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Jaina Figures and the Figuration of Maya Social Roles:

A Study of SAMA Object 64.289.94

Abstract

The site of Jaina island, for which Jaina figures are named, is unique in comparison to the sites where other Maya ceramic figurines have been found due to the scale and specially developed burial culture involving ceramic figurines that developed there (McVicker 2011: 211). The exceptional and artistic renderings and context for these figures from Campeche, Mexico has led to problems of looting and forgeries that have created obstacles for scholars trying to understand this body of work. A careful consideration of the stylistic features and grouping of individual figurines to determine their authenticity and meaning is therefore a step that can be undertaken to attempt to chip away at this problem. Such an opportunity for study exists in SAMA 64.289.94, a Jaina figurine from the San Antonio Museum of Art's off-exhibition collection. Considerations of style, form, burial context, ritual use, and representation in the system of Maya iconography and cosmology building off of past scholarship will be considered to come to an interpretation of this figure's practical and more theoretical purposes of representation. In this paper, I argue that the Jaina-style figurine SAMA 64.289.94 embodies the intersection of socio-economic and ritual life symbolically centered in the figure of the Maya woman and her specific role within cosmological ideology, demonstrating the value of Jaina figurines with the potential to enrich our understanding of the ancient Maya.

Introduction

The known body of Jaina figurines demonstrates the representation of women within ancient Maya society and offers insights into cultural practices and social norms along lines of gender and the human body, making it them a subject of fascination among collectors. The problem of many figures' archeologically unprovenanced origins has served as an obstacle to studying the Jaina figures throughout most of the 20th century, and attention to women in ancient Mesoamerican societies is likewise a relatively recent avenue of study. Therefore, there is still much to be gained by combining these two areas of focus in the study of Jaina figures. The Jaina figurine that I am studying from the off-exhibition collection at the San Antonio Museum of Art (SAMA), accession number 64.289.94, offers such an opportunity for investigation. This figure presents the question of how gender was a significant element in the treatment and use of such figures, and a parallel line of questioning regarding the figure's functional use in the ancient Maya social context is necessarily intertwined with its subject of female representation and ritual roles.

In this paper, I will explore the representation of the female in this SAMA 64.289.94 in conjunction with the uses of Jaina figures in life and burial contexts to place these points within the broader framework of Mesoamerican symbolism of duality and ritual practice. I will move from an overview of SAMA 64.289.94 towards a more specific identification of the Jaina "type" represented here by evaluating the museum file and supplementing its shortcomings with classification systems developed by scholars (Butler and Corson's studies) and information about the social circumstances surrounding Jaina burial culture as supported by archaeological findings (as through De Orellana's reports) (Butler 1935; Corson 1976; De Orellana 1965). Building on this contextual information, I will then return to an analysis of the SAMA figurine's physical

aspects in terms of production, its basic function as a rattle and grave good, and its representation of costume in order to come to an interpretation of who the object represents and how the object was used in a ritual function. This leads me to the argument that this Jaina-style figurine embodies the intersection of socio-economic and ritual life symbolically centered in the figure of the Maya woman and her specific role within cosmological ideology, demonstrating the value of Jaina figurines with the potential to enrich our understanding of the ancient Maya.

Formal Description of the SAMA Figure

The basic interpretive information provided by the museum file for SAMA 64.289.94 provides the basis of my study and has guided the line of questioning that follows in this paper. As seen in Figure 1, the piece is an anthropomorphic ceramic figurine representing a standing woman. The item description states that the object is a hollow rattle figurine, and observation shows that there is a small hole at the base of the object perhaps related to the technical necessities of this form (SAMA file 2018). As a ceramic piece with white glazing on the frontal side decorated with incised lines to draw in detail and an untreated backside, its construction as two mold-made pieces joined together is apparent. It is attributed to the Maya culture of Campeche, Mexico dating from 600-900 AD and falls within the category of Jaina figurines (SAMA file 2018). In terms of iconographic interpretation, the figure is identified as a priestess or high-ranking individual based on her elaborate dress and headdress or *tocado* (SAMA file, 2018).

