

SHOOFLY CHAPTER
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THE CERAMIC FIGURINE FRAGMENTS FROM SHOOFLY VILLAGE, 1985

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During the excavations at Shoofly Village in the summer of 1985 fragments of four ceramic figurines were found. Of these, three were quadrupeds and the fourth was the head of an anthropomorphic figure. All were found in habitation or midden areas and do not appear to have been associated with burials. John Hohman examined the figurines and his analysis is included with the drawings of the fragments as part of Fig. 1. The following paragraphs contain a brief description of the ceramic figurine tradition in the Southwest and a comparison of the Shoofly figurines with those from other sites. Illustrations of comparative material (figs. 2-6) and relevant bibliography will be included at the end.

In his 1954 article "Clay Figurines of the American Southwest" Noel Morss divided the anthropomorphic figurines into two major categories: a Northern tradition which developed in the area occupied by the Anasazi, pueblo dwelling Indians, and a Southern tradition, most fully represented in the Hohokam culture of Southern Arizona. Figurines from sites in Central Arizona, near Flagstaff and Prescott show more affiliations with the Southern group, though Northern traits are also present (Scott 1960: 26). Morss (1954: 27) and Henry (1976:255) have postulated that the ceramic figurine tradition was originally introduced from the Meso-American cultural sphere and filtered to the North, perhaps via the Senaqua Indians of the Flagstaff region, in the 11th century A.D.

At Snaketown Houry (1976:265) observed that anthropomorphic figurines were plentiful in the earlier periods but became more rare in the Sedentary period (900-1100 A.D.). The tradition seems to have died out by the Classic period (1100-1400 A.D.), a result, perhaps, of contacts with Salado-puebloid people. Evidence from other Hohokam sites (Morss 1954:32; Kelly 1978:78) confirms that anthropomorphic figurines were rare in the Classic period. Houry also discusses the simplicity of representation that was achieved in the Sedentary Phase by reducing the facial area of the figurine to an oblique disc with only a pinched ridge for a nose (Houry 1976:260). This description fits the Shoofly figurine head, which is distinguished by its lack of features except for the prominent nose.

The Shoofly figurine head closely resembles the heads on a group of figurines from Hodges Ruin, a Hohokam site in the Tucson Basin (Fig. 2 i-m). On these figurines, most of which appear to be female, the head seems to have been made from a separate piece of clay and then attached to the body, as on the Shoofly figurine. The Hodges Ruin figurines are not all precisely dateable but have been assigned to the Rincon Phase (c.900-1100 A.D.) by those who analysed them (Kelly 1978:82). Some of these figurines came from a cremation burial where figurines of other types also occurred. Figurines which are similar but which have incised or applied "coffee-bean" eyes came from a cremation burial at the Tres-Alamos site in the San Pedro River Valley near Tucson (Morss 1954: fig. 26, g-j), dated vaguely between 900 and 1450 A.D.

The Shoofly head also bears a superficial resemblance to the heads of figurines from the Prescott area (fig. 3), Winona Village (fig. 4) and Los Muertos (fig. 5) which have prominent noses and no eyes. However, in these cases, all of which probably date to the latter part of the Sedentary or Classical Period, the heads seem to be formed from the same piece of clay as the body.

The use of clay figurines in the American Southwest, in MesoAmerica and the Old World has been much discussed. Opinions range from the prosaic "toy" attitude to the "mother goddess" point of view, which often labels a building or cave which holds a collection of such objects a "shrine." In his analysis of Southwestern figurines Morss includes a lengthy discussion of their possible uses, giving several examples of the use of anthropomorphic figurines by modern Indian tribes. He speculates that a few examples may have been used for rituals involving witchcraft. In general he concludes, however, that in the Southwest as well as in the Old World, "There is no good evidence to indicate the specific meaning of such objects" (Morss 1954:58). He tends to believe that the figurines, most of which are female, are related to a cult of human increase and not necessarily agricultural productivity, though the figurines do appear mainly in the context of agricultural societies. He points out that the nude female figure is "a natural symbol of sex relations" (Morss 1954:58).

Haury generally agrees with Morss, though he dismisses

the witchcraft idea. He observes that "Their frequency and formalization suggest that they were not made as toys or to pacify the baby at the potter's ^{side} fires" (Haury 1976:255). He points out that most figurines were broken, probably deliberately, perhaps at the end of an increase ritual in which they had been used. Such breakage may also have been meant to prevent children's using them as toys (Haury 1976:266). By far the majority of Hohokam figurine fragments were discovered in middens and domestic areas. What Haury does not attempt to explain is the Sedentary Period ~~of~~ figurines, which are most often found in association with cremation burials (Haury 1976:255).

