

Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Journal of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Volume 44
Issue 1 *Iberia in Entangled and Transnational
Contexts*

Article 2

2019

Town and Country: Connecting Late Medieval Castilian Urban Experience with Sixteenth-Century Colonization of the Americas

María Asenjo-González
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, majonsa@ghis.ucm.es

David Alonso García
davalonso@ghis.ucm.es, davalonso@ghis.ucm.es

Sean Perrone
Saint Anselm College, sperrone@anselm.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Asenjo-González, María; Alonso García, David; and Perrone, Sean (2019) "Town and Country: Connecting Late Medieval Castilian Urban Experience with Sixteenth-Century Colonization of the Americas," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

<https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1326>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol44/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies by an authorized editor of Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. For more information, please contact andrew.lee@nyu.edu.

Town and Country: Connecting Late Medieval Castilian Urban Experience with Sixteenth-Century Colonization of the Americas

María Asenjo-González, David Alonso García, and Sean T. Perrone*

Introduction

The growing interest in globalization has reinvigorated transnational studies. Today, scholars regularly talk about connections and entanglements. We have examined more closely the circulation of people, ideas, and commodities. Some projects have even used new digital tools to visualize these connections across space and time. These transnational histories have also de-centered the nation-state as the analytical framework, moving us away from narratives of national exceptionalism and instead focusing on the commonalities that connected distinct polities, cultures, and societies. In the process, transnational studies have enriched our understanding of the past and provided fodder for writing more inclusive histories.¹

Though we are more cognizant than ever that local, national, and global events overlapped and intersected to varying degrees, we continue to work overwhelmingly in academic “silos” – for instance, Spanish history/Latin American history or medievalists/early modernists.² The nature of the archives partially explains the continued emphasis on the nation-state or its regions in most monographs. Individual scholars rarely have the resources to do original transnational research in multiple national or regional archives. The 1492 chronological divide between the medieval and the early modern periods is harder to explain, especially in light of recent scholarship that examines the historical evolution of societies in terms of networks.³ The breach between medieval colonization processes and American colonization processes is not so great that the two cannot be compared more directly – beyond a simple nod to

* The authors would like to thank Silvia Shannon, Megan Morrissey, and the anonymous reviewers for their feedback on earlier drafts. Support for research and writing came from a Spanish government grant (HAR2017-82983-P) and the Robert E. Jean Chair of History and Government, Saint Anselm College.

¹ Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Kimberly Lynn and Erin Kathleen Rowe, “Introduction: Mapping the Early Modern Hispanic World,” in *The Early Modern Hispanic World: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. Kimberly Lynn and Erin Kathleen Rowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-22; Jorge Luengo and Pol Dalmau, “Writing Spanish History in the Global Age: Connections and Entanglements in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 3 (2018): 425-445; “Mapping the Republic of Letters” <http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/index.html> (Accessed July 21, 2019).

² For a discussion of a similar divide between Latin America and Spain in literature and the possibility of transatlantic studies to bridge the divide, see Sebastiaan Faber, “Hispanism, Transatlantic Studies, and the Problem of Cultural History,” in *Empire's End: Transnational Connections in the Hispanic World*, ed. Akiko Tsuchiya and William G. Acree, Jr. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016), 17-33.

³ John R. McNeill and William H. McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* (New York: Norton, 2003).

Castilian precedents.⁴ Fortunately, many scholars of the Hispanic world now recognize that this chronological divide has been overemphasized and that many early modern developments are connected to “longer-range processes.”⁵ This recognition, however, does not obviate the challenge: namely, how do we more actively explore the broad connections linking the world together and incorporate a more transnational approach into our research? We posit that cities provide the ideal framework to analyze connections across time and place because, from an historical perspective, the essence of past societies is reflected in their cities.⁶

Historians of Spain and the wider Hispanic world are particularly well-suited to undertake transnational research. Spaniards facilitated direct links between Europe and the New World from 1492 and between America and Asia from 1567. Thus, the Spanish Monarchy generated new economic, social, and cultural patterns around the world with important processes of miscegenation in global history, and much of this activity took place in or around cities. Essentially, it is impossible to write a global history from a broad perspective focusing on influences between all parts of the globe without acknowledging the role of the Spanish world in the first stage of globalization.⁷

Examining cities allows us to take a global structural approach to a level of local or “glocal” analysis, to use a common sociological term, in order to study the interrelation between the micro and macro levels.⁸ Moreover, we should not simply see developments in America as continuity with the Castilian past. The sixteenth-century urban developments in Castile coincided with the creation of urban systems in America, and these transatlantic urban developments had many similarities and often reciprocal influences. This paper consequently proposes the necessity of linking the medieval and the early modern periods to fully understand how and why Castilian models crossed the Atlantic and how this particular urban model influenced the organization of space on both sides of the Atlantic into the sixteenth century.

This paper is divided into three sections. Section one, Late Medieval Urban Experience in Castile, examines the Castilian urban model and why it

⁴ Félix Retamero and Josep Torró, “One Conquest, Two Worlds: An Introduction,” in *From Al-Andalus to the Americas (13th-17th Centuries): Destruction and Construction of Societies*, ed. Thomas F. Glick et al., Torró (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 3.

⁵ Lynn and Rowe, “Introduction,” 9.

⁶ Aidan Southall, *The City in Time and Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Adrian Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); María Asenjo-González, *Las ciudades en el Occidente Medieval* (Madrid: Arco Libros, 1996); Thierry Dutour, *La ville médiévale. Origines et triomphe de l'Europe urbaine* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2003).

⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *¿Para qué sirve la historia?* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2018).

⁸ For more on the polycentric connections between different spaces, see Pedro Cardim et al., *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Sussex: Sussex Academic, 2014). From an economic point of view, see David Alonso García, *Mercados y mercaderes en los siglos XVI y XVII. Una historia global* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2016).

was particularly well suited to expansion. Section two, Expansion in the Americas, discusses how the conquistadores and settlers brought this model to the Americas. Section three, Transatlantic Urban Connections and Reciprocal Influences, addresses the commonalities and reciprocal influences between urban centers in Castile and America.

Late Medieval Urban Experience in Castile

The medieval urban model was the template for Spanish colonization (both internally during the reconquest and externally during colonization). For example, Helen Nader wrote:

The degree to which municipal society and citizenship dominated the mentality of even the most rebellious Castilian can be seen in the actions of the Cortés expedition... They did not organize themselves into a country, a kingdom, or an empire but created the same sort of municipal government they knew as citizens of Castilian towns. They took it for granted that the king would want his royal dominions on the American continent to be organized into municipalities.⁹

This is not a contested point. In fact, it is such a commonplace one that few ask the fundamental questions: What exactly was the Castilian model? How did this urban model differ from others? Why was it suited to colonization?

From roughly the ninth until the thirteenth century, Europe experienced unprecedented economic and demographic growth. Probably the most dynamic area of growth was in cities.¹⁰ Most cities had withered away with the collapse of the Roman Empire, and those that remained were primarily religious or administrative centers.¹¹ The revitalization of the cities began in the ninth century, and the most active period of their founding took place between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Most historical narratives of this time period highlight the origins of European urbanization in long distance trade activity near castles, monasteries, and other marketplaces. In the classic and still influential monograph, *Medieval Cities*, Henri Pirenne argued that in no civilization did city life evolve independently of commerce and industry. He theorized that the birth of medieval cities marked the beginning of a new era in Western history. Until then, medieval society had recognized only two

⁹ Helen Nader, *Liberty in Absolutist Spain: The Habsburg Sale of Towns, 1516-1700* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 94.

¹⁰ Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe (1000-1950)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985); Georges Jehel and Philippe Racinet, *La ville médiévale. De l'Occident chrétien à l'Orient musulman, Ve-XVe siècle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1996); Jean Gautier-Dalché, *Historia urbana de León y Castilla en la Edad Media (Siglos IX-XIII)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1979).

