



Stratigraphy of the Pre-Columbian Chancay Funerary Bundle

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Abstract

During the excavations conducted on the Cerro Colorado site (Peruvian Central Coast), van Dalen Luna discovered that some 40% of 1,500 burials contained human remains wrapped in funerary bundles (fardos). The study of the associated material, along with radiocarbon dating, revealed that the cemetery was used by the society known today as the Chancay culture (ca. 1000 to 1572 AD). In this article we present the stratigraphy of one of the excavated funerary bundles. Its layout informs about the complexity of the funerary ritual during which it was made, as well as the general Chancay mortuary pattern.

Keywords: funerary bundle, Chancay culture, Peruvian archaeology, Andean archaeology, funerary archaeology.

1. Introduction

In the period from 2014 to 2017, van Dalen Luna conducted excavation in the settlement of the Cerro Colorado on the northern part of the Peruvian Central Coast. Among more than 1,500 burials he excavated, some 40% contained human remains wrapped in funerary bundles made of textiles and vegetal materials. Although the analysis of the material is still in the process, we have already obtained some important data on the layout of the bundles, and one of them is presented below.

The cemetery belonged to the Chancay culture (ca. 1000 to 1572 AD), and functioned probably from the middle of the Middle Horizon (ca. 700 to 1000 AD) (Bueno, 2012), through most of the Late Intermediate Period (ca. 1000 to 1470 AD), being abandoned just before the Late Horizon, the period when the Inca empire conquered and ruled that area (ca. 1470 to 1533). Studies conducted by Krzanowski (1991, 2008) and van Dalen Luna (2008, 2012, 2013, 2016a, 2016b, 2017) show that the Chancay people raised monumental public and religious structures that are still visible on enormous sites such as Pisquillo Chico in the Chancay Valley. They were also accomplished weavers, perhaps even the best in whole Central Andes (Makowski et al., 2006; Rowe, 2014). Unfortunately, early Spanish documents on that region reveal little data (Rostworowski, 2002: 269-373; van Dalen Luna, 2016a), and nearly all Chancay cemeteries have

been severely looted. For that reason, the contexts excavated by van Dalen Luna, studied now with the application of modern chemical and biological methods, may contribute to the general knowledge on the pre-Hispanic customs of Andean people.

- The Chancay culture was developed in the north-central Peruvian coast between the year 1000 and 1532 AD.
- Cerro Colorado was one of its most important cemeteries, located in the valley of Huaaura.
- The main form of burial was placing the body of the individual inside bundles or funerary packages.
- Inside these funerary packages a complex stratigraphy is observed, conformed by diverse archaeological materials.

2. The tradition of funerary bundles in the Central Andes

The tradition of bundle-type burials developed in the Paracas culture (ca. 800 to 200 AD) on the Peruvian South Coast and spread throughout the whole Central Andes (Tello, 2009), as the testimonies of early colonial chroniclers relate (Cieza, 1946 [1553]: 351-353; Poma, 1962 [1615]: 206-211; Cobo, 1964 [1635]: 163-165). One of these chroniclers, Bartolome de las Casas, the Spanish bishop who worked in Central America, left a description of bundle making. According to this author, the ritual was public and took place in a courtyard, in the center of which the cadaver was placed. During the ceremony, a choir recounted the deeds of the dead, accompanied by the “mournful” sound of flutes. Subsequent groups of mourners – some of them with stuffs in hands – approached the cadaver in turns, walking around it continuously, placing textiles on the body, crying and singing. Votive offerings of food and objects used by the person during life were made. The typical custom was to renew those offerings as the time from the burial progressed (van Dalen Luna, 2017). Some pieces of the baked meat were hung before the body, and the priests or sorcerers checked the way the color of the meat was changing, auguring the fate of the dead in the afterlife. The mourning could take from five to ten days, depending on the rank of the deceased in life, then the finished bundle was buried in the underground tomb. To facilitate further offerings after the funeral, the mourners sometimes raised constructions above the tomb, on the ground (de las Casas, 1892 [1550]: 118-124). The author had never been to the Central Andes, and this description was probably delivered to him by his friend, fray Domingo de Santo Tomas, who spent more than 30 years in the Viceroyalty of Peru, especially in the towns of the Chancay Valley (the antique territory of the Chancay culture). Pablo Josef de Arriaga (1968 [1621]), the famous extirpator of idolatry, testified that ancestors’ bodies, called “mallqui”, were revered by their descendants and relatives as divine beings. This ancestor cult included physical interaction with the dead, changing their clothes, cleaning the body and making offerings of food. In the early Colonial period, the term “mallqui” meant “a young plant to put in a soil” or “every fruit tree”, and generally referred to the activity of sowing and seeds (Holquin, 2007 [1608]: 41). According to archaeologists, bundle-making was perceived as the transformation of the dead into a powerful ancestor who possessed generative power called *camac* or *camaquen* (Fung, 1960; Morales, 1998; Kaulicke, 2001; Makowski, 2005; van Dalen Luna, 2017). However, we don’t know if every funerary bundle was perceived and treated as *mallqui*. The interaction with the dead should be documented in the bundle stratigraphy, with the episodes of reopening and rewrapping well visible (Shimada et al. 2015, van Dalen Luna, 2017).

