

Inventory to the Papers of
Robert F. Heizer

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National Anthropological Archives
Smithsonian Institution

Robert F. Heizer was an anthropologist best known for his archeological work in California and Nevada and ethnographic work in California. A University of California Ph.D. (1941), he was on the Berkeley staff from 1946 to 1976, when he gained emeritus status. For many years he headed the Archeological Survey in California.

In 1955, Heizer extended his work into Mexican archeology with an expedition to La Venta with Philip Drucker, of the Bureau of American Ethnology, and Robert J. Squiers. The National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian, and the University of California sponsored the expedition. Its purpose was to follow up with large-scale excavations the preliminary work of Matthew W. Stirling of 1941 and Stirling and Waldo R. Wedel's work of 1943. Controversies concerning chronology took Heizer back to La Venta between 1967 and 1969. His interest in Middle American archeology continued until his death.

In 1957, Heizer began work at a site just west of the great pyramid at Cuicuilco. Involved was an investigation of a group of mounds threatened by lava quarrying. The site proved to be one of long occupation, back to around 2000 B.C. With James A. Bennyhoff, Heizer worked at the site in 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, and 1962.

Virtually the entire collection of Heizer's papers in the National Anthropological Archives concerns the work at La Venta, the material relating to Cuicuilco representing a small miscellany. There are a few additional materials that concern Heizer's other activities, particularly in Middle America. Included are documents of an administrative nature concerning arrangements, management, and publications. There are also materials that came directly from the field work and studies of museum specimens. Also present are materials that concern controversies over Olmec chronology.

Heizer also collected notes, notebooks, photographs, cartographic material, and manuscripts from some of his colleagues and assistants on the La Venta expeditions. Included among these are materials of C. William Clewlow, Eduardo Contreras, Philip Drucker, and P.F. Healy. There are manuscripts of writings and reprints of publications from some of these and from students of Heizer. The photographic collections, considerable amounts of which are unidentified, include field negatives and prints of La Venta, many other Olmec sites, and other archeological sites in Mexico and Middle America. There are also photographs collected from other archeologists, including Stirling.

Papers relating to other aspects of Heizer's career are at the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Correspondents include James A. Bennyhoff, Ignacio Bernal, Geoffrey Bushnell, Leonard Carmichael, Michael D. Coe, William R. Coe, Carmen C. de Leonard, Philip Drucker, Clifford Evans, George Kubler, Melvin M. Payne, Froelich G. Rainey, Anna O. Shepard, Robert J. Squier, Matthew W. Stirling, Robert Stuckenrath, Howel Williams, and Robert Wuchopi.

SERIES 1: MATERIAL CONCERNING LA VENTA AND OTHER OLMEC SITES

Box 1

Correspondence, 1954-1973 (most after 1956). Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

Includes letters, memoranda, and telegrams. A few administrative forms grant applications, and photographs are attached.

Most of the material relates to arrangements for expeditions; loans and exchanges of photographs, publications, and other material; brief reports to sponsoring institutions; and discussions of developments and problems in the study of Olmec remains. There is a very small amount of information concerning other areas of Heizer's work.

There is substantial correspondence with Michael D. Coe, William R. Coe, Philip Drucker, Robert J. Squier, and Matthew W. Stirling. Other selected correspondents include Ignacio Bernal, Geoffrey Bushnell, Leonard Carmichael, Carmen Cook De Leonard, Clifford Evans, George Kubler, Melvin M. Payne, Froelich Rainey, Robert Stuckenrath Jr., and Howel Williams.

Box 2

Notebooks, 1955-1968 (12 volumes). Arranged chronologically.

Includes six notebooks for the 1955 work at La Venta, including those of Heizer (2), Philip Drucker, Robert J. Squier (2+), and Eduardo Contreras. In addition, there is a microfilm of Heizer's notebooks. The notebooks contain sketches, measurements, and notes concerning excavations and specimens, lists of photographs, and miscellaneous other material.

