

## MORTUARY PREFERENCES: A WARI<sup>1</sup> CULTURE CASE STUDY FROM MIDDLE HORIZON PERU

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*Mortuary practices reveal a great deal about the social organization of prehistoric cultures and their landscape of places. However, tombs are favored targets for looters, making it difficult to determine original burial practices. Very little was known about Wari burial during the Middle Horizon (A.D. 500–1000), even though Wari was an imperial, early Bronze Age culture with a spectacular urban capital in highland Peru. Excavations at the secondary Wari city of Conchopata produced remains of more than 200 individuals, from disturbed and undisturbed contexts. These burials as well as information from other sites permit an initial description of ideal patterns of Wari mortuary behavior. The forms abstracted reveal graves ranging from poor and ordinary citizens to royal potentates, supporting inferences of hierarchical political organization. It is also clear that the living accessed graves of important people frequently, implying some form of ancestor worship. However, unlike the later Inkas, Wari ancestors were venerated in their tombs, located deep within residential compounds and palaces.*

*El estudio de las prácticas funerarias es invaluable para el conocimiento de las culturas prehistóricas y los pueblos antiguos. Desgraciadamente, las tumbas son también el blanco favorito de los saqueadores, por lo que resulta difícil en muchos casos interpretar las prácticas originales. Pese a la importancia de una cultura como Wari, un imperio de la Edad del Bronce que tuvo una espectacular capital urbana en la sierra del Perú, conocemos muy poco respecto a sus prácticas funerarias. Las recientes excavaciones en la ciudad secundaria wari de Conchopata han permitido recuperar restos humanos, en contextos funerarios disturbados y no disturbados, correspondientes a más de 200 individuos. Estos entierros y la información disponible de otros sitios waris (incluyendo al centro urbano de Huari) hacen posible plantear una descripción inicial de patrones ideales de la conducta funeraria wari durante el Horizonte Medio (500–1000 d. C.). Las formas interpretadas revelan tumbas que corresponden tanto a ciudadanos pobres y ordinarios como a gobernantes reales. Además, las tumbas de las personas importantes presentan evidencias de haber sido abiertas con frecuencia luego del entierro, implicando alguna forma de culto a los ancestros.*

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Archaeological studies of tombs and mortuary remains have been critical for understanding the prehistoric past since at least Sir Leonard Woolley's (1934) discovery of the Royal Cemeteries of Ur. In the 1970s, grave and cemetery analysis became more rigorous and systematic with the methodological innovations associated with processual archaeology (Brown 1971; Goldstein 1980, 1981; Saxe 1970; Tainter 1978). Postprocessual archaeology and the study of ancient landscapes offer a potential for even broader understandings from mortuary studies, examining places of the dead as spatial metaphors inscribed

into built environments of the past (Bradley 1989, 1998; Cannon 1989, 2002; Carr 1995; Parker Pearson 1982, 1993, 2002; Silverman 2002; Thomas 1996). These landscapes of death were designed to communicate, so archaeologists would not be doing their jobs if they rejected the hermeneutic challenge to read and interpret them. However, meaningful understandings depend on archaeologists determining how ancient people intended burial to be conducted. This is usually more difficult to determine than imagined.

Graves, and especially the interments of important individuals, are almost always targets of plun-

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der and destruction. Tombs were loci of power within their social arenas, making them targets of aggression. They frequently contain significant wealth, attracting looters. Furthermore, mortuary behavior may not represent an event, but a process, consisting of a sequence of acts over an extended period of time. How can the archaeologist differentiate the opening of a grave to add a newly deceased member of the family, to remove an ancestor's bones, or to participate in some activity from robbing a grave for its wealth? At least in part because of this problem, there are no general syntheses of mortuary practices for prehispanic Andean cultures such as highland Chavin, Recuay, Pucara, Tiwanaku, or Wari.

Archaeologists' discussions of landscapes of the dead must be based on intended conditions of interment. But the archaeological record presents snapshots of complex processes, some intended by the mourners but others resulting from looting, construction, erosion, etc., frozen as confusing material contexts. An inventory of popular burial patterns must emphasize the original ideals. While this obscures variation and inferences about individual agency, in the long run the abstraction of ideal patterns or norms seeks to recognize culturally relevant distinctions, on the basis of which organizational structure may be inferred, and observed ranges of behavior can be more cogently discussed. To abstract intended or ideal patterns an archaeologist must work qualitatively, evaluating as many mortuary contexts from the same culture and time period as possible. Effects from destructive processes such as looting must be evaluated in opposition to impacts from intended mortuary processes that may have gone on over a long period of time, such as refurbishing grave goods. These effects must be distinguished from differences intended to express status, class, gender, age, or other socially relevant variables. No explicit methodology exists to assure success, although large, carefully excavated samples are essential.

In the archaeological study of Wari mortuary behavior, it was impossible to move directly from excavation data to prehistoric activity. Information was confusing and contradictory, in large part because so many mortuary contexts were disturbed. Was every pit and chamber with a few human bones a tomb that had been looted? Or had human bones been trophies or amulets that were deposited here

and there, and not exclusively in tombs? Was any disturbance a result of looting, or had mortuary practices been a prolonged process involving reopening a grave several times? Was secondary burial a Wari practice or did bones become disarticulated by other post-interment processes? It was only through comparison of many cases that patterns began to emerge. Unfortunately, information has been poorly recorded for many years; therefore comparative data were not accumulating quickly. Archaeologists discovering disturbed Wari burials paid little attention, for they appeared to offer only insignificant scraps of information about the past. More recently, it has become clear that even disturbed remains are valuable for comparative purposes, when carefully described.

Archaeologists engaged in inferring past cultural patterns must avoid excessive influences from theory and expectations in their comparative abstraction of ideals and norms. If we employ favored theoretical convictions or analogies to help infer intended burial forms and mortuary processes and then go on to use the same theory to infer cultural meanings, our results become overly laden with theoretical conviction (Isbell 1995; Wylie 1992a, 1992b). For example, Jalh Dulanto (2002) describes scattered human bones and their spatial contexts for a first millennium B.C. settlement on Peru's central coast that imply an ideal involving processing of ancestors' remains in a manner quite foreign to anything known in Andean ethnohistory. However, his convictions about continuity in Inka ancestor worship and mortuary practices lead him to emphasize similarities to ethnohistorical descriptions while de-emphasizing differences. The outcome is preferred patterns more similar to those of the Inka than warranted by the actual data.

### **Intended Patterns of Death at Conchopata**

This study is possible because of recent excavations at Huari's secondary city of Conchopata.<sup>2</sup> They have revealed the remains of more than 200 individuals from burial contexts of the Wari culture. Conchopata is one of many Wari capitals, secondary cities, provincial centers, and communities (Figure 1) that were spread across the Central Andes during the Middle Horizon (A.D. 550–1000). Most archaeologists interpret Huari as the capital of a vast imperial state of the same name

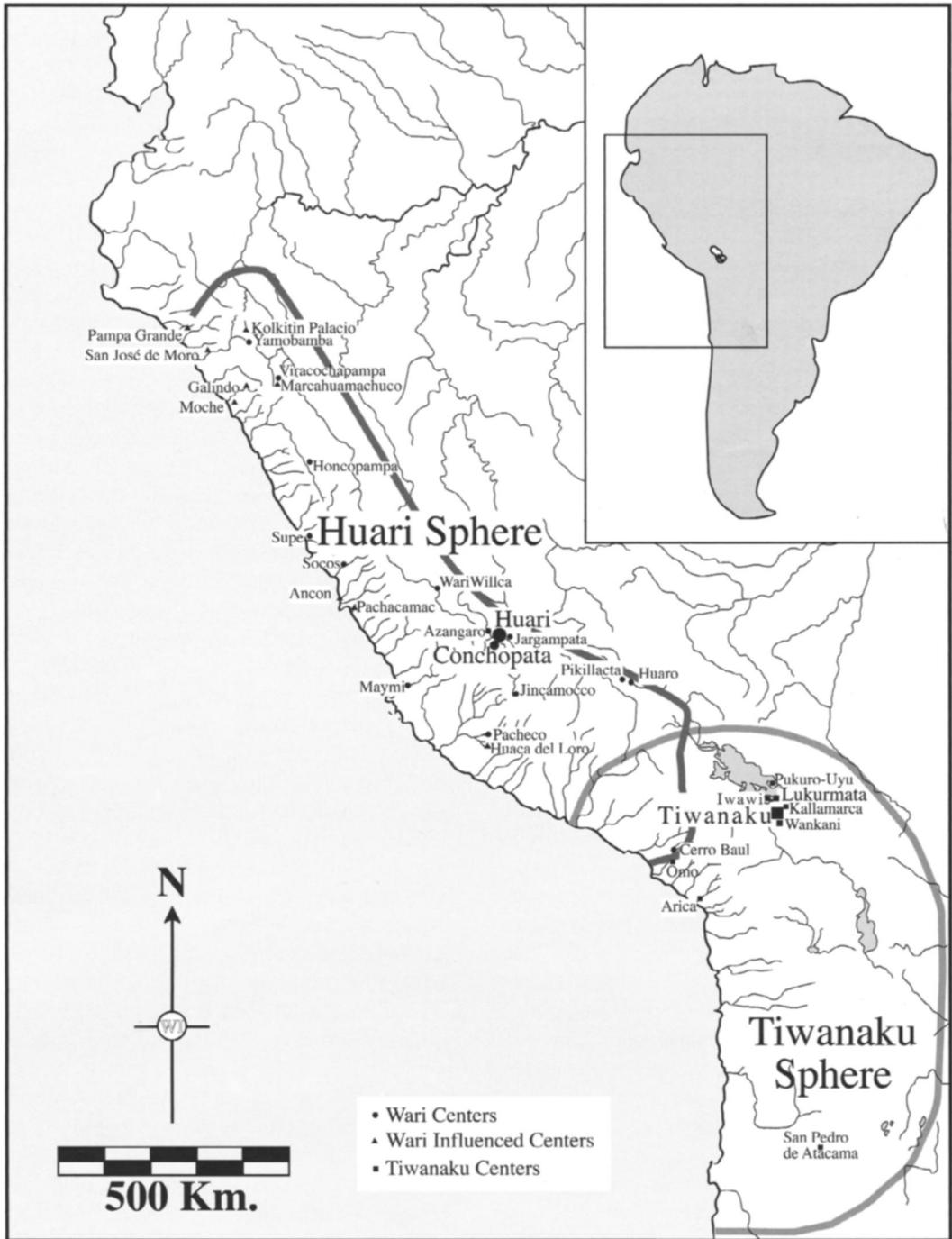


Figure 1. Central Andes showing Middle Horizon centers including the capital, Huari, provincial Wari cities and other contemporary capitals.

with its network of centers documenting its administrative structure (Isbell 1983, 1985, 1991, 1997b; Isbell and Schreiber 1978; Lumbreras 1974a, 1974b, 1985; McEwan 1991, 1996, 1998; Schreiber 1991, 1992). But agreement is not universal. Alternative positions consider Huari and the Middle Horizon a confederation of lineages (J. Topic 1986, 1991, 1994; T. Topic 1991; J. Topic and T. Topic 1992, 2001), or a mosaic of independent cities engaged in intensive commerce (Shady 1982, 1988; Shady and Ruiz 1979). Of course, new understandings of the landscape of death during the Middle Horizon can help resolve this debate.

