

# Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca

VOLUME TWO



# Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca

His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez

Rolena Adorno & Patrick Charles Pautz

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**able 4 provides an analytical division of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* into nine segments (corresponding to commentary chaps. 2–10 in this volume). We have created these divisions and the accompanying commentaries to facilitate the reader's access to the narrative, which is itself unbroken, as well as to provide the reader with a reference tool that brings to the fore the distinctiveness of the successive portions of the narration and their many historical and cultural references. Inasmuch as the textual commentaries are intended to be read as adjuncts to the Cabeza de Vaca *relación*, we have refrained from introducing their divisions into the critical apparatus of the edition and translation; we have instead oriented the commentaries according to the foliation of the 1542 text (noting as well the corresponding chapters of the 1555 edition; see table 4). The assessments we have offered in the commentaries are condensed and summarized in the explanatory footnotes to our English translation; in the commentaries, we present the arguments on which our conclusions are based.

The content of the commentaries has been determined by the *relación* itself and represents our attempt to deal effectively with the chronology of the expedition, setting forth a time frame for the internal divisions of the account and specifically addressing the problem of those sections of the narrative that move backward and forward in time. We have likewise coordinated chronology with location so that the reader can have a clearer sense of the areas inhabited and traversed by the expeditionaries. In the consideration of both time and space, our assessments can only be approximate. Hence we make no attempt to offer a history of the Narváez expedition as such but rather to look inside Cabeza de Vaca's 1542 *relación* in order to reveal its narrative complexities and historical and cultural references.

The reader will discover that in the commentaries (as elsewhere in this project) we have attempted to address the question of referentiality in the *relación*, in this way indirectly responding to recent, frequently repeated claims (from the fields of literary and cultural studies) to the effect that Cabeza de Vaca's account has little to do with any attempt to represent an experienced reality. We take instead the position that he took considerable pains to represent as best he could the American world that he experienced and the experience of his journey through that American world while at the

Table 4. Analytical division of the *Relación***Gulf Coast journey of the Narváez expedition (approx. 8 years):**

<i>Part</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>1542 folio</i>	<i>1555 chap.</i>	<i>Occurrences</i>
1	17 June 1527 to Feb./Mar. 1528	8–9 mos.	f3r–f5v	1–2	Departure from Spain and sojourn in the Caribbean to arrival near Havana, Cuba
2	Feb./Mar. 1528 to 1 May 1528	2.5–3.5 mos.	f5v–f8v	3–4	Journey to <i>Florida</i> and establishment on the west coast of the Florida Peninsula
3 secs. 1–3	1 May 1528 to July 1536		f65v–f67r	38	Fate of the sea contingent and the search for Narváez's overland expedition
secs. 4–16	1 May 1528 to 22 Sept. 1528	5 mos.	f8v–f16r	5–8	Overland expedition into the Florida Peninsula to the Bay of Horses
4	22 Sept. 1528 to 6 Nov. 1528	1.5 mos.	f16r–f20v	9–10	Coastal exploration by raft to mouth of Mississippi River; separation of rafts and voyage to Texas coast
5	6 Nov. 1528 to midsummer 1535	81 mos. (6.5–6.75 yrs.)	f20v–f48r	11–28	Arrival of rafts at Galveston Bay; sojourn of expeditionaries among native peoples and travels south along the coast to the arrival of the final four survivors at the foot of mountains in northern Tamaulipas

**Overland journey of the final four Narváez expedition survivors (approx. 2 years):**

6	Midsummer 1535 to early autumn 1535	2–3 mos.	f48r–f54v	28–31	Four survivors' overland travel from northern Tamaulipas to La Junta de los Ríos
7	Early autumn 1535 to spring 1536	6–7 mos.	f54v–f58v	31–33	Four survivors' overland travel from La Junta de los Ríos to the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa)
8	Spring 1536 to 23 July 1536	3 mos.	f58v–f63v	33–36	Four survivors' reunion with other Spaniards and travel from the Río Petatlán to San Miguel de Culiacán and México-Tenochtitlán
9	23 July 1536 to 9 Aug. 1537	13 mos.	f63v–f65v	37	Four survivors' sojourn in México-Tenochtitlán and Cabeza de Vaca's travel to Havana, Cuba, and Lisbon, Portugal

Total: 122 mos. (10 yrs., 2 mos.)

same time enhancing the potential gain to be had from some parts of the land traversed and, even more importantly, enhancing his own role in the Narváez expedition and its aftermath. Producing a healthy tension between themselves, this dual effort corresponded to Cabeza de Vaca's immediate goal of impressing the emperor and obtaining another royal contract; balanced against one another, both impulses—to report and to enhance—make us wary of Cabeza de Vaca's claims at the same time as we are informed by his attempt to represent his own perceptions of a world previously undescribed by any European.

Taking this theoretical position has had two consequences. The first is that we have studied the *relación* not for what it might tell us about the world through which Cabeza de Vaca and his colleagues passed—we do not see it as a transparent source by which to access the Amerindian world of North America, its flora and fauna—but rather for what it tells us about Cabeza de Vaca's interpretation of his experience of that world. For this reason, we have written commentaries on the personal narrative instead of a global history of the expedition.

The second consequence has been that we have coordinated our study of the *relación* with Oviedo's book 35, chapters 1–6 of his *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, precisely because we are interested in something beyond Cabeza de Vaca's personal testimony. Despite its being a secondhand version of the expedition written from the Joint Report (see chap. 12, secs. 2.B–D), the value of Oviedo's account as a primary source is paramount since it is the *only* account to offer the testimony of two different survivors of the Narváez expedition—Andrés Dorantes as well as Cabeza de Vaca—regarding their individual experiences during portions of the six and a half years they spent living in the coastal region of the Gulf of Mexico in the area known at the time as *Florida*. Secondhand in a different way from Oviedo's, Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* provides an eyewitness account that is considerably removed from his own Joint Report testimony and constitutes a much expanded and reworked account built on its basis.

Taken together, Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* and Oviedo's book 35, chapters 1–6 are the only primary sources that make possible any sort of historical reconstruction of the Narváez expedition from the point at which the three-hundred-man expedition struck inland on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula until the four survivors contacted other Europeans in northwestern Mexico eight years later. For this reason and because they constitute somewhat different, once-removed, yet “primary” accounts, we have granted Cabeza de Vaca's and Oviedo's narratives virtually equal status as interpreters of the men's experience.



With respect to the division of the account into two different journeys, it was Bartolomé de las Casas (*Apologética* 2:361 [chap. 206]) who first observed that the first of these followed close to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and occupied the majority of the time that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions spent outside the realm of Spanish settlement, while the second led the men far from the sea on a rapid journey that allowed them little opportunity to learn about the native peoples among whom they traveled. We have restored this largely geographical conceptualization of the *relación* by dividing it into two main divisions, as shown in table 4.

Within the context of this division, we have further divided the journey into nine parts, and the criteria for doing so are based on our assessment of the significant turning points in the expeditionaries' experience as reconstructed in Cabeza de Vaca's and Oviedo's narratives. In other words, we make no claim to logical divisions of the historical expedition but rather to the way its surviving accounts have interpreted it. In narrative terms, these divisions correspond to the internal closures or shifts within the original narrations, which are represented and identified in table 4.

Regarding the identification of geographic location, ethnic groups, flora and fauna, and the passage of time we have taken a somewhat conservative approach. On all of these matters we are not merely left with what Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo *did* say but are aware of the risk of making assertions in the face of not knowing what they might have left *unsaid*. With respect to geographic location, the failure of either to cite topographical features of landscape mentioned by the other at a given point in the narration gives cause for caution. Though a toponym of the sixteenth-century Spanish world remains in use today, the current site to which it refers and its historical referent are not necessarily one and the same. Precisely because of the frequently vague nature of the accounts with respect to geography and chronology, as well as the nonlinear subtleties of the narrative (see below) that further obscure the references, we have refrained from offering a specific route that the men followed from the Florida Peninsula to México-Tenochtitlán. Though we frequently offer specific identifications of geography, we present them as uncertain best guesses, maintaining that although certain general conclusions can be derived from the two accounts regarding location and chronology, conclusive specific identifications are beyond reach. With this in mind, we have offered our maps of the journey as aids for following our arguments rather than for asserting a precise historical route. We insist on the highly retrospective character of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*, which differs significantly from a journal or travel log in terms of narrative technique in spite of its power to seduce the reader into traveling along with him through his narrative.

Perhaps the most intriguing and challenging geographical question of the four Narváez survivors' experience and of the two surviving accounts is the men's abandonment of their goal of reaching Pánuco and their traversal of a vast area of northern Mexico not previously explored by Europeans. As we discuss below (chap. 6, sec. 2.B; chap. 7, sec. 2), Cabeza de Vaca's (f47v) mention of the men's decision to travel through the coastal interior rather than directly along the shoreline as they continued to search for Pánuco has been incorrectly understood as an explicit declaration about the men's decision to cross northern Mexico. This misinterpretation has had two results. First, route interpreters have used the passage to justify their claim that Cabeza de Vaca was simply mistaken when he said that the first mountains the men encountered along their route were only fifteen leagues from the coast of the North Sea (Gulf of Mexico; f47v) and consequently have argued that these mountains were located in western Texas (in essence, this line of interpretation justified by Cabeza de Vaca's supposedly explicit declaration of going overland is the core of all trans-Texas/New Mexico/Arizona routes of the Cabeza de Vaca party). Second, it has concealed that neither account ever truly addresses the fact that somehow the four men resolved to abandon their search for Pánuco along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and head overland for the South Sea (see chap. 7, sec. 6).

Regarding ethnic groups mentioned in the accounts, Cabeza de Vaca named a great number; Oviedo, working from the Joint Report, named almost none in his chapters 1–6. The tendency of modern scholarship is not only to correlate names Cabeza de Vaca gave in his account to later ones from accounts of subsequent exploration but also to insist on naming ethnic groups encountered by Cabeza de Vaca and his companions but not named in the accounts. This practice was inaugurated by Buckingham Smith in his 1871 translation (*Relation* 162–63, 177–81), in which he used Antonio de Espejo's account of a 1582–83 journey through present-day Chihuahua to La Junta de los Ríos, as well as those of other soldiers and missionaries, to map the "human topography" of North America encountered by the Cabeza de Vaca party in the 1520s and 1530s. We have resisted this retrospective naming for several reasons: first, because in many cases, several decades passed before subsequent European explorers passed through the same (or similar) areas, and, second, the later eyewitness accounts may be representing as the collective memory of particular native groups the suggestions derived from their own, information-seeking readings of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*.

Likewise, the level and type of ethnographic description given by Cabeza de Vaca must be considered incomplete and therefore difficult to use in identifying archaeological or surviving cultures. One of the most frequently mentioned such identifications is Cabeza de Vaca's "people of the cows"

(of the Rio Grande/Río Conchos confluence at La Junta de los Ríos) as the Jumanos. There is usually inadequate evidence to suggest that later expeditions encountered the same groups, and it is impossible to draw persuasive conclusions from accounts that were themselves partial and incomplete in order to establish that they referred to identical bodies of custom and belief presumably observed by different reporters in the same places decades earlier.

The study of the flora and fauna in the *relación* and Oviedo is potentially one of their most fascinating topics: what did the sixteenth-century reporters actually see, and how could they communicate it while having to rely on the European terms and categories that were familiar to them? We have attempted to take the remarkably vivid descriptions provided by Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo and set forth the broad categories of native North American flora and fauna (mesquite, prickly pears, bison, etc.) that the men experienced as a way to inform the reader about these phenomena in a general manner without making strong claims about specifics.

Perhaps one of the most easily misleading areas of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is its representation of the passage of time and its illusion of being a linear narrative. Together, these factors confound the reader hoping to reconstruct the time frame of the narration and expecting to enjoy a straightforward, sequential account of events. Our commentaries are meant to keep the reader from being carried away by the seemingly linear progression of the narrative, which masks the more subtle changes of temporal reference that occur at the level of narrative sequence. Occasionally, this linearity is false, concealing the conflation of information gathered from very disparate sources, as in, for example, Cabeza de Vaca's synthetic treatment of information on the bison (see chap. 6, sec. 14.A).

Besides this subtle nonlinearity of events in Cabeza de Vaca's account, there is also an explicit chronological nonlinearity of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative of the Narváez expedition. For example, on f65v–f67r of the 1542 Zamora *relación* (chapter 38 of the 1555 Valladolid edition), Cabeza de Vaca narrates at the end of his account of his journey with the overland expedition the events of May 1528 through July 1536 concerning the fate of the sea contingent that left the men on the overland march in the spring of 1528 and later went back to the coast of the Florida Peninsula to search for Narváez and his men (see chap. 4, secs. 1–3). Out of chronological order in the global narration of the Narváez expedition, Cabeza de Vaca intentionally presents this information in the logical order of the time when he learned it, that is, after having arrived in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536. Following this principle of providing information about the expedition's progress at the point in the narrative meant to correspond to when he learned it, Cabeza de Vaca presents

in the context of his own travels along the Texas coastline an extraordinarily complex account of how he discovered the fate of the other four rafts that coasted the rim of the Gulf of Mexico and landed along the Texas coast in the autumn of 1528 (see chap. 6, secs. 4–9). As we point out in our commentaries, Cabeza de Vaca did not execute his chronological ordering of his account according to his own journey without some limited technical errors.

With respect to the passage of time, the reader should be cautioned that Cabeza de Vaca's frequent references to "otro día" do not necessarily mean "the next day." Although he appears in the early portions of the narration to give a day-by-day recounting, as, for example, when he tells of the time the Narváez expedition spent establishing a camp on the *Florida* coast and exploring native villages up to 1 May 1528, his narrative reveals that he does not account for each day (see chap. 3). A careful study of the chronological references in the *relación* shows that even though his use of "otro día" sometimes appears to mean "the next day," the term cannot always be taken as such. As the narrative progresses, the precision of temporal references diminishes considerably, and "otro día" may be interpreted no more specifically than to mean "another day."

On the overland itinerary that constitutes the second of the two journeys we have described, the temporal references are minimal. In the course of this nine- or ten-month journey from Tamaulipas to the Río Petatlán in Sinaloa there are but two temporal references; Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) remarked that the climate of the coastal area (of Sonora) was hot in January, and Oviedo (611a) mentioned that it was Christmastime when the four men were stopped by the flooding river (the Río Yaqui), where they found iron artifacts strung to an Indian's neck piece. (All references to Oviedo giving a page number only refer to his account of the Narváez expedition in his *Historia* 3:579–618 [bk. 35, chaps. 1–7]).

Overall, given the difficulties of ascertaining what would appear to be basic data about the men's experience—difficulties that can be attributed to elliptical descriptions, faulty memory, and a myriad of other reasons—it should be apparent why we have refrained from attempting to write a history of the Narváez expedition and its consequences. Nevertheless, the interpretive information that Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo provide is considerable. Despite enormous lacunae, we have much to learn from their accounts about how the European explorers and settlers of their day interpreted their own experience and those of others in America.

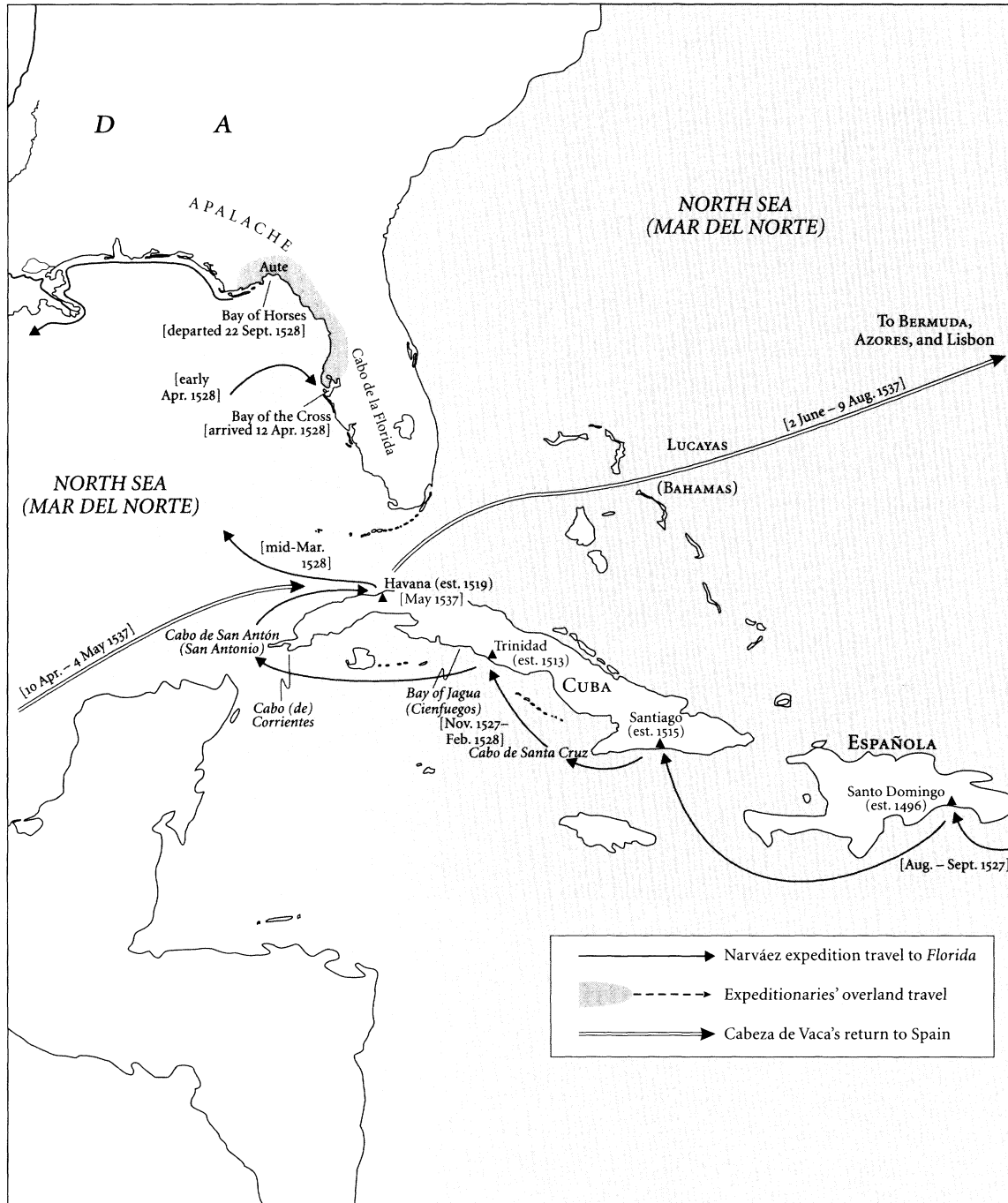
Recalling the time-honored literary genre of the commentary that was well established in the sixteenth century, we have here attempted to provide a solution to the problem that vexed the purveyors of historical literary culture back then, namely, how to facilitate the reading of a text of virtually

eternal freshness and appeal that at the same time is characterized by almost insurmountable difficulties of decipherment. Tackling the casual shorthand of an historical community long gone and its arcane dictionary-catalog denoting what have long since ceased to be self-evident referents, we have attempted to provide readers with the foundations of an analysis that will facilitate (but not mold) the construction of their own interpretations of the Cabeza de Vaca text.

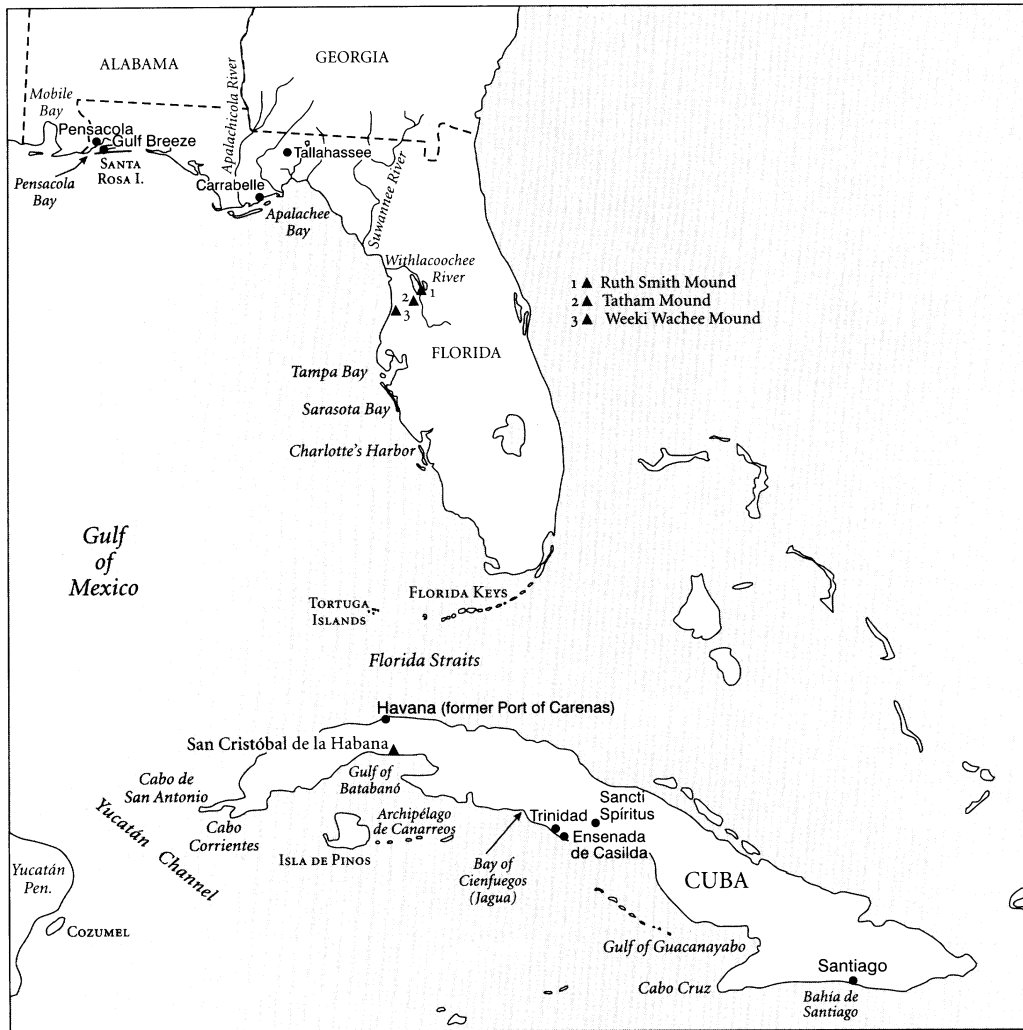
## Maps

Map 1, an overview of the areas traversed by the Narváez expedition and its four overland survivors, is repeated from volume 1 (for maps 2–4, see volume 1). Maps 5–10 detail the specific regions discussed in this volume.

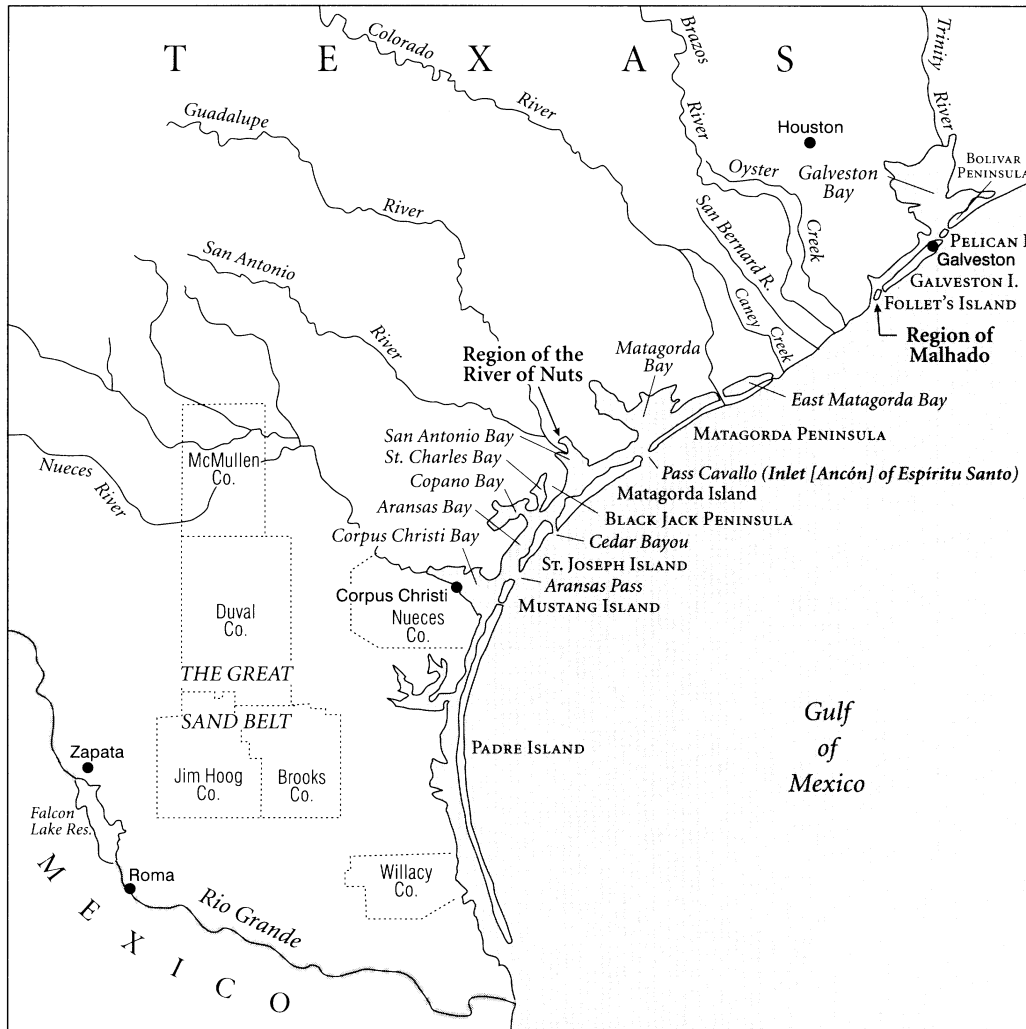




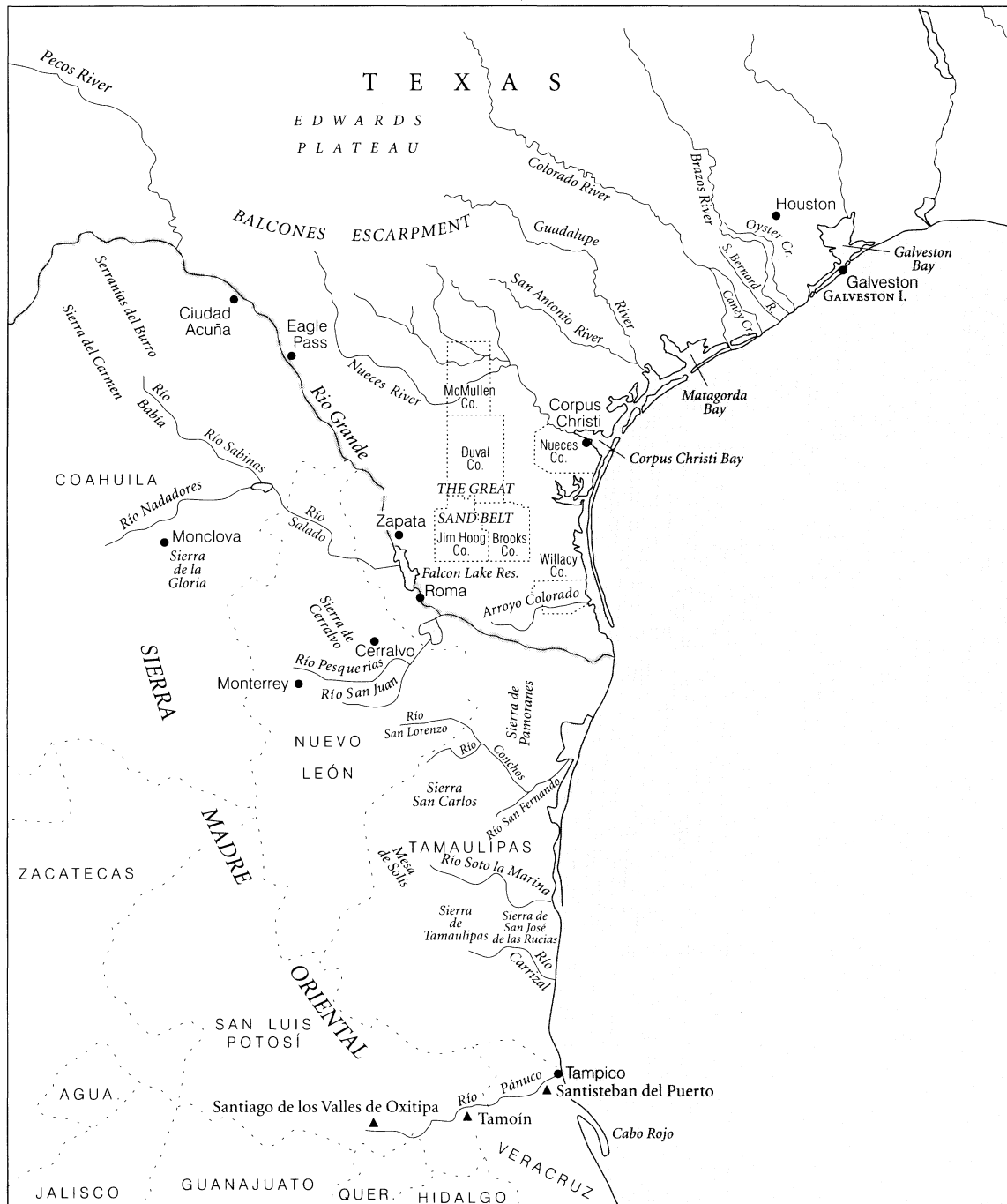




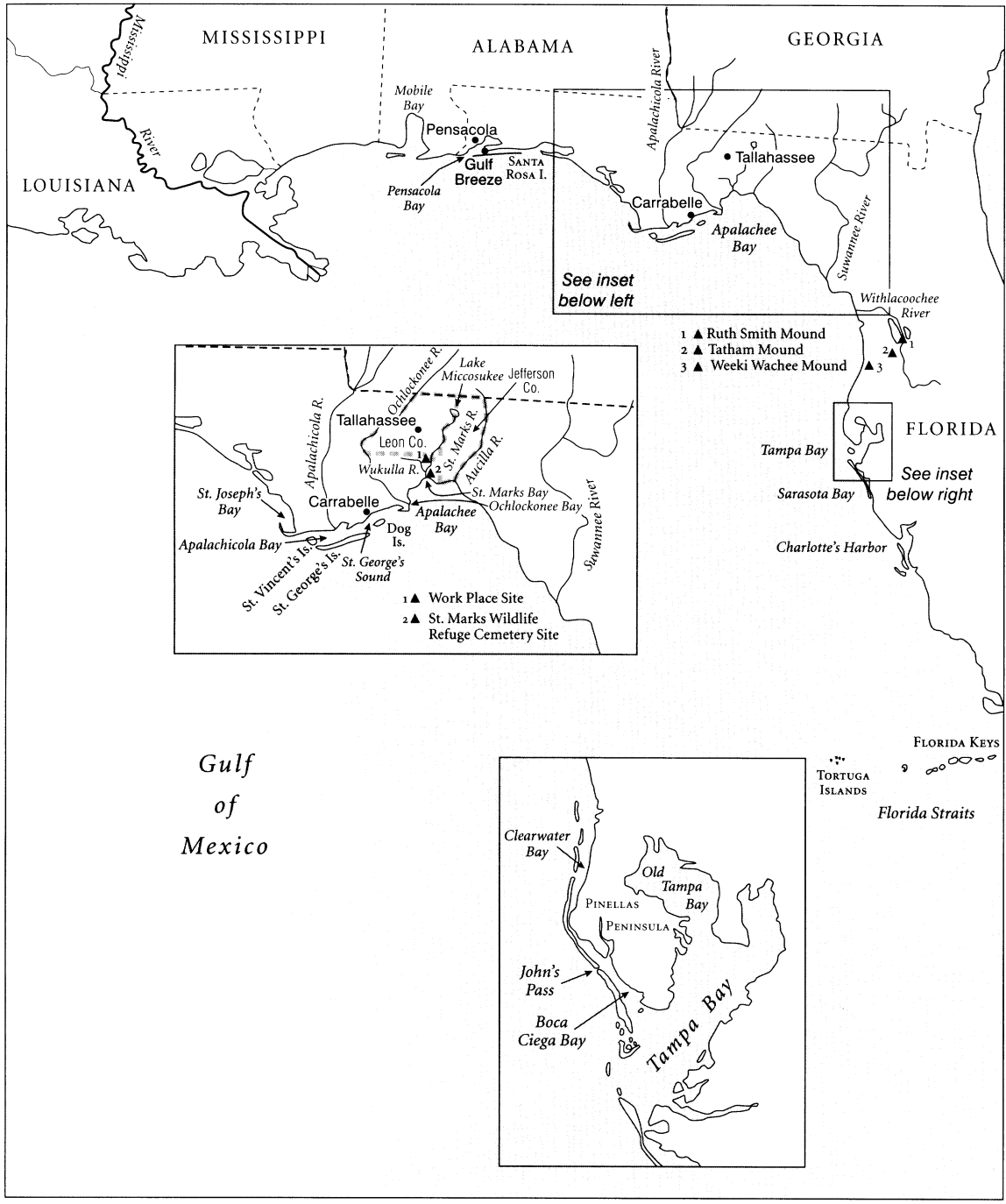
Map 5. Cuba and Florida Peninsula reference map

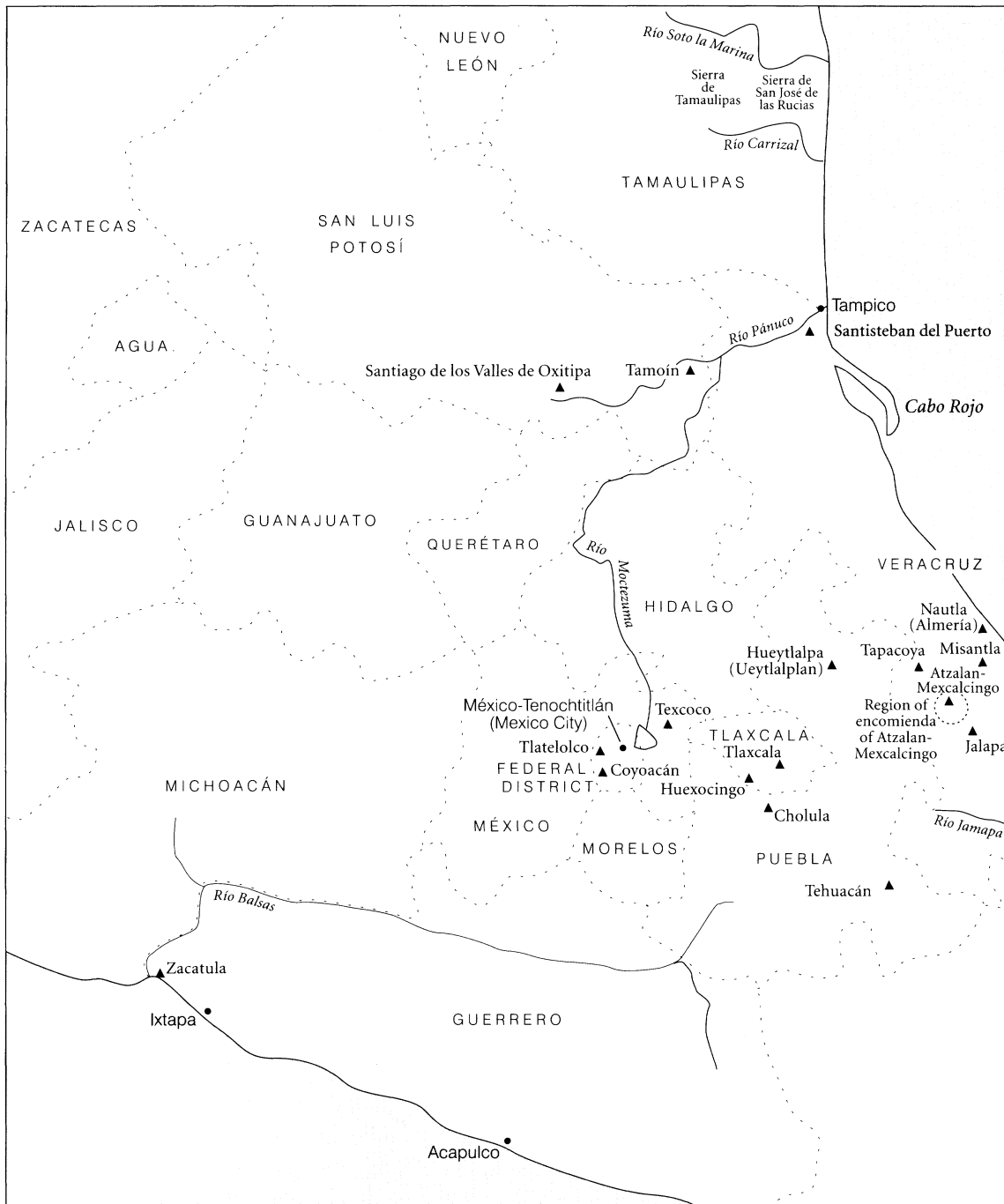


Map 6. Texas coastline reference map

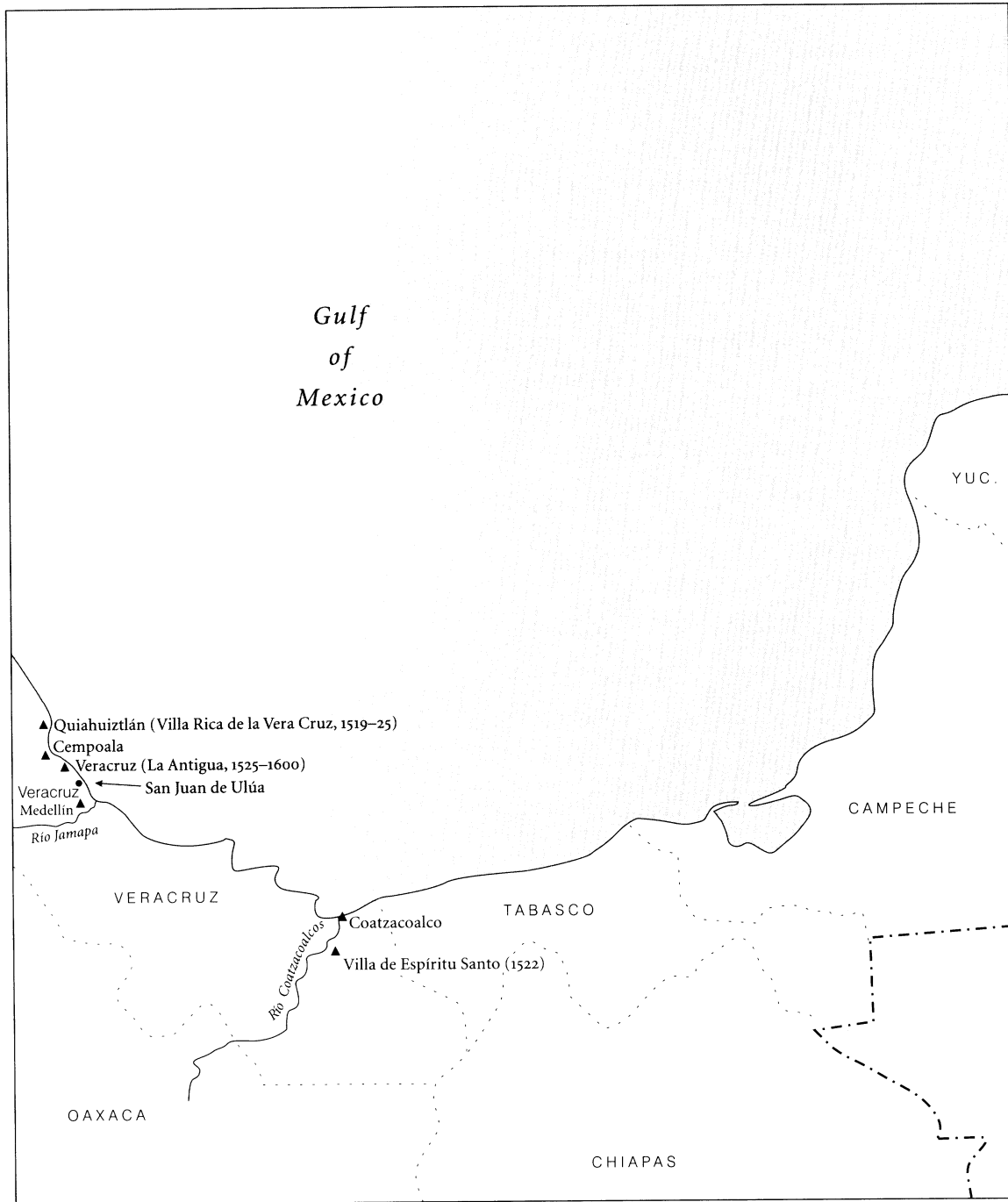


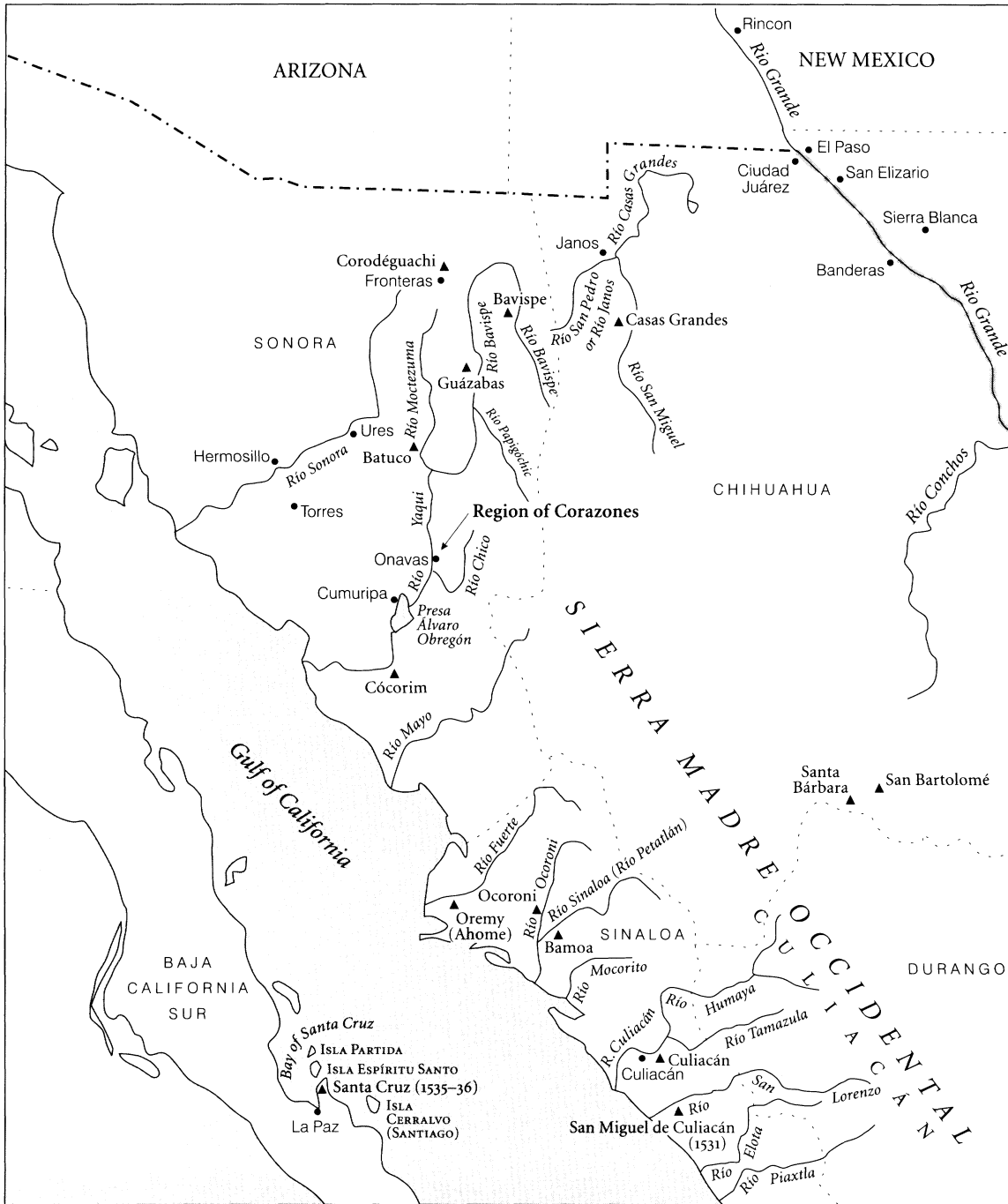
Map 7. Florida Peninsula, eastern Texas, and northeastern Mexico reference map



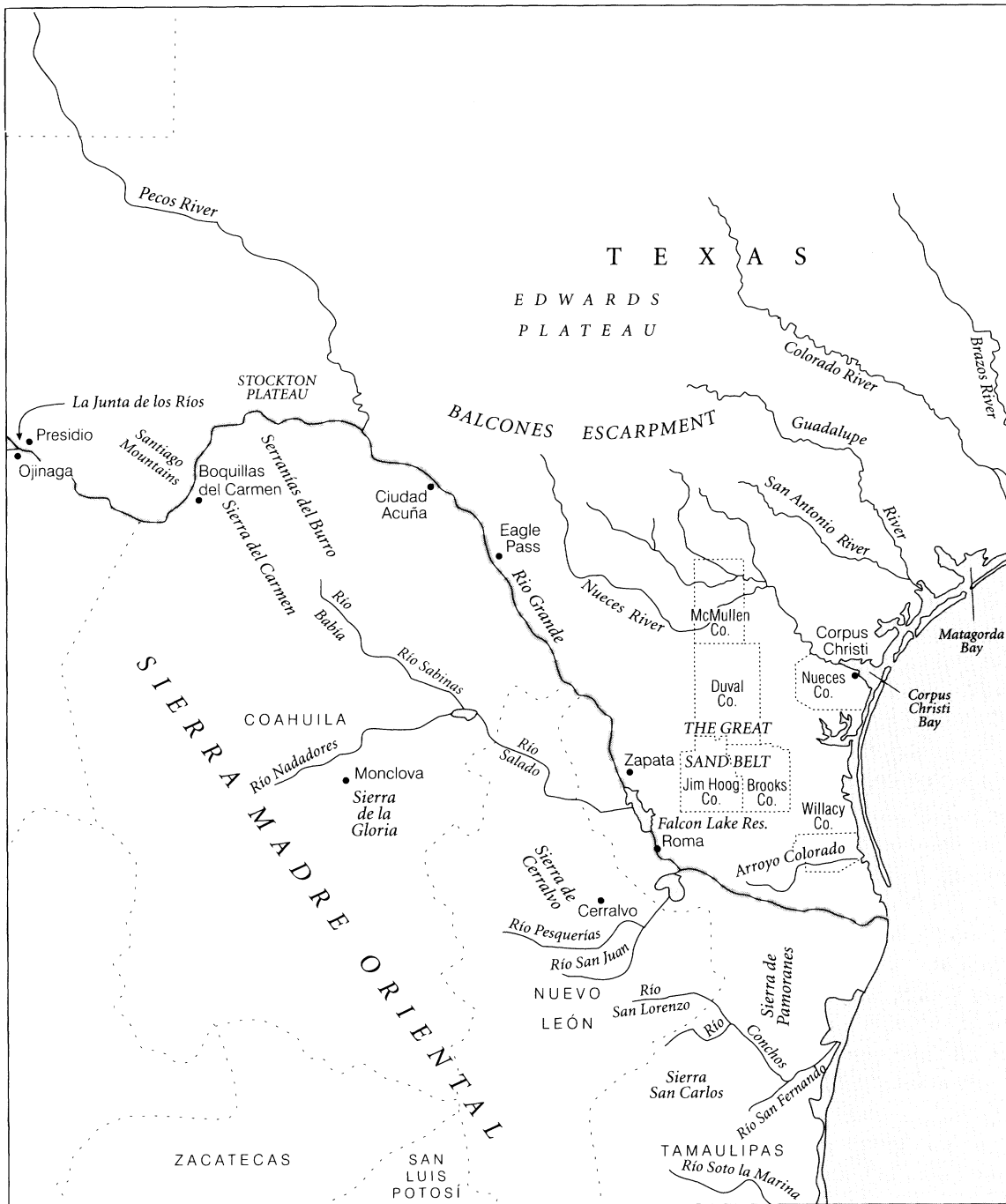


Map 8. Southeastern Mexico reference map

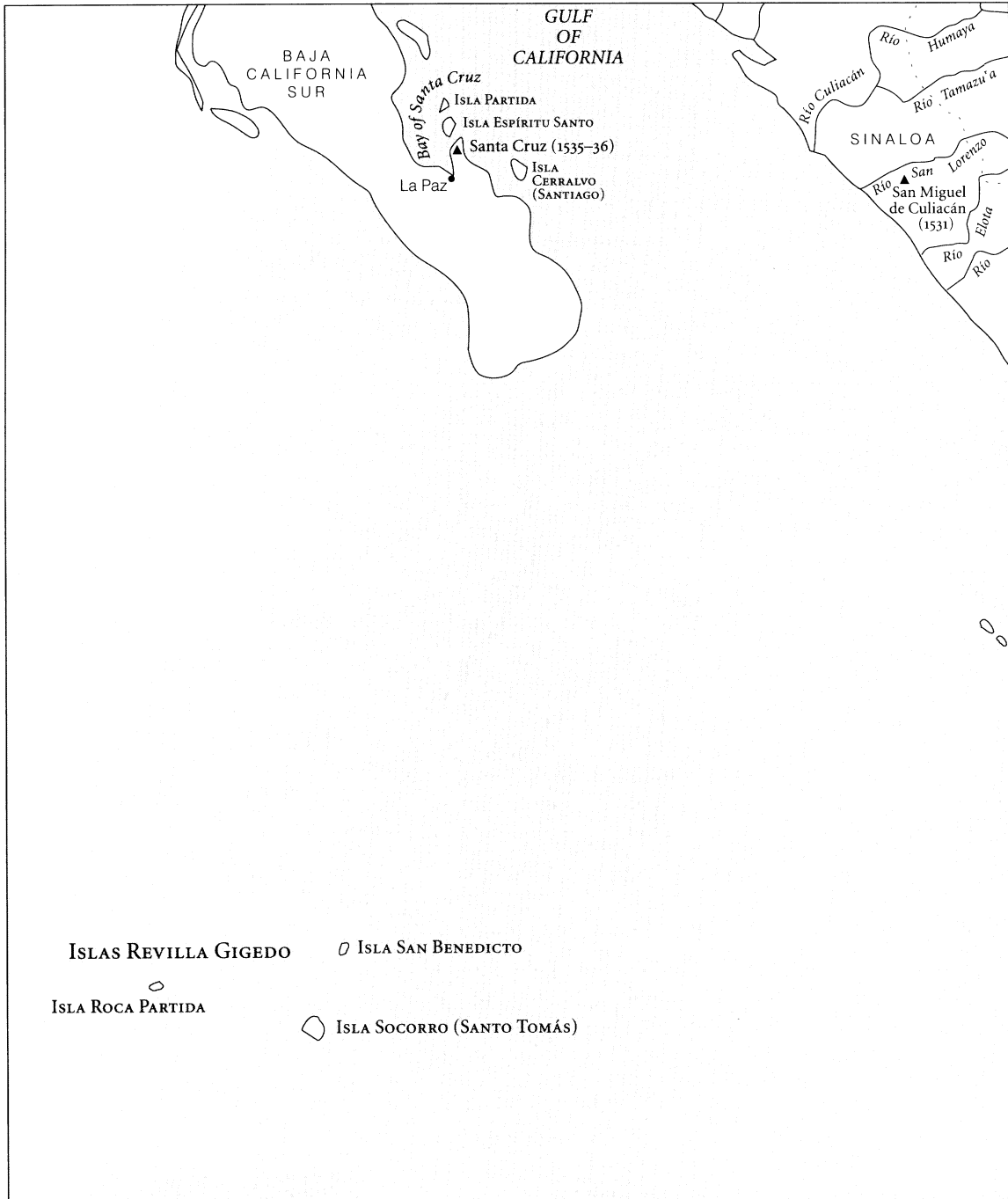




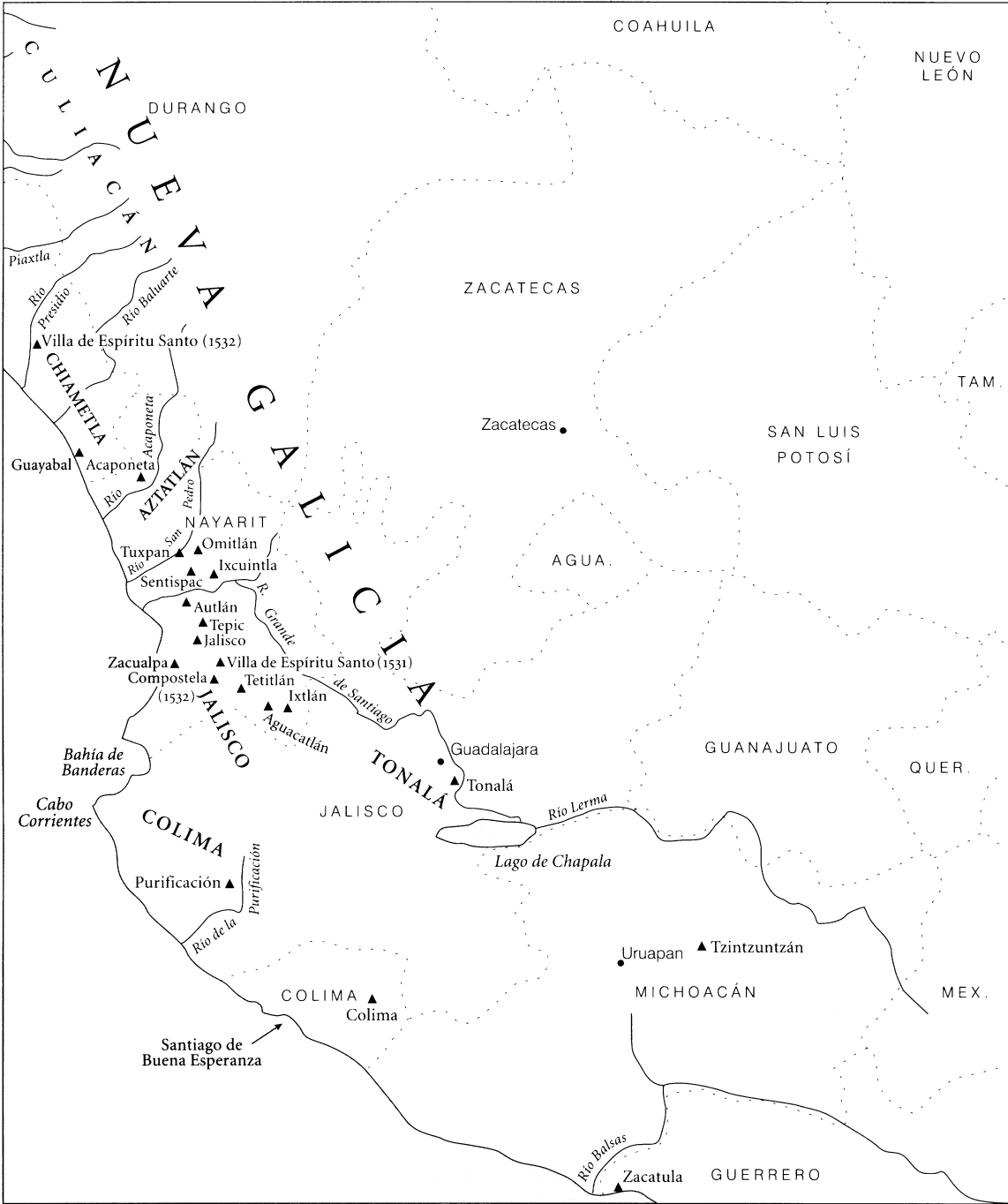
Map 9. Western Texas and northwestern Mexico reference map







Map 10. Southwestern Mexico reference map





## ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain
CDI	<i>Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de América y Oceanía</i>
CDIE	<i>Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España</i>
CDU	<i>Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de Ultramar</i>
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, Spain
DHC	<i>Documentos inéditos relativos a Hernán Cortés y su familia</i>
DRAE	Real Academia Española. <i>Diccionario de la lengua española</i>
ENE	<i>Epistolario de Nueva España, 1505–1818</i>
JCBL	John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence RI
USLC	United States Library of Congress, Washington DC

## CHAPTER 1

### Preparations for Departure (1525 to 17 June 1527)

Cabeza de Vaca begins his account of Pánfilo de Narváez's *Florida* expedition with the narration of its departure from Spain on 17 June 1527. His desire to recount to his sovereign the fate of the expedition from that day, when the expedition left the shores of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, until the day he himself returned to the Iberian Peninsula was consistent with his responsibilities as the treasurer of the Narváez expedition. As he later wrote his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca reasonably assumed that the primary readers of his account—the emperor Charles V and his ministers—were aware of the circumstances under which Narváez and his men had departed for *Florida* in 1527. The king and then emperor Charles had witnessed from Spain the discovery of Mexico between 1517 and 1519. He and his ministers had overseen the various disputes between Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Garay, Hernán Cortés, Pánfilo de Narváez, and Nuño de Guzmán over possession of the lands of the western and northern Gulf of Mexico between 1519 and 1537, the year Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain (see chaps. 15–17 for consideration of these topics). Likewise, these most important first readers of the *relación* were privy to Narváez's own activities in Spain from 1525 until he departed for the Caribbean on 17 June 1527, the day with which the narrative of the *relación* commences.

The modern reader of the *relación* is unable to interpret it from the privileged position of the Castilian court of the early 1540s where the text was first read. A reconstruction of the circumstances leading up to the departure of the Narváez expedition from Spain therefore proves useful for comprehending it. Many documents pertaining to the preparation of the Narváez expedition are extant and allow us to reconstruct the immediate context of the expedition. This context, offering an idea of how the Narváez expedition was first conceived, organized, and set into motion, prepares the stage upon which Cabeza de Vaca's narrative commences. We begin with Pánfilo de Narváez's return from Mexico to Spain.

#### 1. NARVÁEZ'S RELEASE FROM PRISON IN MEXICO AND HIS RETURN TO CUBA AND SPAIN

We have discovered little direct information on Cortés's imprisonment of Narváez in New Spain, and we discuss elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 8.B.3)

Narváez's unsuccessful attempt to escape from Veracruz at Quiahuiztlán in February 1521 and his later transfer to México-Tenochtitlán. At Cortés's 1529 *residencia* (the official investigation of his conduct as governor of New Spain), Andrés de Monxaraz testified that he had seen Narváez imprisoned in Veracruz for "a period of about one and one half or two years, more or less" (CDI 26:545). On 8 May 1529, Cortés was charged with holding Narváez prisoner for "three and [*sic*] four years" (CDI 27:13). According to Buckingham Smith's (*Relation* 207) translation of a petition from Narváez to the emperor, Narváez said he was imprisoned for five years, apparently from 1520 to 1525, although we show elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 9.D) that he seems to have been traveling from Medellín (on the Río Jamapa near San Juan de Ulúa) to Santisteban del Puerto (on the Río Pánuco) in mid-1524.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo (423b [chap. 158]) said that Cortés sent for Narváez from Veracruz before the construction of the Spanish city on top of the Aztec city of México-Tenochtitlán was completed and that Narváez did eventually enter the capital of New Spain. Díaz del Castillo's (423b [chap. 158]) dramatic recounting of Narváez's first appearance before Cortés and a similar account of Narváez's conversation with Garay (Castillo 448–49, cols. b [chap. 162]) were no doubt his imagined narratives, far from eyewitness testimony. According to Bernal Díaz's construction of these conversations, Narváez promised to be Cortés's servant (*servidor*) once he realized the positive implications of Cortés's conquest of Mexico for Spain and acknowledged that Cortés's defeat of the army Diego Velázquez had sent under his command had been a service to the emperor. As we discuss elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 9.C), Bernal Díaz said it was Garay's intercession and the pleas of Narváez's wife, María de Valenzuela, that finally convinced Cortés to free Narváez, evidently in late 1523, and he adds that Cortés gave Narváez 2,000 *pesos de oro* when he left New Spain. On 12 October 1529, García de Llerena, acting in Cortés's stead, responded to the charge that his client had imprisoned Narváez, saying that the act had been a service to the emperor, that the emperor had never ordered Cortés to release Narváez, and that eventually Cortés did free him and send him to Spain to give an account of the situation to Charles V (CDI 27:216). He added, ironically, since by this time Narváez was already known to be lost on the *Florida* coast, that he hoped Narváez would have better luck in the Río de las Palmas than he had had in New Spain.

After his release from prison and his visits to Medellín and possibly to Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco, Narváez returned to Cuba. Narváez probably arrived in Cuba somewhat after 11 or 12 June 1524, the date when Diego Velázquez, who had sent Narváez on the disastrous 1520 expedition to New Spain, died. As we consider elsewhere, Narváez served

as a witness in the *residencias* of the deceased governor of Cuba and the lieutenant governor, Alonso de Zuazo (CDU 1:129–203), and was still present in Cuba on 24 May 1525. Shortly thereafter, Narváez must have set sail for Spain. In the six years from his return from Spain to Cuba in mid-1519 as the newly named treasurer of what later became Cortés's New Spain to mid-1525, when he returned to the Iberian Peninsula, he had been involved solely in an unsuccessful attempt to see justice served for Diego Velázquez in an effort to remove Cortés from Mexico.

## 2. NARVÁEZ'S OLD BUSINESS: PETITIONS AGAINST CORTÉS AND AYLLÓN

### 2.A. Charges against Cortés

Bernal Díaz, Francisco López de Gómara, and Oviedo all record Narváez's activities in Spain, and it is from them that we deduce the date of his arrival there. As we demonstrate in our discussion of Spanish exploration in the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 9.B), Bernal Díaz's account of Narváez's activities from his arrival in Mexico in 1520 to his return to Spain is unreliable, since in some parts of his *Historia* he has Narváez back in Spain even before October 1522, accusing Cortés of crimes that had not even occurred by that date, despite the fact that in other episodes narrated in the work pertaining to later events he has Narváez still in Mexico.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo (502–06, cols. b [chap. 172]) narrates the major movement against Cortés by his adversaries at the Castilian court that occurred in 1525 and had been initiated, according to Bernal Díaz, by a letter that Rodrigo de Albornoz sent to Spain while Cortés was in southern Mexico confronting Cristóbal de Olid. In this narration, Díaz del Castillo seems to echo various aspects of his earlier account (Castillo 478–90, cols. b [chaps. 167–68]) of the previous, similar events involving Cortés's advocates, Velázquez's advocates, and the bishop of Burgos that had brought about the 1522 investigation by Pope Adrian VI and the subsequent junta overseen by the emperor that awarded Cortés the governance of New Spain (see chap. 15, sec. 9.B). In contrast to Bernal Díaz's narration of these events of 1522, where Narváez could neither have been present at court nor have been able to make the accusations Díaz del Castillo narrated, in his account of the situation at the Castilian court in 1525 Pánfilo de Narváez was indeed present and probably did make the accusations that Bernal Díaz had attributed to him in the earlier situation. As we have seen above, however, Narváez did not arrive in Spain until after May 1525, and we can therefore show that he could not have acted exactly as Díaz del Castillo (504b [chap. 172]) says. Although

Narváez was certainly at court speaking out against Cortés, he could not have gone to speak with Bishop Fonseca in Toro, since Fonseca had died by the end of 1524. As in the description of the 1522 events, Díaz del Castillo desired once again to explain the movement against Cortés as the plotting of the bishop of Burgos, Narváez, Cristóbal de Tapia, Diego Velázquez, and other opponents of Cortés, and there is a noteworthy degree of conflation of the 1522 and 1525 events in Bernal Díaz's account.

Gómara (*Historia de la conquista* 294 [chap. 188]) gives a more convincing account of Narváez's attempts to discredit Cortés. He says that although Cortés was the most famous Spaniard at the time (1525), there were many at court who were making charges against him, especially Pánfilo de Narváez. Gómara says that the combination of these complaints with the lack of correspondence to the Castilian court from Cortés in Mexico produced the court's suspicion of his activities and precipitated, among other things, the naming of Nuño de Guzmán to the governorship of the province of Pánuco. Cortés's fourth *carta de relación* to the emperor is dated 15 October 1524, and the fifth is dated 3 September 1526. Chipman (*Nuño de Guzmán* 85) notes that Cortés was nearly granted the governance of Pánuco in February 1525 but that the move was postponed. According to Gómara (*Historia de la conquista* 304 [chap. 195]), Narváez gave "a memorial containing many chapters" directly to the emperor, apparently sometime in mid- to late 1526, according to the surrounding context, in which he accused Cortés of many crimes. Gómara says further that "in many petitions" Narváez even sought Cortés's execution. To our knowledge, neither the memorial nor any of these petitions has been discovered.

Gómara (*Historia de la conquista* 294 [chap. 188]) noted that the proceedings against Cortés occurred while the Castilian court was in Toledo. The emperor arrived in Toledo on 24 April 1525 (Anghiera, *Epistolario* 4:399 [bk. 38, letter 81]; Santa Cruz 2:124 [pt. 3, chap. 23]), where he convened the court of Castile. Oviedo (*Historia* 3:316a [bk. 33, chap. 12], 3:580b [bk. 35, proem]) recorded that Narváez vigorously criticized Cortés in 1525 at Toledo while the emperor was in the city. He remarked that Narváez "publicly proclaimed that Cortés was a traitor . . . saying he was treacherous, tyrannical, and ungrateful to his king and to Diego Velázquez, who had sent him to New Spain at his own expense" (Oviedo, *Historia* 3:316a [bk. 33, chap. 12]).

2.A.1. *Suppression of Cortés's Letters.* Although we must rely in large part on the chroniclers for information regarding the litigation that Narváez brought before the emperor against Cortés between mid-1525 and his departure from Spain for *Florida* in June 1527, one piece of documentary evidence related to his attempt to suppress the circulation of Cortés's writings survives. In



an effort to protect his own reputation, Narváez successfully sought the prohibition of any publication of Cortés's letters, in the second of which Cortés (*Cartas de relación* 248–66) had given an account of how he defeated Narváez and his 1520 expedition to New Spain. Oviedo (*Historia* 3:316a [bk. 33, chap. 12]) observed that Narváez gave an account at the Castilian court in 1525 of his 1520 confrontation with Cortés that was considerably different from the one Oviedo knew from Cortés's letter.

Bataillon (78) has shown that in March 1527 the publication of Cortés's letters was prohibited. Bataillon (78) explains that the *cédula* (royal decree) declaring this prohibition has been lost, and his only evidence of the prohibition was the article of the late-sixteenth-century *Copulata de leyes de Indias* recording it. In the absence of further documentation, Bataillon (80–81) argued that the crown's rationale for banning the publication of the letters in 1527, like its subsequent ban on Gómara's writings (1553, 1566), was its need to neutralize Cortés's influence. While Bataillon's argument might be plausible in the case of Gómara's works (a question we have not investigated further), extant documentary records reveal that, rather than the crown, Narváez was the primary interested party in the case of the suppression of Cortés's letters.

In 1546, Francisco Núñez, who had served as one of Cortés's advocates in Spain since December 1519, explained in the summary of his activities from 1519 to 1546 on Cortés's behalf that in February 1527 Narváez went to court and acquired a royal decree both prohibiting the publication of Cortés's letters and ordering the burning of any printed volumes because they were not true and compromised his position (“no heran verdaderas . . . e heran en su perjuicio”) (Cuevas 259). Núñez went on to say that the decree was executed in Seville, Toledo, Granada, and other places before he discovered that Narváez had exacted this concession from the crown. Núñez explains that he filed a suit with the crown when he found out what Narváez had done and that he successfully had the *cédula* canceled. Núñez claimed that the documents pertaining to this suit were in the hands of [Juan de] Sámano, secretary of the Council of the Indies since 1539 (Schäfer, *El Consejo Real* 1:369).

Although the original *cédula* calling for the suppression of Cortés's letters has not survived, a list of *cédulas* granted to Cortés, probably also prepared by Núñez in 1546, records that the date of the decree to Narváez was 1 March 1527 (Cuevas 274). The listing notes that the decree was carried out and that a suit was filed. The entry is immediately followed by one describing another *cédula* granted to Cortés in March 1527 that ordered Narváez to return to the court the original *cédula* and the “autos [public announcements] that had been carried out” [abtos que en ella ubiesen fecho]. Also included in

Núñez's list of *cédulas* are records of two additional decrees (*sobre-cédulas*) and reference to a third repeating the recall. The first of these was issued on 27 July 1527 (Cuevas 274). According to Núñez's list (Cuevas 285), the second was issued sometime between 1537 and 1539 and was a reiteration of another, dated 20 July 1537, that does not figure in the list.

In addition to the notice in Francisco Núñez's 1546 list of documents recalling the *cédula* that Narváez had been given and any record of public announcements of it, another *cédula*, dated 1 June 1527 at Valladolid (DHC 7; Martínez, *Documentos* 465), survives. Directed by the Council of the Indies to Narváez, the document instructs him to return the original copy of the *cédula* prohibiting the publication or possession of Cortés's letters, along with a record of any publications by criers (*pregones*) that he had had carried out. The request from the crown to Narváez acknowledges that it had promulgated a decree banning Cortés's published and unpublished letters and states that Narváez had requested the suppression of the letters because they were damaging to his reputation. The reason for which the crown was requesting the mentioned documents is not stated, and the surviving 1 June 1527 *cédula* does not explicitly say that the crown was canceling that legislation. We must infer this from Núñez's explanation that he had successfully had it canceled.

Martínez's (*Documentos* 465n1) argument that Francisco Núñez had exaggerated his success in getting the ban on Cortés's letters rescinded and that Núñez's assertion that the ban on Cortés's letters was lifted must be false because the 1 June 1527 document to Narváez does not constitute evidence that the ban had been revoked is unconvincing. Martínez supposes, for no apparent reason, that the claims Núñez made regarding the ban were not his independent record of his legal activities on Cortés's behalf but instead were his gross misrepresentation of the extant 1 June document to Narváez (i.e., that Núñez's claim had been inspired by his reading of the 1 June document and that in his claim he had falsely portrayed the order to Narváez to return the original *cédula* and any *pregones* to the court as the revocation of the original ban).

Even though the 1 June 1527 document seems not to be immediately obvious evidence of the crown's cancellation of its *cédula* to Narváez, Núñez's independent account of his activities with respect to the matter must be taken as the key to understanding its content, rather than a misinterpretation of it. The evident accuracy of Núñez's 1546 testimony with respect to his other activities as Cortés's advocate, his reference to the documentation of the suit he carried out in getting the ruling to Narváez regarding Cortés's letters withdrawn, and the existence of the extant 1 June 1527 document that corroborates the content of the ones Núñez describes in his list sufficiently

prove that the ban on Cortés's letters that Narváez had acquired was in fact canceled. Though it seems not to constitute evidence of the cancellation of Narváez's *cédula*, the crown's request that Narváez return the *cédula* and record of any official proclamation of it apparently does evidence its abrogation of the earlier legislation. Despite the apparent veracity of Francisco Núñez's claim regarding the revocation of the ban on Cortés's letters in the same month that it was issued, Bataillon's original evidence for the prohibition (its presence in the law code of the second half of the sixteenth century) and the nonexistence of any Spanish edition of Cortés's letters published between 1526 and 1731 remain unexplained.

It is curious that Bataillon consulted Andrés González de Barcia's 1737–38 amplified edition of Antonio Rodríguez de León Pinelo's 1629 *Epítome* on the issue of publication bans regarding Gómara's works but not regarding Cortés's *cartas de relación*, for there, as well as in León Pinelo's original publication, he would have discovered the link between Narváez and the ban on Cortés's letters. In 1629, León Pinelo (73 [Biblioteca occidental, tit. 4]) mentioned Narváez's successful attempt to suppress Cortés's writings in the context of trying to explain the disappearance of Cortés's first letter; León Pinelo said that Cortés's first letter seemed to be "the one that was ordered recalled by the Royal Council of the Indies at the instance of Pánfilo de Narváez." León Pinelo's association of Narváez with the disappearance of Cortés's first letter is unconvincing, since Narváez would have been most concerned with Cortés's second letter. His comment nevertheless reveals his access to some source, probably a version of the same *Copilata de leyes de Indias* used by Bataillon, which explained that Narváez had requested the suppression of Cortés's letters. Whereas Barcia (*Epítome* col. 589 [Biblioteca occidental, tit. 3]) claimed that the old ban on Gómara's works was lifted in 1729 for his republication of them in 1731, he said nothing of any prohibition of the publication of Cortés's letters beyond what León Pinelo had said in 1629 and that he was completing the publication of the second and third of them in Madrid in 1731 (Barcia, *Epítome* col. 597 [Biblioteca occidental, tit. 4]). Though Francisco Núñez had successfully had the ban on Cortés's letters lifted almost immediately after it had been declared, it seems to have remained on the books but disregarded and forgotten by the eighteenth century.

#### 2.B. *Reversal of the Court's Decision in Ayllón's Suit against Narváez*

Far less significant than his resolve to defame Cortés yet still worthy of mention is Narváez's success in seeking the reversal of a decision on charges filed against him by Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón; while Narváez was absent in

Mexico, Ayllón had won a suit against him for misconduct when Ayllón had followed him to Mexico in mid-1520. Weddle (178) cites a “letter to the crown dated Ciudad Rodrigo, Nov. 15, 1526 (AGI, Indiferente General 421, lib. 12, f14v)” in which “Narváez complains of having been falsely accused by Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón and asks that his fine of six hundred *pesos* be returned.” On 15 November 1527, at Valladolid, Francisco de los Cobos ordered that the 600 *pesos de oro* Narváez had been required to pay to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo while he was absent from the Caribbean be returned to him with interest for the six years that it had been held (Llaverías 113; CDU 1:361–62); the document in CDU is incorrectly dated 15 November 1526, but its origin at Valladolid reveals that the correct year is 1527, as transcribed in Llaverías, since the court resided in Granada in November 1526 but in Valladolid in November 1527. This document was countersigned by the bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo, and this detail, when considered with the confusion regarding the document’s date, requires us to question the accuracy of the place and date of the unpublished document cited by Weddle above; rather than a coincidence, the fact that Francisco de los Cobos allegedly acted on this issue exactly one year after Narváez submitted his petition suggests an error instead. The copy of Narváez’s petition that Weddle cited is most likely embedded in Cobos’s 15 November 1527 response and was neither written in Ciudad Rodrigo (but instead signed by the bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo) nor dated 15 November 1526. Vázquez de Ayllón had filed the suit against Narváez for imprisoning him and sending him back to the Caribbean at the end of 1520. Narváez evidently filed his petition for the return of the money sometime before he departed for the Caribbean on 17 June 1527, and thus the claim that his fine had been held for six years, from about early 1521 to early 1527, and the crown’s 15 November 1527 response are plausible.

### 3. NARVÁEZ’S NEW BUSINESS: PETITIONS TO SETTLE AT THE RÍO DE LAS PALMAS

Gómara (*Historia de la conquista* 304 [chap. 195]) observed that at the time Narváez launched his attack on Cortés at the Castilian court in Toledo, he was simultaneously negotiating his conquest of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*. In the previous section we noted Oviedo’s contact with Narváez in Toledo, and Narváez’s lobbying before the emperor there for the governance of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* so bothered Oviedo (*Historia* 3:580b [bk. 35, proem]) that the chronicler claims he was moved to try to discourage Narváez from leading another expedition to the Indies.

Smith (*Relation* 207) gave an English translation of what appears to be one of Narváez’s earliest petitions for territory “in New Spain.” In this document,

whose citation Smith gives only as “Archivo de Indias,” Narváez recorded his loss of property during his trip to New Spain, five years of imprisonment there, and twenty-six years of service to the crown in the Indies. The date and place of the petition are not given.

Narváez seems to have presented his first petition (CDI 10:40–44) explicitly requesting permission to take a trading mission to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* to the emperor in Toledo, apparently sometime between April 1525 and March 1526, the period during which the emperor resided in that city. A reference to this petition in a second one (CDI 10:44–46; English trans. in Smith, *Relation* 208–10) that Narváez submitted to the emperor regarding the same matter suggests that the first petition had been submitted at Toledo and that the second one had been submitted somewhere other than Toledo. On 10 March 1526, the emperor arrived in Seville (Santa Cruz 3:229 [pt. 3, chap. 37]), where he married Isabel of Portugal, and from there the couple continued south, eventually arriving in Granada on 4 June 1526 (Santa Cruz 3:245 [pt. 3, chap. 42]). In contrast to the trading mission that Narváez had initially proposed, he offers in his second petition to “conquer, populate, and discover everything that there is to discover in those parts” (CDI 10:44). The second petition does not restate the promises Narváez made to the emperor regarding the expedition, but it does reiterate all the concessions he requested in the original petition and adds two additional ones regarding the seizure of Indians as slaves. Whereas in the first petition Narváez asked for permission only to trade with the Indians, in the second he requested that he be allowed to take as slaves any Indians of the region who did not receive the Spaniards peacefully (*esclavos de guerra*) and that he also be allowed to purchase from their native lords any Indians who were already slaves (*esclavos de rescate*). Hoffman (*A New Andalusia* 58n58) refers to an unpublished petition that Narváez submitted, dated Seville, 27 May 1526; it is likely to be similar to this second published petition for the Río de las Palmas.

Another document (CDI 10:46–47) related to Narváez’s petitions appears to be a summary written in the third person of a letter in which Narváez requested that the emperor have the Council of the Indies review and approve his proposal to go to the Río de las Palmas. In the letter he put considerable emphasis on the religious considerations, mentioning “certain conditions all put forth in the service of God and Your Majesty.” The petition reveals that certain “emendations and approvals” [enmiendas y aprobaciones] were added to Narváez’s request, and the context of the letter suggests that these pertained to religious issues and problems of depopulation in the Indies. Smith’s (*Relation* 207–08) English translation, again undated and cited as “Archivo de Indias,” seems to have been done from an original first-person version of this letter.

The information on Narváez's petitions to conquer the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* suggests that he spent the period between mid-1525 and December 1526 working out an agreement with the Castilian crown regarding his past service and future plans. During this time he must have traveled from Toledo to Seville and Granada with the Castilian court. He had therefore been in Spain when the king of France, Francis I, was imprisoned in Madrid in August 1525 and might also have witnessed the splendor of Charles V's marriage in Seville in March 1526. The issues regarding the treatment of the Indians and depopulation in the Indies that appear in Narváez's second petition and the letter he evidently wrote to hurry the court along suggest that his request was delayed as the court deliberated over Spanish conduct in the Indies and the economic situation there, out of which new legislation was promulgated in Granada on 17 November 1526.

#### 4. 1526 LEGISLATION ON THE TREATMENT OF THE INDIANS

The regulations governing conquests that Pánfilo de Narváez accepted in the contract (*capitulaciones*) granted to him on 11 December 1526 were the result of the royal junta held at the Alhambra the preceding month. The principal objectives of the ordinances, which Hanke ("The Development" 78) has called "the first important law governing conquests," were to ensure the proper treatment of the Indians (a pressing issue due to the depopulation of the islands of the Caribbean) and to underscore the spiritual and political ends of conquest, thus enhancing the public character of the contracts made to carry them out (Ots Capdequí 17). Dated 17 November 1526, the royal ordinances (CDU 9:268–80) were included immediately in the contracts made with Narváez for the conquest of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, Francisco de Montejo for the conquest of Yucatán (8 December 1526), and many others, including Hernán Cortés for the discovery and conquest of islands and lands on the South Sea (27 October 1529) (Hanke, "The Development" 78–79).

The 1526 laws sought to provide for the good treatment of the natives by requiring that ecclesiastics accompany expeditions of conquest to determine whether war could be waged justly; they were to prepare written judgments as to whether such criteria (the natives' refusal or acceptance of the conditions of the *requerimiento*, their resistance to allowing the Spaniards to mine and remove gold and other precious metals) were met (CDU 9:276–77; Hanke, "The Development" 76). The "letter of the law" was the aforementioned *requerimiento* and its mandatory reading to the Indians. It was a formal proclamation that offered the Indians the choice of accepting peacefully the Castilian king's sovereignty or being subjected to a war that would end in their death or captivity and enslavement.

The *requerimiento* had first been espoused, formulated, and imposed by a junta of jurists and theologians who met at the Dominican monastery of San Pablo in Valladolid in 1513 (Hanke, “Studies” 147–49; Manzano Manzano 37). The lawyer and cosmographer Martín Fernández de Enciso’s (CDI 1:441–50) memorandum contained the results of that meeting (Hanke, “Studies” 148n1). Enciso (CDI 1:444–45) explains that the theologians agreed on the principle of submitting the Indians to a just war leading to death or enslavement if they refused to turn over their kingdoms to the Christian king; he alludes to the document (the *requerimiento*) that he says was presented to Pedrarias Dávila and that he, Enciso, read for the first time when it was employed in Darién in 1514 as part of Pedrarias Dávila’s expedition (see Hanke, “Studies” 160, 162–63).

By Enciso’s (CDI 1:446–47) reasoning, man had been created by God as a rational being with the knowledge of good and evil; if the Indians did not worship the single god who had created them but rather many gods (hence, they were idolaters), this was sufficient cause to conquer them and take away their lands. The argument Enciso (CDI 1:442–44) formulated at the 1513 junta was based on his interpretation of how the Israelites rightfully gained the Promised Land (“la tierra de Promisión,” the land of Canaan) from gentiles and idolaters (Book of Joshua; see Josh. 3.7–13, 6.16–21). After Moses’s death, Joshua led the Israelites across the River Jordan and presented an ultimatum to the people of Jericho, demanding that they abandon the city to the Israelites, to whom God had promised it. When the Canaanites refused, Joshua took the land by force, “killing an infinite number of them, capturing many; the ones he captured he took as slaves and used them as such. And all this was done by the will of God, because they were idolaters” (CDI 1:443–44).

By this logic, the pope, surrogate for God on earth, gave the Indies, possessed by idolaters, to the Castilian king, who likewise could rightfully demand (*requerir*) that the Indians, as idolaters, relinquish their lands to the Christian monarch, to whom the pope had assigned it. If the Indians failed to give up the land, the king could take it by force, killing and capturing and granting as slaves those who were prisoners, “as Joshua had done to those who inhabited the Promised Land” (CDI 1:444). This proposition was to be contained in the proclamation to be read to the Indians. Thus, the text of the *requerimiento* was refined and codified by the jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubios, a member of the Valladolid junta who, according to Hanke (“Studies” 157), probably “worked out the sonorous periods of the Proclamation” (Manzano Manzano 43). Las Casas (*Historia* 3:27–28 [bk. 3, chap. 57]) recalled that Palacios Rubios had authored it, and Oviedo (*Historia* 3:31b [bk. 29, chap. 7]) likewise credited him for it.

Enciso's report is undated but was probably written in late 1524 or 1525 (Manzano Manzano 37n31); it was evidently influential in the November 1526 junta in Granada, since its justification for conquest (the Indians' idolatry) and the mechanism to carry it out (the reading of the *requerimiento*) became law at that time and was to be applied to all subsequent conquest expeditions (Hanke, "The Development" 75, 78).

Buckingham Smith (*Relation* 215–17) translated the specific *requerimiento* issued to Pánfilo de Narváez; it is found in the "Libro de la Florida de Capitulaciones . . ." (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f14v–f16r). After demanding that the Indians recognize and accept the authority of the Church, the pope, and the king and consent to the preaching of the gospel, the document spells out the consequences of refusing these terms:

If you do not do this . . . I will enter by force, making war upon you from all directions and in every manner that I may be able, when I will subject you to obedience to the Church and the yoke of Their Majesties; and I will take the persons of yourselves, your wives and your children to make slaves, sell and dispose of you, as Their Majesties shall think fit; and I will take your goods, doing you all the evil and injury that I may be able, as to vassals who do not obey but reject their master, resist and deny him: and I declare to you that the deaths and damages that arise therefrom, will be your fault and not that of His Majesty, nor mine, nor of these cavaliers who come with me. (Smith, *Relation* 217)

The *requerimiento* was subject to criticism by both proponents and opponents of the Spanish conquests in the Indies. Oviedo (*Historia* 3:27b, 31a [bk. 29, chap. 7]) had accompanied the 1514 Pedrarias Dávila expedition and was designated by the governor to read the proclamation. After battling the Indians of the area, he returned the document to the governor (leaving to Enciso the honor of its first formal reading) and, to the mirth of all assembled, suggested that it best be read to some Indian confined in a cage, "so that he could learn it slowly and the lord bishop could teach him its contents." Meeting Palacios Rubios in 1516, Oviedo (*Historia* 3:31b–32a [bk. 29, chap. 7]) inquired if Christian conscience was satisfied by the use of the *requerimiento*, and Palacios Rubios replied that it was, if the conquest was carried out as the document dictated; Oviedo was not convinced, because it was clear to him that the Indians had no way of understanding the ultimatum without "the discourse of years and time."

Like Oviedo (*Historia* 3:28a–29b [bk. 29, chap. 7]), Las Casas (*Historia* 3:26–27 [bk. 3, chap. 57]) transcribed as significant the text of the Pedrarias Dávila *requerimiento*, and he was likewise critical of it. Unlike Oviedo, who rejected the *requerimiento* because it could not be understood by the



Indians, Las Casas (*Historia* 3:28 [bk. 3, chap. 57]) repudiated it because Palacios Rubios based it on what Las Casas considered to be grave errors in the theological doctrine of the thirteenth-century canonist Enrique de Susa (El Ostiense, Hostiensis), which effectively granted the pope temporal dominion on earth not only over Christians but also over infidels and idolaters, against whom war could be justly made, because Christ's coming denied to those who did not accept the gospel the ownership of their properties and possessions (Wagner and Parish 19017; Zavala, *La filosofía* 25–26).

Although the 1526 ordinances have been interpreted by Hanke and some others as the means to protect the Indians, the *requerimiento* in particular served the purpose of legalizing Indian slavery and facilitating its easy execution. In the history of the legislation on the enslavement of the Indians (see chap. 17, sec. 5.A), the 1526 ordinances mandating the use of the *requerimiento* on all conquest expeditions were followed in 1530 and 1534 by two reversals regarding the legality of Indian slavery, which was definitively abolished in the 1542–43 New Laws.

The debate around Indian slavery was familiar to Narváez, who acknowledged—as did the 1526 laws that he promised to obey—both the objectives of good treatment of the Indians and the legality of Indian slavery. In Narváez's petitions, described in the previous section, and the agreement between him and the crown to be examined in the following one, Narváez promised to treat the Indians well and to take on his expedition two clerics and two friars who would determine if war could be waged justly and undertake the Indians' conversion to Christianity (see sec. 7). At the same time, Narváez recognized his legal right to enslave those Indians who did not accept the ultimatum given them (*esclavos de guerra*) and to barter for Indians who were already enslaved by their caciques (*esclavos de rescate*). His right to take war slaves and to purchase natives already enslaved (“siendo berdaderamente esclavos”) was spelled out explicitly in his *capitulaciones* (Vas Mingo 236).

##### 5. PERMISSION TO SETTLE ON THE RÍO DE LAS PALMAS AND IN FLORIDA

Narváez was not the only person in Granada who was required to wait for the crown to articulate its position on Indian slavery. At the same time that Narváez was petitioning the governance of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, Francisco de Montejo was seeking permission to settle on Cozumel and the Yucatán Peninsula. As we discuss in our treatment of Spanish activity in the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15), Montejo had been involved in the exploration and conquest of Mexican lands since Hernández de Córdoba's initial voyage

in 1517. Between 1519, when Montejo arrived in Spain as one of Cortés's advocates, and the end of 1526, his position changed radically, since in seeking rights to Yucatán he became one of Cortés's competitors for unclaimed territory in southern Mexico. On 19 November 1526, two days after the 1526 laws on Indian slavery had been finalized, Montejo presented Pánfilo de Narváez as a witness in favor of his conquest of Cozumel and Yucatán (CDI 40:16–17). A man with experience in travel between Cuba and New Spain, Narváez affirmed that settlement on Cozumel and in Yucatán was a wise proposal, since travelers on their way to and from New Spain, Pánuco, and Higuera (in the Caribbean, south along the eastern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula) passed through the region and could make stopovers there. He acknowledged further that Montejo was an appropriate man for the task.

The crown's grant to Narváez in Granada on 11 December 1526 permitted him to lead an expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* (Vas Mingo 234–37, 227–33; CDI 16:67–87; CDI 22:224–45). Because the new ordinances of 17 November 1526 were included in his contract, the date of Narváez's *capitulaciones* with the crown regarding these territories is often erroneously stated as the one of the ordinances rather than that of the actual contract with Narváez (e.g., Gómez del Campillo in Herrera y Tordesillas 8:97n1; Barrera, *Álvar Núñez* 9; Weddle 164).

Containing the Granada laws on Indian slavery, references to the prohibition of certain emigrants from going to the Río de las Palmas, and special provisions for the transport of livestock from the Caribbean, the agreement between Narváez and the crown drafted at the end of 1526 reflects the complicated economic relationships of trade and travel in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico at the time it was written as well as the particular problems that administrators of the expanding sphere of colonial Spanish America confronted as Narváez was organizing his expedition.

#### 5.A. *Settlers and Slaves on the Narváez Expedition*

At his own cost, Pánfilo de Narváez was to depart on the expedition within a year from the date of the patent, that is, before 11 December 1527, and was expected to establish at least two towns and three fortresses in the region of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* (for a discussion of this area, see below, sec. 9); to carry out this settlement he was to take at least one hundred men with him to establish and reside in each town. Of the two hundred men he was to take to settle in the area specified in the grant, they could come “from inside or outside these our kingdoms,” but none were to be those who were “prohibited from going to those places” [proybidas para ir a aquellas partes] (Vas Mingo 234). Regarding foreigners, in his *relación* Cabeza de Vaca

names Portuguese and Greeks among the soldiers who came from outside the realms of the Hapsburg Empire to go on the Narváez expedition. With respect to those who were prohibited from going, beyond the question of the degree to which Christians who were not subjects of the crown of Castile were prohibited from settling in Castilian territories of the Americas (see Konetzke), there are three possible explanations of the prohibition to which Narváez referred.

The first and obvious one, if we interpret “to those places” as meaning “to the Spanish Indies,” would be those groups who were denied passage to America by the landmark *instrucciones* issued to Nicolás de Ovando as governor of Española on 16 September 1501 (CDI 31:13–25; partially reproduced in Rumeu de Armas 373–76). In order to facilitate the conversion of the Indians, the crown forbade “Muslims, Jews, heretics, former apostates reconciled to the faith [*reconciliados*], and anyone newly converted to it [*conversos*, Moriscos]” from emigrating, with one exception: “black or other slaves born under the tutelage of Christians, our subjects and native peoples” (CDI 31:23; Rumeu de Armas 375).

Thus it is clear that by 1501 African slaves who were Christians were already being imported into the Indies, and these royal instructions reiterate the authorization to do so. This provision corrects the common misperception that the 1501 directive prohibited the importation of slaves, as Mellafe (14) assumes, or that Las Casas’s 1516 memorandum on saving the Indies (Casas, “Memorial” 9, 17) was responsible for introducing black slavery in the New World. African slaves were working in the mines of Española soon after the turn of the century, and by 1510–11 Ferdinand ordered that ways be found to bring them to the Indies in great numbers (Herrera y Tordesillas 3:284 [dec. 1, bk. 9, chap. 5]). Until 1518, African slaves sent to the Indies were required to have been born in Spain or to have lived there for such a period that they were Spanish-speaking, Christian, and well acculturated. In his 1516 memorandum recommending the importation of black and white slaves, for example, Las Casas (“Memorial” 17; CDI 7:41) explicitly stated that the slaves should be taken “from Castile,” presumably as assurance of their Christian upbringing.

These slaves were accordingly called *ladinos*, but in 1518, unacculturated Africans (*bozales*) were permitted to be taken directly from Africa to the American mainland and islands of the Caribbean. By a royal decree signed at Zaragoza on 18 August 1518, King Charles granted one of his favorite Flemish nobles, Laurent de Gouvenot, the exclusive right to import to Portugal and “to these kingdoms” (the Indies included) a total of four thousand African slaves who were either Christian (*ladinos*) or who would convert to Christianity (*bozales*) upon disembarkation at the Caribbean islands to

which they were destined. This grant to Gouvenot authorized a major influx of black slaves directly from Africa to the Indies (Scelle 141, 755; Phillips 185). Two months later, on 21 October 1518, Charles exempted Gouvenot from the payment of export duty (*almojarifazgo*) on the slaves he would thus transport (Scelle 756), no doubt seeking thereby to further stimulate Gouvenot's slave trade.

There are two provisions in the 1526 *capitulaciones* with Narváez that grant exemption from payment of export duties; one exemption is granted to Narváez personally, the other to the expedition's prospective settlers ("los dichos vecinos") for all the goods and possessions they might bring to the Indies (Vas Mingo 235, 236). This privilege no doubt extended to slaves they might take with them, as it was customary for the gentlemen who equipped expeditions (captains such as Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo Maldonado) to provide slaves as part of their retinues. The crown's rationale for exempting private citizens from duty payment was that such property was taken to the Indies for the purpose of domestic use and settlement rather than commerce or barter and therefore should be duty free (Vas Mingo 235, 236).

