

# The broken spears: the aztec account of the conquest of mexico

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



The Broken Spears of Miguel León Portilla, describes the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the struggle of the Aztecs to protect their cultural space in those times. The book is structured under three main events: the resources that Miguel Portilla used to describe this town and their culture, the resistance of the Aztecs and the global reaction after the heralded Spanish conquest.

When we talk about resistance, we focus in the effect of diseases during the war. The Aztecs were defending their territory in spite of the epidemics.

The broken spears is an assessment of the difficult relations that have existed between the descendants of the Aztecs and the contemporary Mexicans. These relations are strictly defined by the language, for the cultural manifestations and factors of identity. The book has as mission, bring the voices of past to the audience: present the indigenous people to the rest of the world; contribute to the global history with this review of struggle. There are many copies around the world. Copies have appeared in Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, among others.

This title is described for many experts like a unique and powerful story that relates perfectly the Aztec struggle in those times of Spanish colonization.

The Broken Spears is a way to know better and chronologically so many topics in the mentioned context. The object of study during those years is the arrived of the Spaniards, the resistance of Aztecs and finally, the surrender. One of the chronicles of this book describes the place where the drums were played and the rituals started. The part where the Spaniards cut the head of the man who was drumming was a shocking event and perhaps the beginning of the war for this town.

Immediately, the Spaniards started to cut the head of all the celebrants, no matter how the Aztecs tried to save themselves, they only found the death. The history says that the conquest wasn't the result of a spontaneous deal between the Aztecs and Spaniards. We are talking about a sequence of various events; the stronger one against the weak. The Spaniards conquerors were available to use the best weapons in those times, they had the best technology, the best army and the best organization as civilization.

In this brief review of the ancient history, we can appreciate all the stages during the colonization and how Mexico suffered the biggest cultural change. We can define this process like the Christianity era. For Mexicans was an era of introduction, fear, resistance, adaption and a lot of changes. The development of new continents appeared with the first human beings upon twenty thousand years ago. In Mexico, for example, the development of the famous pyramid of Teotihuacan has probably no more than ten thousand years ago.

To make a global analysis of America, we must see until the middle of second millennium before we can discover the earliest vestiges of systemic agriculture and the making of ceramic. Egypt and Mesopotamia for example, had contrived modes of writing as far back as the fourth millennium before Christ. The architecture in Mexico was the main attractive to Spaniards; those structures indicated the presence of ceremonial centers and rituals. A number of extraordinary artifacts have been found there, they Spaniards also found the oldest calendar.

Mexicans were suffering the construction of the Spaniard empire and the introduction to the Christianity. The Spaniards started the foundation of many cities and structures inside of temples, pyramids and jungles. An example of transitions is the changed that suffered the ritual centers in Teotihuacan during the colonization and the implementation of Christianity. The Maya area started to decline in the eighth and ninth centuries and was eventually abandoned.

We can appreciate the lost of culture and essence, the Aztecs stop to make their rituals in those places because the Spaniards constructed cities based in a new civilization. The new civilization had as mission to build a new stage based on the Christianity. The Spaniards were looking for a new place where they can teach their culture and especially the religion.

For the Spaniards, Mexico was a perfect place to impose the religion. With the correct organization and use of weapons, they started to encroach and trespass the Aztec territory. The Spaniards wanted the Aztec lands, theirs treasures and the thousands of natural resources. Actually, the greatness of some places in the Aztec culture is considered as a result of a mixture of many ethnic groups. This people were especially gifted as warriors and administrators.

Tenochtilan is known as the Metropolis of the Aztecs, at the beginning this capital was founded on a low-lying island. To describe the history of the indigenous is necessary to focus in this stage. The sights in this place were so clear; in this capital the indigenous were available to make rituals and a

lot of temples. The main temple was the scenery where the Spaniards were invited to a party, they started to know and study the place; they knew it well: the conquest was the plan.

The Spanish soldiers described the Aztec city as a special place to start a new civilization. They definitely had a good reason to describing the city in such enthusiastic terms. The main reason was the richness of the land and all the virgin territorial. It seems like the biggest wars in the history have been product of fights for conquer a territory. Is very important to say that maps, artefacts and evidences have disappeared during the conquest. This is corroborated by the ancient's writers and experts in the topic; they said that the Aztec city lost a lot of characteristic elements of their culture.

Perhaps one of the principal arguments of the author is that the Spanish empire contributed to the downfall of the Aztecs. In this review, we can appreciate how the Spaniards exploited them and took a big advantage because the cultural difference. The Spaniards were viewed as a giant at the first time. As we said before, the Spaniards were invited to a cultural party. The Aztecs welcomed them with a lot of representative gifts and festivities. The Spaniards realized they were superior when Aztecs made a ceremony with various rituals.

They made this kind of rituals for someone who is considered a god. Spaniards started to create a thought of superiority in their minds and they changed the kindness for submission. Basically, the main factor of study in this review is the massacre to the Aztecs and a recompilation of stories from

the survivors. These stories represent the more realistic point of view of what really happened during the Spanish colonization.

Most of the history about the Aztec town was based on actions and events produced by the Spanish conquest. Leon Portilla has contributed to the global history with illustrations of the survivors. This is about to explain the conquest since the beginning with the respective evidence like maps of the ancient city, for example. This book is strictly focus on how the Spaniards exploited the Aztecs resources to the point where they started killing people to exterminate them.

One of the turning events in this context during the Spanish conquest was the massacre in the main temple during the celebration of Toxcatl. This book is definitely different than others because it gives with real illustrations accounts of the fall of the Aztec empire. The text is especial too because it was written from the vantage point of the Aztecs rather than the Spaniards. The author describes many different reasons why the Spaniards were successful in the defeat of such a strong empire.

At the beginning, the author starts out by giving a review of the culture and religion of both towns. The reader can structure many theories of how this carried over to the Aztecs way of thinking and fighting. When we talk about culture and religion, we appreciate how Portilla shows the technology over the Aztecs. The author also goes on to describe the poor leadership of Motecuhzoma.

There is no doubt about the technology in the Spanish empire was the main reason of the fall in the Aztec town. Portilla describes the strategy that worked well for the Spaniards as they made alliances with other cities. Another factor that contributed to the Aztec fall was the plague that wiped a big part of the cities. This may have been the greatest factor in the fall of the Aztecs.

All of these factors combined effectively show how Spaniards prevailed over this great Aztec empire. The culture of Aztecs played an important role in the way they thought and fought. The religion of the Aztecs, for example, carried some ridiculous rituals such as human sacrifice along with using magicians and wizards. In the war context, the Aztecs made human sacrifices to the gods to obtain protection. They did not want to fight with weapons against the Spanish empire.

The Spanish empire always knew how to take advantage because the cultural difference and religion. An example of this fact is when the Spaniards attacked the man who was drumming and cut off his head and it rolled across the floor. They attacked all the celebrants with no compassion. They attacked and slashed others in the abdomen, and their entrails all spilled to the ground.

This book should be required for Latin-American studies, since it gives a very detailed description of the events. To present a material that would reveal the side of Aztecs, and how they viewed the event, would very helpful because it will dramatize how the Aztecs took the colonization. How they lost their identity, their culture and religion after the invasion.

Is a fact that more of the negative opinions could be drawn on the description of the Azteca king: Motecuhzoma. What his weakness were, and which mistakes made him lose his throne and his town. In those times, the Spaniards were men who craved for gold and treasures, but in the Aztec lands, they wanted more. The Broken Spears is a complete review of the Spanish colonization; it is well written and easy to understand, which ends up being really fascinating because of the descriptions.