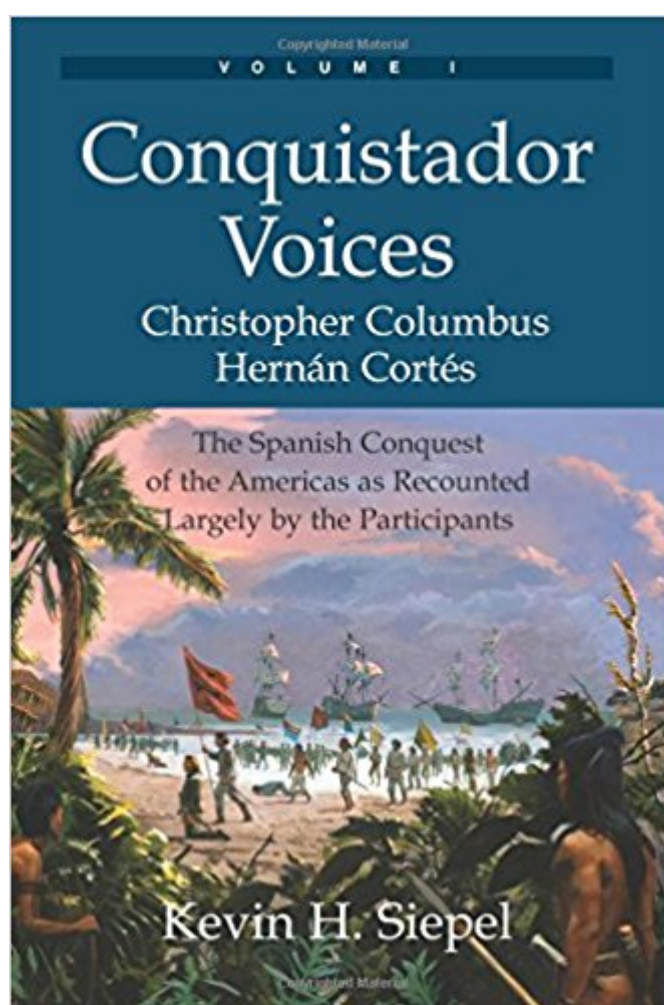


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Conquistador Voices (vol I): The Spanish Conquest Of The Americas As Recounted Largely By The Participants (Volume 1)



Synopsis

Follow the Spanish Conquest of the Americas through first-person action accounts. In Conquistador Voices you will hear explorers, conquistadors, and, in some cases native peoples--aided by the author as narrator--tell us what they themselves saw and did during the Conquest. To make such 500-year-old "sound bites" attractive to the modern reader, fresh translations of much of this material have been made from Spanish and Italian sources. In this book, written for the general reader and consciously refraining from praise or condemnation, you are likely to learn much more about those epic times than you ever learned in school. Volume I is devoted to the four voyages of Christopher Columbus, and to the subsequent conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortés. Aztec accounts are included in the Cortés material. Nine maps accompany the text. An index, copious footnotes, and brief bibliography are also included. 340 pp.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A nuanced view Clear and engaging with minimal biased commentary. Perfect for anyone looking for a more in-depth look at the Spanish conquistadors, and interested in them as three-dimensional and not just distant figures. . . . An interesting and wide-ranging look at a critical period in history. - Foreword Reviews Clearly a labor of love. - Publishers Weekly Exhaustively researched, exceptionally well written, impressively organized and presented, . . . very highly recommended for both community and academic library world history reference collections in general, and Spanish conquistador supplemental studies lists in particular. â " Midwest Book

Review This book should be promoted in universities and in US social organizations where there are many second- and third-generation Latinos who have no idea of their origins in this country, and who would be very much enriched by reading this book. " Opciones magazine "s not very often that a book as necessary as it is interesting lands on our desk. . . . A refreshing account . . . This English-language work ought to be required reading in US Latino academic circles. . . . A welcome literary effort. " Gente de Exito magazine A great read, for pleasure or for historical background on the Spanish conquistadors and their initial contact with the American Indians. . . . Uses extensive translations of primary sources, Spanish as well as native, with a commentary that is straightforward and makes sense. The translations are extremely good. Any university or secondary-education student would be able to comprehend and make use of this book, which is a useful complement to specialized courses in Latin American or colonial American history . . . Highly recommended. " Russell M. Lawson, Professor of History, Bacon College In Conquistador Voices the conquistadors give us their version of events, ably related here in modern documentary fashion. What is especially valuable is that the author makes no judgments on these men, preferring to leave this to the reader. In translating many of the original documents himself he has struck a nice balance between the original sense of the narrative and a text that hooks the modern reader. . . . Siepel, whose primary announced purpose is to teach, makes us laugh, cry, and "why not?" suffer along the way. . . . Conquistador Voices would make a fine gift for anyone interested in learning more about the Conquest. " Hoy en Delaware magazine

