



A CHIRIBAYA TEXTILE WOVEN WITH HUMAN HAIR

UN TEXTIL CHIRIBAYA TEJIDO CON PELO HUMANO

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One of the textiles in the Maiman Collection is a long band that has been attributed to the Chiribaya Culture (1000-1350 AD), a group of Tiwanaku descendants that settled in an oasis of the Moquegua Desert in southern Peru, and in the Azapa Valley near Arica in northern Chile, (Maytas/ San Miguel phases). The textile technique used is complementary warp, meaning that both sides are identical but the design is reversed. Black human hair forms the image on white cotton net. There is no precedent for the use of human hair strands as a complementary warp in such a long textile piece. A repeating image occurs along the length of the band that we have interpreted as a segmented anthropomorphic female figure. The head bears a typical female headdress, the upper body is depicted with three parallel lines and includes breasts, and the lower body displays female sexual organs, perhaps with the interior shown also.

Key words: textile, Chiribaya, human hair, archaeology, Peru, Chile

La colección Maiman tiene una larga banda textil que ha sido atribuida a la Cultura Chiribaya (1000-1350 DC), descendiente de los Tiwanaku que se asentaron en un oasis en el desierto de Moquegua, en el extremo sur del Perú, y en el valle de Azapa, en el extremo norte de Chile, cerca de Arica (fases Maytas/San Miguel). La técnica es urdimbre complementaria, lo que quiere decir que los dos lados son idénticos pero el diseño es al revés. La imagen sobre el fondo de la red de algodón blanco está formada por pelo humano, del cual no hay precedentes de uso como urdimbre complementaria en un textil tan largo. Hemos identificado la figura segmentada como figura antropomorfa femenina. La cabeza tiene un tocado femenino típico, el cuerpo superior tiene contorno de tres líneas paralelas y muestra los senos, y el cuerpo inferior indica el órgano sexual femenino, quizás con su interior.

Palabras clave: textil, Chiribaya, pelo humano, arqueología, Perú, Chile

The Maiman Collection in Herzliya, Israel, is fortunate to have two interesting and well-preserved Chiribaya textiles, a prehispanic culture of Peruvian southern coast. The one described in this article deserves special attention because of the use of human hair in the weaving, as well as its intriguing iconography (figs. 1, 2).¹

The purpose of this paper is to explore the background of the use of human hair as a weaving fiber in the context of this Andean culture. There are references to use of hair but little work has been carried out on this subject, as our review of all available related literature has demonstrated. The results of this investigation should add to the existing knowledge of the Chiribaya and Mayta peoples and of the use of hair in textile manufacture.

CHIRIBAYA CULTURE

Tiwanaku descendants settled in two valleys near the present-day Peru-Chile border—on the Peruvian side in the Algarrobo Valley near the port of Ilo, Moquegua, and on the Chilean side in the Azapa Valley near Arica. During the late phase of the Chiribaya Culture, some colonies were established in the Tambo Valley further north (Minkes 2005: 107-109) (fig. 3).

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Figure 1. Complete picture of the textile MC8-27, 157 x 9 cm photographed by Abraham Hay.
 Figura 1. Fotografía del textil MC8-27 completo, 157 x 9 cm, por Abraham Hay.



Figure 2. Partial picture of the textile, photographed by Abraham Hay.
 Figura 2. Foto parcial del textil, por Abraham Hay.



Figure 3. Map of the sites mentioned (after Owen 1993: 4).
Figura 3. Mapa de los sitios mencionados (según Owen 1993: 4).

These groups created a distinctive Late Intermediate culture that in Peru is called Chiribaya and in Chile is called Maytas and San Miguel. Their correlation is shown by the following Jessup table (1990: 29; here Table 1):

Table 1. Chronology of the Late Intermediate Period in Ilo and Azapa based on ceramic styles.

Tabla 1. Cronología del Período Tardío Intermedio en Ilo y Azapa, según estilos cerámicos.

Ilo Algarrobo-Osmore Valley	Arica Azapa Valley
Estuquiña/Porobaya	Gentilar
Chiribaya-San Gerónimo	San Miguel
Chiribaya-Yaral	
Chiribaya-Algarrobal	
Ilo Multi-Color	
Osmore Multi-Color	Maytas
Tumilaca	Cabuza

The Chiribaya Culture was studied and described by a number of authors (Buikstra 1989, 1995, 2002; Owen 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998; Boytner 1992, 1998; and others). Its main Peruvian sites are found in the southern coastal desert in the area called the Algarrobo Valley, around the Osmore River. In winter there is lush vegetation on the margins of this valley.

