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Chan Chan



Trujillo

Foreword

Geophysics of the Voice

In 850 AD a monumental adobe city appeared on the north coast of present-day Peru: *Chan Chan*.

Chan Chan developed into the sacred center of the Chimú Empire, also called Chimor, one of the largest political entities in the Pacific coastal region. In 1470 the city was conquered by Túpac Inca Yupanqui, and after fierce resistance eventually abandoned. The last Chimú ruler, Minchancaman, was taken with his nobility to Cusco. In 1532 the territory was conquered by Spanish troupes, who built the modern city *Trujillo* in the immediate vicinity. Chan Chan was left to ruin. For centuries the adobe buildings were re-sculpted by grave robbers, earthquakes, wind and weather.

In the 18th century, the language of the Chimú people, *Quingnam*, eventually died out, with the exception of a few personal and place names. The original name of Chan Chan remains unknown to the present day.

During a research trip the German-Peruvian linguist J. C. Duenkel¹ makes a groundbreaking discovery: the inhabitants of the Bolivian Isla del Sol speak a language thought to be long dead: Quingnam. Duenkel begins to make recordings of the forgotten idiom. With the re-established vocabulary he hopes to acquire new insights into the culture of the Chimú and their enigmatic city.

In 1968 he takes part in archaeological excavations in Chan Chan. His notebook bears witness to an intense interest in morphological correspondences between language and architecture. The discovery of a ceramic object gives rise to a new understanding of the site's acoustic dimension.

In July 1969 J. C. Duenkel and his wife Lea Mayer move with friends and colleagues into the desert of Chan Chan. The controversial settlement project ends in January 1970 with the abrupt dissolution of the group.

The second toponymic journal is dedicated to a problem that has rarely been addressed by contemporary linguistics – the physical effect of language. At the center of the journal are the notebooks made by the researcher J. C. Duenkel – here published for the first time – and his praxis of geophysical speech acts. In addition, selected essays and interviews provide a number of insights into the historical relation between landscape and voice, the changes and loss of names.



The nine monumental compounds of Chan Chan: “the Chimú Empire in temporal depth”

1 · J.C. Duenkel (pronounced Djäy Ssi Dünk), * October 12, 1905 in Trujillo/Peru – † January 1970 (?), was a Peruvian-German linguist, author and mountaineer. He is considered a pioneer of modern toponymy. Duenkel was born in Trujillo/Peru as the third son of the German land surveyor Johannes

Dünkell and the Peruvian elementary school teacher Aymara Chira Ballester. The abbreviation of his name goes back to a disagreement between his parents. Throughout his life J.C. Duenkel himself insisted on the English pronunciation of his initials.

15. 3.

Erster klarer Tag. Blick bis zu dem Anden Ostweir lasse ich das Aufnahmegerät (Apur) für eine Selbstgespräche. Ich kann es kaum erwarten, mit der Arbeit zu beginnen.

16. 3.

Auf- und abebbende Gesänge wehen vom anderen Ende der Insel herbei. Tröten und Getömmel. Abends laufe ich ins Dorf hinunter. Ein alter Mann kommt mit schwankend entgegen, seine Nase blutet. Morgen ist der Karneval endlich vorüber.

18. 3.

Starke Regenfälle in der Nacht. Ich liege steif und begraben unter drei feuchtkalten Wolldecken. Direkt neben mir

tropft es durch die Decke, vergeblich suche ich das Leck. Notizzbücher u. Aufnahmegerät verstaue ich am einzigen, trockenen Platz unter dem Bett. Ein Abkühlen Tropfen dringen durch meinen Schädel, von Außen voracost die Haut. Wache schwergebadet auf.

19. 3.

Amara bringt frisches Brot vorbei. Er verspricht, mich einer älteren Dame aus dem Wirtshaus im südlichen Teil der Insel vorzustellen. Ich sollte es mir aus dem Kopf schlagen, direkten Kontakt zu den Bewohnern aufzunehmen. Dies könnte ihr Mißtrauen vor gegenüber Fremden

After a while, I notice that I no longer have a tongue.¹¹

29.8.

As I walk to the water I talk with myself. A shudder runs down my spine as the words stored as inner voice are successively uttered out loud. Long chains of consonants, the free sliding into rattling repetition, my vocal chords stretched to the limit.

