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Threads of Time: Technique, Structure and Iconography
in an Embroidered Mantle from Paracas

by

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B.A., University of Virginia, 1979

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Introduction

This thesis analyzes the structure, technique and iconography of an embroidered burial mantle from Wari Kayan Necropolis on the Paracas Peninsula, Peru, which dates between approximately 100 B.C. and A.D. 100 (Fig. 1).¹ The mantle is currently in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (Accession no. 41.2/632), and will be referred to subsequently as the AMNH mantle. This study will consist of a structural analysis of the burial mantle, addressing the design of the textile and the iconography. In addition to examining the origin and iconography of the double-headed bird motif which appears throughout the mantle, this study analyzes technical and design

¹ Recently published radiocarbon dating suggests that the cemeteries were in use from ca. 300 B.C.-A.D. 200. Silverman, Helaine, "The Paracas Problem, Archaeological Perspectives," in Paracas Art and Architecture, ed. by Anne Paul (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 351. It is based on this dating that the mantle being studied has been assigned a date of ca. 100 B.C.-A.D. 100. Earlier studies of Paracas have used the chronological sequence developed by Menzel, Rowe and Dawson, The Paracas Pottery of Ica: A Study in Style and Time (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 50, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964). This sequence consists of the Early Horizon, subdivided into ten epochs, and the Early Intermediate Period Epochs 1 and 2, ranging in date from approximately 700 B.C. to A.D. 200. Most Paracas style textiles correspond to the Early Horizon Epochs 9 and 10 and the Early Intermediate Period Epochs 1 and 2 (approximately 300 B.C. to A.D. 200).

considerations involved in the creation of the mantle, including style of embroidery, structure, and color repeats. Ethnographic studies of Andean cultures will also be considered in the analysis of the symbolic and ritual aspects of textiles, and how they relate to the symbolic function of the mantle in its burial context.

The mantle has recently been featured in the exhibition "Ancient Peruvian Mantles, 300 B.C.-A.D. 200," which took place at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1995, and is in a rotating exhibit schedule at the American Museum of Natural History. The piece is an exquisite example of the elaborately embroidered mantles that were discovered in the cemeteries of Paracas, as part of large burial bundles. In addition to featuring a specific type of embroidery, called linear style embroidery, that was used during this period, the mantle demonstrates the enormous technical ability and strong sense of design and color of the Paracas embroiderers. The motif found on the mantle, that of the double-headed bird, is fairly common in Paracas textiles, and its design possibilities have been fully explored on this mantle. The mantle is illustrated and briefly discussed in the exhibition catalog from the Metropolitan, and in The Inka Empire and Its Andean Origins by Craig Morris and Adriana Von Hagen, a publication of the American Museum of Natural History, as well as Ancient Arts of the Andes by Wendell C.

Bennett.²

As noted above, the same version of the double-headed bird motif can be found in a number of Paracas textiles. More specifically, there are several mantles in other collections which are extremely similar in design to the mantle from the American Museum of Natural History, including ones at the Gotesborgs Etnografiska Museum, Goteborg, Sweden; the University Museum, Philadelphia; and the Museo Nacional de Antropologia y Arqueologia (MNAA) in Lima, Peru (Figs. 2 and 3). The same design has also appeared on other Paracas garments, including a number of tunics, headbands and turbans. While much research has been done in the area of Peruvian textiles, no study has focused on the iconography of this mantle and its technical design.

The history of the Paracas cemeteries and their excavation has been extensively detailed by a number of authors, including Edward and Jane Powell Dwyer (1975), Anne Paul (1990, 1991), Richard Daggett (1994) and Ann Peters (1994), who have also addressed the chronological relationships between the various sites.³ Technical analyses of Paracas textiles have been performed by

² Frame, Mary, Ancient Peruvian Mantles, 300 B.C. - A.D. 200 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), Morris, Craig, The Inka Empire and its Andean Origins (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1992), Bennett, Wendell, Ancient Arts of the Andes (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1954).

³ Dwyer, Edward B. and Jane Powell Dwyer, "The Paracas Cemeteries: Mortuary Patterns in a Peruvian South Coastal Tradition." in Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America, ed. Elizabeth Benson (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1975), 145-161; Paul, Anne, Paracas Ritual Attire: Symbols of Authority in Ancient Peru (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990a), "Paracas, An Ancient Cultural Tradition of the South Coast of Peru," in Paracas Art and

Cora Stafford (1941), Junius Bird and Louisa Bellinger (1954), Raoul D'Harcourt (1962), Mary Elizabeth King (1965), and Paul (1982, 1984, 1990, 1991), who have reviewed factors such as weave structure, fiber type, embroidery style, color patterns, and design components of various textiles.⁴ Alan Sawyer (1961), Jane Powell Dwyer (1971, 1979), and Hildegard Pang (1992) have provided a chronological and iconographic analysis of Paracas textiles, reviewing major themes and motifs and their placement within the Paracas chronology.⁵

Iconographic studies focusing on more specific themes include those by King

Architecture: Object and Context in South Coastal Peru, ed. by Anne Paul (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 1-34; Daggett, Richard E., "The Paracas Mummy Bundles of the Great Necropolis of Wari Kayan: A History," *Andean Past*, 4 (1994), 53-75; Peters, Ann, "Paracas Cavemas, Paracas Necropolis and Ocucaje: Looking At Appropriation and Identity with Only Material Remains," Contact, Crossover, Continuity: Textile Society of America Proceedings 1994, 305-315.

⁴ Stafford, Cora E. Paracas Embroideries: A Study of Repeated Patterns (New York: J.J. Augustin Publisher, 1941); Bird, Junius B. and Louisa Bellinger, Paracas Fabrics and Nazca Needlework: 3rd century B.C.-3rd century A.D.: The Textile Museum Catalogue Raisonne (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1954); D'Harcourt, Raoul, Textiles of Ancient Peru and Their Techniques (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962); King, Mary Elizabeth, Textiles and Basketry of the Paracas Period, Ica Valley, Peru, Ph.D. Dissertation (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1965); Paul, Anne, "The Chronological Relationship of the Linear, Block Color and Broad Line Styles of Paracas Embroidered Images," in Pre-Columbian Art History, ed. Alana Cordy-Collins (Palo Alto: Peek Publications, 1982) 255-277; Paul, Anne, "A Study of Two Paracas Textile Fragments in the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* (Oberlin), 41/2: 86-99, 1984; Paul, Anne, "The Use of Color in Paracas Necropolis Fabrics: What Does It Reveal About the Organization of Dyeing and Designing?," National Geographic Research 6/2: 7-21, 1990b; Paul, 1991.

⁵ Sawyer, Alan R., "Paracas and Nazca Iconography," in Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, ed. Samuel K Lothrop (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1961) 269-298; Dwyer, Jane Powell, Chronology and Iconography in Late Paracas and Early Nasca Textile Designs, Ph.D. Dissertation (Berkeley: University of California, Dept. of Anthropology, 1971); Dwyer, Jane Powell, "The Chronology and Iconography of Paracas Style Textiles," in Junius B. Bird Pre-Columbian Textile Conference, ed. Ann Rowe, Elizabeth P. Benson, and Anne-Louise Schaffer, (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1979), 61-82; Pang, Hildegard, Pre-Columbian Art: Investigations and Insights (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

(1974), Carol Damian (1978), Paul (1990, 1992), Paul and Solveig Turpin (1986), and Peters (1991), which have looked at depictions of mythological creatures, ecstatic shamans, and Peruvian plants and animals.⁶ While the use of double-headed birds is acknowledged as a common motif in Peruvian art, no studies have looked at this version of the image as it appears in Paracas textiles.

The dark blue AMNH mantle consists of camelid wool woven in a plain weave with embroidery in satin, stem and running stitches, measuring 53 1/2 x 93 inches (136 x 236.2 cm.). The mantle features an embroidered border with a series of stylized, double-headed bird motifs, inverted and nested within each other. The outside border, which runs along the two long sides of the mantle and continues approximately one third of the way along the shorter sides, features red, yellow, brown, green and dark blue embroidery with a crossed loop fringe along the outer edge. The basic motif of the border is repeated thirty-six times within the border, with feline images and small versions of the double-headed bird filling in the spaces (Fig. 4). A smaller simplified version of the bird motif is repeated along the inner edge of the border, separating it from the center of the mantle, which

⁶ King, Mary Elizabeth, "Mythological Figures in Textiles from Ocucaje, Peru," in *Atti del XL, Congresso Internazionale degli Americanisti, Roma-Genova, 3-10 settembre 1972*, vol. 2, 1994, 521-529; Damian, Carol, *The Oculate Being* MA Thesis, (Coral Gables: University of Florida, 1978); Paul, 1990a; Paul, "Paracas Necropolis Textiles; Symbolic Visions of Coastal Peru," in *Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes*, ed. Richard Townsend (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago; Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1992) 279-289; Paul, Anne and Solveig Turpin, "The Ecstatic Shaman Theme of Paracas Textiles," *Archaeology*, 39/5, 1986, 20-27; Peters, Ann, "Ecology and Society in Embroidered Images from the Paracas Necropolis," in *Paracas Art and Architecture*, 1991, 240-314.

also features a simplified version of the double-headed bird motif in a checkerboard arrangement (Fig. 5).

Throughout parts of the mantle, the image of the double-headed bird appears frequently, varying in both size and detail. On the main border, it ranges from the largest most detailed depiction in Figure 6, to a tiny almost stick figure version, with several variations in between (Fig. 7). Information on the iconographic significance of this image may be gained from looking at imagery from other Paracas style textiles. Images of birds, and the related images of felines and serpents, appear in textiles throughout the South Coast and other parts of Peru in earlier periods. However, it is from 200 to 100 B.C. that double-headed birds appear in Paracas textiles along with images of a mythological figure referred to by Menzel, Rowe and Dawson as the Oculate Being.⁷ Described by Damian as an important deity in Paracas culture, the Oculate Being features large concentric eyes, a grinning mouth, and numerous appendages (Fig. 8).⁸ This mythical or supernatural figure is often depicted flying, and may appear holding a knife and trophy heads. The Oculate Being may also be depicted with human, avian, feline, monkey or serpent attributes. The double-headed bird motif often appears in association with this being on textiles as an attendant figure or as a space filler,

⁷ Menzel, Dorothy, John Rowe, and Lawrence Dawson, The Paracas Pottery of Ica: A Study in Style and Time (University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. 50, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 171.

⁸ Damian, 1978, 1

sometimes occurring inside of the Oculate Being, along with felines and serpents. Some Paracas textiles also depict creatures which combine both the attributes of the Oculate Being and the double-headed bird. The style in which the double-headed bird appears in these early textiles is a geometricized linear one, with images first appearing on double-woven textiles from Paracas Cavernas. In textiles from Epoch 10 of the Early Horizon or approximately 100 B.C., embroidery becomes a more prominent technique and images of the birds, felines and serpents become important images on their own, often incorporating features of the Oculate Being.

Anne Paul has analyzed the various styles of embroidery found on Paracas textiles, and has categorized them as linear, broad line and block color styles.⁹ According to Paul, the different styles of embroidery may represent attempts to communicate different types of information. In linear style embroidery, the style of the AMNH mantle, images are made with a series of straight thin lines that emphasize the geometric forms of the motif. Another characteristic of linear style images is that they are frequently dominated by the same color used in the background of the design area. This feature, along with the use of many narrow lines, results in what Paul refers to as "visually illusive" images.¹⁰ Unlike motifs

⁹ Paul, Anne, "The Chronological Relationship of the Linear, Block Color, and Broad Line Styles of Paracas Embroidered Images," in Pre-Columbian Art History: Selected Readings, ed. Alana Cordy-Collins (Palo Alto, CA: Peek Publications, 1982).

¹⁰ Paul, Anne, Paracas Ritual Attire: Symbols of Authority in Ancient Peru (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 72.

created using block style embroidery, figures in the linear style lack identifying details, such as garments or ornaments, or features to indicate the particular type of animal being depicted. Paul suggests that these images are either representations of abstractions, or mythical or totemic symbols.¹¹ Studies by Paul (1982) and Dwyer (1971) have also revealed that images depicted in the linear style are very traditional and are not subject to major iconographic and stylistic changes over periods of time.¹²

The actual process involved in creating linear style embroidery also differs in procedure from other forms of embroidery, such as block color style. Paul (1985) has analyzed the technique used in linear style embroidery, and described how it varies from block color style embroidery.¹³ In linear style, the embroiderer begins by gradually filling in the background of the image first, stitching along the warp or weft of the fabric, leaving blank spaces for the lines of the actual image. Later after the background is filled in, colored yarns are used to embroider the spaces left blank, thus creating the image. This technique, with its row by row approach, is more similar to weaving and allows the embroiderer to count warp and weft threads in composing or memorizing the design. This study considers what implications this technique may have for the transference of the image over time

¹¹ Paul, 1990, 72

¹² Paul, 1982, Dwyer, 1971.

¹³ Paul, Anne, "The Stitching of Paracas Embroidered Images; Procedural Variations and Differences in Meaning," RES, 9, Spring, 1985, 91-100.

and its relation to different types of textiles which also display the double-headed bird motif.

The composition and the construction of the Paracas textile as a whole is also examined. Comparisons with other embroidered mantles suggest the existence of certain design principles used in the construction and design of the mantles.

Elements to be considered include type of stitches, color and pattern repeats. The mantle is also examined for any variations in the patterning, as well as any features that are specific to this mantle.

Finally, this study addresses the important role of textiles and weaving in Andean societies and how it relates to the design of the AMNH mantle. This writer will discuss how both recent ethnographic studies of Peruvian textile design and historical accounts of Incan textile production can provide information on the creation and symbolism of the Paracas mantles.