In Seville, on 11 May 1526, the crown modified its position on the transport of Spanish-speaking African slaves and unacculturated African slaves to the Americas in response to information it had received from the Caribbean. According to the *cédula* (CDU 9:242–44), the frequent practice of sending the most disobedient African *ladino* slaves from Spain to the Indies had undesirably produced uprisings and escapes among "pacific and obedient" African *bozales* living on Española. To counter this effect, the crown prohibited the transport to the Indies of any African slave who had been in Spain for more than one year. Those who desired to take with them to the Americas African *ladino* slaves who had been in Spain and Portugal for longer periods were required to obtain special permission from the crown to do so.

There were at least two (and probably many more) African Christian slaves on the Narváez expedition, according to Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*. One would leave the expedition somewhere west of the mouth of the Mississippi River with Doroteo Teodoro, and the other was the famous Estevanico, Andrés Dorantes's slave, who would survive the expedition with his master. Described as a native of Azemmour (a Portuguese outpost on the northwestern coast of Africa from at least 1508 onward) and a Christian by Cabeza de Vaca (f67r), Estevanico was likely brought to Seville, where Dorantes acquired him. If he had been in Spain for more than a year at the time the Narváez expedition departed, or perhaps because of his birth in Portuguese-held territory, he would have been considered an acculturated (*ladino*) black slave and therefore undesirable and potentially rebellious

once in the Indies. It is therefore most probable that Dorantes had to acquire special crown license to permit him to take a *negro ladino* slave to the Indies.

The second possibility regarding persons prohibited from going “to those places” emerges if we restrict the phrase in Narváez’s *capitulaciones* to meaning “to *Florida* and the Río de las Palmas.” Rather than to keep emigrants from outside the emperor’s realms from going to the Indies, the clause of this *capitulación* appears to have been designed in part to prohibit emigration from the Caribbean islands and other parts of the Indies to Narváez’s province. In his first petition, Narváez said he would make up his expedition “without taking people from the other populated islands of the Ocean Sea” and that he would pay a security guaranteeing this (CDI 10:41). The issue of a declining European population on the four islands of the Greater Antilles was closely related to the one of native depopulation of the Indies, and just as the crown had responded to the latter issue with the new ordinances regarding Indian slavery in 1526 (see above, sec. 4), there is indirect evidence that it had also promulgated legislation on the former problem, and thus some of the people prohibited from going with Narváez to the Río de las Palmas were the colonists of the Caribbean islands.

As we discuss elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 8.B.2), one of the chief concerns of the Audiencia of Santo Domingo as the huge expedition that Diego Velázquez sent to New Spain under Narváez’s command departed in 1520 was that so few European settlers would be left in Cuba that the safety of the island would be jeopardized. Following the Mexican conquest, Caribbean settlers continued to make their way to New Spain, so much so that by the time Narváez began petitioning the emperor for permission to settle at the Río de las Palmas, emigration from the Caribbean to other parts of the Americas seems to have been strictly prohibited. In an assessment of the situation at the end of March 1528, the *licenciados* Espinosa and Zuazo wrote to the emperor from Española documenting the dire straits of all of the Greater Antilles and many parts of the mainland with respect to the declining European population (Marte 277–90). Espinosa and Zuazo proposed a plan to the emperor for a systematic recolonization of Española founded on the immigration of Spanish families and the importation of African slaves. Espinosa and Zuazo blamed the depopulated state of the islands on transient Spanish colonists who responded to diminished numbers of Indian slaves by migrating to other parts of the Indies. They also spoke of the demand for Spanish colonists in the Indies and the competition between provincial governors for them. The most current examples to which they referred were the expeditions of Francisco de Montejo and Pánfilo de Narváez. The two expeditions had passed through Española the previous year.

In their March 1528 letter, Espinosa and Zuazo also alluded to the possibility of restricting Spanish colonists who had become *vecinos* of any given region and who held *encomienda* Indians (natives entrusted to the care of a settler in return for their labor and tribute) from later being granted citizenship and Indians in another district in an effort to keep them from emigrating from their place of original settlement in the Americas. Although we have not uncovered an explicit prohibition of Spanish emigration from the Caribbean islands to other parts of the Indies, one of the complaints the advocates of the towns of Cuba sent to the emperor on 17 March 1528 was that the governor of the island, Gonzalo de Guzmán, was enforcing a provision by the emperor prohibiting emigration from Cuba to new lands by also forbidding any individual to leave Cuba on trading missions (CDI 12:24). In an effort to remedy this problem, the advocates requested that His Majesty order that a security deposit be required of each individual departing the island on a trading voyage, guaranteeing both the person's freedom to trade outside of Cuba as well as his eventual return. As we will see in our Part 1 commentary (chap. 2, sec. 6.B.3), Guzmán may have overzealously enforced the apparent ban on emigration, but not without exceptions.

A third explanation of who the “prohibited” people were is found in the conflicts that had occurred between Cortés and the island governors, Diego Velázquez and Francisco de Garay. The arrival of Narváez's expedition in New Spain in 1520 nearly led to a civil war among Spaniards, and even before Narváez's arrival in New Spain in 1520 there had been problems between the pro-Cortés and pro-Velázquez factions among the Spaniards who went there. An analogous situation developed at Santisteban del Puerto between Cortés's and Francisco de Garay's men in 1523. Although we have not discovered the documents from which he was no doubt writing, Herrera y Tordesillas (8:98 [dec. 4, bk. 2, chap. 4]) stated that the emperor explicitly prohibited emigration from New Spain to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* in order to avoid conflicts stemming from Narváez's rivalry with Cortés.

#### 5.B. *Transport of Livestock from the Caribbean to Florida*

The issue of the transfer of livestock from the Caribbean to *Florida* is also addressed in Narváez's 11 December 1526 *capitulaciones*. The crown declared that Narváez was not to be prohibited from carrying stock animals from the islands to the Río de las Palmas (Vas Mingo 236). This ruling apparently was a response to a general shortage of livestock in the Caribbean at the time, and Chipman (*Nuño de Guzmán* 203–04), underscoring the shortage of livestock in both the Caribbean and New Spain, cites an anonymous letter of 26 September 1526 that refers to a ban that the governors of Cuba and Española

placed on livestock exportation. The shortage of livestock in the recently settled mainland territories evidently extended throughout New Spain and Pánuco. When Nuño de Guzmán arrived at Santisteban del Puerto in 1527 he not only increased the trade of Indian slaves for livestock between Pánuco and the Caribbean but also banned the export of stock animals from Pánuco to ensure that they would not pass from the Caribbean through Pánuco on to New Spain (Chipman, *Nuño de Guzmán* 204).

In light of the apparent shortage of livestock in the Caribbean and mainland territories of Spanish settlement, Pietro Martire gives a curiously contradictory account of the number of stock animals in the Caribbean. In a 22 February 1525 letter, Martire d'Anghiera (*Epistolario* 4:387 [bk. 38, letter 806]) claimed that so many hides were produced on Española that the inhabitants of the island did not know where to send them.

## 6. ROYALLY APPOINTED OFFICIALS OF THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION

### 6.A. *Titles Granted to Narváez*

In his first petition to the emperor, Narváez had requested that in return for his service in the conquest of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* he be named governor, captain general, *alguacil mayor* (chief law enforcement official), and *adelantado* (military commander) of the region and also *teniente* (superintendent) of the fortresses he was to build there. The 11 December 1526 *capitulaciones* granted Narváez the title of governor and captain general for life (Vas Mingo 235). The *capitulaciones* also granted Narváez the titles of *alguacil mayor* and *adelantado* of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, as well as the one of *lugarteniente* of the fortresses in the jurisdiction. According to the *capitulaciones*, the first two of these titles were granted in perpetuity, as Narváez had requested in his petitions, but the title granting tenancy of the fortresses was given only for the lifetimes of two successors, rather than in perpetuity, as Narváez had originally asked.

Because Cabeza de Vaca claimed in the *relación* (f3r) that he had occupied the post of *alguacil mayor* and again made the same claim in his written defense of his conduct as governor of Río de la Plata (AGI, Justicia 1131, pieza 8a, f561r), it is often mistakenly asserted that he, rather than Narváez, served in this capacity on the *Florida* expedition. There is no evidence of such an appointment, however, in the instructions given to him by the emperor on 15 February 1527 (see vol. 1, “The Life,” sec. 6). The appointment of *alguacil mayor* was the one most frequently granted by the crown to the heads of seagoing expeditions of conquest (Vas Mingo 69); accordingly (and contrary to Cabeza de Vaca’s claim), it was Narváez who was named *alguacil mayor* over all the lands he might discover and settle, as we have stated above.

The instructions to Narváez pertaining to the titles mentioned in the *capitulaciones*, as well as the contract itself, are located in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f1r–f14v, f16r–f19v). The instructions pertaining to the individual titles have never been published.

#### 6.B. *Officials of the Royal Treasury*

In Narváez's first petition to the emperor he stated that if granted permission to carry out the expedition to the Río de las Palmas, he would take two or three of the emperor's officials to collect His Majesty's portion of the proceeds of the expedition, as well as to oversee all aspects of the expedition's operations (CDI 10:42). Narváez was referring to the posts of the royal treasury, appointed to protect the crown's interests and administer its financial obligations on all conquering expeditions, including (in order of seniority ranking) the chief treasurer (*tesorero*), comptroller (*contador*), factor (*factor*), and inspector (*veedor*) of mines; these positions had been a permanent fixture of Spanish governance from the days of Columbus onward (Sánchez Bella 300–01; Parry and Keith 1:xxxv).

The instructions to Cabeza de Vaca as chief treasurer of the Narváez expedition are discussed elsewhere (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 6). The instructions to Alonso Enríquez as the comptroller of the expedition are found among those of Narváez and Cabeza de Vaca in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f39r–f48v). The instructions to the factor of the Narváez expedition are not found with those mentioned above, and in the only known copy of them (CDI 14:265–69), which is found in the Archivo General de Indias along with the condensed fragment of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* known as the Short Report (CDI 14:269–79), the name of the person who filled the position is absent.

Cabeza de Vaca recorded in his *relación* (f3r) that Alonso de Solís served as both factor and chief inspector of mines. The instructions to the inspector are found in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f48v–f51v) but assign this position to *Diego* de Solís rather than to Alonso de Solís; Cabeza de Vaca evidently erred on the first name of this individual when he wrote his *relación*. Herrera y Tordesillas (8:98 [dec. 4, bk. 2, chap. 4]) cited Diego de Solís as the inspector, a fact that suggests that he wrote his account in part from the archived documents mentioned above. Like the instructions to the comptroller, those to the inspector of mines have never been published.

Between the three men (Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso Enríquez, and Diego de Solís), the four posts pertaining to the royal treasury were filled. Throughout



the *relación* and Oviedo's account, these men are most often referred to by their positions as officers of the expedition rather than by their names, attesting to the importance of these official positions on Spanish expeditions of the time. We have found no evidence that any of these men had experience in the Indies prior to going there with Narváez in 1527.

#### 6.c. *Regidores of the First Two Towns to Be Founded by Narváez in Florida*

We discuss elsewhere the grant of a position to Cabeza de Vaca as a *regidor* (town councilman) of the first municipality to be founded in Narváez's territory (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 6). Although Herrera y Tordesillas (8:98 [dec. 4, bk. 2, chap. 4]) does not mention the granting of this title to Cabeza de Vaca, he does assert that Miguel de Lumbreras (Umbrales?), Jerónimo López, Andrés Dorantes, and Diego de Cueto were named *regidores* of the first town that Narváez was to establish, and this is substantiated by extant documentation (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f30v–f31v, f30r–v, f26v–f27v, f25v–f26v, respectively). Muñoz (Muñoz Collection, A/105, f29v) noted a document naming Juan Velázquez de Salazar as a *regidor* of the first town, although his name appears neither in known AGI documents regarding this title nor in Herrera's account. With regard to the four names that Herrera gives for *regidores* of the second town (Juan de Mayorga, Bartolomé Hernández Franco, Juan de Guijón, and Alonso de Herrera), only the document granting the title to a certain Antonio de Herrera is found among the AGI documents (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f56v–f57v). Extant documents pertaining to other *regidores* of the second town but not mentioned by Herrera y Tordesillas include those to Sancho de Salcedo, Pedro ———, Francisco Fernández, Francisco de Mosquera, ——— Solís, and Cristóbal ——— (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f28r–f29r, f29r–f30r, f31v–f32v, f38r–f39r, f51r–v, f55r–f56r, respectively). None of these *regimiento* documents has ever been published.

#### 7. THE COMMISSARY AND OTHER CLERGY OF THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION

Obviously already aware of the Spanish crown's concerns regarding religious issues in the Indies, Narváez stated in his first petition that he would take two clerics and two friars with him for the administration of the sacraments to the Christians and the conversion of the Indians (CDI 10:41). The ordinances of 17 November 1526 dictated that all expeditions sent to conquer lands within the crown's jurisdiction were required to take at least two religious or secular priests, appointed by the religious officials of the Council of the

Indies, whose “life, doctrine, and example” assured their preparedness for the task of instructing and converting the Indians to Christianity (Vas Mingo 229; CDI 22:236). The importance of the presence of the five Franciscans on the Narváez expedition is demonstrated by the many references to their participation in the expedition’s activities throughout both accounts of the mission; the accounts establish that as the expedition moved forward on each leg of its overland exploration the religious officials were always present, in compliance with the requirements of the 1526 legislation (see above, sec. 4).

The leader of these five held the title of commissary, a religious in the Franciscan Order responsible for provincial governance (DRAE 329ab). Unlike the officials of the expedition’s royal treasury, Narváez’s commissary had significant previous experience in the Indies. Although in the 1542 edition of the *relación* Cabeza de Vaca (f3r) initially names the commissary as the Franciscan friar Juan Gutiérrez, he is referenced subsequently and in the 1555 edition as Juan Xuárez or Juan Suárez. As we will see below, external evidence shows that the name of the commissary was indeed Juan Suárez, not Juan Gutiérrez.

Juan Suárez was one of the original twelve Franciscans to go to Mexico, arriving there in 1524. Mendieta’s (2:159b–60a [bk. 5, pt. 1, chap. 20]) biography of Juan Suárez confirms that he and another clergyman named Juan de Palos accompanied the Narváez expedition. It is possible, of course, that Mendieta used Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* as the source for this information, since Mendieta wrote his *Historia* at the end of the sixteenth century and particularly since Mendieta, like Cabeza de Vaca (f9r), explicitly names only Juan de Palos among the other clergymen who accompanied Suárez on the Narváez expedition. Mendieta (1:127a [bk. 3, chap. 10]) does relate, however, that Fray Juan de Palos had been another of the first twelve Franciscans to go to New Spain in 1524, serving as the substitute for Fray Bernardino de la Torre, who did not go with the others, though he had gathered with them in Seville. Mendieta’s description of Fray Suárez as a *predicator* and *confesor docto*, in comparison to Fray Juan de Palos, who is described only as a *religioso lego*, substantiates Suárez’s position as the leader of the religious contingent on Narváez’s expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*.

Mendieta (2:159b [bk. 5, pt. 1, chap. 20]) states that in New Spain Fray Juan Suárez had served as the *primero guardián* of the convent of Huexocingo (Huexocingo) and suggests that Fray Juan Baptista Moles’s criticism of his (Mendieta’s) 1585 “Descripción de la relación de la provincia del Santo Evangelio que es en las Indias Occidentales que llaman Nueva España” for the misnaming of Juan Suárez (who Baptista Moles apparently said should

have been Alonso Suárez) was in fact an error on Baptista Moles's part, stemming from confusion attributable to the brief period of time that Juan Suárez spent in New Spain. A notation by Muñoz (Muñoz Collection, A/105, f30v) dated 16 March 1527 corroborates Mendieta's assertions about Suárez's name and activities in New Spain and provides further evidence that by early 1527 the Franciscan had returned to Spain and was preparing for another voyage to America:

16 March 1527. To Fray Juan Xuárez, commissary of New Spain and guardian of Guaxucingo to take to New Spain twenty friars of the order and six Indians that he brought with him: he spent a great deal to clothe these Indians, as His Majesty ordered.

[16 Marzo (15)27. A Fr. Juan Xuárez Comisario de Nueva España i Guardián de Guaxucingo para pasar consigo a Nueva España 20 frailes de la orden, i 6 indios que consigo trajo: para vestir a estos indios se gastó bastante, según mandó Su Magestad.]

Herrera y Tordesillas's (8:97 [dec. 4, bk. 2, chap. 4]) claim that Suárez had been given the bishopric of the Río de las Palmas has been disputed (see Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements* 175n2). Despite Shea's discrediting of the claim in his "Ancient Florida" (287n9) and his *The Catholic Church* (cited in Lowery), the emperor's 15 February 1528 response (Llaverías 135) to a letter that Fray Juan Suárez sent to the Castilian court from the island of Española on 6 September 1527 both authorized the voyage he had elected to take with Pánfilo de Narváez and informed him that he was being presented to the pope by the Spanish crown as the bishop of the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*. The emperor related to Suárez that he was doing this so that the Franciscan would have "more authority in the defense of the Indians" and also to keep the sort of offenses that had taken place on other expeditions from occurring on this one. The letter states further that since the papal bulls naming Suárez bishop would take time to arrive, a provision from the emperor had been included with his response to Suárez giving the new bishop of the Río de las Palmas the authority to "spend and distribute the tithes and ecclesiastical revenues of the province as he saw fit." A second provision named Suárez *preceptor* and *defensor* of the Indians in Narváez's jurisdiction. Muñoz's mention of six Indians that Suárez had taken to Spain from Mexico corroborates Cabeza de Vaca's (f12v) mention of a lord of Texcoco whom he says Suárez brought with him to the *Florida* coast and strengthens the claim that the Fray Juan Suárez of New Spain and the one of the Narváez expedition were indeed the same person.

The emperor's letter of 15 February 1528 suggests that Suárez might have traveled from Spain to Española on Narváez's expedition and en route

decided to go with Narváez to the Río de las Palmas rather than return to New Spain. Thus he informed the emperor of his plans during the forty-five days that Cabeza de Vaca says the expedition spent on Española. If there is no record of the formation of the bishopric of Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, as Shea claimed, it is not because Suárez was not presented for the bishopric but rather because the Narváez expedition failed and the province of Río de las Palmas was never established.

#### 8. ASSEMBLY IN SEVILLE

Narváez apparently spent the six months between December 1526, when his royal permission to go to the Río de las Palmas was granted, until his departure from Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 17 June 1527 purchasing ships, selecting his crew, and preparing to depart for the Caribbean. On 19 February 1527 in Seville, Narváez had a power of attorney drawn up assigning authority over his affairs in Spain to Hernando de Zaballos (CDI 12:87–90). Shea (242) noted that in this document Narváez “styles himself Governor of Florida, Rio de Palmas, and Espiritu Santo,” a detail that underscores the importance of the last river as one well known within his jurisdiction (see chap. 5, sec. 7).

Cabeza de Vaca, as an officer of the royal treasury and a *regidor* of the first town to be founded at the Río de las Palmas, and Andrés Dorantes, who was also to serve as a *regidor*, must have been among the men who made their way to Seville in the early months of 1527. Arriving in the city, they would have gone to the Casa de la Contratación to present their royal instructions and there receive information pertaining to their assigned positions. There they would have gained access to the geographical information about the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico that had been collected between 1518 and 1527, most likely including descriptions of Espiritu Santo, the Río de las Palmas, and the Río Pánuco (see below, sec. 9.D). In Alonso del Castillo’s *información de servicios* (account of services rendered to the crown) (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f7v), prepared in 1547, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado gave testimony on Castillo’s purchase of supplies and arms at Salamanca in preparation for his 1527 journey to the Americas with Pánfilo de Narváez. Fray Juan de Palos must have been among the twenty friars who received permission along with the six Indians from Mexico to go with Fray Juan Suárez to New Spain, and Suárez probably convinced Narváez to carry the group with his expedition to the Caribbean.

The crown also continued to make preparations for the Narváez expedition. Chipman (*Nuño de Guzmán* 159) and Weddle (204) both cite unpublished letters from the crown sent to the island officials of the Caribbean

ordering them to assist Narváez in the outfitting of his expedition with supplies and livestock. Chipman cites a letter dated 12 April 1527 (“AGI, Indiferente General 221-12”), and Weddle cites another dated 12 June 1527 (“AGI, Indiferente General 421, lib. 13, f298”). As we mention in our discussion of Nuño de Guzmán’s governorship of Pánuco (see chap. 15, sec. 11), Chipman uses this document as evidence to support his argument that Guzmán probably knew about Narváez’s pending expedition to the Río de las Palmas before he departed from Cuba for the province of Pánuco in May 1527, one month before Narváez would depart from Spain.

#### 9. THE GEOGRAPHICAL TERMINOLOGY OF THE *RELACIÓN* AND THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITIONARIES’ GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF FLORIDA

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the most important items of business for the Narváez expedition officials at the Casa de la Contratación in Seville would have been to acquire the most current information about the region of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico to which they would be going. As we will see, although it seems that fairly detailed information about the geography of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico was available at the Casa de la Contratación in 1527, the accounts of the Narváez expedition suggest that a distinct lack of geographical knowledge among the expeditionaries was a major obstacle to the expedition’s success. The impressive extent of the four survivors’ travels through a vast region to the north of New Spain never explored by Europeans likewise brings the topic of geography in Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* to the fore.

The geographical terms that Cabeza de Vaca uses in his *relación* to refer to the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico and other regions of the Americas are evidently the ones that were in common use as he wrote his *relación* sometime between 1537 and 1540. Because our present conceptualization of the physical geography of the Americas differs considerably from the Spanish one of the mid–sixteenth century, and because a multitude of changes in the political geography of areas to which Cabeza de Vaca referred have occurred since he wrote his account of the Narváez expedition over 450 years ago, the significance of the geographical terms he uses in the *relación* is sometimes unclear to the modern reader. For this reason we here first elucidate their denotative and connotative limits at the time Cabeza de Vaca wrote his account in order to define the geographic space of the *relación* (secs. 9.A–C) and then go on to consider the information the Narváez expeditionaries might have been given in Seville in the late spring of 1527 (sec. 9.D).

9.A. *The North Sea and the South Sea*

Because Columbus believed that the large body of water to the west of the Iberian Peninsula stretched to islands of eastern Asia, he concluded that the islands he had discovered in the Caribbean were the farthest eastern fringe of Asia. Thus, the earliest Spanish travelers, thinking that a single, vast body of water separated Spain from Asia, called the Atlantic the “Ocean Sea” (Mar Océano). As we observe in our discussions of Spanish exploration in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Pacific coastline of the Americas (chap. 15, secs. 4, 6, 7; chap. 16, secs. 3, 4, 6), the Spaniards’ gradual exploration of the Atlantic coast of the American continents, Balboa’s discovery of the Pacific Ocean in 1513, and the Spaniards’ search for sea passages to this second ocean all led to the development of more specific terms for identifying two clearly separate bodies of water. By 1527 the Spaniards knew the western Atlantic Ocean, including the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, as the “North Sea” (Mar del Norte) and referred to the waters south of Panama (and eventually the American side of the Pacific Ocean) as the “South Sea” (Mar del Sur). Despite the Spaniards’ discovery and exploration of the Gulf of Mexico between 1513 and 1519, there is no evidence that they more specifically named that body of water in order to differentiate it from the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean until the 1540s (Weddle 14), when it became known as the “Bay of Mexico” (Seno Mexicano). Although Cortés had discovered the tip of Baja California in 1536, it was not known to be a peninsula enclosing the Gulf of California until Cortés sponsored a subsequent maritime expedition in 1539 (see chap. 16, sec. 6.E). Although Cabeza de Vaca may have known of this discovery at the time he wrote his account, he nevertheless referred to the body of water to which his party had drawn near in early 1536, formerly the Sea of Cortés and now the Gulf of California, as part of the larger South Sea. In both the 1542 and 1555 editions of his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca uses the terms “North Sea” and “South Sea” to refer respectively to the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean Sea/Atlantic Ocean and to the Gulf of California/Pacific Ocean.

9.B. *Tierra firme: The American Mainland*

In the proem to his *relación* (fv), Cabeza de Vaca speaks of the journey he made to “tierra firme.” It is important to distinguish his use of this generic term of physical geography (*tierra firme*), meaning “mainland,” from its contemporary significance as a proper term of political geography (Tierra Firme) referring specifically to a stretch of Caribbean coastline and adjacent inland territory of southern Central America and northwestern

South America that later would officially be named Castilla del Oro. Both uses of the toponym had their origin in the phrase “islas y tierra firme” [islands and mainland], which reaches back like “mar océano” [ocean sea] to the days of Columbus’s and other explorers’ discoveries in the Caribbean.

Originally “islas y tierra firme” referred to the Greater Antilles and the northern coast of South America (Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* 1). As exploration extended first east and south along the Caribbean and Atlantic coastlines of South America and later along the Atlantic coastline of North America, throughout the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, the knowledge of the existence of a vast mainland was established. The contract granting Pedrarias Dávila the Caribbean coasts of southern Central America and northwestern South America in 1513 reveals that prior to this date the official identification of that particular area had been Tierra Firme; in the concessions to Dávila, the crown ordered that the jurisdiction be renamed Castilla del Oro (Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* 247). The change was evidently made to differentiate the narrower political jurisdiction from the much larger physical region to which *tierra firme* had come to refer, since by 1513 much of the Atlantic coast of South America had been discovered. Nevertheless, many Spanish settlers continued to call Castilla del Oro by its old name, Tierra Firme, in spite of the new official one, well into the sixteenth century, as shown, for example, in Alonso García Bravo’s 1561 *probanza de méritos y servicios* (Mantecón 32). Because Sauer treated only the coasts of northern South America and southern Central America in his *Early Spanish Main*, his frequent use of “Tierra Firme” in this well-known work has produced a false notion of combined physical and political significance of the term, due to the fact that during the period studied in the book the physical and political regions to which the terms referred comprised largely the same lands. As a result of Sauer’s influence, modern readers of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* may be more likely to interpret “tierra firme” to mean only the narrower region encompassed by its political sense, rather than understanding it in its wider physical context denoting the mainland in opposition to the islands of the Caribbean.

In Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, “tierra firme” means simply the mainland of the Americas. When Cabeza de Vaca sailed to the Caribbean in 1527 the Atlantic coasts of both North and South America had been explored, and the Spaniards were beginning their explorations of the Pacific coasts of Mexico and northern South America. As we observe in our discussion of Spanish exploration in the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 7.G), the relationship between the coasts beyond the eastern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula and those west beyond the tip of the Florida Peninsula was uncertain until 1519, as the Spaniards thought that the Florida and Yucatán Peninsulas were islands

when they first discovered them in 1513 and 1517, respectively. After Grijalva's voyage to the Mexican coast in 1518, the lands on the western side of the Gulf of Mexico were known vaguely as "islas y tierras" [islands and lands] (e.g., CDI 12:152) or "tierras e islas" [lands and islands] (e.g., Navarrete 3:161), obviously because their relationship to the coastlines of North, Central, and South America was still uncertain. The Castilian crown's 1521 contract with Francisco de Garay (Navarrete 3:160–65) reveals at the same time, however, that by that date Garay's discoveries in the northern Gulf of Mexico established that the whole region from the "Floridian land" [tierra Florida] (see below) to Mexico was part of *tierra firme*, the mainland. Thus, Cabeza de Vaca understandably refers to the regions that he traversed between 1528 and 1536 as *tierra firme* in his *relación*.

Although Favata and Fernández (*The Account* 123n4) understand *tierra firme* to mean "mainland" in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*, their rendering of it as "Spanish Main" (*Account* 28) is both inaccurate and anachronistic. Although Sauer (*The Early Spanish Main* 2–4) says that this was the English translation of "Tierra Firme," he specifically identifies the "Tierra Firme" about which he was speaking as "the common name for the south side of the Caribbean," and he goes on to explain that the English translation of the term stemmed from English raids on the northern coast of South America. Later, "Spanish Main" came to refer to the entire "Circumcaribbean Region," which, according to Sauer, was a neologism inferior to "Spanish Main" when speaking of the "islas y Tierra Firme" of the days of Columbus. The *tierra firme* of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* was of an era of Spanish presence in the Americas that followed that of Columbus, however, and the lands he visited lay outside the realm of what the British would come to call the "Spanish Main."

### 9.c. Florida

As we point out in our discussion of exploration in the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 4.B), Ponce de León first used the term *tierra florida* in 1513 to describe the Florida Peninsula. By 1605, when El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (13 [bk. 1, chap. 2]) published his rendition of the 1539–41 Hernando de Soto expedition into southeastern North America, *tierra florida* referred to a considerably larger area: "[t]o describe the great Floridian land [la gran tierra florida] as completely as we would like will be a difficult thing, because, as it is broad and extensive and has not been conquered or even fully discovered, its confines are still unknown." El Inca went on to explain that "la gran tierra florida" was bordered on the south by the Ocean Sea (Gulf of Mexico) and the island of Cuba and on the west by the province of the Seven Cities of



Cíbola, and that on the east side its limits included the entire coast all the way to the land “which they call *de los Bacallaos*,” even though a certain French cosmographer had placed a huge province in the middle called New France. According to El Inca, even though De Soto was said to have entered inland one thousand leagues, the northern limits of the Spanish province of *Florida* had yet to be determined.

Unlike El Inca Garcilaso, Cabeza de Vaca did not have the luxury of knowing the western confines of the *Florida* province, since it was his own journey between 1528 and 1536 through northern Mexico that would later precipitate the expedition of Vázquez de Coronado, whose discoveries set the border between the province of Cíbola in the west and that of *Florida* in the east. Prior to Coronado’s search for Cíbola and his discovery of the province he named Quivira (the western Great Plains), “la Florida” appears to have included more or less whatever concept of the North American continent the Spaniards of the day held, including not only the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico but also the Atlantic coastline and the unexplored regions of the interior as far to the north and west as the Spaniards imagined the continent to extend. This expanded significance of *Florida* was accompanied throughout the period by the term’s original, limited reference to the Florida Peninsula only (“el cabo de la Florida”).

Although Narváez would land on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1528 and travel along the coast toward Mexico in search of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco, it is important to recognize that both in his petitions to conquer the region and in the contract granting the area to him, the province was defined eastward, northward, and westward from the reference point of the Río de las Palmas, that is, the modern-day Río Soto la Marina, which empties into the Gulf of Mexico on the coast of central Tamaulipas, Mexico. When the crown split the province of Pánuco off from New Spain, making it an independent jurisdiction in 1525, its first governor, Nuño de Guzmán, had apparently been given permission to extend exploration north along the coast, as well as west into the interior (CDI 40:279–80). As we mention in our discussion of Guzmán’s governance of Pánuco (see chap. 15, sec. 11; chap. 17, sec. 5.C), sometime after 1540 Guzmán complained that even before he arrived in Pánuco, Pánfilo de Narváez had been granted the Río de las Palmas and the lands along the northern coast, thereby terminating his own rights to them and cutting him off from further expansion in that direction.

In his petitions to the emperor (CDI 10:40–47), Narváez solicited permission to “discover the islands of *tierra firme* that there are from the Río de las Palmas to *Florida*, and all of the said *Florida* to the north and south” (CDI 10:40). The opening lines of Pánfilo de Narváez’s 11 December 1526 contract

with the Castilian crown approving this conquest restate his request, saying that he had asked for permission to “discover and conquer and populate the lands from the Río de las Palmas to the island of *Florida*, as well as *Florida* itself and all the coast from one sea to the other” (Vas Mingo 234). Whereas in his extant petitions Narváez requests permission to explore and settle *Florida* to the north and south, the crown appears to redefine his request in its contract with him by using the phrase “from one sea to the other,” that is, from the Gulf of Mexico/Atlantic Ocean (the North Sea) to the Gulf of California/Pacific Ocean (the South Sea).

The wording of the contract reveals the crown’s vague idea of lands to the north of Mexico at the end of 1526. The Spanish officials evidently assumed that the distance from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean at the latitude of the Río de las Palmas was much shorter than it actually was, an assumption that was no doubt based on the known geography of southern Mexico and Central America at the end of 1526. As we will see below, an individual more knowledgeable about the geography of the lands to the north of New Spain would later criticize the officials for having given what, unbeknownst to them, had been an enormous amount of land to Narváez.

The Spanish officials seem to have been aware that the Florida Peninsula was not an island, for they granted Narváez permission to “discover and conquer and populate the said lands from the Río de las Palmas to the cape which is called ‘of *Florida*’” (Vas Mingo 234). At the time the grant was made, the news of Vázquez de Ayllón’s 18 October 1526 death had almost certainly not reached Spain, but the deaths of Francisco de Garay (1523) and Ponce de León (1521) must have been well known; by 1525 Pietro Martire d’Anghiera (*Epistolario* 4:387 [bk. 38, letter 806]; *Décadas* 443 [dec. 5, bk. 1]) had written of both of them. Thus, Narváez was given all the lands along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico that had earlier been given to these men, from the northern limit of the province of Pánuco (the Río de las Palmas) to the beginning of Ayllón’s jurisdiction on the eastern coast of the Florida Peninsula, as well as all those between this region and the South Sea. No limit was placed on the northern extent of the territory.

In Seville, on 30 August 1527, only a month and a half after Narváez had set out from Sanlúcar de Barrameda for the Caribbean, Luis de Cárdenas gave a formal opinion (*parecer*) regarding the jurisdictional divisions of New Spain (CDI 40:273–87). Cárdenas, identified by Bernal Díaz del Castillo (481, 486–87, cols. b [chap. 168]) as a man who had gone to Mexico with Cortés and who returned to Spain as one of Cortés’s opponents, described the fourth part of his division of New Spain as extending from the Río de las Palmas west to the opposite sea (i.e., the Pacific Ocean/Gulf of California or South Sea) and said that Pánfilo de Narváez was now going to conquer that

region (CDI 40:280–81). According to Cárdenas, the crown had erred in not consulting “someone who was knowledgeable in these matters” (he was no doubt referring to himself), because he understood that the distance from the Río de las Palmas west to the South Sea was 650 leagues and that from the river east to the Florida Peninsula was another 300, such that not even three governors would be sufficient to bring the region under Spanish control.

9.D. *The Geography of the Northern Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*

We have virtually no information regarding Pánfilo de Narváez’s direct knowledge of the geography of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico or of any notion he had of lands to the north of New Spain and the province of Pánuco. When he left Mexico, sometime between mid-1524 and early 1525, only Francisco de Garay’s 1523 expedition had visited the Río de las Palmas, and as we mention in our discussion of the exploration of the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 9.c), it is possible that Narváez obtained information from Garay about the river and the northern coast of the gulf while he was in México-Tenochtitlán before the governor of Jamaica died there at the end of 1523. Narváez appears to have traveled from Medellín to Pánuco in 1524 and perhaps sailed from Santisteban del Puerto to Cuba, though this is conjecture based on his statement in early 1525 that he had been en route from Medellín to Pánuco about a year earlier (CDU 1:186).

Although unpublished until 1530, Pietro Martire’s writings of 1524 and 1525 on Garay’s 1523 expedition to the Río de las Palmas and Pánuco prove that if Pánfilo de Narváez had not gotten information about the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico directly from Francisco de Garay at the end of 1523 in México-Tenochtitlán as Bernal Díaz claimed, it was certainly available to him at the Casa de la Contratación in Seville as he departed from that city in 1527. In writing his first account of Garay’s 1523 expedition, Martire d’Anghiera (*Décadas* 613, 615 [dec. 7, bk. 5]) stated that the source of his information was a letter written by the officials of the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, who had been apprised by a notary from Cuba of the conflict at Pánuco between Cortés and Garay. In this first account Martire does not give the name of the river to which Garay and his men arrived, nor does he give any specific information about the geography of the Río de las Palmas region.

Martire d’Anghiera (*Décadas* 655–66 [dec. 8, bks. 1–2]) gives a second, much more detailed account of Garay’s 1523 expedition in which he refers to his earlier account as having been written from the “uncertain” information that the Audiencia of Santo Domingo had sent to the emperor and the Casa de la Contratación. Subsequently, Martire d’Anghiera (*Décadas* 668–71 [dec. 8, bk. 3]) adds some important geographical information that the chronicler

says he obtained from a man who had served as *alguacil* (law officer) for Garay in Jamaica. The informant was Cristóbal Pérez, the close companion of Garay, who, according to Martire's account, had gone on the 1523 expedition and had been present at the governor's death in México-Tenochtitlán in December of that year. Pérez evidently arrived in Spain in 1525, carrying a letter to Garay's advocate at court, Pedro Espinosa, from Pedro Cano, Garay's secretary, who had also been with the governor in Pánuco. Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 669 [dec. 8, bk. 3]) recorded the following information from a conversation he had with Pérez sometime in 1525:

The *alguacil* adds other information that should not be omitted: that the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas empty into the ocean with almost the same force, and that at a distance of nine miles out to sea sailors collect drinkable water from both; that a third river, called by our people Espíritu Santo and closer to *Florida*, has a much narrower bed but is surrounded by more fertile regions and is full of [Indian] settlements. . . . The same *alguacil* adds . . . that the pilots responsible for guiding the fleet, misled by the reasons stated above, mistook the Río de las Palmas for the Pánuco until having traveled beyond the mouth, [where] they realized the difference of its banks.

Earlier, Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 666 [dec. 8, bk. 2]) commented that Garay might have done well to stay away from Cortés and settle on the Río de las Palmas or the Río de Espíritu Santo, rather than insist on going to the Pánuco; in speaking with Pérez, Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 669 [dec. 8, bk. 3]) learned that if Garay's men had not insisted on leaving the Río de las Palmas, to which the expedition had first arrived by accident, in order to go south to the Río Pánuco, Garay would have settled there instead. In the petition that five men of Garay's expedition who feared they would be taken by force to the Río de Espíritu Santo presented to Rodrigo Ranjel at Santisteban del Puerto in 1523 (CDI 26:100–14), however, Pérez's affirmation is contradicted. These men said that members of Garay's crew had advised their leader to settle on the "Río de Palma," which lay "thirty to forty leagues from this port [Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco]," but that he had refused, insisting instead on going to the Pánuco to claim what was rightfully his (CDI 26:103).

It was in Martire d'Anghiera's (*Décadas* 663 [dec. 8, bk. 2]) second account of the region, which was perhaps taken directly from the letter that Cristóbal Pérez brought for Pedro Espinosa from Pedro Cano, that he mentioned snowcapped mountains. According to Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 670 [dec. 8, bk. 3]), Pérez himself also described a mountainous highland that was visible to the west from the path inland along the coast between the mouths of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco that Garay's men — Pérez evidently

among them—had traversed; these were no doubt the same mountainous highlands that the last four survivors of the Narváez expedition would see as they moved down the coast in 1535. The fact that Martire d’Anghiera’s (*Décadas* 717) decade 8, book 9 is dated 19 November 1525 suggests that Martire had acquired all of this information about the Garay expedition prior to that date and that the information he narrated would also have been given to the Casa de la Contratación, where it, as well as his source documents, would have been made available to Narváez.

Whereas Garay’s 1523 exploration between the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco would have provided Narváez with useful information about that region and especially about the two rivers, it offered virtually no information about the lands actually included in Narváez’s territory, since those that lay between the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco fell under Nuño de Guzmán’s jurisdiction in the province of Pánuco. Regarding the region between the Río de las Palmas and the Florida Peninsula, only the rather generic description of the Río de Espíritu Santo figures in Martire’s accounts. As we discuss in detail in our treatment of Garay’s early exploration of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 9.D), the only specific information that the Spaniards held regarding the area beyond the Río de las Palmas was the location of the Río de Espíritu Santo, believed in 1523 to be two hundred leagues from the Río Pánuco. Despite Ponce de León’s discovery of the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1513, Hernández de Cordoba’s emergency stopover there in 1517, Camargo’s skirting of the coast on Garay’s settling expedition of 1519, and Ponce de León’s return to attempt to settle there in 1521, there seems to be no early description of the region. The Bay of Juan Ponce appearing on early-sixteenth-century maps must have been known since 1513. With the exception of the Río de Espíritu Santo, the rivers between the tip of the Florida Cape and the mouth of the Río de las Palmas seem to have remained nameless to the Spaniards, at least in the earliest surviving written descriptions of the region. Only the length of the coast, thought to be three hundred leagues, was known.

The apparent lack of information regarding the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico is contradicted by the cartographic record between the publication of the Cortés map of the Gulf of Mexico in 1524 (chap. 15, sec. 9.D) and Narváez’s departure for the Caribbean in 1527. Both the anonymous “Salvati Planisphere” of 1525–26 (Wolff 48–49 [cat. 67]) and the signed and dated Juan Vespucci world map of 1526 (Wolff 50 [cat. 68]; Nebenzahl 84–87 [pl. 27]) were drafted in Seville and exhibit numerous toponyms along the entire northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. A third important map, known as the Weimar or Hernando Colón map, is of uncertain authorship and is believed also to have been drawn in Seville in 1527 (fig. 3). Delanglez (15–25) has

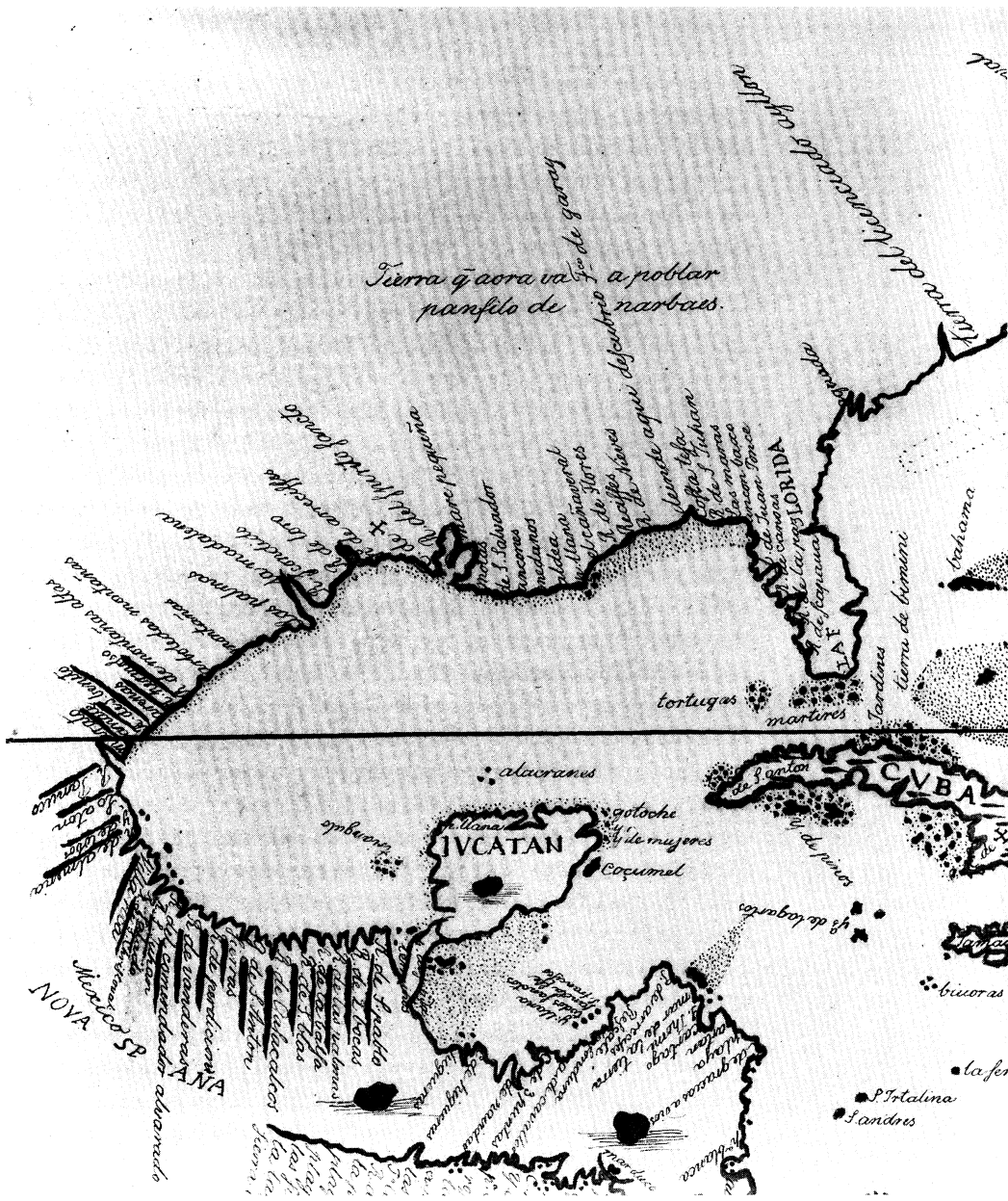


Figure 3. Detail of Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean section of the 1527 world map titled *Carta universal en que se contiene todo lo que*

*descubr[ieron] del mundo sea fasta aora*, known as the Hernando Colón map. USLC, Geography and Map Division, Johann Georg Kohl Collection, no. 38.

argued that the map is closely related to the *Padrón general*, a map intended to standardize geographic knowledge according to the emperor's 6 October 1526 decree (referenced in CD1 32:512) to Diego Ribero, the *piloto mayor* of the Casa de la Contratación. Given that knowledge of this original decree is embedded in the empress's 20 May 1535 order that the work be completed, however, it is difficult to determine with certainty the state of affairs at the Casa de la Contratación in the mid-1520s with regard to the maintenance of geographical information.

If the map does represent the *Padrón general*, it reveals that many more names had been assigned to geographical features of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico than appear in the extant accounts of the region that predate the drafting of the map. The lack of toponyms in verbal descriptions of the region compared to their abundance on the map is perhaps best explained by the dearth of information in all of the early chronicles regarding the island of Jamaica and Garay's involvement in exploration of the northern Gulf of Mexico between 1518 and 1523 and a lack of published documentary evidence concerning Spanish Jamaica, in which the exploration of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico may be documented. The image of the Gulf of Mexico offered by the Weimar map is probably the best representation of the geographic conceptualization of the region that Narváez's pilots and expeditionaries carried with them to the Caribbean in mid-1527.

In comparison to Cortés's 1524 map of the Gulf of Mexico (see vol. 3, fig. 12), the Weimar map suggests that much more had been observed about the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico than simply the existence of the Río de Espíritu Santo two hundred leagues from the Río Pánuco. Between the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas appear the Río de San Benito, the Río Hermoso (Beautiful River), and the Río de Montañas Altas (River of High Mountains). The last of these is no doubt the same Río Montalto whose discovery and naming by Garay Pietro Martire recorded. Beyond the mouth of the Río de las Palmas north along the coast to the mouth of the Río de Espíritu Santo, and from the mouth of the latter river to the Bay of Juan Ponce (b[ahía] de Juan Ponce), many legends appear on the Weimar map along the northern coastline where the Cortés map had shown only the Río de Arboledas and the Punto de Arrecifes; on the Cortés map both of these are placed between the Río de las Palmas and the Río de Espíritu Santo. If the Weimar map is indeed a version of the official *Padrón general*, then its many legends cluttering the coast from the Río de las Palmas to the Florida Peninsula are not likely to have been invented, considering the control over the drafting and maintenance of the *Padrón general* at the Casa de la Contratación; their source would likely have been Garay's exploration of the region between 1518 and 1523 (see chap. 15, secs. 7–9).

In 1536, Alonso de Chaves produced a new version of the *Padrón general* that has since been lost. Oviedo derived much of his treatment of American geography in book 21 of his *Historia* (2:111–52) from this map, and in this manner it is believed that the majority of the legends on the map were preserved. Although the map itself does not survive, Alonso de Chaves included a narrative version of it in his manuscript “Espejo de navegantes,” believed to have been completed in approximately 1538 (Chaves 36). In “Chapter Thirteen, which treats the coast of western and eastern *Florida*,” Chaves (364–71) gives highly detailed information about the legends that appeared on the 1536 map; the many details given by Oviedo suggest that he may well have had this narrative version of the map also at his disposal (Delanglez 24n30). Many of the legends on the Chaves map had already appeared on the Weimar map in 1527, and thus the 1536 map and Chaves’s “Espejo de navegantes” suggest that much more specific information about the geography of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico was available to Narváez at the Casa de la Contratación at the time he departed from Castile than direct examination of the 1527 Weimar map alone can reveal.

In spite of the very detailed geographical information that Narváez and his pilots might have possessed, the accounts of the Narváez expedition in Oviedo’s *Historia* and Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* suggest that the description of no physical feature of the coastline other than a river or bay named Espíritu Santo was sufficiently well known to the Narváez expeditionaries such that they were able to recognize it on their journey along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico in late 1528 in order to establish their location on the coast of the gulf and estimate their distance from the Río de las Palmas and Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco.

The date noted on the Weimar map is 1527. Although there is a legend identifying “the land that Pánfilo de Narváez is now going to populate” [tierra que aora va a poblar panfilo de narbaes], the reference serves only to date the map as posterior to Narváez’s 11 December 1526 patent to settle at the Río de las Palmas and cannot be used to determine whether the map was completed before or after the Narváez expedition left Spain on 17 June 1527. Regardless of this fact, the information the map contained would have been available to Narváez in Seville prior to his departure. Although the placement of the legend on the map seems to suggest that the territory Narváez had been granted included only southeastern North America, the Pacific Coast of the Americas is absent from the map, save a short section of southern Central America, an observation that reveals how little was known about most regions of this coast at the time the map was drawn. Uncertain and unexplored, the western extent of Narváez’s grant had not been determined and thus could not be cartographically represented. For



additional discussion of the Weimar map, see Lowery (*The Lowery Collection* 31–32) and Chaves (16–20).

#### 10. CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS OF FLORIDA'S WEALTH

When Narváez left New Spain in late 1524 or early 1525, he must have already been planning his return. The sight of Tenochtitlán in the early 1520s must have convinced him that other such cities could be found in the lands to the north of New Spain, and he must have been considerably more inclined to explore the western portion of his grant from the Río de las Palmas west and north to the South Sea rather than to colonize the coastal region of his grant from the mouth of the Río de las Palmas east to the Florida Peninsula. We have considered the notions of what Spaniards in 1527 might have believed the lands north of México-Tenochtitlán to contain in our discussions of exploration in the South Sea (chap. 16) and Nuño de Guzmán's conquest of Nueva Galicia (chap. 17); here we contemplate what Narváez might have expected to find, or perhaps might have expected not to find, in lands along the coast and in the interior from the mouth of the Río de las Palmas to the Florida Peninsula.

The earliest description of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico is found in the 1521 *capitulaciones* granting the region to Francisco de Garay (Navarrete 3:160–65; Toussaint 195–201). The description of the land given therein was evidently derived from Camargo's 1518–19 running of the coast on his settling expedition to the Río Pánuco (see chap. 15, sec. 7.D). The document describes how the expedition reached the land Ponce de León had discovered “adjacent to other low-lying barren lands” [entre otra tierra baja estéril]. In contrast to the unfavorable description given in the *capitulaciones* of the lands nearer the Florida Peninsula, the lands Camargo discovered to the west in the vicinity of the Río Pánuco are portrayed as being worthy of settlement:

It is a very good land, with a temperate and healthy climate and many provisions and fruits and other food, and in many of the rivers there is pure gold [*oro fino*], according to what the Indians revealed through certain samples, and also the said Indians and people of the land wore much gold jewelry in their nostrils and ears and on other parts of their bodies, and they are a very peaceful people . . . and there are people in some parts who are very tall, being ten or eleven spans in height, and others who are short, and other people very short, being only five or six spans in height.

The source of this description of the material wealth (or lack thereof) of the Florida Peninsula, the Río Pánuco region, and the lands in between was evidently some sort of *relación* that Garay had sent to the king; in our

discussion of exploration in the Gulf of Mexico we describe how, prior to the sending of this account, Juan de Torralba appeared with samples of gold in Barcelona in December 1519 (chap. 15, sec. 7.B). This fact notwithstanding, we must approach the description found in the *capitulaciones* as we do the account of the Camargo expedition's activities at the Río Pánuco contained in this document. There we demonstrate that although no settlement at the Pánuco is described, it seems fairly certain that by this point Garay's expedition under the command of Diego de Camargo was doing much more at the Río Pánuco than simply trading with the Indians for gold. Since the governor of Jamaica was still seeking a contract to settle in the province, he did not say in his *relación* that he was already doing so, and he would have wanted Amichel, the name of the province around the mouth of the Río Pánuco given in the 1521 *capitulaciones*, to sound as desirable as possible. Thus, this contract's description of the land probably tends more toward being a generic account designed to obtain its governance than an objective description of its character.

Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's (*Décadas* 443 [dec. 5, bk. 1]) account of the lands of the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico must have been derived from a source similar to the one from which the 1521 contract was written, that is, some lost account sent by Garay to Spain describing Camargo's discoveries on his 1519 voyage of settlement. Martire notes that the people living on both sides of the Río Pánuco had "houses covered with reeds," that they were all governed by one native lord who was named Pánuco, and that Garay had not been able to trade with them. Again, the contact between the Spaniards and the Indians is minimized, perhaps because Garay had sent Camargo to Pánuco with limited privileges from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo; Martire does claim, however, that Garay had intended to found a settlement named Santa Cruz but that Cortés had stopped him. Martire gives a view on the prospects of mineral wealth in the land that is completely different from the one in the 1521 *capitulaciones*: "Garay believes that the said province will likely be of little gain, because he saw few signs of gold, and none of it pure."

The defeat of Garay's settlement at the Río Pánuco in 1520 no doubt influenced the Spaniards' perception of the natives of the region. As we discuss elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 9), in the years between Diego de Camargo's attempts to settle on the Río Pánuco (1519–20) and Garay's own arrival there (1523), Cortés conquered the province and discovered the little that remained of Garay's 1519–20 colony. Many years after the conquest of the region, Bernal Díaz del Castillo (425b [chap. 158]) offered some striking commentary on the native people of the Río Pánuco region. He explained that the *indios guastecas*, as the people of that region were called, attacked Cortés's men like

“raging lions” and then proceeded to tell that in the native temples of Pánuco Cortés’s soldiers found the preserved skins of the men of Garay’s settlement whom the Indians had killed almost three years earlier when Camargo fled with the survivors. It is difficult to determine from what sources Bernal Díaz formed his opinion about the Huastecas of Pánuco; whether from firsthand experience or, more likely, from hearsay, Díaz del Castillo (428b [chap. 158]) conveyed what was evidently a general opinion held by the Spaniards of the time regarding the natives who lived near Santisteban del Puerto and beyond to the north, that is, that they were the most barbaric of all those that the Spaniards had encountered in Mexico.

Pietro Martire’s second account of Garay’s 1523 march from the Río de las Palmas to the Río Pánuco suggests that this region formed the border between the sedentary, agricultural peoples of southern Mexico and the semisedentary or nomadic peoples farther north. Martire d’Anghiera (*Décadas* 658 [dec. 8, bk. 1]) records that Garay and his men found no cultivation for three days to the south of the Río de las Palmas and that the region was only very sparsely populated. Although Martire relates that as the men moved south toward the Río Pánuco they discovered cultivated maize and permanent settlements, above all his account underscores the poverty of the region.

Almost nothing was known of the people who lived beyond the Río de las Palmas toward the Florida Peninsula. References to the difference in the sizes of various peoples recorded in the 1521 *capitulaciones* to Garay probably derive from actual observations, just as they do in the accounts of the 1527 Narváez expedition given by Cabeza de Vaca. Martire d’Anghiera’s (*Décadas* 666 [dec. 8, bk. 2]) claim that the provinces surrounding the mouths of the Río de las Palmas and the Río de Espíritu Santo were immense, “rich and full of settlements,” is generalized, and its direct sources are unknown. Narváez’s knowledge of the lands along the coast beyond the mouth of the Río de Espíritu Santo to the Florida Peninsula would most likely have come from the survivors of Ponce de León’s attempt to settle there in 1521. In summary, if Narváez had formed his expectations for the eastern part of the territory granted to him on the basis of previous exploration, he could only have expected what he would eventually learn firsthand, that the people there were hostile to intruders and that the land was poor and generally uncultivated and contained little gold.

#### 11. SEVILLE TO SANLÚCAR DE BARRAMEDA

The date the Narváez expedition set out from Seville down the Guadalquivir River to Sanlúcar de Barrameda is not known. Cabeza de Vaca’s instructions

as treasurer of the expedition were issued at Valladolid on 15 February 1527 (see vol. 1, “The Life,” sec. 6). Francisco Núñez claimed that Narváez appeared at court in February, evidently at Valladolid, and that after Narváez had acquired the 1 March 1527 *cédula* prohibiting the publication of Cortés’s letters, Núñez filed a suit against him (above, sec. 2.A.1). Since Narváez had his power of attorney assigned to Hernando de Zaballos in Seville on 19 February 1527 (above, sec. 8), it is possible that he remained in Seville from that date and that Zaballos represented him at court in Valladolid. Research in the Archivo General de Indias could reveal further information about the Narváez expedition’s activities in Seville immediately prior to its departure for Sanlúcar, probably in early June 1527. Neither the trip down the Guadalquivir River from Seville nor the time the expedition spent in Sanlúcar de Barrameda is treated in either account of the Narváez expedition. It was evidently from Sanlúcar, located less than fifteen miles from Cabeza de Vaca’s native Jerez de la Frontera, that Cabeza de Vaca’s cousin Pedro Estopiñán saw the expedition off, as he testified nearly twenty-five years later (vol. 1, “The Life,” sec. 6). It was perhaps also at Sanlúcar that the Muslim woman from Hornachos foretold the doom of the expedition, as Cabeza de Vaca recorded near the end of his account. Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* commences with the Narváez expedition’s departure from this city on the Atlantic coast of Andalusia on 17 June 1527.

## CHAPTER 2

### Part 1: The Atlantic Crossing and Caribbean Sojourn: Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain, to Havana, Cuba (17 June 1527 to February/March 1528)(f3r–f5v)

In this Part 1 of our commentary on Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* we consider the Narváez expedition's activities from 17 June 1527, the date the expedition departed from Spain, to February/March 1528, when it was blown off the northwestern coast of Cuba into the Gulf of Mexico. The period includes the expeditionaries' crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, their visit to the island of Española, their overwintering in Cuba, and their attempt to reach Havana in the spring of 1528.

Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* (f3r–f5r) is the sole source of information regarding the expedition's departure from Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 17 June 1527 until its departure in the spring of 1528 from the port of Jagua on the southwestern coast of Cuba. From the latter point Oviedo provides a less detailed but parallel account of the expedition's activities. In the spring of 1528 the Narváez crew set sail from Jagua in four ships (*navíos*) and a brigantine, intending to travel around the western tip of Cuba to the port of Havana, where it was to be joined by another vessel before departing on its journey to the Río de las Palmas on the northwestern coast of the Gulf of Mexico. While standing offshore at Havana, the five ships that had come from Jagua were caught by a storm and driven into the gulf without ever reaching port.

When Cabeza de Vaca departed from Spain with the Narváez expedition in June 1527, nearly thirty-five years had passed since Spaniards had first visited the Caribbean. Travel between Spain and Española was no longer a subject of particular interest to those who wrote about the Indies, and for Spaniards who had lived in the Caribbean since the end of the fifteenth century, everyday life there was likewise not a novelty. Narváez's main residence had been in Cuba from shortly after he and Diego Velázquez had conquered the island in 1511, and thus he would have been very familiar with the Caribbean. Cabeza de Vaca's narration of the time the expedition spent in the Caribbean reveals his own unfamiliarity with the Indies, resulting from the fact that this was his first trip to the Americas. Though Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Caribbean leg of his journey is interesting primarily for what

it reveals about his particular perspective, his narration also bears witness to the general economic decline of the Caribbean at the time when the Narváez expedition passed through, and in this respect the account provides a more general historical interest.

#### 1. ATLANTIC CROSSING AND SOJOURN ON ESPAÑOLA (17 JUNE 1527 TO SEPTEMBER 1527)

Apart from the details he took from his reading of the published *relación* in 1547, Oviedo (615ab) gives no information about the Narváez expedition's departure from Castile; Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is the only source for this 1527 voyage. According to Cabeza de Vaca, Pánfilo de Narváez put together an expedition of five ships and about six hundred men (f3r). The number of persons who actually sailed from Spain, among whom there may have been a small number of women, is not of great significance, since this crew was not the one that would depart from the Caribbean for the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico in 1528. Cabeza de Vaca naturally included the names of the officers of the royal treasury of the expedition in his account, as the *relación* was an official report to Charles V.

The port from which the Narváez expedition departed Spain—Sanlúcar de Barrameda—lies at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River and was the main port of embarkation from Castile for the Indies at the time. Weddle's (179) hypothesis that the date of departure of the Narváez expedition is stated alternately as 17 June or 27 June 1527 because of "some editor's attempt to convert the Julian calendar to the Gregorian" is possible; the source of the 27 June date appears to be Fanny Bandelier's (1, 1n1) translation of the 1542 edition, which led Hodge (14n1) to claim that the original Spanish edition of 1542 states the later departure date. We have verified that both the Zamora (1542) and Valladolid (1555) editions state 17 June 1527 as the departure date, pertaining to the Julian calendar used at the time Cabeza de Vaca wrote.

Cabeza de Vaca does not describe the route followed or the amount of time the expedition took to cross the Atlantic Ocean, nor does he give the date of the fleet's arrival at Española. As we mentioned previously (chap. 1, sec. 5), Francisco de Montejo was preparing his expedition to settle at Cozumel and Yucatán at the same time Narváez was getting ready to go to the northern Gulf of Mexico; Weddle (165) posits that the two expeditions sailed from Spain to Española together, where they would have competed for men and supplies upon arrival.

A document dating to sometime after 1525 ("Secreto e Istrucion [*sic*] para la navegacion dende España a la Isla de Santo Domingo e visiversa [*sic*]" [The secret and instructions for navigating from Spain to the Island of Santo

Domingo and vice versa]; CDI 42:541–48) describes the typical voyage from Sanlúcar to Santo Domingo of the time, which included a stopover in the Canary Islands and generally took a total of thirty-five to forty days, although ships frequently made the journey in “many less or many more days.” Oviedo (*Sumario* 21–22 [chap. 1]) gave a similar account of the journey at the end of 1525 or early 1526. Writing from Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, Oviedo (615b) mistook Cabeza de Vaca’s reference to the forty-five days he says the fleet spent at Española upon arrival for the number of days the expedition spent crossing the ocean.

The expedition most likely was present on Española, evidently at Santo Domingo, during the months of August and September 1527. Cabeza de Vaca (f3r) says only that the fleet remained on the island for “nearly forty-five days” in order to secure horses for the expedition to the Río de las Palmas. Neither account reveals whether the shortage of livestock and the ban on its exportation from the Caribbean caused the Narváez expedition difficulty in obtaining horses (chap. 1, sec. 5.B) in spite of the crown’s decrees that Narváez was to be aided in outfitting his expedition. As mentioned above (chap. 1, sec. 7), Fray Juan Suárez wrote to the emperor from Española on 6 September 1527, informing him of his decision to go with Narváez to the Río de las Palmas. This was most likely the date near which Narváez’s expedition departed from Española for Cuba, still intending at that time to continue on to the Río de las Palmas that same autumn.

The loss of approximately 140 men, whom Cabeza de Vaca says left the expedition on Española because they chose to take advantage of “the favors and promises that the men of that land made to them” (f3r), is unsurprising given the general state of depopulation on the islands discussed earlier (chap. 1, sec. 5.A). Alonso de Parada had already given a lengthy description of the deteriorating state of affairs in the Caribbean at the time he departed from Santiago de Cuba (CDI 40:260–73); since Parada had been absent from Santiago for one and a half years by 9 September 1526 (CDU 1:346), the account evidently pertains to early 1525 and apparently was reviewed by the crown on 2 July 1527. According to Parada, the city of Santo Domingo on the island of Española was stable and growing due to the commerce that took place there as well as the pearl fishing and the presence of a nascent sugar industry; in the region of Santo Domingo seven or eight sugar mills were then functioning (CDI 40:262).

Parada suggested that other settlements on Española were not faring as well as Santo Domingo, but in general he gave a characterization of the island more positive than the ones he gave of the other Caribbean islands. Parada claimed that Cuba and Jamaica were in considerable decline and that Española too was being hurt by colonists’ emigration to other parts of the

Indies (CDI 40:266). Parada proposed that the emperor make settlement on the islands more attractive by contracting with the king of Portugal to bring 4,500 or 5,000 African slaves (half of them men and half of them women) to the Caribbean islands to work for Spanish colonists in the gold mines and the sugar mills. In light of the strong demand for European colonists on the islands, the “favors and promises” made to some of Narváez’s men in 1527 no doubt had to do with efforts of the *vecinos* (Spanish settlers) of Española to shore up their dwindling population.

The disappearance of the indigenous population because of disease and Spanish abuse had caused the gradual flow of the original colonists of Española and the other Caribbean islands to more populated regions of the Indies, particularly to Mexico. In addition to this chronic deterioration, which Parada hoped the importation of African slaves would reverse, Española suffered more acute problems at the time the Narváez expedition passed through. It had been hit by a hurricane in October 1526 that destroyed a number of sugar mills, according to an account written by the *licenciados* Lebrón and Zuazo from Santo Domingo on 20 May 1527 (Marte 271). At the time Narváez’s expedition passed through Española, the *vecinos* there were also foundering under the weight of the battle they had been waging against Enriquillo and his community of refugee Indians on the western end of the island. Special taxes had been levied against the community to pay for the war against Enriquillo sometime prior to 30 March 1528 (CDI 37:389–96).

Narváez’s purchase of another ship while at Española, bringing the total number in his fleet to six, is mentioned out of chronological order in the *relación*; Cabeza de Vaca does not give the information in his account of the expedition’s time on Española but instead adds it to his narration of the journey he and Juan Pantoja later made with two ships from Santa Cruz to Trinidad along the southern shore of Cuba (f3v).

## 2. CUBA AND VASCO PORCALLO: CABEZA DE VACA’S VIEW OF THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean leg of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* is written from the perspective of a newcomer to the Indies. Nowhere is this more evident than in his description of Cuba and the expedition’s encounter with Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa (f3r–v). We know that Pánfilo de Narváez had played a significant role in the conquest of Cuba between 1511 and 1514 (see chap. 15, secs. 2–3) and that there he had been second in importance, and probably wealth as well, only to the island’s governor, Diego Velázquez, who died in 1524. When Narváez brought his expedition to Cuba in mid-1527, the island had been occupied by Spaniards for sixteen years, and its geography and ports were



well known. Undoubtedly, Narváez was a known figure among the residents of the Spanish settlements on the island.

The fact that the expedition spent a number of days at Santiago de Cuba to acquire men, arms, and horses suggests that Narváez may have had difficulty putting together an adequately supplied fleet for his settlement expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, and the diminishing population in Cuba was certainly a contributing factor. Cabeza de Vaca recorded that while the expedition was in the Cuban capital, Narváez was contacted by “a prominent gentleman named Vasco Porcallo, resident of the *villa* [incorporated town] of Trinidad, which is on the same island” (f3r–v). Cabeza de Vaca narrates the account of the town and Vasco Porcallo as though this person and place were unknown to Narváez and his expedition. The unfamiliarity, however, was Cabeza de Vaca’s, for Narváez had spent approximately six years—between 1511 and 1515, the year from early 1519 to early 1520, and another brief period in 1524–25—living on the island. Trinidad had been founded by Diego Velázquez by 1513 and was located on the southwestern coast of Cuba. Along with Sancti Spíritus nearby (modern Sancti Spíritus), this town formed a center for gold placer mining on the island (Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* 186–87). Porcallo and perhaps Narváez had likely grown wealthy by acquiring land in this area at the time of the conquest of Cuba. Although these towns had enjoyed prosperity in the early years after their founding due to the availability of Indian slaves, by 1527–28 they too were in decline. When the *licenciados* Espinosa and Zuazo wrote their 30 March 1528 plan for recolonization of the Caribbean they claimed that Santiago had only fifty *vecinos* and that the other towns—including Sancti Spíritus, Trinidad, and Havana—were practically depopulated (Marte 279).

The biographical information on Vasco Porcallo has not been sufficiently gathered; Schäfer’s (*Índice* 1:407b–08a) collection of references to him in CDI and CDU provides a starting point. Like Narváez, Porcallo seems to have been a fairly important figure in Cuba’s early history. Weddle (128) speaks of Porcallo’s earliest experience in the Indies under Pedrarias Dávila in Castilla del Oro (Tierra Firme). In our discussion of Spanish exploration of the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 6), we mention Bernal Díaz’s reference to Porcallo as the individual Diego Velázquez had supposedly chosen to replace Cortés as the leader of the 1519 voyage to Mexico as it was departing from Cuba. Contrary to Weddle’s (129) claim, Porcallo evidently did accompany Narváez to Mexico in early 1520, since Cortés was accused in 1529 of failing to pursue and punish Porcallo for two murders he had committed in New Spain (CDI 27:35–36). According to question number 221 and corresponding testimony of the *interrogatorio* presented by Cortés in his appeal to his 1529 *residencia* (CDI 27:391–92, 527; CDI 28:69, 190–91), Porcallo had murdered a man in

Coyoacán, apparently in 1521. According to witnesses favorable to Cortés, this act invoked Cortés's wrath, and Porcallo appears to have lived for a time as a fugitive in the region of the South Sea, that is, in the direction of the Tarascan kingdom of Michoacán (CDI 27:528). Porcallo served as a witness in Francisco Montaña's 1531 *probanza de méritos y servicios*, saying he had seen Montaña return from Michoacán in 1522 (Warren, *The Conquest* 37).

By February 1522, Porcallo must have returned to Cuba, since the documentary record shows that at that time he was serving as lieutenant chief justice of Sancti Spíritus and Havana and put down an uprising in imitation of the Spanish Comunero revolt at Sancti Spíritus (CDU 1:119–26). Legal documents narrating the horrific account of how Porcallo, then age twenty-eight, had cut off the genitals of three Cuban Indians and then forced them to eat them covered in dirt, after which he burned the men to death, and how he had forced another Indian to cut off his own genitals (CDU 1:124–25) impose a shocking contrast to Cabeza de Vaca's description of the "gentleman" who appeared in Santiago five years later offering supplies to the Narváez expedition.

With respect to Narváez's expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida*, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa seems to have played a very minor role, and the *relación* is specific about neither the sort of provisions he offered to supply to Narváez nor the terms on which he offered them. Later in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* (f31r) Porcallo's name appears again, this time in reference to his brother (see below, sec. 6.B.2).

More can be learned about Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa from accounts of the Hernando de Soto expedition to the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, on which Porcallo himself went in 1539. The Gentleman of Elvas, in his 1557 published account, recorded that in joining the expedition, Vasco Porcallo had the title of captain general of the expedition conferred upon him (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:57 [chap. 7]) and that on the expedition his "principal intent . . . was to send slaves from Florida to the island of Cuba where he had his lands and his mines" (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:63 [chap. 10]). Fifty years later, El Inca Garcilaso (36–37 [bk. 1, chap. 12]; Varner and Varner 43) described the situation more colorfully in his *La Florida*. He narrated that in 1538 Porcallo came to Santiago from Trinidad (just as he had done in the case of Narváez's 1527 expedition) to see De Soto. There "he was unable to contain himself, and his enthusiasm, which had already cooled for things of war, was now fired with new zeal for such" at the sight of "the liveliness and gracefulness of so many cavaliers and such good footsoldiers," who brought to mind his own experience in conquest both in the Indies and in Spain and Italy such that he desired to join them, despite his age of more than fifty years. Since he declared himself to be twenty-eight

years old in 1522, Porcallo would have been only forty-five years old in 1539, and he was obviously a wealthy and influential man in Cuba. Although El Inca Garcilaso (37 [bk. 1, chap. 12]; Varner and Varner 43–44) offers details regarding Porcallo's involvement in the De Soto expedition, we must keep El Inca's geographic and temporal removal from the events of the conquest of *Florida* in mind when we consider his account:

Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa y de la Cerda as a very rich and generous man helped magnificently in the conquest of Florida. He carried with him on his journey many Spanish, Indian and Negro servants as well as other equipment and furnishings from his household; and he brought along thirty-six horses for his own use besides more than fifty others which he presented to individual cavaliers of the army. Furthermore, he provided a great supply of meat, fish, corn and cassava for the armada, not to mention other things they needed. And finally, it was because of this man and in imitation of him that many Spaniards who were living in the island of Cuba became enthusiastic about the conquest and joined the expedition.

Porcallo no doubt had intended to provide supplies to the Narváez expedition similar to those he later gave to De Soto. After returning from the De Soto expedition, Porcallo continued to offer provisions to the leaders of expeditions of conquest to *Florida* such as Menéndez de Avilés's in 1565 (Weddle 330). Like his description of Porcallo's arrival in Santiago de Cuba, Cabeza de Vaca's (f3v) narration of the six ships' voyage from Santiago to Santa Cruz on the southern coast of Cuba, approximately halfway between Santiago de Cuba and Trinidad, apparently carrying Porcallo with them, and of his excursion with Captain Juan Pantoja to Trinidad while Narváez waited with the other four ships at Santa Cruz conveys the freshness of Cabeza de Vaca's unfamiliarity with the Caribbean.

### 3. JUAN PANTOJA, A FAVORITE OF NARVÁEZ

According to Hodge (15n5), a certain Juan Pantoja accompanied Narváez on his expedition to Mexico in 1520 as captain of the crossbow men and there became lord of Ixtlahuaca. Although Pantoja's involvement with Narváez in Mexico is likely, Hodge does not give the source of this information. Concerning his role in the 1528 expedition to *Florida*, Pantoja is mentioned by Cabeza de Vaca infrequently in the *relación* following his initial reference to him as the captain who manned the other ship when Cabeza de Vaca traveled with two ships along the southern shore of Cuba from Santa Cruz to Trinidad in autumn 1527. It is evident from the references that Pantoja occupied a fairly important role on the Narváez expedition and wielded considerable

power as one of Narváez's most trusted captains on the expedition. Cabeza de Vaca paints Pantoja in the same sinister light that he does Narváez; in the *relación* Pantoja is portrayed as a sort of accomplice to Narváez's mishandling of the expedition and as a behind-the-scenes abettor of Narváez's actions. Narváez's confidence in Pantoja is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that he seems to have allowed Pantoja to negotiate the terms upon which Vasco Porcallo would supply provisions for the Narváez expedition.

Pantoja is absent from Oviedo's account. In Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*, he reappears as the overland contingent of the expedition reached the Mississippi River. There Cabeza de Vaca (f9v) suggests that Pantoja had had a part in convincing Narváez that they and the men of their raft could not help Cabeza de Vaca and those of his raft by tying the two crafts together. His manner of referring to Pantoja at this point ("a captain whom he carried with him, called Pantoja") suggests he had forgotten his earlier mention in the *relación* of his voyage with Pantoja from Santa Cruz to Trinidad. Also not included in Oviedo's account, Cabeza de Vaca (f30v) narrates that Narváez revoked the authority he had given to the comptroller, Alonso Enríquez, as his lieutenant governor (*lugarteniente*) of the expedition and gave the title to Pantoja. Once Narváez disappeared, Pantoja assumed Narváez's role among the small group of survivors on the Texas coast made up of those who had gone on his and Narváez's raft as well as the men of the comptroller and the commissary's raft. According to Cabeza de Vaca (f31r), Esquivel, the only survivor of that isolated group, conveyed its fate through Figueroa, another expeditionary who was temporarily rejoined with Andrés Dorantes, who eventually related the story to Cabeza de Vaca. As we will see in our Part 5 commentary (chap. 6, sec. 4.B), Esquivel told Figueroa that Vasco Porcallo's brother, Sotomayor, murdered Pantoja because he treated the men poorly. Thus, throughout the first half of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative Pantoja's negative reputation is methodically unveiled until finally he is murdered for his evil deeds.

#### 4. THE HURRICANE OF OCTOBER/EARLY NOVEMBER 1527

Cabeza de Vaca's narration of what occurred once he and Pantoja arrived at Trinidad provides the first evidence of his intention, sustained throughout the *relación*, to highlight his own good judgment; he strengthens this positive image of himself throughout the account by juxtaposing it with a perhaps overstated representation of Narváez's bad judgment in order to prove his own merit as an expeditionary. His rhetorical introduction of the incident, as though he were uncertain whether or not the account belonged in his *relación*, calls particular attention to its importance: "[a]nd because what

happened to us there was such a notable thing, it seemed to me that to tell it here would not be unrelated to the purpose and goal for which I chose to write an account of this journey” (f3v). Cabeza de Vaca’s apologetic tone suggests that his inclusion of the incident in his *relación* served the purpose of exonerating himself. Only through a detailed account of what occurred could he explain the loss of the ships that had been left in his care. Cabeza de Vaca evidently found this incident to be a very important one, as he chose to include it in his *relación* in spite of the fact that he had already informed the Spanish crown of the event at the end of November 1527 and again prior to departing with the expedition from Cuba for *Florida* in the spring of 1528, as we note below (sec. 5).

While Pantoja and some of the other members of the two-ship contingent went into Trinidad to secure provisions from Vasco Porcallo, Cabeza de Vaca remained offshore on the ships, serving as the commander of the maritime crew. According to Cabeza de Vaca (f3v), the day after Pantoja departed, a canoe came twice from Trinidad to where the ships were anchored, bearing a request that he come to the *villa*. He says he resisted for fear of losing the ships in a storm, because he had been previously informed by the nervous pilots that the port where they were waiting was not safe. Reluctantly, he yielded to the petitions from the island only in order to expedite the acquisition of the goods, leaving the ships’ pilots with specific instructions regarding the actions to be taken if a storm should come up (f4r). One hour after he had gone ashore, he says, a northerly wind began to blow and a hurricane ensued, peaking in intensity the following day (Sunday) and lasting through that night.

On Monday, Pantoja, Cabeza de Vaca, and “about thirty” others who had survived the hurricane went to the coast to find that the two ships, the sixty passengers who were on them, and twenty horses had all been lost (f5r; Oviedo 582a). The hurricane had also destroyed the provisions that Porcallo had promised and caused great damage to the entire area. The contingent remained in Trinidad until Narváez arrived with his four ships (also having narrowly escaped the destruction of the storm) on 5 November 1527 (f5r).

Smith (*Relation* 16n5) referred to extant documents describing a hurricane that occurred in October 1526, as we also have done (sec. 1). The only mention of a hurricane that may pertain to the one Cabeza de Vaca experienced in autumn 1527, however, is found in the 30 March 1528 report that the *licenciados* Espinosa and Zuazo sent to the crown from Santo Domingo (CDI 37:389–96). In it they speak of destruction caused by a past hurricane and the *vecinos*’ inability to pay special taxes levied against them in the war against Enriquillo, in part because of the costs incurred from hurricane damage.

## 5. OVERWINTERING IN CUBA (NOVEMBER 1527 TO FEBRUARY 1528)

In the letter that the advocates of the towns of Cuba wrote to the emperor on 17 March 1528 (CDI 12:5–25), they allude only to the generally poor state of affairs on the island but make no mention of destruction due to a hurricane. Two important specific issues brought up in the letter are, first, a recently proclaimed decree from the emperor concerning the prohibition of forced Indian labor in the mines in an effort to salvage the rapidly diminishing population of Indians on the Caribbean islands, and second, another decree regarding limitations on the importation of black slaves, which were to be brought to the islands only in equal numbers of men and women.

The document also mentions Indian uprisings in Cuba since the death of Diego Velázquez (1524) and records how Gonzalo de Guzmán had punished some of these Indians, but it records as well that a disagreement between Guzmán and the *cabildo* (municipal council) of Santiago about eight months earlier due to an event that occurred on 8 May 1527 and was recorded by Jerónimo de Alaniz, as we will see below (sec. 6.B.3), had led to the arrival of an investigator from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo to Santiago de Cuba. According to the Cuban officials' letter, the investigation of Guzmán's activities caused him to abandon his efforts to put down the uprisings, and thus they reported that during the previous three or four months (i.e., December 1527–March 1528) the Indians had killed many Spaniards, ambushing them along the roads, robbing them, and burning their houses and cattle. The contents of this official report of deteriorating conditions in Cuba that followed the beginning of the mentioned investigation a few months before Narváez and his group arrived on the island substantiates Cabeza de Vaca's (f4v) description of the conditions that produced the terror he says he and the other members of the Narváez expedition felt while in Cuba during the hurricane at hearing voices and the sounds of flutes, bells, and tambourines.

The experience of the hurricane prompted the newcomers to the Indies to insist that Narváez postpone his travel to the Río de las Palmas until the following spring. Cabeza de Vaca was given charge of the four remaining ships and the crew of the expedition, which he took to the port of Jagua (modern-day Cienfuegos) for the winter (f5r). Jagua was first reported to be a favorable harbor when Cuba was circumnavigated by Sebastián de Ocampo in 1508 (Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* 181) and was no doubt a port commonly used for overwintering by 1527. Cabeza de Vaca's description in the *relación* of the hurricane that struck Cuba in autumn 1527 and the winter stay of the Narváez expedition at Jagua again demonstrates his unfamiliarity with the Caribbean environment. The fear experienced during the hurricane

and the sight of the many deaths and destruction in southwestern Cuba as well as the threat of Indian attacks must have left a deep impression on him and the other members of the Narváez expedition for whom the trip was their first to the Americas.

The account of the hurricane is recorded only by Cabeza de Vaca in the *relación* (f3v–f5r); Oviedo (615b) paraphrases the information from the *relación* at the end of his own account. Cabeza de Vaca states in his *relación* (f4v) that he sent a *probanza* to the emperor describing the events that had occurred during the hurricane, evidently to document the losses that had been incurred, in compliance with his responsibilities as treasurer of the expedition. As we mention in our discussion of the texts and documents of the Narváez expedition (chap. 12, sec. 2.A.1), the emperor responded from Madrid on 27 March 1528 to a missive that Cabeza de Vaca had sent to him from Jagua dated 28 November 1527. In responding, the emperor documented receipt of the information about the expedition's losses to which Cabeza de Vaca had referred in mentioning in his *relación* the *probanza* he had prepared; the emperor's 27 March 1528 letter was evidently the response to the *probanza* materials.

In his 27 March letter, the emperor also encouraged Cabeza de Vaca to continue writing to the crown about the progress of the Narváez expedition, a request with which Cabeza de Vaca had already complied. Oviedo (582a) recorded that in his testimony for the Joint Report Cabeza de Vaca said he had written to the emperor from Jagua on 15 February 1527 (*sic*, 1528), telling him of all that had occurred on the expedition thus far and of the loss of the two ships, the people, and the horses. The imminent departure of the expedition from Jagua to Havana and the Río de las Palmas on 22 February 1528 must have induced Cabeza de Vaca to once again update the emperor on the expedition's activities prior to its departure from the Caribbean for the northwestern coast of the Gulf of Mexico even before the emperor had drafted his 27 March 1528 response to Cabeza de Vaca's report of 28 November 1527. Curiously, Cabeza de Vaca did not mention in his *relación* this second report that he sent to the emperor, to which he evidently did refer in his Joint Report testimony, as Oviedo's account reveals.

## 6. MAKEUP OF NARVÁEZ'S 1528 EXPEDITION TO FLORIDA

### 6.A. *Ships and Supplies: The Size of the Expedition*

The composition of the expedition that Narváez led from the port of Jagua in February 1528 was evidently somewhat different from the one he had carried from Spain to the Caribbean in June 1527. Of the five ships Narváez

had brought from Spain and the one he had purchased on Española, two had been destroyed by the hurricane at Trinidad. Besides the 140 individuals who had deserted the expedition on Española and the 60 who died at Trinidad, there must have been some additional deserters during the four months that the expedition spent at Jagua. As we will consider below, although emigration from Cuba seems to have been prohibited, at least a few Spanish settlers on Cuba appear to have joined the Narváez expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* in late 1527 and early 1528. Cabeza de Vaca (f5r) relates that Narváez purchased a brigantine during the winter months and also left another ship with forty infantrymen and twelve cavalrymen under the captain Álvaro de la Cerda on the northern shore of Cuba (f5v). When Narváez set out from Jagua for Havana, his expedition was comprised of four ships, a brigantine, four hundred men, and eighty horses (f5v; Oviedo 582a).

In comparison to other expeditions of conquest that had previously been taken to various parts of the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Peninsula, the one Narváez intended to take to the Río de las Palmas appears to have been intermediate in size. Narváez's 1520 expedition to Mexico to arrest Cortés had been more than twice as large, with eighteen ships, eight hundred men, and eighty horses. Cortés had taken an initial six hundred men to Mexico in eleven ships in 1519.

As a colonizing expedition, Narváez's does not seem to have been so fully provisioned to found permanent settlements as the one Ponce de León had taken to the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1521 or the one Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón had taken to the eastern coast of southern North America in 1526 (see chap. 15, secs. 10.A, 10.B, respectively). If Narváez took any livestock other than horses on the expedition, as De Soto did in 1539, they were not taken ashore; given the shortage of food for the overland expedition that Cabeza de Vaca reported, it is unlikely that other livestock were taken. The disastrous hurricane that hit Cuba in late 1527 had probably put available provisions in short supply as the expedition was preparing to depart at the beginning of 1528. Had Narváez succeeded in locating the Río de las Palmas, travel and commerce between Cuba and the settlements he had planned to establish on the Río de las Palmas and along the *Florida* coast would have been initiated, and the slow process of supplying the colonies with all the necessary provisions and livestock would have begun.

#### 6.B. Expeditionary Personnel

In his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca (f14v) establishes that there was a distinguished group of hidalgos among the four hundred men of the Narváez expedition. Such a class distinction was not uncommon on expeditions of



discovery. Corresponding roughly to this social distinction was an economic one. As was true in the case of the Narváez expedition, the hidalgos seem generally to have been the cavalymen, each having the means to provide and maintain his own horse on the expedition; as we noted in the example of Vasco Porcallo, these men also often provided horses to other men who were unable to afford their own. Oviedo (596a) underscored the socioeconomic heterogeneity of expeditions of conquest to America when he addressed the deceased caballeros, hidalgos, artisans, and peasants of the Narváez expedition in his commentary on Spanish conquest in the Americas.

As discussed previously, Oviedo (612b–13a) reminds us that not all who went to the Americas were Castilians, just as Cabeza de Vaca does in the proem to his *relación* (fiv), and this held true for the expedition with which Narváez departed from Jagua in February 1528. Also present on Narváez's expedition were Portuguese, Greeks, and black Christian slaves. As we have noted in our discussion of the group Narváez carried from Spain, Cabeza de Vaca (f2v) recorded that the Franciscan Fray Juan Suárez brought a lord of Texcoco with him on the expedition. Cabeza de Vaca later mentions "a boy of an hidalgo" (f3v) and an "Indian from the island of Avia" (f23v), both of whom were most likely Indian slaves brought to *Florida* from the Caribbean.

A final factor contributing to the character of the Narváez expedition to the Río de las Palmas and *Florida* was its participants' previous experience in the Indies and, particularly, experience there under Narváez. Some members of the Narváez expedition, such as Cabeza de Vaca, had come to the Indies for the first time. Others had lived in the Caribbean prior to going with Narváez to *Florida*, and still others, like Narváez himself, had been to various parts of the Americas before going to *Florida*. Despite the apparent ban on emigration from Cuba, we will see below that at least the primary pilot, the camp master, and the notary of the expedition joined Narváez in Cuba.

We have already mentioned above that Juan Pantoja may have accompanied Narváez to Mexico in 1520. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (311b [chap. 136]) noted that already by the time of Cristóbal de Tapia's visit to New Spain at the end of 1521, many of the principal soldiers of Narváez's 1520 expedition to New Spain had been allowed to return to Cuba. Cabeza de Vaca (f22v) referred to men who had been on expeditions of conquest in New Spain who, because of what they had seen in Mexico, feared they would be sacrificed by the Indians, and it seems likely that a number of those who accompanied Narváez on his 1528 expedition from Cuba to *Florida* had also gone with him to Mexico; the notary of the expedition was one of them. Despite the fact that Narváez himself had been held prisoner in New Spain until about 1524, his previous associations, not only proceeding from his expedition to New

Spain in 1520 but from as far back as his conquest of Cuba (1511–14) and his advocacy for Diego Velázquez in Spain (1515–18), still provided personnel for his expedition. Diego Velázquez's nephew Antonio, who had served in Spain with Narváez as the other original advocate for Cuba in 1515, evidently also joined the expedition from the island (CDU 4:356–58).

6.B.1. *Middle- and Lower-Ranking Officials.* Notwithstanding some minor variations regarding their names, the highest-ranking officials of the Narváez expedition (the governor, the officers of the royal treasury, and the commissary) were all very clearly identified by Cabeza de Vaca in his *relación*. Beyond these individuals, however, the lesser officials such as the ship captains, the military captains, and the *regidores* of the towns Narváez was to found are only haphazardly or not at all identified. Herrera y Tordesillas (8:97–99 [dec. 4, bk. 2, chap. 4]), in the beginning of the seventeenth century, was the first to fill in from documentary sources some of this information absent from Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*.

We have seen above that the comptroller of the expedition, Alonso Enríquez, had originally been granted the title of lieutenant governor of the expedition and that sometime near the end of 1528 Narváez took that title away from him and gave it to Juan Pantoja (f30v), who until then seems to have served as a ship captain and/or military captain (see above, sec. 3). Álvaro de la Cerda is mentioned as the captain of the ship and the small contingent that Narváez left at Havana (f5v). Other individuals mentioned as captains on the expedition according to Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* or Oviedo's account were Alonso del Castillo (f9v, f13v, f16r, f23r), Valenzuela (f9v; Oviedo 585a), Téllez (f16r, f18r, f20r; 588a, 590b), Peñalosa (f18r, f20r), and Andrés Dorantes (f18r, f23r, f28v). An *alcalde* (magistrate) named Caravallo was given command of the ships of the expedition when Narváez led his men overland (f8v).

6.B.2. *The Maestre de campo.* In his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca (f31r) identified the *maestre de campo* (camp master, responsible for tactics and supply) (Hemming 515) of the Narváez expedition in his passing reference to the murder of Juan Pantoja by the individual named Sotomayor who had occupied this position on the expedition. Cabeza de Vaca added parenthetically that this person, who had murdered Pantoja because of the lieutenant governor's ill-treatment of the other surviving expeditionaries, was the brother of Vasco Porcallo from the island of Cuba.

To date, no other reference to this Sotomayor has ever been cited regarding Cabeza de Vaca's claim that he was Vasco Porcallo's brother and that he went on the Narváez expedition as the *maestre de campo*. We have discovered

in a document dated 25 August 1530, recording the Indians that Gonzalo de Guzmán assigned to various *vecinos* of the towns of Cuba between 25 April 1526 and 25 August 1530 (CDU 4:109–28), that sometime between these dates in the *villa* of Trinidad, nineteen of Alonso de Sotomayor's *aborías* (domestic slaves) were assigned to other *vecinos* of the town. In the record of the transfer of three of these Indians to Lorenzo Gómez (CDU 4:121), the reason given for the transfer is that Alonso de Sotomayor had left the island. In the record of the transfer of another four of Sotomayor's Indians to Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, Sotomayor is identified as Porcallo's brother (CDU 4:122).

6.B.3. *The Notary.* Muñoz (Real Academia de la Historia 2:431 [entry 1595. 1173]) examined a document written at Medina del Campo on 19 February 1513, assigning Jerónimo de Alaniz the title of *escribano de número* (licensed notary public) of the city of Santo Domingo. By virtue of his profession, Alaniz left an easily followed trail of documents by which we are able to trace his career through the Indies. In spite of this, until now no editor of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* has called attention to the identity of this notary who went on Narváez's 1528 expedition from Cuba to the coast of the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Alaniz received three *encomienda* Indians in Alburquerque's 1514 *repartimiento* (act of administrative allotment) on Española (Arranz Márquez 537). In February 1515, Alaniz held the position of *escribano público* or *de número* and continued to reside in Santo Domingo at least through the end of 1517 (Arranz Márquez 478, 526). As Spanish settlement spread to Cuba, Alaniz may have followed the wave of emigration to the island from Española. In 1520 he traveled with Narváez to New Spain, appearing on various occasions in the record of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's attempt to impede Narváez's departure (e.g., CDI 35:93, 132). It should be noted that in his *Índice* to the CDI and the CDU, Schäfer (1:9b–10a) listed the surnames of Alaniz (Alanís), Alaminos, Alarín, and Alasín and the accompanying first names of Alonso, Andrés, Gonzalo, and Gregorio all under one entry. Even though some of the references clearly represent erroneous transcriptions of Alaniz's name, it seems likely that Schäfer unknowingly melded the identity of at least one other notary, Gregorio de Alaminos, and that of Jerónimo de Alaniz together. Schäfer's grouping is in part a result of the poor quality of many transcriptions contained in the CDI and the CDU.

Once in New Spain, Alaniz assumed a notary position in Veracruz, where in early 1521 he recorded the investigation of Narváez's attempt to escape from the *villa* (CDI 26:287–97). By 1525, and probably earlier, Alaniz had returned to Santiago de Cuba, where he served as *escribano de Su Majestad* (royal notary)

and *escribano del consejo* (notary of the town council) of Santiago (CDU 1:143–44). Alaniz was implicated on at least two occasions in Gonzalo de Guzmán’s 1526 *residencia* of Juan de Altamirano, who had served as lieutenant governor of the island from May 1524 until April 1526 (CDU 1:257–337). Regarding Altamirano’s abuse of his right to collect fees from the *escribanos* for their transactions, the charge made against the former lieutenant governor states that he charged 44 *maravedís* per signature, whereas the normal rate was 16 or 20 *maravedís*; the charge reports that Jerónimo de Alaniz had been required to pay Altamirano 7 or 8 *pesos de oro* (3,150 or 3,500 *maravedís*) over a certain period of time that he served as a notary under the lieutenant governor (CDU 1:283–84).

