



Ancient Latin American Objects in the Archive

Selections from the George and Louise Patten Collection of Salem Hyde Cultural
Artifacts at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga



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An exhibition catalog authored by students enrolled in Professor Caroline “Olivia” M. Wolf’s Latin American Visual Culture from Ancient to Modern class in Spring 2020.

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A Collaborative Approach to Undergraduate Research

Caroline "Olivia" M. Wolf

Early in the Spring 2020 semester, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga students in my Ancient to Modern Latin American Visual Culture Art History course embarked upon an intensive first-hand visual analysis and research project that involved working directly with original artifacts from Ancient Latin America housed within the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Library's Special Collections. This unique opportunity and the publication of their findings were made possible thanks to the generous support and assistance of Special Collections Director Carolyn Runyon and her dedicated staff.

By examining the wide array of Pre-Columbian objects in the George and Louise Patten Salem Hyde Papers and Cultural Artifacts Collection, these upper division students formed small research groups dedicated to specific artifact types, such as *human figurines, animal figurines, tools and lithics, vessels, anthropomorphic ceramics, replicas, and sherds*. They carefully recorded their original observations of their selected objects of study in written field notes, photographs, and drawings. Later, they compared their initial observations with preliminary collection data developed independently by Archaeology students of Dr. Andrew Workinger, leading to further questions and insights surrounding these extraordinary pieces predominantly from pre-contact indigenous cultures of the Central and Intermediate regions of Latin America that today comprise Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia. Building upon their analysis, the Art History student research groups then re-examined their selected artifacts through analytical frameworks focused on *Gender and the Body, Color, Pattern and Materiality, Spirituality and the Object, Form and Function, and Identity and Representation*. In presenting their findings to their peers, students received feedback that allowed them to refine their analysis and develop the original individual and group catalog essays that comprise this exhibition publication. Their research sheds further light on the extraordinary value and diversity of the ancient artifacts of Latin America that uniquely form part of UTC's Special Collections, as well as the innovative power of interdisciplinary research and collaboration.

A Note on the Collection

Caroline "Olivia" M. Wolf

One of the rare archives in University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Special Collections to feature both primary source documents and an array of distinctive artifacts from the ancient Americas, the George and Louise Patten Collection of Salem Hyde Papers and Cultural Artifacts contains epistolary records, original objects, and modern replicas assembled by insurance businessman and amateur archeologist, Salem Hyde (1906-1969). This rich collection also contains slides of South and Central American archaeological sites as well as a variety of prehistoric artifacts from those regions, in addition to correspondence between Mr. Hyde and Emilio Estrada (1916-1961), a businessman and archaeologist from a distinguished family in the Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil whose research led to the founding of the Museo Víctor Emilio Estrada. Estrada's research site near Valdivia, Ecuador, revealed pottery that showed similarities to the Jomon pottery from Japan (3000-2000 BCE), which gave rise to a theory of transpacific migration during that time. Estrada was also well known for his 1962 publication, *Arqueología de Manabí Central*. UTC's unique collection also houses correspondence between Mr. Hyde and two of the leading archaeologists of the day, Drs. Betty Meggars and Clifford Evans, known to have collaborated closely with Estrada.

The comprehensive set of artifacts in this Special Collection reflect objects from the relatively understudied region in Latin America often referred to as the Intermediate area. Spanning from exquisitely modeled human figurines of Tumaco La Tolita and Jama Coaque cultures to the vibrant ceramics sherds of Panama, the collection presents an exciting opportunity for UTC professors and students to conduct original research and contribute to novel scholarship in fields such as Art History, Archeology, Anthropology and beyond, and beckons further examination.



Animal Figures

Caitlin Ballone, Katlynn Campbell, Aaliyah Garnett, and Abby Kandrach

The object set is animal figurines from the Pre-Columbian period and likely from the intermediate areas of Ecuador and Panama, based on Salem Hyde's collecting practice. The specific types of creatures range from two different depictions of monkeys or bat imagery, to a bird and a dog. Regarding the ideas of spirituality and the object, each of these pieces were possibly used to aid in rituals ranging from sacrifices, to offerings for the gods. This association with death is believed to be a popular theme involving funerary objects during the period. Each object is either complex in terms of being parts of a whole (incomplete pieces), or their uses are still being discovered.

The first figurine is shaped like the head of a monkey, or possibly a bat, and has carved fangs with large eyes with pointed ears. The monkey/bat figurine could have possibly been used as a sacrificial animal. However, the artifact could represent a mythical creature that would have represented more of a god-like image than an actual animal. It resembles the Mayan Howler Monkey god, which was a major deity in the Pre-Columbian era. The second object is of a bat head which is black and also has carved fangs with protruding eyes with an incised outline around the face and similar pointed ears. In regards to these characteristics it resembles the bats that have cultural relations to the pottery in Ecuador and the Intermediate area, as well as the Chimú people of Peru. They were connected with the dead in Ecuador and have similar characteristics to the objects used by cultures in La Tolita as pendant necklaces or false heads at funerary sites. Many of their art forms were adapted from the Moche culture which ranged from natural elements and animals to conceptual subjects like gods, demons, and sex. Scholars believe that the culture gave spiritual significance and communicated ideas with their art forms.

The third figurine, that we believe is the head of a hairless dog, appears red in color due to the use of polished red slip ware. Then the last figurine, we believe, is a ceramic bird-shaped whistle. The bird and dog figurines also led us to the belief that they could be used for functional use, as the two previous bat-like and monkey figurines were believed to have been used in funerary practices with the dead. The bird figurine is believed to be a whistle that was used for ceremonial purposes, as a signal for security purposes, or used by hunting parties as an animal call. Similar whistles that have been found are thought to be "death whistles", sounded before a sacrifice was to be given, emitting a haunting or an eerie tone. Traditionally, Manteño pottery is made from a black burnished design on greyware, though this artifact seems to be fully burnished with lines carved into the sides, possibly to depict wings. The hairless dog figurine head was said to represent a symbol for guiding the dead to the

underworld. It also often was used as a container for offerings of food or drink (when the whole body is intact). In addition, connections to the Dog god, Xolotl, may correlate with the form of the figurine. The object in the figurine's mouth could possibly resemble a corn cob, which presented the idea of corn, or maize. What may be a more accurate assumption of this figurine is the connection that it may have to Chiriqui pottery in the Panama and Ecuador region. Regarding general functions, this piece could've been part of a whistle, drum, rattle, or spindle whorls. Some sources conclude that a large portion of these pieces were placed directly from furnaces to tombs, implying a specific function for this piece to fit in funerary practices in connection with the other bat and monkey figurines.

In conclusion, the object set of animal figurines were possibly used to aid rituals ranging from sacrifice to offerings to gods. This association with death is believed to be a popular theme involving funerary objects during the period. Each object is either complex in terms of being parts of a whole (incomplete pieces), and their animal iconography and functions are still being examined.

Pre-Columbian Ceramic Figure

Caitlin Ballone



Pre-Columbian animal figurine shaped as the head of an animal. This artifact was made around 2100 BCE-1500 CE. The design of the head resembles a monkey/lemur or could potentially be a bat. The artifact has pointed ears at the top of the head and fangs showing. The figure is made from rock and has the appearance of a brown/grey color. The figurine only represents the head of the animal with two ears, a nose, and eyes and is cut off from the neck which appears to be purposeful. The back of the head has an inscribed "ET" on the back. This type of artifact could have possibly been used as a sacrificial animal. However, the artifact could represent a mythical creature that would have represented as more of a god-like image than an actual animal. It could resemble monkey deity in the Pre-Columbian era that was often seen wearing a mask around the mouth. However, the object has similar features to a bat and could represent that animal as well. This artifact is similar to the sacrum camelid bone used to make dog shaped figures. The bone was molded into the shape of a dog's head. The figures were made in the Pre-Columbian era as well around the prehistoric time of 800- 1800 BCE. It is unclear for sure why these animal shaped figures were made or if they are tied to a religious purpose.

