



Lightning Warrior: Maya Art and Kingship at Quirigua (The Linda Schele Series in Maya and Pre-Columbian Studies)

Matthew G.Looper

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The ancient Maya city of Quirigua occupied a crossroads between Copan in the southeastern Maya highlands and the major centers of the Peten heartland. Though always a relatively small city, Quirigua stands out because of its public monuments, which were some of the greatest achievements of Classic Maya civilization. Impressive not only for their colossal size, high sculptural quality, and eloquent hieroglyphic texts, the sculptures of Quirigua are also one of the few complete, *in situ* series of Maya monuments anywhere, which makes them a crucial source of information about ancient Maya spirituality and political practice within a specific historical context.

Using epigraphic, iconographic, and stylistic analyses, this study explores the integrated political-religious meanings of Quirigua's monumental sculptures during the eighth-century A.D. reign of the city's most famous ruler, K'ak' Tiliw. In particular, Matthew Looper focuses on the role of stelae and other sculpture in representing the persona of the ruler not only as a political authority but also as a manifestation of various supernatural entities with whom he was associated through ritual performance. By tracing this sculptural program from its Early Classic beginnings through the reigns of K'ak' Tiliw and his successors, and also by linking it to practices at Copan, Looper offers important new insights into the politico-religious history of Quirigua and its ties to other Classic Maya centers, the role of kingship in Maya society, and the development of Maya art.

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