

LA MASCHERA DI PACAL

(The Mask of Pacal)

Stefano Cammelli

Pendragon, Bologna (2005)

Who were the Maya's? Why did they build incredible cities in the middle of the Americas which then suddenly disappeared, long time before the arrival of white-men? What is the mystery hidden in their writing and in their art?

Set between Mexico City and Chiapas, Santa Fe and Los Angeles, and played upon two different temporal levels, this novel drifts into a detective story.

A detective from the Mexican federal police is sent to investigate an archaeological robbery, among which a VII century mask. Mexican officials believed that such a robbery, spectacular and useless as well, can be credited just to the drug dealers, the only ones interested in such a dramatic spectacular action. That's why a detective, used to deal with drug traffickers, has now to deal with art galleries, museums, archaeologists and antiquaries.

He realises that only by trying to understand the Maya's mysterious culture it will be possible to get to the final solution and find out the author of such a risky theft.

Stefano Cammelli, friend and collaborator of several Mexican archaeologists, has written a special detective novel about pre-Colombian civilization and culture: Cammelli has therefore followed a well-known narrative plot to talk about something unknown. He merges the detective story with a historical background, examining a reflection of America's situation before the white-men's arrival. It is: a great civilization, able to compare itself with that of other great cultures of the ancient world. The reader is able to visualize the building of Prince Pacal's great tomb, and comprehend the religious, human and civil values which are part of it.

A novel as a deep and clear "fresco" concerning a nearly vanished culture; a glimpse of a voyage in Mexico and Guatemala; a deep story which guides the reader into the mysterious Maya civilization that has never been revealed in such a way until now.

