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THE BODY OF MEANING IN CHAVÍN ART

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In the study of pre-Columbian art in South America, one particular artistic tradition, that known (from the eponymous site of Chavín de Huántar, Peru) as Chavín, has been the focus of a great deal of interest and attention over the years.¹ The interest in Chavín art is related partially to the antiquity of works produced in this style (ca. 850–200 B.C.), as well as to its impressive range of distribution. Objects of stone, pottery, gold, shell, and other media rendered in the Chavín style have been found in archaeological sites along the coast, in the Andean highlands, and at sites along tributaries of the Amazon River within much of the territory of the present-day nation of Peru.² Beyond its impressive distribution in time and space, the central question that has motivated so much research on this artistic tradition is, What is the meaning of Chavín iconography? This is the question that motivates the present study.

In more concrete terms, I address the following questions: What attracts us when we view a work of art in the Chavín style? What were Chavín artists communicating about their understanding of their world in the iconography of this art? And, what (if anything) do we know about the subject matter of Chavín iconography as a basis for understanding and interpreting its meaning? To address these questions, I begin with a rather fanciful characterization of the process whereby (at least in my own experience) one gains a familiarity with, and gradually becomes accustomed to,

some of the standard formal elements and organizational principles of Chavín art. The purpose of this exercise is to develop a basis for beginning to discuss the relationships between form and meaning that may have been important to Chavín artists as they went about their work, rendering subjects in the style to which they had become accustomed.

AN EXPLORATION OF STYLE IN CHAVÍN ART

To begin with, and following Boas's dictum (1955: 9–10) to the effect that "without skill, there is no art," I maintain that underlying all fascination with Chavín art is the perception that a considerable degree of artistic skill is represented in the composition, design, and execution of most works rendered in this style. Therefore, at the most basic level—that of execution—we are constantly reassured when we view a range of works in this style that the individual Chavín artists had mastered their crafts.

At the next level, I suggest that when we view particularly complex examples of Chavín art work, such as the Lintel of the Jaguars (Roe, 1974: Fig. 9) or the Yauya stela (plate 8.1; see Roe 1974: Fig. 11), we are often simultaneously repelled and attracted by the absence of a clearly identifiable focal subject. By this I mean that the eye immediately encounters a profusion of complex, interlocking forms with no easily discernible central image and with no clearly defined figure/ground

relation among the various parts of the clusters of images. It is as though one is viewing a very complex, highly stylized jigsaw puzzle, but as to whether or not the pieces are all in their proper places, and if so what the image in the puzzle is supposed to be "about," one can not say with certainty. However, as one begins to sort out and re-group individual elements in a work such as the Yauya stela (figure 8.1) or the Tello obelisk (figure 8.2), the abundance of often grim-looking, profusely tusked animals, such as felines, reptiles, and raptorial birds, gradually resolve themselves into a central image.

To summarize, and assuming skill as the fundamental requirement for the production of any work of art, I argue that on the formal level, we are often fascinated by works of art in the Chavín style because:

- We encounter an immediate challenge and dilemma in identifying the relationship between what appear to be innumerable *parts* with a recognizable *whole*. That is, Chavín art seems to tinker, in a way often uncomfortable for us, with our part-whole system of classification according to which we manage, on an everyday basis, to recognize patterns among disparate forms.
- The subject matter of Chavín iconography is overwhelmingly concerned with life forms that have held a fascination for humans in all times and places—that is, *animals*. Perhaps only dimly, through our remnant pre-industrial senses, do we recognize that these animals are for the most part *carnivores*. The Chavín artists consistently provide an index of the dietary predilection of their subjects by equipping them with oversized canines, claws, and occasionally, fierce-looking agnathic mouths. Miller and Burger (1995:453–454) have noted that while the principal animals consumed by residents of Chavín de Huántar included llamas and (to a lesser extent) deer and vicuña, the animals represented in the iconography were in all cases the wild, carnivorous animals of the tropical forest. Thus, while the subject matter of Chavín iconography generally conforms to what Fernandez (1974:122) has noted with regard to the im-

portance of animals in metaphorical constructions more broadly — "[t]his becoming an object, this taking the other, this prediction upon the pronoun, is a process that has for millennia turned to the animal world"—the Chavín artists achieved an even greater level of affective power of such representations through their emphasis on wild carnivores.

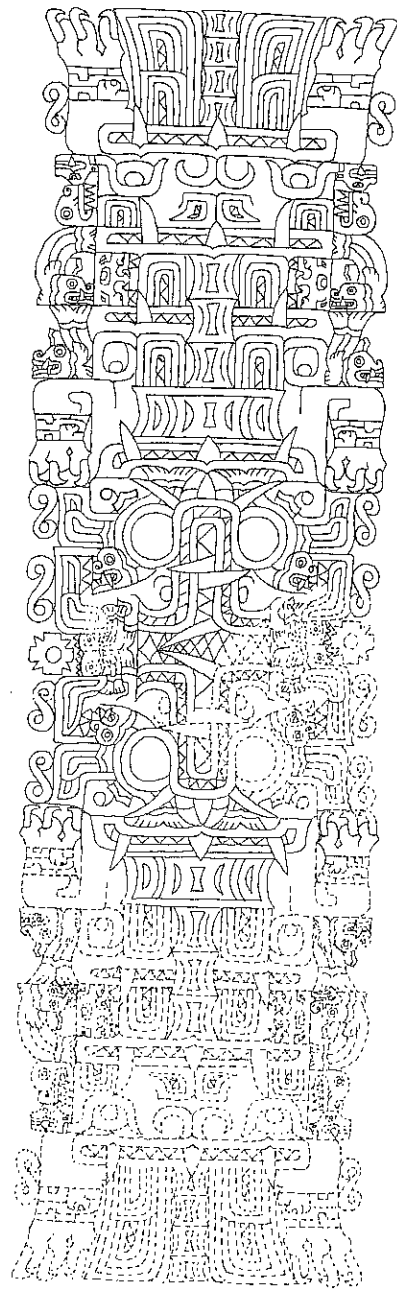


Figure 8.1. The Yauya stela (from Roe 1974:47, Fig. 11)

- And finally, despite the initially unfamiliar patterns of arrangement of the various elements of Chavín composite figures, there is ultimately always the *body* of an animal and/or human that we can identify as constituting

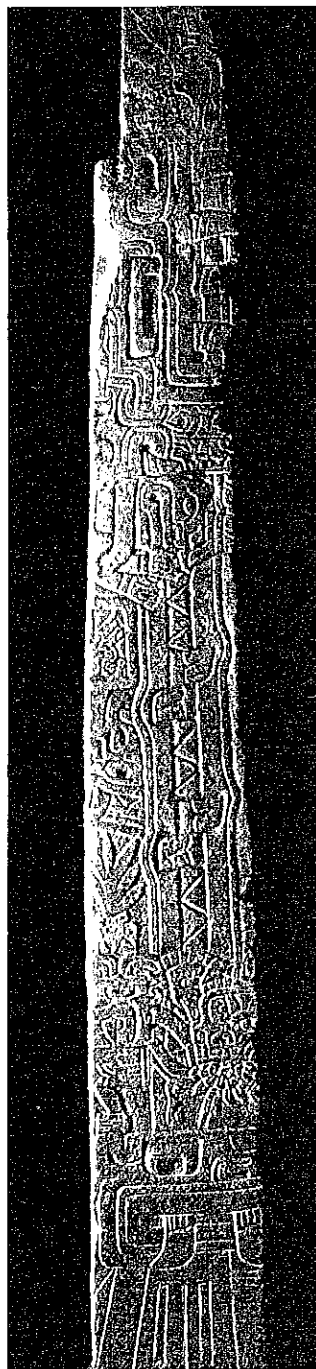


Figure 8.2. The Tello obelisk, Museo Nacional, Pueblo Libre, Lima. Photo: Gary Urton

what the particular work of art is “about.” I would argue that much of the affective power of Chavín art is its focus on the body—the object in the world with which we are most familiar and through which we experience the world. But, what does this art do with, or say about, the body? It is the Chavín artists’ manipulations of the body—the transformation of joints and penises into fierce jaguars; of hair into entwined serpents; and of vaginas into the sharp-toothed mouths of piranhas—that, as possessors of bodies, commands our attention.

