

# The *Tumi*-Bearer of Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru.

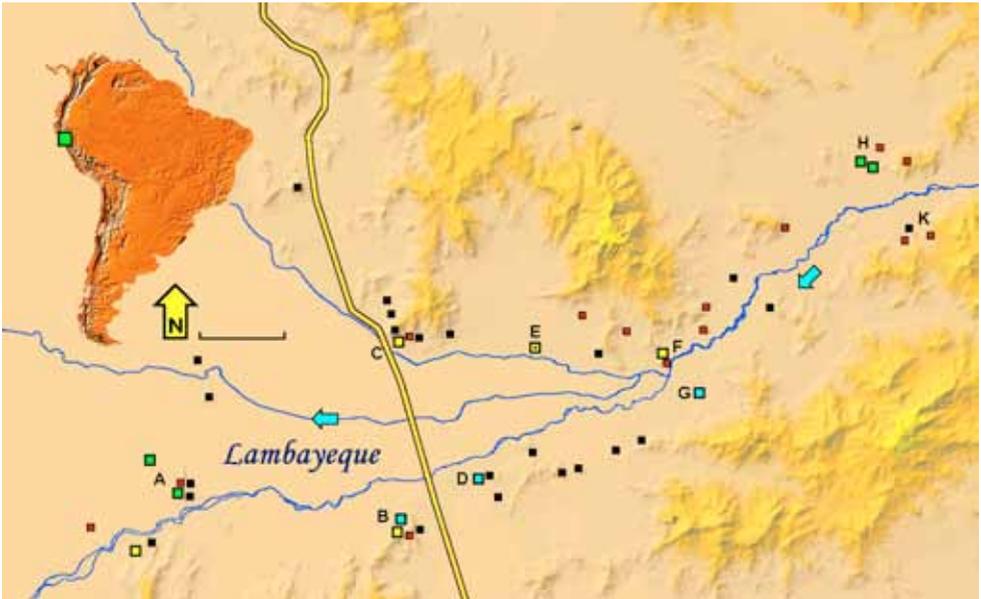
## Introduction

The Department of Lambayeque in the north of Peru is not only a paradise for the archaeologist investigating Pre-Columbian monumental structures, burial remains and mural art, it is also very rich in prehistoric rock art. The majority of those rock art sites are found in the basin of the Chancay-Reque drainage, east of the city of Chiclayo. Up to 2012 more than 24 rock art sites have been recorded in this fertile valley. Most rock art sites in this drainage, also called the

Lambayeque Valley, have been comprehensively studied by me (Van Hoek 2012), but one site, and one boulder in particular, deserves more attention as a detailed study of these important petroglyphs has never been published.

The location of this stone, located somewhere in the greater area of Pampa Grande, will not be revealed here to avoid damage and vandalism. It notably proved

Map 1. Archaeological remains of the Chancay-Reque Drainage (the Lambayeque Valley); northern Peru. Green squares: Cupisnique culture; blue squares: Moche culture; yellow squares: Chimú culture; solid black squares: unknown cultures; yellow line: prehistoric road; red squares: rock art sites. The capitals A to K refer to sites mentioned in the text. Inset: South America and the location of the study area. Scale: 5 km. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek; based on: Carta educativa de las Direcciones Regionales de Educación y Unidades de Gestión Educativa Local - Chiclayo PDF.



that, when a similarly important stone at Cerro Saltur (see Figure 16; Map 1: Site B), located approximately 20 km WSW of the huge Huaca Fortaleza at Pampa Grande, was recorded on the internet by Elmer Fernández Gastelo in 2008, locals severely vandalised the stone, probably in 2009. Therefore the Pampa Grande petroglyphs will be described in such a way that the exact location will not be made public.

## Historical Background

Although several locals, but even taxi drivers from Chiclayo, know about the Pampa Grande petroglyphs, very little has actually been published about the rock art in this remote corner of the Lambayeque Valley. I first learned about the site in 2004 when reading the National Inventory by Rainer Hostnig (2003: 222), who actually only mentioned the word ‘petroglifos’; the location: ‘*Distrito Chongoyape*’ and the source of this information: *Linares Málaga 1985: 37*. However, Linares Málaga possibly recorded the site also as El Cerezo (1999: Mapa No. 19;

see also Hostnig 2003: 223; Van Hoek 2012: 27, 253).

