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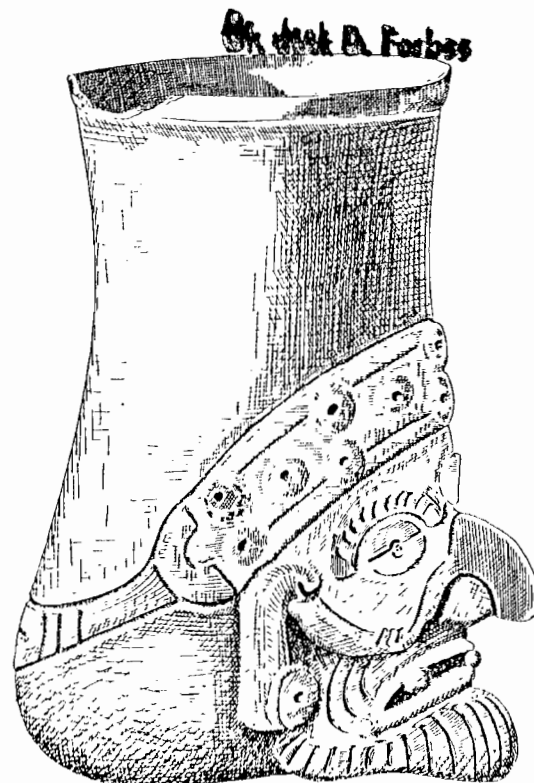
## SOUTHWEST MUSEUM


 The  
  
**MASTERKEY**

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No. 3



BEARDED MAN EFFIGY, Tobil Plumbate Ware  
From Ocosingo, Chiapas, Mexico. Ht. 14.5 cm.  
MONTGOMERY COLLECTION

## THE PREHISTORY OF SIBERIA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR AMERICA

By  
JACK D. FORBES

THE prehistory of Siberia and in particular of northeastern Siberia has assumed a significance far beyond its intrinsic importance in human history, for scholars dealing with the past of the American Indian have sought answers to their problems there. Thus a great amount of attention has been focused upon the regions on both sides of the Bering Sea and archeologists have sought to find traces of the supposed migratory route used by the ancestors of the Americans. Ethnologists have also sought to apply their theories of cultural diffusion by illustrating the spread of traits from Asia to America by way of Siberia.

Focusing attention upon the Bering Sea region has been primarily the result of certain negative factors, that is, the absence of proto-hominid or anthropoid ape fossils in the Americas (necessitating a migration theory for the origin of the Amerindians), the absence of other suitable migration routes, the idea of the limited inventiveness of mankind (necessitating broad diffusionist theories to explain much of the culture of the Americans), and other essentially negativistic attitudes involving, among other things, an unwillingness to accord either antiquity or originality to the native American. Thus archeologists, ethnologists, and other scholars have eagerly searched the steppes, forests, and tundras of Siberia for whatever relationships might be found. Many of these scholars have been perhaps overly enthusiastic and, generally speaking, any trait possessed by the Amerindians which was also possessed by the Siberians or East Asiatics has been given an Asiatic origin and its diffusion to America accepted almost *a priori*. More and more, however, the inventiveness of the Americans is being demonstrated by archeologists (especially in Meso-America) and it might be well to re-examine many of the Asia-to-America diffusion theories as well as to look at the evidence relating to the origin of the Indians. Properly, then, one should begin any discussion of Siberian-American relations by examining the prehistory of northeastern Siberia.

The archeology of Siberia presents many problems, for man appears to be more ancient in the United States than in northeastern Asia. Thus far only a few indications of



FIG. 1--OUTLINE OF SIBERIA.

Pleistocene man have been found in all of Siberia and the remains in question date only from the end of the last glacial age (that is, some ten or twelve thousand years ago). On the upper Yenisei River in central Siberia artifacts have been found in association with extinct animals. The greater part of the stone tools are chipped on one side only and are comparable to Mousterian forms, even including typical points and side scrapers. Also found were reindeer horn and bone tools and a few stone implements chipped on both sides after the Chellean and Acheulian fashion. The total assemblage appears to be transitional from Mousterian to Aurignacian in terms of European chronology but it is not certain that this sequence can be applied to central Siberia (Von Merhart, 1923, pp. 21-55).

