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The Ampato Textile Offerings

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Introduction

The term "sacred" in our symposium title implies the existence of "secular" and thus conceptually divides the world into a dualism which is characteristic of Western thought. Perhaps though, that is not the way the ancient Andeans, whose textiles we are to briefly examine, saw their world. They did not divide the world into animate and inanimate, into flora and fauna, or neatly into secular and sacred. Every thing was a living, interactive part of their cosmos and every textile, regardless of its rank, was considered to be spirited. With last year's discovery of a fully clothed 13 year old Inka girl who had been sacrificed in Inka ritual on a mountaintop and then frozen, to be found five hundred years later, we can glimpse the end of this three thousand year Andean textile story.

Geography

In 1500, the approximate year of the sacrifice and just before the Spanish meltdown, the Inka ruled the western face of South America from their capital at Cusco. The sacrifices and the textile offerings with which we are concerned were the result of an Inka ritual called Khapak Huchaⁱ, whichⁱⁱ involved the empire's best looking teenagers, who were nominated by their parents or selected by the Inka, sent to Cusco and feted. They were then carried in a processional, which moved only in straight lines, across the country to the selected mountaintop where they were sacrificed to serve as propitiation to a mountain, lightning or other deity.

Ampato is the name of the site of Johan Reinhard's frozen mummy discoveries.ⁱⁱⁱ It is a volcanic peak amongst a chain of peaks in Southern Peru^{iv}, is ice covered and is 21,000 feet high. The sacrificed girl was found inside the volcanic crater, having tumbled with her associated offerings from her disintegrating mountaintop platform. Also Reinhard, with Jose Antonio Chavez of the Universidad Catolica in Arequipa, discovered on a lower plateau a grouping of associated buried ritual offerings. Each set of offerings was marked by a circle of stones and two of the offering pits contained fully clothed burials.

Offering containing Mummy #2

One of the offering pits, when excavated, proved to contain a fully-clothed, frozen young female who had been surrounded by some 40 Inka ceramics. X-rays of the body have revealed the presence of tupus which are Inka women's clothing pins, indicating that the burial was undoubtedly a female. The sacrificed girl was wearing an elaborate feather headdress which had been rudely crushed. Johan Reinhard reports there was a big rock in the bottom of the pit limiting the Inka excavation, with the digger's solution to the problem being the crunching down of the headdress which otherwise would have projected above the ground level. In the burial process, the attached feathered cap was shoved forward over the face.

Headdress of Mummy #2

The headdress feathers which are Macaw tail feathers, probably from the jungle below Cusco, had formed an approximately 18 inch high semi-circle above the head. This type of headdress though not represented by Huaman Poma^v, does appear on Inka figurines. The creation of the headdress involved the construction of a semi-circular ridge of plaiting which went over the head from ear to ear. It was attached to the base cap which was feather-covered with small feathers pre-assembled on strings which were then sewn onto the base textile. The upright Macaw feathers had been

individually inserted and fastened into the fiber ridge so that when the headdress was crunched down during burial, some of the fibers of the ridge structure were also broken.

Outer wrapping of Mummy #2

This sacrificed child before burial, had been placed in the middle of a large rectangular textile, which had been spread out on the ground. This enormous ground cloth and mummy wrapper, probably an Aksu, had simple warp striping. The four corners had been brought up and tied, enclosing all of the mummy except for the head and the headdress. Her orientation was such that when the wrapping textile would have been untied, presumably in the next world, it would have unfolded to be square with that world also, suggesting that the next world was modeled on this one. The warp of the textile was placed north/south with her facing orientation toward the south, sometimes considered the direction of death in the Inca world. It also tells us that the people engaged in the ritual, her handlers, were probably deeply concerned with establishing the correct resonance between the textiles and the Inka cosmos.

She was then put into the burial pit where she was surrounded by Inka ceramics which were primarily sets of paired vessels, perhaps for her and a male next-world counterpart. The textiles worn by the mummy were similar to the outer wrapping and quite intact, but astonishingly, the burial had been struck by lightning and the body tissues destroyed. A quarter-sized hole in the head marked the entrance and path of the lightning through the body which can be traced by examination of the bones.

Tunic of Mummy #2

When the outer wrapping of mummy #2 had been untied and removed, and the headdress lifted off for conservation, the textiles actually worn by the sacrificed girl could be studied. Like the outer wrappings, they were brown, warp-faced, with simple striping and seemingly stylistically unrelated to the elaborate headdress.

