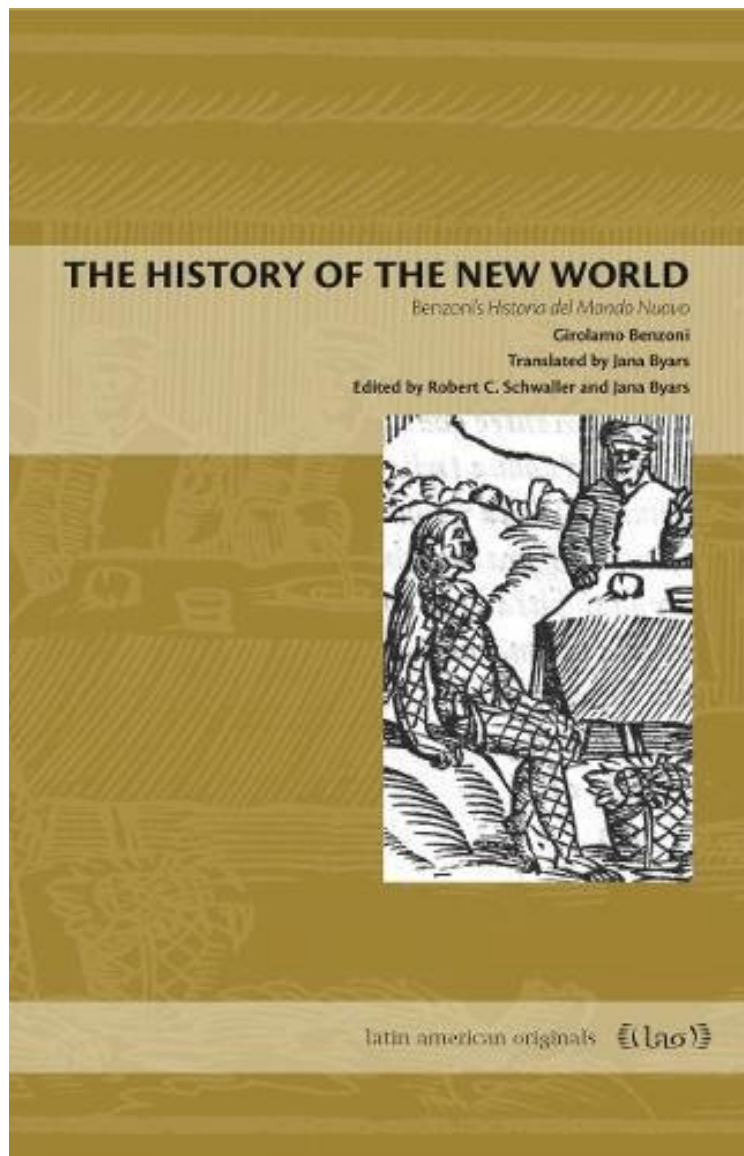


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The History of the New World: Benzoni's Historia del Mondo Nuovo (Latin American Originals)

Girolamo Benzoni

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#2141349 in Books 2017-01-03Original language:English 8.50 x .35 x 5.50l, #File Name: 0271077573128 pages | File size: 54.Mb

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History of the New World: Benzoni's *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* (Latin American Originals):

The History of the New World is an abridged, unique English translation of sixteenth-century Italian merchant Girolamo Benzoni's popular account of his adventures in the Americas and the Spanish colonies. First published in Venice in 1565, Benzoni's book was an immediate best seller and available in at least five languages before the end of the century. It spanned the years 1541-156, providing detailed descriptions of native flora and fauna, exciting narration of harrowing exploits, and a surprisingly critical perspective on the expanding Spanish Empire's methods of conquest and governance, in which Benzoni highlighted the struggles of indigenous peoples. This edition follows the three-book structure of the original account but focuses on Benzoni's own experiences, omitting episodes to which he was not a witness and excising repetition and hyperbolic hearsay. The first English-language version published since 1847, this volume includes an informative introduction and annotations that situate Benzoni and his fascinating writings in the larger context of Spanish colonial conquest. Perfect for classroom use, this is a lively, vivid firsthand account of the adventure and wonder of the New World.

Long sampled by Spain's enemies in search of Black Legend propaganda, Girolamo Benzoni's gripping 1556 account of his misadventures in early Spanish America has rarely been treated on its own as a tale of personal survival and rare foreign witness to conquest and its aftermath. Surprisingly direct and accessible, *The History of the New World* benefits tremendously from Jana Byars's new translation and from her and Robert Schwaller's careful editing and introduction, which will help today's readers navigate Benzoni's wild tales of lost treasure, shipwreck, jungle warfare, and human sacrifice. Kris Lane, author of *Pillaging the Empire: Global Piracy on the High Seas, 1500-1750* Robert Schwaller and Jana Byars provide an engaging translation of Benzoni that contextualizes his work within modern scholarship on the early modern Atlantic world as well as recent historical research on the Americas. They are careful to point out that this eyewitness account provides valuable information about the New World, but they also demonstrate how and why the History is not always to be trusted for its accuracy. This book will be greatly appreciated by students and scholars of Latin American history, cross-cultural exchange in the Renaissance, and travel writing. Lia Markey, author of *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence* Probably as well known in early modern Europe as Las Casas's *Brevissima relacion*, Girolamo Benzoni's *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* has finally been given a full, modern, scholarly English translation. More than another chapter in the Black Legend, Benzoni's *Historia* is an example of the political, economic, and religious writing that shaped Europe's perceptions of the Spanish project in the New World, and Robert Schwaller and Jana Byars's well-annotated edition makes it accessible for researchers of all levels. M. G. Aune, California University of Pennsylvania Jana Byars and Robert Schwaller's highly accessible edited translation of Benzoni's adventures will be a valuable vehicle for teaching the early history of the New World. Benzoni's references to crucial themes in colonial history and his unsubtle discourse regarding the Spanish conquests will certainly stimulate classroom discussions ranging from the Black Legend debate to the usefulness and pitfalls of firsthand travel accounts. This new edition will add yet another indispensable primary document to our collection of historical references for Anglophone students. Rene Soulodre-La France, author of *Regin e imperio: El Tolima Grande y las Reformas Borbnicas en el siglo XVIII* About the Author Jana Byars is Assistant Professor of History at Iowa State University. Robert C. Schwaller is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Kansas and the author of *Gneros de Gente in Early Colonial Mexico: Defining Racial Difference*.