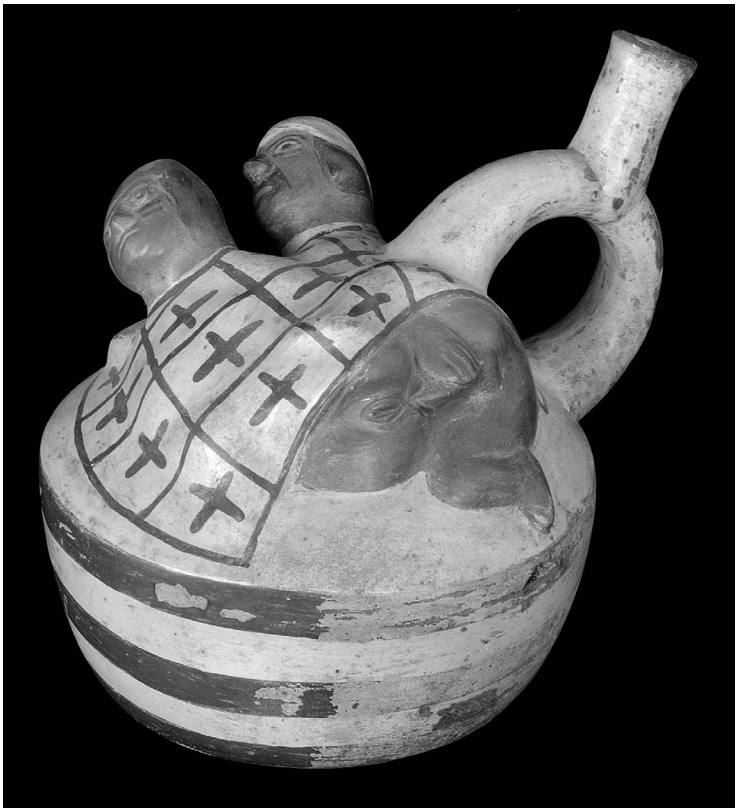

Figure 2.32 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004223).

Figure 2.33 Bottle in the shape of a bat-being holding ceramic vessels. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-003474).

smaller mat, that may have measured 60 cm by 150 cm, covered everything (Conklin and Versteylen 1978: 391).

In the following sections, I return to subjects related to sacrifice, death, funerary offerings, wave symbols, etc. which will indicate the homogeneity of the broad theme of sexual representations. There seems to be a certain relation between sexual scenes and funerary rituals already referenced through connections with mats. To a lesser extent, there exists a connection with the world of the sea, but this is a subject that warrants separate and more detailed demonstration.

Presence of Children in Scenes of Sodomy

On other bottles depicting sodomy, a child is lying by the couple or is being breastfed during anal copulation (figures 2.34, 2.35). Some scholars have seen in these representations a form of birth control that guarantees the newborn baby the milk necessary for survival (Dobkin de Rios 1984; Gebhard 1970; Kauffmann Doig 1978). Yet the whole theme of sexual representations and two further scenes of sodomy contradict this interpretation. This rather literal and mechanistic reading of the iconography does not relate to the profoundly symbolic nature of the iconography. Indeed, on the next two figures, the male sodomite on figures 2.34 and 2.35 has been replaced by actors in scenes that might be closely associated with funerary and sacrificial symbolism. The first actor is an individual with nose and lips cut out (figure 2.36). The second example clearly depicts a human lying with a skeletal being in a position suggesting an act of sodomy (figure 2.37). Although children are not depicted in these scenes,

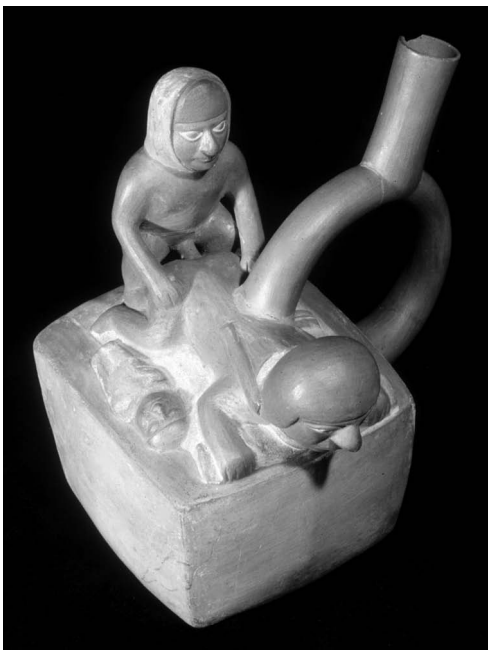

Figure 2.34 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with a child resting alongside the couple. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (VA-18537).

Figure 2.35 Bottle in the shape of human beings engaging in anal copulation, with the woman apparently breastfeeding a child. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (1-4338).

Figure 2.36 Bottle in the shape of a woman and a mutilated individual engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004266).

Figure 2.37 Bottle in the shape of a woman and a skeletonized individual engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004329).

these subjects clearly demonstrate that the birth-control hypothesis cannot explain this type of sexual activity. A more symbolic and complex interpretation must be sought.

In the next scene (figure 2.38), the male sodomite is now represented as a one-eyed man. The round depressions in his earlobes indicate that he would have worn tubular ear ornaments. These ear ornaments are consistently associated with ritual warriors, and their removal reflects a sign of capture and eventual sacrifice. Such ear ornaments can be seen on figures 1.52 and 1.54. The transitional nature of this subject is thus not only marked by his missing eye but also by his connection to his eventual sacrifice. Consequently, in the scenes of anal copulation, the transitional beings such as the skeletal individual, the mutilated face, the one-eyed person, and the eventual sacrificial victim are directly involved. Tubular earplugs and head cloths de-

picted in the portrait-head vessel tradition are also frequently worn by the male individuals involved in the sexual activities (figures 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.18, 2.40, 2.43, 2.47, 2.50, 2.54, 2.71, 2.73). Since an important part of this tradition has been linked to the practice of ritual warfare by Donnan (2004), it is conceivable that the male individuals involved in the sexual scenes, at least those that wear those types of ear ornaments and headdresses, may also have been directly associated with this activity. The close involvement of women with skeletal beings and with these specially marked individuals seems to reinforce the roles played by women, or the feminine gender, in relation to death, ritual warfare, sacrifice, and funerary rituals.

I would suggest that the feminine gender plays a key role in the rituals and beliefs associated with death and sacrifice because of the very nature of biological reproduction. In a fundamental way, by bringing children into the world, women bring at the same time death itself. In an earlier contribution, I suggested a link between the offering of children in the iconography and archaeology with the practice of human sacrifice (Bourget 2001b). Archaeologically, this association has been supported by the discovery of three children deposited in the sand directly underneath the Huaca de la Luna sacrifi-

Figure 2.38 Bottle in the shape of a woman and one-eyed man engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004257).

cial site, Plaza 3A (Bourget 2001b). I would thus suggest that the presence of children in certain scenes of sodomy are also part of the wider concept of fertility. Children, birth, and biological reproduction thus become an integral part of the social and symbolic discourse on death and sacrifice:

> Merging birth and death in the funerary ceremonies is what creates a picture of fertility which transcends the biology of mere dirty mortality and birth. Funerary rituals act out, therefore, not only the victory over death but the victory over the physical, biological nature of man as a whole. Birth and death and often sexuality are declared to be a low illusion, located in the world of women, and true life, fertility, is therefore elsewhere. This is why funerary rituals are an occasion for fertility. This is fertility dispensed by authority, whether it be that of the elders or of the priests, while in the meantime women are left holding the corpse. (Bloch 1982: 227)

Although I would argue that in the Moche case the roles of women during funerary and sacrificial rituals are rather more complex, they are also, in a certain way, depicted dealing with the corpse (figure 2.25). Merging death and birth not only brings a wider and more encompassing idea of fertility, it also creates a discursive continuity between life and death, a form of symbolic duality.

Sodomy and Individual with Fangs

The last scene of this section (figure 2.39), representing an individual with fangs copulating anally with a woman, appears both puzzling and difficult to explain in the context of this analysis. It is extremely rare. Only two of these representations have been encountered during the research: one is in the Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera (ML-004211), and the other was excavated at the site of Pacatnamú. The two examples, which are almost identical, represent an individual with supernatural attributes who is sodomizing a female. The action of individual with fangs seems to undermine the proposition that these acts of sodomy are not performed by individuals with supernatural attributes.

A number of reasons may explain this apparent discrepancy and the rarity of this subject. First of all, its rarity may be due to the vessel having been buried with a specific individual or in the context of a very peculiar funerary ritual. For example, it is notable that, the second vessel, the only one found in context, was excavated at the site of Pacatnamú by Ubbelohde-Doering in the 1930s. It was discovered in a boot-shaped chamber along with the remains of three adults, two disarticulated skeletons, a human skull, and twenty additional Late Moche vessels (Ubbelohde-Doering 1983). A detailed analysis of this funerary context has never been carried out, but this chamber may have been the resting place of relatively high-ranking individuals. An

Figure 2.39 Bottle in the shape of an individual with fangs and a woman engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004211).

adult individual with the feet missing was located directly above the chamber, indicating that he may have acted as a retainer for this elaborate tomb. Similar amputated individuals have been found above Tomb 1 and Tomb 2 at Sipán (Alva and Donnan 1993). A metallic rattle ending in a chisel was also found inside the chamber. This ritual tool is almost identical to the one located in Tomb 3 at Sipán. Along with the amputee lying above the burial, this tool is a further indication of a link between some of the individuals deposited in the chamber and the practice of sacrifice. Did one of the individuals found in the boot-shaped chamber carry an identity recognizable in the iconography? Did he personify a Wrinkle Face such as the one depicted in figure 2.39? Since a chisel very similar to the one encountered in Tomb 3 at Sipán was found, did this person assume a similar identity?

Additionally, these bottles and the funerary context from Pacatnamú date to the late Phase V period (ca. 700–800 AD), and a number of these bottles may have been imported from the southern region (Castillo 2003: 96). During this period, numerous changes took place in Moche society and its system of representation. Some of the most important Moche sites such as the Huacas de Moche and the El Brujo Complex gradually fell into disuse. The iconography was also transformed both stylistically and thematically. It is thus possible that the subject of sodomy, like many others, may have been substantially altered. With regard to the fineline painting tradition, Donnan

and McClelland suggested a dramatic shift in the subject matter and in the nature of the actors during the ultimate stylistic phase:

> Between Phase I–II and Phase III the percentage of paintings of human activity increased dramatically. It further increased in Phase IV, when there were nearly as many paintings of human activities as there were of supernatural activities. This trend suddenly reversed in Phase V, when nearly all of the fineline paintings once again depicted supernatural activities. (1999: 178)

Phase V is thus a period when beings with supernatural attributes dominate the iconography, and activities involving human beings almost completely disappeared. The main problem for the dominant hypothesis of this study, that these acts can be performed only by individuals closely associated with the afterworld, would be to encounter depictions of human beings engaging in vaginal copulation.

Masturbation

Although human and skeletal individuals are both represented in the masturbation scenes, depictions are dominated by the latter. Masturbation is the second most important sexual act in this peculiar iconographic corpus. Before analyzing these scenes, it is necessary to determine what can represent acts of masturbation in order to differentiate them from the scenes of fellatio. In the scenes of masturbation, a woman can be touching the penis of a man or skeletal being (figures 2.40, 2.41), or, more rarely, a man can be caressing a woman (figure 2.42). The same subjects can also be represented in solitary exercise (figures 2.31, 2.43, 2.44).

Figure 2.40 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a male individual. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004283).

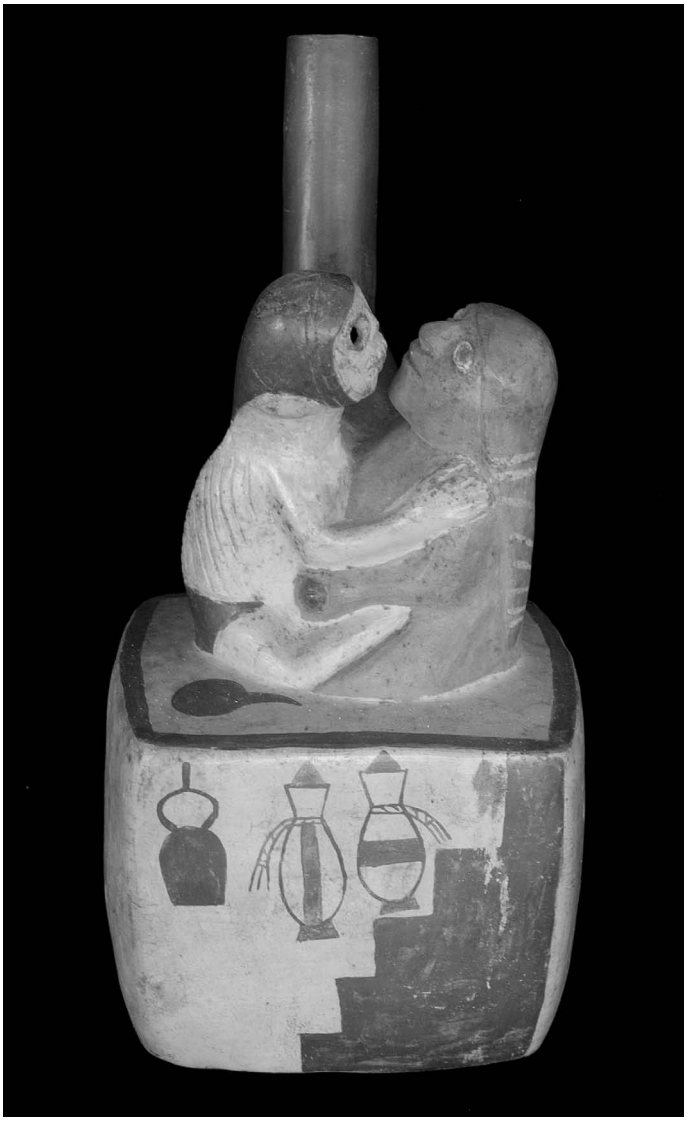

Figure 2.41 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a skeletal being. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004341)

On the first vase of this group of ceramics, a woman is masturbating a man (figure 2.40). As Larco previously noticed, the faces of the women often have what appears to be an impassive or even a choleric expression (1965). Sometimes, as in a scene of fellatio (figure 2.45), the woman even displays an expression of disgust and seems to try to withdraw herself from the sexual act. It is possible that these facial expressions are meant to deny the existence of any sexual pleasure and to emphasize the ritual dimension. The forcing of the woman to perform the sexual act is even more apparent in scenes of fellatio as we shall see further on.

Women are also represented masturbating skeletal beings, and in some scenes, this is associated with funerary offerings. Modeled on

Figure 2.42 Bottle in the shape of an individual masturbating a woman. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004330).

Figure 2.43 Bottle in the shape of a man holding his penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004319).

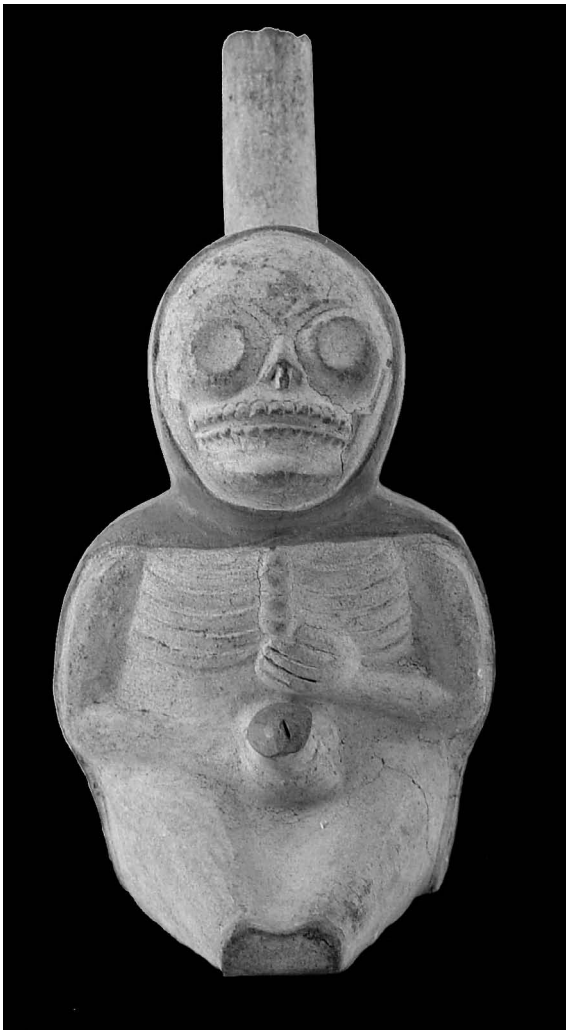

Figure 2.44 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal being holding his penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004321).

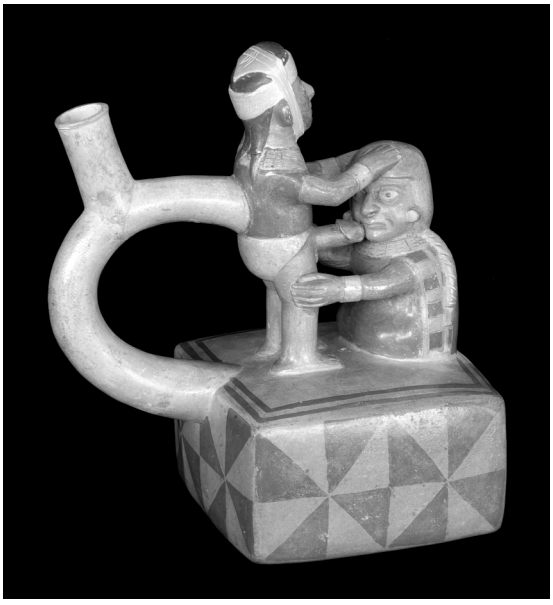

Figure 2.45 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004284).

top of a bottle (figure 2.41), a woman masturbates a skeleton wearing a scarf. Situated just alongside and underneath the couple are a dipper, a stirrup spout bottle, and two jars. An interlocking step motif is also painted on the side of the quadrangular bottle chamber. Skeletons masturbating alone often wear a peculiar cape that is sometimes covered with the cross symbol (figures 2.31, 2.44). In most cases, these capes are worn by women. Therefore, it is possible that in this context, the capes serve to indicate the feminine gender. In numerous examples, women are prominently associated with skeletal beings sometimes holding panpipes (figure 2.46) or with a transitional figure possessing monkeylike and skeletal attributes (figure 2.47). The symbolic elements seen earlier are also shown with these activities, such as funerary offerings, wave motif, cross motif, and step designs (figures 2.41, 2.45, 2.48).

The main difference between masturbation scenes and the scenes of anal copulation is not only the greater prominence of skeletal males but the number of women also shown in skeletal stages (figures 2.48, 2.49). On a complex bottle (figure 2.50), most of these elements relevant to gender and death are depicted. On the upper part,

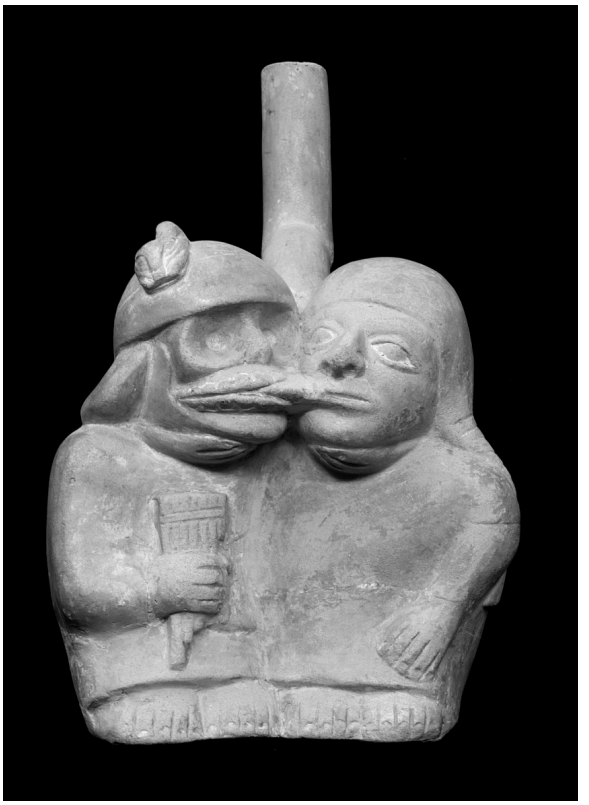

Figure 2.46 Bottle in the shape of a woman with a skeletal being holding panpipes. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (1-4370).

Figure 2.47 Bottle in the shape of a woman apparently caressing a skeletal being. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004306).

Figure 2.48 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal being caressing another skeletal being. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004316).

Figure 2.49 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal woman with a skeletal man. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004322).

a small sculpture portrays a skeletal being masturbating with his right hand and holding his lower jaw with the left. He seems to be looking down on the painted scene located on the chamber of the vessel. On the left of the scene, a skeletal being draped with a red cape is sitting on a sort of dais, and a stirrup spout bottle hovers just above his right hand. Just in front of him, what appears to be a woman (identified on the basis of the hairstyle) is holding panpipes. She and her companion have mutilated faces. The latter woman is embracing another skeletal being, who is holding his penis. This individual is completely naked, as is evident from his vertebral column, which is clearly visible. This scene seems to bring together the main elements forming part of a funerary ritual: the feminine gender, funerary offerings, music, and sexual activity.

In the subject of masturbation, symbolic duality appears to have been expressed in at least two different ways. In the first type, the couple is often painted in two contrasting colors. The woman is always rendered in red, and her skeletal partner, in white (figures 2.41, 2.47). Again, in the following examples, colors and state of existence are clearly expressed. In the first example (figure 2.51), a woman in

Figure 2.50 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal being masturbating and seated on top of the chamber of a bottle, side view. Museo de Arte, Lima (MA-410), Donation Memoria Prado.

red masturbates a skeletal being who is completely covered with a layer of white slip. In the second example (figure 2.52), the threesome of skeletal beings sitting on top of the bottle is painted in white. As a research hypothesis, I suggest that these contrasting colors—red and white—represent respectively the fundamental concepts of life and death. As such, they must have been systematically used in other media such as murals, to convey what may appear to be the most basic principle of Moche iconography and religion. This is probably why in scenes in which the woman is also depicted as a skeleton, her body is white (figures 2.48, 2.49, 2.50). Thus, the red capes worn by skeletal males would not only reinforce the association with the feminine gender but also with the dualist concept of life (red cape) and death (white corpse; figures 2.31, 2.41, 2.44).

On the right side of the next representation (figure 2.53), a woman painted in red masturbates a central figure playing the flute. The musician is a skeleton painted in white and wearing a short red cape and an elaborate headdress. On the left side stands an individual with a skeletal face rendered in white. Color symbolism even extends to the genital areas of skeletal people, where the extremities of their penises are consistently painted in red (figures 2.41, 2.44, 2.50–2.53). In this way, the source of vitality, as may be expected, is represented with the color of life.

Figure 2.51 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a skeletal being. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01701).

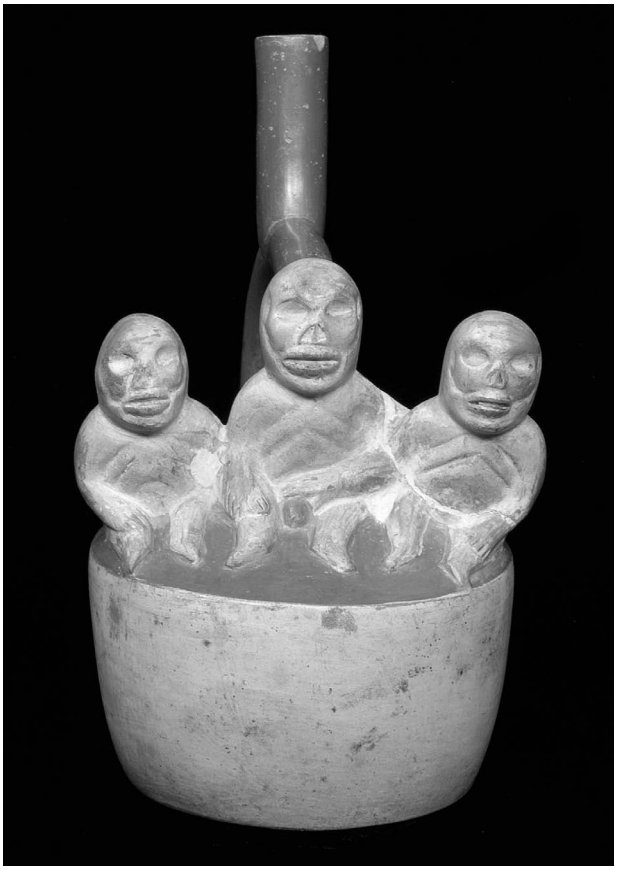

Figure 2.52 Bottle in the shape of a sexual scene with three skeletal beings. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01672).

Figure 2.53 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a skeletal being playing the flute. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004347).

The designs painted just underneath the couples recall this dualist aspect. For example, in a scene of fellatio, a series of eight Maltese crosses in contrasting colors have been applied all around the base of a quadrangular bottle (figure 2.45). In a second example, a red and white step motif is painted just underneath the couple (figure 2.41). In that example, the funerary offerings are displayed on the white background, and the skeletal being wears a red scarf. A third example is composed of the well-known wave symbol painted just underneath a skeletal pair, both painted in white (figure 2.48). A fourth example displays a scene of shared masturbation between a woman and a man (figure 2.54). The design is partly erased, but it depicts geometric stingrays against an alternating white and red background. In this case, contrasting colors may be more than a mere device to create a style with a rather limited bicolor palette. They could also serve to express more complex ideas such as life and death.

Additionally, in most scenes involving a woman and a skeletal male, the female is situated to the left of her partner. This could support the idea that left and right may have been part of the dualistic system. As mentioned earlier, this organizational principle is beautifully expressed in the burials at Sipán where the gold objects

Figure 2.54 Bottle in the shape of a woman and man stimulating each other. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (55.2676).

are placed on the right side of the main individual, and the silver ones are placed mostly on the left side (Alva and Donnan 1993: 223).

The musician of figure 2.53 displays clearly the system of color symbolism. He has a cadaveric white face with sunken eyes and plays the flute with no lips. He wears a red cape. A woman in red caresses his penis—the extremity of which is painted red. This fine example demonstrates the inherent complexity of Moche iconography and a system of what I would call embedded metaphors. This means that once the multiple meanings of certain basic elements such as the cape are understood, it is possible to decode much more thoroughly a given scene. For example, the monkeylike skeleton of figure 1.51 is not solely a panpipe player. Because he wears the red cape, he also carries the symbolism associated with the feminine gender, with life and death, and with the sexual activity of masturbation. In this case, a single vase would carry the meaning of at least three pairs of dualist metaphors: Life (red) and Death (white), Man and Woman (cape), and Human (man) and Animal (monkey). In short, a skeletal being masturbating but also wearing a cape carries exactly the same meaning as that of a woman masturbating a skeletal being (figures 2.44, 2.51). I will return to the concept of embedded metaphor later, as I suspect it represents one of the main techniques used to encapsulate numerous complex meanings and symbols in a single scene.

Fellatio

The scenes of fellatio are the third major category of sexual acts of the sample. As mentioned above, it would appear that the majority of the fellatio scenes represent the man seemingly forcing the woman into performing the act (figure 2.55). The standing posture of the male during this sexual act is fairly rare (figure 2.45). Two main positions are more or less evenly distributed. The first one is the couple resting on their sides, facing each other, with the man maintaining or pushing the head of his partner towards his erect penis (figure 2.56). The second position portrays the male individual sitting on a sort of rectangular seat with his partner seated on the ground just in front of him (figures 2.57, 2.58). This seated position on a raised dais or throne and the step design painted on these two bottles reinforce the ritual nature of the sexual act.

Before proceeding, it is worth mentioning that the wave design painted underneath the couple of figure 2.56 is identical to those surveyed earlier at Huaca de la Luna and in the scenes of anal copulation and masturbation (figures 2.14, 2.16, 2.48). The reason why this wave design is predominantly painted white on red is now easier to understand, as these colors may signify such an important concept as life and death. The consistency of placing the colors white on top and red underneath indicates that it cannot have escaped the artists that

Figure 2.55 Bottle in the shape of a man apparently forcing a woman to perform fellatio. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004282).

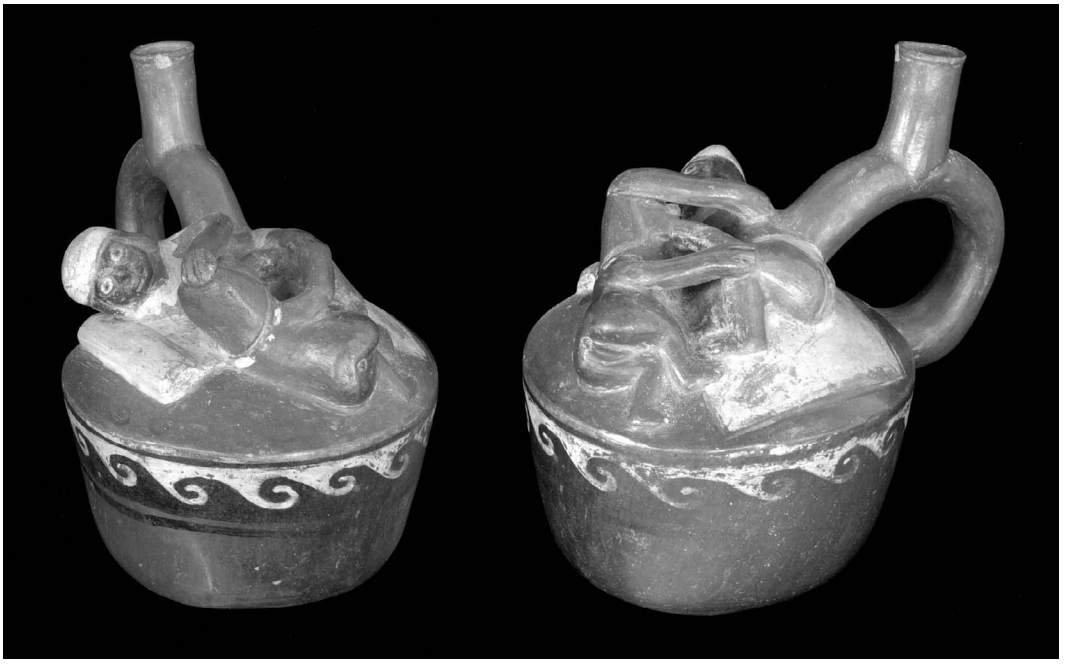

Figure 2.56 Bottle in the shape of a man forcing a woman to perform fellatio. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004286).

these colors carried an ontological value. For example, the step tunic usually worn by Wrinkle Face and certain male individuals is always rendered as white on red (figures 1.6, 1.25, 1.34, 2.59).

A scene of fellatio is beautifully portrayed on perhaps one of most intriguing vessels ever discovered at the Huacas de Moche site (figure 2.59). This item was found during the construction of the information center. Although the burial had been disturbed in the past, it is likely that most of the offerings were still in place. It contained the remains of an adult male in his sixties, llama bones, some copper objects, and 59 Phase IV ceramic vessels (Millones 1998). The vessel shows a male individual seated on a throne and wearing a step tunic. Incidentally, this tomb also contained two other similar examples and the portrait vessel of the one-eyed person (figure 1.53). The highly unusual feature of these ceramic sculptures is that the head of the woman performing the fellatio is a separate piece. It rests on a pivot and can thus be moved around the penis (figure 2.60). The impor-

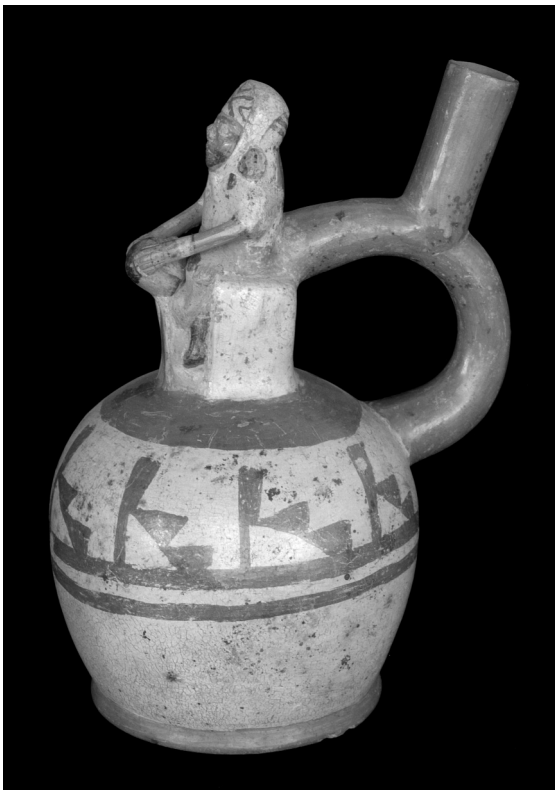

Figure 2.57 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man sitting on a throne. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004285).

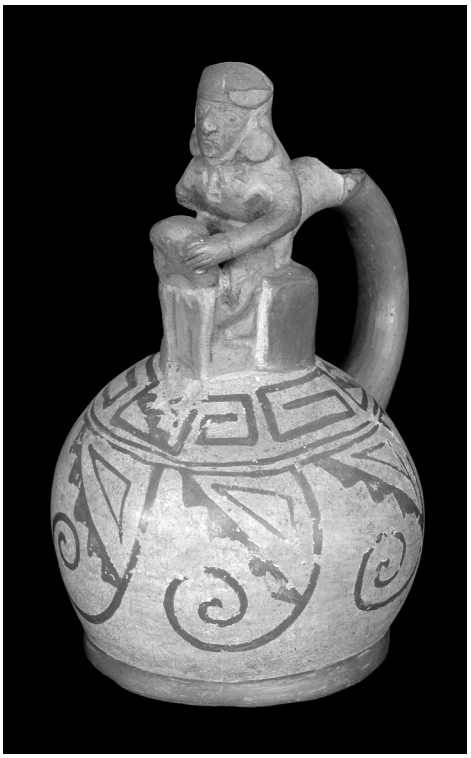

Figure 2.58 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man sitting on a throne. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004294).

