

1: Maya civilization - Wikipedia

The Highland Maya in Fact and Legend is a concise book that lacks focus and original research. It is by no means a comprehensive work. It is by no means a comprehensive work. Because he never clearly defines a thesis, the reader is unsure of both Peterson's intentions in writing the book and his desired conclusions.

Supplementary Series[edit] Many Classic period inscriptions include a series of glyphs known as the Supplementary Series. The operation of this series was largely worked out by John E. The Supplementary Series most commonly consists of the following elements: Lords of the Night[edit] Main article: Lords of the Night Each night was ruled by one of the nine lords of the underworld. This nine-day cycle was usually written as two glyphs: Lunar Series[edit] A lunar series generally is written as five glyphs that provide information about the current lunation , the number of the lunation in a series of six, the current ruling lunar deity and the length of the current lunation. Moon age[edit] The Maya counted the number of days in the current lunation. They used two systems for the zero date of the lunar cycle: A new moon glyph was used for day zero in the lunar cycle. D glyphs were used for lunar ages for days 1 through 19, with the number of days that had passed from the new moon. For lunar ages 20 to 30, an E glyph was used, with the number of days from Count of Lunations[edit] The Maya counted the lunations. The C glyph could be prefixed with a number indicating the lunation. No prefixing number meant one, whereas the numbers two through six indicated the other lunations. As a whole number, the number of days per lunation will be either 29 or 30 days, with the day intervals necessarily occurring slightly more frequently than the day intervals. The Maya wrote whether the lunar month was 29 or 30 days as two glyphs: These can also be found in the Dresden codex. The day count can be described several ways: Most of these are referred to using a "Y" glyph and a number. The accompanying texts begin with a directional glyph and a verb for day-count phrases. Anderson [35] provides a detailed description of the day count. Short count[edit] During the late Classic period the Maya began to use an abbreviated short count instead of the Long Count. An example of this can be found on altar 14 at Tikal. The concluding day 13 Ahau was followed by the re-entering first day 1 Imix. This is the system as found in the colonial Books of Chilam Balam.

2: Myths & Legends | Ancient Origins

The Highland Maya in Fact and Legend is a concise book that lacks focus and original research. It is by no means a comprehensive work. Because he never clearly.

Well complimented with photographs, this narrative offers a rounded perspective on the Maya and their changing way of life. Elois Ann Berlin Language: Princeton University Press Format Available: Whereas most previous work on Maya healing has focused on ritual and symbolism, this book presents evidence that confirms the scientific foundations of traditional Maya medicine. Data drawn from analysis of the medical practices of two Mayan-speaking peoples, the Tzeltal and Tzotzil, reveal that they have developed a large number of herbal remedies based on a highly sophisticated understanding of the physiology and symptomatology of common diseases and on an in-depth knowledge of medicinal plants. Here Elois Ann Berlin and Brent Berlin, along with their many collaborators, provide detailed information on Maya disease classification, symptomatology, and treatment of the most significant health conditions affecting the Highland Maya, the gastrointestinal diseases. The authors base their work on broad-ranging comparative ethno-medical and ethnobotanical data collected over seven years of original field research. These findings suggest that the traditional Maya medical system is the result of long-term explicit empirical experimentation with the effects of herbal remedies on bodily function. Originally published in The Princeton Legacy Library uses the latest print-on-demand technology to again make available previously out-of-print books from the distinguished backlist of Princeton University Press. These editions preserve the original texts of these important books while presenting them in durable paperback and hardcover editions. The goal of the Princeton Legacy Library is to vastly increase access to the rich scholarly heritage found in the thousands of books published by Princeton University Press since its founding in John Richard Stepp Language: Plants play a central role in human existence. Medicinal plants, in particular, have allowed for the continued survival of the human species. This book, based on over a decade of research in Southern Mexico with the Highland Maya, explores the relationship between medicinal plants, traditional ecological knowledge and the environment. The biodiversity of the region remains among the highest in the world, comprising more than plant species. Over employed for medicinal uses and knowledge for approximately species is widespread. Medicinal plants play an overwhelmingly primary role in the daily health care of the Highland Maya. Three principal objectives are addressed: Findings demonstrate the overwhelming importance of human modified environments for medicinal plants. Explanations are presented from human ecology and biochemical ecology. Implications for conservation, health and the environment are discussed.

