Contents

Part V: Reexamining the Political Economy of Interaction in the Basin of Mexico and Beyond

1

The Legacies of the Green Book

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INTRODUCTION

Most archaeologists who have worked or are still working in the Basin of Mexico are not very site-specific. They tend to think of questions that are broad intellectually but also broad empirically, both chronologically and regionally. This outlook has very strong historical precedents. On the one hand, this regional trend developed in the early-to-mid-twentieth-century work of many cosmopolitan Mexican and Mexican-resident archaeologists, iconographers, ethnographers, ethnologists, and ethnohistorians whose research took them all over Mexico. They included individuals such as Manuel Gamio, Laurette Séjourné, Pedro Armillas, Ángel Palerm, Zelia Nuttall, Jorge Acosta, Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, Román Piña Chan, Doris Heyden, Alfonso Caso, Eulalia Guzmán, Pedro Carrasco, Ignacio Bernal, Miguel León Portilla, among many others. It is not difficult to observe their intellectual fingerprints across a range of sites, regions and periods, and across the intellectual currents that influenced and continue to influence subsequent scholars.

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On the other hand, from the 1950s to the 1970s, archaeologists interested in new topics that were of relevance to emerging paradigms in both archaeology and anthropology established a broad perspective shared by many contemporary archaeologists and their students. Despite the development of this new comparative approach, archaeology in most of Mesoamerica still retained a focus on the larger sites, the centers of ancient cities and the monumentality of "high-culture," leaving out a vast number of people who lived in this region. Consequently, a series of questions that were basic to any historical reconstruction simply could not be answered from an archaeological perspective. How many archaeological sites existed? When were they occupied? How large were they? What kinds of sites were they? How many people lived in these sites? What were their lives like? How many people lived in the broader region? How were these settlements distributed in relation to the environment, to each other, to major centers of political power? What was the landscape and environment like at the time of occupation?

Answering these essential questions required knowledge of basic demographic and environmental data that did not exist. Historical records and documents were the only source of data to answer them. Although rich in content and coverage, such sources nevertheless lack information on a wide range of issues. Moreover, such documentation is largely limited to records written after the arrival of Spaniards and the establishment of New Spain. Some indigenous documents, both codices and later annals authored by indigenous writers, go back farther in time, but they often intermix with quasi-mythological histories that exist at spatial and temporal scales that are difficult to approximate with other forms of data. Hence, the only way to reconstruct deep history is to use archaeology, with a broad-scale and comprehensive perspective on ancient settlements and their environment.

One of the first steps in this direction was the settlement and cultural ecology research that William Sanders (1957) developed in his path-breaking dissertation research, itself influenced by preeminent scholars like Pedro Armillas, Ángel Palerm, and Gordon Willey. Sanders would go on to develop some of the key methodologies for a broader survey in the Teotihuacan Valley (i.e., Sanders 1965) and to serve as the central pivot for all the subsequent surveys. As other contributions discuss in more detail (Kolb; Nichols, this volume), many of the approaches and issues were laid out in a National Science Foundation–sponsored conference in 1960, which was eventually published in 1976 (Wolf 1976a). The broader Basin of Mexico was divided into a number of survey zones, and each zone received a full-coverage pedestrian survey. These survey zones include work led by Sanders in the Teotihuacan, Cuautitlan, and Temascalapa valleys of the northeast and northwest Basin of Mexico (e.g., Gorenflo and Sanders 2007; Parsons 1966; Sanders 1965; Sanders and Gorenflo 2007); work led by Jeffrey Parsons in the Texcoco, Chalco-Xochimilco, and Zumpango regions (e.g., Parsons 1971;

