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The Social Fabric: Deep Local to Pan Global

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The Rayed Head and Stepped Platform: A Core Symbol of the Southern Andean Iconographic Series¹

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The southern Andes, which includes far southern Peru, western Bolivia, northern Chile, and northwestern Argentina, is the focus of a reclaimed interpretive model that views the region as an interaction sphere of cultural relationships across long distances and time periods.² This approach identifies a core set of symbols – the Rayed Head, Staff God, and Profile Attendants – that appear on a wide range of objects throughout the southern Andes. This complex of images and decorative art has been named the Southern Andean Iconographic Series, or SAIS, and this paper focuses on one of those symbols, the Rayed Head.³ The author proposes that its manifestation in association with the stepped platform is a variation of this complex.

The Southern Andes

¹ I am grateful to Ann Peters for sharing information about her “Traveling Rayed Head” essay before its publication in *Images and Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, and to Randi Danforth, the Publications Director of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, for providing review copies of both Peters’ and Joerg Haeberli’s chapters. Their ground-breaking research has greatly informed the content of this paper, but any errors are mine.

² William H. Isbell, “Introduction: Social Interactions in the Southern Andes,” in *Images in Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, ed. William H. Isbell, et. al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 3. Isbell states that what defines the southern Andes are “sociotechnic” and “ideotechnic” artifacts that are tools of social interaction, *Ibid.*, 1.

³ Isbell, “Introduction,” 3. The earliest known example of the Rayed Head in the southern Andes occurs on an incised clay wall at the site of Animas Altas in the Ica Valley, and dates from Ocucaje phase 9, circa 350 B.C.E., Sarah A. Massey, “Social and Political Leadership in the Lower Ica Valley: Ocucaje Phases 8 and 9,” in *Paracas Art & Architecture: Object and Context in South Coastal Peru*, ed. Anne Paul (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 323–326.

Numerous scholars have examined the motif, which is referred to as the Rayed Head because the headband or crown has radiating appendages that encircle the head.⁴ Ann Peters has written the most extensively about the motif, focusing primarily on textiles, although she also discusses ceramics and gold objects.⁵ She traces the occurrence of the image on the south coast, along with its associated manifestation, the Oculate Being, among the Paracas, Nasca, and Topará cultures, and compares them to representations in the altiplano regions of Arequipa and the Lake Titicaca Basin. Karen Mohr Chávez and Sergio Chávez have examined various manifestations of the Rayed Head and other motifs on stone sculptures at various sites in the Titicaca Basin such as Pucara, and have associated them with the Yaya-Mama Religious Tradition, a movement that unified a number of diverse groups and laid the foundation for the later Tiwanaku style.⁶ Joerg Haeberli has written about the Rayed Head motif, which he also refers to as the Front-Face Deity, in a recently recognized textile tradition that he identified as Sigvas 1, 2, and 3 based upon iconography, style, color sequences, weaving techniques, and, when available, radiocarbon dates.⁷ This textile tradition is located in the Sihuas River Valley in the department of Arequipa, Peru, and the Rayed Head is the dominant symbol on Sigvas 1 textiles. The Rayed Head is also the principal figure in another textile tradition identified by Haeberli and named Provincial Pucara, also located in the department of Arequipa. These two textile traditions – Sigvas 1 and Provincial Pucara – are the focus of this paper, which examines the Rayed Head motif in association with stepped platforms.

On these textiles, the Rayed Heads and their associated secondary figures represent supernatural beings because they have some or all of the following attributes: vertically divided eyes, tearlines, crossed fangs, open mouths showing teeth, a crown with appendages ending in different motifs, wings on beings other than birds, human hands or feet on animals, and human heads on animal bodies. The association of the Rayed Head and the stepped platform is a variation of the Rayed Head form, which together with other core symbols, continued to be used

⁴ Joerg Haeberli, “Front-Face Deity Motifs and Themes in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series,” in *Images in Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, ed. William H. Isbell, et. al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 143.

