The Petroglyphs of Cerro San Diego, Peru

by Maarten van Hoek - Tuesday, November 15, 2022

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This paper describes the petroglyph site of Cerro San Diego, north of Lima. The site has a rather unusual location. Moreover, it has some exceptional petroglyphs, for instance a large purported “eye-motif” from the Andean Formative Period.

By *Maarten van Hoek*

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Carabaylla, Lima, Peru

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Introduction

The rock art site of Cerro San Diego is found roughly 30 km north of city centre of Lima, the

capital of Peru, 13 km inland from the coastal town of Ancón and 7 km west of the Río Chillón (Figure 1). The site is located on the very top of the mountain (at 1431 m asl; all distances and altitudes in this study are based on Google Earth, although altitudes may vary in different publications and Google Earth satellite photos) and for that reason often is only visible above the thick blanket of clouds (the *Garua*) that covers a large part of the coastal area.

Figure 1. Locations of most of the sites mentioned in this study. Cerro San Diego is indicated by a blue circle. Map © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a map © by OpenStreetMap - Contributors. Click any illustration to see an enlargement.

The site is locally (and confusingly) called Lomas de Primavera, Lomas del Cerro Gavilán, (erroneously) Cerro Huatocay (actually this is a mountain top with no rock art, about 7 km north of Cerro San Diego), or (Lomas de) Carabayllo. Even more confusingly, the site is also listed as *Cerro de Ancón* or *Lomas de Ancón* in the *Inventario Nacional* by Rainer Hostnig (2003: 321, 343 - although he mentions an almost correct altitude). Because the site definitely is found on the very top of Cerro San Diego, the SIGDA also listed the site by that name. Therefore the name of Cerro San Diego will also be used in this study.

The Regional Context

The desert area, the river valleys and the mountains around Lima are rich in rock art sites (see Van Hoek and Cárdenas 2022a: Fig. 1; 2022b: Fig. 1). About 14 km SE of Cerro San Diego is the important, ancient petroglyph site of Cerro Cantería (located 21 km inland and at 1177 m exactly on the watershed between Quebrada Canto Grande [Rímac drainage] and Río Chillón). Further east is the enigmatic archaeological site at Cerro Colorado (summit at 2172 m and 28 km inland) where a few boulders with petroglyphs have been reported (Figures 2 and 3). Rock art sites with only one or a few decorated boulders have been registered at Chocas in the Chillón Valley (at 503 m and 22 km inland; 10 km NE of Cerro San Diego) and - surprisingly - at the coastal site of Ancón (at 8 m above sea level and about 500 m inland; 13 km WNW of Cerro San Diego; source 2019). The two papers by Van Hoek and Cárdenas (2022a and 2022b) provide further information about rock art in the drainages of the Chillón, Rímac and Lurín.

Figure 2. The locations of the three important rock art sites in the area. Map © by Maarten van Hoek, based on Google Earth.

Figure 3. The locations of the three important rock art sites in the area. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on Google Earth.

It is quite exceptional to find a rock art site at the very top of a mountain, as most rock art sites in the Desert Andes are found in the river valleys, very near the rivers or along ancient routes (sometimes leading across high mountain passes). There may be a very special reason for selecting the top of Cerro San Diego for rock art production. Of course it is first of all decisive that at the top of this mountain many boulders suitable for petroglyph manufacture are found, but suitable rocks also are found at much lower levels in the Chillón drainage. Therefore, there must be an additional reason.

It may now be important that the very top of Cerro San Diego projects only just above the "*garua*", the thick layer of low clouds that is blown inland by the prevailing SW wind from the Pacific Ocean and the same can be said for the rock art sites of Cerro Cantería and Cerro Colorado (Figure 4). This "*garua*" is very persistent and therefore cloudless days are rare in Lima and surroundings. Rock art sites that are located further inland, like Checta, are not easily covered by the "*garua*", especially as Checta is also located some 100 m above the floodplain of the Río Chillón at an altitude of about 1130 to 1160 m asl.

Figure 4. The rock art sites in the area and the extent of the *Garua*. Map © by Maarten van Hoek, based on Google Earth.

It is certain that the area of Lima and surroundings was very important in prehistoric times, as is evidenced by the many temple ruins from the Andean Formative Period, like Garagay, and later structures. When the area is covered by the "*garua*" the (movements of the) sun cannot be observed. Perhaps for that reason, the very top of Cerro San Diego was selected. From the site the sunrise and the sunset could have easily been observed in ancient times. It "only" involved an arduous climb from the valley to the top, roughly 1200 m above the floodplain of the Río Chillón to the south.

