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Mochica: Grammatical topics and external relations

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Citation

Eloranta-Barrera Virhuez, R. S. (2020, May 12). *Mochica: Grammatical topics and external relations*. *LOT dissertation series*. LOT, Utrecht. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/87645>

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Cover Page



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Title: Mochica : grammatical topics and external relations

Issue Date: 2020-05-12

Part V. Final Remarks

*Chapter 11. Conclusions and future
plans*

The aim of this dissertation was twofold. My first goal was to reconstruct and better understand the Mochica language in order to achieve the second goal of this research: the comparison of Mochica language with other languages, which could potentially allow the establishment of contact or genetic relations. Concerning the study of the language itself, I had to deal with old linguistic and non-linguistic documentation.

All of this work really represented an attempt to reconstruct an extinct language based on a colonial grammatical description, fragments of writing – letters, documents – an attempt to piece these together in order to gain a complete picture of the language, thereby predicting what the missing pieces, unattested in the surviving literature, were like (chapters 2-8). Having gained a more thorough knowledge and understanding of Mochica grammar, I attempted to compare Mochica with other languages looking for areal contact or even distant relations (chapters 9 and 10). In this chapter, I wish to summarize and present each chapter's most relevant results and final remarks.

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter, which provides the context and aims of the dissertation and details the corpus and methodology of the study. This chapter presents the enigmatic linguistic panorama of South America, with regard to its high level of diversity and numerous isolates. I present the Mochica language as one of 65 South American isolates. In this first chapter, I also present my research questions and explain the objectives of my study, namely, to understand the nature of the Mochica language and to identify its possible external and genealogical relationships. In relation to my corpus of study, I describe my main source of data: the grammatical description of the Mochica language by Carrera (1644). Moreover, I expose the challenges inherent in the study of the Mochica language: firstly, the lack of speakers; secondly, the scarcity of sources; thirdly, the difficulties in understanding the

colonial missionary sources due to their specific model of grammatical description; and finally, the difficulty in accessing possible repositories of lost grammars, catechisms and vocabularies, i.e. religious orders' archives.

Chapter 2 of this thesis covers topics external to the structure of the Mochica language, dealing mainly with archival information, sources for the study of the language and onomastics. Despite the fact that this second chapter provides new information about Mochica not known so far, here I wish to address only three insights discussed in Chapter 2: first, my proposal of interpretation of the confusing cover term *Pescadora* known in Andean linguistics to refer to extinct languages of the northern Peruvian coast; second, language revival and its role in the construction of a northern Peruvian identity; and third, my proposal for the etymological interpretation of the Mochica toponym Lambayeque.

I developed a hypothesis regarding the motivation for the use of the Spanish term *Pescadora* to refer to coastal languages in northern Peru. I reflected on how the need to differentiate regions, peoples and languages motivated Spaniards to adopt Quechua terms to refer to them, such as the term *Yunga*, known and used to refer to the region, peoples and language of high areas of the valleys. The term *pescadora* emerges in the context of the coastal languages and sometimes appears to be rather ambiguous. The problem with the term *Pescadora* is that, so far, it has been assumed to refer mainly to Quingnam. This is the reason why researchers dealing with colonial documentation regarding this area very often get the feeling they are obtaining misleading information when this term is used to designate a language in clear Mochica territory. Since there were several coastal languages, there would have been a clear need to differentiate between them, thus rendering the term *Yunga* insufficient. In this manner, adopting the term *Pescadora* represents a

strategy for establishing a similar distinction as the one represented by the pair *mediterranean/maritime*, used in colonial documentation. In this sense, the pair *yunga/pescadora* corresponds perfectly to the *mediterranean/maritime* opposition in the context of coastal languages. *Yunga* would designate the coastal languages spoken inland, in the plains, in the valleys, distant from the seashore, and *Pescadora* would refer to the languages of the maritime regions, that is, the languages spoken next to the sea, on the Pacific coast, such as harbors. This solution explains why *Pescadora* was sometimes used in the plural form. Moreover, if the term *Pescadora* designated coastal languages spoken by the people living near the sea, the options of such languages being at least more than one, there would certainly have been maritime Mochica and Quingnam speakers, depending mainly on where they were actually located. This would mean that there were, for instance, Mochica-Pescadora and Quingnam-Pescadora languages/speakers. I consider my proposal to be the simplest way to interpret the term *Pescadora*. Summarizing: *Yunga* was not the only cover designation for coastal languages. The same concept was embedded in the term *Pescadora*.

