



Montezuma II (c. 1470-1520) was ruler of the Aztec Empire - in an area of the world we now call Mexico - when Spaniards arrived in 1519. (His name has various spellings, including Moctezuma and Moteuczoma.)

Not understanding the true intentions of these warring visitors - who were intent on conquest - Montezuma eventually doomed himself, and his empire, by placating (instead of resisting) the Spaniards.

At the start of Montezuma's reign, the Aztec Empire was characterized by independent city states. The new ruler believed in central government, however, so he spent much of his time strengthening his authority and replacing nobles loyal to his predecessor.

Believing he was semi-divine - and being treated in that fashion by his subjects - Montezuma encouraged lavish court rituals which honored his lordly status.

Always worried about betrayal from within, he miscalculated the threat from without. Because of that - and the superior fighting power of the Spaniards - Montezuma II was the last Aztec ruler.

Following the Spanish Conquest - and Montezuma's own death, in 1520, as a direct result of the invasion (although accounts of his actual demise differ) - the Aztec Empire ceased to exist.

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Montezuma II

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