
14. Chalcatzingo's Formative Figurines

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The Chalcatzingo excavations produced nearly six thousand recognizable fragments of anthropomorphic figurines. These were the object of an analysis which had two basic purposes: to generate a reasonably complete description of the figurines' variability and to use the distribution of patterned variability to investigate the organization of Chalcatzingo's prehistoric population. To these ends, a design attribute analysis was carried out, which is presented elsewhere in detail (Harland 1975; 1979). The results of that analysis are summarized in the second section of this chapter. In order that the Chalcatzingo figurines could be used for comparisons with other areas of Mesoamerica, they have been classified according to a whole piece typology based on the work of George C. Vaillant (1930) in the Valley of Mexico. The Chalcatzingo whole piece typology forms the first section of the chapter.

WHOLE PIECE TYPOLOGY

While minor attempts have been made to revise Vaillant's typology, primarily to reflect regional differences in figurine styles, there has been only one lengthy reanalysis of central Mexican Formative figurines, the thesis of Rosa María Reyna Robles (1971). Her study is broad in geographic scope and is not site specific. She reclassified most of Vaillant's types into a series of "traditions." For example, Vaillant's numerous Middle Formative C types were placed into two traditions. In my analysis of Chalcatzingo figurines, I have taken her criticisms of Vaillant's typology into account, but I have not followed her system of reclassification since it does not fit the Chalcatzingo sample well.

The research of Paul Tolstoy and Louise Paradis (1970) significantly revised the Formative period sequence in the Val-

ley of Mexico and placed Formative period figurines in a finer sequence than that provided by Vaillant. The temporal sequence of figurines has been further refined through Tolstoy's continued work (e.g., 1978:253-260; 1979:Fig. 1) and through research in the northern Valley of Mexico (McBride 1974) and in the southern valley (Niederberger 1976).

Unfortunately, attempts to order the Chalcatzingo figurine types chronologically, e.g., by seriation, proved generally unsuccessful, since erosion, land modification, and frequent rebuilding had created numerous mixed levels with few pure strata. In addition, figurines were seldom abundant in areas with good, unmixed stratigraphy; therefore, only general chronological observations can be made. In spite of the revisions by other researchers, the classification of the Chalcatzingo figurines primarily follows Vaillant's original typology published in his Zacatenco report (Vaillant 1930). The Zacatenco collection contains nearly the full range of figurines and variability seen at Chalcatzingo, and many of the types are truly identical. In using Vaillant's categories, primary reliance was placed on the photographs of his various types and less emphasis on his written descriptions, although portions of these proved valuable and are quoted in some of the Chalcatzingo descriptions. A copy of the Zacatenco report was kept on hand throughout the classification procedure, and attempts were made to match each piece in our collection with figurine photographs in the report. Thus, when a Chalcatzingo figurine bears the same type designation as one of Vaillant's types, a high degree of correspondence can be assumed.

Because Chalcatzingo and Zacatenco are regionally distant, exact similarities in all figurine types were not expected, and, as anticipated, many specimens in our sample failed to correspond closely

to types from the Zacatenco assemblage. Vaillant's Types C1-C9, K, E, A, F, G, D1, and D2 each occurred at least once in our sample. However, some figurines were dissimilar enough from Valley of Mexico types to justify new type designations. These were Chalcatzingo 1 (Ch1), varieties 1-5 (labeled Ch1-1-Ch1-5), and Chalcatzingo 2 (Ch2).

The main difference between the Ch1 series and Vaillant's C series of figurine heads is in the depiction of the eyes, which are quite distinct in the Ch1 figurines. Ch2 figurines are in the same stylistic tradition as the C and Ch1 types but possess a series of features which warrant a separate category, the main difference again being in the eye form.

Complete figurines (some examples of which are shown in Figs. 14.1 and 14.2) are extremely rare. Our large sample clearly shows that most had been broken at the neck area, a pattern so regular that it strongly indicates purposeful breakage. Such decapitation may be akin to the decapitation of monuments (e.g., Grove 1981b). It is important to note that even those few figurines which were complete when found were usually also broken.

Two of the whole figurines found were in good association with a child burial (no. 45) from PC Structure 2 (Fig. 8.2), although figurines were rarely included as mortuary furniture at Chalcatzingo. One of the Burial 45 figurines (Type Ch1; Fig. 14.1b) depicts a person seated with knees flexed, arms encircling the knees. Significantly, the person is wearing a zoomorphic headdress which continues down the back almost to the waist. The features of the headdress resemble a horned owl. The second figurine with the burial was of the C8 type. Other whole figurines were of the C8, Ch1, and Ch2 types.

In view of the small number of whole figurines and the difficulty of associating

heads with specific bodies, I also set up four body (BD) types to classify figurines lacking heads. These are B-C, Ch, D, and E bodies. Since the vast majority of the figurines were fragmentary, it seemed important to classify them as well even though they could not be put into the established whole piece typology.

Detailed descriptions of the types are given below, along with a discussion of comparisons between Chalcatzingo and other Mesoamerican figurine types. Comparisons to types with the same numerical designation from sites in the Valley of Mexico and Morelos are taken for granted and are not mentioned unless the Chalcatzingo designation is somehow different. Distributional data for both head and body types are displayed in Tables 14.1 and 14.2.

Head Type Descriptions and Comparisons

C

Vaillant (1930:99) described Type C as the most common figurine type in the Valley of Mexico. He subdivided the type into eight groups (Ci–Cviii; our designations substitute Arabic numerals for Roman ones) to provide “greater ease in description” (1930:99).

C1 (Fig. 14.3a–b; 24 specimens [specimen numbers for Chalcatzingo only, not Telixtac and Huazulco])

The C figurines generally have coffee bean eyes with the fillet of clay which forms the eyes left protruding. Type C1 has a prognathic face, and the chin is undeveloped. The mouth is most frequently depicted as a simple gash under the nose. The C1 figurines from Chalcatzingo were among the most crudely modeled in the collection. Vaillant (1930:99) described C1 figurines as “characterized by a relatively small trunk, usually erect posture, heads which are prognathic and relatively large in proportion to the body. The features, eyes, nose, and mouth are indicated by fillets of clay, the mouth is developed to the exclusion of the chin. The prognathic chinlessness is the definitive trait.”

Tolstoy (1979: Fig. 1) places C1's in the Valley of Mexico within the Bomba and El Arbolillo phases, both within the time range of Chalcatzingo's Barranca phase. However, C1's were absent in most Barranca phase contexts at Chalcatzingo other than on the Plaza Central (see Table 14.1). None were recovered at Huazulco, but one occurs in the Telixtac sample.



Figure 14.1. Whole figurines: a, C8 Person M, 15.5 cm tall; b, CH1, 9.0 cm tall; c, C8 Person F, 13.8 cm tall.

