

# MAYAN

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# **Key Gods/Goddesses**

# Kukulcan

- He was the Mayan Supreme God
- He was a God of the four elements, he was also a creator God and the God of resurrection and reincarnation
- The Mayans attributed many functions to him as he was the supreme God. They also believed that he was one of the Gods that created the earth



# Chac



Chac was the God of rain. He was associated with creation and life. Chac was also associated with the wind God, Kukulcan. Critics wonder whether Kukulcan was just a variation of Chac.

# Quetzalcoatl

- Also known as Precious Twin; Feathered Serpent; Winged God
- He is the God of intelligence and self-reflection
- He wears cut shell ornaments and sometimes wears a beak shaped mask which he uses to produce wind



# Kinich Ahau



- He was the Mayan Sun God
- He is portrayed as a young man, with strength like the rising sun.
- Kinich Ahau is also associated with the jaguar which was the most powerful dweller of the forest

# Ixtab

- Goddess of Suicide, believed to be the protector of those who committed suicide or died by hanging, slain warriors, sacrificial victims, priests, and women who died in childbirth. These victims went straight to eternal rest in paradise.
- Ixtab is depicted with a rope around her neck



# **Three Mayan Beliefs**

- Mayan Creation Myth
- The Mayan After life
- The Mayan Calendar Myth



# The Mayan Creation Myth

- Initially there was only the sea, the sky and the creator of the universe, Itzam Na
- Itzam Na created
  - Clay people
  - Wood people
  - True people
- Finally the true people were created with water and miazé
- August 13, 3114 BC



# The Mayan After Life

- Mayans believed life was like a cycle, like the seasons
- When one life ends, another begins
- Heaven is above earth which consists of 13 layers, each with its own god
- The sun, moon and the planet venus passed through the underworld and a priest had to perform prayers for their return



# 2012

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcpCUh3djoI>



# The Mayan Calendar



- The Mayans had several calendars
  - We are living in the 4th world/creation
- Time to celebrate the end of a creation cycle, a start to a new age
- The end of the world does not exist
  - The myth of the world ending was created by Jose Arguelles in his book The Mayan Factor, Path Beyond Technology

# **Mayan Holidays**

# Mayan Rain Festival

- Takes place from 4/26 until 5/3
- Honors the rain god Chac and his attendant Chacmool
- Welcomes the fructifying rains



# Mayan Sun Festival

- Takes place on 7/23
- Honors sun god Ahau Kin
- Celebrated with devotional offerings of food, song, and procession that symbolically travels to the 4 corners of the universe



# **Important Rituals**



# Bloodletting

- Done by the Mayans during important ceremonies such as the dedication of monuments or crowning a new King
- Performed by cutting or piercing a part of the body such as the earlobes or tongue with ceremonial tools, like stingray spines. The blood drawn is collected in a bowl or basket filled with bark paper, and the blood stained paper is then burned.