Previous Research

It proves that the rock art site of Cerro San Diego is at least known since 2003, as the *Inventario Nacional* by Rainer Hostnig (2003: 243) shows a photo of one of the petroglyph boulders at Cerro San Diego (site listed by him as Ancón, though). This photo was published in "El Commercio" (s.f. [*sín fecha*], but possibly dates from 2000; Rainer Hostnig 2011: personal communication; see also this webpage) and thus the site may have been known well before 2003 (especially by locals).

Because the site is known at least since 2003 and because it is certain that the rock art site of Cerro San Diego (just) falls within the drainage of the Río Chillón, it is remarkable that a study about the rock art of the Chillón drainage by Echevarría López (2012) fails to describe or even mention the rock art site of Cerro San Diego. He (only) mentions "*Ancón", sitio arqueológico con petroglifos (Justo Cáceres, conversación personal* 2008" (2012: 50), but does not describe

or illustrate those petroglyphs at Ancón. Just possibly his site of “Ancón” is the same as Cerro San Diego after all. However, in one of his maps he locates “Ancón” (?) west of and outside the drainage of the Río Chillón (2012: Fig. 3). Moreover, his “Ancón” is not located directly along the coastline and thus does not indicate the rock art at the archaeological site of Ancón (source 2019).

Also the extensive thesis by Echevarría López (2015a) and a similar book by him (2015b) about the rock art in the neighbourhood of Lima fail to include or mention the important rock art site of Cerro San Diego. Also the two geoglyph sites of Carabayllo in Chillón are missing in his 2015-thesis. In my opinion all those missing sites should at least have been mentioned by Echevarría López in his thesis.

It now seems that Echevarría López describes the rock art site of Cerro San Diego for the first time in a paper dated 2021. In his paper he calls the site - which he apparently visited in 2018 - Lomas de Carabayllo. He includes five photos and without any hesitation relates some (which?) petroglyphs to the Chavín Cult (a persistent and incorrect claim, which in general has been seriously questioned by me [Van Hoek 2011a]) or - much more likely - the Lima Culture (Echevarría López 2021: 57). I will return to this “Chavín Controversy”.

Perhaps Echevarría López found out about the rock art of Cerro San Diego visiting the Facebook pages of *Panaka Rimaq Mayu* (2016) who visited the site and claimed that the site has 40 boulders with petroglyphs (of which they recorded 30 boulders). Or perhaps Echevarría López read my book (lol) about Formative Period Rock Art in Arequipa, Peru, in which I described and illustrated one of the petroglyphs recorded at Cerro San Diego (Van Hoek 2018: 29; Fig. 14), which may have triggered him to finally visit the site.

Further useful contributions in order to complete this study are the photographs of the rock art at Cerro San Diego taken and posted by *Rutas Culturales* - along with useful information - on their Facebook page in 2018. Rodimus Prime visited the site in 2019 and 2020 and posted at least two videos on YouTube. Finally, several photographs of the rock art at Cerro San Diego were also posted in the Facebook page of Gustavo Cárdenas Huachaca in 2021, providing several excellent pictures of the petroglyphs. I checked the comprehensive bibliography compiled by Rainer Hostnig (2022) and could not find any further reference to the site.

The Petroglyphs

On the very summit of Cerro San Diego is an area of about 100 m from south to north with numerous angular blocks of stone with often smooth surfaces. The rather hard type of stone mainly has reddish (and/or blackish) surfaces. Throughout the years I collected a large number of photographs from the internet showing the rock art at Cerro San Diego, resulting in a photographic record of at least 39 boulders (some with multiple panels) with (often faint)

petroglyphs. Because I have not surveyed the site myself, this study is completely based on the photographs I have available. For that reason scales, bearings and a plan are not available (except some measurements based on photos published by Echevarria [2021]). And because there does not exist an official, scientific survey of the site, I compiled my own inventory, labelling the boulders with petroglyphs (in random order) with a number prefixed by **CSD**, like CSD-001. When a boulder has two or more decorated panels, a capital letter will be added, like CSD-012A. My “inventory” only briefly describes the rock art, realising that it will be incomplete. There may be more boulders or panels with petroglyphs and the photos that I have available may not show every image (clearly).

Boulder CSD-001: Complex design of curving parallel lines, possibly an expression of MSC-Style Modular Width. The left-hand part ends in a circle and may depict a bird, while the right-hand part may depict (part of) a snake (Figure 5). Some minor, randomly distributed markings.

