

# Función de las plazas en la época prehispánica del altiplano Mesoamericano

*The squares function in the Prehispanic Mesoamerican Highlands*

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## Resumen

Las plazas mesoamericanas corresponden a patrones muy definidos en el urbanismo prehispánico, fueron trazadas con referentes geométricos en estricto apego lineal.

Su uso y función en algunos casos, hasta la fecha son escasamente conocidos, sin embargo, los cronistas pudieron reconstruir gran parte de los referentes de uso.

La intencionalidad de estos espacios resultó muy importante en este inmenso conjunto arquitectónico. Sumado a sus calles y vías principales, las plazas fueron elementos para un buen y acompasado reparto de basamentos, palacios, accesos, conjunto de viviendas y talleres artesanales, los cuales actuaron como moduladores y distribuidores del ámbito urbano prehispánico.

Es la intención de este documento evaluar la función e importancia del trazo de las plazas urbanas mesoamericanas.

**Palabras Clave:** plazas, época prehispánica, mesoamericano.

## Abstract

The Mesoamerican squares correspond to very defined patterns in the Prehispanic urbanism, were drawn with relating geometric in strict linear adherence. Use and function in some cases, to date are barely known, however, chroniclers could reconstruct much of the references of use. The intention of these spaces was very important in this huge architectural complex. In addition to its streets and main thoroughfares, squares were elements for a good and rhythmic bases distribution, palaces, accesses, set houses and artisan workshops, which acted as modulators and distributors of Prehispanic urban areas. Is the intent of this document to assess the function and importance of the stroke of the Mesoamerican urban squares.

**Key Words:** squares, Prehispanic times, Mesoamerican.

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## Introduction

### **The squares function in the Prehispanic Mesoamerican Highlands**

The richness of the architectural content of the Mesoamerican archaeological sites allows us to analyze different construction stages in their various regions, each with its style and in a society whose urban structure was closely linked to the political and religious activities of the time.

Mesoamerican man's life was mainly focused on the religious aspect, which generated ceremonial sets which functioned as initial cores for the development of urban society.

These areas contained one or more small squares, where members of the community gathered for religious reasons, but at the same time the characters agreed and exchanged expressions about the problems of their communal life. To grow and expand cities, conditions were also modified and added new architectural elements, for this reason the functions, the design and the layout of the urban ensembles changed. The new growth centres and populations in developing demonstrated impressive form in open spaces like areas destined to the ceremonial plazas, public squares, the plazas-mercado and the tianquiztli macuil areas, also appearing the large courtyards and walkways, streets and channels, where both kings, as priests, magistrates, merchants, and common men used to move around.

These architectural expressions were in many cases cause materialization, story and graphic expression. The pre-Hispanic codices and several documents were used to testify to Indian stories, even when they had contact with Europeans of the sixteenth century. They were used as graphic material and diligent chroniclers of the colonial government; for the modern researcher they have been testimonies of spaces that had a vital importance for the Mesoamerican man, as perhaps was the agora and the forum for the Greek and Roman world, although with very different characteristics.

These open spaces (squares) were very important urbanistically in Mesoamerican cities, focusing our study in the Central Highlands region and the characteristics of these open

spaces, spaces traditionally known by researchers. Similarly, we will study the use and function that each one, its elements and symbolic components and materials, its spatial location in the pre-Hispanic urban and architectural fabric.

## **MESOAMÉRICA**

The term Mesoamerica was proposed in 1940 by Dr. Paul Kirchhoff to designate the group of villages located in Mexico and Central America, which had common basic features and came to form a pattern of civilization, based mainly on the cultivation of corn, beans, pumpkin, avocado, codices production and construction of buildings, with its consequent solar orientation, the mathematical measurement of space and knowledge of solar, lunar calendar, the ritual calendar of 260 days and the Venusian, so that the time was seen as a continuum, with a cyclic behavior, recurrent. His paraphernalia was the conception of the universe, where there were deities who presided over the space and all the natural elements. These gods were offered the sacrifice of blood and to deify the sun and water making captives favored; on the other hand, they had a stratified social system based on prestige.

This area with cultural, historical and geographical situation, was bounded by the river Sinaloa in northwestern Mexico, to liaise with the basins of the rivers Lerma and Soto la Marina flowing into the Gulf Coast, territory that extended until the Pacific coast of Central America, Nicaragua height. He understood a little more than 1.1 million km<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently, conventionally, the researchers divided the territory of Mesoamerica in five cultural regions, including the Central Highlands was formed by the city of Mexico and Puebla.

## **TIMELINESS**

To locate ourselves in time and space of this time is useful to use space-time correspondence below:

A) Villager. Preclásico 3000 B.C. - 200 B.C.

Cities incipient early urbanism 100 a. C. - 450 d.C.

B) Classic or theocratic

Full urban cities 450- 750 d.C.

C) Epiclassic

Cities Fortaleza 650 - 900 d. C.

D) Indigenous manors 1100 - 1350

E) Militaristic. States, empires and republics 1350 - 1521



**Superior Preclassic village. Museum of Anthropology and History, Mexico DF**

Location of a "street" and along the way scattered semi huts are located. On the left side of the model, open "collective" a space.

## **The community and the use of space**

In pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica it can be seen that primitive man had to live both collecting wild fruits such as water, later hunting and fishing without leaving the collection. Usually they were nomadic and used rudimentary tools; gradually they were established at various sites, mostly near water sources, in small groups that we call good bands, extended families or inbred communities, which slowly led to a sedentary life. Perhaps climate change from wet to dry, caused the increase in the collection of plant products, which ultimately also led to the emergence of agriculture.

Between the year 7000 and the year 3000 B.C. came the American miracle, corn, which long in the beginning was a meager living by their poor nutritional power, middlings

known as "pinole" made by slaughtering the small cob after drying in the sun, but it served and serves as food base of rural people.

Today we can say that the location of the first farmers was dispersed or organic, that is, the rural population put its first dwellings or houses in the central part of their land; in fact, currently in rural areas of the country still continues to this very dispersed settlement pattern called. This location separate homes while allowing them to monitor and cultivate their fields.

To originate a greater social complexity, higher concentrations of people emerged, not only or inbred family, but several groups or families, and as a result, the first villages grew and developed, so call hamlet of houses grouped together on a one place, made up of a complex society but lives in harmony or neighborhood. By partnering, the prehispanic man originated the appearance of the first ranches, gangs, villages, towns, villages and then cities.

In these villages there was apparently a strong social differentiation, nor a priestly body itself as such and trade and utility were in their infancy. Therefore, there is differentiation in the remains of the buildings located. This change in the urban development of the villages we can see with the model that reproduces the archaeological site of Montenegro in Oaxaca (Museum of Anthropology, Room Oaxaca), where we can appreciate its size that the homes already have a hierarchy of location, and especially already it abandoned their settlement dispersed mode, also can capture the characteristics as to the room. Here you can see that there is an alignment along a "street" and that this in turn leads to a common area or space that could be called "Central Location" perhaps a space for public use where they met to make decisions with respect to the community.

### **The growth of the ceremonial centers**

Such spaces originally formed as a single, isolated element, but growing population multiplied simultaneously not only with religious foundations, but also with other support buildings, adding elements to the initial set. Its forms and spaces became increasingly more elaborate to become true religious groups. Among the most unique is the ceremonial center of Cuicuilco, circular in shape and that to date still remains a source of unexpected findings. (August 22 newspaper Reforma, cultural section).

Some of these sites came to lead to big cities and others eventually were abandoned by their builders. Needless to say, some of these sacred sites that were part of nature, remain of

visits and offerings by current indigenous groups, such as the small platform Xochipila in Xicotepec Juarez, the Sierra Norte de Puebla, the heart of the current mestizo settlement. At the bedside of a polluted river now, Totonac group still comes with offerings to his sacred place, ignored by contemporary society, alien to its people and customs.

With the diversification of farming community enriched, villages grew and multiplied; the social structure became more complex and appeared magic, shamanism, the shaman. Environment conducive to contemplation and appearance of the first divinities: the old fire god, the sun god, the god of water, the god of the night, the god of the stars, the god of the mountain. During this period many of the villages were transformed into villas and many of them first appeared a new building: the temple.

The temple would later be the nucleus of a stepped construction in roughly pyramidal shape, set most of the time on a compact platform of land and located in the center of the village. Beside her was a nascent religious and administrative complex shaped buildings that occupied the sides necessarily a physical place. Thereafter, the life of the people revolved around this construction made of non-residential purposes but worship, the temple, and since then from its solar farming residents and / or tax attended the religious complex for both religious and administrative services without having to be forced to leave for long periods their living spaces and agricultural plots. At the same time, the kind and quality of the various constructions allow us to see the complexity of its urban evolution. We assume that this was the result of a change in social organization, then turning differentiation between different social classes and even in different urban groups.

The great value of Mesoamerican cities is supported and complemented by the idea that men of the New World had the scale developed to a great view of the universe, where spaces were not limited or constrained by walls, terrain features or rudeness climate. For them the most important was the centrality of the set, where spaces were nested from a main point that was where the largest ceremonial center was located; establishing the principle of openness and planning prior stenographic community spaces and ensuring access by roads, mostly straight, wide and long; as salient point precise orientation architectural carefully according to the positions and movements of celestial bodies in space. All this reveals the advance planning; lifestyle outdoor inhabitants, whose daily activities were carried directly under heaven without protected under one roof.

Here you can allow freedom to specify which does not apply to our knowledge confusing features a medieval European term square -extension of streets- with the open spaces of Mesoamerican ceremonial center, or even more, with the delimited area used for indigenous flea markets or on specific days gathered the inhabitants of the region for sale or barter of their products.

The medieval square was a wider street, generally bounded by the buildings that formed the perimeter road system within which it was part. There used to be this one or perimeter buildings facing major reason for the expansion of the street.

A ceremonial center instead was a set of enclosures delimited mainly by the walls of the foundations of the temples with marked entrances at the corners first and then by central access, which only indicated the entrances, but you prevent them or control them. Following them he was reached by wide straight roads. In each city there was a major ceremonial center that marked its physical center, the heart of religious activities, and this architectural phenomenon repeated a particular level in each calpulli or barrio, where he also had a ceremonial space smaller scale, depending on the importance of the place.

