

URBANIZATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN PERIL IN THE BASIN OF MEXICO

The rapid urbanization of the Valley of México has caused concern in recent years due to the threat to the many Precolumbian archaeological sites that are located throughout the basin. The metropolitan giant, once home to the ancient capital of the Aztec Empire, Tenochtitlán, México City (Ciudad de México) is home to 22.2 million people, compared to 1950 when it housed 3.2 million (INEGI). According to the UN World Urbanization Prospects, the agglomeration of the population is resides in the metropolitan area and beyond the adjacent borders into rural and sub-urban areas.

At a national level, 79 % of the population lives in urban centers and 21 % in rural towns (INEGI).

BUT, WHAT ABOUT THE ARCHAEOLOGY?

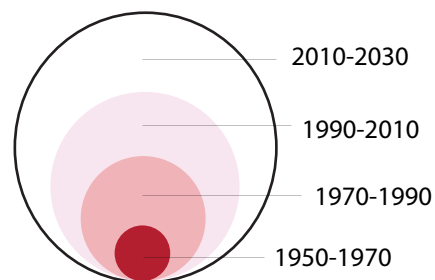
México City sits on an ancient lake, Lake Texcoco, as the Aztecs established their Empire on *Anahuac* (Nahuatl word for basin) in AD 1325, later drained by the Spanish following the Colonial period (AD 1521-1821). Prior to the México, there were many other peoples residing in the Valley, including Teotihuacán (AD 100-650) and Toltecs (AD 850-1150) among other state and non-state societies (Totonacs, Otomi-Chichimecs, etc.) Many sites that pertain pieces of these ancient societies have been destroyed, some by colonial powers and others by urban development. México's INAH, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, has devoted time and resources to conducting salvage archaeological projects to recover as much materials as possible from major urban areas in México City and on the periurban-rural landscapes that are threatened by urban expansion.

Not only are Mexicans expanding, but tourism is increasing and foreign migrants have begun purchasing land without understanding the value and significance of the place they're building on. Well known archaeological sites such as Teotihuacán are also seeing a spur in businesses being constructed around the site, unaware of the consequences that is damaging ancestral architecture and material culture. It also enables the increase in the black market of ancient Mesoamerican artifacts. Ultimately, hurting the people who rely on those objects for a sense of cultural identity.

