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Boston University

Bridging prehistory and history in the archaeology of cities

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Archaeology is ideally suited for examining the deep roots of urbanism, its materialization and physicality, and the commonalities and variability in urban experiences cross-culturally and temporally. We propose that the significant advances archaeologists have made in situating the discipline within broader urban studies could be furthered through increased dialog between scholars working on urbanism during prehistoric and historical periods, as a means of bridging concerns in the study of the past and present. We review some major themes in urban studies by presenting archaeological cases from two areas of the Americas: central Mexico and Atlantic North America. Our cases span premodern and early modern periods, and three of the four covered in greatest depth live on as cities of today. Comparison of the cases highlights the complementarity of their primary datasets: the long developmental trajectories and relatively intact urban plans offered by many prehistoric cities, and the rich documentary sources offered by historic cities.

Keywords: cities, urbanism, built environment, Mesoamerica, North America

Introduction

The rise and fall of cities has likely been of interest to humans since those urbanites of the second cycles of urbanization in different parts of the ancient world pondered the ruined cities near their own. V. Gordon Childe (1936, 1950) was, if not the first, certainly one of the earliest archaeologists to treat urbanism systematically and comparatively. Childe's studies were framed more broadly than cities, however, and touched on varied issues pertaining to cultural evolution, such as the economic, political, and other societal changes that transpired during the emergence of urban lifeways and institutions of state governance (Smith 2009). Better elucidation of the origins and developmental trajectories of urbanism continue as one of the grand challenges in contemporary archaeology (Kintigh et al. 2014).

Today most archaeologists employ comparative perspectives to define urbanism functionally along a spectrum, rather than as a threshold phenomenon following a specific checklist of traits (e.g., Cowgill 2004; Marcus and Sabloff 2008a; M. E. Smith 2011; M. L. Smith 2003a; G. Storey 2006). Although significant variability is observable among cities, the possibilities of urban arrangements are not endless, and comparative, functional perspectives

demonstrate how different societies developed analogous suites of solutions to related problems (Fletcher 1995; Smith 2003b). Consideration of the spectrum of urbanism illustrates that early urban 'revolutions' do not constitute an endpoint in archaeological study and reveals the ways in which certain settlements were more urban than others, as remains the case among contemporary cities and towns. Comparative analyses are capable of productively addressing broad research questions, including questions that address the past and present so as to consider the relevance of understanding premodern cities to life in modern ones—including topics such as urban scaling, sprawl, sustainability, and environmental impacts (Smith 2010a).

As is often the case in archaeology, major questions in research on urbanism include when in human history it first developed and what constitute the earliest cities in any particular world region. A promising venue for conceptualizing the trajectories of cities is developing through transdisciplinary research on urban scaling, which has documented systematic relationships between variables of population, infrastructure, and social relations in both modern and ancient contexts (Bettencourt 2013; Ortman et al. 2015). This work demonstrates that as population increases urban infrastructure and social relations grow at different rates; whereas infrastructure lags behind population consistent with economies-of-scale (sublinear scaling), novel social

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relations exhibit increasing returns to scale relative to population growth (superlinear scaling). In these models infrastructure includes elements of the built environment often used archaeologically in defining cities (i.e. ceremonial precincts, walls, roads), which appear cross-culturally to increase more incrementally, shadowing population growth. In contrast, social relations (i.e. division of labor, bureaucratization) appear to increase more markedly, which could allow for greater precision in the definition of ordinal categories that identify why some settlements are more analytically qualified than others to be classified as cities. Particular examples are culturally contingent, but the distinction could help reconcile archaeological debate concerning the origins of urbanism, since those favoring earlier dates may be looking more to infrastructural developments, whereas those favoring later dates may be looking more to punctuated divisions of labor, anonymity, and other social vectors that only developed later in human history.

For this commemorative issue of the *Journal of Field Archaeology* we are less interested in origins and more so on the challenges and possibilities in relating the archaeology of urbanism to urban studies focused on the early-modern and contemporary world. Some of the earliest contributions to this journal include those by founding member James Wiseman, who reported on collaborative research at the Macedonian city of Stobi, Yugoslavia (Wiseman and Mano-Zissi 1974, 1976); an interpretation of the functions of urban architecture at the massive adobe city of Chan Chan, Peru (Andrews 1974); and a regional perspective on cycles of urban development in central Mexico (Parsons 1974). The global scope of the journal has allowed for illuminating cross-cultural comparisons of early urbanization, such as McIntosh's (1991) provocative article drawing from both Africa's Middle Niger and China's Yellow River to question dominant models of despotic, centralized control in favor of more bottom-up processes of urban affiliation.

Although the journal has showcased a wealth of pre-modern cities, little has been published on modern urban landscapes (following ca. A.D. 1500). Two exceptions include Salwen's (1978) appraisal of the promise of research at urban historical sites, and the work by Nassaney, Cremin, and Lynch (2004) at Fort St. Joseph in Michigan. Salwen admonished archaeologists working on historical periods for failing to recognize the promise and potential contribution of historic urban contexts, and who mistakenly consider modern 'intrusions' and disturbances as compromising the integrity of such sites. As a group, historical archaeologists have seldom published in the journal (but see Ryzewski and Cherry 2012; Siegal *et. al* 2013; Silliman 2005). We hope that in the future more will look to the *JFA* as an outlet for their research and find value in the journal's emphasis on the publication of primary field data and its global coverage, which allows for the engagement of broader themes such as urban development from a comparative perspective.

Our primary goals for this paper are twofold: to engage a few prevalent themes in the archaeology of cities and to encourage better dialogue between archaeologists investigating prehistoric cities and those investigating historical ones—particularly as a means of bridging the intellectual divide between pre-modern and modern studies. This second concern is of greater interest to us and provides structure to what themes are discussed for the first. We take our lead from Kent Lightfoot (1995), who has noted the impediments that subfield compartmentalization of prehistoric and historical archaeology pose to adequately addressing long-term processes of change seen in the archaeological record, and of relevance to life in the present. Being specialists in the archaeology of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and the early modern Atlantic world, we tether our discussion to these two parts of the Americas in the interest of presenting sequences that span prehistoric to contemporary periods. Our perspectives are complementary to the generations of scholars in urban studies who have included ancient cities into comparative histories of urbanism with significant time depth (e.g., Kostof 1991; Scargill 1979), but from our particular vantage as archaeologists. After introducing our four cases we discuss three groups of paired themes in the archaeology of cities more comparatively. These are urban growth and planning, functions and meaning of urban landscapes, and neighborhoods and ethnicity. Many other themes exist for productive comparison, but we have chosen these groupings because of their applicability to our cases and relevance for bridging prehistoric and historical contexts.

Two Millennia of American Cities

Our two case areas are located in the Americas but are otherwise vastly different (FIG. 1). Central Mexico comprises a landscape of tropical, high-altitude plains, lake basins, and river valleys, bisected by active volcanoes and volcanic sierras beginning some 2300 m above sea level and reaching over 5600 m (18,490 ft). Atlantic North America comprises a much larger area consisting primarily of temperate coastal plains and forests and adjacent islands, all at low elevations generally under 100 m. Whereas central Mexico's indigenous cultures such as the Aztecs and Teotihuacanos created some of the largest

Figure 1   Cities discussed in text.

cities of the pre-Columbian Americas, native populations of the Atlantic region, many of them Eastern Algonquian speakers, lived in high densities but more dispersed across the landscape. Therefore, although both areas were centers of European colonialism, including New Spain and New England, they vary in the degrees of hybridity seen in settlement forms.

Our first case, Teotihuacan, is often used as a model ancient metropolis in introductory texts on archaeology. It is followed chronologically and in our discussion by Mexico City, which is in many ways our pivot from an ancient or prehistoric city, to an early modern, historical one, and endures today as one of the largest cities of the world. The final two cases, Boston and Charleston, possess the early modern to contemporary trajectory without origins as pre-Columbian cities. We hope that the temporal span of these cases illustrates our central point regarding the permeability of disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries to many overarching concerns in urban studies.