Following from the above observations, I will argue herein that the *body* was a subject of great interest to Chavín artists. Moreover, I argue that one of the primary vehicles for representing meaning in Chavín art is the play of transformations and substitutions of body parts and that the bodies of Chavín composite creatures represent structural “frameworks,” models, or paradigms for organizing and classifying relations (for example, of ancestry, filiation, and affinity) among a host of phenomena and domains of meaning and experience in nature and culture. By analyzing these relationships between bodily form and meaning in art, we can hope to arrive at a point from which to articulate some of the core classificatory principles, values, and meanings in Chavín society and culture more broadly.

THE PROBLEM OF “KENNINGS”

Any new attempt to develop an understanding of form and meaning in Chavín art requires a consideration of the dominant paradigm in the study of Chavín art today. I am referring to the ideas articulated in John H. Rowe’s classic study, “Form and Meaning in Chavín Art” (1967a). One of the most influential suggestions made by Rowe in this article was that Chavín iconography should be understood in terms of the construction of various levels and forms of visual metaphors, beginning in simple similes and metaphors and culminating in the representation of metaphors of metaphors; Rowe refers to the latter as “kennings.” Rowe derived the idea of kennings from a common literary convention, or trope, used in Norse sagas. It

will be instructive to begin with a rather lengthy quotation from Rowe's study in which he outlined the main features of kennings and suggested how such a device might have been employed in the production of Chavín iconography.

The type of figurative elaboration which is characteristic of Chavín art is *one with which we are more familiar in literary contexts*; it is a series of visual comparisons often suggested by substitution. *To give a literary example*, if we say of a woman that 'her hair is like snakes,' we are making a direct comparison (simile). If we speak of "her snaky hair" we are making an implied comparison (metaphor). We can go even further, however, and simply refer to "her nest of snakes," without using the word hair at all, and *in this case we are making a comparison by substitution*. In order to understand our expression the hearer or reader must either share with us the knowledge that hair is commonly compared to snakes or infer our meaning from the context. Comparison by substitution was an especially fashionable device in Old Norse court poetry, and it was given the name "kenning" by the thirteenth century scholar Snorri Sturluson (1178-1241).

In Old Norse court poetry kenning became the chief basis on which verse was judged. The poets responded to this development in taste by devising ever more complex and far fetched kennings as well as increasing the frequency with which they used these figures. The elaboration of kennings was of two kinds, the kenning of kennings and the introduction of kennings which depended on a reference to a story which the hearers were assumed to know.

The same kind of development in the direction of increasing figurative complexity which we have described for Old Norse poetry took place also in Chavín art. Kennings became more numerous and more far fetched, and we can identify cases of the kenning of kennings. *We cannot identify kennings referring to stories in any specific way, because the [Chavín] literary tradition is lost.* (Rowe 1967a/1977:313-314; my emphases)

Now, while Rowe's introduction of the concept of "kenning" has proven to be an important stimulus for thinking and writing about Chavín iconography over the years (certainly it was the point of departure for the present work), there are a number of problems with the use of this trope in interpreting Chavín (or any other) art style. The principal problem is, in fact, signaled by Rowe's continual switching between artistic and literary examples in explaining the meaning of kennings and other related tropes (such as simile and metaphor) in the above quotation, all the while claiming that the literary examples are valid for iconographic representation. However, even a cursory look at the comparison between literature and iconography will convince us that something is amiss here. Literary or verbal statements that make use of the devices of simile ("her hair is like snakes"), metaphor ("her snaky hair"), and kenning ("her nest of snakes") produce sequential, or layered, images in the mind. That is, *saying* "her hair was like twisted snakes" evokes, first, an image of hair, and then, the transformation of "hair" into "snakes." However, when represented *visually*, these three distinct linguistic tropes *will all look exactly alike*—that is, hair rendered as snakes. The reason for this, of course, is because a visual representation of, for instance, a metaphor cannot portray the simile of which that metaphor is a further elaboration. In short, a visual representation of any one of the three *verbal* statements can be accomplished only by means of "comparison by substitution" (that is, Rowe's "kenning"). Thus, the distinctions Rowe makes among the various literary devices, or tropes, break down when applied to the domain of visual art.

By appealing to the literary trope of "kennings," Rowe was trying to develop a methodological approach whereby the symbols and metaphors suggested by "substitutions" and "comparisons" in Chavín iconography could be used as a basis for the study of meaning in Chavín society and culture more generally. The most daring suggestion made by Rowe for the potential value of this approach in his 1967(a) article was that the symbols and metaphors derived by means of the analysis of artistic "kennings" might reveal elements that would have been explained by, and

therefore were representations of, Chavín myths and legends. However, in order to make use of kennings in art for interpreting a mythical statement, we would have to be able to refer to the visual *ancestry*—that is, the *prior* chain of comparisons and substitutions—from which the final image was derived. Only if we were to have access to Chavín narratives, which would allow us to move beyond, or behind, iconographic comparisons and substitutions could we follow the cumulative chains of ever more complex and indirect comparisons that are the hallmark of “kennings” in literature. Thus, the argument becomes circular and falters once again on the same point noted earlier—that is, that similes, metaphors, and kennings are *visually* indistinguishable.

Therefore, since the route of analysis so creatively opened up by Rowe leads, in the end, to any number interpretive quandaries, we must return to Chavín art itself and look for some other route of analysis to follow. I would suggest that we go back to a body of information in Chavín art that most students of Chavín iconography have undoubtedly recognized as central to the style itself but which, perhaps *because* of its prominence and its familiarity to us, has been entirely neglected as a focus of study; I am referring to the *body*.

I argue herein that the structures and relations organizing the bodies of humans and animals in Chavín art represent models of and for structured relations among actors (or other elements), processes, and systems of classification in other domains of life (for example, kinship, hunting, curing, eating). The “mapping” of sets of non-corporeal objects and relations onto the body represented the strategy whereby Chavín artists constructed their iconographic conventions on the proper and “natural” order of things according to Chavín cosmology. The resulting frameworks and paradigms of the body constituted what I refer to here as the “well-ordered body.” Finally, it is important to stress that the body, with its joints regulating movement, its orifices regulating body-environment transactions, and so forth, is virtually the only thing we have in common with the Chavín artists. While I would not suggest that we interpret our bodily experiences in the same ways

the people of Chavín did, nonetheless I maintain that the structures, processes, and experiences of the body are the most logical points of departure for an informed analysis of form and meaning in Chavín art.

THE PAIRED AMARUS OF THE TELLO OBELISK

In order to develop the ideas outlined above, I examine closely a single, but quite complex piece of Chavín art, the so-called Tello obelisk (plate 8.1; figure 8.2). The Tello obelisk, which is currently housed in the Museo Nacional in Pueblo Libre, Lima, was the focus of previous studies of Chavín art and iconography undertaken by Tello (1961) and Lathrap (1977b). The descriptive and analytical strategy to be used here, based as it is on one work of art, will obviously be insufficient to elaborate fully the iconographic details and variations thereof common to the full corpus of Chavín art. What we can hopefully accomplish in the space available here is the articulation of the theme of the “well-ordered body,” as defined in Chavinoid terms, as well as the principles of organization and classification that informed the construction and representation of meaning by Chavín artists, as indicated by the metaphorical comparisons and metonymic connections which they customarily mapped onto the well-ordered body.

The Tello obelisk is a vertical, rectangular shaft of granite with a step-like notch at the top. The shaft is carved in relief on all four sides. When the four sides are depicted in a single, two-dimensional image (see figure 8.3), we see that the statue consists of two representations of what is apparently a single type of creature. The head, body, and tail of each creature occupy one or the other of the broad sides of the stela (figures 8.3, 8.4:A1 and B1), while the legs and genitalia, as well as other subsidiary elements, occupy the respective narrow sides, to the right of the main body (figures 8.3, 8.4:A2 and B2).

What kind of “creatures” are depicted on the Tello obelisk? Julio C. Tello, who was one of the first scholars to address seriously the questions of form and meaning in Chavín iconography,

identified this pair of images as "cat-dragons" (Tello 1961:183–185). Rowe (1962:18) and Lathrap (1977b:338) identify them as caymans (*Melanosuchus niger*), the large alligators which, until their virtual extinction during this century, commonly inhabited the middle and lower floodplains of the Amazon River basin. On one level, I would agree with Rowe's and Lathrap's identification but would insist that, by virtue of the transformations of the caymans' body parts into other animals, these creatures have become something more than just caymans; to use what I think might be their proper Andean designation, these are *amarus* ("dragon, giant serpent"). As we will see below, *amarus* incorporate elements of Rowe's and Lathrap's caymans with Tello's "cat-dragon."

