

The Late Intermediate Period: The Kingdom of Chimor

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- The most complex and regionally extensive society of the Late Intermediate Period:
 - the kingdom of Chimor
 - Chimu culture: culture of the citizens of Chimor
 - located in roughly the same portion of the north coast as the Moche had been
 - culturally and biologically descended from the Moche
 - but separated from them by a period of political disunity
 - that started with the collapse of the Moche, as discussed by Moseley
 - geographically large, Chimor encompassed
 - 1000 km of Pacific coastline
 - two-thirds of the arable land on the desert coast
 - presumably, about two-thirds of the coastal population
 - the largest polity in the Andes in the Late Intermediate Period
 - notable for a widespread, standardized corporate style of art and ideology
 - in ceramics
 - textiles
 - copper, bronze, gold, silver
 - carved wooden items, etc.
 - conquered by the Inka around 1470 AD
 - Chimu craft workers, especially metalworkers, provided much of the skill and labor for Inka luxury good production
 - and Chimor was a model for some Inka political and economic arrangements
 - arose out of the remnants of the Moche state(s), starting 700-800 AD
 - initially, there were two separate Chimu polities
 - Sican to the north, also called Lambayeque
 - and Chimor to the south
 - each first united a single valley
 - then each incorporated several adjacent valleys, each forming a state with a large capital
 - then Chimor conquered and incorporated Sican to form the full Chimor state or empire
 - which was, in turn, conquered by the Inka and incorporated into the Inka empire
- All this happened recently enough that oral history remained to be recorded by early Spanish writers, despite Inka attempts to incorporate the area and break it up to prevent rebellion
- some Chimu oral history, as recorded by the Spanish and synthesized by Moseley in the text:
 - Chan Chan, the capital city of Chimor, was ruled by kings of the Taycanamu dynasty
 - thus Chimor was headed by centralized rulers
 - Moseley suggests that Chimor was probably ruled by an unequal pair of kings in a dual organization system
 - with a señor and a segunda persona, each representing a part of the polity
 - the Lambayeque area to the north was ruled by members of the Naymlap dynasty

- apparently more of a confederacy of large, powerful centers, each with a ruler claiming descent from the possibly mythical founding ancestor, Naymlap
- ethnohistorical sources mix mythologized stories with more realistic accounts
- and where they are roughly corroborated by archaeological evidence, they tend to compress centuries of development into a few generations of dramatic events, much as Inka lore did

- Lambayeque (Sican) origins and development
 - The Lambayeque valley is a huge, wide, fertile valley on the far north coast
 - exploited prehistorically and today with extensive irrigation systems
 - this was part of the north coast region where the valleys were big enough to support a Moche elite without having to conquer other valleys
 - Naymlap story, probably highly mythologized
 - Naymlap and his retinue arrived by sea on many rafts (called balsas)
 - they established Naymlap's court at Chot
 - maybe the site of Chotuna, a complex of platform mounds and many-roomed adobe compounds with evidence of craft production
 - but work there did not find any definitive evidence linking it to the Naymlap story
 - not surprising -- what could?
 - Naymlap's sons founded additional centers, and 12 generations of leaders followed
 - Fempellec, the 12th leader, moved Naymlap's greenstone idol
 - causing 30 days of rain -- a disaster on the coast of Peru
 - possibly a bad El Nino?
 - so he was overthrown and dynastic rule broke down
 - this left Lambayeque vulnerable to conquest by Chimor
 - no evidence of a literal invasion of foreigners from the sea
 - maybe the Lambayeque centers developed from the declining Moche capital of Pampa Grande?
 - as Moche V Pampa Grande lost regional power, highlanders from Cajamarca established colonies in the Lambayeque (and other north coast) valleys
 - this may have been relatively neutral multiethnic settlement, if there was space
 - or it may have involved conflict
 - but the Cajamarca sites in coastal valleys don't appear particularly defensible
 - This period (700-900 AD) was ripe for change
 - decline of Moche meant that no state existed to control a corporate style
 - Cajamarca influence brought in new ideas
 - Limited numbers of Wari artifacts in elite burials suggest some influence, too
 - the result was a new, synthetic north coast art (and presumably ideological) style: Lambayeque, or Sican
 - not to be confused with Sipan, the rich Moche burial mound site from centuries earlier
 - lots of stamped and molded decoration on polished blackware ceramics
 - Middle Sican 900 - 1100 AD
 - mound construction increased dramatically
 - and a corporate style was formalized around the "Sican Lord"
 - again, not to be confused with the Moche "Lord of Sipan"

