

The change is so radical from "Albericus" to "Americus"—names of totally different significance—it is impossible to understand how such a change could have been effected other than by a misprint. All authors agree that printing was not done so carefully or correctly at that day as in our era, and typographical blunders were, therefore, abundant. It must be remembered that the editions of his third voyage, bearing the name, "Albericus," were published directly from his written copy to De Medici, while the St. Die editions were printed from a French text—a language which Vespucci did not know—and in the absence of the original Italian text, from which the French was translated, I feel satisfied that either the French printer, the translator Basin, or Waldseemüller is responsible for the change in name made.

So little is known of the personal history of Vespucci, after his return from his last voyage in 1504, we are even uncertain whether he remained in Europe after that period. He states to his friend in Florence that he encloses to him an account of his four voyages, "that posterity may know what he has done," and as the original MS. is lost, it is possible that Vespucci may not have seen any of the printed editions recording his name as "Americus," and therefore it remained uncorrected by him; or, are we to believe that his vanity was such, on seeing the manner in which the name was to do service in perpetuating his glory, which he seemed so anxious to attain, that pausing to it, he thought it wiser to allow his new-found name to remain to do duty for the new-found land, which he also was anxious to have ascribed to him as the discoverer, to the detriment of the real discoverers, Christopher Columbus and Sebastian Cabot, the latter of whom unquestionably preceded him in putting his feet upon the new soil? With the exception of a Spanish document showing that a certain Amerigo Vespucci was named a Grand Pilot, we have no documentary evidence bearing on his existence after 1504, and it is believed that his death took place at Terceira, in the Azore Islands, in 1516. If this document applies to our Vespucci, why he should receive an honor from Spain, when his discoveries were made under the Portuguese flag, antagonistic to the interests of Spain and the discoveries made under its flag by Columbus and others, seems inexplicable, and this honor may therefore be intended for some other Vespucci.

The only documents bearing Vespucci's signature are those of two letters, fac-similes of which are given in volume II of Winsor's *Critical History*, pages 130 and 138, and two or three other receipts, signatures upon which are not given. The letter written in Italy bears the signature Emericus Vespuccius, while the other from Spain is signed "Americo Vespucci," the writing and form of signature being so entirely different, it is hard to credit that they emanate from the same hand. The former is that of an educated Italian, while the latter is that of a rough hand, just such as would appear to be written by a sailor, after a few years of hard sailing. If we are therefore to credit these as written by the same individual, they would serve to imply that Emericus Vespuccius 1476, alias Albericus Vespucci 1503, alias Amerigo Vespucci 1508, had a happy facility of transmogrifying his name and signature to suit the country he was in, and the trade or calling he was engaged in. If we assume his baptismal name to be Italian, Amerigo, in Latin it would be more correctly written Americus (not Emericus), and in Spanish, Almerigo, while if his baptismal name was Alberico, Italian, it would be written in

Latin—Albericus.

Spanish—Alvaro.

The derivation of these names is also wholly different. The former, "Americus," is derived from "Amalrich," in Teuton Mythology, the Work-Ruler; while "Albericus" is derived from "Elberich," the Elf-King of the Nibelung.

To make it plainer, the equivalents in English are respectively Almeric and Alberic, the synonym of Alfred, names of totally different significance (vide C. M. Yonge on Christian Names, pp 330 and 380). It cannot for one moment be believed that so intelligent a man as Vespucci is shown to be, by his accredited writings, could have signed his name in such different forms, all having totally different significance in his native Italian language. I am, therefore, inclined to throw out both of the published signatures as spurious, especially the one signed "Amerigo," after the name had been given to him by Waldseemüller, which may readily have been made to suit the circumstances, or as written by some one else than the alleged discoverer of our continent. The Vespucci were a large family in Florence at that date, including the celebrated Savonarolo Controversialist, a renowned orator and politician, "Guid Antonio Vespucci," who was either the father or the uncle. Some writers, and the majority, concur in the father's name being Nastugio Vespucci, a notary, the possessor of many children, one of whom may have borne the name "Amerigo" (which has tended to the confusion now existing), while another, the celebrated navigator, must have borne the name of "Alberico," as his first publications so positively assert. It is surprising that this most important difference in name should have escaped criticism from so many able writers upon the career of Vespucci, both past and present.

It has been entirely overlooked by such eminent critics as Humboldt, Navarre, Varnhagen and HARRISSE, as well as Justin Winsor, in his *Encyclopædic History and Bibliography of America*. Much more could be said on the subject if space permitted. My own conviction is that the rightful name to which we are entitled and by which we should be called and ought to be known, is that of "Atlantis," and if you will remember I took up a considerable space in my essay in endeavoring to prove that our continent is certainly the lost "Atlantis" blotted out at the time of the deluge, though well known to the antediluvians, as is sufficiently proved by the indirect reference to it in the sixth chapter of Genesis, and other Biblical references, a subject which is too long to discuss in your columns but which I had contemplated putting into pamphlet form.

Yours very truly,

GERALD E. HART.

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