# Bloodletting Cont.

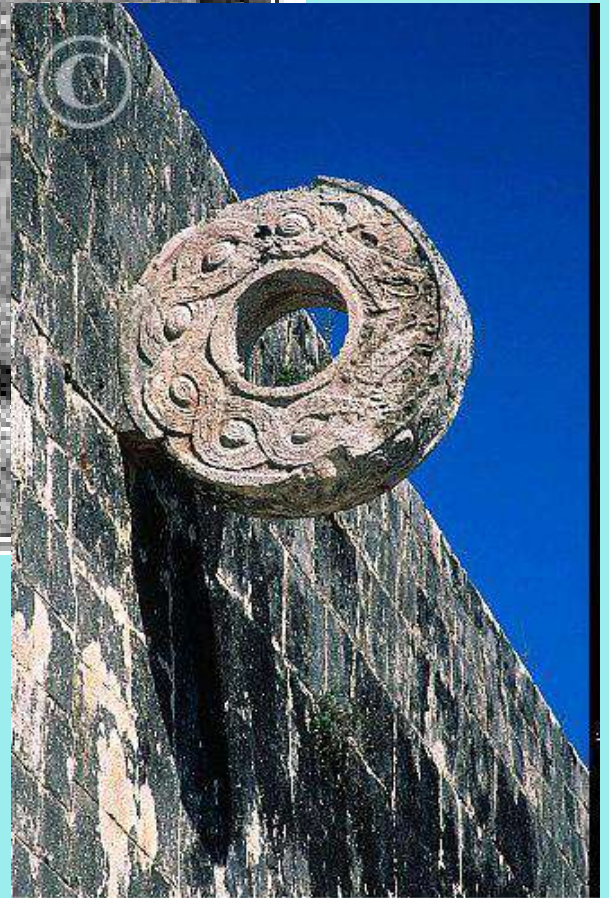
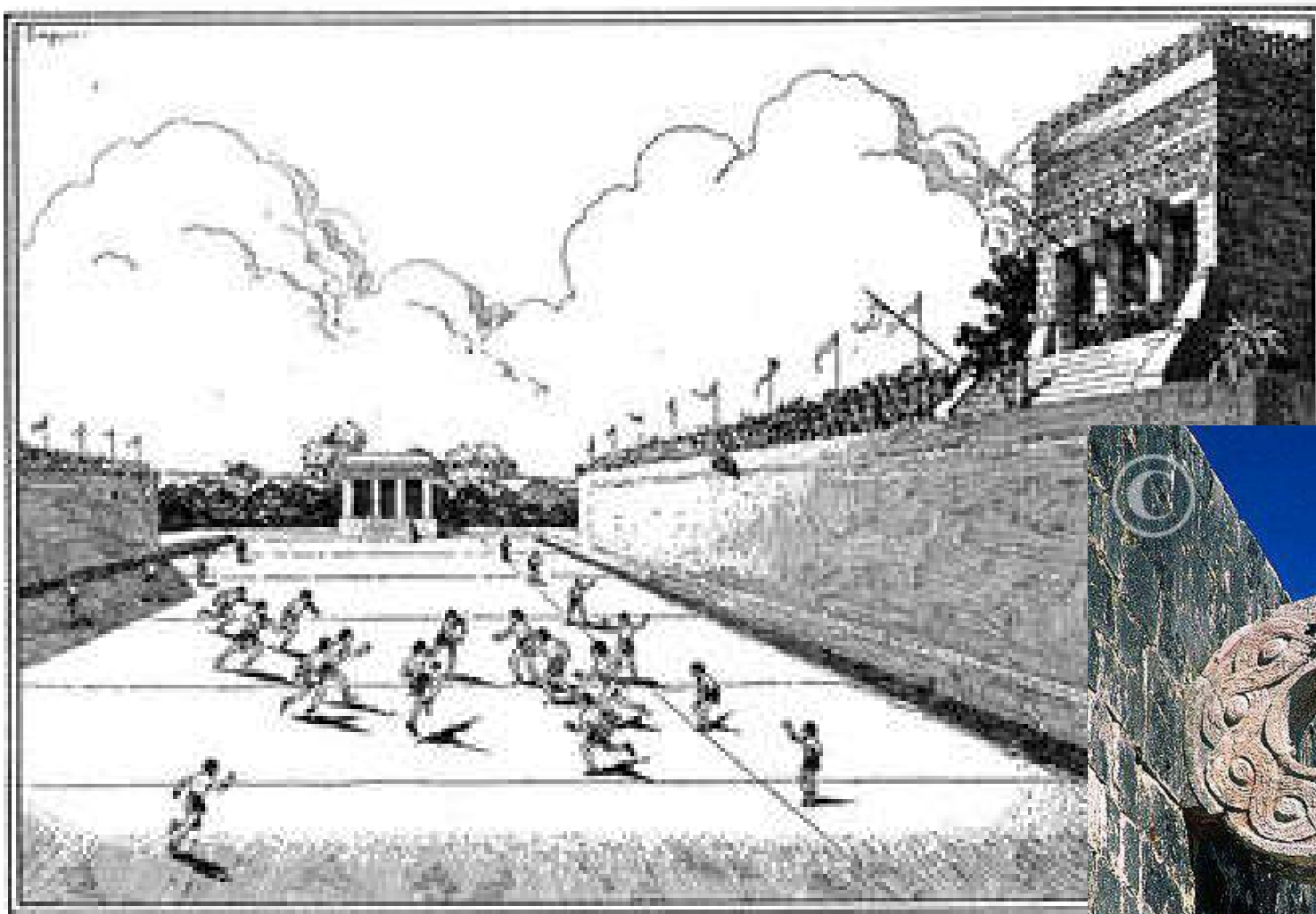
- Used to communicate directly with the gods
- If the bloodletting was done on a King, then they would see if the gods accepted the offer of the energy that the smoke gave off, and in return the King would receive divine power

# Ball Game

- Played in a stone court, two teams against each other
- Floor of the court was thought to represent the earth's platform, separating the human world from the underworld
- Using a rubber ball, the point of the game was to get the ball through one of the rings surrounding the court. This was difficult since the players couldn't use their hands and so the game usually ended when the ball touched the ground

# Ball Game Cont.

- Filled with ritual importance, many religious leaders attended along with government leaders
- It was said that the gods determined the winners of the game, and the winners celebrated with a great feast
- The losers penalty was death. The leader of the team was killed.
- This occurred because of the Mayan belief that human sacrifice was necessary for the continued success of the peoples agriculture, trade, and overall health.



