

3-28-2018

Book Review Essay: The Mature Phase: Four Generations of Scholarship on Colonial Mesoamerica and New Spain

Laura E. Matthew

Marquette University, laura.matthew@marquette.edu

Published version. *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (March 28, 2018): 152–158. [DOI](#).
© 2018 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

The Mature Phase: Four Generations of Scholarship on Colonial Mesoamerica and New Spain

Laura E. Matthew

Marquette University, US

laura.matthew@marquette.edu

This essay reviews the following works:

Native Wills from the Colonial Americas: Dead Giveaways in a New World. Edited by Mark Christensen and Jonathan Truitt. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016. Pp. vii + 276. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781607814160.

Strange Lands and Different Peoples: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala. By W. George Lovell, Christopher H. Lutz, with Wendy Kramer and William R. Swezey. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 339. \$34.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780806143903.

Indians and the Political Economy of Colonial Central America, 1670–1810. By Robert W. Patch. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 284. \$36.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780806144009.

The Mixtecs of Oaxaca: Ancient Times to the Present. By Ronald Spores and Andrew K. Balkansky. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 328. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780806143811.

Emotions and Daily Life in Colonial Mexico. Edited by Javier Villa-Flores and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. Pp. ix + 257. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780826354624.

Colonial Latin American history in the United States and Canada has long been centered on Mexico and Mesoamerica, from the nineteenth-century adventures of William Prescott and John Lloyd Stephens, to turn-of-the-century academic lineages established by Herbert Bolton and France Vinton Scholes, to pioneering women kept on the outskirts of the academy like Eleanor B. Adams. It is also deeply indebted to Mexican scholarship by the likes of Angel María Garibay K., Alfonso Caso, and Josefina Muriel, and to Mesoamericanist anthropologists, archaeologists, and art historians like Alfred Kidder, Maud Oakes, George Kubler, and Tatiana Proskouriakoff. At mid-twentieth century, researchers trained in these newly established traditions included Charles Gibson, Eric Wolf, Oscar Lewis, Michael Coe, and Woodrow Borah publishing in the 1950s and 1960s, joined in the 1970s and 1980s by scholars such as Richard Greenleaf, Nancy Farriss, and James Lockhart in the United States, and Miguel León Portilla and Luís Reyes García in Mexico. Latin American historical studies in the United States and Canada have continued to grow and increasingly to direct attention toward other regions of the Western Hemisphere. Still, colonial-era Mexican and Mesoamerican history attracts healthy numbers of PhD students north of the Rio Grande each year, and more students and scholars from Canada, the United States, Mexico, and Central America are crossing borders in all directions for collaboration, conferences, and employment.

The five books reviewed here provide an intergenerational sampling of the people, approaches, and collective conversation that have resulted over the past forty years. All are centered on a temporal geography variably defined as colonial Mesoamerica, colonial Mexico, or imperial or New Spain. The ethnohistorical combination of anthropology, archaeology, and history for the study of indigenous Mesoamerica has deepened and continues to yield new insights. Increased attention paid by U.S. historians to Mesoamerican

languages is reflected in a third generation of *nahuatlato*s and has gone well beyond central Mexico. Although not as apparent in the books reviewed here, art historians in the United States have also played an important role in this conversation. An unintended consequence of the flourishing of Mesoamerican studies since the 1990s, perhaps, has been an increasing bifurcation in the United States between scholarship that focuses on indigeneity and scholarship that may include Native Americans, but as part of colonial society more broadly understood. The final book under review here, which brings the history of emotions to bear on colonial Mexico, is an example of the latter.