Pre-Columbian Ceramic Monkey Figurine

Aaliyah Garnett



The animal figurine is of an object in the shape of a bat head which is black, has carved fangs, protruding eyes, an incised outline around the face along with pointed ears. In regards to these characteristics it resembles the bats that have cultural relations to the pottery in Ecuador and the Intermediate area as well as the Chimu people of Peru. Bats were considered a symbol of death in Ecuador so this piece could strongly be associated as a funerary object within this collection. Also it has similar characteristics which were used by cultures in La Tolita as pendant necklaces or false heads at funerary sites. When connecting these visuals to the potential of funerary use, it also has pottery forms in the Andean region with the Chimu people. This association with death is believed to be a popular form within their vessel usage, as a funerary object. A specific piece that was discussed in class that resembles the figurine is the stirrup spout from the Moche culture. Scholars believe that it gave significance and communicated spiritual ideas with their ceramics.

Pre-Columbian Ceramic Sherd

Abby Kandrach



I was given what we believe is the head of a hairless dog figurine. It was said to represent a symbol for guiding the dead to the underworld. It is made of clay, and receives its red coloring from the polished red slip ware used on it. In regards to spirituality in the object, this piece was often used as a container for ritual offerings of food or drink as well (when the whole body is intact). In addition, connections to the Dog god, Xolotl, may correlate



with the form of the figurine. The object in the figurine's mouth could possibly resemble a corn cob, which presented the idea of corn, or maize. What may be a more accurate assumption of this figurine is the connection that it may have to Chiriqui pottery in the Panama and Ecuador region. Regarding general functions, this piece could've been part of a whistle, drum, rattle, or spindle whorls. Some sources conclude that a large portion of these pieces were placed directly from furnaces to tombs, implying a specific function for this piece to fit in funerary practices. This piece is similar to "Lithograph of the Sacrum as illustrated by Mariano Bárcena, published in *Anales del Museo Nacional*, vol. 2 (1882)". Both pieces are presented as man-made work that has been altered to illustrate the appearance of an animal figure. The lithograph takes a very similar resemblance to that of the hairless dog head. They both have hollowed eye sockets, along with extended noses, and pointed ears.

Pre-Columbian Ceramic Bird-Shaped Whistle

Katlynn Campbell



This artifact is a Pre-Columbian ceramic bird-shaped whistle dated to 750-900 CE. Traditionally, Manteño pottery is made from a black burnished design on greyware, though this artifact seems to be fully burnished with lines carved into the sides, possibly to depict wings. There is a hole in the tail and a hole in the beak, and what looks to be another hole in the breast of the bird figurine, possibly used in order to create different tones. There are a few different ideas about what they were used for. Originally, researchers believed that they may have been toys, but a closer look at similar whistles shows that they may have been used during different ceremonies, and some believe that they were used by hunters to produce different animal calls. Similar whistles found throughout the Americas have been dubbed as “death whistles”: whistles that were blown before a sacrifice was given, which often emitted a haunting tone. It is not completely known how these whistles were made, though x-rays and broken whistles have shown that the inside of the whistles contained a series of hollow chambers, likely to allow the players to create a variety of sounds.



Anthropomorphic Ceramics

Rebekah Assid, Hailey Gentry, Peter Li, and Kaitlyn Seaborn

In Pre-Columbian Nuclear America, anthropomorphic imagery was prevalent across eras and crafts. Anthropomorphic figures possess features of animals and/or humans yet occupy a liminal space of interpretation. This particular set of artifacts presents anthropomorphic figures upon functional objects, such as vessels. These types of objects depict a sort of duality in marrying spiritual interpretations of the environment with everyday activities and needs.

Each of these examples can be interpreted as possessing imagery of living flora or fauna. Naturalistic and geometric depictions of animal faces such as turtles or jaguars and aspects of the environment such as shells appear on useful objects. These ceramics - or pieces of ceramics - may have been used in everyday or ritualistic actions that may have been referenced by the imagery itself.

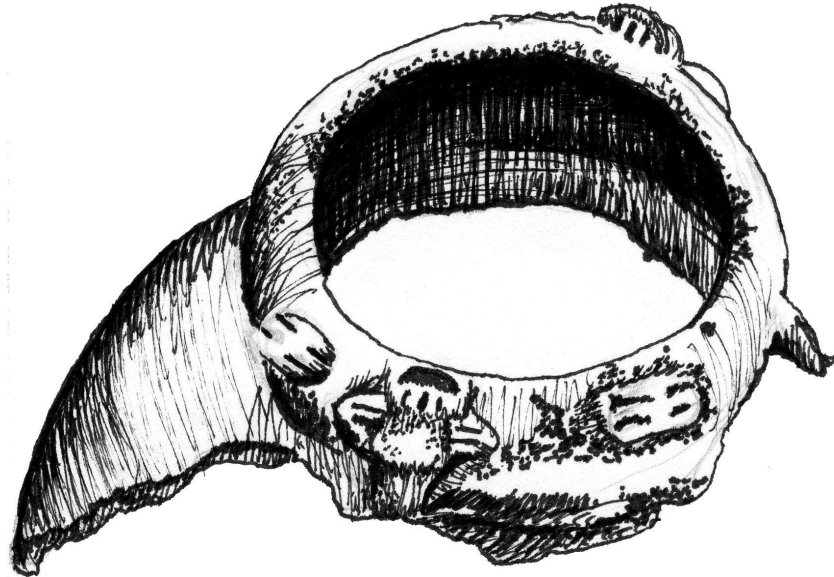
The first object is a sherd of a ceramic vessel possessing anthropomorphic motifs, possibly of a bat or a turtle. Being a sherd of a vessel, it would have originally functioned as a storage container for a substance. The next object may possibly be of an Amazonian or Mayan style, made from terra cotta ceramic, shaped like a human arm but missing the fingers, with hole markings on the wrist for a beaded bracelet, and a jaguar-like face between the hand and arm base connecting to a vase, urn, or possibly a plate. It may have been used for ritual or ceremonial purposes, reserved for an elite warrior or knight, or for a royal family member.

The third object is a small, tripod vessel with turtle or bird-like imagery. The two protruding heads and multiple emerging feathers or shell segments transform this object into more than just a container. Both the materials utilized as well as the artistic choices of representation suggest this to be an object of Chiriquí or Chorrera origin. The fourth object is a slightly larger vessel. This object contains two handles that appear to actually be some sort of reptilian head. This is another representation of an object incorporating the natural environment into mundane functionality. These containers become more than their function and attain statuses as visual representations of a culture.

Examples of ceramics in Nuclear America often show elements of anthropomorphism. The cultural idea of duality is readily expressed in these artifacts. By merging the observed environment with man-made, useful objects, early indigenous peoples of the Americas expressed their understanding of their link to the cosmos. Each functional object contains aspects of the environment it was produced in, inextricably linking the two. Such artifacts may reflect an ideology that forms (and figures) can contain multiple identities and uses.

Pre-Columbian Vessel Sherd

Hailey Gentry



This Pre-Columbian anthropomorphic ceramic was created anywhere from 2100 BCE- 1500 CE and is made of a brown, almost off-white clay. When created, it would have been a vessel, but today it appears as only a sherd of a broken off neck and body. Originally as a whole, the vessel would have functioned as a storage container for some type of substance: water, lime, coca, etc. Whether it was used ritualistically or spiritually is unknown. It is

speculated that the sherd came from the Chiriquí culture in Panama, where there were “...popular wares in the “Classical Chiriquí culture,” namely Armadillo-Terra Cotta or Bisquit ware, and Fish-Tripod-Handled ware. Tarrago Bisquit ware has a characteristically light buff homogeneous paste with a sandpapery surface texture and very thin vessel walls”.^[1] The vessel sherd being observed here is unglazed, like that of Tarrago Bisquit ware, and has very thin vessel walls. The Fish-Tripod-Handled ware and the sherd both possess anthropomorphic designs, in their own respects, which even further secures this idea that the sherd is from Panama. The surface of the anthropomorphic designs bears decorative marks that impose a distinct impression in the clay, created with the edge of a tool. Some Chiriquí wares possess this “technique... dentate rocker stamping” which is highly similar, if not exactly like the impressions along the surface of this sherd. Even further, the designs possess a distinct imagery of an animal,



possibly a turtle or a bat. The face at the top of the sherd resembles that of a species of bat native to the Panama area: the fruit bat, *Artibeus Jamaicensis*. The indigenous people may have mimicked this bat species specifically as a form of motifs on the vessel as a way of imagery. This fruit bat possesses distinct facial features, with grooves on the inside of their ears along with a specific shaped nose and wide, broad structured face that looks similar to that of the vessel. Below the face, there are little hands. On the back of the neck, the body of the bat is reflected across the rim of the sherd and it appears as the body and feet of the bat. On the bottom half of the sherd, there is a linear, freeform shape that could easily be deciphered as a bat flying.