Conchopata is located in the southern end of the Ayacucho Valley, about 10 km from the capital city of Huari (Figure 2). It has a long history of occupation, but during the centuries when Huari dominated much of Peru, Conchopata was the second city of the imperial heartland and the largest urban center in the Ayacucho Valley's southern settlement enclave. Today its ruins are overrun by the modern city of Ayacucho, resulting in the destruction of most of the ancient archaeological zone (Figure 2). Originally the settlement covered at least 20 ha, and possibly as much as 40 ha. Presently, only about three ha remain, probably the focus of the original civic center. All of our new information about the dead comes from this tiny portion of the old city (Isbell 2001a). However, this well-documented sample of some 200 individuals is probably the largest collection of archaeologically excavated burials from the Wari heartland. All come from a densely urbanized area of more or less continuous buildings, plazas, and patios (Figure 3). At some time, most of this surviving portion of Conchopata may have been enclosed by a perimeter wall, of which a northwest and a southeast corner have been preserved. Be that as it may, Conchopata was long recognized as a community of potters because large numbers of ceramic manufacturing tools were discovered at the site (Pozzi-Escot 1985, 1991; Pozzi-Escot et al 1994, 1998). However, once we learned to recognize mortuary architecture and how it varied with status, it became clear that the surviving portion of Conchopata contained tombs that included elaborate and wealthy examples. The site could not have been a town of craftspeople of more or less middle status. Rather, it appears to have been a landscape of palace compounds occupied by lowly servants, middle-level citizens, wealthy

elites, and probably even petty kings or governors.

Architecture, stratigraphy, ceramic styles, and radiocarbon dates reveal five phases of occupation at Conchopata. During the Huamaní phase (240 B.C.–A.D. 300) we know that Conchopata was occupied, but little cultural material can be assigned to this time. During the Mendosa phase (A.D. 300–550), Huarpa and Curz Pata pottery styles were in use. Several graves were discovered in the north-central portion of surviving Conchopata, but these burials represent a distinct pattern of interment. Modest tombs appear to have been located in an open area with no architecture, close enough to one another to imply a cemetery. Bodies were flexed and placed in simple pits or cavities in the bedrock, frequently accompanied by one or more ceramic vessels, and probably by perishable items as well. Another grave, reportedly discovered by earthmovers while leveling the landing strip several hundred meters southeast of our excavation area, contained Curz Pata pottery, so it also belonged to the Huamaní phase. But it is reported to have been a bottle-shaped shaft tomb with a skeleton extended on its back (Lumbreras 1974:112a). No other bottle-shaped shaft tombs or extended burials are known at Conchopata.

The Silva phase (A.D. 550–700) initiated the Middle Horizon at Conchopata and is characterized by oversize Conchopata-style ceramics as well as Chakipampa and Ocos pottery. Less-fancy pottery usually designated Huamanga was also in use. There is a great deal of evidence for large-scale building at Conchopata, although many of these early buildings were disturbed by later activities. The remains document a significant change in the landscape of the dead between the late Early Intermediate period and Middle Horizon times that continued through the Silva phase as well as the next two phases at Conchopata. Human bodies were no longer placed in open cemeteries but below the floors of rooms and patios. These rooms and courts were parts of extensive building compounds and because, as discussed below, at least some of the burials were revered and given offerings long after death, groups of descendants must have resided in, and expected to remain in charge of, the residential compound of their ancestors. The Middle Horizon landscape of the dead constructed a new association between large building compounds, ancestors, and a social group that was probably

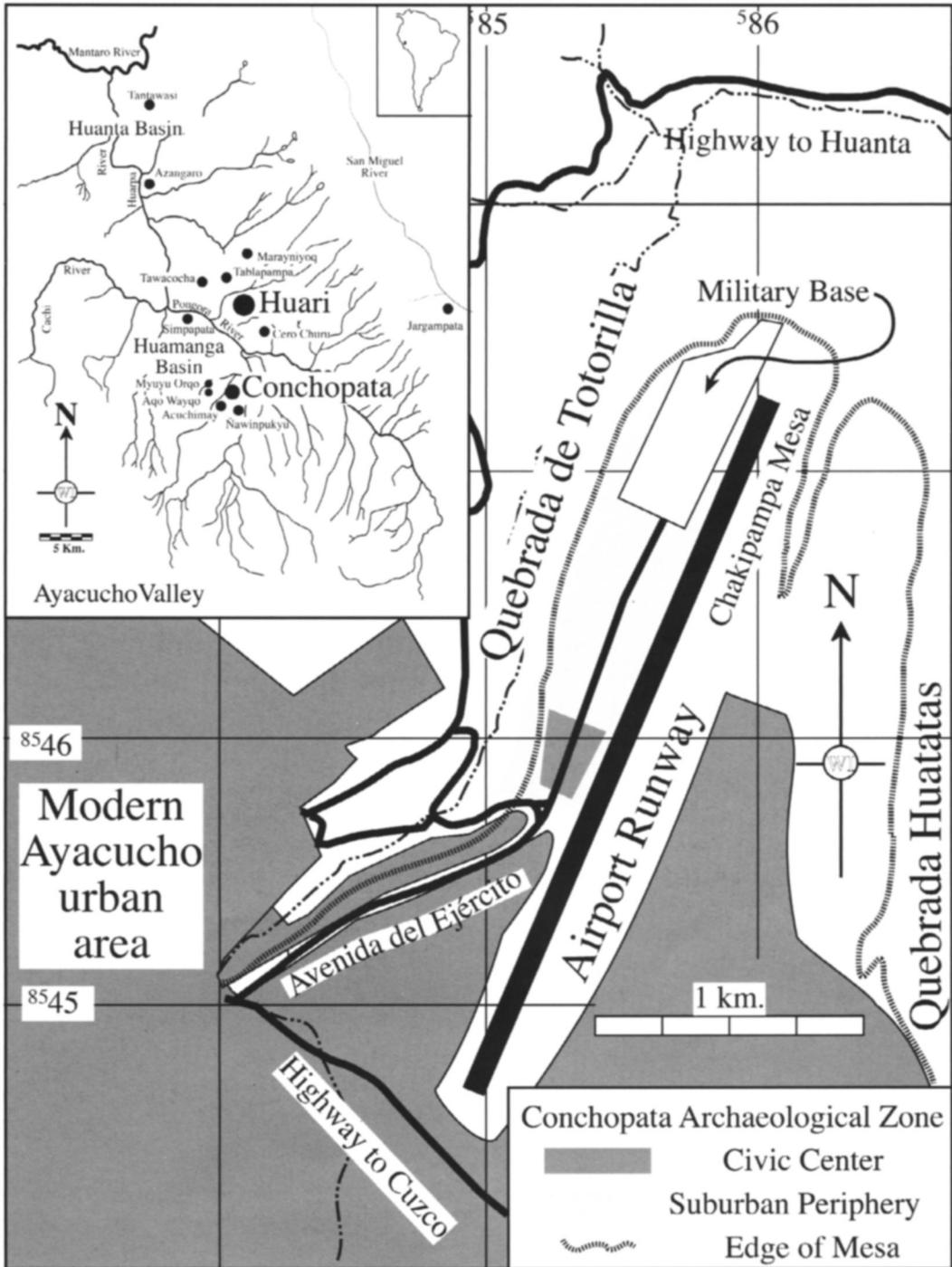


Figure 2. Map of Ayacucho Valley and the Conchopata archaeological zone.

based on descent. Conchopata's largest architectural complexes seem to have palaces occupied by rulers or governors.

It is probable that the mortuary complex in room EA-203 belongs to the Silva phase (Figure 3), but it was excavated years ago and, apparently because of severe looting, it was never described in print. This tomb complex belongs to Type 5a of the following proposed typology and it could be the earliest "mortuary room" at Conchopata, representing the first elite grave complex constructed under the floors of a palace

The Huisa phase (A.D. 700–850) was the major occupation at the Conchopata site. Oversize-Conchopata pottery continued in use, but probably disappeared before the end of this time. Huamanga, Chikipampa, and Ocros pottery styles were very popular. Huisa is the phase to which the majority of the burials employed in this analysis appear to belong, although it seems that the most elaborate tombs continued in use though the final Alarcon phase (A.D. 850–1000). During that phase, there is no evidence for construction or occupation of palaces except for the tombs that were still in use, or perhaps being reused. However, Alarcon phase rooms nearby have simple tombs that are consistent with the proposed typology. Huamanga pottery was popular in Alarcon times, but occasional pieces of Vifiaque and Atarco style ceramics also appear.

Mortuary remains from Conchopata's final three phases seem very similar, at least on the basis of current data, so descriptions from all three phases were combined. Along with less detailed information as well as restudy of undescribed graves from former excavations, they provide the data on which the following preferential patterns are based. Many of the tombs suffered significant disturbance, but some were intact. However, even damaged tombs furnished valuable information.

Conchopata's Middle Horizon mortuary remains appear to fall into seven preferential groups or ideal types of interment, described below. I omit one type of "non-burial" at Conchopata, in which human remains were deliberately defleshed and disarticulated before they were eventually deposited on the floors of temple buildings. Nor will I explore infant and child burials except when they co-occur with adult burials.<sup>3</sup> I will make comparisons with mortuary contexts from Huari and other

Middle Horizon cities in the central highlands to fill out Wari's cultural record, and to confirm its mortuary ideals.

#### *Wari Burial Type 1—Individual Interment*

This form of burial consists of a single body placed in a small pit excavated into the ground and covered with earth (Figure 4). Sometimes the grave was capped with a flat stone or two, and occasionally a few flat stones were used to line the sides of the pit. Bodies appear to have been tightly flexed and placed in the grave either seated, on the back, or on one side. Traces of textiles and cordage suggest that at least some bodies were wrapped in cloth and bound with rope. Examples appear to have been located in patios, courts, and narrow rooms. Except when a stone slab was used to cap the pit, there is no evidence that these grave locations were marked. Occasionally, Type 1 graves include a ceramic vessel, a stone bead, or some other object, but typically, imperishable grave furnishings are absent.

#### *Wari Burial Type 2—Multiple Interments*

Undisturbed multiple interments were found in Architectural Enclosure EA-65 and EA-151 (Figure 3). Both were probably open patio areas rather than roofed chambers. Like individual interments, multiple interments consist of unlined pits covered by soil, and perhaps a stone or two, with few or no grave furnishings, and the flexed remains of two to four or five bodies of adults and sub-adult children. It is apparent that burials could be added to these graves as time passed, so it seems likely that Type 1 interments turned into Type 2. Like Type 1 individual graves, Type 2 graves show little evidence for marking of their locations. However, they were reopened for subsequent burials, so people of the community must have remembered the locations of the graves. Perhaps there were markers that have now disappeared.

Future bioarchaeological study will show whether bones found disarticulated and moved about in Type 2 graves were moved simply to accommodate the addition of more bodies, or whether some more elaborate activities were involved. It may be that Multiple Interment graves contained members of the same family or social group.

