

The Great Ball Court



Photo courtesy of paul mannix(@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution



Photo courtesy of redeo(@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

- The ball court at Chichen Itza was similar in size to the football pitch at Wembley. The heavy rubber ball would be passed with hips and elbows, the aim being to get it through the ring (not easy).
- There is a small temple at each end where the rulers would watch the game.
- The acoustics are amazing. A whisper from one end of the ball court can be heard at the other.
- According to some sources, the losing captain would be decapitated. According to other sources the *winning* captain would offer his head! Apparently it was the ultimate honour as it would get them a direct route to the Upperworld.



Photo courtesy of paul mannix(@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

One of the temples at the end of the ball court is called the Temple of the Bearded Man. It got the name from a carved figure on the inner wall that appears to have a beard.

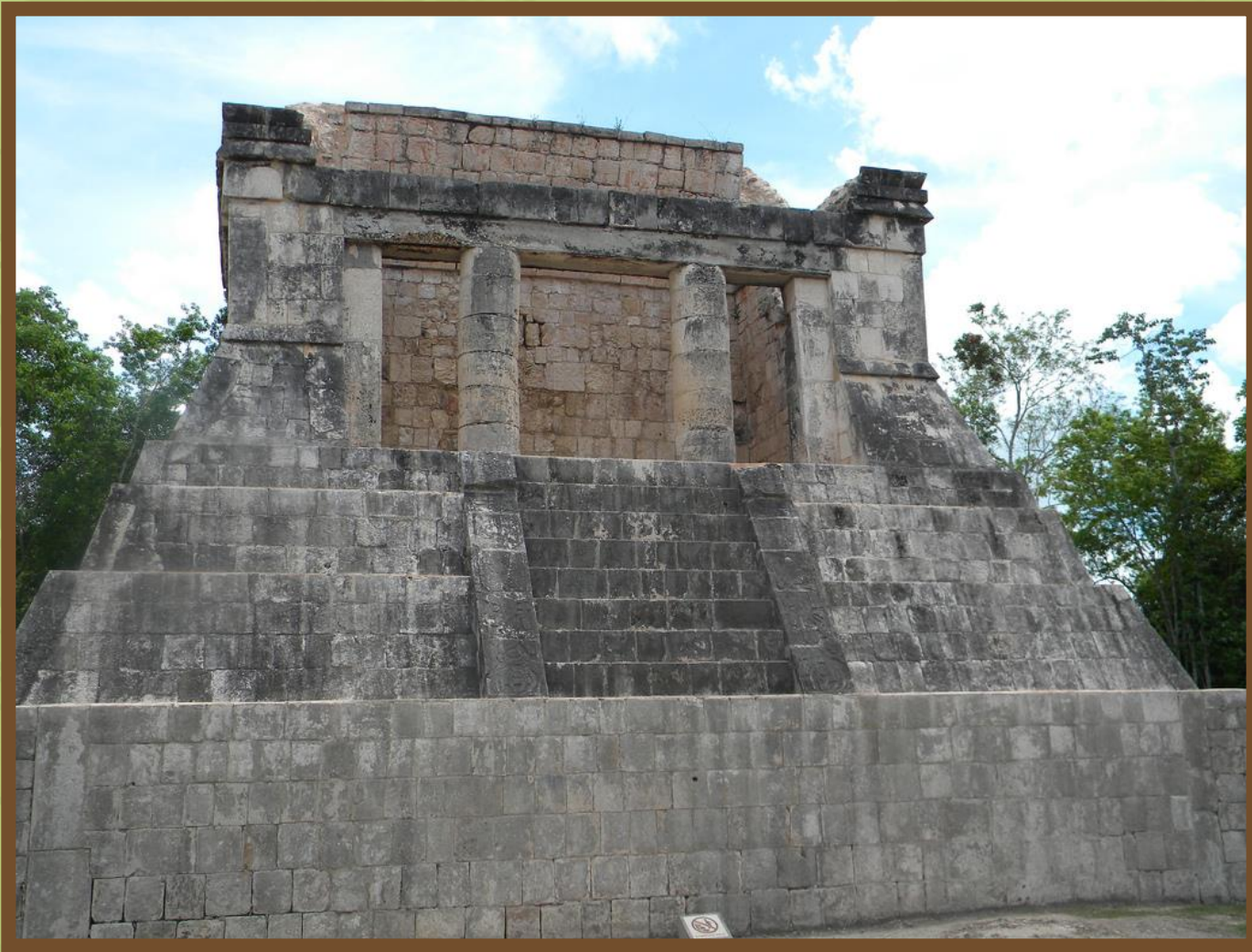


Photo courtesy of tonya2hadassah (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution



There are three areas with many rows of columns, close to the Temple of the Warriors. Originally the columns will have held up a roof for each building.

