Review Essay: Flint, Valerie I. J. *The Imaginative Landscape of Christopher Columbus*

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identified in the *Morte Darthur* with the "cowardyse, murdre, hate" that he also noted there.

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The Columbus-Quincentenary has produced a number of studies both on the great explorer and on the general historical aspects of his discovery. Some have glorified Columbus's achievements; others have pointed out his gross misunderstandings and failures. From a philosophical point of view, however, it does not matter what he accomplished in concrete terms, but what consequences his journey had for the development of the modern world. We also know that Columbus approached the American continent with largely false concepts, since he was deeply steeped in medieval ideology about the Exotic, its countries, people, fauna, and flora. One of the best monographs dedicated to this aspect recently published is Mary B. Campbell's *The Witness and the Other World* (1988; not consulted here). Valerie Flint's approach in *The Imaginative Landscape of Christopher Columbus* does not deviate remarkably from this traditional avenue of research, but she adds much color to the canvas of Columbus's mind, retelling and analyzing a large number of contemporary chronicles, travel accounts, geographical records, and other types of texts concerned with the Exotic.

Flint does not unfold a broad array of novel research but builds a puzzle picture from a diverse range of sources. These include not only Columbus's own writings but also the works by Roger Bacon, Pierre d'Ailly, Marco Polo, and John Mandeville. Other types of texts are accounts written by people such as Pliny, Ovid, Plutarch, St. Augustine,
then some Saints’ lives, and St. Brendan’s Journey versions from the early to the late Middle Ages.

Flint’s intentions are to follow the boundaries of Columbus’s frame of mind and to trace the influences that shaped his perceptions of the New World. Six groups of sources form the basic skeleton of her investigation: (1) medieval maps, known as mappemondes; (2) Columbus’s personal library; (3) sea stories from antiquity such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Ovid’s *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, and the Legend of St. Ursula. The chapter on marvels of the East deals with texts such as (4) Marco Polo’s and John Mandeville’s travel accounts, which both deeply influenced Columbus the reader. In the fifth chapter Flint highlights (5) the traveler’s impression that he had come upon paradise and points out the various sources that provided him with the relevant material for his false perception (Pierre d’Ailly’s *Imago Mundi*, Mandeville’s account, and the Bible). In the final chapter Flint explores Columbus’s Christian attitude and the religious inspiration that gave him the necessary momentum to continue with his discoveries. Here she relies heavily on (6) Columbus’s own writing and succeeds in discovering some of the most important elements of his mental structure.

If Flint carries out any independent analysis with resulting original findings, then the last chapter proves her ability as interpreter. All other chapters offer barely more than a summary of the now available research literature on Columbus and do not shed new light on his personality or writing. Flint is a good writer and manages skillfully to weave together a complex patchwork of information, but she must have been aware that her work was outdated from the beginning and could strive to become only a pleasant and instructive monograph on Columbus. Her bibliography does not contain any of the relevant studies published between 1988 and 1991 (her work was completed in 1991), but even works printed between 1980 and 1981 are represented here only selectively. This book might serve well as an introduction to this topic but disappoints overall in terms of its analytic approach and lack of originality. The three color illustrations of maps and a number of black and white reproductions of charts and other maps

Horace’s “Ars Poetica” exerted a tremendous influence not only throughout antiquity but also in the Middle Ages and far into the modern times. In fact, the Horatian tradition has never really come to an end, although modern writers might no longer refer to him specifically and would rather practice his teachings than discuss them explicitly. Proverbial sayings such as “delectare et prodesse” have had their impact on all ages since antiquity. Recognizing the need both to provide the modern reader with an English translation and to trace the continuous afterlife of Horace’s treatise, again in English translation, O. B. Hardison, Jr., and Leon Golden here offer an anthology of the relevant texts. After a general introduction follows the “Ars Poetica” itself, then the “Poetria Nova” by Geoffrey of Vinsauf as the most important medieval representative of Horatian thinking. In chapter 3 we discover the theoretical discussion by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, in chapter 4 the “Essay on Criticism” by Alexander Pope, in chapter 5 Lord Byron’s “The British Bards: A Satire,” and finally in chapter 6 Wallace Stevens’s “Notes toward a Supreme Fiction.”

We can certainly agree with this selection as being representative insofar as it reflects the major steps in the reception process of Horace’s treatise far into the twentieth century. In terms of translation, the individual texts would not really have required an additional treatment because they all have appeared before in separate printing or within other anthologies. Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s “Poetria Nova,” for...