

deeper social, political, religious, ideological, and even economic processes that shaped the Aztec empire, he has indeed revealed the surprising degree to which “the rituals manifest the vestiges of bygone days” (196-97).

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### CONQUEST OF MEXICO

*Conquistadoren und Azteken: Cortés und die Eroberung Mexikos.* By Stefan Rinke. Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019. Pp. 399. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$31.75 cloth. doi:10.1017/tam.2020.74

The book market in German-speaking countries considers practical publishing introductions to South American topics, at least those aimed at a broader readership, only during commemorative years such as the fifth centenary of the discovery of America or the bicentenary of the independent republics. In 2019, the fifth centenary of the beginning of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire led to various publications tied to an ethnographic exhibition in the Lindenmuseum (Stuttgart) and a concise and more general introduction to the phenomenon of the Spanish conquest (Vitus Huber, *Die Konquistadoren. Cortés, Pizarro und die Eroberung Amerikas*; Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019). Rinke’s introduction is more detailed and narrative, focusing on the military conquest and cultural changes in Mesoamerica around 1520.

The book is highly recommended for two target audiences. Its 11 readily comprehensible chapters will be of considerable use to the general reader because they include the social basis and results of the conquest, both in Estremadura and Central America. Scholars and students seeking to acquire expertise in a new field will find an invaluable starting point in the precise endnotes and the excellent remarks on research traditions and the different types of sources (17-30), with a slight underrepresentation of French research into the subject.

The central part of the book (57-294) weaves together different narrative threads. The main thread is the biography of Hernán Cortés and the immediate historical context, starting with the expeditions of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba and Juan de Grijalva in 1517-18. Using one of the methodological innovations of the biographical turn, Rinke avoids the “coherent feel” (16) that the (auto)biographical writings of the early modern era may provoke. He summarizes the key results of historiographical and ethnographical research concerning Mesoamerica by stating that the indigenous world was not homogeneous at all (161), and that the conquest was a “complex process of pacts and deals” (21) between conquerors and indigenous allies and enemies. The same goes for Spaniards themselves, whose activities were anything but unitary, either in the

Caribbean or in the Iberian Peninsula. For example, not all of the Spanish authorities supported Cortés. The reader learns that Cortés entered into open dispute with Diego Velázquez, governor of Cuba, and Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, bishop of Burgos and president of the Council of the Indies in Spain and one of the most powerful critics of Cortés.

Rinke is also aware of the current debates in the history of communication. Cortés's letters to Emperor Charles V are not used simply as a primary source; going beyond that use, the chronology includes a thorough explanation of all the measures taken by the conqueror, detailing when and why each of these were carried out (219, 274). In his reflections, Rinke also identifies the decisive role that vast geographical distances played in the differences in knowledge caused by a lack of information (62, 117, 133) and the slow decision-making on the part of the king of Spain (133). Another aspect of Rinke's exploration of communication processes is a focus on the important work of indigenous interpreters, especially the famous Malinche, but also many who are nameless (63, 68, 75-78, 118, 163, 176, 179).

The guiding principle of Rinke's heuristics is Nelson Goodman's concept of different "ways of worldmaking" (17, 331). His use of this theoretical framework is most evident in the analysis of contradictory sources. In many such cases, Rinke does not gloss over these contradictions in silence; instead, he points out the differences and tries to explain them (118, 140, 187-89, 203, 206, 210, 222, 248-51). By including methodological debates, recent research problems, and a broad range of Spanish primary sources, Rinke has created a highly recommendable introduction for students and scholars as well as a broader public.

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## DEVOTIONAL LANDSCAPE OF MEXICO CITY

*Las capillas del Vía Crucis de la Ciudad de México: arte, patrocinio y sacralización del espacio.*

By Alena Robin. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2014.

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Like all human environments, city spaces are never static but change over time. Shifting tastes and needs, the growth or decline of populations, natural and man-made disasters—all can effect transformations upon urban environments. In effect, a city is a constantly changing terrain, a palimpsest upon which remnants of older incarnations may sometimes be visible, or exist only in memory, or show themselves only through the historian's patient labors. In this book, Alena Robin recovers from the archives part