Pre-Columbian Handle Sherd

Peter Li



Object #2 of the Anthropomorphic Ceramics of the Pre-Columbian culture is a possible handle feature of an Amazonian or Mayan style vase or urn. It is brown, possibly made of terra-cotta ceramic, shaped like a human arm but missing the fingers, with hole-markings on the wrist for a beaded bracelet, and a jaguar-like face figure between the hand and arm base connecting to the vase/urn. It could be a horse, dog, or coyote, but on closer analysis, it has a more jaguar face feature. It is similar to polychrome objects found from the Nicoya-Guanacaste region of Costa Rica (around 1200-1500 AD), like a Jaguar Tripod Vessel and a Papagayo Tripod Rattle Vessel, that had jaguar head motifs carved on the legs of the vessel. The jaguar, considered the most fearsome of predators, symbolize power, and is the symbol of the Mayan creation myth of the Jaguar Sun, and the Zapotec god, Tepeyollotl, controller of earthquakes. The object might be an arm for a large vase, urn, possibly a plate, for ritual or ceremonial purpose, reserved for an elite warrior or a royal family member, like a prince. There was a crack between the jaguar head and the wrist, probably was intentionally broken for ritual purposes or cracked during the years before its discovery.

Pre-Columbian Panamanian Ceramic Vessel with Decorated Applique Handles

Rebekah Assid



Globular and petite, this Pre-Columbian vessel artifact showcases naturalistic animal forms as well as geometric designs inherent to many Nuclear American cultures. Perched atop the remaining two of three bulbous feet (forming a tripod), the tiny ceramic container has thick walls formed into an orb-like shape. Two animalistic heads protrude from the object just below the container's opening.

This amorphous shape echoes the objects of many Formative Era peoples of the coastal Intermediate Area that had inherited the mother culture of Chorrera's imagery and style of craftsmanship such as the Chiriquí people. Globular ceramics atop a tripod base constituted a majority of common earthenware products produced by this culture. An example of such a bulbous object of a similar ceramic material originating from the Intermediate Area is the La Tolita Tumaco warrior or priest figures of modern Ecuador and Columbia. Protruding from the object's body are numerous pyramid shapes incised with pairs of nearly intersecting lines that would have likely contained painted color fields. Emerging from the top of the form beside an everted rim are two animal-like heads. These are composed of triangular faces, eyes of bored holes, and a beak-like mouth created with an incised line. Though the entire object can fit in the palm of a hand, the forms have great character and definition. Probably originally painted, the artifact may be made of grey ceramic or a similar kiln-fired material common to the Chiriquí gulf area, modern Panama.

The animal-like forms could represent bird or turtle heads; though the entire object, when viewed from above, mimics the shape of a turtle's body and shell. The protruding pyramids, as well as the geometrically incised lines upon them, evoke feathers or perhaps the sections of a turtle's shell. Clearly, the craftsman of this object



intended to represent natural elements of the environment around them in a manner meant to “reveal geometric order behind the vagaries of realistic nature.” Yet, the artifact remains a functional vessel, rendering it quintessentially

anthropomorphic. Too small for containing much, it was probably used for everyday spices or ritualistic consumables such as the lime-coca concoction integrally important to the shamans of the Intermediate Area and Panama. The object attains a dual status as an artistic representation of a culture’s experience of life and nature as well as being an essential object in daily or spiritual life. In this way, Formative Era peoples of the Intermediate Area brought their spiritual and naturalistic understanding of life into their everyday experience with functional objects.

Pre-Columbian Panamanian Tripod Vessel

Kaitlyn Seaborn



This object is categorized as an “Anthropomorphic Ceramic” and more specifically it resembles a vessel. This container consists of a reddish-brown clay and is no more than four or five inches tall. The culture that this piece can be associated with is Pre-Colombian and more specifically from the intermediate area, perhaps Panama. The shape of this object resembles a mug; it is very round. Examining more into the visual components of this piece there are two handles on this object. These two handles are obviously some sort of head possibly a reptilian head. There is a lot of imagery within other artworks during this time of snakes and animals that were tied to their worship. There is no indication of what this vessel use was but the most probable use was to hold liquids or foodstuffs and spices, they also may have been used in ritual especially due to their small size. Plates one and two in the article referenced also have animal heads as handles. These objects were said to be from Costa Rica and the animal portrayed on one is a “howler monkey with prominent fangs and forelimbs”. These animals may have been more specific to that region the same way that reptiles may have been indigenous to the area this item was produced. These have been found to be motifs to the deities or mythological animals that their cultures worshiped even the “Feathered Serpent” (“Intermediate Area Artifacts”). Another resemblance this vessel holds is to Chiriqui ceramics and some of the shards that were found and later analyzed by Olga Linares de Sapir. While this tiny vessel lacks markings it is hard to tie it to any specific culture but the overall shape fits into these regions and Sapir’s findings.



Human Figures

Morgan Craig, Mallory Crook, Riley Grisham, Chelsey Hall, Casper Kittle, and Silvey McGregor

The human figurines originated from Latin America with a majority from Ecuador. The figurines explore the way these ancient people considered the body and how gender affected their societies in the expression of headdresses, clothing, and the form. They also explore the case of genderlessness being portrayed within some of the pieces that we examined closely.

The objects in the collection are composed of broken pieces, fully rendered bodies, and heads. Most are figures in the round. They are all about palm-sized, carved from stone or modeled from natural clays. On some of the objects, there are remnants of cinnabar, a pigment used to give the object a red color. They are inconsistent in their style of rendering suggesting pieces from different cultures. Present in a lot of works from Ecuador some of these pieces are also hollowed out; indicative of the use of molds seen throughout this region as well. Gender is rendered uniquely throughout all of the pieces; all have varied examples of gender representation. Several of these pieces are presumably women, but males are also seen wearing elaborate headdresses and jewelry as a display of societal status. Other figurines are modeled in ways that communicate no obvious gender, particularly the figurines that only consist of a head (though it should be noted that, at one point, some of the head-only figurines probably were connected to bodies that have been lost). We see these figurines being depicted with different types of bodies and features— for example, no one figure has exactly the same nose as another or the same physical build. This is suggestive of a wide range of cultures that were engaged in creating human figurines. Gender is primarily communicated through attire and jewelry, and it assumed that these figures held high status in their cultures. That many figures in the collection had ornamentation as a marker of high status also reflects societal artistic values regarding gender and the body. These figurines echo the abstracted style typically found throughout Pre-Columbian figurines, communicating physical features in a simplistic but very effective manner. Thus, the bodies of the figurines are, again, all rendered differently due to the fact that some of these are partial figurines and aren't seen in full.

In conclusion, these figurines display an array of attributes and characteristics that communicate themes of the body and gender, ranging from their attire to their physical features. Despite the key compositional differences, the figurines do still share a sense of cohesion; the fact that many of the figures are hollow, for instance, echoes the traditional style of the Hollow babies produced by the Olmec in which a mold was used. This practice was common in Ecuador where many of the figurines were found. Overall, this collection of human figurines is an example of the simultaneous diversity and cohesion in the figurine-making tradition of Pre-Columbian cultures.

Pre-Columbian Esmeraldas Female Figurine

Riley Grisham



This Pre-Columbian object is a full-body carved stone representation of a female figure from Esmeraldas. This object dates to approximately 2100 BCE - 1500 CE. This figure most likely represents a woman of high status, as she is depicted as wearing a large headdress and accompanying collar. The woman is otherwise nude, and faces the viewer squarely, her palms outturned. The woman has a prominent, triangular nose and wide smile. There are a few damaged areas on this figure, most notably on the bottom left foot and over the right eye.

