Violence against Women

Differential Treatment of Local and Foreign Females in the Heartland of the Wari Empire, Peru

Tiffany A. Tung

Introduction

Bioarchaeological studies that employ a population-level approach to violence-related trauma are essential for gaining insights into the larger social and political contexts of ancient communities. This bird’s-eye view may permit a clearer understanding of social norms regarding the role of violence both in everyday life and in seemingly extraordinary circumstances, such as warfare or ritual. This view of society, however, should be combined with a nuanced, close-up view of the battered and beaten individuals to clarify how broad social ideals directly impacted the lives of certain individuals.

Bioarchaeology is ideally suited to both macro (population) and micro (individual) levels of analysis, because our data lenses, which focus on the skeletons of individuals, can easily move between the two perspectives. If we view skeletons as the bony diaries of people’s lives, we can reconstruct individual morbidity profiles (and in the case presented here, the exposure of individuals to violence) and situate them within the larger social arena. These kinds of life histories have been done with great success in bioarchaeology, providing us with detailed views of life experiences of individuals from ancient populations (Hawkey 1998; Martin et al. 2008; Mayes and Barber 2008; Wilson et al. 2007).
In this chapter, I attempt to present that kind of bifocal view, presenting data on population-level cranial trauma and a detailed discussion of bodily injury and mortuary treatment of two females interred at the Wari site of Conchopata in the central highland Peruvian Andes. In this way, I aim to investigate how Wari society and the individual were mutually constituted in terms of norms about violence and female identity and notions of community membership.

The Wari Empire

In the seventh century AD, the Wari Empire expanded and incorporated various lands and people, ranging from pockets of coastal areas to large sections of productive mid-valley agricultural lands and smaller regions in the high-altitude mountain zones. This era, known as the Middle Horizon in Andean chronology (AD 600–1000), was characterized by the distribution of Wari architectural and iconographic styles across the Andean landscape. For example, Wari administrative sites and Wari-style architecture are seen as far south as the Moquegua Valley in southern Peru, where the site of Cerro Baúl is located, and in northern highland Peru, where the sites of Honcopampa and Viracochapampa (and other smaller Huari sites) are situated (Fig. 9.1). To the southeast, in the Cusco region, Wari sites such as Pikillacta and Cotocotuyoc exhibit Wari-style architectural forms and artifacts (McEwan 2005). Together, these various sites point to conquest, collaboration, and/or incorporation of groups that lived far from the heartland of the Wari Empire. Wari textiles and ceramics (Castillo 2000; Conlee 2010; de la Vera Cruz Chávez 1996; Nash 2010; Owen 2007) and the occasional Wari-style trophy head (Koontz 2011; Tung 2008) also demonstrate the influence of the Wari across much of the Peruvian Andes. The variability in Wari-influenced material culture—ranging from ritual D-shaped structures and orthogonal architecture to Wari polychrome ceramics and textiles—reveals the various levels of interaction of local populations with the imperial core.

The Role of Militarism and Trophy Heads in Wari Expansion

The development of the Wari Empire and the growing interaction with other cultural groups likely occurred through military expansion, religious indoctrination (Lumbreras 1974; Menzel 1964), and superior
Fig. 9.1. Map of Peru showing sites discussed in the chapter.
practices in agricultural engineering (e.g., water canals and agricultural terraces) that enabled Wari agents to harness new lands and make them productive (Williams 2002). Archaeological and bioarchaeological research in the Wari heartland suggests that military might was widely used to subjugate other groups and expand territory. Militaristic iconography is common on ceramics from the Wari heartland sites of Conchopata and Huari (the capital) (Isbell and Cook 2002; Ochatoma and Cabrera 2002; Ochatoma, Tung, and Cabrera 2008), and weapons such as doughnut stones and a possible bow have been uncovered at Conchopata (Isbell and Cook 2002). In addition, human trophy heads—mostly from adult men but also including a few young children—have been excavated from two ritual structures at Conchopata. Strontium isotope analysis of those trophy heads shows that the majority are from nonlocal individuals, likely foreign enemies, which suggests that Wari military agents traveled to distant locales and took captives back to Conchopata (Tung and Knudson 2008, 2011). Those findings suggest that men and children were targeted for abduction and that they were selected for sacrifice and transformation into trophy heads. Thus, it appears that age and sex were powerful markers of identity that structured how captives (and perhaps others) were to be treated in Wari society.