One of the hallmarks of U.S. and Canadian scholarship on Mesoamerica has been its interdisciplinarity. *The Mixtecs of Oaxaca* exemplifies this trend. In it, Ronald Spores and Andrew Balkansky synthesize three thousand years of history and seventy years of combined research. Pre- and post-Spanish conquest sections of the book roughly correlate to each author's disciplinary and period specialization (archaeology for Balkansky, ethnohistory for Spores). Together, they argue strongly for viewing the Mixteca—Alta, Baja, and Costa—as a distinct culture area separate not only from the Maya and central Mexican regions but also, albeit less dramatically, from the Zapotec Isthmus and the Valley of Oaxaca. Mixtec urbanization in the Formative period (ca. 2000 BCE to 150 CE) was a “fundamentally autochthonous” process (53–56) that established an enduring tendency toward densely populated, territorially small, relatively equal polities with links to rural agriculturalists. Although these early cities declined and were replaced by new settlements in the Classic period (c. 200–600 CE), the basic pattern persisted. “In the Mixtecas there was no primary center like Monte Albán or Teotihuacan. Instead, there were dozens of ‘mini-Monte Albáns’” (75) in competition and sometimes warfare with one another, which map closely onto later Postclassic and colonial-era sites. These same deep historical patterns are apparent, the authors argue, in the region's response to Mexica and Nahua-European militarism; in the consolidation of the colonial-era *cacicazgo* (which gave an unusually prominent role to women in leadership positions, a pattern not even clear for the neighboring Zapotecs); and in community identities that were “hispanized but not homogenized” under both colonial and national regimes (154). A fine analysis of the regional market system at the end of the nineteenth century in Chapter 7 makes one wish for comparable studies of the transformative postrevolutionary period, which Spores and Balkansky briefly survey but consider lacking (224–225). The volume ends with a thoughtful consideration of the forces that have enabled regional pan-Mixtec identities to emerge despite continued tendencies toward micropatriotism, in Mexico and also in the ethnically and racially self-conscious United States.

Spores and Balkansky's “convergent methodology” has been the cornerstone of ethnohistory in the region since the 1960s in the United States, most prominently within anthropology (for instance, in work by Judith Zeitlin and David Tavárez) but also for historians like John Chance, Kevin Terraciano, and Yanna Yannakakis.¹ Other leading practitioners include the Leiden school of Mesoamericanists trained under Maarten Jansen, including Michel Oudijk and Sebastián van Doesburg; Mexican historians like María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi and Ethelia Ruíz Medrano, and a new generation of archaeologists such as Marc Levine, Stacie King, Peter Kroefges, and Danny Zborover working especially in the Mixteca Costa.² Like Spores and Balkansky, these scholars tend to write Mesoamerican history from a long-term perspective with indigenous culture as the necessary foundation and focus. *The Mixtecs of Oaxaca* incorporates and pays homage to important archaeological data from the early to mid-twentieth century. Some of its analytical framework—referencing Marxist analysis, closed corporate communities, and peasant revolution—also derives from an earlier era of scholarship. The incorporation of more recent work is limited. Nevertheless, the book is a model of readability and of integrating archaeology into a historical narrative, never an easy task. It is also a testament to Spores's lifetime of scholarship, following his now classic works *The Mixtec Kings and Their People* (1967) and *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times* (1984).³

¹ Judith Zeitlin, *Cultural Politics in Tehuantepec: Community and State Among the Isthmus Zapotec, 1500–1750* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); David Tavárez, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978); Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

² For example, Maarten Jansen, Peter Kroefges, and Michel Oudijk, eds., *The Shadow of Monte Albán: Politics and Historiography in Postclassic Oaxaca* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1998); María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, *El sol y la cruz: Los pueblos indios de Oaxaca colonial* (Tlalpan, DF: CIESAS, 1996); Ethelia Ruíz Medrano, *Mexico's Indigenous Communities: Their Lands and Histories, 1500–2010* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010); Danny Zborover and Peter Kroefges, eds., *Bridging the Gaps: Integrating and Archaeology and History in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015); Marc Levine, “Negotiating Political Economy at Late Postclassic Tututepec (Yucu Dzaa), Oaxaca, Mexico,” *American Anthropologist* 113, no. 1 (2011): 22–39.

³ Ronald Spores, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).

