

Tikal: The History of the Ancient Maya's Famous Capital

By Charles River Editors, Jesse Harasta

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Many ancient civilizations have influenced and inspired people in the 21st century. The Greeks and Romans continue to fascinate the West today. But of all the world's civilizations, none have intrigued people more than the Mayans, whose culture, astronomy, language, and mysterious disappearance all continue to captivate people. In 2012 especially, there was a renewed focus on the Mayans, whose advanced calendar has led many to speculate the world would end on the same date the Mayan calendar ends, but if anything, the focus on the "doomsday" scenario overshadowed the Mayans' true contribution to astronomy, language, sports, and art.

The Maya maintained power in the Yucatan for over a thousand years, and at the height of its "Classical era" (3rd-9th centuries A.D.), the city of Tikal was one of the power centers of the empire. Archaeologists believe Tikal had been built as early as the 5th or 4th century BC, and eventually it became a political, economic and military capital that was an important part of a far-flung network across Mesoamerica, despite the fact it was seemingly conquered by Teotihuacan in the 4th century AD. It seems the foreign rulers came to assimilate Mayan culture, thus ensuring Tikal would continue to be a power base, and as a result, the city would not be abandoned until about the 10th century AD.

As one of the Ancient Maya's most important sites, construction at Tikal was impressive, and even though it was apparently conquered, the city's records were unusually well preserved. This includes a list of the city's dynastic rulers, as well as the tombs and monuments dedicated to them. Thanks to this preservation, Tikal offers researchers their best look at the Ancient Maya and has gone a long way toward helping scholars understand Mayan history.

Tikal: The History of the Ancient Maya's Famous Capital covers the history of the city, as well as the speculation and debate surrounding it. Along with pictures and a bibliography, you will learn about Tikal like you never have before, in no time at all.

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