The opinion has been expressed that Siberia was "... uninhabitable until towards the end of the Ice Age" due to geographical conditions, and thus no lower Paleolithic sites have been discovered there (Boule and Vallois, 1957, p. 380). Upper Paleolithic remains occur in Siberia in a belt extending from the Upper Yenisei to Lake Baikal, northern Manchuria and Vladivostok. One of the older sites (in Central Siberia) included a large quantity of carved and engraved objects of bone or mammoth ivory and several female figurines (Boule and Vallois, 1957, p. 382). In general they resemble the assemblages of the upper Yenisei described previously.

Of more significance to American scholars are Paleolithic remains found in the upper Lena basin. These assemblages are perhaps later than the ones mentioned above, being roughly contemporaneous with ". . . the early hunting culture of North America . . .", and having a terminal date of possibly 5,000 B.C. The Paleolithic of the Lena takes the form of a crude macrolithic industry with choppers and scraper planes (semilunar or ovate) roughly blocked out of pebbles. It includes a small number of prismatic core and blade tools and casual-flake burins, and is perhaps accompanied by a bone industry. The complex is described as not being Mousterian on the one hand and as showing ". . . no bifacial workmanship revealed in the early hunting cultures of North America, with which it is . . . largely coeval" Tolstoy, 1958a, p. 397).

In that portion of Siberia lying to the northeast of the Lena basin and nearer to America no Paleolithic remains have been found. The oldest sites (on the lower Lena) go back no farther than 3300 B.C. and are associated with pottery (Tolstoy, 1958a, p. 409). The Lake Chirovoe site in the Chukchi peninsula dates only to 1500-1000 B.C. and is late Neolithic in character. Thus no Paleolithic or preceramic remains occur in that portion of Siberia nearest to America, that is, east of the 110th meridian or north of 62° (Chard, 1956, pp. 406-407).

Northeastern Siberia, then, appears as a liability in any thesis of early Siberian-American contacts. The area of the lower Lena and farther east shows no pre-ceramic cultures and, more significantly, when the Paleolithic does appear, as on the upper Lena, it is quite different from Paleo-Indian cultures. Thus the archeology of Siberia fails to explain the origin of the American Indian and fails to document any possible migration route. If the Amerindian's ancestors did indeed reach America by way of the Bering Sea region (as seems very likely) they apparently crossed eastern Siberia prior to the occupation of that area by the known Siberian Paleolithic peoples. Since the latter's occupation evidently began as early as the end of the Pleistocene, it would mean that the Paleo-Indians were in Siberia in fourth glacial times at the latest. (Unless, of course, one could assume that the Paleo-Indians were in the above area contemporaneously with the Siberian Paleolithic peoples without absorbing or influencing the latter's industries or leaving evidence of their own.) But what happens if one accepts the thesis that Siberia was uninhabitable in glacial times?

Fortunately, not all scholars assert that Siberia was completely glaciated in even the coldest periods of the Pleistocene. A number of areas in eastern Siberia were not glaciated, including the Lena basin, south central Siberia, and two belts extending towards America, the first from the mouth of the Lena to the northern edge of the Chukchi peninsula and the second from the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk to the southern edge of the Chukchi region. These non-glaciated areas would have been severely cold but probably habitable for a people who could have hunted the woolly mammoth (Flint, 1947, pp. 249-355, 523). However, even if the Paleo-Indians could have lived in Siberia in fourth glacial times, they would have experienced great difficulty in reaching the area of the United States prior to the end of the Ice Age. The non-glaciated routes between Siberia and Alaska were narrow and dependent upon the utilization of land now lying beneath the sea. Routes between Alaska and the United States would apparently have been non-existent during the height of the fourth glacial age and perhaps not feasible until some 11,000 years ago (Flint, 1947, plate 3). What, then, of the Paleo-Indians living in the New Mexico region as early as perhaps 15,000 B.C. (to say nothing of Tule Springs or Santa Rosa Island)?

The evidence would seem to indicate that the Paleo-Indians are most likely to have reached America prior to the fourth glacial age (that is, prior to 40,000 years ago). This is because, as seen above, a post-Pleistocene migration from Siberia is not indicated and rather unlikely, and a glacial-age movement is apparently impossible because of the ice-barriers of northeastern Siberia and the continuous area of glaciation which stretched across Canada in fourth glacial times (Flint, 1947, Plate 3). Thus a great antiquity for the Indian in America seems to be indicated. To some extent at least this theoretical antiquity is corroborated by such archeological sites as Santa Rosa Island which could place the Indian in America well into fourth glacial times.

