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BOOK REVIEW

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo: A Voyage of Rediscovery. By Wendy Kramer. Edited and Illustrated by Kevin Sheehan. A publication of *Mains'l Haul: A Journal of Pacific Maritime History* Vol. 55:1-4 //Winter/Spring 2019. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. 104 pages. \$15.99 paper.

Reviewed by Iris Engstrand, Professor Emerita, History, University of San Diego.

In lieu of the regular issue of the *Mains'l Haul* containing articles written by separate authors in 2019, the San Diego Maritime Museum elected to publish an English translation of Dr. Wendy Kramer's book in Spanish entitled *El Español que exploró California: JUAN RODRIGUEZ CABRILLO (C. 1497-1543) De Palma del Río a Guatemala* (Córdoba, 2018). The new English edition is subtitled "A Voyage of Rediscovery" because the discoveries of primary documents shed new light not only on Cabrillo's birthplace in Spain, but on his entire career as a landowner in Guatemala, with his wife and five children, and his death and burial on his voyage to the coast of California in 1543. He was not a "conquistador" but an explorer searching for a shorter route to Asia by sailing along the coast of California north of what is today's Cedros Island reached by Francisco de Ulloa in 1539.

Getting history right is never easy. In the case of Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, his story has been controversial from his arrival in the Americas about 1514 when he landed in Panama with Governor Pedrarias. Cabrillo then sailed to Cuba and accompanied Panfilo de Narvaez who was destined to become united with Hernán Cortés and his soldiers in conquering the Aztecs in Mexico. Cabrillo later joined of the a Pedro de Alvarado in his conquest of Guatemala..

The story of Cabrillo's life was documented for the most part by historian Dr. Harry Kelsey in 1997, but because of little conclusive evidence at the time, Kelsey could only speculate about the actual place of Cabrillo's birth. Along with several other historians, he rightly surmised that Cabrillo was indeed Spanish. Recently, Dr. Kramer, a research historian from Toronto, Canada, working on sixteenth century documents located in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, uncovered absolute proof of Cabrillo's birth in Palma del Rio, province of Córdoba, in the heart of Andalucia, Spain. Many of the sixteenth century documents concerning Cabrillo's landholdings, business affairs, and family matters in Guatemala are included in the illustrations accompanying this work.

In the telling of Cabrillo' life story, his identity was mistaken as Portuguese because of a single 17th century account and later misrepresentations. First, in 1615, Spanish chronicler Antonio de Herrera recorded the Spaniard's name with a third last name as Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo Portuguese without explanation or documentation. Second, in the 1930s Portuguese residents of Point Loma carried the idea of Cabrillo as being Portuguese forward and enlisted the support of the government of Portugal to honor him with a statue. Third, National Park Service officials accepted plaques and a statue identifying him as the Portuguese navigator João Rodrigues Cabrilho without an in-depth investigation of his nationality.

This new work by Dr. Kramer is a welcome addition to the libraries of the Maritime Museum members as well as to supporters and visitors to the Cabrillo National Monument. It rectifies an inaccuracy that has been perpetuated by the National Park Service by accepting incorrect plaques, a statue by a Portuguese sculptor, and by providing misleading information. It is also important not only for new documentation but because of the recent building of a replica of Cabrillo's flagship *San Salvador* that is on exhibit and accessible for tours and voyages at the San Diego embarcadero. This issue of the *Mains'l Haul* is available at the San Diego Maritime Museum and by special order.