Altamirano may have overcharged Alaniz, but in return he evidently overlooked some of Alaniz’s transgressions. In responding to a question of the secret investigation into Altamirano’s conduct regarding enforcement of the law, Francisco Vázquez de Valdés testified that Alaniz had been living out of wedlock with a woman known in Santiago de Cuba as “la portuguesa” and that although Altamirano had imprisoned both the notary and his concubine, Alaniz paid bail, and the case apparently never went to trial (CDU 1:282). Alaniz evidently maintained this living situation, which appears to have been publicly known, for the duration of his time in Cuba, since one of the charges presented by Juan de Vadillo against Gonzalo de Guzmán in Vadillo’s February 1532 *residencia* of Guzmán was that as lieutenant governor of Cuba Guzmán had not prosecuted a number of men openly living out of wedlock; one of these was Alaniz, who is said to have lived with Mayor de Azevedo, evidently “la portuguesa” (CDU 4:203).

In May 1527, while Gonzalo de Guzmán continued to serve as lieutenant governor of Cuba, Alaniz remained employed as a notary on the island (e.g., CDU 1:388). He was apparently imprisoned by Guzmán from sometime after 16 May 1527 “until news of the birth of the prince” (21 May 1527) reached Cuba (CDU 4:222) for having recorded the formal complaint against the lieutenant governor in the incident occurring in Cuba, where, in defiance of the town council, Guzmán forcefully entered the church to remove a Genoese fugitive named Esteban Basiñana who sought refuge there (CDU 1:370–78; CDI 11:457–64). This was the event mentioned above (sec. 5) for which a group of officials had come to Cuba from Española to investigate, which in turn had caused Guzmán to abandon his efforts to assure the safety of the island colonists from Indian attacks. In a 15 September 1530 letter to the emperor the officials of Cuba gave the cause of this incident between Basiñana and Guzmán as a dispute over thirty black slaves that Basiñana had illegally brought to Cuba from the Cape Verde Islands beyond the forty he had permission to bring to the island (CDU 6:20).

By 22 April 1528, the crown had received Jerónimo de Alaniz's letter relinquishing his position of *escribano del consejo* to Pero Pérez (Llaverías 140–42). Pánfilo de Narváez must have convinced Alaniz to go with him as the *escribano* of the *Florida* expedition once he arrived in Santiago in the autumn of 1527. Another of the charges brought against Gonzalo de Guzmán by Vadillo in 1532 claimed that, in spite of the ban on emigration from the island declared by the emperor (which we earlier noted Guzmán to have overzealously enforced), Guzmán had given permission to certain individuals to leave the island, among these, Alaniz (CDU 4:210).

Cabeza de Vaca recorded the final chapter of Alaniz's life in his *relación*, as we will discuss in subsequent parts of our commentary. The same 25 August 1530 document that recorded Gonzalo de Guzmán's transfer of Alonso de Sotomayor's Indians to other *vecinos* in Cuba also documents his transfer of all the *encomienda* Indians and *naborías* that Alaniz had held to Francisco Benites, save two *naborías* that went to Mayor de Azevedo (CDU 4:112); the transfer of Alaniz's Indians was declared illegal by Vadillo in the 1532 charges against Guzmán because the law dictated that the Indians were to have been sold (CDU 4:219). On 28 April 1531, the crown referred to the vacancy of a position of *escribano público* in Santiago as the result of Jerónimo de Alaniz's death in a document naming Cristóbal de Torres to the position (Llaverías 167–68). Thus by mid- to late 1530, Alaniz's supposed death on the Narváez expedition was completely accepted in Cuba. The actual date of his death at Galveston Bay can be only imprecisely determined from Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* to have occurred between the spring of 1529 and the spring of 1534, as we will show in our Part 5 commentary (chap. 6, sec. 8.B).

### 6.c. Women on the Expedition

Among those who departed on the Narváez expedition from Jagua in February 1528 were ten married women, but Cabeza de Vaca (f65v) does not reveal this until the very end of his narrative, where he explains what happened to the ships just before the overland expedition left them and afterward. There he recounts an episode in which a woman on the voyage tried to deter Narváez from entering inland because a certain Muslim woman from Hornachos in Castile had foretold the fate of the expedition and predicted its disastrous end, as we will discuss in our Part 9 commentary (chap. 10, sec. 8). Once the men departed, she advised the other women to look for husbands among those who were left on the ships because they would not see their own husbands ever again.

We might speculate that these women had come from Spain with their husbands in 1527, although it is possible that some of the women who

went were the wives of men who joined Narváez in Cuba. Women began to emigrate to the Indies from Spain in 1498, when Queen Isabel issued a license allowing thirty Castilian women to join Columbus's third expedition, provided that they agreed to remain in Española as permanent settlers (Casas, *Historia* 1:468 [bk. 1, chap. 123]; Martín 9–10).

The strong-willed María de Valenzuela, likened by Oviedo (580b) to Penelope of classical Greek lore, must have gone to the Indies as a permanent settler sometime in the first decade of the sixteenth century, and what little we know of her biography provides some interesting notions of the life of Castilian women of gentle birth in the Caribbean of the early sixteenth century. María de Valenzuela was a widow when she married Pánfilo de Narváez, probably on the island of Española. After the conquest of Cuba, the couple must have moved from Española to Cuba, where she managed her husband's holdings while he was in Spain serving as advocate for Diego Velázquez. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (448b [chap. 162]) relates that while Narváez was held prisoner in Mexico, Valenzuela wrote letters to Cortés, asking him to free her husband, and Oviedo (580b) verified with Narváez in Toledo in 1525 his wife's careful management of the estate while he had been held by Cortés. Apparently, María de Valenzuela's intention was to raise enough money to ransom Narváez's freedom from the conqueror of Mexico. Her involvement in the search for her husband's expedition in the Gulf of Mexico once it became evident that he was lost there will be taken up below (chap. 4, sec. 2).

#### 7. THE PILOT MIRUELO

Cabeza de Vaca states in the *relación* (f5r) that when Narváez arrived at Jagua in a brigantine he had purchased in Trinidad he brought with him a pilot named Miruelo. Narváez brought this Miruelo because "they said that he knew and had been in the Río de las Palmas and was a very good pilot of the entire north coast" (f5r–v). Although Oviedo (583b) does not explicitly tell of Narváez's arrival at Jagua with the pilot Miruelo, he does confirm that Miruelo was present on the expedition when the fleet reached the coast of *Florida*; this mention reveals that the three Castilian survivors of the Narváez expedition spoke of Miruelo in their testimony for the Joint Report in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536. Because there are few references to the pilots who went on the Narváez expedition in either account, and because one of the most striking aspects of both accounts is the utter disorientation of the expedition once it entered the Gulf of Mexico, this Miruelo has interested and inspired readers of the *relación* at least since the time of El Inca Garcilaso.

As we discovered during our research into Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's exploration of the Atlantic coast of southeastern North America (chap. 15, sec. 10.B.1), El Inca Garcilaso referred to a "Miruelo" who made an independent voyage to the eastern coast of the Florida Peninsula that took place "a few years after" Ponce de León had discovered *Florida* and "at about the same time" as the first exploratory mission to the region financed by Ayllón and others in 1521. El Inca's Miruelo later went on Ayllón's "1524" (*sic*, 1526) expedition to settle on the Atlantic coast of North America and is said by El Inca to have died of melancholy on this voyage. Using El Inca's account, Barcia transformed this Miruelo into "Diego Miruelo," and since he had arbitrarily dated the pilot's independent voyage to 1516, he also placed him on the jointly financed 1521 exploratory expedition (erroneously dating it to 1520) in addition to Ayllón's "1524" expedition to the *Florida* coast (see chap. 15, secs. 4.C, 10.B, 10.B.1). As we show below, it is probable that El Inca's "Miruelo" was fictitious.

We mention in our discussion of Ponce de León's discovery of *Florida* (chap. 15, sec. 4.B) that the sole account of his 1513 expedition, written by Herrera y Tordesillas (3:317–26 [dec. 1, bk. 9, chaps. 10–11]), relates Ponce de León's encounter with a ship piloted by a Diego Miruelo in the Lucayas (Bahamas) as he traveled home from the peninsula to Puerto Rico. In the early accounts of Ayllón's exploration of the eastern coast of North America between 1521 and 1526 and documentation regarding this exploration there is no mention of any Miruelo. Keeping in mind these two Miruelos, one from a 1513 voyage recorded by Herrera, the other from a "1516" voyage and a "1524" voyage narrated by El Inca Garcilaso, we now consider the Miruelo whom Narváez took on his 1528 expedition.

It is important to note that although the two Miruelos mentioned above are described in connection with events that preceded Narváez's 1528 journey to *Florida*, the texts that mention them were both published (as well as composed) well after Cabeza de Vaca published his *relación* (Herrera y Tordesillas's in 1601–15 and El Inca Garcilaso's in 1605); in addition, both of these authors had read the 1555 published version of Cabeza de Vaca's account. El Inca Garcilaso (17 [bk. 1, chap. 4]) claimed that Narváez's pilot was a younger relative of the Miruelo who he claimed had gone on the independent voyage to *Florida* that Barcia dated to 1516 and on Ayllón's "1524" voyage to the Atlantic coast. There is a striking parallel between El Inca's Miruelo of these earlier expeditions being unable to locate the site he visited on his "1516" voyage to the *Florida* coast when he returned on Ayllón's "1524" expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's account of Narváez's Miruelo being unable in 1528 to locate the Río de las Palmas, which he was said to have visited previously. The Miruelo of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* probably served

as the inspiration for El Inca's invention of the elder Miruelo as he wrote his account in the late sixteenth century. El Inca Garcilaso's (17 [bk. 1, chap. 4]) claim that Narváez's Miruelo was "a relative of the former [Miruelo] and just as poor at his profession" comes as no surprise when we consider that he had probably served as the model for El Inca's construction of his older relative. The voyage Barcia dated to 1516 and the presence of El Inca's Miruelo on Ayllón's expedition are likewise El Inca's literary inventions.

Barcia confounded the issue of these Miruelos to an even greater degree. Although Barcia (*Ensayo* 1a–2a [años 1512–13]) does not mention a Diego Miruelo in his treatment of Ponce de León's 1513 voyage as Herrera y Tordesillas did, we have seen that he curiously referred to El Inca's Miruelo as "Diego Miruelo" (*Ensayo* 2b [año 1516], 5b [año 1520], 8b [año 1524]). Then, with no stated sources to substantiate his claim, Barcia (*Ensayo* 9b [año 1527]) went on to more precisely state the relationship of the invented Miruelo of El Inca Garcilaso's account of Ayllón's exploration to the real one of Cabeza de Vaca's treatment of Narváez's expedition as that of uncle to nephew. In addition, he referred to the Miruelo found in the accounts of the Narváez expedition also as "Diego Miruelo."

Barcia took El Inca's *La Florida* as a dependable primary source for the history of the region without hesitation. In light of other chronicles and documentary evidence regarding the topics of El Inca's narrative, however, the work is revealed to be somewhat unreliable historically, especially for the history of Spanish *Florida* prior to De Soto. This problem has been compounded by modern historians' acceptance of Barcia's *Ensayo*, which expands on El Inca's constructions, also as a dependable historical source. Thus, if we disregard El Inca's invented Miruelo, perhaps inspired by his reading of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* and embellished by Barcia over a century later, we have a single, early-seventeenth-century source—Herrera y Tordesillas—naming a Diego Miruelo whom Ponce de León encountered in 1513 and Cabeza de Vaca's testimony from 1536 in the Joint Report and his later *relación* naming a Miruelo who went as a pilot on Narváez's 1528 expedition to *Florida*. There is presently no established relationship between these two Miruelos. In terms of chronology, their activities are separated by fifteen years (1513–28), and it is therefore not impossible, if Herrera's mention is authentic, that the two citations referred to the same individual.

Weddle (187, 204) is correct in his assertion that the Miruelo Bay appearing on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula on sixteenth-century maps of the Gulf of Mexico was discovered by the Miruelo whom Narváez took as a pilot to the northern coast of the gulf in 1528 rather than by the one we claim El Inca Garcilaso invented and sent on the fictitious voyage that Barcia dated to 1516 and that many modern historians assume to have gone to the western



coast of the Florida Peninsula. Weddle's argument, repeated by Hoffman ("Narváez" 53), that Narváez's Miruelo had discovered the bay on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula on the "Alonso Álvarez Pineda" (i.e., Diego de Camargo; see chap. 15, sec. 7) voyage of 1519, rather than on Narváez's own 1528 expedition, and his assumption that the Narváez expedition subsequently went looking intentionally for this previously discovered bay on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1528, however, are incorrect. Swanton (United States De Soto Expedition Commission 110) apparently was the first to suggest that the Narváez expedition intentionally went to the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1528, and Hoffman ("Narváez" 53–54) has recently repeated this misconception. Weddle's additional claim that the Miruelo of the Narváez expedition had not gone with Garay to the Río de las Palmas in 1523 and his hypothesis that this assertion is a result of Barcia's confusion of Narváez's "Miruelo" with Garay's "Morillo" are also wrong. As we will now demonstrate, a "Diego Fernández de Mirnedo [*sic*]" did indeed go with Garay to the Río de las Palmas in 1523 and most likely was the Miruelo who went with Narváez to *Florida* in 1528. He was apparently not familiar with the entire coast of the Gulf of Mexico and especially not with the western coast of the Florida Peninsula. He knew of no bay there until he discovered the one near the mouth of which the Narváez expedition disembarked in April 1528. Thus, the toponym "Miruelo Bay" first appeared on the now-lost Chaves map of 1536, when the loss of Narváez's expedition was widely known and the search for it on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula had been completely abandoned (see chap. 4, sec. 2).

Although Weddle (187) sensibly rejected the idea that El Inca Garcilaso's Miruelo had discovered the Bay of Miruelo, he was unaware of Barcia's transformations by which this fictitious character had become the uncle of the Miruelo of the Narváez expedition, and thus he refers to the two as uncle and nephew. Weddle (187, 204) bases his claim that Narváez's Miruelo must have gone on the 1519 voyage of Alonso Álvarez Pineda (i.e., the second one led from Jamaica by Diego de Camargo and described in the 1521 *capitulaciones* to Francisco de Garay), rather than on Garay's 1523 voyage to the Río de las Palmas, on Cabeza de Vaca's statement in the *relación* (f5r–v) that Narváez had taken the pilot named Miruelo on his expedition because "they said that he knew and had been in the Río de las Palmas and was a very good pilot of the entire north coast." Because Weddle was erroneously convinced that the Narváez expedition was intentionally looking for a bay on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula identified as "Miruelo Bay" on later maps, rather than for the Río de las Palmas on the northeastern coast of Mexico, he claimed that this Miruelo could only have gained his knowledge

of the western coast of the Florida Peninsula on the 1519 voyage and that he would have discovered “Miruelo Bay” there on this 1519 voyage.

Elsewhere we show that the 1521 *capitulaciones* describing the “Álvarez Pineda” (i.e., Camargo) voyage say only that “good pilots” went on the expedition (chap. 15, sec. 7.D); none of them are identified by name. If we assume that Narváez’s Miruelo actually did have experience in sailing along the entire northern coast, then Weddle’s assertion must stand, since Camargo’s 1519 expedition is the only one thought to have surveyed the entire northern coast prior to 1527. Weddle’s false assertion that Miruelo was already familiar with the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1528, however, convinced him that Miruelo necessarily had been there prior to that date.

Delanglez (24–25) has shown that the legend “Miruelo Bay” (Bahía de Miruelo) first appeared on the lost Chaves map of 1536, which Oviedo (*Historia* 2:143b [bk. 21, chap. 8]) described and of which Chaves (366 [bk. 4, chap. 13, no. 7]) himself gave a narrative version. This legend does not appear on the “Pineda” map of 1519, the Cortés map of 1524, or the Weimar map of 1527, discussed elsewhere (chap. 15, secs. 7.G, 9.D; chap. 1, sec. 9.D). It also does not appear on three other maps thought, like the Weimar map, to be closely related to the *Padrón general* (the undated Wolfenbüttel map and the two 1529 Ribeiro maps; Delanglez 21–23). The cartographic evidence supports Weddle’s (184, 204–05) claim that El Inca’s (invented) Miruelo on the (fictional) voyage that Barcia dated to 1516 and that Shea traced to Pensacola Bay on the western coast of the present-day state of Florida did not result in the appearance of a “Miruelo Bay” on sixteenth-century maps, but it likewise excludes his claim that it was Narváez’s Miruelo on the “Alonso Álvarez Pineda” (Camargo) voyage of 1519 that engendered the map legend. If this were the case, we might expect “Miruelo Bay” even to have appeared already on the 1519 Pineda map.

The port that Cabeza de Vaca tells us Miruelo knew was actually on the Río de las Palmas, north of the settlement of Santisteban del Puerto on the western side of the Gulf of Mexico. Miruelo would discover “Miruelo Bay,” that is, the one on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula near to the north of which the Narváez expedition would land, in April 1528. As we will see below (chap. 3, sec. 4), Miruelo would be sent traveling along the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in the direction of Cuba in search of “the port that he knew,” that is, the Río de las Palmas, and in the process discover Tampa Bay. Later, as the search for the Narváez expedition was begun in 1528, the geography of the western coast of the Florida Peninsula would have been charted, and thus the bay that Miruelo discovered on his way to Cuba—modern Tampa Bay—received the Spanish name “Bahía de

Miruelo.” In 1536 it would appear on the Chaves map. The bay was known sufficiently well by the time Cabeza de Vaca passed through Havana in June 1537 such that he was later able to write in his *relación* (f66v) that the bay, which the Narváez expeditionaries had named the “Bay of the Cross” (f15v), was one hundred leagues north of the Cuban port and could be reached in four days. The name “Miruelo Bay” for this body of water was evidently unfamiliar to Cabeza de Vaca, as he does not record it in his account.

It is obvious from our discussion of the objectives of the Narváez expedition that the “port that Miruelo knew” was the Río de las Palmas. It is this part of the claim about Miruelo’s knowledge that was most important and, strangely, also the one that Weddle overlooks. The absence of a “Miruelo Bay” on any map prior to 1536 and the fact that Miruelo could not determine where the Narváez expedition was when it landed along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico suggest that Miruelo was unfamiliar with the eastern portion of the Gulf of Mexico (the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in particular) prior to 1528. Even if he had visited the western coast of the peninsula on an earlier voyage, the Narváez expedition certainly did not go intentionally looking for a bay with which Miruelo was familiar on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in 1528, as Weddle (187) claims they did. As we have shown, Narváez’s entire jurisdiction was defined from the reference point of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas in the western gulf, and it was near to that river that the expeditionaries incorrectly believed they had landed when they first reached the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in mid-April 1528.

When the scope of Miruelo’s knowledge is reduced to familiarity only with the northwestern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and particularly the Río de las Palmas, he could have made the claim by having been on Camargo’s 1519 voyage as Weddle suggests, but he could also have done so by having been on Diego de Camargo’s initial voyage to the region in 1518, Miguel Díaz de Aux’s or Ramírez “el viejo”’s supply missions to Pánuco in 1520, or Francisco de Garay’s 1523 voyage to the Río de las Palmas and Pánuco. As we note elsewhere (chap. 15, sec. 9.c), Pietro Martire claimed that Garay had discovered and named the Río de las Palmas in 1523. If we focus, therefore, on the aspect of Miruelo’s claim that would have been most important to Narváez (acquaintance with the Río de las Palmas), Miruelo necessarily would have had to be on Garay’s 1523 expedition in order to have knowledge of this river if indeed it was discovered at this time. The scarcity of pilots who knew the region of the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas in 1527 is evidenced by the difficulty Nuño de Guzmán encountered in chartering a ship to Pánuco from Seville because no one in Seville knew what the port on the Río Pánuco was like (see chap. 15, sec. 11); the Río de las Palmas must have been even more poorly known.

Weddle's (130, 204) claim that Barcia mistook a certain pilot of Garay's 1523 expedition to the Río de las Palmas named "Morillo" as Narváez's Miruelo requires careful examination. The source for Barcia's (*Ensayo* 9b [año 1527]) conversion of the Miruelo in the Narváez expedition accounts to "Diego Miruelo" in his own account of the Narváez expedition seems to stem from the similar tendency we have seen in his transformation of the Miruelo of El Inca's account of Ayllón's exploratory voyages to the eastern coast of the Florida Peninsula. Curiously, Barcia (*Ensayo* 8a [año 1523]) made no mention whatsoever of the pilots who went on Garay's 1523 expedition in his direct treatment of that topic. However, when he arrived at his consideration of the Narváez expedition, Barcia (*Ensayo* 9b [año 1527]) added that Narváez's Miruelo—whom he claimed to be the nephew of Ayllón's Miruelo—had gone with Garay to the Río de las Palmas. Barcia's conversion of these figures from "Miruelos" into "Diego Miruelos" could be explained by his association of them with Herrera y Tordesillas's reference to the Diego Miruelo in his account of Ponce de León's discovery of *Florida*, though, as we have noted above, Barcia does not include a mention of this Miruelo in his own treatment of Ponce de León in his *Ensayo*. It is more likely, however, that these name changes were inspired by archived documents concerning Garay's 1523 voyage, as we will now show.

Although Weddle (130) does not identify his source for the names of the pilots who went to the Río de las Palmas with Garay in 1523, we have concluded that he draws the information at least partially from a declaration made by the pilots regarding the seaworthiness of Garay's ships once they arrived at Santisteban del Puerto (CD1 26:98–99). At the beginning of the *published version* of this declaration, the chief pilot's name is given as "Diego Morillo." It is evidently from this reference that Weddle insists the chief pilot of Garay's 1523 expedition was not the Miruelo of Narváez's 1528 expedition but rather a separate Diego Morillo with whom he says Narváez's pilot is often confused. At the end of the document, however, this name is replaced by the name "Diego Fernández de Mirnedo [*sic*]." It would be necessary to consult the original document to determine the accuracy of the transcription, but the published version suggests that Narváez's pilot "Miruelo" was most likely the same individual—"Diego Fernández de Mirnedo"—who had been the chief pilot of Garay's 1523 expedition. Pietro Martire's statement that Garay discovered the Río de las Palmas on his 1523 expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's remark in the *relación* that the pilot Miruelo claimed to have been to the Río de las Palmas support this claim. This individual could easily have been on early explorations sponsored by Garay, and on that basis he might have claimed to be familiar with the entire northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Thus, it appears that Barcia's assertion that the pilot of Garay's 1523 expedition to Pánuco later served as Narváez's pilot is plausible, and Weddle's characterization of that claim as a confusion of names is false. As alluded to above, the Diego Miruelo to which Herrera referred in conjunction with Ponce de León's discovery could represent a third reference to the same individual; that is, the "Diego Miruelo" sighted by Ponce de León in the Lucayas in 1513 according to Herrera's account may be the "Diego Fernández de Mirnedo [*sic*]" who went with Garay ten years later to the Río de las Palmas as well as the "Miruelo" who went with Narváez to *Florida* five years after that. Whether he was one of the "good pilots" who went with Camargo to the Río Pánuco for Garay in 1519 is not known.

Regarding other pilots who went on the Narváez expedition, Cabeza de Vaca (*f7r*) reveals that a certain Bartolomé Fernández served as an important sailor and was probably a pilot, for he was present at the expedition's 1 May 1528 junta regarding the decision to leave the ships and take an expedition overland. Cabeza de Vaca (*f15v*, *f23v*) later names a Portuguese, Álvaro Fernández, who he says was a sailor and the only carpenter on the overland expedition. With respect to other pilots on the overland expedition, Cabeza de Vaca (*f15v*) contradicts himself when first he says that "upon the declaration and oath of our pilots" the Bay of Horses was thought to be 250 leagues from where the expedition had started overland and later (*f16r*) that no one among those who embarked on the rafts, that is, those who had gone on the overland expedition, knew anything about the art of navigation. Most of the pilots would probably have stayed with the ships when the overland expedition departed on 1 May 1528. On that date the pilot Miruelo was on his way down the western coast of the Florida Peninsula, discovering "Miruelo Bay" (the expeditionaries' "Bay of the Cross" and modern Tampa Bay) as he sailed toward Cuba on a futile search for the mouth of the Río de las Palmas.

#### 8. TRAVEL FROM JAGUA TO HAVANA (FEBRUARY/MARCH 1528)

There is some discrepancy between Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo's accounts of the Narváez expedition and the other early ones regarding the date that the expedition departed from Jagua. Cabeza de Vaca (*f5r-v*) implies that Narváez's fleet departed on 22 February 1528, and Oviedo gives a similar account, saying that Narváez arrived at Jagua on that date, leaving the reader to assume that the expedition departed shortly thereafter. Santa Cruz (3:480 [pt. 5, chap. 41]) says Narváez left southwestern Cuba in mid-March, and Herrera y Tordesillas (8:219 [dec. 4, bk. 4, chap. 4]), in spite of the fact that he relied heavily on the printed Valladolid (1555) edition of the *relación*, also states that it was already March when the expedition departed.

As the Narváez expedition left Jagua with four ships, a brigantine, about four hundred men, ten women, and eighty horses (f5v; Oviedo 582b), Miruelo clumsily led the fleet through the present-day Gulf of Batabanó, where he grounded it in shallow waters for fifteen days. The expedition was finally freed by an influx of water into the bay caused by a storm blowing from the south, and the fleet continued west along the shore of southern Cuba. The group encountered one violent storm near Guaniguanico and another that caused it to remain at Cabo Corrientes for three days. The ships eventually rounded the Cape of San Antón (present-day San Antonio) and sailed against the wind to a point twelve leagues from Havana.

Havana was recognized by the Castilians as a desirable port by 1508, and the bay there was known as the Port of Carenas. Antón de Alaminos's voyage in 1519 from Veracruz in Mexico through the Florida Straits to Spain led to the modification of earlier sailing patterns and the relocation that same year of the *villa* of San Cristóbal de la Habana from the southern coast of Cuba to the northern coastal bay (Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* 216). While waiting to enter the bay at a point twelve leagues distant from its mouth, the Narváez expedition was swept away from the Cuban coast and into the Gulf of Mexico by yet another storm (f5v). Cabeza de Vaca would not reach Havana for another nine years, finally passing through it on his way back to Spain in 1537.

## CHAPTER 3

### Part 2: The Journey to *Florida* and Establishment on the *Florida* Coast: Havana, Cuba, to Tampa Bay, Florida (February/March 1528 to 1 May 1528) (f5v–f8v)

The subject of Part 2 of our commentary on Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is the expedition's travel from Cuba to the *Florida* coast, its explorations along the coastline, and its establishment there of a temporary settlement, all during the brief period between February/March and 1 May 1528. The details concerning the expedition's journey from Havana to the *Florida* coast are few. Neither account offers any estimate of the time the expedition spent sailing in the gulf, but the Narváez expeditionaries' activities once they finally sighted land on 12 April 1528 as narrated in both accounts reveal that the sea voyage had sufficiently disoriented them, such that they immediately set to the task of trying to determine where along the coast they had landed. After two days of skirting along the shore, sailing in the direction of the tip of the Florida Peninsula, the fleet anchored and the expeditionaries disembarked. The expedition remained in the region until 1 May 1528, but the pilot Miruelo was sent sailing in the brigantine along the coast in the same direction that the whole fleet had been sailing (toward the tip of the Florida Peninsula) in search of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas. Miruelo was unaware, of course, that the fleet had landed on the Florida Peninsula and that he would reach Cuba before finding the river. By the time Miruelo and Álvaro de la Cerda could return from Cuba to the site where the expedition had disembarked, Narváez had already departed with his overland expedition and had sent the remaining ships sailing along the coast toward the Río de las Palmas, unaware of how far away from its mouth the group had actually landed.

Whereas Cabeza de Vaca's description of the Caribbean reveals more about his own perspective as a newcomer to it than about the region itself, his account of the *Florida* coast and lands subsequently encountered represents the first detailed description of these areas and offers the perspective that most of the expeditionaries in the group would have held regardless of their previous experience in the Indies, since the lands of the western Florida Peninsula and the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico were poorly known by the Spaniards prior to this 1528 expedition.

One theme that emerges over the course of this segment of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative is the formation of Narváez's desire to search for Apalache. As the expedition arrived on the coast, its main objective was to locate a port that the pilot Miruelo knew, the mouth of the Río de las Palmas. Up to that time no settlement had been founded on that river, and the references to a known and inhabited port given in this first section of the narrative pertain to Santisteban del Puerto, established by Cortés in 1523 and located south of the Río de las Palmas a number of leagues upstream along the Río Pánuco. Through muddled communication with the Indians of the Florida Peninsula, Narváez developed an imagined vision of a wealthy province called Apalache that he no doubt hoped would be his Tenochtitlán. Because he believed originally that he had disembarked very near to the mouth of the Río de las Palmas, this notion of finding another Tenochtitlán supposedly to the north of and quite near to the original one was reasonable. Narváez's desire to find a large and wealthy native settlement caused him nearly to abandon his original goal upon departure from Cuba, which had been to go directly to settle on the Río de las Palmas.

Another theme appearing in this part of the narrative is a rivalry between Narváez and Cabeza de Vaca. It is impossible to know if this rivalry existed to the degree that Cabeza de Vaca states in his *relación* or if his account of it is more a narrative construction designed to underscore his good judgment and Narváez's ineptitude in the eyes of their sovereign. In his narration of the 1 May 1528 junta to determine if the expedition should separate from the ships and go inland along the coast, Cabeza de Vaca seems to insist that the orders given and carried out were contrary to his opinion, and he seems to employ the *relación* to exonerate himself of the disastrous loss of life that resulted from Narváez's decision to go inland. Regarding this point, we must keep in mind Cabeza de Vaca's official position as royal treasurer of the expedition. He was required to account for the losses, and as the only survivor of the emperor's officials of the royal treasury, he no doubt felt at risk of being held accountable for the loss of life and property incurred on Narváez's voyage to the unexplored province of *Florida*.

#### 1. TRAVEL FROM HAVANA TO THE FLORIDA COAST (FEBRUARY/MARCH 1528 TO 12 APRIL 1528)

Although Cabeza de Vaca gave a fairly detailed account of the expedition's journey to the point near Havana where Narváez had intended to rendezvous with the ship that he had left there with Álvaro de la Cerda during the winter of 1527–28, he makes no reference to the date on which the expedition was blown away from the Cuban coast into the Gulf of Mexico. With regard to the subsequent journey to the coast of *Florida* he says nothing, giving only



the date land was sighted. Unlike Cabeza de Vaca, Oviedo (582b) gave no details regarding the Narváez expedition's voyage from Jagua to Havana, narrating the whole voyage from Jagua to the *Florida* coast as one event by saying only that the expeditionaries "went by sea until 12 April 1528, Tuesday of Holy Week, when they arrived to the mainland." Bishop (33n6) pointed out that 12 April 1528 was actually Easter Sunday, a fact we have verified both on a published calendar (Fry table 22) and by constructing a calendar of the period from contemporary documents published in CDI and CDU. The expedition could have spent a maximum of about fifty days traveling from Jagua to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, if the beginning and end dates of the journey were 22 February and 12 April, but even if these dates are accurate, it is impossible to know when the fleet was blown off the northern coast of Cuba and the number of days the expeditionaries spent in the Gulf of Mexico out of sight of any land.

At least three earlier voyages from the Caribbean to Pánuco give us some idea what the Narváez expeditionaries might have viewed as the normal amount of time necessary to travel to Pánuco. In 1519, Diego Camargo had spent eight or nine months traveling from Jamaica to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and along its whole northern shore before settling at the Río Pánuco. Garay departed from western Cuba sometime after 14 June 1523, attempting to travel to the Río Pánuco (Anghiera, *Décadas* 657 [dec. 8, bk. 1]). His fleet was caught by a southern storm that blew the ships off course to the north, and the expedition arrived at the Río de las Palmas on 25 July 1523 (Weddle 132); Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 658 [dec. 8, bk. 1]) says "25 June [*sic*, July] 1523, the day on which Spain celebrates the festival of her protector, Saint James." When Nuño de Guzmán traveled to Pánuco in 1527, he departed sometime in May and arrived at the river on the twenty-fourth of that same month (Chipman, *Nuño de Guzmán* 137, 143).

The last two examples show that less than a month of travel out of sight of land could have convinced the navigators of the Narváez expedition that they had crossed the Gulf of Mexico and had landed on its western coast near the mouths of the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas rather than on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula, where they had actually landed. The only comments in the Narváez expedition narratives that refer to the sea voyage do so only indirectly. Both accounts mention the many storms that occurred during the lengthy sea voyage on which half of the expedition's horses died before the fleet reached the *Florida* coast (f6r; 583a). They also document the commissary's mention of the storms and losses on the expedition's sea voyage, although these details seem to refer to the voyages from Castile and through the Caribbean as well as the one from Havana to *Florida* (f8r; 584b).

2. DESCRIPTION OF TRAVEL ALONG THE *FLORIDA* COAST

Before beginning our discussion of the landfall of the Narváez expedition on the Florida Peninsula and its travel along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, a few preliminary observations are necessary. First, as we have stated above (chap. 2, sec. 7), the intended destination of the Narváez expedition was the Río de las Palmas, not the western coast of the Florida Peninsula. This river, now known as the Soto la Marina, marked the western/southern boundary of Narváez's jurisdiction along the northern rim of the Gulf of Mexico in the Spanish province of *Florida*. South, beyond the mouth of the Río de las Palmas, was the port of Santisteban del Puerto a number of leagues up the Río Pánuco in Nuño de Guzmán's province of Pánuco. Like the Río de las Palmas, Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco would have been an important reference point for Narváez's expedition, since it was the last Spanish settlement along the coastal route around the rim of the Gulf of Mexico as one traveled from the western shore of the Yucatán Peninsula south and west along the coastline of New Spain. Narváez would have considered Santisteban del Puerto a friendly port, since it had been removed from Cortés's control in late 1525; Nuño de Guzmán had assumed the governorship there on 24 May 1527 (see chap. 17, sec. 5).

As we have seen, two points delimited Narváez's grant in the Gulf of Mexico. On the west side was the Río de las Palmas, and on the east was the cape of the Florida Peninsula. Because the expedition seems not to have possessed detailed descriptions of the coastline, it was impossible for them to know which direction the coast ran at any particular point, although they would have known at least that generally it formed an arc between the area of Pánuco and the tip of the Florida Cape, as Pietro Martire had recorded (see chap. 15, sec. 7.G). In the *relación* Cabeza de Vaca uses terms to describe travel along the coast that demonstrate that the Spaniards had almost no detailed information about the stretch of coastline of the Gulf of Mexico between the mouth of the Río de las Palmas and the Florida Cape. He employed "the way of *Florida*" [la vía de la Florida] to signify travel along the coast toward the Florida Peninsula. Travel in the opposite direction was described by "the way of the Palms" [la vía de Palmas] or "the way of Pánuco" [la vía de Pánuco]. We arrived at this interpretation independently; Hoffman ("Narváez" 56n21) has come to the same conclusion.

3. A GEOGRAPHICAL MISCALCULATION: OVERVIEW OF THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION'S LANDING IN *FLORIDA*

Below we will consider more specifically where the Narváez expedition landed on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula (sec. 4). Before treating

that problem, however, it is necessary to highlight a simple fact about the Narváez expedition that is as easy to understand as it is difficult to believe. When the crew of the Narváez expedition first sighted land on 12 April 1528, the men believed that they had landed on the west side of the Gulf of Mexico near the mouths of the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas; quite contrary to what they thought, however, they had in fact landed on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula in the region of Tampa Bay. The expeditionaries and pilots who remained on the ships must have learned of their error quite rapidly. For those who went on the overland expedition, only four would survive to learn the truth, but only eight years later, after traveling along the entire northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico and crossing vast unexplored lands to the north of New Spain.

Oviedo (615a) was impressed by the fact that the crew of the Narváez expedition had been unable to determine its position on the coast and that Miruelo was unable to navigate to the mouth of the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco. It is surprising that Cabeza de Vaca neither offers an account of the time the expedition spent traveling from Havana to the mainland nor alludes at any point to the pilots' opinions of where the expedition had been during the sea voyage. From both Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* (f6v) and Oviedo's account (583b) it is evident that the expedition had intended to rely completely on Miruelo to find and recognize the Río de las Palmas. Miruelo's claim that he knew very well the entire northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico was evidently an exaggeration, however, since he could not identify the section of western coast of the Florida Peninsula north of the mouth of Tampa Bay.

Once land was sighted, the expedition traveled along the coast "the way of *Florida*" (f5v). The pilots evidently believed that the expedition had reached the coast on the Río Pánuco (i.e., south) side of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas. Once the ships arrived at the small bay where they disembarked, Miruelo was sent to continue with the brigantine along the coast in the same direction that the whole expedition had been traveling. He was to continue on in the direction of the Florida Peninsula until he found the port that he knew or until he arrived in Cuba (f6v). If he reached Cuba without finding the port, he was to take on supplies and return to the expedition with the ship Narváez had left at Havana with Álvaro de la Cerda. He certainly must have been surprised to discover the short distance the expedition had landed from the northern shore of the island.

Narváez's decision not to wait for Miruelo's return had tragic consequences for the expedition. After Miruelo departed, a great deal of deliberation among the pilots must have occurred (f7r). Because they had not found either the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco during the first few

days of travel along the coast, they evidently changed their opinion about where they had landed, deciding that they had come to shore on the *Florida* (i.e., northern) side of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas rather than on the Río Pánuco side. In this they were correct, but they had no idea how far away from the rivers they were. The problem was exacerbated by Narváez's anxiousness to explore the land. Had the whole expedition remained on the ships and sailed in the direction of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco, it would have soon discovered how lost it was.

Regrettably, Narváez was convinced by the pilots, who, according to Cabeza de Vaca (f7r-v), told Narváez that "going in the direction of the Río de Palmas they were very close to there." Narváez must have had Garay's 1523 experience north of the Río Pánuco in mind when he decided to send his ships ahead and walk overland toward the Río de las Palmas; Garay had done similarly, landing at the Río de las Palmas and then walking to the Río Pánuco as his ships sailed there. With the rumors of Apalache that Narváez had been given by the Indians of the Florida Peninsula, he planned to walk inland, supposedly toward the Río de las Palmas, where he would rejoin the sea contingent, whose pilots he ordered to sail along the coast to the port. Cabeza de Vaca (f7v) says he was against leaving the ships, because "the pilots were not convinced, nor were they all affirming the same thing, nor did they know where they were." His understanding of the pilots' opinion on their location was obviously quite different from Narváez's and that of the other officials. Cabeza de Vaca (f7v) reports that the commissary was in favor of going ashore because of the many storms the expedition had experienced and because "the pilots said that going in the direction of Pánuco it would not be but ten or fifteen leagues from there, and that it was not possible, always going along the coast, for us to miss it, because they said that it entered twelve leagues inland." The description of the port may have referred to either the mouth of the Río de las Palmas or that of the Río Pánuco.

As we know, Narváez and the other officials prevailed, and Cabeza de Vaca was one of only four expeditionaries of those who went overland with Narváez to survive the harrowing journey along the coast and across Mexico. The ships traveled in the direction of Pánuco, evidently beyond the point where they had first sighted land on 12 April, and when they did not find the mouth of either the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco where they expected, ten to fifteen leagues from the place where the expedition had departed overland, they returned in the direction of the Florida Cape, sailing beyond the point of the overland group's disembarkation. Five leagues beyond that point they discovered the mouth of the bay that the small, overland reconnaissance missions had discovered during their first few days on the coast by traveling a short distance into the interior (f66v).

Miruelo and Álvaro de la Cerda must have discovered the ships in this bay on their return from Cuba, and there the other pilots of the Narváez crew must have recognized their grave error in having wrongly informed Narváez that the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas were only ten to fifteen leagues away. Although the crews of the ships searched for the expeditionaries in this region for nearly a year, according to what Cabeza de Vaca (f66v) learned about the search missions after he appeared in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536 and returned to Spain in 1537, the Narváez expedition could not be located because Narváez had led it off in search of Apalache. In this respect he truly was responsible for the loss of all who died on the expedition, as Oviedo accused. With this overview of the complex problem of geographical expectations held by members of the expedition, we return to more specific issues regarding the expedition's first days on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula. The evolving geographical perspectives of those who went on the overland expedition will be considered in subsequent parts of our commentary.

#### 4. TAMPA BAY: THE POINT OF DEBARKATION AND THE BAY DISCOVERED BY MIRUELO

On 14 April 1528, after having followed the coast toward the tip of the Florida Peninsula for two days, Narváez's fleet anchored "at the mouth of a bay, at the back of which . . . certain houses and habitations of Indians" could be seen (f5v). Once they installed themselves on the coast near these native dwellings, the expeditionaries completed two exploratory missions inland during the days between 15 April and 1 May 1528, traveling in the direction of north (f6v) or northeast (583a) from the point where they had gone ashore. On the first of these, they discovered "a very large bay." When the exploratory contingent returned to their camp, Narváez sent Miruelo sailing in the brigantine in the direction of the Florida Cape (f6v; Oviedo 583b) in continued search of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas. Miruelo was instructed to proceed in the direction of the Florida Cape until he found the river with which he was familiar or until he reached Havana. Thereafter, the second exploratory crew went out exploring the shores of the large bay they had discovered for a distance of four leagues (f6v; 583b), which took them to the end of it (583b). It was on this bay that the men discovered the crates from Castile with corpses of Spaniards in them.

There has been a significant amount of speculation, sometimes put forth with great conviction and little or no argumentation, regarding the identity of the place where the Narváez expedition disembarked and the large bay that it discovered on its inland explorations. Buckingham Smith was the first

to propose a landing site, which he presented in his 1851 English translation of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*. There Smith (*Narrative*, seven unnumbered folios facing 138) provided a series of seven maps (almost completely lacking nomenclature other than terms used in the *relación*) on which he traced the route of the expedition. On the first of these he showed in careful detail Narváez's landing near the southern end of Pinellas Peninsula just north of the mouth of Tampa Bay, the expedition's two trips across the peninsula and then north along the western shore of the western arm of the bay (Old Tampa Bay), and, finally, the expedition's departure from the bay north along the coast. Smith gave no argument for his placement, but as we will show below, it remains the most convincing response to a question to which a verifiable answer does not exist.

In 1901, Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 453–54) reviewed the literature on the modern identification of the place where the Narváez expeditionaries disembarked and the larger bay that they discovered on their two exploratory missions toward the interior. By that time Pensacola Bay, Apalachee Bay, and Charlotte's Harbor also had their proponents. Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 454–55) himself came to the conclusion that a point south of Clear Water Bay, apparently also on the Pinellas Peninsula to the north of the mouth of Tampa Bay, was the most plausible landing site. Since then other researchers have repeated these locations, with Tampa Bay and Charlotte's Harbor being most frequently cited. Hoffman ("Narváez" 66–67) provides a useful summary.

In 1925, Phinney (15, 16) falsely claimed that from Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* "we are able to definitely know where Narváez found a landing place" and argued that the length of the Spanish league to which Cabeza de Vaca referred equaled 2.6 miles (see below). Although his proposal that on 14 April 1528 Narváez's fleet anchored at John's Pass into Boca Ciega Bay to the north of the mouth of Tampa Bay along the western coast of Pinellas Peninsula is unnecessarily specific, his positioning, similar to Smith's and Lowery's, of the landing point of the Narváez expedition on Pinellas Peninsula to the east of Old Tampa Bay north of the mouth of Tampa Bay is quite acceptable, and he provides a useful map of the region. Weddle (205) has recently agreed that there is little reason to dispute the location of the landing site north of the mouth of Tampa Bay, although he then curiously goes on to locate the landing to the south of the mouth of Tampa Bay, at Sarasota Bay. Though the school from Smith through Phinney has offered a plausible identification of Narváez's landing place, it has failed to demonstrate why other solutions are less likely. Although it will never be possible to verify Narváez's point of debarkation, the narratives of the expedition provide compelling evidence still unargued that points to a place five leagues north

of the mouth of Tampa Bay as the landing site of the expedition, as we will now demonstrate.

The two accounts of the Narváez landfall are identical in their description of the expedition's activities, and they clearly show that whatever the identity of the large bay discovered, the expedition went ashore *to the north* of its mouth (United States De Soto Expedition Commission 113; Hoffman, "Narváez" 56). Prior to 12 April 1528, Narváez's fleet had been traveling out of sight of any land in an attempt to reach the Río de las Palmas. Once it sighted land, the expedition continued for two days along the coast heading in the direction of the tip of the Florida Peninsula before reaching the inlet where it went ashore. From that point the exploratory land missions traveled north/northeast until arriving at the large bay along which they explored and discovered the crates from Castile.

Because neither account makes any mention of the discovery of the mouth of this large bay during the two days that the fleet spent sailing along the shore toward the tip of the Florida Peninsula, *and* because the discovery of the mouth of that bay *is* later mentioned by Cabeza de Vaca in his *relación* (f66v), the mouth necessarily lay to the south of the point where the men disembarked. As Cabeza de Vaca (f66v) explained, when the overland contingent set out to the north (had they not gone north they themselves would have discovered the mouth of the bay and/or eventually reached the tip of the Florida Peninsula) the expeditionaries who remained on the ships traveled in that same direction. Unlike Miruelo, who went in the brigantine in the direction of the tip of the Florida Peninsula and Cuba, the sea contingent traveled in the direction of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco. Evidently having sailed beyond the place where the expedition had originally sighted land on 12 April and not finding either river, the pilots turned the ships back. Five leagues beyond the place where they had separated from the land contingent they discovered the mouth of the bay that the overland expedition had earlier discovered.

Weddle's (205) argument that Cabeza de Vaca's (f66v) "cinco leguas más bajo" [five leagues below] statement might be interpreted to mean that the ships traveled five leagues to the north rather than to the south due to map orientation stems from his confusion regarding the Narváez expedition's objectives and the bay that Miruelo discovered. As we discussed above (chap. 2, sec. 7), Weddle erroneously believed that upon departure from Cuba the Narváez expedition went first in search of a place on the Florida Peninsula. In Weddle's (187) words, "[t]he first mainland destination [of the Narváez expedition] was a bay on the Florida peninsula that Miruelo claimed to know." Overlooking the significance of the terms "la vía de la Florida" and "la vía de Palmas," Weddle understood the expedition to have gone directly

to the western coast of the peninsula traveling in a northerly direction. The end results of the expedition (the four survivors' arrival in Mexico), however, make impossible such an inversion of the directions traveled by the whole expedition prior to debarkation, by Miruelo on his way to Cuba, and by the land and sea contingents when they set out in search of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco.

Concerning Weddle's justification of his hypothesis regarding the direction of the sea contingent's travel (i.e., his interpretation of the term "bajo"), we note in our discussion of Cortés's descriptions of travel along the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico (chap. 15, sec. 7.6) that relative terms such as "below" or "back" are specific to the context in which they are used and correspond in narratives of exploration to the historical context and to the perspective of the individual who observed and described the geography. The interpretation of cartographic representations is relevant only in situations where the text in question was written from a map, as is often the case with histories or cosmographies of the period. When Cabeza de Vaca wrote that the ships discovered the mouth of the bay "five leagues below," he was relying on his own travel experience and knowledge of the Gulf of Mexico and was relating what members of the expedition who had remained on the ships told him; he was not dependent on a map for his directions. Thus he claimed that five leagues in the opposite direction that he himself had gone with the overland group beyond the point where the sea and land contingents had separated, the sea group discovered the mouth of the large bay.

As we have also discussed above, the bay Miruelo knew was the Río de las Palmas, not the "Bay of Miruelo" that appeared on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula on maps of 1536 and later. Departing from where the Narváez expedition had gone ashore on 15 April 1528 (a point five leagues to the north of the mouth of the bay the overland exploratory mission had discovered), Miruelo set sail in the direction of the tip of the Florida Peninsula. On his way to Havana he no doubt was the first to discover the entrance to the bay, and thus the bay to the north of whose mouth Narváez disembarked came to be known to some as the "Bay of Miruelo."

Weddle's argument that the pilots of the expedition would have had to overlook the main entrance to Tampa Bay in order to arrive at a point north of it is likewise irrelevant, since this view is an extension of his belief that the Narváez expedition had purposely gone directly to the western coast of the Florida Peninsula from Havana and was sailing along it toward the north. As we have shown above, when the expedition first sighted land along the northern coast of the gulf, it had been at sea for an undetermined amount of time as the pilots attempted to cross the Gulf of Mexico en route to the Río de las Palmas. The expedition had not sailed directly from Cuba



along the southern and western coasts of the Florida Peninsula, and thus only Miruelo on his trip to Cuba would have sailed past the bay's entrance after departing to the south from the point north of the mouth of the bay where the expedition had disembarked. It was evidently his inversion of the direction traveled by the expedition that led Weddle to propose a landfall at Sarasota Bay to the south of Tampa Bay, rather than to the north of it.

Thus far we have shown only that, whatever the identity of the large bay discovered, the expeditionaries landed to the north of it. As the overland contingent journeyed north parallel to the western coast of the Florida Peninsula and somewhat inland they crossed two rivers, but they discovered no large inlet of the sea like the one they had discovered in their first days on the coast. Likewise, the sea party that traveled north along the shore in Narváez's ships also found no inlet as it searched for the Río de la Palmas and the Río Pánuco, eventually turning back and finding the mouth of the large bay the exploratory land contingents had previously visited. These facts seem to exclude a landing site just north of Charlotte's Harbor, as such a landing would require the Narváez expedition's sea exploration in a southerly direction from 12 April to 14 April, as well as the sea contingent's travel first to the north and then back to the south after separating from the land contingent on 1 May to have taken place between the mouths of Tampa Bay and Charlotte's Harbor without the discovery of the mouth of Tampa Bay. In addition, the land contingent heading north would have had to stray far enough away from the coast as they set out from Charlotte's Harbor to pass by the back of Tampa Bay without noticing it, an unlikely possibility given that the group was in search of the mouth of the Río de las Palmas, where it planned to rejoin the sea party.

Analysis of the distance of the large bay from Havana lends further credence to the identification of it as the modern-day Tampa Bay. At the end of his narrative, Cabeza de Vaca (f66v) wrote that once he returned to México-Tenochtitlán he learned from those who had remained on the ships that the bay where the crates from Castile had been discovered, to which the ships went after they were unsuccessful at locating the overland contingent, lay one hundred leagues due north of Havana. Miruelo and Álvaro de la Cerda's group evidently discovered Narváez's ships in this bay when it arrived from Havana. As we have already suggested, Miruelo must have first discovered the mouth of this bay on his trip to Cuba, and it was obviously from this voyage and subsequent searches for the overland expedition (see chap. 4, sec. 2) that the distance between the bay and the port of Havana was learned. It was not on Narváez's original voyage to the bay, which did not take a direct route, but on Miruelo's trip to Havana from a point five leagues north of the mouth of the bay and later back to the bay from Havana, as

well as subsequent trips made from Havana, that the one-hundred-league distance must have been determined.

As we will see in our consideration of the Narváez expedition's overland travel through the Florida Peninsula and beyond, the estimation of distances traveled is vague, obviously affected by terrain and the travelers' ability to estimate distance covered. We point out, however, that in the case of this first bay the distance Cabeza de Vaca gives is of an origin significantly different from the ones he gives for other travel. He must have been informed about the position of the bay once he arrived in New Spain and later passed through Havana, most likely by individuals who had been involved in searching for the Narváez expedition during the period after 1 May 1528. For this reason its reliability is considerably greater than his estimate, for example, of the distance traveled on foot from the time the overland expedition left the bay until it set out on the rafts.

Knowing therefore that Miruelo Bay or the "Bay of the Cross," as Cabeza de Vaca says the Narváez expeditionaries named it, lay one hundred leagues to the north of Havana, we must arrive at a modern equivalent of that distance in order to consider plausible identities of the bay. Whereas the general question of what the modern equivalent of a sixteenth-century Spanish league is remains a perennial problem (see Chardon), Cabeza de Vaca nevertheless gives us a rough notion of what the length of a league was for him in noting in the *relación* (f5r) that the *villa* of Trinidad, Cuba, lay twelve leagues from the Bay of Cienfuegos. We note that Cabeza de Vaca spent almost three months at Cienfuegos, and the distance between Trinidad, founded in 1514, and Cienfuegos must have been well known and frequently traveled by 1527. Barring any significant change in the location of Trinidad since 1527, we determine that the twelve leagues of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* correspond to the approximately 61.5 kilometers along the coastal route between the mouth of Cienfuegos and the Ensenada de Casilda on the coast in front of Trinidad. This suggests a modern equivalent of 5.13 kilometers (3.18 miles) for Cabeza de Vaca's league.

Cabeza de Vaca also claimed in the *relación* (f3v) that Trinidad lay one hundred leagues from Santiago de Cuba. The coastal route from the Bahía de Santiago to Cabo Cruz (where Cabeza de Vaca says that Narváez remained when he and Juan Pantoja journeyed to Trinidad) and then directly to the Ensenada de Casilda is a distance of approximately 530.8 kilometers. This estimate suggests the length of a league to be 5.31 kilometers (3.29 miles). Although this second estimate of the length of a league in the *relación* seems roughly to corroborate the first one, we take the first to be more certain, as Cabeza de Vaca gave no explicit information pertaining to the specific route between Santiago and Trinidad to which he was referring when he gave

the distance estimate. Chardon (302) has given a generalized equivalent for the *legua común* in sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century New Spain of approximately 5.6 kilometers (3.47 miles).

Using 5.13 kilometers (3.18 miles) as the equivalent of a league, the large bay that the Narváez expedition had discovered on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula was evidently located approximately 513 kilometers (318 miles) to the north of Havana, which had been moved to its present-day location on the northern shore of Cuba in 1519. The mouth of Tampa Bay is approximately 495 kilometers (306.9 miles) from Havana. Charlotte's Harbor, mentioned above to be an unlikely site of the Narváez landing strictly with regard to the geographic observations found in the accounts, lies approximately 408 kilometers (253 miles) from Havana. Lying too near to Havana, it therefore seems also to be unlikely as the site of Narváez's landing according to this distance argument, which uses a conservative, context-based estimate for the league. Apalachee and Pensacola Bays lie considerably farther away from Havana and can therefore be excluded, even when the larger league equivalent of 5.6 kilometers (3.47 miles) is used.

Finally, the archaeological record offers evidence that strengthens a landing site north of Tampa Bay. As we will see in our Part 3 commentary (chap. 4, sec. 8), although no Spanish artifact has been directly linked to the Narváez expedition, items of exclusively pre-1550 European origin have been found in considerable quantities at archaeological sites near the western coast of the Florida Peninsula near and to the north of Tampa Bay; at sites to the south of Tampa Bay they are quite rare. In refuting the claim that the Calusa Indians of the Florida Peninsula south of Tampa Bay cultivated maize, Milanich has opposed the notion of Narváez's and De Soto's landings at Charlotte's Harbor and argues for the Tampa Bay landing site, partially on the basis of the lack of convincing archaeological evidence for maize agriculture in the area south of the Tampa Bay area prior to the time of the Narváez and De Soto expeditions taken in conjunction with the fact that the accounts of the expeditions document the discovery of cultivated maize very near their landing sites.

##### 5. FOUNDING A SPANISH SETTLEMENT ON THE *FLORIDA* COAST

On perhaps either Good Friday (10 April 1528) or 15 April 1528 (but *not* Good Friday, 15 April 1528, as Cabeza de Vaca erroneously suggests in his *relación*), Narváez brought as many people of the expedition from the ships to the *Florida* coast as he was able in the rowboats brought by the fleet. According to both Cabeza de Vaca (f6r) and Oviedo (583a), the following day the land was formally claimed in the name of the emperor. Oviedo says

that all the emperor's officials, the friars, and others who had come ashore were gathered together, and there Narváez presented his royal provisions and was recognized by everyone as the governor and captain general of that land. He goes on to say that the officials of the royal treasury (Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso Enríquez, and Alonso [Diego] de Solís) presented their authorization and were recognized by the governor. Cabeza de Vaca's (f6r) description of the proceedings is similar, but he mentions Narváez only as governor. This formal and mutual presentation of credentials between the expedition's leader and its officers was a standard requirement on all royally authorized missions.

In Cabeza de Vaca's (f8r) subsequent description of Narváez's decision to go inland, he relates that Narváez had officially recorded that he was moving the settlement (*pueblo*) he had established due to the lack of provisions available at the site of the original founding. The entity established on the coast is never referred to in either the *relación* or Oviedo's account as an incorporated town (*villa*), in the way that the Rica Villa de la Vera Cruz was described by Cortés. Instead, the site north of the mouth of Tampa Bay that the Narváez expedition occupied for a period of about two weeks is often referred to in the Narváez expedition accounts as a military camp (*real*).

Once the officials of the expedition had formally taken possession of the land, the rest of the expeditionaries and supplies were brought from the ships. Both Cabeza de Vaca (f6r) and Oviedo (583a) comment on the death of many horses during the sea voyage to the coast. Oviedo says over half died; Cabeza de Vaca says forty-two of the original eighty survived.

#### 6. MISINTERPRETED DISCOVERIES: EXPLORATION OF THE FLORIDA INTERIOR

Following the installation of the expedition on the shore, Narváez initiated exploration of the area, probably in an effort to determine where exactly along the *Florida* coast he and his men had landed. Narváez, the commissary (Juan Suárez), the inspector of mines (Alonso [Diego] de Solís), and the treasurer (Cabeza de Vaca) led a contingent of forty foot soldiers and three cavalymen on an exploration of the area north (northeast, according to Oviedo) of the place at which the expedition had established camp. The party of overland explorers discovered "a very large bay that seemed . . . to go far inland" (f6v), where they spent the evening and then returned to the expedition camp the next day. As discussed above, this bay was most likely the western arm of Tampa Bay, known today as Old Tampa Bay.

Following this first survey of the interior, which evidently offered no sign of Spanish occupation or any clue as to where the group had landed on the

coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Narváez sent Miruelo in the brigantine in the direction of the Florida Cape to search for the port at the mouth of the Río de las Palmas. At this point it was evident to the crew that neither Miruelo nor anyone else on the expedition had any idea how far from the Río de las Palmas they had landed. The disorientation of the expedition is manifested by Narváez's orders to Miruelo and the crew of the brigantine that if they did not find the mouth of the Río de las Palmas they should continue on along the coast until they reached Havana, where they were to find the ship that Narváez had left there with Álvaro de la Cerda. After taking up whatever provisions they could carry, the two ships were then to return to the rest of the expedition on the *Florida* coast (f6v; Oviedo 583b).

At this point Narváez may still have intended to remain at the place where he had disembarked. Had he known he was in lands somewhat to the north of where the Indians had expelled Hernández de Córdoba's expedition in 1517 and where they had driven out Ponce de León's settlement expedition in 1521, he might have acted more prudently and taken the Indians' threats more seriously when they came to tell him by signs to leave their land (f6r–v); ironically, Cabeza de Vaca says they came on Easter Day, the same one for which the Spaniards had named the Florida Peninsula in 1513. Narváez's initial geographic deception was reinforced by further discoveries and false communication between the expeditionaries and the *Florida* Indians on Narváez's second exploratory trip to Old Tampa Bay. On this foray, Narváez became more perfectly deceived that he was in the northern hinterlands of New Spain, where great wealth was just within his grasp, rather than in Ponce de León's sterile and dangerous *Florida*, where about one fifth of his expeditionaries would meet their death. The misleading discoveries of the second exploratory mission led Narváez to his disastrous decision to take the expedition overland before Miruelo and Álvaro de la Cerda could return to tell him how far from the Río de las Palmas, and therefore from the wealth discovered by Cortés at Tenochtitlán, he actually was.

#### 7. INTERACTIONS WITH THE INDIANS OF TAMPA BAY

The Narváez expeditionaries' first contact with the Indians of *Florida* occurred the day they anchored their ships at their site of debarkation. The men most likely chose the bay where they disembarked precisely because they could see native dwellings from their ships. Cabeza de Vaca (f5v–f6r) says that Alonso Enríquez went ashore and called to the natives, who came and traded with him, offering fish and venison. When the men went ashore they found that the Indians of the houses they saw had fled. Cabeza de Vaca (f6r–v) narrates that “[t]he next day the Indians from that village came to

us. And although they spoke to us, since we did not have an interpreter we did not understand them. But they made many signs and threatening gestures to us and it seemed to us that they were telling us to leave their land, and with this they parted from us without producing any confrontation and went away.”

Cabeza de Vaca recognized the importance of being able to communicate with the Indians if the expedition was to be successful and noted the necessity of an interpreter to do so. As we will see below, the Narváez expeditionaries used a sample of maize to communicate with the Indians about where they might find food, and it seems that they did the same with gold; their inability to understand the Indians, and the Indians them, led them hopefully on an ultimately futile journey to Apalache in search of gold. When it came time to make a decision regarding whether or not to go inland, Cabeza de Vaca (f7v) says he opposed the inland expedition because the expeditionaries had no interpreters: “above all we were traveling mute, that is, without interpreters, through an area where we could hardly make ourselves understood by the Indians or learn about the land what we desired to know.” The Spaniards of the 1528 Narváez expedition would not have the luxury of such a fine interpreter as Francisco Chicorano, the *Florida* Indian in the service of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón who had conversed in Spanish with Pietro Martire d’Anghiera (*Décadas* 596 [dec. 7, bk. 2]) in his home (*en casa*), apparently at court in Valladolid in 1523.

#### 8. MAIZE ON THE FLORIDA PENINSULA AND BEYOND

On their first trip to the large bay (Old Tampa Bay), the Narváez expeditionaries encountered no Indians. After Miruelo departed in the brigantine, the crew from the first exploratory mission and a few additional soldiers returned to the bay, leaving the comptroller, Alonso Enriquez, also serving at that time as lieutenant governor of the Narváez expedition (f30v), in charge of the settlement (f6v–f7r; 584a). The exploratory crew, which included Narváez, Cabeza de Vaca, and Juan Suárez (the commissary), followed along the shore of the bay until it encountered four natives. The men showed maize to these Indians to determine whether they recognized it (f6v; 583b), and the Indians took them to their village, which was located near the back of the bay, where the expeditionaries found that they had a small amount of green, cultivated maize. As the Spaniards traveled on, they would find dry maize at the next village, and on their overland journey through the Florida Peninsula they discovered maize all the way to Apalachee Bay. Once they left the bay on their sea journey on rafts, they did not encounter cultivated maize

again until the last four survivors of the expedition reached northwestern Mexico some seven years later.

Columbus recorded the European discovery of maize in the Americas on the island of Cuba in November 1492 (Weatherwax 28). In late 1525 or early 1526, Oviedo (*Sumario* 27–29 [chap. 4]) wrote about “the bread of the Indians, which they make from maize.” Oviedo (*Historia* 1:264a–68b [bk. 7, chap. 1]) again wrote about maize cultivation in the Americas in 1541, describing maize as one of the most important and productive plants of the Indies. By the time the Narváez expeditionaries carried maize from Cuba to *Florida* in 1528, showing it to the *Florida* Indians as a means of asking about its presence in that land, they understood from their experience in the Caribbean and Mexico that its cultivation served as a clue to finding areas that held the potential for sustaining expeditions and supporting European settlement. The persistent goal of finding maize on the Narváez expedition is evidenced by the frequency of its mention in the accounts of the expedition.

Equally persistent as the Spanish search for cultivated maize in the sixteenth century has been the modern-day search for the plant’s origin and dispersal. As described by Galinat (246), the theory that a now-extinct wild maize was domesticated in Mexico has given way to the idea that maize came into being through the transformation of teosinte, a grass native to certain regions of Mexico. Though the oldest specimens of maize have traditionally been dated to 5000 B.C., new dating methods have revised that date to no earlier than 3640 B.C. (Fritz 306a). Galinat (246) explains that these early specimens were once thought to be wild maize but are now believed to be the most primitive domesticated form of teosinte; their discovery at Tehuacán, Mexico, east of Mexico City, marks this region as the place where domesticated maize is presently believed to have originated.

From Tehuacán, the primitive eight-rowed “Early Cultivated” maize spread for thousands of miles (Galinat 263). Archaeological evidence has revealed that the origin and diversity of maize stem not from the multiple domestication of various races of wild maize, as was previously believed, but rather from the systematic adaptation of the maize plant derived from teosinte to the day lengths of the latitudes and the climates of the altitudes at which it was subsequently grown (Galinat 264). From early on the maize plant was almost completely dependent on human beings for its survival, since it is unable to disperse its seeds, which, unlike those of teosinte, grow on cobs encased in husks; for this reason maize cannot freely disperse its seeds from the terminal ends of the stalk of the plant, as was the case with its parent, wild teosinte. The maize of Tehuacán required little adaptation in order to thrive in Central America, approximate in latitude and climate to the region in which maize had come into being. From northern South America,

maize was carried to the Andes, where isolation in diverse ecological and geographical niches gave rise to a great number of new races.

To the north maize spread more slowly, adapting along the way to the longer days and shorter growing season of the northern latitudes. Earlier it was believed that maize reached the southwestern region of the modern-day United States as early as 3500 to 2000 B.C., but a recent reevaluation of the evidence has moved the date of the introduction of maize to that region to between 1000 and 500 B.C. (Berry 303). Maize-centered sedentary farming did not appear in the southwestern Desert Borderlands, however, until A.D. 200 (Minnis 129a). Galinat (267) has proposed that maize was carried from the Southern Basin region of the Southwest up the Rio Grande valley to the Arkansas River valley, and from there along all the major rivers of the Midwest during the first millennium A.D. Smith ("Origins" 1569a) gives A.D. 175 as the earliest date for maize in eastern North America. Between A.D. 800 and 1100 maize became a staple in the diet of midwestern riverine peoples of North America (Woods 285; Smith, "Origins" 1570a). Galinat (267) points out that maize could not be grown in the regions of the modern-day Midwestern Corn Belt in areas distant from riverbeds until the introduction of the steel plow, used to break up tough prairie sod.

With regard to the spread of maize into southeastern North America, Galinat (269) says that the process of maize introduction to that region is complex and poorly documented archaeologically. Modern Southeastern Dent Corn is thought to have been introduced by the Spanish from Mexico after A.D. 1500. Galinat (270) does allude to an eight-row race of maize present in southeastern North America prior to this time that he suggests had not spread from the midwestern riverine regions but rather along a southerly route, that is, from the Caribbean. The sources from which maize cultivation spread through the Caribbean and the time frame of this diffusion are disputed (see Keegan, "Diffusion"; Milanich; Lathrap).

Smith ("Origins" 1570a) argues that predominantly forager societies living in the region of the gulf coastal plains adopted maize agriculture from central North America between A.D. 800 and 1100. The complete absence of maize or any kind of agriculture along the coastline that the Narváez expeditionaries visited on their raft voyage and in the coastal region that Cabeza de Vaca inhabited from 1528 to 1534 (apparently very near the plains region and the buffalo range on the coasts of modern-day Texas) shows that in the early sixteenth century maize agriculture had not completely converted all forager societies to sedentary lifeways despite its evident importance in the coastal interior, at least in the region to the east of the mouth of the Mississippi River. In a map depicting pre-Columbian maize cultivation in the Americas, Weatherwax (52) portrays the absence of



maize cultivation in the Great Plains region and shows only a very sparse cultivation or its complete absence along the Texas coastal plain.

As Narváez and his expeditionaries traveled through the Florida Peninsula, they sought out cultivated maize and depended on it for their survival. Cabeza de Vaca (f11r) recorded that on this journey he and the other expeditionaries often walked seven or eight leagues without finding any maize. Cabeza de Vaca (f11v) said there were many maize fields in the province of Apalache, and he reported that while building the rafts, the expedition had successfully taken four hundred *fanegas* of maize from the village of Aute (f15r). From that point in the narrative it is the absence of maize and the Spaniards' continual search for it that draws attention. Carrying maize with them, the men traded it to the coastal Indians somewhere along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico in exchange for cooked fish and water (f17v). Cabeza de Vaca stated that he and the others sustained themselves on raw maize as they traveled by raft along the coast (f20r) and that when they arrived on the Texas coast in November 1528 they toasted maize on the shore (f20v). The Spaniards had carried this maize from Aute.

A fleeting reference to maize flour appears in the *relación* (f48r) as the four survivors of the Narváez expedition began their overland journey, a short distance south of the Rio Grande near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico; the complete absence of any other reference to cultivated maize along the men's route until their arrival in northwestern Mexico, however, in combination with the archaeological evidence reviewed above suggests that if the earlier reference documents a real encounter, the maize flour had come from very far away (see chap. 7, sec. 3). Cabeza de Vaca's (f52v) description of Alonso del Castillo's discovery of maize in northwestern Mexico and the frequent references to its abundance thereafter appear in striking contrast to the total absence of maize in the narrative beginning at the expedition's departure from Aute until the four survivors' arrival in northwestern Mexico, with the exception of this single, isolated, and probably fictitious reference.

#### 9. CRATES FROM CASTILE, CLOTH AND PLUMES FROM NEW SPAIN

At the same village at the back of Old Tampa Bay where the expeditionaries found their first maize, they also discovered many shipping crates from Castile, each containing the body of a dead man covered with painted deer hides. Whereas this discovery was probably of little interest to Narváez, who was looking for material gain, it was an important issue for the Franciscan commissary, who viewed the natives' possession of such boxes as a form of idolatry, and he therefore had the governor burn the boxes (f7r). Oviedo (583b) says that Narváez had the boxes burned. He commented (615a) after

reading the 1542 edition of the *relación* that the friars should not have burned the bodies, which “the second account” (i.e., Cabeza de Vaca’s published *relación*) stated were the bodies of Christians (f66v).

In this same village where the Spaniards made the discovery of the crates from Castile, they also found “pieces of linen cloth and plumes that seemed to be from New Spain” (f7r). Cabeza de Vaca says that when the Narváez expeditionaries asked the Indians about the origin of these items, they told them they came from very far away in a province called Apalache (Apalachen, Palache, Palachen). Regarding the crates and goods, Oviedo’s (583b) account adds pieces of shoes and iron to the list of items mentioned in the *relación* and says that the Indians told the Narváez expeditionaries that the boxes and the goods had come from a ship that had been wrecked in that bay.

The discovery of items that appeared to be from New Spain must have confirmed the Spaniards’ erroneous belief that they were near the Río de las Palmas. In the case that the items did come from a shipwreck on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula, as Oviedo’s text implies, Hodge (21n1) has reasonably disputed the suggestion first made by the Bandeliers (Bandelier, *Journey* 12n4) that the goods came from the wreck of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón’s expedition to the Atlantic coast of *Florida* in 1526. The description of the goods and the location of their discovery make Ayllón’s wreck an unlikely source of their origin, since the ship that brought the goods must have run aground in Tampa Bay on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula. A more plausible origin would be the shipwreck of a commercial vessel coming from New Spain sometime between 1519 and 1528 that sailed too far north to pass through the Strait of Florida and ended up on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula. The goods discovered and the crates in which the Indians had evidently placed the corpses of Spaniards had most likely all come together on the same ship to the coast of the Florida Peninsula; the vessel probably came from Veracruz and would have been destined for Havana and Seville.

#### 10. GOLD IN APALACHE: VISIONS OF A *FLORIDIAN* TENOCHTITLÁN

Both accounts of the Narváez expedition record that the first gold discovered by the expeditionaries was a rattle (f6r) or tambourine (583a) found among the Indians’ fishing nets on the coast of the Florida Peninsula. As we mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca (f7r) said that the natives claimed that the gold and other items they had found in the first village they discovered on the bay had come from a province called Apalache, and he added that in this same village the men also discovered samples of gold, of which the Indians told the Narváez expeditionaries there was a great quantity in Apalache. Like his account of the origin of the plumes, cloth, and other items discovered,

Oviedo's account of gold discovered in this village is different from Cabeza de Vaca's. According to Oviedo's (583b) account, the Spaniards showed the Indians gold that they had brought to *Florida* and were told that in that province there was none but that in Apalache there was a great deal.

The origin of the gold rattle or tambourine among the fishing nets is uncertain. It is not impossible that, like the items found in the village at the back of the bay, it had come from a ship sailing from Mexico wrecked on the *Florida* coast. The two accounts are at odds over whether or not gold was present at the village where the crates and other goods from New Spain were found. Despite these differences, the accounts do agree in reporting that everything the Spaniards desired was to be found in great quantities in the province of Apalache (f7r; 583b).

The little gold and other goods that the Narváez expeditionaries found on these forays into the *Florida* interior could not have seduced Narváez into leaving the ships and leading his men off into the interior of North America; the imagined vision of a maize-lined road to a second Tenochtitlán could. Narváez was far more interested in searching for gold than he was in reaching the Río Pánuco or the Río de las Palmas. Having passed the period between 1522 and 1524 as Cortés's prisoner in central Mexico and having visited México-Tenochtitlán, Narváez knew the splendor and wealth of the Mexica (Aztec) capital, and he no doubt hoped to convert the province of Apalache into his Tenochtitlán. Regarding the gold he believed could be found in Apalache, the concessions granted to him to encourage Spanish settlement and native conversion offered a strong incentive; gold was to be taxed at the rate of only 10 percent for the first three years after its discovery and at 20 percent (the *quinto real*) only from the fifth year onward (Vas Mingo 236).

Narváez's pursuit of Apalache will be the subject of our Part 3 commentary (chap. 4, secs. 4–10); however, some observations concerning his intentions can be made here. First, with regard to Cabeza de Vaca's comments on communication with the natives, it seems evident that Narváez could in no way have had the clear information about Apalache that would have moved him to take his expedition overland. His decision was the product of a greedy imagination. When Cabeza de Vaca added his epilogue to the *relación* treating the events that happened after the overland expedition had set out, he also added a detail that occurred just prior to the group's departure from the ships. When the Castilian woman told Narváez of the presage of the Muslim woman from Hornachos that the expeditionaries would perish, he responded to her, saying that "he and all those who entered with him were going to fight and conquer many and very strange peoples and lands, and that he held it for very certain that in conquering them, many would die, but

those who remained would be of good fortune and would end up very rich, according to the information that he had about the wealth that there was in that land” (f66r). This was evidently the way Narváez, during approximately four years of prison in Mexico, had come to understand Cortés’s conquest; had Narváez actually been in the lands to the north of Mexico where he thought he was, things might have occurred differently. Narváez certainly never intended to abandon his expedition to the Río de las Palmas. The trip to Apalache was evidently intended to be a detour along a route that Narváez believed would take him to that river. The deliberation over whether or not the overland crew should temporarily separate from the ships proves the point; the ships were to go along the coast to the Río de las Palmas and wait for the overland group to arrive.

#### 11. THE DECISION TO GO INLAND TO APALACHE (1 MAY 1528)

The two exploratory missions to Old Tampa Bay occurred between 15 April and 1 May 1528 (f7r; 584b). On 1 May, Narváez held a private meeting with the commissary (Juan Suárez), the comptroller (Alonso Enríquez), the chief inspector of mines (Alonso [Diego] de Solís), and the treasurer (Cabeza de Vaca) to decide on the course of action the expedition should take. In addition to this ruling junta of the Narváez expedition, a mariner named Bartolomé Fernández and the notary, Jerónimo de Alaniz, were also present. Alaniz’s presence at the meeting demonstrates that it was an official proceeding of the expedition; Cabeza de Vaca’s record of it preserves some of the legalistic flavor that would have characterized the official account of the proceedings that Alaniz must have recorded. Likewise, Oviedo’s inclusion of many formulaic phrases in his account suggests the official manner in which the events must have been narrated in the Joint Report: “they gave them an account” [les hicieron relación] (584a), “and officially, before a notary” [y por aucto, ante un escribano] (584a), “and regarding this he asked for their formal opinion” [e pidioles sobresto su paresçer] (584a), “he formally demanded many times” [le requirió muchas veçes] (584b), “and thus he asked the notary to record it” [e assi lo pidió por testimonio al escribano] (584b).

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the accounts of this meeting is the difference of opinion of the land that the various individuals held and on the course that they felt the expedition should follow; for this reason we consider individually the position that each man took or at least is said to have taken by Cabeza de Vaca. We should remember that the other two Castilians who testified for the Joint Report—Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo—were not present at this meeting, and thus Cabeza de Vaca is the only individual who could serve as the source of this episode in both

Oviedo's text and the *relación*, since Alaniz's official record most certainly perished with the notary.

Narváez called the meeting to announce before the notary his desire to go inland (“*entrar la tierra adentro*”) and to have the ships continue on along the coast in search of the port, since the pilots believed it was near where they had landed going along the coast in the direction of the Río de las Palmas (f7r-v; 584a). As was the case on any expedition, Narváez was required to seek the opinions of the other officials in determining the course of action to take, and thus he had called the men together to discuss the matter.

Cabeza de Vaca's response is much less dramatic in Oviedo's account (584a) than it is in his *relación* (f7v). Oviedo says that Cabeza de Vaca opposed going inland because “from the information they had received from the Indians, and from what the Christians had seen, it was a land poor and unpopulated.” Oviedo says that Cabeza de Vaca added that the expedition should not enter inland because the group was waiting for the brigantine and the other ship from Havana and because the “pilots did not know, nor were they able to figure out where they were.” Finally, Oviedo says that “for many other reasons” Cabeza de Vaca believed that the expedition should remain with the ships until they discovered a safe and populated harbor from which the expedition could enter inland. In his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca (f7v) adds some of these “many other reasons.” One was the extreme difficulty the men had in communicating with the Indians, as we have discussed above. Cabeza de Vaca says further that there was a shortage of food for an overland expedition.

The Spaniards' view of the land of *Florida* in 1528 is problematic. Narváez was convinced that the Indians spoke of a wealthy land in Apalache. Oviedo's account suggests that Cabeza de Vaca understood from the Indians that the land was poor and unpopulated, yet in both accounts he says that the expeditionaries were unable to communicate with the Indians and knew nothing of the land. Both accounts show that little or no gold and only a small quantity of maize had been discovered. The accounts confirm that the Spaniards saw the land where they had established their camp to be poor and unpopulated “as any place that had been discovered in those parts” (f7v). The evidence reveals how the influence of hopes of discovery in unknown lands far outweighed the significance of empirical information for men like Narváez when decisions regarding conquest were made.

The commissary argued for a coastal land route, emphasizing that “the pilots said that going in the direction of Pánuco it would not be but ten or fifteen leagues from there” (f7v); according to Oviedo (584a), the pilots claimed it was fifteen. Narváez's commissary felt that if the expedition were to travel inland along the shore (“*la tierra adentro, yendo çerca de la costa*”)

(Oviedo 584a), it would be impossible to miss the harbor, which lay twelve leagues inland, and that if the ships continued on along the coast “the way of Pánuco,” the two groups would most certainly meet upon arrival at the bay and not overshoot it (f7v). Given the storms and losses the expedition had thus far suffered, the commissary emphasized that to embark would be “to tempt God” (f8r; 584b). The commissary was evidently not partial to sailing; it seems that the most important decision-making factor for him was a fear of storms and the sea, and thus he proposed to walk along the coast until the Río de las Palmas or the port of Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco was reached. Both accounts state that the comptroller and the chief inspector of mines agreed with the commissary. Cabeza de Vaca (f8r) says in his *relación* that only the notary (Jerónimo de Alaniz) agreed with him that the expedition should not go inland until the ships were in a safe port.

#### 12. RIVALRY BETWEEN THE GOVERNOR AND THE TREASURER

When Narváez resolved to take the expedition inland along the shore in search of the Río de las Palmas, as the commissary had recommended (but actually in search of Apalache, according to his own desire for wealth), Cabeza de Vaca demanded that the notary record his opposition to leaving the ships (f8r; 584b). According to Cabeza de Vaca’s claims made in the Joint Report and in his *relación*, Narváez’s official record of his activities did not exactly conform to his intentions, since Cabeza de Vaca tells us the governor went on record saying nothing of the search for Apalache and remarking only that “on account of there not being adequate foodstuffs in that land to establish a settlement or a port for the ships, he was moving the settlement that he had established there and was going with it in search of the port and of land that would be better” (f8r). Cabeza de Vaca seems to call attention to the fact that in the official record Narváez made no mention of his interest in looking for Apalache, although the *relación* leads us to believe that the poverty of the land was not his primary motive for moving the settlement. For Narváez, finding Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas had become secondary to searching out Apalache.

Cabeza de Vaca’s refusal of Narváez’s request, made various times the afternoon of the day the meeting was held, that he remain with the ships is completely absent from Oviedo’s account and marks a critical point in Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative. Cabeza de Vaca’s defiance of Narváez introduces an atmosphere of continual antagonism between the two men that is prominent throughout the rest of his *relación*. The answer Cabeza de Vaca (f8v) said he gave to Narváez in response to his request that Cabeza de Vaca remain with the ships is striking:

I responded that I refused to take that responsibility because I was certain and knew that he would not see the ships again nor the ships him, and that I understood this on seeing how unprepared they were to go inland, and that I was more willing than he and the others to expose myself to danger and endure whatever he and the others were to endure than to take charge of the ships and give occasion that it be said, as I had opposed the overland expedition, that I remained out of fear, for which my honor would be under attack, and that I preferred risking my life to placing my honor in jeopardy.

Cabeza de Vaca's manipulation of the concept of honor affords us a noteworthy insight into this inflexible, socially defined concept typical within the rigid structure of the Spanish social order of the sixteenth century. The expression of fear of the sea, the implied fear of inland exploration, and the responsibility to the emperor, which translated into the fear of invoking his wrath, were all expressed in one form or another on this critical afternoon of 1 May 1528, when an isolated group of European explorers deliberated over entrance into the unknown and threatening lands of *Florida*, believed by them to be the northern hinterlands of New Spain. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative reconstruction of his response to Narváez in light of these factors and his appeal to the concept of honor illustrate the seriousness of the decision made.

Narváez was eventually able to convince another man, named Caravallo, an *alcalde* (f8v) from Cuenca de Huete (f66r), to remain in charge of the ships, and on the same afternoon the meager portions of hardtack and salt pork were distributed to the crew in preparation for the overland expedition. Cabeza de Vaca makes no reference to the instructions Narváez gave the crew that remained with the ships when the expedition departed but rather continues with a narration of the overland expedition, as does Oviedo. Unlike Oviedo, however, Cabeza de Vaca did add further information about the departure of the overland expedition at the end of his account. As will be seen throughout the narration of the *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca structured his account by giving the information at the point in the narrative at which he received it, always explaining how it was acquired. In this particular case, however, he leaves some information for the end of the narrative that he must have witnessed himself before departing on the overland expedition with Narváez and might have included in the main narrative. Most noteworthy among the items he reserved for the end of his *relación* but that he must have witnessed before leaving the ships was the Castilian woman's exchange with Narváez regarding the prediction of the Muslim woman from Hornachos and possibly the loss of one of Narváez's ships along the shore (see chap. 4, secs. 1–2; chap. 10, sec. 8).





## CHAPTER 4

### Part 3: The Division and Separation of the Narváez Expedition in *Florida*

We have divided Part 3 of our commentary on Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* into two divisions (I and II), each of which has 1 May 1528 (the day the sea and land components of the Narváez expedition separated) as its starting point. In the first (I) we consider the fate of the crew that remained on Narváez's ships when the three-hundred-man overland contingent set out for Apalache. We include here the sea contingent's search for the Río de las Palmas after separating from the overland contingent and its attempts to regain contact with the overland party, as well as subsequent search efforts sent out from the Caribbean to locate the overland portion of the Narváez expedition over the course of the ensuing eight years, until the final four survivors of the overland contingent reappeared in México-Tenochtitlán.

The fate of the ships that Narváez left on the *Florida* coast under the command of an *alcalde* named Caravallo when he departed overland is told only by Cabeza de Vaca. Cabeza de Vaca added an epilogue to his *relación* (f65v–f67r) in which he records what he learned from people who had stayed on the ships and whom he reencountered once he arrived in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536 and returned to Spain in 1537. Cabeza de Vaca claimed that Narváez's crew spent over a year looking for the overland expedition in the region where the two parts of the expedition had separated before abandoning the search and sailing to New Spain. Outside sources offer more details about this search as well as reveal other efforts made from Cuba to locate the lost Narváez expedition.

The departure of the overland expedition from the ships at a point just north of the mouth of Tampa Bay on 1 May or 2 May 1528 marks the beginning of the overland contingent's unintentional, permanent separation from established spheres of Spanish settlement in the New World, namely, the Caribbean, Pánuco, and New Spain. Beginning with this separation, we consider in the second division (II) of this Part 3 commentary the portion of Cabeza de Vaca's account in which he narrates the Narváez expeditionaries' overland journey through the northwestern part of the Florida Peninsula to the native settlements of Apalache and Aute and finally back to the sea,

where the surviving crew members embarked on their raft voyage west along the northern rim of the Gulf of Mexico.

In the first segment of this overland journey, from Tampa Bay to the settlement of Apalache, the expeditionaries seem to have pursued two separate goals. While Narváez marched in search of the rumored wealth of Apalache, Cabeza de Vaca and the other royal officials of the expedition hoped to discover either the mouth of the Río de las Palmas or the Spanish settlement at Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco. Both Narváez and his officials had intended to rendezvous with the part of their expedition that had set sail in the group's ships along the *Florida* coast in the direction of Pánuco (i.e., north) at the time the overland part of the expedition set out along the coastline in the same direction.

The overland group's arrival at Apalache revealed to Narváez and the others that they had imagined their communication with the Indians regarding gold and great wealth in that province. When the reality of the land's poverty, its lack of precious metals, the sparsity of its indigenous population, and the Indians' hostility toward the Spaniards became painfully evident to Narváez, the expedition headed to Aute and the coast. Illness and the Indians' continued attacks eventually forced the men to build rafts and leave the land.

### ❧ 1. Fate of the Sea Contingent and the Search for Narváez's Overland Expedition (1 May 1528 to July 1536) (f65v–f67r)

#### 1. THE SEA CONTINGENT'S SEARCH FOR THE RÍO DE LAS PALMAS (MAY 1528)

In the final pages of the *relación* (f65v–f67r) Cabeza de Vaca narrates the events that occurred at the departure of the overland expedition and afterward among the people who remained on the ships, the account of which he says is based on the information he acquired from persons who remained on the ships and whom he encountered after his return from the expedition to Mexico and Spain. Corresponding information does not appear in the Oviedo text, presumably because it did not figure in the original Joint Report. Since Oviedo's account terminates with the four survivors' arrival in Compostela in the province of Nueva Galicia in western Mexico, we must rely completely on Cabeza de Vaca's account and on outside sources for this information.

Cabeza de Vaca (f65v) reveals in his epilogue that one of the four ships (*navíos*) that sailed to the *Florida* coast was wrecked on the shore. From the narrative it is not possible to determine at what point this fourth ship

was lost, since Cabeza de Vaca mentions it in a parenthetical manner as he describes the departure of the ships when the overland expedition went inland. Since Cabeza de Vaca says that the men “left the three ships,” however, it appears that the loss occurred sometime before 1 May 1528, the day that he says the expedition went inland. It seems strange that he did not include this information, as well as the account of the governor’s exchange with the woman who related the prediction of the Muslim woman from Hornachos, near the beginning of his account, as he must have already witnessed these things or heard of them at the time he left the ships with the rest of the overland contingent in May 1528, rather than upon his return from the expedition in 1536.

About one hundred persons (ten of whom were women, as mentioned above) remained on the ships left in Caravallo’s charge. They must have carried very few provisions, since much of what had remained on board the ships when the decision was made to go inland was evidently sent with the overland expedition. When he departed, Narváez instructed Caravallo to take the ships along the coast in the direction assumed to be toward Pánuco in search of the bay formed by the mouth of the Río de las Palmas and to wait for the land contingent at that bay. In his description of the ships’ travel along the coast, Cabeza de Vaca employs relative terms of travel that were developed along the course of the narrative, as we discuss in our Part 5 commentary (chap. 6, sec. 2.c): “and after leaving from there, the ships set sail and continued their voyage, and they found no port ahead [*adelante*], and they turned back [*atrás*]. And five leagues below [*abajo*] where we had disembarked, they found the port that entered seven or eight leagues inland, and it was the same one that we had discovered, where we found the crates from Castile” (f66v). We have already considered Weddle’s reading of “below,” regarding map orientation (chap. 3, sec. 4). More important are the terms “ahead” (*adelante*) and “back” or “behind” (*atrás*). In Cabeza de Vaca’s portrayal of the overland group’s movement, we will see that as it progressed along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, traveling in the direction of Pánuco became synonymous with *adelante* (forward), and traveling toward the Florida Peninsula came to mean *atrás* (back). As we have mentioned above, the ships apparently sailed north along the *Florida* coast, and when they did not find the entrance to the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco within fifteen leagues as they had expected, and having journeyed beyond the place where they had first sighted land on 12 April, they doubled back, passing the point from which the overland expedition had set out and continuing south until they reached the mouth of Tampa Bay.

## 2. SEARCH FOR THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION (1528 TO 1536)

As we will see in subsequent parts of our commentary, Narváez's quest for Apalache and his lack of interest in finding the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco permanently separated his overland expedition from his ships. Most of the expeditionaries would die with no idea of where they were on the *Florida* coast; the four survivors of the overland expedition would spend eight years in unexplored territories of the northern coastal lands of the Gulf of Mexico and the northern interior of Mexico. Narváez's *alcalde*, Caravallo, was evidently a more prudent man than his superior, however, and thus those who remained on the ships were more fortunate than the land expeditionaries. While Caravallo was searching for the overland expedition in Tampa Bay, Miruelo and Álvaro de la Cerda must have joined his fleet of three ships upon arrival from Havana and must also have brought the provisions necessary to sustain the year-long search for the overland expedition that Cabeza de Vaca (f66v) says was conducted there and along the *Florida* coast. According to Cabeza de Vaca, when the crew on the ships was unable to find the land contingent, they set sail for New Spain.

No documentary evidence records a specific date by which the probable loss of Narváez's overland expedition became known and accepted. Miruelo departed from the other ships and went to Cuba prior to the separation of the ships from the land contingent and therefore could not have carried any news of the overland expedition's loss. There is no record of any of the ships' return to Cuba, but it is clear that the search for the Narváez expedition and the passage on to New Spain of some of the Spaniards who had come to the Americas with Narváez in 1527 were not as direct as Cabeza de Vaca narrates in the *relación*.

Ships evidently came and went between *Florida* and Cuba in this search; whether the original Narváez ships went directly to New Spain without going first to Cuba is impossible to prove. One of the men who remained on the ships, Alonso de la Barrera, gave a considerably different account of what occurred among the Narváez expeditionaries who had remained with Caravallo on the ships. In Alonso del Castillo Maldonado's 1547 *información de servicios* (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, fior) Barrera claimed that he had gone to *Florida* with Narváez in the same ship that Alonso del Castillo had, that the expedition was separated into two parts, and that over three hundred men went with the overland part. He says that he, having remained on the ships, was in the province for four years more or less, evidently involved in the search for the overland group, and afterward he says he went to Cuba. Barrera claimed that from there he went to New Spain and that five years later, more or less, Alonso del Castillo and the other three survivors arrived

in México-Tenochtitlán. Although here Barrera seems to suggest that the search for Narváez in *Florida* had gone on for as many as four years and that he arrived in New Spain about 1531 or 1532, in another part of his testimony (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f9v) he suggests that he had arrived in New Spain from Havana “eighteen or nineteen years earlier” (i.e., eighteen or nineteen years prior to testifying in 1547), in other words, in 1528 or 1529. Whether he spent four years or only a few months in the search for Narváez’s overland contingent, he claims to have passed through Cuba before going on to New Spain.

In a letter to the emperor dated 8 May 1529 from Santiago de Cuba, Lope de Hurtado mentioned that a caravel returning from the search for Narváez had come to the island. Hurtado stated that the crew of the ship had taken eight Indians from “the coast where Narváez had embarked” who said that Narváez had gone inland and that “they [the Narváez expeditionaries] do nothing but eat and live and sleep” (CDI 12:224). Hurtado said they did not know what to believe about what the Indians had said.

The caravel could have been one of Narváez’s original ships or one that had been sent to the *Florida* coast specifically to search for the expedition. Documentary evidence records Hernando de Zaballos’s involvement in a search for Narváez that Narváez’s wife, María de Valenzuela, carried out, no doubt with the same zeal with which she worked to rescue her husband from Cortés between 1520 and 1525. As we have mentioned earlier, Zaballos had held Narváez’s power of attorney since early 1527, and on 8 March 1528 he extended that power to Alonso de Ara in Carmona, Spain (CDI 12:86–91). Zaballos must have gone to Cuba shortly thereafter, where María de Valenzuela enlisted him in the search for her husband.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo (591b [chap. 196]) relates that in the time when Nuño de Guzmán was presiding over the First Audiencia of New Spain in México-Tenochtitlán (i.e., in 1529), a certain “Çavallos” arrived in Mexico. According to Bernal Díaz, he had been sent by María de Valenzuela to seize any of Narváez’s possessions there and to look for him, since by that time Narváez was rumored to be lost or dead, although Díaz del Castillo’s account suggests that María de Valenzuela still believed her husband would be found alive in México-Tenochtitlán. Díaz del Castillo claimed that Zaballos was coerced by Nuño de Guzmán, Matienzo, and Delgadillo into issuing a formal complaint against Cortés and all the soldiers who had participated in Narváez’s defeat in Mexico in early 1520. Although Guzmán’s and the others’ involvement cannot be proven, such an accusation by Zaballos, dated 30 September 1529, does appear among documents pertaining to Cortés’s appeal of Guzmán’s *residencia* of his tenure as governor of New Spain (CDI 27:107–11). A similar document, transcribed by García Icazbalceta (1:437–44)

from a copy by Muñoz (Real Academia de la Historia 1:332 [entry 556]) and noted by Muñoz to have figured among the documents of Guzmán's *residencia* of Cortés, is incorrectly dated 1531.