¹¹ María Asenjo-González, "Nacimiento y planificación de la ciudad medieval," in *De la aldea al burgo: La ciudad como estructura urbana y política en el Mediterráneo* (Mediterránea 11), ed. Aurelio Pérez Jimenez (Málaga: Ediciones Clásicas, 2003), 313-370.

active orders: the clergy and the nobility. The urban middle class, in taking its place alongside them, rounded out the social order or, rather, gave the finishing touch thereto.¹² However, in feudal Europe, the city was a strange construction based on non-rural activities. The middle class fought to maintain liberties and jurisdiction to protect their trade activity. The merchant class inspired a commercial movement that spread across Europe. In the historiography of urbanization, cities and towns resembled islands in a feudal sea because they did not rule over territories. Rather, they needed the support of feudal lords to guarantee peace and allow mercantile trade. Most northern and central European cities corresponded to Pirenne's model; however, in Castile, a different urban model known as the *concejo* emerged in the tenth century. This particular Castilian urban process, heavily rooted in agriculture and territorial control, continued to influence Spanish and American urban history into the early modern period.¹³

The chronology of the growth of Castilian cities (mid-tenth to mid-twelfth centuries) is roughly the same as in northern Europe, but the underlying political and economic drivers for city formation differed. Cities and towns of various sizes in Castile controlled and defended large territories, and townspeople actively worked as agriculturalists and pastoralists to provide for their subsistence.¹⁴ During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the cities and towns south of the Duero River – such as Segovia, Ávila and Salamanca – extended their control over lands on the other side of the Guadarrama Mountains near the Muslim cities of Toledo, Madrid, and Guadalajara. Towns also regularly organized raids across the Muslim frontier, and booty from those raids was important to the municipal economy.¹⁵ Consequently, Castilian towns were militarized to a greater extent than towns elsewhere in Western Europe to protect their lands, leading to the emergence of important groups of urban knights who vied for influence in the *concejo*. The frontier origin of many Castilian towns, which were built without merchants' influence, increased the developmental gap that already existed with northern European urban enclaves, and this gap grew even wider due to the

¹² Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

¹³ Jay Kinsbruner, *The Colonial Spanish-American City: Urban Life in the Age of Atlantic Capitalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 3; Similar town and country patterns of urban settlement and control existed into nineteenth-century Spain. David Reher, for instance, argues “in favor of a holistic vision of pre-industrial society which includes both town and countryside as socially, economically and culturally interdependent entities.” See David Sven Reher, *Town and Country in Pre-Industrial Spain: Cuenca, 1550-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

¹⁴ A synopsis is found in Jean Gautier-Dalché, “La ville hispanique au moyen âge,” in *Concejos y ciudades en la edad media hispánica. II Congreso de estudios medievales (León 1989)* (Madrid: Fundación Sánchez Albornoz, 1990), 9-20.

¹⁵ For more on Iberian urban militias, see the five excellent chapters in Part One of *From Al-Andalus to the Americas*, ed. Thomas F. Glick et al., *A Society Organized for War: The Municipal Militias of the Iberian Peninsula during the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1284* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

reestablishment of many settlements along the frontier. War and booty favored urban knights, who became the main ruling group in the local hierarchies of these frontier cities.

The agrarian and militaristic aspects of Castilian urban centers, however, did not prevent a close economic network of urban settlements of various sizes from forming in Castile and León. For instance, cities linked to the craft industries and trade did develop (e.g., Oviedo, Burgos, and Sahagún). Many towns also formed along the route to Santiago or around shrines to local saints to provide hospitality and sustenance to pilgrims.¹⁶ Similar trade networks continued to develop over the centuries, especially after the incorporation into the kingdom of large Muslim cities in Andalusia and Granada from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.¹⁷ Therefore, trade networks appeared and urban settlements did create the need for merchant-capitalists, but trade did not provide the impetus for urbanization in Castile to the same extent that it did elsewhere in Europe.¹⁸

Though the urban history of the Hispanic kingdoms was shaped by the particularities of the Reconquista and repopulation, this did not mean that incentives for citizens ultimately differed from those in the rest of Western Europe. Inhabitants of cities and towns across Europe went about creating complex and diverse urban communities. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, for instance, the Italian city-states took advantage of the frailty of imperial-royal power to wrest political freedom from kings, nobles, and the church. Many of these Italian communes, which controlled large territories, were initially dominated by noblemen and rich citizens. Only gradually did the *popolo* gain greater sway in Italian urban politics, giving rise to rhetoric of citizenship and the common good. Even in English cities, which were more closely controlled by the crown and dominated by oligarchic systems of rule, recent scholarship has found that notions of citizenship emerged in the Middle Ages.¹⁹ Many aspects of Castilian urban life, then, such as town councils, notions of citizenship, and territorial control, were not unique. However, the frontier created specific conditions in the Iberian Peninsula that resulted in an

¹⁶ For example, the creation of the Burgo de Santo Domingo in the late eleventh century was clearly connected to the growing number of pilgrims visiting the local saint's shrine at the monastery of Silos. The town even had international connections, with the development of a French neighborhood by the late twelfth century. However, much of the town's economy was still based on agriculture. See Amando Represa, "El 'Burgo' de Santo Domingo de Silos: De las 'vilas' a la 'Villa' de Silos," in *Homenaje a Fray Justo Perez de Urbel, OSB*, vol. 1 (Domingo ed Silos: Abadía de Silos, 1976), 309-322.

¹⁷ At the start of the modern age, Spain and Castile, in particular, were among the most urbanized countries in Europe, behind Italy and Flanders. See Jan de Vries, *La urbanización de Europa 1500-1800*, trans. Ramón Grau (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1987), 60-63; Reher, *Town and Country*, 36-57.

¹⁸ Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 6-7.

¹⁹ See Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979) and Christian D. Libby, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Iberian variant of communal life. For example, urban knights played a more prominent role in Iberian urban life than in that of northern Europe. The military capacity of these knights explains why the crown granted extensive freedoms to towns.²⁰ Moreover, although most inhabitants of cities remained under royal jurisdiction during this period, medieval Castilian kings did not directly organize urban settlements along the frontier. Instead, they stimulated urbanization and encouraged the settlement of the territory by granting towns' laws and customary privileges (i.e., *fueros*) and giving settlers the opportunity to acquire land (e.g., the *carta presura*). Such incentives encouraged people to settle empty lands in dangerous places and to defend those lands from Muslim attacks.

These frontier cities employed original forms of urban organization – *concejos* – that became administrative models for the monarchy during the kingdom's advance into al-Andalus.²¹ These *concejos* governed according to customary laws and *fueros* (i.e., royal privileges). Initially, most towns had *fueros* similar to that of Sepúlveda (1076), a typical *fuero* of a frontier town. These privileges essentially granted cities local autonomy. Municipalities had the freedom to decide and act on everyday urban matters and matters regarding territory belonging to the city. These *fueros* gave citizens in Castilian towns greater independence than townspeople elsewhere in Europe, “especially as compared to contemporary England.”²² In exchange for these privileges, urban residents were obliged to muster militias for the crown for offensive and defensive duties. Ultimately, however, urban growth depended on security along the southern border. The conquest of Toledo in 1085 signaled the end of the Muslim threat in the central region of the peninsula, and urban positions could now be consolidated.²³ At the end of the eleventh century, a solid urban network arose of cities and towns of different sizes, each associated with an important surrounding territory.²⁴

Frontier towns were provided with solid walls to defend residents and control conquered territory, however, the size of cities varied greatly. In Ávila, the medieval town grew up inside the Roman wall and included 31 hectares.

²⁰ James F. Powers, *The Code of Cuenca: Municipal Law on the Twelfth-Century Castilian Frontier* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 15.

²¹ María Asenjo-González, “La repoblación de las Extremaduras (s. X-XIII),” *Actas del coloquio de la V Asamblea general de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales. Estado de la cuestión de los últimos cuarenta años* (Diputación General de Aragón: Jaca, 1988), 73-99.

²² Powers, *Code*, 2.

²³ Of course, the arrival of the Almoravids and the defeat of Alfonso VI's Christian army at the battle of Zalaca (1086) placed the Muslims to the south of the Tajo River within striking distance of recently created Christian councils. See José María Monsalvo Antón, “Transformaciones sociales y relaciones de poder en los concejos de frontera, siglos XI-XIII. Aldeanos, vecinos y caballeros ante las instituciones municipales,” in *Relaciones de poder, de producción y parentesco en la Edad Media y Moderna: Aproximación a su estudio*, ed. Reyna Pastor de Togneri (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1990), 107-170.

²⁴ Julio González, “La Extremadura castellana al mediar el siglo XIII” *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, no. 127, 1974. 265-424.

