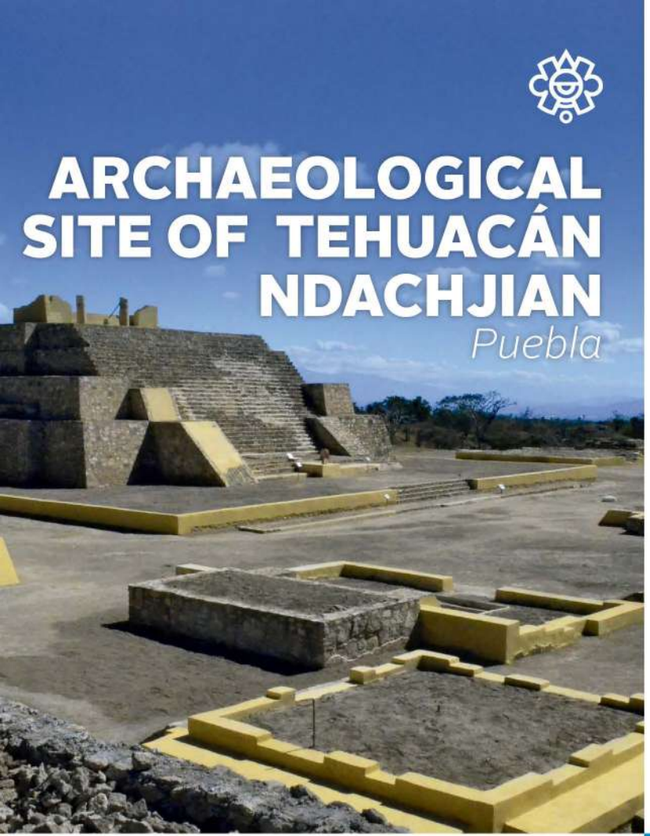


ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF TEHUACÁN NDACHJIAN

Puebla

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

*The archaeological site of **Tehuacán Ndachjian** is one of the four Popoloca Domain capitals of the province, along with **Tecamachalco** and **Tepexi el Viejo** in the modern-day state of Puebla, and **Coixtlahuaca** in the state of Oaxaca.*

The culmination of Popoloca groups and especially those living in the great city of Tehuacán Ndachjian dates to the Postclassic period, a time spanning from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries AD, when they were subjugated by the Mexicas.

*The archaeological site of Tehuacán Ndachjian is in the state of Puebla, in the municipality of Tehuacán near the town of San Diego Chalma. The site rises on a low plateau at the foot of the elevation known as Cerro Colorado. The settlement grew from north to south, in the shape of an inverted "Y" whose right arm descends to the valley floor, now known as Calcahualco. The archaeological site of Tehuacán was a **Shrine City.***

PLACE NAME	In Náhuatl the word *Tehuac•n* means "place of *tecuanes* [jaguars]," in the *Nguiwa* (Popoloca) language *Ndachjian* means "stored water."
ETHNIC AFFILIATION	The language spoken by the people known as Popolocas is Nguiwa; the Mexicas called it "Popoloca" (stutterer) because it was unintelligible to them. The origin of the Popolocas is related to another group, the "Nonoalcas," who came from the Atlantic coast and were polyethnic groups that also included Mixtecs, Mixes, Chinantecs, and Zapotecs, and other peoples.
PERIOD	The Popolocas are present in the northern state of Oaxaca and southern Puebla from the Classic period, from AD 400. People from this ethnic group were the makers of "Thin Orange" ceramics, considered the diagnostic trade ware associated with the great metropolis of Teotihuacan during the Classic period.

HOW TO GET THERE

The easiest and surest way to reach the site is crossing the city of Tehuacán and reaching the town of San Diego Chalma, on the same highway the first sign guides visitors to the archaeological site of Tehuacán.

ADMISSION

According to the Federal Fees Act, admission is free for students, teachers, and seniors with a valid ID; children under 13 and people with a disability.

Sundays: Free admission for Mexican citizens and foreign residents.

HOURS

From Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

PHOTOGRAPHY

For the use of any device to make videos, visitors must pay the fee stipulated by the Ministry of the Treasury. Non-professional photography, without the use of tripods, is free of charge, and must be done without a flash.

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GOBIERNO DE MÉXICO | CULTURA | INAH 1939 / 2019

GET READY TO EXPLORE

Complex I

It is composed of three plazas designated A, B, and C. Plaza A is framed to the north by a hypostyle hall, to the east by Platform 1 with a composite silhouette that has two sides, the main facade, where the stairway on the east faces Plaza B; this structure faces west and has an altar. Plaza A is adjacent to Complex II and there is a residential structure (Structure 10) south of it. Plaza B is framed on the west by a composite silhouette structure. On the east, it is limited by two pyramidal structures whose temples are no longer standing, the pyramidal platform designated Structure 4 stands on the north, and two elite residential compounds on the south.

Plaza C is the most important group in Complex I. It was an enclosed plaza with hypostyle halls on the north and south whose openings face the Central Plaza. A pyramidal platform called Structure 4 stands on the east and its stairway faces west and has an attached altar, with remains of the foundations of a temple on the upper part. The west side of the plaza is demarcated by three low pyramidal platforms that must have been crowned by temples. The first of them was a composite silhouette platform dedicated to the Wind God. Following the three platforms, a construction with a square plan corresponds to the temple dedicated to "New Fire."