- Moseley suggests that this figure represents Naymlap -- could be
- perhaps ten polities in the Lambayeque area, each with a huge mound complex as its administrative center
- Moseley is very reasonable in suggesting that the Naymlap story may have been adjusted after the fact to justify alliances between these centers by creating a common origin
- Batan Grande, the biggest early and middle Sican site
 - in the Leche valley
 - monumental core is 4 square kilometers
 - over a dozen huge platform mounds
 - flat-topped
 - perpendicular ramps and ramps with bends
 - constructed by chamber and fill -- a “cheaper” way to make mounds that was adopted by the late Moche at Pampa Grande
 - with marked adobes for walls, continuing the Moche tradition
- Batan Grande was a huge center of production of copper and bronze, especially "naipes"
 - lots of copper smelting, refining, and working done at Batan Grande
 - on a large scale
 - complexes of highly specialized shops that each did only one part of the whole process from ore to object
 - naipes
 - I-shaped copper or bronze sheet cutouts
 - often found in neat, tied bundles of up to hundreds of nearly-identical naipes
 - apparently a means of storing and exchanging wealth, like a currency
 - they are common at Batan Grande, but rare elsewhere
 - in Ecuador, there are "money axes", functionless sheetmetal cutouts that were used for exchange
 - but not naipes
 - so they weren't used for currency with outsiders? or...?
 - also other forms, like long, thin, concave "leaves" or spatulas
 - also found in tied stacks of many
 - probably other metal production done there, too, especially gold work, but shops are not as well documented
 - the seafaring merchants of Chincha, far to the south, apparently traded for copper or bronze from Lambayeque
- huge cemeteries with tens of thousands of burials
 - Batan Grande was presumably a desired burial place for higher-status people in a large surrounding region, not just the immediate occupants of the site
 - burials are seated and flexed, vs earlier extended position of Moche burials
 - Moseley suggests that this means a big change in ideology
 - maybe influenced by Wari's flexed burial tradition
 - some burials (mostly looted for private collectors) had incredible quantities of gold, copper/bronze, pottery, etc.
 - one looted burial had around 200 artifacts, including

- gold and silver necklaces
- gold keros with modeled faces
- mummy masks
- tumi knives
- shell, turquoise, lapis, emerald inlays, pendants, and beads, etc.
- another had
 - 17 human sacrifices
 - lots of Spondylus, lapis, gold, etc.
 - over 500 kilos of copper, much of it in the form of stacks of hundreds of naipes
- 1100 AD, Batan Grande was flooded
 - then burned and largely abandoned
 - this may relate to the drought that supposedly brought down Tiwanaku
 - El Niño events typically cause drought in the highlands and rain on the coast
 - probably the same event is also what damaged Chotuna, Pacatnamu, and Chan Chan, but they were rebuilt, not abandoned afterwards
- Late Sican 1100 - 1370
 - El Purgatorio, in the Leche valley, replaced Batan Grande as the large mound center
 - The Sican Lord disappeared from the art style
 - rejected due to his failure to prevent the 1100 AD flooding?
- Chimor origins and development
 - Moche valley, well south of Lambayeque
 - early in his long (and continuing) career, Michael Moseley led a major project to study Chan Chan, so this part of the text is first-hand
 - Alan Kolata, who ran the Tiwanaku project, also worked with Moseley at Chan Chan
 - Tradition has Chimor founded by Taycanamu, who arrived from the sea to govern
 - his sons and descendents established centers and conquered surrounding areas
 - the reality appears to have been more gradual
 - Chimor was the direct cultural descendent of the remains of the Moche V state, with its capital at Pampa Grande in Lambayeque
 - Pampa Grande was abandoned and burned around 700 AD
 - the Moche broke up into small, competing chiefdoms
 - around 850 AD, the Moche valley was reunited and monumental construction began at Chan Chan
 - Capital at Chan Chan
 - not to be confused with Chen Chen, in Moquegua
 - at north edge of the mouth of the Moche valley
 - area marked out by huge adobe walls is over 20 square kilometers
 - dense core is about 6 square kilometers
 - 9 to 11 (depending on which you count) huge rectangular compounds ("ciudadelas") with high adobe walls
 - surrounded by large areas of dense, more informal, much smaller perishable cane-walled compounds of rooms around open patios "SIAR"
 - Ciudadelas

