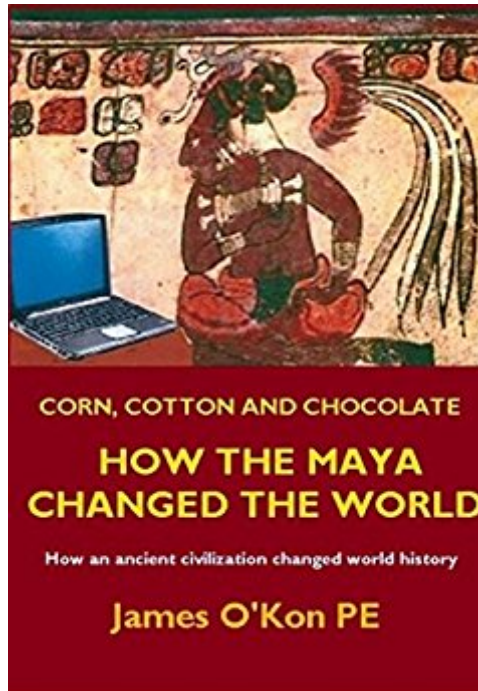




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Corn, Cotton And Chocolate: How The Maya Changed The World



Synopsis

The Maya were the longest-lived civilization in history. Their civilization began in 2500 BC on a time-line with the ancient Sumerians and terminated in 900 AD during the reign of Charlemagne. Their histories did not converge because the Maya and other world civilizations did not know of each other's existence. The Maya were the phantoms of history. They were the greatest agronomists in world history. Their cultivars nourished the Maya culture and enabled their rapid growth into a society of profound thinkers. After European contact, the inventive products of Maya agronomy were disseminated around the world. The integration of Maya cultivars into world cultures has changed the course of world history. Maya science has changed the world. Maya Cultivars now feed and clothe the majority of the world's population. They have increased the global population, started wars, overthrown monarchies, ignited the industrial revolution, initiated educational systems, started sports empires, changed the lifestyles of world cultures and have killed more people than all the wars in history. It will come as a surprise that history can be changed by a civilization that collapsed over a thousand years ago. Maya cultivars are living inventions that have become a part of the world's heritage and continue to make history

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Customer Reviews

James O'Kon, whom I am pleased to acknowledge as a friend of more than half a century, is an award-winning engineering designer of large structures, an explorer, a better than amateur archeologist and, as the present book reveals, a better than amateur agriculturist, who has a passion for things Mayan. He has led canoeing expeditions upriver into the rain forests of the Yucatan to search for hidden ruins, identified strange river pilings as the site of an ancient suspension bridge, immersed himself in a study of Mayan culture, and now it seems has immersed himself in the origin and present world-wide use and production of the foodstuffs that have fed the world from ancient times to the present. An astounding number of these things---corn, squash, beans, cassava, papaya, agave, tomatoes, pineapple, avocado, peanuts, sweet potatoes, chili peppers, papaya, chocolate, chewing gum, sunflowers, tobacco, turkeys, and vanilla, as well as cotton for cloth and agave henequen for rope for suspension bridges---were bred from small natural plants (animals in the case of the turkey) by Mayan agronomists in the Yucatan region of Mesoamerica over the period 2500BC-900AD. O'Kon interweaves this story with stories of the export of these foodstuffs to Asia, Africa and South America by seagoing Mayan traders, the later Spanish conquest of the lands that had been Mayan and the consequential exportation of these foods to Europe and beyond. He provides interesting tables of present worldwide production and consumption of these foodstuffs today to make the point that the world is fed largely on foodstuffs developed by the ancient Mayans. He also provides a personal account of how he first came across each of these foodstuffs as a boy in Marietta, Georgia, of how these various foodstuffs have affected the larger history of the world, and of the regulations for a chili cook-off. Altogether, quite a book!

Corn, Cotton and Chocolate: How the Maya Changed the World is O'Kon's follow-up to the fabulous, *The Lost Secrets of Maya Technology*, a book which provides new insights on the science and engineering prowess of this forgotten civilization. As a writer and research investigator, *How the Maya Changed the World* provides startling new details on Maya Agronomy, (agricultural science), and the developed of Maize (corn), Squash, and Beans, (the three sisters), food stuffs used as staples by Native America people for thousands of years. But the story of the Maya science doesn't stop here, they genetically engineered plants that, to this day, continue to feed and clothe the world. Yes, the Maya are credited with developing cotton, the peanut, chocolate, the avocado, papaya, pineapple, and a number of other crop plants. Perhaps the most surprising, and one that must be a consideration for historians, is the creation of Tobacco,

which scientists have found in Egyptian mummies. Our perception of the Maya is forever changed by the data released in this book, and our understanding of the ancient past. Cliff Dunning, writer, and host/producer of Earth Ancients, Startling New Discoveries from our Planets Distant Past

As a journalist specializing in food in the context of modern lifestyles, this highly readable book has an exalted place on my bookshelf, serving as a vast resource of food origins that have until now been so terribly misunderstood. How barren our dinner tables would be without chocolate, vanilla, chili peppers and other gifts from the Maya. O'Kon, ever the good instructor, chronicles the demise of this civilization who out-stripped their land and did not practice sustainable agriculture. We should heed these lessons. A wonderful work that will never become dated.

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