### **The square and religion**

All Mesoamerican cultures were polytheistic. Humans, animals and natural phenomena were conceived as part of a continuum that encompassed the entire universe and that was governed by dialectical laws. The stargazing was directly linked to the socioeconomic processes of agricultural societies, accordingly, the cosmos in turn was personified by many deities, one for each of the objects they could see (in many of the sites considered special as Monte Alban, Xochicalco and Chichen Itza found astronomical observatories).

Later, this knowledge would give the basis for organizing the calendar, predict the weather, bring mathematics, knowledge of botany and zoology; They would lead to applications in medicine, while writing emerge and with it the first notions of geography, surveying, architecture and so on. This definitely anchored man in his environment, therefore, the elements of nature and society came to form a single unit.

Independent of the work done by collectors, fishermen, hunters and later by farmers, who were themselves the forces or major production bases of communities, some specialized

people appeared from small learned by contact and oral tradition knowledge herbalism, the use of certain animals and their use as medicines or medicine; They also learned to read the positions of the stars. For this they are recognized as shamans and later as priests. Later they became a productive class, being useful its climate knowledge for agriculture. Such knowledge generated a social class that gradually became highly powerful, which took control of the group. Under the previous scheme, in the village square period it should have served as the most important architectural and structural element of the social life of the community and not only for religious activities, but for being the meeting point of their social and political .

The headquarters of the intellectual work of the priests and astronomical observers, was what specialists have called the "place or sacred space" where the whole environment, the landscape is so lively, the smallest details take on outstanding significance . The site is loaded or place of human history, that is, acquires the status of "myth" because the fact of its founding is not presented as an isolated event, but as a complement to a spiritual action. The site or sacred place is part of a complex in which various circumstances, facts, figures or beings, or simply the place that chose a visionary body for a ceremony or ritual or newspaper isolated, making it sacred part; therefore will arise where the constructions of the ceremonial center, the main point of the settlement itself is the physical representation of the universe. Therefore, the ceremonial center is the result of the essential structure of the villages, where it emerges for the first time a huge pyramidal base or platform where a hut or house of sticks is placed, which you will call "temple "where the prevailing image of the deity shall be deposited. When man could see that the room he had built for his deity was too small to accommodate more than two people, it decided that the ceremonial procedure was performed as close as possible, but in open spaces.

So we can say that the open space that was used for community activities in all possible, religious versions, and / or education, should be a planned space but greater than or equal to the same base of the temple. In this space in general, you will be enabled greater capacity than is necessary to accommodate all the inhabitants of the city, since these activities are expected to receive foreign visitors in large numbers, depending on the solemnity of the celebration. They also became in confined spaces groups to evolve into a more rigid theocratic society, under the control of the priestly caste, which symbolized the political power at that time.



Initially, these open spaces that henceforth call "prehispanic plazas, ceremonial squares, or religious places", as forced ties have pyramidal structures, which are the carriers of temples, religious ties at a basic unit; without forgetting that in small towns also places functioned as open spaces for civil or political group meetings, although it was primarily this space to the ceremonial religiosity influence of the temples and surrounding buildings where it is exercised is used the power political.

### Religious places and their surroundings

Thus it arose what might be called the Mesoamerican city, which was a huge panoramic scene and planned to the horizon in which the company noted a convergence point, the square, the site occupied a special place for the realization of the set of external actions backed by tradition to worship and express reverence to their gods, place or space considered as the physical representation of the center of the universe.

The religious spaces appear as an element of social and political conditions of the communities. They were a centralizing element for bringing people together, there came all those laborers who were dispersed. The main component of these architectural complex was the pyramidal base and its temple, with an esplanade that unfolded before the set with a small temple built like a promontory drawn axially, ie, the center of these open spaces an altar was placed to be performed in ceremonies in view of the concurrent.

We should note that at the bottom of some stairs of access to the temples there were some monoliths or stelae, which usually marked dates related to the deity or who dedicated the temple. The places where the streets were accessed mostly was in the corners, never front, ie the sites placed in the corners which was reached by narrow lanes of 1.60 meters maximum and abutted other secondary squares or side streets. In the pyramidal base of the temple, on the dice or higher tops of the balustrades lining the stairs, carrying banners they were placed totemic animals, permanent guardians as the mighty jaguar, eagles and coyotes; or large braceros burning day and night, 365 days a year. So many of these places adopted the names of deities: Night Square, opposite the Pyramid of the Moon, Plaza del Sol, Plaza de Tlaloc. (Roman, 1981)

According to need, these spaces emerged gradually, surrounding himself with additional buildings such as administrative, that solved the needs of ordinary men. The growth was not

only incorporated administrative services but also the palaces and mansions of the main government, becoming promptly sites corresponding to an urban elite. Thus, the new buildings were part of the big city in most cases. This kind of places had a function originally intended to be a space occupied by the groups to the collective religious celebrations, which were manifested in a thousand ways: dancing, singing, talking and sharing the best of their ethnicity and customs. Special sites, which ended the journey of indigenous groups, many of them during the periods in which there were no ceremonies, became places occupied by the general public, especially when it was not yet full control of priests .

### **Civil and recreational spaces**

From the second half of the Classic period, that is, around 400 AD, and for the following periods of 650/900 to 1200, the Epi 1200 and the arrival of the Spaniards, production field allows the growth of the population, cities should have increased open spaces for public use, and fostered widely tolerated by centralizing administration and essentially used in dual military and political-civil function. Then the streets became a new function, in which civil eminently eventually become more common information exchange, where it attests to the daily events and the place where people communicate progress or progress a military campaign of conquest or the appointment of new officials and other dignitaries, the place where people filed their complaints and where they communicate the solutions. But what happened in these places when these activities are not performed? All before or after a religious celebration, to a political campaign or a new appointment, then gradually appeared a new feature days, aimed at the ceremony but not the leisure and fun.

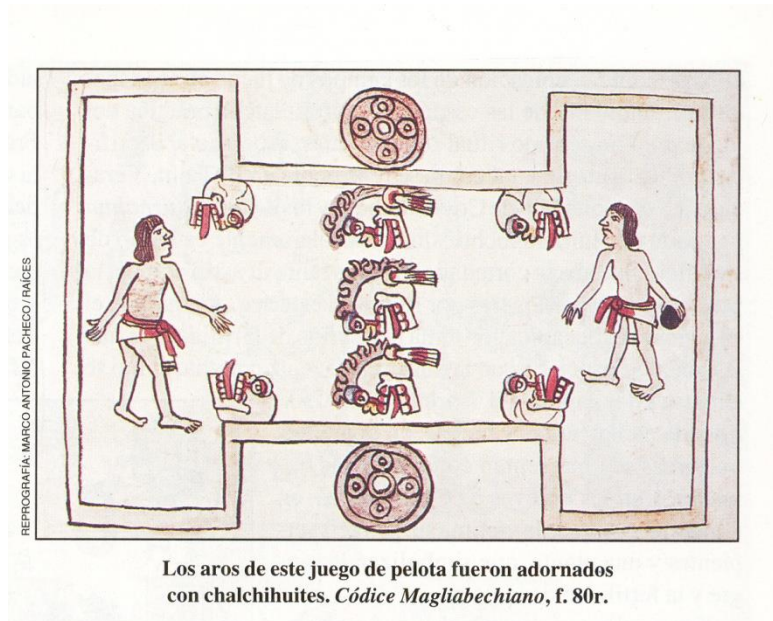
At first, as part of the ceremonial paraphernalia, the big ceremonial or sacred places were added open temple known as the "ball game, or Tlachtli", which was used to celebrate through it over the stars or planets in the sky. The ball represented the planets and space "court" the cosmos, so it was paramount in them the orientation and position of the temples of tribute. These were placed at one end of the main square, occupying a whole side, as in the case of Tajin, Tula or Chichen Itza, elsewhere these ball games are located in the secondary or adjoining squares. There is also the problem that in one city there were several "types" of ball games, an example of this are located in the archaeological zone of Cantona, Puebla, where between 24 excavated, there is a structure of small dimensions, which He estimates experts, it was perhaps for children or people of stature escasísima (image). We have seen that the

typology of these areas varies in each community and region, as well as the dimensions of the architectural limitations.

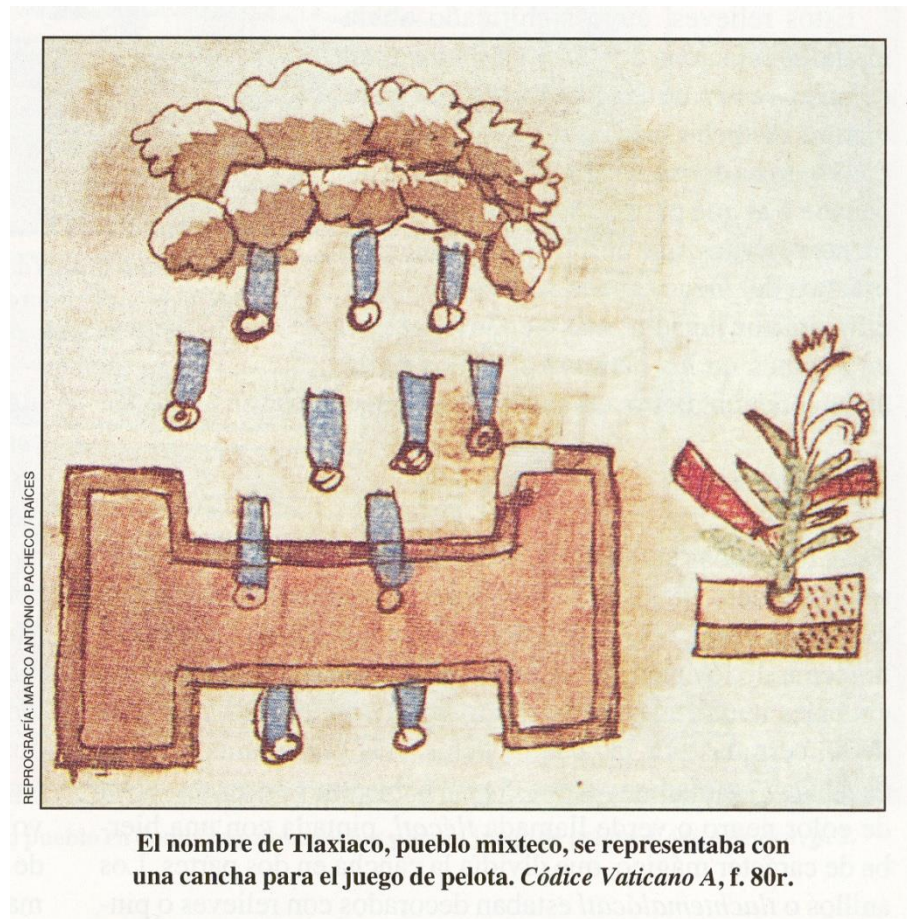
Over time, these "Tlachtle" or spaces lined turn walls or temples, were used in other celebrations were not just religious, but popular where racing and betting to players according to the social and religious situation of each individual in the community, that is, turned into amusement. This places them in the sphere of power and history in Mesoamerica but also according to the region and time changed the characteristics of type, importance and meaning of community. Due to the size of the Mesoamerican region, the figure exceeds the number of Greek or Roman sports facilities as well considering that the ball game was over these events in his role as ritual or sports. According to the investigations of archaeologists found so far more than 1500 tennis ball game, besides being an ancient sport was a ritual political and possibly economic role.