- outer walls of cast adobe (tapia) or mud bricks
 - built in independent segments
 - maybe corresponding to work groups, like the columns of bricks in the Huaca del Sol
 - possibly for technical reasons having to do with use of tapia molds or drying or cracking issues
 - a single, narrow entrance in the north wall
- containing courts, small areas of high-status and servants' residences, storage areas, and a royal burial mound
- high walls divide the interiors into three (sometimes four) sectors
 - southern sector: only impermanent cane architecture, presumably residences of servants
 - middle and northern sectors: large courts, decorative friezes, ramps, corridors, audiencia chambers, blocks of small probable storerooms
- audiencias
 - small U-shaped structures inside the large compounds
 - often on a low platform
 - in a small walled court
 - often gabled, probably roofed
 - often have interior niches
 - most compounds have many of them
 - thought to be "offices" or "court chambers" for rulers and upper-to-middle-level administrators
 - once said to have controlled access to storage areas, and each other
 - but recent studies show that while some could have controlled storage areas and access routes, many are not well located for that purpose
- burial mound, typically in the central sector
 - several meters tall
 - numerous interior chambers, all looted
 - in best-preserved, late examples, the central chamber is T-shaped and larger, presumably the royal tomb
 - the surrounding, smaller, roughly square chambers contain traces of wealth goods and human remains, especially young females
 - in some cases, smaller mounds were added onto the main one, with multiple smaller T-shaped cells
 - maybe for non-ruling descendents, siblings, etc. of the buried king?
 - maybe for heads of the institutions that venerated the king after his death (if that is the way it worked)?
 - mounds were looted severely and early, records show that they contained a lot of gold
- So the function of the ciudadelas was apparently administrative for a while, and then mortuary
- ciudadelas were apparently built in a sequence
 - apparently built and modified for a period -- maybe the ruler's lifetime, or several rulers' lifetimes -- then used for a long time thereafter with only minor modifications

- earlier ones seem to have been modified for several generations, later ones only maybe one
- may correspond to the sequence of rulers in ethnohistorical accounts
 - since each seems to contain a single royal burial
 - but remember that at least the exploits of the listed rulers is very compressed, probably really happened over a much longer period
- Moseley suggests that they may have been built and used in pairs, according to dual organization of rule, rather than in simple sequence
- suggestion by Conrad and Demarest that expansion of Chimor was based on a pattern of "split inheritance"
 - in which the lands gained by the ruler went to an institution in his name
 - to support an ancestor cult after his death
 - this institution would care for his mummy, and would operate out of his ciudadela
 - meanwhile, the new ruler got the title, but had to build his own ciudadela and either raise taxes or conquer new lands for his own cult
 - this creates a constant need for expansion, even beyond what seems economically sensible
 - even if true, this is probably idealized
 - since there would have been more kings in the history of Chimor than there are ciudadelas
 - the early ones were used for a long time
 - if it does work, it is probably fully true only for the last four or so ciudadelas
- Intermediate architecture
 - look like mini-ciudadelas
 - with residences, storerooms, audiencias
 - but no burial platforms
 - and no decorative friezes
 - thought to be homes and offices of administrators/lower nobility
- SIAR (Small Irregular Agglutinated Rooms)
 - cramped, dense, cane-walled urban areas with narrow, wandering streets
 - located in the spaces outside and between the ciudadelas and intermediate architecture complexes
 - very extensive, with thousands of rooms
 - residences and workplaces of families of craft producers
 - especially metalworking shops
 - melting, casting, hammering, polishing
 - also woodworking shops
 - shaping blocks with coral "files", carving
 - and stone jewelry making, especially beads
 - also weaving
 - possibly Chimú ceramics were also made in the SIAR, although the workshops have not been identified
 - mostly mass-produced, mold-made ceramics

