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July 14, 1979

Mr. John Clark
New World Archaeological Foundation
16 de Septiembre No. 30 - Apartado Postal 140
San Cristobal de Las Cusas
Chiapas, Mexico

Dear John:

So glad to receive your letter and information on the new technique of blade making. I have taken the liberty of sending the paper to the lithic technology field school of Washington State University conducted by Jeffrey Flenniken. He has five participants who all have their Ph D's and I felt that this would give them an opportunity to try your new approach at detaching blades from a polyhedral core.

The core sizes that these people have been working with are so variable from micro blades to large pressure blades incorporating a number of different technologies. It will be interesting to see the results by their following your description of blade detachment.

By the way, the method of holding shows the platform part of the core facing the worker which indicates a pushing rather than a pulling technique. I feel that more drawings in detail would greatly improve the paper. The obtuse angles as you describe will not cut flesh or soft materials and they are only useful for cutting hard materials. The danger in holding is the perimeter around the platform of their sharp edges left when the overhang is not removed. The overhang is not removed on the Belize blades nor is it on the blades that come from Colima in southwestern Mexico.

The report on Irwin Rovner showed that in his studying the Carnegie collection there are some cores that were 3/4" in length which may create a difficulty in holding the core between the feet. Many of the technological traits are indicated by the form, platform preparation, and size of the core and are indicative of certain peoples in time and space and there are probably many technologies represented in the detachment of blades from Meso American cores. They are not all polyhedral. There is still much to discuss in regard to pressure bladmaking.

I just talked to Payson Sheets (University of Colorado) describing some of the very large cores and blade traits of Salvadore and he agrees that there may be a number of different approaches for blade detachment. It is most interesting and this is a most unique technique and may have been used in numerous areas of Meso America in time and space.

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I will look forward to seeing you in August and we can continue some of the research on bladmaking and particularly the preforming of the cores. It involves more than just the obsidian and the tool to detach the blades.

Your friend,

Don Crabtree

Research Associate in
Prehistoric Technology

DC:wt