Characteristic Figurines
From Esmeraldas

BY
Edwin N. Ferdon, Jr.

Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Three typical figurines from Esmeraldas, Ecuador. Left: mother and child; middle and right: Alter ego types. About one-half size.
CHARACTERISTIC FIGURINES FROM ESMERALDAS
Edwin N. Ferdon, Jr.

Introduction

The Ecuadorean coastal province of Esmeraldas is potentially one of the richest archaeological fields in the country. Today, however, it is known more through its figurines and gold ornaments than through any of the other cultural items left by its ancient inhabitants. That the area remains virtually undeveloped is readily understood. The province is hot, wet, and heavily clothed in dense forest, and is a natural breeding ground for malaria and other tropical diseases.

Archaeological investigation has been limited to the actual coast, or beach, with surveys on the lower waters of the Tiaone and Verde rivers. Saville undertook extensive explorations in this region and conducted excavations at certain sites. His report on this work has never been published, so that these studies remain lost to archaeology. The publication of Uhle's subsequent explorations in Esmeraldas, including the site of La Tolita at the mouth of Rio Santiago, presents an idea of what may be expected. However, to date we are still dependent mainly upon local archaeological collections obtained from pot hunters and others who have picked up specimens where they have been washed from deposits by heavy rains or the action of tide and wave.

In the fall of 1941, I met Mr. Max Konanz of Guayaquil, owner of one of the finest collections of Esmeraldas archaeological material in Ecuador. He generously placed his entire collection at my disposal, allowing a rather thorough study to be made of the specimens. The present report deals with certain clay figurines in the Konanz museum that are found to have been repeated often enough by the ancient Esmeraldeños to warrant their study as characteristic types of this region. Most of Konanz' Esmeraldas figurines are catalogued as to province but not as to drainage or site. However, Uhle's published finds and the unpub-
lished specimens of the School of American Research from Esmeraldas serve to check this material to some extent.

**Esmeraldas Figurines in General**

The figurine cult may be said to have extended from Esmeraldas down the coast through Manabi and in lesser intensity to the western half of Guayas province. Figurines are also found in the prehistoric sites of the highlands and the middle Guayas basin but are few in number and appear to have been of minor importance. In fact, Esmeraldas seems to have outstripped even Manabi in both quantity and variety, especially in the area north of Cape San Francisco.

The art of figurine making in Esmeraldas does not seem to have been necessarily limited to religious or ritually conservative concepts of a cut pattern. Of the hundreds of figurines that have reached Ecuadorian collectors' shelves, a certain percentage represent purely the results of the creative urge of the primitive artist, controlled only by his mastery of the material. In this respect the ancient Esmeraldeños shared a common ground with the Chimú ceramic artists further south. A canoe being paddled by lightly clothed men is a typical Esmeraldas creative model drawn from local color. More common, however, are models of everyday people which apparently have no specific meaning but are merely representative of artistic creativeness. Old people, the young, and the middle aged are portrayed. In a few cases there is even an attempt to reproduce facial expressions.

A large collection of these figurines would present an excellent view of the dress and ornament of the time. Types of clothing and decoration are readily discernible on many specimens, even to textile patterns and facial painting. Ear pendants and earrings were used, a number of the latter often appearing on a single ear. Various nose ornaments are also depicted, varying from simple rings to semi-lunar pendants and fancy, winged types. Lip and cheek plugs were also in vogue, while a great variety of head-dresses are shown. Necklaces, bracelets, and anklets may also be observed, although usually the woman wears only a short wrap-around skirt, plain or decorated, and a turban-like head-dress. A short, geometrically cut mantle appears on a few female
figurines. Men apparently wore only a clout for everyday use, while a kilt was used for special occasions. A mantle, or short poncho, was also worn by men in certain instances, and decorated necklaces were customary. Male head-dresses are variable, some being quite elaborate. Sandals seem never to have been worn by either sex.

These figurines range from poorly developed, crudely modeled examples relying heavily upon applique for detail, to beautifully hand-modeled specimens. A certain lowering of standards, and a trend toward the making of type figures, came with the introduction of mass manufacture by the use of the mould. In certain figures a mould has been used to roughly cast the image, after which hand work was employed to touch up details. There are a number of hollow figurines, many made into whistles, in which the front has been cast and the back apparently built up by hand. Other mould-made images consist of flat, solid pieces of clay with the figure in relief on one side and the back plain. Often marks show where the clay was pressed into the mould.