⁵ Ann Peters, “Travels of a Rayed Head: Imagery, Fiber, Structure and Connotations of Early Textiles from the South Central Andes,” *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* 409 (2002); and “Travels of a Rayed Head: Textile Movement and the Concepts of Center and Periphery in the Southern Andes,” in *Images in Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, ed. William H. Isbell, et. al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018).

⁶ Sergio Jorge Chávez and Karen Lynne Mohr Chávez, “A Carved Stela from Taraco, Puno, Peru, and the Definition of an Early Style of Stone Sculpture from the Altiplano of Peru and Bolivia,” *Nawpa Pacha: Journal of Andean Archaeology* 13 (1975): 45–83; K. Chávez, “The Significance of Chiripa in Lake Titicaca Basin Developments,” *Expedition Magazine* 30, no. 3 (1988): 17–26; S. Chávez, “The Yaya-Mama Religious Tradition as an Antecedent of Tiwanaku” in *Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez (Lincoln and London: Denver Art Museum and University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 70–93; and S. Chávez, “Identification, Definition, and Continuities of the Yaya-Mama Religious Tradition in the Titicaca Basin” in *Images in Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, ed. William H. Isbell, et. al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 17–49.

⁷ Joerg Haeberli, “Tiempo y tradición en Arequipa, Peru, y el surgimiento de la cronología del tema de la deidad central” in *Boletín de Arqueología PUCP* 5 (2001): 89–137; Joerg Haeberli, “Sigvas 1: A Newly Identified Early Horizon Culture, Department of Arequipa, Peru” in *Textile Society of America Proceedings* 521 (2002): 252; and Haeberli, “Front-Face Deity.”

throughout the later Middle Horizon Period at the site of Tiwanaku in western Bolivia. The time period encompasses the late Early Horizon through the Early Intermediate Period, approximately 350 B.C.E. to 545 C.E., based upon a few have radiocarbon dates. Most of the textiles illustrated in this paper lack provenience.

This period in the southern Andean region was characterized by the rise of independent states such as the Nasca culture on the south coast and the Pucara culture in the altiplano, just northwest of Lake Titicaca. Less is known about the people who lived in the coastal river valleys of the Arequipa region in the far south of Peru. It is likely that settlements were small due to the geography, which is characterized by deep canyons formed by rivers, and plateaus of grasslands rising thousands of feet above sea level. A combination of terraced agriculture and llama and alpaca herding were likely the primary means of subsistence, and caravans of llamas were used to transport goods over great distances and facilitate the exchange of ideas.⁸

Siguas 1 Textiles

Haeberli has suggested that the Provincial Pucara culture introduced the theme of the Rayed Head atop a three-step platform,⁹ but it is my contention that stepped platforms in association with Rayed Heads occur even earlier in Siguas 1 textiles, which date from about 350 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.¹⁰ Siguas 1 textiles are square or rectangular, and are characterized by a linear

*Mantle (Group A), 100 B.C.E.-300 C.E.
Southern Highlands, Peru
Camelid fiber, 43 5/16 × 58 1/16 in. (110 × 147.5 cm)
Museo de América, Madrid, 2002/05/248*

*Mantle (Group A), 350 B.C.E.-120 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 47 5/8 × 63 3/4 in. (121 × 161.9 cm)
Private collection (New York)*

style that is often highly abstract. The Rayed Heads are rectangular in shape and framed by a band from which eight, zig-zagging and straight appendages emerge, one from each corner and one from the middle of each side. The faces have zig-zag or stepped tearlines below the eyes, and eyebrows and a nose that form a capital T or I. The mouth may be represented by a rectangle, three squares, or not at all. There are often smaller, secondary figures including human beings, anthropomorphic animals, snakes, and enigmatic figures with a cross- or I-shaped body and perpendicular zig-zag lines suggesting wings. These enigmatic figures may represent insects,

⁸ Isbell, "Introduction," 1–2.

⁹ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity Motifs," 166.

