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Order and Nature in Olmec Art

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Artistic Style Reveals a Culture

The concept of "the Olmec" emerged with the discovery and comparison of monumental and small-scale sculptures whose forms showed similarities, and even identical characteristics, that were different from those of sculptures from other ancient Mexican cultures known at the time. This surprising and novel artistic style was an indication of the first, firm imprints of high civilization in the Mesoamerican region.

The history of "the Olmec" began in 1862, when José Melgar found, and later published, the Colossal Head of Hueyapan,¹ now designated Monument A of Tres Zapotes. The name by which we know these great creators of art dates to 1929, when Marshall H. Saville defined as Olmec a series of traits common to various basalt and jadeite sculptures.² The dominant traits, according to Saville were: a human body with a head of feline aspect, a tiger mask, a grooved head, prominent canines, a pronounced upper lip, and a small, feline nose. This list of traits, expanded, refined, and interpreted, has been the base of scholarly inquiry and interpretation of the style and iconographic characteristics that define Olmec sculpture in both its monumental and small-scale forms.³ Olmec art is essentially sculptural; it was made both in the round and in relief. Figures carved in basalt, jade, jadeite, serpentine, and other stones exhibit smooth, curving planes with finely and crisply incised anatomical details and

elements of costume. The techniques of Olmec sculptors remained unexcelled in Mesoamerica, and the unique style they evolved is among the most powerfully expressive. The principal common element in iconographic studies of the Olmec is the dominant image of a kind of jaguar figure ("were-jaguar"), which may appear monstrous but, on other occasions, seems humanized (see cat. no. US/Los Angeles/man-jaguar); sometimes it looks like an adult, but it also appears with an infantile aspect. Based on variations on this feline image and on another called the Olmec dragon, some investigators have established the existence of diverse deities having to do with sun, earth, fire, water, and animal forms, all of which, it has been said, are also related to symbols that identify the governing classes.⁴ Other writers claim that Olmec images have primordial serpent and toad characteristics.⁵ In recent years, some scholars have interpreted the symbolic attributes as signs corresponding to the ritual sacrifice of blood and the legitimization of power of the Olmec rulers.⁶

In my opinion, Olmec sculpture is essentially centered on the human form, a concept evident in the approximately 250 monumental sculptures,⁷ the majority of which represent a human being (see cat. no. Mexico/colossal head); the minority are hybrid figures (which almost always have a human body) with animal and imaginary attributes (see cat. no. US/LA/crouching fig.). On the other hand, the majority of the small jadeite or serpentine carvings represent hybrid figures (see cat. no. US/NY/AMNH/Kunz axe), while human figures are in the minority (see

cat. no. US/Brooklyn). In the small ceramics, the dominant theme is, again, the human figure.

A sense of the supernatural is revealed in the human images and in those of composite appearance by the integration and interplay of animal imagery or imaginary or symbolic elements with the human form. These attributes refer to the creation of the world, the origin of humankind, and the beneficent or harmful forces of nature. Such forms speak of an ancient way of perceiving divinity in the earth and the water, in the sun and the volcanic "mountain of fire," and also in man, who, in communion with supernatural forces and phenomena, was capable of creative activity. From man's imagination sprang those monumental human figures and composite forms that aspired to permanence, and from man sprang also the small images carved in more precious materials, which probably belonged to more intimate cults.

The Olmec

Written documents illuminating the history, beliefs, and customs of the Olmec do not exist. The most spectacular remains of their presence are found in the monumental basalt sculptures, in ceramics and smaller sculpture, and in the construction of such centers of ritual and government as San Lorenzo, La Venta, Tres Zapotes, and Laguna de los Cerros. ~~(Laguna de los Cerros)~~ There are many other sites, both small and large, that have yet to be explored. At these centers, the Olmec constructed extensive drainage systems, ~~and~~ made buried offerings of tons of serpentine stones, ^{and} using colored clays to line extensive underground surfaces. From the

extant archaeological materials and monuments, we can conclude that the Olmec reached a very high cultural and social level, and, through these achievements, we can seek to understand them, after almost three thousand years.

