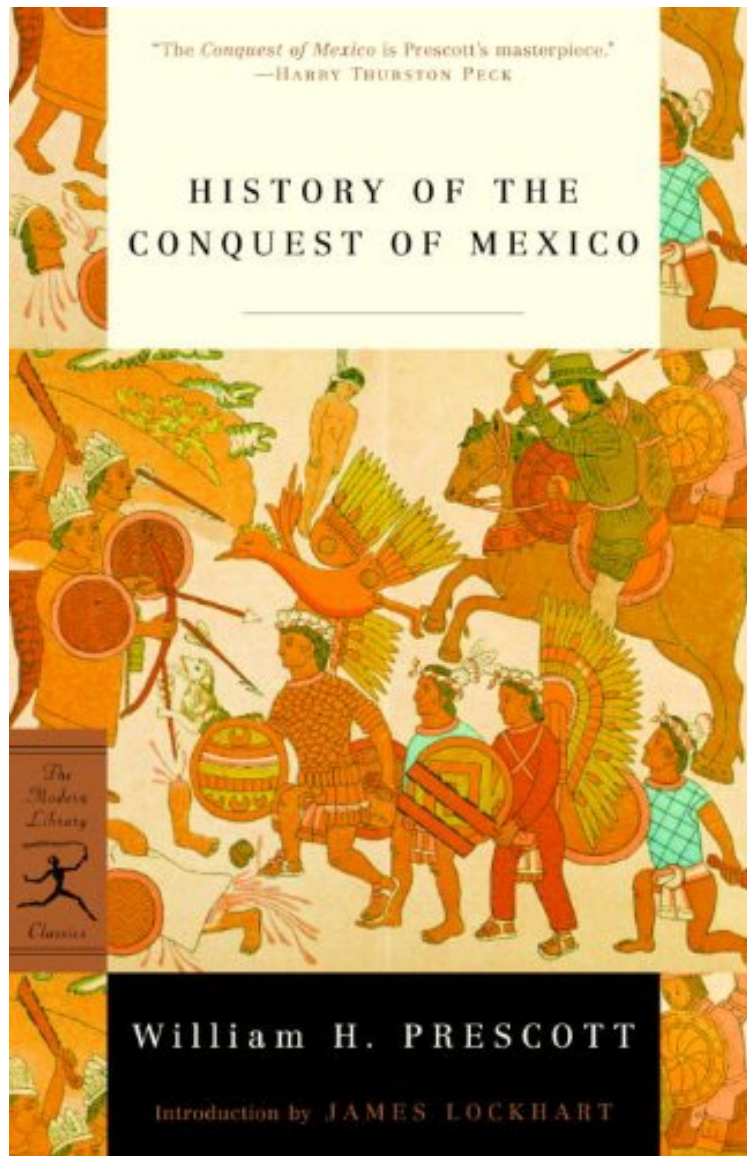


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History of the Conquest of Mexico (Modern Library Classics)

Von William H. Prescott

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Von William H. Prescott : History of the Conquest of Mexico (Modern Library Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised History of the Conquest of Mexico (Modern Library Classics):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Historical MasterpieceVon nicholas chadwickIn his "History of the Conquest of Mexico" and it's companion volume, the "History of the Conquest of Peru", William Prescott achieves the remarkable feat of portraying the action and