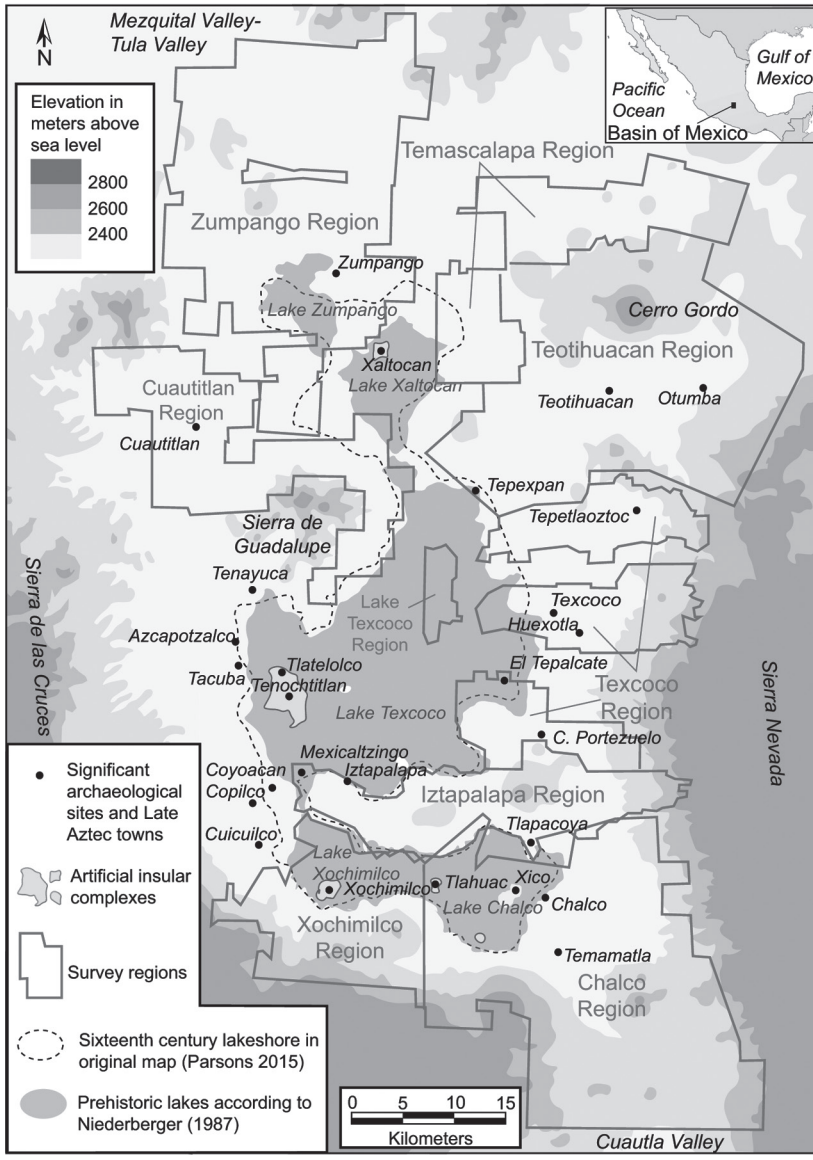

FIGURE 1.1. *Basin of Mexico survey regions. Based on Cordova (2022), Parsons (2015), and Niederberger (1987).*

Parsons and Morett 2004, 2005; Parsons et al. 1982; Parsons et al. 1983); and work led by Richard Blanton in the Ixtapalapa Peninsula (Blanton 1972) (see figure 1.1).

According to the original research formulation, these regional surveys would integrate with archaeological investigations at key cities, especially Teotihuacan

but also at Tula, and would also incorporate findings from comparative ethnohistory (Wolf 1976b). These projects led to a large corpus of publications in both archaeology and ethnography and trained several cohorts of students, many of whom have already trained many of the archaeologists currently working in the Basin of Mexico and elsewhere.

This volume celebrates the continuing impact of the most notable contribution from this work, *The Basin of Mexico: Ecological Processes in the Evolution of a Civilization*. Authored by William T. Sanders, Jeffrey R. Parsons, and Robert S. Santley and published in 1979, the book synthesized the results of all the survey projects, as well as follow-up excavations at several sites. Theoretically, it was rooted in the prevailing ecological perspective that characterized archaeological theory at the time. It also outlined field and analytical methods, including the application of aerial photography, which were widely influential. The book proposed a long-term history of the Basin of Mexico by relating the growth and distribution of Prehispanic populations to environmental and political economic systems from the first agricultural villages during the Early Formative period to the complex states and empires that existed from the Classic period to the Postclassic period. This volume has been so useful that it has acquired the moniker, *La Biblia Verde*, the Green Bible or the Green Book, attesting to its essential place in the archaeological and historical literature of the area.

On the fortieth anniversary of the publication of the Green Book, we decided that it was time to recognize its impact on archaeological research, the formation of new archaeologists, and the interpretation of the complex societal and environmental processes that Sanders, Parsons, and Santley sought to explain. We thus invited a diverse number of researchers to discuss and contribute to a volume about the impact of the Green Book and related archaeological surveys in recent research in the Basin of Mexico and other parts of Central Mexico. The group of contributors represents several generations of archaeologists as well as specialists of other disciplines. Among them were those who directly participated in the Basin of Mexico survey, working side by side or under the supervision of one or more of the book's authors. This included a contribution of the late Jeffrey Parsons, the only living author of *The Basin of Mexico* at that time. The grave loss of Jeff in early 2021 was felt by the archaeological community not only in Mexico but around the world. Jeff was an extraordinary scholar, educator, and mentor. He was a perennially exciting voice of support, advice, and encouragement for several generations of anthropologists. For this reason, we dedicate this volume to Jeff's memory.

The goal of this introduction is not to provide a thorough history of the origins of the Green Book, as that is discussed in the contributions by Kolb, Nichols, Parsons and Gorenflo, and Gorenflo in this volume, as well as in previous publications (e.g., Fowler et al. 2015; Robertson and Gorenflo 2015). Jeff Parsons's

(2019) recently published memoirs provide a fascinating and invigorating biography of his personal experiences working in Mexico (and Peru). Instead, we focus here on some of the major contributions of the Green Book, the range of research that it synthesized, and, most importantly, the long legacy it established for understanding the deep history of this region and for the researchers and students that have followed in its path.

