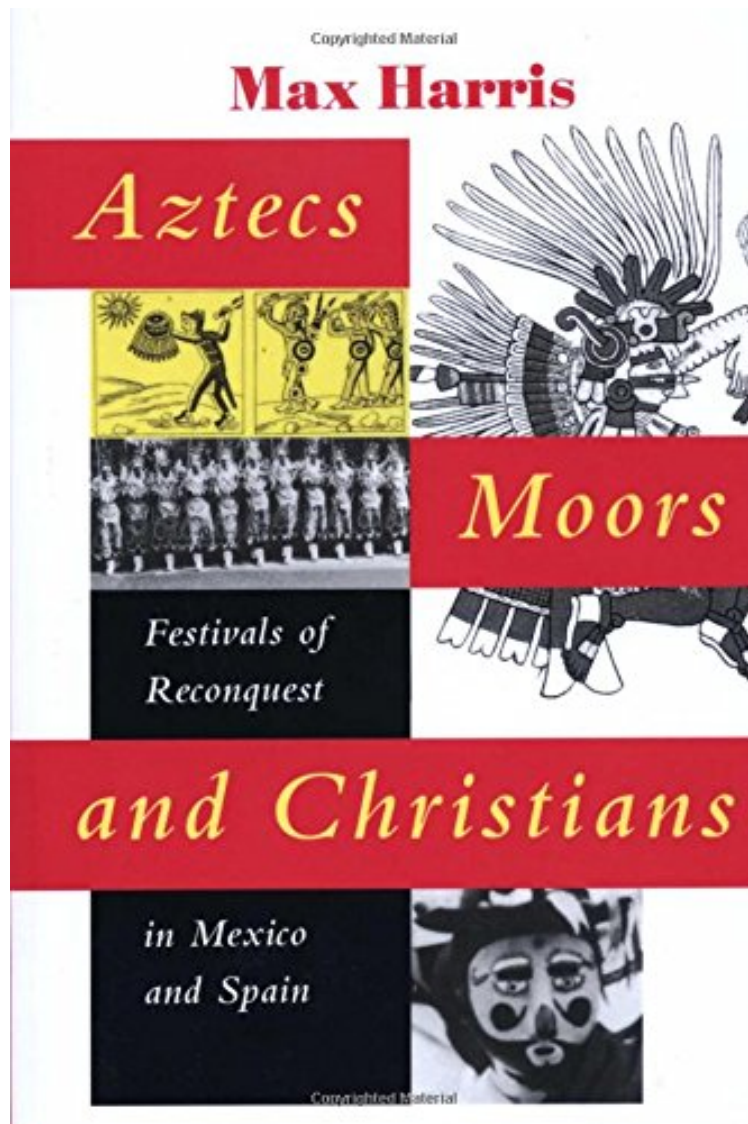


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Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and

Max Harris

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Max Harris : Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Aztecs, Moors, and Christians: Festivals of Reconquest in Mexico and:

In villages and towns across Spain and its former New World colonies, local performers stage mock battles between Spanish Christians and Moors or Aztecs that range from brief sword dances to massive street theatre lasting several days. The festival tradition officially celebrates the triumph of Spanish Catholicism over its enemies, yet this does not explain its persistence for more than five hundred years nor its widespread diffusion. In this insightful book, Max Harris seeks to understand Mexicans' "puzzling and enduring passion" for festivals of *moros y cristianos*. He begins by tracing the performances' roots in medieval Spain and showing how they came to be superimposed on the mock battles that had been a part of pre-contact Aztec calendar rituals. Then using James Scott's distinction between "public" and "hidden transcripts," he reveals how, in the hands of folk and indigenous performers, these spectacles of conquest became prophecies of the eventual reconquest of Mexico by the defeated Aztec peoples. Even today, as lively descriptions of current festivals make plain, they remain a remarkably sophisticated vehicle for the communal expression of dissent.

"This is a major contribution to the rich and fascinating cultural history of colonial-era Mexico and to the tumultuous clash of European and Native American values, institutions, and technologies.... It is beautifully written and makes compelling reading." (Robert Potter, Professor of Dramatic Art, University of California, Santa Barbara) "This is a major contribution to the rich and fascinating cultural history of colonial-era Mexico and to the tumultuous clash of European and Native American values, institutions, and technologies.... It is beautifully written and makes compelling reading." (Robert Potter, Professor of Dramatic Art, University of California, Santa Barbara) From the Back Cover IN villages and towns across Spain and its former New World colonies, local performers stage mock battles between Spanish Christians and Moors or Aztecs that range from brief sword dances to massive street theatre lasting several days. The performances officially celebrate the triumph of Spanish Catholicism over its enemies. Such an explanation does not, however, account for the tradition's persistence for more than five hundred years nor for its widespread diffusion. In this perceptive book, Max Harris seeks to understand the "puzzling and enduring passion" of both Mexicans and Spaniards for festivals of *moros y cristianos*. He begins by tracing the performances' roots in medieval Spain and showing how they came to be superimposed on the mock battles that had been part of pre-contact Aztec calendar rituals. Then, using James Scott's distinction between "public transcripts" and "hidden transcripts", he reveals how, in the hands of folk and indigenous performers, these spectacles of conquest became prophecies of the eventual reconquest of Mexico by the defeated Aztec peoples. Finally, he documents the early arrival of native American performance practices in Europe and the shift of *moros y cristianos* from court to folk tradition in Spain. Even today, as lively descriptions of current festivals make plain, mock battles between Aztecs, Moors, and Christians remain a remarkably sophisticated vehicle for the communal expression of dissent.