After that, two photographs of the rock art at Pampa Grande appeared in the web site of the Pampa Grande Archaeological Project, directed by Dr. Ilana Johnson from 2004 to 2006 (Johnson 2010). One of the photos in this web site, taken in August 2004 by Krishan Barr, member of the topographic team, shows the large petroglyph (on panel PGR-002A) that is the focus of my paper.

From 2004 to 2012 my wife Elles and I visited the Chancay-Reque Drainage several times, but, as the great majority of rock art is found at the northern side of the valley, it took a while before we actually visited Pampa Grande. But without knowing the exact location it is extremely difficult to find this specific rock art site in this enormously large area. Therefore we are very grateful to Dr. Ignacio Alva Meneses, director of the Huaca Ventarrón Archaeological Project, who kindly supplied us with the exact location of this ‘hidden’ rock art site (Alva Men-

Figure 1. Huaca Fortaleza at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek



eses 2012: pers. comm.). Finally, in my book about the rock art of the Chancay-Reque Drainage (Van Hoek 2012) the rock art of Pampa Grande was only mentioned, not described, but a photograph of panel PGR-002A features on the cover of the book.

## The Environment

Pampa Grande (Map 1: Site G) is an enormous archaeological complex situated on a roughly triangular, west facing alluvial fan on the south bank of the Río Chancay-Reque, about 40 km due east of the city of Chiclayo (distances in this paper have been measured with Google Earth from the Huaca Fortaleza at Pampa Grande). The study area of this paper comprises a >-shaped mountain range (Cerro Pampa Grande) that encloses the alluvial fan on which the archaeological complex has been built. This archaeological complex is dominated by the impressive and still towering ruin of Huaca Fortaleza (height about 40 m) (Figure 1), while many much lower adjacent buildings, structures and numerous walls cover almost every part of the fan. The enormous scale of the whole complex is best appreciated with Google Earth, especially with the 2009 satellite photo.

From south (at 215 m O.D.) to north (150 m O.D.) the alluvial fan measures about 3 km, while from east (at 245 m O.D.) to west (at 140 m O.D.) the distance is about 2.5 km. In prehistoric times this alluvial fan will probably have stretched even further west. This may be demonstrated by the remains of two *Huacas* (*Huaca 20* and *21*; according to Shimada 1998: Fig. 7) that are now located a short distance west of the modern village. Together with the surrounding mountains (in which the remains of other Pre-Columbian structures occur) the area measures no less than 14 km<sup>2</sup>. In this large area at least four petroglyph boulders have been recorded.

## The Rock Art at Pampa Grande

Up to now, I know of four boulders with petroglyphs in this area; two of which, la-



Figure 2. Petroglyphs on boulder PGR-003 at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on the photograph kindly supplied by Dr. Ilana Johnson.



belled PGR-001 and PGR-002 by me, were surveyed in 2012 by my wife Elles and me. The exact locations of the two other boulders, labelled PGR-003 and PGR-004, are unknown to me, but Dr. Ilana Johnson informed me that they were found roughly in the same area as the other two (2013: pers. comm.). Boulders PGR-003 and PGR-004 (Figures 2, 3 and 4) were photographed by members of the Pampa Grande Archaeological Project on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2004. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 they also photographed boulder PGR-002, which features the petroglyph which is the focus of this paper. These four petroglyph rocks will be described below (in non-numerical order). The descriptions of the boulders that I have not seen (PGR-003 and PGR-004) are based on photographs forwarded by Dr. Ilana Johnson (2013: pers. comm.).