Central Mexico

The mountainous terrain of central Mexico created a vertical ecology featuring the distribution of complementary resources in adjacent regions, and encouraging economic symbiosis and cultural exchanges that were critical to the emergence of pre-Columbian urbanism (Sanders 1976). The region is a continental interior, and the cycles of cities that developed within it were all landlocked (Charlton and Nichols 1997). Lake systems provided a degree of waterborne transport, but archaeologists, historians, and economists alike have all noted how the region's geography and topography conspire to hinder transportation. It is therefore all the more remarkable that central Mexicans created the largest cities and empires of Mesoamerica, based exclusively on human transport without the assistance of pack

animals (Hassig 1985; Hirth 2013). The two largest cities to emerge in the region were Teotihuacan, which had its apogee during the Classic period (A.D. 100–600), and Mexico-Tenochtitlan, which was the capital of the Triple Alliance or Aztec empire (A.D 1325–1521), and became, as the Ciudad de México, the capital of colonial New Spain.

TEOTIHUACAN

We have inherited the name Teotihuacan for the extensive and highly planned ruined city 45 km to the northeast of Mexico City courtesy of the later Aztecs, for whom Teotihuacan was a semi-mythical place that was the setting for certain acts of cosmogenesis (Boone 2000). The Nahuatl (Aztec language) name is often glossed as "place of the gods" or "place of those who had gods." During later periods there were many Aztec settlements ringing the ruins, but during its apogee in the mid-first millennium A.D. Teotihuacan was not an Aztec city. The Aztecs referred to the inhabitants of the city as *tolltecatl*, based on the term *tollan* used for several venerated cities of earlier civilizations and from which we get the archaeological term Toltec. In archaeological literature this designation is reserved for the large urban civilization that arose between the fall of Teotihuacan and ascendance of the Aztecs, and the inhabitants of the earlier city are referred to by the Hispanicized term Teotihuacanos. Although mythohistorical narratives are abundant in Aztec documents concerning Teotihuacan, the Aztecs also conducted rituals and undertook excavations at the ruined city and would have recognized it as having been inhabited by people who possessed a material culture very similar to their own. Familiarity with the ruined city inspired the Mexica-Aztec in particular to draw from elements of its architectural planning and symbolism in constructing their own imperial capital, discussed in the next section.

Archaeological remains of villages and small towns within the Teotihuacan Valley date to the early first millennium B.C., but it is not until the 1st century B.C. that Teotihuacan became urbanized (Cowgill 1997; Millon 1973). It was not the first city in central Mexico, a distinction usually bestowed on Cuicuilco during the last centuries B.C., but Teotihuacan grew to become the largest in the Americas, with a population of some 80,000–150,000 packed densely over 20-25 sq km (FIG. 2).

Two of Teotihuacan's major advantages for the study of ancient urbanism are its ecological setting and its occupation history. Because the city developed in a semi-arid environment with relatively thin soils and was largely abandoned after the mid first millennium A.D., much of Teotihuacan's urban footprint has remained available for archaeological

Figure 2 Teotihuacan in the early 6th century, based on Millon (1973).

research. Over four decades later, the most ambitious study of urbanism at the city continues to be the Teotihuacan Mapping Project directed by Millon (Millon 1973; Millon *et al.* 1973), which applied intensive site mapping and surface collection and became a model for the archaeological study of urbanism within Mesoamerica and elsewhere. The city is known almost exclusively through archaeology and the iconographic study of a rich tradition of mural painting and other forms of imagery. A writing system existed at Teotihuacan, but it was highly pictographic, used sparingly (at least on media that preserves archaeologically), and only provides glimpses of daily life in the city and positions in the civic hierarchy.

The orderliness of Teotihuacan's urban settlement, the monumentality of its epicenter, and its large, multi-family apartment compounds, are three of the city's attributes that stand out in global archaeology (Cowgill 2007). The city's economic base included the following: a productive system of springs that permitted irrigation agriculture in an area to the southwest during much of the year; adjacent positioning to the Basin of Mexico lake system, its resources and transportation possibilities; proximate access to a number of obsidian sources that provided the primary cutting implements of the period and an easily exchangeable commodity; and a combination of intensive household craft production, and market and interregional exchange (Carballo 2013; Manzanilla 2009). The urban organization of Teotihuacan included districts that served

civic and administrative functions and were themselves composed of neighborhoods of frequently interacting apartment compounds, often termed *barrios* (Cabrera Castro and Gómez Chávez 2008; Manzanilla 2012). Its central artery was a wide (ca. 40 m) and long (over 5 km) thoroughfare known as the Street of the Dead, which runs from the northern Moon Pyramid to pass the Sun Pyramid and other major civic, ceremonial, and palatial structures of the urban epicenter.

Teotihuacan was a cosmopolitan city that saw substantial migration from other parts of Mesoamerica and may have been home to speakers of five or more languages (Spence *et al.* 2005). Early in its history, migrants likely moved *en masse* to the city following the major eruption of the Popocatepetl volcano, which displaced large populations in the southern Basin of Mexico and southern Puebla (Plunket and Uruñuela 2008). They apparently continued coming throughout its primary occupation, likely because it was the center of the most robust economic system in Mesoamerica at the time, but also because, as was the case with preindustrial cities of the Old World, the city presented health hazards that created high mortality rates, particularly later in its history (R. Storey 2006). Teotihuacan's size, cosmopolitanism, migration, craft and market systems, and level of planning were therefore all remarkable for its place and time, and make it atypical for a pre-Columbian Mesoamerican city. These same characteristics, however, are what make Teotihuacan more relatable to modern

cities, among cases from the ancient world. When the state centered at Teotihuacan collapsed in the mid-6th century A.D., an event that included the burning of many of the structures in the urban epicenter and the contraction of the transportation corridors once under the sway of the state, the city's population decentralized and the urban organization of subsequent centuries remains less clear. The city as a symbol lived on, however–memorialized by other Mesoamerican cultures up to and including the Aztecs.

TENOCHTITLAN-TLATELOLCO/MEXICO CITY

Mexico City's direct predecessors were sister cities founded on islands in Lake Texcoco by the Mexica-Aztecs in the early to mid-14th century A.D. (FIG. 3). The name of the Mexica ethnic group plus the locative suffix -co designates the island of

