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ABSTRACT

A narrative belt woven in the 1970's in the Río Pampas area of the central Andes and studied in 1992 by the Killka Project constitutes the first consideration of the *unkunakuchkan* figure as a radical in the Andean recording system known as *killka*. The focus of this pioneer study was archaeographic, employing the methodology of deconstruction to initiate the classification of birds common to the Victor Fajardo province of the department of Ayacucho.

Then the figure was related to archaeological sources on the north coast of what is today Peru. At that time gender concepts were introduced. Later the figure was defined as "pájaros enamorándose", a literal nonvocabulary specific interpretation of the visual image. Finally, taking into consideration the relation of pallas/archaeography/word the figure has been defined in English as "mothering".

This paper will employ archaeolinguistic methodology to explore in depth the meanings of the *unkunakuchkan* and *wailis* radicals in relation to concepts of gender and concepts of gender change through time in order to question the employment of the Christian concept of millennium as an adequate ground for the study of Andean culture, past and/or present.

A narrative belt, woven in the 1970's in the Río Pampas area of the central Andes and studied in 1992 by the Killka Project, constitutes the first consideration of the *unkunakuchkan* as a radical in the Andean recording system known as *killka*. The focus of that pioneer study was both archaeolinguistic and archaeographic, establishing new paths of inquiry in regard to Andean concepts of ethics and psychology, feminine gender, as well as employing the methodology of deconstruction to initiate the classification of birds, common to the Victor Fajardo province, department of Ayacucho (Proyecto Killka 1992-1995:68-84). Subsequently, the figure was related to ancient sources of the north coast of what is known today as Peru (Ibid, p. 122-123), as well as ancient textiles (Ibid). At that time concepts of gender were enlarged. Then the *unkunakuchkan* figure was defined as “pájaros enamorándose” (Ibid, p. 277-288), a non verbally specific interpretation of the visual image. Finally, taking into consideration the relation *pallay*/archaeograph/word, the figure most recently has been defined in English as “mothering” (Lizárraga 2000), a word without literal translation in Spanish. A provisional equivalence was found in the word *madrero* (Ibid), defined as “...very dear to his mother” (Diccionario Pequeño Larousse 1984:644).

In this paper I will employ archaeolinguistic methodology to explore more deeply the meaning of the *unkunakuchkan* and *waylis* radicals in relation to Andean concepts of ethics, health, concepts of gender and changes in concepts of gender through time in order to question the employment of the Christian concept of millennium as an adequate base for the study of Andean culture, past and/or present.

Andean cultural continuity and peruvian history

As an academic theme, Andean cultural continuity has been the subject of debate for the length of the 20th century. In the early part of the century peruvian literary figure Augusto Aguirre Morales in the prologue to the short story *La Justicia de Huayna Capac* (1924) and the novel *El Pueblo del Sol* (1927/1988), manifested an Indian identity, anchored in the incipient archaeology of the times. Others ignored archaeology in favor of geography and psychology. Within this latter current of thought, associated with the emerging political Left, historian and philosopher Jose Uriel García, stated that “to turn toward the Indian is not to return to the Inca but to return to the earth and an earth consciousness” (García 1930/73:190-191).(1) Nevertheless, García's vision was impaired by a fundamental blind spot. He projected contradictory concepts of identity: one grounded in andean space, the other grounded in Spanish culture.

It was after the coup of 1930 that García, Aguirre Morales and others began to be marginalized. The original contradictions, projected by them, turned into an ambivalence which underscored the development of Peruvian culture until the decade of the Eighties, when an andean ground of identity, aesthetics and communion once again began to pervade contemporary culture. Finally, it was in 1989 that the National Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology made its historic gesture, projecting an Andean Renaissance. The initial contradictions and ambivalence, inherent in the use of language such as Indian, *mestizaje* (cultural mix), *cholification* and most recently hybrid, began to be resolved, intellectually and culturally, when the Museum initiated the restoration of the ancient calendar and the projection of a concept of cultural continuity by way of the textile tradition.

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Nevertheless, it was the words of García – earth consciousness - that became a key theme of the Andean Renaissance, projected by the National Museum. A year later, the historic gesture of the museum was followed by a new generation of Peruvians, who began to discard the word “art” in favor of new and renewed concepts of aesthetics and communication (Lizárraga and Garay 1990).

