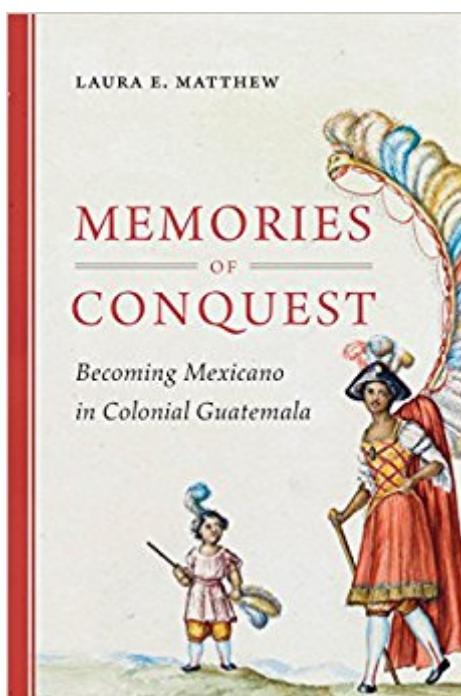


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Memories Of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano In Colonial Guatemala (First Peoples: New Directions In Indigenous Studies)



Synopsis

Indigenous allies helped the Spanish gain a foothold in the Americas. What did these Indian conquistadors expect from the partnership, and what were the implications of their involvement in Spain's New World empire? Laura Matthew's study of Ciudad Vieja, Guatemala--the first study to focus on a single allied colony over the entire colonial period--places the Nahua, Zapotec, and Mixtec conquistadors of Guatemala and their descendants within a deeply Mesoamerican historical context. Drawing on archives, ethnography, and colonial Mesoamerican maps, Matthew argues that the conquest cannot be fully understood without considering how these Indian conquistadors first invaded and then, of their own accord and largely by their own rules, settled in Central America. Shaped by pre-Columbian patterns of empire, alliance, warfare, and migration, the members of this diverse indigenous community became unified as the Mexicanos--descendants of Indian conquistadors in their adopted homeland. Their identity and higher status in Guatemalan society derived from their continued pride in their heritage, says Matthew, but also depended on Spanish colonialism's willingness to honor them. Throughout *Memories of Conquest*, Matthew charts the power of colonialism to reshape and restrict Mesoamerican society--even for those most favored by colonial policy and despite powerful continuities in Mesoamerican culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Skillful. . . . Reinforces our understanding of the Spanish practice of forming alliances with native

groups for the purpose of conquest.--The HistorianA unique perspective on the history of the conquest of Guatemala, and as such is a welcome addition to the colonial history of Latin America. Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.--ChoiceAn impressive scholarly study.--Journal of Historical GeographyA welcome addition to the classroom and to the field. [Memories of Conquest] significantly advances our understanding of New Conquest history.--The Americas

This fine-grained study of a Mexican indigenous immigrant community in Guatemala breaks new ground. Ranging widely over central Mexico and Oaxaca, history and anthropology, Laura Matthew deftly shows how Mexicano identity in colonial Guatemala was shaped both by the Mesoamerican past and by European colonization. This is a work of prodigious scholarship that challenges the longstanding--and problematic--dichotomies of conquerors versus conquered and pre-Hispanic versus colonial eras. Matthew's portrayal of the self-ascribed Indian conquistadors exposes the shortcomings of the Eurocentric 'conquest paradigm' and points the way to an alternative Mesoamerican-centered timeline. This original and provocative book will be a touchstone for understanding colonial Mesoamerica for a long time to come.--John K. Chance, professor emeritus of anthropology, Arizona State UniversityBuilt upon her impressive expertise in the field, and supported by an original and thorough analysis of archival documents, Laura Matthew's book makes significant contributions to our understanding of the Spanish Conquest, the colonial histories of Mexico and Guatemala, and the nature of the Guatemalan nation.--Matthew Restall, author of *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan*

Great book, well written, great information.

This thoroughly researched and clearly written study illuminates the role of "Indian conquistadors" from Mexico and their descendants in the conquest and colonization of Guatemala. Its exploration of ethnicity, migration, and place in the making of a colonial "Mexicano" identity will make it of interest to a wide audience of, mostly, scholars. It presents a complicated picture of culture as a process; i.e. "it" is always in the making. Thus it avoids being fixated on the issue of whether Indian identities were "authentically traditional" or "innovatively (or perhaps inauthentically) colonial." It is jargon free, but it is a book that demands attentive and engaged reading, particularly if not a specialist in indigenous Mesoamerica or colonial Latin America.

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