Hypothesis 2

It is unlikely that after the Spanish conquest Quingnam would only have survived on this island alone. What escaped chroniclers and scholars: Quingnam did not die out, but at some point in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries disappeared into a zone that was inaccessible to foreigners. Just like the Taki Unquy¹² it became a secret language, and functioned as a ritual source of strength against the colonizers. In contrast to the writing cult of the Spanish and their worship of the Bible and the law of the alphabet, the language of the Chimú was above all voice, magical communication with the mountains, the gods and among the initiated.

11 · Duenkel had suffered from a stutter since childhood. Due to anxiety related to sounds and consonants such as "p" and "t," he developed avoidance strategies with regard to certain words. The sonority of Quingnam was felt by Duenkel as especially salutary. Apparently he could speak

Quingnam without experiencing any disturbances in the flow of his speech.

12 · *Taki Unquy* or *Taki Onqoy* (Quechua, meaning "sickness of the chant" or "dancing sickness") was an indigenous rebel movement which arose after the Spanish conquest of the Andes.

A few words have a curious metaphorical quality whose original meaning has clearly been lost on the journey from north (Trujillo) to south (Lake Titicaca). Words in which relics of a long lost world still slumber.

1.9.

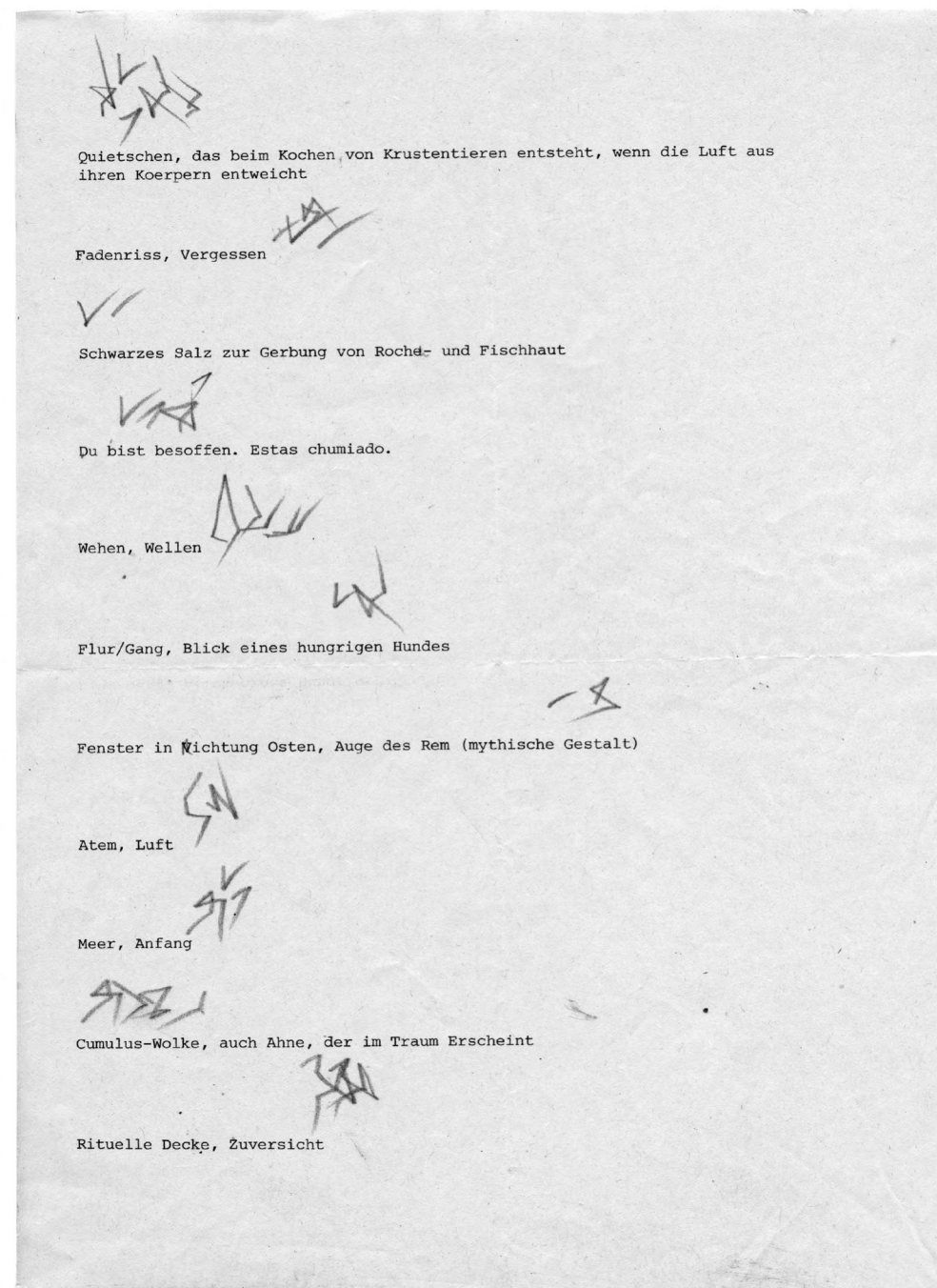
A notation system based on the Latin or Greek alphabet cannot do justice to this language and its peculiar melody.¹³ The physicality of the sound would necessarily fall victim to the desire for a universal describability. So far tape seems to be the only adequate means of recording. My sketches still too clumsy.

