

Präkolumbische Tonreiben (ralladores) aus Kolumbien und Ecuador

Summary

Seven graters of baked clay, which were collected in the Tumaco region, Southwestern Colombia, are described and illustrated. They are compared with pieces stemming from the La Tolita/Esmeraldas region, Northwestern Ecuador.

The pieces from the Tumaco region are relatively thin and do not seem likely to have served as manioc-graters (for *manihot utilissima*, i.e. bitter manioc). They may, however, have been used as graters for sweet potatoes (camote) and other soft fruits.

Since sweet potatoes are often mixed with manioc-pulp and juice in order to produce a tastier masato (manioc-beer), the occurrence of ceramic graters in archaeological contexts might, then, very well be connected with the »masato-complex«, even if these graters were not used to grate (bitter) manioc tubers. There is, however, another possibility. Since sweet potatoes are also mixed with corn-chicha, the graters of baked clay may have served for the preparation of corn-chicha (see post scriptum).

Two photographs illustrate an outstanding bowl-shaped grater of baked clay from La Tolita, Ecuador, which is characterized by two man- and animal-like beings embracing both ends of the oval bowl. Their heads show feline features. It is reasonable to assume that this bowl-shaped grater has been used ritually. The author of the present article holds the opinion that the ritual was linked to the drinking of masato. Since the bowl is very solid, it is possible that bitter manioc tubers were grated in it.

Vor einiger Zeit erwarb das Museum für Völkerkunde Basel sieben »ralladores«, Reiben aus gebranntem Ton. Den Angaben der Sammler zufolge stammen diese Reiben aus der Gegend von Tumaco, dem Küstengebiet im Südwesten Kolumbiens, das sich nicht weit von der Esmeraldas/La Tolita-Zone Ecuadors entfernt befindet.¹

Aus Ecuador sind Hunderte solcher Tonreiben bekannt; schon Saville berichtet 1910, daß er mehr als hundert Exemplare, darunter vor allem Fragmente, viele davon in Fischform, gesammelt habe.²

Über die im südwestlichen Kolumbien ausgegrabenen oder sonstwie gefundenen Tonreiben liegen verschiedene Berichte vor, darunter die von Cubillos und Bouchard; auch über die Tonreiben von Esmeraldas/La Tolita finden sich verschiedene Nachrichten.³

¹ Viele Archäologen sind der Ansicht, die Kulturen von La Tolita/Esmeraldas und von Tumaco wiesen so viele gemeinsame Züge auf, daß sie letztlich eine und dieselbe Kultur bildeten; vgl. Bouchard

(1977–78: 287), Cubillos (1955: 13).

² Saville (1910: 220).

³ Cubillos (1955); Bouchard (1977–78); Joyce (1912); Uhle (1927); D'Harcourt (1947).