Mexico as "place of the Mexica," but the two halves of what eventually became a twin city are distinguished as Mexico-Tenochtitlan and Mexico-Tlatelolco, or just by the second parts of these compound names. The cities are known through both archaeology and early colonial texts recorded by the Spanish with the assistance of Mexica informants who learned alphabetic script to then also record their history in Spanish and Nahuatl (e.g., Calnek 2003; Dahlgren *et al.* 2009). Tenochtitlan became the politically and militarily dominant city of central Mexico during the 15th century A.D., and was already the most influential capital of an imperial confederation known as the Triple Alliance when it conquered and annexed Tlatelolco in 1473. Nevertheless, the marketplace at Tlatelolco had grown larger than the one at Tenochtitlan, and at the time
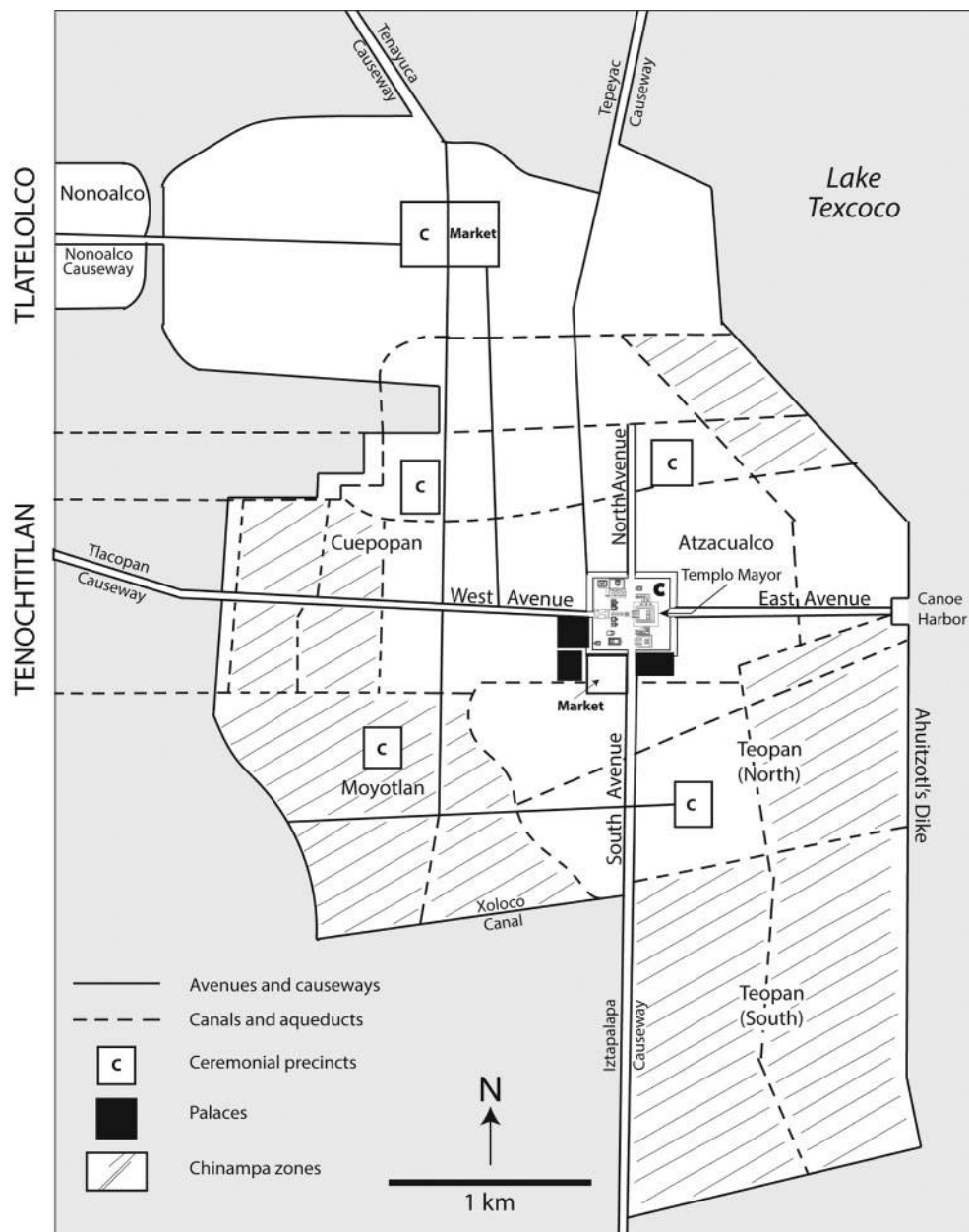

Figure 3   Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco in the early 16th century, based on Calnek (2003) and Smith (2008).

of the Spanish conquest of 1519-1521 it retained its important economic functions as a northern sector of the dual city.

Mexico City has been continuously occupied for seven centuries, rendering the pre-Columbian urban plan of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco—dismantled and buried by the conquistadors—more poorly known than Teotihuacan's. Excavations have been undertaken primarily in the two ceremonial precincts and as salvage excavations associated with urban construction projects outside of these epicenters (González Rul 2000; Matos Moctezuma 1988). Scholars of the city attempt to reconcile Spanish accounts of the number of households and the daily visitors to the market at Tlatelolco with population density calculations based on an estimated urban footprint of some 12–14 sq km (Calnek 2003: 151), which included more and less densely occupied areas of residential districts, civic-ceremonial complexes, and zones bisected by the intensively farmed lakeshore fields known as *chinampas*. There exists general consensus for an early 16th-century population of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco in the range of 100,000–200,000 inhabitants (Calnek 2003; Sanders 2003; Smith 2008). If accurate, the city would have been more populous than any in Western Europe at the time except perhaps Paris (Barioch *et al.* 1988). It would have been unmatched by cities in the United States until 19th-century New York (Rothschild 2006).

The location of these cities in saline Lake Texcoco has made water management a repeated nuisance for urban planners. The Mexica and their Acolhua allies from the city of Texcoco devised aqueducts to deliver fresh water to the city from springs in the forested hills of Chapultepec, located to the west; various dykes to minimize flooding from the east; and networks of canals that provided canoe access to chinampa and residential zones and led the Spanish to compare the city to Venice. The filling of the lake in order to expand the city and control against periodic floods began prior to the conquest but accelerated afterwards, particularly following several devastating floods of the 17th century.

A series of maps presented by Calnek (2003) nicely illustrates the incremental growth of Mexico City through the late 18th century. An early example named the Mapa de Alonzo de Santa Cruz or the Uppsala Map (FIG. 4), likely produced by a native scribe circa 1550, depicts the close correspondence between the pre- and post-conquest city plan, with the major difference being the construction of churches and other buildings associated with the importation of Christianity, often using the rubble from dismantled Mexica structures. More streets and landfill were also added to the early colonial city, yet the cardinal orientation of Mexico City's plan, principal streets and causeways, location of major civic-ceremonial precincts and markets, and elements of the hydraulic infrastructure developed from clear indigenous foundations.

The continued urbanization of Mexico City to its present status as one of the largest megacities of the modern world has interested numerous urban scholars (e.g., Negrete *et al.* 1993; Pick and Butler 2000). The particular intersections of varied factors and historical contingencies cannot be ignored, but an enduring pattern to the city's growth could be said to be the weight of its balance as a production, rather than consumption center. Based on his reading of colonial texts, Calnek (2003: 151) argued that the Mexica adaptation to sequential floods of 1382-1385 that devastated chinampa fields involved expanding craft production and trade, which in turn stimulated the growth of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco. This major center of production, tax, and tribute then became more of a consumer city in a colonial economy featuring centrifugal characteristics of rural, hacienda-based production and trans-Atlantic extraction by the Spanish Crown. An example of its stagnation is provided by a 1790 census in which Mexico City's 113,000 inhabitants made it still the most populous city of New Spain, but this represented little change from the Aztec period, or even a decline, and was only double the population of Puebla, the second largest city (Kemper and Royce 1979: 269). Kemper and Royce (1979) noted that Mexico City's primate status within the country has oscillated with the urban versus rural orientation of the national economy since then, seeing fits of growth during the late 19th century Porfirian era and again following post-1940 industrialization. It is during this earlier colonial era that Mexico City can be compared most directly to Atlantic English cities in North America.

Atlantic North America

The river-pierced coastline of eastern North America was the stage for waves of European colonial settlement from the 16th century onwards. The earliest colonial settlements were situated on the coast or major waterways, and were bridges between Europe and the New World (Earle 1977; Hornsby and Hermann 2005; Kornwolf 2002).

