

TLATELOLCO

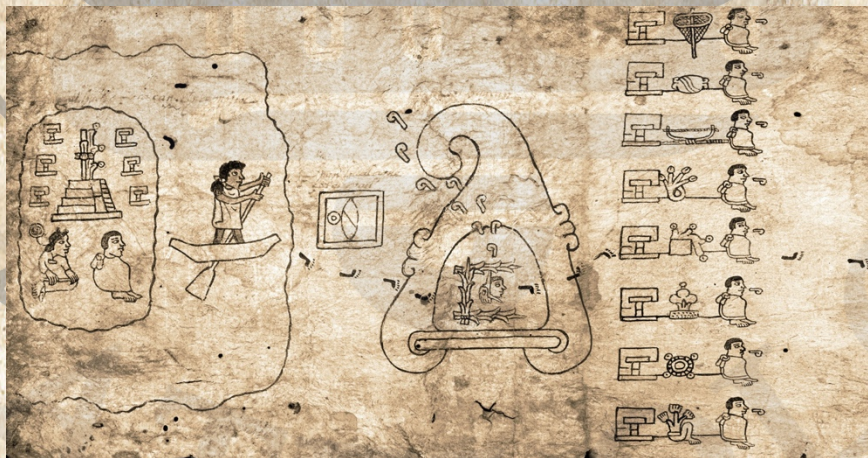
ORIGIN



The Three Cultures Plaza is one of Mexico City's most significant sites. It reflects three stages in Mexico's history: the pre-Hispanic, the colonial, and the contemporary eras.

Tlatelolco was pre-Hispanic Mexico's most important commercial center. Its name in Nahuatl is derived from *tlatelli* (terrace) or *xaltilolli* (sandy place).

Several groups of Nahua origin (Aztecs, Culhuas, Xochimilcas, Chalcas, Tlaxcaltecs, Tepanecs, and Tlahuicas) arrived in the Mexico Basin from Aztlán, the "place of whiteness." They were searching for the lands offered them by their god Huitzilopochtli.



Huitzilopochtli chose the Aztecs, who changed their name to Mexicas, to govern this promised land. During their pilgrimage, several conflicts divided the group. One myth says that, when their god gave them two bundles called *quimiles*, one with two

wooden sticks and the other with jade, they fought over them. The god said that the sticks were important for creating the New Fire and the group that possessed them founded Tenochtitlan, while the group that had the precious stone founded Tlatelolco.

Some ancient documents point to Tlatelolco's foundation predating that of Tenochtitlan; others say it came later; and still others say they were founded at the same time. What is certain is that both Mexica cities shared the same destiny.

Tenochtitlan held the ideological, political, and economic power, while Tlatelolco participated in all the military campaigns of conquest of other peoples of pre-Hispanic Mexico, and dominated commerce from 1428 on, when the Mexicas freed themselves from the dominion of the lord of Azcapotzalco and moved its market, the most important until the arrival of the Europeans, to Tlatelolco.

Although power was divided between the two cities, the differences continued, and in 1473 a war broke out in which the ruler of Tlatelolco, Moquihuix, confronted Axayácatl, the Tenochca ruler, who emerged victorious.

In 1515, Cuauhtémoc was elected lord of Tlatelolco, restoring the city's status as a fiefdom. In 1519, when the Spanish conquistadors arrived, Moctezuma Xocoyotzin was the ruler of Tenochtitlan.

When he died, he was replaced by Cuitláhuac, who died of smallpox 40 days later. Cuauhtémoc was then named the lord of both cities, and he led the 80-day-long indigenous resistance from Tlatelolco until he was apprehended by Hernán Cortés on August 13, 1521.

ARCHEAOLOGICAL ZONE VISIT

Temple of Ehécatl-Quetzalcóatl



The main body of the circular temple has a rectangular façade with a stairway facing east. Inside are the remains of an altar from a previous period that can be seen from the watch tower. Between 1987 and 1989, 41 burial sites and 54 offerings were discovered containing infants inside pots with figurines made of ceramics, stone, and shell. The offerings were to Ehécatl, god of the wind, to plead for his intervention during a great drought from 1454 to 1458.