#### *Wari Burial Type 3—Cist Interment*

This important class of Middle Horizon graves

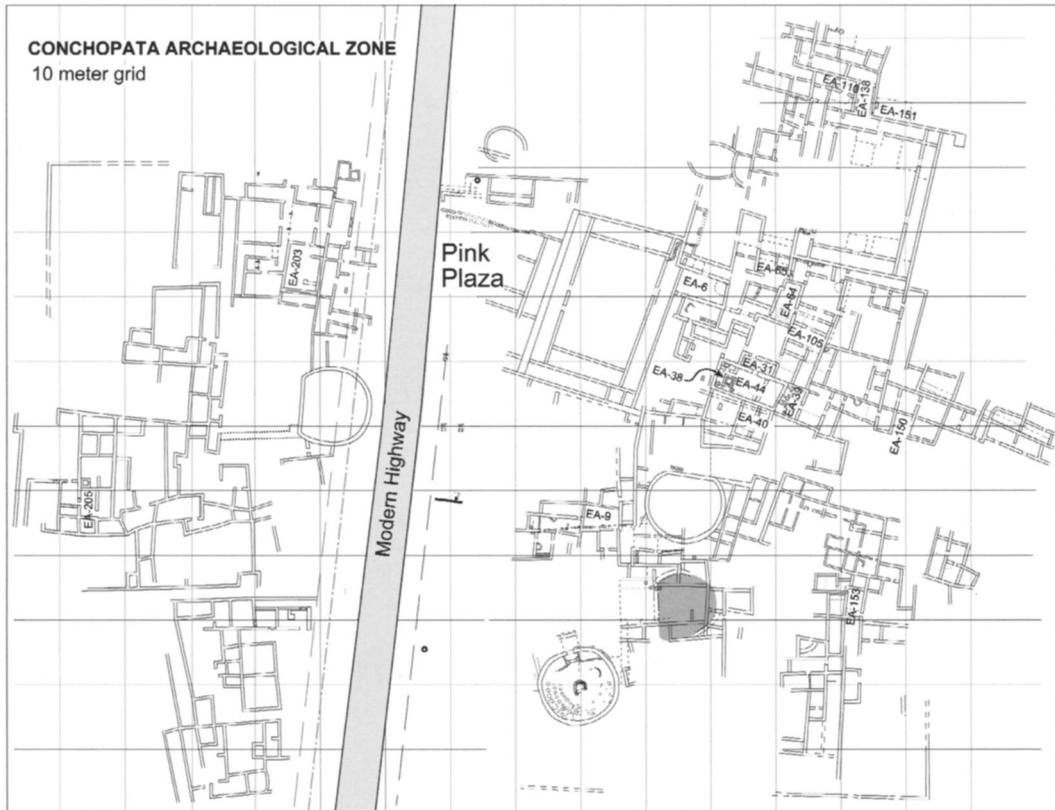


Figure 3. Map of Conchopata's civic center architectural remains.

(Figure 4) is poorly known at Conchopata, for only one undisturbed example was discovered in room EA-205 (Figure 3). It contained an older adult female with two ceramic vessels, but the grave was only partially stone lined with a clay top as its marker rather than a rock with a perforation through it. A small hole reached the grave, passing through a wall to the adjoining room. A second looted example was found in the Pink Plaza (Figure 3), incompletely capped by several flat stones and containing the partial remains of a single individual, a *tupu*,<sup>4</sup> and a distinctive polychrome ceramic sherd. However, because cist interments are frequent at other sites in the Ayacucho Valley, the type deserves significant attention.

Cist tombs probably were marked graves consisting of cylindrical pits, fully or partially stone-lined, about 60 to 90 cm in diameter and 60 cm to 1 m deep. They are known throughout Ayacucho and many were sealed with a large, flat, circular stone or by several smaller slabs of rock. Some-

times there is a notch in one side of the cover, or a hole about 10 cm in diameter pecked through the middle of a single stone lid. Sometimes there is a small niche in the wall of the cist, or a groove running down one side. Where grooves have been found, they appear to align with the notch in the lid. Cist tombs probably represent a more lavish version of Type 1 and Type 2 graves. Their distinctive lids served to mark the grave location and probably also facilitated reopening the tombs. I suspect that Type 3 tombs were designed to receive successive burials over a period of time. When they have a notch or hole through the lid, this must have been intended for communication with the dead.

I have named the notch or hole through Wari grave lids "*ttoco*," from the old Quechua term for window or passage. These holes appear to have been used for making offerings to the dead, probably consisting of small luxury items such as shell and stone beads. Type 3 Cist Interments are very similar to the primary and secondary burial cham-

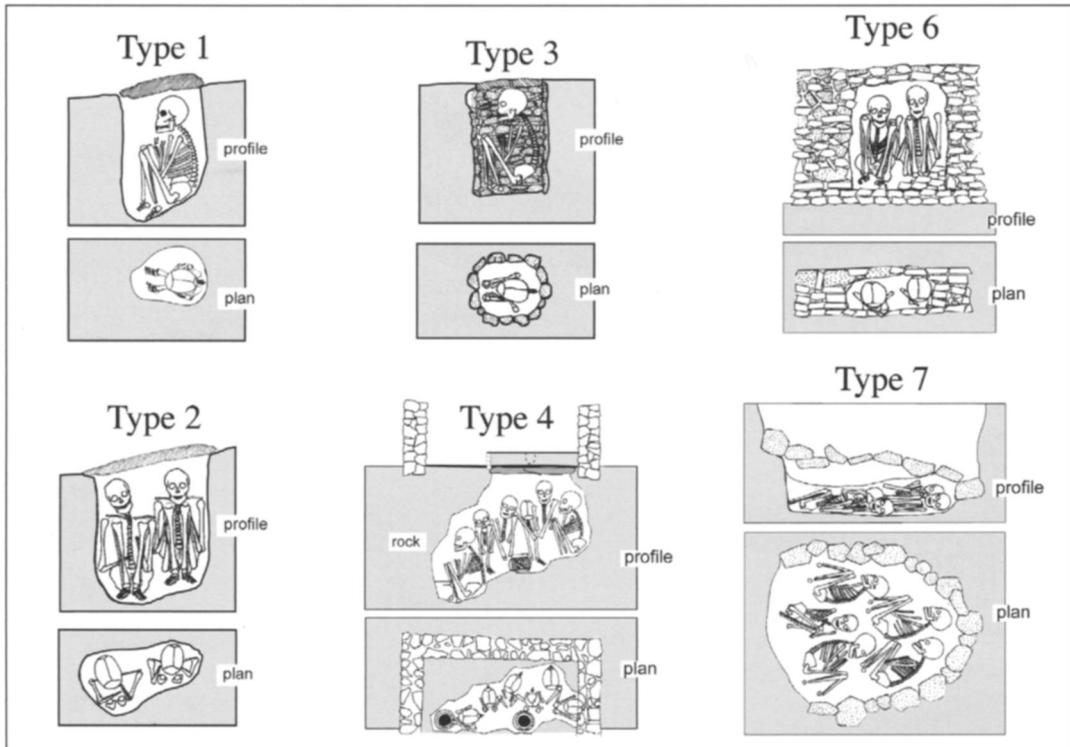


Figure 4. Illustrations of Wari Burial Types 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7.

bers of mortuary rooms that I classify below as Type 5a, demonstrating unity in grave forms at Conchopata and other Wari settlements. However, there is no evidence for *ttoco* in Type 1 and Type 2 Wari graves. And only the more elaborate burials that have *ttoco* also have evidence for introducing small luxury items into the grave as offerings.

At other Middle Horizon Ayacucho sites, Type 3 cist interments appear to occur in isolation or in cemetery groupings, in buildings, and in open places. They may contain the remains of one or several individuals, but often contain incomplete assortments of human bones. Grave furnishings were occasionally included, but rarely are the objects numerous or of significant value.

#### *Wari Burial Type 4—Bedrock Cavity Interment*

Bedrock cavity burial employed deep tombs excavated into the bedrock underlying Conchopata (Figures 4, 5, and 6). They appear to have been marked by raised bench-like structures that often had *ttoco* holes in them. They were located under the floors of buildings that were probably roofed rooms in the

residential areas of larger compounds. Perhaps this kind of tomb should be recognized as another variant of the mortuary room, which I have classified below as the Type 5 burial, an issue to be resolved by further study of Wari mortuary practices.

Bedrock cavity tombs have different shapes, probably because the contours were determined by cracks in the rock that made it easier to remove the stone. Most, but not all, the bedrock cavity tombs discovered at Conchopata were looted. All appear to have contained the remains of more than one person, and significant numbers of pots as well as other offerings. One bedrock cavity interment was found intact below Conchopata's room EA-31 (Figure 5). To construct the tomb, earth and then stone had been cut away to produce a broad shaft-like entrance, with two burial chambers in the deepest northern part of the excavation, one to the northeast and one to the northwest. A *ttoco* about 15 cm in diameter that had been cut through the bedrock at the northwest edge of the tomb shaft appears to have served both burial chambers.

The northwest chamber was open, having been looted, and contained many fragments of human



Figure 5. This bedrock cavity tomb was cut through the floor of room EA-31, and a *toco* was also opened through the rock to its left. All photographs are by William Isbell.

bones as well as pieces of broken pottery, but the northeast chamber remained closed behind a rough stone wall. It contained several individuals whose bones were almost totally consumed by chemical action within the sealed environment of the grave. Two adults were tightly flexed. One, associated with *tupus*, has skeletal features diagnostic of a female. The other adult was associated with half of an archer's bow and another wooden object that may be a reworked bow stave. Based on the bow, it seems probable that the individual was male, although sex determination from the bones themselves was impossible. In the rear of the grave were additional bones in extremely poor condition that may represent earlier interments in the same grave. A jar in the grave contains a human fetus and a radiocarbon sample from vegetable fiber bindings about one of the cadavers produced a terminal Huisa phase date.

The most impressive unlooted bedrock cavity interment was discovered during our 2000 season. The grave opening was found in room EA-105, partially covered by a bench-like construction that

had a circular hole in the top suggestive of a *toco*, except that it did not penetrate into the tomb (Figure 6). Small luxury objects of turquoise and *Spondylus* shell were found in this hole.

The floor around the tomb entrance was covered with sherds from large jars, but there was no lid, only earth and rocks in the mouth. A small plain pot with constricted opening was also found at the entrance into this bedrock cavity tomb. Below the roughly 80-cm-diameter tomb mouth was a spherical cavity almost 2 m wide and about 1.6 m deep, excavated into the bedrock. The grave yielded 27 ceramic vessels, including several miniature pots that seem to imitate oversize offering urns, small objects of green stone, numerous copper *tupus*, and the remains of 15 individuals. Osteological examination documented two fetuses in jars, three infants, part of a child, a juvenile, one male between 23 and 27 years of age, and six adult females of various ages, as well as a seventh skeleton too incomplete to be sexed, but probably also an adult female (Tung 2003; Tung and Cook 2002). The male was placed in the bottom of the grave seated

