

which he appointed Ojeda to proceed in the discovery of the continent, and any other country whatsoever; by which the authority of Columbus was lessened, who being then at St. Domingo, could not know what was plotting against him in Spain. They add, that Ojeda took for his first pilot Giovanni de la Cosa, a Biscain, and that Amerigo Vespucci embarked in this armament, and likewise went on shipboard. Hence all the management of this navigation is by them ascribed to Ojeda and to la Cosa; but of Vespucci they speak only as a mere passenger, who afterwards usurped all the glory of that navigation, and of the discoveries made by it; on the other hand, the advocates of Vespucci give him all the glory of it. The same Vespucci, however, to speak truth, in his own accounts, speaks of himself with great moderation. In the compendious relation of his voyages, treating of the first he says: *King Don Ferdinand, of Castile, wishing to send four ships, to discover new lands in the west, I was appointed by his Highness to be in the fleet, in order to assist in the discovery; and therefore in this, as well as the second voyage, he commonly speaks in the plural number; We went, we landed, &c.* Avoiding, as it were, being considered as the sole arbiter and director of that voyage: only in the letter in which he particularly describes his second voyage to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de' Medici, it seems as if he had made himself the principal conductor of it: *By commission of his Highness the King of Spain, I sailed with two caravels the xviii<sup>th</sup> of May, 1499, to proceed in discovering, &c.* But in no place does he mention Ojeda, or la Cosa; as it is likely that a faithful writer would have done.—What are we then to believe in so great a diversity of accounts? To me it seems probable, that Vespucci was in the navigation simply a passenger, and only interested in the armament and traffic; but that the skill, in those days extraordinary, which he had in astronomy, as his own accounts shew us, might render him useful to the captain and the sailors; and, consequently, he might rise to much esteem amongst them. What renders it probable to me, in the first place, is, the manner in which Peter Martire, of Anghiera, speaks of him, who mentions him not amongst the discoverers of America, but as a man versed in astronomy and cosmography, and recites only the voyages made by order of the King of Portugal. In the second place I reflect, that, according to the accounts of the authors of the History of Voyages, on the authority of Herrera, Vespucci, in the year 1507, was destined to reside in Seville, in order to point out the methods which should be observed in navigation, and that he had the honourable title of First Pilot, with privilege of calling all pilots whatever to account, with an annual pension of seventy-five thousand maravedis (a small coin which corresponds to about seven Venetian pence): titles and compensation sufficient for a man excelling in the science of navigation, but too little for the merit of one, supposed to have been the commander of a fleet, and discoverer of the continent of the new world. But the employment given to Vespucci afforded him an opportunity of rendering his name immortal, by applying it to the provinces newly discovered; as being necessarily called to draw the maps for navigation, he marked these countries with his own name, calling them America: and this appellation, being used amongst the sailors and mariners, became afterwards universal. The Spaniards complained afterwards of this imposition of name; *but their complaints, say the abovesaid authors of the History of Voyages, have not prevented the*