Thanks to the excellent conditions for preservation, several sites in the Azapa Valley have yielded a great number of archaeological items, including hundreds of textiles.

As the two areas were closely linked, they shared ceramic and textile styles and had similar funerary practices. Although a number of bio-archaeological studies have found some differences, the cultural similarities are such that we can refer to them jointly as the Chiribaya Style (Minkes 2005: 110). Carbon fourteen and thermoluminescence tests confirm the dating as 950-1440 AD (Owen 1993: 17, 20, 94).

The Chiribaya Alta settlement is the largest and most important complex, as has been interpreted as the culture's main ceremonial and political center, as well as the home of its highest leaders (Owen 1997: 11).

Despite the harsh environment, these people were able to create a self-sustaining economy based on agriculture, communal irrigation projects and fishing; they also raised camelids and guinea pigs (Jessup 1990: 7-9). They lived in rectangular cane-walled houses of one to

four rooms, and in some cases adobe buildings (Owen 1997: 10).

The burials provide us with information about this society, which had two distinct social classes. Members of the lower one were buried in simple pits with only a few grave goods and plain textiles, while those of the upper group were buried in rectangular tombs with highly decorated ceramics and better quality textiles. Cemetery 4 at Chiribaya Alta contains funerary bundles with many layers of finely woven shirts in a variety of designs that probably belonged to the elite. The quality and quantity of fine pottery and textiles indicate that they were made by specialized craft workers (Owen 1997: 11), with women being the textile producers. According to Lozada and Buikstra (2002: 139), the population was composed of two bio-anthropological groups: farmers and fishermen.

For burial, the non-mummified body was placed in a seated and flexed position and covered with one or several large textiles such as shirts or mantels, which were tied around the corpse with camelid or plant fiber ropes (Minkes 2005: 209). The head of the deceased was often entirely covered with a small rectangular cloth called an *inkuña* (Horta & Agüero 2009: 221).

Women were buried with their faces covered, sometimes with a wide belt around their tunics, and often accompanied by several large ceramic vessels (Buikstra 1995: 359) and artifacts related to textile production. Male burials were accompanied by fishing tools, axes (Minkes 2005: 147) and in one case, two females (Lozada & Buikstra 2002: 154-155).

Amazingly, the hairstyles of the mummies were preserved. A study of the hairstyles of mummies found in the Arica zone from the Cabuza, Tiwanaku, Maytas and Chiribaya cultures (380-1235 AD) shows that 82% of the women's hairstyles included two braids, one on each side (classified as type 2.1b), while the male hairstyles were more variable and complex (classified as types 2.2, 2.9, 2.11 and 3.1) (Arriaza et al. 1986: 362).

Distinction between genders was minimal, if any: "Both sexes had been buried in *camisas* that were similar in form, size, design and quality [...] This seems to imply that men and women of Ilo-Tumilaca/Cabuza and Chiribaya affiliation alike had been entitled to hold similar social positions" (Minkes 2005: 226). In addition, Horta (1997: 82) reports no differences in dress for men and women, with no evidence of special dress for women.

The Chiribaya-Maytas produced a variety of attractive artifacts in a particular style. Their ceramic style, wood and metal craft has been well documented (see Jessup 1991; Owen 1997; Minkes 2005).

All Chiribaya and Mayta textiles were found in tombs, and practically all are made of camelid wool, occasionally with small quantities of cotton. These groups used natural light brown wool for the plain parts and a limited number of dyed colors.

The most important pieces were the tunics, which followed the Tiwanaku textile tradition. The prevailing technique used is plain weave warp faced. Other textiles also use the same design, such as the large rectangular mantles MC804 (see above) and the small rectangular cloth. Another type of textile is the *inkuña* or ritual cloth, which measures approximately 45 by 50 cm and usually contains coca leaves.

Small bags (*ch'uspas*) held special importance in male tombs, with up to nine found in a single tomb, some containing coca leaves. Other textiles found include loincloths, hats and belts, which shall be referred to below (Minkes 2005: 145-146).