3: Maya calendar - Wikipedia

The Highland Maya in Fact and Legend is a concise book that lacks focus and original research. It is by no means a comprehensive work. Because he never clearly defines a thesis, the reader is.

They were seized by a Maya lord, and most were sacrificed, although two managed to escape. Maya peoples
The Spanish conquest stripped away most of the defining features of Maya civilization. However, many Maya villages remained remote from Spanish colonial authority, and for the most part continued to manage their own affairs. Maya communities and the nuclear family maintained their traditional day-to-day life. Traditional crafts such as weaving, ceramics, and basketry continued to be practised. Community markets and trade in local products continued long after the conquest. At times, the colonial administration encouraged the traditional economy in order to extract tribute in the form of ceramics or cotton textiles, although these were usually made to European specifications. Maya beliefs and language proved resistant to change, despite vigorous efforts by Catholic missionaries. Thompson promoted the ideas that Maya cities were essentially vacant ceremonial centres serving a dispersed population in the forest, and that the Maya civilization was governed by peaceful astronomer-priests. Rather, throughout its history, the Maya area contained a varying mix of political complexity that included both states and chiefdoms. These polities fluctuated greatly in their relationships with each other and were engaged in a complex web of rivalries, periods of dominance or submission, vassalage, and alliances. At times, different polities achieved regional dominance, such as Calakmul, Caracol, Mayapan, and Tikal. The first reliably evidenced polities formed in the Maya lowlands in the 9th century BC. The divine authority invested within the ruler was such that the king was able to mobilize both the aristocracy and commoners in executing huge infrastructure projects, apparently with no police force or standing army. In other cases, loose alliance networks were formed around a dominant city. An overriding sense of pride and honour among the warrior aristocracy could lead to extended feuds and vendettas, which caused political instability and the fragmentation of polities. Women in Maya society From the Early Preclassic, Maya society was sharply divided between the elite and commoners. As population increased over time, various sectors of society became increasingly specialized, and political organization became increasingly complex. Commoners included farmers, servants, labourers, and slaves. Such clans held that the land was the property of the clan ancestors, and such ties between the land and the ancestors were reinforced by the burial of the dead within residential compounds. The king was the supreme ruler and held a semi-divine status that made him the mediator between the mortal realm and that of the gods. From very early times, kings were specifically identified with the young maize god, whose gift of maize was the basis of Mesoamerican civilization. Maya royal succession was patrilineal, and royal power only passed to queens when doing otherwise would result in the extinction of the dynasty. Typically, power was passed to the eldest son. Although being of the royal bloodline was of utmost importance, the heir also had to be a successful war leader, as demonstrated by taking of captives. Government was hierarchical, and official posts were sponsored by higher-ranking members of the aristocracy; officials tended to be promoted to higher levels of office during the course of their lives. Officials are referred to as being "owned" by their sponsor, and this relationship continued even after the death of the sponsor. Ajaw is usually translated as "lord" or "king". In the Early Classic, an ajaw was the ruler of a city. Later, with increasing social complexity, the ajaw was a member of the ruling class and a major city could have more than one, each ruling over different districts. It indicated an overlord, or high king, and the title was only in use during the Classic period. A sajal would be lord of a second- or third-tier site, answering to an ajaw, who may himself have been subservient to a k'ulmte'. These last two may be variations on the same title, [] and Mark Zender has suggested that the holder of this title may have been the spokesman for the ruler. Rivalry between different factions would have led to dynamic political institutions as compromises and disagreements were played out. In such a setting, public performance was vital. Such performances included ritual dances, presentation of war captives, offerings of tribute, human sacrifice, and religious ritual. Their houses were generally constructed from perishable materials, and their remains have left little trace in the archaeological record. Some commoner dwellings were raised on low

platforms, and these can be identified, but an unknown quantity of commoner houses were not. Such low-status dwellings can only be detected by extensive remote-sensing surveys of apparently empty terrain.