In the south of the state of Veracruz and the east of the state of Tabasco in the Republic of Mexico, in a region of tropical-lowland forest, marshy plains with rivers, and some higher ground, the Olmec founded their capitals and urban areas, and consolidated civilization in Mesoamerica (fig. 1). The Tuxtla Mountains rise from the wide plain to the east, close by the Gulf of Mexico, and the Sierra Madre del Sur delimits the plain to the west. These are the natural frontiers of the Olmec land. The area is traversed by large rivers such as the Coatzacoalcos, the Grijalva, and the Usumacinta, and their tributaries, which rise and fall according to the cycle of the rainy and dry seasons in the mountains; these rivers carry rich silt, which, like the Nile in Egypt, was deposited along the river banks, which were farmed in ancient times. The area is known archaeologically as the Olmec "heartland area," or "nuclear area," because most of the monumental sculptures and the remains of the capitals and urban areas have been found there. The enormous masses of basalt for sculpture and the pillar-shaped stones for tombs and the walls of ritual enclosures were transported, perhaps by rafts, from the nearby mountain ranges. Fine gemstones were imported from distant places: jadeite from Oaxaca and Guatemala, and blue-green jade, the most prized stone, from the Motagua region of Guatemala. Recent archaeological explorations have shown that the Olmec

culture also manifested its presence on ~~high~~ plateau of Mexico at such sites as Chalcatzingo in Morelos, Las Bocas in Puebla, Tlatilco and Tlapacoya in the state of Mexico, and Xochipala and Teopantecuanitlan in Guerrero; other sites have been located on the Pacific slopes, at Izapa in Chiapas and Abaj Takalik in Guatemala.⁸ The Olmec area exceeds by far the area imagined for it forty years ago by the great Mexican scholar Miguel Covarrubias,⁹ who was among the first to recognize the importance of the Olmec in the early history of Mesoamerica, ~~noting that~~ ^{where} it occupied a position analogous to that of the great Chavín synthesis in Andean South America.

Themes Represented in the Sculpture

The Olmec represent not a primitive state of intellectual development but a way of life, thought, and aesthetic expression comparable to that of other early agrarian civilizations. The Olmec had to face, as all cultures do, the primordial experiences of life and death, the feelings of insignificance and finiteness in the presence of the forces of nature and the magnitude of the cosmos, and they had to respond to these universal problems. The Olmec cannot be removed from the common denominator of all cultures--the syntax of thought and of human feelings. Symbols and myths are expressions of man's desire for meaning and permanence. To understand Olmec ideas, beliefs, and the structures of their world view, we must rely on what their sculptures, architecture, and certain formations of their natural environment show us. Understanding is possible on two levels: the

first is direct, objective, and achievable by visual recognition; the second involves interpreting what we see--this is the world of Olmec symbols, which may be approached through analogies with the art of later, more well-known Mesoamerican cultures, through the placement of monuments in archaeological sites and landscapes, and through an understanding of certain universal tendencies of the human mind.

Olmec sculpture displays three major thematic groupings: mythic images, effigies of supernatural beings, and human figures.

The Mythic Images

Myths have as their objective, as does science, the explanation of the universe and the achievement by man of material and spiritual reassurance. Myths are realities in the collective consciousness. They narrate events that occurred at the beginning of time, and they tell how, through acts of supernatural beings, reality came to exist. Myths explain creation as a sacred process of transformation whereby the concrete world and humankind were brought into being. Attempting to define threads common to universal mythology in existing Olmec sculptures, I find that the imagery of the sculpture is not fundamentally narrative but, rather, a compact expression of archetypal mythic concepts.

Three groups of mythic images can be identified. The first is composed of only three, very deteriorated monuments--San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan Monument 1 (fig. 2), Laguna de los Cerros

Monument 20, and Potrero Nuevo Monument 3--which have been said to represent the sexual union of a jaguar and a woman, a union that produced the were-jaguar, part fantastic animal, part human. Careful analysis, however, reveals that the protagonists in the supposed sexual act are different in each of the sculptures; also, there is no attempt to depict an actual sexual act. Instead, the sculptures were intended to represent symbolically a profoundly significant event: they are stone incarnations of a creation myth describing the possession and fertilization of the earth, the sacred marriage of the primordial male and female principles, the union of sky and earth. This was the supernatural union that was a paradigm for all unions, including the sacred origin of man.

A second group of mythic images is composed of sculptures with a powerful figure, larger than life size, emerging from a space that resembles a cave. The figures are carved in huge blocks of stone that have been called "altars," although this may not have been their function; they may have been perhaps thrones or sacred seats of Olmec rulers. Examples are La Venta "Altar" 4 (fig. 3), "Altar" 5 of Laguna de los Cerros, and "Altar" 14 of San Lorenzo. I believe that these images reproduce a second episode or stage of a widespread Mesoamerican origin myth: the exit of humankind from the cave of the earth, the great ancestral matrix, as the sacred beginning of life. This theme of mythic emergence was later repeated in other cultures, among them, the Maya, Teotihuacan, and the Aztec.

