

# Tapestry-Woven Textiles from Castillo de Huarmey, Peru and the Wari-Huarmey Textile Tradition

Aleksandra Laszczka, Patrycja Prządka-Giersz

## Abstract

Peruvian tapestries are prestige textiles, known for their mosaic-like patterns made of multicoloured yarns. Numerous tapestry fragments from the Middle Horizon Period (650-1050 A.D.) were found at the Castillo de Huarmey archaeological site on the North Coast of Peru, where an intact Wari royal mausoleum was discovered. Relying on technological and iconographic analyses and on the context of the entire textile collection, a new Middle Horizon tradition, associated with the expansion of the Wari culture, is proposed.

**Keywords:** South America, Peru, Pre-Columbian Textiles, Castillo de Huarmey, Middle Horizon

## Resumen


TEJIDOS DE TAPIZ DEL CASTILLO DE HUARMEY, PERÚ Y LA TRADICIÓN TEXTIL WARI-HUARMEY

En los tiempos prehispánicos, los tapices, conocidos por sus patrones en forma de mosaico y hechos de hilos multicolores, fueron considerados como los objetos de lujo. Una colección relevante de tapices provenientes del período Horizonte Medio (650-1050 d.C.) fue hallada en el sitio arqueológico Castillo de Huarmey, en la costa norte del Perú, donde se descubrió el mausoleo real Wari intacto. Apoyándonos en el análisis tecnológico e iconográfico, así como en el contexto de toda la colección textil, se propone una nueva tradición para el Horizonte Medio pertinente con la expansión de la cultura Wari.

**Palabras claves:** América del Sur, Perú, Tejidos Precolombinos, Castillo de Huarmey, Horizonte Medio

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## 1. Introduction

The archaeological site of Castillo de Huarmey is located in the southern part of the North Coast of Peru, in the Ancash region, about 300 km to the north of Lima and less than 4 km from the Pacific Ocean (Fig. 1). Since 2010 the site has been studied by a Polish-Peruvian team as part of the Castillo de Huarmey Archaeological Research Project (PIACH) (Giersz and Pardo 2014; Giersz 2017). Castillo de Huarmey is considered the most important Middle Horizon (ca. 650-1050 A.D.) site on the Peruvian North Coast, closely associated with the Wari expansion in the region. It covers an area of 45 ha, including the central sector with monumental architecture and areas for public, domestic and ritual activities (Giersz 2014: 75).

In 2012, the first intact Wari royal mausoleum was discovered, containing 58 funerary bundles, six human sacrifices, and over 1300 valuable artifacts, comprising grave goods and ceremonial offerings. Besides those luxury objects, remnants of clothing were found. It is of particular importance, as fabrics were objects of personal use, reflecting the economic and social status of their owner. The manner of manufacturing and the represented repertoire of decorative motifs might also indicate the cultural identity of those individuals. In this article we discuss a particular group of textiles that comprise tapestry-woven fragments, and analyse their style and design.

## 2. Andean tapestry weaving

Andean tapestries are textiles woven in a specific way, known for their complex design, bright colours and high level of craftsmanship. The tapestry weave evolved presumably from the weft-faced bands of the Chavín textiles during the Early Horizon (ca. 900-200 B.C.). According to Conklin (1978), its invention was revolutionary, influencing the art of subsequent cultures. This weaving technique was frequently employed until the times of the Inca Empire.

Technically, tapestry is a type of plain weave, where discontinuous wefts of different colours are woven in weft-face, hiding the warp threads. Adjacent wefts may be left without connection, creating slit tapestry with vertical slits visible along its vertical margins. Wefts from adjacent areas may also be joined by dovetailing, where they turn back alternately round the same warp, and by interlocking, where they are linked with each other (Emery 1966: 78-81). The distinction between slit and interlocked tapestry is essential, as the former technique is diagnostic for the coastal tradition, and the latter for the highlands (Conklin 1983).

