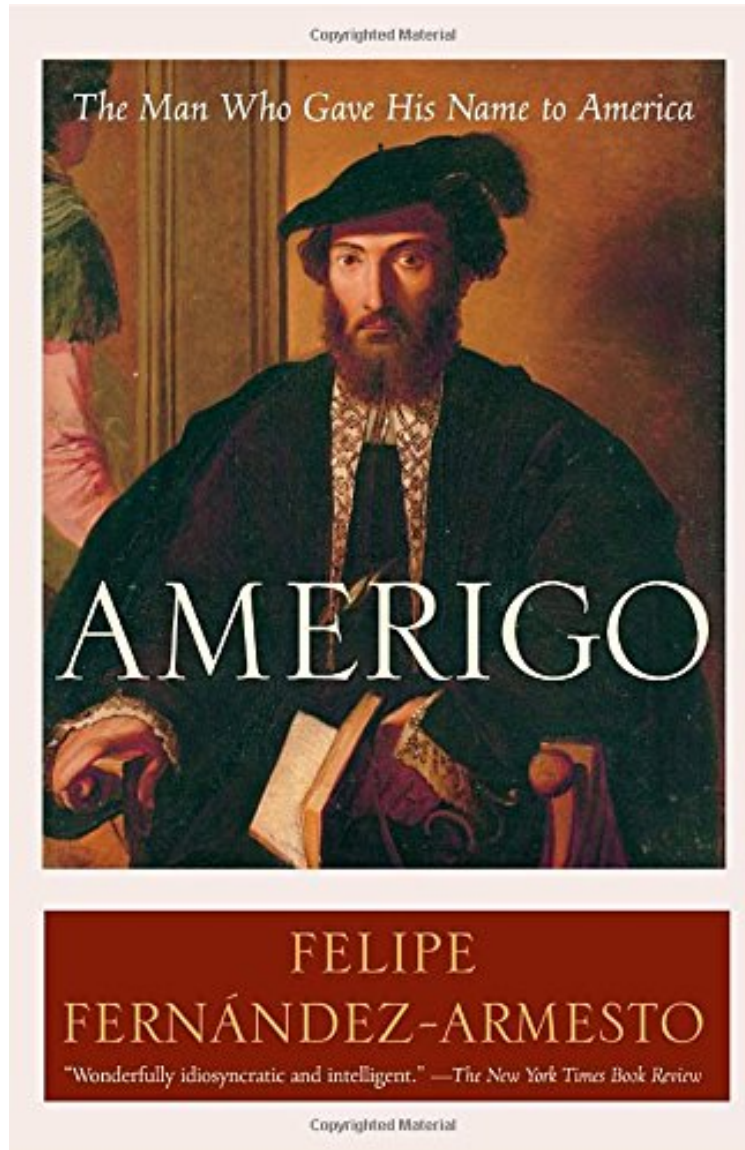


(Mobile book) Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America

Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America

Felipe Fernndez-Armesto

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Felipe Fernndez-Armesto : Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Feuer Istvnnvery intertesing, very detailed1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is the best biography of Amerigo Vesputi that exists, and probably will be the best for generationsBy Gene Rhea Tucker4.5 out of 5Fernndez-Armesto is ever-witty, erudite, and engaging. His research is wide and detailed. His story told with verve. This is the best biography of Amerigo Vesputi

that exists, and probably will be the best for generations. Vespucci was nothing special. He was not a navigator. Unlike Columbus the Genoese, he was a landlubbing Florentine. He was not a competent businessman. He made no vast sums. He was not a conquistador. He found no riches like Cortes. Vespucci was a middling factotum for larger Florentine interests who probably captained no ships and only made two voyages, not the three or four often ascribed to him. Fernandez-Armesto calls him a magus. A trickster who parleyed his late-Renaissance learning, his Florentine-Medici connections, and his gift for self-promotion into a sort of fame, or infamy. He wrote to his sometime patron, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, and others, playing up his travels. He exaggerated and hyperbolized his mere tagging along on a Spanish expedition and a Portuguese expedition, turning these into grand explorations under his captaincy. All poppycock. But the books that came into print under his name, Fernandez-Armesto claims that he had a hand in all of them, made him into a superstar. The books had the standard tropes of the genre (Sir John Mandeville and Columbus were his models): cannibals, naked savages, wild birds, exotic fauna and flora, and the like. These books became bestsellers, and Vespucci's fame brought him a job with the Spanish (a job that he did not do particularly well) and reputation. This reputation led to the strange incident of Martin Waldseemüller and Matthias Ringmann slapping his name on the South American continent they put on their 1507 wall map of the world. Why? They believed Vespucci's P.R. that he had found a "new world," a "new continent." Fernandez-Armesto points out, he didn't discover it, he didn't land on it first, and he wasn't the first to call it something new (Columbus himself had called it an "otro mundo," an "other world"). But he got the credit. And the name stuck. A fine book all around: writing, research, reading. Good endnotes, good index, decent images (Fernandez-Armesto dismisses the conjecture via Vasari that the boy painted in the Madonna della Misericordia by Domenico Ghirlandaio at the Ognissanti church in Florence is a young Amerigo), one map. The only thing which knocked it down to 4.5 stars is the lack of a bibliography/suggested readings. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Utterly Vacuous By J. Jones I read a short excerpt and a summary of book contents and saw that this is merely the latest contribution to the tradition of slandering the man whose name was given to America by people who knew the secrets he kept. I am currently researching Amerigo's career and working on a book. The truth is that he received non-European training that enabled him to sail like a European/American of 1850. He hid this from the monarchs. During his third voyage (1501-2), he circumnavigated the world, visiting all seven continents. He mapped Antarctica. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto never knew that mage.