If violence, militarism, and abductions were part of the Wari repertoire for expanding and maintaining imperial authority, then these strategies warrant further exploration, especially in terms of how these activities structured the lives of Conchopata community members and those who may have been forcibly brought into the community. How common was violence-related trauma at this Wari heartland site, and were there other "foreigners" at Conchopata besides those who were transformed into trophy heads? If so, what was the morbidity profile and lived experience of those outsiders within the Conchopata community?

To address those questions, I report on two reliable osteological indicators for violence: the frequency of cranial trauma and patterns of such trauma among adults. I then briefly present strontium isotope and ancient mtDNA data from Conchopata as a way to identify potential outsiders (other than the trophy heads) and report on osteological findings that reveal insights about how outsiders, particularly women, may have been perceived and treated in Wari society. Bioarchaeological methods of analysis and techniques for distinguishing between accidental and intentional trauma have been presented elsewhere (Tung 2007, 2012) and have been
discussed by other authors (Kimmerle and Baraybar 2008; Lovell 1997; Martin and Frayer 1997; Walker 2001).

A Population View of Violence at Conchopata

The sample includes 44 adult crania that were more than half complete, 10 of which (23 percent) exhibit antemortem head wounds (these numbers exclude adult trophy heads, which I reported in Tung 2008). There are no cases of perimortem cranial trauma, which suggests that no one in the burial sample died shortly after receiving a lethal blow to the head. There is, however, one case in which an elderly female died before her head wounds had completely healed (discussed below).

Males and females exhibit similar levels of cranial trauma: 24 percent of females (6 of 25) and 29 percent of males (4 of 14) (Fisher’s exact, $p = 0.519$) show evidence of head wounds (Table 9.1). This suggests that men and women at Conchopata were similarly exposed to violence, at least in terms of frequency of head wounds. None of the five unsexed adults display healed cranial trauma, and none of the 39 children (<15 years old) buried in tombs at Conchopata exhibit any kind of head wound. Child trophy heads are excluded from this calculation; they are clearly a distinct subgroup and those data have been published elsewhere (Tung and Knudson 2010):

Previous studies have shown that older individuals are exposed to more years of risk for violence, so as a group, they are likely to show relatively more head trauma than younger age groups and may exhibit more head wounds per person (Glencross and Sawchuk 2003). A counterargument to this might be that because certain age groups are more likely to engage in violence—and perhaps eventually die from one of those interactions—younger males in particular might exhibit more head wounds (both healed and unhealed) than those who lived fairly peaceably into old age. This pattern can be seen in modern mortality tables, where there is a “bulge” in deaths among late adolescent males and young adult men. The risky behavior and sometimes violent interactions for this demographic group contribute to its relatively high proportion of deaths (Paine 1997).

At Conchopata, cranial trauma differences by age group follows the cumulative effect of age on exposure to trauma Glencross and Sawchuk (2003) have outlined. That is, there is no skull trauma among children and
Table 9.1. Summary of antemortem cranial trauma data at Conchopata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Juveniles (&lt; 15 yrs)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Unsexed Adults</th>
<th>Adult Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/Total %</td>
<td>N/Total %</td>
<td>N/Total %</td>
<td>N/Total %</td>
<td>N/Total %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4/14 29</td>
<td>6/25 24</td>
<td>0/5 0</td>
<td>10/44 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a lower frequency of trauma among young adults (14 percent) than among middle-aged adults (29 percent) and older adults (44 percent).

Injury Recidivism, or Repetitive Hits

Of the 10 injured adults in the sample, half exhibit more than one head wound: three females and one male had two cranial fractures and one male had three head wounds. These multiple head injuries suggest that some may have been in more than one violent incident during their lifetime. It is also possible that the attacker leveled several blows to the head during one violent event. It is difficult to distinguish between the two scenarios when all the wounds are well healed. Only when one wound is well healed and the other is perimortem or partially healed can bioarchaeologists conclude that two separate violent acts occurred.