The practice of the game will be displayed in the morphology of their courts could say that initially the homogeneous model of the Mexican plateau would be composed of a space bordered by two buildings and each structure composed of a slope inclination dimensions and variables in whose narrow walls parallel to each other are one or several markers or a central ring, topped by a crown of some meters. Sometimes the ends of the courts were open, others were limited by high walls ends of platforms where uproots religious buildings, giving the space a character of a closed square. These games were known as plants "H" or double "T".

According to several authors (the game and its symbolism is not always needed architectural spaces to exist) in many villages in their relationships or codices he speaks of "Play Ball" but does not exist in places an architectural construction or a defined field. Also in many indigenous petroglyphs and documents along the temples and squares are represented to the ballgame, and various documents of the sixteenth century we are told that besides political ceremonies and rites relating to game officials and the nobility They played ball.



However, the evolution of tennis and the game does not reflect a symbolic unity within the practice; by groups that exerted, there are many hypotheses about it in relation to that symbolism was in itself a ceremonial warrior, representing the astral struggles, fertility rites, or simply the role of economic struggle. In a magical interpretation of this space and according to the position of the court, usually lower than other building structures, represent the site where the ruler or priest faces the forces of the underworld to end the dry season and ensure life with the rebirth of vegetation, thus forming a "rite of fertility."



In the town of Tlaxiaco in the state of Oaxaca, located in the Mixteca Alta, he was made one of the largest regional "flea market" Altiplano. Currently the market offers the most beautiful pieces in basketry and cordage with materials of the region and the most exotic culinary combinations, such as fresh tomato and pumpkin in attractive packaging presentation ancestral heritage of indigenous astronomical wealth.

### Places of tianquiztli

In indigenous societies, the need to exchange products originated exclusive spaces for trade. The company earned surplus production and initiated a process organized for exchange; once solved the supply problem of the community, barter appears and then the marketing process starts, mainly between the nearby villages. So we can say that these people had to resort to a physical space where he had to make the trade, so an open space or plaza, which in many cases eventually techaría, and where specifically came the merchants elected to make barter. This site is known in Nahuatl as tianquiztli, or market.

Fray Juan de Torquemada made mention of prehispanic Mexico markets:

*... Numerous are the testimonies that remain on the market and trade in prehispanic Mexico. On the one hand, there are the news of some of the conquerors, who as Hernan Cortes and Bernal Diaz del Castillo, expressed his admiration for the greatness, good police and variety of products or flea markets, particularly that of Tlatelolco. Furthermore, as chroniclers Sahagun, Motolinia and Duran transcribed not only what they could see in the downstream markets Conquest, but also on reports and relationships that they got from their native informants. In the Codex matritense of the Real Academia de la Historia several texts preserved in the Nahuatl language that allow the study directly not only markets, but also trade and economic life of Mexico-Tenochtitlan.*

We must clarify here that in principle these areas were not occupied or used permanently but periodically, so it was named tianquiztli macuil, market every 5 days, we thought that the Products were purchased most of which They were perishable and could only last used in consumer hands this time without damage due to deficiencies for storage. As a basic response to complement the needs of families living in such concentrations, raised up a place to be a meeting point, commitment and communication; not only selling goods, but a fundamental element in the social and cultural fabric of nations. We can also say that the tianquis was given according to the quantities and origin of the goods.

The macuil tianquiztli principle will in border and close to the nuclei of housing areas or villages. In many cases, these spaces are located within the core of the community, or on the outskirts of "trace" of the population. As they progressed in complexity of society, we find regional markets might call fixed or permanent, we located in high production sites or in a location at the confluence of roads and / or traditional trade routes of the various groups in the region. Many of these markets lasted from classical times until the arrival of Hispanics and have subsequently been considered of great importance; Examples are: the Atzacapotzalco, Tianguismanalco Tlatelolco, Tianguistengo (State of Mexico), which Torquemada devoted a study to one "... dedicated to the study of markets and trade, we include here the reference to Tianguis Mexico City, particularly those of Tlatelolco neighborhood of San Juan and San Hipolito "), include others such as Tlaxiaco (Oaxaca), Itzocan and Tepeaca (Puebla), and many sites the Maya area, where it has several market areas, an example is the tianquiztli located and excavated Tikal, which proved a huge esplanade surrounded, like Tlatelolco, premises and warehouses where the goods deposited.

Potters, weavers and embroiderers of sisal and cotton weaving baskets and mats, lapidary and tanners, preparers paints and paper amate, designers and drafters: about many of these markets quickly neighborhoods, according to many specialties generated pen. This gave rise to a local and particular framework which in turn created new spaces for work and led to the most rapid commercialization of products, reaching nearby neighborhoods to the market

places in small spaces or in smaller squares that marked with a specific function within the framework of the community field in many cases perhaps more focused on everything related to the products and support religious pilgrims. Given the immediate needs of the inhabitants, many of these markets had the need for judges to regulate prices and dirimieran disputes between buyer and seller, in addition to large traders also they had the need for tlacuilos (scribes) to accounts and make notes about what was sold and taxes paid and received. They also had to keep a record of who provided them necessary, and staff to carry, fetch and carry goods and everything related to the daily trade.

So we can add what Torquemada described markets of ancient Mexico:

*“...And back to our Mexican Tianguetz, say things that are more grief and pregnancy, such as stone, wood, lime, bricks and other in this way, dejábanlas in canoes or put into the language of water so there they were to they wanted to buy. Traíanse (and tráense today) market thin and thick mats, backpacks called, of all kinds. But the fine is painted like a carpet, so that can be put into the camera any lord, and of those used by the kings in their living rooms and bedrooms. Traíase this market charcoal, ash, china clay and all sorts of painted, glazed and very cute, they make all kinds of vessels, from jars to shakers.*

*Tráense skins Raw and dressed with deer hair and without it, many dyed colors, for shields, shields, leather jackets, shoes, stick arms Aforros also hides of other animals and birds, marinated with his pen and filled with herbs, some large and some girls: a thing, to see the colors and strangeness. The richest is mercadería blankets, and of these many differences; They are cotton, some thinner than others, white, black and other colors; some large, some small, some to bed, damascadas delicious, well worth seeing, for other layers, sometimes hanging, others for pants, linen shirts, toques, tablecloths, fine linen and many other things.*

*Téjense blankets with rich colors and some even after the arrival of the Spaniards with gold thread and silk of various shades. Those sold have wrought the work made of rabbit hair and feathers very tiny birds, which, incidentally, to admire. Vendíanse also made blankets for winter pen, white and give a lot of heat. Selling rabbit hair yarn, cotton fabrics, yarn, white and dyed skeins.*

*The nicest thing to see was the poultry that was brought to market, but now it does not bring much. Because it does not take much Indians as they used to, and causes all the Indians have been timid, and given to other more home offices and for those who remain are no longer as lagoons frequented these birds, because the pastures They have withered cattle that walk by them. And because our (but not always) a few times to make them evil in this deal, removing the nets and doing other humiliations. And this is the cause, and not say, like Herrera, which is too much freedom they have, because they have not been sleeping at home many of them, as are fleeing from immense services that charge them says. And such was the amount, which has no number; others because of these birds ate meat and wore clothes and drew others with them was much to see their colors and differences, a gentle, another whitewater of prey, air, water and land.*

*The richest, which were brought to market the works of gold and silver, some melted, some stone carved with such great delicacy and subtlety that many have been admiring the highly skilled silversmiths of Castile, therefore, that They never could understand how they had wrought. Because they saw hammer, chisel or trail, or any other instrument that they used, of which lack the Indians. Traíanse also works pen, which puts admiration workmanship and everything is dealt with elsewhere.”*





Market Model of Tlatelolco at the Museum of Anthropology and History. Mexico City, DF

Mercado de Tlateloco

Vista de zona porticada

### TLALTELOLCO (plaza – mercado)

The Aztecs were the last group arrived at the Basin of Mexico. It tells the story that after his pilgrimage, the first group sought shelter in a nearby place to chichimeca-Tepanec of Atzacpotzalco manor, but the locals away, taking refuge in the Mexica "Chapultepec" as great was his "need" were and they stole food and women Atzacpotzalco, which caused great anger and annoyance. Tepanecas sought alliance lord of the Colhua, and fought together, defeating them and holding them as workers, Atzacpotzalco taken to use them in half and the other half of Culhuacan. Tepanecas forced his subjects to work on the islands of salt that were east of the manor, and they asked Tezozomoc, lord of Azcapotzalco, permission to settle on the island unsalted they called Tlatelolco, "mound of sand" uninhabited until that time, they founded a village. The tecpaneca prince also granted a relative to be their governor in the year 1351, and since then became known as Mexican-Tlatelolcas.

