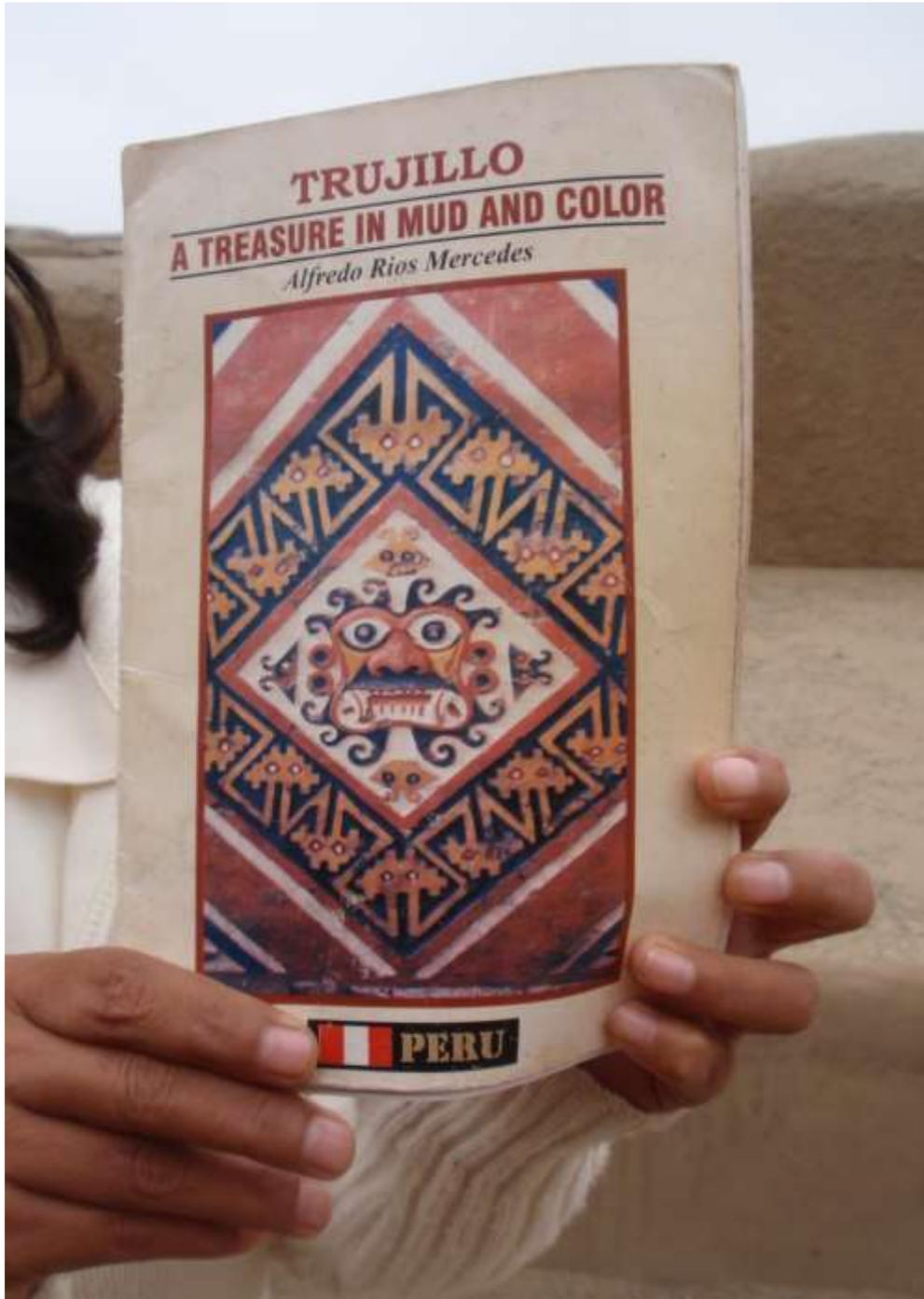


Chan Chan archaeological site (Chimu Empire), Trujillo



Book: "Trujillo, A Treasure in Mud and Color" by Alfredo Rios Mercedes

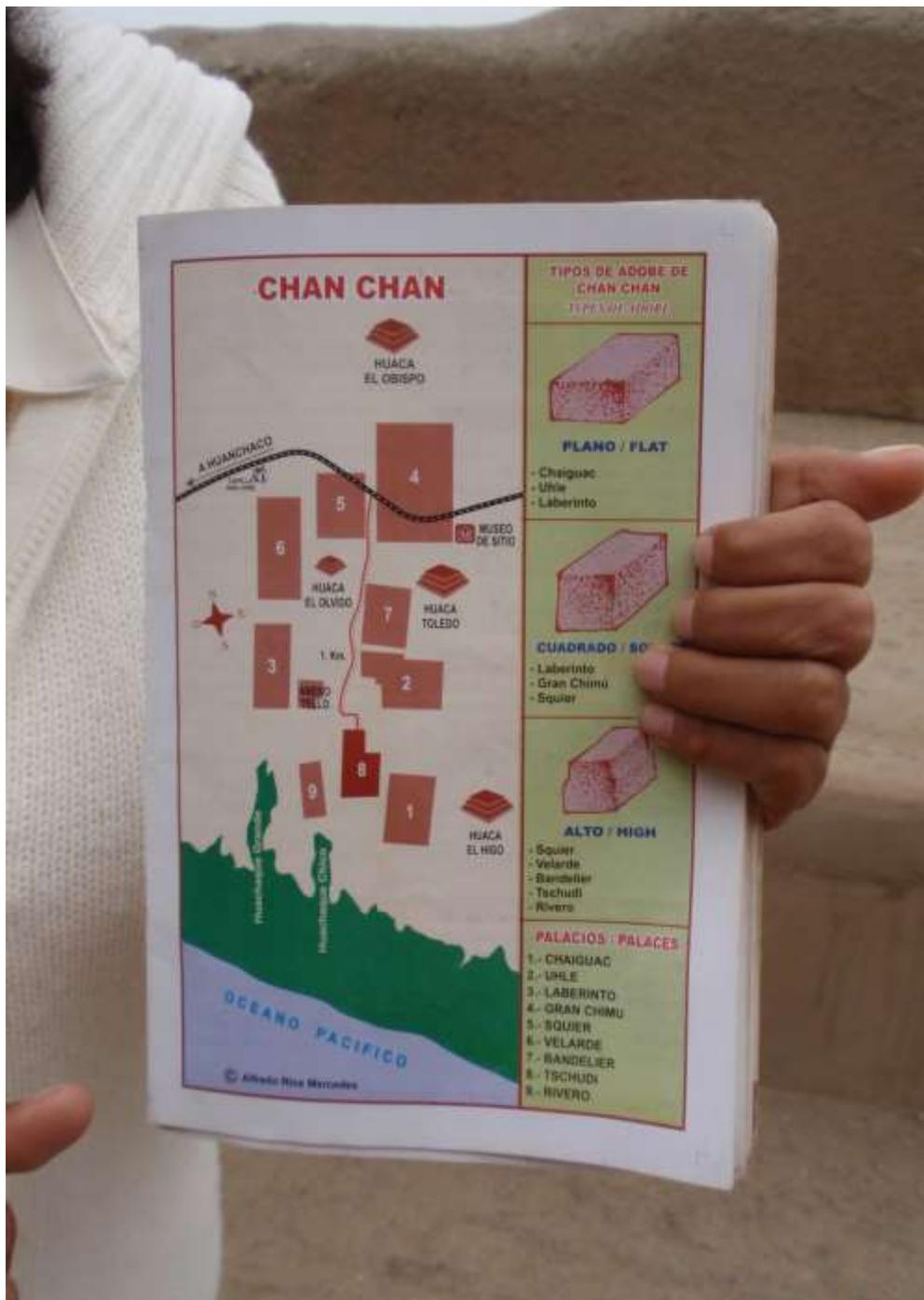


Chart of Chan Chan. The separate cities today have been given the names of the archaeologists who studied them (Rivero, Tschudi, Bandelier, Uhle, Tello).



Replica of ruler in regalia.



The largest Pre-Columbian city in South America, Chan Chan is an archaeological site located in the Peruvian region of La Libertad, five km west of Trujillo. Chan Chan covers an area of approximately 20 km², and had a dense urban center of about 6km².^[1] Chan Chan was constructed by the Chimor (the kingdom of the Chimú), a late intermediate period civilization which grew out of the remnants of the Moche civilization. The vast adobe city of Chan Chan was built by the Chimu around AD 850 and lasted until its conquest by the Inca Empire in AD 1470. It was the imperial capital of the Chimor until it was conquered in the 15th century. It is estimated that around 30,000 people lived in the city of Chan Chan.

The city is composed of ten walled citadels which housed ceremonial rooms, burial chambers, temples, reservoirs and some residences. Chan Chan is a triangular city surrounded by walls 50-60 feet high.



The numerous walls throughout the city create a labyrinth of passages (corridors).