Figure 5. Boulder CSD-001. **Inset:** Boulder CSD-008. Photographs © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-002: Located just below a tall (modern) *apacheta*. **Panel A:** This panel features a number of faint, curving lines, superimposed by a much clearer zoomorphic image (25 cm in length?), apparently without legs (Figure 6); a feature repeated in the feline petroglyph on Boulder CSD-021 (Figure 6: inset). Hovering over the animal is a swastika-like design (an octopus? See Van Hoek 2021a). **Panel B:** A side panel has a few straight (faint) grooves of uncertain pattern (and uncertain age).

Figure 6. Boulder CSD-002. **Inset:** Boulder CSD-021. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph by *Rutas Culturales* (Facebook).

Boulder CSD-003: This boulder has a number of (partially finished) single rings (some with internal dot) and a large motif of three concentric rings (estimated by me to measure 15 cm across). Among indeterminable groove-patterns are at least two zoomorphic images (apparently viewed from above; both estimated by me to measure about 21 cm in length), each of the four, outspread legs ending in three digits (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Boulder CSD-003. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-004: This boulder (first [?] photographed in 2000; Hostnig [2003: 243]) shows a complex abstract design composed of rings and squares (the largest square estimated by me to measure 10 cm across) and linear and curving grooves (Figure 8). This boulder touches Boulder CSD-027.

Figure 8. Boulder CSD-004. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-005: An incomplete, crudely executed ring with a large central dot has three short lines attached, while two larger, slightly curved lines seem to enclose the motif. An unfinished eye design?

Boulder CSD-006: On this flat panel sits a petroglyph composed of two curvilinear, parallel lines attached to a simple head with two dots representing eyes and a short line for a mouth. It seems to depict a “monkey in an offering position”. Further down on the much sloping surface is a rough X-mark and a second simple head image with three dots (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Boulder CSD-006. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-007: Almost covered with petroglyphs, this panel features at least one (backwards-looking?) zoomorphic image (1 in Figure 10), two exceptional spirals with many short lines (2 in Figure 10), a possibly human head (3 in Figure 10), an unusual design of two lines with outlined triangles (4 in Figure 10) and at least three rings with central dot. Several more indistinct, much weathered markings.

Figure 10. Boulder CSD-007. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas. **Inset:** Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photo by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-008: Large boulder with possibly a large, much weathered ring, some indistinct markings and a much clearer petroglyph of what might depict an (unfinished?) bird (see Figure 5: inset).

Boulder CSD-009: A most interesting petroglyph of a large, outlined head with two dots representing eyes and a large, outlined (possibly dented) mouth. It may be important that it has two outlined, triangular ears and a triangular neck (Figure 11). From the top of the head emerge seven straight, splayed lines possibly depicting hair (or a headdress?). This head will be discussed more fully in the discussion section.

Figure 11. Boulder CSD-009. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas (also the cover photo). **Inset:** Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on the photo by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-010: This is probably the biggest decorated boulder at Cerro San Diego (Figure 12). Its flat surface has a large number of petroglyphs, many almost weathered off. There are two square motifs with internal decoration (a cross plus either dots or a circle). There are also some (concentric) rings, some with a central dot, others with a cross and at least two examples with three (?) dots thus forming a simple head image.

One example is special (1 in Figure 12). The very small ring (having two eyes and a simple mouth) has four sets of short linear appendages thus creating an image that also occurs (at least three times) at Checta (a major rock art site in the Chillón drainage, 28 km to the ENE). Nearby is a square (with facial features?) with a similarly arranged set of four parallel lines, all

rather weathered (2 in Figure 12). Another ring (estimated by me to measure 14 cm in diameter) has facial features and two ears. It has a neck that is joined to a set of three concentric rings, the outer one being incomplete and ending in curved lines. For the rest there is a chaos of dots, curved lines and some serpentine lines. Exceptional is also the petroglyph of a small, outlined fish, composed of a single line with four triangular fins, a triangular tail and a triangular head with two eyes.

Figure 12. Boulder CSD-010. Upper photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas (**Upper inset:** Panel CSD-017B). Lower photographs © by *Rutas Culturales* (**Lower inset**: Panel SCD-020). Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph by *Rutas Culturales* (Facebook).

Boulder CSD-011: Small block that has been built I into a low wall of an (ancient?) structure. It has a square (with internal circle; very faint) and a circle with internal cross and four lines emerging from the circle. There are some more markings. Another petroglyph may depict a head with one ear (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Boulder CSD-011. Note the difference. Photographs © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-012: Panel A: This panel features a large, outlined, curvilinear design enclosing a smaller, fully pecked area (Figure 14). When rotated (Figure 14: inset), the design looks like a huge MSC-Style eye (Van Hoek 2018: Fig. 14-left). There is also a curving groove (shaped like a simple bird?). **Panel B:** An outlined (empty) ring with at least one line attached, which might also represent an MSC-Style eye. **Panel C:** Possible petroglyphs.

