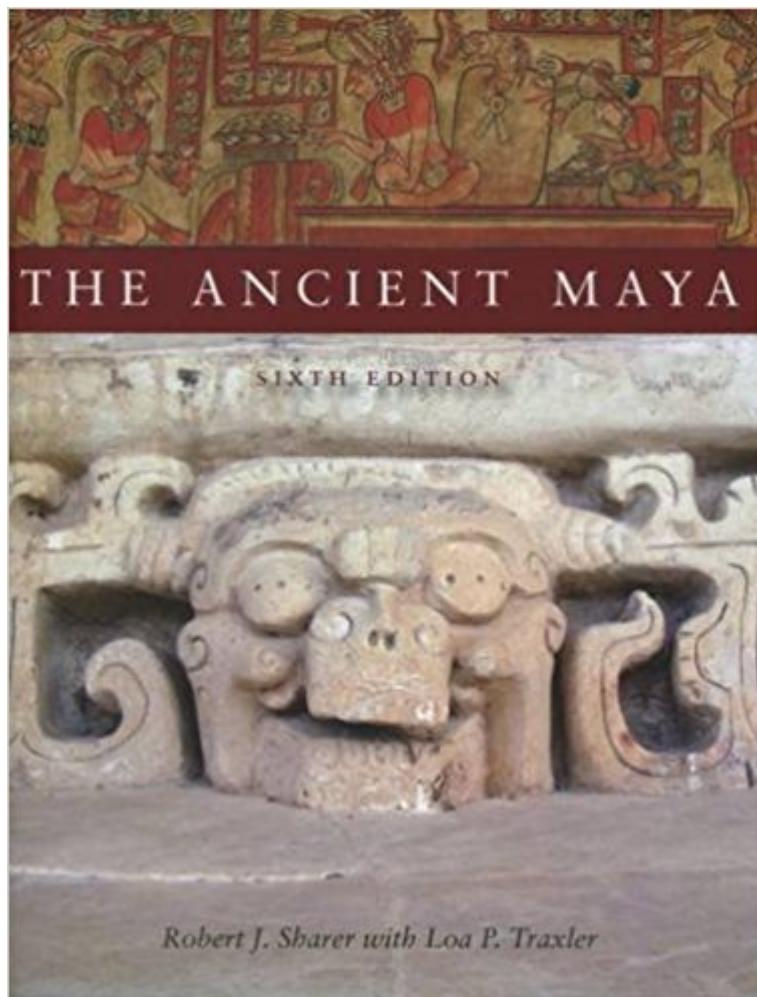


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The Ancient Maya, 6th Edition



Synopsis

This book traces the evolution of Maya civilization through the Pre-Columbian era, a span of some 2,500 years from the origins of complex society within Mesoamerica to the end of the Pre-Columbian world with the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century. The sixth edition presents new archaeological evidence and historical studies and offers the most extensive revisions of this classic work to date. The result is the most thorough and incisive study of the origins and development of ancient Maya civilization ever published.

Book Information

Paperback: 931 pages

Publisher: Stanford University Press; 6 edition (October 7, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0804748179

ISBN-13: 978-0804748179

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #200,520 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Mayan #144 in Books > History > Americas > Central America #206 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Latin America

Customer Reviews

"(T)his work is surely a must-have reference for Mayanists of all fields. . . . The Ancient Maya is appropriate to scholars, graduate students, and upper-level undergraduates." (The Americas)"The Ancient Maya remains the best and most comprehensive single source on the prehispanic Maya. Easy to read and up-to-date, this new edition is an excellent choice for the general reader and for college classes." . E. Wyllis Andrews, Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University"This marvelous book shows why the Maya constitute one of the best "case studies" of social and political evolution. Rich with detail and new insights, the authors skillfully show that the Maya were on a par with other great civilizations such as the Greeks, Egyptians, and Chinese. This truly monumental work has been updated to meet the needs of all readers -- from laymen to tourists to professional archaeologists -- and it should be on everyone's bookshelf to read and re-read." . Joyce Marcus, University of Michigan, Museum of Anthropology"The Ancient Maya has become a standard text on the study of Mayan culture and prehistory. Given the veritable

explosion of research on the Maya, greater understanding of this past--yet living--culture has been realized." (Colonial Latin American Historical Review)"The Ancient Maya is indispensable to anyone interested in the Maya--or in complex societies in general--because of its authoritative voice and encyclopedic scope. It is entertainingly written so that one can sit down and read through its chapters, while at the same time its tables, figures, and superb index and bibliography make it a dependable and essential reference tool. There simply isn't anything comparable to this book."--Prudence M. Rice, Southern Illinois University Carbondale"For nearly 60 years, successive editions of *The Ancient Maya* have served as benchmarks of our knowledge of Maya civilization. This new edition follows in the footsteps of its illustrious predecessors, presenting the most thorough and up-to-date synthesis of our knowledge of the Mayacivilization as revealed through archaeology, epigraphy, and art history. Scholars and the general public alike will be excited to find the latest archaeological discoveries and theories about topics like the rise of Maya civilization and the Classic Maya collapse. Thanks to significant reorganization, the text addresses the history of Maya archaeology and epigraphy, thus contextualizing the study of the ancient Maya within the larger field of archaeology. In short, this book remains the definitive synthesis of our knowledge of Precolumbian Mayacivilization."--Jason Yaeger, University of Wisconsin-Madison"The Ancient Maya is the definitive statement for our current understanding of their time and place. It goes well beyond any other competing volume in its encompassing reach." (Journal of Anthropological Research)"The most comprehensive and most lavishly illustrated book on its subject." (Journal of Latin American Studies)

