Fragments of identity: A Study of Ceramic Figurines from the Terminal Formative Period in the Lower Río Verde Valley, Oaxaca, Mexico

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Fragments of identity: A Study of Ceramic Figurines from the Terminal Formative Period in the Lower Río Verde Valley, Oaxaca, MX.

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Abstract

This thesis is a descriptive study of 143 ceramic figurines from two different sites in the Coastal region of Oaxaca, Mexico, occupied during the Terminal Formative period (150BC-AD250). The site of Río Viejo operated as a large ceremonial center in the Lower Río Verde Valley during the Terminal Formative Period and attracted people from surrounding communities during large-scale rituals (Barber & Joyce 2015; Joyce 2016). The second site, Cerro de la Virgen, was a contemporary hilltop community in the region (Joyce et al. 2013). By studying ceramic figurines from two sites in this period, regional patterns can be discerned.

Studying the aesthetics, uses and manufacture methods of figurines from the two sites enhances understanding of the regional patterns and differences in the Lower Río Verde Valley during the Terminal Formative Period. Between the two sites, there are some overarching trends in iconography, like the ubiquity of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines, but each site has its own unique canon of figurines. Intensive examination of regional patterns of ceramic figurines within this period at the two sites will aide future archaeologists in establishing a regional figurine typology. A rigorous analysis of ceramic figurines from both sites will promote a clearer picture of their ritual value and meaning, and provide further insights into the ongoing questions of local and regional identities in the face of political interactions during the Terminal Formative Period (Joyce 2010).

The first chapter of this thesis provides a regional background of the Lower Río Verde Valley, followed by a methods section. Chapter two focuses on figurines from the site of Río Viejo, providing an artifact catalogue of the figurine sample from the site, a description of the different subtypes at the site, and concludes with a quantitative data section. Chapter three
follows the same structure as chapter two, but specifically addresses figurines from the site of Cerro de la Virgen. The fourth and final chapter is the conclusion where the findings in this study will be reviewed while comparing the figurine samples from each site. The final chapter ends with concluding statements about Terminal Formative Period figurines from the Lower Rio Verde Valley, followed by a postulation of the future implications of this work.
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Chapter 1: Background

Regional Background

Oaxaca is a modern state of Mexico and shares a southern border with the state of Chiapas and an eastern border with the state of Veracruz. Oaxaca was both and ecologically and culturally diverse area in Pre-Hispanic times and today it remains as one of the most environmentally and linguistically diverse places on earth. Oaxaca’s environments range from tropical beaches to temperate highlands and is home to numerous indigenous groups including...
the Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos (A. Joyce 2010). As Marcus Winter (1998, p. 13) points out, “Pre-Hispanic groups in Oaxaca did not develop in isolation: they exchanged raw materials, finished products, techniques, and ideas with neighboring groups, and they also participated in wider changes in Mesoamerica through trade and other interaction.” The history of Oaxaca has unfolded through multitudes of rich cultural interactions beginning in Pre-Hispanic times (Winter 1998; A. Joyce 2010).

This archaeological study is concentrated in on the Pacific coast of Oaxaca in the Mixteca de la Costa region, specifically in the Lower Río Verde Valley. The Lower Río Verde Valley is an ecologically diverse landscape focused on the floodplain of Río Verde as it descends to the Pacific Ocean (Joyce and Goman 2012; Joyce and Goman et. al. 2010). There is evidence of early peoples in the region, predating that of the archaeological record (Joyce and Goman 2012, p. 10). Regional occupation has since intensified and has continued into the contemporary (Joyce and Goman 2012, p. 10).

**Archaeology of Oaxaca**

The Formative period in Oaxaca is sub-divided into four temporal categories: Early Formative (1900-850 BC), Middle Formative (850-1400BC), Late Formative (400-150BC), and Terminal Formative (150BC-AD250). In the Late Formative (400-150BC) sedentary agricultural villages were established in the lower Río Verde with households involved in craft production including pottery and lithic manufacture (A. Joyce 2009; Winter 1998). By the Late Terminal Formative (100BC-AD250) sedentary villages were fully-established and saw the rise of urban
centers, e.g., Río Viejo in the Lower Río Verde Valley, signaling further social complexity in political and social interactions during this period (A. Joyce 2013; Joyce and Barber 2005).

The presence of ceramic figurines in the archaeological record begins in the Early Formative period (1900-850BC) in the lower Río Verde Valley. The appearance of ceramic figurines in this period suggests the establishment and organization of ritual practices. While figurines were introduced in the Early Formative, their use, production, and ritual importance persisted throughout the Pre-Hispanic period (Hepp & Joyce 2013; Winter 2005, p. 35).

Figurines are common at many Pre-Hispanic sites in the region, including Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen, which are the focus of this study.

The site of Río Viejo has undergone several years of large-scale excavations which began in the 1980’s (A. Joyce 1988, 2003, 2005, 2012, 2013). One of the more notable findings at Río Viejo includes the presence and construction of monumental architecture, including the site’s massive acropolis where numerous feasting middens from the Terminal Formative period have been discovered. Such findings have lead Joyce and Barber (2015) to interpret the acropolis at Río Viejo as the site’s civic-ceremonial center. Based on the above evidence, Río Viejo was a probable gathering place for surrounding communities to participate in large-scale rituals, such as feasting (Joyce & Barber 2015).

The site of Cerro de la Virgen is located on a hilltop near the modern town of San Felipe in the municipality of Tututepec. The site lies 12km east of Río Viejo (Joyce and Barber 2013). Excavations at Cerro de la Virgen were carried out in 2003 (Barber 2005), 2013, and 2016 (Joyce and Barber 2015). Occupation of the site dates from the Late to Terminal Formative Period (400BC-AD250), with possible sparse occupation continuing into the Early Classic (250AD-
500AD). The research that has been done at the site has mostly been centered on understanding Cerro de la Virgen’s relationship to other sites in the area, especially with the urban center of Río Viejo (A. Joyce 2013, Joyce & Barber 2015, Brzezinski et al. 2017).

In the early excavations of Cerro de la Virgen, Barber (2005) found a ball court, staircase, and an elite residence. In 2013, Brzezinski continued intensive excavation of terrace 10, adjacent to the elite residence, and found an ornate cache (Brzezinski et al. 2017). Artifacts associated with this cache included five lithic artifacts, a figurine, two miniature table altars, and a broken stone mask depicting the rain deity (Brzezinski et al. 2017). Recent findings at the site (2016) have exposed more public spaces and a possible residential area in the lower tier of Complex E (Brzezinski forthcoming). Another intriguing find at the site is the multitudes of ceramic vessels that have been deposited as offerings, often accompanied by thin vertical lithic slabs; this find is unique to the site of Cerro de la Virgen (Brzezinski et al. 2017).

**Figurines in Mesoamerica**

Figurine studies in Mesoamerica cover a diversity of regions, cultures, and rituals. Many researchers have been interested in figurines because they are a versatile medium of social inscription (R. Joyce 2003, 2005). Analytical studies of Mesoamerican figurines have often been focused on tracing cultural interactions through iconographic trends and production techniques (Rosenswieg 2010, p. 4-6). By studying patterns in iconography, distribution, and manufacture of figurines, archaeologists can begin to unveil the many matrices of social interaction in which the objects participated. Identifying such patterns can help archaeologists draw perimeters
around the consistencies and/or differences in the use and value of figurines in different communities.

Ceramic figurines first appeared in the archaeological record of Oaxaca, in the Early Formative period (1900-850BC) (A. Joyce 2010, p. 79). Figurines were made in a variety of media, e.g., rubber, corn dough, paper, stone, wood, and other organic matter, like plant fibers (Hepp & Joyce 2013, 265). One reason that ceramic figurines have been so heavily studied in Mesoamerica is due to their stylized iconography, strong ties to religious and social rituals, and because of their longevity and preservation in the archaeological record (R. Joyce 2005; Ange and Pirtou 2016; Lesure 2014).

Early research on figurines was largely concerned with establishing regional typologies and did so citing iconographic and technological traits from different sites. By creating a typology of figurines researchers hoped to better illustrate inter-regional networks to investigate political economies (R. Joyce 2003). Functionalism was a guiding theory in the early research on Mesoamerican figurines. Consequentially, early studies of figurines with a functionalist approach largely ignored individuals’ relationship with such artifacts, ascribed figurines to only having served a single-use, ignored intra-cultural differences, and assumed culture and social meaning as static (R. Joyce 2003).

Contemporary investigations of figurines have shifted away from functionalist perspectives towards achieving a better understanding of the social meanings and uses of figurines. Recent figurine studies have also made efforts to incorporate the role of people rather than maintaining a rigid focus on figurine ‘function’. In the second-half of the 20th century a wave of theories emerged that were concerned with different aspects of socio-
cultural identity, most notably, feminist theory (R.Joyce 2003). With the emergence of post-processualism in the late 20th century, an interest in studies of gender and identity have continued to surge in archaeology (Lesure 2011).

Analyses of ceramic figurines focus mainly on their morphology, iconography, and ornamentation. Such characteristics of figurines have addressed questions about social identity and interaction networks (Marcus 1998; Halperin 2014). Researchers like Rosemary Joyce, Joyce Marcus, and Christina Halperin have drawn parallels between political shifts and community identity through figurines. Lesure (2002, p. 7) explicitly mentions that, “morphological, iconographic, or any differences between figurines spatially and temporally can also reveal much about shifts and transitions in cultures.”

The manufacture of figurines in Mesoamerica was a deeply intimate process (R. Joyce 2003). Marcus (1998) suggests that the process of figurine production was just as meaningful as their ritual value. Quarrying clay sources allowed for individuals’ education on the intimate nature of clay, which carried over into their craft knowledge. Working in a clay medium was another avenue through which individuals could become more intimately engaged with the craft (e.g., working with one’s own hands and having creative autonomy). Through an examination of the operational chain of figurine production in ancient Oaxaca, it is apparent that different people of various skill levels had crafted figurines (Hepp 2007, p. 101). Some figurines are more crude and were likely made by adolescents or apprentices who were training in the crafting of clay figurines (R. Joyce 2003; Marcus 1998).

Identity was ascribed to clay figurines ritually. Hepp and Joyce (2013, p. 268-269) argue that the distinct ritual uses of figurines in Formative period Oaxaca contributed to forming a
Some Formative period figurines were crafted with the absence of intricate facial features, which was likely a purposeful stylistic choice. Hepp and Joyce (2013, p. 271) posit that, anthropomorphic figurines with ambiguous characteristics may have been spaces onto which identity could be openly ascribed through ritual and ornamentation (e.g., accoutrements). Figurines also provided a medium that ancestors/deities could be called forth onto (Marcus 1998; Blomster 2013, 2011). Some figurines are even thought to be representations of ancestors. Ancestors were actively involved in the lives of their living relatives especially through ritual contact (Blomster 2011). For example, Blomster cites ethnographic evidence of the celebration non-living ancestors during Dia de los Muertos (a holiday celebrated throughout Mexico) as a reference for cultural relationships between the living and the dead.

Formative period Mesoamerican figurine use, production, and meaning are main topics of academic interest (Lesure 2011). Archaeological contexts have unearthed many figurines and figurine fragments in domestic contexts (domestic midden, dooryard, etc.) and in burials. The emplacement of clay figurines in women’s burials in Pre-Hispanic Oaxaca suggests an intimate connection between females and figurines (Marcus 1998; R. Joyce 2003). Figurines also commonly depict females, which Joyce Marcus argues is another line of evidence for women as manufacturers of figurines (1998). However, Richard Lesure (2002, 2011) is hesitant to interpret iconographic features as being explicit characteristics of gender. Following Lesure’s critique, although an important contribution in figurine studies, Joyce Marcus’ work on Mesoamerican figurines all too easily subscribes to a narrow gender dichotomy that is pervasive in Western culture but not others.
Blomster (2011) argues that researchers need to overcome Western Cartesian value of the individual and to look to more fluid definitions. Addressing the concepts of the dividual body and communal identities in non-Western societies can help researchers gain a more accurate interpretation of Mesoamerican worldview. Even considering the contemporary social climate of the United States, such binary views of gender are being deconstructed (Marsh 2016). A demand for recognition of gender and sex fluidity in modern-day America should prompt researchers to question what cultured-gendered biases they are imposing onto figurines manufactured in a wholly different time and culture (Marsh 2016).

**Figurines in the Lower Río Verde Valley**

Guy Hepp (2007) analyzed Formative-period figurines from the Lower Río Verde Valley from the sites of Barra Quebrada, Cerro de la Cruz, Cerro de la Virgen, Corozo, La Consentida, Loma Reyes, Río Viejo, and Yugüe (Hepp & Joyce 2013, p. 266). He examined both the functional characteristics of ceramic figurines as well as their ritual use and value. One important contribution from Hepp’s work is the deconstruction of male/female and public/domestic binaries that have unflinchingly existed in figurine studies. Hepp (2007) postulates that the ritual use of figurines likely appeared in both private and public spaces and that these categories overlapped, rather than being in a binary opposition. He also found that people from all genders, sexes, statuses and ages participated in the use and manufacture of ceramic figurines (Hepp and Joyce 2013).

In Mesoamerica the three main contexts of figurine-use were: public and domestic, including both elite and non-elite contexts (Cyphers 1993; Halperin 2013). The public and
private spheres of daily life in ancient Oaxaca have been thought to be mutually exclusive. Public and private spheres have even been gendered spaces through the lens of Western gender binaries. Men were associated with the public, while women were associated with private spaces (Marcus 1998). Deconstructing the public/private binary, Hepp and Joyce (2013) suggest that the ritual use of clay figurines on the coast blurred the boundary between public and private rituals and contributed to the formation of communal identities. A fluid view of the contextual use of figurines, as promoted by Hepp and Joyce (2013), is a more progressive view which should be applied in figurine studies.

Because figurines are found in both public and private contexts, they deal with the commonplace perceptions of everyday life (Joyce 1992; Taube and Taube Meso Figs). Ritual deployment of figurines and/or the manufacture of figurines are open dialogues for social negotiation. During the Terminal Formative Period in the Lower Río Verde Valley, a time of increasing social tension, figurines played a large role in identity formation (Hepp and Joyce 2013, p. 292). The ritual use, iconography, and manufacturing methods of figurines all contribute in sculpting the identity of the individual and the community (Cyphers 1993, R. Joyce 2014, 2003). Iconographic themes of gender identity, ancestor veneration, age, and spiritual power are all present in the figurines from the Lower Río Verde Valley (Hepp and Joyce 2013, p. 292).
Methods

The methods of figurine analysis used here were modeled after Guy Hepp’s (2007) MA thesis. Data were collected and recorded in the field-lab, with data analysis continued after the lab season. This study is currently awaiting results from INAA (Inter Neutron Activation Analysis) testing of 60 (30 from Cerro de la Virgen, 30 from Río Viejo) of the 143 figurines. Future INAA results will help elucidate any differences in the clay sources that were exploited for ceramic figurine manufacture.

In gathering the samples from both sites, selective sampling methods were used. This sampling method was chosen in consideration of the value that selecting for figurines from primary contexts can provide a better understanding of figurine use. A second goal of the sampling method used was to gain a large sample size for better representation. First, provenience information of the figurines was recorded which included: site name, project name and year, operation number, unit number, lot number, FS number (a serial identification number assigned to an artifact in the field). Each figurine was then reassigned an identifying number for this project. The box number of where the artifacts reside in the INAH repository at Cuilapam de Gurrero was also recorded.

