

Route 1, Box 210
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

Jan. 13, 1975

Hattula Moholy-Nagy
Zahringerplatz 11
CH-9001
Zurich, Switzerland

Dear Moholy-Naga:

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 12th. Unfortunately I have not had any experience in working the Panchucha obsidian. There is little doubt that material from this location has superior blademaking qualities. This is evident from collections I have seen. Obsidians are greatly variable in flaking qualities. I find that certain types of obsidian will respond very well for making common unifacial or bifacial implements both by percussion and pressure but will be unsatisfactory for making pressured prismatic blades. Certain inherent elastic and isotropic qualities are necessary for detachment of blades by pressure. One could draw more definite conclusions if he had the actual material from the site and made replications of the aboriginal cores and blades.

Too, it is obvious from the vast quantities of debris at the Panchucha source that the workers were highly selective when obtaining their material from the quarries. Blademaking was a highly sophisticated technique of stoneworking and there are many core and blade techniques represented in Mesoamerica.

I will be most interested in learning of your findings at Tikal as there has been so little done in the lithic studies there and the emphasis has been to tout the temples and the site as a tourist attraction.

Sorry that at this time I can not give you more help. You may like to contact Ms. Alice Benifer, University of Missouri, Dept. of Anthropology. She has been doing work on pressure blades in the Valley of Mexico. She was also a student of our summer field school and I find she has great knowledge of the artifacts of Mesoamerica.

Sincerely yours,

Don E. Crabtree

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