

EVELINA GUŽAUSKYTĖ. *Christopher Columbus's Naming in the "Diarios" of the Four Voyages: A Discourse of Negotiation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2014. 296 pp.

Several Columbian studies in recent decades have explored the field of toponymy, the study of place names and naming, in the writings and maps of Christopher Columbus. This relatively new subfield arose logically from cartography studies of the New World in general and of Columbus's voyages in particular. Yet until now, Columbus's systems of naming have been viewed by colonial scholars as a simple act of imposition: applying European verbalities to American physicalities. Critics such as Stephen Greenblatt, Tzvetan Todorov, Edmundo O'Gorman, José Rabasa, Eduardo Subirats, and George R. Stewart have been the pioneers of such studies, tending to view Columbus's choice of place names as evidence of appropriation and of the imposition of a new worldview on a negated space.

However, Evelina Gužauskytė introduces a new possibility in her study, reinvigorating the field of Columbian toponymy by treating it as a form of discourse, in which Asian, American, and European cosmovisions interact to contribute to the creation of meaning from which new interpretations of the American enterprise can be drawn. She even goes so far as to suggest that place names in Columbus's texts can be read as a parallel sub-narrative that reveals the author's emotions and especially his fears in a way which was impossible to overtly convey in texts destined to be read by the very financiers of the expeditions. If we accept Gužauskytė's challenging notion of toponymy as narrative, the result is an altering of the way we as readers and as colonialists approach our subsequent readings of Columbus, and by extension of all colonial maps and narratives of exploration.

Gužauskytė's chapters themselves constitute a narrative with a climax, as the author builds from cautious to bold in her interpretations of place names in Columbus's writings. Her Introduction and first two chapters establish the assumptions and approach that she will apply in the analytical chapters to come. Chapter one asserts that Columbian mapping and naming reflect both practical-scientific and ideological-spiritual concerns *at the same time*, setting up readers for her later interpretations of names carrying African, Asian, European, exclusively Spanish, American, Jewish, and Christian connotations, often simultaneously. Chapter two introduces the patterns and clusters of names that the author has observed in Columbus's writings, hierarchies that she uses to confirm her toponymic interpretations in the four subsequent chapters. While a few challenging notions are presented in these introductory chapters of the book, the

reader has the sense that too much time is spent presenting and later recycling theoretical material; to Gužauskytė's credit, we are anxious to reach the analytical portion of the study.

Chapter three begins the interpretation process cautiously (after more restating of introductory material) by making observations of the Taino place names whose presence alongside new Spanish names or translations in the diaries represents a sign of silent resistance to European dominance. Building logically from the Taino worldview and their interactions with Columbus, chapter four argues for the existence of a cluster of place names related to alchemy and signaling the explorer's prioritization of the search for gold. Chapter five takes a bold step in interpreting the juxtaposition of places named for iguanas or serpents and those named for Christ, as representative of Columbus' framing of a particularly complex American visual scene in terms of his Christian ideology. Finally, chapter six audaciously examines the manifestations of fear (of failure, of death) in voyage three as originator of a group of toponyms that relate either to Hell or to Paradise, as well as of the eventual breakdown of naming systems in voyage four that signals the chaos of a Columbus who "was being devoured by the very landscape he had been attempting to subdue" (156). The study is rounded out by a conclusion that extrapolates this breakdown to Columbus's other (non-naming) failures in the American enterprise, as well as by a useful, if short on commentary, compendium of Columbian place names.

Taken together, the introduction and six chapters offer a unique and challenging analysis of the key features of toponymy in Columbus's writings on the New World. *Christopher Columbus's Naming in the "Diarios" of the Four Voyages* articulately rethinks the field of colonial toponymy and focuses our discussion of it by inviting us to treat mapping and naming in the Americas as a subtext worthy of its own analysis and interpretation. Doing so will change our readings of canonical texts of "discovery" and invite new interpretations of the ways in which indigenous and European cultures interacted in the American space. In alignment with the author's hope, it is likely indeed that this book will open doors to broader studies that will serve scholars and students of colonial and postcolonial studies alike.

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