



UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

MA Cultural Astronomy and Astrology

HPCA7014 – Sacred Geography

Presentation:

Belonging:
A Landscape to Which I Feel
a Deep Connection

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Chichen Itza: A Cultural Landscape

General Facts: Chichen Itzá *

- Ancient Maya city of the Post-Classic Period situated in the Yucatán peninsula in South-East Mexico.
- A UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the Seven New Wonders of the World.
- Founded in around 550 AD and abandoned around 1450 AD, it occupied an area of 4 square miles.
- It was a religious, military, political, and commercial centre with a population of 35,000 people at its peak.
- The natural landscape of the area includes water caves and sinkholes in limestone formations, known as *cenotes*.
- Chichen Itza's name comes from the Maya *chi* ('mouths'), *chen* ('wells'), and *Itza*, the name of the Maya tribe that settled there.



Chichen Itza at Nigh, Cenote IK KIL online.



Chichen Itza: Sacred Cenote, Encyclopædia Britannica Online

(*) 'Chichen Itza', Encyclopædia Britannica Online. (Accessed 2 November 2024)

Chichen Itza: Landscapes



Temple of Kukulcan on top of a Cenote. 'Sacred Sinkhole' by Mail Online.

Chichen Itza
Equinox,
Wikipedia
Commons.



Temple of the Warrior, Wikipedia Commons.



Chac Mol, Yucatan Times.



'El Caracol' Observatory, Encyclopædia Britannica

Chichen Itza: Previous Connections

Drawn to Chichen Itza because:

- Mother was an Anthropologist and we lived in Mexico City during my childhood and teen-age years.
- Visited Teotihuacan and Aztec sites but never an Ancient Maya site.
- My first Spanish name 'Rocío' is Itza in Maya language and Dew in English. We named our daughter Dew Maya.
- City was founded on 2 Akbal, my Maya sign which means 'Night Serpent' and represented the Milky Way.
- Looking for extra meaning about the Feathered Bird-Serpent, first Temple of Quetzacoatl in Teotihuacan, then Temple of Kukulcan.
- 2012-2013 Experiences, Telepathy Transmission of Heaven-Earth / Birth-Serpent / Pyramid-Mountain.



Teotihuacan: Temple of the Feathered Serpent. Wikipedia Commons.



Akbal Maya Sign,
Astrologyk.com

Chichen Itza: Experience of Landscape

Experience of Landscape in April 2014:

- Visit Chichen Itza in April 2014 by the first time.
- Flight from the UK arrived at Gate 21 in Cancun Airport. Number 21 is my Maya sing number in the Galactic Maya (New Age) count.
- Felt *hierophany* as soon as I set foot inside Chichen Itza, a mysterious experience of awe and amazement, like I belonged there.
- Our daughter injured her 2 big toes a little, and she slightly bled as we we walked from Temple of Kukulkan to the Sacred Cenote. In Galactic Maya Count, one big toe is for Eagle and the other for Serpent = Bird-Serpent.
- Tried to enter Night Show, Noches de Kukulkan, but it was over booked.
- Next night I decided to chase it and they let us in for free.
- We entered Chichen Itza for the Night Show on 2 Akbal in the Ancient Maya Calendar, the founding sign of Chichen Itza and my Maya sign,



Visiting Chichen Itza by Author.



Chichen Itza: Landscape Perspectives

Hierophany Experience – Mircea Eliade

- 'Man becomes aware of the sacred because it itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane'. The hierophany 'designate(s) the act of manifestation of the sacred'. (1)
- 'The myth describes the various and sometimes dramatic irruptions of the sacred into the world'. (2)

Set Apart Collective Representation – Émile Durkheim

- 'Sacred things (are) things set apart and forbidden'. (3) 'Temples and sanctuaries (are) spaces assigned to sacred things and beings'. (4)
- 'Religion is an eminently social thing... a product of collective thought. (5)

(1) Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred And The Profane*, p. 11.

(2) Eliade, *The Sacred And The Profane*, p. 97.

(3) Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms Of Religious Life*, p. 44.

(4) Durkheim, *Forms*, p. 312.

(5) Durkheim, *Forms*, p. 9.



Visiting Chichen Itza by Author.



Chichen Itza: Landscape Perspectives

Relational Significance – Christopher Tilley

- 'Space is socially produced'. (1)
- 'Space has no substantial essence in itself, but only has a relational significance, created through relations between peoples and places'. (2)

Sacred Place as Consciousness – Belden C. Lane

- A 'sacred place is not chosen, it chooses' because '(it) is a construction of the imagination that affirms the independence of the holy.' (3)
- 'A sacred place can be thread upon without being entered' because 'the identification of sacred place is thus intimately related to states of consciousness'. (4)



Visiting Chichen Itza by Author.



(1) Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology Of Landscape*, p. 10.

(2) Tilley, *Phenomenology Of Landscape*, p. 11.

(3) Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes Of The Sacred: Geography And Narrative In American Spirituality*, p. 19.

(4) Lane, *Landscapes Of The Sacred*, p. 19.

References

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- Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred And The Profane: The Nature Of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959)
- Lane, Belden C., *Landscapes Of The Sacred: Geography And Narrative In American Spirituality*, Expanded edn. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)
- Tilley, Christopher, *A Phenomenology Of Landscape* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994)