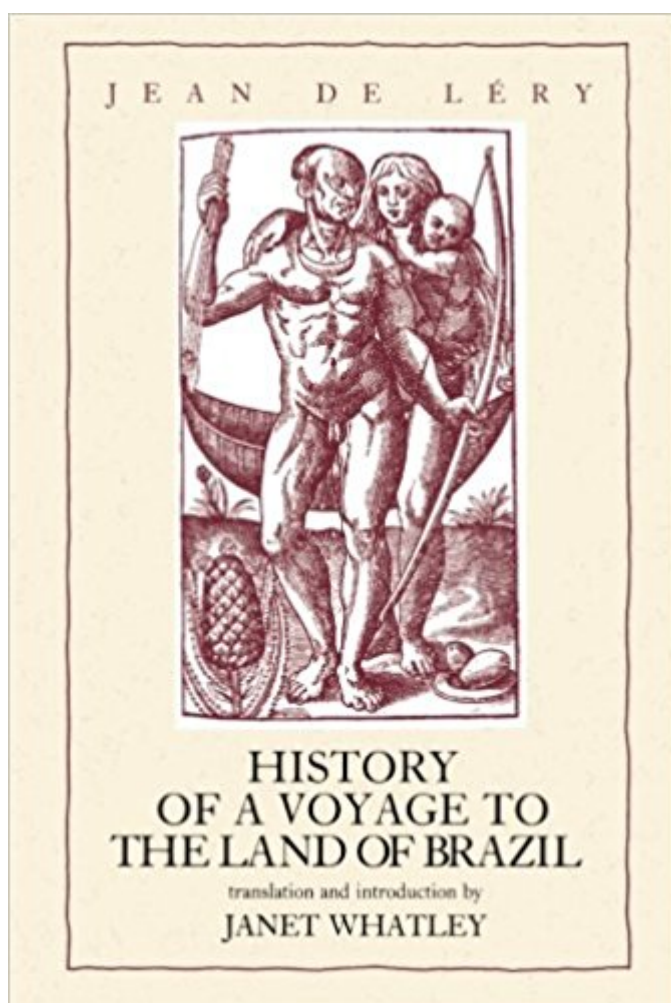


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History Of A Voyage To The Land Of Brazil (Latin American Literature And Culture)



Synopsis

When the famous anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss arrived in Rio de Janeiro, he had one book in his pocket: Jean de Léry's History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil. Léry had undertaken his fascinating and arduous voyage in 1556, as a youthful member of the first Protestant mission to the New World. Janet Whatley presents the first complete English translation of one of the most vivid early European accounts of life in the New World.

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Customer Reviews

"Whatley has done English readers not versed in French a major service by providing an annotated translation of Lery's fascinating text."--"Virginia Quarterly Review

When the famous anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss arrived in Rio de Janeiro, he had one book in his pocket: Jean de Léry's History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil. Léry had undertaken his fascinating and arduous voyage in 1556, as a youthful member of the first Protestant mission to the New World. Janet Whatley presents the first complete English translation of one of the most vivid European accounts of life in the New World.

This is a very important first hand account of the French expedition to Brazil in 1555, sent by King Henry II to counter Portuguese hegemony over Brazil. DeLery gave a detailed account of the geography, flora-fauna, anthropology, and culture of the savage Americans of Rio de Janeiro bay

he observed. As a writer in Christian missions, I find it fascinating because it shows the error of the misrepresentations of this expedition as a Huguenot missionary venture. There were a few Huguenot refugees among the hundreds of soldiers and workers building a fort for Admiral Villegaignon on Guanabara island in the bay. Most fled back to France because of his treachery, but three Protestants were executed as heretics by the Admiral. It is important to read history first hand!

Masterpiece and it should be read by all. Not enough history teachers add this text to their syllabus, and they should! Original and insightful ideas and observations and to think it was one of the first books about first contact. Interesting also in terms of the how Lery approached his subject with a great dosage of admiration and respect not common to ethnographic writing for the centuries to come...

Fascinn

thanks!

This book contains Jean de Lery's personal account of his participation in the French attempt to found a colony near Rio de Janeiro. Admiral Villegaignon, the leader of the expedition invited the Huguenots (French Calvinists) to join the venture and even wrote to John Calvin in Geneva inviting him to "send ministers to instruct the colonists in the Word of God and to bring the savages to the knowledge of salvation." The church in Geneva responded with thanks to God for the opportunity to "extend the realm of Christ to the nation without God." Lery gives a detailed description of the life and beliefs of the Tupinamba people that he and his fellow Calvinists from Geneva came to know, including their religious beliefs and his unsuccessful attempts to explain to them the doctrines of the Christian religion. Although Lery wrote the book as a defense against Villegaignon's charge that the Huguenots caused the failure of the colony, the majority of the book describes the Tupinamba people. As such, it provides interesting insights into the life of that indigenous people and also the conflict of cultures and beliefs that the Christian missionaries encountered.

The one thing I found really frustrating is that this translation doesn't contain Lery's transcriptions of Tupinamba melodies. I mean, what a fascinating thing that is for musicians, and for non-musicians,

well, they only take up a few pages, so I can't understand why they were left out. Otherwise a great translation of a fascinating book.

I read these books mostly for the narrative and this one didn't have a lot of narrative. It did have some interesting bits from time to time. It was also interesting to read about a tribe that was openly, indisputably cannibalistic instead of just strongly-suspected. Very short, about 200 pages of primary text. Beautifully introduced, translated and annotated, for sure. I still don't know what a breviary is and I don't want to.

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