This laboratory study aimed to glean both qualitative and quantitative data from figurine analysis. Figurines from both sites, Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen, underwent the same analytical processes. Quantitative data included the measurement of figurine dimensions including: width, length, and thickness. The ‘thickness’ of the figurines refers to the overall thickness of the ceramic wall of a figurine (i.e. hollow figurines, figurine-instruments, figurine appliques on vessel, etc.).
Although there were some refits, near-complete or well-preserved figurines were far outnumbered by eroded and broken figurines in the sample. Due to the fragmentary nature of some of the figurines, in many cases full description and interpretation was not possible (e.g. morphology, primary and secondary sex characteristics). A designation of “n/a” (not applicable) for any category indicates that most of the figurine was missing and I was therefore unable to make a clear determination; this issue mostly affected the qualitative analysis. Despite the possibility of error in interpretation, the concern here is to be upfront about my methods of classification. While some figurines were almost entirely unclassifiable because of their extremely fragmented and/or eroded nature, they were still included in this study.

Qualitative data include archaeological context, associated artifacts (yes/no), ceramic phase (e.g. Miniyua or Chacahua), ceramic paste-type, ceramic slip, paint, and burnishing (Y/N), iconography, presence of accoutrements (Y/N), and type of accoutrements. The color of ceramic paste, paint, and slip were all taken with a 2015 Munsell Soil Chart, used indoors (Munsell 2010). Other qualitative data recorded included: whether the figurine was broken (Y/N), refit (Y/N), had primary sexual characteristics (Y/N), had secondary sexual characteristics (Y/N), has properties of a musical instrument (Y/N), was an applique (Y/N), has a point of attachment (Y/N), figurine use, and a final column for additional written comments. These categories will each be described in the following paragraphs.

The context of the figurines was found by reviewing lot forms from field excavations and further supported by reading through the final project reports (Joyce 2012; Joyce & Barber 2013; Brzezinski n.d). Context can be extremely complex but classifications of context were kept as close to a one word maximum as possible. Context categories include: middens,
construction fill, and residential. Midden contexts are deposits of material refuse within a specific space. Middens can be both primary: refuse was deposited within a distinctive time, and secondary: a primary midden deposit that is disturbed, e.g., contents were dug up and redistributed. At Río Viejo, the feasting middens (refuse piles of large-scale feasting paraphernalia) overlap with ritual context due to the accumulation of refuse in episodes of ritual feasting. Construction fill encompasses the accumulation of both natural and cultural fill material which are then used in building and development projects. Residential contexts directly refer to all domestic architecture and activity, e.g., a hearth or figurine found within a domestic structure.

All figurines were dated in comparison to established phases in the ceramic chronology (Joyce 1991). Ceramic paste type was classified according to established conventions as either: grey, fine brown, medium brown, or coarse brown. All ceramic paste categories depended on how the artifacts were fired, their paste color and size of temper inclusions. Ceramic finishing refers to the presence of paint, slip, and/or burnishing on a figurine, all of which were measured in separate categories. If there was paint and/or slip present on a figurine then the color was measured with a Munsell Soil Color Chart (Munsell 2010). The point of attachment is a measurement used to gage the transportability of a figurine, for example, if there was a feature on the figurine that allowed it to be strung, fitted, inserted, and/or worn. The point of attachment was measured on a yes or no basis.

This study focused on the Terminal Formative period ceramic phases Miniyua (150BC-AD100) and Chacahua (100AD-250AD). A ceramic phase refers to a specific horizon of ceramic manufacture by a culture within a given period and is usually understood through diagnostic
traits like vessel form, manufacturing methods, slip/paint, and decoration. In addition to being organized by ceramic phase, figurines in this study were also organized by the type of ceramic vessel, and by the type of ceramic paste (clay) used to manufacture them. The type of clay is defined by color and by temper size (inclusions in the clay to aid in firing). The following categories were the only paste types in this study: coarse brown, medium brown, fine brown, and grey.

Themes represented in figurine iconography followed the categorization established by Hepp (2007). Figurine iconography consisted of three broad categories: anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and transformational. Anthropomorphic figurines resemble the human form and body, while zoomorphic figurines include any figurine that references animals. Transformational figurines, are: “Those combining human and animal elements, [which] may relate to nagualistic and tonalistic beliefs or depict characters from a divine or ancestral pantheon” (Hepp & Joyce 2013, p. 266). Nagualism and tonalism are two different, but related, religious outlooks in Mesoamerica and pertain to an individual’s ability to harness and embody a spiritual essence/identity through fusion with a non-human being (Hepp et al. 2013, p. 392).

The qualitative category of accoutrements is vast. First, figurines were categorized as either having accoutrements, or not having any. If a figurine possessed any accoutrements then it was further classified by the types of accoutrements present. Figurine accoutrements included anything that can distinguish identity such as: clothing, jewelry, hairstyles and headdresses/decor, bodily modification (i.e. lip plugs, ear-flares, scarification, tattoo and body painting). There are many different types of accoutrements, and there are even more combinations of accoutrement types.
For purposes of this study, an eye and a mouth typology were established to better classify and record figurines. If a figurine had an extremely fragmented face, was only a body fragment, or unclear iconography/orientation then it was not able to be classified by eye and/or mouth type and was placed in the not applicable (‘n/a’) category. By establishing a typology for eye and mouth types, the goal is to identify potential correlations between certain eye and mouth types, and a specific iconographic class.

Beginning with the eye typology, eight different categories were established: ‘cheerio applique’, ‘pinched cheerio’, ‘oval applique’, ‘incised oval’, ‘horseshoe’, ‘incised’, ‘circular incisions’, and ‘naturalistic’. ‘Cheerio applique’ eyes have a donut-like shape: they are circular with a hole/cavity in the center. ‘Pinched cheerio’ eyes are also always appliques. They are the exact same shape as the ‘cheerio applique’ eyes but have been pressed or squished together to form a more oblong shape with no circular cavity in the middle. ‘Oval applique’ eyes are a longer, oval-shaped piece of semi-flattened clay with a puncture in the middle, for a pupil. Sometimes ‘oval applique’ eyes have a pinch at one end, some more dramatic than others. ‘Incised oval’ appliques follow the same form and design of ‘oval appliques’, however, as their title suggests, they are incised as opposed to being appliqued.

There are two unique eye-type categories. The ‘horseshoe’ eye-type is a complete anomaly and only seen in figurine #89 from Cerro de la Virgen. The ‘horseshoe’ eye-type is so unique that no other category is fitting. This eye-type is an applique design, with a small circular applique framed by two abstract lines that form a U-shape and a furl detail at the end. The ‘disk applique’ eye-type is also an anomaly, only seen on figurine #55. This eye-type is simple, and is defined as any plain circular appliques for eyes.
‘Incised’ eyes, in this sample, are somewhat crude, like a plain incised line or puncture (e.g., tool poke). But it is a broad category and can include any figurine (except oval and circular incised) with eye iconography that has been incised. ‘Circular incisions’ are another, more specific, strain of incised eye-types. ‘Circular incisions’ are usually one to two concentric circles. ‘Naturalistic’ eyes are the only eye-type that does not refer to manufacture methods. ‘Naturalistic’ eyes can be appliqued, incised, or formed by a combination of the techniques, e.g., an applique is well-blended onto the surface of a figurine and further distinguished by carving away and adding incised designs to the clay.

Secondly, the mouth typology has seven categories: ‘beak’, ‘snout’, ‘grimace’, ‘grimace with teeth’, ‘incised, open’, and ‘open teeth’. The ‘beak’ and ‘snout’ mouth-types are somewhat self-explanatory and are most commonly found on iconographic zoomorphic figurines. Both ‘beaks’ and ‘snouts’ are elongated appliques at have incised characteristics. The real difference between the two types is that, ‘beaks; usually have a more pointed/conical shape while ‘snouts’ are more rounded and/or squared at the end. In addition, ‘beaks’ are usually indicative of a bird and ‘snouts’ can be associated with a variety of zoomorphic iconography, but are common of canid figurines. Transformational figurines also have the capacity to behold either one of these mouth types, it is not exclusive to zoomorphic figurines.

‘Grimace’ mouth-types refer to a grimace facial expression. A coil of clay is linked together, forming a complete loop, and is pinched together on the top and bottom to form a pill-shape and then further distinguished by pushing the bottom and/or top lip in the middle, forming a figure eight-like shape. The ‘grimace’ mouth-type is commonly an applique. The ‘grimace with teeth’ mouth type follows the above guidelines except a small clay applique is
present inside the mouth, representing teeth. Sometimes teeth are just a simple pinch of clay, other times they are more naturalistic, mirroring the same number and shape of teeth. When teeth are present on a grimace mouth-type, either the top or bottom row is present, it is less common to see both rows of teeth.

‘Incised’ mouth-types are a broad category and, like ‘incised’ eye-types, tend to be more rudimentary in form and detail but this does not omit them from having more ornate designs. The ‘incised’ moth-type refers to any mouth design that has been incised as opposed to an applique. In contrast, ‘open’ mouths are commonly appliques. The ‘open’ mouth-type can be understood as being the same as the ‘grimace’ mouth-type, except without a pinch on the upper and/or bottom lip; ‘open’ mouths remain a pill-shape. ‘Open teeth’ mouth-types encompass all ‘open’ mouth-types that have distinguished teeth appliques. Again, the teeth can range from a simple pinch of clay to a more naturalistic design of teeth.

The most subjective categories in iconography are primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Before defining the difference between primary and secondary sexual characteristics it is important to bring up the divide between sex and gender. Traditionally, archaeologists studying figurines have been predicated on the presence of ‘breast’ appliques. This is troubling for many reasons but I will discuss two here. First, the presence of two bump appliques interpreted as breasts are used as a common basis to assign gender (Polity and Ecology ch 4). Secondly, for a concept Fortunately, in present day, archaeologists are becoming increasingly aware and sensitive to the boundary between sex and gender. Ideally, archaeologists should look at multiple lines of data (e.g., context, accoutrements, ethnographic data) to gain a better understanding of a past culture’s spectrum of gender and sex.
Sex, or biological sex, refers to the biological body and genitalia that one is born with and is usually assigned at birth (Fausto-Sterling 2012). There is no simple male/female sex binary within biological categories since biological sex is on a spectrum (Fausto-Sterling 2012). Gender is a separate category from sex, but they are both inter-related (Fausto-Sterling 2012). Gender and sex are defined, assigned, and enacted socially within a specific culture’s conceptions of sexual identities (Blomster 2013; Butler 2003; Fausto-Sterling 2012; R. Joyce 2000). The categories of sex and gender share similarities within the distinction between primary and secondary characteristics. Primary sexual characteristics are usually distinguished as being something that directly pertains to biological capacities of fertility, i.e., genitalia, and secondary sexual characteristics refer to sex traits developed in puberty, e.g., breasts, pubic hair, etc. Birthing scenes or scenes of explicit sexual intercourse are blatant examples that reference these primary sexual characteristics (Cyphers 1993). Secondary sexual traits are more commonly distinguished on figurines, as seen in this sample.

Iconographic-instruments include any figurine that possesses the qualities/ability to produce musical notes. Iconographic-instruments include: whistles, ocarinas, and flutes. A whistle is defined as a wind instrument with a mouthpiece leading to a resonating chamber. An ocarina is another type of whistle wind instrument characterized by having two or more finger-stops to conduct different pitches. A flute is a wind instrument that possesses a horizontal arrangement of finger stops for different pitches.

Figurine use is the final qualitative category. Figurine use refers to the different varieties of figurine types. For example, the different categories of figurine use include: instruments, figurines (free-standing), masks, and vessel appliques. Pendants are not included as a distinct
category since the ability to wear a figurine can overlap with one of these categories, e.g., a zoomorphic bird instrument with a cavity through its neck. Iconographic instruments refer to any figurine that possesses the capability of musical production, e.g., resonating chamber, mouthpiece, beveled cavity. Free-standing figurines are any figurine meant to sit, stand, or lay down on a surface and do not overlap with any of the other figurine use categories.

Masks include any figurine that is meant to be worn or attached. Masks often depict faces and are usually meant to be fastened to the facial area of an object (e.g., another figurine) or person. Masks may have cavities to help string them onto the wearer, or masks may be appliqued (usually on objects such as another figurine). The hallmark characteristic of a mask is that it will have cavities through the eyes, mouth, and/or nose to afford the wearer comfort as well as creating a symbolic boundary through which the wearer transforms and interacts.

I recorded the iconography of figurines through photography and illustration. While in the lab, I photographed every figurine in the collection from a minimum of three different angles/positions. I used a Nikon D70 with a 60mm micro-lens with auto-focus and an external flash on a tripod. Figurines were placed on a black synthetic velvet fabric, which served as a background and they were placed alongside a 5cm black and white scale. Figurines were shot indoors in a white 2.5ftx2.5ft cubic tent. Figurines were drawn with pen and ink on a 1:2 scale using digital calipers to measure their various angles and characteristics.
Chapter 2: Río Viejo

This chapter is focused on the figurine sample from Río Viejo, offering descriptive analysis of the figurines. The first section in this chapter will present a detailed artifact catalogue, with photos and descriptions of each individual figurine from Río Viejo. Presenting a catalogue of the figurines lends a strong visual aid for a better understanding of the interpretations made in this study. Quantifiable patterns in the iconography and other characteristics of the figurines are presented at the end of this chapter. The following chapter examines the figurine sample from the site of Cerro de la Virgen and is modeled after the format of this chapter.
Artifact Catalogue: Río Viejo

