

BEYOND CORTÉS AND MONTEZUMA

The Conquest of Mexico Revisited

EDITED BY

Vitus Huber and John F. Schwaller

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Foreword

KEVIN TERRACIANO

The corpus of books, manuscripts, archival documents, and images on the Spanish-led invasion of Mexico is so extensive and dispersed in libraries, archives, and museums on both sides of the Atlantic that scholars continue to make original contributions to a deep historiography on the topic. The war that the Spaniards called *la conquista de México* (or *Nueva España*) is easily the most documented series of events in the history of the early Americas. The topic has inspired European, Indigenous, Mestizo, and Creole writers and artists for centuries, but scholarship on the topic has surged in recent years with the quincentennial commemoration of the war. Matthew Restall's reinterpretation of the encounter between Montezuma and Cortés (2018) was among the first and most impressive books to appear in relation to the anniversary. Two excellent anthologies were published in 2022: *500 años de la conquista de México: Resistencias y apropiaciones*, edited by Valeria Añón, and *The Conquest of Mexico: Five Centuries of Reinvention*, edited by Peter Vilella and Pablo García Loaeza. A weekly series in Mexico titled Noticonquista, organized by Federico Navarrete and colleagues at UNAM, exemplified how to present concise and well-curated historical essays to a public audience. These are but a few of many recent studies of the topic, and no doubt there are more to come. The present volume is a welcome addition to this literature.

Most of the interdisciplinary chapters in *Beyond Cortés and Montezuma* seek to look beyond the dramatic encounter between Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin and Hernando Cortés and the invasion of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco by examining

texts and images that shed light on a complex narrative of contact and conflict, negotiation and cooperation, that continued well after 1521 into Mexico's viceregal or "colonial" period. I think of the "conquest" as an extended, incomplete, transformative process rather than a finite military event, and I would argue that the systemic exploitation and marginalization of Indigenous peoples of the Americas that began in the late fifteenth century continues to the present, not only in Mexico but in many nations throughout North and South America. Justyna Olko makes this point very clearly in her compelling contribution to this volume. Olko exposes the painful legacy of the *Conquista* and colonial rule, and the current Mexican government's continued inability or unwillingness to make sense of the past despite all the new historical research on the topic. National leaders fail to recognize the legacy of violence and to implement policies to address many of the problems that the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas brought to the world's attention more than three decades ago.

But many chapters in this volume also document a spectrum of active and creative Indigenous responses to colonial rule, thereby demonstrating the limits of colonial and postcolonial domination, the vitality of Indigenous cultures, and the agency of individuals and communities. Stephanie Wood examines Nahuatl-language sources for insights into how people spoke of the war in all types of texts from both the early and later colonial periods, and finds little evidence that Nahuas thought of themselves as a conquered people. Julia Madajczak revisits a fascinating Nahuatl manuscript associated with the *Anales de Tlatelolco*, likely written in the late seventeenth century by Don Diego García de Mendoza Moctezuma, who drew on a vivid oral tradition to narrate how Cuauhtemoc was betrayed and unjustly executed by Cortés en route to Honduras. Madajczak skillfully unpacks the narrative's many symbolic cultural references and its complex mixture of fact and fable. María Castañeda de la Paz reminds us that Indigenous texts such as the *Anales de Tlatelolco*, like all sources, have their implicit biases and objectives. In fact, many Native writings mimic Spanish strategies in the viceregal period, when the king's rule and favor was paramount. Robert Haskett addresses a similar theme by analyzing local memories of the conquest preserved in pictorial and alphabetic records that highlight the heroic figure of Don Zacarías de Santiago, a noble who went with a Tlaxcalan delegation to visit King Philip II in 1584 and obtained a coat of arms and other privileges for himself and his *altepetl* (city-province). Many late colonial documents from the region go so far as to cast Don Zacarías in the impossible role of a conquistador who greeted Cortés in 1519. Like a skilled detective, Haskett sifts through a trove of discursive, difficult sources that represent collective responses to late colonial changes in land tenure, typical of the *título primordial* genre of colonial-era Indigenous writing. In fact Don Zacarías was not a conquistador and did not greet Cortés, but people from several nearby communities remembered or imagined him in such a role, in

part because it served their present interests. In other words, the encounter and war remained relevant historical reference points for many Indigenous pueblos in the eighteenth century. Of course, descendants of Spanish conquistadors also tried to benefit from claims of their ancestors' services to the crown. Vitus Huber considers the concerns and strategies of an ordinary if not obscure Spaniard who fought in Mexico and other parts of New Spain, and who sought to procure rewards from the crown in the rapid transitional period between *entradas* and settlement.