¹⁰ Haeberli, "Siguas 1," 252.

birds or plants. There are always snakes with zig-zag bodies in the space between the horizontal and diagonal appendages.¹¹ These snakes can be single or double-headed, and sometimes they look like they have ears.¹² Snakes are an important element on Sigwas 1 and Provincial Pucara textiles, which will be discussed later.

*Panel (Group B), 206 B.C.E.- 116 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 35 1/16 × 39 3/8 in. (89 × 100 cm)
Private collection, from Haeblerli 2001, fig. 12*

Sigwas 1 weaving techniques are highly varied and include discontinuous interlocking warp and weft, interlocking tapestry, cross-looping, balanced plain weave, sprang, and tie-dye, but only one technique was used exclusively for textiles depicting the Rayed Head motif: discontinuous double interlocking warp and weft. This technique was used for mantles, tunics, and rectangular textiles with corner ties such as the one illustrated above.¹³ The function of these textiles is unknown because none have been scientifically excavated, but they were likely used for hanging or burial since it is hard to imagine how they would have been worn.¹⁴ The fibers are always camelid with a twist that is 2Z into S or 2S into Z.¹⁵ Discontinuous double interlocking warp and weft is used to create pure color areas, and is one of the most demanding weaving techniques because the warp and weft threads discontinue or change with every color.¹⁶ The deliberate use of this difficult technique to produce complex designs, and the discovery of at least 80 textiles to date, testifies to the sophistication and skill of Sigwas 1 weavers. Textiles were

¹¹ Haeblerli, "Front-Face Deity Motifs," 161.

¹² On late Early Horizon stone monuments in the Titicaca basin, these snakes are referred to as eared serpents, Arik Ohnstad and John W. Janusek, "The Development of 'Tiwanaku Style' out of the Ideological and Political-Economic Landscapes of the Formative Period Titicaca Basin," paper presented at the Southern Andean Iconographic Series: A Colloquium in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology (Santiago, Chile, March 15-17, 2007), 10.

¹³ Haeblerli, "Tiempo y tradición," 96.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Haeblerli, "Front-Face Deity," 161 and "Tiempo y tradición," 96.

¹⁶ Elena Phipps, *The Peruvian Four-Selvaged Cloth: Ancient Threads/New Directions* (Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California, 2013), 59.

also the dominant form of artistic expression because no decorated pottery has been found in the Sihuas Valley.¹⁷

*Siguas 1 Mantle (Group A or B), 100 B.C.E.-300 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 45 11/16 × 71 5/8 in. (116 × 182 cm)
Israel Museum, B02.1620*

*Siguas 1 Panel (Group C), 100 B.C.E.- 300 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 50 × 55 7/8 in. (127 × 142 cm)
Private collection, from Haeblerli 2001, fig. 13*

Siguas 1 Rayed Heads can be divided into three groups, A, B and C, based upon appendage style, background color, and secondary figures. There are two kinds of appendages: groups A and B are split at the end and recurve in opposite directions (see textile on the left), and group C ends in a square or rectangle, except for the horizontal appendages that do not have a specific ending (see textile on the right).¹⁸ These two textiles also illustrate a double-sided head in which the eyebrows, nose and mouth become a capital I, and the two sets of eyes are connected by zig-zag tearlines. This design, in which the faces are bilateral horizontally and vertically, appears in Group B and becomes popular in Group C, creating a face that is barely discernable.¹⁹

Rayed Head groups are also differentiated by background color. Group A is usually white and sometimes red, and a human figure with raised arms is placed between the vertical and horizontal appendages or along the garment's vertical borders (see mantle above left). The background color of Group B ranges from blue to dark blue, but is sometimes red, and the space between the appendages is more crowded. The background color of group C is hardly visible due to crowding by secondary designs. In this group, human figures are infrequent and the background is filled with zig-zags and other lines (see panel above right).²⁰

¹⁷ Haeblerli, "Tiempo y tradición," 97; Haeblerli, "Front-Face Deity," 156, 160. Haeblerli's surface finds also included incised canes and pyro-engraved gourds but these objects had different designs.