ESTABLISHING A LEGACY: A BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE GREEN BOOK

In addition to offering a broad background to the region, the Green Book (and its related reports) continues to serve as the primary explanatory text for one of the most informative archaeological records in Mexico. Methodologically, it offers direction on how to carry out full-coverage archaeological surveys, how to incorporate aerial photography into field methods, and how to record field data. Conceptually, it provides useful discussion on the range of approaches for analyzing survey data, including statistical sampling, ethnographic analogy, population and productivity estimations, and so on. It also offers an explicit framework for the essential decisions archaeologists must make in the field, lab, and office to classify, synthesize, and interpret survey data, including assigning sites to major time periods and ways to record multi-component sites. Moreover, the discussions of the sites, together with the several volumes of primary settlement data that have been published (i.e., Blanton 1972; Gorenflo and Sanders 2007; Parsons 1971, 2008; Parsons et al. 1982; Parsons et al. 1983; Sanders and Gorenflo 2007) or made available online, offer unparalleled sources of information for any archaeologist seeking to begin fieldwork in the Basin of Mexico, at the very least providing basic data on site location, site size, major time periods of occupation, and key ceramic types.

Most significant, however, was the demographic history the Green Book synthesized. The broad, full-coverage surveys permitted the reconstruction of long-term changes across a range of settlement types, from the Early Formative period (ca. 1500 BCE) to the end of the Late Postclassic period (ca. 1519 CE). The geographically distributed sampling zones allowed an assessment of the impact of regional environmental and political variation at different spatial scales on settlement change, demonstrating significant fluctuations in levels of cultural and sociopolitical integration across time. During the Early Formative period (ca. 1500–1100 BCE), considerable settlement was concentrated in the alluvial and lower piedmont zones in the southern Basin of Mexico (Sanders et al. 1979:94–95). Initially, most of these settlements were small villages and hamlets, with larger villages becoming more common. Although some degree of social ranking may have existed, little evidence was recorded of systemic inequality. This would change during the Middle and Late Formative (ca. 1100–300 BCE), which saw an

increase in population, evidence of social and settlement hierarchies, and the development of centers of regional polities that may have integrated four or five clusters of sites, such as Cuicuilco (Sanders et al. 1979:97–98). Although most of the population growth occurred in the southern Basin, settlements also spread north, though population growth was not as dramatic in this area.

The increase in population and the development of regional sociopolitical hierarchies became pronounced during the Terminal Formative period (ca. 300 BCE–150 CE) (Sanders et al. 1979:98–103). Settlements during this time existed in most parts of the Basin of Mexico, including in the more arid northern region. Important settlement clusters were documented in the southern and eastern Basin of Mexico, each with several small centers perhaps controlled by fewer regional centers. Cuicuilco, for example, seems to have developed into a powerful urban center with a population of around twenty thousand people (Sanders et al. 1979:99). The Teotihuacan Valley experienced a noticeable change in population and organization during this time. The site of Teotihuacan became a regional center with a large resident population that enjoyed a regional influence similar to that of Cuicuilco and other Formative period centers in Central Mexico at the time (see also Plunket and Uruñela 2012).

Within a few centuries, substantial demographic and social change was recorded. Cuicuilco declined in importance, which possibly provided opportunities for Teotihuacan to take advantage of its favorable position in alternative economic networks, particularly obsidian exchange routes (Carballo and Pluckhahn 2007). This period also initially saw a dramatic reorganization of settlement distribution, with either negative or zero growth in some areas but a dramatic population increase and nucleation around Teotihuacan, where between 80 and 90 percent of the Basin of Mexico's population now resided (Sanders et al. 1979:107). One possibility for this regional population decline is the demographic pull exerted by Teotihuacan's urbanization (Parsons 1966).

By the Classic period (ca. 150–650 CE), Teotihuacan had developed to become the largest city in Mesoamerica and a likely empire that controlled the Basin of Mexico and influenced much of Central Mexico and areas as far away as the Maya Lowlands (Cowgill 2015; Sanders et al. 1979:127). In the Basin of Mexico, this period of time was marked by the highest population in the region's history with rural settlements and centers developing in multiple locations. Sanders and his colleagues (1979:114) speculated that the reorganization of the regional settlement system might have been a direct result of the development of the Teotihuacan state. New Classic period centers that formed outside of Teotihuacan during the Classic period seem to lack antecedents in the Formative period, suggesting colonization by Teotihuacan populations. The regional settlement system likely reflected systemic needs for a range of resources, including lacustrine resources and salt from the Basin's lakes, limestone for construction

from the northern Basin and southern Mezquital Valley, obsidian resources from sources in Otumba and Pachuca, and agricultural products from a range ofs ecological zones (Sanders et al. 1979:126–27).

