

AMERIND STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

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**AMERIND STUDIES
IN ANTHROPOLOGY**

THE GLOBAL SPANISH EMPIRE

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF PLACE
MAKING AND PLURALISM

EDITED BY

Christine D. Beaulé and John G. Douglass



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To our respective spouses, Christian and Jill, for their love, support, and understanding as we worked on this project for the last two years.

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A Tense *Convivencia*

Place Making, Pluralism, and Violence in Early Spanish Central America

Laura Matthew and William R. Fowler

The earliest Spanish American cities—especially those founded where no prior settlement existed—provide a unique opportunity to interrogate the initial encounters and nascent structures of Spanish colonialism. Once invasion and war had created the conditions for settlement, what must it have been like to confront such a plurality of peoples, weapons, clothes, languages, animals, landscapes, foods, and other items, often in the midst of extreme violence but without knowing the full extent of the transformations under way? What did this unprecedented *convivencia* (living together) look like? We consider the question by comparing the rich archaeological and documentary records of the first successful Spanish urban foundations in Central America, Santiago en Almolonga in Guatemala and the *villa* of San Salvador in El Salvador, founded nearly simultaneously in 1527–1528.

Santiago in Almolonga lies under the modern-day towns of San Miguel Escobar and Ciudad Vieja, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala. Continuous settlement from its foundation to the present day problematizes archaeological excavation (Szecsy 1953). The city's already significant documentary record, however, was greatly augmented by the identification in the late 1990s of the Nahua *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*—a cloth painting that depicts the invasion of Guatemala led by Santiago's founder, Jorge de Alvarado—and the rediscovery in 2011 of the city's 1530–1541 Spanish city council (*cabildo*) books at the Hispanic Society of America in New York City (Kramer et al. 2014).¹ The *villa* of San Salvador near Suchitoto, El Salvador, on the other hand, is the best-preserved Spanish conquest town on the American mainland. The site is completely accessible and exposed, with very light vegetation cover and no modern occupation to obscure surface features. It has suffered very little damage due to agricultural disturbances, and it has not been prone to illicit digging by

looters. Built on a grid plan with a core area covering 45 ha, virtually all of the town was artificially leveled and filled with various types of densely packed constructions, making it an urban landscape of truly impressive proportions.

Santiago and San Salvador were founded by the same people around the same time, with the intention of establishing a strong Spanish foothold within Maya, Nahuatl Pipil, and Xinka territory. They staked a visible claim on the landscape and turned conquistadors into colonists. Military and residential aspects of the city manifested themselves in tandem in a process fraught with danger, violence, and fear. Europeans and Africans were the minority by a large margin and had to negotiate simultaneously their position with each other, their native allies, and those whose territory they had successfully invaded. Taken together, Santiago in Almolonga and San Salvador reveal how Hispanic idealizations of conquered, urbanized space were tempered by the military and multi-ethnic realities of their founding.

FOUNDATION BY FORCE

The conquest of Guatemala and El Salvador was an extension of the conquest of Mexico. After the fall of the imperial capital, Tenochtitlan, in 1521, Hernán Cortés dispatched Pedro de Alvarado to conquer lands to the south. Several thousand central Mexican Nahua conquistadors led by Tlaxcalan, Cholulan, and Mexica nobility, Zapotec forces from Oaxaca, and a small contingent of Spanish conquistadors led by Alvarado invaded Guatemala in early 1524 and formed an alliance with the Kaqchikel Maya kingdom of Iximché. These combined forces—in which the Spanish were dramatically outnumbered—subdued the K'iche' Maya in the spring of 1524 and continued into western and central El Salvador by June (Matthew 2012:77–81). In El Salvador, however, the invaders met fierce resistance from the native Nahuatl-speaking Pipil of the region, who, after two major battles, forced the Spaniards to return to Iximché.

Meanwhile, many Nahua in Guatemala had returned to Mexico. This left the remaining conquistadors vulnerable when the Kaqchikel Maya broke their alliance and drove the Nahua and Spaniards from Iximché in the fall of 1524. From a military camp in the formerly K'iche' highlands, Pedro de Alvarado's cousin Diego de Alvarado led the second invasion

into El Salvador and founded the first truly Spanish city in Central America in the spring of 1525: the *villa* of San Salvador, probably on the same site as the later 1528 settlement, now known as Ciudad Vieja (Barón Castro 1996:41–42). The town was built in a small valley known as La Bermuda to the north of Cuscatlán Nahuatl Pipil territory, which had little or no indigenous settlement at the time of the conquest but was still subject to attack (Fowler and Earnest 1985). By 1526 the local Nahuatl Pipil had once again forced the invaders to retreat to Guatemala.

