Olmec Heads
by
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Jose Maria Melgar y Serrano

- Jose y Serrano, discovered the first Olmec head in 1862 at Tres Zapotes. Mr. Serrano, given the physical features of the Olmec head he was sure that it was the depiction of an African.

- Tres Zapotes Monument A
The Most Well Known Image of the Olmecs are the Olmecheads

- Today there are 17 Olmec heads so far discovered in Mexico. These heads have been found at 10 San Lorenzo, 4 LaVenta and 2 Tres Zapotes, 1 La Cobata.
Ethnicity of Olmec Heads

- Controversy surrounds the Olmec heads. Some researchers believe that they represent Mongoloid people, while other researchers are sure that the Olmec heads are portraits of African rulers who formerly led many Olmec cities due to the African features that characterized these heads.
The Phenotypic Non-resemblance Between the Olmec and Mayan

4. Gulf Sam Lorenzo. Olmec. EF. 1200-900 BC
5. Muhammad Ali. World Heavy Weight Champion. USA
6. Nubian wrestler with Olmec Physiology and Earring like No. 4
8. Nubian. Wrestler with Olmec-like. Ear-ring
10. Gulf. Veracruz. Figure. Olmec. EF. 1500 BC-900 BC
13. SE. Mexico. Chiapas. Palenque. Mayan. 800 AD-1600 AD
17. SE. Mexico. Campeche. Jaina. Weaver. Mayan. c. 100 AD

On the origins of the Olmec: “In 1832, Rafinesque noted the similarities between the Mayan glyphs and the Libyco-Berber writing. And Leo Wiener (1922, v. 3) was the first researcher to recognize the resemblance between the Manding writing and the symbols on the Tuxtla statuette. In addition, Harold Lawrence (1962) noted that the ‘pargetrographic’ inscriptions found throughout much of the southern hemisphere compared identically with the writing systems of the Manding.” In: Clyde Winters, Afrocentrism - Myth or Science, (Lulu publishers, 2005), p. 268.

Picture pairs: African physiology in ancient statues and contemporary Negroes resemble in 1/5, 2/6, and 3/7. In 4/6 and 8, the Nubians (6 and 8) are wearing the same kind of ear ring as the Olmec king (4). Chance? How likely is it chance?

Unsung heroes, It was the Negro Olmec who introduced the world to coffee, ruber, and ball games and in this way underlaid multi-trillion dollar industries in the world today. They brought religion, the calendar, the study of astronomy and mathematics, farming, stone masonry, art, and civilization to Mesoamerica. They carved cities out of forest that would become the seeds of future living centers of millions. They who were the Mother Civilization of their region of the world - as National Geographic writes in their May 2002 - they among many.

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EL PARALELISMO DE DOS ANTIGUOS REYES DE KUSH EN LA NUEVA AFRICANA
CON LOS OLMECAS EN AMÉRICA

EMOCRANTE QUE DIJO EL
UN GRAN JUEDE OLMECA,
GRANADO EN LA
AFROSOBRENA PARA
DIFERENCIAR DE LA VENTA EN
ESCRIPTURA MÁNE,
DE LA NUEVA ANTIGUA

DESCIFRAMIENTO DE LA
INSCRIPCIÓN KUSHIJA
SIN UN WINTER, CHICAGO
"DEBIEBRA SEGUÍC
UN HOMBRE VIRTUOSO;
DONDE RESIDE ES UN
SANTUARIO PARA LOS
HOMBRES VIRTUOSOS.

TAMARCO REY DE KUSH
EL ALTÍO EGIPTO

C. F. LINCOLN
"LA VENTA"

C. S. SAN LORENZO
C. KESTERDE VER
Ancient Shi Diaspora

Xi (Shi)  Shi  Xia (Shi-a)
Mexican Traditions referring to Ancient Migration to Mexico

- Popol Vuh: claims that the Olmec came to Mexico in “ships of bark”.
- Landed at Potonchan-commenced to populate
- Sahagun- ancient race landed at Panotha (located on Mexican Coast) in search of Mountains
- Archaeological evidence Olmec spread from Gulf of Mexico to mountains of Chalcatzingo
African Origin Olmecs

- Ancestors of Olmec lived North-Northwest Africa
- Proto-Mande People
- Rock art depicting boats in desert
- Changes in weather patterns
FIGURE 3-9  Major ocean currents. Warm currents are shown by dark arrows and cold currents by open arrows. (After J. B. Hoyt, Man and the Earth, 3rd ed., © 1973 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., reprinted by permission of the publisher.)
Figure 9.3  The North Atlantic gyre, a series of four interconnected currents with different flow characteristics and temperatures.
Friar Diego de Landa said that:

- “Some old men of Yucatan say that they heard from their ancestors that this country was peopled by a certain race who came from the EAST, who God delivered by opening for them twelve roads through the sea.”
Skeletal Evidence

- Constance Irwin, *Fair Gods and Stone Faces*
- C. Marquez, *Estudios arqueologicos y ethnograficas*
- A. Wiercinski, *An Anthropological study on the origin of Olmecs, Swiatowit, 33,143-174*

- Tlatilco:
  - Cerro
    - Laponoid: 21.2%
    - Equatorial: 13.5% 4.5%
    - Armenoid: 18.3% 4.5%
  - Total: 53% 40.8%

- Laponoid = Oceanic
- Equatorial = African
- Armenoid = Somali type
Linguistic Evidence

- *Swadesh*- Separation of Huastecs from Maya 1200 BC
- *Lee*- Invasion of Mexican area by non-Mixe speaking people separating Mixe, & Zoque
- *Mixe Oral Tradition*- claim culture created by strangers
- *Weiner*- Mande substratum in Mexican lang.

