

ranging from small, modeled animals and human figures to larger mold-made ones with flat backs that include females attired in a broad array of dress and headdress styles and males outfitted in a range of warrior garb. There also are large and small anthropomorphic whistles with modeled bodies and molded heads. We became aware of not only this diversity in form but also the dizzying array of variation in the expression of individual attributes as we excavated the four different sites and the number of figurines and whistles in our collections increased to more than 7500. The 2005 figurines and fragments from Ejutla include many wasters, and a number of the figurine molds we recovered match some of the more common figurine varieties at the site (see sections 7.1 and 7.7; Feinman and Nicholas 2004a, 175–76). Although we found figurine fragments in all houses and public spaces at El Palmillo, they were much less abundant than at Ejutla, with 1169 figurine fragments spread out over the eight houses and adjacent spaces. There were slightly more figurines in the upper palatial residences than in the lower houses. Evidence for figurine production was absent. Figurines were a bit more abundant on the three terraces at the Mitla Fortress (562) than on terraces at El Palmillo. There was minimal evidence for ceramic production, including for figurines. At Lambityeco, most of the material remains were associated with ritual activities. In addition to an abundance of large ollas and serving vessels that were used in feasting events administered by the resident priests of Mound 165, we recovered 3870 figurine and whistle fragments. The figurines and whistles were recovered from the residence and all the public spaces, including several features filled with figurine and whistle fragments that appear to be event-related discard.

To understand whole figurine assemblages, and not just figurines found in intact primary contexts, we knew that we could not just describe all the individual attributes of the figurines, or what Paddock (1983, 203) described as a “nearly endless” array of variability, and that we needed ways to organize and compare larger figurine assemblages from different contexts. To make sense of the wide variety of figurine forms and attributes, we decided it would be useful to group this tremendous diversity into a smaller set of broad categories that we could more easily examine across contexts and sites. This first classificatory step provides a way to define the parameters and general frequencies of the diverse forms of Classic period figurines and to investigate how and in what distinct contexts different figurines and whistles were most abundant.

Leaving aside the great diversity in the finer details of form and representation, we see in this assemblage eight major categories of Classic period figurines and whistles—animals, anthropomorphic miniatures, three distinct sets of females, male warriors, small whistles, and large globular whistles (see Table A4.1). Basically, size, production technique, and representation are the main criteria that we used to distinguish these categories. We base our gender assignments on prior studies of prehispanic figurines in

Oaxaca and elsewhere in Mesoamerica (Halperin 2014, 54; López Zárate 2014; Scott 1993; Serra Puche and Durand V. 1998; Stark et al. 1998, 19–20; Triadan 2007, 276–77) and on extensive discussions of Mesoamerican attire, including in late prehispanic codices (Anawalt 1981a, 1981b, 1985; Berdan and Anawalt 1997; Filloy Nadal 2017, figure 3; McCafferty and McCafferty 1996).

We identify three major categories of females but only one category for male warrior figurines; artifact sizes and broad styles of headdresses and garments tend to co-occur in female figurines, whereas the attribute-level variability in male figurines tends to be cross-cutting in ways that do not accord with the definition of discrete overarching categories. For each major category, we have also defined principal variants or subcategories that have specific attributes or imagery. Here we define the key elements of each category and describe the principal variants. At this stage, we gloss over the great idiosyncratic variability in the finer details, facial features, and minor size discrepancies, focusing on consistent, repetitive patterning in the representations of headgear and garments.