We do not have space here to discuss extensively the concept of *amaru* as it is used in the Andes. Briefly, *amarus* have been identified throughout the ethnographic and ethnohistoric literatures as several different kinds of animals, such as cats (Zuidema 1967); large aquatic constrictors, such as anacondas (Garcilaso 1966 [1609]:222–223, 495–496; Guaman Poma 1980 [1615]:50, 65; Pachacuti Yamqui 1950 [1613]:242); black bulls (Ortíz 1973); "dragons" (González Holguín 1952 [1608]:24); and rainbow-serpents (Urton 1981; Whitten 1979). Two commonly recurring characteristics of *amarus* are especially appropriately mentioned in this context. First, *amarus* are generally thought of as composite creatures. For instance, Ortíz Rescariere recorded one myth from the Mantaro Valley of an *amaru* that had the body of a toad, the head of a *huánuco*, small wings, a tail like a serpent, and was white with age (Ortíz 1973:69–70). In a similar fashion, the Milky Way which, among other things, is considered to represent the body of an *amaru*, is composed of several different "dark cloud" animal constellations, including a snake, toad, *tinamou*, llama, and a fox (Urton 1981). Therefore, *amarus* are composite creatures—chimeras (compare Bompiani 1989).

Second, as suggested in the quote from Ortíz cited above, *amarus* are often represented as winged creatures. I think it is arguable that the creatures on the Tello obelisk are also winged. The wings are depicted in the form of tail feathers (figures 8.3, 8.4: A-36 and B-36). Lathrap

(1977b:339) and Rowe (1962:19) concluded that these elements represent fishtails. However, when one compares the tails of the creatures on the Tello obelisk (as well as those on the Yauya stela; see figure 8.1) with the objects that are obviously tail feathers on the harpy eagles shown in Rowe 1962:Fig. 14 and Roe 1974:Fig. 1, I think a strong case can be made that these creatures are "feathered caymans." Thus, I am in basic agreement with Burger's earlier interpretation of these elements as the tail feathers of an eagle or hawk (1992a:151). For these several reasons, I think it is warranted to refer to the pair of creatures on the Tello obelisk by the Quechua designation: *amaru*.

With regard to the representations of the two *amarus*, we see that they are composed of body parts rendered as other animals (or other animals' body parts) such that, for example, a feline/knee is attached to a reptile/wrist (or ankle), which terminates in the clawed foot of a cayman. Thus, the *amarus* of the Tello obelisk are composed of juxtaposed animals, or animal body parts, represented within the framework of the bodies of two caymans. I argue that the structure and organization of these compositions give us information about Chavín structural relations and classificatory principles on two levels at once. First, certain animals are regularly related to each other through an association of juxtaposition, or contiguity (that is, metonymy). Second, through metaphorical comparisons, these same animals are regularly compared to certain classes of body parts; for example, elbows and knees are commonly represented by, or transformed into, similar animals (such as jaguars), as are wrists and ankles (entwined serpents). These particular body parts are members of the class of body-part connectors we term "joints." My presumption here is that such comparisons as that just outlined between a class of body parts and particular types, or classes, of animals provide us with important information about Chavín ways of viewing, ordering, and classifying the world.

In summary, I propose that the bodies of the pair of *amarus* on the Tello obelisk serve as structural framing devices for classifying and comparing certain animals in relation to particular body parts, and/or classes of body parts. This suggests

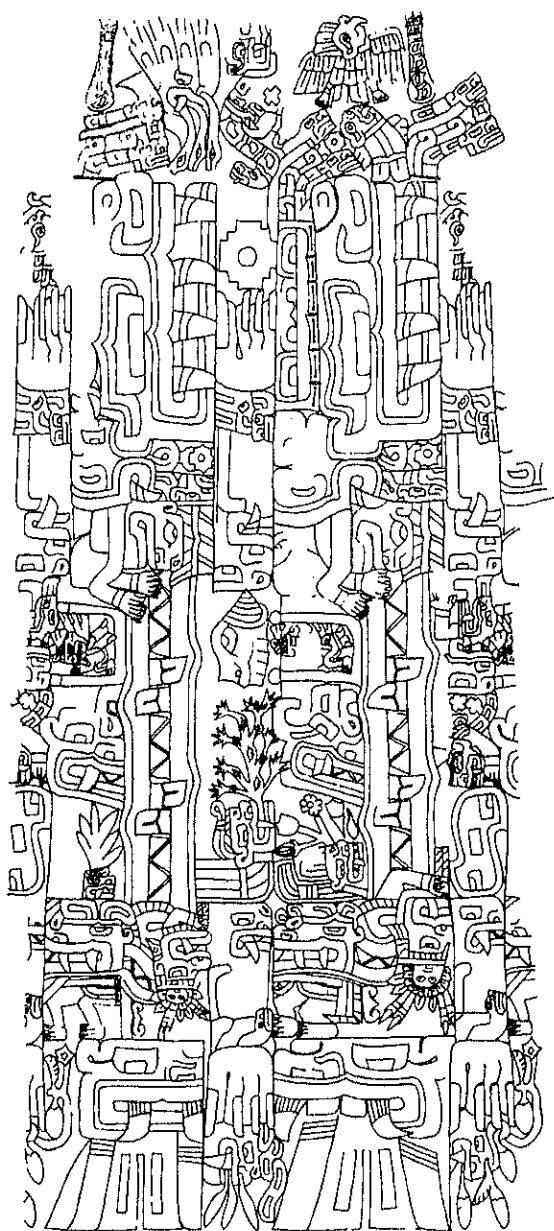


Figure 8.3. Rollout of the reliefs on the Tello obelisk (from Rowe 1967a/1977:328, Fig. 6)

that it may be fruitful to discuss some general principles of ethnoanatomy and body symbolism before proceeding with the analysis of the particular classificatory principles and structural relations encoded in the bodies of the amarus on the Tello obelisk.

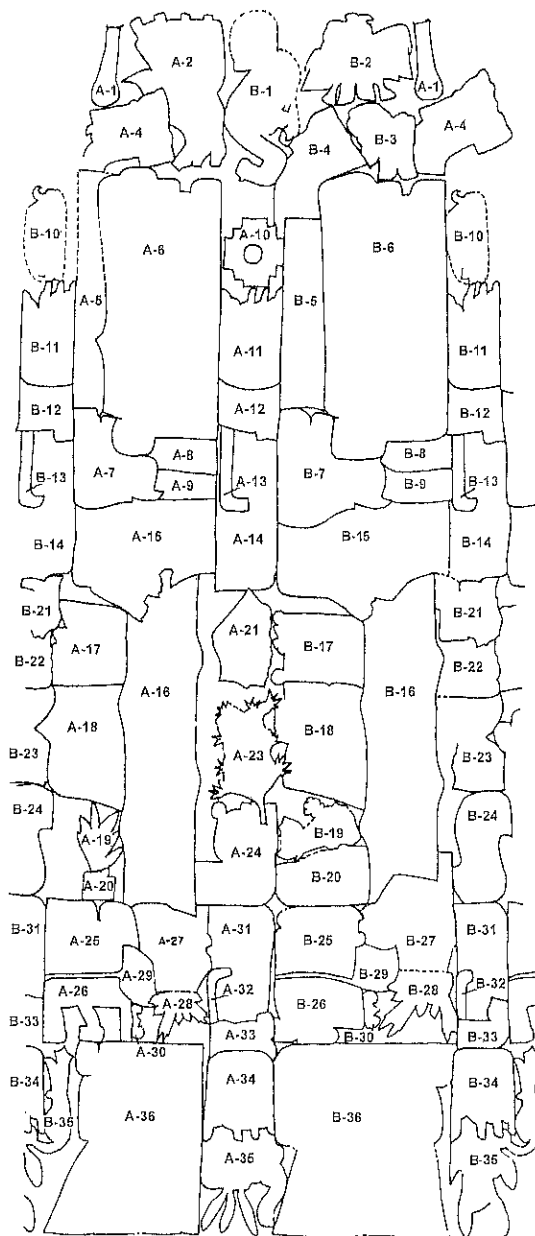


Figure 8.4. Reference key to design elements on the Tello obelisk (from Rowe 1967a/1977:328, Fig. 7)