On the death of the ruler (1409), his son took power, founded a tianquiz who was on an island nearby (the current market place San Juan), eventually managed to grab the salt is not taxed at the Tepanecs and trade with it, the intense trade strengthened the Mexican political and commercially achieve the degree of independence from Atzacpotzalco through marriage alliances with the house of Prince Tezozomoc, but the death of their plight began again, so next with Texcocans Tenochca and had to launch the revolution.

For the year 1428, the people of central and northeastern central highland lakes, sought independence from the Tepanecs Atzacpotzalco, to achieve established the so-called Triple



Alliance because in reality it was made of 4 manors, Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, Tacuba, and Tlatelolco.

After separation of Atzacapotzalco, and the conquest of other peoples before the Tepanecs subject to the first three villages tribute from conquered handed and left the management Tlatelolcas markets and goods, receiving the name of "Pochtecas" responsible for such duties. These were organized under a military structure and traders were considered warriors.

The organization of the Triple Alliance, led to the expansion of the Mexican territory of the manors of the Lerma River Basin (State of Mexico), in the vicinity of the Great Lakes Basin of Mexico, and in the Basin Puebla-Tlaxcala River, stretching north of Veracruz, Oaxaca and even the Soconusco, Chiapas.

In the towns of Atzacapotzalco and Itzocan, the "rule" established a "slave market" (the misnamed slaves, who were great warriors conquered in battle, who were considered the highest ceremonial offerings, that is, they were intended to be sacrificed on the sacrificial stone of the "Great Temple" they were like princes and care had to be well fed and well treated, which was done for an entire year).

Rivalries between the components of the alliance led to major conflicts that provoked among other things the overthrow of Tlatelolcas lords and mastery of this town by the Mexica, which eventually control the whole market Tenochca and therefore receive all flow benefits.

The function of this market was expending all kinds of goods that occurred or were produced in Mesoamerica: perishable meat and fish pond, river and sea crafts of all kinds, live animals, sumptuary and utilitarian rhinestones, and a series product coming out for sale to other markets and other regions, prompting not only the establishment of specialized people (so it could consider Tlatelolco as preindustrial city, especially the neighborhoods established in the vicinity), but also He led a special typology in housing, consisting of spacious patios where they worked outdoors, imported materials are used and the rooms were at the bottom or side, to deposit free materials spaces and thus work more freely and in the required volume.

In addition to the data provided by archaeologists, comment that this market exists historical overview of the chroniclers, for example, Don Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who speaks

of the features he appreciated the "tianquiz" of Tlatelolco for the tour made with Hernán Cortés:

*... They were many chiefs of Montezuma to accompany us; since we arrived in the main square, the Tlatelolco is said, as we had not seen anything, we were amazed at the crowd of people and merchandise that was in it and the great concert and regiment all had. The chief who were with us we were showing; every kind of goods were by themselves and had located and identified their seats. Let us begin with the dealers in gold, silver and precious stones, feathers and embroidered goods, and other goods to Indians and Indian slaves and slaves say they brought many of them to sell at that place, as the Portuguese bring Negroes of Guinea and fetched them tied to long poles with collars to their necks, because there are others flee and let loose ...*

*... And I would have finished saying all the things that were sold and there were so many different qualities of what we had just to see and to overthrow it as the great square was full of so many people and all fenced portals in two day would not be ...*

*... Among us there were soldiers who had been in many parts of the world, in Constantinople, in Italy and Rome, as well compasada that square with both concert and size and crowded they had not seen...<sup>1</sup>*

New alliances of blood among the most prominent families, contributed to the birth of Prince Cuatémoczin Xocoyotli tlacatecuhtli, who since 1515, at the age of 13, was the second military governor of Tlatelolco and then his master. It was in this space that ran the indigenous world's largest market, as the symbol of the strongest economic power in Mesoamerica, the Aztec. To which we can add what Torquemada tells of Tlatelolco:

*... There were and are today in the whole land of Anahuac, in many towns, they call tianquiztli markets. And are the places where they leave to their contracts, so large and spacious, no city in the world that has more anchurosos the know. Especially cities and large towns, like Tlaxcala, Cholula, Tepeyácac, Huexotzinco, Texcoco, Xochimilco and all (finally) those with a great number of people, who are without number are.*

*And not to delay this chapter almost infinite things, will reduce all to this city of Mexico. Because seen here may be for them to understand all the other parts of the earth. It has this most excellent city, in every square and fairly empty place, every day eating markets. So as to provide the Spaniards and the Indians their homes, there must go away. Outside these markets there are other places where the competition is most people. But without these, has three very key places, one of which is the Plaza de Santiago Tlatelolco, which concurred in time of their paganism and Christians after many years, all the people to sell and buy the necessary things to try human. But apparently something away, this trade deal and the other two, where certain days of the week gathering a large crowd of Indians to this ministry that was transferred.*

*The first tianquiztli, which is the part of Santiago, is a square plaza, surrounded by the three parties of portals and shops, and the sidewalk is the tecpan, which are council houses and Audience, and assists them and lives the governor of this part of town. The fourth sidewalk and house occupies the convent of St. James, which is Franciscos friars. In the middle of this square, which is one of the largest in the world, he was hanged and a beautiful fountain, whose water was brought to her by the friars of San Francisco in his principles, and not by the Spaniards as Herrera says, but the second time I got the Azcapotzalco, which is a league to the west. He cost the city in terms of materials, but the friars and the Indians brought worked.*

<sup>1</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo. *Verdadera Historia de la Conquista de la Nueva España*, editorial Porrúa, México.

*This is no ordinary market place, but not many people, for the treatment of other two have passed and the Indians already be made to go to them. And it is so extreme, that being the guardian of the convent and wanting to reduce things in some way to its former use, I asked the Marquis of Salinas, Luis de Velasco, the second, then came to rule the second time that he commanded that had treatment and general market in that place any day of the week for the conservation of the people. And he had commanded him and proclaimed Friday. And although the first of these was that part, it was a lot and very concerted and colorful, refused to those of other neighborhoods attend. And second, when we figured it out again, it was less. And the third was almost no people, because the people watching their neighbors came, went to look. It was strictly for this command to be supported and not profit. Finally, and this market and square, more memory serves being of being.*

*The ordinary market of this city, is the one in the town of San Juan, which is also very large square so that in quotes and fit last hundred thousand people with their goods. There was every day of the week people in this market or Tianguetz (for so they called the Spaniards, without taking away the name of the Indians, and has also been left with the many other things), and then in the time of Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza and visitor Tello de Sandoval ordered that the people who came to these two Tianguetz each week, Wednesday and Thursday came together in another large square near the town of the Spaniards, who were just as then, these markets were far from their homes. But now they fall under the Spanish city, and even in the alleys of the Indians there are very few who do not have many inhabitants, as well as Spaniards mestizos and mulattos.*

*This third Tianguetz called San Hipólito to be near the church of the holy city attorney and to have won this day, some say, but according to others it was the day of Santa Clara. But because no universally reads her church and therefore so was not in the schedule and standings from prayed this holy, they will not found it when they wanted to note the day and thus became the immediate, which is followed, where are the Hipólito Casiano saints and blessed. And this I say, although talk of Tianguetz, so you know who go into it.*

*In this Tianguetz go of all peoples of the lagoon, and it was so people who gathered in this large market, you could barely walk through it on horseback or on foot, and there were so many contractors, who do not dare to say the number that will look fabulous that hears and has not seen. Because there was a hive of bustle as much once I saw it, and was not then in many parts, than it was before. Many come to buy, and countless others, to see what sells. Most are women, below about tendejones or shadows that make for sun protection. They have the merchandises placed on the floor and each knows and has its seat, another would take, because comes running since pagan among them, in this as in all markets of New Spain, have each trade your seat and place. And each had mercadería place. Because of this market, such as the lagoon come to buy and sell, there were many canoes in the ditch it deserves, covering the water.*

*In the other big towns, that call our provincial capitals, the Fray Toribio Motolinia they had each other, neighborhoods, spread the merchandises that had to sell he says. And so a neighborhood selling baked bread and other chili and salt and other other evil cooked. And those who were engaged in a granjería, could not meet each other which was fed remarkable curiosity. But all together, they could sell centli, which is corn on the cob, when the bread is caught and then beans.*

On the other hand, we say that Cuitlahuac was a remarkable character of the Mexica, who staged the bloodiest battles against the Spaniards, as were those of "La Noche Triste" and Otumba. Cuauhtemoc, lord of Tlatelolco, was the successor of this man when he dies by the spread of smallpox. The great Cuauhtemoc, the last opponent conquest made by both Tlatelolco the last bastion of the Aztec resistance. As he fell, the battle is lost before the Spanish, the August 13, 1521, and they take prisoner.

## **TYPE**

### **The open squares (planned spaces)**

These places were all intended for use and service of the common people, where they could serve the exchange and group socialization. Whether to use informal, religious or social (dance, music and singing) commercial type. Many of them did not have a regular shape, they stretched into the remnants of the population or in areas bordering villages organized linearly and were occasional flea market where they settled.

### **-colectiva Square**

The regular shapes of squares established in major cities that were structured orthogonally, even those with more relaxed or open forms, allowing them some freedom of solution, especially the Classic Maya period, such as those located in Tikal, Copan, Uaxactun, Quirigua Kaminaljuyú, and even in the highlands such as Teotihuacan, Tajin, Xochicalco and Tlachihualtepetl. Spaces where the common citizen could move, and served as liaison between streets, alleys and grand avenues.

### **Closed spaces**

These types of places correspond to features of a religious nature where only the priests could be in them, only for initiates sites where sacrifices were offered the gods. These places were limited by high patios or decks, or intermediate steps that prevented him who was able to look outside and witness the paraphernalia that they performed. In them the items of equipment were needed, as were the fechadoras or commemorative stelae, temples or shrines, bearers, incense burners, and so on. There were also places corresponding to constructive luxuries, truly unique sites, polished floors, or covered with mica, some with inlaid decorations and ceremonial walking without sandals if necessary, perfectly paved courtyards *junteados*.

