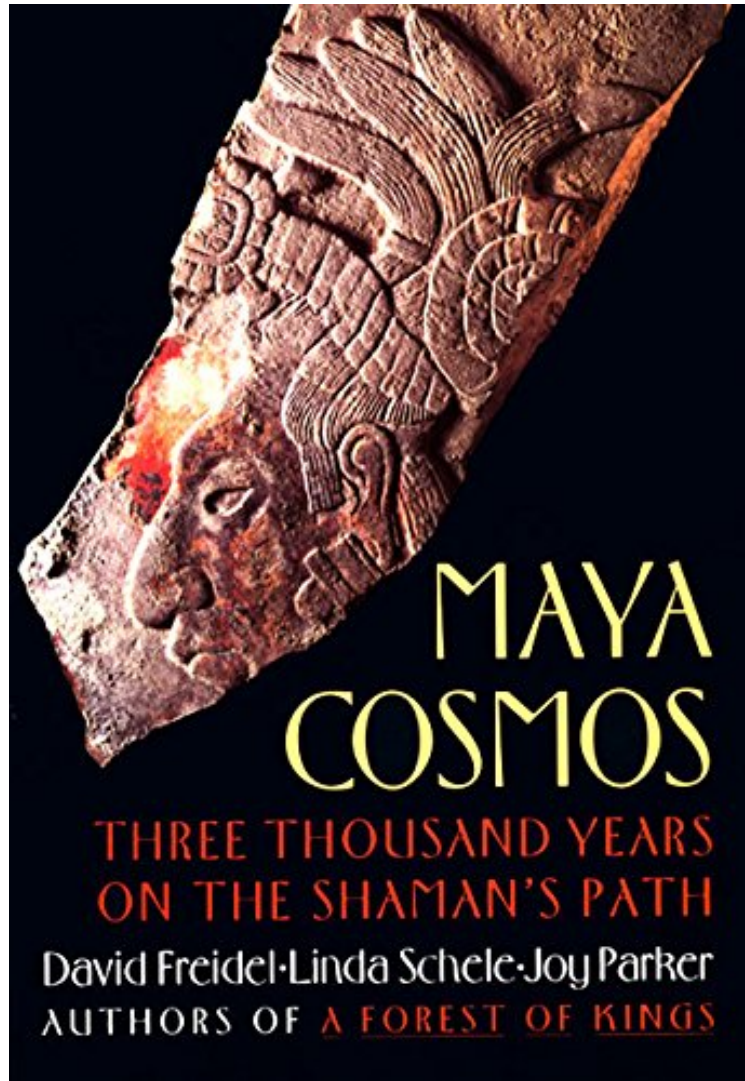


Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path

David Freidel, Linda Schele, Joy Parker

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OR ARCHAEOLOGY T BUT, IF YOU ARE STUDING THE MAYA POPULATION OR OLDER RELIGIONS, THEN THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU. MAULAW0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy James McHughan interesting journey into the maya cosmos. well written and very captivating

A Masterful blend of archaeology, anthropology, astronomy, and lively personal reportage, *Maya Comos* tells a constellation of stories, from the historical to the mythological, and evokes the awesome power of one of the richest civilizations ever to grace the earth.

From Library Journal
In this highly original and politically provocative synthesis, archaeologist Freidel and epigrapher Linda Schele team up with Joy Parker, a popular writer, in an attempt to bridge history and prehistory in the Yucatan peninsula of Guatemala and Mexico. Their device is to apply shamanistic belief and practice among modern Maya to interpretations of hieroglyphics and other archaeological remains. In this captivating thesis, foreshadowed in Dennis Tedlock's *Popol Vuh* (LJ 1/85) and their own *A Forest of Kings* (Morrow, 1990), they argue that the world view of the prehistoric Maya lives on in the language and beliefs of the survivors of the Spanish conquest. While at once compelling and controversial, this book will appeal to everyone interested in the Maya and non-Western religion.-
William S. Dancey, Ohio State Univ., Columbus
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From Booklist
This is pure pleasure to read--an extraordinary contribution to academic knowledge written like a well-paced novel. Linda Schele, whose *Blood of Kings* (1986) and earlier collaboration with Freidel, *A Forest of Kings* (1990), are both well-regarded books on the Maya, goes deeper into the Mayan gestalt in this second collaboration with him and first with new partner Joy Parker. The subject is Mayan cosmology, and interweaving archaeology and anthropology with personal experience, the three authors examine the major religious concepts of the Maya and how those concepts found expression in religious architecture and myth. The Maya, they reveal, were not destroyed by the Spanish invaders. Their religion continues, sometimes under the guise of Christianity, sometimes in folk custom, sometimes in ancient rituals still practiced among the descendants of one of America's premier civilizations--rites informed by the concepts the authors present. The creation myth, the ritual ball games, the pyramidal world-tree--these are examined and fleshed out so substantively that the reader feels truly immersed in Mayan reality. Pat Monaghan
From Kirkus
sHow elements of the Maya creation myth can be found in ancient Maya art as well as in today's Maya folk culture. In *A Forest of Kings* (1990), Freidel (Archaeology/Southern Methodist University) and Schele (Art/University of Texas at Austin) shared their extensive knowledge lucidly; here, working with writing-instructor Parker, they go astray, throwing in occasional (mostly superficial) material on the shamanic tradition, awkwardly personalizing their intellectual quest. The authors claim to reverse the idea that the Conquest destroyed links between ancient Maya civilization and contemporary Maya. In fact, cultural survivals have long been documented, but Freidel and Schele do quite brilliantly recognize in detail previously unsuspected imagery and symbolic systems that connect present-day practice to ancient myth. Finding that creation myths parallel celestial events, Schele concludes that "every major image from Maya cosmic symbolism was probably a map of the sky." (Interpretations here will fascinate enthusiasts of Giorgio De Santillana and Hertha Von Dechend's *Hamlet's Mill*, 1969, which contended that myth has an astronomical/cosmological, rather than historical, basis). The authors generously share credit with colleagues, unfortunately studding the already dense text with names of individuals and institutions. Attempts to dramatize the creative process fall flat ("One afternoon, Nikolai had arrived late after meetings in Guatemala City to find a contemplative Linda brooding over the structure of this very chapter"). Moreover, perhaps for political reasons, the recent Maya genocide is barely referred to, while the current cultural revival (in which the authors have played a role) is mentioned but left tantalizingly unexplored. Frustrating, irritating, hard to read--and not for the New Age audience the subtitle seems chosen to attract. Those with a serious interest in Maya myth, symbol, and art, though, can excavate much of value here. (Illustrations--250, including 24 pages color) -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.