4: Scottish myths, folklore and legends | Scotland is Now

*The Highland Maya in fact and legend: Francisco Ximenez, Fernando Alva de Ixtlilxochitl, and other commentators on Indian origins and deeds: from and De los Reyes Toltecas y su destruccion [Marshall N Peterson] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Interesting Facts About Mayans: Comparatively, the Mayans were far more resilient and survived way longer than the Aztecs. In fact, even today there are millions of Mayas who still survive and live their ancient culture in some form or the other. In this article titled 30 interesting facts about Mayans, we intend to take a look into one of the great civilizations of ancient times. If you happen to be a history buff, you will like these facts. So, sit back, relax and enjoy our facts list! Exactly how the Mayan Empire met its end is really not known. By the time the Spanish explorers came to the places where the Mayans thrived, many cities were already in their ruins, long abandoned with no trace of what happened. Climate change, drought, famine and overpopulation are some of the possible causes as hypothesized by the historians. The Mayans were one of the first people to use the symbol for zero. Yes, zero was already there and the Sumerians used it before the Mayans. The Sumerians however used a slanted double wedge to denote that a number is absent. Using the symbol of zero as a place holder came from Mayans. However, they really did not use zero as a number. The idea that zero can be used as a number came from ancient Indians. The man behind this was Aryabhata. Though Aryabhata did not explicitly use the symbol of zero as the Mayans, his work shaped the modern-day decimal system. Then came another Indian mathematician by the name Brahmagupta who gave the rules of using zero in his famous book Brahmagupta Siddhanta which translates as The Opening of the Universe. Nobelwomen in the Mayan culture used to have their teeth filed and shaped into points. Mayans never used steel or iron. All their weapons were made of volcanic rock known as obsidian. Mayans were literate people and they came up with their own writing system which was one of the most complex writing systems to have ever existed on this planet. They actually wrote on almost anything they could lay their hands on. Mayans made use of different calendars 3 to be precise. Of these one was more like the modern Gregorian calendar that had days. However, they also used the Long Count calendar which was deemed to be reset in , leading to the prophecy of destruction of world in The Long Count calendar they used cycles every 2,, days. As mentioned, Mayans used various calendars but interestingly the Long Count calendar never came up with the prophecy of doomsday. The cause for such panic is modern thinking. We failed to understand that the calendar only speaks of resetting and not complete destruction. Many of the written works of the Maya people were totally destroyed during Spanish conquest. Whatever was left behind was salvaged after hard work of scavenging and they were complete translated during 20th century and 21st century. Mayans had very brutal human sacrifice rituals. The people who were usually sacrificed were slaves and prisoners. The less common method of sacrificing a human was to make him stand in front of a volley of arrows. The more common method of sacrificing a human was to paint the victim in blue color and then carrying him to the top of one of the pyramids where the victim would be held down while a priest would cut out the beating heart of the person. At times, an assistant priest would skin the victim and give the skin to the priest who would then wear the skin and perform a ritualistic dance in front of the gathered crowd. Chichen Itza was one of the largest Mayan cities. The largest city was Tikal which spanned over an area of sq. The Mayan pyramids that we usually see in photographs are from Chichen Itza, which was once privately owned but later the government purchased it from the owner. The blood sacrifice of the ancient Mayans is still practiced by the Maya people who still live today. The only difference between now and then is that the present Mayas sacrifice chickens and not humans. Mayans were pretty advanced when it came to medical knowledge. They knew how to fill teeth, use human hair for suturing wounds etc. They even knew how to create prosthesis. They even made use of painkillers as anesthetics for the purpose of medicinal use and also as hallucinogenic agent during religious rituals. They extracted the pain killers from their environment. Mesoamerican Ballgame was one of the favorite pastime games for the Mayans. Many courts have been found in almost all major Mayan cities. However, the game was usually associated with decapitation of the members of the losing team. Many historians believe that the Maya people