Present-day visitors to Chan Chan can enter the Tschudi Complex, believed to be one of the later citadels built in the city.



The walls themselves were constructed of adobe brick and were then covered with a smooth surface into which intricate designs were carved. There are two styles of design present in these carvings: one is a 'realistic' representation of subjects such as birds, fish, and small mammals; and the other is a more graphic, stylized representation of the same subjects. The carvings at Chan Chan depict crabs, turtles, and nets for catching various sea monsters. Chan Chan, unlike most other coastal ruins in Peru, is located extremely close to the Pacific Ocean.



Symmetrical design above an altar area.



Pelican design.



model



Fish design. [Corredor de Peces y Aves]



Preserved wall with diagonal (fishnet) designs.



Model



Zona de Audiencias (little temple).

The archaeological site is characterized by very tall walls, some of which are 26 feet high, which enclose each of the 11 citadels. Together with Huaca Obispo, Chan Chan's largest stepped pyramid, which lies at the north of the city, they form the bulk of the monumental architecture at the site. Each of these palaces, most of which are laid out in a very similar fashion in spite of the differences in size, are characterized by three types of structures: U-shaped audiencias, storerooms and wells. In general terms the site's high walls, long corridors, tortuous, winding passageways, and small entrances show how meticulously the regime controlled the flow of people within the enclosures.



(left) throne in sunken ceremonial patio.

The Chimú followed a strict hierarchy based on a belief that all men were not created equal. According to Chimú myth, the sun populated the world by creating three eggs: gold for the ruling elite, silver for their wives and copper for everybody else.



Zona de Audiencias (little temple).

The U-shaped rooms called "audiencias" are found in varying sizes and are interpreted as the administrative offices of the Chimú elite. Some are decorated with elaborate clay friezes that represent shellfish, stylized waves, marine birds and fish.



Souvenirs for sale from a local artisan.



Model – Audiencias O Templetas



Area of room dedicated to divinities.

It is interesting to note that unlike the Inca, who revered the sun perhaps more than anything else, the Chimu people worshiped the moon instead. It was their belief that the sun only destroyed things, which is easy to understand if you consider the desert environment that characterizes the region.



From the entrance, the pathway leads into a vast walled plaza, where religious ceremonies were once held. The king sat on a throne near a ramp at the front of the square and was flanked by hundreds of priests and other court attendants, while human sacrifices were made on an altar in the center of the square. The walls are decorated with reliefs of sea otters/squirrels—a fertility symbol passed down from Moche times—and cormorants.



The acoustics of the plaza are stunning: the ocean, more than a kilometer away, roars on a windless day.



From the plaza, the circuit continues down a corridor decorated with pelicans and zigzagging fish designs that probably represented the ocean tide and currents. On the opposite wall are diamond-shaped designs of fishing nets, a motif throughout Chan Chan.



A passageway leads to a more intimate square with a ceremonial altar (now covered in adobe to preserve it) and U-shaped audience chamber.



One of the more surprising sights of Tschudi, given the desert surroundings, is a pool with a marsh reed at one end that was probably once a pleasure garden for Chimú royalty and a place for worshipping the moon.



Unlike the Incas, the Chimú apparently valued the moon over the sun because it comes out both during day and night and controls the oceans.



Model – Pozo Ceremonial



Burial area - tombs.



Burial area - royal tomb.



Model – Recinto Funerario



Photo of Chan Chan archaeological site.

The Chimu Empire, which is also known as the Kingdom of Chimor, thrived roughly between the years 850 AD and 1470 AD. Its reach saw it extend some 600 miles from Lima on up the northern coast of Peru. The Chimu Empire was the largest kingdom around during what is referred to as the Late Intermediate period, accounting for some two-thirds of the Andean peoples. The Chimu people were highly influenced by nearby cultures, such as the Cajamarca and the Huari. Indigenous legend has it that Chan Chan was founded around 850 AD by the figure Taycanamo, who supposedly came by way of canoe from the sea.