Mould-made figurines made their appearance in the Valley of Mexico in Teotihuacan 3 times and in the Petan region of the Mayas in the Tepeu phase of Uaxactun Late 3 period, or about 900 A.D. Assuming that the mould-making technique spread southward from the Maya area, its arrival on the Ecuadorian coast must have been after 900 A.D. and possibly around 1000 or 1100 A.D. With the advent of the mould in Esmeraldas, new figurine types appeared, or else the earlier hand-modeled counterparts have not yet been found.

**Characteristic Esmeraldas Figurines**

Characteristic Esmeraldas figurines, ranging from about 1 to 7 inches in height, fit broadly into four groups: (1) human, (2) anthropomorphized figures, (3) animals, and (4) birds. The first, third, and fourth group are clear cut in having to do with persons in special attire or attitude and different types of animals and birds. The anthropomorphic group, however, is formed of fig-

3 Vaillant, 1941, p. 64.
4 Smith, 1940, p. 245.
Kroeber, 1940, Table X, pp. 484-485, and Table XI, pp. 488-489.
urines showing a combination of human and animal traits. Most of these include specimens in various phases of evolution from animal to human characterization. In these examples the complete series is described under group two, even though some of the figures in the series may be purely animal in nature.

The types of figurines named here does not form a complete list of those characteristic of the northern Ecuadorian coast. They merely represent those forms most often seen from this region and therefore most typical. Undoubtedly others will be found to exist as more material is gathered.

**Human Figurines**

*The thinker.* One of the first and simplest figurines to be described is tentatively referred to as "the thinker." This group is typified by a male or female seated figure whose right hand is held to the cheek, mouth, or chin as in contemplation. The left hand may recline in the lap or it may support the elbow of the right arm. The figure may be seated directly on the ground, in which case the women appear seated with legs outstretched before them, while the men have their legs bent up at the knees. A few examples are seated on cylinder stools.

None of these models present the aspect of high ceremony, dress and ornament usually being quite plain. Women are portrayed wearing a plain skirt. Some are further decorated with ear and nose ornaments and occasionally a necklace. Male figures, usually short and squat, may wear a breech clout and the usual turban-like head-dress. One example in the Konanz collection is more elaborate than the others as the figure wears a wide necklace with a central pendant. One brown clay specimen in the form of a whistle is decorated with green painted earrings.

These figures are encountered in both modeled and mould-made examples. Two mould-made figurines have been formed into whistles, a conical tube at the back forming the mouthpiece. A mould for the reproduction of a "thinker" type figure was found by Uhle at La Tolita. However, this type of figurine, though characteristic of the Esmeraldas area, is also found in other parts of the Americas where figurine making is common.

5 Uhle, 1927, Plate 22, fig. 5 and 5a.
Plate II. Human figurine types from Esmeraldas. Also, in bottom row, left: an owl; center: a hat
The prisoner. The figurine type here referred to as "the prisoner" consists of a nude male figure whose only ornamentation is a simple head-dress, ear and nose ornaments, and, in most cases, a necklace with pendant. Both arms of the man are bound tightly to his sides by means of what appears to be a wide belt of cloth which has been wrapped around the central part of his body and arms. In a few cases the cloth has been exchanged for a series of decorated fajas or cloth belts. (Plate II. top right.) The prisoner may appear in a standing position or reclining on his back.

The reclining figures are all placed upon solid rectangular clay plaques. Usually a log may be seen passing beneath the individual's neck and another beneath his knees. There are four unexplainable figures who recline on their backs with the usual logs beneath neck and knees but the significant binding cloth or belt is missing (Plate II. top middle). All of these prisoner plaques are of solid clay and appear to be mould-made. Two holes in each plaque, one on either side of the prisoner's head, have been made for suspension. Max Uhle has pictured a fragment of one of these plaque type prisoner figurines found by him at La Tolita.6

The upright prisoner figurines lack the rectangular clay plaques and the logs beneath neck and knees. However, the arms are still bound to the sides of the body by a wide belt. The School of American Research expedition collected an example of this type of figurine from La Tolita in 1940.7 In one of the Konanz figures a small hole at the back of the head has been made for suspension. All upright figures are of solid clay and appear to be mould-made. In both the upright and the reclining figures where paint still exists the decorative color is a solid red.