3. Making the bundle in the Chancay culture

Each funerary bundle (in Spanish: *fardo*) is composed of different units that create its unique stratigraphy. Instead of soil or construction elements which would be expected in a traditional excavation, these are subsequent layers of textiles, vegetal materials, metal objects, animal skin or fur and different artifacts. The very first, “the lowest”, unit in this sequence is the

mummified or skeletonized human body, the “core” of each bundle. The typical Chancay bundle resembles a rectangular box with its faces slightly curved, which sometimes confers the general appearance of a flattened cylinder. The dimensions rarely exceed 120 cm in length, 70 cm in width and 50 cm in depth. Every bundle is composed of a different number of miscellaneous layers that envelop the body creating the stratigraphic sequence.

3.1 The stratigraphy of the CF C1 bundle

In this article we present the stratigraphic record of the bundle located in the burial CF C1 (Spanish: contexto funerario or funerary context), found in Matrix (feature) 66 of Unit 28, Sub-unit 1. Matrix 66 measured 140 cm in length, 100 cm in width, and the 50 cm in height. The burial was located 171 cm beneath the modern surface level. The bundle was accompanied by three pottery vessels (including anthropomorphic figurine), all executed in the Chancay style. The sample taken from the third cotton layer (level 10B) yielded a radiocarbon date of 580 +/- 30 BP or 1316 to 1439 AD at 95.4% modelled in OxCal v. 4.2.3. using mixed (50:50) IntCal13 and SHCal13 calibration curves (Hogg et al., 2013; Reimer et al., 2013) which means the downturn of the Late Intermediate Period. The unwrapping of the bundle is always a complicated task because of its internal complexity, as well as the poor condition of many elements, especially textiles. We used the stratigraphic method, following the subsequent layers of the bundle, registering every individual element. The work was divided in line with the levels marked by the appearance of the major textiles or vegetal layers that covered or wrapped the bundle. The CF C1 bundle's external layers had been partially destroyed, and in its middle part there was a hole (approx. 15 x 7 cm) made by robbers, who commonly insert long metal bars into the earth to probe for graves. However, the general stratigraphy remained undisturbed and is presented below. Most of the textiles were woven warp-faced, with a 1x1 interlacing pattern. For those that were not, the difference is specified in the description.



Figure 1. The funerary context analyzed

Level 1. Refers to the external layers, severely damaged (Fig. 1, top). The elements:

- Textile 1: preserved only in fragments, this is a mantle of the white-beige color. One fragment, possibly one of the ends, is attached to the other part of the textile with a cord.
- Cotton layer, thickness from 3 to 5 cm, placed all around the bundle.

- Textile 2: poorly preserved fragment of a bigger mantle. The basic color is dark blue with bands created by brown thread warps. This textile was placed on the upper anterior side of the bundle.
- Textile 3: small mantle, base color brown with bands of geometric figures created with complementary beige and blue thread warps. Placed beneath textile 2.
- Textile 4: created from at least four smaller mantles sewn together. The original color was the white, with the surface slightly opened. Wrapped the whole bundle.

Level 2. Refers to textile 6, with a slightly opened surface, composed of two mantles sewn horizontally and wrapped around the bundle (Fig. 1, bottom). The original color was beige.



Figure 2. Level 1 (top); level 2 (bottom)

In the upper anterior part there were five copper sheets, laid in the place corresponding to the head of the individual. Three of them were on the surface of textile 6, and the last two directly beneath. Their deposition was apparently simultaneous with that of the textile.

Level 3. Refers to the main element – textile 7 – and the group of elements placed on top of the bundle:

- Layer of cotton.