The third type of origin-myth sculpture is more complex

type, in that it portrays a powerful human figure holding a baby with a highly stylized, masklike head. In La Venta "Altars" 2 and 5 (fig. 4) and San Lorenzo "Altar" 20, the man who emerges from the cave carries in his arms the inanimate body of a child with this fantastic head. The inert posture of the child suggests that it may have recently died, perhaps having been sacrificed as a precious offering. The theme of child-sacrifice appears again in later cultures, both in Mesoamerica and in the Andean area. ^{(see McEwan's) van der} It is ^{Guchta} ^{essay} ^{with this} ^{catalogue} important to note that the word sacrifice means "make sacred," and the idea of sacrifice to various forms of gods is as ancient and universal as human culture. In early Mesoamerica, this notion was defined in a distinctive way. Man, in being born from the earth-womb cave, has gained earthly life; but this is only a transition, one aspect of the totality of being. By the sacrifice of something most valuable in return to the earth for the original gift of life, man acts to assure the continuance of a cyclic, immutable order. The offering of sacrifice is thus intended to make humankind an active participant in the eternal flow of life and its sacred dimension. With the sacrificial "return," the cycle comes to a close and begins again, repeating the eternal model established in the time of the first creation. This concept of sacrifice as an act of making something sacred is, in turn, a fertility myth in the aspect of renewal in the never-ending process of birth from the underworld source of life--the cave--to life on earth--man--culminating on a level of supernatural return--the immolated child--as the offering to ensure the regeneration of the earth and the new beginning of the

cosmic cycle.

A subgroup of these sacrificial depictions is found in independent sculptures such as San Lorenzo Monument 12 and the celebrated Las Limas figure (fig. 5a). Although these figures do not emerge from caves, I presume that each was originally placed outside a natural cave, thereby gaining the sacred and mythic contexts depicted on the "altars."

The human figures who hold or present the inert children in their arms exist also in small jade or jadeite sculptures such as the superbly carved and polished figure from the Brooklyn Museum (cat. no. US/Brooklyn). Other images and symbols can allude, although only partially, to aspects of sacrifice: these are the so-called "scepters," "torches," and "knuckle-dusters," held, for example, in the hands of the figure that is San Lorenzo Monument 10. There are also jadeite awls and spoons, which have been explained as ritual implements used by Olmec rulers to draw blood from themselves in acts of autosacrifice to the deified forces of nature and as a means of legitimizing themselves in their office. This was also a practice that was to last throughout Mesoamerican history.

Supernatural Beings

Another group of sculptures is composed of solitary images that incorporate in their essentially human aspect one or more animal characteristics as well as imaginary or fantastic traits. Like the monumental sculptures and figurines just mentioned, they, too, refer to the mythic archetypes and ideas central to

the world view of the Olmec. They are icons for the imagination to grasp and realize the deepest values held by the community. In the words of Mircea Eliade:

The imagination imitates the exemplary models established by the images, reproducing, re-actualizing, and repeating them without end. To have imagination is to be able to see the world in its totality, for the power and the mission of the images is to show all that pertains to the concept. . . .¹⁰

These hybrid, abstract images are visual metaphors for the imagination. Their composite human and animal characteristics speak of a supernatural world beyond material reality.

The figures of this group range between those of almost entirely animal appearance to those that are more closely related to the human. Again, the animal and imaginary characteristics are concentrated in the head and face. In a few cases, claws ~~are~~ ^{sculpt} ~~added to~~ hands and feet. The most dehumanized figures belong to a symbolic group with two subtypes. One subtype, which comprises San Lorenzo Monument 10, La Venta Monuments 6, 9, 11, and 64 and the "Kunz" axe (cat. no. Mexico/Olmec/AMNH no.), is distinguished by a face with a thick upper lip curled back to reveal large canines bifurcated at the tips; a broad, flattened nose; and, at times, parallel lines in squares instead of eyes. The other group, well represented among the smaller figures, is typified by almond-shaped eyes, with the eyelid creases turned down and

inward; a thick upper lip turned up and, occasionally, bracketed; and a toothless gum, either in the shape of an inverted E or with incipient teeth. Because of their infantile aspect, these figures are generally known as "jaguar-babies." They can be seen as such in La Venta Monument 75 and San Lorenzo Monument 52 (fig. 6a), and in many minor sculptures, such as an axe in the British Museum and the Necaxa jaguar in the American Museum of Natural History. San Lorenzo Monument 52, which demonstrates well the symbolism of the group, was found in connection with a drainage system and has a channel cut into its back. It seems legitimate to suppose, because of its direct relationship with water, that the image is an aquatic deity. The Olmec habitat lay between rivers, streams, lagoons, and marshes. Water and its control must have been fundamental concerns in daily life, in the elaboration of myths that relate to water, and in associated rites.