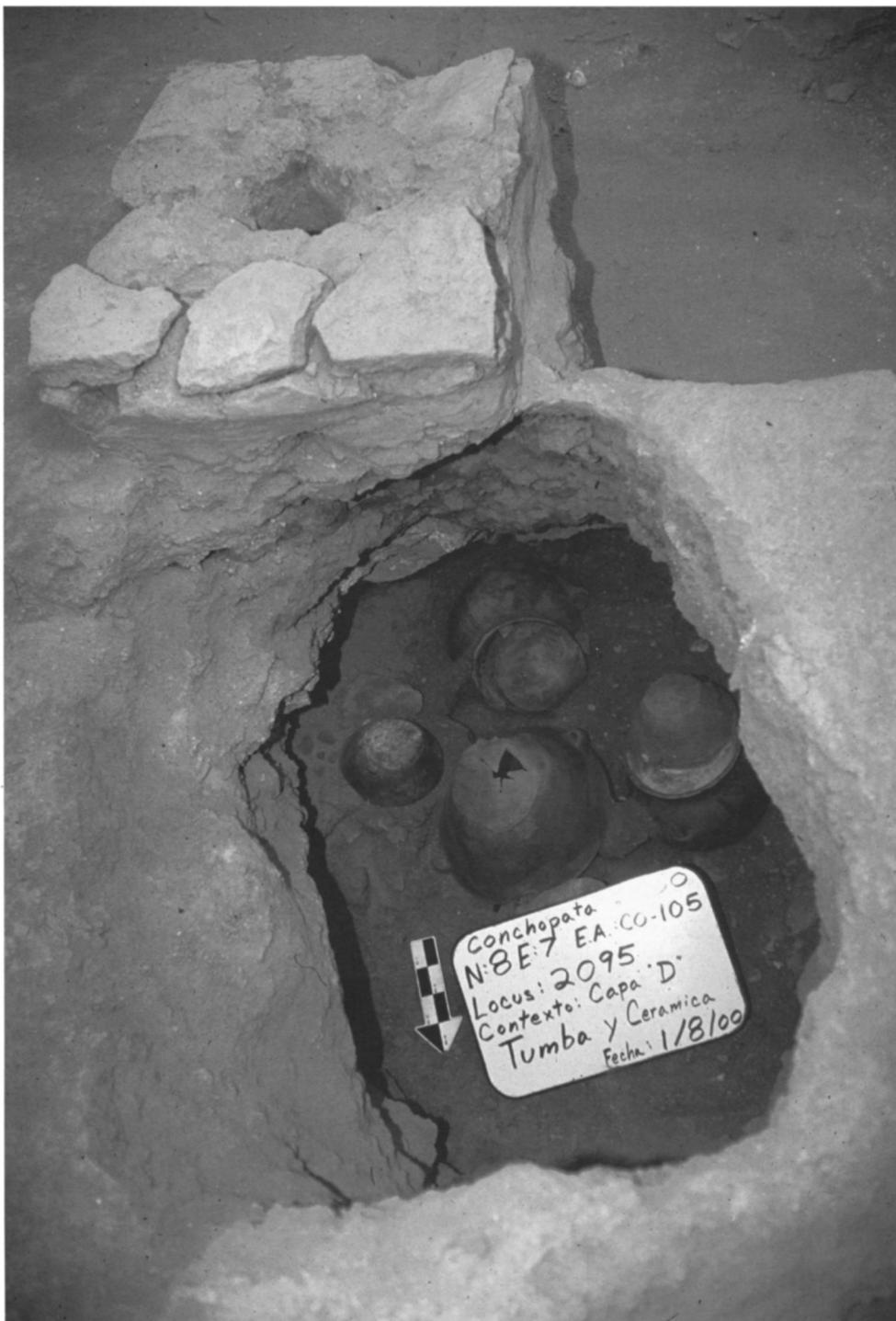


Figure 6. The bedrock chamber tomb in room EA-105 had large pots and other objects just inside its entrance. Its bench and *toco* can be seen just behind the tomb opening.

on crossed sticks of wood that may have been the framework of a stool or mortuary support. I suspect that this was the primary burial of the group, probably a husband accompanied by polygynous wives and deceased infants. If my inferences are correct, it seems likely that this grave belonged to a nobleman, for the number of wives seems too large for a commoner.

The skeleton of a pregnant woman was found just inside the tomb opening. It was completely articulated as though untouched since the body had been placed into the tomb. It appears to have been added after other burials immediately below, which were disturbed and partially disarticulated. Disturbance of these skeletons was consistent with the intrusion of the final female body when the other bodies still had connective tissue holding their bones together, but when their remains were delicate enough to permit parts of the skeleton to separate from one another. This is a convincing demonstration that Wari tombs were reopened by intention to add individuals and it seems likely that it occurred many times. We can also conclude that bones were removed when the tomb was opened, for some of the skeletons in this unlooted grave are incomplete. So Wari burial was a process, not an event. The last woman added to the grave in EA-105 was about 45 years of age and was pregnant, but she probably also was a wife of the young man interred earlier at the bottom of the grave.

Another Type 4 Bedrock Cavity Interment was in EA-40, and disturbed examples were found in rooms EA-9 and EA-64. A unique case in a larger, probably open patio came from EA-6.

#### *Wari Burial Type 5a and Type 5b—Mortuary Room Interment*

This kind of burial is named “Mortuary Room Interment” because tombs occupy so much of the space within a room that it is difficult to imagine any other activity except burial and burial ritual within the enclosed and roofed area (Figures 7, 8, and 9). In some cases a second room and even a third room appear to have been part of the mortuary complex, although these secondary mortuary rooms were probably not filled with tombs. However, looting has usually disturbed the original conditions so severely that interpretations cannot be precise. At least six examples of mortuary rooms are known at Conchopata. They are room EA-138, with its

neighbor EA-110 that were both looted severely. A second, and perhaps the largest mortuary room complex, consisted of EA-38 (Figures 3 and 8), probably combined with EA-44, and perhaps EA-31. Mortuary rooms that appear to have included only one architectural space are EA-39, EA-150, EA-153, and EA-203 in the western part of Conchopata, across the highway from our excavations. Mortuary rooms EA-38 (Figure 8) and EA-150 (Figure 9) are the best preserved and provide much of the information necessary for identifying Burial Type 5a and Type 5b, respectively.

Type 5a mortuary rooms (Figures 7 and 8) contain several circular or rectangular stone-lined cist tombs and skeletal remains from numerous individuals. Mortuary rooms of Type 5a all probably contained several cist chambers, but one appears to have been the principal cist, which also may have been the first tomb in the room. The principal cist or burial chamber was either circular or rectangular, and apparently could have two and perhaps more chambers. It was sealed with a heavy capstone pierced by a notch or hole, the *ttoco*. All examples probably contained the remains of several individuals, although none has been discovered intact. Over the capstone a small offering house somewhat less than 1 m tall was built, containing an altar chamber. The offering house had a flat top and a small trapezoidal entrance in one side. The floor of the offering house was the grave lid, with the *ttoco* providing a tiny passage from the altar chamber of the offering house into the burial chamber that contained human bodies. It seems likely that *ttoco* were usually sealed with stone plugs shaped much like champagne corks. The offering house was constructed on the heavy stone lid, so once the little building was in place it would have been impossible to re-open the cist without destroying the altar chamber walls. Consequently, construction of the offering house terminated the use of the principal cist, and probably initiated excavation of, and burial in, secondary cists within the mortuary room. There likely was both a chronological order and a hierarchy among the interments in multi-cist burial mortuary rooms.

In some mortuary rooms, additional cist tombs were excavated through the floor almost everywhere that was possible. Sometimes partitions were constructed around a seemingly secondary cist, or set of cists, creating a subsidiary offering house

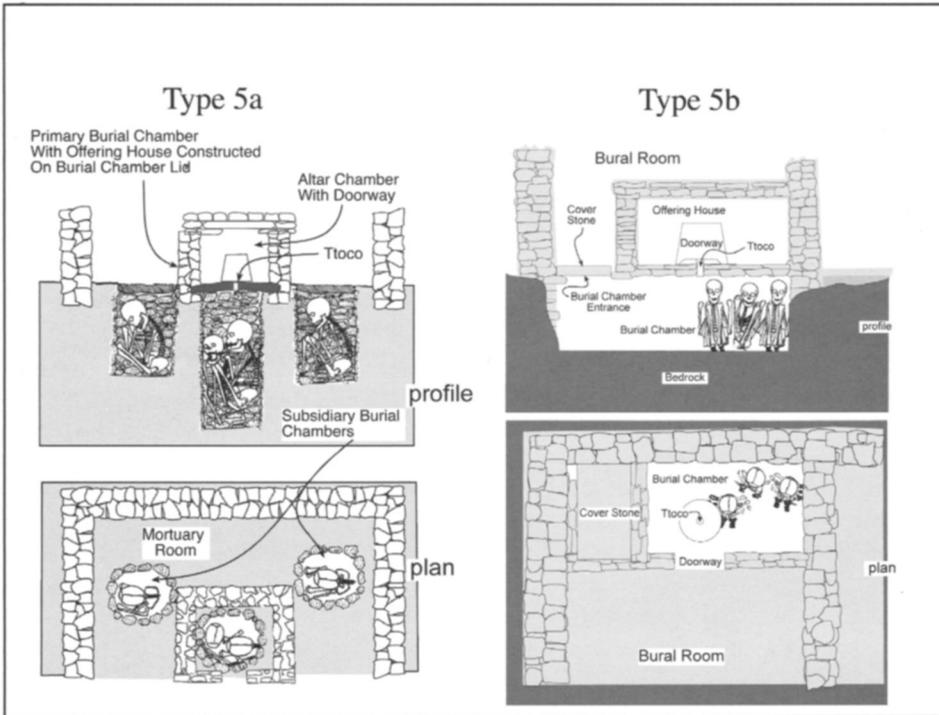


Figure 7. Illustrations of Wari Burial Type 5a and Type 5b.



Figure 8. Mortuary Room EA-38 is an example of Wari Burial Type 5a. The offering house, now lacking a roof, is constructed over a massive lid of the primary burial chamber. Its *ttoco* notch is visible at the top edge of the stone. Secondary cist tombs were located around the primary burial chamber.



Figure 9. Mortuary Room EA-150 is an example of Wari Burial Type 5b. The offering house, with roof intact, is constructed over a chamber that was entered from the side, where its rectangular lid, now broken, has collapsed into the void. The *ttoco* notch is located inside the offering house.

with an altar chamber. Occasionally, an adjacent room seems to have been part of the mortuary complex, having its own cist tombs excavated into its floor, and walls that may have been parts of offering houses with altar chambers. Unfortunately, looting has made it difficult to determine critical details of construction chronology, but what does seem clear is that in Type 5a mortuary rooms, the construction of an offering house over a tomb signaled its importance. It also meant that the tomb was difficult if not impossible to re-open to insert additional burials or to remove any remains.

Mortuary rooms of Type 5b represent an elaboration on Type 5a that could be entered and re-entered, without disturbing the offering house. These tombs had a separate entrance to one side, sealed by a flat stone (Figures 7 and 9). A large rectangular burial chamber was constructed below the floor of the mortuary room and capped with stone slabs at about the same level as the floor. A *ttoco* was constructed between the stone lintels at one end of the chamber, and an entrance that could be sealed with a single stone slab was placed at the other end. An offering house with altar chamber was built over the *ttoco*, covering about 70 percent of the bur-

ial chamber, but leaving the entrance and covering stone exposed. This kind of mortuary unit could be re-opened repeatedly, while the offering house and *ttoco* remained undisturbed.

All the mortuary rooms discovered at Conchopata were looted, but gold artifacts were found in mortuary rooms EA-138 and EA-150. This is the only gold discovered in our excavations at Conchopata, so there seems little doubt that mortuary rooms were the pinnacles of the local interment hierarchy. Only the most powerful and wealthy residents could afford so much luxury. Study of the skeletal remains from mortuary rooms is still in progress, and, of course, all were disturbed. However, preliminary evidence indicates a significant preponderance of female skeletons, consistent with a high-status palace area where a king and his noble kinfolk were attended by numerous wives, concubines, and serving women.

#### *Wari Burial Type 6—Wall Interment*

This type of interment employed a chamber cut out of, constructed within, or attached to, a thick wall (Figure 4). We did not discover any wall interments during our excavations at Conchopata, but Lum-

breras (1974a:180–181) reported one example containing two individuals during his investigations at the site. It is possible that it represents a late addition to a Silva phase wall at Conchopata and that wall burial is a late Wari feature. Numerous wall burials have been reported from Huari (González Carré and Bragayrac Dávila 1996) and Middle Horizon Batan Urqu (Zapata 1997), so although burial Type 6 does not seem to have been very popular in the civic center of Conchopata, it was apparently a significant type of Wari interment.

#### *Wari Burial Type 7—Communal or Sacrificial Group Burial*

One example of a mass grave, probably a group of sacrificial victims,<sup>5</sup> is reported for Conchopata. This unique example contained five young females covered by a stone mound or cairn (Figure 4). All appear to have been buried at the same moment. This interment was discovered in 1977 about 1 m northwest of a ceramic offering of oversize face-neck jars (Isbell 1987; Isbell and Cook 1987, 2002). It is likely that the women participated in the same event in which the giant face-neck jars were smashed and buried (Cook 1987, 1994).