In my multiple visits to the Mochica area, I encountered what I have decided to call New Mochica, which is a version of a revived Mochica language. Following Zuckermann & Walsh (2011) and Zuckermann & Monaghan (2012), I prefer to use the term language revival instead of language revitalization, as it is more appropriate to the situation of Mochica. Mochica is being revived after having become totally extinct in the first half of the 20th century. Language revival means resurrecting a language with no existing speakers. This initiative of language revival is an attempt to maintain it and empower it. New Mochica does not represent any evolutionary phase of Mochica. New Mochica is a revived language and is no longer the original language becoming more of a hybrid language. Preferably, New Mochica

should be viewed as a new language with a Mochica base, but with syntactic structures belonging to Spanish. This revived Mochica or New Mochica plays an important role in the construction of an identity in the northern Peruvian coast nowadays. Yet, this language has not yet received much attention from linguists, a task which I consider necessary.

In 2.6.2. I presented my analysis of the toponym Lambayeque, offering a novel etymology. Providing etymologies for names of a dead language is a difficult task and, therefore, the etymology discussed and proposed for Lambayeque must be taken with criticism. Essentially, the proposal states that Lambayeque or <ñampaxllæc> could be segmented into two parts <ñaim> ‘bird’ and <paxllæc>. According to my interpretation, the element <paxllæc> is a nominalization derived from a previously unidentified verb. This verb would be <paxll->, and it is found in the Mochica version of the *Salve Regina*. It is difficult to be sure about its most adequate interpretation; nevertheless, one can conclude that its most probable meaning was ‘to convert’, ‘to return’, ‘to turn’, ‘to turn round’, ‘to turn back’, ‘to turn or direct somewhere’ (Lewis & Short ([1879] 1958:464), as its corresponding Latin counterpart *convertere* in the Latin version of the *Salve Regina*.

Due to the fact that the suffix <-Vc> can be used to create both deverbal place and instrumental nominalizations, <paxllæc> could mean, ‘the one who turns’, ‘the one who converts’. Combining the first segment <ñaim> ‘bird’ with <paxllæc> ‘the one who turns’, ‘the one who converts’, I suggested that the meaning of Lambayeque is ‘the one who turns into a bird’. In my view, my etymological proposal for Lambayeque not only respects the structure and syntax of the Mochica language, but its proposed meaning also responds perfectly to the legend of the foundation of the first ruling dynasty in the

Mochica speaking area, according to which its first ruler came from a distant place, grew wings and flew away after dying.

Chapter 3 dealt with Mochica phonology. In my view, the proposal of interpretation of the phonological nature of the Mochica so-called sixth vowel, sketched in Chapter 3, is worth mentioning amongst the important concluding remarks. So far, the discussion on this vowel has mostly centered around its phonetic realization. In the analysis presented in Chapter 3, I chose to focus on its phonological behaviour instead. After inspecting vowel harmony alternations in Mochica, one can argue that the sixth vowel is a phonologically high and central vowel: /i/. The presence of /i/ is a distinctive feature of languages of the Peruvian Amazonian area, eastern Ecuador, southern Colombia, and Meso-American languages, Quechua and Aimara being the exceptions. The presence of this vowel being an areal feature, it would not be surprising if Mochica had this vowel in its inventory (see 3.4.1.).

Chapter 4 dealt with nominal categories: noun, adjective and pronouns. As a concluding remark, I wish to summarize my proposal concerning the interpretation of the Mochica inflectional case system, sketched in 4.1.4.2., and that of the adpositional case system, exposed in 4.1.4.3. After examining the Mochica data in relation to the inflectional case system, I surmised that it is more appropriate to establish a direct-oblique distinction. A binary opposing case system implies an overtly marked case category expressing a specific function (oblique case) and a corresponding zero-marked base form, used as “default case” or “direct case”. I chose to use the direct/oblique distinction because even though “genitive” is the only overtly marked case, it has several functions depending on the context in which it appears. This oblique marker can behave as (a) a relational in combination with some adpositions, (b) a genitive when expressing possession, and (c) an ergative when expressing

agentivity in ergative constructions. In 4.1.4.3. I presented the multiple Mochica adpositions as analytic case markers, in opposition to synthetic case markers (Blake [2001] 2004: 9). I also coined a new label for the adpositions, <funæc> ‘according to’, ‘following’ (in 4.1.4.3.2.2.9.) and <mæn> ‘according to’, ‘following’ (in 4.1.4.3.2.2.10.). I chose the label “acolytive” after the Greek noun *ἀκόλουθος*, which means ‘assistant’ or ‘follower’.