Among the five Conchopata adults that show more than one wound, one—an elderly female—exhibits signs of injury recidivism. She had a healed wound on the parietal boss and a partially healed wound on the superior of the cranium. She also exhibits postcranial fractures and is likely not natal to the Conchopata community, as discussed below.

Location of Cranial Wounds

The 10 injured adults exhibit 16 fractures; 69 percent (or 11 of 16) of those wounds are on the posterior of the cranium (on the parietal boss and the occipital bone), 19 percent (or 4 of 16) are on the superior of the head, and about 12 percent (or 2 of 16) are on the anterior (Tung 2012). Given that the majority of wounds are on the posterior, it would appear that this portion of the head was nearly systematically targeted or that the victims were in similar social contexts that frequently exposed the back of the head to trauma. This might include fleeing during raids (Webb 1995) or ducking the head to avoid an oncoming blow (Tung 2012).
The distribution in head wound location is slightly different between the sexes. The great majority of wounds on females are observed on the posterior (7 of 9, or 78 percent), and not a single wound is on the anterior. In contrast, the location of cranial fractures on men is more evenly dispersed; 57 percent are on the posterior, 29 percent are on the anterior, and 14 percent are on the top of the skull (Fig. 9.2). These patterns suggest that the social contexts in which violence emerged were distinct for men and women. It appears that women were never in face-to-face conflicts that led to anterior craniofacial trauma, whereas the men were.
Life History of a Battered Female at Conchopata

Among the six women with cranial trauma, one female (aged 47 to 53 years) warrants further discussion because of her repeated injuries. This micro-level view, which situates her within the larger Conchopata community and examines how she is similar to and different from other women, may provide nuanced perspectives about how women—and this woman in particular—were perceived in this Wari community.

Three observations mark her as different from the other women at the site. First, her mortuary treatment was unique. She was buried alone with only a ceramic fragment under her head, a type of funerary treatment that differs from that of the other Conchopata women, who are typically buried with several other individuals and with large quantities of grave goods, such as ceramic bowls, figurines, bottles, copper pins (*tupus*), greenstone (which is similar to turquoise), and Spondylus shells (Tung and Cook 2006). Second, she is the only individual to exhibit the annular form of cranial modification (elongated skull from front to back) (Fig. 9.3). Most others at Conchopata exhibit no cranial modification, and those that do have the fronto-occipital style of modification. Given that cranial modification must be imposed in infancy, it is likely that her parents (or other kin with decision-making power about how her identity

![Fig. 9.3. Older female from Conchopata with annular form of cranial modification.](image-url)
would be corporally expressed) were not local to Conchopata. Third, a previous study of ancient mtDNA of a Conchopata subsample demonstrated that she was the only one of a sample of 14 individuals who belonged to haplogroup D (haplogroup A = 4; haplogroup B = 7; haplogroup C = 2; haplogroup D = 1) (Kemp, Tung, and Summar 2009).

While those three data points suggest that she was not native to Conchopata, the strontium isotope ratio in her upper canine enamel and in her metatarsal bone indicate that she consumed a local diet similar to others at Conchopata from at least age three ($^{87}$Sr/$^{86}$Sr = 0.7058 for both) (Tung and Knudson 2011). The maxillary canine was sampled, and its enamel formation begins at about age three, so it appears that by early childhood this female was already living in or around Conchopata or another region with a similar strontium isotope ratio. Thus, she could have been born in the local area but to parents who were outsiders and marked her as such through a unique form of cranial modification. It is also possible that her parents voluntarily brought her to Conchopata when she was an infant or that she was abducted and eventually adopted into the local community. In either case, an outsider status seems to be marked in her bones (cranial modification) and in her eventual simple treatment in death. How, then, was she treated in life?

