



INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES
ESTÉTICAS
ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO



FONDO	BEATRIZ DE LA FUENTE
SERIE	003: CORRESPONDENCIA
CAJA	007
EXP.	004
DOC.	0001
FOJAS	1-2
FECHA (S)	s/f

BF3C7E5D1F1

Dra. Beatriz de la Fuente

To: Centro de Investigaciones Esteticas, U.N.A.M.
Re.: OLMEC AXES, A CATALOGUE
Subject: A proposal for approval.
Researcher: Anatole Pohorilenko

One of the great frustrations besetting the student of any Mesoamerican culture is the lack of systematically assembled data which may serve as a source not only for more in-depth studies, but constitute a basic work of reference and consultation. Such a corpus would bring together data or specific segments of data belonging to a particular culture at the descriptive and classificatory levels of analysis. It should form the basis for subsequent chronological, comparative, and socio-cultural studies focusing on areas of formalistic and esthetic considerations as well as those related to the culture's ideational systems. Beatriz de la Fuente (1973:7) poignantly stresses the necessity of such descriptive studies: "How is it possible to define styles, to interpret symbols, or to define levels of artistic achievement without first studying the artifacts individually or as a group?" Beatriz de la Fuente published the first comprehensive catalogue of Olmec monumental sculpture. It has become an indispensable work of consultation for any scholar who is attempting to unravel the mysteries of past civilizations by shedding light on the history, customs, and beliefs of the earliest of the great Mesoamerican civilizations through the only evidence available - their artifacts. Alas, her catalogue is limited to monumental sculptures.

As part of a systematic publications program which, eventually, will make available a significant corpus of Olmec small, portable sculpture, I herein submit a statement outlining the progress of a work in course, the first volume of a catalogue on Olmec small sculpture - Olmec Axes: A Catalogue.

In terms of its structure, Olmec Axes follows the outline of De la Fuente's catalogue, in order that consistency may be maintained. It will incorporate over sixty pieces, of which seven have never been published before. Olmec Axes will consider votive, celts, and plaque-axes. Eighteen are votive axes; fifteen are plaque-axes; and twenty-six are incised celts. Following De la Fuente's (1973:11-12) system, these pieces will be considered in terms of their discovery and archaeological information, material description, formal description, condition, history and present location, and bibliographic references. Work has already been completed on all but four votive axes, nine plaque-axes, and seven celts. In this context, I would also like to add that under a different format, a detailed analytical study of votive and plaque-axes were the subject of my Master's thesis for Tulane University, New Orleans, in 1974. I expect this catalogue of Olmec Axes to be ready for the presses in December of this year.

Anatole Pohorilenko
Department of Anthropology
Tulane University, New Orleans.