This figurine echoes the abstracted style typically found throughout Pre-Columbian figurines, communicating physical features in a simplistic but very effective manner. This work is actually quite similar to the Valdivia figurines (c. 3500 BC) which were also from the region that is now modern-day Ecuador. They share the object's full-bodied stance, although the Valdivia figures have their arms crossed. Additionally, several of them are also bare-chested and depicted with prominent breasts, very similar to this object from Esmeraldas. Perhaps the most striking similarity is the prominent headdresses, which echo the headdress worn by the Esmeraldas figurine. All of these objects speak to the way gender would have been denoted in works at the time, emphasizing physical traits in concert with elevated status.

Pre-Columbian Tomaco la Tolita Human Figurine

Morgan Craig



This figurine is part of the Pre-Columbian Latin American culture and is most likely made of stone or ceramics that have become dull since its origination. The ancient artifact has been painted with cinnabar or a kind of red pigment, but this quality has diminished over time. This feature is present in other Pre-Columbian figurines, including Patzcuaro of Mexico figurines whose faces are also painted with red pigment. The figurine is stylized, and the face is not expressive even though this was common among other Pre-Columbian figurines. Similar to the theme of gender and sexuality of the Olmecs of ancient Mexico, the gender of the Pre-Columbian figurine is androgynous, without gender specifications. For example, the Olmec “hollow baby” figurines, specifically Las Bocas of Puebla, Mexico, also had little to no indicators of gender. Like this, there is no clear representation of gender based on the qualities of the dress of the figurine. It is holding something reverently at the front of its chest, and it is wearing dress that most likely suggests ceremonial garb. The back of the figurine is also relatively flat, where the front is three-dimensional and contains contours of the face and body. The garment protruding from behind the figure is ornamented with a striped pattern, and the figure looks to be wearing either a special headdress or hairstyle. This is representative of a ceremony or kind of reverence, possibly used within burial ceremonies.

Pre-Columbian Human Head Figurine

Silvey McGregor



This human figurine artifact, found from the pre-Columbian period of Mesoamerica, is a hollow ceramic, as evident by the crack on the back that exposes the inside of it. It appears to be fired clay, except for a circular area around the middle of the piece where the red pigment is isolated. It takes on a spherical form, for the most part with carved contours to give the piece human facial features. It seems to be representative of a human head and is depicted in a sort of ceremonial garb featuring both a neck adornment and a headdress. It is possible that this was used to represent someone of importance within the community which is evident because of the particular adornments of the figure. According to the text, “Ancient Mesoamerica,” by Erica Begun, figurines of “the Patzcuaro style seem to occur throughout the chronology in the Late Patzcuaro Basin in Mexico, appearing during the Late Preclassic Period.” A similar feature is the “‘double eye’ or ‘coffee bean’ forms of eyes” in which the eyes are “composed of two lateral running slits in an oval-shaped eye.” According to Begun, both the headdresses and the ear spools are very common adornments of the Patzcuaro style which are both noted in the construction of the artifact found from the pre-Columbian period. The gender here can be thought of in a similar way to the Olmec representation of gender as non-specific, or androgynous. The features of this head are similar to that of the colossal head monument found in San Lorenzo, Veracruz, Mexico.

Pre-Columbian Guangala Human Head Figurine

Chelsey Hall



The object is representative of a head in the round. The shape is spherical with two $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick ears, the left ear has one ear ornamentation and the right ear has two ear ornaments. There is an indication that at one point both ears had representations of jewelry. The facial features have been simplified to straight lines for the eyes and mouth. The nose is three-dimensional in a narrow triangle form. There are remnants of cinnabar on the face suggesting that it was once painted. At the top of the head, there is a small hole in the center. There are signs on the bottom of the head that it may have broken off at the neck and been part of a larger piece. The head is hollow which suggests that there may have used a mold in production, this was common practice for ancient Ecuadorian figurines.

Without evidence of the body, it cannot be certain if there was a depiction of gender. There are sherds that have been found in Guangala with similar slit features that are not recorded with gender identifiers. Considering that these people would have lived in a gendered society, this object may suggest that it is a depiction of a shaman or warrior that would have been of the male gender. This conclusion can be drawn from the evidence of jewelry, lack of headdress, and the hierarchy of gender in the Guangala society. There are depictions of male priests and warriors from La Tolita in the Tumaco warrior or priest figures that have similar renderings of the ears and jewelry. However, the gender of this head can not be stated definitely. The argument of a shaman is further supported by the trace-like, somber expression based on the expressionless mouth. Shamans were privileged to cocoa-chewing rituals in which they would experience vivid hallucinations. Though it is not affirmative, this could explain the 'sleeping' expression.

However, it can not be emphasized enough that this research has been influenced by a Western perspective on this ancient culture. These are all educated assumptions on the identity and purpose of the object.

Pre-Columbian Human Head figurine

Casper Kittle



This partial figure, broken at the bust just below the breasts, depicts what, through the depiction of breasts, we can assume to be a female figure. She wears heavy ornamentation- ear and nose ornaments, and a large neck adornment. The heavy lidded eyes, known as ‘coffee-bean’ eyes, and large nose and nostrils, as well as the lack of texture in the hair, suggest the artist’s disinterest in conveying naturalism. The face is also larger, proportionally, than the body, suggesting that it is important through a hierarchy of scale. The figure is convex, with the curve of the figure perhaps related to the object’s initial purpose. The back of the figure is black and red, likely due to a coloring process. The figure is porous, and there are layers in where she has broken, so materially it is likely stone, or could be cast pottery/ ceramic, or “pox pottery.”

Previous research places its creation to be c. 2100-1500 BCE. The Valdivia figurines from the Archaic period suggest what could be early references to the style of this later female figurine; a lack of naturalism, emphasized eyes/ eyelids, and large noses. The stone and ceramic figures are rough, suggesting a lack of knowledge about refined surfaces/polish. The female figure depicted here is likely of high status, as we can tell from her ornamentation, with gender signified through breasts that have been carved and the jewelry that adorns the figure.

Pre-Columbian Jama Coaque Female Figurine

Mallory Crook



The figurine I chose was the Pre-Columbian Jama Coaque female figurine, which is dated during the Pre-Columbian period in the Tolitan and Ecuador area. The figurine is a non-freestanding sculpture with a wooden stand that was added later by perhaps archaeologists; it still illustrates that maybe this wasn't a piece that had the ability to stand on its own yet something that was carried around, idolized, and used in rituals. Considering the key theme of Gender and Body, we see the emphasis on the breasts and jewelry and lack of facial features which could be indicative of focusing solely on the body and wealth of these women and less on them being individuals. Comparing this to the Tolita-Temuco figurines from the Ecuadorian-Columbia ca. 300-BCE – 400 CE, one notes the lack of facial features and emphasis on jewelry-like aspects. They also have a lack of pigment seen from around this area, which could point towards fading and the use of the molds that is pointed out by John Scott in *Latin American Art Ancient to Modern* where he states, "The style of the coastal Ecuadorian figures can be as naturalistic as those of the Moche, and like them are often made in molds." This use of molds is also mirrored by Thomas Cummins looking at the case for continuity in the article "The Jama-Coaque mold-made figurines from coastal Ecuador." He states, "The Ecuadorian mold was almost exclusively employed in the creation of figurines, almost all of which were human figures." The mold process was used consistently for around 2,000 years and was most likely used into the colonial period. Little is known how these molds were made during this era, yet these molds were used as forming techniques and a way to create a consistent visual tradition for generations.



Sherds

McKenzie Cleveland, Kyle Cumberton, Nora Fernandez, Cameron Williams, and Hannah Wimberly Lowe

This catalog entry covers a collection of sherds, or remains of broken pieces of clay pottery, with the intent to explore similarities in color, pattern, and materiality within each object. Each sherd is dated to the Pre-Columbian period and is elaborately decorated with geometric patterns in black, cream, red, and in some pieces, purple. The vividity of the polychrome paint used on most of the sherds has remained incredibly intact considering the age of the artifacts. By using previous knowledge, and observation of pre-Columbian artifacts, the repeated patterns, embellishments, and linear designs may give an idea as to where these sherds originated from and what they were intended to be used for.