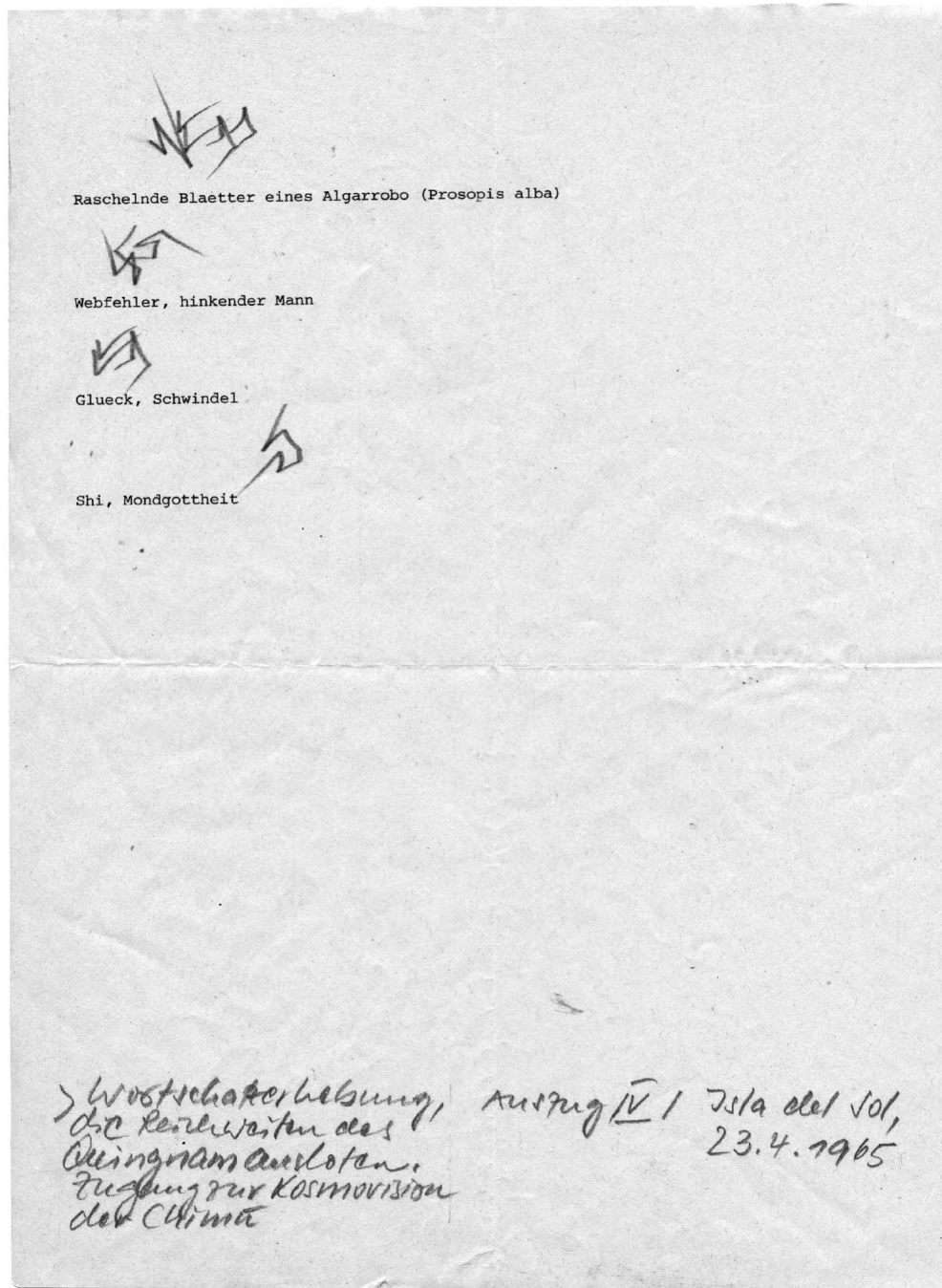
6.9.