### **Wari Tombs at Other Settlements**

I doubt that this descriptive discussion, based on Conchopata burials, exhausts the range of Wari mortuary practices. Expansion, revision, and reevaluations will surely be required as we learn more about Middle Horizon mortuary landscapes. However, it is clear that these ideal tomb types have equivalents at other Ayacucho settlements, as well as at more distant Wari communities.

Tombs of Type 1, individual interment, are described for the Wari sites of Jargampata (Isbell 1977:29) and Azangaro (Anders 1986:619–620). Similar graves existed at the Río Pampas site of Taqsa Urqu, but were destroyed by road construction. However, I suspect that many examples of Wari Type 1 burials have gone unrecognized, and perhaps even unreported, because they contained no stylistically datable objects.

Type 2 multiple interments are as poor as Type 1 graves and are probably also under-reported. One example, described by Schreiber (1992:249–250), is a grave containing two individuals at Jincamocco. This tomb was a little fancier than Conchopata

examples, for the pit was partially stone lined and covered with simple slabs of rock, but no offerings were included.

Type 3 cist interment burials have been reported for Aqo Wayqo (Ochatoma and Cabrera 2001: 83–96), where at least one contained pottery, *tupus*, and other furnishings. However, these examples had no *ttoco*. A similar burial was found at Ñawimpuquio, with a stone-lined double chamber (Cabrera 1998) that is somewhat larger and more elaborate than most cist interments, although it also lacked a *ttoco*. Perhaps this represents a subclass of cist burials consisting of a stone-lined vault instead of just a pit cut into earth.

A Type 4 bedrock chamber tomb is found at the planned architectural complex of Azangaro (Anders 1986:617–619). Accounts of what seem to be Wari sites in the Río Pampas, south of Ayacucho, suggest that bedrock chamber tombs may exist there as well.

Type 5a mortuary room interment is also known at Huari (Figure 10). My students and I excavated an example in the Moraduchayuq area (Isbell et al. 1991:34–36 and Figure 18). The presence of only scattered fragments of human bone made us reluctant to identify the chambers as mortuary in function without the kind of corroboration we now have from comparisons with Conchopata. At Moraduchayuq, two rooms, each 5.3 m long and 2 m wide, connect through a doorway. The north end of the inner room is raised about 20 cm with the primary cist located on this bench and covered by a heavy circular stone with two *ttoco*. Remains of an offering house are represented by wall bases on two sides of the lid. In this mortuary room, there are two more large cists with lids and *ttoco*, and in the neighboring room, four cists, one with lid and *ttoco* still in place. All the tombs had been looted, and a great quantity of fine pottery of Middle Horizon Epoch 1B, all severely broken, was found scattered about. The pottery was mostly open vessel forms, such as bowls and cups, appropriate for consuming food and drink (Cook 1994).

A second example of a Type 5a mortuary room is from the Cuzco Middle Horizon site of Batan Urqu (Figure 11). Part of a larger Wari community known as Huaro, the Batan Urqu complex might be described as a cemetery building containing various mortuary rooms (Zapata 1997). Most similar to the Conchopata examples is the primary burial (Zap-

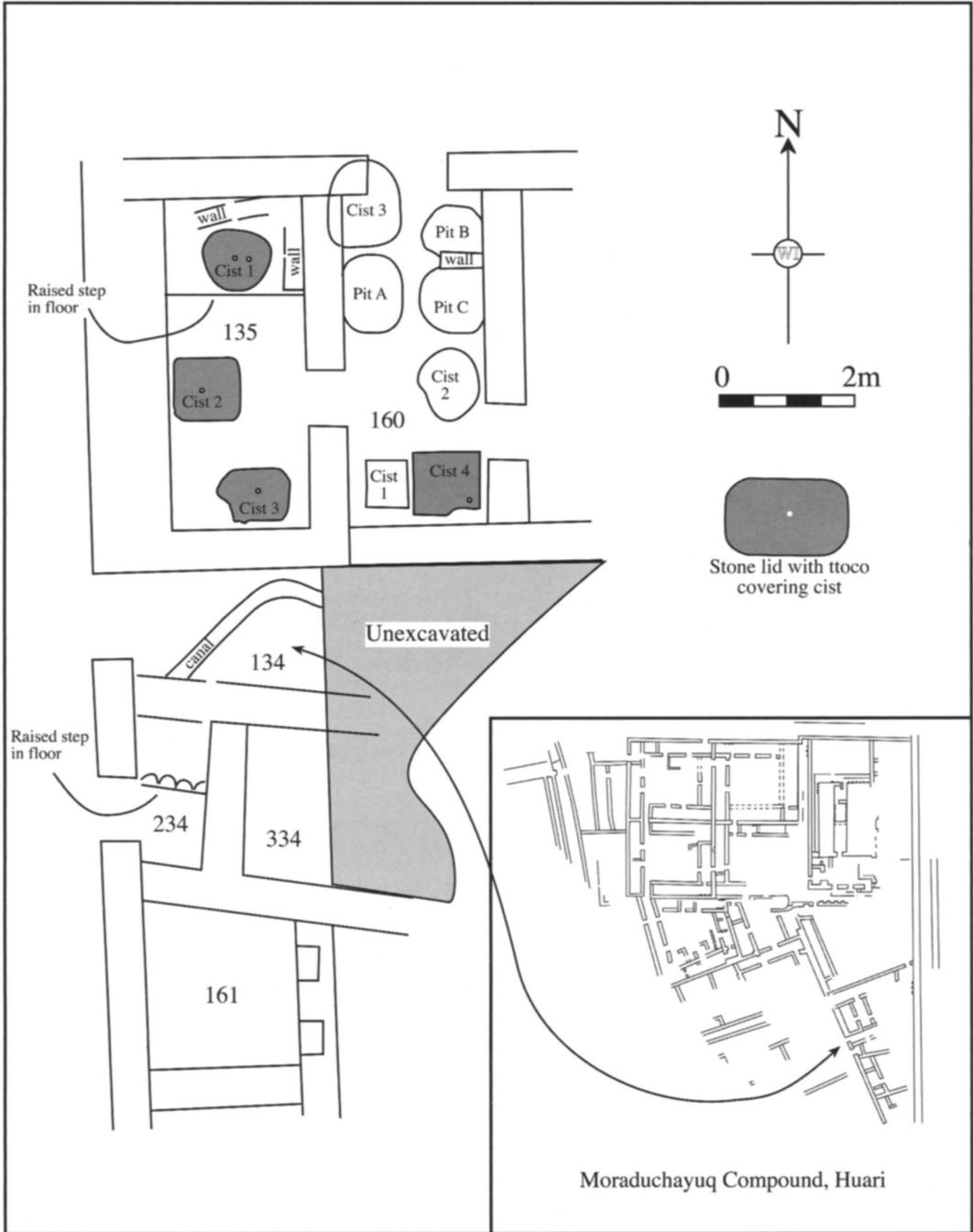


Figure 10. Huari's Moraduchayuq Compound showing a burial room of Type 5a. (Redrawn from Isbell et al. 1991: Figures 6 and 18)

ata 1997:Figures 33, 34) consisting of a huge stone-lined cist with heavy rock lid and central *ttoco*. Remains of a small rectangular offering house surmount the lid, and many other cist tombs and mortuary rooms are located close by. There can be no question that the Batan Urqu mortuary complex represents an order of magnitude or two grander than anything at Conchopata, but the mortuary behavior is clearly that of a Type 5a Wari burial.

I believe that Conchopata Type 5b mortuary rooms are formally similar to numerous examples from Huari, but the Huari tombs have been so severely damaged that most are difficult to conceptualize in their original form. Called "*cheqo wasi*" (stone house), they are megalithic chamber complexes, often of two or even three floor levels (Figures 12 and 13). No one has attempted to determine their original forms, although we have several descriptions of the looted architectural remains (Benavides 1984, 1991; Bennett 1953; González Carré and Bragayrac Dávila 1996; Pérez 1999, 2001a, 2001b). Based on these discussions, my own research at Huari, and the new Conchopata comparisons, I conclude that the majority of the megalithic chambers were enclosed within the rough stone walls of architectural compounds. They were re-openable mausoleums similar to Conchopata's Type 5b mortuary rooms.

Type 5 mortuary rooms described for Huari can enclose one large chamber complex or several small chambers, probably ranging from two to five. Small and simple *cheqo wasi* probably were entered by removing the lid (Figure 12). More complex examples consist of a subterranean room or complex of rooms entered from one side through a crawlway, perhaps also covered by a heavy stone (Figure 12). The upper level is often a room, or room complex that may have been closed except for *ttoco*. Other *ttoco* connect the upper chambers with the lower chambers. In form, Huari's *cheqo wasi* are like Type 5a and 5b mortuary rooms from Conchopata, except that they are much grander. I propose that these megalithic tombs be recognized as another subclass, Type 5c (Figure 12)

All known Type 5c mortuary rooms from Huari were looted, probably many times, beginning in the distant past. In early postconquest times they served as quarries for construction stone, furnishing huge expertly worked ashlar that could be re-cut into mill stones, water conduits, and other stone objects

used to construct the colonial city of Huamanga (now Ayacucho). But excavations in and around them have revealed many human remains in the disturbed contexts. As our understandings grow, there seems little doubt that the chambers were elite tombs.

If the Batan Urqu Type 5a mortuary rooms are grander than Conchopata's by an order or two of magnitude, some of Huari's larger *cheqo wasi* are greater than Conchopata's Type 5b mortuary rooms by half a dozen orders of magnitude. Huari's *cheqo wasi* must have been tombs for kings or nobles whose status was a full social level above the fanciest tombs discovered at Conchopata.

Megalithic stone chambers of Type 5c are common at Huari, but are very rare if they exist at all outside the capital city. Only one example has been reported. In southern Ayacucho, more than 100 km from Huari, Schreiber (1992:154–155) reports "at least one (and possibly more than three) semi-subterranean chambers built of large slabs of cut stone." This settlement appears to have been quite small but located near the entrance into a valley that had a sizable complex of Wari administrative architecture and extensive agricultural terracing. Perhaps it became the estate of a Huari monarch whose relatives were eventually buried there, but excavations are required to confirm the existence of these rural *cheqo wasi*, much less infer their meanings in the vast Wari landscape of death.

Uncommon at Conchopata, Type 6 wall interment was frequent at Huari and at Batan Urqu in Cuzco (Zapata 1997). Wall graves are only found in very thick walls, which are rare at Conchopata, at least in the civic center where our excavations have been concentrated.