If all you know about the conquistadors is what you learned in school, this book may be for you. This is not a standard history book, but rather a sort of television documentary in written form. In it you will hear the voices of the conquistadors themselves as they tell you--through a series of "sound bites" that they themselves have provided--what they saw and did during the Conquest. These voices have been brought together and context established by the author as narrator, to provide you with a vivid, streamlined, and overall compelling reading experience. The entire sweep of the Conquest is covered in two volumes of adventure--Christopher Columbus and Hernn Corts in Volume I, and Francisco Pizarro, lvar Nnez Cabeza de Vaca, and Hernando de Soto in Volume II. You'll be whisked from the islands of the Indies to central America, Mexico, Peru, today's southeastern US, Mexico again, Paraguay, and back to the US, in the process having to embark on two desperate escapes by sea. Delve into these five narratives--a one-stop Conquest summary for the general reader--and you should come away with a fuller and more realistic appreciation of those epic times than you may have ever had before.

Siepel's history of the Spanish encounter with the Americas is described on the back cover as "a sort of television documentary in written form... a series of 'sound bites'" from the conquistadors themselves. This is a very accurate description and no doubt why it's so well reviewed. He has created a highly digestible narrative of historical events sprinkled with first-person details... The trouble is with his documentation. He does not cite his sources and instead gives us a short list of books at the end that he calls "Further Reading." Although this was an entertaining read, I could easily have skipped it in favor of material that was properly sourced.

The arrival of Europeans in the Caribbean and Mexico in the 15th and early 16th Century is a subject that is now, more than ever, freighted with political weight. And the evolution of historical writing about the era and its leaders illustrates both our political and cultural evolution. We have gone from the religious condemnations of Las Casas in the 16th Century to the 19th Century European Supremacism of Prescott and Parkman. The newer views of the post-Columbian era now emphasize the evils of cruelty, greed, and Euro-centrism, and the failures by Spain to live up to the values it claimed to support. Kevin Siepel's work goes directly to the source -- the words of Columbus, Cortes and the people who accompanied them. This technique of placing greater than usual reliance upon actual source material allows the reader to avoid the kind of tendentious history that would colonize the historical past, that would make it a slave to a historical narrative that dovetails with contemporary agendas. The stories that emerge from the translated materials selected and edited by Siepel are harrowing, surprising, spontaneous, improvisations built upon the desire of the participants to survive and prosper despite their widespread ignorance and confusion. Nobody had a script for the encounters that took place. There was precious little in the way of a template that would enable Columbus and Cortes to compare what they were doing with what they should be doing. They were cruel and rapacious to the native peoples because they were cruel and rapacious to each other. The translations are eminently readable, so much so that I wonder how it can be that 15th Century Spanish translates more gracefully into contemporary English than 15th Century English translates to a contemporary idiom. The Kindle edition that I read has excellent footnotes, so much so that I think it would be a good idea to use maps as footnotes to help the reader more easily see the geographical relationships among the places and participants. This was an excellent read and I will now buy the second volume.

Excellent account of the Spanish exploration of the New World in the explorers' own words. Get it,

read it and live the Conquest as it happened.

What gives this book remarkable immediacy is the fact that it is based on contemporary accounts by members of the different expeditions. Of all the descriptions it contains I found the account of Tenochtitlan exceptionally gripping. I've often heard of the sophistication (as well as the brutality) of the Aztec civilisation but, to be honest, it meant little to me. This book conveyed it in a way that was absolutely unforgettable!

This is a great book for any history lover who is looking for an account of the voyages of Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortes that goes beyond whatever was learned in high school, or even college. The narrations were concise and easy to follow. The first hand accounts were exciting to read and gave this reader the feeling he was experiencing the adventures of these men and their companions as they saw it themselves. After reading this book, I could not wait to start Volume 2.

An outstanding book that provides the reader with a fascinating account of Columbus & Cortes exploration and conquest. The author uses actual diaries of these events that truly bring to life the brutality, courage and hardship of both the indigenous people and that of the explorers. This is extremely well written with page notes & maps that provide clarification of certain terms of locations - very helpful. It's truly an amazing story what these early explorers endured and how the native people reacted to their introduction.

Fascinating first hand accounts of the first European's interactions with Native Americans. I especially enjoyed the descriptions of the great Native American cities and culture. Of particular interest was a single encounter described by both the Spanish and Native American participants.

A fascinating account of an incredible story: the collision of two worlds recounted in the words of the participants themselves. The Spanish explorers in search of gold and glory were a different breed of human being. Ruthless, devious, driven by greed, these men opened up a continent to conquest through their tenacity and incredible stamina. Mr. Siepel follows these men as they rise to positions of power and inevitably die violent or inglorious deaths. A great read for history lovers!

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