

[Read download] Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America

Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America

Eviatar Zerubavel

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*

With a new preface by the author



TERRA COGNITA

The Mental Discovery of America

Eviatar Zerubavel

DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#837821 in Books Transaction Publishers 2003-02-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.02 x .53 x 6.00l, .70 #File Name: 0765809877164 pages | File size: 33.Mb

Eviatar Zerubavel : Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating book on a little seen subjectBy Peter Huston[Note that this review is of the earlier 1992 edition.]As we all know, Columbus was not aware in 1492 that he had landed on a new continent. Hence the lingering odd term "Indian." This work discusses in great detail the often ignored process, and it emphasizes process, of how and why and when Europeans began to realize that they had discovered an entire

new continent (or two) that was completely unconnected with Asia. The author is an Israeli geographer and does this in large part through discussions of period maps and a couple globes. (The work includes 31 plates of period maps showing how cartographers in Europe viewed the relationship between newly discovered areas of America and the rest of the world.) He emphasizes in great detail the need to look at varying definitions of terms like "continent," "discover," "North America," and so on. A great deal of time is spent not only on explorers, be they Spanish, Italian, Viking, English or Russian (who approached North America from the West but were the first to truly prove it is not attached to Asia) over a period of many centuries, as well as the cartographers and writers in Europe who disseminated, analyzed, sorted, filtered and processed the new information that was being uncovered and tried to put it in a context. (In fact, this work was first recommended to me by a professor who recommended it as partial refutation of Gavin Menzies' silly claims that the Chinese not only discovered America in 1421, but, somehow, instantly knew what it was and then told Columbus.) Best of all, the work is only 118 pages long, plus plates and footnotes, making it a relatively quick read. It does provide a great deal of information on the context of actions that might otherwise have been missed. (i.e. Coronado was apparently searching for a mythical seven cities of gold, but was not sure how these cities related to the civilization of China and the spice areas of SE Asia, for instance, and thought there might be a connection between the two.)

Most of us are fascinated by the conventional storybook account of Christopher Columbus' heroic discovery of America in 1492. Yet, should the credit for discovering America go to a man who insisted it was but a few islands off the shores of China? In *Terra Cognita*, Eviatar Zerubavel argues that physical encounters are only one part of the complex, multifaceted process of discovery. Such encounters must be complemented by an understanding of the true identity of what is being discovered. The small group of islands claimed by Columbus to have been discovered off the shores of Asia was a far cry from what we now call America. The discovery of the New World was not achieved in a single day but was a slow process--mental as well as physical--that lasted almost three hundred years. By celebrating 1492 as a year of discovery, we inevitably distort the reality of history. In vividly documenting how a slowly emerging New World gradually forced itself into Europe's consciousness, Zerubavel shows that Columbus did not discover America on October 12, 1492. Supplemented by fascinating old maps and a new preface written for this paperback edition, *Terra Cognita* will be of interest to historians, geographers, cognitive scientists, sociologists, and students of culture.

From *Library Journal* Here comes yet another Columbian publication. The author's thesis is that the New World was discovered not by Columbus, and not in a single day, but rather in a slow, 300-year process that ended when Europeans finally figured out that the land they had encountered wasn't connected to Asia. The writing is good, as is the reasoning, and the use of maps to prove points is effective. These black-and-white maps could have been sharper, but there are 31 of them, each an important pre-1600 document; while they would be far more effective in color, the black-and-white versions keep the cost down. This voice of realism--"What's the fuss all about?"--would provide a good contrast in a collection on the quincentennial. - Mary L. Larsgaard, Univ. of California-Santa Barbara Map Imagery Lab Lib. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Eviatar Zerubavel is one of the most original and versatile scholars in the field of sociology, the kind of man who sees important patterns and relationships where others see only the banalities of everyday life. [*Terra Cognita*] pulls together history and geography with the sociology of culture, and the result is one that gives new meaning and depth to the notion of discovery." David S. Landes, Coolidge Professor Emeritus of History and Economics, Harvard University A fascinating, brightly written and cogently argued work on the power of the geographical imagination to discover and fabricate reality will delight and stimulate all cognitive geographers and students of the world map, and those concerned with the epistemological standing and psychology of exploration and discovery. Yi-Fu Tuan, J.K., University of Wisconsin, Madison About the Author Eviatar Zerubavel is professor of sociology at Rutgers University. He is also the author of *Patterns of Time in Hospital Life*, *The Seven-Day Circle*, *Social Mindscapes*, *The Clockwork Muse*, and *Time Maps*. Eviatar Zerubavel is professor of sociology at Rutgers University. He is also the author of *Patterns of Time in Hospital Life*, *The Seven-Day Circle*, *Social Mindscapes*, *The Clockwork Muse*, and *Time Maps*.