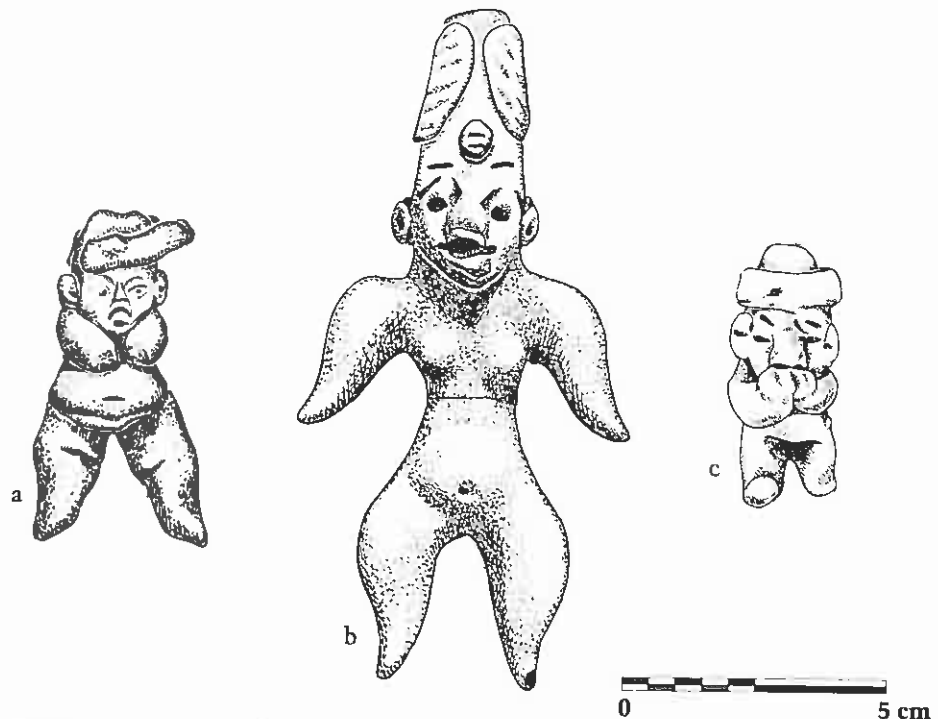


Figure 14.2. Whole figurines: a, C8; b, Ch1; c, Ch2.

Table 14.1. Distribution of Figurine Head Types

Area	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	Ch1-1	Ch1-2	Ch1-3	Ch1-4	Ch1-5	Ch2	D1	D2	K	KC	A	E	F	G	Totals	
PC Strs. 1 & 2	10	18	5		5		2	111		5	34	16	3	20	2	3	33	2	3						272
PC Str. 6					1												1								2
PC other	13	33	35	4	40	2	12	169	2	32	76	26	6	29	26	15	97	27	14	14	12	4	3		691
CT-1		1	1		1			14			10	2					1	1				2			33
CT-2		1	4					20	2		2						4								33
T-4		1	1				1	40		2	7	2		2	2		9	1	4	1					73
T-6		3	2		3		2	9		1	5	1		1	6	1	7	6	3	2	2				54
T-9A		3	2		1			7		2		4		2	3		1								25
T-9B		1	1				2	1				2		1	2		1								11
T-11		6	9		5	1	8	11				26	10		5	13	1	1		1	1				98
T-15 Str. 1		3	2			3										5	27	15	3	2		4	1		65
T-15 Str. 5		1			1			1			4	1					5	3		1					17
T-15 other		7	2					7				1				1	5	1							24
T-17								3			1					1	1								6
T-20			13		3	1	3	19		2	11	3		3	1		5	5	5						74
T-21			3		2			14		1	1	1		3	1			1	2						29
T-23		6	3		1	1	1	48		6	31	4	1	2	1		3					3			111
T-24		7	6		2		2	58		1	13	7	2	4	5	2	5	2	3						119
T-25		6	3		1		2	73		3	9	2		1	9	1	9	1	1			1	2		124
T-27			4		2			47			20	5				3		4	2		1	5			93
T-29		5	8		8			2	2	1							10	4	2	2			1		45
T-31					1			1		1		1					1								5
T-37		1	5					8			11	5				4	1		2						37
S-39			1				3	14			9	1				9	2								39
N-2																1	1								2
N-5	1		1					3		1				1											7
N-7																									0
Caves								4		1	4						1				12	3			25
Telixtac	1		1		1			18				5		3											29
Huazulco		1			1							2													4
Totals	25	104	112	4	79	8	38	702	6	59	274	101	12	77	90	28	235	69	45	22	28	22	7		2,147

C2 (Fig. 14.3c-d; 103 specimens)

C2 figurines contrast with C1's mainly in the depiction of the chin, which is usually well formed and often pointed. The eyes of C2 figurines have the fillet of clay which forms the coffee bean shape well smoothed to leave only a soft ridge around the eye. Overall, the finishing on C2 figurines is quite superior to that found on C1's. Vaillant (1930:103) described C2's as having "a greater refinement of feature than C1. The planes of the face through the reduction of the fillets forming the features, increase to a more nearly natural size. By decreasing the size of the mouth fillet, the contours of the chin are modeled naturalistically."

As with the C1's, C2's have been chronologically classified by Tolstoy (1979: Fig. 1) within the Bomba and El Arbolillo phases, and at Chalcatzingo they do occur in good Barranca phase contexts (T-9B and T-29), although they are lacking on N-2. One was found at Huazulco, but none were recovered from the larger site of Telixtac.

C2 figurines from Chalcatzingo share general attribute similarities with the High Turban Slit Eye Heads from the Tehuacan Valley (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970:95).

C3 (Fig. 14.3e-g; 111 specimens)

C3 figurines are distinguished from C1's and C2's in that the face is not prognathic and its outline is much more ovate than the faces of the previous two types. Noses and lips in particular do not protrude to the extent seen in the C1 and C2 figurines. C3 figurines may or may not have well-developed chins. Vaillant (1930:104) stated that the C3 type "shows more positive diagnostic traits. The face is heavy in contour and oblong in outline . . . , and the headdress is equally coarse and simple."

C3 figurines are placed by Tolstoy (1979: Fig. 1) within the Early La Pastora phase, the equivalent of the Early Cantera subphase at Chalcatzingo. The Chalcatzingo sample contains some C3 figurines from Barranca phase contexts, suggesting that perhaps our chronologies are

not well matched.

MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery (1970:93) identified a number of Early Santa María phase specimens as C3a and C3d figurines. These identifications seem to have been made on the basis of filleting of the eyes. In my opinion the correspondences are not very close.

C4 (Fig. 14.3h; 4 specimens)

Due to the small number of figurines of this type from our collection, nothing can be added to Vaillant's original description (1930:107): "The diagnostic traits comprise a flat, thin head, conical in outline, features in relatively low relief, the chin indicated by a fillet applied and smoothed and a headdress presented in frankly two dimensions."

All C4 figurines at Chalcatzingo come from general (non-structure) excavations on the Plaza Central. The sample size renders comparisons of this type to others of little value.

C5 (Fig. 14.3i-j; 77 specimens)

Type C5 contains some of the most finely made C figurines. The face is

Table 14.2. Distribution of Figurine Body Types

Area	B-CBD	ChBD	DBD	EBD	Totals
PC Strs. 1 & 2	200	127	2	2	331
PC Str. 6			1		1
PC other	868	377	43	9	1,297
CT-1	21	13	2		36
CT-2	14	24			38
T-4	32	48		2	82
T-6	36	26	4	2	68
T-9A	23	22	1		46
T-9B	29	10			39
T-11	97	50	5	1	153
T-15 Str. 1	12	6	4		22
T-15 Str. 5	11	5			16
T-15 other	11	6	1		18
T-17	2		1		3
T-20	115	86	6	2	209
T-21	36	39	1		76
T-23	118	60	17		195
T-24	54	123			177
T-25	57	123			180
T-27	95	92			187
T-29	38	10			48
T-31	7	2			9
T-37	36	36			72
S-39	21	30			51
N-2			16		16
N-5	9	2			11
N-7	8				8
Caves	13	3	2		18
Telixtac	21	11	2		34
Huazulco	5	2			7
Totals	1,989	1,333	108	18	3,448

rounded in plan and relatively flat in cross-section. The fillets of clay used to model the various features of the face are carefully formed and well smoothed. The rather elaborate headdresses seen on the C5 figurines illustrated are characteristic of the type. Vaillant (1930:108) defined C5's in the following manner: "The heads are relatively large; the face plump and rounded. The nose, which closely follows the convexity of the face which is completed usually with the chin underdeveloped, gives the countenance a sheep-like appearance."