Fighting in Guatemala intensified in the spring of 1527 with the arrival from Mexico of thousands of Nahua reinforcements and several hundred more Spaniards under the leadership of Pedro de Alvarado's brother Jorge. This massive invasion struck at the heart of Kaqchikel territory. The Nahua and Spanish first occupied the major market town of Chimaltenango, then relocated to the nearby valley of Almolonga, where on 22 November 1527 Jorge de Alvarado founded Santiago de Guatemala. From there Diego de Alvarado and his troops left to re-establish San Salvador, which they officially founded on 1 April 1528 (Barón Castro 1996:87–91, 197–202). If the invasion of Central America was an extension of the conquest of México-Tenochtitlan, Santiago and San Salvador were extensions of each other.

The act of foundation constituted not only a legal claim to territory but also a seminal moment of urban planning in which a self-designated city council began to imagine systematically what an orderly, protective, and, above all, European space would look like in a foreign and hostile landscape. The famous Spanish American grid layout, or *traza*, descended from medieval *bastide* towns of southern France and northern Spain, as well as military settlements such as Santa Fe and Puerto Real established in Andalucía during the siege of Granada (Lauret et al. 1988; Navarro Segura 2006). It was replicated in the Caribbean by Hispaniola's military governor, Nicolás de Ovando, who supervised the founding of 15 towns across the island between 1502 and 1511 (Brewer-Carías 2006:285; Castellero Calvo 2006:11–17; Mira Caballos 2000:60–61). By 1515 the model had spread to 27 towns founded across Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica (McAlister 1984:138).

These Caribbean island cities did follow a grid pattern, but often with off-center plazas, irregularly sized blocks, and nonparallel streets. The earliest surviving example of a more stereotypically orthogonal Spanish

American *traza* is found in modern-day Panama at the site of Natá de los Caballeros, founded in 1522 during the governorship of Pedrarias Dávila (Tejeira-Davis 1996). The surveyor who worked with Dávila from 1513 to 1520, Alonso García Bravo, presumably influenced this more rigid design, which he later replicated in the Spanish *traza* of México-Tenochtitlan atop the ruins of the former ceremonial center of the Aztec city in 1523–1524 (Kagan 2000:58; Rodríguez-Alegría 2017; Tejeira-Davis 1996:54). In any case, the Spanish American *traza* did not develop through specific orders from above; the Crown issued no directives for any of these urban plans beyond their being orderly. Rather, the *traza* emerged through the application of prior experience and the development of new patterns on the ground. The city council of Santiago in Guatemala drew explicitly on this emerging New World pattern of Spanish settlement, noting on 22 November 1527 that Santiago's *traza* would be laid out "in the manner that has been done in other cities, *villas*, and places that in this New Spain are populated by Spaniards" (Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala 1934:29–30).

On the day of Santiago's foundation the council designated a central plaza of four *solares*, or lots, for their meeting house, a prison, a church dedicated to Santiago, and two public buildings. They also made plans for a military lookout point, a chapel to Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, and a hospital and designated several dozen *vecinos*, or resident citizens (Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala 1934:29–30). Notably, however, four months separated the act of Santiago's foundation and the council's next official meeting, at which more *vecinos* were named and the first house lots distributed. By contrast, immediately after San Salvador's official foundation, its newly appointed city council spent 15 days laying out the streets, the plaza, and the church and building a few residences. After completing this layout, each Spanish resident was assigned a house lot within the town. If the Dominican chronicler Antonio de Remesal, who apparently consulted the now-lost *cabildo* books of San Salvador 75 years later, was not compressing time in his brief account (Remesal and Sáenz de Santa María 1964–1966, vol. 2, bk. 9, chap. 3:201), this process appears to have been more rapid in San Salvador than in Guatemala. Despite nine months of prior fighting and significant gains made against the Kaqchikel Maya by renewed Nahua and Spanish forces under Jorge de Alvarado's leadership, one suspects that taking possession of land for

a Spanish city between November 1527 and March 1528 was as militarily difficult in Guatemala as it was during the same period against the Nahuat Pipil in El Salvador. Foundation initiated place making but did not end the violence of war.