There are also catalogs from Heizer's fieldwork in Mexico in 1957, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1967 (2), and 1968. These usually include notes and sketches relating to fieldwork in the front of each volume and a diary towards the end. Pages from diaries maintained by J.F. O'Connell and C. William Clewlow in 1968 are also included.

Boxes 3-4

Alphabetical File, ca. 1954-1970. Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Includes notes, outlines, catalogs, lists, bibliographic data, sketches, sketch maps, photographs, and letters. There is also a considerable amount of printed and processed material.

The file is a miscellany made up of labeled folders and envelopes that were found distributed throughout the collection but unrelated to the material with which they were physically associated.

Folder titles:

Additional notes for lectures or meetings on La Venta
Altar 1-5, 7, G [7f]

Anthropology 127 (Olmec) lecture notes
 Applications for grant by Louise Iseut Paradis
 Application, Miller Institute
 C14 proposal
 Construction phase correlation
 Catalogs of offerings and notes (by Philip Drucker)
 Contract, December 14, 1967
 Contract, winter 1968
 Eduardo Contreras' La Venta notes, 1968
 Drucker and Heizer proposal for 1955
 Forms describing ceramics, 1968
 Forms describing figurines, 1968
 Jaguar masks
 Laguna de los Cerros Altar
 Laguna de los Cerros monument 5
 List of photographs
 Magnetometer survey
 Material sent to the Museo Nacional de Mexico
 Miscellaneous material regarding or received during 1968 expedition
 Miscellaneous notes (most by Heizer and Drucker)
 Notes, correspondence, and other material regarding La Venta film [2f]
 Olmec article for Mesoamerican Handbook
 Olmec-Chavin relationship
 Parque de La Venta, Altar E, LV-6
 Possible sociological-political structure (by Drucker)
 Potrero Nuevo Altar
 Profile of main trench, 1955
 Proposal for a program of basic anthropological research in the Valley of Mexico (received from
 William Mayer-Oakes, 1961)
 Proposed nomenclature, Complex A
 Reconstruction (sketches by Drucker)
 San Lorenzo altar and monuments [3f]
 Stela 3
 Stone Monuments
 Tlatelolco project

The notes on altars and other monuments throughout this series are by Heizer, C. William Clewlow, and P.F. Healy. Several letters from Robert Wauchope, Robert J. Squier, and Philip Drucker are included in the folder concerning the Olmec article for the Mesoamerican Handbook. The same folder also contains Squier, "Notes on La Venta-Middle Tres Zapotes Differences"; Drucker, "Sample Collection of Sherds from the Tres Zapotes, Veracruz"; and "Ceramics of Cerro de las Mesas, Veracruz."

Boxes 5-9

Writings, 1956-1974. Arranged alphabetically by author.

Includes drafts and/or printed and processed copies of published and unpublished manuscripts by Heizer, colleagues, and students. Many include critical notes by Heizer. Related correspondence, photographs, and other illustrative material accompany some of the manuscripts.

Authors and titles:

- Anonymous, "*Archeology and the Motion Picture*"
"*Some North and South American Radiocarbon Dates for Archeology and Geological Materials as determined by J.R. Arnold and W. F. Libby...*" (for distribution to students) 1951 or later
- Rainer Berger, John A. Graham, and Robert F. Heizer, "*A Reconsideration of the Age of the La Venta Site*"
- Ignacio Bernal, "*El Mundo Olmeca*"
- Dennis E. Bryson (student), "*The Ancient Olmec*"
- Richard Chabram (student), "*The Significance of the Jaguar in Olmec Culture*"
- C. W. Clewlow Jr., and Christopher Corson, "*New Stone Monuments from La Venta, 1968*"
- Michael D. Coe
"*The Archaeological Sequence at San Lorenzo Tenochtitlan, Veracruz, Mexico*"
"*Cycle 7 Monuments in Middle America: A Reconsideration*"
"*The Olmec Style and Its Distribution*"
- William R. Coe and Robert Stuckenrath Jr., "*A Review of La Venta, Tabasco, and Its Relevance to the Olmec Problem*"
- Stephen F. Coleman (student), "*Votive Axes and Cults of the Olmecs: Some Descriptions and Speculations*"
- Philip Drucker
"*Collection of Carbon and Other Samples at Tres Zapotes, Veracruz*"
"*The El Meson a Angel R. Cabade, Veracruz*"
"*The La Venta Support Area*"
"*Report on Sources of Geologic Specimens from the East Slope Cerro Cintepec (vicinity S. Pedro Soteapan)*"
- Drucker and Heizer, "*Commentary on W. R. Coe and Robert Stuckenrath's Review of Excavations at La Venta, Tabasco, 1955.*"
- John E. Funnel and Edwin A. Brown, "*Report on Macroscopic Analysis of the Las Limas Olmec Sculpture*"
- Patricia Garbe, "*Annotated Bibliography for Olmec Art*"
- Graham and Heizer, "*Notes on Papalhuapa Site Guatemala*"
- Fred Gueman (student), "*The Competitive Rubber Ball Games of Central and Southern Middle America*"
- Marian Hartsough (student), "*Characteristic Feature of Jade and Serpentine Figurines of La Venta, Tabasco*"
- Heizer
"*Agriculture and the Emergent Theocratic State in Lowland Southeastern Mexico*"
"*Analysis of Two Low Relief Sculptures from La Venta*"
"*Ceramics*" [fragment of a larger paper]
"*Colossal Sculpture at Teotihuacan*"
Discussion of Bernal's contribution on Olmec Culture
"*Final Comment...on the Controversy Written by Heizer after reading Coe and Stuckenrath's Comment Printed Supra*"
"*The Great 'Stela' of La Venta*"
"*Inferences on the Nature of Olmec Society Based upon the data from La Venta Site*"
"*Investigations of 1967 and 1968 at La Venta*"
"*La Venta and the Early Theocratic State in Mexico*"
"*Man and Maize in the Southeastern Lowlands*"
"*New Observations on La Venta*"
"*The Possible Socio-political Structures of the La Venta Olmecs*"

"Stela 2"
 "Studying America's Oldest Civilization"
 Untitled note on jaguar masks in the southeast and southwest platforms, Complex A, La Venta
 Heizer and Drucker, "The Fluted Pyramid of the La Venta Site"
 Heizer, Drucker, and Graham, "Investigations at La Venta, 1967"
 Heizer and Graham
 "Brief Tentative Synopsis and Guide to Slides: Excavations at La Venta, 1968"
 "Report to INAH on Archaeological Concession #5, 1967"
 Heizer and Jonas E. Bullberg, "Concave Mirrors from the Site of La Venta"
 Heizer, Tillie Smith, and Howel Williams, "Notes on Colossal Head No. 2 from Tres Zapotes"
 Heizer and Williams, "Source of Rocks Used in Olmec Monuments"
 Curtis Arthur Jackson (student), "Multidimensional Scaling and the Seriation of the Twelve Olmec Colossal Heads"
 Peter David Joralemon, "A Study of Olmec Iconography"
 Le Roy V. Joesink-Mandeville, "The Olmec Gulf Coast Region and Northwestern Yucatan during Middle Formative"
 Gary Kring (student), "The Jaguar in Olmec Religion"
 Paul Kroster (student), "Cultural Exchange between Mexican Highland and Veracruz Coast"
 Melinda Leach (student), "Dress and Ornamentation in Olmec Monumental Sculpture, rock Carvings, and Figurines"
 Alexander Marshak, "Olmec Mosaic Pendent: Internal Analysis Reveals Prehistoric Arithmetic, Possibly Calendric Contents"
 Scott McCue (student), "Inferences on the Use of San Lorenzo and La Venta from the Monumental Sculpture"
 Rene Millon, "Chronological and Developmental Classifications in Mesoamerican Prehistory"
 Takashi Miyawaki, "Multidimensional Scaling of the Twelve Heads"
 Martin G. Murry, "Concerning the Concave Mirrors found at La Venta, Veracruz, Mexico"
 Michael Muse and T. Stocker, "The Cult of the Cross: Interpretations in Olmec Iconography"
 Adriadne H. Prater (student), "An Analysis of Site Plans and Layouts of Six Pre-Classic Sites in Mesoamerica"
 E. M. Shook and Heizer, "An Olmec Sculpture from the South (Pacific) Coast of Guatemala"
 Tillie Smith
 "Comments on Kubler's Developmental Theory of Olmec Art"
 "The Great Stone Olmec Heads of Southeast Mexico"
 Robert J. Squier
 "Evidence of 'Post-Olmec' Occupations at La Venta, Tabasco"
 "The Nature and Chronology of Olmec Culture"
 Matthew W. Stirling, "Three Sandstone Monuments from La Venta Island"
 Karen Weeks (student), "Possible System of Measurement for Olmec Culture"
 Bent T. Young (student), "Olmec Agriculture"