Despite the volume's provocative "beyond" title, many chapters do not stray too far from the meeting between Moteuczoma and Cortés and the war in Mexico Tenochtitlan. After all, these were momentous events. Miguel Pastrana Flores surveys a wide range of sources to scrutinize Moteuczoma's alleged submission to King Charles, the idea of a *translatio imperii* constructed by Cortés and advanced by nearly all Spanish accounts of the encounter. According to most Spanish narratives, Mexica rebels rejected the pact by revolting against their leader and the Spaniards, an act of treason that necessitated a "just war." Pastrana considers how the Mexica would have conceived of such an act of self-deposition, based on Nahua practices and institutions of governance. Erika Escutia explores what can be known about the forty *teteuctin*, or Nahua lords, Cortés brought with him to the court in Spain in 1528, and especially how these performatively displayed political subjects were represented and interpreted by European observers. Lori Boornazian Diel goes beyond the usual focus on Malintzin to consider the representation and roles of other Native women in narratives of the encounter and war: as slaves, as marriage alliance or "gifting" partners, and as battle participants and victims. Diel's discussion of Tecuichpotzin, one of Moteuczoma's daughters who was later named Doña Isabel, is especially interesting. Last but certainly not least, Patrick Hajovsky identifies a painting in the Museo de Américas in Madrid as a missing panel from a conquest *biombo* (screen-fold painting) that is now preserved in a private collection in Mexico. The panel depicts a familiar scene in many *biombos* and *enconchados* (paintings encrusted with mother-of-pearl) produced in Mexico in the late seventeenth century: Moteuczoma standing on his balcony, assaulted by Mexica rebels who reject his call for peace after war has broken out. Hajovsky's find is a significant contribution to the literature on history paintings of the conquest and visual representations of Moteuczoma.

John F. Schwaller deserves a good deal of credit for bringing this edition to fruition, along with coeditor Vitus Huber. I know that Schwaller organized and participated in several conference panels and meetings on the broadly defined and inclusive topic of the conquest, war, invasion, and so on. His concluding chapter makes clear the complexity and enduring significance of this history. I congratulate Fritz and Vitus and all the authors on their valuable contributions to an extensive, interdisciplinary literature.

Preface

VITUS HUBER AND JOHN F. SCHWALLER

From 2019 to 2021 the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the so-called *Conquista* of Mexico has once again raised public interest, provoked polemic debates, and stimulated scholarly discussion. We consider the time at the close of the intensified responsiveness as an appropriate moment to take stock and organize the various arguments. The fertilizing conversation especially in Mexico and Spain as well as among the specialists across the globe has been very inspiring and informative. The chapters of this volume not only originate from this discussion but are an effort to continue it as well. Most of them stem from a double panel held online at the triannual meeting of the Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos (AHILA) in Paris in August 2021. With this international and interdisciplinary book, we not only aim at reflecting upon the state of the art but even more so at mapping out cutting-edge approaches, materials, and questions. We are hoping to open—or at least point toward—some paths that we regard as fruitful for future scholarship on the subject.

We extend our gratitude to University Press of Colorado and the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies of the University at Albany for the acceptance to the IMS Monograph series, as well as to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. We would like to thank Rachael Levay, Walter Little, Allegra Martschenko, Dan Pratt, and Darrin Pratt for their support in the publishing process and Stanislaw Pawlowski and Héloïse Stritt for their help in proofreading the manuscript.

Furthermore, we are grateful to Kevin Terraciano for honoring this book with his foreword and to all the contributors for their cooperation.

We would like to dedicate this volume to Luis Fernando Granados Salinas (1968–2021). Our dear friend and colleague from the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa passed away unexpectedly. As this happened shortly before the conference of AHILA, we lack even a working paper and are unable to publish his planned contribution to this volume. Nevertheless, the book intends to honor Luis's work by uniting some of the most renowned experts in the studies of Nahua culture and of colonial Spanish America from Europe, Mexico, and the US.

The volume's international and interdisciplinary group seeks fresh insights from historical as well as philological, gender, and art historical perspectives. Moreover, the decades-old revisionism still generates new questions, and it is still necessary to continue dismantling sturdy narratives that distort both Mesoamerican and European history. Within the boundaries of a collective volume, we hence endeavor to revisit the historiography of the *Conquista* of Mexico and to suggest examples for new approaches that go beyond Cortés and Moteuczoma.

Beyond Cortés and Moteuczoma

Revisiting the Conquista of Mexico

VITUS HUBER

The events commonly known as the “Conquest of Mexico” still arouse great interest, even roughly half a millennium after they unfolded. The main reasons for this are twofold: on the one hand, these events have a world-historical significance and, on the other hand, they have constantly provoked controversies. Basically, since the beginning, the interpretation and depiction of these incidents have been strongly loaded with interests. Not only Indigenous people or Spaniards defended their interests, which were moreover often erroneously perceived as respectively homogenous. The field of actors and their points of view were ultimately much more disparate. After missionaries and clerics had challenged conquistadors’ accounts starting in the early sixteenth century, other European powers picked up the criticism against the Spanish Crown. Alongside further voices from women, Africans, merchants, settlers, and others, the wide range of sources mirrors the phenomenon’s polyphony.

