

Caterina Magni

LES OLMÈQUES

La genèse de l'écriture
en Méso-Amérique



Avec un dictionnaire des motifs
et des symboles olmèques

éditions errance

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2014

Summary

In the 1970s, Jacques Soustelle, French politician and expert of Mexico, did not hesitate to compare Olmecs, the first great mesoamerican civilization, with Sumerians. This comparison, which could seem audacious at that time, turns out particularly relevant today.

Supported by archaeological evidence, the scientists agreed to recognize the contribution of Olmecs in the field of the urban planning, architecture and art. On the other hand, the archaeologists questioned, for a long time, the intellectual accomplishments of the Olmecs. The discovery, made public in 2006, of the Cascajal block, near San Lorenzo on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, convinced the most sceptical.

This serpentine tablet, carved with 62 glyphic signs which belongs to the olmec vocabulary, demonstrates that this ancient people invented the writing. As for the old country of Sumer, this invention result from a long process of maturation with, in the background, the hierarchical organization of the society, the institutionalization of the religion and the development of the first urban cities.

The cities of Uruk, Mari and Ebla in the Ancient Near East « are called », in Mesoamerica, La Venta, Teopantecuanitlan, Tak'alik Ab'aj to quote only the most prosperous ceremonial centers which emerged, from 1300 to 400 B.C., on the mesoamerican territory.

The book « *Les Olmèques. La genèse de l'écriture en Méso-Amérique* » proposes a new approach to graphic code of the Olmecs and offers a new perspective on their system of thought.

The Olmecs reached a high degree of abstraction which peaks in what Caterina Magni names the « glyph in three dimensions ». According to the thesis of the author, the « contour line » of a work of art, an architectural work and the orography of a site can be « read » following the example of giants glyphs whom it is necessary to « understand » in their volume. Besides, their location in the space draws graphic signs.

The Olmecs transmit their original knowledge to later civilizations. They had large influences on Mexican cultures like Zapotecs, Mayas, Toltecs, Aztecs...

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Note bio-bibliographique

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Notice

Editeur : Éd. Errance/Actes Sud, Paris/Arles, 2014

Description : 368 p. et environ 650 ill. n/b. ; 23,2 cm

ISBN : 978-2877725439 : 49 EUR

Collection(s) : Collection des Hespérides ; 2014

Mots-clés : Méso-Amérique ; Mexique ; Archéologie précolombienne ; Stèle de Cascajal ;

Olmèques ; Art olmèque ; civilisation olmèque ; Iconographie ; Ecriture ; Langage des signes