The tapestry weaving technique allows for creating almost any mosaic-like pattern, but it also demands meeting specific economic and material requirements. Creating a complete decorated cloth, where wefts are closely packed, requires not only an immense amount of labour by specialised weavers, but also materials, whose acquisition and processing are extremely time-consuming. Therefore, tapestry fab-

rics are considered items of prestige, and garments woven in this technique were only available to members of royalty and nobility as “symbol[s] of power, wealth, and influence” (Oakland Rodman and Cassman 1995: 33). This is confirmed by ethno-historical written sources that provide information on textile production under the Inca control for the Inca ruler and the administrative officials.

The state-controlled weaving process concerned fine decorated clothes, including the ones made in tapestry technique. Those exquisite fabrics were tightly connected with political, military, social, and religious events. In fact, it is very important to note that in pre-Hispanic times textiles were key markers of status and wealth.

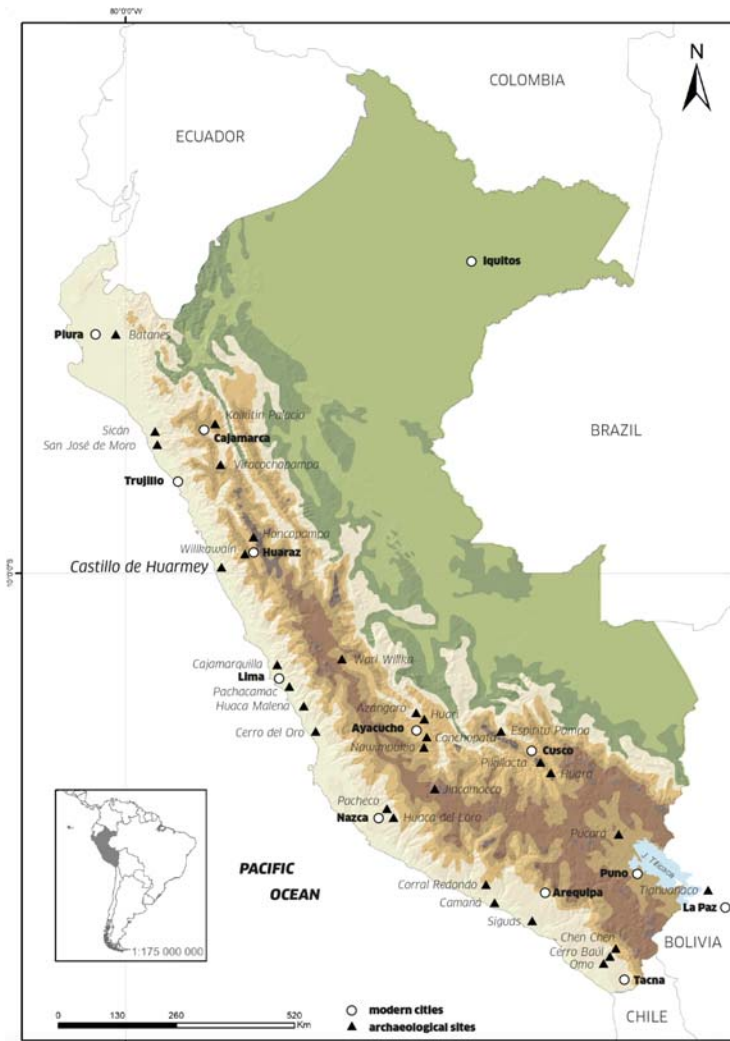


Fig. 1. Map of Middle Horizon Sites in Peru, with location of Castillo de Huarmey archaeological site (courtesy of Miłosz Giersz, based on Giersz and Prządka-Giersz 2018: 18)

