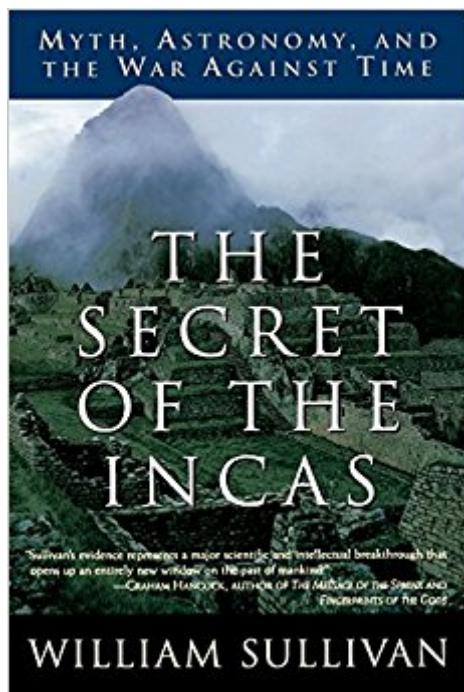


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The Secret Of The Incas: Myth, Astronomy, And The War Against Time



Synopsis

Step by step, Sullivan pieces together the hidden esoteric tradition of the Andes to uncover the tragic secret of the Incas, a tribe who believed that, if events in the heavens could influence those on earth, perhaps the reverse could be true. Anyone who reads this book will never look at the ruins of the Incas, or at the night sky, the same way again. Illustrations. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

A sometimes murky, frequently meandering excursion into the meaning of ancient Andean beliefs, arguing that in a series of sophisticated myths Incan soothsayers foretold their own civilization's doom at the hands of Pizarro and his conquistadors in 1532. Sullivan, a scholar of Native American cultures, begins with a question that has perplexed historians of the Spanish conquest: How could the vast Inca Empire, with its millions of subjects, have been conquered overnight by a band of 170 Spanish adventurers? Sullivan digs into the history and mythology of Andean civilization to find what he feels is the answer: For hundreds of years the sages of the Andes had believed that astronomical transitions presaged earthly cataclysms; reading changes in the night skies in the 1400s, Incan priest-astronomers foretold the imminent destruction of their own recently founded empire. Sullivan argues, in a sometimes hyperbolic first-person account ("In that moment I had, I believed, touched for an instant the terrible burden and tragic urgency of the Inca vision"), that the Incas followed the planets, recorded precessional events in their myths, and equated social and celestial changes. He further asserts that elements in Incan culture preceding Pizarro's arrival--constant warfare and the Incan ritual of human sacrifice--represented an attempt to halt the

march of time and prevent the apocalyptic events foreshadowed by changes in the night sky. The Incas assumed that the arrival of Pizarro represented the culmination of the prophecy and the failure of their own efforts to prevent its occurrence. The thread of the author's argument can be hard to follow. Still, Sullivan's deep feeling for Andean folk materials, and the originality of his observations about Andean astronomy, make his text worthwhile for those interested in the history of South American civilization and for those who, in the wake of Joseph Campbell's works, seek enduring meaning in ancient mythology. (History Book Club and One Spirit Book Club alternate selections) -- Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Step by step, Sullivan pieces together the hidden esoteric tradition of the Andes to uncover the tragic secret of the Incas, a tribe who believed that, if events in the heavens could influence those on earth, perhaps the reverse could be true. Anyone who reads this book will never look at the ruins of the Incas, or at the night sky, the same way again. Illustrations. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great read of the mysticism of the Inca, and an underlying theory of how to decode myths from oral cultures. Great research and presentation that takes you on the authors journey of discovery while it also teaches you about the discoveries and what they mean. Lots of great insight here, and I feel like I learned not only about the Inca, but a number of other cultures and topics as well (some of the lessons and metaphors of this book are easily applied to other traditions as well). Lots of information here, so I could see some people having a little trouble making it all the way through the book. Some of the astronomy was a bit over my head, as I am not used to many of the terms used, but the author explained things well enough that I could understand most of it regardless of my inexperience with astronomy. I sometimes lead group trips to Peru to see Machu Pichu and other ruins, and I will hopefully be reading this book a second time before my next visit in a few months - a lot of this information will be very helpful in understanding some of the ruins and myths more deeply!

well written, well documented perspective on Incan history. Though a bit on the technical side and well documented, the book presents a challenging and believable set of assertions that make sense. William Sullivan does a very credible and provocative approach to history, speculating some but, overall, presenting a good case for Incan history and the impact of a most remarkable culture. This book helps to substantiate the well-founded argument that our prehistorical cultures were

sophisticated and capable peoples.