## Boulder PGR-003

Boulder PGR-003, a flat, cracked stone almost flush with the ground and resting on a

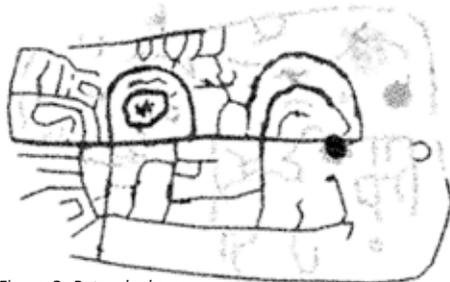


Figure 3. Petroglyphs on panel PGR-004A at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on the photograph kindly supplied by Dr. Ilana Johnson.

slight slope, has an interesting pattern that unfortunately has weathered quite much. Its rough surface features a petroglyph that seems to represent an abstract design, but it cannot be ruled out that an anthropomorphic figure or a mask has been depicted. The width of the petroglyph is about 60 cm; the large central 'rectangle' measures about 26 cm. The drawing of Figure 2 distinguishes between more certain anthropic

lines (red) and faint or possibly natural markings (light brown).

### Boulder PGR-004

Boulder PGR-004 has at least two decorated panels. The vertical, probably south facing panel A has a large and complex pattern of lines (often showing modular width) that is reminiscent of several Formative Period

Figure 5. Boulder PGR-001 at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.

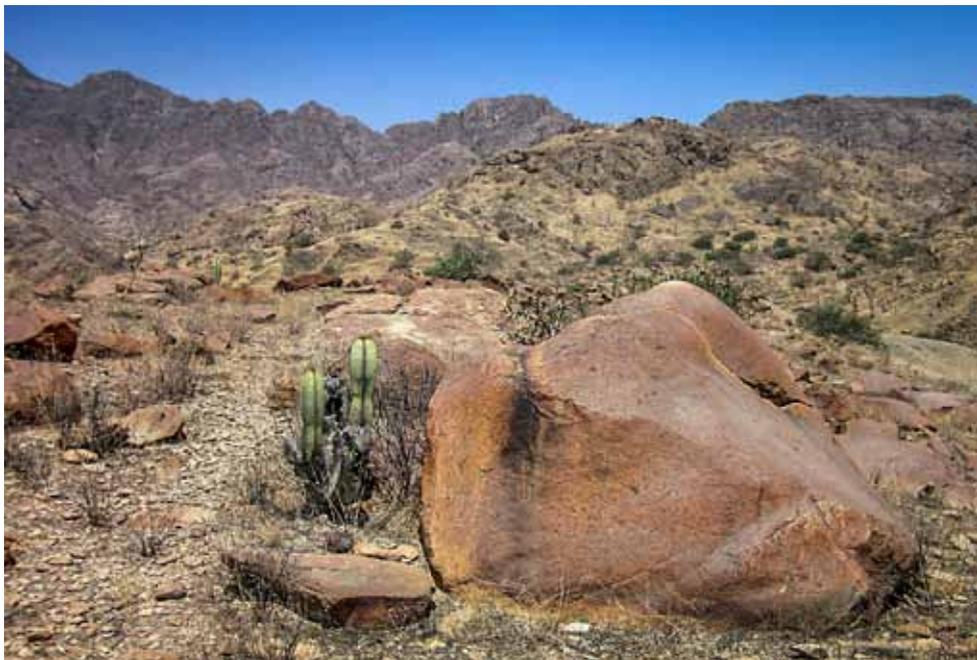




Figure 4. Petroglyphs on panel PGR-004B at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru.  
Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on the photograph kindly supplied by Dr. Ilana Johnson.

designs found elsewhere in the rock art repertoire of this valley, for instance at Huaca Blanca (Map 1: Site K) and at Cerro Mulato (Map 1: Site H). The design almost completely covers the whole surface of panel A, which roughly measures 1.5 m in height and 2 m in width (Figure 3). Because of the inverted, U-shaped element that encloses a

circular motif with a central dot (an eye?), this complex figure may even represent a mythical being. Petroglyphs of similarly 'hidden' faces or 'hidden' facial elements occur elsewhere in the valley.