The defensive nature of both urban plans is indeed one of their most outstanding features in common. In Guatemala, Kaqchikel warfare led by the lords Kaji' Imox and B'eleje' K'at remained a threat that impeded urban development (Polo Sifontes 1986:96–98). Santiago's vulnerable western edge, where invaders could approach undetected between the volcanoes Fuego and Agua, was protected by a deep perimeter of indigenous allies from Mexico. In 1532 the council worried that the removal of rock for construction from areas around the river and the entrances and exits of the city was creating uneven surfaces on which Spaniards and their horses could stumble during an attack (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:72). By 1533 the only government building that had been built in the city of Santiago was the council house (*casa del cabildo*), which doubled as the church. (The church was later shifted to an adjacent house.) Amid news of battles on the coast, sword makers and bit makers got special tax relief (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:130–131, 164–165). The *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*, painted by Nahuia allies, makes the ongoing warfare patently clear, depicting clashes and sabotage on the city's very outskirts (Figure 5.1). In 1540 Kaji' Imox and B'eleje' K'at were captured, imprisoned in the city jail, and subsequently hanged (Maxwell and Hill 2006:287). Still, the city council openly expressed fear of a Maya insurrection, as Pedro de Alvarado prepared to leave town soon thereafter (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:316).

San Salvador, meanwhile, was built on a small mesa formed by an extrusive basalt outcrop rising above a small natural basin south of the middle reaches of the Lempa River known as the Paraíso Basin (Fowler and Earnest 1985). The south and east sides of the town were protected by a steep, rocky slope and a sentry station or observation post on the south, just outside the *traza*. The west side was comparatively level and open, but archaeological research shows that, like Santiago, the residences of the Nahuia and other indigenous allies in San Salvador were concentrated on this side of the town to form a kind of human shield. The north side also appears to have been relatively open and level (Map 5.1). Having chosen a previously unoccupied and geographically defensive site for

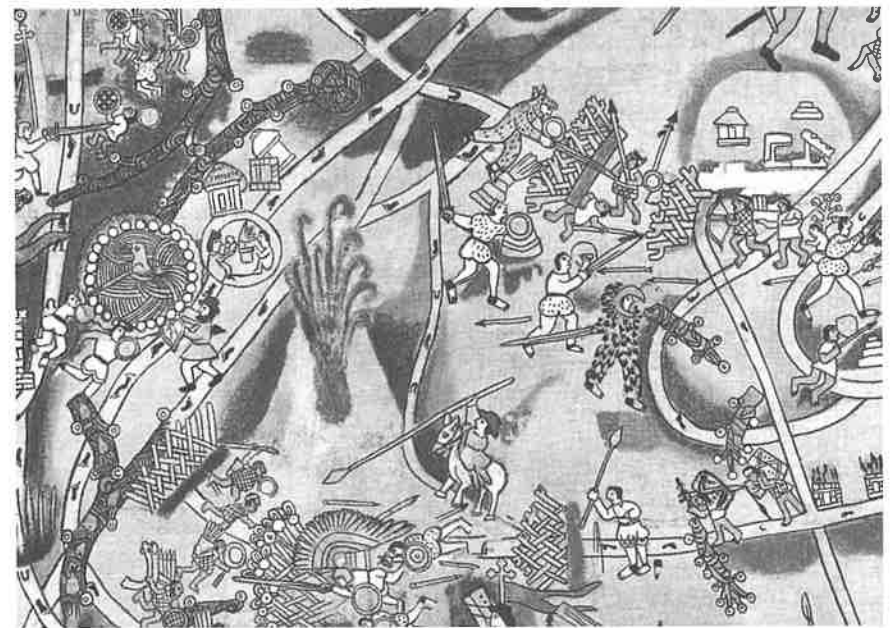
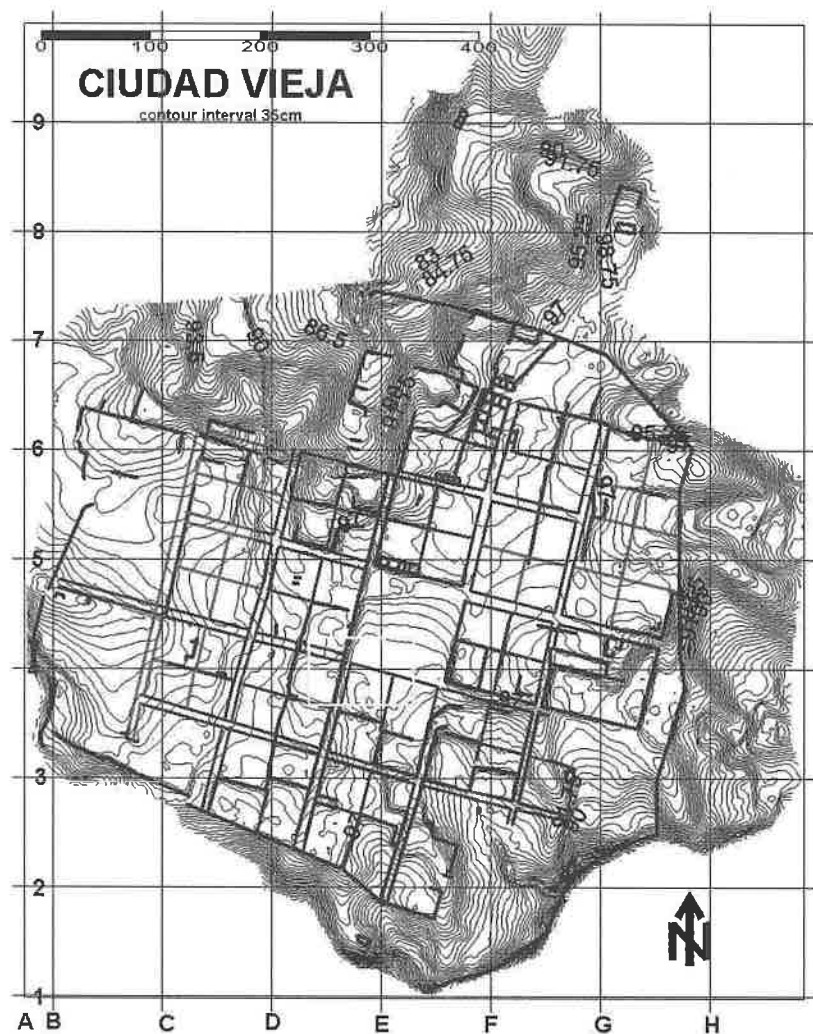


