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Wrap the Dead : The funerary textile tradition from the Osmore Valley, South Peru, and its social-political implications

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12 – CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, a selection of the archaeological textiles from the Osmore drainage has been presented. In all, 586 textile specimens were analysed from the Chen Chen site in the middle Osmore valley, and from La Cruz, El Descanso, Algodonal Ladera and Boca del Río in the lower valley. These textiles originated from mortuary contexts, even though many of them had been found on the surface due to the severe looting of these sites.

The aims of this study were twofold. Firstly, to introduce archaeological textiles in the on going discussion on the cultural identity of the inhabitants of the lower Osmore valley during the peak of the Tiwanaku state influence over the South Central Andean region and immediately after (about A.D. 900-1000). Secondly, to explore the potential of this textile evidence in the reconstruction of the social-political organization of an extinct society, on intra- and intersite level in the Osmore valley, as well as in the valleys beyond. This line of evidence is not commonly used in archaeological studies, even when the organic preservation allows it. That is unfortunate, as ethnographic studies have shown that Andean indigenous communities still consider their clothing style to be their paramount identity marker, while archaeological studies have revealed that garments are the most informative type of artefacts one can hope to recover inside the mortuary context in this region (see Paragraph 1.1).

TEXTILE ANALYSIS AND CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION

Multiple lines of archaeological evidence have positively identified the middle Osmore valley as a location of colonization by highlanders under Tiwanaku rule. One of those settlements was Chen Chen, dating from the final Tiwanaku phase (with Tiwanaku V style ceramics), locally known as the Chen Chen phase (A.D. 800-1050) (see Paragraphs 5.4 and 6.5.1). In addition, few settlements from the Wari culture from the Central Peruvian Highlands have been identified in the same stretch of the narrow valley.

In the lower Osmore valley, no such intensive and multidisciplinary archaeological investigations have been undertaken or published yet, except for a valley-wide survey by Owen (1989-1990), so that the opinions of various archaeologists differ on the cultural identity of several of its sites (Paragraphs 5.5 and 6.5.2). The main problem is the distinction between the material culture produced under Tiwanaku state supervision, versus the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza cultural remains that were produced by their direct descendants who, without question, settled in the coastal Osmore valley between A.D. 950 and 1250.

This thesis has mainly focussed on the identification of these two (textile) styles and therefore on the cultural identity of the ancient inhabitants of La Cruz, El Descanso, and Algodonal Ladera. In addition, a cultural tradition known as Chiribaya was concentrated in the lower Osmore valley, and found to be contemporary (A.D. 900 (or earlier)- A.D. 1375) with the final Tiwanaku and Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza cultures. This Chiribaya culture is generally considered to be of highland origin, possibly even a descendant of the Tiwanaku colonies in the western valleys such as the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza population. In this study, however, the hypothesis of Lozada (1998) has been followed, suggesting that the people associated with Chiribaya-style artefacts were genetically closer related to Osmore's Formative and Archaic coastal populations than to highland people such as the Tiwanaku colonists (see Paragraph 6.6). Nonetheless, it is obvious that the Chiribaya derived their knowledge of ceramic and textile production, as well as their burial tradition, from highland cultures, presumably inspired through their trade with the Formative Pukara culture (500 B.C.-A.D. 500) and with the later Tiwanaku colonies. The sharing of ideological practices would certainly have facilitated the coexistence in the Osmore valley of the agro-maritime Chiribaya population with agro-pastoral Tiwanaku and Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza groups originating from the highlands.

