

The Lady of Cao

425 - 450 CE, the Moche Chicama Valley

Women's Intellectual History
Presentation by Meg Boedeker





The El Brujo Region

The Lady of Cao lived until the age of 25 in the Chicama Valley of Northern Peru around 425-450 CE as part of the Moche civilization (100-900 CE)

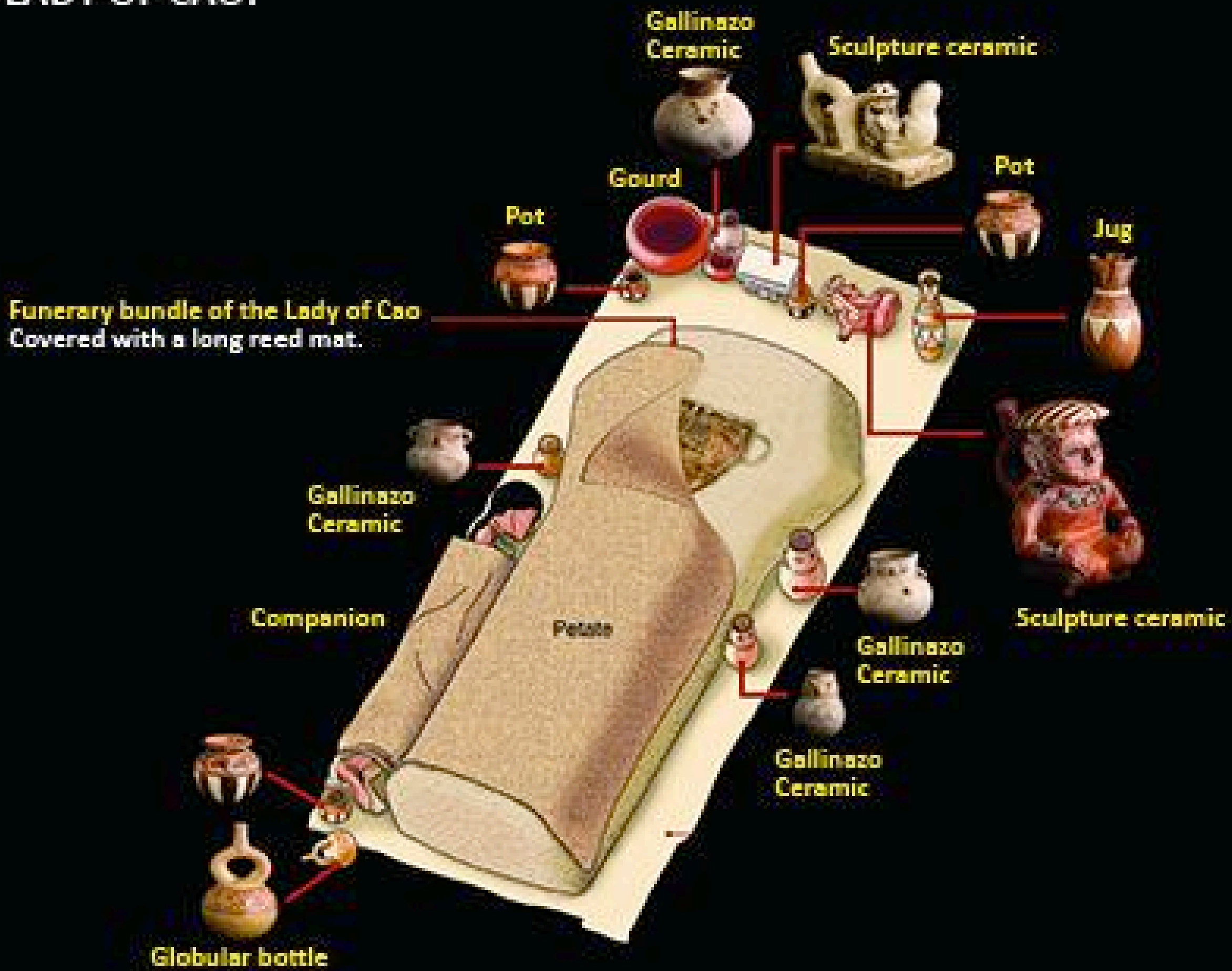
- The Moche civilization started 1,000 years before the Incan civilization

Huaca Casa Viejo: The initial resting place of The Lady of Cao



- The Lady of Cao's tomb was found in December 2004 by an archaeologist team from the Wiese Foundation; the findings were led by Dr. Régulo Franco Jordán
- The Lady of Cao was one of five tombs within this compound--she was the only woman (El Brujo, "The Funerary Context")