Animals also belong to the group of supernatural beings: for example, San Lorenzo Monuments 7, 21, and 37 and Los Soldados Monument 1. These depictions, which are far from naturalistic, speak of a dimension of Olmec thought and perception that transcends the merely sensory. The jaguar motif is seen in several small sculptural figures: those in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks and one in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (cat. no. US/Olmec/LACMA/crouching figure). With the exception of the very deteriorated sculpture found by Matthew Stirling at San Lorenzo,¹¹ the serpent motif is usually a part of more complex sculptural images, as in La Venta Monument 19 (fig. 7) and San Lorenzo Monument 47. In general, the two animals found most

frequently in Olmec imagery--the jaguar and the serpent--express symbolically related cosmological themes. The jaguar, lord of the forest, was also a symbol of the earth and, correspondingly, jaguar emblems were worn by Olmec lords as signs of rulership (cat. no. US/DO/porphyry mask). Far from the Olmec heartland, the archaeological site of Chalcatzingo in Central Highland Mexico offers an especially vivid illustration of this earth/jaguar/rulership imagery. The site was a provincial capital, probably tied by trade and marriage alliances to the centers of Tabasco or southern Veracruz. Chalcatzingo is dominated by a huge rock formation rising from the plain (fig. 8). At the base of this great sacred rock, a large burial mound was built and equipped with a structure (long destroyed) that contained a two-meter-high feline mask (cat. no. US/Munson Procter/jaguar mask). The open mouth was designed in a stylized quatrefoil pattern, and plant motifs spring from the four interstices. The mouth was probably a place to make offerings to the earth and the ancestral dead. A petroglyph carved high on the cliff above also features the stylized feline mask, shown in profile position (fig. 9). A royal figure is seated within this "cave," from which cloud-scrolls issue forth; above, rain-clouds are depicted with falling drops and circular "precious" pieces of jade. Nowhere else in Olmec art is the cycle of fertility depicted with such graphic clarity.

The Human Figures

Naturalistic representations of human figures contrast with the preceding sculptures. They do not, however, deal with man in

his strictly historical dimension but with man, anchored in myth, as the bridge between the supernatural and physical worlds. The human form is imbued with divine power. I find, within this type of sculpture, three groups. The first comprises images that I have called men under supernatural protection; these figures are part of a scene and are shown protected by supernatural beings placed above them. A splendid example is San Martín Pajapan Monument 1 (fig. 10), showing a massive, crouching masked human figure wearing an elaborate were-jaguar headdress. The same concept, in a more complex presentation, can be seen in La Venta "Altar" 4, where the figure of superhuman size emerges from a "cave" surmounted by a stylized feline mask (fig. 3).

The second figural type consists of unique personages whom I call mediators. These seated human figures have individualized expressions, yet they also conform to an idealized, vigorous Olmec racial type. There is always something of the feline in their seated postures, and an aura of the supernatural surrounds them. Many of the monumental sculptures have been decapitated. The intact pieces include some that deserve to be mentioned among the masterworks of Olmec art, most notably, the "Prince" of Cruz de Milagro (fig. 11). This superhuman figure displays a greatly simplified torso and limbs in a modified "seated feline" pose; yet the face, while idealized, is that of an individual. This masterpiece reveals the Olmec taste for large-scale figures suggestive of supernatural powers linked to the memory of historical personages. Similar effects are achieved in smaller objects such as figurines and masks made of jadeite and other

fine stone (see cat No. US/Olmec/Boston/mask). Mediators are, perhaps, images of initiates or of those selected to invoke or manifest exceptional forces beyond the range of ordinary people. They project a sense of control and contained force; their serenity serves to indicate that they are superior to ordinary, mundane human ways. Such idealized figures express the fact that the human condition can be altered as a consequence of spiritual illumination. The masks, while portraitlike, gave give those who wore them a metaphysical identity (see cat. no. US/Boston/mask).