Ethnohistorical sources reveal that in the Inca Empire the best-quality fabrics and garments were offered as prestigious gifts to royal lineages and/or other noble families (Murra 1962; Rowe 1997). Therefore, the access to sophisticated textile techniques, and to the repertoire of iconographic designs, must have been jealously guarded. They were most likely studied only by a select group of specialists belonging to the elite class. The Colonial chronicles of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries make reference to different classes of Inca noblewomen who were dedicated to weaving delicate garments, such as *cumbi* cloths, made with the finest camelid fiber (Cieza de León 1880 [1553]: 22; Betanzos 1999 [1557]). Juan de Betanzos, one of the early chroniclers, points out that in the process of weaving these garments they used tools of the best quality laden with powerful symbolic meaning. According to him, such was the case of the party organized in commemoration of the *coya* Mama Ocllo, where the women came out “hilando oro fino con husos de oro y ruecas de oro, que imitasen a su madre cuando le daba voluntad de hilar algo...” (1999 [1557]: 174). Among the women who were dedicated to weaving were the *coyas*, or queens, and the *ñustas*, or princesses of the royal blood, who, according to Garcilaso de la Vega (2009 [1609]: 51, 58), taught other Andean women to weave and spin. Without doubt these were textiles of the best quality, like the tapestry especially created for the elaboration of *unku* tunics and other garments that were worn by the elites. Taking this into consideration, it is highly probable that tapestries had similar importance in earlier Andean societies, including Wari, who left behind “one of the most aesthetically accomplished and technically innovative textile legacies in the world” (Bergh 2012: 159).

### 3. Former research on Castillo de Huarmey archaeological site and its textiles

The first references to artefacts of possible provenance from Castillo de Huarmey, resulting from the expeditions of Julio C. Tello, date back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Giersz 2017: 74-75). However, the first research carried out at the site, limited to a surface reconnaissance, took place in 1963. At that time, German archaeologist Heinrich Ubbelohde-Doering managed to gather a large collection of wooden artefacts, ceramic fragments and about 160 textile fragments, which were deposited in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Munich (Prümers 2000: 290-291), currently known as the Museum Fünf Kontinente. Some years later, several textiles, which are presumed to have come from El Castillo, were studied by William Conklin (1979), who analysed their structure and iconographic representation. Based on his research, Conklin suggested that during the Middle Horizon the Huarmey Valley had possibly remained under the influence of Wari and Moche cultures.

In the middle of 1980s, Heiko Prümers (1990, 2000) carried out a field survey at Castillo de Huarmey, which yielded 366 textile fragments, approximately 1600 pottery fragments and about 1300 fragments of wooden artefacts, pyro-engraved gourds

and weaving utensils. Those specimens were found on the surface in consequence of a systematic looting of the site by *huaqueros*. All these artefacts, along with textiles collected by Ubbelohde-Doering, were analysed by Prümers (1990) in his doctoral dissertation, where he took into consideration both their technological and iconographical aspects. Based on their combined stylistic traits, the textiles were described as representing mostly a hybrid “Moche-Huari” style, thus supporting Conklin’s thesis.

Prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the site of Castillo de Huarmey had never been the subject of systematic archaeological excavations. In 2010 Polish and Peruvian specialists, led by Miłosz Giersz from the University of Warsaw, Poland, carried out a full non-invasive survey of the site and the first scientific excavation as part of the PIACH project (Bogacki *et al.* 2010, 2011). During the second field season in 2012, an intact Wari imperial mausoleum was discovered (Giersz and Pardo 2014; Giersz 2017; Prządka-Giersz 2019). As mentioned earlier, the burial chamber contained the remains of 58 individuals, mostly females, belonging to upper echelons of Wari nobility (Więckowski 2014: 216), buried with more than 1300 prestige items, including fine jewellery, paraphernalia, weapons, vessels, and weaving utensils (Prządka-Giersz 2014, 2019).