Additional Tunic of Mummy #2

One textile, though, was clearly not being worn by the mummy, nor was it being used as a wrapper. It was a separate textile which had been folded and placed by her side during the burial. Because a neck slot was present, it appeared to be a male garment although in a female grave. The folded condition of the textile and its placement indicated that it had been placed there as an offering - with the sacrificed girl, his neck slot at her side, the bottom of the tunic near her feet. It was apparently for her husband in the next world. The tunic appeared to be weft patterned with the warps running horizontally as in other Inka men's tunics, but it had been constructed in two pieces with a center seam like much earlier Wari tunics. The bottom selvage had an attached elaborate tie-dyed fringe. As to interpretation, there is a reference in the chronicler Molina^{vi}(1) to Inka men at a Cusco festival wearing a long red unku with a red and white fringe. Possibly, someday enough such textile interpretations can be found, to enable an understanding of the whole sacrifice.

The offering also contained, placed above the body, a golden spatula-like object which was probably a golden feather. Noting that vertical feathers are associated with Inka male headgear, perhaps it was associated with the red male tunic buried below. It may have, perhaps intentionally, functioned as a lightning rod, since it shows evidence of having been struck by lightning.

Offering containing Mummy #3

Another of the stone offering circles on that same plaza, when excavated, revealed the burial of a probable male, which had also been struck by lightning. The textiles had disintegrated and the body had been reduced to carbonized bones.

Though disturbed by the excavation process, a large group of tan reed-like vegetable fiber elements were associated with the skull and were believed by the excavators to have formed a fringe around the head. Each of these reed-like elements had been pre-formed --- doubled and then bent with a hooked top --- and strung together in the manner of the feather work. A possible reconstruction of this headband/fringe produces a wearable item but not one like any of the Spanish illustrations.

Male figurine associated with Mummy #3

A miniature silver male figurine some four inches high, found amongst the leg bones of the carbonized mummy, had been struck by the lightning. Melted silver appears around the entrance and exit holes created by the lightning as it ripped diagonally through the casting of his body. The resultant heat severely darkened the finish of the silver. He has the solemn face of a mature and deeply reverent male but his tumescence speaks of youth and fertility. His ear lobes have deep loops which were used by the Inkas to hold decorated ear spools. This standing male may be resonant with the standing deities of the earlier pre-Inka Andean cultures such as Tiwanaku.

Because of the lack of oxygen in the frozen ground, the clothing of the figurine, though severely toasted by the heat of the lightning, did not seem to actually burn. It is possible that the whole human offering and its associated artifacts was intended for the God of lightning and thunder whose Inka name was Illapa.

Figurines associated with Mummy #1

Johan Reinhard on his initial trip to the top of Ampato which resulted in the retrieval of the frozen mummy #1, saw emerging from the slope just below the collapsed Inka platform at some 21,000 feet, the feathers of three sets of miniature figurines. Such figurines, found primarily with the Khapak Hucha ritual sacrifices, are of gold, silver or spondylus shell, and wear replicas of Inka clothes.^{viiiviii} Their clothes, however, were seemingly always oversized, perhaps because the Inkas believed that the figurines would, like seeds, grow after being placed underground. Miniatures, had a high status in Andean society and, no doubt, the sacrificed teen-agers may also have been considered to be a form of miniature.

One of the figurine is of gold, is female and is constructed largely of sheet metal though her face may be a casting. Gold is associated with the sun in Inka mythology. The chroniclers have many references to full-size realistic Inka sculptures representing deities, but none have survived. Such carefully constructed miniatures thus provide for us a keyhole view into that tradition.. The figurine wears an outer mantle or llyclla, an inner wrap-around dress called an aksu, and a cord which connects two of her three tupu pins. The llyclla worn by the golden figurine is about 1/12 the size of an adult llyclla. From the figurine's Tupu connecting cord, hang four suspended spondylus shell fragments attached with the same half-hitch knot used by the Inkas in the construction of their quipus. Prior to the Ampato discovery, this necklace-like arrangement was considered normal for Inka women's wear, however differences now emerge in the arrangements used in the miniatures, in burial, and in real life.