Figure 2.59 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man sitting on a throne. Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PT-006).

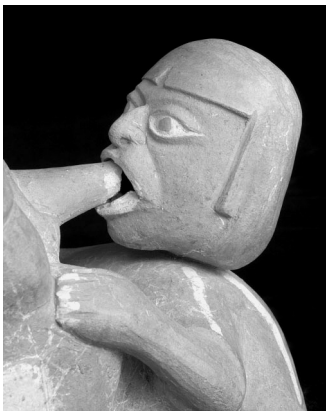

Figure 2.60 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man sitting on a throne (detail of the head of the woman, figure 2.59). Proyecto Arqueológico Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Trujillo (PT-006).

tance not solely of the fellatio but also of the woman performing the sexual act is displayed by a quite extraordinary dipper in the form of a woman's head with her mouth wide open (figure 2.61). The head and the hairstyle are very similar to the head of the woman on the preceding bottle (figure 2.61). It would seem that in this case the artist has chosen to emphasize this aspect of the fellatio.

While he receives the attention of the female, the man gives a slight smile and executes a fist gesture with his left hand (figure 2.59). This gesture is probably one of the most symbolically charged hand signs of Moche iconography. Life-sized renditions of this important hand signal have also been modeled in clay (figure 2.62). The hand gesture is consistently performed by ritual runners (figure

Figure 2.61 Head of a woman in the shape of a dipper. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (1-61).

2.63), by captives led by victorious warriors (figure 2.64), and by victims being sacrificed (figure 2.65). The fist gesture is also executed by individual A of the Presentation Theme. In figure 2.66, which is a detail of figure 1.3, he makes the gesture with his right hand while receiving the goblet from individual B with his left hand. The gesticular language of Moche iconography warrants a thorough investigation. In the present research, it reiterates once more the close relationship that may have existed between the sexual scenes and the wide-ranging concepts of ritual warfare and human sacrifice.

Figure 2.62 Ceramic vessel in the shape of a forearm making a fist gesture. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-00277).

Figure 2.63 Fineline painting of ritual runners. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 2.64 Fineline painting of a warrior and an eventual sacrificial victim. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 2.65 Fineline painting of sacrificial victims. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

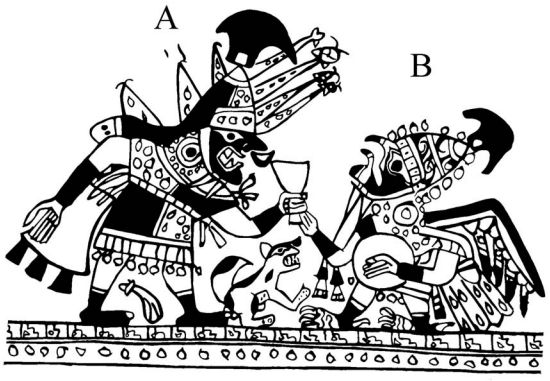

Figure 2.66 Fineline painting of the Presentation Theme (detail of figure 1.3), Staatliche Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

A complex bottle (figure 2.67) unites a number of important iconographic elements, especially the relations existing between funerary rituals, human sacrifice, and sexual activities. At the top of the chamber a male individual is sitting on a throne as he forces a woman to perform fellatio. In addition to the seat, an elaborate headdress and earspools mark the relatively high status of this individual. His smiling face is almost a cross between a human skull and the face of a monkey. Painted on the bottle, two rituals are performed on each side of a row of three jars. Each ritual takes place in a special house. The first one, situated on the left side of the bottle, involves two emaciated individuals exchanging a cup, while the other, to the right, represents a similarly emaciated couple (figure 2.67). Although the second pair is not fully engaged, the general position of the couple is consistent with an act of anal copulation. The dark color of the face, the circular orbits, and the missing lips indicates that the skin on the faces of these two individuals is missing. In this example, it appears that a relationship is being established between sexual scenes and an activity usually related to human sacrifice. The exchange of cups in the iconography is first and foremost associated with the taking and ritual use of human blood such as in the Presentation Theme (figure 2.66). In the present context, it cannot be demonstrated that human blood is being exchanged.

The excision of the facial skin is usually seen in rituals in which the victims are tied to a tree and left there, only to be eaten alive by black vultures (*Coragyps atratus*). In such cases, the sacrificed individuals are usually male (figure 2.68). On top of one bottle (figure 2.69), however, a male and a female are attached to a wooden structure. The

Figure 2.67 Bottle in the shape of a woman performing fellatio on a man sitting on a throne. Cassinelli Mazzei Collection, Trujillo (470).

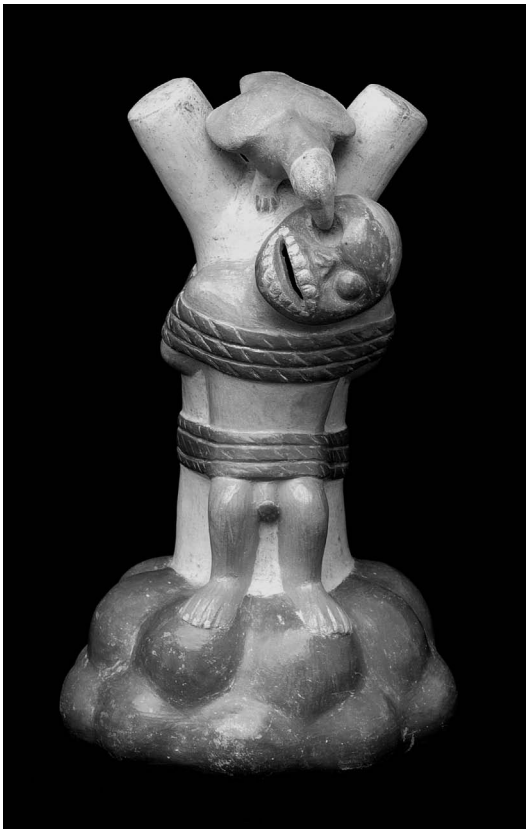

Figure 2.68 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal being tied to a tree and pecked by a black vulture. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-001478).

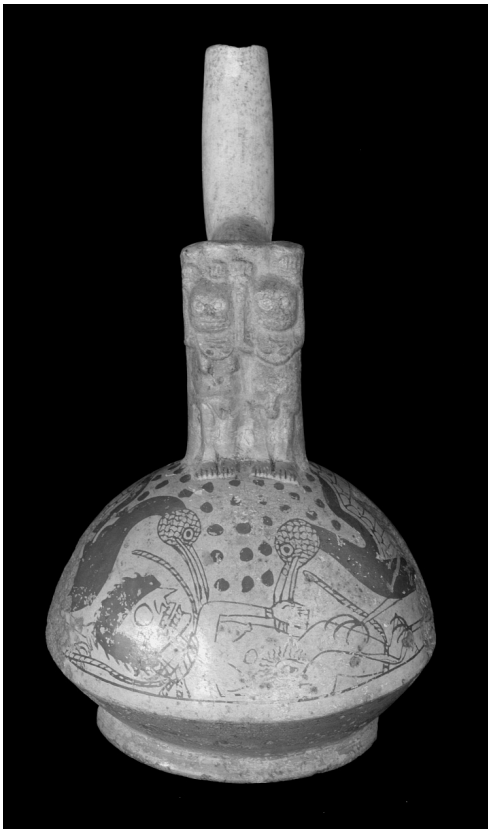

Figure 2.69 Bottle in the shape of a couple of facially mutilated individuals tied to a sacrificial rack. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004331).

skins of their faces, literally peeled from their heads, are resting on their chests like discarded masks. Painted on the vessel, just underneath the couple, two black vultures are feeding on a woman whose hands and feet are bound together. Her facial skin has also been cut away. Although it remains difficult for the moment to reconstruct the story linking these activities, there is most certainly a symbolic relationship between the emaciated couple with mutilated faces seemingly performing anal intercourse and this pair tied to the sacrificial structure.

Sitting on top of another bottle (figure 2.70), a skeletal woman is masturbating a skeletal male. The male is firmly holding her lower jaw. Both individuals are painted white, the color of death, and her cape is the color of life, red. Painted on each side of the bottle is a small house (figure 2.70), in many respects almost identical to those depicted on figure 2.67. Its presence on figure 2.70 thus suggests that a very precise symbolism is associated with these twin structures.

Figure 2.70 Bottle in the shape of a skeletal couple caressing and sitting on the chamber of a bottle, frontal view. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-0216).

One additional aspect concerning the bottle discussed above (figure 2.67) is that it may represent on the same piece two sexual activities, fellatio and anal copulation. The Moche themselves acknowledged a relation by creating this bottle. Likewise, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the connection between certain sexual activities and funerary contexts is marked not only by the involvement of skeletal fig-

ures in numerous scenes but by the intentional depiction of an anal copulation taking place alongside funerary activities.

Sexual Depictions on Libation Vases

What are termed libation vases represent the fourth subject in order of importance. The first group to be considered is composed of male individuals endowed with enormous phalluses. The figure can be a man standing up or sitting on a throne, or a skeletal being (figures 2.71–2.74). The liquid for the libation has to be poured in through the head of the subject; if one attempted to drink or pour from the head or the headdress, however, one would be sprinkled with the liquid coming through the holes around the rim of the vessel. Therefore, it is obligatory to pour or to drink from the hole in the phallus. These cases join the idea of the seminal fluid and the fellatio ritual.

Figure 2.71 Bottle in the shape of a man sitting on a throne and displaying an oversized penis. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-1724).

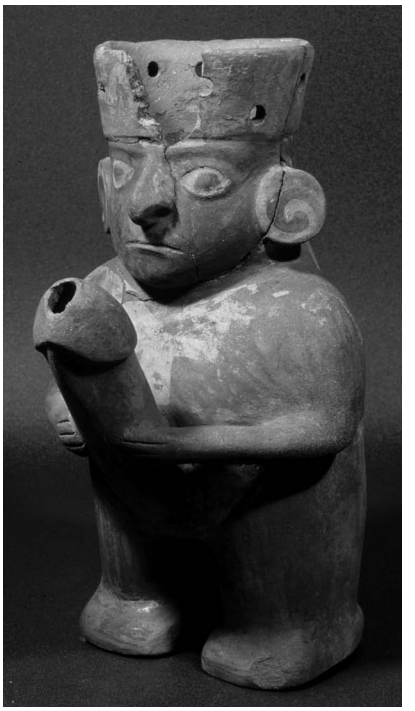

Figure 2.72 Bottle in the shape of a man standing up and displaying an oversized penis. Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (119358).

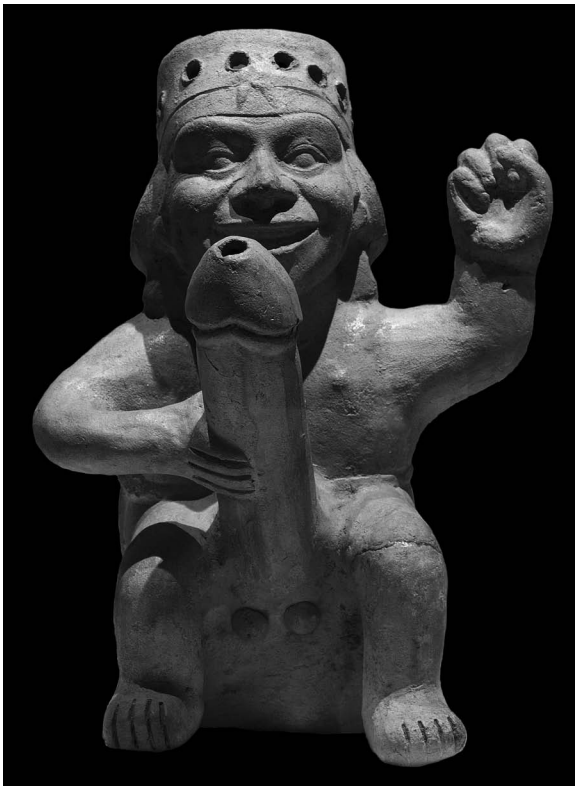

Figure 2.73 Bottle in the shape of a man sitting on a throne making a half-fist gesture and showing an oversized penis. Museo de la Nación, Lima.

Figure 2.74 Jar in the shape of a skeletal being with an oversized penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004199).

Interestingly, a slightly different form of the fist gesture is displayed by one of the subjects (figure 2.73). This hand gesture has been called the half-fist gesture by Donnan (1978: 151): "The half fist is similar to a full fist, except that the thumb remains erect; the four fingers are half clenched, so that the fingernails are still visible; and, the knuckle of the middle finger projects above the remaining three fingers and thumb" (figure 2.75). This gesture is also related to a number of contexts. In some cases, the hand can even take the shape of a mountain (figure 2.76): "Like the mountain scenes, the half fist emphasizes a central point with symmetrically arranged protrusions to each side" (Donnan 1978: 154). This hand signal is often performed by the principal individual attending the sacrificial ritual on the mountain (figure 2.77). It is thus intimately associated with the mountain but also with the sacrifice taking place upon it. Finally, with the next mountain scene, the symbolic circle is in essence completed, as the central peak literally takes the form of an erect penis (figure 2.78). Another case of embedded metaphors seems to occur where this hand signal refers at the same time to ritual capture, mountain sacrifice, and penile erection: "A ritual sign may refer to all of its significata at once, and it does not derive its meanings from each of them separately so much as it derives its meaning from the *union* of these several significata" (Rappaport 1979: 204). In short, the half-fist relates to fertility in its most profound and multitudinous aspects.

Figure 2.75 Ceramic vessel in the shape of a forearm. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

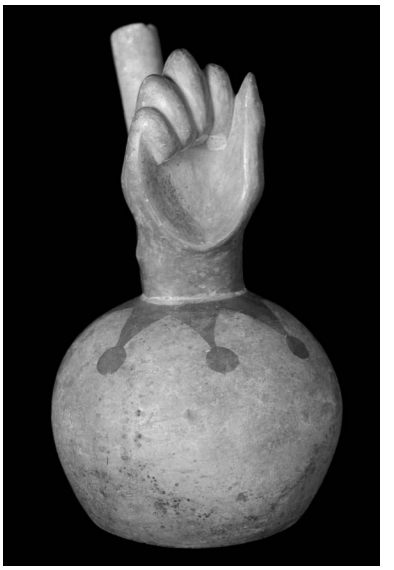

Figure 2.76 Modeled fist on top of a bottle. Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Köln. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 2.77 Five mountain peaks with their base in the shape of a human mandible. Fundación Museo Amano, Lima.

Figure 2.78 Mountain with the central peak in the shape of a penis. The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction, Inc. (A 862K E003.1).

Skeletal Beings and Erections

Fellatio scenes and male libation vessels must be cognitively related. The rather healthy erection exhibited by the skeletal being in figure 2.74 is also displayed by numerous skeletons in the iconography, as if to indicate that they maintained a certain vitality after their death (figures 2.23, 2.30). Certain physiological reasons may explain these beliefs and the presence of erect penises on skeletal beings.

The historian Paul Barber mentions that the vampires of European folklore, especially those from Yugoslavia, were known to be obsessed by sex. The recently deceased returning as vampires could even exhaust their widows with their attentions. Indeed, when the tomb of a suspected vampire was reopened, among the telltale signs of vampirism, such as blood on the lips, new fingernails, and growth of hair and beard, the most compelling evidence was a postmortem erection. Barber contends that an erection can really happen: "Such 'erections,' according to coroners I have spoken to, actually result from the bloating, with decomposition, of the sexual organs. They may have contributed to the common belief that . . . the dead are generally regarded as particularly sensual beings" (1988: 9).

Given the importance the Moche attributed to funerary rituals and sacrificial practices, there remains little doubt that they, like the Europeans, would have had the opportunity to observe such erec-

tions. Two supplementary indicators seem to corroborate that the Moche elaborated upon part of their concept of life after death by observing corpses in diverse stages of putrefaction. The fineline painting situated just beneath skeletons attending a coffin in figure 2.30 depicts eight skeletal beings dancing with war clubs and playing drums. Starting from the left of the illustration, the tips (extremities) of the penises of the first, third, fourth, and fifth subjects holding the clubs are exfoliated. This may be a device on the part of the painter to attempt to represent flesh in an advanced stage of decomposition. The same unusual penile feature is also visible at the end of the penis of a skeletal being holding a stick with copper bells attached to it, standing to the left of the fly (figure 2.23).

For a society apparently so interested in the continuation of life after death, an indubitable sign such as a postmortem erection could have been perceived as the definitive proof that life goes on after the passage of the Grim Reaper. Thus, these postmortem erections would represent a tangible demonstration of the fertility provided perhaps by the beings with supernatural attributes, even after death. In a pragmatic sense, to recognize the existence of fertility after death (or vampirism in the more modern European example) is, in essence, to acknowledge the existence of the afterlife. Although modern science now defines the threshold between life and death, this has not always been the case. Until recent times, when life stops and when death begins has usually been a culturally determined affair, not a clinical one:

> It must be stressed that, our modern preconceptions to the contrary, bodies continue to act long after death. We distinguish between the two types of activity: that which we bring about by our will (in life) and that which is caused by other entities, such as microorganisms (in death). Because we regard only the former as "our" activity, we view the body as inert after death. Its movements, changes in dimension or the like, are not "real" for us, since we do not will them. For the most part, however, our ancestors made no such distinction. To them, if the body continued to change in color, move, bleed, and so on (as it in fact does), then it continued to live. Our view of death has made it difficult for us to understand earlier views, which are often quite pragmatic. (Barber 1988: 91)

At the ritual level, the Moche may have entertained a more complex relationship with the human body in its skeletal form. In a deposit of human remains, situated just alongside the Huaca de la Luna sacrificial site, Peruvian archaeologists discovered the remains of a number of articulated skeletons (Tufinio 2001, 2002). The flesh of some of these bodies had been carefully removed, and numerous cut marks were visible on the bones: "The location of the cuts corresponds in most cases to areas of muscle attachment—often in the midshaft region of long bones, for example—implying that the objective was not simply to disarticulate [such as in Plaza 3A], but to *deflesh* the skele-

tons" (Verano 2001: 121). As a hypothesis for further investigation, I suggest that what the Moche wanted to achieve was the creation of articulated skeletons to be used during specific rituals performed in the Huaca de la Luna main platform. The partially defleshed dancing skeletons shown earlier may in fact have really existed (figures 2.23, 2.30). If we continue in this speculative vein slightly further, it can be imagined that these skillfully prepared corpses may have been mounted onto wooden poles to be manipulated like puppets during certain rituals. Once the ritual was completed, or when these skeletons were no longer needed, they would have been buried in Plaza 3C, wedged in between the sacrificial site, Plaza 3A, and the Huaca main platform, Platform I.

In the final three ceramic examples, only the sexual organs remain (figures 2.79–2.81). Nevertheless, the holes pierced around the rim of the chamber of the jar in figure 2.79 indicate that these are probably libation vessels that all carry the same meaning as those showing a complete individual.

The feminine gender is also represented in the form of libation vessels. The first two examples show women with clearly oversized genitalia (figures 2.82, 2.83). These vases must be seen as resting on their back, not as standing upright. It is thus likely that these vessels could have served to contain certain liquids. Two other vases of the same type are interesting because the females, adopting the same position, rest at the bottom of a bowl. Their vaginas lead to a double cavity inside the chamber of the vessel (figures 2.84, 2.85). If one

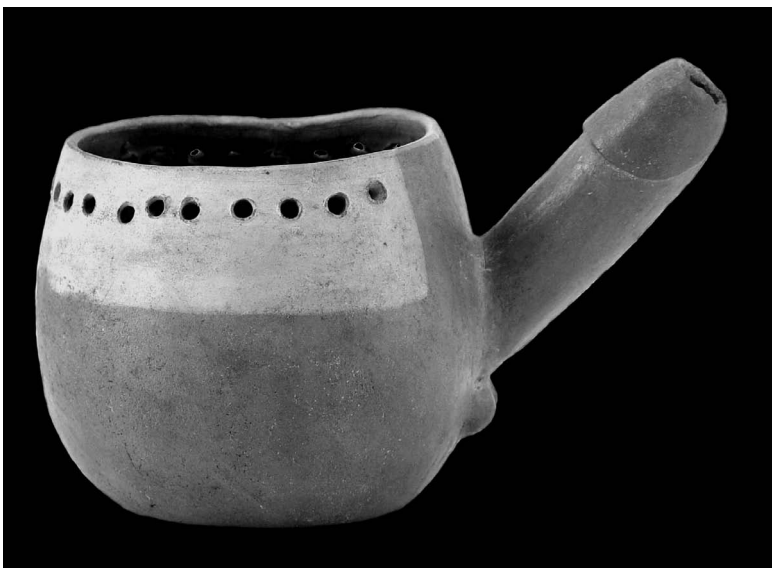

Figure 2.79 Bowl in the form of an erect penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004357).

Figure 2.80 Bottle in the shape of a penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004204).

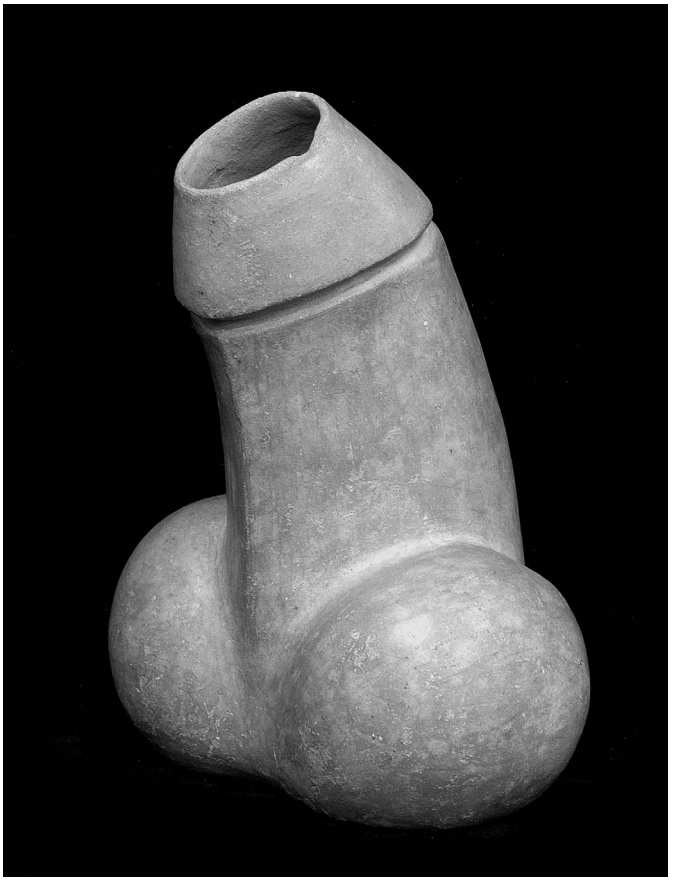

Figure 2.81 Bottle in the form of an erect penis. Museo del Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, Lima (ACE-2986).

pours liquid into the vessel, it disappears completely inside the body of the woman through the vagina. Consequently, if one attempts to drink or pour from this type of vessel, the liquid will reappear from the body of the woman through the vagina. The relationship between these libation vessels and the preceding ones that show oversized male genitalia is further reinforced by the fist gesture the woman inside the bowl in figure 2.84 is making with both hands. This, of course, is similar to the hand signal made by the male seen in figure 2.59. It would thus be possible that the two types of depictions might be related in a form of duality. I shall return to this aspect later, but it would appear that the women with oversized genitalia are the same type of women copulating with Wrinkle Face (figures 2.130, 2.134).

Women displaying their genitalia are also depicted on dippers. On the first example (figure 2.86), the vagina is painted just below the aperture of the dipper, whereas, in the second one, the opening of the dipper itself takes the form of the vagina (figure 2.87). The exact function of dippers in Moche culture has never been clearly demonstrated. During the research I carried out at Huancaco, a site in the Virú valley dating to the Early Intermediate period (500–650 AD), dippers were consistently found associated with jars and gourd

Figure 2.82 Vessel in the shape of a woman with an oversized vagina. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004426).

Figure 2.83 Vessel in the shape of a woman with an oversized vagina. Field Museum, Chicago (100120).

Figure 2.84 Bowl in the form of a woman resting on her back. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004355).

Figure 2.85 Bowl in the form of a woman resting on her back. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01685).

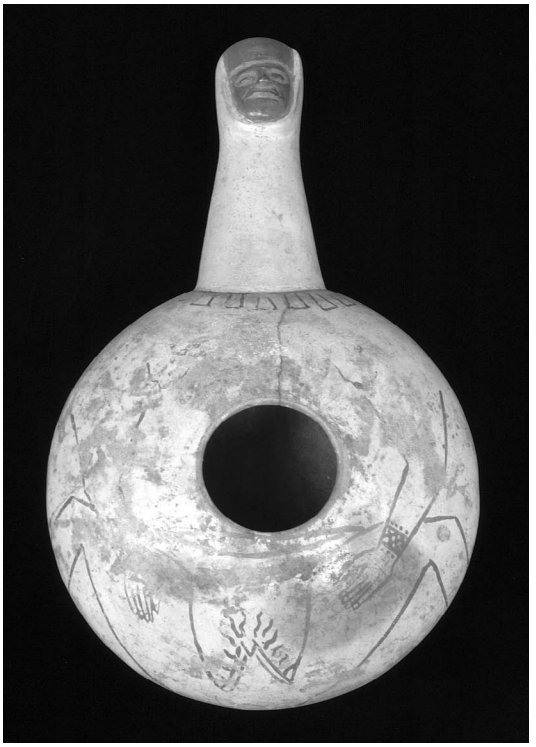

Figure 2.86 Dipper with a fineline painting depicting a woman lying on her back. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004219).

Figure 2.87 Dipper with a representation of a woman on her back. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004200).

Figure 2.88 Jar in the form of an anal copulation between a man and a woman. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004251).

bowls. They laid on a number of floors of the monumental structure that was identified as a possible palace. I suggested that these dippers may have been used to stir corn beer and pour it into gourd bowls during feasting activities (Bourget 2003). Although we cannot demonstrate the exact liquid used in the vessels with complete confidence, I suggest that corn beer is a strong candidate.

The libation vases are not the only type of vessels that represent sexual activity and could have contained liquids. Other ceramics showing acts of anal copulation (figure 2.88) or fellatio (figure 2.59) could well have been used also as containers. Did someone drink from these vases? It is likely. What was the liquid? Nobody knows for the moment, but tests could be carried out especially to attempt to isolate some residue such as corn protein. This would indicate that these vessels may have been used, as I have suggested, to contain corn beer.

Anthropomorphic Genitals

Anthropomorphized male genitals emphasize the symbolic relations that seem to exist between the head and the penis. In some cases, the head of the penis literally takes the form of the human head (figures 2.89, 2.90). In the first example, the testicles are modeled directly onto the chamber, and what appears to be a vagina with pubic hair has been painted all around the penis (figure 2.89). In both examples, these penis-heads possess tubular ear ornaments and put a hand to their nose or to their face. The clue for understanding this gesture may rest with the representations of ritual warfare. In numerous scenes of this activity, the captured warriors are portrayed with nosebleeds (figures 1.2, 2.91). In these instances, the victims systematically bring their hands close to their noses. This ritual bleeding would have been part of the ritual sequence (Donnan 2004: 114). As all the representations of penises in the iconography, and also those found on the clay statuettes of Plaza 3A, show evidence of circumcision (figures 1.43, 2.80), it might be not too farfetched to suggest that the shedding of blood during a circumcision ritual might have been perceived as a sacrificial act. This hypothesis is further reinforced by these anthropomorphized penises wearing the tubular ear ornaments of warriors (figures 2.89, 2.90). These ear ornaments are specific to a special group of male individuals, and their removal from a defeated warrior is an additional sign of capture and eventual sacrifice.

Two other vases represent the same theme, but this time the penis is completely anthropomorphized. In the first example, the sexual organ takes the form of a man with a wrinkled face in a kneeling position (figure 2.92). The knees have been formed in the shape of the testicles. The next example is almost identical to the preceding one, but this time the wrinkled man is in a sitting position, and the testicles are modeled on his lower back, just underneath the stirrup spout (figure 2.93). Thus, the frontal part depicts an old man with both

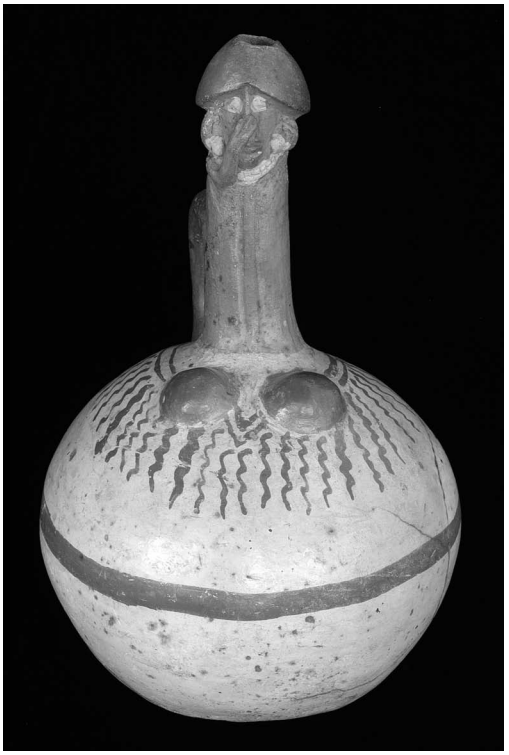

Figure 2.89 Bottle with the spout in the form of an anthropormorphized penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004356).

Figure 2.90 Bottle in the shape of an anthropormorphized penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004354).

Figure 2.91 Fineline painting of a captured warrior. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

hands clasped, whereas the dorsal part represents a penis. It would therefore bear a close relationship to the libation vases associated with the masculine gender. Indeed, in the examples discussed above (figures 2.71–2.74), the liquid has to be poured into the head first. In this example, the penis becomes anthropomorphized, or the head of the person takes the shape of the penis itself. The wrinkled face and the hands in a clasped position reiterate the ritual importance of the representations. The last vessel in this series represents a number of amalgamated concepts, as it depicts a libation vase in the form of an anthropomorphized penis with a wrinkled face (figure 2.94). The presence of tubular ear ornaments and the general posture of the being in the form of a penis indicate some sort of connection with the activity of ritual warfare and sacrifice.

On a vessel pertinent to the same theme (figure 2.95), the erect phallus is placed on top of an owl's head. In this example, the play on metaphors brings together an animal head and the human penis. The shape of the beak and the treatment of the feathers around the eyes indicate that the bird represented is a burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). This species is more diurnal than others and occupies burrows

Figure 2.92 Bottle in the shape of an anthropormorphized penis. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01740).

Figure 2.93 Bottle in the shape of an anthropormorphized penis. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004313).

Figure 2.94 Bottle in the shape of an anthropormorphized penis. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01737).

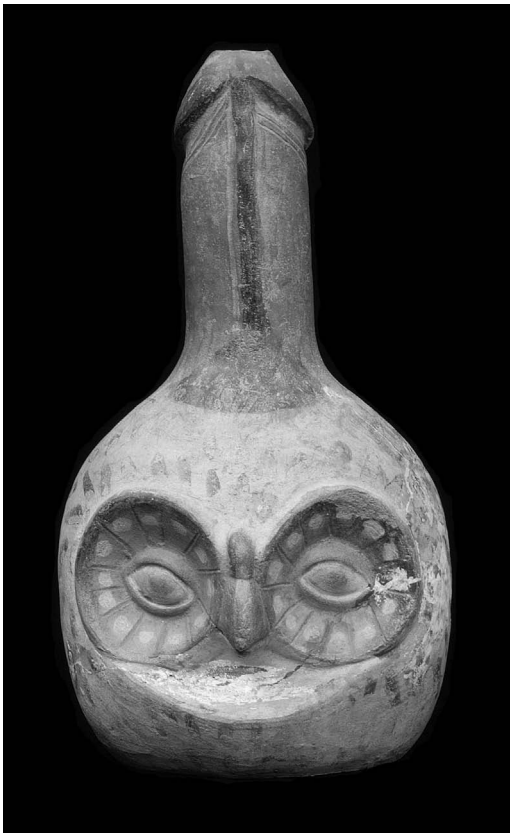

Figure 2.95 Spout in the shape of an erect penis placed on the head of an owl. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01736).

dug into the sand. The owl is an important animal by being directly linked to the bird priest of the Presentation Theme (figures 1.3, 1.4). In the iconography, owls are closely associated with funerary symbolism and human sacrifice by decapitation (Bourget 1996). Along with the boa, the fox, and the bat, the owl is one of the most important animals in the iconography. It shares with the animals just mentioned a number of similar behaviors. All are nocturnal and hide from daylight in caves, crevices, or burrows; three of them, the fox, the boa, and the owl, prey upon rodents.

Hence, a clear relationship exists between the head and the erect penis. If I am right, a certain vitality is associated with these two parts of the anatomy. Indeed, the rope around the neck of this prisoner becomes a serpent biting his penis (figure 1.37). Although it is still difficult to document for the moment, the Moche seem to have perceived a certain connection between strangulation and erection. An extraordinary mural excavated at the Moche site of Huaca Cao Viejo depicts a group of nude males walking in a single file (figure 2.96). They all have ropes around their necks, and they also seem to display penile erections (figures 2.97). It is of course very difficult to discern clearly in scenes of naked prisoners being paraded with a rope

Figure 2.96 Mural representing a procession of captured warriors. Huaca Cao Viejo, Chicama Valley.