Figure 14. Boulder CSD-012. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas. **Inset:** Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on the photo by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-013: This boulder has a horizontally arranged line of large, superficial dots, a rough (recent?) X-mark and some very faint lines (Figure 15). Most conspicuous is the petroglyph of what could be the image of a frontally depicted bird; an owl perhaps?

Figure 15. Boulder CSD-013. Photograph © by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-014: A side panel of this boulder has a set of serpentine lines enclosing two dots at its lower end (a snake?).

Boulder CSD-015: At least two petroglyphs (and some very doubtful markings). One may be an unfinished head; the other a faint rectangle.

Boulder CSD-016: This long boulder has a most interesting snake (?) petroglyph (Figure 16A). Its outlined body is completely straight and ends in a small forked (fish ?) tail. It has a most characteristic V-shaped head (with two dots for eyes) and two fully pecked fin-shaped

appendages just below the head (both features also seen in snakes of the rock art of La Caldera in Arequipa, 770 km to the SE). At the very end are also two or three pecked dots (similar to those on Boulder CSD-013).

Boulder CSD-017: Panel A: On this panel are two vertically arranged serpentine lines, both ending in a possible head (both outlined!?) and thus possibly representing snakes. There is also a very faint circle. **Panel B** has at least one petroglyph of an anthropomorphic figure (see Figure 12 - upper inset). **Panel C** has what probably is the shortest bicephalic snake petroglyph in the Desert Andes (but because I have no scales available, this claim may also apply to a petroglyph on Boulder CSD-27). It concerns two outlined heads (similar to the head of the "snake" on Boulder CSD-016), each with two dots for eyes. An extremely short body connects the two heads (Figure 16B). For a full (global) discussion about polycephalic images in rock art see Van Hoek 2020).

Figure 16. A: Boulder CSD-016; **B:** Boulder CSD-017; **C:** Boulder CSD-027. Drawings © by Maarten van Hoek, all based on photographs by Gustavo Cárdenas.

Boulder CSD-018: This boulder has a large set of three concentric rings with at least three short lines attached (a sun-symbol?), some rectangles and lines.

Boulder CSD-019: On a damaged boulder are at least two (incomplete) rectangles with a central dot, a pecked area, some faint lines and an outlined anthropomorphic figure.

Boulder CSD-020: This broken boulder has at least one circle on one part and - on the other part - a circle (estimated by me to measure 10 cm across) with three dots representing the facials of a human head (see Figure 12: lower inset). Interestingly, it also has four sets of two short, parallel lines, thus possibly it is related to the "rayed heads" on Boulder CSD-010 (see Figure 12) (and to those at Checta; see Figures 18 and 19).

Boulder CSD-021: An exceptional petroglyph is seen on Boulder CSD-021. It clearly represents an outlined, laterally depicted feline with a frontally depicted head featuring two small circles as eyes and a (possibly dented) mouth (see Figure 6: inset). Most remarkable is that there the legs are missing (on purpose or unfinished?), which may be compared with the zoomorphic petroglyph on Boulder CSD-002 (see Figure 6). Above the feline are some very faint scratches (ancient or modern?).

Boulder CSD-022: This boulder only bears the simple match-stick petroglyph of a possible quadruped with an amorphous extension from the head.

Boulder CSD-023: This boulder has one of the very few instances of vandalism: the name "Jordy" painted in white on a side panel with petroglyphs, which include possibly abstract motifs only (Echevarría 2021: Fig. 14). However, the grooves at the extreme left could represent an outlined bird (an Andean ostrich, the *ñañdu*?) when viewed sideways. This petroglyph is estimated by me to measure 27 cm from top to toe.

Boulder CSD-024: Behind Boulder CSD-023 is Boulder CSD-024 with the image of a simple double spiral and some faint markings.

Boulder CSD-025: Boulder with two eccentric rings and possibly some faint markings.

Boulder CSD-026: Boulder with four short, parallel, vertically arranged lines.

Boulder CSD-027: Touching Boulder CSD-004 is another boulder with - on **Panel A**- a large circle with semi-circular rings attached. Another (very faint) ring has two dots (representing eyes?) and at least seven or eight “rays”. Further down the panel is a bicephalic creature (most likely a snake) with two large triangular heads, each with two dots for eyes. Each head also seems to have a line representing the mouth. The two heads are connected by a short, single, zigzagging line (see Figure 16C). **Panel B:** a few straight lines, two forming a rather large cross (see Figure 8).