“Strange Lands and Different Peoples”: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala is also the product of a long-standing scholarly partnership. Since the late 1970s, geographer W. George Lovell and the historians Christopher Lutz and Wendy Kramer (and William R. Swezey, who died in 1989) have combined their research on the impact of Spanish invasion on the Maya of Guatemala. Lutz has focused on the Audiencia capital Santiago de Guatemala. Lovell publishes primarily on historical geography and demography in the Maya highlands, while Kramer is the preeminent historian of the early Spanish *encomienda*. *Strange Lands* weaves these strands into a chronological reconsideration of the first century of Spanish conquest and colonialism; demographic data from later centuries serves mostly to underline the dramatic population loss of the early period. Half of the chapters have been published elsewhere and appear with few changes. New chapters incorporate recent scholarship that emphasizes the role of indigenous allies in conquests throughout Mesoamerica.⁴ But *Strange Lands* argues forcefully that despite these valuable new perspectives, the role of the Spanish should not be overlooked. Pedro de Alvarado in particular was “wily,” “ruthless,” and “lethal” (22), “wanton and rapacious” (28), and so frightening that his mere presence brought a halt to a multiyear Kaqchikel Maya campaign against the invaders (58). The title of a partial translation of *Strange Lands* into Spanish for a more general Guatemalan readership makes this narrative bent even clearer: *Atemorizar la tierra: Pedro de Alvarado y la conquista de Guatemala, 1520–1541*.⁵

Strange Lands makes a reasonable case that the conquest of Maya territory by Nahua and Spanish conquistadors was unusually violent, which scholars should carefully consider despite its similarity to the great (evil)-man histories of past generations. Beyond Alvarado’s villainy, the authors also note the “incredulity” (214) at abuse of the indigenous population expressed by administrator Diego García de Valverde, who arrived in Guatemala in 1577 after service in Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. In Chapter 7, they meticulously mine an early court case to detail the “cunning, at times malevolent behavior” (149) of which even the most minor Spanish figure in Guatemala was capable. This chapter also illustrates the constraints of the book’s argument. Conquistador and *encomendero* Juan de Espinar put local people “in chains to scare them so that they would serve me” (144), beat reluctant workers, and burned down entire towns to force residents into closer range of his authority. But he also found willing “accomplices” (147) in the indigenous leaders of Huehuetenango. Maya commoners destroyed their homes when their own lords ordered it, and were encouraged by Espinar to flee temporarily into the mountains to avoid Christian friars. Their new lands were more fertile, the climate more comfortable. *Strange Lands* acknowledges all this, but highlights Juan de Espinar’s cunning and malevolence rather than the complicated relationships between and among indigenous people and Europeans. Any benefit to indigenous people was mere “spin-off” (147). The result is a compelling but traditional victors-and-vanquished history. This is of course a political, not merely academic, issue. Can we find a language sufficient to explain such complex scenarios *and also* the violence of the period?

Robert Patch, a contemporary of Lovell, Lutz, and Kramer who has worked primarily in the Yucatan, tackles this same problem in his recent book, *Indians and the Political Economy of Colonial Central America, 1670–1810*. Patch praises Jeremy Baskes’s controversial contention in a 1996 article (followed by a book in 2000) that the *repartimiento*—the illegal but commonly practiced system of extending credit or goods for subsequent payment in money or in kind—was voluntarily accepted by the indigenous population of Oaxaca.⁶ By avoiding the moralistic overtones of a traditional Spanish vs. Indians narrative, Baskes stimulated new questions about this much maligned but understudied institution. Nevertheless, Patch in *Indians and the Political Economy* comes to the very different conclusion that the Central American *repartimiento* fundamentally depended on coercion. Indigenous leaders did indeed take advantage of loans to cover tribute payments, and indigenous consumers bought mules, cattle, quetzal feathers, and other items that *alcaldes mayores* and their colleagues sold at high prices. Spanish bureaucrats constantly bemoaned, however, the “laziness” of indigenous people, arguing that the *repartimiento* was the only thing that induced them to work (133, 235). Indigenous people refused to buy certain products they were compelled to grow, like wheat. When the *repartimiento* declined, so did economic output (207). Late colonial measures to end the *repartimiento* replaced it with extractive policies that were less corrupt but no less coercive. Patch infers

⁴ Florine Asselbergs, *Conquered Conquistadors: The Lienzo de Quauhquechollan: A Nahua Vision of the Conquest of Guatemala* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2008); Laura E. Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁵ W. George Lovell, Christopher Lutz, and Wendy Kramer, *Atemorizar la tierra: Pedro de Alvarado y la conquista de Guatemala, 1520–1541* (Guatemala: F&G Editores, 2016).

