

mous city; discusses the settlement, its buildings, and the surrounding countryside.

ÁNGEL GARCÍA COOK

Translated from Spanish by Scott Sessions

CARACOL. Situated approximately 600 meters (1,800 feet) above sea level in the Maya Mountains of Belize, Caracol is the largest Late Classic period (550–900 CE) archaeological site known from the southern Maya Lowlands. At approximately 650 CE, this ancient city supported more than 115,000 people, who utilized extensive agricultural terraces within a widely distributed but highly integrated settlement system. The archaeological site covers 177 square kilometers, is believed to contain over 36,000 structures, and is characterized by a radial causeway system that extends out from the site epicenter as far as eight kilometers (5 miles).

Caracol was discovered in the 1930s by men searching for timber and chicle. Initial visits proved the site to be relatively rich in carved stone hieroglyphic monuments, which are rather rare in Belize. In the early 1950s, an expedition to the site was led by Linton Satterthwaite of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. This early research resulted in the creation of a map of the central part of the site, the excavation of several tombs, the recording of the site's known stone monuments, and the transportation of about a dozen monuments to the University Museum in Philadelphia. Further research on the monumental architecture in the site's epicenter was undertaken during the mid-1950s by A. Hamilton Anderson, then archaeological commissioner of British Honduras. In the late 1970s, one of the site's many outlying agricultural terrace systems was investigated by Paul Healy of Trent University. Since 1983, central Caracol and its outlying residential settlement have been under continuous investigation by the University of Central Florida's Caracol Archaeological Project, directed by Diane Chase and Arlen Chase.

Just as the carved stone monuments of Caracol initially drove interest in the site, Caracol's hieroglyphic history has continued to alter interpretations of the Classic Maya world. Much of the basic data on Caracol's stelae and altars, including a preliminary statement concerning the site's ruling dynasty, were published in 1981 by Carl Beetz and Linton Satterthwaite. Subsequent investigations by the Caracol Archaeological Project have led to the discovery of new stone monuments and inscriptions that significantly amended the dynastic and political history of the site. Especially important have been painted texts found in royal tombs and records of Late Classic conquests; one, included on a circular ballcourt marker discovered in 1986, records a major defeat of the site of Tikal, Guatemala, in 562 CE.

Particularly significant for work at Caracol has been the correlation of archaeological data with hieroglyphic history. This conjunctive research has confirmed some hieroglyphic statements, but it has also pointed to problems in relying on strictly hieroglyphic material for interpreting Maya prehistory. For example, archaeological data have demonstrated that Caracol's population increased dramatically after the victory in 562 CE. At least 115,000 people were present at the site by 650, making it the largest known city in the southern Maya Lowlands at the time. The archaeological record also demonstrates that Caracol's Late Classic population enjoyed more widespread prosperity than is characteristic of other sites in the southern Lowlands. Caracol's immense size and archaeological record seem to support hieroglyphic statements concerning the site's role in political events of the early Late Classic period. However, very little hieroglyphic history at Caracol dates from between 650 and 800. Caracol's "emblem" glyph is not widely found in the southern Lowlands, and the inhabitants did not erect a significant number of stelae during this time. This lack of a monumental record has led some to suggest that Caracol's successes had waned by 650; however, the archaeological record demonstrates that Caracol was most populous and prosperous at and after this time. Thus, a conjoined use of archaeology and epigraphy provides the most reasonable reconstruction of Caracol's ancient past.

Hieroglyphic History. Although the archaeological record indicates that Caracol was settled by 600 BCE, the written history for the site begins much later. A retrospective hieroglyphic text from Caracol notes that the site's dynasty originated in 331 CE (8.14.13.10.4 in the Maya Long Count). The initial "founder" was followed by at least twenty-eight additional rulers. A late 8 Baktun date opens the text on one of the earliest monuments from the site—a badly shattered stela that was cached under a Late Classic altar. Although several hieroglyphic texts may be correlated with individuals who lived before the Late Classic period (before c.550 CE), much of the site's hieroglyphic history comes from stone monuments that date to the early part of the Late Classic. These texts contain historic information that relates predominantly to four key individuals. Lord Water, also known as Yahaw Te K'inich, acceded to Caracol's throne in 553 CE (9.5.19.2.1). The defeat of Tikal is placed within his reign (9.6.8.4.2) on a monument erected by one of his sons. While some epigraphers have suggested that this defeat occurred because of an alliance with Calakmul, Mexico, archaeological data from Caracol cannot be mustered to support this assertion. Yahaw Te K'inich probably died before 599, when the Caracol throne was passed to the first of two of his sons. The elder son, Lord Flaming Ahau or "Ruler IV," was born in 575 (9.7.2.0.3) and acceded to

the throne in 599 (9.8.5.16.12). Most of the monument texts relating to him are badly eroded, so that little is actually known about his reign. He was succeeded by his better-known brother, Lord K'an II, who was born in 588 (9.7.14.10.8), acceded to the throne in 618 (9.9.4.16.2), and died in 658 (9.11.5.15.9). Lord K'an II created numerous texts commemorating his military conquest of Naranjo, Guatemala, a site 42 kilometers (25 miles) distant, which appears to have become a second capital for Caracol's ruling dynasty between 631 and 658 (if not later). Approximately one month before his death, Lord K'an II witnessed the accession of his successor, Lord Hok Pol, to the Caracol throne on 9.11.5.14.0. Lord Hok Pol was still ruling in 680, but after this date Caracol's Late Classic dynastic history becomes murky. There are sporadic monuments and texts at the site from the next one hundred years, but the written history of Caracol is largely unknown until the Terminal Classic era (780–900 CE), when carved monuments are again plentiful in the archaeological record. Lord Hok K'auil ushers in a new era of historical records after 798 CE and is followed by textual data relating to at least two other rulers. Caracol's hieroglyphic record falls silent after 859; however, archaeological data indicate that the site epicenter was occupied and rebuilt by a prosperous elite until approximately 895, when burning and on-floor debris suggest that the downtown area was sacked.