The objection might be made that the native Americans bear such a great racial resemblance to the Mongoloid peoples of eastern Asia that it is difficult to visualize an era of separation amounting to more than 40,000 years. In answer to this it should be stated that the Indians appear as Mongoloids only in part, and that many scholars now suppose that they have a heritage of Caucasoid and other genes as well. In other words, the Americans have the appearance of a hybrid people and have notable differences from the Mongo-

loids of Asia. For example, the blood types B and AB are typical of Asians but are absent among Amerindians and Australoids. B-AB decreases in populations the farther one moves in a westerly and easterly direction from the Buriat Mongols and the Bengalis. Thus the percentages of B-AB for the following are: English (9%), French (18%), German (21%), Poles (30%), Russians (34%), Buriat Mongols (47%), Chinese (35%), Japanese (32%). It seems that the Indians became isolated in the Americas, and the Australoids in Australia, prior to the diffusion of B-AB genes from the Mongolia-Bengal area. This diffusion must have taken place over a long period of time, for peoples from Britain to Java and Japan to Central Africa possess B-AB (Dunn and Dobzhansky, 1952, p. 120).

The absence of B-AB among the native Americans suggests also that there have been no important accretions of Asiatic blood in recent times. As Frederick S. Hulse asserted, the absence of B-AB and M in the MN series ". . . are strong indications of the lack of recent genetic contacts across the Pacific or even with Polynesia. In northeastern Asia, Japan, and China, blood type B is exceptionally common . . ." (Hulse, 1955, p. 103). Certain groups bordering on Asia, such as the Aleuts, have some B types but this could easily be explained by the widespread miscegenation with Russians which occurred after the 1740's.

Many of the Indians appear to have a much greater share of non-Mongoloid genes than do the present peoples of Siberia. Thus it appears that the Indian's racial relationships may well be with pre-Mongoloid peoples in Asia, remnants of which are to be seen in the Ainu of Japan and the Yenisei Ostyaks of central Siberia (Lopatin, 1940, pp. 205-206). This again argues for a considerable antiquity for the Indians in America, since Mongoloids have been in east Asia for thousands of years.

The archeology of Siberia is rapidly becoming clearer and this is particularly true of the area of the Lena basin and Lake Baikal. Increasing knowledge of the post-Paleolithic Siberian past enables scholars to study the oft-postulated theories of cultural diffusion from Asia to America. Culture in the Lake Baikal region, according to Paul Tolstoy, begins to advance into a so-called Neolithic era about 5,000 B.C. At that time the Khin'skaya period begins and core and blade tools became dominant. Lamellar points, shouldered and unshouldered, appear and are taken to indicate the arrival of the bow in Siberia. Likewise a few artifacts with controlled

bifacial chipping appear, thousands of years later than in North America. Burials of this period are covered with loose stones and have associated long slate points and punch-like tools which were perhaps hafted. Needless to say, this "Neolithic" does not conform to the European-Middle Mesolithic (Tolstoy, 1958a, p. 397).

Some time near 4,000 B.C. (according to the estimates of Russian archeologists) the Isakovo period begins on the upper Lena River. This period ushers in "Woodland" type pottery which is decorated with notches and punctations and has net-impressions. Bifacial shaping dominates the stone industry and American-like points are noticeable in the assemblages. Stone grinding occurs also. The Serovo period, beginning about 3,000 B.C., is much more impressive with subconoidal and globular-shaped pottery made by the use of the paddle and anvil. It is said by Tolstoy to closely resemble the earliest pottery of Virginia. "Ripple" flaking occurs and is apparently much later in Siberia than in America. Cremation was occasionally practiced and bark-covered tipi-like houses are assumed from the presence of stone circles.

The Serovo period is followed by the Kitoi (about 2200 B.C.) which is rather similar. The "tei-tho" scraper apparently enters Siberia from America during this period. In 1700 B.C. the Glazkovo period begins and the use of copper and bronze is ushered in. The points found resemble American types but are later and smaller. The axe replaced the adze (Tolstoy, 1958a, pp. 398-403). By 500 B.C. a "Developed Bronze" period existed in the upper Lena-Lake Baikal region.