Francisco Núñez's summary of the suits at law that he pursued on Hernán Cortés's behalf through 1546 sheds further light on this topic. Núñez claimed that he had prepared a petition in Cortés's name responding to an accusation that "Pedro [*sic*] de Cauillos [*sic*]" had made against Cortés under the authority of Pánfilo de Narváez's power of attorney. Núñez said he established in the petition that Narváez was dead and introduced a suit against Zaballos for having committed the crime of making an accusation against Cortés on the authority of a dead man's power of attorney (Cuevas 266). Núñez mentioned six warrants of investigation "concerning Pánfilo de Narváez" granted on 21 September 1539 (*sic*, 1529) in his catalog of Cortés's *cédulas* (Cuevas 277). These were evidently to collect the *probanza* testimony establishing proof of Narváez's death. Núñez also listed a *cédula* of 5 July 1530 concerning the suit with "Hernando de Caballos [*sic*]" and the Castilian court's order from Madrid on 11 August 1530 that the president and judges of Cortés's *residencia* pay no further attention to Zaballos's accusations. Núñez claimed at the end of the entry that "everything was established and finished" (Cuevas 281). In other words, on 11 August 1530, the court formally recognized Narváez's death and presumably the deaths of all those who had gone inland into *Florida* with him in May 1528.

Weddle (207) cites a 16 March 1531 document (Weddle's citation is "AGI, Indiferente General 1203, no. 28") in which Hernando de Zaballos, requesting release from prison, testified that he had sold Narváez two brigantines purchased in New Spain and that later he spent at least the amount Narváez had paid him in the search for him. Weddle is unclear on when Zaballos sold the ships, and it is not at all clear why Zaballos would have been obligated to spend the money he had been paid for ships he ostensibly sold to Narváez in the search for him or why he had been imprisoned.

Wright (164) gives a much clearer reading, although it is not certain that she was working with exactly the same documents. She claims that in New Spain Zaballos was bribed into abandoning the prosecution of Narváez's lawsuits and that there he sold Narváez's ships. This version of the story is more logical, identifying Zaballos's transaction as the sale of Narváez's property, from which he would have been obligated either to spend the proceeds on Narváez's behalf or return them to María de Valenzuela. Wright sympathizes with María de Valenzuela's loss when she says that "her suits-at-law against this faithless agent pursued him to Spain, where, it is pleasant to learn, he was at one time 'a prisoner in chains.'" We have been unable to consult the microfilm available at the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California,

of copies of the Stetson Collection photostats of the original documents of an *información* prepared by María de Valenzuela in Havana in 1530 “relative to two bergantines [*sic*] and munitions”; the originals are located in the Archivo General de Indias (Justicia 972, 51-5-2/12, according to the Bancroft Library cataloging).

Zaballos’s apparent imprisonment in Spain by 1531 suggests that by that time María de Valenzuela had probably given up her search for her husband. We have already mentioned the assumed death of Jerónimo de Alaniz by 25 April 1530, according to the transfer of his *encomienda* Indians and the 28 April 1531 transfer of his position of *escribano público* to another individual, as well as the transfer of Alonso de Sotomayor’s Indian slaves in the Cuban *villa* of Trinidad by 25 August 1530. By 14 September 1534, Toribio Velázquez had prepared an *información* in Cuéllar, Spain, in order to claim his brother Antonio’s inheritance of Diego Velázquez’s estate, on account of Antonio’s assumed death on the Narváez expedition (CDU 4:326). In CDU there is only a note to this *información*, and it has evidently not been published; the crown’s 13 November 1534 grant of Diego Velázquez’s estate to Toribio Velázquez states that it was “very publicly known that the said governor [Pánfilo de Narváez] and all who had gone with him had died, as he [Toribio Velázquez] said had been established by a certain *información* that he had prepared and presented before those of our Council of the Indies” (CDU 4:356–58). Toribio Velázquez’s *información* would no doubt shed further light on the search for Narváez and public opinion regarding the expedition’s disappearance.

There are some references to the possibility of Narváez and the other expeditionaries still being alive in the years between 1528 and 1536 as well. In 1531, Cristóbal de Barrios testified that one desirable aspect of the conquest that Nuño de Guzmán was carrying out in Nueva Galicia was the possibility of gaining new information on the fate of Pánfilo de Narváez (CDI 16:365). In a letter dated 16 January 1531, Nuño de Guzmán advised the emperor of his plan to travel north through Nueva Galicia and then east to the Gulf of Mexico (CDI 13:409). Recounting his eventual success in crossing over from Compostela to Pánuco in 1533 (chap. 17, sec. 9.E), Guzmán (67) said he carried out the expedition to learn what was in the land and to determine what had happened to Narváez. It must be recognized, of course, that such mentions of the search for Narváez may have been attempts merely to justify the conquest of Nueva Galicia, rather than manifestations of any serious belief in Narváez’s survival and a sincere desire to locate the 1528 expedition. We have also already mentioned Cortés’s advocate’s response to the charge made against Cortés in October 1529 regarding Narváez’s imprisonment, to which he glibly said that he hoped God would be pleased to have things turn out better for Narváez at the Río de las Palmas than they had for him

in 1520 at Veracruz (CDI 27:216). At the time the remark was made, news of Narváez's possible death must already have been circulating in New Spain with Zaballos's arrival in México-Tenochtitlán. In 1534, Cortés still referred to the region of northern Mexico as part of Narváez's jurisdiction with regard to the territorial conflict between him and Nuño de Guzmán (CDI 12:447).

The arrival of Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, and Estevanico in Nueva Galicia in the spring of 1536 confirmed any doubts about the possible survival of the three hundred men who had gone inland with Narváez in search of Apalache. On 20 November 1536, the crown granted Pánfilo de Narváez's son, Diego de Narváez, permission to be absent from Cuba to pursue his late father's suit against Cortés in New Spain and other places (CDU 4:409–11).

### 3. DE SOTO'S DISCOVERY OF JUAN ORTIZ (1539)

All four major accounts of the 1539–43 De Soto expedition to *Florida* record its discovery of Juan Ortiz (Biedma 47; Ranjel through Oviedo's *Historia* 1:546 [bk. 17, chap. 22]; the Gentleman of Elvas in Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:59–60 [chaps. 8–9]; El Inca Garcilaso 45–60 [bk. 2, pt. 1, chaps. 1–6]). Biedma noted only that Ortiz had gone to *Florida* with Narváez and says nothing regarding either the particulars of how he ended up abandoned there or the number of years he had been there when the De Soto expedition recovered him. In Oviedo's version of Ranjel's log, Ortiz is not even explicitly associated with the Narváez expedition. In contrast, the Gentleman of Elvas and El Inca Garcilaso gave considerably more lengthy and detailed accounts of how Ortiz arrived in *Florida* and the time he had spent there.

The Gentleman of Elvas (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:60 [chap. 9]) recounted the events as follows:

The Christian was called Juan Ortiz and was a native of Seville, of a noble family. For twelve years he had been in the hands of the Indians. He had gone to that land with Governor Narvaez and had returned in the ships to the island of Cuba, where the wife of Governor Pánfilo de Narvaez had remained. At her order, with twenty or thirty others he returned to Florida in a brigantine. Arriving at the port, within sight of the town, they saw on land a cane sticking in the ground with its top split and holding a letter. They believed that the governor had left it in order to give news of himself when he resolved to go inland. They asked four or five Indians who were walking on the beach for it, but the latter told them by signs to come ashore for it, which Juan Ortiz and another did contrary to the wish of the others. As soon as they reached land, many Indians came out of the houses of the town and surrounded them and seized them so that they could not escape. The other



man who tried to defend himself they killed immediately in that place, and Juan Ortiz they seized by the hands and led to their chief, Ucita. The men in the brigantine refused to land and made for the open sea and returned to the island of Cuba.

The Gentleman of Elvas's account implies that after Miruelo returned to *Florida* accompanied by Álvaro de la Cerda and rejoined Narváez's three remaining ships, and after this group carried out the search for Narváez's overland contingent, it then returned to Cuba. Ortiz might have traveled with Miruelo to Cuba in mid-1528 and back to *Florida*, or he may have been one of the approximately one hundred men, like Alonso de la Barrera, who remained on the ships when Narváez set out for Apalache. In either case, the Gentleman of Elvas's account of Ortiz's return on Narváez's ships to Cuba after searching for the overland group corroborates Alonso de la Barrera's testimony that the ships went to Cuba rather than to New Spain, as Cabeza de Vaca claimed (see above, sec. 2). Contrary to the Gentleman of Elvas's claim of twelve years, Ortiz could not have been living among the *Florida* Indians for more than eleven years (from sometime after May 1528 until the De Soto expedition discovered him in mid-1539), and then only if the search effort for Narváez with which he had gone to the *Florida* coast and from which he was lost lasted only a short time.

El Inca Garcilaso's account of Juan Ortiz is more elaborate than the Gentleman of Elvas's, and it is probable that the Portuguese caballero's account was the source from which Garcilaso spun his tale. Although neither account of the Narváez expedition records the name of any native lord in the region where Narváez disembarked or gives account of any particular acts of cruelty to the Indians that Narváez committed there, El Inca Garcilaso (47 [bk. 2, pt. 1, chap. 1]; Varner and Varner 61–62) claimed that acts Narváez allegedly committed in 1528 against the native lord of the region named Hirrihigua, particularly that he had cut off the lord's nose, explained why Ortiz had been captured and held in captivity, as well as why the Indians of the region were hostile to De Soto's expedition:

Know then that some days after Pámphilo de Narváez had done what we have mentioned and had departed from the land of Hirrihigua, one of his ships, which had stopped elsewhere, happened to call at this same bay in search of its captain. On ascertaining the identity and purpose of the vessel, the Cacique resolved to seize every man aboard and burn him alive. Therefore, with the idea of instilling confidence in them, he pretended to be a friend of their captain, sending them word that Pámphilo de Narváez had indeed been in that place, and moreover had left a message with him as to what their ship should do if it too should call there. Then to persuade them to belief, he

disclosed from land two or three sheets of white paper and some old letters which he had obtained from the Spaniards in former times by friendly means, or however it may have been, and in the interim had guarded very carefully.

El Inca Garcilaso goes on to tell that four Spaniards eventually came ashore to see the documents and were immediately seized by the natives. The four natives who had come to the ship as hostages leaped into the water from the ship and swam to shore. Three of the Spaniards were killed, but Juan Ortiz was saved through the intervention of Hirrihigua's daughter. In constructing his account of the discovery of Juan Ortiz, El Inca Garcilaso is unclear about whether he envisioned Juan Ortiz as a member of the original expedition who had gone with Miruelo to Cuba and then returned to *Florida*, one who had remained on the ships when Narváez departed inland, or perhaps a member of the crew he had left at Havana under the command of Álvaro de la Cerda when he departed for the *Florida* coast in 1528 and that returned with Miruelo. The provenance of Narváez's ship in El Inca's account cannot be determined.

The variant accounts regarding how the search for Narváez was carried out as told by Cabeza de Vaca in his *relación* and by Alonso de la Barrera as well as the Gentleman of Elvas's vague account of the same subject with respect to the De Soto expedition's discovery of Juan Ortiz make it impossible to determine with certainty the details of the search for the Narváez expedition between 1528 and 1536 and the manner by which Ortiz actually ended up on the *Florida* coast. Study of María de Valenzuela's suit against Hernando de Zaballos might shed light on the subject; El Inca Garcilaso's rendition of the De Soto expedition's discovery of Ortiz is clearly a late-sixteenth-century imagined version of the events. For a discussion of the significance of other references to the Narváez expedition in the accounts of the De Soto expedition, see section 9 as well as chapter 5, section 6, and chapter 13, sections 3 and 9.

## II. The Search for Apalache: The Overland Contingent's Travel through the Florida Peninsula, Tampa Bay to Apalachee Bay (1 May 1528 to 22 September 1528) (f8v–f16r)

### 4. OVERVIEW OF THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE FLORIDA PENINSULA

The Narváez expeditionaries' goal of reaching the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco determined the path that the three hundred men of the overland contingent pursued through the Florida Peninsula, and it continued to influence the decisions various individuals on the expedition made concerning their trajectories from 1 May 1528 until the summer of 1535,

when the last four survivors left the coast and journeyed across northern Mexico. The route that Narváez chose through the Florida Peninsula was a compromise between the commissary's desire to travel directly along the shore and Narváez's own wish to enter farther inland in order to discover and explore the province of Apalache. The commissary hoped to avoid the perils of the sea without losing the certain path it provided to the mouths of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco, and thus he suggested that the men travel along the coast. The accounts are somewhat vague concerning whether the known port that the men were seeking as they began their journey was the unpopulated Río de las Palmas or the settlement of Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco. The Río de las Palmas had been the expedition's original destination and the port Miruelo supposedly knew, but as the objectives of this disoriented and ever more vulnerable group evolved, the *villa* of Santisteban del Puerto seems to have become its primary goal, evidenced by the frequent mentions in the narratives of "the way of Pánuco." Whatever the port to which the commissary referred was, he claimed that it entered twelve to fifteen leagues inland along the shore and could not be overlooked (f7v; Oviedo 584a). Contrary to Hoffman's ("Narváez" 54–56) recent repetition of a common misinterpretation of the *relación*, the men were *not* looking for "Bahía Honda" according to some notion they ostensibly had of Tampa Bay on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula based on exploration that preceded Narváez's arrival there. Despite the fact that the men were actually on the Florida Peninsula, they believed themselves to be near the mouths of the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas and were searching for them.

The commissary's fear of the sea brought the men from the ships to the shore; Narváez's greed evidently took them somewhat farther to the interior in search of Apalache. Since he knew that Santisteban lay inland along the Río Pánuco, and since both the Río Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas opened into bays that ships could enter, Narváez evidently believed it was not necessary to travel directly along the coastline to find either port. He must have believed that upon encountering one of the rivers by traveling some leagues inland parallel to the coast, the overland group could follow the river to its mouth and rejoin the ships. Thus the route along the coast was set; even though the men traveled some leagues inland, the coastline formed the path they would follow in search of the Río de las Palmas and/or Santisteban del Puerto.

As the group set out in search of Apalache, it apparently strayed somewhat from the shore as the coastline simultaneously deviated to the west. The two accounts of the expedition's journey offer few references to the direction and distances the group traveled. After the first fifteen days of travel, evidently in a northerly direction, the expedition seems to have been on a course

approximately one half day's journey from the coast, according to Cabeza de Vaca's (f9v) narration of his journey down the first river that the men discovered on their overland march. He records no attempt to search out a port at the mouth of the second river the men crossed (fior), one that does not appear in Oviedo's account. The narratives reveal that by the time the group reached Apalache the coastline was eight or nine (f13v; 587a) days' journey to the south (f12r) of their location at that point.

Even in this portion of the expedition through the Florida Peninsula, where the references to time and distance in both accounts are fairly specific and largely corroborative, their sporadic appearance makes the reconstruction of the overland contingent's route through the northwestern Florida Peninsula problematic. Both accounts suggest that the overland group set out about 1 or 2 May 1528 (f8v; 584ab), that it reached the first river on its fifteenth day of travel (f9r; 584b), that it arrived at Apalache on 25 June, the day after that of Saint John (fiov; 585a), that Aute was eight or nine days' journey to the south of Apalache (see above), and that Aute was located somewhat more than one day's journey from the coast (f13v–f14r; 587b). Unfortunately, the group's arrival at specific places on specific days gives us little idea of the distance between the places, since it is often difficult to determine the number of days actually spent traveling between them. Cabeza de Vaca's (f5v) claim, also made by Oviedo (582b), that the expedition arrived on the *Florida* coast on Tuesday, 12 April 1528 (actually a Sunday), and Cabeza de Vaca's (f8v) additional assertion that the junta of officials met on Saturday, 1 May 1528 (actually a Friday), together reveal not only a variance with European date reckoning in the accounts but also a lack of temporal accuracy within Cabeza de Vaca's own narrative. This fact obligates us to question the accuracy of the *relación's* temporal references as the narrative progresses.

In cases where the accounts are sufficiently specific to estimate the number of days traveled, problems of distance calculation still arise. First, both accounts claim that the distance traveled from the Bay of the Cross (Tampa Bay) to the point where the expeditionaries embarked on their raft journey was approximately 280 leagues (f15v–f16r; 588a). Even using the conservative value of 5.13 kilometers (3.18 miles) for a league in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* determined above (chap. 3, sec. 4), 280 leagues equal 1,436.4 kilometers (890.4 miles), a distance stretching well beyond the Mississippi River following along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico north and west from Tampa Bay. The reference is all the more curious when we consider that the whole stretch of northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico from the tip of the Florida Peninsula to the mouth of the Río Pánuco had been estimated since at least 1519 to be about 300 leagues long (Navarrete 3:160). Smith (*Relation* 49n2)

observed that the distance the men had traveled from 1 May to 22 September 1528 could not have been much more than about 280 miles (453.6 kilometers) and not 280 leagues.

Apart from the global assessment of the length of this journey, virtually no other estimate of distances traveled stated in leagues is given in either account. References to distance that do appear tell us only that the native settlement discovered beyond the first river lay up to half a league from the river (f9r) and that after Cabeza de Vaca and his party descended this river to the coast they traveled along the shore through shallow water for up to a league and a half (f9v) or two leagues (585a) before reaching the river's central channel, where they were unable to cross. Finally, Cabeza de Vaca (f13r–v) offered some miscellaneous details about the length of a lagoon crossed on the way from Apalache to Aute and other short distances traversed on that trip.

The only estimate of how far the men traveled per day must be calculated from a combination of information from the two accounts. Cabeza de Vaca (f10v–f11r) claimed that on the journey to Apalache the expedition sometimes went seven or eight leagues without finding maize, and Oviedo (585a) stated that at times they went for four or five days without finding it. A combination of the two estimates suggests a maximum travel speed of two leagues per day. As we will see below (secs. 7 and 12), between the 2 May 1528 start date of the expeditionaries' journey from the Bay of the Cross and the men's arrival at the beginning of August 1528 to the place they would call the Bay of Horses they seem to have spent about fifty-nine days traveling forward, and thus in fifty-nine days only 118 leagues might have been covered, rather than the 280 that Cabeza de Vaca cites. Using 5.13 kilometers (3.18 miles) as the equivalent of the Spanish league, this distance was approximately 605 kilometers (375 miles). The margin of error in calculations that are based on assumptions that must necessarily be made when dealing with such vague references makes them virtually useless for purposes such as positively identifying a river the Narváez expedition crossed or a site it occupied along a potential route.

Smith's (1851, 1871) English translation of the *relación* and Hodge's (1907) annotation of a reprinted edition of Smith's translation (in which he relied heavily on Smith's own annotation) represent the earliest line of speculation on the route of the Narváez expedition through what today is the northwestern part of the state of Florida. In 1886 Shea (242–43), who had overseen the publication of the posthumous second edition of Smith's English translation, offered some sporadic identifications of places the expedition visited in his essay entitled "Ancient Florida." In 1901 Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 181–88) collected the identifications proposed in a number of earlier his-

torical works that had treated the Narváez expedition's route through the Florida Peninsula only secondarily. Davenport (27:127–39, 217–20) laid out a route in the annotation to his English translation of the Oviedo account in 1923–24, and Swanton (United States De Soto Expedition Commission 109–16) gave a narrative reconstruction of Narváez's route through the Florida Peninsula in 1939. Davenport and Swanton paid considerably more attention to mentions of the Narváez expedition in the accounts of the 1539–43 De Soto expedition in trying to determine the route Narváez had earlier traveled than previous interpreters had. Hallenbeck's 1941 English paraphrase of the text with accompanying study and Cyclone Covey's application of Hallenbeck's conclusions to his 1961 English translation (i.e., adaptation) represent another line of speculation on the route through the Florida Peninsula. Many popular editions of the *relación* refer to the Smith/Hodge and Hallenbeck/Covey reconstructions by citing Hodge and Covey; here we cite the individuals, Smith and Hallenbeck, who originally proposed the routes. In cases where the point in question is an original contribution from the Hodge or Covey editions, we refer to those texts. Recent interpretations of the Florida route include those by Elizabeth Scott ("Route") in 1981, Weddle (187–92, 205) in 1985, and Hoffman ("Narváez") in 1994.

We have already established the expedition's point of debarkation and departure just north of the mouth of Tampa Bay in our Part 2 commentary (chap. 3, sec. 4). In the 1851 publication of his translation of the *relación*, Smith (*Narrative*, first six maps facing 138) posited that the entire journey of the Narváez expedition, including the raft journey and the final four survivors' deviation from the coast into the interior of North America, had occurred along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico east of the mouth of the Mississippi River. Smith altered his position considerably in the second edition (1871) of his translation, in the annotation of which he extends the expedition's coastal journey beyond the mouth of the Mississippi River to the shores of present-day Louisiana and eastern Texas before sending the last four survivors inland. Although Smith (*Narrative*, third map following 138) originally placed the end of the portion of the journey we are here considering at the mouth of the Apalachicola River, in his second edition he retracted it to Apalachee Bay (Smith, *Relation* 51n1). This second interpretation is the one we still find to be most compatible with the accounts of the Narváez expedition for this leg of the journey. Hallenbeck stretches the limits of the overland journey between Sarasota Bay (to the south of Tampa Bay; 36n20) and Apalachicola Bay (45n44, 116). As we have shown in our Part 2 commentary (chap. 3, sec. 4), the directions the Narváez expedition traveled by sea along the coast when it first arrived there on 12 April 1528 make it very unlikely that the fleet landed

at a point south of Tampa Bay. We consider the possibility of Apalachicola Bay as an endpoint to the expedition's trek through the northwestern Florida Peninsula below.

Many editors and translators of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* have offered calculated dates in their editions by which various points along the route through the Florida Peninsula and beyond were reached. Although these dates can be estimated according to the number of days Cabeza de Vaca says the men spent traveling, interpreted calculations of the sometimes very vague references to the passage of days in the accounts make it impossible to determine with certainty dates other than the ones specifically given in the accounts. As we have mentioned, even these are dependent on the expeditionaries' accuracy in tracking time during the expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's recollection of the dates when he testified in the preparation of the Joint Report and when he later wrote his *relación*. For this first portion of the journey some specific dates are given, but with each subsequent leg of the journey, the references to time become more vague as the men resorted to using the seasons and moon cycles to estimate the passage of time.

#### 5. FROM THE BAY OF THE CROSS TO THE FIRST RIVER

During their first days on the *Florida* coast, the expeditionaries had discovered Old Tampa Bay by traveling north (f6v) or northeast (583a) from their encampment near the shore. Although neither account explicitly says that Apalache lay to the north, we assume that the overland expedition traveled in that direction ("the way of Pánuco") along a route originally not more than about twelve leagues from the coast along the western edge of the Florida Peninsula. The claims of the accounts that approximately three hundred men (260 infantry and 40 cavalry) went on the overland journey (f9r; 584b) is substantiated both internally by the fact that forty (583a) to forty-two (f6r) horses of the original eighty remained and externally by the unsolicited claim Alonso de la Barrera made in Alonso del Castillo Maldonado's 1547 *información de servicios* that three hundred men had gone on the overland expedition (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f10r). Both accounts state that the commissary (Juan Suárez), the four other clergymen (Fray Juan de Palos and three other clerics), and the royal officials of the expedition were among those who went on the overland journey. Of the men who remained on the ships, most must have been directly responsible for the various tasks of navigation. As mentioned earlier, Cabeza de Vaca contradicts himself in saying, on the one hand, that it was the pilots on the overland expedition who had made the estimate of 280 leagues that the expedition had traveled from the Bay of the Cross to the Bay of Horses (f15v), and, on the other, that

no one on the overland expedition had any knowledge of shipbuilding (f15r) or navigation (f16r).

The fifteen days that both accounts (f9r; 584b) claim the group spent traveling to the first river correspond to approximately 1 May through 15 May 1528. Smith (*Relation* 29n3) identified as the Withlacoochee the river that the group presumably spent the fifteenth day of travel crossing by swimming and on rafts because of the swiftness of its current (f9r; 584b). As we will show below, Hallenbeck's (39n28) identification of the river as the Suwannee is less convincing than Smith's, if only because of a date miscalculation in Hallenbeck's analysis that consequently requires the translocation of his whole route farther west than he himself places it.

Oviedo (584b) recorded only that the native settlement to which the expeditionaries went after confronting the Indians they encountered on the northern bank of the river was "near there" (i.e., near the river). Cabeza de Vaca (f9r) said it was up to one half league from the river crossing. The reproach Cabeza de Vaca (f9r) attributes to Narváez at the instance of the royal officials' desire to search out a port at the mouth of the river is absent from Oviedo's (584b) account. Narváez's instructions to Cabeza de Vaca (f9v) that he should go in search of the port with forty infantry and no horses seems to suggest, in light of the reproach, that the leader of the expedition was unwilling to devote too many resources to the endeavor. Oviedo's (584b) account clarifies, nevertheless, that the terrain made the use of horses impossible, a fact Cabeza de Vaca (f6v) had earlier observed about the lands near where the expedition disembarked.

The royal officials of the expedition evidently believed that the river they had discovered was either the Río de las Palmas or the Pánuco, and they apparently hoped to there rejoin the sea contingent from which they had separated two weeks earlier. Cabeza de Vaca and Alonso del Castillo's journey down the northern bank of the river to the coast seems to have occupied half a day (f9v; 585a). This short distance to the shore demonstrates that the expedition was traveling very near the coast, in spite of the fact that Narváez, according to Cabeza de Vaca (f9r), had claimed the sea to be very far away. Cabeza de Vaca and Castillo Maldonado's exploratory mission down the northern bank of the river and Valenzuela's recrossing of the river at the point where the whole expedition had first crossed it and his travel down its southern bank with six horsemen and sixty foot soldiers (forty according to Oviedo; 585a) revealed its mouth to be too shallow for ships to enter (f9v; 585a), proving it was neither the Río de las Palmas nor the Río Pánuco. Whereas Cabeza de Vaca (f9r-v) seems to account for approximately five to six days at this native settlement just north of the first river, Oviedo's (584b-85a) more concise narrative seems to refer to only three. Smith (*Relation*



31) proposed 21 May 1528 as the date the expedition departed from the Withlacoochee region.

#### 6. SUSTENANCE FOR THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION: SPANISH DEPENDENCE ON INDIGENOUS SOURCES OF FOOD

Cabeza de Vaca (f9r) recalled that on the first fifteen days of overland travel the men encountered no Indians and found nothing to eat along the way but hearts of palm (*palmitos*) similar to those of his native Andalusia. Cabeza de Vaca (f7v) had spoken explicitly of the expedition's shortage of provisions in recording that he believed each man in the group could be given only a pound of hardtack and a pound of salt pork to carry on the overland journey, and he offered the estimate as one reason for which he opposed the decision to go inland. Cabeza de Vaca (f8v) claimed that the men actually set out with two pounds of hardtack (one, according to Oviedo; 584b) and a half pound of salt pork. There is no mention in either account of livestock taken on the expedition other than horses; other types of livestock had been present on Ponce de León's 1521 expedition to *Florida* and Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's in 1526. When De Soto came to the *Florida* coast in 1539, his soldiers drove live pigs along their route.

Narváez would have purchased both the little hardtack (*bizcocho*) and the salt pork (*tocino*) he possessed in Cuba just prior to the expedition's departure from Jagua in 1528. According to Sauer (*The Early Spanish Main* 157), Spanish immigrants to the Caribbean had adopted cassava root as a replacement for wheat in the production of bread by the beginning of the sixteenth century. Las Casas (*Apologética* 1:58–60 [chap. 10], 63–66 [chap. 11]) treated the indigenous cultivation of cassava root and the production of hardtack from it in detail. He recounted a particular instance of its preparation at Macaca in southern Cuba for Cortés's expedition to Mexico in 1519 (*Historia* 3:225 [bk. 3, chap. 115]). Las Casas said that at Macaca the Indians prepared more than three hundred loaves (*cargas*) of cassava bread (*pan caçabí*), each one weighing fifty pounds (*dos arrobas*); he stated in both of these accounts that a fifty-pound loaf of this bread provided sufficient nourishment for one man for an entire month. Thus, the one or two pounds of hardtack given to each of Narváez's men was sufficient for only a few days of their journey.

Las Casas (*Historia* 3:226 [bk. 3, chap. 116]) also noted that Cortés had acquired hogs and maize at Macaca. In narrating Cortés's voyage along the southern coast of Cuba in search of further supplies, Las Casas related that as Cortés arrived at Trinidad, he encountered a ship carrying "hogs, salt pork, and cassava to sell on the island of Cuba in the mines" coming from Jamaica

to Cuba, which he seized. According to Las Casas, at the time Cortés departed (late 1518/early 1519) the mines in Cuba had recently been discovered and were very rich. The Indians were not allowed to do anything but mine gold, and food was shipped to Cuba from Jamaica, where it was abundant. Las Casas (*Historia* 3:234 [bk. 3, chap. 118]) claimed that Francisco de Garay had held five thousand Indians for the care of his swine herds in Jamaica around that time.

Las Casas's description of Cortés's preparations illustrates Cabeza de Vaca's mention of the cassava bread, maize, and salt pork taken on the Narváez expedition. Above we mentioned the conflicting information regarding the supply of livestock on the Caribbean Islands, in New Spain, and in Pánuco in 1527 (chap. 1, sec. 5.B). The times of plenty in the Caribbean at the beginning of the third decade of the sixteenth century that Las Casas described evidently faded as the decade wore on, and shortages there may have made it difficult for Pánfilo de Narváez to adequately provision his expedition in 1528. Live pigs were probably not available, and the amount of hardtack and salt pork Narváez took was insufficient. The aftermath of a major hurricane must have made the acquisition of supplies more difficult, and Narváez most likely had not been able to completely prepare for the *Florida* expedition as he left Jagua, since he had expected to dock in Havana before departing for the mainland coast.

During their first days on the coast, between 14 April and 1 May 1528, Narváez and his men discovered some maize cultivated by the Indians, presumably of the Tampa Bay area (chap. 3, sec. 8). As we have seen above, Cabeza de Vaca (f10v–f11r) explains that along the entire journey from the Bay of the Cross to the settlement of Apalache between 1 May and 25 June, maize was not particularly abundant, and he records that the men suffered considerable hunger, often not finding maize for seven or eight leagues at a time; as mentioned above, Oviedo's (585a) version says the men sometimes did not find maize for four or five days at a time. From the slave labor provided by Indians of the Caribbean in the care of stock animals and the cultivation of cassava root and its processing into bread, to the forced surrender of maize by free peoples of the North American mainland, the indigenous American peoples formed the infrastructure on top of which Spanish colonies were built. As we will show in Parts 6 and 7 (chaps. 7 and 8) of our commentary, it was the dependence of the final four survivors of the Narváez expedition on the network of native societies that ultimately bore them successfully through *Florida* back into the realm of their countrymen on the northern fringe of Guzmán's Nueva Galicia in the northwestern part of modern-day Mexico.

## 7. FROM THE NATIVE SETTLEMENT BEYOND THE FIRST RIVER TO THE ONE OF APALACHE

In Oviedo's account of the overland contingent's travel from the native settlement to the north of the first river it visited (Smith's Withlacoochee) to the settlement of Apalache, there is a lacuna of considerable significance. According to Oviedo (585a), once the captain, Valenzuela, returned from his exploration down the river, the expedition set out for Apalache and arrived there on 25 June 1528. Not a single detail of the journey is recorded.

Cabeza de Vaca's own account reveals that this journey to Apalache was not uninterrupted, and he fills the space with the expedition's encounter with the native lord Dulchanchellin and the men's crossing of a second river, which he says the expeditionaries reached on 17 June 1528 (f10r). Accepting Smith's estimate of 21 May as the date the expedition departed from the first river, we may assume that the contingent traveled for approximately twenty-eight days before reaching the second one.

In comparison to the account of the first river, Cabeza de Vaca's description of the second suggests it was larger than the first. Whereas he claims the first one had a "very strong current" [muy gran corriente] and had been crossed "by swimming and on rafts" (f9r), he says that the second river was "very deep and very wide and had a very strong current" [muy hondo y muy ancho y la corriente muy rezia], and that the expedition crossed it only by means of a dugout canoe they paused to make and with the assistance of Indians (f10r). He also narrates the drowning of a Spaniard and his horse when the man attempted to cross the river on horseback.

Smith (*Relation* 31n8) speculated that this river was the Suwannee. Hallenbeck (40n30) believed it was the Apalachicola. According to the Narváez expedition accounts (f10v; 585a), the expedition arrived at the settlement of Apalache one day after the day of Saint John, that is, on 25 June 1528. Hallenbeck (40n31) incorrectly identified either the day of Saint John or the day after (it is not clear from his text) to be 17 June, the date Cabeza de Vaca said the men arrived at the second river. Covey (38) repeated this error. By improperly identifying the day of Saint John (24 June) or the day after (25 June) as 17 June, Hallenbeck introduced an inconsistency with the facts of the Narváez expedition accounts, suggesting that the expeditionaries simultaneously arrived at the second river and the settlement of Apalache. With this false assertion, Hallenbeck (40n32) proceeded to locate Apalache near the west bank of the Apalachicola River.

Properly identifying the dates, we can determine that the native settlement of Apalache lay approximately seven days' journey beyond the second river encountered, evidently to the north and west. Once Hallenbeck's

error with respect to the arrival date of the expedition at the second river and at the village of Apalache has been rectified, his identification of the second river as the Apalachicola would require his Apalache to be located some distance beyond the Apalachicola River to the west. No student of the Narváez expedition has ever proposed a location of Apalache much beyond the Apalachicola River to the west, and thus identifying the river the expedition discovered on 17 June 1528 as the Apalachicola seems less plausible than identifying it as the Suwannee. Identification of the Suwannee is, nevertheless, also highly speculative.

Aided by Dulchanchellin and his Indians, the expedition spent a full day crossing this second river, traveled to the Indians' settlement the following day, and then continued on until they arrived at Apalache on 25 June 1528 (fior-v). The *relación* therefore seems to account for forty-nine days of forward travel (fourteen from Tampa Bay to the first river, twenty-eight from the first river to the second, and seven more from the second river to Apalache). One man (the first to die on the expedition, according to Cabeza de Vaca [fior]) and one horse died on this journey.

#### 8. BEADS AND BELLS: ARCHAEOLOGY AND NARVÁEZ'S ROUTE FROM THE BAY OF THE CROSS TO APALACHE

As we have argued above, it is impossible to positively identify the two rivers Cabeza de Vaca says in his *relación* that the expedition crossed. Even when we accept the Withlacoochee and the Suwannee as the rivers to which he referred, neither narrative gives us any clue as to how far inland the Narváez expedition was when it crossed the Suwannee. In 1939 Swanton (United States De Soto Expedition Commission 114) hypothesized that the expedition had stayed near the coast, keeping somewhat away from more populated inland areas, since in comparison to the De Soto expedition accounts, the ones of Narváez's expedition seem to suggest that Narváez's men encountered considerably fewer people in this part of the Florida Peninsula than De Soto's did eleven years later. This statement presumed without justification positive knowledge about the native population of the peninsula in the early sixteenth century and about De Soto's route through Florida.

Swanton seems to be the first route interpreter who went beyond a time/distance interpretation of the Narváez expedition accounts, applying knowledge derived from extratextual ethnohistorical and archaeological investigations to them in an effort to determine a plausible route for the Narváez expedition. Another example of Swanton's approach is his application of an independently established location of the Apalachee cultural area

east of the Apalachicola River, by which he assumed that the settlement of Apalache cited in the Narváez expedition narratives had to be located east of that river. Since then, a combination of direct textual interpretation and the addition of extratextual data to the Narváez accounts has been used for route interpretation purposes. Archaeological investigation has focused to a relatively small degree on the locations of indigenous cultural areas, due to the lack of specificity in the narratives pertaining to Indian groups. It has focused to a much greater degree on artifacts of European manufacture found in the regions through which the Narváez expedition is believed to have passed.

In 1954, John Goggin, in an article entitled “Are There De Soto Relics in Florida?” argued that one of two noteworthy concentrations of artifacts of European manufacture on the Florida Peninsula believed to date from the sixteenth century was centered around Old Tampa Bay. In concluding his discussion of the artifacts, Goggin (161) cautioned that the “small but greatest concentration of identified early to mid-16th century Spanish objects” found around Tampa Bay should not be dismissed in considering the routes of Narváez and De Soto; he stated further that more circumstantial evidence in the form of objects such as Spanish pottery, coins, bronze hinges, and similar items would have to be used to determine the routes of these expeditions in the absence of artifacts that could be positively linked to them.

Setting out from Goggin’s (161) suggestion that items other than those he had reviewed might be useful for establishing the routes of the Narváez and De Soto expeditions, Brain argued in 1975 that Clarksdale bells and cut rock crystal beads appeared to be associated almost exclusively with sixteenth-century Spanish contexts. Brain (135–36) referred to only one bell that he believed might have proceeded from the Narváez expedition and to a concentration of cut rock crystal beads in Florida that might have proceeded from either the Narváez or the De Soto expedition. Brain (135) recognized the portability of these small items, which the accounts of the expeditions explained to have served as barter with indigenous peoples, and warned about the dangers of making strong claims about the routes of the expeditions based on such circumstantial evidence.

Since approximately 1983, Jeffrey M. Mitchem has been reviewing the literature on previous archaeological excavations of sites on the western side of the Florida Peninsula, has participated in and supervised archaeological fieldwork in the region, and has summarized and interpreted the findings. Mitchem has focused particularly on the Weeki Wachee and Ruth Smith mounds (Mitchem, Smith, Goodyear, and Allen) and on the Tatham Mound (Mitchem and Leader) in the northwestern part of the peninsula, finding at these sites a high concentration of Nueva Cadiz and faceted chevron

beads; both types have been dated to pre-1565 European manufacture and on this basis have been assumed to be associated with the Narváez and De Soto expeditions. Mitchem and McEwan described some previously undocumented Clarksdale bells in 1988 and gave an updated general summary of the archaeological significance of Clarksdale bell finds in the southeastern United States.

In his overall interpretation of the archaeological findings, Mitchem (“Artifacts,” “Initial Spanish-Indian Contact”) has been somewhat ambivalent about their significance, sometimes almost claiming that the discovery of them points directly to specific incidents of historical contact with particular groups of Indians narrated in the accounts and at others speaking condescendingly of “Narváez was here” historical reconstruction (“Artifacts” 103) and suggesting that the artifacts are useful only for more accurately dating the indigenous contexts in which they are found. With respect to their pertinence to the route of the Narváez expedition, Marrinan, Scarry, and Majors (76) seem to best summarize the situation, saying simply that “[b]etween the Withlacoochee and the Suwannee Rivers, there are currently no data to support the passage of either the Narváez or de Soto expedition.” Nevertheless, Mitchem’s findings make the route through northwestern Florida at least plausible, even though the evidence is too circumstantial to allow us ever to make the certain claim that “Narváez was [t]here.” Hoffman (“Narváez” 55) has recently provided a map of a plausible route the expedition might have followed from the Bay of the Cross to Apalache, despite the overly specific character of it resulting from an overinterpretation of the written sources.

In Cabeza de Vaca’s (f10r) narration of the journey to Apalache we find a single reference to “beads and bells and other items of exchange.” Cabeza de Vaca recounts that as the expedition neared the second river it encountered, supposed to be the Suwannee, it met the native lord Dulchanchellin, to whom these things were given. As we noted above, neither the river, nor the native lord, nor the beads and bells figure in Oviedo’s account. Oviedo (589a) claimed that the men later traded beads and bells to Indians they encountered during their raft journey in addition to the maize that both accounts record (f17v; 589a); all of this was given in exchange for food. Cabeza de Vaca (f21r–v) again referred to beads and bells used in a peace exchange with the Indians the men first encountered at the end of their raft voyage.

Regardless of whether the beads and bells discovered in this century by archaeologists help to fix the route of the Narváez expedition, and regardless of whether they can be positively linked to the Narváez expedition or the De Soto expedition or came from some other European visit to the shores of

the Florida Peninsula in the first half of the sixteenth century, we find them interesting in and of themselves as well as pertinent to the Narváez expedition narratives in that they aid in interpreting the generic references to beads and bells that the accounts contain. For color photographs of beads and bells recovered from Florida archaeological sites, see Mitchem and Leader (facing 48) and Mitchem (“Artifacts” 102, 104, 107).

Cabeza de Vaca’s (f31v) subsequent reference to Esquivel’s beads perhaps signified a rosary. Under the entry for *cuenta*, Covarrubias (352a) mentioned “bead and beads for praying” [*cuenta y cuentas para rezar*] in his *Tesoro* and referred the reader to his entry for “rosary” (*rosario*). Other appearances in Cabeza de Vaca’s account of beads (*cuentas de la mar*, f27v; *cuentas*, f46v, f47r, f47v, f49r, f55r, f57r, f61v, f62v) that the Indians gave the Europeans, no longer accompanied by bells, suggest pearls and beads evidently of American origin.

#### 9. THE LOCATIONS OF APALACHE, AUTE, AND THE BAY OF HORSES AND THE PERTINENCE OF THE DE SOTO EXPEDITION ACCOUNTS

Route interpreters have generally begun determining the locations of the native settlements of Apalache and Aute mentioned in the accounts of the Narváez expedition by establishing the settlements’ relative distance from one another and their proximity to the point from which the Narváez expeditionaries are thought to have set out on their raft voyage, a place on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico that the group named the “Bay of Horses.” The Narváez expedition accounts place Aute at eight (585b) or nine days (f12v, f13v; 587a) of travel to the south (f12r) toward the sea from Apalache and approximately one additional day from the coast. Whereas the general north-south configuration of Apalache, Aute, and the coastal point of embarkation is relatively constrained by the narratives (dependent, nevertheless, on the distance signified by a day’s travel), the east-west placement of this trajectory on route interpretations published since Buckingham Smith first speculated on the topic in 1851 has vacillated between a western limit slightly west of the Apalachicola River and an eastern one bounded by the region of the Aucilla River drainage basin. The flexibility of these villages’ location along an east-west axis derives from the large interpretational margin allowed by the vagueness of the Narváez accounts with respect to the distances the expedition traveled through the northwestern region of the Florida Peninsula, as we have examined above.

As we also saw above, interpretations of the segment of Narváez’s journey from the Bay of the Cross to Apalache have been based almost completely on direct interpretation of the narratives of the expedition and recent archaeological data. References to the Narváez expedition in the De Soto

expedition narratives concerning that first part of the journey pertain to De Soto's recovery of Juan Ortiz, and they only circumstantially link the "Bahía Honda" on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula where De Soto landed with Narváez's Bay of the Cross, since Ortiz was deposited on the coast not at the time of the Narváez expedition's original visit to this coast but, rather, while on a subsequent search expedition for Narváez, evidently one that had gone back to the *Florida* coast from Cuba sometime after the original ships of the expedition returned to the island. Whereas the accounts of Narváez's landing site in both Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* and in Oviedo's text are quite explicitly described, the four De Soto narratives are rather vague, and the Narváez accounts therefore seem to have played a stronger role in determining the landing site of the expeditions for those interpreters who believe that both disembarked near the same bay. With respect to the locations of Apalache, Aute, and the Bay of Horses, however, as well as the route of the Narváez expeditionaries' raft voyage (see chap. 5, sec. 6), "interference" from the De Soto expedition narratives has played a considerably larger role in route interpretations of the Narváez expedition.

By the time Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain in August 1537, the lands of *Florida* had been granted to Hernando de Soto (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 7). In the spring of 1539, eleven years after Narváez had landed on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula, De Soto arrived there with the first major expedition of conquest to that region since Narváez had been there. Like Narváez, De Soto died in *Florida*, but some three hundred of his men were successful in building ships, once again as Narváez's men had done, and sailing from the Mississippi River to Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco in 1543. Much in the same way that references in later accounts of exploration in southwestern North America to Cabeza de Vaca's journey through that region are complicated (see chap. 13, secs. 8, 11, 14, and 15), the historical relationships between the Narváez and De Soto expeditions and the textual one between their respective accounts are problematic, particularly because none of the four survivors of Narváez's overland expedition went with De Soto back to the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

The four surviving accounts of the De Soto expedition (see chap. 13, secs. 3 and 9) contain a number of references to the Narváez expedition for these parts of the journey and have frequently been used in the study of the Narváez accounts to illuminate, clarify, or corroborate information narrated therein, as well as to determine the route of the Narváez expedition. This has often been done with very limited consideration of the complex historical and textual relationships between the two expeditions and their various accounts. With respect to Narváez's visits to Apalache, Aute, and



his Bay of Horses, as well as his raft journey, mentions of the discovery of artifacts or indigenous testimony regarding Narváez's route in the De Soto expedition accounts have been combined with claims of exaggerated certainty about the De Soto expedition's route in order to "fix" the Narváez expedition's route.

Just as Narváez had done before him, De Soto went in search of the province of Apalache from the point along the western coast of the Florida Peninsula where he disembarked. Upon reaching a large settlement that he believed to be the central village of the province of Apalache, he sent Juan de Añasco south from the settlement in search of the sea. Biedma (49; Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:227) narrated that "[h]ere we went to look for the sea, which was about nine leagues from this town [Yniahyco], and we found on the shore the place where Pánfilo de Narváez made his boats, because we found the site of the forge and many bones of the horses, and the Indians told us through the interpreter how the other Christians had made boats there." Ranjel (Oviedo, *Historia* 1:554a [bk. 17, chap. 24]; Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:267) gave a similar account, telling that "Juan de Añasco had left from this town [Iviahica], and eight leagues from it, he found the port where Pánfilo de Narváez had embarked in the boats that he made. This he recognized by the skulls of the horses and site of the forge and cribs and mortars that they had made in order to grind the corn, and by crosses fashioned on the trees."

The two accounts are notably similar in their narration of an eight- or nine-league journey to the sea from the village of Yniahyco/Iviahica to where the remains of Narváez's raft-building camp were found. These accounts say nothing about the relationship between Narváez's Apalache and the Yniahyco/Iviahica from which Añasco's contingent departed. Whereas the Narváez accounts claimed that Apalache lay eight or nine *days'* journey from the sea, Yniahyco/Iviahica lay eight or nine *leagues* from the sea. Neither account makes any mention of a settlement that might have corresponded to the Aute of the Narváez expedition accounts.

In his 1557 published account, the Gentleman of Elvas (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:72 [chap. 12]) gave Anhayca Apalache as the name of the central settlement of the province of Apalache and reported that

[t]he governor was informed that the sea was ten leagues from there. He immediately sent a captain and some horse and foot, and after going six leagues the captain found a town called Ochete. He reached the sea and found a large tree which had been cut down and made into troughs [*couchos*] fixed with some posts which were used as mangers and saw skulls of horses. With this message he came and what they said of Narváez was considered true,

namely, that he had there built the boats with which he left that land and in which he was lost at sea.

The Gentleman of Elvas claimed that Anhayca Apalache was ten leagues from the sea, and he introduces the discovery of a town, Ochete, six leagues from the sea. This Ochete appears in the sequence of the Gentleman of Elvas's narrative where the Narváez expedition accounts mentioned Aute.

The Gentleman of Elvas's (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:48 [chap. 2]) explicit reference to Cabeza de Vaca's written account of the Narváez expedition at the beginning of his own narration of the De Soto expedition suggests the *possibility* of a textual convergence rather than a historical one. If the Gentleman of Elvas did indeed introduce the discovery of the Narváez campsite as the result of his reading Cabeza de Vaca's account, the fact that the discovery appears in all four De Soto accounts must be explained. Here as well the possibility of infiltration of the De Soto narratives by rumors and written information about the Narváez expedition must be considered; it is certainly not impossible that the De Soto expedition did in fact discover the Narváez camp, but the possibility of textual influences between the Narváez accounts and the De Soto accounts, as well as among the various De Soto accounts, should not be overlooked.

In discussing Añasco's march to the coast, El Inca Garcilaso (131 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 4]) explicitly referred to Cabeza de Vaca's text as his *Comentarios*. Whereas the Gentleman of Elvas's reference to Cabeza de Vaca's account positively links him only to consultation of a manuscript version of Cabeza de Vaca's text prior to his own departure from Spain with De Soto in 1538, El Inca's use of the particular title *Comentarios* suggests that he used a copy of the 1555 published version of Cabeza de Vaca's *Florida* account, including both Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* of the Narváez expedition and Pero Hernández's *Comentarios* on Cabeza de Vaca's 1540–45 expedition to Río de la Plata. The Gentleman of Elvas may also have consulted one of Cabeza de Vaca's two published versions upon return to the Iberian Peninsula prior to publishing his 1557 account of the De Soto expedition.

El Inca Garcilaso (130 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 3]) was the only chronicler to quantitatively describe the principal town of the province of Apalache, where De Soto spent the winter of 1539, and he said that it contained two hundred and fifty large houses of good quality. El Inca was likewise the only chronicler of the De Soto expedition to consider a possible relationship between De Soto's Apalache and the one Cabeza de Vaca describes in his *relación*, and thus he alone claimed that Narváez's expedition had not entered the central town of Apalache as De Soto had, because the Apalache Cabeza de Vaca described was much smaller than De Soto's. This claim is particularly curious in light

of the fact that El Inca was the only De Soto chronicler to use the name “Apalache” for this settlement, as Cabeza de Vaca had.

El Inca Garcilaso’s (132–36 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chaps. 5–6]) narration of Juan de Añasco’s journey from De Soto’s Apalache south to the coast deviates from the Gentleman of Elvas’s account in that he claimed the town of “Aute” (perhaps equivalent to the Gentleman of Elvas’s Ochete and evidently renamed by El Inca according to Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*) to be only two leagues from Apalache, rather than the Gentleman of Elvas’s six. His account of the Añasco contingent’s first attempt to travel from Aute to the coast is complicated by Indian guides who led the men off their desired path to the coast, forcing them to return to Aute without reaching the coast. El Inca Garcilaso claimed that on their final attempt, Añasco’s group was led directly to the shore by three Indians along a path from Aute of only two leagues, suggesting a total distance from Apalache to the coast of only four leagues, rather than the eight stated by Biedma and Ranjel and the Portuguese caballero’s ten. On the coast, Juan de Añasco’s party ostensibly arrived

at the place where Pámphilo de Narváez had camped. There was a great amount of charcoal around the site where he had built his forge to make the assortment of nails necessary for ships, and there also were some thick beams which had been hollowed out like bread troughs to serve as cribs for horses. The guides now pointed out the spot where the Indians had killed ten of those Christians (as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca tells us in his history), and they led their captors step by step through all of the places where Pámphilo de Narváez had traveled, pointing out where such and such a thing occurred and eventually giving by signs and words, some well and some poorly understood, an account of all the remarkable things that worthy cavalier had done at the bay. Some spoke in Castilian, for the people along that entire coast prided themselves on their knowledge of that language and made every effort possible to learn even isolated words, which they repeated again and again. (Garcilaso de la Vega 135–36 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 6]; Varner and Varner 192)

El Inca’s hyperbolic claims about the Añasco party’s discoveries of the Narváez campsite and the Indians who walked them through it force us to disregard virtually the whole account as a literary invention, most likely an artful blending of Cabeza de Vaca’s published account of the time the Narváez expedition spent at the site and the Gentleman of Elvas’s published account of the De Soto expedition’s subsequent discovery of it. We must therefore necessarily question both El Inca Garcilaso’s description of the “Apalache” where he says the De Soto expedition lodged, as well as his claim that the settlement Cabeza de Vaca referred to as Apalache was not the central

settlement of the province but rather a smaller, less important one to the south of it.

El Inca Garcilaso's (127–28 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 2]) "original" (i.e., uncorroborated by the other De Soto accounts) claim that as the De Soto expeditionaries moved from their point of debarkation toward Apalache they were inspired by the memory of the Narváez expeditionaries to seek revenge on the Indians who had attacked those men as they crossed a certain swamp (*ciénega*) seems also to be an invention inspired by Garcilaso's reading of a particular passage of Cabeza de Vaca's printed *relación*. El Inca's allegation that this swamp (along the De Soto expeditionaries' route between the place where they landed on the western coast of the Florida Peninsula and Apalache) was the same one that Narváez's men had crossed, although "on a different path," some "ten or eleven years earlier" evidently referred to Cabeza de Vaca's (f12v–f13v) narration of the Narváez expedition's journey from Apalache to Aute. El Inca no doubt saw his De Soto expeditionaries seeking revenge for the Indians' murder of the Spaniard Avellaneda; that this same swamp had been crossed by the two expeditions on different legs of their journeys was of little concern to El Inca, who perhaps imagined his De Soto expeditionaries crossing the Narváez expeditionaries' path from the lesser "false" central settlement of Apalache to Aute on their own journey to the larger "true" central settlement of the province as they arrived from the Florida Peninsula.

Smith (*Relation* 51n1) was the first to propose Saint Marks Bay as Narváez's Bay of Horses, and he mentions the reference in El Inca Garcilaso's *La Florida* regarding the De Soto expedition's discovery in 1539 of the site where Narváez's men had built the rafts and notes that Charlevoix, on his visit to San Marcos de Apalache in 1722, noted that the bay was precisely the one El Inca had called the "port of Aute." Unfortunately, Charlevoix had no way of knowing he was at El Inca's port of Aute, and thus, even if the De Soto expedition's discovery of Narváez's camp is authentic, its route is as uncertain as that of the Narváez expedition and tells us less about where Narváez had been than the two Narváez accounts themselves.

Very much to the contrary of Davenport's (27:135n14) claim that "[t]he De Soto narratives throw considerable light on the geographical location of Apalache, and Narváez's *Bahia [sic] de los Caballos*," the accounts of the De Soto expedition offer little or no aid in locating Apalache, Aute, or the Bay of Horses. As we will see in our Part 4 commentary (chap. 5, sec. 6), mentions in the De Soto expedition accounts of native testimony given to the De Soto expeditionaries concerning the passage of the Narváez expedition in their rafts along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico and the De Soto expedition's discovery of Narváez expedition artifacts also

pertaining to the Narváez expedition's raft voyage show a similar propensity for textual provenance rather than actual historical intersection of the two expeditions' paths. In the case where the accounts might reasonably be taken as representative of historical fact, the locations at which the De Soto expedition acquired the information are considerably more obscure and the evidence presented considerably more circumstantial with regard to establishing the stopping points of the Narváez expedition along the route of their coastal raft voyage. Ultimately, the points of overlap between the accounts bear considerably more interest for their textual resonance than for the historical intersections they might represent.

Having implied curiously that Narváez's expedition had disembarked at Apalachee Bay on 15 April 1528, Shea (243) made no attempt to locate Apalache, Aute, or the Bay of Horses. Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 184n2) reviewed a number of previously suggested locations from Tallahassee to somewhere between the Suwannee and Aucilla Rivers for the location of Apalache; Lowery himself settled on the lake region of northern Leon and Jefferson Counties near Lake Miccosukee and Tallahassee, Florida. Hodge (29n2) agreed, intimating that he believed Cabeza de Vaca's (f10v) descriptions of lowland geography to correspond to that region. Hodge hypothesized that Apalache had been located on Miccosukee Lake (29n2) and that Aute was situated at the head of Saint Marks Bay (33n1). Like Smith, Hodge (37n2) identified the Bay of Horses as Saint Marks Bay of Apalachee Bay. Davenport (27:217n1) claimed that information in the De Soto narratives eliminated the possibility of Saint Marks as the Bay of Horses; he identified it as the mouth of the Ochlockonee River to the west of Saint Marks.

In narrating his exploratory journey from Aute to the coast, Cabeza de Vaca (f13v) made an elliptical reference to a river he says the expedition named the Magdalena, which he suggests the expedition had discovered and perhaps even followed to the sea on its way from Apalache to Aute. This led the Bandeliers (Bandelier, *Journey* 25n6, 29n13, 33n15) to cautiously speculate that the Río de la Magdalena might have been the Apalachicola and that Apalache and Aute may have been located along it and the Bay of Horses at its mouth. As we have mentioned above, Hallenbeck (40n30) identified the second river that the Narváez expedition crossed as the Apalachicola and then proceeded to locate the settlement of Apalache on the western bank of that river, having made a temporal error in understanding 17 June to be the calendar date of the day of Saint John or the day after it, on which the Narváez expedition reached Apalache. Because he had omitted approximately eight days of the expedition's travel beyond the second river to Apalache, Hallenbeck (43n39) appears to have understood the river Cabeza de Vaca says the expedition crossed on 17 June (which Smith identified as

the Suwannee) to also have been the Río de la Magdalena mentioned in the context of the expedition's journey from Apalache and Aute, despite the fact that Cabeza de Vaca nowhere makes such an association. Collapsing the two rivers into one and identifying it as the Apalachicola, Hallenbeck (45n44) placed Aute also along the Apalachicola and identified the Bay of Horses as Apalachicola Bay. Whereas the Bandeliers had not identified the river the expedition crossed on 17 June and gave a clear, plausible route interpretation in suggesting that the Río de la Magdalena was the Apalachicola River and that the Apalachicola region was the location of Apalache, Aute, and the Bay of Horses, Hallenbeck collapses the *relación* geography from the river crossed on 17 June with the one about eight days distant from it that Cabeza de Vaca called the Río de la Magdalena. Proponents of a location of the Bay of Horses to the east of the mouth of the Apalachicola River have offered the Ochlockonee, Saint Marks, and Aucilla Rivers as possible equivalents to Cabeza de Vaca's Río de la Magdalena.

Only El Inca Garcilaso's account clearly distinguishes between Narváez's Apalache and De Soto's Yniahyco/Iviahica/Anhayca Apalache as two separate sites of indigenous settlement of different size (forty small dwellings versus two hundred and fifty large ones), and on these grounds we cannot rule out the possibility that El Inca's description was invented and that the two places were actually the same one, as Davenport (27:217n1) asserted. Where the settlement was located depends on the route interpretation we assign to the accounts. Ewen ("Anhaica," "Soldier of Fortune") has argued that the Martin site discovered just east of Tallahassee, Florida, in 1987 is the site of the Apalache where De Soto overwintered in 1539. Artifacts of European manufacture, including pottery, coins, and beads dating from the early sixteenth century, suggest that this site may pertain to the Narváez and/or De Soto expeditions. The items themselves are indeed interesting, yet the discovery of a shattered jawbone of a pig in a sixteenth-century context (Ewen, "Soldier of Fortune" 89) is not sufficient evidence upon which to exclude the possibility of Narváez expedition origin for some of the objects found at the Martin site. Even when it is agreed that Narváez's and De Soto's Apalaches are the same, at most the objects found at the Martin site suggest the possibility that the expeditions passed through or by the region; to argue that the Martin site is Narváez's Apalache and/or De Soto's Anhayca Apalache is to assert far more than can reasonably be claimed.

Mitchem ("Artifacts" 100–03) has presented archaeological evidence suggesting that Aute and the Bay of Horses were located in the region of the Work Place site and Saint Marks Wildlife Refuge Cemetery site in the region of the Wakulla and Saint Marks Rivers. Marrinan, Scarry, and Majors (77) note that these findings are sufficient to locate the general area of possible

Spanish occupation but that they do not give us the exact locations of Aute and the Bay of Horses, sites that remain unknown. Elizabeth Scott's ("Route") and Hoffman's ("Narváez" 60–63) recent reconstructions of the Narváez expedition's route through northwestern Florida are plausible, but their identifications are far more specific than the Narváez expedition accounts permit.

#### 10. THE SETTLEMENTS OF APALACHE PROVINCE AND CABEZA DE VACA'S REFERENCE TO "THE GELVES"

##### 10.A. *Maize Agriculture and Apalache Settlement Patterns*

Cabeza de Vaca states at two different points in his *relación* (f12r, f12v) that the overland contingent of the Narváez expedition spent twenty-five days at the native settlement of Apalache; Oviedo's account says twenty-six (585b, 586a). The dates of the stay in Apalache would have been from approximately 25 June to 19–20 July 1528 (Smith, *Relation* 38), during which time Narváez sent out three reconnaissance missions into the lands around the settlement (f12r; 585b). From his direct observation of the region over this lengthy period of time, Cabeza de Vaca (f11r) recalled that Apalache was made up of "forty small houses, built low to the ground and in protected places . . . surrounded by very thick woods and great groves and many lagoons." Cabeza de Vaca (f11v) reported that the province had many fields of maize and that the houses were "scattered about the countryside in the same manner as those of the Gelves." Oviedo (585a) also referred to forty small and very protected houses and many maize fields and stored dry maize, but he did not include the reference to the Gelves. The fact that Oviedo (616a) picked up the reference to "los Xelves" when he consulted Cabeza de Vaca's printed *relación* suggests that it had not appeared in the Joint Report document.

As we saw in the previous section, El Inca Garcilaso described De Soto's Apalache as a settlement of two hundred and fifty large and good houses, and he claimed that Narváez's Apalache must have been a lesser settlement nearer the coast than De Soto's Apalache. El Inca Garcilaso (130 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 3]; Varner and Varner 184) narrated that "[i]n addition to the principal town, there were many more scattered throughout the vicinity at a half-league, one, one and a half, two and at times three leagues apart. Some comprised fifty or sixty dwellings and others a hundred more or less, not to mention another great number which were sprinkled about and not arranged as a town." El Inca Garcilaso (131 [bk. 2, pt. 2, chap. 4]) claimed that Narváez had actually not visited the main settlement of Apalache but rather a small satellite village to the south of the one in which De Soto overwintered. Hoffman ("Narváez" 60–61) has recently suggested that Narváez's Apalache

lay to the east of De Soto's, yet a distinction between the two towns can ultimately be made only on the basis of El Inca's description, the veracity of which is uncertain.

The other De Soto accounts are far less specific in their description of Apalache. The Gentleman of Elvas (Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:71 [chap. 12]) noted that once the De Soto expedition passed through Vitachuco, a settlement he said was in the jurisdiction of Apalache, "the land was very populous and maize abounded" and that the region had "many open districts like villages." Biedma (49; Clayton, Knight, and Moore 1:227) said only that "[i]n this province of Apalache there are many towns, and it is a land of plentiful food." Ranjel gave no assessment of the lands of Apalache.

Scarry has reviewed the prehistoric Apalachee, and Hann (*Apalachee*, "The Apalachee") treats historic references to the peoples of the cultural region defined to include the lands from just west of the Ochlockonee River east to the western bank of the Aucilla River. Both explain the settlement patterns of the Apalachee groups in relation to the small rivers of the region and the relationship of these rivers to maize cultivation. Unlike other Mississippian riverine cultures, which established themselves along the floodplains of major rivers throughout the Midwest in villages and separate dwellings scattered throughout their maize fields (see Woods), the Apalachee are believed to have cultivated their maize on the higher ground in the areas between the small, non-silt-bearing rivers. Despite the difference in the region the Apalache inhabited relative to the rivers near which they lived due to the different character of the smaller rivers, the demands of maize cultivation nevertheless required the population to disperse in small settlements and individual dwellings scattered throughout their fields.

#### 10.B. *The Significance of the Gelves*

In our discussion of Cabeza de Vaca's military experience prior to departing for the Americas (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 5.E), we identified his reference to "the Gelves" as signifying the small island off the coast of Tunisia known today as Djerba. Cabeza de Vaca claimed that the settlement pattern of the inhabitants of that island resembled the one he observed among the Indians of Apalache province.

Until the present, the significance of the Gelves, to which Cabeza de Vaca likened Apalache, has been a vexed question. Pupo-Walker (*Naufragios* 200n141) has recently suggested that the Gelves of Cabeza de Vaca's account was first identified in 1941 as a small town ten kilometers to the southwest of Seville on the western bank of the Guadalquivir River. Covey (40) repeated the 1941 identification in his 1961 translation of the *relación*. In spite of his



citation of “the campaigns of Gelves” mentioned in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Pupo-Walker gives no identification of the place to which Gelves referred. The author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* suggested obliquely, through a claim Lazarillo’s mother makes, that the “certain expedition against Moors” on which Lazarillo’s father died while serving as a mule driver for a caballero who went on the expedition was one that had gone to the Gelves. Thus, the destination of the expedition that the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* had in mind was obviously a land of the Muslim infidel, not a small Andalusian town south of Seville on the Guadalquivir River. In his simultaneous reference to the two places, Pupo-Walker apparently understood both to refer to the Andalusian town, and the note to Gelves in the recent English translation of his edition of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* is simply “Núñez refers to a town in Andalusia, Spain” (López-Morillas 141n11).

Although Blecua (9–10) gives only the years—1510 and 1520—of the first two sixteenth-century Spanish expeditions to Djerba, to one of which the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* obviously alluded, he assumes his reader is aware that in this text the term refers to the small island off the coast of Tunisia and thus neglects to identify it. It seems fairly evident that the author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* imagined Lazarillo’s mother to claim that her husband died on Pedro Navarro’s tragic 1510 expedition, as Blecua (10n6) agrees, although the question of whether the reference pertains to this 1510 defeat or instead to Hugo de Moncada’s 1520 victorious Spanish attack on the island remains unsettled and lies at the heart of the debate concerning the date of composition and the internal chronology of that anonymous work (Blecua 9–10).

To our knowledge, Justo García Morales (16, 65n3), in his 1945 edition of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, was the first to entertain the possibility that Cabeza de Vaca’s reference to the Gelves signified Djerba. García Morales referred to Pedro Navarro’s disastrous 1510 expedition to the island and hypothesized that Cabeza de Vaca may have been one of the fortunate men who escaped from the island alive; he did not mention the 1520 expedition. García Morales argued that though it was difficult to prove, it seemed more likely that Cabeza de Vaca’s reference to the Gelves pertained to the Mediterranean island rather than to the Andalusian town and that Cabeza de Vaca rose in rank through his participation in the 1510 expedition. Since 1945, most editions and translations have offered both possible interpretations of the referent (e.g., Barrera, *Álvar Núñez* 81n41; Favata and Fernández, *Relación* 27n3, *The Account* 42n3). Ferrando Pérez (*Naufragios* 55n34) follows García Morales in privileging Djerba over the Andalusian town but erroneously claims that only four hundred, rather than four thousand, men died on the 1510 expedition.

As we discussed in our treatment of Cabeza de Vaca's military career, he certainly did not go to Djerba on the 1510 expedition, but he almost surely did meet some of the men who survived it when both they and he reached Gaeta in the kingdom of Naples in the autumn of 1511 (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 5). There the soldiers arriving from Pedro Navarro's Djerba campaign would have given him the information about the topography of the island against which he would later compare his observations about the organization of the indigenous dwellings and the maize fields of Apalache. The notoriety that the 1510 disaster lent to Djerba in the minds of Spaniards, as well as the fact that Charles V led another attack on Tunis in 1535, just two years prior to Cabeza de Vaca's return to Spain, help to explain why Cabeza de Vaca chose this particular place to which he had never gone to compare to Apalache.

A further source leads us finally to a direct description of Djerba from the sixteenth century. In his annotation, published in 1570, to the reference to Gelves in Garcilaso de la Vega's second eclogue, Fernando de Herrera (591–95) identified the Mediterranean island as Djerba and gave a lengthy account of its topography and Pedro Navarro's 1510 Spanish attack on the island in which four thousand Christian soldiers had died, among them Don García de Toledo, heir to the house of the duke of Alba. Herrera's earliest source for the topography of the island was written in Arabic by Joannes Leo Africanus (El-Hasan ben Mohammed el-Wazzân ez-Zayyâti) and published in Italian translation in 1526 under the title *Descrizione dell'Africa*. Leo Africanus was born in Granada between 1489 and 1495 (Épaulard in Leo Africanus vii) and was captured by an Italian corsair on the island of Djerba and taken to Rome in 1518 (Épaulard in Leo Africanus ix). In his description of Djerba, Leo Africanus (400) said that the island's inhabitants "live in hamlets of which the houses are dispersed, each property having its own house inhabited by a single family. Yet there are also certain of these hamlets where the houses are grouped together."

That Cabeza de Vaca's reference to the Gelves refers to the Mediterranean island and not to the small Andalusian town south of Seville is supported, finally, by the fact that when the author of the condensed version of the beginning of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* known as the Short Report composed this text, he removed the phrase "the houses are scattered about the countryside in the same manner as those of the Gelves" and replaced it with "the houses [are] scattered through the countryside in the fashion of the farmsteads [*caseríos*] of the Basque country [*Vizcaya*]" (Barrera López, "Problemas textuales" 26). As we argue elsewhere (chap. 12, sec. 4), the author of this summary was probably Alonso de Santa Cruz, who wrote an account of the 1510 Djerba disaster sometime in the mid–sixteenth century (1:40–43 [pt. 1, chap. 12]). Had Cabeza de Vaca's referent "Gelves" signified

the layout of the small town near Seville (probably no different from any other along the Guadalquivir River), Santa Cruz would certainly not have found the cultural translation necessary.

#### 11. DON PEDRO DE TEXCOCO

Oviedo (586a) reported that the Narváez expedition eventually resolved to leave Apalache and go to Aute in part because the Indians of the region “had killed a native lord [cacique] of those which the friars were bringing from New Spain.” Cabeza de Vaca (f12v) called this man “a lord [*señor*] of Tescuco who was called Don Pedro, whom the commissary had brought with him.” As discussed above (chap. 1, sec. 7), the commissary of the Narváez expedition, Juan Suárez, had gone to New Spain in 1524 and served there as the *primero guardián* of the convent of Huexocingo. On 16 March 1527, he petitioned the crown to allow him to take six Indians he had brought with him to Spain back to New Spain along with twenty friars he was also taking. Probably having traveled to the Caribbean with Narváez in June 1527 with intentions to continue on to New Spain, Suárez seems to have changed his mind regarding his planned return and went with Narváez to *Florida*. Don Pedro de Texcoco may have been one of the Indians Suárez had earlier taken to Spain, and Oviedo’s account seems to suggest that more than this one native lord was taken on the expedition. Smith’s (*Relation* 38n7) identification of this Don Pedro as the brother of the Acolhuan prince Ixtlilxochitl who assisted Cortés in the conquest of Mexico has not been substantiated.

#### 12. JOURNEY FROM APALACHE TO THE BAY OF HORSES

As mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca (f13v) makes an elliptical reference to a river, named the Magdalena, which the group had discovered sometime prior to their nine-day (f13v; eight- or nine-day, Oviedo 587a) journey from Apalache to Aute. Oviedo makes no mention of the river. Cabeza de Vaca implies that the men knew the sea was near because they had discovered it by following this river downstream, evidently sometime prior to setting out from Apalache. The expedition must have arrived near Aute near the end of July 1528; Smith (*Relation* 41) proposed an arrival date at Aute of 28 July 1528. The Spaniard Avellaneda was the third casualty of the expedition; he died on the eight- or nine-day journey from Apalache to Aute (f13v; 587a).

On the exploratory expedition to the sea from Aute, Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso del Castillo, and Andrés Dorantes traveled with a party of seven (nine, 587a) horsemen and fifty foot soldiers for a full day before arriving at

a “bay or entrance to the sea” (f14r). The following day twenty of the soldiers set out to explore the bay and look for the coast. Returning the next night, they reported only that the bays were very large and entered deep inland and that the coast (open sea) seemed to be far away. The party returned to Aute to find Narváez and the rest of the men very ill and injured from Indian attacks. Cabeza de Vaca (f14r) claims also that the Indians had killed a horse. In an effort to escape from the natives, the expedition departed the following day, traveling to the bay that Cabeza de Vaca’s exploratory party had found. The expedition had spent the period from approximately 29 July 1528 through 3 August 1528 in Aute (Smith, *Relation* 41, 45).

Since departing from the Bay of the Cross, the expedition had lost three men (Velázquez, Don Pedro de Texcoco, and Avellaneda) and three horses. In addition to the forty-nine days they had spent traveling to Apalache (above, sec. 7), they traveled nine days to Aute and an additional day to the coast. The expedition thus spent approximately fifty-nine actual days traveling from the Bay of the Cross (Tampa Bay) to the Bay of Horses (an inlet along the coast of Apalachee Bay).

### 13. INTRAEXPEDITIONARY CONFLICT

As we considered in our Part 2 commentary (chap. 3, sec. 12), one element particular to Cabeza de Vaca’s account of the Narváez expedition is his portrayal of a distinct rivalry between himself and Pánfilo de Narváez. Cabeza de Vaca’s narration may be much better characterized as an after-the-fact, crafted literary construction than his description of his relationship with the leader of the expedition as he perceived it along the way; whatever Cabeza de Vaca’s real differences of opinion with Narváez had been, his need to exonerate himself before the emperor regarding the loss of the 1528 expedition and his desire to bring his own good judgment to the fore naturally would have led him to overstate Narváez’s shortcomings as well as his own opposition to Narváez’s decisions. In our Part 2 commentary we noted two earlier situations—the loss of two ships at Trinidad in the fall of 1527 and Cabeza de Vaca’s disagreement with Narváez regarding the abandonment of the ships for the overland expedition on 1 May 1528—that illustrated this point.

In this part of the *relación*, two more such situations arise. The first was the royal officials’ request that Narváez search out a harbor at the mouth of the first river that the expedition reached:

And on the third day after having arrived there, we—the comptroller, the inspector, the commissary, and I—met together, and we begged the governor to send scouts to look for the sea to see if we could find a port, because the

Indians said that the sea was not very far from there. He replied to us that we should not trouble ourselves with talking about that, because it was very far from there. And since I was the one who importuned him the most, he told me that I should go to find it and seek a port, and that I was to go on foot with forty men to do this. (f9r-v)

It is evident that Narváez was in search of the riches of Apalache, rather than the ports of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco. Although the officers were no doubt interested in finding fortune themselves, Cabeza de Vaca suggests they were much more fearful of being forever lost in the lands of the province of *Florida*.

In the second incident, Cabeza de Vaca claims he served as an intermediary between the governor and other members of the expedition who no longer wished to obey their royally appointed leader. Cabeza de Vaca's (f14r-v) rhetoric heightens the reader's sense of the desperation the expedition members must have experienced at this point in their journey:

I refrain here from telling this at greater length because each one can imagine for himself what could happen in a land so strange and so poor and so lacking in every single thing that it seemed impossible either to be in it or to escape from it. But since the most certain remedy is God our Lord and in him our faith never falters, another thing occurred that worsened the situation more than all of this; that is, among the horsemen, the majority of them began to plan secretly to find relief for themselves and abandon the governor and the sick men, who were altogether powerless, without strength or the means to impose authority.

Although Cabeza de Vaca emphasizes the utter despair of the expeditionaries, he does not fail to ascertain the faith in God that he says they maintained. This claim, reiterated at various points in the narrative, was a notation of certain interest and satisfaction in the mind of his Catholic king. Cabeza de Vaca once again underscores what we are to assume is his and the other officers' loyalty to the emperor as the definitive factor in deterring the hidalgos' abandonment of the expedition:

But since among them there were many hidalgos and men of good breeding, they refused to let this happen without informing the governor and the officials of Your Majesty. And since we discredited their intentions and placed before them the occasion on which they were abandoning their captain and those who were sick and without strength, and above all else removing themselves from the service of Your Majesty, they agreed to remain, affirming that what would be the fate of one would be the fate of all without any one abandoning the others. (f14v)

Only the incident of the search for the port is recorded in Oviedo's text, and it does not exhibit the antagonism between the treasurer and the governor that the *relación* conveys. As mentioned above (sec. 5), Oviedo (584b) makes no mention of the governor's opposition to the search and explains that Cabeza de Vaca and Castillo Maldonado could not take horses on the search because they were a hindrance rather than an aid. By dropping the explanation, Cabeza de Vaca seems to imply in the *relación* that Narváez was trying to prevent Cabeza de Vaca and the other officials from searching for the port by prohibiting their use of horses.

The account of the hidalgos' rebellion does not appear in Oviedo's text. The absence of the Joint Report makes it impossible to determine what Cabeza de Vaca intensified as he wrote his *relación* and what Oviedo downplayed or omitted in writing his account.

#### 14. RAFT CONSTRUCTION: THE LAST FIFTY DAYS OF THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION

Though it is evident from the expeditionaries' exploration of the rivers they discovered that they hoped to regain contact with their ships at some point along their overland journey, neither account ever explicitly refers to the search for them in its narration of the overland contingent's journey. Once it became evident that neither Apalache nor Aute possessed the riches the Narváez men were seeking, the sole objective of the expedition became survival, and this required an escape from the hostile Indians of *Florida* and the return to Spanish civilization. When the governor sent the search party headed by Cabeza de Vaca, Alonso del Castillo, and Andrés Dorantes from Aute toward the sea, he must have hoped they would discover the ships he had abandoned. The resolution to build rafts and set sail along the coast from the Bay of Horses was the expedition's desperate effort to return to a Spanish settlement. Evidently the Narváez expeditionaries continued to believe that the nearest Spanish outpost was on the Río Pánuco and that by heading the way of Pánuco along the coast they would discover the river and the *villa* of Santisteban del Puerto; had they sailed for Cuba, Cabeza de Vaca's report to the crown no doubt would have been considerably less interesting.

According to Cabeza de Vaca (f14v), by the time the men reached the Bay of Horses over a third of them were ill, and the horses hardly sufficed to carry the sick from Aute. Cabeza de Vaca related that the governor sought the opinions of all the survivors of his expedition in determining a solution to the disastrous situation. Cabeza de Vaca (f15r) observed that the only carpenter in the group resolved to build rafts on which the men could leave

the land. Later in the *relación* (f23v), a Portuguese carpenter named Álvaro Fernández is mentioned; he was perhaps the expeditionary who offered the solution.

In the final fifty days in the region of the Florida Peninsula (from 4 August to 22 September 1528), the contingent constructed five rafts. The two accounts of the raft building vary slightly. Both explain that the metal tools necessary to construct the vessels were made from the metal objects the expedition was carrying (f15r; 587b). A bellows made from deerskins was used in the melting down and recasting. Cabeza de Vaca (f15v) names a Greek, “Don Teodoro,” who collected the pine tar that was used to caulk the rafts (588a), and he notes that each raft was twenty-two cubits long. The sails of the rafts were made from the expeditionaries’ shirts (f15v; 588a).

The number of horses that had survived to 4 August 1528 was probably around seventeen, since the expeditionaries killed one for food every third day during the time they were constructing the rafts; of the forty-two he says were unloaded on the *Florida* coast, Cabeza de Vaca accounted for the deaths of only three: Juan Velázquez’s, the commissary’s, and one killed by the Indians at Aute while Cabeza de Vaca’s group was exploring the coast near the Bay of Horses. Cabeza de Vaca (f16r) states that around forty men died of hunger and sickness, not including those who were killed by natives. At least ten men were killed by Indians within sight of the Spanish campsite as they sought shellfish in the bay where they had settled (f15v; 588a). Altogether, about 250 of the approximately 300 men of the overland expedition survived beyond the departure from the Bay of Horses. Smith (*Relation* 50) gives a summary estimate of the losses on the expedition according to Cabeza de Vaca’s account. On 22 September 1528, the disastrous, six-month overland expedition ended as these survivors devoured the last horse and left the wretched lands of the Florida Peninsula.

#### 15. THE NATURAL WORLD OF CABEZA DE VACA’S FLORIDA PENINSULA

Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* was no doubt the fundamental text in forming European opinion about *Florida*, and it continued to serve along with the Gentleman of Elvas’s account as one of the most important descriptions of eastern North America even for seventeenth-century English colonists (see chap. 13, sec. 13). His account of the lands through which the Narváez expedition passed from the time it struck inland until it set out on its five rafts varies from rather generic to highly specific description. With respect to the physical geography, both accounts state that the land was flat and sandy (f11v; 585a). Oviedo’s text is somewhat contradictory in claiming at one point that the Indians sometimes retreated to the highlands (*sierras*)

(585b) and later that “in all that land they did not see highlands nor did they receive any notice of any” (588a). As we will see in our Part 5 commentary (chap. 6), Cabeza de Vaca’s account repeats this latter claim of the absence of mountains or highlands.

There are numerous mentions in both accounts of the many lagoons and forested areas throughout the region (f11r, f11v, f12r, f12v; 585a, 585b, 586a, 587a). Cabeza de Vaca (f11v) observed that in the province of Apalache the lagoons were larger than those the expedition had encountered on its march. In describing these lagoons, Cabeza de Vaca often refers to the great number of fallen trees in the land and the difficulty that the trees and lagoons caused for the men’s forward travel, as well as the danger such places presented because the Indians would attack them there. The expedition’s firsthand experience with hurricanes in the Caribbean and probably also on the Florida Peninsula surely contributed to the realistic description and convincing explanation given in both accounts of how lightning bolts, thunderstorms, and hurricanes downed the trees (f10v; 585ab) and threatened the Indians’ dwellings (f11r; 585a). Mention of the coldness of the land (f11v; 585a) in reference to the Florida Peninsula as the men passed through it in midsummer, however, is perplexing.

Cabeza de Vaca’s (f11v) catalog of trees that the expedition encountered in the region is an example of the somewhat generic descriptions that occasionally appear in the account: “[t]hroughout the entire land there are very large trees and open woods where there are walnut trees, and laurels and others that are called liquidambers, cedars, savins and evergreen oaks and pines and oaks, [and] palmettos of the type commonly found in Castile.” Apart from the palms (f9r, f15r; 588a), pines (f15v; 588a), and savins (f15v) that the accounts mention as trees that the expedition put to particular uses, the trees of the list were no doubt cited to convey a sense of the diverse flora rather than to serve as a specific description of particular species of trees encountered. Even in the case of the palms, they are likened to those of Castile but are not described in further detail. As is the case throughout the *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca saw the natural world he experienced through Castilian eyes; we can attempt to specifically identify the European plants and animals he names, but we are often left with little clue as to the American species he was attempting to denote in referring to their supposed European counterparts.

This is the case with the list of birds Cabeza de Vaca (f11v) gives as well: “geese in great numbers, ducks, mallards, royal-ducks, fly-catchers and night-herons and herons, [and] partridges. We saw many falcons, gyrfalcons, sparrow hawks, merlins, and many other birds.” Smith (*Relation* 36n2) found it odd that Cabeza de Vaca did not mention turkeys, although it



is certainly possible that this American bird is concealed behind Cabeza de Vaca's generic list of common European birds. Cabeza de Vaca's (f11v) list of animals exhibits an even more generic character than do his lists of trees and birds: "deer of three types, rabbits and hares, bears and lions, and other wild beasts." As Smith also observed, it is surprising that alligators did not figure in the Narváez expedition accounts. To Smith it seemed likely that the men would have encountered them; as a species of this land "very difficult to maneuver and glorious to see" (f10v), we might expect Cabeza de Vaca to have described them as he did the common opossum, that is, as one that had to be considered in some detail, since no simple reference to a European counterpart could be made.

The three surviving Castilians of the Narváez expedition evidently did not include any mention of the opossum in their Joint Report. Cabeza de Vaca must have added it to his own account as he wrote his *relación* (f11v), since it was not until Oviedo (616a) consulted that work in its published form that he collected Cabeza de Vaca's description of the "animal that carries its young in a pouch." Of course Oviedo, the old Indies hand, was little impressed by this neophyte's observation on New World fauna, and with respect to this particular animal he immediately directed his reader to the place in his *Historia general* where he had discussed at length an animal called a *churca* by the Cueva Indians of Panama. Though Oviedo did not include a chapter on the *churca* in his 1535 published *La historia general de las Indias*, he had earlier published his original description of the species of opossum he had observed in Central America in his 1526 *Sumario* (67–68 [chap. 27]) and later included it in the final manuscript of his *Historia* (1:416ab [bk. 12, chap. 27]) sometime after 1535.

#### 16. THE INDIANS OF THE NORTHWESTERN FLORIDA PENINSULA IN 1528

Dulchanchellin is the only Indian identified by name in either account of the Narváez expedition, and he appears only in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* (f10r). Cabeza de Vaca does not specifically identify any indigenous group that he encountered on the Florida Peninsula, and we note that the retrospective application of names such as Calusa, Timucua, or Apalache to the Indians he met on this leg of his journey may be inappropriate. Such names, with the exception perhaps of Apalache, proceed from accounts of much later exploration of the region, and their association with the specific peoples Narváez and his men confronted is therefore anachronistic. Even in the case of the Apalache, Cabeza de Vaca gives no indication that the Indians he encountered in the province identified themselves by that name; he applies

the name only to the province and its main settlement. The fragmentary information about the *Florida* Indians given in the accounts allows us to say at most that the groups the Narváez expedition encountered appear to have conformed in some ways to the Mississippian cultures as described by Bruce D. Smith (“The Archaeology” 50–63). Because the observations found in the accounts often pertain to broad areas of the peninsula and very generally to the peoples of the region, we can gather very little specific information about the groups who lived on the Florida Peninsula at the time of Narváez’s exploration.

The Narváez expedition accounts do, nevertheless, offer the first European glimpse of the people who lived on the northwestern Florida Peninsula in 1528. With respect to their physical appearance, Oviedo (588a) noted from the Joint Report that they were very large people, and Cabeza de Vaca (f13r) said likewise, stating that they went naked and appeared from a distance to be giants. Similar observations about the size of indigenous peoples who had probably been brought from the Atlantic coast of North America to Española by Pedro de Salazar between 1514 and 1516 circulated among the Spaniards on Española (Hoffman, “A New Voyage” 422). Both accounts speak positively of the physical qualities of these Indians (f13r; 588a). Cabeza de Vaca (f9v) noted that when Valenzuela descended the southern bank of the first river discovered by the expedition he observed Indians who traveled in canoes and wore many plumes. The only other mention of clothing used by the *Florida* Indians were deerskin cloaks (used by Dulchanchellin, f10r) and some blankets of poor quality used by the women at Apalache (f11r).

The accounts describe a large dwelling near Tampa Bay that the expeditionaries estimated could hold three hundred individuals (f6r; 583a). A village on the large bay the men discovered upon their initial explorations was made up of twelve to fifteen houses (f7r; 584a), and, as we have discussed above, Apalache contained forty thatched houses built low to the ground (f11r; 585a) and many other smaller hamlets and single dwellings scattered through the maize fields (f11v). The Narváez expedition seems not to have visited any settlement larger than Apalache. The only evidence suggesting a hierarchical social organization of any indigenous group in the accounts is the mention of Dulchanchellin (f10r) and the cacique at Apalache (f12r; 585b).

With respect to the agriculture of the *Florida* Indians, the accounts of the Narváez expedition provide the first historical evidence that maize was cultivated throughout the northwestern part of the peninsula. We have discussed the importance of maize to the Spanish expedition in our Part 2 commentary (chap. 3, sec. 8). The Narváez expeditionaries discovered cultivated maize at intervals (f10v–f11r; 585a) along their journey from Tampa

Bay to Apalache (f6v, f7r, f9r, fior, fi1r, fi1v, fi2r; 583b, 584a, 584b, 585a) and at Aute (fi3v, fi5r; 587a, 587b, 588a). The men also discovered stored maize at Tampa Bay (f7r), Apalache (fi1r; 585a), and Aute (fi5r; 587b, 588a). Although the Spanish *fanega* is a variable unit of volume (DRAE 607c–08a; Hemming 518), if we accept 1.6 bushels to be the modern English equivalent for this sixteenth-century Spanish unit of dry volume (Smith, *Relation* 47n1; cf. Hallenbeck 44n41), the Narváez expeditionaries seized 640 bushels (400 *fanegas*) of maize from the Indians at Aute alone (fi5r), some of which they carried on their raft journey (fi7v, f20v; 588a).

Cabeza de Vaca (fi3v) recorded that when the men first arrived at Aute they found the natives' houses burned, and that in addition to maize they found cultivated squash and beans. Oviedo (585b) reports that the Indians of Apalache had told the Narváez expeditionaries that the people at Aute had maize and beans; according to Oviedo (587a), when the men arrived at Aute, they found maize fields that had been burned, but he does not mention squash or beans in the account. Squash had become a common cultigen in east-central North America by two thousand years ago (Asch and Asch 158) and was widely cultivated among Eastern Woodland peoples (Ford, "Patterns" 352). According to Ford ("Patterns" 353), the common bean reached eastern North America after A.D. 800, completing the "trinity" of maize, squash, and beans in that region. It is certainly plausible, therefore, according to current archaeological evidence, that Narváez's men would have discovered both cultivated squash and beans at Aute. Cabeza de Vaca (f6r) documents that the Indians at Tampa Bay supplemented their diet with fish and venison and that those at Aute also consumed fish (fi2v).

The accounts reveal that the Indians of the Florida Peninsula possessed fishing nets (f6r; 583a), mortars for grinding maize (fi1r), and reed flutes (fior), besides deerskin mantles (f7r, fior, fi1r; 583b, 585a) and woven blankets (fi1r; 585a). These items are mentioned only infrequently in the accounts, and generalizations about their presence even in limited regions of the peninsula on the basis of these accounts must be made cautiously. Both accounts attest to the quality, strength, and utility of the *Florida* Indians' bows and arrows and the skill with which they employed them throughout the region from the point the expedition entered inland to the Bay of Horses (fi3r; 588a). The Indians of Apalache also employed fire in an effort to expel the Narváez expeditionaries from their settlement (fi2r; 585b).

Implicit in the narratives of the Narváez expedition's trek through the northwestern portion of the Florida Peninsula and the eastern part of the Florida Panhandle is the indigenous peoples' response to Narváez's three-hundred-man invasion of the region on his overland route. Narváez's men were of course not the first Europeans to visit the Florida Peninsula. In

1513 Ponce de León had coasted both its eastern and western shores. In 1517 the Hernández de Córdoba expedition had been driven from the cape of the peninsula by its native inhabitants. Ponce de León had made an unsuccessful attempt to settle on the western edge of the Florida Cape in 1521. At the same time, Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's and Juan Ortiz de Matienzo's ships were visiting the Atlantic coast of southeastern North America and had captured slaves there. Other visits to the *Florida* shores, like the Camargo voyage of 1518/19, had coasted the lands of the western coast of the Florida Peninsula, and secret slaving missions to the peninsula probably also occurred between 1513 and 1528 (see chap. 15).

Thus, the Indians of the Florida Peninsula and Panhandle were well aware of the implications of the Narváez invasion, and it is not surprising that throughout the Florida Peninsula portion of the *relación* we find traces of an organized resistance to the Spanish invasion. In his discussion of Ponce de León's second voyage, Morison (*The European Discovery* 2:532–33) rightly observes that explaining native hostility to Europeans solely as a response to previous European contact is naïve. We have no way of determining whether or not the natives between Tampa Bay and Apalachee Bay had previously dealt with Europeans, but the accounts of the Narváez expedition leave no doubt that the Florida Peninsula Indians were continuously aware of the expeditionaries' movements and were eventually successful at driving them out of the region.

In our Part 2 commentary we considered the first contact between the men of the Narváez expedition and the Indians at Tampa Bay, as well as Cabeza de Vaca's observation that by signs the Indians seemed to have threatened the expeditionaries and told them to leave their land. The Narváez men were evidently better at understanding native threats than native reports of wealth in the land. Between Tampa Bay and the first river they discovered, the Narváez group traveled for fifteen days without encountering any natives, but upon crossing this river they were forced to confront "nearly two hundred Indians" (f9r; 584b). It seems clear that the natives of the region were well aware of the expedition's presence, since the contingent encountered no natives for the first fifteen days and then encountered a two-hundred-man group immediately after crossing the river.

The natives were threatening, according to Cabeza de Vaca, but eventually the Narváez expeditionaries captured five or six of them, who then led the men to their settlement. From the village beyond the river crossing, the Spaniards took native prisoners as guides. As mentioned earlier, Oviedo gives no account of the journey from the river to the settlement of Apalache. Cabeza de Vaca (f10r) says that from one river to the next, no Indians dared to face the expeditionaries. On about 17 June 1528, however, as the men

neared the second river they were to discover, they met the native lord Dulchanchellin. Because it seemed to the Spaniards that Dulchanchellin might be an enemy of the people of Apalache, they allegedly made a pact with him to accompany them on their way there, notwithstanding the fact that they could not verbally communicate with him. Cabeza de Vaca claimed that the Narváez men and the Indians sealed the pact with a ritual trading of possessions and then departed, the Spaniards following Dulchanchellin and his tribe to their settlement. This scene (completely absent from Oviedo's account) is suspicious in that apart from naming the native lord, Cabeza de Vaca gives very little information about Dulchanchellin and his people.

Shortly beyond the point where they met with Dulchanchellin, the Narváez expeditionaries encountered the second river, which the Indians aided them in crossing. Cabeza de Vaca (fior) made an important observation regarding the help Dulchanchellin's people gave the expeditionaries and the vulnerable and dangerous situation that river crossings represented for the Spaniards: "and it took us a day to cross it. And if the Indians had wanted to attack us, they could easily have obstructed our passage, and even with their help we had great difficulty." For the Spaniards, crossing a river meant the division of the group and the danger of native attack while they lowered their guard to engineer the crossing. It is not surprising that the expedition first encountered the group of two hundred natives after crossing the first river. The natives seem to have known not only the geographically related tactics of warfare but also the vulnerabilities of these first Europeans, most notably, their inability to swim; it was precisely at this river that the first Spaniard, Velázquez, drowned. We will return to the vulnerability and the hindrance that being unable to swim represented for the expeditionaries in our Part 5 commentary on the *relación* (see chap. 6).