This basic identifying information provides a starting point for my exploration of the functional and representational aspects of the SAMA piece, as it leads me to focus on previous

scholarship pertaining to Jaina figurines and Jaina-style figurines along the coast of Campeche during the Classic Maya period. However, some information from the museum records is incomplete, out of date, or must be elaborated upon. For example, the file suggests that Jaina was solely a necropolis, while sources detailing excavations refute this misconception by describing evidence of homes, ceremonial complexes, and other signs that the island was an important commercial site (SAMA file 2018; De Orellana 1965: 28; McVicker 2011). So, the observations of style and form provided by the object itself and the SAMA file must be taken together with other sources that provide arguments supported by archaeological data, as follows.

Classification within the Corpus of Jaina Figures

The SAMA file shows that the object was a gift to the San Antonio Museum of Art's collection and lacks specific provenience, as is common in the many Jaina and Jaina-style figures on display in museums (SAMA file 2018). As my following analysis is predicated on the assumption of the object's ancient date, the question SAMA 64.289.94's authenticity must be considered. Because of the popularity of Jaina figures among collectors, looting and an industry of fakes that began in the 1900s are problems that scholarship still seeks to address. While details such as the specific posing of the outturned arms at first seem questionable (as described later), I ultimately believe the piece to be an authentic Classic Maya period artifact based on its consistencies with well-established stylistic conventions. As support, a figurine apparently created from the same mold was recently exhibited as reputable by the Museo Nacional de Antropología (Figure 2) while the SAMA figure fits into the stylistic and temporal categories presented by previous scholars (Gallegos 2015: 64-5, Butler 1935; Corson 1976).

The classification of Maya figurines to address unreliable provenance has been the object of several studies aiming to better understand their features and chronology, and to resolve the confusion caused by the preponderance of unprovenanced and forged figurines resulting from the figures' popularity among collectors (Butler 1935: 636; Corson 1976). The first of these studies was Mary Butler's 1935 overview of mold-made human figures from throughout the Maya region, in which style was the primary consideration followed by the subject matter or type of subject shown (Butler 1935: 641). Butler's work helps confirm the most general classification of the SAMA object as an object from the Campeche or Tabasco region of the Gulf Coast due to its squat shape and other details of representation (Butler 1935: 654-655). A comparison of SAMA 64.289.94 (Figure 1) to Butler's drawings of Campeche style Maya mold-made figurines (Figure 3) demonstrates that its form fits into this section (Butler 1935: 655). Butler describes the Campeche figures as squat and heavy shaped, with a broad, flat, expressionless face (see Figure 3a-b for examples) with hands that may be raised or down-stretched and resting slightly bent at the sides (Butler 1935: 654). However, the SAMA figure's pose is more consistent with Butler's Tabasco style—which she describes as a slightly less squat and heavy modification of the Campeche style—since this category also includes figures with hands turned out and resting at the sides (as in Figure 3e) (Butler 1935: 654). Despite this posing, though, the SAMA piece fits more firmly within the Campeche style overall based on its overall shape and costume with detailed textile designs (Butler 1935: 654).

The most comprehensive consideration of Jaina figurines based on style and geographic connections is Christopher Corson's 1976 study of anthropomorphic figurines from Campeche, which includes those from Jaina island (Corson 1976). The SAMA piece fits best into what Corson calls the Campeche Phase, a later period of Jaina island's habitation which is

characterized by the use of molding technology and the function of female rattle figurines (Corson 1976: 128, 148). The SAMA figure is in line with the most common type from this period, a sort of combination of what Butler labelled the Campeche and Tabasco styles. For examples similar to the SAMA specimen in shape, detail style, and dress, see Figures 4 and 5. Corson describes the Campeche Phase as exhibiting considerable uniformity in its ceramic technology, and figurines from this period are hollow mold-cast figures (as opposed to hand-modelled) of an untampered light-colored ware and covered in white slip on the front surface (Corson 1976: 146). This phase is dominated by the iconographic theme of a standing woman with upraised arms, and as the variety of subjects decreased, variation among each piece became restricted to decoration rather than major differences in form (Corson 1976: 173). Corson notes that this period's change of theme towards the female gender must have been backed by a shift in interest corresponding to significant cultural and religious developments near the end of the Classic period, an issue that I will consider more fully in later sections (Corson 1976: 128, 173).

The fact that excavation projects on Jaina island have found this stylized posture (a short squat standing woman wearing a low headdress and rounded *huipil* or *quechquemitl* with arms raised or at sides) to be among the most common figures—and that most Campeche region figures of this type indeed come from Jaina island—lends further support for authenticity of the SAMA piece and for its Jaina origin (De Orellana 1965: 27-31; Butler 1935: 659).