THE ORGANIZATION AND MEANING OF ANATOMY

From a number of studies of ethnoanatomical classification and symbolism within different non-Western cultures (for example, Classen 1993;

Feher 1989; Franklin 1963; Lenormand 1950; López Austin 1988; Marsh and Laughlin 1956; Perey 1975; Stark 1969; and Swanson and Witkowski 1977), it has become clear that the terms and principles employed in classifying the parts of the body are often the same as those used in classifying other domains of nature and culture, such as plants, animals, and social groups. In addition, in all languages, human body-part terms are used in the naming of animal body parts. In light of this, as well as the demonstrable fact that human anatomical classifications are more elaborate than the anatomical classification of non-human animals, Ellen has argued that the human body is the primary model of classification, "in both an evolutionary and logico-operational sense" (1977:353). In addition, Douglas has argued persuasively that in many cultures, the body serves as a model of and for society: "In its role as an image of society, the body's main scope is to express the relation of the individual to the group" (Douglas 1975:87; see also Ellen 1977:360). One context in which this theme has been developed in Andean studies is in Zuidema's analysis of the body of the puma used as a metaphor for the organization of the Inca capital city of Cusco (1985; see also Classen's study of body symbolism in Inca cosmology [1993:96ff.]).

There is still considerable speculation about whether body-part terms used in other domains are egressive (that is, extended from the body to those other domains) or ingressive (that is, projected from other domains to the body). However, the preponderance of the data suggests that in most cultures, the body is primary; it provides a model of and the terminology for classification within other domains. This extends to the use of relations among body parts as a way of describing relations among different elements within another domain, or between two similar elements belonging to two different domains (see Ellen 1977:357-358).

Apart from these general observations on the use of the body as a model and source of classifications, symbols, and metaphors, there are a few related points that should be stressed because of their relevance for interpreting certain body parts, or features, that are emphasized in the composite bodies (*amarus*) in Chavín art. First, there

are certain characteristics of the structure and organization of the human body that are respected in all systems of ethnoanatomical classifications. These include, perhaps foremost, a universal unwillingness to violate the order in which the parts of the body are physically connected. For example, no society has been found in its classification of body parts to unite the foot and thigh as a category opposed to the lower leg (Swanson and Witkowski 1977:328). In this sense, the body represents a pre-determined grid of connections and relations whose basic structural features are always the same, regardless of the cultural setting. Another characteristic element of the grid of body classifications is its symmetry. There is no known example in which the two ears, eyes, arms, or legs are given different primary lexemes, although these symmetrical right and left body parts are, of course, commonly accorded different—usually opposed—symbolic values (see Needham 1973).

Second, certain parts or elements of the body are accorded special significance. These include especially the joints and orifices. The principal named joints, the body "dividers," include the shoulder, elbow, hip, and knee. Interestingly, Swanson and Witkowski found in a survey of the ethnoanatomical classifications of seven languages that wrists and ankles are not widely named (1977:331). They note that "it is what we might call the 'dividers' or 'general markers of boundaries' that most closely approach what we might refer to as named semantic universal concepts or primes" (1977:331). As for the orifices, these include especially the mouth, nostrils, eyes, ears, genitalia, and the anus. In an intriguing study of body-environment transactions, Watson and Nelson (1967) developed a "paradigm of orifices," which recognizes the centrality of the orifices as the loci of the major exchanges between an organism and its environment:

All three [mouth, anus, genitalia] function to relate the organism to its environment through the ingestion of sustaining substances or the expulsion of wastes and other secretions. For this reason, all can easily symbolize the exchange of gifts and donations with the rest of nature. (Watson and Nelson 1967:296)

These observations are interesting in relation to Lathrap's analysis of the plants represented on the Tello obelisk. Lathrap argued that, in its totality, the Tello obelisk represents a "huge, granitic doxology" in which the two creatures appear to be delivering the gift of cultivated plants to mankind (Lathrap 1977b:347-348). The plants often extrude from the orifices of animals appended to the amarus. For instance, both Tello and Lathrap interpreted elements A23 and A24 (figures 8.3, 8.4) as, respectively, a manioc (*Manihot utilisima*) plant extruding from the mouth of a jaguar, the latter of which is in the position of the penis of amaru A (Lathrap 1977b:344-346; Tello 1961:184). Lathrap further suggested that this particular iconographic composition represented something on the order of a "credo" of tropical forest, horticultural societies, projecting the message: "Manioc is the semen of the Great Cayman" (1977b:348). It is timely to take note in this regard of Gregor's comment that among the Mehinaku, who live on the upper Xingu River in central Brazil, manioc tubers are commonly compared to phalluses. Furthermore, what the Mehinaku refer to as "women's food," the principal example of which is manioc, is considered to become transformed into semen in its passage through the body (Gregor 1985:81-86). Thus, it appears that Watson and Nelson's "paradigm of orifices," with its emphasis on bodily openings as sites of body-environment transactions, may have considerable relevance in analyzing Chavín body-part classification and symbolism—especially in relation to the symbolism of body fluids and boundaries.

Third, an important theme in ethnoanatomical studies has concerned the principles that underlie different ways of classifying body parts. These principles have been defined as:

- (a) *part-whole* (part-of, partiality; analytic)—for example, "my nose is part of my face"
- (b) *kind-of* (class inclusion; synthetic)—for example, "my index finger is a kind of finger"
- (c) *inalienable possession*—for example, "this is my ear"

While Swanson and Witkowski argue, on the basis of their study of Hopi ethnoanatomy, that inalienable possession is the most salient of the three classificatory modes (1977:322, 325), nonetheless, as this classificatory principle depends for its realization upon *verbal* statements, we cannot expect to get much purchase in analyzing this classificatory principle from the study of iconography. Thus, we will focus here on the first two classificatory principles (a and b, above) in this discussion.

Part-whole and kind-of classifications coincide, respectively, with the rhetorical strategies, or tropes, of metonymy and metaphor. Furthermore, metonymy and the part-whole mode of classification are comparable to what is termed "syntagmatic" relations, while metaphor and kind-of classifications are conceptually and in principle linked to "paradigmatic" relations (see Leach 1979:25-27). Turner (1985) has employed the contrast, and relationship, between syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements in his highly insightful analysis of the Kayapó myth of the "bird-nester and the fire of the jaguar." As we will see later, Turner's study of the ways these classificatory modes structure form and meaning in tropical forest myths provides a useful model for analyzing syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements in art as well. I now summarize the various methodological approaches and theoretical orientations for our analysis of Chavín art discussed up to this point.

METONYMY, METAPHOR, AND ANATOMICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Having digressed in several different directions in the discussion of how we might approach an analysis of Chavín body metaphors and symbols, I provide in figure 8.5 a diagram of the artistic forms, tropic principles, ethnoanatomical concepts, and classificatory and cosmological principles that I propose to use in analyzing the paradigm of the well-ordered body in Chavín art and iconography.

Figure 8.5 begins with a restatement of the central elements and compositional forms of Chavín art—that is, animals, plants, and composite creatures (for example, amarus). The chart is

<i>Artistic Form</i>	<i>Chavín Iconography</i>	<i>Tropic Principle</i>	<i>Bodily Structure & Organization</i>	<i>Comparison to Anatomy</i>	<i>Chavín Classificatory Practice</i>	<i>Cosmological Paradigm</i>
Elements	Animals & plants	Metonymy	Connections	Joints	Part-whole (analytic)	= Syntagmatic
Composition	Composite creatures	Metaphor	Symmetry & translation	Orifices	Kind-of (synthetic)	= Paradigmatic

Figure 8.5. Elements of Chavín iconography, body symbolism, and classification

intended to be read both horizontally, along the rows labeled "Elements" and "Composition," and vertically, between items in columns falling under the same heading. The horizontal reading of the "Elements" row in the chart traces the manner in which discrete elements, such as identifiable plants and animals, represented in Chavín art may be understood to form connected series of elements that reflect Chavín part-whole (analytic) classificatory practices. In the paradigm of the well-ordered body, this dimension refers to the representation of discrete parts connected in syntagmatic chains, the crucial anatomical expressions of which are joints.

