

## **Women in the Conquest of Mexico**

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Much attention has been paid to the role of Hernán Cortés' native translator, doña Marina, in studies of the Spanish-Mexica War. However, few have considered other women who were made to participate in the conquest for various reasons. The experiences of women are largely under-reported in alphabetic and pictorial accounts of the conquest; nevertheless, a close reading of these sources elucidates the impact of the conquest on native women. Many women were involuntarily made to participate in the conquest, with a woman's status and ethnicity being important factors in determining her role. Lower class women were given as slaves to the Spanish conquerors, while noblewomen were used to establish marriage alliances. Some women were targeted by the Spaniards in acts of intimidation, others helped the Mexica fight against the Spaniards, and still others allied with the Spaniards. And one woman who witnessed some of the key events of the conquest emerged from it as one of the wealthiest Nahua citizens of New Spain, Isabel Moctezuma. This presentation reveals that the conquest was not an event in which only the male portion of the population participated but one that also deeply implicated women.