Check for updates

Ñaimlap, the Birds, and the Sea: Viewing an Ancient Peruvian Legend through the Lens of Onomastics

MATTHIAS URBAN AND RITA ELORANTA

Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, Leiden, The Netherlands

Among the most intriguing oral testimonies of the late pre-Hispanic cultures of the Peruvian North Coast are the legends of origin that the Spanish were still able to record. In this article, we explore the names of the (mythological) first rulers and their associates which figure in one particularly famous North-Coast legend, that of Ñaimlap, the mythological founder of Lambayeque. We show that the name of Ñaimlap, as well as those of his courtiers and successors, can be attributed to the Mochica language. We also provide, to the extent possible, etymologies. Two names of the Ñaimlap dynasty, those of the dynastic founder Ñaimlap himself and his grandson Escuñain, reveal avian associations, while that of one of his officers, Ñina Cala, shows maritime connections. Both aspects match the structure of the Ñaimlap myth, in which the ruler arrives from a foreign land via a sea route.

KEYWORDS anthroponyms, ancient Peru, Peruvian North Coast, Mochica language, mythology, etymology, Ñaimlap.

The Ñaimlap legend

In the second half of the 16th century, the Spanish secular priest Miguel Cabello de Valboa roamed the coast of Northern Peru questioning local Indians about their accounts of their origins. He compiled his findings in his *Miscelánea Antártica* (Cabello Valboa [1586] 2011), which provides an elaboration of a common concern among Christians at that time: how did the Amerindians reach the Americas, and how did they lose touch with their true origin as creations of the biblical God? In this context, it is no surprise that Cabello Valboa was interested in what the Indians themselves had to say about their origins.

Here, we are interested in the names of the protagonists of the origin myth which Cabello Valboa heard in Northern Peru. In particular, we seek to explore how their etymology, to the extent that it can be recovered, relates to the manifest content of the story. There are two complete copies of Cabello Valboa's work, one kept at the University of Texas, Austin, the other at the New York Public Library (NYPL). The NYPL version, which was the basis of previous editions, appears to be a copy of the Austin version (Lerner 2011, xix). We cite the account and spellings of its protagonists as found in Lerner's (2011) edition. This is the first edition based on the Austin copy, which is considered closest to the original manuscript.

Cabello Valboa's ([1586] 2011, 393–395) account narrates of a lord called Naimlap (variant spellings used by Cabello Valboa are *Nailamp*, *Naymlap*, and *Nainlap*; we discuss later why we prefer the spelling *Ñaimlap*). With his wife Ceterñi and a large royal estate, this lord arrived on the shores of Lambayeque by sea with a great fleet of rafts. They brought an idol made of green stone called *Yampallec* (or *Yanpallec*). Cabello Valboa translates this as "figure and statue of Ñaimlap."[1] Accompanying the royal couple were 40 officials. They included Pita Zofi (player of the conch trumpet), Ñina Cala (responsible for the throne and litter), Ñinagintue and Occhoçalo (responsible for drinks and food for the lord, respectively), Fonca Sigde (whose job it was to disperse shell powder on the streets where Naimlap walked),[2] Xum Muchec (the royal face-painting artist), Ollopcopoc (in charge of the baths), and Llap Chiluli (manufacturer of feather-adorned clothes). As his death approached, Ñaimlap arranged to be buried secretly, and propagated that he had grown wings and flown away. Ñaimlap's oldest son was called Cium, and his wife was called Çolçoloñi. Cium succeeded Ñaimlap after his death and, during his reign, his 12 sons and their followers populated the lands of Lambayeque. After his death, Cium was followed by rulers named Escuñain, Mascuy, Cuntipallec, Allascunti, No Fan Nech, Mulumuslan, Llamcoll, Lanipatcum, and Acunta. Last was the unfortunate Fempellec (*Femllep* or *Fempallec*), who dared to try to move the Yampallec idol to a different place and was punished by torrential rains, followed by crop failure and famine. This catastrophe marked the end of the dynasty.

It is not clear from whom and where Cabello Valboa obtained his information. He credits his account to the people of Lambayeque generally, suggesting that he obtained the information directly from unspecified individuals during the expedition. Fernández Alvarado (2004, 184) suggests that his informant was Martín Farro, lord of Túcume.

A similar but less detailed version of the myth was written down in the 18th century by the priest Justo Modesto Ruviños y Andrade (published in Romero 1936). The names in this version differ somewhat. Here, the name of the newly arriving ruler is Ñamla (or *Namla*), and that of his wife is Sotenic. Their son is called Suim instead of Cium, and his wife is Ciernuncacum rather than Çolçoloñi. While the Ruviños y Andrade account does not provide the names of later rulers, and the royal estate is not discussed at all, it does provide more information on Ñamla's background than Cabello Valboa's version: a large war had taken place between the polities of some unspecified islands. In one of the battles fought during this war, Ñamla retreated with the royal family and as many treasures as they could salvage, until they were shipwrecked at the mouth of the Lambayeque River. Then, according to Ruviños y Andrade's version, the first settlement was named Nam (in honor of Ñamla) and, as in Cabello Valboa's account, Ñamla's numerous descendants populated the land.[3] Ruviños y Andrade reports that

they spread their language from Pacasmayo to Motupe and Olmos, and later as far as Tumbes, albeit in a "modified" form.[4]