Treading the path of cultural mix in which space and time loom, like a ghost, in the background, literary figure Jose Maria Arguedas in the sixties and seventies had claimed that cultural continuity was expressed most effectively by way of literature. Creating a body of work that began to blur the line between fiction and anthropology, Arguedas defined “hispanism” as the purposeful projection of the rupture of the contemporary masses from their archaeological past (Arguedas 1975:190-191); but, he, too, made contradictory statements related to the use of the word *mestizo*, projected as a cultural concept.

Parallel to the rise of Arguedas, the idea of social archaeology was introduced in Peru. But, this current of thought failed to gain the momentum necessary to spark the flame of freedom, laying dormant in the national consciousness. Indeed, the torch was ignited a decade later, when the historic National Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology began to project the rebirth of the Andean culture, taking in hand the textile medium as the guiding thread of cultural continuity, spun from the raw material of natural/social rhythms recorded in the Andean calendar system.

One year after the museum made its historic gesture was published posthumously the work of anthropologist Emilio Mendizabal Lozack in which this author had contested Arguedas and turned his attention toward the textile medium to establish Andean cultural continuity, studied by him in the Pachitea region of the department of Huanuco. Ten years later there are approximately five established currents of study and thought focused on contemporary textiles, centered in Ayacucho/Apurimac, Cusco, Puno, Huánuco and the Valley of the Mantaro. Today we are going to take a closer look at concepts of textiles, gender and cultural continuity, centered in the department of Ayacucho.

By way of pioneer research focused on a selection of belts, *chumpis*, woven by Amalia Quispe de Jimenez, the Killka Project has modified the classification of Andean textiles, established by Kosok in his classic study of an ancient cloth. While Kosok wrote of textiles with calendrical/numerological content, the Project, some years later, published methodology for the translation of narrative texts of social content. In this way has been established a dual system of classification, valuable for the study of archaeological and contemporary texts: calendrical/numerological and social.

The narrative of Amalia Quispe introduces to the academic arena an Andean code of feminine ethics, grounded in a concept of health in which memory is a key factor. Her story is one of affirmation/resistance, positive negation - rejection of an attempted seduction on the part of the mountain spirit, known as Wamani, in his male gendered form. Rather than narrate the sequence of events, I will recount important aspects of Amalia's text by way of the employment of archaeolinguistic methodology: (1) archaeographic deconstruction of the format and figures, (2) identification of the semantic and semasiographic codes (3) reconstruction of the text, thus revealing multiple levels of discourse. In this way will be established that *unkunakuchkan* is an Andean radical, defined as a nuclear element of signification with varying levels of meaning.

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The chosen format for the text is a vertical extension, determined by the item of clothing, *chumpi*, a narrow band, worn about the waist. The cloth is divided into nineteen clearly distinguishable *pallay*, rectangular sections in each of which is centered a nuclear figure, which can be simple, combined, complex or aggregate (PK 1992-95:220-221). In general figures fall into two basic categories: geogrammatic and pictogrammatic. A third, less clearly definable category of abstraction is the subject of current study. The geogrammatic figures generally refer to space and time; the pictogrammatic figures refer to persons and action. For an adequate understanding of the text, the “reading” or apprehension of which is synchronic rather than linear, it is necessary to locate the figure which expresses the essence of the message and then the appropriate clusters which amplify and modify the meaning. The word *pallay* refers to a woven figure, while archaeograph indicates a transcribed figure, usually in the medium of pen, ink and paper. Because of differences inherent to each medium, the transcription of necessity implies a process of deconstruction, simplification in accordance with the archetypal paradigm.

The figure central to an understanding of text under consideration is “*kuchipa lastrón*”, accompanied by an important group of bird figures, both simple and complex. *Kuchi*, or pig, in reality is a contemporary synonym for *añas - zorrina*, skunk - a metonym/metaphor for the solitary, self-directed woman (Proyecto Killka 1992-1995:68-88).(2) The figure central to an understanding of the essence of the text is an aggregate with a proper name, composed of three interlocked figures, each of which has its own name and meaning.

The text contains, as well, an important group of bird figures, both simple and complex. An archaeographic study of the text – the transcription of the *pisko pallay*, bird figures, reveals six basic graphic images, corresponding to the six *pallay* identified by doña Amalia as *chiwako*, *jiuljia*, *washwa*, *kimpiti* (a kind of duck), *kinti y yutu*. The complex figures correspond to the not fully understood term *Aymara pallay*, a category proper to the feminine gendered weaving tradition, as differentiated from academic classification. This type of *pallay* is composed of a double figure in which both major units are attached (see PK 1995-2000). In ornithological classification chart it can be seen that the *unkunakuchkan* figure is applicable to more than one species of bird, source of the idea that the basic referent is not a particular species of bird, but rather a wider concept that extends beyond biology.