#### **4. Textile collection from Castillo de Huarmey**

During excavations carried out since 2012, a large collection of fabrics has been acquired. Of particular importance are the textiles found in the main chamber. However, their preservation is poor due to bodily fluids from the decomposing corpses of the deceased. The most important fabrics from the chamber, including miniature tunics, bags, headbands and headdresses, were published soon after the mausoleum’s discovery, but their description is limited to basic information (Giersz and Pardo 2014: 259-267). Textiles in a better state of preservation were found outside the chamber, in disturbed strata of the principal monumental compound, and around looted areas. They are heavily fragmented because of depredation, but the mostly dry climatic conditions permitted an excellent preservation of fabric structures and yarn colour. Altogether, at present, the fabric collection from the site exceeds more than 2000 fragments.

In 2014, in order to carry out the preliminary evaluation of the collection, and to determine the scope of research for the following seasons, a sample of 724 objects including textile fragments, yarns and cordages was examined (Laszczka, Splitstoser and Giersz 2017). During the following two research seasons in 2016 and 2017, 1200 textile fragments from the collection were analysed and documented with a high-resolution A3 graphic scanner, or photographed. The sample consisted of pieces mentioned above<sup>2</sup>, as well as individual pieces from subsequent seasons, distinctive for their complex weaving techniques. From this group, 543 samples, either fragments or complete textiles, originating from 531 fabrics, were subjected to

a detailed analysis. The prime criterion of selection for this group was the presence of decoration, which improves interpretative possibilities, as not only the textile structure, but also iconography is a significant marker of cultural influences. Another criterion was the textiles' resemblance to those discovered in other Middle Horizon burials on the Northern Coast, such as those of Huaca Cao Viejo (Oakland Rodman and Fernández Lopez 2005: 120-127), or Chimú Capac (Oakland 2020). In both of those cases the findings included pieces made with characteristic structures, such as red and white double cloth, slit and interlocked tapestry, as well as fabrics made with discontinuous warps and wefts and subsequently tie-dyed. Taking into consideration significant similarities to fabrics discovered in the disturbed layers of the royal mausoleum at Castillo de Huarney, such textiles have been considered as particularly important. Therefore, fragments with distinguishable iconographies<sup>3</sup> were also selected for analysis.

Another factor crucial to the sample selection was the fabric's form, being either a complete piece of clothing or at least a fragment large enough to allow for determining its function. Additionally, fragments having at least two selvages, or measuring at least 300 cm<sup>2</sup>, were taken into account. These criteria allowed to show a variety of cloths made in simple weaving techniques, and at the same time permitted avoidance of analysing numerous, tiny pieces – mostly parts of burial shrouds, destroyed during looting. All of the above-mentioned criteria made it possible to create a representative statistical sample, reflecting the structure of the entire textile collection. Among 531 complete textiles and textile fragments, 739 structures were recognized, as multiple structures were frequently combined in an individual piece of fabric (e.g. plain weave with weft-faced plain weave band). Plain weave and its variations encompass 78.6% of analysed structures; in this group, 176 tapestries were recorded, constituting 23.8% of the analysed collection. Several pieces of the same fabric were counted as one.

## **5. Tapestry fragments from the collection**

As tapestries are distinguished on the basis of the techniques used to join the weft yarns where two colours meet on the field, in the Castillo de Huarney collection three variants were singled out (see Table 1). Importantly, among 176 textiles, 159 are independent tapestries woven separately or stitched to another cloth. In the remaining 17 examples, more than one structure was noted – the most common variant being simple plain weave with tapestry panel, woven with warps of the plain weave.

Slit tapestry is the most common type on the North Coast, where weavers frequently left short slits open, while longer ones were sewn. However, in studied collection, such a variant of tapestry was only observed in 32 examples, or 18.2% of the total. The most representative variant, found in 100 fragments (56.8%), is

Table 1. Tapestry variants in Castillo de Huarmey textile collection

Tapestry variants	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Interlocked tapestry	44	25.0%
Slit tapestry	32	18.2%
Reinforced slit tapestry	100	56.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

reinforced slit tapestry, a technique highlighted during preliminary evaluation of the textile collection (Laszczka, Splitstoser and Giersz 2017: 256). In the analysed fragments, single dovetail joints are especially prominent, serving to reinforce the textile structure where the slit is too long. In multiple examples, reinforced slits are associated with the outlining of the motif, simultaneously emphasizing certain features of the pattern. Outlining is usually done in black or dark brown colours, but also in red, yellow, cream or even pink. Furthermore, outlining colours may vary within one textile (Fig. 2). Slits may also be created by cutting out or pulling out the warp thread – this decorative technique resembles an openwork and appears in particular textile areas, usually of rectangular shape.



