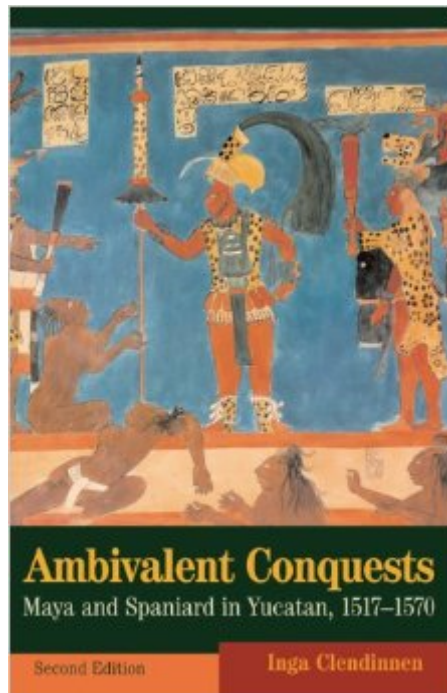


The book was found

Ambivalent Conquests: Maya And Spaniard In Yucatan, 1517-1570 (Cambridge Latin American Studies)



Synopsis

This is both a specific study of conversion in a corner of the Spanish Empire, and a work with implications for the understanding of European domination and native resistance throughout the colonial world. Dr Clendinnen explores the intensifying conflict between competing and increasingly divergent Spanish visions of Yucatan and its destructive outcomes. She seeks to penetrate the ways of thinking and feeling of the Mayan Indians in a detailed reconstruction of their assessment of the intruders.

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Customer Reviews

Overall, Inga Clendinnen's book serves as a vivid illustration of history. The images from the text stick to memory, and specific events and people (Diego de Landa, Nachi Cocom, Francisco Hernandez, and Fray Francisco de Toral) from almost five hundred years ago, come alive. The book is divided in two parts: the Spaniards and Indians, where what happened in Yucatan between

1517 and 1570 is examined from two different perspectives. It almost seems like there are two books within a book, as there are two beginnings and two epilogues, yet the connection between the two parts is never lost. The structure of the book is not only interesting, but also appropriate to the message the author seeks to convey: it illustrates the idea of "confusion of tongues", the fact that the perceptions of the Maya and the Spaniard were almost irreconcilably different. The book is also thoroughly researched, employing both primary and secondary sources. I enjoyed Clendinnen's discussions of the books of Chilam Bilam, of Landa's *Relacion de Las Cosas de Yucatan*, and of the confessions that Landa extracted from the Indians in 1562. I also appreciated the fact that where information is unavailable, and deduction from what is known goes a little far, the author is not afraid to acknowledge it. I should also mention that the author makes an implicit assumption that the reader is Christian, and has a good understanding of Christian faith and practices. When explaining Mayan human sacrifice, for example, Clendinnen writes that "we have somehow to detach ourselves from our Christian-drenched notions of sacrifice..."

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