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The Cascajal Tablet

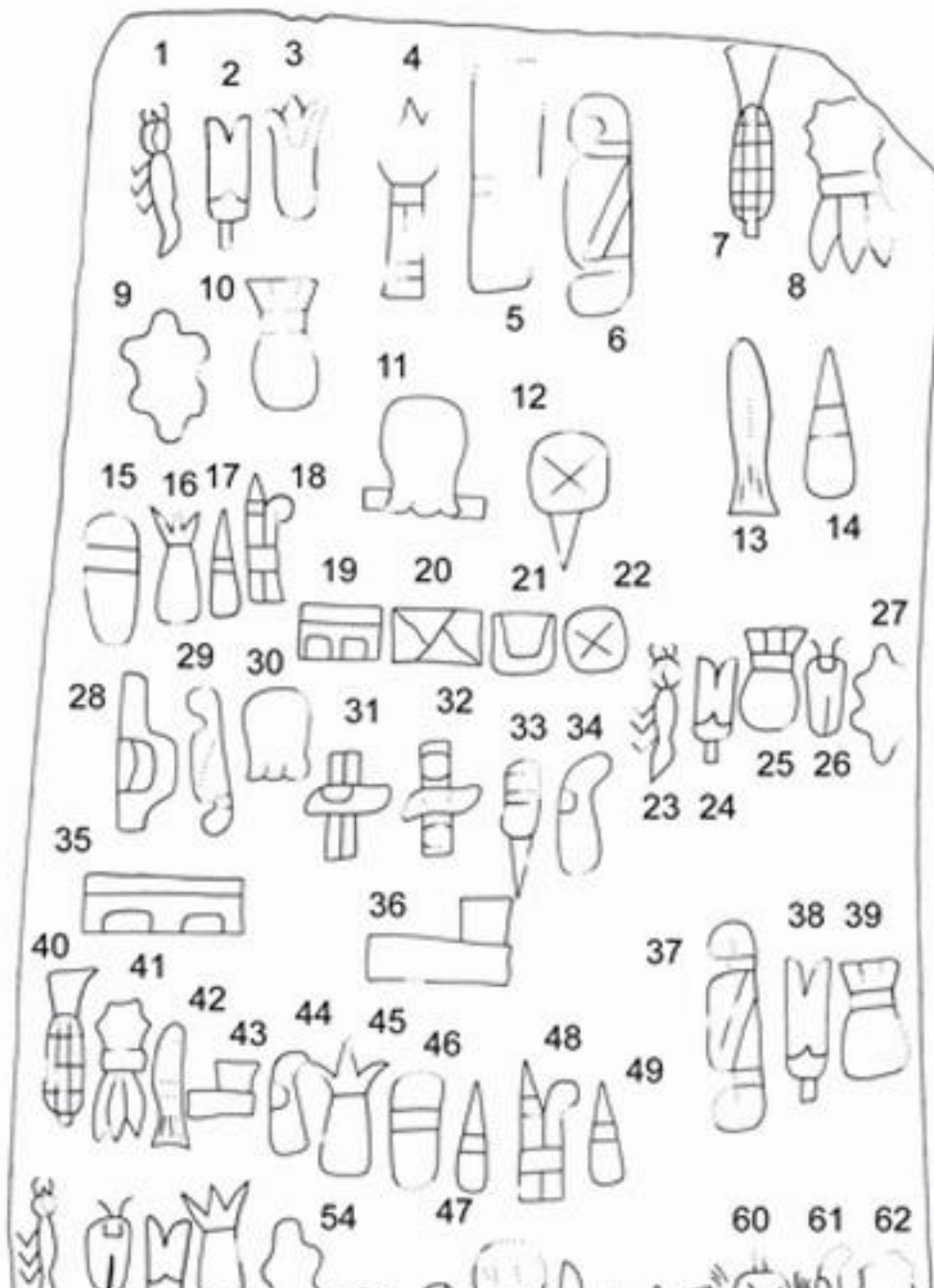
The article by Martinez et al in the 15 September 2006 issue of Science was very interesting. Although the authors maintain that the inscription can not be read this is untrue.