Cabeza de Vaca (fiov) remarks that the same night the expedition arrived at Dulchanchellin's village a Narváez expeditionary narrowly missed being hit by an arrow at the place where he had gone to get water. From there to Apalache, Cabeza de Vaca again says that no Indians dared to appear, and Dulchanchellin's promise of aid to the expeditionaries in seizing the province of Apalache fades away. A brief episode along the route to Apalache from the second river led to the expedition's ambush of natives who were once again seized as guides. As the Spaniards arrived in sight of the settlement, Oviedo's text begins again to parallel Cabeza de Vaca's. Cabeza de Vaca (fiov) says the expedition reached the settlement "without being perceived by the Indians of the area," but the Indians had obviously been forewarned. Upon entry into Apalache the expedition found only the women and children present, and later the men of the settlement attacked them by surprise. From this we can infer that the natives were clearly aware of the expeditionaries' arrival

at Apalache and had determined ahead of time the way to combat their invasion. The native men successfully killed the commissary's horse but eventually fled, leaving their women and children behind.

Two days following the initial confrontation at Apalache the men returned peacefully, requesting their women and children, whom the Narváez expeditionaries returned to them. The governor's retention of the cacique of the village as a hostage, in hopes of receiving information about the area surrounding Apalache, aggravated the natives, however, and the day after recovering their women and children the Indians returned to attack the Spaniards. Cabeza de Vaca (f12r) states that during a subsequent day another neighboring group of natives also attacked them. The hostility of the Indians was the primary reason for which the group finally decided to leave Apalache.

From Apalache to Aute the route was difficult, and Cabeza de Vaca gives a detailed description of the techniques by which the natives of the region attacked the expedition. He also recounts the death of the horseman named Avellaneda at the hands of Indian archers. Not surprisingly, when the expedition arrived in Aute it found that the natives had burned their village to the ground and deserted it. Cabeza de Vaca is not explicit regarding whether or not the Indians burned their maize fields; Oviedo says they did. The destruction and abandonment of the settlement is further evidence that communication among the groups of natives living in the region was extensive and that by the time Narváez reached Aute news of his presence in the peninsula was traveling ahead of him along his route. Before the Narváez expeditionaries could leave the region the Indians were successful in killing another ten of them by means of bows and arrows (f15v; 588a). Cabeza de Vaca's account certainly served to establish in Spain a notion of the ferocious nature of the Indians of the region we know today as Florida.

## CHAPTER 6

### Part 5: Six and a Half Years on the Texas Coast of the Gulf of Mexico: Galveston Bay to the Río Conchos/San Fernando (Tamaulipas) (November 1528 to Mid-/Late Summer 1535) (f20v–f48r)

The section of the *relación* that we treat here in our Part 5 commentary gives an account of the approximately six and a half years between November 1528 and the summer of 1535, during which the survivors of the Narváez expedition lived on the islands and a strip of coastal mainland through what is now the coastal region of modern-day Texas and extreme northeastern Mexico. As the narration of the final disintegration of the Narváez expedition on its persistent quest for the Spanish settlement of Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco, this segment of the *relación* serves as the hinge between the account of the Narváez expedition's eight-month journey from Cuba to Texas, which we treated in our commentary Parts 2, 3, and 4, and, as we will consider in Parts 6 through 8, the final four survivors' ten- to twelve-month overland journey from the time of their turn toward the interior at the foot of mountains in northern Tamaulipas to their arrival in México-Tenochtitlán.

Because Cabeza de Vaca spent such a lengthy time living in the Texas coastal region, it is unsurprising that nearly half of his account is dedicated to describing what he and the other members of the Narváez expedition experienced and observed on this leg of their journey. In this section of the *relación* more than in any other, the romantic characterization of the “nafragios” as a tale of continuous, free, and aimless wandering about the North American continent departs farthest from the *relación's* actual content. Analysis of this part of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative reveals that the majority of the time the expedition survivors were in America was not spent on a continual, vertiginous odyssey. Much to the contrary, this longest segment of the *relación* is best characterized as an account of the Narváez expeditionaries' extended, involuntary sojourn in a localized region on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico among the native peoples of the Texas coastal islands, shore, and coastal interior while they attempted to escape south to the Spanish outpost of Santisteban del Puerto near the mouth of the Río Pánuco.

Most studies treating this portion of the narrative have focused on determining the route that the survivors followed, and a few others have concentrated on synthesizing the ethnographic information found in the text. The controversy over the route has been the product of much regionally and nationally biased scholarship, as Chipman (“In Search”) has shown. The intentional neglect on the part of some investigators to consider the *relación* and Oviedo’s account of the Narváez expedition within their historical context and their willingness to selectively accept and discredit the information found in the accounts to suit their bias produced the debate over whether the four-man party crossed central Texas and New Mexico or went down the coast of Texas and across the Rio Grande before heading inland across northern Mexico.

While many scholars have attempted to convert Cabeza de Vaca into a local culture hero as the first European to cross Texas or New Mexico, others—sharing the impulse but taking a different approach—have attempted to make the *relación* function as the foundation for elaborate hypotheses on the lifeways of aboriginal peoples of the Texas coast. Since the two texts of the Narváez expedition provide our only descriptions of the native peoples of this geographical area prior to the arrival of the La Salle expedition at Matagorda Bay over a hundred and fifty years later (1685), this section of the narratives has been subjected to some rather forced interpretations, especially with respect to determining the regions inhabited by the indigenous groups that Cabeza de Vaca named and the correspondence of these groups to ones recorded much later. Such correlations have produced claims of considerably greater certainty regarding the indigenous groups that inhabited the Texas coast in the sixteenth century than can actually be made from Cabeza de Vaca’s vivid but far from geographically and ethnographically precise narrative.

## 1. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF CABEZA DE VACA’S ACCOUNT

### 1.A. *Diminished Narrative Continuity*

This portion of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, positioned between the narratives of two very different journeys and serving as a locus of mediation between the two, distinguishes itself considerably from the rest of the account. The narrative pace of the *relación* rapidly shifts in this part of the text from a seemingly day-by-day accounting of the men’s first few days on the Texas coast to a description of the passage of years—so many that we have difficulty identifying Cabeza de Vaca’s point of reference when he says that six years have passed. Failure to consider this temporal change in the narrative



has led some scholars to propose a route of the men's travels through Texas that is at once too direct and more precise than can be determined. Inaccurately portraying the men's movements through this region, these investigators consequently fail to recognize that since the expeditionaries lived with various groups of Indians for such a considerable length of time, the men must have moved back and forth over the natives' migratory ranges before finally initiating in midsummer 1535 the journey that started with their departure from the Avavares Indians and eventually took them to México-Tenochtitlán. Consequently, it is not possible to determine a specific route traveled according to days, distances, and places mentioned when such references do not correspond directly to a description of continuous forward travel. With regard to this aspect of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*, we refer especially to almost all investigators' failure to view the men's "travel" (more appropriately a transfer) from the Mariames Indians to the Avavares as separate from their subsequent journey, a necessary distinction since the two segments are isolated by the intervening winter season of 1534–35. As we will see, although the men's move from the Mariames to the Avavares represented forward travel, it cannot be considered the beginning of the overland journey, because neither Cabeza de Vaca nor Oviedo treats the men's movements from the time after their first few days of travel with the Avavares in late summer 1534 until early summer 1535, when the men actually began their continuous journey by departing from them (see table 4).

The shift in narrative pace and the absence of continuous forward travel by the Narváez expeditionaries as they took up residence with the native inhabitants of the Texas coast stands in contrast to the progressive character of previous legs of the expedition's journey, on which the whole expedition pushed continually forward. Whereas descriptions of the geography, native peoples, flora, and fauna pertaining to the Narváez expeditionaries' journey from Cuba to Texas conveyed in the Narváez expedition accounts are markedly generic, those pertaining to the Texas coast reveal that the survivors' lengthy stay in the region and their repeated movements over a smaller geographical area afforded them a much more specific and detailed view of this place, one that is especially prominent in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*.

A result of this expanded information, however, is diminished narrative continuity in comparison to Cabeza de Vaca's prior account of the Narváez expedition's passage from Cuba to Texas and his narration of the four survivors' subsequent travel to México-Tenochtitlán. The many pauses in the narrative during which Cabeza de Vaca gives lengthy accounts of the manners and customs of the indigenous peoples, set off by subtle and sometimes misleading narrative markers, present an obstacle along the

narrative trajectory of the *relación*. An example is Cabeza de Vaca's narration of the episode in which the four men, having commenced their overland journey after departing from the Avavares, leave a group of Indians weeping over their departure. Cabeza de Vaca picks up the narration of this episode, again mentioning the weeping Indians, only after more than three folios (f41v–f45r) of panoramic description pertaining to all the peoples that he had thus far encountered on the Texas coast.

Cabeza de Vaca's sometimes confusing references to the passage of time also contribute to the diminished narrative continuity of this part of the *relación*. In his narration of the time he spent during the spring and summer of 1533 as a slave among the Mariames Indians directly after his reunion with Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico, for example, he mentions on three separate occasions (f29v, f33r, f34r) the six-month period that he was obligated to wait prior to his first visit with the Mariames to the prickly pear region toward the end of summer in 1533. The isolation and particular context of each reference tends to obscure the fact that all three refer to the same six-month period.

#### 1.B. *Increased Narrative Complexity*

In contrast to the other portions of the narrative, this segment of the *relación* is not one man's tale of a single group's journey. In this respect it lacks the straightforward nature of the narrative segment of the *relación* that recounts the entire Narváez expedition's journey along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and the one that tells of the four survivors' subsequent journey across southern North America. This middle portion of the *relación* is instead a complex explanation of how the Narváez expedition of what we might call the first journey was reduced over the course of seven years to the four individuals who would make the second journey across the northern hinterlands of New Spain.

At the end of our Part 2 commentary (chap. 3, sec. 12), we observed that Cabeza de Vaca narrated events in the *relación* according to the chronological order in which he received the information rather than according to the one in which the events occurred. In the same manner that he placed the information he gained about the fate of Narváez's ships after he departed from them in May 1528 at the end of his account because he did not receive that information until at least July 1536, he likewise narrates his own experiences on the Texas coast from November 1528 until his journey in the spring of 1533 to the river where the Indians went to eat nuts and his encounter there with Andrés Dorantes before he conveys the account Dorantes gave him of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast from the island

of Malhado in the spring of 1529 through their reunion with him in 1533. Similarly, he inserts into that account the one that Figueroa (one of the four Narváez expeditionaries who left Malhado in November 1528) gave to Dorantes in the spring of 1529 once he reaches the point in his reconstruction of Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico's tale where the Dorantes/Castillo party encounters Figueroa. Finally, as Cabeza de Vaca narrates the information that Figueroa gave to this group about his journey down the coast in the fall of 1528 through his encounter with Esquivel in the spring of 1529, prior to Figueroa's encounter with Dorantes and the others, he inserts the account that Figueroa learned from Esquivel about the groups of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, both of which had perished on the coast in the winter of 1528–29. Thus, we show that the character of this part of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is a narrative (Esquivel's) within a narrative (Figueroa's) within a narrative (the Dorantes/Castillo party's) within a narrative (Cabeza de Vaca's) that requires a considerable amount of unpacking. As we will consider in carrying out that unpacking, Cabeza de Vaca was not completely successful in tying up the loose ends of this series of interrupted narratives; the net result was a truncation of the end of Figueroa's and the Dorantes/Castillo party's accounts, particularly with respect to how the three survivors of this latter group came to live with the Mariames and Yguases Indians from mid-1529 until Cabeza de Vaca rejoined them in the spring of 1533 (see below, sec. 7.E).

The whole section of the *relación* (f26v–f35r) and the corresponding sections of Oviedo's account (592a–95a, 598b–602b), which narrate the activities of the survivors of the Narváez expedition between November 1528 and late summer 1534, are the ones that have most often caused readers to criticize the expedition accounts as contradictory and difficult to understand. Andrés Dorantes's journey down the coast in the spring of 1529 and his and his party's experiences among the Texas Indians until he, Castillo, Estevanico, and Cabeza de Vaca escaped to the Avavares Indians is the only portion of the journey for which there exists an account (in the form of Oviedo's narrative written from Dorantes's testimony for the Joint Report) that is independent of the one Cabeza de Vaca gives in the *relación*, and it fortunately covers Cabeza de Vaca's truncation in the *relación* mentioned above. For the other segments of the account Cabeza de Vaca's testimony for the Joint Report apparently served as the source Oviedo used to write his version, in addition to being the basis of Cabeza de Vaca's own *relación*. Some of the earliest criticism of the narratives as confusing no doubt stemmed from Oviedo's erroneous identification of Cabeza de Vaca as Andrés Dorantes in one section of this part of his narrative (592b–93a; see chap. 12, secs. 2.B.7–8). Such an error by this first student of the events of the Narváez expedition

is the quintessential example of the difficulty that the narratives present. In addition to unwinding Cabeza de Vaca's own narrative, it is particularly necessary to correlate Oviedo's version of Andrés Dorantes's account of his journey down the coast and the account he received from Figueroa, as well as the one he received from Esquivel through Figueroa, to the information that Cabeza de Vaca gives in the *relación* concerning the same events; Cabeza de Vaca's truncated version of these events in the *relación* was apparently written from the information Dorantes and Castillo gave him after he rejoined them in 1533.

## 2. THE CONTINUED SEARCH FOR PÁNUCO

### 2.A. *Texas Landfall*

Above we have referred to the arrival of the Narváez expedition's five rafts on the Texas coast and the survivors' journey down the coast as though the men's locations along the Texas coast during this part of their journey were certain and verifiable. We have already demonstrated in previous parts of this study, however, that no geographic identification assigned to any site described in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* from the time the men left Cuba until they reached the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa) is certain, and that even the most seemingly obvious geographic features, such as the Mississippi River, cannot be positively identified. We can be certain that the Narváez expedition departed from Cuba and arrived in San Miguel de Culiacán and Compostela, but for all the points in between it is virtually impossible to positively assign any specific geographical referent from the accounts to a modern-day location.

With respect to this point, Chipman ("In Search" 129), in one of the most important articles on the Narváez expedition's route written in recent years, says about the land journey of Narváez's men from the time they abandoned their rafts until their arrival in northwestern Mexico that "[t]here have been and are difficulties in projecting the path of the four survivors from the Galveston area to Culiacán—problems that will never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, for no one can prove beyond a doubt the route taken on any part of the journey." The case of Buckingham Smith's first speculation on the place of the men's location during their lengthy stay on the coast illustrates this point. In 1851 Smith initially believed that the landfall of the rafts and the Narváez expedition survivors' sojourn on the coast until their departure from it on their overland journey had all occurred to the east of the mouth of the Mississippi River (Smith, *Narrative*, third and fourth maps following 138; T. W. Field in Smith, *Relation* 235). Smith held this view

in spite of the fact that he himself explicitly acknowledged that the mesquite he identified as a food source that the men had encountered during this period was not known to grow east of the river (*Narrative* 86nGG). Such contradictions must have led him to move the coastal sojourn to the Texas coast in the second (1871) edition of his translation. Thus, our references to the Narváez expeditionaries' landfall on the Texas coast and their travel along the Texas shore do not represent proven identifications but rather are allusions to the most plausible locations derived from direct analysis of the narratives of the expedition evaluated at a temporal distance of over 450 years and read against the backdrop of previous route interpretation.

### 2.B. *A Coastal Trajectory*

Chipman outlines the development of two very different proposals for Cabeza de Vaca's route through the lands of modern-day Texas, which over the course of almost one hundred and fifty years have been determined ultimately on exactly the same sources—the information in the portions of the two Narváez expedition narratives that we will consider in this Part 5 of our commentary. Early in his article, Chipman (“In Search” 129) states one of his most important conclusions:

A totally trans-Texas route for the first segment of the overland march defies both logic and documentation. It defies logic in that the overall goal of the Narváez expedition from the time it left Florida was to reach Pánuco, not to explore the interior. It defies documentation in that it is frequently at variance with evidence in the two original accounts on which all route interpretations must ultimately rest.

Chipman (“In Search” 142) goes on to prescribe a methodology for the study of Cabeza de Vaca's route:

Any detailed analysis of the Cabeza de Vaca journey requires a book-length monograph, for the route interpreter must carefully coordinate the texts of *Nafragios* [the *relación*] and the Joint Report with all available data—physiography, time and distance of travel, ethnographic information, biota, geographic knowledge, geographic *perceptions* of the castaways, and the overall objective of the trek, which, to repeat, was to reach Pánuco on the Gulf coast of Mexico. (Emphasis in original)

We agree with Chipman's recommendations for the interpretation of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* and Oviedo's account of the Narváez expedition regarding the determination of the expeditionaries' route. We add that each of the elements he mentions must be weighted according to the significance and

the spectrum of interpretation that it might be given according to its particular character. For example, the geographic knowledge, geographic perceptions, and overall objective of the Narváez expeditionaries cannot be overemphasized. The analysis of these elements has led us to realize that, contrary to previous interpretation, Cabeza de Vaca's (f47v) proclamation about traveling inland does not and could not represent the men's conscious decision to go overland through completely uncharted lands to the South Sea (Gulf of California/Pacific Ocean). As we discuss below, this statement is Cabeza de Vaca's retrospective comment on the men's move from the coastline to the coastal interior as they passed from the Mariames to the Avavares Indians in autumn 1534, eventually continuing their travel parallel to the coast in search of Pánuco.

The significance of distance references and time-to-distance correspondences are less dependable and open to much broader interpretation. Krieger's ("Nuevo estudio") overemphasis of time and distance calculations throughout his study caused him to neglect the expeditionaries' objectives. A penchant for calculation led him to misinterpret more basic elements of the narratives, such as the fact that the four survivors' overland journey did not begin until they left the Avavares at the beginning of the prickly pear season in midsummer 1535. Though he misunderstood the temporal references of the accounts, Krieger recognized that the men spent a number of months with the Avavares, but he nevertheless began his calculation of the men's continuous overland route from their arrival at these Indians. The point at which the men actually commenced their journey after eight months with the Avavares is uncertain, however, and Krieger's approach produced a route that begins farther north and that follows a much more inland course than the narratives can reasonably accommodate. Campbell and Campbell moved Krieger's route south and somewhat back to the coast, but they too underestimated the significance of the coast as the primary determinant of the men's early trajectory.

Perhaps the trans-Texas route interpreters' gravest error has been to reject the references appearing in both accounts of the Narváez expedition to mountains that were near the sea. On two occasions prior to reaching these mountains, Cabeza de Vaca (f16r, f35r) mentions in the *relación* that the expedition had encountered mountains nowhere along its entire journey up to that point, making his account of finally seeing them that much more significant: "[h]ere we began to see mountains, and it seems that they came in a chain from toward the North Sea. And thus by the account that the Indians gave us about this, we believe that they are fifteen leagues from the sea" (f47r). Oviedo's (605a) account mentions a river in the description: "[n]ear there were the mountains [*sierras*], and one cordillera of them appeared to

traverse the land directly toward the north; and from there they took these Christians another five leagues ahead, to a river which was at the foot of the point where the mentioned sierra began.” We note in our discussion of Garay’s discovery of the Río de las Palmas that on his march along the coast from the mouth of the Río de las Palmas to the mouth of the Río Pánuco he encountered a river between the other two that he named the Río de Montalto, because the Garay expeditionaries could see mountains from this point (chap. 15, sec. 9.c). Fortunately for us as modern readers of the *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca and the other three survivors of the Narváez expedition never reached the Río de las Palmas or any point south of that river such as this “Río de Montalto,” since there they would have discovered signs of Caniego’s explorations in the region for Nuño de Guzmán in 1527 and would have sought their goal of Pánuco with greater zeal, forgoing their eventual journey across Mexico.

Coopwood (138–39) was the first to propose the Sierra de Pamoranes of northern Tamaulipas as the mountains that the four Narváez survivors encountered, and Davenport and Wells (238) considered the possibility of the men’s sighting either the Pamoranes, the Sierra San Carlos behind them, or the Sierra Cerralvo, all of which lie in the same general region. We will treat this question in detail in our Part 6 commentary (chap. 7, sec. 1); here we wish only to establish that the route the Narváez expedition survivors followed through Texas was a coastal one that extended to these mountains of northeastern Mexico before turning inland, rather than the trans-Texas one first proposed by Smith (*Narrative*, fifth, sixth, and seventh maps following 138; Smith, *Relation* 145n2), Bancroft (*History of the North Mexican States* 62–67, map on 67), and Adolph Bandelier (map facing title page, 31–40). Modern editors and translators such as Ferrando Pérez (1984), Barrera (1985), Pupo-Walker (1992), López-Morillas (1993), and Favata and Fernández (1986, 1993) continue to reproduce this trans-Texas route under the influence of these and subsequent studies (particularly that of Hallenbeck), which, in asserting that the four survivors were actually in the area of modern-day western Texas when they saw mountains, nearly always make the claim that the men must have been mistaken about their proximity to the coast at the point when they saw them. The men’s ultimate goal of following the coast to Pánuco would have made their continual monitoring of their distance from it a primary objective throughout their journey; therefore, the possibility that they made such a gross error about their location at the time they sighted mountains seems highly unlikely.

The most convincing evidence that the expeditionaries lived on the islands near the coast, on the coastline, and in the coastal interior of the mainland from the commencement of their journey until the last

four survivors sighted mountains can be found in the direct geographical references to the islands, bays, passes, rivers, and coasts of the region, as we will see in our consideration of the travels of the various groups of men throughout this period. The many references in the accounts to the survivors' inability to swim and the great hindrance that this represented for their movement ahead to Pánuco provide further evidence that the region was coastal rather than inland. Perhaps the most convincing description of all is found in Oviedo's account, where Andrés Dorantes explained that "they were surrounded by water, that all of that [region] where they walked was islands" (599b).

Further proof for this coastal environment is provided by the references to saltwater, rafts discovered along the coast, snails, fish, crabs, underwater roots, shells, shellfish, deer that were driven into the bays, the men's move to the coast at night in order to flee from the smoke used by the Indians to kill mosquitoes, and the *yerba pedrera* (probably seaweed) that the Dorantes/Castillo party ate on its way down the coast. There is little room for doubt that this entire section of the narrative describes a coastal experience.

These many references appear among the descriptions of the expeditionaries' lives not only among Indians such as the Quevenes and other groups farther ahead, which Cabeza de Vaca says were coastal, but also among the Mariames and the Yguases, which he says lived on the mainland. Cabeza de Vaca's account of his own activities between 1529 and 1533 as recorded by himself and Oviedo provides a key to understanding his geographical references to the locations of the coastal and inland native groups (f27v–f28r; 592b). Cabeza de Vaca (f27v) claimed, "And with my dealings and wares I entered inland as far as I desired, and I went along the coast for forty or fifty leagues." From this statement it is apparent that even though the Indians of Charruco, to whom he had fled from the ones on the island of Malhado, lived on *tierra firme* (the mainland), they were still a shoreline-oriented group. To Cabeza de Vaca (as well as to all of the other survivors) there were significant differences between being on the islands, on the mainland shore, or deeper in the coastal interior.

This is further evidenced by the type of goods that Cabeza de Vaca traded. The exchange between his Indians, who lived on the mainland coast, and the ones farther to the interior was one of coastal products readily available to the Indians of Charruco for products from the interior that were scarce to them. The Indians of Charruco were evidently a coastal people, since in their region Cabeza de Vaca's supply of goods was made up of easily acquired snails and seashells (f27v) that he traded inland for hides, ocher, rocks for arrowheads, stiff canes for arrow shafts, and a sort of paste to construct the



arrows, as well as deer-hair tassels, all of which were not available to his Indians on the coast.

With this in mind, we consider the important chapter twenty-six (1542 folios f44r–f45r; 1555 chapter divisions) of the *relación*, in which Cabeza de Vaca gives the relative placement of the native groups, which he identifies by name. Here Cabeza de Vaca's terms "en la costa" and "dentro en la tierra firme" have often been interpreted as "on the coast" and "inland," but the spatial relationship Cabeza de Vaca establishes between the Indians at Malhado and the ones of Charruco shows that "en la costa" and "en la tierra firme" signify a relationship between *island*-dwelling Indians and ones who lived on the mainland *shore* directly behind the islands. Thus, *all* of these native groups north of the prickly pear lands were island and coastline dwellers. Cabeza de Vaca's distinction is between those Indians who lived on the *islands* (whose location he describes as "en la costa"), and those who lived on the *shore* of the mainland (referred to as "en la tierra firme" or "dentro en la tierra firme"). An exaggerated translation of "en la tierra firme" as "inland" has led route interpreters of the survivors' travels—even those who acknowledge a route through southern Texas and northern Mexico—to understate or disregard the coastline as the major determinant of the route that Cabeza de Vaca and the others followed through Texas and across the Rio Grande to the first sighting of mountains.

All students of the Narváez expedition narratives seem to agree that the course the men followed from Malhado was coastal until they reached the river where the Indians consumed nuts. From that point the location of the first prickly pear cactus region has been the source of some disagreement, and we will treat that issue separately below (sec. 12.B). Cabeza de Vaca's (f35r) account of the prickly pear region suggests that the men were no longer directly on the coast: "[t]hroughout the land there are many and very beautiful grazing lands and good pastures for cattle, and it seems to me that it would be very productive land if it were worked and inhabited by men of reason." This agrees with Oviedo's (601b) mention that once the men reached the coastal edge of the prickly pear region by traveling along the coast from the river where the nuts were found, they entered somewhat inland, eating prickly pears as they went.

At the point where Cabeza de Vaca narrates the men's transfer from the Mariames to the Avavares, he says that some intermediate Indians, evidently the Eanagados or the unnamed ones with whom he himself had been, told them that other Indians farther ahead and toward the coast, called the Camones, had killed all the men of the Téllez and Peñalosa crew as they arrived on shore and that their raft could still be seen there (f35r). The fact that these Indians said the rafts could be seen on the coast, and that

they had seen the articles of clothing and weapons that had been traded to the interior, shows that although these Indians did not live directly on the coast, neither did they live so far inland that they had no contact with the shoreline groups. The actual distance that the Narváez expeditionaries went inland is not possible to determine, but whatever it was, their evident proximity to the coast suggests that they intended to continue following it in search of Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco as they left the Avavares Indians at the outset of their continuous travel that eventually led them through northern and western Mexico to San Miguel de Culiacán. We must therefore question Davenport and Wells's (216) suggestion that "[s]ince Cabeza de Vaca and his companions could not have known of the eastward bulge in the coast line in the region of the mouth of the Rio Grande, they would naturally continue in this southwesterly direction to reach Pánuco." The men viewed the coastline, not any cardinal direction, as their path, and they therefore must always have been well aware of where the coast of the North Sea (Gulf of Mexico) lay. For this reason, we will argue that the four survivors may have crossed the Rio Grande at a point nearer to the coast than either Davenport and Wells, Krieger, or Campbell and Campbell have proposed. The fact that Cabeza de Vaca (f39v) says the Avavares Indians informed the four that the Asturian and Figueroa had been seen among the shore-dwelling Indians "of the figs" suggests that even though the Avavares did not live directly on the coast, they too had contact with coastal peoples. We must not forget that Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) described the Avavares as living directly across from the island-dwelling Quitoles.

Finally, with regard to the men's journey beyond the Avavares and their turn toward the interior, we consider the following often-cited passage from the *relación* (f47v):

But because this was off our route, we refused to go to them, and we took the course through the plain near the mountains, which we believed were not far from the coast. All the people of the coast are very bad, and we considered it preferable to go through the land because the people farther inland are of a better disposition and they treated us better, and we considered it certain that we would find the land more populated and with better means of sustenance. Finally, we did this because, by crossing through the land, we would see many of its particularities, because if God our Lord were served by taking some one of us out of there and bringing him to the land of Christians, he could give an account and description of it.

Cabeza de Vaca's statement that he and the others "believed" the mountains were near the coast must have been the one that led Davenport and Wells to assume that the men were unsure of the exact location of the coast and

to suggest that they were unknowingly straying from it as they traveled in a southwesterly direction. Yet, according to Oviedo's account (605a), when the men arrived at the foot of the mountains, the Indians there called others up from toward the sea to visit the men. Later those people attempted to take the men to the coast, but they refused, having been warned about the coastal peoples: "[b]ut they wanted to go nowhere but upland and inland, because experience had taught them about the people of the coast, and also because they had always been told not to go to the sea after sunset, and since then they had been afraid to go to it when it was not possible to see" (605b). Once again, the men's proximity to the coast is clear, and the notion that the men might actually have been in western Texas at this point in the narrative must be discarded.

Even the interpreters of Cabeza de Vaca's route who acknowledge the author's claim that he and his companions were indeed near the coast of the North Sea (Gulf of Mexico) at the time he makes his statement about inland travel have invariably understood the passage from the *relación* cited above to mean that the men made a conscious decision at this point in their journey to cross through the interior of southern North America to the South Sea (Gulf of California/Pacific Ocean). Interpreting the passage as an introductory reference to subsequent travel beyond the geographic point at which the men found themselves in the narrative when the phrase appears, these students of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* understand it to imply that the men intentionally abandoned their coastal route to Pánuco at this point in order to explore the unknown territory north of New Spain and give account of it to the Spanish monarch. Davenport and Wells (238) attribute the men's climb into the mountains to a fear of the coastal Indians but are unclear on the direction the men were heading, and they use a mistranslation of Oviedo's text, saying that the men "preferred going 'higher into the interior,' rather than going toward the coast or the sunset." Oviedo's reference to "a la puesta del sol" here actually signified not direction ("toward the west"), as Davenport and Wells assumed, but rather time ("after sunset"), as we have fully translated the passage above.

Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 113–14) explicitly states that Cabeza de Vaca's proclamation refers to the men's decision to go to the Pacific Ocean, although he puzzles over the fact that after this statement the men appear to have continued in the direction of Pánuco for three additional days. Although Campbell and Campbell (8–9) follow Krieger in interpreting Cabeza de Vaca's statement about traveling inland as an active decision to take the cross-continental trek, they seem to have been aware that the four survivors had initiated an inland journey parallel to the coast from the time they had departed from the Mariames Indians. Campbell and Campbell (8)

note that “[w]hen Cabeza de Vaca and his three associates escaped from the Mariames and Yguazes in the prickly pear area and passed on to the Arbadaos and Cuchendados, they were proceeding in accordance with their plan to take an inland route southward toward Pánuco in order to avoid further contacts with shoreline groups.” Here Campbell and Campbell have introduced a considerable ellipsis, since the accounts record that the men traveled from the Mariames and Yguases in late summer of 1534 to the Eanagados and another unnamed group and then to the Avavares, with whom they remained for almost a year, until the summer of 1535, when they went to the Maliacones and the Arbadaos. (As we will show below [sec. 21], the identification of the large Indian settlement of one hundred dwellings that the men reached after leaving the Arbadaos as having pertained to the Cuchendados is one Davenport and Wells made, although this association is implied very indirectly in the Narváez expedition narratives.) Campbell and Campbell’s realization that the men were on a journey through the coastal interior to Pánuco from the time they left the Mariames nevertheless represents an improvement over previous interpretations of the account, even though they did not recognize as such Cabeza de Vaca’s *retrospective* commentary on the men’s shift toward the coastal interior as they joined the Avavares in continuing to move toward Pánuco.

It is evident that when Cabeza de Vaca made this statement about inland travel as he wrote his *relación* sometime after returning to Spain in 1537, he was referring back to the intentional move the men had made to the coastal interior from the shoreline in late summer 1534, rather than to the radical alteration of their course that occurred shortly after they reached the mountains in midsummer 1535. That his statement was the declaration of a conscious decision to cross over to the Pacific Ocean is very unlikely, if not completely impossible, since Cabeza de Vaca could have known nothing of the interior of southern North America, and especially in light of the fact that he says he strongly opposed Narváez’s abandonment of the ships even to do exploration of the coastal interior in search of Apalache in May 1528. Thus, it seems not at all likely that he would have subscribed to intentionally abandoning the effort to reach Pánuco after more than seven years of searching for it, only to replace such a humble and desperate goal with a flourish of confident (and risky) exploratory zeal. The men’s six years of life and travel along the coast from Galveston Bay to the first prickly pear region, their escape from the Mariames Indians toward the more inland Avavares, and the less frequent—but still present—references to coastal travel on the journey through the coastal interior all suggest that Cabeza de Vaca intended to convey in the passage about travel through the interior cited above that, rather than suffer the poor treatment received

from the coastal Indians as they skirted the shoreline, the men had chosen to move somewhat inland (always keeping track of where the coast was as they continued to move south in search of the Río Pánuco and Santisteban del Puerto) in order to avoid starvation and ill treatment at the hands of the Indians.

To propose that the passage explains the men's overland journey through the lands north of New Spain and that this journey was intentional is to deny the evidence all the way from the expedition's departure from the Caribbean in March/April 1528 through to the last four survivors' disagreement late in the summer of 1535 with the Indians at the last village on their way south to Pánuco, where Oviedo's text says the four men proceeded up the river and the Indians went down the river toward the sea. Cabeza de Vaca's statement about traveling inland to learn about the land can be explained through its parallel with Narváez's decision to travel inland in search of Apalache. Each assumed that by traveling not more than fifteen leagues from the coast through the interior he would be able to simultaneously explore the land and still discover the Río de las Palmas or the Río Pánuco.

To propose, on the other hand, that the four Narváez survivors *accidentally* turned inland and then wandered aimlessly over the continent until they stumbled upon the Gulf of California would too completely remove the agency that we argue has up to now been too strongly assigned to the men on the basis of the misinterpretation of Cabeza de Vaca's statement about traveling through the interior. Though the declaration is *not* evidence of their intention to cross Mexico, characterization of the men's journey as completely accidental seems likewise to be a somewhat exaggerated reading of the four Narváez expedition survivors' overland crossing. A plausible explanation for the overland journey consistent with the two surviving accounts is that as the men were heading south into a narrow corridor between the coastline on the east and mountains on the west through one of the most biologically impoverished regions of northeastern Mexico, they found the difficult passage through the region all the more hazardous because of the hostile shoreline peoples who blocked their way. Because the coastal plain could not be crossed, the men were obligated to go into the highlands and ultimately to follow the mountains to the north. As the four Narváez expedition survivors confronted the natural barrier of the Sierra Madre Oriental, their hopes of reaching Pánuco by traveling south through the coastal interior must have faded. As we will consider in our Part 6 commentary, it was during this period that their originally unplanned passage across the lands to the north of New Spain began to take shape.

Any proposal that the men followed a trans-Texas route up to their discovery of mountains rather than a coastal one might have been avoided

had modern readers given more credence to the expeditionaries' references to the sighting of mountains near the coast and paid more attention to one sixteenth-century reader's observations about the *relación*. Bartolomé de las Casas (*Apologética* 2:361 [chap. 206]) observed that

[f]inally, all these peoples, or the majority of those which Cabeza de Vaca saw and with whom he had contact, and of whom he relates the said customs, are the ones near the coast of the North Sea, and those who neighbor them, and not very many leagues inland, since afterward he strayed far from the sea, entering into the land and encountering many other diverse and more organized nations, about whose customs he could learn very little, as he was traveling very rapidly.

### 2.c. *Modes of Travel and Route Identification*

As we showed in our Part 3 commentary (chap. 4, sec. 4), the men of the Narváez expedition believed that by traveling either along the shoreline or inland parallel to the coast they would eventually reach the Río de las Palmas or the Spanish *villa* of Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco. Along their raft voyage the expeditionaries continued to explore the coastline for the mouths of the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco, covering a significant length of the coast before their rafts disintegrated. It was during the initial overland journey through the Florida Peninsula and during the subsequent sea voyage that the men became convinced that they were indeed making progress toward Pánuco, that is, that it lay “ahead” (*adelante*).

We should not forget, however, that the notion of certain forward progress toward a desired goal (Pánuco) that we find in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* was cast in the retrospective light of the men's successful arrival in México-Tenochtitlán by having followed an unplanned route. Only after returning to the sphere of Spanish settlement along a route they could never have fully intended to follow could they be assured that where they had hoped and believed they were going was in fact where they had gone, and thus the terminology of the accounts represents perspectives the men developed along their journey and verified after they arrived in New Spain.

Cabeza de Vaca (f28r) says he traveled “forward” with Lope de Oviedo on the same path that Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and the others had taken along the coast four years earlier. The four survivors made plans at the river where they were united to go to the prickly pear stands, where “Indians from farther on” would come, and the men would return with them at the end of the season toward Pánuco (f29v). Esquivel would become wrongly convinced by the clergy who had gone on the expedition that from where their raft had landed on the coast, “Pánuco lay behind” [Pánuco

avía quedado atrás] (f31r); in other words, Juan Suárez and the other clergy believed that their group had landed somewhere on the Veracruz side of the mouth of the Río Pánuco, rather than on the side of the Florida Peninsula. As a consequence of that determination, Esquivel refused to go the “way of Pánuco” with Figueroa because he no longer believed that Figueroa’s “way of Pánuco” was the direction one should travel to get there. Finally, according to his testimony in Oviedo’s account, Andrés Dorantes went “twenty leagues back” from the point at which he had crossed over to the mainland from the coastal islands (600a), in other words, twenty leagues in the opposite direction of Pánuco.

Although the entire journey of all the Narváez expedition survivors from the time each of them landed on the coast until the last four reached the mountains of northern Tamaulipas took place very near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, it is important to note that each of the five rafts landed at a different point along the coast and that not all of the surviving expeditionaries traveled together on their various coastal journeys. The raft led by Téllez and Peñalosa reached the coast alone, the ones of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja appear to have landed much farther north of Pánuco than Téllez and Peñalosa’s had, and the ones of Dorantes and Castillo and of Cabeza de Vaca and the inspector landed even farther north, at the island of Malhado. Some of the expeditionaries (e.g., Esquivel, Andrés Dorantes, Méndez, and Lope de Oviedo) would first travel “forward” toward Pánuco and then return along the coast in the direction of the Florida Peninsula, although none would ever reach any point east of the island of Malhado, to which only Lope de Oviedo may have returned in 1533.

It is only through the careful analysis and correlation of geographical descriptions and biotic data found in the Narváez expedition accounts that we may attempt to more specifically locate the regions along the coast that these various groups of expeditionaries traversed. In subsequent sections, we will give the evidence by which we and other students of Cabeza de Vaca’s journey who subscribe to the coastal route have fixed the paths of the various survivors on their journeys from Galveston Island and the mainland around Galveston Bay on the coast of modern-day Texas to the mouth of the Río San Fernando/Río Conchos system in the northernmost part of modern-day Tamaulipas. Because the narratives of the Narváez expedition present the testimony of Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés Dorantes only, the route interpretations pertaining to the experiences of other expeditionaries that they convey (e.g., the Téllez and Peñalosa raft group, the Narváez and Pantoja raft group) depend directly on the route interpretation given to Cabeza de Vaca’s and Dorantes’s own journeys. Because the journeys of these other

groups took place prior to Dorantes's and Cabeza de Vaca's journeys down the coast, however, as we unravel the narratives we will consider the earlier journeys first, giving the modern geographic equivalents of their routes and explaining how these locations depend on Dorantes's and Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions of their own journeys in our direct discussion of Dorantes's and Cabeza de Vaca's own travels.

#### 2.D. *Location and Classification of Cabeza de Vaca's Indian Groups*

Buckingham Smith was the first to attempt to locate the ranges of the Indian groups mentioned in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*, placing their names on a map of the section of coastal mainland of southern North America between Mobile Bay and the mouth of the Mississippi River (Smith, *Narrative*, fourth map following 138; reproduced in Baskett 267), according to his original determination of the landfall of the rafts. As mentioned above, Smith moved that landfall west beyond the mouth of the Mississippi River as he prepared the second edition of his translation, but his untimely death preempted the inclusion of two maps showing the routes of the various expeditionaries (Murphy in Smith, *Relation* iii), and there is no reference to the locations of Indian groups in the notes to the edition. Field (Smith, *Relation* 235) observed that in Smith's modified version of the Narváez expeditionaries' route the author believed that Cabeza de Vaca's captivity had occurred on the coast of the modern-day state of Texas, and from this we may infer that he also believed that region to be the place inhabited by the Indians who had held Cabeza de Vaca captive.

Although Baskett blazed the trail of a clearly coastal route traveled by the expeditionaries from Galveston Bay to as far south as Mustang Island, his placement of Indian groups was affected by the curious overland route he adopted beyond that point. Thus, Baskett's (263–68) discussion of the topic and his own map (264) are not particularly useful in determining the locations of the groups. Attempts to locate and classify the Indian groups that Cabeza de Vaca encountered on the Texas coast by correlating the information to much later information collected at the eighteenth-century missions of Texas, as Davenport and Wells (133–42, 222, 229–32, 239–40) did, have been largely discredited as anachronistic, although they have not completely disappeared (e.g., Newcomb, "Karankawa").

Due therefore to the temporal isolation of the Narváez expedition experience and narratives, we can determine the ranges of native groups of the Texas coast mentioned therein *only* by locating the Narváez expeditionaries' encounters with them and correlating the ethnographic information given in the accounts to these encounters. The locations are therefore completely



dependent on the accuracy with which the expeditionaries' routes of travel along the coast can be determined. Whereas in previous portions of the narratives the lack of geographic specificity has made locating the men's position on the coast with any degree of precision a nearly impossible task, especially with respect to the expeditionaries' sea journey, the lengthy period that Cabeza de Vaca and the others spent on the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico and the corresponding detail of the narratives regarding geography, biota, and the lifeways of the native inhabitants in this particular section make the task of placing limits on a plausible route followed and, by extension, the location of indigenous groups identified in the narrative somewhat easier; as always, however, they remain unverifiable (table 6).

### 3. ORGANIZATION OF THIS TEXTUAL COMMENTARY

We have divided our commentary on this section of the *relación* into two segments (I and II) according to a geographical criterion, noting the men's move from the shoreline to the region of the interior coastal region as explained above. The first segment (I) includes the time period from the expeditionaries' arrival on the Texas coast in November 1528 through late summer 1534, when the last four survivors of the Narváez expedition left the Mariames Indians of the coast and went to live with the inland Avavares Indians. The second segment (II) treats the four survivors' time among the Avavares and subsequent groups of the coastal interior from the fall of 1534 to mid-/late summer 1535, when, having begun their continuous overland travel, the men reached mountains for the first time along their now seven-year journey.

The first segment (I) of the above division is the more complex of the two from a narrative perspective, as it contains the accounts of three distinct groups of Narváez expeditionaries: that of the Téllez/Peñalosa raft, that of the comptroller/commissary and Narváez/Pantoja rafts, and that of the Cabeza de Vaca/inspector and Dorantes/Castillo rafts. The last of these groups split into three parts after landing at the island of Malhado: the group of four expeditionaries and an Indian who traveled down the coast in November 1528; the group Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo led down the coast in the spring of 1529; and finally, Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo, who journeyed down the coast in 1533. Thus, within the geographical framework of our analysis, we separate and unravel the many narrative threads of this segment chronologically, considering first the fate of the Téllez/Pantoja group, then that of the combined comptroller/commissary and Narváez/Pantoja groups, and then the three journeys down the coast from Malhado, continuing through to Cabeza de Vaca's reunion with the

other three survivors in 1533 and their escape from the Mariames to the Avavares of the coastal interior in 1534 (table 5).

The second segment (II) of this part of our commentary on the Narváez expedition experience, in which we consider the period following the men's shift from the shoreline Indians to those of the coastal interior, is narratively much less complex. We divide it into two subdivisions (II.A and II.B), the first of which corresponds to the men's move to the Avavares Indians and the time they spent with this group from the summer of 1534 to the summer of 1535. As mentioned above, this period cannot be seen as the beginning of the men's overland journey, as the continuous movement that characterizes that journey did not begin until the summer of 1535. The second subdivision (II.B) considers the first leg of the overland journey. We include it here because it represents the final leg of the men's search for Pánuco and is the only part of their journey to México-Tenochtitlán that follows a path along the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The men's continued quest for Pánuco led them through the corridor of the coastal interior from the region inhabited by the Avavares in southeastern Texas to their arrival at the sierras of northeastern Tamaulipas, where their seven-year experience along the coasts of the northern Gulf of Mexico in search of Pánuco drew to a close.

#### ✪ 1. Shoreline Travel among the Peoples of the Coastal Islands and Mainland (Late 1528 to Late Summer 1534) (f20v–f35r)

As we mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca did not construct a chronologically ordered narrative of the events of the Narváez expedition but rather gave a linear account organized around his own journey through the Indies on the expedition. Because of the complexity of this account, and because Oviedo's narrative (written from the separate testimony that Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés Dorantes gave for the Joint Report pertaining to this part of the Narváez expedition experience) presents problems of similar scope, it is necessary to construct an ordered chronological account from the two narratives by analyzing Cabeza de Vaca's account and correlating it to the pertinent pieces of the account Oviedo wrote from the Joint Report testimony.

Before beginning our reconstruction and discussion of this complicated period of the Narváez expedition, however, a preliminary observation about the geography of the region in which these events transpired is necessary. The islands and mainland coast of Texas have been modified considerably by both natural and human processes since Cabeza de Vaca visited them over 450 years ago. Although the region has been the subject of detailed geological

study (see Brown, *Environmental Geologic Atlas of the Texas Coastal Zone*), it is not possible to reconstruct the region's geography of Cabeza de Vaca's time or even to prove that any specific inlet or island that existed then remains in that same recognizable form today. Although we will note some of the most significant geological changes to the Texas coast since Cabeza de Vaca visited it (which some previous route interpreters have incorporated into their arguments regarding the Narváez expeditionaries' path along the Texas coast), we wish to call attention to the fact that even modern maps of this coastal zone are at variance in their portrayal of the present configuration of islands and mainland of the region. This is due in part to the effects of tides in the shallow waters between the islands and the mainland and the many types of land (sand dunes, marsh, etc.) that are found there and to the way that these types of land are cartographically portrayed on any given map.

The very specific identifications of islands that we have given represent a best guess about the ones across which the men might have traveled, yet we recognize that the intricate and volatile geography of this region and the lack of specificity in the accounts allow for other route interpretations within the region of the Texas coastal zone (see map 6). For our identifications and geographic nomenclature we have relied on the map of the Texas coast published by Davenport and Wells (facing 259) in their study of the Narváez expedition and on the maps in Brown.

#### 4. THE EXPEDITION'S ARRIVAL ON THE TEXAS COAST

##### 4.A. *The Raft of Téllez and Peñalosa (Late 1528)*

Although the raft that Captains Téllez and Peñalosa led was the final one Cabeza de Vaca and his men accompanied as they sailed along the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico prior to arriving on the Texas coast in late 1528, Cabeza de Vaca learned of its fate later than he learned what happened to any of the other three rafts. The four Narváez expedition survivors learned of the men of the Téllez and Peñalosa raft only in late summer 1534.

According to Cabeza de Vaca (f35r), when he, Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico received news of the Téllez/Peñalosa group they had already departed from the Mariames Indians and were with the Eanagados and another unidentified group in the first region of prickly pears on their way to joining the Avavares. From Cabeza de Vaca's account it is not clear which group—the Eanagados, with whom Andrés Dorantes and Estevanico had left Castillo when they went in search of Cabeza de Vaca, or the group with whom they found Cabeza de Vaca—told the men that a coastal group called the Camones had killed the Téllez and Peñalosa crew as it arrived on the

coast and that the raft could still be seen nearby on the shore. Cabeza de Vaca (f35r) reported that the Indians claimed that these men had arrived on shore so fatigued from their journey that they could not protect themselves against the hostile Camones. He says the Indians killed the entire crew as it came ashore and then traded the expeditionaries' clothing and weapons inland.

As we will establish in subsequent sections of this commentary, the two Narváez expedition accounts suggest that other members of the Narváez expedition traveled as far south along the coastal islands as the northern tip of Mustang Island without ever giving any indication that they themselves discovered the Téllez/Peñalosa raft along the coast, or at least such information never reached Andrés Dorantes or Cabeza de Vaca. Thus, we may assume that Téllez, Peñalosa, and their men landed somewhere on southern Mustang Island or, more likely, on Padre Island sometime after the beginning of November 1528, and that this region was the native land of the Camones Indians. In his account of the native peoples of the region, Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) described a group he called Camoles simply as a group that lived on the coast, but he does not mention the Camones in this summary.

Oviedo (601b–02a) wrote his account of the four survivors' move from the Mariames to the two intermediate groups and then to the Avavares from Andrés Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report, and he does not relate that any of these natives informed the men about the Téllez/Peñalosa raft. In fact, there is no mention of the Téllez/Peñalosa group or their raft in Oviedo's account after Cabeza de Vaca and the men of his raft were separated from that group in the autumn of 1528 as they sailed toward the Texas coast from a point west of the mouth of the Mississippi River.

#### 4.B. *The Rafts of the Comptroller and the Commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja: The Account Esquivel Would Give (Late 1528 to March 1529)*

Because the experience of the men of the Téllez/Peñalosa raft on the Texas coast quickly ended in late 1528 as all of them were killed there, it befell the indigenous inhabitants of the region to inform the final four survivors of the expedition in 1534 about what had happened to their countrymen some six years earlier. Among the men who went on the rafts of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, one survived until at least early spring 1529. This man, a native of Badajoz named Hernando de Esquivel (f30r), survived long enough to encounter Figueroa (one of the four expeditionaries who would leave Malhado for Pánuco in November 1528) and give him an account of these events. Figueroa passed Esquivel's story on to Andrés Dorantes, evidently sometime after March 1529. Dorantes's recounting of it appeared in his 1536 testimony in the Joint Report and

was preserved by Oviedo (594ab). Dorantes likewise passed the story on to Cabeza de Vaca in the spring of 1533, and the latter subsequently recorded it in his *relación* (f30r–f31r). Thus, Oviedo's and Cabeza de Vaca's accounts of these events are more or less equally mediated versions of the testimony that Andrés Dorantes gave on the basis of what Figueroa told him he had learned from Esquivel. Whereas Cabeza de Vaca would have had the opportunity to question Dorantes about the information he received from Figueroa about what Esquivel had told him of the rafts of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, Oviedo had to rely on Andrés Dorantes's written testimony given for the Joint Report only, and the chronicler apparently never had the opportunity to acquire any clarification of the written source from Dorantes.

The two accounts of these events are largely corroborative, and because both tell Esquivel's tale in the immediate context of Figueroa's journey down the coast in the fall of 1528, and this within the context of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast in the spring of 1529, they refer to the geography of Esquivel's narrative in terms of that of the two subsequent journeys. The two accounts relate that the comptroller (Alonso Enríquez) and the commissary (Juan Suárez) arrived with the group of friars and the rest of the passengers of their raft in autumn 1528. As we will show below (sec. 7.A), this group's arrival on the strip of the Texas coast at the eastern edge of the mouth of the San Bernard River can be established by correlating Esquivel's account to Andrés Dorantes's testimony in Oviedo's (593b) account of Dorantes's party's discovery of Esquivel's group's raft as the Dorantes/Castillo party traveled down the coast from Malhado in the spring of 1529 and then determining the modern identifications of the geography pertaining to the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey.

Once the comptroller, commissary, clergy, and the others arrived on the coast just north of the San Bernard River, they began to make their way along the coast toward Pánuco (f30v; 594a). As the company of the comptroller and the commissary skirted the coast, Narváez, Pantoja, and their group arrived on their raft to the place along the shore where the other group was walking. Again by assigning modern equivalents to the geography described in the accounts of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast in 1529 (f29v–f30r; 593b), as well as Cabeza de Vaca's journey down the coast in 1533 (f28r; 592b), we can determine that Narváez's raft reached the coast somewhere between the mouth of the San Bernard River and the tip of Matagorda Peninsula at the northern edge of Matagorda Bay. Narváez had his men disembark and walk along the shore with the men of the other raft so that his vessel might sail along more easily. He guided his raft along the shore of Matagorda Peninsula, where the others walked until they reached Pass Cavallo (f30v;

594ab), the generally accepted modern identification of the many references in both accounts to a large inlet (“ancón grande”) or “ancón de Espíritu Santo” that the various groups traveling down the coast from Malhado discovered. We will consider the identifications of the San Bernard River and Pass Cavallo below in our direct discussion of the Dorantes/Castillo party’s journey down the coast in the spring of 1529 (secs. 7.A–B).

At Pass Cavallo Narváez helped the men, who could have numbered up to about eighty, cross over to Matagorda Island. At this point, just after his narration of the crossing, Cabeza de Vaca inserts a detail in the *relación* that Oviedo (616b) implies did not appear in the Joint Report and that continues the negative portrayal of Narváez and Pantoja that Cabeza de Vaca constructed throughout his account. He says that Narváez revoked the power of the comptroller, Alonso Enríquez, as lieutenant governor (*lugarteniente*) of the expedition and gave this title to Pantoja (f30v). That night the governor remained on his raft with a pilot named Antón Pérez and a page, Campo (f30v; 594b), while the rest of the crew camped on the north end of Matagorda Island. During the night a north wind came up and blew Narváez’s raft, which was completely lacking in provisions and without a sufficient anchor, out to sea. He and the other two on board were never seen again (f30v; 594b).

The remaining members of the comptroller and commissary’s and Pantoja’s crews continued to walk down the coast until they arrived at Cedar Bayou, a narrow pass between Matagorda and Saint Joseph Islands. Crossing over to Saint Joseph Island without difficulty, the group walked down the island to Aransas Pass (f30v; 594b). Cabeza de Vaca’s secondhand recounting of how these men frightened away some Indians, who put their houses into their canoes and sailed “from the other side, to the coast,” is the basis on which we might propose that these men were on the coastal islands. It is equally possible, however, that the crossing Cabeza de Vaca narrates that we identify with Cedar Bayou was rather a crossing from Matagorda Island to Blackjack Peninsula, on the mainland just south of San Antonio Bay. Oviedo’s (594b) account of the men’s travel, pertaining again to Andrés Dorantes’s testimony, states that after Narváez disappeared, the men entered “certain marshes and inundated areas that were there, and inland” [*ciertos paludes é anegadiços que allí avía, e por la tierra adentro*], suggesting perhaps that the men were in fact on the mainland during the winter of 1528–29. Once again, we postpone the argumentation regarding the identification of Matagorda Island, Cedar Bayou, Saint Joseph Island, and Aransas Pass for our discussion of Dorantes and Castillo’s 1529 journey down the coast (sec. 7).

Finding a minimal amount of water, firewood, and shellfish, either at Aransas Pass on the southern tip of Saint Joseph Island or on the tip of Blackjack Peninsula between Saint Charles and Aransas Bays, the

expeditionaries decided to spend the winter there since weather conditions had begun to make travel difficult (f30v–f31r; 594b). Just as Cabeza de Vaca remembered to note how Pantoja had received the position of lieutenant governor from Narváez, he also narrates the account of Pantoja's ill treatment of the crew after Narváez disappeared and of how Sotomayor (the brother of Vasco Porcallo of Cuba) killed Pantoja with a single blow in the camp where the group had gone to winter (f31r); though Andrés Dorantes had been his source for this information, Dorantes himself must not have offered this testimony in the Joint Report, as Oviedo did not include it in his account. The group apparently tried to exist on its own without the help of the Indians, living off the shellfish and other food that they could find.

Little more is said about this group in either account, except that day by day their number dwindled, as the living fed off the flesh of those who died until the last man, Esquivel, in the final days of February, preserved the meat of the body of Sotomayor, the last of the men to perish. By eating this meat he survived until the beginning of March (f31r). Oviedo (594a, 594b) is less explicit about who ate whom; he says merely that some of the men survived by eating the flesh of others, and that Esquivel was the only survivor.

Only Cabeza de Vaca (f31r) narrates that in the desperate months between November and February, during which this group languished on the coast, the friars who were among the men had come to believe (incorrectly) that Pánuco lay in the direction of the Florida Peninsula along the coast from where these men had lodged. In other words, the friars were convinced that when they arrived to the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico on their raft they were at a point somewhere near the mouth of the Río Pánuco on the side of the Spanish settlement of Veracruz to the south. From this supposition the clergy inferred that the group had been traveling the wrong way along the coast if it expected to reach Pánuco. Esquivel would not forget this information when he was taken away in the beginning of March 1529 by the same group of Indians that had fled the previous autumn from the place where the men had overwintered (f31r).

It is difficult to determine which Indians these were who had fled when the men arrived in the fall of 1528 and returned in the spring of 1529 to capture Esquivel. As we will see, Cabeza de Vaca suggests in the *relación* (f31r) that Esquivel ultimately fled to the Mariames, and we can therefore eliminate that group. That he fled to the Mariames from the Pánuco side of the coast (that is, from a point south of where the Mariames lived) is not surprising when we consider that his objective in the spring of 1529 was to go along the coast toward the Florida Peninsula with hopes of finding Pánuco. As the sole survivor among the passengers of the rafts of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, Esquivel was carrying an

important fragment of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative with him that he would pass on to Figueroa, who would relate it to Andrés Dorantes (all in the spring of 1529), and who would finally tell it to Cabeza de Vaca sometime in the spring of 1533 or later.

4.c. *The Rafts of Cabeza de Vaca and the Inspector and of Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo (November/December 1528)*

Cabeza de Vaca's testimony in the Joint Report served as Oviedo's source for his description of the men's arrival at Malhado, and it is therefore not surprising that his own *relación* and Oviedo's rewriting of his testimony concur that he, the inspector (Alonso [Diego] de Solís), and their men arrived on an island on 6 November 1528 (f20v; 591b). Cabeza de Vaca described the island to be one-half league wide and five leagues long, lying two leagues from the mainland (f26v). Lope de Oviedo (a Narváez expeditionary, not to be confused with the chronicler, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, who wrote from the Joint Report) was the first to survey the region from atop a tree. Lope de Oviedo reported that the men had landed on an island and that there were trails through the land that he assumed to be cattle trails; from this he concluded that the region must be a land inhabited by Christians (f20v–f21r; 590b). Much in the same manner that the pilots of the ships had been convinced from the time of the expedition's arrival on the Florida Peninsula in April 1528 that Pánuco lay nearby, Lope de Oviedo must have assumed that the men had landed with their raft near Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco.

On the same day that the crew arrived, Cabeza de Vaca also sent Lope de Oviedo on a short mission to explore the island (f21r; 590b). He returned with a pot, a small dog, and some fish and was apparently followed by their owners—three natives of the island—who were later followed by another one hundred Indians armed with bows and arrows (“indios flecheros”) (f21r); according to Oviedo (590b), the Indians numbered two hundred.

The Indians seem to have quickly befriended Cabeza de Vaca's group and brought food and water to these men. Cabeza de Vaca (f21r) makes evident the fact that he and his men were so weak and fatigued that the Indians could easily have killed them. After a few days of being fed by the Indians, the expeditionaries attempted to again set sail west along the coast for Pánuco. This resulted in the sinking of the raft upon which they had come from the Bay of Horses, the death by drowning of the inspector and two other men, and the loss of all of the expeditionaries' clothing and the provisions that they had salvaged from their trip to the coast from the Bay of Horses. When the Indians returned to give them food that night they were immediately



surprised and shocked by the altered condition in which they found their unfamiliar visitors. The Indians sat among the Narváez expeditionaries and wept for half an hour, perhaps as a ritual for the dead that they saw on the shore or in ritually greeting again these recent acquaintances (see f26v) (f21r–f22v; 590b–91a).

In his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca tells that, knowing no other remedy for their unfortunate situation, he asked for the others' opinion on going to the natives' settlement. He recounts how out of fear those who had been in New Spain (and who knew of Aztec sacrifice) protested such a proposal because they believed that the natives would surely sacrifice them to their idols (f22v). Most of the men did eventually move to the settlement of the natives who had been giving them food, and it was there that Cabeza de Vaca says he saw an Indian with an item of barter that he knew was not like any that they were carrying. By such means, Cabeza de Vaca's group discovered the men of Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes's raft (f23r; 591ab).

This last group of men had arrived on the same island on 5 November 1528 only a league and a half back (i.e., toward the Florida Peninsula) from where Cabeza de Vaca's group had landed. The combined group of expeditionaries decided that those who were capable of travel should attempt to sail to Pánuco on the raft that the men of Dorantes and Castillo's group had sailed to the coast and that the others should remain until they were strong enough to travel and then follow on foot along the coast to Pánuco. This plan resulted in the sinking of the second raft and finally in the group's decision to spend the winter of 1528–29 with the Indians of Malhado (f23r–v; 591a).

Oviedo rejected Cabeza de Vaca's naming in his *relación* (f24r) of this island as the "Isla de Malhado" and calls attention to the fact that Cabeza de Vaca himself admitted both in the Joint Report and in his *relación* that the Narváez expeditionaries had been treated well on that "island of ill fate." In the dramatic and moralizing tone that typifies much of his commentary, Oviedo (615a) said:

I refuse to accept the name Cabeza de Vaca gives in his printed book to that island, which he calls "of ill fate" since in the first *relación* [the Joint Report] they did not give it a name, nor can such a name be given. Instead, the Christians were well treated on that island, as he [Cabeza de Vaca] himself confesses in the one and the other *relación* [the Joint Report and the 1542 printed *relación*, respectively]; and if the sea or fate took those two boats from them, the other boats did not have a better fortune [with regard to sinking], or with regard to the place where they were taken.

By considering the relationship of four rivers west of the island that are mentioned in the Narváez accounts (see below, sec. 7.A), Ponton and

McFarland (168, 175–78) determined that the island where these men landed was the modern Galveston Island, refuting both Smith's (*Narrative*, fourth map following 138) early belief that the rafts had landed between Mobile Bay and the mouth of the Mississippi River and his later one in his incomplete second edition that the place of Cabeza de Vaca's captivity was Espíritu Santo Bay (behind Matagorda Island; Field in Smith, *Relation* 235). Coopwood (117) argued that Galveston Island was too large to fit the description of Malhado in the *relación*. Taking Coopwood's position, Davenport and Wells (121–22) refined Ponton and McFarland's proposal, arguing that Malhado was not Galveston; they suggested instead a combination of San Luis Island and Oyster Bay Peninsula, both just to the southwest of Galveston Island. Davenport and Wells (122–23) maintained that the island and peninsula have often been combined by natural processes. Today this island and peninsula seem again to exist as Follet's Island (Brown, Galveston–Houston Area volume, topography and bathymetry map), which Weddle (206) suggests could have been Malhado.

#### 5. MESSENGERS FROM MALHADO: FIGUEROA'S ATTEMPT TO REACH PÁNUCO (LATE 1528 TO APRIL 1529)

##### 5.A. *Five-Man Journey down the Coast from Malhado*

Both accounts of the Narváez expedition relate that the men who resolved to spend the winter at Malhado sent four of their strongest comrades and best swimmers down the coast to carry news of their predicament to the Spanish settlement at Pánuco (f23v; 591a). Of these men (Figueroa, Álvaro Fernández, Méndez, and Estudillo), one, the Portuguese carpenter Fernández, was perhaps the individual who had offered the idea of building the rafts that had carried the Narváez expeditionaries from the Bay of Horses to the Texas coast. On more than one occasion Cabeza de Vaca notes some of the key skills necessary for overseas exploration: knowledge of ship building and navigation and the ability to swim; possessing at least two of these, Fernández was evidently one of the best-prepared expeditionaries of the Narváez mission. Along with these four men the group at Malhado sent an Indian (f23v; 591a), said in the 1542 edition of the *relación* to have come from “the island of Avia.” The origin of this native is not clear, and “from Avia” is omitted in the 1555 edition. Hodge (49n2) comments that “Avia has been regarded as the native name for Malhado, but this is seemingly an error.” He suggests that the native was not from Malhado but rather from Cuba, whence Hodge assumes he had been brought on the expedition to *Florida*.

Cabeza de Vaca (f23v) could note the departure of these five men down the coast at the point in his narrative that pertained to November/December

1528, but he did not learn their fate until he himself left Malhado in the spring of 1533 and met up with Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico. The Dorantes/Castillo party encountered Figueroa, the sole survivor of the five-man group, sometime around April 1529, as Dorantes, Castillo, and their men were making their way from Malhado along the coast to Pánuco. Andrés Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report on Figueroa's account of the five men's travel down the coast served as Oviedo's, and his oral testimony to Cabeza de Vaca was the latter's source for these events.

Neither Oviedo's account nor the *relación* gives the specifics of the five-man group's travel down the coast in any detail, such that it is not possible to know whether they encountered the raft that the comptroller and the commissary had abandoned on the bank of the San Bernard River that the Dorantes/Castillo party would discover the following spring. We can deduce, however, that Figueroa and the other four were unable to reach the combined group of the comptroller and commissary's and Narváez and Pantoja's men. As we have seen above (sec. 4.B), the men of this latter group, from whom only Esquivel survived, were living out their miserable fate at a point farther down the coast at the same time that the five-man group from Malhado made its way down the coast. Had the group of five reached the others, they perhaps all would have returned up the coast to Malhado rather than perish on the coast and leave only Esquivel to narrate their deaths. Such events would have altered considerably the accounts that Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés Dorantes gave of the expedition over eight years later. It is probable that the four Europeans and the Indian traveled along the coastline toward Pánuco to a point somewhere on Matagorda Island.

#### 5.B. *Conflicting Versions of Méndez's Death*

Cabeza de Vaca (f30r) explains, according to what he learned from Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo in the spring of 1533, that harsh conditions of later November 1528 and a lack of provisions caused the death of Fernández, Estudillo, and the Indian. The two remaining men, Figueroa and Méndez, were taken captive by the Indians of the area. Oviedo's (594a) account of the journey of the four Europeans and the Indian from Malhado is very brief (there is no mention of the fate of the Indian who accompanied the four expeditionaries), and he relates only that two of the four expeditionaries died of cold and hunger and that Indians killed a third. This third man was Méndez, and Cabeza de Vaca's account of his death is problematic.

In his repetition of what he suggests Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo told him when he rejoined them in the spring of 1533 about what they had learned from Figueroa, Cabeza de Vaca (f30r) claims about Méndez

that, rather than remain with the Indians who had captured him and Figueroa, he attempted to flee to Pánuco, and that the Indians who had taken the two men captive—presumably ones such as the Quevenes who lived on the islands in front of the coast—followed Méndez and killed him. In spite of this account, Cabeza de Vaca (f28v) had already said earlier in his narrative of his own journey down the coast in 1533 that before he discovered Dorantes and Castillo, the Quevenes Indians just beyond the large pass (Pass Cavallo) told him that the same Indians who had killed Esquivel (see below)—the Mariames—had also killed Méndez; according to Cabeza de Vaca, both of these men had been killed because of dreams the Mariames had had. Thus the two versions of Méndez’s death in Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*—one according to what Cabeza de Vaca learned from Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo (which they had learned from Méndez’s traveling companion Figueroa) and the other from what Cabeza de Vaca learned from the Quevenes—are vague and somewhat at odds.

#### 5.c. *Figueroa’s Encounter with Esquivel*

Fortunately, the Mariames did not kill Esquivel, the sole survivor from among the men of the rafts of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, until he had had the chance to meet Figueroa sometime about April 1529. Since Esquivel had arrived on the coast at a point farther down the coast toward Pánuco in the fall of 1528 and then became wrongly convinced that Santisteban del Puerto lay in the direction of the Florida Peninsula, it is plausible that he met Figueroa coming down the coast from Malhado but traveling the opposite direction that he himself was, both of them in search of Pánuco.

Oviedo’s account, derived in this case again from Dorantes’s testimony, is silent on the subject of which Indian groups were holding Esquivel and Figueroa when they encountered each other. A somewhat elliptical passage in Cabeza de Vaca’s (f30r) account suggests that by the time the Dorantes/Castillo party discovered Figueroa in the spring of 1529, Esquivel had already passed over to the Mariames, but that when the two men met one another prior to the arrival of the Dorantes/Castillo party from Malhado, Esquivel had still been in the Quevenes’ possession: “[a]nd [Figueroa told Dorantes, Castillo, and the other five] that being with these Indians, he learned from them that with the Mariames there was a Christian who had crossed over from the other side, and [that] he [Figueroa] had found him [the Christian] with the ones who were called Quevenes, and that this Christian was Hernando de Esquivel.” Cabeza de Vaca (f31r) seems to suggest even more specifically that Figueroa encountered Esquivel while Esquivel was still in

the possession of the particular Indian of those who had fled from where the men of the comptroller and commissary's and Narváez and Pantoja's groups had overwintered and who had returned in the spring for Esquivel. From this we might assume that the whole group had overwintered in Quevenes territory and that Figueroa also never went beyond the Quevenes' range along the coastal islands.

Figueroa learned from Esquivel how the latter had been the only survivor of the crews of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, as discussed above (sec. 4.B). Figueroa no doubt told Esquivel how the crews of Cabeza de Vaca and the inspector and of Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo had landed at Malhado the previous November and how he had come down the coast with the other three Europeans and the Indian in search of Pánuco some five months earlier. This, however, did not suffice to convince Esquivel to accompany him south along the coast past where Esquivel had seen his companions die of starvation and cold, and where the friars had convinced him that Pánuco lay back up the coast in the direction of the Florida Peninsula.

By early to mid-April 1529, Esquivel had gone to live on the mainland with the Mariames and Figueroa evidently remained on the coastal islands with the Quevenes. According to Cabeza de Vaca (f31r), when the Dorantes/Castillo party came down the coast from Malhado in the spring of 1529 and encountered Figueroa, he could tell them only that Esquivel had gone to live with the Mariames and that if they were there for a time they might soon see him. According to Oviedo (594b), Dorantes apparently first said in his own testimony for the Joint Report that he learned Esquivel was dead about a month after the men discovered Figueroa, and that the Indians who held Esquivel had killed him because he had fled from them. Oviedo (600a) recorded from a subsequent account that Dorantes gave of the same details but in connection with the extended period he spent with the Mariames that the killing was linked to a dream that one of the Mariames women had had.

In narrating his own journey down the coast in 1533, Cabeza de Vaca (f28v) gave a premature allusion to Esquivel's death at the hands of the Mariames Indians, suggesting he learned the information from the Quevenes natives. Dorantes evidently informed Cabeza de Vaca (f31v) after they were reunited in 1533 that he himself learned while living among the Mariames that they had killed Esquivel because he fled after one of their women dreamed that he would kill one of her children; Dorantes claimed to have seen Esquivel's sword, beads (likely a rosary), and book (perhaps a Bible or breviary).

The meeting of Esquivel and Figueroa was especially fortuitous, since it facilitated the transmission of the information regarding the rafts of the

comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja from Esquivel, the sole survivor of those groups, to Figueroa. Had Esquivel and Figueroa not met, this information would never have reached Andrés Dorantes, who would not only narrate it himself in testifying for the Joint Report but would also pass it on to Cabeza de Vaca, making possible its inclusion in the *relación*. We pick up Figueroa's story again in our discussion of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast in March 1529 at the point at which they discovered him (below, sec. 7.c). Prior to considering that journey, however, we turn back to Malhado, where Cabeza de Vaca, Dorantes, Castillo, and all the others remained at the end of 1528 while the events we have discussed above were taking place farther down the coast toward Pánuco.

#### 6. WINTER AT MALHADO (NOVEMBER 1528 TO MARCH 1529)

In the months between November 1528 and March 1529, all the men of the three rafts that had landed south of Malhado, as well as the five-man contingent sent down the coast from Malhado itself, perished, save Esquivel and Figueroa. During this same time, the men of the two rafts that landed at Malhado also languished, though, as Oviedo observed, they had had the fortune on this misnamed "island of ill fate" of encountering friendly Indians who turned out to be the key to survival for a few of them.

Both Oviedo's account and Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* present Cabeza de Vaca's version of the time the Narváez expedition survivors spent in the region of Malhado during the winter of 1528–29. Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) says that the island was inhabited by two groups of natives, each of which spoke a separate language. Although he gives the names of these groups, the Capoques and the Han, he does not tell us which group his company encountered when they landed or the one that the Dorantes/Castillo group first met. In the two modern editions (1853, 1959) of Oviedo's book 35, chapter 7, which the chronicler wrote after having read Cabeza de Vaca's printed *relación*, the name of the second of these groups—Han—has been incorrectly converted into the third-person present form (*han*) of the Spanish verb *haber* (to have).

Shortly after Figueroa, the other three Europeans, and the Indian had departed from the island, the weather at Malhado turned harsh, and the Han and Capoques had great difficulty digging out the roots they were accustomed to eating (f23v). Five Spaniards who were living on the coast ended up in the same desperate state as had those of the crews of Narváez and Pantoja and of the comptroller and the commissary, both groups resorting to cannibalism during the winter of 1528–29 in order to survive (f23v–f24r; 591a). Cabeza de Vaca gives us the names of these five, but he says no more

about them, not explaining why they were living away from the Indians on Malhado. They may have been some of the same men who, on the grounds of their experience in New Spain, had feared being sacrificed and therefore refused to go to the Indian settlements. Although Oviedo also relates the account, only Cabeza de Vaca (f24r) tells of the Indians' reaction to this instance of cannibalism among the expeditionaries, saying that they became "very upset" over it and that it produced "great scandal among them."

Sometime in November 1528, presumably after Figueroa and the other four men's departure but very shortly after the arrival of the Narváez men on the island, many of the natives and the expeditionaries became sick, and nearly half the Indians and a great many of the Narváez men died (f24r; 591ab). Many of the Indians believed that the foreigners were responsible for the deaths, and had it not been for the intervention of one of the Indians on the men's behalf, the Indians might have killed them all. According to Cabeza de Vaca, this man specifically was an Indian who held him; according to Oviedo, he was simply "a principal Indian among them." This Indian successfully argued that if the foreigners were responsible for the deaths of the Indians, then they would not have allowed so many of their own to die as well, and that for this reason the surviving ones should not be harmed. The hardship and famine that the Narváez expeditionaries experienced was compounded by a ritual custom that the Capoques and Han observed, which dictated that those who experienced a death in their family did not search for food and depended on the others to find food for them (f25r).

The shortage of sustenance and the diminished number of Indians who would search for food caused the Indians eventually to divide the expeditionaries up amongst themselves and cross over to the mainland to hunt for food, and the accounts claim that the surviving men were forced to do the same tasks as the Indians (f25r-v; 591b-92a). Although both narratives seem to suggest that the natives left the island for reasons related to the interruption in their life cycle that disease and the presence of the Europeans who probably brought it caused, it also seems from the accounts that it was typical for these coastal, island-dwelling Indians to go to the bays of the mainland to eat oysters for about three (f25v) or four (591b) months of the year. Cabeza de Vaca says that the Indians of Malhado forced the men to become *fisicos* (physicians, healers) on this island, although this information is found only in his *relación* (f25v-f26r). Oviedo does not mention the curing rites performed by the expeditionaries until much later in the course of the narrative and among Indians much farther down the coast (603b). We consider this discrepancy in the context of the men's whole journey through this coastal region below (sec. 27).

6.A. *Survivors of the Expedition in Spring 1529*

The two accounts show that by the end of March 1529, only eighteen or nineteen of the nearly 250 Narváez expeditionaries who had arrived on the Texas coast on the five rafts were still alive (table 5). Recounting the hardships that he and the others endured at Malhado, Cabeza de Vaca reported that “of us eighty men who arrived there from both ends [of the island], only fifteen remained alive” (f24r). He apparently included himself in this count, since later he names ten men whom Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo led from the island of Malhado to the mainland, and two more whom they left there because they were too ill to travel from the island (f27r). Cabeza de Vaca says further that the group of twelve that departed from the island picked up a thirteenth man—Francisco de León—on the mainland, and that he (Cabeza de Vaca) was too ill to see this group when it departed. Cabeza de Vaca evidently did not include Francisco de León in his original count of fifteen survivors.

As we show in our discussion of the texts of the Narváez expedition (chap. 12, sec. 2.B.8), Oviedo’s account contains two narrations of the Andrés Dorantes/Alonso del Castillo party’s departure down the coast. The first (592a–93b) is derived from Cabeza de Vaca’s testimony and relates only the men’s return to the island of Malhado from the mainland in the spring of 1529 and their departure toward Pánuco. Oviedo records that Dorantes and Castillo returned to the island at the end of March from the mainland to find fourteen men still alive, evidently including themselves. This number corresponds to the fifteen-man count that Cabeza de Vaca later gave in the *relación*, there including himself. Two of the fourteen were too sick to travel, as was Cabeza de Vaca, who was still on the mainland; the account is precisely the one we find in the *relación*, except that it does not include the account of Dorantes and Castillo’s discovery of Francisco de León on the mainland.

Oviedo’s (593a–95a, 598b–601a) second account is taken from Andrés Dorantes’s testimony and extends from Dorantes and Castillo’s return to Malhado in the spring of 1529 to the spring of 1533, when Cabeza de Vaca arrived to where they were; because the account is Oviedo’s relation of Andrés Dorantes’s direct testimony, it gives a much clearer recounting of and much more specific information about the Dorantes/Castillo party’s departure from Malhado and the men’s journey down the coast than Cabeza de Vaca gave either in the Joint Report or in his *relación*. From this version in Oviedo’s account we learn that Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, Diego Dorantes, and Pedro Valdivieso returned to Malhado from the mainland, supposedly on the first day of April 1529 (593a). These last two men are identified later in



Table 5. Survivors of the Narváez expedition in the spring of 1529

<i>Group</i>	<i>Location during winter of 1528–29</i>	<i>Survivors in the spring of 1529</i>
Téllez/Peñalosa	Landing on Padre Island in late 1528	None (killed by Camones)
Narváez/Pantoja; Suárez/Enríquez	Southern tip of St. Joseph Island or of Blackjack Peninsula	1. Esquivel (March 1529 encounter with Figueroa)
Group of four Europeans (Fernández, Estudillo, Méndez, Figueroa) and Indian “from Avia”	Matagorda Island or St. Joseph Island	2. Figueroa (March 1529 encounter with Esquivel)
Cabeza de Vaca/Alonso de Solís; Dorantes/Castillo	Island of Malhado and mainland near the island	<p>Leave for Pánuco in spring 1529 (the Dorantes/Castillo party, thirteen members):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Andrés Dorantes</li> <li>4. Alonso del Castillo</li> <li>5. Estevanico</li> <li>6. Diego Dorantes</li> <li>7. Pedro Valdivieso</li> <li>8. Diego de Huelva</li> <li>9. the Asturian cleric</li> <li>10. Estrada</li> <li>11. Tostado</li> <li>12. Chaves</li> <li>13. Gutiérrez</li> <li>14. Benítez</li> <li>15. Francisco de León</li> </ol> <p>Leave for Pánuco in spring 1533:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Cabeza de Vaca</li> <li>17. Lope de Oviedo</li> </ol> <p>Perish between 1529 and 1533:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18. Jerónimo de Alaniz (on Malhado)</li> <li>19. Unknown fate of man mentioned in Oviedo’s text as being too far inland to be reached</li> </ol>

the account as Andrés Dorantes's cousins (598b). The Asturian clergyman ("asturiano clérigo") and Estevanico are said in this account to have been brought back by other Indians from another island that lay behind Malhado (i.e., toward the Florida Peninsula; 593a).

Following Ponton and McFarland's identification of Malhado as Galveston Island, Baskett (250) proposed Pelican Island as the one where the Asturian and Estevanico had been. Having identified Malhado as San Luis Island and Oyster Bay Peninsula (in the location of present-day Follet's Island), Davenport and Wells (121–22) rejected Baskett's suggestion and proposed that the Asturian and Estevanico had been on Galveston Island instead. According to this second account in Oviedo (593a), Dorantes and Castillo found six more men on Malhado who left the island with them and two more who remained because they were too sick to travel. Thus Dorantes's account given for the Joint Report agrees with the narration of a departure of twelve men from Malhado that Cabeza de Vaca gave both in his testimony for the Joint Report and his *relación*.

Dorantes's account in Oviedo's (593b) text mentions the recovery of a thirteenth man between the third and fourth rivers that the group crossed on their way down the coast; this was evidently Francisco de León, whom Cabeza de Vaca (f27r) said was recovered on the mainland; although Cabeza de Vaca includes this information about Francisco de León when he narrates the men's departure in the spring of 1529, he evidently learned of the party's recovery of the man either from Indians of the region sometime after the group's departure or much later from Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico in 1533. Besides Cabeza de Vaca, another survivor said to have been too far inland to be contacted by the others when they left is mentioned only in the part of Oviedo's text (593a) derived from Dorantes's testimony; he does not appear again in either account. This survivor serves as a reminder of the possibility that other Narváez expeditionaries may have continued to live in the region, unknown to those who eventually left the Texas coastal area and finally reached México-Tenochtitlán.

In summary, Cabeza de Vaca's testimony for the Joint Report and his account in the *relación* as well as Andrés Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report suggest that eighteen men of the Narváez expedition were still alive in the spring of 1529: Cabeza de Vaca, twelve who left Malhado and picked up another on the mainland, two who remained on Malhado, and Esquivel and Figueroa farther down the coast. Oviedo's account based on Andrés Dorantes's Joint Report testimony mentions one additional survivor whom the then twelve-man party leaving Malhado (prior to finding Francisco de León) was unable to contact on the mainland.

7. THE DORANTES/CASTILLO PARTY'S JOURNEY DOWN THE COAST  
(SPRING 1529)

7.A. *From Malhado to the Last of Four Rivers*

It is perhaps with respect to the narration of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast in the spring of 1529 that the two accounts of the Narváez expedition differ most. With respect to this group's journey up to their discovery of Figueroa, Andrés Dorantes's account in Oviedo (593a–94a) is far more detailed than Cabeza de Vaca's (f29v–f30r) retelling of the events from the account Dorantes gave him four years after they occurred. Ponton and McFarland's and Baskett's studies of the accounts of the Dorantes/Castillo party's and Cabeza de Vaca's journeys down the coast led to the identification of the rivers, islands, and inlets that the men discovered, some of which we have already mentioned in our discussions of the rafts of Téllez/Peñalosa, the comptroller and the commissary, and Narváez and Pantoja. We will treat the identification of these geographic features directly here in this consideration of the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast in 1529 and later in our discussion of Cabeza de Vaca's journey along the same course in 1533 (sec. 9).

As we mentioned in the previous section, the party led by Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo was composed of twelve men at the time the group left Malhado. According to Oviedo's (593a) account, the men paid the Indians at Malhado with "certain things" [ciertas cosas] in order to cross the inlet (*ancón*) between Malhado and the mainland. Cabeza de Vaca (f27r) claimed that in return for the crossing the twelve paid the Indians with the famous sable cloak ("la manta de martas") that the expeditionaries had acquired during their raft voyage.

Having reached the mainland and being unable to contact Cabeza de Vaca (f26v–f27r; 593a) or the unidentified man who was too far inland for them to reach (593a), the twelve men traveled two leagues down the coast to a river that was beginning to swell with spring rains (593a). Because there were few men in the party who could swim, the group constructed dugout canoes to cross the river. Three leagues farther down the coast the travelers came to another river that ran with such force that fresh water emptying from it entered far into the sea. At this second river the men built rafts in order to cross. The first raft traversed the river successfully, but the river's current was so strong that the second raft was swept a league out to sea (593a). Two of the five men on this raft drowned, two swam to shore, and a third hung onto the raft until he was able to climb back on, at which point he used his body as a sail and was blown back to shore by the landward breeze (593b).

The party, which had now been reduced to ten men following the two drownings, continued beyond the second river, and as they went along they discovered the other Christian (593b), apparently Francisco de León (f27r). The group, now made up of eleven men (twelve less two drownings plus the recovery of Francisco de León), came to the third river three or four leagues after crossing the second one, and there they found the raft that the comptroller, the commissary, the friars, and the others of that crew had abandoned (593b). In narrating from Andrés Dorantes's Joint Report testimony, Oviedo (593b) explicitly states that the group moving down the shore from Malhado had no knowledge of what had happened to the men of this raft.

After crossing the third river, the group of eleven traveled another five or six leagues before they came to a fourth river. Although a few Indians who were living on the Florida (north) side of the river fled, Indians from the Pánuco (south) side crossed over to the expeditionaries and aided them in crossing the river (593b). Oviedo (593b) says that these Indians aided the men because "they had already seen those of the raft of the governor and those of the raft of Alonso Enríquez," thereby giving a premature reference to his later narration (594ab) of the account that Figueroa would give to Andrés Dorantes and the others once they were reunited at a point farther down the coast. Whether this was a statement present in the Joint Report testimony proceeding from Andrés Dorantes's anticipation of subsequent events or Oviedo's addition in writing his account due to his own reading of the complete report prior to writing his own account cannot be determined.

In this first segment of the Dorantes and Castillo group's journey down the coast, Cabeza de Vaca's narration of the same events from the account that he says Dorantes and Castillo gave him at the river where they were reunited in the spring of 1533 begins to vary. The *relación* (f29v–f30r) does not convey the specific detail about the rivers and the men's crossing of them but says only that after crossing to the mainland the men found the raft of the comptroller and commissary, that the rivers crossed were "four very large ones . . . of many currents," that the men's boat had been carried out to sea as they crossed the rivers, and that during this time four men had drowned; by this point in the narration of his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca (f28r) had of course already mentioned the four rivers in his account of his own travel down the coast with Lope de Oviedo. Whereas in Oviedo's account taken from Andrés Dorantes's testimony we acquire very specific information about the rivers and the crossings and learn that by the time the men had crossed the fourth one the Dorantes/Castillo party was made up of eleven men, Cabeza de Vaca gives a more impressionistic account, and his narrative leaves only nine men of the party still alive at this point.

Ponton and McFarland (175) employed the account of four rivers flowing directly into the Gulf of Mexico and the distances between them given in the Oviedo text describing the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast to identify them as Oyster Creek, the Brazos River, the San Bernard River, and Caney Creek. Davenport and Wells (119–21) agreed with Ponton and McFarland's identifications, noting especially that Oyster Creek, now a wide bayou, probably carried part of the flow of the Brazos River in the sixteenth century, and that Caney Creek was then the bed of the Colorado River. This determination of these rivers allowed us to state earlier (sec. 4.B) that the comptroller/commissary group had landed on the north bank (Florida side) of the San Bernard River, since that is where the Dorantes/Castillo party discovered its abandoned raft.

#### 7.B. *The Bay of Espíritu Santo*

Returning to Dorantes's account in Oviedo, after the eleven-man group crossed Caney Creek it traveled for four days down the coast to an inlet (*ancón*). The account records that two more of the men died on this journey, leaving nine (593b). Cabeza de Vaca's (f30r) version of the account says only that the men crossed the inlet. In the *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca himself says that during the time he was alone at Malhado after the Dorantes/Castillo party departed (spring 1529 to spring 1533) he explored down the coast "forty or fifty leagues" (f27v), and he first mentions the four rivers and the inlet in describing his final journey down the coast from Malhado with Lope de Oviedo (sec. 9), where he associates the large inlet with the name Espíritu Santo (f28r). Oviedo (592b) wrote from Cabeza de Vaca's testimony in the Joint Report that Cabeza de Vaca had crossed the inlet twice and returned to Malhado prior to taking Lope de Oviedo across in 1533. This is the first instance in Oviedo's account where the inlet is linked to the name Espíritu Santo.

Andrés Dorantes provided the most detailed description of this inlet, which Oviedo (593b) recorded from the Joint Report: "[t]his inlet was wide, and it was almost a league across, and it makes a point toward the Pánuco side which protrudes into the sea a quarter of a league, with some large dunes of white sand, which must be easily seen from far out to sea, and for this reason they suspected that this was the Río del Espíritu Santo." Although Cabeza de Vaca also had associated this inlet with the name Espíritu Santo in his testimony for the Joint Report regarding his three crossings of it (592b), he gave no explicit description of it there. In the *relación* (f28r) he described it to be "a league wide and deep throughout."

Ponton and McFarland (176) suggested that this crossing had been from Matagorda Peninsula west across East Bay of the Matagorda Bay system.

Baskett (257–59) determined from his analysis of the accounts that the use of the term *ancón* referred to the narrow passageways between the islands off the coast of Texas, and that the inlet described was the crossing between the tip of Matagorda Peninsula and Matagorda Island, known today as Pass Cavallo. We note that the change of course of the Colorado River has caused the filling of East Bay, and this, combined with human alterations, has changed Matagorda Peninsula considerably from its form in the sixteenth century as a long narrow peninsula connected to the mainland on the Florida side and dividing East Bay from the Gulf of Mexico. Davenport and Wells (132–33) remarked that the region of Pass Cavallo must have changed little since the sixteenth century, since it still closely resembles the Narváez expedition narratives' descriptions.

From the Oviedo account taken from Andrés Dorantes's Joint Report testimony we can infer that the Narváez expeditionaries carried with them a fairly specific description of the Río del Espíritu Santo; unfortunately, no other such description from an independent source is known, and thus we must assume that this is the one that circulated about the river/bay in the early sixteenth century. As we have discussed in our Part 4 commentary (chap. 5, sec. 7), the fact that the Narváez expeditionaries did not identify the Mississippi as the Río del Espíritu Santo but seem rather to have applied the name to the region of Matagorda Bay supports Delanglez's argument that portrayals of the Río del Espíritu Santo on early maps did not correspond to the Mississippi River. Regardless of the actual geographical phenomenon or phenomena to which the toponym "Espíritu Santo" had been applied by previous explorers to the region, by attaching the name to a specific location that they encountered on the coast, evidently in the region of Matagorda Bay, the men of the Narváez expedition must have believed when they reached the large inlet that they were some two hundred leagues from the Spanish settlement of Santisteban del Puerto. The fact that the Narváez expeditionaries seem not to have associated the toponym "Espíritu Santo" with the Mississippi River does not serve as proof that all earlier cartographic and narrative representations of a large river on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico did not correspond to the present-day Mississippi.

#### 7.c. *Encounter with Figueroa*

Returning to Dorantes's account in Oviedo (593b–94b) of the now nine-man group (eleven less two deaths between Caney Creek and Pass Cavallo), we learn that after crossing Pass Cavallo the men continued twelve leagues down the coast to the narrow inlet between Matagorda and Saint Joseph Islands, identified by Baskett (260) as Cedar Creek (Cedar Bayou). Cabeza de Vaca

(f30r) conveys that this inlet was fifteen leagues from Pass Cavallo and adds that two men had died of fatigue along the sixty leagues that the group had walked from Malhado, although he is not specific about where the deaths occurred. The two deaths along the land route narrated in each account are apparently the same, even though in Oviedo's account they occur before the group reached the large inlet and in Cabeza de Vaca's account they take place afterward. Nevertheless, because of the two extra drownings that Cabeza de Vaca narrated in his account of the river crossings, by the time the group reached Cedar Bayou, according to his account it consisted of only seven men, rather than nine, as Oviedo's record taken directly from Dorantes's eyewitness account claimed.

While attempting to cross Cedar Bayou, the group was noticed by an Indian who returned later that day with Figueroa (594a), whom we have shown above to have been living on the coastal islands in the region of Matagorda Bay, perhaps on Matagorda Island. As Baskett (260) has observed, Figueroa seems to have come from Saint Joseph Island across Cedar Bayou to Matagorda Island, where the group of nine or seven was attempting to cross in the opposite direction. As we discussed above (sec. 5.c), Figueroa had already encountered Esquivel while the latter had also been with the Quevenes Indians sometime prior to the Dorantes/Castillo party's arrival. By the time the nine- or seven-man contingent reached Figueroa, Esquivel had already gone over to the Mariames, and it is not clear whether the Indians who brought Figueroa to the Dorantes/Castillo party were Quevenes or other Indians from farther down the coastal islands, although, as we have argued, it seems likely that these were Quevenes.

Both accounts claim that Figueroa told the Dorantes/Castillo party about his own journey with the other three Narváez expeditionaries and the Indian down the coast from Malhado the previous November, the deaths of two of the men and the Indian from cold and starvation, and Méndez's death, according to him at the hands of an Indian group down the coast in the direction of Pánuco. The accounts also record his encounter with Esquivel, the information he learned from Esquivel about the crews of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja, and how Esquivel had passed over to the mainland to the Mariames, where Figueroa believed he was still living (f30r–f31r; 594ab), as we have discussed above (secs. 4.b and 5).

#### 7.D. *Figueroa and the Asturian's Flight to Pánuco*

From Oviedo's account of Andrés Dorantes's Joint Report testimony, we learn that a short time after the Dorantes/Castillo party discovered Figueroa, he was forced to go with the Indian who had brought him, and only two of

the other nine men were able to go along with him since they were the only ones among the nine who could swim; these two men were the Asturian clergyman and another man described in Oviedo's (594b) text simply as a young man and good swimmer. According to Oviedo, the following day only the young man returned to the remaining seven Christians who were at the south end of Matagorda Island. The day after the young man returned, "other Indians" came to eat berries near the small inlet, and, at the demand of the eight-man group (nine less the loss of the Asturian), the Indians took them across the pass onto Saint Joseph Island. These Indians also gave them some fish and other food, and when they moved on with their houses, they took the eight with them. As a result, they left Figueroa and the Asturian behind, as they had not returned from the Indian who had originally brought Figueroa to them (594b–95a).

