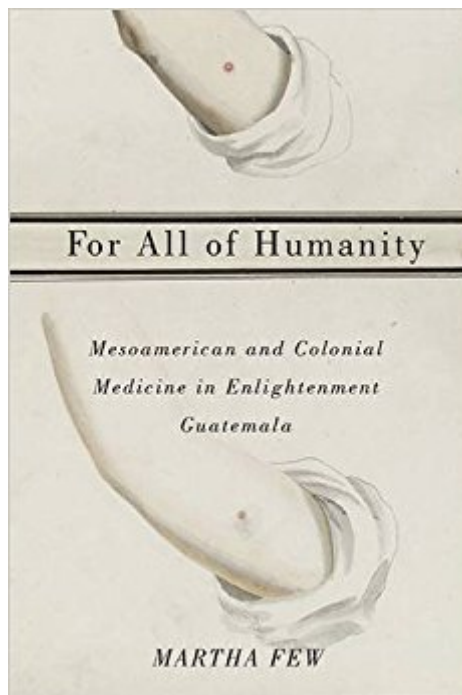




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For All Of Humanity: Mesoamerican And Colonial Medicine In Enlightenment Guatemala



Synopsis

Smallpox, measles, and typhus. The scourges of lethal disease "as threatening in colonial Mesoamerica as in other parts of the world" called for widespread efforts and enlightened attitudes to battle the centuries-old killers of children and adults. Even before edicts from Spain crossed the Atlantic, colonial elites oftentimes embraced medical experimentation and reform in the name of the public good, believing it was their moral responsibility to apply medical innovations to cure and prevent disease. Their efforts included the first inoculations and vaccinations against smallpox, new strategies to protect families and communities from typhus and measles, and medical interventions into pregnancy and childbirth. *For All of Humanity* examines the first public health campaigns in Guatemala, southern Mexico, and Central America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Martha Few pays close attention to Indigenous Mesoamerican medical cultures, which not only influenced the shape and scope of those regional campaigns but also affected the broader New World medical cultures. The author reconstructs a rich and complex picture of the ways colonial doctors, surgeons, Indigenous healers, midwives, priests, government officials, and ordinary people engaged in efforts to prevent and control epidemic disease. Few's analysis weaves medical history and ethnohistory with social, cultural, and intellectual history. She uses prescriptive texts, medical correspondence, and legal documents to provide rich ethnographic descriptions of Mesoamerican medical cultures, their practitioners, and regional pharmacopeia that came into contact with colonial medicine, at times violently, during public health campaigns.

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Martha Few "utilizes extensive archival records to explore the role of colonial practitioners and Indigenous healers in combating typhus and smallpox and in developing vaccinations. The author also powerfully utilizes cases of postmortem cesareans to examine the role that religious leaders and state officials played in reinforcing colonialism among Indigenous women...She excels at breaking down complicated arguments into an approachable text that students will appreciate."

-Choice

Martha Few has opened a fresh window into the new knowledge of the Enlightenment as it filtered into the Americas and was impacted and nurtured by the findings of creole intellectuals and native healers as they faced the challenges of epidemic disease and public health.

"Noble David Cook, author of *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* A rich and complex picture of the ways various groups engaged in efforts to prevent and control epidemic disease, improve health, and save (and at times baptize) the lives of those facing near-certain death.

"Adam Warren, author of *Medicine and Politics in Colonial Peru: Population Growth and the Bourbon Reforms* Few's work adds to the public health historiography by revealing that medical pluralisms shaped health practices in Guatemala beginning in the late 1600s. She excels at breaking down complicated arguments into an approachable text that students will appreciate.

"Choice For All of Humanity serves as an important contribution to the growing literature on medicine and science in the Spanish empire and an important corrective to this literature, which has tended to focus on imperial directives with less attention to local initiatives.

"American Historical Review In this well-researched study, Martha Few presents a detailed account of the responses to smallpox, typhus, and other epidemic illnesses in colonial Guatemala.

"Bulletin of the History of Medicine

Martha Few is an associate professor of Latin American history at the University of Arizona. She is the author of *Women Who Live Evil Lives: Gender, Religion, and the Politics of Power in Colonial Guatemala* and co-editor of *Centering Animals in Latin American History*.

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