A514-Am,S- Ecuador-Valdivia-Female-Pointed legs-3500-2000 BCE



Fig. 1. Ecuador-Valdivia-Female-Pointed legs-3500-2000 BCE

Case No.: 9

**Accession No.**

**Formal Label:** Ecuador-Valdivia-Female-Lacking legs-3500-2000 BCE

**Display Description:**

Valdivia Culture flourished on the Pacific coastal lowlands of Ecuador during the Early Formative period (3500-2000 BCE) making it one of the earliest cultures of the Americas. It was identified at the type site of Valdivia in coastal Guayas province by the Ecuadoran Emilio Estrada, and U. S. archaeologists Betty Meggers and Clifford Evans in the late 1950s.

Valdivia culture was initially thought to be an egalitarian, semi-sedentary littoral adaptation based upon fishing and shellfish gathering, with only rudimentary reliance on horticulture. Today this view of Valdivian culture has been revised to be a tropical forest culture" having a fundamentally riverine settlement focus, whose ultimate origins can be traced to early population dispersals from the Amazon Basin. Newer subsistence data indicate a mixed economy of flood plain horticultural production (based on maize, beans, manioc, achira and other root crops, chili pepper, cotton, and gourds), hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild plants and shellfish. Its unique ceramic style and the so-called "Venus" figurines remain as its trademark.

An eight-phase ceramic sequence established by Betsy Hill has permitted a more precise delineation of temporal trends in settlement pattern and internal site layout. Large-scale excavations at village sites such as Real Alto and Loma Alta in Guayas province have generated detailed reconstructions of Valdivia households, community patterning, social organization, burial practices, and ceremonial behavior, all of which underwent significant changes between phases 1 and 8. As a result, it is now clear that Valdivia represents a dynamic, fully sedentary society of village horticulturalists, characterized by progressive demographic growth, household expansion from nuclear to extended family dwellings, and an increasing degree of social ranking and status inequality through time. Beginning as early as Middle Valdivia times, mortuary evidence suggests the establishment of hereditary social status accorded to senior females. Long-distance maritime trade was apparent from exotic material excavated in village sites and this probably generated societal change and heightened complexity.

**LC Classification:**

**Date or Time Horizon:** 3500-1800 BCE

**Geographical Area:** [Santa Elena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Elena_Province) peninsula near the modern-day town of [Valdivia](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Valdivia,_Ecuador&action=edit&redlink=1), [Ecuador](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecuador).

**Map:**



[Santa Elena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Elena_Province) peninsula in Ecuador. After https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/15/Santa\_Elena\_in\_Ecuador\_%28%2BGalapagos%29.svg/375px-Santa\_Elena\_in\_Ecuador\_%28%2BGalapagos%29.svg.png

**GPS coordinates:**



Valdivian culture area in red after Alfredobi Own work assumed (based on copyright claims)., Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1267392

**Cultural Affiliation:**

**Medium: ceramic**

**Dimensions: 76.43 mm, 3.0 in**

**Weight:**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance: English 1930’s collection**

**Discussion:**

“The provocative theory of Meggers, Evans, and Estrada that the Valdivia pottery of Ecuador owes its inception to lost Middle Jomon fishermen from Kyushu, Japan (Meggers, Evans, and Estrada 1965; Meggers 1966; Meggers and Evans 1966) has been reviewed by a number of Americanists (Coe 1967; Ferdon 1966; Lathrap 1967). Dr. Lathrap pointed out several aspects of the authors’ interpretive sections that seemed questionable to him. … the Jomon traits they have selected in no way demonstrate the existence of a prehistoric community from which migrants could have drifted to the New World (Pearson 1978)” “Meggers’ and Evans’ theory of diffusion from the Neolithic Jomon culture of Japan, which seemed to share some similarities in ceramic design (McEwan 1978), was marred by the fact they did not seek possible correlations between the Valdivia and other regional groups such as the sites of Real Alto and Las Vegas , which provided data showing the genesis and development of Valdivian culture.

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