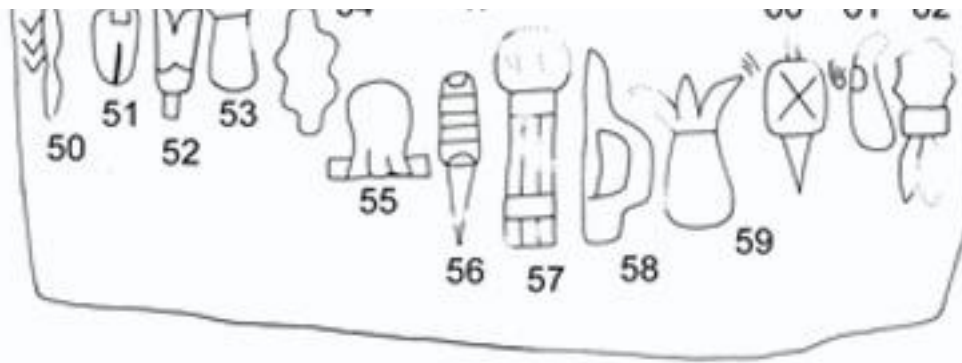
I deciphered Olmec writing and can read the writing on the tablet. The Olmec writing on the Cascajal tablet is an obituary for a King Bi Po. This writing is written in Hieroglyphic Olmec (Winters,2006). Hieroglyphic Olmec includes multiple linear Olmec signs which are joined together to make pictures of animals, faces and other objects.

4x	3x	2x	1x
1 	4 	10 	22 
2 	5 	11 	23 
3 	6 	12 	24 
	7 	13 	25 
	8 	14 	26 
	9 	15 	27 
		16 	28 
		17 	
		18 	
		19 	
		20 	
		21 	

Some researchers have recognized insects and other objects in the signs. In reality these signs are made up several different Olmec linear signs (Winters,1998).

To read the Olmec writing I use the Vai script. The Vai script includes a number of syllabic signs that have been used to engrave rocks in the Sahara for the past 4000 years. I read the signs in Malinke-Bambara which was the spoken language of the Olmec.





The Olmec writing is read right to left top to bottom. Each segment of the Olmec sign has to be broken down into its individual syllabic sign. In most cases the Olmec signs includes two or more syllabic characters. The Olmec signs can be interpreted as follows:

1. La fe ta gyo
2. Bi yu
3. Pa po yu
4. Se ta I su
5. Ta kye
6. Beb be
7. Bi Po Yu to
8. Tu fa ku
9. Tu pa pot u
10. Ta gbe pa
11. i-tu
12. Bi Yu yo po
13. Kye gyo
14. Po lu
15. Fe ta yo i
16. Be kye

17. Fe gina
18. Po bi po tu
19. Lu kye gyo to
20. Kye tu a pa
21. Yu gyo i
22. Pa ku pa
23. Po yu
24. Day u kye da
25. Po ta kye tap o
26. Ta gbe
27. Bi Fa yu
28. Bi Yu / Paw

Translation

Reading the Cascajal Tablet from right to left we have the following:

- (8) Bi Po lays in state in the tomb, (7) desiring to be endowed with mysterious faculties.
- (6) This abode is possessed by the Governor . (5).... (4) Bi Po Po.
- (3) Bi (was), (2) an Artisan desires to be consecrated to the divinity. (1) (and He) merits thou offer of libations.
- (14). Admiration (for) the cult specialist's hemisphere tomb. (13) The inheritance of thou vital spirit is consecration to the divinity.
- (12) In a place of righteous admiration, (11) Pure Bi (in a) pure abode
- (10) A pure mark of admiration (is) this hemispheric tomb.
- (9) [Here] lays low (the celebrity) [he] is gone.

(22) The place of righteousness, [1s] (21) the pure hemispheric tomb

(20)

(19) Thou (art) obedient to the Order. (18) Hold upright the Order (and) the divinity of the sacred cult.

(17) Pure Admiration this place of, (16) Bi the Vital Spirit. (15) [Truly this is] a place consecrated to the divinity and propriety.

27) Lay low (the celebrity) to go to , (26) love the mystic order—thou vivid image of the race,

(25) The pure Govenor and (24) Devotee [of the Order lies in this] hemispheric tomb ,desires [to be] a talisman effective in providing one with virtue, (23) [He] merits thou offer of Libations.

(34) Command Respect. (33)...this place of admiration. (32) Thou sacred inheritance is propriety. (31) The Govenor commands existence in a unique state, (31) [in] this ruler's hemispheric tomb. (29) The Royal (28) [was] a vigorous man.

(36) The pure habitation (35) [of a]Ruler obedient to the Order.