Back from Cusco.¹⁴ New paper supply. Cooked and burned my tongue. Sat outside. Hushed sound-setting as night falls.

13 · Duenkel is referring to the International Phonetic Alphabet.

14 · This trip presents something of a riddle. While Duenkel's surviving lists of expenses note two tickets, there is no mention of a travelling companion in the notebooks. It remains unclear who this might have been.





|||
squealing noise made by air escaping from the shells of crustaceans (especially lobsters) while being cooked

|||
thread breakage, oblivion

|||
black salt for the tanning of ray and fish skin

|||
"You are drunk." Spanish: "Estás chumiado."

|||
contractions, waves

|||
corridor/eye of a hungry dog

|||
window facing east, also eye of Rem (mythical figure)

|||
breath, air

|||
sea, beginning

|||
cumulus cloud,, also ancestor who appears in a dream

|||
ritual blanket, assurance

|||
rustling leaves of an algarrobo (Prosopis alba)

|||
weaving flaw, limping man

|||
happiness, dizziness

|||
Shi, moon divinity

> Vocabulary survey, exploration of the range of Quingnam. Access to the cosmovision of the Chimú

Extract IV / Isla del Sol, April 23, 1965

Loose sheet from the unpublished Quingnam dictionary (*Diccionario Quingnam*) found in the mid-1980s in an old song book belonging to Ana Duenkel. During the last third of his stay Duenkel clearly developed

his own phonetic script. The date at the end of the sheet indicates that the linguist stayed on the Isla del Sol until at least the end of April 1965. A surviving correspondence with Hans-Joachim Bock, at the time director of the Ibero-American

Institute in Berlin, shows that Duenkel planned a publication of the Quingnam dictionary in collaboration with German institutions.

§

*On behalf of His Majesty, . . .
 I . . . his servant, messenger . . .
 notify and make known as best I can that God our Lord
 one and eternal created heaven and earth . . .
 God our Lord gave charge [of all peoples] to one man named Saint Peter,
 so that he was lord and superior of all the men of the world . . .
 and gave him all the world for his lordship and jurisdiction . . .
 One of these Pontiffs . . . made a donation of these islands
 and mainland of the Ocean Sea to the Catholic kings of Spain . . .
 Almost all who have been notified [of this] have received His Majesty
 and obeyed and served him, and serve him as subjects . . .
 and turned Christian without reward or stipulation . . .
 and His Majesty received them . . . as . . . subjects and vassals . . .
 Therefore I beg and require you as best I can . . .
 [that] you recognize the Church as lord and superior of the universal world,
 and the most elevated Pope . . . in its name, and His Majesty in his place
 as superior and lord and king . . .
 and consent that these religious fathers declare and preach . . .
 and His Majesty and I in his name will receive you . . .
 and will leave your women and children free,
 without servitude so that with them
 and with yourselves you can freely do what you wish . . .
 and we will not compel you to turn Christians.
 But if you do not do it . . .
 with the help of God,
 I will enter forcefully against you,
 and I will make war everywhere and however I can,
 and I will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the Church and His Majesty,
 and I will take your wives and children,
 and I will make them slaves, . . .
 and I will take your goods,
 and I will do to you all the evil and damages that a lord may do to vassals
 who do not obey or receive him.
 And I solemnly declare that the deaths and damages received from
 such will be your fault and not that of His Majesty,
 nor mine, nor of the gentlemen who came with me.*

§

The Requirement – A Protocol for Conquest *Patricia Seed*

This speech called the Requirement (Requerimiento) was the principal means by which Spaniards enacted political authority over the New World during the era of the most extensive conquests (1512–1573). Read aloud to the New World natives from a written text, the Requirement was an ultimatum for Indians to acknowledge the superiority of Christianity or be warred upon. Unlike French practices of seeking an alliance and watching the faces and gestures of indigenous peoples for signs of assent, Spaniards created their rights to the New World through conquest not consent. While English rules governed the planting of fences, gardens, and houses, and French rules governed the conduct of ceremonies, Spanish rules governed the procedures for declaring war. [...]