It is believed the buildings were great meeting halls.



Photos courtesy of redeo(@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Temple of the Warriors

A large, stepped pyramid with rows of columns sculpted to look like warriors, and other columns like serpents.

At the top of the staircase, in front of the temple at the top, is a chacmool.



chacmool - reclining man.

Photos courtesy of jim944 and olibac(@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Cenote Sagrado

This is a natural sink hole, 60 metres across and surrounded by cliffs 27 metres above the water.

Thousands of objects such as shell, jade, wood, obsidian (black glass), cloth and gold as well as human skeletons have been found at the bottom.

It was a place of pilgrimage as well as somewhere to sacrifice victims on occasion!



Photos courtesy of jim944 and BruceHH (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

La Iglesia

A rectangular building with a single room inside. It has very detailed carvings including a mask of the god Chac sticking out on all four corners.

Other carvings include an armadillo, a snail, a turtle and a crab.

According to Maya mythology these animals hold up the sky.

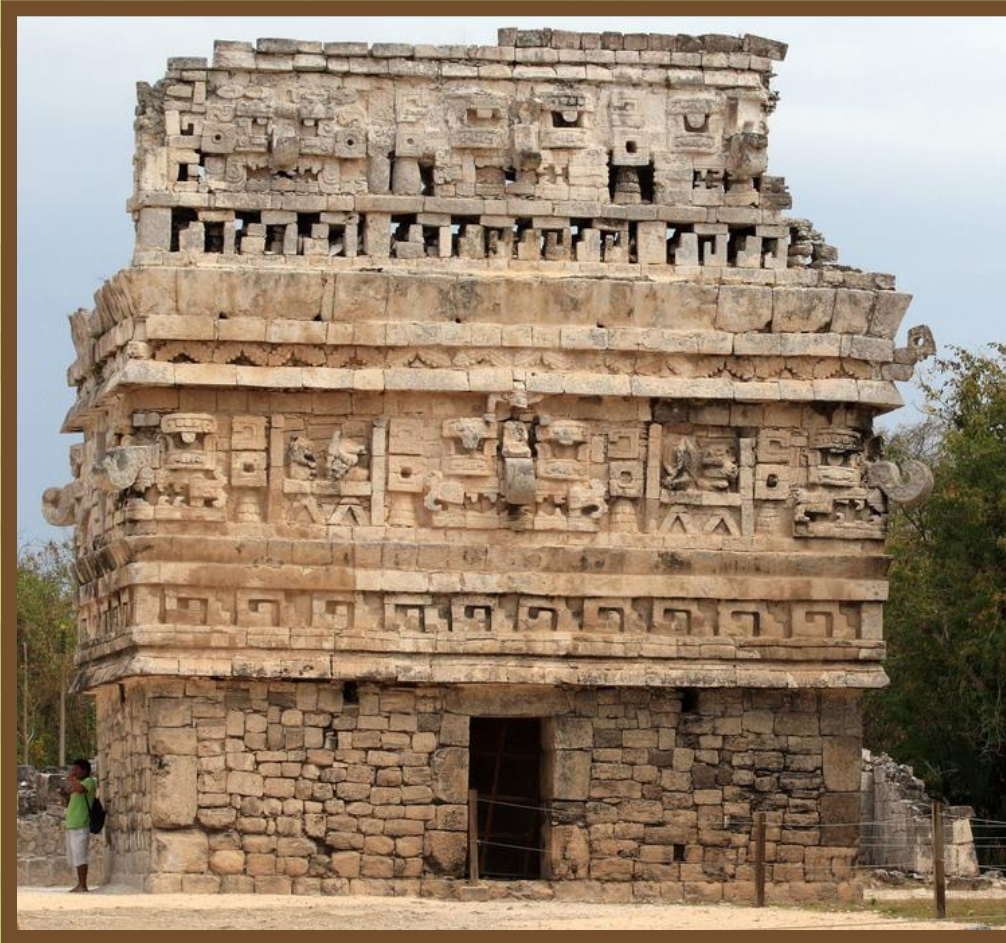


Photo courtesy of Alaskan Dude (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

This intricately carved building was drawn by Frederick Catherwood when he explored the ruins in 1839.