¹⁸ Haeblerli, "Front-Face Deity," 161.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

Stepped Platforms on Sigwas 1 Textiles

Details of two previously illustrated Sigwas 1 textiles showing stepped platforms and sacred chambers with snakes and human figures.

I was able to examine a Sigwas 1 textile in a private collection in New York City, which is the textile on the above left. The cream-colored background in natural camelid fiber accentuates the bold designs in red, blue and brown, and I was struck by how the diagonal appendages create pyramid-shaped spaces on all four sides of the Rayed Head (see details above). I believe these spaces reference a sacred or ritual chamber that could be architectural or located in the supernatural realm. In addition, the lateral appendages are often unconnected to the head's rectangular frame and become a type of interior wall within the sacred chambers that enclose human and/or enigmatic figures. These figures could be supernatural beings or ritual attendants.

Detail showing three snakes: two descending the sides of the stepped platform and one along the base.

*Sigwas 1 Mantle (Group A or B)
Israel Museum, B02.1620*

On the numbered areas above, the presence of snakes depicted frontally adjacent to the diagonal appendages, and in profile at the end of the lateral ones, is evidence for the sacred nature of the space, and is possibly a fertility reference that ties the worship of the Rayed Head to ceremonies focusing on the sun, the agricultural cycle, camelid herding, and the importance of water.

The following Provincial Pucara textiles show a more explicit connection between sacred chambers and snakes, as well as the realistic representation of the Rayed Head in association with the Stepped Platform.

Provincial Pucara Textiles

Provincial Pucara textiles are constructed of camelid fibers in the interlocked tapestry weave technique, sometimes with paired warps. Due to similarities with Pucara iconography, Haeberli named this textile tradition Provincial Pucara because Arequipa is far from the Pucara heartland in the Titicaca Basin.²¹ This relationship with the type-site of Pucara is not farfetched because there is possible evidence of population movement in the presence of Pucara-style stone sculptures as far north as the province of Chumbivilcas in the department of Cuzco.²² Pucara people could have also migrated westward and settled in Arequipa, where they produced tapestry woven textiles depicting the Rayed Head on top of a three-step platform.²³ To date, it is not possible to identify where Provincial Pucara textiles were made or the scope of their distribution because none have been excavated in archaeological contexts, however their good state of preservation suggests burial in dry alluvial terraces or placement in cold and dry highland caves.²⁴

Three Provincial Pucara Rayed Head themes, designated A, B and C, appear on tunics. They all have vertically-divided eyes surrounded by a red band, tearlines, and crowns with radiating appendages encircling the head.²⁵ Variations are based upon the number and type of appendage; the number, arrangement, and orientation of the attendant figures; and decorative elements on the Rayed Head itself such as a dark rectangle on the chin, possibly representing a labret, or designs on the crown band that are S forms or interlocking frets.²⁶ On each textile, the corner appendages end in the same animal head, which is topped by two L-shaped projections resembling antennae. In fact, all animal and human attendant figures have these antennae, perhaps one of their supernatural attributes.

²¹ Haeberli, "Tiempo y tradición," 116.

²² S. Chávez suggests that these migrations occurred after the abandonment of two important Pucara settlements in the area of Pucara, "Archaeological Reconnaissance in the Province of Chumbivilcas, South Highland Peru," *Expedition Magazine* 30, no. 3 (1988): 37.

²³ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity Motifs," 166. It is also possible that textiles were already being produced at Pucara, but they didn't survive.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity," 167.

²⁶ Ibid.