Now, let’s focus on the complex figure, identified as *unkunakuchkan*.

The same type of figure - two animals, natural and/or conceptual, joined by the mouth - can be observed on a number of major monuments located on the north coast of Peru. The information that follows, related to both to archaeological and contemporary figures, helps to confirm *unkunakuchkan* as a radical, or archetypal figure. Taking a closer look at the commentary provided by a group of kichwa speaking intellectuals from the departments of Ayacucho and Apurimac, we arrive not only at a more profound understanding of the figure, but also at the need for a new concept of informant.

It is doña Amalia, herself, who has identified this figure as *unkunakuchkan* (field notes 1993). Since the original study sessions did not focus on this figure, but rather the *kuchipa lastron*, she did not elaborate further, other than to indicate that the birds represented particular members of the family. In this way it can be seen that one layer of meaning is familial - mother/father, mother/child and mother/father/child and can be said that the figure has bisexual gender (For an Andean

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trigender model see PK 1992-95:23; Lizárraga 1997c:s/n). For a third gender model in the north of America see d'Anglure in Mills and Slobodin 1994).

Later, when presented with archaeographic transcriptions of the *unkunakuchkan* figure, in forms both contemporary and archaeological, Ubaldina Altamirano, a native of Andahuaylas, Apurímac, sang in Kichwa a romantic fugue, affirming a level of meaning related to coupling, as well as a conscious perspective of an indivisible relation mountains/coast (PK 1992-95:122). It is important to note that Ubaldina is not a weaver, but rather employs the *arpillera* as a textile technique for the recording of information of different kinds (Angulo-Chiu-Lizárraga 1990:25; Lizárraga 1991:31/95:85; PK 1999). Thus, it becomes clear that the ability to interpret, or “read”, the figures is not restricted to weavers.

The third person to view *unkunakuchkan* archaeographs, transcribed from archaeological sources both adobe and textile, was a professional archaeologist, native speaker of Kichwa and native of the department of Ayacucho. Apparently unaware of the word specific nature of the figure, he suggested vocabulary such as *kuyanakuchkan*, “they are loving”, and *uminakuchkan*, essentially the mouth to mouth feeding of the young, whether birds or small animals (Rosas, personal communication, 1993; PK 1992-1995:99-124). His collaboration makes clear that the word *unkunakuchkan* represents a concept, beyond the mere biological identification of the birds, fish or conceptual animals used to transmit the idea.

The fourth person interviewed saw the archaeograph of the contemporary figure and immediately identified it as *unkunakuchkan*, at the same time making a gesture of the hand under the chin. He explained, “Cuando me madre me daba de comer me dijo, “Unkunakuchkan.....samanakuchkan”, translated as, “When my mother fed me she would say.....we are loving.....we are celebrating, sharing the breath of life”, thus revealing a whole new level of understanding (Zárate, personal communication 1993. For more about concepts of breathing and regeneration see Angulo-Chiu-Lizárraga 1990:12-14).

In its contemporary form the *unkunakuchkan* figure can be seen in feminine gendered weavings from Ayacucho, Peru, to La Paz, Bolivia. Archaeologically it has been related principally to north coast adobe monuments – the Waka del Dragón and the Waka Chotuna (PK 1992-95:276-290) and possibly the Waka el Higo – and three textiles, one classified as Chimu (Rowe 1984, fig. 71), one classified as Chancay (op. Cit.) and one classified as Ancon (Lizárraga 2000), a fact that has clear and wide reaching implications for the reconstruction of the Andean archaeology, historiography and history. In fact it was peruvian archaeologist Rebecca Carrión Cachot who not only affirmed the integrity of the coastal cultural development (Carrion Cachot 1951; PK 1992-1995:101-102), but stated, as well, that wakas were administered by gender (Carrion Cachot 1953:193; PK 1992-1995:285).

The second major step in archaeolinguistic methodology is to relate the figure to a word, group of words or concept; in fact, it can be said that the andean recording system is both semantic, word specific, and semasiographic, non word specific. In the case of the figure under study contemporary common usage confirms its word specific nature as *unkunakuchkan*, an unrecorded word, the root of which is *unkuy*, an Andean concept of maternal fecundity, grounded in the yearly round of the constellation known in European terms as the Pléyades, seven goats or seven sisters (for more about structural aspects of Andean linguistics and archaeolinguistics see PK 1992-1995:204). In Lizárraga

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other words the *unkuy* is the ground of the feminine gendered Andean calendar in which New Year is celebrated in the month of June and Mother's Day in August.