Figure 2.97 (*left*) Detail of a mural representing a procession of captured warriors (detail of figure 2.96). Huaca Cao Viejo, Chicama Valley.

around their necks if the artists intended to represent an erection or if this was just a way of displaying the sexual organs (figure 2.91).

Women and Blood

The numerous scenes of decapitation in the iconography and the no less numerous decapitated individuals found in the sacrificial site at Huaca de la Luna and other Moche sites such as Dos Cabezas (Cordy-Collins 2001) seem to imply that the Moche gave great symbolic importance to the human head and the spurting blood. In this regard, it

proves interesting to compare two vases. In the first vase (figure 2.98), the stirrup spout of the bottle literally emerges from the vagina and from the heart region of the woman. On the second, the stirrup spout branches out from the mouth and the foramen magnum of the decapitated head (figure 2.99). These two vases thus convey a complex series of symbolic meanings.

Figure 2.98 Stirrup spout bottle in the shape of a naked woman resting on her back. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004240).

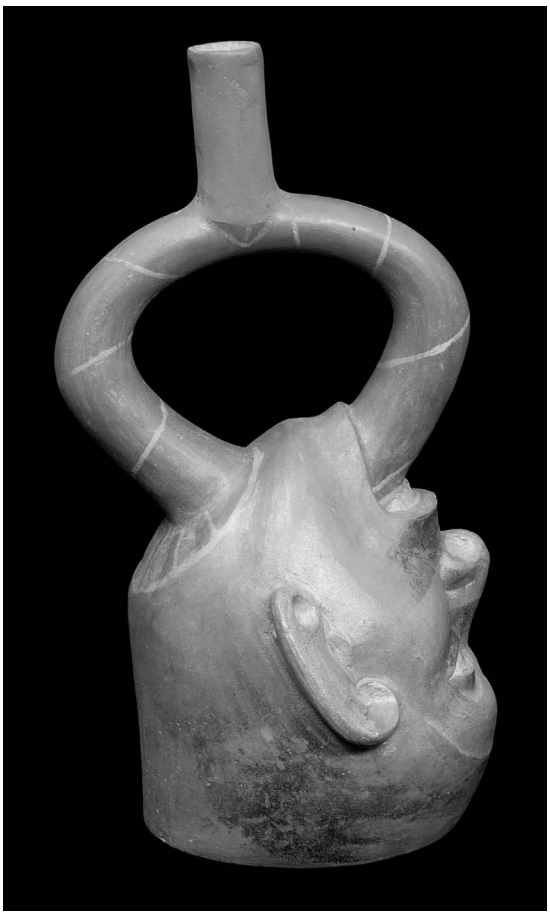

Figure 2.99 Stirrup spout bottle in the shape of a severed head. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-00033).

The association between these two vases is not too farfetched if we look at the ritual activities and biological functions that permit the joining in an almost sophisticated symbiotic form of women with sacrificial victims. In many scenes, women seem to be placed at a key moment during the preparation of the sacrificial victims, the taking of their blood, and the exchange of blood-filled goblets (figure 1.3). The relationship that exists between these two groups could be based on a certain form of ritual reciprocity between the blood of the women (the menstrual blood) and the blood of the sacrificial victims. For example, it is worth noting that one of the anthropomorphized penises is located in the center of a vagina (figure 2.89). Thus if it is correct to suggest that it depicts a warrior with a nosebleed, the blood of the sacrificial-victim-to-be could also be directly associated with the vagina itself. This concept comprises part of another complex theme that warrants further exploration in another contribution.

Inverted Fertilities

It has become apparent that, apart from a few exceptions, a very specific set of actors are involved in these actions. The vast majority of the activities explored so far, along with the depictions of oversized genitals, occur with human beings, many of them possibly involved with ritual warfare; mutilated individuals; eventual sacrificial victims; skeletal beings; and monkeylike figures. An individual with fangs who is sodomizing a woman (figure 2.39) presents the only divergent example, and, as noted above, this object may be the result of a sort of symbolic slippage that occurred during Phase V. Additionally, it may have been associated with the social identity of the main individual deposited in this elaborate funerary chamber. During this final period, supernatural figures dominated fineline paintings, and numerous activities usually involving human beings stopped being produced (Donnan and McClelland 1999: 178).

Vaginal Copulation

In the second part of this chapter, I will review the scenes of vaginal copulation. I have included not only the scenes involving human beings but those depicting animals. It will become apparent that they form part of the larger concept of fertility and the afterlife.

Copulation between Animals

The copulation of certain animal species seems to be situated, symbolically perhaps, between the scenes of inverted fertility just described and those depicting vaginal copulation. The key players in most scenes of inverted fertility are women. Yet in the scenes involving only animals, women are notable by their absence. The following

two examples may help to bridge the apparent gap between these two types of scenes: those involving solely human beings or solely animals.

The first example is the only one that I am aware of that represents a woman associated with an animal in a scene that does not depict vaginal copulation (figure 2.100). Due to lack of anatomical detail, it is impossible to ascertain clearly what type of relationship exists between the woman and this bird, which is apparently a marine bird.[9] Nevertheless, the position is absolutely consistent with scenes of masturbation usually involving women with emaciated individuals or with a simian face (figure 2.47).

The second example, a stirrup spout bottle, is perhaps the most extraordinary depiction of an anal copulation (figure 2.101). The male sodomite adopts the usual position, but the posture and the body of the female are that of an animal with the anterior paws clearly delineated. She is looking back at her partner, and her free-flowing hair is draped over her left shoulder. This subject, half-female and half-animal, is in some respects similar to the subjects that morph together monkey features with living human or skeletal features. These two scenes seem to demonstrate that the scenes of copulation involving only animals can be grouped with the global theme of sexual scenes explored so far. In this section, I will review three main animal subjects: the toad-feline, the rodent, and the llama.

Figure 2.100 Bottle in the shape of a woman with a bird. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004368).

Figure 2.101 Bottle in the shape of a man and woman engaging in anal copulation. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004217).

Toad-Feline

Toad-felines and batrachians do not play an elaborate role in the iconography. They are usually represented in a natural form, sometimes being attacked by a boa (*Boa constrictor ortonii;* figure 2.102). In other examples, the animal is transformed by the addition of mammal ears belonging to the feline family (figure 2.103). These ears could symbolize extensions of the parotid glands of a species of toad of the *Bufo* genus. In still other examples, the glands are represented by spirals placed on each side of the head (figure 2.104). Among the fifty-plus species that belong to the genus *Bufo* in South America, the *Bufo spinulosus* is frequently found in *lomas* (a special type of vegetation created in a humid environment) and near the rivers of the Peruvian north coast. Another species, the *Bufo marinus,* can also be found in coastal swamps. The morphological similarities of both species are such that it is virtually impossible to determine which animal is represented in the iconography (Lavallée 1970: 52).

These species of toads are active at night or during torrential rains. Throughout the dry season, they adopt a lethargic state and bury themselves in the ground to a depth of up to 50 centimeters. The arrival of the humid season triggers their period of reproduction. They will reappear on the surface when the humidity reaches their underground hiding place. Their sexual instinct is so strong that numerous males will frequently try to fertilize the eggs of a single female at the same time. They may even attempt to mate with male in-

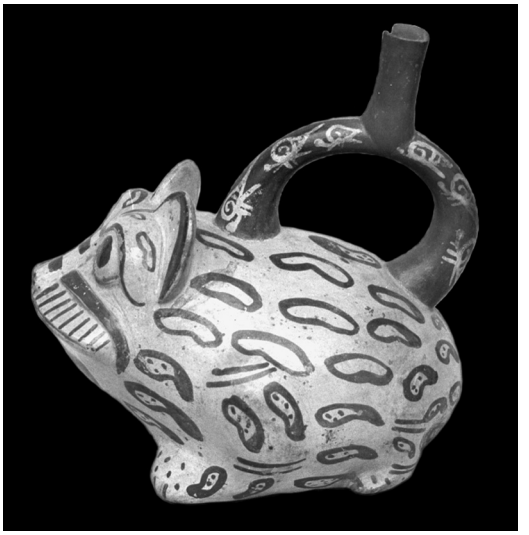

Figure 2.102 (*above*) Bottle in the shape of a toad captured by a boa. Museum of Natural History, New York (41.2/7848).

Figure 2.103 (*top right*) Bottle in the shape of a toad with lima beans painted on its body. Guillermo Ganoza Vargas Collection, Trujillo.

Figure 2.104 (*bottom right*) Bottle in the shape of a toad with agricultural plants on its body. Guillermo Ganoza Vargas Collection, Trujillo.

dividuals of the same species or with objects vaguely resembling a toad (Lutz 1971: 438–446). The boa is also a cyclical animal, which hibernates during the dry season and reappears in the coastal landscape at the onset of the humid season. This shared cycle may help to explain the depiction of a boa capturing a toad, which must have been a regular action in nature (figure 2.102).

Incidentally, both the toad and the boa are rarely represented in their natural form. As already noted, the toads usually sport feline ears, whereas the snakes are consistently depicted with fox ears (figure 1.8). The belt of Wrinkle Face is always formed with this composite animal (figure 1.6). The body of the toad-feline is often covered

with plants, usually maize stalks on the front legs, chili (*Capsicum* sp.) and yucca plant (*Manihot esculanta*) on its back (figures 2.104, 2.105). In some other cases, the toad-feline may also be covered with lima beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*) or land snails (*Scutalus* sp.; figure 2.103). These toads, laden with vegetal elements and land snails, may indicate a metaphorical association between vegetal growth, humidity, and the reproduction of batrachians (figure 2.106). The next depiction of copulating toads links together ideas regarding the inside of the earth and duality by representing the toads in the shape of tubers

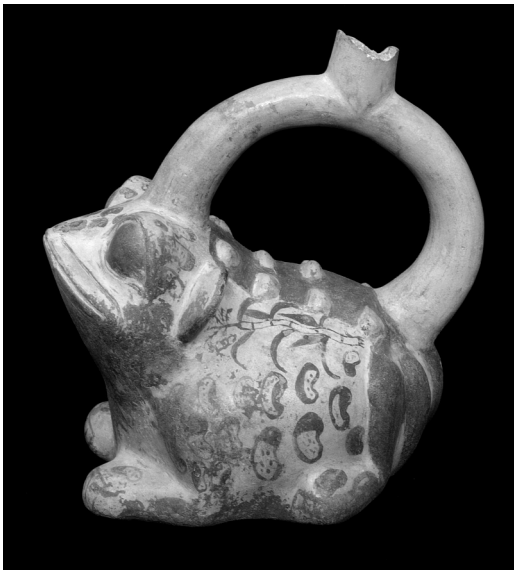

Figure 2.105 Bottle in the shape of a toad with agricultural plants on its body. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01561).

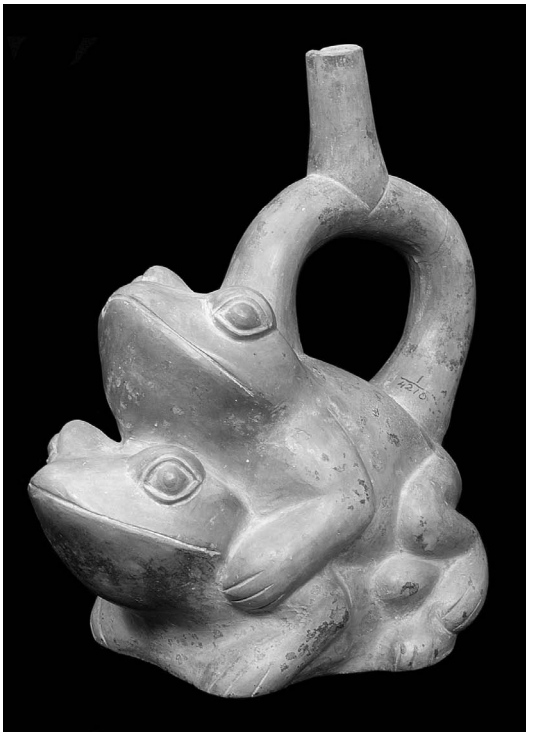

Figure 2.106 Bottle in the shape of copulating toads. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01758).

Figure 2.107 Bottle in the shape of copulating toads. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01751).

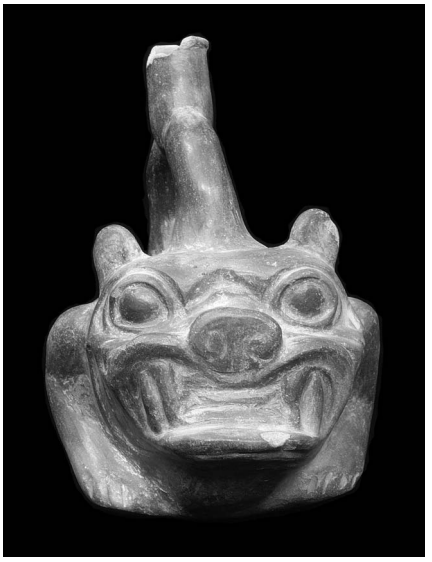

Figure 2.108 Bottle in the shape of a toad with fangs in its mouth. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01606).

(figure 2.107). The colors of the toads are consistent with the rule of white on red, with the toad on top painted in white, and its partner underneath covered by a red slip. In still other examples, the connection of the toad with the animals and beings of the afterworld is marked by fangs in their mouths (figure 2.108).

Thus, when the sun-dried earth starts to receive the first rains of the humid season, the toads emerge from their underground burrows, and with them come humidity and agricultural fertility. The abundance of the developing crops can be evaluated by the reproductive success of the toads since both are intimately related to the availability of water. In a Quechua community from the region of Anta, Roca noted, the behavior of toads is scrutinized to forecast the quality of the crops to come. If their croaks are numerous and sustained during the months of September and October, then the rains will be abundant and the harvest excellent (1966: 58–59). The next sculptural vessel may well be associated with a certain form of agricultural divination (figure 2.109). On top of this quadrangular bottle a large rodent sits up on its hind legs and covers its eyes with its front paws. In front of the rodent is a toad that may be associated with humidity and symbolize agricultural fertility. Is this a scene depicting a rodent—an agricultural pest *par excellence*—in the process of predicting the quality of the harvest? Would the imposing size of the rodent be an indication of the quality of the crops? Agricultural productivity and rodents are inextricably linked together. Favorable conditions facilitating agriculture will also trigger rodent proliferation by providing them with an ample supply of food. There is an almost dialec-

Figure 2.109 Bottle in the shape of a rodent sitting in front of a toad. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01322).

Figure 2.110 Bottle in the shape of a rodent eating a corncob. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-54509).

tical relationship between the two. Excellent crops also mean sizeable populations of rodents. The quality of both the crops and the reproductive success of rodents may be depicted by this well-fed rodent holding a fully developed corncob (figure 2.110).

Rodent

Copulating rodents (*Oryzomys* sp.) adopt the same position that couples assume during anal intercourse, with the male rodent mounting the female rodent from the back and holding her with his paws (figure 2.111). This is, of course, the natural position for most mammals. The ritual importance of this position and its relationship with the human position may, however, be marked by representations showing animals copulating on top of a structure (figure 2.112). This structure was noted earlier with certain human sexual scenes, and once more it emphasizes the profoundly symbolic and religious aspect of this sexual activity involving rodents.

Rodents represent probably the most dangerous pest for preindustrial agriculture. The reproductive cycle of rodents is very rapid; on average, the gestation is about 20 days, and the female will give birth to up to 8 pups per litter. The pups will reach sexual maturity in 5 to 8 weeks. A single female may produce up to 56 offspring annually. Therefore, in optimal conditions, a single pair of rodents and their offspring may produce a population of more than 50 rodents in less

Figure 2.111 Stirrup spout bottle depicting copulating rodents. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01754).

Figure 2.112 Bottle in the shape of copulating rodents on a temple. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01748).

than 120 days, a period corresponding to the average time needed for maize to reach maturity. Their reproductive success is clearly represented by a pair of rodents surrounded by ten small rodents, likely their offspring, painted on the floor of the circular structure (figure 2.112). A small population of rodents at the beginning of the agricultural season could thus literally, physically, and metaphorically outgrow the crops and destroy everything long before harvest time. To illustrate this threat, one of the rodents is frequently represented holding a grain or a peanut during copulation. It also suggests that fertility is evenly distributed and that if delivered in overabundance, it can also bring death and destruction. A certain balance must be achieved. Around the couple in this example (figure 2.113), a painted scene depicts a number of rodents feeding on chili peppers and peanuts.

The Moche did not randomly choose chili peppers and peanuts because these two plants are symbolically important. As noted above, the chili is frequently depicted on the bodies of toads, while the peanut is often transformed into a human or skeletal being playing a musical instrument (panpipes, flute) or with the head simply resting on a potato (figure 2.114). In a previous contribution, I suggested that peanuts formed part of a cluster of plants and food products directly associated with symbolic aspects of death and fertility (Bourget 1990). This group, mostly comprised of potatoes, camote, yucca, and peanuts, provides complex metaphors, since these crops grow underground and may have been perceived as possessing some uncanny associations with death and ideas regarding the inside of the earth and the underworld. This connection with the inside of the earth is not unique to these plants, as some of the most important animals of this system of representation, such as bats, foxes, burrowing owls, snakes, toads, and, of course, rodents, also dwell inside the ground or in anfractuosities during most of the day. The connection between tubers and some form of inverted fertility is further emphasized by a

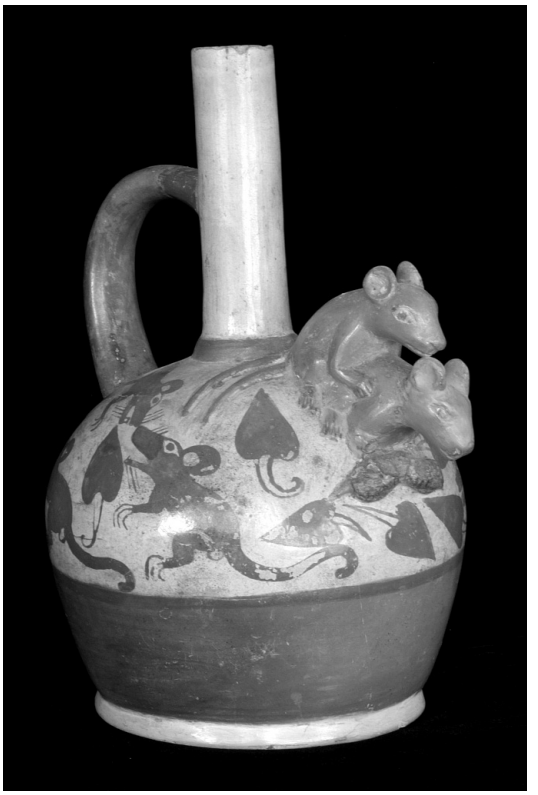

Figure 2.113 Stirrup spout bottle depicting copulating rodents. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004387).

representation of a woman masturbating a skeletal man, in which the cape covering the couple takes the form of a tuber (figure 2.115). A yucca plant is represented just alongside a couple in an anal copulation scene (figure 2.20). Tubers and sexual subjects have a pervasive association, so I will need to return to this subject later.

Figure 2.114 Bottle in the shape of a human being in the form of a peanut with its head resting on a potato. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03011).

Figure 2.115 Bottle in the shape of a woman masturbating a skeletal being. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-01703).

Figure 2.116 Bottle in the shape of an owl with a rodent in its beak. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (57.404).

Figure 2.117 Bottle in the shape of an anthropomorphized fox with a rodent in its mouth. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

Because of the potentially disruptive relation between rodents and agriculture, it may not be surprising to see that two of the most important animals in Moche iconography are the owl and the fox. These fierce killers of rodents are often represented with prey in their beaks or jaws. In figure 2.116, an owl devours its prey. In figure 2.117, a fox warrior holds a rodent in its hands and has another one cleverly depicted in its mouth. The owl and the fox fulfill a host of important symbolic functions related to such fundamental aspects as death and ritual warfare.[10]

It may seem paradoxical that the deities that provide for the fertility of plants and humans should also facilitate the reproduction of pests, such as the rodents. There even seems to be a corollary: the better the crop and the agricultural season, the better will be the reproductive success of rodents. This duality between fertility and infertility (brought about by the rodents' destruction of crops)—or between life and death—is also shown by representing a white rodent (death and male) copulating with a red rodent (life and female; figure 2.111). As is the case with the wave design, the white color is consistently on top and the red, underneath.

Llama

The llama (*Llama glama*) is the third animal subject of this section. In copulation scenes, the pair often adopts the same position as human couples or rodents with the front legs of the male holding the shoulders of his partner (figure 2.118). The example illustrated here is painted ocher and cream in a checkerboard fashion. In the way it functioned with the rodents and the toads mentioned above, this checkerboard may be a device here to recall the concept of symbolic duality with the use of alternating colors.

The llama does not play an active role in the iconography and, like the dog, is never anthropomorphized. Nevertheless, it fulfills important functions as a sacrificial animal and as a carrier of ritual objects and symbolically marked individuals. For example, they are not only represented in funerary scenes; camelid body parts are consistently

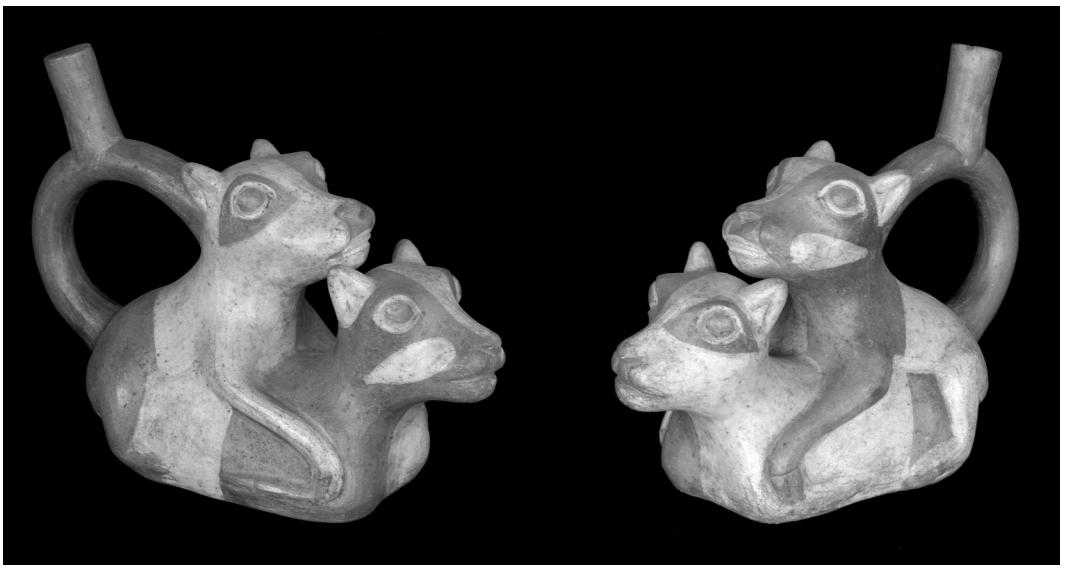

Figure 2.118 Bottle in the shape of copulating llamas. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004388).

Figure 2.119 Bottle in the shape of a llama transporting an amputee. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-55037).

found in funerary contexts (Millaire 2002: 129). In the tombs of high-ranking individuals, at sites such as Sipán, Huaca de la Cruz, and San José de Moro, complete and decapitated llamas have been found in most funerary contexts. The decapitation of some of them recalls a form of sacrifice regularly applied to humans. In the iconography, this animal is often depicted carrying on its back a mutilated human whose lips are excised, whose feet are missing, or both (figure 2.119); in other depictions, the llama wears a backpack and is laden with *Strombus* seashells or ceramic jars (figure 1.6).

Copulation between Animals and Women

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, scenes of vaginal copulation are rare and represent only a small fraction of the corpus. Nevertheless, the scenes presented in this section and the following one are crucial to the understanding of Moche sexual representation in its entirety because they include three of the most important subjects of Moche iconography: the bat, the fox, and Wrinkle Face. Also, by contrasting these types of actions and actors with the inverted scenes of fertility, some of the principles of this broad theme emerge. As a research hypothesis for this section, I suggest that vaginal copulation is performed only by subjects who are connected to complex and still poorly understood concepts of the afterlife and the afterworld.

Bat

The first representation of a bat is, to my knowledge, unique (figure 2.120). This exceptional cup concentrates once more a series of embedded metaphors in the form of a bat engaged in vaginal copulation with a woman. In the same way as is depicted with men during copulation, the loincloth of the bat is shoved to the side. The anus of the woman is clearly represented, demonstrating without a shadow of doubt the type of copulation being performed (figure 2.120). On the basis of other representations of bats, I have identified this species as the *Desmodus rotundus* (1994a). It is the most widely distributed of the three species of the vampire family (Greenhall and Schmidt 1988).

Two of the bat's principal functions are the holding of funerary offerings and the bloodletting of sacrificial victims (figures 2.121, 2.123). As we saw earlier, the holding of jars by bats could be associated with the carrying of vessels by human or skeletal beings (figures 1.55, 1.57, 1.58). Yet the bats hold only jars and are represented as if they are emptying them over their shoulders. On the lower section of the vessel just underneath the figure, an individual sits to the left of a series of funerary jars. In the central section, a second individual holding a club touches the lower jaw of a bat-being, which is accompanied by two others (figure 2.122). Five structures are depicted. We thus have two human beings dressed and adorned with similar attributes, overseeing a display of ritual vessels and three bat-beings. I shall come back to the significance of this scene shortly.

Figure 2.120 Cup in the shape of a bat copulating with a woman. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004367).

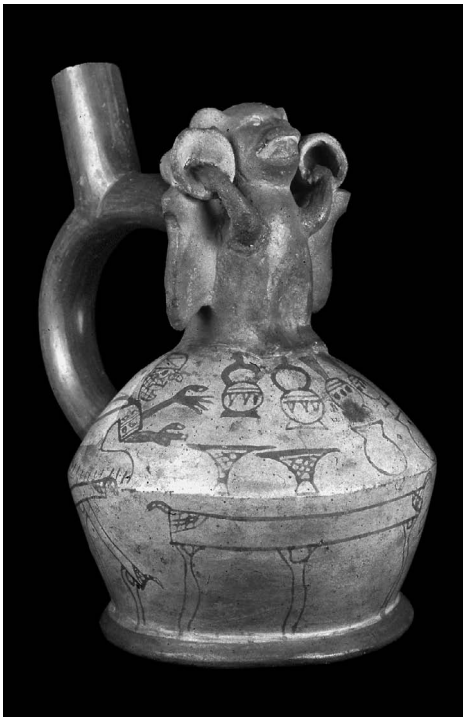

Figure 2.121 Bottle in the shape of an anthropomorphized bat holding jars. Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (L1450/110).

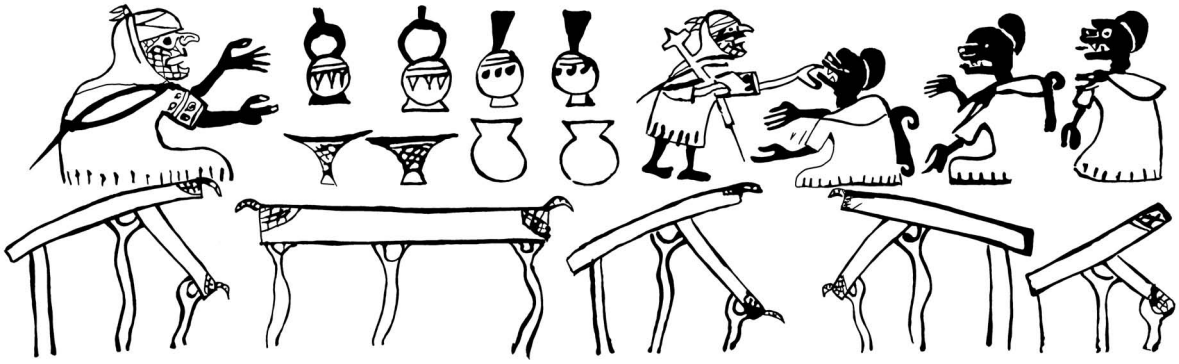

Figure 2.122 Fineline painting of human beings with bat-beings and jars (detail of figure 2.121). Linden-Museum, Stuttgart (L1450/110). Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Perhaps the most elaborate depiction involving a bat-being as sacrificer is a somewhat abbreviated version of the Presentation Theme (figure 2.123). The bat sacrificer, situated at the extreme left of the scene, is drawing blood from the neck of a male victim and collecting the spurting liquid in a cup. Two additional cups and a three-pronged club separate them from the rest of the representation. Another three-pronged club is also situated just above the bat-being. As stated

at the beginning of this essay, these special clubs are also represented in the most elaborate rendition of the same ceremony in the guise of a female anthropomorphic being, and also as a single object (figure 1.3, E). In the complex rendition of the Presentation Theme, the clubwoman is portrayed plunging her left hand into the throat of a nude warrior and holding in her right hand what is perhaps a small vessel. As she is dressed with the same ritual attire as her counterpart on the upper register of the scene, it is thus likely that the blood she is drawing is the blood that will subsequently be presented by individual C (figure 1.3, C). Thus in figure 2.123, the cups and the staff wedged in between the scene of blood sacrifice and the scene of cup presentation may act as a visual device to join both activities. The staffs may also function to mark association between this type of sacrifice and the feminine gender.

Two important points have to be made at this juncture of the analysis. First, women do not play a passive role during this ritual; on the contrary, as in the most complex ritual known so far—the Presentation Theme—they perform the sacrifice and participate as equals with the rest of the cast. The existence at the sites of San José de Moro and Huaca de la Cruz of at least four burials of women apparently associated with the collection of human blood further reinforces this point of view.

Second, as we briefly mentioned earlier, women are involved in the preparation of the body of the deceased and the funerary offerings. In that regard, I suggest that the fineline drawing placed underneath the bat-being that tips the jars (figure 2.121) illustrates two women in direct association with these ritual aspects (figure 2.122). Through two ritual hand gestures, the first woman at the left signals her rela-

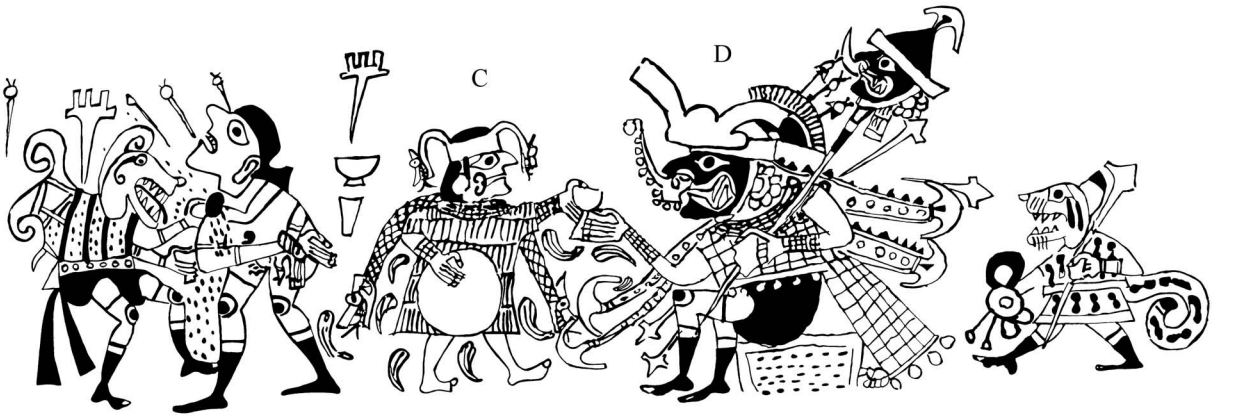

Figure 2.123 Fineline painting of a Presentation Theme (detail of figure 4.29). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

tionship with the funerary rituals symbolized by the vessels. The woman in the center would mark the link with human sacrifice by carrying the same club used in scenes of ritual warfare and by touching the lower jaw of a bat-being, a sacrificer. The touching of the lower jaw is a very specific gesture possibly associated with the idea of ritual capture and sacrifice.

The Presentation Theme scene (figure 2.123) could represent a narrative involving at least two moments. The first one involves the sacrifice of a captured warrior by a bat-being. The blood collected in a cup would then be passed to the person holding a circular disc. Although we cannot for the moment ascertain with complete confidence that this person is a woman, the exchange of the blood is marked by the presence of these two cups; the feminine gender is marked by the three-pronged clubs, the long tunic, and a special sash terminating in fox heads. She replaces the bird priest in the Presentation Theme illustrated in figure 1.3 and offers the cup to individual D seen at the extreme right of the more elaborate version of this ritual of exchange (figure 1.3, D). Individual D is now seated on a special dais or throne but still wears his distinctive headdress and the same train. In the first scene, he appeared to be playing a lesser role, simply joining hands to mark the importance (sacredness?) of the activity being performed by the other individuals.

So it would seem that both women and bat-beings play an active role during funerary and sacrificial rituals. Alongside women, bats are also involved in the ritual offering of children. This complex theme has been explored elsewhere (Bourget 2001b). I thus suggest that the bat-being copulates vaginally with a woman because he belongs to the afterworld (figure 2.120). This association with the afterworld may also be marked by the carriers of vessels. The human being and skeletal figures consistently carry the whole set of funerary offerings, whereas the bats are always shown tipping the vessels sideways. It is possible that the first two actors are more closely associated with rituals taking place during the funerary proceedings, while the bats are shown receiving these offerings and, in some cases, emptying the contents of the vessels.

