

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHIC INVESTIGATIONS AT TAMARINDITO, PETEN, GUATEMALA

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Abstract

The present article (1) summarizes several aspects of recent research in the Classic Maya site of Tamarindito, including its archaeology and epigraphy. The archaeological section focuses on results of the 2010 field season of the Tamarindito Archaeological Project, directed by the junior author. An unusual walled group excavated during that season is discussed in greater detail along with the implications it raises for the reconstruction of the borders of Classic Maya centres. In the epigraphy section, the senior author provides new insights into the written history of the site and its hieroglyphic corpus.

Resumen

El artículo presente (1) recapitula varios aspectos de investigaciones recientes en el sitio clásico maya de Tamarindito, incluyendo su arqueología y epigrafía. La parte arqueológica se enfoca en las excavaciones de la temporada 2010 del Proyecto Arqueológico Tamarindito bajo la dirección del segundo autor. Un grupo excepcional y cercado fue excavado durante esa temporada y se trata en más detalle, junto con las implicaciones que este contribuye a la reconstrucción de los límites de los centros mayas del periodo Clásico. En la sección epigráfica el autor mayor proporciona nuevas informaciones acerca de la historia escrita del sitio y su corpus jeroglífico.

INTRODUCTION

The Maya site of Tamarindito is located in the Petexbatun area of the Department of Peten in south-western Guatemala (Figure 1). The geographic position according to the WGS 84 datum is 16° 27' 04" N, 90° 14' 05" W, at an altitude of 203 m above mean sea level (Gall 1999: 32), as referenced in Plaza A, within the eastern group (Figure 2) of the site centre.

The archaeological zone lies within the municipality of Sayaxche that is situated approximately 10.0 km northeast on the southern bank of the Río Pasión. From Tamarindito, it is only 17 km in a fairly straight line to the Río Usumacinta and the border of Mexico, to the west. The archaeological site can be accessed by a dirt road and later a trail from the modern hamlet of Las Maravillas, which is located some 1.5 km to the north, and also by boat on the navigable waters and a trail from the river bank across cultivated land. In both instances, the visitor arrives first at Plaza B.

The closest bodies of water are the Laguna Tamarindito, 1.3 km northeast, and the Laguna Petexbatun, the northernmost bay, which lies 3.0 km to the east. From there, the Laguna drains into the Río Petexbatun and ultimately the Río Pasión. To the north and east of the site, the terrain is rather level, with seasonal wetlands occurring closer to the rivers and the Laguna Petexbatun.