

The book was found

The Career And Legend Of Vasco Da Gama



Synopsis

Vasco da Gama (?1469-1524) is well known as one of a generation of discoverers, along with Magellan, Cabral, and Columbus. Yet little is known about his life, or about the context within which he 'discovered' the all-sea route to India in 1497-99. This book, based on a mass of published and unpublished sources in Portuguese and other languages, delineates Gama's career and social context, focusing on the delicate balance between 'career' and 'legend'. The book addresses broad questions of myth-building and nationalism, while never losing sight of Gama himself.

Book Information

Paperback: 428 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press (December 28, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521646294

ISBN-13: 978-0521646291

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #757,597 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Spain & Portugal](#) #724 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geography > Regional](#) #782 in [Books > History > World > Expeditions & Discoveries](#)

Customer Reviews

'... exhaustively documented, and dense with information.' The Times Literary Supplement
'Subrahmanyam is an exemplary scholar. His knowledge of the subject is unsurpassed.' The Sunday Times
'... a book notable as much for its formidable scholarship as for the boldness and breadth of its conception'. Cultura
'... an outstanding biography ... which makes it easy to follow Vasco Da Gama's career'. Business Standard

A startling new interpretation of the myth and the reality of the life of one of the great figures of the 'Age of Discoverers'.

Vasco da Gama is one of the great heros of the Portuguese Age of Exploration. This book is a well written and very thorough look at his career and exploits, particularly the impact of political

maneuvering within the Portuguese nobility at the time. The author has translated and cited many historic Portuguese writings. As with many modern histories, the myth and legend are taken down a notch, and da Gama the man - warts and all - is revealed. Nonetheless da Gama is all the more interesting as a flawed human character. My only disappointment with the book is that the author seemed to have missed an opportunity to delve more deeply into the storytelling aspect of da Gama's voyages, especially his first journey to India. The account of the voyages at times seem rather dry, lacking a narrative voice to pull the reader in and recreate what it must have been like as the Portuguese encountered various civilizations for the first time. But it was only because the author does such a thorough job of detailing the events of the voyages that I was left wanting to hear a bit more ... All in all a very well researched and documented study of da Gama, which has served as a good starting point for learning more about this fascinating character.

In times wherein we debate kinks and spikes in a flat world, the relevance of the great explorers of the 15th century in contributing to this phase is a moot point. What could lend a boost to any of these debates is this great book on one of the explorers viz. Vasco Da Gama by Sanjay Subrahmanyam. The book is infinitely detailed, sometimes tiresomely so but to a patient reader the facts form a coherent pattern in a tapestry checkered by messianic zeal and greed. Vasco Da Gama came from a reasonably humble beginning, born to a family of noblemen of an average standing. Though current history and the significance of events have allowed poets and artists to use broad strokes to paint him as an intrepid adventurer, this can only be a partial truth. Vasco Da Gama was a creation of the times albeit a smart and brave one. 15th century Portugal displays an enormous amount of politicking. The power of the royalty is undermined or augmented based on the support of military orders which are leftovers of the crusades, notably one of them viz. The Order of Christ largely being a makeover of the Templars who may have found refuge in Portugal. The king Dom Joao 2, under severe competitive pressure from neighboring Spain which could boast of greater maritime success (both financially and nominally), discovers an excellent device for his ambitions in Vasco Da Gama who is entrusted with the voyage to India. The purpose being twofold - undermine the power of the Moors who till now have dominated the spice trade, and sound the death knell on Islam by allying with the mythical Prestor John who controls an large army of willing Christians. May 1498 sees Vasco Da Gama sighting land in Kerala, and the first Portuguese land in India. The spice trade is portrayed to be fairly open controlled largely by the Samudri Zamorin of Calicut. What follows is a tale of greed and power-play with the Portuguese based on their sheer might on the seas being able to control a large share of the spice trade. Religious zeal takes a back-seat to sheer

greed and though the spice trade is largely won its at a fairly large cost to the locals. Vasco goes back to a sinecure under a new king Dom Manuel and over a period of time with political upheaval taking a toll on his image and standing, he is "convinced" to become the viceroy of India where he finally is put to rest. So the questions linger, was the discovery of the sea route to India an enabler for a more global society? From a western perspective, maybe yes, but for the largely peaceful trade routes that existed in the Indian ocean the dark ages had just begun