*Provincial Pucara Tunic, 135-435 C.E.
Peru or Chile
Camelid fiber, dims. Unknown
Private collection, Reproduced from Tiwanaku:
Ancestors of the Inca (fig. 5.7). © 2004 Denver Art
Museum, All Rights Reserved*

*Provincial Pucara Shoulder Panel, 130-421 C.E.
Vicinity of Cochate, Majes Valley, Arequipa, Peru
Camelid fiber, 23 1/4 x 29 1/2 in. (59 x 75 cm)
Private collection, From Haeberli 2001: Fig. 30*

The tunic on the above left illustrates the position of the shoulder panels, which have the same iconography as the individual shoulder panel on the right. The panel allegedly comes from the vicinity of Cochate in the Majes Valley, and has a radiocarbon date of 130-421 C.E. The tunic has no provenience but it has a radiocarbon date of 135-435 C.E., so both textiles are contemporaneous. Haeberli designates the iconography as Rayed Head Theme A because it has sixteen radiating appendages including eight that resemble feathers; six attendant figures; a nose in the form of a small female head; and a crown band decorated with repeating S motifs. The six attendant figures flanking the central head are similar, yet smaller frontal heads that are stacked one above the other. Below the central head is a three-step platform containing a frontal female head, and the first step is flanked on both sides by a profile human head with tearlines and wearing a tall crown.²⁷ The multiple representations of female heads on this tunic and panel suggest an association with female deity veneration.

*Shoulder Panel, ca. 30-545 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 19 1/4 x 30 1/2 in. (48.9 x 77.5 cm)
Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,
1994.203*

*Shoulder Panel, ca. 30-545 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 20 1/2 x 28 7/8 in. (52.1 x 73.3 cm)
Private Collection (New York)*

²⁷ Haeberli, "Tiempo y tradición," 117.

*Shoulder Panel, ca. 30-545 C.E.
Camelid fiber, no dims.
Private collection, Reproduced from Tiwanaku: Ancestors of
the Inca (fig. 1.9). © 2004 Denver Art Museum, All Rights
Reserved*

The three panels above are similar in iconography and represent Rayed Head Theme B. None of them have provenience, although Haeberli suspects they are from Arequipa. There are no radiocarbon dates so they have been assigned the temporal range of Provincial Pucara, which is 30 to 545 C.E. All three Rayed Heads have 24 appendages ending in rings and crown bands decorated with interlocking frets. The different colored faces have vertically-divided eyes; a T-shaped nose and eyebrows with an indentation at the top; tearlines with three concentric rectangles or circles probably representing tears; an open mouth showing teeth; and a dark rectangle on the chin. The three-step platform has a concentric rectangle in the center from which emerge four yellow and red striped bands forming a cross. Profile heads with forked tongues flank the first step, and the horizontal yellow and red band inside the platform becomes their snake-like body. On all three panels, a snake-like creature is associated with the stepped platform and its interior chamber. The attendant figures face the Rayed Head and have full bodies shown in profile, wings, vertically-divides eyes, and antennae, all attributes of their supernatural status.²⁸ Mythical beings like these with divided eyes, tearlines, antennae, and forked tongues are seen on Pucara decorated pottery from the Titicaca Basin.²⁹ All figures have three fingers and three toes, and some of them are partly outlined in white.

I was able to examine two of these Provincial Pucara shoulder panels. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston example has paired warps and is woven in two parts that are joined down the center. The panel has ten attendant figures: eight are birds, probably condors, and two are human figures with bird bodies and hands that grasp a conch shell.³⁰ The bird figures are standing while the human/bird figures are kneeling or running toward the principal figure. Two smaller avian figures flank the platform. All bird figures have an appendage coming out of their chests that

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ John Howland Rowe and Catherine Terry Brandel, "Pucara Style Pottery Designs," *Nawpa Pacha: Journal of Andean Archaeology* 7/8 (1969–70): Plate IX, Fig. 30.

³⁰ Haeberli refers to these objects as snails but it is more likely that they are large conch or *Strombus* shells brought from the Pacific Ocean and used as trumpets, which explains why some attendant figures hold them in front of their mouths, Chávez, "The Yaya-Mama Religious Tradition," 81.

ends in an animal head, while the human/bird figures have plant-like appendages, also emerging from their chests.

