

## BOOK NOTICES

*El Almirantazgo de Castilla hasta las capitulaciones de Santa Fe.* By FLORENTINO PÉREZ EMBID. [Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de la Universidad de Sevilla, Publicaciones, Serie 1<sup>a</sup>: *Anuario*, No. I.] (Sevilla: Editorial Católica Española, S. A., 1944. Pp. ix, 185. Facsimiles. Paper.)

The background of maritime interest and achievement in Spain, which, with the genius of Columbus, made possible the discovery of America, did not spring into being suddenly at the end of the fifteenth century. It was instead the culmination of a long period of slow and often painful evolution. The present monograph relates the history of the growth of maritime power through the establishment of the Almirantazgo de Castilla, literally the Admiralty of Castile. The translation Admiralty does not convey the full measure of meaning, for we are accustomed to think of the Admiralty as administrative offices. In the period under discussion, the Almirantazgo was much more than an administrative office; headed by an admiral who was a great dignitary with wide powers, the Admiralty was entrusted with all matters pertaining to raising or constructing ships, equipping, manning and on frequent occasion fighting them, together with a great variety of other duties, functions, rights, privileges, and obligations, some of which concerned the sea and others the land.

The author first discusses the evolution of the Admiralty with its special duties and privileges as a background for the second and most extensive portion of the study, a chronological list of the admirals of Castile from Ruy López de Mendoza, 1254-1260 (?), to Fadrique Enríquez, 1490-1492, listing in all thirty periods with the names of the individuals known to have borne the title. Brief biographies of each are included and painstaking research has brought together for the first time something approaching a coherent picture. In the earlier periods there are few data available and some gaps, but in the main a surprising amount of detail has been uncovered. The third section of the study concerns the Admiralty of Castile and that of the Indies with some interesting sidelights on the claims of Columbus and the traditional and actual significance of the title of "Almirante del Mar Océano" which was based in concept on the Almirantazgo de Castilla and which became its successor.

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