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<td>#1</td>
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This is a fragment of a wide anthropomorphic face. The surface of the fragment is highly eroded. The eyes fit the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. There is a slight indent at the bridge of the nose applique which could signify remains of a possible nose ornament, but the fragment is broken and eroded to the point of unclear interpretation. The right half of the figurine’s face has broken off. There is also a break line around the outer-edges of the fragment, and there are remains of some incised décor on the bottom right suggesting that the original figurine may have had some kind of headdress or hairstyle applique.
This is a small bird head fragment. This fragment was associated with possible formative ceramic sherds in the same lot. The surface of the fragment has been burnished which is unusual on brown wares. The fragment is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type. This figurine fragment appears very well made since its detailed characteristics were articulated onto such a small object and was likely done with small-scale tools. The details of the décor are also neat and precise.
This figurine is an iconographic bird whistle. This artifact is classified as a whistle because it has a robust internal resonating chamber, mouthpiece, beveled cavity and no finger stops. This figurine is nearly complete but is missing one leg applique and the bottom of the mouthpiece is gone. The broken part at mouthpiece has since been refitted (refit visible in the first photo). There is a pressed tool imprint on the mouthpiece leading to resonating chamber. There are two highly eroded appliques on either side of the body which probably depicted wings. There is a non-oxidized patch on the surface (visible in second photo). Some red paint remains around the outside of the eye appliques, in the mouth and there is a small dot of red paint on the back of the neck. The eyes fall under the are ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and the mouth falls under the ‘beak’ mouth-type.
This is a fragment of a zoomorphic bird instrument. There is a circular cavity that runs through the entire neck of the fragment giving it the ability to be strung, suspended or worn. The eyes are classified as the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type, but no mouth is present since the area is eroded. There is a square beveled cavity at the bottom of the figure which appears to lead to a hollow area on the interior of the fragment, probably a resonating chamber. This feature, coupled with the absence of finger stops, suggests that this is a fragment of a whistle wind instrument. There are several small, non-oxidized patches all around the object’s surface. There are two appliques on either side of the body which also have linear incised décor suggesting that they represent wings.
This is a figurine limb fragment. This fragment resembles a foot since it has a pinch at the distal end, forming an angle, and is flat on the bottom. The fragment is broken at the top, where it was attached to the original figurine. The front side of the break is higher than in the back, suggesting the original figurine stood upright. Because this is just a small figurine fragment and has no iconographic characteristics, it is difficult to discern what the overall figurine was like.
This is a zoomorphic body fragment. The head of the figurine has broken off but the rest of the figurine is intact. The figure is positioned in a quadrupedal stance and has a tail applique at one end. All the above characteristics suggest this fragment represents the body of a canid. The legs of the figurine are flat on the bottom which give the figurine the ability to be on a flat surface. This is overall a thin figurine since the body and tail do not appear to be dense or wide, and the clay forming the body/torso was flattened and elongated.
This fragment is an anthropomorphic figurine head and is associated with two other figurine fragments (#8, #9). The fragment is dense. The surface of the fragment has eroded to the point that it has a chalky texture. Due to erosion, the characteristics of the figurine are faint but remnants suggest that the iconography was naturalistic. All characteristics on the figure appear to have been incised. The fragment falls under the ‘slanted’ eye-type and ‘grimace’ mouth-type categories. There is a break at the neckline. The neck of the fragment appears to be craned forward.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment resembling a canid. The surface of the fragment is highly burnished. There are two appliques with incisions at the top which represent ears. One of the ear appliques is broken off. There is an elongated applique protruding from the front of the fragment, and has an incised horizontal line; this applique resembles a snout. The fragment is broken at the neckline. All features of the fragment are incised. This fragment is classified under the 'incised' eye-type and 'snout' mouth-type.
This is a zoomorphic fragment of a bird head. The fragment is broken at the neckline and on the backside. The break on the back of the head reveals a hollow area however, the area is not refined, suggesting that this was probably not an instrument. The fragment is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and a ‘beak’ mouth-type. The beak is an applique with four punctured holes at top which is a slightly more ornate/naturalistic design versus the beaks of the other bird figurines. The surface has a burnished finish. The scale of the head fragment suggests the original figurine was quite large.
This is a near-complete fragment of a figurine. The iconography is highly abstract and it is possible that this represents a canid or opossum but interpretation is uncertain. The fragment stands by a tripod support, with two small leg appliques in the front and longer mouthpiece applique in the back. There is an imprint of a reed tool on the mouthpiece. The mouthpiece, a large resonating chamber, and the absence of finger-stops suggest that this is a whistle instrument. There is a small handle/loop coil applique at the top. This point of attachment suggests that this figurine is able to be suspended or worn. The figure has two half-fanned appliques on either side of the point of attachment which may be ears. The figure is broken on the end of the snout, bottom of the mouthpiece, and on one ear applique. Some sections of the surface are oxidized. The fragment is classified under the ‘pinched cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘snout’ mouth-type.
This is an anthropomorphic face fragment. The fragment only includes the lower-half of the face, including the mouth and chin. The mouth is an applique that has been smoothed/blended onto the surface. The mouth is naturalistic and has been classified under the ‘open teeth’ mouth-type. The exterior of the fragment is well-burnished to the point of a smooth luster. Some burnishing swipes are still visible on the surface of the fragment. The break line goes through the middle of the face and around the edges. The break along the edges suggests that the outer-edges of the face were appliqued to another surface, suggesting that this may be a fragment of an iconographic vessel applique.
This is an ambiguous face fragment. There is a break line down the middle of the fragment, revealing a concave area. At the back of the head there are three appliques that form two adjacent angels, similar to a “W” shape (see second photo) but the overall form is unclear. All iconography on the fragment was done with appliques further defined by incisions and scoring. The iconography is highly abstract and a confident interpretation of the figure is unable to be made. The image of this fragment shares similarities with #39, 40, 69, 70, and a tentative interpretation is that this fragment references the same iconography.
This is a mouthpiece to an iconographic instrument. There is a break at the bottom of the mouthpiece which exposes a windpipe. There is another break through the body of the fragment which exposes part of a resonating chamber. The two appliques on either side of the fragment appear to represent wings. The qualities of this fragment, in comparison to other iconographic bird instruments, suggest that this is a fragment of a zoomorphic bird instrument.
This is a death face figurine and is a fragment of an exterior vessel applique. There are clean breaks on all sides of the fragment but they do not obstruct the face applique, suggesting the breaks were careful and intentional. The figure is classified under the 'closed' eye-type and 'open' mouth-type. There is a small bump applique in-between the parted lips which probably represents teeth or a tongue. There are no accoutrements. The figure does not have any hair or hairstyle/headdress. The ears of the figure are two elongated appliques on either side of the head. There is a small circular cavity at the top of the head applique which was probably to aide in firing the ceramic.
This is a small anthropomorphic face fragment. The overall shape of the fragment is thumb-like; it is an elongated form and has a rounded area at the top. This may be an iconographic insert (e.g., insert into a holster on a building or ritual object). There is a break at the bottom/neckline of the fragment. All iconographic features are near the top and distinguish a naturalistic anthropomorphic face. No hair or headdress iconography is present. There is a small applique within the mouth of the fragment which probably represents teeth. The facial features are eroded so the exact facial expression is unclear, but the figurine has a ‘naturalistic’ eye-type and ‘open teeth’ mouth-type.
This is a small anthropomorphic head fragment. There is a break at the chin line and the surface of the fragment is slightly eroded. On the right side of the fragment there are remnants of an ear accoutrement applique. The fragment has the ‘oval applique’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. There are two horizontal incisions above the eyes which appear to represent eyebrows. The nose applique is extremely eroded and the end is broken off. Remnants of red paint are visible within the mouth and eyebrows. The fragment is not hollow and is flat on the backside of the head.
This is a fragment of an anthropomorphic face. This fragment (and #18-20) was associated with a piece of diagnostic Chacahua rim sherd and a possible piece of adobe. The surface has a burnished finish. The fragment has a break line through the middle of the face and around all the edges. The break line around all the edges and the curvature of the fragment suggest that this may have been an iconographic vessel applique, but the fragment is too eroded to make confident interpretation. Fragment has highly naturalistic features, falling into the ‘naturalistic’ eye-type and the ‘open teeth’ mouth-type categories. The fragment has a unique incised circle on the cheek area, possibly representing a kind of body modification (e.g., scarification). There is a burnished indent above the eyes which forms a brow ridge. The nose, mouth, and ear-flares are all appliques. Remnants of red paint are visible within the ear-flare applique.
This appears to be a body fragment of an iconographic bird instrument. The fragment has a beveled cavity at the bottom and a large spherical body (due to an interior resonating chamber). The above features support the notion that this is a whistle instrument. The head of the figurine is broken off and the tail is highly eroded. There are two eroded circular stumps at the bottom of the fragment which are probably the remainders of leg appliques. Although the legs and tail of the figurine are broken and eroded, they probably served as tripod supports which is typical of most bird figurines. There is an applique with incised décor on the left side of the fragment, resembling a wing.
This is a near-complete zoomorphic iconographic instrument but it is eroded and a few appliques have broken off. Two appliques at the top, one applique in the front and another applique on the right side have all broken off. The positions of the broken appliques suggest that the two appliques at the top were probably ears, the frontal applique was probably a snout, and the side applique was an arm. The figure stands upright with tripod supports (two legs and a tail). The figure has all limbs extended outwards, a posture which can suggest the ease of outfitting a figurine with clothing. At the bottom of the figurine, where the tail applique meets the body of the figurine, there is an eroded beveled cavity leading into the interior. The tail of the fragment serves as a mouthpiece. The figure is classified under the ‘incised’ eye-type.
This is a cylindrical fragment with ambiguous iconographic qualities. The fragment is broken at either end. The top of the fragment is a platform that just has a corner broken-off while the distal end is a clean break. The top of the fragment has a larger diameter than the bottom. The surface of the fragment has traces of a red slip. This fragment is a similar shape to #15, and both fragments are possible iconographic inserts. The fragment has two semi-spherical appliques, with horizontal incisions in the middle, placed next to each other near the top. The perimeter of these two appliques are surrounded by a coil applique that is broken at the bottom.
This is another highly ambiguous fragment and is associated with #17-20. The center of the fragment is a hollow coil, with two coil appliques on either side that are bent behind the middle coil. The three coils meet at the center, forming a vertex. The ends of the coil appliques are all broken off.
This is a small transformational head fragment. The right half of the figure’s face is missing, and there is a break line around the edges of the face revealing a concave area within the head. There is good preservation of both red and graphite paint on the surface (see photos). The face possesses both anthropomorphic qualities, e.g., ear-flare appliques and a grimace expression, but has a beak-like nose applique. The beak applique protrudes from the face, has a slight curvature, and has linear incisions on either side. These above qualities have led to the classification of this fragment as transformational, with the figure appearing to be a fusion between an anthropomorphic being and a bird. The fragment has an ‘oval applique’ eye-type and ‘grimace’ mouth-type. The chin of the fragment is a pointed applique. There is a trace of a reed-pressed indent beneath the chin that leads into the concave interior of the head. The hollow area inside the head fragment presents the possibility that this is an iconographic instrument fragment, but interpretation is uncertain based on this fragment alone.
This is a fragment of a zoomorphic bird figurine. This fragment is a probable redeposit since it was found in an early lot, but was associated with a possible Formative Period ceramic sherd. The bottom of the figure is broken off, and there is a break line through the torso. There are two appliques on either side which have more appliqued décor on them (e.g., line of small bump appliques), probably indicating wings. There are also two larger bump appliques are on the tail area of the fragment. The interior of the figurine, as exposed by the break, reveals a strange bulbous applique with two holes in the center. Although the purpose of this applique is unknown, it is possible that it was a rattle chamber and that this is a fragment of an iconographic instrument.
This is a fragment of probable anthropomorphic face. This fragment contains only a small fraction of iconography. The surface of the fragment is highly burnished. All iconography was incised. The fragment is tentatively classified under the ‘naturalistic’ eye-type.
This is a probable Formative Period figurine fragment that was redeposited since it is from such a shallow lot. The fragment has zoomorphic iconography depicting a bird head. The fragment has a two-dimensional format. The fragment has the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type. There is a break at the neckline.
This is an anthropomorphic face fragment. This fragment is a probable redeposit since it is from such a shallow lot. The left half of the figure’s face is missing and the surface is highly eroded. There is a long, horizontal stepped-indent across the forehead of the figure. The back of the fragment is flat and has no iconography. The facial features look naturalistic and the fragment is classified under the naturalistic eye-type (although it shares some features with the oval applique eye-type) and open mouth-type. The figure has an ear-flare applique.
This is an anthropomorphic body fragment. The shape of the fragment is somewhat cylindrical and is broken at the top and bottom. Underneath the bottom of the figurine is a small concave area. There is a circular incised cavity in the middle of the front of the fragment which resembles a bellybutton. There are two eroded large bump appliques on the upper torso area which possibly represent nipples. There is a linear indent down the length of the back. There are highly eroded coil appliques on either side of the fragment which are likely remnants of arm appliques. There are two breaks on the bottom of the front side of the fragment; it is possible that two leg appliques extended out from the front of the figurine.
This is a small limb fragment. The clay is pinched at the distal end of the fragment with three vertical incisions. The fragment is broken at the top where it was attached. The break line is lower in the back and higher in the front. The direction of the break and the shape of the fragment suggest that the original figurine stood quadrupedal.

This is an anthropomorphic head fragment. This was associated with a piece of impressed adobe and an eroded piece of adobe. The fragment is very eroded and the eye-type is unable to be discerned however, this fragment fits comfortably into the ‘open’ mouth-type category. Remnants of red paint are visible within the mouth of the fragment. There are two ear accoutrement appliques but it is unclear whether they are ear-flares or ear-spool.
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This is a possible limb fragment. The fragment forms a sharp 45-degree angle. The fragment is broken on the top and bottom at the points where it was attached/appliqued. The clay at the bottom of the fragment is pinched and has three incised lines for décor. This fragment was associated with a piece of a ceramic ear-flare. The surface of the fragment is well-burnished. Based on the shape and décor of the fragment, it was probably an arm applique.
This is an anthropomorphic face fragment. This fragment is associated with a highly ornate Chacahua rim sherd (see photo). The face fragment is thin-walled and has a curvature, suggesting that this is probably a vessel applique. The surface of the fragment is well-burnished. Most of the iconography is incised but the nose and teeth are appliques. The eyes are plain and do not have a pupil distinguished, which is unique. There is a linear incision above the eye resembling an eyebrow. The fragment was categorized in the ‘open teeth’ mouth-type and ‘closed’ eye-type since no eyelids or pupils were distinguished.
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment. The fragment is broken at the top and at the neckline. The break at the top of the head reveals a small chamber, however, this chamber is not refined and does not connect to any passages so this is probably not an instrument. This fragment has the ‘oval incised’ eye-type and ‘incised’ mouth-type. There are two small appliques on either side of the face which resemble ears. The ear appliques both have a punctured cavity that goes through them allowing actual accoutrements/jewelry to be attached.
This is a figurine head fragment. The fragment only includes the top-left side of the head. The fragment does not display any facial features so the iconography is unclear, but the shape of the fragment and all present characteristics suggest that it is an anthropomorphic head. The surface is highly burnished. There is a unique petal-shaped applique at the top. This fragment looks like part of an ornate head wrap. There is a large bulbous applique on the side of the fragment, probably a part of an ear applique. The back of the head shows that the head/neck of the fragment is craned forward.
This is a figurine face fragment. The fragment only contains the top of the head, including the forehead and hairline. This fragment is a probable refit with associated fragment #35, but the edges of both fragments are too eroded to confidently refit. At the bottom, the fragment is broken into a curved V-shape, suggesting that the break line frames where the eyes were. There is a T-shaped applique at the top with decorative incisions which resembles a type of headdress/hair-wrap. Above this applique is more incised décor, further supporting the notion that this figure is depicted with a headdress/hair-wrap. The back of the fragment is slightly concave.
This is a fragment of the lower-half of an anthropomorphic face. This is a probable refit with associated fragment #34, but the edges of both are too eroded to make a confident refit. The bottom of a nose applique is present, although broken and highly eroded. There are several flecks of red pigment on the surface but it does not look like paint. The mouth area is slightly eroded and this fragment is classified under the ‘incised’ mouth-type. Within the mouth there is a circular cavity that runs through the figurine. This cavity is a unique characteristic and shares some similarities with masks but it is not clear whether this was also a mask from this fragment alone. The edges of the fragment flare-out from the face which may suggest that this was appliqued to something, e.g., a vessel.
This is a tabular figurine. The fragment is highly erosive and granules of sediment erode when the figurine is touched or moved. The fragment has a porous surface. Parts of the surface are calcified. There are traces of an arm applique on the right side. The arm applique is positioned in front of the torso.
This is a death face. This is an iconographic vessel applique. The surface of the sherd and the iconographic applique are both burnished. The sherd is out-curving. All facial features on the applique are highly naturalistic. The iconographic applique is classified under the ‘closed’ eye-type and ‘grimace’ mouth-type. There is a small concave area underneath the chin area. There are two indents on either side of the mouth which resemble dimples.
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![Image of Río Viejo artifact](image-url)
Drawing: Guy Hepp
This is a large fragment of a mask. The fragment is broken at the chin and on either side of the face. The surface of the fragment has a burnished finish. The scale of the fragment suggests that the complete mask is relatively proportional to a human face. All iconographic features of the mask fragment are highly naturalistic. The shape of the mask has been sculpted to be hyper-realistic, e.g., the forehead of the fragment protrudes and is sculpted into a brow ridge and the eyes bulge out. The eyes are classified in the 'naturalistic' eye-type category and have circular cavities for pupils. These pupil cavities run through the entire fragment which give the wearer the ability to see through the object. The nose is an applique and has two incised cavities on the bottom. Only the top of the mouth remains, which includes the upper-lip and top row of teeth. The teeth are a platform applique and have parallel incisions to distinguish the separation in enamel. The fragment is classified under the 'open teeth' mouth-type. The back of the fragment is smooth and refined.
This is a fragment of an iconographic vessel applique. This fragment is a rim sherd and suggests that the vessel style was a composite silhouette bowl. The vessel shape and paste type point to this fragment belonging to a Miniyua phase vessel. The iconography on this fragment is highly abstract making it difficult for a clear interpretation, but it does reference the same iconography as on fragments #40, 69, 74. All iconography is appliqued and incised. There is a protruding disk applique at the top with a set of n-shaped appliques emerging from either side; a clay slap applique with two circular cavities is below.
This is a fragment of an iconographic vessel applique. This fragment is a rim sherd and shows that the vessel was a composite silhouette bowl. The vessel shape and paste type point to this fragment belonging to a Miniyua phase vessel. The iconography is highly abstract making it difficult for a clear interpretation, but it does reference the same iconography as on fragments #39, 69, 74; this fragment is the smallest. There is a protruding applique with circular cavities at the rim of the sherd with an n-shaped applique below it that frames a curved slab applique.
This is a small limb fragment. There is a small pinch of clay at the bottom, forming an angle. The shape of the fragment suggests that this is a foot/leg applique.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment. The figure is broken at the neckline and on the snout. The figure has no ears and the snout size is exaggerated, suggesting that this represents a crocodile. The surface of the fragment has a burnished finish. Some burnishing tool swipes are visible on the back of the head. The figure has huge bulbous eyes and is classified in the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type. The figure is also classified as having a ‘snout’ mouth-type although the bottom half of the snout has broken off. The top and bottom parts of the snout are separated by a deep incision. The snout has an upturned applique at the end with two circular cavities resembling nostrils.
This is a small arm fragment. The fragment has a slight curve and is broken at the point of attachment. At the opposite end, there is a pinch of clay with two parallel incisions and a horizontal incision above, resembling a hand. A vibrant red paint remains on the surface but is only present on the side of the arm that was not appliqued to the figurine body.
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![Image of a clay figurine from Rio Viejo, PRV12, featuring a female figure with a bird-like head and anthropomorphic features. The figurine is grey in color.](image-url)
Drawing: Rachael Wedemeyer
Drawing: Rachael Wedemeyer
This is a near-complete anthropomorphic figurine, it has just been subjected to erosion and the ends of all the limb appliques are broken off.