At the end of his retelling in the *relación* of the tale Figueroa had given to the Dorantes/Castillo party about his encounter with Esquivel, Cabeza de Vaca (f31r) suspended his narrative temporarily to call attention to the manner in which all the information had circulated from Esquivel to Figueroa to Dorantes to him, and that in such a manner he had learned the fate of the two rafts of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja. After relating the last portion of Figueroa's narrative (that the Dorantes/Castillo party might still encounter Esquivel alive in that region), Cabeza de Vaca does *not* return to a clear narrative of reported speech regarding what Andrés Dorantes told him about what Figueroa and the Dorantes/Castillo party did after this exchange of information. Instead of saying "And Dorantes said" or "And he said," Cabeza de Vaca (f31r) suddenly begins to narrate in the first person, giving the reader the misleading sense that Cabeza de Vaca had been there himself witnessing the remaining events occurring in early 1529 among what, according to his account, was now, with the addition of the recently recovered Figueroa to his seven-man group, an eight-man party moving down the coast: "[a]nd as I have just said, he [Figueroa] and the Asturian attempted to go to other Indians." In her edition of the Valladolid text, Barrera (*Álvar Núñez* 114) seems to have missed this subtle transition, transforming the first-person present verb form *acabo* to the third-person preterit *acabó*, thus transcribing the phrase "Y como acabó de decir" [And as he finished saying], apparently understanding this phrase as Cabeza de Vaca's reporting of Andrés Dorantes's utterance with Figueroa as its subject. Smith (*Relation* 101) appears to have made the same error of interpretation in his translation, to wit, "After Figueroa had finished telling the story." This interpretation is plausible, as is the one in which we might imagine Dorantes to be the subject of the sentence, whereby this is the last sentence of Cabeza de Vaca's reporting of Andrés Dorantes's narrative.



Regardless of whether this phrase is a third-person preterit utterance of which Figueroa was the subject or a first-person present one, the important point is that from this moment on, Cabeza de Vaca narrates the final four years of the Dorantes/Castillo party's experience as though he had direct, eyewitness knowledge of it. The effect of this narrative rupture in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is to deprive the reader of the end of Andrés Dorantes's own clear recounting through speech reported by Cabeza de Vaca in the *relación* of the period from just after the time when Figueroa joined the Dorantes/Castillo party in April 1529 until the point four years later when Cabeza de Vaca finally caught up with Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico. If Cabeza de Vaca had been faithful to the narrative technique he had employed throughout the *relación* up to this point, he would very likely have given a clearer picture of this lengthy period of the Narváez experience in which he did not participate directly, as he was living up the coast at Malhado.

Fortunately, Oviedo brings us this lengthy account of Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report, some of which we have already seen above. In the *relación*, this account is replaced by Cabeza de Vaca's vague first-person, somewhat imbricated narrative of the events that is often at odds with Oviedo's clearer account. Oviedo's account of the disappearance of Figueroa, the Asturian, and the young swimmer and the young swimmer's subsequent return is absent from the *relación*. Cabeza de Vaca (f31r-v) says simply that Figueroa and the Asturian desired to flee, were threatened and tortured by the Indians, and finally were successful at escaping, leaving only six men among the Indians, evidently the same Indians who had brought Figueroa to the seven-man Dorantes/Castillo party that had arrived there.

Although the two accounts are at odds over the number of men remaining in the Dorantes/Castillo party after Figueroa and the Asturian's departure (eight in Oviedo, six in Cabeza de Vaca) and the precise chain of events that led to these two men's escape, they both document the escape itself. According to Oviedo's (598b-99a) account from Andrés Dorantes's testimony, Pedro de Valdivieso later learned that "the other two Christian swimmers" had passed through the place where he was then living, apparently on Mustang Island, as we will explain below. Valdivieso would cross over from Mustang Island to Saint Joseph Island to tell Diego Dorantes that Figueroa and the Asturian had been stripped of their clothing and mistreated by the Indians, and that he had seen the clothing and breviary or diary of the Asturian. He would inform Diego Dorantes further that the two had fled from these Indians after making a pact with one another to not stop until they reached Pánuco. Diego Dorantes apparently passed this information on to his cousin Andrés, who narrated it in the Joint Report.

Because Cabeza de Vaca truncates Andrés Dorantes's account of the six remaining men in his narrative once he assumes Andrés Dorantes's voice in the narration of the conclusion of Figueroa's account as he relates Figueroa and the Asturian's escape, Pedro de Valdivieso's account of the discovery of their possessions as told by Oviedo does not appear. Whether or not Andrés Dorantes gave Cabeza de Vaca this account of Valdivieso's sighting of the two men is uncertain, although the latter would certainly have had the opportunity to hear or read the information when the Joint Report was prepared. Cabeza de Vaca does record a sighting of Figueroa and the Asturian, but not by Valdivieso. Cabeza de Vaca (f39v) relates that while he, Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico were with the Avavares Indians, the Indians told him that they had seen Figueroa and the Asturian with "the people of the figs." According to Cabeza de Vaca's location of Indian groups (f44r), these Indians "of the figs" lived on the coast beyond the Camones, most likely somewhere on central or southern Padre Island. It should be noted that Pedro de Valdivieso's discovery of Figueroa and the Asturian's possessions would have occurred and been passed on to Andrés Dorantes before August 1530, when Dorantes fled to the mainland coast (see below, sec. 8.A), and probably took place even earlier, by late spring or early summer of 1529. Cabeza de Vaca would not have acquired his information on the Avavares' sighting of the two fugitives until after late summer 1534. No further reference to the two men appears in either narrative.

#### 7.E. *Continuation of the Coastal Journey toward Pánuco*

Cabeza de Vaca suggests that he derived his account of the events that occurred among the remaining men of the Dorantes/Castillo party (six according to his *relación*) from two sources. He says that when he and Lope de Oviedo traveled down the coast in the spring of 1533, the Quevenes on Matagorda Island informed them that there were three men like them at that place and told them their names, although Cabeza de Vaca unexplainably decides not to reveal them at this point in his narrative (f28r); they of course were Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Estevanico. Cabeza de Vaca also relates that the Indians told him and Lope de Oviedo that Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva had been killed by Indians who lived farther down the coast "because they had passed from one house to another" (f28r–v) and that their neighbors (obviously the Mariames), "with whom Captain Dorantes now was," had killed Esquivel and Méndez because of a dream (f28v).

Cabeza de Vaca's second source of information is, of course, the account he says Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo gave him after he rejoined

them in 1533 of their group's 1529 journey down the coast (f31v–f32r), and we have already discussed above how Cabeza de Vaca corrupted the end of that version as he retold it as though he had witnessed the events himself. There he reiterates the deaths of Diego Dorantes, Pedro de Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva and says that Andrés Dorantes fled to the Mariames, who told him how they had killed Esquivel and showed him some of Esquivel's possessions (f31v). Following part of a digression on the customs of the Mariames and the Yguases (f31v–f32r), Cabeza de Vaca inserted an isolated phrase: "Dorantes was with these Indians, and after a few days he fled. Castillo and Estevanico came to the mainland to the Yeguazes" (f32r). The Indians with whom Dorantes was and from whom he subsequently fled were not Mariames and Yguases, however, as the narrative might seem to suggest, but rather Quevenes or other island dwellers. This portion of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, treating the details of what occurred among the six remaining men after Figueroa and the Asturian fled, is severed by ethnographic interpolations of uncertain origin. Cabeza de Vaca perhaps had the complete information at hand in the form of a copy of the original Joint Report like the one from which Oviedo had worked, and he may have omitted some of the narrative detail from Andrés Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report as he constructed his own *relación*, mixing an abridged account of the other men's experiences with a more generalized version of ethnographic information that he derived both from Andrés Dorantes's and his own extended exposure to the Mariames Indians.

Oviedo's account of the same period regarding his eight-man group, including the young expeditionary who returned to the Dorantes/Castillo party when Figueroa and the Asturian disappeared, is far more detailed and gives a much more focused picture of what occurred among these men in mid-1529 as they proceeded down the coastal islands toward Pánuco after they separated from Figueroa and the Asturian than Cabeza de Vaca's does, and his account of the entire journey of the Dorantes/Castillo party down the coast should be considered more accurate than Cabeza de Vaca's highly fragmentary and much less intelligible version of the events in the *relación*. Oviedo (598b) records that the Indians who took the eight-man group away soon grew tired of feeding the expeditionaries and sent five of them to other Indians farther down the coast at the next inlet, which the account says was six leagues ahead. Baskett (261) identified this inlet as Aransas Pass at the end of Saint Joseph Island. Because Cabeza de Vaca does not narrate the journey of these men, and because Oviedo does not give the names of the Indian groups, it is not possible to determine the identity of the Indians who picked up the eight men or any of those beyond. Because Cabeza de Vaca (f28r) says that Quevenes near the large inlet (Pass Cavallo) told him

that “Indians ahead” had killed some of the men, the ones to whom the five who went down the coast arrived might have been ones Cabeza de Vaca says lived beyond the Quevenes (Guaycones). It is equally likely that these were simply other groups of Quevenes.

Of the five who went ahead, Alonso del Castillo, Pedro de Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva stopped at the inlet (Aransas Pass; 598b). The other two men are reported to have gone “farther down to the coast” [más baxo á la costa]. Baskett (261) suggests that this was to the southeastern edge of the island. Evidently these two men remained on Saint Joseph Island but may have gone to live away from the Indians on the shore, where they died of hunger and where Andrés and Diego Dorantes later found their remains (598b). By process of elimination it can be shown that one of these two men was the young Christian swimmer who had returned to the group of seven (Pedro de Valdivieso, Diego de Huelva, Alonso del Castillo, Diego Dorantes, Andrés Dorantes, Estevanico, and one other) when Figueroa and the Asturian disappeared and the others moved on down the coast following their encounter with Figueroa; the other man who died on the coast cannot be identified any more precisely than one of those who had traveled down the coast with Dorantes and Castillo. In his *relación* Cabeza de Vaca does not mention the deaths of these two men whom Oviedo says Andrés and Diego Dorantes discovered to have died on this island; these two deaths in Oviedo’s account resolve the discrepancy between his narration of the Dorantes/Castillo party’s journey down the coast and Cabeza de Vaca’s in the *relación* with respect to the number of deaths among the Dorantes/Castillo party. As discussed above, this discrepancy had been introduced when Cabeza de Vaca narrated the drowning that did not appear in Oviedo’s account of two additional men while the group was crossing the four rivers.

The three men who were not so quickly expelled by the Indians— Andrés Dorantes, Diego Dorantes, and Estevanico— remained for three or four days in their custody on the north end of Saint Joseph Island, but they too were soon driven from there by the natives. According to Oviedo’s (598b) text, the Indians expelled these men because they were tired of feeding them, an observation that led Oviedo to quip, “as occurs everywhere when guests stay longer than their host would like, and especially where they are neither desired nor of any gain!” These three men continued down the island to a point somewhere on the central part of Saint Joseph Island where Andrés Dorantes remained; Diego Dorantes continued down to where Castillo, Valdivieso, and Diego de Huelva had earlier stopped at the south end of Saint Joseph Island (598b). As Andrés and Diego Dorantes traveled down this island and before they encountered more Indians in the central part

of Saint Joseph Island they found the two Christians who had perished (598b). Though Estevanico is not mentioned in Oviedo's narration of Andrés and Diego Dorantes's move down the island, he evidently traveled with them and remained with Andrés Dorantes when Diego Dorantes went farther ahead.

At Aransas Pass on the tip of Saint Joseph Island, Diego Dorantes discovered that Valdivieso had passed over to the other side (across Aransas Pass to Mustang Island). As we mentioned in our discussion of Figueroa and the Asturian clergyman (sec. 7.D), Valdivieso returned across the inlet (Aransas Pass) to tell Diego Dorantes that he had learned that the two Christian swimmers (Figueroa and the Asturian) had passed through that region, and thus we justify the identification of the place where we claimed this discovery took place, as noted above. That Valdivieso actually had contact with Figueroa and the Asturian is not explicitly stated, but Oviedo's text does say that Figueroa and the Asturian had made a pact to flee down the coast without stopping until they reached a land where other Christians lived (i.e., Pánuco; 599a). This suggests that Valdivieso probably had spoken with them, since the Indians, who could have been Valdivieso's only other source of information, would not have been told of such an agreement made between the two Christian fugitives.

According to Oviedo (599a), when Valdivieso attempted to leave Saint Joseph Island and go back across Aransas Pass to Mustang Island the natives killed him because they believed he was also trying to flee. Shortly thereafter, Diego de Huelva, who was apparently living at the eastern shore of Aransas Pass on the western end of Saint Joseph Island (where he and Castillo had come to live after their expulsion along with Pedro de Valdivieso, the young swimmer, and the other who had died), was killed "because he moved from one house to another" (599a). Thus, of the nine men who first encountered Figueroa according to Oviedo's account, four were dead. Valdivieso and Diego de Huelva had been killed by the Indians. The young swimmer who had returned to the group before it separated from Figueroa and the Asturian as well as another unidentified man of the group had starved to death on Saint Joseph Island. Of the five survivors, one, the Asturian, had fled in the direction of Pánuco with Figueroa. Since Valdivieso appears to have seen them on Mustang Island, the Avavares' sighting of them with the "people of the figs" must have occurred farther toward Pánuco, perhaps on Padre Island, as mentioned above. Thus, only Alonso del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes, Diego Dorantes, and Estevanico remained as captives on Saint Joseph Island in front of and between Copano and Corpus Christi Bays.

8. FOUR YEARS OF CAPTIVITY ON THE ISLANDS AND THE MAINLAND  
(MID-1529 TO SPRING 1533)

The Narváez expedition accounts document that only nine of the nearly 250 men who had departed from the Bay of Horses survived until mid-1529, less than one year after the five rafts of the Narváez expedition had arrived on the Texas coast. Andrés and Diego Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Estevanico were living on an island that was likely Saint Joseph Island or another in its vicinity, and Cabeza de Vaca, Lope de Oviedo, and Jerónimo de Alaniz were living in the vicinity of Galveston Bay. By the time these two groups gained notice of each other in the spring of 1533, Diego Dorantes and Jerónimo de Alaniz had died. Figueroa and the Asturian had disappeared to the south and were apparently never again directly contacted by any member of the expedition and never reached Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco.

8.A. *Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, Estevanico, and Diego Dorantes among the Mariames and Yguases*

As we mentioned in our discussion of Cabeza de Vaca's fragmentary treatment of the Dorantes/Castillo party's activities after their encounter with Figueroa (sec. 7.D), he gives virtually no clear information on Andrés and Diego Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Estevanico's experiences to the south of Malhado prior to his reunion with them in 1533; we must rely heavily on Oviedo's account to decipher and contextualize the few comments Cabeza de Vaca (f31v–f32r) makes about these men during this period.

These four survivors of those who had traveled down the coast from Malhado in the spring of 1529 stayed on the islands, according to Oviedo's (599b) account, because they could not escape and therefore had no other choice: "and even though they did not desire to undergo such hardship, they could do nothing (except despair), because they were surrounded by water, since the place where they were was made up of islands." According to Oviedo (599a), the Indians who held these men were more cruel taskmasters "than even a Moor could be." Andrés Dorantes served these Indians of the coastal islands for fourteen months, from about May 1529, when the account says the men were first enslaved, until August 1530, when in broad daylight he fled from them to the mainland (599b–600a).

Baskett (261–62), asserting that "there is no evidence that Dorantes himself ever left the island of Saint Joseph on any *forward* journey" (emphasis is his), has argued that Dorantes fled to the mainland from Saint Joseph Island. Davenport and Wells (127n45) claimed that Baskett was in error on this point and insist that it must have been on the same island where

Valdivieso was killed (i.e., Mustang Island) that the other expeditionaries were treated so harshly. Departing from this point, Davenport and Wells (133) locate Andrés Dorantes's crossing to the mainland from Mustang Island and identify Oviedo's reference to the "great water" (599b) that Dorantes crossed as Corpus Christi Bay. Davenport and Wells's suggestion is plausible, but Baskett's statement is more consistent with his global interpretation of the narrative that Davenport and Wells also follow; there is no explicit evidence that any of the men of the Dorantes/Castillo party save Valdivieso, Figueroa, and the Asturian ever crossed over the last inlet (Aransas Pass) onto Mustang Island, and it is more likely that the "great water" that Andrés Dorantes passed was Aransas Bay, separating Saint Joseph Island from the mainland.

Three months after Andrés Dorantes fled to the mainland (November 1530), Estevanico followed his lead, and there the two men had contact with one another, although they were not together (600a). A year and a half after Estevanico had fled (perhaps about May 1532), Castillo also left the islands to the mainland. There he found only Estevanico, since Andrés Dorantes had fled by then to the Mariames (600a). Dorantes might have fled to the Mariames sometime near May 1532, since the text states that he was among the Mariames alone for ten months (600a); Cabeza de Vaca arrived at the Mariames in the spring of the following year. The actual time that Dorantes spent with the Mariames is difficult to determine, however, since the Oviedo text also states that "in four years' time, Dorantes saw them [the Mariames] kill or bury alive eleven or twelve children" (600a). The maximum time Dorantes could have spent with the Mariames would have been a little less than four years, from sometime after August 1530, when he went to the mainland, to the summer of 1534, when he, Castillo, Estevanico, and Cabeza de Vaca escaped from them. According to Cabeza de Vaca's (f29v) account in the *relación*, Estevanico and Castillo were with the Yguases and Dorantes was with the Mariames when he arrived in the spring of 1533 at the river where the Indians went to eat nuts.

Diego Dorantes's death is perhaps the most obscure aspect of Oviedo's paraphrase of Andrés Dorantes's testimony from the Joint Report. It seems that he too fled from the islands to the mainland, either with Andrés Dorantes or shortly after him, although the text does not explicitly narrate his flight to the mainland with the detail with which it describes the escapes of the other three men. He is said only to have served two years as a slave to some Indians who lived near the Mariames in the region of the river where the Indians went to eat nuts, until his Indians killed him for reasons that are not stated (600a).

The details we have examined above reveal that Cabeza de Vaca's (f28r–v, f31v) account in the *relación* of how Indians had killed Diego de Huelva,

Pedro de Valdivieso, and Diego Dorantes because they moved from one house to another is somewhat contradicted by Oviedo's account, which shows that only Diego de Huelva was killed for this reason. Valdivieso had been killed for trying to flee after he had spoken to Diego Dorantes, and Diego Dorantes himself is reported to have died over two years later as a slave on the mainland. From a narrative perspective, far more important than the content of the details regarding these men's deaths is the fact that they allow us to identify a narrative hole in Cabeza de Vaca's account, one that would otherwise remain relatively invisible.

The Oviedo text states that by May 1532 Castillo had come to the mainland to the same Indians with whom Estevanico had been living since approximately November 1530, and that Andrés Dorantes had also lived with these Indians for a time until he fled to the others, "twenty leagues back" (i.e., twenty leagues up the coast in the direction of the Florida Peninsula) to a river near the inlet of Espíritu Santo (600a). This was the "River of Nuts" where Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico would be reunited with Cabeza de Vaca. As mentioned above (sec. 5.c), while Andrés Dorantes was with the Mariames they told him how they had killed Esquivel because of a dream one of their women had had, and they showed him some of Esquivel's possessions (600b). Although Oviedo's text states no names for the native groups, the lengthy descriptions of the Indians given in Oviedo's account (600a–01b) and evidently derived from Andrés Dorantes's testimony for the Joint Report very closely resemble the ones Cabeza de Vaca gave in his *relación* (f31v–f34r), where the Indians with whom Castillo and Estevanico lived are identified explicitly as the Yguases and the ones with whom Andrés Dorantes lived as the Mariames. Cabeza de Vaca gave no dates in the *relación* regarding these men's flight to the mainland or the amount of time each of them spent on the islands and the mainland before he himself arrived to where they were in the spring of 1533.

Oviedo's (599b–600a) texts suggest that Estevanico's and Castillo's escapes from the island Indians were delayed in part by their inability to swim, and Cabeza de Vaca (f29r–v) confirms their fear of the rivers and bays that had to be crossed. Andrés Dorantes seems to have had some ability to swim or had developed it along the journey. Had all three of the men been capable of swimming they would probably have left the region long before the spring of 1533 and consequently never would have encountered Cabeza de Vaca.

While with the Yguases and the Mariames, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo, and Estevanico were obligated to travel along their migratory route between the river where the Indians consumed nuts in the spring until the end of May, when they began traveling to a prickly pear ground "more than forty leagues" from the river in the direction of Pánuco (601a). The prickly



pears lasted approximately one and a half months (601a) or fifty to sixty days and were ripe during August and September (601b). Andrés Dorantes would have entered this cycle first, perhaps arriving unaccompanied from the island to the mainland region of the prickly pear grounds in the summer of 1530. Estevanico could have been present at the River of Nuts in 1531, as well as in the prickly pears in the summer of that same year. The first time that all three men were together since being on the islands was probably at the prickly pear grounds during the summer of 1532, and we can be certain from the *relación* that all three were at the River of Nuts in 1533, when they and Cabeza de Vaca encountered each other for the first time since their separation at Malhado in late 1528. Oviedo (601b) related that when Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico were reunited in the prickly pear region in the summer of 1532, they planned to escape; they were unsuccessful because the Indians who held each of them were never together.

#### 8.B. *Cabeza de Vaca, Lope de Oviedo, and Jerónimo de Alaniz in the Region of Malhado*

As we might expect, Cabeza de Vaca (f27r–f28r) gives a much more lengthy account in the *relación* of the time he spent alone among the Indians near Malhado than Oviedo gives in the account he wrote from Cabeza de Vaca's testimony in the Joint Report (592a–93a). As we examine in detail elsewhere (chap. 12, sec. 2.B.8), in his own narrative Oviedo incorrectly attributed part of Cabeza de Vaca's testimony taken from the Joint Report (the portion regarding his activity as a merchant among the Indians through his final trip down the coast with Lope de Oviedo) to Andrés Dorantes, even though just paragraphs earlier Oviedo had recorded Dorantes's own departure from Malhado. The four years that Cabeza de Vaca spent living in the area around Malhado taught him many lessons about surviving among the natives, and these certainly must have aided him in his escape down the coast and ultimately his return to Spanish settlement. While the Dorantes/Castillo party and, even more so, Figueroa and Esquivel had confronted more hostile Indians down the coast, Cabeza de Vaca, Lope de Oviedo, and Jerónimo de Alaniz survived under harsh conditions, but apparently they were less severe than those under which the others lived; Oviedo's criticism of Cabeza de Vaca's naming of the island was, therefore, not unwarranted.

When the others departed at the beginning of April 1529, Cabeza de Vaca was still with the Indians who had taken him to the mainland from Malhado; Lope de Oviedo and Jerónimo de Alaniz were both living on the island. As mentioned previously, all three of these men had been too ill and too weak to travel at the time the others departed (f27r; 592a). The two accounts say

very little about Lope de Oviedo and Jerónimo de Alaniz during this time. By the spring of 1533 (and probably earlier, since Cabeza de Vaca makes no mention of him other than with respect to his death), Jerónimo de Alaniz had died. Lope de Oviedo remained living on the island (f28r; 592b).

For the year that Cabeza de Vaca says he lived with the island Indians of Malhado, he reports that he was a slave to them and explains the great difficulty he had in completing his tasks of digging out the roots that the Indians there ate during a few months of the winter (f27r; 592ab). As noted above, Cabeza de Vaca indicated that during the time between November 1528 and the departure of almost all of the other Narváez expedition survivors from Malhado in April 1529, the Indians had forced them to become “físicos,” but he says nothing more about this obligation in describing the majority of his time at Malhado. Finally, because of the harsh treatment he received from the Indians on Malhado, Cabeza de Vaca fled to others who took their name—Charruco—from the wooded area on the mainland where they lived (f27r–v). Oviedo’s text does not narrate Cabeza de Vaca’s move from the island groups to the people of Charruco.

With the Indians of Charruco, Cabeza de Vaca became a trader or overland merchant. Exercising this occupation, he says he freed himself from the captivity under which he had lived among the Indians of Malhado. His freedom was essential to escaping toward Pánuco: “[a]nd this occupation served me well, because practicing it, I had the freedom to go wherever I wanted, and I was not constrained in any way nor enslaved, and wherever I went they treated me well and gave me food out of want for my wares, and most importantly because doing that, I was able to seek out the way by which I would go forward” (f27v). Cabeza de Vaca’s success as a merchant seems to have been due in large part to the antagonistic relationship between coastal mainland groups and those farther inland (f27v). Their wars hindered them from trading in coastal and inland products, and Cabeza de Vaca, as an outside party, exploited this situation in order to obtain food and safety and in order to determine the best way to escape to Pánuco.

Cabeza de Vaca claimed that he spent nearly six years alone and naked in this land (f28r). It is clear that he did not spend six years, and certainly not six years alone at Malhado, since he was not alone until 1529 and was reunited with the others in 1533 at the river where the Indians went to eat nuts. The maximum time he spent at Malhado, including the time he was not alone, was from November 1528 until the spring of 1533, or approximately four and one half years. Oviedo (592a) says that Cabeza de Vaca remained around Malhado for five and one half years. Whether this was a statement in the Joint Report or Oviedo’s own calculation cannot be determined. Both Cabeza de Vaca’s and Oviedo’s accounts appear to reckon time from Cabeza

de Vaca's departure in June 1527 from Spain; as he departed from Malhado in the spring of 1533 Cabeza de Vaca had been in the Indies for almost six years.

9. CABEZA DE VACA AND LOPE DE OVIEDO'S JOURNEY FROM MALHADO TO THE RIVER OF NUTS (SPRING 1533)

The reason Cabeza de Vaca gave for remaining near the island so long and for crossing the large inlet (Pass Cavallo) two times and then returning (592b) was that he wanted to take Lope de Oviedo, who was still living on Malhado, along with him to Pánuco. Cabeza de Vaca says he crossed over the water to Malhado every year to try to convince Lope de Oviedo to come with him. The similarity between Andrés Dorantes's dealings with Castillo and Estevanico on the islands and mainland between San Antonio and Copano Bays with regard to attempting to flee and the situation Cabeza de Vaca confronted with Lope de Oviedo in this respect is striking. The Narváez expedition narratives demonstrate that the expeditionaries' inability to swim was an overwhelming hindrance to their search along the coast for Pánuco. Second only to their captivity among the Indians, this was the most important factor that kept the men from continuing down the coast.

Finally, in the spring of 1533, Cabeza de Vaca convinced Lope de Oviedo to leave Malhado and thus was able to put his plan into effect. He took Lope de Oviedo with him along the coast toward Pánuco, helping him to cross the water between Malhado and the mainland, as well as the four great rivers and the large inlet (f28r; 592b). As they departed from Malhado in the spring of 1533, they apparently received assistance from the same Indians who had helped the Dorantes/Castillo party pass through the area of the four rivers and the large inlet in April 1529; in this episode Cabeza de Vaca states that these Indians were called Deaguanes. Davenport and Wells (133) suggest that Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo must have crossed from Matagorda Peninsula to the mainland peninsula between Matagorda and San Antonio Bays, rather than to Matagorda Island, as previous groups had. It seems more likely, however, that the men followed the coastline and crossed to the island where they met up with the Quevenes Indians, who would have taken Cabeza de Vaca to the mainland where Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico were now located.

It was at this point that Cabeza de Vaca learned from the Quevenes about the "three men like us" who were living with the Quevenes' neighbors and about the deaths of Diego de Huelva, Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, Méndez, and Esquivel (f28r-v). The Quevenes told Cabeza de Vaca that the Indians who were holding the three survivors would come to eat nuts at a river near there (f28v), to which we have referred above in our discussion of

Dorantes's move back in the direction of the Florida Peninsula. Whether Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo had already learned about the groups of the comptroller and the commissary and of Narváez and Pantoja from the Indians is uncertain; although nothing to that effect is narrated in the accounts, it is likely that they had. Surely the men would have passed the raft that was lying on the east bank of the San Bernard River that the Dorantes/Castillo party passed in coming down the coast from Malhado; Cabeza de Vaca nevertheless makes no mention in the *relación* of his own discovery of it.

When Cabeza de Vaca says that he and Lope de Oviedo asked the Quevenes about the others (f28v), it seems that they would have been asking about the Dorantes/Castillo party that had left Malhado in the spring of 1529. The reply that Cabeza de Vaca attributes to the Quevenes seems to refer, however, to all of the men who had died in the region, since it cites death by starvation and cold—seemingly, references to the experience of the two raft groups from which only Esquivel had survived. As we have seen above (sec. 7.E), the Oviedo text speaks of only two members of the thirteen-man Dorantes/Castillo party who died of starvation. In spite of his attempt to describe the manner and the chronological order in which he acquired his information, it is possible that as Cabeza de Vaca wrote his *relación* back in Spain well after all of these events had occurred, his retrospective knowledge of the events about which he was writing led him to allude accidentally to people and events about which he may have known nothing at that particular point along his journey. We noted the same phenomenon in Oviedo's account regarding the Dorantes/Castillo party's journey down the coast (593b; see sec. 7.A).

In addition to the information the Quevenes gave the two men about the fate of the other expeditionaries, they also explained how farther down the coast there were few Indians and that they had little food and few hides and were very cruel. To convince them of this, Cabeza de Vaca says the Quevenes offered some practical examples of the cruelty they said the men would experience among the natives who lived beyond them down the coast and who had tortured, enslaved, and killed some of their countrymen (f28v; 592b). In spite of these threats, the news of the three Christians inclined Cabeza de Vaca to stay with these Indians in order to contact the other Christians; the cruelty of the Quevenes caused Lope de Oviedo to return to the Deaguanes women who had brought the two men down the coast, though Cabeza de Vaca implored him to remain (f28v; 592b). This episode, in which Cabeza de Vaca chose to endure the unpleasant island Quevenes in order to contact the others, in contrast to Lope de Oviedo's decision to remain with the previous Indians, is an interesting example of the evolving

perspectives, morale, and expectations that the various survivors must have held at different points along the journey in response to their desperate situation. Cabeza de Vaca's attempt to convince Lope de Oviedo to stay with him is reminiscent of Figueroa's pleading with Esquivel to accompany him down the coast four years earlier. After Lope de Oviedo fled back along the coast toward Malhado, the Quevenes evidently took Cabeza de Vaca to the place on the banks of the river to where they said their neighbors would bring the other Christians.

#### 10. THE RIVER OF NUTS

Possibly Méndez and certainly Esquivel were the first Narváez men to go with the Mariames Indians to "a river near the inlet of Espíritu Santo" (600a) to eat nuts in the spring of the year. Andrés Dorantes appears to have traveled with the Mariames from the prickly pear region in August 1530 to the river in the spring of 1531. In 1533, this river was the site of Cabeza de Vaca's reunion with the other three survivors of the Narváez expedition.

Writing from Andrés Dorantes's testimony, Oviedo (601a) noted that there were many trees that bore nuts along this river, and he referred to them as walnut trees (*nogales*). The trees bore nuts every other year (601a), and Andrés Dorantes observed that in the year that Cabeza de Vaca arrived the yield was particularly heavy (601b). Cabeza de Vaca (f29r) also noted this alternation of the yield, though he was there for only two seasons (1533, 1534); he likened the nuts to those of Galicia (hazelnuts?). Coopwood (120–21) identified the nuts as wild pecans, saying that "the description that the trees bear one year and another not, applies to many of the pecan trees in Western Texas."

Notwithstanding his identification of the trees as pecan, which we accept, these trees were not in western Texas but rather along a river near the coast of Gulf of Mexico in eastern Texas. Ponton and McFarland (175) identified the river as the Colorado along its modern course, emptying into Matagorda Bay, and claimed the trees to be walnut groves. Earlier we noted the change in the course of the Colorado River to the path they describe sometime after the sixteenth century, although a smaller riverbed would have been present at that time in the place now occupied by the Colorado. Ponton and McFarland recognized that the river had to be near the large inlet that the accounts associated with Espíritu Santo, which the two investigators identified as East Bay of the Matagorda Bay system.

Coopwood's (121) location of the rivers and inlets of the coast are confused, and he located the center of the pecan region on the San Antonio River above the confluence of Cibolo Creek, far from the coast. In conjunction

with his identification of the large inlet as Pass Cavallo, Baskett (259–62) identified the river as the Guadalupe below its confluence with the San Antonio, and this interpretation has been accepted by almost all subsequent students. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 63) and Campbell and Campbell (6) refer to many local records affirming the presence of pecans on the lower Guadalupe River, but they cite none of them. Fray Francisco Céliz of the 1718–19 Alarcón expedition to Texas mentioned pecans in his description of the river (Weniger, *The Explorers’ Texas* 137b).

#### 11. CABEZA DE VACA’S REUNION WITH DORANTES, CASTILLO, AND ESTEVANICO (SPRING 1533)

The Quevenes’ knowledge of the presence of Narváez expeditionaries among the Mariames at the River of Nuts suggests that they too went there from the coastal islands to consume the nuts, although Cabeza de Vaca does not explicitly say so. As mentioned above, Davenport and Wells suggest that the Deaguanes crossed their foreign travelers over from the tip of Matagorda Peninsula to the mainland and from there to a location very near the eastern bank of the Guadalupe River, where they met the Quevenes; it is more plausible, however, that Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo met the Quevenes on Matagorda Island and that they took Cabeza de Vaca with them to the Guadalupe River when they went there to eat pecans. Oviedo (601a) claimed that Indians came from “twenty and thirty leagues” away from the river to eat these nuts.

Cabeza de Vaca (f29r) recorded that two days after Lope de Oviedo had gone, the “Indians who held Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes” (the Mariames and Yguases) arrived at the River of Nuts. He says he secretly went off with Indians (unidentified) who spoke a language different from that of his Indians (the Quevenes) and who told him that they were going to some other Indians (Mariames and Yguases) where there was a Christian. Convinced that these Indians were telling the truth, Cabeza de Vaca allowed them to take him to where these others supposedly were, and shortly thereafter he was reunited with Andrés Dorantes. The internal chronology of the account suggests the year was 1533.

Oviedo’s (592b–93a) narration of Cabeza de Vaca’s journey down the coast, for which Cabeza de Vaca’s testimony in the Joint Report served as the source, ends abruptly where the Cabeza de Vaca who is mistakenly identified as Andrés Dorantes meets the real Andrés Dorantes and Alonso del Castillo who had left Malhado four years earlier. Oviedo’s (601b) second narration of this encounter, taken from Andrés Dorantes’s testimony, is told from the perspective of Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico at the River of Nuts and

explains how Cabeza de Vaca arrived to the other three in the spring after their first attempt to flee from their Indians in the prickly pear cactus range (in the summer of 1532) had failed.

## 12. THE PRICKLY PEAR CACTI

### 12.A. *American Origin of Cacti and the Presence of Prickly Pears in Early Spanish Descriptions of the Americas*

When Covarrubias wrote his *Tesoro* in the years between 1606 and 1610, he included no entry corresponding to the general term “cactus,” a word derived from the Greek term for a thistle. He did, however, include the entries for *tuna* (prickly pear) and *higuera de Indias* (fig tree of the Indies). The *tuna*, said Covarrubias (982b), was “a species of fig tree of the Indies [*higuera de Indias*], which in place of branches produces very wide and thick leaves in the manner of paddles, attached one on top of the next, and armed with sharp spines on their edges; the fruit of this plant is like an early fig [*breva*] or very sweet fig.” In speaking of the fig (*higo*) and the fig tree (*higuera*), Covarrubias (688ab) noted that Padre Juan de Pineda had posited in his *Monarquía eclesiástica* that a species of fig had been the forbidden fruit of the book of Genesis. Covarrubias (688b) said that Padre Pineda had written at length about the *higuera de Indias*, and that the ancients had called the leaves of the *higuera de Indias* “Amazon shields.”

Since Pineda, who died at the end of the sixteenth century, asserted that the ancients had known of this “fig tree of the Indies,” he evidently assumed it had come from the East Indies rather than from the West Indies (i.e., America), and Covarrubias seems to have accepted his authority. Pineda was far less empirical in his understanding of the natural history of the prickly pear cacti than was another author who also wrote in the sixteenth century about the “figs” of the Indies. Covarrubias (982b–83a) referred to this author—Doctor Andrés de Laguna, physician to the emperor Charles V and Pope Julius III—as one of the “modern authors on the nature of plants,” and he cited book 1, chapter 145 of Laguna’s Spanish translation and commentary on Dioscorides, first published in 1555; in this chapter on figs we find under *Higuera de la India* the source for Covarrubias’s definition of the *tuna*.

Whereas Covarrubias had been somewhat imprecise about the origin of the *tuna*, Andrés de Laguna (121 [bk. 1, chap. 145]) made clear in his commentary on Dioscorides that it had been “only a few years ago” that the “fig of India” had been found in Italy, and he questioned the assertion that this plant was the “Paddle of Pliny” [*Pala de Plinio*]. In other words, he was aware that this spiny plant had not been known to the ancients as Pineda had

said, but rather that it had been a recent introduction to Europe. Laguna observed that the pulp of the leaves cured wounds, and, as Covarrubias (688b) did after him, he also noted that consuming the fruit of this plant caused one's urine to turn blood red. According to Laguna, this was a matter that might cause an individual not a little concern for his health.

Laguna had come close to the truth about the prickly pear cacti, but not nearly so close as Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés. In his *Sumario* (110–11 [chap. 80]), first published in 1526, Oviedo gave the first detailed description of the *tuna* or prickly pear, the fruit of the group of plants identified today by the genus *Opuntia*, of which the majority of the species have large, flat, spine-covered, paddlelike stems upon which this fruit grows. Oviedo reported that he had seen the fruits on the island of Española only, but that he knew they grew on other islands and lands of the Americas. He likened their fruits to the fig and the medlar (*nispero*) and confessed that the first time he ate this fruit he had experienced great concern for his health when he saw the color of his urine. In his 1535 *La historia general de las Indias* (f86v [bk. 8, chap. 25]), Oviedo not only provided an unmistakable woodcut illustration of the prickly pear cactus (fig. 4) but also expanded the comical tale of his first experience with the prickly pear and the practical joke that had been played on him in this respect. Oviedo explained that he had eaten a number of the fruits with some other men who knew their effect and recreated some of the dialogue on the topic between him and Andrés Niño, one of the men who played this joke on him.

*Tuna* was the Taino name for the prickly pear. Oviedo (*Historia* 1:314b–15a [bk. 8, chap. 28]), in his later additions to part 1 of the *Historia general* (thought to have been finished by 1547), said that the Indians in the province of Venezuela called both the prickly pear (*tuna*) and the plant on which it grew *comoho*. Sometime prior to or in 1552, an acculturated Aztec physician, baptized Martín de la Cruz, gave the Nahuatl name for the plant as *tlatocnochtli*, and a color illustration of the plant appears in Juan de Badiano's surviving 1552 Latin translation of the work, titled *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis* (Cruz 174, pl. 90) (fig. 5). In this work, the leaves of the prickly pear cactus are referred to as *nohpalli*, and their juice is mentioned as the Nahuatl remedy for burns (Cruz 174, 301). Seven years of work in Mexico during the 1570s allowed Francisco Hernández (1:311a–13a [bk. 6, chap. 106]) to say that “even though the Hatians [*haitianos*, i.e., the Tainos of Española] call this plant *tuna*, the Mexicans *nochtli*, and the ancients, according to what some erroneously believe, *opuntia*, *árbol pala*, or Indian fig, it was discovered many years ago and began to spread throughout our Old World.” The Spanish doctor gave a lengthy general account of the prickly pear cacti and went on to say that, according to what he had discovered, there



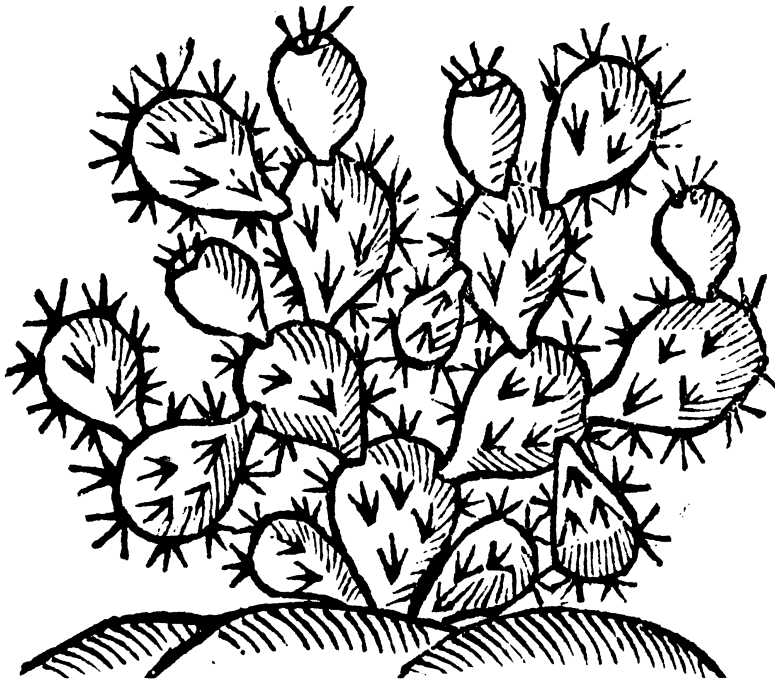


Figure 4. Prickly pear cactus illustration from Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *La historia general de las Indias* (f86v), published in Seville in 1535. Scheide Library, Princeton NJ.

were seven types of prickly pear in the province of Mexico, which he goes on to describe.

As we have seen, Cabeza de Vaca was not the first to describe the prickly pear. Oviedo's observations about the plant in his 1526 *Sumario* demonstrate that it was well known in the Caribbean by the time Cabeza de Vaca arrived there in 1527, so much so that when he himself wrote about it sometime after returning to Spain in 1537 he did not offer in his *relación* the name by which the Indian groups of the Texas coast referred to the fruit but instead used the term *tuna*, by which the Caribbean Tainos and, consequently, the Spaniards knew it. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (141b [chap. 73]) stated that the Tlascaltecs had given the Spaniards *tunas*, which he says were in season as the men passed through Tlascalala; this was in late summer of 1519. We observe in our discussion of the conquest of Nueva Galicia (chap. 17, sec. 9.B) that Gonzalo López discovered a land filled with prickly pears in 1530 probably in the eastern portion of modern-day Durango or western Coahuila as he traveled on an expedition north and east from the modern-day Río San Lorenzo on the Pacific coast of Mexico. Although subsequent to the Narváez expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's testimony regarding the prickly pears, Castañeda (Mora 81 [pt. 1, chap. 10]) recorded that members of the Coronado expedition fell ill on the way to Cíbola in 1540 because they ate

Figure 5. Prickly pear cactus illustration from Martín de la Cruz's *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis* 1552 manuscript. Reproduced from Cruz (174, pl. 90). Courtesy of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City, which holds the original, and the Johns Hopkins University Press.



the preserves of prickly pears that Indians in the province of Vacapan had given them. Castañeda said that this land was full of prickly pears.

Because there are virtually no fossil remains of cactus-related plants, the evolution of the cactus is poorly known. Modern botanical research has revealed, however, that apart from a few uncactuslike related species in Madagascar and Sri Lanka, the cactus plants “are as American as corn, tomatoes, tobacco, or potatoes” (Weniger, *Cacti* xi). In his discussion of the genus *Opuntia*, Weniger (*Cacti* 159–240) describes *Opuntia stricta* as a species native to the entire Caribbean (167–68) and a number of other species native to southern Texas and Mexico, especially the many varieties of

*Opuntia engelmannii* (168–82). For photographs, modern uses, and cultural information about the *Opuntia* genus, see Weniger (*Cacti*) and Ciesla (“Opuntia”).

#### 12.B. Prickly Pear Cacti in the Narváez Expedition Accounts

Although they neither prove a coastal route nor disprove a trans-Texas one, Cabeza de Vaca’s lengthy descriptions of the Indians’ seasonal migration to a prickly pear cactus ground is without doubt the key element of the Narváez expedition narratives that allows us to place the men’s six-year sojourn (late 1528 to midsummer 1534) in the southern part of modern-day Texas with a fair degree of certainty. The accounts of the Narváez expedition give no indication that the prickly pear was an element of the diet of the Indians at Malhado or the ones of Charruco, and it appears that Andrés Dorantes must have been the first of the survivors of the Narváez expedition to visit the prickly pear region, probably in the late summer of 1530. It appears certain that Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico were all in the prickly pear region in 1532, since in late summer of that year they there made their first attempt to flee to Pánuco. Cabeza de Vaca would first encounter the prickly pear in 1533 and would later record that the “people of the figs,” evidently meaning the “people of the prickly pears,” had seen Figueroa and the Asturian.

The Narváez expedition narratives present clear evidence that the four survivors visited two separate areas densely populated by prickly pear cacti, and their locations are the source of some dispute. Andrés Dorantes’s testimony in Oviedo’s (601a) account tells that the prickly pear region was “more than forty leagues ahead toward Pánuco” from the River of Nuts. Oviedo (601ab) records that as the Indians made their way to the prickly pears between May and August they would hunt deer along the route by driving them into the bays that they followed, where the animals would drown. The account notes that the prickly pear season lasted a month and a half to two months (601a) or fifty to sixty days (601b), and it explicitly states that the Indians followed along the shore until “they leave the saltwater and enter inland eating prickly pears” (601b). Thus, this first prickly pear region must have bordered the coast. Weniger (*Cacti* 176a) has noted that the species *Opuntia engelmannii* var. *alta* today “grows in huge thickets around the mouth of each river entering the Gulf on the Texas coast.” The four survivors of the Narváez expedition visited this first prickly pear stand together in the late summer of 1533 and again in 1534. In his *relación*, Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) said that the place where the men went to eat the fruit was up to thirty leagues from the River of Nuts, evidently thirty leagues along the coast in the direction of Pánuco.

Ponton and McFarland (177) observed that in spite of the widespread nature of the prickly pear cactus, “the region . . . in which it grows in such abundance as to constitute a food plant is limited to the country west (i.e., south and west) of the Guadalupe River.” Williams (56–58) considered the possibility of change in the prickly pear range since Cabeza de Vaca lived on the Texas coast but concluded rather unscientifically that in the case of the prickly pear the sixteenth-century range corresponded roughly to the modern one, and that the region must be located somewhere south of a line from Galveston to Eagle Pass, Texas. Williams (59) noted that the prickly pear region could not be far from the coast. Coopwood (121) located the center of the prickly pears on the county line between present-day McMullen and Duval Counties of Texas, and Baskett (262–63) moved the region to Nueces County on the coast. Davenport and Wells (209–10) discussed a reduction after 1899 in the heavy concentration of prickly pear cacti that had grown south of the Nueces River prior to that time and argued that the Narváez expeditionaries’ first region of prickly pears must have been in the area encompassing both Coopwood’s and Baskett’s locations, all just south along the Nueces River. They further identified the second region of prickly pears, frequented by the Avavares but not by the Mariames, as just north of the Rio Grande and separated from the first region by a sandy plain in Willacy, Brooks, and Jim Hoog Counties. These locations seem to be the ones most compatible with the expedition accounts.

Campbell and Campbell (5–8) have adequately refuted Krieger’s (“Nuevo estudio” 73–79) location of the first prickly pear region somewhat to the north and west of Galveston and support the location that the earlier route interpreters had already established. As alluded to above, Krieger’s understanding of the four Narváez expedition survivors’ continual overland journey to have commenced with their departure from the Mariames caused him to place the entire first leg of their journey too far to the north and too far inland. Having made this determination, he located the first prickly pear region of the Narváez expedition accounts north and west in south-central Texas, where the trans-Texas route interpreters had located it, and the second one in the region where the coastal route interpreters located the first one.

13. CABEZA DE VACA, DORANTES, CASTILLO, AND ESTEVANICO  
AMONG THE MARIAMES AND THE YGUADES (SPRING 1533 TO LATE  
SUMMER 1534)

Oviedo’s (599a–601b) account of the Narváez expedition survivors’ time with the Mariames and Yguades is derived completely from Andrés Dorantes’s testimony in the Joint Report and pertains, insofar as the descriptions

of the native peoples are concerned, to observations that Dorantes made between August 1530 and late summer 1534; we have noted above (sec. 8.A) the account's lack of clarity with regard to the amount of time that Dorantes himself lived with the Mariames. Cabeza de Vaca's (f29r–f35r) discussion of his life among the Mariames between the spring of 1533 and the late summer of 1534 contains his fragmentary version of Dorantes's account of the Dorantes/Castillo party's experiences between the spring of 1529 and the spring of 1533, as well as much ethnographic information on the Mariames Indians that is most likely a combination of his own and Dorantes's observations.

After narrating that he and Dorantes had agreed to wait six months until the time of the prickly pear season before effecting their plan to escape (f29v), Cabeza de Vaca gives long descriptions of the Mariames and other Indians he had thus far encountered. These ethnographic interpolations conceal fragments of information about Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico's passage to the mainland (f31v, f32r) and his triple mention of this same six-month waiting period (f29v, f33r, f34r) before going for the first time to the first prickly pear region.

The men's strategy for escaping to Pánuco was the product of the experience that Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico had gained from living among the Mariames and Yguases. These men knew the Indians' annual cycle from the pecans at the Guadalupe River to the beginning of their journey along the coast to the first prickly pear region. They also knew of a group of Indians (the Avavares) who came from beyond this prickly pear range to trade with the Mariames in the prickly pear lands (f29v).

Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) attributed the men's failed attempt to flee from the Indians in 1533, which Oviedo (601b) claimed must have occurred because of the men's sins, to the Indians' dispute over a woman that resulted in their separation of the men and the men's forced departure from the region with their respective Indian groups. In accordance with the Oviedo (601b) text, Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) reports that the men were separated for a full year. Both accounts report that the four men returned to the prickly pear grounds the year after their attempt to escape in 1533 failed, but only Cabeza de Vaca (f34r–v) makes any mention of the intervening year, and only in very general terms: “[a]nd during this time I endured a very bad life, as much because of my great hunger as because of the bad treatment I received from the Indians, which was such that I had to flee three times from the masters who held me, and they all went looking for me and put forth great effort to find and kill me.” Whether Cabeza de Vaca returned to the prickly pear region in the summer of 1534 with the Mariames or with another group to which he had fled cannot be determined from his account.

14. THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION SURVIVORS AND THE NORTH  
AMERICAN BISON14.A. *First Notice of the North American Bison*

As we will see in our Part 6 commentary (chap. 7, sec. 11), almost all interpreters of the Narváez expedition survivors' route place the men at the confluence of the Río Conchos and the Rio Grande along the southwestern border of Texas when they receive notice of people who had gone to hunt "cows," that is, the North American bison. Oviedo's (607b–08a) and Cabeza de Vaca's (f52v) texts agree that Indian women who had been sent out to find other people farther ahead returned to say that the people whom they had gone to find had gone to the cows (*vacas*). Cabeza de Vaca mentions that it was the season for hunting the cows. Oviedo goes on to record that although the Narváez survivors wished to travel to the west, the Indians who were leading them encouraged them to go north to the cows, since there they would find people. At a point shortly thereafter, Oviedo (609a) recorded from the Joint Report that the men received many robes made from the hides of these cows, that the Indians said the animals were killed in the summer, and that there were very many near there.

The account described above is the first point in Oviedo's narrative of the men's journey where these "cows" are mentioned, but Cabeza de Vaca gives notice of the animals at a much earlier point in his *relación*. Among the detailed descriptions of the Mariames Indians, Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) inserted his first mention of the bison at the point in the narrative where he relates details of the six-month period in 1533 that the men waited to go to the prickly pear stands:

Cows sometimes range as far as here, and three times I have seen and eaten of them. And it seems to me that they are about the size of those of Spain. They have small horns like Moorish cows, and their fur is very long. Some are brown and others black, and in my opinion they have better meat and more of it than those from here. From [the skins] of the young ones the Indians make robes to cover themselves, and from [the hides of] the mature animals they make shoes and shields. These cows come from the north forward through the land to the coast of *Florida* and they extend over the land for more than four hundred leagues. And along this entire route throughout the valleys through which they come, the people who inhabit them come down and sustain themselves on them, and they supply the land with a great quantity of hides.

Cabeza de Vaca's placement of this description in his narrative and his claim that the buffalo came as far as the coast give the illusion that all of this

information had been acquired in and pertained to the region of the Texas coast where Cabeza de Vaca was living at that particular point in the narrative. More careful consideration of his descriptions of the valleys and the great quantities of hides reveals, however, that some of this information was most likely his retrospective recounting as he wrote the *relación* of information about the animals that the men learned later on their overland journey beyond La Junta de los Ríos, rather than on the Texas coast. Cabeza de Vaca inserted the information at this early point in his narrative because he had received first notice of the animals while living on the Texas coast. In his testimony for the Joint Report, Cabeza de Vaca evidently included only the reference to “cows” and the “people of the cows” at La Junta de los Ríos; he later added his vivid description of the bison and his encounter with them along the Texas coast as he wrote his *relación*. This information sequence is confirmed by the fact that Oviedo (607b–08a) included the less complete information in the account of the Narváez expedition he wrote from the Joint Report and only later included in chapter 7 (617a) of his account the full information as Cabeza de Vaca had given it in his published *relación*.

Wagner (“Álvar Núñez” 12) dismissed the Narváez expedition survivors’ mention of “cows” as a spurious account. He questioned the meaning of Cabeza de Vaca’s (f34r) phrase, “meten en la tierra grande cantidad de cueros,” a phrase we have translated, “they supply the land with a great quantity of hides.” As Wagner observed, if we apply to the phrase the immediate geographical context of the *relación* in which it appears, it would suggest that the coastal Indians were the ones who were sending hides inland, a situation that seems rather unlikely when we consider Cabeza de Vaca’s description of their material culture. As we have observed above, however, Cabeza de Vaca obviously blended information on the bison gained at different times during his journey when he finally wrote his *relación*. The portion about supplying hides in this first reference, seemingly pertaining to the peoples who lived on the Texas coast, is instead a reflection of knowledge he gained later on his journey about the animals and their plains hunters in regions of the southern North American interior.

That the men did indeed see bison on their overland journey is evidenced by Oviedo’s inclusion of their mention of “cows” in the Joint Report of 1536 in his own. Wagner’s (“Álvar Núñez” 12) misreading of Oviedo’s comments on this first Spanish reference to the bison introduces an interesting problem regarding the Europeans’ evolving ideas about these large grazers of the North American plains; the modern reader immediately recognizes that the “cows” of the Narváez accounts were North American bison, but Oviedo reveals that this was not at all clear to even the most specialized early readers of the Zamora edition of the *relación*.

Wagner (“Álvar Núñez” 12) claimed that Oviedo said he had no idea as to what the “cow” reference in the Joint Report referred: “[t]his account also occurs in Oviedo who at the time he read this passage in 1539, as he says, had never heard of buffalo and did not know what ‘vacas’ could be.” As we point out in our direct study of Oviedo’s account (chap. 12, sec. 2.B.1), he wrote it from the Joint Report sometime between 1540 and 1547, and it is not possible to more precisely establish the year of its writing. When Oviedo (608b) arrived at the Joint Report reference to these “cows,” however, he did not say that he did not know what they were but rather something very much to the contrary:

But because mention of cows was made above, the reader should understand that they are not the same as ours, but rather are of those that the Spaniards call cows [*vacas*] in some parts of the mainland [*tierra firme*] and some inappropriately call them buffalo [*dantas*], because their hides are as tough or tougher than those of buffalo [*búfanos*]. The Indians of the province of Cueva, in the jurisdiction of Castilla del Oro, call this animal *beorí*, as was said in the first part of this history, in book twelve, chapter eleven.

Far from saying he didn’t know what the Narváez expedition survivors’ “cow” reference meant, Oviedo alerted his reader to the fact that they were not like Iberian cattle. In light of the animal Cabeza de Vaca’s reference actually signified and the one Oviedo erroneously thought it did, however, Oviedo might have done better to say what Wagner understood him to say; as we will now examine, the assumptions Oviedo made in his reading of the Joint Report about these “cows” were almost as far off the mark as Wagner’s reading of Oviedo’s text.

The Spaniards of the early sixteenth century had little with which to compare the American bison (*Bison bison*) when they first encountered it. By the fifteenth century, the European bison or wisent (*Bison bonasus*) that had once roamed across Europe from Britain to the Caucasus Mountains had disappeared from Britain, Iberia, and Italy, and its population in central Europe continued to dwindle, the last animals making a comeback only in recent years in modern-day Poland (Kraśniński 62). The Castilians referred to their domesticated cattle as *ganado* or *ganado vacuno*; bulls were *bueyes* or *toros* and cows were *vacas*. Besides these animals, the Indian water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*)—domesticated in Asia, used as a beast of burden in Asia and Africa, and long known to the Greeks and Romans—had been introduced into Italy. In his *Tesoro*, Covarrubias (988a) spoke of the interchangeable nature of *vaca* and *buey* under his entry for *vaca*, and under the one for *búfalo* (243a) he documented the ancients’ knowledge of these animals and their introduction and widespread use in Italy.



When Covarrubias arrived at the explanation of the use of the Indian buffalo's tough hide in making shields and heavy, protective jackets (*coletos*) through which a lance could not pass, however, he inserted one of his fabricated etymologies. He said that these jackets were called *cueras de ante* (literally, "hides of/for the front") because they covered the front of the body. In further discussion under the entry *ante*, Covarrubias (124a) went on to say that the

*cuera de ante* is [made] of the hide of the [Indian] buffalo, tanned in such a way that a weapon can pass through it only with great difficulty; and they call it *de ante* because they are put in front of the chest, which is what is principally guarded; others say that it [*ante*] is a corruption of "Nantes," the city of Flanders or France, where they purport that this method of tanning was invented.

Today the Spanish *ante* is believed to have derived from *lamt*, the Arabic word for the Indian buffalo, and Corominas (277) cites an example from 1505, *adarga d'ante*, or "shield of buffalo [hide]." Corominas also notes the Castilian variation *anta* from the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, as well as the agglutinative forms *dante* and *danta* proceeding from the then frequently used phrase, *adarga d'ante*, for which he cites Oviedo's use of the form *danta* in the *Sumario* as an example.

Covarrubias, who employed only *búfalo* to refer to the Indian buffalo, was evidently unfamiliar with the terms *ante*, *anta*, *dante*, and *danta*, for he gave no entry or made any such mention in his *Tesoro*. It is not surprising then that in his ignorance of these other terms he came up with a bogus etymology for the *de ante* portion of *cueras de ante*. Rather than meaning "of the front" or "for the front," much less the alternative, "from Nantes," seemingly rejected even by Covarrubias himself, *de ante* actually meant "of the buffalo," (i.e., "of the hide of the Indian buffalo") as it did in *adarga de ante*. Curiously, Covarrubias included the mention of these *cueras de ante* under his entry for *búfalo*, in spite of the fact that he failed to realize that *ante* referred to the Indian buffalo, and he said further under that entry that previously the buffalo hide had also been used to make armor for horses, and that this armor could be seen in his day in *armerías antiguas*, depositories where old armor was displayed. Also under the *búfalo* entry, Covarrubias said that shields made of buffalo hide had been introduced when the Muslims overtook the Iberian Peninsula, thus making the Arabic origin much more convincing. Evidently the use of *ante* and its variants to refer to the Indian water buffalo had been completely replaced by the words *búfalo* or *búfano* through Italian by the time Covarrubias wrote; this is already evident in Oviedo's use, as cited above, of both *danta* and *búfano*. Finally, Covarrubias

noted that from the Indian buffalo's horns many curious things were made, such as glasses, spoons, and beads.

A little light is therefore shed on Oviedo's comment about *beorís*, *vacas*, and *dantas*. He claimed that some of the Spaniards of Castilla del Oro referred to the animal that the Cuevan Indians called a *beorí* as a "cow" (*vaca*), while others, noting its tough hide, were calling it an "[Indian] buffalo" (*danta*). As we saw above in Oviedo's comments about Cabeza de Vaca's mention of "cows," the Castilian naturalist preferred the term *vaca* over *danta* to denote a *beorí*.

Oviedo had first stated the preference in his direct discussion of the *beorí* in book 12, chapter 11 of his *Historia*. He made these observations sometime after 1535, since his book 12, chapter 11 on the *beorí* does not appear in his published 1535 edition; he probably wrote it prior to his account of the Narváez expedition, however, since he inserted a cross-reference to it in the latter text. Oviedo (*Historia* 1:405–06 [bk. 12, chap. 11]) claimed that "the largest of these *beorís* are the size of a yearling calf. Their hair is dark brown and somewhat thicker than that of the [Indian] buffalo [*búfano*], and it [*sic*] does not have horns, even though some call them cows [*vacas*]." Here Oviedo seems to suggest that even calling these *beorís* cows was inappropriate; he evidently found that calling them cows (*vacas*) was preferable to calling them Indian buffalos (*dantas* or *búfanos*), however, because *beorís* did not have horns and the Indian buffalo did. That Iberian cattle also did seems likewise to have been the source of his disapproval even of calling these *beorís* cows.

The next logical question then is what these *beorís* of Castilla del Oro were exactly. For the speaker of modern Spanish, the answer is obvious, that is, for the speaker of modern Spanish who also has some knowledge of the fauna of Central and South America. According to the Royal Academy, the word *beorí*, which Oviedo explained was of Cuevan Indian origin, is recognized today as a standard Castilian word referring to the American tapir (DRAE 177c). There are actually three extant species of American tapir, and the nonoverlapping nature of their modern ranges makes certain the identification of Oviedo's *beorí* as the Central American or Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), which inhabits a region spanning from Mexico to coastal Ecuador.

Thus Baird's tapir, which the Spanish colonists of Castilla del Oro sometimes called an Indian buffalo (*danta*), was, according to Oviedo, preferably known as an aboriginal American cow (*vaca*) when the Narváez expeditionaries arrived in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536 with news of the North American bison. Never having been to Castilla del Oro, and obviously never having seen Baird's tapir, these first Europeans to describe the North American bison referred to it as a cow (*vaca*) in the Joint Report, as Oviedo recorded. We will never know whether the term *vaca*, or cow, of the Joint

Report had been put into the four survivors' mouths by the Spanish colonists of Mexico who were attempting to make sense of the men's recent discoveries and who, like Oviedo, might have associated their descriptions with the *beorí*, or whether the Narváez expeditionaries themselves chose the name to refer to the animal they had seen. The latter seems more likely, and brief discussion with the colonists of Mexico would have clarified that the animals the Narváez expeditionaries had seen in North America were not the *beorís* of Central America but much closer in appearance to the bulls of Spain.

Without the opportunity to question the four men about this animal they called a *vaca* in the Joint Report prior to writing his own account from it, Oviedo drew on his knowledge of Central American fauna to understand what it was and thus drew a false conclusion about its identity. Had Cabeza de Vaca given the vivid description of the North American bison that first appeared in the Zamora edition of his *relación* in 1542, Oviedo would certainly not have leaped to the conclusion that the cattlelike animal that the men had seen was Baird's tapir, the *beorí* of Central America he described in his book 12, chapter 11.

Oviedo's error in identifying Cabeza de Vaca's "cows" serves as further proof of the generally accepted belief that the account of Cortés's army's discovery of an American bison or "Mexican bull" (*toro mexicano*) in Moctezuma's zoological garden as stated in Antonio de Solís's seventeenth-century *Historia de la conquista de México* (Solís y Rivadeneira 170b [bk. 3, chap. 14]) is fabricated (Reed 390–91; Roe 206–09; Sehm 328, 328n3). Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions truly were the first men to see and describe the American bison, and prior to the men's arrival in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536, Spanish explorers and settlers seem to have had no knowledge of this large animal of the Great Plains.

Wagner's misreading of Oviedo's comments on the mention in the Joint Report of these cows that the Narváez expedition survivors had seen near the Texas coast and at La Junta de los Ríos evidently kept him (somewhat unexplainably) from recognizing that the reference in the Joint Report was proof that the Narváez expeditionaries were indeed the first Europeans to learn of the American bison and that they testified to the sighting in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536. Wagner ("Álvar Núñez" 12) claimed that the Narváez expedition survivors probably never even saw the North American bison, and he argued that the interpolated description of the animal and its range, as well as the seemingly problematic description of native exploitation of it that was first published in the Zamora edition of the *relación* in 1542, had been taken from an early account from 1541 or 1542 sent to Spain from the Coronado expedition. Wagner hypothesized that the description of the bison had been inserted into the text "when the book was published, by

some enterprising bookseller who wished to take advantage of the public interest in the happenings in that distant country.” Here the stakes are higher than whether or not Cabeza de Vaca was the first European to see the North American bison, for Wagner entertains the issue as part of his larger argument that Cabeza de Vaca’s published *relación* is not a good-faith account of the Narváez expedition, an assertion with which we strongly disagree.

Wagner clearly used faulty logic when he intimated that if Oviedo did not know (as Wagner correctly understood in spite of his misreading) what Cabeza de Vaca’s “cows” were, then the Narváez expeditionaries must not have seen any bison on their journey. Apparently he assumed that since the very detailed description of the bison that appeared in the 1542 *relación* was absent from Oviedo’s text, it must have been lifted from a description given by the “true” discoverers of the bison—the men of the Coronado expedition. The simple mention of cows in 1536 in the Joint Report as evidenced in Oviedo’s text is itself sufficient proof that Cabeza de Vaca and his fellows were indeed the first Europeans to observe the North American bison, and from this observation Cabeza de Vaca wrote his expanded description in the *relación*.

In August 1539, when Fray Marcos de Niza returned to México-Tenochtitlán from his travel to Cibola, the “cows” to the north of New Spain were clearly still a mystery. On numerous occasions Fray Marcos makes reference to the hides of cows without saying what they were: “[t]hese Indians of the coast brought me shields of cow hide, very well worked, large, such that they cover them from head to foot” (Mora 150); “some wear very good robes, and others wear cow hides” (Mora 151); “And they gave me many cow hides . . . which they said all came from Cibola” (Mora 151); “here in this valley I saw more than two thousand cow hides” (Mora 154).

Whether or not Fray Marcos saw the bison is uncertain; whether or not he associated these cows with the *beorí*, or Baird’s tapir, as Oviedo did when he first learned of them from the Joint Report, is also unknown. Niza likely had more precise information about the North American bison from Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés Dorantes than is reflected by Oviedo’s account written from the Joint Report, since the men of the Narváez expedition would have told the viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza, about the bovine animals they had seen to the north of New Spain. One of Fray Marcos’s (Mora 154) descriptions of the animals of the north is especially peculiar; although it obviously did not pertain to these “cows,” it deserves mention here:

Here in this valley, they brought me a hide, one and a half times as big as that of a large cow, and they told me that it is from an animal which has only

one horn on its forehead and that this horn is turned toward its chest, and that out of it protrudes a point, in which it is said to have so much force that nothing, as hard as it might be, can keep from breaking if hit by it; and they say there are many of these animals in that land; the color of its hide is like that of a billy goat and its fur a finger's length long.

This account that Fray Marcos gave trickled down to Oviedo through letters that Antonio de Mendoza and the comptroller of New Spain, Rodrigo de Albornoz, sent to Alonso de la Torre while he was treasurer on Española. Oviedo (*Historia* 4:19a [bk. 40, chap. 1]) preserved an extensive quote from Albornoz's 18 October 1539 letter, which said that in the land Marcos de Niza had visited there were

animals of camels and elephants, and cows like ours and wild ones, which the people of that land hunt in the highlands, and a great quantity of sheep like those of Peru, and other animals which have only one horn, which reaches to its feet, for which reason he says that it eats on its side. He says that they are not unicorns, but another manner of animals.

Besides the curious observance that this other sort of animal “was not a unicorn,” Oviedo's paraphrase of Albornoz's letter suggests that the comptroller of New Spain had a more specific yet still confused description of the bison—“animals of camels and elephants, and cows like ours and wild ones”—that predated the Coronado expedition. By the time Oviedo completed the writing of his *Historia*, not only the information brought back by Fray Marcos de Niza in August 1539 but also the accounts of the Coronado expedition of 1540–42 must have reached Española, and from this information Oviedo obviously determined that the animal Spanish explorers of the regions north of New Spain referred to as a *vaca* was not a *beorí*.

Oviedo includes a direct narration of neither Fray Marcos's journey nor of Coronado's expedition to the lands north beyond New Spain. Nevertheless, he does include direct treatment of the bison, which he placed after his account of Ponce de León's 1521 attempt to settle on the Florida Peninsula, evidently because these animals pertained to the province of *Florida*. Oviedo (*Historia* 3:623ab [bk. 36, chap. 2]) explained that “many of those who have walked on the mainland to the north and the seas farthest to the north, have seen many cows and bulls, which in general are larger animals than our cows of Spain.” He went on to give a vivid description of the bison, calling them *vacas monteses* (wild cows); he claimed they were “innumerable” and lived in a large portion of the northern lands. Oviedo also added as his last chapter of book 12 treating the animals of the Americas one called “cows of the northern land” (*Historia* 1:422ab [bk. 12, chap. 40]). There Oviedo again

described the bison, saying it was larger but carried its head lower than the bovines of Spain, that the necks of these animals, as well as the lower portion of their legs, were covered with long fur, and that the hair that covered the rest of their bodies was like thick merino wool. By this time Oviedo had clearly distinguished the bison from the tapir. He apparently did not have the opportunity to adjust the cross-reference in his account of the Narváez expedition from book 12, chapter 11 on the tapir to chapter 40 on the bison.

Reed erred in informing Roe (915n59) that Oviedo's was the first published account of the bison, since neither his chapter on the tapir nor the two on the bison appeared in either the 1535 or 1547 edition of the *Historia*, but rather remained in manuscript until finally published in the 1851–55 edition; Sehm (328) has recently repeated the error. In 1535 the survivors of the Narváez expedition had not even returned to tell of the bison. Although Oviedo claimed in both of his chapters on the bison that he had included a drawing of them, an original from his manuscripts, if one exists, has never been published (Sehm [328] documents the frequent misinterpretation of the nineteenth-century illustrations found in the 1851–55 edition of Oviedo's *Historia*).

As we have shown above, an unmistakable description of the bison was already circulating in New Spain by October 1539, prior to the Coronado expeditions. Even though the Zamora edition of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* was not finished until October 1542, it seems very unlikely that any account of the Coronado expedition could have reached Spain in time to have been included in it, as Wagner argued. Wagner held no positive proof that an account of the Coronado expedition had reached Spain by October 1542, when the Zamora edition of Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* appeared, and none is known today. Wagner's argument is weakened by the fact that he fails to address the mention of "cows" in the Joint Report, which was certainly prepared before mid-1537 and probably by late summer 1536. Without a doubt, Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* is his own, authentic elaboration of the testimony he gave in the Joint Report, into which he inserted his own eyewitness testimony on the North American bison before he departed for Río de la Plata in 1540.

The Coronado accounts could have had a slight influence on the 1555 edition of the *relación*, however. There, Cabeza de Vaca's (f34r; V:f27v) description of the bison was amended to say that the animal's fur was not only long but also "merino, like an Hibernian cape." Covarrubias (208ab) described the Hibernian cape (*bernia*) as a long, coarsely woven cape used some sixty years earlier (around 1550) in Salamanca by poor students and some women. He said the name had come from Hibernia (Ireland), the place



Figure 6. The first published illustration of a North American bison appeared in Zaragoza in 1552 in Francisco López de Gómara's *La istoria de las Indias, y la conquista de México* (f116v). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

where the capes were made. The first illustration of a bison was published in the 1552 Zaragoza *editio princeps* of Gómara's *Historia general de las Indias* (fig. 6). Gómara (*Historia general* 306–07 [chap. 214]) noted that the animal had “something of the lion and something of the camel”—a variation on Oviedo's lion and elephant combination—and was so ugly and fierce of head and body that horses often fled at the sight of it.

#### 14.B. Cabeza de Vaca's Bison Sightings and His Route

Route interpreters have taken various approaches to the mentions of bison in Cabeza de Vaca's account. Ponton and McFarland (177) used Shea's argument that the bison did not range east of the Colorado River in order to locate the men's trans-Texas route on the west side of it. Thus, they used a modern opinion on the sixteenth-century bison range formed according to unknown sources and methods as a means of determining Cabeza de Vaca's route. Williams (59–60) nominally recognized the possibility of year-to-year changes in the bison range; as in the case of the prickly pear, however, he resolved that these changes were insignificant. Williams seems to have accepted the idea of his day that the bison never crossed the Rio Grande or Pecos River, and he employs the Narváez accounts as a source to prove this assumption, suggesting he was somehow certain of the men's route and that for a portion of their journey they had gone south of the bison range. At the same time, he observed that La Salle's men had eaten bison at Matagorda Bay, and on these grounds he concluded that the four survivors must have set out across Texas south of that point. Thus, Williams applied sources regarding the bison range more than one hundred and fifty years

after Cabeza de Vaca's journey in order to establish the beginning of his route and then subsequently used Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* as a source for determining the bison range in the sixteenth century.

Coopwood (229–42) took the approach of using later accounts of the bison range to determine Cabeza de Vaca's route one step further. He used nineteenth-century accounts showing that the bison range *had* extended south over the Rio Grande as part of his argument that Cabeza de Vaca traveled deep into modern-day Mexico rather than across its most northern parts. That the bison did sometimes inhabit regions south of the Rio Grande and west of the Pecos River is now relatively (although by no means completely) accepted (Roe 906–22). Coopwood's evidence for the nineteenth century is convincing, but this has no direct bearing on the sixteenth-century bison range and says nothing about Cabeza de Vaca's route.

Subsequent route interpreters have wisely paid less attention to the bison range as a determining factor in the establishment of Cabeza de Vaca's route. Recent anthropological research (Dillehay; Flynn; Creel) has concluded that since 10,000 B.C. there have been two periods—from 6000–5000 B.C. to 2500 B.C. and from A.D. 500 to A.D. 1200–1300—when bison populations diminished, causing the southern range of the bison to shift northward. It is thought that from 1300 the bison populations were on the increase, but the southern limit of their range in the early 1500s cannot be easily determined. Thus, locating the Narváez expedition survivors' route by other means and using statements in the Narváez accounts as historic sources regarding the range of the bison in the early sixteenth century is more appropriate than using false assumptions about the limits of the bison range in that period based on accounts from much later periods to determine the men's route.

According to our interpretation of Cabeza de Vaca's route, it seems that the bison did range, although infrequently, as far as the Texas coastal plain in the 1530s, but they seem not to have ranged south of a line from the mouth of the Nueces River to the confluence of the Río Conchos with the Rio Grande *during this period*, or, more precisely, if they did, the Narváez expedition survivors did not encounter them or at least did not mention seeing them there. Since the men again referred in the Joint Report to seeing bison near the area of La Junta de los Ríos, it seems reasonable to assume that they had traveled beyond the southern extent of the bison range, and that the southern limit of this range in 1534–36 did not extend beyond the Rio Grande; these assumptions about the bison range are of course wholly dependent on the accuracy of the expeditionaries' route that we propose. The Narváez accounts provide evidence as well for an active trade in bison hides among the indigenous groups north of La Junta de los Ríos in the mid–sixteenth century.



15. INDIANS OF THE TEXAS COASTAL ISLANDS AND SHORE FROM  
GALVESTON BAY TO PADRE ISLAND

15.A. *The Problem of Karankawas and Coahuiltecan*

At the end of the nineteenth century, Gatschet (23) made the prudent observation that none of the coastal tribes mentioned by Cabeza de Vaca could be identified “with the tribes known in later times as the Karankawas or the Ebahamos . . . though some of them must have lived in the same districts.” In 1949, Schaedel summarized research concerning the aboriginal peoples of coastal Texas published after Gatschet, and in this summary he implied a continuously identifiable Karankawa culture extending from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth. Schaedel (129) did observe, however, that Cabeza de Vaca’s descriptions of people accepted as Karankawa were “inextricably confused with other wandering tribes of Coahuiltecan, Attacapan, and Caddoan peoples.” In 1961, Newcomb (*Indians* 29–81) synthesized previous work on this topic, describing not only a division between the indigenous peoples of coastal Texas named in Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* as Karankawas and the inland Coahuiltecan, but also specifically associating these Indians with groups the Europeans did not encounter until 1685 and later. As late as 1983, Newcomb (“Karankawa” 360, table 1) continued to include Cabeza de Vaca’s “Charrucos, Capoques, Hans, Deguenes (Deaguanes), Quevenes (Guevenes), Quitoles, Camolas [*sic*], and Fig People” among the Karankawas and suggested that these indigenous groups, which Cabeza de Vaca had encountered or about which he had learned between 1528 and 1535, could be correlated to other groups named in the accounts of the late-seventeenth-century La Salle expedition and eighteenth-century mission accounts. Also in 1983, T. N. Campbell considered the Mariames in the broad context of Indian groups that supposedly inhabited more inland regions of the Texas coast known as the Coahuiltecan. Based wholly on interpretation of the two Narváez expedition narratives as the earliest European observations about these peoples, these modern studies continue to overstate Cabeza de Vaca’s distinction between island and shoreline groups (e.g., Quevenes vs. Mariames) and fail to acknowledge his clear portrayal of two different cultural spheres, one of shoreline groups (both island and mainland shore), some of which seasonally frequented the first prickly pear region, and another of coastal interior groups that ranged south of the first prickly pear region and who also depended on mesquite but not on coastal products for their survival.

Campbell and Campbell (9–40) have superseded all previous work with regard to collecting the cultural references to some of the indigenous groups mentioned in the *relación*, and they offer considerable discussion

on previous attempts to locate the Indian groups that Cabeza de Vaca named, as well as their own hypotheses on these groups' migratory ranges. Although Campbell and Campbell identified twenty-three named groups in the *relación*, their focus on a particular geographic region led them to exclude six ("Capoques, Chorroco, Doguenes, Han, Mendica, and Quevenes") that to them appear not to have ranged south of the Guadalupe River. We do not agree with this claim in the case of the Quevenes and perhaps also the Deaguanes (Doguenes).

Like the studies mentioned above, Campbell and Campbell's classification scheme of the seventeen groups included in their study seems at variance with the way in which Cabeza de Vaca associated the groups he mentioned, both with respect to geography and material culture. Campbell and Campbell (10–11) divide the seventeen groups into three classes, largely along geographical lines:

Area 1. Four groups that lived along the shores of coastal bays and islands: Camoles, Fig People, Guaycones, and Quitoles.

Area 2. Eleven inland groups that lived most of the year between the lower Guadalupe and lower Nueces Rivers but moved southwestward in the summer to the prickly pear collecting grounds: Acubadaos, Anegados [*sic*], Atayos, Avavares, Coayos, Comos, Cutalchuches, Maliacones, Mariames, Susolas, and Yguazes.

Area 3. Two inland groups that lived southwest of the prickly-pear collecting grounds and not far from the Rio Grande: Arbadaos and Cuchendados.

As we have discussed above (sec. 3), the two Narváez expedition narratives suggest that Cabeza de Vaca saw a much less significant division between the Indians of the islands and the shoreline than he did between that group as a whole and others that lived farther into the coastal interior and south of the first prickly pear region. Although the Mariames were obviously different from the Quevenes and found to be preferable to them by the Narváez expeditionaries, the *relación* still suggests that their lifeway more closely corresponded to the one of the Quevenes than to that of the Avavares, for example, and a characterization of the Mariames as pertaining to a cultural subgroup of the "Coahuiltecan" or some variation on that theme and the Quevenes as a subgroup of the "Karankawas" is a misrepresentation of the ethnographic information found in the Narváez expedition narratives.

We have taken Cabeza de Vaca's (f47v) statement that "[a]ll the people of the coast are very bad, and we considered it preferable to go through the land because the people farther inland are of a better disposition and they treated us better" as the most basic scheme for classifying these peoples. We therefore believe that a system of two divisions—one including all of the

Table 6. Classification of the Indian groups mentioned in Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación*

<b>A. Coastal and shoreline groups</b>	
1. Indians of the Galveston Bay Area:	Capoques, Han, Charruco
2. Indians of the coastal islands:	Deaguanes, Quevenes, Guaycones, Quitoles, Camones, "people of the figs"
3. Indians of the mainland shore north of the first prickly pear region:	Mendica, Mariames, Yguases
<b>B. Indians of the coastal interior</b>	
1. Indians of the coastal interior in and to the south of the first prickly pear region:	Atayos, Acubadaos, Eanagados, Avavares, Cuthalchuches, Maliacones, Coayos, Susolas, Arbadaos, Cuchendados, Comos

clearly island and shoreline groups, and the other including groups that lived in the coastal interior to the south of the first prickly pear region—more accurately represents the information that can reasonably be derived from the Narváez expedition narratives regarding indigenous peoples of the Texas coast (table 6).

Such a classification scheme incorporates Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions of these groups' geographic locations relative to one another, their contacts with one another, and their material cultures. In earlier discussion (see sec. 2.D), we correlated Cabeza de Vaca's description of his trading to his summary description of the locations of the Malhado Indians, those of Charruco, and ones farther to the interior, showing that the ones of Charruco were coastal Indians, despite the fact that he describes them in his summary account as living "[o]n the mainland in front of the island" (f44r). We find a similar situation in the case of the Mariames, who occupy a position analogous to the ones of Charruco, living in front of the Quevenes, according to Cabeza de Vaca's (f44r) summary discussion of their relative ranges. Cabeza de Vaca's (f33r–v) description of the manner in which the Mariames killed mosquitoes and his mention of an alternate way of completing the same task that Indians of the interior used support the argument that the Mariames, like those of Charruco, were a mainland but still coastal group distinguished from those groups that inhabited the interior. Cabeza de Vaca's reference to Indians of the interior was a retrospective allusion he made as he wrote his *relación* to Indians that the men would reach at a later point in his narrative. It corresponds to Indians such as the Avavares, whom the Europeans would meet away from the coast in the first stands of prickly pear cacti. The Avavares are likewise some of the ones to which he referred when he made his retrospective statement about having decided to travel through

the coastal interior rather than along the shore, because these Indians were “of a better disposition.”

In Oviedo’s account we find a similar division between the coastline groups the men encountered up to and including the Mariames and the ones they subsequently contacted, this time with regard to the importance of fish as a food source. Based on Andrés Dorantes’s testimony for the Joint Report, Oviedo (599a) said about the *island* Indians (e.g., the Quevenes) that “this people does not eat anything other than fish all year long and little of it, and with this they have much less hunger than those away from the coast (with whom they later were).” Later, Oviedo (600b) observed about Indians who were evidently the Mariames that they sometimes ate a great deal of fish but that this was only once or twice a year, in April and sometimes May, when the rivers flooded. Finally, when he spoke about the time the men spent with the Avavares, Oviedo (602b) said that they suffered greater hunger than they had in the previous seven (*sic*) years, “and the reason was because these Indians were not near the water where they might have been able to kill some fish and thus there they only ate roots; and they have more hardship than all the others who acquire some sort of fish.” Oviedo saw in the Joint Report testimony a clear distinction between the coastally oriented Indians and the inland ones, and his reference to the Indians “with whom they later were” pertained to the ones with whom the men lived from the Avavares onward.

In table 6 we have set off the Indians of the Galveston Bay area (A.1) from other coastal groups as much for reasons of their isolation in the narrative from groups farther along the coast as for ones of material culture. Their geographic isolation from the other groups makes this separation seem more appropriate than classing the Capoques and the Han in the category of island groups (A.2) and the Charruco in the category of mainland coastal groups (A.3) of the shoreline Indian section (A). As we will see, although the Avavares occupy a position in Cabeza de Vaca’s description of groups analogous to the one that the Mariames occupied with regard to coastal orientation, the Avavares were clearly part of a second cultural sphere that did not depend on the sea and the rivers for life but rather on prickly pears, mesquite, and other inland products that they even traded to the coastal Mariames. Furthermore, the Avavares lived on the northern edge of a larger organization of Indian groups that would begin the process of ritually passing the Narváez expedition survivors forward, and it was no doubt this aspect of the inland groups’ culture that led Cabeza de Vaca to comment that these were “of a better disposition” than the coastal Indians, among whom the men had lived as slaves. If Cabeza de Vaca’s Indian groups must continue to be placed in anachronistic ethnographic categories such

as “Karankawa” and “Coahuiltecan,” the Mariames obviously belonged to the former group rather than to the latter (cf. Campbell 351–52).

#### 15.B. *Indians of Malhado*

As mentioned above, we have placed the Indians of the Malhado (Galveston Bay) region in a separate subdivision (A.1) both for their apparent geographical separation from subsequent groups and because of their unique material culture. Campbell and Campbell excluded these groups from their study for geographic reasons, and thus a systematic collection of the details in both accounts of the Narváez expedition regarding the Capoques, the Han, and the ones of Charruco has yet to be done. Cabeza de Vaca’s (f44r) suggestion that the divide between the Capoques and the Han was a linguistic one and his observance that the Indians of Charruco took their name from the forest where they lived are particularly important, for they point out that with respect to most of the other groups mentioned in the narrative we cannot be certain of the criteria (linguistic, geographic, or other) that separated them from one another. The explicitly described coastal lifeway of these “Indians of Malhado” is the criterion that we feel justifies their grouping with other ones described by Cabeza de Vaca to have lived farther down the coast, but the lack of any evidence of communication between them and Indians farther to the south requires us to set them off from subsequent groups. Their apparent isolation is more likely a vestige of the accounts attributable to the men’s historical experience on the coast rather than the manifestation of a real cultural divide between them and subsequently encountered groups; along with this observation we underscore the fact that the focus of Cabeza de Vaca’s experiences on the coast and his composition of the *relación* were by no means ethnographical in any modern sense of the word, and this problem must be addressed whenever the account is used as an ethnohistorical source.

#### 15.c. *Indians of the Texas Coastline*

Cabeza de Vaca’s journeys down the coast to the first prickly pear region and his mention of coastal groups beyond that point allow us to classify all subsequent groups of the men’s coastal experience together. As we discussed above, the Narváez expedition narratives clearly distinguish between the groups of the islands and those of the coastline of the mainland, but all of these groups demonstrated a coastal way of life. Some of them, however, supplemented that lifeway by visiting the prickly pear collecting grounds, although explicit evidence of this is present in the narrative only for the Mariames and the Yguases. On the basis of the island versus shoreline mainland distinction,

we have distributed these peoples among two subgroups of island (A.2) and shoreline (A.3) dwellers.

Of the island groups, Campbell and Campbell excluded both the Deaguanes and the Quevenes from their study. The name of the former, who took Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo across the large inlet (Pass Cavallo or “Ancón de Espíritu Santo”), appears in the two earliest editions of the *relación* as Deaguanes (f28v), de Aguenes (f42v), Deguenes (f44r), and Doguenes (V:f36r). The name was possibly formed, therefore, from the agglutinative Spanish pronoun *de* (from) and the toponym of the region inhabited by the Indians, that is, “the Indians from Aguenes.” We generally agree with Campbell and Campbell that the Deaguanes seem not to have ranged south of the Guadalupe River. The group’s eastern limit along the coast cannot be determined from the Narváez expedition accounts; it most likely lay somewhere in the region of the four large rivers (Oyster Creek, Brazos River, San Bernard River, Caney Creek). The statement in Oviedo’s (592b) account that these Indians who took the two men across Pass Cavallo continued on down the coast ten leagues beyond the large inlet before encountering others with whom they were at war is corroborated by Cabeza de Vaca’s (f42v–f43r) description of a skirmish between members of the two groups, which he explicitly identified as the Deaguanes and the Quevenes. That the Deaguanes continued down Matagorda Island ten leagues, or almost to the pass between Matagorda and Saint Joseph Islands, suggests that their range may have extended beyond the tip of Matagorda Peninsula, according to Cabeza de Vaca’s (f28r) description of the encounter with the Quevenes that he says occurred directly after he, Lope de Oviedo, and the Deaguanes crossed Pass Cavallo. The range of the Deaguanes was probably from somewhere in the region of the four rivers along the coast down Matagorda Peninsula and perhaps onto Matagorda Island.

The Quevenes seems to have ranged from east (i.e., north) or central Matagorda Island to an undetermined point west along the coast, perhaps not farther than central Saint Joseph Island. References in the *relación* and corresponding ones in the Joint Report portray these Indians as some of the fiercest of all the Indians that Cabeza de Vaca identifies by name. In the *relación* (f28r–v), the Quevenes are the ones who abuse Cabeza de Vaca and Lope de Oviedo and tell them that Indians ahead had killed Pedro de Valdivieso, Diego de Huelva, and Diego Dorantes; we have already mentioned that whether other Quevenes or a group beyond them such as the Guaycones did this cannot be determined from the accounts. As we have seen above, Esquivel was evidently with the Quevenes when Figueroa encountered him and later fled to the Mariames. Andrés Dorantes did likewise, although he may have fled from the Guaycones rather than from

the Quevenes. Since the Quevenes were responsible for taking Cabeza de Vaca to the river where the Indians went to eat nuts, it seems likely that they made the seasonal migration to the mainland and shared in some of the lifeways of their enemy neighbors, the Mariames.

The fact that Cabeza de Vaca reported only that when he came down the coast in 1533 he learned from the Quevenes at the east end of Pass Cavallo that “Indians ahead” had killed three of the men makes the identification of these others impossible. If these were the Guaycones, then this suggests that the boundary between the Quevenes and the Guaycones might have been located somewhere on Saint Joseph Island. According to Cabeza de Vaca’s (f44r) account of the Indian groups, the Yguases lived on the mainland in front of the Guaycones. Since the Yguases are the ones with whom Alonso del Castillo and Estevanico were living and evidently the ones from whom Andrés Dorantes fled twenty leagues in the direction of the Florida Peninsula to the Mariames sometime after his original flight from the islands to the mainland Yguases, it is reasonable to assume that it was the Guaycones group rather than more Quevenes who had enslaved and killed the men, as Baskett (265) and Davenport and Wells (134) suggest. Contrary to Campbell and Campbell’s claim, it appears that the Quevenes did range south of the Guadalupe River. Baskett (260–61) and Campbell and Campbell (11–12) locate the Guaycones’ range as extending to Saint Joseph Island. Their western (i.e., southern) limit cannot be determined from the accounts.

Campbell and Campbell (12) provide very reasonable locations for the Quitoles, Camones, and “people of the figs,” who Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) says lived beyond the Guaycones on the islands along the coast. Campbell and Campbell propose the region of Saint Joseph, Mustang, and Padre Islands and recognize the almost complete lack of detail about these Indians in the accounts. The Camones (f35r) may have been the Camoles (f44r), who, as the Eanagados told the four Narváez expedition survivors in mid-1534, had killed the expeditionaries of the Téllez/Peñalosa raft. The Avavares told the men that Figueroa and the Asturian had been seen with the “people of the figs” (f39v). The little information that Cabeza de Vaca gives about these island groups beyond the Quevenes supports the notion that once he was reunited with the other three survivors among the Mariames and Yguases, the four men traveled only along the mainland shore and the coastal interior. Campbell and Campbell’s (12) claim that Baskett did not recognize the “people of the figs” as a discrete group but rather understood the reference to pertain to all the peoples who frequented the prickly pear regions is false.

The descriptions of the three groups of Indians that Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) says lived on the mainland in front of the Deaguanes, the Quevenes, and the Guaycones—the Mendica, the Mariames, and the Yguases—suggest that as

coastal mainland Indians these latter three groups shared some of the same lifeways as the island Indians; thus we have classified them in subdivision A.3. of our category of coastal Indians. Cabeza de Vaca says nothing more about the Mendica other than that they lived on the mainland across from the Deaguanes, and it is therefore impossible to know if they frequented the River of Nuts like their neighbors the Mariames; it seems certain, however, that they did not travel to the prickly pear grounds as the Mariames and Yguases did. From the earlier stated location of the Deaguanes on Matagorda Peninsula, we can assume that the Mendica lived on the mainland across East Bay. Campbell and Campbell's particular geographical focus excluded this group from their study of Indians south of the Guadalupe River.

Campbell and Campbell (13–23) have collected the cultural references to the Mariames and the Yguases Indians, about whom more information is found in the Narváez expedition narratives than about any other group. By a great margin the Mariames are the most specifically described Indians in the accounts. In addition, the Mariames are the only Indians for whom two relatively independent observers' descriptions exist, since Oviedo's (600a–01b) account preserves Andrés Dorantes's testimony of his time of up to four years with the group, and the *relación* presents Cabeza de Vaca's independent description of these same people; as we have mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca could also have drawn his information to a certain degree from Dorantes's testimony.

The accounts of the Narváez expedition suggest that the Mariames and the Yguases had similar lifeways. Campbell and Campbell (13) have noted that paragraph division changes in Hodge's (65) edition of Smith's English translation have resulted in the erroneous attribution of much information about the Mariames to the Yguases. The heart of this confusion has no doubt resulted from the obscure phrase in the *relación* (f32r) that mentions Dorantes's flight from the Yguases to the Mariames; it is narrated in a part of the text that is an amalgam of descriptive and narrative elements.

Both the Mariames and the Yguases migrated between the River of Nuts and the prickly pear region, in other words, from the Guadalupe River along the coast to beyond the mouth of the Nueces River and then inland away from the coast into the prickly pear region. It was while the survivors were in the interior of the prickly pear region during the summers between as early as 1530 and 1534 that they learned of other Indians from beyond the prickly pear grounds with whom they would later escape on their way toward Pánuco, moving into the coastal interior. Although the men met many other groups at the prickly pear grounds, none of them seems to have ranged north of that region, and none is said to have lived directly on the coast. Cabeza de Vaca's suggestion that one group, the Susolas, ranged between the River



of Nuts (Guadalupe River) and the second region of prickly pears is likely related to his inflation of the men's role as healers in southern Texas (see below, sec. 27).

## II. Travel Parallel to the Coast through the Coastal Interior toward Pánuco (f35r–f48r)

### II.A. The Escape from the Mariames through Eight Months with the Avavares (Late Summer 1534 to Midsummer 1535)

#### 16. ESCAPE FROM THE MARIAMES AND YGUASES (SEPTEMBER 1534)

Drawing from Andrés Dorantes's testimony in the Joint Report, Oviedo (601b–02a) narrates a version of the four men's departure from the Mariames and Yguases Indians that is consistent with Dorantes's perspective. He explains that in the "seventh year," even though each of the Christians was separated from the others, each one secretly went off and arrived inland ("la tierra adentro") to a certain place where the men had often eaten prickly pears with their Indians. Dorantes was the first to arrive at the location where the men had agreed to meet, and there he encountered some Indians who were "great enemies" of those with whom the men had previously lived. Estevanico and Alonso del Castillo came upon Dorantes within three or four days, and the three then agreed to search for Cabeza de Vaca, who Oviedo (602a) says was waiting for them ahead.

