

ing and incision on the figure. A third section is devoted to relationships with other Olmec sculptures, chiefly in terms of iconography; after that is a purely speculative section. The article appears to be free of mistakes and is amply illustrated with twenty-two excellent photographs (three of these of the second figure) and twenty-four line drawings of motifs on the Arroyo Pesquero artifact and on comparative material.

The descriptive sections are well done and thorough and require no comment. The section on iconography is less scholarly. Benson appears to be working in a purely speculative iconographic vacuum. She deals with Olmec iconography as though it were a "rugged monadnock" or a solitary sport, rarely venturing beyond the confines of the Olmec world.

For example, Benson discusses the crossed-bands motif on the figure, mentions Coe's previous interpretation (1968:114-115), and decides the glyph is "probably derived from the pattern of a snake's marking and came to have the meaning of sky as well" (p. 26). Coe's interpretation gave cogent evidence to support the idea that this motif, also called the "St. Andrew's Cross," may have been the toponym for the legendary Tamoanchan, and, by extension, possibly La Venta.

I concur with Coe and suggest that Benson and other students of Olmec iconography might find comparisons with some of the Monte Alban Olmecoid-derived toponyms an illuminating avenue of approach, e.g., Tablet 4 on Mound J where the crossed-bands motif appears as an element of a probable place glyph (cf. Caso 1947, Fig. 41).

Benson's most important contribution in this study to the incipient "school" of Olmec writing is her discovery of what may be termed "grammatical rules." I should like to quote all of the final paragraph, beginning on p. 34, but that would eliminate 108 of my allotted 400 words.

In summary, Benson's conscientious essay adds to our knowledge of Olmec iconography—perhaps the New World's earliest writing system—and my few minor points of disagreement with her approach to iconographic interpretation in no way detract from its potential value.

References Cited

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The Artifacts of Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas, Mexico. THOMAS A. LEE, JR. Papers of the New World Archaeological Foundation, 26. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University (New World Archaeological Foundation), 1969. xvii + 231 pp., figures, illustrations, tables, 4 appendices, references. \$8.00 (paper).

Reviewed by DONALD E. MCVICKER
Loyola University of Chicago

For over a decade the New World Archaeological Foundation has centered its research in the Central Depression of Chiapas, Mexico, at the major Preclassic site of Chiapa de Corzo. More than twenty papers have been published reporting the results of this research. Mr. Lee has gathered together in his "effort to clear the deck" a complete inventory of both previously published and unpublished artifacts (other than ceramic vessels) from Chiapa de Corzo.

Mr. Lee explicitly faces the problems encountered by any author attempting to organize the vast array of material with which he deals. He has chosen to divide his volume into "industries," at the risk of scattering data on obvious functional categories. He has devoted approximately fifty percent of his work to ceramic artifacts, mainly figurines; twenty-five percent to stone artifacts, and less than ten percent to, respectively, bone, shell, copper, charcoal, resins, and plasters. He has prepared brief comparative paragraphs and lists of relevant references which follow most of his descriptive passages. The four brief appendices offer analyses of more technical aspects of metal artifacts (Root), animal bones (Flannery), shell (Chávez O.), and plaster floors and stucco (Littmann).

Based on his analysis of figurine heads and complete specimens Mr. Lee has defined four "styles," similar to ceramic wares, based on manufacturing techniques. He has divided his styles into types and varieties which "have been grouped according to the attribute or attributes which appear to [the author] to pull them together as a unit" (p. 10). Mr. Lee felt he could not consistently classify figurine bodies, limbs, and arms within his taxonomy of heads. As a result, both typologies are convenient, though subjective, and not particularly sensitive to temporal placement. The author has provided a three-page review of the Chiapa de Corzo figurines, and offers some interesting, though untested, suggestions concerning figurine function.

The author's handling of lithic material is typical of most Mesoamerican reports. For example, only two short paragraphs (p. 154) are devoted to the 341 obsidian prismatic blades recorded from the site, and a typology that can only be described as peculiar is used for the six obsidian projectile points recovered. Mr. Lee contends (p. 191) that the study of *manos* does not permit the same "level of interpretation" as other classes of artifacts. If greater attention had been paid to material, form, and source, and if attributes had been defined and types drawn as carefully as they were for the ceramic material, certainly more information could have been gained of use to the culture historian.

Bone and shell are, with the exception of some elaborately carved specimens, handled rather summarily. Given the paucity of post-Preclassic material from the site, few copper artifacts were available for description.

Mr. Lee's "Summary and Discussion" (pp. 191-202) provides a concise period-by-period review of the Chiapa de Corzo sequence. Emphasis is placed on figurine styles to demonstrate the cultural ties of the Central Depression to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, and the Gulf Coast. Extensive use is made of the concept of a religious or Isthmian "interaction sphere," although no reference is given to Caldwell's (1964) original article. A Zoque hypothesis is introduced to offer an ethnic identity for the early inhabitants of the region. An interesting attempt is made (p. 195) to iden-

tify the "flowering of cultural development" at the site in terms of the changes in complexity of the artifact assemblage from period to period.

In the writing of a descriptive work with an historical purpose, Mr. Lee has covered his ground in an admirably methodical manner. Throughout the monograph numerous excellent photographs are used to illustrate the collection. Only the infrequency of profile and back views, and the lack of generalized line drawings detract from the high quality of the illustrative material. A major difficulty that the reader who wishes to use the data presented for analytic purposes will encounter is the absence of a master excavation chart. Although the provenience data are meticulously recorded in an abbreviated form for each artifact illustrated, it is virtually impossible for even the specialist to relate an object from A-121-G-4 to one from A-133-R36-S1 despite the author's general explanation of the symbols.

Reference Cited

- Caldwell, Joseph R.
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Guia para o estudo das indústrias líticas da América do Sul. ANNETTE LAMING-EMPERAIRE. Foreword by Igor Chmyz. *Manuais de Arqueologia*, 2. Curitiba, Paraná, Brasil: Centro do Ensino e Pesquisas Arqueológicas, 1967. 155 pp., figures, tables, bibliography. n.p. (paper).

Reviewed by THOMAS P. MYERS
Indiana University

This volume was inspired by the "Seminário de Ensino e Pesquisa em Sítios Pré-cerâmicos" held in Paraná in September, 1966, and appeared in print only a year later. It is best described as a handbook for lithic analysis since the reference to South America in the title does little more than justify the author's omission of the particular problems of other geographic areas. Specifically South American problems are rarely mentioned.