Boulder CSD-028: Boulder with four joined, outlined rectangles. One simple line.

Boulder CSD-029: Abstract, curvilinear petroglyph.

Boulder CSD-030: Possibly abstract, outlined motif connected to an angular “serpentine” line.

Boulder CSD-031: Outlined, abstract motif (hard to see).

Boulder CSD-032: Panel A: Match-stick quadruped, some small circles and straight lines. **Panel B:** Some straight lines that are joined to form V-shapes. **Panel C:** Arc(s)?

Boulder CSD-033: Long, straight groove and - above it - a serpentine line.

Boulder CSD-034: The rough side panel of this boulder *might* have some anthropic cupules. The flat upper surface *might* have a large circular motif.

Boulder CSD-035: Two concentric arcs with a long, curved line attached (an eye?).

Boulder CSD-036: Large oval ring enclosing a grid composed of four lines, two of the lines continuing outside the oval.

Boulder CSD-037: Possibly an abstract motif.

Boulder CSD-038: Boulder with hooked groove (superimposed upon a faint outlined rectangle) and a faint serpentine line.

Boulder CSD-039: Two concentric circles with six or seven short “rays”, one ending in three “digits”. A few more faint lines. Boulder located a short distance to the “left” of Boulder CSD-012.

It is certain that there are more boulders with anthropic markings at this site. However, in most

cases it is uncertain whether it concerns prehistoric markings or recent additions (including cases of vandalism?), like the small zigzag on the boulder to the left of Boulder CSD-011 (marked ? in Figure 13 - right).

Discussion

With “only” 39 decorated boulders the imagery at Cerro San Diego still displays a remarkable diversity, even while abstract motifs predominate. Biomorphic petroglyphs are relatively scarce. They include one fish, some possible reptiles (lizards and snakes), a few possible birds, a possible monkey, a quadruped, at least one feline and some anthropomorphic images (involving both complete figures and isolated human heads or parts thereof). Yet, several petroglyphs merit a more detailed discussion, starting what are possibly the oldest images of the site.

MSC-Style Imagery

The possibly oldest images at Cerro San Diego are found on Boulder CSD-012 (see Figure 14). Besides a possible, simple eye-element, the boulder bears a large petroglyph that - when rotated (the boulder may possibly have been disturbed) - definitely depicts a large, complex MSC-Style eye with a (fully pecked) eccentric pupil. However, the rotated position of the petroglyph may be premeditated, as in the north of Peru a few MSC-Style petroglyphs have intentionally been manufactured in an inverted position, which is clearly evident regarding examples manufactured on natural outcrop panels, like at Cojitambo, Chicama (Van Hoek 2017a). The style of the purported MSC-Style eye petroglyph at Cerro San Diego is comparable with the MSC-Style eye petroglyphs at “nearby” Cerro Cantería (Van Hoek 2011a: 130-131; Figs 134-135), although the lay-outs are different (as can be expected).

MSC-Style images belong to a specific style of biomorphic figures from the Andean Formative Period (more details in Van Hoek 2011a). The acronym MSC refers to the influential coastal cultures of that period in which the “M” refers to the Manchay Culture around Lima (with - for instance - colourful adobe MSC-Style sculptures at the Temple Complex of Garagay in north Lima). The “S” stands for the Sechín Culture further north (Casma and surroundings), while the “C” represents a collective of cultures, grouped together as the Cupisnique Cultures, further north along the Pacific coast. Alternatively, *all* those MSC-cultures may be grouped together as “Cupisnique”, just to avoid the incorrect Chavín “supremacy”.

There are only few rock art sites around Lima that have unambiguous MSC-Style images. Apart from Cerro San Diego and Cerro Cantería (with at least five petroglyphs depicting MSC-Style elements), only at Checta one unambiguous MSC-Style petroglyph (Van Hoek 2011a: Fig. 119) and possibly some other MSC-Style-related petroglyphs have been reported by me (Van Hoek 2011a: 126). Although some MSC-Style petroglyphs have been recorded in the coastal area *south* of Lima (Van Hoek 2018) it is important to know that - in my opinion - MSC-Style rock art

images in general connect Cerro San Diego with the Cupisnique Cultures in the coastal areas *north* of Lima.

