

# SEEING DIAN THROUGH BARBARIAN EYES

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## ABSTRACT

*The Late Bronze Age burial sites in the Dian region of Yunnan are known for the originality, wealth and variety of their bronze artefacts. This paper examines a set of published images of cattle and textiles in an attempt to see the Dian world in its own terms. It notes the transfer of decoration between bronzes and textiles and considers the apotropaic nature of some items.*

## INTRODUCTION

It will take years for archaeologists to fully understand the more than 10,000 bronze artefacts recovered from the 28 sites excavated in the Dian region between 1995 and 2005. The sites are generally coeval with the Warring States, Qin and Western Han periods in China, with the Persian Empire and its Hellenistic successors in west Asia, and with the Mauryan Empire in northern India. This paper describes the archaeological evidence for links between these regions and then goes on to discuss what messages are encoded in the imagery of the Dian cultures. It refers mostly to images published in European-language texts.

For this paper, I am dealing only with four sites: Dabona (5<sup>th</sup> century/Warring States), Yangfutou and Lijiashan (both Late Warring States/Early Western Han) and Shizhaishan (Early to Late Western Han). The artistic overlap between Lijiashan and Shizhaishan has been noted by Pirazzoli T'Serstevens (1996-97:283).

There is every indication that the many figural representations on bronzes are based on real life and first-hand observation, the most obvious examples being images of local fauna, from insects (e.g. bees, cicadas) to large mammals. Human behaviour can be inferred from musical instruments, weapons, and ornaments and also from images of village life. The grave goods support the Han observers' reports of a stratified pastoral and warrior society (Huang and Wang 1983; Lee 2002). There was clear gender differentiation

(Rode 2004:326). Men are the only people shown as individuals while women are seen in communal situations. There do not seem to be any family scenes and only a few images of children.

A high level of craftsmanship is evidenced early on at Dabona, outside the Dian area proper. The tomb contained a house-shaped coffin, 2.43 x 0.790 x 0.765 m, made of seven pieces of sheet bronze, decorated on all visible surfaces (HKMH 2004:96-97). It demonstrates some of the metallurgical accomplishments of the Dian cultures, which include lost-wax, chasing and engraving (Barnard 1996-97:7-16, 59-61). The coffin alloy is high in copper and contains some lead as well as tin: Cu 89.6, Sn 5.02, Pb 2.25 (Pirazzoli-T'Serstevens 1974:147-148). Yunnan is rich in all these minerals and also in silver and gold (Wong 1927:90-95; Trinh 2009:Map 3).

The extraction and use of other geological resources is shown by finds of jadeite bracelets, and beads of turquoise and agate: over 1000 beads of gold, turquoise, jade, agate and glass were sewn in horizontal rows onto a 'jewelled quilt' found in Lijiashan tomb 47 (HKMH 2004:126-127). Organic resources included wood, used to build pile houses with steeply pitched roofs, fibres for textile-weaving and animal skins.

## EXTERNAL CONTACTS

The external contacts of Yunnan have often been discussed. There are artefactual links with the Chu of the middle Yangzi, evidenced in the use of silk and lacquer and also in the use of the crossbow and other weapons. The *ge* halberd is said to have come in via Sichuan (Chiang 2009:63-65).

The Chu kingdom's need for cavalry horses may well have created the horse-trade which became so important in the historic period (Yang, B. 2004; Wade 2009). The claim that the indigenous Yunnan horse was extinct by 6000 BCE (Zhang 1986 cited by Chiou-Peng 2004:306) should be

viewed with caution in the absence of catastrophic natural events. However, it is possible to accept that the idea of domesticating horses was originally brought in from central Asia and that this led to the subsequent domestication of local horses.

Other domesticated animals such as longhorn cattle (*Bos Taurus*) and broad-tail sheep (*Ovis orientalis*) indicate links with western Asia or northern India (Meadow 1996:397, 400-402). Bruce Lincoln (1981) has analyzed East African and Indo-Iranian 'cattle cultures,' and finds an emphasis on the masculine, on the heroic and on decorated weaponry. Such elements are clearly visible in the Dian images and it is relevant that cattle are only ever shown with men, not women.

