

explore the organizational and cultural characteristics of food. By tracing the storage and preparation techniques of food from Atlantic voyages to treks into the interior of Tierra Firme, as one example, he suggests how the technical problems of food changed, and how they may have influenced the social organization of the expeditions.

In the concluding chapters, Piqueras Céspedes elaborates on the symbolic importance of his subject. He stresses the interplay between gold and food, now interpreted as representations of the two driving but conflicting forces of the conquest. Gold represented the dreams and desires of the early creation of Latin America, the hopes of the first generation of Spaniards who searched for “el Dorado.” Food, the need for sustenance, represented the hard reality of the new land, and often the frustration and failure of the dreams. The tension between gold and food is seen on many levels. Spaniards, in order to secure gold, abused and exploited Indians; at the same time they depended on Indians to provide the food that allowed their search for gold to continue. This inherent contradiction has been used many times to explain the tensions of early colonization, but Piqueras Céspedes gives it new twists.

This is a good book. By concentrating on a neglected area and the experiences of the *hueste*, it broadens our understanding of the sixteenth century and makes a significant contribution to the growing body of literature on the history of food and Latin America.

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*El hombre frente al mar: naufragios en la Carrera de Indias durante los siglos XVI y XVII.*

By PABLO EMILIO PÉREZ-MALLAÍNA BUENO. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1996.

Illustration. Table. Appendix. Notes. 197 pp. Paper.

The empire of Habsburg Spain, like those of its European rivals, was by necessity and definition a seaborne enterprise. It relied on life at sea, with all of its wonder, drudgery, and peril, for commerce, communication, and migration. Pérez-Mallaína has energetically reasserted this nautical focus in two recent books: *Los hombres del océano: vida cotidiana de los tripulantes de las flotas de Indias, siglo XVI*, published in Spanish (Sevilla, 1992) and in Carla Rahn Phillips’s translation (*Spain’s Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*; Baltimore, 1998), and now its sequel of sorts, *El hombre frente al mar*.

Despite its mechanical-sounding subtitle, this book is no mere catalogue of Atlantic shipwrecks and salvage operations. That he supplies in a useful documentary appendix. Rather, Pérez-Mallaína uses exemplary stories of maritime disaster to elucidate the mental culture of early modern Spain and the activities it conditioned. His organizational scheme—“Ante el peligro y la muerte,” “Pérdidas de vidas y haciendas,” and “La fortuna en la desgracia”—signals his emphasis that Spanish behaviors both during and after shipwreck intertwined issues of the soul and the pocketbook. Passion—

reflected in feelings such as fear of death, hope in magic, and industrious self-interest—and institutional solidity—embodied in forms like tort law, bureaucratic management, and vertical classism—equally determined responses to oceanic calamity.

The argument in the first part of the book generally moves from the emotional to the corporeal. Not surprisingly, it does not, and cannot, escape the traditional romance of the sea. For example, the fateful voyage of the *Nuestra Señora del Junca* in October 1631 showcased the dangerous, but also stirring, character of trans-Atlantic travel. Francisco Granillo, boatswain of the galleon, personified bravery, duty, and competence in the face of danger. But more importantly, the author argues, imminent drowning democratized the ship's company and so subverted societal convention. Affluent passengers and destitute sailors alike feared a violent death far from the comfort of friends, family, and God. The aristocrats recognized that prestige and wealth would not save them but that nautical proficiency, hard work, and luck could. So, as the vessel sank in the Gulf of Mexico, they temporarily joined forces with the seamen in an attempt to save lives and hope.

The author reverses his line of reasoning in the book's second and third parts, presenting maritime disaster as a profoundly secular situation with ramifications for belief systems. Shipwrecks indeed focused attention on the value of human life and society, but, even more, they illustrated a cultural priority on the value of things and capitalist profit. For if they represented an assault on social order, as Pérez-Mallaína asserts, it was precisely because they “threw a mantle of confusion over one of its basic pillars: property” (p. 86). Thus, divine petitions from threatened crewmen and passengers gave way to survivors' questions: Who was to blame, and what punishment should be applied? How were human and commercial losses appraised? Who could profit from the loss, how, and to what extent? How could the proper pattern of ownership, wealth, and status best be restored?

In the end, Pérez-Mallaína's work reaches well beyond the narrow boundaries of “the feelings of individuals connected to transoceanic traffic between Spain and America when their persons and belongings suffered the fierce attack of natural forces” (p. 15). Throughout the text, and in overall effect, he deftly weaves the spiritual and material threads of the *Carrera de Indias* into the sociocultural whole of Spanish mercantilist life. The result is an engaging study of personal and institutional responses to distress that, in turn, demonstrates the richness of Atlantic maritime history.

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