(37) This abode is possessed by the governor. (38) Admiration to you [who art] obedient to the Order.

(49) Pure admiration [for this] tomb.

(48) Thou hold upright the pure law.

(47). Pure admiration [for this tomb].

(46) [It] acts [as] a talisman effective in providing one with virtue.

(45) Bi Po, (44) a pure man, (43) of wonder, (42) [whose] inheritance is consecration to the Divinity.

(41) Bi Po lays in state in the tomb, (40) desiring to be endowed with mysterious faculties.

(62) Bi Po lays in state in the tomb.

(61) [This] tomb [is a] sacred object, (60) a place of righteous wonder.

[1]

(59) Bi's tomb (58) [is in] accord [with] the law (57) Bi exist in a unique (and) pure state the abode of the Govenor is pure..

(56) The inheritance of [this] Ruler is joy.

(55) [In] this tomb of King Bi (54) lays low a celebrity, [he] is gone.

(53) The tomb of Bi (52) is a dormitory [of] love. A place consacreted to the divinity.

(51) Thou the vivid image of the race love(d) the mystic order.

(50) [He] merits [your] offer of Libations.

This translation of the Cascajal tablet makes it clear that the tablet was written for a local ruler at San Lorenzo called Bi Po. This tablet indicates that Bi Po's tomb was recognized as a sacred site. It also indicates that the Olmecians believed that if they offered libations at the tombs of their rulers they would gain blessings.

The Cascajal Tablet according to the road builders at the village was found in a mound. The fact that a mound existed where the tablet was found offers considerable support to the idea that the mound where the tablet was found is the tomb of **BiPoPo**.

The obituary on the Cascajal Tablet may be written about one of the Royals among Olmec heads found at San Lorenzo. The Cascajal Tablet may relate to the personage depicted in San Lorenzo monument 3.



**HEAD 3,
SAN LORENZO**
(Monument 3),
1.78 m (5.84 ft) tall.
Jalapa Museum
of Anthropology.

We have found that the names of these rulers is probably found among the symbols associated with the individual Olmec heads. The headband on monument 3 is made up of four parallel ropes encircling the head. In the parallel ropes there are two serrated figures that cross the ropes diagonally.

There is also a plaited diadem or four braids on the back of the figure covered with serrated element. On the side of the head of monument 3, two serrated elements on four parallel lines hang. This element ends with a three-tiered element hanging.



In the Olmec writing the serrated elements means Bi, while the boxes under the serrated element within the four parallel lines would represent the words PoPo. This suggest that the name for monument 3 was probably **BiPoPo**.

The hanging element on monument 3 is similar to one of the signs on the Cascajal



tablet. Although symbol 57 on the Cascajal monument is hard to recognize it appears to include the Bi sign on the top of the symbol. This finding indicates that the BiPoPo of monument 3, is most likely the BiPo(Po) mentioned in the Cascajal Tablet.

Stirling said that monument 3 was found at the bottom of a deep ravine half-a-mile southwest of the principal mound of San Lorenzo, along with ceramic potsherds. This is interesting because

the village of Cascajal is situated southwest of San Lorenzo.

According to reports of the discovery of the road builders who found the Cascajal Tablet, the tablet came from a mound at Cascajal which was located about a mile from San Lorenzo. The coincidence of finding San Lorenzo Monument 3 in the proximity of the Cascajal mound where the Cascajal Tablet was found suggest that these artifacts concern the same personage. This leads to the possibility that the Cascajal mound was the tomb of **BiPoPo**.

In conclusion the Cascajal Tablet is an obituary for a Olmec ruler named BiPoPo. Given the presence of similar signs on the Olmec head called San Lorenzo monument 3, which also read BiPoPo suggest that the Cascajal Tablet was written for the personage depicted in Olmec head 3.

If the Cascajal Tablet really corresponds to one of the Olmec heads suggest that Cascajal may have been a royal burial site. If this is the case it is conceivable that other tablets relating to Olmec rulers may also be found at this locale, since some of these other mounds may be the “hemispheric” tombs of other Olmec rulers.

References:

Winters, Clyde. (1998). The Decipherment of the Olmec Writing System. Retrieved 09/25/2006 at <http://www.olmec98.net/olmecDecip.htm>

Winters,Clyde.(2006). The Olmec Hieroglyphic Script. Retrieved 09/25/2006 at: <http://olmec98.net/hieromec.pdf>

[1]

This sign reads **Bi ta po tu po ku**