The surface of the figurine has a burnished finish. The position of the figurine is unique and all the limbs are spread out. This looks like a possible acrobat figurine. There is a small cavity on the underside of the figure’s torso, representing a belly button. On the same side, there is a triangular incised design long the waistline of the figure representing a kind of garment. All facial features are incised and the eye and mouth-types are both categorized as incised. There is a strange and undiscernible applique at the front of the figurine, on the neck area, that has since broken off. Around the neckline, there is also an incised design which resembles a kind of neck accoutrement. The ears of the figurine are appliques and have cavities through them to allow for accoutrements to be attached.
This is a body fragment of a large anthropomorphic figurine. The surface of the fragment is highly eroded so most iconographic features are faint but this represents a seated figure with knees tucked under, and arms resting on the knees. The bottom of the figure is flat and has a large circular cavity. The inside of the figure is completely hollow. There are two bump appliques at the top of the torso, resembling nipples. The area beneath the nipples, and above the knees, also protrudes, resembling a belly. This may be a possible rattle instrument since the inside is hollow and there is a large cavity at the bottom but this is not definitively classified as an iconographic instrument.
This is a small limb fragment. The fragment is broken at the top where it was appliqued. The fragment forms an L-shape and there is a small pinch of clay at the bottom. The shape of the fragment suggests that this is a foot/leg.
This is a zoomorphic iconographic vessel applique. The applique sits on the vessel rim and faces inward. The vessel form is a bowl. There is one large bump applique which resembles a face, and a coil applique to the right which connects to the top of the head applique. The figure has an ‘open’ mouth-type and ‘incised’ eye-type. There is a faint circular bump applique on the chest of the figure/inside of the vessel but it is very eroded. The figure resembles a monkey.
This fragment resembles an anthropomorphic head. The fragment is broken at the neck line. The fragment has a nose and ear-flare appliques. The fragment is classified under the ‘incised oval’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. All features are incised except for the nose, which is an applique. The headdress wraps around to the back of the head and has incised décor. The back of the head is flat and has no design.
This is a transformational body fragment. The fragment has two finger stops in the front, a hollow area inside, and the remains of a beveled cavity in the back (see second photo) suggesting that this is an ocarina iconographic instrument. The figure has two leg appliques that extend outwards in the front, supporting the figure on a flat surface. Both leg appliques have parallel incisions at the bottom to represent feet. There are two elongated, wing-like appliques on either side of the figurine. The figure has ear-flare appliques and a neck accoutrement applique. The form of the fragment resembles a bird, however, the presence of accoutrements classifies this as a transformational figurine.
This is a small limb fragment. The fragment is broken at the top at the point it was appliqued. There is a small pinch of clay at the opposite end of the break that is flat on the bottom suggesting that this is a leg fragment. The position of the fragment is unique and looks like the figure stood with bent legs that faced outwards which is a traditional dancing pose in Mesoamerica.
This is a body fragment of a transformational iconographic instrument. The fragment stands quadrupedal. There is a tail applique at one end which also doubles as a mouthpiece. There is a beveled cavity at the base of the tail/mouthpiece. The inside of the fragment is hollow. There are two finger stops on the top of the fragment. The above characteristics suggest that this is an iconographic ocarina. There are remnants of a red slip still visible on the surface. There is a neck accoutrement applique that wraps around the neckline and forms a V-shape on the chest of the figure.
This is a zoomorphic vessel applique. The figure resembles a frog (see #82 and #56). The head is appliqued onto a flat piece of ceramic. The applique has been classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘incised’ mouth-type. The eyes have two small bump appliques in the center, representing pupils.
This is an anthropomorphic face fragment. Only the upper-left section of the face is preserved. The figurine has a well-burnished finish. All iconographic features are naturalistic and were incised. The eye-type of the figure is ‘naturalistic’. There is a curved incised line above the eye, representing an eyebrow. There is a circle incised design on the cheek area of the figure (see also #17). There is an elongated applique at the side of the face with incised décor, resembling an ear with accoutrements/piercing. There are several parallel incisions framing the face to represent hair. There is a deep incised depression that delineates the area between the face and the hair.
This is a figurine face fragment. There is a break through the middle of the face and along all the edges. The surface of the fragment is highly eroded, making it difficult to classify the fragment by eye-type. The scale of the facial fragment suggests this was an overall small figurine. The edges flare outwards from the face suggesting this is an iconographic vessel applique. There is a small cavity at the top of the head which leads into the hollow interior of the fragment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rio Viejo</th>
<th>PRV12</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>11439</th>
<th>#55</th>
<th>-1F</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>fine brown</th>
<th>transformational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Image of pottery with fine brown transformational features]
This is a near-complete transformational iconographic instrument. The figurine is a bird wearing human accoutrements, i.e., ear-flare appliques. There is a square beveled cavity on the bottom of the figurine, a hollow interior, and two finger stops on the front, classifying this to be an ocarina instrument. The figurine stands upright by tripod support, like most bird figurines, with two leg appliques and a tail/mouthpiece applique. There is a circular cavity that runs through the neck which allows for the figurine to be worn and/or suspended. The figurine is classified under the ‘disk applique’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type. There are remnants of a red slip on the surface of the figure. There is an incised line on the left side of the figurine’s face.
This is a zoomorphic vessel applique. The figure resembles a frog (see #82 and #56). The figure is broken in the back of the head. The figure is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye type and ‘incised’ mouth-type. There is a V-shaped depression down the middle of the head. There are remains of two flared appliques at either side of the fragment.
This is a small zoomorphic head fragment. This figure resembles a bird. The figure is formatted two-dimensionally. There is a cavity that runs through the applique, resembling an eye. There is a pointed applique in the front of the fragment which resembles a beak. The figure is classified under the ‘incised’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type.
This is an ambiguous fragment. This fragment is an applique with incised décor. The form of the fragment suggests that this may be a beak or snout applique.
This is a zoomorphic vessel applique. The figure is appliqued onto a rim sherd, looking inward to the vessel. The vessel type is a possible conical bowl. The figure resembles a bird head. The figure is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment that resembles a bird. The figure is presented in a two-dimensional format, with all iconographic characteristics on opposite sides. The snout/beak applique has broken off. Above this area there is a clay slab applique, which would have sat above the beak applique. The figure is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type. There is a break at the neck line.
This is a figurine limb fragment. The fragment is broken at either end. The fragment is a coil shape and curves on one end. The surface of the fragment is burnished. This fragment was associated with large glyph stamp of an anthropomorphic face.
This is a zoomorphic body fragment which resembles a bird. The bottom of the figure is flat, allowing it to sit on a flat surface versus standing with a tripod support. There are two appliques on either side that flare outward from the body, resembling wings. There are two small appliques on the bottom of the front of the figure, each has three incised lines, resembling feet. There is a similar applique on the lower back of the figurine which represents a tail. The back of the figurine has several incised parallel lines for décor, while the front of the figure is relatively plain.
This is a figurine head fragment. The figure resembles an anthropomorphic face that is wearing a zoomorphic headdress. The décor on the headdress applique resembles a bird. The headdress has a tri-point: two pointed appliques on either side of the face (resembling wings) and one protruding over the forehead of the figure (resembling a beak). All décor on the headdress is incised. The fragment has a break through the middle of the face. The nose, ear, and ear-flare are applique. The nose applique has two cavities, representing nostrils. Figure is classified under the ‘oval incised’ eye-type.
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment. All features on the figure are incised. The fragment falls into the ‘incised oval’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. The nose applique is eroded. There is an elongated applique at the top of the head, with linear incisions for décor, and wraps around two small bump appliques. This applique around the top of the head fragment resembles a headdress/hair-style. There is a break at the neck line. The neck of the figure is flat, and is slightly craned forward suggesting that this figure is a possible vessel applique.
This is a small fragment of a circular applique on a flat piece of clay. This could either be an ear-flare applique or a ‘cheerio applique’ eye.
This is a limb fragment. The clay at the end is pinched, forming an angle, which suggests this is a foot/leg fragment. The fragment has a break at the top where it was attached/appliqued.
This is a fragment of a small tabular figurine. The head of the fragment is missing. The figure is relatively flat, and presented in a two-dimensional format. There are two coil appliques on either side of the figure which resemble arms. The arm appliques are positioned in front of the body, with hands together.
This is a body fragment of a zoomorphic iconographic instrument. The figure is eroded and broken at the neckline. The figure stands by a tripod support, with two leg appliques and a tail/mouthpiece applique. The tail applique of the figure doubles as a mouthpiece. The bottom of the figurine has a beveled cavity that is eroded around the edges. The body of the figure is round and spherical, serving as the resonating chamber. This is probably a whistle instrument.
This is an iconographic vessel applique. The iconography is highly abstract but is the same as #39, 40, 74, however, this applique has slightly more detail (e.g., cross hatching design, more incised decor). This sherd belongs to a composite silhouette bowl. This is a Miniyua-phase ceramic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rio Viejo</th>
<th>PRV12</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>8759</th>
<th>#70</th>
<th>6E</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>grey</th>
<th>anthropomorphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Image of anthropomorphic figure](image_url)
This is a near-complete anthropomorphic statuette. The figure is standing, with hands resting on the hips. The legs, right arm, and ear-flare appliques are broken off and sections of the head are also missing. The figure is hollow on the inside but it is not an instrument. There is a circular cavity on the lower-half of the torso area. All iconography is incised. The figurine is classified in the 'oval incised' eye-type and 'open' mouth-type. There is an incised neck accoutrement on the front of the statuette. The hair of the figure is also incised. On the back of the statuette there is an upside-down U-shaped incised design in the hair, resembling a hair-tie/hairstyle.
This is a small ambiguous fragment. The fragment is a coil shape with a band applique around the middle, and a concave area on the bottom. There are two imprints on the bands.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rio Viejo</th>
<th>PRV12</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>8282</th>
<th>#72</th>
<th>5H</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>fine brown</th>
<th>zoomorphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is a zoomorphic head fragment. This figure resembles a canid. There are two small, pointed appliques at the top of the head representing ears. The figure is classified under the 'cheerio applique' eye-type and 'snout' mouth-type. There is a break at the neckline.
This is a fragment of an anthropomorphic body. The fragment is the upper-right section of the torso. The right arm applique is broken off. There is a slab applique with red paint resembling a neck accoutrement. There is a small bump applique on the torso, representing a nipple. The figure is hollow. The scale of the fragment suggests that the original figurine was large.
This is an iconographic vessel applique. This fragment is similar to #39, 40, and 69; this is also a Miniyua-phase ceramic but the vessel shape is uncertain. The iconography of the applique faces upward, toward the rim. The iconography includes three different appliques: a bulbous applique with a circular cavity on the top, next to what looks like an open mouth applique, and a flat applique at the other end with linear incised décor.
This is an anthropomorphic bust fragment. The figure is classified under the ‘oval applique’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. There are two horizontal incised lines above the eye appliques to represent eyebrows. The figure has a nose applique with two cavities for nostrils and deep impressions on either side. There is a broken applique with incised décor on the neck line which resembles some type of neck accoutrement. There are two small cavities on the torso which resemble nipples. The figure has two ear-flare appliques which are attached to two elongated appliques with incised décor, probably representing a kind of head accoutrement. Remnants of red paint are visible within the incised cavities.
This is a fragment of a tabular figurine. The fragment is an applique on a flat piece of ceramic and resembles two hands clasped together. All iconography is incised.
This is a fragment of an anthropomorphic body. The scale of the fragment suggests that the original figurine was quite substantial. There is a break at the waistline and through the middle of the figure. The break reveals that the interior of the figurine is hollow; The leg applique is also hollow. The fragment resembles a seated figure with crossed-legs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rio Viejo</th>
<th>PRV12</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>9491</th>
<th>#78</th>
<th>4Y</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>fine brown</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is a limb fragment. There is a slight curve at one end of the fragment. At the opposite end of the curve, there is a punctured cavity that runs through the fragment suggesting that this fragment was attached or fastened to something. There are two horizontal lines on one side of the fragment but the design is eroded.
This is an ambiguous figurine fragment. The fragment is flat. Iconography is only present on one side. There are several incised lines and a small disk applique on the iconographic side. The surface of the fragment is highly eroded, making interpretation difficult.
**Río Viejo Figurines**

The figurine sample from Río Viejo presents great variety in manufacture techniques, iconography, and form. Regardless of the wide variety of figurines, there are some general consistencies across this sample. First, any figurine with paint remnants on it either had an oxidized red and/or graphite paint. No figurine possessed any pigment color beyond red or black/grey. The most common surface treatment was burnishing, which was often found on grey ware figurines. All the figurines appear handmade, and the most abundant iconographic category is anthropomorphic figurines.

![Figure 2: Iconography at Río Viejo](image)

Anthropomorphic figurines are the largest represented category at the site and have several different subtypes. Some general consistencies among the anthropomorphic figurines include naturalistic qualities and ear-flare accoutrement appliques. Zoomorphic figurines also
have a large presence in the sample. The dominant paste type of the zoomorphic figurines from Río Viejo are grey wares. Most zoomorphic figurines at Río Viejo mostly depict birds and a number are canids, with the miscellaneous categories of frogs and crocodiles. Zoomorphic figurines were found as: instruments, vessel appliques, and free-standing figures. Sometimes zoomorphic iconographic qualities were applied on a vessel’s exterior but often were applied on rim sherds as if the zoomorphic being was peering in/out of a vessel or as if the vessel itself was expressive of its body. In general, most zoomorphic figurines from Río Viejo are iconographic bird instruments.