In order to determine the identity of the inhabitants of these lower Osmore sites, the textile material itself, their contextual data and previous archaeological studies were examined. The contextual data, however, lacked the required details or were unavailable all together, so that the data from previous textile studies from the Osmore valley and the wider region had to be used as well. The textile collections would have been produced according to culture-specific and conservative choices, so that the isolation of their stylistic features in time and space would point to a particular group of people, and thus would serve as useful comparative material (see Paragraph 2.2). Studies on the textile traditions from the Tiwanaku, Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza and Chiribaya cultures proved to be hard to find due to lack of publication or for the limited distribution of the local journals, so that a summary of the textile characteristics of each of these three cultures has been included in this thesis (Chapter 7). Obviously, the most useful collection of comparative textiles in the search after Tiwanaku settlements in the lower Osmore valley came from the Tiwanaku colonists buried at Chen Chen's cemeteries that were excavated in two separate, multidisciplinary campaigns (1987-1988 and 1995). A selection of the textiles from both campaigns was analysed by the author. These textiles were considered to be representative for the types of garments worn by the colonists from the Tiwanaku highlands (A.D. 800-1050).

The daily outfit of the Chen Chen people proved to be the *camisa* (sleeveless tunic), a rather crude, square or rectangular shaped garment, made by the rapidly advancing warp-faced plain weave structure in camelid wool. Mantas (mantles) and pañuelos (small cloths) were found to be common grave gifts, whereas headgear, sandals, *ch'uspas* (coca bags) or other bags were not (see Paragraph 8.3). Textiles produced according to Tiwanaku state controlled standards as identified by Oakland (1986a), Conklin (1983) and others have been found in very small quantities at El Descanso and Algodonal Ladera in the lower Osmore valley, and concerned mantas and pañuelos (see Paragraphs 7.2, 8.5, and 8.6). The structural and ornamental features of the remaining textiles from El Descanso were found to agree with the stylistic preferences of the Ilo-Tumilaca tradition, whereas most of the textiles from Algodonal Ladera closely resembled the cruder Ilo-Cabuza style

which is believed to eventually have replaced the Ilo-Tumilaca style (Owen 1993). Camisas still formed the bulk of the textiles, mantas and pañuelos were common and by now the *ch'uspa* and *bolsa faja* had been introduced. This led the author to interpret the Tiwanaku cloths from these two sites as family heirlooms and not as evidence of Tiwanaku settlements. Guarding ceremonial textile bundles (*señal q'epi*) in a family or office for generations is a custom still practised among indigenous people from both Bolivia and Peru (see Paragraph 4.10). In addition, one tomb and its textiles from El Descanso have been interpreted as Chiribaya, suggesting that the Ilo-Tumilaca people allowed some Chiribaya intrusions in their cemetery area, and possibly in the domestic area as well. No Chiribaya intrusion was apparent among the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza burials of Algodonal Ladera.

The Boca del Río *camisa* had been especially selected for its exceptional Tiwanaku-style features (see Paragraph 8.7). It had been found with Chiribaya-style artefacts at the Late Chiribaya coastal site of Boca del Río (also known as San Gerónimo) and probably was an heirloom as well. This specimen combined Tiwanaku-style figurative decoration and dovetailed tapestry structure (also found in mantas from Chen Chen) with the unique Chiribaya trapezoidal shape. However, the shape of the loom and required weaving structure had been unknown among either culture, as was the composition of two mirrored instead of a single profile figure and the rendering of a llama-like personage. Supposedly, this *camisa* had been made by innovative weavers familiar with the Tiwanaku and the Chiribaya tradition, although import from another region cannot be excluded and the Siguas and Pukara areas have been mentioned in that aspect.

Only the collection from La Cruz contained considerable numbers of fabrics that agreed with the Tiwanaku style as found at Chen Chen (see Paragraph 8.4). However, Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza style garments were common at this site as well, while an equal amount of tombs contained solely Chiribaya-style garments. Camisas were common regardless of cultural context, whereas *bolsa fajas* were restricted to Tiwanaku-like contexts, and the *ch'uspas* to the Chiribaya style. None of the burials was found with a combination of Chiribaya and Tiwanaku or Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza-style textiles.