In *Amerigo*, the award-winning scholar Felipe Fernandez-Armesto answers the question *What's in a name?* by delivering a rousing flesh-and-blood narrative of the life and times of Amerigo Vespucci. Here we meet Amerigo as he really was: a rogue and raconteur who counted Christopher Columbus among his friends and rivals; an amateur sorcerer who attained fame and honor through a series of disastrous failures and equally grand self-reinventions. Filled with well-informed insights and amazing anecdotes, this magisterial and compulsively readable account sweeps readers from Medicean Florence to the Sevillian court of Ferdinand and Isabella, then across the Atlantic of Columbus to the brave New World where fortune favored the bold. Amerigo Vespucci emerges from these pages as an irresistible avatar for the age of exploration and as a man of genuine achievement as a voyager and chronicler of discovery. And now, in *Amerigo*, this mercurial and elusive figure finally has a biography to do full justice to both the man and his remarkable era. Praise for *Amerigo*: Wonderfully idiosyncratic and intelligent. *The New York Times Book Review* Fascinating . . . [Fernandez-Armesto's] lively style is effective in evoking the flashy and violent world of Renaissance Europe. *The Washington Post Book World* An outstanding historian . . . [Fernandez-Armesto] introduces Amerigo Vespucci as an amazing Renaissance character independent of his names fame and does Fernandez-Armesto ever deliver. *Booklist* (starred review) Dazzling . . . an elegant tale of Vespucci's ability to transform himself from a merchant into an explorer and conqueror of new worlds. *Publishers Weekly* (starred review) NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE WASHINGTON POST

From *Publishers Weekly* Starred . In a dazzling new biography, noted historian Fernandez-Armesto (Columbus) captures the exploits of the now mostly forgotten adventurer for whom the New World was named a man the author characterizes as a self-promoter lacking in talent and accomplishment. Born into a Florentine family, the young Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512) entered the seagoing life to make his fortune; his earliest expeditions were in search of pearls. As a result of his later voyages, however, Vespucci presented himself as a celestial navigator and master of the art of reading latitude and even longitude. As Fernandez-Armesto points out, Vespucci's own accounts of his voyages were largely colored by his readings, so that he exaggerated the physical beauty of the new worlds and the new peoples he encountered, and he promoted himself as an expert in cosmography when his skills were far more modest. Although Vespucci claimed to have navigated beyond the Pole Star and to have measured longitude by lunar distances, Fernandez-Armesto shows that these claims were false. But Vespucci promoted himself so well that mapmakers in 1507 chose to name America after him. Fernandez-Armesto weaves an elegant tale of Vespucci's ability to transform himself from a merchant into an explorer and conqueror of new worlds. (Aug. 7) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *Booklist* *Starred* An outstanding

historian of Atlantic exploration, Fernndez-Armesto delves into the oddities of cultural transmission that attached the name America to the continents discovered in the 1490s. Most know that it honors Amerigo Vespucci, whom the author introduces as an amazing Renaissance character independent of his name's fame and does Fernndez-Armesto ever deliver. Pimp, flimflam man, diplomat, business agent, and inventive writer, Vespucci's many guises spring from his record of failing at one thing and moving on to the next. A Florentine, he performed government functions for the Medici, apparently not well enough for promotion but good enough to maintain correspondence when Vespucci decamped for Seville and entered the orbit of Columbus. Vespucci's letters and travel writings about his several voyages to the New World became his brief to be an explorer, but Vespucci's authorship is contested, informs Fernndez-Armesto, who analyzes the scholarly controversy with clarity. In 1507 one of the writings that Fernndez-Armesto regards as bogus reached gullible geographers in the landlocked duchy of Lorraine, of all places; they added "America" to their world map, which became popular. On such contingencies was the permanence of America's name achieved, a story brightly animated by Fernndez-Armesto's biography. Taylor, Gilbert "An imaginative, intelligent and sprightly volume that, in the space of some two hundred pages, races through the history of the Western hemisphere-from prehistoric times to the present."-The Washington Post Book World "This wonderfully sharp and provocative book should become essential reading for anybody interested in the history of America."-The Times Literary Supplement (London) "Fernandez-Armesto can personalize broad historical trends without sinking into triviality. . . . History written at its best." -Booklist "An imaginative, intelligent and sprightly volume that, in the space of some two hundred pages, races through the history of the Western hemisphere-from prehistoric times to the present."-The Washington Post Book World "This wonderfully sharp and provocative book should become essential reading for anybody interested in the history of America."-The Times Literary Supplement (London) "Fernandez-Armesto can personalize broad historical trends without sinking into triviality. . . . History written at its best." -Booklist