

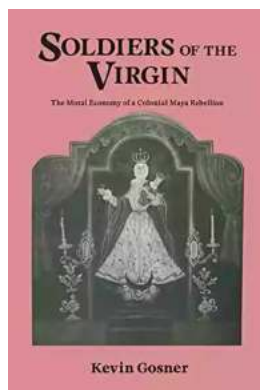
# The Moral Economy of Colonial Maya Rebellion: Unveiling the Untold Stories

When studying the history of the Mayan civilization, it becomes clear that their society was built on strong foundations of morality and fairness. The colonial era, however, disrupted these principles, leading to a series of rebellions. This article aims to explore the moral economy of the Mayan people during this tumultuous period and shed light on the untold stories of their resistance.

## Understanding the Mayan Moral Economy

The Mayan moral economy was ingrained with a sense of communalism and reciprocity. Within their communities, resources were distributed fairly, and trade was conducted in a way that ensured everyone's basic needs were met. Their society functioned on the belief that no individual should be deprived of the essentials for survival, and wealth accumulation was not the primary focus.

In this moral system, labor, land, water, and other resources were recognized as community assets rather than individual possessions. The well-being of their members was valued above individual gain, fostering a sense of unity and mutual support.



## Soldiers of the Virgin: The Moral Economy of a Colonial Maya Rebellion

by Kevin Gosner([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported

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## **The Colonial Disruption**

With the arrival of Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century, the Mayan moral economy faced a severe disruption. The Spanish colonizers imposed their own economic system, which was built on extracting resources and wealth from the indigenous population. The Maya were coerced into forced labor, subjected to high tribute payments, and pushed into an economic framework that did not align with their moral values.

Under this exploitative system, the Spanish utilized the Mayan labor force to extract valuable resources such as gold, silver, and precious woods. The profits made from these resources were taken back to Spain, leaving the Mayan communities impoverished and profoundly impacting their moral economy.

## **The Resilience of Maya Resistance**

Despite the turmoil brought by the colonial rule, the Mayan people exhibited immense resilience through their acts of rebellion. These rebellions were not driven solely by economic hardships but were deeply rooted in their moral principles. The Mayan rebels fought not only for their material well-being but also for the restoration of their sacred values and moral economy.

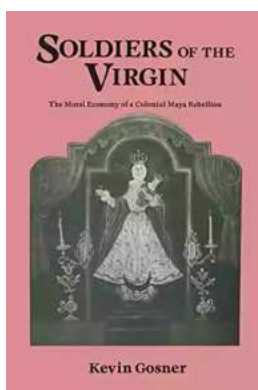
The Mayan resistance movements were characterized by both armed uprisings and covert acts of resistance. They employed guerilla tactics, ambushing Spanish forces and disrupting economic activities in an attempt to reclaim their autonomy and return to their moral economy.

## **The Significance of the Untold Stories**

Unfortunately, much of the history of Mayan resistance lies hidden within the archives of colonial powers. The voices of the Mayan rebels have been largely overlooked and marginalized, overshadowed by the dominant narratives of the colonizers. By delving into these untold stories, we can uncover the true extent of Mayan resistance and the significance of their moral economy.

Studying these untold stories allows us to challenge the narratives that perpetuate the notion of passive, subservient indigenous communities. It reveals the strength and determination of the Mayan people, who resisted against oppressive forces in defense of their moral values.

The moral economy of the Mayan civilization was a central aspect of their society, emphasizing communal well-being and fairness. The destructive impacts of colonial powers disrupted this moral economy, leading to acts of rebellion driven by a deep desire to restore their sacred principles. By acknowledging these untold stories, we can shed light on the strength and resilience of the Mayan people, ensuring their contributions are recognized and celebrated.



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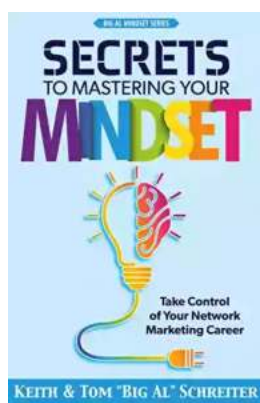
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In the early summer of 1712, a young Maya woman from the village of Cancuc in southern Mexico encountered an apparition of the Virgin Mary while walking in the forest. The miracle soon attracted Indian pilgrims from pueblos throughout the highlands of Chiapas. When alarmed Spanish authorities stepped in to put a stop to the burgeoning cult, they ignited a full-scale rebellion. Declaring "Now there is no God or King," rebel leaders raised an army of some five thousand "soldiers of the Virgin" to defend their new faith and cast off colonial rule. Using the trial records of Mayas imprisoned after the rebellion, as well as the letters of Dominican priests, the local bishop, and Spaniards who led the army of pacification, Kevin Gosner reconstructs the history of the Tzeltal Revolt and examines its causes. He characterizes the rebellion as a defense of the Maya moral economy, and shows how administrative reforms and new economic demands imposed by colonial authorities at the end of the seventeenth century challenged Maya norms about the ritual obligations of community leaders, the need for reciprocity in political affairs, and the supernatural origins of power. The first book-length study of the Tzeltal Revolt, *Soldiers of the Virgin* goes beyond the conventions of the regional monograph to offer an expansive view of Maya social and cultural history. With an eye to the contributions of archaeologists and ethnographers, Gosner explores many issues that are central to Maya studies, including the origins of the civil-religious hierarchy, the role of shamanism in political culture, the social dynamics of peasant corporate communities, and the fate of the native nobility after the Spanish conquest.



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