Next, the author's cultural determinations based on stylistic features of the textiles were compared to the

archaeological field reports of the four sites (Chapter 9). In these reports, El Descanso's tombs, ceramics and textiles had been identified as belonging to the final phase of the Tiwanaku culture and the subsequent Ilo-Tumilaca culture, and no mention is made of Chiribaya-style burials (Carpio 2000; Owen pers. comm. 2004; Salazar 2001). However, the author disagrees with the identification of a final Tiwanaku phase identity, as it would imply the presence of a settlement under Tiwanaku state control. Instead, she believes that El Descanso was inhabited by first generations of Ilo-Tumilaca immigrants who may have brought considerable quantities of portable Tiwanaku-state produced artefacts with them, which may have been cherished as heirlooms by several generations before being disposed of in some tomb. In addition, the early Ilo-Tumilaca potters and weavers would have worked according to culture-specific decisions that only slowly moved away from their ancestral Tiwanaku tradition.

The site of El Algodonal had been excavated by Owen (1989-1990), including its domestic area and its three separate cemeteries, before Algodonal Ladera was excavated in a salvage campaign by Carpio in 2000. The latter forms the eastern-most section of Owen's explored cemeteries. Owen (1993, 104, 266-300) identified all burials from El Algodonal's three cemeteries as belonging to the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza culture, and found not a single Tiwanaku or Chiribaya-style burial. This was remarkable as he found that the Chiribaya had dominated the adjacent domestic area. Boytner (1998, 326) confirmed that the textiles from Algodonal's cemeteries represented solely Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza-style products. Nonetheless, Carpio (2000) identified the Algodonal Ladera tombs and ceramics as belonging to the Tiwanaku culture.

The author found that the textiles from this site indeed resembled the cruder Tiwanaku specimens from Chen Chen, but nonetheless believes these textiles to be of Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza style: the Tiwanaku-like specimens are rather non-descriptive, whereas some outspoken Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza specimens could be identified among this collection. Because these textiles were simpler than those from El Descanso, the author believes them to represent cruder and supposedly poorer and/or more recent Ilo-Cabuza style products. Once more, the few genuine Tiwanaku-like artefacts

could represent heirlooms guarded by the descendants of the Tiwanaku colonists, or conservatively made specimens of a later date.

Although no field reports from La Cruz were available to the author, its excavators Carpio and Guillén verbally confirmed the existence of two segregated sectors at the cemetery, one containing Early Chiribaya-style tombs and artefacts, and the other sector, separated by a straight line, containing Tiwanaku-like artefacts, although not all of them were believed to be original Tiwanaku-state products from the Chen Chen phase (Guillén pers. comm. 2004). In addition, the accessible location of La Cruz was felt to be typical of the Tiwanaku state settlement pattern, leading Carpio (pers. comm. 2004) to conclude that the Tiwanaku colonists had formed an '*active society*' in the lower valley.

The author found that, contrary to the other two lower Osmore sites, the La Cruz cemetery contained a considerable number of what seems to be genuine Tiwanaku state produced artefacts. Without radiocarbon dating, it will remain unclear whether this site represents the home of first generations Ilo-Tumilaca immigrants or indeed colonists sent down to this part of the valley under Tiwanaku state supervision. But as these dates are so close, the answer may never be found.

The excavation reports and textile data show that at all three lower valley sites, the Chiribaya and Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza people were allowed to approach one another very closely. Nonetheless, at all three sites, the two groups observed a clear segregation in the disposal area of their dead and in the dress code in which they sent them to the afterlife. This also became evident in Owen's survey, revealing a mingled settlement pattern without defence structures throughout the lower Osmore valley and even some mixed domestic and cemetery areas, although it was not always clear whether the mixing had been a result of successive occupation or cohabitation (Owen 1993, 17-18).