Salamanca had two enclosures, one surrounding the main old city and another exterior wall enclosing 110 hectares. Despite differences in physical size, within the walls, urban life consistently revolved around *collaciones*. The *collación* was like a parish-district in the city that included urban dwellers and settlers in surrounding villages, all linked by family ties. The *collación* was the basis of religious, social, ethnic, and political life within the urban system. Each *collación* had a parish church inside the urban walls and participated in city governance through the *concilium*.²⁵ In the thirteenth century, for example, Ávila had nineteen *collaciones* and Segovia had thirty-four, even though both cities had less than 5,000 inhabitants. It is no wonder, then, that the twelfth-century Arab geographer Idrisi described the cities of Ávila and Segovia as a series of villages packed together, each clumped around a church. He described the *collaciones* inside the cities as the basic foundation of the political and administrative organization of the *concejo* or council.²⁶

As mentioned previously, the *concilium* assembly or *concejo* governed the city and its surrounding territory (*alfoz*). Townsmen participated in the *concilium* assembly through the *collaciones*. Municipal government also included the *ayuntamiento*, an assembly of all the *vecinos*. Townsmen had many opportunities to participate in the political life of these frontier towns as citizens, and, after 1188, some towns even had a voice at the national level through their representation in the *Cortes*, the first parliamentary body convened in Europe, which included three estates – clergy, nobles, and townsmen. Consequently, self-government became a crucial aspect of urban identity in the late Middle Ages. Family ties also facilitated internal city governance, reinforcing the leadership of urban hierarchies. Settlement patterns within the *collación* preserved group links, which were formalized between members in church rituals, and members were protected by the guarantees of mobility that the group obtained from the *concejo* (council) inside the urban territory. Meanwhile, city dwellers' right of movement within the territory was crucial for managing the clearing of agricultural land or raising livestock.²⁷

Again, the urban structure of the *collaciones* was based on the integration of urban dwellers and settlers in areas around the city to exploit and control territory. The urban economy revolved largely around rural activities, and in the new cities of *Extrema-Dorii* (Extremadura), the survival of city dwellers depended on the territory's grain harvest and livestock

²⁵ For more on urban construction in Soria, see María Asenjo-González, *Espacio y sociedad en la Soria Medieval. Siglos XIII-XV* (Soria: Diputación Provincial de Soria, 1999).

²⁶ Julio González-González, "La Extremadura castellana al mediar el siglo XIII," *Hispania* 34 (1974): 265-464.

²⁷ Asenjo-González, *Espacio y sociedad*, 217-228; Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 152-153. The constant flow of people between city and countryside continued into the nineteenth century and is an important factor in the growth and decline of Castilian towns as well as in the analysis of kin groups, see Reher, *Town and Country*, 64, 66, 203-204, 242-243, and 303.

raising.²⁸ New settlements increased economic output, providing stability and guarantees to all settlers. The increase in population in the area during the thirteenth century was a result of economic success. The *collación* was able to organize human resources, territory, and rural space. Each *collación* usually had around seven villages, and their inhabitants enjoyed the right to farm and live in these places as well as in the city. This model of settlement integrated the city and the villages of the territory, keeping some inhabitants in the urban district and others in the outlying territory. During the following centuries, the expansion of farming prevented village dwellers from becoming tied to one place. Extensive farming required a vast territory in which to move persons and livestock about when farmland had to be abandoned. However, several studies have demonstrated that the *collaciones* made it possible for wider expanses of territory to become linked to a greater number of urban *collaciones*. This confirms the relationship between control of farming and grazing territory and the size of cities, which depended in part on the number of *collaciones* because they represented the workforce.²⁹ The cities of Castile were not just mercantile centers, but also agrarian centers controlling large territories. Moreover, this territorial control was predicated on the *collaciones*' organization of urban militias – each one was required to provide one unit and was responsible for the distribution of booty, including the crown's share (the royal fifth).³⁰

These ideas endured in the period of the Great Reconquest in the thirteenth century. In less than one hundred years, the Christian kings conquered all of Andalusia, with the exception of the kingdom of Granada. Suddenly, the monarchs faced the challenge of populating the newly conquered lands and governing many Muslim cities. Once again, cities were ideal vehicles with which to colonize and to control territory. The main difference from earlier periods was that Christian cities in southern Spain also had control over a large population of conquered people. The Castilian kings encouraged Christian migration to new cities or the repopulation of existing cities by granting extensive privileges and charters.³¹ The ability of towns to control the countryside has been projected south of the Tajo River, and these early thirteenth-century cities and towns were organized in *collaciones*. In essence, the *concejo* and its *collaciones* – with rights elucidated in *fueros* – integrated settlers and territories in such a way as to assure territorial control over the newly conquered region, and larger Andalusian cities were the main

²⁸ Jesús García-Fernández, "Champs ouverts et champs clôturés en Vieille Castille," *Annales. E.S.C.* 20 (4) (1965): 692-718.

²⁹ María Asenjo-González and José M. Monsalvo Antón, "Las villas nuevas medievales de Castilla y León en la Extremadura castellana," *Boletín Arkeolan*, no. 14 (2006): 227-253.

³⁰ Josep Torró, "Partners-in-Arms. Medieval Military Associations: From Iberian *cabalgada* to American *entrada*," in *From Al-Andalus to the Americas*, 22, 26, and 33; Powers, *Code*, 15.

³¹ Jews also participated in the resettlement of some cities in al-Andalus. See Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquesta and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

governmental instrument in this process.³² The territorial dimensions of southern cities were very different. Some controlled large stretches of lands, such as Seville with 12,000 km² and Córdoba with 9,000 km², while others governed smaller territories, such as Jerez de la Frontera with only 1,400 km² and Carmona with 1,300 km². Some big cities had jurisdiction over many towns and villages: Seville had 60 localities, Córdoba 21, and Jaén 10. Others, such as Andújar Antequera, Carmona, Écija or Jerez de la Frontera, had no relevant villages under their jurisdiction. Both types of urban developments – those colonizing a frontier and a conquered people, and cities with extensive jurisdiction – crossed the Atlantic.³³

The Great Reconquest also led to new *fueros*. The *fuero* of Sepúlveda no longer served as well for larger, more complex urban centers as it did for the smaller urban settlements on the frontier hundreds of years earlier. The *fuero* of Cuenca (1190), for instance, more clearly articulated “the status of Jews as the king’s *servi*.” These ideas were later extended to conquered Muslim subjects, and the crown included such clauses in other urban legislation to protect its non-Christian subjects.³⁴ Moreover, even in towns in which the vast majority of the population was Christian, urban organization was not static, and the system slowly began to change. For example, the *Fuero de Soria* is a magnificent codex from the second half of the thirteenth century that regulated the life of the council. It illustrates a cohesive and interconnected society ruled by a hierarchical group inside the urban *collaciones*. The ruling class was made up of men called “*seniores*” or *boni homines* and *caballeros*, urban knights and men of arms with military responsibilities. Both the *caballeros* and the *seniores* enjoyed royal honors and privileges and exerted authority and power in the *concilium*. Dependencies were related to economic bonds and social relationships such as fidelity and submission, and such dependencies were the result of the slow process of social stratification within the urban hierarchy. These changes partially explain why the urban structure based around the *concejo* changed in fourteenth century. The *collaciones* were replaced by a new type of district called either *sexmo* or *ochavo*. These districts demarcated the urban territory, and each city had six, eight, or eleven districts under its jurisdiction. The territorial transformation allowed for urban difference in territorial governance, but it also maintained the relationship between town and country.³⁵ Moreover, regardless of the term, such districts or wards in Spanish American cities

³² Antonio Collantes de Terán, “La Andalucía de las ciudades,” *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia Medieval*, no. 16 (2009-2010): 111-132.

³³ Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 33.

³⁴ Debates over Jewish and Muslim subjects in Spain have analogies to debates over Native Americans. See David Abulafia, “Servants, Slaves or Subjects? Jews, Muslims and Indians as Royal Property,” in *From Al-Andalus to the Americas*, 362 (quote), 370, and 374; Powers, *Code*, 12-14.

³⁵ Pablo Sánchez León, “Town and Country in Castile, 1400-1650,” in *Town and Country in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. Steven A. Epstein (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 272-291.

served a similar function. That is, the character of the city was built around neighborhoods that maintained a group identity within the larger urban center.

The laws, charters, and privileges granted to the cities following the conquest were linked to urban competences, such as justice, defense, taxation, military participation in *fonsado* (i.e., personal service in war), and urban dwellers' duties in *auxilium* to the king's army.³⁶ The fact that cities and towns had different *fueros* means that we find different urban models as a consequence of the application of the law. For instance, western Andalusian cities and Murcia received the *Fuero* of Toledo and eastern Andalusian cities such as Úbeda, Baeza, and Quesada received the *Fuero* of Cuenca and *Fuero* of Coria. From these model charters, the various Andalusian cities created their own *fueros*. After 1482, the cities of the kingdom of Granada that were conquered first, such as Baza, Vélez-Málaga, and Guadix, received the *Fuero* of Sevilla, while Loja received the *Fuero* of Córdoba. In 1492, all the remaining Nasrid territory fell to the Christians, and between 1494 and 1495, the crown imposed the "*Ordenamiento real*" or "*Fuero Nuevo*" on all cities and towns in the kingdom of Granada. The new code regulated urban government but let the urban rulers make new regulations regarding daily life. Thus, despite growing royal oversight, urban elites retained significant local autonomy. The same model was applied in the Canary Islands.