As described earlier, the sherds are broken clay pieces of a larger whole, though at least one of the objects within this set (thought to be a pedestal bowl) is nearly a whole piece. The fragmentation of each object varies, with some pieces (for example, the pedestal bowl) alluding to their exact use more clearly than others. The thickness of most of the sherds is roughly a centimeter, with each individual piece varying in surface area. The objects have been ambiguously dated to the Pre-Columbian era and were found throughout the Mesoamerican region. At present, no exact time periods or cultures have been identified with these pieces. Each piece displays a conglomerate of different geometric arrangements of line and shape, varying in color and style. These patterns are carefully crafted- the lines never vary in width, the colors remain within distinct sections (colors do not bleed into each other), each piece exhibiting no visible evidence of error during the painting process. As a whole, the once-complete vessels were clearly created by someone very skilled- an affirmation that these were important pieces, as paintings were possibly one of the highest expressions of art in the Pre-Columbian period.

In observation of the themes of color, pattern, and materiality, the most strikingly visible characteristic of this set is the color. As previously noted, the surfaces of the sherds are painted using polychrome techniques. Curiously, many of the sherds include the color purple, which is not commonly found on pre-Columbian pottery. A study by an assistant conservator, Kathryn Etre, examines a particular shade [of purple] found on Panamanian Pottery of the Coclé region; the style, and even the color, can be stylistically compared with Nazca works from around 500 AD. Etre points out, however, using the Munsell Color System that the purple in Nazca pottery is, in fact, a version of maroon, and contains warmer undertones, whereas the Coclé purple contains cooler grays. Nonetheless, without further examination, it cannot be definitively concluded what

culture the objects [that exhibit purple coloring] come from. In either culture, the meticulously accurate and stylized designs imply the possibility that these could have served ritual or shamanistic purposes to elite owners. Other post-classical objects or cultures with potential similarities/resemblances include an Incan chicha vessel from the city of Cusco, as well as certain pieces from Carchi Nariño, and Chibcha. While these similarities could be random, it is also a potential sign of trade, or stylistic influence between empires.

In structure, many of the sherds would've likely been hand-molded, or made using the coiling method, as the potter's wheel was unknown to this area. Though the pieces are now prone to potential damage, the consistent thickness and weight of each piece point to a once-strong and durable structural design.

In conclusion, the majority of assertions about the history of this collection of sherds can be gleaned by specifically analyzing and exploring the color, pattern, and in some cases (such as the pedestal bowl), what remains of the shape. The impressive endurance of the color, the exact carefulness of the pattern, and the consistency of the material informs present-day viewers of the advanced level of skill needed as is evident within the creation of these now broken pieces of pottery, while the stylization of the motifs and use of specific colors give potential hints as to what cultures and archeological areas each object hails from.

Pre-Columbian Sherd

Hannah Wimberly Lowe



This object, a Pre-Columbian sherd, was likely found in Panama, specifically in an area called the Province of Coclé. This assertion can be deduced from the similarities this object shares with other pottery pieces from this area. “Gran Coclé” is somewhat of an umbrella term that refers to an archaeological area within the Province of Coclé, where a number of cultures have been loosely identified by pottery style. The most notable indicator of this is the presence of purple slip, a color that began to appear on Panamanian pottery around 500 AD. Another primary indicator is the style of geometric patterning, which holds an uncanny resemblance to many other whole Coclé artifacts. Similar styles of patterning can be found within the Carchi Nariño, Chibcha, and Nazca cultures

Pre-Columbian Sherd

McKenzie Cleveland



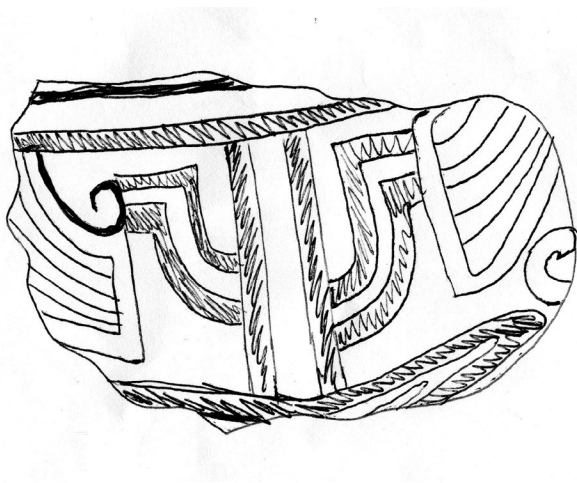
This artifact is dated to the Pre-Columbian period and likely originates from modern-day Panama but objects similar to this one have been traded throughout the region and have been found in areas as far away as Chichen Itza in Yucatán, Mexico. This frutero, or pedestal bowl, is notable for a strong structural design, which is evident because the object is able to stand despite missing large sections of the base and top. Despite its age, the bold red, black and cream polychrome colors painted on the frutero are still very elaborate and vivid. The geometric shapes and lines on the surface are created for the purpose of visual language. Some scholars believe the symmetrically opposing stylized lines represent birds or amphibian-like forms. This follows the belief of many Panamanians that the vital element of life force was essentially dualistic, inherent in the male and female aspect. To the Panamanians, these stylized designs would have brought to mind a shamanistic or mythic being. Fruterios with this type of vibrant pattern have been tied to Gran Coclé cultures based in Panama in the Pre-Columbian era. They too used polychrome pottery techniques with red, black, cream and signature purple color accents. Some researchers believe the decoration on the pottery may be inspired by the walls of a temple and reminiscent of dualistic beings and aspects.

Pre-Columbian Sherd

Cameron Williams



Pre-Columbian art encompasses the artifacts created by the indigenous peoples from the second millennium BC to the time of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, when the existing cultures were conquered by the Europeans. During this millennium, civilizations were able to develop their own distinctive artistic styles. The artifact I'm studying is a Pre-Columbian sherd, possibly deriving from a larger pottery vessel. This sherd



displays complex geometric patterns and lines that vary in width and length; orange, blue, and black pigments were used as well to add color to the piece. Because the potter's wheel was not invented yet, this clay sherd was most likely produced by hand or mould. I came across a piece of pottery from the city of Cuzco, the capital of the Inca empire, that resembles the sherd. Both unknown artists used similar combinations of dark, thick and thin lines as well as other consistent shapes to create distinct geometric patterns. The pottery from Cuzco was used to hold chicha, a fermented or unfermented drink; the term chicha means to "sour a drink."

Pre-Columbian Sherd

Nora Fernandez



Pre-Columbian, Central America, Panama, Gran Coclé culture, ca. 800 to 1000 CE polychrome pottery sherd featuring geometrical shapes. This brightly colored ceramic sherd is made with an array of colored slip and repeated patterns. This polychrome sherd appears to be part of a vessel potentially related to the Central America, Panama Coclé style, characterized by the quantity of colors used. Coclé artwork is representative of Panamanian polychromatic styles, in which pigments are baked onto artifacts to give them a variety of colors



such as white, black, brown, dark red, light red, and purple, sometimes all of them in a single piece. The Coclé painted zoomorphic and stylized designs onto their ceramic pieces, and their vessels included small bowls, elongated beakers, carafes, and plates with ring-shaped or pedestal bases. Some Coclé vessels are decorated with images of tortoises, birds, and snakes—sometimes snakes with feathers—while others include effigies with faces, humped backs, and masks. Another feature of Coclé decorative style is the use of black on white pigment, with motifs in the form of the letters Y, V, or T near the edges of vessels. Pottery vessels design similar to the ones on this sherd have cream and black/deep purple geometric motifs. Geometric design elements such as these were imbued with powerful symbolism, often relating to shamanism, although the cognitive intent of these has largely been forgotten or is no longer known. The most popular shapes among Coclé polychrome are shallow, flat trays, usually square, resting on

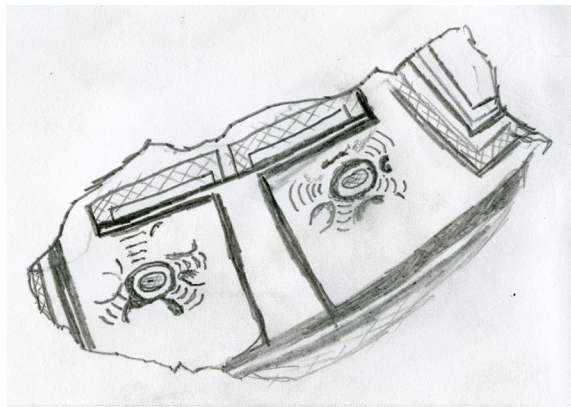
low ring stands; round slightly curved plates, also resting on low stands; jar with angled bodies; and spouted jars. The decorated area was dependent of the vessel form, and the characteristic panel shapes are often distorted to fit the particular space selected, although a balance and sense of proportion are almost always retained.