The skeletal trauma data suggested that she was not treated well. She exhibits a small circular healed wound (6 x 3.61mm) on the left parietal boss and a large partially healed fracture near the osteometric point of bregmà (Fig. 9.4). The fracture near bregma shows a mix of smooth bone and porosity at the margins, suggesting that there was an associated infection. She also exhibits antemortem tooth loss of anterior dentition: both mandibular central incisors and the maxillary right incisors are missing. It is not typical for anterior teeth to exfoliate before the others, and their untimely loss may be related to a facial trauma that today is colloquially known as having one’s front teeth knocked out. Granted, it is not clear whether the antemortem tooth loss is related to trauma (and thus it was not counted in the trauma percentages presented above), but in light of her other injuries, it is highly probable that it was. Given that there are two (maybe three) head/facial wounds in various states of healing, it appears that she was a victim of violence in at least two separate events. First, she suffered a nonfatal blow to the posterior of her head (and maybe a hit to her face that dislodged her teeth), and second, she received a severe
Fig. 9.4. Top: Skeletal fractures on the ribs (anterior and posterior views). Bottom: Healed wound on left parietal boss, partially healed wound on superior of cranium, and undiagnosed circular lesion/taphonomic change on the frontal bone.
trauma to the superior of her skull that had healed only partially before her death.

This older female also exhibits fractures on six left ribs that primarily affected the sternal portion of ribs four through seven (Fig. 9.4), though the second and third ribs were slightly affected as well. The rib fractures are only partially healed; there is an incomplete union between normal bone and the bony callous, which suggests that the rib fractures occurred shortly before her death, perhaps around the time she received the injury on the superior part of her skull. She has other injuries that are unrelated to violence but suggest a life of physical labor. One of her metacarpals had either a fracture or severe (but well healed) dislocation, and she exhibits compression fractures in lumbar vertebrae three through five.

This female also exhibits a small circular discolored area of bone on the center of the frontal bone, superior to glabella. It is lighter in color and is less dense than the surrounding bone. It may have been caused by an object placed on the center of her forehead in the burial that was later removed by prehistoric inhabitants (archaeologists found no metal disks or other objects that could have caused the discoloration) or it may be a pathological lesion that still needs to be diagnosed.

Comparing the Older, Foreign Female to the Local Females

The wound on the posterior of the older female's skull is not unlike wounds on the skulls of other injured females at the site. Indeed, all women with at least one head wound exhibit it on the posterior of the skull. This hints at more general social norms regarding the ways that abuse might be inflicted on women at Conchopata, whether during raids, domestic abuse, or corporal punishment enacted in a judicial context. This is similar to what Walker (1997) observed among abused wives in nineteenth-century England, where the highly patterned distribution of wounds (primarily on the face) suggested agreed-upon methods of “disciplining” wives. Although the precise social context in which female violence was enacted at Conchopata is unknown, a general statement about the larger context can be posited: it appears that women were typically in a defensive position when they received the injury.

This older female was treated in other ways that were quite different from how women in general were treated at Conchopata. In addition to her rare cranial modification and unique burial treatment (described
above), she had a partially healed wound on the superior part of her skull, which suggests that the injury may have contributed to her death, and her anterior teeth may have been dislodged from a blow to the face. No other women exhibit such brutal and repetitive injuries. In this regard, social norms regarding the “appropriate” way to enact violence against a woman were violated, and she was apparently abused to a much greater and more severe degree than were other women at Conchopata, perhaps due to her outsider status. Bizarre as this might seem to our modern, western sensibilities, a variety of cultural groups (and classes within those groups) view violence against women as an appropriate way to ensure a disciplined, well-functioning family and society (Chambers 1999; Van Vleet 2002; Walker 1997).

In short, the mortuary, osteological, genetic, and strontium isotope data from this elderly female suggest that she was not local to the area or that her mother (haplogroup derives from the maternal line) was not local. Her parents (or other family members) imposed the uncommon form of cranial modification on her when she was an infant, forever marking her as an “outsider.” This outsider status combined with her female identity may have structured how she was perceived and treated by other community members at Conchopata. Being a woman and an outsider apparently placed her in a socially precarious position, making her more susceptible than others at Conchopata to maltreatment and attack during life and less likely to receive “proper” burial rites in death.

