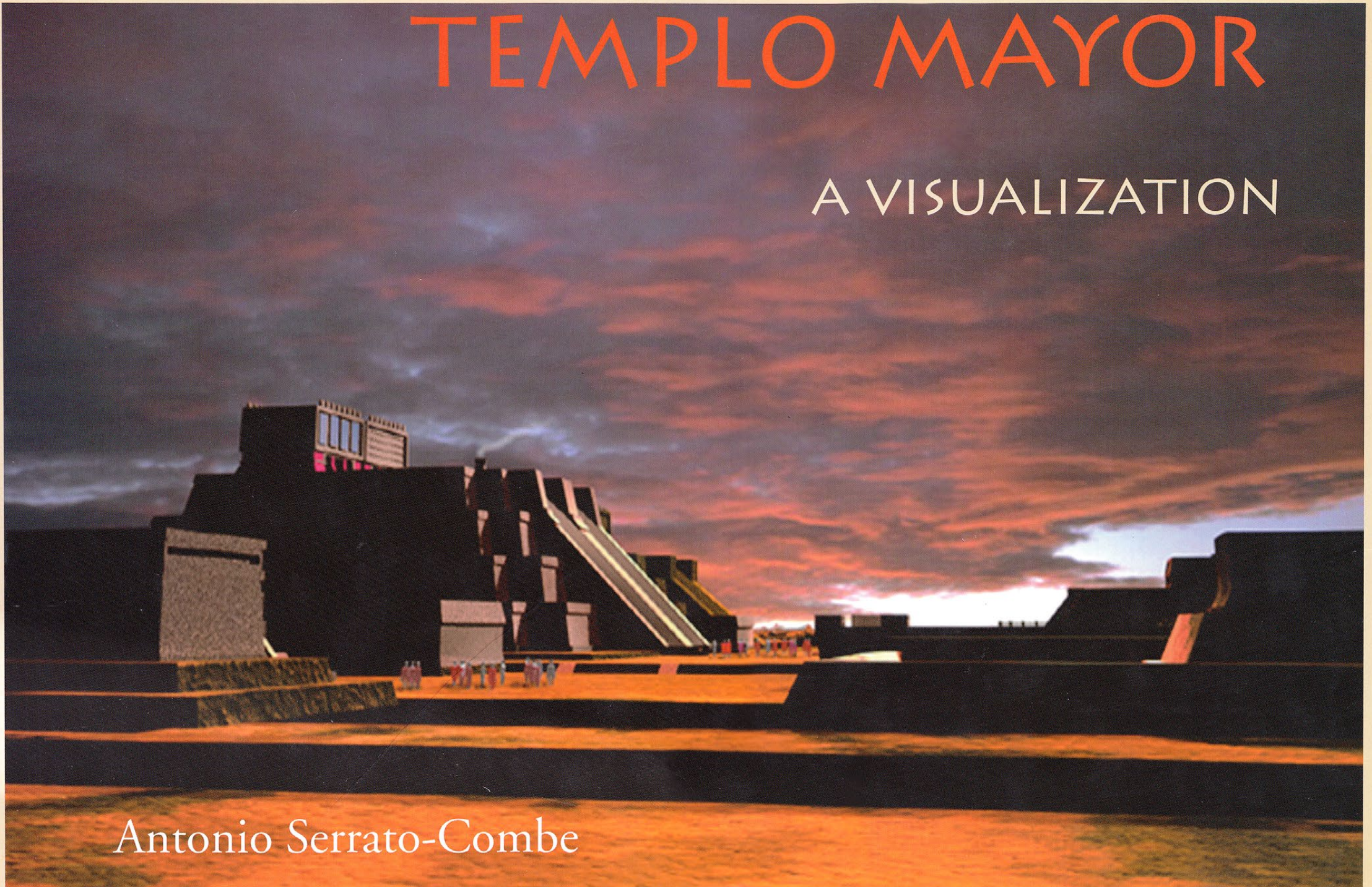


# THE AZTEC TEMPLO MAYOR

A VISUALIZATION



Antonio Serrato-Combe

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The Templo Mayor precinct in Tenochtitlan, Mexico, destroyed by Hernan Cortés in 1521, was the center stage for the drama of Aztec ceremonial life. The temple served as the setting for colorful displays of highly energized rituals depicting the relationships between social groups and humans and their gods. A Spanish observer at the time of the Conquest wrote of these ceremonies that he “saw things never seen before, not even in dreams.”

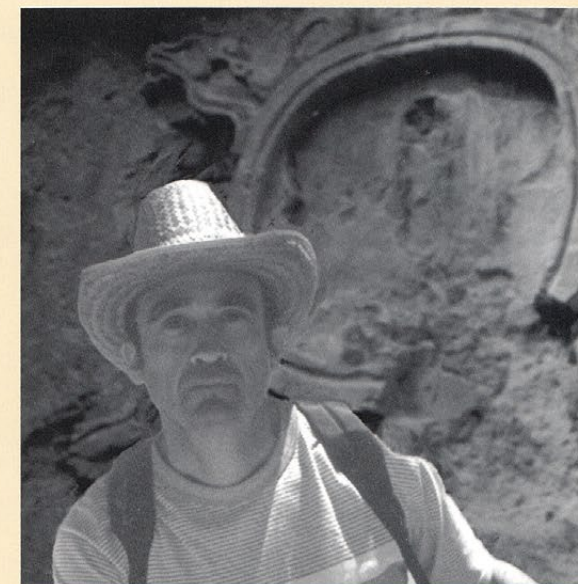
*The Aztec Templo Mayor* presents fifty-five architectural visualizations of the preconquest temple precinct at various stages of development. The Aztec orchestration of architectural spaces was profoundly influenced by the concept of divine visions received under the auspices of a very powerful temporal authority. The Templo Mayor was a concrete manifestation of this unique system of beliefs. Antonio Serrato-Combe's carefully researched graphic treatments of these architectural spaces are at once both novel and stunning. Using computer-generated, three-dimensional color imagery, he presents a series of architectural topics ranging from site-planning principles to building details. In 1998 several of these illustrations won an Award of Honor at the Architecture in Perspective world competition.

While we will probably never know the exact layout of the temple precinct, it is possible to hypothesize by means of contemporary documents and recent archaeological evidence. Through a series of isometric drawings and “x-rays,” or sections cut through buildings and open spaces, we can

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begin to understand how the Aztecs planned their ceremonial center and how it evolved from a scattering of mud and thatch huts to one of the most impressive urban complexes in the world.



Antonio Serrato-Combe is Professor in the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Utah. He lives in Salt Lake City.

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