

Olmec Writing

- Used to inscribe celts, mask and monuments
- Syllabic script used on celts, statuettes and portable artifacts
- Hieroglyphic script employed on bas-reliefs and monuments



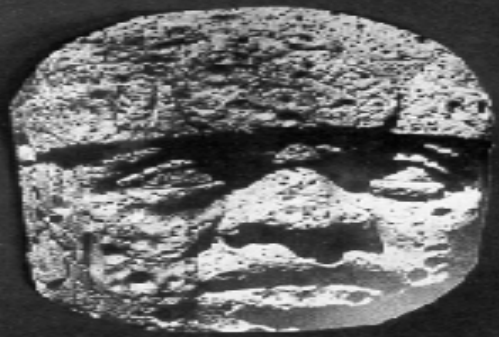
EL PARENTESCO DE LOS ANTIGUOS REYES DE KUSCH EN LA NUBIA AFRICANA
CON LOS OLMECAS EN AMERICA

LA CORONA DE KUSCH



EMOCIONANTE HERITARIO DE UN GRAN JEFE OLMECA, GRABADO EN LA CELTA N.º 2 DE LA OFRENDA CUATRO DE LA VENTA EN ESCRITURA MANDE DE LA NUBIA ANTIGUA.

DESCIFRAMIENTO DE LA INSCRIPCION MAN DING SEGUN WINTERS, CHICAGO: "FUE LEAL A SU DIOS UN HOMBRE VIRTUOSO; DONDE REPOSA ES UN SANTUARIO PARA LOS HOMBRES VIRTUOSOS."



C. SAN LORENZO
C. SAN LORENZO

TAHARCO REY DE KUSCH
Y DEL ALTO EGIPTO

S. 1. LA VENTA

C. SAN LORENZO
C. NESTEROVER

Olmec writing

- Zapotec and Maya writing associated with dynasty and military events set in chronological framework
- Olmec inscriptions generally religious writing
- Olmec writing read right to left
- Main organizing principal columns read top to bottom
- Olmec writing system combining logograms & syllabic
- Homophony, Monosyllabic

The LaVenta Celt of King Pe

OLMEC SCRIPT Transliteration

OLMEC SCRIPT
Transliteration
O-Kye
gyo...de
gbe...le
gyo
-we-mbe
to
(-he
=gyo

INSCRIPTION ON
CELT AT LA VENTA:

He was faithful to his God, a man of virtue. Hence here, his place of rest, is an effective talisman (protective shrine) for the virtuous.



Comparison of Olmec and Vai Signs

Libyco- Berber	Vai	Tuxtla	LaVenta Celts	Princeton Series	Izapa
				pa	
				be	
				yu	
				lu	
				tu	
				zi	
				ta	
				gbe	
				gbe	
				pe	

Olmec Syllabic Signs

The
Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System

	A	E	I	O	U	È
B						
D						
F						
H						
G						
L						
K						
M						
N						
P						

The
Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System

	A	E	I	O	U	È
S						
T						
Y						
/GB						
J/GY						
KY						

Hieroglyphic Olmec

- Pure hieroglyphics, Olmec signs which represent a word
- Phonetic hieroglyphs, a combination of syllabic and logographic Olmec signs

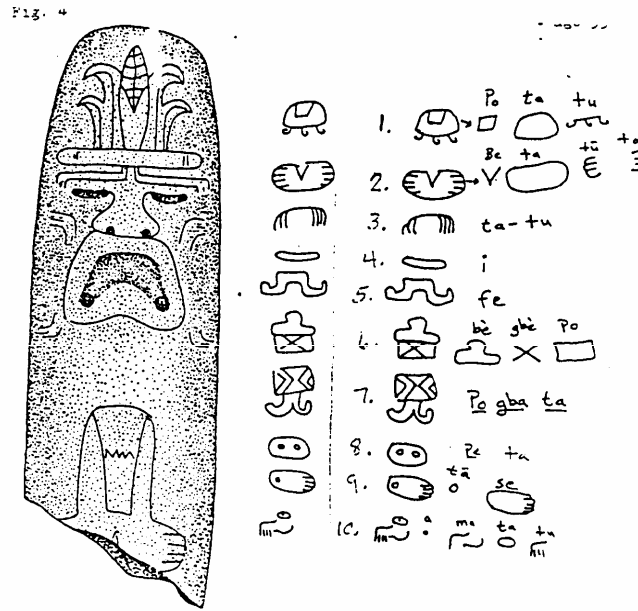
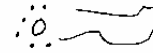


Figure 25. Incised Jadeite Celt from near El Stiro.
Department of San Marcos, Guatemala.
To the right are the glyphs that are incised on the back of the celt.
Height: 22 cm.