⁶ Jeremy Baskes, “Coerced or Voluntary? The Repartimiento and Market Participation of Peasants in Late Colonial Oaxaca,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 1–28; *Indians, Merchants, and Markets: A Reinterpretation of the Repartimiento and Spanish-Indian Economic Relations in Colonial Oaxaca, 1750–1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

from all this that the indigenous people of Central America generally resisted entering into economic arrangements they could not control and from which they rarely benefited. They accepted the repartimiento system, but only within certain limits and not sufficient to colonialism's demands.

Patch's analysis depends entirely on Spanish administrative documentation: for instance, reports by bureaucrats jockeying for posts in the Americas, debates about corruption, and tribute records. He simultaneously takes Spanish bureaucrats at their word and reads against the grain. Patch's careful dissection of how the repartimiento (mal)functioned according to the Spanish uncovers indigenous activity—and inactivity—over time. The close-up picture of regional trade that emerges is fascinating and reinforces the extent to which Mesoamericans were integrated into the global imperial economy in the late colonial period. Maya were sold cotton thread and required to repay their tribute debt in cloth, which supplied miners in Honduras, Mexico, and Peru, and indigo plantation workers in El Salvador. The industrial production of cotton cloth was “put out” to indigenous women weaving at home. Similarly, repartimiento debt stimulated the production of cotton sails, sisal twine, and other supplies needed to serve and defend Nicaragua's ports, by tribute-paying natives who might otherwise have earned higher wages in private *obrajes*—again, often women (151). Like Lovell, Lutz, and Kramer, Patch paints an overall picture of Spanish oppression and indigenous resistance in colonial Central America using similar material, but in more muted tones. The book builds on Patch's earlier thinking about peasant moral economies and James Scott's “weapons of the weak,” still used to good effect some thirty years later.⁷

Native Wills from the Colonial Americas: Dead Giveaways in a New World, edited by Mark Christensen and Jonathan Truitt, represents a third and fourth generation of Mesoamericanist social history north of the Rio Grande since the 1950s. The subtitle of the book references a parallel collection of essays edited by Susan Kellogg and Matthew Restall in 1998.⁸ The emphasis in both volumes on native language and especially Nahuatl sources comes as no surprise. Since the 1980s, increasing numbers of scholars outside Mexico have become “nahuatlats,” influenced by anthropologists like Kellogg and Louise Burkhart, historians such as John F. Schwaller and Frances Karttunen, and the “New Philology” school pioneered by the late James Lockhart. *Native Wills* demonstrates that research continues apace, referencing corpuses of over seventy wills in K'iche' Maya from Guatemala, some eighty wills in Nahuatl from Oaxaca, over one hundred in Yucatec Maya, and over two hundred in Mixtec. Like its predecessor, however, *Native Wills* takes a broad geographical view that necessarily admits Spanish-language texts as well. The first thematic section, “Women of Native America,” emphasizes the mobility, wealth, and political power achievable by some women. Karen Graubart examines the life history and social milieu of an Andean immigrant to Trujillo by a careful assessment of the goods she left behind. Tatiana Seijas notes the financial success and social pride of a Filipino slave and his Afro-Mexican wife who purchased his freedom. Kevin Terraciano describes the considerable wealth of a native woman from the Mixteca Alta. The possibility of particularly native forms of female leadership is revealed to Jonathan Truitt in the Spanish-language will of an indigenous woman from Mexico Tenochtitlan's Mixtec barrio.

Women's lives are also visible in the volume's second thematic section, “Strategies of the Elite,” as Richard Conway analyzes the land claims of a Nahua noblewoman and Mark Christensen uncovers endogamous marriage patterns among the elite Pech lineage in a longitudinal study of Yucatec Maya wills. These chapters, however, focus on the maintenance of elite power and on form as much as content. Conway argues that testaments and painted land maps “began to converge as documentary genres” and serve new judicial purposes. Owen Jones finds that K'iche' Maya testators in Guatemala reproduced Spanish legal norms, but variably; in some towns, wills took on a unique dialogical form that captured community elders' participation in the testamentary process. The book's final thematic section, “The Individual and Collective Nature of Death,” features the volume's only essay on British America.⁹ Kathleen Bragdon analyzes the goods bequeathed by eighteenth-century wills from Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, to show continuity and change in mortuary practices. Erika Hosselkus also considers mortuary practices through a spatial and social analysis of burial requests inside the church of Huexotzinco's Convento de San Miguel. Lisa Sousa examines “fluid” (184) understandings of property ownership and exchange amongst the Mixe of Oaxaca through testamentary instructions, and notes testators' expressions of love and authority meant to carry beyond the

⁷ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁸ Susan Kellogg and Matthew Restall, eds., *Dead Giveaways: Indigenous Testaments of Colonial Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998).