Since women take an active role at a crucial point during the sacrificial ritual, the bat-woman cup could represent the consequences of the sacrifice itself: the reception of fertility not only through the semen of this sacrificer but also by the blood sacrifice of the victim.

Fox

The next subject reiterates the same proposition: depictions of vaginal copulation associated with actors directly related with the afterworld, ritual warfare, and sacrificial rituals. This bottle takes the form of a fox copulating with a woman (figure 2.124). The vulva of the woman is clearly represented, and the erect penis of the fox, now

broken, probably shown penetrating her. Once more, like the bat, this animal is associated with the ritual of sacrifice. The fox is also related to ritual warfare and the capture of prisoners for sacrifice. For example, in the detail of a much more elaborate fineline painting, an anthropomorphized fox is depicted wielding a *tumi* knife above the head of a bound human victim (figure 2.125, B). As I mentioned briefly in the section on rodents, foxes, by controlling the population of rodents, protect the agricultural field and ensure its fertility. Thus, like the bat, the fox presents another animal associated with human sacrifice that brings fertility to a woman.

Figure 2.124 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a copulation between a woman and a desert fox. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (55.2681).

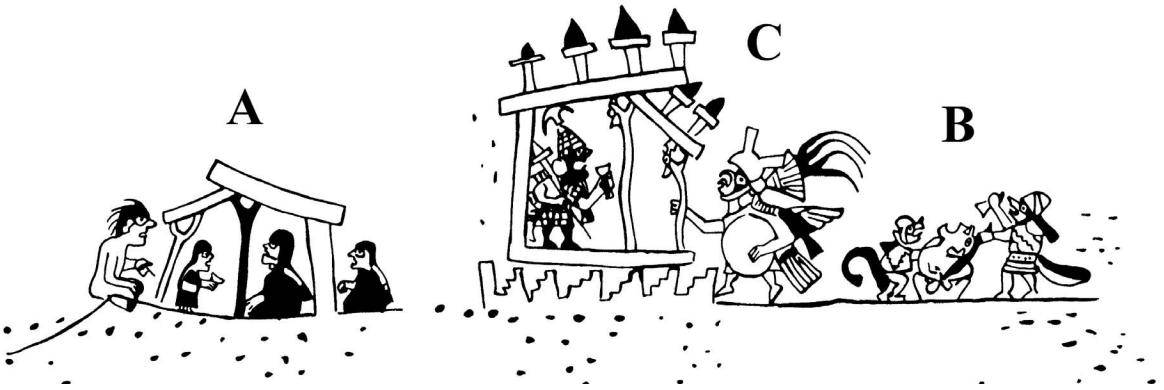

Figure 2.125 Fineline painting of a Presentation Theme (detail of figure 2.132, upper right). American Museum of Natural History, New York. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Copulation between Wrinkle Face and Women

The vast majority of sexual scenes in Moche iconography consist of the presentation of disproportionate male and female genitalia, acts of sodomy, masturbation, and fellatio. The actors in these activities are predominantly human, skeletal beings, mutilated individuals, and eventual sacrificial victim. Only twenty vases recorded so far depict vaginal copulation. Two of these implicate animals, a vampire bat and a fox, and all but one of the remaining involves a being with fangs, usually known under the somewhat generic appellation of Wrinkle Face.

Wrinkle Face, who is one of the main actors of the iconography, and Iguana, with whom Wrinkle Face is usually depicted, are shown not only in this type of sexual activity; as we will see in Chapter 4, they also play a pivotal role in the Burial Theme. The sexual scenes involving Wrinkle Face are probably the most studied representations of Moche iconography. After a brief review of the literature on this subject, this complex theme will be investigated in its contextual and mythical dimensions. In the first section, I will analyze the scenes as a narrative sequence and separate them into four interrelated parts: instruction, preparation, transfer, and copulation. This is not a new approach, because some contributions in the past have attempted to explain this activity as a narration, but their efforts have met with only relative success. Following this, the copulation will be explored for its mythical and rituals dimensions, especially in the light of the possible relationships that may have existed between a world of the living and an afterworld.

Viewpoints

During the last fifty years or so, a number of scholars have attempted to explain the meaning of this complex scene of copulation (figure 2.126). A brief overview of these contributions will highlight the range of ideas that could be expressed on a single Moche theme. I will begin with the views of Anne Marie Hocquenghem, who has presented the most detailed analysis of this representation so far. Since these copulation scenes are molded, incised, and painted around the body of a ceramic jar, it is possible to separate the scene just about anywhere when one wants to represent them on a two-dimensional plane. All the scholars so far have placed part A, depicting the women in the house, on the right-hand side of the representation (see, e.g., Donnan 1978: 9). Scholars have suggested this relative placement to indicate that this activity belongs to the same context as the copulation scene. On the basis of a number of elements that will be discussed later, I have decided to place this part of the scene at the beginning of the narrative sequence.

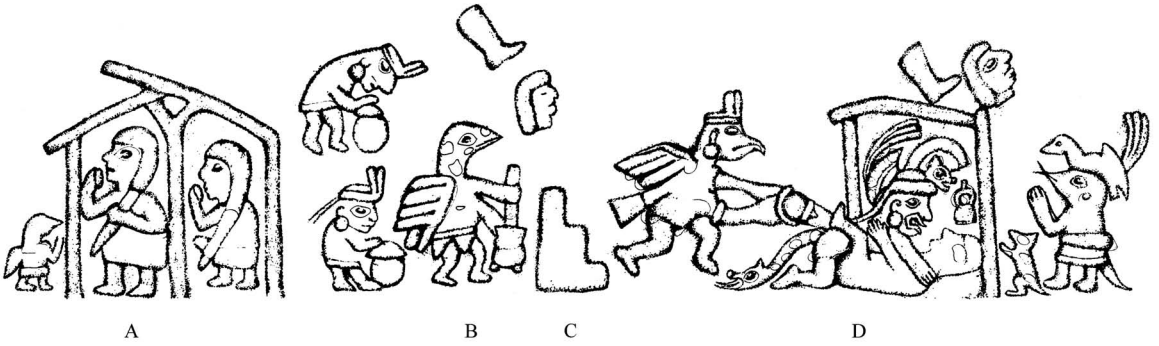

Figure 2.126 Drawing of a Copulation Ceremony. Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Santiago. Drawing by Alana Cordy-Collins.

In her first paper on the subject, Hocquenghem recognized the mythical dimension of this scene and links it to funerary and sacrificial activities: "The copulation scene between the mythical being with fangs and snake belt is difficult to explain. . . . The presence of funerary vessels, the liquid of which is being spilled on the couple by mythical animals, permits to classify this scene with mourning rituals; it would represent the mythical act at the origin of purification rituals" (1977: 12).[11] She also indicated that the fineline painting where severed human heads and arms can be seen hovering above the activities may indicate that the same copulation could also be related to sacrificial activities and fertility rituals (figure 2.126). Using ethnohistorical documents, she later reanalyzed this scene and suggested that this copulation act may have been part of an annual ritual celebrated during the month of September at the time of the equinox of the dry season (1979, 1989).

In collaboration with Golte, Hocquenghem drew upon the Huarochiri manuscript, a text dating to the sixteen century, to analyze each segment of the copulation scene, although without complete success: "The vessel resting on three stones and being warmed over a fire cannot be immediately explained with the Huarochiri's myths. . . . The house with two women appearing in the Moche scene is not present in the myths of Huarochiri" (Golte and Hocquenghem 1984: 106).[12] By taking this approach, these two scholars took a road already traveled by Carrión Cachot in 1955. Using the same manuscript, Carrión Cachot proposed that this scene could be associated with the fertilization of the earth (1955: 55). She later added that the union of these divine beings represents the fusion of cosmic forces in favor of the fertilization of the earth (1959: 16).

According to Elizabeth Benson, the copulation scene relates to a myth. She recognized a fanged god having intercourse with a woman, while an anthropomorphic bird throws a liquid at the couple (1972:

144). Subsequently, she linked the same scene with sacrificial elements, the sea, and the world of the dead (1975: 109–110). Sacrifice and death are, of course, two important aspects being explored in the present essay.

In the contributions discussed so far, most authors were aware that this complex representation could be separated into a number of smaller units, such as the intercourse, the two women in a house, and the anthropomorphic bird throwing liquid. Nevertheless, they did not attempt to interpret these units in sequential form. Larco was one of the few scholars to consider this scene in terms of a narrative:

> The most commonly found scenes are shown in fine relief and give an idea of their mystic character. They depict the god in an arbour possessing the woman, while the dog, his inseparable companion, and the lizard in human shape, his faithful servant, engage in prayer with hands joined while looking on. In this ritual act of sex the god is assisted by cormorants and humming-birds in human form, one of them preparing a liquid in a little receptacle over a flame and stirring it with some implement, while another, a cormorant in human shape, lifts a similar receptacle and throws its contents at the genitals of the god and the woman. This scene would appear to symbolize fertility or something related to it. (1965: 101)

By not taking into account the complete sequence and by treating sections B, C, and D as synchronous events, Larco remained unable to establish a link between the diverse stages of a hypothetical sequence.

Arboleda saw in this scene the possibility of a sequence entailing four activities, but he maintained the order as represented in the literature, with the house of the women located at the right hand side of the scene as the first activity (1981: 103). He suggested that some sort of enema is being given to the copulating figures, although he does not reject the possibility that the liquid may have been thrown on the couple: "If the liquid is a hallucinogenic drug, it is possible that this drug may have been transferred into a syringe and then applied as an enema in the anus of the prostrated figure as suggested by John H. Rowe. Or, alternatively, the drug may have been consumed orally by the participants and then emptied ritually on the genitals of the couple in the central part of the representation" (Arboleda 1981, 102).[13]

Finally, Vergara suggested that this scene may have served as a form of sexual education: "These teachings or instructions were directed by a social and religious order personified, according to whether it related to the education of a man or a woman, by a priest or a priestess taking on the attributes of a bird" (1990: 410).[14]

The review of the literature concerning this important scene indicates that no one has really attempted to analyze it as a complete narrative. They usually accept that the bird-being is throwing a liquid on

the couple in the region of their genitals. Also, most of the scholars agree that this scene might be related to a certain form of fertility: of the earth (Carrión Cachot), of nature (Larco), to a purification ritual (Hocquenghem), or to the control of irrigation water (Golte and Hocquenghem).

I will commence the analysis by attempting to reconstruct the order of each part of this complex representation. These scenes are painted and etched all around the body of a vessel, and so, to consider a given scene as a narrative, determination of the order of the sequence is absolutely critical. Finally, most people who have studied this type of representation have assigned a fantastic origin to the individual with fangs and a belt terminating in the head of a snake-fox. This subject with supernatural attributes has generally been perceived as a mythical being or a deity. Without proposing a definitive answer to this identification problem, I suggested in Chapter 1 that a number of buried individuals found at Huaca de la Luna and Huaca de la Cruz may have been the real counterparts of this individual. This identification does not preclude that this event may have been entirely mythical, yet it is worth nothing anew that many complex activities represented in the iconography may also have included some ritual aspects.

Division of the Representation

The four figures used for this analysis have been divided into four distinct parts: A, B, C, and D (figure 2.126). I suggest as a research hypothesis that each of these parts is distinct and successive and that, taken as a whole, they constitute a narrative. An additional indication that they constitute divisible entities is that at least two of these parts have been represented separately on a single vessel. The first vessel, a bowl (figure 2.127), depicts a copulation similar to that in part D. Although the head of the male individual is missing, making his identification more difficult, he wears the distinctive snake-belt terminating in fox heads associated with Wrinkle Face. The second vessel, a bottle, represents a man and a woman mixing something in a flaring bowl (figure 2.128). It seems to be a slightly more elaborate version of part B. The jar resting on three stones just in front of the couple and the step design painted all around the base of the bottle also indicate that it refers very probably to the same subject seen in part B. The reorganization I am proposing here leads to a new interpretation. I will first describe each part of this complex representation.

In the first part (A), a bird is standing in front of a house with a gabled roof. In the structure, two individuals, who are women (identified on the basis of their tunics, which are usually tied with sashes), each hold a long object in their left hand and bring their right hand to the level of their mouth. From a quick reading of the scene, the object may be mistaken for the long hair braids often associated with wom-

Figure 2.127 Vessel in the shape of a Copulation Ceremony. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004362).

Figure 2.128 Bottle in the shape of a couple preparing a substance in a flaring bowl. Museo Arqueológico Bruning, Lambayeque. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

en (see, for example, figures 2.20, 2.34, 2.51, 2.83). In fact, all the women in the parts of this narrative wear a shorter style of hair, which is also worn by women in certain scenes of fellatio (figure 2.59). This type of haircut is consistently associated with captured warriors and sacrificial victims, men and women alike (figure 2.69). For example, the severed heads hovering above the stepped structure in C and the couple in D in the first ritual copulation scene sport the same type of haircut (figure 2.126).

In the second part of the scene (B), a bird-being is shown stirring something in a jar with a stick. The jar rests on three stones (of which only two are visible), possibly indicating that the product is being put on a fire. The bird is sometimes surrounded by human beings attending with jars that have lids (figures 2.126, 2.129). The men and the birds involved in the copulation scenes wear a specific headdress con-

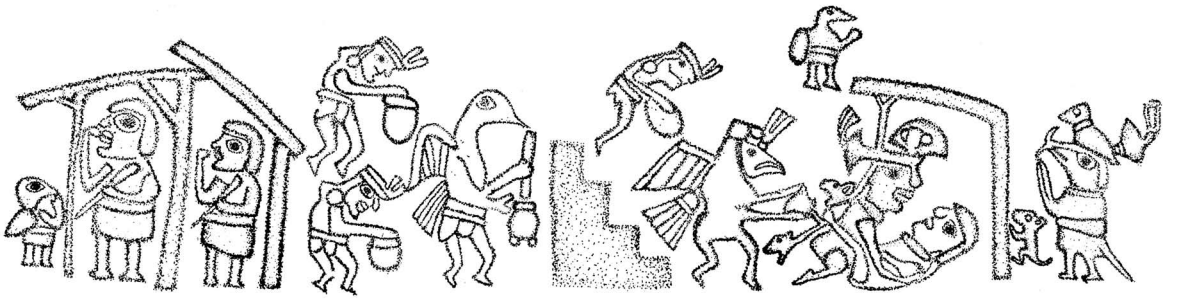

Figure 2.129 Drawing of a Copulation Ceremony. The British Museum, London. Drawing by Donna McClelland. By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

sistently associated with people engaging in marine activities. The connection with the world of the sea is emphasized by the presence of a wave motif framing the lower part of the whole scene in figures 2.130 and 2.131.[15] A similar wave design has been noted in the context of other sexual activities (figures 2.3, 2.14, 2.48, 2.56).

In the third part of the scene (C), a bird ([figures 2.130, 2.131] or in one case, a human [figure 2.129]) is seen hovering above a stepped structure, 2.130, 2.131). Although these subjects are not consistently represented over the structure, this element seems to be used to convey a certain direction to the action and to mark a change between what takes place on one side of the stepped structure and what happens on the other.

The fourth part is, of course, the most important activity and the reason for the whole representation (D). Inside a house with a slanting roof, a man with an elaborate headdress and a snake-fox belt copulates with a woman. Although the genitals are not visible, the physical position of the pair implies a vaginal copulation. We can identify the male individual as Wrinkle Face, since he is generally depicted with the typical headdress and the special belt. He is also usually accompanied by an iguana-being. In the present example, Iguana is standing with a dog on the right side of the house. They are both looking towards the couple, while clasping their hands or paws together. A similar hand gesture is performed by the bird in part A. I suggest that this hand gesture is depicted to mark the sacredness of a given activity: it is a gesture made by individual D in the Presentation Theme scene (figure 1.3) and by the person sitting in front of a row of jars in the scene involving an owl-woman and Wrinkle Face (figure 2.26). Completing part D is a bird-being standing behind the couple and seemingly holding an object just above the buttocks of the male.

A stirrup spout bottle usually appears in the house just above the head of the woman (figures 2.126, 2.130, 2.131), and severed heads and limbs are represented in at least one scene (figures 2.126).

Figure 2.130 Fineline painting of a Copulation Ceremony. Ganoza Collection, Trujillo. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

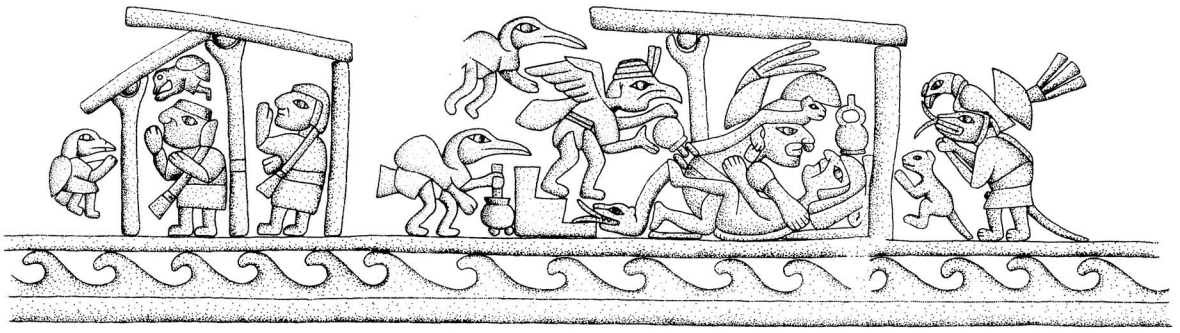

Figure 2.131 Drawing of a Copulation Ceremony. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo. Drawing by Jorge Sachún.

The copulation part of the scene can also be depicted on its own. In such cases, the scene is rendered as a sculpture (figure 2.127). Unfortunately, in this piece the head of the male is missing; the general position of the couple, however, is consistent with the position adopted by Wrinkle Face in the complex scene. Interestingly, the vessel is in the shape of a goblet, indicating that it may have been used during certain libation rituals. Would it then be possible that the libation vessels depicting women with oversized vaginas (figures 2.83, 2.84, 2.85) are also related to this scene? These libation vessels would have highlighted the sexual act as such: the penetration of the woman by Wrinkle Face. They recall the dipper modeled as the head of a woman with her mouth open, which emphasizes the act of fellatio (figure 2.61). As a duality, the open mouth of the woman would have referred to the nonvaginal part of the sexual representations, whereas the women with oversized genitalia would have referred to the vaginal copulations.

The general form of the birds suggests that all the recognizable species belong to the guano group. The guanay cormorant (*Phalocrocorax bougainvillii*), the Peruvian booby (*Sula variegata*), and the pelican (*Pelecanus thagus*) are the most recognizable in these complex scenes. Their connection with the sea is further paralleled by the wave motif, the marine headdresses worn by a number of attendants, and the iguana-being. The iguana (*Conolophus subcristanus*) is a species of lizard easily recognizable by its serrated tail. These semiaquatic animals live along the shore and islands of the Peruvian north coast, where they feed mostly on marine algae from the sea floor. Iguana-being almost always wears a headdress decorated with the effigy of a bird, usually an Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*). Although condors are now usually thought of as inhabiting the high Andes, until the early twentieth century they regularly descended to the coast to feed on carcasses of fish, marine birds, and sea lions. These carrion eaters would be particularly prevalent during El Niño events because of the number of marine animals, especially sea lions, that wash up on the shores. In contrast to the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*), condors shy away from humans and feed almost entirely on dead animals.

Organization and Interpretation of the Narrative

Part A. Instruction. In the first section of the analysis of these scenes, it was necessary to reorder the narrative sequence by placing part A at the beginning. A number of elements within the scene and the formal organization of other representations displaying rituals associated with architecture support the reordering proposed. First of all, a bird-being is present in the four parts of the scene. These beings thus may represent continuity that permits the joining of all the scenes together in the form of a narration. If this is the case, then placing the house with the women on the right side of the copulation scene would suggest that this is the last moment and conclusion of the story. Whereas if, as I suggest, we place this scene on the far left side, the narrative would commence with the encounter between the women and the bird-being.

The focus in this first house centers upon the interaction between the two women and the bird standing at the entrance. Since birds will be involved in all the subsequent parts of the representation, it is likely that the bird is receiving some information or an item or both from the women. Although I cannot completely reject the possibility that the object in the hands of the women may be their hair, this element is usually depicted as a straight object not connected to their hair, which tends to reinforce the idea that it is actually a stick. Furthermore, there is a horizontal line or separation between the object and the hair of the women, suggesting that there is a break between the two. I suggest that the bird-being is receiving the stick to stir the product in the jar in part B. The meaning of the hand gesture per-

formed by the women is unclear to me; these hand gestures and the presence of body parts in C and D, however, may have been the basis for Donnan's suggestion of cannibalism within this scene (figure 2.126; 1978: 9).

The excerpt shown in figure 2.125 is taken from a more elaborate scene representing, in my view, a narrative sequence that bears some structural resemblance to the one in figure 2.126. The scene in figure 2.125 depicts a somewhat simplified version of the Presentation Theme. From the well-known line-up, only individuals A and B (figure 1.3) are present. In the narrative depicted in figure 2.125, I suggest that the first stage is the presentation of a nude male, a captured warrior on the basis of his disheveled hair, in front of a simple house (A). Three individuals, and especially two clearly depicted women, are situated inside and just behind the structure. The woman behind the house may have been painted there by the artist due to lack of space. This scene corresponds to the preparation of the future sacrificial victim.

The next part, B of figure 2.125, represents the sacrifice proper. The seated victim, with his hands tied behind his back, is having his throat cut by a fox warrior wielding a *tumi* knife, while a feline or monkey attendant is probably collecting the spurting blood in a cup. Finally, the blood is being exchanged between the bird priest carrying a disc and the individual with a crescent-shaped headdress (C). The house in C is much more elaborate than the one in A and is decorated with war clubs on the roof. Interestingly, a step design runs underneath the structure and thus marks the importance of this building in comparison with the first one. So, in figure 2.125, the sequence would be (A) women with nude warrior, (B) sacrifice of nude warrior and collection of his blood, and (C) exchange of blood collected following the sacrificial act.

The fragment shown in figure 2.125 is part of a much more complex scene (figure 2.132). I suggest that this narrative begins in the lower part of the scene (A), where fallen male victims are being attended by anthropomorphic birds. In the next part, the nude males, still surrounded by similar birds, are carried to the temple precinct (B), where they are presented to an individual seated on top of a stepped structure (C). Then, as I showed earlier, the victim is prepared (D), sacrificed (E), and his blood consumed (F). Consequently, I would argue that in both cases, the women inside the house are associated with the preparatory stage culminating with the ritual proper. Also, pairs of buildings such as those depicted in the Copulation Ceremonies and in the Presentation Theme (figure 2.125) would mark the beginning and the end of the ritual sequence.

Part B. Preparation. In the next action of figure 2.126, part B, the bird-being prepares a product with the help of a stick. He is surrounded by people attending to other types of jars with lids. The

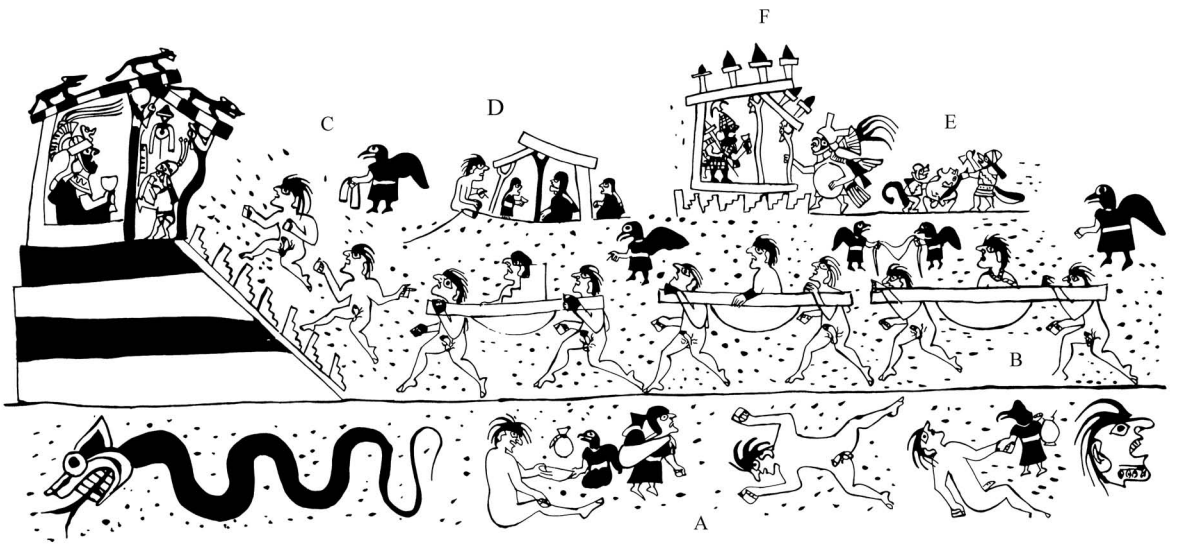

Figure 2.132 Fineline painting of a complex depiction of captured warriors, culminating with the ceremony of the Presentation. American Museum of Natural History, New York. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

stones underneath the vessel not only provide stability to the jar but may also indicate that the product sat over a fire. It is possible that before submitting the substance to cooking, attendants standing behind the bird-being are actually preparing a recipe. A Phase III stirrup spout bottle (figure 2.128) may show this same procedure. Modeled on top of the quadrangular chamber, a man mixes something with the help of a stick, while a woman to his right pours a liquid into the flaring bowl from a jar. To the left of the man, a wide-rimmed jar rests on three stones. It is thus conceivable that the product being mixed in the large bowl is the same one that will eventually be cooked in the jar. A number of physical characteristics of the two individuals indicate that this piece belongs to stage B of the Copulation Ceremony. The woman has the same short haircut as the women shown in copulation scenes. The man wears tubular ear ornaments and a head cloth usually associated with individuals represented in portrait vessels. Interestingly, the activity is taking place over a row of painted step designs running all around the base of the bottle. This design recalls the one separating part B from part C in the copulation scene of figure 2.126 and would indicate that this mixing activity is part of a highly ritualized ceremony.

Part C. Transfer. During the third stage of the narrative (C), a bird-being or a human passes over the stepped structure (figures 2.130, 2.131). The passage may signify that the attendant is entering a ceremonial precinct to perform a ritual activity. In all the scenes, the attendant holding the bottle behind the corpses wears the headdress

usually associated with marine activities, such as the ritual hunt of sea lions and boat scenes (figures 1.33, 2.133; Benson 1974: 110).

Part D. Copulation. The fourth stage (D) constitutes the culminating event around which the rest of the representation is orchestrated. After the preparation of the product and its transport into the ceremonial arena, the bird-being displays what appears to be a container of some sort just at the level of the back area of the copulating pair. If this complex scene is organized in a narrative format, it is logical to suggest that this bottle may contain the liquid prepared in phase B. Given the size and the detailing of the representation, it is not possible to determine exactly what is being done. Some scholars have suggested that the liquid is being poured onto the couple (Benson 1974; Larco 1965) or injected into the anus of the male as an enema (Arboleda 1981). In either case, the pouring of liquid on the couple coincides with the copulation, which strongly suggests that both activities are related and cognitively refer to a common concept. In some scenes, a stirrup spout bottle is placed inside the structure just above the woman's head (figures 2.126, 2.130, 2.131). Severed body parts (legs and heads) float above the whole scene in one of the representations (figure 2.126). I would argue that these two motifs, severed body parts and bottles, act as signifiers that tie this ceremony to the practice of human sacrifice by the presentation of body parts and to funerary rituals by the display of funerary vessels, the latter of which appear shown in a number of other sexual scenes.

Copulation, Tree, and Sacrifice

Finally, a fineline painting may provide us with the outcome of the copulation ceremony (figure 2.134). In the central section of the painting, Wrinkle Face, wearing an elaborate necklace, copulates with

Figure 2.133 Fineline painting of a ritual hunt of sea lions. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

a woman wearing a bicephalous arch as a headband. To the left of the couple, Iguana and another anthropomorphic animal (fox? small feline?) observe the ceremony with their hands clasped. Just above this pair, two cormorant-beings are seated facing each other. Completing this side of the scene are three nectandra seeds, a flaring bowl, a stirrup spout bottle just above the head of the woman, and a small fern-like plant at her head. The main feature, though, is an imposing tree located above the couple. In the tree, seven monkeys are collecting *ulluchu* fruits in small bags tied to their backs. To the right of the copulation, four individuals are receiving these *ulluchus* and touching as yet unidentified objects with sticks. Just behind the couple there is also a small dog and a spear thrower with three spears.

Figure 2.135 also refers to the copulation of Wrinkle Face. As in figure 2.134, a gigantic tree populated by monkeys collecting *ulluchus* is located on top of the couple. To the left, a mutilated face with his feet missing is on his arms and knees and is witnessing the scene. Just in front of him, another individual is attending a jar. Wrinkle Face points toward a plant, a stirrup spout bottle, and a bicephalous arch. To the right, a group of three persons, two males and a female, are progressing toward the couple. They all carry a small bottle in their hands. The males wear marine headdresses, and a wave design frames the upper part of the representation. The first one has a bag

Figure 2.134 Fineline painting of a Copulation Ceremony. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 2.135 Drawing of a Copulation Ceremony. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima. Drawing by Percy Fiestas.

dangling from his back, while the second one has a human head. Finally, the woman is carrying a monkey on her back. She is accompanied by a llama laden with a backpack. This scene shows many similarities with the previous one, and it may form part of the same complex story (figure 2.134). It would appear that the copulation of Wrinkle Face is linked with the growth of plants, the domain of the sea, and funerary and sacrificial elements.

These two complex scenes open up a vast array of associations with other themes of the iconography. First, they seem to be related to the growth of plants. The preparation and the throwing of liquid on the back of the couples, described earlier, may also be related to the appearance of these trees. Perhaps, the liquid, symbolizing the water needed for irrigation, and the vaginal copulation of Wrinkle Face are both vital for vegetation growth. In that regard, it is worth noting that marine birds (such as the cormorants in figure 2.134) are consistently represented in all these scenes. They are also the ones throwing liquid at the couple (figures 2.126, 2.129–2.131). The role of marine birds in the depictions may, in part, be related to the association of marine birds with the sea and of their droppings with agricultural fertility.[16]

The trees on top of the couples are laden with *ulluchu* fruits (figures 2.134, 2.135), which are being collected by monkeys. These fruits are a further indication that the Copulation Ceremony is closely related to sacrifice. This association had already been suspected because of the copulation scene displaying human heads and lower limbs (figure 2.126). The *ulluchu* is a fruit prominently associated with sacrificial rituals, especially with the collection and exchange of human blood. A number of these fruits appear in the fineline painting of the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3). Actual examples of this fruit have been found at the Moche sites of Sipán and Dos Cabezas. A critical task of future research will be to make a taxonomic identification of the fruits to understand why they relate so closely to the use of human blood and the global concept of fertility.

The intimate relationship between this copulation theme and human sacrifice is clearly expressed by a vessel representing Wrinkle Face copulating with a woman who has a tuft of hair projecting from her forehead (figure 2.136). This hairstyle is typically associated with captured prisoners and sacrificial victims (Benson 1972; Donnan 2001b, 2003). Equating this woman with a sacrificial victim may not be a stretch of the imagination, since in this copulation act, Wrinkle Face is displayed firmly grasping her hair, a sure sign of capture (figure 2.136; Donnan 1978: 151). Across her back she carries a bag similar to that of one of the four individuals at the right side of the previous copulation scene (figure 2.134). Could this bag be filled with *ulluchu* fruits?

The next bottle shows the intricacies and the complexity of this broad subject (figure 2.137). The bottle takes the shape of a tuber. The main subject is a monkey, whose prominent fangs indicate that it is a male. He has a Maltese cross painted across his face and a tuft of hair on his forehead. Underneath, there is a smaller monkey with the same hair tuft, four dots painted on his face, and a bag around his neck. He holds a small bag and stands between an owl to the right and Iguana to the left (figure 2.137). Standing behind the main figure, just underneath the stirrup spout, is a skeleton displaying an

Figure 2.136 Bottle in the shape of a copulating Wrinkle Face. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004364).

erection. He is accompanied by a second smaller skeletal figure at the base of the spout. The shape of the bottle and the facial attributes of the monkey are reminiscent of the portrait vessel found with the child buried with the Warrior-Priest of Huaca de la Cruz (figure 2.138).

Figure 2.137 Bottle in the shape of a tuber covered with subjects. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (55.2320).

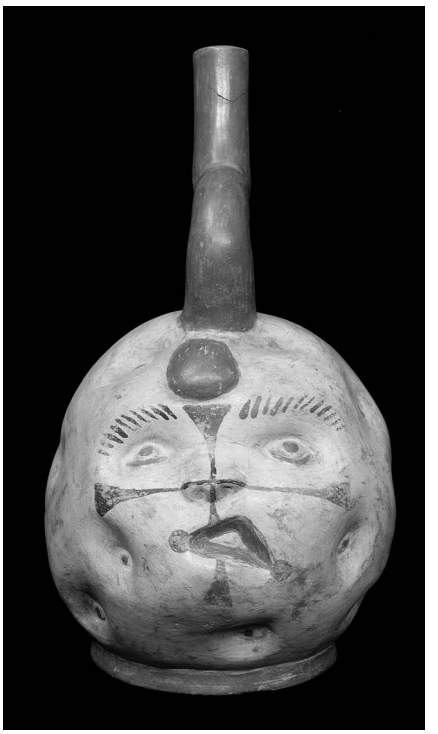

Figure 2.138 Portrait vessel in the shape of a potato. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-02926).

