



# The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya: An Illustrated Dictionary of Mesoamerican Religion

*By Mary Ellen Miller, Karl A. Taube*

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## **The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya: An Illustrated Dictionary of Mesoamerican Religion** By Mary Ellen Miller, Karl A. Taube

How did the hummingbird become the symbol of the chief Aztec god? Who were the Hero Twins? Why was Venus the planet of war? Did the Maya practise human sacrifice? And did they eat their victims? Who played the ancient ball game? Who were the first consumers of chocolate? What was a war of flowers? The legends and beliefs of the great pre-Columbian civilizations of Mesoamerica have baffled and fascinated outsiders ever since the Spanish Conquest. Yet, until now, no single-volume introduction has existed to act as a guide to this labyrinthine symbolic world. This book is the first-ever English-language dictionary of Mesoamerican mythology and religion. Nearly 300 entries, from "accession" to "yoke", describe the main deities, motifs and practices of the Olmecs, Zapotecs, Maya, Teotihuacanos, Mixtecs, Toltecs and Aztecs. Introductory essays provide succinct accounts of Mesoamerican history and religion, while a substantial bibliography details original sources and recent discussions. Entries are illustrated with photographs and newly commissioned line drawings. Mary Miller is Professor of History of Art at Yale University. She is the author of "The Art of Mesoamerica" (1986) and co-author, with Linda Schele, of "The Blood of Kings" (1992), both published by Thames and Hudson. Karl Taube is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of California at Riverside.

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