For a long time in the 500 years of historiography, the more strident tones were given preferential consideration. Complexity was often reduced. This volume aims to take into account more subtle tones and contribute to a more detailed picture. By including neglected sources and aspects, this book expands on single facets of the events and their historiographies. Simultaneously, it encourages thorough reflections upon the methodological approaches by asking what implications the selection of empirical material and the framing of the subject have on the outcome and narrative of the inquiry. Furthermore, it examines the proper language to discuss

the events. The essays offer a variety of options: “conquest,” “invasion,” “encounter,” “war,” among others. The use of certain categories like “soldiers” or *hueste* had and continues to have a distortive impact on the evaluation of the object or subject they are describing. One should therefore reflect upon the question, to put it in the semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure’s terms, how the signifier influences the signified. Indeed, the choices made regarding topics, sources, time frame, and terminology heavily influence the results of the analysis.

Reassessing the semantics of key terms is definitely necessary. In many ways language has been instrumental in the construction of narratives; hence, using adequate terminology is essential. Admittedly, considering the different tongues and cultures as well as the complex situation of the moment under scrutiny, cultural translations and simplifications impose themselves. Telling the story of such a multifarious process is challenging. Nevertheless, language usage dictates the message, whether implicitly or explicitly. We should thus start by revisiting the term “conquest.”

Scholars have grappled with finding adequate expressions for the so-called *Conquista*. On the eve of the 500th anniversary of the voyage of Columbus in 1992, following the initiative of Mexico, most members of the Organization of American States declared in the 1980s to replace the terms of “discovery and conquest” with “encounter of cultures.” The goal was to underscore the agency of Indigenous people and to eliminate the heroic semantic of a lopsided European achievement.¹ It certainly encouraged the ongoing debate about the active role of Indigenous people. The shortcoming of the word “encounter,” though, lies in its neutrality. It appears somewhat innocuous. Reacting to criticism against Spanish conquistadors’ and settlers’ brutal treatment of the local population in the Americas, in 1573 Philip II had already commissioned that the clearly euphemistic term of “pacification” replaces the word “conquest.”² “Pacification” had already circulated before his decree. On the other hand, “conquest” never disappeared entirely. In the nineteenth and twentieth century the latter was applied again with pride, especially by nationalist Spanish historiography.³

Depending on the sources one uses or the group of actors one discusses, scholars prefer to call the *Conquista* of Mexico a “war” or an “invasion.”⁴ The latter is certainly a valid description. Nonetheless, it is not necessarily a more precise term than “conquest.” It mainly marks a different *perspective*, the one from the people and places attacked instead of that from the attackers’ point of view. Consequently, it makes sense to use the term “invasion” in those situations when the narrative’s focus lies on the attacked locals and their homelands. Additionally, the expression judges the action as something negative just in the same manner as “conquest” implied a positive meaning until the late twentieth century. In fact, since the latter is the established term in historiography and common public perception, the

demonstrative distancing from it makes the former more judgmental. Finally, in contrast to “conquest,” an invasion does not automatically end in a lasting occupation of the territory (or parts thereof) invaded. We therefore think, depending on the perspective, “invasion” is an apt description but only for specific phases of the process.

A similar verdict applies to the term “war.” The renowned historian Matthew Restall has started to promote the use of “Spanish-Aztec War (1519–21)” and, regarding the larger conflict, “Spanish-Mesoamerican War (1517–50).”⁵ The problem here is that—certainly against the inventor’s idea—the adjectives exclude the Tlaxcaltecah and other Indigenous allies to the Spaniards. This seems incompatible with the last approximately five decades of scholarship that has worked on giving the “subaltern” a voice.⁶ After we have emphasized their decisive contributions, we should eschew falling behind this level of differentiation again. Furthermore, the term “war” hides the fact of the succeeding Spanish colonial presence for roughly 300 years. Without claiming that this presence meant area-wide colonial rule, it was clearly more than a common “war.”⁷