Finally, another bottle beautifully represents the connection with human sacrifice of this theme by showing a nude prisoner being bled by a feline (figure 2.139). The man has a rope around his neck and both hands tied behind his back. His face is decorated with the Maltese cross, and he wears the tuft of hair.

This information seems to indicate that there exists a vast reticular system of relationships between Wrinkle Face, vaginal copulation, death, and sacrifice. It would seem also that there is a positive relationship between the growth of plants, female fertility, and blood sacrifice.

Eventual Sacrificial Victims

The next fineline painting decorates a large jar in the shape of a tuber (figure 2.140). It depicts a close encounter between a human male and female (figures 2.140, 2.141). It does not consist of a vaginal penetration per se, as the genital organs of both the female and the male are clearly depicted. Is this a representation preceding the sexual act as such? Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that this male indi-

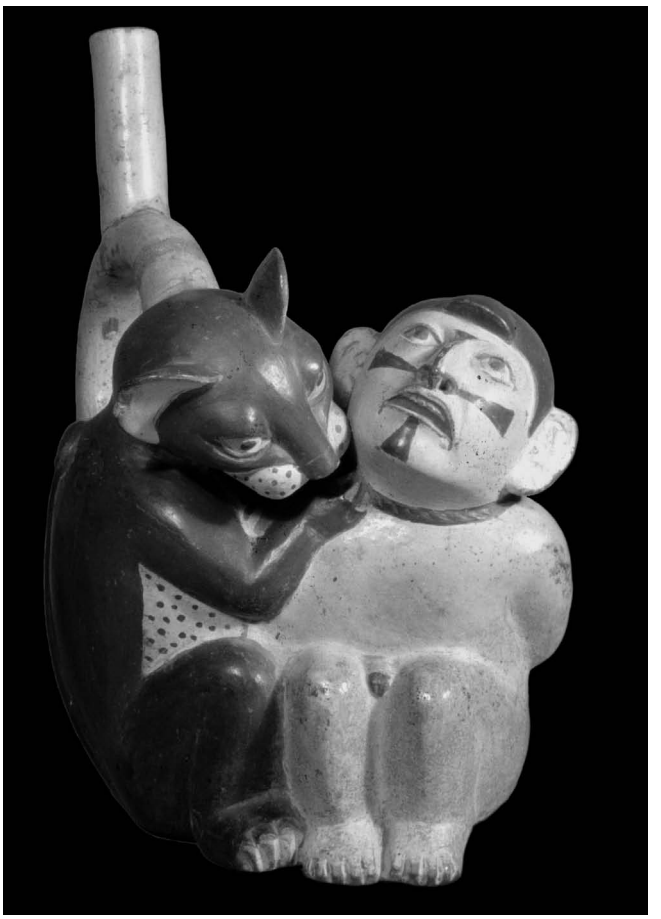

Figure 2.139 Bottle in the shape of a feline overpowering a captured victim. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge. Photograph by Susan Einstein.

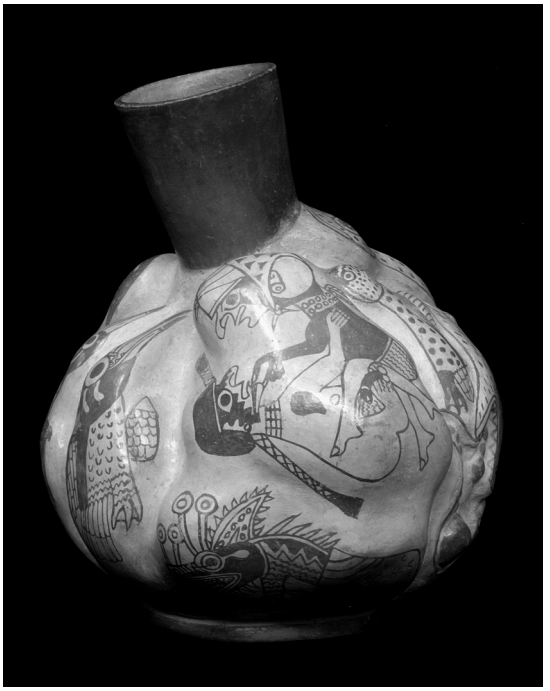

Figure 2.140 Bottle in the shape of a tuber covered with subjects. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-02921).

Figure 2.141 Fineline painting of an eventual sacrificial victim and a woman (detail of figure 2.140). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

vidual possesses a number of elements consistently associated with the subjects of portrait vessels, such as the head cloth and the tubular ear ornaments. Other indicators may also relate to ritual warfare and sacrifice, such as the depiction of the male genitals and the rope around the neck. These are often portrayed not only in scenes of capture but also in sacrificial contexts in which sexual organs are depicted alone, detached from the rest of the body. For example, a detached penis is painted between the pair of protagonists in the lower register of a depiction of sacrifice and dismemberment (figure 2.65). The removal of the male genitals may have been part of the ritual process. The man in figure 2.141 also has a necklace consisting of two rows of large beads that are sometimes seen around the neck of certain individuals depicted on portrait-head vessels and human sacrifice (figure 2.142).

Thus, due to the ritual attire of the man, it can be suggested that this scene does not refer to the copulation of a man with a woman but rather the encounter between a woman and an eventual sacrificial victim. Apart from the attributes of the male partner, a number of elements further support this suggestion: the display of her heart, the touching of the lower jaw, and the complete depiction of the male genitals.

Figure 2.142 Portrait-head vessel. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

The female is almost identical to the one represented with Wrinkle Face. She also has a facial painting and the same necklace as the woman in figure 2.134. Her heart region is marked by a dark spot. This may have some form of symbolic continuity with the bottle in the form of a woman being penetrated in the chest region and in the vagina by the extremities of the stirrup spout (figure 2.98). The gesture towards a jaw is also performed by a woman holding the lower jaw of a bat-being (figure 2.122), and, in sexual scenes, the male frequently holds the jaw of his partner (figures 2.4, 2.18, 2.70). At the Huaca de la Luna sacrificial site—Plaza 3A—jaws were removed from a number of victims. Some of these jaws were then placed in very specific positions (Bourget 2001a). In certain scenes of mountain sacrifice, the base of the hill transforms into a gigantic skeletal jaw (figure 2.77). A row of four teeth has been modeled on the lower part of the bottle, and a wavy line just underneath recalls the shape of the mandible. The victim literally falls inside the jaw.

In the encounter between the eventual sacrificial victim and the woman, the connection with the afterworld is further reinforced by the fact that the couple has been painted on a jar in the shape of a tuber (figure 2.140). In addition, a *Strombus*-monster is depicted underneath the couple. This supernatural animal is formed from the head of a fox, the antennae of a land snail, and the shell of a *Strombus* (Donnan 1978: 63). In the Burial Theme, this figure is prominently depicted on the rooftop of a temple where Wrinkle Face is offering *Strombus* seashells to a high-ranking individual (figure 4.1). In this Phase IV scene (figure 2.143), the *Strombus*-monster is situated just

above Iguana, while Wrinkle Face is in the process of offering *Strombus* to an individual with fangs sitting inside the building. A stirrup spout bottle in the form of a portrait vessel lies just in front of him. This portrait-head vessel reconfirms the link between ritual warfare, human sacrifice, funerary rituals, and the offering of *Strombus* seashells.

Sacrificial Victim and Vaginal Copulation

The last vessel of this chapter is perhaps the most intriguing, as it displays at first sight a vaginal copulation between a man and a woman (figure 2.144). A close inspection reveals, however, that it is not a simple sexual act between a man and a woman. As the sexual union is taking place, the woman is literally peeling off the face of her companion. The right side of his face is intact, with the eye clearly delineated, while, on his left side, just above the woman's hand, the left eye socket is empty, suggesting that this crude face-lift is done to a one-eyed person (figure 2.145). This intriguing vessel could be related to the painted couple whose faces are missing in figure 2.67, and the couple attached to a structure and presenting the same facial mutilations (figure 2.69). Because of the very nature of sacrifice, the sacrificial victim would belong both to the world of the living and to the afterworld. The sacrificial act would create the transition between these two domains. In the transitory stage before the sacrifice, the one-eyed person is performing an anal copulation (figure 2.38). The extended earlobes with the ubiquitous holes indicate that he would have worn tubular ear ornaments. This would signify that he is a cap-

Figure 2.143 Fineline painting of a presentation of *Strombus* seashells. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 2.144 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a vaginal copulation between a woman and a sacrificial victim. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 2.145 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a vaginal copulation between a woman and a sacrificial victim (detail of figure 2.144). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

tured warrior, a one-eyed man, and a sacrificial victim. This possibility is confirmed by the inclusion of this subject within the portrait-vessel tradition (figure 1.53). This scene then reiterates the complex relationships that may have existed between sacrifice and the feminine gender.

Summary

If we compare the four subjects of vaginal copulation (the bat [figure 2.120], the fox [figure 2.124], Wrinkle Face [figure 2.126], and the eventual sacrificial victim [figure 2.144]) with the rest of the representations, two important observations can be made concerning the whole subject of sexual representations: (1) vaginal copulation is performed by actors closely associated with sacrifice and the afterworld: Wrinkle Face, the vampire bat, the fox, and the sacrificial victim and (2) all but one of the subjects (the individual with fangs [figure 2.39]) that are associated with other sexual representations (such as sodomy, masturbation, fellatio, and the display of oversized genitalia) come from the world of the living and the world of the dead: humans, individuals with mutilated faces, skeletal beings, and eventual sacrificial victims. This double dichotomy between the type of actions and the nature of the performers suggests that the sexual scenes that do not display vaginal penetrations are closely associated to the world of the living and the world of the dead, while the vaginal copulations are exclusively related to the afterworld.

I would, therefore propose the hypothesis that the sexual acts are intellectually and symbolically linked to a general principle of ritual inversion and that this inversion takes place during funerary or sacrificial rituals. This connection with death and funerary rituals is clearly marked in numerous scenes of sexual activities by the presence of offerings such as ceramic vessels, metallic plates, and mats. Ritual inversion would also have been part of sacrificial rituals. Numerous males involved in the sexual representations that are not vaginal penetrations possess the attributes of the individuals depicted in the portrait-head vessels.[17] The most distinctive attributes are the head cloths and the tubular ear ornaments.

It can be argued that the portrait-vessel tradition, especially during Phase IV, is linked to the warrior narrative and the eventual sacrifice of the defeated combatants: "Perhaps the most surprising result of this search was the discovery that some of the individuals depicted in portrait head vessels were warriors who participated in combat and ultimately suffered capture and ritual sacrifice" (Donnan 2004: 113). Thus, if we follow this possibility, it would seem that during Phase IV most of the human beings represented in scenes that do not depict vaginal copulation are this type of individual. The scenes in which they are depicted therefore could have been directly associated with ritualized warfare and the eventual sacrifice of the defeated warriors. For the moment, it cannot be stated more forcefully than this. Nevertheless, the possibility that the portrait-head tradition belongs exclusively to the spheres of ritual warfare and human sacrifice will need to be explored more thoroughly.

3 • Eros and Thanatos

In this chapter, the structural relationship between the broad subject of sexual representations and the Burial Theme will be investigated with a number of scenes that represent subjects both on a single ceramic vessel and within the same narrative. These scenes not only present an important methodological justification to associate both subjects—sex and death—but will also permit forays into the ever-present problem of myths versus rituals. In other words, is it possible to discern what could have been a mythical representation and what could have been an authentic ritual performed by living beings? Again, it is not an easy topic to investigate. Scholars have often resolved the problem by skipping the issue altogether or by suggesting that a double and separate system of representations existed, with scenes pertaining to ritual performances mostly carried out by humans and mythical representations depicting the actions of the dead and the afterworld (Hocquenghem 1989: 23).

As shown in the previous chapter, a number of scenes depicting sexual activities consistently portray ceramic vessels and paraphernalia usually found in funerary contexts, such as flaring bowls, stirrup spout bottles, dippers, jars, and copper offerings (figures 2.18, 2.19, 2.41). The symbolic proximity of sexual activities and death is strengthened further by the numerous scenes portraying women involved with skeletal beings and ambiguous subjects that can be labeled only as living dead. Moreover, the link with death and especially with funerary rituals is reinforced by the placement of all these vessels in Moche burials, suggesting that they must have been part of the activities surrounding these burials. It is thus likely that prior to being buried with the deceased, these ceramic vessels were seen by the mourners and used during certain crucial moments of the funerary rituals.

The main objective is to demonstrate not only the structural connections between sex and death but also the relationships that might have existed between certain types of sexual activities and funerary rituals. This study thus represents an attempt to move from the rather formal aspects of myth and symbolism to the more performative dimensions of ritual. Funerary rituals provide the quintessential moment for a society to express its most fundamental values. In that regard, I entirely agree with Rappaport when he says that "social contract, morality, the concept of the sacred, the notion of the divine, and even a paradigm of creation are intrinsic to ritual's structure" (1979: 174). Because numerous aspects of ritual, such as speeches, songs, dances, gestures, and acts, do not leave traces in the archaeological record, this chapter will perhaps be slightly more speculative than what has been presented so far, but it will provide the conceptual platform needed to establish a certain palaeoethnography of Moche funerary rituals and beliefs in the afterlife in the following chapters.

As we have seen in the first chapter, a number of subjects depicted in the iconography may have had real-life counterparts dressed in prescribed ceremonial attire. These identities reinforce the distinct possibility that many of the actions modeled in clay and painted on ceramic vessels may well have been performed. Archaeological contexts conclusively demonstrate that rituals and activities such as the Presentation Theme, the Ceremonial Badminton, the Coca Taking Ceremony, ritual warfare, and sacrifices of different types have existed. The link between the identity of the individuals encountered so far, the evidence of sacrifice, and the activities depicted in the iconography suggest that the sexual activities may also have been enacted. But in what contexts?

The scene illustrated in figure 3.1 will permit us to demonstrate not only the transition between the world of the living and the world of the dead but also the passage to the afterworld. It will be argued here that the lower register represents the burial proper and parts of the journey into the afterworld, while the upper register depicts activities linked to the afterworld. In such a perspective, the tomb could be seen not so much as the final resting place of the deceased but as a conduit to the other dimension. The disembodied traveler is equipped with funerary goods to ensure his transition to and guarantee his arrival in or—in the case of a Moche priest or high-ranking individuals such as those represented in the Presentation Theme—his return to the afterworld.

In the context of this analysis, I suggest that the first illustration represents the passage and the relation between certain sexual activities with funerary rituals and the broader concept of sacrifice. On the upper part of this roll-out drawing (figure 3.1) are two key ani-

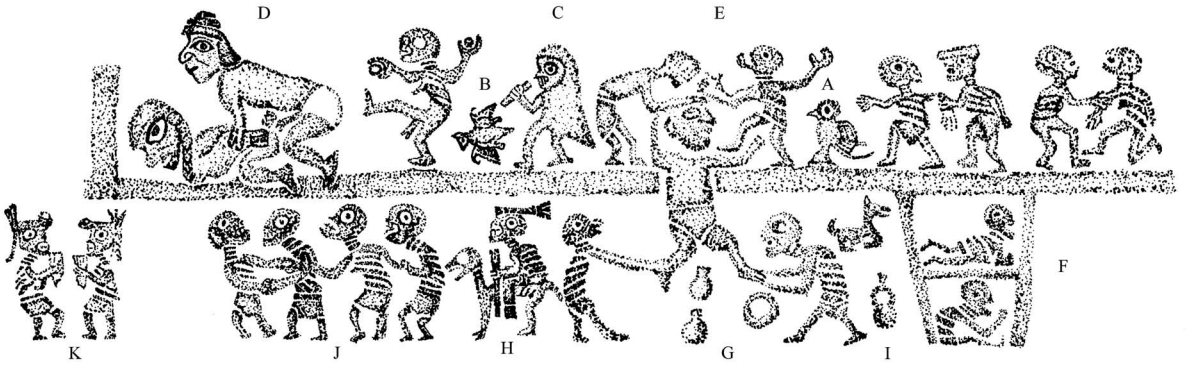

Figure 3.1 Low-relief scene of anal copulation and funerary ritual. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

mals of the night and the underworld, the owl (A) and the bat (B). On the same level, there is also a flute player with a mutilated face (C) and a scene of anal copulation (D). This act thus confirms the hypothesis that sexual performances are related to the funerary ritual. Interestingly, the head cloth of the male indicates that he is an eventual sacrificial victim. The traveler or deceased is passing between the two levels (E). He seems to be at the same time prevented from reaching the surface by one pair of skeletons in the upper register and held back at the bottom by another. This transition seems to be an undertaking fraught with difficulty. At this point, it is not possible to know the detailed myth explaining this transition.

On the lower register, there is a series of elements associated with burials: two dead individuals in their funerary chambers or caskets (F), a group of ceramics (G), an amputee transported on a llama (H), a sacrificed llama (I), a procession of skeletal beings (J),[1] and two musicians playing panpipes (K). The position of the two individuals in the rectangular chambers (F) would appear to be unusual if we consider that the Moche commonly place the body of the deceased on its back, in a fully extended position. In complex burials containing multiple corpses, however, the individuals of secondary importance are consistently organized in relation with the body of the principal figure. In the elaborate burials found at Sipán, San José de Moro, Huaca Cao Viejo, and Huaca de la Cruz, these secondary individuals have sometimes been placed lying on their chest, on their side, in a tightly flexed position, and even in a seated posture.

Another depiction (figure 3.2) recalls the same scene but with a few changes that indicate the range of variation allowed for a given representation. The person passing between the two levels is now depicted in a frontal view (A). It would appear that the mutilated individual to the left is not playing the flute, as before, but blowing a *Strombus*-shell trumpet (B).

Contrary to the opinion of Hocquenghem (1989), who proposed that this scene represents the passage of the dead from the world of the living on the upper register to the world of the dead on the lower register, I would suggest that it depicts a passage from the world of the dead in the lower register to the afterworld in the upper register. Instead of witnessing a passage from life to death, it may represent the subsequent transition, the one following death. The essence of the deceased is the passing from the world of the dead to the afterworld. Three elements seem to substantiate this proposition: the anal copulation, which is also performed by skeletal and mutilated individuals in other scenes; the presence of animals of the afterworld, the owl and the bat; and the skeletal beings evenly represented in the two levels. Therefore, there is a possibility that the tomb is indeed perceived as transitory, and, by inversion, the dead is actually resurfacing, with a certain difficulty, into this other world.

This transition from death to another life, from the lower to the upper register, may also have been expressed by an extraordinary bowl (figure 3.3). Inside the vessel is a small skeletal being firmly holding the legs of a person attempting to break free from its grip—the grip of death. The human individual has been modeled with the lower half of his body inside the vessel, and the other half appearing outside, across the wall of the vessel. The wall of the vessel now replaces the separation level seen in the previous scene. The crossing between the two levels is, in any case, fraught with difficulties. Not only is the person in figures 3.1 and 3.2 held back by his feet, he is also threatened by the skeleton to the right holding a rock in his hand. The rock is especially apparent in figure 3.2.

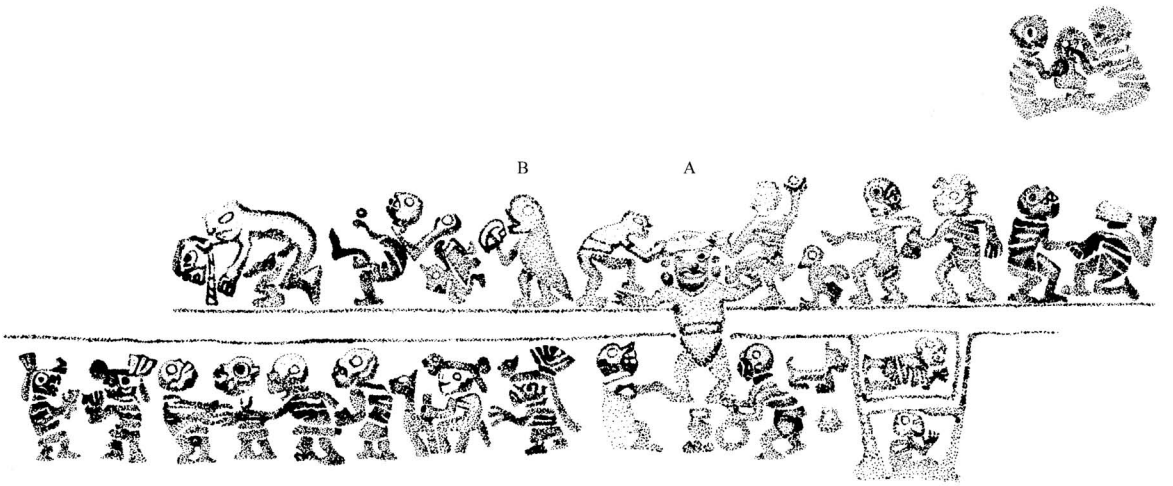

Figure 3.2 Low-relief scene of anal copulation and funerary ritual. Museo Amano, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

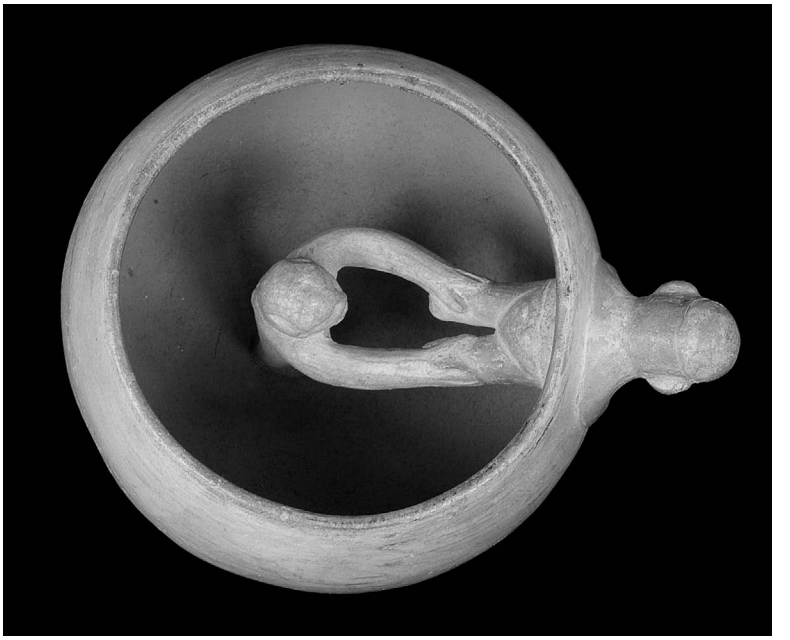

Figure 3.3 Bowl with a human attempting to break free from the grip of a skeletal being. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML002281).

It could be that the artist has tried to represent in the same scene the totality of a story, including, at the same time, mythical and ritual components. In this case, the deceased could well be the same individual who is seen sodomizing the woman under the threat and scrutiny of the skeleton. This skeleton also holds rocks in his hands to enforce and to mark the ritualized and sacrificial aspect of this sexual activity. As shown earlier, the throwing of rocks is usually associated with sacrificial activities (figure 2.65). Sexual acts of this nature may also have constituted an integral part of funerary rituals, and of the mourning process. The presence of male individuals close to the activity of ritual warfare and sacrifice further indicates that sexual activities may also have been related to this other ritual of transition. Numerous other representations appear to depict rituals that were actually performed, and some evidence for them was found in the archaeological record. Also, the funerary offerings often located around sexual activities may represent a further indication that these acts may have taken place around the time of a burial.

To understand how mythical and ritual components may coexist in a single representation, we have to take into account the inherent complexity of the mythical discourse and the jointly synchronic and diachronic nature of the funerary ritual:

> Mythical history thus presents the paradox of being both disjoined from and conjoined with the present. It is disjoined from it because the origi-

> nal ancestors were of a nature different from contemporary men: they were creators and these are imitators. It is conjoined with it because nothing has been going on since the appearance of the ancestors except events whose recurrence periodically effaces their particularity. It remains to be shown how the savage mind succeeds not only in overcoming this twofold contradiction, but also in deriving from it the materials of a coherent system in which diachrony, in some sort mastered, collaborates with synchrony without the risk of further conflicts arising between them. Thanks to ritual, the "disjoined" past of myth is expressed, on the one hand, through biological and seasonal periodicity and, on the other, through the "conjoined" past, which unites from generation to generation the living and the dead. (Lévi-Strauss 1962 [1966]: 236)

If we accept the hypothesis that certain beings with supernatural attributes are largely responsible for the fertility of the living, I suggest that the living in return would transmit through the burial context scenes of inverted fertility to establish a dualist relationship between the two. These inverted acts of fertility are often intimately associated with death and human sacrifice. The sexual acts performed by human individuals, who are mostly eventual sacrificial victims, and transitional individuals would symbolize the necessary inversion and transformation between death and the afterlife, or between inverted fertility and fertility. In the same manner, the dead and those who are sacrificed pass from life to death and then, by transformation, from death to another form of life in the afterworld. This transition or passage from life to death and this inversion from death to afterlife would have had an ontological value by permitting the resolution of the enigma of death and reaffirming the continuity of existence after this ultimate physiological barrier.

The unequal relationship between the living and beings with supernatural attributes would make requisite a series of funerary and sacrificial obligations. For example, a stirrup spout bottle in the British Museum represents a couple involved in an act of masturbation and forcing a person who is carrying the funerary offerings to walk in front of them (figure 3.4). He moves under the threat of a stone by the male and is pushed forward by a stick held by the woman. The wide blade at the end of the stick is possibly indicative of a digging implement. The object is also strikingly similar to the stick used to stir the mixture in figure 2.128. It indicates that this procession may have been part of a much more complex narrative. The stick may also symbolize the necessary breaking of the ground and digging of the burial chamber. It is worth noting once more that in addition to funerary offerings, the skeletal being shown in chapter 1 (figure 1.57) also carried a stick under his right arm. Figure 3.4 demonstrates that ritual masturbation, like anal copulation, is closely linked to the funerary rituals as a rite of inversion. In this case, the act of masturbation appears as integral to the funerary rituals as the trans-

port of funerary offerings. Because the stick may indicate the necessity to dig the tomb of the deceased at the end of this procession and include the funerary paraphernalia, it is even held upside down, perhaps to mark once more the necessary concept of inversion by physically holding the spade not by its handle but by its blade.

A sculpture, also modeled on the top of another stirrup spout bottle, recalls exactly the same concept; this time, however, both the male individual and the carrier of the offerings are depicted as skeletal beings (figure 3.5). In figures 3.4 and 3.5, it is difficult to determine exactly the identity of the male individual holding the rock. For example, is he the deceased pursuing his journey into the afterlife? In that case, it would be understandable that a human or a skeletal being can be shown performing the same activity. The same conceptual continuity has been seen with the carrying of funerary offerings, where human and skeletal beings are virtually interchangeable (figures 1.55, 1.57). In figure 3.5, both skeletal males wear head cloths, indicating that they probably belong to the portrait-vessel tradition. Indeed, a portrait vessel depicts the same subject (figure 1.52).

In Moche culture, the social importance of the deceased had an impact on the quality of the funerary goods but not on the basic nature of the ritual that had to be accomplished (Donnan 1995). This situation confirms that funerary ritual went further than simple respect given to the deceased. It was a ritual that had to be accom-

Figure 3.4 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a group of figures in a sexual activity and carrying funerary offerings. By kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

Figure 3.5 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a woman and two skeletal beings. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004332).

plished in a very precise form by all the community. The death of an individual was resolved by the eventual journey of the deceased's essence or soul into the afterlife. Likewise, the concept of sacrifice operated under similar rules, and sacrificial rituals constituted an integral component of the most elaborate funerary rituals—those that were performed for the highest ranking individuals of Moche society.

4 • Thanatos

In this chapter, I will explore the "afterworld" or "world of the ancestors," terms that have loosely been applied to a number of concepts and representations in Moche culture and iconography. It is not by any means an easy undertaking to visit the mindscape of an ancient society, but I would argue that a number of concepts developed so far, especially those of symbolic duality and ritual inversion, should provide us with the tools needed to attempt this journey.

The emphasis will now be given to a number of scenes, predominantly from Phase V, that represent what appear to be funerary rituals. One of our main arguments for associating the Burial Theme with the sexual representations is that, in addition to being intricately related to each other, both are governed by similar symbolic rules, an ontological grammar of some sort. The burial scenes, except for one crucial example, come from only one location, the Late Moche settlement of San José de Moro in the Jequetepeque valley. Therefore, it will be important here to demonstrate the extent to which the Burial Theme formed an integral part of the iconography and was not just an idiosyncrasy mostly originating from an isolated Late Moche site. Fortunately, detailed archaeological contexts and a number of earlier Phase IV examples provide us with the information needed to make such a demonstration.

A fineline painting depicting the Burial Theme is probably the most complex one of Moche iconography (figure 4.1, with details of it in several later figures, e.g., 4.7, 4.8, 4.11–4.15, 4.18, 4.26). The scene is crammed with human, anthropo-zoomorphic beings and animals involved in a vast array of activities. In 1979, Christopher Donnan and Donna McClelland published a booklet on the subject, entitled simply *The Burial Theme in Moche Iconography*. They maintained that seven pots, dating from Late Phase V, represented the narrative of a Moche burial for a high-ranking individual. In a later publication

(1999), their sample increased to sixteen painted ceramics. In both publications they mentioned that in all these scenes, a series of double lines consistently separated four activities: the Burial, the Assembly, the Conch Exchange, and the Sacrifice. The Burial Theme would constitute a narrative in their view because these four activities involve the same recurring pairs of actors and thus could not be occurring simultaneously but rather sequentially: "Moreover, since Iguana and Wrinkle Face are specific individuals, their presence in each of the four activities indicates that the activities are separate events, which are *not* occurring at the same time. This suggests that the artists were depicting a sequential narrative of the four activities" (1979: 11).

The authors did not attempt to recreate the narrative and acknowledged that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the chronological sequence in which the four activities took place" (Donnan and McClelland 1979: 11). Indeed, although they believed that this series of four discrete but interrelated scenes depicted a narrative, they could not present it as a continuous narrative and were unable to explain the presence of Wrinkle Face and Iguana in each of the activities. The main problem resided in explaining the relationship between the two most prominent activities—the Burial and the Conch Exchange—and determining the identity of the individual seated inside the temple.

The principal objective of this chapter is to explore the concept of an afterworld by taking up the challenge and proposing a sequence for the narrative. Second, I will argue that even if this theme is related to funerary beliefs and to the afterlife, it does not depict a burial ritual in the strictest sense of the term. To reconstruct the se-

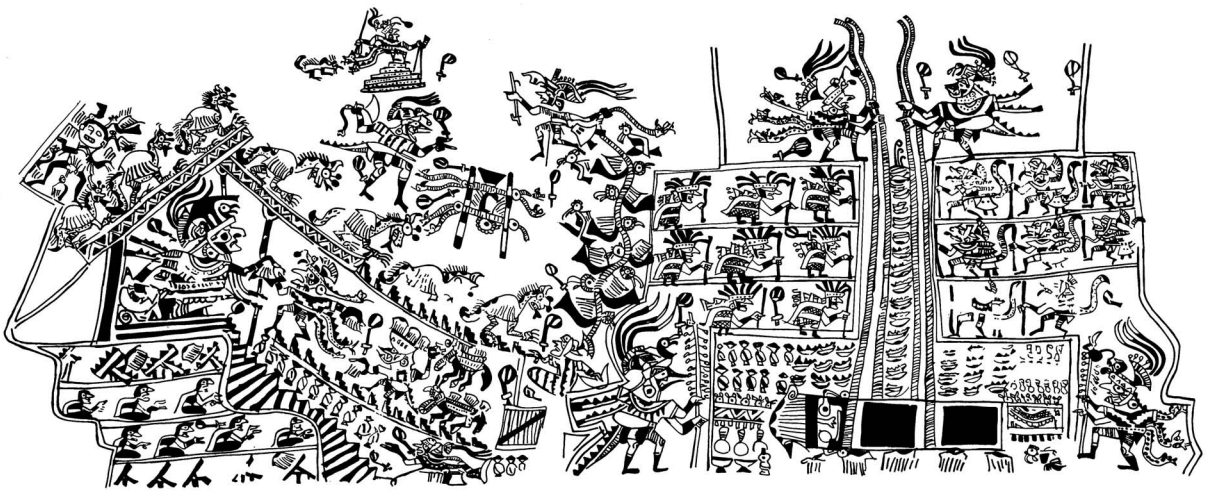

Figure 4.1 Fineline painting depicting a Burial Theme. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

quence and suggest a narrative, I will use a number of conceptual tools elaborated upon in the preceding chapters, especially those of symbolic duality and ritual inversion.