In 1584 English first arrived in North America and settled Roanoke Island—an outpost that quickly failed. Undeterred, English settlers occupied three areas of the Western Hemisphere: New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Lesser Antilles (Greene 1988). English cities and towns were designed as administrative, social, and economic centers of colonial society (Earle 1977: 36). Boston and Charleston were two of the largest and most prosperous cities of Britain's Empire. Boston flourished as a shipping
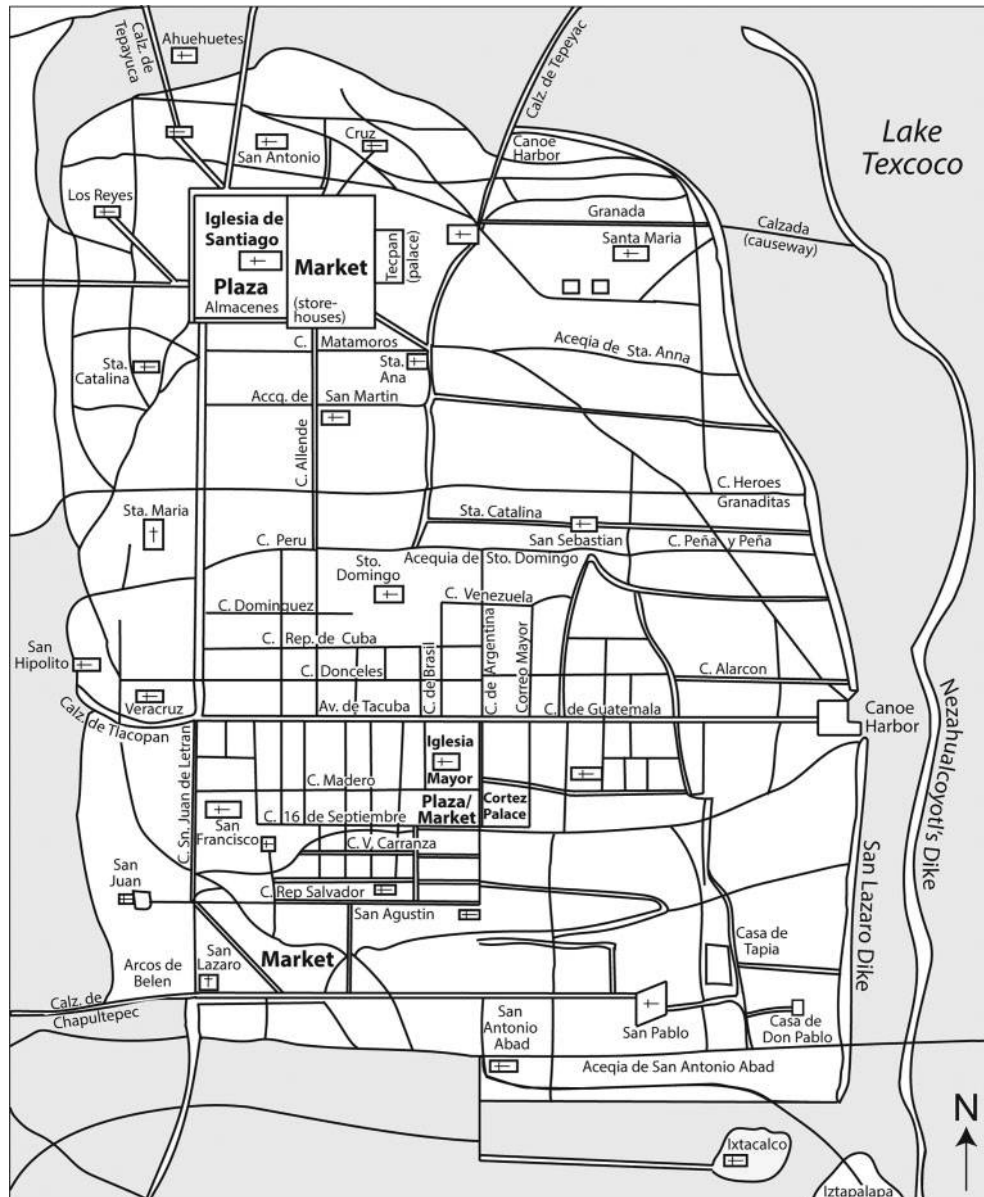
Figure 4 Mexico City in the mid-16th century, based on map of Alonso de Santa Cruz published in Calnek (2003).

point between England to the east and colonies to the south, whereas Charleston's success was a product of the indigo, rice, and cotton economies. On the eve of the American Revolution, these were British North America's two largest and richest cities: Boston in size and Charleston in per-capita wealth (Hudgins 1999: 102). While united by their affluence and influence, the inhabitants of these cities forged their own socio-economic trajectories that demonstrate contrasting urbanization processes in the Americas.

BOSTON

Native Americans were living in the area that would become the city of Boston beginning in the Early Archaic period (9,500–8000 B.P.) Hunting and gathering activities have been registered in the archaeological record around the Shawmut peninsula, and included the construction of a system of fish weirs near modern day Boylston Street (Bagley 2007: 3–4;

Mrozowski 1985). Europeans first arrived in 1625, and Boston was founded in 1630. By 1636 Boston was designated the capitol of the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony. The city was situated on the peninsula with the Charles River to the north and west, and Massachusetts Bay to the east and south (FIG. 5).

During its 18th-century apogee, Boston was both a mercantile outpost and a major consumer center, dominated by a wealthy elite. Its strategic location and commercial maritime infrastructure made it a powerhouse within the Atlantic economy, yet Boston's economic and social fortunes were bound up in the political events leading up the American Revolution (Nash 1979: 45–46). By 1640 it had become the largest city in North America and retained this status until the expansions of New York and Philadelphia in the 19th century (Kornwolf 2002: 959). Three major features define early Boston's urban landscape: its emergence as a mercantile êntrepot; the
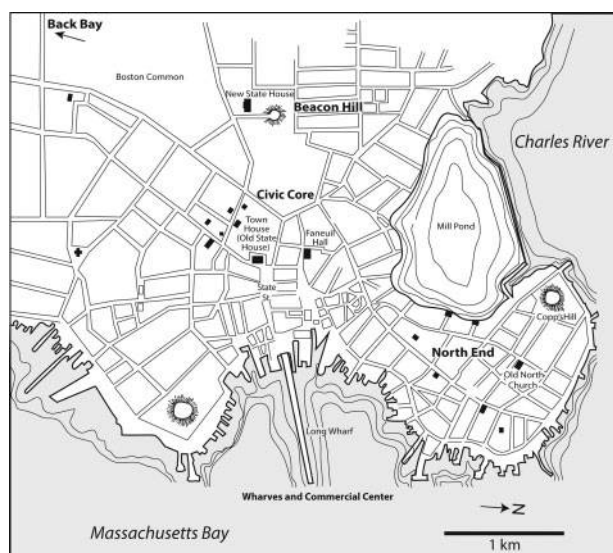
Figure 5   Map of Boston in the mid-18th century, based on Kornwolf (2005).

development of strong, smaller social enclaves along racial, ethnic, and economic lines; and 'land-making' practices (Seasholes 2003). All have parallels in the cases from pre-Columbian central Mexico. Yet, in contrast, early Bostonians did not concern themselves with a unified, ordered urban landscape. The city grew in a piecemeal fashion over the 17th and 18th centuries.

Archaeological research of the city's past has been driven by urban development and executed by cultural resource management firms, the most prominent example of which was the Central Artery Project, or Big Dig. In all, over 77 sites with Native American components and 149 colonial sites have been excavated in the city and its environs (MACRIS 2014). Historical archaeological research in Boston has focused on the ways that households and neighborhoods, their occupants, and the material trappings of daily life were indicative of Boston's broader urban experience. For example, at the 27/29 Endicott Street, on the Mill Pond, archaeological data showed a 19th-century assemblage associated with a brothel. Beaudry (2006: 263) argues that fashionable ceramics were material indexes of "aspirations to respectability if not to gentility of some sort." Thus the owners of the privy sought to balance refined material tastes with the social world of 19th-century prostitution. At the community level, archaeological research has centered on the ways that social and ethnic groups carved out their own neighborhoods and material cultures within the urban landscape. For example, histories of the experiences of Boston's African population (Pierson 1988; Bower 1991) have been enriched by archaeological and architectural historical work on the Black community that occupied the northern slopes of Beacon Hill.

Land-making practices significantly altered Boston's urban landscape (Seasholes 2003). Land along the commercial wharves was frequently reclaimed in the 17th century, to expand commercial spaces (Mrozowski 1985: 13–15, 1987: 1). The area of the Mill Pond, created in the 17th century, was filled in during the 18th and 19th centuries to extend the bounds of the Shawmut peninsula in order to develop a new residential neighborhood (Seasholes 1998). One of the most recent and ambitious land reclamation schemes involved the creation of an elite neighborhood west of Boston Common through the filling of Boston's Back Bay.

