

cas were a “disease-free paradise” before European discovery. Not surprisingly, the presenters decimate that assumption. The evidence, on the continental scale, is overwhelming. Before the diffusion of acute, epidemic diseases, Native Americans suffered from a range of infections. Although the severity of these infections varied, health was clearly compromised; this status may partially explain the great numbers of deaths that occurred in the wake of introduced infections.

In the second section the issues are native population sizes at the contact boundary and the magnitude of decline that followed. The timing and role of infectious disease introduction looms large in these discussions. Disease, population size, and decline are contentious topics, and the editors make no bones about it. Rather than reaching consensus or presenting a single view, the goal is to “clarify issues and logic . . . and point . . . toward greater understanding” (p. 2). Future scholarship on contact populations and disease will tell whether or not understanding has resulted.

Despite varying quality and detail, the volume is successful. The editors wanted to cover the field, and they have largely done that. Indeed, a major strength here is the diversity of topics and areas and the inclusion of most major researchers on native demographics and disease. The volume is a useful introduction to the field and a reference for specialists.

ANN F. RAMENOFSKY, University of New Mexico

Vanguard of Empire: Ships of Exploration in the Age of Columbus. By ROGER C. SMITH. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Illustrations. Maps. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Glossaries. Bibliographic essay. Indexes. xii, 316 pp. Cloth. \$35.00.

Every component of the “world encounter” that began in the fifteenth century crossed the oceans in wooden ships. People and their possessions, mineral and agricultural products, religions, ideas, and diseases all passed overseas aboard vessels bound for American, European, and Asian ports. Ships were as basic to the continuing encounter as they had been to its first, exploratory phase. In *Vanguard of Empire*, Roger Smith assiduously examines the ships and shipping of both stages over the period 1430–1530.

This book is uniquely complete. Samuel Eliot Morison (*Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 1942) and José María Martínez Hidalgo (*Las Naves de Colón*, 1966) have written in the context of the Columbus voyages, describing the ships utilized in them. In *Six Galleons for the King of Spain* (1986), Carla Rahn Phillips displays a firm knowledge of the *Carrera de Indias* and the ships built for it. Björn Landström’s book *The Ship: An Illustrated History* (1961) describes and beautifully depicts vessels of all epochs. But Smith addresses the task of full exposition of the Iberian maritime world: the terms of trade and exploration beginning in the early fifteenth century, the sailing craft employed, their construction, arms, rig-

ging, provisioning, and navigation. Clearly and methodically, he delineates the maritime technology of Iberian expansion in terms readily understandable to specialists or to ordinary readers. Illustrations of hull construction, sail and rigging plans, pumps, and cannon clarify and illuminate the text.

As a maritime archaeologist, Smith has employed new and direct knowledge of early ships gained from recent excavations. From shipwrecks at Red Bay, Labrador; Bahía Mujeres in Yucatán; Highborn Cay in the Bahamas; West Molasses Reef in the Caicos; and a newly discovered site on the Little Bahama Bank he deduces “startlingly tangible evidence” about the discovery vessels (p. 190). This lends freshness and immediacy to his narrative.

Based on research for a doctoral dissertation, the book is soundly grounded in primary and secondary sources that are reviewed in a bibliographical essay. Three very useful glossaries of nautical terms—in English, Spanish, and Portuguese—are appended, together with translations of key documents about Columbus’ caravels *Niña* and *Santa Cruz* from the *Libro de Armadas* in the Archivo de Indias.

Vanguard of Empire is a significant book that belongs in the libraries of Latin American scholars and maritime historians. Its excellent quality, readability, and thoroughness should guarantee it a wide audience.

EUGENE LYON, Flagler College

La exploración del Atlántico. By GUILLERMO CÉSPEDES DEL CASTILLO. Madrid: MAPFRE, 1991. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 341 pp. Paper.

The MAPFRE America Foundation was created in Spain in 1988 to develop intellectual and cultural activities for the Quincentenary of Columbus’ westward voyage across the Atlantic. Its aim was to foster a sense of solidarity and common purpose among the peoples of Spain, Portugal, and the nations of the Americas, in part through an ambitious publication program. Many of the planned 250 books appeared before and during the Quincentennial year, including the volume under review; others are in progress.

Guillermo Céspedes, a distinguished Spanish historian of Latin America, has lectured and taught on both sides of the Atlantic. In this wide-ranging survey, he provides thoughtful commentary on thousands of years of human contact with the Atlantic Ocean. In the first three sections, which make up nearly half the text, Céspedes evaluates ancient and medieval legends of Atlantic voyages, picking through the fantasy and hyperbole to glean the kernels of usable historical and geographical information. Long before Columbus, Europeans both north and south were venturing out into the Atlantic, though their voyages had few lasting effects.

The fourth section of the book examines the familiar story of systematic exploration in the Atlantic, first by the Portuguese on the African coast and then by the Spanish, once Columbus had shown the way. The fifth section provides a global