The second shoulder panel, which is in a New York private collection, was framed so I was unable to examine it closely. It has eight large attendant figures and they are, from top to bottom: an anthropomorphic fish, a man holding a conch shell, and a bird. The figures of the anthropomorphic fish and man are kneeling or running toward the Rayed Head, while the two birds are standing. The two fox-like creatures flanking the platform are also in a kneeling or running pose, with their bodies facing the platform while their heads face backwards toward the other attendants.

The third shoulder panel, which is published in Young-Sánchez, is also in a private collection. There are ten winged-attendant figures, eight facing the Rayed Head, and two flanking the stepped platform. The attendants from top to bottom represent an anthropomorphic fish, a bird, a man holding a conch shell, and a condor. The two attendants next to the platform are deer with antlers, representing the taruca, a deer indigenous to the Andean region.³¹

Provincial Pucara Tunic Fragment, 200-400 C.E.
Peru
Camelid fiber, 7 1/2 x 10 1/2 (19.05 x 26.67cm)
Yale University Art Gallery, ILE2017.5.151

A small tunic fragment of interlocked tapestry weave in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery includes a partial shoulder panel depicting a Rayed Female Feline Head. The sections that would have had the stepped platform and the left-side attendant figures are missing. This is a different Rayed Head theme with elements that are not present on the other panels. The feline head is female due to the inverted U-shaped mouth, which is seen on feline heads represented on Pucara-style pottery.³² The crown band is composed of linked concentric rectangles and the appendages are unusual. The top center tuft has two checkered crosses below, and it is flanked by plants, possibly blooming cacti. The feathered appendages at the sides end in bird heads with antennae, and the corner appendages consist of a band of linked rectangles that splits in two, one end terminating in a frontal feline head and the other in a profile feline head with a stepped-fret body. There are three female feline attendant figures with profile bodies and

³¹ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity," 167.

³² Ibid., 169; S. Chávez, "Identification of the Camelid Woman and Feline Man," in *Andean Archaeology II: Art, Landscape, and Society*, eds. Helaine Silverman and William H. Isbell (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2002), 50.

frontal heads. They have checkered crosses on their bodies, and a striped cord around their necks ending in rings, both motifs seen on Pucara decorated pottery.³³

Tunic, 337-414 C.E.
Peru or Chile
Camelid fiber, 48 × 74¼ in. (121.9 × 188.6 cm)
Private collection, Reproduced from *Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca* (fig. 2.26a). © 2004 Denver Art Museum, All Rights Reserved

Detail of Staff Goddess on the tunic's shoulder panels. From Haeberli 2018: Fig. 6.11.

On the striking and densely-packed tunic above, the Rayed Head and stepped platform motif is not on the shoulder panels but occupies the entire center of the garment's two sides. The piece is referred to as the Gateway Tunic because its iconography resembles the imagery on the Gateway of the Sun at Tiwanaku, however the textile's provenience is unknown. Based on its iconography, scholars have speculated that it is Provincial Pucara or Tiwanaku, a debate that was not resolved by the two recent radiocarbon dates that confirmed it was made sometime between 337-414 C.E., dates that coincide with both cultures.³⁴

This tunic has all three core symbols that make up the Southern Andean Iconographic Series: the Rayed Head, Staff God, and Profile Attendants. All figures have vertically-divided eyes and other attributes signifying their supernatural status. The Rayed Head has twenty-four appendages – twenty ending in rings and four in profile animal heads – and the crown band is decorated with interlocking frets. The face has vertically-divided eyes outlined in red; a T-shaped nose and eyebrows; tearlines with three concentric rectangles; and an open mouth showing teeth. The three-stepped platform is tall and narrow and has concentric rectangles in the center from which emerge four yellow and red striped bands, the horizontal one becoming the zig-zag body of two profile snake heads with forked tongues that are located on the bottom step. The bodies of two attendant winged animals face the platform, but their heads turn toward the eighteen human figures arranged in three rows around the Rayed Head. These standing, frontal, attendant figures

³³ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity," 169; Rowe and Brandel, "Pucara Style Pottery," Plates XIV and XVII.