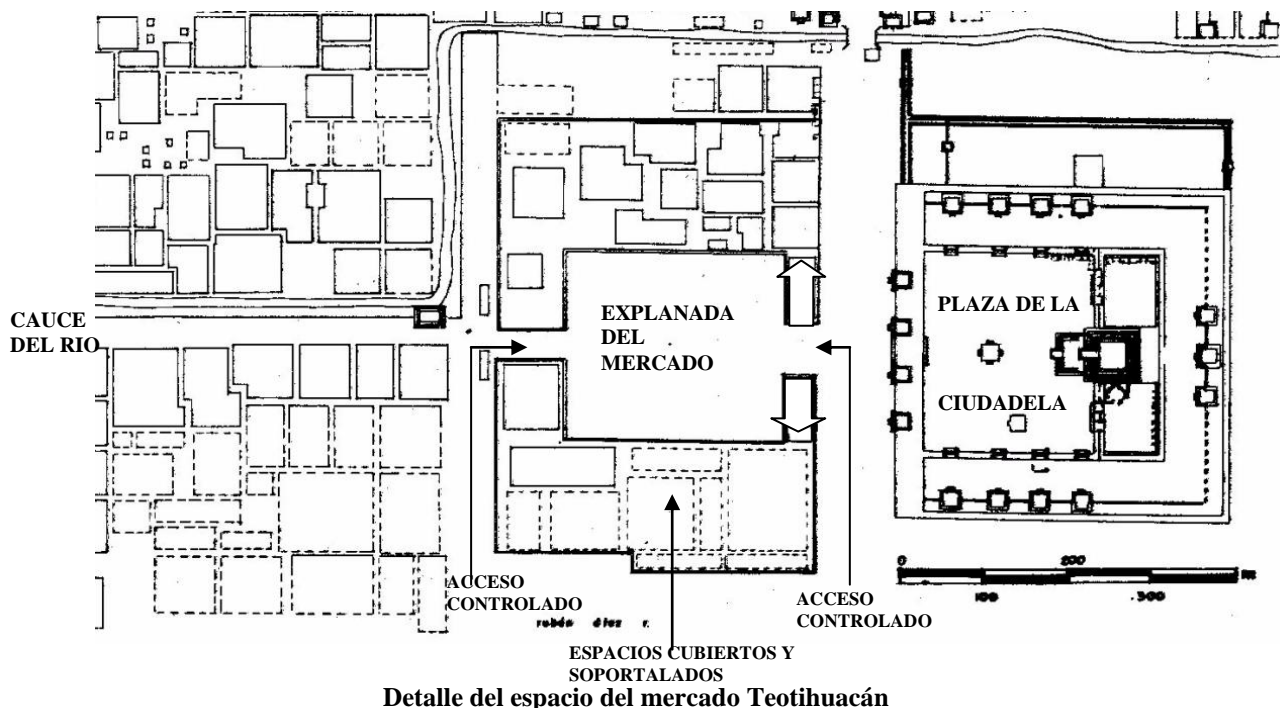
### **Secondary spaces**

It was a minor spaces, those spaces that served as links between roads and other open spaces in the city, places that were intended for use by the common man and that allowed him to move among the allowed sites. Some of these places were due to strokes and orthogonal lines

of the big city and in smaller towns perhaps even with irregular shapes were integrated urban village guidelines. They served to shelter them in any space and spend the night with the sole accompaniment of a mat or mat. They worked to interact commercially in that deep and unique world of the pre-sales or post them barter circumstantial. Also they worked to identify the spies of the enemy groups by means of observation, also housed the pilgrims.

Sleeps - market

Such places were those that were established from the needs and functions of a growing population, maybe it emerged from negotiations and alliances between different groups with local produce agricultural surpluses and high consumption. One of them was the famous market fixed Tianguis or city or another larger than could have been a Regional Tianguis. In Teotihuacan the year 400 AD, there was already a space for the market, with a defined arrangement located in front of the Citadel. Its outline was rectangular, with slopes to accommodate different kinds of goods. Unfortunately, the establishment of the museum site on the area of 1960 did not allow us to have more knowledge about it.



Another example would be tianquiz of Tlatelolco, which broadly describes the chroniclers. Interestingly, their idea of joint spaces and its rich environment. In the description of the square - market, the role was fully defined, supported, organized and properly drawn. (Images of the Museum of Anthropology)

*... and so we leave the main square without her and got to the large patios and fences where is the great cu had before coming to him, a great circuit courts, which I think were more than the square in Salamanca, and two fences around of masonry and the same site all paved patio and large stones of white and very smooth slabs and those where there was whitewashed stone was polished and very clean which will not find nor straw or dust on it.*

Tlatelolco was not only busy around by merchants, staff and the main housing; nearby were also service people for loading and unloading, carries both freight and characters; and since early times took shape the famous neighborhood of Mecapalapa or shippers of packages, which carried by a tie that bound her head, carrying the load so this subject and on the back, the loop fastener called them "mecapal"; the neighborhood was located next to a landing at one of the big channels coming from the south of a town called Iztapalapa, today the neighborhood is still one of the largest exchange of goods in central Mexico, called bravo neighborhood Tepito.

## **Formal expression**

### **The design of the seats**

Prehispanic plazas were designed in rectangular or square, were so limited by three or four generally pyramidal bases, and sometimes more buildings, as is the case for the vast central plaza of Monte Alban. The buildings and the space of places were regulated by the observation of the stars, therefore, its orientation was astronomical.

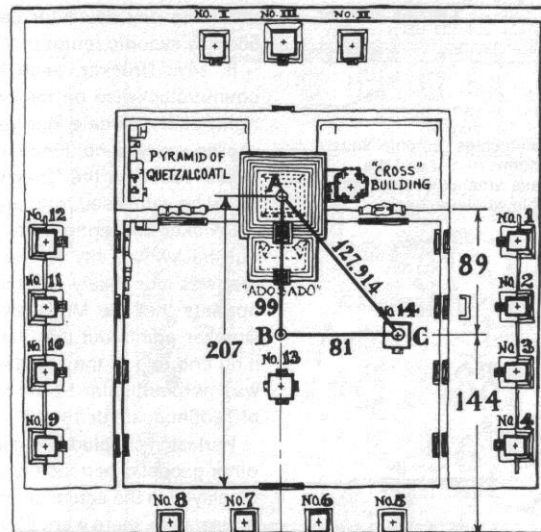
Architectural elements of the squares corresponding to orthogonal lines designed from knowledge of geometric space, making his stroke on shafts made from support points located at elevations of the nearby hills according to the deviation from the sun and the changing orientation the solstices and equinoxes.

The squares can be found at ground level, or on large platforms or different gaps between buildings (Teotihuacan). It's casual center find them a base of small height, which often sets the tone for the direction and distribution of the outbuildings. In the case of the Maya area in many archaeological sites it does not meet the above premises as has been the case that many of the places are totally irregular. So we can continue the studies regarding the layout of the streets, we could say that reached a peak at the Citadel, where space corresponds achieved their measurements with traces of the Pythagorean law. (Peter, 1976)

Harleston found the  $\phi$  proportion in the Citadel, starting from the center of the Quetzalcoatl Pyramid.  $207/127.9 = 1.618 = \phi$ , and  $144/89 = 1.618$ . As with many classic and Renaissance structures, these  $\phi$  relationships are aesthetically satisfying and account for the Citadel's extraordinary air of elegance.

The constant, known to the ancients and designated by the Greek letter  $\phi$ , is the proportion called "the golden mean." It has been found to be related in nature to the spiral growth in sea shells and other organisms. Mathematically the number is obtained in two ways: as the limit of a series of numerical divisions called the Fibonacci series (after the Italian mathematician), or simply taking the square root of 5, adding 1, and dividing the sum by 2:

$$\phi = \frac{\sqrt{5} + 1}{2} = \frac{2.236068 + 1}{2} = \frac{3.236068}{2} = 1.6180339885 \dots$$



## Primitive traces and squares

### Platforms

In Mesoamerica, as in many other parts of the world, to highlight the enclosures, houses or special temples of the monotony of the hamlets of the villages were built earthen platforms. This served to prioritize the position of the upper classes, seating platforms on small structures or temples to the sacred house, ie the temple. In many cases it was done on another small embankment, as can be seen in the archaeological site Tlapacoya, State of Mexico.

Consequently, the first spaces made should have been simply that left mounds together, platforms earth, that is, those that were used to put their houses on either side, or front, flat or clearances remaining following the natural slope at rest. At first, the simple use of the huts on platforms soon changed the simple structure of the town, which would become more complex with the emergence of the palaces or simply larger sheds, which grew to the diversity of the group. In trace and design of inclined planes terminated platforms, man to prevent movement of the earth, stone placed a support at its ends, which appeared inclined wall or slope. So the "most luxurious" platforms ended in slope or incline, characteristic of Mesoamerican architecture.

In the case of religious buildings, most began on dual platforms at the highest promontories of the town with this artificial lift to differentiate, by highlighting and

dignifying the built environment. Social development led to the emergence of the first adobe buildings with vertical walls; in the Mexican highlands for its rainfall also came the first flat roofs with slight inclinations. In many cases to preserve the stability of these first walls placed small buttresses shaped slope at their bases, the former being the oldest<sup>2</sup>.

It has been determined mainly in the Mayan area, according to the increasing of religious rites complexity, the foundations were higher and superponieron each other, attaching new architectural and urban to all elements, to form true urban complexes . Mesoamerican for the conception of the mountain was sacred cycle, in which the sun rises in the morning and low in the afternoon, so that its imaginary and real celestial slope is staggered like a giant building superimposed cubes, as artificial mountain or a hill that most often grows to form large volumes of material topped by temples. Such is the case of the Great Pyramid of Cholula adobes, the Tachuihuatlépetl (Mountain handmade) famous, which is characterized by the construction of a pyramid with several overlapping to form the larger ritual structure of all cultures (420 m base) and the highest (over 85 m) and which became the symbol of heaven.

Other spaces as an "squares" without platforms, which are also found at this early stage, are those in the emerging aperturan build homes and initially served as a frame to the main house of the Lord and later became the square of the community. Perhaps it was also strictly an irregular site, given the tendency of order and geometric trace persistent in everything it was being built, could be more appropriate to reorganize the town, marking guidelines in trace and growth.