Tolstoy (1979: Fig. 1) has placed the C5 figurines, as well as the C3's, in the Early La Pastora phase, equivalent to Early Cantera subphase at Chalcatzingo. The Chalcatzingo C5 figurines seem to confirm this chronological placement. In addition, one C5 figurine was found at Telixtac and one at Huazulco. No close correspondences occur with types outside of the Morelos-Valley of Mexico area.

C6 (Fig. 14.3k; 8 specimens)

Type C6, very rare at Chalcatzingo, contrasts with types C1-C5 mainly in its eye form. The eyes of C6 figurines are basically a square variant of the coffee bean eye. According to Vaillant (1930:111), "The proportions of the face are naturalistic and there is a tendency to work the fillets into the base clay of the face."

In eye treatment the C6 figurines show some general similarities to figurines from a number of sites, including La Venta and Tres Zapotes. These correspondences may be insignificant, particularly in view of the small sample size from Chalcatzingo.

C7 (Fig. 14.3l-n; 38 specimens)

Type C7 has a rather great range of variability in the treatment of the facial features with the exception of the eyes. It is the eye form which contrasts C7 with the C1-C6 types. The eye is the coffee bean shape but has the pupil depicted by punctation. In all other characteristics, C7 shows as much internal variability as seen in Types C1-C5 combined. Some C7 figurines are closely similar to C8's

and are occasionally difficult to differentiate from them.

Based on eye treatment, C7's show some correspondences to five of the Tehuacan types: Hollow Lowland Heads of the Early Santa María phase (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970: Fig. 48), the La Venta Hairknot type of the Early Santa María phase (ibid.: Fig. 53; the Chalcatzingo C7 figurine is also the type most likely to display a hairknot), the Multi-Hairknot Head of the Early Santa María phase (ibid.: Fig. 56), the Doughnut-eye Heads (ibid.: Fig. 55). The Tehuacan specimens of these types are quite crudely formed in comparison to Chalcatzingo's C7's.

C8 (Figs. 14.1a, c, 14.2a, 27.1; 684 specimens)

The single feature which best contrasts all C8's with the rest of the C series is the depiction of the eyes. The eye is not the basic coffee bean shape seen in other C types. Rather than by the application of a fillet, the eye is made by incising and gouging directly into the face. The pupils are almost always shown by a deep punctation in the inside corner, giving the figurines a cross-eyed appearance. An additional important characteristic is the portrayal of the eyebrows by lightly incised lines.

Whereas eye and eyebrow execution, plus the well-modeled nature of these figurines, serves as the basis for classifying these as one type, they exhibit a wide range of variation in the execution of the general facial features. This variation is apparently not random or of a type which might be expected of different figurine workshops: instead, it appears to be patterned. Grove (Chapter 27) believes that C8 figurines are not stylized in the sense of most C, D, and K type figurines, but rather are portrait figurines of specific individuals. He sees the variation within the C8 type as reflecting the personal physical differences of these personages, and points out that there is a definite correlation between the individuals portrayed and headdress shapes.

The Matamoros type figurines from the Late Santa María phase at Tehuacan (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970: Fig. 80) are similar to C8's from Chalcatzingo but lack the distinctive eye attribute. Early Santa María phase Crescentic Cap Heads (ibid.: Fig. 51) share turban forms with some of the C8 varieties, but neither this type nor the Matamoros type appears to have portrait qualities.

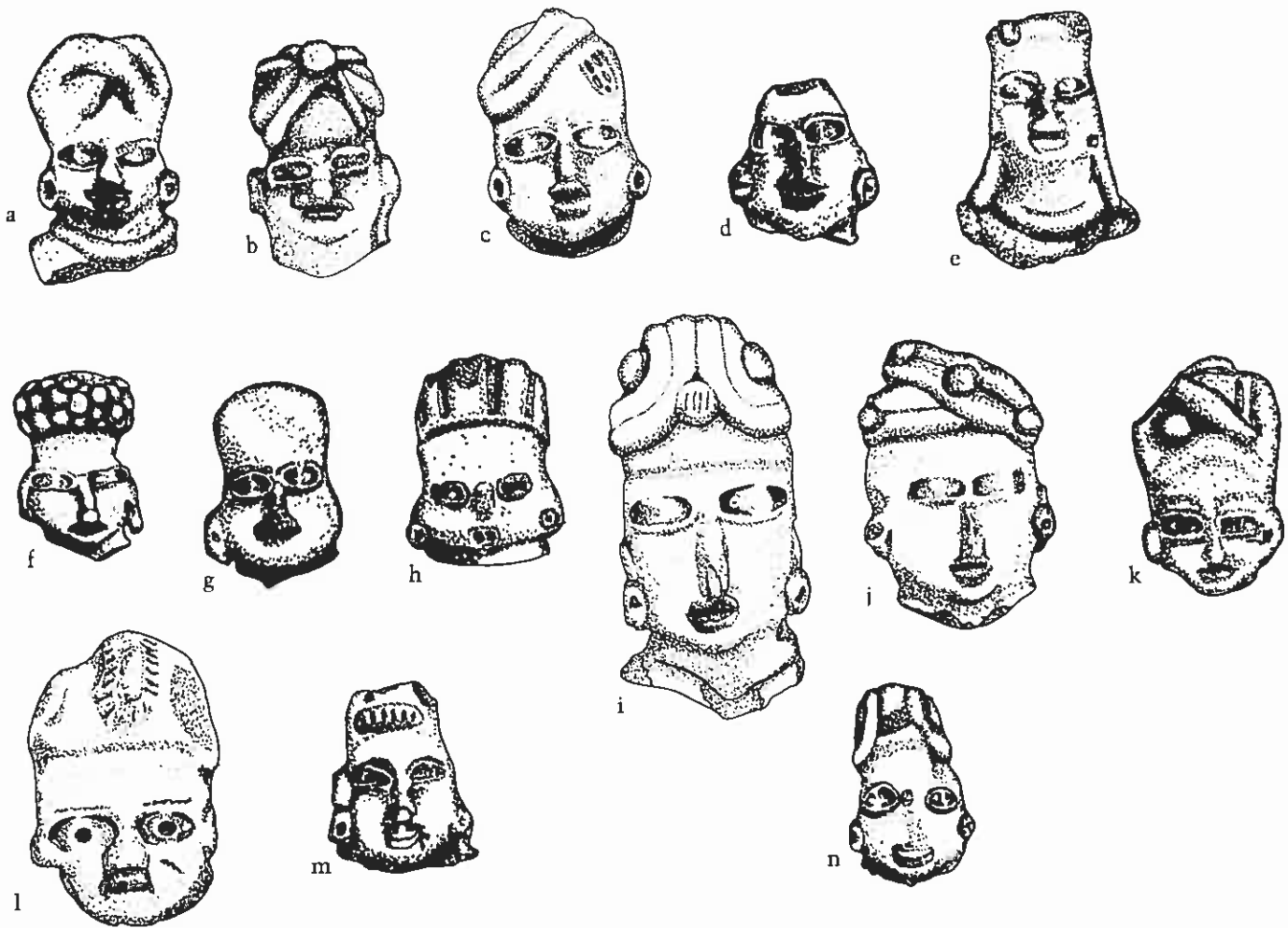


Figure 14.3. Type C figurine heads: *a-b*, C1; *c-d*, C2; *e-g*, C3; *h*, C4; *i-j*, C5; *k*, C6; *l-n*, C-7.

