

The Astronomy of Teotihuacan

Sunday 6 September 2020 09:00 (30 minutes)

Northeast of Mexico City are the extant remains of one of the largest urban centers of the ancient world. Built long before, the Aztecs later adopted the site and named it “the place where the gods were created”, or Teotihuacan. They considered this to be the location where time began.

Elements of the vast complex were created with astronomical alignments, a common practice with many ancient cultures. The sophistication found in the urban planning design demonstrates the level of understanding of celestial movements that had been amassed by those who constructed the massive temples, and the importance that they assigned to this knowledge. Teotihuacan’s Pyramid of the Sun and Pyramid of the Moon were built with intriguing alignments, and interesting orientations have been as well identified at the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, or La Ciudadela, the name given to it by the Spaniards.

These important features are examined with cultural context. Cyclical patterns are prominent, and as in many cultures the alignments would have been used to assist with calendrical needs and crop management. It is also significant that certain elements of astronomy found at Teotihuacan exhibit similarities with those at other sites in the greater region. This presentation will illustrate the fascinating level of astronomical knowledge and prowess exhibited in the region and will explore visual effects of archaeoastronomy displayed at Teotihuacan.

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