

shipwreck, discovered in 1996 by Intersal, LLC, off the coast of Beaufort, North Carolina. The book is not a formal archaeological report; rather, it is a modest-size volume written for both archaeologists and the public. It is a handsome paperback containing numerous maps, graphs, tables, and interesting sidebars that the authors call “vignettes.” Bursting with color photographs, the book is also interspersed with “piratey” transitions—for example, “Thirsting to learn, are ye? Have patience, lads and lasses, and go slow, for your own sake. Ye must first listen to what historians have discovered ... before attempting to gaze upon its archaeological treasures!” (p. 20). Overall, the book is an excellent report of investigations and analyses of artifact finds from the shipwreck undertaken to date by the Underwater Archaeology Branch of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, East Carolina University, and other partners for the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* Project.

The majority of the book is devoted to a thorough description of the recovered artifacts and efforts to conserve them. One especially useful table in this section, comprising almost three entire pages, is a list of all specialists who have contributed analysis and research to the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* Project. A few of these specialists include those to be expected, such as experts in archival research, ceramic analysis, and dendrochronology, but the list includes many others whose diverse backgrounds and expertise reflect the analytical breadth associated with this project. These include experts associated with scour-burial modeling, coal analysis, wood aging, and plutonium tracing, among other areas of interest and expertise. One of the book’s vignettes describes the findings of a bell expert and his interpretations about the cultural significance of the sound produced by one of the two bells recovered from the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. In my opinion, these conclusions drawn from the recovery and innovative acoustic analyses of bells are unique and compelling archaeological findings.

Because the extent of intact hull remains was scant, the number of pages devoted to the hull timbers is also limited. The surviving hull timbers include only a small section of intact frames and hull planks and the lower part of the vessel’s stern. The authors suggest that the timber dimensions and associated draft marks are characteristic of a lightly built vessel that would correspond to a French privateer of the eighteenth century, namely, that of the French-built *Concorde*, the original designation for the ship that later became known as the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. Discussions of functional groups of artifacts such as anchors ($n = 2$), cannons ($n = 23$), navigational tools, handheld weapons, medical tools, galley wares, clothing, and personal items are also included. This section will prove

useful to other archaeologists studying shipwrecks and artifact assemblages from this period.

Concluding chapters include a discussion of the fate of Blackbeard and his crew as well as arguments to substantiate the vessel’s identification as the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. They focus their identification of the shipwreck on the dates of manufacture for datable artifacts, cultural affiliations, hull analysis, wreck location and correspondence to historic evidence about the ship’s travels, ties to the *Concorde*’s employment as a slaver, and considerations of evidence about the vessel’s actual wrecking event. These arguments are sound. The authors also advocate full recovery of the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*’s remaining artifacts and hull structure, and they discuss benefits of the project’s Dive Down and Dive Live programs, both designed for public outreach.

This book would make an excellent text for an undergraduate course and also will serve as a useful reference for professionals. It is not the definitive archaeological report for the *Queen Anne’s Revenge* Project, but the archaeological and historical research and interpretations outlined in the book are excellent. The book clearly reflects the vast amount of effort required to conduct a professional archaeological excavation on a shipwreck of this type and the wealth of knowledge that can be derived with proper and thorough analyses of archaeological finds and the participation of experts in the myriad associated fields relevant to studying and interpreting shipwrecks of this type, from this period, with this historical interest and significance.

Ancient Ocean Crossings: Reconsidering the Case for Contacts with the Pre-Columbian Americas. STEPHEN C. JETT. 2017. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa. xx + 508 pp. \$49.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-8173-1939-7.