The second figurine of the group of three found by Johan Reinhard is also female but is made of cast silver which is associated with the moon in Inka cosmology. She has a fan-shaped white

feather headdress, and her clothing is predominantly of natural undyed material with no linear patterning. Her tupu and connecting cord are constructed like those of the first figurine but she carries only two spondylus fragments. This “snow” woman’s cap and train are constructed of white alpaca except for the final fringe which is bright blue. Her white cap of single element looping, forms the structural basis for her feather headdress. A miniature version of the plaited semicircular feather-base ridge similar to that of the big headdress of Mummy #2 is visible. She also wears a very fine inner Aksu probably of tan vicuna. The significance of these pristine clothes on this silver girl is unknown.

The third figurine of the group is also female with clothing similar to those of number one, but she is carved of spondylus shell, a material which is associated with the sea and was imported from the coast of Ecuador. She has not yet been disassembled so the construction of her connecting cord is not yet known. Her headdress is fan-shaped but of coral and yellow feathers. Yellow feathers on a white base textile form the train which extends down her back from the cap and coral red top feathers of her headdress. Her tupus are of bronze.

Possible Chimu featherwork associations

The feather headdresses on the miniatures and on the mummy may well have been derived from the clothing styles of the Chimu. Several full-size Chimu feather headdresses exist in museum collections --- headdresses which have both an upright array and a feathered train. The chroniclers report that the Chimu empire was conquered by the Inka, their feather workers were taken to Cusco and made to work for the Inka.

Mummy #1

The first full-sized frozen mummy discovered by Johan Reinhard on his initial ascent up Mount Ampato was the mummy bundle which had rolled down the inner side of the extinct crater after the collapse of the Inka burial platform. She is called Juanita after the name of her discoverer.

Outer wrapping of Mummy #1

Her outer wrapping was a gray-with-white-striped warp-patterned alpaca textile, probably a mantle, which was damaged in her rolling descent. Associated with these outer wrappings were a belt and an awayo (carrying cloth) containing her personal possessions, a coca bag, some small balls of human hair, some string, and a fragment of spondylus. The awayo had been darned and repaired. These textiles, probably her own sacred textiles, as distinct from her offering garments, may be able to be related to local clothing of the 16th century.

Mummy #1 Headcovering

Over her head was a rectangular cloth used as a head covering which had disintegrated exposing her face to the weather. This head covering was the first of the special ceremonial textiles to be removed from the frozen bundle. It had been pulled down over her head for burial, (presumably after her death) and was held down by a tupu pinned in front. This tupu was probably the central, third tupu, used in life to hold together the left and right sides of her llyclla or shoulder mantle. This action by her handlers, presumably after her death, of pulling her head covering down over her head and pinning it in place so that the striping and the warps of the textile were carefully aligned with her body, seems intentional. Because she was not found in a buried position, her burial orientation is not known, but this careful alignment of headcovering with her body seems resonant with the more extensive evidence of the cosmic alignment of textiles and body found in the case of mummy #2. Though a simple two color design, this head covering had beautifully

constructed and patterned two color warp and weft selvages. Its colors and quality of construction suggest that it is a part of her ceremonial clothing rather than the outer set of clothing used as wrappers.

Ceremonial clothing of Mummy #1

When the outer gray wrapping and her head covering were removed, her elaborate Inka textiles began to be revealed. Having been in the deep freeze for 500 years, and protected by the wrapping set, they were in like-new condition. Apparent were her llyclla and her aksu, though the folds, convolutions, fading etc. made them very difficult to identify. She was a young girl, perhaps 13 or 14, but the clothes are fully adult.

Llyclla

Her shoulder-wrap or llyclla is a predominantly red, finely woven textile with characteristic and easily recognizable classic Inka designs and edging details. The llyclla has upper and lower broad red bands and a central white band separated by design bands. Selvages are bound with a simple wrapping stitch in a red, yellow, and black repetitive pattern except around the corners where the wrapping is given a crossed loop stitch finish, presumably for reinforcement. The design bands have patterns in red, yellow and near-black, with the patterns consisting of variations on a drawing of the cross section of a textile showing the under-and-over characteristic of weaving. This patterning in these woven lines contains the memories of more than a millennium of Andean textile history. The diagonal color reversals and the symbolic weaving structure pattern recall designs from their predecessor cultures - Pucara and Tiwanaku.

Belt

Her belt, still firmly frozen, is probably a complementary-warp patterned weave with three-span floats in alternating alignment. and would properly be called a mamachumpi^{ix}. The edge pattern of waves and dots no doubt also represents textile structure. The patterning on her belt does not resemble the tokapu patterns portrayed on women's belts by Human Poma.^x Inka clothing is always symmetrical with the body and not asymmetrical like togas or saris.

