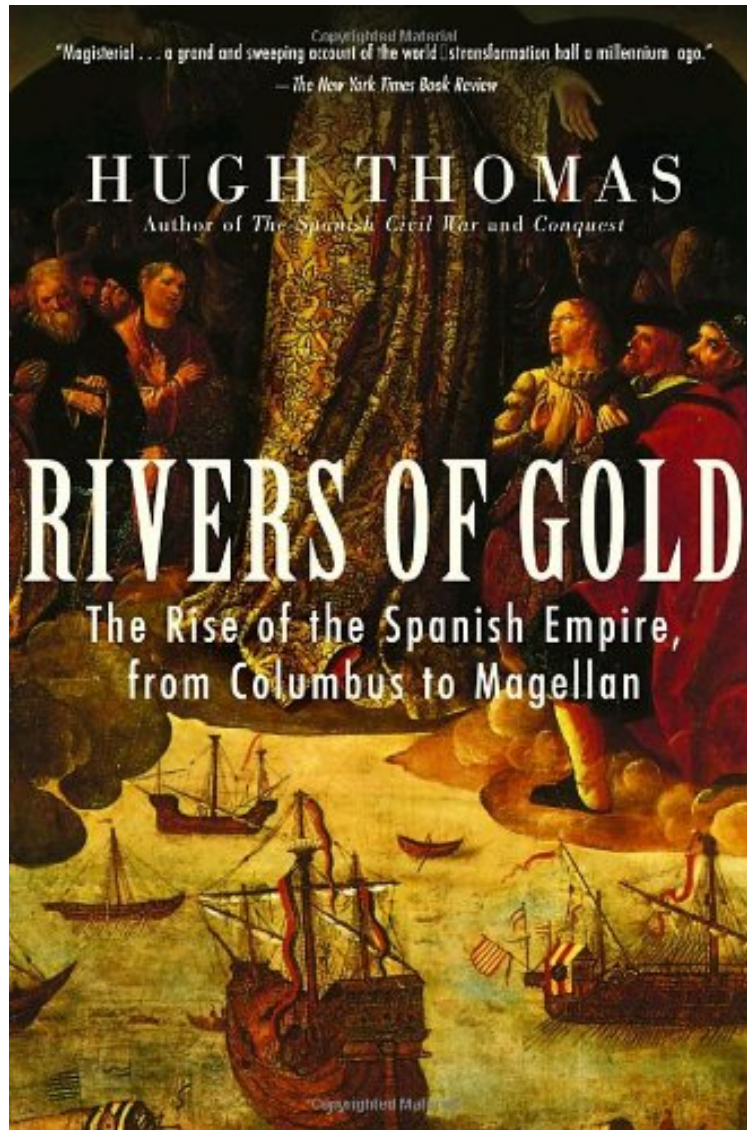


(Free pdf) Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan

Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan

Hugh Thomas

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Hugh Thomas : Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire, from Columbus to Magellan:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. No Fluffy History Here By ArtisteA very informative book, not just on Columbus, but on the time and the circumstances of his rise to fame and fortune. Some will find the details

overwhelming---you can skip through family histories, campaigns, etc.---, but the research is solid and much of this history is genuinely fascinating. This isn't fluffy history by any stretch. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Santiago First rate review of the rise and fall of Spain. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I was familiar with a lot of it. By joedud I was familiar with a lot of it.