The standard textile decoration consists of a few asymmetric lateral stripes in two colors. Some have stripes with figurative designs or blocks of the same design. These were made with plain warp and two complementary sets of colors (Minkes 2005: 139-140).

The designs are either abstract geometric, zoomorphic, or anthropomorphic. Geometric figures include an S-shape, hooks, zigzag lines, step patterns and a typical four-part design (Horta 1998: 155-163). The most prominent zoomorphic motif used by the Maytas-Chiribaya is the double-headed serpent (Horta 1997: 84); others include camelids, monkeys, frogs or toads, lizards, spiders, condors and pelicans (Minkes 2005: 141-143).

Anthropomorphic designs show stylized humans, some clearly male or female, with head appendages, eyes, raised hands with three fingers, and figures or designs in their trunk (Horta 1998: 147-149).

The Chiribaya Culture collapsed around 1350 AD after a catastrophic El Niño period that destroyed their hamlets and irrigation systems. Thereafter, those spared from the disaster produced only very simple items and have been denominated the Estuquiña Culture (Minkes 2005: 111).

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHIRIBAYA TEXTILE

This textile (N° MC8-27) was acquired by the Maiman Collection from a European gallery along with other textiles, with no source information. The piece is a long band (157 x 9 cm) made with the complementary warp technique using white cotton and dark human hair, which is braided into two strands (fig. 4).



Figure 4. Braided hair from this textile, magnification 50x, photographed by Olga Negnevitsky.

Figura 4. Pelo trenzado del textil, magnificado 50x, fotografiado por Olga Negnevitsky.

Technical aspects of the textile

The technique is complicated: the base cloth is white cotton and the complementary warp is inserted in such a way as to leave a net of white for the background and to outline the details. The black hair warp threads are prominent and dominate the surface.

This technique belongs to the category of Warp Pattern Weaves, more specifically Complementary Warps (Pollard Rowe 1977: 67-79). This technique produces an inversion of the design to create a double-faced textile, with one side being the negative of the other. Both sides of the textile are so well executed that it is difficult to know which was intended to be the front or back. Indeed, both sides constitute the front of the textile.

Each end of the band terminates in twenty-six loops of complementary warp. The terminations are fixed by six thick superficial wefts at one end and a single one at the other end (fig. 5). The estimated aggregate length of the braided hair cord is eighty-one meters (fifty-two warps, each 157 cm long).

As the use of human hair as a textile fiber is unusual, we verified this fact carefully, first with an illuminated 12.5x magnifying glass. Olga Negnevitsky then verified the material with a 100x microscope (fig. 6). To be absolutely sure, identification of the material was confirmed with a 400x microscope at the Institute of Forensic Science in Jerusalem, which also concluded that the human hair used in this textile displays characteristics of Mongoloid



Figure 5. One extreme of the textile MC8-27, photographed by Abraham Hay.
 Figura 5. Un extremo del textil MC8-27, fotografiado por Abraham Hay.

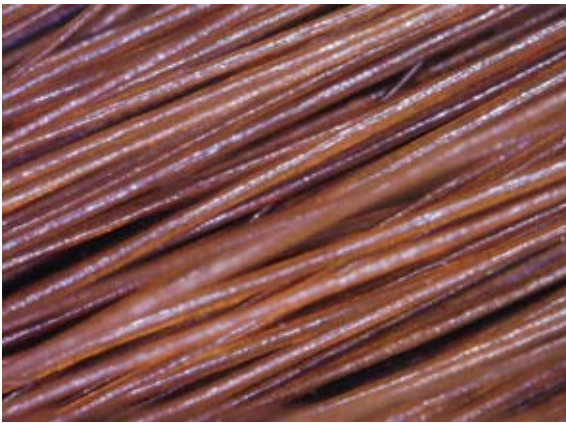


Figure 6. Microscope photography of the hair magnification 100x, photographed by Olga Negnevitsky.
 Figura 6. Foto microscópica del pelo, magnificada 100x, fotografiada por Olga Negnevitsky.

origin. We therefore feel confident that we are, in fact, dealing with human hair.

The iconography of the textile

The other interesting feature of the textile is the iconography. The band has nine rectangular modules and two partial modules at the ends, visible on both sides of the textile (figs. 1, 2). Each module has the same figure, composed of two segments divided into two sections. We believe that these are parts of a single person (figs. 7, 8) rather than a scene with surrounding elements. However, we found no similar figures in the published literature.

