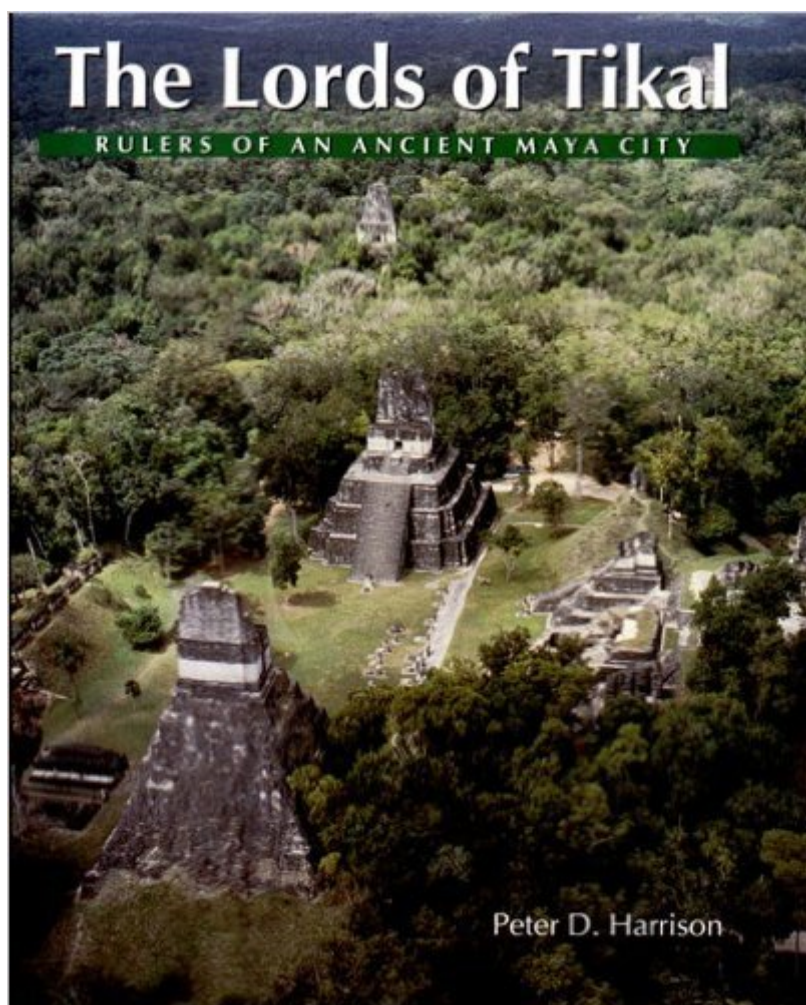


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The Lords Of Tikal: Rulers Of An Ancient Maya City



Synopsis

The Maya metropolis of Tikal was once one of the greatest cities in the world, its skyline dominated by huge temple-pyramids. In AD 750 over 100,000 people lived there, in the heart of the Guatemalan rainforest. But why did the city flourish? What does its history reveal about Maya civilization? And why did Tikal collapse? Drawing upon over 30 years of excavation and research, some of it his own, Peter D. Harrison provides this account of the turbulent story of Tikal over 1700 years, from 800 BC to the late-9th century AD. Strategically located, the city was a trade centre, a pioneer of architecture, and a focal point of warfare, struggling with other cities for dominance of the region. The apogee of power and wealth was achieved during the reign of the great Jaguar Claw clan, whose ruling lords built the Great Temples, some with tombs of treasures that hint at the richness of life as a lord of Tikal. The text also makes use of the breakthroughs in translating Mayan hieroglyphs.

Book Information

Series: New Aspects of Antiquity

Hardcover: 208 pages

Publisher: Thames & Hudson; First edition (July 1, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0500050945

ISBN-13: 978-0500050941

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 7.8 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,172,072 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 inÂ Books > History > Americas > Central America > Guatemala #206 inÂ Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Mayan #1451 inÂ Books > History > Americas > South America

Customer Reviews

The city we call Tikal was called something like Mutul by its Mayan inhabitants and was inhabited continuously for about 1,700 years. While there has been magnificent archaeological and translating work done in recent years, the foundation of what we know of Tikal was laid in a great excavating and mapping project done by the University of Pennsylvania from 1955 until 1969. The author of this book, Peter D. Harrison, Ph.D. had participated in these (and other) excavations and brings that first hand authority to this very interesting book. Dr. Harrison starts with the pre-history of Tikal and ends

with the little we know of its inhabitants after the collapse in the 9th century. However, most of the book centers on the succession of 30 rulers (Kings, Lords, or whatever you want to call them). We know who most of these people were because of the Mayan predilection for documenting great events by erecting great monuments that had writing on them that we can now read (mostly). The author also shares important understanding of the building of the great palaces and temples and shows us their important orientations and relationships with each other. Since what we see today is the decayed form of the final state of Tikal, I found it fascinating to work backward and realize all that wasn't there when the city was at its height of power and influence. The great pyramids we associate with the city today were late additions by an important set of rulers, but by no means the most powerful the city had known. The book is full of pictures, great drawings, maps, and even some beautiful color plates. There is also a page on when and how to visit Tikal that would be very helpful for those intending to visit the site. There are also many helpful notes and an index.

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