Figure 5.1 The *Lienzo de Quauhquechollan*. Santiago with the indigenous market (*circle*) and the Lago de Quilinizapa (*circle with bird*) to the north-west of the Volcán de Agua. © 2007 Universidad Francisco Marroquín, Guatemala. Images are available under the Creative Commons license. Attribution–Noncommercial–Share Alike.

their city, the residents of San Salvador were obviously more concerned about attacks from the south and the east, in which direction lay a number of densely indigenous Nahuat Pipil towns and a possible attack by the forces of rival Spanish conquistador Pedrarias Dávila in Nicaragua.

In both San Salvador and Santiago, indigenous laborers played a major role in the city's construction, and the demands on both people and land were significant. San Salvador was founded on top of an unoccupied mesa that required extensive leveling and terracing. The dominant natural features of the surrounding landscape are Cerro Tecomatepe, a small remnant volcanic cone to the southwest, and the extinct Guazapa Volcano to the west. The area was probably very thickly wooded at the time of the conquest, and while some labor for clearing and leveling and for construction of the town may have come in part from allied and enslaved



Map 5.1 Projected urban grid plan of Ciudad Vieja, the first *villa* of San Salvador. Map by Conard C. Hamilton, by permission.

Mesoamericans from other regions, it almost certainly was also provided by Nahuatl Pipil commoners from towns in the preconquest Cuscatlán polity. Agricultural tribute commodities from the same local communities supplied the town with food. In Santiago, meanwhile, even the Nahuatl allies were asked to contribute to public works by the Santiago cabildo

(Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:112, 116). In 1540 Pedro de Alvarado pledged the labor and supplies of Maya from distant Tecpan Atitlán and Rabinal to construct a fountain in the raised central plaza (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:136v), and indigenous merchants provided the Spanish with food staples, wax, clothes, cacao, and other goods.

The point is obvious but bears repeating: the first successful instances of Spanish place making in Guatemala and El Salvador were made possible first by the Spaniards' alliance with highly trained Nahuatl warriors, then by the violent displacement, both permanent and temporary, of tens of thousands of Maya, Xinka, and Nahuatl Pipil peoples. The place making that occurred in both cases represented hybrid creations drawing on the spatial traditions and habitus of both Mesoamerican and European societies.