In Chapter 5, I offered the proposal that the formation of an ergative system was underway in Mochica. Hovdhaugen (2004: 74) had previously noted Mochica to be a “rather special kind of a split ergative language”. This statement was based on two factors: the recurrent use of passive constructions and the presence of the “agentive case” *-n*. I proposed instead that the attested examples in Mochica are suggestive of the language’s transitional state, from a nominative to an ergative system. I interpret the passive markings as traces of an older accusative-like system. In my proposal, the Mochica ergative system would be a system in transition, meaning that Mochica would have not yet fully emerged as an ergative language. In order to understand the Mochica ergative system in development, relevant information provided by Carrera (1644: 11) needs to be mentioned: the preferred and more elegant form of speaking Mochica was by means of the so called “passive construction”. This said, I consider the thus far called *passive construction* to be the basic transitive clause in Mochica. The non-fully ergative system shows traces of the passive marking, which in turn shows that it has not completely transformed into a full ergative alignment, where such traces would no longer be present.

The main goal of chapter 6 was to describe and explain the linguistic expressions of nominal possession in Mochica. As a result of my research on possession constructions in Mochica, I came to the following conclusions: the

Mochica nominal possessive system is best explained in terms of its possessive classes, as determined by distinctive marking strategies. Mochica does not fit into the typology proposed by Nichols (1986, 1988, 1992) and Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1998). This typology suggests that the languages that establish the distinction between inalienable and alienable possession tend to present a morphological marking on the head of the possessive construction, that is, on the possessed noun. Rather, Mochica's marking pattern varies according to the type of possessive construction. The oblique-genitive case marking on the possessor is the morphosyntactic strategy Mochica employs to establish the relationship of possession between two NPs. Besides this marking on the possessor, Mochica uses affixes that appear suffixed to the head of the alienable possessive phrase functioning as relationals. Double marking also represents a means of expressing possession in this language. To sum up, the Mochica system of nominal possession can be interpreted as a *continuum*, one end of which is occupied by the inalienable construction, and the other of which is occupied by the allomorphs expressing alienable possession. In the middle zone, one finds a transition area representing inalienable possessive constructions with double marking, characterized by the suffix <-æng>.

With regard to the outcome of the research on nominalization exposed in Chapter 7, two processes are identifiable: (a) lexical nominalization and (b) grammatical nominalization. With regard to lexical nominalization, by which a noun is derived from other lexical entities, Mochica exhibits the following suffixes: (1) the very versatile nominalizer <-Vc>, which can function as a locative nominalizer and an instrumental nominalizer; (2) a set of multiple nominalizers, each with dedicated functions: the event nominalizer <-ssVc> / <-çVc>, the agentive nominalizer <-(V)pVc> and the locative nominalizer <-tVc>; (3) the deadjectival nominalizer <-Vss>; and (4) the stative

nominalizer <-Vd(o)>. Nominalization serves relativizing, complementation and adverbial functions. Some lexical nominalizers, namely, the event nominalizer, the agentive nominalizer and the stative nominalizer, are used in grammatical nominalization constructions. This fact was taken to show that the distinction between lexical and grammatical nominalization in Mochica is not fluid.

Numeral classification was the focus of Chapter 8, where I tried to offer a novel interpretation of Mochica's numeral classifier system, after comparing it to systems described in languages investigated by Bender & Beller (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b). To understand Mochica's system, one first needs to acknowledge that Mochica numeral classifiers do not correspond to the most prototypical kind of numeral classifier. A prototypical numeral classifier is understood as one that categorizes nouns according to salient perceptual properties. In this sense, Mochica numeral classifiers coincide neither with the classifiers present in South American Amazonian languages nor with the ones in Mesoamerican languages. According to my analysis, they share relevant features comparable to those in the Austronesian languages studied by Bender & Beller (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b).