Calendar Temple



The three secondary façades are decorated with 13 glyphs representing the days of the ritual calendar, or *Tonalpohualli*. At the center of the main façade, a mural painting was discovered in 1989 representing the couple who created time, Cipactonal and Oxomoco, and the fourth thirteenth of the lunar calendar. This mural can be viewed in the Museum.

The Palace



This building consists of four small rooms with a central patio and a portal flanked by pilasters. It had two stairways leading up to it and an altar on the north wall.

Altar "V"



Interior of the Altar V

This is a small room with stairways on all sides located in the southwest corner of The Palace. It may have been dedicated to Tláloc.

Temple “Z”, Temple “T”, and Altar “U”



Temple T

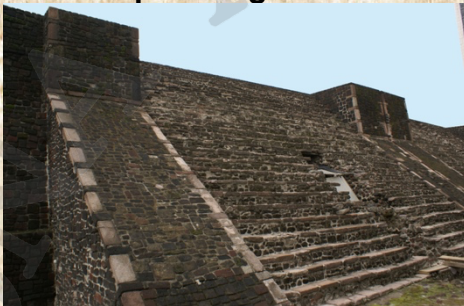
The façades of Temple “Z” and Temple “T” face the south patio’s central plaza where Altar “U” is located. From the top of the altar, several stages of construction can be observed. The group of structures form a closed plaza within the southern patio of the Ceremonial Area.

Temple of Paintings



This structure is built in the slope-and-panel style of Teotihuacan architecture. Its secondary façades are decorated with banners in the form of bows. Apparently, the building was dedicated to Xochipilli.

Main Temple. Stage II



Its side and rear façades are decorated with petroglyphs: 100 on the south side represent Huitzilopochtli, and 50 on the north side, Tláloc. Just like the Main Temple of Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco’s has seven complete construction stages and two amplifications of the main façade.

Temple “I” and Temple “J”



Northwest of the Main Temple is Temple I, or the Great Basement, built with pink quarried stone. Archaeologists believe that this was the compound of the military elite from Tlatelolco. It borders on the east with Temple “J”, which is of similar design, but built out of red, porous *tezontle* stone.

Altar "D1"



Located across from the access to the ceremonial compound's northern avenue, this altar is joined to the structures of the western sector by a wall.

Border of the Sacred Compound



This border is formed by alternating stairways, thin beams, and cubes. It is probably the *Coatepantli*, or Wall of Serpents, that delimits the space dedicated to the gods. To the north it includes a space that gives on to the avenue leading to Tepeyac.

Temple "C"



This structure is on a platform and has a stairway leading up to it, flanked by lintels topped with a cube. This temple faced south.

Altar "B"



This structure is circular and its façade faces south. The stairways show evidence of a previous stage of construction.

Tzompantli Altar



In 1963, 170 human skulls were found in the altar near the building's rear façade, the result of sacrifice by decapitation. The craniums were perforated in each side and piled on the altar was called *Tzompantli*, or Wall of Skulls.

Zona Chica (Small Area)



The remains of priests' rooms can be found on the eastern end of the ceremonial compound, near the Santiago Church.

Tlatelolco in New Spain

From here, the visitor can continue walking to the Water Deposit Site Museum and the Tecpan Museum, both dating from the sixteenth century.

Tecpan Museum



This building was Cuauhtémoc's palace during his reign, as well as the residence of the judges and the administrative area for the Tlatelolco market.

Museo de Sitio de Tlatelolco. Caja de Agua of the 16th century (Tlatelolco Water Deposit Site Museum, sixteenth century)



The Water Deposit was the site of the font of the Imperial Colegio de la Santa Cruz (Holy Cross Imperial College); the museum is inside the old Tlatelolco monastery.

WATER DEPOSIT AT THE IMPERIAL COLEGIO DE LA SANTA CRUZ DE SANTIAGO TLATELOLCO (IMPERIAL COLLEGE OF THE SAINT CROSS AT SANTIAGO TLATELOLCO)

The Imperial Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Santiago Tlatelolco was inaugurated in January 6th 1536. Important intellectuals such as Pedro de Gante, Arnaldo Basaccio, Jacobo de Testera and Antonio Valeriano taught there, standing out the work of Andres de Olmos and Bernardino de Sahagun.