It is however most remarkable that several academic rock art researchers from Peru, Echevarría López in particular, seem to completely deny the important role of the Manchay, Sechín and Cupisnique Cultures in the evolution of the Andean cultures. Those researchers seem to glorify the (otherwise important and influential) role of the Chavín Cult (I do not regard Chavín to have been a culture any longer) but they deliberately ignore the role of the Cupisnique (MSC). In none of the publications by Echevarría López that I have available (2012; 2015; 2022) he refers to the much earlier Cupisnique Cultures. Even the Manchay Culture is hardly ever referred to and even rejected by him (2015: 235; note). Moreover, it is obvious that he completely ignored my book (Van Hoek 2011a) in which I fully explain and emphasise the important role of MSC-Style iconography (and I am not the only one). It proves that several well-known Andean icons (like the Andean Staff-God) originated along the Pacific Coast, *long* before Chavín emerged! This “ignoring” of the Cupisnique is also seen in (only!) the *title* of the otherwise most informative book by Rebecca Stone-Miller (1995; my emphasis): *Art of the Andes. From **Chavín** to Inca*, although she acknowledges the importance of the earlier cultures in her book.

Triangular Ears

Also an important petroglyph that connects Cerro San Diego with the coastal areas north of Cerro San Diego is the frontally depicted face on Boulder CSD-009 (see Figure 11), characterised by its large triangular ears; the “Face with the Triangular Ear(s)”, henceforth labelled the FTE. An FTE is always fully frontally depicted. The distinguishing element of the head of this icon is that it has at least one ear (but more often it concerns two ears) that is/are (roughly) triangular in shape. The apex of the triangle is attached to the head-contour of the face, creating a most distinctive facade. In some cases the ear is more rectangular, but even those instances may be related to the FTE.

The FTE image seems to occur only in the coastal area north of Cerro San Diego. Interestingly, it proves that the drainage of the Río Chicama (roughly 500 km NW of Cerro San Diego) has the highest number of petroglyphs featuring the FTE. They occur at least at four sites: Cerro el Diablo and Quebrada de Algarrobos (where altogether no less than ten examples have been recorded by me), Cerro Negro and Cafetal (more detailed information about the FTE in Van Hoek 2021b). North of Chicama only two sites each with only one petroglyph of the FTE are known to me: Cerro Mulato in Chancay-Reque (the northernmost example; 625 km NW of Cerro San Diego) and on Boulder FEL-015 at Quebrada del Felino in Jequetepeque.

South of Chicama at least ten petroglyphs of the FTE have been recorded, yet unevenly distributed across a large area: El Vagón in the Moche drainage and two undisclosed sites in the same drainage (?); Alto de las Guitarras, Pampa Calata, Tomabal and Cerro Blanco in the

Virú drainage; Palamenco in the Santa drainage; Chacuascucho (also known as Pocós) in the Nepeña drainage; and Jaiva in the Supe drainage (more detailed information in Van Hoek 2021b). The example at Cerro San Diego is - until now (writing November 2022) - the southernmost example of the FTE, thus representing an element, which is now known it to occur in a coastal strip of about 625 km (reaching 75 km farthest inland at Chuquillanqui).

Interestingly, at the rock art site of Caballete, which is located about 9 km NE and inland from Paramonga on the Pacific coast and 153 km NW of Cerro San Diego, is the petroglyph of an isolated head (Figure 17) that may be considered to be a hybrid form combining an FTE and a Rayed Head symbol. A similar, yet somewhat more dubious hybrid figure is seen on Boulder CNG-017 at Cerro Negro in the Chicama drainage (Van Hoek 2021b: Fig. 61).

Figure 17. Petroglyphs at Caballete, Río Fortaleza. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photograph by Marcelo Castillo (2020: 32). **Inset:** Shield carried by a “Trophy” Head Hunter. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on a photo by *Rutas Culturales* (Facebook).

The Rayed Head

There are - understandably - several types of Rayed heads in Andean iconography, like the heads in Staff-Bearer petroglyphs (Van Hoek 2016) and the possibly Páracas influenced Rayed Heads at Toro Muerto (Van Hoek 2018) and Illomas (Jennings and Van Hoek *et al*. 2019) in the rock art of Arequipa. The Rayed Heads I am discussing here concern rather small images of a head with - ideally - four groups of short, straight “rays” emerging from the four “corners” of the head, thus creating an easily recognisable face/head (which may be circular or squarish). At Cerro San Diego two examples have been recorded on Boulder SCD-010 (marked 1 and 2 in Figure 12 - lower).

There are only few comparable examples in Desert Andes rock art and - importantly - all are found north of Cerro San Diego. At least three more or less comparable petroglyphs have been recorded by me at Checta, 27 km NNE of Cerro San Diego (Figure 18 and inset). One of those petroglyphs was recorded by Núñez Jiménez (1986) (Figure 19A), later by Jean Guffroy (Figure 19B) and also by me (Figure 19C). It proves that each time different renderings are being drawn. Again, the drawing by Núñez Jiménez is rather inaccurate (Van Hoek 2011b).