Chapter 1

Paracas Cemeteries

The Paracas Peninsula is located on the south coast of Peru about 125 miles (286 kilometers) south of Lima between the Pisco and Ica valleys. The peninsula extends out into the Pacific Ocean and is bordered by the Bahia de Paracas, a deep harbor to the north, and a bay called the Lagunillas to the south. The peninsula consists of an extremely dry windswept piece of land with overlooking bluffs and rocky coastal beaches. While now largely uninhabited, it once featured an abundant marine life and is believed to have supported large settlements in the first millennium B.C. The peninsula features the burial zones of Cavernas, Arena Blanca (also known as Cabeza Larga) and Wari Kayan Necropolis, all located near the hill of Cerro Colorado on the eastern part of the peninsula (Fig. 9), which have yielded a large collection of textiles. Many of the textiles of this period were discovered in a burial context, often part of a huge bundle of textiles wrapped around mummified remains, along with other grave goods.

The Paracas Peninsula was extensively excavated by Peruvian archaeologists

Julio C. Tello and Toribio Mejia Xesspe beginning in 1925.¹⁴ From the Wari Kayan Necropolis, which was uncovered in 1927, Tello and his associates recovered 429 conical shaped funerary bundles, many containing tall wooden staffs, gourd containers with food or offerings, and monochrome pottery jars and vessels (Fig. 10). Some of the largest mummy bundles measured up to 1.5 meters in diameter at the base and 1.5 meters in height, with many of the bundles containing numerous textile and non-textile items.¹⁵ Most mummy bundles featured tall wooden markers, consisting of either a ceremonial staff or spear, and were located within what was left of walled structures.¹⁶ Some of the underground chambers were thought by Tello to have been used as habituation areas that were built into earlier Cavernas refuse sites.¹⁷ The mummy bundles were believed to have been placed in groups, with the larger bundles circled by two or three medium sized bundles, which were covered with smaller bundles. After their discovery, these bundles were eventually taken to the Museo Nacional de Antropologia y Arqueologia (MNAA) in Lima, Peru, where most of them still remain. A number of the larger bundles have been unwrapped, with an identifying number being assigned to both the bundle and to each object found in that bundle.

¹⁴ Paul, 1990, 22.

¹⁵ Ibid. 26

¹⁶ Ibid.

Most of the textiles in the collection of the MNAA have bundle associations, i.e. can be traced to a particular bundle. According to Richard Daggett, several of the bundles were donated by the MNAA to other institutions.¹⁸ The majority of Paracas textiles in other collections were acquired from dealers or private collectors, and were not the result of documented archaeological excavations. These textiles, including the AMNH mantle which was received as a gift from Mrs. Kate Roberts Smith in 1953, do not have bundle associations.¹⁹

A typical mummy bundle would consist of a naked body of an older male in a flexed seated position wrapped in a large cotton sheet, which was stitched in place. Objects such as shell jewelry, mirrors, clubs, gourds with food and some clothing might be set next to the body before the sheet was closed. The bundle was then placed in a large woven basket, and wrapped with more clothing and cotton sheets. The top of the bundle may have featured a headdress of fox skins. The funerary bundles from the Necropolis contained the most elaborately decorated textiles from the peninsula, with some of the bundles containing a variety of embroidered textiles. One bundle may have included garments such as mantles, shirts, loincloths, ponchos, skirts, shawls, turbans and belts, which along with long lengths of plain cloth were wrapped around the body.

¹⁸ Daggett, Richard E., "Paracas: Discovery and Controversy," in Paracas Art and Architecture: Object and Context in South Coastal Peru (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 47.

¹⁹ Bennett, Wendell C., Ancient Arts of the Andes (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1954), 52.

According to Anne Paul, the wrapping of the bundle reflected the way garments would have been worn by the deceased.²⁰ The turbans may have been wrapped near the head and middle layers of the bundle, while ponchos and mantles would have been wrapped around the top of the bundle similarly to how they would have been worn. Paul notes that a number of bundles also contained suits of clothing with garments of matching images and colors.²¹ While there is disagreement over whether some of the recovered textiles show signs of wear, other textiles are obviously unfinished but were used for burial anyway, suggesting that at least some of the garments were made just for burial purposes. Other studies by Paul indicate that the embroidered clothing, through its color and imagery may have projected a sense of the individuality of the wearer.²²

It is significant that with all the available choices of textile techniques, embroidery was the predominant technique used in Paracas Necropolis textiles, as well as textiles found at some other Paracas sites, such as Ocucaje. The technique itself is extremely labor intensive. Based on estimates by Anne Paul, it would take approximately 40,786 hours of labor to produce the embroidered textiles that were found in two Necropolis mummy bundles.²³ This estimate includes the amount of

²⁰ Paul, 1990, 42

²¹ Ibid, 96.

²² Ibid, 98.

²³ Ibid, 32-33.

time needed to weave the plain cloth and to embroider it, but does not include labor estimates for spinning or dyeing the wool or for weaving the wrapping sheets also found in the bundle, which for one bundle totaled more than 555 square meters of woven cloth.

These estimates strongly suggest that the textiles were the work of full time specialists. Studies by Paul have also indicated that up to 17 embroiderers may have worked together on one mantle.²⁴ She also proposed that a type of apprenticeship training may have taken place, whereby less experienced embroiderers were placed between more skilled ones. The large number of remaining textiles and their technical proficiency also suggests the existence of a large group of specialists, possibly working under the patronage of the ruling class. An example of this can be seen in the Inca system of specially selected women who produced textiles for the Inca. Father Bernabe Cobo describes how cloistered women, referred to as "*mamaconas*" or "esteemed mothers" were charged with spinning and weaving "clothing of wool, cotton, and vicuna, which was very fine and delicate, of excellent quality, and in a variety of bright colors."²⁵ This clothing was used for garments for the Inca, as well as to dress the idols and to be offered in sacrifice.²⁶

²⁴ Paul and Niles, 1985, 6.

²⁵ Cobo, Father Bernabe, Inca Religion and Customs, trans. and ed. by Roland Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 172, 174.

Paul has also proposed that one individual may have had input on both the colors and motifs used in textiles found in specific bundles.²⁷ She has discovered some colors which were only used in specific bundles and also noted how certain motifs or themes seem to be predominant in some bundles. Paul suggested that the individual may have had input in the design and creation of the textile, possibly commissioning its creation, or that certain textiles may have been created with an individual in mind and the imagery may have reflected that person's role or affiliations in life.

²⁷ Paul, 1990b, 7.

Chapter 2

Technical analysis of the AMNH mantle

The study of Paracas mantles reveals the presence of a number of general design principles in action in the construction of mantles. These can be seen in the overall construction of the mantle, textile technique, figure orientation, pattern analysis and color repeats.

The central area of the mantle is usually woven in one piece and is made of wool. Borders were created by attaching separately woven pieces of fabric, often cotton, along the sides of the main piece. These pieces, as well as the areas where they were attached, were then fully covered with embroidery, giving the overall appearance of one large continuous textile. Since all three pieces were woven separately, and as Peruvian textiles were uncut and were woven to size, the lengths of the finished fabrics did not match exactly in some cases. In those instances, adjustments had to be made in attaching the pieces together. Junius Bird, who examined the AMNH mantle, noted how this was also the case with the mantle and that some alterations had been made in the creation of the mantle to make the

pieces fit together.²⁸

In addition to the border fabrics being covered with embroidery, the embroidery would often be continued on the corner of the main fabric of the mantle to create an L-shape or what Paul refers to as a "border bracket."²⁹ This feature can also be seen on the AMNH mantle (Fig. 4), where the same motif of the border is embroidered directly onto the main fabric of the mantle.

In addition to the main border, Stafford notes how the linear style, or what she refers to as geometrical style, mantles are distinct in featuring a sub-border or inner border between the main border and the central field.³⁰ This sub-border often repeats the motif of the main border and serves as a transition between the main border and the central field. Stafford notes how the inner border is usually not made with completely full coverage embroidery and contains areas that allow the base fabric to show through. This is also the case with the AMNH mantle, where part of the dark blue base fabric shows through areas of the motif for the inner border (Fig. 11).

²⁸ American Museum of Natural History, file notes

²⁹ Paul, Anne, "Procedures, Patterns, and Deviations in Paracas Embroidered Textiles," in To Weave for the Sun: Ancient Andean Textiles (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 33.

³⁰ Stafford, 26

Linear style embroidered mantles may or may not feature embroidered motifs in the central area. When they are present, they tend to be in either a striped or a checkerboard arrangement, as is the AMNH mantle. A different version of the double-headed bird motif is repeated throughout the central area and can be seen in Figure 12. Mantles are often finished with a needle knitted edging and fringe. This feature is also found on the AMNH mantle.

Paracas embroiderers relied on a great number of different colors, with up to 240 different colors having been documented.³¹ The number of colors used in one mantle would depend, however, on the style of embroidery. Linear style or broad line style embroidered textiles featured an average of five colors, while textiles that incorporated block color style averaged ten colors.³² The style of embroidery also determined the specific colors that would be used, with linear and broad line embroidered textiles using a very restricted number of colors. In the linear and broad line style textiles analyzed by Anne Paul, more than 90 percent of the textiles featured a brown or navy colored field and more than 80 percent had a red border background.³³ This also corresponds with the colors selected for the AMNH mantle, which features a navy blue field and red borders. Certain specific colors were also used for the stitching of images for specific styles of textiles.

³¹ Paul, Anne, "The Use of Color in Paracas Necropolis Fabrics: What Does It Reveal about the Organization of Dyeing, Designing and Society?", National Geographic Research, 1990, 6(1), 7-21.

³² Ibid, 17

³³ Ibid, 18

Textiles embroidered in linear or broad line style always included at least red or pink or both, gold or dark gold or both, green or dark green or both, and navy or purple or both.³⁴ Again the AMNH mantle follows this standard with its use of red, yellow, green and blue embroidered images. The specific style, in which the mantle was embroidered seemed to determine the choice and number of colors that were used. The other style of embroidery, block color style, did not have any restrictions on the number of colors used or choice of colors. These mantles show a much greater variation in color and a greater number of colors used for each piece.

While the linear style mantles used a fewer number of colors for the embroidery, they were still arranged in complex patterns throughout the textile. Many of these patterns can be determined by analyzing the color changes for each of the motifs. Systematic patterns can be determined for the use of color for the same section of a motif throughout the border and for the pattern of specific color blocks, in which specific colors are used together for one motif. Even though it is possible to determine the color patterning used by the embroiderer(s), in many cases inconsistencies are present. Stafford notes how an embroiderer could have easily taken out stitches that were created in the wrong color, and considering the technical proficiency of many of the Paracas mantles, it seems unlikely that errors

³⁴ Ibid.

would not have been corrected.³⁵ Paul has been able to trace some inconsistencies in color patterning in mantles to the work of specific workers.³⁶ A similar analysis was performed on the AMNH mantle (see below) to determine the pattern of color and block repeats throughout the design. It should be noted that inconsistencies in the color patterning were also found in the mantle, and will be described in detail.

The AMNH mantle features a main border of full coverage embroidery, attached lengthwise to the base fabric, an inner border, and a central field. Each of these areas features a different variation of the double-headed bird motif. The inner border has been embroidered on the base fabric and is not created with full coverage embroidery. Each of the smaller motifs is repeated 54 times for each border, and 108 times for the entire mantle. Within the central area of the mantle is another version of the bird motif embroidered on the blue base fabric in a checkerboard arrangement, repeated 168 times. The colors used for each part of these motifs also vary throughout each section, with distinct patterns emerging for each.

The main border consists of 36 design blocks which repeat the same design throughout the border. The components of the block can be broken down as follows. Bird 1 is the largest and outermost bird figure appearing in the block

³⁵ Stafford, 12

³⁶ Paul, Anne and Susan Niles, "Identifying Hands at Work on a Paracas Mantle," Textile Museum Journal, 1984, 5-15.

(Fig. 6). Bird 2 is the second bird figure, which is inverted for all of the design blocks. Bird 3 is the third bird figure, which appears upright, while Bird 4 is the third bird to appear within the main figure. Bird 5 is the bird motif appearing between the heads of the main figure, and Bird 6 refers to the motif appearing between the heads of Bird 2. Other figures include additional bird motifs (corner birds) which are located beneath the wings of Bird 1 and upper birds, which are located beneath the wings of Bird 2 or below the heads of Bird 1. There are also feline images near the top of the wings of Bird 1 (upper felines) and near the beaks of Bird 2 (lower felines).

As noted, the embroiderers used several colors for the design of the border. However, if the entire mantle is analyzed, a distinct pattern can be determined. The same combination of colors are used for specific blocks, resulting in a sequence of 6 distinct color blocks that are repeated throughout the border.

In Figure 13, each of the blocks in the border have been numbered 1 through 36. For Block 1 the color pattern has been analyzed and is illustrated in Figure 14. The design has been embroidered with the following colors for each segment of the block:

Bird 1 - red (head and beak red, wings green and brown)

Bird 2 - yellow

Bird 3 - red (eyes green)

Bird 4 - brown

Bird 5 - green

Bird 6 - green

Upper felines - blue

Lower felines - green

Corner birds (below wings of Bird 1) - yellow

Upper birds (below wings of Bird 2) - brown

Bird 1 has been further analyzed for colors of heads, beaks and wings. The heads of Bird 1 consist of five rings, beginning with an outer ring of red and continuing with yellow, red, blue and red. Many of the motifs of the border are embroidered in red, the same color as the background. These images are slightly difficult to discern from a distance, but because of the way the elements were embroidered the images take on a strong textural quality. Also in some areas, the motifs are a slightly different color red than the background. This is probably due to the fact that the motifs were embroidered last, after the background was filled in, and yarn from a different dyebath may have been used. This color may have been slightly varied from the background color or may have faded at a different rate.

Each block of the border has been analyzed in the same manner and it has been determined that there are six different color block combinations. The above

color combination has been labeled Block A and it appears in sequence every 6 blocks throughout the main border (Fig. 15). Thus color Block A with this color arrangement appears in blocks numbered 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, and 31. Color combinations have also been determined for each of the other color blocks of the border (Blocks B-F). The other color blocks follow the same pattern, appearing every six blocks of the border (Table 1).