The Ñaimlap legend and the Mochica language

The language spoken in historical times in Lambayeque was Mochica. According to the preface to de la Carrera's (1644) Mochica grammar, it was spoken from the southern limits of the Sechura desert to the valley of the Chicama River in the south. It was also spoken in the Upper Piura Valley and several places in the highlands of Cajamarca. An extension to Olmos is also possible (see Urban 2015a for a review of the evidence). Mochica is the best documented of all the indigenous languages once spoken along the Peruvian Pacific coast, with the exception of a (presumably coastal) variety of Quechua documented by Santo Tomás (1560) (although see Itier 2013). This is due to an early phase of documentation represented most prominently by de la Carrera's (1644) colonial grammar, and then by the efforts of various ethnographers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including Ernst Middendorf, Hans Heinrich Brüning, and others, who worked with the last speakers of the language in the region of Eten. The lexical data from most sources are compiled in Salas García (2002), and Brüning's data appear under Salas García's editorship as Brüning (2004). Despite this substantial quantity of documentation, however, both lexically and grammatically significant gaps remain in our understanding of Mochica. An additional complication lies in Mochica's sound system, which contained sounds that were foreign to European ears and were not easily represented with the Latin alphabet. Therefore, uncertainties regarding the pronunciation of Mochica remain (cf. the differing interpretations regarding Mochica phonetics and phonology in Cerrón-Palomino 1995; Hovdhaugen 2004; and Torero 1997).

Salas García (2012, 22) claims that the names associated with the legend told by Cabello Valboa and Ruviños y Andrade derive from the Mochica language generally. However, apart from one case that we discuss below, he does not offer evidence for this claim. We believe that Salas García is mostly correct, but in many cases the analysis is much more difficult than his statement suggests, and in others even impossible. The paucity of available Mochica material and the inconsistent spelling practices make it impossible to provide etymologies for many names. Some of the names of the personages of the myth will thus probably remain opaque, but others, including that of the protagonist, have an apparent origin in the Mochica language.[5] On the one hand, this is not surprising, since Mochica was still spoken in colonial times in the Lambayeque area and must have been the language of Cabello Valboa's and Ruviños y Andrade's informants. On the other hand, the names used in legends need not necessarily derive from the language spoken in that area. A relevant example from the Andes is the survival of Puquina and Aymara elements in the names of Inca rulers (Cerrón-Palomino 2012).

We quote the names of Ñaimlap's dynasty and the mentioned courtiers as they appear when first published, i.e. in Lerner's (2011) edition of Cabello Valboa and Romero's (1936) edition of Ruviños y Andrade, except for the name of the founder himself, which we prefer to spell as Ñaimlap for reasons explained below. Over the course of time, a large number of mostly spurious alternative spellings have appeared in the exegetic literature. This occurred partially through attempts to etymologize the names and arrive

at a more appropriate representation than that appearing in the original sources, and partially through simple misreading (cf. Trimborn 1979, 17–25).

We begin our discussion with Ñaimlap himself. This is in many senses the most difficult name to etymologize, and the discussion is the most tentative and speculative of all that we provide. We do not wish to conceal this fact to avoid false impressions to non-linguists, but rather consider it important that the difficulties be born in mind. We point out problematic aspects of the discussion as it proceeds. Of all the variant spellings Cabello Valboa uses, we concur with Cerrón-Palomino (1995, 43–44 fn. 22) that Naimlap is the most adequate one in the light of Mochica phonotactics. Given the spelling Ñamla by Ruviños y Andrade and Cabello Balboa's spelling of Yampallec (related to the name of the personage this idol represented), we in addition assume that the initial nasal is palatal and hence use the spelling Ñaimlap. We noted earlier that this name indeed seems to derive from Mochica. More specifically, Ñaimlap's name likely has something to do with the Mochica word for "bird" (cf. Torero 2002, 229): de la Carrera records it as <ñaiñ>, and both (approximate) pronunciation and meaning are confirmed by an array of independent sources (cf. Salas García 2002, 26). Rowe (1948, 38 fn. 14) contests this identification on the basis of the formal difference between <ñaiñ> and the first syllable of the name. However, there are several plausible possibilities to account for the attested spellings and their deviation from <ñaiñ>. First, while the palatal nasal /ɲ/ (represented orthographically by <ñ>) is part of the phonological system of Spanish, its occurrence in word-initial and final position is very uncommon. This may have caused replacement by the closest sound available, i.e. the alveolar nasal /n/ in the onset of the initial syllable of the name as heard by Cabello Valboa. Second, a sequence [ɲl] presents articulatory difficulties, possibly leading to dissimilation of <ñaiñ> to <ñaim> even in Mochica itself.[6] The meaning of the element -lap remains unclear. The oft-cited identification of -lap with Mochica <là> "water," and the resulting interpretation of the name as "water bird," which goes back to Ruviños y Andrade himself (in Romero 1936, 363), is unlikely. First, as already pointed out by Cerrón-Palomino (1995, 44 fn. 22), the final stop in Cabello Valboa's version of the name would lack an explanation. Second, Mochica, like English, has dependent-head order in compounds, so the resulting interpretation would necessarily be "bird water" rather than "water bird" (cf. Rowe 1948, 38 fn. 15). Place and personal names do not help in the interpretation of -lap, either. It is not frequent in historically attested personal names from the Mochica-speaking area; known cases are Falla ~ Fallap (Zevallos Quiñones 1993a) and Facollape (Zevallos Quiñones 1989, 107).[7]