Twins. The twin figurine consists of a pair of young individuals standing side by side and often holding hands (Plate II. top left). Of the four figurines of this type in the Konanz collection three are girl twins, each wearing a simple skirt and a bead necklace. In the fourth case a girl is represented dressed as above while her companion is a boy wearing a breech clout. Uhle shows a similar pair found at La Tolita.8 In the Uhle specimen the

6 Ibid., Plate 21, fig. 5.
7 Cat. No. E-1-c 13/4
8 Uhle. 1927, plate 17.
hands are crossed, while in one example in the Konanz collection one girl's hand extends in front of the other's body while her companion twin appears to have her hand around the other's back. All of these figures are of solid clay with plain backs and are mould-made.

Fecundity plaque series. The fecundity plaque series is represented in the Konanz collection by a number of specimens. In essence, this is a portrayal of the drama of birth presented in a series of three figurines on clay plaques (Plate II, second row). That this is a rather standardized set of portrayals is clearly shown in that a number of examples of any one of the three plaques are found to be almost identical except for size.

The three portraits consist of (1) initial lovemaking, (2) cohabitation, and (3) mother and child or father and child. In the first the woman is lying on her back while the man, resting on his right side, lies on the woman's left. His hands reach across to her breast. The man is naked except for a necklace and ear plugs while the woman wears ear plugs and is in the act of removing her wrap-around skirt (Plate II, second row left). In the second portrait the woman has removed her skirt and the couple are in close embrace (Plate II, second row middle). The third picture presents either the man or woman holding a small child beside the left hip (Plate II, second row right). In one special plaque a man is shown with two children on his left. One of the children is larger than the other and probably, therefore, older.

All of these figures rest on solid clay rectangular plaques and are mould-made. Two holes in the upper part of each plaque have probably been made for suspension. Where paint exists it is either yellow or red. An example of the first of this series has been found at La Tolita by Uhle while the third type was recovered by the School of American Research in 1940 at the same site.

Mother and child. These figurines are hollow and have been worked in the round. They are considerably larger than any of the fecundity series. The figure consists of a simply dressed woman with plain skirt, wide necklace, a nose ornament, and perhaps bracelets. In one arm she holds a suckling child to either

9 Ibid., plate 17, fig. 4 and 5.
her right or left breast. One of the mother’s hands supports the child’s head while the other hand holds the opposite breast. The child lies horizontally, with one hand clutching the mother’s breast (cover plate, left).

The four Konanz figurines of this type show an interesting evolution of the child. In one example the child is clearly portrayed, while in the other three examples the baby becomes successively less distinct, until in the fourth specimen it has become merely a slightly raised curved line. Here it is possible to see that the Esmeraldas figurines in which a woman is shown holding her breasts may have evolved from this mother and child type of figurine. With the complete loss of the child portraiture the woman remains with one hand on the breast and the other, which formerly held the baby’s head, placed just below the breast. From this point it is a slight step in artistic balance to move the hand upward.

The mother and child figurines have been made by a combination of techniques, i.e., the fronts mould-made, and the backs crudely modeled. No painted decoration is indicated on the Konanz specimens. Two examples of this figurine type have been reported from La Tolita by Max Uhle.¹⁰

Sacrificial head. Three figurines in the Konanz collection, two from the region of San Lorenzo, consist of clay plaques upon which is moulded an Indian holding in front of him, in both hands, a sacrificed human head (Plate II, lower right). Nose ornaments, earrings, and a plain breech clout make up the Indian’s dress. In two of the examples no head-dress is shown, a raised line indicating the hair. A third specimen, somewhat broken around the head, indicates the presence of a more or less elaborate head-dress. One of the figures from San Lorenzo has a raised clay band or rim around its mouth, reminding one somewhat of the Mexican figurines wearing the flayed skin of a sacrificial victim.

The sacrificed head is held in front of the man with his hands either on each side of the head or one on top and the other below.

¹⁰ Ib., plate 11, figs. 3 and 4.
The presentation of this figure is interesting when one considers somewhat similar stone statues in Peru.\(^{11}\)

The three figurines are of solid clay and mould-made. A small hole punched through the top of the head of each figure was probably made for suspension. One figure has been painted red and yellow. Max Uhle has reproduced a weathered specimen of this type from La Tolita.\(^{12}\) Although he describes it as a woman, there is little doubt that it is a man, for the breech clout is clearly portrayed. The sacrificed head is weathered smooth in this example but the hands are in the same position as in certain of the more distinct Konanz specimens.

*Alter ego* figurines. There are a number of Esmeraldas figurines that bear the *alter ego* motif in the form of an elaborate mask head-dress. The Konanz collection contains five such figures, three of which have the same *alter ego* motif. A separate discussion of these various types is not attempted because an insufficient quantity of them is available for study.