The conservative use of distinct clothing styles and the absence of mixed styles inside any of the 98 tombs of this study, suggests that the Chiribaya and the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza people considered their differences important despite their peaceful cohabitation. The distinct clothing style agrees with other expressions of unique identity that both groups had maintained: they

had used different styles for their houses, tombs, and ceramics, different dyes for their textiles, and even had slightly dissimilar food preferences (see Paragraphs 6.6, 7.3, 7.4, and 10.6). In this study, the distinctions between the two stylistic groups have been explained as expression of ethnicity, as the material used for ethnic markers had been easily available for all members of a community, including men and women, young and old. It was further argued that the Tiwanaku and their Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza descendants were of altiplano origin, versus the Chiribaya people with a coastal ancestry, and that their feeling of distinctness must have been deep felt to have been maintained for three centuries. It seems remarkable that the Chiribaya allowed large groups of Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza people to enter their closely circumscribed territory without any sign of violence or even defensive behaviour. This suggests that the newcomers had something important to offer to the coastal dwellers. Owen (1993, 92, 125) had identified a 6.7 kilometre long irrigation canal constructed around the time of Ilo-Tumilaca arrival, which seems to have been a joint venture of both groups. The 23 hectares of newly created fields doubled the earlier amount of arable land and they were located high above the floodplain where the agricultural fields had previously been situated, despite the risk of occasional flooding. Presumably these engineering skills had been the asset of the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza people, possibly completed with grants of access to the highlands. The combination of new agricultural techniques, expanding influence in the ever further regions, and the millennia-old maritime exploitation expertise, may have been the reason why the Chiribaya rose to unprecedented population numbers, riches and prestige after Tiwanaku's downfall. In the meanwhile, the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza artistic tradition impoverished until it disappeared all together around A.D. 1250. Presumably its people had been absorbed into the growing Chiribaya population, and/or remigrated to the higher reaches of the Osmore valley where the Estuquiña tradition was rising out of the Tumilaca ashes (see Paragraph 6.7 and 10.6).

TEXTILE ANALYSIS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION OF OSMORE'S PEOPLE

In the Osmore valley, each adult, adolescent, and child had been wrapped by one or more new or worn

garments and buried with a variety of gifts, such as tools, food, and containers. Apparently, each individual had been placed inside their tomb with some personal belongings, suggesting that the mourners had taken care to preserve his or her *social persona* for the afterlife. Those personal belongings allowed a reconstruction of the social-political organization of the Osmore people (see Paragraph 2.6). Therefore, the textiles and their contextual information on the human remains and associated objects had been sifted in Chapter 10 for signs of possible subgroups based on age, sex and/or on status distinction.

It appears that the people from the lower valley had considered the time-consuming or dyed yarn-consuming types of *camisas* (types 3A and 5A/B) too elaborate for children, who would soon outgrow their clothes. Most infants and children had been buried swaddled in *paños* (cloths) cut out of worn adult-sized *camisas*, though some had been buried in child-sized *camisas*. The latter were usually completely plain, or modestly striped in predominant natural colours or in the asymmetrical Chiribaya-style. Only at Chen Chen were two child-sized *camisas* found with embroidered cross-knit loop plaques that would have required extra time to produce. The nine identified adolescents of this study had likewise been excluded from the time and dyed yarn-consuming *camisas* types. This differential clothing style was explained as indicative of the presence of broad age groups that are believed to have had some regulating power in the Osmore communities (see Paragraph 10.3).

Although the number of registered sex-identified individuals was minimal at all lower Osmore sites and absent altogether for the Chen Chen site, it did become clear that both sexes from the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza-style contexts had been buried in *camisas* with a similar variety of forms, designs, and fineness. Because the sizes of the garments agreed with the length of the buried individuals and because most *camisas* showed evidence of wear, they are thought to have been worn by the men and women in life as well in death. Not only the garments, but also the hairstyles appear to have been largely similar for men and women, so that neither men nor women would have drawn more attention through their appearance. Thus the unisex attire and hairstyle were interpreted as the expression of a more or less

equal participation of the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza men and women in public life. Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether the unisex dress code had already been en vogue among the Tiwanaku colonists of the middle Osmore valley, although the unisex garments from the Tiwanaku colony at San Pedro de Atacama suggests it was. Such emancipated society would have been rather unusual among Andean cultures, but not unique. Unfortunately, the Chiribaya individuals were too young and too few in number to trace sex-distinguished clothing style, although Buikstra (1995, 259) claimed such gender distinction expressed in Chiribaya shirts, headgear and belts. Obviously, more individuals will need to be sex-identified before it is possible to make a firm statement in this matter. Nonetheless, the suggestion by the textile evidence of a fundamentally different social-political organization of these two populations is an interesting topic of future research.