With Teotihuacan's decline in power and the collapse of its political economy by the seventh century CE, the demographic system in the Basin of Mexico also changed fundamentally. The following period, referred to as the Epiclassic period (ca. 650–900 CE), witnessed a period of regional population decline, the nucleation of population at a range of centers, and an apparent fragmentation and balkanization of the political landscape (Blanton 1976; Parsons 1971; Sanders et al. 1979). New forms and styles of material culture also became widespread, suggesting strong cultural changes in the absence of Teotihuacan's influence, perhaps due to both migration and local innovation. Outside the Basin of Mexico, many other political centers expanded in size and influence, and some have proposed that the heterogeneous landscape of much of Mesoamerica was integrated via particular beliefs and practices that integrated militarism and cosmology (López Austin and López Lujan 2000; Ringle et al. 1998). The fragmented and balkanized nature of politics is reflected in what several archaeologists have recognized as clusters or political economic provinces of related settlements in the north, east, west, and southern portions of the Basin (Sanders et al. 1979:130–37, see also Crider; Morehart, this volume). Many of these areas may have retained a degree of autonomy, but they were interrelated economically and culturally, not unlike a geopolitical system comprised of city-states (Charlton and Nichols 1997; Crider et al. 2007).

The regional population changed considerably in the Early Postclassic period (ca. 900–1200 CE). Settlements increased in number, size, and organization and spread out into areas not occupied during the Epiclassic period. Sanders and his colleagues (1979:138–39) refer to this transformation as a ruralization of the settlement system, a period when 70 percent of the population in the Basin of Mexico lived outside of provincial centers. Areas in the northern Basin of Mexico had a higher population density than the south, where fewer nucleated settlements existed (Sanders et al. 1979:148–49). Broadly speaking, they felt that the Basin of Mexico could be viewed as having a north-south dichotomy, with settlements in the north under the influence of the Tula state and settlements to the south maintaining relationships with Cholula. Another important indicator of this contrast can be observed in the distribution of key ceramic types. Key Red-on-Buff ceramics were widespread in the Basin of Mexico, but particularly in the north, where they had been interpreted as evidence of Tula's influence. In the southern Basin of Mexico, where Early Postclassic Red-on-Buff ceramics are not abundant, the Black-on-Orange ceramic tradition emerged, specifically Aztec I Black-on-Orange. As the name suggests, these ceramics have long been associated with the Aztecs, but Aztec I predates the appearance of the Aztec state by

some centuries and exhibits strong stylistic affinities to decorated pottery types at Cholula (Sanders et al. 1979:152; see also Parsons et al. 1996).

By the end of the Early Postclassic period, the Tula state had collapsed. The following Middle Postclassic period (ca. 1200–1350 CE) appears to have experienced a dramatic population abandonment in the northern Basin of Mexico. Red-on-Buff pottery, which was considered a marker of Tula's influence, fell out of use. Different styles of Black-on-Orange pottery, referred to as Aztec II, became widely used throughout many parts of the Basin but apparently not in the northern Basin of Mexico, which Parsons and Gorenflo (this volume) view as evidence of a population decline. Many of the historical sagas that describe migration into the Basin likely began much earlier (Beekman and Christiansen 2003), but by the Middle Postclassic to early Late Postclassic periods, several ethnolinguistic groups existed in the region, most of which spoke Nahuatl but also Otomi. During this time, the city-state (*altepetl*) was the primary social unit that organized political relationships. Several city-states existed. Some became highly influential regional states, such as Azcapotzalco, Tenayuca, Texcoco, and Xaltocan, among others, and some would continue to be major centers of settlement well after this period.

The relationships between city-states in the Basin of Mexico would establish important organizational precedents that directly led to political centralization of the Basin of Mexico and much of Central Mexico during the Late Postclassic period (ca. 1350–1519 CE). During this time, what scholars have referred to as the Aztec empire formed from the confederation of polities, including the Mexica of Tenochtitlan, the Alcohua of Texcoco, and the Tepaneca of Tlacopan. The Aztec empire would conquer much of Central Mexico, frequently employing a system of indirect rule that left intact previously existing political structures in subject towns (Berdan et al. 1996; Hassig 1985). The transition between the Middle Postclassic and the Late Postclassic is often identified by the presence of Aztec III (and eventually IV) Black-on-Orange pottery as well as changes in other types, such as red ware. But as with any other chronological scheme, this neatness does not fully capture the reality of cultural and technological change. The widespread appearance of this pottery in the Basin of Mexico appears to reflect both the adoption of a regional style (likely centered at Tenochtitlan) and the way the Aztecs integrated previously autonomous provinces. The Aztec state apparently did not directly administer or control the market systems. But Aztec political centralization nonetheless facilitated market interaction between producers and consumers on a more regional level (see Hodge et al. 1993).