THE MESOAMERICAN MAJORITY

In this unstable atmosphere, Europeans and Africans, for whom the idealized *traza* represented a safe, familiar haven, constituted an extreme minority. Some 200 European men received the status of *vecino* in Santiago between 1527 and 1530 (Sáenz de Santa María 1991:205–210). An unknown number of other Europeans and Africans are not included in such lists but appear elsewhere in the cabildo books as property owners and officeholders. The free African Pedro de Barrera, for instance, held the office of town crier between 1536 and 1537 and owned his own house (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:162, 207, 216). These Old World settlers were surrounded not only by partially subjugated but still hostile K'aqchikel Maya whose lands they had invaded but also by many hundreds if not thousands of indigenous allies from Mexico, Oaxaca, and the Soconusco. Known collectively as Mexicanos, the non-Maya indigenous allies lived on the immediate outskirts of the Spanish *traza* close to the springs that gave Almolonga its Nahuatl name. Significantly, this placed a major water source beyond the Spaniards' and Africans' direct control, although nearby rivers were also accessible. A cross at the intersection of two roadways indicated the Mexicano-Spanish boundary and the Spanish city's entrance. Boundary markers further delimited and protected the Mexicanos' lands (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:14, 54–55; see also Matthew 2012:174).

In addition to its close proximity to and frequent contact with the Mexicano population, Santiago was also surrounded by mostly Maya refugees, migrants, and slaves from other regions (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:146, 203–204, 210). The city council attempted to resettle this heterogeneous and fluid indigenous population into towns corresponding to royal encomienda grants of native labor and tribute obligations (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:110, 139–140, 217–218), but with only partial success. Mesoamericans lived where they liked; planted milpas; killed Spanish colts, cattle, and sheep that disturbed their fields; and demonstrated their indifference to Catholic evangelization by working on Sundays (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:123, 203–204, 246). Mesoamericans also entered the *traza* itself as transient laborers, servants living in Spanish households, and even residents in their own private homes (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:123, 163, 299).

A large, possibly pre-Columbian indigenous market at the city's southern edge anchored the Spanish city and became a central site of multicultural contact, attracting buyers and sellers from across the region. Spaniards, Africans, Nahua, Maya, and others converged to buy and sell indigenous products such as fresh fish and salt from the Pacific coast, cacao, corn, chiles, beans, cloth, and clothing, as well as new products like cheese, wine, wool, wax, and wheat-flour cookies. Spanish peddlers and encomenderos sold local items privately from their homes in competition with indigenous sellers (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:197–198, 200, 236–238, 312). The Spanish market supervisor, Diego López Gordillo, appears to have been removed from his post in part for demanding remuneration from indigenous sellers beyond the basic supplies such as firewood and food that they were obligated to provide him (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:279). Spaniards also inserted themselves into the cacao trade (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:160–161, 210, 344)—at this early date, a testament to cacao's intraregional rather than export value.

The material record of San Salvador makes even clearer that although the Spanish architecturally created a “little Europe” within the *traza*, these early cities were simultaneously very Mesoamerican. An indigenous population of significant proportions was concentrated on the west and south sides of San Salvador, within and just outside the boundaries of the *traza*. Nahuat Pipil servants forced into service from nearby encomienda towns also rotated in and out of the city, apparently without

substantial living quarters. While San Salvador is within Nahuat Pipil territory, as there was no immediate precontact settlement on the site, all inhabitants would have been newcomers to the site by choice or by force. San Salvador's 73 Spanish *vecinos* (Lardé y Larín 2000:108–110), meanwhile, built their residences near the center of the *traza*. The foundations here are predominantly in Spanish style, with rectangular layouts, carved stone column bases, adobe ovens, blacksmiths' and smelters' workshops, and sometimes tiled floors and roofs. Aside from a very small number of Spanish imports (2.6 percent), however, the ceramic complex of San Salvador is overwhelmingly indigenous, displaying many forms and decorative modes representing continuities with Late Postclassic materials, as well as hybrid forms and motifs developed during the conquest period.

In addition to the highly visible concentrations of ceramics, obsidian artifacts occur in great numbers on the surface and have been recovered from all excavated loci. *Manos* and *metates* (grinding stones) for maize processing occur in domestic contexts and on the surface. Ceramic spindle whorls for spinning thread, found in association with indigenous residences, speak to gendered production practices. Significantly, the highest concentration of Spanish ceramics and glass in San Salvador has been found in the commercial complex across the plaza from the city council building in the very center of the *traza*. This same urban plan is replicated in Santiago, though perhaps on a smaller scale; the council books only mention four shops commissioned to be built adjacent to the city council building on the plaza rather late, in 1537–1538.