³⁴ Margaret Young-Sánchez, "Tapestry Tunic" in *Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez, (Denver, Co. and Lincoln, NE: Denver Art Museum and University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 46–49; Jim Blackmon personal communication.

are women based upon their long tunics and mantles.³⁵ They wear tall and elaborate crown headdresses, and hold a variety of objects in their outstretched hands.

The Staff God on the shoulder panels is a Staff Goddess, identified by her long, belted tunic, mantle, and ear pendants (see detail above). Her crown has a tuft appendage and two checkered crosses in the center with additional animal head and bird appendages.³⁶ She holds a red and black striped, double-headed snake staff in each hand, and stands inside an architectural enclosure, facing a doorway that is flanked by anthropomorphic winged feline heads. Above her, the perspective changes and two running figures holding a staff in one hand and possibly a conch shell in the other face the building's entrance. They do not have wings, but they have antennae. Notice the three appendages ending in bird heads that emerge from each side of the building;³⁷ they resemble the snake-like creatures seen inside and outside of the sacred, ritual chambers depicted on Sigüas 1 and Provincial Pucara textiles.

*Pucara Headdress Ornament, 200 B.C.E.– 400 C.E.
Cuzco, Peru
Hammered gold, 2 ½ x 5 in. (6.4 x 12.7 cm)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984.14*

*Detail of gold ornament showing
the interior ritual chamber with
large animal heads flanking the
entrance.*

Architectural structures/ritual chambers associated with the Rayed Head motif are also seen in other media such as the hammered and incised gold headdress ornament above, attributed to the Pucara culture. It was reportedly found in Cuzco in the mid-19th century and dates from about 200 B.C.E. to 400 C.E.³⁸ It depicts a supernatural feline figure with a frontal face surrounded by radiating appendages that terminate in animal heads or divided circles. The feline's body is in profile, and its human hands grasp a bundle of some sort. The incised scene below centers around a circular structure with large animal heads at the entrance. Inside, there

³⁵ Haeberli, "Front-Face Deity," 170.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 170-171.

³⁸ Margaret Young-Sánchez, "Ornamented Gold Plume" in *Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca*, ed. Margaret Young-Sánchez (Denver, Co. and Lincoln, NE: Denver Art Museum and University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 94–95.

are four spotted animals, probably llamas or alpacas, and outside there are three large human figures in profile, holding staffs and with two llamas or alpacas tethered near the entrance of the building. Earlier, I mentioned that Pucara people migrated north to the region of Chumbivilcas in the department of Cuzco. This population may be associated with the ornament, which could have been transported from the Pucara homeland or made locally by the newcomers.³⁹ The circular, central chamber inside the building could be a sunken temple or terraced platform; both architectural features are present at the site of Pucara.⁴⁰ In any event, this chamber recalls the stepped platforms seen on Sigwas 1 and Provincial Pucara textiles.

The Rayed Head is one of the core symbols of the Southern Andean Iconographic Series, and its manifestation in association with a stepped platform is a variation of this complex. A closer look at the iconography of Sigwas 1 textiles reveals that a stepped platform or ritual chamber may be embedded in the Rayed Head motif. Unlike Provincial Pucara depictions in which elements of the iconography can be traced to artifacts found at the type site of Pucara in the Titicaca Basin, no centers of Sigwas 1 culture have yet been found, much less undisturbed funerary sites that could provide more information. For both cultures, textiles were the dominant form of artistic expression for conveying symbolic content that was deeply local, and they developed distinctive styles for depicting the Rayed Head in labor-intensive techniques that underscored its cultural and religious significance. While only conjecture, the images and exquisite garments on which they were produced were likely associated with the life-giving power of the sun and rain, which were needed for agriculture and the fertility of camelid herds.

³⁹ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth A. Klarich and Cecilia Chávez Justo, "Late formative Period Ceramics from Pukara: Insights from Excavations on the Central Pampa," in *Images in Action in the Southern Andean Iconographic Series*, eds. William H. Isbell, et. al. (Los Angeles: UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2018), 56.

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