Boxes 10-11

Printed and Processed Material, Most 1950s-1907s

Most of the material consists of copies of publications concerning Olmec Culture or general Mesoamerican archeology. Also included are news releases about Heizer's publications, guides to the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and other publications for tourists, literature concerning the magnetometer, newspaper clippings concerning the work of Heizer and other

archeologists, and copies of a bibliography of Heizer's published writings (1937-1978) including one annotated by T.R. Hester.

Box 12

Miscellany, 1955-1978.

Includes financial papers, bibliography cards, captions of photographic material, tags of 1955 C14 samples, and a 40 centavos stamp bearing an Olmec head.

Drawings

Sketches and photocopies of sketches of Olmec colossal heads and other specimens. There is also an unfinished rubbing of plaque number 1 made by Robert J. Squier in 1955.

Boxes 13-14

Photograph Albums with negatives

Arranged in two groups: albums and loose negatives. The albums are arranged by site and then by specimen, following an alphabetical-numerical code for designating specific monuments, altars, and so forth.

Includes black and white prints and negatives of views and details of sculpture from La Venta, Tres Zapotes, San Lorenzo, Cerro de las Mesas, and Laguna de los Cerros. There is also a miscellany of photographs of objects from other sites. Typed captions under the photographs briefly identify the object and view.

Related photographs are in the series of photographs arranged by site.

Boxes 15-16

Photographs arranged by site, 1955-1969

Mostly black and white prints many with related negatives. A few postcards and color prints are included.

Folder titles:

Alvarado
British Museum
Catamaca
Catamaca – aerial photographs
Coatlinchan
Corral Nuevo
Ejido Ojoshal
El Meson
Jalapa
Laguna de los Cerros
Las Limas
La Venta

- Altars
- Ballcourt
- Carvings
- Celts
- Colossal heads
- Columns
- Drains
- Excavations
- Figurines
- Jaguar mask
- Magnetometer survey
- Mirrors
- Model complex A
- Offerings
- Pyramid
- Stele
- Tomb
- Unidentified
- Workers
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Mitla/Monte Alban, Monte Alto (Guatemala)
- Munich, Museo Nacional de Mexico, Piedrahabrada
- San Lorenzo
 - Colossal heads
 - Miscellany
 - Negative
- Santa Maria Uxpanana
- Sayula
- Taxco
- Tehuantepec
- Teotihuacan
- Terron Cagado
- Tlatilco
- Tres Zapotes
 - Colossal heads
 - Miscellany
- Tula
- Tuxtla Coast
- Viejon
- Villahermosa
- Xico Viego

Many of the photographs in this series are duplicated in other series.

Boxes 17-19

Photographs of Expeditions, 1955, 1967-1969

Arranged in chronological order by year of expedition. Heizer arranged some of the 1955 photographs in labeled packs and these have been retained. The photographs for 1967-1969 are arranged by filmstrip.

Includes black and white negatives, prints, and proof sheets. Heizer shot most of the photographs, but there are also photographs made by Philip Drucker, Robert J. Squier, and C. William Clewlow.