It is also possible to look at the color variations for each particular motif and to determine its color sequence throughout the border. Table 2 lists the colors used for the four main birds of the design for each of the 36 blocks. From this, it can be noted that only certain colors were used for specific motifs and this pattern remained consistent for the border. In Table 2 the color of Bird 1 was determined by the color of the outer ring of the heads and its beaks, which were the same. For Bird 1, the only colors used were red, brown and green. The sequence for the colors used in this motif throughout the border is R, Br, R, R, G, R. All the colors (yellow, red, green, brown, blue) were used for Bird 2, in the order Y, R, G, Br, R, Bl. For Bird 3, the colors used are red, green and brown, which are repeated in the pattern R, G, R, R, Br, R. This is the same basic sequence that is used for Bird 1, but starts out on a different color. For Bird 4, the colors used are brown, red, green, and yellow, with one use of blue. The pattern for this motif is Br, R, Br, G, R, Y. Similar patterns occur for the other motifs that appear in the blocks.

While these patterns are very consistent throughout the border, there are a

few exceptions or variations. As noted above, blue is used once for Bird 4 in Block 31, where the pattern would have predicted the use of green. Another variation is the use of yellow for Bird 2 in Block 34, where according to the pattern the color should have been brown. In Block 1, Bird 5 is blue instead of green according to the pattern and the color used for the second ring outlining the head is green, instead of yellow. There are also some variations in orientation of the figures. While the orientation of Bird 4 is usually upright for all the blocks, in Blocks 1 and 2 this figure is inverted.

The inner border also has a distinct patterning. In Table 3, it can be seen that in Block 1, the heads of the main bird and the center bird are green, the eyes of the main bird are yellow, the bird between the heads of the main bird is blue, and the corner birds and the beaks of the main bird are brown. A similar color pattern has been worked out for the other five blocks of the inner border. The color red does appear in these blocks, but is used as an outline in the same way for each block. It has been determined that the same color sequence is used for all of the motifs in this border. That is, the color of each motif corresponds to the same sequence of G, Y, Br, G, Y, Bl. For example, the first block may use the color green for the center bird. According to this pattern, the second block would use the next color in the sequence, yellow, for the center bird, followed by brown, green, yellow and blue. Another component for the first block, such as the eyes, would be yellow. The following blocks would continue this sequence with

brown, green, yellow, blue and green. The same pattern can be seen for all the components of the inner border, with each one following the same color cycle.

A similar analysis can be applied to the motifs on the center area of the mantle. The motifs are embroidered in a checkerboard arrangement of 14 rows and 27 columns, with a total of 164 motifs. The rows of motifs alternate in orientation, with the first row appearing upright, the second inverted, etc., throughout the mantle. Much like the blocks in the border, each motif can be broken down into a number of components. In this case, each block consists of Bird 1, - the main bird of the figure (appearing upright). The color pattern for Bird 1 also includes colors for beaks, wings and heads. Bird 2 is the center bird of the motif, shown inverted. Bird 3 is the smallest bird, appearing upright inside of Bird 2. The motif also features felines near the wings of Bird 1, and additional double-headed bird motifs below the wings of Bird 1 (corner birds). Again, the color pattern for specific blocks can be determined. For color Block 1, the pattern is as follows:

Bird 1 - heads - yellow

beaks - brown

eyes - blue

wings - brown

Bird 2- blue

Bird 3 - green

Felines - green

Corner birds - yellow

Eyes of Bird 2 - yellow

Four distinct color blocks can be determined, and their layout on the mantle is depicted in Table 4. The blocks are repeated in sequence 1, 2, 3, 4 going both horizontally and vertically across the mantle (Fig. 15).

While red is also used to create the background and the outline for the center area motifs, unlike the border, it is never used for any of the specific components. All of the other available colors (blue, yellow, brown and green) are used for all of the components of the motifs in the center area, with one exception. The eye of Bird 2 is either colored yellow or green and appears in the sequence as Y, Y, G, G throughout the center area. Again with the exception of the eye of the center bird, all of the motifs follow a similar color sequence. They all correspond in some way to the sequence of Br, Y, G, Bl. Some of the components, such as the beaks and wings of Bird 1, follow it exactly. Other components, such as the heads of Bird 1 and the corner birds, follow the reverse sequence of Bl, G, Y, Br.

In looking at each of the areas of the mantle, specific color patterns can be determined. The main border was created with six design blocks that used specific colors for various components. These six blocks repeated in sequence

around the border, resulting in specific patterns for the individual motifs. Each motif then had its own cycle of colors, which was repeated. For the border, some of the motifs seem to share the same color pattern. Bird 1 and Bird 3 continued the same pattern of R, Br, R, R, G. Birds 2 and 4 were similar, with Bird 2 following the cycle of Y, R, G, Br, R, Bl. Bird 4 followed this same pattern, except brown was also used in place of blue, and the pattern was reversed, resulting in Br, R, Br, G, R, Y.

The inner border was composed of six block variations, with all components following the pattern of G, Y, Br, G, Y, Bl. The center area was composed of four different block patterns, which went in sequence both horizontally and vertically across the mantle. The color sequence was the same for most of the motifs following either the pattern of Br, Y, G, Bl, or the reverse of Bl, G, Y, Br.

This analysis shows how each segment of the mantle was carefully planned with an elaborate coloration pattern. Specific sequences were determined for each area, as well as for the individual sections of each motif. These color sequences were followed carefully, with only a minimum number of inconsistencies. The entire design of the mantle consists of a series of endlessly repeating color sequences continuing around the mantle, each following their own cycles. Even the A-F sequence of blocks of the main border continue uninterrupted around the mantle in sequence. The carefully controlled color changes suggest that a higher purpose was in effect, rather than just a concern for visual interest. The need to

demonstrate technical proficiency, as seen in this mantle, was an overriding concern that characterizes Andean textiles and may reflect their underlying meaning.

Chapter 3

Andean textiles

To fully understand the significance of the extraordinary embroidery of Paracas, it is helpful to look at the development of techniques and the symbolic role that textiles played in ancient Peru. The textile chronology of Peru, which can be traced as far back as 8600 B.C., is an elaborate and well documented one. Environmental conditions have resulted in the preservation of hundreds of thousands of textiles, providing a detailed history of the area's textile technologies and iconographies. Archaeological evidence shows the progression from simple non-woven techniques to more elaborate woven-based patterning over time.

The weaving equipment used by ancient Peruvians was very basic, with evidence indicating that three types of looms were used: a backstrap loom, a staked horizontal loom and a vertical frame loom. Fibers included cotton in both dyed and natural shades and wool from cameloids, such as llama, alpaca and vicuna. Dyes, which were used as early as the preceramic period, were obtained from plants such as indigo and insects such as conchineal. While the technology itself was simple, the techniques used in weaving grew rapidly in number and

sophistication.

By the Paracas period, the list of potential textile techniques that could be employed was extremely varied. It included techniques such as plain weave, double cloth, triple cloth, tapestry, embroidery, gauze, netting, knotting, warp and weft patterning, brocade, featherwork, painted textiles and braiding.

Technique is an extremely important component in Peruvian textiles, and can be used as a way to classify textiles as well as a sign of cultural differences and meaning. Junius Bird describes how based on their technique, Peruvian textiles can be placed into three distinct categories: structural, non-structural and super structural.³⁷ Structural techniques are defined as those in which the weave determines the design of the fabrics. They would include techniques such as twining, double weave and gauze. Many early Peruvian textiles, such as those found at Huaca Prieta, are based on structural patterning. Examples include a warp patterned, twined fabric from Huaca Prieta dating to approximately 2000 B.C. (Fig. 16) and a double woven cloth from Cavernas (Fig. 17). Non-structural refers to techniques such as painting and resist dyeing, where the design is part of the fabric but not determined by its structural limitations. These techniques can be seen in the painted mummy masks of Ocucaje (Fig 18). Super structural techniques would include embroidery, which is used in the AMNH mantle, and

³⁷ Bird, Junius B. "Technology and art in Peruvian textiles. Technique and personality in primitive art." In Lecture Series Number Three, (New York: The Museum of Primitive Art, 1963), 45-77.

applique or featherwork, where something is applied to the base fabric.

Embroidery, the most prevalent technique used in Paracas textiles, is free of the structural constraints of the fabric. Block color style embroidery, which employs curvilinear designs, takes advantage of the freedom of design that embroidery offers. Block color style designs frequently depict a variety of ornately decorated figures and naturalistically designed animals. Linear style embroidery, which appears on the AMNH mantle, ignores the design possibilities of embroidery on a plain fabric. Instead designs are created in a very restricted, controlled way by making stitches in a straight line following the warps or weft of the woven fabric. The artist continues with each line of stitching parallel to the one before it. Areas of color are left open until the entire background of the design is filled in. Then the embroiderer goes back in and fills in the design area with a different color. In areas where full coverage embroidery is used, such as the main border of the AMNH mantle, the stitching is so dense that it completely covers the base fabric. It becomes, in one sense, another layer of fabric, much like double-woven cloth, in both process and structure.

This type of phenomenon occurs in other textiles as well, reflecting a desire by ancient Peruvians to emphasize technique or structure over visual appearance. E. M. Franquemont describes how an elaborate technique called discontinuous warp and weft involves the use of multiple scaffolds to allow each section of the

fabric to be created with its own set of warps and wefts.³⁸ A similar textile could be woven with less elaborate techniques, such as tapestry or double-weave, both of which were known at that time period. Franquemont suggests that it was important that each square of the textile, not only look different from the other sections, but that it actually be different as well. With the AMNH mantle, the borders consist of other strips of fabric that were attached to the main fabric of the mantle. Analyses by Bird and Bellinger of other mantles have shown that this fabric was sometimes woven of cotton, and often a different color than the rest of the mantle.³⁹ As it was usually fully covered with embroidery, the difference did not show. While the base fabric for the border of the AMNH mantle cannot be seen, it seems likely that it follows the same pattern as other mantles. As Bird and Bellinger have noted that many of the cotton borders have disintegrated over time, it is probable that the border of the AMNH mantle is camelid wool like the rest of the mantle, but likely a different color.⁴⁰ The two border strips were then woven separately, attached to the main fabric of the mantle, and embroidered.

A similar visual effect could have been created by attaching a border with a woven design on it, attaching borders of red fabric and embroidering them, or just embroidering one large piece of fabric. Yet, the designers of Paracas mantles

³⁸ Franquemont, E.M. "Threads of Time: Andean Cloth and Costume," in Costume as Communication (Bristol, RI: Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology), 1986, 83.

³⁹ Bird and Bellinger, 19

chose an extremely complicated and time-consuming method for designing mantles. It seemed important, not only that the borders look different than the rest of the mantle, but also that they were actually a different textile. In addition, since they were completely covered by embroidery, they weren't really the original fabric either, but a newly transformed one.

The use of an elaborate complicated technique to achieve a visual effect that could also have been achieved with a much simpler technique is very characteristic of Peruvian textiles. According to Franquemont, this suggests that meaning is conveyed by the structure of the textile and the process of weaving.⁴¹

Franquemont argues that Andean textile art was not a representation of language but the primary medium itself, which used "not simply visual images but also structure, processes, tactile qualities and fiber characteristics to encode meaning."⁴²

Heather Lechtman describes how as Andean cloth production emphasized and relied on structurally created patterns, the complexity of structure surpassed "mere virtuosity."⁴³ Lechtman examines the extent to which the visual message of Andean textiles was part of and generated by the structure of the textile. She poses the question of whether at some time the technology itself "becomes the medium for the expression of message," and suggests that the primary creative

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Franquemont, 84

⁴³ Lechtman, Heather, "Andean Value Systems and the Development of Prehistoric Metallurgy," Technology and Culture, Jan. 1984, v. 25, no. 1, 1-36.

direction of Andean weaving "lay in the rich elaboration of structural techniques, in the playing out of a structural technological style."⁴⁴ Lechtman believes that "Andean weaving seems to have responded to notions that saw the achievement of visual, surface message as emerging from underlying, invisible structural relations. Andean weaving insists that message be embodied in and expressed by structure."⁴⁵

For the AMNH mantle, and for any linear style embroidery, the technique far surpasses what is required visually. At some point in the design and creation of the mantle, the technique becomes more important than just a means to achieve a certain visual effect. This suggests that the process of creating the textile may have had special ritual significance or contributed to the ritual or supernatural power of the textile.

Much evidence exists that textiles and weaving were considered vital to the social and religious activities of the Andean world. According to John Murra, who has researched the role of textiles in the Inca period :

A primary source of state revenues, an annual chore among peasant obligations, a common sacrificial offering, cloth could also serve at different times and occasions as a status symbol or a token of enforced citizenship, as burial furniture, bride-wealth, or armistice sealer. No political, military, social or religious event was complete without textiles being volunteered or bestowed, burned, exchanged, or sacrificed.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lechtman, 32

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Murra, John, "Cloth and Its Function in the Inka State," in Cloth and Human Experience, ed. by Annett B. Weiner and Jane Schneider (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 293.

Textiles were important in terms of social and ritual obligations, and were particularly important in relation to the Andean belief in the afterlife and the Inca tradition of caring for the mummified former rulers. Father Bernabe Cobo describes a procession in which the deceased rulers were paraded on litters: "The kings were wearing the same mantles and adornments that the kings themselves used to use; dressed in fine cumbe, which was their brocade and finest cloth, holding a scepter, each one had his royal insignia and attendants dressed according to their custom and an officer by his side who carried a sunshade of attractive feathers. They represented each king, his descendants and his nearest kinsmen."⁴⁷

Textiles played an important role in the continuing relationship between the ancestor ruler and the community. The ancestors, however, were still considered to be vital parts of the community. In his description of Andean ancestor cults, Frank Salomon notes how the mummified ancestors became the source of continuing fertility for the remaining society.⁴⁸ Ancestor mummies continued to be worshipped and cared for, and were petitioned for favors, such as a request for skill in weaving, and consulted on future marriages. They passed from living to permanent immortal enshrinement.

⁴⁷ Cobo, Father Bernabe, History of the Inca Empire: An account of the Indians' customs and their origin together with a treatise on Inca legends, history and social institutions [1653], trans. and ed. by Roland Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 101.

⁴⁸ Salomon, Frank, "The Beautiful Grandparents": Andean Ancestor Shrines and Mortuary Ritual as Seen Through Colonial Records, in Tombs for the Living: Andean Mortuary Practices (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 325.