By the end of the Middle Ages, noteworthy differences existed between urban centers in the north and south of Castile. For example, Andalusian urban centers controlled larger territories than northern Castilian cities, and Andalusian councils, like others in Castile, such as Toledo, that ruled over large territories as a collective lord did not hesitate to call themselves "*señor Córdoba*." Such lordly rhetoric, however, belied the fact that the Andalusian councils were more closely watched by royal authorities than other councils. For instance, in the process of granting *fueros* to Andalusian cities, the crown maintained greater royal control over the southern cities and intervened more frequently in their municipal affairs. For example, the kings had greater say over the appointment of local officials, thereby limiting urban competences.³⁷ Civic life was also slightly curtailed in southern cities with the growing influence of urban oligarchies. Common people still had representation through the *jurados*. However, oligarchical groups gained more control over local affairs. In short, the crown no longer granted the same level of independence to settlers moving into the conquered

³⁶ Jean Gautier Dalché, "En Castille pendant la première moitié du XIIe: les combattants des villes d'entre Duero et Tage," *Le Combattant au Moyen Age: 18e Congrès de la Société des Historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement supérieur public, 1987* (Saint-Herblain, Cid Editions, 1991), 199-214.

³⁷ María Asenjo-González, "Acerca de los linajes urbanos y su conflictividad en las ciudades castellanas a fines de la Edad Media," *Clio & Crimen*, no. 6 (2009): 52-84; Alicia Montero Málaga, "Los nobles en la ciudad: Una aproximación a las relaciones ciudad-nobleza en la historiografía castellana de los siglos XX y XXI," in *Discurso político y relaciones de poder: Ciudad, nobleza y monarquía en la Baja Edad Media*, ed. José A. Jara Fuente (Madrid, Dyckinson S.L., 2017), 21-88.

taifa states that it had previously granted to settlers founding cities in the uninhabited frontier of Extremadura. These changes did not sit well with many settlers in southern cities, who felt condemned to “an inferior legal and economic status.” With the closing of the frontier in the peninsula, many settlers looked to the Americas for the freedom and opportunities they had long experienced along the frontier. Centuries of municipal liberties had created a strong “commitment to the democratic tradition of town government.”³⁸

Expansion in the Americas

The basic urban pattern of expansion crossed the Atlantic. In fact, the foundation of cities was crucial to the colonization and settlement of the New World. For Spaniards, as has been demonstrated, cities were essential to control territories and allow people to live a civilized life in a stable political community.³⁹ The medieval urban experience influenced the urbanization process of the new continent in two ways: first, the American cities would be conceived as territorial and jurisdictional units; and second, as in Castile, they maintained a remarkable autonomy from the point of view of their management and government.⁴⁰ In Castile and in the Americas, cities and their respective councils assumed very important symbolic and administrative functions at the administrative, fiscal, political, and military level. The newly established colonial cities, like their Castilian predecessors, also served as bases for further invasions as Spaniards pushed deeper into native-controlled territory. More importantly, the cities provided a “bastion of Castilian law and jurisdiction and a symbol of Spanish permanence on the American mainland.”⁴¹ Cities served as the backbone and cohesive element of the Hispanic world. Around 1576, there were approximately 200 urban centers in the Americas.⁴²

The crown and colonists took it for granted that settlers would establish municipal governments in the Americas. Castilians wanted to live in cities and enjoy citizenship. These preconceived notions explain the conflicts

³⁸ José María Ruiz Povedano, “Oligarquización del poder municipal. Las elites de las ciudades del reino de Granada (1485-1556),” *La historia del Reino de Granada a debate: viejos y nuevos temas: perspectivas de estudio* (Málaga: Diputación, 2004), 389-440; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Los Reyes Católicos: La Corona y la Unidad de España. La Corona y los pueblos americanos* (Valencia: Asoc. L. Gomara, 1989); Alberto de la Hera, *Iglesia y Corona en la América española* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992); Nader, *Liberty*, 45, 85-86.

³⁹ Ida Altman, “Towns and the Forging of the Spanish Caribbean,” in *Early Modern Hispanic World*, 23; John H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 38-39.

⁴⁰ Richard M. Morse, “A Prolegomenon to Latin American Urban History,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 52, no. 3 (1972): 359-394.

⁴¹ Alexander Ponsen, “From Monarchy to Empire: Ideologies, Institutions, and the Limits of Spanish Imperial Sovereignty, 1492-1700,” in *The World of Colonial America: An Atlantic Handbook*, ed. Ignacio Gallup-Díaz (New York: Routledge, 2017), 23-24.

⁴² Porfirio Sanz Camañes, *Las ciudades en la América hispana. Siglos XV al XVIII* (Madrid: Sílex, 2004), 28.

between Columbus and the settlers on Hispaniola. Columbus established several fortified towns akin to Portuguese *feitorias* and viewed the settlers as employees. This was unacceptable to the settlers, who rebelled and petitioned the crown in 1497 to establish Castilian towns. The crown quickly complied with their request, ordering Columbus to divide the land among the current citizens or future emigrants, who would receive full title to the property after four years of occupation. Later, in 1528, the Welser factory in Venezuela also was undone by Spanish settlers who wanted a town council. Effective administration in the Americas required the establishment of towns.⁴³

The conquest of the New World thus followed the patterns of medieval Castile. D.W. Meinig notes:

The conquest itself was clearly a direct continuation of traditional processes, displaying both the freedoms and formalities of the *reconquista*. Thus the rapid, wide-ranging forays through the West Indies and mainland margins in search of riches to plunder and natives to exploit were a repetition on a larger stage of Iberian border warfare and the Canaries conquest, carried out in large part by adventurers on their own initiative and resources, outrunning any close supervision of the state.⁴⁴

Though private initiative was at the heart of many expeditions and subsequent settlements, the conquistadores generally sought royal patents before organizing their *entradas*. However, with the exception of some minor instructions and provisions (for instance, the instructions for establishing towns given to Pedrarias Dávila in 1513), royal oversight was generally slight until the discovery of more advanced civilizations in Mesoamerica.⁴⁵ At that point, the kings became more specific in their patents of conquest, essentially reserving more rights for the crown.⁴⁶ In this regard, royal policy in America paralleled the policy shift that had occurred over a century earlier during the resettlement of Andalusia and the kingdom of Granada.

Whether they were exploring a densely or sparsely populated area, royal patents required conquistadores to establish settlements in the newly conquered lands. The crown did not directly organize settlement, but rather

⁴³ Nader, *Liberty*, 41, 92-93. It is also worth noting that the non-market economy of the Tainos made a Portuguese style trading post unprofitable, and this factor, combined with the military weakness of the Taino, led to the adoption of the settler model as well. See Thomas Benjamin, *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 125.

⁴⁴ Donald W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*. Vol. 1: *Atlantic America, 1492-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 11. We would like to thank Anne Knowles for directing us to this book.

⁴⁵ Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 11.

⁴⁶ Lyle N. McAlister, *Spain & Portugal in the New World 1492-1700* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 96.

used its grants to encourage city formation. As Gómez de Gomara stated: “[He] who will not settle will not make a good conquest ... So the maxim of conquering must be to settle.”⁴⁷ Royal policy thus differed little from that of the Middle Ages. The crown encouraged settlement and expansion, but it did not directly organize expeditions.

The *entradas* also had similarities with the urban militias of the Middle Ages.⁴⁸ They were made up of townsmen, not professional soldiers. These expeditions included farmers, tailors, ironsmiths, barbers, scribes, and numerous other skilled workers. Lyle McAlister notes:

Such an assortment of skills enabled the company to survive for extended periods far from European settlements. In sum, the expedition of conquest constituted a self-contained segment of Spanish society capable of survival, expansion, reproduction, and adaption.⁴⁹

The composition of the *entradas* explains why the establishment of towns was central to a successful campaign or conquest; the men were looking for booty and land to settle. In their effort to persuade Bernal Díaz del Castillo to support the foundation of Vera Cruz and to break with Velázquez in 1519, for example, Cortés’s allies argued:

Do you think it is a good thing, sir, that Hernando Cortés has brought us here in this way, deceiving all of us by having advertised in Cuba that he was coming to settle, when now we find out that he carries no power to do so but only to trade, and they want us to go back to Santiago de Cuba with all the gold that has been acquired. We will all be left penniless, and Diego Velázquez will end up with the gold as before. Remember, sir, that you have come on three expeditions at your own expense with the hope of settling, going into debt, risking your life, and being wounded time and again. Tell us, sir, why should we go back to Cuba when there are enough of us to settle this land in the name of his majesty?⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Quoted in Manuel Lucena Giraldo, *A los cuatro vientos. Las ciudades de la América Hispánica* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2006), 63.

⁴⁸ The term *entrada* gradually replaced the medieval term *cabalgada* for raiding parties in the Americas. The term *entrada* though had already appeared in documents during the reign of Alfonso X (1252-1284). Though the *entradas* in the Americas used the same warfare tactics as medieval raids, they differed in that conquistadores sought not only booty but also land to settle. See Torró, “Partners-in-Arms,” 20-21, 62, 66-67.

