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Mochica: Grammatical topics and external relations

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Summary in English

A precise linguistic panorama and a proper classification of the languages of South America, prior to the Spanish invasion, may remain incomplete, the languages having existed long before they were recorded. The arrival of the Europeans is what led to the written recording of these languages; however, European presence also ultimately caused a large number of them to lose ground in the face of the dominant European languages (Spanish in Hispanic America and Portuguese in Luso-America). During the pre-Columbian era, several languages coexisted along the northern Peruvian coast. The available information dating back to the time when these languages were still spoken is limited to short lists of words as in the cases of Sechura, Culli, Colán and Catacaos (cf. Martínez Compañón 1783b: EIV). Fortunately, amongst the north coastal Peruvian languages, Mochica, the language I focus on in this dissertation, received special attention.

Mochica is the best documented northern Peruvian coastal language. This was probably due to the fact that it was considered a *lengua general* ‘general language’ (Oré 1607, Carrera 1644). In times of the Spanish colonial administration, the term *lengua general* was used to refer to a language that was considered important because of its convenience of use for evangelization and its geographical extension. According to colonial accounts, several missionaries prepared Mochica grammatical descriptions and vocabularies. Nevertheless, the only available colonial grammatical description to date is Carrera (1644). In addition to Carrera, some Christian prayers and a few religious texts included in the earliest testimony of this language registered in press (Oré 1607: 403-408) constitute the other Mochica colonial sources of

study at hand. These colonial records are thus the only evidence of use of this language whilst it was still extant.

The republican study sources gathered mainly by German travellers, anthropologists and researchers display a Mochica language that was already in the process of obsolescence. In addition, the variety of Mochica recorded during this latter period corresponds to the last bastion of this language before it became dormant (Eten, in the province of Chiclayo, Lambayeque). As such, it is relevant to remark that if the lost colonial sources for the study of Mochica are never found, we will probably never have a fuller understanding of this language and its varieties.

Mochica is similar to other South American languages that have vanished, leaving some unsolved enigmas. The scholar interested in researching the linguistic past of South America faces challenges when attempting to establish genealogical relationships between languages with scarce or no records. Due to insufficient data, such languages are frequently labeled as unclassified or isolated. In the field of Andean linguistics, Mochica is overwhelmingly considered to be an Andean language isolate due to several peculiar typological and lexical features.

This research has two main purposes: first of all, it serves to contribute to the understanding of the Mochica language and its typologically distinct features (Chapters 1-8), and, furthermore, to explore its genealogical position, or possible external relations (Chapter 9 and Chapter 10). Chapter 11 offers concluding remarks and future avenues for the study of this language.

There are five parts to this thesis. Part I consists of the introductory chapter, which provides the context and aims of the dissertation and details the corpus and methodology of the study. Part II comprises Chapters 2 through 5. Chapter

2 provides an inventory of all the available colonial and republican Mochica study sources. In addition, this chapter introduces a linguistic variety that is based on Mochica, but which borrows several structures from Spanish. I refer to it as New Mochica. Newly proposed etymologies of an anthroponym (Naimlap/Ñaimlap) and a toponym (Lambayeque) are also provided in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I evaluate earlier proposals of the interpretation of the Mochica phonological system. Since Mochica is no longer spoken, it may not be possible to make firm conclusions about the phonological system. However, the available evidence concerning the controversial so-called Mochica sixth vowel <æ>, strongly suggests that it should be interpreted as the high, central vowel /i/. Chapter 4 focuses on the Mochica nominal system, while Chapter 5 deals with the Mochica verbal system.

Part III provides a thorough discussion of several grammatical aspects of Mochica. Chapter 6 focuses on possessives and inalienability. Specifically, I offer an analysis of the syntax and semantics of the possessive constructions described in Carrera (1644). As well, I propose an analysis of the Mochica inalienability split, arguing that it does not constitute a strict bipartite system (inalienable-alienable). Rather, the Mochica system of nominal possession is argued to exist on a *continuum*, with the inalienable construction constituting one end, and the allomorphs expressing alienable possession, the other. Inalienable possessive constructions with double marking, characterized by the suffix <-æng>, exist in the transition area between these two.

Chapter 7 illustrates a study of Mochica lexical and grammatical nominalization. In terms of the former, I describe and analyze the four nominalizing suffixes in the language: <-(V)çVc> / <(V)ssVc> ‘event nominalizer’, <-(V)pVc> ‘agentive nominalizer’, <-tVc> ‘locative nominalizer’, and <-Vc> ‘locative/instrumental nominalizer’. In this chapter,

I also illustrate evidence of the existence of deadjectival and stative nominalization. In terms of grammatical nominalization, I illustrate how nominalizations served several functions: relativization, complementation, and adverbial.

Mochica numeral classifiers are thoroughly examined in Chapter 8, where it is suggested that the system does not correspond to a typologically prototypical numeral classifier system. That is, the peculiar characteristics of some of the morphemes indicate that they cannot be seen as typical numeral classifiers. They share some features with those present in the languages studied by Bender & Beller (2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b), but deviate from them as well. Thus, the numeral system of Mochica is analyzed as neither a system of numeral classifiers in the strict sense, nor a specific counting system.

Part IV, of this work, consisting of Chapters 9 and 10, deals with the second aim of this study. In Chapter 9, I re-evaluate earlier proposals of language contact across the Andes. I present a detailed analysis of the possible case of language contact between Mochica and Cholón-Hibito, as well as examining evidence of the contact relationships between Mochica and Quingnam, and Mochica and Quechua. This involves thorough inspection of coastal loan terms in Quechua, which I propose to be of Mochica origin. Distant relationships between Mochica and other languages are explored in Chapter 10. Most importantly, Stark's (1968, 1972) proposal on the genealogical relationship between Mochica and Mayan is re-evaluated in the face of new evidence from Proto-Mayan. Careful comparison of Proto-Mayan and Mochica lead me to conclude that Mochica and Mayan are not genealogically related. In sum, the conclusions from these chapters suggest that Mochica should be classified as a linguistic isolate.

Finally, Part V (Chapter 11) presents a summary of the findings obtained during the entire process of preparing this thesis. This concluding chapter also suggests some topics for future consideration concerning the study of the Mochica language and its place in the linguistic history of pre-Columbian South America.