At the outset of the 19th century the city's size and influence was eclipsed by New York and Philadelphia, which had over 60,000 and 50,000 residents, respectively, compared to Boston's 25,000 (Nash 1979 cited in Hart 2009: 203). Boston remained at the heart of the New England economy, but never again achieved the level of economic and social influence of its colonial past.

CHARLESTON

Arriving in 1773, New Englander Josiah Quincy remarked on the magnificence of the Carolina capital: "I can only say in general, that in grandeur, splendor of buildings, decorations, equipages, numbers...and indeed in almost everything, it [Charleston] surpasses all I have ever saw or expected to see in America" (Bushman 1993: 139, citing Quincy 1874). Located 1,287 km south of Boston, Charleston was founded 40 years after its northern cousin, as part of the Carolina colony granted to eight proprietors in 1663 by the English Monarch Charles II. The colony was settled in 1670 and by 1680 the colony's primary settlement was moved to Oyster Point on a peninsula flanked by the Ashley and Cooper Rivers (FIG. 6). The city was situated at a strategic locale that could be easily defended, and provided a generous harbor for the development of a robust colonial port (Saunders 2001: 198–199).

Archaeological interpretations of Charleston have emphasized the domestic lives of the city's elite and the contrasting experiences of enslaved Africans. Beyond the household level, the study of Charleston's urban landscape is bolstered by rich archival and cartographic evidence and the survival of over 200 structures dating to before 1900 (Kornwolf 2002: 852). Archaeologists have collaborated with architectural historians and preservationists to understand the relationships between the existing built environment and archaeological resources situated underground. Charleston's planned street pattern and monumental walled domestic compounds are two traits that define the southern capital
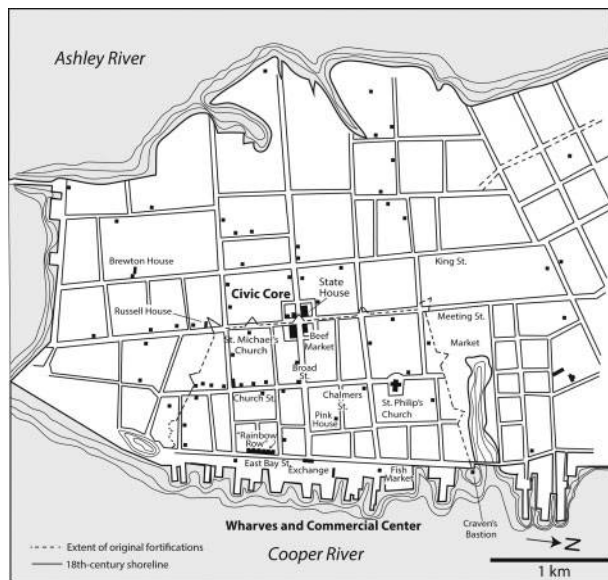
Figure 6 Map of Charleston in the mid-18th century, based on Kornwolf (2005).

within the comparative frame of the early modern period and for comparative urban archaeology.

Although Carolina was founded under the ideals of religious freedom and heterogeneity, Anglicanism became the dominant religion of the colony by the turn of the 18th century, and Charleston was laid out in an orthogonal plan known as the Grand Modell. Civic and religious buildings were centrally placed within the grid to symbolize the primacy of the English Crown and the Anglican Church. Charleston functioned as the waypoint between the agricultural plantations of the colony's interior and the wider marketplace of the emerging British Empire. The city's dominance in the South was due to the fact that it "united in one place the fruits of an emerging consumer society" (Hart 2009: 40). Local merchants linked Carolina to points across the Atlantic world (Hart 2009: 53). Along East Bay, running parallel with the shoreline, wharves, warehouses, and merchant shops sprang up as the Low Country economy surged. Perpendicular to East Bay, shops and provisioning stores catered to the urban population on Broad, King, and Meeting Streets. The order and civility of the grid plan was juxtaposed with the theater of urban street life. Vendors selling their wares and goods from around the Empire, the sounds of ships arriving and unloading their cargo, and the cool breeze from the Ashley River made cosmopolitan Charleston a feast for the senses.

Charlestonians achieved unprecedented levels of wealth during the 18th century because of a booming agricultural economy fueled by the brutal plantation system. The city served as a social stage for elite articulations of power and wealth gentility through vernacular architecture, material props, and social performance. In 1790 the city was the fourth largest

in the United States with 16,000 residents (Kornwolf 2002: 851). As the Atlantic agricultural trade declined, Charleston's urbanites held steadfast to the economic status quo; instead of embracing the industrialization that would be the backbone for American commercial success from the mid-19th century until the end of the Second World War, residents clung to the slave-based agricultural economy and to the "artifactual and architectural representation of empire and civility" (Zeirden and Herman 1999: 1). The American Civil War, Emancipation, and industrialization brought to an end Charleston's influence.

Comparative Themes in the Study of Ancient through Modern Cities

Research on complex topics such as urbanism is hindered by knowledge silos, those artificial boundaries that disrupt productive dialogues among disciplines. In archaeology, the ancient/modern divide is one that has persisted since the inception of historical archaeology in the mid-20th century. There are encouraging signs of change, but the answer to how archaeologists can best transcend temporal divides remains elusive.

The arrival of Europeans to the Western Hemisphere is a flashpoint for bridging those divides in Mesoamerica and Atlantic North America because of the fundamental changes they brought to indigenous landscapes. Differing contexts and pre- and post-Columbian trajectories should not be glossed over, yet we propose that comparative exercises create productive dialogues that transcend disciplinary boundaries. We outline three sets of paired themes that are prevalent in archaeology of cities and provide arenas for cross-temporal and cross-disciplinary dialogues in the broader study of urbanism as part of the human experience: urban growth and planning; function and meaning in urban landscapes; and urban neighborhoods and ethnicity. We separate these sets of themes for heuristic purposes but recognize they are interrelated, and return to our cases to connect these thematic discussions with specific examples.

Urban growth and planning

Discussions concerning the growth and organization of cities often focus on their formal properties and on ascertaining the social and historical processes that resulted in particular spatial distributions on the landscapes—relying on plans, their relationship to artifact and architectural types, and texts, if available (see Smith 2014). Specialists in the archaeology of Mesoamerica such as Marcus (1983; Marcus and Sabloff 2008b) and Smith (2007, 2009) have connected the study of urbanism within the culture

area to the broader literature on historical and contemporary cities by evaluating evidence for different types of planning and city form. Rather than applying dichotomies such as planned versus unplanned, which often prioritize grids or orthogonal layouts as evidence of planning, these authors note that archaeologists can more productively consider intentionality and potential conflicts in the construction of historical and prehistoric urban spaces across segments of the population, from centralized institutions to corporate groups and affiliated households.

Smith (2007) isolated several dimensions of coordination and standardization among buildings as important variables in determining relative degrees and centralization of planning in ancient cities lacking detailed textual information on these processes. His comparative analysis of early city plans demonstrates the incongruence of debates over gridded versus non-gridded urban landscapes for cities of the modern era, the scholarship on which tends to view the first as an index of sophistication and a move from a 'medieval' to an 'enlightened' worldview (see Bushman 1993: 139ff). Such perspectives are short-sighted given the frequent use of grids and orthogonality prior to the early modern period (e.g., Scargill 1979: Chapter 6). More valuable would be comparative studies of the development of urban grid systems, their situated meaning and usage in different regions, and how those meanings changed over time. Grids might tell us less about urban and civic order, and more about how urban landscapes were tools of spatial constraint that were adhered to in varying degrees within and among cities.