Photo courtesy of grahamc99 (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

There are various stone platforms at Chichen Itza, probably used as podiums for rituals, ceremonies or dances.

The Venus Platform

- This one is known as the Venus Platform.
- The skull of a decapitated man was found on the stairway!
- It was originally painted in ochre, blue, red, green and black.
- You can see carvings of the planet Venus and Kukulcan (the serpent bird man).

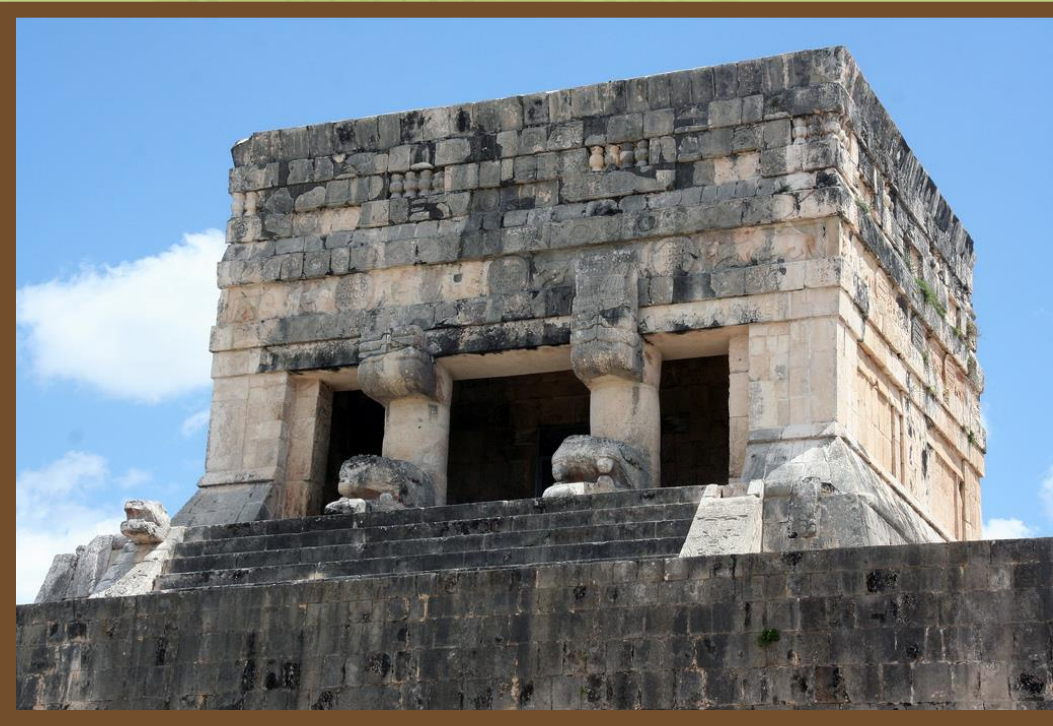


Photo courtesy of redeo (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Platform of the Eagles and Jaguars

- This platform has carvings of eagles and jaguars eating human hearts.
- They represent the warriors who captured the victims for sacrificing to the gods.
- The eagle knights were archers and the jaguar knights fought with wooden clubs tipped with slices of glass.



Photo courtesy of Rob Young @ flickr.com -granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Tzompantli or The Wall of Skulls

- The heads of sacrificial victims were placed on this platform.
- As well as the wall of skulls, there are also carvings showing a human sacrifice, eagles eating human hearts and skeleton warriors with shields and arrows.



Photo courtesy of jim944 @ flickr.com -granted under creative commons licence - attribution