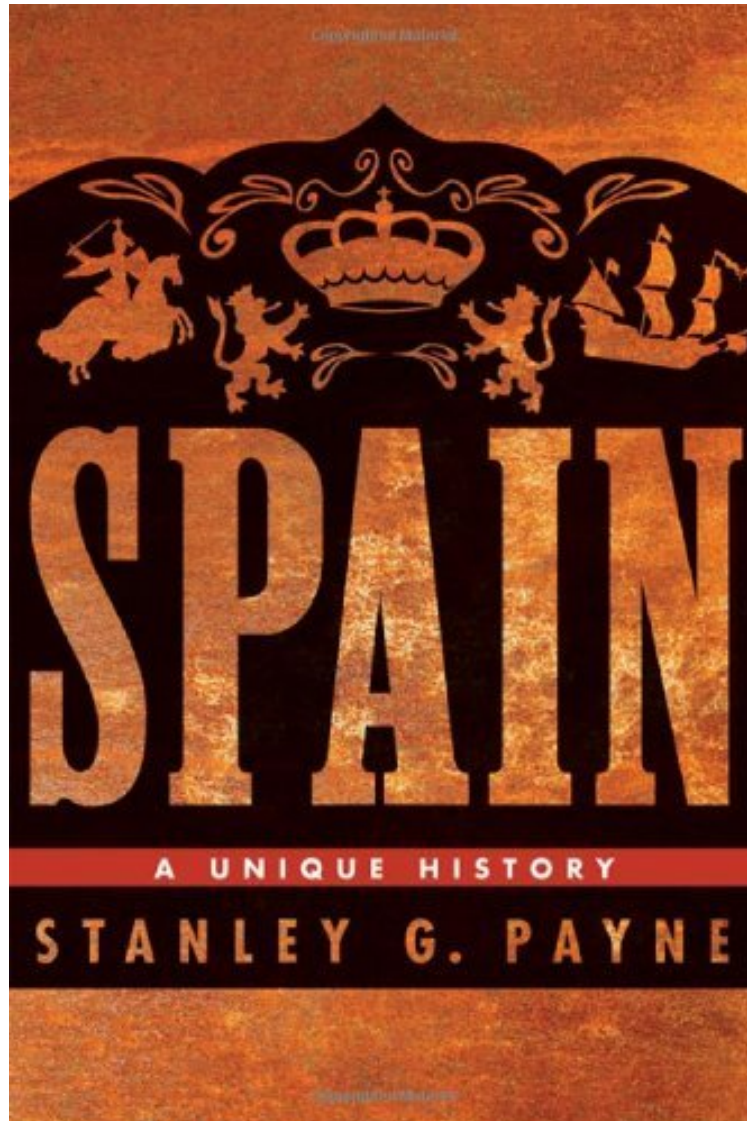


(Free read ebook) Spain: A Unique History

Spain: A Unique History

Von Stanley G. Payne

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Von Stanley G. Payne : Spain: A Unique History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spain: A Unique History:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A wealth of information on Spanish history, but ...Von GrandmagThe Hispanist Payne (as he calls himself) is amazingly, enormously knowledgeable on the topic of Spanish history (and much of further European history as well), from the 6th century A.D. to the present. He covers the many periods from the establishment of the state through the centuries