We suggest the possibility of a different etymology of Lambayeque's mythological founder. Elera Arévalo (1998: viii, 328) mentions <ñampal> as the common name of the osprey on Peru's North Coast.[8] The osprey (*Pandeon haliaetus*) is a large raptor weighing up to 2 kg (Poole 2009). The form <ñampal> is also attested elsewhere in anthropological sources; for instance, Watanabe (1995, 87) mentions, along the form <ñampal>, also a variant <nian-pal>, and states that the coastal people consider the osprey as an indicator of successful fishing. These forms, however, are not attested in any of the lexical sources of Mochica. Even though a Mochica origin is therefore not secure, both variants, <ñampal> and <nian-pal>, are phonologically and phonotactically compatible with a Mochica origin, and the variant mentioned by Watanabe even shows the same variation regarding the presence or absence of an <i> as the name of Ñaimlap in Cabello Valboa's account. To this one can add that the phonological presence of diphthongs

in Mochica is denied by all modern interpreters (Cerrón-Palomino 1995; Hovdhaugen 2004; Torero 1997, 2002). To Torero in particular, orthographic <i> is in some cases nothing more than a marker of a palatal consonantal environment. Could the name of the mythological Ñaimlap then etymologically go back to the Mochica word for the osprey? Disregarding the orthographic vowel sequence, the name of the ruler and the name of the raptor differ essentially only in the relative positioning of the plosive and the lateral in the final syllable, which are inverted with respect to each other. This kind of positional change is known as metathesis, a phonological process attested in many of the world's languages either as a part of their (morpho)phonological system or diachronically in their development. However, it is not a part of Mochica phonology or morphophonology to the extent that it is known to us. The apparent metathesis may well be a result of misrepresentations or mishearings on behalf of Cabello Valboa, or even errors of the publishers of the document, and they do not mean that a process of metathesis should be attributed to Mochica. Metathesis of a lateral with a bilabial plosive specifically is also found in the variant spellings of the last ruler of Ñaimlap's dynasty, which varies between *Fempellec* and *Femllep*. In addition, the variant Nailamp shows variation of the position of <m> with regard to the other segments, a similar process that would need to be posited to account for the variation between Ñaimlap and <ñampal>. Comparable processes occur sporadically in variant spellings of placenames and personal names from the Mochica-speaking area. Without providing a sufficient account of the difference between the name of the osprey and the name of Ñaimlap, and without ultimately resolving the difficulties associated with it, the examples show that it is natural for variation to occur in Spanish representations of indigenous names involving the relative positioning of certain segments relative to one another. Accordingly, the likely Mochica name of the osprey is a possible source for the name of the legendary Ñaimlap. This interpretation would also be attractive because of links between the behavior of ospreys and the narrative content of the Ñaimlap account as told by Cabello Valboa. We return to this further below. However, we cannot be sure that the form <ñampal> is related to Ñaimlap's name. If <ñampal> contains <ñaiñ> "bird," there is also the problem of morpheme order, since modifiers precede heads in Mochica. In sum, the evidence is not conclusive, even though, either through <ñaiñ> or <ñampal>, Ñaimlap's name is likely connected to birds.

The name of the idol Yampallec is of relevance in this context too. If Yampallec indeed means "idol or statue of Ñaimlap," as Cabello Valboa says, the first syllable may represent <ñaiñ> "bird" as well, with derivations in form explained by <i> as a marker of a palatal environment in combination with regressive assimilation. If the names Ñaimlap and <ñampal> were etymologically identical, then a larger portion of the form Yampallec could be accounted for, and we would then be dealing with a form closer to <ñampal> in its unmetathesized form.

However, the etymological interpretation of Yampallec has a number of problems of its own. We turn to these now. One question is the relation of the name of the Yampallec idol with the name of Lambayeque. De la Carrera (1644, 129) translates <Ñampaxllæc> as "to Lambayeque." This form has the expected initial palatal nasal. It also shows the presence of a locative case suffix with the form <−Vc>. Centuries later, Middendorf (1892, 64) records <ñampajek>, and Brüning (2004, 40) <nyampášek> ~ <nyampášik> ~ <nyampášk>. In both cases, the meaning is given simply as "Lambeyeque." Either the

locative ending fused with the root and lost its meaning (indeed <–Vc> appears to have been unproductive in 17th century Mochica; Hovdhaugen 2004, 23), or it is deleted in de la Carrera's example through haplology.[9] These forms, at any rate, could be identified etymologically with Cabello Valboa's Yampallec. If the connection with the name of Ñaimlap himself is brought into play too, then the form could be translated as "at the osprey," "at Ñaimlap," or, less faithful to the Mochica structure, "osprey place." This is not without problems, however, as <xll> is used by de la Carrera (1644) to represent a sound in the Mochica language that was foreign to Spanish. There is no consensus regarding its phonetic reality. Hovdhaugen (2004) interprets it as a retroflex fricative [ʂ], Cerrón-Palomino (1995) as a palatal fricative with lateral release [çˡ], Salas García (2002) as an alveolar lateral fricative [ɬ], and Torero (1997) as a palatal or postpalatal voiceless lateral. By the early 20th century, the segment had lost its lateral character (Cerrón-Palomino 1995, 153–154). It would be odd under any proposed phonetic interpretation of <xll> that the Mochica sequence <Ñampaxll> should give <ñampal> in local Spanish. In addition, the entire sequence <–pallec> ~ <–pellec> recurs in other names of Ñaimlap's successors, whereas an analysis of Yampallec as "at the osprey" requires the assumption of a morphemic break that is not easily reconcilable with this.[10] Finally, the meaning "at" in the translation of Yampallec is somewhat problematic, since the usual translation of the case into English requires the prepositions "in" or "on," and rarely "to," but not "at" (Hovdhaugen 2004, 23–24).

Indeed, there are alternative explanations of the names Yampallec and Lambayeque. For instance, Brüning (2004, 40) records <nyam> "smoke." Glosses for the entries <nyampášek> ~ <nyampášik> ~ <nyampášk> "Lambayeque" suggest that Brüning himself thought of an etymology involving <nyam>, specifically, that the word means literally "clay jug of smoke". This etymology presents fewer problems on the formal side, but it remains unclear how the semantics would relate to both Ñaimlap's idol and the lands of Lambayeque.