At least three Gulf Coast (Tres Zapotes) figurine types show similarities to Chalcatzingo C8 figurines: Classic Pointed Chin type, Classic Prognathic Type, and Classic Beatific Type (Weiant 1943: Figs. 1–7). While the similarities are often general, Grove (Chapter 27) believes that some of the figurines classified within these Tres Zapotes types may be portrait figurines, in part because the figurines lack the stylized “sameness” of other figurine types. The fact that both the Gulf Coast and Chalcatzingo appear to have special portrait figurines may reflect the close ties between them.

C9 (Fig. 14.4; 6 specimens)

Vaillant's Zacatenco (1930) and El Arbolillo (1935) reports did not document the C9 figurine type. It was identified instead during his work at Gualupita, Morelos (Vaillant and Vaillant 1934: 38), and has subsequently been found at Early Formative sites throughout the central

highlands. Using the illustrated C9 figurines from Gualupita leads to some confusion in differentiating D from C9 because, while many of the figurines with Olmec baby-faces fall within the C9 type, most of the C9's originally illustrated by the Vaillants (1934: Fig. 10, nos. 2–4, 7–10) are so similar to Type D figurines that Chalcatzingo figurines with those attributes are difficult to classify. Therefore, I have followed the practice most current today (e.g., Reyna Robles 1971: 277–301, Figs. 56–66) of using the C9 type as a catch-all for baby-face figurines. When figurines were more similar to Vaillant's Type D and lacked clear baby-face attributes, they were placed in the D category.

Over three hundred Amate phase D and K figurines were recovered at Chalcatzingo, while the C9 sample is very small, comprising only about 1 percent of the Early Formative figurines. At Zoha-

pilco in the Valley of Mexico (Niederberger 1976: Chart 8), C9 (Pilli) figurines range from 9 to 69 percent of the figurine assemblage in the Early Formative levels, a striking contrast to Chalcatzingo. The low percentages of C9 figurines at Chalcatzingo may surprise many who think of Chalcatzingo as an Olmec site. All Chalcatzingo C9 baby-face figurines come from areas with Amate phase fill.

Because C9's represent the wide range of baby-face figurines, they compare readily to baby-face figurines in many areas of Mesoamerica. These comparisons include Pilli, Isla, Pahuacan, and Tenayo figurine types at Zohapilco (Niederberger 1976: 209–213, Figs. 74–76, 78, 82–83), the Baby Face type at Tres Zapotes (Weiant 1943: Pls. 18–19), and Baby Face, Plough Eye, and Tres Zapotes Chin Strap types from Tehuacan (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970: Figs. 47, 52, 53), to name only a few.

Ch1 (Fig. 14.5a–h; 513 specimens [59 Ch1-1, 274 Ch1-2, 94 Ch1-3, 12 Ch1-4, 74 Ch1-5])

We have defined within the Chalcatzingo sample a series of types which bear strong resemblances to the C1–C5 figurines of Vaillant's typology in head shape, modeling of the face, and turban forms, but differ in eye treatment. The eyes are executed by gouging rather than filleting. Two gouges form the lateral edges of each eye, and a pupil between these is created by another smaller gouge or a punctuation. Types Ch1-3–Ch1-5 also seem considerably more prognathic than Types C3–C5.

Because the unusual eye treatment which sets the Ch1 types apart from C types appears to be a phenomenon restricted mainly to the Chalcatzingo region (see for example Reyna Robles

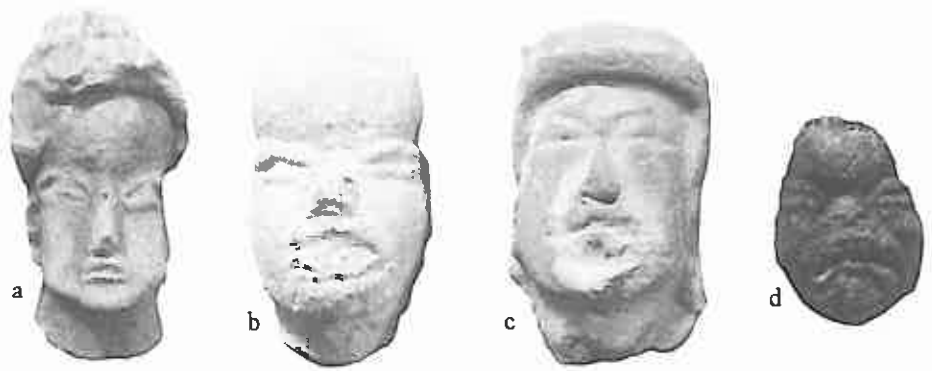


Figure 14.4. C9 figurines. Each head is ca. 4 cm tall.



Figure 14.5. Type Ch figurines: a–f, Ch1-2; g–h, CH1-5; i–n, CH1-1; o–q, Ch2.

1971:171, Pl. 8), they may represent a Chalcatzingo regional variation of the standard Valley of Mexico Type C figurines. In some instances the Ch1 type occurs in greater quantities than its C counterpart. The distributions of these Ch1 figurines and their C counterparts across the site are seldom identical (Table 14.1; see also Chapter 15).

Because the Ch1 type of eye execution is not common in central Mexico, it is interesting to note that among the Aherent Types at Tehuacan, which date to the Late Santa María phase (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970:Fig. 85), there is at least one with a similar eye treatment. No figurines with this eye treatment have been published from Valley of Mexico collections.

Ch2 (Fig. 14.5o–q; 90 specimens)

The type given the designation Ch2 bears no resemblance to any of Vaillant's material. It is characterized by the following features: (1) the eyes are depicted by making three slashes in a triangle, slightly raising the area inside the triangle; (2) the nose is quite large and protruding, with the mouth usually depicted as a slash directly below the nose; and (3) the turban is high and almost always has a distinctive crossing element near the forehead, giving it the effect of an old-fashioned top hat.

There were no close correspondences between Ch2 and other central Mexican figurine types.

D (Fig. 14.6a–c; 263 specimens [28 D1, 235 D2])

As Vaillant noted (1930:116), "It is not possible . . . to predicate exactly the line of demarcation between Di and Dii." These two D types do, however, contrast sharply with the whole C series. D heads are usually oblong to square in plan and quite straight in cross section. The features are finely modeled and the fillets of clay well smoothed into the base. Nearly all D figurines are shown wearing turbans, and these usually continue in line with the forehead. Unlike most C figurines, many D's are modeled on the back as well as the front surface.

The only consistent contrast I was able to find between D1 and D2 figurines is the tendency for D1's to have heads which are rounded into cross-section. The D2 heads are always quite flat. However, even in this one diagnostic there is gradation.

Vaillant described the D figurines in the following manner (1930:115): "The most distinctive features of Type Di are a

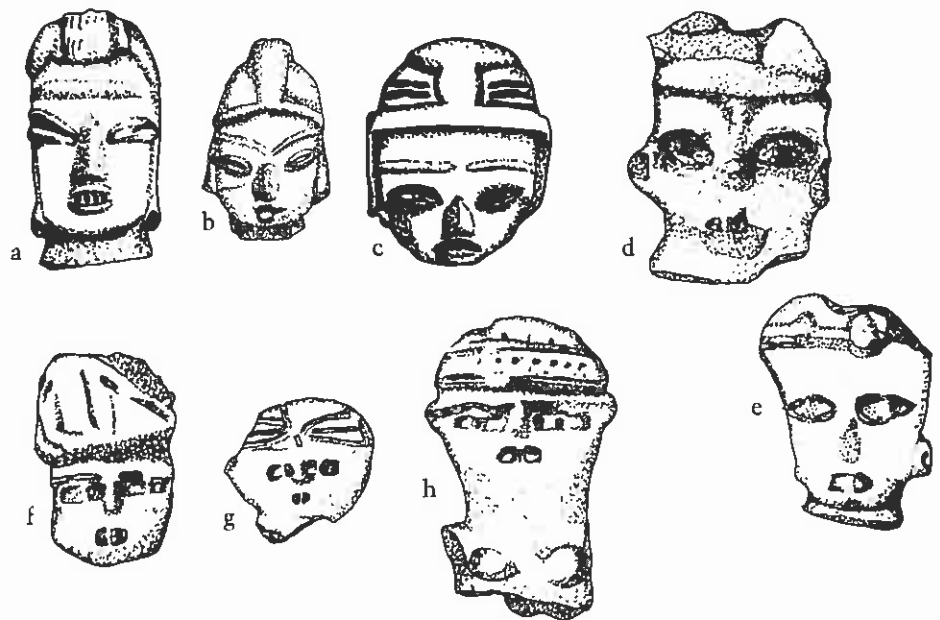


Figure 14.6. Early Formative figurines: a–c, D2; d–e, K; f–h, K Crude.