Translations of 16th and early 17th century Quechua religious texts provide some evidence that the process of weaving may have been compared to the act of infusing life spirit into an inanimate object. Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste in their translation of The Huarochiri Manuscript, a 17th century text on Andean religion, translate the term *compi camayuc* as "master weaver" with *compi* meaning "luxury-grade textile" and *camayuc* being translated as "specialist."⁴⁹ The authors note that *camayuc* more literally means "possessor of a specific force or energy [*camay*]."⁵⁰ The word *camay* can be translated as "to give form and force" or "to animate."⁵¹ Thus the weaver could be seen as an individual possessing the power or force to give life to textiles. Certain techniques or imagery may then have also been attributed with enhancing the life spirit of the textile. Linear style embroidery with its technique that replicates the weaving process may have been considered especially powerful. These textiles also featured traditional religious images which continued to be used for hundreds of years.

Terence Grieder, in reference to the tombs at La Galgada, describes how the treatment of the bodies of the dead, including their placement, wrapping and addition of certain objects, indicates that they were thought to be alive or

⁴⁹ Salomon, Frank and George L. Urioste, The Huarochiri Manuscript, A Testament of Ancient and Colonial Andean Religion (Austin: University of Texas, 1991), 45.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

belonging to the realm of myth.⁵² Grieder notes that the bodies at La Galgada were placed in the fetal position, suggesting that they were prepared for rebirth rather than death. The bodies found in Paracas sites were also placed in the fetal position and carefully wrapped with textiles and offerings of food. Textiles played an important role in the belief in the afterlife at Paracas. They may have been part of a reciprocal relationship between the ruler and the people, symbolizing the ongoing ritual communication between the living and the ancestors.

⁵² Grieder, Terence, La Galgada: A Peruvian Culture in Transition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 206.

Chapter 4

Iconography

Images of double-headed birds of varying types are prevalent throughout Peruvian art. It is interesting to note that the earliest examples of these images occur in textiles as well. Remains of early cotton or vegetable fiber textiles, which first appeared in the preceramic period, show the use of simple twining or looping, as well as weaving. Textile fragments from Guitarrero cave in the Callejon de Huaylas, dating to 8600 to 8000 B.C., included fabrics created with weft twining, looping and plain weave.⁵³ Preceramic cotton textiles from the north coast site of Huaca Prieta in the Chicama Valley, dating to 2500 B.C, were composed of weft twining, looping, knotted netting and weaving. Elaborate patterning was discovered on these weft twined fabrics where the warps were diverted and held by twining to form designs. These patterns included condors, pumas, rock crabs, double-headed snakes and human figures. Twined and looped textiles from Huaca Prieta and La Galgada feature not only birds as in Figure 19, but also snakes,

⁵³ Adovasio, J.M. and Robert F. Maslowksi, *Cordage, Basketry and Textiles*, in Guitarrero Cave: Early Man in the Andes, ed. by Thomas F. Lynch (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 253-90.

felines and composite creatures, images that appear in later Peruvian cultures. The symmetry of these figures reflects the textile techniques that were used, but this style was also continued with other techniques. Some images, such as the condor in Figure 16, are also executed in a type of x-ray style, which allows the serpent inside the condor to show through. This style also appears later in Paracas, in double-woven textiles and mummy masks, and in linear style embroidery as in the AMNH mantle. According to Richard L. Burger, these figures may be representative of early cosmologies or myths.⁵⁴ He states, "Considering the historical relationship of these motifs to later religious art, it seems more likely that the imagery expresses elements of Late Preceramic cosmology and its accompanying myths. Furthermore, the contexts in which the textiles have been found reinforce the view that these were not emblems of elite prestige, but instead were symbols of popular belief."⁵⁵ It does seem likely that besides merely depicting the world around them, early Peruvian artists attempted to express their belief in cosmologies based on ecological symbols. While Burger feels they were symbols of popular belief, instead of just emblems of prestige, by the Paracas period, these elements may have been both.

Grieder has noted that the bird itself may have been considered a

⁵⁴ Burger, Richard L., Chavin and the Origins of Andean Civilization (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 35.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

transitional animal in Peruvian culture.⁵⁶ The bird has the ability to cross through the various realms of the sky, earth, and water, and may have been attributed with spiritual power or significance. Paul believes that images of birds, such as those representing condors or falcons or other species that hover in the air, may have referred to aspects of the celestial realm.⁵⁷ Along the same line, fish-eating seabirds may have referred to marine cults while land birds may have been associated with earth based phenomenon. Paul notes that cats, snakes and birds, animals that were ecologically related, may have been a visual reference for an earth related phenomenon. These animals have also been used in depictions of costumed human impersonators on other Paracas textiles, suggesting that they may eventually have become cult images. Katherine Seibold in her study of weavers of Choquecancha, Cuzco, Peru, describes the current existence of a similar symbolism.⁵⁸ Animal figures such as birds, felines and serpents/toads are used to symbolize deities representing the sky, earth and water. These animals are considered power animals for their ability to cross the boundaries into other cosmic realms.

It is interesting how these animals may also have become linked together, forming a type of triad in Peruvian art. In addition to appearing as separate

⁵⁶ Grieder, 207

⁵⁷ Paul, 1990, 83.

⁵⁸ Seibold, Katherine E., "Textiles and Cosmology in Choquecancha, Cuzco, Peru," in Andean Cosmologies Through Time (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 170.

elements together, they also often appear as composite creatures as well. Chavin de Huantar, which had a strong influence on Paracas, features numerous sculptures of jaguars, crested eagles, and serpents. There are also composite creatures, such as crested eagles and hawks with jaguar and serpent attributes, which can be seen the Black and White Portal sculptures, which flanked the entrance of the temple (Fig. 20). These column reliefs may have depicted guardian creatures for the temple. These images may have symbolized the power of all the creatures depicted, as well as representing existing mythologies. Also the concept of paired attendant bird figures may have continued into the Paracas period, where its influence may have resulted in the development of the double-headed bird motif.

In addition to being able to cross ecological boundaries, birds may be seen as having the ability to cross celestial boundaries as well. Birds such as condors may have been associated with death due to their feeding habits, which consist of scavenging for carrion or dead animals. The concept of flight itself suggests the ability to travel to different realms. In many cultures, birds and feathers are associated with shamans and magic. Textiles featuring feathers or avian images may be symbolic of the shaman's ability to travel from the present world to the afterlife and back. These images would be especially appropriate on mantles that would accompany the individual on his final journey.

Much of the imagery of the AMNH mantle can be seen as the culmination of a series of design and style phases for the textiles of Necropolis, Cavernas and

Arena Blanca. Jane Dwyer has established a sequence of phases outlining the iconography and chronology of Paracas textiles, which corresponds to the Early Horizon Epoch 9 and 10, and Early Intermediate Period, Epochs 1 and 2, or approximately 200 B.C. to A.D. 200.⁵⁹

In reviewing these style phases, it becomes clear how design elements from the earliest phases continued to be used throughout the sequence, and appear in the AMNH mantle. The earliest textiles in Dwyer's study are from Cavernas, and correspond to Early Horizon Epoch 9 (200 B.C.). The textiles for this period tend to use what Dwyer calls "conservative design elements drawn from the well-established Early Horizon ceramic and textile tradition."⁶⁰ The Oculate Being, which first appears in pottery designs from the Early Horizon Epoch 8, now becomes a dominant motif in textiles.⁶¹

Textile designs were usually made with patterned weaves, double and triple cloth, brocading and gauze, twining, braiding, knotting and looping. Embroidery is used very little, sometimes restricted to small simplified figures. The color range is also very limited, usually with only one of two colors being used on one textile. Textiles feature geometricized or stylized motifs and often include birds, serpent-like forms, feline and anthropomorphic representations – elements that have

⁵⁹ Dwyer, Jane Powell, "Chronology and Iconography of Paracas-Style Textiles," in The Junius B. Bird Pre-Columbian Textile Conference (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1979).

⁶⁰ Dwyer, 1973, 107

⁶¹ Dwyer and Dwyer, 1975, 153

appeared over time in ancient Peruvian textiles and continue through the Paracas sequence. Much of the imagery is created by structural patterns in the weaving, which also results in very angular or geometric style images. While the emphasis gradually shifted to other textile techniques, this geometric style continued to be used, especially in embroidery.

According to Dwyer's sequence, Cavernas textiles in the sample correspond only up to the first phase of Early Horizon Epoch 10, suggesting that Cavernas was no longer used as a cemetery after that time. Some of the important trends in Early Horizon Epoch 10 (100 B.C.) include less emphasis on structurally decorated cloth with increasing use of elaborate embroidery. Dwyer notes that, in spite of the increased freedom with embroidery, a linear style of embroidery was used, with angular figures made up of narrow parallel lines. Wool, which dyes better than cotton, was used more frequently. There was also more color experimentation with the use of red, yellow, blue, and green as the basic colors.

Dwyer characterizes the next period, Early Intermediate Period Epoch 1 (A.D. 1), as one concerned with "creating new methods of achieving clarity of form, new devices for expressing life-like shapes, and different ways of emphasizing the richness and variation of color."⁶² There is a trend toward the use of a wide range of colored yarns, with more interest in color patterning and consistent color changes for different figures. Linear designs are still being made,

⁶² Dwyer, 109.

according to Dwyer, yet they are seen as conservative elements in a time of experimentation and innovation.⁶³

According to Dwyer, the style of the Early Intermediate Period Epoch 2 (A.D. 100) reflects greater complexity, elaboration of designs and more intricate color compositions.⁶⁴ While Dwyer feels that linear style embroidered textiles were no longer being made during this period, Paul argues that both styles co-existed for approximately 200 years within Paracas culture.⁶⁵ According to Paul, most of the bundles throughout Early Horizon 10 and Early Intermediate Period 1 included textiles representing both linear and block color styles.⁶⁶ The AMNH mantle, which corresponds to this period, was then created when both linear and block color style embroidered mantles were in use. The linear style seems to represent a more traditional textile technique, using imagery found in textiles from earlier in the sequence. In addition, the geometric quality of this style also reflects the earlier designs created by weaving patterns. This is especially important, given the freedom of design that embroidery offers, and which can be seen in block color style embroideries. These textiles feature curvilinear multicolor images which depict individuals in elaborate costumes or very specific animals, such as birds,

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Paul, 1990, 75.

felines or fish. The choice of technique was thus a very deliberate one, and one that must have had special significance.

The double-head bird first appears in the Paracas sequence in the double woven textiles from Cavernas (Fig. 17), as a figure accompanying the Oculate Being. The Oculate Being becomes an important cult figure in Paracas culture and remains a prominent image throughout the sequence. Dwyer and Dwyer also note how the Oculate Being was depicted with a variety of other attributes, including felines, birds and humans, early in the Paracas sequence and these aspects later became basic categories of Paracas iconography.⁶⁷ The bird, felines and human-like figures were also depicted as hunters, often in association with trophy head imagery. Related images, such as birds, thus became important images on their own.

In a comparison of contents of large mummy bundles from the same time period from Necropolis, Dwyer and Dwyer discovered that one or more textiles displaying the "conventional flying Oculate Being" existed in almost every elite bundle.⁶⁸ Dwyer and Dwyer noted that while one or more of these textiles were included in the smaller Necropolis bundles, for some of the larger bundles, up to one third of the textiles contained representations of the Oculate Being. The lack of design innovation in depictions of the Oculate Being has also been addressed.

⁶⁷ Dwyer and Dwyer, 152.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Dwyer and Dwyer feel it is related to its importance in Paracas ritual and belief, and that adding additional textiles depicting this being would increase the supernatural power added to the bundle.⁶⁹ Dwyer and Dwyer also described how the conservatism in depictions of the Oculate Being may reflect the fact that it was believed to be the most sacred and effective. Paul has examined the design continuity of linear style depictions of the Oculate Being and has noted the extent to which embroiderers working in the linear style were conservative in color usage and design innovation.⁷⁰

The Oculate Being appears in a variety of forms throughout the Paracas sequence. Figure 21 illustrates various depictions of the Oculate Being on Cavernas double-weave textiles. Each example shows the strong angular quality of the early depictions, along with the appearance of various appendages, trophy heads and filler motifs, such as felines and birds. Figures 21a and 21b also feature double-headed birds as filler motifs, while Figure 21c seems to depict single-headed birds. The Oculate Being, which is shown holding a knife or blade in Figures 21b and 21c, could be described as the standing, frontal version. All three examples also illustrate the x-ray style, showing figures within figures. This feature continues through the sequence, and becomes even more prominent in the

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Paul, Anne, "Paracas Textile Iconography and Its Implications for the Meaning of Linear Style Images," in The Junius B. Bird Conference on Andean Textiles (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1986).

AMNH mantle.

Figure 22 shows depictions of the Oculate Being on double-weave textiles from Paracas Necropolis. There are very few double-weave textiles from the Necropolis site, and the similarity of these textiles to other Cavernas textiles suggests that they may be heirloom pieces or specific attempts to replicate Cavernas style textiles. The first image shows a seated version of the Oculate Being, holding a trophy head, and appearing with the image of a double-headed bird inside him. The second image shows two versions of the Oculate Being; a standing, inverted head version on the left and the seated version on the right. Again the image of the double-headed bird appears inside the Oculate Being, which is also shown with a knife and trophy heads. The tabs along the lower edge feature double-headed serpent and feline images.

Depictions of the Oculate Being in later Paracas textiles become even more diverse, resulting in a great number of Oculate Being types. Figure 23 illustrates the main types of Oculate Beings appearing in linear style embroideries, some of which correspond to those described by Paul.⁷¹ These include the flying Oculate Being, feline Oculate Being, serpent Oculate being, bird Oculate Being, symmetrical Oculate Being, seated Oculate Being, Oculate Being with inverted head, and Oculate Being with streaming hair. Many of these depictions show a strong similarity to earlier Cavernas images of Oculate Beings. All the images

⁷¹ Ibid.

show the large-eyed, grinning creature, often with a knife and trophy heads. Some of the images feature double-headed birds and felines as filler motifs, as in the flying Oculate Being and the Oculate Being with streaming hair. Others such as the feline Oculate Being, the bird Oculate Being, and the serpent Oculate Being show how the creature was depicted with these attributes. The linear style images also show the use of the x-ray style, as well as the use of thin parallel lines which tend to obscure the image.