Life History of a Sacrificed Adolescent Female

The older female with numerous violence-related traumas was not the only nonlocal woman at Conchopata. There was also an adolescent female, and although her cranium was too poorly preserved to observe for trauma, she warrants discussion because she reveals much about how young nonlocal females were treated at Conchopata. She was buried in front of the ritual D-shaped structure (known as EA72), where 10 human trophy heads were also deposited (Tung 2008). Importantly, this teenage girl exhibits a strontium isotope ratio unlike anyone else at the site ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr} = 0.71058$). This value is much higher than the local average ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr} = 0.70584 \pm 0.00074$), indicating that she was a nonlocal individual (Tung and Knudson 2011). Analysis of her mandibular canine indicates that she could have arrived at Conchopata anytime after age five
(enamel formation of the mandibular canine completes around age five); this means that she could have arrived there at age six or seven or even a few days before her death at age 17–22 years.

Additional evidence of her nonlocal status is her unusual burial treatment. She was not interred under a house floor with several other kin and a variety of grave goods, as was the usual funerary custom (Isbell 2004; Tung and Cook 2006). Instead, she was buried alone directly in front of the D-shaped ritual building. She was buried with four small copper pins (tupus) that still had textile fragments adhering to them, suggesting that they were used to pin her clothing together (Anita Cook, personal communication 2010). She displayed mild periostitis on her left tibial midshaft and her left ulna. It is unknown if the periostitis was bilateral because the other tibia fragments and ulna were too poorly preserved. Thus, it is unclear if localized trauma or a mild systemic infection affected the shin and lower arm. Her cranium and cervical vertebrae were not well enough preserved to observe for trauma, so it is not known if violence-related trauma to the head or neck was the mechanism of death. Although she could have died from natural causes, her unique burial location and early death in adolescence require that other explanations be explored.

Compelling iconographic, skeletal, and strontium isotope data indicate that Wari warriors traveled to distant locales so they could take men and children captive, sacrifice them at a later time, and transform them into trophies (Tung 2008; Tung and Knudson 2011). This adolescent female may have been taken captive, and she was eventually deposited in front of the ritual building where the trophy heads were found. It is likely that she was sacrificed, as were the trophy head victims. Notably, however, this female captive was treated in a very different manner from the men and child captives. The latter group was dismembered and their heads and hands were separated from their bodies and made into trophies. The cut marks on the crania and hand phalanges attest to the butchering of the men’s and children’s bodies. They were subsequently burned and smashed on the floor of this centrally located ritual building and a sacrificed camelid was placed on top of the pile of human trophy heads (Ochatoma and Cabrera 2002). In the same space, enormous ceramic urns were intentionally smashed as a ritual offering. Importantly, those urns depicted Wari warriors brandishing weapons and wearing trophy heads (Ochatoma and Cabrera 2002), hinting at the way those captives were obtained.

The female captive, in contrast, was not butchered and transformed
into trophy parts. Her body was kept intact and was wrapped in a shroud or clothing before she was placed in the prominent location in front of the entrance to the D-shaped ritual structure. I suggest that her nonlocal status and her gender and age marked her as an ideal sacrifice to sanctify the ritual space and the ceremonies that occurred within it. Moreover, her female identity structured how she was to be treated in sacrifice and death, just as age-based markers of identity structured the treatment of captive children, coding them as appropriate for sacrifice and dismemberment and as trophy head objects. Captive males underwent the same processing as the child captives. Finally, it is also important to note that the adolescent woman was likely captured in a village raid, perhaps when children were also captured for trophies. It is unlikely that she (and the other children) were captured on the battlefield, as it is unlikely that warriors would have encountered adolescent females and children in that setting.

Comparing the Adolescent Female to the Group

Currently, the teenage female in front of the D-shaped building is the only one of 14 females sampled to exhibit a nonlocal strontium isotope ratio, an indication that foreign females were rare at the site (though the older female described above may also have been foreign). The adolescent’s nonlocal status may have been known among Conchopata inhabitants and may have ultimately contributed to her unusual deposition and (suspected) sacrifice in front of the ritual structure. Local women did not receive mortuary treatments like she did, nor would they have been considered for sacrifice and trophy head rituals. Instead, local women were given fairly elaborate funerary treatments, and they were interred under the floors of family houses with other kin. Apparently, whether a person was an insider or an outsider was a powerful structuring force in how a decedent was treated in mortuary rituals and one that also affected the likelihood of early (nonaccidental) death.