adventures of the Spanish cavaliers in a highly readable format for those with little prior knowledge of the Conquests. The subject matter for these books is basically the clash of cultures that occurred between the Old World (in the form of Catholic Spain) and the New (in the form of the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru). It is interesting to note that these books were written by in the early 19th century by a partially sighted American author who had never visited the countries but who had access to all available historical documents. The style of writing is such that the reader is never overwhelmed by detail and is continually impressed by the heroic feats of the Spanish and at the same time shocked by their cruelty to the indigenous peoples. In the "History of the Conquest of Mexico", Prescott provides an excellent account of the origin and nature of Mexican civilization at the time of the conquest, describing how the Aztecs dominated the many races of Mexico with savage brutality, indulging in regular human sacrifices. He then goes on to describe the key player in this adventure, Hernando Cortes, and how he and a small party of cavaliers overcame overwhelming odds to defeat the armies of the Aztecs. While it is impossible not to admire the genius of Cortes, the reader is left in no doubt that the Spaniards were motivated by the promise of Aztec gold and not by the desire to "spread the word of God to the heathen". However, Prescott excuses the means by which Cortes overthrew the Aztec empire as it put an end to the Aztec practice of human sacrifice. In the second book, "History of the Conquest of Peru", Prescott finds no excuse for the manner in which Pizarro and Almagro conquered the relatively peaceful empire of the Incas. As with the first book, an interesting description of the Inca way of life precedes the action. While equally enthralling as the conquest of Mexico, Pizarro accomplished the overthrow of the Incas by brute force, without the finesse of Cortes. The second half of this book deals with the remarkable events which followed the conquest; the two civil wars and their resolution by Pedro de la Gasca on behalf of the Spanish crown. It is difficult to find fault with Prescott's scientific approach to his writings; all of the events are backed up by references to documents written at the time of, or shortly after the conquests and these are given as valuable footnotes on each page. In addition, at the end of some of the chapters, Prescott writes short essays about his sources, describing which are trustworthy and which are prejudiced. If there were to be a fault with Prescott's approach, then it would be his sympathy with the Catholic church during the years of the Conquest and his excusing of the Spanish atrocities as a means of spreading Christianity. But then we should bear in mind that Prescott was writing in the 1840s and was obviously a serious Christian. A second problem is that some of the footnotes are left in their original text, i.e. Spanish, Latin or sometimes Greek which presents problems to non-polyglots. The publishers have obviously not thought to translate these. In conclusion, these two books are essential reading for anyone interested in the empires of the Aztecs and Incas, and their overthrow by the Spanish Conquistadors. I have not read any other books on the subject which compare to Prescott's masterpieces.

Kurzbeschreibung "It is a magnificent epic," said William H. Prescott after the publication of History of the Conquest of Mexico in 1843. Since then, his sweeping account of Cortes's subjugation of the Aztec people has endured as a landmark work of scholarship and dramatic storytelling. This pioneering study presents a compelling view of the clash of civilizations that reverberates in Latin America to this day. "Regarded simply from the standpoint of literary criticism, the Conquest of Mexico is Prescott's masterpiece," judged his biographer Harry Thurston Peck. "More than that, it is one of the most brilliant examples which the English language possesses of literary art applied to historical narration. . . . Here, as nowhere else, has Prescott succeeded in delineating character. All the chief actors of his great historic drama not only live and breathe, but they are as distinctly differentiated as they must have been in life. Cortes and his lieutenants are persons whom we actually come to know in the pages of Prescott. . . . Over against these brilliant figures stands the melancholy form of Montezuma, around whom, even from the first, one feels gathering the darkness of his coming fate. He reminds one of some hero of Greek tragedy, doomed to destruction and intensely conscious of it, yet striving in vain against the decree of an inexorable destiny. . . . [Prescott] transmuted the acquisitions of laborious research into an enduring monument of pure literature." Kurzbeschreibung "It is a magnificent epic," said William H. Prescott after the publication of History of the Conquest of Mexico in 1843. Since then, his sweeping account of Cortes's subjugation of the Aztec people has endured as a landmark work of scholarship and dramatic storytelling. This pioneering study presents a compelling view of the clash of civilizations that reverberates in Latin America to this day. "Regarded simply from the standpoint of literary criticism, the Conquest of Mexico is Prescott's masterpiece," judged his biographer Harry Thurston Peck. "More than that, it is one of the most brilliant examples which the English language possesses of literary art applied to historical narration. . . . Here, as nowhere else, has Prescott succeeded in delineating character. All the chief actors of his great historic drama not only live and breathe, but they are as distinctly differentiated as they must have been in life. Cortes and his lieutenants are persons whom we actually come to know in the pages of Prescott. . . . Over against these brilliant figures stands the melancholy form of Montezuma, around whom, even from the first, one feels gathering the darkness of his coming fate. He reminds one of some hero of Greek tragedy, doomed to destruction and intensely conscious of it, yet striving in vain against the decree of an inexorable destiny. . . . [Prescott] transmuted the acquisitions of laborious research into an enduring monument of pure literature." Synopsis In 1519, Hernando Cortes arrived in Mexico to investigate stories

of a wealthy empire. What he encountered was beyond his wildest dreams - an advanced civilisation with complex artistic, political and religious systems (involving extensive human sacrifice) and replete with gold. This was the Aztec empire, headed by the aloof emperor, Montezuma. With just a handful of men, Cortes achieved the impossible, crushing the Aztecs and their allies, and effectively annexing the whole territory for Spain. One of the most extraordinary stories of conquest in mankind's history is told here in this classic account.