Anne Paul has categorized representations of the Oculate Being into several different types with several variations.⁷² One of the types, the Oculate-Bird Being, refers to a figure with an upside down human head and the body of a bird shown in dorsal view (Fig. 24). Some of the variants of this type described by Paul, also feature wings opened on the side, triangles along the bottom which can be read as feathers, and additional figures contained within the main figure, as well as filler motifs. These characteristics are all found in the AMNH mantle. In addition, variations 2 and 3 have concentric eyes and appendages coming out from the heads, features that are very similar to the AMNH mantle, where the appendages are replaced with beaks. This type of Oculate Being has also been illustrated by Dwyer and Dwyer in an embroidered mantle from Arena Blanca (Fig. 25).

Depictions of the Oculate Bird Being in linear style embroidery show a strong resemblance to the linear style depiction of the double-headed bird in the

⁷² Ibid.

mantle from the AMNH. Figure 26 compares an illustration of the Oculate Bird Being with the double-headed bird from the AMNH mantle. The image of the Oculate Bird Being features a smiling being with appendages, wings, and tail feathers. In the image of the double-headed bird, the appendages could be seen as the beaks of the bird. The head is divided into two heads and the smile has disappeared. The strong similarity between the two images suggests that the double-headed bird may have represented another aspect of the Oculate Being. Depictions of the double-headed bird may have functioned as a visual reference to the Oculate Being.

Paul has suggested that linear style images represent mythical or supernatural figures, and that they functioned as totemic symbols linking together members of a clan, kinship group or extended family.⁷³ Linear style images were extremely traditional and remained relatively unchanged for almost 400 years. The images were also restricted to creatures associated with the Oculate Being, an important religious figure. Many of the images are also very difficult to read or decipher, possibly because they were considered sacred or ritual images.

⁷³ Paul, 1990, 91.

Conclusion

From this analysis, it can be seen how various aspects of the AMNH mantle, the technique, structure and iconography are combined in its role as a ritual burial cloth. As discussed, the mantle was created with a very particular style of embroidery, that of linear style embroidery. Linear style embroidered mantles differed in structure, style and iconography from other mantles. Linear style embroidery required a special technique which distinguished it from other types of embroidery. In this style of embroidery, the artist stitches the image line by line, following the warp or weft of the base fabric. This technique, in a sense, required the artist to reweave or recreate the textile, rather than just add to it. Linear style images with their thin parallel lines have a transparent or elusive quality to them. In addition, many of the motifs are created in the same color as the background color, such as the red figures on the red border of the AMNH mantle, making them difficult to interpret.

Linear style mantles were also made in accordance with specific design principles, including the layout of the design, choice and number of colors, and iconography. Elaborate and complex color patterns were created and continued

throughout all parts of the mantle. The use of linear style embroidery may have reflected a goal of expressing different types of information from other types of textiles. The technique, which would have created easily repeated motifs, allows for the consistent transmission of designs. In addition, the elusive visual quality of the images suggests a ritual or perhaps supernatural relation.

The imagery of linear style textiles is also very specific and limited. Most linear style textiles feature images as felines, birds, serpents and the Oculate Being, an important cult image in the Paracas sequence. The imagery used in these textiles is also very resistant to change and remains relatively the same throughout the period. The large number of other textiles that feature this same design also suggests that it was a consistent image throughout the period.

Peruvian textiles from other periods show the importance of technique in these textiles, and the way in which technique may become the message. Choice of technique at times seems to reflect a greater interest in the resulting structure or essence of a textile, rather than its visual qualities. This can especially be seen in the way the AMNH mantle is embroidered with red figures on a red background. While the figures are difficult to read from any distance, up close it can be seen that the images are as carefully formed as ones of a contrasting color. It is this technique that also adds to the elusiveness of the images, suggesting a more sacred function. The technique is also very similar to weaving and may have held special significance or ritual importance. Religious texts from the 17th century suggests

that weavers were thought to have animating powers and were able to infuse textiles with life. The use of special techniques may have been considered especially powerful or sacred.

The iconography of the mantle reflects a persistent theme throughout Peruvian art. As noted, the double-headed bird appears in the Preceramic period in twined and looped textiles, where it may have reflected early cosmologies or mythologies. During the Paracas sequence, the double-headed bird appears with the Oculate Being, along with serpents and felines. It first appears in textiles from the earlier Cavernas site, and retains a strong geometric quality that is seen in these textiles. The Oculate Being also takes on qualities of these attendant creatures, and at times appears as a combination Oculate Bird Being. The continued appearance of the double-headed bird with the Oculate Being and the strong similarity between depictions of the double-headed bird and the Oculate Bird Being suggest that it was an important part of this religious cult. The use of nesting one image inside the other also reflects the overall structure of the funerary bundles, which consisted of layer upon layer of textiles. The imagery of the AMNH mantle shows how Paracas embroiderers used embroidery to recreate traditional images in a style and process that was reminiscent of early woven textiles.

As with other Paracas mantles, color plays an important part in the AMNH mantle. The mantle was found to have a very complex and systematic coloring

scheme throughout the main border, inner border and central field motifs. In addition to the fact that only certain colors were used for certain motifs, the designers also decided to restrict the color changes to specific sequences. The same or reverse sequence of colors was used for the same areas. The analysis showed how a specific number of blocks were designed and then repeated throughout the mantle. While the patterns were followed throughout most of the mantle, in some cases some inconsistencies were discovered. Their presence in such an elaborately planned and executed mantle does suggest that they were intentional, rather than accidental, and may have had some ritual purpose.

Quechua religious texts of the 16th and 17th century, as well as reports from Spanish chronicles, have provided additional information on the role of the ancestor cult in Andean society and the important function that textiles play. Textiles were an important facet of society, both during life and in reference to the afterlife, and reflected important ritual and social obligations. The large amount of labor and resources required in the creation of Paracas mantles reflects the strong ties that existed between the two worlds. Textiles were symbolic of the ongoing ritual relationship between the living and the ancestors.

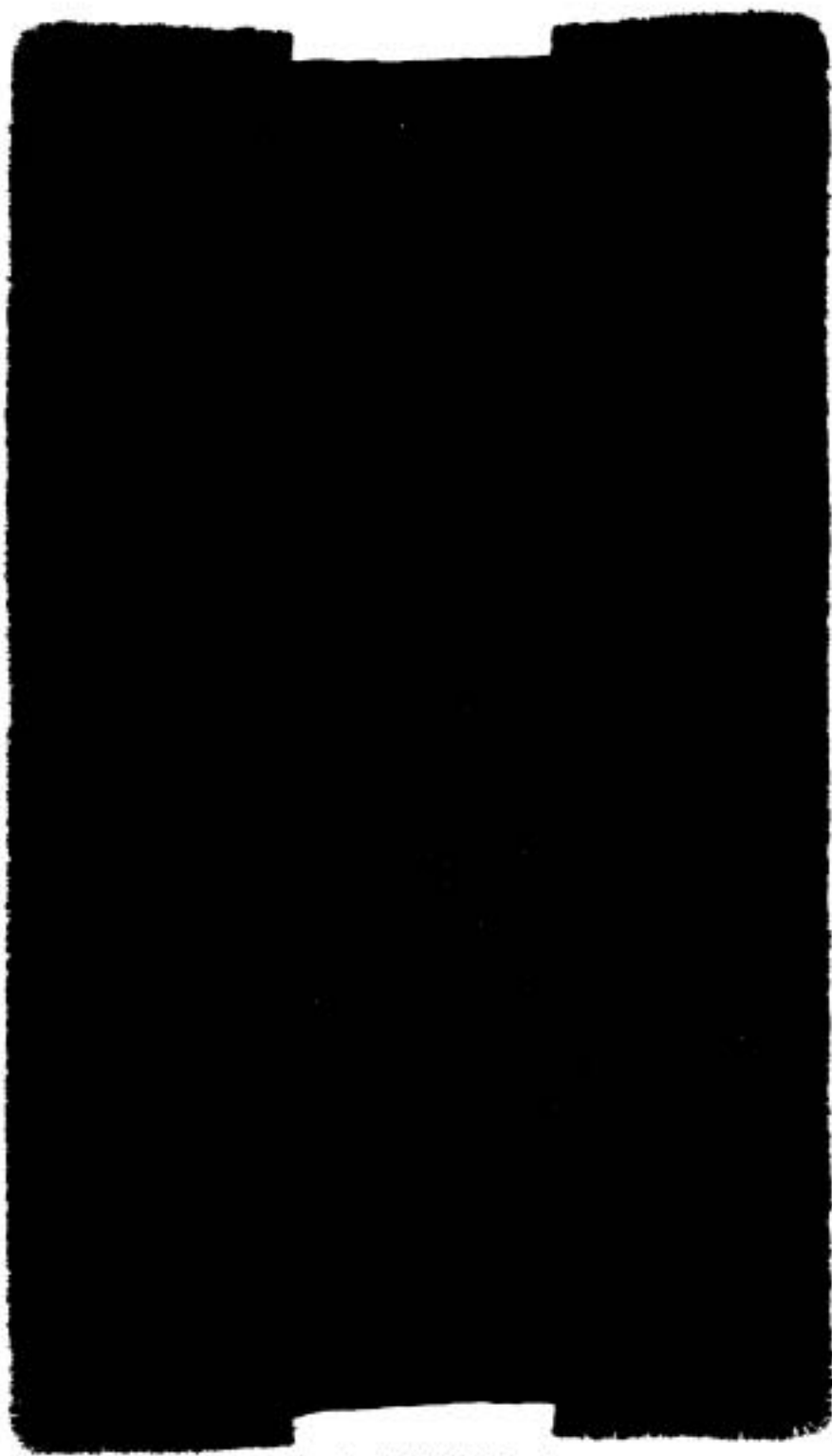


Fig. 1. AMNH Mantle.

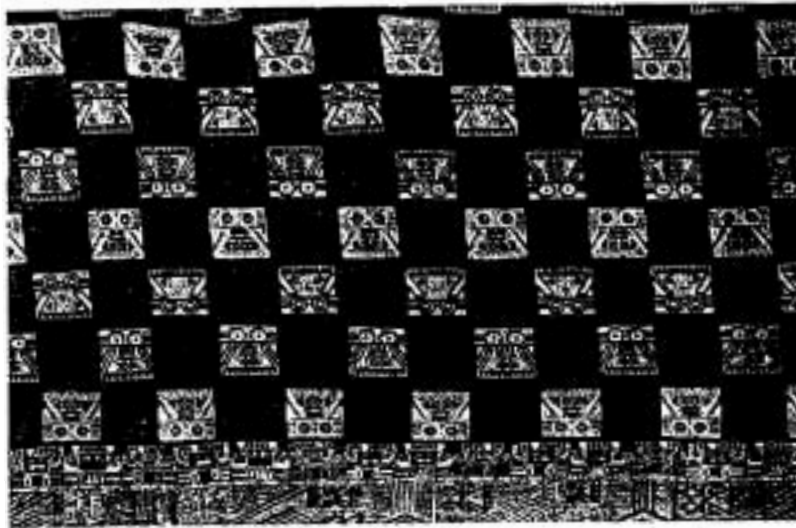
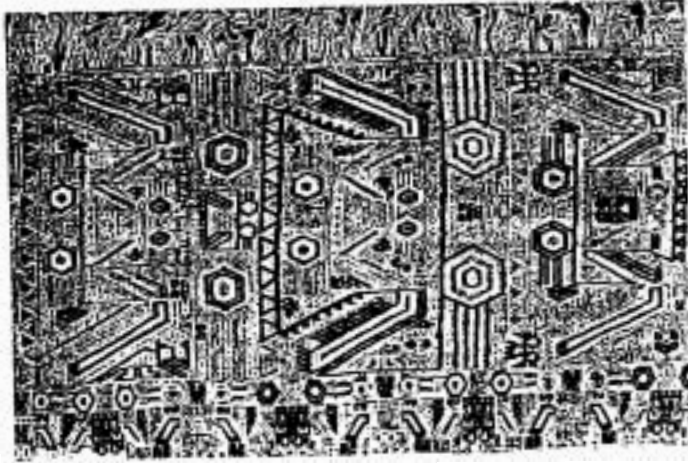


Fig. 2. Paracas Mantles from Gotesborgs Etnografiska Museum and University Museum, Philadelphia.