More broadly, it is unlikely that females voluntarily migrated to Conchopata or that Conchopata men abducted women from distant locales to force them into new social roles as servants or wives. Instead, nearly all the women at Conchopata were natal inhabitants, and as a result, they had remarkably similar lifeways and deathways with only minor variations in health status and numbers of grave goods (Tung and Cook 2006). The
adolescent female was the most different from the other women at the site in terms of her mortuary placement and treatment, age at death, and nonlocal status, factors that strongly suggest she was a human sacrifice.

Conclusion

Based on various lines of data, I have argued that the Wari Empire engaged in the capture of men, women, and children, though the final treatment of the captives varied, apparently structured by their age and sex and perhaps by other personal qualities that are not visible to the bioarchaeologist. The demographic and strontium isotope data on the trophy heads indicate that adult men were the preferred targets for capture, dismemberment, and subsequent transformation into trophy heads (Tung 2008). Children were also apparent targets; they constitute nearly a quarter of the trophy head sample. Women from faraway regions were rarely targets of abduction, and their body parts certainly were not selected as war trophies (only one trophy head out of 31 has been identified as a possible female) (Tung 2008).

The sample of burials and trophy heads at Conchopata includes two examples of foreign females. One was badly beaten, likely a result of her lower social standing in the community, a status that was in large part defined by her outsider identity. The second was an adolescent girl that was likely sacrificed and deposited in front of the ritual building that held the human trophy heads. Her selection as a particular kind of sacrificial victim—her body kept intact and placed in a sacred location—may have been informed by her unusual foreign status and the fact that she was female. Indeed, it is possible that she was abducted solely for the purpose of ritual sacrifice, a practice that was carried out by the later Inka Empire, which commonly sacrificed young children and adolescent girls (Bray et al. 2005; Reinhard 2005; Wilson et al. 2007).

These findings show that although female abduction was rare at Conchopata, when it did occur nonlocal females could either be incorporated into the community for life or sacrificed in an elaborate ceremony. The older foreign female was apparently integrated into Wari society but at a low level in the social hierarchy. The younger female was probably sacrificed, but it is notable that she was not dismembered and made into a trophy head like the foreign men and children. Together, these data suggest that notions of community membership and gender identity were
powerful factors in structuring how one was treated in life and death. And among those who were marked as outsiders, age and sex were important in determining treatment in life, the method of sacrifice, and subsequent treatment of the body in death.

References Cited

Bray, T. L., L. Minc, M. C. Ceruti, J. A. Chávez, R. Perea, and J. Reinhard

Castillo, L. J.

Chambers, S. C.

Conlee, C. A.

de la Vera Cruz Chávez, P.

Glencross, B., and L. Sawchuk

Hawkey, D. E.

Isbell, W. H.

Isbell, W. H., and A. G. Cook
Kemp, B. M., T. A. Tung, and M. Summar

Kimmerle, E. H., and J. P. Baraybar (editors)

Koontz, C. B.

Lovell, N. C.

Lumbraeras, L. G.


Martin, D. L., and D. W. Frayer (editors)

Mayes, A. T., and S. B. Barber

McEwan, G. F.

Menzel, D.

Nash, D. J.

Ochotona, J. A., and M. R. Cabrera

Ochotona, J. A., T. A. Tung, and M. Cabrera
2008 The Emergence of a Wari Military Class as Viewed through Art and the Body.
Paper presented at the 73rd annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Vancouver, Canada.

Owen, B.

Paine, R. R.

Reinhard, J.

Tung, T. A.


Tung, T. A., and A. G. Cook

Tung, T. A., and K. J. Knudson


Van Vleet, K. E.

Walker, P. L.

Webb, S.

Williams, R. P.