Other vocabulary derivative of *unkuy* would be *unku*, a major item of male gendered clothing and *unkuña*, a ritual collar, an item apparently worn by both men and women. (For an andean trinary model useful for the gendered study of clothing see PK 1992-95:22). In the case of *unku*, the wearer could then be "a son of the *unkuy*" in this way acting out a bisexual psychosocial model, different from the use of the *wara*, or loin cloth, for example, associated with virility. Although the *unku* and *wara* are long gone, the psychosocial model remains, as could be seen in the contemporary textile diptych entitled *Kunan Llikllanchi*, housed for the decade from 1990 to 1999 in the Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Antropología (Zárate 1990; Lizárraga 1991; archivo del Proyecto Killka 1999). (For an andean triune model for the gendered study of clothing see PK 1992-1995: 23).

Thus, it can be concluded that in its essence *unkunakuchkan* is translated most precisely as mothering, a concept of life renewal grounded in breathing and eating, as well as a bisexual, third gender collective symbol in which a concept of love is indivisible from physical well-being.(3)

Clearly, this figure has been in continuous use with no known distortion of its trigender ground from precontact times to the present. Seen in this context, the insistence on the employment of the term millenium, only as it relates to Christianity, constitutes little more than a restatement of the so-called extirpation of idolatries, established in the 16th century, from any perspective a clear violation of human and more recently civil rights. It is our expectation that putting in plain view what up to now has been largely invisible to those who have not wanted to see represents a great step toward an adequate understanding of the Andes in particular, the Americas in general and the evolution of a proper contemporary American culture.

A second figure for which can be established a clear case of cultural continuity is the *waylis*, or wasp. While the contemporary Kichwa dictionaries define *wailis* as both wasp and bee, the arguments developed here will focused on the *wailis*, understood as wasp, grounded in a pioneer study of Andean religion realized less than a decade ago (Fernandez Centeno 1994; Killka Project 1992-5: 298-300), as well as a lexicographical search. For association to the bee/huayrunku see Cereceda 1987:178-179).

In his pioneer integral study Fernandez Centeno recorded the dialogue/chant, recited by the andean priests in the district of Puquio, province of Lucanas, department of Ayacuho, during the ritual sacrifice of the llama. This activity in which the *wailis*/priest is protagonist is a major part of the celebration on August 15th of what could be called Andean Mother's Day, mother of the earth and waters. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that in this context the wasp, sacred insect, has masculine gender.

It was the recording of this contemporary practice in which the wasp plays a principal role that has insisted on new perspectives and definitions in archaeology and archaeolinguistic interpretation. Prior to the study accomplished by this peruvian painter, knowledge of the wasp had not been recorded academically. For this reason archaeological figures which have stingers, an appendage articulated in ovoid and other forms, have been referred to as spiders (Burger and Salazar Burger in PK 1992-5:298-299; Peters 1991: 291 in Ibid) and shrimp (Ravannes 1984 in Ibid). The appendage in triangular form in ceramics designated Naska and has been defined as a whale

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(Yacovleff). Armed with triangular shaped stingers, other figures without biological classification have been designated Naska/Chanka, Warpa and Wari (Rosselló 1960, 1972/1988; Benavides 1965; González Carré et al 1999)..

The text of Fernandez Centeno in relation to the image, painted on a middle horizon ceramic piece excavated at a major archaeological site known as the Wari Citadel, (Gonzalez Carré, E. et al 1999:s/n), leaves little doubt as to the identity and nature of the wasp, as well as its continuous use as a religious symbol in the central Andes from that time to the present. The mentioned ceramic piece is a portrait vase of what would appear to be a priest with hair held in place by a headband, rather than a four cornered hat. This figure has insects with stingers crawling about its face (González Carré 1999:s/n). Its gender – masculine? feminine? - is not yet clear for the following reasons.

On the one hand the ceremonial headband has not been studied; therefore, the gender of this item of clothing, which could be an important clue, has not been established. In the Andes the difficulty of establishing the gender of ancient images is well known; and, it is a given that certainty is dependent upon the actual depiction of the genitals. Clothing often serves as a secondary source. On the other hand the dictionaries do not define clearly the word *wailis* but rather relates this noun to both wasps and bees (see addendum). This, in turn, leaves in suspense the sex and gender both of this particular ceramic and *wailis* in general. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the words of the chant to the wasp and the lexical search, it would seem that *wailis* in its masculine form is a wasp and in its feminine form a bee, each related to the flow of blood. In the male gendered model the flow of blood is artificially induced by the sacrifice of the llama, a social act. In the female model it is a natural occurrence, related to the menstrual and lunar cycles (see addendum). This explanation leads to a path of understanding why the triangular appendage is related to words associated with knives and cutting.

