



# Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest

*Matthew Restall*

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Here is an intriguing exploration of the ways in which the history of the Spanish Conquest has been misread and passed down to become popular knowledge of these events. The book offers a fresh account of the activities of the best-known conquistadors and explorers, including Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro. Using a wide array of sources, historian Matthew Restall highlights seven key myths, uncovering the source of the inaccuracies and exploding the fallacies and misconceptions behind each myth. This vividly written and authoritative book shows, for instance, that native Americans did not take the conquistadors for gods and that small numbers of vastly outnumbered Spaniards did not bring down great empires with stunning rapidity. We discover that Columbus was correctly seen in his lifetime--and for decades after--as a briefly fortunate but unexceptional participant in efforts involving many southern Europeans. It was only much later that Columbus was portrayed as a great man who fought against the ignorance of his age to discover the new world. Another popular misconception--that the Conquistadors worked alone--is shattered by the revelation that vast numbers of black and native allies joined them in a conflict that pitted native Americans against each other. This and other factors, not the supposed superiority of the Spaniards, made conquests possible. The Conquest, Restall shows, was more complex--and more fascinating--than conventional histories have portrayed it. Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest offers a richer and more nuanced account of a key event in the history of the Americas.



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