A third interpretation is offered by Torero (2002, 229) and Cerrón-Palomino (2008, 157 fn. 5). They suggest that <paxllæc> "lima bean" forms the second part of <Ñampaxllæc>. This word is attested in late sources on Mochica, but not in de la Carrera (1644). It is inferred for Carreran Mochica, however, from the following untranslated sentence in de la Carrera's (1644, 116) grammar:

> mit c-an moiñ pexllæc
> bring BEN-IMP 1SG(DAT) pexllæc
> "bring me pexllæc!"[11]

The form <pexllæc> in this example and the final syllables of <Ñampaxllæc> are the only supposed occurrences of <paxllæc> "lima bean" in de la Carrera's grammar. We have reservations about this interpretation. First, the quality of the vowel in the first syllable remains problematic, in spite of Salas García's (2012, 56) attempt to reconcile the two variants. Then again, Brüning (2004, 45–47) records words for "(lima) bean" with a high or mid vowel in the initial syllable, yet in <nyampášek> ~ <nyampášik> ~ <nyampášk>, the vowel quality is consistently low. But in particular, we find the etymology semantically unconvincing in the absence of a solid foundation for the semantic connection between lima beans and the Yampallec idol. Mentioning Moche iconography, Torero (2002, 229) suggests that <paxllæc> had a secondary meaning,

"figure, sign," which is not attested in the lexical sources of Mochica. Then, Ñampaxllæc could indeed mean "figure or statue of Ñaimlap," as Cabello Valboa says. However, Torero does not tell us what the relevance of the iconography is. He may simply have noted anthropomorphized lima beans in Moche iconography, leading him to assume a reading of "figure." If this is based on Larco Hoyle's (e.g. 1944) interpretation of incised patterns on archaeologically recovered lima beans as a form of writing, it should be pointed out that this is extremely controversial, and a number of other interpretations are preferred by Moche iconographers (cf. e.g. Hocquenghem 1984). Furthermore, the interpretation has the disadvantage that Fempellec and Cuntipallec, later rulers of the Ñaimlap dynasty who were made from flesh and bones and not green stone, would have been called lima beans and/or figures or statues (unless Torero thought that their names do not contain <paxllæc>). Urban (2015b) suggests that the proposed presence of the word for lima bean in the name of Pallesmassa, one of the rulers of Lambayeque after the Fempellec flood, is spurious. The form is present, but in its function as a numeral classifier for hundreds rather than utilizing its lexical meaning. Thus, the etymologies of the Yampallec idol and <Ñampaxllæc> "Lambayeque" remain problematic, and neither etymology should be accepted uncritically.

The name of Ñaimlap's grandson Escuñain is more easily etymologized through Mochica: the final element can be identified as a variant of <ñaiñ> "bird" showing depalatalization of the final nasal; <eizcu> is glossed as "hijada" by de la Carrera (1644, 178). This is a variant spelling of Spanish *ijada*, which denotes the cavities between the lower ribs and the hipbone. The term was later recorded as <eiscu, eisku> and glossed as "die Waise" (i.e. "the orphan") by German ethnographer Ernst Middendorf (1892, 49), but as "die Weiche" (i.e. "the loins;" the word is archaic in present-day German) in a list of body-part terms 10 pages later (1892, 59). We assume the meaning "orphan" is an error that results from the phonological similarity between the words for "orphan" and "loins" in Middendorf's metalanguage, German. It is significant that <eizcu> appears to be made up of <eiz> "son, daughter" and a rare derivational suffix <–cu>. Other words containing this suffix are <çiad-cu> "inclined to sleep," <ñang-cu> "male," <lecɥ-cu> "pinky" (all from de la Carrera 1644 in Salas García 2002, 26) and <chär-ku> "proud" (Middendorf 1892). For <lecɥ-cu> "pinky," Middendorf records <jech-ku> "thumb." A clear derivation base can be found for only two of these words: <ñang> "husband" (de la Carrera 1644; later authors also recognize the meaning "man," cf. Salas García 2002, 26) and <lecɥ> "head."[12] From these examples, no clear semantics for the <–cu> suffix can be deduced. One can speculate that the body cavities denoted by <eizcu> were conceived as relevant to pregnancy alongside the womb as the place where the foetus develops ("uterus" in Mochica is <eiztic> according to de la Carrera 1644, 180). So, what does this mean for the interpretation of Escuñain's name? The interpretation that sticks most closely to its apparent structure would suggest that it refers to a bird still in the <eizcu>, i.e. unborn and in the state of development. Another possibility would be that <eizcu> carried another unrecorded meaning related semantically to that of the derivation base <eiz>, and that it is this unrecorded meaning which was implied when Escuñain's name was conceived. Regardless of the meaning, the etymology is solid on purely formal grounds.

Other officers or successors of the legendary Ñaimlap, whose names may be connected with the names of birds, are Llap Chiluli, who manufactured clothes adorned with

feathers, Llamcoll, and Fempellec. For Llap Chiluli, similarities with <cucûli> "dove" and <cꭒelû> "hawk" (de la Carrera 1644 in Salas García 2002, 92, 94) can be noted. Llamcoll may be compared with <lyam> "turkey vulture" (Brüning 2004, 31), and Fempellec with <fiñ>. According to de la Carrera (1644) as quoted in Salas García (2002, 96), this is the name of a kind of bird associated with prophecies; Middendorf (1892) has <fiñ> "penguin." All these connections are tenuous, however, and the resemblances to the Mochica bird names could be coincidences.[13] The same would be true of attempts to connect Llamcoll's name with <llam> "thin, delicate" and/or <col> "llama" (on this term see below). In the latter case the different quality of the lateral would be particularly problematic.

