

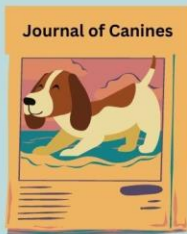

Recognizing Useful Academic Sources

Contents

Is it relevant?.....	1
How do I recognize an academic article?	1
How do I recognize an academic book?	2
Ways to confirm authority and reliability of the author and publisher.....	4

Is it relevant?

HOW TO TELL IF A SOURCE IS RELEVANT

Journal Articles

- Look at the title of both the journal and the article.
- Read the abstract/summary.
- Skim the first and last paragraph.

Books

- Read the book description on the book.
- Skim at the table of contents and intro.
- Look at the cover and back of the book.
- Find a book review on Google or Amazon.

How do I recognize an academic article?

- It usually has an abstract/summary at the beginning of the article.
- It *always* has references, notes, and/or a bibliography.
- The author is a scholar or authority in the field. (Google their name.)
- The journal/author is affiliated with an academic institution or reputable organization. (Google the journal.)
- You limited your search to “*peer reviewed*” in USIC search.*
- You used Google Scholar or one of our academic databases.
- The item is published in an academic journal. Many thesis and dissertations are online, but these might not be peer-reviewed.

Recognizing Useful Academic Sources

IS IT AN ACADEMIC ARTICLE?

TACTICAL FACTORS IN THE SPANISH CONQUEST OF THE AZTECS

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Author's name and institution

Abstract/Summary

A perspective largely unexamined in past works on the Spanish Conquest of Mexico has been the details of the tactical systems of the respective sides, and how these systems worked on the battlefield to produce the Spanish victory. This article examines the Conquest in terms of tactics, applying a military-historical perspective to ethnohistorical texts and data gleaned from modern works. It is shown that Spanish infantry tactics and horse cavalry were critical factors in the Spanish victory. [Aztecs, ethnohistory, Mexico, Spanish Conquest, war]

Introduction

Most interpretations of the Spanish Conquest of the Aztecs attribute the Spanish victory to psychosocial factors—the Aztecs had a different conception of warfare, or they were paralyzed by the Quetzalcoatl myth—over to technological factors.

the Spanish victory in the Conquest can be found in the tactics of the two sides. In this interpretation the Spanish were able to win on the battlefield largely because of two facts: 1) the way in which the Spanish used their infantry formations (close order formation with tightly drilled bodies of men) gave them a decisive advantage over Aztec infantry

IS IT AN ACADEMIC ARTICLE?

194

ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

presence on the lakes in the form of armed brigantines. This new order of Spanish forces was merely a variation of their usual tactical functions.

*It is beyond the scope of this article to examine the sufficiency of these "orthodox" interpretations. However, certain assumptions about the Aztecs and their way of war, and the ways in which they responded to the Spanish invasion, have been criticized or are susceptible to criticism. For example, the supposition that the Aztec conception of warfare was fundamentally different from the European is no longer defensible. Barry Isaacs (1983a) has demonstrated from the ethnohistorical record that Mexican warfare on the eve of the Spanish Conquest was similar or identical to "state-level warfare elsewhere . . ." with the same heavy casualties, destruction of property and lands, and political objectives. The capture of enemy warriors for sacrifice, in Isaacs' view, fades to a secondary pursuit of peasant soldiers eager to advance in rank; the overall aims and methods of warfare were set by the elite, who had a different agenda (1983a). Even the special case of the "Flower War" (*socktyuoyotl*), which has usually been interpreted as wholly religious in motivation and content (Soustelle 1970: 101), in fact had very real strategic and attritional purposes (Isaacs 1983b). Similar criticism can be leveled against the assumption of the superiority of Spanish weapons, or the effects of the Quetzalcoatl myth on the Aztecs (see, for example, Hasig 1988: 237-238, 240).

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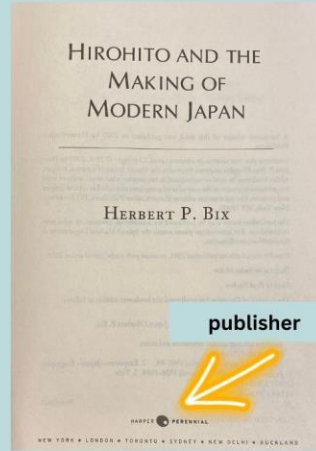
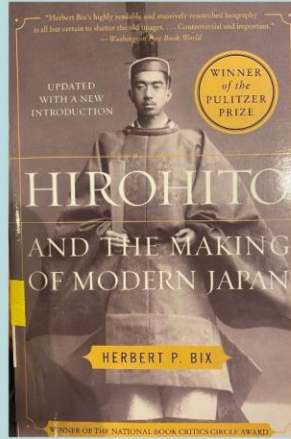
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How do I recognize an academic book?

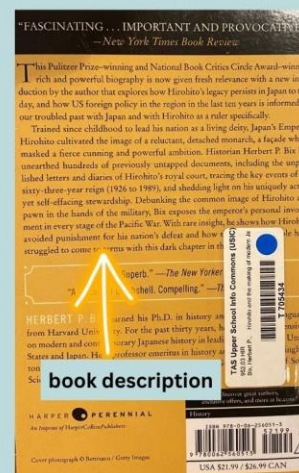
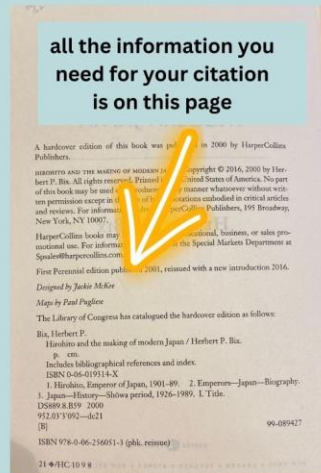
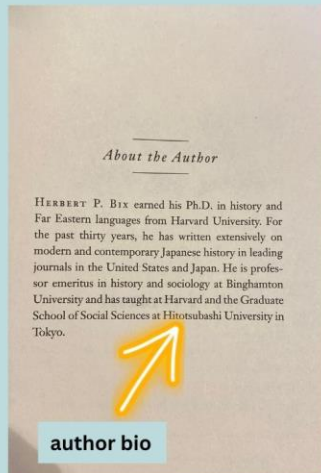
- It has references, notes, and/or a bibliography.
 - Look in the back of the book, at the bottom of each page, or at the end of chapters for references.
- The author is a scholar or authority in the field.
- The author is affiliated with an academic institution or reputable organization, and/or is well-reviewed by reliable sources.

Recognizing Useful Academic Sources

IS IT AN ACADEMIC BOOK?



IS IT AN ACADEMIC BOOK?



Recognizing Useful Academic Sources

IS IT AN ACADEMIC BOOK?

Research for each chapter is listed in the back of the book

references

Ways to confirm authority and reliability of the author and publisher.

- Google the author with site: edu - Ben Gross site: edu
- See how many other articles the author wrote by clicking on their name in your search, if it's a link, or by searching their name on Google Scholar.
- Note how many other writers cited the article if in Google Scholar.
- Check the bio page in the book or Google the author's name.
- Google the Journal, book publisher.
- See if the publisher is affiliated with a university, e.g. Oxford University Press.
- Google the author or book to see if they won the Pulitzer Prize or National Book Award, etc.
- Google the journal title or publisher to see if it is published by a university or other reputable press.
- Find reviews of the book on Google or USIC Search.