The excavations at San Salvador thus offer a window into something the Guatemalan council books rarely discuss: the maintenance or construction of indigenous identity in and around these early colonial cities. Polished ceramic ear flares and jade objects (indicating elite bodily adornment) are significant in the inventory of indigenous-associated items at San Salvador. The ceramic record from eight excavated contexts and structures and from an extensive surface collection of the site shows evidence of a mixing and matching of indigenous styles, as well as the appearance of pottery normally associated with Oaxaca. Most strikingly, Jeb Card (2007) identified a class of earthenware serving plates with wide, outflaring rims produced with native Mesoamerican technology and painted designs but with brimmed forms copied from Italian majolica. Card (2007, 2013) refers to these vessels as “hybrid plates.” Unlike

the situation at most other Spanish colonial settlements, this new class of vessel is more associated with indigenous use than with Spanish use, and it is especially rare in the wealthiest Spanish households. Significantly, this pattern of hybridized vessel manufacture and use is known only in other cases of forced indigenous displacement in early colonial Spanish America (Card 2007:276–299, 2013:120).

A TENSE CONVIVENCIA

The Guatemalan council books remind us of the delicate political and social circumstances in which such hybridization took place. In 1535 the Santiago city council complained that local Kaqchikel were selling the lands they had possessed before the invasion, to which by Spanish logic they should no longer have had any rights. Worse yet, the Kaqchikel were selling their old lands to Spaniards, further evidence of the economic relationships that were developing between the Spanish and Maya, as well as the city council's lack of control over not only the indigenous population but also its own citizens. The Maya also played the Spanish and Nahua allies against each other, for instance, in 1538, when Maya lords arrived at the city council house requesting permission to create a new town—something the Spaniards had repeatedly tried to force them to do—in lands that were occupied by the Mexicanos (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:150r). The stock phrase in the council books ordering Spaniards to build outside the *traza* “sin perjuizio de los yndios” (without prejudice to the Indians) conformed to imperial expectations, but it may also have responded to the need not to provoke unduly the thousands of Mesoamericans who lived there.

Local indigenous people were also, however, vulnerable to the violence that both Nahua and Spaniards were willing to unleash against them. Complaining that the Maya were not remaining in the towns that had been created for them around nearby Lake Quilinizapa, the Spanish “gave many orders for men to go round them up, but these men treated the Indian lords badly, and this caused much scandal to both the Indians and the Spaniards” (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:139–140). These men were Mexicano *calpisques*, a Nahuatl word for the Aztec administrators of conquered towns; the Spanish council sometimes called them *mayordomos* and identified them by name (Kramer and Luján Muñoz

2018:208). The Spanish council decided to negotiate this potentially explosive situation themselves.

Maya and other refugee, encomienda, and migrant populations around Santiago also suffered from private slave-raiding. In 1536 the council prohibited Spaniards from rounding up feral horses to abduct Mesoamerican slaves and commoners and rapidly transport them to boats waiting on the Pacific coast (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:190) and ships' captains from taking free Mesoamericans out of the city as slaves (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:213). Indeed, the business of slaving constituted a major connecting thread between Santiago and San Salvador, and one wonders how much of San Salvador's *traza* was built by these Maya, Xinka, or other slaves rather than by local Nahuatl Pipil populations (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:84, 87, 91, 139–140, 163, 167, 191, 319).

The Santiago city council books provide valuable information about another group that thus far has remained invisible in the material record of San Salvador: Africans. As was true elsewhere in the nascent Spanish Empire, free and enslaved Africans played important, specific roles both as colonists and as enforcers of colonialism, against whom indigenous Americans often chafed (Aguirre Beltrán 1946; Restall 2000, 2005; Vinson and Restall 2009; Wheat 2016; Zabala Aguirre 2013). In Santiago, as we have already seen, Africans were artisans such as barbers and bakers, town criers, supervisors of Mesoamerican labor, and guardsmen, as well as slaves (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:162, 243, 280, 311). Often, the city council books provide the names, salaries, and negotiations of these crucial urban actors. However, they also evince concern with the independence some Africans were showing, echoing problems even at the heart of empire in México-Tenochtitlan, where the leaders of an African uprising were publicly hanged in 1537 (Quiñones Keber 1995:93). Africans in Santiago were repeatedly forbidden from carrying arms unless accompanied by their masters (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:62, 189), suggesting they were doing exactly that. A runaway slave was ordered to have one foot broken the first time he escaped and cut off the second time; after the third time the slave would be hanged (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:218). Africans were also threatened with lashes, jail time, and a heavy fine if they entered the indigenous marketplace at the edge of the Spanish *traza*, which, unusually, was guarded by a Spaniard. African women were specifically and repeatedly prohibited from the market

“for the trouble [*daño*] they cause” (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:213, 235, 282).

