

“Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus – their Importance for the Exploration of the New World” is the paper that presents and appreciates the questions of the overseas discoveries from the earliest times till the first period of the European colonisation of the African, Asian and American continent. The main aim of the paper is to recapitulate the four voyages of Christopher Columbus and the other ones of his contemporaries till the age of the beginning of the Spanish conquest of the New World in 1509.

The first part of the paper is focusing principally on the infancy of the overseas discoveries at the ancient era and the middle Ages. The chapters discuss the discoveries of the ancient Phoenicians, Hellenes and Romans, the first successful European attempt to reach the American continent made by the Vikings, the voyages of the missionaries reaching the Far East, the voyages of Marco Polo into the empire of Grand Khan and the voyages of the other European and Arabic travellers of that era. The questions of the formulation of the geographical attitude to the world shape in connection with its progressive discovery and exploration are also discussed in that part of the paper.

The following part discusses the questions of the prelude of the overseas expansion at the end of the 15th century, the age of Henry the Navigator and the Portuguese discoveries in Africa. The third part after it evaluates the Columbus’s era of the overseas discoveries. The chapters focus on the presentation of the reign of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, the peripeteias of Christopher Columbus’s youth before his arrival in Portugal, the theme of his great enterprise and its development and the detailed recapitulation of his four overseas voyages to the New World.