Hieroglyphic Olmec 2

- Synthetic Olmec compounds represent a compound expression characterized by VO type sentences

Tuttle Fig. 2



ba ta me / gye

1) Exist in a unique state of comprehension

be ta gye (ju)

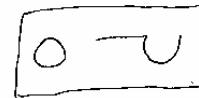
2) Exist in a unique state of spiritual tranquility



ki ka lu

"Send away the personal character"

"Send away the personality to the family habitation"



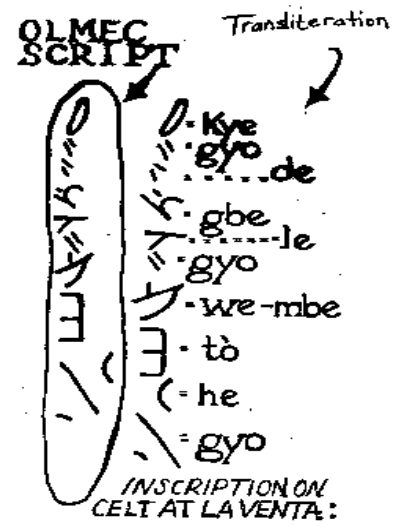
fo be ta

"Purity Exist here"

"Lay low the celebrity alone in a good situation
 " " " " to sleep
 " " " " this place"

Syllabic Hieroglyphic Celts

Fig. 3



He was faithful to his God, a man of virtue. Hence here, his place of rest, it was effective talisman (protective shrine) for the virtuous.

Fig. 4

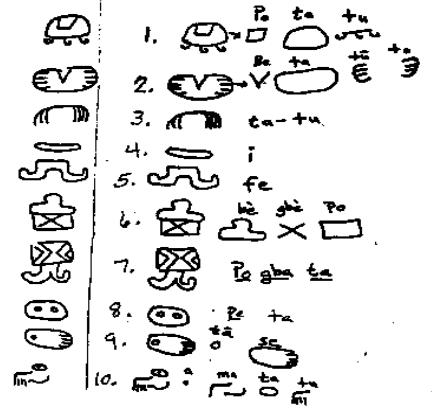
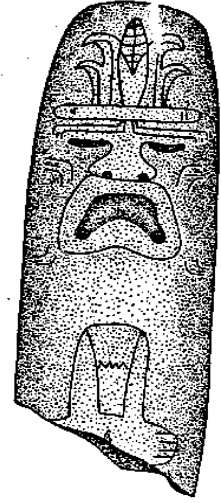
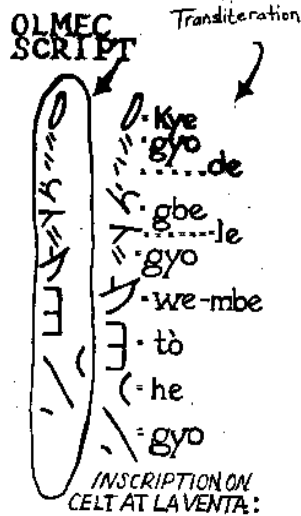


Figure 25. INCISED JADEITE CELT FROM NEAR EL SITIO DEPARTAMENTO OF SAN MARCOS, GUATEMALA.
At the right see the glyphs that are incised on the back of the celt. Height: 21 cm.

La Venta Celt and Olmec Signs

Fig. 1



He was faithful to his God, a man of virtue. Hence here, his place of rest, is an effective talisman (protective shrine) for the virtuous.

The
Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System






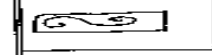

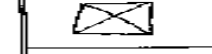
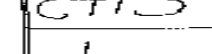
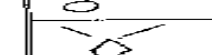
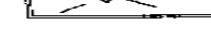
	A	E	I	O	U	È
B						
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The
Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System

	A	E	I	O	U	È
S						
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KY						

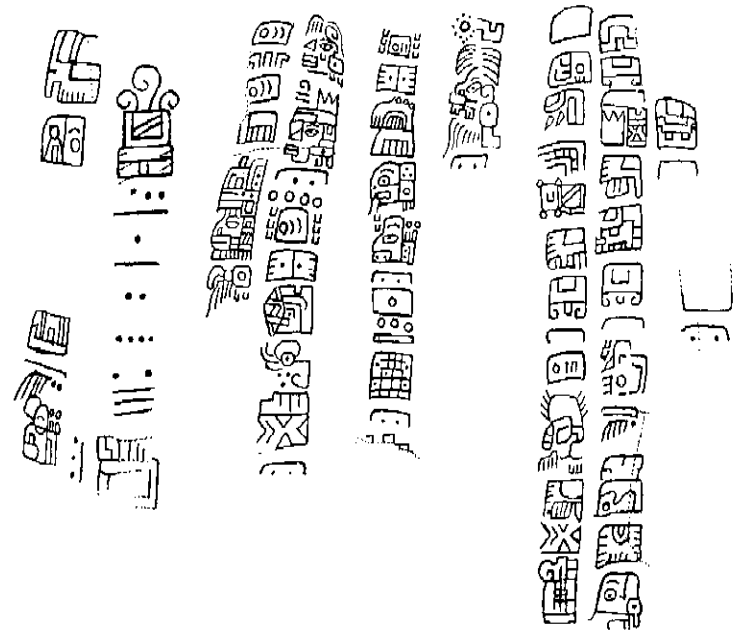
Olmec Compound Signs

The
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An ancient American Writing System