The reading of the "Composition" row in figure 8.5 points to the synthetic, paradigmatic dimension of Chavín art and iconography. In this dimension, metaphor guides the comparison of elements in compositional form. This includes such expressions as, for instance, the comparison of body parts on the right side of the body with those on the left, as well as substances inside the body with metaphorically comparable (according to Chavín ideology) substances outside the body (for example, as with semen and manioc). In the well-ordered body, such expressions, or translations, occur through the orifices of the body. Concerning the notion (suggested in figure 8.5) that symmetry is a kind-of, or synthetic classificatory form, we see expressions of this in Chavín art in two dimensions: right/left and upper/lower. As to the former, whatever body part (for example, the right eye), or set of interconnected body parts (for example, the right hand/wrist), exists on one

side of the body may be likened or compared to its mirror image on the opposite side of the body (the left eye, and the left hand/wrist). As for the comparison between upper and lower, the hand/wrist combination of the upper body may be likened to that of the foot/ankle connection of the lower body. The classificatory mode of such iconographic expressions appears to rest on the principle of class inclusion (that is, "kind-of"). For instance, the right and left eyes are each a "kind-of" eye, just as the hand/wrist and the foot/ankle are "kinds-of" terminus/joint combinations. The latter comparison is, of course, especially compelling and generalizable when the subject in question is a quadruped, as is the case with the two amarus in the Tello obelisk.

It is argued here that a full reading of figure 8.5, like a full reading of a Chavín artistic composition, is realized in the combination of the metonymic, syntagmatic chains with the metaphorical, paradigmatic transformations to produce the well-ordered body of Chavín cosmology. This will serve as the model or paradigm for our analysis and interpretation of Chavín iconography and classificatory practices as represented on the Tello obelisk. As a prelude to undertaking that analysis and interpretation, it will be useful to take account of the semantic strategies and classificatory principles of the naming of body parts in an indigenous Andean language. Now, we do not know what language was spoken by the people who built, occupied, and regularly visited the site of Chavín de Huántar. In my discussion below, I make use of material drawn from one of

the varieties of Quechua (that is, Southern Peruvian), which was a widespread language of the coast, highlands, and parts of the tropical forest of Peru at the time of the Spanish conquest.³

Before turning to this discussion, I want to make clear that my purpose in presenting Quechua ethnoanatomical material is *not* to suggest that these data are directly relevant to the interpretation of Chavín iconography. In general, my hope is that the Quechua anatomical terms and concepts that we encounter in this discussion may provide us with useful conceptual and classificatory tools with which to talk about the organization of form and meaning in this ancient Andean iconographic tradition. Certainly, we will be better off in our attempt to develop a meaningful heuristic device and an analytical vocabulary with which to talk about Chavín iconography by exploring terms and concepts that derive from "well-ordered bodies" in any one of the varieties of Quechua, rather than if we rely on English body part terms and classes, or, worse yet, if we refer to works of Chavín art by such potentially misleading characterizations as "the Smiling God," "the Staff God," or "guardian angels" (Rowe 1962).

QUECHUA ETHNOANATOMY

The data on Quechua ethnoanatomy discussed below are drawn from several different sources. One particularly valuable source is a study by Louisa Stark, entitled "The Lexical Structure of Quechua Body Parts" (1969). I also refer to data on contemporary Southern Peruvian Quechua ethnoanatomy that I collected in the community of Pacariqtambo (Prov. of Paruro, Dept. of Cusco) in two sessions of fieldwork, in 1981–82 and 1987–88.⁴ Finally, wherever appropriate, I have also drawn on anatomical terms and concepts provided in the early seventeenth century Quechua dictionary of González Holguín (1952 [1608]; this is the late pre-hispanic, Incaic variety of Quechua, probably ancestral to contemporary Southern Peruvian Quechua; see Mannheim 1991).⁵ As there is not space here to give a complete accounting of Quechua body-part terminology, I confine my discussion below to those data that appear to

be most directly relevant for understanding body symbolism and body-part classifications as represented in Chavín iconography; that is, I focus here on terminology relating to joints, orifices, teeth, extremities (hands and feet), and what I refer to as the "landscape," or geography, of the body.

Joints

One of the body parts that we find to be of central importance in the anatomical vocabulary in the Tello obelisk is the joints. In Quechua, there are distinct primary lexemes for the elbow (*kukuchu*, "corner; something bent over"), knee (*muqu*, "hill, mound"), pelvis (*chaka tekñin*, "hip cross[-ing]," or *cintura pata*, "waist ledge"; Stark 1969:10) and the neck (*kunka*). However, the wrists (*maki muñica*, "arm/hand wrist") are similar to the ankles (*chaki muñica*, "leg/foot wrist"). As for the body parts connected by joints, Ellen (1977:366) has noted that joints often represent links between areas of relative undifferentiation, or of classificatory uncertainty. The common term for such long, undifferentiated segments of the extremities in Quechua is *llañu* ("a long, thin cylindrical thing"). For example, the buttocks and knee stand at the terminus points of the underside of the "thigh" (*llañu chaka*); the elbow and shoulder terminate the long stretch, called *llañu rikra*, from the shoulder down to the elbow; the portion of the arms between the elbow and the wrist is called *llañu maki*.

Orifices

As for the orifices, the eye (*ñawi*), ear (*ninri*), and nose (*sinqa*) openings are all conceived of as "openings, splits, or windows" (*t'uqu*). However, unlike these other orifices of the head, the mouth is not conceptualized as a *t'uqu*; rather, it is composed of a mouth [opening] (*simi*) and an interior mouth cavity (*simi uxu*). The lower body orifices are also (like the mouth) lexically distinct: anus (*ubete*; or *sip'uti*; Stark 1969:10); vagina (*raka*); and the urinary opening of the penis (*bisp'añin*; Stark 1969:10).

The terms outlined above suggest that there exists in Quechua thought a dual classification of orifices. This involves a distinction between the

three orifices involved primarily in the intake, through *t'uqus*, of sensory data (that is, eye, ear, nose) as opposed to the orifices through which material transactions take place between the body and the environment (mouth, anus, vagina, and urinary opening).

It is no doubt significant that body-environment transactions in the Tello obelisk occur primarily through the mouth, the penis, and the nose. The Quechua category of orifices through which body-environment transactions occur, and therefore those through which material transformations take place between the inside and the outside, is similar but not identical to what we see depicted on the Tello obelisk. The addition of the nose as an orifice of body-environment transactions in Chavín art may be related to the practice of ingesting powdered hallucinogenic snuffs through the nose. We have a substantial amount of archaeological evidence for this practice at Chavín sites, including mortars, bone trays, spatulas, and snuffing tubes (see Burger 1992a: 157-159). This evidence is complemented by detailed ethnographic descriptions from present-day societies in the lowlands of South America (see Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975; Dobkin de Rios 1984 [1972]), as well as by historical sources. Among the latter is the following description of drug use by the Muisca of Colombia provided by the seventeenth-century friar Pedro Simon:

[T]hey take these powders and put them in their noses and which, because they are pungent, make the mucus flow until it hangs down to the mouth, which they observe in the mirror, and when it runs straight down it is a good sign. (cited in Burger 1992a:157)

Teeth

The importance of the mouth as a portal of entry and exit in Chavín iconography may be reflected in the strong emphasis on the canine teeth. In Quechua, the teeth are categorized into two principal groups: (1) the incisors and canines = *punku kiru* ("entry, or door teeth"), and (2) all the teeth behind the canines = *wago kiru* ("cheek teeth"). González Holguín refers to the canine teeth as *tokma* ("canine; fang"), and *chocta quiru* (*chocta* =

"long pointed [thing]"). Therefore, the canine teeth define the boundary of the "doorway" into and out of the body. Marked canines indicate, of course, a particular dietary predilection shared by humans and certain animals, most notably felines. Therefore, the possession of canines represents a point of comparison linking humans and jaguars. As a marker of boundaries and site of transformation, canine teeth can be compared to joints and orifices.

Hands and Feet

Although in contemporary Quechua the hands and feet are given different primary lexemes (hand = *maki*; foot = *chaki*), nonetheless their constituent parts are identical—that is, finger/toe = *riru* (Sp. *dedo*; Q. *rucana*; González Holguín 1952 [1608]:319); palm/sole = *pampa* ("flat plain"); hollow of hand/arch = *puxyu* ("spring"); and fingernail/toenail = *sillu* (Stark 1969:11). Stark's comments on this point are relevant here:

This use of identical lexemes may indicate that the Quechua Speaker conceptualizes the hand and foot as being similar, if not identical, entities. This interpretation is supported somewhat by the fact that in the pre-Conquest (Inca) art of Quechua speakers, the hands and feet of the human figure are generally almost identical in representation. (Stark 1969:8)

These observations are important for our analysis of the Tello obelisk, because the hands and feet—or the front and hind legs—of the amarus are rendered identically (see figures 8.2-8.4, A and B-11, and A and B-34).