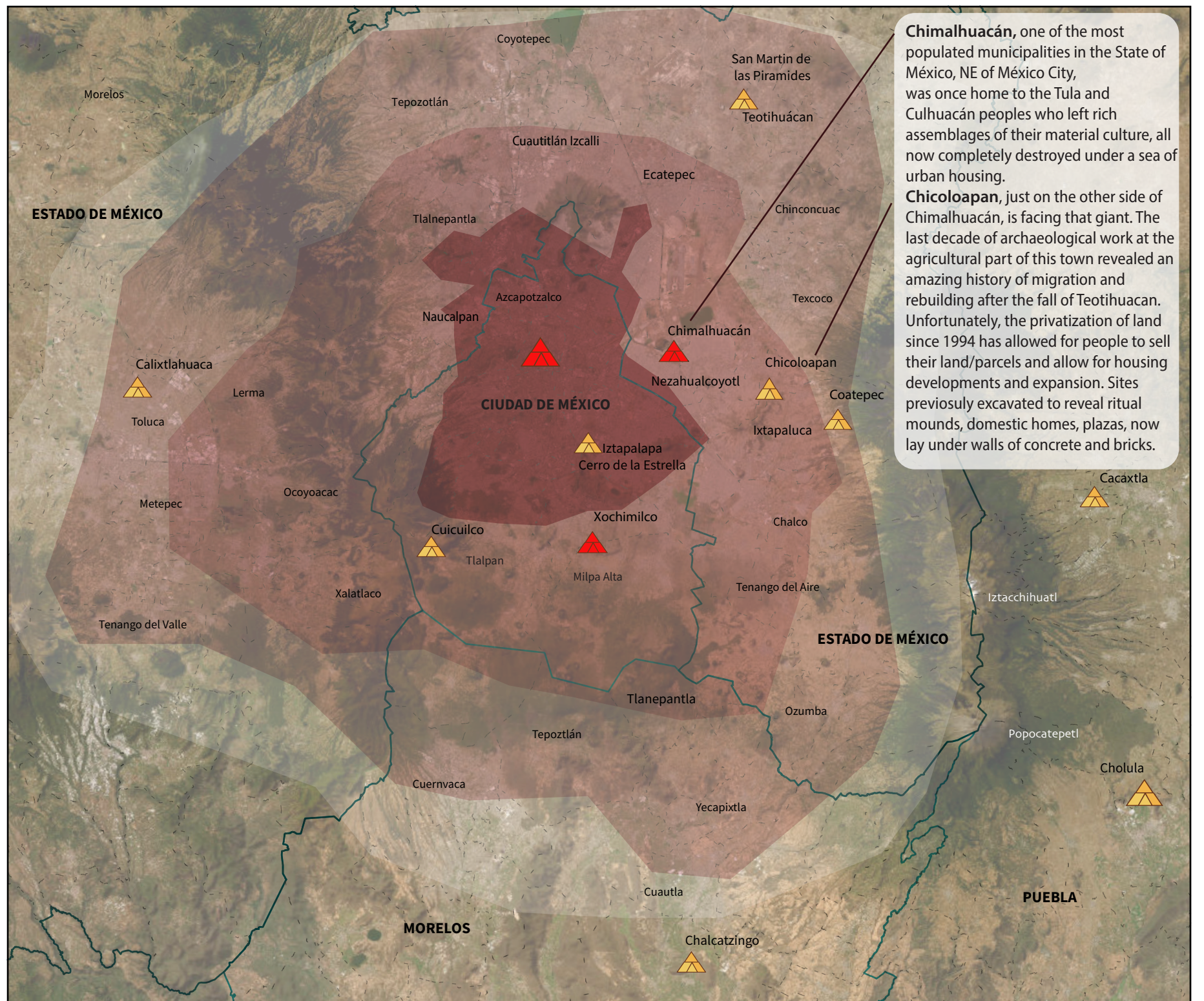
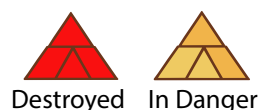
The objective of this project is to increase awareness about the state of peril of cultural patrimony in the hands of urban expansion and ideally, encourage the preservation of lesser-known sites and incentivize preventative measures to ensure people from building over land that is significantly rich in heritage, history, and identity for the Mexican mestizo and Indigenous populations of central México.

LEGEND

Urban expansion every 20 yrs



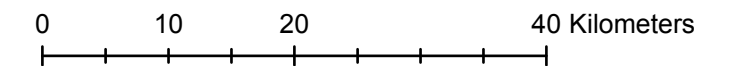
Archaeological Sites



Chimalhuacán, one of the most populated municipalities in the State of México, NE of México City, was once home to the Tula and Culhuacán peoples who left rich assemblages of their material culture, all now completely destroyed under a sea of urban housing. **Chicoloapan**, just on the other side of Chimalhuacán, is facing that giant. The last decade of archaeological work at the agricultural part of this town revealed an amazing history of migration and rebuilding after the fall of Teotihuacán. Unfortunately, the privatization of land since 1994 has allowed for people to sell their land/parcels and allow for housing developments and expansion. Sites previously excavated to reveal ritual mounds, domestic homes, plazas, now lay under walls of concrete and bricks.

As of 2016, 75% of the state of Mexico's population, or approximately 10 million people, lives in a municipality that's part of Greater Mexico City. Additionally, the population is estimated to increase to 24.1 million people by 2030 (World Population Review)

- Ecatepec (1.6 million)
- Nezahualcóyotl (1.1 million)
- Naucalpan (833,000)
- Tlanepantla de Baz (664,000)
- Chimalhuacán (602,000)
- Ixtapaluca (467,000)
- Cuautitlán Izcalli (533,000)



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Projection: North America Albers Equal Area Conic
Data: INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)
INAH (National Institute of Anthropology and History)
Secretaría de Economía-Data Mexico