body shown always erect and modeled in the Type C manner, but with more grace. The heads are small and in direct natural proportion to the body. The features are naturalistic and the filleting technique is refined to a point where it is no longer distinctive . . . Attention is especially given by gouging and by perforation to present the eye and its pupil realistically and to show the mouth and teeth." On the other hand, "Type Dii is characterized by the presentation of the features slightly coarser and more formalized than that of Type Di. The body is apt to be cruder, flatter and squarer than its predecessors. Especially definitive is the attenuation of the fillets composing the eyes and eyebrows" (ibid.: 119).

Few pure Early Formative levels were excavated at Chalcatzingo, and most D figurines come from mixed contexts. The Tehuacan Valley types show resemblances to type D1, i.e., the Trapiche Banded-Helmet type of the Early Santa María phase (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970:Fig. 49), as well as the specimens specifically identified as D1's (ibid.: Fig. 50). These latter show only a fair correspondence to Chalcatzingo's D1's, and the Tehuacan figurines tend to be cruder.

K (Fig. 14.6d–h; 114 specimens [69 K, 45 K Crude])

Vaillant (1930:112) said of Type K that it is "characterized by a round face, simple headdress with details shown by incision, a mouth made by two gouges, and the eye depicted by two broad gouges on a heavy fillet." Since Vaillant's classification was created, the sample of K figurines has become far larger, and some modifications must be made in this description.

K figurines can be readily recognized by their eye forms. The eyes are executed by two broad gouges, sometimes placed on a fillet of clay and sometimes placed directly on the face. A pupil is sometimes incised between the gouges.

The K Crude (KC) variant has a form quite similar to the generalized K type, but these figurines are much less carefully modeled. The eyes and mouth are often executed with a single deep gouge made directly on the face with a squared implement.

There are two types from the Tehuacan Valley which are similar to some of the Type K figurines from Chalcatzingo. The Flat Punched Feature Heads (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970:Fig. 15) and the Early Ajalpan phase Spheri-

cal Punched Feature Heads (*ibid.*: Fig. 14) resemble some of the cruder K types recovered at Chalcatzingo.

A (22 specimens)

Type A figurines are characterized by a basically round face with the features rather crudely depicted. Few specimens show any attempt at fine modeling. The most diagnostic feature of the type is the eye form. The eyes are depicted by two ploughs into the face, sometimes with a punctuation between them to show the pupil. Vaillant (1930:120) said of this type: "Its definitive features are squat bodies . . . a broad round face with nose and mouth fillets sunk into a central groove. The eye is made usually by two ploughs with a central perforation. The headdress is simple and heavy."

The Typical Vaillant's Type A from Tres Zapotes (Weiant 1943:Pls. 10-12) actually bears only a general resemblance to A figurines from Chalcatzingo and central Mexico.

E (28 specimens)

As illustrated by Vaillant (1930:130), Type E is highly variable. Some of the specimens placed in Type E would fit as well in A or G. The specimens typed as E from the Chalcatzingo collection were placed in that type because they possess an eye form depicted by placing a single stroke through a fillet of clay. The eye fillets are not smoothed, and the majority of E figurines from Chalcatzingo are quite crude. According to Vaillant (1930:131), "The head is flat in back and the face is pinched forward into an almost bird-like prognathism." The quantity of this type at Chalcatzingo is too small to provide any meaningful distribution or temporal data.

MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery (1970: Fig. 54) identify a number of specimens at Tehuacan as Type E, and this identification appears to be reasonably well based. The Standing Ticoman Body (*ibid.*: Fig. 18) is the same type of body sometimes found associated with Type E heads.

F (22 specimens)

Type F may be a residual category of very crude pieces. The face is very prognathic with the features carelessly modeled. The head is often squashed straight onto the shoulders with no attempt to depict a neck. Vaillant's (1930:128) description of this type is that "the head is almost inhuman, so crudely portrayed are the features. The nose and mouth fillets occupy a large space on the highly convex and prognathic face, while the

brow recedes." The Chalcatzingo sample is too small to provide good data on distribution.

G (7 specimens)

The figurines typed as G from the Chalcatzingo collection were all characterized by an eye form executed by two slashes perpendicular to the long axis of the face. In some specimens, a third, shorter slash was placed between the first two, and in other cases a punctuation was used to depict the pupil. Vaillant (1930:132) described these figurines as follows: "The heads are narrow and pinched into a bird rather than a human face . . . The flat-backed, pointed-faced heads receive the most rudimentary delineation of features by incision."

G figurines are very rare in the Chalcatzingo assemblage. The Tehuacan Valley specimens identified as Type G (MacNeish, Peterson, and Flannery 1970: Fig. 82) are similar to specimens of this type in our sample.

Body Types

B-C, Ch, D, and E Body (Fig. 14.7; 3,448 specimens [1,989 B-C, 1,333 Ch, 108 D, 18 E])

In this study, headless body fragments have been treated separately and classified into four types independent of the head types. These are B-C, Ch, D, and E. Other body fragments were put into a residual category which is not a type. The B-C and Ch bodies are both associated with C and Ch figurines, but not necessarily respectively. Ch heads may be found on B-C bodies, and C heads (particularly C8's) occur on Ch bodies. The plan for both of these body types is the same: a pudgy figurine, usually standing. The distinction between B-C and Ch bodies is the heavy grooving around the joints associated with the latter type.

It is sometimes (but not always) possible to distinguish D bodies from B-C and Ch bodies. The classification is based on two distinctions: D bodies tend to be slightly squared-off, especially in the limbs, and they are frequently modeled on both sides, particularly in depicting the buttocks. Another distinction, which is less diagnostic but which can be helpful, is that D figurines tend to be wasp-waisted and flat-chested, while B-C and Ch figurines tend to be chubby and barrel-chested.

E bodies are distinguished (rather unsatisfactorily) by the following criteria: legs jutting off from the body at a sharp angle, a "gingerbread man" appearance,

and breasts shown as appliquéd dots. The classification of this type is tenuous, and there is no example from Chalcatzingo of a Type E head associated with any large part of its body.

The treatment of bodies in this chapter and in studies of comparative collections precludes any useful comparisons.

Miscellaneous Figurines

Some figurine heads were recovered which were not classifiable within the Vaillant typology or that set up for Chalcatzingo, and few of these bear similarities to published figurines from other Mesoamerican sites. As these are generally solitary pieces, they do not warrant new types. Many of these unique pieces are probably non-local, but thin-section analyses have not been carried out at this time to test this assumption.