According to Cabeza de Vaca's account of the same events (f34v), after the four men arrived at the northern prickly pear grounds in 1534 they made plans to escape but were separated on the day they were to leave. Cabeza de Vaca says that as they were separated on the first day of September, which was the first day of the new moon, he told the others that he would wait until the moon was full and that if they did not find him by then he would leave without them.

Oviedo (602a) recorded that Dorantes and Estevanico convinced the Indians to whom they had arrived that they were going to look for another Christian and would bring him to them, and that they left Castillo with those Indians to guarantee their return. He continued to explain how on the evening of their departure the two men arrived at smoke spires they had sighted earlier that day and that there they found Cabeza de Vaca. Finally, Oviedo notes that the Indians with whom Cabeza de Vaca was staying moved to the place where Castillo had remained, and thus the four men were finally reunited.

Cabeza de Vaca (f34v) claimed that Dorantes and Estevanico arrived at the place where he was waiting for them on the thirteenth day of the moon,

and therefore of September, and he describes how they had left Castillo with other Indians. Just as Dorantes testified in the Joint Report, Cabeza de Vaca also states that after the three men were reunited, his Indians moved to where Castillo was. At this point he says the Indians who were holding Castillo were the Eanagados, but he never reveals the name of the native group with which Dorantes and Estevanico found him. The *relación* perfectly corroborates the Oviedo account, the former narrating the events from Cabeza de Vaca's perspective and the latter from that of Andrés Dorantes.

Assuming that Cabeza de Vaca waited for the others for thirteen days, since he says Cabeza de Vaca would not have been able to see the new moon until it was one day old, Smith (*Relation* 112n1) made a curious attempt to calculate the *year* these events occurred by determining the full moons that occurred closest to 13 September for the years of the expedition. Smith's conclusion that the closest dates corresponded to the years 1532 or 1535 suggests either that he incorrectly compared Cabeza de Vaca's new-moon date of 1 September to his Old Style calendar full-moon table (30 August 1532 or 28 August 1535) or that he incorrectly compared Cabeza de Vaca's full-moon date of 13 September to his New Style calendar full-moon table (9 September 1532 or 7 September 1535). The internal chronology of the account allows us to easily identify the year of these events as 1534, however, and thus Smith's Old Style calendar full-moon date of 8 September 1534 is the one we would need to compare to Cabeza de Vaca's implied full-moon date of 13 September 1534 to assess the accuracy of his stated dates. The comparison suggests that either Cabeza de Vaca's date estimate is within five days of the actual Old Style date or it is off by more than a month. As we will see below, only a few days after leaving the Eanagados and the other group of Indians, the men reached the Avavares, and Oviedo (602b) claimed from the Joint Report that this occurred in October rather than in September.

Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 11–12) divided the *relación* into three sections and saw the Narváez expedition survivors' escape from the Mariames and Yguases as the beginning of their continuous overland journey. Krieger saw this escape as the beginning of the third part of the narrative, upon which he focused his study of the four survivors' route. Although Krieger recognized that the men spent at least eight lunar months with the Avavares Indians (to whom the men would flee from the two groups that now held them) and that during this time they made no forward progress on their trip, his characterization of their move from the Mariames and Yguases as a "flight" that commenced the overland trip and his implicit denial that neither Narváez expedition narrative gives any account of the men's migrations

while they were with the Avavares Indians during this eight-month period represent fundamental problems from the outset of his analysis of the journey. We reject Krieger's scheme of the journey's beginning at this first area of prickly pears, since the narratives give virtually no information about the men's whereabouts and travels during the winter of 1534–35. As we will show below, the overland journey truly began at the men's departure from the Avavares in the summer of 1535.

#### 17. MOVE TO THE AVAVARES (OCTOBER 1534)

It was no doubt Oviedo (602ab) who put the particular spin of Christian obligation on his version of the men's departure from the intermediate groups to whom they had gone from the Mariames and Yguases; he described the departure, which he says occurred in October (1534), as the three Spanish hidalgos' honorable and Christian escape from the "savage" natives. Oviedo does not indicate the amount of time the men spent with the Eanagados and the others; Cabeza de Vaca (f35r) says that the group of four men remained with these Indians for two days before they fled and mentions that he and the other three men learned the fate of the rafts of Téllez and Peñalosa (a detail also absent from Oviedo's account) prior to departing from the Eanagados and the other Indians.

Both accounts agree that the Narváez expedition survivors' move from the mainland coastal Mariames and Yguases first somewhat inland to the Eanagados and the other unnamed group and then to the Avavares, who were a day's journey from the former two groups, took place in the interior part of the first (northern) region of prickly pears, which was near the coast, as the season was ending; both mention the men's fear of a lack of food when they fled from the Eanagados and the others, because the prickly pear season was nearly over. The men nevertheless agreed that with the few prickly pears still remaining in the fields they would be able to travel a considerable distance toward Pánuco (f35r–v; 602b). As was mentioned earlier, the men's plan had been to find the Avavares, who they knew lived in the direction that they desired to go, but it is not clear that they knew where the Avavares were when they left the Eanagados and the others.

The same day that the men disappeared from the Eanagados and the others, fleeing "with great fear that the Indians would follow [them]" (f35v), they saw smoke spires. According to the *relación*, sometime after the hour of vespers they encountered an Indian with whom they spoke and who eventually went ahead of them to announce their arrival to the Avavares people, to whom they arrived at nightfall (f35v; 602b). The travel to the

Eanagados and the others, followed by the movement to the Avavares, seems all to have taken place within the northern region of prickly pears or on its southern fringe. As Campbell and Campbell (5–6) suggest, the men would not have moved on to the Avavares if they had not known that they lived in the direction of Pánuco, or in a generally southern direction from the northern limit of the prickly pears.

With regard to the manner in which the men found the Avavares, Oviedo (602b) recorded the following: “and it pleased the mother of God that that day at sunset they met the Indians whom they were seeking; these Indians were very gentle, and had some knowledge of the Christians, though little, because they did not know how badly the others had treated them (which was well enough for these sinners).” In contrast to the Oviedo text, the source of which may have been the testimony of either Andrés Dorantes or Cabeza de Vaca, the *relación* (f35v) describes how, prior to arriving at the village of the Avavares, the men encountered one Indian who fled, whom they ordered Estevanico to follow. Since Estevanico was now alone, the Indian waited when he saw him coming, and the two of them exchanged words. The Indian then went on ahead to tell the people about the men’s arrival, and at sunset, the group of four encountered four Indians, with whom they spoke.

Here we learn that although the Avavares were “of another nation and language” (f35v) they were capable of speaking the Mariames’ language, and that it was in this language that the survivors communicated with the Avavares. This is in accord with information the *relación* provides both before and after this encounter (f29v, f35v), identifying the Avavares as the Indians who came to the northern prickly pear ground to trade with the Mariames, bringing bows to them from the south. The seasonal trade implies that the Avavares lived in a region different from the Mariames in terms of natural resources (i.e., they had access to wood that was suitable for making bows, whereas the Mariames did not).

The Avavares’ contact with the Mariames in the prickly pears makes it likely that they knew about the Christians well before the summer of 1534. We have shown that Andrés Dorantes may have arrived to the first region of prickly pear cacti as early as the 1530 season, and that he, Castillo, and Estevanico had been in the prickly pears intending to flee to the Avavares in the summer of 1532 and were joined by Cabeza de Vaca in another failed attempt in 1533. In contrast to the “very little” knowledge of the Christians that Oviedo says the Avavares had, Cabeza de Vaca suggests that the men were already very well known among the Indians of the land for the curing they had done, an issue about which the Oviedo text is still completely silent at this point (see below, sec. 27).

## 18. EIGHT MONTHS WITH THE AVAVARES (AUTUMN 1534 TO MIDSUMMER 1535)

As we mention in our discussion of the Joint Report (chap. 12, sec. 2.B.8), Oviedo does not identify the witness who provided the testimony from which he wrote the remainder of his account once the four men were definitively reunited (602a), and it is therefore more difficult to assess the relationship between Oviedo's and Cabeza de Vaca's narratives. Regarding the amount of time that the men were with the Avavares, Oviedo (602b) is very explicit, stating from 1 October to August of the following year (apparently from 1534 to 1535). Besides the men's need for hides on their journey ahead, Oviedo mentions the lack of fish among the Avavares, because they "were not near the water," and the Narváez survivors' consequent hunger because of this lack. Otherwise, he mentions only the relative freedom in which the men lived among these Indians up until the time they departed from them.

In contrast to Oviedo's brief account of the men's time with the Avavares, Cabeza de Vaca's (f35v–f40r) narrative of the same period is populated with many narrative digressions. He explains that God "[opened] roads for us through a land so deserted" and "[inspired] these people to treat us well"; we have mentioned the parallel passage in Oviedo's (602ab) account above, as it appears before the men reach the Avavares in that text. According to Cabeza de Vaca (f35v–f36r), it was the Avavares' knowledge of the survivors' healing powers that moved the Indians to give them many prickly pears. The same night of their arrival, Castillo, who Cabeza de Vaca seems to suggest was among them the first and most often solicited to do the curing, healed five Indians. Cabeza de Vaca (f36r) claimed further that the men's arrival prompted a great three-day celebration among the Indians that began that night.

After the three days had passed, the survivors inquired about the land ahead as they had previously done so many times over the course of the past six years in their continued effort to reach Santisteban del Puerto on the Río Pánuco. The great lack of food (since the prickly pears that grew in abundance in the land were no longer in season), people, and especially animal hides influenced the men's decision to stay with the Avavares during the winter of 1534–35. Both Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* and the account in Oviedo's text seem to emphasize that a major reason the men remained with the Avavares was to obtain hides for the journey ahead (f36r; 602b, 603a). Both texts identify these hides as deer hides (f39v; 603a), and the numerous references to deer that appear in both texts while the men were living with previous groups, as well as Cabeza de Vaca's (f34r) mention of having seen bison only three times, lead us to conclude that the hides the

men acquired among the Indians of the Texas coast were primarily, if not exclusively, deer hides.

Cabeza de Vaca (f36r–v) continues to say after his mention of the men's inquiry about the land ahead that five days after the men had arrived at the Avavares, presumably in the southern part of the expanse of prickly pears where they had left the Mariames and Yguases, they traveled for five days under very harsh conditions through lands that held no prickly pears to a river where the Indians set up their camp and went to eat a type of bean that grew on trees. At this point, late in 1534, Cabeza de Vaca says that he became separated from the others, and he describes how he survived for five days alone by hiding in the brush "near the rivers" during the night. The often cited episode of the burning tree pertains to this five-day separation (f36v–f37r). On the fifth day, Cabeza de Vaca (f37r) says that he encountered the Avavares along with Castillo, Dorantes, and Estevanico at the bank of another river.

Immediately following the men's reunion, Cabeza de Vaca (f37r–v) narrates their first contact with the Cuthalchuches, Maliacones, Coayos, Susolas, and Atayos and then inserts the incident of his "revival" of the nearly dead Susola Indian (f37v–f38r), which he follows by more discussion of the men's curing (f38v) and the Avavares' tale of Mala Cosa (f38v–f39v). Cabeza de Vaca (f39v) also mentions that the Avavares told the men that they had seen Figueroa and the Asturian with the "people of the figs" farther ahead along the coast. As we saw above (sec. 7.D), Oviedo last mentioned a sighting of them by Pedro de Valdivieso that seems to have occurred in the region of the south end of Mustang Island in mid-1529. It was now sometime between mid-1534 and mid-1535. Cabeza de Vaca's (f39v) narrative again begins to parallel Oviedo's with his mention of the lack of fish and the men's secret move to the Maliacones (f40r) in the summer of 1535.

It is not possible to determine whether this large section of text of the *relación* that is absent from Oviedo's account was one that Cabeza de Vaca added as he wrote his *relación* from the more skeletal Joint Report in the way we described above regarding the description of the bison, or if Oviedo edited all of these episodes out of the Joint Report as he wrote his narrative. The similarities between the two texts make it clear, however, that both had a common source and that one of these two scenarios occurred. The controversial stories narrated in this section make the question—answerable only by the discovery of the Joint Report—particularly provocative.

Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 83–84) makes a convincing argument that the Avavares lived toward the coast of the Gulf of Mexico rather than deep in the interior of modern-day Texas, but his attempt to identify the river to which the Avavares arrived after their five-day journey and the one

where Cabeza de Vaca says he got lost (which Krieger assumes was the same one, identifying it as “River 1”) seems to be an overinterpretation of the sources (“Nuevo estudio” 84–87). Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 87) disputes Davenport and Wells’s identification of the river as the Arroyo Colorado on the grounds that it is too close to the river “as wide as the one of Seville” (f46r), which both Krieger and Davenport and Wells identify as the Rio Grande, as we will consider below; this led Krieger to propose that “River 1” was the Nueces.

As shown above, Campbell and Campbell noted that Krieger’s entire scheme—beginning with the placement of the first prickly pear cacti region much farther inland and to the north of where Davenport and Wells place it—departs considerably from the information given in the two accounts. Davenport and Wells’s identification of the men’s harsh five-day journey as they traveled with the Avavares away from the first prickly pear region as the crossing of the Great Sand Belt makes their route the more convincing of the two. Krieger’s argument that there is too little distance between this first river and the second larger river if the two are identified as the Arroyo Colorado and the Rio Grande is not valid, since he fails to acknowledge that the first river was reached in late 1534, and that the river as wide as the Guadalquivir at Seville was not crossed until at least July 1535. Although Krieger recognized that the men spent eight months with the Avavares, he seems not to have observed that the Narváez expedition narratives do not give a day-by-day account of the Indians’ and Narváez survivors’ movements between traveling to this first river and their much later arrival at the one as wide as the Guadalquivir at Seville. When the men actually began their continuous overland journey by leaving the Avavares at the beginning of the prickly pear season of 1535, they had no doubt moved about the area with the Indians, and we can make no logical inferences about the spatial relationship between the first river they reached with the Avavares at the end of the summer of 1534, the one where Cabeza de Vaca got lost, the ones where he collected wood, and the one as large as the one at Seville, which was not reached until midsummer 1535.

Students of this section of the journey disagree on both the geographic range and the amount of time that the four survivors spent with the Avavares. As we have discussed earlier, determining the location of the mentioned sighting of Figueroa and the Asturian and the region inhabited by the people “of the figs” depends on the location of the Avavares’ range. Campbell and Campbell (24–25) have shown that the range of the Avavares is poorly delineated in the narratives and that it is very difficult to make positive statements about the area that they inhabited. In Cabeza de Vaca’s relative placement of the Indian groups (f44r), he says that the Avavares lived on

the mainland in front of the Quitoles, suggesting the region along the coast in the area directly across from northern Padre Island, and this is where Campbell and Campbell locate them.

The amount of time that the four survivors spent with the Avavares is a second point of disagreement among investigators. In the *relación* Cabeza de Vaca cites the time that the four were with the Avavares as eight months (f38v, f39v). Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 88–89) reveals his confusion about when the men’s overland journey actually began (that is, with their departure from the Avavares, rather than from the Mariames, as he misunderstood) by referring to Cabeza de Vaca’s (f63r) reference to the ten-month period that the men spent on their overland journey from the Avavares to México-Tenochtitlán as the time that they spent with the Avavares: “because in the two thousand leagues that we traveled by land and through the sea on the rafts and another ten months that we went through the land without stopping once we were no longer captives, we found neither sacrifices nor idolatry.” This reference clearly does not pertain to the time the men spent *with* the Avavares but rather to the time they spent traveling overland *from* the Avavares in the late summer of 1535 until they arrived in México-Tenochtitlán in midsummer 1536. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 89) goes on to attribute his own misunderstanding of the passage to Cabeza de Vaca’s error: “[i]t is more likely that de Vaca [*sic*] had committed an error when he wrote, ‘ten months after we had escaped from captivity,’ and had intended to write, ‘after this, we were with the Avavares for ten months.’” In spite of the relative freedom in which Cabeza de Vaca says he and his companions lived with the Avavares, he nevertheless referred to his time with the Avavares as constituting an extension of their captivity *before* escaping from them and commencing continuous travel to New Spain, a subtlety that seems to have escaped Krieger.

As we mentioned above, Oviedo’s (602b) account suggests that the four men were with the Avavares for around ten months, from approximately October 1534 to August 1535, although he does not give the years: “they rested for the time being from the first of October until August of the following year.” We cannot know with certainty exactly how long the men were with the Avavares or the precise or even approximate dates on which they departed from them. We can be certain, nevertheless, that they traveled according to the seasonal cycle by which the indigenous peoples of the land migrated. The group of four left the Avavares sometime during the summer of 1535, at the time when the prickly pears were beginning to ripen (f40r), the time at which the Avavares would have been preparing to return north, away from Pánuco, to trade with the Mariames in the first prickly pear ground.



## II.B. Continuous Travel toward Pánuco through the Coastal Interior to the Sighting of Mountains (Mid-/Late Summer 1535)

### 19. MOVE FROM THE AVAVARES TO THE MALIACONES AND THE ARBADAOS

After their departure from the Avavares the men encountered the Maliacones at the end of one day of travel (f40r), during which Oviedo (603a) claimed the men covered seven leagues. Cabeza de Vaca (f37v) had mentioned their earlier contact with the Maliacones in the southern prickly pear region the previous autumn. It is not possible to determine the men's location when they fled from the Avavares to the Maliacones, since, as we have noted, the last continuous description of their movements ended with the recounting of their last days at this second prickly pear region during the prickly pear season of 1534 after they had traveled to the area with the Avavares. It seems that they would have tried to avoid traveling any distance backward, away from Pánuco, yet it is also possible that they were obligated by the Avavares to return in the direction of the northern prickly pear grounds or even all the way to them before finally effecting their escape.

Cabeza de Vaca (f40r) suggests that he and Estevanico traveled to the Maliacones first, and that three days later he sent Estevanico to bring Dorantes and Castillo to the same Indians. The four men traveled with the Maliacones to a place where they ate mesquite beans (see below, sec. 22), and there they were joined by the Arbadaos, who appear to have lived under the harshest conditions of all the Indians whom the men had thus far encountered. After some private negotiation between the Maliacones and the Arbadaos, the men were allowed to leave the Maliacones and were taken away by the Arbadaos. Oviedo (603a) states that the four Narváez expedition survivors remained with the Arbadaos for eight days in order to regain their strength, eating nothing but roasted prickly pear leaves and mesquite beans during this time; Cabeza de Vaca (f40r) mentions only the mesquite.

Both texts confirm that through barter the men obtained from the Arbadaos two dogs to eat, but the texts vary regarding the price the men paid. Oviedo (603a) says simply that the men received them in exchange for some of the hides that they carried with them, and Cabeza de Vaca (f40r) claims that they gave the Indians some nets and other things, as well as a hide with which Cabeza de Vaca had covered himself.

### 20. TWO LENGTHY INTERPOLATIONS TO THE *RELACIÓN*

After mentioning the acquisition of the dogs, Cabeza de Vaca breaks off his narrative of the men's journey in order to give further descriptions about

their lives among the Indians. The subtlety of the break from the progressing narrative of the journey back to description of an earlier period is smooth enough that even the editor of the Valladolid edition did not introduce a chapter break at this point, as we will see occurred in a subsequent addition. Although impossible to prove, since no specific Indian groups are named, this interpolation (f40r–f41r) appears to pertain to the eight-month period that the men spent with the Avavares. Relatively brief, it includes the passage in which Cabeza de Vaca recounts his collection of wood along the rivers and his often cited reference to Christ's suffering, as well as a description of the men's exchange with the Indians of goods that they made for food and the difficulties they experienced when trying to cook meat in the presence of the Indians; all of this is absent from Oviedo's account. Although the beginning of this interpolation did not warrant a new chapter according to whomever prepared the Valladolid divisions, its end and the return to the narrative of the men's continuing journey to Pánuco did; thus, chapter 23 of the 1555 publication is entitled, "How we departed after having eaten the dogs" (f41r; V:f33v).

Cabeza de Vaca's second interpolation (f41v–f45r) is more obvious and constitutes chapters 24 through 26 of the Valladolid edition. The chapter titles—"Of the customs of the Indians of that land," "How the Indians are quick with a weapon," and "Of the nations and languages"—reveal the general, descriptive nature of the text. According to Cabeza de Vaca, the information on child rearing (f41v–f42r) pertained to all the groups thus far encountered. The information on conflict between individuals (f42r–v) and Indian warfare (f42v, f43r–f44r) cannot be assigned to specific groups, although Cabeza de Vaca does reveal that his specific description of one conflict (f42v–f43r) pertained to the "ones of Aguenes" (Deaguanes) and the Quevenes. The applicability of the descriptions of the intoxicating drink of the Indians (f44v), customs regarding food gathering (f44r), and mention of same-sex unions among the Indians (f45r; see below, sec. 26) cannot be assigned to specific groups. In general, the bulk of this material seems to pertain to the island and coastal peoples of Cabeza de Vaca's first four and a half years in the region, rather than to the groups of the coastal interior, to which he had more limited exposure. Once again the information of this second obvious interpolation does not appear in Oviedo's account except for the information he collected in 1547 from his examination of the printed edition of Cabeza de Vaca's text (617ab).

#### 21. DEPARTURE FROM THE ARBADAOS TO THE FIRST VILLAGE WHERE THE NARVÁEZ SURVIVORS WERE REVERED

As mentioned in the previous section, the narrative of the men's journey resumes temporarily between Cabeza de Vaca's two interpolations with the

four survivors' departure after consuming the dogs that the Arbadaos had sold them, from which they gained strength to continue their journey (f41r; 603a). The day of their departure from the Arbadaos the men traveled five to six leagues, according to Oviedo (603a). Cabeza de Vaca states that they had to walk in the rain and that they became lost. Both texts agree that the four travelers found no Indians that day and that they stopped that night in a wooded area (*monte*) where they set prickly pear leaves roasting, which they ate in the morning (f41r); Oviedo (603ab) claimed the men buried the leaves overnight and that this facilitated their cooking and digestion. The following day the men continued on their journey, always ahead (*adelante*) toward Pánuco, finding a few houses of Indians who instructed them to go farther ahead, where they would find many more houses and more to eat, since they themselves had nothing (f41r-v; 603b). Oviedo's text omits the description of the encounter with the women and boys near the woods where the men had spent the night. According to Cabeza de Vaca, the women and boys fled to call their kinsmen in the woods, and these people informed the four survivors of a large village of their people a bit farther ahead.

That night the men arrived at a village of forty to fifty houses (603b; fifty, f41v). Throughout this journey from the Avavares to the large settlement, only Oviedo gives specific information about the distance traveled. This movement, which took place in the area north of the Rio Grande, seems to have occupied about twelve days, three of which the men spent traveling alone. Oviedo suggests that the men covered about thirteen leagues during this time, passing from the Avavares to the Maliacones to the small group of houses and finally to the large group, both of which seem to have pertained to the same band of Indians. Davenport and Wells (227) suggest that the Indians of this large group were the Cuchendados, evidently based on the fact that this name is the last one Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) gives in his summary of the Indian peoples encountered. Cabeza de Vaca himself makes no such direct correlation to this first unnamed group beyond the Arbadaos.

The contact with this large group of Indians is especially significant, since Oviedo (603b) identifies this settlement of Indians as the one where the four Narváez survivors were first feared and revered:

And there was where they first began to fear and revere these few Christians and hold them in esteem, and they drew near them and rubbed them and rubbed themselves, and by signs told the Christians to rub them and stroke them and heal them. And they brought them some of their sick to cure, and the Christians thus did so, even though they were more accustomed to labor than to performing miracles.

The *relación* (f41v) records that the men stayed at this large village “for some days” because of the food and favorable treatment that they

received from the Indians, taking advantage of the situation in order to build their strength for the continuing journey; Oviedo (603b) is more specific, reporting that the four survivors spent two weeks (*quinze días*) in this village. The accounts note that besides the roasted prickly pear leaves that the Indians gave them, the men also received roasted prickly pears that were green (f41v; 603b); Oviedo adds that the prickly pears were beginning to mature at the time the men were in the village, from which we may suppose that the men had departed from the Avavares sometime before the prickly pear season had come, perhaps in July rather than in August, as Oviedo's text suggests.

Considering the notable difference in the way the surviving expeditionaries were treated at the large village, as Oviedo (603b–04a) observed, it comes as little surprise that Cabeza de Vaca claims that when the men departed from there, they did not do so alone but rather traveled in the company of other Indians who had come from farther ahead (f41v, f45r). Cabeza de Vaca (f41v) says that many of the Indians wept at the Christians' departure from this large Indian settlement, and his referral back to this instance after the second large interpolation serves as the only cue that his narrative of the journey forward resumes, where he begins, "After we departed from those whom we left weeping" (f45r). In contrast, Oviedo, who had previously (603b) mentioned the discontent of the Arbadaos when the men departed from them, is silent on this issue of the large village's reaction to their departure; he says only that the men went two leagues ahead to others and suggests neither that the Indians wept nor that others from ahead accompanied the men. As we will see below, Oviedo's (604b) description of the four men's departure from the first settlement after this one of forty or fifty houses where he says they were first revered corresponds closely to the account Cabeza de Vaca gives of their departure from this one, as just described.

The survivors' form of travel from one group of Indians to the next that Cabeza de Vaca here recounts begins a transformation that was evidently the product of the Indians' evolving perception of them. This evolution, as Oviedo (604a) observed, would be the men's key to successful and rapid travel:

And thus God so favored them, that what they thought they would be incapable of walking, even if their lives were to last so long as eight years, because of the difficulties and hardships of such a long road, they nevertheless walked in ten months, which was a very great miracle and something which no one but those who had witnessed it could believe how it had occurred.

Here the reference to the overland journey of ten months more explicitly demonstrates that Cabeza de Vaca's (f63r) mention of ten months referred

not to the time that the four men had spent with the Avavares, as Krieger incorrectly assumed (see above, sec. 18), but rather to the time the men spent traveling to México-Tenochtitlán after leaving the Avavares.

## 22. MESQUITE AND THE LAST VILLAGE NORTH OF THE RIO GRANDE

As discussed above, Cabeza de Vaca (f36v) remarked that after five days of difficult travel, evidently in the direction of Pánuco from the first prickly pear grounds in late summer 1534 across a region containing no prickly pears, the four survivors and the Avavares had arrived at a river where they set up their houses and then “went to look for the fruit of some trees, which is like [the fruit of a] vetch.” Coopwood (129) claimed that this was the fruit of the “*ebanito*, or scrub ebony,” and he then went on to describe the pealike fruit, which he says was green-colored in its unripe state. The reason Coopwood claimed that Cabeza de Vaca here referred to the scrub ebony was because his odd reckoning of time in the narrative convinced him that the men departed from the Mariames to the Avavares in September 1535 (rather than in September/October 1534) and that they departed from the Avavares in January 1536 (128, 132). This time scheme was Coopwood’s motivation for mentioning that the scrub ebony held its seedpods into the winter. Although they present the same time scheme that we have here presented, both Davenport and Wells (215) and Campbell and Campbell (26) accept Coopwood’s identification without question.

We believe that the description given is not specific enough to distinguish it from the fruit of the mesquite tree and that it is more likely that this reference pertaining to the summer of 1534 is Cabeza de Vaca’s first mention of mesquite. Later, in his narration of the men’s departure from the Avavares and their move to the Maliacones as the prickly pears were beginning to ripen in midsummer of 1535, Cabeza de Vaca (f40r) noted that just after all the men reached the Maliacones they “departed all together with the Indians who were going to eat a small fruit from some trees, on which they sustain themselves during ten or twelve days before the prickly pears ripen.” Coopwood (132–33), who practically dismisses the eight months that the men spent with the Avavares and who, like Krieger after him, gives a continuous route interpretation from the men’s departure from the Mariames, did not identify this fruit from a tree to which Cabeza de Vaca refers as *una frutilla* and Oviedo as *unos granillos*. Coopwood’s dismissal of the entire intervening winter, spring, and early summer of 1534–35 that the men spent with the Avavares would have made it difficult for him to realize that this was the same fruit “which is like vetch” that had been consumed the previous season with the Avavares.

Finally, as Cabeza de Vaca (f45r) and his fellows arrived at the first village after the one of forty to fifty houses where Oviedo says the men were first revered, he claims that they were given much flour made from *mezquiquez*, or the mesquite bean. It is at this point that Cabeza de Vaca (f45r–v) gives his detailed description of how this caroblike fruit was used by the Indians of this settlement in the coastal interior of southeastern Texas. Oviedo makes no reference to mesquite other than the one about the *granillos* mentioned above until after the men had crossed “a river wider than the Guadalquivir in Seville.” Slightly later in his narrative of the men’s journey, as they reached one of the large settlements on the south side of the Rio Grande, Oviedo (604b) recorded from the Joint Report that the travelers were there given “twenty-eight loaves of bread [made from flour], which is a thing that those people eat, and they call it *mesquite*.” Cabeza de Vaca did not speak of mesquite flour at this point, and as we will see in our Part 6 commentary (chap. 7, sec. 3), he interpolated a most likely fabricated account of women bringing maize flour from the west just shortly after the point in the narrative where Oviedo mentions this mesquite bread.

As was the case with his description of the North American bison, Cabeza de Vaca reserved his lengthy description of mesquite and the Indians’ use of it for his *relación*, and Oviedo (617b) acquired this information only in 1547 when he read the published edition. The two Narváez expedition accounts thus attest to the importance of the mesquite bean to the Indians of the coastal interior beginning with the Avavares and all those who ranged no farther north than the first prickly pear region, which, as we have discussed above, lay near the coast just south of the Nueces River.

Just as he compared the North American bison that he had seen near the coast of the Gulf of Mexico (f34r) to the cows of Spain, Cabeza de Vaca (f45r) likened this *mezquiquez* to the Old World carob (*algarroba*). The carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*), a Mediterranean evergreen leguminous tree, had long been familiar to the Spaniards. Covarrubias (85ab) had difficulty deciding if the Spanish name for the fruit of this tree, *algarroba*, had come from the Arabic or the Hebrew, but he knew that the Greek word for it meant “horn” and referred to the shape of its pod, and that the Romans called it *siliqua* and had used its beans as measures of weight just like the Spaniards used grains of wheat. Covarrubias noted that carob pods had been fed to the pigs in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) and that Pliny and Dioscorides had discussed the carob tree. More important with regard to Cabeza de Vaca’s knowledge of the carob tree, however, were the Spaniards’ uses of the carob. Covarrubias mentioned that in Valencia carob pods were fed to cattle and that in Castile the beans were sold in shops as sweets for children. He also noted that “in some places the carob served as food for wretched people,”

prompting him to quote Horace (2, epist. I) “Vivit siliquis et pane secundo” [He lived off carobs and second-rate bread].

In the mid–sixteenth century Andrés de Laguna (101 [bk. 1, chap. 130]) commented on the multitude of carob trees along the section of the route between Rome and Naples. In the 1570s the Spanish physician Francisco Hernández (2:32a–33a [bk. 12, chap. 9]) wrote about a tree similar to the carob tree, saying that the *mizquitl* was a very common tree in New Spain that produced long, edible pods full of seeds that had a sweet flavor. Hernández observed that the Chichimecas made tortillas out of these seeds that they consumed as bread.

*Mizquitl* was the Nahuatl word for the mesquite tree, the pods and fruit of which Cabeza de Vaca had called *mezquiquez* and had likened to the Old World carob. Burkart (226) has noted that when the “Algarrobo [*sic*] de Chile” was first described in 1782 it was confused with the carob of the Mediterranean and incorrectly called *Ceratonia chilensis*. It was later renamed *Prosopis chilensis*, and its similarity to the mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) has caused a good deal of confusion regarding the naming of these plants; hence, Bell and Castetter (3) discussed the mesquite in 1937, calling it “*Prosopis chilensis* (Molina) Stuntz.” Just as Cabeza de Vaca likened the American *mezquiquez* to the European carob or *algarroba*, the many South American species of the genus *Prosopis* are still commonly known as *algarrobas*.

Cabeza de Vaca was certainly not the first to encounter the mesquite tree, as the colonists of New Spain had undoubtedly learned of it beginning with Cortés’s conquest of Mexico in 1519. In the same lands (probably in southern Durango) where Gonzalo López discovered a place along a river that was “full of prickly pears” on his 1530 expedition from the modern-day Río San Lorenzo in Sinaloa (chap. 17, sec. 9.B), he also noted that there were “some trees that are called mezquiques” (CDI 14:458); Gonzalo López referred to the people who inhabited this land as Chichimecas. Gonzalo López’s passage through a land of prickly pears, mesquite, and Chichimecas preceded by four years the Cabeza de Vaca party’s journey with the Avavares in 1534 to the second prickly pear region just north of the Rio Grande where they would go to eat mesquite. Over twenty years after the 1540–42 Coronado expedition, Pedro de Castañeda Nájera (Mora 114 [pt. 2, chap. 2]) would recall about the expedition that the Indians of the Sonora river valley region made prickly pear preserves and “bread from *mesquites* similar to a cheese” that could be stored for an entire year. (For color photographs and discussion of the mesquite tree, see Keith Elliot’s treatment in Peacock 102–06. For scientific treatment and bibliography on mesquite biology, range, and uses, see Simpson.)

Although the positive identification of mesquite helps to locate the Cabeza de Vaca party in Texas, it does not serve to prove a coastal or trans-Texas route, any more than do the location of the prickly pear and buffalo ranges. As Bell and Castetter (3) note, "*Prosopis chilensis* (Molina) Stuntz, is one of the best known plants of both Mexico and the arid regions of the United States." Bell and Castetter (facing 3) offer a map showing the widespread range of *Prosopis juliflora* (*Prosopis chilensis*). A continuous debate about whether or not the mesquite tree spread a considerable distance northward into Texas following Spanish colonization and the beginning of cattle raising in the region renders the hypothesized extent of the mesquite range in the early sixteenth century even more uncertain, thereby making it even less useful as a means of determining Cabeza de Vaca's route.

### 23. A RIVER AS WIDE AS THE ONE OF SEVILLE: CROSSING THE RIO GRANDE

Both accounts of the Narváez expedition claim that while the four survivors were at the second settlement where they were revered and at which point Cabeza de Vaca gave his lengthy description of the Indians' mesquite consumption, women from farther ahead came to see them; these women had evidently come from across the river "as wide as the one of Seville," although in neither account are the women immediately identified as having come from beyond the river. According to Oviedo (604a), the women had come specifically to bring the Christians gifts; Cabeza de Vaca (f45v) records the arrival of these women but does not state that they had come specifically to lead the men ahead.

Both texts suggest that at this point the men had yet to accept their role almost as sacred objects in the Indians' ritual passage of them from one village to the next that at that point was still in its earliest stage, though it would eventually carry them from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to Nuño de Guzmán's Nueva Galicia in northwestern Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca (f45v) and the other men inquired about the land ahead, and without waiting for the women who had arrived they set out from the second village. Oviedo (604a) also records the men's independent departure, here saying that it grieved these people to see the men leave and that the whole village went after them, trying in vain to convince them to wait for the women who had come for them. As we noted above, Cabeza de Vaca had made these statements about the men's departure from the previous settlement they had visited.

Cabeza de Vaca (f45v) recounts how, despite their exhaustion, these women followed behind the men once they departed, not in the company of the whole settlement, as Oviedo claimed, but of other women from the



village where they had been. After four leagues (two or three according to Oviedo; 604a) of difficult travel through land that had no paths and where they had wandered lost, the men encountered the Indian women from the two villages at a place where there was water (f45v). With the women from the first village across the river serving as their guides, the group of four survivors traveled ahead a distance of eight or nine leagues (604a) until the evening, when they came to the river “as wide as” (f46r) or “wider than” (604a) the Guadalquivir in Seville.

Cabeza de Vaca (f46r) said in his *relación* that this river came up to the men’s chests as they crossed and had a considerable current. Oviedo (604a) gives a more detailed description that seems to lessen somewhat the force of the river; he says that the river was knee- or thigh-deep, and chest-deep for the length of two lances, but not dangerous to cross. The identification of the river as the Rio Grande is particularly important with regard to the trans-Texas versus the coastal route of the men. Defenders of the trans-Texas route have argued that throughout the course of the journey we have been considering in this commentary the men were moving in a westerly direction across the region of modern-day southern Texas. The proponents of such a route generally identify this crossing to have taken place on the Colorado or some other river far from its mouth and near the Edwards Plateau and the Balcones Escarpment in southwestern Texas, arguing that these geographic features constituted the “sierras” that the men would see shortly after the river crossing. As such, the proponents of the trans-Texas route have always discredited Cabeza de Vaca’s claim that the mountains they saw had been fifteen leagues from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

We have shown that throughout the men’s journey they had been traveling near the coast, and their crossing had to have been very near the mouth of the river. The group had to be near the coast, crossing a river “as wide as” or “wider than” the Guadalquivir in Seville and only a few leagues to the north of “sierras” that they estimated to be approximately fifteen leagues from the coast. In addition, the region had to be rich in both prickly pear cacti and mesquite trees, leaving the Rio Grande as the only reasonable possibility. Davenport and Wells (232–36), Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 100–11), and Campbell and Campbell (8–9) have all argued for a crossing in the area of Falcon Lake Reservoir between Zapata and Roma, Texas. We find this crossing unlikely because it would have placed the men so far west upon crossing the river that they would be in a low mountainous area instead of on a plain, as both accounts indicate, some thirty-five to forty miles from their first sighting of mountains. Moreover, considering the importance the Narváez survivors placed on traveling near the coast, we believe that the

crossing would have likely taken place nearer the mouth of the river in the coastal lowlands of Texas and Tamaulipas.

#### 24. THE SETTLEMENTS BEYOND THE RIO GRANDE TO THE SIGHTING OF MOUNTAINS NEAR THE COAST

Oviedo's (604a–05a) description of the four survivors' journey from just south of the Rio Grande until they first sighted mountains much more specifically details the number of days and leagues that the men traveled and the settlements they encountered. Cabeza de Vaca (f46r–f47r) more explicitly describes the men's contact with each subsequent group and the development of a ritual trade pattern among the native groups as the Indians began to pass the men along on this part of their journey.

In the first village, at which the men arrived the same evening that they crossed the Rio Grande, they were received with great fear and frenzy by the Indians, who rushed up to touch them. Both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo document the Indians' use of gourds filled with small stones as ceremonial objects in their dances and music (f46r; 604b); only Cabeza de Vaca said they were used in curing (f46r). Cabeza de Vaca explained that the Indians did not know where the gourds came from and said only that they flowed down the river during the times of flood. Such information supports the identification of the large river near which these Indians lived as the Rio Grande; these gourds would have flowed from the lands upstream where they were cultivated by agricultural peoples whom the little party of survivors met later on their overland journey.

The night the men arrived at this village, the Indians of this settlement, located in the northernmost part of present-day Tamaulipas, carried them to the huts they had prepared for them and placed them in them. The Indians spent the rest of the night in ceremonial festival. In the morning they brought all of their people to be cured by the men, and when the women (an Indian, according to Oviedo) who had come with them from north of the Rio Grande were about to return to their homes, the Indians of this large settlement south of the river gave them many arrows, apparently as an expression of gratitude for having brought the Narváez expeditionaries to them (f46r; 604b).

In the days after the women from the settlement north of the Rio Grande had departed, all the people of the village south of the river departed with the four survivors ahead to the next Indian settlement, which according to Oviedo (604b) was about a league and a half away from the first and comprised about seventy or eighty houses. The two accounts differ with regard to what occurred at this second village south of the river. Each text

explains that those who had come from the previous village took some of the possessions of the people in the second village, but Cabeza de Vaca (f46v) is more specific in his *relación* about the exchange that took place. He states that the Indians who had come from the first village south of the Rio Grande “took from those who came to be cured their bows and arrows and shoes and beads if they brought them” and apparently kept them. In addition to recounting how the men were given twenty-eight loaves of mesquite bread, as mentioned in our discussion of mesquite above, Oviedo (604b–05a) says that the Indians from the first village to the south of the Rio Grande completely sacked this second village. With regard to the food the Indians gave the men, Cabeza de Vaca mentions that the men received some of “what the Indians had” and especially deer meat; he says nothing of mesquite bread, and he does not give an account of the sack of the settlement.

Cabeza de Vaca (f46v) included the Christians’ movement to a third group of people south of the Rio Grande that does not appear in Oviedo’s text. The description of the occurrences in this village is generic and seems only to repeat the pattern of the men’s arrival, their curing among the Indians, and great festivity and celebration among the Indians afterward.

Oviedo (605a) records that after departing from the second village after crossing the Rio Grande, the men traveled with the people of that settlement six leagues to the village where there were many blind Indians who were evidently noted in the Joint Report to have been the whitest ones the men had seen so far, according to the information Oviedo preserved. Oviedo says this settlement was about as big as the previous one (i.e., about seventy to eighty houses). For clarity, we will refer to this village of the blind Indians as the fourth one that the men encountered south of the Rio Grande, even though the third one does not appear in Oviedo’s text. This fourth village clearly corresponds to the same one described in the *relación*, which in Cabeza de Vaca’s (f46v–f47r) text follows the generic description of the one that appears third. Cabeza de Vaca (f47r) also noted that many of the Indians at this village were blind and that they were the whitest Indians the men had seen. The account of the Indians’ frenzied rush to touch the Narváez survivors and the sack of the village by the previous group is similar in both texts (f46v–f47r; 605a).

With regard to the issue of curing in the village of the blind Indians, Oviedo (605a) says the following: “but there they cured all the blind Indians as well as those blind in only one eye and many other infirmities, and if the Christians did not heal all of them, the Indians at least believed that they could cure them.” Cabeza de Vaca never indicates that they cured the blind. This interpretation, obviously influenced by biblical themes, no doubt represents Oviedo’s own understanding of the role that the Christians played

in this ritual curing, rather than any information that actually appeared in the Joint Report.

The accounts agree that the expeditionaries first saw mountains at this fourth village south of the Rio Grande. From their settlement, this group of Indians among whom so many were blind took the men toward the mountains to a settlement of their relatives (f47r), which Oviedo (605a) says was five leagues from their village on a river at the foot of the mountains. According to the distances Oviedo recorded, the men had traveled twelve and one-half leagues from the Rio Grande in the direction of Pánuco along their journey through these native settlements situated in the coastal interior.

#### 25. INDIANS OF THE PRICKLY PEAR AND MESQUITE LANDS

As the four Narváez survivors shifted their course toward the coastal interior with their move to the Avavares and continued to travel toward Pánuco, they began encountering peoples whose lifeways were significantly different from the ones they had first encountered on the shores of Texas. The importance of prickly pears was now considerably augmented by the mesquite bean in the culture of these peoples, and they appear to have treated the men considerably better than their coastal neighbors to the north. That the men's discovery of this cultural difference resulted from their shift to the interior rather than simple movement down the coast is evidenced by the violent deeds of groups living along the coast south of the first prickly pear region such as the Guaycones, who may have killed Diego de Huelva and Pedro de Valdivieso and treated many of the other expeditionaries badly, and the Camones, who had slaughtered the men of the Téllez/Peñalosa raft. The Mariames, who had held the Narváez expedition survivors as slaves, clearly pertained to this earlier sphere of coastline peoples, rather than to the one to which the men arrived by leaving them and going to the coastal interior, as we have discussed above (sec. 15).

The only groups among these coastal interior peoples that might have lived north of the Nueces River were the Atayos and the Acubadaos, who Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) suggests in his summary of Indian groups lived behind the mainland shore-dwelling Yguases in the coastal interior. It is important to note that these are the first Indians who Cabeza de Vaca says lived beyond those who lived on the mainland shoreline, and this indicates that from near the range of the Yguases along the coast the men had shifted their route somewhat toward the interior. Although the Acubadaos may have lived to the north of the Nueces River, the lack of information about them other than their location relative to the Yguases has persuaded us to include them with the interior groups in our classification scheme (see table 6). Likewise,

Cabeza de Vaca mentions the Atayos on only one other occasion (f37v), shortly after the men reached the Avavares. They seem also to have lived directly in the first area of prickly pears, and little more can be inferred about them other than that they were at continual war with the Susolas.

The first groups the men encountered once they departed from the Mariames in late summer 1534 were the Eanagados and others whom Cabeza de Vaca (f34v) does not name. He says very little about these Indians, but it is apparent that he encountered them in the southern interior region of the first prickly pear grounds, as the men were heading south toward Pánuco and the Mariames were returning north.

We have already mentioned above that the Avavares seem not to have ranged beyond the first prickly pear region (i.e., they did not range north beyond the Nueces River). Campbell and Campbell (24–27) have collected the relevant cultural references in the narratives pertaining to the Avavares, the only Indians described in any significant detail in the Narváez expedition narratives of all those who lived in the prickly pear region southward.

Cabeza de Vaca (f36v) remarked that once he and the other men reached the Avavares they went looking for prickly pears “where there were other people of different nations and tongues.” The subsequent text reveals that some of these other people were the Cuthalchuches and Mali[a]cones, names Cabeza de Vaca (f37v) said pertained to other languages. He also mentioned the Coayos, the Susolas, and the Atayos at this point, of which he says the latter two were at war. The Susolas are a somewhat problematic group, since Cabeza de Vaca (f38r) claims that they remembered that he had cured among them at the River of Nuts. The context of the narrative at this point is the period of late summer, 1534, while the men were with the Avavares; the fact that Oviedo (603b) explicitly says that the men did not start curing until they reached the large settlement beyond the Avavares (among Indians whom Cabeza de Vaca names as the Arbadaos) in midsummer 1535 suggests that it is both unlikely that the Susolas ranged to the River of Nuts (the Guadalupe River) or, as we will discuss below (sec. 27), that the men did any curing at Malhado between 1528 and their respective departures from there through the spring of 1533.

From the Avavares the men passed on to the Maliacones, mentioned above, in midsummer 1535 and afterward to the Arbadaos. Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) mentions the Chavavares (Avavares) as living across from the island Quitoles, and we have already discussed how, in spite of the fact that the Avavares occupy a position that technically pertains to the mainland shoreline, these Indians obviously lived farther toward the coastal interior than previous groups occupying analogous positions in his summary description (e.g., Mariames, Yguases). Finally, Cabeza de Vaca says simply

that the Maliacones, Cuthalchulches (Cuthalchulches), Susolas, and Comos joined together with the Avavares. All of these except the Comos had been mentioned earlier. These Indians all appear to have been closely associated with the prickly pear and mesquite culture from the Nueces River southward.

When Cabeza de Vaca (f44r) introduced his summary review of the Indians of the whole region discussed in this Part 5 of our commentary, he said the treatment regarded the “nations and languages that are found from the island of Malhado to the last ones, who are Cuchendados.” As we have mentioned above, Cabeza de Vaca never assigned the onomastic “Cuchendados” to any specific group with which he had contact along his journey, although Davenport and Wells believed it pertained to the large settlement where the men were well received after leaving the Arbadaos and where Oviedo said the men were first revered and began to cure; this is not an unlikely supposition, but it is not explicitly stated anywhere in the texts. Like this settlement, no name is given for the inhabitants of any one beyond it, and it seems that from this point on the men began moving too rapidly as they headed in the direction of Pánuco to learn the specific details about the Indian groups that the previous six and a half years had allowed them to do in the case of the Indians of the Texas coastline.

#### 26. CABEZA DE VACA’S ACCOUNT OF SODOMY AND SAME-SEX UNIONS AMONG INDIANS OF THE TEXAS COAST

Oviedo mentions the practice of sodomy and the presence of a certain sort of conjugal union between some male Indians of the Texas coast only in chapter 7 of his account of the Narváez expedition; this suggests that in the Joint Report none of the three Castilian survivors made any mention of either of these phenomena and that Cabeza de Vaca added these observations as he wrote his *relación* sometime after returning to Spain in 1537. These mentions have been the subject of quite diverse interpretation. We look first at how these topics have been handled by modern editors and English-language translators of the *relación*, and then, as an aid to our readings of them today, we consider the way in which these fragments were read and the implications they carried in sixteenth-century Spain.

In addition to his isolated statement that the Indians of the Texas coast practiced sodomy (*pecado contra natura*) (f32v), Cabeza de Vaca described what seemed to him to be the sexual union between some pairs of male Indians who he says occupied a female gender role according to his interpretation of his observations (f44v–f45r):

In the time that thus I was among these people, I saw a wicked behavior [*diablura*], and it is that I saw one man married to another, and these are

effeminate [*amarionados*], impotent men [*impotentes*]. And they go about covered like women, and they perform the tasks of women, and they do not use a bow, and they carry very great loads. And among these we saw many of them, thus unmanly as I say, and they are more muscular than other men and taller; they suffer very large loads.

Smith (*Relation* 104) gave a literal and thus somewhat opaque translation of *pecado contra natura* (“[s]ome among them are accustomed to sin against nature”). Regarding the same-sex union that Cabeza de Vaca described, Smith (*Relation* 139) translated *diablura* as “a diabolical practice,” and he claimed that only one of the two men who entered such a union was “emasculate and impotent.” His later reference to mutilation suggests that he understood one man of the two to be castrated. Fanny Bandelier (90, 126) translated Cabeza de Vaca’s reference to sodomy as “unnatural vices” and rendered his *diablura* as “something very repulsive,” but she seems to have improved on Smith’s translation by recognizing that Cabeza de Vaca’s *amarionado* probably referred to a notion of effeminate behavior rather than physical castration. Covey (79, 100) followed Smith in his use of “sin against nature” and “diabolical practice” but took Smith’s notion of mutilation one step further, calling these men eunuchs.

The anthropological concept of the berdache (see Angelino and Shedd; Schnarch) has been applied to Cabeza de Vaca’s description of these same-sex unions in editions and translations of the *relación* at least as early as Lesfargues and Auzias’s (107n70) 1979 French translation, though these particular translators placed their note on the subject at Cabeza de Vaca’s mention of sodomy rather than at his description of these same-sex unions. Newcomb (*Indians* 51) had associated Cabeza de Vaca’s description of the men who entered into these unions as berdaches in his 1951 monograph on Texas Indians, but he evidently relied on Smith’s translation and therefore repeated the claim that some of these men were emasculated (i.e., castrated). Favata and Fernández (*Relación* 99n9; *The Account* 90n9) presented Newcomb’s discussion as a corroborative observation about the “Coahuiltecan” Indians rather than recognizing it to be the mere repetition of Cabeza de Vaca’s own observation in the *relación*; thus they claimed that “Newcomb’s and Cabeza de Vaca’s descriptions are very similar.” Newcomb’s surrounding text reveals that he drew all of the information he gives about these “Coahuiltecan” directly from Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*.

Newcomb (*Indians* 51), in claiming that “[t]here was among Coahuiltecan a class of homosexual men, termed *berdaches* in the literature on American Indians,” demonstrated a superficial understanding of the modern anthropological category of the berdache, as can be determined from

Angelino and Shedd's study, which appeared four years after Newcomb's text, and Schnarch's recent study. Newcomb's simplification of berdache sexuality (see Angelino and Shedd; Schnarch) has infiltrated Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* with the notion not only that the modern Western category of "homosexual" can be applied to sixteenth-century Amerindian cultures but additionally that this category existed in the minds of sixteenth-century Europeans and operated in their understanding of the indigenous American cultures they discovered. Both assumptions are false.

Gilbert (61) cites Foucault's observation in *The History of Sexuality* that terms such as "homosexuality" date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and that there is an important historical distinction to be made between the categories of "sodomite" and "homosexual" as they were identified by the societies that employ(ed) them: "[t]he sodomite had been someone who *sinned* by performing a deviant social *act*. The homosexual was not a sinner in the old religious sense but someone with an identifiable lifestyle revolving around the choice of sexual partners of the same sex" (emphasis is Gilbert's). Though religious and secular condemnation of sodomy may still persist today, it is now often accompanied by considerations of sexuality that seem to have been absent from sixteenth-century considerations of the sexual act, at least as it was discussed in surviving writings from the period, almost all of which are legal proceedings.

Following Newcomb's observations, Favata and Fernández (*Relación* 99n9, *The Account* 90n9) introduced the notion that these men whom Cabeza de Vaca described were "homosexuals," an observation Cabeza de Vaca could not have made in his time. Favata and Fernández translated *pecado contra natura* as "sin against nature" (*The Account* 71) and *diablura* as "one wicked thing" (*The Account* 90). Pupo-Walker (*Naufragios* 270n619) omitted the notion that these men were berdaches and claimed that Cabeza de Vaca's observation was "one of the first precise verifications of clear and accepted homosexuality among aborigines of the New World." López-Morillas (61) employed "sin against nature," in her translation but rendered *diablura* as "a devilish thing" (85). About the same-sex unions that Cabeza de Vaca described, López-Morillas claimed that "Cabeza de Vaca's important observation establishes the fact that homosexuality was tolerated and describes ways in which it affected the distribution of labor" (85n50).

Elsewhere (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 5.A) we criticize Maura's (*Arte* 30–31) juxtaposition of Cabeza de Vaca's account of these same-sex unions that he observed on the Texas coast (which Maura characterized as Cabeza de Vaca's "impression of somewhat dubious ingenuousness") with his testimony concerning the impotency suit between Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (fifth duke of Medina Sidonia) and Ana of Aragon. The anachronistic claim Maura (*Arte*



30) implicitly made about Cabeza de Vaca's attitude toward homosexuality became explicit in his edition of the *relación*, where he characterized Cabeza de Vaca's use of the term *diablura* concerning these same-sex unions as his "congenial and picaresque allusion to homosexuality" (Maura, *Naufragios* 173n77). This is quite a transformation from Fanny Bandelier's "something very repulsive."

The above examples might be summarized as two interpretive trends: (1) the application of the anthropological category of the berdache to Cabeza de Vaca's description of these same-sex unions, which has resulted in an elevation of these individuals' position within their community to a degree higher than can be determined from the account itself, and (2) the application of the modern social category of homosexual, which has focused on the sexuality of the individuals Cabeza de Vaca described and has produced misleading interpretations of Cabeza de Vaca's own opinion on sexual acts between members of the same sex and same-sex conjugal unions, largely according to the disposition of the editor's or translator's own opinion on the subject. Since the totality of our understanding of Cabeza de Vaca's own *expressed* attitude toward the sodomy and same-sex unions of which he was informed and observed on the Texas coast hinges on the interpretation of his use of the word *diablura*, the closest we might come to his opinion of what he saw would require a search through the writings of the mid–sixteenth century for the significance of this term. Covarrubias's (468a) definition from the early seventeenth century, placed at the end of his entry *diablo* (demon or devil), seems to suggest that *diablura* might have meant anything from the diabolical to the prankish.

Oviedo (617a) immediately put Cabeza de Vaca's separate observations about sodomy and same-sex unions together and said the following: "[t]here are sodomites [*sodomitas*] among them, and some so abominable that they publicly have another man as their wife; and these passive effeminate ones have nothing to do with the things of the men, but instead with the activities of the women." In 1526 Oviedo (*Sumario* 112–13 [chap. 81]) had already published a claim that sodomy (*el pecado nefando contra natura*) was typical among the Amerindians in many parts of the Indies. The only concrete example he gave, however, pertained to the Cueva Indians of Panama, among whom he had observed that the principal lords kept boys with whom they practiced sodomy. Oviedo described that these boys dressed as women, participated in the activities of women, and were called *camayoa* in the Cuevan language. Oviedo claimed these boys were the passive participants of sodomy and were despised by the women of their community.

Oviedo obviously read Cabeza de Vaca's entire *relación* before writing the seventh chapter of his account since, following the narrative sequence

of Cabeza de Vaca's published account, he was able as he wrote to combine the mentions of sodomy and same-sex unions (617a) and then mentioned the same-sex unions a second time (617b). Upon reiteration of the account of same-sex unions, Oviedo falsely claimed that Cabeza de Vaca had distinguished between the active and passive participant in the sodomitic act and that only the *paciente* went about as the women of the community did. Oviedo's interpretation of Cabeza de Vaca's account reveals the extent to which sixteenth-century Europeans were influenced in their observations about Amerindian behavior and customs by Old World stereotypes and calls attention as well to Cabeza de Vaca's own limitations in perceiving and describing the people with whom he lived. Claims made today that the men Cabeza de Vaca described were "eunuchs" or "homosexuals" reveal the persistence of such culturally and historically unsophisticated interpretation.

Monter (41) has synthesized the attitude of early modern Europeans toward homosexual practices with two statements: "(1) Homosexuality was tacitly permitted at various times and places in the royal courts of Europe . . . and (2) among the rest of the population, male homosexuality was blanketed with bestiality under the rubric of 'sodomy,' and both were punishable by death throughout Christian civilization." With respect to point number two, Castile was no exception, as title 21 of the *Séptima partida* (Castile 3:f72v–f73r) spelled out the terms by which persons who were guilty of practicing sodomy or bestiality were to be put to death.

In the only study known to us of the enforcement of these laws in Castile, Lea (4:361–62) has observed that the issue of sodomy and bestiality ("unnatural crime") technically remained outside the Inquisition's jurisdiction, although the institution seems to have been sporadically involved in the prosecution of such cases. Lea also notes that in 1497 Ferdinand and Isabel declared that burning alive and confiscation of possessions would replace the earlier prescribed punishment of castration and lapidation for persons convicted of such crimes. Regarding the kingdom of Aragon, Lea (4:363) states that when the Aragonese ambassador at Rome requested on 24 February 1524 that the Inquisition be given jurisdiction over the crime he stated that the vice had been "introduced into Spain by the Moors." As we will see below, knowledge of the Turkish custom of maintaining catamites circulated in Spain at least as early as 1526.

Covarrubias (46b) gave two separate definitions for the term *afeminado*, distinguishing between the "man of feminine condition," inclined to speak in the same voice and of the same topics as women and to do the same types of work as they, on the one hand, and, on the other, the man of delicate features but with masculine inclinations (*ánimo*); *ánimo* evidently encompassed sexuality. Covarrubias claimed this latter type of individual

was deemed “feeble” by peasants and “delicate” by courtesans. *Afeminado* in its first sense was synonymous with Covarrubias’s (790a) *maricón* or *marimarica*. Under *paciencia*, Covarrubias (843a) claimed the term *paciente* carried a bad (*mala*) sense signifying *cinedo afeminado*, that is, the passive participant of a sodomitic sexual act/relationship.

Finally, Covarrubias (194b) listed the term *bardaxa*, which he claimed was a word of Persian origin that had come to Castilian through Italian and referred to the passive boy of a pederast. The Real Academia Española’s *Diccionario histórico* (2:112b) dates the earliest use of this term to 1526; it figures in Cristóbal de Arcos’s translation of Jacques de Bourbon’s *La grande et merveilleuse et très cruelle oppugnation de la noble cité de Rhodes . . .*, published in Paris in 1526 and treating the Turkish conquest of Rhodes in 1522 (see Brockman). Thus, Cabeza de Vaca’s attitude toward sodomy and his understanding of the same-sex unions he observed on the Texas coast would have been influenced (perhaps determined) by his knowledge regarding incidents of and Castilian stereotypes pertaining to sodomy in Christian Spain, Turkish customs of maintaining catamites, and Amerindian acts of sodomy reported prior to his departure for *Florida* from Cuba in 1528.

Cabeza de Vaca certainly did not perceive the same-sex unions he observed on the Texas coast according to the highly interpreted modern anthropological category of the berdache as summarized by Schnarch, and from what he intimates about the opinions held by other Indians of the communities in which such men lived, it seems that the others did not see them as berdaches in the modern anthropological sense. The only information Cabeza de Vaca offers regarding the Indians’ opinion of these effeminate men is his observation that suggests they were perhaps forced by the others to carry great loads. From this we might deduce that they were not held in the esteem that Schnarch (117) says berdaches were held in some Amerindian societies but perhaps thought of instead as Oviedo says the Cuvian Indian women viewed the *camayoa* of their culture.

Ultimately we must recognize that we can deduce nothing from Cabeza de Vaca’s words with respect to his own opinion about same-sex acts or unions, either among Europeans or Amerindians. The simple fact that he chose to report rather than suppress that sodomy was practiced among some of the Indians he encountered might suggest that his opinion of the act was negative, since for all practical purposes his account translated into the accusation of a criminal act in sixteenth-century Castile. On an even darker note, we must recognize that Cabeza de Vaca’s observations about such matters among the Indians may not in any way reflect opinions he might have held regarding sexuality but rather might be a manifestation of

his opinions and interests regarding the potential enslavement of the people he encountered.

Las Casas saw immediately that Cabeza de Vaca's comment about sodomy among the Indians with whom he had lived put them at risk of persecution by the Castilian state for being the perpetrators of "unnatural crimes." In essence, upon conviction for sodomy these people could have their possessions confiscated and be burned alive according to Ferdinand and Isabel's 1497 decree mentioned above and might also have been subjected to enslavement (see chap. 17, sec. 5.A). Las Casas responded directly in the *Apologética* (2:364 [chap. 207]) to Cabeza de Vaca's observations about sodomy and same-sex "marriages" among the *Florida* Indians by citing similar unions between young Celtic men, for which his source was Eusebius of Caesarea's fourth-century *Ecclesiastical History* (Casas, *Apologética* 2:314 [chap. 198]). Las Casas also compared this custom of the *Florida* Indians to the Greek philosophers who, though they were not married to them, had maintained catamites. Finally, Las Casas referred to the Roman emperor Hadrian, who not only had maintained as a catamite his beloved Antinoüs but had also committed the sinful act of converting him into a god for his subjects to worship after Antinoüs's death by drowning in the Nile (*Apologética* 1:602–03 [chap. 114]).

In spite of the fact that Las Casas himself referred to sodomy as infamy, he adduced all this in defense of the *Florida* Indians for the charge of sodomy that he saw had been brought against them in Cabeza de Vaca's *relación*. He explained their transgressions as being the product of their ignorance of the Christian god in the same manner that he explained how the Greek, Roman, and Celtic ancestors of the Christians had committed them before being converted to Christianity. Thus Oviedo's and Las Casas's sixteenth-century readings of Cabeza de Vaca's references in the *relación* to sodomy and same-sex unions between Indian males of the Texas coast allow us to lay to rest the recently invented, anachronistic notion of Cabeza de Vaca's "sympathetic view of homosexuality."

#### 27. MIRACLE CURES AND MALA COSA: THE EXPEDITIONARIES' PLACE AMONG THE INDIANS OF THE COAST FROM MALHADO TO NORTHERN TAMAULIPAS

Perhaps the strangest incident in Cabeza de Vaca's narration, which was not repeated by Oviedo after reading the published *relación* and probably had not appeared in the Joint Report, is the tale of Mala Cosa. Reportedly told to the men by the Avavares and others encountered prior to them ("the rest whom we had left behind") (f38v), the tale may have been shared by the Mariames

and the Avavares. Given the mutual intelligibility of their languages and considering that the Mariames constituted the group with which the four Narváez survivors were most familiar, it is not surprising that the men were acquainted in detail with some of the lore of these peoples from north of the Rio Grande in coastal Texas.

Developing arguments made elsewhere about Mala Cosa (Adorno, “Como leer” 89–101, “The Negotiation” 174–75), we consider the tale from three perspectives. The first concerns its representation of the trickster figure myth that was common to ancient and Old and New World (particularly North American Indian) mythologies. The second is the relationship that Cabeza de Vaca creates in the *relación* between the Indians who told them about Mala Cosa and Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions. Here the myth of Christian conquest appears in the form of the spiritual struggle for men’s souls carried out between the “good angel” and the “bad angel.” Apart from this dramatization in which Cabeza de Vaca and his companions become protagonists in a battle between Christianity and paganism, a third consideration is Cabeza de Vaca’s articulation of the Mala Cosa episode within the larger narrative that he presents of his and his companions’ efforts as physicians throughout the *relación*. It is the last of these that is the most problematic.

In describing how he and his companions became widely known for their curing during the eight months they spent with the Avavares from September or October 1534 to midsummer 1535, Cabeza de Vaca (f38v–f39v) tells how these Indians, as well as others whom they had encountered, reported the existence of a man who some fifteen or sixteen years earlier had terrorized the people of the area. This strange being, who performed acts of bodily dismemberment and remarkable cures, was called, says Cabeza de Vaca, Mala Cosa, literally, “evil thing,” which we have translated as “evil being.” Mala Cosa was described as bearded and short. Whenever he appeared, people’s hair stood on end and they began to tremble. Occasionally dressed as a woman, other times as a man, he sometimes presented himself among them as they danced. He could send a hut flying through the air and ride it to the ground. Many times, the Indians said, they had given him food, but he never consumed it. When the Indians asked him where he came from, he pointed to a cleft in the earth and said that his home was there below.

The account that Cabeza de Vaca (f39r) gives of Mala Cosa’s deeds is strikingly vivid. Appearing at the door of a house with a burning firebrand, Mala Cosa would enter the dwelling, select a man, and perform two surgical operations, giving his victim three large incisions in his sides with a very sharp flint, one hand wide and two spans long. He would place his hand into the wounds and pull out the entrails, cut off a piece more or less a span

long, and throw it into the fire. Afterward he would make three cuts in the arm, the second at the crook, and dislocate it. Mala Cosa next would reset the dislocated limb and place his hands over the wounds. Cabeza de Vaca reports, “[T]hey told us that later they were healed” (f39r). When the Narváez survivors dismissed the tale with a laugh, the Indians brought forward many of their number who said that they had been taken by Mala Cosa. Cabeza de Vaca confesses, “[W]e saw the scars of the cuts that he had made in the places and in the manner they had said” (f39v).

Before further considering Cabeza de Vaca’s interpretation of this disconcerting tale and its apparent verification by the Indians, we turn to its appropriate context. In its own right, the story of Mala Cosa can be identified with one of humanity’s oldest inventions, the trickster figure. For its general outline and particulars, we follow the classic work of Paul Radin. With a nearly universal distribution that included the ancient Greeks, the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Semitic world, its earliest and most archaic forms are found among the Indians of North America, and its patterns have apparently changed little over time (Radin xxiii, 132).

In its North American Amerindian manifestations, the trickster has been described as “at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. . . . He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being” (Radin xxiii). Without a well-defined or fixed form, the trickster figure was characterized as looking something like a man whose specific features were never seen (Radin xxiv). He remained isolated from the company of society and had the ability to transform himself sexually (Radin 133, 137). If divinity was attached to him, it always seemed to be a secondary (not an original) attribution (Radin 164). The significance of the trickster theme consisted of its embodiment of “the vague memories of an archaic and primordial past, where there as yet existed no clear-cut differentiation between the divine and the non-divine”: “[f]or this period Trickster is the symbol. His hunger, his sex, his wandering, these appertain neither to the gods nor to man. They belong to another realm, materially and spiritually, and that is why neither the gods nor man know precisely what to do with them” (Radin 168–69).

Cabeza de Vaca’s Mala Cosa fits this paradigm surprisingly well. The indiscernible facial features of this short and bearded man, his habitation in a cleft in the earth, and his sudden appearances among the Indians, variously dressed in male or female garb as an indication of his sexual transformability, all correspond to the traits of this ancient mythical figure. Whether or not the Indians considered Mala Cosa to be divine, they certainly considered him

powerful, setting forth his magical qualities and the fear they experienced upon his appearance: “when he came to the house where they were, their hair stood on end and they trembled” (f39r).

The interest of the Mala Cosa tale is that it bears resemblance to other myths collected in Mesoamerica in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries. Accounts of magical bodily dismemberment and restoration are recorded by other Spanish reporters, Cabeza de Vaca’s contemporary the Franciscan Fray Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590) and the Dominican Fray Francisco Jiménez (1666–1729/30), who transcribed and preserved the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the highland Quiché Maya.

For the great compendium of information about Nahua institutions, customs, and beliefs that became the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Sahagún (904–09) in the 1570s collected materials about magicians and mountebanks that he mentioned in passing but did not integrate into his *Historia*. In this constellation of conjurers, Sahagún included seers, diviners, and curers, as well as those who terrorized people in order to rob them of their wealth and possessions. Among such charlatans and fakers, the one he described as “the destroyer” (*el destrozador*) is perhaps the most relevant. Always and only performed in the sanctuaries of lordly elites, the legerdemain practiced by the destroyer consisted of a daring stunt of cutting off hands, feet, and other body parts and placing them at various locations. Then he would cover all with a red mantle, and the parts would grow back together as if they had never been cut asunder. At this point, he would reveal the restored body. It is unclear from Sahagún’s (906) text whether this reconstituted figure was the mountebank himself or another person.

Ángel María Garibay describes this as a “curious case of magicanship in old Anáhuac,” a form of amusement that depended on visual suggestion. Sahagún, suggests Garibay (244n39), must have considered this phenomenon an enchantment due to diabolical arts. One malevolent character in Sahagún’s (905) catalog was a being who, out of malice and hatred, bewitched people and devoured the calves of their legs or their hearts. The victim would call on his attacker to be cured and then give him the goods he wanted. Garibay (168, 173) notes that the verb for “to cure,” *patia*, meant “to heal” in the medical sense as well as “to undo a magic spell.”

In quite a different register of magical experience, Fray Francisco Jiménez collected the sacred traditions of the *Popol Vuh* in 1701–03 and also recorded a myth of corporeal dismemberment. This tradition involved the principal protagonists of two hero cycles, the sacred twins Xbalanque and Hunahpu. In the account of the sacrifice of Hunahpu by Xbalanque (Tedlock 153), Xbalanque sacrificed Hunahpu by extending his arms and legs, decapitating him, and tearing out his heart. Xbalanque then danced alone until

commanding his dismembered brother to arise. Hunahpu got up restored, and much rejoicing followed. Yearning to dance the dance of Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the lords One and Seven Death presented themselves for sacrifice and dismemberment. But they did not come back to life: “the heart sacrifice was performed on the two lords only for the purpose of destroying them” (Tedlock 153). This defeat of One and Seven Death, the rulers of Xibalba, was accomplished by the hero twins “only through wonders, only through self-transformation” (Tedlock 155). Despite the fact that the mythical and magical content of these tales held meanings specific to Nahua and Quiché Maya cultural settings, the general principle of bodily dismemberment and restoration is shared with the Indians of coastal Texas and northern Mexico in the tale preserved by Cabeza de Vaca.

With respect to North American Plains Indians, Woodbury Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 202) in 1901 found cultural resonance between Cabeza de Vaca’s account of Mala Cosa and the Pawnee Indians “of our own day” in a tale collected by George Bird Grinnell in 1893 on the basis of the testimony of a friend, Captain L. H. North, about the deeds carried out by the “masters of mystery” of the Pawnee nation. The physicians of the Pawnee were curers, not priests, and their trade was healing sicknesses caused by evil spirits by expelling them from the victim’s body (Grinnell 374). Grinnell (376) insisted that there was no opportunity for tricks or deception because the rituals were carried out by naked men, working on open ground and surrounded by spectators. Among various descriptions similar to the story of Mala Cosa, Lowery (*The Spanish Settlements* 202n2) singled out the tale about a boy of six or eight years of age who was laid down naked in the middle of a circle of men. Two men sat upon him and opened his abdomen with a knife and pulled out what appeared to be part of his liver. One cut out the organ and gave it to the other, who ate it. The rest of the organ was put back in place and the child carried away. Afterward, he was seen again, apparently recovered and restored.

Regarding the origin of the Pawnee, Grinnell (227–29) speculated that they had come from the south, from Mexico along the Río Grande and in Texas; later they migrated as far north as southern Kansas. Whether or not a common cultural origin accounts for the similarity of these Mesoamerican and North American beliefs, it is clear, following Radin’s thesis, that there was a wide cultural range and time span over which phenomena like that of the trickster figure occurred and that such accounts of bodily dismemberment and radical recovery were not uncommon.

How Cabeza de Vaca and his companions would have understood this phenomenon in the sixteenth century is another matter. He indicated, by the laughter that signified his and his companions’ dismissal of the Mala



Cosa tale, that the Indians' senses had deceived them. Deception by the senses was the way that learned men at the time explained such phenomena. In the *Apologética historia sumaria*, Las Casas (1:481–85 [chap. 93]) explained that such deceptions subverted the internal senses (imagination, fantasy, and common sense) or the external ones (sight, hearing, etc.) and were produced by three means: (1) the art and industry of men, without diabolical intervention; (2) natural causes that lacked both diabolic and human intervention; or (3) demons, “when God allows them to use the virtues and powers over certain inferior things that he had given them in their apprenticeship as good angels” (*Apologética* 1:483 [chap. 93]). These diabolical deceits occurred always with divine consent and often also with the express collaboration of magicians and charlatans working in concert with the devil by means of “the pact and partnership between them” (*Apologética* 1:495 [chap. 95]).

Dividing the diabolical deception of the senses into five main types, Las Casas listed as the third phenomenon the false corporeality by which, in one type of instance, the devil transformed himself into a person or beast or, in a deceit of another type, he changed himself into an actual person, man or woman, concealed his or her true form and appeared as an animal or a beast, or made an animal appear in the guise of a human being (*Apologética* 1:491–92 [chap. 95]).

Las Casas illustrated the principle by citing a famous case understood as diabolical intervention from the *Malleus maleficarum* (c. 1486) by the Dominicans Johann Sprenger and Heinrich Kraemer. While cutting firewood in his home, a woodcutter found himself attacked by three cats; he responded by beating them off, wounding them in the process. Soon afterward, the authorities arrested the laborer, accusing him of having entered a house occupied by three respectable matrons of the city and beating them nearly to death. When it was determined that both events occurred on the same day and at the same hour, the authorities judged the entire episode to be the work of the devil, and the workman was freed (*Apologética* 1:493–94 [chap. 95]). Las Casas offered two explanations. In one scenario the devil took the form of the cats and transferred the wounds inflicted on them to the women, who were innocent. In the other, the women were sorcerers who appeared before the laborer upon incitement by the devil, whose trickery made them appear to the woodcutter to be cats; the culpable female sorcerers received the wounds directly from the woodcutter. Following Sprenger and Kraemer's interpretation, Las Casas concluded that the second explanation was the correct one (*Apologética* 1:494–95 [chap. 95]).

Consonant with his concern about the efforts of “magicians, enchanters, necromancers, sorcerers, diviners, and all the other infinite superstitions that exist throughout the mainland” as obstacles to the work of evangelization

in the Indies (*Apologética* 1:496 [chap. 95]), Las Casas next considered a troublesome case that occurred during his tenure as bishop of Chiapas and to which he said he and his colleagues did not give credence. He theorized, nevertheless, about its meaning; we rehearse it here in order to suggest the possibilities of interpretation that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, as well as readers of the day, might have applied to the case of Mala Cosa.

In Las Casas's account, the disturbing tale told by some Indians in Chiapas and publicly acknowledged among them was that one or more Indians had come upon two tigers in the countryside and wounded them. At the same time, two other Indians, apparently safe in their houses far away from there, received wounds identical to those suffered by the tigers and died from them. What caused the wounding and death of the two Indians in their houses? Las Casas offers the same potential explanations he had considered about the *Malleus maleficarum* case of the woodcutter and the cats in order to determine how it could have been that Indian sorcerers, at the instigation of the devil, had wounded the two Indians in their houses.

By one theory, the demons themselves took the form of tigers and attacked the Indian or Indians in the field; the Indian or Indians responded by wounding the demons-in-the-shape-of-tigers, who transferred the wounds "through the air" by diabolical agency to the two Indians in their houses. These two Indians were in fact sorcerers and the devil's allies and therefore culpable for the deeds. Another hypothesis Las Casas advanced was that the devil spirited forth the actual sorcerers (there were two) and gave them the shape and form of tigers; the two magicians-cum-tigers attacked the Indian or Indians in the field who in turn wounded them. The two wounded Indians in their houses are thus the two temporarily transformed sorcerers whom the devil had spirited away and now failed to protect from the wounds. In this scenario, as in the previous one, the wounded Indians were the devil's allies and collaborators.

Las Casas's third alternative postulates that the two Indians in their houses who received the wounds were in fact innocent. Las Casas included the devil's affliction of the innocent in the range of theoretical possibilities, attributing it to the "secret judgments of God" and citing the trials of Job as a biblical example (*Apologética* 1:495 [chap. 95]). In this instance, the wounding of the two Indians was caused indirectly by diabolical intervention in the following manner: the Indians who wounded the tigers were sorcerers before whom the devil had placed tigers "either real and alive or formed of air and phantasmic." When the sorcerers attacked these diabolical tigers (their own allies), the devil reacted by suddenly transferring the wounds to the Indians who were innocent (*Apologética* 1:496 [chap. 95]).

The seemingly preposterous tale of Mala Cosa could easily be interpreted as Las Casas's examples indicate. Mala Cosa's transformations were likely to be considered diabolical, and the Indians who bore scars as evidence of their wounds from his surgical rituals could be considered either innocent victims or sorcerers in concert with the devil. Consistent with his position about the absence of human sacrifice and idolatry among all the Indians he encountered, Cabeza de Vaca implicitly suggests the Indians' innocence by observing that he and his fellows attempted to comfort them in their fears of Mala Cosa. At the same time he assesses Mala Cosa and his actions as diabolical when he remarks that he assured the Indians that if they believed in the Christians' God they need not fear Mala Cosa and when he claimed that as long as he and his companions (as Christians) were in the land Mala Cosa would not dare reappear.

Cabeza de Vaca did not have to attribute the visits of Mala Cosa explicitly to satanic intervention in order for his readers to understand that such was his implicit and obvious interpretation of the deed. In this light, the sort of myth that would have interested Cabeza de Vaca and his readers did not pertain to Amerindian but rather to Christian mythology, that is, those tales by which Christian culture represented and reproduced itself from medieval times onward. In this respect, Cabeza de Vaca and his fellows played the role of the good angel, the Christian proselytizer, engaged in a struggle for men's souls against the bad angel, the pagan sorcerer.

Barrera (*Álvar Núñez* 37) made reference to this interpretation with respect to Mala Cosa, and Solá (15–31) has studied the theme of the good and bad angel in the Spanish American literary tradition more generally. Within Cabeza de Vaca's story, the tale of Mala Cosa takes on meaning according to the model of comportment of the Christian warrior that came from a chivalric tradition of which the thirteenth-century Ramon Llull (c. 1235–1316) was an early exemplar. To Llull, the first duty of the Christian knight was to defend the faith and convert "infidels" to it. The tradition was brought to the Indies in the sixteenth century in a later transformation by which Hernán Cortés became the model of the *dux populi* in his own writings and those of others, most notably Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta's (1525–1604) characterization of him as the "Moses of the New World" in the *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (Phelan 30). The Christian caballero as defender and promoter of the faith with the capacity to lead great numbers of people is the implicit model presented by Cabeza de Vaca for the men's experience in the Texas-Tamaulipas area, and it anticipates his fully realized *dux populi* interpretation of the final portion of the men's journey, through the area of Sinaloa in Nueva Galicia (see chap. 9). Representing the triumph of the Christian cavalier over the pagan necromancer, the myth of Mala Cosa is a

key insertion into Cabeza de Vaca's account; it reproduces the paradigmatic episode from the history of the evangelization of the ancient pagans as bringing the gospel to the Amerindians.

Cabeza de Vaca inserted the tale of Mala Cosa at a dramatic moment in the narrative in which he had just given an account of the increasing and near-complete reverence in which the four men were held during their eight-month stay among the Avavares. Cabeza de Vaca (f38r, f38v) says he resuscitated a virtual dead man whose recovery "caused very great wonder and fear, and in all the land they spoke of nothing else." In this area the men were universally taken to be "children of the sun," and Dorantes and Estevanico now joined in the curing. Cabeza de Vaca declared that their reputation was so great that the Indians "had so much confidence that they would be cured if we performed the cures, that they believed that as long as we were there, none of them would die" (f38v). At this climactic moment, all that remained was to test their authority and power against that of the devil, that is, vis-à-vis the native people who believed in the existence of Mala Cosa:

We told them that he was an evil person. And in the best manner that we could, we gave them to understand that, if they believed in God our Lord and were Christians like us, they would not be afraid of him, nor would he dare to come and do those things to them, and they could be assured that as long as we were in the land, he would not dare to appear in it. With this they were very pleased, and they lost a great deal of the fear they had. (f39v)

Within the narrative scheme imposed on the remembered deeds, the episodes of curing and the story of Mala Cosa are thus crucial, representing the contest between the Christian proselytizer and the devil. This is the first of only two occasions in Cabeza de Vaca's account where he indicates that he and his companions tried to teach the natives about the Christian religion. The second occurs later at Culiacán when the men call down to the floodplain the people who had fled to the sierras to persuade them to worship the Christian god (f62r). There, Cabeza de Vaca makes it seem that the Christians' god and Aguar are one and the same. Only in the present case of Mala Cosa does a contest between the good healer and the evil enchanter appear, and the four men's apparent triumph over his influence represents the triumph over the devil.

The Mala Cosa episode brings to a conclusion a narrative cycle that began with the account of the men's experience on the island of Malhado and ends in the last moments before they put into action their plan to leave the Avavares and make a concerted, collective effort to push forward to Pánuco. Although the presentation of this story-within-a-story is

teleologically effective, claiming the triumph of the Narváez survivors' faith over the Indians' superstition, the progression of the larger account into which the Mala Cosa story is inserted lacks narrative consistency. Are the claims that Cabeza de Vaca makes about early and ever more striking curing episodes borne out by the events he actually narrates? Comparison of his own account with that of Oviedo from the Joint Report can help us assess the consistency between Cabeza de Vaca's assertions and his episodic narration. Along the general lines of Cabeza de Vaca's self-aggrandizement as we have witnessed it in his personal account of the *Florida* journey, the prominence he gives to the cures and his own role in them—"we all became physicians, although in boldness and daring to perform any cure I was the most notable among them" (f38v)—warrants further scrutiny.

In describing the men's experience on the island of Malhado, he separates the account of his own experience during the winter of 1528–29 from that of the other men. He tells how the Indians who held him took him along with them from Malhado to the mainland, where they remained until the end of April (f25v). Subsequently, he tells how the Indians who were of a different lineage and language and held Castillo and Dorantes and the others went to another part of the mainland, and that they returned to the island on the first of April (f26v). Meanwhile, Cabeza de Vaca (f26v) reiterates, he still remained on the mainland, felled by a great sickness.

It is unclear how long Cabeza de Vaca and the others were separated on the mainland, but he spoke of a customary period of three months during which his Indians ate oysters and drank the brackish water of the mainland shore (f25v). Earlier, he had described the habitation of the island as occurring between October and the end of February (f24v). In any case, between the account of his own springtime experience on the mainland and that of Dorantes and Castillo, he inserted his account of how "they tried to make us physicians" (f25v–f26r). Was this to have occurred between October and February? Or did Cabeza de Vaca make a belated interpolation into his narrative in order to anticipate and reinforce his later accounts of healing?

There seem to be two contradictions here regarding the men's treatment by the natives. One occurs locally at Malhado, where he says the natives treated them well and refrained from eating in order to give the men food, and yet, at the same time, he spoke of the great labors they forced him to perform and their bad treatment of him that prompted his escape to the Indians of Charruco, who treated him somewhat better (f26r, f27r).

The other contradiction is a more comprehensive one, and it concerns the general reputation he assigned to himself and his companions as physicians from the time of their reunion to their arrival at the Avavares. Although Cabeza de Vaca was silent on the topic of curing in his account of being at

the River of Nuts or among the Mariames (even in the prickly pear region), he made three unusual claims about the four men's arrival at the Avavares (f36r, f37r, f38r). He asserted that they had to do curing the very night they arrived, that men came in search of Castillo to do healing, and that the Susolas sought out Cabeza de Vaca, asking him to resuscitate a man who was nearly dead, because they had seen him perform cures at the River of Nuts. In spite of the fact that he claimed that the men were well known for their curing when they arrived at the Avavares (f35v), he also stated that, up until that time, neither Dorantes nor Estevanico had done any curing (f38v). Although he claimed that it was with the Avavares that all four men became physicians and were well received and treated with reverence (f35v), it was nevertheless among the people the four Narváez survivors met *after* the Avavares to whom Cabeza de Vaca (f41v) attributed the clearest and most concrete account of the new reverence in which they were held:

And that night we arrived to where there were fifty houses, and they were astonished to see us, and they showed great fear. And after they were somewhat calmed about our presence, they came to us, placing their hands on our faces and bodies, and afterward they passed their hands over their own faces and bodies. And thus we remained that night, and come the morning they brought us the sick people they had. . . . And because of the good treatment they gave us, and because they gave to us gladly and willingly what they had and were pleased to remain without food in order to give it to us, we stayed with them for some days.

Two features about this passage are notable. First, it repeats the natives' reaction as described by Cabeza de Vaca on only one other occasion, when he claimed that the Indians of Malhado had treated them well and denied food to themselves in order to give sustenance to these strange men who had done the healing. Second, in the corresponding section of Oviedo's (603b) account, the episode just quoted is presented as the first occurrence of curing. Oviedo's (603b) introduction of the subject here is underscored by his explanation to the reader that the men performed these actions "in the manner that those who in Castile are called healers [*saludadores*] do it," that is, by making the sign of the cross over and blowing upon the victims.

According to the Joint Report, the men were at a point beyond the Avavares but still in prickly pear country when they performed their first cures. As to the good treatment the men received here, Oviedo (603b–04a) emphasized that they had never enjoyed the good will of any Indians prior to this time among "all those whom they had seen and dealt with," that thus far they had only suffered "evil and cruelty, as has been stated."

So when and where did the healing rituals actually begin? It is important to note that there is more consistency between the specific content of Cabeza de Vaca's and Oviedo's accounts than between Cabeza de Vaca's account and his claim about beginning the curing on Malhado and continuing it without hiatus afterward. For example, both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo (f27r; 592a) describe the hardships Cabeza de Vaca endured on Malhado, being poorly treated and digging up roots from under water and carrying loads of firewood; both (f27v; 592b) recall his flight to the Indians of Charruco as somewhat improving his bitter lot, because as a merchant he had more freedom.

Somewhat later, Oviedo (598b, 599a) described Castillo, Dorantes, and Estevanico's fate among the coastal Indians in the midsummer of 1529 as being treated "like slaves," and he remarked that "there they took them for slaves, treating them more cruelly than would a Moorish master." Likewise, Cabeza de Vaca (f29v) acknowledged their enslavement when, after recounting his reunion with the other men, he told how he was given "as a slave to an Indian with whom Dorantes was staying." He too acknowledged that his newfound companions, whom the Indians had intimidated in order to make them more cooperative, "were treated worse than slaves or men of any fate had ever been" (f31v). Regarding himself, Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) confessed that he had had to flee from the Indians who held him on three different occasions between the late summers of 1533 and 1534 because of the bad treatment he received from them.

There are further similarities between the substance of Cabeza de Vaca's and Oviedo's accounts of the men's arrival at the Avavares. Both authors describe how the Indians placed their hands on the men's bodies and also on their own (f41v; 603b). Both authors state that among the Avavares the Narváez survivors were better treated (f35v; 602b), yet they disagree as to the reason. Oviedo, utilizing the Joint Report, explained that it was because the Avavares had very little prior notice of them; he stated that the Avavares did not know that their neighbors had treated these strange men badly, and this ignorance worked to the men's advantage. Cabeza de Vaca (f35v) argued the opposite, that their good reception was due to the fame that had preceded them: "[l]ater the people offered us many prickly pears, because they already had news of us and about how we were curing and about the wonders that our Lord was working through us." Nevertheless, although both authors (f39v, f40v; 602b) explain how the men had had to work here, the greater detail Cabeza de Vaca (f39v, f40v) gives about how they had to dig up what they ate, carry water and woundingly heavy loads of wood, scrape hides, and make bows and arrows and nets as trade items belies their situation. With these remarks, Cabeza de Vaca (f35v) effectively undermines

his claims about their superior treatment by the Avavares and indirectly reveals—no doubt without intending to do so—that their reception by the people they met *after* leaving the Avavares was the more positive and the more significant. On this point, Oviedo's (603b–04a) account and Cabeza de Vaca's (f41v) explicit narration of the meeting with the group encountered after the Avavares fully agree.

Placing Oviedo's account and Cabeza de Vaca's *relación* side by side, we redraw the scenario of events. Oviedo's account progresses more logically and allows us to read through the lines of the *relación* as follows: (1) There was no curing done at Malhado, where the men clearly served as slaves. (2) When Cabeza de Vaca escaped from those Indians to the ones of Charruco, he became a merchant and gained more freedom. (3) Down the coast, the members of the Dorantes/Castillo party struggled against the Quevenes and Mariames, by whom they were enslaved. (4) When all four men went on to the Avavares, little advance notice preceded them and certainly none about any curing. (5) The Avavares, however, allowed the men more freedom and better treatment than they had received previously. (6) Only when they went on to the large settlement beyond the Avavares were they revered, and it was here where the first curing took place.

In sum, although Cabeza de Vaca's account of the curing was accurate, he shifted the process backward in time to begin it on Malhado in November 1528, rather than after the men left the Avavares in late summer 1535. Regarding the descriptions of the native physicians and the men's interactions with them, Cabeza de Vaca's eyewitness account is clearly the most important. Nevertheless, Oviedo's account, taken from the Joint Report, positions the events where they most likely occurred, thus neutralizing some of Cabeza de Vaca's more extravagant claims. Even though it was Oviedo who proclaimed these deeds "miracles" [miraglos, *sic*, milagros], he kept them in the place and sequence in which they had been recorded in the Joint Report.

In contrast, although Cabeza de Vaca's personal *relación* never exalted these deeds as overtly as Oviedo did, he stressed their occurrence a great deal more, extending them implausibly all the way back to the famous "Malhado." In light of the contradictory reports Cabeza de Vaca gave about the islanders' treatment of him, we recall that Oviedo had objected to Cabeza de Vaca's coining of the name of the island ("Ill Fate") when the account Cabeza de Vaca gave of the men's treatment there seemed to make the opposite claim. The men who landed at Malhado had indeed been more fortunate than their fellow expeditionaries who landed at points to the south of the island, as Oviedo insisted. Yet we must also conclude that in spite of the claims Cabeza de Vaca made about curing there, the name "Ill Fate" no doubt conformed to his negative assessment of the time he spent on the island in contrast to



the generous way that Indians farther south, away from the coastline, and those encountered on the journey across Mexico treated them.

The Mala Cosa episode was the narration of a confrontation between Christianity and superstitious or diabolical paganism that occurred only indirectly; the protagonists were the four Christians and Mala Cosa's victims (not Mala Cosa himself), since Mala Cosa had allegedly been in the area a decade and a half earlier. As a result, the tale stands as a bold emblem not of the four men's actual experience in coastal Texas but rather of the dramatic *dux populi* interpretation Cabeza de Vaca made about it. Within the larger narrative, the Mala Cosa episode serves to focus and define the providential character of the mission that Cabeza de Vaca implicitly assigned to himself and his companions as physicians and healers in the lands to the north of New Spain.



## CHAPTER 7

### Part 6: The Turn Inland to the Maize/Bison Fork: The Río Conchos/San Fernando (Tamaulipas) to La Junta de los Ríos (Texas-Chihuahua Border) (Midsummer to Early Autumn 1535) (f48r–f54v)

Part 6 of our commentary begins with the “elbow” of the journey when Cabeza de Vaca and his companions planned to continue southward to the Río Pánuco from their position in northern Tamaulipas but tentatively began to pursue a course that ultimately took them north and west, threading through the highlands of northern Mexico and crossing southwestern Texas, all the way to the confluence of the Rio Grande with the Río Conchos at Presidio, Texas, and Ojinaga, Chihuahua. This trek began when the four travelers refused to follow the advice of their hosts at the Río Conchos/Río San Fernando in Tamaulipas and headed upstream (though still in a southerly direction) while their Indian guides wanted to take them coastward and downstream (f48r).

This portion of the journey ends with the men’s arrival at the first permanent settlements they had encountered since leaving the Florida Peninsula and the need to make a clear choice as to whether to head northward toward the land of the bison or westward to the land of maize (f54r–v). We establish as significant this episode at La Junta de los Ríos, that is, at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Río Conchos of Chihuahua, which flows from southeastern Chihuahua northward to the Rio Grande, not only because of the decision the four men made there but also due to the affective power that Cabeza de Vaca attributes retrospectively to the occasion.

While this overland journey across northeastern Mexico and into southwestern Texas is scarce in geographical detail, it is rich in information about Cabeza de Vaca’s understanding of the crucial decisions made during this segment of the journey that took them from Tamaulipas to the first permanent settlement of agriculturalists they had seen in seven years. Cabeza de Vaca’s commentary reveals what he considered to be the critical and decisive moments of this portion of the journey. The most significant of these are the discovery of a copper bell and cotton mantles at the settlement southwest of the Sierra de la Gloria in Coahuila (f49v), because

of its promise of settled and prosperous peoples to be found somewhere to the north, and the climactic arrival at La Junta de los Ríos when the men came upon the first permanent houses with their foodstuffs of squash and beans and, most importantly, evidence of the people's familiarity with maize (f52v).

Cabeza de Vaca's narrative transforms the men's pursuit of survival into the search for the South Sea. Upon recalling how they made the decision at La Junta de los Ríos to pursue the maize road and before they set out on the thirty-five-day journey that would take them to permanent settlements where maize was actually cultivated, he proclaimed, "[W]e always held it for certain that going the route of the setting sun we would find what we desired. And thus we followed our course and traversed the entire land until coming out at the South Sea" (f54r-v). This summary statement, made at the end of this segment of the journey, is preceded by two other references, one of which is merely allusive, the other a direct statement regarding their destination.