Maritime connections can be seen for at least one member of Ñaimlap's royal court. As stated above, Salas García (2012) claims that most names of the Ñaimlap dynasty are recognizably Mochica in origin, but provides an etymology of only one: Ñina Cala, the official responsible for the throne and royal litter, which appears to translate literally as "llama of the sea:" <ñi> indeed means "sea" in Mochica, and <col> is attested in the colonial sources with the meaning "horse," but this is a clear case of semantic change in lexical acculturation. The original meaning must have been "llama." The <n> in Ñina is well interpretable as the <–ng> allomorph of the Mochica genitive (or oblique). Regarding the final vowels, Salas García (2012, 25) says that they are "auxiliary."[14] We believe that this statement can be refined as follows: the first instance probably corresponds to a final vowel <o> which is found in several instances on dependents in de la Carrera's (1644) grammar. The function remains unclear. The second instance, in contrast, is best explained as an adaptation to the phonotactics of Spanish.

The etymological associations we have discussed so far are connected to the content of the Ñaimlap legend itself. Regarding Ñina Cala, it is notable that indeed the llama was the pre-Columbian beast of burden, while the maritime reference corresponds to Ñaimlap's arrival by sea (cf. Salas García 2012, 22). In addition, avian characters are suggested by the names of at least two of the legend's protagonists. This is the case for the name of Ñaimlap's grandson Escuñain, and also for that of the legendary founder figure himself. In the manifest content of the legend, Ñaimlap's avian character is suggested by the fact that he brought with him a specialist specifically responsible for making clothes adorned with feathers, Llap Chiluli (a craft pre-Columbian Peruvian artists excelled in, see King 2012). More significantly, recall too that Ñaimlap had spread a story on his death bed about growing wings and flying away, invoking precisely the avian character suggested by his name. If, as we have suggested as a possibility, the mythological personage Ñaimlap could indeed be identified etymologically with the name of the osprey specifically, the structure of the myth would show striking correlations with the raptor's behavior: like the mythological Ñaimlap, the osprey has strong connections with the sea; because of its fish-based diet, the species is bound to maritime or inshore habitats. Also, like Ñaimlap, it arrives from faraway foreign lands at a certain point in the year. Significant osprey populations are migratory, especially those for whom cold winters in the northern latitudes do not allow for enough calorie intake in all seasons. These populations, especially those of the subspecies *Pandion haliaetus carolinensis*, migrate from breeding places in North America to the south as far as Chile and southern Brazil (Poole 2009). In Peru, they are observed most commonly on the coast, from April to October (Schulenberg et al. 2007, 110). Their arrival correlates with the summer period

in the southern hemisphere, that time when the rivers intersecting the coastal desert would begin to carry water again after running dry during the winter and thus marking the beginning of fertility and the crop-planting season. The ospreys observable in Peru arrive from the north, and the same is frequently, although not uncontroversially, assumed for Ñaimlap.[15] We cannot be sure, however, whether indeed the basis of the mythological Ñaimlap is the osprey because the etymology presents some difficulties.

Final reflections

In this article, we have analyzed the Ñaimlap legend in a self-contained manner from the point of view of Mochica linguistics, and have shown that the maritime and avian associations of the plot correspond, with greater or lesser degrees of certainty, to the etymology of some of its protagonists. Such an analysis can stand on its own and does not in principle require support from other disciplines.

On the other hand, we also believe that more complete insights into the pre-Colombian North-Coast cultures may emerge when considering the evidence from multiple disciplines, and we hope that our contribution from linguistics can serve as a building block for detailed future studies of this kind. As the linguistic analysis confirms, the Ñaimlap account is one instance of a more general preoccupation with avian motives in Andean cultures (e.g. Fernández Alvarado 2004; Yakovleff, 1932). Makowski (2001, 146) notes that transformation of anthropomorphic deities into birds is a frequent Andean theme.[16]

In the case of Ñaimlap, these motives are linked in a double conceptual and linguistic fashion with maritime topics (cf. the analysis of the name Ñina Cala), as is to be expected for maritime-adapted societies such as those of Peru's North Coast. In addition, some of the myth's features are apparently deeply entrenched in North-Coast culture more generally.[17] The notion of a foreign arrival via the sea, for one, is not unique, but part of broader North-Coast traditions, as the case of Taycanamo, the mythical founder of the Chimú dynasty according to the anonymous 1604 genealogy (published by Vargas Ugarte 1936) and the origin myth of Eten (Liza 1967) show. Furthermore, the legend of the creator god Con (told by López de Gómara ([1552] 2012, 238) and other chroniclers), also speaks of an arrival from a faraway land, suggesting that this is a general and widespread part of North-Coast mythology (Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1989, 167–168). As such, the Ñaimlap legend is of considerable importance as a testimony of the pre-Columbian cultures of the North Coast, reflecting their unique characteristics as well as their relationships to a broader Andean cultural area.[18] We hope that a linguistic analysis of the names of its protagonists can further deepen the understanding of its contents.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. "figura y estatua de Naimlap."

2. Presumably the shell powder was from the highly prized Spondylus, but this is not explicit (cf. Cordy-Collins 1990, 395).

3. Indeed, Brüning ([1922] 1989, 20–21) and Romero (1936, 362) point out that Ñan or Nam alone is also the name of an old *parcialidad*.

4. "adulterada en mucha parte" (Romero 1936, 362).

5. In the origin myth of Eten (Liza 1967 in Netherly 2009, 145, 152), the voyagers already speak Mochica.

6. Note, however, that Cabello Valboa's variant spelling *Nainlap* retains a point of articulation closer to the presumed original.

7. We note that it is more frequent in toponyms, in particular from the Chicama Valley, e.g. Collap, Copilap, Facallape, Fonlape, Jejelape, and Tulape. The only similar name from Moche is Fallape (Zevallos Quiñones 1993b). This observation may not be relevant, however, since such names are also attested with some frequency in the Chachapoyas area (e.g. Cuelap, Conílape, and Yálape). Accordingly, such placenames may belong to an old toponymic stratum rather than one associated with the Mochica language.