Analysis in Context: Situating in the Site, In and Out of Sight

The classification of the SAMA piece, while useful in establishing the artifact as aligned with precedent and conventions of authentic objects, begins to take on significant meaning only

when considered within the context of our knowledge of Jaina figures derived from archeological investigation of Jaina island's burial culture. Due to the popularity of Jaina figurines on the art market and a preference among collectors for the finely hand modelled Jaina I Phase specimens depicting high-status individuals (a view already privileged in the archaeological record), a skewed version of Jaina figures must be addressed (Corson 1976: 146). For example, the figurine from the Yale collection in Figure 6 exemplifies the popular view of Jaina imagery, and contrasts with the SAMA figurine (refer to Figure 1). Coe describes the Yale figure as typical of the finest Jaina workmanship, made partly in a mold and partly by hand, and with a delicately modelled and almost portraitlike face (Coe 1975: 24). This piece's simple and realistic style represents an image of the aristocratic class, which is given most attention in publications, and contrasts with the more detailed yet less finely crafted mold-made SAMA figure, which is perhaps more exceptional for its subject of possibly ritual or religious significance (Coe 1975: 24).

A consideration of the site shows that the full corpus of Jaina figures is exceptional for the range of social actors and activities it depicts, perhaps representing the social diversity of the population (McVicker 2011). In fact, the site of Jaina island itself is exceptional for a number of reasons as well. Despite its small size (it has an area of less than 1 km² that was likely built up by its inhabitants over the years), the island off the northwest coast of Campeche holds thousands of high-quality ceramic figurines in its vast cemetery of simple graves (McVicker 2011: 211). The questions raised by this "Jaina exceptionalism" are the focus of McVicker's study, in which he places the island's ceramics in the social context of the economic and political changes of the Terminal Classic period in the Maya lowlands (McVicker 2011:211). Jaina, translated as "house in the water," held particular significance due to its site: it faced the sea on the western extreme

of the Maya region, making it an important ceremonial center, while its position on the coast facilitated its development into a prosperous commercial area linked to a circum-peninsular trade network along with its neighboring small islands (De Orellana 1965: 27-31; McVicker 2011: 211). These factors supported each other, as the site attracted religious pilgrims who likely contributed to the island's wealth, while commerce allowed considerable prestige and power to permeate the general population so that "every family could afford to include fine figurines among the household paraphernalia that marked their middle rank with visible symbols," adding to the cultural interest in the site (McVicker 2011: 211; Butler 1935: 659).

The result was a unique and highly developed "cult of the dead" intertwined with religious and commercial ends, in which ceramic figurines were placed in many of the simple earthen graves (McVicker 2011: 212). This burial cult is exceptional within the Maya world, as figurines at most other sites are absent from burials and instead found in domestic contexts—in construction fill or trash dumps associated with homes (McVicker 2012: 211; Gallegos 2015: 68). These burials reveal the social organization of the burying population, which was densely inhabited as suggested by houses and graves (De Orellana 1965: 27-31). Excavations also lend support for the use of identical mold-made figures, as they found two or more identical figurines within one grave or spread in different graves throughout the island, a fact that suggests mass production and the commercialization of figure manufacture (Corson 1976: 127-148; De Orellana 1965).

Mass Production

This type of evidence for the use of molds for multiple figures is directly available in the case of the SAMA piece, as there exists a figurine in the collection of Centro INAH Campeche (Figure 2) that appears to be its match, created from the same mold (Gallegos 2015: 64-5). The rise of the standardized mold-made figure in Classic period Campeche is the product of a major technological development, in which the press-molding technique began to replace the earlier method of hand-modelling (Goldstein, 1979: 52-3). In this process, pieces of clay were hand-pressed into the mold to form the front of the figurine, and the undecorated back was cut to shape and attached with damp clay to the mold-made front piece, leaving a seam where the edges were joined as evidence of the process (Goldstein 1979: 53-4). This can be seen in both the SAMA and INAH pieces (Figures 1 and 2), and further evidence of their shared origin can be seen in their differences in the level of detail. Because ceramic molds wear out with use, the detail on each succeeding figurine created was duller, suggesting that the SAMA piece (with its sharper details) was made before its INAH double (whose patterns are slightly less legible) (Goldstein 1979: 53-4).

