Jeffrey R. Parsons, *Prehispanic Settlement Patterns in the Northwestern Valley of Mexico: The Zumpango Region*. Ann Arbor, Museum of Anthropology Publications, University of Michigan, 2008, xviii + 438, US$44 paperback.

This attractive volume documents part of a major archaeological survey of 1960–73 in the northern Basin of Mexico, part of which was a lacustrine habitat in prehistoric times. Although the theoretical framework is dated, the published record is important since the Zumpango area is now intensely disturbed, with most major sites destroyed by industrial plowing. The project is of interest here because it was part of a basin-wide survey, which included Teotihuacan, directed by William Sanders and believed at the time to be state of the art 'settlement archaeology', an empirical and landscape alternative to L.R. Binford's theory-driven positivism (see W.T. Sanders, J. Parsons, R. Santley, *The Basin of Mexico: Ecological Processes in the Evolution of a Civilization*, Academic Press, 1979). With echoes of settlement geography and sequent occupance, settlement categories (dispersed *vs*. nucleated, size categories, and inferred functions) were mapped in time-slices, as a basis for changing settlement patterns that were believed to reveal cultural, demographic, and economic change over time. The approach soon gained many adherents in Mesoamerica, Peru, and Mesopotamia, evolving rapidly at the hands of some researchers, among whom spatial analysis techniques such as rank–size hierarchies were sometimes adopted. The early and less sophisticated work of Sanders and Parsons (no relation of James Parsons) is perhaps best known today for its low numerical approximations of the Prehispanic population of Central Mexico.

The Zumpango survey covered roughly 600 km^2 and espoused a 'full coverage' approach for a large area, with the eventual goal of access to spatial variability and the development of large-scale databases that could be used to formulate and test new hypotheses. By way of contrast, the 'sampling' strategy, also devised for survey and excavation, allowed more attention to detail but was less suited for overview studies. The difference also is in the quality of the objectives, and the Parsons monograph is disappointing in various ways. The discussion of more recent paleoclimatic results in the basin is sketchy, and the review of paleoecological accounts for the historical period is insufficiently critical.

The strength of the report lies in its descriptive analyses. So the histograms of site sizes for each period, which reveal a strongly fluctuating, estimated populations 100–1500 CE (Fig. 5.1). Maps for the Late Aztec period plot different sizes of settlements, and show five categories of population aggregates. Low densities during the Formative may have resulted from a preferred exploitation of wetland resources in a semiarid landscape, thus in the hinterland of Teotihuacan. These and other weak interpretations not only underscore the absence of more sophisticated spatial analyses, but become apparent from chapter 6's list of (neglected) 'future research needs' which include chronometric results, geoarchaeology, paleoclimatic study, aquatic resources and water-control technology. An absence of attention to ancient irrigation is inexcusable, and the scarcity of sites in areas of covering lake beds implies that at least some demographic estimates are incomplete.

Over half (223 pp.) of the volume is devoted to 302 individual site reports (with 205 photographs), followed by tabular overviews of essential data. Derived from surface collecting and recording with 1:5,000 air photos in hand, the reported data include global coordinates, rudimentary information on the natural setting, ceramic evidence, and site classification (e.g., 'Small hamlet, 5–10 people' or 'Small dispersed village, 75–150 people'). This is a testimony to years of back-breaking work by leading archaeologists of the time, but they failed to comprehend what interdisciplinary research is about.

Fortunately the next cohort of settlement archaeologists acquired broader horizons and achieved more inspiring results, in Mexico and Mesopotamia, where the key volume of Robert McC. Adams (*Heartland of Cities: Surveys of ancient Settlement and Land Use of the Central Plain of the Euphrates*, Chicago, 1981) remains an intellectual staple. In the meantime, spatial archaeology had turned to urban phenomena, but in a disciplinary mode and with insufficient ethnocultural sensitivity (K.W. Butzer, 'Other perspectives on urbanism', pp. 77–92, in J. Marcus, J.A. Sabloff, eds. *The Ancient City*, School for Advanced Research, 2008).

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2012.11.010

Benjamin F. Tillman, *Imprints on Native Lands: The Miskito–Moravian Settlement Landscape in Honduras*. Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2011, xiv + 186 pages, US$45 hardcover.

Scholars have long recognized the distinctiveness of the Caribbean lowlands of eastern Honduras and Nicaragua, a region sometimes referred to as the Miskito coast, or in Honduras, simply as the Mosquitia. In this informative and enjoyable book Benjamin Tillman examines how the Moravian church played a role in making this region unique. Moravians first came to the Miskito coast in the 1840s, establishing a presence at Bluefields, Nicaragua in response to a request by a local British colonial administrator to minister to the dwindling members of a nearby German colonization project. The project failed soon afterwards, but the Moravians remained, and over the next century, spread across northeastern Nicaragua and eastern Honduras to create what is likely the largest Protestant culture region in Latin America.

Tillman begins by interweaving narratives about the origin and spread of the Moravian church, the historical geography of the Miskito coast, and ethnohistories of its indigenous peoples, especially the Miskito. Moravian presence in the Miskito coast coincided with a period of heightened encroachment by British and north American companies bent on extracting natural resources from the region. The Moravians, more concerned with conversions and improving the material lives of local inhabitants, implemented policies that left enduring traces on the lands and peoples of the region. Moravian influence in the Miskito coast was a blend of diffusion, assimilation, acculturation, and syncretism. Tillman does an excellent job documenting the first three of these processes by drawing from the archival record, secondary historical literature, and his own field experiences.

Tillman focuses on a dozen communities in the Honduran Mosquitia and documents five key types of culture change associated with Moravian activities: the transformation of traditional Miskito house styles to reflect Moravian ideals of family health and privacy; changes to Miskito settlement design to accommodate new Moravian churches, schools, and public spaces; the spread of European architectural styles through Moravian churches and mission compounds; agricultural innovations in the form of new crops and dooryard gardens; changes to pre-Christian Miskito burial practices, and the diffusion of Moravian-style cemeteries.

The Moravians began work in Honduras during the first decades of the twentieth century. In the 1990s, when Tillman conducted much of this research, he encountered elderly residents who had memory of Miskito society before the Moravians. Tillman brings his narratives alive with stories from his conversations with these informants as well as with excerpts from his field notes. Dozens of