⁹ The editors note this persistent problem; see for comparison Gregory Smithers and Brooke Newman, eds., *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

grave. Paul Charney studies patterns of debt and credit in late sixteenth-century indigenous wills from Lima and its environs, revealing “networks of trust” within and between the city and rural communities.

Kellogg and Restall assess the approaches taken to indigenous wills since their 1998 publication, at volume’s end. These include a “nexus of investigative subfields and foci” in the study of indigenous language testaments (248). In addition to Terraciano’s careful linguistic parsing in the best New Philological tradition, we see Nahuatl being used as the written language of Mixe speakers (Sousa) and Nahuatl loan words describing Mixtec categories of governance in a Spanish-language will (Truitt). Conway’s study of property pictorials draws on recent work in art history and legal history for New Spain. The recent “spatial turn” is also apparent, whether through historical archaeology (Bragdon), architectural reconstructions (Hosselkus), or regional networks (Charney). Finally, Graubart’s, Seijas’s, and Truitt’s essays raise interesting questions about how we define identity, race, ethnicity, and other troublesome categories in colonial Spanish America. On what basis is a Spanish-speaking Filipino slave considered “Native” as opposed to a slave from Fujian or Mughal India? How should we understand the identity of an urban mestizo, child of a hispanized Andean migrant? Or a woman seemingly fluent in Spanish, born and living in the Mixteco barrio in Mexico City? Does her life provide evidence primarily of indigenous continuities and survival, or (as Kellogg and Restall put it) “something very Spanish American, both Spanish and Indigenous” (248)?

The final book under review, *Emotions and Daily Life in Colonial Mexico* edited by Javier Villa-Flores and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, points to an increasing divide in the United States and Canada, since 2000, between those who study Native America mostly for its own sake and those who are more interested in colonial society as a whole. Indeed, the term “Mesoamerican”—like “Andean” and “Amazonian”—has become largely synonymous with “native” and “indigenous.” In this volume it is used only once. The contributors focus on class (plebeian or popular versus elite), protonational (Spanish versus Mexican), and political (creole versus royalist) rather than ethnic identities. An impressive array of senior and midcareer scholars, they consider the relatively new history of emotions—an outgrowth of social, cultural, gender, and *mentalité* approaches to European history since the mid-twentieth century, which has recently also received significant attention from scholars of British America—in the context of colonial Mexico.

In Part 1, “Personal Emotions,” three essays by Jacqueline Holler, Linda Curcio-Nagy, and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera inquire what early modern Mexicans understood feelings such as sorrow, melancholy, passion, jealousy, or love to be. Adopting medievalist Barbara Rosenwein’s influential idea of emotional communities, Holler establishes a theme that runs throughout the book: that Catholic doctrine significantly shaped how feelings were expressed and understood in colonial Mexico. The Church, she writes, was a “hegemon of sentiments” (23) that endorsed emotions like sorrow as paths toward the divine, but proscribed emotions like despair that questioned God’s providential presence. Where sex was concerned, however, the Church’s hegemony broke down. Curcio-Nagy shows that while the Church railed against sins of the flesh, popular culture encouraged them. “Insurmountable passion” (60) was blamed for acting on lust, and priests (at least in theory) and their parishioners lived in different emotional communities, where sensual pleasure was concerned. Lipsett-Rivera tackles a more somber side of love and passion in seventy-three cases of violence overwhelmingly against women. Her stellar essay links colonial Mexican jealousy to ideas of possession, control, female dependence, and male inviolability. Women were attacked by jealous wives, by admirers jealous of their affections, and by husbands jealous of their labor and attention (for instance, if lunch was late). Although Lipsett-Rivera avoids anachronism, some of the scenarios are sadly recognizable. A careful examination of one common response to jealousy, face cutting, invites further, comparative research. This chapter would be excellent in the undergraduate classroom.