- Textile 5: small mantle, with cords attached to its corners, original color beige or white.
- Textile 8: small mantle, woven 2x1, warp-faced, original color white or beige.



Figure 3. Level 3, textile 7 (top); level 3 textile 9 (bottom)

Textile 7 (Fig. 2, top) was the mantle that originally wrapped the whole bundle. At the time of the study only 40% of it remained, and the original color was lost. There was a small copper sheet that was attached with a cord to this textile, in a lower part of the bundle. Further below was textile 9 (fig. 2, bottom), a mantle with the surface divided into brown and white bands of different widths, made from alternate threads of these colors used as warps. This textile wrapped the fardo, except for its top.

Level 4. On this level, textile 10 was registered (Fig. 3, top). This textile was not stretched and had many wrinkles, and was preserved in fragments, although it was possible to

determine that it originally wrapped the whole bundle. There was a rectangular copper sheet in one of the wrinkles, on the top of the fardo.



Figure 4. Level 4 (top); level 5 (bottom)

Level 5. Textile 11 occupied another position in the stratigraphic sequence (Fig. 3, bottom). Its surface was decorated with two different colors of warp, with double brown bands (divided by a thin beige line) separated at regular intervals by beige ones. This textile wrapped the whole bundle in an “envelope” manner, with its corners tied in a knot on the central anterior side of the fardo. There were three copper sheets in an upper fold on the mantle. All of them were rectangular, with the edges slightly concave. The edge of the textile in that place had a small copper bead attached with a cord. A major part of textile 11 was in a state of decomposition, with the beige warps frayed.

Level 6. Beneath textile 11 there was a layer of the cotton 3-6 cm thick (Fig. 4, top). It wrapped the bundle except for its upper extreme, where another element, textile 12, was already visible.



Figure 5. Level 6 (top), level 7A (bottom)

Level 7A. On this level there were two layers – textiles 12 and 13, both in physical contact with the layer of cotton of level 6 (Fig. 4, bottom). Textile 12 wrapped only the upper part of the bundle. It was a mantle sewn of at least eight horizontal bands, each one made of camelid wool in the weft-faced manner, with thick yellow warps and thin rose-red wefts, and with compacted surface (warps invisible). Apart from one case in which two undecorated bands were sown together, every second band had been decorated (Fig. 9). It was in the form of a meander-type figure (probably representing ocean weaves) that continues from one edge to another, and in every flexure there is a figure that represents a fish-like creature bent halfway through the body. Both the meander-type ornament and animal figures had been executed using tapestry and eccentric tapestry, and in some parts also in slit tapestry. In the latter case, the floating parts had been sown to the main part of the textile (the red one). Together, there were four decorated bands and five undecorated ones. Although the textile was not preserved in its entirety, its position on the bundle suggests the original dimensions did not differ remarkably from the present ones.

Level 7B. On this level, textile 13 was registered in its entirety (Fig. 5, top). It had decoration in form of brown and beige vertical bands (warps) placed alternately. This textile was in bad condition, torn and decomposed in many places; however, it was possible to state that it had originally been wrapped around the bundle. Beneath textile 13 there was another one, textile 14, of brown color with an opened surface. This textile originally wrapped the bundle, but only small fragments remained at the time of the examination. Below textile 14 there was a small mantle placed on the top of the bundle. This, textile 16, was decorated with double brown bands (divided by a thin beige line), separated at regular intervals by beige bands. Beneath that small mantle was textile 15, a large mantle decorated with alternate light and dark brown bands (original color unknown). The dark bands had white rectangles as additional decoration. This textile had been sewn from at least three pieces, with vertical seams, and had probably been wrapped around the whole bundle.



Figure 6. Level 7B (top), level 8, textile 18 (bottom)

Level 8. After the removal of textile 15, another two pieces were visible. Textile 17 was a doubled mantle with open surface, of brown color (original color unknown). This element had been placed on the bundle in a shawl-like manner, with both ends laid more below, on the

“thoracic” area. The second textile – 18 – lay beneath textile 17 and was wrapped around the bundle (Fig. 5, bottom). This one lacked any decoration and was badly preserved, although the original beige color was still visible in some places.

Level 9. On this level we registered few different textiles. The first, textile 19, was a mantle decorated in typical style with alternative light and dark bands (the original color had not been preserved) and wrapped horizontally around the bundle, except its top (Fig. 6, top).