Subrahmanyam's book on Vasco de Gama opens like a powerful opera with a nineteenth century overture by Mayerbeeer on one of the heroes of European exploration. One instantly remembers Said's use of Aida to illustrate his point about culture and imperialism, also at the heart of this book . It is a theoretically sophisticated book informed by Foucault and Said, who nevertheless are never in the foreground to cloud the real issues. There is no jargon to spoil the sophistication, yet the discourse about de Gama is slowly deconstructed as it unfolds as a biography, a portrait, a eulogy , an opera and a heroic journey. It is no longer a European view of de Gama, but a more global one, where Middle Eastern and Indian merchants long absent on the pages written in Europe play their role, at long last. It looks at the Portuguese arrival in India as a real historical event as opposed to leaving it a hymn to exploration and European imperialism. The book examines the construction of the Portuguese heroic myth of de Gama often represented as a Christ like figure, followed by 12 apostles, a Christian hero who has left holy relics. It might infuriate some readers, but it will inform many others about a major chapter of history which has remained, as the book title suggests a legend. A tour de force, and a must read for serious historians. The best book I have read in a long time, and a real pleasure to read.

While the book certainly merits praise for its extensive research, one cannot help but see that the author takes every opportunity to throw pot shots at the Portuguese, failing in the process to highlight the merit that this trip had to the whole world. A more objective, less emotional approach would have greatly improved your work. JosÃ©Â© Dores, Toronto, Canada 5 September 1998

[Download to continue reading...](#)

The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama Vasco Da Gama: Quest for the Spice Trade (In the Footsteps of Explorers) The Last Crusade: The Epic Voyages of Vasco da Gama Career Information, Career Counseling, and Career Development (9th Edition) Career Information, Career Counseling, and Career Development (10th Edition) (Merrill Counseling (Hardcover)) Career Information, Career Counseling, and Career Development (10th Edition) (Merrill Counseling) Career

Information, Career Counseling, and Career Development (7th Edition) Pais Vasco, Asturias y Cantabria / Basque Country, Asturias and Cantabria: Rutas Del Romanico (Travel Time Arte) (Spanish Edition) Pais Vasco y Navarra/ Basque Country and Navarra (Trotamundos/ Globetrotters) (Spanish Edition) La Hora Vasca del Uruguay: GÃfÂ©nesis y desarrollo del nacionalismo vasco en Uruguay (1825-1960) (Spanish Edition) Rutas arqueologicas en la Espana verde / Archaeological Routes in Green Spain: Pais Vasco, Asturias, Cantabria y Galicia / Basque Country, Asturias, ... Galicia (Travel Time Arte) (Spanish Edition) PaÃfÂ-s Vasco / The Basque Country (Guia Viva / Live Guide) (Spanish Edition) Legend Of Zelda: Breath Of The Wild Ultimate Un-Official Secrets Tips and Strategies, Premium Secrets for your favourite game by Ultimate Player: An ... Fantasy World The Legend Of Zelda Book 2) Legend (A Legend Novel, Book 1) The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords -Legendary Edition- (The Legend of Zelda: Legendary Edition) The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask / A Link to the Past -Legendary Edition- (The Legend of Zelda: Legendary Edition) The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap / Phantom Hourglass -Legendary Edition- (The Legend of Zelda: Legendary Edition) The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time -Legendary Edition- (The Legend of Zelda: Legendary Edition) Legend of Korra: The Art of the Animated Series Book Two: Spirits (The Legend Of Korra: The Art Of The Animated Series 2) The Summer Star: One Legend, Three Enchanting Novellas (Legend of Scotland Book 2)

[Contact Us](#)

[DMCA](#)

[Privacy](#)

[FAQ & Help](#)