Other types of fabric, however, were found to be gender-biased at all sites: textiles found with females or unidentified individuals, but never with positively identified males, were pañuelos, bolsa fajas, fajas and cintas, whereas textiles associated with males and not with females were taparrabos, ponchos, and ch'uspas. It is interesting that up to today, similar gender-related distribution of extant textile types can be observed in the Andean communities. Both sexes received food offerings and a variety of other objects, but none of these represented recognizable craft-related objects suggestive of some gender-determined tasks (see Paragraph 10.4).

Finally, the textiles and their contextual data were scrutinized for evidence of accumulated wealth or special status, both on intrasite as intersite level (see 10.5). On intrasite level, no specific artefact stood out as symbol of some higher social position, in the form of special attire, decorations of precious metals or some exotic material, and/or a ceremonial staff used in traditional Andean communities. In addition, no general distinction in social status could be observed between the men and women's total grave gifts. These counted about two to four textile specimens each plus an equal number of non-textile gifts. Some individuals had been buried with little more material wealth, which was considered to have symbolized the presence of a subtly graded social organization of achieved positions at most.

No obvious status differences were noticeable on intersite level, either. The Chen Chen colony of the mighty Tiwanaku empire had not buried their dead with more or qualitatively better artefacts. The apparent absence of high ranking Tiwanaku state representatives among these buried colonists is believed to be more related to the selective looting of the cemeteries and the possible practice of secondary burial of select individuals in the Tiwanaku core area, than to an actual absence of Tiwanaku state hierarchy in its colonies. Interesting is that those individuals buried at the southern cemeteries of the Chen Chen site excavated in the 1995 campaign, had been buried with double the amount of textiles compared to the people buried in the northeastern cemeteries excavated in 1987-1988, pointing to subtle differences in wealth and/or in the intention of the mourners. Such differential burial practices seem suggestive of a rather heterogeneous nature of the Tiwanaku colonists, as had been observed at the type site itself (Janusek 2002, 51-55).

A similar observation was made at La Cruz, where the Chiribaya people had buried their dead with twice as many gifts as the Tiwanaku-like people buried at the adjacent part of the cemetery. The difference was even more remarkable as most of Chiribaya's mummy bundles contained small children. The majority of the Chiribaya textiles were formed by second hand wrappings and the associated items usually consisted of simple food stuffs, Chiribaya's grave gifts were not considered as an expression of more wealth or of higher social standing, but rather of differential burial tradition.

The quantity of El Descanso's boldly decorated type 5A and 5B camisas was felt to have been imbued with some prestige, supposedly related to the *primer inter pares* position of El Descanso, lying at the foot of elite site of Chiribaya Alta and at the easy access for llama caravans to the coastal valley.

Interestingly, the only artefacts suggestive of craft specialization were found inside infant burials from the Chiribaya sector of La Cruz. Miniature rafts and oars were interpreted as symbols of specialization in maritime exploitation of (one of) the parents or perhaps of all Chiribaya members of this site, as opposed to the Tiwanaku and Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza agropastoral societies.

INTERREGIONAL COMPARISON OF TEXTILE TRADITIONS

The final objective of this thesis was to broaden the horizon of Andean archaeological textile studies that tend to limit themselves to one small region. In this thesis, the textile studies from various coastal valleys in the South Central Andean region were compared, in order to assess the cultural and political integration of these people under Tiwanaku influence and immediately after its collapse.

