



Columbus: The Four Voyages, 1492-1504

By Laurence Bergreen

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Columbus: The Four Voyages, 1492-1504 By Laurence Bergreen

He knew nothing of celestial navigation or of the existence of the Pacific Ocean. He was a self-promoting and ambitious entrepreneur. His maps were a hybrid of fantasy and delusion. When he did make land, he enslaved the populace he found, encouraged genocide, and polluted relations between peoples. He ended his career in near lunacy. But Columbus had one asset that made all the difference, an inborn sense of the sea, of wind and weather, and of selecting the optimal course to get from A to B. Laurence Bergreen's energetic and bracing book gives the whole Columbus and most importantly, the whole of his career, not just the highlight of 1492. Columbus undertook three more voyages between 1494 and 1504, each designed to demonstrate that he could sail to China within a matter of weeks and convert those he found there to Christianity. By their conclusion, Columbus was broken in body and spirit, a hero undone by the tragic flaw of pride. If the first voyage illustrates the rewards of exploration, this book shows how the subsequent voyages illustrate the costs - political, moral, and economic.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A Look Inside *Columbus: The Four Voyages* (Click on Images to Enlarge)



Description: Engraving of Christopher Columbus offering his services to King John (João) II of Portugal before winning the backing of Spain.



Description: World map, c1489, of Henricus Martellus. A similar map is believed to have influenced Columbus's ideas about his first voyage.



Description: Woodcut from 1493 of Native Americans fleeing in fear of Columbus as he sets foot on the Bahama island "Guanahani."



Description: A 1493 woodcut accompanying Columbus's "Letter on the First Voyage," illustrating his arrival in the Indies.



Description: World map, 1500, of Juan de la Cosa, cartographer and navigator on Christopher Columbus's second voyage of 1493-94.



Description: The first page of Columbus's 1492 manuscript The Book of Privileges.

Review

"Laurence Bergreen's Columbus was brilliant, audacious, volatile, paranoid and ruthless. What emerges in this biography, a worthy addition to the literature on Columbus is a surprising and revealing portrait of a man who might have been the title character in a Shakespearean tragedy."

— **The New York Times**

"Laurence Bergreen's ambitious new biography, *Columbus: The Four Voyages* [is] a spellbinding epic that's simultaneously a profoundly private portrait of the most complex, compelling, controversial creature ever to board a boat. This scrupulously researched, unbiased account of four death-defying journeys to The New World reveals the Admiral's paradoxical personality."

— **USA Today**

"A compelling new book [that] details the explorer's trips to the New World, including three you haven't heard about."

— **Salon**

"Once you have read this superb account of Columbus' four voyages, you will never be content with the cliché about the Italian-born explorer's sailing the ocean blue in 1492. Author of many prize-winning popular history books on topics as diverse as Marco Polo and Al Capone. Laurence Bergreen is a New York-based scholar whose portrayal of the life and times of Christopher Columbus is a tour de force."

— **Winnipeg Free Press**

"Laurence Bergreen's new book, refreshingly, is fluid in style in its style and comprehensive in its research. Richly illustrated and enhanced with maps that are as legible as they are relevant. *Columbus: The Four Voyages* is complex in its themes, intriguing in its substance and sparkling with surprises."

— **The Washington Times**

"In this scrupulously fair and often thrilling account of his four voyages to the "New World," Bergreen reveals Columbus as brilliant, brave, adventurous, and deeply flawed . . . A superb reexamination of the character and career of a still controversial historical agent." — **Booklist**

About the Author

Laurence Bergreen is the author of several award-winning biographies, including those of Louis Armstrong, Al Capone, Irving Berlin, and James Agee. He has written for many national publications including *Esquire* and *Newsweek*, taught at the New School for Social Research, and served as Assistant to the President of the

Museum of Television and Radio in New York. Bergreen has also served as a nonfiction judge for the National Book Awards and as a judge for the PEN/Albrand Nonfiction Award. Bergreen lives in New York City.

Users Review

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Doris Geer:

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