The regional population of the Basin of Mexico during the Late Postclassic was the highest in the area's entire history, with an estimated one million inhabitants—a demographic size the region would not experience again until several centuries after European conquest (Sanders et al. 1979:162). The

settlement was characterized by the presence of local, nucleated centers and more dispersed settlements. Despite the existence of many rural settlements, over half of the population resided in centers, much of it in the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. City-states still remained one of the most important units of local social interaction as well as familial and community affiliation. Indeed, not only did the structure of the Aztec empire emerge from a city-state system, the hierarchical organization of city-states also facilitated economic production and labor organization critical to financing the political economy (Hicks 1982). The influence of city-state organization is also reflected in the settlement data. Most centers appear to have a core of monumental and administrative buildings surrounded by a periphery of increasingly more dispersed settlements that eventually merge with peripheral settlements tied into another city-state center (Sanders et al. 1979:163–64). The landscape of city-states was, moreover, organized into a series of provinces to organize tax collection for the empire (Berdan and Anawalt 1992). The introduction of tax or tribute goods into markets may also have contributed to a decline in craft production in many communities, as craftspeople turned to farming when they became unable to compete with essentially state-subsidized commodities (Brumfiel 1976).

In addition to a large and widely distributed settlement system, local communities and households in the Basin of Mexico also developed many different strategies to interact with the environmental landscape in order to produce the food and goods they needed for their households and for local and regional political obligations. Salt production sites became common along the shores of lakes Texcoco and Xaltocan (Millhauser 2012; Parsons 2006; Sanders et al. 1979:171–75). The well-known system of *chinampas* (raised fields) in the southern Basin of Mexico appears to have expanded during this time, where enough produce could be cultivated to support local populations as well as residents in larger cities like Tenochtitlan (Armillas 1971; Parsons 1976; Sanders et al. 1979:280). Many irrigation and terrace systems were constructed in both alluvial and foothill locations. Establishing the chronology of these systems is challenging, and some certainly pre-dated the Late Postclassic period (see discussions in Borejsza; McClung de Tapia and Acosta Ochoa, this volume). But the authors of the Green Book at least felt confident in the existence of strong evidence that many of these landscape investments, especially terracing, dated to the Late Postclassic period (Sanders et al. 1979:251).

This overview is largely schematic and drawn principally from the original survey publications. But one of the most important contributions of the Basin of Mexico survey projects was how they set the stage for several archaeologists who would go on to carry out more intensive archaeological projects in the areas and at the sites the surveyors identified. This can be seen perhaps most clearly in the case of research in the Teotihuacan Valley. This subregion of the Basin of Mexico

witnessed a series of archaeological operations that directly built off of the surface survey's original work, methodologically demonstrating the importance of multi-phase research projects (see Kolb's contribution to this volume).

Several additional archaeological projects have built on the survey to develop intensive investigations (see Nichols, this volume). These include field projects in the Chalco and Xochimilco region (e.g., Frederick and Cordova 2019; Hodge 2008; Parsons et al. 1985), in the Texcoco region (Clayton 2013, 2016; Cordova 1997; Cowgill 2013; Crider 2013; Nichols et al. 2013), in the northern Basin of Mexico (Brumfiel 1991, 2005; De Lucia 2011; Farah 2019; Millhauser 2012; Morehart 2010; Overholtzer 2012; Rodríguez-Alegría 2008), as well as in the greater Teotihuacan Valley (Charlton et al. 1991; Evans 1988; Nichols and Charlton 1996; Stoner et al. 2015). A countless number of projects have been carried by archaeologists of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) throughout the Basin as well, and both Mexican and foreign archaeologists have directed many excavation projects within the urban districts of well-known ancient cities, such as Tenochtitlan, Teotihuacan, Tenayuca, and Cuicuilco, and Temamatla, among others (see Manzanilla 2014).

Finally, it is important to stress that the original Basin of Mexico surveys made important contributions to some of the most influential theoretical perspectives in anthropology at the time. Particular emphasis was put on a cultural ecological understanding of adaptation and social evolution (see Logan and Sanders 1976; Sanders 1957, 1962; Sanders and Price 1968; Sanders et al. 1979). Intellectually, their cultural ecological model integrates the ideas of several scholars, including some with somewhat opposing views, such as a Boserupian emphasis on technological innovation in agriculture, a Malthusian recognition of carrying capacities, Carneiro's ideas on circumscription, and Wittfogel's work on political complexity and irrigation. Population growth, sociopolitical complexity, and the nature of economic strategies were viewed as having close ties to the finite distributions of water, land, and a range of other important resources. This constellation of biological, social, and geophysical variables were systemically related to one another in a series of feedbacks of cause and effect that led to change (Sanders et al. 1979:395). Overall, this framing emphasized the ecologically adaptive nature of a range of institutions and practices. It offered archaeologists a model to explain and generalize about agricultural change, the development of inequality, and trade. Nonetheless, many scholars were critical of cultural ecology's emphasis on adaptation and the driving force of population growth and instead stressed more political and even exploitative aspects of change (e.g., Blanton 1976; Brumfiel 1976, 1992; Brumfiel and Earle 1987; Cowgill 1975; Morrison 1996; see also replies to Sanders and Nichols 1988).

