



Bartolomeu Dias

Ernst Georg Ravenstein, William Brooks Greenlee, Pero Vaz de Caminha

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The biography of Bartolomeu Dias (Bartholomeu Dias, Bartholomew Diaz) (c1450-1500), the Portuguese explorer who was the first European to sail around the southern tip of Africa. His discovery, which he described to his king in the presence of Christopher Columbus, opened up the sea route around Africa to India and the rest of Asia. On his return, Bartolomeu Dias could have been considered the world's greatest discoverer. However, his discoveries did not cease there. Bartolomeu Dias was to take part in more important voyages of discovery than any other explorer. Prior to his voyage to the southern tip of Africa, Bartolomeu Dias participated in voyages and discoveries along the west coast of Africa with Diogo da Azambuja. After Christopher Columbus, made his voyages of discovery, Bartolomeu Dias organised and accompanied Vasco da Gama's fleet on its voyage to India. The voyage was only possible because of the earlier discovery of Bartolomeu Dias. Because of the voyages of Bartolomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama, Portugal became mistress of the lucrative sea-route around Africa to India. Bartolomeu Dias finally captained a ship in the fleet of Pedro Cabral, which was one of the largest fleets that had ever sailed the Atlantic. It included the discovery of Brazil as one of its achievements. It was the longest voyage in history up to that time, and one of the greatest and most influential voyages of discovery ever made. On passing the site of his discovery of the southern route around Africa Bartolomeu Dias had taken "leave of it as from a beloved son whom he never expected to see again". However, Bartolomeu Dias did return to the site of his greatest discovery, which unfortunately became the site of his greatest tragedy.

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