Our suggestion is to use the most precise terms at hand for individual events within the bigger process (like invasion/attack, conquest, battle, siege, looting of an individual place, etc.) and call the larger phenomenon *Conquista* in italics, indicating that one refers to the complex historic encounters of the Old and New World. This way, even in Italian and the Iberian tongues the italics and capitalized spelling—instead of aggrandizing the word—mark the distance from a naive use of the term. In all other languages, it furthermore stands out through the application of a foreign word. This solution is far from perfect, since the expression translates as the problematic “conquest,” yet makes clear that it represents a controversial issue. It furthermore stands out from other famous conquests, for example, the one of Constantinople by the Ottomans or the Mughal conquest of Gujarat. This holds true even in Spanish, as the conquests of Seville or Granada and so forth are always mentioned specifying the place. Thus, in the American context too, adding the toponyms helps to distinguish what part of the larger process of the *Conquista* one is referring to: for example, the “*Conquista* of Guatemala.” No additional geographic specification means simply the “*Conquista* of the Americas” in general. For ease of finding in digital research and in library catalogues, we have privileged the traditional monikers “Montezuma” and “Conquest” in the title of this volume. Notwithstanding this, the authors strive to be as precise as possible in the chapters, applying the Andrews-Campbell-Karttunen’s orthographic conventions regarding “Moteuczoma,”⁸ and the italicized *Conquista*, as suggested by us. However, a certain terminological heterogeneity remains throughout the volume, which perfectly represents the contested nature of the significance of this history and the often

fragmentary documentation underlying it. Whether or not one accepts our terminology, the next question concerns the meanings of the matter described by it.

Without a doubt, *Conquista* stands for a complex phenomenon. It included not only a myriad of different institutions and actors with a varying degree of agency but also a whole range of interactions that ran from peaceful conversations and gift-giving to cultural, commercial, and biological exchange—however coercive—and political or military maneuvers. All of this unfolded under the influence of the environment (topographic, climatic, and meteorological conditions) as well as further contingent factors like the disastrously lethal effect of European diseases such as smallpox on the local population.⁹ Politically, its result led—albeit not linearly—to Spanish colonial rule in a vast yet porous area of the Americas. This rule was fragile, inconsistent, and flexible indeed, but this “domination without dominance,” as Gonzalo Lamana described the early colonial situation in Peru, was arguably an important factor for its undeniable longevity.¹⁰ Indeed, the effects of colonial rule differed from place to place and depended on social status. They could impact the daily life of a lord’s son educated in the Franciscan Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco more profoundly than the one of a commoner (*macehualli*) working in the cultivation of beans, to cite two examples. This variety of experiences makes it harder to define the most accurate terminology.¹¹

The discourses of the *Conquista*, in general, and of the *Conquista* of Mexico, in particular, have shaped these events and our perceptions of them since day one. For the *Conquista* of Mexico, Cortés with his letters to King Charles created a seemingly compelling story, which for roughly five centuries has been eagerly followed and retold.¹² His letters give the reader the rare opportunity to follow Cortés and his men and experience the whole “adventure” as it allegedly unfolds. By inviting the reader to be his witness, Cortés “made history” in both senses of the term: with his deeds and with the narrative he constructed around them, however accurate or aberrant it might be. In any case, it is a thrilling plot indeed, including the constituents you find in many intriguing novels and films today: the protagonist (and allies) go(es) to a foreign land for a noble cause, where they get into great danger and an almost hopeless situation, but instead of surrendering, they overcome the seemingly unsurpassable obstacle, master the challenge, or defeat the overpowering enemy in the end. No wonder many scholars, novelists, screenwriters, and others essentially followed this—or Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s similar—storyline. Yet, repeating the same tale does not make that tale any truer. Undeniably, it makes it harder to revisit.

The methodological choices of perspective, of focus, and of framing have great implications for the analysis and depend greatly on the selection of sources. Deconstructing various myths about the *Conquista*, Restall—and lately also Nancy

van Deusen—cited the Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who had pointed out that the scarcity of sources from marginalized groups is in fact one of the main reasons we regard their members as marginalized in the first place. Their past and their history have been “silenced.”¹³ With substantial efforts, scholars since Miguel León-Portilla in Mexico and James Lockhart in the US have studied Nahuatl, Maya, Quechua, and other Indigenous languages using written records in the Native languages along with their pictorial codices and their material culture of quipus and further artifacts. The access to more sources has broadened our knowledge about pre-Hispanic cultures, and the linguistic approaches have informed generations of scholars.¹⁴ At the advent of the twenty-first century, Restall has renewed Lockhart’s plea for a new philology, an approach that has been instructive for the former’s conceptualization of the New Conquest History. It aims at deconstructing Eurocentrically glorifying narratives and at shedding light on actors who were neglected until recently: namely, women, Indigenous people, Africans, enslaved people, and others.¹⁵ This welcome approach has decisively contributed to a more complete picture of that history.