It took us some time to understand the relationships between the different iconographic components and arrive at a sensible interpretation. In the end, we

concluded that the figure represents a stylized anthropomorphic female figure with a characteristic headdress, split head, arms, and trunk with breasts, sexual organs, legs and feet.

The first segment is the head. The upper section shows the headdress, the hair and part of the face with eyes. According to Dransart (2000: 131; fig. 9) the headdress is typical of a Chiribaya female figure. An adult woman found in the Osmore Valley had a hairstyle of two large braids made of three strands (Minkes 2005: 244). In our figure, the hair is divided into two sections, one on each side, with each section having three lines that might represent the three strands of the braid.

The lower section of the first segment shows the rest of the face including the mouth, and the shoulders and arms. The arms are folded upwards so the hands are above the level of the shoulders.

The second segment is the rhomboidal body, divided at the waist into two sections. The top section represents the upper body and is outlined as three lines with an opening in the upper part. This most likely represents the three layers of dress that are common in burial bundles. The center of this section contains the breasts, and the bottom section shows the lower body, including the female sexual organ. According to our interpretation, the rounded rectangle represents the female sexual organ, but the lower addition is unusual. It could be simply a decoration, but might in fact represent the internal female organs. Depiction of inner body parts with outer parts has been documented for other Andean textiles, such as the famous textile from Huaca Prieta, which contains an image of a condor with a snake in its stomach.

Double feet extending from the left and right sides of the figure are probably zoomorphic, similar to those on the anthropomorphized creature in our textile N° MC 804 (fig. 9). However, it should be noted that these feet are without legs and are attached directly to the sides of the rhomboid body. This might indicate the contracted legs of a frog or the crouched posture of a woman giving birth.

The iconography of this band represents the concept of duality that is a basic feature of Andean culture; in this textile it is manifested by the partition of the person into two, and the use of two colors and two raw materials. The duality is further reinforced by the fact that the upper and lower parts of the body appear back to back on the object; one side is the negative of the other. For example, the head on one side is the upper body on the other side, while the lower body and feet on one side are the face on the other side, and the straight white line separating



Figure 7. One module: Stylized anthropomorphic female figure, photographed by Abraham Hay.
 Figura 7. Módulo del textil: Figura antropomorfa femenina estilizada, fotografiado por Abraham Hay.

the module on one side is a black line representing the shoulders and arms on the other side, etc.

It is interesting that the mouth represented on one side of the textile is the sexual organ on the reverse side. This connection of the two organs is mentioned by Lyon (1978: 98), who commented, “in some versions the vagina is a mouth.”

HUMAN HAIR AS A TEXTILE FIBER

Human hair is a fiber rarely employed in the weaving of textiles in ancient Peru. Indeed, there are only a few published examples in which this is the case.

Hair has been found on the heads of some ancient Peruvian mummies and as spools and tresses in natural and/or twisted form (see the collection of the National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru in Lima, inventory numbers 14, 239, 285, 351, 7706 and 527).

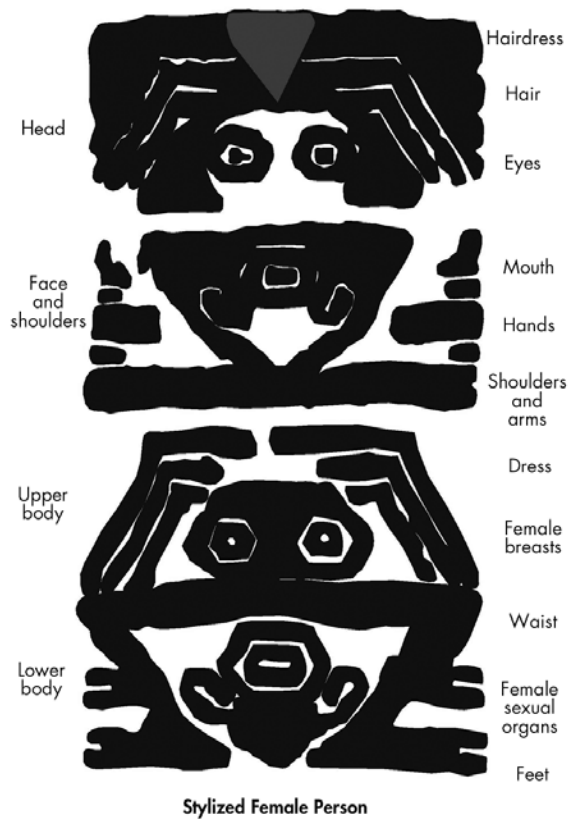


Figure 8. Interpretation of the module (original 15 x 9 cm): Stylized anthropomorphic female figure, drawn by Arturo Fernando Rivera.
 Figura 8. Interpretación del módulo (original 15 x 9 cm): Figura antropomorfa femenina estilizada, dibujada por Arturo Fernando Rivera.