Aksu

The most basic element of Inka women's clothing was the aksu, which was a large folded rectangular cloth used as a wrap-around dress. The cloth was folded horizontally so that the fold came under the arm pits and the bottom edge reached foot level. It seems likely that aksu were not sized in accordance with the wearer but in accordance with the occasion.. Perhaps the fold made possible adjustments in accordance with the height of the woman. The upper corners of this folded rectangle were crossed in back and then came generously over the shoulders. These corners were then held in place in front with pins called tupus.

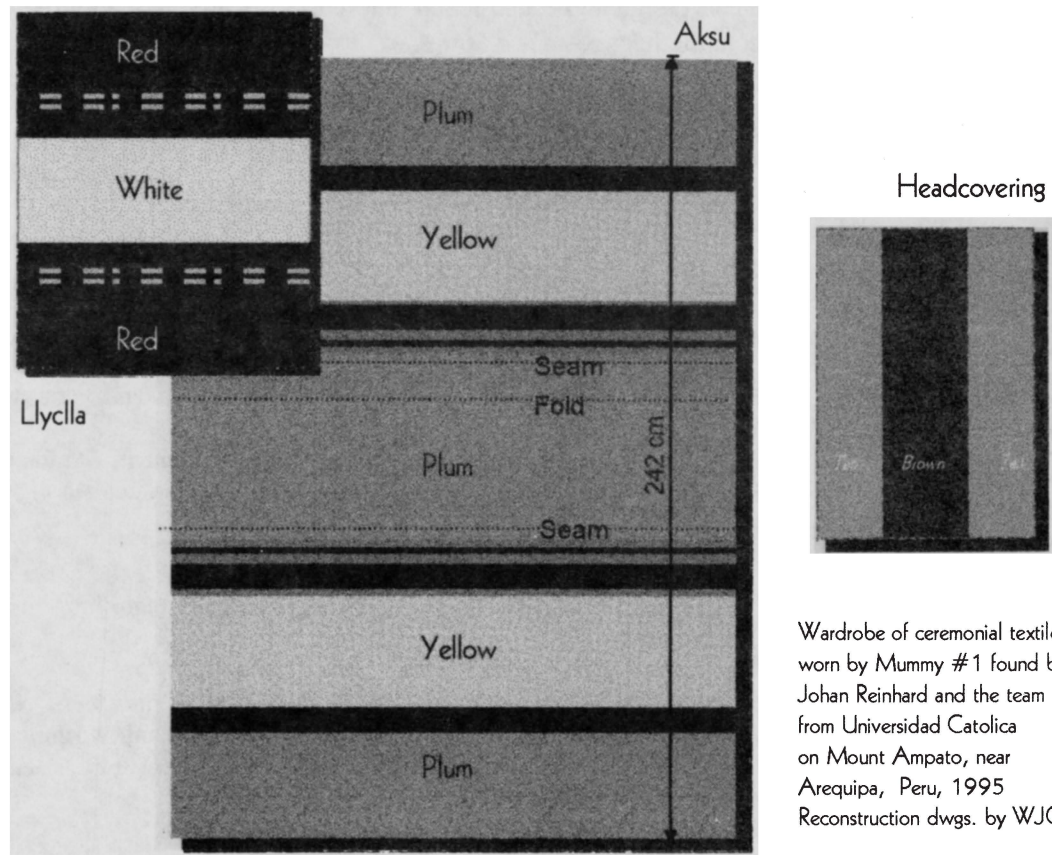
The design of the aksu contains no detailed patterning but consists exclusively of color bands. The edge binding is of a single color. By measuring along visible selvages, a reconstruction of the aksu was developed. The aksu was constructed in three pieces with two almost invisible seams occurring within color areas and not along points of color change. The top and bottom color bands and the central color band is a bluish-red or plum, an unprecedented color for Inka textiles but one which continued into colonial times. Additional color bands are in brilliant red, yellow and orange. The rainbow of colors which characterize the aksu were a shock to those who have previously seen the Inka world only through the colonial black and white ink line drawings

Tupus

Two silver tupus which had four inch fan-shaped heads and 3/16th inch shanks, held up her aksu were inserted upward. In the process the tupus had to penetrate through many layers - seemingly eight - of tightly woven heavy cloth --- no easy task. Inka women's garment construction should probably be considered as relatively permanent. Bathing for cleanliness reasons did not occur, clothing removal for toileting was unnecessary and no undergarments were worn. These relatively permanent tupu constructions on either side were then covered by a shawl. In addition to the two tupus used to hold her aksu together, a third tupu, normally used to hold her llyclla together, had been used by her handlers to hold her head covering as well as her llyclla in place.

