

THE CORNICE OF THE TEMPLE OF THE JAGUARS

Jaguars
of the Tigers
~~to jaguars~~

The decoration of the outer wall faces of the Temple are extremely beautiful. They show unbelievable knowledge of the treatment of plane surfaces. The central band of carved ^{Jaguars} ~~tigers~~ is of course the principle theme and is the source of the temple's name, though that ~~name is~~ ^{it was} ~~mis-nomer is mis-~~ leading. ~~There are no tigers as we know them in Yucatan, but~~ ⁸ ~~the jaguar still lives in the forest.~~ The jaguar, like the ~~same~~ tiger in China, played an important part in Maya religion.

The treatment of the section immediately above the beveled cornice is particularly worthy of notice, for a design has been created even with ^{Smooth} ~~plane~~ surfaces by laying the stones in a pattern and ^{in different planes.} ~~at different levels.~~ The delicate scroll design on the bands bordering the ^{jaguar} ~~tiger~~ frieze embellishes without becoming too ^p ~~aparent.~~ Near the top, the introduction of the ^{engaged columnettes} ~~four~~ ~~and shaped columns~~ in the coils, as it were, of the feathered serpent, add a lightness and ^{or} ~~balance~~ to the entire cornice. The complete design of the wall has great beauty.

THE CORNICE OF THE TEMPLE OF THE DAUGHTERS

The decoration of the outer wall faces of the temple are extremely beautiful. They show undeniable knowledge of the treatment of plane surfaces. The central band of carved figures is obviously the principle theme and is the source of the temple's name, though that name is the mis-nomen in its meaning. There are no figures as known in the temple, but the figures still lives in the forest. The legend, like the new tiger in China, played an important part in the religion.

The treatment of the section immediately above the carved cornice is particularly worthy of notice, for a design has been created even with planes by laying the stones in a pattern and at different levels. The delicate scroll design on the panels bearing the tiger figures embodies the becoming too elegant. Near the top the introduction of the four ~~columns~~ ^{columns} in the ceiling, as it were, of the festooned serpent, and a lightness and balance to the entire cornice. The complete design of the wall has great beauty.

ch Five architectural terms for use checked.

THE RING IN THE WEST WALL (1946).

THE RING IN THE EAST WALL (1932)

THE NORTH TEMPLE.

The north Temple of the ^{GREAT} Ball Court is another example of the Maya's ability to achieve beauty of proportion. The inside wall, which ^{new} is an effective sounding board, is covered with a carved frieze which still bears traces of red color. Standing in this temple one can speak in a low voice and be heard distinctly at the other end of the court, five hundred feet away.

Access to the temple is gained by a few steps at the rear of the low wall in front, with the wall itself forming a narrow platform immediately in front of the temple.

~~etc~~

JAGUARS
THE REAR ELEVATION OF THE TEMPLE OF THE ~~WIGGERS~~
and the Sorcerer's temple
AND THE SORCERERS TEMPLE.

SORCERER'S

THE ~~TEMPLE~~ TEMPLE DURING RECONSTRUCTION (1932)

THE GREAT PLAZA OF NORTH CHICHEN ITZA.

From within the arena of the ^{GREAT} Ball Court one sees the relationship of the three principle buildings of North Chichén Itzá. The Temple of the ^{Jaguars} ~~Tigers~~ to the left, the Temple of the Warriors directly opposite the entrance to the ^{GREAT} Ball Court, the Temple of Kukulcán to the right. Originally the entire plaza was paved. These three buildings were erected after the Toltec influence reached Chichén Itzá ~~and~~ between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

THE TZOMPANTLI.

Between the east wall of the ^{GREAT} Ball Court and the Temple of Kukulcan, is the Tzompantli, or the ~~so-called~~ cemetery, a platform surmounted by a parapet upon which human skulls have been carved. This idea is definitely of Mexican origin, as the Aztecs of Mexico had similar places for displaying the skulls of sacrificial victims. In Mexico, however, these platforms consisted of actual skulls impaled one above another on stakes. The Maya, while accepting the idea, evidently preferred sculpture to reality, though this does eliminate the possibility that the actual skulls were originally stored here in the Tzompantli.

Much has been learned of Maya religion from the codices, the books of Chilam Balam, and from writings of the early Spanish priests. The Maya dieties, like those of all primitive peoples, were personifications of the elements- the earth and its productivity, and the sky. The four chief deities of the earth were associated with the four points of the compass and the four world colors- south, yellow; east, red; north, white; and west, black. In Yucatan these gods were known by the name of the Lords of the Forest. In addition to the earth gods, there were sky gods of rain, thunder and lightening. The god of the sky, and the head of the Maya Pantheon, was Itzamna*. There are many ancient legends about the sun-god and his wife the moon-goddess. In

* ETZAHMnah.

Guat^emalala there was an ancient book called the Popul Vuh* which like our Old Testament contained the ancient myths of the creation of the world and the origin of man. In this book, as in our ^{Genesis} Old Testament, is the story of a great flood which covered the earth.

The most important god of the sky was the god of the planet Venus when Venus was the morning star. Venus was the god of the astronomers and was consequently associated with the calendar.