The threat of warfare contained in the Requirement was one of the most distinctive features of Spanish colonialism. No other European state created a fully ritualized protocol for declaring war against indigenous peoples. Warfare against native peoples was, for the most part, a decision made by local communities, governor-generals, or confederations of towns, undertaken by a consensus or decision by European settlers inhabiting the Americas. Official consent was sometimes required, but formal procedures for initiating war against natives were rarely dictated and equally rarely observed. Only Spaniards carried with them a protocol created on the orders of their king, and which they were directed to read before launching an attack.

Because it was constructed and ordered implemented by the Spanish Crown, the Requirement defined the formalities for launching a war in political terms. It set the aims of the warfare not as mere surrender, but as submission to Catholicism and its legitimate representatives, the Spaniards. The Requirement was thus both a military and a political ritual. But as a ritual for declaring war it was uniquely Spanish, having no parallel in any other European culture. Other Europeans found both its method of

in the overcrowded restaurant and at the barber's! Acoustic force-feeding. My brain on edge, a sort of dizziness overcomes me. Almost worse is the obligation to understand. Carelessly babbled words that cut the world up into trivialities.

29.5.

Rosa is a delicate, anemic girl, the daughter of a shoemaker from El Porvenir. The last few weeks she has scarcely uttered a word. Today she surprises me by having already learned half of the dictionary by heart. [?] not in the words, not in the syntax, but somewhere in the melody.

15.6.

The apartment full of photographs. Lack of space forces me to move from my desk to the floor. Surface, pattern, ornament.

Textile logic of Chimú architecture:
seabirds and fish as if woven from mud!

23.6.^E

Archaeology as destruction. In 1925 Velarde¹¹ discovers an intricate frieze in one of the "palaces." He frees the ornament from the sand and proudly presents it to the public. Shortly after-

ward a storm sweeps across the city, and the frieze, which the sand had previously protected, is immediately destroyed. Even today, his name still blights the palace.

26.6

The unnerving sense of having reached a dead end. A weary and dangerous moment. Is there really any relation between the words brought from the island and this place? Or perhaps, just as the walls are shaped by the wind, these words too have long been irrevocably transformed into something entirely different. Words fossils, syntax fossils.

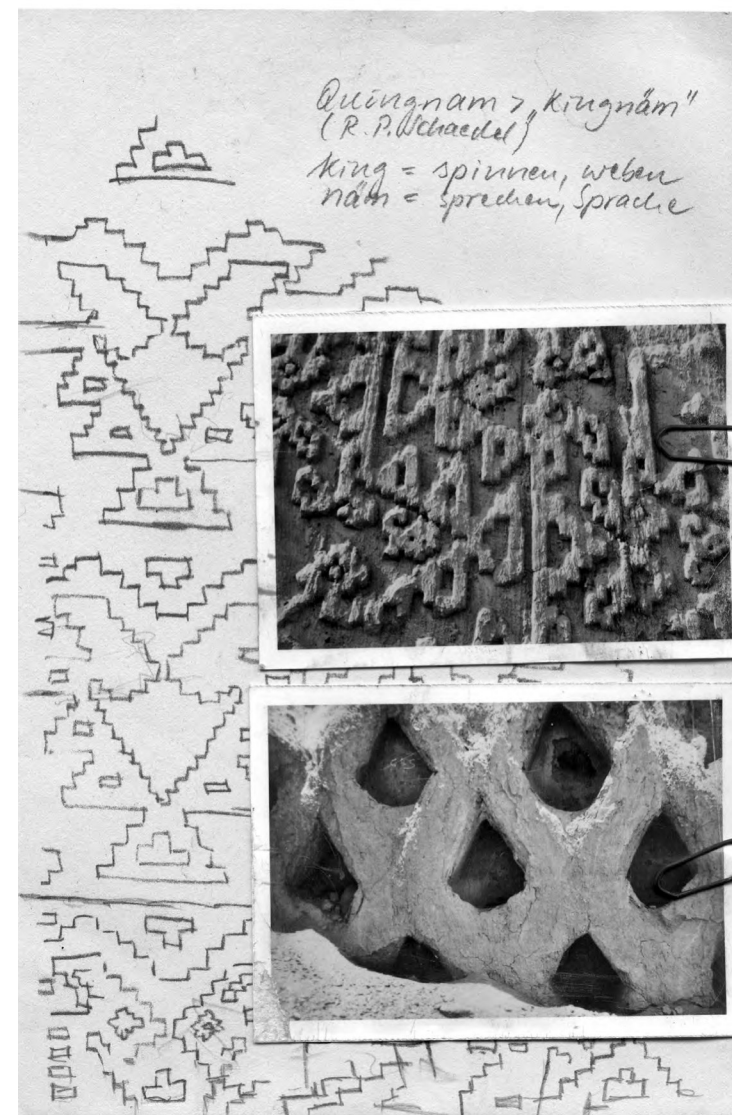
The day after tomorrow the conference with the archaeologists. My lecture. I can already hear their tired questions. No, I do not hate it, communication. It disgusts me.