Supplemental offerings

Her paired tupus were joined together by a beautifully plaited cord with diamond patterning. This cord went through holes in the metal tupus and was knotted - all in a manner like that found on the miniatures. On the miniatures, supplemental offerings were hung from this cord like amulets from a necklace. However the supplemental offerings in this burial were not attached to the cord, but were instead attached directly to the stem of the tupus with half hitch knots. Attached to her tupus in this fashion, were a wide variety of miniature offerings including a pair of miniature carved wooden keros or cups the size of thimbles, a needle made from a cactus spine, and a carved four-footed miniature animal figure. One small object was filled with what appeared to be llama fat suggesting that they were all indeed offerings and not simply "charms." These miniature offerings were of meticulous quality construction.



Wardrobe of ceremonial textiles worn by Mummy #1 found by Johan Reinhard and the team from Universidad Catolica on Mount Ampato, near Arequipa, Peru, 1995
Reconstruction dwgs. by WJC

Mummy #1 garment set (Fig. 1)

Mummy #1 garment set

With the aid of reconstruction drawings, see Fig. 1, since some of the clothing is still frozen around the body, it is possible to compare the sizes and patterns of her clothing set. The aksu has no detailed patterning and the colors (plum, orange etc.) seem to bear little relation to the classic Inka colors of her llyclla (red, gold and black). The vertical dimension of her aksu when it is unfolded will be about 8 feet.

Conclusions:

The moccasins on her feet are the type which Huaman Poma illustrates for this quarter of the Inka empire (Colla) and were tucked in very tightly, suggesting that she was huddled against the cold at the moment of death. The soft leather soles were finished with a stretch weave binding. Her right hand has a firm grip on her aksu also suggesting huddling. Cat scans performed by Johns Hopkins Medical School have discovered that her skull was cracked probably by a sharp blow to the right side of her head which caused her death.

Although we don't know who this Ampato maiden was, we do have from one of the chroniclers the final words of another such sacrificed girl, as follows: "You can finish with me now because I could not be honored more than I have been already by the feast that they celebrated for me in Cuzco."^x

In the scientific sense, the forty or so textiles from the Ampato discoveries help us in the technical definition of Inka textiles, but more importantly help to understand the sacred role of textiles in Inka religion as evident in their design and construction, but most critically, in the sacred nature of their placement in relation to the Inka cosmos.

ⁱ McEwan, Colin and Vande Guchte, Martin "Ancestral Time and Sacred Space in the ritual Inka State" Ancient America, Art Institute of Chicago, 1992

ⁱⁱ Besom, Tom, "Notes on Khapak Chucha," personal communication provided to WJC, 1996

ⁱⁱⁱ Reinhard, Johan, "Peru's Ice Maidens" National Geographic, June 1996

^{iv} Chavez Chavez, Jose Antonio, La Erupcion del Volcan Misti, Zenit, Arequipa, Peru, 1993.

^v Poma de Ayala, Huaman Felipe, *Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno*, Inst. D'Ethnologie, Paris, 1936

^{vi} de Molina, Cristobal, see *Narratives of The Rites and Laws of the Yncas* - Clements Markham, Editor. The Hakluyt Society, London 1873 Molina p.45 in relation to the November festival, sometime after 14th day, "Those who had to take part in the *taqui* (musical event?) wore red skirts, with red and white fringes, reaching to the feet. They called these shirts *puca-caychu-uncu*. The *taqui* was called *coyo*."

^{vii} Dransart, Penny, Elemental Meanings: Symbolic Expression in Inka Miniature Figurines - Institute of Latin American Studies, London. 1995

^{viii} Desrosiers, Sophie, "An Interpretation of Technical Weaving Data Found in an Early 17th-Century Chronicle," The Junius B. Bird Conference on Andean Textiles, The Textile Museum, Washington DC. 1986

^{ix} Huaman Poma de Ayala, Felipe, op cit

^x Principe, Hernandez R. "Mitologia Andina," Inca Vol. 1, pp25-68, 1923 [1621]