8. We use the author's full name for all three publications we cite. However, it is stated in this form only in the 1998 publication. The author is credited as "Carlos G. Elera" in the 1993 publication, and as "Carlos Elera" in the 2006 publication.

9. It is also worth noting that the Mochica language distinguished possessed from non-possessed stems. For one class of nouns, the non-possessed stem is formed with the suffix <–(V)c> and the possessed stem with the suffix <–(V)r>. These nouns are frequently deverbal in origin (Hovdhaugen 2004, 20). It is possible or even likely that <paxllæc> is such a noun, in which case the verb <paxll–> "return, come back", which occurs in the translation of the Salve Regina (de la Carrera 1644, 210), suggests itself as a derivation base.

10. Brüning ([1922] 1989, 20–21) points out that both –ñan and –pallec (or variants) recur in both personal and placenames of Lambayeque; Ñan alone is also the name of an old *parcialidad*.

11. Abbreviations: BEN "benefactive," IMP "imperative," SG "singular," and DAT "dative."

12. This lends support to the meaning provided by Middendorf; a typological parallel is found in Turkish *baş-parmak* (Cowan and Rakušan 1998, 79).

13. Brüning ([1922] 1989, 27–28) separates the name as Llapchi-llulli, citing the personal names Minollulli and Chucullulli and the place name Ciarciallulli as relevant analogies.

14. "sirven de apoyo."

15. Cabello Valboa actually speaks of Ñaimlap's arrival from the "suprema parte." Means' (1931) translation suggest that this implies arrival of Ñaimlap from the north; however, for the Spaniards the adjective *supremo* may well have implied the south (e.g. Rowe 1948, 37). The fact that in the highly similar origin myth of Eten (Liza 1967 in Netherly 2009, 145, 152) the north is unambiguously identified may point towards the former interpretation.

16. Conceptual associations of Andean rulers with birds are also reflected onomastically elsewhere: the Inca title Guaman (and variant transcriptions) is actually nothing else than the Quechua word for "hawk" (<proto-Quechua *waman "hawk"), and Atahualpa is literally *atawalpa* "bird of good fortune" (Parker 1969, 53).

17. The apparent embeddedness of the Ñaimlap myth into a broader North-Coast cultural context also may be visible iconographically through time, although this interpretation is somewhat vexed. For instance, it has been argued that the avian character of the legendary Ñaimlap is reflected in attributes of the Sicán deity, the ubiquitous hallmark of Middle Sicán iconography (cf. Elera 2006, 66–67). Kauffmann Doig (1978, 497) suggests identifying Ñaimlap and the avian Sicán deity generally and Elera (2006, 66–67) holds that the Sicán deity is Ñaimlap's representation. However, it could be argued that the Sicán lord cannot be reduced to a simple avian deity, nor be exhaustively explained through reference to the Ñaimlap account. The iconographic evidence suggests a much more complex character, appearing in a diversity of roles and contexts (Shimada and Samillán Torres 2014). In a quite different manner, ospreys play a role in Moche iconography too (Donnan and McClelland 1999, 136; Lunsford et al. 2006, 152; Makowski 2001, 152; Yakovleff 1932). Possibly there are still earlier representations in Chavín and Cupisnique iconography (Elera 1993, 249; Salazar and Burger 2001, 68). We are not qualified to judge if the possible etymology of Ñaimlap's name can be felicitously brought in a connection with these facts, but if aspects of the conceptual structure of the Ñaimlap myth, in particular the arrival from a foreign land via the sea, could have Moche roots (Bourget 2008, 286–287), the possibility remains open.

18. This would follow an allegorical interpretation of the legend which describes and perhaps justifies the official institutions (cf. Cordy-Collins 1990, 394; Moseley 2001, 261; Netherly 1990; and Zuidema 1990 for different aspects). To this one could add the significance of the number 40 in Andean cultures (cf. Donnan 2009) and the fact that Ñaimlap's secret burial corresponds well with funerary practices of North-Coast rulers at Chan (Moore 2004) and Huaca Loro (Shimada et al. 2004, 387–388, who explicitly make the connection with the Ñaimlap legend). For the possibility of historical interpretations see Brüning ([1922] 1989), Donnan (1990, 2011), and Fernández Alvarado (2004).

Bibliography

Bourget, Steve. 2008. "The third man: Identity and rulership in Moche archaeology and visual culture." In *The art and archaeology of the Moche. An ancient Andean society of the Peruvian North Coast*, eds. Steve Bourget and Kimberly L. Jones, 263–288. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Brüning, Enrique. (1922) 1989. *Estudios monográficos del departamento de Lambayeque* [Monographic studies of the department of Lambayeque], Ed. James M. Vreeland, Jr. Chiclayo: Sociedad de Investigación de la Ciencia, Cultura y Arte Norteño SICAN.

Brüning, Hans Heinrich. 2004. *Mochica Wörterbuch. Diccionario mochica. Mochica – Castellano / Castellano – Mochica* [Mochica dictionary. Mochica-Spanish / Spanish-Mochica], Ed. José Antonio Salas García. Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porres (USMP), Escuela Profesional de Turismo y Hotelería.

Cabello Valboa, Miguel. (1586) 2011. *Miscelánea Antártica* [Antarctic Miscellanea]. Ed. Isaías Lerner. Seville: Fundación José Manuel Lara.

Carrera, Fernando de la. 1644. *Arte de la lengua yunga de los valles del obispado de Truxillo del Peru, con un confessonario, y todas las oraciones Christianas, traducidas en la lengua, y otras cosas* [Grammar of the Yunga language of the valleys of the archbishopric of Trujillo, Peru, with a confessionary and all Christian prayers translated to the language, and other items]. Lima: Ioseph de Contreras.