Similarly, the council books speak volumes about the tensions between the Spanish and their Nahua and Zapotec allies. In 1532 the cabildo created a buffer zone between the Mexicanos’ houses and the river to guard against conflicts with Spaniards collecting mud for making adobe bricks (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:55). By 1535 some Spaniards were urging that the Mexicanos be thrown off the site they occupied (“hechen los yndios de Mexico del sytio”) (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:132). In 1538 and again in 1541 the Spanish unsuccessfully attempted to forcefully relocate the Mexicanos and appropriate their land (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:239, 250, 260, 263, 330, 331). Mesoamerican women of all ethnicities were vulnerable to sexual assault, especially around the river and springs, where both Spaniards and Africans were forbidden to linger when women were washing or gathering water under threat of the unusually explicit punishment of four days in prison and a fine of four gold pesos for Spaniards or one hundred lashes for Africans (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:85–86).²

Despite the tensions, construction in Santiago continued apace. Houses and the city council building were made of adobe or rammed-earth *tapia*, with planked walls and thatched roofs. In 1536 the city had a tannery and two blacksmiths; they were ordered to move outside the *traza* when sparks from their workshops caused a major fire “because the buildings of this city have coverings of straw” (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:162, 188). By the end of the 1530s, most *solares* in Santiago had been distributed, and *vecinos* were constructing vineyards; successfully growing wheat, which helped stock a bakery and required a second mill for grinding flour; visiting the local tavern; and expanding roads within the city toward gold-mining areas in Honduras and to both Pacific and Atlantic ports (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:234, 237, 243, 252, 254, 257, 270, 286). The church was finally approved for construction in 1536, and the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Mercedarians were planning monasteries in 1538. In the same year that Kají Imox and B’eleje’ Kat were hanged, the city council building finally replaced its straw roof with ceramic tile.

If for Santiago we have a fine-grained sense of the process and timing of urbanization, in San Salvador we can more easily see its architectural and structural features. Excavations of residential and nonresidential

structures and activity loci in San Salvador were conducted in the 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2013, 2014, and 2015 field seasons. A total of 20 structures or activity areas have been identified and excavated. These include a large Spanish residence, several indigenous residences, a kitchen structure, two blacksmith’s workshops, a commercial structure with a tavern, a church in the style of an open chapel (*capilla abierta*), an observation post, and several special-function structures. With very few exceptions, the orientations of the buildings follow the general site grid of 12 degrees. The multicourse stone wall foundations are usually 80–85 cm in width, or approximately one Spanish *vara* of 83 cm, although some foundations were thicker, in the range of 100–120 cm. The foundations run very deep, usually to at least 1 m below the top row of stones. The width and depth of foundations were correlated with the width and height of the walls supported. The basalt building stones were carefully cut, with at least one dressed face, and were laid carefully to form noticeably straight foundations. Here, too, walls were generally constructed of rammed earth *tapia*, but in some cases adobe bricks were used. Floors were either earthen or covered with *baldosas* (brick floor tiles); occasionally, cobblestones arranged in decorative patterns were used. Roofs were thatched or covered with *tejas* (ceramic roof tiles), laid over a wooden framework.

In both Santiago and San Salvador, all humans had to manage the uncontrolled, even explosive increase in the population of invasive species such as horses, sheep, cattle, and pigs, which also cleared land for new seeds and grasses such as wheat. According to the *Relación Marroquín*, which describes El Salvador in 1532, several encomenderos raised pigs in their encomienda towns. Pedro de Puelles noted that his Indians in the encomienda town of Cojutepeque kept a herd of 50 swine “para su necesidad” (for their needs) (Gall 1968:209). Sancho de Figueroa also stated that his Indians in Cojutepeque kept pigs (Gall 1968:210; Lardé y Larín 2000:159). Pedro de Liano mentioned that his Indians in Perulapa raise maize-fed pigs (Gall 1968:220). Very early we see an adoption of these animals for food; for instance, a domestic midden excavated at San Salvador yielded remains of pig or javalí, dog, rabbit, frog, catfish, freshwater snail, oyster, a crustacean, and possibly deer, cattle, chicken, and turkey, indicating a varied protein diet for the residents of the house associated with this deposit (Scott 2011). Significantly, this was a Spanish

residence with a Mesoamerican kitchen, indicating perhaps that the woman of the house was of indigenous heritage and quite possibly of high status (Herrera 2007; Matthew 2012:216–224).

