

VOYAGES OF EXPLORATION

THE DISCOVERY OF SOUTH AMERICA AND THE ANDALUSIAN VOYAGES. By LOUIS-ANDRÉ VIGNERAS. (Chicago and London: Published for the Newberry Library by The University of Chicago Press, Studies in the History of Discoveries, 1976. Pp. 170. \$10.00.)

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THOMAS CAVENDISH, 1591–1592. THE AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT OF HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF THE VOYAGE, WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, FROM THE COLLECTION OF PAUL MELLON. Introduction, transcription, and notes by DAVID BEERS QUINN. (Chicago and London: Published for the Newberry Library by the The University of Chicago Press, Studies in the History of Discoveries, 1976. Pp. 165. \$22.50.)

THE "REAL EXPEDICIÓN MARÍTIMA DE LA VACUNA" IN NEW SPAIN AND GUATEMALA. By MICHAEL M. SMITH. (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, Volume 64, Part 1, 1974, Pp. 74. \$4.00.)

A natural tendency is to gloss quickly over the dozen or so maritime expeditions to the Brazilian coast and adjacent regions following Columbus's third voyage in 1498. Probably most historians would recognize the names of the prominent leaders of these expeditions—Vicente Yañez Pinzón, Diego de Lepe, and a few others—but it is easy to confuse one with another, and exactly where each one went and what each did are soon forgotten. As a group they seem to signify the breakdown of the Columbus monopoly, the increasing knowledge of the American coast, and little else. Moreover we have not had good modern studies, as we have with Columbus's own voyages. Most of what we have known of the post-1498 voyages stems from the work of Martín Fernández de Navarrete in the early nineteenth century.

The study by Louis-André Vigneras goes a long way toward correcting this situation. We have now about as exact an accounting as possible of the dates and routes. But this is perhaps the least important aspect of what Vigneras provides. Much more interesting to modern students will be the material on costs and *quintos*, the recruiting of crews, the formal agreements between the monarchs and the leaders, the private and corporate financing of the adventures. All were Andalusian in origin, and the merchants of Seville appear here in a familiar role, that of financial supporters and investors. The new material, chiefly from the notarial records of Seville, consists of contracts, bills, promissory notes, and the like. There is enough to permit the author to conclude, convincingly, that unauthorized voyages must have been very few in number and could have occurred in any case only in the years 1502–1504. Moreover the voyages of 1499–1504 were of a special type. After this period the enthusiasm waned, and the subsequent voyages, to other areas, were financed more by the crown and led and organized more by government officials.

By the late sixteenth century the initiative in overseas enterprise had passed from Spain to England, and no one reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the newly expanding nation more than Thomas Cavendish. His account of his final voyage is one of the classic texts of seafaring. It was published 350 years ago but the original manuscript has only recently come to light, and it is now republished in facsimile with a transcription and scholarly introduction and notes by David B. Quinn. Cavendish set out in 1591 to circumnavigate the earth for the second time (he had already performed this feat in 1586–88), and also to find the Northwest Passage, to attack the Portuguese and the Spaniards in America and the Philippines, and to open direct trade with the Far East. Storms, shipwrecks, dissensions among the crew, failures at rendezvous, and many other misfortunes beset the expedition, which turned back to England after passing through the Straits of Magellan. Cavendish's text relates the tribulations with a fine sixteenth-century touch (the weather in the Straits of Magellan is described as "not durable for Christians"). But it is also a narrative of personal and psychological failure. Quinn tallies the signs in Cavendish's behavior: dis temper, misjudgment, egoism, bullying. Cavendish was his own worst enemy. Defeated, he prepared for death, made his will, and died in late 1592 somewhere in the south Atlantic.

By the early nineteenth century conditions had changed again in the world of navigation. The seas and their boundaries had now been thoroughly explored. Seafaring was no longer so dangerous an undertaking. Official voyages were designed for particular, often scientific, purposes rather than discovery or personal achievement. Spanish America had repeatedly been afflicted by epidemics of smallpox, and the tasks of introducing the newly discovered vaccine and teaching Spanish Americans to use it were assigned to the "Real Expedición Marítima de la Vacuna" under the command of Dr. Francisco Xavier de Balmis y Berenguer. Successive vaccination was the method used to assure an effective supply of vaccine on arrival in America. A group of twenty-two nonimmune young boys from a foundling home were taken as carriers. This was not the first introduction of smallpox vaccine into America (encrusted lymph had already been taken from England to St. Thomas, whence it passed to Puerto Rico). But it was the first large-scale and systematic introduction. Michael M. Smith has very carefully chronicled the expedition's main movements and its offshoots to Mexico City, Oaxaca, northern and western Mexico, and Guatemala. In each location we have the details of the introduction of the vaccine and the relations, sometimes cordial and sometimes strained, between Balmis and the local officials. Balmis, with his assistants and another group of boys as carriers, moved to the Philippines, Macao, and Canton in 1805.

The three works represent sequential periods of the great age of navigation. They remind us, if we need reminding, that the history of maritime adventure is still a live subject, with numerous facets remaining to be examined. It depends on much more than itineraries and dates and the identification of landmarks. Each of these works demonstrates added modern dimensions of the subject: economic and social in the case of Vigneras, psychological in Quinn's perceptive observations on Cavendish, and scientific in Smith's study of Balmis.

The Andalusian mariners of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and Balms in the early nineteenth century illustrate the early and late periods of Spanish expansion to America. As individuals they are incompletely documented, but the social and economic and political systems that supported them are clearer to us for these studies. Not surprisingly it is Cavendish, the Elizabethan seadog, who emerges as the best documented and most interesting personality.

CHARLES GIBSON
University of Michigan