Organization of the Narrative

Although Donnan and McClelland accurately stated that the Burial Theme appeared during the last phase of the stylistic sequence (Phase V), each aspect of the ritual had already been created on separate vessels during Phase IV, such as a coffin with a copper mask (figure 4.2), a conch-shell exchange (figure 4.3), a female victim pecked by black vultures (figure 4.4), a string of captured birds (figure 4.5), and music performed with copper bells mounted on poles (figure 4.6). It would seem logical that during Phase V the Burial Theme, already well developed in the preceding stylistic period, would have been rendered in a more elaborate format.[1] Stylistic evidence suggests that the development of the narrative for the Burial Theme may

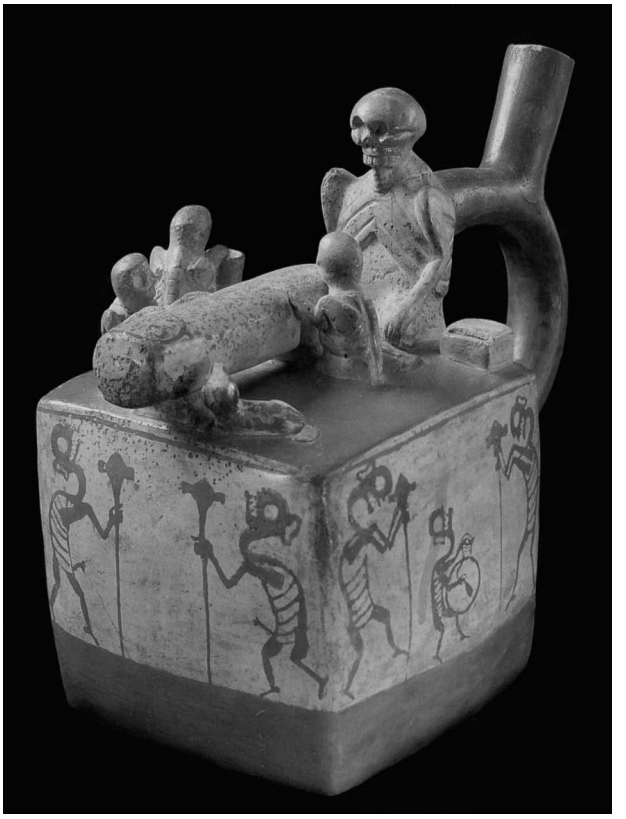

Figure 4.2 Bottle in the shape of skeletons attending a coffin. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (F-724). Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 4.3 Fineline painting of a presentation of *Strombus* seashells. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.4 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a couple of facially mutilated individuals tied to a sacrificial rack. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-004331).

Figure 4.5 Bottle depicting the offering of captured birds. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-003115).

Figure 4.6 Fineline painting of dancing skeletons and a fly. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

have taken place in the southern region, perhaps in the Moche valley itself (C. B. Donnan, pers. comm. 2004). This possibility is suggested by the first Burial Theme painting presented in this analysis (figure 4.1). To the north, at San José de Moro, the fineline painting tradition would be pursued with force, and most of the other examples of the Burial Theme probably originated from there. It is at this same site that the only two examples ever found in a secure archaeological context were excavated. The existence of earlier examples of this complex subject demonstrates that the Burial Theme is not an idiosyncrasy created at San José de Moro but rather a well-known theme shared by a number of other Moche sites.

As in the example of the vaginal copulation with Wrinkle Face explored in Chapter 2 (figure 2.126), the Burial Theme scenes are painted all around the body of a bottle. At first glance, it would seem that the sequence suggested here could be as arbitrary as any other. In the case of the Burial Theme, however, two elements corroborate the beginning of the narrative on the side portraying the activities taking place around the casket. First, Donnan and McClelland determined that in all the scenes they scrutinized, the first activity to be painted by the artists was the actual burial, then the assembly. Turning to the other side of the bottle, the artists painted the conch exchange with the sacrifice and hunting activity in the remaining space above the temple (1999: 166). Second, these scholars remarked that in one example, a pair of monkeys modeled on the stirrup spout looked over to one side of the bottle where the burial was depicted, thus associating that side with the first activity (1979: 11).

In line with the description offered by Donnan and McClelland, I will attempt to demonstrate that this sequential narrative could indeed be read in four activities: first, the Awakening of the dead high-ranking individual (Assembly); second, the Exit from the funerary chamber (Burial); third, the deceased's Reinstatement in the afterworld (Conch Exchange); and fourth, the Sacrifice of a woman and the Capture of birds celebrating this reinstatement (Sacrifice). It will be further argued that, to create the metaphysical transformation of this high-ranking individual from a dead corpse to a living individual, an elaborate concept of ritual inversion was employed throughout the narrative. For most of the analysis, I will use the first Burial Scene presented in figure 4.1, as it is probably the most complete one in the corpus. Other burial scenes will be called upon only to document and support some of the arguments. The first example is also the same one analyzed by Donnan and McClelland in their publications, which should facilitate comparisons between these two analyses and the resulting interpretations. I must hasten to say that their formal analysis as to the structure of this theme was, in my view, absolutely sound. There are clearly four distinct activities. I only wish to pick up the trail where they left it.

The Awakening

The first part of the metaphysical journey of the dead, high-ranking individual would be his awakening with the help of funerary music (figure 4.7). To make the demonstration easier to follow, I have grayed out the portion of the scene that does not directly relate to the description. This is a technique used by Donnan and McClelland in their publications as well. On each side of the burial scene, there is a group of nine individuals. Both groups face towards the center, where the funerary chamber is depicted. Their positioning indicates that the action as a whole is directly associated with the burial. Iguana stands on the left side of the chamber, holding a rattle staff adorned with copper bells. He is depicted with his usual attire: a bird-effigy headdress and a sash or bag tied around his waist. At the right side of the chamber, Wrinkle Face holds a similar object, and, like Iguana, he looks towards the coffin. He wears his most typical outfit: an animal-effigy headdress (usually a fox or a feline) and a step tunic. As Don-

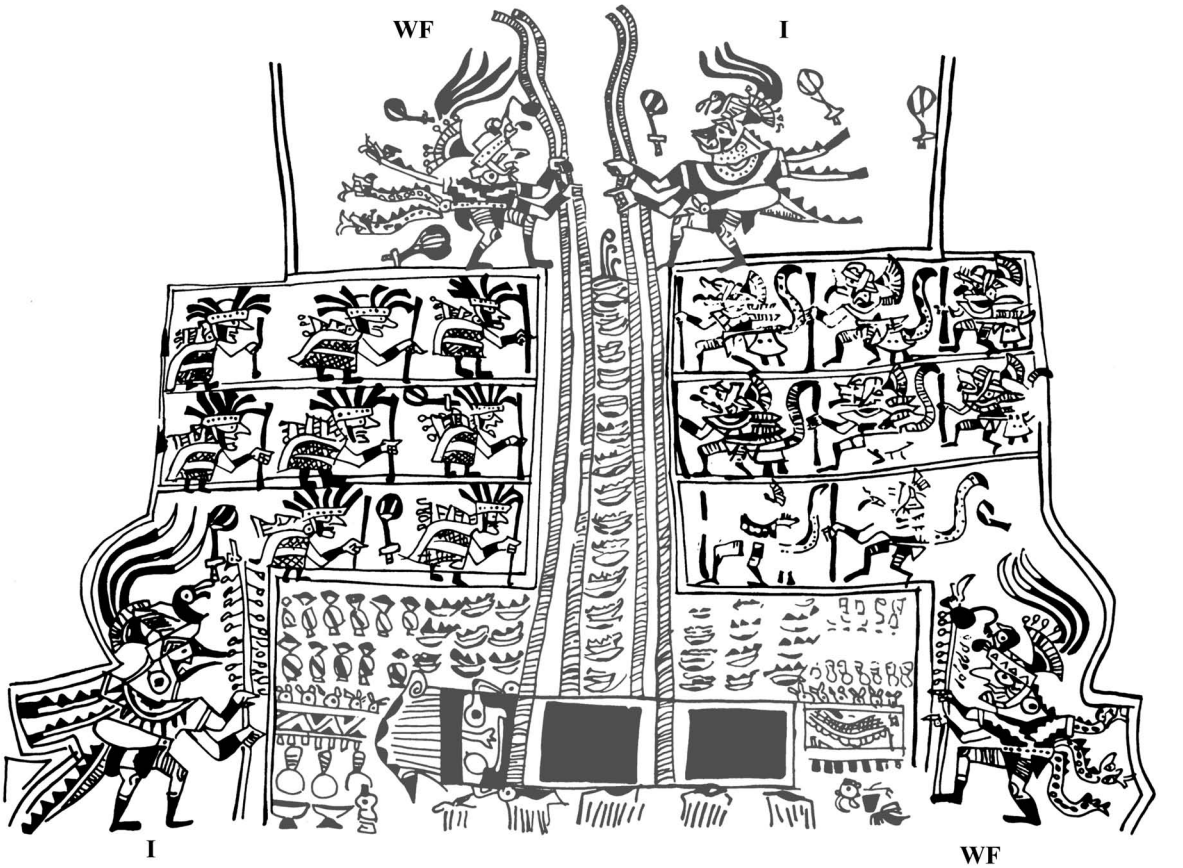

Figure 4.7 The Awakening (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

nan and McClelland mention, in some examples, Wrinkle Face is replaced by an anthropomorphized feline or human figure (1979: 7). In another unusual and perhaps aberrant case, Wrinkle Face and Iguana were replaced by anthropomorphized animals (Donnan and McClelland 1979: 17). Yet in this last example, the painting is poorly made, and most of the design is missing, and so it is difficult to tell.

Just above Iguana, distributed over three superimposed levels, are eight standing human individuals, each holding a staff in one hand. They face in the same direction as Iguana. Because of their distinctive tunics and headdresses, these figures have been referred to as Net Shirts: "It is interesting that Net Shirts are not depicted in Moche art until Phase V. During that phase they are found in only two contexts: in the Burial Theme and in tule boats" (Donnan and McClelland 1979: 8). Although they did not refer directly to Net Shirt subjects, Hocquenghem and Lyon suggested that related figures, including individual C of the Presentation Theme, probably represented a class of supernatural females (1980). Since then, the recent archaeological discoveries made at San José de Moro of women personifying individual C have corroborated this gender identification. Facing the women, on the other side of the ropes separating the assembly and just above Wrinkle Face, there is a similar layout of eight anthropomorphized felines. They stand in the same position and also hold staffs. They wear elaborate headdresses made of what appears to be a fan of feathers. Backflaps are tied to their waists. Since these sixteen individuals are not represented in the other parts of the narrative, their main activity seems to be related to the actions performed by Wrinkle Face and Iguana, who stand on either side of the coffin.

A total of twenty gilded copper spheres were found in Tomb 3 at Sipán and may have formed part of such a rattle-pole instrument as Iguana and Wrinkle Face carry (Alva and Donnan 1993: 185), although this cannot be ascertained with complete confidence. In any case, it appears that the best way to produce a sound with such an instrument would have been to hit the ground repeatedly with the lower end of the staff. It remains speculative, but I would suggest that since the same standing position and holding of staff is repeated by the sixteen attendants, this elaborate ceremony could have involved the rhythmic stumping of the ground with the staffs and the rattle poles, producing a deep throbbing sound. Skeletons also play music with similar rattles at the moment of the arrival of a fly (figure 4.6). Thus, the music played with rattle poles may have been perceived as the proper way to greet the arrival of the fly-soul, or essence, of the high-ranking person resting in the funerary chamber (Bourget 2001a; Hocquenghem 1981). Needham has also remarked on the almost universal appeal of the use of music, and more specifically percussion, during such rituals of transition (1967).

The Exit

The second moment coincides with the exit of the dead, or *sleeping,* high-ranking individual from its tomb or *resting place* (figure 4.8). Interestingly and importantly, at this point, the second pair of actors, Wrinkle Face and Iguana, situate themselves in an inverted position from the previous pair. Wrinkle Face (WF) now stands on the left side of the representation, while Iguana (I) stands on the right side. This reversal is consistent in all the scenes consulted where these two pairs appear together, which indicates that the inversion had a very specific meaning and is not coincidental. Furthermore, it must be emphasized that, in the lower section, Iguana is always situated to the left of the casket and Wrinkle Face to the right. Thus, when these two pairs are represented in the burial section of this representation, the specific position of these two subjects and their subsequent inversion cannot be changed or forgotten without losing the integrity of the meaning associated with the whole theme. Indeed, I would argue that it symbolizes the necessary inversion that marks the transition from the place of the dead to the afterworld. Not only would it mark the physical transition from one place to another, but rather more importantly, it would conceptualize the metaphysical transformation from a dead corpse to a living high-ranking individual in the afterlife.

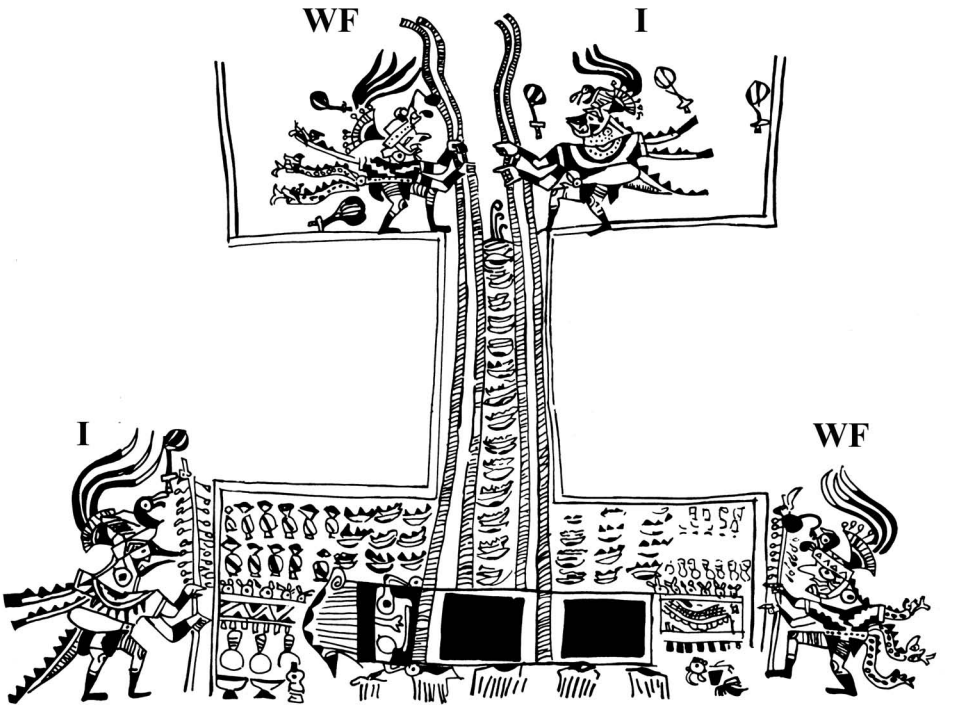

Figure 4.8 The Exit, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

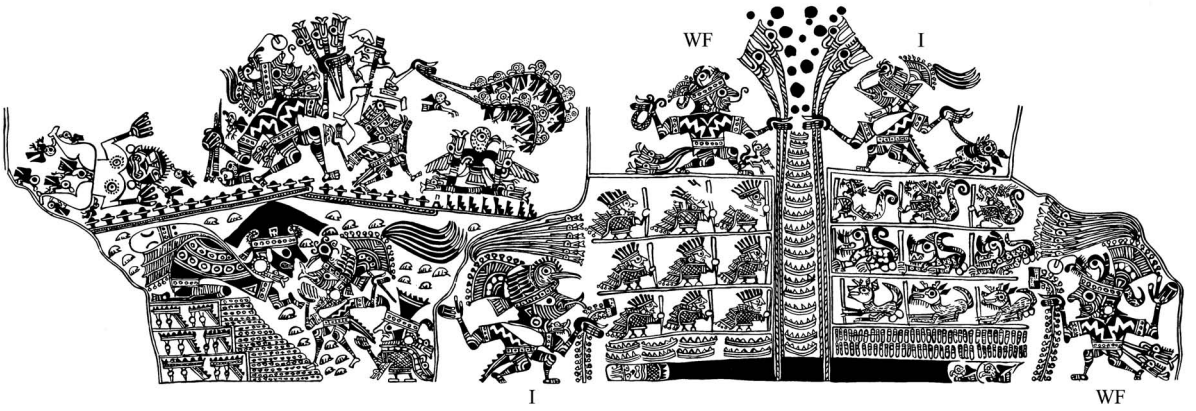

Figure 4.9 Fineline painting of a Burial Theme. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

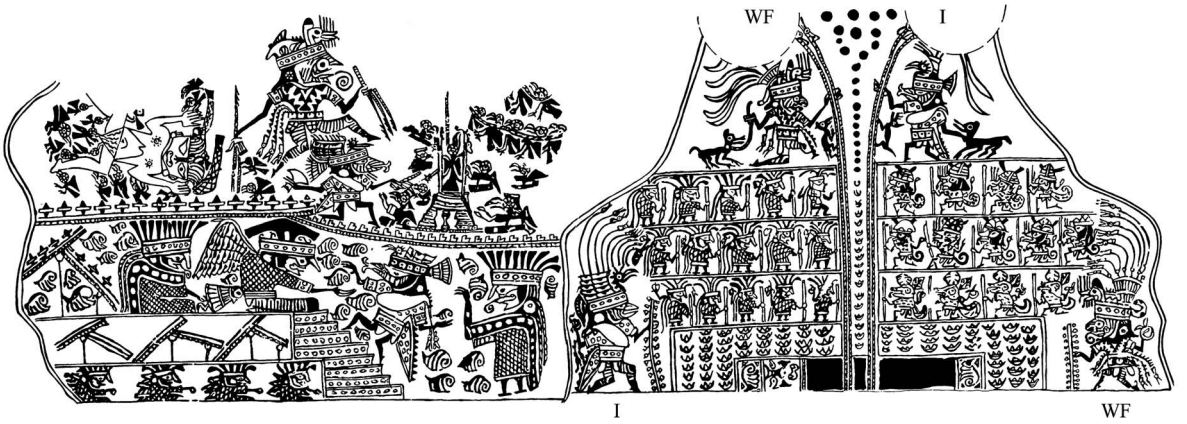

Figure 4.10 Fineline painting of a Burial Theme. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

As clear examples, the next two fineline paintings display this same necessary inversion (figures 4.9, 4.10). Again, this inversion must have been perceived as critical in this scene, as artists will frequently make certain changes to the scene; when Wrinkle Face and Iguana are present, however, they consistently invert these figures. For the moment, I cannot offer a clear explanation as to these changes or the replacement of certain figures by others. If the bottles were produced for the burials of specific high-ranking individuals, the changes in details may have to do with their persona, their social importance, or even with the nature of the funerary ritual at the time. I shall return to this question later with an archeological example that provides tantalizing clues concerning this contextual aspect.

The funerary chamber delimited by the double lines is brimful with offerings: plates of food, jars of different types, two cups, a stirrup spout bottle, a bird, and *Strombus* seashells (*Strombus galeatus;*

figure 4.8). A number of plates are also situated in between the ropes holding the casket. The general form of the casket depicted in these scenes is very consistent with those found at San José de Moro, and the face on the left side is most probably meant to represent a gilded copper mask similar to those found at the site (see, e.g., Donnan and Castillo 1994: lamina XV).

Donnan and McClelland suggest that Wrinkle Face and Iguana are lowering the coffin into the grave shaft with the help of long ropes passed around the casket (1979: 6). This is contrary to what I am proposing. In my view, the casket is being raised to the surface along with the stack of shallow bowls resting on its top. On top of the bowls is an intriguing object of oblong form with three projections on top of it (figures 4.8, 4.11). The detail is very small, but I would tentatively suggest that it represents a sprouting seed with three emerging shoots. If this is the case, it would perhaps act as a metaphor symbolizing the new life or reemergence of the individual in the casket. Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, this detail is unique.

In most burial scenes, a series of black dots usually appears above the stack of shallow bowls (figures 4.9, 4.10). Similar dots are also depicted with the priest under the bicephalous arch (figure 1.40). If relating to the sky, they may symbolize a star-filled night.

The Reinstatement

The third part of the narrative is the reinstatement of the high-ranking individual into the afterworld (figure 4.12). I would suggest that the individual sitting inside an elaborate structure, which has an ornate gabled roof and a long stairway, is the same individual who was resting in the casket (figure 4.8). At this moment three specific sets of rituals take place in and above the building: the presentation of *Strombus* seashells (figure 4.12), a human sacrifice (figure 4.13), and a ritual hunt and capture of birds (figure 4.14). Because Wrinkle Face and Iguana are usually represented both in the ritual hunt and in the offering of *Strombus* seashells, logically these two activities must have taken place one after the other. I cannot for the moment offer a definitive order for this part of the narrative; since captured birds are sometimes presented to a high-ranking individual sitting on top of a stepped structure (cf. figure 4.5), however, it is quite possible that

Figure 4.11 Motif between the ropes (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

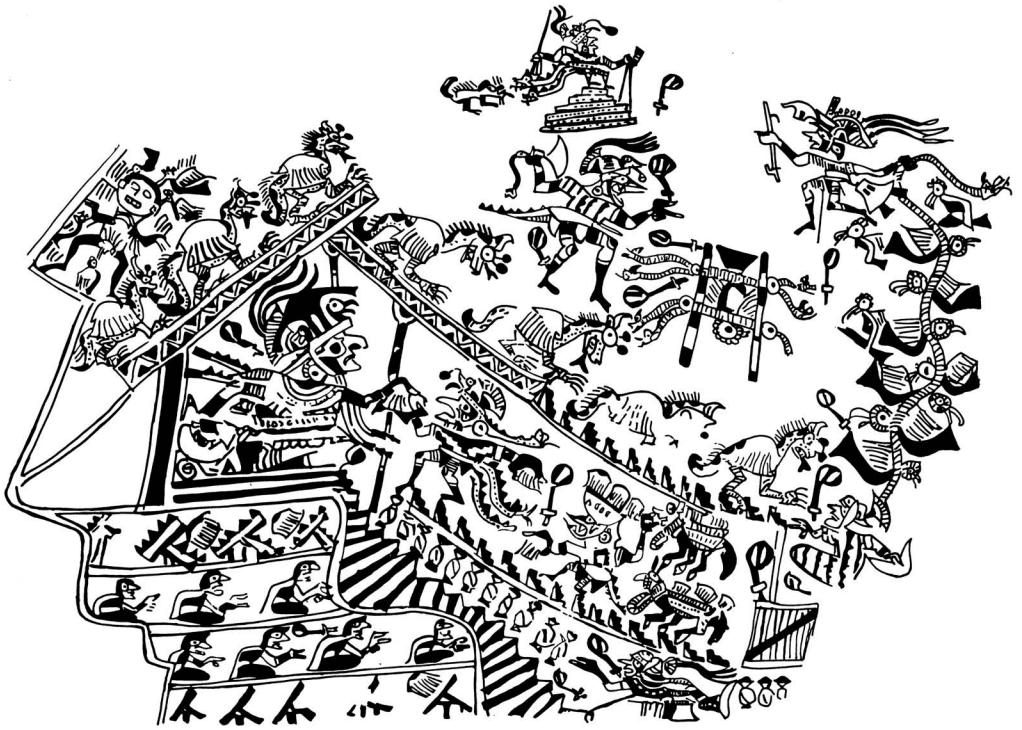

Figure 4.12 The Reinstatement, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.13 The Sacrifice, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.14 Capture of birds, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

this hunting activity took place before the actual reinstatement. The presentation of the birds would then have been part of the final ceremony. In any case, I would argue that all the activities noted before are closely related to the individual sitting inside the temple. I will begin with the conch-shell transfer and then proceed to the other rituals taking place directly above the main architectural structure.

The reinstatement of the high-ranking person is marked by the offering of *Strombus* seashells under a temple covered with *Strombus*-monsters (figure 4.12). Wrinkle Face is offering conches to the individual sitting on a small raised platform at the end of the long stairway. This person wears an elaborate crescent-shaped headdress with a bird effigy. Wrinkle Face is accompanied by Iguana, who is dragging two llamas laden with additional seashells. Just underneath the conch-shell ceremony is another seated individual who is apparently presenting in front of him a row of 11 sealed jars. Three additional jars appear just behind him. Though possibly coincidental, figure 4.8 also depicts 11 jars at the head of the casket on the upper section; on the lower section, three more jars appear just above two cups and a stirrup spout bottle. Thus the 14 jars presented to the high-ranking individual in the temple resemble the 14 examples painted on the left side of the casket, which strongly suggests that these are the same offerings (figure 4.8).

It is thus likely that, like the jars, the *Strombus* shells underneath the casket are related to the *Strombus*-beings standing on the roof of the temple (figure 4.1). This element did not escape the scrutiny of Donnan and McClelland (1979:9). The presence of the same types of offering in both contexts, in the burial and around the temple, reinforces the proposition that both scenes are related and that one of them leads to the other. At the end of the roofline, there is also an individual in a seated position who seems to be pointing toward the supernatural *Strombii* (figure 4.12). *Strombus* seashells were symbolically very important to the Moche (Bourget 1990; see also below).

This important scene is represented by itself in figure 4.3, from the Phase IV period. In that representation, Wrinkle Face is clearly depicted offering a *Strombus* to an individual seated inside an elaborate structure with a roof that is decorated with oversized ceramic war clubs. On the floor just in front of him is a portrait vessel. A row of four sealed jars has been painted on the side of the structure. Similar jars shown side by side are also present in the burial and in front of the individual in the temple.

These rows of jars are very specific and are represented in certain scenes of the Ceremonial Badminton (figure 1.38), anal copulation (figure 2.18), masturbation (figure 2.41), and fellatio (figure 2.67), or during the preparation of Wrinkle Face by the owl-woman (figure 2.25). I would therefore venture to say that such rows of jars closely connect with the inversion concept also noted with the sexual activities and with the afterworld. In that regard, does this latter scene represent the preparation of the body of Wrinkle Face or his awakening by the owl-woman in the afterlife (figure 2.25)? The uncertainty of this interpretation shows the complexity of investigating Moche iconography. In some respects, the scenes and the subjects painted and modeled on these vessels are only snapshots of complex stories

and ideas. The preparation of the body of Wrinkle Face may simultaneously represent his awakening into the afterworld. The sacrificed llama brought back to life and the ritual paraphernalia found in the tomb would now be an integral part of afterworld possessions. The dancing skeletons underneath the casket attended by other skeletons (figure 2.30) may well carry the same symbolism; the dead person is literally being awakened by these skeletal beings. The pervasive row of jars similar to those seen in the Burial Theme is also depicted with the dancers.

Finally, blocking the entrance to the temple, just behind the pair of llamas, is a door with a dark diagonal band across it (figures 4.12, 4.15). An architectural model with exactly the same type of door is also depicted during Phase IV. The house is modeled on top of a globular jar with figures on either side of its door (figure 4.16). These figures are two facially mutilated individuals with their feet missing. Such individuals play crucial roles in numerous scenes and are often represented as distinct subjects (figure 4.17). The individual on the left side of the house (figure 4.16; viewer's right) has a whip in front of him, while the one on the right side (viewer's left) is either guarding the door or blocking access to the building by holding a stick across the door.

Elizabeth Benson has suggested that this building could have been a charnel house of some sort, and these individuals may have been priests guarding the dead (1997: 94). It is a seductive interpretation, and I entirely agree with her. Furthermore, I would suggest that these representations indicate the existence at Moche sites of real specialized structures dedicated to these activities, perhaps even where the bodies of these priests may have been kept prior to being buried. The mutilated individuals with their nose, lips, and feet missing not only act as doorkeepers; their presence also signals the liminal condition between life and death. It is worth mentioning again that a portrait vessel of such a mutilated individual was found on Platform II at Huaca de la Luna (figure 1.7). Thus, in the Burial Theme, the building in which the high-ranking individual is seated may well be the same structure guarded by the mutilated individuals. This shorthand way of representing a door with only the stick across is intriguing because it may have been sufficient to trigger the idea of the entrance of the building closely guarded by these living-dead. As this very door may have given access to a charnel house, its presence in the burial scene reinforces a connection that must have existed between the presentation of seashells to high-ranking individuals and funerary activities.

Another intriguing element linking the burial chamber with the monumental structure in figure 4.1 is the presence of a decorated band at the head of the casket, just to the left of the *Strombus* seashell (figure 4.8). Donnan and McClelland suggested that this band may have been a piece of textile (1979: 7). Yet the band decorated with al-

Figure 4.15 Door, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.16 Jar depicting a house with mutilated faces guarding the door. Museo Arqueológico Rafael Larco Herrera, Lima (ML-002892).

Figure 4.17 Stirrup spout bottle in the shape of a mutilated individual sitting on a bottle. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-00316).

ternating triangles is identical to the design forming the roof of the building (figure 4.12). I would suggest as a research hypothesis that the shared design presents a certain metonymy between ritual and funerary architecture—the burial chamber representing conceptually the house of the dead.

Sacrifice and Capture

The sacrifice taking place just above the temple is a very peculiar one as it represents a woman being eaten by vultures (figures 4.12, 4.13). Indeed, the vast majority of sacrificed victims in the iconography are men (figure 2.68). One of the rare depictions of the sacrifice of a woman is on the bottle illustrated as figure 4.4. On the top of that ceramic vessel, a man and a woman are attached side by side to a wooden structure. Their hands are tied above their heads, and their faces have literally been peeled away. Painted on the body of the bottle is a woman with her hands and her feet tied together. She is being eaten by vultures, and the skin of her face has also been removed. Her hair is short and in a disheveled state, identical to the hair of captured warriors (figure 1.2) and sacrificial victims (figures 2.65, 2.132).

As I said earlier, figure 4.4 is probably a scene associated with the Burial Theme as a whole. The scenes of women sacrificed upon a wooden rack are very rare and could well be associated with the concept of ritual inversion—men being replaced by women in the afterworld. In other words, the women with disheveled hair depicted in the Burial Theme may represent the dual term of the male attached to the rack and left to voracious vultures.

Employing a seventeenth-century account, Donnan and McClelland proposed that the victim may have been a curer who was put to death because she lost her patient, namely, the person in the grave (1979: 11). It is doubtful that this interpretation is accurate, because the consistency with which this sacrifice is represented in the context of the Burial Theme as a whole indicates that it is an integral part of this greater ritual.

Another part of the representation may help us to better understand the nature of the female sacrifice. A vulture is also represented inside a wooden rack (figure 4.18). This is an unusual depiction, as the vulture has replaced the human victim whom we usually see in such a rack (figure 4.19). Furthermore, the whole subject is inverted: the head of the bird is in the lower part of the drawing. It would depict a double inversion: first, the scavenger has replaced the victim inside the rack; second, the subject has been painted upside down.

At this stage, a word must be said concerning the natural comportment of these birds, as it will enable a better understanding of this ritual. The black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) is one of the few species of carrion eater that does not feed solely on dead flesh. If these birds locate a still-living but helpless prey that cannot defend itself, they will

Figure 4.18 Iguana and vulture inside a sacrificial rack, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.19 Jar in the shape of a victim tied to a sacrificial rack. Museo del Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, Lima (ACE-909).

begin to feed straight away without waiting for the animal to die. If the body is intact without apparent wounds, the birds will start tearing at the eyes and the genitals of their prey so they can more easily and more rapidly gain access to the brain by piercing the thin layer of bone behind the eyes or to the stomach cavity through the pelvis. This is exactly how the birds are seen feeding on sacrificial victims at-

tached to trees (figure 2.68), tied to wooden racks (figure 4.19), or lying on the ground in the Burial Theme (figure 4.13). Although we may never know if the Moche delivered still-living victims to these birds, the accurateness of the depictions indicates that they knew perfectly well this behavioral aspect of black vultures and made it an integral part of their sacrificial ritual.

The presence of such sacrificial racks is not rare in the iconography. In the next scene, a victim in a wooden rack is facing an elaborate structure with a gabled roof (figure 4.20). Birds seem to be eating the victim. The structure is very similar to the one shown in figure 4.16. It possesses a similar door guarded by two figures, one on either side. Thus, if this structure is a funerary building, this human sacrifice may have been associated with a burial. At Huaca de la Luna, during the excavation of Tomb 1 on Platform II, which I suggested earlier as the resting place of a sacrificer (perhaps an impersonator of Wrinkle Face himself), a posthole was found just alongside the tomb. In a small recess at the bottom of the posthole were encountered a few ceramic sherds and a sizeable vertebra of an adult sea lion (*Otaria byronia;* figure 4.21). These objects had been purposely placed in this posthole, perhaps indicating some form of symbolism associated with the sea lion. I have suggested that clues to the presence of a sea-lion vertebra in the posthole lay to some extent with a magnificent ceramic vessel depicting another sacrificial victim tied to a wooden rack (figure 4.22; Bourget 2001a). In this example, the extremities of the rack terminate in the heads of sea lions. Partly on the basis of this information, I suggested that the killing of sea lions in the iconography may have been closely associated with ritual warfare and rituals of sacrifice (figure 4.23). Sea-lion hunting is not the only hunting activity that has been associated with ritual warfare. Donnan made a similar observation with regard to deer hunting. He said that the type of individuals involved in this hunting activity was the same seen in ritual warfare: "The many parallels between deer hunting and warfare strongly suggest that these were related activities in the Moche world" (1997: 58).

I also speculated that the posthole may have served to anchor a wooden rack and that a sacrificial victim may have been tied to it during the actual funeral of the priest-sacrificer buried in Tomb 1 (Bourget 2001a). Painted on the next bottle, an empty rack is standing in front of the typical building with a small door (figure 4.24). Again, this serves as evidence of the ubiquity of such objects in the iconography and their close relationship with specific architectural forms and funerary rituals. Other buildings are represented on either side of the rack (figure 4.24). These twin structures are reminiscent of those depicted in acts of fellatio (figure 2.67), masturbation (figure 2.70), and vaginal copulation (figures 2.129–2.131).

