

**Camille Myers Breeze
Museum Textile Services
715 Shawsheen Street
Tewksbury, MA 01876
camillebreeze@hotmail.com
978-851-0110**

1 March, 2004

Museo Municipal de Huaca Malena
Pedro La Rosa y Miramar
Capilla de Asia
Peru

Object: Mummy Bundle #7 (Fardo Funerario #7)
Materials: Human remains; cotton textiles; wool textiles; cotton yarns; unspun cotton fibers; un-spun wool fibers; plant fibers; wood; gourd; ceramic; vegetable remains; rodent remains.
Dimensions: 60 cm x 30 cm x 24 cm approximately
MTS#: 10104

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Fardo Funerario #7 was examined and conserved by Rommel Angeles Falcon, Camille Myers Breeze, and Gabriel Rimachi Sialer on January 28 and 29, 2004 (photograph 1). The mummy bundle was excavated in 1997 by Angeles Falcon y Denise Pozzi-Escot. It is consistent with the description of female funerary bundles published by the above in "Textiles del Horizonte Medio, las Evidencias de Huaca Malena, Valle de Asia, Canete." The mummy bundle has an outer mantle of wool held in place around the middle with a belt. Between this outer garment and the mummy bundle a dried pepper was found. The bundle itself consists of numerous layers of cotton fabric wound around the mummified female, who is in a fetal position with hands raised near the head. At the top of the bundle, corresponding to the head of the mummy, is a tapestry head cloth. Near the head there is a woven bag containing a gourd, and another woven bag that is not assembled and therefore does not contain anything. Numerous cords, ropes, and woven bands are used to hold the bundle in its current arrangement. The presence of spindles of yarn, a cone of unspun cotton, and other weaving tools near the top of the bundle also identify the mummy as female. Also found within the bundle were the remains of three rodents. The mummy was not unwrapped, but instead conserved in its original form.

CONDITION

The mummy bundle has been wrapped in a black tarp and stored in a plain cardboard box in the storage room of the Museo Municipal de Huaca Malena (photograph 2). There is no climate control in the room. There appear to be neither insect activity nor mold present, although there were numerous dead beetles in the bottom of the box and within the mummy bundle. Moth balls are used throughout the storage area but not in this box. There was a package of desiccant in the box, which was removed. The mummy was covered in loose dried earth from its burial environment.

The mummy bundle is in good condition overall. The only area of deterioration appears to be at the lower extremes, corresponding to the hip area and lower spine of the mummy, where fluids apparently collected during the initial stages of decomposition of the body (photograph 3). This indicates that the mummy was buried upright in a seated fetal position. The cotton wrappings in the lower extremes are blackened, degraded, and at the very lowest part, missing altogether. The remainder of the cotton and wool textiles are in excellent condition and retain strength and color.

The human remains have been preserved through desiccation. There is very little flesh or soft tissue remaining in the lower deteriorated area, although some connective tissue can be seen around some of the exposed skeleton (photograph 4). One hand is visible by moving some of the wrappings. The fingers are woven together with strips of fabric, probably cotton, and they appear to retain some skin (photograph 5). The condition of the rest of the mummy is not known but is assumed to be good.

TREATMENT

The mummy bundle was surface cleaned, stabilized, and analyzed to improve its level of preservation and assess the possibility of future display. The bundle was vacuum cleaned with a soft attachment and paint brush (photograph 6). The soils were collected in a bag and retained for future analysis and to preserve the fragments of textile and other remains removed by the vacuum. Where possible, the wrappings were moved aside to allow more thorough vacuum cleaning. First the top side of the bundle was vacuumed, then the mummy was rotated, and the bottom side was vacuumed (photograph 7). Once surface cleaned, the lower deteriorated area was temporarily stabilized to arrest further damage from handling and gravitational strain. Acid-free tissue was placed against the deteriorated area, then layers of polyester and cotton batting. These materials are held in place by hand-stitching a piece of undyed cotton plain-weave fabric to the strong cotton wrappings surrounding the area of deterioration using cotton thread (photograph 8). No sampling or testing was done.

A textile associated with the burial site of this mummy bundle was found in the storage box with other associated artifacts. This textile was humidified in a Gore-Tex humidification chamber until it could be flattened out. It was allowed to dry in contact with acid-free tissue, which drew out some soils and deterioration products (photograph 9). This textile is still soiled but it can now be analyzed and stored more safely.

TEXTILE ANALYSIS

PRINCIPLE BELT (VINCHA)

4.4 cm wide; length unknown

Warp-faced camelid with camelid weft

20 warps/cm; 5 wefts/cm

This belt was found around the middle of the mummy bundle, corresponding to the waist area of the outer mantle. It wraps around the bundle twice and is tied in a simple flat knot (photograph 10). The warp is natural, beige, tan, and dark brown. Half way down the length of the belt the warps change position, causing the color positions on the belt to also change. Consequently, one end of the belt has dark brown only on the edge designs, and the other has dark brown only in the center design. The designs consist of simple geometrical shapes with some zoomorphic figures consistent with coastal iconography of fish and birds (photograph 11).