Of the three similar specimens, only one is nearly complete, the others presenting only the head and part or all of the head-dress (cover plate, middle). These figurines are hollow, the front mould-made and the back rather plain and hand modeled. The man's well-formed face is decorated with a nose ornament and long tassel-like ear pendants. Around the forehead is a decorated band surmounted by a serpent's head which is encircled by a clay disk bearing seven small clay pellets, each with a hole punched in its center. Extending horizontally on either side of the head-dress, on a line slightly below the level of the serpent's head, is a crude modeled cone. These appear to be fastened to the forward part of two plates which extend parallel and straight back from the head-dress like folded wings. Above the serpent and its ornamental disk are two crown-like decorations standing side by side. Each is topped by a disk having punched clay pellets as ornamentation. Back of each disk is a modeled clay cone.

The most nearly complete specimen of the three examples shows the wearer of the head-dress to be seated rather than stand-

\(^{11}\) Tello. 1929, Fig. 104.
\(^{12}\) Uhle, 1927, Plate 10, fig. 3.
ing. A wide necklace and a pointed poncho-like garment fall from his shoulders. The two arms extend down in front where the hands grasp a horizontal rope-like bar in somewhat the same fashion as certain Maya figures (cover plate, right). Max Uhle unearthed a similar, though weathered, figurine of this nature at La Tolita.18

Another serpent head-dress differs somewhat from those above. The solid clay figures, broken except for the head and part of the head-dress, is partially mould-made and then retouched by hand. A buff slip covers the figure and green paint has been applied to the head-dress. The human face is rather stylized with half moon shaped eyes familiar to figurines in the Jama region. A nose ornament is indicated. A single step crown appears on the forehead, over which is an open mouthed serpent's head. Ear ornaments composed of a disk and tassel extend downward from each side of the serpent head. The clay just above and to one side of the serpent is broken away so that we do not know what the remainder of the head-dress looked like. A series of modeled clay plaques and squares back of the head-dress represent nothing more than a supporting framework.

The third alter ego motif in the Konanz collection is that of a jaguar or other member of the cat family. This figurine is hollow, made of grey clay, and is hand modeled. Only the head and part of the head-dress exists, the remainder having broken away. The Indian's head has been weathered but a nose ornament and two cheek plugs can still be made out as well as two large earrings, each accompanied by smaller rings fastened to the upper part of the ear. The head-dress consists of a jaguar's head fully the size of that of the wearer. The cat's mouth is open showing bared teeth.

The whistler. Turning from the full figure models, we shall describe two characteristic figurines which present only the human head. The first of these we have chosen to call "the whistler" because of the prevalent pursed lips which give the aspect of whistling.

This type is characterized by a long, slightly concave face

13 Ibid., plate 17, fig. 1.
Plate III. Anthropomorphic figurines showing, top row, bottom left and middle: a snouted animal. Bottom right: a kinkajou, a small Ecuadorian animal.
pointed at the chin and having either a dully pointed or a completely rounded head. The mouth, as previously stated, is pursed. A hole for suspension is often found at the top of the head. The Konanz museum contains nine of these specimens, three of which are actual whistles. Both modeled and moulded examples are to be found, the modeled specimens being rather crude.

All whistling heads are simple in decoration. In some cases two head lobs are indicated by incising or by a raised rim of clay, while a small lunar or disk shaped ornament decorates the nose. In specimens where ears are portrayed some form of ear plug is usually depicted. The nose is often shown extending to the point of almost touching the pursed lips. While illustrates a whistling type figurine from La Tolita, though the forehead bears a scroll that is usually found on monkey figures.14

The majority of these heads have concave backs, the face having been formed from a sheet of clay. However, three of the specimens have plain backs and have been formed into whistles, the elongated chin forming the mouthpiece.

Tattooed head. These hollow figurine heads, represented by four specimens in the Konanz collection, have a rather odd ape-like appearance. The face, simply made, shows an open mouth with lips extended in the manner of an ape. Around the mouth and extending up each cheek to the head is a band of incised decoration, giving the impression of tattooing. In two cases the head is plain, while in the other two a decoration is formed by two disk-like protuberances on the top of the head. These disks are slightly concave and have a hole in the center which connects with the hollow interior of the figure. At the back of the head a large oval hole gives access to the inside of the figurine. Three of the specimens have two holes made at their back for suspension, while the fourth may have once decorated the side of a vessel. A tattooed head figurine similar to the Konanz specimens has been found at La Tolita.15

14 Ibid., Plate 19, fig. 2.  
15 Ibid., Plate 9, fig. 12.
**Anthropomorphic Figurines**

*Snouted animal.* The snouted animal figure is presented in at least five different ways in the Konanz collection. None of these, however, presents the animal in his completely natural form, thus leaving us in doubt as to his identification.

