

### Chalcatzingo

MORELOS, MEXICO

Founded in the mid-second millennium B.C., Chalcatzingo is among the most important early Olmec sites. The ancient ceremonial center has yielded abundant sculptures that have provided a wealth of information on this early Prehispanic culture, which flourished in central Mexico and along the Gulf Coast in what are now the states of Tabasco and Veracruz between 1500 and 100 B.C.

A series of temples, plazas, and a ballcourt have survived at the site, although they are not well preserved. Despite its importance, Chalcatzingo, which has been poorly investigated, faces an uncertain future as its architectural remains continue to be harvested for modern building projects, and much of the archaeological zone is regularly overrun by cattle from an adjacent ranch.

The Morelos state office of Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia hopes to clear the ruins, build shelters over vulnerable remains, and control access to the site. Chalcatzingo will remain at risk, however, until plans are drafted for its long-term management and conservation.

