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who really discovered America?

In this reading, Thor Heyerdahl, the great Norwegian explorer, questions the fact that Columbus was the first explorer to discover the Americas. He thinks ancient people were able to build boats and cross oceans.

He tested his ideas after he looked at ancient Egyptian paintings. His team built a copy of the boats they saw in those pictures and called it Ra. They also simulated all the other conditions they could think of.

The first expedition which started on May 25, 1969 was a failure. However, Ra II set off on May 17, 1970 and successfully crossed the Atlantic, showing that ancient civilizations were able to reach the Americas long before Columbus.

1. Why did Thor think that Columbus was probably not the first explorer to discover the Americas?

Because he believed ancient civilizations could reach the Americas before Columbus.

2. How could ancient people cross oceans?

They could cross oceans by building reed boats.

3. What did the team fill the pots with?

They filled the pots with enough food for their journey.

4. What did they call the boat they built?

They called it Ra.

5. Who did the international group include?

It included a Norwegian, an Egyptian, and Italian, a Mexican, and a Chadian.

6. When did the first expedition start?

It started on May 25, 1969.

7. Did any member of the team die in the first expedition?

No, they all survived and wanted to try again.

8. How long did it take them to rebuild a boat and try again?

It took them around a year to prepare for another expedition.

9. Under what flag was Ra II sailing?

It was sailing under the flag of the United Nations.

10. What did Ra II expedition prove?

It proved that ancient civilizations had enough skill to reach the Americas long before Columbus did.