It is probable that the Water Deposit might have been constructed shortly after the Mexica defeat and inaugurated at the same time as the College; it provided drinking water to the Republic of Indians of Santiago Tlatelolco.

The best virtue of the deposit creators was to conceive a tank for water in constant movement that coexisted in harmony with the pictorial discourse that represented the quotidian life of inhabitants of the terrain near the lakes.

Mural paintings were distributed in the northern, western and southern walls, around the water mirror.

The place where paintings' raise allows determining that water ran through the steps and the floor as a thin curtain that might have recovered spills of those who entered it to pick up water from the first continent. This means that users went into the tank, stepped down and got immerse, surrounded by the paintings.

The center of the western wall is dominated by 9 red stones. To the right, a fisherman is represented as well as bulrushes and an ahvizotl (doglike mythic creature) crunching, watching a small fish.



The hips and legs of another fishing character follow; behind him, another fisherman holds a conic net and the stick used to catch 3 fishes. A female heron that holds a fish in the beak next to a big plant is at the end of this scene.

The southern wall's scene begins with the image of an eagle standing on a Maya blue-colored plant, which comes out from the back of a jaguar that walks on the water. Under his claws, between the swirls, some fishes can be observed.

The jaguar used to have 2 faces, one looking to the north, which was erased using red color, and the visible one, seen from the side, has the tongue extended.



The second segment shows a fisherman that has a basket on his back. His pants are folded up past the knee, his feet inside the water, where a big fish swims towards the east. A plant with the root in the shape of a hand is between his legs.

In the oriental part of the southern wall, there is a canoe where a character extends his rod to the west, with a frog on the hook. Under the frog, a shell walks between the roots of plants and water lilies.

In the western area of the same wall, a male heron was depicted, with a fish in the beak, and under its feet, another fish is emerging from a swirl.

At the first segment of the northern wall, there is only a frieze with water motives. On the second part, there is a duck hunter standing inside his canoe. With his left hand he holds the paddle; the left one throws the minacachalli, a 3 points-harpoon. There is a duck on the bow and another between the bulrushes.

The third part of the northern wall was designed to integrate the access staircase. A fisherman with short pants is standing between 2 plants. He has a conic net and a basket to store the fishes.

Behind him, there is a rattlesnake devouring a frog, and there are fishes in the water swirls.



SANTIAGO TLATELOLCO TEMPLE

The Temple of Santiago Tlatelolco was built on the place where Mexicas resisted military attack during 80 days. In January 1522 Hernan Cortes decided to construct a city and erase all evidence of the Prehispanic greatness.

He designated Tlatelolco as Indigenous lordship and Cuauhtemoc as its ruler, naming it Santiago to honor the patron saint of Cortes troops. Franciscan order was in charge of it.



In 1536 was founded the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. Religious men as Bernardino de Sahagun, Andres de Olmos, Arnolfo de Basaccio and the Indigenous friar Juan Badiano, author of the codex named after him and related to Mexican herbalist, studied and lived there.

In 1585 the church was flanked by the hospital and college of Santa Cruz. Fray Juan de Torquemada inaugurated it in 1610, with the appearance it has to present. The church was in service until the Reform, when it was looted and abandoned.

In late 19th century, Porfirio Diaz propelled development of railroads and the surroundings of the church changed. In the northern terrain yards, rails, warehouses and train unloading areas were installed. Aduana del Pulque (Pulque Customs) was built in the northeast terrain, a structure controlled to present by the Foreign Affairs Ministry (SRE).

The Temple of Santiago Tlatelolco was used as warehouse and the convent turned into a military jail until 1944, when the team led by Pablo Martinez del Rio recommended that the church should be open again to cult.



When conquerors arrived to Tlatelolco they ordered the destruction of Mexica vestiges and legacy. They used Prehispanic sculptures to build Santiago Apostol Temple. To present, a fragment of a deity linked to the earth, Tlaloc or Tlaltecuhтли can be observed in the back of the.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORY

TLATELOLCO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

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Guerrero, alc. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06300, Ciudad de México

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., **by appointment only.**

Free Entrance

Information

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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