actually used decapitated heads as balls during the Mesoamerican Ballgames. However, historians have actually gathered evidences that Mayans had pretty advanced knowledge of rubber that they created using natural latex. Historians believe that they even created various qualities of rubber by mixing rubber latex with other plant substances and they even made the bouncy variants that they possibly used as balls during the games. Maya people who continue to live even today have a modern version of the game their ancient ancestors used to play. However, unlike their ancestors, modern day Mayans do not use decapitated human heads for the game. The modern version of the game is known as Ulama. Sweat baths and saunas were popular in Mayan culture. They had a strong belief that saunas were a means of ridding themselves of the impurities that plague them. The Mayans had this habit of naming their newborns based on their day of birth. In Mayan calendar each day had assigned names for boys and girls. The parents literally followed that. Did you know Tayasal – an island city of the Maya people was the last independent and self-governing Mayan state that survived till before it finally gave into Spanish rule? Mayans also possessed some advanced astronomical knowledge and their calendar was based on this knowledge. They used to keep detailed records of planetary movements, movements of sun, stars and moon. Mayans strongly believed that the sun and the moon and the stars were actually gods who moved across the sky and they marked the events like equinoxes, eclipses and solstice in their temples. Mayans were among one of the earliest civilizations in world to use the art of tattooing. Men and even women used to tattoo their bodies with elaborate designs. The Mayans were incredible architects too! They built some of the most stunning temples and pyramids of their times. When it comes to pyramids, the Mayans possibly even outsmarted Egyptians. One of the famous and largest pyramids in world is La Danta. They think that the pyramid contains 99 million cubic feet of fill and rock. Mayans were obsessed with physical appearance. They tried to enhance the physical structure using a number of means. They liked flatter foreheads and mothers used boards to press the foreheads of their babies. However, this was mostly found in case of upper class people. Nobility of Mayan people loved crossed eyes. In order to achieve this, mothers would dangle objects in front of the eyes of their babies until they became cross eyed. The Mayan calendars start counting from that date. The earliest Maya settlements found so far dates as far back as BCE. That period is known as the Formative Period or Preclassic Period. The city of Mirador located in northern Peten is one of the greatest Mayan cities ever built. It is also one of the greatest in pre-Colombian Americas. Mirador was actually a late Preclassic city. The Maya people were good drinkers too and their favorite drink was blache that they prepared using fermented honey and mixing it with blache tree bark.

5: Francisco Ximénez (Translator of Popol Vuh)

The Highland Maya in fact and legend: Francisco Ximénez, Fernando Alva de Ixtlilxóchitl, and other commentators on Indian origins and deeds: from Escolias a las historias del origen de los Indios and De los Reyes Toltecas y su destrucción.

Visit Website Within that expanse, the Maya lived in three separate sub-areas with distinct environmental and cultural differences: Most famously, the Maya of the southern lowland region reached their peak during the Classic Period of Maya civilization A. The earliest Maya were agricultural, growing crops such as corn maize, beans, squash and cassava manioc. During the Middle Preclassic Period, which lasted until about B. The Middle Preclassic Period also saw the rise of the first major Mesoamerican civilization, the Olmecs. In addition to agriculture, the Preclassic Maya also displayed more advanced cultural traits like pyramid-building, city construction and the inscribing of stone monuments. The Late Preclassic city of Mirador, in the northern Peten, was one of the greatest cities ever built in the pre-Columbian Americas. Its size dwarfed the Classic Maya capital of Tikal, and its existence proves that the Maya flourished centuries before the Classic Period. The Classic Maya, A. At its peak, the Maya population may have reached 2,, Excavations of Maya sites have unearthed plazas, palaces, temples and pyramids, as well as courts for playing the ball games that were ritually and politically significant to Maya culture. Maya cities were surrounded and supported by a large population of farmers. The Maya were deeply religious, and worshiped various gods related to nature, including the gods of the sun, the moon, rain and corn. They were thought to serve as mediators between the gods and people on earth, and performed the elaborate religious ceremonies and rituals so important to the Maya culture. The Classic Maya built many of their temples and palaces in a stepped pyramid shape, decorating them with elaborate reliefs and inscriptions. These structures have earned the Maya their reputation as the great artists of Mesoamerica. Guided by their religious ritual, the Maya also made significant advances in mathematics and astronomy, including the use of the zero and the development of a complex calendar system based on days. Though early researchers concluded that the Maya were a peaceful society of priests and scribes, later evidence—including a thorough examination of the artwork and inscriptions on their temple walls—showed the less peaceful side of Maya culture, including the war between rival Mayan city-states and the importance of torture and human sacrifice to their religious ritual. Serious exploration of Classic Maya sites began in the s. By the early to midth century, a small portion of their system of hieroglyph writing had been deciphered, and more about their history and culture became known. Most of what historians know about the Maya comes from what remains of their architecture and art, including stone carvings and inscriptions on their buildings and monuments. The Maya also made paper from tree bark and wrote in books made from this paper, known as codices; four of these codices are known to have survived. Life in the Rainforest One of the many intriguing things about the Maya was their ability to build a great civilization in a tropical rainforest climate. Traditionally, ancient peoples had flourished in drier climates, where the centralized management of water resources through irrigation and other techniques formed the basis of society. This was the case for the Teotihuacan of highland Mexico, contemporaries of the Classic Maya. In the southern Maya lowlands, however, there were few navigable rivers for trade and transport, as well as no obvious need for an irrigation system. By the late 20th century, researchers had concluded that the climate of the lowlands was in fact quite environmentally diverse. The environment also held other treasures for the Maya, including jade, quetzal feathers used to decorate the elaborate costumes of Maya nobility and marine shells, which were used as trumpets in ceremonies and warfare. Mysterious Decline of the Maya From the late eighth through the end of the ninth century, something unknown happened to shake the Maya civilization to its foundations. One by one, the Classic cities in the southern lowlands were abandoned, and by A. The reason for this mysterious decline is unknown, though scholars have developed several competing theories. Some believe that by the ninth century the Maya had exhausted the environment around them to the point that it could no longer sustain a very large population. Other Maya scholars argue that constant warfare among competing city-states led the complicated military, family by marriage and trade alliances between them to break down,