5.7.

A sore throat as punishment for systematic sleep deprivation. Days spent wandering about. Sluggish recovery. Sage and salt mouth-rinses. Three days working feverishly in the darkroom.

Language = filter, dissolution of reality. Comparable with the grain of a

11 · Carlos A. Velarde, Trujilloan prefect and grave robber.



Quingnam > kingnām (R.P. Schaedel)
king = to spin, to weave
nām = to speak

Extracts from notebook no. 9

23.8.

Lunch break on the Huaca de Toledo. View of the surface survey of the last few months. More important than the contact with the archaeologists right now is the exchange with the peasants who live in small oases in the middle of the desert. Made the acquaintance of Rebekka. She showed me the hidden place from which I later recovered a black figurine. Like Rebekka approximately another five families have settled in this area. Their fields are partly located in the midst of the monumental buildings. As long as they don't encroach on the ruins they are tolerated by the archaeologists.

1.9.

Otto sings!¹² It's as if he has revealed the secret of the ominous diphthong "oy." Had to immediately note this down in my phonetics table.

Huachaque¹³ in the Tschudi complex. Totora plants on the ground. The superstition that water from a huachaque cures infertility.

5.9.

Halfway between Trujillo and Huan-chaco. Mound riddled with holes, remnants of brick and bone. White tips

of bone catch the sun in the salt-in-crust sand. Outside the walls there's hardly anything left. The housing of the common folk was made from mud and reeds and quickly decayed. Burgundy- and black-colored sand is evidence of the kilns used here.

If [?] wants nothing more I'll walk through this desert until my last thought has been cast out. Relaxation.

10.9.^E

I have come to prefer teaching in the open. Perception exercises with the students on location. What words do we have at our disposal? The longer the silence, the more successful the experiment.

13.9.

The chestnut tree in front of my house is the only tree in the street. Bare black branches loom against the sky. A cluster of leaves is blown against the window, and I too am penetrated by an icy wind.

14.9.