The move towards mass production was a trend that reached fulfillment by the Campeche phase, a time of “a total commitment to molding technique encouraged by an increasing demand for the duplication of forms” according to Corson (1976: 148). This corresponds to the increasing standardization of poses (accounting for the emergence of standing female figures such as the SAMA piece) as experimentation was reduced in favor of the market-oriented goals of efficient production and standardization (Corson 1976: 130). Such trends seem to transform Jaina figurines into primarily instruments of an economic and social system, perhaps making them into what McVicker calls “mass media for the plebeians” (McVicker 2011: 218-220). In

this sense, the figures would have served as a sort of status symbols that met the demands of Jaina's middle class, who was eager to populate their common graves with high-quality burial goods in emulation of elites at more typical Maya sites, which were dominated by court hierarchy rather than merchant systems (McVicker 2011: 211, 218-20).

Though McVicker stresses the commercial element of mass production and standardization, I contend that this factor was also significantly tangled with the ritual side of culture. After all, the standardization of poses entailed by mass production may not be solely a factor limiting creativity, but could be viewed as ideally suited for representing an increasingly character types or icons who were part of ritual hierarchy and domestic religious paraphernalia. In addition, the subject of the predominant theme that was standardized, an image of a standing woman, reflected a shift in interest corresponding to significant cultural and religious developments near the end of the Classic period (Corson 1976: 173).

Material Use and Performative Function

The subject being represented in the SAMA piece gives a clue to its use. Butler states that the majority of Campeche figures likely depict cult devotees, while a few definitely portray deities, suggesting that such figures were used in a religious manner (Butler, 1935: 640). Furthermore, the presence of a *tocado* headdress suggests she may wear the costume of a ritual capacity, indicating the use of the figure-rattle in rituals. The specifics of use may be further revealed by considering the physical form/materiality of the rattle through analogy to ritual objects outside the Maya context. Overholtzer's study of Aztec rattle figurines and household social reproductive practices provides a useful comparison (Overholtzer 2012). In this study,

Overholtzer finds that rattles in the form of women as iconographic representations centered on fertility and health (depicting women or reproductive age, pregnant, or childrearing) were used in healing rituals pertaining to successful human reproduction and maternal health (Overholtzer 2012: 70-2, 74).

Overholtzer supports the assertion that Aztec rattle figurines were actively used in curing and healing rituals performed by women (mainly midwives, mothers, and healers) with a consideration of their tactile, auditory, visual, and physiological aspects (Overholtzer 2012: 74). The size, shape, and noisemaking feature of these figurines suggests they were held in the hand and shaken to produce a soothing noise during domestic rituals and the birth process, while ethnohistoric accounts specify their use in household ritual: they were hung over corn fields to summon deities/protect crops, and worn by children to protect well-being, both actions intended to further processes of reproduction (agricultural and human) (Overholtzer 2012: 70, 76, 77). The SAMA figurine and other Campeche phase figures were also likely handled in the domestic setting based on their tactile elements. Though larger than the Aztec rattles, they still would fit comfortably in the hand, but would leave the decorated front side visible as they were shaken for noisemaking. The element of display afforded by the SAMA figure's size in conjunction with its rattle function suggests that the presentation of the female subject was as important as the object's musical element, suggesting a rather performative aspect was central to its ultimate purpose. However, the SAMA figurine also differs from Overholtzer's Aztec rattle examples in its somewhat more two-dimensional form (a result of the press-molding technique described above). In this sense the SAMA figure is more like a flat-backed type of Aztec figurine (separate from Overholtzer's focus), which had a plain undecorated posterior side and a large base that allowed them to stand—qualities that make them suited to “sit on an altar and be seen and not

touched” (Overholtzer 2012: 78). This aspect in the SAMA piece, though, does not negate its capacity to be actively used and handled in rituals with practical purposes. Instead, it suggests that the Campeche phase Jaina figurines had multiple uses over their lifeways: they were perhaps placed on household display when not in ceremonial or performative use, showing that the form of the rattle and display figurine were effectively merged in Jaina to suit both active tactile and visually instructive modes. Furthermore, this hypothesis of figurines with multiple uses throughout its life—and human life—could help explain why the Jaina figures are found in graves rather than simply in domestic contexts. Because the form facilitated the display of molded and incised details representing a female social subject, Jaina figurines as practical objects of daily life simultaneously served as markers of status, and through a change of context into the burial setting could fulfill this purpose in death. At the same time, the subject of a ritual object specific to Jaina used as a burial good combined the motives of a status-interested Jaina population of the ceremonial center and commercial outpost with the more sacred realm of religious practice, from which Jaina island drew much of its symbolic importance from as a watery site of the west (De Orellana, 27-29).