Type 6 wall interment requires additional investigation in the future. Burials from the Vegachayoq Moqo sector of Huari (Figure 14) are described by Vera Tiesler Blos (1996). Most of the human remains were looted from tombs within a massive wall that was built across a courtyard when the function of the architectural complex changed from palace, to mortuary monument, to popular cemetery (see Isbell 2001b). It is now clear that this massive wall, more than 2 m thick, had many large niches, one containing a collection of secondary burials (Bragayrac 1991), as well as numerous chambers for wall interments. These were not niches but crypts for primary burials that were prob-

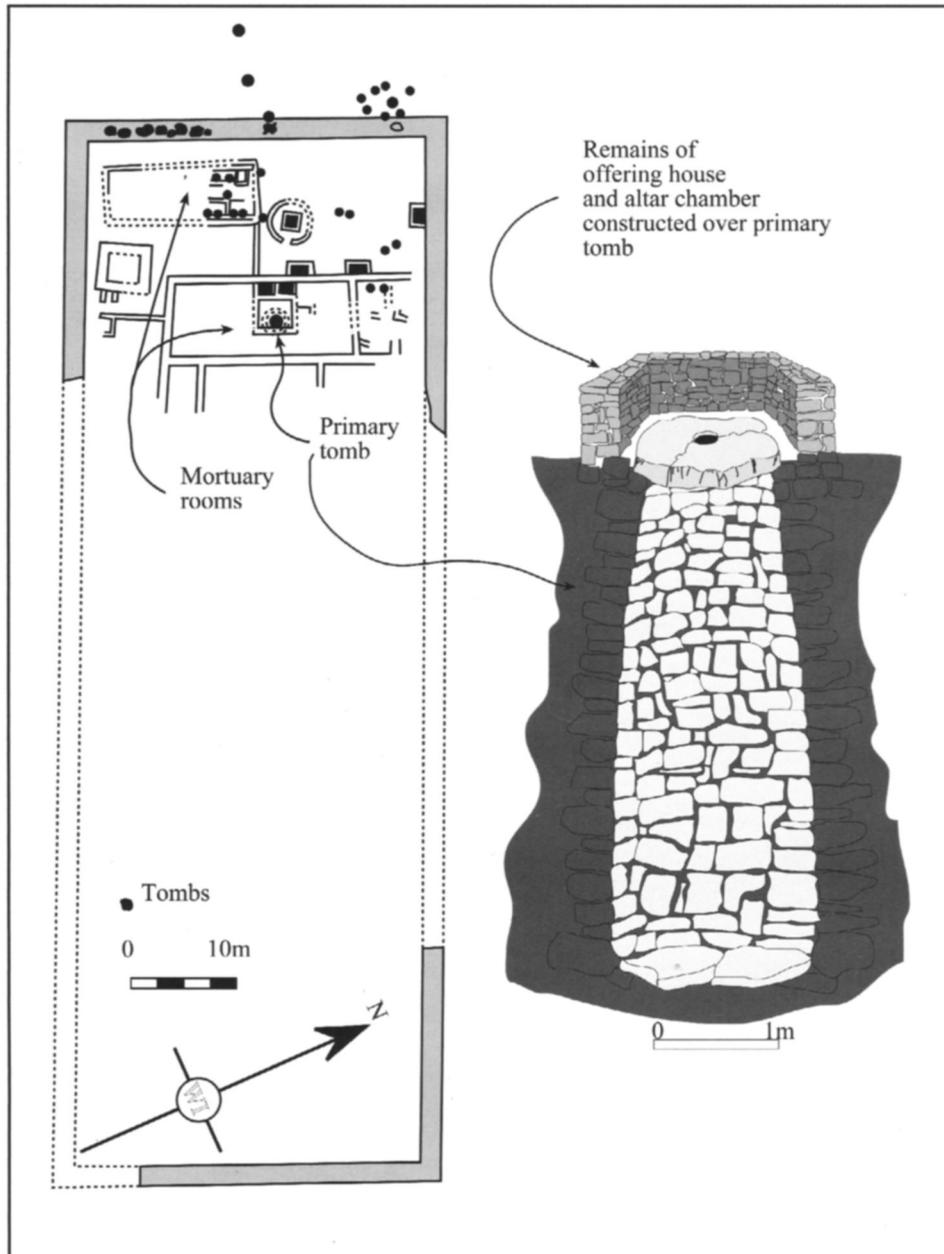


Figure 11. Batan Urqu, Cuzco, mortuary building with burials of Types 5a and 6. (Redrawn from Zapata 1997: Figures 5 and 34).

ably sealed except when occasionally reopened. Some were probably intruded into the wall after its construction, while others appear to have been shaped as the wall was built (Pérez 1999; Tiesler Blos 1996). I suspect that the large quantity of human remains found along the edge of this same wall—and attributed to post-Middle Horizon mor-

tuary activity by Tiesler—are actually Huari burials pulled from their wall chambers and scattered about the foundation area by looters.

At Batan Urqu in Cuzco, Zapata (1997) describes a large rectangular building, poorly preserved, but originally about 33 m by 89 m, with parts of its perimeter wall standing almost 1 m high

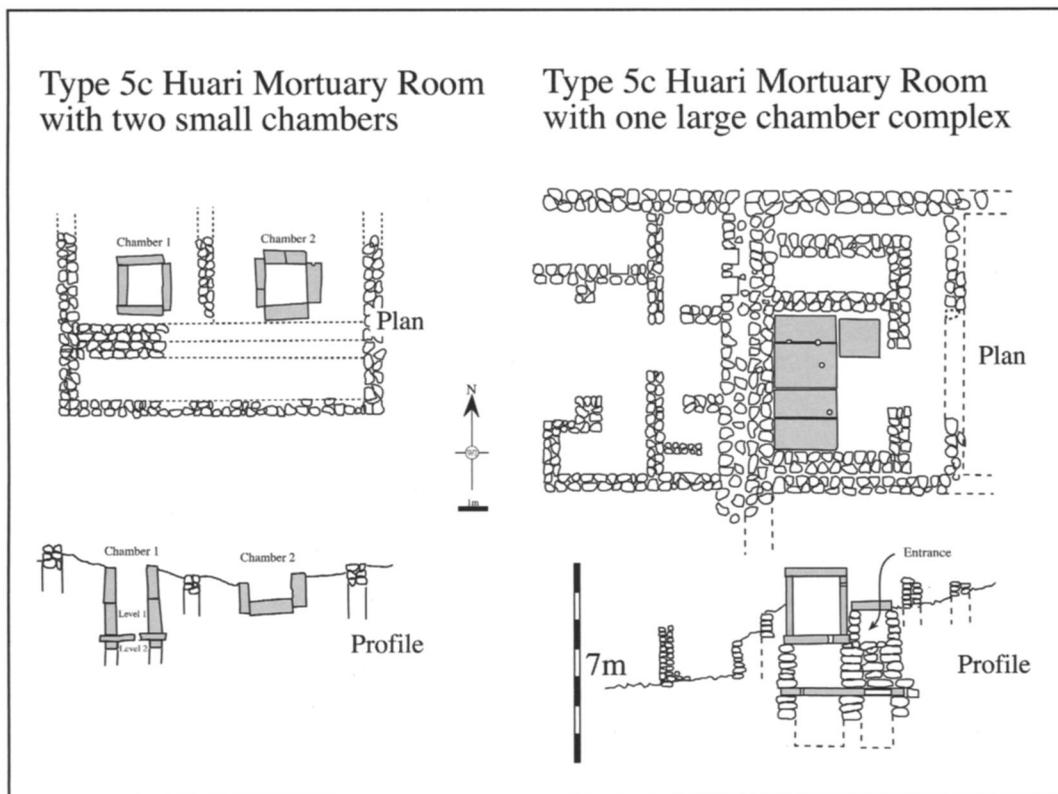


Figure 12. Huari's *cheqo wasi* or megalithic mortuary rooms of Type 5c. (Redrawn from González Carré and Bragayrac Dávila 1996: 20 and from Pérez 2001a: Figure 32).

and about 1.3 m thick. Along the interior bottom of the west wall, he found Type 6 wall burial chambers of various forms, from rectangular to semi-circular to elongated, usually containing disturbed bones of several individuals, adults as well as infants and children (Figure 11).

Based on these reports it appears that wall interments represent yet another kind of Wari grave that was probably opened and reopened for the addition, and perhaps the removal, of human bodies and defleshed bones, respectively. Few offerings or grave furnishings have been found with wall interments. Perhaps this is because so many were looted, but more probably, it is because they were similar in status to Type 3 cist interments.

### Type 8 Royal Interment

The Monjachayoq area of Huari is also named “*canterón*” (Bennett 1953:19) or stone quarry in Spanish. Before the 1970s it had gaping holes 15

to 20 m in diameter and half as deep that were partially filled with huge rocks, including fragments of finely worked ashlars, curiously shaped stones that looked like conduits for aqueducts, and circular slabs resembling mill stones. Nearby was a long subterranean hall filled with human remains.

Although extremely damaged, clearing and excavation by Ismael Pérez (1999, 2001a, 2001b) in 1997 has finally revealed enough of the ancient architecture at Monjachayoq to get a sense of its original form. Monjachayoq consisted of four or five subterranean levels of construction with the deepest reaching 10 m or more below the ground (Figure 15). On the surface there appears to have been a perimeter wall, a “D-” shaped temple building, a large structure, and maybe a street or corridor. Under this, and apparently below the original ground level, was a complex of four halls, end to end, of well-made rough stone masonry with massive cut stone slabs for the roof and the floor. At the south end, the hall complex passed over a deeper,



Figure 13. This mortuary room at Huari contains a medium sized *cheqo wasi*, or megalithic tomb of Type 5c.

second subterranean level of architecture (Figures 15, 16, and 17).

Monjachayoq's second subterranean level contains 21 cells constructed of ashlar in combination with rough stonework (Figures 16 and 17). This construction was disclosed by cleaning one of Monjachayoq's gaping holes of loose stone, revealing a surface exposed by looters and subsequently worked by colonial stonecutters who converted ancient ashlar into millstones, water conduits, and other items requisitioned by Spanish architects in the new city of Huamanga. In fact, the 21 chambers are exposed because massive covering stones were removed, along with several levels of construction above them. Pérez (1999) found stones in the process of being re-cut, along with an exhausted iron chisel of the colonial masons.

Huari's subterranean megalithic complex of cells must have been opened and looted, perhaps in prehispanic times. During the colonial era Spanish contractors began quarrying stone from Mon-

jachayoq, recutting its original construction blocks for new requirements in the colonial capital of Huamanga. In spite of this destruction, there can be little question that the complex of 21 cells represents a mortuary group, of subsidiary burial chambers, or perhaps offering houses built above an even grander primary mortuary chamber.

Under the complex of 21 cells is a third basement level, accessible only by a shaft. It is a hall whose plan resembles a llama viewed in profile (Figures 16 and 18). Pérez (1999) observed that entry was at the mouth of the symbolic animal. And, at the tip of the llama's tail a still-deeper element was constructed, that might be considered a fourth underground level. This is a circular chamber, lined with rough stonework, 3.7 to 4 m deep, reaching 1.2 m in diameter at the bottom, with a flat-stone lid that once sealed it. It looks remarkably like a primary burial cist from a Type 5a Wari mortuary room, as well as the primary burial chamber in the Batan Urqu mortuary room.