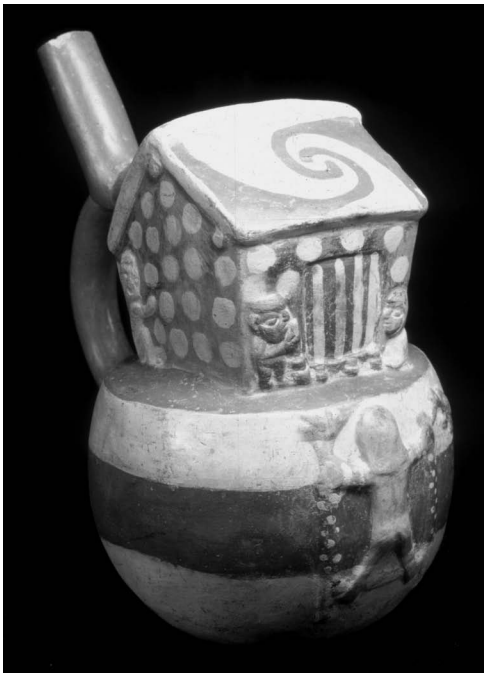

Figure 4.20 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a sacrificial victim tied to a rack in front of a building. Private Collection. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

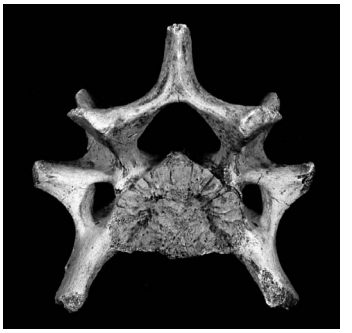

Figure 4.21 Vertebra of a sea lion (*Otaria byronia*). Platform II, Huaca de la Luna. Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

Figure 4.22 Jar in the shape of a victim tied to a sacrificial rack. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (VA-48078).

Figure 4.23 Fineline painting of a ritual hunt of sea lions. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.24 Building placed on top of a bottle. Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin (VA-18282).

The ritual hunt, which takes place just alongside the bird in the rack, is unusual in that it represents the capture of vultures (figures 4.1, 4.14). I would argue that this hunt of scavenger birds is also an inversion of the ritual hunts in Moche iconography. These hunts always involve sea lions (figure 4.23), deer (figure 4.25), or foxes. The depiction of vultures as the prey in a burial scene, however, seems to be an inversion of the ritual hunt and sacrificial practices that are taking place in the afterworld. Not only are the sexes of the sacrificial victims reversed but the hunter has become the hunted and the scavenger bird, a prey. In the Burial Theme the hunting of vultures would have been part of the reinstatement of the ruler. This Phase IV bottle

shows Wrinkle Face, Iguana, and other individuals offering a string of birds to a reinstated high-ranking person (figure 4.5). He is sitting on a raised dais on top of a circular platform. Finally, it appears that Wrinkle Face, who is standing on top of a stepped structure, is overseeing the ritual hunt and the rest of the activities taking place above the temple (figures 4.1, 4.26). He would be directing the capture of birds carried out by an anthropomorphized spear (figure 4.14).

Figure 4.25 Fineline painting of a deer hunting scene. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.26 Wrinkle Face standing on a step-and-fret structure, detail from a Burial Theme (detail of figure 4.1). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

A further association with the idea of human sacrifice is the presence of a total of 24 *ulluchu* fruits dispersed throughout the representation (figure 4.1). As we have already seen, these symbolic fruits, which have yet to be identified botanically, are depicted in a number of other scenes, especially ones in connection with the taking and the possible consumption of human blood. Such *ulluchus* appear prominently in the Presentation Theme (figure 1.3), and twenty bone beads in the form of these fruits were found in Tomb 2-3 on Platform II at Huaca de la Luna (figure 1.36). *Ulluchus* also represent a key part of the vaginal copulation scene of Wrinkle Face, where the fruit-bearing tree literally grows on the back of the copulating couple (figures 2.134, 2.135). Thus the *ulluchus* reinforce the structural bond existing between these scenes and possibly the overarching concepts of beings with supernatural attributes, sacrificial blood, and fertility.

Strombus Seashells

Along the Pacific coast, *Strombus* and *Spondylus* seashells can be found only in warm tropical waters north of the gulf of Guayaquil. The trade of these seashells is of great antiquity (Paulsen 1974). At the Early Horizon (800–200 BC) site of Chavín de Huántar, both Ecuadorian marine seashells are prominently exhibited on carved stones, and a number of *Strombus* shells transformed into trumpets, or *pututos,* have been found at the site by John Rick. Although the Moche regularly depicted the *Strombus,* the actual shells are relatively rare. Most Moche *pututos* are ceramic.

The importance of *Strombus* is not only apparent in the Burial Theme but pervades other prominent subjects as well. For example, a *pututo* player can be seen in the center of one battle scene (figure 4.27). In another scene, two warriors are seated in front of *Strombus*-monsters (figure 4.28). The warriors' war bundles are displayed in front of the supernatural creatures, and they both hold their hands clasped together in a symbolic gesture (supplication? submission?). In the Presentation Theme, a *pututo* player has been modeled on top of the fineline painting (figures 4.29, 4.30). In this case, the use of this musical instrument may have coincided with the sacrificial ritual and the partaking of blood painted just beneath. It is thus likely that the scene shown in figure 2.140, depicting a *Strombus*-monster underneath the couple with sacrificial elements, forms part of the same complex. In these examples, these exotic shells, as supernatural entities or musical instruments, are directly associated with the scenes of ritual battle and capture, the offering of eventual sacrificial victims, and the collection and exchange of blood during the Presentation Theme. As we saw earlier, a *pututo* player is even depicted in a burial ritual (figure 3.2, B).

Figure 4.27 Fineline painting of a complex scene of ritual warfare. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

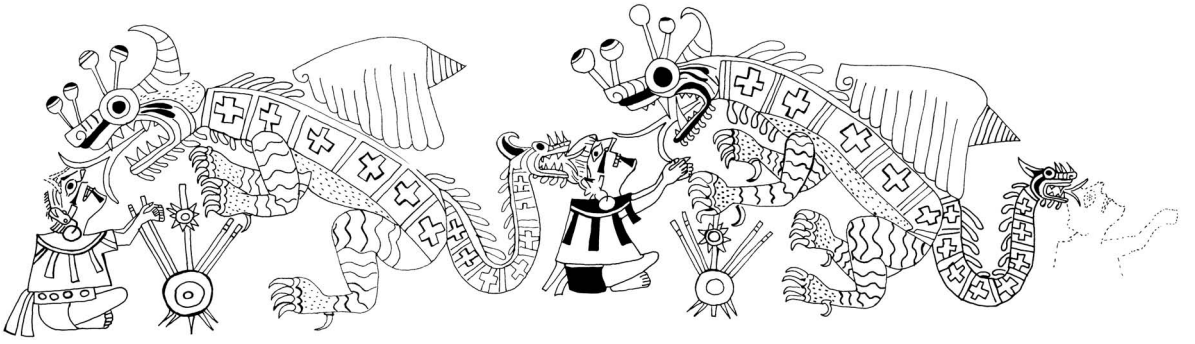

Figure 4.28 Fineline painting of warriors sitting in front of *Strombus*-monsters. British Museum, London. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Each of the *Strombus*-monsters shown in figure 4.28 is a composite animal made with a *Strombus galeatus* shell, the heads of foxes, the claws of a feline or a raptorial bird, the ubiquitous tentacles with the eyespots of a land snail, and the forked tongue of a snake. The dark marking painted just behind the eye is indicative of the *Boidae* family. The three main constituting parts of this extraordinary subject, the fox, the boa, and the land snail, would be closely related to fertility, humidity, and water. Foxes and boas may have carried complex symbolic associations with agriculture not only by their capacity to control rodent populations but also by their own comportment during the onset of the humid season. Among their features are their reproductive cycles and hunting habits, which are transformed by the changing of seasons. The living habits of boas inhabiting the coastal regions of Peru are cyclical and closely connected with the alternation of the dry and humid seasons. During the dry season, when food is

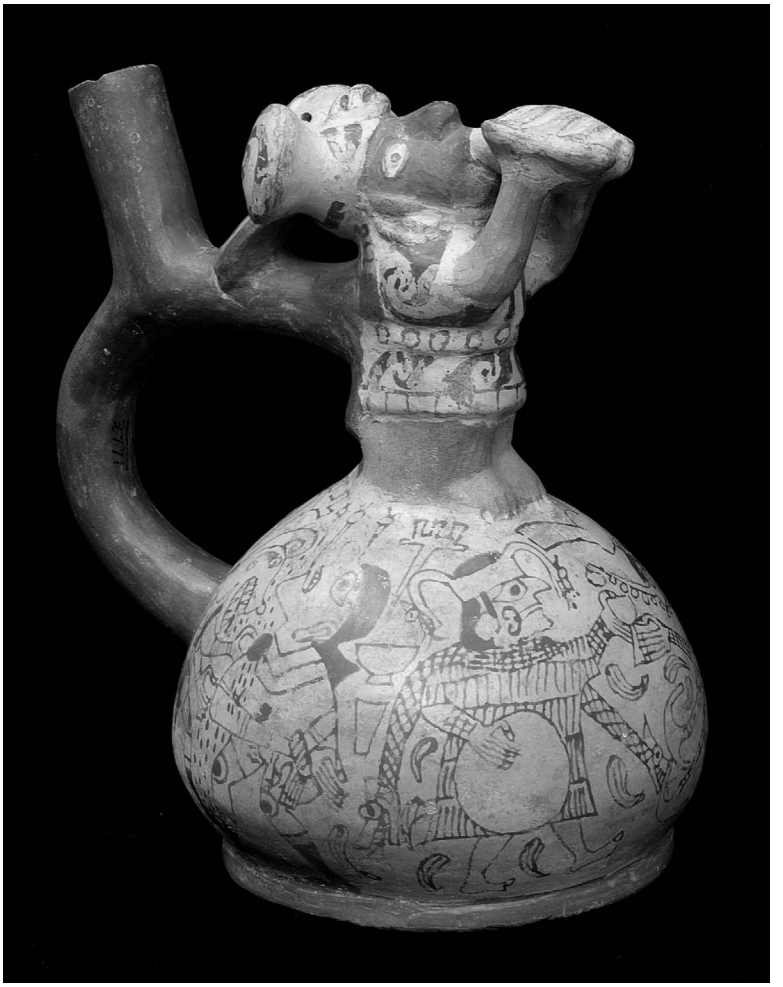

Figure 4.29 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a *pututo* player standing on top of a Presentation Theme. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03315).

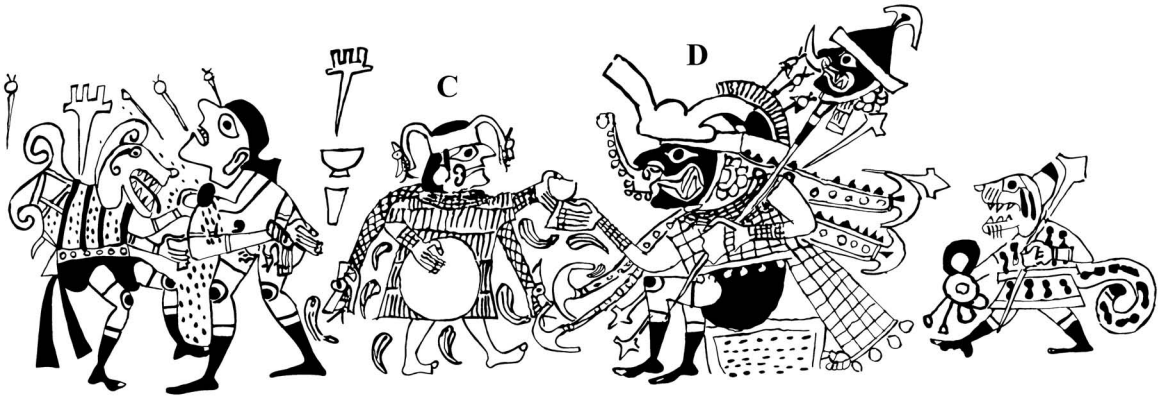

Figure 4.30 Fineline painting of a Presentation Theme (detail of figure 4.29). Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima (C-03315). Drawing by Donna McClelland.

scarce, a boa can go without food for many months. It stays underground and enters a semihibernation state, reappearing on the surface at the beginning of the humid season to feed again and reconstitute its reserves. Land snails are also intimately related to humidity. During the dry season, they usually graze upon certain types of cactus and start to move again only during the humid season or during unusual climatic conditions such as an El Niño event.

The *Strombus galeatus* is native to the warm waters of Ecuador to the north. An important part of its symbolism may also have been related to the disruptive conditions coming from the north during an El Niño event, when this sea current is displaced to the south. These conditions are created by variations in atmospheric pressure between the Indian Ocean and the eastern part of the Pacific. While they prevail, this warm counter-current extends its reach to the south and displaces the cold Humboldt Current along the coast of Peru. The presence of the shells and of Iguana also creates a connection between the coast of Peru and a distant land, the coast of Ecuador, and especially the warm seas of the El Niño current. As pointed out by Donnan and McClelland, Iguana is the one seen leading the llamas laden with the shells; and since this species of reptile originates also from the north, "Iguana may have an inherent association with conch shells" (1979: 9).

The awesome power of destruction and transformation arising from El Niño events may have been perceived as constituting part of the activities of the most powerful sacred beings. Thus, the gesture of presenting *Strombus* shells could well be a symbol of the reinstatement of a high-ranking individual and, also, a gesture of deference (see figure 4.3). Although clear archaeological evidence is still lacking, I would argue that, in the context of their representation, the *Strombus* as an object and the *pututo* as a musical instrument are closely related to some form of worship of these sacred beings. The nature of rulership and the possible connections that may have existed between high-ranking individuals such as those found at Sipán and iconographical subjects with supernatural attributes will be explored in Chapter 5.

Archaeological Evidence of an Afterworld

An archaeological context from the site of San José de Moro will now be discussed to test the hypothesis that the Moche believed in an afterworld and that symbolic duality and ritual inversion were the main conceptual tools used to explain and to represent the transition or passage from death in this world into life in another.

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, in 1991 and 1992, Christopher Donnan and Luis Jaime Castillo (1994) discovered the elaborate tombs of two high-ranking women at San José de Moro. These funer-

ary chambers, each containing multiple corpses, had been carved into the floor of the plaza near the main ramp leading to the summit of Huaca La Capilla (Castillo and Donnan 1994: 129). On the basis of the artifacts found in these tombs, they were conclusively able to identify these women as the physical representatives of individual C of the Presentation Theme (Donnan and Castillo 1994). In the first tomb were found a basin with small bowls and a pedestal cup painted with a series of anthropomorphized war clubs holding similar cups seemingly filled with blood (figures 4.31, 4.19, Donnan and Castillo 1994: 419).

Both funerary contexts showed a number of strong similarities such as anthropomorphized caskets adorned with legs, arms, and a mask, all made with sheets of silver-copper alloy; these caskets with masks closely match the representations on the coffins. More importantly for present analysis, a stirrup spout bottle representing the Burial Theme was also located in the second tomb. It had been placed in a niche situated in the southwest corner to the proper left of the deceased (figure 4.32); and the bottle had been carefully placed in an inverted position. The bottle was leaning against the wall of the niche, balanced on its spout (figure 4.33). Moreover, this intentionally inverted bottle had been placed in the middle of two pairs of vessels. The first pair, placed near the edge of the niche, is comprised of two nearly identical neck-effigy jars. The face of one looks down, whereas the other faces up in the opposite position (figure 4.33). The second pair flanks each side of the Burial Theme vessel. In this example, only their stirrup spout handles have been oriented in different directions. They present nearly identical representations of a boat

Figure 4.31 Basin with small bowls and pedestal cup. Tomb 3, San José de Moro. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 4.32 Tomb of the second priestess found at San José de Moro. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 4.33 Niche with ceramic vessels in Tomb 2, San José de Moro. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 4.34 Burial Theme in Tomb 2, San José de Moro. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

scene (figure 4.34).

I suggest that the inverted position of the Burial Theme vessel indicates that the attendants to this funerary ritual were fully aware of the ritual inversion associated with this subject, and they decided physically to reassert the concept by carefully arranging the bottle in this precarious position. Furthermore, I would argue that this context constitutes tangible evidence that ritual inversion is not merely speculation by the analyst but rather that it clearly inhabited the

mindscape of Moche people. The inversion of certain offerings would have been carried out in most of their funerary activities. For example, resting right on top of the face of the Warrior-Priest of Huaca de la Cruz, a series of twelve large gourd bowls had been placed in an inverted position (figure 1.17). Furthermore, this context reinforces the possibility that rituals of inversion, such as certain sexual activities seen earlier, were performed during this part of the funerary ritual (figures 3.1, 3.4).

Donnan suggested that the caskets with the metallic masks, legs, and arms may have symbolized the animated reed boats extensively depicted during Phase V (2003b). Because of these elements, I would argue that his assumption is correct. In this context, the world of the sea and the Burial Theme have been carefully joined together not only by being placed side by side but also by the intentional positioning of artifacts that replicate complex forms of ritual inversion and symbolic dualities. The painted scenes on each side of these almost identical vessels represent a woman navigating on a reed boat. She personifies a Net Shirt, identical to those seen in the Awakening scene of the Burial Theme found just alongside (figure 4.35). She would thus make her journey into the afterlife in this reed boat. As mentioned by Donnan and McClelland, this association between the Boat Theme and the Burial Theme may be even closer:

> Almost every Moche V representation of a tule boat, whether realistic or stylized has a Net Shirt inside it. As mentioned above, some of the most enigmatic of the burial goods shown around the coffins in the burial activity are the oblong objects with lines across their widths. It is curious that the only representation of similar objects in Moche art are on the torsos of Net Shirts seated in the tule boats. Moreover, the jars above the right side of the casket in Figure 10 are remarkably similar to those shown in tule boats. (1979: 8)

The burial scene found in the priestess tomb is very illuminating, as it does not portray a generic scene but rather what appears to be a very specific activity seemingly painted for this burial. The first section of this Burial Theme is in many respects quite similar to the first one presented in this chapter. On each side of the casket Wrinkle Face and Iguana hold a rattle pole, and, as expected, they are situated to the right and to the left of the coffin respectively (figure 4.35). The assembly consists of four Net Shirt women, each holding a staff, on the side of Iguana and four animals, two felines and two deer, on the side of Wrinkle Face. On the upper part of this section, Wrinkle Face and Iguana are holding the ropes leading to the casket, and, as again expected, they have been placed in an inverted position. Albeit in a somewhat abbreviated format, the Reinstatement section also portrays a female lying on the ground and the hunting and capture of black vultures. In the temple structure, though, the presentation of

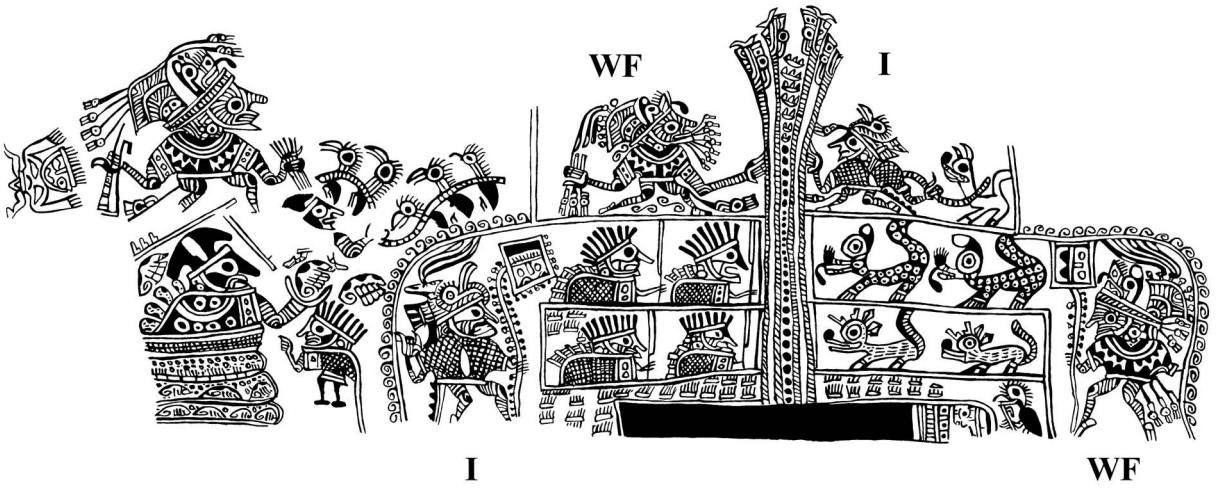

Figure 4.35 Fineline painting of the Burial Theme from Tomb 2, San José de Moro. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.36 Fineline painting of the Burial Theme from Tomb 2, San José de Moro (detail of 4.35). Drawing by Donna McClelland.

seashells is different. It presents a male individual with a crescent headdress, sitting on the summit of the structure. He holds a *Strombus* seashell, and a woman stands in front of him (figure 4.36). In this example, it would appear that the presentation of conch shells is made towards the woman. If this is so, it is possible that in this instance, she is being reinstated by having a *Strombus* offered to her by a higher-ranking individual.

The exact narrative sequence between the Burial Theme and the Boat Theme remains speculative, and other secure contexts will be needed to assess the complexities and intricacies of the story. For example, is this aquatic journey taking place between the place of burial and the afterworld? These two themes may have been part of a complex series of narratives involving a number of distinct but interrelated rituals and activities. It could be that the next representation, from Phase V, may well depict another narrative closely related to the Boat and the Burial Themes (figure 4.37). In the lower and central

section, warlike activities are performed, and warriors are captured by anthropomorphized objects and an animated reed boat (figure 4.38). Individual A, a Net Shirt woman, and an individual sitting in a dark recess in the lower left-hand corner of the scene supervise the activities.

In the second and middle sections, three boats are journeying towards a temple. The individuals in the boats may represent the subjects seen in the taking of prisoners, because one wears the marine headdress, the second one is a Net Shirt, and the third bears a crescent-shaped headdress (figure 4.39). In this example, however, the boatman in the lower right-hand corner is no longer a human being but rather an anthropomorphized feline. Finally, two similar activities are taking place on the upper section at the left (figure 4.40). The first involves the partaking of sacrificial blood between a person with a crescent-shaped headdress sitting in a temple and a bird-being with a marine headdress. The second, on the left of the illustration, com-

Figure 4.37 Fineline painting depicting a boat scene. Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.38 Fineline painting depicting a boat scene (detail of figure 4.37). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.39 Detail of a fineline painting depicting a boat scene (detail of figure 4.37). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.40 Fineline painting depicting a boat scene (detail of figure 4.37). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

prises two Net Shirt women exchanging a cup (figure 4.40). Therefore, this narrative may involve three main moments: first, the capture of warriors/eventual sacrificial victims; second, the journey on reed boats; and finally, the ritual partaking of human blood. Could the journey on the boat act as a metaphor for the passage through the sacrificial act from the world of the living into the afterworld? This might help to explain the presence of the anthropo-zoomorphic subject in one of the reed boats. Additionally, the bottles seen here and there in between the reed boats (figure 4.39), and in the last section, during the exchange of cups, may have served to carry the blood of the sacrificed warriors.

Another scene is worth exploring, as it seems to connect very well with the symbolic and ritual actions that have been explored so far in this chapter. Modeled on the upper part of this bottle, the ubiquitous building with its usual roof decoration is immediately recognizable (figure 4.41). This is of course the very same type of structure that we have seen earlier guarded by the mutilated persons (figure 4.16) or with a sacrificial rack in front of it (figures 4.20, 4.24). It shares, in fact, many similarities with figure 4.24, as it is shown with a plaza

and two other buildings in front of the main one.

A number of activities are taking place painted around the bottle, illustrated in figure 4.42. At the left, two women are conferring together. They are separated by two houses from the other activities. One of the houses contains a flaring bowl and another vessel. The other has a black vulture standing on the roof. At the right, a seated person takes care of a large basin containing two goblets and three bowls. His lower jaw is painted red. A series of jars and two other persons are in front of him. Lastly, inside the plaza, demarcated by a modeled wall decorated with a series of step symbols, are two parallel sticks, a flaring bowl, and a stirrup spout bottle. These objects are situated just above the seated man and the large basin (figure 4.42). It is interesting to note that, except for the woman at the extreme left of the scene, all the subjects painted on the bottle point or look towards the modeled building on top, suggesting that all the activities are subordinate to this structure.

If we compare this scene with the depictions of vaginal copulations involving Wrinkle Face, a number of similarities emerge. The pairs of buildings are nearly identical. The one to the left of the scene has a gabled roof, while the one sheltering the couple has a flat roof (figures 2.126, 2.129–2.131). They are also placed in the same position. In figure 4.42, the house with the gabled roof is also associated

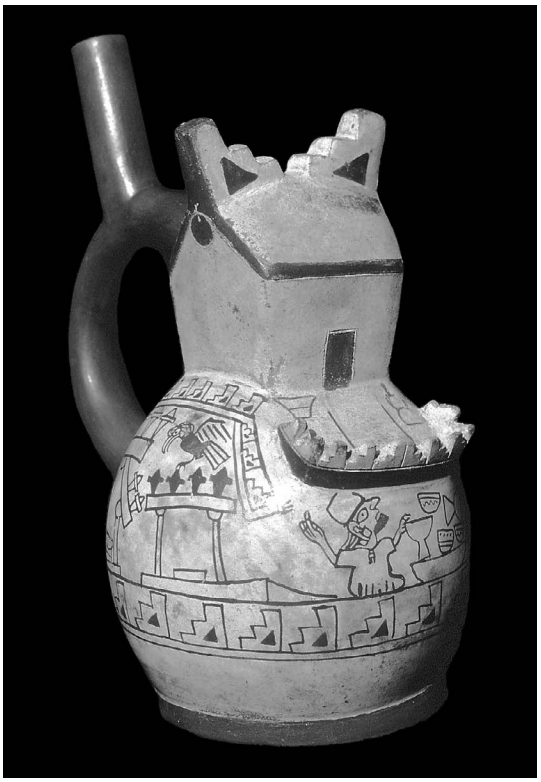

Figure 4.41 Stirrup spout bottle depicting a building modeled on top of a stirrup spout bottle. Private Collection. Photograph by Christopher B. Donnan.

Figure 4.42 Fineline painting depicting women, houses, attendants, and ceramic vessels (detail of figure 4.41). Moche Archive, UCLA. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

Figure 4.43 Fineline painting of an eventual sacrificial victim and a woman. Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología e Historia, Lima. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

with two women, whereas the other one has a vulture standing on its roof. Therefore, I suggest that these are in fact the same type of buildings and that in both cases these activities are closely related to death and sacrifice. The formal organization of these architectural features—houses and plaza—and the consistency of the activities depicted would indicate that these ceremonial components and ritual performances really existed within Moche sites. In this example (figure 4.42), I would contend that the principal elements of a complex funerary ritual are depicted. A group of people, including the two women, are involved in the preparation of the funerary offerings, and the house with the gabled roof is associated with these activities.

The second part of the ritual would be sacrificial, and, in that regard, the two sticks would represent the sacrificial rack secured in the ground of the plaza. The eventual sacrificial victim may well be the person whose jaw is painted in red. As we have seen earlier, the holding of the lower jaw and the design on it may carry specific association with human sacrifice (figure 4.43). The black vulture resting on the roof of the second house would indicate the sacrificial designation of this structure. A closer examination of Moche ceremonial architecture may thus be warranted to detect the location of such tri-

Figure 4.44 Mural depicting the Presentation Theme. Pañamarca, Nepeña Valley. Painting by Feliz Cacho.

adic arrangement of the two types of houses and the plaza.

Finally, ritual consistency is very apparent in the depiction of the same row of jars on the right in numerous representations (figure 4.42). As mentioned above, the large basin containing the ceramic vessels is in many respects very similar to the one found in the tomb of the first priestess at San José de Moro. That large ceramic vessel also contained a sacrificial goblet and a number of small bowls (figure 4.31). As noted by Alva and Donnan, a similar basin containing three goblets is also represented on a mural from Pañamarca, a Moche site in the Nepeña valley (figure 4.44; 1993: 225).

Summary

It thus seems that, in a certain way, the transition from death to the afterworld transforms the offerings. The male victim in the sacrificial rack is replaced by a black vulture. The male attached to a tree and offered to the voracious birds is now a female lying on the ground. This gender reversal is attested by the extraordinary scene of sacrifice in figure 4.4. The hunting of sea lions or deer has become a hunt of vultures. The hunt of animals such as deer has been successfully interpreted as a metaphor for ritual battle, capture, and human sacrifice (Donnan 1997). For that reason, it can be suggested that in the Burial Theme, the vulture in the sacrificial rack is the outcome of the bird-hunting activity taking place just alongside.

We will probably never know when this metaphysical passage, or ritual inversion, of high-ranking individuals supposedly took place. I

refer here to those once-living rulers and priests who would have conceptually been linked to the depicted individuals in the Presentation Theme or to subjects such as Wrinkle Face and Iguana. But if I may follow a speculative vein for a moment, it is likely that the funerary ritual could have been perceived as an appropriate moment for simultaneously carrying out the funerary duties in the world of the living and for accomplishing the reinstatement of the deceased high-ranking person into the afterworld. The ritual performance would have reinforced the mythical statement being made.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, the scenes of anal copulation, which apparently took place at the same time as the "passage" of the deceased, could have happened during the funerary or mourning period by people closely related to the deceased, to mark the transition and the necessary inversion from death to a particular form of life. Thus, the funerary ritual would have taken care of the physical remains of this high-ranking person; rituals of inversion would have attended to the metaphysical part or essence of this same individual.

The time required for the transition to be completed, and the Reinstatement to be accomplished, could have been visually witnessed by certain people through the sacrifice of the male individual tied in the wooden rack and offered to the black vultures. The terribly slow and excruciating death of a man suffering from the removal of his facial skin, or some other form of wound, and then literally being eaten alive and dismembered by these ravenous carrion eaters, may have been perceived as the period of time needed for the transition and the Reinstatement to take place. In the afterworld (as represented in the Burial Theme), the inverted rituals taking place on top of the temple—such as the woman offered to the birds, the hunt of vultures, and the vulture in the inverted wooden rack—may be indicative of this period of time and of the necessary inversions associated with human sacrifice and ritual hunting.

To a certain extent, the inclusion of black vultures in this sacrificial process is somewhat reminiscent of the relations that were noted in the sacrificial site of Huaca de la Luna between the slain warriors and sarcosaprophagous insects. In a previous contribution, I suggested that the fly infestation, evident by the thousands of pupal cases found in between the human remains, constituted an integral part of the ritual process (Bourget 2001a). The arrival of hundreds of flies rapidly detecting the presence of decaying flesh and alighting on the corpses to lay eggs on the putrefying flesh, the feeding and eventual double transformation of the maggots (first into pupal cases and then into new flies), and the breaking free from cocoons and departing the sacrificial arena may have been closely monitored by the Moche. Their departure would have marked the end of the sacrificial ritual. I further suggested that this final transition from the pupae to the flies was illustrated on the lower jaws of the clay statuettes representing nude

males that were purposely destroyed with the victims (figure 4.45).

In both cases, the victims in Plaza 3A and the individual in the rack, the liberation of the bones of the sacrificial victims from their flesh may have formed an integral part of the sacrificial process. The cleaned and white bones then marked the final essence of the person and signaled the end of the ritual. The flies located above a group of dancing skeletons or in the midst of a procession of warriors and their captives may have been related directly to the concept of the last

Figure 4.45 Fragment of a clay effigy from Plaza 3A, Huaca de la Luna, Museo de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia, Universidad Nacional de Trujillo, Trujillo.

Figure 4.46 Fineline painting depicting warriors and sacrificial victims. Museo Colchagua, Chile. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

metaphysical remnants of the dead (figure 4.46; cf. figure 4.6).

Another measurement of time may have been suggested by the architecture and the elaborate activities taking place around it. The existence of such a purposefully built structure, perhaps for the safekeeping and preparation of dead, high-ranking individuals, suggests that the corpse(s) may have been kept for a number of weeks, months or, in some cases, years before being buried as a part of a multiple burial in a single funerary chamber. This possibility has been noted at Sipán, where some of the retainers in Tomb 1, for example, may have been kept for some time. The disarticulation of some of their bones indicated that these women had been moved a long time after their death, and some type of building may have been used for the original storing of these human remains prior to burial:

> We do not know how long the women had been dead prior to their placement in the royal tomb. They may have died during the life of the principal male, although it is also possible that they had been dead long before he was born. Whatever the case, their bodies were probably wrapped in burial shrouds, placed in cane coffins, and subsequently stored in a dry, sheltered place for many years while the soft tissue decomposed, freeing the ribs and the vertebrae. This may have occurred in a palace, or in a temple at the summit of one of the pyramids. Then, on the occasion of the death of someone of the importance of the principal male, they were brought out of storage for placement in his tomb. (Alva and Donnan 1993: 125)

It is quite certain that proper timing would have been of critical importance during such elaborate rituals, which involved numerous specialists engaged in the preparations of the funerary offerings, the dressing of the deceased, and the completion of the sacrifices. To carry out all these activities, in most cases, a lengthy period of time quite likely would have been required. The familiars of an important individual, who could have met an untimely death, would likely have been kept in a special structure perhaps similar to the one depicted in the iconography.

An additional aspect of time is also indicated by the burials found on Platform II at Huaca de la Luna. All the nine llamas we have encountered deposited with the priests and adolescents were in between six and twelve months of age (Vásquez and Rosales 1997). If the birthing time for llamas is around June or July, this would suggest that these animals may have been killed around the end of December or during the month of January, at the moment of the deposition of the corpses and the offerings in the burial chambers. It must be acknowledged that the sample is too small and that other data will have to be collected. Nevertheless, the Moche may have considered that important people, such as those of the Presentation Theme or

Wrinkle Face individuals, could reenter the afterworld only at a certain time of the year, perhaps in accordance with the transition from the dry to the humid season. This is also the time of the year when El Niño events start to manifest themselves on the Peruvian north coast.