Attire/Clothing and Gendered Identity

The importance of gender roles and representation considered in Overholtzer’s study of Aztec rattles is certainly applicable to the realm of Jaina figurines, as their function as musical instruments is divided along lines of the gender being represented as much as by chronological occurrence. In general, Jaina rattle figures tend to be female, while whistles tend to be males (Gallegos, 2015: 56; Corson 1976: 128, 130). Therefore, the female aspects of the SAMA rattle

figure are likely integral to her original significance, and the gender presentation of the woman represented should be considered. Clothing, costume, and ceremonial dress of the ancient and modern Maya bear messages relating to the status or identity of the wearer, and in Maya textiles symbols of iconographic significance from mythology and nature are interwoven to create meaning (Gallegos, 2015: 64). Furthermore, a “pan-Mesoamerican costume repertory” divided along lines of gender even functioned to communicate status and messages of a class system, as suggested by the existence of ancient Maya sumptuary laws (Blum Schevill, 1997: 131-2). The richly dressed SAMA figure, with intricately patterned textile designs indicated in relief along with a headdress and presumably jade earspools, bracelets, and necklace, suggests that she represents a figure of high status or importance—someone privileged in society or ceremonial/mythological scenes (Blum Schevill, 1997: 131). While simple dress materials (such as rough vegetal fibers) were likely mandated for commoners and slaves, more elegant dress (such as cotton, feathers, and jewel embellishments) was reserved for the upper classes, and these distinctions were further compounded by stylistic divisions that indicated class and rank (Blum Schevill, 1997: 131).

The clothing that suggests the figure’s respected status also clearly follow gender conventions of Maya dress. The SAMA figure wears the basic elements that comprise Classic Maya female dress, the *enredo* skirt covering the hips, and the *huipil*, a loose tunic worn over the torso, along with a headdress which completes the woman’s costume repertoire (Gallegos 2015:66; Blum Schevill 1997: 129, 136). As identified by the museum file, the SAMA figure also wears a semi-circular shaped *quechquemitl* covering the shoulders and reaching the waist, as is conventional by the Campeche A phase (SAMA file 2018; Corson 1976: 137). In addition, she also follows the figurine convention of females being depicted without shoes (Goldstein notes

that only men were shown sandaled) (Goldstein 1979: 45). Hairstyle was also a clear marker of a woman's status in artistic figure representation. The SAMA figure (refer to Figure 1) wears straight hair evenly divided into two, parted down the middle of the head, and hanging loose on both sides. This allows the identification of the figure as a young woman, given that adult women were never shown with their hair loose (as in Figure 7), but "invariably" were shown with their hair pulled into ponytails or braided and gathered in the back of the head, and with bands and face-framing stepped cuts (as in Figures 8 and 9). Elderly women were also shown wearing their hair tied back but lacking any additional decoration (Figure 10) (Gallegos, 2015: 67). The fact that the young woman's hairstyle is indicated suggests that the figure's youthful age is an important part of her identity.

Scholars of textiles have suggested that mythical history is woven into Maya fabrics, making this another part of clothing as a "cultural identity badge" to be read (Blum Schevill, 1997: 138, 130; Morris, 1986: 3-5). The patterns in the SAMA figure's clothes are aligned with the established weaving traditions, further supporting the object's authenticity as an ancient Mesoamerican artifact. The design on the figure's *huipil* is a diamond/rhomboid pattern, one of the most basic motifs of Maya weaving that appears on both Classic period and modern Maya *huipils* (Morris, 1986: 7; Corson 1976: 146). While diamonds, usually decorating banded skirts, symbolize "the earth and sky as a unity," undulating forms such as snakes symbolize the fertile earth (Morris, 1986:10; Corson 1976:146). The floral pattern of tightly compacted scrolls and flourishes, likely representing embroidery, decorating the *quechquemiltl* as the principal decorative zone in the SAMA piece is an example of this fertility imagery, as conventional for Campeche A specimens (Corson 1976: 147).

