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Laura E. Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala*

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personal conflicts, and corruption reflected in ceremonial performances. Finally, the author addresses the increasingly detrimental impact that the reforms imposed by the Bourbon regime had on Puebla's culture of ceremony and on the *cabildo's* authority. Ramos rightly concludes that the complexity of ritual makes it necessary to study it through multiple lenses.

Identity, Ritual, and Power in Colonial Puebla is largely an account of how Puebla's *cabildo* continuously resisted reforms mandated by the Bourbon regime, partly because they called for moderating the rituals that supported its cultural identity as well as its political power, two aspects intimately intertwined. The fact that exposition tends to trump interpretation, together with the steady paraphrasing of the main argument, reveal this work's dissertation-to-book character. Nevertheless, this case study constitutes a straightforward point of entry into its subject matter and lays the ground work for several interesting avenues of research.

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Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala. By Laura E. Matthew. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. xii + 318 pp. Illustrations, maps, table, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.)

In Ciudad Vieja, a significant colonial city until an earthquake leveled much of it in 1773, native conquistadors (principally Nahuas and Oaxacans), who migrated into Guatemala from the 1520s, and their descendants "became Mexicano." Laura Matthew builds upon her already substantial scholarly contributions, interrogating the dialectic conquistador and conquered, bringing in historical perspective to demonstrate the political motivations of indigenous conquistadors who invaded, with Europeans, lands dominated by Kaqchikel and K'iche' Maya. For this study, Matthew considers the conquest of southern Mesoamerica as a rather ordinary event in Mesoamerican experience: a continuation of incursions that began centuries, if not millennia, before. The native groups came to Ciudad Vieja as conquerors, remained, and created nine distinct *parcialidades* (semi-autonomous administrative sections). These groups responded to colonialism by doggedly defending privileges and rights earned through royal service, eking out a space of political significance, and ultimately helping to construct a colonial world that at times preserved indigenous authority and autonomy over local affairs using royal institutions. Native conquistadors were hardly the "porters" of European soldiers, as some histories have imagined them, but rather interested actors in the expansion of central Mexico's reach into Guatemala. As a result, Matthew makes a powerful case for conscious political negotiations by indigenous peoples as they labored

under the veneer of Spanish colonialism and the bureaucracy that seemed intent to obscure their voices.

Finding evidence for something richer, Matthew adds layers of significance to her study. Of principal concern are the implications of her work on the evolution of indigenous identity today. Her argument speaks to modern Guatemalan indigenous peoples by resurrecting a largely forgotten history. As Matthew observes, *mexicanos* in Ciudad Vieja were *ladino* in that they considered themselves acculturated within colonialism and spoke a lingua franca (Nahuatl usually). For modern Guatemalan discourse, Matthew's arguments offer a devastating critique of mythologies of submission which persist in Guatemalan school texts and even within commemorative celebrations in indigenous communities. Matthew's apparent object is to rescue the authentic heroic indigenous past. In so doing, she can at once inform scholars about the ambivalent, although complex, importance of indigenous conquistadores and also help to resurrect the past for the *mexicano* heirs of the Mexica and Tlaxcalteca, among others, who are now Guatemalan. This work offers a measured and cerebral discussion of the implications of indigenous peoples facilitating the conquest without judgment by placing the *mexicanos* and their motivations at the center of the analysis.

The book is divided into six thematic chapters supported by both manuscript sources in Spanish and indigenous languages as well as various colonial painted documents. In the first two chapters, the author recounts the history of interconnections and linkages between northern and southern Mesoamerica since the first millennium through the sixteenth century. Matthew then considers the implications of being an indigenous conquistador, the importance of the town and indigenous conceptions of space, for example, the *altepetl* for foreign native peoples, and the ways in which indigenous peoples used political, social, and religious institutions such as the *cabildo*, *cofradías*, and militias in building identity. Matthew turns to the importance of language in the construction of *mexicano* identity, noting how indigenous peoples elevated Nahuatl (in a region where Maya languages predominated) as a mark of status and acculturation.

Matthew relies heavily on a single document from the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, (AGI, Justicia 291), a *probanza* of over eight hundred pages, which speaks to the service of those she has identified as indigenous conquistadors. She consulted indigenous-produced histories, particularly those that relate the story of Ciudad Vieja, such as the Lienzo de Quauhquechollan. There are also numerous manuscript sources of the more mundane variety, although only five are in Nahuatl for Ciudad Vieja. While there were scribes who wrote exclusively in Nahuatl, their writings have not been located. Matthew has read legal testimony and *protocolos* (notary documents) carefully to determine identity. She assumes the importance of details such as whether a litigant needed a translator and draws conclusions about identity based on such reporting.

Matthew's research is careful and thorough, and her argument is innovative and forceful. She has found creative ways to make excellent use of Spanish-language documents which can sometimes make native peoples less visible. Focusing on indigenous identity and how it has changed over time, her work helps to advance the understanding of indigenous peoples under colonialism and provides a useful framework for students of modern Guatemalan history. This study, building upon the corpus of works in the New Conquest History genre and the established body of work on indigenous identity, will help scholars better understand colonialism and the persistence of indigenous identity.

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