Polosmak and colleagues (2009) have singled out the Yuezhi as possible links with western Asia. Thierry (2005:446-447) credits the historic Yuezhi with a larger territory than Gansu province, extending into the Tarim and controlling the Hetian jade market. Zhang Qian, whose mission to make an alliance with the Yuezhi against the Xiongnu was spread over the years 138–125 BCE, reported that they had expanded their rule westward, taking over Daxia/Bactria (Shiji Book 123; Thierry 2005:453-457). The alkaline-etched beads found at Lijiashan ("Lijiashan excavation report" 2007:pl.176) are likely to have come from Afghanistan. The many turquoise and jadeite items found in the Dian tombs may have come from the Hetian region, which had access to textiles of Hellenistic style in at least the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE (Wagner et al. 2009).

The relatively slight evidence for archery suggests that there was no direct contact with the more northerly people of central Asia. There are similarities between the Dian horse-riders' short capes and shabrack saddle-cloths and those shown on the appliqué hanging of Pazyryk 5 (Rudenko 1970; pl. 154), but the presence of Chinese items in that same barrow (Rudenko 1970:174-179, 304-306) indicates a possibility that Dian contacts with north-central Asia were indirect and mediated through China. Chinese silk embroidery was found at Pazyryk 2, now firmly dated to 300 BCE which gives a date of 250 BCE for barrow 5 (Hajdas et al. 2004:114).

We should not neglect the possibility of contact with western Asia by sea. The Indus Valley had been explored on behalf of Darius the Great, Emperor of Persia 520–486 BCE, and he established trading posts on the Persian Gulf (Herodotus IV.43). The sub-continent was thus brought into a maritime trading system, which linked east, and west in what Sherratt (2006) describes as a global system. This was obviously known in central China, since the Han expedition of 122 BCE was intended to find the route to India (Shiji Book 123). Some items of western Asian origin could have been brought in from the south and may be recoverable through archaeological investigations in Assam or Myanmar.

Contact with the Indian sub-continent is clear from the great number of cowrie shells (*Cypraea moneta*), by several

images of water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) and of a zebu (*Bos indicus*), with pronounced hump and dewlaps, shown on the container from Shizaishan tomb 13 ("Epic in the bronzes" 2008:109, 125). Wade (2009:163, pl. 40) and Moore (IPPA Hanoi 2009) have noted possible links with the Samon River area of central Myanmar.

There is abundant evidence of contact with the east, from the Red River/Hong He (Dong Son) to the West River/Xi Jiang (Nan Yue). The presence of exotic items, such as African ivory tusks and a pedestaled spherical silver box at Xiangganshan, Guangdong, in the tomb of Zhao Mo (King of NanYue, 137–122 BCE), points again to possible maritime links with western Asia. The 'petal' ornament on the box has been used in western Asia since at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Muscarella 1988:184, pl. 116; Young 1981, pls 68-70). A similar silver box has been found in Wotuo, Shandong. Bronze petal-ornament boxes are found in Dian graves: a gilded one in Lijiashan 69 ("Lijiashan excavation report" 2007:92, pl. 65) and two in Shizhaishan (Yang, X. 2004:vol. 2 259). Figurines have been mounted onto the tops of the Shizaishan boxes, three crouching felids on one ("Epic in the bronzes" 2008:7), three birds on the other (Yang, X. 2004:vol. 1 pl. 30-31).

All of these contacts seem to have been superseded when the Han Empire conquered Nan Yue in 112 BCE. After a campaign in which Sima Qian himself took part (Shiji Book 130, Watson 1958:48), the Empire established a formal relationship with Dian in 109 BCE (Shiji Book 116; Crespiigny 1996-97:760). This may be marked by the 'seal of the King of Dian,' found in Shizhaishan Tomb 6. The set of bells in that tomb still has Dian-style decoration, but by the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, Chinese styles were everywhere replacing the indigenous.

#### *Seeing what the Dian craftsmen saw*

The Dian artefacts are decorated with both abstract patterns and representational images. Humans and animals are shown both in three-dimensional figurines and cast or engraved onto decorative plaques, the sides of drums, or cowrie-containers. They are noticeably naturalistic in style, which is very different from the schematic representations on Dong Son drums. The notion of naturalism could derive from the Chu through a variety of media, such as lacquer or textile. Contact with Chu is confirmed at Yangfutou, which is 'clearly modeled on Chu graves' (Chiou-Peng 2008:40). Given the troubled times, it is possible to imagine that specialised craftsmen could have come to Yunnan as slaves or refugees from Chu, or elsewhere.