In any case, it is quite certain that with such an elaborate system of representation, these complex funerary and sacrificial rituals were meant to establish and maintain an elaborate belief system concerning life, fertility, death, and another form of life after death. If the iconography serves in part to represent this other world and the proper way of relating to it, then it would seem that only a fairly restricted number of individuals could access this afterworld. The people represented are consistently the high-ranking individuals of the Presentation Theme, Wrinkle Face and Iguana, and an array of secondary subjects associated with ritual warfare and other highly charged activities, such as badminton players, ritual runners, and sea-lion and deer hunters. In that regard, myths or stories concerning the state of affairs in the other world and the process of getting there would have also been explained through performances, words, and images. Ritual inversion would then constitute the necessary transformation for the passage from death to the afterlife. It provides the internal logic of the ritual system reuniting in a cycle: Life—Dying—Death—[Inversion]—Afterlife. In the closing chapter, I explore this conceptual chain of stages and processes.

5 • Dualities, Liminalities, and Rulership

In Moche visual culture the sexual acts, the transport of funerary paraphernalia, and the offering of children are consistently being carried out by three broad types of subjects. The first one consists of human beings. The second one consists of living-dead, skeletal, or mutilated beings. The third one consists of individuals with supernatural attributes and the bat.

I have suggested here that to explore Moche religion and belief system, these three types of actors had to be related to three conceptually and cognitively different but related domains: the World of the Living (human beings), the World of the Dead (skeletal and mutilated beings), and the afterworld (beings with supernatural attributes, animals). Throughout this analysis it became apparent that another group of people could be associated with these actors: the eventual sacrificial victims, who may represent most of the male individuals of this corpus, and the sacrificial victim, who engages in the same actions as the beings with supernatural attributes. These individuals and the three interrelated domains can thus be synthesized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Worlds of the Living, the World of the Dead, and the Afterworld

World of the Living	Human Beings/Eventual Sacrificial Victims
World of the Dead	Mutilated and Skeletal Beings
Afterworld	Beings With Supernatural Attributes/Sacrificial Victim/Animals

In line with the thoughts of Hocquenghem (among others), I have used this tripartite system as a convenient tool to organize the representations associated with sexual activities. This process led to the creation of two distinct but clearly related types of activities: sexual acts that are nonvaginal, which are overwhelmingly performed by living beings, eventual sacrificial victims, living-dead, and mutilated individuals; and acts that are vaginal, which are performed by Wrinkle Face, the sacrificial victim, the fox, and the bat. The copulation of animals such as rodents, toads, and llamas would also fall into this category (Table 5.2).

These complementary acts, nonvaginal and vaginal, are governed by a strict system of rules that could be perceived as a form of duality. Symbolic duality may have constituted an important classificatory device for the organization of rituals. Therefore, in the first part of this closing chapter, I will discuss in greater detail the concept of duality or dualities in Moche religion and the symbolic system of representation. I suggest that it represents the first organizational principle on top of which the rest of the religious apparatus is constructed.

In the second part, I will rediscuss the concept of the tripartite system, with an emphasis on its more performative aspect. The main objective is to verify whether it remains a useful concept, and if so, to try to see how these different domains could have been connected and led to one another.

I will also revisit certain more theoretical aspects of rituals first explored nearly a century ago by Arnold van Gennep (1909) in *Les Rites de Passage* and developed by Victor Turner in his fieldwork research on Ndembu rituals (1967). In an attempt to bridge the gap between mythical discourse and ritual actions, I will create a performative model of rituals based upon, among others, the approaches of Roy Rappaport (1999) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962 [1966]). I suggest that a ritual process somewhat more complex than those presented by van Gennep and Turner must be elaborated upon for the Moche to take into account the structure of the two themes of mythical discourse and ritual action; the intricacies of funerary rituals; and the ontological framework provided by the Moche belief system concerning life, death, and afterlife. Finally, because the present

Table 5.2. Dichotomies of Ritual Acts and Actors

Nonvaginal Acts	Human/Eventual Sacrificial Victim/Mutilated and Skeletal Beings
Vaginal Acts	Beings with Supernatural Attributes/Sacrificial Victim/Animals

study has implications for our understanding of the Moche political system, I will explore the nature of Moche rulership.

Dualities

One of the main symbolic constructs that has come out of the research carried out at Sipán, at Huaca de la Luna, and in Moche iconography is that of symbolic duality. It constitutes the first and most basic principle of symbolic organization of Moche religion.

Sipán

At Sipán, the dualist organization has been observed in most funerary assemblages, especially in the position of some of the corpses around the principal individual in two burials, as well as in the nature of the objects. Some of the retainers found in Tomb 1 and Tomb 2 appear to have been placed in a dualist position in relation to the main individual. In Tomb 1, the "Lord," or individual A of the Presentation Theme, was flanked by two males. The individual to his right rested on his back in the same position and orientation as the Lord, whereas the second male to his left was placed on his back but in the opposite direction. Likewise, the two women lying at the head of the casket lay with their heads to the east, while the woman at the base of the same casket was on her right side with her head to the west. In Tomb 2, a woman had been placed on each side of the principal individual, who has been identified as the bird priest (individual B of the Presentation Theme). The woman on his left was resting on her back, whereas the woman to his right was resting on her belly.

In both tombs, dualist principles were even more rigidly imposed through the duplication of metallic objects, the material employed for their manufacture, and their positioning in relation to the body of the principal occupant of each complex burial. Three main devices were used to enforce these principles. The first one was to put gold objects to the right of the body and silver ones to the left. For example, twenty oversized gold and silver peanut beads were found on the chest of the Lord of Sipán. Ten gold beads were positioned to the right, and the remaining ten silver beads were on the left (Alva and Donnan 1993: 221). Second, a number of objects, such as backflaps, nose ornaments, and ceremonial knives, had been duplicated in the two metals as well. Third, certain objects were made with one half in gold and the other half in silver. Alva and Donnan mentioned that the pairing of silver and gold objects as well as the placement of the gold objects to the right and the silver to the left was so consistent that specific symbolic meaning must have been attached to this practice. In their view, this widespread practice may have continued until the period of contact with Europeans:

> It is interesting that it almost always involved exhibiting gold on the proper right side of the individual, and silver on the proper left side. This is consistent with beliefs and practices of the native people of Peru at the time of European contact. Early Colonial Period accounts state that the native people believed in the duality and complementarity of right and left halves. They associated gold with masculinity and the right side, and silver with feminity and the left side. Placement by the Moche of gold on the right and silver on the left strongly suggests that these gender associations were part of their culture too. (1993: 223)

The dualist system felt to exist at Sipán, especially with regard to the left and the right side of the principal individual of the burial, appears absolutely congruent with Hertz's seminal work on the subject (1909). This became one of the most enduring principles of classification and has acquired, since Hertz's foray into the subject, a quality of quasi universality: "This differentiation and opposition of right and left is the very type of symbolic classification, and its logical simplicity and universal distribution make it a fundamental concern in the social anthropologist's study of symbolism" (Needham 1973: 110).

Yet this is not the only device in the Moche symbolic arsenal for creating dual and complementary sets of terms. The fact is that symbolic duality is perhaps the most important organizational system of the Moche religious apparatus, and the relationship between the left and the right side represents only a fraction of this vast system.

Huacas de Moche Site and El Brujo Complex

The overarching principle of duality could have first been expressed in the monumental architecture present at these sites. For example, at the El Brujo complex in the Chicama valley, two stepped platforms dominate the site: the Huaca Cao Viejo to the south, where complex burials and stunning murals were found, and the Huaca El Brujo, which has not yet been studied in detail. At the Huacas de Moche site in the Moche valley, the city was dominated by the Huaca del Sol situated alongside the river and the Huaca de la Luna resting on the foothills of the Cerro Blanco. The dual nature of these two structures has been recognized in the past: "The composition of El Sol and La Luna as two dialectical mounds occurs with the visible presence of the river in front and the Mountain behind" (Conklin 1990: 50).

At the Huacas de Moche site, symbolic duality has been registered almost everywhere. It provides structural principles for the architecture, the layout of the murals, and the organization of the funerary and sacrificial contexts. It is likely that this fundamental principle predates the Moche (Burger 1992), but it was successfully used and expanded by them.

The excavations carried out at Huaca de la Luna have certainly confirmed the profoundly religious and ceremonial nature of the building; a detailed archaeological project will need to be carried out,

however, before we can properly assess the exact function of the Huaca del Sol and the relation to its companion at the base of the Cerro Blanco. At Huaca de la Luna, dualist organizations have been recognized at different levels. Without entering into a lengthy demonstration of all these elements, a number of aspects can be mentioned. One of the first great series of dualities concerns the murals found on the external and interior walls of Platform I. The external murals that decorated the north side of the Huaca, those next to the main ramp, would have been clearly visible to the people living nearby in the city. These murals represent warriors, prisoners, and beings that are composites of land animals such as foxes, snakes, felines, condors, and spiders. For example, the individual with fangs, yielding a *tumi* knife, is composed of volutes terminating in condor heads (figure 5.1). Situated at the base of the north wall, another composite being is a spider that also holds a sacrificial knife (figure 5.2). In the most secluded part of the platform, the decorative project is dominated by animals from the aquatic domain such as octopus (figure 5.3), catfish, stingray, and marine birds. Thus, it would seem that the murals on the external walls of the huaca visible to the population living in the surrounding city are associated with the land and perhaps with the Moche themselves. In direct contrast, the murals found in a private setting, which could only have been gazed upon by

Figure 5.1 Painted relief of a being with condor attributes. North Wall of Platform I, Huaca de la Luna, Moche Valley.

Figure 5.2 Painted relief of a spider being. North Wall of Platform I, Huaca de la Luna, Moche Valley.

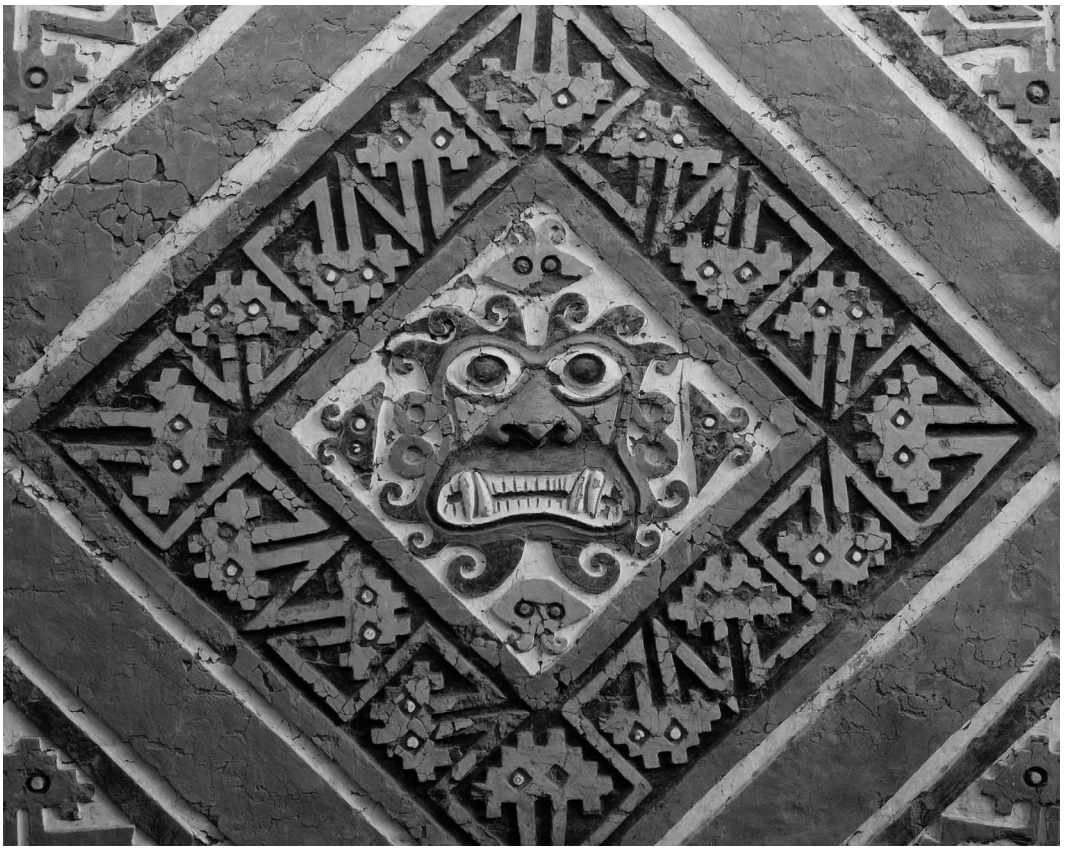

Figure 5.3 Detail of painted relief from the Great Patio in Platform I, Huaca de la Luna, Moche Valley.

a select number of individuals, are connected with the aquatic world and may have been more closely related to the most sacred beings.

Duality is further expressed in the very nature of the murals, where geometric designs are treated in a dualist fashion. For example, the central figure of the Platform I mural represents an octopus—a saltwater animal—depicted against a white background, whereas in the surrounding diagonal band, a series of geometric catfishes—mainly a freshwater creature—has been modeled over a black background (figure 5.3).

Iconography

Dualities have been noted first in the actual funerary assemblages, in which pairs of seemingly similar vessels have been deposited together in the same burial. Although in some cases the vessels appear to be identical, this is not the case since differences, however slight, are always present (figure 1.30). This does not derive from the handmade nature of the objects, because, in most cases, the use of the same mold would have prevented these differences from occurring. I would argue that it is a conscious effort on the part of the Moche, as these differences are sometimes highlighted by depositing a ceramic vessel alongside an identical, but unfired one (figure 1.29). Dualities may also be produced on a single piece by creating authentic living-dead (figure 1.7), a cross between a monkey and a man, that is, a composite portrait that includes human, cranial, and simian features (figure 1.51), or even a one-eyed person (figure 1.53).

From the subjects intimately associated with sexual activities, I have also suggested that dualism may have gone even further: that the colors employed in manufacture may have symbolized life through the red color and death through the cream color. The use of these contrasting colors to depict such fundamental concepts as life and death may have been rigidly imposed, and it may not be too far-fetched to suggest that the same symbolism is displayed in the Huaca de la Luna mural, with the octopus-being and seawater associated with death (white background), and the catfish and freshwater associated with life (black background; figure 5.3). Contrasting and alternating colors also occur extensively with the display of double-spiral, double-wave, Maltese cross, and stingray motifs.

Asymmetry and Duality

On the basis of such a strong and detailed system of symbolic dualities constantly and consistently reiterated in the architecture, in funerary and sacrificial rituals, and in the iconography, it is possible to assert that some form of social duality may also have existed. Although a number of scholars have long suggested such an organization (Moseley 1992; Russell and Jackson 2001; Shimada 1994), on the basis of the available evidence it still appears difficult to demon-

strate this type of social organization. In a duality, the terms fertility and inverted fertility are not in opposition to one another but constitute the end boundaries of a continuum. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, what is of importance in a duality are not the terms as such but rather the discursive continuity that exists between these terms. Also, I suggest that in order for a symbolic duality to exist, it must follow the same structural rule as a social duality. Between the two terms of the duality, a certain degree of asymmetry must exist for the relationships between these two terms to be meaningfully established. In the sexually explicit representations, this asymmetry was created by the type of actors and the type of actions performed by these actors. In funerary rituals it is accomplished by creating slightly different but similar objects as well as through other means.

Liminalities

Probably one of the most enduring and widely accepted theories in cultural anthropology is the concept of rites of passage put forward by Arnold van Gennep at the beginning of the twentieth century (1909). This all-encompassing term characterizes all the "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" (van Gennep in Turner 1967: 94). He subdivided them into the three subsequent and interrelated stages of separation, transition, and integration.

In his theory, birth and death should be perceived as the quintessential rites of passage, as one gives access to the human world from the afterworld, while the second closes the cycle and permits the return to the afterworld or, in numerous religions, to the place of the ancestors. To van Gennep's surprise, during many funerals, emphasis was put on the transitional phase, giving it a certain autonomy:

> On first considering funeral ceremonies, one expects rites of separation to be their most prominent component, in contrast to rites of transition and rites of incorporation, which should be only slightly elaborated. A study of the data, however, reveals that the rites of separation are few in number and very simple, while the transition rites have a duration and complexity sometimes so great that they must be granted a sort of autonomy. Furthermore, those funeral rites which incorporate the deceased into the world of the dead are most extensively elaborated and assigned the greatest importance. (1960: 146)

The main problem regarding van Gennep's theory for a research hypothesis considering an "afterworld" is that he considered the world of the dead as the final stage of his tripartite system. Although he was fully aware of the complexities and diversity concerning belief in an afterlife, he decided not to address them, because his intention was

to explore the rites of passage in general. His project was also to create an all-encompassing theory, and this quest for universality would certainly have been lessened by these variations and exceptions. Thus, the world of the dead became a sort of all-encompassing locale incorporating at the same time the fates of the physical remains, flesh and bones, and of the soul(s).

Years later, in the 1960s, this resilient and fundamental concept was expanded further by Victor Turner in his seminal work on Ndembu rituals (1967). Not only did he acknowledge the pervasiveness of rites of passage in most societies with the well-known three-phase system of separation, margin, and aggregation, but he especially explored the middle phase or margin and granted it, in some cases, a certain independence from the other more socially substantial phases. Furthermore, Turner introduced a quality to liminal phases distinct from that of the more stable phases: "If our basic model of society is that of a 'structure of positions,' we must regard the period of margin or 'liminality' as an interstructural situation" (Turner 1967: 93).

If we accept, however, as a research hypothesis that in Moche religion there might exist in fact three distinct worlds (a world of the living, a world of the dead, and an afterworld), how is the transition from one world to the next conceptualized and represented in Moche visual culture? In van Gennep's essay, the transition between the world of the living and the world (or worlds) of the dead is rather vague, as there is no clear distinction between the ritual of mourning performed by the living and the stages that the dead must undergo to reach their final status. Both processes are in fact lumped together:

> It [mourning] is a transitional period for the survivors, and they enter it through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (rites of the lifting of mourning). In some cases, the transitional period of the living is a counterpart of the transitional period of the deceased, and the termination of the first sometimes coincides with the termination of the second—that is, with the incorporation of the deceased into the world of the dead. (1960: 147)

In Chapter 3, I suggested the possibility of simultaneity between certain sexual activities performed by the mourners and by the deceased himself. But, in our case, the simultaneity is perceived as part of a greater and more complex journey. This contrasts with van Gennep's proposition, in which death is acknowledged as an end in itself, and all that is left is, as I said, a rather nondescript, all-inclusive "world of the dead."

Therefore, it would appear that, to explain this suite of passages, two distinct liminal phases or, to use Turner's term, two "interstructural situations" need to be created. Otherwise, death itself as an on-

tological concept and a physical domain would alone constitute this liminal phase and an end in itself. I would suggest that during the funerary ritual, these two distinct liminal phases are simultaneously present:

LIFE—[Liminal 1]—DEATH—[Liminal 2]—AFTERLIFE

The first liminal phase (Liminal 1) would encompass the passage from the living state to the dead state of the individual. It would entail the preparation of the funerary offerings, the corpse, and the burial ground. A period of mourning might also be associated with this phase, although this aspect and the period preceding the burial as such can be suggested for Moche society only on the basis of representations depicting individuals carrying offerings or performing certain rituals.

The second liminal phase (Liminal 2) would span the transition from the world of the dead to the afterworld. This liminal phase is somewhat trickier, as it suffices to acknowledge not only the transition leading to the new state of a given individual but also the reverse process of bringing back the person from death to a certain form of life in the afterlife. In this study, I have suggested that the Moche created different types of ritual inversion, which constitute the principal tools or devices used to represent and explain this process. In the first case, ritual inversion is achieved by representing acts of inverted fertility performed by subjects from the world of the living and the world of the dead: humans, eventual sacrificial victims, mutilated individuals, and skeletal beings. These sexual scenes are closely associated with the funerary rituals, and some of these sexual acts may have been performed by selected people during the mourning period. In a number of cases, funerary paraphernalia and burials are represented alongside scenes of anal copulation and masturbation. These sexual acts contrast with the scenes of vaginal copulation exclusively performed by subjects directly associated with the afterworld: Wrinkle Face, sacrificial victim, vampire bat, and fox. Certain animal species intimately related to funerary and sacrificial rituals—or to fertility as a whole—are also included in this group: llamas, rodents, and toads.

Fertility and inverted fertilities are thus situated at a crucial juncture of the funerary process. They do not figure prominently only during Moche mortuary rituals, as once stated regarding cultural response to death in general (Bloch and Parry 1982: 9), but rather they become a device to explain the second transition. This is done by linking the living and the beings with supernatural attributes in a quasi symbiotic and dualist relationship.

The principle of inversion is also present in the Burial Theme. In this case, the inversion aims at reversing, metaphorically and metaphysically, the process of death and at reinstating the deceased rulers. Therefore, it can be suggested that some high-ranking individuals

may have claimed a form of filiation or direct descent from certain beings with supernatural attributes or sacred persons. In such a case, this could be referred to as a form of ancestorship. Because of their purported origin, the death or departure of certain high-ranking individuals could have been perceived as a return to their world, the afterworld.

In the Burial Theme, a number of inverted activities take place, such as the sacrifice of a woman, the hunt of vultures, and the placement of the vulture in the sacrificial rack, the last even painted in an inverted position. In the second tomb of the priestess at San José de Moro, a key bottle depicting an elaborate Burial Theme was also placed in an inverted position. The gesture of placing the bottle on its spout not only reinforces the global concept of inversion but clearly advocates that this idea was shared by funerary attendants and performed during the ritual.

If rulers were able to claim some form of "filial," or even genealogical, relationship with and obligations to the ancestors, what can be said about the structure sustaining such a form of political authority and metaphysical power?

On the Structure of Moche Rulership

The problems arising from the death of a ruler are widespread. All state-level societies organized around the rulership of a king or of a select number of high-ranking individuals have had to deal with the consequences following the physical dissolution of the once-living ruler(s) and the disruptive conditions that this may have entailed for the social system as a whole. A number of solutions have been devised by diverse societies to counteract the dangerous instability and the potential threat brought upon the group and the political order following the death of any given ruler.

In medieval England, for example, a clever disassociation between the physical body of the ruler—the body natural—from the political body or rulership—the body politic—was created. This permitted the former to be affected by natural or intentional processes such as mortal illnesses or even murder, while maintaining the latter alive and well, rendering him or her quasi immortal:

> This migration of the "Soul," that is, of the immortal part of kingship, from one incarnation to another as expressed by the concept of the king's demise is certainly one of the essentials of the whole theory of the King's Two Bodies. It has preserved its validity for practically all time to come. Interesting, however, is the fact that this "incarnation" of the body politic in a king of flesh not only does away with the human imperfections of the body natural, but conveys "immortality" to the individual king as King, that is, with regard to his superbody. (Kantorowicz 1957: 13)

It is quite certain that this doctrine has served the English Crown well, as its descendants are still in place to date. In fact, so successful was this two-body system that in 1642, Parliament even managed to retain the body politic of the king while staging a war against the body natural of Charles I and executing him for high treason a few years later (Kantorowicz 1957: 21–23).

In the Moche case, the solution may have consisted of the creation of a sort of generic persona adopted by successive rulers and high-ranking individuals who exercised office over the centuries in sociopolitical centers such as Sipán, San José de Moro, the Huacas de Moche site, and the El Brujo complex. At these sites, such persons would have performed rigidly prescribed ceremonies and rituals. The somewhat stereotyped identities, such as those represented in the Presentation Theme by individuals A to E as well as other subjects such as Wrinkle Face and Iguana, could have been grafted onto the successors through elaborate rituals perhaps coinciding with the burial of the previous titleholder. As mentioned by Metcalf and Huntington concerning the disruption brought about by the death of a ruler, "One solution to the problem of the decaying symbol is to replace it with a more stable representation" (1991: 163).

For the Moche, the stereotypical qualities of "rulers," "priests," and "priestesses," as portrayed on ceramics and on a perhaps more visible medium such as murals, would have obviated the potentially disruptive problem of a dying ruler by eliminating the individuality of the titleholder. This is perhaps why the iconographic representations and the elite attire found in graves exhibit remarkable stability all over the Moche region, from Sipán in the Lambayeque valley, to Pañamarca in the Nepeña valley over a period of nearly four hundred years (figure 5.4).

The apparently seamless transition from one given ruler to the next could have been enacted and maintained through the proclamation of ritual utterances to the effect that the previous ruler had not in fact died but rather had journeyed into the "afterworld," where he was reinstated. It is possible that parts of the elaborate burial ceremony activities displayed in the Burial Theme could have been actually performed in the world of the living but, in that case, for the benefit of the next ruler. Perhaps victims tied in the sacrificial racks during the funerary ritual were also meant to consecrate the renewed ruler and permanent rulership. It is equally possible, but impossible to demonstrate for the moment, that *Strombus* seashells may have been presented to this newly reinstalled ruler as well. Thus occurred a case of perfect simultaneity, a duality transcending life and death with the dual reinstatement of two similar rulers—one in the world of the living and the second one in the afterworld—like two slightly different but related terms at the end of an unbroken continuum.

Figure 5.4 Fineline painting of the Presentation Theme. Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich. Drawing by Donna McClelland.

The use of large facial and body ornaments would have concealed recognizable features and helped to mask the personality of the standing/living ruler. This would have aided the creation of a more general, everlasting impression of the rulership represented by that person. The wide nose and ear ornaments found at Sipán and elsewhere would have concealed the mouth, part of the chin, and the ears, some of the most distinctive facial features of these individuals (see, e.g., Alva and Donnan 1993: figure 77).

To reuse the terminology relating to English kingship during the Tudor era, the body natural of the living Moche ruler would have been masked by the body politic of the immortal ruler. Instead of the body natural of the previous king dying and his body politic passing on to a regent, the Moche kingship model suggested here would permit the body natural to continue living through the body politic with its permanent persona, ensigns, and badges of office simply passing on to the following ruler. It would maintain both the assurance of a permanent kingship and the illusion of an immortal ruler. This would allow the body natural of the previous ruler to be buried and reinstated in the afterworld and for a new one to replace the predecessor without apparent break.

Because of the seemingly identical persona of any given ruler, conceptually only two rulers would be necessary for a given position at a given site. Indeed, at a later time, the ruler of the afterworld could return to replace the recently deceased and buried ruler. Would it then be possible that, for a specific type of rulership at a given site, only two bodies natural are necessary: one acting as a ruler in the world of the living and the other acting as a ruler in the afterworld in

perfect synchrony and absolute duality? The symbolic duality seen in most religious activities, ritual architecture, and systems of representation could thus have been extended to the kingship system of Moche society.

The mythical immortality of the ruler would not only provide that person with a sort of divine right to rule, a sacred essence marked by these supernatural attributes; it also would prevent the destabilization of the rulership following the death of a given ruler. The obliteration of the identity and personality of the ruler would then be a supplementary strategy to achieve the ultimate goal: a permanent and interchangeable rulership tightly controlled by a small retinue of high-ranking individuals claiming divine origins through elaborate rituals, sumptuary regalia, and iconography. In sum, it would have represented an apparently successful attempt to protect and maintain political authority by diminishing the threat posed by the untimely death of an individual ruler. In Moche religion duality—or perhaps more precisely dualities—would have provided the basic structure for the maintenance of an absolute social order embedded within a cyclical process of renewal of both nature and culture.

NOTES

Preface

1. C. B. Donnan: Portraits of Moche Rulers, Keynote Lecture, *The Maya Meetings at Texas: XXVth Forum: The Coming of Kings/Epi-Olmec Writing,* University of Texas at Austin, Austin (2001).

2. A term that refers to the religious attitudes that the Moche may have entertained with their dead relatives.

Chapter 1

1. The term *supernatural* poses a problem, because it creates a dichotomy between what is natural and what is not (Klass 1995). In the context of this essay, the term *supernatural* will be used only to label individuals who possess additional attributes that are not biologically natural such as the addition of animal parts. Consequently, the intention is not to ascribe a supernatural nature or origin to these subjects but to acknowledge the presence of these additional attributes.

2. The Presentation Theme depicts the exchange of a goblet, apparently filled with blood, between two prominent figures.

3. On the basis of discoveries made at Sípan, where two individuals found in lavish burials were recognized as individuals A and B of this scene, this complex representation was renamed as the Sacrifice Ceremony (Alva and Donnan 1993: 132). Because there are other types of *sacrifice ceremonies* in Moche iconography, which will be mentioned in this text, for the sake of clarity, I will maintain the former appellation.

4. For a discussion on narrative in Moche iconography, see Castillo 1989.

5. During the excavations, a third complex burial was found, but the main individual in the chamber was a child between the ages of 5 and 7. The presence of fragments of a copper headdress has led Castillo and Donnan (1994) to suggest that she too would have become a priestess of the Presentation Theme.

6. This unfortunate appellation was coined by Kutscher in 1958.

7. The excavation in the urban sector of the Huacas de Moche site began in 1995.

8. “En términos generales, los ceramios han sido elaborados para ser depositados como ofrendas, pues no presentan huellas de uso doméstico y se fabricaron en serie, a través de moldes, así como también por su decoración; excepto las piezas escultóricas que se distinguen por su mejor calidad y belleza” (Tello et al. 2003: 175–176).

Chapter 2

1. The body/mountain metaphor refers to the practice of giving to mountains considered sacred anthropomorphic features. For a detailed discussion on this aspect of Andean culture, see Bastien 1995.

2. For example, authors of a number of slightly more limited contributions have used this method while discussing north coast curing practices (Donnan 1978), the Burial Theme (Donnan and McClelland 1979), rituals games (De Bock 1998), the Revolt of the Artifacts (Quilter 1990), and so on.

3. According to Gebhard (1970), if this sexual act does not constitute a method of contraception, this way of representing coitus would be only an artifice to highlight the female genitals during the act of copulation. I would argue that this proposal does not fit with three aspects of these representations: (1) The genitals are not always apparent. (2) When they are, the anal copulation is represented with such precision that it is certainly this act that the numerous potters wanted to represent. (3) Because of the presence of the specific actors, this sexual act can be grouped with other scenes that are not vaginal penetrations, such as masturbation, fellatio, and relations with skeletal beings.

4. Recent research carried out at Huancaco, a temple dating from the Early Intermediate Period in the Virú valley, has demonstrated that each wall of a pyramidal structure had been painted in a series of alternating bands of red and white.

5. This symbolic aspect was beautifully expressed at Sipán with the discovery of a magnificent metallic necklace made of oversized peanuts resting on the chest of the main individual buried in Tomb 1 (Alva and Donnan 1993: fig. 96).

6. Other scholars have also analysed this vessel and offered interpretations distinct from this one. Although Elizabeth Benson has noted the funerary connotation of these vases, she associates this scene with a myth concerning the resurrection of a god (1975: 131). With the help of a local healer, Christopher Donnan has suggested that this scene may represent a curing ceremony. The sick, resting alongside the healer, would be wearing the mask of a deity to maximize the effectiveness of the curing ritual. The diverse elements painted in front of the curer would form part of her curing paraphernalia (1978: 127). It is probably the interpretation of Anne Marie Hocquenghem that gets closer to our analysis, as she recognized in the first instance that it may well represent the preparation of a corpse. She nevertheless does not exclude the possibility that it may also consist of a curing ceremony (1989: 132–133).

7. Copper sheeting and folded copper sheets, sometimes still wrapped in fabric, have been found in a number of Moche graves at the Huaca de la Luna site. Of the 33 Moche burials published by Donnan and Mackey (1978), 17 of them contained metallic pieces in the mouths, in the hands, or on the feet of the corpses. Rectangular pieces, however, are fairly rare; the metallic objects may take different forms and are usually made with fragments taken from bigger pieces.

8. Elizabeth Benson already suspected such a connection between the blanket covering the body of the individual with supernatural attributes and those covering the couples in the sexual activities (1974: 131).

9. The shape of the body and the head of the bird are consistent with that of the Peruvian booby (*Sula variegata*).

10. Please consult Bourget 1996 for a more detailed analysis on the relationships between owls, death, and the afterlife.

11. "La scène d'accouplement entre l'être mythique à crocs et ceinture de serpent est difficile à expliquer. . . . La présence de vases funéraires dont le liquide est versé par des animaux mythiques sur le couple permettrait de classer cette scène parmi les rites de deuil; elle représenterait l'acte mythique à l'origine des rites de purification" (Hocquenghem 1977: 12).

12. "La olla que calienta sobre las tres piedras del fogón (D) no tiene explicación inmediata en los mitos de Huarochirí. . . . La casa con dos mujeres (E) que aparece en la escena moche, no se encuentra en los mitos de Huarochirí" (Golte and Hocquenghem 1984: 106).

13. "Si la sustancia líquida es una droga alucinante, es posible que esta droga haya sido vaciada a una jeringa y puesto como una enema en el ano de la figura postrada, como sugiere John H. Rowe. De lo contrario, la droga ha podido ser consumida oralmente por los participantes y vaciada ceremonialmente en la área genital de la pareja central" (Arboleda 1981: 102).

14. "Ces enseignements ou instructions étaient dirigés par un ordre religieux et social représenté, suivant qu'il s'agissait de l'éducation de l'homme ou de la femme, par un prêtre ou une prêtresse-chaman qui revêtait les attributs d'oiseaux" (Vergara 1990: 410).

15. The wave design is present in most of the examples that I have consulted.

16. The droppings of marine birds produce guano, which was one of the most effective fertilizers used in ancient Peru. Because of the devastating looting carried out on guano-laden islands, we will never know the extent of prehistoric structures and the nature of offerings on these islands. Nevertheless, a number of Moche artifacts have been described by Kubler (1948) testifying to the use of these islands by the Moche.

17. See figures 2.9, 2.10, 2.38, 2.40, 2.43, 2.45–2.47, 2.51, 2.57–2.59, 2.67, 2.71, 2.73, 2.88, and 2.92–2.94.

Chapter 3

1. Donnan has suggested that this procession may represent a group of dancers (1982).

Chapter 4

1. A trend also present in other subjects such as the Boat Theme and the combat scenes with various subjects.

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