## **The city**

### **Urban centers**

Population centers incipiently generated the first forms of urbanism, initially irregular settlements and / or casual formed by huts (xacales rectangular constructions or chinancales, circular constructions), grouped on platforms without fixed orientation of land, which the long for their own needs would take little by little the linear layout of the town and would give its ritual form of guidance. But this only happened when he appeared as the binder forced

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<sup>2</sup> The combination of the two techniques originated straight slope and adding moldings different profiles characterizing regions: apron, Maya area, Oaxaca scapular region, slope - dash area of the Mexican Altiplano, Teotihuacan.



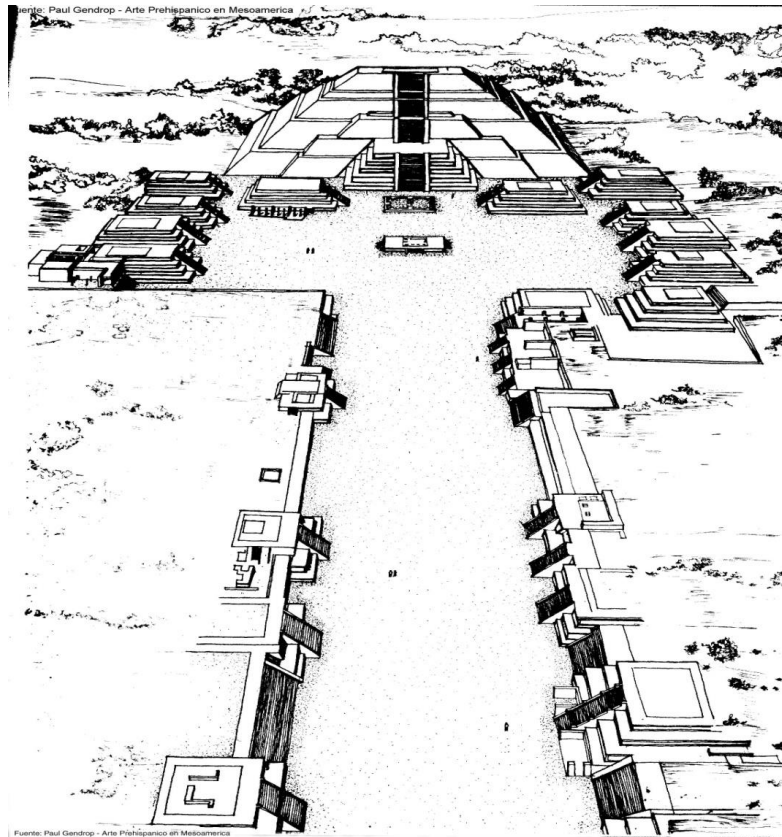
ceremonial complex that gave life and reason to urban settlement. The religious groups were the accumulation and the sum of the elements reproduced orthogonally type.

The first urban manifestations were not presented in the central highlands but in the peripheral area in the Maya area and in Oaxaca, but reached Basin and maturely, so have a city like Teotihuacan, where the streets and temples reflecting consolidated knowledge and exquisite architectural taste, greatly influence throughout Mesoamerica for many years and generations.

Then we can see the emergence of a huge city prepared from large causeways into four quadrants, the Holy City of Tlachihualtepetl or Cholula, and in each of its parts rubles of different ethnic affiliation, cities like Tajin arranged in large squares and these in different terraces; or cities like Monte Alban or Xochicalco, established in the top, in hills cut by way of plateaus, also with different slopes and fully adapted to the natural topography. Heir to the above the marvelous city of Tula Xicocotitan, willing will rise by model Tajin in different decks, platforms and levels, where different levels of society built their temples.

#### **Teotihuacan. (100 -650 B.C. A.D.)**

Teotihuacan in Nahuatl language means "place of the gods", others "where men become gods." It was the largest and most complex Mesoamerican metropolis that has existed in the indigenous world. It occupied an elongated rectangle 200 ha. Most of the population of the basin of Mexico had his residence in that huge city, so that time and that according to studies and statistics came to have between 125 and 200 thousand inhabitants. This city presents the presence of open spaces by way of rectangular plazas, where the pyramids of the Sun and Moon were constructed, (... to belong both places at the same time, it stands to reason that those sets may (were) to massive, and (as) other sets even unknown concentrations, (which) have been linked by roads or streets ceremonial hierarchy.) and great Avenue of the Dead, becoming the most important religious and ceremonial center plateau.



#### **Perspectiva de la Gran Plaza de la Luna y gran calzada de los Muertos**

The great city is settled in the northeastern part of the Basin of Mexico, its relevance and influence, as administrative and hegemonic area, he has left its mark permanently in other later cultures. We know that in society it seems to have been strongly theocratic and public life greatly influenced by religion. He ruled with an iron hand in order to force the population to solve the major construction requirements of the group. (Mexican Archaeology Tab, p. 51). (Chart classic basin and productivity).

This place is generated as a place of worship and has become one big city that had more than 300 thousand inhabitants, implying the need for a major organization that controlled the ideological and religious daily life of people of various ethnicities. The needs of each stage were evidenced in archaeological studies on how the city was developing and expanding a "sui generis" order. Similarly, many cities in other cultures should have been settled in the vicinity of a sacred site, which according to legend here was a cave with a small spring, which also had a nearby river. The south side was a marshy area, an extension of Lake Chalco, now gone, where a series unquantified culture chinampas increased agricultural productivity is developed. As stated in the nearby hills stones astronomical reference points that have served as a guide for the stroke of the many foundations that were built immediately

around the squares were found, following major solar orientations, locations for the foundations of the squares of the pyramids of the Sun and Moon, emblematic buildings that served as references for religious services and pilgrimages.

Given the need to have a decent frame, as well as for the nobles and priests in their duties due to religious and civil administrative rule, the city was filled gradually complex sets of houses, palaces and houses administrative officials, merchants and nobles who left their mark on the passage of living, reflected in murals, sumptuous rooms with spacious courtyards games on high platforms and sunken plazas, intricate emerging neighborhoods and housing complexes for the common man, as well as sites and locations house the outside.

Strengthening the city by growth and addition of small settlements nearby, it consolidated the theocratic state, which necessarily had to join the military, which would not only help to maintain order and control of the various ethnic groups intermingled, but that would be part of the pursuit of regional dominance and extensive Teotihuacan, adding thus timeless powers (religion) and temporary (militarism) in an act of absolute control of a region that was beyond their geographic boundaries By Therefore, the complex base-square-palace-street (alley) that incipient spread in territory under a first and perhaps not as ambitious trace originated.<sup>3</sup>

When speaking of the classical world, Teotihuacan emerges as the great colossus of the plateau, its geometric layout relating scholars continues to impact it, and its perspective of the construction and architectural rhythmic sequence. This situation Teotihuacan group said spatially, not only with the transformation and changes in the geographical areas in which this great little resort started - religious power, but actually transcended and made a deep impression that impacted the environment, reaching to be the great metropolis of great prestige and power, to the point of creating his own style and permanent and subsequent development of their culture influence throughout Mesoamerica.

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<sup>3</sup> John Kubler, pág. 46.

## **Form and construction**

### **Constructions**

Within the residential architecture, palaces had carrying the spatial organization of the ceremonial centers. The frame of the buildings surrounding the open space that served as a link and integration into the streets, driveways and streets. "Neighborhoods" or palaces were sets of high walls, made of austere rooms where the yard ran the center and origin of the distribution of space and sometimes had small or long arcaded bays arranged peripherally, which gave access to the palace rooms. They usually get to have these buildings up to two or three yards and be linked through narrow corridors circulation. The rooms are typically small, free of windows and there is a possibility that these cover themselves with blankets to avoid inclement weather access. In the courtyards sometimes they come to find small shrines to like altars with niches, where the protective image of the site was placed. "The housing exterior architecture lacks according to Western sense, its facade are long windowless walls surrounding the whole. To understand this concept would be necessary to understand the Mesoamerican ideology so poorly studied "

At this time, in many annexes to the main squares sites sometimes small roofed pavilions and / or spaces intended for administration where power is imparted and agreements of all kinds are reconciled, for communities and regions according to the dimensions were place. Some populations were representative areas as were the temples of specialized cult, or to the civil case, the plaza market.

According to the representative of the cities and their political ties, as well as enemies and social strength, there were villages that were protected by walls, moats I natural ravines deepened, had watchtowers in the strict military sense (from militarist period). The wealth in terms of sculptural solutions related to buildings and was huge squares, are features pieces that are most vulnerable in the early stages to be modified and appended to the novohispanos buildings. Stelae and bearers, little altars and closings of seats, bleachers, steps and balustrades with their shots.

They were skilled in handling the transportation of water in terms of canals, dams and drains solution. So the Mexican city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan had an aquifer area, was itself the watershed of two lakes, one freshwater and one saltwater, both lakes are not coming to mix

with the protection of barriers for them prefabricated, the albarradones known. Such was his organization that no contaminated waste common areas, control is performed by means of locks.

### **Materials and construction systems**

Natural materials and sometimes regional local type were used; as were the basalt, the volcanic rock, mud, reed, wood mainly pine, palm and other processed items.

#### **Muros**

As precederos.- walls called bajareque, which was made of woven sticks coated with mud, and with a perimeter of stones that avoided displacement, most often covered with thatched roofs.

Mampostería.- Stone walls and stone foundations lodo.- With river, commonly called boulder, where the walls of adobe or wattle desplantaban. Other features of these walls could be boulder to dry, or Lajillas with mud and dry board meeting.

Mampostería.- lime walls and canto.- Worked in different materials such as boulders and limestone exterior, with blocks of rectangular trend, with large slabs to free spans (Maya arch) or overhanging light. Very interesting the work done in high relief and decorative pieces carved buildings integrated with those in the Citadel of Teotihuacan or Xochicalco, Morelos.

Besides the buildings of the Maya area, decorated in high relief as the temples of Bec and Chenes River or coated plaster masks, like those of Comalcalco and Cieneguilla in Chontalpa, or the earliest constructions such as Kojunrich and even Uaxactún.