along with the traditional system of dynastic power. As the stature of the holy lords diminished, their complex traditions of rituals and ceremonies dissolved into chaos. Finally, some catastrophic environmental change—like an extremely long, intense period of drought—may have wiped out the Classic Maya civilization. Drought would have hit cities like Tikal—where rainwater was necessary for drinking as well as for crop irrigation—especially hard. All three of these factors—overpopulation and overuse of the land, endemic warfare and drought—may have played a part in the downfall of the Maya in the southern lowlands. By the time the Spanish invaders arrived, however, most Maya were living in agricultural villages, their great cities buried under a layer of rainforest green. Start your free trial today.

6: 30 Interesting Facts About Mayans

The Highland Maya in Fact and Legend is a concise book that lacks focus and original research. It is by no means a comprehensive work. Because he never clearly demonstrates a thesis, the reader is unsure of both Peterson's intentions in writing the book and his desired conclusions.

Jan 11th Mayan mythology emerged from the traditions and religion of a civilization as old as 3, years from a vast region called Mesoamerica: Even though many of the texts written by the Mayans were burned on the arrival of the Spanish, some legends have survived and continue to be told today. Mayan mythology is fascinating. The stories below serve a double purpose: To shed some light on a culture that we are immersed in. The legend of the Aluxes: The legend of Xtabay: The legend of the Uxmal dwarf: The aluxes are tiny beings, created out of clay that were hidden and in that way they were able to protect its owner. The aluxes pronounced ah-lu-shes, had a strong tie to their creator. Once they were created, they were offered prayer and offerings to make them come to life. The aluxes were known to be faithful to their owners and mischievous with strangers. When the properties of their owners were passed down to others, the aluxes would come out and scare the children. To please them, the new owners would have to give them food, cigarettes, honey, and corn. Today, the aluxes continue to take care of the Mayan towns. Some original clay figurines can be found in the Dzitnup and Samula cenotes, near the city of Valladolid. Some people believe that the aluxes are here to bring light to the world. The creatures are hardly ever seen as they are agile and light, like the wind. The Mayans believe that if respected, the aluxes will protect you and will take care of your properties. One of them was known as the sinner and the other as the good one. The first one was not wanted because she gave herself to love, but in reality was loved by the sick and the weak ones. The second one was appreciated by the town, but in the interior she was rigid and incapable of loving those around her. Her tomb was surrounded by beautiful, colorful flowers and from that place a sweet smell filled the air. Then Utz-Colel the good woman died. As fast as she died, her body started to emit a disgusting smell and all the flowers around her grave died. She lures them to her and then she kills them. She waits for them by the ceiba trees as she combs her hair with a brush made out of tzacam. She was born in Mayapan: Canek means black serpent, a brave prince with a kind heart. When he turned 21 years of age, he was chosen as king of Chichen Itza. That same day he met princess Sac-Nacte. She was 15 years of age. Both quickly fell in love; however Sac-Nacte was destined to be married with young Ulil, prince of Uxmal. The legend says that a young adviser to the princess told Canek that Sac-Nacte would be waiting among green flowers and that it would be necessary to fight for her, before destiny fought against them. The day of the wedding, Canek arrived with 60 of his best warriors and climbed to the altar screaming Itzalan! As if he was in the battlefield and stole the princess from the altar. Ulil, enraged, launched a war: Mayapan and Uxmal against Itza. The Itzaes abandoned their homes and temples in Chichen Itza. Leading the way was King Canek, hand-in-hand with his beloved Sac-Nacte. The Uxmal and Mayapan armies found an empty Chichen Itza, left dead, abandoned by its citizens. The legend says that a long time ago in the ancient Mayan city, there lived an ancient woman that worked as an oracle in the city. The woman was unable to conceive children and therefore asked the god Chic Chan to bring her the shell of a large turtle. A few months later, a tiny green dwarf with red hair was born. One day, the dwarf decided to make a large gourd, which would serve as a kind of rattle. There was a prophecy that said that people who played a similar instrument would become the new king. The king at the time became angry and challenged the dwarf to a duel. He had three tests for the dwarf. For the first test, he asked the dwarf the number of trees in his palace. For the second test, the king asked the dwarf to bring a turkey male to lay eggs. The next day, the dwarf brought a man who appeared to be pregnant, to prove that it was impossible to do the same with the turkey. The judges gave him the points. In the third test, the king asked Saiya to place a kind of hickory on his head to be broken with a spearhead. Not only was he able to pass the test, but the dwarf asked the king underwent the same experiment. The king died because of his pride and so the little man was proclaimed as king. Visit the Riviera Maya and experience Mayan culture firsthand. This article has 16 Comments.