Over time, a wider range of issues have become central to many archaeological projects, such as agency, power and exploitation, collective action,

households, gender, materiality, and ethnicity, to name a few. Nevertheless, subsequent research programs in the Basin of Mexico that have pursued these topics were very much dependent on the original research that produced the Green Book. Furthermore, with growing evidence and concern for global climate change, ecological processes have once again become central to many of the questions archaeologists ask.

CONTINUING THE LEGACY: THIS BOOK

The final chapter in the Green Book, "Key Problems for Future Research," outlines areas the authors felt needed additional study (Sanders et al. 1979:413–18). They believed that their contribution provided solid empirical footing to refine and operationalize many persistent questions that stimulated archaeological research at the time and still do today, such as the roles of irrigation, population growth, technological change and innovation, economic exchange, warfare, social differentiation, and political integration. They also specifically noted a need to continue work on artifact and site chronology, the functional and demographic classifications of archaeological sites. They also recognized the need to integrate their research with similarly conducted regional surveys in other areas, particularly those directly adjacent to the Basin of Mexico surveys. They asserted that more synthesis between archaeology and ethnohistorical methods and data were needed, particularly for later periods of time. Given the emphasis on the relationship between human settlements and the environment that they pursued, they also recognized the need for a broad range of paleoenvironmental studies. Finally, they recognized the rapidly disappearing nature of the archaeological record in the expanding Mexico City Metropolitan Area and, consequently, the need to prioritize research in higher risk locations and to preserve a wide range of key sites, not just the ones with the largest architecture.

The thirteen chapters of this volume are all, in one way or another, heirs to the groundbreaking research of the Basin of Mexico surveys. They each also address different aspects of the key problems for future research that the Green Book recommended. To present the disparate contributions, we have organized the volume into five thematic parts. Part I centers on the history of research that led to the Green Book and beyond as well as testimonials about the survey work. The contributions in Part II address changing or refined perspectives on settlement and demography through recent research. Part III includes contributions on aspects of the landscape, environmental interaction, and resource procurement. Finally, Part IV presents new studies on the nature of the political economy of the Basin. In this final section, we briefly discuss each contribution and also emphasize the ways the chapters respond to the lacunae that Sanders, Parsons, and Santley recognized and contribute new methods, empirical data, and intellectual questions to the legacy the Green Book established.

The first two contributions in Part I are written by Deborah Nichols and Charles Kolb, respectively. These chapters offer in-depth descriptions of the history of archaeological research in the Basin of Mexico, including the specific projects that became the key sources of data for the Green Book. These chapters are especially compelling because both Nichols and Kolb were participants in the Basin of Mexico survey and excavation projects, particularly in the Teotihuacan Valley. Nichols provides an important overview of archaeology's history in the area, pointing out the social history of the field as well as the intellectual and methodological contexts that led to the Basin of Mexico survey projects. She describes how this work connected to emerging paradigms both in anthropology and in archaeology, particularly the rise in interest in social evolution and ecological adaptation that became key research problems. Nichols's chapter offers an excellent and thorough recognition of the long-term impact of these pioneering archaeologists, and also describes many important studies and projects carried out by contemporary researchers who are not contributors to the present volume. Kolb's chapter offers a chronology of research as well as a reflection on the organizational and logistical dimensions of the survey and excavation projects that led to the Green Book, especially, like Nichols, focusing on his experiences working in the Teotihuacan Valley. He examines some of the intellectual currents of the time and describes the challenges researchers faced, the productive contributions they made, and some of the areas that Kolb and his colleagues recognized needed development and refinement, including nomenclature, the definition of analytical units, and ceramic chronology.

The contributions in this volume's Part II draw attention to demographic issues and include new studies and data, reexaminations of empirical patterns, and reflections that range across the archaeological record. We are particularly honored to recognize the first chapter in this section, co-authored by Jeff Parsons, whose work, as we have discussed, established the legacy this book is meant to recognize. Another reason we are pleased that this volume is hosting this chapter is somewhat more prosaic among the community of Basin of Mexico archaeologists. Essentially, they ask, why Aztec II Black-on-Orange pottery, an important marker for the Middle Postclassic, is rare in the northern Basin compared to the southern and, especially, to the eastern Basin. Does this represent a Middle Postclassic population decline after the collapse of Tula? Or did Aztec II overlap in time with Aztec I into the Early Postclassic? Parsons and Gorenflo review a range of settlement data, including data on settlement continuity across phases, ceramic studies, and radiocarbon dates. They conclude that the absence of Aztec II materials in the northern Basin of Mexico does document a population decline in the wake of Tula's collapse.

