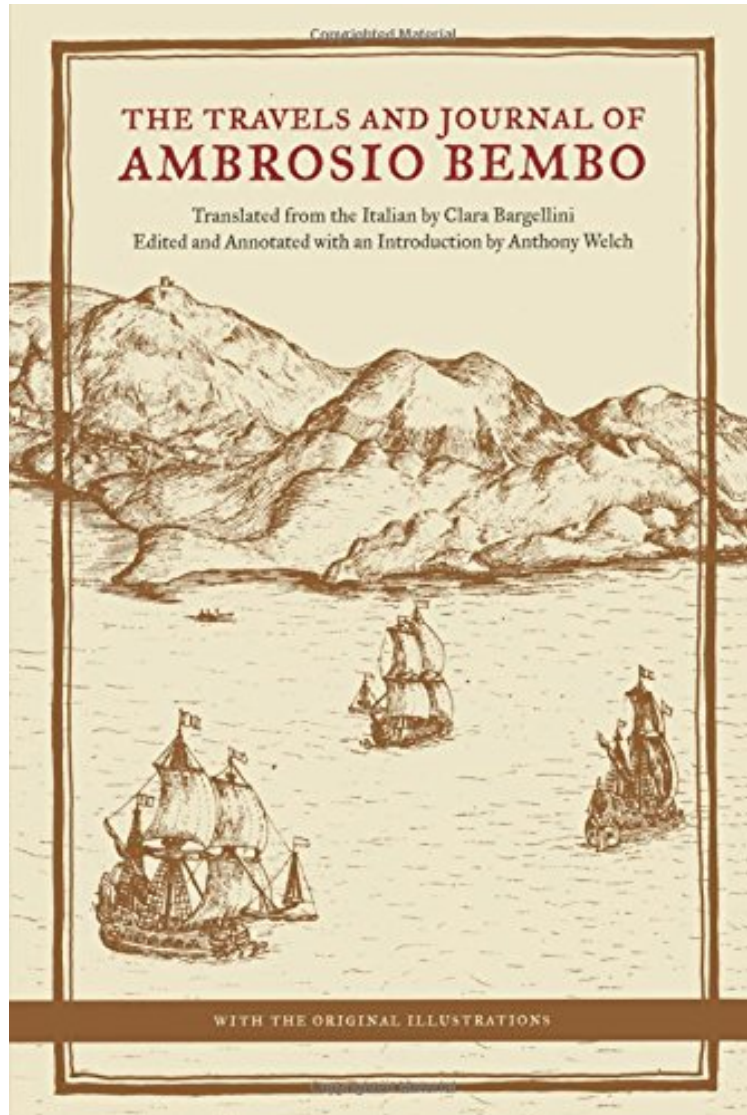


The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo

Ambrosio Bembo

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Ambrosio Bembo : The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Travels and Journal of Ambrosio Bembo:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A history-lover's goldmine By Larry N. Stout Bembo's seventeenth-century journal of his travels is good reading in itself (here in translation), but it is the abundant annotations of learned editor Anthony Welch that gives this book its great value. This is both engaging travelogue and a virtual course in Medieval history and cultures from Italy to India. Did you know that some version of table tennis was being played in Aleppo taverns in the late seventeenth century? (Nor did I!) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five

StarsBy richard johnsA surprise.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Bembo's Travel BugBy Robert LeblingAmbrosio Bembo was a young nobleman from Venice who traveled to the Middle East and India in the late 17th century. He wrote a detailed account of his travels, and had the work illustrated with 52 line drawings by French artist G.J. Grlot, who traveled with him on the return trip.Bembo's book was never published in his lifetime, perhaps because the author felt it could not compete with other travel books of its kind. It was rediscovered some three centuries later and was finally published last year. The book is not without its weaknesses. It is least interesting when Bembo is on the move, journeying from one city to another. It is much more compelling when he settles into a new community, and describes the people, customs and culture around him.Bembo traveled first to the bustling market city of Aleppo in Ottoman Syria, accompanying his uncle, the newly named Venetian consul there. He paints valuable descriptions of the European merchant community of Aleppo and the Ottoman bureaucracy with which it interacts. But soon the travel bug bites again, and Bembo sets off through Mesopotamia to Basra, and then travels by sea to India's west coast. Eventually he craves further adventures, and sails from Goa to the Gulf coast of Safavid Iran.Bembo's descriptions of life in such Persian cities as Shiraz and Isfahan are among his finest and most fascinating - whether he is munching fresh fennel-topped flatbread on the streets of Isfahan, hobnobbing with wealthy Armenian merchants in Julfa or traveling with a caravan in the hills of western Iran. Bembo's youthful perspective and insatiable curiosity are great assets, and a blessing for the reader.

In 1671, Ambrosio Bembo, a young nobleman bored with everyday life in Venice, decided to broaden his knowledge of the world through travel. That August he set off on a remarkable, occasionally hazardous, four-year voyage to Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and the Portuguese colonies of western India. His journal, now translated into English for the first time, is the most important new European travel account of western Asia to be published in the past hundred years. It opens an extraordinary perspective on the Near East and India at a time when few Europeans traveled to these lands. Keenly observed and engagingly written, Bembo's vivid account is filled with a high sense of adventure and curiosity and provides intriguing descriptions of people, landscapes, food, fashion, architecture, customs, cities, commerce, and more. Presented here with the original illustrations and with a rich introduction and annotations, this lively and important historical document is at last available to scholars, students, and armchair travelers alike.

From the Inside Flap"This work makes an important contribution. . . . It also introduces a fascinating young observer from Venice full of humor and curiosity about everything."Oleg Grabar, author of *The Formation of Islamic Art*