Pre-Columbian Sherd

Kyle Cumberton



My artifact was a clay potsherd painted with black and red geometric lines. The most interesting feature it has are two raised bumps with a hole on all four sides which appear to be a type of handle at first glance. Because of the absence of the pottery wheel in Mesoamerican society, each clay vessel was hand shaped arduously. The polychrome pottery appears to be the work of the post classical period for its visible construction leads with the



ideas of the time that art should not necessarily depict their gods but inspire awe that invokes the feeling of the god within the viewer. To further support this, the detail of the lines is too intricate to have been produced in the pottery of the classical period where geometric shapes appeared more hand painted and inexact. The post classical period was also named the Imperial period wherein large city centers began to evolve within South America blending the cultures and knowledge of multiple groups, leading to the production of these more intricate objects built with a less literal design philosophy.

Mayan pottery from the classical period often depicted a scene of gods and humans wherein the post-classical emphasized their technical design and paint application. While the absence of the pottery wheel seems an inhibitor, it led to forms of pottery being much more expressive within Mesoamerican culture for it wasn't held to the forms that could be constructed from a potter's wheel.



Vessels

Shaurie Bidot, Keturah Cole, and Amber McClane

Very often, it is because of enthusiastic collectors that we get to view vast collections such as the Salem Hyde Cultural Artifacts Collection. From this collection three vessels were carefully selected to be further documented and elaborated by investigative research and supported theory. The curated set consists of vessels from the Pre-Colombian region and Middle Pre-Classical time period. Through each vessel, the theme of Form and Function is explored, unveiling the purpose for each piece of pottery and reflecting on the cultural norms and beliefs.

Each vessel in the selected collection is handcrafted with red clay and painted with a monochromatic and bichrome color scheme of red, white and black. The recurring theme of these colors are due to the influences of neighboring cultures and regions. Each vessel was used for specific purposes whether it would have been ceremonial or for storing valuable herbs or plants. By studying each vessel, the spiritual practices and the significant areas of nature of each peoples is unveiled. Every vessel explores spirituality and the importance of some valuable productions of nature. The form of every piece is a mirror of the surrounding life and nature of which each culture has inhabited. Two of the vessels in this set strongly point to Coclé humanoid and zoomorphic forms. Coclé artists tended to embody only a portion of the animal world in their pieces, either the human form was often portrayed or a more metaphorical language using symbolic use of animal figures were used to communicate cultural values. Perhaps this is what these ancient mesoamerican artists were trying to convey and the form of their vessels very much informed the function. Also, the third piece which has a stronger connection to nature. For example, vessels from the Veraguas region of Central Panama, mimic the oceanic waves and animals of its tropical region. In the painted patterns one can identify the rolling waves of the sea and aquatic creatures that lurk throughout the shores. In both Pre-Colombian vessels, each pot imitates the natural colors of the region and geometric patterns that were influenced and inspired by the northern region of Mexico. In the middle pre-classical human vessel, the face is a portrait of human beings belonging to the region, which reflects how people are interpreted in the culture with form and proportions. The human vessel also tells a story of elitism and spirituality, further mirroring its societal beliefs. The human vessels were owned by citizens of the elite class, which reflects their lives and gives insight into how their daily lives were. The vessels are clear narrations of the owner's life.

In retrospect, vessels are not only ornamental objects, but containers of stories reflecting the lives and aspects of its people. Perhaps this is what these ancient Mesoamerican artists were trying to convey and the form of their vessels very much informed the function. One can comprehend the historical intimacy of each ritual and story through the patterns and shapes of every vessel belonging to its lands. In a way, pottery was the universal source of channeling through cultures and contacting the abstractions of spirituality and ceremonial traditions. Vessels can be seen through history as a symbol of preserving what is important to nature and people in regard to the gods.

Pre-Columbian Panamanian Polychromatic Vessel with Applique Handles

Shaurie Bidot



This pre-Colombian vessel originated from the Chiriquí Culture located in western Panama, which dates back from the time periods of 1500 B.C – 500 A.D. The petite vessel was created with red clay and painted with a white slip for the base coat and red and black slip for the pattern and details. The technique of using post-fire organic paint was often used on these vessels. In this technique, the paint is subjected to fire which then transforms itself into a black color. Beneath the circumference of the rim, is a geometric abstract pattern placed in the form of zigzags. The usage of pattern and parallel lines is consistent along with the monochromatic color scheme of red, white, and black. The overall shape is slightly asymmetrical and the horizontally oblong with subtle knob handles on each side.

It was common in the Chiriquí culture that vessels were made for ritual practices, urns, or to store precious herbs or sacred plants. Most ritualistic vessels were later destroyed after the ceremony came to an end. Most likely this vessel was used for storing herbs or sacred plants such as cocoa.

Pre-Columbian Ceramic Vessel with Human Motif

Keturah Cole



This middle preclassic vessel was constructed with red clay and white slip. It features a human motif in the neck with two eyes, a protruding nose, and a slit for a mouth. On the opposite side, there is a small handle extending from the neck. On both sides of the face, there are areas that extend from the body. These are most likely representations of shoulders to complete the humanness of the vessel. The presence of a face motif indicates that this may have been a vessel used as a funerary object. Anthropomorphic vessels were typically used for burial and ritual ceremonies. This vessel may have been used during a ceremony prior to burial of the deceased.



These types of vessels were very elaborate and ornate in nature, so this vessel may have had painted symbols and carvings that have faded and worn off over time. The face motif would have been more detailed because it would have been a representation of the person being buried. This vessel is similar to other vessels found in elite tombs in Chiapa de Corzo containing 35 vessels which means this may have been one of many that was buried with a human, most likely from an elite class.

Pre-Columbian Panamanian Ceramic Vessel with Applique Decoration

Amber McClane



This object is a vessel that is Pre-Columbian, and most likely from the Coclé culture, dated around 600-800 CE, and associated with archaic zoomorphic forms. Some elements possibly reference anthropomorphic forms. The vessel is terra cotta colored modeled clay, from Panama. The bottom of the vessel is spherical and bowl-shaped,



leading to a narrow spout placed off-center with an obliquely angled top body that ends at the short narrow neck before the slightly flared out spout. The rough terra cotta surface is pock-marked with a distinctive hole towards the front left of the vessel. The front portion also includes two small bumps or protrusions, these could be compared to other Coclé vessels that are referencing human eyes or possibly breasts. Perhaps this vessel held liquid or food, or grain. The narrower shape of the upper body and neck show the helpful containment of a liquid within its walls. This form is somewhat zoomorphic, and takes on an avian form with perhaps a connection

to a zoomorphic shape of a serpent element with simple line pattern that surrounds the vessel and separates the bowl-shaped bottom from the angled top body. This points to the symbolic use of the vessel, perhaps the form and design points to zoomorphic symbolism that could have communicated cultural values. This piece is similar to the Coclé vessels that may have been contained in a funerary rite of the elite.



Tools and Lithics

Jodi Koski, Sammy Mai, Cecily Salyer, Stephanie Swart, and Lauren Williamson

Within the set of artifacts categorized as tools and lithics, there are five Pre-Columbian objects, all crafted to perform a specific function, whether that purpose was symbolic, utilitarian, or ceremonial. The set includes a semi-lunar gold ornament, copper bells, a ceremonial axe, a projectile point, and a stone scraper.