The more natural presentation of this figure portrays the animal’s head which is placed upon an upright human body. The figure, mould-made, is ceremonially dressed with a fan head-dress, a decorated skirt or kilt, a wide, flat necklace from which a wide pendant hangs, and ribbon ear tassels (Plate III, top left). A long droplet tongue hangs out of the open mouth and extends down to the chest of the animal. An inverted V-shaped pair of raised parallel lines extend from the middle of the forehead down to either cheek and curve under the jaw. The arms, now partly broken, appear to have been held out at either side. Uhle found two examples of this form of the snouted animal at La Tolita.16 They differ slightly in that one lacks the head-dress and the other the droplet tongue.

The next and somewhat more stylized figure is seated and has been formed into a whistle. The mouth, as usual, is open and a long droplet tongue hangs down to the chest. The snouted nose and inverted V-line extending from the forehead is clearly presented. A fan head-dress is worn as are pendant type ear ornaments. The seated figure has its hands placed on its knees and is wearing a stylized breech clout (Plate III, top middle).

A third figure, consisting of only the upper half of a figurine, is still more stylized, although all of the main identifying characteristics are present. In this particular example the arms are made to extend across the chest where the hands hold the long droplet tongue (Plate III, top right).

This animal finally appears as a head mask mounted on a human body and as such seems to have taken on the characteristics of an alter ego. From the animal’s open mouth appears the head of a man in much the same way as in certain Maya figurines and stone carvings (Plate III, bottom left and middle). These figures may be hollow or solid, but all are mould-made. The animal mask presents the usual fan head-dress, ear pendants,

16 Ibid., plate 12, fig. 5, and plate 13, fig. 6.
and inverted V-line extending from forehead to jaw. A droplet tongue extends from the lower jaw just below the man’s head and drops down to the chest. Max Uhle illustrates two figures of this type that he found at La Tolita. 17

The Indian shown wearing this mask is usually dressed in a small shoulder poncho which extends to his waist. In some cases a decorated waist band is portrayed from which drops a wide, short breech clout. The arms, hands clenched, are extended downward and slightly away from the body. All figurines of this type have plain backs, some being flat and others round. Some have a hole drilled in the head-dress for suspension.

The kinkajou. The kinkajou is a small nocturnal animal related to the raccoon and found from Mexico to South America. Of the nine kinkajou specimens in the Konanz museum all but four are in the form of whistles, each having a conical tenon at the back base of the figure extending slightly downward to form both a support and a mouth piece.

The kinkajou figures, regardless of their use, are characterized by an elongated triangular face and nose with a raised or incised band running from the top center of the head down to the tip of the nose. Occasionally this band is broken by three incised, horizontal lines passing across the tip of the nose. The animal is almost always shown eating something, the bared teeth being indicated by incised lines. The ears, as with the real animal, are rounded, and extend outwards at the side of the head. Eyes are portrayed either as incised ovals or raised lozenges. In the former a small dot appears in the oval, while in the latter only the raised lozenges suffice for the eyes. Hands, especially in the whistle forms, are indicated by incised lines and are quite human in appearance. One or two incised lines around the wrist may indicate bracelets or the natural creases that are often found on the real animal.

In all of the whistle forms the kinkajou is seated upright on its haunches with knees bent and front paws brought together over the stomach, where they hold a small fruit (Plate III, bottom right). The fruit is crudely depicted by an oval or round ball of

17 Ibid., plate 3, fig. 3, and plate 5, fig. 4.
clay, which is usually covered by a mass of punched holes. In three of the whistle examples a tail curves up in a spiral between partially spread legs. In another example the tail has been modified to a raised ring, with a raised dot in its center, below which is a pendant-like object that probably represents a stylized loin cloth.

This same animal is also portrayed as a full standing figure, legs spaced well apart, hands and arms hanging down and away from the body. In the mouth is held a rope-like object which hangs down from either side of the jaw (Plate IV. top left). The head has been made decidedly larger than the body. This figurine type is of solid clay construction, with a flat back from which extends a downward curving clay cylinder, which probably represents the tail and serves as a support. The figure was not always made to stand on some surface, for a hole in the top of the head was probably made for suspension.