A challenge that remains is the fact that all surviving textual Indigenous sources treating the *Conquista* were produced *after* the events—most of them even decades later—and hence in the colonial setting. One must thus read them with this new power constellation in mind, which certainly influenced their narratives too.¹⁶ Several of the chapters in this volume touch on this methodological challenge. Meanwhile, contextual rhetoric and hidden agendas have also been detected in Spanish sources, most famously in works like Cortés’s epistolary reports to King Charles or in Bernal Díaz del Castillo’s so-called *True History* (*Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*), published posthumously in 1632.¹⁷

Regardless of the empirical basis on which scholars ground their work and the vagaries they imply, it is imperative to reflect upon the weight one attributes to a topic or to a specific voice. The *Conquista* is too complex to simply depict in black-and-white contrasts. Take for instance the balance between coercive and peaceful encounters. Focusing one’s story on the violent battles does not necessarily paint the “legend” clearly black or white. On the one hand, the carnage could present the Spanish as reckless villains. On the other, it could also mark the logic of conquest, crediting the latter with political rights and military glory. If, on the contrary, one highlights the many peaceful encounters in which the parties came to agreements without fighting each other ferociously, it could be regarded as an attempt to trivialize the brutality and bloodshed of the conflict. Equally biased are perspectives that praise the pre-Hispanic cultures to an extent that they seemingly forget or at least downplay the gory rituals of human sacrifice. Even the nature of sacrifice can be presented in opposing manners. Some argue that it was deeply rooted in the religious

life of the culture, an extreme form of public execution. Traditionally, it was seen as a sufficient justification for European colonization.

Whatever the author's point of view, it is a narrow path, and one always runs the risk of overemphasizing one side or another. When recognizing the importance of the Nahua and other Indigenous participants who cooperated with the Spanish, one lessens to some degree the latter of the harm caused by the Spanish arrival. Even though one intended to deconstruct the myth of the small, brave group of Spaniards allegedly conquering a whole empire on their own, one ends up blaming local fractions to have grievously enabled the European invaders to colonize parts of the Americas. Similarly, when further reducing the aggrandizing plot of the small cohort against an entire empire by rendering the Triple Alliance as a mere empire of tribute, one automatically questions the greatness of that alliance or even the pre-Hispanic cultural achievements in general. These are but a few examples of how delicate it is to pursue a balanced stand. Every small shift away from common opinions on a certain issue can be interpreted as denying the Mexica's or Tlaxcalteca's and others Indigenous groups' agencies or the Spaniards' responsibility when in fact one tries to adjust to the latest scholarship or one's own findings. Then again, not adapting is also not an option, as this would perpetuate outdated views.¹⁸

The selected time frame is another factor that largely dictates the chronology and narrative of a story. Comparable to graphic illustrations of mathematical diagrams, for example, for stocks, the graph might dramatically point up or down, depending on the section of the chart chosen. When one adjusts the parameter of either the x - or y -axis, sharp peaks can flatten out or, vice versa, relatively low horizontal waves gain in verticality. Even though far from the illustrated linearity of mathematical charts, historical narratives are also strongly shaped by the selected period and by the analytical *Flughöhe*, the cruising altitude of the analysis. From a distance, the *Conquista* might seem like a bilateral confrontation between the so-called Old and New World. Zooming in on the scene, one finds that the multifaceted conflicts and interactions become more visible. Clearly, these interactions could take place between Spaniards and Nahuas, and others, but also within different representatives of Indigenous groups or within European ones. While a narrow understanding of the *Conquista* of Mexico refers to the time of Spanish arrival at the Totonac coast in spring 1519 until the fall of Tenochtitlan on August 13, 1521, the conquering phase of Central Mexico was far from being over by then. As Julia Madajczak's chapter shows, four years later, in 1525, when Cortés had Cuauhtemoc executed in Itzamkanac in today's Guatemala, the Spaniards and their Nahua allies were still far from having full control over the region.

Defining a time frame comes with another choice to make, that of the *geographic* scope. For the *Conquista* with its "encounter" of two worlds—admittingly neither

of them was a monolithic one—the difficulty of storytelling lies in the (at least) two distinct beginnings. If one starts with the Mexicah or Tlaxcaltecah, for example, and introduces the Spaniards only at their arrival, the scholar misses an important part of why and how the Spanish had decided to set sail from the Iberian Peninsula in the first place. Yet again, starting with the Europeans, one would easily earn criticism for a Eurocentric framing, as it might foster a glorifying narrative. While the classic Eurocentric narrative maintains its long tradition, new literature often includes both perspectives by jumping back and forth, weaving the multiple threads to a more integrative storyline.¹⁹

The commemoration of 500 years since the fall of Tenochtitlan has given rise to a number of related publications—especially in Mexico and Spain.²⁰ On the one hand, some offer edited sources or focus on principal figures and events, spanning genres from new editions of biographies or reevaluations of Hernán Cortés to updated narratives of the *Conquista* of Mexico.²¹ On the other hand, the approaches from Indigenous perspectives have strongly increased, even though their main focus seldom lies on the *Conquista* itself but rather on topics from the time before or after.²²

Arguably more important, scholarship on the *Conquista* had already advanced before the attention had been raised, stimulated by the quincentenary. The edition of the so-called *Petición al cabildo*, the earliest Spanish document from today's Mexican lands, contains the rubrics and signatures of 346 participants of Cortés's expedition, eighty of whom had been unknown beforehand.²³ Furthermore, new research has analyzed the Spanish Crown's politics of European enslavement and also the related strategies and practices both in the Caribbean and in New Spain.²⁴ Finally, the importance of booty was highlighted, describing the dynamics of the *Conquista* as a "spiral of spoils" that not only emerged from pre-Hispanic and Iberian rewarding practices but moreover played a decisive role in the establishment of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas.²⁵ Hence, the latest studies on both sides of the Atlantic have not only provided new insights but also offered new narratives of the whole process. This dynamic scholarship has also informed the discussion presented in this volume.