Within the transformational figurines there is also a trend of iconographic instruments. Reasoning for this may include the ritual value of transformational figurines, or that their manufacture may have fallen into more specialized hands since they embody sacred beings and concepts. In entirety, transformational figurines are the most elusive morphological category since there seem to be multiple aesthetic themes operating in each figurine as well as their overall rarity in the collection.

Anthropomorphic figurines from Río Viejo also display some interesting patterns. Like the other iconographic figurine categories, anthropomorphic figurines were hand-molded, a hallmark of figurine manufacture during the Terminal Formative Period. Most anthropomorphic figurines in this sample are head fragments with ornate and abundant accoutrements like ear-flares and hairstyles. One particularly interesting pattern in the anthropomorphic figurines is that none of them (despite some being more fragmented) display any primary sexual traits, and only two figurines within the combined site samples display any secondary sexual characteristics, however they are from Cerro de la Virgen. There are only a handful of figurines
from both sites with two bump appliques on the upper-body area suggesting breasts/nipples. Overall, it seems that sexual traits were not a big concern to show on the figurines from Río Viejo.

Deciding what gender or sex is of the figurines in this sample will not be part of this discussion for two reasons. First, there are no figurines in the sample with primary sexual traits, and only a small number have secondary sexual traits. Second, because the basis of something as complex as gender cannot not be predicated on a singular line of evidence, like the presence of nipple appliques, especially when such evidence is easily conflated with western conceptions of gender and sex (A. Joyce 2013, p. 79). Gender distinctions may also be closely intertwined with class or status distinctions, both of which may have been ascribed onto figurines through socio-cultural signifiers like accoutrements and clothing (Blomster 2009, 2011).

**Subtypes at Río Viejo**

Iconographic instruments are mostly zoomorphic and commonly depicted as birds. Imagining the loquacious nature of birds and their vast vocal calls, it does not seem surprising that most figurine-instruments are fashioned in the iconography of a bird. The mouthpiece on zoomorphic bird instruments is usually distinguished as the tail of a bird. The bird instruments are usually able to stand on their own on a surface as a tripod with their tail and two leg appliques serving as supports. Mouthpieces on the bird figurine-instruments seem to be defined as being the birds’ tails and usually lead to a square-beveled cavity on the bottom of the figurines’ body which opens to the resonating chamber. The resonating chamber is located within the “belly” or body of the bird-figurine instruments. Studying the direction of the
mouthpiece and broken figurines allowed me to understand the placement of the resonating chamber in figurine-instruments. On all zoomorphic iconographic instruments, resonating chambers were a highly refined interior area, which was carefully smoothed and articulated during manufacture as opposed to being unpolished; imprints of tool pressings, commonly done by reeds, are evident on most iconographic instruments. Tools were used to press and shape the beveled cavities that led into the resonating chamber.

There are also several zoomorphic figurines as vessel appliques in this sample. Again, zoomorphic figurines are represented in a diversity of forms. All zoomorphic iconographic vessel appliques were grey wares which are considered to be of higher quality due to their fine paste (no inclusions) versus coarse brown wares, and that the Valley of Oaxaca was a large center of grey ware exports (Blomster et al. 2005). There were four zoomorphic vessel appliques in the Río Viejo sample. Two of the iconographic appliques are frogs, one is a monkey and the other is a bird. The placement of these zoomorphic appliques on vessels was possibly a way to mark the contents of a vessel and/or to lend symbolic properties to the vessel itself (e.g. drinking from a vessel with a specific animal applique may lend certain qualities and/or prestige to the consumer).

Transformational figurines are also represented as iconographic instruments. There are three transformational iconographic instruments in the Río Viejo sample: #49, #51, #55. All three of these transformational iconographic instruments are ocarinas; all possess 2 finger stops. Two of these instruments (i.e., #49, #55) are transformational bird figurines, while the third (i.e., #51) represents a quadrupedal animal with neck accoutrements that wrap around its torso. Figurine #55 is a well-preserved and nearly complete bird tripod ocarina with ear-flare
appliques and large, plain disk-appliques for eyes, the other two bird instruments are missing their heads (i.e., #49, #51).

There is a subtype of abstract iconographic vessel appliques which does not fit clearly into any of the broad iconographic categories. This subtype contains three rim sherd fragments, all belonging to the Miniyua ceramic phase (i.e., #39, 40, 69, 74). Two of the four iconographic vessel appliques belong to a composite silhouette bowl, the third is an unspecified bowl form. The depicted figure is highly abstract and appears on all sherds as a mouth and possible nose, surrounded by cross-hatching and incised décor on the vessel. While all of these iconographic vessel appliques share many similar characteristics and iconography, the fourth sherd (figurine #74) deviates the most from the others. The iconography of the three composite silhouette bowls are almost identical (#39, 40, 69), but iconography of the fourth applique slightly differs in composition (e.g., the applique faces upwards, towards the rim, and is a slightly different shape). In addition, the fourth vessel applique (#74) is not a composite silhouette bowl, belonging to a different vessel type.

There is only one mask in this site sample (#38). The mask depicts an extremely naturalistic anthropomorphic face and has an exquisite burnished finish. Based on the aesthetic and qualities of the mask, it appears that a highly skilled artisan was responsible for its manufacture. The presence of a mask at Río Viejo is not surprising considering the large-scale rituals that took place at the site’s massive acropolis however, it is interesting that only one mask is present in the sample.

A unique trend in the sample involves anthropomorphic figurines with arms and/or hands folded/held in front of the torso area. These figurines are usually flat, or are appliqued to
a flat piece of ceramic (Hepp 2007; 222). This specific iconography and figurine format comprises the subcategory of tabular figurines. Tabular figurines are commonly distinguished with an anthropomorphic body, are depicted as standing up with hands and arms positioned in front of the torso. Tabular figurines have a variety of hand placements: sometimes hands are folded together, one on top of the other, or one hand rests in the palm of the other. Since only body/torso fragments have been found of this sub type, they may be potentially classified as anthropomorphic or transformational, depending on the iconography and accoutrements on the head, but in this thesis they are tentatively classified as anthropomorphic.

There is one anthropomorphic trope which seems to be reoccurring within this sample: an anthropomorphic face with a circular incision on its cheek. This image is depicted on three different figurines in this sample. The circle on the cheek is the linking characteristic, as well as the fact that this being is always depicted naturalistically (i.e. naturalistic-incised eyes). This circle-symbol incision on this figure’s cheek could represent a type of bodily modification (e.g. scarification or tattoo) or represent a more divine characteristic of which humans do not have. The reoccurrence of this image is potent, although it manifests as a slightly different image on each figurine due to variation in its execution, perhaps by different artists. The fact that the consistency of this image rests solely within the figurine sample from Río Viejo suggests that this being/image was specific to the site’s ritual activity and meaning. No figurines from Cerro de la Virgen fell into this subtype.

Some anthropomorphic figurine head-fragments were also vessel appliques, as opposed to stand-alone three-dimensional figurines. These figurine head vessel appliques are known as ‘death faces’, which reference ancestor veneration and ritual (Hepp 2007; 52). All the death
face fragments were naturalistic and smoothed and burnished; the heads were smoothed onto a vessel’s surface and traces of their application (i.e. tool swipes) are still visible. All of the ‘death faces’ are categorized under the ‘closed’ eye-type although their mouth-types vary.

Large-scale figurines are another subtype present at Río Viejo. In contrast to the common ‘miniature’ scale of figurines (approximately 20-30 cm in height) these larger figurines are approximately 50 + cm in height. This trend is expressed by four anthropomorphic figurine body fragments and a statuette. All of the large figurines are hollow. Two of the four large figurines depict seated figures, one a torso with a neck accoutrement applique, and a statuette, which was nearly complete but its legs are broken as well as recent facial damage in excavation.

One of the most unique figurines in the Río Viejo sample is an anthropomorphic acrobat (figurine #44). There is only one such figurine in the entire sample, from both sites. Figurine #44 is an extremely ornate and very well-made figurine. The surface of the figurine is highly burnished and has been smoothed as much as possible to mute the intensity of the burnishing swipes. All characteristics have been incised: the figurine has a face with open eyes and a mouth, a belly-button, a wide neck accoutrement, and clothing on the lower-half of the figurine’s body which could a type of loincloth or skirt. The figurine may have had some kind of headdress but the area has since been broken and eroded.

Again, there are no primary sexual characteristics present in the Río Viejo sample, only potential secondary sexual characteristics are present. Zoomorphic figurines do not normally have primary or secondary sexual traits depicted, or at least none in this sample do and the same goes for transformational figurines. The only exception may be figurine #47 which is a zoomorphic monkey vessel applique that has a small bump applique on its torso area. It is not
clear however, if this bump applique is part of the overall vessel design or is a secondary sexual trait. To reiterate, none of the anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, or transformational figurines have any kind of primary sexual characteristics present. In this study, figurines were not placed into definitive gender categories.

**Quantitative Data**

To further examine the relation of figurine morphology to other traits, I also compared iconographic frequency with ceramic paste type. Most figurines at the site were fine brown. The frequency of fine brown zoomorphic figurines is interesting to consider since an abundance of zoomorphic figurines in Oaxaca are depicted in grey paste (Winter 1989; Blomster 2005). On the contrary, anthropomorphic figurines at the site were mostly depicted in grey pastes. In general, grey anthropomorphic figurines, and fine brown anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines are the most abundant types from Río Viejo. In terms of surface finish, most grey figurines were burnished while the majority of fine brown figurines were not.
Figure 3: Paste-types at Río Viejo

Table 1: Paste-type by iconography at Río Viejo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paste Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>anthropomorphic</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>transformational</th>
<th>zoomorphic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>8.86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22.78</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.39</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24.05</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>27.85</td>
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Table 1: Paste-type by iconography at Río Viejo
<table>
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<th>Count Total %</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.56</td>
<td>35.44</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Paste-type by burnish at Río Viejo**

Free-standing figurines were the most common at Río Viejo, although over one-third of the sample was unable to be classified (“n/a”). Vessel appliques account for over one-fifth of the sample, a more specific variety of figurines. The majority of the definite iconographic instruments were zoomorphic. In contrast, most anthropomorphic figurines were definitively not instruments. Although the quantity of transformational figurines was low, more than half of them were instruments. All instruments were wind-instruments, there were no iconographic string instruments or etc. Most instruments were whistles, with a few ocarinas, but there were no flute instruments present.
Examining the correlation between mouth and eye type can help to establish and/or understand patterns of possible figurine facial typologies. Río Viejo seems to have the highest correlation between cheerio eye-appliques and beak mouth-types which can be seen in the zoomorphic bird figurines at the site. Although the correlation between cheerio eyes and beak mouths is the highest at the site, it accounts for a relatively low portion of the site sample and

**Table 3: Iconography by instrument at Río Viejo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<th>no</th>
<th>possibly</th>
<th>yes</th>
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is not a significant enough correlation. Open mouths are the most common mouth-type, but are evenly distributed between several different eye types. At Río Viejo, the patterning between eye and mouth types seem to be highly dispersed.

Mouth-type and eye-types, when examined in isolation from each other, are also relatively dispersed. Eye-type by iconography is rather diluted throughout the site, with no strong pattering. There is however, a strong trend of anthropomorphic figurines with an open mouth-type. Although the open teeth mouth-type category has a small number of constituent figurines, anthropomorphic figurines are mostly responsible for this population. Because many of the anthropomorphic figurines at the site have naturalistic qualities, it is not surprising that the open teeth mouth-type is comprised as such.

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Table 4: Eye-type by mouth-type at Río Viejo
Accoutrements included any kind of adornment, regalia, or modification to the physical appearance of the figurines (i.e. hairstyles, jewelry, clothing). It has been hypothesized that figurines may have worn clothing but the archaeological record in the Lower Rio Verde Valley has not allowed for such preservation of organic materials (Winter 2005; Blomster; Hepp 2007; Hepp and Joyce 2013; Cyphers 1993). While some figurines in this sample may have been
outfitted with clothing, there was no definite way to tell. Some figurines are positioned in a ‘stiff’ manner (their limbs extended outwards), which may suggest the ease of dressing the figurines but this interpretation is only supported within speculation so far. Figurine bodies had potential for accoutrements, but accoutrements seemed to usually be represented on figurine heads, so if the head of a figurine was missing they were classified as “n/a”.

The most common figurine accoutrement across all iconographic categories is ear-flare appliques. The absence of accoutrements on zoomorphic figurines is consistent with the difference between zoomorphic figurines and transformational figurines. Body modification was the second most common accoutrement type and is only present on anthropomorphomorphic figurines. Necklaces and hairstyles are also most frequent on anthropomorphic figurines, but only account for a small representation at the site.
Table 7: Iconography by accoutrement type

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<th>Count</th>
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<th>Body Modification</th>
<th>Earflare</th>
<th>Earflare, Body Modification</th>
<th>Earflare, Hairstyle</th>
<th>Earflare, Necklace, Hairstyle</th>
<th>Earpiercings, Hairstyle</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

Qualitative analyses of the Río Viejo sample helped both support and dismiss some arbitrarily perceived patterns. There is no correlation between eye and mouth types. There is a higher frequency of anthropomorphic figurines with a grey paste-type then zoomorphic figurines, contrary to what was expected. There are several other strong patterns in this sample which will be compared, in the conclusion, to the patterns seen in the Cerro de la Virgen sample.
Chapter 3: Cerro de la Virgen

The figurine sample from the site Cerro de la Virgen has some consistencies with the sample from Río Viejo, but overall is unique from Río Viejo. An artifact catalogue of the Cerro de la Virgen figurines will be presented here and will be followed by an analytical discussion. The following chapter will present quantitative data results from both sites and further comparison of the sites’ figurines will be given within the concluding statements.
This is a bird head fragment. The figure has a small applique at top of its head, perhaps representing a tuft of feathers, and a long beak applique. This fragment is flat and has characteristics on opposing sides, indicating a two-dimensional design. There is a horizontal incision on either side of the beak, but the design doesn’t connect at the center. The break-line reveals remnants of two finger stops which suggest that this is an ocarina. The break reveals a concave area behind the head, which looks to be part of a resonating chamber. At the center, there is a cavity that follows through the entire head of the figurine and was possibly a point of attachment. This fragment is categorized under the ‘incised’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site</th>
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<th>Op#</th>
<th>FS#</th>
<th>Reassigned #</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Lot</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>PRV13</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3-8223</td>
<td>#80</td>
<td>10B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>fine brown</td>
<td>zoomorphic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a highly eroded fragment and resembles bust of bird figurine. All that survives is a section from neck down to middle of the body. The top of the wings, which are appliques, can also be seen. The presence of two vertical incisions on the wing appliques could signify feathers. There is a concave area at the bottom of the broken figurine.
Cerro de la Virgen  |  PRV13  |  A  |  3-8820  |  #82  |  110  |  3  |  fine brown  |  zoomorphic