Bioarchaeological research has expanded significantly since the research that led to the Green Book. The next chapter, by Meza-Peñaloza, Zertuche, and García

Chávez, employs the analysis of non-metric cranial traits, features that serve as useful proxies for genetic relationships within and between populations. They analyze several hundred cranial samples from several sites in the Basin of Mexico and the Toluca Valley that date from the Formative period to the Postclassic, including Teotihuacan, Xaltocan, Tlatilco, and Xico. Their analysis documents considerable population variation across space and time, with compelling patterns of biological continuity and discontinuity. Generally speaking, populations after the collapse of Teotihuacan (during the Epiclassic period) differ significantly from Classic-period Teotihuacan, calling into question the notion that inhabitants from Teotihuacan spread out into the Basin after the city's decline. Patterns of relationships at Teotihuacan, however, are also variable, reflecting varying degrees of interaction between inhabitants as well as varying degrees of biological affiliation with distant locations, such as the Gulf Coast. Of particular interest is their work at Xico in the Basin of Mexico, where long-term biological continuity apparently existed despite incredible demographic change.

Frederick's chapter takes up an important issue related to the use of settlement survey data to document the distribution of populations. He examines how the presented site tabulation and the distribution of survey data correspond, revealing that many of the "gaps" between sites are far from insignificant for understanding the settlement system (see also Cordova, this volume). The fact that the sites, as he observes, "are merely geographic subsets of larger artifact scatters suggests that settlement was more broadly dispersed in some places than the sites imply, and/or that post-depositional processes have dispersed the artifacts." Frederick offers three case examples in the southern Basin of Mexico to illustrate how the depositional environment of the Basin may have biased demographic reconstructions toward lower population estimates. In some depositional environments, such as alluvial areas, sites were often not recorded because intact components were buried and, hence, not visible to surveyors. On the one hand, including sites in alluvial areas might dramatically change our reconstruction of population history. On the other, the alluvial areas adjacent to recorded sites often have a much better and more intact record than the actual identified site loci. As other studies in this volume attest, Frederick's contribution points to the need for more geoarchaeological research, not only generally but also as a specific component of all archaeological research projects.

Gorenflo's chapter offers a much-needed perspective on the condition of archaeological resources in the Basin of Mexico. He examines the current state of preservation of some of the archaeological sites identified during the original surveys, documenting how demographic changes that have occurred in the region in the past forty or fifty years have affected some of the archaeological sites that the Green Book was written about. Morehart and Millhauser (2016) carried out a similar study, examining site locations in the Zumpango survey

area with contemporary high-resolution satellite imagery. Gorenflo notes the incredible peri-urban explosion since the 1960s and 70s, a process of demographic expansion that has affected areas around Mexico City much more than the city itself. He also shows a long-term pattern in some areas of land use, particularly agriculture, which had persisted from the pre-Columbian period up to the mid- to late twentieth century, but has increasingly disappeared over the past forty years. These changes reflect national and global economic transformations that have led to a decrease in small farming and an increase in commercial and urban development as well as large-scale agriculture using heavy machinery. One of the take-home lessons from Gorenflo's chapter is that the incredible record that the archaeological surveys produced is of historic significance, especially because urban growth has caused many of the sites to disappear, while the future of those that remain untouched is uncertain.

The contributions to this volume's Part III are two studies of a larger body of research on environmental change. This corpus of research directly responds to the Green Book's assertion that more paleoecological research projects are needed. The chapter by Solleiro-Rebolledo and colleagues provides pedological and chemical analyses of the mosaic distribution of soils in the Teotihuacan Valley. By classifying the physical and chemical properties of soils, they assess the range of soil resources that were available to the inhabitants of the valley for intensive agriculture, pottery production, and house construction. They also consider how the use of soils for such activities may have affected the landscape that other groups subsequently inherited.

While soil and water was an important resource inland, so were resources in the lakes. Despite including the lakebeds of the southern Basin, however, large parts of the lakebeds were not surveyed (see figure 1.1). Parsons (2015) recognized this failure after reviewing the recent data of the center of Lake Texcoco and recent work in Xaltocan. In his contribution, Cordova uses examples of several *tlatel*-type settlements recorded by the Texcoco and Teotihuacan survey on the shores of former Lake Texcoco to explain how the dynamics of the lake influenced settlements in the lacustrine and peri-lacustrine areas. First, lake levels fluctuated dramatically from one period to the next, thus changing the location of resources and areas suitable for settlement. Second, the study of the stratigraphy and geomorphology around sites shows how diverse the lacustrine environment was, demonstrating that not all settlements in the lake were focused on salt production. Third, in agreement with Frederick's chapter, Cordova's chapter stresses the importance of off-site geoarchaeological research in the overall analysis of the population and economy of ancient settlements.