The Landscape of the Body

An important phenomenon in Quechua anatomical classification is a lexical overlap in body-part terms with terms and concepts referring to topographical features of the landscape. Stark (1969:8-9) has provided a good discussion of these terms, and I take one example here in order to suggest the possible significance of geographical conceptions and classifications for the construction and representation of meaning in the Tello obelisk.

The Quechua term for knee is *chaki muqu*, and the term for shoulder blade is *wasá muqu*. *Muqu* is also the word for "hill." These various uses of the term *muqu* indicate the existence of a synthetic principle of classification in which "hills" can be said to stand—and function—in the geographical domain in a manner comparable to knees and shoulder blades in the anatomical domain. That is, hills provide links between river valleys, just as knees link thighs and shins (that is, two stretches identified as *llañu*) and as the shoulder blades connect shoulders (= *rixra*, "shoulder of a mountain") with the depression between the shoulder blades (= *wasá wayq'u*, "back ravine").

Furthermore, I would argue that the anatomical correlates of "hill" (*muqu*), representing as they do points of connection and mediation, allow us to extend these metaphorical connections to the animal domain (as is clearly done iconographically in the Tello obelisk) by linking, for example, elbows, hills, and jaguars. These elements and characters perform similar mediating functions in their respective domains; therefore, they may be metaphorically compared to each other in iconographic expressions. This is the conceptual basis for making "comparisons by substitution" (kennings), as discussed earlier. However, while the literary trope of kenning—as the end point of a progression of tropes beginning with simile and passing through metaphor—has no natural grounding, nor can it be expressed, in iconography the interpretive paradigm of the "well-ordered body" provides the motivation, rules, and logic for comparisons by substitution in Chavín art.

Forms of Classification in Quechua Ethnoanatomy

Although her argument has been subject to criticism (see Swanson and Witkowski 1977:324), Stark maintains that Quechua body parts are conceived of in horizontal and vertical hierarchical levels; these, she argues, reflect the overarching operation of a principle of partiality (that is, the relations of part-to-whole) in Quechua anatomical classifications and naming. As stated by Stark:

[T]he semantic dimension of [an anatomical] . . . lexeme may depend in part upon its posi-

tion within an overall hierarchy, both from the point of view of 1) the horizontal contrasts it makes on the level on which it occurs, and 2) its vertical relationship to the lexeme of which it is a constituent. (Stark 1969:3)

We will return to comment on this important observation in our discussion of the vertical and horizontal layout of iconographic elements in the Tello obelisk (below).

Having outlined a number of Quechua ethnoanatomical terms and principles, we can now turn our attention to the Tello obelisk to see how the bodies of the two amarus on this stela are organized. Following this overview, we then return to compare the features of the Chavín "well-ordered body" to the organizational concepts and principles of classification in Quechua. Our objective in this comparison is to investigate whether or not there are any commonalities between the two systems that might provide us with a grounded, contextual approach—that of Quechua ethnoanatomy—for interpreting form and meaning in Chavín iconography.

ANIMAL SYMBOLS AND ANATOMICAL CLASSIFICATIONS IN THE TELLO OBELISK

I begin with an outline of what I think are some of the principal diagnostic features and structural relations of the two amarus on the Tello obelisk. Several general observations should be made initially:

- (a) For the most part, the two amarus are shown in right profile; thus, the representational statement made here seems to be that these are two different creatures. However, I say this is true "for the most part" because elements A and B-36 (figures 8.3, 8.4)—the heads from which the tail feathers protrude at the bottom of the stela—are shown (respectively) in right and left profile. It is as though the two amarus begin as a single entity, with complementary right and left profiles, at the base but then become differentiated moving up the stela as the single, lower amaru is transformed into two parallel versions of the original image. This

- may derive from a principle of the unity of like objects; that is, the understanding that different forms of a type (in this case, amarus) are at some level alike and share a common origin.
- (b) As noted earlier, the bodies of the amarus are divided vertically so that the head, trunk, and tail of each occupy one broad side of the slab while the extremities and genitalia occupy the narrow side (to the viewer's right). This establishes a hierarchy of body parts with those elements on the broad side(s) as most inside and those on the narrow side(s) as outside; the two classes—inside and outside—are connected at body joints.
 - (c) In keeping with the Chavín design convention of dividing figures into a number of horizontal "modular bands" (Rowe 1962: 14), the bodies of the amarus appear to be divisible into five modular bands, organized as shown in table 8.1.
 - (d) There is a general emphasis on *heads*; for example, the various parts of the bodies of the amarus are made up of the heads of other animals, especially felines (for instance, elbows, knees, tails, and penis = heads of jaguars). The message seems to be that identity is formed and expressed by, or in, the head of an animal.
 - (e) There is an overwhelming iconographic interest in the *canine teeth*, which are often depicted on felines located at the joints, the "body dividers" (that is, at the elbows, necks, knees, pelves, and the point of connection between the pelvis and tail).
 - (f) *Joints* are often associated with *orifices*, especially with the mouths of jaguars.
- In addition to these general observations on the structure and organization of the body parts and composite creatures on the Tello obelisk, there are a number of more specific observations to be made:
- (g) Elbows and knees are represented by *similar* but not the *same* kind of felines.
 - (h) Wrists and ankles both incorporate reptilian forms.
 - (i) Hands and feet are depicted in almost the same way.
 - (j) There is an equal number of fingers and toes—*four* of each; these are represented as *one* thumb/big toe together with *three* fingers/toes.
- I interpret the significance of the above observations in the following ways, in reference to the interpretive diagram shown in figure 8.6. This diagram illustrates the organization and classifica-

Table 8.1. The Organization of Modular Bands and Body Parts on the Tello Obelisk

Modular band	Body parts	Design elements (see figs. 8.3, 8.4)
I	Head	A- and B-5, -6
	Wrist	A- and B-12
	Hand	A- and B-11
II	Neck	A- and B-7, -8, -9, -15
	Elbow & Forearm	A- and B-14
III	Trunk	A- and B-16
	Genitalia	A- and B-24
IV	Pelvis	A- and B-25, -26, -27, -28, -29
	Knee	A- and B-31
	Ankle	A- and B-33
V	Tail	A- and B-36
	Foot	A- and B-34

tion of body parts according to the classificatory "grid" provided by (a) the vertical division of the two bodies into "core" (that is, trunk) and "periphery" (namely, extremities), and (b) the horizontal modular bands coordinating relations among upper/central/lower and inside/outside body parts.

Under the category of metonymic relations, I reemphasize the point that the head, trunk, and tail on each of the broad sides are juxtaposed to the extremities and genitalia along the respective narrow side. The connections between the central shaft of the body and the appendages occur at "joints"—the elbows, knees, and the crooked penis—marked by jaguar heads. The element in the position of the genitalia of amaru B (element B-24) is crooked but is not depicted as a jaguar head. Thus, except for element B-24, we learn that *joints in the anatomical domain are likened to jaguars in the animal domain*.

The second observation to stress concerning metonymic relations in the layout of the Tello obelisk is the juxtaposition of the five modular bands in the vertical dimension, from the top to the bottom of the stela. This arrangement could be interpreted as establishing *either* a hierarchical organization of elements along a continuum from the top to the bottom or from the bottom to the top, or a symmetrical organization in which the

section from the top down to the center (band I to III) is complemented by the section from the bottom up to the center (band V to III). In view of the emphasis on symmetry and complementarity in other expressions of the organization of iconographic elements in the Tello obelisk, I argue for the latter of the two alternatives outlined above.