The opposite panel B (probably north facing) is also vertical (and of similar dimensions as panel A). Its smooth but much

Figure 6. Location of boulder PGR-002 at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.



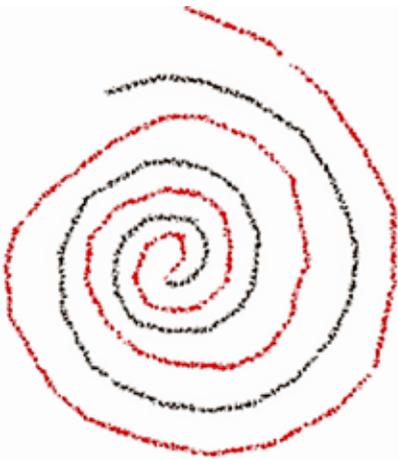


Figure 7. Petroglyph on panel PGR-002B at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru.  
Drawing by Maarten van Hoek.

weathered surface has several abstract designs among which are recognisable an irregular design looking like an open, outlined cross, a circular design enclosing faint lines, a small triangular motif and indeterminate designs, one of which may be a zoomorph; a bird perhaps (Figure 4). Some lines seem to continue onto the almost hori-

zontal top surface of the stone that shows a thin crack.

### Boulder PGR-001

Two petroglyph stones have been recorded by us in 2012. One large, cracked boulder of red-patinated granodiorite, labelled PGR-001, is found at about 180 m O.D. on a low ridge bordering a small valley to the west (Figure 5). On its smooth surfaces there are three panels that altogether have at least eight petroglyphs or areas where remains of petroglyphs are visible. Most outstanding are the images of two, perhaps three, so-called 'Venus-crosses'; simple, equal-armed crosses enclosed by an outlined cross with rounded ends. One is found in a blackish area caused by water dripping down from a depression near the top. This type of cross motif also occurs at Cerro Mulato (18 km to the NE). There are more traces of petroglyphs on this boulder; too faint and too uncertain to determine.

Figure 8. Boulder PGR-002 at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.





Figure 9. Petroglyph on panel PGR-002A at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru.  
Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.

### Boulder PGR-002

About 340 m from PGR-001, in the mountainous area, is a small terrace very close to a narrow, dry river bed (one of many in those mountains). Only when approached from one direction one has a fine view of a boulder field comprising many deeply patinated boulders of a reddish colour (Figure 6). As far as we could check only one boulder on this terrace, labelled PGR-002 by us, featured petroglyphs (although boulder PGR-004 may be a short distance SE of this terrace). This large boulder, of which a substantial part split off a very long time ago,

Figure 10. Petroglyph on panel PGR-002A at Pampa Grande, Lambayeque, Peru.  
Drawing by Maarten van Hoek.



is found at 220 m O.D. and is located very near and above a high, vertical escarpment where, in wet times, a small waterfall can be observed.

This large, multifaceted boulder has at least two decorated panels (A and B; the upper part of this high boulder has not been inspected). Panel B is a smooth, almost vertical side-panel of the boulder and only comprises a very faint pattern of a large set of two intertwined spirals. The height of this motif is approximately 40 cm (Figure 7). I cannot recall to have ever seen such a double-spiral anywhere else in this part of the Andes (this type of spiral is better known from the Neolithic Passage Grave Art at, for instance New Grange in eastern Ireland). On a smaller part adjacent to panel B may be some faint remains of another petroglyph.

### The *Tumi*-Bearer on panel PGR-002A

Panel A (Figure 8) is the uppermost, smooth and vertical part of the front of boulder

Figure 11. Petroglyph on panel HBL-012B at Huaca Blanca, Lambayeque, Peru.  
Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.



PGR-002. The front of the boulder measures in 2.3 m height from the apex and 2.7 m in width across the major petroglyph. It features a very imposing, outlined petroglyph of a completely frontally depicted anthropomorphic face or mask crowned by an object that appears to be a very large *tumi*. A *tumi* is a half-moon-shaped ritual knife that is very characteristic for a number of Andean cultures from the Early Intermediate and Middle Horizon Periods. Especially the Moche culture and the subsequent Sicán and Chimú cultures used the *tumi*.