This is the top, or face of a semi-eroded figurine. The inside of the fragment is hollow and is an oblong shape. Two sets of incised concentric rings likely indicate eyes and pupils. Long, slanted, linear indents sit above the eyes and indicate eyebrows. Sections of the exterior are non-oxidized. Although the iconography on this fragment is limited, it suggests that this is a possible frog figurine (see #52, 56).
This is an anthropomorphic head applique on a flat slab of clay. The back of the fragment is flat and has no iconography. There is a small pinch of clay within the mouth that makes it look like it has one tooth. The ears are pronounced with small indents. In manufacture, it looks as though the initial face, ears, and nose were applied first, the other facial features and headdress were applied subsequently. This anthropomorphic figurine is very similar to #111. This fragment is classified under the ‘oval applique’ eye-type and ‘open-teeth’ mouth-type.
This is a highly eroded and small figurine fragment with an unclear orientation. The back of the fragment is slightly concave. The left eye, and a small part of the right eye, have been preserved. The fragment is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type. A small part of a brow ridge applique (which forms a V-shape) can be seen above the right eye.
Cerro de la Virgen
PRV13  8  3-8103  #85  16J  1  fine brown  anthropomorphic
The manufacturing process of this figurine appears to be similar to that of #86 except this figurine is not mounted on a flat slab of clay. The headdress is a band of clay that wraps around the forehead and has two diagonal incisions for décor. The fragment has the ‘oval applique’ eye-type and an ‘open’ mouth-type. There is a small circular applique with a hollow center on the chin area which represents a lip plug. Two long, slanted indents follow the tops of the eyes, like eyebrows. The face is long. Flecks of red paint remain on the figurine and are especially visible in the crevices around the eye area. There is a preserved fingerprint swipe on the back. It is possible that this figurine was appliqued to something, e.g., a vessel.
This is a very small, eroded fragment. The remnants of the figurine suggest that it represents a bird. There is a break at neckline. The figurine stands by a tripod support which includes two leg appliques in the front, and the tail/mouthpiece in the back as a third point of support. There is a square beveled cavity on the bottom which leads to an interior resonating chamber. The bottom of the tail has been broken off, exposing the mouthpiece. Small flecks of red paint remain on various areas on the exterior of the figurine.
This fragment is small and eroded which, makes it difficult to discern the overall figure and orientation. Based on the characteristics present, this looks like half of an anthropomorphic face. The eye and mouth are both appliques. The fragment is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and an ‘open’ mouth-type. There is a convex lump in middle, which is probably remains of a nose applique. The figurine is broken on the back and shows remnants of tool swipes, suggesting that this figurine was likely applied to something, e.g., vessel or figurine body.
This is a highly-eroded figurine fragment with an ambiguous form, but is possibly zoomorphic based on present characteristics. The figurine fragment resembles an owl, with an eye applique and the flare applique next to the eye probably represents feathers, much like a horned owl (see #90). There is a small, vertical indent next to the potential “cheerio applique” eye-type. There are three eroded horizontal indents on the flared applique.
This is a fragment of an eye-applique. The fragment has patches of non-oxidized clay which suggests that it was differentially fired in manufacture. This is a relatively flat sherd with an eye applique. The eye applique design is rather ornate, with an abstract applique shape that frames a smaller circular applique in the middle. This is a very unique eye shape. The fragment has been classified as the only ‘horseshoe’ eye-type in the sample.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment. There fragment is broken at the jawline. The original figurine was small-scale, based on the head fragment size. There is a fold within the break line which suggests that the figurine was hollow. This fragment resembles an owl head. The fragment is classified under the 'cheerio applique' eye-type and 'beak' mouth-type. The fragment has a short beak applique with horizontal indents on both sides but they don't connect in the middle. The two pinched appliques on left and right sides, over the eyes, both have three indented horizontal lines which represent feathers (see #88).
This fragment resembles an anthropomorphic face. The bottom and top halves of the face of this figurine were refitted together. The eye is an applique and falls under the ‘oval applique’ eye-type. The mouth is also an applique and falls under the ‘open’ mouth-type. Remains of red slip are preserved within the indent of the mouth applique. There are also remnants of a nose applique in the middle, but it has since eroded. Parts of the exterior of the fragment are non-oxidized.
This fragment is broken and eroded. This is a very ambiguous figurine fragment but looks like part of a possible bird head. One side of the fragment is flat and worn and has no visible attributes; this plain area shares an angle with another small flat side which has cheerio-like applique, possibly to represent an eye.
This is a small limb fragment which has been refitted. The fragment is a curved-cylindrical shape with a slight pinch of clay that forms an angle at one end.
This is a large and dense coarse brown wear fragment. This fragment has been refitted and looks like a limb from a large figurine. The fragment is a cylindrical L-shape.
This is a foot fragment. The fragment is broken at its attachment point and the break reveals a concave impression. The temper inclusions are large and look like sand granules and/or broken shell.
This is a fragment of an anthropomorphic face. The surface of the figurine is highly eroded and has a coarse and porous texture. Most of the facial details are faint due to weathering. It does appear however, that all the facial features were incised, except for the nose applique. There are also ear-flare appliques on either side of the face. The chin of the figurine is broad, and has a large surface area. There is a small area of red discoloration on the chin of the figurine which was probably due to firing conditions. This fragment is tentatively categorized under the ‘naturalistic’ eye-type, but the mouth area is too eroded to make a clear interpretation.
This is a head fragment that resembles a canid. The fragment is broken along the neck line. The neckline extends behind the head of the figurine, suggesting that it may have stood as a quadruped, or was a possible vessel applique. There are also two breaks above the eye appliques, which were probably appliques that likely represented ears. At the front of the fragment there is an elongated applique of clay which has a single incised horizontal line around it; this probably represents a ‘snout’ mouth-type. The eyes are also appliques and are classified as the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type.
This fragment looks a type of canid or opossum. There are two small appliques at the top of the head to represent ears. This fragment falls into the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘snout’ mouth-type. The end of the snout applique has broken off. One side of the snout applique is more preserved and shows remnants of a possible applique at the end, which may further suggest this is an opossum figurine. The ceramic has been highly oxidized resulting in a vibrant red-orange color. The scale of the head fragment suggests this was originally a small figurine. The fragment is broken at the neckline which is located in the back of the head, implying that the figure probably stood as a quadruped.
This is a fragment of a small, possibly zoomorphic figurine. This fragment looks like the head of a bird figurine which had a beak applique broken off and is broken at the neck line. All characteristics are situated on opposite sides of the fragment which indicates a two-dimensional format. There are two appliques on either side of the fragment which look to fulfill the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type. There is a circular cavity below the eye appliques which runs through figurine; this characteristic suggests that the figurine is able to be strung or attached to something, e.g., pendant.
This is a tabular figurine. This figurine fragment was associated with a fragment of a stamp. Two small pressed buttons of clay are appliqued on the front of the fragment, and both have diagonal incisions. In-between these two appliques is a plain bump applique with a horizontal incision through it. The iconography of the fragment is somewhat difficult to discern but it resembles two hands clasping onto an ambiguous item. The fragment is flat, onto which all the details were appliqued.
This fragment has an ambiguous shape and iconography. This fragment looks like a part of a torso, with a shoulder and an arm applique on the side. This is probably an anthropomorphic figurine. The scale of this fragment suggests that this would have been a very large figurine. The break reveals that the figurine is hollow on the inside but the interior area is not smoothed or refined.
This is a small zoomorphic head fragment that resembles a bird. The fragment is classified under the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘beak’ mouth-type. The fragment is cleanly broken at neckline, which is at the back of the head, suggesting that this is an iconographic vessel applique. The profile of fragment shows the outline of a large, pointed forehead which forms an obtuse angle where it meets the beak applique. There are small horizontal incisions on either side of the beak applique.
This is an ambiguous fragment but it looks like a section of the lower-half of an anthropomorphic body/torso, including part of an arm applique. The small applique on the side with two parallel incisions likely represents a hand, or part of an arm. Overall the fragment is broken into an almost triangular shape, and it begins to flare out past the small applique on the side. The fragment looks dense but a concave area on the bottom is revealed by the break line.
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment. The fragment is broken at the top and at the neckline. Since the exterior is highly eroded, it is not clear whether this is representative of a death face or of a conventional anthropomorphic figure. Fragment is a flattened shape with all characteristics distinguished on one side. The facial features all look naturalistic. The mouth has a grimaced expression but it is difficult to tell if the eyes are open or closed. The two ear-flare appliques are quite large in comparison to the scale of the facial features and look a bit exaggerated. This fragment is only definitively categorized as having the ‘grimace’ mouth-type, the eyes are too eroded for clear interpretation.
This is an anthropomorphic figurine head. All characteristics were incised, excluding the nose and the mouth, which were appliqued. The fragment has an incised ‘oval incised’ eye-type and an ‘open’ mouth-type. The figure has ear-flares and some kind of neck accoutrement which is signified by the incised décor at the neck line. The top of the face is narrow. There are two ‘ J-shaped impressions on either side of the fragment, above the ear-flare appliques; this looks like part of a hairstyle/headdress that has since broken off. The interior of the fragment has a small hollow area.
This is a very ambiguous figure and it is both broken and eroded. All iconographic characteristics are appliques. There is a circular applique which could either resemble a cheerio applique eye-type or an ear-flare applique. This circular applique is perpendicular to a linear applique. There are two semi-circle appliques which border the linear applique. The unbroken edge of the fragment is rounded.
This is a small zoomorphic head fragment and it resembles a possible canid or opossum. The fragment has the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘open’ mouth-type. Two appliques at the top have broken off and probably once signified ears. The figure has a short nose or snout which has two cavities for nostrils and looks upturned at the end, similar to a pig snout. There is a small circular cavity below eyes which runs through the neck for attachment. The fragment has been broken at the neckline which reveals a thin-walled and refined concave area below the head which suggests that this is an iconographic instrument.
This anthropomorphic head fragment is very similar to #83. Both of these figurine fragments have the same headdress and facial design. In manufacture, it does not seem as if the facial applique was mounted on a flat slab of clay like #83 was, but it looks like this figurine was constructed as a free-standing figurine. The head fragment has the oval applique eye-type and open mouth-type. The fragment is broken at the bottom, along the chin/jawline, and on the left side of the face.
This is a fragment of a tabular figurine. The fragment is a flat slab of clay and is supported by two appliques on one side. The supports likely allowed the figurine to stand upright in a similar fashion to a photo-frame. Iconographic traits are present on the side opposite of the support appliques. There are two elongated appliques on the front that meet, forming a V-shape with a shallow cavity at the vertex. These two appliques resemble two arms positioned in front of a torso with hands clasped together. There is also an extremely faint design surrounding the two arm appliques, but the image is unclear due to poor surface preservation. On the right side of the figurine the image is slightly more visible, and looks like a possible arm or leg; if so, the image probably represented one being engulfing by another, following a highly transformative theme, however, at this point the figurine is only ostensibly transformational.
Cerro de la Virgen  PTRV16  A  16-1199  #110  24M  2  grey  transformational
This is a mask fragment. All iconographic features are incised except for a small applique for the nose. This fragment is classified under the ‘oval incised’ eye-type. There are two small cavities underneath the nose applique to represent nostrils. There is a small cavity near the break line which punctures through the ceramic. This punctured cavity represents a pupil which gives the wearer the ability to look through the cavity, hence classifying this as a mask. The fragment is broken through the cross-sections of the face but the outer edges are well preserved.
| Cerro de la Virgen | PTRV16 | A | 16-0558 | #111 | 23K | 2 | grey | anthropomorphic |

This is a tabular figurine. The fragment resembles an anthropomorphic torso. The fragment is flat and has two appliques with linear incisions on the front side. The two appliques on the front resemble hands clasped together. The small, circular incised cavity above the hand appliques is representative of a belly-button. There are two breaks at the bottom where leg appliques were probably attached and a diagonal break across the top.
This fragment is an iconographic vessel applique. The applique is a zoomorphic bust that stoops over the rim-sherd, suggesting that the applique either peered inward or outwards from a vessel. The applique resembles an opossum and is depicted with its hands over its snout. The applique has a ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and a ‘snout’ mouth-type. Two small pinched appliques at the top represent ears and vertical incisions to further define them. The right ear applique is broken. The two long coil appliques that meet in the center represent arms/paws which rest atop the snout applique.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cerro de la Virgen</th>
<th>PTRV16</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>16-0936</th>
<th>#113</th>
<th>8S</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>grey</th>
<th>anthropomorphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Image of a clay figurine with dimensions indicated by a checkerboard pattern.]
This is an anthropomorphic body fragment. The figure looks like it was in a seated position, with its knees tucked under the waist and a hand resting on the leg. The leg appliques are broken and eroded. There is a large break through the torso which is responsible for the absence of the head of the figurine. From what survives of the torso, there are two bump appliques, differentially sized, which resemble a swollen belly and nipples. There is a small cavity on the bottom/underside of belly applique which represents a belly button. The long applique on side which has parallel incisions at the bottom which resembles an arm.
This is a fragment of the upper-half of an anthropomorphic face. In the middle of the fragment there is an applique which represents a nose, and it has a circular cavity that runs through to both sides. The cavity through the nose possesses the ability to attach accoutrements to/through it, serving as the explicit symbol and function of a nose piercing. Part of an eye is visible on the left side of the fragment and is defined by incised lines and has a small cavity for a pupil in the center. Although most of the facial features are not present on this fragment, the top lip is still visible and looks to have been appliqued.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cerro de la Virgen</th>
<th>PTRV16</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>16-0562</th>
<th>#115</th>
<th>12l</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>grey</th>
<th>anthropomorphic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This is a fragment of the lower-half of an anthropomorphic face. The fragment has an 'open' mouth-type but eyes are not present on the fragment. The bottom of a nose applique, with a nostril cavity, is visible in the top-right corner of the fragment. There is an elongated applique on the side of the fragment, which was probably an ear. The backside of the fragment is slightly concave.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment. This figure resembles an opossum. This is probably a fragment of an iconographic instrument since the inside is hollow, refined, has evidence of a reed-tool pressing (a common trace in most instrument resonating chambers), and the snout of the figure is a mouthpiece. The fragment has the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘snout’ mouth-type. There are two coil appliques above the eyes and a small rectangular applique with two incised holes that sits on top of the snout. The figure is depicted with hands covering/sitting on top of the snout which is characteristic of opossum iconography. The arms and hands are appliques.
This is a bust fragment of an anthropomorphic figurine. The surface of the fragment is eroded but there are still traces of a white slip. There is a unique cavity underneath the chin of the figure, which leads to a hollow area within the head of the figure however, there is no evidence that this is a resonating chamber. There are also several linear incisions on the neck of the figure, probably also for décor. The facial expression of the figure is reminiscent of the other death faces (e.g., eyes are half closed with an open mouth exposing teeth) however this is not a vessel applique. All facial features are naturalistic. This fragment is classified under the ‘naturalistic’ eye-type and ‘open teeth’ mouth-type. The top of the head has several decorative linear incisions to depict some kind of hairstyle or head-wrap/headdress. The ears are appliques with incised designs and are present on either side of the head.
This is an eroded, broken, and ambiguous fragment. The form of the fragment is similar to the torso area of zoomorphic bird figurines. There are three eroded appliques on the bottom which probably were the feet and tail that served as tripod supports. The fragment is dense and does not have a hollow chamber pointing to the fact that this is not an iconographic instrument. There is a small vertical incision between the two eroded possible leg appliques.
This fragment is a coil that is broken at either end. This looks like a possible arm of anthropomorphic figurine. The fragment is pinched at one end and has decorative incisions. The breaks at the top and bottom suggest that this fragment was a limb applique. There is a set of parallel incisions near the end, and are perpendicular to a single incision at the end.
Cerro de la Virgen | PTRV16 | B | 16-1294 | #120 | 16M | 3 | fine brown | anthropomorphic
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment with breaks at the hair and neck lines. The complete figurine may have had a headdress but it has since broken off and there are some decorative remnants (e.g. incisions) that support this notion. The break along the hairline reveals a hollow area in the within the head. The facial features of the figurine are extremely detailed. The fragment has a ‘pinched cheerio’ eye-type and an ‘open’ mouth-type. The nose on the fragment is also an applique feature and has two small cavities to distinguish nostrils. On either side of the nose there are two appliques of extraneous clay that have been shaped and smoothed into a ridge-like shape. These two ridge appliques form a high-cheekbone ridge on the figurine, giving the face a hyper-realistic shape. On the cheek appliques are two parallel vertical incisions which probably indicate bodily modification, e.g., scarification or tattooing. There is a convex applique of clay under the chin of the figure that has broken off; at one point this applique was probably some kind of accoutrement. The fragment has ear-flare appliques but deviates from the standard ear-flare appliques in that they are less circular, as if the applique has been pinched together.
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment and only the left side of the face remains. The break at the neckline and in the back of the head reveals that the inside of the head is hollow. The back of the fragment looks flat and undecorated. The fragment has an ‘oval applique’ eye-type and an ‘open’ mouth-type. Flecks of red paint remain on the surface but has mostly eroded. The fragment also has a large nose and two ear-flare appliques. There are two parallel incisions on an applique that connects to the ear-flare which may be indicative of a hairstyle.
This is a very ambiguous fragment. The fragment is an abstract triangular shape. Where the clay is pinched at the top, there is a small punctured cavity which runs through which is a point of attachment. There are several decorative incisions along the edge of the fragment, creating a border on the front of the fragment. The opposite side has no iconography/décor.
This is a tabular figurine. Most of the figurine looks intact but the head is missing. The fragment is flat, suggesting that this has a two-dimensional format. There are two small bump appliques on the upper part of the figure that represent nipples. There is a small circular cavity below the nipples which resembles a bellybutton. There are two elongated coil appliques on the sides of the fragment that have been blended/smoothed into the body of the figurine. The arms are positioned in front of the torso with one higher than the other. There is a vertical incision at the bottom of the fragment to indicate legs.
This is an ambiguous figurine fragment. This is a small, thin-walled, curved piece of ceramic. There are two rows of incised décor at the top of the figurine. The opposite side has no décor and has been smoothed.
This fragment is a small flat slab of clay with part of an applique intact. The applique has a small pinch at the end and two small parallel incisions, resembling a hand.

