



The Race to the New World: Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, and a Lost History of Discovery

Douglas Hunter

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The final decade of the fifteenth century was a turning point in world history. The Genoese mariner Christopher Columbus sailed westward on the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, famously determined to discover for Spain a shorter and more direct route to the riches of the Indies. Meanwhile, a fellow Italian explorer for hire, John Cabot, set off on his own journey, under England's flag. Here, Douglas Hunter tells the fascinating tale of how, during this expedition, Columbus gained a rival. In the space of a few critical years, these two men engaged in a high-stakes race that threatened the precarious diplomatic balance of Europe-to exploit what they believed was a shortcut to staggering wealth. Instead, they found a New World that neither was looking for. Hunter provides a revelatory look at how the lives of Columbus and Cabot were interconnected, and how neither explorer can be understood properly without understanding both. Together, Cabot and Columbus provide a novel and important perspective on the first years of European experience of the New World.

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