Six fragmentary figurines which appear to be modeled after the seated personage of Monument 2 (Fig. 10.13d) were found during the excavations, and a complete figurine from Chalcatzingo, in the same style, occurs in a private collection (Fig. 27.4e). All the pieces depict a seated person, arms and legs stretched forward. Two clearly show the headdress projecting slightly forward, although it does not curve upward as does the horned headdress shown in Monument 2. These same two figurines also have suspension holes at the rear of the neck. Two of the fragments were recovered from T-4, two from PC Structure 2, and one each from T-25 and T-27.

Fragments of large, hollow figurines are rare in our sample. Among the several recovered are the crown of the head of a white-slipped figurine (Fig. 14.8a) presumably from an Amate phase baby-face figure although found in a Cantera phase context; the muzzle portion of a jaguar face from a Barranca phase context (Fig. 14.8b); and a white-slipped face with red hematite pigmentation on the ear and chin areas (Fig. 14.8c) from a Cantera phase provenience. There are also a few hollow Amate phase D-K figurines.

Although Late Formative, Classic, and Postclassic figurines are not dealt with in this chapter, a few deserve mention. Among the burial furniture of Late Formative double burial 117-118 were three identical figurines, persons with duck-bill masks gazing slightly upward (Fig. 8.17). Perhaps the most spectacular figurine seen during our research was discovered by one of the villagers, who

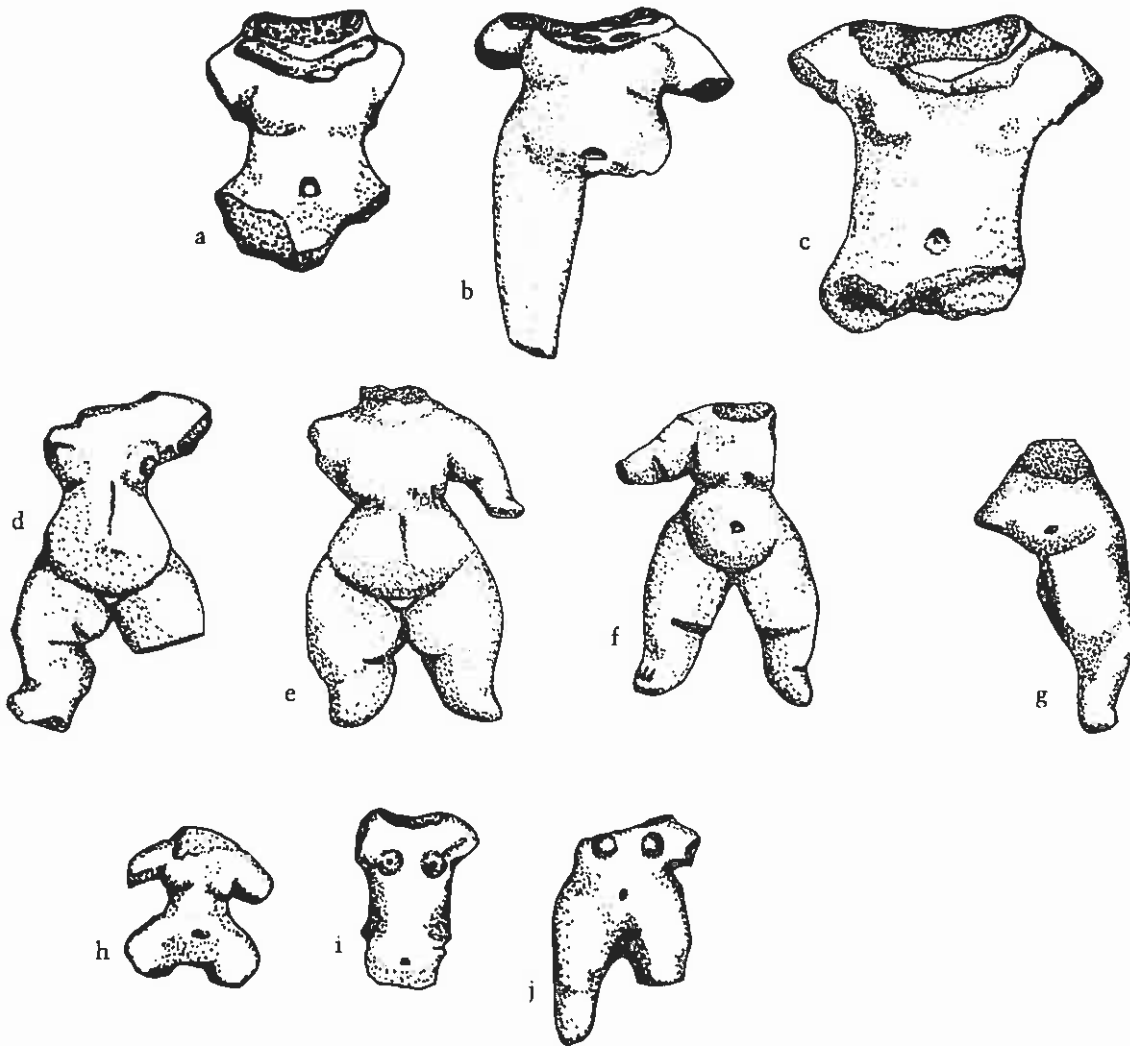


Figure 14.7. Figurine bodies: a–c, B-C; d–f, Ch1; g, D; h–j, E.

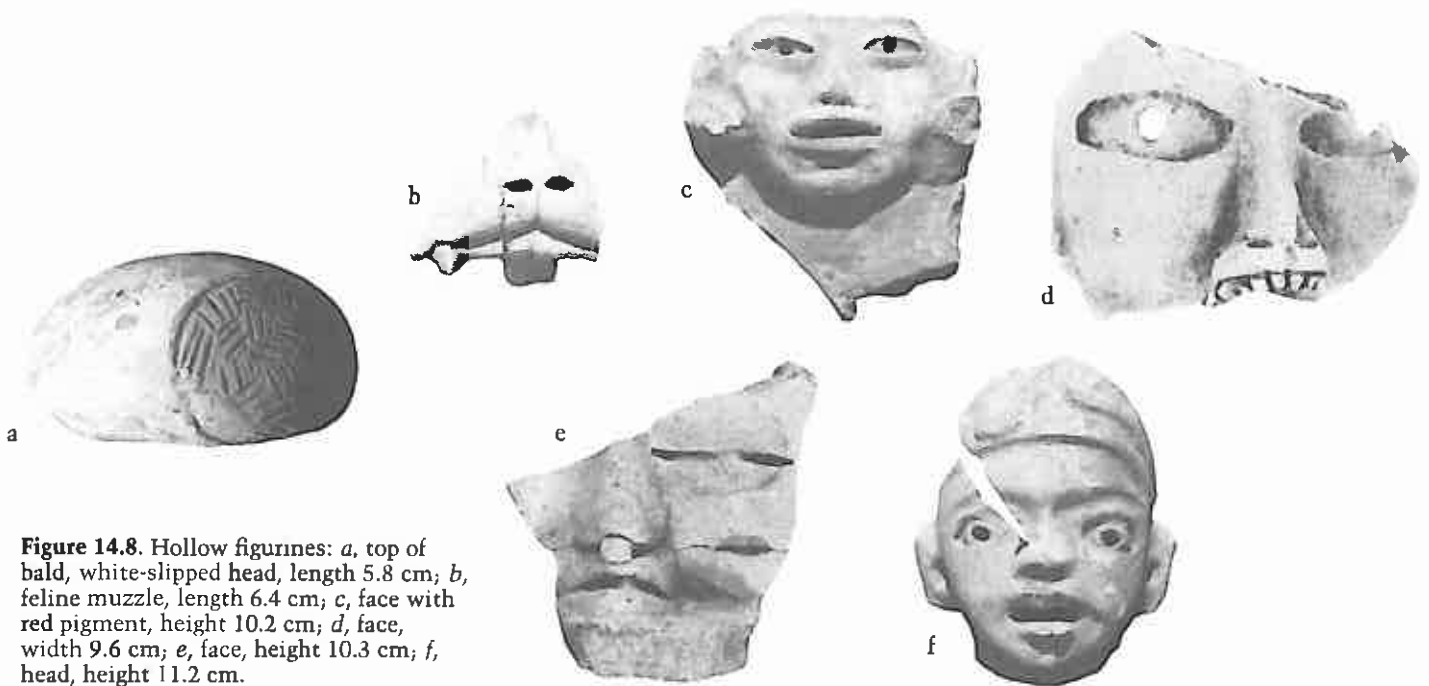


Figure 14.8. Hollow figurines: a, top of bald, white-slipped head, length 5.8 cm; b, feline muzzle, length 6.4 cm; c, face with red pigment, height 10.2 cm; d, face, width 9.6 cm; e, face, height 10.3 cm; f, head, height 11.2 cm.