The Mochica classifiers used to count tens, hundreds (and thousands) clearly exhibit a multiplication feature: they do not classify; they multiply, indicating a precise value that acts as a factor to the adjoined numeral. Because of this feature, they could either be understood as "power classifiers" or as classifiers belonging to a specific counting system. Mochica numeral classifiers for counting pairs also appear to be adjustable to a specific counting system similar to those present in Austronesian languages. Nevertheless, the object specificity in the Mochica system is not fully one-object-specific, which means that the units do not classify sets of objects the way a numeral classifier,

in the strict sense, would do. They retain their very own peculiar characteristics and this is why, according to my analysis, the Mochica system can be considered neither a numeral classifier system in the strict sense nor a specific counting system. Following this, my suggestion was that the Mochica system might represent a transitional phase, from a semantic properties-based numeral classifier system to a system that enables more efficient counting i.e. a specific counting system. This suggestion receives support on two factors, namely the motivation of the use of large numerals in specific societies and evidence of the evolutionary formation of such a specific counting system from a numeral classifier system (Bender & Beller (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2017)).

In Chapter 9, I searched for possible evidence of language contact between Mochica and other Andean languages. I proposed evidence of contact between Mochica and genealogically unrelated and extinct Andean language groups: with Hibito and Cholón, languages of the same family that were spoken on the eastern Peruvian slopes (9.1.), and with Quingnam, spoken on the northern coast of Peru (9.2.). In 9.3., I presented the case of contact between Mochica and Quechua. The evidence of a contact situation between Mochica and Cholón and Hibito concerns a) shared lexical items between Mochica and Cholón (six items) and between Mochica and Hibito (one item), b) shared numeral classifiers: Mochica <pong> and Cholón <pon> are similar in form and function, both being means to count groups. Moreover, Mochica <palæc> ‘hundred’ shares phonological similarities with Cholón <lec> ‘ten’. I analyzed both numeral classifiers as “power classifiers”. Thus, I considered this another case of shared numeral classifiers between Mochica and Cholón. In Chapter 9, I also established the presence of at least one attested numeral classifier in Hibito, namely <tšē>. The Mochica-Quechua contact evidence is proven in both Quechua borrowings in Colonial and Republican Mochica identified by

Cerrón-Palomino (1989); besides the cases proven by Cerrón-Palomino, I identified three additional Quechua borrowings in republican Mochica, namely, <cunti> ‘west region’, <kélyka> ‘paper’ and <pürr> / <perr> ‘feather’. Chapter 9 also includes my suggestion of considering <apichu> a Mochica loan word that entered Quechua vocabulary during early colonial times, as registered in Aimara by Bertonio (1612: 345) and in Quechua by González Holguín (1608: 58, 74).

In Chapter 10, I reviewed previous proposals on distant relationships between Mochica and other languages presenting proposals on the relationship between Mochica and Ecuadorian languages, as well as Lehmann’s ([1929a]-1937; 1930) various proposals on distant relations, exposed in some of his many manuscripts. I also reviewed Adelaar’s (2003) proposed relation of Mochica with Atacameño. Finally, I reconsidered Stark’s proposal on the relationship between Mochica and Mayan language, offering my own comparison with Proto-Mayan. My re-evaluation of the Mochica-Mayan comparison involved multiple aspects. I conducted a lexical comparison between Mochica and the available Proto-Mayan forms. In cases where reconstructed items were not available, I used forms from the other Mayan languages registered in the etymological dictionary by Kaufman and Justeson (2003). The result of the comparison indicated neither a significant number of cognates nor many sound correspondences. In Chapter 10, I also analyzed Mochica and Mayan from other viewpoints. For instance, I compared the phonological and phonotactic elements of these two languages, considering morphological and syntactic features, as well. Interestingly, it was revealed that Mochica shares various typological features with Mayan languages, namely, nominal possession, inalienability split, spatial relational markers originating in body part terms, the absence of obligatory plural marking and the presence of numeral classifiers. Although some lexical items can be said

to involve similar forms and functions, they are scarce, some being body part terms and others specific verbs. In addition, the sound correspondences are few. Based on all these results, after re-evaluation, I concluded that Mochica and Mayan are by no means related genealogically. The general conclusion concerning Mochica's potential areal and distant relations, was that Mochica represents a language isolate.

I believe that my study is not conclusive in the sense that it may be necessary to conduct further investigation in search of possible genealogical or contact relations between Mochica and other languages. Future investigations should include examination of archival information about Mochica and other extinct languages of South America. It may be an important task to access the chronicle representing the earliest existing evidence of the Mochica language: the manuscript written by the chronicler Alonso Castro de Lovaina in 1582, presumably located in the Archbishopric Archive of Trujillo in Peru (Burgos Guevara 2003: 14) (see 2.4.1.2.). Also, of particular interest is the study of the revived New Mochica language which currently represents an important element in the process of constructing a cultural identity on the northern coast of Peru.