of Arab rule, the Reconquest and the Crusades, the Middle Ages through to the 20th century, the Republic and its downfall, the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship and the Transition after his death, up to Zapatero's government in the early 21st century. The chapters are mostly chronological, although some are more thematic ("Spain and Portugal", "Moscow and Madrid", among others), which makes for occasional confusion as to when and where events occurred. His presentation is almost encyclopedic in its vastness, yet his style of writing is easy to read. At times one has the feeling he is telling the reader his story, the information flowing readily and easily, as though it were all in his head, and he needed but occasionally to take a quick glance at his notes in order to continue. This thorough knowledge has its drawbacks, though. Every now and then names, expressions, events are mentioned, without date, without place, without reference. He knows exactly what he's talking about, but the reader may or may not, and this I found at times irritating. A few examples: At the very beginning the reader learns that "Spain emerged as a kingdom ... under the Visigoths". And who, please, were the Visigoths? He never explains. Of course the reader can find the answer on the internet, but a small explanation in parentheses, or in a footnote in the book itself would have been nice. In a later chapter on "The `Hispanic Monarchy'", Payne introduces "The remarkable marriage of the rulers (later know as the Catholic Monarchs)", without any details; the reader is left wondering: Who? With whom? When? By putting together mosaic pieces of information given earlier and later in the book, and, finally, by googling, I was able to establish that Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon married in 1469, thus combining all of the Iberian peninsula states. The missing details that angered me the most concern Calvo Sotelo. More than once Payne refers to the disastrous effect of Sotelo's assassination which more or less sparked, or marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. Yet he never bothers to explain to the uninformed (and why else am I reading his book, if not to gain the information I'm lacking) who Sotelo was and why his death had such a profound effect. The first time Sotelo appeared, I thought I had perhaps missed something, so I quickly looked for his name in the Index. The references there led me only to pages on which he had been mentioned. (Once more, Google had to come to my rescue.) Here and there Payne makes references which I also found somewhat irritating. Two examples: In writing on cultural influence in the chapter on "Spain and Islam", he writes that "Spanish music...could not be played on the typically Muslim instruments". Since when can musical instruments be "Muslim", or "Jewish", or "Methodist" or whatever? "Arab" might have been a better expression. In his chapter "In the Shadow of the Military", Payne refers to the attempted takeover of the government by the military in February, 1981, five years after democratization had begun following Franco's death. In this paragraph Payne writes, the takeover "never happened, because of the crown's startled and resolute reaction to the crude assault on the parliamentary chamber...on February 23, 1981." From this the reader must assume the king, Juan Carlos, reacted immediately to save Spain's young democracy. However, Javier Cercas' fascinating fact-written-as-novel "The Anatomy of a Moment" (also available on) describes at length the slow and painful hours in which the "crown" consulted and re-consulted with his advisors and others before finally, almost reluctantly, refusing to go along with the military plan worked out by his court secretary and close mentor during his adolescence and early adulthood, Alfonso Armada. While these and other similar examples are pettinesses, their imprecision bothers in a book so full of supposedly - and most probably - precise information. A final criticism: Payne concentrates on Spanish history, while regional history plays almost no role. For a Hispanist this is natural and understandable. However, his manner of occasionally dismissing, almost scoffing at regional developments, issues, or concerns, especially when or as portrayed by regional historians, above all in the Catalan and Basque nations, seems thoroughly unnecessary. His work overall might deserve 5 stars, the above mentioned irritants have led me to give it only 4.

Kurzbeschreibung From bloodthirsty conquest to exotic romance, stereotypes of Spain abound. This new volume by distinguished historian Stanley G. Payne draws on his half-century of experience to offer a balanced, broadly chronological survey of Spanish history from the Visigoths to the present. Who were the first Spaniards? Is Spain a fully Western country? Was Spanish liberalism a failure? Examining Spain's unique role in the larger history of Western Europe, Payne reinterprets key aspects of the country's history. Topics include Muslim culture in the peninsula, the Spanish monarchy, the empire, and the relationship between Spain and Portugal. Turning to the twentieth century, Payne discusses the Second Republic and the Spanish Civil War. The book's final chapters focus on the Franco regime, the nature of Spanish fascism, and the special role of the military. Analyzing the figure of Franco himself, Payne seeks to explain why some Spaniards still regard him with respect, while many others view the late dictator with profound loathing. Framed by reflections on the author's own formation as a Hispanist and his evaluation of the controversy about historical memory in contemporary Spain, this volume offers deeply informed insights into both the history and the historiography of a unique country. A Choice Outstanding Academic Book Best Books for General Audiences, selected by the Public Library Association