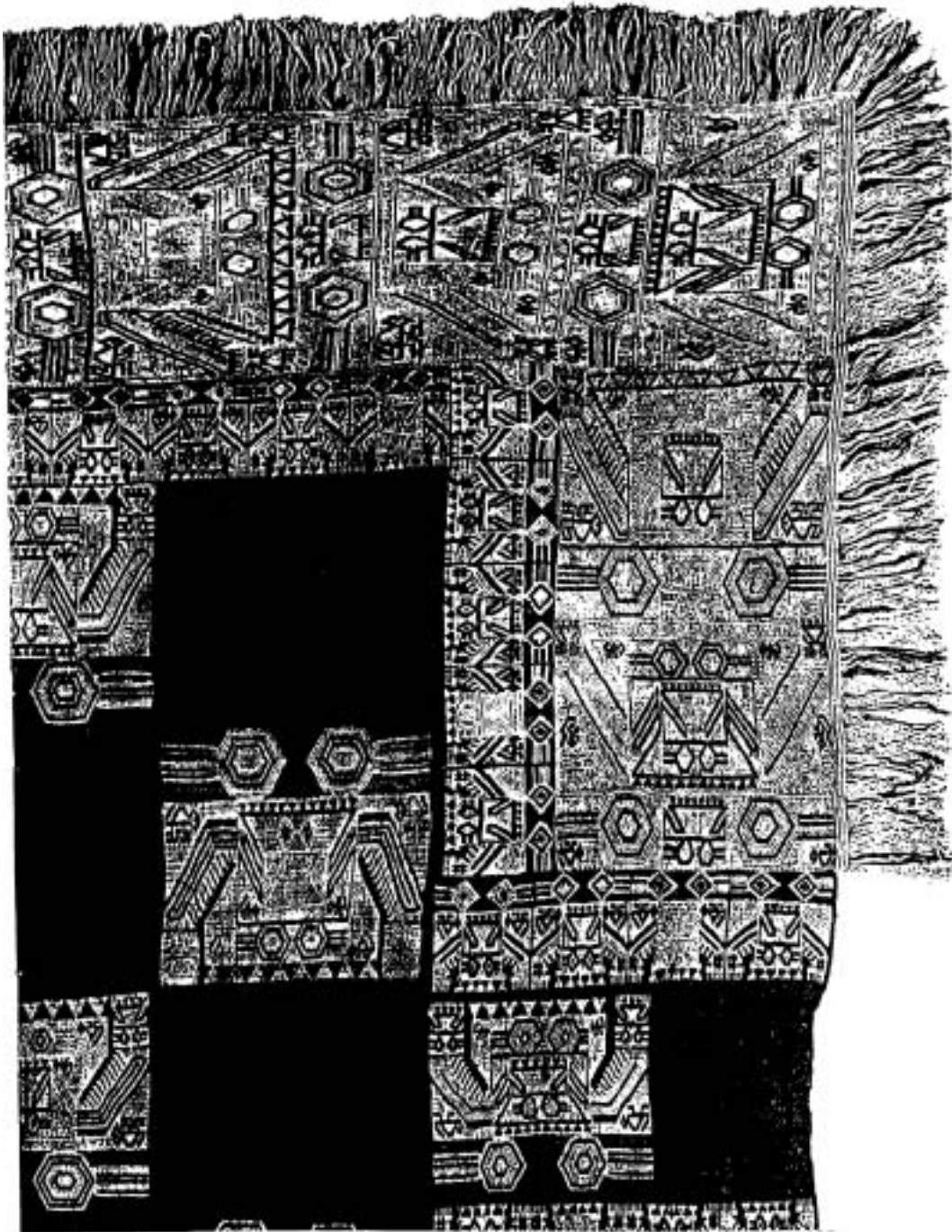


Fig. 3. Paracas Mantle from Museo Nacional de Antropología y Arqueología.

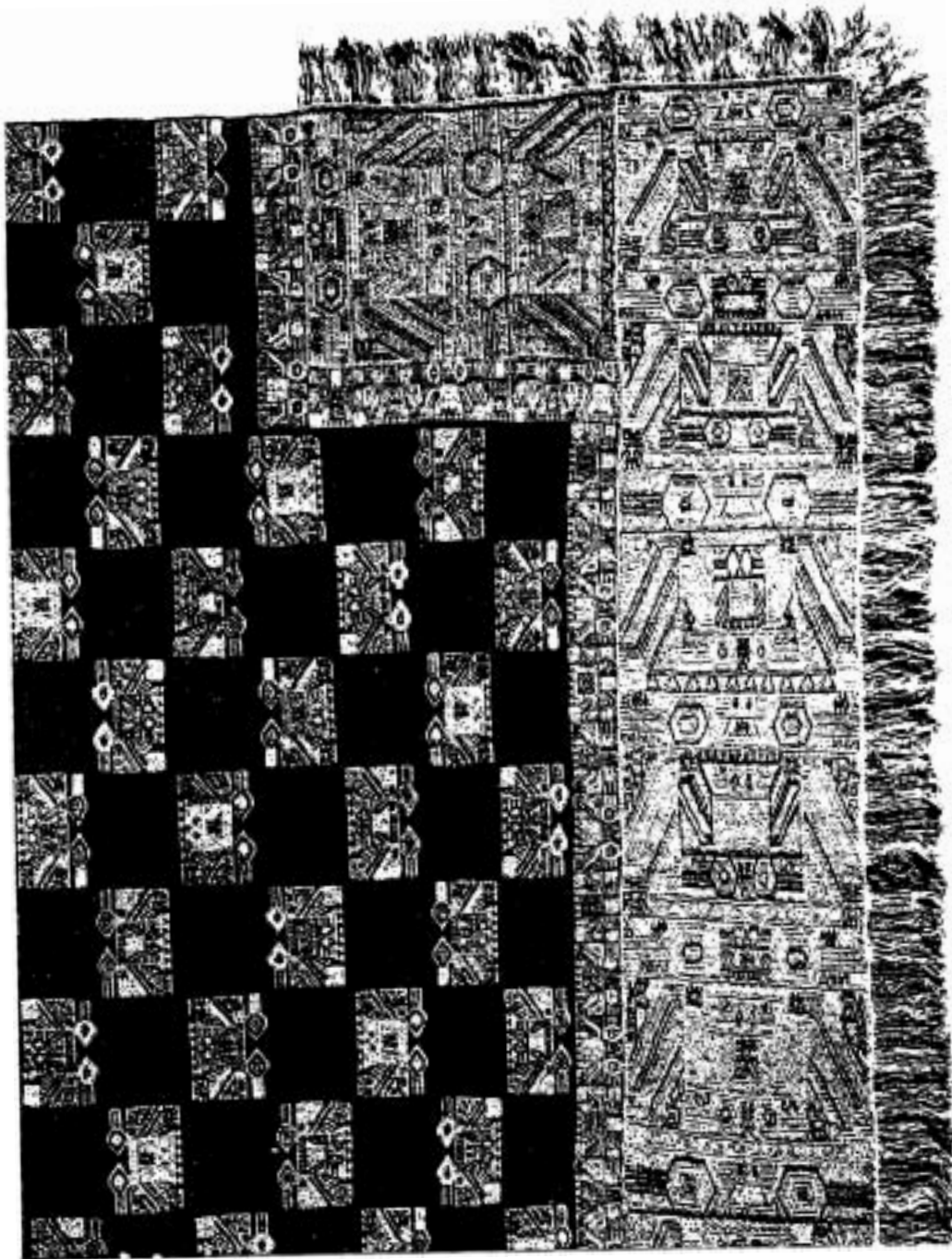


Fig. 4. Detail of AMNH Mantle.



Fig. 5. Detail of AMNH Mantle.

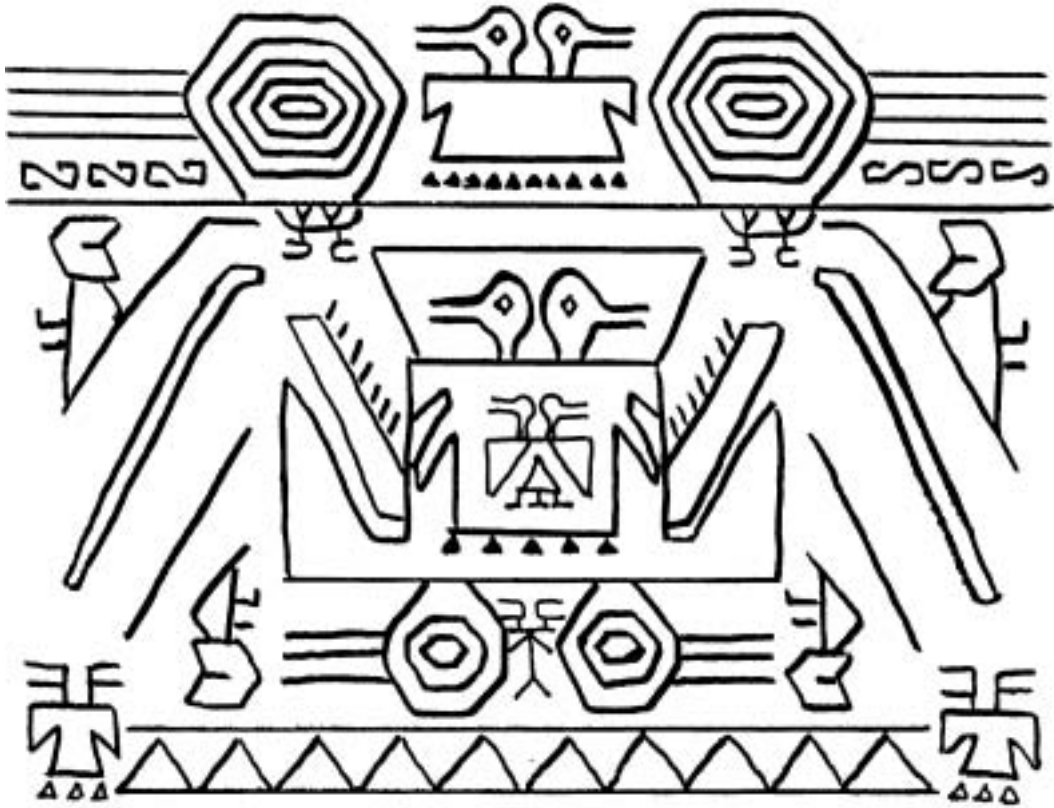


Fig. 6. Drawing of Mantle Design.

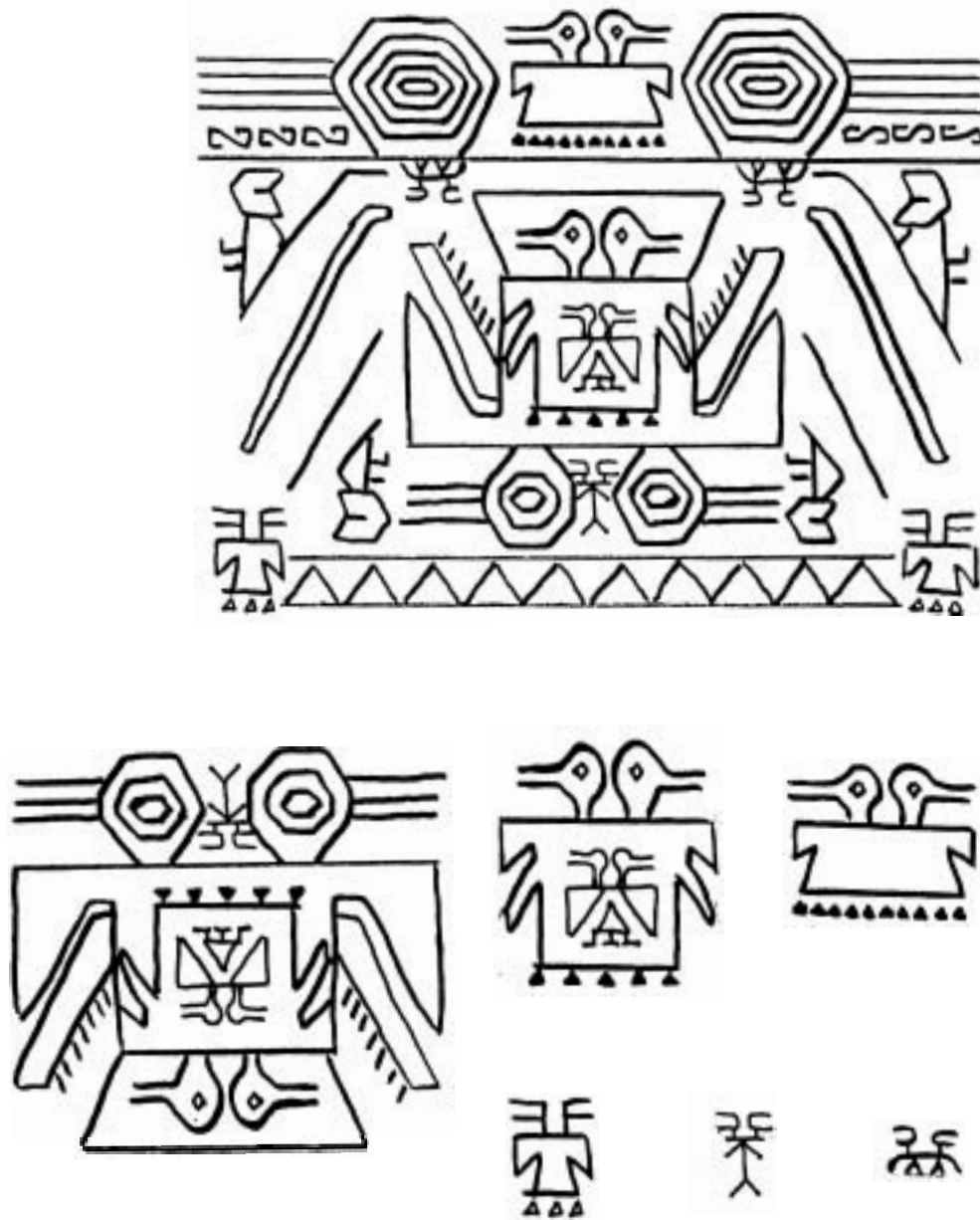


Fig. 7. Drawing of Mantle Design.