Walls Mampostería.- spine-stiffening pez.- Worked mostly manufactured and external coatings and usually with Lajilla basalt stone or limestone in the Maya area, Uxmal and some of the highlands.

Mampostería.- walls adobe.- From very early times was the most common after use of the rods material was used to build the walls of the houses and temples as well as large walls; It was sometimes used as a filling for the aggrandizement of temples.

Mampostería.- walls ladrillo.- The last time the area south of Veracruz and Tabasco in the Northern region of the Chontalpa, the use of buildings constructed of brick, covered with large masks of plaster (plaster) was achieved.

## **Supporting elements**

Verticales.- supportive columns, and / or pilasters. Were built of two types of materials: wood and stone, the stone found them worked in circular or rectangular. So megalithic (Oaxaca region and central highlands) or as sectional (cheese and / or sectional irregular pieces) with pin and without it, plain or exterior decoration.

Holders of wooden elements: beams and morillos.- horizontal supporting elements; andirons for beams and walls. Palaces were essential for beams and andirons to stop and / or supported the roof truss. For houses of popular order will be important pieces of wood poles and shrubs and flexible shafts to shape your home.

## **Covers**

Covers inclinadas.- Due to climatic conditions and type rains, houses sloping ceilings, two and four waters must have been the most common solution for traditional housing and the shrines should be renewed periodically, so the management and use of wooden sticks and andirons were in aid of straw, palm leaves and other materials that were covering the region.

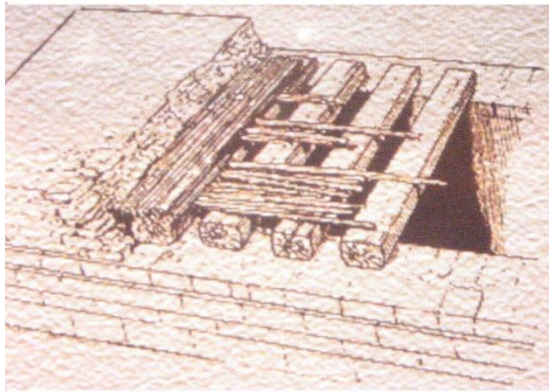
Covers planas.- The roofs of the palaces in the Altiplano and Oaxaca, were solved with flat roofs covered with light, made from fabrics covered with mud poles between which impermeable land as tepetate were placed. These ceilings were made based on round pieces of wood unworked calls andirons, which solved the support rods at the same time these rested on wooden beams. On the surface of the roof, downspouts were settled in the corners, and conducted in various forms; in channels, buttresses, mud tubes or jarritos together or overlapping.

Flat roofs with walls 4 Covers aguas.- preferably used in the last period of the Maya area, where the walls had a very small flat roof and the walls were conditioned by the use of so-called false arch. Where the roof was blown together by assembling wooden clamps.

## **OF FINISHES**

Stucco and aplanados.- In Mesoamerica used to coat buildings with a layer of mortar based on lime-sand 2-3 cm thick in the highlands and up to 8 cm in the Maya area. Sometimes a plaster applied with lime stucco 3 to 4 mm. This technique allowed the development and

management of high and low reliefs in other cultures. Stucco most times was polychromatic and often was added decorative elements inlaid as obsidian or jade, the chalchihuites or marine elements, especially to enrich the ornamental motifs. The coating techniques or burnished floors to important sites (ceremonial plazas and walkways) and many of the streets of access to religious places were also applied.



Design flat roof covered with andirons and (techniques used in Teotihuacán y San José Mogote, Oax.).

Museum of Anthropology and History. Mexico City

Color.- color was applied with the famous and effective technique of painting with lime, to which he added up the sediments of mineral and land as ocher that still gets almost spontaneously in the landslides area Mixtec. Rust red, meant the sacred; yellow rust sacrifice; blue water and green wealth.

Previous work applied to architecture in general and for this, the artisan of the building was clever, but alternated with other artisan that persisted until the time of the colony, which was the tlacuilo. The tlacuilos-painters or writers of sacred Indian motifs, noted for handling and preparing their lands and colors as well as his skill in making the work of the Rapporteur and detail as were the codices.

These specialists also had the functions of surveyors and designers, elaborated the plans for the Altepetl (villages), and communal properties and temples, and periodically, all the people were forced to hand over the demarcation of their lands and settlements by ethnicity and family, so to make this work "location shots" were quite aided in that environment. In most of the regions were made in bark paper or cotton "coguchi" tanned deerskin, or maguey paper.

### **Office buildings and / or ceremonial**

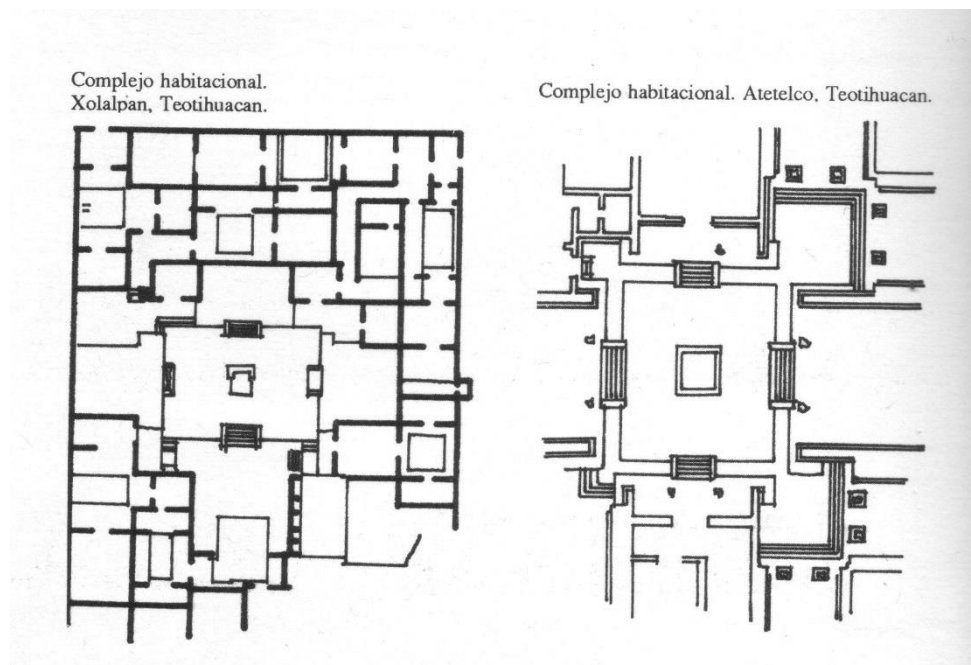
We have recognized the buildings for the service of priests and military to manage the various subordinate peoples. These buildings and open spaces generated, could not escape the use of astronomical geometry developed ancestrally and so we have to stroke and orientation

dates correspond to cyclic with respect to the summer solstice and winter and autumn equinox referenced the elevations of your environment.

Mainly they distributed in the vicinity of religious groups and were linked together, under a complex but practical network of corridors and alleyways, which required access to the courtyards of the palaces in the corners. Which was resulting structuring them by a central courtyard similar to the ceremonial plazas mode. Overall they had a massive and powerful constitution, elongated walls which dominated the bulk of the vain, were flat roofs with upper straight shots, for turrets and battlements. They rose on commonly staggered bases that gave them a hierarchical aspect. They were decorated with large murals with animal and human, polychrome representations corresponding to Community narrative themes, and more commonly to religious themes (such as Tlalocan or of mythological animals) that often were dated by indigenous calendars.

## **Civic buildings**

Spaces house the common individual, the city dweller who marketed, served or provided services to whoever requested and most importantly, lived in the city, which had the financial capacity to build in the center of it and followingIt traces, who had structured its construction in an orthogonal trace with order and harmony, according to the geographical conditions of their settlement especially when it belonged to a city. They were built with different materials, often perishable.





## **Urbanization**

A city has two important factors: the physical and cultural, which makes it a bit difficult to try to insert the religious and civil developments that occurred in Mesoamerica current titles, especially the term "city" or "development urban "or even of" urbanization ". Maybe if the main factors that determine a city were: the place or site and a particular human group.

But we could also say that if we consider that many stocks were developed without containing a large number of inhabitants, showing a mastery over their physical environment and material marked its cultural level not only in time but to this day, which remains the model and synonymous with admiration regarding urban solutions in rugged, sparsely conducive to land and ideal solutions, however, turned those sites worthy and livable for the people of the time spaces.

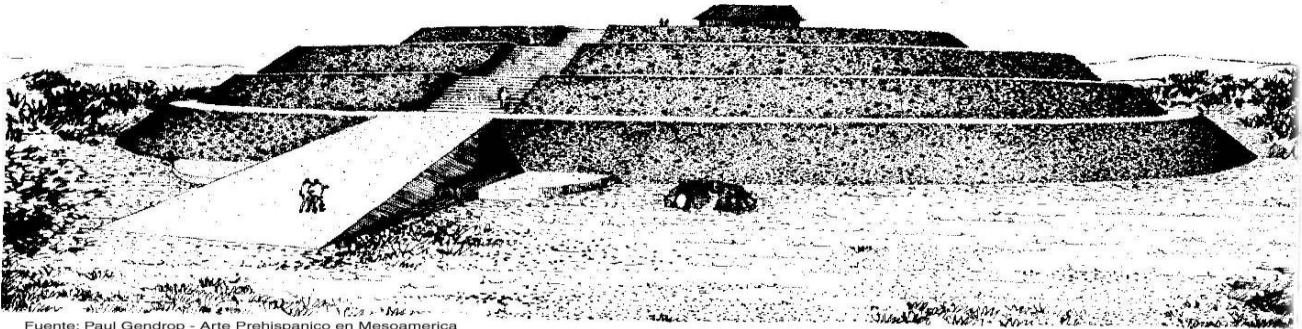
So my question arises: when a town becomes a city in Mesoamerica, what characteristics might have and what those factors be? Since the investigator Hardoy comments:

... ..a Given time organizing groups into social classes, with a theocratic control and division of spaces, urban planning begins ...

Then you might say that if the emergence of urbanism in a quantitative manner were, then according to that Teotihuacan such as researchers around 500 to hold. C must have had a population of over 100,000 inhabitants and therefore must have been in the urban development.