Such thematic imagery seems to emphasize feminine themes relating to abundance and reproduction, recalling the representations of Overholtzer's Aztec female rattles. But the emphasis here on the woman's dress and woven garments rather than on her body seems to suggest that her status is more focused in her symbolic capacities as a female (within Mesoamerican male/female dichotomies) than on physical reproduction. Borrowing Overholtzer's language, I suggest that that the clothing as a mode of gender presentation here is related to ideas of the female's role as a key figure in "social reproduction," a process that is attached to biological reproduction, but instead encompasses the broader social, political, and cultural practices of women (Overholtzer 2012: 72). This concept is in line with a view of the SAMA figurine symbolically functioning as a key figure and material tool in female domestic and/or more formalized ceremonial ritual unique to Jaina island.

Identification and Implications: Representing Maya Women and Social Roles

The key to my interpretation of SAMA 64.289.94 is the identification of its subject as a variation of the "speaker" figure, a standardized "type" character that would support processes of ritual social reproduction. A common scene from Gulf Coast Maya sites of Mexico are referred to as "speakers," images of young women standing in poses of oration (Gallegos 2015: 67). Speaker figures depict young women (shown with barely perceptible breasts with loose hair parted down the middle, sometimes decorated) standing usually with one or both arms bent at the elbow and raised with palms facing forward or with their arms at their sides as in Figure 11 (Gallegos 2015: 67). As Gallegos points out, this figurine type may have served as a portable image of Goddess I, a moon goddess associated fertility, abundance, and weaving (Gallegos

2011; Gallegos 2015: 68; Taube, 1992: 64, 68). Goddess I appears in postclassic codices as a young woman wearing only a skirt, large earspools, and the loose hairstyle described previously (Gallegos 2011: 55; Gallegos 2015: 67). Gallegos suggests that “speaker” figurines represented the portable image of this goddess or an earlier deity with similar attributes and were a necessary element of female domestic rituals (Gallegos 2011; Gallegos 2015: 68). This interpretation is supported by Diego de Landa’s 16th century ethnohistorical account of a Maya practice in which midwives placed a figurine of the goddess under the beds of pregnant women as a tool of protection (Gallegos, 2015: 68). This provides evidence for the use of protective figurines in domestic contexts, similar to that described in Overholtzer’s argument focused on Aztec rattles (Overholtzer 2012). Gallegos notes that the archeological abundance of “speaker” figures, including many incomplete ones (see Figure 11), suggests veneration implied by “their ongoing renewal, whether because they were broken or else they had to be replaced periodically, perhaps at a given ceremony” (Gallegos 2015:68). While the SAMA file suggests that its figure’s left arm was broken post-excavation (compare Figure 1 to the unbroken Figure 2), the option of breakage during original use may present an alternate interpretation (SAMA, 2018; Gallegos 2015:68).

While the SAMA object as a figurine embodies feminine or deity-like forces through miniaturization is a compelling hypothesis, I propose a similar but alternate interpretation for this type of speaker figure. Her age, gender, and dress emphasizing female themes of fertility and abundance is indeed aligned with that of Goddess I, who Gallegos associates with the speaker pose, but the emphasis on these aspects as signified through human adornment seems to suggest she is not simply a representation of a goddess in mortal form (Gallegos 2015:68). Rather, just the opposite: it may be that the figurine subject is young female orator taking on the attributes of the deity. This seems a more likely possibility, at least for this type of speaker figure who clearly

adopts a standardized posture of ritual oration, supplication, or communication with (rather than the actions *of*) a divine force.

This scenario is more in line with Goldstein's interpretation of the speaker figure, or as she calls it, the "orant priestess" (Goldstein, 1979: 98). Gallegos also acknowledges a variation of a type of speaker figure that did not portray the "characteristics of the ordinary Maya physique" she described, but is instead shown covered by a *quechquemiltl* and/or headdress (Gallegos 2015: 68). These elements of dress could suggest that women were more actively involved in rituals beyond the domestic sphere in the Classic period, and such pieces may have influenced by contact with the Central Highlands (Gallegos 2015: 68). These details are feasible considering the context for Jaina island as a site connected to surrounding regions by trade networks and its development of a unique burial cult and status-oriented, merchant-class based (and therefore somewhat exceptional) society. In this case, the figurine could still function in a ritual dimension as a source of divine protection, but not as a direct proxy to a goddess through miniaturization into a physical ceramic object. Instead it would seem to reflect the social role of a human vessel or communicator with the divine through a specific power based in her identity as a young woman. In fact, it was perhaps her status as a young woman that made her suited to take on and adorn herself with clothing that marked an association with the themes of Goddess I in the first place. In this sense, it is feasible to consider the Campeche phase Jaina speaker figure as an example of women negotiating gender relations by performing and asserting their control as integral actors in the "reproduction of society" (Overholtzer 2012:80).