The petroglyph (Figure 9), measuring roughly 60 cm across the widest part of the *tumi* and 56 cm from chin to the upper end of the blade, is rather clear at the upper part (red patina), but is almost completely invisible near and below the chin area (yellow patina). Therefore much of the face is hardly discernable and it was even impossible to decide if below the chin more lines

(part of a possible body) have ever existed. Yet, the larger part of the design is so distinct that it can be seen from 100 m distance (see Figure 6).

The petroglyph (Figure 10) most prominently features a *tumi* which comprises a large half-moon-shaped ornament without sharp-pointed ends. The interior of the blade seems to be decorated with a pattern that may represent another, smaller *tumi*. The human face is slightly heart-shaped and features large outlined eyes with (outlined?) pupils that are not exactly circular, a possible nose, an ear at each side of the head and probably a mouth (although this latter item is barely visible).

Directly to the right of the *tumi* is a faint pattern of lines that either may have been part of the petroglyph or may represent an earlier design. Similarly faint lines also occur in an irregular, multifaceted area, 20 to 60

Figure 12. Petroglyph on panel YON-046 at Yonán, Cajamarca, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.



Figure 13. Petroglyph on panel CNG-014 at Cerro Negro, La Libertad, Peru. Photograph by Maarten van Hoek.



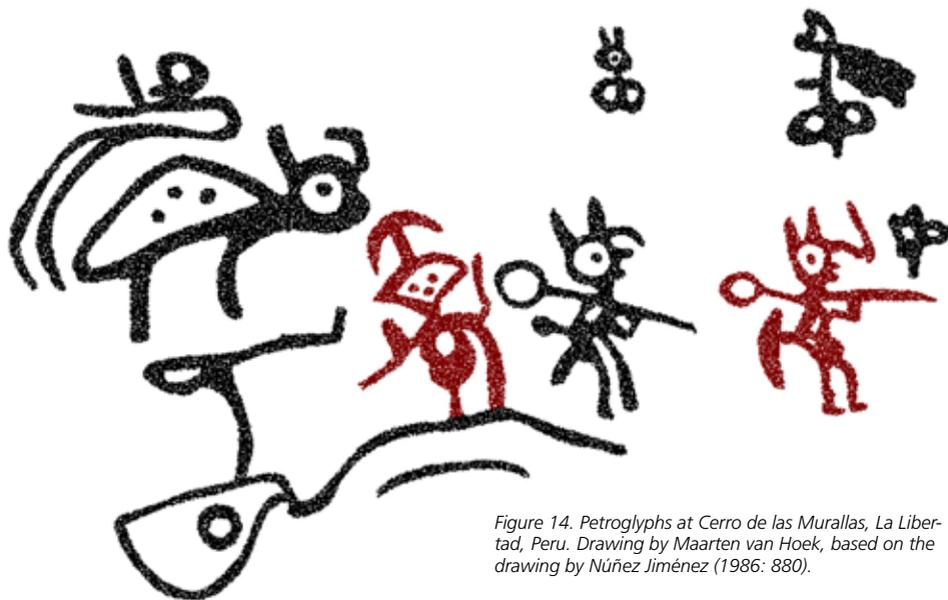


Figure 14. Petroglyphs at Cerro de las Murallas, La Libertad, Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on the drawing by Núñez Jiménez (1986: 880).

cm to the right of the *tumi* and on a small panel left of the *tumi*.

### The *Tumi* in Andean Rock Art

Taking in account the large size and the specific lay-out of the *tumi*-bearer petroglyph on boulder PGR-002, I have to state that I do not know of any comparable figure in Andean rock art. Yet, the image of a *tumi*-bearer is not unique in the Reque-Chancay Drainage and also at other Andean rock art sites *tumi*-bearing figures have been reported, though rarely. However, all those rock art images represent rather small, often complete anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures with a *tumi* on the head. In a number of other cases the *tumis* (may) have been depicted as isolated objects. For instance, large, isolated crescent-moon-shaped petroglyphs without a handle and with the blade-ends pointing downwards (*tumis* or moon symbols?) are found at Cerro Mulato and Huaca Blanca and, further south, at sites in the valley of the Jequetepeque and near Lúcumar in the Moche Drainage.