⁴⁹ McAlister, *Spain*, 100.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Nader, *Liberty*, 95.

This competition for booty and land to settle also led many conquistadores, such as Cortés's lieutenant Pedro de Alvarado, to set off for new territories and establish new colonies.⁵¹ The stories of conquistadores and their efforts to find "*otros Méxicos*" continue to draw readers today.⁵² Many of these conquistadores failed to find cities of gold or establish permanent settlements. Consequently, to evoke Gómez de Gomara's maxim, they did not make good conquests.⁵³ The free-for-all of the conquistadores gradually came to an end with the establishment of the viceregal government in New Spain in 1535 and Peru in 1542. Settlers retained influence, however, as the hundreds of municipalities already established served as the basic units underpinning territorial government and the social and political life of the colonies.⁵⁴

As in Castile, towns provided settlers with self-government and a voice in the political affairs of the monarchy. In 1518, the governor of Hispaniola convened a *junta* (i.e., a reunion) of the towns to discuss pressing issues.⁵⁵ Each municipality duly elected *procuradores* (i.e., representatives) to attend the meeting. In fact, in 1532, Charles V decreed that a *junta* of towns meet annually in Santiago de Cuba to discuss the island's most pressing needs. The nature of colonial assemblies and *juntas* requires further study, and if the crown did offer representation in the *Cortes* of Castile to New Spain and Peru in 1635, as some scholars, such as Demetrio Ramos, contend, the colonies did not accept the privilege of sending representatives. What is clear, however, is that settlers had means to express their concerns and articulate the common good to colonial officials and the crown. Colonial cities even sent representatives to court to petition the crown directly. In 1545, for example, representatives from New Spain arrived in Castile to petition Charles V not to enforce the New Laws of 1542, because, they argued, if the New Laws were enforced, everything would be lost. The representatives instead urged the emperor to make the division of Indian labor (*encomienda*) permanent to preserve the new colonies. Such petitions, along with a revolt in Peru, led the crown to delay enacting the portion of the New Laws relating to abolishing the transmission of *encomiendas* to an heir. Politically, the settlers behaved very

⁵¹ Steve Stern, "Paradigms of Conquest: History, Historiography, and Politics," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, Quincentenary Supplement: The Colonial and Post Colonial Experience. Five Centuries of Spanish and Portuguese America (1992): 6, 8-11, and 14.

⁵² Cortés's success led other Spaniards to brave the unknown to find and conquer similar empires – hence the express *otros Méxicos*. See McAlister, *Spain*, 96.

⁵³ For a brief discussion of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's short-lived colony of San Miguel de Gualdape (on the Georgia coast) and the wanderings of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Hernando de Soto in what is now the southwestern and the southeastern parts of the United States respectively, see Carrie Gibson, *El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten History of Hispanic North America* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2019), 32-33 and 61-64.

⁵⁴ Meinig, *Shaping*, 14.

⁵⁵ Various types of representative institutions, besides the *Cortes*, existed in the early modern Hispanic world. For example, regional *juntas* can also be found in the Iberian Peninsula. See Manuel Maria de Artaza, "Regional political representation in the Spanish Monarchy during the *Ancien Régime*: The *Junta General* of the Kingdom of Galicia," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, 18, no. 1 (1998): 15-26.

similarly to medieval and early modern Castilians. The concept of *república* had crossed the Atlantic, and municipal government ensured liberty and stability.⁵⁶

Again, not all towns survived, and many in fact failed (especially in the Caribbean), yet colonists would often move to new places and, in some cases, even took their legal status with them. For instance, when the city of Santa María de la Antigua del Darién fused with the smaller town of Acla in the late 1520s to survive, Santa María transferred its title of city and corresponding privileges to the new entity (Santa María la Antigua de Acla), thereby maintaining judicial and political continuity in the region.⁵⁷ Privileges and status were a crucial aspect of Castilian urban life, and, as in Castile, many colonists sought to maintain favorable privileges, local autonomy, and jurisdiction over larger areas of land.

Urbanization in America was influenced by four types of settlements: cities, *reducciones de indios*, royal mines, and forts or *presidios*.⁵⁸ Cities could be based on either a new foundation or an ongoing nucleus from pre-Hispanic experience.⁵⁹ For example, Cortés superimposed the grid-patterned Mexico City on the ruins of Tenochtitlan. By maintaining the ancient capital's status as the dominant city, the Spanish found it easier to control the surrounding towns via Aztec tribute systems. Just as they had done in Castile, the Spaniards often used ancient settlement patterns to legitimize their presence, even though the urban organization was dramatically different.⁶⁰ The Spanish preferred to build towns near Native American communities to control native

⁵⁶ See Jaime E. Rodríguez O. *Political Culture in Spanish America, 1500-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 32-37; Adrian Masters, "A Thousand Invisible Architects: Vassals, the Petition and Response System, and the Creation of Spanish Imperial Caste Legislation," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (2018): 377-406; Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 65-77; Demetrio Ramos, "Las ciudades de Indias y su asiento en Cortes de Castilla," *Revista del Instituto de Historia del Derecho Ricardo Levene* 18 (1967): 170-185; Archivo General de Simancas, Estado leg. 72, f. 15.

⁵⁷ Jorge Díaz Ceballos, "New World *Civitas*, Contested Jurisdictions, and Inter-Cultural Conversation in the Construction of the Spanish Monarchy," *Colonial Latin American Review* 27, no.1 (2018): 34; Ida Altman, "Key to the Indies: Port Towns in the Spanish Caribbean, 1493-1550," *The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Latin American History* 74, no. 1 (2017): 5-26.

⁵⁸ For more on the classification of American cities, see Sanz Camañes, *Las ciudades*, 40-41.

⁵⁹ Though beyond the scope of this paper, more work needs to be done on the continuities between Native American cities and colonial cities. See José Luis de Rojas, "Mesoamerican Cities and Spanish Foundations in New Spain: a Necessary Coexistence," paper presented at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference, Albuquerque, NM, 2018.

⁶⁰ For more on this process in medieval Castile, see Isabel Torrente-Fernández, "Goticismo astur e ideología política," *La época de la monarquía asturiana: Actas del simposio celebrado en Covadonga (8-10 October 2001)* (Oviedo: Real Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 2002), 295-315; Manuel Bendala-Galán, "Plan urbanístico de Augusto en Hispania: precedentes y pautas macroterritoriales," in *Stadtbild und Ideologie. Die Monumentalisierung und Kaiserzeit. Kolloquium im Madrid von 19. bis 23. Oktober 1987*, eds. Walter Trillmicht and Paul Zanker (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 25-42.

labor. However, many urban mining centers, such as Zacatecas and Potosí, were established in unpopulated and inhospitable areas. These mining communities stimulated regional economies in New Spain and Peru. The greatest novelty stemmed from the policy of creating indigenous towns (*reducciones de indios*). There were not enough friars to visit all the scattered rural native settlements, and hence Native Americans were resettled in segregated self-sufficient urban communities to facilitate their conversion to Christianity. This policy also forcibly relocated Native American populations to areas closer to cities and royal mines.⁶¹

The extensive urbanization of Native Americans in Mesoamerica and the Andes made it easier for the Spaniards to implement their control along similar lines as the Great Reconquest.⁶² Again, the Spanish viewed the establishment of urban centers amid a conquered people as a way to control territory and labor. At the same time, the crown recognized that to rule over large numbers of non-Spaniards required a certain level of coexistence. During the reconquest, Spanish Christians regularly interacted with Muslims on the battlefield but also maintained personal relationships with many Muslims. These relationships were always complicated and ambiguous, and they led to a certain level of tolerance out of necessity if not conviction. Therefore, Spaniards may have been more open to being in close contact with Native Americans than other Europeans, making it easier for Spaniards to form alliances with native peoples and delegate certain responsibilities to traditional elites. Moreover, the Spanish crown's decision to establish a *república de indios* (which provided the Indians with their own space and a certain degree of autonomy) was seen as an effort to protect the Indians from colonists and make it easier for priests to convert them.⁶³

The more closely we examine new urban centers in America and their connection to prior native centers (Spanish settlements were often built next to or atop native cities, as in the case of Tenochtitlan-Mexico City), the clearer it becomes that natives were able to navigate the new "Spanish" urban landscape and were a crucial component of city life.⁶⁴ Many Native Americans had already lived in cosmopolitan cities where multiple languages were spoken, and were themselves bilingual or trilingual. They migrated and moved to take advantage of new economic opportunities and were able to forge new kinship

⁶¹ Helen Rawlings, *Church, Religion and Society in Early Modern Spain* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 109. The French and English also relocated Native Americans into missionary towns. The most famous English examples are the praying towns of New England organized by John Eliot in the 1640s. See Benjamin, *Atlantic World*, 309-312.

⁶² Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*: 22.