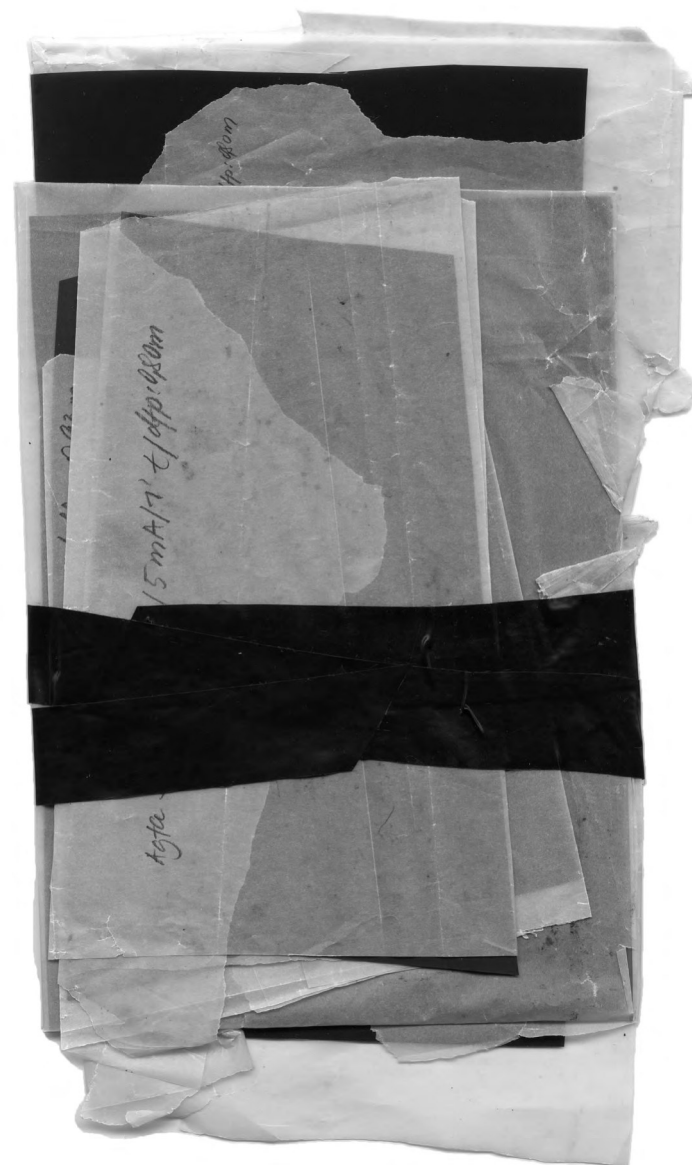
Managed to persuade Omar to let me x-ray the ceramics in his clinic. "And what can you see? Terminal cancer?" Far too little contrast in the images,

12 · According to popular belief and superstition, ceramic vessels (huacos) "sing" when they are occupied by a curse. The huaquero has to constantly fear being haunted by the robbed ancestors, who express themselves through nocturnal "sounding" or "singing." See on

this also: A. Pinillos, *Huacas de Trujillo - Derrotero para una visita turística*, Trujillo/Peru 1983.

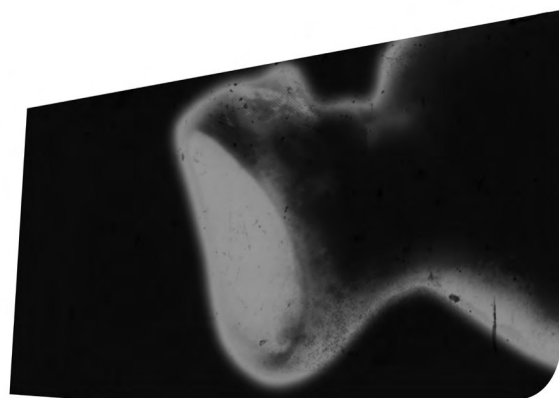
13 · Sunken fields or water basins constructed for practical or spiritual purposes. The huachaque of the Tschudi Palace described by Duenkel is approx. 140 m long, 60 m wide

and 8 m deep. Chan Chan has a total of approx. 125 of these sunken fields.

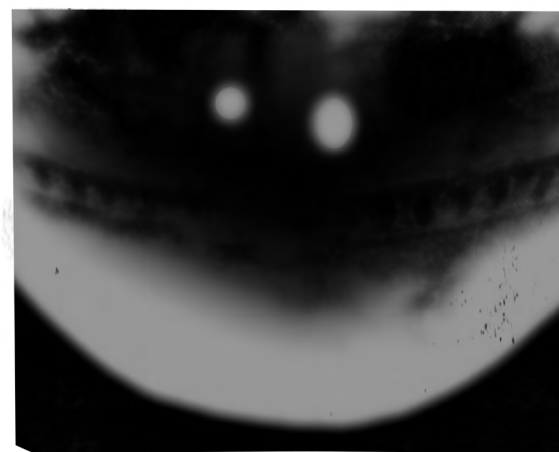


X-ray film material
(see following pages)