Fig. 2. Example of reinforced slit tapestry band sewn to the 2/1 plain weave cloth. A band depicts outlined stepped-fret motif combining bird heads, and a band of rays and stepped-crosses; cotton and camelid fibre; 17.5 cm x 26.0 cm (ID number 254-1)



Fig. 3. Tapestry fragments with eccentric wefts: A. Reinforced slit tapestry, decorated with outlined circles; camelid fibre and cotton; 6.0 x 6.5 cm (ID number 250-8); B. Interlocked tapestry depicting a raptorial bird and a wing's fragment; cotton and camelid fibre; 11.0 x 13.5 cm (ID number 261-3)



Fig. 4. Fragment of three-dimensional bag, woven in reinforced slit tapestry and plain weave (1/2), depicting a frontal figure holding staffs; cotton; 22.0 x 15 cm (ID number 862-9)



In 21 fragments made in slit-, and reinforced slit tapestry, the presence of eccentric wefts, which were used to create sliding lines in particular parts of motifs, was observed (Fig. 3A-B). Patterns of remaining slit tapestry fragments are geometric, that is, the edges of the design are parallel, creating vertical and horizontal lines. Eccentric wefts are also present in interlocked tapestry fragments (Fig. 3B), constituting 25.0% of the studied assemblage.

Almost all tapestry examples are made of cotton warps and woollen wefts, but there are some exceptions. In the collection there are three three-dimensional bags entirely made of cotton, where individual fragments are woven not only with single wefts, but also with pairs of yarns. Figure 4 shows an example of such a bag, where the bottom part is made in plain weave with single warps and paired wefts, and its sides are woven in reinforced slit tapestry; particular cream-and-blue-colour areas are made of S-spun, single or paired yarns. The other four three-dimensional bags are identical, though individual woollen blocks are present. In contrast, the tapestry collection also contains fabrics woven entirely with camelid fibres: one is woven in reinforced slit tapestry and seven in interlocked tapestry (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Interlocked tapestry fragment; camelid fibre; 11.0 x 25.5 cm (ID number 862-4)

While tapestry wefts are usually made of two Z-spun woollen threads plied together in S-direction (“S(2z)”, 97% frequency), in 20 textiles from the assemblage, aside from prevailing camelid fibre wefts, individual areas made of cotton wefts were recorded. In those examples, cotton wefts are mostly S-spun, or Z-spun and S-plied (“S(2z)”), but in single specimens also Z-spun, and S-spun and Z-plied (“Z(2s)”). They mostly retain their natural cream and brown colours, though some of them are dyed blue. In comparison, woollen yarns are associated with a bright colour palette, as they absorb dyes more easily than cotton. Multiple shades of yellow (21.4% of tapestry collection), red (18.7%) and brown (17.9%) prevail, cream (8.5%), pink

(8.1%) and blue (6.5%) woollen wefts are less common. Besides, black, violet, gold, green, grey, teal and orange yarns were used. Comparing those data to the results of analyses of the entire studied sample, where cotton wefts in their natural colour dominate, the frequency of occurrence of yellow, red and brown woollen wefts is similar (Laszczka 2019: 38-43).