Animal figurines are rarer than anthropomorphic ones at Snaketown and most other sites (Morss 1954:31; Haury 1976:268; Kelly 1978:83). At Snaketown early figurines were crudely made and small (3-6 cm. long), while those of the Sedentary period were more abundant, better executed and much larger (15-20 cm. long) (Haury 1976:268). Groups of large figurines, probably female deer, occurred in groups as caches with other probably ritual materials (Haury 1976:177, 268). Haury and Morss conclude that animal figurines of this type were made to be used in increase rituals and both cite ethnological models in the Southwest (Haury 1976:268; Morss 1954:53). In the Classic period the figurines reverted to their earlier cruder form. ^{Animal Figurines at} Classic period sites are rare. Haury speculates that the cruder figurines did not enjoy the same ritual status as the

better made examples and may indeed have been toys. (Haury 1976:267).

The Shoofly animal figurines are of three different types. Fragment no. 6046 is the leg and part of the body of a quadruped of indistinguishable type, which was probably not more than about 6 cm. long originally. It may have resembled the figurines from Snaketown illustrated by Haury (fig. 6). There are traces of a small stick running through the Shoofly figurine. The method of manufacturing animal figurines around a stick or blade of thick grass is described in S. Scott's article on the figurines from the Prescott area (Scott 1960:16). Fragments nos. 7305 A-C are from a larger figurine which may originally have been c. 10 cm. long or even longer. The fragment (B) of the head retains part of the horn and the animal can thus be identified as a deer. The clay used in the manufacture of this figurine, Verde/Tonto Red, differs from that of the other examples. The third fragment is the head and body of a small quadruped pinched from a single piece of clay. The type of animal is indistinguishable but it could have been one of a variety of creatures as described by S. Scott (1960:16).

In conclusion, the Shoofly Village ceramic figurine fragments fall well within the Southern figurine tradition of the Southwest. Animal figurines, especially as fragmentary as those at Shoofly, are not particularly useful for dating purposes. The use of such figurines also remains cryptic. Perhaps the larger animal was intentionally made to be used

in an increase ritual, then broken and discarded in the midden in which it was found. The Hohokam style anthropomorphic head seems to be most comparable to examples from the Tucson area which probably can be dated to the period between 900 and 1100 A.D. It most likely belonged to a female figurine. An analysis of the clay should determine whether the piece was an import or was locally made. The fragment was discovered in a curvilinear free-standing room at the periphery of the site. One speculation about the existence of these peripheral rooms has been that they were slightly earlier than those in the core area. The appearance of the figurine might support an earlier date. It is also true, however, that Hohokam traits do appear in the Flagstaff and Prescott areas at a slightly later date than that of comparable material in the South (Scott 1960:16; McGregor 1971:79). Future excavations at Shoofly and in the surrounding area will hopefully produce more examples so that some systematic study will be possible.

Fig. 1: The Figurines From Shooply Village, 1985

7472

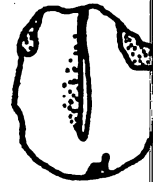
1.8 cm wide
2.2 cm long
8 cm thick (at nose)
4 cm thick (at top)

Provenience: E123 N158

Level/Loc. 3-6



side



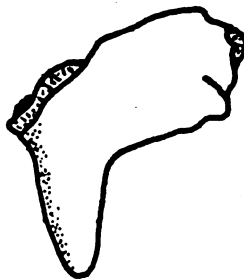
front

6046

3.2 cm long
2.9 cm high
1.3 cm thick

Provenience: E113 N124

Level/Loc 5-5



side

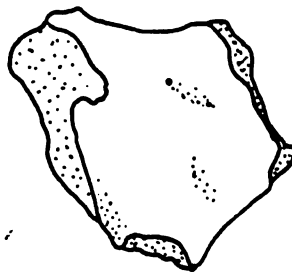


front

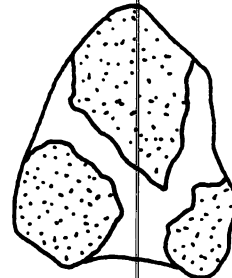
7305 (A-C)

A. Body Section

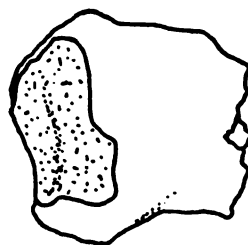
3.2 cm long
2.9 cm thick
3.9 cm high



side



front



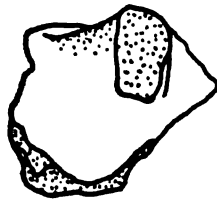
top.