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo. 1995. *La lengua de Naimlap (reconstrucción y obsolescencia del mochica)* [The language of Naimlap (reconstruction and obsolescence of the Mochica language)]. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo. 2008. *Voces del Ande. Ensayos sobre onomástica andina* [Andean words. Essays on Andean onomastics]. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú.

Cerrón-Palomino, Rodolfo. 2012. Unravelling the enigma of the 'Particular Language' of the Incas. In *Archaeology and language in the Andes: A cross-disciplinary exploration of prehistory*, eds. Paul Heggarty and David Beresford-Jones, 265–294. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press/The British Museum.

Cordy-Collins, Alana. 1990. Fonga Sigde, shell purveyor to the Chimu kings. In *The northern dynasties: Kingship and statecraft in Chimor*, eds. Michael E. Moseley and Alana Cordy-Collins, 393–417. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library.

Cowan, William, and Jaromira Rakušan. 1998. *Source book for linguistics*. 3rd ed. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Donnan, Christopher B. 1990. "An assessment of the validity of the Ñaimlap dynasty. In *The northern dynasties: Kingship and statecraft in Chimor*, eds. Michael E. Moseley and Alana Cordy-Collins, 243–274. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library.

Donnan, Christopher B. 2009. "The Moche use of numbers and number sets." In *Andean civilization. A tribute to Michael E. Moseley*, eds. Joyce Marcus and Patrick Ryan Williams, 165–180. Los Angeles, CA: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.

Donnan, Christopher B., and Donna McClelland. 1999. *Moche fineline painting: its evolution and its artists*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Elera, Arévalo G. Carlos. 1993. El complejo cultural Cupisnique: antecedentes y desarrollo de su ideología religiosa [The Cupisnique cultural complex: antecedents and development of its religious ideology]. *Senri Ethnological Studies* 37: 229–257.

Elera, Arévalo, Carlos G. 2006. "The cultural landscapes of the Sicán." In *Ancient Peru unearthed. Golden treasures of a lost Civilization/Sicán: l'or du Pérou antique. L'or précieux d'une civilisation disparue*. eds. Joyce Hildebrandt and Karen Buckley, 62–71. Calgary: The Nickle Arts Museum, University of Calgary.

Elera Arévalo, Carlos G. 1998. *The Puémape site and the Cupisnique culture: a case study on the origins and development of complex society in the Central Andes, Peru*. Ph.D. thesis. Calgary: University of Calgary.

Fernández Alvarado, Julio César. 2004. "Ñaymlap: un personaje legendario y divinidad Lambayecana" [Ñaymlap: a Lambayecan legendary personage and deity]. In *Sinto. Señorío e identidad en la Costa Norte lambayecana* [Sinto. Señorío and identity on the Lambayecan North Coast], 183–199. Chiclayo: Consultores y Promotores Turísticos del Norte.

Hocquenghem, Anne-Marie. 1984. El hombre y el pallar en la iconografía Mochica [Man and lima bean in Mochica iconography]. *Anthropologica* 2: 403–411.

Hovdhaugen, Even. 2004. *Mochica*. Munich: Lincom Europa.

Itier, César. 2013. Las bases geográficas de la lengua vehicular del imperio Inca [The geographical bases of the common language of the Inca empire]. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Études Andines* 42, no. 2: 237–260.

Kauffmann Doig, Federico. 1978. *Manual de arqueología peruana* [Manual of Peruvian archaeology]. 6th ed. Lima: Peisa.

King, Heidi ed. 2012. *Peruvian featherworks: Art of the Precolumbian Era*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Larco Hoyle, Rafael. 1944. La escritura peruana sobre pallares [The Peruvian writing system on lima beans]. *Relaciones de la Sociedad Argentina de Antropología* 4: 57–77.

Lerner, Isaías. 2011. "Introducción" [Introduction]. In *Miguel Cabello de Valboa: Miscelánea Antártica* ed. Isaías Lerner, viii–xxxvii. Seville: Fundación José Manuel Lara.

Liza Q., Jacinto A. 1967. *Historia de la aparición del divino Niño Jesús en el antiguo pueblo mochica de Eten en 1649* [Account of the apparition of the divine child Jesus in the old Mochica village of Eten in 1649]. [no publisher stated]: Chiclayo/Ciudad Eten.

López de Gómara, Francisco. (1552) 2012. *Historia general de las Indias* [General history of the Indies]. Barcelona: Red Ediciones.

Lunsford, John, Mary Brinker, and Courtney E. Kennedy eds. 2006. *Important Pre-Columbian and Native American art: the Hendershott Collection – Session 1*. New York: Heritage Auctions.

Makowski, Krzysztof. 2001. "Las divinidades en la iconografía mochica" [The deities in Mochica iconography].In *Los dioses del antiguo Perú* [The gods of ancient Peru], 137–175. Lima: Banco del Crédito del Perú.

Means, Philip Ainsworth. 1931. *Ancient civilizations of the Andes*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Middendorf, Ernst Wilhelm. 1892. *Das Muchik oder die Chimu-Sprache, mit einer Einleitung über die Culturvölker, die gleichzeitig mit den Inkas und Aimaras in Südamerika lebten, und einem Anhang über die Chibcha-Sprache* [Muchik or the Chimu language, with an introduction on the civilized peoples who lived contemporaneously with the Inka and Aimara in South America, and an appendix on the Chibcha language]. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus.

Moore, Jerry D. 2004. "The social basis of sacred spaces in the Prehispanic Andes: ritual landscapes of the dead in Chimú and Inka societies." *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11, no. 1: 83–124.

Moseley, Michael E. 2001. *The Incas and their ancestors. The archaeology of Peru*. Revised ed. London: Thames & Hudson.

Netherly, Patricia J. 1990. Out of many, one: the organization of rule in the North Coast polities. In *The northern dynasties: Kingship and statecraft in Chimor*, eds. Michael E. Moseley and Alana Cordy-Collins, 461–487. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library.