This book traces the evolution of Maya civilization through the Pre-Columbian era, a span of some 2,500 years from the origins of complex society within Mesoamerica to the end of the Pre-Columbian world with the Spanish Conquest in the 16th century. The sixth edition presents new archaeological evidence and historical studies and offers the most extensive revisions of this classic work to date. The result is the most thorough and incisive study of the origins and development of ancient Maya civilization ever published.

While making a joke about (or reference to) the Mayan calendar is tempting, I'm just not clever enough -or perhaps I'm too earnest - to pull it off. Interested in pre-Columbian history, I stumbled across Sharer's *The Ancient Maya*. It was more - much more - than I had expected, which in and of itself isn't a bad thing, but it is something readers should be aware of. The book is near

encyclopedic in its detail and the depth into which Sharer explores the Maya. While I was initially intimidated by the scope and level of specificity, there is so much here that even those looking for a brief synopsis of the Maya can (with a little attention to the index) have all their questions about this vibrant and tremendously important civilization answered. The book is primarily an anthropological and archaeological study as the maps, photos, illustrations and figurative drawings of burial sites, buildings, communities and temples attest, and as explained in the opening chapters. This should not dissuade historians (such as myself) or others interested in this civilization (but not necessarily students of this discipline) from reading this marvelous book - the use of technical jargon is kept at a minimum, but the first three chapters (the first 100 or so pages) are devoted to a discussion of archeology in Mesoamerica. Sharer hits his historical stride about a third of the way into the book, elaborating, illustrating and discussing a very complex and long-lasting civilization. Admittedly, the detail can be a bit overwhelming. Sharer includes dozens of "case studies" of various digs in Mexico, Belize, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador providing a close-up view of current research on several aspects of Mayan civilization from 1000 BCE - 800 CE. While illustrative of the specific time periods (and regions), they can be distracting. I felt this feature was commendable. Likewise I was impressed with Sharer's transparency in discussing areas of academic disagreement. For example, while covering the end of Maya states in the Classic Period (800 - 900 CE), several explanations have been advanced. Rather than dismissing those with which Sharer disagrees, each theory is presented, a summary of the supporting evidence is discussed, and a brief analysis of the relative merits and flaws of the interpretation of the data is discussed. Not only is this good scholarship, its good teaching and is academically honest. I commend him. I was most fascinated by the concluding chapters of the book, in which Mayan society and religion is discussed, and the final chapter that related the Spanish conquest of Mayan civilization. While much of Mayan art, writing and architecture was concerned with the social and religious elite, I was pleased to find so much included about gender roles and the daily lives of the common people. While I strongly suspect this is a text for a 200-300 level archeology course on the Maya, it is very well written with a depth and detail that I wish more academic writers were able to pull off. For the non-academic, I still recommend this book, but read it judiciously and refer to the table of contents or index to highlight areas of interest. Highly recommended.

We visited 12 Mayan ruins over the course of a month and returned with enough information to have lots of questions. I gave this book to my husband as a gift upon our return and he LOVES it. Reading it after our on site visits has enriched the experience.

im having a tough time plowing through. other reviewers state it gets interesting after preliminary explanations are finished but ifn i dont break through soon im just going back to the mayan riviera and ask !

This is more like a college textbook. You will learn a lot about Maya civilization. Highly recommended.

Well if you want to study the ancient Maya, this is the book to get. However, if you are a casual reader who just wants a basic overview or understanding of the Maya, this book is probably too much for you. Its very long and extremely well written by someone who is clearly one of the leading experts in the field. If you read this one book, you probably dont need any others. But dont expect to just tear through it in a weekend, its a long scholarly book for a serious student of the Maya.

I bought this book as a gift for my father as a precursor to our planned trip to the Yucatan Peninsula. He loves history and learning about different cultures and was very pleased with the writing style and content. Overall I am very happy with this purchase!

This book is a very satisfying review of all aspects Maya history and and culture. It is extremely readable, given the amount of detail provided. Down side? 778 readable pages - about 4 pounds, not a vacation read. If you have serious interest in the history of the Mayan people take the time to read this book. AS seattle

This is a detailed compendium of Maya history. It would be suitable as a college textbook, for AP classes in high school and for libraries everywhere. A professor from the University of Arizona recommended it to me. This book is of a higher reading level but an interested reader could navigate it and learn both vocabulary and history.

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