



Pre-Colombian Cities

By Jorge Enrique Hardoy

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What visitor to Mexico City, unaware of its pre-Hispanic history, could imagine that right under a Christian Church may still lie the remains of the sinister tzompantli, the Aztecs' altar of skulls? Professor Jorge Hardoy poses this question and many more in his comprehensive summary of the ancient cities where Latin America's peoples lived before the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century.

Because Aztec Tenochtitlan, today Mexico City, and Inca Cuzco represent the culmination of the two most advanced civilizations encountered by the Spanish conquistadors, the author explores these cities end-to-end. He also studies such older civic memorial centers as Teotihuacan, Tula, Monte Alban, Uxmal, Chichen Itza, Tikal, Palenque, Tiahuanaco, Chan Chan, Pachacamac, Machu Picchu, and lesser known sites, most virtually, if not totally, abandoned centuries before the Conquest. Such inclusive coverage makes for a lively discussion of some fifteen hundred years of urban life as immortalized in the architecture, art, and crafts of long vanished civilizations. There is an extensive bibliography, many photographs, maps, charts and city plans showing urban layouts of temples, which tell much about the life of the inhabitants.

His book shows that while new findings come to light each year, so much buried history lies waiting to be found that archaeology will always be an ever unfolding drama.

This book was first published in 1973.

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