Figure 7. Level 9 (top), level 10A (bottom)

Level 10 A. Refers to the level beneath textile 19, where a group of small mantles wrapped around the top was visible, as was a layer of cotton covering the other part of the fardo (Fig. 6, bottom). This level included:

- Textile 20: a beige gauze.
- Textile 21: a beige-brownish mantle, with the edges decorated with a row of marine birds represented in profile, executed using the brocade technique with rose-red supplementary threads; as in the other cases, this piece was fragmented.

Beneath textile 21 there were three copper sheets (Fig. 7, top). Two of them were rectangular with concave edges and were lying alongside each other. The third one had clear rectangular form and was below. The metal pieces were on textile 22, the small mantle that wrapped the top of the bundle in the manner of a headscarf. This textile was executed in a warp-faced manner, with mixed 1/2 and 2/2 interlacing patterns. Originally, this textile had been two-

colored, with beige as the basic color and blue horizontal bands created with dyed wefts. Due to decomposition, the majority of textile 22 had lost its original colors, so it was impossible to determine exactly how it had been decorated.

Level 10 B. On this level, a layer of 5 cm thick cotton was registered (Fig. 7, bottom). This layer was placed beneath textile 19 and textile 22, and was wrapped around the whole bundle. The exception was the top, where the amount of the vegetal material was notably less. Textile 22 was in physical contact with textiles 23 and 24, and with the head of the cadaver.



Figure 8. Level 10A, copper sheets (top), level 10B (bottom)

Level 11A. On this level, the skeletonized body appeared (Fig. 8, top). On the rear side of the skull there was textile 24, a small brown piece (original color unknown) between the cotton and textile 22 on one side, and textile 23 and the skull on the other. The head itself was wrapped with a dark blue band or llautu knotted on the forehead (textile 23). The rest of the body was covered with fragments of textile 25, preserved so badly that it was impossible to specify whether it had been the clothing of the cadaver or the mantle that wrapped the body.



Figure 9. Level 11A (top), level 11B (bottom)

Level 11B. This level refers to the skeleton exposed to the highest possible degree (Fig. 8, bottom) without disturbing its anatomic position (for that reason, textile 23 was still present, as it was impossible to remove it without also disturbing the skull). One can notice that there are many small textile fragments and cotton pieces between the bones. This was due to hole made by grave robbers, in which different fragments from upper layers had fallen. There are also elements of each layer visible beneath the skeleton. As in most of the cases, their state of preservation was far worse than in the anterior part of the bundle, and many of them were found in powder form.

The cadaver was lying on its back and partially on the left side, in a tight flexed position with the thighs adducted to the abdomen. The upper extremities were flexed and the hands were placed on the thorax. The skull was turned to the right and angled down – which could have been an intentional act or might have happened accidentally after the bundle had been made. The soft tissues were mostly decomposed, although some pieces of skin were still attached to the bones. The mandible was lowered, and there was a piece of cotton placed inside the oral cavity. Cotton had been used to cover the face of the dead, and after the decomposition of the soft tissue it fell inside the orbits too. There were also green stains on the bones of the face, indicating the original presence of some metal ornament placed directly on the skin. The ribs and the scapulas were displaced towards the pelvis, which probably happened after the burial, perhaps during the excavation of the bundle.

3.2 *The cadaver*

The cadaver was that of a male aged 50 to 60 (the age at death was established according to Buskistra and Ubelaker (1994) with a typical coastal-type tabular-erect cranial deformation. On the orbital roof was observed cribra orbitalia (second degree). The presence of

these changes suggest iron-deficiency anemia, a vitamin B12-deficient diet or parasitic infections (Hengen, 1971; Walker et al., 2009). All maxillary teeth had been lost during life. The mandibular dentition was partially preserved. From the left part of the dental arch the second incisor, canine and second premolar were still present. On the right side we noted the presence of the first and second premolars, and the first molar. On the crown of the first molar were gross dental caries, and on the contact surfaces of the premolars there were smaller carious lesions. It is most likely that the remaining examples which were examined had survived some serious inflammations that ended with severe fistulas in the alveolus of the upper left incisor and lower left canine. Like most adults buried in the Cerro Colorado necropolis, he suffered from periodontal diseases. In addition, his crown of the left second incisor had been broken during life. The frequency of ante-mortem tooth fractures in this population is very high. We observed, that modern traditional fishermen open mollusk shells directly with their teeth, which could influence the general dental condition and could be one explanation for the dramatic state of dentition in the remains of former fishermen.

