

What's For Dinner?

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Data

"The grinding slabs, often known as metates, chiefly were made of hard sandstone"

-Texas Beyond History

www.texasbeyondhistory.net/harrell/artifacts.html



Introduction

"Although seeds were ground in the archaic, the extra grinding required by maize causes more grit from the grinding slabs to get into food, wearing down molars."

Denver: An Archaeological History
By Sarah M. Nelson



"It is estimated that the average Indian ate three manos and Metates in a lifetime"

Encyclopedia of medical anthropology: Health and Illness in the World's Cultures
By Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember

Purpose

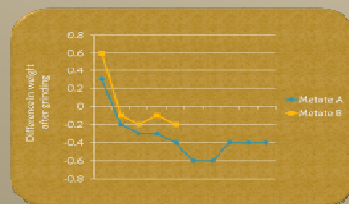
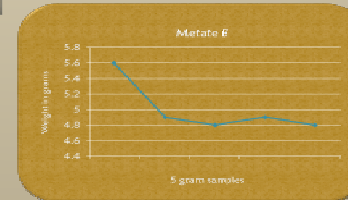
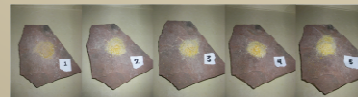
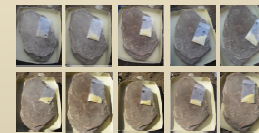
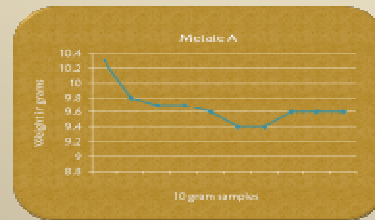
The purpose is to find out if the amount of grit produced when grinding corn on a metate can be reduced by preparing the surface.

Hypothesis

As a metate is shaped, the surface is being smoothed and possibly prepared before using to feed a family so that there is less debris in the food and thus less wearing down of their teeth.

Procedure

- Test amount of grit produced when grinding a constant amount of corn.
 - Measure 10 grams of popcorn
 - Grind on metate until reaching desired consistency
 - Brush off all corn and grit
 - Measure on scale
 - Clean metate
 - Dry
 - Repeat
- Test difference between grit produced while grinding with corn and without corn.
 - Grind 1,000 strokes
 - Measure grit
 - Grind 4,000 more strokes
 - Measure grit



Part II



Findings

Part I

- First sample had substantially more grit
- Corn was lost during grinding process
- It is difficult to separate corn from grit to measure the amount of grit only
- More grit was produced on Metate B

Part II

- Insignificant amounts of grit were produced
- No measurements
- Most of the grit came from the mano

Analysis

- The first use of the metate produces a lot of grit but there is not evidence supporting the hypothesis that each progressive use reduces the amount of grit
- Grinding corn produces more grit than just grinding the stone. This follows the evidence of more wearing on teeth that have eaten corn than those that mainly eat seeds (Nelson).
- It is possible that certain types of sandstone produce less grit

Works Cited

- Ember, Carol R., and Melvin Ember, eds. Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology Vol. 1&2 : Health and Illness in the World's Cultures. New York: Springer, 2003.
- "The Harrell Site - Artifacts." Texas Beyond History. 8 Aug. 2002. University of Texas Austin. 2 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/harrell/artifacts.html>>.
- Nelson, Sarah Milledge, K. Lynn Berry, and Richard Carillo. Denver : An Archaeological History. New York: University of Pennsylvania P, 2001.