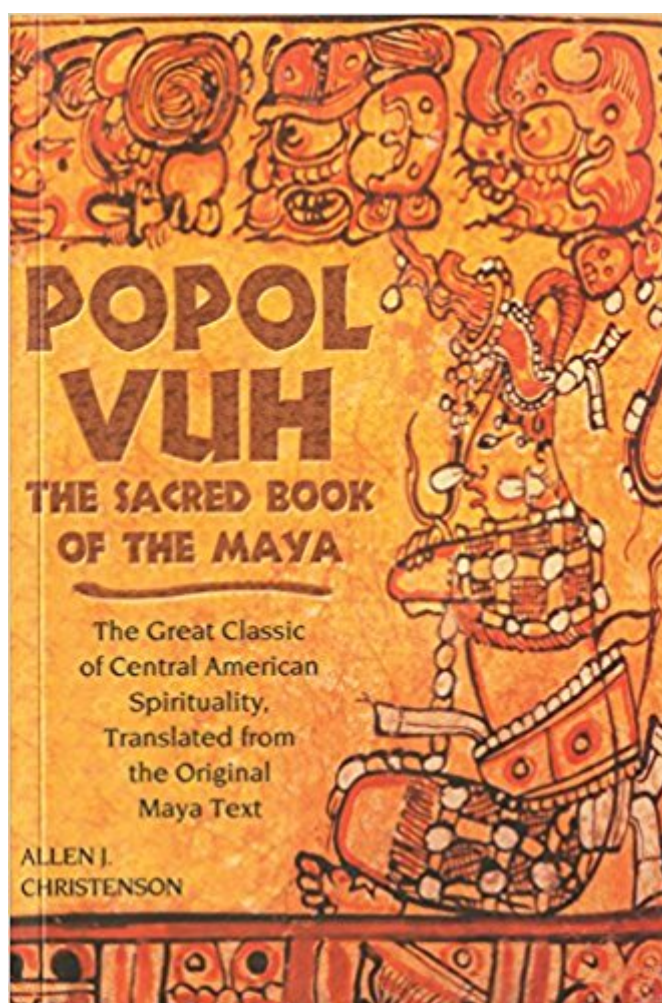


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# Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book Of The Maya: The Great Classic Of Central American Spirituality, Translated From The Original Maya Text



## Synopsis

The Popol Vuh is the most important example of Maya literature to have survived the Spanish conquest. It is also one of the world's great creation accounts, comparable to the beauty and power of Genesis. Most previous translations have relied on Spanish versions rather than the original K'iche'-Maya text. Based on ten years of research by a leading scholar of Maya literature, this translation with extensive notes is uniquely faithful to the original language. Retaining the poetic style of the original text, the translation is also remarkably accessible to English readers. Illustrated with more than eighty drawings, photographs, and maps, Allen J. Christenson's authoritative version brings out the richness and elegance of this sublime work of literature, comparable to such epic masterpieces as the Ramayana and Mahabharata of India or the Iliad and Odyssey of Greece.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Allen J. Christenson is Associate Professor of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. He is the author of *Art and Society in a Highland Maya Community: The Altarpiece of Santiago Atitlan*.

In *Popol Vuh*, anonymous Mayan authors excellently combine both the history and the lore of the Quiché Maya to tell the story of their origin and explain their existence as well as explain why

things in the world happened the way that they did. As an AP World History student, I found this book incredibly intriguing. The way that Christenson translated this from the original language was not only fluid but captured the voice of the Maya. Their unique tone and style is clear and contributes a rustic feel that helps the reader clearly visualize the events being described. Both the adventures of the various Mayan gods and the tales of wars between the Quiché and the so-called nations offer an interesting read and an insight to early Central American culture. Popol Vuh has a clear purpose. As stated in the preamble, it is to "...tell the ancient stories of the beginning, the origin of all that was done in the citadel of Quiché, among the people of the Quiché nation." The authors do this well, of course. They clearly illustrate how the earth, the animals, and the different versions of people (mud, wood, etc) were created and what purpose they served in the order of things. Animals, for example, were created to be eaten and humans were created to praise the gods. Then, slightly out of order, the stories of various human-like gods, including Hunahpu and Xbalanque, are told. These stories describe why things happen the way they do. They give explanations to things such as the size of the macaw's eyes and the wideness of the whippoorwill's mouth. Finally, Popol Vuh gives an account of the early history of the Quiché Maya. All of these combined complete a tale of the ancient stories of the beginning, as the authors reference them in the preamble, as well as the origin of the Quiché Maya and their people.

This is a very well researched and beautifully translated work. It is a little difficult to read on my iPhone in Kindle version, owing to the vast number of footnotes and explanatory notes. These are very good and thorough, but it becomes somewhat hard to follow the narrative on such a small screen. It would likely be much more easily read in print media. It is the translation of the material recorded by the Spanish from the oral account given them by the conquered Maya. Since their "books" records and genealogies were destroyed by the zealous missionaries seeking their total conversion (as an afterthought not considered to have been the best idea), this is the only surviving record of their beliefs and traditions. It is enlightening and this appears to be a very good translation.

This book was very fun to read! There were many parts of the book where I got confused about what was going on, but a quick reread of the section cleared things up. Christenson completed his goal of given these ancient authors their voice once more. The different writing styles throughout the piece kept it interesting as well. This Mayan story of creation had many dark twists and turns, such as when the gods were not pleased with the people created out of trees, so the sentenced to death by sending a large flood to wipe them out. I would recommend this book to people that are interested

in the ancient Mayan culture and the religion surrounding them. The Popol Vuh goes into great detail of way the gods that purposed throughout the text should be worshiped and even have human sacrifices for. This polytheistic religion was very intriguing to learn about. I ended up doing some researching of my own after completing the book. Overall, I thought that the Popol Vuh was an excellent book and I couldn't stop reading it after I started.

If Maya creation text interests you, I highly recommend this book! Especially this translation, because it was done by my teacher and he is a truly incredible person. Extremely knowledgeable of the Mayan language, the sites and rulers--everything you expect from an expert. This is also an interesting read for anyone who is interested in comparing this creation text to others for religious studies.

One of my favorite books so far. You'll notice a lot of similarities to Christian and other religious stories. This helps to show that all religions and creation stories have a unified source and are all basically teaching the same things. There is also a video version of this available on my youtube channel. Just search Popol Vuh animated version and you'll find it.

Thoroughly researched, with a detailed, clear introduction that gives helpful context for someone new to the text. Accessible to high school students--the tone is immediate and contemporary, not dry or belabored. Beautiful work.

Don't get the Kindle Version of this. It is super difficult to navigate because it incorporates all the footnotes into the reading. The book itself is quite interesting and important to understanding the history of Latin America, but I would definitely recommend hard copy over Kindle version.

I was looking forward to what ancient texts would reveal about the events beyond our understanding. It's translated well but the format is somewhat lacking. The Preface is longer than it should of been. Being straightforward, get to the content immediately, nobody really cares about the pet parrot and what cute mud puddle your child slipped on (

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