THE TOMB OF THE LADY OF CAO:
THE OFFERINGS





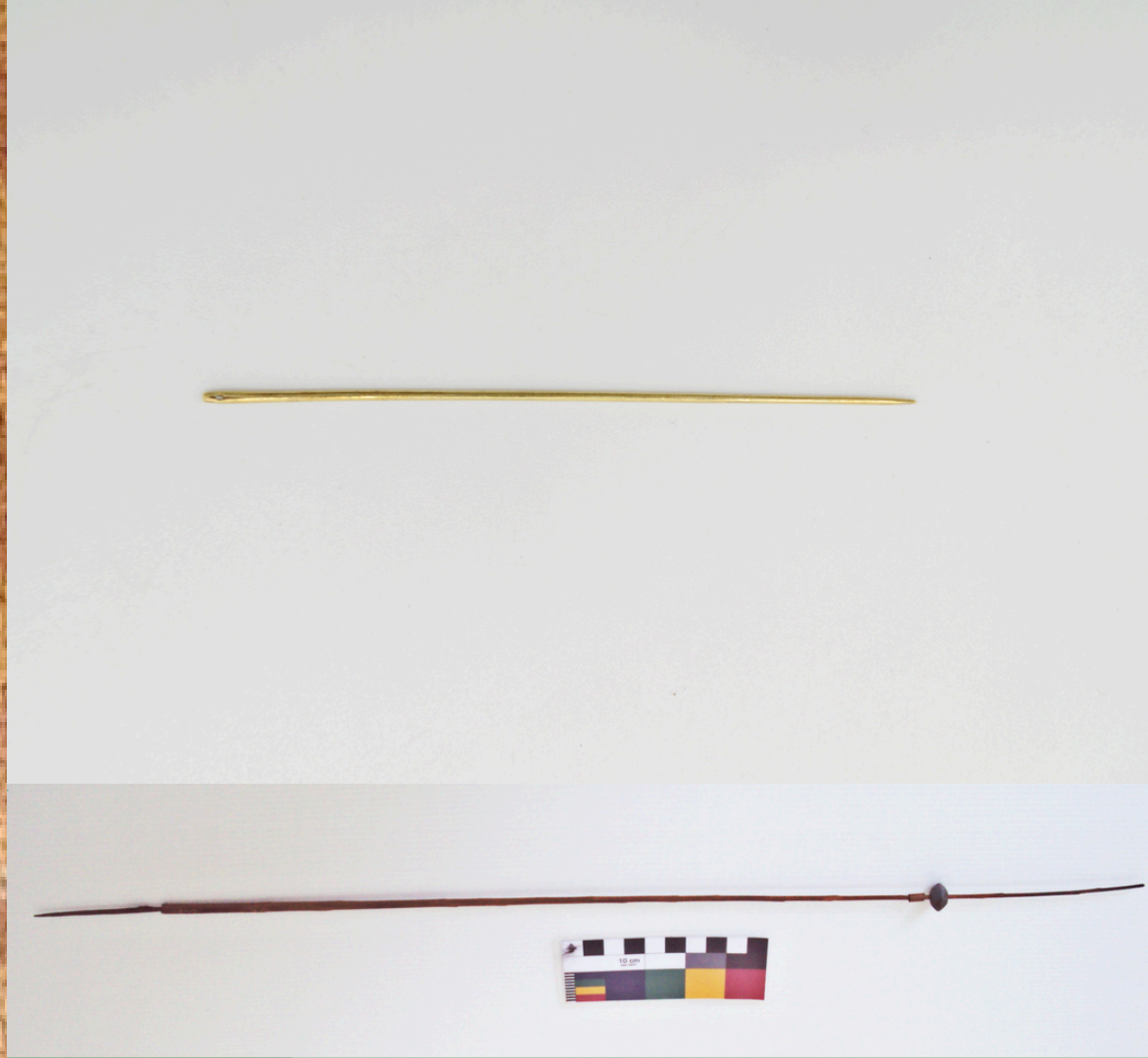
Finding of the vessel with the representation of the owl on the surface of the tomb of the Lady of Cao.



Finding of the vessel with the representation of the owl on the surface of the tomb of the Lady of Cao.

Figure 7. Bottles in the Moche style found inside the Tomb of the Lady of Cao.