Whatever their origins, the Dian representations are not imitations and there is a genuine artistic vision at work. Magdelene von Dewall (1974:348) has described it as an 'astonishing approximation to corporeality and movement'. This is well demonstrated in the case of horse-riders; they are

shown in motion in three dimensions, whereas in coeval images elsewhere the horse is either still or, if in motion, shown in two dimensions only (textile, painting/mosaic, relief carving).

Dewall (1974:364) also says that there is a 'ready and frequent interchange of artistic media from graphic to plastic means of expression', implying that images can be transferred from one medium to another without loss of meaning. I would extend the concept of interchangeability to include textiles and lacquer, as is done by scholars of Chinese crafts (e.g. Chung 2005:92-93; Hao 2004:319, 324).

Some themes are clearly preferred to others. Cattle are a key subject, as described below. Clothing is carefully shown and I shall examine the ways in which textiles were made, in order to establish the choices made by the women who wove them and (presumably) made the garments.

#### *Cattle in domestic contexts*

Almost all cattle are male (bulls), though many must be castrated (oxen). A gilded bronze plaque from Shizhaishan Tomb 13 shows a raiding scene. Two fully armoured and helmeted warriors are leading away a long-haired woman, carrying a small child on her back in a striped cape or blanket, and domesticated animals, one goat, one sheep and one ox. Each man holds the severed head of a long-haired enemy. The man at the end of the file holds an axe and treads on the decapitated body. Here, as on most plaques, at the base of the image is a snake, which may symbolise both earth and death.

The lower rim of a double cowrie-container from the same tomb shows a procession, which includes two domesticated bovids: a standard *Bos taurus*, small and hairy with long horns, and a water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) with back-swept horns and shaggy coat. Two other domesticated animals are shown, a horse and a broad-tail sheep (Rawson 1983:19-26, 219-221; Chiou-Peng 2004:303-305). The *Bos* is the only animal shown standing rather than walking, perhaps marking the end of the procession. His domesticated status is shown by his being unaccompanied or bound in any way. Huang and Wang (1983) have discussed hairstyles and clothing on this vessel as markers of ethnicity and rank.

On a conical lid from Shizhaishan Tomb 10, 100 x 107 mm, a man wearing a topknot and cape sits quietly with three oxen ("Epic in the bronzes" 2008:112). If Huang and Wang (1983) are correct about the meaning of hairstyles, this must be the owner of the cattle rather than a herdsman. On a bronze plaque from Lijiashan Tomb 71 a similarly dressed man is shown feeding an ox, which is tied by a long cord (Li 1999:156, Fig. 5). A snake, forming the base of the image, bites the bull's tail: this could indicate that the bull is to be led to slaughter.

#### *Men versus bulls*

Capturing bulls for slaughter is a common scene. The Guangnan drum has a narrative sequence of a man preparing to kill a small bull beside a tall decorated pole (Li 2008:10; also shown as Chang Chai in Hà 1989:106-107, 237). On fastener-plaques the bull is depicted as tied to a pillar of man's height only. On Lijiashan 24:90, 60 x 120 mm, an elaborate scene shows an injured boy hanging upside down from the left horn. On the fastener from Lijiashan tomb 68, 103 x 134 mm, 11 men are involved in tying the bull to a pillar on which stands a figure of a bull; two men have apparently been injured (HKMH 2004:54-55). On Shizhaishan 6:30, 96 x 160 mm, a snake is coiled around the pillar and the scene stands on a very long rope, while on the gilded fastener from Shizhaishan tomb 71, 148 x 74 mm, two men are violently struggling with a water-buffalo (HKMH 2004:142, 32).

On top of the container from Lijiashan Tomb 51, three warriors on horseback, two of them sitting on fringed shabracks, have lassoed a bull. The images are realistic, but the proportions are not, the bull being half the size of the humans, whereas in life it should be at least as tall as the horses. The bull is said to be partly covered with a leopard skin while the riders' garments are said to be of tiger skin (HKMH 2004:169). However, the drawing shows decorative edgings on the trousers which make me think that they are made of woven fabric. The short capes are quite shaggy and likely made of animal skin. A similar cape, looped up at the back, is worn by the gilded and helmeted central figure on the battle-scene from Shizhaishan tomb 13; that man sits on a leopard skin shabrack (HKMH 2004:137-138).