- often a polished blackware
- at least some craftspeople wore earspools, suggesting that they were of moderately high status
- no fishing or farming population at Chan Chan
 - these all lived in other settlements outside the capital
- population
 - estimated around 26,000 craft producers lived at Chan Chan, mostly in the SIAR
 - plus another 3,000 people in similar structures directly against the ciudadelas, probably working for or inside them
 - administrative population lived in nicer adobe architecture
 - both ciudadelas and "intermediate" architecture
 - Moseley suggests a maximum of 6,000 such people
 - lower levels lived and apparently worked in "intermediate architecture" compounds
 - while uppermost levels lived in the ciudadelas
 - so the total would be up to 35,000 people, almost all with non-food-producing, specialized roles
- development of Chan Chan and Chimor
 - earliest ciudadelas were built close to the shore
 - got water from walk-in wells
 - outside the ciudadelas, sunken gardens allowed plants' roots to tap the water table
 - canal irrigation further inland kept the water table relatively high
 - Chimor initially focused mostly on local agricultural exploitation of the Moche area
 - then the 1100 floods badly damaged the canal system
 - repairs were apparently unsuccessful
 - they undertook to build the huge Chicama-Moche intervalley canal ("Le Cumbre" canal) to bring water from the neighboring valley to the land above Chan Chan
 - but apparently it never worked all the way, either
 - possibly due to rapid land uplift
 - so Chan Chan had to grow back towards the coast, rather than inland, because the water table was too deep to reach with wells inland without a lot of irrigation going on
 - they dug huge sunken gardens close to the shore, where the water table is high enough even without much artificial irrigation
 - Moseley suggests that these problems with getting water to farmland near Chan Chan led to military conquests of productive land for tribute
 - Kolata suggests that changes in ciudadela details support this
 - large increase in small storerooms, possibly to hold valuables looted from or extracted as tribute from conquered valleys
 - also what he considers to be jump in administrative architecture, reflecting more bureaucrats needed to manage the tribute and control of the conquered valleys
 - by 1200 AD, centers were built in the Jequetepeque and Viru valleys
 - both have burial platforms, suggesting that they were seats of subordinate kings
 - Kolata argues for a second wave of military expansion from 1300-1370 AD
 - conquering Lambayeque

- now the new centers did not have burial platforms, suggesting a shift to more centralized rule based at Chan Chan, operating indirectly through local leaders (Moseley)
 - Lambayeque metalworkers were apparently brought to Chan Chan
 - (just as the Inka would later bring Chimu metalworkers from Chan Chan to Cuzco)
 - lots of SIAR constructed at this time
- yet storage rooms in the later ciudadelas declined in size and number
 - Kolata argues that earlier storage was of many different kinds of goods, including bulky food that was locally produced
 - while after the conquest of Lambayeque, storage would have concentrated on metals, which are compact for their value and need less storage space
 - in part because local food production was reduced by irrigation problems
 - he also notes that there is more "intermediate" architecture outside the ciudadelas, with some storage to compensate for the decline in the ciudadelas
- summary of Kolata's scheme
 - 1. economy based on local food production
 - 2. El Niño destroyed the canal system and drought denied water to rebuilt canals. Chan Chan's economy shifted to a mix of reduced local production plus extraction from a first round of conquered valleys
 - 3. In a second round of conquests, Chan Chan took control of Lambayeque. Chan Chan's economy shifted further, now based mostly on extraction of wealth goods from conquered valleys
- Kolata also claims to see an increasing isolation of the ruler from the rest of society, and increasing status marking of the nobility over time
 - culminating in the divine kingship known from ethnohistorical sources just before the Inka conquest
 - this was presumably related to the growing emphasis on conquest and tribute extraction, both as cause and effect
 - divine kings would have demanded expensive support, requiring conquests and tribute
 - and would have been able to mobilize people to do that
- The development of Chimor was cut short by the Inka
 - who conquered Chimor and intentionally weakened it to reduce the risk of rebellion
 - even so, the Chimu are said to have rebelled at least once against the Inka
 - many of the Chimu may have initially seen the Spanish as allies...
 - check out the last selection in the reader, by Rowe, for a vivid account of what they actually had to look forward to.