

Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.archaeology/2005-06/msg00126.html>

- *From:* nospam@xx
 - *Date:* Thu, 02 Jun 2005 15:16:52 GMT
-

Apparently on date Wed, 1 Jun 2005 19:15:07 +0000 (UTC), David Johnson <trolleyfan_nospam@xxxxxxxxxxxx> said:

>nospam@xx wrote in
>>
>> Anyone other than Philip feel capable of discussing the question of
>> Columbus?
>>
>> I realise he's not a mythical figure and it's not some weird theory
>> about stuff that never happened, but what's the problem otherwise?
>
>Main problem? That he probably made up the whole finding his latitude by
>an eclipse story:
>
>from: <http://www1.minn.net/~keithp/longi.htm>

Ok, this is an excellent starting point. We presumably agree that the longitude could and can be estimated to the same accuracy as local time is known, so the story as the URL puts it is valid.

Now I'm thinking that Columbus was aware of the method and was able to present "results" which supported his smaller earth preconception? That is, he knew what should happen, and was equipped to perform the experiment in 1494.

This leaves a number of possibilities:

1) He did the experiment but someone had forgotten to turn the egg timer over or whatnot and therefore he got an inaccurate result, timing the eclipse by over an hour wrong.

I would hope we would all reject this possibility because getting an error that continued his false conception of the size of the globe is a bizarre result by chance.

2) He did the experiment, got the approximately correct result that pointed to the navigation board at Salamanca being right and him wrong, and chose to falsify the results.

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This is a strong contender for what happened.

3) He didn't do the experiment at all and merely reported that he had for dishonest reasons, giving the false result that suited him.

This is also a strong contender. I take it you currently favour this position?

I would like to add some speculative thoughts. Columbus was very well aware that there was a major difference of opinion between him and the establishment regarding the size of the Earth. He was aware that the Navigation Board reckoned the circumference to be somewhere around 26,000 miles and he was pushing a figure of 18,000 miles.

The measurement of longitude quite clearly supports one or other of these positions. He has a reasonable dead reckoning figure for his travels and he argued it was 3,500 miles to Japan, this was roughly how far he had travelled. Providing he was in Japan, he was right and everyone else was wrong.

Now I don't know about you, but I would probably be very pleased with the result and quite eager to do experiments that would confirm what I already knew, so given the ability to measure longitude to an extent that would confirm the Earth was as small as I had claimed, I would have every reason to do the experiment.

Now it is possible that the opportunity was missed, e.g. someone forgot to turn the hour glass over or he overslept but as this happened twice, and in both cases he gave false figures that we know never happened, I'm driven to the position that he probably knew he had been wrong about the size of the globe.

• ***Follow-Ups:***

- ◆ ***Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)***
◇ From: David Johnson

• ***References:***

- ◆ ***Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)***
◇ From: nospam
- ◆ ***Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)***
◇ From: Philip Deitiker
- ◆ ***Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)***
◇ From: nospam
- ◆ ***Re: Why only crap in this NG? (was Wolter claims ...)***
◇ From: David Johnson

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