Combining this observation with that made above, in point (b), I would suggest that there is a strong design convention in the Tello obelisk emphasizing vertical and horizontal complementarity. This represents a form of "parallelism"—that is, the iconographic means for positing a structural metaphor—between the elements from the head and tail inward to the trunk with that from the extremities on the narrow panels to their attachments with the trunk on the broad panel (that is, from modular bands I to II and V to IV). Thus, the head downward to the neck is likened to the hand inward to the elbow; and the tail upward to the pelvis is likened to the relationship from the foot inward to the knee. There is, therefore, a powerful proposition represented in the modular band organization of the anatomy of the two amarus, which takes the form of a complementary relationship between upper and lower with outside and inside. The tropic principles directing

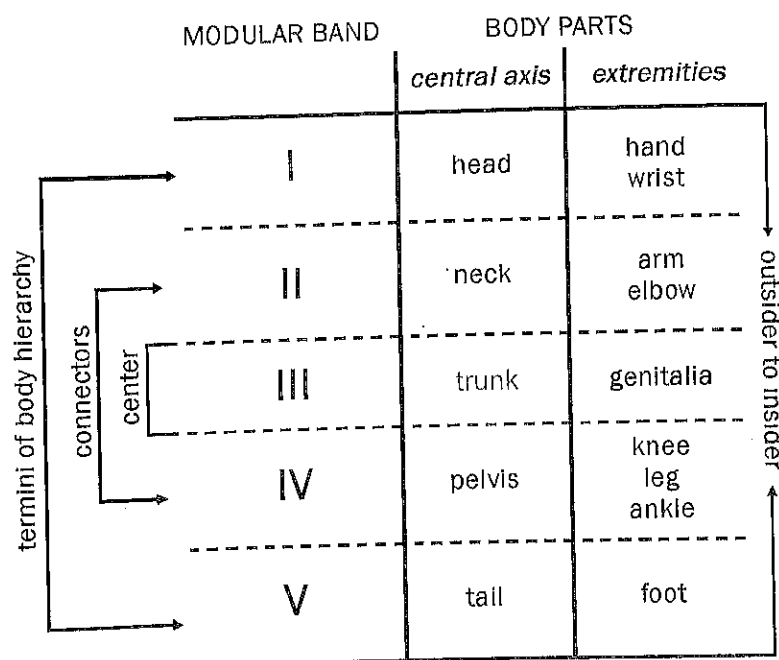


Figure 8.6. Schematic representation of the well-ordered body on the Tello obelisk

these expressions of parallelism are metonymy and metaphor, acting simultaneously and in concert.

Finally, the modular band division of body parts along the central axis of the amarus incorporates an iconographic theme noted earlier in the discussion of the points of connection between the extremities and the trunk; that is, joints are compared to jaguars. We note that along the central axes, jaguars are found at the neck (elements A and B-7) and at the point of connection between the hips and the tail (elements A and B-25, -27, and -36). Therefore, the points articulating the extremities with the trunk are compared to the points of articulation between the upper and lower parts of the body inward to the trunk.

It is instructive to note that the overall structure of the bodies of the amarus arrived at above is strikingly similar to the divisions and organization of body segments by means of body decorations found among the Yekuana of the Upper Orinoco River basin, as described by Guss (1989; see also Seeger's 1975 discussion of body ornaments among the Suyá). The Yekuana body decorations included arm bands on the upper arms (between biceps and shoulder); strands of beads wrapped tightly around the calves, just below the knees; white beads wrapped around the wrists; necklaces; and a loincloth passing just below the stomach (Guss 1989:41-42). As Guss notes,

Yekuana dress is a deliberate charting of the human space, with the trunk of the body fastidiously circumscribed from the outer limbs and head. . . . [E]ach Yekuana body is intersected by two imaginary concentric circles, the outer running through the wrist and ankle bands and the inner through those of the biceps and calves. Thus . . . the outer ring of the body—between knee and ankle, bicep and wrist—is also a world of differentiation and division. The inner circle . . . is a world of wholeness and union. (Guss 1989:42)

To return to the Tello obelisk, the comparison between joints and orifices in the iconography suggests an important conceptual relationship in Chavín thought between *articulation*

(joints) and *transformation* (orifices). That is, a point at which a bend, break, or articulation occurs in a connected sequence is similar to a place where transactions are made between the inside and outside of a body. The Tello obelisk glosses this relationship between classes of anatomical parts and processes through a particular kind of animal: the jaguar. This key iconographic proposition requires further contextualization and commentary.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF TRANSITION AND MEDIATION: JAGUARS, JOINTS, AND UNCLES

Reichel-Dolmatoff's masterful study (1975) of the ideology and symbolism of human/jaguar transformations among Tucanoan-speaking peoples of southeastern Columbia provides ample evidence that, in many parts of the lowlands of South America, the jaguar was (and still is) thought of as the principal animal capable of transforming into a human, specifically, a shaman; in this role, the jaguar articulates, or mediates, between humans and animals and between humans and spirits (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1975:130-132; on the role of jaguars as mediators in myth, see Turner 1985: 63-64). Furthermore, Whitten has noted (1976) that among the Sacha Runa of eastern Ecuador, jaguars are conceptually and terminologically related to the kinship category of "uncle," especially mother's brother. It is interesting to note in this regard that in the invocation to keep jaguars away from villages among the Guaraní-speaking Paí-Cayúa, the jaguar is referred to as *che tuty*, "my uncle" (Cadogan 1973: 98).

To expand what appears, upon comparative study, to be an interconnected set of symbolic associations, including jaguars, shamans, and mediating classes or categories of kin (such as uncles), with other "mediating" classes or categories of individuals, Kensinger reports that most of his male Cashinahua informants said that when aroused, women "become sexually aggressive and insatiable because they have an erect and hot penis (clitoris) which causes them to be like jaguars, both dangerous and exciting" (Kensinger 1995: 81). On a related theme, Riviére has noted that

among the Trio Indians of Surinam, shamans are compared to menstruating women (1969: 268), and Hugh-Jones has remarked on the saliency of such a connection for the Barasana, among whom shamans play a central role in regulating menstruation through their control and manipulation of sacred paraphernalia (1988:125). This last comparison links the transactional symbolism of orifices—or of that which, like menstruating women, is considered to be excessively “opened up” (see Hugh-Jones 1988:125–126)—with joints, through the comparison among menstruating women, shamans, and jaguars, all of whom are considered to be in positions or states of mediation, transformation, and transaction with the environment.

Finally, it is relevant to note here Burger's interpretation of a veritable iconographic “program” at the site of Chavín de Huántar focusing on jaguar-shaman transformations based on the medium of hallucinogenic drugs. The iconography in question is that seen on several sculpted stone tenon heads, which adorned the walls of one of the temples at Chavín de Huántar. The tenon heads can be grouped into three sets, each representing a stage in the progressive and reciprocal transformation between shaman and jaguar. Burger's analysis of these sets of sculptures is that “they represent different stages in the drug-induced metamorphosis of the religious leaders (or their mythical prototypes) into their jaguar or crested-eagle alter egos” (Burger 1992a:157). One of the iconographic markers of the transition between shaman and jaguar is the representation of the snuff-induced flow of mucus from the nostrils of these transforming beings. This reaffirms our earlier suggestion identifying the nose as a major orifice of body-environment transactions in Chavín iconography.

To the degree that comparisons between anatomical and kinship classifications may be represented in the Tello obelisk by such strategies as comparing articulation and transformation, this may have enormous significance for our study of the social implications of Chavín iconography. For such comparisons as those mentioned here may be interpreted as motivated by Chavín ideological principles, which may point to what were common social practices in Chavín society. For in-

stance, a “confusion” between articulation (joints) and transaction (orifices) may suggest a wider cultural principle such as the notion that, in reckoning along a collateral line of kin from the point of view of any particular ego, one may reach an individual—such as an “uncle”—who articulates ego's kin with other groups. Such a linking position becomes a point of “articulation” and “transaction” between ego and those outside his/ her group, or of transformations from one group or status and another. Such would be the case, for example, in the numerous lowland South American societies which have (or had) prescriptive cross-cousin marriage and an accompanying terminological equation between, say, wife's father and mother's brother.⁶

In terms of the social and reproductive significance of the iconic set *jaguar/joint/uncle*, I would note that on the Tello obelisk, the penis of amaru A (figures 8.3, 8.4:A-24), which is situated on the narrow panel A1, is represented with a jaguar head. In this position, the jaguar-penis mediates—that is, is a “joint” between—the two composite creatures (see Lathrap 1977b, for more discussion on the jaguar as a mediator in Chavín iconography).

