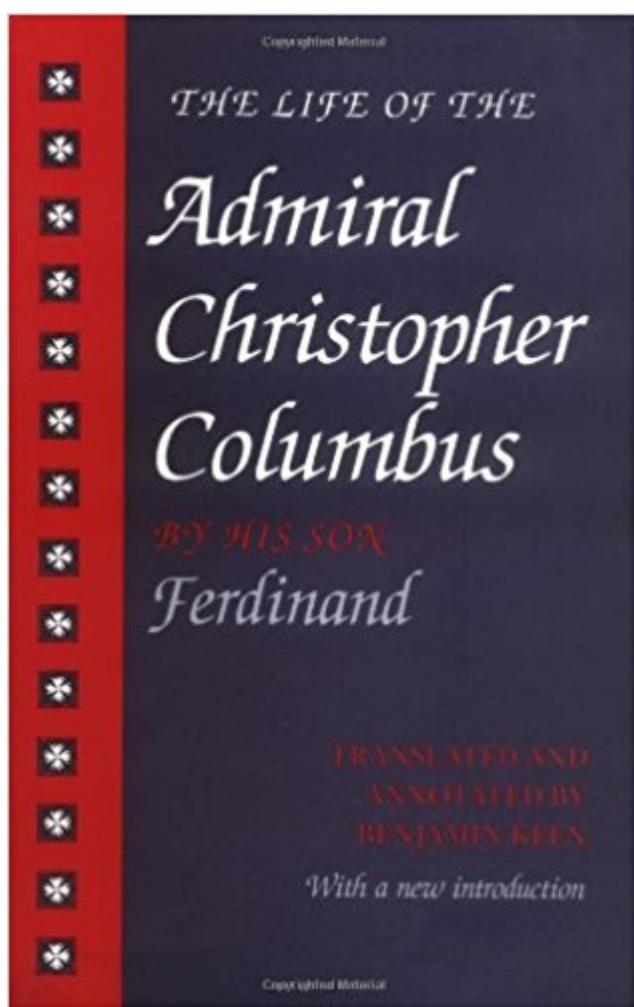


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The Life Of The Admiral Christopher Columbus: By His Son Ferdinand



Synopsis

"The cornerstone of the history of the American continent." --Washington Irving This revised edition (originally published in 1959) of the famous biography of Columbus by his son Ferdinand was published to coincide with the Columbus quincentenary celebrations. Benjamin Keen's introduction traces the changing assessments of Columbus and his Discovery over almost five centuries, as reflected in the writings of historians, other social scientists, novelists, and poets, and shows how these assessments were influenced by varying political, social, and intellectual conditions. Keen has also revised his translation and notes to reflect new information and viewpoints. Ferdinand's book is a moving and personal document. Provoked in part by the Spanish Crown's attempts to diminish Columbus's role as discoverer, it reveals the restrained emotions of a loving son jealous of his father's honor. Ferdinand had access to all of his father's papers. At the age of thirteen, he accompanied Columbus on the last voyage and participated in many of the events he relates here. The narrative has the irresistible excitement of an adventure story: shipwreck, storms, and battles with mutineers or Indians. Ferdinand's imaginative insight into the many-faceted personality of the discoverer and his artistry with words make this biography, as Henry Vignaud has said, "the most important of our sources of information on the life of the discoverer of America." Benjamin Keen is Professor Emeritus of Latin American history at Northern Illinois University. He is the author of *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (Rutgers University Press) and many other books.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Italian (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this

title.

This newly revised edition of the famous biography of Columbus by his son Ferdinand is published to coincide with the Christopher Columbus quincentenary celebrations.

This is the type of must-read literature they should make mandatory in all High School or college classes. Interpreted in easy-to-understand English with the original Spanish script nearby so you can see if the interpreter deviated. Very accurate (I read Spanish as well) interpretation of a life's long collection of logs, notes, letters by Columbus' son Fernando who accompanied him on a later voyage. This is a page turner. You can not stop reading. From Columbus' first voyage with 3 boats and a few hundred men, to his second with over 1,000 men, and his third where a flotilla of 2,500 followed ---- he changed the world - better or worse --- by his visionary discovery, bravery, ego and confidence. Sure there was a negative side - but that was mainly the fault of wealth-seeking followers who were unruly and out for personal gain. Columbus himself always espoused fairest treatment of indigenous peoples.

Fascinating in how it differs from the mythical version I was fed in school 50+ years ago. Nobody believed the world was flat. Columbus believed that the world was much smaller than it really is, which made the idea of sailing west to the East plausible. Many of the bits that we conveniently forget on October 12, Ferdinand treats in some detail: the rapacity, greed, stupidity, and cruelty of the Spanish inflicted on the local population is near unfathomable. Still, this is written by his son, years after his death, so it is a bit of a hagiography. Ferdinand leaves out or glosses over embarrassing details, like Columbus's early belief that Cuba was Japan or the Asian mainland. Interesting to see what his son said in the 16th century; vastly different from the Washington Irvingified take in the mid-20th.

I ordered this book after my second grade son came from school confused about "what Columbus really did." We have so enjoyed reading excerpts together. This is a fascinating biography of Columbus written by his son. Even my seven year old was intrigued!

One could not be in a better position to explain about the Admiral Christopher Columbus than his son. Through this book we understand that Columbus did not appear out of thin air but was a person inflamed with a passion for adventure.

I received a hard-copy edition of this book from 1959. This book is absolutely necessary for the student of European or American History. Obviously, the Columbus scholar can't ignore it. Although it is clearly biased, as one would expect it to be, the information is primary source, since Fernando was with the Admiral on one voyage, and had access to most of his father's books and writings. Fernando was a passionate defender of his family's rights, and this book may have been written to enumerate, for later use in los Pleitos Colombinos (the Colombian Lawsuits), just what Fernando thought the Admiral's children and grand-children deserved based on the Capitulations of Santa Fe. If so, the reader will see how Fernando displays his father's accomplishments well. The book may be biased. This is expected. Nevertheless, it is a welcome relief from all the liberal Left Wing Nut Jobs (LWNJ's) that dominate so much of the so-called "scholarship" of today. It definitely portrays a flawed Christopher Columbus. No matter how much his son tries to whitewash that, it still comes through. Fernando may have loved his father, but he wasn't a liar. Columbus in this book is not a hero or a villain. He is a God-fearing man with faults common to the men of his time and place. His sins, if such they were, were of omission rather than commission, insofar as he should have controlled his own people better. Ultimately, Columbus was a terrible Administrator of a settlement. He was a fine Navigator, and could charm the socks off a sailor to keep that man's courage up. He should have stayed on his chosen element, namely, Water, and only come ashore for R&R and to help convert the Natives, which was always a goal of his. The biggest mistake he made was to think that he could make as good an Administrator of a settlement as he was an Admiral. So, in sum, the book is brilliant. Not cheap, but worth every penny. Columbus definitely comes across as a decent, God-fearing, but deeply flawed man. Your judgement of him will change. If you have been raised on Washington Irving's quasi-sacramental (and largely fictional) hagiographical "history", you will now realise that a Saint Columbus was not. On the other hand, if you are living under the regime of the LWNJ's, you might actually see Columbus as a man among men, brilliant, flawed, indomitable, yet weak, all the things that make us who we are, rather than the purely slavering genocidal maniac that the LWNJ's want you to believe he was which is so ridiculous it doesn't deserve consideration, and yet, that's the standard education in the schools and colleges these days. This book provides a welcome relief from that, and a much more realistic view.

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