Stone court where ball game was played

# Video of Ball Game

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1qNYhkSaF4&NR=1>

# **Mayan Death Beliefs/Rituals**

# Beliefs

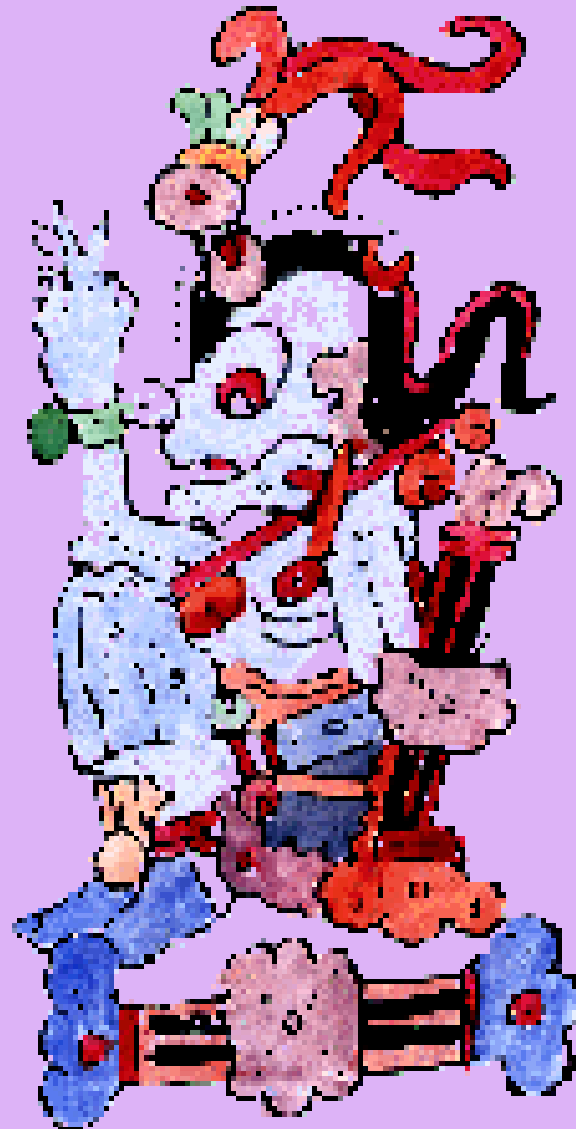
- Mayans were very spiritual
- Believed in life cycles
- Both worlds connected
- Believed in a heaven above Earth
- Also in Underworld below



# Rituals

- Most bodies buried in ground
- A piece of corn and a stone bead was placed in their mouth
- Graves faced either North or South
- Red cinnabar was placed on the body

# Ah Puch/ Yum Cimil



# QUESTION

Which God was considered to be the supreme God and why?

- a.Kukulcan- had many functions
- b.Chac- was a creator God
- c.Quetzalcoatl- most intelligent
- d.Kinich Ahau- strongest God

# ANSWER

a. Kukulcan- had many functions

# QUESTION

The year 2012 is believed to be the year the world is going to end. However, the Maya would be celebrating. Why would the Maya celebrate at a time when the rest of the world is in a panic?

- a. It's the end of a creation cycle
- b. All the infidels would be destroyed
- c. Mayan lives would end in heaven
- d. Everyone dies

# ANSWER

a. It's the end of a creation cycle

# QUESTION

What is the point of the Mayan Rain Festival?

- a. Cleanse the Earth
- b. Honor the rain god
- c. Celebrate the end of a drought
- d. Celebrate agricultural growth

# ANSWER

b. Honor the rain god



# QUESTION

The losers penalty for losing the ball game was:

- a. Fasting
- b. Death
- c. Jail
- d. Torture

# Answer

b. Death

# QUESTION

How many steps were in the Mayan heaven?

- a. 9
- b. 15
- c. 13
- d. 1

# ANSWER

c. 13

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