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF RUPTURE, TRANSITION, AND BIRTH: CANINES AND EGG TEETH

Finally, in terms of ideas and iconographic expressions relating to transition, mediation, and the like, we should take note of the interesting but puzzling Chavín convention of the “agnathic” tooth row of caymans. This convention involves the representation of a sharply pointed tooth protruding from the center of the upper jaw, between the incisors (see, for example, figure 8.1). Lathrap (1977b:339) suggests that this trait may have started out as a depiction of the constantly visible upper tooth row of the cayman. Concerning the agnathic element, Rowe stated:

As early as Phase AB we find front view agnathic faces provided with a pointed tooth in the center as well as the usual canines on each side. The central tooth is a pure product of

the imagination which can be based on no observation of nature. (1962:17)

I suggest that Lathrap and Rowe may both have been wrong, and that the agnathic trait was, indeed, based on an observation of nature. The central tooth probably represents the "egg tooth" of a baby cayman. As the naturalist Cutright noted long ago:

Often the young [caymans] are unable to escape from the eggs without maternal assistance, even though each one is generally equipped with an egg tooth. This is an exiguous structure sticking up from the anterior end of the upper jaw like the sight on the end of a rifle barrel. (Cutright 1943:233)

The egg tooth is the instrument for rupturing the container (the egg), which allows the cayman to make the transition from inside the egg out into the world. It is of great interest to note as well that Chavín artists often combined the egg tooth with well-developed canines—the marker of "felineness" in Chavín iconography. This combination appears to link the jaguar, the animal of transition, mediation, and transformation par excellence, with the cayman at the moment of the transition of the latter from inside (the egg) to outside (see Roe 1982a, who has discussed these and related symbolic features with extraordinary insight).

In the variety of ways outlined in this section, I argue that the well-ordered bodies of the amarus on the Tello obelisk represent sites for portraying, and working out, the various terms and expressions of a few key symbols and organizing principles in Chavín cosmology.

SYMBOLS AND PRINCIPLES OF CHAVÍN COSMOLOGY

In the previous three sections, I have attempted to pull together in a preliminary way data from different ethnographic and natural historical sources in order to interpret the significance of animals and body parts in Chavín iconography. The product of the combination of these sections itself has the feel of a composite "creature"—a

chimera—like the amarus on the Tello obelisk. That is, both the interpretation and the amarus are composites of elements drawn from diverse sources from around the South American tropical forest. The principal virtue of an interpretation constructed of such heterogeneous elements may, in fact, be its methodological and genealogical similarity to the processes of selection and composition by which the Chavín artists constructed the two images on the Tello obelisk. This similarity may, however, provide just enough of an opening to allow a new perspective on form and meaning in Chavín iconography. By this I mean the following.

As we have seen here, the bodies of the amarus provide the framework of a universal logic—based as it is on the human body (see Brown 1991)—for the study and interpretation of Chavín iconography. The elements, or terms, of that logical framework are formed by the segments, nodes, and relations of what I have called here the well-ordered body. The unity and the sense of such composite wholes are represented in, and are to be understood through, the language and logic based on metonymic (syntagmatic) and metaphoric (paradigmatic) structures and relations of the human body. These devices and strategies are, in fact, similar to those used by Turner in his interpretation of the Kayapó myth of "the bird-nester and the origin of cooking fire" (1985). For example, Turner concluded from his study of this myth that:

symbols have an internal structure, not only of static oppositions but of coordinated transformations of the relations among their constituent meaningful features. This structure is homologous with the relations between the symbols in question and the other symbolic elements of the compositions to which they belong. The meaning and structure of a symbol is . . . radically inseparable from the structure of the composite form in which it is embedded. (Turner 1985:52–53)

Turner's analysis (which he argues convincingly is fundamentally different from a structuralist analysis; 1985:53) of the form and meaning of a multi-episodic myth—that is, a "composite crea-

ture"—from the corpus of Kayapó myths provides us with a useful perspective from which to think about both the relationship between the individual parts and the composite whole figures composing the two amarus on the Tello obelisk, as well as the possible relationship between these (part and whole) images and the myths informing the iconography.⁷ These comments lead us back to the topic of the relationship between myths and "kennings" with which we began this study.

As I pointed out earlier, the original idea behind Rowe's (1962) introduction into Chavín studies of the heuristic device of the kenning seems to have been the desire to find a way to induce the iconography to "speak" to us about the myths that lay behind, organized, and gave meaning to the imagery. We have been straining to hear some murmur of these myths resonating from the sounding board of the kennings we have identified in Chavín art over the past three decades without notable success. As I have tried to show in this article, I don't think the device of the kenning is well suited to the task we have assigned it. That is, to say that an icon is an example of a "comparison by substitution" (that is, a kenning) does not move us very far along the path of interpretation. However, saying that that same icon is located at a determined position within a *body* immediately places that icon in a logical (in bodily terms), *well-ordered* framework of surfaces, joints, orifices, and—based on our knowledge of how bodies work—internal processes, fluids, and sensations. Here, we are in a world about which we have some good intuitions—intuitions that may provide us with ways of articulating some of the principles, structures, and values by which metaphorical and metonymic relations among body parts, animals, and plants are organized in Chavín iconography, such as that on the Tello obelisk. But the implications of this interpretive approach do not stop at the corporeal level; this is both because society is consistently imagined, or seen metaphorically, as a body, and because while bodies are *individually* experienced, they are *collectively* socialized. Thus, whatever we learn about bodies and their states of transition from the study of Chavín iconography ought to be a path of entry into the study of Chavín society.

From our preliminary examination here of some of the images mapped onto the well-ordered bodies of the Tello obelisk, I conclude that the two amarus carved in opposition to each other across a slab of granite display a complex, redundant "message" built up around the topic of the body and organized according to the themes of mediation, transition, and transaction; of boundaries and the rupture of boundaries; of fertility, reproduction, and birth; and the complexities of individual and social identity and alterity. As to the identities of the characters in this drama and the nature of the individual and collective actions that led them to become the subjects of representation in the Tello obelisk, I suggest there is only one moderately reliable source of information that we can turn to—this is to the ethnographic materials containing accounts of myths, rituals and artistic practices, as well as classifications of animals, plants, social groups, and body parts, that have been collected over the years among native peoples of the tropical forest of South America. I have undertaken only a very preliminary review of these materials in the present paper; much more work remains to be done.

NOTES

1. This chapter is reprinted in revised form from a previous article, "The body of meaning in Chavín Art," *Res* 29/30, Spring/ Autumn 1996: *The Pre-Columbian*, pp. 237–255. Copyright 1996 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College. I would like to express my appreciation to the following people for reading and commenting on earlier versions of this paper: Richard Burger, Billie Jean Isbell, Bruce Mannheim, Julia Meyerson, Ann Peters, Johannes Wilbert, Tom Zuidema, and an anonymous reader selected by the editor of *Res*. The various comments and suggestions for improvements made by all of these people have been enormously helpful to me in writing this paper. I alone, of course, am responsible for the opinions expressed, and any errors that remain, in the paper.
2. For information on the history of research at the site of Chavín de Huántar, and of studies of Chavín culture more broadly, see Benson 1971; and Burger 1984, 1992a.

3. For studies of the differentiation among and the chronology of the various dialects of Quechua, see Parker 1963; Torero 1964; and Mannheim 1991.
4. Unless otherwise indicated, the contemporary Quechua anatomical terminology given below derive from my own fieldwork. As the site of Chavín de Huántar is located in central Peru, it would no doubt be more directly relevant to our study to work with one of the Central Quechua varieties of this language. I have used the Southern Peruvian variety (Cusihuamán 1976) here because that is the variety with which I have considerable experience and a reasonable level of fluency in speaking. I invite my colleagues who specialize in any one of a number of central Peruvian languages spoken in the central highlands or the tropical forest to take up this study.
5. Classen has recently (1993) provided a valuable summary and analysis of Inca anatomical terms and concepts, primarily as recorded in the Quechua dictionary of González Holguín. Classen's study is concerned principally with understanding Quechua conceptions of the senses, rather than (as is the case with the present study) conceptions and classifications of bodies and body parts.
6. See, for example, the series of articles describing such relationships and terminology in lowland South American societies in Kensinger 1985. I would note here the interesting comparative perspective on such relationships that we gain from Bulmer's study (1967) of ideas about cassowaries—which are considered to be like sisters and cross-cousins to men—among the Karam of the New Guinea highlands.
7. Although not incorporating ethnographic materials, one of the best examples of the general type of iconographic analysis that I have proposed herein is Ann Peters's study of animal and plant imagery in Paracas embroidered textiles (1991).