stated it came from his backyard. However, because his *ejido* land includes the Plaza Central and T-3, it is possible that the piece actually came from this part of the site. This large, hollow figurine depicts a duality, the right side of the face being human while the left side is a jaguar. Stylistically, the human side of the face seems similar to some Teotihuacan art, suggesting that the figure may date to the Classic period. The figurine was donated to INAH.

SUMMARY OF DESIGN ATTRIBUTE ANALYSIS

While useful information has come from the whole piece typology, its limitations have proven particularly severe in the study of Formative figurines. This is largely the result of two binding constraints. When a whole piece typology is used, one is assuming that: (1) only the non-shared variability between types is interesting, and any variability that crosscuts types can be safely ignored; and (2) with whole piece typologies, there is no attempt to find isomorphic taxa, only types which somewhat resemble one another.

Thus, in order to deal with problems other than simple chronology, I felt that any further analysis should proceed at the attribute level where true isomorphisms can be expected to occur. Analyses at this level were performed (see Harlan 1975; 1979) using as the fundamental unit of observation the depiction of individual figurine parts. In this section I will briefly summarize the figurine attributes and discuss the implications of their observed variability at Chalcatzingo.

The 142 attribute classes used in the analysis were all based on non-unique occurrences in the assemblage. These attributes include various eye, mouth, nose, and hair forms; turban types, embellishments, and buttons; ear and neck ornaments; arm positions; pregnancy types; and hand, breast, navel, leg, and clothing forms. This last category consists of waistbands, pubic covers, knee pads, sandals, and various other clothing and ornament attributes. Body decoration and categories for items carried or formed with the figurine (such as a burden or a chair) were also included in the analysis. Each of the attribute classes is described in more detail in Appendix E.

The reasons for this attribute variability were probably many and varied,

but they are most likely associated with the functions of the figurines. Thus, variability may be expected to reflect the activities in which the figurines were used. Furthermore, changes in these activities through time are also expressed in the variability (see Harlan 1979).

Given that variability is primarily related to function in the broad sense, important sources of variability must be examined. These include tradition of manufacture, aesthetic considerations, and iconography, i.e., the need to convey meaning through symbols. Little is known of the learning tradition of figurine manufacture. However, this much can be said: (1) There are indications that figurines may have been manufactured by specialists. (2) Nearly all of the figurines found at Chalcatzingo seem to have been made in the same basic tradition. (3) There are indications that access to the specialized knowledge of figurine manufacture or perhaps to the figurines themselves changed through time (Harlan 1979).

The role of aesthetics in figurine manufacture is particularly difficult to pin down since this whole area is so poorly understood. There is no doubt that some figurine variability was generated in response to considerations of taste. What is hard to determine is how much patterning can be expected in that variability. If aesthetic considerations were purely idiosyncratic to the individual makers of figurines, then it is likely that most or all of the aesthetic variability has been drawn off into the unique design attributes. If aesthetic variability is patterned with respect to social groups or any other feature of the prehistoric community, then some part of the redundant variability must be imputed to it. At present, there is no theory of aesthetics which would permit a rational choice between these alternatives.

If the figurines functioned integrally with an ideological system, then constraints imposed by an iconography would be a major source of variability. Since this appears to me to be the most likely function of the figurines, more detailed consideration will be given to this area of variability. Here again, however, the discussion is hampered by a lack of theory.

If the figurines were used in ritual, they were symbolic of some aspect of the ideology behind that ritual and so needed to convey meaning. This view of figurine variability has implications for expected

patterning. Certain attributes should vary only within set limits, since a particular combination of symbols and depictions is required to insure that the figurine conveys its intended meaning. This combination may or may not correspond to the whole piece types set up by the archaeologist. While there is no way to specify the content of the prehistoric ideology or even to truly determine which of the attributes on the figurines carry meaning, the attributes themselves and their patterned distribution may provide some clues of how the informational system may have worked.

First, it would seem that some parts of the figurines carried the bulk of the informational load. In the Chalcatzingo collection, the main information bearers seem to be a series of features on and around the head. These parts appear to be key information carriers for two reasons: they are highly variable, yet there is a high degree of redundancy in the variability. Vaillant (1930) implicitly recognized this fact when he based his main typological distinctions on the figurines' heads.

Nevertheless, it does not seem that all of the features of the heads had an equal role in carrying information. The depictions of the turbans may have been among the most important. This is suggested by the large variety of ways in which the turbans were wrapped and in the consistent associations between wraps and ornamentation or embellishment. Ear ornaments seem another likely candidate for high symbolic content. While not nearly as variable as turban forms, their depictions are both consistent and patterned. Eye forms may have symbolic content, but here the ground is less sure. While there were eighteen different ways to show the eyes, and the occurrence of the variants is patterned archaeologically, a good deal of the variability takes place over time, and changing aesthetics or tradition of manufacture may have played a major role in this variability. Depictions of the nose, mouth, and other anatomical parts of the head seem least likely to carry iconic content. Here the differences between the forms are much less marked and distributional patterning much harder to perceive.

While the most highly variable part of any given figurine is generally its head, and all other body parts are much less variable, there may still be some iconic information below the figurine's neck.

The positions of the limbs may carry meaning, and the depiction of the thorax and abdomen sometimes distinguishes female figurines. It is interesting to note that none of the figurines in the Chalcatzingo collection were definitely male. They were either recognizably female (having developed breasts or obvious signs of pregnancy) or they were sexless. Male genitalia were never depicted, and it is impossible to say that the simple lines placed on some female figurines were intended to depict female genitalia. Sure depictions of genitalia are seen on some of Vaillant's specimens (1930: Pl. 26, middle row 8, 10, 11), but only on Type E figurines.

Other than turbans, clothing is rare in the Chalcatzingo figurine assemblage. A number of kinds of sandals are depicted, and the more common depictions are quite consistent. Garments on the body are very rare, and it may be that when used the figurines were dressed in perishable materials.

A rare but striking exception to the general nudity is the pads on the knees, hips, and thighs which may have been intended to depict equipment for the ball game. Aside from this one area, it is hard to assess the possible iconic content of the few garments which were depicted.

While it is possible to use variability and its redundancy to suggest which parts of the figurines carried iconic information, the content of the message cannot yet be decoded. Even this, however, may be possible at some future time. This interpretation will not come from archaeological material alone. The hope lies in an intensive comparative study of Formative cultures' ideologies and their material culture correlates.

In this discussion of figurine variability, attention must also be given to the level of integration of the prehistoric culture and its implications for the systems of figurine manufacture and distribution. In dealing with these two factors, much more support is available from archaeological data, both from Chalcatzingo and from other sites in the central highlands of Mexico.