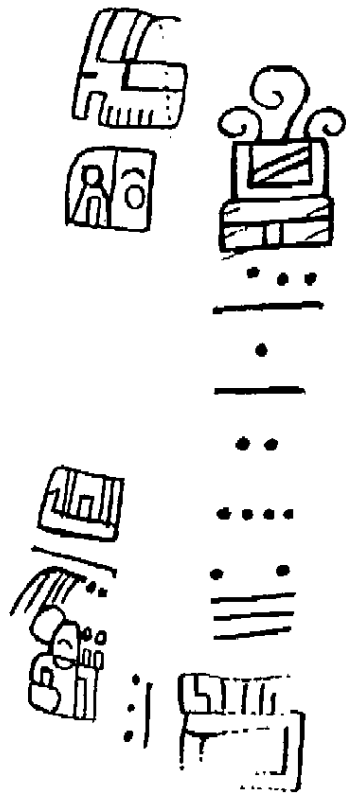
Ngbe	
Nde	
Nde-Po	
Fa Po	
Yo Pol li	
Su Po	
Fa Kuku	
Po gbe	
Tu fa be	
ita	
Ngbe Po	

itu 

The Compound Syllabic signs on the Tuxtla Statuette



Translation of the front columns of the Tuxtla statuette



- Column 1: Offer pure cleansing libations (at this) habitation (today) 162 AD. (Tutu) Your pure hearth (it is realized).
- Column 2: (This) is the home of thou spirit. It is here. (This) abode (it) is thrust (down) in the ground, here. He was an important personage (with) considerable and effective wonder making power.

The Inscribed Celt of Ngbe a religious leader from Guerrero c.900-600 BC



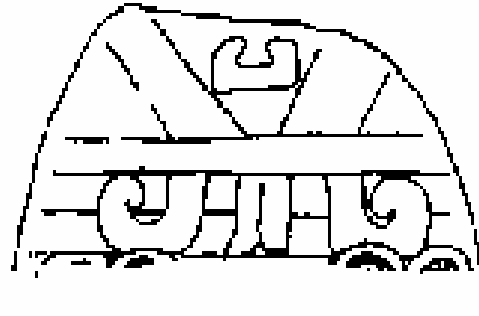
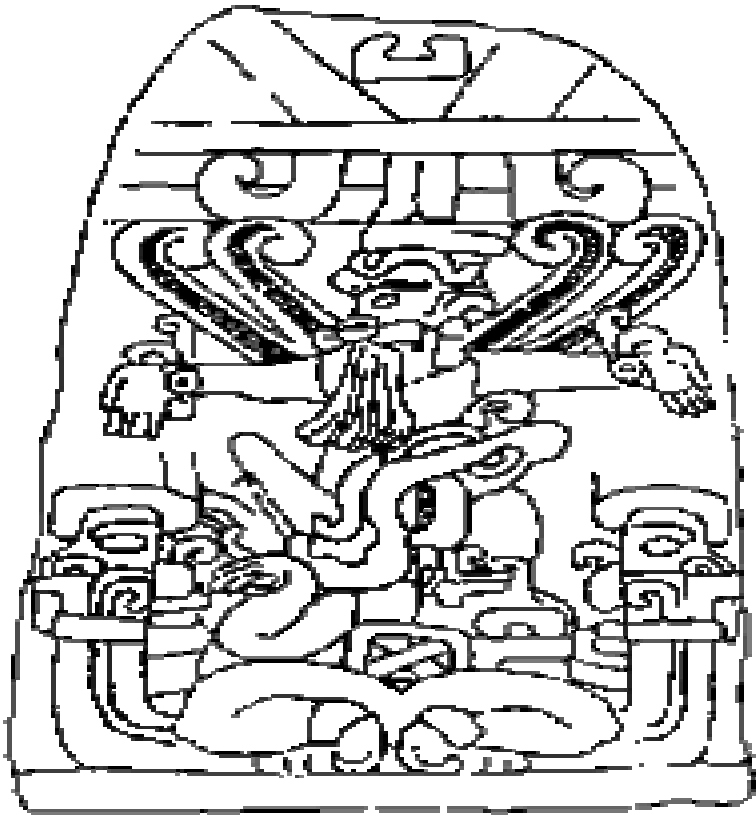
- This pure talisman effective in providing one with virtue, holds virtue upright. The fabricator (clansman) is a (magic worker) of the cult association. This pure container of the law(giver), a glowing sepulchre welcomes understanding, offer (here) libations.

Ahuelican, Guerrero Tablet from Ngbe's Tomb



- “The sanctuary of Po-
Ngbe. Indeed purity is
king Gbe. Ngbe (was)
obedient to the order--
the unblemished
society consecrated to
the cult. The[of Ngbe]
temple, the heart [of]
purity exist [here].
Growth of purity to be
realized here. “

Izapa



Conclusion

- Olmec built earliest substructure pyramids at Mayan sites
- Olmec and Maya lived in bilingual community
- Mayans adopted Olmec writing changed many signs to reflect their own cultural identity
- Maya attracted to Olmec centers to acquire Olmec luxury items and agricultural techniques introduced to Mexico by the Olmecs
- Mayans probably taught Olmec writing at educational centers in Mexico i.e., Comalcalco