⁶³ Elliott, *Empires*, 79-81; William F. Connell, "Alliance Building and the Restoration of Native Government in the Altepetl of Mexico Tenochtitlan, 1521-1565," in *City Indians in Spain's American Empire: Urban Indigenous Society in Colonial Mesoamerica and Andean South America, 1530-1810*, ed. Dana Velasco Murillo, Mark Lentz, and Margarita R. Ochoa (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 8-31; Rubén González Cuerva, "La historia global de la diplomacia desde la monarquía Hispánica," *Chronica Nova* no. 44 (2018): 35-39.

⁶⁴ Altman, "Towns," 27.

networks. A recent study highlights the interconnections between the Spanish town and the native satellite villages in the conurbation of San Luis Potosí in Mexico. New research on indigenous movements in Spanish America has demonstrated that natives were able to work within the confines of the Spanish urban system, form new kinship groups, retain ties to old groups across great distances, etc. Thus, Native Americans retained agency after the conquest, and far closer contact existed between different ethnic groups in urban settings than previously thought. For instance, even though Spanish law required Indians to live in special neighborhoods, many resided in the homes of their Spanish employers or in Spanish neighborhoods. These ethnically and racially diverse towns played a key role in the settlement and governance of the colonies.⁶⁵ Moreover, though the *collaciones* did not cross the Atlantic per se, the idea of urban centers made up of autonomous “villages” did do so. For instance, Santiago de Guatemala, like most Castilian cities, was divided into wards, and the native wards offered indigenous municipal councils a certain level of autonomy and cemented a link between town and country, as many of these wards evolved from agrarian settlements that merged with the city.⁶⁶ The conurbations in the Americas thus shared important aspects with medieval Castilian cities. The blurring of the urban-rural divide, for instance, would have seemed normal to Castilians during the early phases of colonization.

Finally, the Spaniards were not the only Europeans to settle the Americas.⁶⁷ Even though the Portuguese had similar urban experiences on a hostile frontier in the middle ages, in sixteenth-century Brazil, they initially used trading factories to exploit the coast, then “donatary captaincies” to execute private conquest, and finally, royal control over a network of municipalities.⁶⁸ Northern European nations made tentative efforts to colonize in the 1500s, but only succeeded in establishing permanent colonies in the 1600s. The English, for example, tried unsuccessfully to establish colonies in America, such as Roanoke, in the late 1500s to facilitate privateering against

⁶⁵ Laurent Corbeil, *The Motions Beneath: Indigenous Migrants on the Urban Frontier of New Spain* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018). Medieval Castilian towns were also ethnically and religiously diverse, and this offers possibilities for comparison. For example, Karen Graubart has done some initial comparison in a working paper (“Imperial Conviviality: What Medieval Spanish Legal Practice Can Teach Us About Colonial Latin America”) and prepared some useful maps showing the integration of Jews and Muslims into the wider community in late medieval Seville and of Native Americans in colonial Lima, see <https://karengraubart.com/home/digital-history/> and http://mecila.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WP-8-Graubart-Online_OK.pdf (Accessed December 4, 2019).

⁶⁶ Robinson A. Herrera, “Surviving the Colonial City: Native Peoples in Early Santiago de Guatemala,” in *City Indians in Spain’s American Empire*, 52-54.

⁶⁷ For a helpful comparative discussion of conquests in Hispaniola, Jamestown, New England, and Quebec, see George Raudzens, “Outfighting or Outpopulating? Main Reasons for Early Colonial Conquests, 1493-1788,” in *Technology, Disease and Colonial Conquests, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries: Essays Reappraising the Guns and Germs Theories*, ed. George Raudzens (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 31-57.

⁶⁸ Harold B. Johnson, “Portuguese Settlement, 1500-1580,” in *Colonial Brazil*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1-38.

Spanish shipping. The English crown generally granted charters to private individuals or companies because it lacked the resources to outfit such ventures itself, as well as to maintain a kind of diplomatic deniability. In 1607, the Virginia Company established Jamestown. The colony was initially run as a military-commercial outpost similar to a Portuguese *feitoria*. With the colony faltering, the company changed direction in 1614 and “deliberately imported Spanish models of urban settlement, including urban planning around grids and plazas. The new model involved the creation of autonomous, self-ruling creole, settler colonies.” The English and other Europeans subsequently drew on Spanish lessons in developing their own colonies in the seventeenth century.⁶⁹ The Spanish urban model, which developed in a frontier context, was copied by other colonial powers as they colonized New World frontiers.

Transatlantic Urban Connections and Reciprocal Influences

The conquest and settlement of the Americas was an encounter between two old worlds. Both were transformed by the encounter – radically in the case of America and subtly in the case of Europe. The level of change would vary depending on the numbers of people engaged in the colonial enterprise, the number of institutions involved in the process, and the volume of trade. The changes wrought by these Atlantic encounters were both global and local, or “glocal,” making it possible to compare distinct parts of the world and place them in a common analytical framework. Meinig, for instance, has identified eight recurrent patterns of interaction (Exploration, Gathering, Barter, Plunder, Outpost, Imperial Imposition, Implantation, and Imperial Colony), and each pattern affected America and Europe in different ways.⁷⁰

Here, we wish to briefly compare the urban systems of Madrid and Lima. The creation of Madrid as the permanent court of the Habsburgs in the sixteenth century radically changed the relations between cities within the Castilian urban network. Lima, capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru, was created in 1535, just when Madrid received the Castilian court. Did the changing urban hierarchical structure in Castile in any way influence the evolution of the politico-administrative capitals of the American continent, that is, the viceregal administration and court? Or perhaps it was the other way around? Scholars have begun to study the formation of the viceregal courts and the court experience in America, especially in the Viceroyalty of Peru.⁷¹ From here, looking for differences and parallels in the development of urban

⁶⁹ Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Bradley J. Dixon, “The Oversight of King Henry VII: Imperial Envy and the Making of British America,” in *The World of Colonial America*, 45, 46, 52.

⁷⁰ Meinig, *Shape*, 65-69.

⁷¹ Manfredi Merluzzi, “Il Perú del viceré Francisco de Toledo: l’affermazione di uno spazio politico cortigiano,” in *Las cortes virreinales de la Monarquía española: América e Italia*, ed. Francesca Cantù (Rome: Viella, 2008), 79-102.

systems can be an advantageous approach to transnational history. By 1540, the population of both cities had moved in similar directions: they were cities in formation as courts, with some 15,000 inhabitants in the case of Lima and about 25-30,000 in the case of Madrid. Both were in the process of becoming political centers, Madrid as a city in which the court appeared with special frequency, and Lima as a viceregal metropolis. Both were also becoming economic centers – Madrid in central Castile and Lima as the hub of the Viceroyalty of Peru.⁷²

Naturally, differences also existed between the two. The city plan of Lima was based on the classic ideas around the main square, generating a perfect grid structure of 63 blocks. The main square of Madrid, built in 1617 on the old square of a suburb, was certainly not the focal point from which the city plan radiated. Madrid's urban design did not correspond to the famous ordinances of *El Bosque de Segovia* (1573), which called for cities and towns to be founded on a grid pattern of square blocks and streets intersecting at right angles with a spacious main square at the center of the city surrounded by the main public buildings, such as the cathedral, city hall, and governor's palace. That is, the new royal policies for urban planning and the projection of power through urban design based on Roman principles were executed in many American cities long before being incorporated into Castilian ones.⁷³ On the other hand, in both Lima and Madrid, the main square (or *plaza mayor*) played an important role in urban development from an economic, social, political, and symbolic point of view. Consequently, given the dates of construction, the periphery influenced the metropole in this aspect of urban development, and not the reverse. The viceroy reproduced the ceremonial aspects of the court. Lima's main square was shaped as an expression of monarchical and viceregal authority long before Madrid had a proper square for such acts (e.g., births or deaths in the royal family). Public displays of monarchical and viceregal authority also highlighted the municipal councils' place within the political and ceremonial hierarchy of the colony. Formal celebrations were integral parts of the political process and political power on both sides of the Atlantic.⁷⁴

Residents of Madrid also maintained many personal ties to America. They were aware of what transpired in the New World. For example, Felipe and Diego Gutiérrez de Madrid moved to America to start careers as something halfway between conquerors and businessmen. Both also served as governors in Central America. Felipe Gutiérrez was the governor of the

⁷² Lyman L. Johnson and Susan Migden Socolow, "Colonial Centers, Colonial Peripheries, and the Economic Agency of the Spanish State," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York-London: Routledge, 2002), 59-77.

⁷³ Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 23.