Among our cases, the central Mexican cities offer examples of non-Western, premodern orthogonality. Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan were more exceptions than the rule for pre-Columbian cities given the extensiveness of their orthogonal structures, which radiated into residential sectors well beyond the urban epicenter. Nevertheless, the plans of these central Mexican capitals likely emerged through multifaceted processes. As an example, recent investigations at Teotihuacan's southern Street of the Dead by Carballo and colleagues (in press) verify the suggestion made by Paddock (cited in Millon 1973: 38) that this portion of the city's central artery was cut into the volcanic tuft substrate over two or more kilometers, in what was apparently a centralized labor effort. Yet it was also left relatively unelaborated in comparison with the formally bounded northern Street of the Dead running through the urban epicenter, and residential compounds to the south were constructed more haphazardly in relation to the street than was the case to the north, although they adhere closely to the overarching orthogonal plan.

The area is therefore consistent with a mix of central and local planning.

The residential sectors of Tenochtitlan are buried under Mexico City, leaving their organization more speculative, but early colonial maps and opportunistic excavations illustrate a pervasive orthogonal plan. Although there is evidence that the layout of the urban epicenter was centrally planned and astronomically aligned (Aveni *et al.* 1988), there exists little evidence that Mexica rulers mandated commoners to arrange their residences to the same plan. Smith (2007: 38) suggests that the orthogonal layout of residential sectors could have instead had more to do with the organization of chinampa fields than with centralized efforts to orient domestic space. During the early colonial period the Spanish continued the native organization in Mexico City's historical center but deviated from it in newer outlying areas, only to readopt grid models that were in fashion in Europe later in the colonial period.

Two different processes are evidenced in our North American case studies. Boston's early 17th-century development occurred prior to broad adoption of orthogonal plans. The town's initial form was more closely akin to its English cousins, such as Bristol or Norwich, which developed out of medieval cities organized around central marketplaces and churches. The remnants of this informal plan can still be seen today in the city's North End and Beacon Hill neighborhoods.

For Charleston, a Grand Modell in the form of an orthogonal grid was outlined by the colony's proprietors as a beacon of European civility on the Carolina peninsula. The city was the first major use of a grid plan in the English colonies, and all major settlements established thereafter employed some form of a grid (Hornsby and Herman 2005: 181). The mid-19th century growth of Boston's Back Bay was influenced by Parisian urban planning practices and consisted of uniform streets lined with row houses in order to materialize elite group identity. Urban grids were "spatial representations" that materialized early modern ideals of civic European order on the foreign colonial environment (Upton 2005: 9).

Research on growth and planning also considers the organization of citywide space as a whole. Formal models proposed by early urban theorists such as the concentric, sector, and multiple-nuclei models (e.g., Burgess 1925; Hoyt 1939; Harris and Ullman 1945) still possess analytical value after being adapted to comparative archaeological and historical cases (Marcus 1983; Marcus and Sabloff 2008b; Scargill 1979: Chapter 2; Smith 2010b). In the first of these models, spatial organization resembles an archery target with its epicenter as the bullseye and concentric rings of industrial and

residential space following gradations in production activities and social status. In the second, the target takes on some of the properties of a dartboard, whereby residential or commercial sectors expand outward from the center as the city grows, creating additional pie-shaped wedges that cut across the rings. Finally, in the multiple-nuclei model, urban spatial organization resembles a flow chart with bounded sectors of adjoining sectors represented as cells that serve civic, industrial, and residential functions. Rather than set models, comparative urban studies show that cities possess variable overlap of concentricity, sectorization, and nuclei.

Our cases suggest possible relationships between centralization of political and religious authority and concentricity, and between economic functions and sectorization or the formation of multiple nuclei. Teotihuacan presents the most concentric plan, with a well-defined monumental core of religious and civic structures (FIG. 7A); an inner ring of denser, higher-status districts and their associated common spaces; and an outer ring of more dispersed, lower-status districts and isolated groups of households (Manzanilla 2009). In this respect, it resembles Sjoberg's (1960) adaptation of the concentric model to preindustrial cities, which tended to emanate outward from an elite-dominated epicenter (Smith 2010b: 138). Craft activities were largely household undertakings at Teotihuacan that followed these concentric gradations in status, yet clusters of households that engaged in the same trades are apparent, providing a degree of sectorization. So too did the linear orientation provided by the Street of the Dead, which extended what might be considered the epicenter and was flanked with residences of higher status relative to their districts, as was noted by Marcus (1983: 201). Related economic sectors include clusters of obsidian workers to the north, clusters of masons using lime plaster to the west, and clusters of households importing materials from the Gulf of Mexico to the east (Carballo 2013). In many cases these locations are consistent with the acquisition routes to particular resources, indicating that households either moved or organized their domestic economies strategically in accordance with trade networks.

On its own Tenochtitlan may have shared much of Teotihuacan's mix of concentricity with sectors save for its incorporation of Tlatelolco, a historical event that created a twin-city amalgamation with

Figure 7   A) Teotihuacan, looking south to Moon Plaza, Street of the Dead, and Sun Pyramid; B) Mexico City, looking west across ruins of Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor to the Colonial era Cathedral and houses; C) Boston, looking west down State Street to Old State House; D) Charleston, Broad Street looking west towards the intersection with Meeting St. and the Civic Square.

dual yet unequal nuclei, both with their own epicenters (FIG. 7B), marketplaces, and canoe ports. These factors encouraged greater sectorization, and the plan of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco as a unified city presents a hybrid with dual nuclei, a northern sector associated with the larger Tlatelolco marketplace, and port sectors to the north and east. In the early colonial period, the Spanish encouraged greater centralization in market activities by housing three within the Plaza Mayor or Zocalo, approximately where Tenochtitlan's had been located (Olvera 2007). For an interval the central market was relocated to the west/southwest, where it is designated in the Santa Cruz map, but it was brought back close to its Tenochca location by the end of the 16th century (Martínez 1977; Rubial-Garcia 2012). Pick and Butler (2000: 382) propose that combination of the concentric model plus sectors still works for spatial characterization of today's Mexico City.

Among our Atlantic North American cases, the 'T' or 'bell' shaped plans of Boston and Charleston present variants of city-sector models guided by their port settings and strong maritime economies. This form of development is premised on economic functionality since the most desirable land was on the harbor frontage for mercantile activities. While informal, it was produced from "shared principles of siting and orientation" (Upton 2005: 21), namely the waterfront as the hub of commercial activity. T-shaped development would be a hallmark of later urban development in cities such as Philadelphia and New Orleans (see Upton 2005).

In Boston and Charleston, land was reclaimed to extend the shoreline and wharves into the harbors; wetland reclamation and in-filling were also major components in the growth of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City. In Charleston, the area called "the Wharf" (later known as East Bay Street) was reclaimed as a part of the city's 17th- and 18th-century fortifications, while private wharves interrupted these shoreline defenses. Following American independence, the fortifications were dismantled, and commercial wharves dominated Charleston's primary shoreline. At the center of Boston's commercial frontage was Long Wharf, one of the busiest in the western Atlantic; the city was also defended by a series of fortifications (Bushman 1993: 159).

From the shoreline urban settlement in both cities pulled back from the harbor, with intensive development along central boulevards, King (later State) Street in Boston (FIG. 7C) and Broad Street in Charleston (FIG. 7D). In both cases, the major artery culminated in civic spaces. In Charleston, the intersection of Meeting and Broad Streets was the geographic and symbolic center of the Carolina capital. There, officials designed the open spaces of the Grand Modell with civic and religious structures—St. Michael's Church, the State House, the Grand House, and the Beef Market.

Boston's earliest civic spaces were recessed from the commercial docks to overlook the commerce of the British Empire's northwest cornerstone. Running north from Long Wharf was King Street, with its terminus at the Town House, the seat of colonial government—its first two wooden incarnations had been lost to fires in 1657 and 1711 before a brick structure was erected in 1713. Outside of the epicenter, Boston acquired 45 acres of land in 1634 to create Boston Common, used as grazing pasture and for public gathering, and most notably as a venue for hangings and militia musters (Fisher 2000: 124–143; Kornwolf 2002: 959–960).

