
Traceology of the manufacturing techniques of Olmec axes

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Résumé

The Olmec culture, one of the earliest complex societies of Mesoamerica, reputed for its high quality stone work in monumental sculptures like the famous colossal head and in its portable sculpture like mask and figurines. Also famous for its massive offerings of different artifacts, mostly, votive axes some made of jade and serpentine found in sites like La Venta, Arroyo Pesquero, el Manatí among others. Associated to rituals of deities of water and fertility. We had access to some axes, discovered in context of archeological project in the sites of San Lorenzo, La Venta and Arroyo Pesquero, to be able to cast polymer mold samples of the surface with a replicating tapes softened with acetone, that technique allows to observe the manufacturing techniques in the SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) and was already been successfully implemented in other pre-Hispanic objects from other Mesoamerican region comparing with an extensive reference in experimental techniques of burnishing, polishing and incisions. The results of these analyzes presented in this dissertation, allow us to recognize similarities and differences in the manufacture of these axes between the early formative 1500-900 a.C. and the formative medium 900-400 a.C. in the Gulf coast, where we could observe continuities and changes in manufacturing technique.

Mots-Clés: Olmec, Traceology, Technology

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