The kinkajou figure again appears with the same rope-like object in its mouth, but this time both hands hold the rope ends. The figure has taken on still more human attributes in the form of dress. It wears a poncho-like garment extending to the knees and the ears are decorated by pendants formed of a small disk and ribbon. Unlike the example described above, which is painted red, this type is found also covered with yellow paint. This figure has been found at La Tolita both by Uhle18 and the School of American Research.19

The kinkajou is also represented in another of his typical positions. Here the animal is curled up with the tail brought up between the hind legs and held by the front paws. This particular form of the animal is usually found on the flat disk faces of certain whistles. It always appears in the natural animal state without such human additions as ponchos, pendants, etc. It is usually painted red in these models.

The jaguar, or cat. The jaguar figure probably presents the greatest diversity in portrayal of any of the characteristic figurines of Esmeraldas. Its forms range from purely natural portrayals

18 Ibid., plate 14, fig. 5.
19 Cat. No. E-1-e 19/17.
to conventionalized, highly ornamented cat heads on human bodies. For the purpose of this report these feline figures may be divided into (1) the seated cat, (2) the standing cat, and (3) the "jumping jack" cat. These three divisions do not include all of the many forms the cat may take since the various combinations of conventionalization, modification, and humanization are infinite. However, the following examples will describe the most common and often repeated forms, which are the most typical portrayals of this feline model.

The seated cat. The Konanz collection contains a fine evolutionary group of seated cat figurines, ranging from natural to somewhat humanized types. The simplest and most natural figure in the collection (Plate IV, top right) is mould-made with a plain, crudely modeled back. A thick, crude tail curls out from the back base of the figurine and serves as a stand. The hind legs rest on the outside of the straight front legs. The face, now weathered, shows bared teeth from which a droplet tongue hangs. Round ears stick out from the side of the head. Another figure in the museum is similar to the above except in ears of human form. In this example the face has taken on a conventionalized aspect.

A further dressing up of the seated cat is portrayed in four specimens which differ from one another only in minor points. Each is decorated by long ribbon-like ear pendants which are further ornamented at their ends by tassels. The tongue, which drops from the bared teeth, is of droplet form and may curve slightly to the right or left. A small incised circle decorates the lobe of the tongue in two of the cases. It is interesting to note that of the four specimens of this cat type two have the hind feet resting on the outside of the front paws, while in the other two this position is reversed.

The final stage of this seated feline is represented in the collection by two examples. Here a clay ring, or head-dress, completely encircles the face of the cat (Plate IV, top middle). One of the specimens, besides wearing the head-dress, is further decorated by a pair of ear pendants. One example shows no tongue, while the other has the usual droplet type. In these two cases the cat's face almost appears to be laughing.
The standing cat. The standing cat figurine in its simplest form is represented in the Konanz collection by ten specimens exactly alike except for size, which ranges from small "charm" figures to ones six inches tall. All are of solid clay construction and mould-made. A hand modeled, straight, cylindrical tail extends diagonally downward from the back to form a stand.

These figures portray a naturalistic cat standing on its hind feet in the apparent act of delivering a speech (Plate IV, bottom left). The face is well developed with mouth open and tongue hanging out and down to the chest, where it may curve to right or left as with the seated cats. The right hand, or paw, is raised somewhat in the manner of taking an oath, while the left paw is brought across the body and rests on the chest. A few of these figures have been painted red. Uhle illustrates one of these figures found by him at La Tolita.20

From this simple naturalistic beginning, the standing cat suddenly changes to a fully humanized body surmounted by a cat's head upon which is worn a great fan head-dress (Plate IV, bottom right). This elaborate figurine type has been found at La Tolita by Uhle21 and the School of American Research.22

All of the anthropomorphized standing cats are of solid clay, mould-made, and have plain flat backs. Three of the figures in the Konanz collection are in the act of speech making, as in the former naturalistic type, though the left hand is not always placed on the chest but may drop to the side of the body. The great fan head-dresses that decorate these figures never appear to be absolutely identical, always differing in minor decorative points. However, two main forms appear, one being purely fan shaped, while the other, though presenting a fan-shaped center, has three inverted wedge shaped ornaments appended to the top and two sides of the head-dress. Ribbon and tassel ear pendants are usually shown along with an odd pendant that looks like a faja or belt. This is laid across the head with its ends extending down on both sides of the face. The lower half of these figures is usually quite plain although one example has a skirt or kilt.