Figure 18. Petroglyphs at Checta. Photographs © by Maarten van Hoek.

Figure 19A. Petroglyph panel at Checta. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on the drawing by Núñez Jiménez (1986: Fig. 1295).

Figure 19B. The same petroglyph panel at Checta. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on an illustration by Jean Guffroy (2012: Fig. 10b).

Figure 19C. The same petroglyph panel at Checta. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek.

Another example (looking NW) has been reported by Henry William Marcelo Castillo (2020) at the "minor" rock art site of Caballete in the Fortaleza valley, about 10 km inland from Paramonga (see Figure 17). It is possible that this example links the coast with the highland area of the Recuay Culture. Recuay sculpture often involves representations of "Trophy" Head Carriers. One of those images is relevant in this discussion. It concerns a sculptured boulder (a lintel? stored at Huaraz) that features two large, menacing felines flanking a fully frontally depicted "Trophy" Head Hunter that also carries a club (?) and a small square shield in its left hand. On the shield is the clear image of a small head with four groups of short rays emerging from the corners of the head (see Figure 17: inset).

The Rayed Heads of Cerro San Diego, Checta and Caballete may also be related to the representations of the influential Moche and Chimú deity of *Ai-Apaec* - the Decapitator God (therefore often holding a "Trophy" Head in one hand and a *Tumi* [a ceremonial knife] in the other hand). *Ai-Apaec* is often depicted with four appendages that emerge diagonally from its body. In my opinion (see Van Hoek 2017b: Fig. 7) those appendages may symbolise the eight legs of the spider (murals depicting enormous decapitator-spiders are seen at Huaca de la Luna, a Moche temple near Trujillo).

It is now most remarkable that rock art images of this important personage are (almost) completely lacking in Desert Andes rock art. Only one petroglyph - at Alto de la Guitarra - may represent *Ai-Apaec* (Van Hoek 2017b: Fig. 3), but this petroglyph almost certainly dates from the much earlier Formative Period. However, in my earlier discussion about *Ai-Apaec*, I suggested that at least seven petroglyphs in northern Peru may depict the *isolated* head of *Ai-Apaec* (Van Hoek 2017). They are found at Cerro Mulato (four examples) and Cumbil in Chancay-Reque, Chuquillanqui in Chicama and Yonán in Jequetepeque (Van Hoek 2017b: Fig. 20). The layout of those heads may well be compared with the Rayed Heads petroglyphs near Lima.

Fish

Petroglyphs of fish (whether showing only the bones or not) are relatively very rare in Desert Andes rock art. In most cases it concerns a sole image on a rock surface (like the example on Boulder CSD-010). Especially in coastal area of northern Peru there are several rock art sites with one example or a small number of fish petroglyphs, like Chuquillanqui (Van Hoek 2021b) and Cerro Negro in Chicama; vandalised Callanca (or Cerro San Bartolo), vandalised Huaca

Blanca (Van Hoek 2021c: Fig. 17) and Cerro Mulato in Chancay-Reque (Van Hoek 2012: 61); Quebrada de Pay Pay in Jequetepeque; Pampa Calata and Alto de la Guitarra in Virú; and Santa Rita B in Chao. Fish imagery also abounds in Chimú architectural art (like at Chan Chan in Moche), especially when sculptured onto adobe walls. Some of the Chimú fish sculptures have an additional fish-bone element incised on their bodies.

South of Cerro San Diego rock art images depicting fish or marine creatures are very rare. Examples are the unique shark petroglyph at Retama in the Mala Valley (Van Hoek 2011b: 80) and the often enormous petroglyphs of marine animals at Majuelos in Grande (Nieves 2007: Figs 6.32 to 6.35) . Other examples are often doubtful, like an example at Toro Muerto in Majes.

The “Swastika Cross”

It must be emphasised here that the “Swastika Cross” symbol is only graphically (but definitely not culturally) *somewhat* related to the ancient Swastika symbol from India. The (possible) example on Panel CSD-002A (see Figure 6) comprises an equal-armed cross of which all arm-ends have a small projection (a hook, a curl, a small spiral-like curl or something else). The “Swastika Cross” symbol is extremely rare in Andean Rock Art. The design has so far been recorded four times in Arequipa rock art; once in the Manga drainage (discovered by Kurt Rademaker and David Reid during their 2007-survey) and once at Toro Muerto in the Majes Valley. At Quilcapampa in Sihuas no less than two petroglyphs of the “Swastika Cross” symbol have been recorded so far (Van Hoek 2021a: Fig. 22).

