

## Poster

### Constructional woods of Tikal: Forest use and the end of time

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**Introduction.** Tikal, located in the lowland rainforest of northern Guatemala, was perhaps the largest settlement of Ancient Mayan civilization. However, little archeobotanical investigation has been done to assess the circumstances surrounding its mysterious collapse at the end of the eighth century A.D.

**Objectives.** To determine which tree species were being exploited for constructional use in Tikal over the course of Late Classic times in order to better understand the area's ecological and cultural environment.

**Methods.** In this study, we analyzed 135 samples of constructional remains from all six of the city's major temples, as well as two major palaces.

**Results.** We found evidence for a switch in preference from large-growing *Manilkara zapota*, to swamp species *Haematoxylum campechianum* in 741 A.D. When *Manilkara* later returned in 810 A.D., beam widths were found to be significantly smaller, and the wood assemblage adulterated with a smaller tree relative.

**Conclusion.** These findings suggest widespread deforestation and a movement toward exploitation of the swamplands at the end of Tikal Maya civilization.

Keywords: Maya, Classical, paleoethnobotany, deforestation

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