It is interesting to note that most of the objects made of human hair are related to the human head, such as headdresses, wigs and hats (*chullo* or *gorro/llautu*).

Burial wigs from the Middle Horizon (600-1000 AD) made of human hair have been found, and are discussed in the literature: d’Harcourt (1962: plate 77), Zimmern (1949: figures 6a, 6b), Pollard Rowe (1986: 170-171), Stone Miller (1994: 16, fig I.10), Calonder and Rickenbach (2006: 250), and Purin (1991: 225, figure 288). Our catalogue also contains the burial wig from our collection (Makowski et al. 2006: 177, cat. 77). See also the Chinchero Culture wig (Cornejo 2008: 77).

The National Museum of Natural History in Santiago houses the famous Inka “El Plomo child”, who wears a *llautu* or *cintillo* made of human hair on his head (Cornejo 2001: 106). The grave goods that accompanied him included a bag containing locks of hair, deciduous teeth and fingernails (Horne & Quevedo Kawasaki 1984: 926).



Figure 9. Detail of Chiribaya mantle MC804. Catalogue number 268 (Makowski et al. 2006), complete textile 188 x 206 cm, photographed by Yakir Gershon.

Figura 9. Detalle del manto Chiribaya MC804. Número catálogo 268 (Makowski et al. 2006), textil completo 188 x 206 cm, fotografiado por Yakir Gershon.

Two other examples are Wari helmets decorated with braided human hair (Sinclair 2000: 46) and an Inka diadem from northern Chile (1450-1536 AD) made of cotton and feathers and embroidered with human hair (Berenguer 2006: 107).

There are few examples of the use of human hair as fibers in woven textiles. Textiles from the Nazca Valley dating to the fall of the Wari Empire contain human hair as supplementary wefts (Pollard Rowe 1986: 171, figures 13-14). Another use of human hair can be found on the edges of a Pucara-style sash (200 BC-200 AD) (Conklin 2004: 86-87, figure 320). Michieli (2000: 84, figure 2) described a pre-Inka striped textile in which the second weft of the termination is made from human hair.

Bjerregaard (2006: 5) describes contemporary belts woven of human hair from Taquile Island in Lake Titicaca. These items are used by men and women as under-belts in ceremonies and communal work to support the wearer's back during hard labor. The hair used comes from the women of the family.

It should also be mentioned that Minkes, who recently studied the textiles of the Osmore Valley, does not know of any similar items made from human hair. She did, however, mention that human hair was used to make knotted bags and cords (Minkes 2005: 138). Mainly she reported on a *chullo* made from plied and looped human hair that was found in the Algarrobal Valley (Minkes 2005: 170).

BELIEFS CONCERNING HAIR IN THE ANDES

In our review, we failed to find any other textile item similar to the one we are describing. There is no precedent for the massive use of hair as a fiber for weaving (with one notable exception, as mentioned above). This makes this item rare and perhaps unique.

The literature, however, does offer different interpretations of the use of human hair as a fiber in pre-Columbian cultures.

Bjerregaard (2006: 3) proposes that hair in textile has a functional rather than special or ritual meaning: "human hair is relatively thick, long and hardwearing and therefore clearly was used as reinforcement in textiles."

Carmona (2006: 30, 127) mentions Tiwanaku items woven with human hair from the north of Chile, suggesting that hair would have had a sacred quality.

Castañeda (1981: 22) suggests that human hair was used in ceremonial costumes, based on her reading of the chronicles.

According to the chroniclers Betanzos and Cobo, the *wawqi* (the stone "brother" of the ruler) contained fingernails and hair of the Inka it represented. Dean (2010: 35) suggests that each *wawqi* had an interior cavity that contained the fingernails and the hair, and as such the essence (*kamay*) of the Inka was embodied in his *wawqi*.

