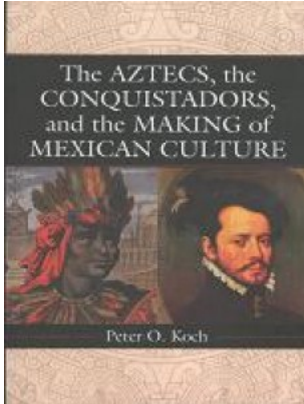


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Tracing events from the discovery of the New World through the fall of the Aztec empire in 1521, this book discusses the battles between the Spanish explorers and the Aztecs_battles that culminated in the ruin of a civilization. The first half of the work alternates between Aztec and Spanish history, discussing events and motivations on each side as the two cultures expanded toward one another on their way to inevitable conflict. Placing special emphasis on Aztec mythology and religious beliefs, the author explains how the Spanish exploited the Aztecs' own cultural practices to insure the success of their invasion. The gold-and-glory engines driving the Spanish Crown and the actions of contemporary Spanish explorers such as Juan Ponce de León and Francisco Cordoba are examined. The concluding chapters give a thorough account of the struggle between Hernán Cortés and the Aztec ruler Montezuma, including the role of other indigenous tribes in the eventual downfall of the empire. The final chapter details the siege of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, and summarizes the ultimate destruction of the Aztec civilization