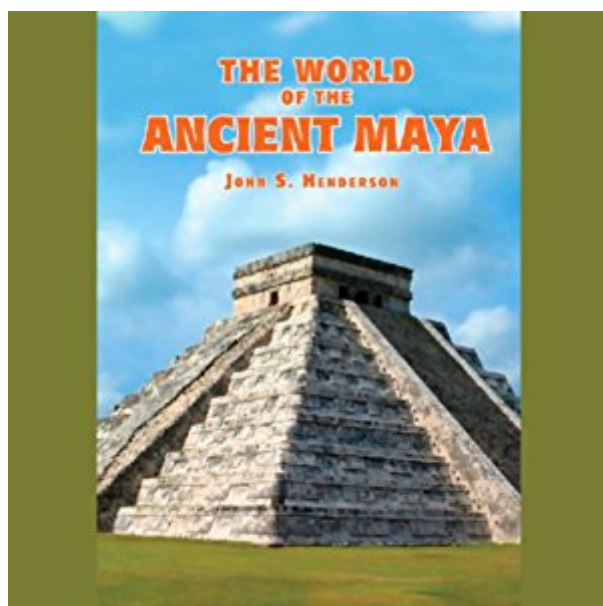


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# The World Of The Ancient Maya: 2nd Edition



## Synopsis

The ancient Maya were the only fully literate pre-Colombian people in the Americas. Superb scientists, they developed highly sophisticated mathematics and an intricate and accurate calendar system. Theirs was one of the few complex societies to emerge in and to adapt successfully to a tropical-forest environment. Their architecture, sculpture, and painting were sophisticated and compellingly beautiful. In this comprehensive survey, updated for this new edition, Henderson explores the entire Maya cultural tradition, from the earliest traces of settlement through the period of the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. His wide-ranging account treats diverse aspects of the Maya world, from religion and philosophy to the environments of the various Maya peoples, using deciphered Maya texts to reconstruct the ancient societies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I acquired an earlier edition of this book about 30 years ago, and this is the last of four books about Mesoamerican civilizations which I have re-read in the past two years. I suppose, on the first reading, and because my life was focussed on making a living, my aim, then, was to get a quick overview of this civilization of eastern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras. This time around, my purpose was to get a more complete understanding of the details, which required a considerably longer period of study. The author, John S. Henderson, has 25 seasons of experience focusing mainly in Mexico and Central America, and his most recent excavations have been the uncovering one of the earliest pottery-making villages in Mesoamerica along with evidence that shortly thereafter the area became part of Mesoamerica's first civilization, the Olmec. The World of the

Ancient Maya, apparently, is considered by many to be the best introduction to ancient Maya civilization currently available and, according to the author, "it is a survey of the Maya cultural tradition: an introduction to the societies that make it up and an exploration of their contrasts, connections, and linked historical development." In my edition of this absorbing book, there are 10 colour plates and 133 photographs and illustrations of some of the more important Maya sites such as Tikal, Copán, Palenque, Chichén Itzá, Tulum, and Zaculeu. There are 11 excellent maps of the principal sites for each period, which I found very helpful, because I always like to know the geographic location and time frame of such places. The book includes an extensive set of notes for each chapter and a 19 page bibliography of published works by more than 200 scholars.

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