Fig 1: (Cont).

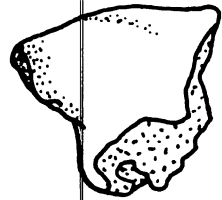
#7305 (cont).

B. Section of Head

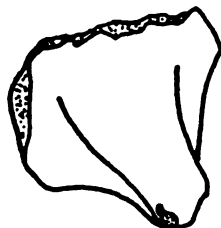
2.9 cm. long
2.8 cm. wide
2.3 cm. thick



side



front

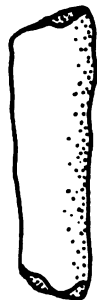


top.

C. Section of Leg

3.6 cm long
1.1 - 0.8 cm. diam.

Provenience: E145 N66
Level/Loc. 3-2



side

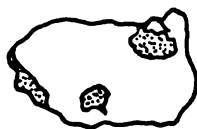


Cross section

#9317

2.4 cm. long
1.1 cm. wide
1.2 cm. thick

Provenience: E93 N83
Level/Loc. 2-0



John Hohman's analysis:

#7472 : "Hohokam style" Bean-Faced Figurine

#7305 : Verde / Tonto Red zoomorphic (quadruped, (Deer) Figurine - 3 pieces - same figurine. May have been formed around a small wooden stick.

#6046: Verde Plain zoomorphic (quadruped) Figurine fragment. (Has evidence of a small wooden stick running through it - may have been formed around this stick).

#9317: Tonto/Verde Plain miniature Zoomorphic figurine fragment (pinch form).



Fig. 5.3 Figurines: Unplaced as to phase. Typologically *a-e*, are Pioneer; *f*, Cañada del Oro; *g*, either Cañada del Oro or Rillito; remainder, Rillito or Rincon. Length of *j*, 12 cm.