## Towns and cities

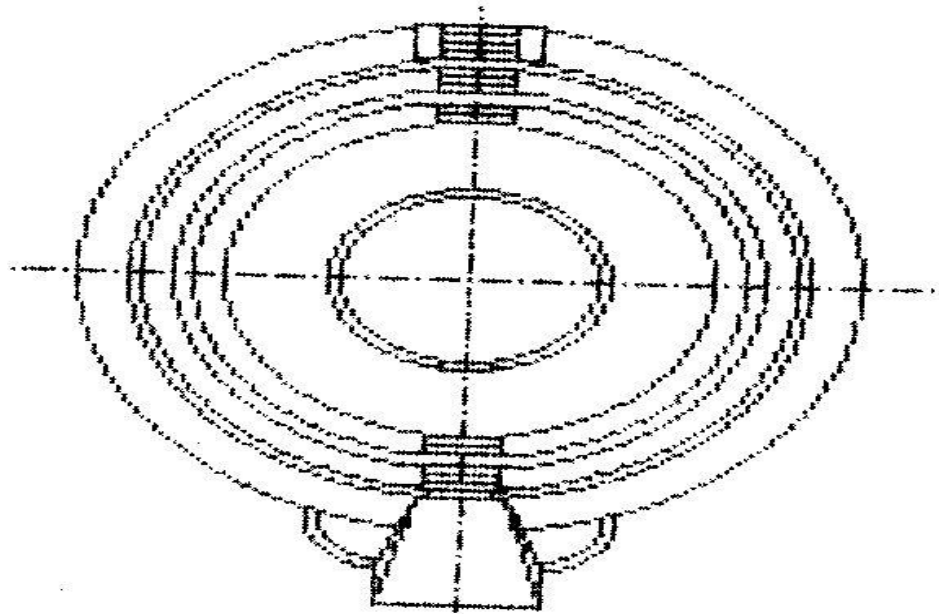
### Cuicuilco



Fuente: Paul Gendrop - Arte Prehispánico en Mesoamérica

Perspective Cuicuilco pyramid

Belonging to the formative period structure strikes one of the most beautiful and significant pyramidal bases, circular with stepped bodies, covered the ground floor by the eruption of the volcano Xitle aimed at civic and religious events, where religious architecture became more evident and singular monumental and considered by many authors as the first monumental space highland different. With a plant of 135 m in diameter, built of adobe and stone flattened land, with entrances on the east and west. Cuicuilco for Hardoy is a period of consolidation in social structures, in terms of organization and control in production and trade and the development of craft specialization, which facilitates the grouping of villages, thus initiating the elements that favored the urban period. It becomes a religious center of self-sufficiency and political management for sedentary groups of their environment, acquiring a more regional profile and consolidated.



Plant Cuicuilco pyramid

### **Teotihuacán-Urbe**

Not only is generated as a place of worship, it has become one big city that comes to have during its heyday an extension of 20 square kilometers, and more than 300 thousand inhabitants, because to 500-600 AD The population density was 7,000 people per square km, which meant an important organization, ideological and religious control the daily life of people of various ethnicities. 600 religious foundations has two thousand housing complexes. The needs of each stage are evidenced in archaeological studies as the city was developing and expanding in a sui generis order.

Similar to many cities in other cultures way, the first settlements must have been in the vicinity of the holy site, which according to legend, it was a cave with a small spring, a river in the vicinity and the extension of Lake Chalco , now disappeared. When speaking of the classical world, Teotihuacan emerges as the great colossus of the plateau, its geometric layout relating scholars still impacting it. In the nearby hills the basis of astronomical references in stroke stones for the location of the many foundations that were built immediately following the guidance of the autumn equinox and winter and summer solstice, concerning important location for relevant bases found and pyramids of the Sun (75 meters high and 225 meters

from base) and Moon (46 meters high) significant and emblematic buildings that were regulated not only by the magic of the cosmos and order but also for the practical strokes builder started: Handling the Pythagorean triangle to trace the whole.

Given the need to have a decent frame, as well as for the nobles and priests in their duties due to religious and civil administrative domain as well as the sites and places that house the outside, the city was slowly filling complex housing complexes, palaces and houses administrative officials, merchants and nobles, as well as intricate neighborhoods and housing complexes for the common citizen, who left their mark on the way of inhabiting, captured in images polychrome murals Palace has Tetitla 120 painted walls. Sumptuous rooms with spacious courtyards games on high platforms and sunken plazas, straight corridors with access esviajes courtyards and squares.

Therefore, the complex base-square-palace-street-alley, spread at that incipient territory, under a first and perhaps not as ambitious trace originated. The structural unit of the spaces corresponds to Maitl related measure anthropometric dimensions that correspond approximately two Castilian twigs. (1.64). Strengthening the city by growth and addition of small settlements in the vicinity, which consolidated the theocratic state, which necessarily had to join the military, which would not only help to maintain order and control of the various ethnic groups intermingled but that would be part of the pursuit of regional dominance and extensive Teotihuacan, thus adding timeless powers (religion) and temporary (militarism) in an act of absolute control of a region that went beyond its limits Geographic

This situation and performance of Teotihuacan group, expressed spatially, not only with the transformation and changes in the geographical areas in which this great little power, and religious complex actually began it emerged and made a deep mark also in the constructive aspects that struck their environment, great game and balance levels and gaps between streets and courtyards, monuments and stairways, square and ceremonial areas (see polychrome plane). With a roadway of 5 kilometers, becoming the metropolis of great prestige and power, to the point of creating his own style and permanent and subsequent development of their culture influence throughout Mesoamerica.

## **Conclusions**

## **Sacred place**

Are common created stories and myths about the foundation of cities. They will be seated the most incredible events throughout generations are told from father to son, a shaman priest, to become legends; the more powerful the city, the deeper the legend. Important are many both in Europe and in America and some will be linked to the building of cities and their heroes or important characters, as in the case of the founding of Rome (Romulus and Remus, who died when passing the delimitation the brother had made the city on pain of death to those who exceed.), so almost all Indian cities will be full of mysticism and legend and often their names will relate to those magical events. The concept of the Mesoamerican world will be based on the observation of nature and the mathematical handling of the stars and from the division of the 4 corners. Based on this thought a stand before the world, which later gradually increase according to the diversity of cultures is chosen, the celestial Pantheon joined the semi deification of monarchs.

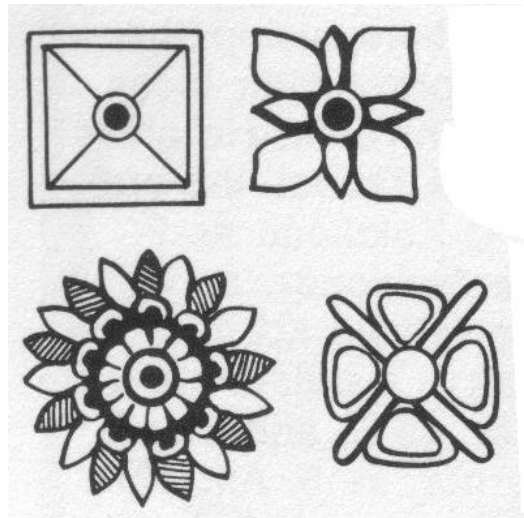
North meant: the arid cold darkness .. .... death is represented by the black color. The worship of cats. Worship night ... Jaguars. And their god Yayahuqui.

South correspond to life represented by the star Venus, light, and blue color. Represented by the dog or Xolotl.

The Eastern correspond to the beginning of everything. And with its white animal, turkey, and his god Tlatlahuqui.

The setting will be the daily death of the sun and will be represented by the color red or Tlahuizcalpantecutli Represented by Venus and her totem animal: the coyote.

Related Once these spaces and characters, the construction activity will be linked only with choosing the sites and topography. The ceremonial centers are the connection between heaven and earth where inhabited areas, not only men but also the demigods who often benefit man but also usually free of charge and become divine animal product called nahuales split or duality.



Geometric images of the cosmos and fitomorfias

From this conception and observation of their environment management it will be based on the number 4 and number 5 which will be essential for the establishment of the Mesoamerican world.

Therefore, cities were founded on places that represent life as it is a similar situation to management and Roman Decumanus Cardus in concept and establishment of conceptual order of establishment of spaces, however, the turn of axes in multiple representations by way of the cross of St. Andrew becomes a bit that reticular geometric order, without leaving the numeral sequence proportion to the square.

They were also closely linked natural elements and water is an element of life. The observation of nature provide one of the basic elements to build the world view, same that later would meet the ideological needs of that society. The foundation of cities would in the next sites to water sources, whether from springs or rivers, materialized as the god Tlaloc or god of rain. The caves meant the entrance to the underground kingdom submerged in water, like the mountains were large glasses of water or houses full of water which were linked ancestrally as places and sites of legitimation of the various ethnic groups, hence the term *altepetl* for the Nahuatl group was extremely significant and accurate translation is closed water while his glyphic representation is the maw of a promontory and a cave at its base. Like the temples were considered a symbol of communal identity politics, they were also designed as water hills.

Stories such as the founding of the powerful Tenochtitlan, whose myth was created once strengthened as the city-militarist empire, speaks of controversial historical events. After two centuries of hardship 7 villages came to settle on an island in Lake Texcoco, guided by a patron god (Huitzilopochtli) that through a "miracle" showed them the site to be definitively established: an eagle tearing a snake on a cactus. The driver or caudillo gave its name to the newly founded town: Tenoch, ie, Tenochtitlan. This brings us to the link between man and the divine. Many of the spaces that are built are also linked to this complex vision of the cosmos and that is handled as a balance of order, achieved only through the sacrifice of individuals, the triumph of the sun in their fight against the gods of the underworld, the triumph over darkness, which is only possible through human sacrifice, also linked to periods of the solar year, solstices and equinoxes, as well as the relationship with drought periods. During these it was at war and played ball game. In various representations is the opposing groups in playgrounds, thus signifying the unification by the opposition, is the small square playing field or access to the underworld. Since pre perspective, death by sacrifice perpetuated life.

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