#### *Cattle in the wild*

A complex set of narrative imagery is shown on the cowrie-container Shizhaishan 71: 154. It is made up of two superimposed drum forms, each with loop handles. On the lid is a stag-hunting scene. Two riders, each with a dog and a hare running alongside, chase two stags. In the centre stands a turbaned man, who was originally gilded and held a spear with both hands: he may be the one who kills the stag that the riders are driving towards him. One of the riders is gilded; he wears a disk bracelet on his right arm and may be wearing gold shoulder-armour similar to that found in Shizhaishan Tomb 3 (HKMH 2004:139). He is otherwise very like the gilded rider raised on a stand above four zebu-like oxen on the cowrie-container Shizhaishan 10: 2 (HKMH 2004:132-133).

Attached to the container are eight figurines, four stags on the upper portion and four bovids on the lower. Each drum form has four narrative panels on the waist while the rims and bases have friezes of wild birds (hornbill, pheasant, and jungle-fowl) and animals (tiger, wild cat, hare, snake, and fox). The relief-figurines are so ingeniously placed against

the narrative panels that the viewer gets an effect of depth in the scene.

The lower panels show three scenes of a bull sitting in woodland. In the first (from the left) he is defending himself from a tiger. In the second and third a bird hovers over him, perhaps indicating that the bull is now dead. The tiger plays with its cub in the third scene. The fourth scene shows a stag sitting with another stag and a monkey in the background. This may be the start of the hunting narrative on the upper drum form. The upper panels show stag-hunting scenes, apparently with several hunters armed with spears: a plainly clad man on foot kills a stag, a horse-rider with a striped garment waves his spear, a horse-rider with a patterned garment chases the stag and the man with the striped garment carries it away on foot.

Several Dian items show felids attacking bovids, e.g. the 'offering table' (Lijiashan 24:5, 430 x 760 x 360 mm) and the headrest from Lijiashan Tomb 17, (l. 503 mm) (Rawson 1983:105-107, 112-113). The bovid fights back on a fastener from Shizaishan Tomb 10, 85 x 155 mm ("Epic in the bronzes" 2008:127). On the lid of another cowrie-container from Shizaishan Tomb 71, a tiger is seen raging at the foot of a tree on which sit two monkeys and two birds; circling the tree are two bulls, one of which seems to be attacking the tiger (HKMH 2004:72-73). These scenes look realistic, but on the plaque Shizaishan 12:38, 90 x 130 mm, a tiger with two cubs is shown carrying a dead bovid on its back, which is not realistic since tigers normally drag their prey (Candido et al. 1987:115).

Snakes are an almost universal theme, not yet fully understood (Gray 1989:46-48). They may imply shamanistic practices (Strassberg 2002:42-43) and it is interesting that they are associated with bovids not only in scenes of real life but also in more abstract images. The fastener Shizhaishan 13: 254, 100 x 195 mm, is a bovid head with horns terminating in three prongs and a heart-shaped decoration on the forehead. A *bucranium* (bovid skull) is placed on top of the forehead and each ear is bitten by a coiled snake. On the horns sit two smaller bovids (HKMH 2004:69). A similar motif from Shizaishan tomb 6, 98 x 190 mm, has one bovid head and two *bucrania*; all with clearly delineated heart-shaped decoration ("Epic in the bronzes" 2008:111).

#### *Uses and values of textiles*

Images of fabric and clothing have been noted in passing. The horse-riders, hunters and the man feeding the ox all wear overall-patterned clothing and dress ornaments. There are also a striped blanket, in the 'raid' scene, and fringed shabracks on the 'lasso' scene.

While we cannot know what symbolic values were allocated to these items, the fabrics and garments have the intrinsic value of the time taken to manufacture them. Decoration is an added value. The quickest/cheapest fabrics would be

plain or striped; unadorned tunics and capes could easily be assembled; trousers would take longer. Striped edgings could be woven-in, but patterned borders would be time-consuming: it might be quicker to embroider a finished garment than to weave and then sew on a decorative band. The various techniques are briefly described below.