It is not likely that the organization of society remained constant during the seven hundred years dealt with here (ca. 1200–500 BC). There is every indication that changes took place, and expectations concerning the figurines' variability and distribution must take account of this change. The relationship works both ways. If there is an expected

pattern of figurine variability assuming a particular level of social integration, the patterns of distribution observed in the archaeological record can be used to provide inferences about the level of social integration actually achieved during various periods.

This discussion will focus on two aspects of social organization which are particularly germane to the study of figurines: craft specialization and access to specialist-produced goods. These are at least partially independent of one another, and both have implications for expected variability and its patterned distribution.

Some degree of craft specialization can be found at almost any level of social integration. It begins to assume real importance, however, in what Morton Fried (1967) has called "ranked" societies, a level which Chalcatzingo had certainly attained by the Middle Formative. There is the possibility that the Chalcatzingo figurines (and other Formative figurines) were not produced by specialists. They may have been produced by each household unit for its own use. Although this is a likely situation for some other ceramic artifacts in Formative period culture, it does not seem applicable for figurines, assuming an "ideotechnic" (Binford 1962) function for them. Religious specialists are among the earliest to emerge in human societies and may be expected at the lowest levels of integration achieved by Formative societies. Although craft specialists have done the actual forming and firing, religious specialists would have been ultimately responsible for the iconic content. Further, while a few of the Chalcatzingo figurines appear crude and roughly made, the majority are remarkable for both the quality of the workmanship and the uniformity of that quality.

If the Chalcatzingo figurines were produced by specialists who were members of an egalitarian society, hereditary privilege would have had no influence on access to their products. Subject to need for the product, ability to compensate the specialist, and perhaps an achieved prerogative to use it, any member of an egalitarian society has equal access to the products of its specialists. Some factors might intervene to constrain the choice of an individual specialist by an individual consumer (such as kinship ties, a traditional relationship between one particular group and one specialist, or some similar mechanism), and these relation-

ships can be expected to create some clusters of variability in the archaeological record left by such a society. The range of variability, on the other hand, should be essentially consistent throughout the whole community (and thus over the entire archaeological site). In the particular case of Chalcatzingo, if the site were occupied by an egalitarian society, there might be clusters of design attributes associated with particular areas of the site, but there would be no reason to expect greater variability within any one of the clusters.

The pattern of equal variability would not hold if the specialists operated within a ranked or chiefdom level society. Here there are hereditary differences in status, and persons in the higher levels command greater access to the products of the specialists. There may even be a tendency for specialists to derive all or part of their subsistence from members of their society's upper levels.

In the archaeological remains of a ranked society, the expected pattern of figurine variability is different. In this case, not only will associations between particular groups and particular specialists create clusters of attributes, but there may also be consistent differences between the areas of the site associated with the elite and those associated with the non-elite. If the figurines were only toys or decorative items, we might expect that the only differences would be in quality and abundance. If the figurines were ideotechnic in function, there might be differences in diversity as well. Since this study assumes an ideotechnic function, this last point merits further discussion.

As indicated above, it is probably not correct to view the specialists responsible for figurine production in the same way that the craft specialists who produced pottery, stone tools, and other utilitarian items might be viewed. The key individual in determining figurine variability may have been a religious practitioner rather than a craft specialist. This would mean that the role of the religious practitioner in determining figurine variability was far more important than the role of the craft specialists who may have formed the artifacts, since any serious flaw in the iconographic content may have negated the efficacy of the figurine.

An implication of this line of reasoning is that the unequal availability of figurines reflects an unequal access to ritual.

It is for this reason that we might expect differential diversity in the design attributes placed on the figurines manufactured for the elite. Some of the design attributes would correspond to aspects of the iconography reserved for the elite. Since the elite must, by definition, have been in a minority in the society, we might also expect these reserved elements to be among the least frequent.

The results of the figurine attribute analysis (Harlan 1979) support many of these hypotheses and expectations. It is apparent that over a period of centuries figurine attributes began to cluster differently for the elite and non-elite areas of the site, a pattern "consistent with the assumption that the elite had developed as a distinct group that controlled the production and distribution of figurines" (ibid.:485). The quantity and diversity of figurines found in elite areas suggest that the elite had achieved greater access to the specialist producers. There is also a tendency for the rarest elements to occur most frequently in elite areas. These differences in attribute groupings most likely reflect the ideotechnic function of the figurines in a religious system dominated by the elite, who had access to a portion of the iconography which was not available to the non-elite.

It would seem that there were three foci of the figurine cult, each with its own particular aspect. First, there was the private ritual carried out in and around the elite residences which made use of figurines carrying a diverse range of design attributes (or iconographic elements). Second, there was the private ritual performed in or around the non-elite residences which made use of figurines with a limited range of iconographic elements. Finally, there was the ritual carried out in association with formal ceremonial features, like the altar on T-25. The figurines associated with this third activity also have a limited range of iconographic elements. This leads to the suggestion that this ritual was intended to serve the whole community.

In conclusion, the attribute analysis of the Chalcatzingo figurines suggests the following interpretation, which has implications for societal development in Mesoamerica as a whole: An elite emerged in the community and, among other things, achieved control of the religious system. Special features were constructed for elite-directed public ritual on behalf of the whole community. A portion of figurine variability (and by im-

plication an aspect of ritual) was reserved for elite use only.

This discussion has not been intended to argue any absolute superiority of design attribute analyses over whole piece typologies. Each has its advantages and drawbacks. The limitations of the design attribute analysis are most obvious in the comparative domain. The distribution of the design attributes within a single site can be highly informative, but the information produced by such analysis drops off sharply as more distant sites are included. When dealing with a Formative site like Chalcatzingo, one can presume that one deals with the archaeological remains left by members of the same community. Fluctuations in the frequencies of design attributes from one area of the site to another are not likely to result from differences in the opportunity for contact created by physical distance. This is not true when samples from geographically distant communities are included in the same analysis. Design attribute analysis and whole piece typology, then, are each important in the study of the Chalcatzingo figurines. The greater emphasis on design attribute analysis in this study stems from its greater utility in dealing with my main research problems.

RESUMEN DEL CAPÍTULO 14

Se analizaron con dos objetivos en mente, describir su variabilidad e investigar los patrones de la variabilidad al través del sitio, cerca de seis mil figurillas recuperadas en Chalcatzingo. La tipología descriptiva de pieza completa está basada en el trabajo de Vaillant en el Valle de México. Casi todos los tipos principales de figurillas del Formativo Temprano y Medio provenientes del Valle de México se encuentran también presentes en Chalcatzingo, en efecto las series D, K, y C. Además, existen en Chalcatzingo variantes de algunos de estos tipos para los cuales se produjeron nuevas designaciones: la Ch1, variedades 1 a 5, las cuales son contrapartes de las C1 a C5 de Vaillant; y la Ch2, la cual no parece corresponder a ninguno de los tipos de Vaillant; aun cuando queda claramente dentro de la misma tradición estilística que tienen las figurillas C y Ch1. Se crearon cuatro tipos de cuerpos para clasificar aquellas figurillas que no tenían cabeza.

La variabilidad de las figurillas refleja casi seguramente la función que tenían. Generalmente se presume que las figurillas fueron usadas en las actividades rituales, y que podrían proporcionar información iconográfica, en especial las características con relación a y alrededor de la cabeza. También pueden ser de alguna importancia simbólica las posiciones de las extremidades, el atuendo, indicaciones de embarazo, etc. El admitir que las figurillas tuvieran uso ritual y el que sus atributos pudieran tener conotación esotérica, implica que la manufactura y el uso de estos artefactos estaban probablemente bajo la dirección de especialistas quienes formaban parte del segmento elitico de la comunidad.