A second, longer section on “Emotions and Institutions” highlights the role of feelings in governance. An excellent chapter by Alejandro Cañeque explains the imperial Spanish model of the loving, and loved, monarch. Anti-Machiavellian political philosophy rooted in Aristotle, Aquinas, and Seneca asserted that the king was owed a preponderance of love from his obedient subjects. He in turn was expected to control his passions in deference to his power over them. Spanish colonial rule was, quoting William Taylor, a “calculated blend of punishment and mercy” (112). Andrew Fisher illustrates this principle in his account of a standoff between a magistrate and indigenous townspeople in the Balsas Basin of central western Mexico. The magistrate emphasized his composure as his subjects become increasingly aggressive; the locals played their roles as simple but threatening Indians. By the end of the colonial period, Fisher argues, Mesoamericans understood the emotional standards of Spanish power and were fully capable of manipulating them.

Conversely, essays by Frances Ramos and Javier Villa-Flores analyze the power of elites and government officials to manipulate emotions in service of civic pride in Puebla de los Ángeles, or to encourage reluctant gamblers to participate in the state-sponsored lottery in Mexico City. The volume ends with a return to the

Church and its role in framing emotions. Matthew O'Hara shows how sermons directed toward conservative peninsulars in the colony helped them manage the anxieties of the independence period. Overall, *Emotions and Daily Life* offers an initial foray into this vibrant and developing field for historians of Iberian America. While the authors engage important voices such as Rosenwein, Peter and Carol Stearns, and William Reddy, and offer a healthy reconsideration of classic interpretations of popular emotional sensibilities such as Norbert Elias's, they do not venture very far into the phenomenology, neuroscience, or biology of feeling. Such caution is not unwarranted. This is a fine effort that takes the history of emotion seriously without being overcome by it.

In colonial Mesoamerican, Mexican, and Spanish American history, the silos tend to be ethnic/racial, regional, and national. Self-described Mesoamericanists (of which I am one) have gone from analyzing the impact of European colonialism and neocolonialism on indigenous society to attaching that history to a longer, deeper timeline, much as Spores and Balkansky do. The arrival of Europeans still matters, but it matters less, and we sometimes pay scant attention to other colonial actors beyond the disembodied state. Lovell et al. and Patch provide an important corrective to this tendency. So do studies of women, family, and multiethnic social networks like those discussed in Christensen and Truitt's *Native Wills*, which also battles against the tendency to subdivide into closed corporate communities of scholarship based on geography.¹⁰ Studies of the Afro-Mexican and Afro-Mesoamerican experience, the Atlantic and Pacific World paradigms, and legal history constitute other rich veins of current research on Mexico and Mesoamerica unexamined in this review. All these approaches tend to highlight complex issues of ethnic, racial, and national identity. It is refreshing, therefore, to see an experienced group of scholars in *Emotions and Daily Life* sidestep that perennial topic as well as the divide between rural and urban, and explore colonial Mexico through a different lens. In industry, the "mature phase" indicates a pinnacle of production before tapering off. That will surely not be the case for future historical research by the northernmost North Americans regarding their southern neighbors.

Author Information

Laura E. Matthew is associate professor of history at Marquette University. Her research is centered on southern Mesoamerica and Central America, particularly Guatemala. She is the author of *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012) and the coeditor with Michel Oudijk of *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2007). She is also creator of the digital archive and collaborative *Nahuatl/Nawat in Central America* (<http://www.nahuatl-nawat.org>) and is currently researching sixteenth-century migration, trade, and conquistador networks along Mesoamerica's southern Pacific coast.

¹⁰ Recent efforts to cross these boundaries include Clay Mathers, Jeffrey M. Mitchem, and Charles M. Haecker, eds., *Native and Spanish New Worlds: Sixteenth-Century Entradas in the American Southwest and Southeast* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), and Danna A. Levin Rojo, *Return to Aztlan: Indians, Spaniards, and the Invention of Nuevo México* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

How to cite this article: Matthew, Laura E. 2018. The Mature Phase: Four Generations of Scholarship on Colonial Mesoamerica and New Spain. *Latin American Research Review* 53(1), pp. 152–158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.254>

Submitted: 15 March 2017

Accepted: 24 April 2017

Published: 28 March 2018

Copyright: © 2018 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

LARR

Latin American Research Review is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the Latin American Studies Association.

OPEN ACCESS 