Bowden and later Hornsby and Hermann (2005) argued that these processes are indicative of a category of urban development in port-capitals termed the "mercantile triangle," whereby triangular sectorization characterizes the city plan. The model begins with the commercial wharf frontage at the bottom of the triangle for warehousing, wholesaling, shipping, and commission. Moving away from the water a financial and communication sector coordinates mercantile movements and their monetary infrastructure. Next are middle sections of personal, retail, and professional services as well as hotels, taverns, and theaters. At the tip of the triangle is a concentrated legal, political, religious, and administrative sector. While this model is compelling in Charleston (FIG. 8), Bowden (cited in Hornsby and Hermann 2005: 186–187) argues that this economic and administrative model could be applied to all North American port cities, and we wonder whether
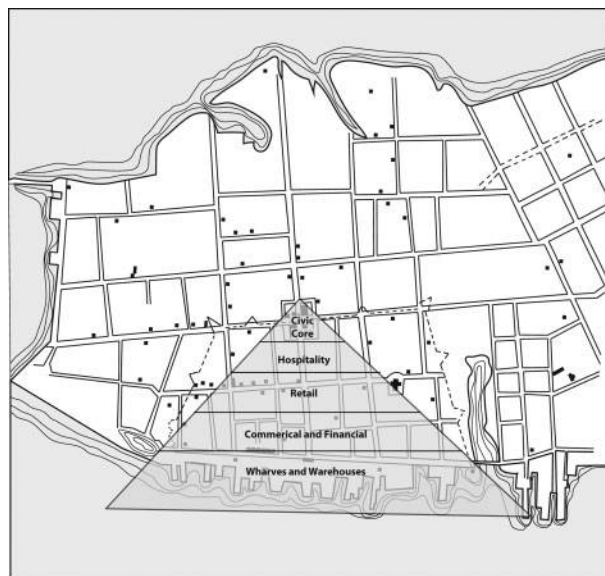

Figure 8 Mercantile Triangle model of Charleston after Hornsby and Herman (2005).

a modified version could be adapted for the canoe ports, marketplaces, palace storage facilities, and temple precincts of Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco.

Comparative approaches to urban plans have not gained widespread appeal in historical archaeology (but see Rothschild 1992). Further diverse and creative modeling of early modern cities might yield fruitful comparisons to cases from the ancient world. For example, do ancient port towns develop in similar ways in other contexts? A similarly useful exercise would be to chart the ways that sectors have changed or remained the same over time, and what the stimuli were for change.

Function and Meaning of Urban Landscapes

The plans and spatial distributions of cities relate directly to how urban spaces were used and conceived by their builders and occupants. In addressing these dynamics, many archaeologists have found the built-environment approach championed by Amos Rapoport (1977, 1988, 1990) to be of great utility. Rapoport (1988) termed the symbolic encoding of religious or cosmological principles into city layouts *high-level meaning*, something that is perhaps more apparent among societies without strong divisions between political and religious organization, but can also characterize more secular societies. *Mid-level meanings* involve interpersonal relations of power and inequality, and are marked in urban landscapes in differences such as those present among residential architecture of variable social statuses. *Low-level meanings*, in turn, are less indexical, though no less important in providing cultural cues for the habituation of lived experience. They could include conventions such as the elevation of sidewalks or frames around doorways as cues from the built environment for where to walk apart from traffic or exit a room, specific to a particular culture and time.

These levels of meaning often crosscut. Whereas scholars of central Mexico see directional and cosmological encoding as important high-level meaning, they debate how centrally planned layouts were in relation to practical concerns such as agricultural strategies and low-level meanings generating orthogonal layouts such as at Tenochtitlan. Texts clearly articulate how early modern urban landscapes of North America were overtly indexed with high and mid-level meanings. The grid was a materialization of Georgian notions of imposed cultural order on nature, while the siting of civic and religious edifices on prominent locales within the urban landscape further accentuated the rationality of colonial power relations.

Convergence in levels of meaning can also be seen in roadways and other thoroughfares, which could serve more utilitarian purposes of daily circulation while also fulfilling periodic status-enforcing purposes of political spectacles or cosmically regenerative purposes of ritual procession. A key feature of our cases is core boulevards. The Street of the Dead at Teotihuacan, several causeways within Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco/Mexico City and linking the island city to the mainland, King Street in Boston, and Broad Street in Charleston all acted as central arteries with multiple functions and meanings through their use. As was the case in ancient cities, elites in early modern ones used central avenues for ritualized processions to reinforce power over the city (Leech 1998). An example from colonial Mexico City was the procession associated with Corpus Christi from the cathedral through city streets. It was the largest and most elaborate festival in the city's ritual calendar, and reflected Mexico City's hybrid nature in involving large native participation (Curcio-Nagy 1994).

Since meaning in the built environment is strongly predicated on the use of space, we find utility in the spectrum proposed by Cynthia Robin and Nan Rothschild (2002) of public, semi-public, semi-private, and private space. Urban public spaces are often open, with parks, plazas, and wide boulevards. Archaeologists working in transdisciplinary collaboration have classified such spaces more completely than the simple 'gray' versus 'green' space dichotomy of architectural elaboration, for the purposes of comparative analysis (Stanley *et al.* 2012). Stark (2014) has further parsed the green spaces of parks and gardens for a globally and temporally comparative sample of premodern urban societies, noting their high-level meanings and symbolism as well as their mid-level meanings including elite display.

As one of the first urban green spaces in North America, Boston Common served multiple functions including for public grazing of animals and overtly political public executions. Boston also provides an example of how grid plans might convey mid-level meaning. Back Bay was designed to create a visual distinction between the winding streets of the city's early core and the new, high-status zone expressing norms of refinement. 19th-century Anglo-American society championed ideas of holistic civic improvement, yet new public urban projects in Boston such as Commonwealth Avenue and Back Bay's Copley Square (which contained the Public Library) served to insulate civic institutions inside of the bounds of elite neighborhoods. These monuments to improvement conflated private elite interests with civic betterment (Domosh 1992: 291).

In central Mexico, palaces of the pre-Columbian elite served semi-private and semi-public functions, with large interior courtyards often acting as focal points that could accommodate large groups of spectators or participants, but a number well below that

which could fit in the plazas of ceremonial complexes (Evans 2004). The status and political power of Aztec rulers were expressed through urban botanical gardens, zoos, and aviaries located within or in close proximity to palaces, and exhibiting species acquired from throughout the empire (Evans 2000).

Digital modeling techniques such as space syntax offer methods of evaluating levels of meaning within past built environments by elucidating how open space, avenues, monuments, and residential sectors were physically connected as parts of urban landscapes. These approaches facilitate understanding of the role of public and private space and how they are connected into urban spatial networks, and can provide cross-disciplinary opportunities for comparative analyses. While scholars of Mesoamerica have been exploring the uses of space syntax in urban contexts for some time (e.g., Morton *et al.* 2012; Robb 2007), historical archaeologists have yet to fully engage this analytical tool and could profitably build on the extensive work undertaken on modern cities by urban planners and human geographers (e.g., Psarra and Kickert 2012; Hillier 2005).

Neighborhoods and Ethnicity

Urban spatial organization of neighborhoods is so pervasive that Smith (2010b) considers it one of the few universals of cities past and present. Being economic hubs, the cases we have assembled illustrate the spectrum of variability in the ethnic composition of neighborhoods, with migrant populations producing ethnic enclaves within which their urban minority group was a neighborhood majority, and other multiethnic neighborhoods where majority and different minority populations were in close contact. Various authors have considered the ways in which pre-Columbian societies in central Mexico resembled precapitalist world systems or world economies (Blanton and Feinman 1984; Smith 2001), but it was in the 16th century that Mexico City became a global city in the modern sense of the term, followed by the cities of Atlantic North America. Mexico City's globalization is vividly illustrated by an entry from the diary of Domingo Chimalpahin, in which he recounts the arrival of Japanese emissaries in 1610 (Restall *et al.* 2005:153–154). In this illustrative passage we have an individual of indigenous ancestry writing in Nahuatl regarding the dress and customs of east Asians mulling about with western Europeans. Another example is provided by Mexico City's Parián market, one of the three in operation in the Plaza Mayor that specialized particularly in goods originating across the Pacific via Manila. Cities of Atlantic North America would not be so globally connected for decades but they, and the pre-Columbian cities that preceded Mexico City, saw migration,

forced and voluntary, that resulted in neighborhood formation based on ethnicity among other factors.