⁷⁴ For more on the ceremonial aspects of power in Mexico City, see Cañeque, *The King's Living*, ch. 4.

province of Veragua,⁷⁵ and Diego Gutiérrez was the governor of the Province of Nueva Cartago and Costa Rica. Diego Gutiérrez is still remembered in a seventeenth-century history of Madrid:

In this letter, there is another surname of Gutiérrez. He is member of the entailed household founded by Alonso Gutiérrez, who in the year 1494 was a resident of this Villa His son Diego Gutiérrez was killed in the Province of Veragua being governor of a certain part of the mainland.⁷⁶

More importantly, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, a native of Madrid, governor of Cartagena de Indias and author of the famous *General and Natural History of the Indies*, represented a further link between the future capital and America prior to 1561, the year Madrid became the permanent court of the Spanish Monarchy.⁷⁷

Hernán Cortés also used agents in Madrid and eventually moved to that city. For example, he employed Francisco de Arteaga, a resident of Segovia with a house in Madrid, in his lawsuit with the Council of the Indies.⁷⁸ In 1540, Cortés himself returned to Spain and settled in Madrid. His house became an “academy” for regular discussions on matters of humanism and religious concerns. Members of his circle included Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who would later debate Bartolomé de Las Casas, and his biographer López de Gómara, who turned Cortés into a typical hero of Renaissance historiography.⁷⁹

The point is not that New World connections were unique to Madrid. Such connections existed across Spain, and the return of conquistadores and their wealth transformed many Spanish cities.⁸⁰ Rather, we wish to emphasize

⁷⁵ León Fernández, *Historia de Costa Rica durante la dominación española, 1502-1821* (Madrid, 1889), 60-62 and 74 [Online at: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/historia-de-costa-rica-durante-la-dominacion-espanola-1502-1821-931963/>].

⁷⁶ Jerónimo de Quintana, *A la muy antigua, noble y coronada villa de Madrid....* (Madrid, 1629), 225v.

⁷⁷ Óscar Perea, “Madrid en la obra genealógica de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo,” in *Organización social del espacio. III. Madrid en el tránsito de la Edad Media a la Moderna*, coords., Santiago Muriel Hernández and Cristina Segura Graiño (Madrid: al-Mudayna, 2008), 319.

⁷⁸ Archivo Histórico de Protocolos Notariales Madrid, *Prot. 86*, fol. 1136r and v, 1137r; José Luis Martínez, *Hernán Cortés* (México Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003).

⁷⁹ John H. Elliott, *Spain and Its Worlds, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 41.

⁸⁰ Thomas Benjamin notes, for instance, “Just about every family in Castile either had a family member in America or knew someone who had emigrated. Castilians were connected to America, and Castilians in America were connected to home.” See *Atlantic World*, 185. For more on the Pizarro fortune and development in Trujillo, see Rafael Varón Gabai, *Francisco Pizarro and His Brothers: The Illusion of Power in Sixteenth-Century Peru*. Trans. Javier Flaves Espinoza (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). The essays in Óscar Álvarez Gila and Juan Bosco Amores Carredano, eds., *Del Espacio cantábrico al mundo*

that these connections were constant. For sixteenth-century Spaniards, American cities were part of an empire of cities, and the differences between those cities and Castilian cities were not necessarily greater from an organizational point of view than those that existed between cities in northern and southern Spain.⁸¹ Consequently, the Atlantic did not create a barrier. Urban centers developed along similar lines on both sides of the ocean and consequently can be studied together.

The growing similarity between cities also made it easier for Europeans and Native Americans to navigate through strange places. For instance, American and Castilian architecture developed in tandem. Therefore, it is not surprising that some of the best examples of Baroque design are found in the New World (e.g., Mexico City's Metropolitan Cathedral), while many American homes incorporated southern Spanish designs. According to one cleric, by the 1620s, Spaniards had constructed 70,000 churches, cathedrals, chapels, monasteries, and other religious buildings in the Americas. Here we can see the growing strands that linked cities across the Atlantic, pulling urban people in particular – directly or indirectly – into a new global system.⁸²

For example, even though the mendicant friars played a crucial role in evangelization and acculturation of Native Americans, growing urbanization gradually transformed the friars from missionaries to more conventional mendicants.⁸³ That is, the more the friars moved away from exclusively ministering to Indians to ministering to all urban dwellers in the late sixteenth century, the more readily we can make comparisons between Castile and the Americas. The continuity between religious life in American and Castilian monasteries meant that similarities existed between urban religious experiences in the two places. For instance, Mercedarian friars collected alms in the Americas to free captives from Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean. Through their donations, residents in America participated in a practice dating back to thirteenth-century Aragon and helped to protect fellow Christians from dangerous enemies half a world away. Such religious connections aided in the

americano: Perspectivas sobre migración, etnicidad y retorno (Bilbao: Universidad de País Vasco, 2015) also provide insights into migration from Cantabria to America and the effect return migration had on Cantabria between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁸¹ Aurelio Espinosa. *The Empire of the Cities: Emperor Charles V, the Comunero Revolt, and the Transformation of the Spanish System* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), ch. 5.

⁸² Benjamin, *Atlantic World*, 166; Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 50-55; Meinig, *Shape*, 69. The British also exported their architectural traditions and practices to their colonies; see Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman, eds., *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

⁸³ It is also worth recalling that similar efforts at evangelization and acculturations were taking place on a smaller scale within the Iberian Peninsula at this very same time. See Vicente Barletta "Editor's Introduction" in Francisco Núñez Muley, *A Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audiencia and Chancery Court of the City and Kingdom of Granada*. ed. and trans. Vicente Barletta (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 33-37.

formation and maintenance of a shared identity and purpose among subjects on both sides of the Atlantic, as was true during late medieval Castile.⁸⁴

Taxation is another area in which we can make comparisons between Castilian and American cities. The formation of a fiscal system in America was a long process. First, to make this system compatible with the nature of conquest, the crown usually claimed a share of the spoils – the royal fifth or “*quinto real*,” or 20% of net profits from gold, silver, pearls and precious stones. The payment of the royal fifth, of course, dates back to the reconquest and regulations requiring militias to provide a fifth of their spoils to the crown. In the Americas, the royal fifth was initially the crown’s main source of revenue from the colonies. The lack of taxation or limited taxes paid by early settlers made the American enterprise more attractive to Castilians.⁸⁵

For example, in 1497, the Catholic Kings imposed the collection of the *almojarifazgos* (custom duties) over the newly conquered territories. Charles V confirmed the collection of this tariff. Until the reign of Philip II, however, taxation in the colonies was negligible beyond the *almojarifazgo* and some ecclesiastical contributions. Nonetheless, royal accountants and other tax officials found their way to the colonies, and many of these men “held positions on town councils in addition to their royal appointments.”⁸⁶

Taxation processes became increasingly standardized during the reign of Philip II. Therefore, depending on each territory, taxation in the American urban system became more comparable with the fiscal system of Castile, especially with the adoption of the *alcabala* (sales tax), the main tax in Castile, in different parts of America in the late sixteenth century. There was opposition to the introduction of the *alcabala*. In Quito, for example, political tensions between the city and royal representatives surfaced in the 1590s.⁸⁷ There was one notable difference in the response to royal fiscal demands between Castile and America. Although there were discussions and different attempts to incorporate American representatives into the Castilian parliament, American cities never joined with Castilian cities in the *Cortes*, nor did they form their own parliaments in the viceroyalties. This fact lessened the negotiating power of American municipalities vis-à-vis the crown.⁸⁸ During the 1560s and 1570s, in Castile, Philip II had to choose between imposing new taxes to sustain his growing debt or turning to the kingdom (cities) to increase

⁸⁴ Karen Melvin, *Building Colonial Cities of God: Mendicant Orders and Urban Culture in New Spain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), no. 1, 3, 4, 30, 163-167, 267 and 272-274; José María Miura Andrades, “Ciudades y conventos franciscanos en la Andalucía bajomedieval. Jerarquías urbanas y procesos de expansión del poblamiento,” *Anuario de estudios medievales* 48 (2018): 331-360.

⁸⁵ Antonio Miguel Bernal, *España, proyecto inacabado. Los costes/beneficios del Imperio*, (Madrid: Marcial-Pons, 2005), 249; Powers, *Code*, 15.

⁸⁶ Altman, “Key to the Indies,” 14.

⁸⁷ Bernard Lavalle, *Quito y la crisis de la Alcabala (1580-1600)* (Lima: Corporación Editora Nacional, 1997).