- """"""""-Tuxtla statuette
### Linguistic Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixe</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mayan</th>
<th>Mande</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*koya</td>
<td>tomato</td>
<td>ko:ya</td>
<td>koya</td>
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<tr>
<td>*cumah</td>
<td>gourd</td>
<td>kuum</td>
<td>kula</td>
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<td>*ciwa</td>
<td>squash</td>
<td>c'iwan</td>
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<td>to:h</td>
<td>rain</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>Tyo,dyo</td>
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<td>*ma</td>
<td>deer</td>
<td>me'</td>
<td>m'na</td>
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<tr>
<td>kok</td>
<td>maize</td>
<td>co</td>
<td>'antelope'</td>
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Mixe: ta: k kam- land for cultivation

Malinke-Bambara: ta ka ga - place for plant cultivation
The LaVenta Celt of King Pe

OLMEC SCRIPT

Transliteration

- Ke
- gu
- de
- gbe
- le
- gu
- we-mbe
- to
- ke
- gu

INSCRIPTION ON CELT AT LAVENTA:

His Majesty pays his God, a man of valor. Here he is, his place and his seat, a massive monument/protective shrine for the civilization.
LaVenta Celt and Olmec Signs

The Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System

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Translation: The inscription on a Celt at LaVenta:
By means of dots, the name of the person, the place of the event, and the date were written on a stone tablet for eternity.
Olmec Compound Signs

The Olmec Signs
An ancient American Writing System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ngbe</th>
<th>Nde</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nde-Po</td>
<td>Fa Po</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yo Po li</td>
<td>Su Po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa Kuku</td>
<td>Po gbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu fa be</td>
<td>ita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngbe Po</td>
<td>itu</td>
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</table>
The Olmec heads appear to represent Olmec Kings from different periods.

Most Olmec heads were buried and probably moved from their original placement.

Ignacio Bernal notes that these heads may have originally been aligned to architectural monuments given the fact that the Monument 1 head from LaVenta stands at the foot of the great pyramid.
The Colossal heads were stand alone portraits of individual Olmec rulers.

The headdresses on the Colossal heads are the characteristic “football helmet”.

The Colossal heads were found at the earliest Olmec sites in the Olmec homeland.
- The headdress of each Colossal head records the name of the individual Olmec rulers.
- Each Olmec ruler has a unique insignia that can be read using the symbols of the Olmec writing system.
In reading the inscription on the head of this figure, we discover that Bu was a member of the stone mason caste, who later became governor of Veracruz.
Recently a mask of Po Ngbe was recently discovered and published. The mask of Po Ngbe has an inscription written on the inside of the mask.
Legacy of Olmecs

- Archaeological Evidence supports African origin of Olmecs
- Physical Features of Olmec heads
- African Writing
- African Genetic Evidence
Genetic Evidence

- Heterogeneity of Mexican Population
- African Y chromosomes among Maya
- Haplotypes L1 & L2 found among isolated groups in North Central Mexico: Cora, Huichol
- High frequency of African HLAs Vantigen of the Rhesus system among Indians in Belize
  - A*28 Common among Eastern Maya
  - B Allele of the ABO system among 6 Mayan groups and the Otomi
Olmecs: Product of Indigenous Populations
75% of Contemporary Mexicans have African Ancestry

- Mexican and African admixture in Mexico Lisker et al (1996) noted that the East Coast of Mexico had extensive admixture.

- The following percentages of African ancestry were found among East coast populations: Paraiso - 21.7%; El Carmen - 28.4%; Veracruz - 25.6%; Salader - 30.2%; and Tamiahua - 40.5%.
Olmecs: Product of Indigenous Populations
Mexican African Admixture

- Among Indian groups, Lisker et al (1996) found among the Chontal have 5% and the Cora .8% African admixture. The Chontal speak a Mayan language.

- According to Crawford et al. (1974), the mestizo population of Saltillo has 15.8% African ancestry, while Tlaxcala has 8% and Cuanalan 18.1%.
The Olmecs built their civilization in the region of the current states of Veracruz and Tabasco. Now here again are the percentages of African ancestry according to Lisker et al (1996):

- **Paraiso** - 21.7%  
- **El Carmen** - 28.4%  
- **Veracruz** - 25.6%  
- **Saladero** - 30.2%  
- **Tamiahua** - 40.5%  

Paraiso is in Tabasco and Veracruz is, of course, in the state of **Veracruz**. Tamiahua is in northern Veracruz. These areas were the first places in Mexico settled by the Olmecs. I'm not sure about **Saladero** and **El Carmen**.
Olmecs: Product of Indigenous Populations