With the aspiration to continue to revisit the *Conquista*, the book is structured in four parts, including (1) Semantics and Effects, (2) Narratives and Memories, (3) Power and Negotiations, and (4) Representations and Iconic Figures. The first part illustrates how the words people use(d) to speak of the *Conquista* of Mexico matter(ed) in these people's own historical contexts: Stephanie Wood scrutinizes the term "conquest" in colonial Nahuatl manuscripts as well as additional key vocabulary regarding warfare. Wood dismisses the term "conquest" as an imported one that would inadequately undermine the Nahuas' perspective on their histories, rendering them rather histories of victimhood than of survivance.

Vitus Huber assesses the tipping point when war turns into colonialism and when conquistadors become settlers. Huber argues that the characteristics of the specific warfare—including the practices of alliances—were foundational for the colonial rule. Justyna Olko reflects on the aftermath of the *Conquista* in Indigenous communities of the twenty-first century. Olko reveals how histories and its forms of commemoration shape social reality and vice versa.

The second part deals with two different concepts of Nahua history telling. Julia Madajczak examines three narrative tropes of Cuauhtemoc's death in Nahuatl sources that also appear in the late colonial *Anales de Tlatelolco*. Even though these motives were of a symbolic rather than a historical nature, they still helped Nahuas conceptualize their ruler and the passage to the Otherworld. Robert Haskett dissects the layers of Nahua historical memories that had led Don Zacarías de Santiago, a man from the Tlaxcalteca elite, to the erroneous honor of being celebrated in late colonial times as a Nahua conquistador allied with Hernando Cortés. María Castañeda de la Paz demonstrates how a number of Spanish and especially Nahua authors constructed colonial narratives. With a focus on the events in the Hibueras that led to the hanging of the lords of the Triple Alliance, she describes—in a complementary way to Madajczak—the modes of copying, altering, and composing the historical accounts according to the authors' interests.

The third part consists of two chapters about the question of power and how it can be gained, maintained, or lost within both the Nahua and colonial settings. Miguel Pastrana Flores analyzes the critical moment of the surrender of power from Moteuczoma to the Spanish Crown. He argues that the way in which the transfer of power was presented in Spanish sources, namely, as a submission to the Crown, was incompatible with Nahua political concepts. Erika Escutia focuses on the intercultural readings of the forty Nahua dignitaries' bodies that accompanied Cortés on his journey to Europe in 1528. Escutia highlights that these Nahuas did not merely serve Cortés to consolidate his power by exhibiting his success. Rather, the Nahua delegation benefitted from the trip to negotiate and enhance their own social and political position in their homelands. Escutia's emphasis on the body and its representation points at the approaches chosen for both of the following chapters.

The fourth part includes two chapters on iconic figures and issues of representation. Lori Boornazian Diel invites the reader to look beyond the famous Marina or Malinche for additional women in Nahuatl accounts of the *Conquista* of Mexico. According to Diel, women played different roles in the encounters with the Spaniards that corresponded to their social status and ethnicity. Patrick Hajovsky studies a little-known portrait of Moteuczoma and his physical features painted on a folding screen (*biombo*). This extraordinary depiction of the great speaker (*huey tlahtoani*) illustrates him in a rather passive and tragic posture, evoking associations

with the Noble Savage. As this chapter, as well as that of Pastrana Flores, demonstrate, the title of our book does not imply that we erase the major figures from the picture but that we push beyond their usual images.

In an epilogue, John F. Schwaller sums up by commenting on each chapter of this volume and on the vagaries of the term “Conquest.”

* * *

Regarding orthography of terms in Nahuatl, we have followed the Andrews-Campbell-Karttunen standards. Different spellings of terms like Mexicah, Tlaxcaltecah, or Tlatelolcah versus Mexica, Tlaxcalteca, or Tlatelolca abide to Nahuatl grammar: The final *-h* is used for nouns in plural, for example, Tlatelolcah stands for the people from Tlatelolco; without the final *-h*, it is used as an adjective, for example, a Tlatelolca lord. Furthermore, the ending on *-tl* stands for a noun in singular, for example, Mexicatl, Tlaxcaltecatl, Tlatelolcatl. Finally, as an exception, we use the common English spelling “Nahuas,” for the noun in plural. When the final *-s* is missing, it indicates an adjective use, for example, “Nahua culture.” The adjective “Nahuatl” is only applied when referring to the language, like a “Nahuatl text,” not the culture or ethnic group more generally, for example, “Nahua world.”