In our collections, from approximately half (Ejutla) to 90% (Lambityeco) of the figurines were sufficiently well preserved or complete enough to assign to one of the eight major categories. Those artifacts too fragmentary or eroded to code to a category are not considered further in this analysis. Overall, the modeled and miniature figurines are the most variable. Not unexpectedly, the larger molded figurines are more standardized in form and representation. Although our classification was developed principally on the large number of figurines in our collections, photographs and illustrations of Classic period figurines and whistles from elsewhere in the Valley of Oaxaca (Bernal and Gamio 1974; Boos 1966; Brockington 1973; Caso and Bernal 1952; Caso et al. 1967; Faulseit 2013; Faulseit et al. 2016; Kuttruff 1978; López Zárate 2016; Markman 1981; Martínez López and Winter 1994; Paddock 1966; Sánchez Santiago 2005; Scott 1993) helped inform and confirm the patterns we see in our collections. In some of those works (e.g., Elson et al. 2010), there are variants not present in our collections. Our classification is a pilot study to see if the variable distribution of broad categories of figurines in different contexts can help us understand different behaviors in the production and use of figurines. We intend it as a roadmap that others working at Classic period sites in the Valley of Oaxaca may find helpful for organizing their figurine assemblages, fully suspecting that a broader study of the full corpus of Classic period figurines from across the valley by us and, hopefully, others will foster refinements and additions to this classification.

A4.3.1. Animal Figurines

Most of the animal figurines are small, solid forms that have fully modeled torsos and heads on which facial features are formed through incision or the addition of

small appliques (Figure A4.1). Because they are modeled by hand, there is great variability in how different parts of the bodies are portrayed or emphasized. Dogs are most commonly represented (Figure A4.1 bottom; Martínez López and Winter 1994, 115, figure 92). For dogs, most facial details tend to be incised, although the eyes more typically are formed by adding a variety of small applique circles to the face.

Birds and other animals occur in lower numbers. Birdlike figures have incised or applied eyes on the sides of large modeled beaks (Figure A4.1 top). Some have features that appear to represent owls and bats. Other figures can be identified as frogs, opossums, jaguars, monkeys, bear cubs, and turtles (see also Fauseit 2013, 208; Martínez López and Winter 1994, 110, figure 87).

A4.3.2. Miniature Anthropomorphic Figurines

We include small modeled and molded figurines in this category (Figure A4.2; López Zárate 2016, 70, figure 3.9). Size is a key criterion. The small molded figurines, when complete, tend to be no more than 6–7 cm tall; there is a bit more range in the size of modeled figurines. As with the animals, there is considerable variability in the anthropomorphic modeled figures. Generally, they are simple, ranging from small bodies with crudely formed limbs to torsos with stump legs to simply a head with almost no body (Figure A4.2a–c). Facial features are typically incised, although the eyes may be applied. A few have breasts to identify them as female, but the intended sex often cannot be determined.

The small molded figurines can be divided into females and warriors. The females typically have braided headdresses and wear a *quechquémitl* (long triangular tunic, or *huipil*) (Figure A4.2d–f). The tunics may be plain or have a decorated border. Most of the figures wear some kind of jewelry around their necks. Their arms may be down at their sides or crossed over their chests. A few small molded figurines are warriors (Figure A4.2g–i). They typically wear some kind of helmet. Most of the torsos have loincloths.

A4.3.3. Female #1 (Braided Headdress)

Female figurines largely fall into two categories that we call female #1 and female #2, both of which may be as tall as 15–17 cm; a consistently smaller figurine with a tight set of attributes is female #3. The key characteristics of female #1 are a braided headdress, typically one braided band on the forehead, and a *quechquémitl* over a simple, long garment (Figure A4.3; Caso and Bernal 1952, 294, figure 446). These two features almost always co-occur in the more complete figurines that are not broken across the neck. Based on how the garments are displayed, there are two principal variants of female #1. Both variants have short arms at their sides below the tunic, a necklace of one or two strands of beads, and short, stump-like legs. Although there is variability in how the braids are displayed (how many strands, size of braid, and other details beyond the typically simple braid; Figure A4.3a–b), there is no one style of braided headdress that clearly goes with each broad garment variant. Compared to female #2, the imagery in the braided headdresses is much less complex.



Figure A4.1. Small modeled animal figurines. Top: Bird figurine (whistle) from El Palmillo (left) and two bird heads from Lambityeco (right). Bottom: dog figurines from Lambityeco.