About 16 km NE of Huaca Fortaleza is the village of Huaca Blanca, where a large

concentration of petroglyph boulders has been recorded by my wife Elles and me. The vertical panel of one of the at least 63 boulders (HBL-012B) features the petroglyph of an outlined anthropomorphic figure that has been depicted fully frontally (Figure 11). The figure is rather small and much weathered and may escape being noticed among the many other petroglyphs. The anthropomorph has both arms raised and bears a relatively large *tumi* on the head.

Well known is the petroglyph site of Yonán in Jequetepeque, northern Peru (65 km SE of Pampa Grande), where several examples of biomorphs with a *tumi* on the head occur (Figure 12). At least one anthropomorph holds a *tumi* in the hand. What is special about Yonán is that, besides isolated depictions of possible *tumis*, several zoomorphic petroglyphs have been depicted as *tumi*-bearers. Zoomorphs with a *tumi* on the head have been recorded on Sicán (Lambayeque) ceramics and on Chimú pottery (Kauffman-Doig 1998: 136). Elsewhere in Jequetepeque is a petroglyph of a biomorph with a *tumi*-shaped head (provenance unknown).

Also at Cerro Negro in Chicama, northern Peru (120 km SE of Pampa Grande), are at

least two petroglyphs of an anthropomorph with a (very) small *tumi* on the head (Figure 13), while further upstream, at Chuquillanqui, a biomorphic petroglyph seems to bear a *tumi* on the head (Castillo Benites 2006: Fig. 231) whereas another biomorph seems to have a *tumi*-shaped head (Castillo Benites 2006: Fig. 270).

At the rock art site of Cerro de las Murallas in Virú (195 km SE of Pampa Grande), Núñez Jiménez reported an anthropomorphic figure with a *tumi* on the head, while another biomorph seems to have a *tumi*-shaped tail (Figure 14). However, despite many searches, this panel could not be traced by us.

At Palamenco in Lacramarca (265 km SE of Pampa Grande) is another petroglyph that we could not trace (Núñez Jiménez 1986: Fig. 1001). It depicts a bird with possibly a *tumi* on the head. However, as I have demonstrated (Van Hoek 2011a; 2011b) that more than 20 % of the graphics by Núñez Jiménez are unreliable or even incorrect, his recordings are suspicious.

Much further south, in Mala, southern Peru (720 km SE of Pampa Grande), many T-shaped or anchor-shaped petroglyphs have been reported at the petroglyph site of Cochineros (and a few at nearby Retama). These objects, mainly depicted as isolated objects, may be *tumis*. In one case such an object is held in the hand of an anthropomorphic figure and only in one case a biomorphic petroglyph seems to represent a *tumi*-bearer. Further south and east are but very few sites with (possible) *tumis*. For instance, at Sapagua in the NW of Argentina (2360 km SE of Pampa Grande) are several petroglyphs of possible double-*tumis*.

## Chronology

Pampa Grande is located in the coastal strip of north of Peru. This desert area has a very long and turbulent history. Especially the early Cupisnique cultures (Formative Period: 3000 B.C. to 200 B.C.) have built important temple complexes in the valley, like Ventarrón-Collud (Map 1: Site A), but

also manufactured many petroglyphs in the area; mainly at the north side of the valley (see Map 1). The Cupisnique culture gradually transformed into what is now known as the Gallinazo or Salinar culture (probably around 500 B. C.).

Considering the situation at Pampa Grande, it is very well possible that in particular the large design on panel PGR-004A (Figure 3) and perhaps (some of the) the motifs on panels PGR-004B, PGR-003 and PGR-001 are of Cupisnique manufacture. Although it is practically impossible to absolutely date petroglyphs, the grand design of the *tumi*-bearer on panel PGR-002A definitely is much younger and possibly belongs to the Moche culture, although I do not want to rule out a later Sicán (Lambayeque) or Chimú (Chimor) origin, as all three cul-

Figure 15. *Tumi*-bearer on a Chimú ceramic, provenance unknown, Peru.