This is a fragment of a figurine limb. This is probably a leg fragment since the pinch of clay at the bottom forms an angle and has three incised lines, resembling a foot. The bottom of the figurine is flat which allows it to stand on a flat surface.
This fragment is a naturalistic depiction of a toe with a toenail. To the left of the fragment there is part of an applique that has broken off. Based on the break and applique position, this was probably the big toe on the right foot. There is a flat impression on the bottom of the figurine which suggests that the figurine stood. Considering the scale of the toe, the complete figurine would have been large.
This is a tabular figurine. The fragment includes the chest area of the figurine. There is a crossed arm applique on the front. The hands and arms are consistent with the usual applique style. The fragment is broken on all sides. The back of the fragment is broken and reveals part of the interior of the figurine. On the back, there are several strips of clay that have been scored together suggesting that this figurine had a unique manufacturing process from most other figurines.
This is an anthropomorphic head fragment. The head of the figurine is broken in-half with an additional break at the neck line. The breaks reveal a hollow area within the neck of the fragment but the rest of the interior is dense ceramic. The fragment has an ‘open’ mouth-type and an ‘oval applique’ eye-type. Within the mouth applique, there is a small vertical pinch of clay possibly representing a tooth, similar to #86. On the intact side of the face, it appears that an ear and ear-flare applique have broken off.
This is a small and ambiguous fragment. There is a small pinched appliqué at one end and has two thick parallel incisions. The area below the pinch is broken but seems like part of a hollow area. This area is extremely thin-walled and has a small circular cavity which has been broken in-half. The above characteristics suggest that this may be a fragment of an iconographic instrument.
This small fragment is super ambiguous in form and iconography. The surface of the fragment is jagged and eroded. There are many flat impressions on all sides. There is a deep circular cavity on one side but, due to erosion, it is unclear if it is an applique or not.
This is a large fragment of an anthropomorphic body with a second, smaller anthropomorphic figurine appliqued to it. The fragment appears to depict a parental figure holding a baby. The main figurine has a small bump applique on the upper part of the fragment, which resembles a nipple. There is a small circular cavity on the lower-half of the fragment indicating a bellybutton. There is a long coil applique on the side which bends at an angle and it is broken just past the vertex. This applique resembles an arm, which is cradling a small applique that looks like the body of a child. There are traces of red paint around the arms and stomach. The horizontal strip applique across the waist suggests the figurine was shown with clothing. The interior of the fragment is dense.
This is a small bird head figurine. The fragment has the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and a ‘beak’ mouth-type. The end of the beak has broken off. The fragment is also broken just past the neckline.
This is a zoomorphic head fragment. Figure resembles a possible canid or opossum but the features are too eroded to make definite interpretations. The figure is classified as having the ‘cheerio applique’ eye-type and ‘snout’ mouth-type. There is a break at the neck line, which is in the back of the head, that reveals a concave area. There is a large eyebrow ridge applique that forms a V-shape on the forehead area. There are two appliques at the top that have broken off which were probably ear appliques.
This is a limb fragment. There is a small pinch of clay at the end with three vertical incisions, suggesting that this is a foot/leg fragment. The fragment has a break at the top where it was attached to a figurine.
This is an ambiguous fragment. The fragment is relatively flat and is broken at one end. There are several parallel incised lines on one side of the fragment which are perpendicular to a band applique around the middle. Remnants of red paint are visible within the incisions.
This is a hand fragment. This fragment was associated with other formative ceramics but looks possibly Classic Period, suggesting an intrusive context. One side of the fragment is flat and has no décor, and was probably the side which was attached to a figurine. There are several incisions on the opposite side, resembling fingers. Around the wrist area there two bands of layered disk appliques, resembling an ornate bracelet.
| Cerro de la Virgen | PTRV16 | G | 16-1581 | #138 | 5l | 4 | grey | zoomorphic |

This is an ambiguous head fragment. Only one eye is preserved and falls into the 'cheerio applique' eye-type. There is also remnants of a V-shaped applique that borders the eye area, probably representing a brow ridge. Based on the present characteristics, this is probably a zoomorphic figurine.
This is a limb fragment. The fragment is broken on one end, probably where it attached to a figurine. The exterior of the fragment is non-oxidized. There are remnants of black/grey paint on one side of the fragment. There is a small pinch of clay at one end which suggests that this is a leg applique.

This is a limb fragment. The fragment is broken on one end, probably where it attached to a figurine body. The fragment forms a sharp acute angle and has a flat pinch at the end opposite from the break. The angle/shape of the fragment possibly indicates that this is a leg fragment of a seated figurine.
This is a mask fragment. The scale of the fragment suggest that the complete mask was large. There is a large nose applique with two nostril cavities on the underside. There is a flat, elongated applique below the nose, resembling a lip. Vibrant red paint is still intact on the upper-lip applique. Below the lip applique is a long rectangular applique with several linear incisions, resembling a row of teeth.
This is a fragment of an anthropomorphic torso. There is a break at the waistline and at the neckline. There are traces of two bump appliques near the top of the torso for nipples, but they have since been broken and eroded. There is a small pressed coil applique on the backside of the figurine resembling hair, e.g., ponytail. There is an indented crease down the back of the figurine where the hair applique is. This crease likely was meant to give the figurine a more naturalistic shape, resembling a spine.
This is an anthropomorphic face fragment. The mouth is an applique and falls under the open mouth-type category. There is a small incised line below the mouth. The fragment is broken on all sides.
Cerro da la Virgen Figurines

The majority of the figurine contexts at Cerro de la Virgen were secondary with most figurines from fill contexts, a few were from possibly residential contexts, and some were from public contexts. Because the context of the majority of the sample was from fill, the figurines from Cerro de la Virgen are markedly more broken and eroded versus the figurines from Río Viejo, which most were deposited in middens. The fill contexts of the figurines resulted in much ambiguous iconography and many figurines were unable to be comfortably classified. One stark difference in the anthropomorphic figurines from both sites is that primary sexual traits on figurines were only present at Cerro de la Virgen. This may be due to the possibility that figurines with primary sexual traits are either not present or as explicit at Río Viejo. Conversely, there are several thematic and iconographic consistencies between the figurine samples from both sites; many of the sub-types at Río Viejo are also present at Cerro de la Virgen, e.g., tabular figurines, iconographic bird instruments, etc.

Subtypes at Cerro de la Virgen

The anthropomorphic figurines at Cerro de la Virgen have strong consistencies in their stylistic attributes. Only two of the anthropomorphic figurines in the sample have detailed naturalistic traits (#107, #120) while the rest appear more abstract. Many of the abstract figurines even have the same accoutrements, e.g., #86 and #108 have the same exact headdress. At the site, there is generally a low diversity in anthropomorphic figurines, e.g., in aesthetic and manufacturing methods.
Masks were also present at Cerro de la Virgen. There are two masks in the total site sample. The two masks display highly naturalistic qualities however, the scale of the two masks is vastly different. One mask is small, has zoomorphic iconography, and was probably worn and/or attached to a figurine at one point. Although the iconography is zoomorphic, the fact that it is a mask suggests that it transformed the wearer into a different/new zoomorphic being, or being with zoomorphic traits. This is the only zoomorphic mask in the entire collection from either site.

The other mask fragment resembles an anthropomorphic mouth. It has an upper lip which is painted red and an upper row of teeth, distinguished by several parallel incised lines. The fragment also has the bulb of a nose, with two nostrils as indicated by impressed cavities. The fragment of the mask mouth is very well-made. The fragment is dense, neatly painted, and displays qualities produced by a skilled craftsperson. It is interesting to note that this fragment is a coarse brown ware ceramic, which is typically considered to be a lower-quality paste versus grey or fine brown. The presence of masks within this sample reinforces notions of animistic beliefs and practices in the Lower Río Verde Valley of Oaxaca, MX (Blomster 2011; Hepp and Joyce 2013).

Tabular figurines are also present at Cerro de la Virgen. The tabular figurines in this sample deviate somewhat in manufacture and morphology from those at Río Viejo. In particular, figurine #128 has crossed arms, a bodily composition not seen in the tabular figurines from Río Viejo. Looking at the back of figurine #131 gives insight to the manufacture process which is entirely unique from the other tabular figurines; several strips of clay were laid out and scored/blended together on the surface. There is more variety in the hand and arm
Positions of the tabular figurines as well. Some of the tabular figurines have their hands clasped, crossed arms, or one hand resting above the other. There is also a larger abundance of tabular figurines in the Cerro de la Virgen sample versus Río Viejo.

There are also two zoomorphic vessel appliques in site sample from Cerro de la Virgen (#105 and #93). The quantity of zoomorphic vessel appliques at Cerro de la Virgen is much lower than that of Río Viejo. At Cerro de la Virgen there is a consistent pattern of zoomorphic vessel appliques manufactured in grey ceramic paste, again seen in #105 and #93. The iconography of #93 is representative of a bird, more specifically an owl due to the two flared appliques on top. The flared appliques have several horizontal linear incisions which suggest feather tufts, much like those seen on horned owls. Figurine #105 is a more ambiguous iconography, but most likely represents a bird. Both vessel appliques, although fragments of zoomorphic heads, are very small in scale.

In way of zoomorphic figurines from the Cerro de la Virgen, there do seem to be some notable patterns that are specifically represented at the site. At Cerro de la Virgen, there is a significantly smaller quantity of iconographic bird instruments, versus Río Viejo. The bird instruments from Cerro de la Virgen, although broken, suggest, based on head and/or body fragment size a much smaller scale on average than the iconographic bird instruments from Río Viejo. The iconographic bird instruments from Cerro de la Virgen all are of fine/medium brown paste type and none in the sample were fashioned with grey ceramic paste. Overall, the canon of zoomorphic figurines at Cerro de la Virgen includes: birds, owls, opossums, frogs, and canids. The most glaring deviant trend in the zoomorphic iconography at Cerro de la Virgen is the representation of opossums. Iconography representing opossums does not occur in the
figurines from Río Viejo. Opossum figurines are commonly depicted in a canid-like morphology and have their hands over their snouts (e.g., #115). The hand-over-snout posture is common in the opossum figurines. Although the difference between opossum and canid morphology is slight, and is even more fluid when considering artistic license, opossums are generally indicated by their trademark posture (i.e., hands over snout) and by the presence of a small flat slab of clay applied on the snout (although this is not present on all opossum figurines). Owls are also exclusive to the Cerro de la Virgen sample. Although owls are birds, they are a specific type and are differentiated from other bird figurines by the presence of feathered ear appliques.

The exclusive presence of opossum and owl figurines at Cerro de la Virgen supports the notion of a localized identity. The community members of Cerro de la Virgen may have identified with their immediate ecological surroundings. In a regional perspective, the opossum and/or owl may have been an icon/image related to and referenced by the community of Cerro de la Virgen as a symbol of that local community.

Transformational figurines are not present at all in the sample from Cerro de la Virgen. Due to the contextual nature of figurines at Cerro de la Virgen (being mostly from fill), it is not surprising that most are extremely fragmented. There is an outstanding quantity of figurine limbs and other iconographically ambiguous figurine fragments in the site sample. The fact that no figurines in this sample were explicitly transformational does not waiver the potential for them to be re-classified as such. Classification of figurine fragments in the entirety of this study were conservative. The absence of transformational figurines speaks to the use of figurines; transformational figurines directly reference ritual use and value. The lack of transformational
figurines at Cerro de la Virgen fits this interpretation; anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines at the site may very well have been ritually employed however, the ritual use and meaning seems to differ from that of transformational figurine ritual use at the acropolis of Río Viejo. There is only one potential transformational figurine from Cerro de la Virgen (#112), which is a tabular figurine. Figurine #112 is a flat slab of clay, broken in half, with two ‘feet’ appliques to help it stand. A faint anthropomorphic image is on the surface the flat slab (side opposite the supportive legs). Around the arm appliques, there is a faint outline of possibly zoomorphic arms which seem to be engulfing the anthropomorphic body. Because the exterior is so eroded, the imagery is ambiguous and unable to be comfortably classified as transformational.

The anthropomorphic figurines in this sample were mostly body fragments. Not many anthropomorphic head fragments were present in the sample. This may suggest that the heads of anthropomorphic figurines were not intentionally saved upon discard or retirement of the figurine. Alternatively, it may also speak to the poor preservation and context at the site.