Each artifact exhibits unique characteristics, yet all served as a Pre-Columbian tool used by either the elite for ceremonies or the common person for daily use. The gold lunar ring is u-shaped with a circular center and a small crescent opening on one side. It is about a half an inch thick with tapered ends. The bells are tri-partite, made of copper and feature a cross-hatch texture. The ceremonial axe is made of copper and has a unique curved shape. There is a hole at the bottom which was likely used to attach the tool to another object such as a handle. The projectile point, likely jasper, is an arrow-head shape with three sides. It appears to have been handcrafted through knapping. The stone has smooth edges and is small enough to fit in the palm of a hand.

Each of the objects serves a unique function. The gold lunar-shaped ring was most likely ornamental in function, serving as jewelry for a member of the elite. The bells were most likely used to adorn ceremonial animals or as musical instruments for rituals. The axe is likely an Ecuadorian votive axe that functioned as currency. The projectile point was likely a weapon or a tool, possibly utilized for hunting or crafting. The palm-sized stone was likely used for scraping as there is a sharpened edge on one side and would fit comfortably in the hand of its user.

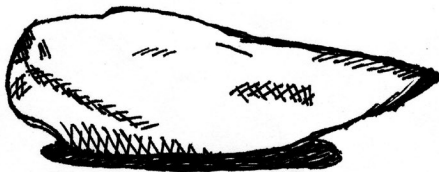
The objects in this category serve as tools, lithics, and ornaments in Pre-Columbian societies. The majority of these objects appear to be from the Intermediate region, particularly Panama and Ecuador, although some objects like the bells and tools are more difficult to place. In conclusion, the function of the gold ring was symbolic, the function of the bells and the axe was ceremonial, and the function of the projectile point and stone scraper was utilitarian.

Pre-Columbian Stone Scraper

Jodi Koski



This Pre-Colombian stone tool was likely made of basalt and was crafted to function as a scraper. The form is a smooth, oblong, palm-sized stone with one slightly sharpened edge. Some of the other edges are smoothed to a rounded shape and take a polished appearance. Other parts of the stone are more roughly ground, indicating that the tool was not completely finished being crafted. Artifacts bearing a similar resemblance to this have been found throughout Mesoamerica from Preclassic to Terminal Classic times, and are sometimes referred to as axe heads or “Celts”, as described by Marc Thompson, “I use the term “celt” in a generic sense to describe an ungrooved axe, adze, or hoe blade of siliceous stone or metal. In the Maya area these implements are petaloid, ovate or sub-rectangular in outline. The term is also applied to ground and polished greenstone artifacts of various sizes, shapes and functions.” Some functions include utilitarian purposes, others were ceremonial. Images of deities have been found on Olmec axe heads which are believed to have inspired the similarly formed and carved objects created by the Mezcala. These objects were crafted with valuable materials, and were not created to serve a utilitarian purpose.



Pre-Columbian Semilunar Copper Adornment

Lauren Williamson



This pre-Columbian artifact is u-shaped with a circular center and a small crescent opening on one side. It is about a half an inch thick with tapered ends. The artifact has a golden appearance, but the gold is chipped off in places revealing a dark brown interior, revealing that the object itself is not pure gold but has a golden overlay on



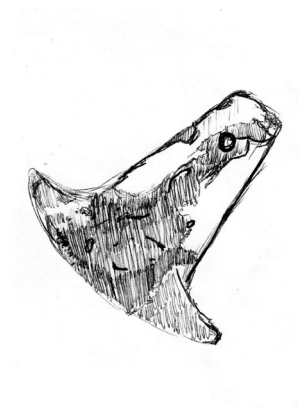
metal or stone. There is a green substance that speckles around 60% of the surface of the gold ring which suggests that the gold overlay is a gold and copper alloy or that the base material is some sort of metal alloy which has oxidized after exposure to the elements. The function of this artifact was likely ornamentation, possibly from the La Tolita culture of Ecuador where similar gold-platinum ornaments have been found or the Quimbaya culture of Colombia who used a gold alloy called tumbaga to craft objects characterized by “smoothly swelling globular forms”. The artifact was most likely an ornament that adorned a member of the elite on a garment or worn as a nose ring or earring. Many of the human-figure lime containers of the Quimbaya feature prominent nose rings and archeologists have identified many elaborate nose ornaments of the La Tolita culture. Gold was held in high regard by early pre-Columbian societies as spiritually or symbolically meaningful and would not have been used for a daily tool for the common layperson. Gold has been found within tombs, temples, and elite residences. In the neighboring culture Carichi-Nariño, due to its scarcity, gold was reserved for elites and is evidence of a stratified society. This scarcity, combined with gold’s malleable and lustrous quality, made it an important religious and social symbol for pre-Columbian cultures.

Pre-Columbian Ceremonial Axe

Sammy Mai



This “axe head” shaped object has a dark green pigment that seems to be constructed out of copper. The green pigment looks as if it has been scratched off at one point. One key element would be the hole on the end of the object that could have been used to attach to another object. Also, the shape is very unique because one side is curved which almost looks like a ceremonial knife or a digging tool. The curved edge appears to be very dull so if it was used to chop through objects, it would need to be very soft material like clay. While the edges are dull, some of them appear to be ragged or raised in comparison to the base. The axe is likely an Ecuadorian votive axe that functioned as currency. It is very clear that this piece falls into the tools and lithics category because of its shape. This object resembles the ceremonial axe from the Olmec in La Venta, Mexico because of the similarities in shape. Unlike the La Venta ceremonial axe, however, there is no face or details engraved into the ceremonial axe described in this catalog.



Pre-Columbian Copper Bells

Cecily Salyer



This object is a trio of bells that is linked together, end to end, and has a suspension loop at the top, making it about three inches long. It appears to be made of a copper alloy that has oxidized in places. The bottom pod is missing the ball inside to make it ring, and has a cross hatched marking on it. It is unclear whether the marking is a glyph or a simple decorative pattern. Its small size lends to the notion that it would have been strung with others, possibly on a costume textile or as an instrument.



Such artifacts have originated from a handful of pre-Columbian cultures in the Andes, including the Moche. Their artists could make elaborate pieces of jewelry with set stones and elements of shells for their leaders. Bells of different shapes were used in ceremonies. There were circular rattles for instruments, and warriors would wear a half circle shaped item called a coccyx as a loin protector. Bells could have adorned animals, which would have caused them to ring as they walked. They were made of gold and silver would have been included in pieces worn by the elite as well.

Pre-Columbian Projectile Point

Stephanie Swart



This pre-Columbian artifact resembles an arrow-head shape with three sides made of a brown stone, likely jasper, which varies in hues. The object has clearly been handcrafted through the process of knapping, as there are chipped indents covering the stone on all three sides. This is presumed to have been used as a weapon or a



tool, possibly utilized for hunting or crafting. Crafting involves “human manipulation of naturally available materials to change their shape for functional purposes.” The aesthetic of the resulting craft, even though it is not necessarily a work of art, was enjoyable for the craftsmen. Thus, making its function utilitarian. Due to its aerodynamic shape, it can be referred to as a projectile point that was meant to be thrown or attached to the end of a spear. The shine of the dark brown stone resembles the volcanic rock, obsidian. Since it is not black, it is most likely not obsidian, but in the case that it was obsidian, it would mean that this artifact originates from a geographic area containing volcanoes, such as Mexico. Many ancient cultures crafted tools and practiced rituals with obsidian. This artifact contains a similar form and function of the Native American Clovis points; the process in making the objects is similar but the crafting of the final shape differs.

Artifacts closely resembling this one have been discovered in areas of Mexico, along the Andes, and in Central America. Specifically, burial sites in Panama, north of the canal, were discovered to be containing objects identical to this artifact. These burial sites collapsed from columnar fracturing of the stone structures, scattering the contents held inside. They contained a variety of offerings, which included the projectile points. These previously mentioned regions crafted and utilized objects similar to this one, so it could reasonably be placed at a site in any of them.



