



A Rain of Darts: The Mexica Aztecs (Texas Pan American)

Burr Cartwright Brundage

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This book was the first serious scholarly attempt in nearly a century to put in narrative form the exciting and important history of the Mexican Indians who founded Tenochtitlan and who created from it what is known as the Aztec empire. Although many native sources, often in translations with scholarly annotations, became available in the twentieth century, the corpus of this material was scattered and uncoordinated. Burr Cartwright Brundage has utilized these sources to produce a consecutive narrative that portrays direction and purpose in the evolution of the Aztec empire.

A Rain of Darts is the first one-volume history of the Mexica, historically the most important of the Aztec peoples. The focus of the narrative is on the political state produced by the Mexica during their stormy history. The eleven Mexica reigns that preceded the Spanish Conquest are investigated, their triumphs and errors explained, and the lives of their great leaders illuminated where the sources allow.

The narrative opens with the first appearance of the Mexica out of the arid north; it details their aimless wandering, the founding of the city of Mexico in the waters of Lake Tezcoco, their desperate struggle for independence (successfully achieved in 1428), and the flourishing of the new state and its curiously structured empire. This history concludes with an analysis of the character of Moteuczoma II, and investigates the final sickness of the Mexican state. Cortez and his small army of Spaniards are seen here for the first time in historical literature through the eyes of the people they conquered. The Mexica Aztecs remain at the center of the narrative.

The Mexica were unable to build a tightly knit empire because of the elitist, international warrior class and its peculiar cult of war and sacrifice. To the Mexica, warfare and bloodshed were sacraments; the teuctli or knightly warrior was the priest of this cult, to which he was as loyal as to the state. In this lay the uniqueness of the Mexican state and the seeds of its tragic end in 1521.

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