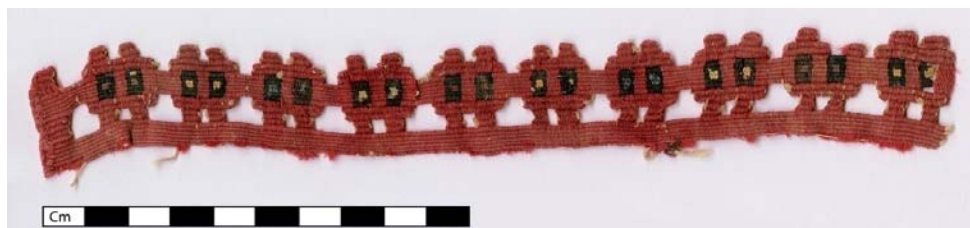


Fig. 6. Fragment of reinforced slit tapestry band, depicting catfish heads; cotton and camelid fibre; 21.0 cm x 2.8 cm (ID number 1033-6)



Fig. 7. Fragment of gauze fabric, sewn together with reinforced slit tapestry band, decorated with catfish heads; cotton and camelid fibre; 23.0 cm x 33.0 cm (ID number 279-4)

Excluding eight entirely woollen tapestries, the remaining specimens usually have two-ply cotton warps. There are only two exceptions to this rule – woollen warps were found in two reinforced slit tapestry bands, representing a kind of openwork. It features catfish heads, with the central zone made of cotton warps and decorated with stepped appendages made with discontinuous cream cotton

yarns, and in particular areas with discontinuous red woollen yarns (Fig. 6). Among 159 independent tapestries, the highest frequency is that of Z-spun, S-ply cotton warps (“S(2z)”), observed in 79 examples, while 65 tapestries have S-spun and Z-ply warps (“Z(2s)”). Three-ply cotton warps were recognized in seven tapestry fragments – in five of them three yarns are S-spun and Z-ply (“Z(3s)”), and in two of them, they are Z-spun, S-ply “S(3z)”. In addition to described tapestry assemblage, in 17 fragments where tapestry is only one of two or more textile structures, the spin direction of warps differs, though those warps are always cotton.



Fig. 8. Decorated tapestry bands: A. Slit tapestry with a pattern of stepped triangles and with short weft fringes; cotton and camelid fibre; 8.6 cm x 2.8 cm (ID number 1594-1); B. Reinforced slit tapestry depicting a stylized frontal figure with spread legs, wearing a headdress; cotton and camelid fibre; 17.0 cm. x 3.2 cm (ID number 1568-1)

In museums, there are numerous tapestry-woven cloths considered to be Wari. Their state of preservation is excellent, which made it possible to determine their function as decorated tunics, mantles and headbands. Unfortunately, as most of the textiles from Castillo de Huarmey are fragmented, in most cases their function cannot be specified. However, the collection contains 72 tapestry examples classified as independent bands. Bands form a significant group in the collection, constituting 20.7% of the entire assemblage of 531 pieces. In this group, 65.5% of bands are made in tapestry technique, mainly slit and reinforced slit tapestry, but interlocked tapestry fragments were also observed. Most bands are narrow, not exceeding five cm in width. Their original length is not known. As suggested by representations on ceramic vessels, they might have served as headbands or waist belts. Bands may have also been woven in order to decorate larger textiles by sewing



Fig. 9. Slit tapestry miniature cloth, folded in the warp direction and sewn. It depicts two highly stylized, profiled figures; cotton and camelid fibre; 5.0 x 8.0 cm (ID number 261-4)

them onto the sleeves and sides of a shirt or another type of cloth: there are specimens sewn together with plain weave cloth (Fig. 2) and one example sewn together with gauze fabric (Fig. 7). Additionally, remnants of sewing thread are visible on multiple edges. Usually, bands are decorated with simple, geometric patterns, such as stepped triangles (Fig. 8A) or stepped crosses. More complex zoomorphic and anthropomorphic (Fig. 8B) designs were also noted. Some of them have short weft fringes (Fig. 8A).