Death faces were, although always face/head fragments, are not present at the site sample of Cerro de la Virgen. There were no facial appliques on grey ware sherds that were intentionally saved. The only figurine that may possibly fall in the same realm as death face appliques is #120. Number 120 is a grey ware bust of a stand-alone anthropomorphic figurine, but not a vessel applique. The facial expression on #120 mirrors the diagnostic features of the death masks: naturalistic features, half-closed/lidded eyes, an open mouth which usually exposes teeth, and grey paste type. While the morphology of #120 does not directly adhere to that of the death faces found at Río Viejo the same themes and iconography are being evoked.
**Quantitative Data**

The iconographic distribution within the site is relatively even. The majority of the figurines are anthropomorphic but are complimented by the large percentage of unclassifiable figurines (“n/a”). In reviewing the contexts of the figurines at the site, many were found in fill. The fill contexts of the figurines points to one reason why there are so many ambiguous and fragmented figurines at Cerro de la Virgen. Anthropomorphic figurines are ubiquitous in the sample, so it is not surprising they are the most abundant iconographic category at Cerro de la Virgen. Zoomorphic figurines are also well-represented at the site and are responsible for a quarter of the sample however, there are not many iconographic zoomorphic instruments. Most notable is the absence of transformational figurines in the site sample. It also does not appear that there is a relationship between burnishing surface treatment and paste type. Most figurines from Cerro de la Virgen, regardless of paste type or iconography, do not have a burnished surface treatment.
Figure 5: Iconography at Cerro de la Virgen

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<th>zoomorphic</th>
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<td>fine brown</td>
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<td>grey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>medium brown</td>
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Table 8: Paste type by Iconography at Cerro de la Virgen

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</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Paste-type by burnish at Cerro de la Virgen
The ‘horseshoe’ eye-type is completely distinct since there is only one such figurine with such attributes. The biggest associations in the combination of eye-type and mouth-types are between ‘oval applique’ eyes and ‘open’ mouths, and between ‘cheerio applique’ eyes and ‘snout’ mouths, although the correlations between these types are low. There is a consistency in zoomorphic figurines with cheerio applique eye-types with beaks and/or snouts. The correlation of eye and mouth types in zoomorphic figurines points to bird, canid and opossum figurines which all commonly having cheerio appliques. In terms of anthropomorphic figurines, most have the ‘oval applique’ eye type but this is a low representation due to the fact that most anthropomorphic figurines in the sample are not head fragments. The not-applicable category (“n/a”) accounts for over half of the figurines.
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<th>incised oval</th>
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</table>

**Table 10: Iconography by eye-type at Cerro de la Virgen**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>beak</th>
<th>grimace</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>open</th>
<th>open teeth</th>
<th>snout</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anthropomorphic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zoomorphic</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>62.50</td>
<td>15.63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11: Iconography by mouth-type at Cerro de la Virgen**
Table 12: Eye-type by mouth-type at Cerro de la Virgen

Quantitative analysis shows that there are not many figurines with accoutrements within the site sample. The biggest issue with classification at Cerro de la Virgen is, again, due to the poor preservation of the figurines. Many of the figurine fragments have traces of broken accoutrement appliques, e.g., a small part of broken ear-flare applique is still visible, the neck area has signs of a previous applique, or if an incised design had eroded. Nose piercings and lip plus are two forms of body modification seen specifically on the figurines from Cerro de la Virgen. All categories were as generalized as possible (e.g., body modification, which includes everything from scarification to tattoos). Despite the figurines not fitting into broad accoutrement patterns, it is still interesting to consider the large quantity of combinations of accoutrement types.
Approximately half of the figurines from the site are unable to be clearly classified into any category of figurine use. The issue of categorization is consistent with the poor preservation at the site, and with most of the figurines being from fill contexts. As for the figurine fragments able to be classified, free-standing figurines are the most abundant in the sample. The more specialized categories, i.e., mask, instrument, and vessel appliques, have a very low representation in the sample. The relative absence of such categories may speak to the fact that figurine use and ritual at the site of Cerro de la Virgen was constrained to a specific variety of ritual, versus having a variety of figurine uses which would suggest a variety of rituals.

### Table 13: Accoutrements by accoutrement type at Cerro de la Virgen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>bracelets</th>
<th>bracelets or tattoos</th>
<th>earflare</th>
<th>earflare, body modification</th>
<th>earflare, hairstyle</th>
<th>earflare, necklace</th>
<th>hairstyle</th>
<th>lip plug, hairstyle</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>necklace</th>
<th>none</th>
<th>nose piercing</th>
<th>skirt</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.56</td>
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<td>1.56</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6: Figurine use at Cerro de la Virgen**
The figurines from Cerro de la Virgen display many unique characteristics. The biggest issue was that the figurine sample from this site is much more fragmented and there were much less clear iconographic traits. Overall, the canons of body modification, accoutrements, and zoomorphic figures are consistent with all the broad classification categories, but also have site specifics. Further comparison between the two figurine samples from Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen will further illuminate patterns in similarities and differences.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

There are both overarching trends and localized differences in the figurine samples from Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen. The presence of more naturalistic figurines/figurine characteristics at Río Viejo versus Cerro de la Virgen suggests craft specialization, either in the presence of more skilled manufacturers, or in material access at the site of Río Viejo. The exquisite refinement in the morphology and detail of transformational figurines also suggests that their manufacture was important and probably fell to more specialized hands. The overwhelming trend of zoomorphic bird-instruments at both sites seems to indicate that their use was not restricted to specific communities in the Lower Río Verde Valley. At both sites, gender and sex, in general, do not seem to have been a priority for distinguishing figurines.

Reviewing the various contexts of figurines from both sites, this study again supports the regional use of figurines in both public and private settings, as also postulated by Guy Hepp (Hepp & Joyce 2013). The majority of the figurines from Cerro de la Virgen were found in secondary contexts, e.g., fill or surface finds, but some figurines were found in public and possible residential areas (A. Joyce et al. 2013; Brzezinski n.d.). Figurines from Río Viejo, again, were mostly from primary contexts i.e. feasting middens, middens on the acropolis (A. Joyce et al. 2013). The various contexts of the figurines, from both sites, suggests that figurines in the region were employed in a variety of ritual settings.

The samples from both sites also depart at the paste-type frequency. While grey paste-type figurines account for the majority of the Río Viejo sample, they only make up approximately one quarter of the sample from Cerro de la Virgen. At Río Viejo, figurines are dominated by only two paste types, grey wares and fine brown wares, with a very low
representation of medium brown and coarse brown wares. At Cerro de la Virgen fine brown wares comprise over half the sample, while grey wares have a much lower representation, but coarse brown wares and medium brown wares account for a larger portion of the sample as compared to Río Viejo.

In contrast to the paste type distribution, the iconographic distribution is similar across Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen. Anthropomorphic figurines encompass the bulk of the iconography, at around forty percent of both samples. The second most frequent iconographic category, at both sites, is zoomorphic figurines. Although zoomorphic figurines comprise a large percentage of figurines from both samples, the zoomorphic canon is different at each site. Both sites have a plethora of bird figurines, several canid figurines, and a few frogs. Crocodiles and monkeys were only seen in the Río Viejo sample while opossums and owls are specific to Cerro de la Virgen. The sites of Cerro de la Virgen and Río Viejo are in close enough proximity that they were both subjected to similar fauna. As mentioned earlier, the separate varieties of zoomorphic figurines at the sites indicate that there are differences in how the two sites identify. The unique zoomorphic varieties, like opossum figurines, may have been symbolic banners of which certain sites (e.g., Cerro de la Virgen) identified under.

The distribution of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines is ubiquitous across both sites but transformational figurines are rather uncommon. The iconographic category of transformational figurines conveys the starkest difference between the two sites. Transformational figurines account for approximately six percent of the Río Viejo sample. At Cerro de la Virgen, however, transformational figurines are not at all present. Reasons as to why transformational figurines were absent at Cerro de la Virgen mostly points to context. In
terms of context, most figurines at the site were found in fill contexts and so were more fragmentary and eroded relative to those from Río Viejo.

Many of the figurines from Cerro de la Virgen were unable to be categorized in iconography because they are so eroded and fragmented. It is possible that these poorly preserved figurine fragments would otherwise be classified as transformational if they were more complete/better preserved. This is not to say that context is the sole reason for the absence of transformational figurines at Cerro de la Virgen, differences in ritual between the sites is another potential hypothesis. Although there are no transformational figurines in the Cerro de la Virgen sample, it is unlikely that no transformational figurines exist at the site since masks are present, inferring that some forms of ritual practices did take place. Cerro de la Virgen has also undergone a lower volume of excavations in comparison to Río Viejo, and it is a big possibility why no transformational figurines have surfaced.

Some of the figurine head fragments, in both site samples, do seem intentionally broken. The break lines on these figurines are clean and precise, as to not disturb any of the iconography. The separation of figurine heads from bodies could have been a de-animating practice, terminating the life-force within the figurines (Blomster 2011; Joyce & Barber 2015). Anthropomorphic heads make up the bulk of figurine fragment types at Río Viejo, and account for a sizeable portion of Cerro de la Virgen’s sample.

An even stronger argument for intentional breaking is formed when considering the presence death face appliques. Death face figurines are anthropomorphic appliques which depict individuals with closed or half-lidded eyes (Hepp 2007, p. 74). Death face appliques are only present at Río Viejo. All death face appliques were neatly broken off from their original
vessels and none had obstructed iconography. Death face figurines have been linked to ancestor veneration practices in Mesoamerica, the death faces representing/holding the identity of an ancestor spirit (Hepp 2007, p. 74).

The unequal distribution of death face appliques between the two sites is another strong indicator of difference in ritual. The death face appliques at Río Viejo indicates ritual practices surrounding ancestry occurred at the site, which may have been a way for people who gathered at the site to negotiate and legitimize ancestral ties. Death face appliques, as objects linked to social memory, may have been a tangible medium for those gathering at Río Viejo to anchor themselves in a communal identity (Connerton 1989; R. Joyce 2004). The large-scale rituals at Río Viejo likely drew participation from exterior communities. Ancestor veneration rituals (e.g., death face appliques) could have been a banner for these separate communities to relate or differentiate.

Many figurine fragments were discernible as limb fragments. Figurine limbs, e.g., legs and arms, were appliqued onto bodies and therefore are more brittle at their point of attachment; this is probably why there are so many limb fragments, they easily break off from the original figurine. Distribution of the different figurine fragments across the sites is relatively similar. At both sites figurine heads are the most common fragment and bodies are the second most common. The real difference between the sites is again due to preservation and context. The figurines from Cerro de la Virgen were far more fragmented and eroded than those from Río Viejo.

In terms of ritual, there are strong indicators that figurines were ritual differences in figurine use at Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen. The massive acropolis at Río Viejo was the
ceremonial center at the site, where ritual activity was concentrated (A. Joyce 2013, p. 137-138). Most figurines from Operation C were from feasting middens (A. Joyce et al 2012). The fact that Río Viejo has more iconographic instruments and vessel appliques present strongly suggests that a large variety of rituals were practiced at the site. The different contexts, iconography, and use of figurines between Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen indicates a difference in the kinds of rituals performed at each site. Although the specifics of the rituals may not be met through this study alone, the notion that there is a difference is relevant.

The mere absence of transformational figurines in the Cerro de la Virgen sample is another strong testimony to the difference between the sites in the ritual use of figurines. It is not to say, however, that the figurines from Cerro de la Virgen were not ever seen in ritual practices, but that differences in figurine iconography and context it is at an indicator of different types of ritual activity taking place. With no definite transformational figurines, the presence of masks, and the smaller site area, it is likely that ritual was more localized versus at Río Viejo, where multiple communities of people would gather and where a larger canon of figurine iconography is present.

There are three possible masks within this sample. What qualifies these figurine-fragments as masks is that they are all faces, and they all have cavities in the eyes, mouth, and/or nose that are hollowed-through to the other side. These cavities signify that the ability to look through the artifacts was important, further supporting their use as masks. One of the fragments is smaller in scale compared to the others, its small size strongly indicates use as a mask to be worn by a figurine or a vessel. The small figurine-mask fragment is also interesting since the iconography looks zoomorphic, perhaps also lending to the evidence of its
transformational properties. For example, a figurine (or person) wearing a mask in a ritual may have the ability to embody the identity of the mask or, the mask itself is a conduit for identity transformation of the wearer. The other two masks were much larger in scale compared to the small zoomorphic mask, they are almost the size of an adult’s face, but not quite large enough to have been worn, perhaps they were worn by adolescents.

The frequency of accoutrements does not differ much between the sites, but figurines are shown to have different types of accoutrements at each site (e.g., lip plugs only seen at Cerro de la Virgen). Ear-flare appliques are an over-arching accoutrement on figurines from both sites. It is interesting to consider that figurines were shown with ear flares versus ear spools. Some figurines, from both sites, are able to have jewelry attached to them. For example, some figurines had actual ear piercings (punctured cavity through ear applique) or nose piercings. The ability to attach ornaments onto a figurine suggests that jewelry could be added or removed for periods. The diversity of accoutrements also suggests the possibility of representing different identities (Hepp & Joyce 2013).

In general, there does seem to be some regional patterning of figurines during the Terminal Formative period, further supported by this study (Hepp and Joyce 2013). The overarching iconographic categories (i.e., anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and transformational) are pervasive at Cerro de la Virgen, Río Viejo, and at other sites in the region such as: Cerro de la Cruz, and Yugue (Hepp 2007Hepp & Joyce 2013). The consistency of some figurine sub-types (e.g., tabular figurines, iconographic bird instruments, masks) between Cerro de la Virgen and Río Viejo also supports this notion.
The issue of political centralization in the Lower Río Verde Valley during the Terminal Formative period is a focal point of archaeological investigation and this study can contribute to the conversation. This descriptive study of figurines from the ritual center of Río Viejo and the site of Cerro de la Virgen has illustrated regional consistencies as well as differences in figurine use, manufacture, and aesthetic. Based on the differences of the figurines from both sites, this suggests that Río Viejo may not have extended complete autonomous control throughout the region since there seem to be localized ritual uses/meanings of figurines persisting at Cerro de la Virgen. The similarities and consistencies within the entire sample however, do suggest that there is a broad and over-arching spectrum of iconography and ritual meaning of figurines within the Lower Río Verde Valley. For example, no figurine deviates from the broad iconographic categories: anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and transformational, and while figurines from both sites may display different accoutrement types and designs (e.g. hairstyles, body modification, etc.), accoutrements, in general, are used at both sites to distinguish identity and status through figurines.

The consideration of the degrees of social interaction and political integration in the Lower Río Verde Valley during the Terminal Formative period are at the forefront of archeological research in the region. The archaeological theories that have traditionally been used to explain political interactions have mainly been predicated on ideas of elitism, control, and coercion (A. Joyce et al. 2016). Archaeologists working on the Coast of Oaxaca, Mexico have proposed an alternative model of political interaction. Instead of a model arguing for political control and subordination, archaeologists on the coast of Oaxaca have argued for a model that considers agency and negotiation amongst all social actors (A. Joyce et al. 2016).
A study of the material remains of ceramic figurines, which are largely considered to be ritual objects, is one avenue of evidence that can contribute to the ongoing conversations about socio-political interactions in the Lower Río Verde region during the Terminal Formative period. Regional research is focused on denoting the degrees to which specific sites in the region (i.e., Cerro de la Virgen) were tied to the political center of Río Viejo (A. Joyce 1991; A. Joyce 2010; A. Joyce 2013; Joyce & Barber 2015; Hepp 2007). Further research tracing the distribution patterns and the iconographic trends of figurines hold the potential to illuminate the social and political networks that pervaded the region. By comparing figurines from two different sites in the LRVV this study has provided new insights on regional patterns of figurine use, manufacture, and meaning (Hepp 2007). The combination of chemical analysis, descriptive analysis, and establishing regional typology of ceramic figurines can help to demarcate socio-political relations in the Formative period Lower Río Verde Valley (A. Joyce 2013; A. Joyce 2008). The results of the INAA tests will help further understand the distribution and origins of figurine manufacture in the region.

This thesis provides extensive descriptions of Terminal Formative Period figurines from the inter-regional sites of Río Viejo and Cerro de la Virgen. Figurines from Río Viejo show a different variety in iconography and manufacture as compared to Cerro de la Virgen. Although there are consistencies in the broad categories of iconography and paste-type, figurines were used and valued differently at each site. Although this study only focuses on the Terminal Formative Period, the descriptive analyses of the figurines will help move archaeologists closer to establishing a regional typology of figurines. This study can also provide one avenue of
evidence in addressing the networks of politics and religious relations in the region. And finally, future INAA results from this study will contribute more evidence for further research.
Bibliography