20 Uhle, 1927, plate 12, fig. 7.
21 Ibid., plate 12, fig. 6. and plate 14 fig. 7.
22 Cat. No. E-1-e 13/5.
The jumping jack cat. The jumping jack cat is a figurine bearing a human body and a cat face which is surmounted by the usual fan head-dress. Ornamentation and dress, besides the head-dress, consists of a breech clout, a small disk-like ornament on the stomach, and a ribbon or faja band falling from either side of the head. The arms of this model are usually portrayed stretching straight out to the sides, while the legs are brought up to either side and bent at the knees as in the true manner of a jumping jack (Plate IV, bottom middle). Between the spread legs and immediately beneath the breech clout is a one-fourth inch hole that extends straight upward into the body for a distance of about one inch. The hole may be for the purpose of fastening the figurine to the end of a small standard. On the plain backs of some of the figures is a small handle or nubbin, which may have served as a guard when leaning the standard and its figurine against a wall or other object.

These figurines are of solid clay and are mould-made with plain backs. In a few cases the figures have been moulded on clay plaques. The jumping jack figure is represented in the Konanz museum by six specimens, while Uhle pictures at least three others from the site of La Tolita.23

*Crocodile—man figure.* This figurine type differs notably from the usual Esmeraldas anthropomorphic models. The figure presents the head and waist of a man, while the legs have been converted into the head of a crocodile. Some of these figures are modeled and others are mould-made. All are slightly concave with plain backs. The man's hands are usually shown resting on his stomach, though in one Konanz example he is playing the pan pipes. Decoration may consist of some sort of necklace and sometimes a few button-like objects extending down the front of the body. This type of figure is also found at La Tolita.24

*Animal Figurines*

*The monkey.* Monkey figurines are not as numerous as one might expect in a lowland jungle culture such as that of Esmeraldas. Monkey faces are depicted with heavy, overriding, super-

23 Uhle, 1927, plate 15, figs. 3, 5, and 6.
24 Ibid., plate 14, fig. 8.
Plate IV. Anthropomorphic figurines. Top row, left: kinkajou. The other figures are various types of jaguars or cats.
orbital ridges. Sometimes a heart-shaped, raised clay rim, or line, extending across the forehead and down over the upper cheeks is used to present the effect of ridges. Eyes are usually placed in deep sockets, while the lips are shown slightly extended. Around the corners of the mouth may be found a curved line or face wrinkle. A mould for the reproduction of a monkey figurine has been found at La Tolita by Uhle.25

These figures do not appear to be as standardized as some of the other figurines previously described. A greater play of fancy is shown by the various positions and decorations of the models. Two solid figurines, however, are consistent. These are mould-made, as are most of the others, and portray a standing figure with a monkey face. The arms are raised with the hands resting on top of the head. A necklace and simple breech clout are portrayed. A small disk ornaments the stomach. An applique tail has been fastened to the plain back of each figure.

Another simple monkey figure is of solid clay and shows the animal in a seated position with hands resting on his chest. The only decoration is a poorly portrayed set of ear pendants. One hollow, modeled monkey head broken from a figurine is also present in the Konanz collection. It is completely natural in its presentation.

The bat. The Konanz museum has two mould-made bat figurines of solid clay, flat and with plain backs. A broken clay stand appears to have extended from the head.

Each figure stands upright on two slightly separated legs. The arms are raised in a flying position. The large head with two big round eyes supports a tall head-dress down the center of which extends a wide serrated band that terminates at the bat’s nose. The mouth is shown slightly open, exhibiting sharp teeth. A long tongue drops from the mouth down over the chin and chest to the waist line. A curving shoulder garment also extends to the waist line. Webs of skin drop like giant wings from the extended arms and curve gently downward to connect with the outer edge of each leg. A decorative incised line outlines the bat’s face, shoulder garment, and webbed wings (Plate II, bottom center).

25 Ibid., plate 22, figs. 6 and 6a.
Bird Figurines

The Owl. Only one natural bird form, the owl, is found in sufficient number in Esmeraldas collections to warrant its description as a characteristic figurine type (Plate II, bottom left). The owl figures in the Konanz collection have been made by the mould, though modeling and retouching have been resorted to in certain instances.

The face of the owl figures are usually heart-shaped and outlined by either one or two raised lines. In a few cases, faces are oval though such do not seem to be typical. Eyes are portrayed as circles or ovals. These figurines are usually to be found in a seated position with wings either folded against the body or stretched out. Uhle has illustrated two of these figurines from La Tolita.26 In the Konanz specimens the majority of owls decorate whistles, though a few are of solid clay.