⁸⁸ For a succinct discussion on subsidy negotiations in the 1630s and 1640s between the viceroy and the municipality of Mexico City, see Cañeque, *The King’s Living*, 71-74.

the size of the *servicios* of the *Cortes* and to renegotiate payment by cities to maintain the *encabezamiento* regime.⁸⁹ He turned to the kingdom, thereby strengthening control over taxation by the Castilian cities. Despite this important difference, by consolidating their control over local taxation, cities on both sides of the Atlantic played a role in fiscal policy. Thus, by the seventeenth century, the tax regime in America had incorporated the main collection formulas used in Castile as well as the tax officials that made it recognizable. Moreover, Hispanic city councils controlled local tax collection and could distribute monies for local projects. Local fiscal autonomy often hindered the crown's plans for tax collection. Meanwhile, royal efforts to assert greater control over municipal finances were a constant bone of contention for municipalities on both sides of the Atlantic.⁹⁰ Cities were essentially the lynchpin in royal taxation schemes. Despite ample literature on royal finances, the historiography generally studies Castile and America separately and does not properly address the ways in which cities on both sides of the Atlantic played a role in fiscal policy.⁹¹

Transatlantic influences can be defined in two directions. Castile in general and Madrid in particular received influences from the Americas. Apart from new products, such as potatoes or chocolate, or cultural transferences in literature or art, many Native Americans traveled to Spain to seek justice, rewards or royal favor as agents of their indigenous communities or on their own behalf.⁹² Although these native travelers mainly wore Spanish clothing, unlike earlier visitors depicted in traditional dress by Christoph Weiditz in

⁸⁹ José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, *Las Cortes de Castilla y León bajo los Austrias: una interpretación* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2008); Elliott, *Empires*, 121. Henry Kamen provides a useful definition of the *encabezamiento*. He writes: "System of tax-collection by which a [city or] region would agree on the total of taxes to be paid (the main constituent tax would be the *alcabalas*), but exercised full local control over the assessment and collection." Henry Kamen, *Spain, 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (London: Longman, 1991), x.

⁹⁰ Kinsbruner, *The Colonial*, 37 and 41.

⁹¹ In regard to American fiscalism in the sixteenth century, the standard works are: Ismael Sánchez-Bella, *La organización financiera de las Indias. Siglo XVI* (Sevilla: CSIC, 1968); John J. TePaske and Herbert S. Klein, *The Royal Treasuries of the Spanish Empire in America*, 3 vols. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1982); Herbert S. Klein, *Las finanzas americanas del Imperio español: 1680-1809* (México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1999); Yovana Celaya Nández, "La recaudación de la alcabala novohispana durante los Austrias: Cabildos, comerciantes y alcaldes mayores," in *Permanencias y Huellas. Comprender un mundo global en la identificación del patrimonio novohispano*, eds. Óscar Mazín Gómez, Ana Díaz Serrano and José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (Murcia: Editum, 2012), 167-183. For Castile, see Modesto Ulloa, *La hacienda real de Castilla en el reinado de Felipe II* (Madrid: FUE, 1977) (especially pp. 687-758); and Pilar Zabala Aguirre, *Las alcabalas y la hacienda real de Castilla* (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2000).

⁹² Bartolomé Yun Casalilla and Bethany Aram, coords., *Global Goods and the Spanish Empire, 1492-1824* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Elvira Vilches, *New World Gold: Cultural Anxiety and Monetary Disorder in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); José Carlos de la Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans: Seeking Justice and Reward at the Spanish Royal Court* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018).

1529, it is easy to imagine the stir they created walking in the streets of Madrid, Valladolid, or Seville. Spaniards may also have been surprised to see natives actually partaking in the Spanish tradition of petitioning the crown. Such interactions make clear that Spain and America were part of a single global monarchy, and every part of the monarchy had the potential to influence other parts. For example, Antonio de León Pinelo, the author of important works in the history of America and noted for his seventeenth-century *Annals of History of Madrid*, travelled throughout the Americas, and his writings addressed both this American perspective and its influence in Madrid. In fact, he turned up in literary meetings with notable authors such as Lope de Vega or Ruiz de Alarcón.⁹³ De León Pinelo and his son Diego also worked as agents of Native American communities in different political centers in America and Spain.⁹⁴ We can find other vestiges of deep social bonds between the two shores of the Atlantic. Social networks played an essential role in the configuration of space on a global scale and in holding together transnational empires. Additionally, these social networks formed and operated in urban settings. Thus, a common urbanization process unfolded on both continents, with differences and similarities between the two, as demonstrated by a wealth of bibliographic information.⁹⁵

Conclusion

Medieval cities did not singlehandedly conquer territory, but their establishment was crucial in allowing the crown to govern frontiers with heterogeneous populations. The crown also encouraged people to settle newly conquered regions in the tenth and eleventh centuries and to repopulate the cities of al-Andalus in the thirteenth century by granting settlers control over everyday affairs through their city's *concejo*. The structural aspects of Castilian cities certainly changed over time, and differences developed between northern and southern cities. Nevertheless, all the cities viewed themselves as *repúblicas* whose leaders negotiated with one another as well as with the crown. The ideology of the common good unified all urban centers, despite the fact that they possessed different *fueros*, and provided a shared political language on both sides of the Atlantic that framed contemporary discussions and demands regarding authority and rights.⁹⁶

⁹³ "Antonio de León Pinelo," *Diccionario Biográfico Español*. <http://dbe.rah.es/biografias/11972/antonio-de-leon-pinelo> (Accessed July 9, 2019).

⁹⁴ Puente Luna, *Andean Cosmopolitans*, 70.

⁹⁵ Juan Eloy Gelabert González, "Cities, Towns and Small Towns in Castile, 1500-1800," in *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 271-294; José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, "Les villes de la couronne de Castille sous l'Ancien Régime: une histoire inachevée," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et contemporaine* 41, no. 2 (1994): 291-312.

⁹⁶ A better understanding of the urban political culture in medieval and early modern Spain will also make clear the vibrant participation of common people in Hispanic politics. For more on these issues (especially from a Latin American point of view), see Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *Political Culture*.

Understanding the nature of Spanish cities in the Middle Ages also helps us to better understand the blurring of lines between urban and rural in the Americas. Urban centers always had a rural component, with residents moving between the two. Consequently, the modern distinction between urban and rural potentially leads us to misconstrue the nature of Hispanic cities.⁹⁷ Moreover, we must remember that one important function of Spanish cities in America throughout the entire colonial period was to defend and control territory. David Weber has noted that “in the mid-eighteenth century... independent Indians controlled over half of the land mass that we think of today as Spanish America.”⁹⁸ Frontiers were not just in Florida or New Mexico; internal frontiers required a patchwork of cities to maintain and extend Spanish control in the Americas.

Cities thus provide a crucial point of continuity between the medieval and early modern periods. The Spanish were the first Europeans to colonize the Americas because they had developed the institutional means through urban settlements to conquer and control territory. These methods, which were developed over the centuries of the reconquest, provided Spaniards with the necessary experience to expand abroad. The conquest of the Canary Islands provided the trial run for later expansion in the Americas.⁹⁹ In short, Spain, unlike other European nations at the time, possessed the political and social conditions to promote expeditions of conquest. Some of those conditions were created by the long tradition of urban expansion during the reconquest. Moreover, the fact that the Castilian urban model was adapted in different territories with dissimilar circumstances attests to the versatility of the Spanish city. Part of the “Iberian advantage” in the early phases of exploration and discovery was its urban structure, and other Europeans copied the Iberian model to launch their own successful colonies in the Americas.¹⁰⁰

Cities can be studied from national, regional, transnational, and global points of view. Each perspective provides new insights. For instance, Madrid’s transformation into the capital of the Spanish Monarchy affected the city’s relationship to the whole structure of the monarchy, not just central Castile. Madrid influenced America, and America influenced Madrid from many angles (political, institutional, economic, etc.). Social networks and personal relationships connected spaces in Europe and America. Many of these relationships remain unknown, awaiting new research. In the Archivo Histórico de Protocolos Notariales, for example, it is possible to locate notarial documents from people in America engaging with the court and brokers in

⁹⁷ Kevin Terraciano, “Concluding Remarks,” in *City Indians in Spain’s American Empire*, 229-230.

⁹⁸ David J. Weber, “Bourbon and Barbaros: Center and Periphery in the Reshaping of Spanish Indian Policy” in *Negotiated Empires*, 79.

⁹⁹ Meinig, *Shape*, 6-7.

¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed study of the navigational, technological, and religious components of the Iberian advantage, see Lawrence Clayton, “The Iberian Advantage” in *Technology, Disease and Colonial Conquests*, 211-35.

Madrid who could move the whole kingdom. Thus, even ostensibly local records have a transnational or global dimension that can be discovered if we are patient enough to look for the global in the local (“glocalism”) or the local in the global.

Finally, the focus on cities also opens the door to further interdisciplinary collaborations. Cities were multi-layered entities in their physical structure, social institutions, webs of political and economic power, works of art, and so forth.¹⁰¹ Thus, to understand the circulation of people, ideas, and commodities in the Hispanic world, we need to understand the places where these people and ideas came from – the medieval Hispanic city – and how those places evolved and changed over time.

¹⁰¹ See Benjamin Fraser, *Digital Cities: The Interdisciplinary Future of the Urban Geo-Humanities* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).