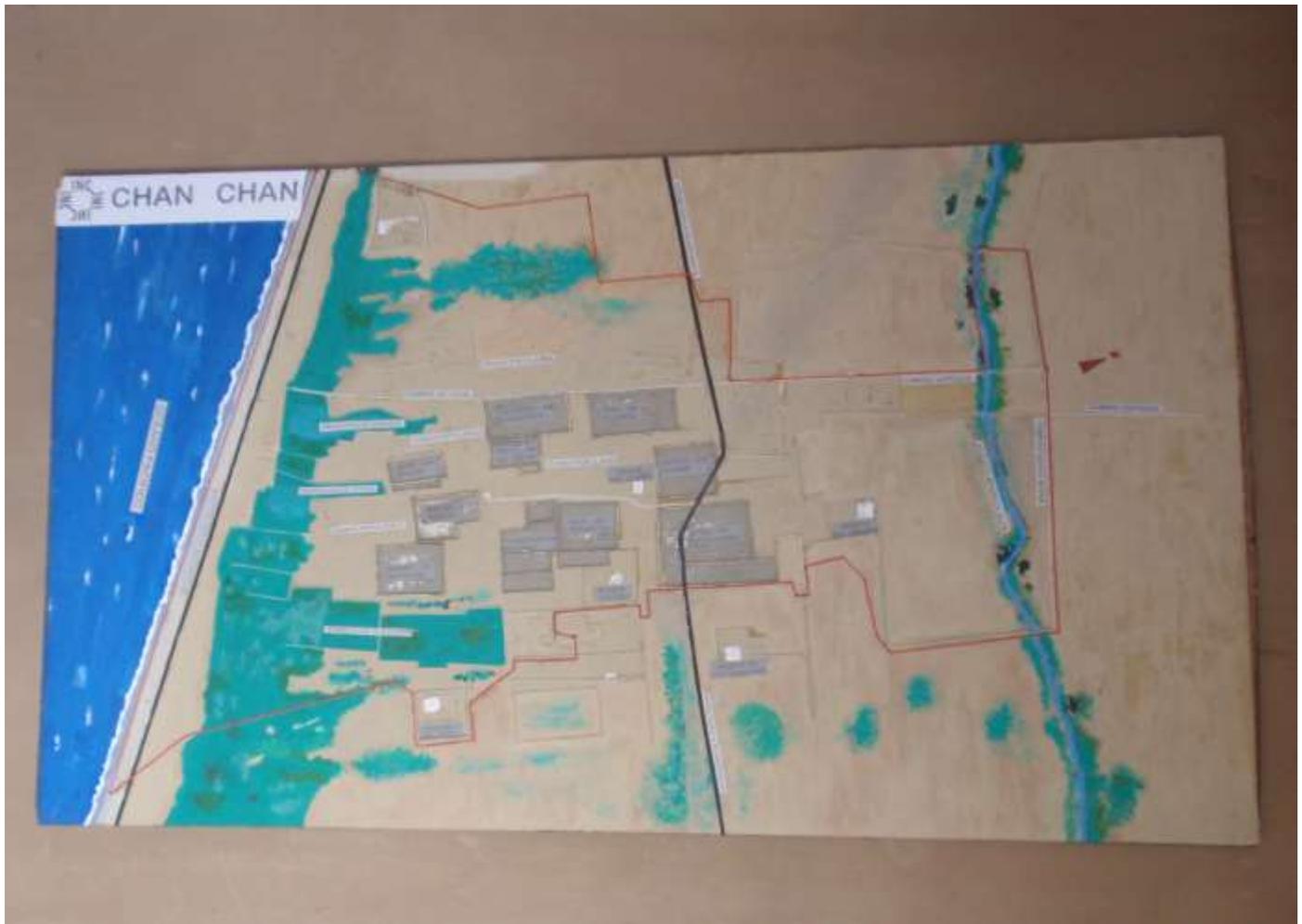


Chart of Chan Chan.

"Archaeological World Heritage Site" UNESCO - The ancient Chimu kingdom (700-1400 AD) founded their capital by the banks of the Moche River in the department of La Libertad and called it Jang-Jang, which in the ancient Mochica language means "sun-sun". Chan Chan, which spans an area of 20 square km, is the largest mud-brick citadel dating back to the pre-Hispanic era. To build it, the Chimú architects used clay, mud, pebbles, wood, reeds, straw and cane, materials which enable the citadel to blend in with the sandy coasts.



Artistic representation of ancient Chan Chan.

The complex is made up of many cities within a city, each of which has its own single entrance which leads down a corridor that opens up into other passageways lining walls and buildings featuring some marvelous rectangular architecture: inner patios, residences, administrative buildings, temples, platforms and storehouses. The walls were decorated with haut-relief friezes done in geometric and animal figures. The T-shaped platform that housed the king's burial chamber was the most important construction in the complex. The citadel was surrounded by outlying quarters which housed the kingdom's producers and servants.

