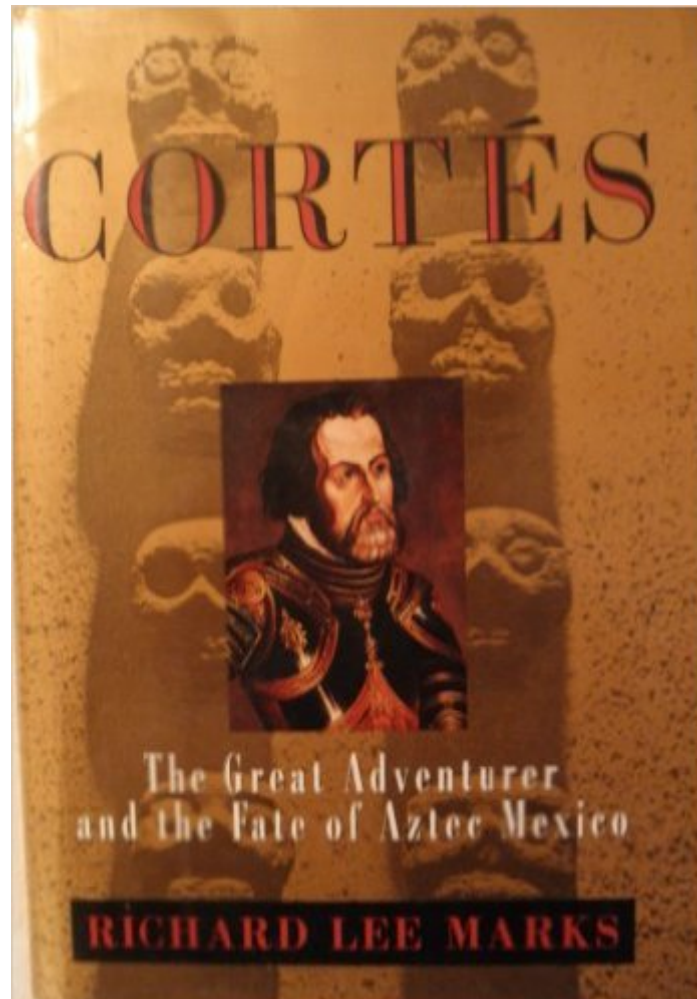


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Cortes: The Great Adventurer And The Fate Of Aztec Mexico



Synopsis

Adding to the debate over the legacy of the European conquest of the Americas, a thorough portrait of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, portrays a unique point in history, where independently evolved cultures collided. 12,500 first printing.

Book Information

Hardcover: 347 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

...and doesn't have more reviews, as it is a damn good book, and drives home what a ballsy swashbuckler and crafty statesman Cortes really was. It's also pretty refreshing in that it doesn't present him as a monster and the Aztecs as innocent victims. The book also disputes the standard notion that Montezuma thought that the Spaniards were gods, and instead maintains that Montezuma was trying to put together a partnership with them, willing to trade the gold that the Spanish wanted for weapons/technology. Interesting and to me, very plausible.

Criminally out of print, this is nominally a biography of Cortes, but the vast majority of this book focuses on his expedition. This is the kind of story that is too incredible to be fiction, it could only be the product of real people and real events. There are other versions of this tale of course, but this is among the best if you can get a hold of a copy. It is simply absurd that the book is no longer available new, but there are used copies floating around -- get one. This book will glue you to your chair.

A better book on the topic could not have been written. I have read 6 books on this topic, and this

was the best. A stunning story that finally finds an author that captures its details and emotions.

I have read the other reviews of this book. They are accurate, to a point. However, the author is so directed at redeeming Cortes, at salvaging his reputation from the "Black Legend," that he omits the valid reasons why that "Legend" has such terrible, strong and deep roots. Additionally, there are important omissions directly impacting the life story of this man. In the author's discussion the expedition to Honduras, he ignores how a large group (not merely 3) of Mexica nobility were decimated and that effect upon their dream of evicting the invaders. Cortes is portrayed as loyal husband, with only peripheral mention his other native relationships except for the Lady Malinche, most notably his love of Moctezuma's surviving daughter, Isabel, and how the people responded when seeing them together. The extensive level of native depression for years following the conquest, juxtaposed with the miracle and stimulus of the Virgin of Guadalupe, occurring shortly before Cortes' return from Spain in 1531, is similarly ignored, as is Bishop Zumara's Inquisition and its impact. Perhaps the story is simply too amazing, too complex, for one volume. Yet within its limits, and accepting the need of an apologist for Cortes, the author has amassed considerable well-researched factual detail into a very fine narrative centered upon the Primero Conquistador whose remarkable deeds defined all others.

Unlike other reviewers, I knew very little about this subject until I read Marks' book. My interest was stimulated by a trip to Spain and the realization of my ignorance of Spanish history. This led me to Marks' Cortes, which is not as long as some other treatments of the conquest of Mexico. I literally could not put this book down. After reading it, it is difficult not to admire Cortes, who was incredibly persistent in face of incredible risks. The fact that the Aztecs were even more brutal than the Spanish cuts against the common assessment of Cortes as one of history's villains.

I couldn't put this book down. It's non-fiction, but reads like a thriller. An amazing story about one of the most amazing men to ever live. Don't believe the hogwash they taught you in school about Cortez. Read this book and discover the true story.

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