Fig. 2 Hodges Ruin

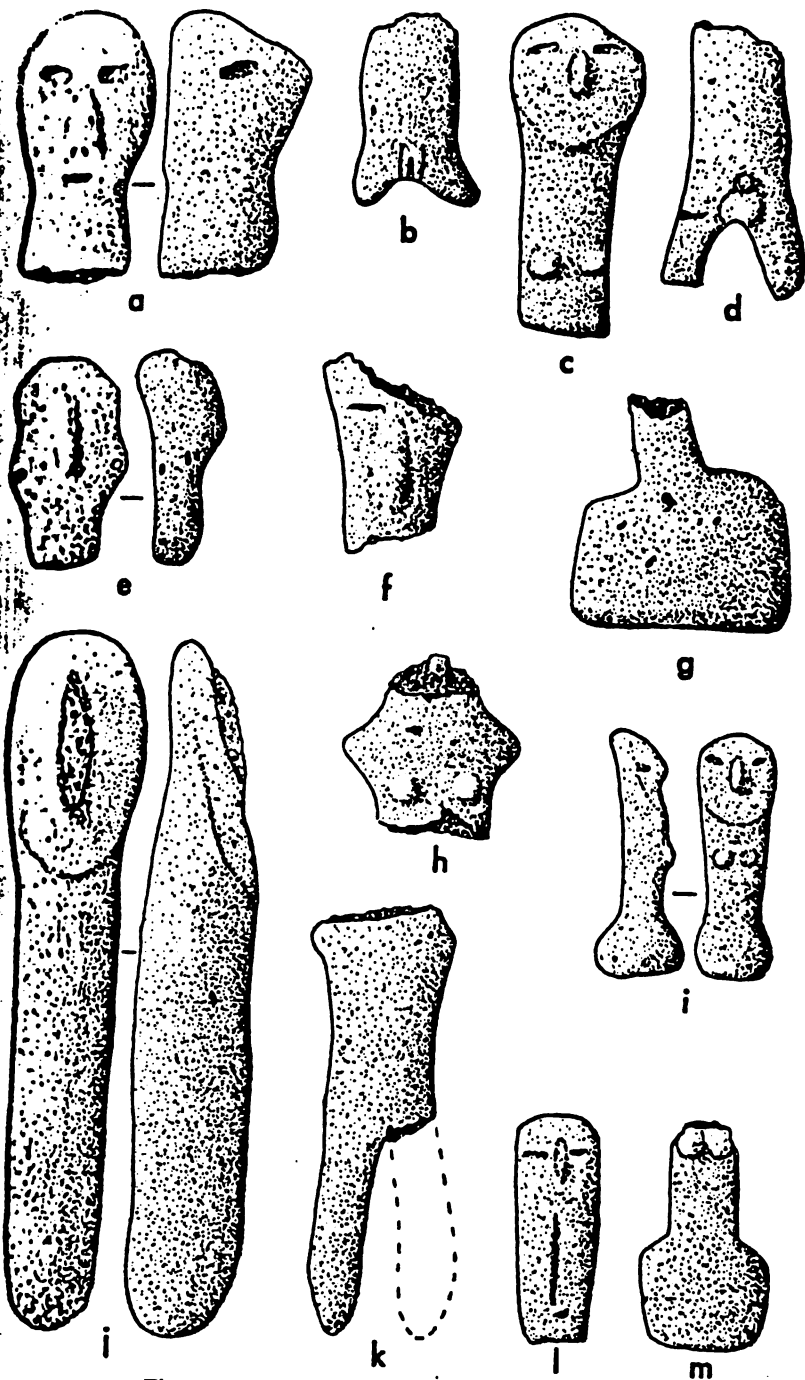


Fig. 2. Human Figurines. Length of *i*, 15 cm.

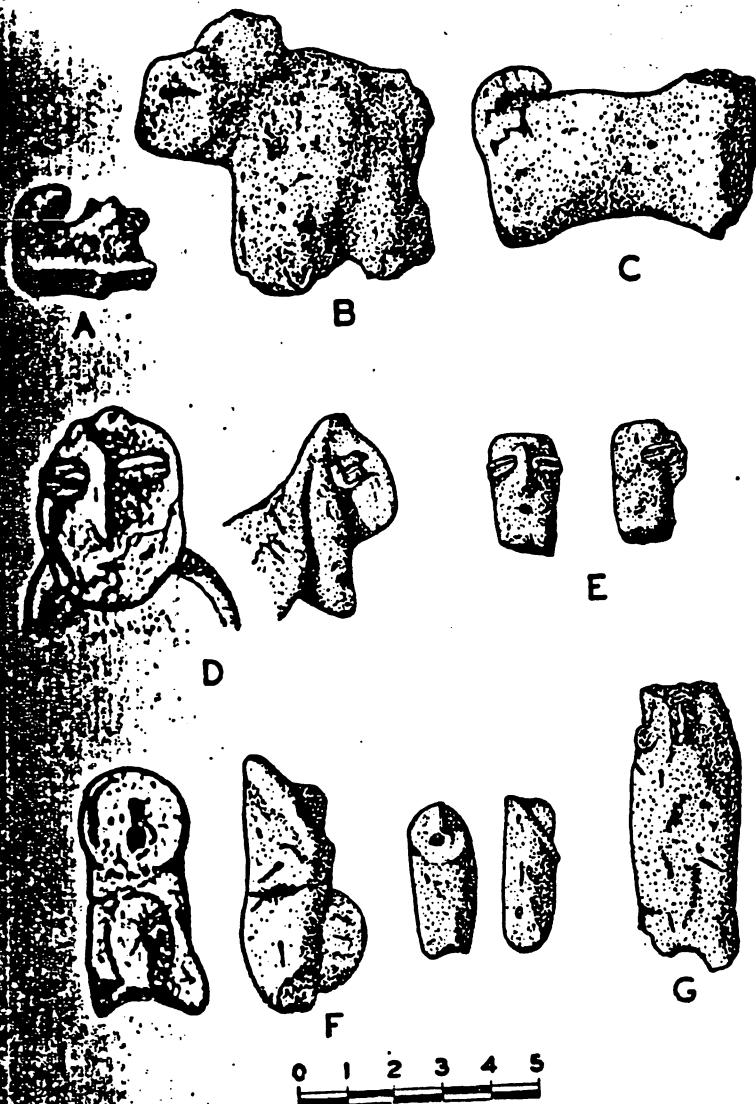


Fig. 23. Clay animal and human figurines. Animal figurines on such as in A, are relatively common; B. and C. modeled animal figurines, characteristic of this culture. D. and E. human figurines. Note absence of coffee bean eyes. F. and G. eyeless figurines.