Spatial Layout. Caana, an immense elevated palace and temple complex that still rises 43.5 meters above the jungle floor, marks the visual and physical center of Caracol. At least for the Terminal Classic, and probably for earlier periods as well, the archaeological data indicate that the Caracol ruler resided and held court in one of the palace compounds that ring Caana's summit. Architectural form indicates that access to this architectural complex was tightly controlled. Three separate temples command all but the south side of the summit plaza. Within the raised substructures of these temples, important royal relatives and family were buried in elaborate tombs, many of which were painted with red lines and panels; black-line hieroglyphs on the red panels date these burials to the early part of the Late Classic period.

Caana dominates the Caracol epicenter in terms of its sheer size, but other large formally constructed groups occur to its immediate east, west, and south within an area covering approximately one half a square kilometer. These architectural arrangements include formal plazas demarcated by pyramids and stelae, as well as a series of more specialized palace compounds, presumably used for residential and administrative purposes. Dense settlement and agricultural terraces, intersected by numerous ancient roadways, surround the epicenter and extend outward in all directions as far as eight kilometers. The site

of Caracol cannot be understood without reference to its settlement and extensive road system.

Five causeways, many of which bifurcate and split into multiple radiating roads, bind the site epicenter to outlying architectural nodes. Unlike many Maya sites which have all their central architecture concentrated in the site epicenter, Caracol's major plazas and their associated architecture are embedded within the surrounding settlement. A ring of major plazas, or *termini*, was established at a distance of approximately three kilometers (2 miles) from the site epicenter at the beginning of the Late Classic era (after 550 CE). Following the explosive population growth that then occurred, a second ring of *termini* was linked by causeways to Caracol's epicenter. This second ring of *termini* incorporated preexisting architectural nodes (presumably already serving administrative purposes), 4.5 to 7.8 kilometers distant, into the site's settlement system. By the end of the Late Classic, residential settlement and agricultural terraces completely filled in the areas between Caracol's causeways and this second ring of *termini*, so that all possible areas of the site were inhabited or intensively farmed.

Results of Archaeological Excavations. Besides excavation in outlying residential groups, intensive investigation of Caracol's central architecture has been undertaken by the University of Central Florida Caracol Archaeological Project. These excavations have revealed an initial settlement of the site epicenter around 300 BCE. Deep probes within Caana's substructure platform have shown that this complex was already thirty-five meters high by the end of the Late Preclassic period (before 250 CE). Impressive Late Preclassic deposits have also been recovered in the buildings surrounding the A Plaza, which took the form of an "E Group," or astronomical observatory, by this date. A simple burial with thirty-two vessels and almost five thousand shell and jadeite beads, dating to 150 CE, has also been recovered from the epicenter's Northeast Acropolis. Impressive Early Classic (250–550 CE) tombs have been recovered from the epicenter's A Group, South Acropolis, and Central Acropolis. Late Classic specialized deposits are found throughout the epicenter. Most epicentral buildings have yielded on-floor Terminal Classic remains; the majority date to the decade immediately preceding the onset of the tenth century. Even later remains are associated with the A Plaza.

Excavations within the outlying settlement area have tested more than one hundred residential groups and recovered more than two hundred burials. These investigations indicate an initial settlement of the Caracol region by 600 BCE and a final, but minimal, occupation in the eleventh century CE. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the settlement research relates to the overall prosperity of the outlying population and their uniform cultural

identity. This is seen especially in human interments and ritual caches. Almost half of the burials found at Caracol contained the remains of multiple individuals. Approximately seventy-five of the recovered residential interments were housed within formally constructed tombs; the majority of these were Late Classic in date. About 22 percent of the recovered burials from Caracol also contained individuals with teeth that were inlaid with hematite or jadeite—a numerical percentage far greater than is known from any other Maya site. A formal caching complex, consisting of larger lidded urns, often modeled with human faces, and smaller lip-to-lip dishes that sometimes housed one or more human digits, was also found throughout the residential settlement (as well as in the site epicenter). Many residential groups also contain partial or whole incense burners, either within tombs or associated with the stairways of eastern buildings that functioned as shrines or mausoleums. All these features are found both within the epicenter and in outlying residential groups, and they have been interpreted as part of a distinctive Caracol identity that may have been fostered by the site's elite. The widespread general prosperity observed among the bulk of Caracol's population may well have resulted from and was fostered by successful warfare.

Summary. Caracol's epigraphic history suggests that it was a significant force in the political arena of the Late Classic southern Maya Lowlands. Its size, settlement layout, prosperity, and uniform cultural identity indicate that Caracol followed a somewhat distinctive developmental path. The deemphasis of the site's hieroglyphic record following 650 CE, during an era when great prosperity is evident in the site's archaeological record, highlights a need to reconcile epigraphic interpretation with archaeological reconstruction in the southern Maya Lowlands.

[See also Southern Maya Lowlands.]

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ARLEN F. CHASE
and DIANE Z. CHASE

CÁRDENAS, LÁZARO (1894–1970), Mexican soldier and politician. In 1938, Lázaro Cárdenas, the president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, nationalized the foreign oil companies that were seen as exploiters of the nation's oil fields. Soon afterward, he requested donations from Mexican citizens to help compensate the companies. Impoverished women donated the only gold they ever possessed, their wedding bands, suggesting something about Cárdenas's ability to move his compatriots. In fact, in a