Folder titles:

1955

LV1, Terron Cagado, LV Column
LV Altar 4
Comalco, LV Stela 2, LV Columns
Stela 1, LV4, LV Monument 5, LV1
Pieces in Museo Nacional, LV Monument 19
SL 1, 2, 3, monument 14
Ednza, Uxmal, Idolo de Coatchiltan
LV4, Comalcalco, LV Jaguar throne
Pieces in Museo Nacional de Mexico, SL2, LV Monument 19
Bird life in Terron Cagado, TZ1, SL site photographs (coyote box)
Terron Cagado, Punta Roca Partida
Sculptures in Santiago Tuxtla, TZ Monument F, NS1, El Meson Stela

1967

A-1-3 (west bastion)
A-5
Artifact
House construction
Land clearing
Miscellany
Northwest platform
Offering 3
Offering 4
Pavement-like offerings
People
Southwest platform
Stone monuments
West bastion (adobes, basalt columns, facing blocks, jaguar mosaic, retaining walls, and marking walls, and stratigraphy)

The remaining photographs are identified only by year and packet number.

Box 20

Miscellaneous Photographs. Arranged by subject.

Includes photographic prints and negatives, mostly black and white. There are also a few postcards.

Most of the photographs are too incompletely identified to allow interfiling in other series.

Folder titles:

Altar
Celts
Colossal heads
Cooks plates

Discs
Excavations
Figurines
Jade ornament (with a letter from T.W. Hester)
Lagos de Monte Bello
Mexican hematite mirrors
Miscellaneous
Postage Stamp
Sculpture
Seler Festschrift
Staubenhaven Collection
Stele
Stone box

Box 21

Unidentified Photographs

This is a set of prints of Olmec specimens on exhibit. Many were taken at the Parque Olmeca at Villahermosa.

Boxes 23-24

Slides, 1943-1971

Arranged in two groups: dated slides arranged by year and then by broad subject; undated slides arranged into broad subjects except for a group of large transparencies at the end.

Many of the slides are view of sites, excavations, specimens in situ, specimens at museums, camps, equipment, and field crews. Heizer took many of them. The 1943 slides, however, concern the fieldwork of Matthew Stirling; Philip Drucker or Robert J. Squier took many of the 1955 slides. Some of the slides are of non-archeological subjects. Among the 1955 slides, for example, are views of people at La Venta village and of the towns of Coatzacoalcos, Minatitlan, and Lagunilla. The 1960 slides include views of Santiago Tuxtla, and the 1967 slides include views of Coatzacoalcos and a boat parade there.

Box 25

Illustrations for Bureau of American Ethnology *Bulletin* 170, 1957

Artwork and photographs for figures and plates published in Drucker, Heizer, and Squier's *Excavations at La Venta, Tabasco*, 1955.

Map Case

Maps and Other Cartographic Material, 1955-1968

Includes sketch maps and cross-sections made in the field; draftsmen's drafts, tracings, and completed maps; and published items. A few notes are included. Some of the items are those of Philip Drucker and Robert J. Squier.

The material is grouped as follows:

La Venta general area
Pyramid plan and elevation
Pyramid contour maps
Chart of magnetometer survey
Plans of area south of pyramid
Plats from 1967 and 1968 surveys
Layout of obsidian samples
Sketch maps of Papahuapa vicinity
Miscellaneous printed maps
Unidentified plan [Identified by David Grove (November 29, 2005) as “a map of Olmec drain stones excavated by Heizer in his 1967 research at La Venta, Mexico. Excavations were published in ‘Univ. of Calif. Archaeological Research Facility’ publication.”]

SERIES 2: Material CONCERNING WORK AT CUICUILCO, MEXICO, 1957-1965

Box 26

Correspondence, 1957-1971
Report, 1957
Howel Williams notes on pottery
Notes (reading, bibliographic)
Printed material
Anna O. Shepard article on pottery analysis
Miscellany
Administrative forms and papers
Notes, 1961
Maps, and sketches

Box 27

Photographs and slides

Last updated: January 2, 2008
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