The Maya believed in the immortality of the soul and that after the death of the body it entered an everlasting life full of rest and peace, or an evil one where the soul was tormented in the lower regions forever.

For the elaborate ceremonies connected with so many gods, there were ^{many} priests, the high priest officiating at very special occasions only. His ^{al} principle duty was that of a teacher, for it was he who taught the young priests to read and write the hieroglyphs, how to read the calendar and to foretell the future. As the "coming of the Strangers from the east" had been prophecied some years before the event occurred, ^rperhaps this may have been the underlying reason for the quick and sudden surrender to the Spanish conquerors.

For the rites of sacrifice, there were special priests. Blue was the sacrificial color and the bodies of victims were painted before these rites took place, the unfortunates being usually either prisoners or slaves. They were placed over a convex stone, and, while certain priests held the arms and legs of the victim, the sacrificing priest cut open the

* PoPOOL VOO.

Notice to
Chao Moof as
indicated

news of
by Aztec priests & as such a prophecy probably reached Guatem.

breast with a sharp obsidian knife and tore out the living heart. This was placed in a special vessel and offered to the sun-god. Such sacrific~~es~~ were usually made as prayers for rain, and while there were many human sacrifices, those of animals were made also. It is the general belief of Maya authorities to-day, that the practi^ce of human sacrifice was brought to Yucatan by the Toltecs in the tenth century and that such rites all date from this late period.

THE CHAC MOOL OF THE TZAMPANTLI.

Several extraordinary carved figures have been found at Chichén Itzá which bear the name of "Chac Mool". Little is known of their significance other than that they were usually placed before doorways leading to altars or before daises. Traces of burned copal incense have been found on the flat discs held on the abdomens of the figures. This very fine Chac Mool was found in the ^{Tzompantli} cemetery. It has exceptionally delicate carving in very low relief and is colored a beautiful shade of yellow.

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The Maya held elaborate ceremonies at New Years when new idols were carved or modeled and all household utensils replaced. There seemed to be the desire to commence the New Year with fresh things, and long periods of fasting preceded these ceremonies. Certain parts of the calendar year, as well as certain days, were of good and bad omen, and the five unlucky days of the month of Yaxeb were extremely unlucky. ^{Those} ~~Anyone~~ were so unfortunate as to be born in this short five day month ^{were} ~~was~~ doomed to failure and unhappiness.

— The Maya, like all Indians, had great fear of death. Burials frequently were made either behind or within the house of the deceased after which the house was abandoned, a practice still in existence among our Navaho Indians. The rulers, priests and persons of high rank were usually cremated and their ashes put either in urns or within hollow idols.

* add 3rd P for preceding middle pages.

THE PLATFORM OF THE EAGLES.

To the east of the Cemetery is a small dance platform still somewhat a pile of tumbled stone, but the theme of decoration is still in place. The two subjects so frequently used by the Maya are the jaguar and the eagle; the kings of the beast and bird worlds as the Maya knew them. One is reminded of the similar ^{of the} ~~themes~~ ^{use} of beast and bird motifs by the Chinese, the tiger and the Feng Huang, the idealistic bird of paradise ^{used} ~~used~~ so extensively in Chinese art.

A short distance north of the Platform of the Eagles is another of similar size and one wonders just how these were used. Bishop Landa in his "Relacion de las Cosas de Yucatan" speaks of the "Theaters" at Chichen Itza.

The most probably explanation is that religious ^{it} ~~dances~~ ^{ritual} were held on these platforms. Such dances are still a part of the ritual ~~of the Indian~~ in the religious expression of many Indian tribes to-day both in Mexico and the United States. It is not difficult to imagine a dance similar in idea though of course totally different in its setting and costuming.

DETAIL OF THE PLATFORM OF THE EAGLES.

One can see here the mastery of the Maya in decorative design,
the filling of the ^{or} otherwise empty spaces ^{surrounding} ~~in addition to~~ the main
theme. The jaguar and the eagle each holds a human heart. The
surface treatment of the spots and feathers ^{is} ~~are~~ remarkable for such
low relief. Elements of less importance surround the beast and
bird making of the whole a design of distinction.

THE PLATFORM OF THE EAGLES

From another point of view we see the relation of the Platform of the Eagles to the ^{Tzompantli parapet} Cemetery wall with the carved skulls, ~~and~~ ^{with} the Temple of the ^{Jaguars} ~~Tigers~~ beyond. From this side also the remnants of the steps leading to the top of the Platform can be seen, ^{while on the ground is} ~~and~~ a serpent head which doubtless capped the balustrade, ~~similar to the large Dance Platform.~~

A little ~~to the~~ north of the Platform of the Eagles is the Tzompantli Platform which is embellished with one of the finest ~~sculptural~~ ^{bas reliefs} ~~pieces~~ at Chichen Itzá. The theme is a large eagle holding a human heart in his claw, alternating with a warrior carrying the decapitated head of his opponent. [This is the identical warrior design which is also found on the low slanting wall in the Ball Court, which makes one wonder if the panel in the Ball Court is descriptive of the game or whether it ^{has} ~~is~~ religious significance.]

