

# *Contents*

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

ONE Searching the Land for Commodities 13

TWO A Chamber of Knowledge: The Casa de la Contratación  
and Its Empirical Methods 29

THREE Communities of Experts: Artisans and Innovation  
in the New World 56

FOUR Circuits of Information: Reports from the  
New World 81

FIVE Books of Nature: Scholars, Natural History, and the  
New World 101

CONCLUSIONS The Politics of Knowledge 128

APPENDIX 1 Pilots and Cosmographers at the Casa de la  
Contratación 135

APPENDIX 2 Instruments 140

APPENDIX 3 Spanish Scientific Books 147

Notes 151

Bibliography 189

Index 205