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

- *The protected area of the archaeological site is 126 ha, where most of the monuments are concentrated.*
- *The entire pre-Hispanic city of Tehuacán was paved with lime floors.*
- *There are drains for rainwater control, which were used for all needs in everyday life, with water storage or pools associated with elite habitational zones.*
- *Mentioned among the first three friars who were in Tehuacán, Fray Toribio de Benavente, better known as Motolinía, states that it was in the monastery of Tehuacán where he finished writing his famous work "History of the Indians of New Spain" in 1540.*

Complex II

It is a habitational group composed of thirteen contiguous, independent houses. Each has its own entrance; all of them have several rooms and central patios. In addition, there are larger patios between them, framed by independent halls and altars with communal patios for special ceremonies.

This complex has subterranean drainage pipes to drain the patios and store water in underground basins beneath the floor. There is a *temazcal* (steambath), where the wall foundations are consistently made of stone, although the actual walls are made of adobe coated with lime and painted; the ceilings were flat with a slight slope to catch rainwater and channel it through earthenware pipes to storage basins.

Complex III

It is composed of two Plazas A and B. The latter is framed on the west by the pyramidal platform with a small attached altar. To the east there are two pyramidal platforms and a small altar in the middle. On the south, there are remains of elite housing.

Plaza A is limited on the north and east by habitational groups. Its hidden drains stand out in this space to channel water from the interior patios to a central collector pipe.

MAIN ATTRACTION

The Goddess of the Starry Skirt

As a Shrine City, various Mesoamerican deities have been identified. Thus, it is known that at its peak the Great Temple was dedicated to the Goddess of the Starry Skirt.



Central Complex

Much still remains to be explored and to be known about ancient Tehuacán. Recent research, including topographic work, has revealed the area occupied by the entire Central Complex at the site's peak. The tallest construction at the site, called the Templo Mayor or Great Temple, stands in this complex.

The Great Temple consists of four stepped tiers, with a large access stairway on the west. On the summit it preserves traces of an adobe temple that has a porticoed enclosure, with two columns in the central part. The interior room has a bench along its length on the front side of the temple. In the center, an adobe marker was probably associated with the people's astronomical knowledge.

The area of the Great Temple is framed by different constructions related to veneration and power. There are structures of different sorts. The east is limited by a large stairway where various buildings stand out, such as the Hall of Pillars and the Hall with Columns. The north is delimited by a massive contention wall and a prominent stairway providing access to other constructions. On the east side seven temple platforms dedicated to different deities stand out, at least three of them were related to the god Xipe Totec.

Because it is a Shrine City, various Mesoamerican deities have been identified. At its peak, the Great Temple was dedicated to the goddess of the Starry Skirt. In addition, other stone sculptures showing the god Xipe, the god of the wind, and deities of death have been found.

The provenance of the stone used in the sculpture is not known with precision, although the geological characteristics of the terrain indicate it is an area of travertine.

The stone sculptures in this zone are remarkable, because most of the deities were made as pottery censers, commonly known as Xantil figures, which are extremely fragile given their raw material. They generally appear in habitational contexts. The faces of these figures are moldmade and the bodies modeled. They were polychromed after firing and their iconography is related to that of the Codex Borgia. As a result, it has been possible to identify deities such as Xochiquetzal, Xochipilli, Tlaloc, and the Wind God, among others.

This great city had trade contacts with its neighbors in the southern part of the state of Oaxaca, the Mixtecs, and to the north in the area of what is Cholula today, where the groups are Nahuatl-speakers. Metal (bronze), probably the result of trade with Oaxaca or West Mexico, has also been found.



HIGHLIGHTS

The culmination of these Popoloca groups began with the fall of Tula, when they migrated to southern Puebla in what are now the towns of Tehuacán, Coxcatlán, Teotitlán del Camino, among other places mentioned in the Toltec Chichimec History.

According to the chronicles, Moctezuma I, the ruler of Mexico, had to first conquer Tehuacán to be able to continue to Coixtlahuaca, which was not easy, for the inhabitants of Tehuacán fought with all their might, taking refuge in the fortress of Cerro Colorado.





ESSENTIALS:

- **A** *Temple dedicated to "New Fire" in Plaza C*
- **B** *Platform dedicated to the Wind God in Plaza C*
- **C** *Great Temple*

ARCHITECTURE

The constructions of this city formed plazas, which in turn formed groups, which have been called complexes. In the distribution of these plazas, the natural gradient of the terrain was used in the distribution of these plazas, which were adapted in the construction sequence of the great city. The protected area of the archaeological site is 126 ha, where the majority of monuments are concentrated. The entire pre-Hispanic city of Tehuacán was paved with lime floors. Like a major city, it had drains to control rainwater, which were used to meet the needs in the daily life of the city's inhabitants, with water storage and pools associated with elite residential zones.

To date four complexes have been explored. In three of them archaeological remains have appeared in habitational areas, in the so-called Central Complex they are still being studied.

The distribution of these architectural complexes present Mesoamerican characteristics in temples on pyramidal platforms, as well as hypostyle halls on platforms, and habitational areas corresponding to dwellings occupied by lords and priests, in other words, areas for the elite.

The peasantry lived in the surrounding valley lands, and just as today, they cultivated the land and they lived in typical, single-room, Popoloca houses, built of wattle-and-daub, with palm roofs, and forms at the ends—which are called ears for their shape—that served for ventilation.

AND DON'T MISS IN TEHUACÁN

- The Cathedral, an eighteenth-century building in the Baroque and Neoclassical style on its facade and the Herrerian style in the church interior.
- The former monastery of San Francisco where construction was begun in the sixteenth century.
- The church of Our Lady of Carmen and its convent was the last foundation of the Barefoot Carmelites in New Spain.
- The portico of the building of the Municipal Palace, for its mural painting.