Drawing by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph in [http://sniteartmuseum.nd.edu/Aztlan\\_Collection](http://sniteartmuseum.nd.edu/Aztlan_Collection) - Snite Museum of Art.



tures used the *tumi*. This needs some explanation.

Moche is being considered as the first ancient Andean state, which probably developed in the Moche Valley of northern Peru during the Early Intermediate Period (B.C. 200 to A.D. 600). Because of climatic disasters (droughts and El Niño's) and foreign intrusions in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Moche power shifted north to the Lambayeque Valley where new political and religious centres developed. First there is the famous Huaca Rajada Complex (Map 1: Site D) where 25 years ago Walter Alva excavated the burial tombs of the Lord of Sipán and other dignitaries and unearthed numerous treasures (from the Moche IV Period). A little later, a new capital of the Moche state (Moche V Period) was established only 15 km further east, at Pampa Grande. This dense urban settlement on the alluvial fan was home to tens of thousands of inhabitants at its height during the Late Moche Period (A.D. 600 to 800) after which the site was abruptly abandoned and the Moche culture disintegrated.

The inheritors of the Moche in the Lambayeque Valley were the Sicán Lords who also built impressive pyramids, especially around Batán Grande in the La Leche Valley further north. Then the Chimú culture developed and northern coastal power shifted again, back south to the Moche Valley, where the powerful kingdom of Chimor created an enormous complex at Chan Chan; the adobe Chimú capital of the largest Andean empire before the Incas. The Chimú also controlled the Lambayeque Valley and at several places fortifications and administration centres were constructed: for instance at Cerro Reque, Cerro Saltur, Cerro Pátapo (*senorio de Cinto*) (Map 1: Site C) and at La Puntilla (Map 1: Site F). Between Cerro Pátapo and La Puntilla (at Pampa de Burros) was an important Chimú ceramic workshop (Map 1: Site E), only 11km WNW of Pampa Grande. Ceramics of Chimú manufacture have been found in a wide area around this 'factory'. Interestingly, in several cases especially Chimú pot-

tery features anthropomorphs with raised arms and with a large *tumi* on the head (Figure 15). These ceramic *tumi*-bearers are almost identical with the *tumi*-bearer on panel PGR-002A (Figure 9) and with the *tumi*-bearer at Huaca Blanca (Figure 11).

Although it is uncertain if the petroglyph of the *tumi*-bearer on boulder PGR-002 is of the same date as the archaeological complex at Pampa Grande, this unique image may date back to the Early Intermediate Period (B.C. 200 to A.D. 600) and possibly belongs to the late stages of the Moche culture (Moche IV or V). However, also during later epochs the *tumi* was much in use by the subsequent cultures that ruled this area and thus the petroglyph may also date to the Middle Horizon (A.D. 600 to A.D. 1000; pertaining to the Sicán/Lambayeque cultures) or even to the Late Intermediate Period (A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1450) when the Chimú culture dominated the area.

## The Geographical Context

Considering the enormous amount of inhabitants at the Pampa Grande complex it is remarkable that so very few petroglyphs have so far been reported in this important section of the south bank of the Chancay-Reque drainage. Actually, the overall southern side of the Lambayeque Valley has a surprisingly limited number of rock panels with petroglyphs (ranging from 1 panel at Callanca south of Chiclayo to 63 boulders at Huaca Blanca).

Quite the opposite, on the other side of the valley hundreds of boulders/panels with petroglyphs dating from the Formative Period to the Late Intermediate Period have been recorded, especially at Cerro Mulato (Map 1: Site H), where more than 500 boulders have been reported (Van Hoek 2012).

In the area directly opposite Pampa Grande (with only four boulders) at least five rock art sites have been reported with altogether more than one hundred panels with petroglyphs. One of those rock art sites is found at La Puntilla (Map 1: Site F), which is a rugged rock promontory pointing

towards Pampa Grande. Together with the Pampa Grande site La Puntilla forms a strategically located bottleneck in the valley.