Netherly, Patricia J. 2009. "Landscapes as metaphor. Resources, language, and myths of dynastic origin on the Pacific Coast from the Santa Valley (Peru) to Manabí (Ecuador)." In *Landscapes of origin in the Americas. Creation narratives linking ancient places and present communities*, ed. Jessica Joyce Christie, 123–152. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Parker, Gary J. 1969. "Comparative Quechua phonology and grammar III: Proto_Quechua Lexicon." *University of Hawaii Working Papers in Linguistics* 4: 1–61.

Poole, Alan F. 2009. "Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)." In *Neotropical birds online*. ed. T.S. Schulenberg. Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology <http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p_p_spp=119196> (accessed December 5, 2016).

Romero, Carlos A. 1936. Un manuscrito interesante [An interesting manuscript]. *Revista Histórica* 10, no. 3: 289–363.

Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, María. 1989. *Costa Peruana prehispánica* [The prehispanic North Coast]. 2nd ed. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

Rowe, John H. 1948. The kingdom of Chimor. *Acta Americana* 6, no. 1/2: 26–59.

Salas García, José Antonio. 2002. *Diccionario mochica – castellano* [Mochica – Spanish dictionary]. Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Escuela Profesional de Turismo y Hotelería.

Salas García, José Antonio. 2012. *Etimologías mochicas* [Mochica etymologies]. Lima: Academia Peruana de la Lengua.

Salazar, Lucy C., and Richard L. Burger. 2001. "Las divinidades del universo religioso Cupisnique y Chavín" [The deities of the Cupisnique and Chavín religious universe].In *Los dioses del antiguo Perú* [The gods of ancient Peru], 35–87. Lima: Banco del Crédito del Perú.

Santo Tomás, Domingo de. 1560. *Vocabulario de la lengua general de los Indios del Peru, llamada quichua* [Vocabulary of the general language of the Indians of Peru, called Quichua]. Valladolid: Francisco Fernandez de Cordoua.

Schulenberg, Thomas S., Douglas F. Stotz, Daniel F. Lane, John P. O'Neill, and Theodore A. Parker III. 2007. *Birds of Peru*. Revised and updated ed. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Shimada, Izumi, with the collaboration of César Samillán Torres. 2014. "Arte, religión y cosmología de Sicán Medio: nuevos enfoques" [Middle Sicán art, religion, and cosmology: new approaches]. In *Cultura Sicán: esplendor preincaico de la Costa Norte* [The Sicán culture: Pre-Incaic splendor of the North Coast], ed. Izumi Shimada, 169–194. Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú.

Shimada, Izumi, Ken-Ichi Shinoda, Julie Farnum, Robert Corruccini, and Hirokatsu Watanabe. 2004. "An integrated analysis of pre-hispanic mortuary practices: A Middle Sicán case study." *Current Anthropology* 45, no. 3: 369–402.

Torero, Alfredo. 1997. La fonología del idioma mochica en los siglos XVI–XVII [The phonology of the Mochica language in the 16th and 17th centuries]. *Revista Andina* 15, no. 1: 101–129.

Torero, Alfredo. 2002. *Idiomas de los Andes. Lingüística e historia* [Languages of the Andes. Linguistics and history]. Lima: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinas/ Editoriál Horizonte.

Trimborn, Heinrich. 1979. *El reino de Lambayeque en el antiguo Perú* [The kingdom of Lambayeque in ancient Peru]. St. Augustin: Haus Völker und Kulturen – Anthropos Institut.

Urban, Matthias. 2015a. El vocabulario Sechurano de Richard Spruce [Richard Spruce's Sechuran vocabulary]. *Lexis* 39, no. 2: 395–413.

Urban, Matthias. 2015b. The Massa connection: an onomastic link between the Peruvian North and Far North in a multidisciplinary perspective. *Indiana* 32: 179–203.

Vargas Ugarte, Rubén. 1936. La fecha de la fundación de Trujillo [The date of the foundation of Trujillo]. *Revista Histórica* 10: 229–239.

Watanabe, Luis K. 1995. *Culturas preincas del Perú* [Pre-Inka cultures of Peru]. Lima: COFIDE.

Yakovleff, Eugenio. 1932. Las Falconidas en el arte y en las creencias de los antiguos Peruanos [The Falconidae in the art and the beliefs of the ancient Peruvians]. *Revista del Museo Nacional* 1, no. 1: 33–111.

Zevallos Quiñones, Jorge. 1989. *Los cacicazgos de Lambayeque* [The cacicazgos of Lambayeque]. Trujillo: Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología.

Zevallos Quiñones, Jorge. 1993a. *Onomástica Chimú* [Chimu onomastics]. Trujillo: Fundación Alfredo Pinillos Goicochea.

Zevallos Quiñones, Jorge. 1993b. *Toponimía Chimú* [Chimu toponymy]. Trujillo: Fundación Alfredo Pinillos Goicochea.

Zuidema, R.Tom. 1990. Dynastic structures in Andean cultures. In *The northern dynasties: Kingship and statecraft in Chimor*, eds. Michael E. Moseley and Alana Cordy-Collins, 489–505. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library.

Notes on contributors

Matthias Urban (PhD 2012 Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology/Leiden University) is a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University. His research concentrates mainly on historical and areal linguistics, with a theoretical focus on semantic change and a geographical focus on the languages of South America, in particular those of the Andes.

Rita Eloranta is a PhD student in linguistics at Leiden University. Rita concentrates on the reconstruction of the Mochica language. She also seeks to define its genetic position and establish its possible early external relations. Furthermore, Rita is interested in Amerindian linguistics, missionary linguistics, contact linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and typology.

Correspondence to: Email: m.urban@hum.leidenuniv.nl