In the testimonies from the idolatry trials and inspections in the province of Cajatambo, from the middle of the XVII century, there is a description of a death ritual in which a lock of hair of the deceased was cut and placed with the mummies (*malki*) of his lineage (Duviols 2003: 340). A year later this lock of hair was burned together with other offerings. According to this source, the ritual with hair was made to facilitate the passage of the dead to *Hupa Marka* (the land of the souls/deceased/shadows) (Taylor 2000: 26). This practice was based on the belief that the soul of the dead passes over a bridge made of hair on its way to the afterworld, with the ritual involving hair keeping the soul from falling into the river below (Duviols 2003: 341).

Arnold (2000: 17-18) cites her talks with present-day Aymara weavers of the Qaqachaka *ayllu*, near Oruro, Bolivia. When making textiles, the people of the *ayllu* believe that they are creating a new person. They also relate that their ancestors made textiles from human hair. According to their accounts, hair could signify the essence of life. They also use plaits to protect them from death and evil, and so some of the women still wear braided hair today.

Human hair also had a symbolic significance, as it was "believed to have a vital link with the life force" (Donnan 1978: 151). There are many ancient ceremonies related to hair: Inka ceremonies of cutting a child's hair and offering it to the *wak'a* as a sacred object, and the washing, combing and braiding of hair during Inka ceremonies marking a girl's first menstruation are two cases in point.

Carmichael (1995: 173) noted that according to the chronicle of Bernabé Cobo, women that just became widows expressed their mourning by cutting their hair. He also assumes that the Nasca women had the same custom.

In the Moche Culture there are many scenes that demonstrate the importance of hair. For example, one scene depicts a supernatural being pulling his hair to one side, while another scene that is frequently shown has the victor of combat holding the hair of his rival. Ceramic iconography also includes figures washing their hair. From all the above, it is quite certain that these scenes have a ritual or symbolic meaning (Donnan 1978: 175-176).

In his research on headdresses from northern Chile, Berenguer (2006: 77) points out the symbolic relationship between hair and snakes in the Andean world. He suggests that the turban—symbolizing a “woolen serpent” coiled around the head—would protect the dead on the wearer’s trip to the afterlife. Additional connections between hair and serpents can be seen in the iconography of Chavín, Nasca and other ancient Peruvian cultures, where the hair is directly represented as snakes. According to Conklin, “the snake-ness of hair is evidence of life” (Conklin 2008: 278).

The death cult, with its elaborate burials and belief in a new life in the afterworld, held the basic concepts of religion in ancient Peru. As shown above, objects made of human hair have been found in this context. Since hair is connected to the life force and had a vital role in rites of passage in the Andean cycle of life, we propose that it also played some part in the final rite of passage: death.

IDENTIFICATION AND INTERPRETATION

We identified our textile MC8-27 as Chiribaya, based on its style and iconography.

Our first step was to compare it with textile MC8-04 (fig. 9) from our collection. That piece is a typical Chiribaya mantle, 1.88 m by 2.06 m in size, with the typical Chiribaya Culture features described above. Minkes (2005: 143) describes these large mantles as the “finest woven fabrics of this culture”. Figure 9 shows the figures on the textile’s decorated stripes. The first is a double-headed serpent identical to those found in other Chiribaya-Maytas textiles (Horta 1997: 84) and typical of ancient Peruvian cultures of the Early Formative Period and later. The second is an anthropomorphic creature in frontal view that may be a kind of lizard with head appendages. The similarities between this figure and the one shown on the textile under study in this paper—the lower bodies are almost identical and small rounded rectangles are found in both, for example—allow us to assume that both belong to the same culture and location.

The two textiles also have an affinity with the Chiribaya textiles (Southern Coast) in the collection of the Museum of the Americas, in Madrid (inventory numbers 02-5-234, 02-5-207, 02-5-213, 02-5-214, 14,546 and 14,676), some of which are described by Jiménez Díaz in her published doctoral thesis (2009: 414; see also Verde Casanova 2006: 239, figure 132).

We also refer to the Chiribaya-Maytas iconography described by Minkes (2005: 142-143) that shows the same rhomboid body and raised hands, and indication of sex.