In an earlier publication I suggested that the “Swastika Cross” motif could perhaps depict a bola (Van Hoek 2021d), but later I suggested an alternative interpretation. Although dating petroglyphs is notoriously difficult, I now would like to tentatively suggest that the “Swastika Cross” recorded in Sihuas rock art may belong to the Nasca Period. It is a fact that Páracas and Nasca traders visited the area of what is now coastal Arequipa and thus also the Sihuas Valley (Proulx 2007; Haeberli 2001; 2002). In this respect a possibly unique Nasca ceramic - said to be from the Ocoña Valley (roughly 110 km to the west of Sihuas) - has a most unusual shape that (when viewed from above) much resembles the “Swastika Cross” designs in Sihuas Valley rock art (Van Hoek 2021a: Fig. 22). Mind you, Donald Proulx explicitly emphasises that the provenience of the vessel has not been established and is only based on hearsay (2007: 9).

Yet it is interesting that Proulx also argues that the ceramic (a Nasca double-spout bottle), is modelled in the form of an octopus, even though - so he added - only *four* tentacles are depicted (2007: 9). Whether indeed the “Swastika Cross” petroglyphs depict or symbolise an octopus is undecided, but it is a fact that the octopus was once important to several ancient Andean peoples. Importantly, in the iconographies of the coastal Cupisnique and Moche Cultures of northern Peru, octopuses sometimes have four (or six) arms only. For those reasons, the petroglyphs of the “Swastika Cross” *could* symbolise an octopus as well.

If indeed the “Swastika Cross” petroglyph at Cerro San Diego symbolises an octopus, it proves to represent an extremely rare example in the rock art of coastal Central Peru. One further (possible!) example has been recorded by me on Boulder PAL-178 at Palamenco in northern Peru (Van Hoek 2021e: Fig. 19A) and another possible example has been noticed by me on Boulder MIS-015 at Miculla, an extensive petroglyph site in the extreme south of Peru (1335 km SE of Palamenco). However, in both cases the pattern could well represent something else. The northern connection may also be underscored by a comparable motif on a ceramic from Gallinazo-Virú period (200 B.C. to A.D. 600), which flourished along the coast some 500 km NNW of Cerro San Diego.

“Snakes”

Although the rock art at Cerro San Diego only features a minimum of three petroglyphs of “snakes”, they can be linked to - surprisingly - iconographies to the north *and* south of the Lima area. I prefer to write “snakes”, as it is not certain that those zoomorphic images really depict snakes. Some examples could well represent centipedes. Notwithstanding, two characteristics are important. First of all, two examples are bicephalic, one showing a ?-shaped head (see Figure 16B), and secondly, one petroglyph has two triangular appendages and also a ?-shaped head (see Figure 16A). Importantly, two snake-like creatures depicted on a Chancay textile (Figure 20) feature the same properties (the Chancay Culture prospered in the coastal area about 60 km NNW of Lima).

Figure 20: Chancay textile. Drawing © by Maarten van Hoek, based on an illustration by López and Aguilar (2015).

Petroglyphs of snake-like creatures with a ?-shaped head and/or with triangular appendages occur relatively regularly in a specific region of the coastal areas south of Lima, Arequipa. They are most abundant in the Vítor drainage, especially at the important rock art sites of La Caldera (Van Hoek 2022a) and the two Mollebaya sites (Van Hoek 2022b). Other examples have been recorded at Quilcapampa in Sihuas (Van Hoek 2021a), Alto de Pitis and Quebrada Pampa Blanca in Majes and Chillihuay in Ocoña (for more details see Van Hoek 2022a).

Conclusions

Cerro San Diego seems to be located in an area that was influenced by cultures to the south

and (predominantly) by cultures in to north of Lima. The earliest influence seems to have travelled from the Cupisnique area to the NW where - around Sechín - possibly the earliest MSC-Style developed, although it cannot be ruled out that MSC-Style imagery also independently originated in one of the Formative Period cultures around Lima. Also suggested to have travelled from the north is the imagery depicting triangular ears (the FTE's) and the Rayed Head, while specific "snake" imagery may have diffused from the south to the Lima area (and beyond, to the Chancay Culture).

Acknowledgements

This paper could never have been written without the much appreciated help of Gustavo Cárdenas Huachaca and of the director of "*Rutas Culturales*", who both permitted me to use and publish their photographs that they posted on their Facebook pages (links in the references). However, the text and all illustrations are completely my responsibility.

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