Conclusions

As a Campeche phase variation on the “speaker” figure, the SAMA figurine is representative of religious or cosmological associations of the young woman with fertility or renewal in a ritual context, performing a vital role within the Maya set of beliefs. At the same time, she emphasizes these specific associations by taking on garments which are essentially performative and socially constructed markers of the themes of the youthful and womanly Goddess I. In this way, the speaker type character seems to parallel the dual function implied in her figurine form here. She functions both in an active, highly physical manner—as a musical instrument and tool used in ritual—and as an object of display. Just as the decorative dress on the frontal side projects messages of her specific role in society, the display of the figurine in the home or its presence in a grave would project a message of her owner’s social status as either a practitioner of ritual or an individual partaking in the mass-produced social economy of Jaina island driven by commerce and expressed in in part through ceramics.

This study has shown the deep system of meaning communicated in Maya material culture, especially through symbolic clothing/adornment and the physical realities of the use of status-indicating and ritual figurines. These areas also provide opportunities for further study. The three designs on the SAMA figure’s lower skirt are unexplored in this analysis, as they are visually unidentifiable in comparison to the designs that contain legible cultural meaning. Therefore, I recommend creating a rubbing of the ceramic surface on the figure’s dress in order to gain a clearer image, and to further explore the symbolism of the figure as related to textile tradition and the iconography of Goddess I. A subject raised by my study which I believe also poses interesting questions is how the Campeche phase Jaina figures fit within the overall body of Jaina figures. For example, the existence of male whistle figurines as a possible counterpart to

female rattles suggests an interesting dual gender symbolism that perhaps reveals unique gender relations on Jaina island.

Overall, a consideration of the materiality of the SAMA object along with its wider context has helped understand its original function and cultural significance for ritual and social purposes in life and in death. This study has shown that the careful analysis of individual Jaina figurines based on previous scholarship, which focused more on generalizations concerning the entire corpus of Jaina island's figures, has the potential to demonstrate how they embody the specific causes and manifestations of Jaina exceptionalism.

Appendix



Figure 1. SAMA Object 64.289.94. Jaina figurine front, back, and face detail (Photos by Natalie Carrier with permission by Gabriela Gamez).



Figure 2. Figurilla de mujer ricamente ataviada/Figurine of a richly dressed woman (Cat. 90 in *Mayas: El Lenguaje de la Belleza*). Jaina Island, Campeche, 600-900 A.D., molded and painted ceramic, Centro INAH Campeche. (Gallegos 2015: 65).



Figure 3. Examples of the Campeche style (a-b) and Tabasco style (c-e) of Maya mold-made figurines from Butler's early classification study (Butler, 1935: 655).



Fig 4. Example of Jaina figure from Campeche A Phase, as identified by Corson. She wears a *quechquemiltl* and *huipil* with similar shape and textile designs as the SAMA figurine (Corson 1976: 202).



Figure 5. Example of Jaina figure from Campeche A Phase, as identified by Corson. She wears an asymmetrical headdress with comparable by the worn by the SAMA figurine (Corson 1976: 204).



Figure 6. Whistle figure of seated woman with child in lap, Jaina Island. Example of earlier finely hand-modelled details in comparison to the later Campeche phase (Coe, 1975: 24).



Figure 7. Young girl in the nude with plain hair parted down middle and hanging loose over shoulders (Groth Kimball 1961: 28).



Figure 8. Old man and woman, molded rattle figurine with traces of white paint. Example of woman wearing *tocado* (headdress) with crossing elements and decorated by rosettes similar to the SAMA piece (Groth Kimball 1961:27).



Figure 9. Female deity. Example of stepped haircut of adult-aged women (Groth Kimball 1961:20).



Figure 10. Old woman carrying a child in shawl in back. She wears her hair tied back and covered. Rattle figurine from Campeche (Groth Kimball 1961:29).



Figure 11. Young women in speaker poses (different variations). From Museo Arqueológico de Jonuta, Peabody Museum, and Museo de Hechchakan-INAH (Gallegos 2011:62).

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