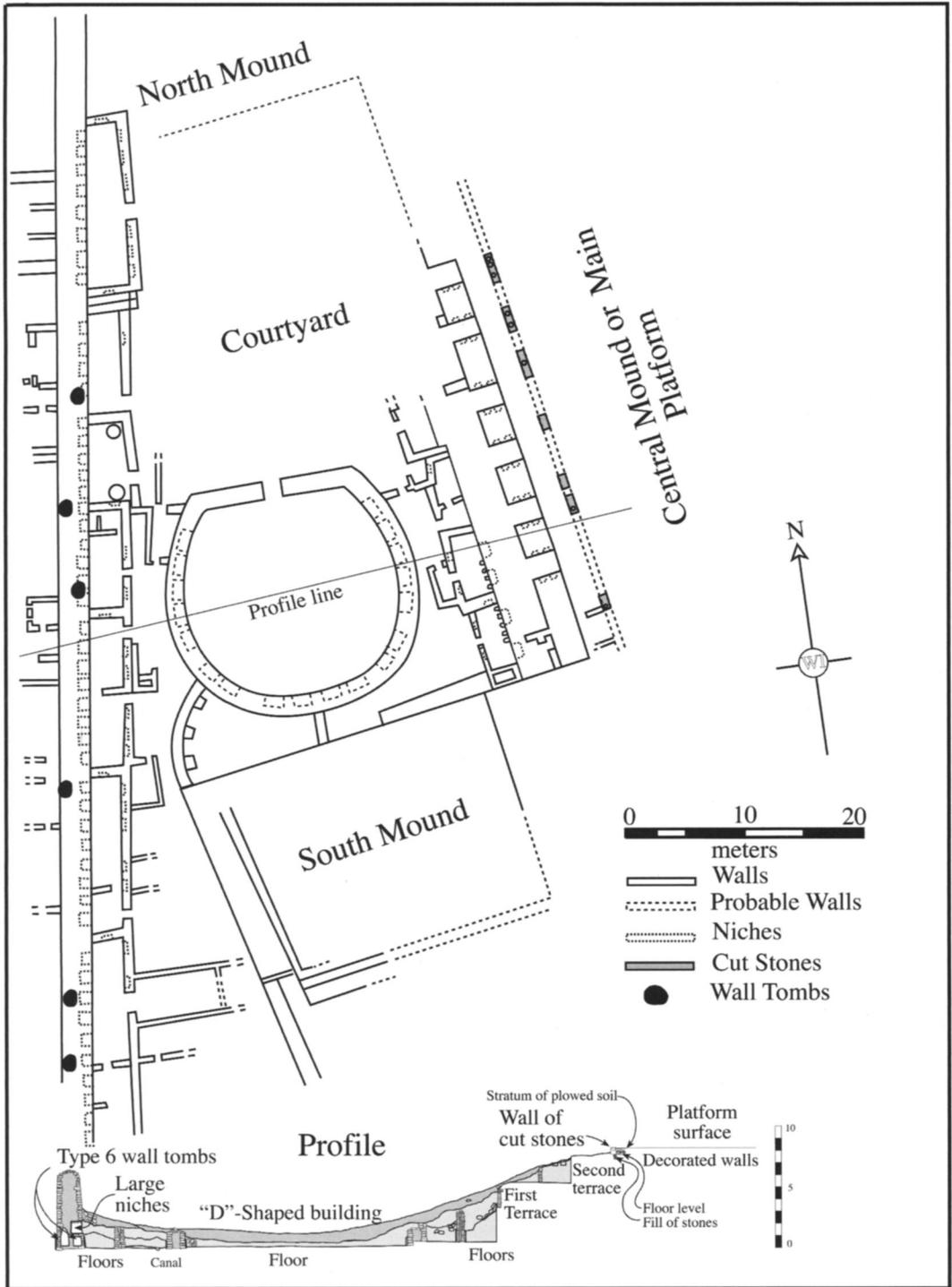


Figure 14. Map of Huari's Vegachayoq Moqo sector.

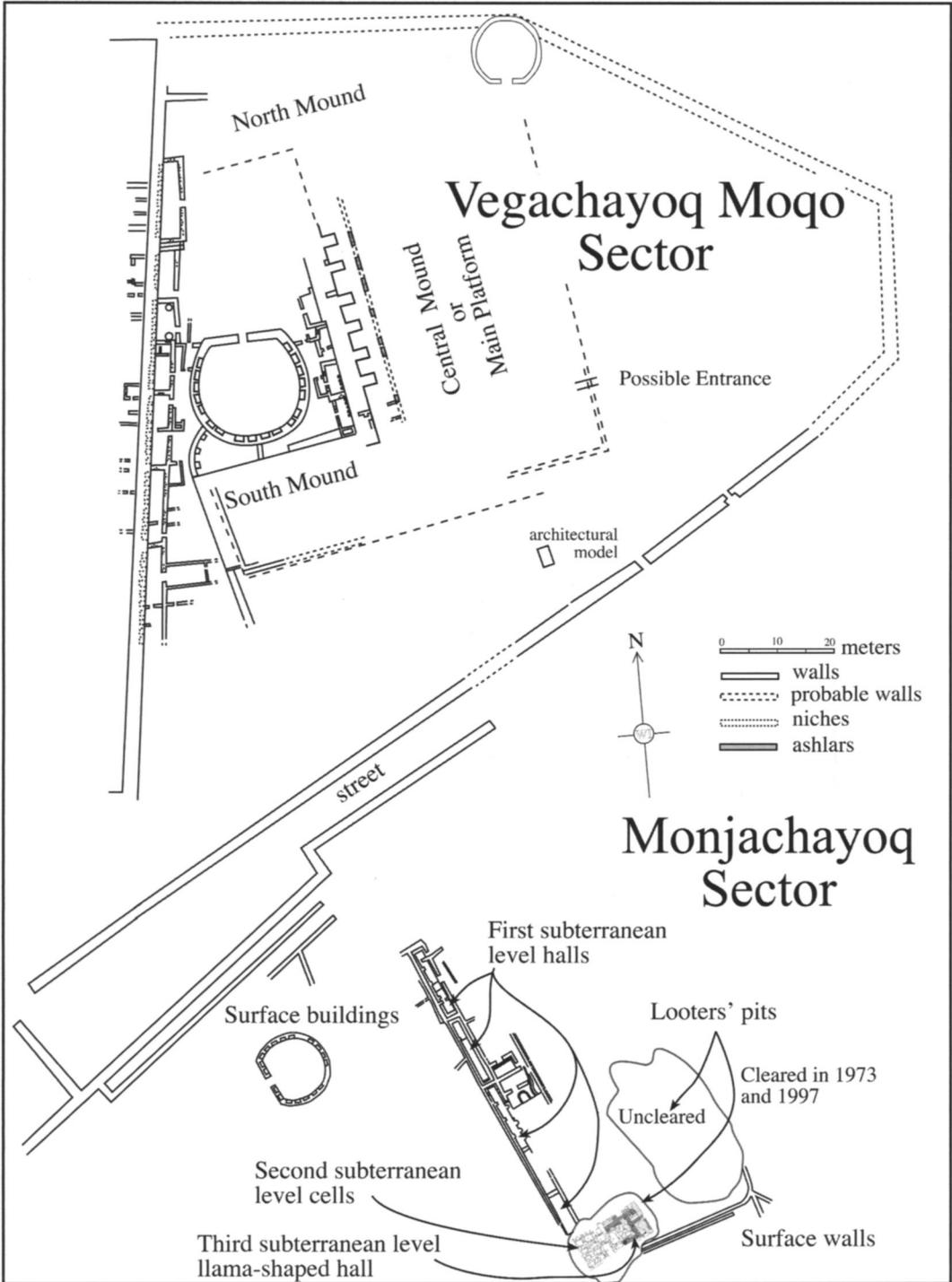


Figure 15. Map of Huari's Vegachayoq Moqo and Monjachayoq sectors. For details of subterranean levels in Monjachayoq Sector, see Figure 16.

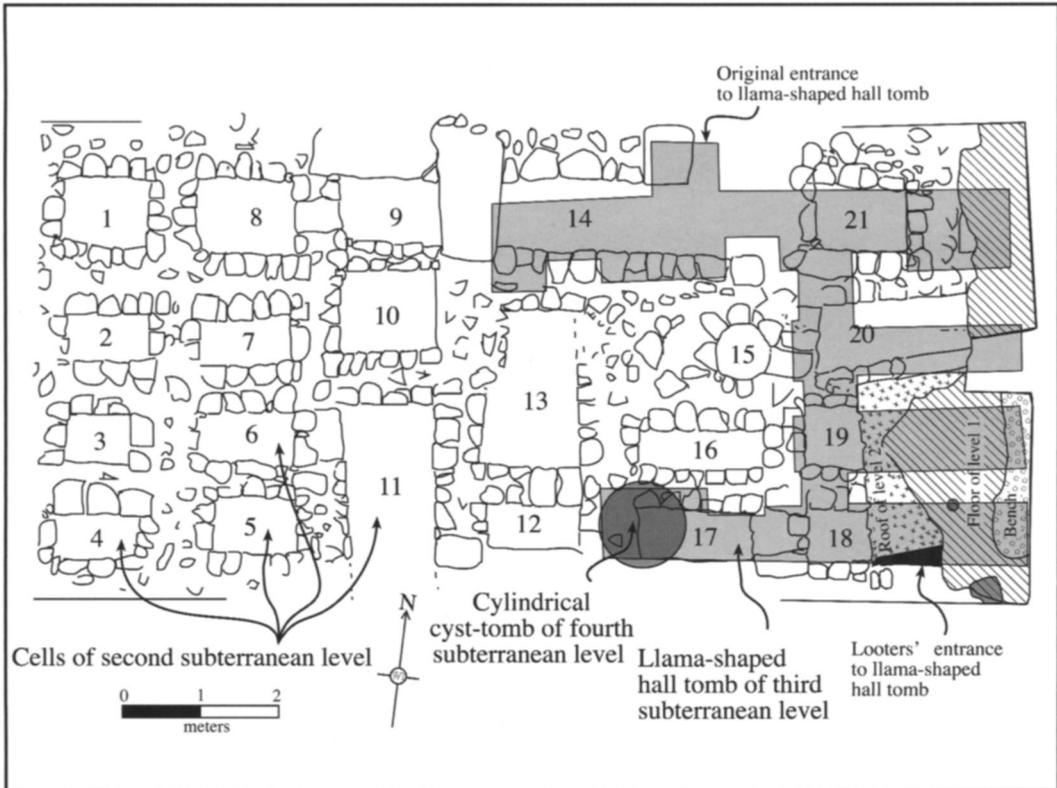


Figure 16. Map of Huari's Monjachayoq Sector showing the second, third, and fourth subterranean levels.

Nothing of the original contents of Monjachayoq's huge underground complex is left today. Many human bones were removed from the first basement halls in 1977. The 21 chambers and llama gallery of the second and third basements were excavated more recently, but they contained only secondary fill, with occasional fragments of human bones, pot sherds, and stone tools. Even the lid of the deepest cist had been removed and nothing was found within. Of course, fragmentary and disturbed human remains were scattered throughout the fill of this impressive complex, confirming its mortuary function.

The form, size, and impressive construction of the Monjachayoq mortuary complex place it on a par with royal burial platforms from Peru's great north coastal city of Chan Chan (see Conrad 1982). I feel secure in identifying the Monjachayoq subterranean building complex as a royal Wari tomb, even though, as at Chan Chan, regal bodies and their offerings disappeared centuries ago. Curiously, the Huari sepulchre is virtually the inverse of Chimú's

royal burial platforms—a "royal catacomb." It represents the supreme hierarchical level in Wari's landscape of death. The Monjachayoq tomb may be listed as a Wari Type 8 Subterranean Chamber Complex Interment, probably representing an emperor who ruled Huari and all its possessions.

Within the Huari site, I do not think that Type 8 interment is unique to Monjachayoq. Near the northeast corner of Huari's architectural core is another great hole, filled with broken blocks, ash-lars, and stones, that is also called *canterón*. I believe that excavations will reveal another megalithic subterranean tomb complex of a Huari emperor, also looted long ago, and quarried for its fine worked stones. Perhaps a new excavation campaign will reveal an unlooted royal tomb at Huari.

### Wari's Landscape of the Dead

Wari people inscribed respect for, and engagement with, the dead into the built environments of their cities and towns. At Conchopata they created new



**Figure 17.** Wari Type 8 Royal Tombs are represented by the megalithic subterranean complex at Monjachayoq, Huari. The second subterranean level consists of 21 cells that probably served as secondary tombs and offering chambers.



**Figure 18.** The third subterranean level of Huari's Monjachayoq royal tomb was probably the primary burial chamber. It consists of a narrow hall whose plan resembles a llama in profile. Located 6 to 8 m below the original ground surface, the looted chamber now contains construction rubble and fragments of human bone.

kinds of buildings where the living venerated the dead, who were interred below the floors. Some of these tombs were modest, others were substantial and a few were pretentious. The most powerful residents created mortuary rooms for their bodies, where they would be visited by generations of their descendents, at least some of whom would eventually be added to the same complex of tombs.