From one of the greatest historians of the Spanish world, here is a fresh and fascinating account of Spain's early conquests in the Americas. Hugh Thomas's magisterial narrative of Spain in the New World has all the characteristics of great historical literature: amazing discoveries, ambition, greed, religious fanaticism, court intrigue, and a battle for the soul of humankind. Hugh Thomas shows Spain at the dawn of the sixteenth century as a world power on the brink of greatness. Her monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, had retaken Granada from Islam, thereby completing restoration of the entire Iberian peninsula to Catholic rule. Flush with success, they agreed to sponsor an obscure Genoese sailor's plan to sail west to the Indies, where, legend purported, gold and spices flowed as if they were rivers. For Spain and for the world, this decision to send Christopher Columbus west was epochal: the dividing line between the medieval and the modern. Spain's colonial adventures began inauspiciously: Columbus's meagerly funded expedition cost less than a Spanish princess's recent wedding. In spite of its small scale, it was a mission of astounding scope: to claim for Spain all the wealth of the Indies. The gold alone, thought Columbus, would fund a grand Crusade to reunite Christendom with its holy city, Jerusalem. The lofty aspirations of the first explorers died hard, as the pursuit of wealth and glory competed with the pursuit of pious impulses. The adventurers from Spain were also, of course, curious about geographical mysteries, and they had a remarkable loyalty to their country. But rather than bridging earth and heaven, Spain's many conquests bore a bitter fruit. In their search for gold, Spaniards enslaved Indians from the Bahamas and the South American mainland. The eloquent protests of Bartolom de las Casas, here much discussed, began almost immediately. Columbus and other Spanish explorers: Cortes, Ponce de Len, and Magellan among them created an empire for Spain of unsurpassed size and scope. But the door was soon open for other powers, enemies of Spain, to stake their claims. Great men and women dominate these pages: cardinals and bishops, priors and sailors, landowners and warriors, princes and priests, noblemen and their determined wives. *Rivers of Gold* is a great story brilliantly told. More significant, it is an engrossing history with many profound and often disturbing echoes in the present.

From Publishers Weekly Thomas has long belonged to the elite of Spanish studies. His popular reputation was made in 1961 by a sweeping history of the Spanish Civil War, strongly sympathetic to the Second Republic and smuggled across the Pyrenees during Franco's dictatorship. But by the '80s he was an adviser to Margaret Thatcher (who made him a lord), and over time unfolded an increasingly conservative vision of the Spanish past. In his new book, Thomas returns to the conquest of the Caribbean islands and Mexico in the first two generations after Columbus, relating a sequence of events he has described as the most important phase of world history. He does so with narrative vigor, informed by personal familiarity with two continents. In his insistence on accidental imperialism and on the multinational dimensions of the enterprise of conquest, his interpretation bears some similarity to recent work by Henry Kamen (*Empire*). However, the ideological underpinnings will be controversial. Indigenous cultures less concerned with street-cleaning than the Aztecs are described as "savages" who would have destroyed each other had the Spanish not shown up. The demographic catastrophes resulting from conquest are treated as minor details in the chivalric adventure that helped ensure Spanish greatness, a tale in which the "savages" are mere backdrop. Indeed, readers free from colonial prejudice will be surprised to find themselves also written out of history: "Who can doubt now," Thomas asks rhetorically, "that [the Spanish] were right to denounce the idea of religion based on human sacrifice or the simple worship of the sun or the rain?)" 32 pages of illus., maps. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine Lord Thomas's old school style privileges grand themes and rich descriptions over theory. It all adds up to a sweeping history of a brief but crucial period of the Spanish Empire. While Thomas doesn't say anything new (and writes from an outdated Eurocentric perspective), he recounts the story of Spain's rise and the subversion of imperial ventures by private interests with great panache. Household names (remember Balboa, Columbus, and Ferdinand and Isabel?) as well as lesser-known figures come alive. A family tree, glossary, and fascinating endnotes supplement his narrative. But, Thomas skims over some key themes (such as the conquest of the Aztecs and the Native Americans), and his arcane language, myriad details, and breezy narrative may sidetrack some readers. Copyright 2004 Phillips Nelson Media, Inc. From Booklist The early exploration of the New World is inextricable from the brief and intense rise of the Spanish Empire, shows Thomas in this account, which differs from his several earlier studies of Spain and the colonization of the New World (*Conquest* [1994] and *The Slave Trade* [1997], to name two), primarily in its focus on the relationship between exploration and empire building. Biographical accounts of key figures are key components of Thomas' narrative--Columbus, Ferdinand, and Isabel are, of course, major foci--but at least as interesting is his more subtle description of the rise of bureaucratic institutions in Spain's colonies. In addition, Thomas includes significant moments of empire not directly related to exploration, such as Charles V being elected Holy Roman Emperor. Engagingly presented, this book clearly shows the author's passion for his subject; his preface also reminds us that he

has visited nearly all of the places referred to in this book. Includes a family tree, a glossary, and a reading list.
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