Part IV continues many of the themes of the previous section but focuses more specifically on resource exploitation and mosaic agricultural systems. Borejsza's chapter provides a long-term, regional reassessment of agricultural

technological change, a developmental sequence that was a central component of the demographic reconstruction on which the Green Book was based. Borejsza deploys the concept of the "agricultural niche" to examine the historical evolution of agricultural strategies in Central Mexico, a perspective that can elucidate change not simply as a product of agricultural growth, as in Boserup's framing, but as a systemic historical process that is critically contingent on both physical and social precedent. Integrating a sizeable body of empirical data, Borejsza analyzes the distribution of progressively more intensive agricultural systems, from swidden to terracing to hydraulic systems such as canals and raised fields (*chinampas*). He finds empirical support for a degree of sequential developmental change across time, but his analysis demonstrates that this progression is far from a simple optimization strategy between the distribution of people and resources. Rather, this development was a historically material process in which established socioecological conditions shaped innovation and change.

McClung de Tapia and Acosta Ochoa's chapter provides a study of *chinampa* farming in the southern Basin of Mexico that aptly follows Borejsza's. *Chinampas* in this area have been extensively discussed yet have attracted surprisingly few archaeological field studies. This is significant because the role of the *chinampas* in this area is frequently discussed in reconstructions of the development of agricultural economies in the Basin of Mexico and, especially, of the connection between farming and the political economy of the Aztec state. Their project, at El Japón, Xochimilco, offers important data from the heart of the Basin of Mexico's *chinampa* zone. They present a range of archaeological, geological, and biological data to reconstruct the construction, maintenance, and use of *chinampas* and, hence, offer a solid methodological model for other researchers to follow. They recognize that dating *chinampas* is challenging for several reasons, but most of their chronological data converge to indicate that *chinampa* farming during the Aztec period, particularly the Late Postclassic, continued into the Colonial period.

The contributions in the final part of the book, Part V, examine politics and economy. Crider has taken on the broad regional dynamics of the Epiclassic period in the Basin of Mexico, offering important methodological advancements and interpretive steps for understanding the unique nature of the political economy in the wake of the collapse of Teotihuacan. Her analysis here and in previous papers has offered researchers significant comparative resources for synthetic understandings that integrate both macro-regional patterns and localized, subregional variation (both in historical and empirical terms and in classificatory terms). Her paper also directly addresses some of the chronological issues discussed in Parsons and Gorenflo's chapter, particularly the spatiotemporal nature of Early Postclassic ceramics and the cultural groups they represent. Finally, her regional ceramic study offers an incredible resource

for reconstructing broad-scale patterns of production and exchange on par with other foundational projects that have helped to establish more comprehensive understandings of Prehispanic economic systems in the Basin of Mexico and surrounding regions.

Morehart, Huster, and Meza-Peñaloza's contribution suitably follows Crider's chapter. They explore the changes in the political landscape between the Epiclassic period to the Early Postclassic period in the northern Basin of Mexico and the southern Mezquital Valley. Examining a range of data on violence and conflict, they find some support for the long-held notion that this period of time was one of balkanization and political instability in the wake of Teotihuacan's collapse. Such instability, they suggest, may have resulted in competition and conflict between political actors occupying the region. Drawing on comparative perspectives on war, conflict, and state formation, they speculate that this geopolitical configuration likely sset up significant challenges for any effort to develop an integrated and centralized regional political economy and thus shaped the formation of the Tula state. The authors suggest that overcoming the power of competitors and establishing a more stable political and economic environment, a *Pax Tolteca*, would have been critical to any degree of longevity in state governance. They also find that the archaeological record provides some support for this possibility, though they recognize that substantiating the hypothesis further will require considerably more data and field research.

The final chapter, by Millhauser, captures an important aspect of historical change fundamental to any sense of the term "legacy." He provides a long-term consideration of the relationship between environmental interaction, political change, and inequality. Employing the concept of "slow violence," he examines how inequality is an intrinsically violent process that unfolds across time and in dialogue with both social and material precedent. He also incorporates considerable data on the Colonial period, a time that was not included in the original Basin of Mexico surveys, which is a lacuna that Sanders, Parsons, and Santley explicitly recognized (see above) and one that a handful of archaeologists in the area have worked tirelessly to correct (see, e.g., Charlton 1968, 1996; Charlton et al. 2005; Rodríguez-Alegría 2008).

CONCLUSION

As any reader familiar with the archaeology of this region will note, this volume is far from comprehensive in its coverage of archaeological research since the publication of the Green Book. In this limited introduction, it is difficult to recognize all the important research that has been done by both Mexican and non-Mexican archaeologists in the Basin of Mexico and at important sites in the area, such as the many existing and ongoing studies of Teotihuacan or the Templo Mayor, for example. We are grateful, therefore, for the comprehensive

reviews that Kolb and Nichols provide. Moreover, we hope that this volume's contributions will convey not only the canonical importance of past work but, more importantly, the way it established a legacy of research that every contemporary archaeologist has inherited. The contributions in this volume stress the legacy of the Green Book, not as a static and unquestionable one, but as an evolving intellectual entity fed by several generations of archaeologists and other specialists. Over four decades after its publication, the Green Book remains the point of reference for most of the archaeological research in the Basin of Mexico and beyond.

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