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Stephen Jett is one of a handful of dedicated (mostly) geographers who have sought to keep dialogues about prehistoric transoceanic contacts with the Americas within the realm of scholarly discourse for historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, or anyone else who might listen. Jett’s first major contribution on this topic was the opening chapter in *Man across the Sea: Problems of Pre-Columbian Contacts* (Riley et al. 1971, University of Texas Press), a volume composed of 24 essays presented at the Society for American Archaeology annual meeting in 1968. In it, Jett

and others considered an eclectic array of evidence for and against transoceanic diffusion based on a range of commodities and styles from a wide variety of source cultures. Like Jett, many of the authors in that book (e.g., Gordon Eckholm, David Kelley, George Carter, John Sorenson, and Alice Kehoe) continued to publish on this topic in the intervening decades, some more successfully than others. The current volume at a minimum represents the capstone of Jett's long scholarly career devoted to the issue of transoceanic contacts, and it could well be considered the culmination of the collective effort of all these scholars (although perhaps more so when considered in tandem with Alice Kehoe's 2016 book *Traveling Prehistoric Seas: Critical Thinking on Ancient Transoceanic Voyages*, Left Coast Press).

If the 1971 volume was eclectic in its coverage and thinking, the current book is methodical, well organized, and exceptionally well researched. In the first 12 chapters (142 pages) Jett considers the many varied arguments that have been made over the years against precolumbian contacts from across the sea. He approaches this by tackling seemingly every single idea that has ever been expressed to raise doubt about the likelihood of Old World contacts with the New prior to Columbus. The scholarship here is thorough and meticulous. Jett begins by addressing the "myth of the oceans as uncrossable barriers" and continues to consider related topics such as "why most domesticated plants and animals stayed home" and "the supposed silence of the historical record." In this first third of the book, Jett seeks to establish circumstantial or contextual cases for contact before focusing on actual physical evidence. Here it can be said that Jett is possibly overthorough—attempting to thwart every imaginable objection to prehistoric transoceanic contacts. This is a tendency common among transoceanic diffusionists who have long suffered from quick, unthoughtful dismissals from archaeologists. Nonetheless, overthoroughness does not necessarily lead to greater credibility. Being given an explanation for "the mystery of the missing artifacts" before being exposed to the actual artifactual evidence itself does not necessarily help to build a stronger case.

The second third of Jett's volume is an exceptionally thorough consideration of the history and archaeology of watercraft, navigation, and sails. These 10 chapters are by far the strength of the volume. Jett's

scholarship here is solid, and his case that various forms of watercraft, sails, and effective navigation were present in world areas other than the Mediterranean thousands of years before Columbus seems sound. He certainly establishes that the requisite technology was in place to enable transoceanic precolumbian diffusion to the New World.

In the final third of Jett's magnum opus, the actual physical evidence for contact is presented, and it is here where I was and most other archaeologists will probably be disappointed, because of the tendency for transoceanic theorists to grab onto every single minuscule transoceanic stylistic similarity or other questionable scrap of possible evidence—and consider all of them on equal footing. Jett and others seem convinced that every set of evidence is indicative of a separate independent contact event, implying therefore that there were many such events in the past. But instead of creating a powerful overall case, this shotgun approach—combining the odd, incredible evidence with the more compelling—only serves to raise questions about the whole enterprise. For example, Jett (p. 287) points to apparent depictions of turkeys on tenth- to thirteenth-century signet rings in Hungary—a landlocked country—which he implies (with no illustrations or citations) had some kind of connection with precolumbian Mesoamerica, where the turkey was domesticated. In the very next paragraph he considers the profoundly more compelling case of the chicken, for which there are clear mitochondrial DNA data and radiocarbon dates indicating its transport by Polynesians to coastal South America before Columbus (Storey et al. 2007, *PNAS* 104:10335–10339). In my view, "evidence" like Hungarian signet rings borders on ridiculous, while the Polynesian chicken dating and DNA evidence is compelling. Transoceanic theorists must convince the scientific world of one significant case of prehistoric transoceanic contact first by concentrating on the more powerful lines of evidence and distinguishing them from the spurious ones that are easily dismissible as chance convergent stylistic developments. Despite such misgivings, I think that the possibility of intercivilizational contacts across the oceans connecting Asia, Malaysia, South America, and/or Mesoamerica continues to be worthy of consideration, and I appreciate Jett's monumental efforts in trying to keep that possibility alive in the minds of American scholars.

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