NOTES

1. Horst Pietschmann, “Bilanz der Diskussionen und Initiativen zum ‘Quinto Centenario’ in Spanien und Amerika,” in *Fünfhundert Jahre Evangelisierung Lateinamerikas: Geschichte—Kontroversen—Perspektiven*, ed. Michael Sievernich and Dieter Spelthahn (Frankfurt: Vervuert, 1995), 162–71, here 162–63.

2. Archivo General de las Indias (henceforth AGI), Indiferente, 427, leg. 29, fols. 67r–93v, Ordenanzas de descubrimiento y población, July 13, 1573.

3. See, e.g., Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *La ciencia española: Polémicas, proyectos y bibliografía*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Imprenta Central a Cargo de Victor Saiz, 1887–89).

4. See, e.g., Guillermo López Varela et al., eds., *A más de 500 años de la invasión de Mesoamérica: Memorias y resistencias de esperanza ngigua, antropología e historia* (Puebla: El Errante, 2021). For “war,” see the following note.

5. Matthew Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History* (New York: ECCO, 2019), 40. On the controversial use of the term “Aztec,” see Schwaller in this volume.

6. Restall himself must be credited for his remarkable achievements in advancing research of many marginalized participants of the *Conquista*. See, e.g., Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); pathbreaking on the Indigenous’ participation was Laura Matthew

and Michel Oudijk, eds., *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

7. On the colonial transformations see, e.g., Serge Gruzinski, *La colonisation de l'imaginaire: Sociétés indigènes et occidentalisation dans le Mexique espagnol XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988); Felix Hinz, “Hispanisierung” in *Neu-Spanien 1519–1568: Transformation kollektiver Identitäten von Mexica, Tlaxkalteken und Spaniern*, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 2005); Bradley Benton, *The Lords of Tetzaco: The Transformation of Indigenous Rule in Postconquest Central Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

8. For these conventions that are commonly abbreviated as ACK after the authors who have contributed to them, see J. Richard Andrews, *Introduction to Classical Nahuatl*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Joe Campbell and Frances Karttunen, *Foundation Course in Nahuatl Grammar* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1989); and Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

9. For the certainly difficult calculations regarding the demographic catastrophe, see Esteban Mira Caballos, *El indio antillano: Repartimiento, encomienda y esclavitud (1492–1542)* (Seville: Muñoz Moya, 1997), 33–47; and Vågene Åshild et al., “Salmonella Enterica Genomes from Victims of a Major Sixteenth-Century Epidemic in Mexico,” in *Nature Ecology and Evolution* 2 (2018): 520–28.

10. Gonzalo Lamana, *Domination without Dominance: Inca-Spanish Encounters in Early Colonial Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), esp. 125–25. On the functionality of the “inefficiency” of the Spanish empire, see Arndt Brendecke, *The Empirical Empire: Spanish Colonial Rule and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), esp. 235–78.

11. The literature on early colonial life is vast; see, for e.g., James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan: Nahuatl-Spanish Relations in Central Mexico, 1519–1650* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Stephanie Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahuatl Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Benjamin Johnson, *Pueblos within Pueblos: Tlaxilacalli Communities in Acolhuacan, Mexico, ca. 1272–1692* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017); Lidia Gómez García, *Los anales nahuas de la ciudad de Puebla de los Ángeles, siglos XVI y XVIII: Escribiendo historia indígena como aliados del rey católico de España* (Puebla: Ayuntamiento de Puebla–Gerencia del Centro Histórico, UNESCO, Universidad de Rutgers, 2018).

12. Cf. Hernán Cortés, *Cartas de relación*, ed. Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba (Madrid: Historia 16, 1985); Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia general de las Indias: “Hispania victrix” cuya segunda parte corresponde a la conquista de Méjico*, ed. Pilar Guibelalde, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Iberia, 1966); William Prescott, *The Conquest of Mexico: With a Preliminary View of Ancient Mexican Civilization, and the Life of the Conqueror Hernando*

Cortés, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1843); Hugh Thomas, *The Conquest of Mexico* (London: Hutchinson, 1993).

13. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995); Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 16; Nancy van Deusen, "Indigenous Slavery's Archive in Seventeenth-Century Chile," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (2021): 2–4.