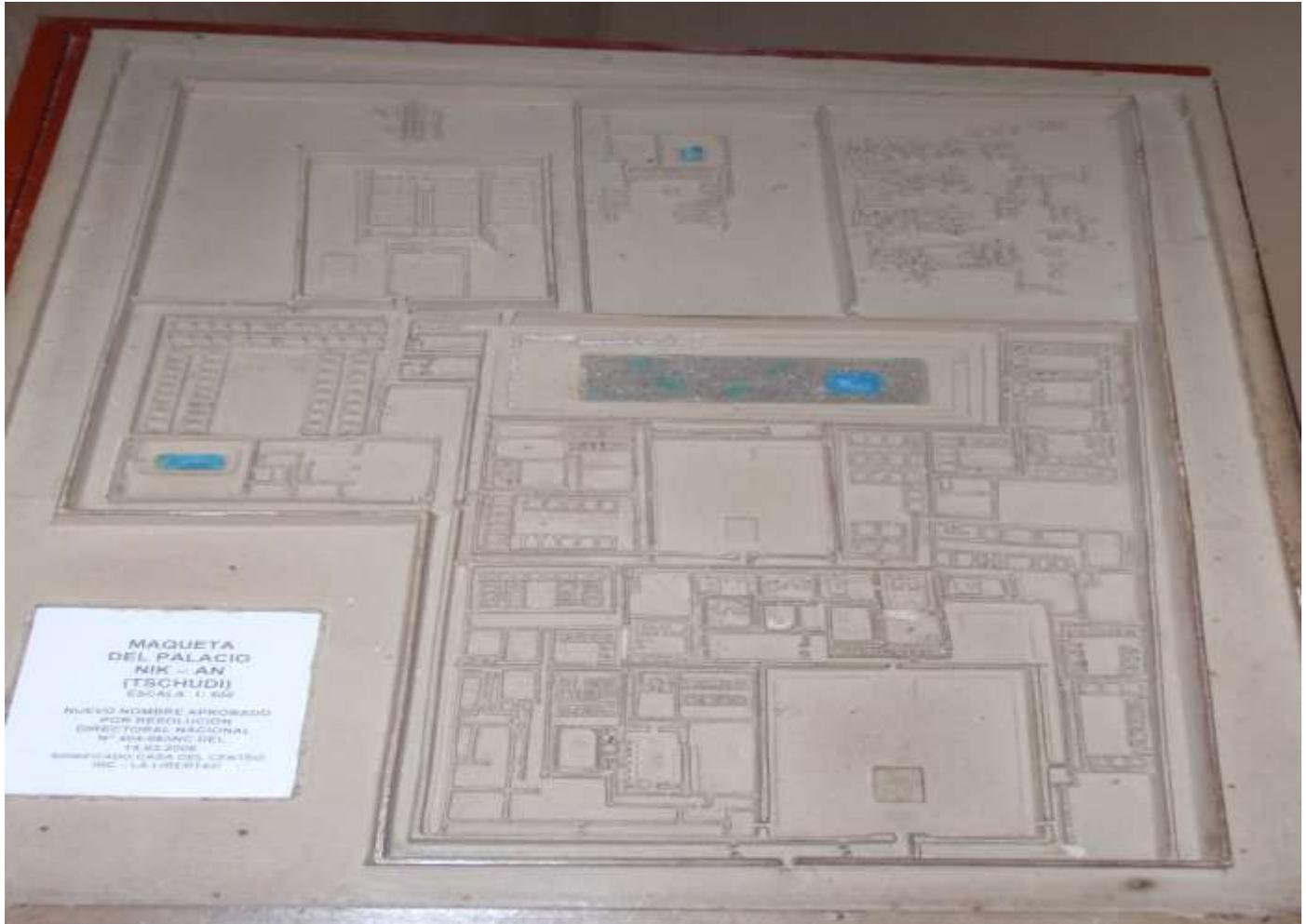


Artistic representation of a ceremony.



Aerial photo of Chan Chan.

At the center of the ruined city are 10 royal compounds, or ciudadelas, built by successive Chimú dynasties, that cover 6 square km (2.3 square miles).



Model: Maqueta del Palacio Nik-An (Tschudi) - Tschudi Palace.

Tschudi Palace was named after a Swiss explorer, and due to the fact that it has been restored to some degree, it is easier to understand than are the other 8 royal compounds. The Tschudi Palace probably housed between 500 and 1,000 noble people, and its courtyard is one of the best places to observe Chimú friezes. The palace's sanctuary is also of elevated interest, as its walls exhibit a sort of fishnet pattern.

Link:

[Wikipedia on Chan Chan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chan_Chan)

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