This book is every bit as entertaining as the run-of-the-mill speculative/paranormal UFO-from-Atlantis books with which it is unfortunately cross-listed on, but the author's scholarly rigor makes it much more satisfying. Sullivan supports his fascinatingly unconventional conclusions with evidence, sound reasoning, and a bit of self-critical skepticism. But the real charm of this book is the fact that he pursued such a crazy theory in the first place. Behind the scholarship is a "guy-with-a-crazy-dream" human-interest story (e.g. Fitzcarraldo, Field of Dreams). This would make perfect film material for Werner Herzog. To hear the author tell it, he spent several years in the academic wilderness (as well as the Andean wilderness), chasing after the (wholly-unsupported) hypothesis that Incan myth encodes both astronomy and Andean history. To his advisers, this must have sounded a lot like writing a grant to study the pyramids of Mars. For a lesser intellect, this would have been a career-killer and the reader gets the sense that Sullivan knew it. One of the best parts of the book recounts Sullivan's meeting with Owen Gingerich and "the Vatican Astronomer" at the Harvard planetarium. He's clearly terrified that these eminent astronomers will think he's a kook. But when they conclude: "he's done his homework," Sullivan breathes a sigh of relief. A word of warning: get the hardback. I got the paperback edition and the binding was defective and the first 50 pages fell out the first time I read them.

Reads like a text book at times but it has much detailed info on pre Columbian myths and archaeo-astronomy. Because I live in the southern hemisphere it's easy for me to identify the stars and dark regions of the milky way discussed in the book and I can see first hand how the myths originated and developed up until the conquest. An absorbing read.

The book provides much information about the Incas, citing astronomy and influence of this in their myths. The book is very good, although it could work more the influence of the Spanish on what we know today about their myths.

Very interesting and more in depth than I expected.

William Sullivan decodes the myths of the Incas. Secrets of the Incas chronicles how Dr Sullivan first learned to decode ancient Andean myths. These myths - which were recorded by the Spanish at the time of their conquest of the Incas - are, according to Dr Sullivan, a 'message in a bottle' from the

Incas to future generations. Dr Sullivan describes how he decoded the myths and how this led him to certain important dates in Andean prehistory and history. A glossary defines and explains various Andean mythological and historical terms, and a timeline shows what Dr Sullivan believes to be the correspondence between mythological, astronomical and archaeological events in the high Andes - how, in effect, what was happening in the heavens was mirrored by what was happening on Earth. On the evening of 15 November 1532, a band of 175 hardened Spanish adventurers crossed a pass in the high Andes. Looking down upon a broad, fertile valley in northern Peru, they became the first Europeans to make contact with the Incas, whose highly developed empire stretched 3,000 miles from Chile to Colombia and had a population of six million. On the following day, in what ranks as one of the strangest events in all recorded history, the Spaniards managed to seize the Inca king Atahuallpa and, in the ensuing panic, used the advantage of their 120 warhorses to kill and wound 10,000 Inca warriors. From that day onward, through luck and guile, and with reinforcements soon pouring in from Panama, the Spaniards - who came in search of gold and glory, in the name of the Roman Catholic Church - never relinquished the edge they seized in that first fateful encounter. What the Spaniards never knew, and what history does not record, was the reason for the apparently inexplicable collapse of the greatest land empire on the face of the Earth. *Secrets of the Incas* explores the baffling and tragic vulnerability of the Inca empire and comes to a startling conclusion: the Spanish had appeared at precisely the right place and at just the right time to fulfil an ancient, astronomically based prophecy of doom. This conclusion is the result of two decades of research by American scholar Dr William Sullivan into the sophisticated astronomical knowledge of the Incas and how they encrypted this in their myths. *Secrets of the Incas* presents completely new evidence taken from an Inca myth. In this, Dr William Sullivan believes, lies the key to the basis of the old man's prophecy and, indeed, to the formation of the Inca empire itself. This myth is nothing less than a dire warning of an impending precessional event that, to the Incas, predicted future ruin. The 'gate' or 'bridge' to the land of the ancestors - that is, the rising of the December solstice Sun with the Milky Way - was about to be washed away. Drawing on their ancient mythological database, the Incas reasoned - from the principle 'as above, so below' - that loss of contact with the ancestors, upon which their religious beliefs were founded, would mean their way of life would be destroyed on Earth. It was this prophecy that stirred the first Inca emperor to action: if time was merciless, it had to be stopped. So the entire Inca empire, which was less than a century old when the Spanish arrived, became involved in an attempt at cosmic regulation - to change the course of the stars by changing the course of human history on Earth: 'as below, so above.' William Sullivan decodes the myths of the Incas to reveal an astoundingly precise record of astronomical events.

The Incas accepted their fate as written in the stars.

Liked this book, very easy to read and informative. Would recommend to anyone going to Peru on vacation who have an interest in history.

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