The cultural sequences for the lower and middle Lena are not quite so clear but, in general, follow the same line of evolution. "Woodland" type pottery appears about 2000-1500 B.C. and the use of bronze begins at about 1700 B.C.; thus there is a lag of some 1,000 years for the pottery and no apparent lag for the use of bronze (Tolstoy, 1958a, pp. 404-409). On the Chukchi peninsula the Lake Chirovoe site is tentatively dated at 1500-1000 B.C. and is suggestive of a late Neolithic-Early Bronze horizon (Chard, 1956, p.407). It should be mentioned, however, that the Russian archeologist Okladnikov doesn't feel that the Neolithic of the Chukchi can go back farther in time than ". . . the last five centuries B.C." (Krader, 1952, p. 262).

The significance of the post-Paleolithic horizon in northeastern Siberia is revealed in several generalizations which

can be made: (1) that diffusion has perhaps occurred from America to Asia, at least in the case of certain point technologies and of the "tei-tho" scraper,<sup>1</sup> (2) that diffusion has occurred from the Lake Baikal region to the Chukchi peninsula and perhaps to America in the case of "Woodland" pottery traits, (3) that certain traits, such as the use of copper and bronze, apparently did not diffuse towards America beyond the Chukchi area.

Tolstoy has attempted to demonstrate the diffusion of certain ceramic traits from the Lake Baikal region to the eastern United States, thus explaining the parallel of "Woodland" type pointed-bottom pottery and eastern Siberian wares. As this may be assumed as something of a "test-case" of Asia to America diffusion it seems wise to examine it in some detail.<sup>2</sup>

Tolstoy discerns some twenty-one ceramic traits in the Isakovo and Serovo periods at Lake Baikal (c. 4,000-2,200 B.C.). These traits do not all occur together or simultaneously. On the middle Lena eleven to thirteen of these traits reappear, as do nine on the lower Lena. At the Firth River, in North America, nine traits also occur but they are not all the same as the nine of the lower Lena. In the eastern United States, the Early Woodland wares have from eight to fifteen traits. Time-wise, Early South has eight and Late South fourteen, for example (Tolstoy, 1958b, pp. 70-71). In the vast area from Chukchi to the eastern United States, with the exception of Firth River, the Baikal traits do not appear except as what Tolstoy calls "relics", that is one trait each for Point Barrow, Ahteut, Kukulik, Point Hope, Igloo Point, and Wooley.

On the basis of the above Tolstoy argues for diffusion in spite of certain handicaps which he points out himself. He remarks, "With the notable exception of some early Virginia pottery . . . the actual trait combinations represented in Early Woodland pottery have no striking parallels in eastern Asia (Tolstoy, 1958b, p. 73). In other words, the argument is not for the diffusion of a specific pottery complex or combination of traits, but for the transmission of a series of separate traits all the way from Siberia to the Atlantic coast. Another problem for the diffusion theory is that, as Tolstoy says, many of the traits in question cannot be shown to have been present in the areas between Lake Baikal and the eastern United States.

<sup>1</sup>Of course, if one admits that diffusion has occurred between America and Siberia the possibility of a reverse movement for other traits is strengthened.

<sup>2</sup>It must be recognized, however, that the case for the diffusion of other items from Asia to America does not stand or fall on whether or not ceramic diffusion took place.

This, however, is seen by Tolstoy as evidence for holding that certain factors inhibited the use of pottery in the Arctic and made that region an obstacle to the transmission of pottery (Tolstoy, 1958b, pp. 72-73). One might raise the question, however, as to how separate ceramic traits could have diffused from Siberia to the Atlantic Coast by way of a region not receptive to the use of such traits?

The thesis of diffusion presented by Tolstoy is one of the transmission of specific traits (such as "net-impression") from Siberia to the Atlantic Coast, and, more accurately, from the Lake Baikal region to the Atlantic seaboard, for many of the traits common to both of these areas are absent from such intermediate areas as the Middle and Upper Lena and Firth River. The distance from Lake Baikal to the Atlantic Coast is very great, twice as far as from Egypt to Lake Baikal, for example, and this factor of distance alone makes a diffusion theory rather difficult to accept.

