

# Olmec civilization

- At the end of the II millennium BC. e . sedentary becomes dominant and there are ceremonial centers on the Gulf Coast and in the highland areas . Begins flowering of the cultures of the Atlantic coast of present-day state of Veracruz , called Olmec ( from the Aztec word " Olmi " - rubber). The Aztecs called them by name because the area of the Gulf Coast , where rubber was produced and where they lived modern Olmecs . So actually the Olmecs and the Olmec culture - not the same thing . According to ancient tradition , the Olmecs ( "people of the land of rubber trees " ) appeared on the territory of modern Tabasco around 4000 years ago , they arrived by sea and settled in the village Tamoanchane ( " We're looking for our home " ) . According to the same legend says that the wise men sailed , and the remaining people colonized the land and began to call themselves by the name of their great leader Olmeca Uimtoni . According to another legend, the Olmecs were the result of the union of the divine animal jaguar with a mortal woman . Since then, the Olmecs believed jaguars their totems , and they were called Indians Jaguars .





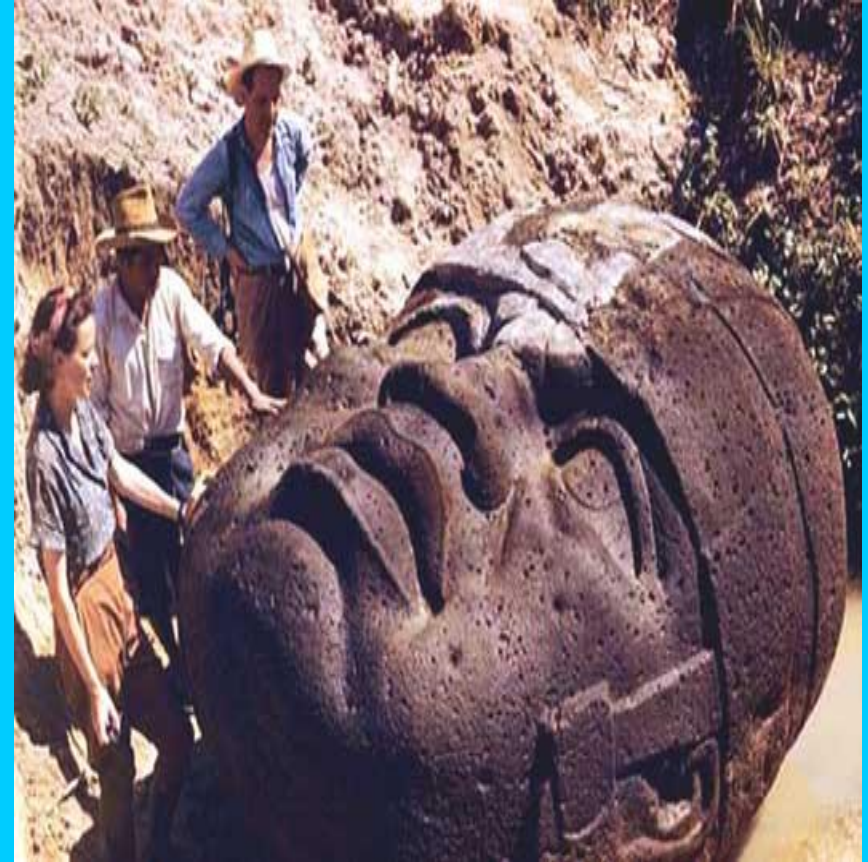
- However, despite the best efforts of archaeologists, anywhere still could not find any trace of the origin and evolution of the Olmec civilization, the stages of its development, the place of its origin. Little is known about the social organization of the Olmec and their beliefs and rituals - except that they, like, too, did not disdain human sacrifices. Unknown and in what language was spoken Olmecs, and ethnic group to which they belonged. In addition to all the high humidity in the Gulf of Mexico has led to the fact that not a single skeleton preserved Olmec, which makes it extremely difficult for archaeologists the opportunity to shed light on the culture of the most ancient civilization of Mesoamerica.

# Olmec sculpture

- The largest Olmec monuments considered San Lorenzo , La Venta and Tres Zapotes . These were real urban center , the first in Mexico. They included large ceremonial complexes with earthen pyramids, an extensive system of irrigation canals , the city's neighborhoods and numerous necropolises .

Olmecs achieved this perfection in stone processing , including a very solid rock. Olmec jade considered to be masterpieces of ancient American art. Olmec monumental sculpture included megaton altars made of granite and basalt, carved stelae , sculptures in human growth. But one of the most remarkable and puzzling features of this civilization are enormous stone heads .

The first such head was found back in 1862 in La Venta . To date, these giant human heads found 17 , ten of them are from San Loesno , four of La Venta , and the rest - even with two monuments of the Olmec culture. All these heads are carved from a single block of basalt. The smallest have a height of 1.5 m , the biggest head found on the monument Rancho la Kobata reaches 3.4 m in height. The average height of the majority of the Olmec heads - about 2 m Accordingly , the weight of these huge sculptures ranges from 10 to 35 tons!





- In 1939, archaeologist M. Stirling during excavations discovered the mysterious stone stele. After cleaning dirt on it were found some figures, decode them, the scientist concluded that the Mayan calendar is a type, but his age is about 300 years older than the most ancient Mayan calendar. It turns out that the mysterious Olmec civilization created a calendar and Mayan priests just copied it without specifying the source.