

BREAKING THE MAYA CODE

SYNOPSIS – Medium length (241 words):

There are over six million Maya today with a rich, vibrant culture and traditions they have guarded with great care. But for four centuries they have been a people cut off from the written record of their own extraordinary past.

For almost 2000 years, the ancient Maya recorded their history and ideas in an intricate and beautiful script. Then, in the 16th century, Spanish invaders burned their books and ruthlessly extinguished hieroglyphic literacy. By the 18th century, when stone inscriptions were discovered buried in the jungles of Central America and bark-paper books began to surface in the libraries of Europe, no one on earth could read them.

Breaking the Maya Code is the story of the 200 year struggle that ultimately unlocked the secrets of one of mankind's greatest civilizations and re-connected contemporary Maya with the writings of their ancestors. The film is based on the book by archaeologist and historian Michael Coe, himself intimately involved in the decipherment. The New York Times called the book “one of the great stories of twentieth century discovery”.

This detective story - often hampered by misconceptions and false leads, rivalries and colliding personalities - leads us from the jungles of Guatemala to the bitter cold of Russia, from imposing Maya temples to the dusty libraries of Dresden and Madrid.

Now, through one of the great intellectual achievements of the past 200 years, the words of the ancient Maya scribes have begun to speak once more.