It is a general belief that when a trait has a continuous distribution, diffusion is to be considered as more likely than a series of independent origins. In this case no such situation exists, for continuous distribution is lacking. Thus the burden of proof would seem to rest upon those who propose a diffusion of ceramic traits from Baikal to the Atlantic Coast rather than upon those who favor an independent origin for Woodland-type pottery in eastern North America. Let us examine some of the problems involved in Tolstoy's theory of diffusion.

1. Tolstoy lists twenty-one traits associated with the pottery of the Isakovo and Serovo periods of the Lake Baikal region. These traits do not, however, form a pottery complex for the use of some of them would exclude the use of others and they do not all occur together in time or space. (Lump-modeling and coiling, for example.) The majority of the traits do not seem to be diagnostic and could easily re-occur time and again, as with granular temper, the use of lugs, sub-conoidal or round bottoms, and decorating by means of pressing some object upon the clay. Interestingly, in order to arrive at as many as twenty-one traits, Tolstoy lists every type of decoration as a separate item, as with cord-marking and net-impression, whereas it seems to this author that these are variations of one thing, i.e., the practice of pressing an object against the clay in order to achieve a decorative effect.<sup>3</sup> Thus the list of twenty-one traits at Baikal and fifteen corresponding traits in the Woodland area is not quite so impressive.

<sup>3</sup>Cord-marking may, of course, be the result of a manufacturing process.

2. The areas between Baikal and the eastern United States exhibit only a few of the above traits. The middle Lena has eleven to thirteen, the lower Lena has only nine, and Firth River has only nine. Even more significantly, the latter two areas share only six traits. Firth River likewise shares six items with the middle Lena but they are not the same six shared with the lower Lena. Thus the area from the Lena Basin to northwestern North America does not appear as a diffusional bridge, for instead of a gradual decline from twenty-one to fifteen, we find a decline from twenty-one to nine and then far away in the eastern United States a rise to fifteen.

3. The chronology of the Baikal-Lena region is purely theoretical and Tolstoy himself admits it is largely guesswork prior to about 2000 B.C. (Tolstoy, 1958a, p. 415). There are good reasons for believing that the *entire* chronology in Siberia may be inaccurate, however, for pottery is said to appear about 4000 B.C. and bronze at 1700 B.C. which would make Siberia a more-advanced area than China of the same period! It has been held that bronze spread into China from the Baikal region between 1700 and 1500 B.C.; the reason for this belief being that when the use of bronze does appear in China it is as a highly-developed art whereas it begins more unpretentiously in Siberia and is, therefore, earlier. How can this be? A "Developed Bronze" period doesn't begin in Baikal until 500 B.C. (Tolstoy, 1958a, p. 403). How then can China have acquired a highly developed industry from Baikal in ca. 1500 B.C.? It seems obvious that the dating of sites in eastern Siberia is inaccurate, perhaps by as much as 1,000 years.

4. The Bering Sea region appears as a liability in any Asia-to-America diffusion scheme for at Uelen (on East Cape, Chukchi Peninsula) an early Eskimo site has been found which dates from 1,000 B.C. No pottery has been found there! Later Eskimo sites do have pottery but it is of poor quality, is non-progressive, and not of a "Woodland" type. It is generally undecorated, black, thick-walled, tempered with sand and gravel and usually modeled from a lump of clay (although some may have been coiled). The bottoms were perhaps round (Chard, 1955a, pp. 151-167). Thus from at least 1,000 B.C. the Bering Sea region appears to have been an Eskimo enclave and a barrier to the diffusion of ceramic traits to eastern North America.

5. One of the oldest sites in northeastern Siberia, Uolba Lake, dates from ca. 2000 B.C. and apparently has no pottery in the earliest levels (Chard, 1956, p. 406). This along with the evidence from Uelen, would seem to indicate that ceramic

traits spread very, very slowly from Baikal to northeastern Siberia. If it took 2,000 years for Baikal ceramic traits to reach Uolba Lake and at least 1000 years more for crude pottery to appear among the Eskimo, how did the traits making up Woodland pottery reach the eastern United States during the same period (that is, by ca. 2,000-1,000 B.C.?)

6. The Woodland pottery of the eastern United States resembles Siberian pottery in its end-product more than in its Early Woodland forms. Thus Early South has only eight traits in common with Baikal while Late South has fifteen. Likewise, Tolstoy says that ". . . Middle Woodland pottery in eastern North America has a more complete range of Amerasian features than earlier wares" (Tolstoy, 1958b, pp. 70-73). Thus it appears more to be a case of convergence than one of diffusion.