In Santiago the Spanish *cabildo* openly appreciated the place making that the growing cattle population helped them accomplish, “break[ing] up the pastures and rid[ding] it of the bad insects and animals . . . and this makes the land open and you can ride it all on horseback” (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:57). In 1538 the council called for new measurements of land allotments outside the city because “now the valley is clean,” revealing differences between the parcels’ sizes (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:225). European animals thus aided the colonizing process in unanticipated ways, but their rapid increase also caused problems even within the *traza*. Repeatedly, the city council ordered *vecinos* to limit the number of pigs they kept in pens adjacent to their houses, to build fences, and to remove their cattle and sheep to the outskirts of the city. Colts and fillies running wild in the common pastures, through people’s gardens, and within the *traza* seems to have been a particular problem throughout the entire decade, mentioned no fewer than 30 times and on a regular basis. By the end of the 1530s the grass in common pastures was starting to run short (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:288). In 1541 it was reported that the cattle “almost don’t fit in the valley,” and no one was bothering to plant wheat or Castilian trees anymore (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:348). The animals brought by the Spanish and Africans committed their own kinds of violence. Along with pathogens that would kill several million indigenous people throughout Central America by the end of the sixteenth century, the animals reshaped the landscape itself (Lovell 1992; Melville 1994).

CONCLUSION

Several points emerge from this comparative exercise between two sixteenth-century Spanish American cities, Santiago and San Salvador, and two disciplines, history and archaeology. First, the precariousness of the initial Spanish foothold in Central America delayed place making. Surrounded and vastly outnumbered by Mesoamericans and often actively engaged in war, Spaniards and Africans concentrated their initial energies on defense and depended heavily on their Nahuatl allies (who

themselves constituted a potential threat). In Santiago, a more urbanized and recognizably Castilian city that included churches, Spanish markets, and Catholic processions came a full decade after the acts of foundation. Given the clear concern with defensive lookouts and allied settlements on the city’s most vulnerable sides in San Salvador, one suspects that there, too, the Spanish *tiendas*, tile roofs and floors, and commercial center were later developments. So far, in neither place does it appear that a Spanish church was fully constructed before each city’s abandonment in the 1540s.

Second, historical archaeology should be alert to emerging networks of trade and political power between Spanish colonial sites. The two *Ciudad Viejas* were founded in tandem between November 1527 and April 1528 as part of an extended military campaign. Their layouts are almost identical. San Salvador was the subordinate sibling: smaller and in need of the administrative functions and contact with Spain that Santiago provided (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:181, 183, 268–269). But San Salvador was also the older site of the two and its own center of economic gravity, oriented toward the developing port of Acajutla, while Santiago put resources into developing a port at Istapa. Sugar plantations were attempted near Izalco and Nahuizalco by 1536 (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:186–187), and while Santiago depended on San Salvador for coastal products like salt and fish, San Salvador competed with Santiago for slaves, cacao, textiles, and other valuable market goods (Kramer and Luján Muñoz 2018:25–26, 252, 270). Although both were abandoned and reestablished within a short twenty years, these earliest Spanish cities established patterns of competition and collaboration that would persist for centuries to come (Dym 2006).

Finally, we are struck both by the dogged determination of the Spanish to re-create the world as they knew it in the Americas and by the fragility of that endeavor. Survival depended on maintaining equilibrium between the minority but aggressive invading force, on the one hand, and a majority population fractured by war, on the other. This was not only a matter of forcing Mesoamericans to build roads, supply food, and provide water and other necessities—though Mesoamericans clearly did these things. It was also a matter of the Spanish learning the limits of their power, engaging in diplomacy, and knowing when to back down. In San Salvador the archaeological record demonstrates some of the mutual

influences that resulted. In Santiago the city council's inability to enforce its will and the slow pace of construction indicate the challenges it faced, while Spanish participation in the indigenous marketplace reveals a hybrid economy taking shape. Santiago's council books remind us that Africans—including African women—were visible and important contributors to this intense cultural encounter.

The violence inherent in early colonial Spanish place making manifested itself in spectacular and quotidian ways. It was embedded in the very fabric of social relations as Spaniards sought order and security through both punishment and appeasement. It was multidirectional; Nahua attacked Maya on behalf of Spaniards and Africans, Spaniards protected Nahua and Maya from Africans, Africans threatened to rebel against Spaniards, Maya manipulated Spaniards against Nahua. This violence not only was conquering and colonial but also constituted part of the crucible of urban foundations. As historian David Nirenberg has put it for another place and time (2015:viii), the Spanish *trazas* of Santiago and San Salvador were a “co-production of community and violence” in search of a “pluralist equilibrium” that was necessary for the city's very survival.

NOTES

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2. We thank Wendy Kramer for calling our attention to this point and passage.

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