Several miniatures are made of textiles woven in tapestry weave, folded in half in the warp direction and with warps selvages sewn together (Fig. 9). Those miniatures always have fringes made with the weft ends which extend beyond the warp yarns and are decorated with geometric or stylized anthropomorphic motifs. Their function is unknown, but as several specimens suggest, presumably they were produced in order to be sewn onto other textiles and decorate the ends of bands and miniature tunics.

Except for the bags, bands, and miniatures, in the collection there are also numerous textile fragments of undetermined function. Nevertheless, as 44 fragments are executed in interlocked tapestry, a technique used in many Wari textiles, it is highly probable that at least some of them are tunic fragments, especially considering the way they are decorated. This decoration is characteristic of the Wari tradition, featuring geometric stepped-fret motifs, visible in rectangular, diagonally divided areas (Fig. 10).

Particular specimens represent characteristic details known in the Wari repertoire as vertically divided eyes, toothed mouths, raptorial bird heads (Fig. 3B) or wings, which most likely formed larger representations.

## 6. Discussion

Castillo de Huarmey is an extraordinary archaeological site due to the abundance of artefacts found not only in the main chamber, but also around the imperial mausoleum. It should be noted that the tapestries at Castillo de Huarmey do not only appear as complete clothing deposited as part of an attire or mortuary offering in funerary contexts, but also as decorative elements of wrappers and baskets with weaving utensils, as well as “symbolic samples” in peculiar contexts. One example is provided by the burial of the most important woman in the female tomb of the Castillo de Huarmey, known as the Principal Lady. Inside it, one of the



Fig. 10. Interlocked tapestry fragment with stepped-fret motif. Figure-eight stitching is visible; cotton and camelid fibre; 5.0 cm x 9.5 cm (ID number 253-10)

baskets found around her funeral bundle was completely covered with a delicate decorated tapestry, a fact further accentuating its value as a luxury object (Prządka-Giersz 2019: 77). A tapestry fragment decorated with geometric figures, found in the same basket, was kept as a “symbolic sample” (Prządka-Giersz 2019: 94). It appears that this was a significant pattern in the composition of grave goods belonging to prominent individuals. Other examples of decorated textile fragments were found in the tomb in baskets filled with fine weaving accessories accompanied by other goods. All these data show that the tapestries found in Castillo de Huarmey were very important items for the women buried in the imperial mausoleum. However, to distinguish their style, a broader perspective is needed, where other fabrics are taken into account.

Tapestry, which is a specific type of plain weave, is the second most representative technique (23.8%), after textiles made in simple plain weave (45.7% of the analysed sample). The prevailing type is the simplest variation with single warp and single weft (1/1), yet fragments with paired warps and paired wefts (2/2), paired warps and single wefts (2/1), and ones made in warp- and weft-faced plain weave are also quite numerous. Plain weave with discontinuous elements was observed in 8.7% of the studied sample, including specimens with discontinuous warps, discontinuous wefts, and mostly discontinuous warps and wefts, along with twelve tie-dyed specimens. Fragments of plain weave decorated with supplementary wefts (8.1%) are also quite frequent, including those inserted on floating warps or woven in weft face, as well as double cloth, encompassing 3.8% of the analysed collection. The remaining group includes twill weave, complementary warp and weft weave, plain weave with warp and weft substitution, plain weave with supplementary warp, plain-weave-derived float weave, and gauze weave. With exception of three-dimensional cross-knit looping and featherwork mosaic structures (Laszczka, Splitstoser and Giersz 2017), the majority of above-mentioned structures are not new for the site, as they were encountered earlier by Heiko Prümers (1990, 2000). Both PIACH and Prümers’ assemblages make up a rich and extremely important collection ascribed to a single Middle Horizon archaeological site with secure context. However, considering the discovery of the first intact Wari mausoleum, the prevalent view about the nature of fabrics found in this area, referred to as the “Moche-Huari” in style, should be reconsidered.