Izumi Shimada (1982) has clearly demonstrated the importance of the location of Pampa Grande in the context of the bottleneck that exists between La Puntilla on the north side of the valley and the Moche-V capital at the south bank.

This bottleneck (only 2 km wide) controlled the traffic, but more importantly, also the water resources of the valley further west. Pampa Grande was positioned to control the intervalley Collique and Taymi Canals, as well as the Lambayeque Canal that served the middle and lower Lambayeque Valley. These important irrigation canals were already in use during Moche rule (and possibly even much earlier).

Control of this diversion point was essential for political and economic control of the Lambayeque region as it would have provided political leverage for the Moche population at Pampa Grande over the

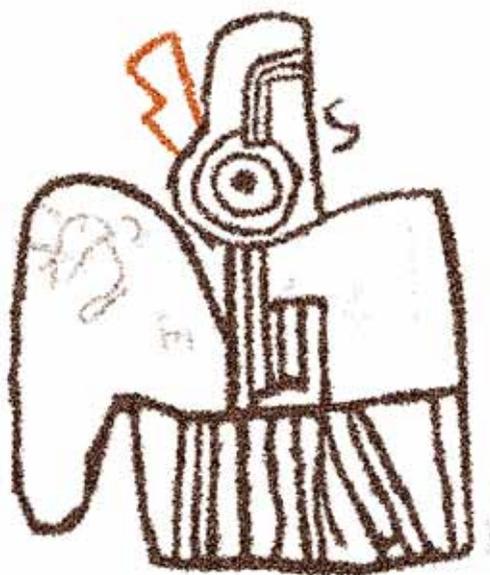
lower Lambayeque population. In return for water rights, tribute in the form of agricultural produce and marine resources may have been extracted from the indigenous population further down valley. Although according to Shimada no Moche-V remains occur at La Puntilla, Moche occupation at Saltur, Sipán, Pátapo and - further north - in Batán Grande argue that Pampa Grande had control of the ancient water canals. It should be kept in mind that the valley neck location also would have given Pampa Grande direct access to the most fertile agricultural land of the valley, the *Valle Viejo* (Shimada 1982: 160-161).

## Conclusions

It is unquestionable that the petroglyph of the *tumi*-bearer at Pampa Grande depicts a high-status figure. Only influential persons like warriors and priests were allowed to possess and display such an important ritual knife. It is also certain that the petroglyph is not that old. It probably dates either from the Moche-IV or Moche-V periods, or from the subsequent Lambayeque or Chimú cultures; a time-span of roughly 800 years (A.D. 600 to A.D. 1400). It is tempting however to assign a Chimú origin for the petroglyph, based on the resemblance with specific imagery on Chimú pottery, but this cannot be attested.

However, it is important to mention that the petroglyph is larger than average, has been manufactured on a vertical panel (and thus is clearly visible from a distance). Moreover it is an isolated petroglyph located in a commanding position. The petroglyph panel directly overlooks an area that could be regarded as a boundary between two different (ritual?) landscapes that are separated by a steep escarpment. It simultaneously overlooks a kind of passing place. Therefore, the petroglyph could have been intended as a warning sign for intruders. Especially because of the often unstable times and the general importance of water control, the location of such an imposing and powerful indicator near the La Puntilla

Figure 16. Petroglyph on boulder STR-001 at Cerro Saltur, Lambayeque, Peru. Drawing by Maarten van Hoek.



- Pampa Grande bottleneck may have been most relevant.

In this respect the location and size resembles the large image on an isolated boulder at Cerro Saltur. This vandalised Saltur petroglyph - a very large bird also manufactured on a vertical surface - faces an ancient wall across the highest point of a pass that also seems to separate two areas: Lambayeque and Zaña. Interestingly, the bird has a head ornament (indicated in red in Figure 16) that is also seen in Moche, Sicán and Chimú iconography.

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