



Pizarro: Conqueror of the Inca

Stuart Stirling

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Francisco Pizarro is possibly one of the best known but least understood figures of world history. In 1530, at the age of fifty-four, he set out on his successful and bloody conquest of Peru, thus changing the future of a continent and its peoples forever. It was a long way from his humble beginnings as an illiterate, illegitimate pig-herder. Within these pages Stuart Stirling tells the story of adversity and tragedy which was the life of Francisco Pizarro.

By the standards of the time, Pizarro was an elderly man when he conquered Peru. He had served as a foot soldier in Spain's Italian wars and later earned a living as an Indian fighter and slaver. Audacious, ruthless and cruel, Pizarro had a surprising and almost fatalistic belief in the Indies as an escape from his illegitimacy. Luck also played a major part in his invasion of Peru - Pizarro's 200 men should not have been able to defeat the indigenous army of more than 30,000, but they did. However, the Spanish conquest saw few happy endings, even for Pizarro, who was now rich beyond his wildest dreams. Eleven years after the conquest, he was assassinated by his one-time Spanish allies.

Stuart Stirling's researches in the Archives of the Indies in Seville enable him to present an accurate portrait of Pizarro as a man of his time, and to place even his most infamous act - the killing of the Inca king Atahualpa - within context. This book brings the man to life against a turbulent background of exploration, discovery, empire building and a clash of cultures.

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