So far, evidence for long-term Tiwanaku colonization has only been found in the middle Osmore valley, the San Pedro de Atacama oasis in modern Chile, and in the Cochabamba area in the lowlands of modern Bolivia (see Paragraph 6.5). No textile studies from the latter area are known to the author. Despite the hundreds of kilometers that separated the Tiwanaku colonists in the former two regions, they shared the same dress code, distinguished only through their different headgear and decoration details (see Paragraph 11.2). These distinction may already have been present in their altiplano homelands, or may have developed in the colonies as expression of their newly acquired regional sub-identity.

The spreading of Tiwanaku influence over distinct ecological zones, with different strategies and impact, forms a good illustration of a typical Andean “vertical” trade network: the Tiwanaku influence reached the areas either directly through their colonies and trade network or indirectly via contacts between the local people and the nearby Tiwanaku colonies. Tiwanaku’s emblematic style elements were, apparently voluntarily, incorporated into the material cultures of the local people, attracted by the growing ideological, political and economic power of the Tiwanaku state. Some groups even went so far as nearly completely imitating the Tiwanaku (material) culture, such as the Cabuza people from the Azapa valley. Eventually, the Azapa valley may have sheltered a small Tiwanaku colony (see Paragraph 11.2.1).

Other autochthonous people are believed to have held on to their regional identity and to have reacted against Tiwanaku’s increasing influence by developing unprecedented levels of their own stylistic expression, such as the Chiribaya culture in the Osmore valley, and the Maytas and San Miguel culture in the Azapa valley. Nonetheless, the source of their artistic skills and stylistic influence is believed to lie in the highland cultures Pukara and

Tiwanaku. Despite the 150 kilometres of desertland separating them, the Chiribaya and Maytas people developed a near identical artistic tradition that reveals close contacts, similar ideological intentions, and supposedly even a sense of shared ethnicity. The Maytas-Chiribaya stylistic expression grew to its full height when the Tiwanaku empire collapsed and its widespread trade network and colonies disintegrated into smaller regional units. The intimate relationship between the Osmore and Azapa valleys reveals that the coastal people considered the “horizontal” maritime contacts much more important than the contacts with the “vertically” distinct ecological zones with its increasingly diverging stylistic traditions, including the Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza and Estuquiña styles.

Like the Osmore valley, the northern Sigüas, Camaná and Acarí valleys near the modern town of Arequipa, allegedly saw the arrival of both Tiwanaku and contemporaneous Wari colonists (see Paragraph 11.2.2). Unlike the Osmore valley, the textile traditions of this area received strongest influence from the Wari culture from the Central Andean highlands to its north. Centuries before, this region already had received strong influence from the Nasca culture, while after the Wari influence had waned, it would adopt Ica-Chincha features, both cultures concentrated to the north of Arequipa. This suggests that its artistic traditions belonged to the Central Andean cultural region more than to the South Central Andean cultural region, unlike the situation in the Osmore valley. Nonetheless, considerable maritime contact is believed to have existed between the Osmore and northern valleys, which found its repercussion in the textile and ‘black-on-red’ ceramic traditions of both areas. No significant distinctions of material wealth were observed between the Late Intermediate Period cultures of the Osmore, Azapa and Arequipa valleys, but further north, the Chincha culture would develop into a mighty society of seafaring merchants reaching the top of their power in Inca times.

Thus, the archaeological textiles have proven to form an important tool in the determination of the cultural identity and social-political structure of the ancient inhabitants of the lower Osmore valley around A.D. 900-1000. Unfortunately, the potential of textiles is too often overlooked in Andean archaeological studies, despite

their often excellent preservation. This is all the more unfortunate, as textiles and their large number of culture-laden production steps were found to be more informative than ceramics that are so easily used as cultural markers. Therefore, the author strongly recommends the Andean archaeologists to include careful textile analyses in their campaigns, and to use a uniform lexicon in their studies to facilitate comparative studies. In addition, the archaeology of the South Central Andean region would benefit from explorations of the valleys immediately to the north and south of the Osmore drainage, which have received hardly any archaeological attention at all. In the author's opinion, what the Osmore archaeology needs now is a broader scope of regional studies instead of ever more detailed excavations inside this one drainage.