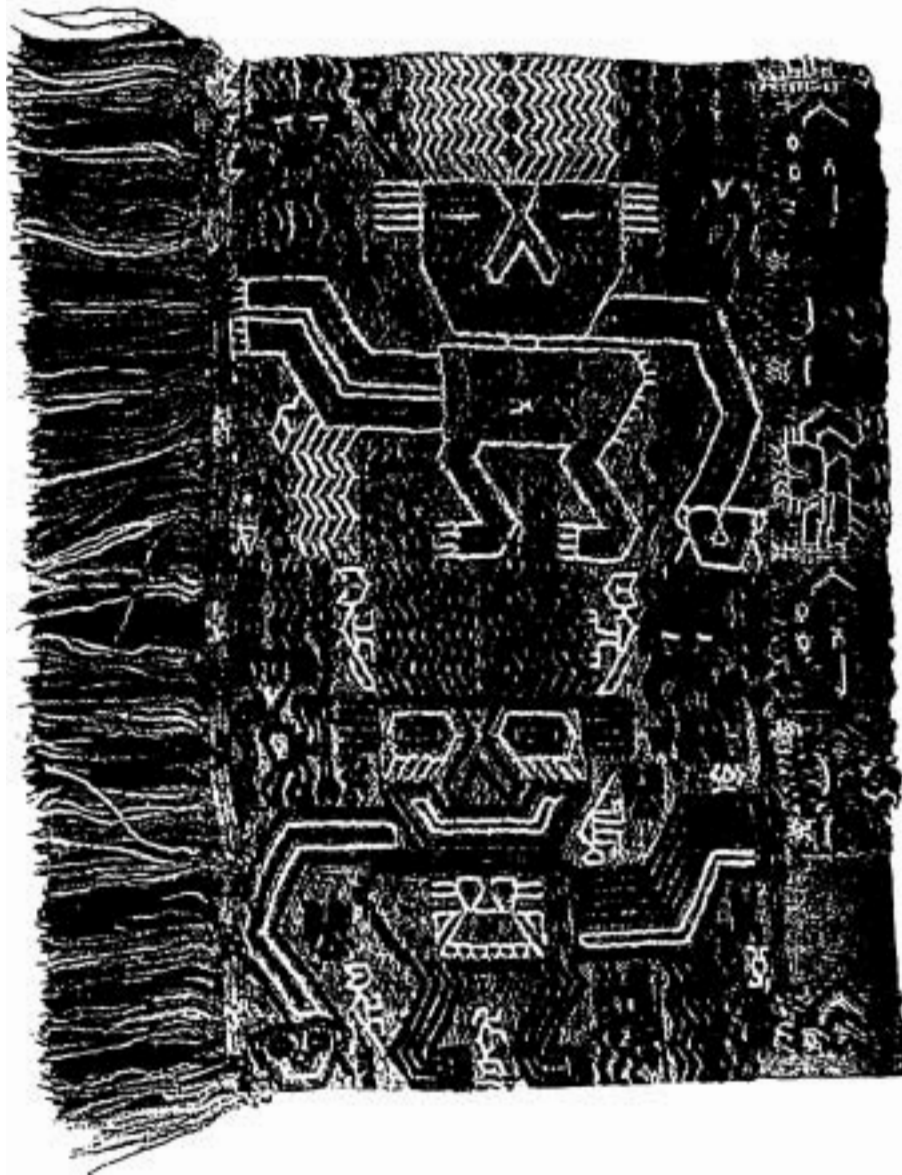


Fig. 8. Paracas Textile with Oculate Being.

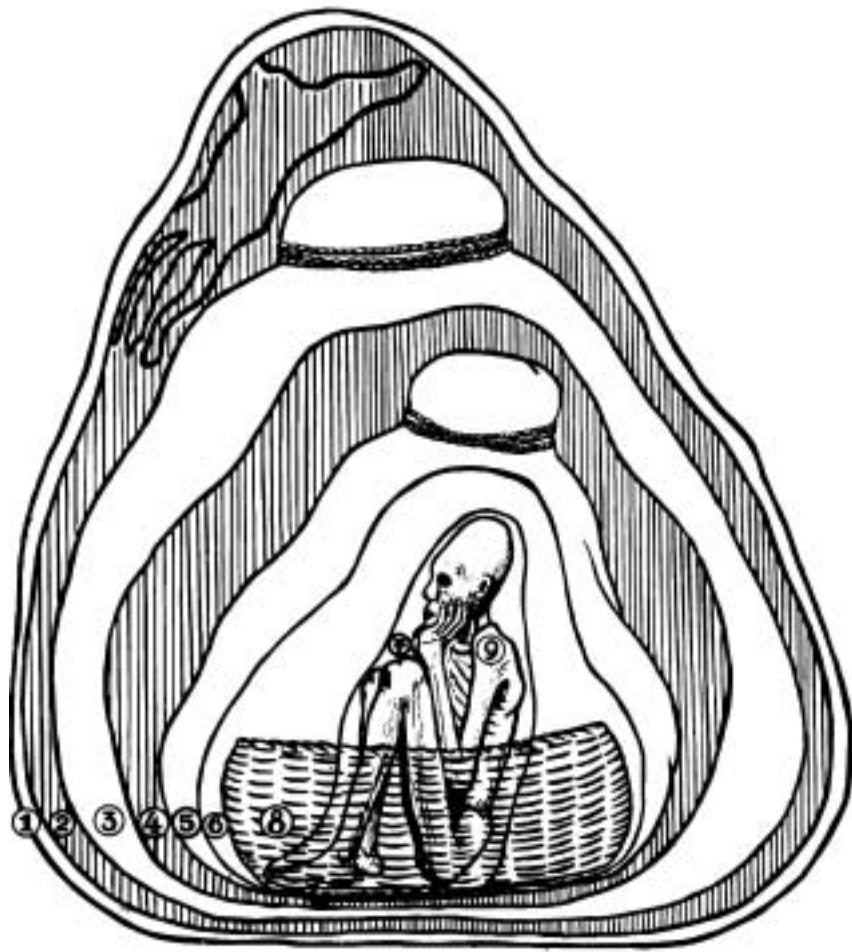


Fig. 10. Drawing of Mummy Bundle

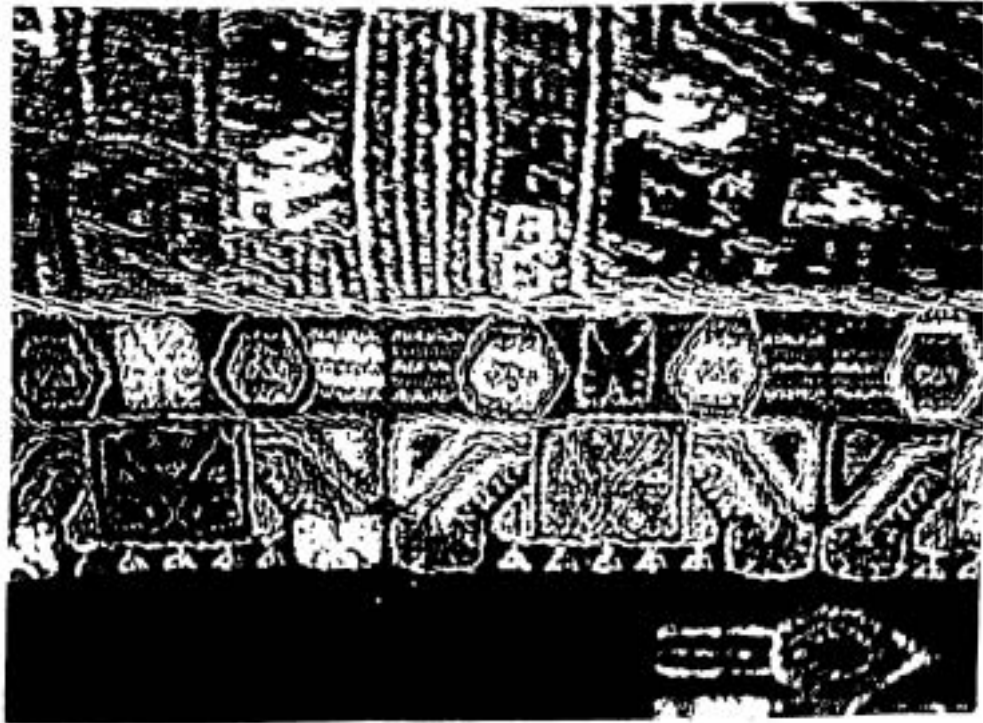


Fig. 11. Detail of Inner Border.

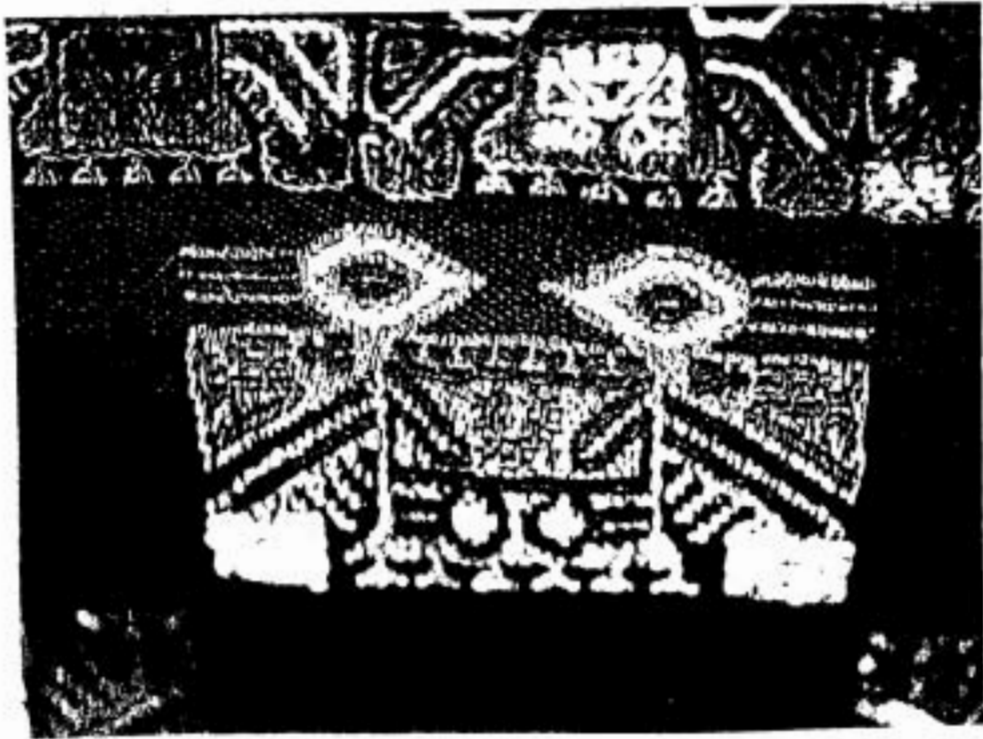


Fig. 12. Detail of Center of Mantle.

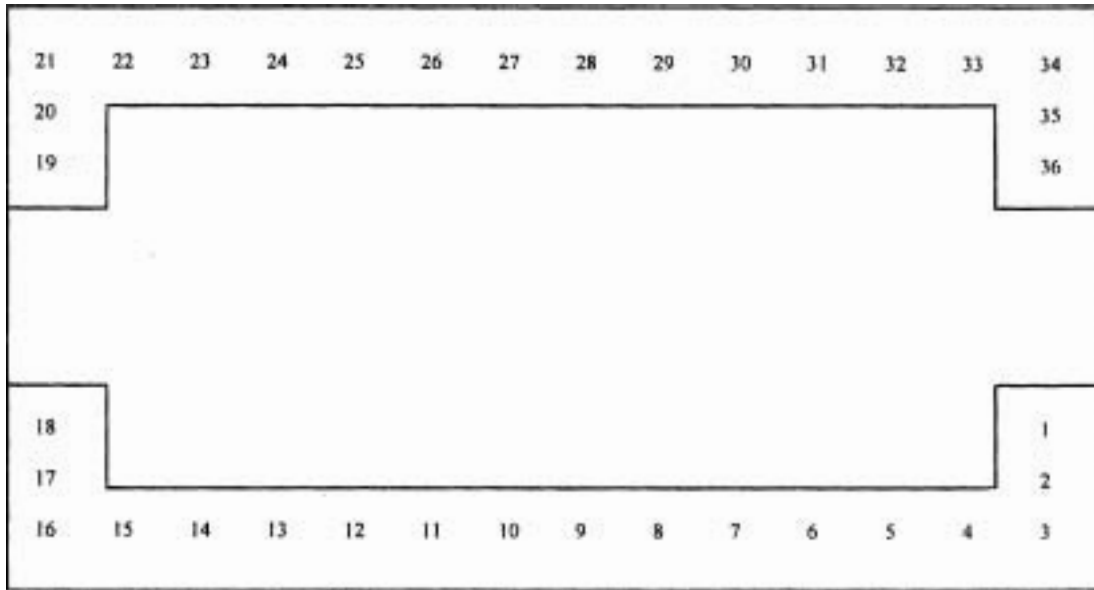


Fig. 13. Diagram of Mantle.

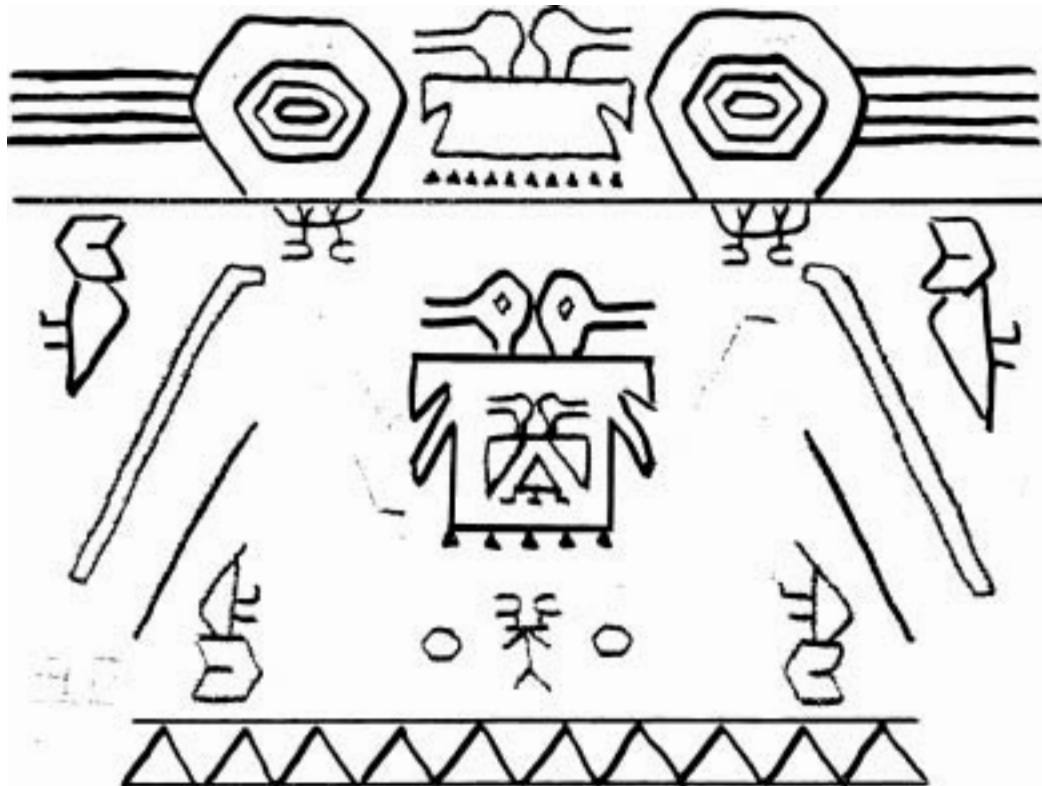


Fig. 14. Diagram of Block 1 Colors.