Although the analysed fragments come from disturbed strata of the architectural context, other objects found in the main burial chamber unambiguously demonstrate the Wari nature of this site. They are influenced by styles characteristic of the highlands, southern and central coast, and local coastal traditions (Giersz 2017), and the same tendency was noticed in the case of the fabrics, both in iconographic and technological aspects. The presence of features ascribed to the Northern Coast traditions, which Prümers described as Moche, is undeniable, although motifs and techniques known from Wari, Tiwanaku, Nasca, and Lima, were noticed as well. Relatively few Moche fabrics from secure contexts are known. All accessible

data concerning Moche textiles were analysed by Flannery Surette (2015) together with a dataset from sites of the contemporaneous Virú community dated to the Early Intermediate Period (c.a. 100 B.C.-600 A.D.), whose textiles reflect characteristics of the Northern tradition: they are woven in plain weave, with consistent use of S-spun cotton yarns, and frequently decorated with supplementary wefts. Twill and slit tapestry techniques are common as well. In the Castillo de Huarmey textile collection, weaving techniques are more diversified, though only six examples of twill were recorded. Moreover, despite a high percentage of plain weave grounds with S-spun cotton, wool is used more frequently than in Moche textiles, and so are yarns in red and yellow colours (Laszczka 2019).

Regarding iconography, the discussion of iconographic features of the Middle Horizon Period is challenging and at times confusing: unlike the Moche culture, the iconographic repertoire of the Wari culture is a blend of stylistic features brought by many artistic groups with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which is also evident in the case of Wari iconography represented on pottery (Giersz 2017: 201-202). Among fabrics from Castillo de Huarmey, the main indicator of Moche influence is the iconographical motif of a catfish/ray, presented in naturalistic or stylized forms. It is frequently represented not only on tapestry fragments (Fig. 2, 6-7), but also in fabrics woven in techniques uncommon on the North Coast, such as discontinuous warps and wefts or complementary-weft weave (Laszczka 2019). This motif appears in other Middle Horizon contexts as well, including Cerro de Oro (Varillas Palacios 2016: Fig. 80), Huaca Malena (Pozzi-Escot and Ángeles 2011: 111, 119; Frame and Ángeles 2014: Fig. 40, 42), Huaca Pucllana (Vargas Nalvarte 2013: Fig. 6, 7, 9) and Chimú Capac (Oakland 2020: Fig. 22, 24). Besides the catfish/ray motif, the stepped-fret motif with multiple merged bird heads is one of the most common ones among Castillo de Huarmey textiles and, except tapestries, it is woven in various techniques, as plain weave with supplementary discontinuous wefts inserted on floating warps, plain weave with supplemental discontinuous wefts woven in weft face, plain weave with discontinuous wefts, or double weave. Birds are characterised by their regular shape and geometry, although they differ in shape and length of the beak. Prümers (1990: 115-116) considers this motif to be the representation of Moche cultural tradition, frequently appearing on the pottery, however Surette (2015: Table 74) does not mention any representations of stepped-fret motif combining bird heads on Moche and Virú textiles. Furthermore, among 270 motifs, birds were observed only on four textiles.

Taking into consideration the technological and iconographical features mentioned above, as well as the archaeologically proven paucity of chronological and cultural connections to the Moche culture at Castillo de Huarmey (Giersz 2017), it seems that the use of “Moche-Huari” term is inadequate. At this point we consider it necessary to distinguish a new technological tradition that combines different styles. We propose the “Wari-Huarmey” tradition as its name. This term is

related to the expansion of Wari culture and shows the coexistence of typical Wari motifs and techniques, together with local ones. The existence of textile hybrids that combine imperial and local features supports this assumption and confirms research results from the Castillo de Huarney archaeological site.

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## Notes

- 1 “spinning fine gold with gold spindles and gold spindle whorls, to imitate their mother when she wanted to spin something ...”; translation by P. Prządka-Giersz.
- 2 Objects such as yarns and cordages were excluded.
- 3 Highly decorative, but tiny fragments were not included because of their state of preservation, which made it impossible to reconstruct the design.

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