Conchopata has half a dozen mortuary rooms with tombs that have great lids, *ttoco*, and offering houses filling the entire space. This mortuary landscape affirms that Conchopata was not just a city of craftspeople, but of elites and nobles, occupying palaces and commanding resources sufficient to construct impressive tombs and provision them with wealth that included gold. But the poor condition of Middle Horizon tombs made it impossible to describe Wari mortuary behavior directly. This has been achieved only by abstracting ideal or preferred patterns from a multitude of graves,

many disturbed but a few intact, from Conchopata and related settlements, including the Huari capital itself. The resulting typology of ideal mortuary classes is remarkably complex and hierarchical. It suggests so many inferences that only a few can be discussed here.

Wari's Middle Horizon landscape of death linked ancestors and descendents with a house or palace. This surely promoted the formalization of royal lineages or dynasties known in many cultures as "great houses." Wari interment emphasized status difference and social inequality in its spatial metaphors. Type 1 and Type 2 interments were small, unmarked, and lacking in material objects. Type 2 multiple interments may gradually have become more popular, almost replacing individual interments. Kin ties, or whatever formed the basis for mortuary grouping, became emphasized even more as multiple interments of the Middle Horizon replaced individual graves and cemeteries of

the Early Intermediate period Mendosa phase. Perhaps in the new urban milieu, new principles of affiliation were explored for creating new kinds of relationships (Smith 2003).

*Ttoco* openings into tombs became popular during the Middle Horizon, implying an increased desire to maintain contact with ancestors. However, Type 1 and Type 2 interments have no *ttoco* and contain no luxury goods. It appears that low-status individuals were buried together, in affiliated groupings, but they did not become revered ancestors.

Wari Type 3 cists, as well as Type 6 wall interments, are a step higher in the social landscape. Type 3 graves sometimes, but not always, had *ttoco* openings, while Type 6 seems not to have had them. I suggest that these burials represent typical residents of Wari cities, neither powerful nor impoverished.

Type 4 bedrock chamber interments appear to have been the burial places of minor nobles, at least at Conchopata. They had *ttoco* openings and contained many grave goods. Type 4 burials are frequent at Conchopata, implying that the surviving portion of that city was a palace compound, or complex of associated palace compounds occupied in large part by elites. Bedrock chamber tombs that were not disturbed appear to have held family groups, and at least some examples are best interpreted as the polygynous family of a man with many wives. In fact, female remains considerably outnumber the males in our Conchopata osteological sample, a fact that I ascribe to the seraglio-like nature of the palatial sector we have investigated at Conchopata.

Burial Type 5a and 5b mortuary rooms represent the pinnacle of the interment hierarchy at Conchopata. They have *ttoco* openings, combined with an offering house with altar chamber. These graves contained gold and other objects of wealth, although none has been discovered unlooted. As in bedrock chamber tombs, mortuary rooms contain a predominance of female skeletons, seeming to confirm the importance of polygyny, and the importance of women and their labor for the smaller number of elite men. I propose that the persons buried in Conchopata's mortuary rooms were rulers and their close family members, probably petty kings or *curaca*, to use an Andean term. The discovery of similar but more magnificent mortuary rooms at

Batan Urqo in Cuzco implies Wari kings of similar noble rank in the distant city of Huaro, but judging by the graves, Batan Urqo's kings were probably wealthier than Conchopata's rulers in a regional scale of power and affluence. Type 5a and 5b burials seem to represent a fourth level of social status in ancient Wari culture, perhaps rulers of secondary cities and governors of provincial territories.

Mortuary rooms of Type 5a and 5b were the apex of the funerary hierarchy at Conchopata and at Huaro/Batan Urqu, but they were modest when compared with Huari's *cheqo wasi*—megalithic chamber tombs—but placed in mortuary rooms similar to those of Conchopata. This demonstrates that the fourth-level *curacas* of Conchopata were significantly out-ranked by more powerful nobles at Huari, who could build truly magnificent mausoleums. Furthermore, Type 5c megalithic mortuary rooms appear to have been limited to Huari, and perhaps one provincial site in the south, where some Huari prince may have established a royal villa or country estate. Consequently, Type 5c burials must represent a fifth hierarchical level of status and wealth in Wari culture and society. Their limitation to the capital city implies centralization of political power, with deceased nobles being buried only in the great city. Wari's landscape of death proclaims Huari's unique hierarchical position, contradicting interpretations of the Middle Horizon that argue for equivalent cities or confederations of lineages.

Supreme power and wealth in Wari's mortuary landscape is represented by Type 8 royal interment, a sixth level in the power hierarchy. Still poorly known, these tomb complexes were vast and impressive. Further research will probably prove that they were the tombs of Huari's emperors. And they significantly surpass all other graves of Middle Horizon date anywhere within the Wari sphere—Pachacamac, Cuzco, Huamachuco, Nasca, or Moquegua. Their only appropriate place was Huari itself, where they probably defined centrality, for there are hints that social relations with these dead emperors never ended, and that social memory was constructed around their tombs.

Wari's dead, or perhaps more correctly, the higher-status dead, were in continued relationships with the living. Offerings of some sort, but certainly including small luxury objects, were introduced

into tombs though *ttoco* openings. Offering houses with altar chambers, built over the tombs of Type 5 as well as Type 8 royal tombs, may have contained many other kinds of gifts. This shows that progenitors were objects of adoration, and that the people of Wari practiced ancestor worship of some sort.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Andean peoples practiced religions that emphasized ancestor worship (Doyle 1988; Duviols 1988; Isbell 1997a; Salomon 1995). Corpses of important lineage founders and political leaders were mummified because their bodies were holy objects of public worship. The cadaver was carefully preserved, even body exuvia—fingernail cuttings and trimmed hair. Some mummies resided in special mortuary towns, others remained in their homes and palaces, and, at least some of the time, dead Inka kings sat together in a great hall within Cuzco's sun temple (MacCormack 1991). Founders' mummies and deceased kings were public figures. They participated in feasts, traveled about, and were available for consultation. They demanded and received fine clothing, foods, and other items of conspicuous display, and witnessing their enjoyment of these gifts seems to have been an essential part of worship by their descendents.

It would be attractive to imagine similar mummies populating Wari's landscape of death, but this seems unlikely. Wari mortuary facilities were not designed to preserve mummified flesh. Under the floors in the ground, Wari dead were soon reduced to bones. Furthermore, some of the bones, but not mummified cadavers, were removed while other parts of the body remained in the graves. Apparently, Wari ancestors were deliberately dismembered, something that would have horrified Inka worshippers.

Many of the higher status Wari tombs were easily opened and sealed again, but it seems unlikely that they contained founders' mummies who were brought out for public worship. The entrances of these tombs would have made it difficult to extract and replace whole mummies. But the evidence for Type 5a tombs is even more indicative. Their primary cists were impossible to re-open once an offering house and altar chamber had been constructed over the lid.

Principal cists of Type 5a mortuary rooms contained important ancestors, but it is impossible to

imagine Inka-style mummies trapped in these tombs, beyond the reach of their descendents. While there were important developments in Type 5 tombs that appear to document significant changes in treatments and meanings of dead ancestors though the Middle Horizon, Wari descendents who employed Type 5a mortuary rooms contented themselves with communicating with their principal ancestor through a *ttoco*

At Conchopata, and apparently at Huari as well, elaborate mortuary rooms were located far from public areas. They were intended for private ceremonies, not public display. In fact, built environments of death imply that admission to mortuary rooms was limited and exclusive. Perhaps entrance instated power that had to be controlled. Adjacent facilities do not include courtyards or plazas large enough for the assembly of many people. We do not yet fully understand how the Wari dead were incorporated in grander rituals where social memory was constructed, but current information suggests the possibility that defleshed and disarticulated bones of deceased ancestors could have been objects of display in public landscapes of death.

Unfortunately, the image of Inka-style mummies is excessively powerful in Andean archaeology, becoming an untested assumption for interpreting earlier mortuary remains (see Kaulicke 2000). Inka ancestor mummies were kept in open sepulchres and brought out to participate in ceremonial activities of the living, in many cases as the focus of adoration. Theresa and John Topic (1984; see also Isbell 1997a:204–208) reported the possibility of Inka-like mummies from a late Early Intermediate period/Middle Horizon mortuary building at Cerro Amaru in Huamachuco, although the context was disturbed and required significant interpretative inference. Also on the basis of highly disturbed human remains I argued that Jargampata, a rural Middle Horizon installation 25 km from Huari, may have included a room within its residential quarters where mummies were kept (Isbell 1997a:187). But new mortuary information from Conchopata shows that the deceased were accessed through *ttoco* openings, and that removal of complete bodies for participation in public rituals would have been difficult or impossible. Gordon McEwan's (1998) inference that Inka-like ancestor mummies were the principal religious objects of

Wari's regional administrative center at Pikillacta now seems very unlikely. Quoted in a recent *National Geographic Magazine* article (Morell 2002:123), McEwan stated that Pikillacta was used as a mummy storage depot where Wari leaders held captured ancestor mummies hostage to insure political compliance from their living descendents. Without material evidence in support of this assertion, and in light of inconsistencies between Middle Horizon Ayacucho mortuary facilities and those associated with Inka public display of mummies, such ancestor bundles seem unlikely in Pikillacta's landscape of death. If ancestor mummies existed at Pikillacta, they were part of the culture of the conquered peoples of Cuzco.

There can be no doubt that this study of Wari mortuary landscape is preliminary. Much more information must be collected and compared. As data increase, so will the refinement of ideal types of Wari mortuary practices, as well as actual cases—the occasional intact tomb—providing better understanding of variability and individual strategies in the treatment of Wari dead. But even in preliminary form, this typology of Wari mortuary preferences furnishes a tool for inferring social and political hierarchy during the Middle Horizon, while it creates a new understanding of Wari's landscape of death.

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## Notes

1. “Huari” is also spelled “Wari.” This name refers to the archaeological ruins of a great city in Peru’s central highland Ayacucho Valley. It also refers to the art style and archaeological culture that probably originated in the city, and was spread across much of the Central Andes during the Middle Horizon (A.D. 550 to 1000). To reduce the confusion, I have proposed (Isbell 2002) that “Huari” be used for the city and its contents, while “Wari” be employed for the broadly diffused culture and its distinctive art found outside the capital city. I follow that practice in this article.

2. I wish to recognize the co-directors, project administrator, sponsors, and other participants and contributors to the Conchopata Archaeological Project. Please see “Acknowledgments” at the end of the article. Special thanks are due Dr. Tiffany Tung for her painstaking analyses of the Conchopata skeletal remains, and the preliminary information presented here. Bioarchaeological study of these materials is continuing.

3. This discussion deals with the burial of adults and juvenile children. Except where they were placed in what appear to have been family tombs, the burial of fetuses and infants, as well as young children, was significantly different from burial for adults and youths. This probably expressed practices appropriate for different age grades. Complete analysis of Conchopata burial practices, including the interment of children, will be presented in the future.

4. A *tupu* is a long pin with flat head ethnohistorically used by women to fasten a wrap-around garment over their shoulders.

5. Challenging Isbell and Cook’s original conclusion that the women were sacrificial victims, recent re-examination of the bones by Tiffany Tung failed to detect evidence of violent death. Of course, strangulation, poison, and other techniques for killing would leave no detectable evidence, especially on poorly preserved bones, as these are. But the conclusion that the women were sacrificed requires more examination in the future.

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