The third group of human representations, comprising the celebrated colossal heads, is unique in world art history. There are sixteen known examples: nine from San Lorenzo (see cat. no. Mexico/Olmec/SL9 and fig. 12a), four from La Venta, and three from Tres Zapotes and its environs. Although they also represent an idealized racial type, each has a different expression and subtly different features; the designs and symbols that decorate their headdresses and pendants also vary from one to another. These differences signal individuality and show that the colossal heads are portraits. Opinions abound as to the identities of the ~~portraits~~ ^{Subjects}.¹² I agree with those who say that these are depictions of Olmec dynastic rulers. Without doubt, the portraits speak of an Olmec ideal of rulership and of those rulers who appear to have attained or fulfilled that ideal. The importance of dynastic sculptures conveying the qualities that justified the aristocracy, is evident in the later Mesoamerican world, and it is reasonable to suppose that the Olmec colossal heads lie at the root of this long-lasting tradition. Aside from the political,

social, and religious implications of these portraits, I believe that their expressions reveal something more profound. All have expressions of concentration and even a fiercely controlled energy; it is also not accidental that all the portraits have crossed eyes, a characteristic evident in various portraits from later Mesoamerican cultures. These traits may well indicate a form of meditation and deep inward equilibrium, through which man can obtain comprehension of the order of the universe and, thereby, freedom. The presence of colossal heads in the Olmec ceremonial centers induces me to think of them as symbols of a specific socio-economic and historical concerns and also in terms of an intrinsic significance and a communication more universally profound. The head is the receptacle that holds the superior abilities of man, his creative powers; it is the center of thought and spiritual life; of his capacity to commune with those forces he considers more powerful, remote and supernatural. In the civilizations of the ancient Americas, those most powerful forces resided in the forms and forces of nature.

There are few equivalents to these portraits in minor sculpture. Two notable exceptions are a serpentine piece in the Museo de Antropología de Veracruz in Xalapa¹³ and a translucent bluish jade in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks. I believe that the colossal heads, located in the most important Olmec ritual centers, were intended to manifest the Olmec concepts of man's relation to nature and the supernatural. Olmec man thereby assumed his central place in the cosmic structure.

Artistic Structure in Harmonic Proportions

The monumental sculptures of the "heartland area" belong to an epoch of notable cultural integration, which lasted for six centuries (1200-600 B.C.). The human effort displayed in these monuments--some weigh many tons and had to be transported from remote locations--could have been applied only to exceptional ends: to make something lasting, to preserve images of fundamental meaning. The same can be said of many small jade or jadeite sculptures. In these, as in the monumental works, there is in their formal organization another level of symbolism that expresses a concept of harmony with nature. This is the Olmec system of harmonic proportion that all of the colossal sculptures have, as do many of the small, essentially human figures.

After having observed the great Olmec sculptures for a long time, one senses that, despite the variety of the formal solutions they display, there is an underlying unifying element that makes them, to a certain degree, similar. This is not a similarity of style or individual expression and representation but, rather, it seems to me, a basic formal unity deriving from the harmony of their proportions according to a mathematical pattern.

The search for balance, the unity and proportion of the human figure, and the structuring of forms according to geometric patterns have been shown in different ways in different civilizations.¹⁴ The artistic expression of great civilizations of their most significant epochs is revealed in a specific and irrefutable way through this search. The Parthenon, East Indian

temples, and the European cathedrals were built according to different but precise systems of measures, which constituted a code and which proclaimed an underlying, coherent unity. Relating art to a governing and determining canon reveals, in the case of the Olmec, that theirs was no undisciplined or primitive artistic manifestation; on the contrary, it was an art fully realized as a means of expression. We have seen that its forms were designed to reflect a mythic view of the natural world and to express the place of man within that organized cosmos. What I now wish to show is that the principal forms of Olmec art were also designed according to a cohesive system of proportions.

The great cultures of Mediterranean antiquity ~~have~~ based their artistic manifestations on systems of proportion anchored in solid cultural foundations. In this respect, the art of the Olmec shows an affinity to that of classical Greece, which was based on the geometry of nature, or to that of the Renaissance, which employed a similar system of proportion. This system, which explains the balance or harmony of parts in relation to the whole and the exact beauty of their formal rhythms, has been designated variously as "golden section," "golden mean," and "divine proportion." The golden section is the division of a length so that one smaller part is to the greater part as the greater part is to the whole. As a "key" or "proportion," the golden section was used not only in ancient times; it is in use at present. The Parthenon is the most famous building of antiquity to follow such a norm of proportion. In the Renaissance, it was employed by the artist Leonardo da Vinci and the architect Leon Battista Alberti.