Weaving is shown on top of containers tops from Shizhaishan 1 and Lijiashan 69 (Rode 2004:323-326) and copies of weaving implements have been found. The Western Han-period grave at Yangfutou 113 had a lacquered wood weft beater, 550 x 50 mm, and a 1 m long bronze copy of a 'laze-rod', which serves to keep the thread taut against the warp-beam (described as a 'prop' in HKMH 2004:48-50). Bronze copies of a spinning distaff, of a yarn-reeler and of a complete backstrap loom, were found at Shizhaishan 17 (Candido et al. 1987:96; "Epic in the bronzes" 2008:70). The parts of the loom are:

- a 'warp-beam', which holds the start of the long threads (warp).
- a 'heddle' to lift the warp-threads and pass the cross-threads (weft) from one side to the other.
- a 'weft-beater', used to push the cross-threads tightly together.
- a 'breast-beam', into which the ends of the warp thread are slotted.

The weaver's backstrap is tied to the breast-beam; she keeps the threads taut through her weight and muscle-power. She continually passes a cross-thread through the space ('shed') created by lifting the heddle, then pushes it tightly into position with the beater. The backstrap loom is portable, but physically demanding, particularly when the weaver also tensions the warp-beam with her feet, as shown on the containers. Nowadays in southeast Asia the warp-beam is fixed in a frame (Roth 1918:64-107; Lewis 1984:73).

The majority of garments shown on the bronzes are striped and many have narrow edgings. This is typical of backstrap-loom fabrics, which can only be as wide as the weaver's back. The Shizhaishan warp-beam would give a width of c. 400 mm. Stripes are produced by using differently coloured long threads in the warp or by sewing pieces together. Narrow edgings are achieved vertically, by using different colours on the outer edges (warp selvedge), and horizontally by starting and finishing the piece with differently coloured cross-threads (weft selvedge).

It is also possible to create repetitive geometric patterns with 'tapestry', a technique in which differently coloured cross-threads are woven in blocks over the warp. Tapestry-like patterns can be seen on the lacquered wooden figurine of a woman from Yangfutou 113, the tomb where the weft-beater and laze-rod were found. She wears a short skirt, and a long-sleeved shirt with fine horizontal stripes, under an outer garment with a 'rippled pattern', which must be an overall

weave. Panels of lozenges within stripes are inset onto the sleeves and down the side-seams.

Tapestry was well-known in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE in western Asia (e.g. Ellis 1981) and seems to have passed from there to Xinjiang province, where spectacular locally made tapestry bands have been found in Han-period graves at Shampula, Hetian (Keller and Schorta 2001). Tapestry is suitable for wool and was technically possible on the Shizhaishan loom.

Another way to decorate a garment would be by embroidery, stitching additional coloured threads over the woven fabric. This can be applied at any time onto finished garments of any size. Because it can deploy a variety of designs and a range of colours, embroidery can also replicate other forms of surface decoration such as painting or tattooing. The ‘jewelled quilt’ from Lijiashan Tomb 47 is a specialised kind of embroidery.

Archaeological finds show that silk embroidery was well established in China by the Warring States period (Kuhn 1995:82-83) and probably much earlier. Chung (2005:77-78) thinks that the ‘flowing, abstracted dragon forms in mirrored, repeated pairs’ on the outer robe of the large bronze figure from Sanxingdui, Sichuan, must have been embroidered. The curvilinear designs on the garments of some of the Dian figurines would be more easily embroidered than woven, and suitable needles have been found.

#### *Interchangeable images: bronze, textiles, lacquer*

The Dabona coffin decoration replicates that of textiles. The long walls’ diagonally repetitive chain of hooked scrolls is a Chinese thunder-pattern (Candido et al. 1987:46). The gable ends are in embroidery-style, with a composition of birds and mammals. The Dabona craftsmen may have known of Chu coffin-shrouds, as postulated for the carbonised textile from Shao Tao’s tomb at Baoshan, Hubei, 316 BCE (Kuhn 2004:308).

A clear equivalence between lacquer and bronze is seen on the Yangfutou 113 quivers. One is a sheet of bronze, folded and joined at the back, and the other is a composite of a lacquered wood front mounted onto a bronze back. Both quivers are decorated with similar images, some well-known – a bull-capture with a snake on the ground, tigers attacking a bovid, felids seen from above, a peacock – and, more unusually, a double-headed dragon. With their variety of ornamental borders, either one of these objects might serve as a pattern-book for designers.

The Dabona gable has shifting viewpoints: birds are seen from below and mammals are in profile. This is how they would be observed by a viewer at ground level. In the later Dian images, including one of the Yangfutou quivers, there are more viewpoints and felids are often seen from above. It would be possible to construct such a view by looking down

at a dead animal or more simply by copying a three-dimensional figurine as a model.