14. Out of their vast opus see, e.g., James Lockhart, Arthur Anderson, and Frances Berdan, eds., *Beyond the Codices: The Nahuatl View of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); or Miguel León-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Boston: Beacon, extended and rev. ed. 2009). For one of the latest books on Nahuatl hieroglyphs, see Gordon Whittaker, *Deciphering Aztec Hieroglyphs: A Guide to Nahuatl Writing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021); or on Nahuatl loans, see Justyna Olko et al., eds., *Loans in Colonial and Modern Nahuatl: A Contextual Dictionary* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020). Stephanie Wood has led the creation of an online Nahuatl dictionary and Laura Matthew that of a repository for Nahuatl-related colonial documents. Accessed October 23, 2023. <https://nahuatl.uoregon.edu>; and <http://nahuatl-nawat.org>.

15. Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003): 113–34.

16. Nancy van Deusen has artfully described the Indigenous people's adaption of rhetoric in their petitions to the Spanish Crown. See Nancy van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). See also the contributions in this volume by Castañeda de la Paz, Haskett, or Huber.

17. Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), esp. 10–11; Cortés, *Cartas de relación*; Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, with an introduction by Felipe Castro Gutiérrez (Mexico City: Editores Mexicanos Unidos, 2005; orig. pub. 1632).

18. I have similarly articulated the arguments of this paragraph in Vitus Huber, *Die Konquistadoren: Cortés, Pizarro und die Eroberung Amerikas* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019), 115–16.

19. For the latter style, see lately David Carballo, *Collision of Worlds: A Deep History of the Fall of Aztec Mexico and the Forging of New Spain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); for the former, Fernando Cervantes, *Conquistadores: A New History* (London: Penguin Books, 2020).

20. Cf., e.g., two different approaches in the special issues of a Spanish and a Mexican journal: "Hernán Cortés: V Centenario de su llegada a México," *Revista de historia militar* 64, no. 2 (2020); versus "Nuevas miradas sobre la Conquista española: Sucesos, significados, efectos y controversias," *Antropología: Revista interdisciplinaria del INAH* 8 (2021). Cf., furthermore, the fifteen short biographies in the series 1521: *Un atado de vidas* and other

numerous publications in relation to the *Conquista* of Mexico in the *Catálogo México 500: México 200* from the UNAM. accessed October 23, 2023, <https://catalogomexico500.unam.mx>; e.g., Alejandro Salafrañca Vázquez, ed., *1521: La conquista de México en el arte* (Mexico City: Publicaciones & Fomento, 2020); or Ana Carolina Ibarra and Pedro Maraño Hernández, eds., *1519: Los europeos en Mesoamérica*, Colección México 500 (Mexico City: Publicaciones & Fomento, 2021).

21. For a rather hagiographic approach on Cortés, see José Ángel Carretero Calero and Tomás García Muñoz, eds., *Hernán Cortés en el siglo XXI: V centenario de la llegada de Corté* (Medellín: Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste, 2020); for a more critical one, see Felix Hinz and Xavier López Medellín, eds., *Hernán Cortés revisado: 500 años de conquista española de México (1521–2021)* (Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2021). A reedition of his biography from 2010 provides Esteban Mira Caballos, *Hernán Cortés: Una biografía para el siglo XXI* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2021). See, furthermore, Martín Ríos Saloma, ed., *Conquistas: Actores, escenarios y reflexiones: Nueva España (1519–1550)* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2021); or Stefan Rinke, *Conquistadores and Aztecs: A History of the Fall of Tenochtitlan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

22. Some of the latest exceptions here are Camilla Townsend, who discusses the *Conquista* thoroughly: Camilla Townsend, *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); and Obregón Cervera and Antonio Marco, “Conquistadores indígenas: Planteamientos tácticos y armamento durante la conquista de México,” special issue: “Hernán Cortés: V Centenario de su llegada a México,” *Revista de historia militar* 64, no. 2 (2020): 89–114. For a focus on multiple aspects, see Frances Berdan and Michael Smith, *Everyday Life in the Aztec World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); and Frances Berdan, *The Aztecs: Lost Civilizations* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021).

23. It was first edited in 2005 and almost simultaneously again in 2013 and 2014: Rodrigo Martínez Baracs, “El primer documento conocido escrito en México por los conquistadores españoles,” *Cartones y cosas vistas* 60 (2005): 113–23; María del Carmen Martínez Martínez, *Veracruz 1519: Los hombres de Cortés* (León: Universidad de León, 2013); John F. Schwaller and Helen Nader, *The First Letter from New Spain: The Lost Petition of Cortés and His Company, June 20, 1519* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

24. Jonas Schirrmacher, *Die politik der sklaverei: Praxis und konflikt in Kastilien und Spanisch-Amerika im 16. jahrhundert* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018); Erin Stone, *Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

25. Vitus Huber, *Beute und Conquista: Die politische ökonomie der eroberung Neuspaniens* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2018); Vitus Huber, “The Spiral of Spoils: Booty, Distributive Justice, and Empire Formation in the *Conquista* of Mexico,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 31, no. 1 (2022), 133–57.