Fibers & Textiles
Textile Objects

Many types of textile objects are made from plant or animal fibers.

Cotton

Khipu
Inka, 1550’s
MCCM 2002.1.118
Linen from Flax

Dog Mummy
Egyptian, 664-332 BC
MCCM 2011.3.1
Wool from Alpaca

Pile Hat
Wari, 500-800 AD
MCCM 2002.1.119
Silk cocoon

Patriarch of Ngor Monastery
Tibetan, 17th century
MCCM 2000.5.5
Fiber Microscopy

Different fibers can be distinguished by their physical characteristics visible under magnification. The fibers’ shapes can be compared in cross-section (top) as well as along their lengths.

Cotton  Wool  Linen  Silk

Fiber Identification

The tan background cloth for this brocaded textile was woven from cotton threads. The colored image threads are dyed wool.

Textile Fragment with Pelican Shaman
Chimu, Peru 1100-1470
MCCM 2002.8.1