The whole frieze has a beautiful rhythmic pattern which is accented by the undulating serpents both above and below, while the rattles of the snakes form decorative punctuation marks.

THE TEMPLE OF THE WARRIORS.

The Temple of the Warriors is perhaps the most elaborate building at Chichen Itzá, and was probably one of the latest to be erected. Here again we have additions to and remodelings of an earlier construction; for within the north section of the pyramidal base, a buried temple was found—the Temple of the Chac Mool—^{on} which the later temple was superimposed.

The Temple of the Warriors differs noticeably from all others in its magnificent ^{west} colonnade, and derives its name from the figures carved in low relief on the sides of the sixty one square ^a columns. Each figure represents a possible portrait of a Maya warrior elaborately clothed in full regalia, each a different design. Originally the entire colonnade was roofed with four high, typical Maya corbel ^{led} vaults. Owing to this form of construction the roof of the vault was nearly twice the height of these eight and a half foot columns. The spaces between the columns, also averaging eight and a half feet, were spanned with carved wooden beams which in turn supported the corbel arches, or vaults. In its original form this great hall must have been magnificent indeed.

On each side of the stairway within the colonnade extending out from the temple base, are two daises, or altars, also elaborately carved and ^{originally} painted. The one on the south side is the larger and finer of the two with reliefs

Formerly emerging through its roof, the stairway from the colonnade gives access to the wide upper platform in front of the temple.

of exceptional quality. The stairway leading from the colonnade to the temple above, (Formerly emerging through its roof) gives access to the wide upper platform in front of the temple. The story of the rebuilding of the Temple of the Warriors is told in interesting detail by archaeologist Earl H. Morris who was in charge of the undertaking.

TEMPLE OF KUKULCÁN FROM THE WEST COLONNADE

CORNER OF THE WEST COLONNADE BY THE STAIRWAY.

GROUP OF MAYA AT DAIS IN THE WEST COLONNADE

STANDARD BEARER AT TOP OF STAIRWAY TO THE TEMPLE OF
THE WARRIORS.

THE PLUMED SERPENT HEADS.

Carved to represent ~~the~~ Plumed Serpent, indicative of the Toltec influence from Mexico, two great columns mark the entrance to the temple in its western wall. The massive tails originally supporting the roof were carved from single pieces of stone in the ~~form~~^{shape} of right angles, ~~with~~^T the rattles and plumes of the legendary ^aserpent ~~carved as their final decorations.~~^{form terminus} Twelve foot columns bearing warrior reliefs, originally supported the roof of the two chambers within the temple. Here again the high corbelled vaults raised the roof top to a much higher elevation than it appears to-day, and we must imagine the completed roof.

The exterior of the temple is decorated with sculptured panels, tiers of three superimposed masks with the familiar ^{curled}hooked noses. These are placed at each corner as well as in the centers of the north, east and south walls, and flanking each side of the main west portal. Alternating with the masks are very handsome serpent-bird panels with great plumes richly carved in relief. From the center of each bird protrudes, in full round, a serpent head with open jaws which hold a human head. These panels, once painted in brilliant colors, still carry their forceful symbolism through the strength of their superb design.

THE PLUMED SERPENT COLUMNS OF THE WEST PORTAL.

THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE.

At the top of the stairway is the semi-reclining figure of a Chac-Mool, holding ^d in its hands the offering plate supported on its abdomen. This figure, carved from a single block of stone, is placed in ^{front of the} ~~xxxxxxx~~ the exact center of the serpent column portal which leads to the inner chambers. Against the rear wall of the second ~~xxxxxxxx~~ room, which was probably the Holy of Holies, is an elaborate altar, or dais, supported by ~~xxxx~~ Atlantean figures. Through careful measurements and observation of its markings, it was found that this altar must have been originally designed for use in the buried Temple of the Chac Mool, and was only brought to the new temple when the earlier was abandoned.

On the inner faces of the walls flanking the portal are small stone rings indicating that ^{of some form} ~~(some form of)~~ textile curtains were used to close the triple doorways. Torchlight must have been used for illumination as there ^{are} no windows or other openings; and imagination is stirred to picture a religious ceremony within this dark ~~in~~ interior.

~~On the walls of this inner sanctuary as well as in the buried Temple of the Chac-Mool there were murals depicting the everyday life of the people, battle scenes, and individuals. As these deteriorated very rapidly when exposed to the air, the Carnegie Institution employed the fine Mexican artist, Jean Charlot, to copy them so that they might be preserved.~~

had had these murals copied by

THE CHAC-MOOL AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRWAY.

From within the serpent portal one looks beyond the Chac-Mool figure to the distant ~~background~~ ^{Great} Temple of the Jaguars which surmounts the eastern wall of ~~The~~ ¹ Ball Court, while at the left the Castillo- the Temple of Kukulcan- rises majestically. Hidden by the right hand column is The Dance Platform and beyond it in direct line with the north stairway of the Castillo is the Well of Sacrifice. The entire area surrounding the ^{so} temples was paved.

copying with this?