The waylis radical: approximating a concept of Chanka style

Ceramics manifesting the figure of the *wailis* had been excavated previously at the site known as *Kunchupata* (Benavides 1965; PK 1991-1999) and can be observed, as well, on figures designated Warpa, andean formative period. The concept of waylis has been introduced to textile studies by way of the Majoro Text (Lizárraga 2000), initially identified as Naska by Rosselló. In fact it is the nonstructurally fabricated figures in this ancient cloth that are key to the reconstruction of the Andean past, both archaic and contemporary, in which the need for archaeological and historiographical classification becomes increasingly clear.

In his pioneer work on the Majoro Text peruvian researcher Lorenzo Rosselló identified two major figures, grounding his interpretation in the archaeographic transcription of 1944. One figure with full whiskers, or beard, at times three, at times four extremities and a triangular tail-like appendage was identified as a whale and related to a particular portion of the yearly calendar round (Rosselló 1988). In the same study he had identified another major figure as a monkey, which he hypothesized to be a synonym for the central figure in the Tiwanaku calendar monument. (Rosselló 1972/1988).

Without taking into consideration the work of Rosselló, textile conservator Nobuko Kajitani in 1982 published the image of a fragment of the archaeological cloth for which she provided for three visibly distinct figures the one only description that follows:

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“...a feline deity, common in the middle Nazca Period. Quadruped with toes, the figure retains protruding fin-like appendages at the head, chin, back, front and tail” (Kajitani 1982/1992:34).

In this way all of the factors stated in her single description of the three could be understood as pertaining to quadrupeds and felines. Was textile conservator Kajitani attempting to lay new ground in the evolution of the stating of the Andean classification system? Here there seems to be no clear answer.

Most recently, two of the three figures, published by both Kajitani and Rosselló, have been identified as *kusillu*, monkey, and *wailis*, the latter based on the observation of images recorded by Benavides and Rosselló, and on the literary description provided by Fernandez Ceneno (PK 1991-1999; Lizárraga 2000). The third figure has been related to a cluster of words – *tiksina*, *kuchuna*, *chuki*, *hutkuna* –descriptive in different ways of a triangular shaped appendage visible in Naska style ceramics in the figures identified as whales and others (Yacovleff 1932: fig. 2 and 3; PK 1991-1999), in central highland ceramics in the mentioned figures, identified as insects and in a textile, designated Naska in 1934 by d’Harcourt (d’Harcourt 1962: Pl 4).(4)

Then, it is a sequence of archaeographic transcriptions of the *wailis* figure, accompanied by supportive literature, that establishes its character as an andean radical and indicate its origin to be in the mountains, not on the coast. It follows that if the earliest images of the *wailis* are recorded on mountain ceramics of the formative period, followed by its appearance on the coast and then its later appearance in the mountains, where it remains a working concept to this day, it’s designation cannot be Wari but could Chanka School, terminology that coincides with projections made in the 1940’s by Julio C. Tello and Toribio Mejía Xesspe.(5)

A wider consideration of the nature of the *wailis*, as sacred insect, and of the triangular appendage depends upon advanced archaeographic study, the design of a chart that differentiates clearly the appendage of the *wailis* from that of other figures, such as cuadrupeds, the whale and the lance.

Whether talking about *unkunakuchkan*, *wailis* or other facets of the Andean calendar and recording system and cultural continuity, it becomes increasingly clear that the concept of millennium is applicable to many cultures, one of which is the andean. In affirmation of this reality in Peru in 1989 the historic National Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology initiated the projection of an Andean Renaissance, grounded in the restoration of the Andean calendar system and the textile tradition, understood as a major thread, weaving together past and present. This historical gesture eventually laid the ground for peace in the convulsed Andes of that time; that is why taking into account the institutional rebirth of andean culture is essential to understanding peruvian, hemispherical and world politics, then and now. As well, it is the historical key that opens the door to a new frontier of archaeography and archaeolinguistics, a welcome alternative to established ways and a proven methodology for gaining a more adequate understanding of andean and american concepts of gender, past and present.

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