Shifting viewpoints are well-evidenced on the engraved bronze armguard from Lijiashan Tomb 13 (217 x 85 x 66 mm, Late Warring States to Early Western Han). The wearer will see different scenes as he moves his arm. On the outside of the arm (right in the drawing) are a monkey, a fish, a crayfish, two stags and a cicada; in the centre, two tigers, one seizing a boar; on the inside of the arm, three tigers and a bee, a jungle-cock biting a lizard and a jungle-cock seized by a leopard. The bee, the cicada, the lizard and one of the tigers are seen from above; all other animals are in profile. The scenes are said to show the chain of life (Candido et al. 1987:112), but there is a potential host of additional meanings, exhorting the wearer, for instance, to ‘sting like a bee’, ‘spring like a leopard’ etc.

This armguard would have been stitched onto cloth padding or a leather backing. A gold armguard has also been found, though it can hardly have been functional (“Epic in the bronzes” 2008:62). The guard protects an archer’s wrist from the recoil of the bow or protects a warrior’s sword arm, the other arm being protected by a shield. On a fastener from Lijiashan (“Lijiashan bronzes” 1995:109) an armguard is worn on the right arm by a hunter running down a stag with a spear (now missing). Although he has a sword on his left side, it is difficult to see how an armguard would specifically help him; its role in the hunt may therefore be purely apotropaic. Hunters are more commonly shown wearing large disk-bracelets, which may have served a similar purpose.

On the Lijiashan armguard the animals are spread out, as on the Dabona gable, and the design may be based upon an embroidery. This may also be said of the large scene on the parasol-holder’s cape, Shizhaishan 18:1, 275 x 95 mm, which shows a jungle-fowl between two stags, one being attacked by foxes or wolves; at the base a snake bites another wolf. The purpose of this imagery must be apotropaic, to preserve from danger the wearer – and the person for whom the parasol is being held. It may be that these images are only a decoration on the bronze, still serving a protective function, but I think this unlikely, in view of the careful detail of most other figurines.

#### CONCLUSION

Only a few items have been described here but enough has been said to show that the Dian imagery deploys similar themes in different media – bronze figurines and engravings, painted lacquer and possibly textiles and tattooing. The range of manufacturing techniques and the high quality of artistic expression indicate that there must have been specialised craftsmen. Craftsmen may have worked to order but could also have had control over the finished product, i.e. the arrangement of figures within the frame, the choice of detail, etc. The range of variations within standard themes suggests

that each piece was individually made and may have referred to facts or events peculiar to the consumers (pun on their name, recall of specific hunts or battles, etc.).

All scholars agree that the Dian sites are those of a ranked society. In the pieces discussed the presence of gilding or other decoration on the riders suggests there was a class of knights or *equites* who were distinctively garbed, even when not on horseback. In contrast the foot soldiers on battle-scenes (not shown here) and the men in the bovid-capture fasteners have few distinguishing features and all look alike. They may be an age-group or other sodality. In this case the fasteners might also function as membership badges. When deposited as grave goods such badges would reassert the status of the dead and through them also the status of the living.

There is an overarching narrative of conflict, between animals, between humans and animals and between humans. Conflict could be over-represented in grave goods, as it implies death, but it is so often shown on the fasteners and other decorative plaques, most likely to have been worn in life, that conflict and violence must have been an integral part of the community's worldview.

The world of Dian was exciting, clangorous with drums and dance, and dangerous. Jungles teeming with predators were just outside the villages; treasure had to be wrested from inhospitable ravines cut through by dangerous waters, or acquired from outsiders who came from unimaginable places of ocean and desert. Apotropaic ornaments and garments were a protection and they also enhanced solidarity.

Men hunted and fought in distinctively-garbed groups led by men whose greatness was displayed in gold and gems, while women ensured prosperity through their work and through village rituals. The death of a leader or great one created anxiety, that had to be overcome through immortal offerings. So not just a loom, but a permanent copy of one; not just a coffin-cover but a bronze image; not just a shroud, but one striped with precious beads.

The creation and sacrifice of such wealth would ensure lasting protection for both the dead and the living, while the sight of the tombs, high above the lakes, would daily reassure and comfort the populations dwelling at lake-level.

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