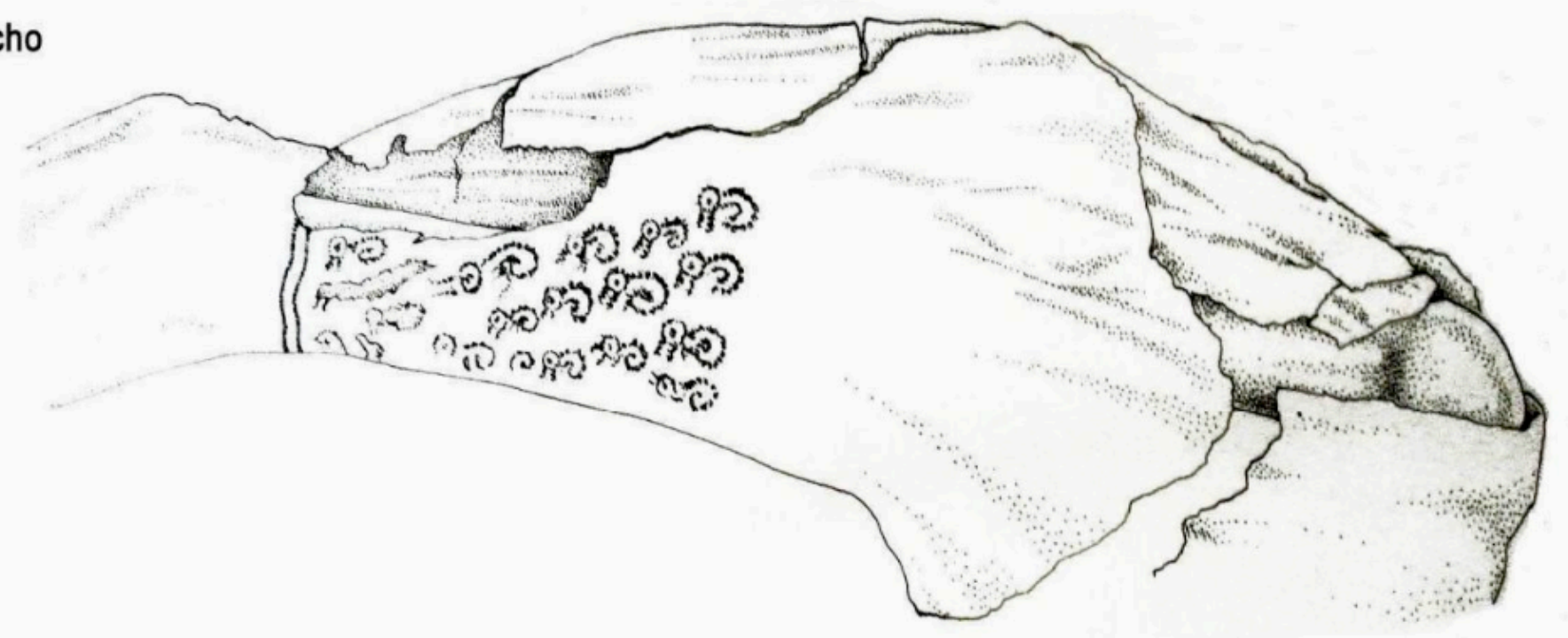




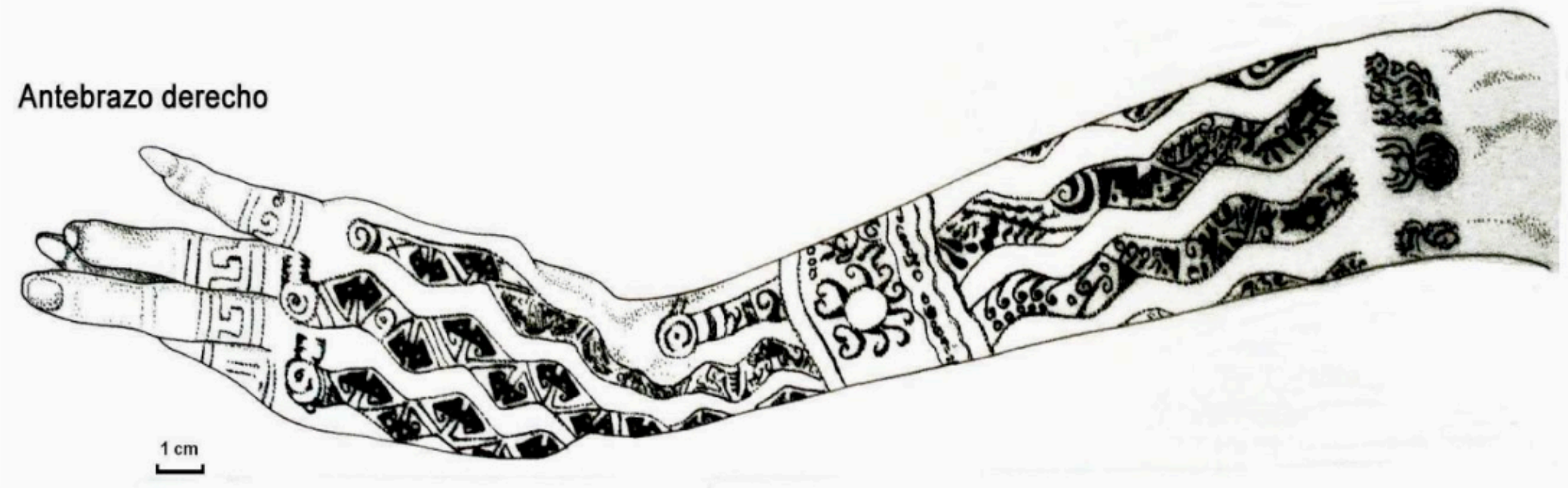
An analysis of her tattoos and hair

- Researchers used EDS (Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy) to identify both the cinnabar (mercury sulfide) in her skin and the iron pigments in the tattoos which led the way to the connection with the *jagua* fruit
- During this time, 43% of the South American coastal population had tattoos (Allison et al, 1981)

Brazo derecho



Antebrazo derecho



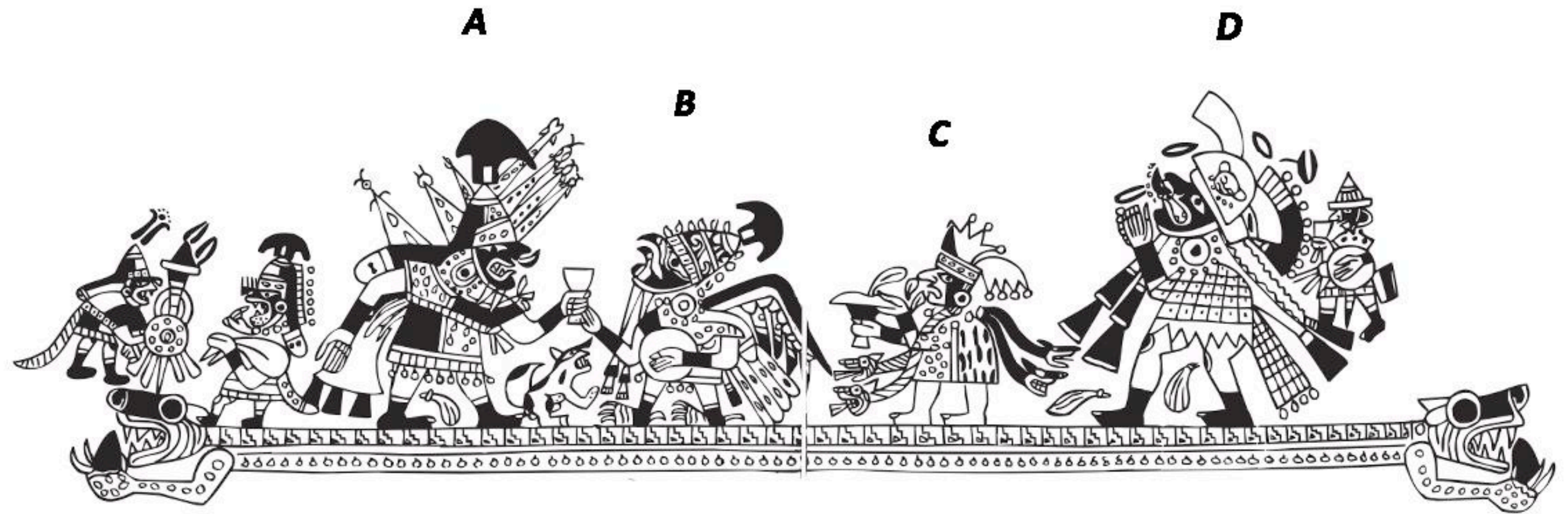
- Women were the artists and creators behind this tattooing methodology used with the Lady of Cao and the South American population
- An isotopic study on her hair revealed her diet to be primarily made up of corn and fish



The Lady of Cao as a Healer

- According to Dr. Régulo Franco Jordán, her tattoos were not just decorative, they were significant and symbolic to her culture
- The top sculpture was buried with her in her tomb; has evidence of use, and was created long before she passed
- The bottom sculpture depicts similar snake imagery on the healer's forearms





The Lady of Cao & Moche Sacrifice Rituals

- Male ruler (A), owl priestess (B), moon priestess (C) and female ruler (D) (El Brujo)
- These ceremonies were not public, but private among the Moche elites

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