The fact that ancient cities possessed neighborhoods is not usually as surprising to non-archaeologists as is the fact that they could be multiethnic, a characteristic presumed to characterize only cities of the modern era and a few select cases from antiquity, such as Rome or other imperial capitals. The waves of migration to larger premodern cities demonstrates how research on neighborhood organization overlaps with research on the articulations between cities and their broader economic networks. Mesoamerican archaeologists have recently focused intensely on neighborhoods, both comparatively and within the culture area (Arnauld *et al.* 2012; Smith 2010b). Although pre-Columbian cities were not global in a modern sense, they could comprise multiple ethnic groups speaking languages from completely distinct language families. Spence and colleagues (2005) provide a succinct overview of these populations at Teotihuacan. Their work highlights ethnic variability in neighborhood arrangements such as the more nucleated enclave of Zapotecs living in the Oaxaca Barrio and the more dispersed west Mexican migrant populations living in places such as the Tlajinga district. They also draw an interesting cross-cultural analogy between the occupants of the Merchant's Barrio at Teotihuacan, whose male members show foreign biomarkers but whose female members show local biomarkers, and the merchant wards of Southwest Asian cities where males were the traders and migrants.

Ethnic and social boundaries are often inscribed on the urban landscape, and this is clearly illustrated by our North American cases. Whereas Charleston's urban plan was a communal platform for the display of civic order, private residences were stages for the aspirations of gentility and refinement away from the central mercantile and commercial urban channels. The Charleston Single House was the preferred genteel urban form, complete with a central passage and entry piazza that was oriented with the gable end to the street frontage (see Herman 1997, 2005; McInnis 2005). These edifices of elite status were a part of larger "urban plantations" that reproduced the social, racial, and spatial relationships of 18th- and 19th-century southern society, where slave-owning Anglo-Americans created landscapes of surveillance over enslaved Africans (Vlach 1999).

Archaeologists working in Charleston have been fortunate to excavate within these urban compounds, and their work has offered insights into the material expression of elite group identity. Zierden (1999: 76–78) has compiled archaeological data from 20 urban households showing access to fashionable European markets and purchasing power at the

height of the city's social and economic influence. At the same time, she has demonstrated the changing tastes of single households over the rise, apogee, and decline of Charleston, documenting the ways that modes of gentility were modified in light of dynamic economic conditions (Zeirden 1999: 79–82). In a related vein, architectural historians have shown how the built environment of these urban plantations were indexes of racial and economic relations, and the ways that space, slave housing, and outbuildings were designed to be surveilled through lines of sight (Herman 1999, 2005; Vlach 1999).

Neighborhood organization and urban form can define social identity. For instance the co-steadying sectors of Boston's 18th-century Beacon Hill and 19th-century Back Bay illustrate contrasting urban identities. As discussed above, the filling in of the Back Bay was a deliberate creation of a landscape for 19th-century elites to distinguish themselves while simultaneously laying claim to improving the city. This new ordered landscape contrasted with the earlier patchwork enclaves of the city's core. For example, Black residents of Beacon Hill operated with relative freedom in the irregularly developed timber-framed neighborhood that became the center of the Abolitionist movement in New England. The streets were set within a built environment in which the movement of bodies could be surveilled by its inhabitants (Klee 2008: 53–55). Such surveillance was crucial during the years leading up to Emancipation to ensure security and solidarity among the Free Black population. Related archaeological work on Beacon Hill has illustrated the everyday lives of Black Bostonians in this landscape. At its center was the African Meeting House (Bower and Rushing 1980). Here, excavations demonstrate the community-building practices of the site such as communal meals. In the adjoining apartments at 44 Joy Street, a privy provided evidence for related meal preparation and service (Landon *et al.* 2007). Beacon Hill and Back Bay are deliberate spatial solutions to the ways these two groups sought to forge their place within Boston's 18th and 19th century landscape, and show how urban group identity can be linked to issues of visibility: to be seen or hidden, to be conspicuous or tucked away.

Conclusions

Two decades ago Lightfoot (1995: 210) noted: "The study of long-term change in both prehistoric and historic contexts is necessary to evaluate the full implications of Columbian consequences (epidemics, novel trade goods, alien fauna and flora), European exploration, and the formation of multi-ethnic colonial communities. Modern African American, European American, Hispanic, and Native American cultures are rooted in the prehistory of the Americas and the colonial policies involving massive movements of ethnic laborers into indigenous homelands." We hope that the comparative overview we have presented here will foster future collaborations on the shared urban past of the Americas and elsewhere that transcend compartmentalization into prehistoric and historical camps. Historic and prehistoric cities offer complementary data sets, as the first possess the rich textual accounts that facilitate precise historical sequences and glimpses into human motivations, while the second are often more accessible for excavation, not being located under contemporary cities, in order to chart diachronic change in the material trappings of urban lifeways.

In this article we traced the development of four urban centers of the Americas. Each case city was a product of particular concerns of place, yet we have shown how urban dwellers used similar solutions to issues of urban planning and development in working out the logic of city space. Bridging the concerns of scholarship on cities across space and through time requires moving beyond particular urban sequences to forge comparative frameworks for dealing with related sets of problems. We have considered just a few in our attention to urban growth and planning, functions and meaning of urban landscapes, and neighborhoods and ethnicity. We emphasized points of similarity but also noted variability in the reasons for and degrees of centralized planning of urban layout, the higher and lower levels of meanings conveyed by public and private spaces, and how neighborhoods were shaped by local and immigrant communities.

In central Mexico, the two pre-Columbian cities of Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan-Tlatelolco present cases of non-Western orthogonal planning on large scales, whereby the latter appears to have been partially modeled on the former and provided the literal foundations of Mexico City. How centrally planned this orthogonality was is debatable in both cases, however, and it seems likely to have been instantiated in urban epicenters based on principles of high-level meaning and on the peripheries of these cities through more local processes. In Boston and Charleston we are presented with the contrast of the first having been established prior to the importation of European grid plans to Atlantic North America and the second having been established following the Grand Modell that conformed to this new conceptual organization of urban space. In addition to the variability in time and culture of our cases, they differ in being either inland or port cities. Nevertheless, they, like other cities, served as economic hubs that attracted goods and people from the broader orbits of the day. Through the circulation of goods,

the plans of these cities developed varying degrees of concentricity based on socioeconomic status; sectorization based on production and distribution (e.g., workshops, marketplaces, harbors); or the development of multiple nuclei based on increased separation between mercantile and other civic space, or the absorption of another, previously autonomous urban epicenter. Through the circulation of people, migrants created multi-ethnic urban populations and ethnic enclaves with variable degrees of assimilation into the local community.

As the world's population continues to flood into cities at unprecedented levels, a broader comparative view of urban environments is capable of providing insights and creative solutions to contemporary problems such as urban stressors and sustainability (Smith 2010a). Overcrowding, development, sprawl, competition for resources, and climate change all threaten today's cities as well as the urban archaeological record. Archaeologists have a vital role to play in the preservation of past urban environments through mediation and working with local communities to combat such threats to urban landscapes, both visible and buried underground. We are also responsible for making scholarly concerns regarding the archaeology of cities of interest to this broader audience, and in this regard less compartmentalization and more collaboration surely offer more appealing perspectives on cities across space and time, with greater contemporary relevance in highlighting both the patterns and uniqueness of human urban experiences.

Acknowledgements

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