Fig. 4. Winona Village

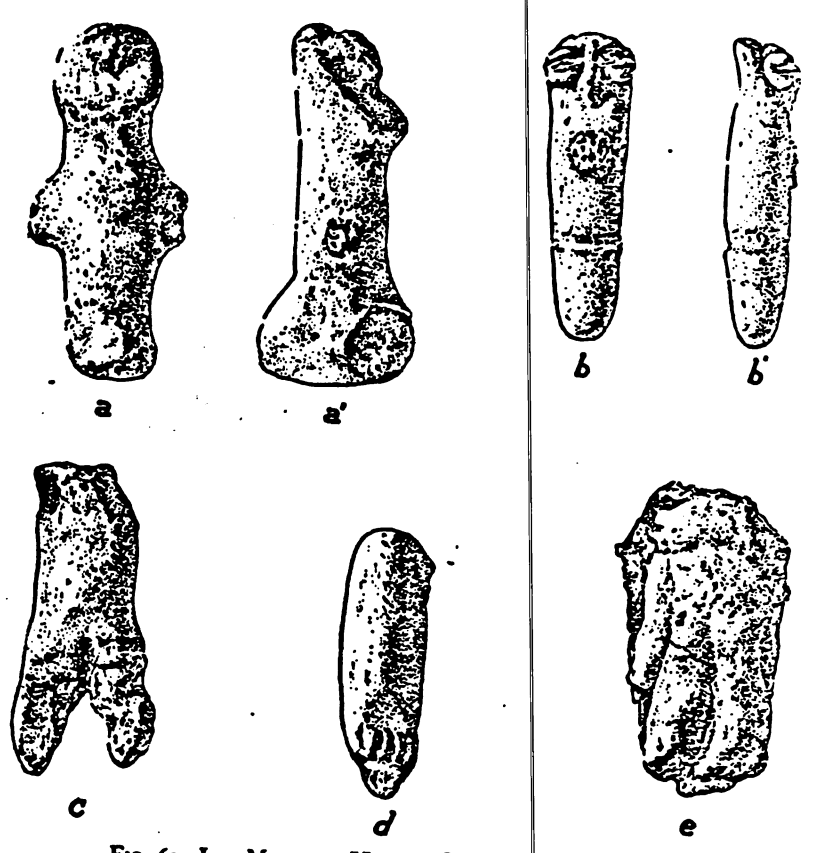


FIG. 69. Los Muertos. Human figurines and fragments.
Length of *a*, 1 1/4 inches.

Fig. 5.

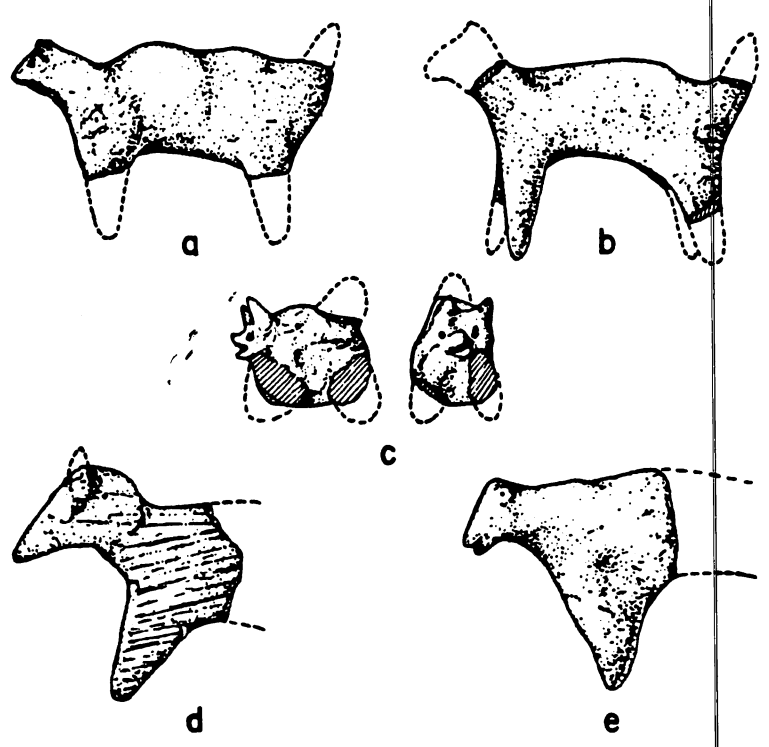


Fig. 13.20. Clay animal figurines: (a, b) Vahki Phase; (c, d) Pioneer Period; (e) Santa Cruz Phase. Length of *a*, 5.9 cm.

Fig. 6.

Snake town



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