Numerous changes were observed in the vertebral column. On the lower thoracic and entire lumbar part of the vertebra, there were well-developed osteophytes on the anterior part of the vertebral bodies. The fifth lumbar vertebra and the sacral bone were fused on both sides but the bodies were unconnected, which means the partial sacralisation of the L5. The segment from the Th11 to L1, on its anterior side, was connected by massive ossification of the longitudinal anterior ligament (ALL). The initial stages of the ossification of the ligaments were observed in the other vertebrae as well. Ossification of the yellow ligaments (YL) was observed along the entire length of the thoracic part of the vertebral column. The presence of the ossified ALL may indicate the occurrence of a disease known as DISH (Ortner 2003). The joints of the upper and lower extremities, especially the shoulder and the knee joints, presented joint deformations typical of degenerative joint disease.

3.3 The making of the CF C1 bundle

As the skin had not been preserved, we don't know exactly how the body was treated between death and the bundle-making ceremony. The mourners could have smeared the body with some balm. In four other cases where the mummified skin was still present, we discovered traces of some mineral and organic substances that had been applied to the bodies. Although most of the fardos contained mummified or semi-mummified remains, the body of the CF C1 individual had skeletonized. This may mean that no preservatives were used, or that external taphonomic factors enhanced the decomposition of the mummified tissues. Although the Central Coast is arid desert, some sudden rains may happen during the El Nino period, as in 2016. The chemical properties of dyes applied to some textiles could also prove significant.

What we know is that the mourners covered the face (perhaps also the rest of the body) with a layer of cotton, and placed above this some copper objects – as the green stains on the facial bones suggest. Then they filled the oral cavity with small copper sheets and cotton, and tied the llautu or textile 23 around the head. All these activities could have happened immediately after death, or when the final bundle was being prepared.

During the bundle-making the body was still in one piece, as indicated by the discovery of nearly all bones in their correct anatomical positions. Thus, the individual was arranged (probably naked) in the fetal position and wrapped in the first layer – textile 25, with textile 24 beneath the back of the head. Then the bundle-makers placed a layer of cotton all around the bundle, and wrapped textile 22 around the top, placing on its surface three copper sheets, and above these textiles 21 and 20. Then the subsequent textiles were added. Some of them served as shrouds and were used to wrap the entire bundle, or its bigger part – textiles 19, 18, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 6, 4, 2 and 1. It seems probable that the ceremony participants first placed the textile on

the ground, then put the bundle on it. While wrapping the fardo with the major textiles, they also put groups of small mantles around its top (22, 21 and 20, 17, 16, then 8 and 5, then 3 and 2). This activity could be connected with the placing “false heads” on the top of the fardos, a custom known from many Andean cemeteries. There were also four layers of cotton between the groups of two, four or five large shroud-type textiles, and also just beneath textile 1. The very special textile 12 – the tapestry – was placed on the anterior upper part of the bundle. During bundle-making, the participants placed small copper sheets cut from some larger pieces into the folds of the mantles or between them. We can only hypothesize that the ceremony of bundle-making resembled in some way the one described by Bartolome de las Casas. Thus the team of bundle-makers would be composed of different groups of mourners, who each placed a layer (or layers) as they performed their part of the ritual. The whole process would last from five to ten days, perhaps even longer.



Figure 10. Textile 12 (top), and a detail of its decoration (bottom)

4. Discussion

The bundle from the CF C1 was one of the most significant found on the Cerro Colorado site, due to the number of all textiles used, and the presence of textile 12. Although we found cotton or wool-based tapestries in some other cases, there had previously been no single piece bearing similar decoration, which seems to present serpent-like beings, each one bent in half, with three bands protruding from the end of the body. That could possibly represent the tail of some bird, fish or lizard. The meander-type ornament that divides the beings from each other could be interpreted as the surface of the ocean. There is no doubt that this textile may be studied in many ways and will provide some important data in the future.