Although the owl never takes on any human physical traits, there is one figure in the collection in which this bird has taken on certain cat features, or vice versa. This particular mould-made figurine, which decorates a whistle, has the usual heart-shaped owl’s face with circular eyes and well defined beak. However, instead of the folded or raised wings, a pair of forelegs extend down in front. On either side of each forepaw can be made out the hind legs. This is the same position as one of the forms of the seated cat figures.

Double-headed bird. Although the owl represents the only characteristic natural bird form, it should be mentioned that a mythical double-headed bird figure does occur in Esmeraldas. The Konanz collection contains three such specimens. They are all small and hand modeled. The figure consists of a single bird body with one pair of wings and feet. However, two separate heads and necks protrude side by side from the single body. In two of the examples the bird is at rest, while in another the wings are spread as if for flight. The double-headed bird has been found as far north as Coast Rica and Chiriqui.27

26 Ibid., plate 16, fig. 3 and plate 19, fig. 10.
27 Lothrop, 1926, p. 375, Fig. 271c.
Holmes, 1888, p. 170. Fig. 255.

21
Although the Konanz museum contains a number of other bird forms, all are rather small and hand modeled. None appears in a uniform presentation or in any quantity sufficient to give each one a place as being clearly characteristic of the region. Parrots, wild turkeys, and pelicans can be identified and other birds with long beaks are present but unidentifiable.

A Final Note

With a limited knowledge of the content of Esmeraldas prehistoric cultures and their spacial and temporal factors, it is sufficient in this paper to have described at least some of the figurines characteristic of the area. In spite of the dearth of basic knowledge, a few interesting points may be observed.

Of the seventeen figurines described as characteristic of the region, all but six appear to have always been made with a mould. Of the six exceptions, only one, the double headed bird, has been consistently hand modeled, while the other five have been reproduced both by the mould and by modeling. The immediate indication is a close relationship between the figurine type invariably mould-made and the mould making process. It is possible that the concept of a type figurine arrived with the mould, since the majority of the figurines described have not been found in hand modeled form. However, such figurines as the "thinker," "whistler," "tattooed head," "monkey," and the "crocodile—man" which were made by both modeling and mould-making techniques may represent earlier characteristic types carried through into mould-making times. Since there is no way yet to prove that with the advent of the mould all hand modeling stopped, it is also possible that some of these modeled figurines are typical of one or another neighboring culture area into which the mould did not diffuse but the figurine type did.

Although the inference is that the majority of mould-made figurine types described arrived with the diffusion of the mould, it does not necessarily mean that certain of the religious beings represented were not already in the primitive Esmeraldas Pantheon. The jaguar, for example, is a well-known Andean deity of some sort and the occurrence of grotesque modeled jaguar
heads in Esmeraldas collections attests to the presence of at least this figure in earlier times.

Although the Konanz collection gives no clue to the provenience of the above figurines beyond the province in which they were found, we have a fair cross-check through Uhle's work and the collections of the School of American Research in this area. Thus, out of seventeen figurines described, all but two, the "bat" and the "double-headed bird," have been found in one or another of their variations at the site of La Tolita by Uhle and/or the School of American Research. It is indeed significant that none of these figurines have been encountered outside of La Tolita either by Uhle or the School's survey. It appears, then, that not only the mould but fifteen of these figurine types are associated with the culture characterized by the material from La Tolita. This includes such items as tripod bowls with hollow feet, ring based vessels, bowls on tall annular supports, double spout and bridge jugs, red and white painted pottery, three color negative ware, trough metates and simple manos, winged type axes, and gold and copper ornaments.28 The presence of three color negative decorated pottery places this site in Jijón y Caamaño's Tuncahuán period which he estimates to have lasted from 0 to 750 A.D.29 However, the mould, as already pointed out, first appeared in Mexico and the Maya country about 900 A.D. and probably was diffused southward from that region. Thus, its arrival at La Tolita must not have been earlier than 900 A.D. and was probably somewhat later. The date of 900 A.D. would, according to Jijón y Caamaño, place La Tolita in the time period of highland Elen Pata. The finding of Elen Pata sherds associated with Tuncahuán wares in the Cañar region by Collier and Murra30 first brought to light in a clear cut manner this view that three color negative ware, or Tuncahuán, and its variously associated cultural features must be placed further up the time scale than is allowed by Jijón y Caamaño.

28 A partial list of the type of material collected or observed at La Tolita in 1940 by the School of American Research.
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