It would appear then that the diffusion of "Woodland" type pottery from Siberia to the eastern United States is still nothing more than a hypothesis with the weight of evidence resting in favor of independent origin.

The prehistory of Siberia is still little-known and as yet does not serve as a real aid for the Americanist. What is known would seem to place man in America earlier than in northeastern Siberia, a surprising circumstance indeed! Nevertheless, the Bering Sea migration route remains as our only recourse on largely negative grounds. On the positive side a reasonably great antiquity for the native American seems indicated.

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### THE MONTGOMERY COLLECTION OF EARLY MESO-AMERICAN POTTERY AND FIGURINES

By HASSO VON WINNING<sup>1</sup>

LAST December our Museum received a gracious gift from Mrs. Lorenz V. Montgomery, consisting of 43 pieces of Mexican and Central American pottery vessels, figurines, and stone artifacts. Of this collection I have selected a few examples for discussion.

Three pieces from Chupicuaro, a pre-Classic site of long occupation in Guanajuato, deserve attention. Fig. 2 is a handmodeled, brown, un-slipped figurine of a female with black vertical stripes on her belt-like skirt. According to Miss Porter's classification, this figurine belongs to the slant-eye group with long nose. Since so many of the specimens in this category were found fragmented, this piece, being in perfect condition, is of particular interest. It belongs to the Early Phase at Chupicuaro, dating approximately from 500-200 B.C. (Porter, 1956, p. 557).

A much larger and all over highly polished red-on-buff figurine (Fig. 3) has an almost exact counterpart in the Museo Michoacano in Morelia (Porter, 1956, fig. 19, p). Noteworthy is the groove in the forehead which, on the smaller female figurines, is a characteristic of their hair arrangement which is parted in the middle. The geometric facial decoration is identical to motifs of polychrome pottery from the area. Certain handmodeled details (fingers, teeth) localize this piece as a product of the pre-Classic horizon.

<sup>1</sup>All illustrations for this article were drawn by the author.

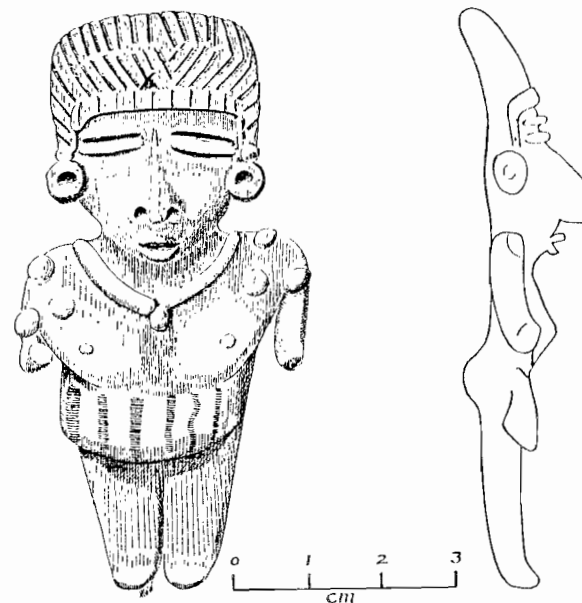


FIG. 2—SMALL HAND-MODELED FIGURINE.  
From Chupicuaro, Guanajuato, Mexico.  
MONTGOMERY COLLECTION

The third piece, (Fig. 4) an effigy, is made of unslipped fine brown paste with a frontal design of hourglass form painted in red. The grooves show remains of white paint. The figure, which belongs to the slant-eye group, contains clay or stone pellets which produce a rattling sound. There is a venthole in the center of the bottom and in front.

Fig. 5 from Colima, dark brown and polished, shows an adult resting and apparently strapped to a pallet with four conical supports. The only ornamentation consists of a bonnet and black stripes on the lower part of the body. The head projects beyond the pallet and is supported by a headrest. Figurines of this type occurred during the pre-Classic and were made during a long time thereafter on the West Coast in Colima and Nayarit. From there they were traded east to the Huasteca and south over maritime routes to Esmeraldas, on the coast of Ecuador. A similar concept for portraying reclining figurines occurred during late Aztec times in the Valley of Mexico. In his recent studies, Lehman (1949 and 1953) pointed out some interesting differences in detail. The