OUTER MANTLE (MANTA)

Dimensions unknown

Warp-faced camelid with camelid weft

Thread counts unknown

The mantle identifies this mummy as female. It is made up of two rectangular warp-faced textiles.

The two pieces of the garment are sewn together with a double strand of dark brown yarn in a ladder stitch. The warp runs horizontally across the garment. The mantle appears to be a simple large rectangle that is wrapped around the bundle and then belted (photograph 12). Before being wrapped, the top half of the mantle was folded inward toward the mummy (photograph 13). This explains why the center seam of the garment is not at the visible center of the bundle, and why there is no selvedge edge visible at the top of the mantle.

The warp is two-ply S-twist (2 Z-spun) and the weft is one- or two-ply S. The body of the mantle is medium brown. The outer 4.5 cm of the lower piece of the mantle has a decorative border of red and dark brown warp stripes (photograph 14). Some dark brown camelid embroidery yarns remain where the warp selvedge was embroidered. It is not known whether the other half of the mantle has a similar border treatment.

WRAPPING CLOTHS AND TIES

Dimensions unknown

Plain-weave cotton

The outer cotton wrapping of the mummy bundle is a course cotton with six warps and 10 wefts per cm (photograph 15). Below is a finer cotton plain weave, and below that an even finer cotton plain weave. All cotton is 2-ply S-twist (z-spun).

Around the cotton wrapping cloths are a coarsely woven cotton belt with of low-spun, or possibly paired warps. There are approximately 12 warps and 12 wefts per cm. The twined cords around the bundle are 2-ply S-twist, made of multiple z-spun vegetable fibers (photograph 16).

BAG AND STRAP

Dimensions unknown

Warp-faced cotton

This bag contains a gourd. The bag has 14 paired warps per cm and 2 weft per cm. All yarns are single ply S-spun. The bag was constructed of one simple rectangle that is folded in half and sewn up the sides (photograph 17). It is a four-selvedge textile with an unwoven section where the weaver no longer had space to pass the weaving shuttle.

The bag has a warp-faced strap made of brown, dark red, white, natural, and ochre camelid yarns. The yarns are 2-ply S-twist with very low-spin threads whose direction of twist is not discernable. There are approximately 22 warps per cm and 4 wefts per cm.

SPINDLE WITH YARN

Wood and cane with

Single-ply S-spun cotton

This spindle is attached with yarn to a section of cotton identical to that from which the bag containing the gourd is made. It appears to be a bag that was not assembled (photograph 18). There is another spindle of cotton thread adjacent to the cone of wrapped cotton.

CONE OF WRAPPED COTTON

This cone of unspun natural-colored cotton fiber is wrapped with a warp-faced band (photograph 19). The band is 7 mm wide and made of tan, red, yellow, natural, and brown camelid yarns. There are approximately 30 warps per cm and 6 wefts per cm.

SLIT-TAPESTRY HEAD CLOTH

Cotton warps; camelid wefts
35 cm long x 21 cm wide approximately

This weft-face, slit tapestry probably has cut warps, however it may possibly be four-selvedge textile. This could not be determined due to the presence of camelid embroidery yarns along the selvages. The warp is natural cotton and the weft is yellow, turquoise, pinkish red, bright red, brick red, light pink, purple, and dark brown camelid. The overcast and interlocking embroidery stitching on the edges is done with yellow, red, and ochre yarns. Longer slits in the tapestry structure are closed with and interlocking weft yarn approximately every 3 mm.

There is a 10 cm diagonal tear in the tapestry that was sewn closed with the same brown camelid yarn used to attach this textile to another textile. It can be concluded, therefore, that this tear or cut was made in antiquity. The repair is a well-executed open plain-weave rather than a simple overcast stitch.

REINFORCED-TAPESTRY HEAD CLOTH

Cotton warps; camelid wefts
35 cm long x 21 cm wide approximately

STRAP WITH TASSELS

1.5 cm wide; 56 cm long; 10 cm tassels
Warp-faced camelid with camelid weft
Thread counts unknown

Looped within the ties and straps neat the head of the mummy bundle is another woven strap that forms a complete circle. It is made of bright red, light pink, yellow, and dark brown camelid warps. The yarns are 2-ply S-twist (z-spun). To close the circle of the strap, the looped warps were gathered and divided into three groups. Each group is wrapped with alternating colored bands of camelid yarns. The ends of the tassels are left unwrapped for fringe.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1