In the twentieth century, the architect Le Corbusier developed the "modular," a scale based on the human body, whose height was divided in golden section at the navel. The golden section is frequently used as a system of proportion in industrial design. It also occurs in nature, in animals and plants. The claim has often been made that the golden section is aesthetically superior to all other proportions, that it is the most visually pleasing and harmonious. Schematic diagrams of several Olmec colossal heads and other major sculptural figures reveal an agenda based on the golden section. For example, Figure 12 shows that, if the entire head were inscribed within a rectangle, it could be subdivided further, according to the ideal ratio of the golden section. The Olmec employed the golden section in the colossal heads, in a series of monumental sculptures, and in certain jade, jadeite, and serpentine figurines.

Some of the Olmec monumental sculptures carved according to the golden mean are San Lorenzo Colossal Head 4 (fig. 12), La Venta Monuments 9 and 10, San Lorenzo Monuments 10 and 52 (fig. 6); also La Venta Monument 77, the "Prince" of Cruz del Milagro (fig. 11), Cuauhtotolapan Monument 1, and the Las Limas figure (fig. 5). Other sculptures reveal certain modifications to the golden section, but they are still describable within it: San Lorenzo Colossal Heads 9 (cat. no. Mexico/Olmec/SL9), 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8, and La Venta Colossal Head 2. Major differences from the mean are found in Colossal Heads La Venta 1 and Tres Zapotes 2 (or Nestepe 1). The principle of compositional order is lost in Tres Zapotes Colossal Heads 1 and 2. It can be said that, when

sculptural works lose the structure of the harmonic canon, they cease to be truly Olmec. The loss of vigorous organization reveals that the significance of the canon was waning. This phenomenon does not occur simultaneously in all the sites where sculpture was made. Nevertheless, I believe that the canon ceased to have total force in works executed between c. 600 and 400 B.C.

The harmonic proportion exists in all organisms, including animal and ^{ze} vegetal species, as well as in human beings, and also in microscopic life. Figures carved with this proportion thus raise echoes of identity, feelings of balance, and a sense of correspondence with things seen in the natural environment. In the plastic arts, Harmonic proportions automatically suggest an underlying order of nature and the cosmos. The Olmec method of using this system of proportion in the stone colossi and figures of jade reveals an intention to symbolize an ordered vision of the world of nature and, perhaps, of the supernatural. On this level of visual organization, the Olmec sculptures gave concrete expression to an abstract principle of absolute order, while investing their forms with great expressive vitality and symbolic power. In this achievement, the human figure may be seen to have mirrored their universe.

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Notes Stirling, 1955, p. 20, pl. 265.

1. Melgar, 1869; Zenil (1960) has said that they are negroid individuals; Kubler (1962, p. 72) qualified them as idealized
2. Saville, 1929. Piña Chan and Covarrubias (1964, p. 48) thought that they represented the decapitated heads of ball-players; Michael
3. See Stirling, 1940; Caso, 1942, pp. 44-45; Covarrubias, 1942, pp. 46-49; Heizer and Drucker, 1956; Heizer, 1959; Grove, (1963), pp. 489-490; Piña Chan and Covarrubias, 1964, pp. 48-54; Michael D. Coe, 1965; Bernal, 1968. On a second reading when he identified them as portraits of kings of the Jaguar dynasty.
4. See Michael D. Coe, 1972; Furst, 1968; Joralemon, 1971, 1976.
13. See de la Fuente, 1977.
5. See Bonifaz Nuno, 1988, 1989; Gay, 1971; Luckert, 1976; Reilly, 14. 1989. Panofsky, 1955.
6. Andrews, 1987; Grove, 1987; Reilly 1989.
7. de la Fuente, 1973.
8. Lauck, 1989.
9. Covarrubias, 1942.
10. Eliade, 1961, 1974.

11. Stirling, 1955, p. 20, pl. 26b.

12. ~~See~~ Medellín Zenil (1960) has said that they are negroid individuals; Kubler (1962, p. 72) qualified them as idealized portraits; Pina Chan and Covarrubias (1964, p. 48) thought that they represented the decapitated heads of ball-players; Michael D. Coe (1965) thought at first that they were warriors; Bernal (1968, p. 75) said they were portraits of rulers; Wicke (1971) noted that they might have had political significance; Michael D. Coe (1972, pp. 5,10) gave them a second reading when he identified them as portraits of kings of the Jaguar dynasty.

13. See de la Fuente, 1977.

14. See Panofsky, 1955.