Medium Level

Abu Simbel

The two temples of Abu Simbel on the shores of Lake Nasser, Egypt: The temples were carved out of the mountainside during the reign of Ramesses II in the 13th century BC, as a monument to himself and his queen Nefertari, to commemorate his alleged victory at the Battle of Kadesh, and to intimidate his Nubian neighbours.

Saved: The temples were relocated to stop their being submerged during the creation of Lake Nasser, formed after the building of the Nile's Aswan High Dam. Between 1964 and 1968, the entire site was carefully cut into collossal blocks, dismantled and reassembled in a new location 65m higher and 200m back from the river.

Baalbek

Satellite image of the ancient city of Baalbek in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley: Known as Heliopolis during the period of Roman rule, Baalbek was one of the largest sanctuaries in the empire and contains some of the best preserved Roman ruins in Lebanon.

Baalbek's Temple of Jupiter: The gods worshipped at the temple, the triad of Jupiter, Venus and Bacchus, were grafted onto the indigenous deities of Hadad, Atargatis and a young male god of fertility. Local influences are seen in the planning and layout of the temples, which vary from the classic Roman design.

Chichen Itza

Lost in the jungle: Satellite image of the ruins of the ancient Mayan city of Chichen Itza in Mexico. One of the largest of the Mayan cities, Chichen Itza, believed to have been started in 600AD, was a major focal point in the northern Maya lowlands until, it is believed, around 1200AD.

The Pyramid of Kukulcan seen from the Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza: The pyramid at Chichen Itza was built so that sunlight shone down its northern stairway at sunset on the equinoxes. The resulting sunlight and shadow which 'slid' down the stairs is thought to represent Kukulkan, the feathered serpent god.

Dzibilchatun

The ruins of the ancient Mayan site of Dzibilchaltun, Mexico: In the view of the modern researchers, the builders of Dzibilchaltún may have chosen the site of the city to be as close possible to the coastal salt-producing region (some 22 km away), while still being located on fertile and habitable terrain.

Holy site: Dzibilchaltun's the Temple Of The Seven Dolls, so named because of seven small effigies found at the site when the temple was discovered in the Fifties under the ruins of a later temple pyramid. On the Spring equinox, the sun rises so that it shines directly through one window of the temple and out the other.

La gran muralla china

Amazing work of engineering: The Great Wall of China, which extends 5,500 miles from west to east fortifying the Chinese border against intrusion from Mongolia. Several walls were being built as early as the 7th century BC; these were later joined together, strengthened and unified during the Ming Dynasty.

A section of the Great Wall of China north of Beijing: The wall stretches from Shanhaiguan in the east, to Lop Lake in the west, along an arc that roughly delineates the southern edge of Inner Mongolia. Other purposes of the Great Wall have included regulation or encouragement of trade and the control of immigration and emigration.

Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu perched high up on a mountainside in the Andes, Peru: Sitting at around 8,000ft above sea level, the hidden city is surrounded by forest and rivers in deep valleys. A road winds up from one of these river valleys to this ancient site, built by the Incas from around 1460 but abandoned around the time of the Spanish conquest

Lost in the clouds: Although known locally, Machu Picchu was lost to the outside world before being brought to international attention in 1911 by the American historian Hiram Bingham. Since then, it has become an important tourist attraction and popular site for visitors following Peru's Inca Trail.

Mayapan

Claimed back by nature: The ruins of the city of Mayapan city, surrounded by forest in Mexico. Situated about 60 miles west from Chichen Itza, Mayapan was the political and cultural capital of the Maya in the Yucatán Peninsula during the Late Post-Classic period from the 1220s until the 1440s.

Blue skies above the ruins at Mayapan: Spanning 4.2 sq/km, the city has over 4000 structures, most of them residences, packed into a compound within stone perimeter walls. Archaeologists estimate 10-12,000 people lived within the walled parameter, while built-up areas extend a half kilometre beyond in all directions.

Piramide de Guiza

Satellite image of the three pyramids at Giza, in northern Egypt: They are thought to have been built sometime between 2600 and 2500BC as tombs and monuments of the ruling dynasties of ancient Egypt. The largest is believed to have been built for King Khufu and was the tallest building in the world for many centuries.

Wondrous: The pyramids, which have historically loomed large as emblems of ancient Egypt, were popularised in Hellenistic times when the Great Pyramid was listed by Antipater of Sidon as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It is by far the oldest of the ancient Wonders and the only one that remains in existence.

Saqqara

City of the dead: Saqqara is a vast, ancient burial ground in Egypt, serving as the necropolis for the Ancient Egyptian capital, Memphis. It features numerous pyramids, including the world famous Step pyramid of Djoser which is the oldest complete stone building complex known in history.

Tourist attraction: Visitors stand around near the 3,500-year-old tombs near Saqqara's Step Pyramid. Another 16 Egyptian kings built pyramids at Saqqara, which are now in various states of preservation or dilapidation and it remained an important complex for non-royal burials and cult ceremonies for more than 3,000 year.

Stonehenge

Green and pleasant land: Stonehenge, the circle of standing stones in Wiltshire, England, which archaeologists believe was built anywhere from 3000 BC to 2000 BC.

Prehistoric astrological sun-dial? It is thought that the alignment of the standing stones at Stonehenge was planned so that sunlight would shine on particular areas on important astronomical dates, such as the summer solstice, the longest day of the year.

Templo de Angkor Wat en Camboya

The temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, as seen by the Ikonos satellite: Situated in the ancient capital of the Khmer Empire located in modern-day Cambodia, Angkor Wat was built between 1113 and 1150 AD by Suryavarman II as a temple to the Hindu god Vishnu.

Angkor Wat basks in the evening sunlight: The buildings in the centre consist of five towers, each shaped to represent the peaks of Mount Meru. Surrounding the complex is a 174-metre-wide moat. The site was largely abandoned sometime in the 15th Centur, but remains in use to this day as a Buddhist holy site.

Teotihuacan

More ancient still: This satellite image shows the ruins of the ancient city of Teotihuacan, north-east of Mexico City. The city is thought to have been established around 100 BC and may have lasted until the 8th Century. At its height, Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas, with a population of perhaps 125,000 or more.

Teotihuacan's Pyramid of the Sun: It is thought that the pyramid venerated a god within Teotihuacan society but the deliberate destruction of the temple on top prior to the archaeological study of the site has prevented its identification with any particular deity.

Uxmal

Once a great city: Satellite image of the ruins of Uxmal, Mexico, which is regarded as one of the most important archaeological sites of Maya culture. Its buildings are noted for their size, decoration and unusually high build quality which left it in better conditions than many other Maya sites.

The Pyramid of the Magician: This ancient structure is Uxmal's tallest and most recognisable structure. The name of the structure is derived from Maya folk legends which say a magician-god named Itzamna single-handedly erected the pyramid in one night, using his might and magic.