7: the highland maya | Download eBook PDF/EPUB

Interesting Facts About Mayans: When we look back at the pre-Colombian civilizations of Central America, two names flash bright - the Aztecs and the Mayans. Comparatively, the Mayans were far more resilient and survived way longer than the Aztecs.

Scottish myths, folklore and legends Scottish myths, folklore and legends 01 Apr Share: Scotland is a land of myths and legends. The stories of Scotland have inspired writers, artists and poets for centuries. Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson both recalled as adults the tales of ghosts, magic and witches they had heard as children. The kelpie would appear to victims as a lost dark grey or white pony but could be identified by its constantly dripping mane. It would entice people to ride on its back, before taking them down to a watery grave. Selkies Selkies were mythical creatures that could transform themselves from seal to human form and back again. The legend of the selkie apparently originated on the Orkney and Shetland Islands where selch or selk ie is the Scots word for seal. Tales once abounded of a man who found a beautiful female selkie sunbathing on a beach, stole her skin and forced her to become his wife and bear his children, only for her to find the skin years later and escape back to seal form and the sea. The large dinosaur-like creature is reputed to inhabit Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands. The first recorded sighting of the monster was nearly 1, years ago when a giant beast is said to have leaped out of a lake near Inverness and ate a local farmer. Since then the myth of the Loch Ness Monster has magnified. In , a London doctor snapped a photograph that seemed to show a dinosaur-looking creature with a long neck emerging from the water. Dozens of sightings have since been claimed, many of which have turned out to be hoaxes. Edward I of England took immediate action, forcing him into hiding. According to legend, at some point while he was on the run and when he was at his lowest ebb, Bruce hid himself in a cave. There, he watched a spider spinning a web from one part of the cave to the other. Watching the spider try and try again to build her web before succeeding is said to have inspired Bruce to carry on fighting the English. There are a number of caves in South West Scotland that claim to be the one where Bruce watched the spider. No one is certain which is the authentic cave or even if the incident with the spider ever really happened. According to legend, Sawney Bean was the head of a criminal, cannibalistic family in the 15th century, during the reign of King James I of Scotland. It is claimed that he, his wife and 46 children and grandchildren killed and fed on over a thousand people before they were captured and executed. Other Scottish mythical creatures Wulver: It was reported to have left fish on the windowsills of poor families. Blue men of Minch: It is said she could be found by streams and pools washing the clothes of those who are about to die.

Mayan mythology emerged from the traditions and religion of a civilization as old as 3,000 years from a vast region called Mesoamerica: territories that are now the Mexican states of Campeche, Chiapas, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, and Yucatan, in addition to some parts of Central America.

The Maya also shared the elaborate calendar system used across much of Mesoamerica. The other, called Tzolkin, was a day sacred calendar. The two calendars meshed in a cycle known as the Calendar Round, which repeated every 52 years. The Maya used the calendar both for measuring worldly time and for sacred purposes, such as divination. Each day in the Calendar Round came under the influence of a unique combination of deities. They recorded their mythology and history in volumes known as codices. Although the Spanish destroyed most Mayan documents, a few codices have survived. Inscriptions found at archaeological sites are also helpful.