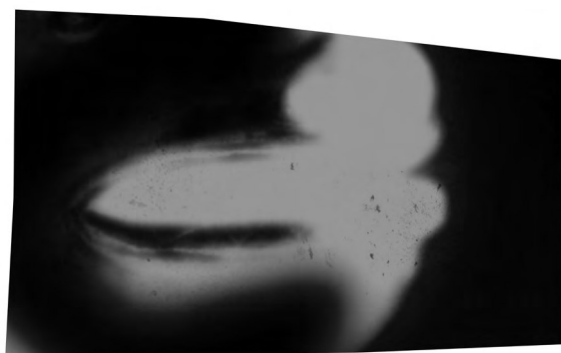
Extract from notebook no. 9



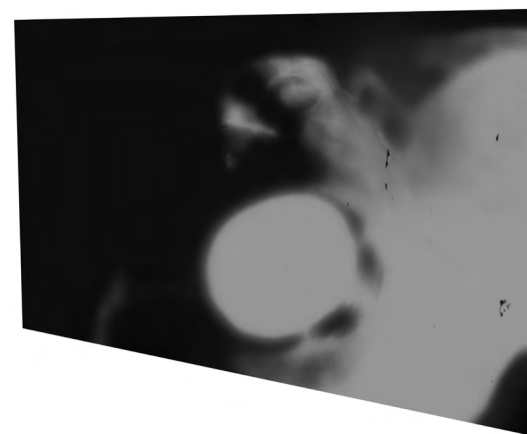
"Head of a felid/body
of a guanábana"



"The radiography reveals the
existence of an opening in the
stomach area. This was probably
sealed at a later date for the
purpose of secrecy."



"Zoomorphic vessel.
Openings in the nose
and mouth area"



"Open-mouthed creature,
deep-bellied sound"

Developed x-ray material (Chimú
vessels) with Duenkel's notes,
notebook no. 9



Newspaper article
La Industria, 28.8.1969

Trujillo/Chan Chan. In the early hours of the morning yesterday a group of unknown persons occupied the grounds of the Tschudi Palace and demanded its immediate “de-naming.” Local excavations had to be put on hold until further notice.

On the burial platform of the enclosure, a flag was hoisted with the inscription: ‘Freedom to the dead! Freedom from meaning!’ So far the political orientation of the group could not be determined. According to a statement from a local

speaker of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces an involvement of the government cannot be ruled out at this stage.¹

1 · On 14.3.2006, based on an initiative of Peru’s National Institute of Culture, Chan Chan’s buildings, which were formerly named after archaeologists and local personalities, were renamed. It was decided that the buildings should be given artificially constructed names derived from

the extinct language Muchic: for example, *Nik An* (House of the Middle, formerly Palacio Tschudi), *Fochic An* (House of the North, formerly Palacio Squier), *Xllangchic An* (Sunrise House, formerly Palacio Uhle), or *Naim An* (House of the Birds, formerly Palacio Bandelier).

Although Muchic was not the language of Chan Chan’s residents, the names are intended to retrospectively provide the site with an indigenous genealogy.

Thinking in the Open

Interview with Olivia Bonares

Ms. Bonares, at the end of the 1960s you were part of the group around Duenkel. How did this contact come about?

At the time I was studying at the National University in Trujillo, reading fairly stale books and not really knowing where I wanted to go with my life. Duenkel took over the seminar from a colleague who had recently passed away. With his round horn-rimmed glasses, American sneakers and combed-back hair, he looked rather out of place. His lectures quickly drew a disparate crowd: freaks I would call them today. People who don’t think like the others. With him they found a kind of refuge. Humberto Maturana, Maria Reiche, Giorgio Mattaca, Elsa Nivers, Samuel Hooker, Smelda Varanas... I’ve forgotten many of their names. What I would say though is that it was far from being a “group.”

Duenkel’s teaching methods deviated considerably from the university curriculum...

After a few weeks we were supposed to throw away our grammar books; he said that we would no longer need them. At some point – it must have been the summer of 1968 – the original teaching format was completely abandoned. Duenkel called it “thinking in the open.” It was then that we began with the investigation of the caves, the inhalations and the coining of new words. His thinking was related to the body; it could become extremely addictive.

What do you mean by that?
 [remains silent]

Between December 1968 and July 1969 the notebook breaks off. What exactly happened in this period?

I can only recall the feeling of the time, the terrible sense of weight, the agony in Trujillo. All around the world was on fire. Anti-Vietnam, anti-family, anti-university. We felt cheated of