The individual from CF C1 died at his 50s or 60s. This life span was quite typical for the fishermen whose remains were buried on the Cerro Colorado site, whereas the other people, including craftsmen, usually died in the fourth or, less often, fifth decade of life. The osteobiography of the cadaver fits into the general condition of the Cerro Colorado population, especially in the matter of dentition, as inflammation resulting in severe fistulas was extremely common. The same can be said about the degenerative joint disease (DJD), as well as the spine malformations. Such severe osteophytosis and ossification of the ligaments were common problems in that area, and the DISH disease occurred sporadically. In our opinion, degenerative changes such as DJD, severe osteophytosis and ossification of ligaments are evidence that the individual performed hard physical work, as the traditional modern fishermen still do. As new bone kept forming in his auditory canals, he was losing his hearing, and was probably deaf in the last years of his life. The fistulas in the alveolus of the upper left incisor and lower left canine indicate prolonged inflammation, perhaps even gangrene. This means that the man was in constant pain during the last months or even years of his life. In traditional Andean traditional, illness is, in many cases, the result of a distortion in the natural balance of the forces that drive the universe. This distortion can occur because of sin (including against non-material beings). The activity of natural powers such as the sun or the wind, supernatural forces, contact with the dead and witchcraft may in this tradition cause sickness as well (Marsteller et al., 2011; Altamirano, 2018). It is unknown, however, how exactly the Cerro Colorado people perceived the health problems that affected the CF C1 man. Malformations of the teeth and spine were common among them. In case of the fishermen, exostosis was too. The question of how they explained the presence of these conditions remains unanswered.

The cadaver, that was to be buried inside the bundle, was probably that of a member of the fishing community. This assumption is based on the presence of the new bone formation (exostosis) in both auditory canals. Clinical studies have shown that such tumors grow as a result of frequent diving in cold waters (Reimers et al., 2008). According to Rostworowski, the coastal society of the Central Andes was, during Inca times, divided into farmers, merchant specialists, craftsmen and fishermen, who lived in separate districts or settlements. The fishermen, of the littoral zone, spoke their own language and worshipped deities and natural phenomena associated with marine resources (Rostworowski, 2005: 117-152). It is still unclear, however, whether in the Late Intermediate Period people lived in a similar manner. On the Cerro Colorado site, both fishermen and craftsmen were buried alongside each other. This may mean that the division described by Rostworowski didn't exist in the 13th and 14th centuries, or that these groups lived separately but used the same burial ground.

To sum up, we know that the remains are those of a fisherman who performed hard physical work. He suffered from painful dental and spine symptoms, as well as the presence of parasites, anemia or a vitamin B12 deficiency. Each one of these conditions might have caused physical weakness, and perhaps some psychiatric problems (in case of vitamin B12 deficiency). Nevertheless, his relatives treated the body with great respect, using a significant number of textiles to create the bundle, including the very unique tapestry of textile 12. The latter could simply refer to his fishing skills (if we accept that its iconography represents the sea and marine beings), or perhaps was intended to help him in his afterlife journey. The significant amount of work put in the creation of his bundle suggests he was a special person, for some reason. He might have had outstanding fishing skills, and perhaps eventually became the leader of the fishermen he worked with, fulfilling some political function too. Could it be possible that after death he was worshipped as a divine ancestor or mallqui? We discovered two cases in which new textiles may have been placed on an already closed bundle; the stratigraphy suggests that this could happen some time after the original deposition of the fardo, and this will be verified with the radiocarbon dating. The CF C1 bundle, however, does not present any signs of rewrapping, and seems to be the product of a one-time event. There were no visible traces of the grave having been re-opened, except for those left by modern robbers. Thus there are no signs of interaction between the dead

and his living relatives. That would mean that the individual described in this article was not meant to become mallqui, yet he was buried inside a funerary bundle. The perceived prospects for the dead among society of the Late Intermediate Period was probably more complicated than simple division to ancestors and non-ancestors. Perhaps the coastal version of the ancestor cult did not require interaction with the dead, as Isbell suggests (Isbell, 1997: 144. See, however, Shimada et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion

The stratigraphic study of the Chancay funerary bundles reveals the complexity of the funerary pattern among the late Pre-Hispanic coastal societies. In this paper we have presented the case of the remains of a 50 to 60-year-old fisherman, who towards the end of his life suffered from painful teeth and spine conditions, and was also deaf. During the funeral ceremony, his body was wrapped in 25 different textiles, as well as some additional cotton layers, then he was buried on the Cerro Colorado site. All textiles were warp-faced mantles of different dimensions, made of cotton-based fibers. The only exception was textile 12, the tapestry decorated with the meander-type ornament and with the serpent-like beings. This mantle was made of camelid wool. The general layout of the bundle might be conditioned by the biography of the man before death, including the social position he occupied. Colonial documents suggest that this type of treatment was reserved only for some important people, perceived as powerful ancestors who possessed generative power. However, the stratigraphy of the CF C1 bundle presents no traces of interaction with the dead. We are dealing then with a somehow distinct funerary tradition, which will, hopefully, be understood in the future.

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