Major Deities and Characters. His wife, Ixchel, was goddess of fertility, pregnancy, and childbirth. Women made pilgrimages to her shrines. Ah Puch, often shown with decomposing flesh and a head like a skull, was the god of death and destruction. He brought disease, was associated with war, and ruled the lowest level of the Mayan underworld. The modern Maya call him Yum Cimil lord of death. Cizin or Kisin stinking one is another death god. He is linked in particular with earthquakes, which often strike Mesoamerica with devastating force. The ancient Maya depicted him as a dancing skeleton with dangling eyeballs. He was associated with jaguars. The rain god, a major figure in all Mesoamerican mythologies, was called Chac by the Maya. He was often portrayed as a fisherman or as a figure with the features of a fish or reptile. This fourfold aspect is a common feature of Mesoamerican mythology. Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, called Kukulcan by the Maya, was also a figure of great importance throughout Mesoamerica.

Major Themes and Myths. The Maya believed that creation was related to divination and magic, and they often referred to their heroes and creator gods as diviners. The men and women who practiced divination regarded it as a form of creation similar to the divine miracle that produced the world and humankind. Like the Aztecs and other Mesoamericans, the Maya believed that the present world is only the most recent in a series of creations. The earlier ones perished or were destroyed one after the other, just as this world will one day come to an end too. According to the Popol Vuh, creation began with the god Huracan, who blew as a great wind over the primeval ocean, causing the earth to rise from the depths. Then Xpiacoc and Xmucane, "old man and old woman," performed magical rites that helped Huracan and other creator deities form plants, animals, and eventually the human race. The gods fashioned the first man out of clay, and he melted into the water. The next race of people, made of wood, were dull, spiritless, and easily destroyed by fire. For their third attempt, the gods mixed yellow and white maize flour together and made the First Fathers, the ancestors of men, from the dough. The Maya probably used the pyramid as a calendar. Together with the top step, that adds up to stepsâ€™ the number of days in a year. The gods then made the First Mothers. Finally they created the sun to bring light to the world. The lords of death, seeing the maize god and his twin brother play the ball game constantly, grew annoyed and summoned the two to Xibalba. They played the ball game every day, and each night they passed some test. Eventually, they decided to set a trap for the lords. In the final part of their trick, the twins cut themselves in pieces and then restored themselves to wholeness. The underworld gods wanted to try the same trick. The twins then restored their father and their uncle to life before passing into the sky to become the sun and moon. The mythology of the ancient Maya included the belief that humans had been put on earth to nourish the gods. Human sacrifices served this purpose. So did the ritual called bloodletting, in which priests or nobles pierced parts of their bodies and offered the blood to the gods or to ancestors in exchange for guidance. Clouds of smoke from burning blood offerings were thought to summon the Vision Serpents, images of snakes with Mayan gods and ancestors coming from their mouths. Such visions probably symbolized the renewal and rebirth made possible by sacrifice. Striking images of the deities and myths of Mayan civilization can be found today in archaeological sites. Southern Mexico and northern Central America are dotted with the remains of great stone cities and temples that are still yielding a wealth of information about the history and culture of the ancient Maya. Some of these sites have become tourist attractions and

educational centers. Other remnants are literary. Mayan texts—those recorded by both Native American and Spanish chroniclers in the years after the Spanish conquest, as well as new translations of inscriptions and codices—are available to interested readers. Some have inspired modern writers. A Many-Layered Universe Like many peoples, the Maya pictured a universe consisting of heavens above and underworlds below, with the human world sandwiched between. The heavens consisted of 13 layers stacked above the earth, and the earth rested on the back of a turtle or reptile floating in the ocean. Below the earth lay a realm called Xibalba, an underworld in nine layers. Linking the three realms was a giant tree whose roots reached into the underworld and branches stretched to heaven. The gods and the souls of the dead traveled between worlds along this tree. There is a living Mayan legacy as well. The descendants of the Maya number about 5 million today. Proud of their heritage, they still tell old myths at festivals and funerals, although perhaps less often than they used to. The mythology that once expressed the visions and beliefs of much of Mesoamerica remains part of a culture that is still alive.

9: BBC - Legacies - Myths and Legends - Scotland - Highland - Ossian: Fact or Fiction

(This was the case for the Teotihuacan of highland Mexico, contemporaries of the Classic Maya.) In the southern Maya lowlands, however, there were few navigable rivers for trade and transport, as.

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