C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D	E	F	A	B	C	D
B													E
A		4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	F
		1	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
		4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	
3	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1
4	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
4	1	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
1	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
F		2	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	A
E		1	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	B
D	C	B	A	F	E	D	C	B	A	F	E	D	C

Fig. 15. Diagram of Mantle.

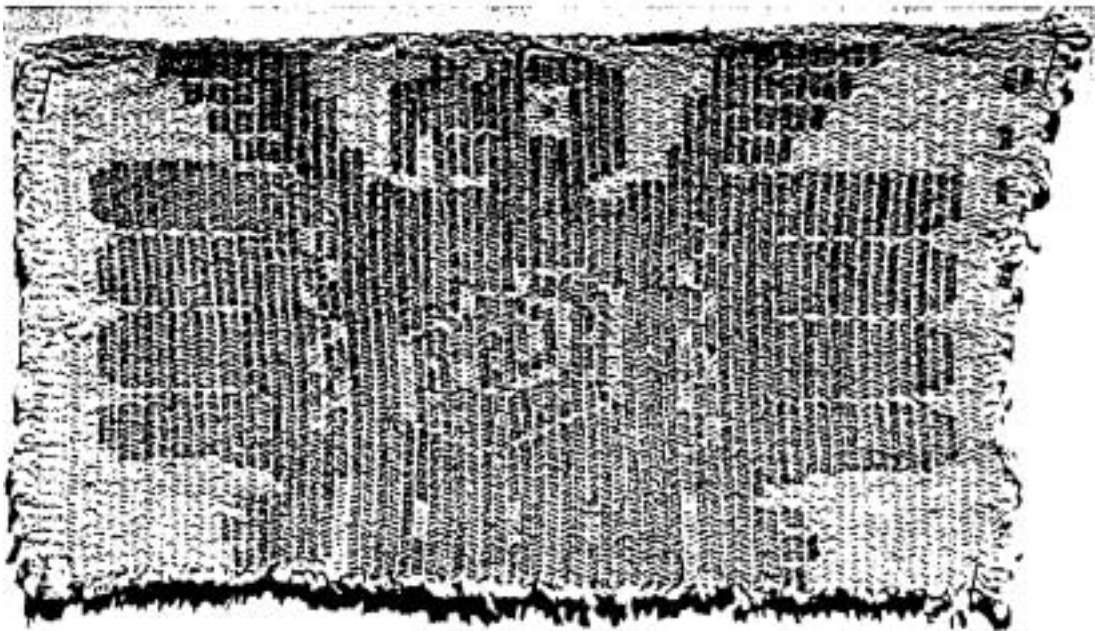


Fig. 16. Textile (Condor Design, Huaca Prieta).



Fig. 17. Double-Woven Textile from Cavernas.



Fig. 18. Mummy Mask from Ocucaje.



Fig. 19. Drawing of Double Bird Textile Designs.

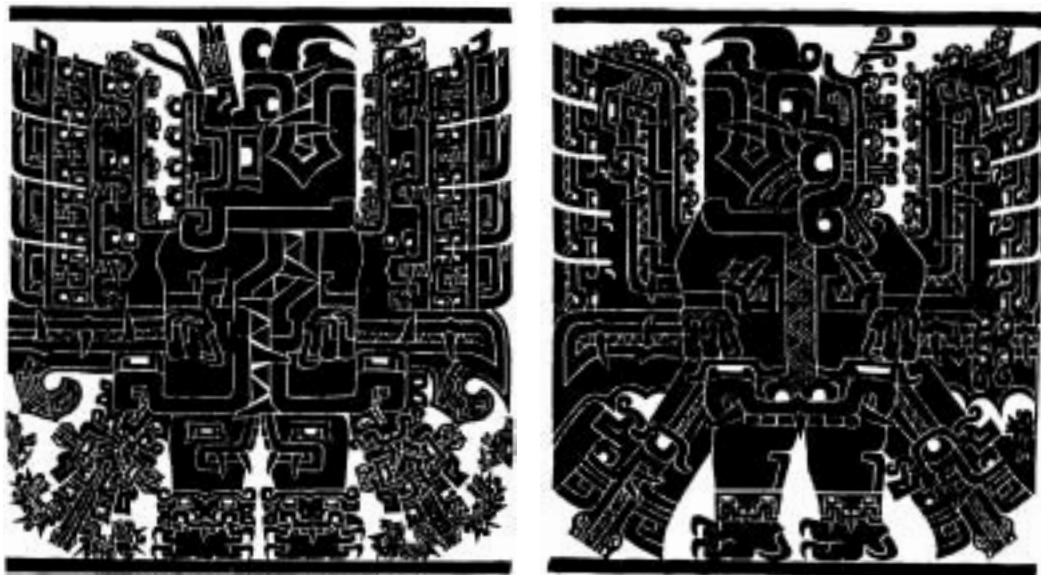


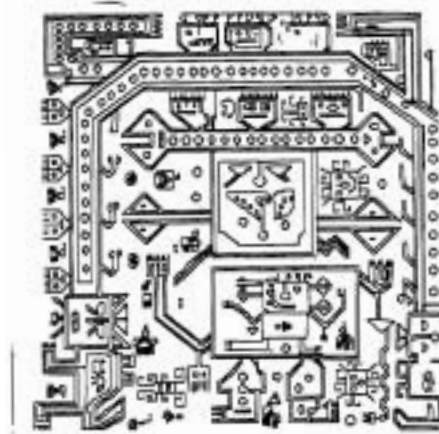
Fig. 20. Black and White Portal columns, Chavin.



a



b



c

Fig. 21. Oculate Beings - Cavernas.



Fig. 22. Oculate Beings - Necropolis.



Fig. 23. Linear Style Oculate Beings.

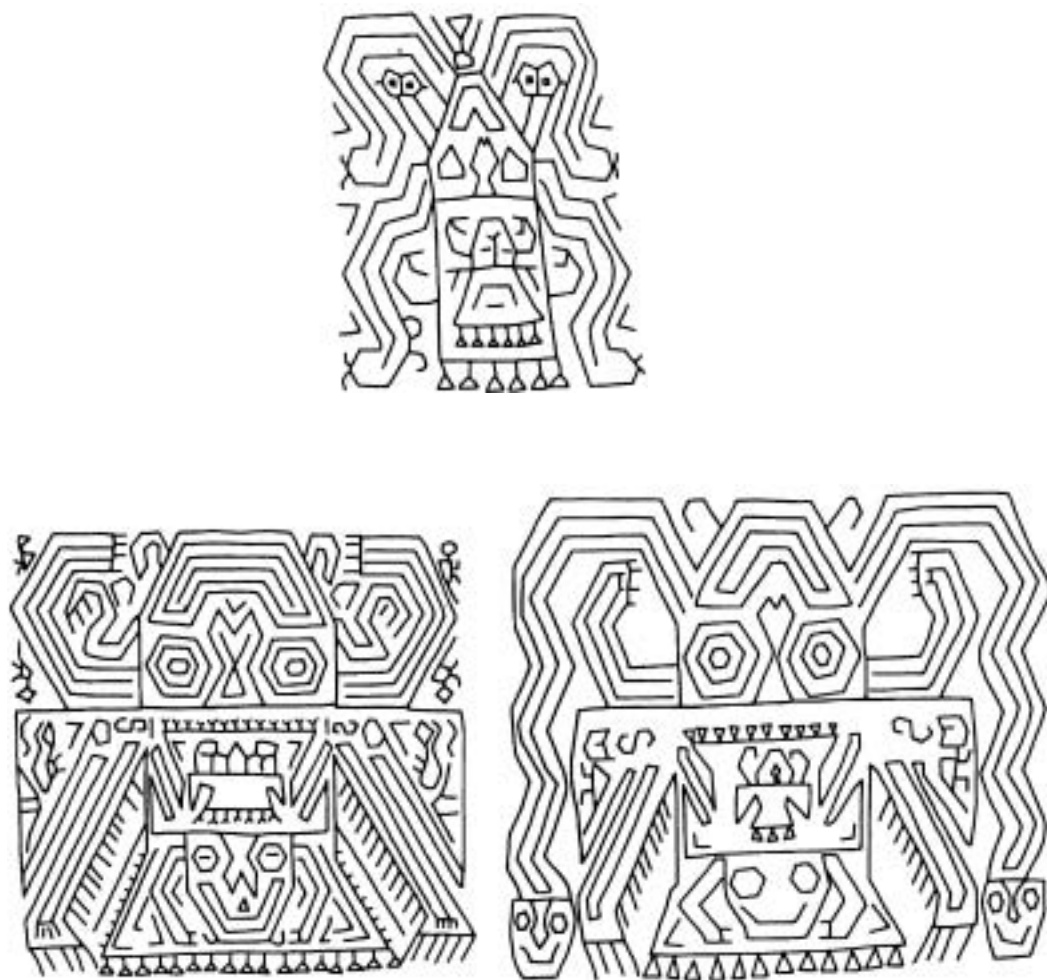


Fig. 24. Drawing of Oculate-Bird Beings.



Fig. 25. Textile with Oculate-Bird Being (Arena Blanca).

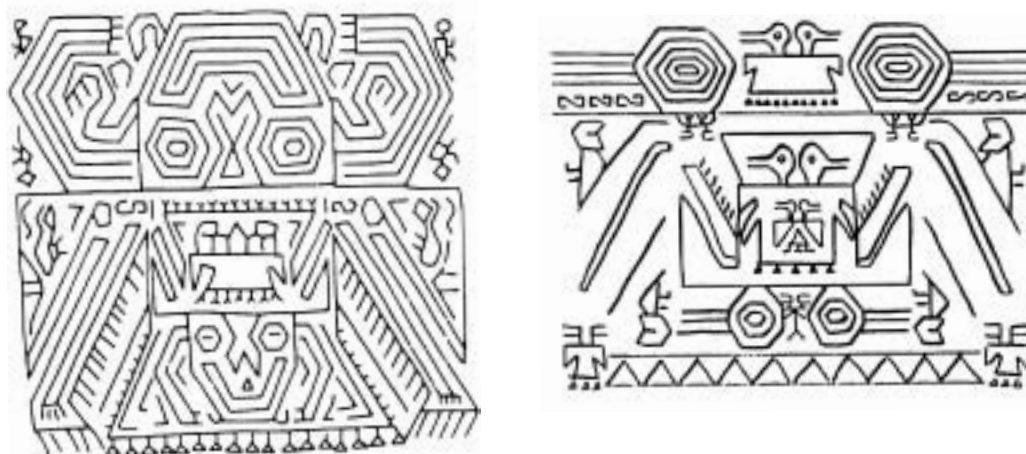


Fig. 26. Oculate Bird Being and Double-Headed Bird.

	Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D	Block E	Block F
Bird 1						
heads	R	BR	R	R	G	R
beaks	R	BR	R	R	G	R
wings	G	BR	BL	G	G	Y
	BR		Y	BL		G
head rings	R	BR	R	R	G	R
	Y	R	BL	G	R	BR
	R	Y	R	R	Y	R
	BL	R	G	Y	R	G
	R	G	R	R	BL	R
Bird 2	Y	R	G	BR	R	BL
Bird 3	R	G	R	R	BR	R
eyes	G	BL	Y	Y	Y	BR
Bird 4	BR	R	BR	G	R	Y
upper felines	BL	R	Y	BL	R	G
inner felines	G	R	BR	G	R	Y
Bird 5 (bird b/t heads)	G	R	Y	BL	R	Y
upper birds	BR	Y	Y	Y	BL	G
corner birds	Y	G	G	BR	Y	BR
Bird 6 (lower bird)	G	BL	Y	Y	BL	BR

Table 1

Border block #	Bird 1	Bird 2	Bird 3	Bird 4
1	R	Y	R	BR (inverted)
2	BR	R	G	R (inverted)
3	R	G	R	BR
4	R	BR	R	G
5	G	R	BR	R
6	R	BL	R	Y
7	R	Y	R	BR
8	BR	R	G	R
9	R	G	R	BR
10	R	BR	R	G
11	G	R	BR	R
12	R	BL	R	Y
13	R	Y	R	BR
14	BR	R	G	R
15	R	G	R	BR
16	R	BR	R	G
17	G	R	BR	R
18	R	BL	R	Y
19	R	Y	R	BR
20	BR	R	G	R
21	R	G	R	BR
22	R	BR	R	G
23	G	R	BR	R
24	R	BL	R	Y
25	R	Y	R	BR
26	BR	R	G	R
27	R	G	R	BR
28	R	BR	R	G

Table 2

29	G	R	BR	R
30	R	BL	R	Y
31	R	Y	R	BL*
32	BR	R	G	R
33	R	G	R	BR
34	R	Y*	R	G
35	G	R	BR	R
36	R	BL	R	Y

Table 2 (cont.)

Inner border	Block # 1	Block # 2	Block # 3
heads	G	Y	BR
center bird	G	Y	BR
eyes	Y	BR	G
bird b/t heads	BL	G	Y
corner birds	BR	G	Y
beaks	BR	G	Y

Block # 4	Block # 5	Block # 6
G	Y	BL
G	Y	BL
Y	BL	G
BR	G	Y
BL	G	Y
BL	G	Y

Table 3

Center motifs	Block # 1	Block # 2	Block # 3	Block #4
Bird 1				
beaks	BR	Y	G	BL
wings	BR	Y	G	BL
heads	Y	BR	BL	G
corner birds	Y	BR	BL	G
eyes	BL	G	Y	BR
Bird 2 (center bird - inverted)	BL	G	Y	BR
Bird 3 (smallest bird)	G	BL	BR	Y
felines	G	BL	BR	Y
eye (Bird 2 - center bird)	Y	Y	G	G

Table 4

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