Replicas

Heather Allen, Briana Fitch, Anna Lee, and Brcien Partin

The Diquis people of Costa Rica were advanced metalsmiths who made miniature humanoid figurines such as the replicas in this. The series consists of replicas of pendants or figurines, is small in size, and is generally made from a gold alloy. They have finely carved details, and each are wearing headdresses. Also when viewed with close attention, each figurine seems to have a distinct hand position to represent a common or recognizable act in their culture. The series utilizes normal South American advanced metalworking techniques that took Western archaeologists hundreds of years to reverse engineer . These not only prove that PreColumbian cultures had notable scientific advancements, but also show an attention to craft, which emphasizes that a lot of thought was poured into the figures.

The pieces are generally a representation of religious deities or high status members of society such as leaders, rulers, or religious figures which show what the Diquis people valued. The identity of Diquis culture was influenced by the cultures around them, more so the Andean regions of South America such as the Muisca and Quimbaya cultures in their styles and techniques than those of Mesoamerica . Due to the multiple influences of the Diquis culture, along with vague historical accounts, archeologists cannot definitively determine the exact identity of this culture . Gender ambiguity is one theme that is constant throughout the Diquis culture, especially in this series. One figurine with an animal head has enlarged breasts and a dress, which could be read as female. Though it is possible that this figure is not female because of differences between European and South American depictions and beliefs, it is still likely to be depicting a woman. Thus, this piece implies that women in Diquis culture, or at least in the thoughts of their gods, could have an equal or uplifted position in society. Similarly, the animal head on a human body raises questions of how people saw their own relationship to the figures represented. Other pieces not only have female breasts, but also have male genitalia which references the ambiguity that is seen throughout the Diquis culture.

The replica figures in this set each display a unique characteristic of the artistic style and cultural values of the Diquis culture of ancient Costa Rica. The figures show the influence of other cultures as well as the religious practices and deities of the people. They are each a visual representation of social status in their society, and are important to the understanding of everyday ancient Diquis culture.

Reproduction of a Human Figurine

Heather Allen



This piece is believed to be a pendant from the Diquis culture in Costa Rica. This modern replica of a pendant is made of a material to evoke the gold alloy from the actual figure. Because of its unique features like this extremely detailed headdress with spiral features one can inquire that this figure is a god deity or a ruler. It has broad shoulders which references power and strength. If paying close attention, the viewer can see that the figure has a form of sagging breasts and male genitalia which infers gender ambiguity. Usually when pieces are made like this, the culture, or artist rather, is making it to communicate power or it is used as a memorial piece. The Diquis culture has produced many different kinds of pieces from around 500 BC. They mainly worked in gold due to the fact that they were right next to the Osa Peninsula. Their culture emerged on the peninsula which is mostly surrounded by the Diquis river. This made the Osa Peninsula the perfect environment to find gold. However, they also had jade that would be imported from Mesoamerica. Pieces like sculptures, breastplates, pendants, and ceramics. Their human figurines would normally be holding something that would represent rank or occupation. In this figure specifically, it holds onto a chord that is wrapped around its waist. Others could have non-human features to depict special powers.

Reproduction of a Human Figurine

Briana Fitch



The replica that is being observed is of a small figurine or pendant. The piece is in the form of a flat silhouette with facial features and limbs with special features such as headdress, necklace, ear spools and no clothing. Also, there are detailed mark makings on the arms and legs of the figure. The figure is casted in what is believed to be a replication of tumbaga, which is a technique of casting with gold and copper alloy, due the figures rustic color. The figure can see as being male due the presence of genitalia. The figure can be seen as representing the status of those of higher power and authority or warriors due to the strong stance and headdress seen. Also, there is emphasis on how thick the figure's legs appear, and it's claw-like hands and feet which are other features that showcase the figure's status of power. The piece is a modern replica of an ancient Diquis object between 1960 through 1980 CE in Costa Rica. The Diquis culture emerged in 700 and ended around 1500, and the Diquis were known to live in southern Costa Rica. Diquis were very skilled in creating such elaborate goldsmith pendants by using tumbaga. The way the object is casted in gold alloy shows the status of people of rank in their culture. The broad shoulder stance of the male figure, hard-like facial features, and small scale of the statue is similar to figurine and pendant pieces from the culture. The Diquis culture were known to use their gold pendants and figurines as symbols of power and authority. Lastly, the use of the large flat headdress, necklace, and ear spools on the figure can be seen as emblems to show the status or rank of the figure.

Reproduction of a Human Figurine

Anna Lee



This object is a replica of an object from Diquis culture. This was made much later in history than the object it is intending to replicate. It is made from a bright, brassy, gold-painted metal alloy that is meant to represent actual gold or gold alloy. The figure, which is roughly 2 ½ inches wide and 4 ½ inches tall, has a human form and features and could be male by the possible presence of genitalia, but overall the gender is slightly ambiguous. What could be mistaken as genitalia could in fact be an imperfection with the mold on this particular replica. The head is made more prominent by a tall headdress with exaggerated spirals which emphasizes the ears, and the neck is adorned with a thick, banded necklace that is carved with finer details. The figure takes a wide stance, and its hands are extended in front of it in possibly a ritual or worshipful position. Strong influences are shown to Chibcha (or Muisca) culture by the visual relationship this replica holds with *Votive Offering of El Dorado on a Raft*, from Columbia by the Muisca people. Due to the Diquis culture being geographically located so closely to the Chibcha culture, one source suggests that there may have been contact between two cultures to lead to such visual influences. The rich, bright gold shows the importance and value that the figure played in its role as an offering as well as the status of the individual it could be representing. This shows how the Diquis culture related to the world around them and formed their own identity as a people while also being influenced by the surrounding peoples.

Reproduction of a Human Figurine

Brcien Partin



This piece is a small, mostly flat replica, about as long as an index finger, but it contains a lot of information. It depicts an anthropomorphic figure with an ornate headdress. It also has a band and a disproportionate chest that might gender it as female, though this may be a reach when considering that using that as a gender basis is a mostly Western assumption. There are no legs in this piece; instead the bottom is a half circle. This is likely a dress or other clothing of some other kind. The piece this replica is based on would have been made out of tumbaga, an alloy of gold and another metal. It took hundreds of years after the discovery of these pieces for Western culture to reverse engineer the dozens of complicated processes much of Precolumbian America had developed, particularly centered on the Oaxaca area.

The figure depicted has an elongated face, probably a reptile or bird. This reinforces belief in the supernatural and deities, and asks the question of what human's relationship with them are. The headdress has a few things that are characteristic of the Central and South American art. The abstract circles and line show a thought of abstract, aesthetic design. The small lines show a desire to look ornate.

This piece is in dialogue with the many depictions of hummingbird gods through Central America and the small golden idols typical from the time of the Toltec till the time of European contact. The circular shape also makes conversation with the semicircular shapes presented in tumis, which were not an element of Diquis culture but possibly known to them by trade. The anthropomorphic nature of many replicas raises questions of the ancient beliefs of mankind's relationship to the gods.

Student Research in Action Photo Essay

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga students in Dr. Olivia Wolf's Ancient to Modern Latin American Visual Culture upper division art history course engage in a hands-on observation of ancient artifacts of the Americas housed in the UTC Library's Special Collections. Photos are provided courtesy of Angela Foster, University Photographer.



Students prepare to observe their selected artifacts.



Ancient artifacts await observation.



Student researchers Hailey Gentry, Peter Li and Kaitlyn Seahorn capture images of their objects of study.



Special Collections Director Carolyn Runyon and Anthropology major Mallory Crook discuss an artifact in the Salem Hyde Special Collections.



Students Chelsey Hall, Keturah Cole and Shaurie Bidot-Martinez dive into their research.



Shaurie Bidot documents an ancient Latin American artifact.



Katlynn Campbell and Aaliyah Garnett discuss their artifacts.



Kaitlyn Seahorn, Rebecca Assid and Peter Li contemplate artifacts.



McKenzie Cleveland records field notes as Nora Fernandez and Dr. Wolf discuss artifacts.



Aaliyah Garnett, Katlynn Campbell, and Dr. Wolf discuss artifacts in the object set.

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