Minkes (2005: 195) also refers to a Chiribaya bag (*chuspa*) from the site of La Cruz that has a zoomorphic creature with a similar rhomboid body, the same geometric trunk symbols, and the same posture as our figure.

In her description of the anthropomorphic motives in Arica Culture textiles (1000-1470 AD), Ruiz Balart (2009: 323) illustrates figures with some similarities to those found in our textile. According to her classification, this would belong to the complex group (*grupo complejo*) that displays great similarity to the human figure and to her theme N° 1, “Anthropomorphic figure containing accompanying motive” (*antropomorfo conteniendo un motivo acompañante*).

Horta and Agüero (2009: 217, figure 16a) refer to a female figure on an *inkuña* belonging to group 2D of their classification. This figure is very similar to the iconography of our textile. This group is associated with the San Miguel-Pocoma phases. The figure has the same hairstyle, rhomboid body and crouched posture as the one in our textile. It also has a small anthropomorphic figure inside the body that might indicate pregnancy.

In Horta’s (1998: 148) classification our figure belongs to the monocephalic figures (*figuras monocéfalas*).

We find another female figure on a bag from the Azapa Valley. This figure has a headdress and eyes similar to the upper section of our figure, and again, is in a crouched posture, like our figure (Horta 1998: 149, figure 2.3a).

These well researched studies reinforce the assignation of our band to the Chiribaya Culture and confirm that the figure thereon is female.

Minkes (2005: 146-147) mentions two types of long bands in Chiribaya textiles: the belt (*faja*) and belt-bag (*bolsa-faja*), from Chiribaya Alta and Maytas. These are woven, interlaced or braided with polychromatic and geometric designs. The belts are narrow, just 3 to 5 cm wide, and were used for tying the funerary bundle at the waistline. Belt-bags are also common in Chiribaya bundles and are around 18 cm wide and 70 cm long. These belts have been found wrapped around the deceased’s neck or around the outside of the bundle. The width of our band (9 cm) falls between those two types.

Minkes (2005: 224) reports that in the Osmore Valley graves, belts (*fajas*), bag-belts (*bolsa-fajas*) and ribbons (*cintas*) were found in association with women. In daily life, belts and bag-belts were tied at the waist as support, especially for carrying babies. In graves, they have been found around the neck or next to the body of adult women (Minkes 2005: 211).

Long bands like the one described herein were normally used as belts or turbans. Head covers from this area described by Berenguer and collaborators (1993)

are mostly four-point rectangular caps and loose-braided turbans. No headdress similar to our long band has been identified in Berenguer's book, which specializes in the ancient hats, turbans and diadems of northern Chile.

CONCLUSIONS

The above analysis led us to the following conclusions. The assignment of this textile to the Chiribaya-Maytas is clear, based on the style and specific aspects noted above. Based on the iconography—particularly the hairstyle, breasts and sexual organs—the figure represented can be considered an anthropomorphic female.

We suggest that this long band was used in the burial attire of a woman. According to Minkes, belts were found only in the tombs of females, sometimes wrapped around the neck (Minkes 2005: 211) or the tunic (Buikstra 1995: 259) of the deceased woman.

Whereas shirts placed in tombs may also have been worn during life, other items such as *inkuñas*, *bolsa-fajas* and *ch'uspas* (Horta 1997: 103) were made especially for ritual burial. As our textile shows no signs of wear, we therefore conclude that it was made especially for the funeral of the deceased.

Although Minkes (2005: 233) asserts that no conclusion about status should be drawn from specific artifacts, we suggest that the special design and material used in our band indicates that the woman who was buried with the textile belonged to the upper class.

If our iconographic interpretation is correct, the female image with the internal sexual organ—unusual in this context—might indicate an association with fertility. This interpretation is also supported by the crouching position of the legs, which may represent childbirth.

Based on the references, we propose that the use of human hair is related to rites of passage in the Andean cycle of life, including death. The relationship of human hair with death and the appearance of the female image on the textile are important points for clarifying the role of women in this context.

Further research on the subject, including laboratory analysis, might reveal more details about the person or persons that provided the hair. We hope that future archaeological discoveries will provide additional material to verify the interpretation above.

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NOTE

¹ The other item mentioned—a large, impressive mantle (MC 804)—is described in our catalogue *Weaving for the Afterlife* (Makowski et al. 2006: 321, catalogue N° 268, see figure 9).

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