Alfonso Gonçalves Baldaya Encyclopedia Article

Alfonso Gonçalves Baldaya

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Alfonso Gonçalves Baldaya

fl. 1430s

Portuguese sailor who in 1436 brought Europe its first cargo from West Africa. In 1435, Baldaya sailed along the west coast of Africa with Gil Eannes (fl. 1433-1445). A year before, the latter had been the first to sail past Cape Bojador, which Europeans had previously regarded as a point of no return. Baldaya and Eannes, exploring the shoreline, saw human and camel tracks—proof that people lived south of the cape. Baldaya continued southward to Cape Blanco on what is now the border between Western Sahara and Morocco. There he traded for sealskins, which he brought back to Europe.