The first reference occurs at the point in the narration of the two-day stay at the settlement encountered after crossing the Sierra de la Gloria in the Monclova area of Coahuila, when the men contemplated the copper bell Dorantes had received; Cabeza de Vaca recalls how they understood that the northern settlements identified by the natives as the origin of the artifact were related to the South Sea (f49v). His first explicit mention of their desire to head west (toward the South Sea) is found later, after their second crossing of the Rio Grande, when he says that they told the "piñon nuts people" in southwestern Texas that they wanted to go to where the sun set (f51r). (We identify these people as "those of the piñon nuts" because of a reference Oviedo [607a] made to them; they are not to be confused, however, with the first people the men encountered who had piñon nuts and lived in Coahuila along the "beautiful river," the Río Nadadores or one of its tributaries [f49r].) By the third reference to the South Sea, at La Junta de los Ríos (f54r-v), the four Narváez survivors' course had long since been set.

It is impossible to locate, in either Cabeza de Vaca's or Oviedo's account, the moments of clear determination for the men's decision to follow a course ever more north- and westward because the narratives contain no reference to a single, clear-cut decision made at the time. Despite the fact that both narrators create the general impression that there had been such a definitive moment, Cabeza de Vaca's (f51r) first express statement of this new goal appears at a point in his narration corresponding to the men's location in southwestern Texas, that is, when they would have been hundreds of miles to the northwest of the area in northeastern Mexico where

they necessarily would have taken their turn inland. Thus Cabeza de Vaca naturalizes the choice of itinerary as though it had been planned all along: the only way to go was west, and the only way to arrive at the west was by going north.

Probably two to three months elapsed in this segment of the journey; the single reference to season concerns the time of the bison hunts. When the party headed northwest through southwestern Texas, two women were sent ahead to look for new settlements and sources of food; they returned saying that people settled to the north had all gone to the bison hunt, “since it was that season” (f52v). Oviedo (609a) reveals that this was done in summer, which confirms the time of year it would have had to have been, given their subsequent arrival at the Río Yaqui around Christmastime. However, even this calculation could only have been made retrospectively by counting backward from the time of their first encounter with Europeans at the end of their overland journey.

Thus time blurs in the narration of this trek from Tamaulipas to La Junta de los Ríos, and calculations as to temporal divisions and duration, such as those of Baskett (333–39) and later Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 227–30) do not find a sufficient basis of evidence in the original texts to be persuasive. Stationary periods explicitly mentioned in this segment of the journey are the two or three days the men spent at the settlement reached after crossing the Sierra de la Gloria in Coahuila after Cabeza de Vaca removed an arrow point from a man’s chest (f49v), the more than two weeks (f52r; 607b) they spent somewhere in southwestern Texas with the “piñon nuts people,” who did not want to take them northward but finally did so after being struck by an epidemic illness, and the two days the four men spent with the “people of the cows” at La Junta de los Ríos while trying to determine whether to take the general route west or north (f54r).

Cabeza de Vaca’s (f49v–f50r) statement that he and the other three men passed through so many peoples and languages that it was impossible to recall them is borne out with respect to the ethnographic description of customs in this section. Only the two groups just mentioned are the subject of such information: the mourning customs (f52r; 607b) of the “piñon nuts people” who carried the band through southwestern Texas north-northwestward to La Junta de los Ríos, and the manner of cooking without pottery of the “people of the cows” to whom they arrived at La Junta (f54r; 608b–09a). The only other significant information of this type that Cabeza de Vaca gives is the manner in which host groups submitted to the sacking visited upon them by the groups leading the four men forward, which we discuss below.

## 1. THE APPEARANCE OF MOUNTAINS IN TAMAULIPAS (MIDSUMMER 1535)

Both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo are clear about the fact that at the settlement of the blind people (in northern Tamaulipas) the Narváez survivors began to see mountains. Cabeza de Vaca (f47r) remarks, presumably at the village of the blind people: “[h]ere we began to see mountains, and it seemed that they came in a chain from toward the North Sea” [(a)quí empezamos a ver sierras y paresçía que venían seguidas de hazia el Mar del Norte]. At the same location in his narration, that is, at the mention of the settlement of blind people, Oviedo (605a) puts the reference to mountains somewhat differently. He states that “the mountains were near there, and there seemed to be a chain of them that crossed the land straight to the north” [(c)erca de allí estaban las sierras, é se paresçía una cordillera dellas que atravessaba la tierra derechamente al Norte]. He also states that five leagues farther on, the men came to a river that was at the foot of the point where the sierra began.

Oviedo’s description of the range as being “near there” and heading straight northward suggests that the men were close to its base. Cabeza de Vaca’s (f47r, f47v) observations regarding the men’s belief that these mountains were fifteen leagues from the sea and that their course was “through the plain near the mountains, which we believed were not far from the coast,” reveal that they were sufficiently inland so as not to know at first hand the mountains’ distance from the shore. Before taking up the mountains’ identification as well as that of the river and the location of the four men along it, we turn to the issue of their initial sighting of mountains at this point in the narration.

The significance of this sighting of mountains as reported by Cabeza de Vaca (f47r) and Oviedo (605a) was no doubt the prospect that they were making visible progress toward Pánuco. In the years immediately prior to the departure of the Narváez expedition, coastal explorations noted the presence of mountains in the area from the Río de las Palmas south to the Río Pánuco. This knowledge is registered on the 1527 map of the world commissioned by the emperor Charles V and presumably prepared by Hernando Colón (USLC, Kohl Collection no. 38; see chap. 1, sec. 9.D, fig. 3).

Designed to take into account all geographical information available to the Spanish crown at the time, the map included a detailed description of features of the rim of the Gulf of Mexico. The expeditions of Camargo and Garay (1518–23) had provided information about the northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico so that by the end of 1523 the geography of the gulf as far north as Pánuco and the Río de las Palmas had been well established (see chap. 15, sec. 9.D). Accordingly, the area of the 1527 Colón map from the

Río de las Palmas (today's Soto la Marina) southward to the Río Pánuco bears notations of "mountains," "mountainous forests," and "river of high mountains" (*montañas*, *arboledas montañosas*, and *río de montañas altas*).

Although the 1527 map identifies the ranges to the south of the Río de las Palmas (an area that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions did not reach), it does not register the highland area found to the north of that river; this low range—now sighted by the Narváez survivors and considered by them to be approximately forty-five miles inland—was not likely to be visible from the coastal waters. The Narváez men must have understood that the mountains they saw were not the ones they had hoped for. Nevertheless, their prompt decision to head toward the mountains (f47r) but to avoid traveling in them (f47v), believing that these mountains lay "not far from the coast" (f47v), suggests that they hoped they would eventually come to the mountainous areas between the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco that the explorations of Camargo and Garay had revealed and that appear on the 1527 Colón map. Cabeza de Vaca's (f47r) supposition that the mountains seemed to come from the direction of the North Sea reflects that hope. His (f35r) previous remark about the absence of mountains in the coastal areas of Texas gains additional weight insofar as it suggests that coastally oriented mountains were what the Narváez men had always hoped to find in order to confirm that they were located in an area that could put them in reach of Pánuco.

Cabeza de Vaca (f47v) said the natives wanted to take them to people at the near end of the mountain range, which he described as being "off our route" [*fuera de nuestro camino*]. The four men preferred instead to head south by staying on the plain near the mountains. Cabeza de Vaca (f47v) speaks of their refusal to go where the Indians wanted them to go in favor of "the road we wanted to pursue," which still meant a southward course to Pánuco, although readers persistently misinterpret it to be a westbound reference in spite of the fact that Cabeza de Vaca does not suggest any new directional orientation (see chap. 6, sec. 2.B).

The remark that has misled readers, "teníamos por mejor de atravesar la tierra," must be read in its immediate context of the men's decision to take what Cabeza de Vaca described as "the course through the plain near the mountains." The verb *atravesar*, meaning to put something through the middle of something and/or pass from one place to the next (Covarrubias 165b), is used here to indicate that the men would go through the land instead of along the shore; "atravesar la tierra" was the alternative to traveling along the coast, and it meant going parallel to it through the coastal interior. When Cabeza de Vaca (f47v) declares, "[W]e considered it preferable to go through the land" and "because, by crossing through the land, we would see many of its particularities," his implicit point is that by taking an inland rather than

a coastal route southward, the men would not duplicate the information already available from Spanish maritime coastal exploration but instead provide new data, specifically about the unknown lands that lay inland from the coast north of Pánuco.

Oviedo's (605b) "arriba la tierra adentro" has also contributed to the erroneous assessment that a new directional orientation is indicated at this point in the narration because *arriba* has been interpreted to refer to land elevation when in fact his references *arriba* and *abaxo* pertain to movement up- or downstream along a river. His reference in this episode ("por aquel río arriba") (605b) makes his meaning clear. Oviedo (605a) says that once the mountains were sighted, the Indians took the four men to other people who happened to be alongside a river that was at the base of the mountainous area. Oviedo's (605ab) account of the men's journey from the point at which they saw the mountains emphasizes that the Narváez men wanted to travel upstream and inland along this river ("arriba la tierra adentro") as opposed to going downstream and toward the coast.

During the evening of the riverside encounter, the Indians sent messengers downstream toward the sea ("abaxo hácia la mar") in order to call their relatives, who came the next day to see the four strange men (Oviedo 605a). These Indians tried to convince the Narváez survivors to go to the sea with them, but the men refused because they had been ill treated by people of the coast and had always been told to stay away from there, especially at night when they could not see; they wished instead to go upstream on the river ("subir más arriba") and thus remain inland (Oviedo 605b). Although the Indians tried to convince them not to do so by saying that there were neither people nor means of sustenance except for very far from there, they nevertheless agreed to send scouts into the inland area. The day after the scouts left, the men headed upstream with their Indian guides, the women carrying water and provisions, until the group encountered the scouts, who said they had not found any people. The Indian escorts then abandoned their provisions and returned downstream to their homes, and the four men picked up the supplies and continued upstream ("por aquel río arriba") (Oviedo 605b).

Oviedo's account makes apparent the significance of this river as the course of the men's current itinerary. This is not the case with Cabeza de Vaca, who does not mention it until the point, just cited in Oviedo (605b), when they decided to travel upstream along it (f48r). However, prior to this moment in the narration, Cabeza de Vaca (f47v) like Oviedo gives what was probably the men's most compelling reason for taking the upstream course: "[a]ll the people of the coast are very bad, and we considered it preferable to go through the land because the people farther inland are



of a better disposition and they treated us better.” We can identify as the former the Mariames and the Quevenes of the shoreline and as the latter the Avavares, who lived a few leagues inland. Cabeza de Vaca uses the phrase “bien dispuesto,” meaning in this instance “of good inclinations or intentions” rather than “of strong build,” because he is describing the attitude expressed toward them by the more inland oriented peoples like the Avavares in contrast to that of the coastal dwellers. Oviedo’s (605b) blunt statement, “estaban escarmentados de la gente de la costa,” makes clear that the men had taken fair warning from the experience they already had had with such peoples and were now determined to avoid future dangers.

## 2. UPSTREAM ON THE RÍO CONCHOS SYSTEM AND THE TURN INLAND

What river was this, and how could pursuing its upstream course still continue to lead the men in the direction of Pánuco? Given the interior coastal rather than overland-oriented route the travelers followed to this point, we identify the relevant river system as the Río San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando. This river system originates with the headwaters of the Río Conchos in the foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental in Nuevo León. Flowing northeastward toward the gulf, the Conchos meets the Río San Lorenzo, which originates in Nuevo León, west of the Sierra de Pamoranes. The merged river flows southeastward to a point where it meets the San Fernando flowing northeast from its headwaters southeast of the Sierra San Carlos in Tamaulipas (Raisz; *Nuevo atlas* 85). Oviedo’s precise description of the mountains in relation to the river suggests that these low ranges running parallel to the coast in northern Tamaulipas were the Sierra de Pamoranes and beyond it, six or seven leagues to the south and traversed from east to west by the “río de Conchas” (Prieto 230), the Sierra San Carlos, which is approximately 1,800 meters high. From the Sierra San Carlos extends the Mesa de Solís and beyond it the mountainous area between the Río de las Palmas and the Río Pánuco sighted from the sea in the years prior to the Narváez expedition (today’s Sierra de Tamaulipas and east of it, the coastal Sierra de San José de las Rucias) (Raisz; *Nuevo atlas* 85).

Oviedo (605a) indicated that the river was located at the foot of the point where the sierra began (these being the mountains of the cordillera that cut through the land straight northward). Under these circumstances, the sighting of mountains and the arrival at a river reached five leagues farther ahead and located at their foot might correspond to two potential locations, either on the plain to the west of the Sierra de Pamoranes or on the flat land along its eastern flank. Traveling alongside the low Pamoranes range, five leagues farther ahead, where it began, the men came upon a river, the Río

San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando system, which is the northernmost major waterway in Tamaulipas. Because of the distance Cabeza de Vaca (f47r, f48r) estimated as separating the mountains from the coast, the men's inclination to head toward but not through the mountains, and both accounts' implication that going downstream on the river would lead through the mountains and to the coastal homes of the Indians, we are inclined to locate the men at this point in the narration on the western (rather than the eastern) side of the Sierra de Pamoranes, between it and the foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental. Although their location relative to the Pamoranes cannot be ascertained, an issue more significant than determining which side of the mountains they were on is to contemplate how they could have made the turn northward and inland when their clear goal was Pánuco to the south. For this purpose, either location vis-à-vis the Sierra de Pamoranes suggests a reasonable scenario and the relevant principle, that is, that following the course of a river determined their northwestbound itinerary.

If the four men were on the eastern side of the Sierra de Pamoranes, they would reach the Río San Fernando; traveling along it upstream, the four men would head south/southwest (toward Pánuco) as the river flowed north/northeast from its headwaters east of the Sierra San Carlos. They would be on the lower San Fernando, downstream from its confluence with the Río Conchos; arriving at the point where the rivers meet, they would opt for the northwest-tending branch (the Río Conchos) as looking more promising than the southwest-tending one (the continuation of the Río San Fernando). Pursuing the Río Conchos upstream, they would turn northwest and then eventually abandon it to head northward as it continued west. If they were, as we deduce, on the western side of the Pamoranes, they would be already on the Río Conchos, downstream from its confluence with the Río San Lorenzo; following it upstream to that juncture, they would opt for the northwest-tending branch (the Río San Lorenzo) rather than continuing west-southwest on the Río Conchos. Following the Río San Lorenzo upstream, they would be undeniably on a north-northwestward course.

Although it is impossible to determine the exact geographical location of this reorientation northwestward or the point of its specific occurrence in either narrative, we can plausibly suggest that this directional shift occurred as the men followed upstream along the course of the river. We cannot ascertain whether they came upon the fork in the river in the few hours that they were traveling unaccompanied, deciding to take the northward branch of the river with hopes of finding better foodstuffs (like the squashes they had seen floating downstream on the Río Grande [f46r]), or whether the

new orientation occurred subsequently as they were led from one group to another in the episodes of ritual marauding. Yet it is clear from Oviedo's (606a) account that riverside travel constituted their course after sighting the mountains and that as these ritual exchanges occurred the men were heading along the foothills of the sierras, going some eighty leagues and traveling "inland, straight to the north" [entrándose la tierra adentro derecho al Norte]. At some indeterminate previous moment, the northwest-tending Río San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando has become their itinerary and defined their new direction.

The men's southernmost location on the Gulf of Mexico side of the continent was thus either the Río Conchos or the San Fernando in Tamaulipas. Their coastal orientation has been ignored by students of the route who have identified their southernmost point as being more northerly and farther inland. Placing the point in their journey when the four men turn inland farther to the west, at the Sierra Cerralvo and the Río Pesquerías y Río San Juan of Nuevo León, as Davenport and Wells (238) and Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 113–14, 117) have done, ignores key evidence given in the original accounts (see chap. 6, sec. 2.B). Coopwood (138–39) alone among previous route scholars identified the river that led them northward as the San Lorenzo.

### 3. A FICTITIOUS EPISODE

From the settlement of the blind people (which we identify as the fourth village the men came upon after crossing the Río Grande) where they sighted the mountains, the party was led, according to Oviedo (605a), five leagues ahead to the aforementioned river, where they came upon a settlement of some forty or fifty dwellings. Although Cabeza de Vaca (f47r) does not indicate the distance, he states that the Indians led them toward the sierras (that evidently lay between their current position and the coast) to some kinsmen of theirs where the usual sack occurred. The hosts had hidden certain goods in anticipation of the pillage and afterward offered them to the Narváez men; these precious goods were beads, red ocher, and "some little bags of silver" (marcasite). These people then had their customary fiesta, and the next day others arrived, bringing to the four men gifts that they redistributed to the people (f47v). Oviedo's (605a) account adds that the party here performed cures and that the other people who came to them the following day arrived "to see these Christians and their miracles."

The Indians continued to importune the four men to accompany them to their homes, but they refused and succeeded in sending out two scouts and getting Indians to accompany them. When the scouts said they had not

found any people and the Indians again beseeched the men to go toward the (coastal) mountains, they again declined (f48r). When the men ignored the guides' warning that they would find neither settlements nor sources of food if they continued traveling inland instead of along the coastal range, the party went on alone upstream on this river of northern Tamaulipas. Although the Indians south of the Rio Grande wanted the four strange men to follow them to the coastal areas inhabited by their friends and kinsmen (f47r-v) and insisted that there was no sustenance inland, the account later reveals that they had sought merely to keep the men among their own friends and away from their enemies.

The party traveled upstream on the Río San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando unaccompanied for several hours. Both accounts suggest that this was virtually the last time they did so in the entire course of their journey. Cabeza de Vaca says they traveled alone for the whole day (f48r); Oviedo (605b) says some Indians guided them the final part of the way. However, during that day's travel, Cabeza de Vaca introduced an episode rendered dubious not only by Oviedo's omission of it but because of the unlikely information it contains. In our view, this encounter is fictitious, invented by Cabeza de Vaca to confirm the wisdom of their unacknowledged decision to forsake their objective of reaching Pánuco. Given Cabeza de Vaca's desire (after the fact) to justify a detour in the course toward Pánuco, the appearance of women carrying maize flour (f48r) makes the decision to move farther inland plausible to the reader because it potentially provides the incontestable logic of the search for food and the quest for survival. What makes this episode implausible is that maize had not been encountered since the Narváez expeditionaries left the Bay of Horses (f16r) on the Florida Panhandle, and they would find no further evidence of it until they reached La Junta de los Ríos at the Texas/Chihuahua border (f52v), far to the northwest of their current location in northern Tamaulipas. Furthermore, they would not find maize harvested and stored until they arrived in the agricultural region of northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora (f54v). Although Oviedo (605b) also said that they met Indians on that day of unaccompanied travel, he identified them as two guides the men had sent forth to find people, not as two women carrying maize flour. The fictitious women of Cabeza de Vaca's account assured the men that they would find not only more maize flour but also prickly pears upstream along the river; the prickly pears would materialize shortly (f48r), but maize was only to be found hundreds of miles to the northwest.

In the present area of Tamaulipas, Oviedo (604b) mentions as a foodstuff only mesquite (see chap. 6, sec. 22), which the Indians of the village of the blind people had ground into flour, made into bread, and given to the

four men. Similar practices are recorded for a broad area south of the Rio Grande by the Franciscan missionary Isidro Félix de Espinosa (1679–1755), who commented on the large concentrations of mesquite growing in the region two centuries later (Weddle 206–07). Espinosa (763 [bk. 5, chap. 22]) described the virtues of mesquite as he found it consumed by the natives of Nuevo León and Coahuila. The Indians dried it in the sun, ground it up, and made it into a paste that could be conserved for the year. When it was green and fresh, although already mature, they mixed the ground beans with water to make a “delicious drink” [gustosa bebida]. Although Cabeza de Vaca does not mention mesquite here, Oviedo’s reference to it reminds us of its importance to the men as they passed through northeastern Mexico, where, as Weddle (207) indicated, the mesquite bean was an important food staple.

#### 4. “CHILDREN OF THE SUN”

After the men’s supposed encounter with the women carrying maize flour and at the end of the day’s travel, the Narváez survivors arrived at a settlement of twenty houses (f48r) or “eight to ten camps” (*ranchos*) located in a wooded area (605b). These new hosts’ fearful reactions generate different interpretations by Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo. According to Cabeza de Vaca (f48r), the men arrived at this encampment unaccompanied, and the natives received them fearfully and with weeping because they expected to be sacked; because the four men arrived alone, however, the Indians gave them prickly pears “and not another single thing.” Despite Cabeza de Vaca’s apparent disappointment at this offering, the importance and variety of prickly pears found in these areas south of the Rio Grande should not be underestimated (see chap. 6, sec. 12). (In this general area two centuries later, the Franciscan friar Espinosa [763 (bk. 5, chap. 22)] was greatly impressed not only by the many varieties of prickly pears available but also by the Indians’ diverse modes of preparation for their consumption.)

In Oviedo’s account, the four men went the last part of the way to this settlement in a wooded area guided by some Indians they had met. In his valedictory interpretation (605b), the new hosts’ fear is interpreted as “weeping with devotion.” Both authors tell how the following morning these people were sacked in a surprise attack by the group to whom the four men had bade farewell the previous day. Obviously the attackers were well aware of these people’s existence despite their earlier protestations about knowing of no human habitation in the area. In Cabeza de Vaca’s (f48r) account, the weeping commenced again, and it was due to the sorrow of material loss, not (as in Oviedo) the joy of spiritual devotion.

To offer the weeping victims consolation, their robbers told them that the four men were “children of the sun” [hijos del sol] and that they “had the power to cure the sick and to kill them and other lies even greater than these, since they know how best to do it when they feel that it suits them” (f48r–v). At that point, Cabeza de Vaca declares, the victims began to fear and venerate the four strangers as their previous hosts had done. These new hosts took the men on a three-day journey (f48v) and, in advance of their arrival at the settlement that was their destination, became instructors themselves, informing the unsuspecting group of new victims how they could exploit the strangers’ presence among them (f48v).

Cabeza de Vaca’s (f38v) prior reference to their being taken as “children of the sun” had occurred during the eight months they had spent among the Avavares in southeastern Texas, after Cabeza de Vaca had seemingly resuscitated a man nearly dead and “people came from many areas” to see the four strange men. At a later point in the narrative (f51r; V:f41r) he would cite a similar belief that he added to the 1555 Valladolid edition, claiming that the people of the area (of northern Coahuila) felt threatened by the four men because they understood that the sun had commanded them to cause the Indians to die if they hid anything from them (f51r; V:f41r). Members of the Narváez expedition would have been familiar with popular accounts—including those told by the now-deceased Pánfilo de Narváez—of the recent conquest of Mexico, and they probably expected the Indians to take the foreign invaders to be divine. Thus the interpretations Cabeza de Vaca gives of fearful native reactions was to some extent anticipated by the lore about the native peoples of the Indies developed since the early days of the Spanish presence in the Antilles (see chap. 8, sec. 12.A).

Along with Columbus’s “Letter of Discovery” (Morison, *Christopher Columbus* 208) and Hernán Cortés’s (*Cartas de relación* 59, 69; Pagden 86, 98) second letter of relation in which Moctezuma was said to have identified the Spaniards as descendants of the lord “who came from where the sun rose,” Cabeza de Vaca’s twice-published account was one of the earliest works in print to disseminate the notion that in these first encounters native Americans took the Europeans to be gods. Later in Sinaloa (f60r; see chap. 9, secs. 2–3), when Alcaraz and his slave hunters tried to persuade the Indians to obey them instead of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, the Indians would defend the latter, saying that they had come “from where the sun rose, and they [Alcaraz and his men] from where it set.” Although the observation is credible in a literal sense, its connotation is more spiritual than geographic because of its resonance of native Amerindian themes familiar to Europeans since the publication of the letters of Columbus and Cortés.

The question of where, when, and for what duration indigenous American groups customarily considered European invaders to be gods has a long history for which the complex case of the conquest of Mexico and the myth of the return of Quetzalcoatl are paradigmatic. Although recent studies such as those of Clendinnen (68–70) and Gillespie (172–230) have tended to argue for a postconquest fabrication of such indigenous beliefs, scholars such as Carrasco and Thomas have seen a blending of pre-Columbian tradition and postconquest conviction. See Thomas (*Conquest* 180–87, 683–84) for an overview of the debate and Carrasco (x), who concluded that while Cortés’s narrative and political strategies would have influenced Indian and Spanish accounts, “[i]t also seems likely that the tincturing went both ways and that Cortés and others were influenced by and drew upon indigenous agendas of interpretation.” As we likewise have argued (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 167–83), the mutual cross-fertilization of gesture and comportment characterizes Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions’ interactions with the beliefs and practices of the natives they encountered.

Although readers from Oviedo’s time to our own have regularly accepted the popular notion that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were considered to be divine by most of the Indian groups they encountered, particularly from Tamaulipas onward, Cabeza de Vaca (f48r–v) here explicitly discredits the belief by claiming that such ideas were invented by one native group in order to deceive another. Nevertheless, Cabeza de Vaca’s caveat may be more oriented toward disclaiming any tendency to exploit such erroneous beliefs than to dismiss altogether what they convey about the men’s treatment. His ambivalence on the subject is suggested by the number of occasions on which he acknowledged such native beliefs or responses in his original, 1542 account (f38v, f46r, f48r–v, f55v, f60r), as well as the 1555 suppression of a phrase (f55v, note c) that offered the Indians’ mundane explanation of the locution “come from the sky,” while at the same time adding another (“because the sun so commanded us”) (f51r, note a) that enhanced the men’s aura of supernatural power as perceived by the natives (see chap. 8, sec. 12).

While claiming to scoff at such native interpretations for their superstitious pagan content or manipulative cynicism, Cabeza de Vaca nevertheless conveyed that he and his companions were associated by the natives with extraordinary and supernatural powers and that the four men skillfully managed this broad range of native reactions all along the course of their nearly coast-to-coast overland journey. In actuality, Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were undoubtedly not the masters of these repeated rites of exchange but rather their willing collaborators, maintaining a delicate balance between leading and being led, being dependent upon and contributing to

the very beliefs or ruses he here discredits before his reader (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 178–83; see Molloy 431–40).

##### 5. NEW ZONES OF CIRCULATION AND EXCHANGE

Cabeza de Vaca’s emphasis on the coaching given to the new victims by their sackers reveals that the party was entering a new zone of exchange and circulation. On the subject of instructing the victims, Oviedo (606a), at secondhand and inclining toward a religious interpretation of the natives’ actions, gives only the briefest mention of these instructions: “they told the others how they were to treat the Christians.” To set in relief the new situation, it is useful to review pertinent episodes that precede this segment of the narration, in which all native groups up to but not including the Avavares were oriented toward the coast for their sustenance and survival. Cabeza de Vaca had devoted a long section of his account to the customs and diversity of peoples and languages that prevailed from the island of Malhado to the river as wide as that of Seville (the Rio Grande). The 1555 edition’s division of this material into three separate chapters (numbered 24 through 26) obscures the integral relationship of this descriptive account to the previous narration of events because it sets this ethnographic material apart from it. This long excursus (f41v–f45r) on Indian customs was clearly Cabeza de Vaca’s attempt to summarize information that characterized the native groups they had encountered and known over the previous seven years (1528–35). His presentation of the digression at this point in the narration divides his entire account, with respect to native peoples, into two parts. Considering the groups located on the coastal islands along the Gulf Coast itself as related in custom, character, and other traits, he sets off this discussion of the coastally oriented peoples they knew well from the countless inland-oriented peoples they encountered from the time they joined the Avavares. As the men traveled through the coastal interior across the Rio Grande and subsequently into the interior of the continent they had a far more superficial acquaintance with these peoples and new and different types of interaction with them.

We assess this cultural transition, comprehending folios 46r–48v, as consisting of two stages. The first includes the four encounters that occurred starting with the men’s first reception to the south of the Rio Grande (f46r–f47r) and ending with their stay at the village of the blind people where they began to see mountains, followed by their guided movement toward the mountains to another settlement where they were received that day by its habitants and visited on the following one by members of another settlement (f47v), their subsequent movement ahead guided by Indians



who would have preferred to take them to the coast (f47v), and their final separation from these coastally oriented peoples, who continued to insist that the men go toward the coastal mountains (f48r). The coastally oriented Indians went downstream, and the men continued alone upstream along the river (f48r).

The second phase of this cultural transition consists of the arrival that night of the unaccompanied four men at a village that was sacked the following morning in a surprise attack by the Indians the men had left the previous day (f48r), the coaching of the victims by their attackers (f48v), and a three-day journey that the four men took with these new apprentices in pillage to “where there were many people” (f48v). Whereas Oviedo (606a) makes short work of this tutelage (“they told the others how they were to treat the Christians”), Cabeza de Vaca (f48v) elaborates the following explanation. These coastal Indians told their inland victims that the four strangers were “children of the sun” whom they should now lead “onward with great respect,” that they should not anger them but give them everything they had, that they should try to take the men to places where there were many people, and that they should endeavor “to steal and loot what the others had, because such was the custom” (f48v).

On close scrutiny, Cabeza de Vaca’s insistence on this carefully articulated strategy of manipulation serves not simply to explain the course of action that followed but rather to place its moral burden squarely on the shoulders of the Indians, whom he characterized as being “very fond of tales and very deceitful, particularly when they are pursuing some gain” (f48v). With great narrative economy in this brief passage, Cabeza de Vaca (f48v) then goes on to tell how this pagan self-interest served the purposes of Christian charity. The Narváez survivors were received with “great pleasure and festivity” at the first subsequent destination to which they were guided, and two ritual gourds were pressed upon them by two of this village’s physicians. The promise of the benefit to the natives yet to be encountered is foreshadowed in Cabeza de Vaca’s (f48v) remark: “[a]nd from this point forward we began to carry gourds with us, and we added to our authority this ceremony, which to them is very great.”

This critical series of movements from one cultural setting to another is specifically set forth in the following manner.

At the first settlement encountered south of the Rio Grande, the people rushed out to greet the four men as they approached; these new hosts slapped their thighs and raised such a din that it caused a great fright, and they pressed the strangers so closely that they nearly crushed them. The people carried them to their houses without letting their feet touch the ground, which is commonly interpreted as a sign of veneration. They had perforated

gourds that were the “item of highest celebration” used only by their elite for dancing or curing (f46r; see also f48v).

As the Cabeza de Vaca party reached the next group in northern Tamaulipas, they were offered gifts, including the deer that had been killed that day. Here appeared what Cabeza de Vaca explicitly described as a “new custom”: the guiding group took the “bows and arrows and shoes and beads if they brought them” from the people who came to be cured and laid them at the four men’s feet in order to solicit their curing rituals (f46v). Subsequently, two stops later, the newest guides—the recently robbed former hosts—revealed yet “another new custom.” They entered and sacked the new hosts’ houses (f46v): “those who came with us began to treat the others very badly, taking their possessions and sacking their houses without leaving them any single thing.” Although it is impossible to establish the precise number of encampments they came upon while heading southward, the last one (to which we referred as the fourth in sequence) was the village with many blind people, mentioned above (see chap. 6, sec. 24); this was the point at which the four men began to see the high elevations of Tamaulipas and their guides wished to take them into those mountains and toward the sea.

These groups encountered south of the Rio Grande, who used gourds for curing and were not content with the voluntary offerings made to the Narváez survivors by other Indians but rather engaged in increasingly vigorous forms of sacking, revealed new cultural protocols from the ones with which the men were familiar. The Cabeza de Vaca party’s movement brought them into a new network of migratory activity (f48v), and the gourds used ceremonially played a crucial role in this cultural transition. Those used by the first group encountered south of the Rio Grande had been obtained from the river itself (f46r), which was also probably the source of the gourds used as vessels north of the Rio Grande (f44r). As the party of Narváez survivors took over their use on their increasingly inland-oriented course, they did so among those for whom the gourds would be indigenous to the areas they inhabited (f48v).

The gourds served the men as a recognizable lingua franca between the coastal peoples for whom the item used ceremonially was foreign or exotic and the inland groups for whom it was an indigenous product. Ahern (“The Cross” 220–21, 224) offers an insightful semiotic study of Cabeza de Vaca’s first contact and subsequent ritual use of the gourds, although she places the first instance too far to the west, at La Junta de los Ríos in western Texas near Presidio, the area that Cabeza de Vaca’s (f48v, f49r, f50v, f51r, f52v) collected references would indicate was approximately 150 leagues to the northwest of their location in Tamaulipas where they received them. Much later, when he and his companions attempted to resettle the natives of Sinaloa (see chap. 9,

sec. 10), Cabeza de Vaca (f61v) would recall that he and his companions gave their native messengers “a very large gourd of those that we carried in our hands, which was our principal insignia and emblem of our great estate.” From Tamaulipas onward, the gourds seem to have become a staple of their interactions with native groups.

Nowhere along their entire course was any transition between cultural areas as clearly defined in Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative as along this “elbow” of the journey when they crossed the Rio Grande, heading south into Tamaulipas, and then turned gradually northwestward into Nuevo León and on to Coahuila. Although we here set forth a general distinction between the shore-dwelling peoples of the Texas coast and the inland peoples of southernmost Texas, Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila encountered by Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, we must also keep in mind their basic similarities. All these coastal or inland groups to the east of the continental divide were nonsedentary, but they cannot properly be called nomadic. Even though they may have had only seasonal camps or shelters, such nonsedentary communities commonly organized their lives along annual migration routes (Lockhart and Schwartz 287–88). Cabeza de Vaca’s account reveals that he understood that all the groups encountered prior to those in Chihuahua and Sonora who had permanent settlements considered certain territories as their own and defined others as those of their friends or enemies.

If the first phase of this transition consisting of the four villages encountered in succession after crossing the Rio Grande was characterized by the great numbers of people who accompanied them despite their efforts to flee them (“[a]long this entire road we had very great difficulty because of the many people who followed us”) (f47r), the second phase was fully inaugurated after the three-day journey on which the newly schooled pillagers took the men to a village where they were given two gourds. It was marked by the men’s being led by small groups through areas so well populated in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León (“the houses were many and they were few”) (f48v) that half the loot was abandoned on the road. Cabeza de Vaca (f48v) here makes a rapid transition from this (unspecified) location to passage “through the foothills of the sierra,” traveling “inland more than fifty leagues.”

#### 6. HEADING NORTHWEST THROUGH NUEVO LEÓN INTO COAHUILA

As noted above (sec. 2), the men’s decision to change course and abandon their southbound search for Pánuco in order to head westward to the South Sea is never explicitly set forth in the place in Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative that

corresponds to the place along their course where it would have occurred. This decision, silently made in the narration, necessarily occurred at a point following Cabeza de Vaca's retrospective mention of the men's determination to continue southward toward Pánuco by traveling somewhat inland parallel to the coast rather than along the shoreline (f47v) and prior to his mention of the journey that carried them forward for three days and was completed by an additional fifty-league trek that took them "through the foothills of the sierra" (f48v). In this narrative interval the implicit reference to Pánuco as the goal of the men's journey disappears. No explanation is given for this change in orientation that set the four men on a far lengthier and therefore potentially far more risky course, and Pánuco is not mentioned again.

If a justification were needed for taking the course that amounted to an eighty-league journey north-northwestward, it was provided by the men's passage through the highly populated area of Tamaulipas or Nuevo León that yielded so many foodstuffs that the robber-guides had to leave more than half of it behind (f48v; 606a). From this evidence, the reader deduces that going farther in the direction they were heading (north-northwest) would have been their only plausible option, given the seasonal harvest found here in contrast to the seasonal deprivation they had known with the Gulf of Mexico coastal peoples over the previous seven years. Cabeza de Vaca describes this trek as the three-day journey plus a distance of fifty leagues "through the foothills of the sierra" as though their course had been a preordained one (f48v), and Oviedo (606a) remarks that "in this manner" the little party went "by the skirt of the mountain eighty leagues, a little more or less, entering through the land inland, straight to the north" [tierra adentro derecho al Norte] (Davenport 27:297). As Baskett (273–74) and Davenport and Wells (242) previously noted, there is no discrepancy between Cabeza de Vaca's and Oviedo's estimates of the distance. Oviedo's "in this manner" includes the course already begun in the first three days, and Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) on occasion used ten leagues as the measure of a day's foot travel.

At the end of these eighty leagues traveled on the eastern side of the Sierra Madre Oriental, the party had passed from present-day Nuevo León into Coahuila and subsequently came upon a settlement of forty houses. From Oviedo (606a) we learn that the settlement was at the foot of a mountain, and from Cabeza de Vaca (f49r) that its stones contained iron scoria and that it was seven leagues wide. The precision of the two descriptions has made possible Krieger's ("Nuevo estudio" 122, "The Travels" 468) identification of this mountain as the Sierra de la Gloria southeast of Monclova in Coahuila.

On the eastern or southeastern side of the Sierra de la Gloria, Dorantes was given a copper bell, which the men learned came from the north. Both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo hinted at the significance of the presumed northern deposits by suggesting that the area possessed not only metals but also the art of metallurgy. Cabeza de Vaca (f49r) says they learned that the northern people had hammered copper into sheets, which they buried. Oviedo (606a; Davenport 27:298) states it boldly: “[f]rom which it can be gathered that, although it is not gold, in that country they cast metals (but for some reason they said it is situated on the South Sea).” After the number of years (1528–35) the men had spent without coming upon a hint of Indies mining wealth, the importance they attached to finding a worked copper object cannot be underestimated. Although copper might seem a modest metal, its value to sixteenth-century Europeans was considerable, as we discuss below.

#### 7. COPPER AND COTTON: NEWS OF THE NORTH AT THE SIERRA DE LA GLORIA

Wealth in copper in the sixteenth century was important for its use in gun founding and ship building. In the Indies, the Spanish found very rich copper deposits in 1508 in a mountain near Puerto Real, Cuba, during the reconnaissance mission of Sebastián de Ocampo, who had been ordered by Nicolás de Ovando to fully explore Cuba and determine whether it was an island or part of a larger land mass (Casas, *Historia* 2:339–40 [bk. 2, chap. 41]). Ovando sent someone to estimate the value of the deposit; this official speculated that it was so rich that it would produce more wealth than the considerable quantities of gold being extracted from the mines of the Antillas at the time. King Ferdinand was persuaded to invest heavily in it, but the small amount of copper yielded failed even to offset the cost of the investment and came as a crushing blow to Ovando, which indicates the great need for copper at the time.

In the fifteenth century in Europe, copper had been mined mostly in southern Germany, and, as a valuable object of long-haul trade, it was reexported to the eastern Mediterranean in Venetian ships to pay for eastern imports (Parry, *The Age* 41, 43). The demand for firearms in the late fifteenth century led Nuremberg gunsmiths to import tin, rather than export copper to Italy, in order to produce and export bronze guns (Parry, *The Age* 45). Demand for copper for military and maritime use in the sixteenth century increased enormously, and by the middle of the seventeenth century copper mined in America was used in Spanish mints because of its scarcity in Spain (Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* 247, 258). Copper was also used as a

reagent in amalgamation for silver production (Bakewell 25). To Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, receiving this copper object was their first notice of the wealth to be found to the north in the direction of the South Sea.

Oviedo, however, mentions another desirable commodity that Cabeza de Vaca omits. The former (606a) adds, significantly, that besides the “cascabel de latón,” these people (of the Sierra de la Gloria area) had mantles of cotton, and they reported that all these things came from the north, which could be reached by “crossing the land toward the South Sea.” Woven cotton cloth was significant to the Narváez survivors not only for itself but also for what it revealed about those who produced it, namely, domesticated production, cultivation, and manufacture by a sedentary population. As Spanish experience in the Indies of previous decades had already shown (Lockhart and Schwartz 287–88), nonsedentary groups offered Europeans no economic incentive; that is, such peoples possessed neither the types of social organization nor the economic activities that the Europeans could bend to their own purposes without extraordinary effort. Sedentary groups were another matter; thus the bell of founded copper and the woven cotton cloth told the four Narváez survivors that they were in indirect contact with peoples who could easily facilitate their survival and even provide the means to prosperity. It goes without saying that under circumstances more favorable to themselves Cabeza de Vaca and his companions would have viewed such peoples as groups to be conquered and colonized. In any case, these reports of copper and cotton greatly animated the four travelers, and, subsequently, this promise of northern wealth would greatly interest the viceroy of New Spain and help stimulate further expeditions to the north (see chap. 13, sec. 2).

This first instance (in Coahuila) of the four men’s coming across cotton brought from the north held a significance difficult for us to appreciate today. In Europe in the fifteenth century, cotton had been one of the prized luxury items of eastern origin; cotton cloth from India was one of the sources of Mediterranean merchant and capitalist prosperity and was imported from the Mediterranean into northern Europe (Parry, *The Age* 41, 48). In the Indies, European contact with cotton began in the Greater Antilles, where it had been cultivated by the natives since before the days of Spanish settlement, particularly on the island of Jamaica, where it grew well and abundantly. Las Casas (*Historia* 2:390 [bk. 2, chap. 61]) described how the natives cultivated it and wove it into cotton cloth, shirts, and hammocks (which the Spaniards used as beds), thus providing the Spanish settlers on the island with their principal commercial enterprise, because they exported the items to Española, Cuba, and the mainland. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the Europeans had learned that cotton was abundant in all the

Indies, at least in those areas north of the equator (Casas, *Historia* 2:390 [bk. 2, chap. 61]).

On the North American mainland the Europeans first came upon cotton in Mexico. Of the three species into which New World cottons are differentiated, the one pertinent to the Narváez survivors' experience was *Gossypium hirsutum*, which had its center of variability in southern Mexico and Guatemala (Hutchinson, Silow, and Stephens 98). It had spread from southern Mexico north into the region of the present-day southwestern United States, and its isolation from the variable population of southern Mexico first took place in the Mexica (Aztec) state with the development of agriculture in the plateau areas. The greater part of the cotton-growing area of the New World had always been sparsely populated, and local concentrations of human population occurred in the areas occupied by the pre-Columbian civilizations (Hutchinson, Silow, and Stephens 105, 108, 111).

Writing about Mexican cotton production in the 1570s, the Franciscan Fray Bernardino de Sahagún was impressed by the variety of types cultivated. He described the highest quality of cotton as being grown in irrigated land, the second best as coming from the eastern and some western sections of Mexico, and in third place, the cotton produced in Ueytlalpan (Hueytlalpa) and the north. In the market of México-Tenochtitlán, each variety, he said, was sold according to its respective value (Sahagún 568b–69a [bk. 10, chap. 20]). Bernal Díaz del Castillo (649b [chap. 209]) was struck by the high quality of the manufactures; his praise for the work of native Mexican weavers and carders of wool as being of the type and quality found in Segovia and Cuenca suggests that these Nahua artisans readily adapted their sophisticated cotton-processing techniques to the production of high quality wool yarn.

Within the native economies, cotton woven into mantles was highly prized, and thus the offering of them to the four travelers represented a considerable gift. Among the Mexica, for example, the bulk of the tribute exacted from subjugated populations to maintain the military, the priesthood, and public functionaries consisted of foodstuffs (maize, beans, chile, cacao, honey, and salt), but cotton mantles and articles of clothing and those made of henequen were the items most highly prized. The areas from which the Mexica collected tribute in cotton goods stretched from the Gulf of Mexico coast in a wide belt across central Mexico to the west coast of Michoacán, Colima, Nayarit, and Jalisco (Florescano et al. 44–45). Because of their northerly itinerary across Mexico, the Cabeza de Vaca party did not dip far enough south, either in the gulf coastal areas or inland, to find cotton. When they came across it at the Sierra de la Gloria settlement, it logically came, as Oviedo (606a) indicated, not from central Mexico but rather, as

the natives claimed, from the areas of cultivation to the north and northwest of Coahuila (the pueblo areas of the present United States).

#### 8. LOOKING NORTHWARD TO THE SOUTH SEA

The news about copper and cotton in the north was confirmed when after crossing the mountain of seven leagues the Cabeza de Vaca party arrived at many houses pitched along a beautiful river (f49r; 606a), the Río Nadadores north of Monclova. As with the identification of the Sierra de la Gloria, we concur here with those given by Davenport and Wells (243), who cite the River of Monclova (also called the Coahuila) as one of the northern branches of the Río Nadadores in the area “famous for the magnificent groves of cypress, pecan, and walnut,” and Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 122–23, “The Travels” 468), who identified this waterway as the Río Nadadores north of Monclova or the tributary that runs through Monclova itself. This area of natural bounty was the Monclova Basin (Raisz).

The Narváez survivors received here (606a) marcasite and powders of antimony, the latter of which the natives used cosmetically, as did the Europeans. The men inquired about the copper bell they were carrying and were told that there were significant amounts of the material at its place of origin, where it was highly esteemed and where there were also permanent houses (f49v). “And this,” Cabeza de Vaca (f49v) interjects at the end of the natives’ report, “we believe to be the South Sea since we always had notice that that sea is richer than the one of the North” (see chap. 16, secs. 2–4). Thus, in this area of the Sierra de la Gloria and the Río Nadadores, the party received its initial news—as well as swift confirmation—of plenty to the north. At this Río Nadadores settlement, the Narváez survivors found bison hides and ate prickly pears and piñon nuts, “better than those of Castile” (f49r; 606b). Davenport and Wells (243) emphasized that the mountains of Coahuila were covered with piñon trees. They had also noted, regarding the bison robes found here, that Coopwood (235–42) had verified that the bison range extended in the nineteenth century to the eastern edge of the Sierra Madre in central Coahuila. (For the extent of the bison range in the sixteenth century, see chap. 6, sec. 14.B.)

The piñon nuts meticulously described by Cabeza de Vaca are also the object of Oviedo’s commentary; as valuable and abundant foodstuffs, both authors describe them as superior to the varieties found in Castile and as having a light, edible husk. Oviedo (606b) stated that they were small in size and that the trees of the sierras were full of them. Cabeza de Vaca (f49r) recalls that the cones were the size of small eggs and that when their seeds were green, the natives ground them up and rolled them into balls before



eating them; if they were mature and dry, they were ground up with the husks and eaten in the form of powders.

These descriptions prompted Williams (61) to identify the plant as the piñon tree and Ponton and McFarland (180–81) to name the species *Pinus edulis*, found in the “mountains of western Texas and westward,” and to argue that the Cabeza de Vaca party therefore traveled at least as far north as the mountains west of the Pecos River. Williams’s observations about the presence of the piñon on the Pecos River and the Rio Grande led Ponton and McFarland (182) to conclude that Cabeza de Vaca “ate the pine nuts and came near the route subsequently followed by Coronado, and so must have been as far north as New Mexico.” However, the breadth of the area in North America where piñon-producing pines are known to grow makes it virtually impossible to use their appearance to determine the precise location or route of the four men at any given point in the narrative. The group *Pinus cembroides*, that is, the piñon, or nut pines, characterized as “small, scraggy trees of desert or semidesert environment,” grow in a large area of Mexico and the western United States (“the Basin-and-Range Province of North America . . . the southwestern Pacific Coastal Ranges, the Colorado Plateau, and the Mexican Volcanic Plateau”) (Mirov 150).

Two of the seven species of this group, Ponton and McFarland’s *Pinus edulis* and the *Pinus cembroides*, may be the ones the four men used to sustain themselves. The species *Pinus cembroides* occurs in a broad area of Mexico and sporadically in Arizona, southern New Mexico, and southwestern Texas; the species *Pinus edulis* is found in the “Rocky Mountain region from Colorado and Utah, and extreme southern Wyoming, through Arizona and New Mexico to Trans-Pecos Texas, and just across the border in the Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua” (Mirov 150). Their overlapping ranges (Mirov 151) make these two species plausible choices, although the widespread occurrence in Mexico of *Pinus cembroides* suggests that it was the more likely candidate for the men’s first acquaintance with the piñon nuts of Coahuila.

On the abundance found here, both accounts seem to echo the interpretation that must have been given in the Joint Report. Namely, the abundance of food and provisions found at both of these Coahuila sites in the area of present-day Monclova as well as the news about the copper deposits in the north serve as evidence in the men’s argument that heading for the South Sea was the most advantageous path to follow. The decision appears to have been made firmly and irrevocably by this point in the narration, because Cabeza de Vaca explains in the next passage that thenceforth they passed through so many nations and languages of peoples that it was now impossible for him

to remember and record them all (f50r). Yet only later he explicitly stated that it was their intention to go “where the sun set” (f51r).

Heading probably in a northerly direction through the valleys of the north-northwest-tending sierras of northwestern Coahuila, Cabeza de Vaca contrasts the speed with which he and his companions were now traveling to the many years they had remained on the Texas coast. Oviedo (604a) comments on how the four men covered in ten months a distance they might not have expected to cover in eight years, given the hardships of the route. The rapid pace of travel kept Cabeza de Vaca from making the type of specific observations about the peoples of the interior that he had noted about the peoples of the coastal region of the Gulf of Mexico.

With respect to their directional orientation and according to the manner in which both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo reconstruct the journey, both seem to follow the version that must have been given in the Joint Report about the steps that led to the eventual determination to head definitively north- and westward: (1) finding (despite warnings to the contrary) twenty houses at the end of a day’s journey when the party headed unaccompanied upstream on the Río San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando in Tamaulipas; (2) after a three-day journey from the aforementioned settlement, coming upon an area where the bounty was so great that the robber-guides could not carry it all; and, finally, (3) coming upon the copper bell and other evidence of northern wealth in cotton and bison hides fifty leagues farther northwest in Coahuila at the Sierra de la Gloria.

#### 9. FROM THE SIERRA DE LA GLORIA TO THE RIO GRANDE

For this and the successive portion of the itinerary pertaining to this Part 6 of our commentary (see below, sec. 11) there are but two well-established landmarks: the Sierra de la Gloria in Coahuila and La Junta de los Ríos at Presidio, Texas, and Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Between these points, Cabeza de Vaca mentions three rivers of note: a “very beautiful river” they encountered after crossing the Sierra de la Gloria (f49r), one great river that “flowed from the north” after passing through the game-rich valleys of the sierras (f50v), and finally, after crossing thirty leagues of plains and fifty of “deserted land in very rugged sierras,” “a very great river in which the water came up to our chests” (f51r). After a two-week hiatus in their journey due to the epidemic illness that befell their guides, a few more days’ journey led to a “river that flowed between some mountains where there was a village,” that is, La Junta de los Ríos (f52v).

Plotting a route over this problematic course from central Coahuila to the Texas/Chihuahua border at Presidio and Ojinaga typically leads to the

identification of the rivers as the Nadadores, the Sabinas (or its northern origin, the Río Babía), and the Río Grande, respectively, followed by the arrival at the confluence of the Río Conchos and the Río Grande (Davenport and Wells map facing 259). Starting from after their crossing of the Sierra de la Gloria, the men pass through an area of great bounty in piñon nuts, then mountain valleys and sierras that produce small and large game in abundance, followed by a plateau of some thirty leagues breadth, then fifty leagues of the most rugged sierra terrain they experience on the entire journey, followed by another plateau and the mountain village. Some route scholars, notably Davenport and Wells (map facing 259), charted this route as going parallel along the Río Nadadores (the thirty leagues of plains) to the Río Sabinas and then ascending either to the east or the west of the Serranía del Burro, which they describe as the rugged highland desert, and crossing the Río Grande at Boquillas del Carmen or along Sanderson Canyon and approaching La Junta de los Ríos from north of the Santiago Mountains in Texas.

Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 134) argued that the Davenport and Wells route compresses the trajectory of more than eighty leagues into a much shorter distance. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 136, “The Travels” 469) instead identified the “pleasant valleys” as the area between the Río Nadadores and the Río Babía in central Coahuila, the “big river from the north” as the Río Babía, which is the northern origin of the Río Sabinas, the thirty leagues of plains as the Babía Valley and the Valle de los Guajes and their continuation, and the dry rugged highlands at the arc in northern Chihuahua “between the Sierra del Carmen on the east and the Lower Río Conchos on the west.” In his view, the next large river would be either the Río Conchos of Chihuahua or the Río Grande near their confluence; thus, La Junta de los Ríos would be approached from the Mexican rather than the Texan side, making the men’s second crossing of the Río Grande into Texas at this point in their journey.

However, if Krieger (“The Travels” 469) enlarged the territory covered between the Sierra de la Gloria and the second crossing of the Río Grande to correspond to the estimated distance of eighty to one hundred leagues given in the original accounts (his itinerary covers three hundred miles), he seems to have compressed or ignored the days of travel that Cabeza de Vaca enumerates as having occurred between that crossing of the “second large river” (which Krieger identifies as either the Río Conchos or the Río Grande near their confluence) and the arrival at the “people of the cows.” This is a four- to five-day journey that begins with the men’s being guided from the river to “some plains at the end of the sierras” (Cabeza de Vaca does not specify the time elapsed or the distance covered) (f51r), a scouting trip by two women that took five days to complete and return to where the four

men were located (f51v, f52v), a three-day journey by the entire party (f52v), followed by a day-and-a-half trek (a three-day round trip) by Castillo and Estevanico to the first permanent settlement (f52v). This minimum of four and a half days' travel from the crossing of the Rio Grande (or possibly the Río Conchos, according to Krieger) to the permanent settlements at La Junta de los Ríos leads us to follow the general scenario outlined by Davenport and Wells regarding the location of the men's second crossing of the Rio Grande rather than Krieger's much foreshortened route from that crossing to the Junta settlements.

Having made that choice, however, it is still impossible to determine the precise route the men traveled. More important is a general understanding of the topography the men confronted over this broad area. As the plateau rises to the ranges of the Sierra Madre Oriental, its ridges and valleys give way to the west to a broad basin-and-range province. In this area that stretches from the Sierra de la Gloria north-northwestward to La Junta de los Ríos, the men were in high elevations and traveling variously through high plateaus and sierras; they experienced areas abundant in natural provisions for sustenance as well as areas that were desperately dry and barren.

At the point at which Cabeza de Vaca (f49v–f50r) declares that they passed through so many peoples and languages it was impossible to remember them, the narration accelerates, and he summarizes: those who accompanied them sacked their hosts, and those who lost as well as those who gained were quite content; they carried so great a company with them that it was impossible to make use of them. This segment of the journey heading northward through Coahuila combines a limited number of geographical references with the stunning account of the ways the native peoples hunted, provided food for the men, and carried them forward, often under circumstances of considerable hardship.

According to Oviedo, the people at the settlement of the beautiful river, that is, the people from the settlement by the Río Nadadores to the north of Monclova, led the party forward for several days (606b). Davenport and Wells (245) suggested that these people had come from the north down to the Sierra de la Gloria area and had given the copper bell to their neighbors on the eastern side of the mountain, where Dorantes had originally received it. Whether these people were local to the Monclova area or came from the north, they led the four men north-northwest through the valleys that interspersed the north-northwest-tending ranges of the Sierra Madre Oriental. Although the traveling band did not pass through settlements, the Indians sent out scouts and brought in people from fifteen to twenty leagues around (606b). Although this highland area was not settled, its hunting grounds produced excellent food sources and attracted large bands

of people (606b; f50r); in these valleys the hunters found hares, deer, birds, quail, and other game, as described by Cabeza de Vaca (f50r). He recalls how these people gladly roasted the game in special ovens they made (f50r–v), which contrasts with the annoyance he and his companions had felt when certain coastal peoples of the Gulf of Mexico repeatedly snatched the meat off the flame when the four men tried to roast it (see f40v–f41r). Apart from the remarkable hunting style of surrounding and clubbing game in these mountain valleys, the Indians with bows and arrows went to hunt deer and quail in the sierra (f50r), which indicates that they were threading their way through mountain valleys of the sierras of northern Coahuila. (Oviedo [606b] does not mention the topography of this area but rather emphasizes the reverential treatment the four men enjoyed.)

Both Cabeza de Vaca (f50r) and Oviedo (606b) describe the natives' practice of placing food before the party of strangers and obtaining their permission (or blessing, from the Christians' point of view) before consuming it. Oviedo (606b) mentions a new custom ("otra nueva orden de caminar") that developed here. The robber-guides would take nothing from the new hosts; instead, the victims would prepare a hut for each of the Christians with their goods spread out in them (606b). Cabeza de Vaca (f50r–v) offers the same information, adding that each of the four men had a group of followers, including women, who associated themselves exclusively with him ("con toda su gente conocida"). According to his account (f50v), the four men would take a little of the food and turn over the rest to the leaders of the groups ("al principal de la gente," "a los principales"), who would then distribute it to all present.

It is probable that these headmen were giving the commands and organizing the ritual blessing by the Christians as a way to exercise their control (Adorno, "The Negotiation" 181). In this light, the blessing by the four Christians would be a sign of truce between marauder and victim groups, signaling that food could be partaken without its possession being disputed. Given the enormous numbers of people, it was a way of organizing the distribution of foodstuffs as controlled by the native lords. The problem of checking this interpretation against other period sources is that there are no other contemporary European testimonies for this crucial portion of the itinerary through present-day Coahuila.

Once the leaders had distributed the food, each person would bring the portion assigned him by the headman to the Narváez survivors so that they would blow upon and bless it; without this preamble, Cabeza de Vaca (f50v) insisted, the natives would not under any circumstances eat the food. By his estimate (f50v), some three to four thousand people accompanied them at various times, and they would make no move without first seeking the

men's permission, probably after obtaining that of their own lords. Oviedo, in interpreting these practices, assigns a more aggressive role to the Narváez survivors. He writes that it was the Christians who took everything from their hosts (606b), not the marauding natives, as Cabeza de Vaca contended; by leaving the Indians dispossessed, the men left them no choice but to go forward to recoup their losses by finding new victims, that is, new hosts to sack. In contrast, Cabeza de Vaca places these initiatives entirely in the hands of the natives. In fact, at an earlier point in the narration, as he described their passage from group to group southward from the Rio Grande (f46v), he had expressed regret that the victims were treated so cruelly by the robbers, who mercilessly took everything.

This divergence between Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo raises a dilemma. Is Cabeza de Vaca suppressing the manipulations in which he and his companions engaged in order to appear more revered by the natives? Is Oviedo placing the initiative in his countrymen's hands because he does not entertain the prospect that the men were being led by the natives? The degree to which the four men set in motion or controlled these exchanges will never be known; we can only state with certainty that Oviedo's account emphasizes the men's power over the Indians, while Cabeza de Vaca's sets forth his small party's compassion and humaneness toward them.

Subsequently, according to Cabeza de Vaca (f50v), the party crossed a great river flowing from the north (which was no doubt the Babía/Sabinas river system, which flowed from northwest to southeast from its origins in the Sierra Madre Oriental). Whereas Cabeza de Vaca mentions plains thirty leagues across in relation to this river (Oviedo mentions neither the plains nor the river), previous route interpreters have disagreed as to whether the party crossed the river or the plains first (Davenport and Wells 246; Krieger, "Nuevo estudio" 133). We consider that the Cabeza de Vaca party crossed the river first, because it seems clear that his (f50v) reference to the plains is a summary statement: "we crossed a great river that flowed from the north. And after crossing some plains of thirty leagues, we found many people who came to receive us from very far from there" (f50v). The plains area that Cabeza de Vaca identifies was probably the high plateau area through which the lower Babía and the Sabinas Rivers pass, between that river system and the Rio Grande. If they had tended slightly northeastward as they traveled, the men might have been in the area in northeastern Coahuila to the east of the Sierra Madre Oriental along the Serranía del Burro. If they had headed northwestward out of the mountain valleys, they could be on a plateau west of the Sierra del Carmen. In any case, they had traversed some higher country, passing through mountain valleys, and were now out on a plain. This precedes the area of the most difficult travel they had to endure,

if we are to judge by Cabeza de Vaca's account. This area of uninhabited desert mountains was the Sierra Madre Oriental in northwestern Coahuila in the area of the dry Arroyo de la Babía and northward to the Rio Grande.

After crossing the river and the plains, Cabeza de Vaca (f50v) describes "another manner of receiving us with regard to the sacking." Here the men were received by new people who came forth, voluntarily offering to the Narváez men not only their goods but also the houses in which they were gathered. In turn, the four men gave these goods to the lords who accompanied them for distribution. These new people of the area approximately thirty leagues or ninety to one hundred miles beyond the river the Narváez survivors had crossed in Coahuila were intimidated by their presence, and these Indians were warned by the ones who had brought the four men not to hide anything from them.

The 1542 edition states that the natives ended this warning against treating the four strange men poorly with the threat: "and later we would see to it that they all died" (f51r). To this, the 1555 edition adds: "because the sun so commanded us" (V:f41v). This emendation, like other additions and suppressions rendered in the Valladolid edition (see chap. 12, secs. 3.C, 6.A), serves to convey the notion that the Indians took the four strangers to be divine. Here the editorial intervention implies what Cabeza de Vaca earlier stated, namely, that some native groups—in southeastern Texas in the area of the Avavares (f38v) and in northern Tamaulipas (f48r)—took the four men to be "children of the sun" or wanted to persuade others of such a notion. In this area of northern Coahuila prior to the second crossing of the Rio Grande (f51r), the 1555 addition of the phrase "because the sun so commanded us" enhances once again the notion that the Indians attributed magical or spiritual powers to the Narváez survivors. According to Cabeza de Vaca, these Indians were so fearful that for the first few days they trembled and would not speak to or even look up at them as they placed the goods before the four travelers. Yet these same fearful people took the men across fifty leagues of rugged desert sierra (the Sierra Madre Oriental in northern Coahuila), across the Rio Grande (this was their second crossing) into Texas, and then "to some plains at the end of the sierras," probably the Stockton Plateau of southwestern Texas (f51r; 607a).

#### 10. "MOST OBEDIENT PEOPLE": NORTH OF THE RIO GRANDE

The great river that the Narváez survivors crossed wading chest-deep in water (f51r) was the Rio Grande. Oviedo does not mention this river at all, but it was in fact the second crossing that the party made, having traversed it earlier when going from Texas to Tamaulipas (see f45v). Davenport and

Wells (map facing 259) placed this crossing into southwestern Texas in the broad area between the present-day locations of Ciudad Acuña (to the east) and Boquillas del Carmen (on the west). As already mentioned, Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 137–38, “The Travels” 469–70), having insisted that the men’s overland trek began farther north and more inland than the narratives indicate, suggested that this second crossing of the Rio Grande occurred near La Junta de los Ríos itself. In our view, this crossing into Texas was likely to have occurred in the vicinity of Boquillas del Carmen or slightly farther to the northeast.

Taking the four men across the river to the plains at the end of the sierras was a great hardship for these Coahuilan peoples who had guided them over the sierras and now began to fall ill after crossing the Rio Grande, due to the starvation conditions they had suffered in the uninhabited desert mountains (f51r). Nevertheless, those who had not been afflicted were able to deposit the men at the plains (in southwestern Texas) where Oviedo (607a) tells us that they came upon one hundred dwellings that had been set up by people who had been gathered from far and wide by the scouts of the people who had crossed the sierras with them. These new people brought with them an enormous quantity of foodstuffs, a great deal of which they abandoned on the road. Cabeza de Vaca (f51r) explains that it was against these people’s custom to reclaim what they had offered, and Oviedo (607a) reveals that the bounty consisted of piñon nuts.

These new people are the ones that Cabeza de Vaca characterized—after he had described the men’s interactions with them—as “the most obedient people we found throughout this land and of the best nature. And they are generally very well disposed” (f52v); Oviedo (607b) expresses similar sentiments. At least in his narration of this journey (from a hundred miles beyond the river that flowed from the north in Coahuila into the high country of southwestern Texas), the preceding people (the ones whom we can identify vaguely by their opening their houses to the Narváez survivors and voluntarily offering them their goods) and these (whom we call the people “of the piñon nuts” for the bounty they offered the men and refused to take back) are characterized by increasing cooperation and good will toward the four strangers. This good will, Cabeza de Vaca (f51r–v) claims, is based on the Indians’ fear of them (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 167–83).

According to Cabeza de Vaca’s claims in this section of the narration, that fear was not generated by his party of four but rather by the natives themselves, who communicated it from one group to another. The natives of Coahuila, who began the practice of giving their goods to the strangers rather than being robbed (f50v), persuaded new groups “that they should take care and not hide a single thing of whatever they had because it was



impossible for us not to find out about it and later we would see to it that they all died" (f51r). "So great were the fears that *they* instilled in *them*" (f51r, emphasis added) that the first few days they were with the four men they were constantly trembling.

On the other hand, in order to get the next group, the "people of the piñon nuts" of southwestern Texas, to lead them forward, which they had refused to do, Cabeza de Vaca explains how the men feigned anger at them. Cabeza de Vaca himself did so by sleeping apart from the encampment one night, and the natives found his action so threatening that they agreed that "even though they knew they would die on the road, they would take us wherever we wanted to go" (f51v). In Oviedo's (607b) account, Andrés Dorantes is the protagonist of a similar episode. The significance of this gesture is revealed by Cabeza de Vaca's (f50r) earlier statement that each man customarily camped with his own entourage, and his refusal to do so threatened the native company. Then, while the four men continued to feign anger, a disease swept through the "people of the piñon nuts" and the others; more than three hundred people fell ill (607b), and eight men died (f51v). This produced such widespread fear of the four men that "it seemed that in seeing us they would die of fear" (f51v–f52r). Cabeza de Vaca (f52r) recalls their own great panic at the time: if all the Indians died, they would remain unprotected without the natives' help on which they depended for their survival; if all the natives fled at the fear of death, the outcome would be the same.

#### 11. HEADING NORTH AND WEST TO LA JUNTA DE LOS RÍOS (EARLY AUTUMN 1535)

Only after meeting the "people of the piñon nuts" but before they fall ill does Cabeza de Vaca make his first explicit statement about the express destination of going overland to the west "to where the sun set" (f51r). Later, to the same guides, he added that they wanted to go north (f51v). On the first occasion, the "piñon nuts people" protested that this was impossible, because there were no inhabited areas except for very far away, and the people they would eventually encounter were their enemies (f51r–v; 607a); on the second, that there would be neither food nor water (f51v). The guides were right; the party would not learn about reliable food sources like maize until they arrived, nearly three weeks later (after a two-week hiatus in their travel and a subsequent journey of approximately five days' duration), at the permanent settlements at La Junta de los Ríos (f53r).

The four men insisted that the "piñon nuts people" send scouts ahead to find people (f51v; 607a), and the natives demurred but finally agreed to

send two women. Both authors explain that this would be effective because they could send a female captive and another woman; according to Oviedo (607a), they could not send men because of the war between the groups and “because they would not understand one another” (607a). Cabeza de Vaca (f51v) offers the insight that these women of the area of present-day southwestern Texas could negotiate and perform exchanges even in time of war (f51v); he had made a similar observation earlier about the women of the coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico (f42r). The female captive could communicate with her own people as well as with her captors; her own people were, as we will discover, the group that Cabeza de Vaca (f53r) would call the “people of the cows.” She had been captured by those we have called the “people of the piñon nuts.”

The men followed the women (f51v; 607a) and then stopped for some three days; the women did not return for five. The Christians insisted they wanted to go north (f51v), but the Indians still refused to do so. After the men feigned anger with them, as noted above, an epidemic befell them. Despite the deaths of eight men, the rest of the natives began to recover; due to this illness, the four men were nevertheless forced to stay where they were for two weeks without moving forward (f52r).

Because they spent fifteen days in one location with these “people of the piñon nuts,” who had fallen ill, both accounts (f52r; 607b) offer descriptions of mourning and burial customs. In this case, the prescribed behavior was complete passivity in the expression of emotion, and anyone caught weeping was severely punished, being scarified the length of his or her body. Both accounts emphasize that these were the “best” people the party of four had so far encountered (f52v; 607b). Since these people lost eight men to illness and attributed their deaths to the four strangers, Cabeza de Vaca’s praise for their obedient nature was no doubt inspired by his recollection of the violent response of the Indians of Galveston Bay to the epidemic of November 1528; blaming the Narváez expeditionaries for the deaths, they came close to killing all of them in retribution (f24r).

The two women sent out as scouts now returned, saying that they had found very few people since it was bison-hunting season and all the people had gone to pursue the herds (f52v; 607b–08a). Since Oviedo (609a) indicated that the bison were hunted during the summer, this suggests that it was now late summer or early autumn of 1535. The four men had been traveling almost continuously for the previous few months since they had departed from the Gulf Coast area of Texas just as the prickly pears were beginning to ripen.

Oviedo (608a) sets forth the debate about going north (the natives’ preference) or heading west to the sea (the Narváez survivors’ choice). The

Christians persuaded the Indians to take them ahead; after the female scouts returned, the whole group set out on a three-day journey. The following day Castillo and Estevanico went with the women, who led them to the captive woman's village, which was found on "a river that flowed between some mountains" (f52v), that is, at La Junta de los Ríos, the confluence of the Río Conchos and the Río Grande near Presidio, Texas, and Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Smith (*Relation* 162–63) identified this site in 1871; Baskett (312) and Davenport and Wells (249) did so also, and almost all subsequent students of the route have concurred (Krieger, "Nuevo estudio" 138–39, "The Travels" 470; Chipman, "In Search" 146). The party did not cross the Río Grande back into Mexico at this time but would do so after the seventeen-day journey up its northern bank, when they crossed it in order to follow the road to the maize (f54v).

It is at La Junta de los Ríos that Cabeza de Vaca (f52v) recalls the joyful emotion of that first great moment on the westward trek, when Castillo returned from a scouting mission with the news that he had found permanent settlements and seen maize: "[t]his was the thing that gladdened us more than anything else in the world, and for this we gave infinite thanks to our Lord." Upon their encounter, the people of the cows gave them beans, squash for eating and for use as water vessels, bison hide robes, and many other things (f53r), including, according to Oviedo (608a), deerskins and bows and arrows. The news of maize was significant because, as noted earlier, the men had not seen any since leaving the Bay of Horses on the northeastern coast of the Gulf of Mexico (f16r).

These "people of the cows" lived in the first permanent dwellings that the Christians had seen since their departure from the Florida Panhandle in September 1528 (f53r; 608a). The enemy groups (the "people of the piñon nuts" and the "people of the cows") were now face to face, so the Narváez survivors gave the goods to the former to satisfy them and sent them home (back to the area just north of the second crossing of the Río Grande) while the four travelers continued northward with the "people of the cows." They spent the night six leagues up the road (608b) amid the natives' feasting (f53r). After a day there, they went on and came to other settlements of permanent homes ("cuatro manadas de pueblos") (608b), and there appeared a new custom among another community of these people whom Cabeza de Vaca called "the people of the cows." The people would not come out to the road to meet the men but rather remained in their dwellings with their eyes covered with their hair and their faces to the wall and their household goods piled up in the middle of the floor (f53r).

From here onward, the four men were given many bison robes (f53r; 609a), and Cabeza de Vaca considered that the animals were hunted over an area

extending fifty leagues north, upriver (f53r). Apart from their permanent settlements, the “people of the cows” were unusual for the fact that they covered themselves, at least the women did (f53v; 610b), and had a novel solution to the lack of pottery for cooking by using gourds as receptacles and throwing in heated stones for cooking (f54r; 608b–09a).

Since Smith (*Relation* 162) compared the account of Antonio de Espejo’s expedition of 1582–83 to that of Cabeza de Vaca and noted that Espejo named the permanently settled Indian group he encountered the Jumanos, commentators have unfailingly so identified the “people of the cows.” However, contradictory evidence between the written and archaeological records makes it impossible to definitively identify as such the Indians Cabeza de Vaca describes. While Cabeza de Vaca (f54r) recounted these people’s method of cooking (throwing heated stones into gourds used as cooking receptacles because they lacked ceramic cooking ware [“no alcançan ollas”]), intensive archaeological investigations at La Junta de los Ríos have revealed that the residents of these villages had ceramic pottery since the thirteenth century (Kelley 16–17). Despite the Espejo expedition’s claims that the Jumanos remembered the one black and three white men of forty-seven years earlier, it is by no means certain that Cabeza de Vaca’s “people of the cows” were Espejo’s Jumanos. (On Espejo’s reading of Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, see chap. 13, sec. 8.)

According to Cabeza de Vaca, the four men made their final and binding decision about their itinerary after arriving at the “people of the cows.” (On this point, we follow Cabeza de Vaca’s participant version, rather than Oviedo’s account, which placed the discussion at the point where the women guides from the “piñon nuts people” returned to lead them onward to the “people of the cows.”) Should they take, as their new hosts urged, “the route of the cows,” which led to the north, or “the maize road,” which led to the west? Cabeza de Vaca admits that they stayed with these people for two days, pondering their decision (f54r). In the end, they chose to head west, although not pleased that they would have to make a “very great detour” northward to do so.

It is here, already more than halfway to the west coast of Mexico, that Cabeza de Vaca (f54r–v) declares, “And we did not want to follow the road of the cows because it is toward the north, and this was for us a very great detour, because we always held it for certain that going the route of the setting sun we would find what we desired. And thus we followed our course and traversed the entire land until coming out at the South Sea.” Later, Cabeza de Vaca tells how Estevanico learned about “the roads we wished to travel” (f55v), thus attempting to persuade the reader yet again that they were embarked on a course deliberately chosen. In his re-creation of this determination at an

earlier moment in the narrative, Oviedo likewise (608a) made it clear that their “right road” was to the west. Later, he remarks that they understood that to go to the maize they would have to go “toward the north, from where the Indians had brought that seed” (609a). The “people of the cows” warned them that it would be seventeen days of travel upstream with nothing to eat except an inedible fruit (f53v; 609a) in territory held by their enemies, who would, nevertheless, speak the same language and be generous to the strangers (f54r). As we know, they decided to follow the route of maize that promised to take them to the South Sea.

## 12. INTERPRETING INTERACTIONS WITH NATIVE GROUPS

The entire trip from the Monclova area in Coahuila where the men had received the copper bell and cotton mantles, to the Río Grande at the Río Conchos near Presidio and Ojinaga, where they came to the “people of the cows,” was negotiated by moving north and westward with people who had been gathered from far and wide to receive them. Regarding their interactions with these native groups, there is an interesting difference between the two accounts. Oviedo offers an interpretation of native responses to the Christians that always emphasizes the miraculous effect that they had on the indigenous peoples, curing them and inspiring their devotion. Cabeza de Vaca does not emphasize these affective consequences as much; in fact, sometimes he does not mention episodes of curing where Oviedo does. Instead Cabeza de Vaca reveals that some native groups inspired awe in others in order to manipulate them for their own self-interest. On the other hand, he allows these remarkable encounters to stand without an explanation of the manipulations that he and his fellows performed to make them possible.

In spite of his spiritual interpretation of the natives’ cooperation, Oviedo is far more forthcoming on the mechanics of how these negotiations worked. He describes the common practice on two occasions. The first, already noted, occurred after the men left the Monclova area and the Río Nadadores and traveled northwest. With respect to the sackings, Oviedo (606b) explains that the Christians customarily took everything from their hosts, just so they would have to take the party forward to seek compensation for all they had lost. He offers a second insight into these procedures when he cites the reluctance of the “people of the piñon nuts” to lead the four men northward to the country of their enemies (the “people of the cows”). Oviedo (607a) remarks:

[T]he Christians told them that they should send some Indian who should tell them how the Christians were approaching (because in this manner they were accustomed to doing it along the entire course, when they went to new

settlements, that four Indians went ahead, each in the name of one of the Christians, so that they would prepare their dwellings and have everything that they were to give them gathered up and ready).

Although less directly, Cabeza de Vaca (f52v) makes remarks to the same effect: when the two women sent out as scouts by the “piñon nuts people” (one being of their own group, the other, the captive woman from the “people of the cows”) returned to the encampment where many lay sick, they reported that they had found few people because all had gone to hunt bison. Cabeza de Vaca here recalls how they ordered those same two women to “go with two of ours to bring out people and lead them to the road to receive us.” Later, high in the mountain refuge in southern Sonora or northern Sinaloa where the natives had gathered in fear of the Spanish slave hunters (see chap. 8, sec. 11), he declares, “[W]e sent out from there four messengers through the land, as we were accustomed to doing, so that they might call and bring together all the people they could” (f57v). Finally, at the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa), when Diego de Alcaraz called upon the men to gather food and Indians, Cabeza de Vaca (f59r–v) explains, “And we then sent out our messengers to call them, and six hundred people came who brought us all the maize they could obtain.”

As the historical observer for whom all types of knowledge of the Indies were important, Oviedo was interested in the workings of these relationships. His overarching religious interpretation was not threatened by the manipulations he understood the Christians performed in order to pursue their goals; in his view, the means of these transactions, manipulated by the four Christians, justified the ends of the natives’ spiritual gain and good (however vaguely these might be posited). Cabeza de Vaca’s agenda in his *relación*, in contrast, is more strategic, less disinterested. As a result, the kind of authority he describes in his narrative is one the four men were given, not one they created themselves. The difference between the two accounts on this point is one of degree: Cabeza de Vaca usually tends to ascribe the authority that he and his fellows enjoyed, from the peoples of Tamaulipas onward, as one that arose naturally from the natives’ desires, needs, or manipulative self-interest; Oviedo, in contrast, examines the strategies employed by the Narváez survivors. As we will see, the skills described by both became particularly useful when the four men were later asked by their countrymen to resettle the communities that the natives had abandoned in their flight from the slave-hunting Spanish settlers of Nueva Galicia (see chap. 9).

## CHAPTER 8

### Part 7: The Maize/Bison Fork to the “Land of Christians”: La Junta de los Ríos to the Río Petatlán (Early Autumn 1535 to Spring 1536) (f54v–f58v)

This leg of the journey begins with the party’s departure from the settlements of the “people of the cows” at La Junta de los Ríos, the confluence of the Río Conchos of Chihuahua and the Rio Grande. Given the information the party would have had from the Indians about the impassability of the sierras farther south, Cabeza de Vaca and his companions knew that going west was possible only by going north. Exactly how far north has been at issue. Proponents of the trans-Texas route of Cabeza de Vaca such as Bandelier, Baskett, Ponton and McFarland, Sauer, and Hallenbeck proposed a route that took the travelers across New Mexico. Sauer (“The Road” 16, “The Discovery” 274, *Sixteenth Century North America* 118 [fig. 10]), for example, argued that the party ascended the Rio Grande to more than seventy miles north of El Paso, Texas, crossed it into New Mexico, and passed through southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona before heading southward into Sonora. The evidence, however, weighs on the side of a more southerly westward route.

The majority opinion among route scholars is that this journey going north and west took the party from the confluence of the two rivers (which they approached from the Texas side), up along the bank of the Rio Grande in southwestern Texas, across the Rio Grande (their third and final crossing of the river) near present-day El Paso, Texas, into Chihuahua and Sonora, and down the parallel ranges and river valleys that brought them to the coastal plain and the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa) in present-day Sinaloa.

The men’s ultimate destination was the South Sea, although the coast to which they were oriented bordered the Gulf of California. In 1528, when the men left Cuba, they would have had no idea that a peninsula (today’s Baja California) separated the west coast of Mexico from the Pacific proper. Even Cortés’s 1535 exploration of the Gulf of California, about which the men would not learn until after they were back in Spanish-held territory in 1536, did not clarify whether the peninsula was an island or part of the mainland. The Narváez survivors did not reach the actual coast but rather

traveled some twelve to fifteen leagues inland from it, according to what they understood from natives who came from there.

Although the men followed a route that led them across the continental divide and took them to the western slopes of the Sierra Madre Occidental among the fertile valleys of the rivers of Sonora and finally Sinaloa (Davenport 28:138–39, 148), the way they effected this journey was more complex than at first it might seem. Maps showing the route across northwestern Mexico (see, for example, Krieger, “Nuevo estudio” fig. 10, “The Travels” 463) typically give the misleading impression that the orientation of travel was directly west/southwest. On the contrary, this section of the journey must be envisioned as a series of movements whose orientation was north/south in order to go west, and this was so not only because of the initial northward movement of some seventeen days upstream along the Rio Grande but also for the second leg of the journey to the first maize settlements in northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora and until the Narváez survivors’ arrival at the area of native settlement they called “Corazones,” described by Oviedo (610a) as being located on level ground beyond the sierras. Northern Sonora in particular is characterized as a “succession of rivers flowing generally from north to south, their upper valleys confined by deeply eroded parallel mountain ranges, until they emerge on a broad coastal plain and drain westerly into the Gulf of California” (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 279a). Regrettably, in both accounts the potential geographic description for this part of the journey is eclipsed by other considerations. As a result, the men’s itinerary, especially across northern Chihuahua, remains vague.

This segment of the four men’s journey ends where they met Spaniards hunting slaves in northwestern Mexico (already designated Nueva Galicia upon their arrival) at the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa) not far from the coast of the Gulf of California. Because the distances traversed in this remarkable portion of the journey are discussed in the two principal accounts and became the object of considerable attention by subsequent explorers, we divide our discussion into four parts: (1) from the settlements of the “people of the cows” on the Rio Grande to the first “houses of maize” in Chihuahua or Sonora, (2) from this fertile river valley to others that led them to the cluster of settlements the men named “Corazones” (610b), (3) from Corazones to the Río Yaqui, and (4) from the Río Yaqui to the encounter with Spanish horsemen on the Río Petatlán. Only two significant points of this itinerary are referentially ambiguous enough to have produced debate: the location of the first maize-growing settlements, which represents the party’s entry into agricultural country, and, most especially, the location of Corazones, which both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo describe as the gateway to northern settlements of wealth and abundance. The identification of the



river whose flooding forced the party to remain stationary for two weeks, during which time Castillo encountered an Indian wearing around his neck iron ornaments of European manufacture, has not been disputed; most route scholars agree that it was the Río Yaqui. Nevertheless, the four travelers’ orientation to that river requires clarification that we take up in due course.

Apart from the promise of material wealth in the unexplored north, one of the great themes of this portion of the journey (anticipated by their experience at La Junta de los Ríos) is the encounter with the practice of agriculture over a broad area. The first reference is the permanent settlements in northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora (at Casas Grandes or along the Río Bavispe) (f54v). The second is the claim about “a thousand leagues of populated land” that were to be found northward from Corazones (f56r); this is Cabeza de Vaca’s speculation based probably on his observations about the Río Sinaloa area to the south (f60r), as well as on reports given to the men at Corazones about the lands to the north (Davenport 28:151). The third is the description of the flood plains of Sonora and Sinaloa through which the party passed (f57r). In addition, Cabeza de Vaca offers here the first European descriptions of the long-distance trade that linked northwestern Mexico with the pueblo country of present-day New Mexico and possibly with the central valley of Mexico as well. Before taking up the journey from La Junta de los Ríos to the “land of maize,” we pause to consider the men’s reasons for having chosen this course over the one that would have led them to the “land of cows.”

The men knew that Hernán Cortés had been exploring the South Sea in the early 1520s, as Cabeza de Vaca (f56v–f57r) revealed when they received their first clear confirmation of Europeans having been in the Río Yaqui area. They thought these strangers had been maritime explorers, following on the announced discovery of the South Sea in Cortés’s third published letter of relation and further references in his fourth, which came into print in 1523 and 1525, respectively, before the departure of Pánfilo de Narváez’s expedition to *Florida* (see chap. 16, sec. 4.A). At the time of their separation from Spanish civilization when they departed from Cuba in 1528, the Narváez expeditionaries would have known that Cortés had not yet explored the coast much beyond Cabo Corrientes on the Pacific coast of Jalisco. They would have expected, however, that that exploration might have been much advanced after the passage of several years. They had no notice whatsoever about Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán’s conquest of this area of northwestern Mexico in 1530–31 and its subsequent incorporation under the crown of Castile as the “kingdom of Nueva Galicia.” In any case, heading for the South Sea (rather than northward) was the only way that the four men would have a chance of making future contact with their countrymen. Although

Cabeza de Vaca (f54r) indicates that they had pondered the choice seriously, the option they took was their clear best chance for returning to Spanish civilization.

Unlike the territories traversed earlier, there exist for the latter portion of this segment of the four men's journey Spanish reports from prior to the time of their arrival. These accounts pertain to Nuño de Guzmán's conquest of northwestern Mexico (the just-mentioned Nueva Galicia) in 1530–31 and subsequent reconnaissance and slaving missions into the area.

1. FROM THE "PEOPLE OF THE COWS" TO THE "HOUSES OF MAIZE"  
(EARLY TO LATE AUTUMN 1535)

The trek from the "people of the cows" and the first permanent settlements to their immediate destination of maize-growing settlements took the Cabeza de Vaca party slightly more than a month of continuous travel that brought the men northwestward up the Rio Grande and across the basin-and-range area of northern Chihuahua. As Davenport (28:147) observed, the "purpose of Cabeza de Vaca's journey up the Rio Grande was to find an available route to the maize region beyond the mountain barrier." Immediately to the south, an unbroken barrier of high peaks and deep barrancas extended for a thousand miles from the upper affluents of the Río Yaqui (the Papigóchic, Tutuaca, and Tomóchic) all the way to Michoacán (Krieger, "The Travels" 470–71; Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 185b–86a).

We accept as plausible the prevailing argument that the men went up the Texas side of the Rio Grande to the north for fifteen to seventeen days (609a; f54v) before crossing it because we identify the third river mentioned by Cabeza de Vaca and crossed in the previous segment of the journey as the Rio Grande (see chap. 7, sec. 10). He made no mention of crossing it when they reached it at La Junta de los Ríos but rather stated that they crossed this river only after they had traveled upstream along it. After crossing the river, they continued to head west for still another period of fifteen to seventeen days (Baskett 313–14; Davenport and Wells 252; Krieger, "Nuevo estudio" 179, "The Travels" 470). Since the first fifteen to seventeen days of the route to the area where maize was grown was the same as the "road to the cows," they were given many bison hides along the way. They suffered great hunger, refraining from eating the inedible fruit, called *masarrones* by Oviedo (609a) and garbled in Cabeza de Vaca's text as "Chacan" (f53v), that was the only available vegetable food source.

Sauer ("The Road" 15) identified this fruit as mesquite. However, elsewhere Cabeza de Vaca (f45r) describes mesquite in detail, as well as native methods of preparation for its consumption (see chap. 6, sec. 22). His remark

that it was sweet and good to eat when mixed with earth suggests that he and his companions consumed it gladly when available. Later, Oviedo (617b) added to his own book 35, chapter 7 the information about mesquite and its preparation that Cabeza de Vaca had given. It is therefore unlikely that mesquite is the “inedible fruit” described here. Instead of consuming the disagreeable *masarrones*, the men nourished themselves exclusively on deer fat or deer suet, which they had probably carried with them from La Junta de los Ríos.

This land was inhabited by the enemies of the “people of the cows,” and during this first leg of the journey the men slept at night in their houses (609a), although there were few people about as they had gone to hunt bison “on some plains among the sierras that came from above toward the sea” (609b), that is, along the continuation of the basin-and-range province that extends into present-day Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona (Raisz). The party crossed the Rio Grande back into Mexico at the end of these fifteen to seventeen days, somewhere in the area of today’s El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Attempting to fix the location of this third and final crossing of the Rio Grande is the issue that has led to the debate as to whether the travelers passed through present-day New Mexico and Arizona, an argument that we, like other recent route scholars, reject. Although the northern itinerary proposed by Sauer (“The Road” 14–20) and Hallenbeck (199–228) is still accepted by some readers, we find that Sauer’s (“The Road” 16, “The Discovery” 277) argument, claiming that the drought described by Cabeza de Vaca (f53v) would have driven the travelers along the river some seventy-five miles farther north than El Paso, Texas, to Rincon, New Mexico, is not persuasive.

Davenport (28:141) and those who have opted for a crossing into Chihuahua instead of New Mexico argued that the pertinent evidence was the warnings given the men earlier (f53v–f54r; 609a) to the effect that all the people they would meet during those seventeen days of travel upriver spoke the same language. Davenport (28:141) thus placed the crossing near and below San Elizario, Texas, suggesting that the party did not go beyond the area inhabited by a single linguistic group, whom he identified (but we do not) as the Jumanos. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 179, 180, “The Travels” 470) suggested that the party crossed the river farther to the southeast, some 150 miles above the mouth of the Río Conchos and seventy-five miles downstream from El Paso at a point southwest of Sierra Blanca, Texas, and that, whether at that or another location, they would have turned west thanks to a pass in the mountains of Chihuahua at Banderas. We agree that this general area was the probable site of the crossing, given the original accounts’

reports of the commonality of language and despite the fact that linguistic homogeneity is the sole available evidence.

Coordinating the Cabeza de Vaca account with that of Espejo, Baskett (316) placed this crossing below El Paso as its upper limit but concluded that at a minimum, “Espejo’s narrative precludes all routes that do not pass at least fifteen days’ travel up the Rio Grande above the Conchas Valley.” Although the accounts of the expedition of Antonio de Espejo going up the Rio Grande some forty-seven years later seem to confirm Cabeza de Vaca’s account (Smith, *Relation* 162–63; Davenport 28:140–41; Krieger, “Nuevo estudio” 179–80), we have refrained from imposing one on the other, in part because reading Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* may have influenced the Espejo narrators and in part because these reporters’ ability to communicate with the natives about strangers who had passed through forty-seven years earlier seems uncertain at best (see chap. 13, sec. 8).

After crossing the Rio Grande into Mexico, the Cabeza de Vaca party spent the next seventeen days traversing plains and threading through high sierras; Oviedo (609b) estimates this period of basin-and-range passage as twenty days. Here in northern Chihuahua they came upon people who ate nothing but hares and some powders ground from grasses during a third of the year (f54v; 609b). Because it was “that season,” the four men also consumed this fare as they passed through the dunes-covered desert highlands (*medranos*) of northeastern Chihuahua (Raisz; Davenport 28:147–48). At the end of the thirty-five days’ travel, about which neither account offers any further geographic information, the party arrived at last at the “houses of maize.” Oviedo (609b) estimated this location to be two hundred leagues (north) of the Spanish settlement at Culiacán, but his subsequent estimation (610b) for the distance between the same settlement and the “river discovered by Nuño de Guzmán” (the Río Yaqui), which lay between the settlement and the one at Culiacán, was three hundred leagues.

The season of the party’s 1535 arrival at the “houses of maize” was autumn, according to the single remark by Oviedo (609a) about the bison-hunting season. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 152) attempted to pinpoint the time as the beginning of October, but he based his projection on a consistent rate of daily travel that cannot be warranted. Although the accounts offer hints about terrain sufficient to verify the men’s general course, determining the precise location of the first maize settlements is impossible. We consider this area to be either in northwestern Chihuahua along the Río Casas Grandes or somewhere in northeastern Sonora along the Río Bavispe. (See our Part 2 commentary [chap. 3, sec. 8] for a discussion of the development of maize production in Central and North America.)

Although there is far from sufficient detail in either account to pinpoint the location, several route scholars have attempted to do so. Davenport and Wells (255–56) had ended their initial study with a Rio Grande crossing located somewhere between El Paso, Texas, and Rincon, New Mexico, and deferred to James Baskett for the route through the Sonora Valley north to south. However, years later (in 1923), Davenport took up this portion of the journey and suggested that if the party had crossed the northerly route through Guadalupe Pass in Chihuahua from Janos, Chihuahua, to Fronteras, Sonora, the first maize village would be Corodéguchi, which was affiliated with colonial Fronteras (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 282b, 283b); if the men crossed the more southerly pass, the maize country would be entered at Bavispe. Davenport chose Bavispe in Sonora as the first settlement encountered, identifying it as inhabited by Opatas, because he was persuaded that the descriptions by Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo matched the topography of northern Sonora. He was further persuaded that the two final stages from Bavispe to Ures went from Guázabas to Batuco, and Batuco to Ures, following the river valleys and lowlands south and west.

Others would locate the site of these maize growers by calculating the distance traveled. Krieger (“The Travels” 470), for example, proposed that the party had traveled 340 to 350 miles (assuming an average of ten miles per day) from La Junta de los Ríos to this area of maize cultivation; he also elected the Río Bavispe valley in northeastern Sonora as the location of the “maize people,” whom he likewise identified as Opatas. While suggesting the possibility that the agriculturalists in question may have been the people of the Casas Grandes area in Chihuahua, he considered the distance of 350 miles sufficient to put the party in Sonora (Krieger, “The Travels” 471). Nevertheless, as already indicated, we cannot assume that the party’s rate of travel over thirty-five days was consistent.

It seems to us that the best approach is simply to put in mind the north/south river valleys of western Chihuahua (the Río Casas Grandes or Río San Pedro or Janos) and eastern Sonora (the great north-south-running waterways of the Río Bavispe and the Río Moctezuma) and leave open the possibility that the men had arrived either to northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora. These river valleys threaded through the high country southward into valleys among which the high peaks of the Sierra Madre Occidental rose. The discontinuous mountain ranges of northwestern Chihuahua and northeastern Sonora are said to be passable on foot by walking between them over plains and low passes (Krieger, “The Travels” 470). The men located permanent settlements where maize was cultivated along the rivers.

In short, the area that Cabeza de Vaca described on that thirty-five-day passage consisted of the broad plateau, basically desert or dry grassland, bordered at its western extreme by the eastern slopes of the Sierra Madre Occidental, where agriculture was difficult if not impossible. In contrast, the western slope of the Sierra Madre was well watered (Coe, Snow, and Benson 88) and supported the agricultural settlements Cabeza de Vaca described. At these sites the men found permanent dwellings of adobe and others constructed of reeds, quantities of stored maize and plentiful squash and beans, as well as garments made of cotton (f54v; 609b). Cabeza de Vaca expresses profound gratitude for deliverance that bespeaks their relief upon finding sustenance and the confirmation of the decision made over a month earlier. The arrival at last at a sedentary people who cultivated food crops and dressed themselves in cotton and skins was remembered by Cabeza de Vaca as an event of monumental importance. These permanently settled peoples who cultivated the land and produced and stored foodstuffs represented a considerable advance over the migratory hunters and gatherers with whom the four men had lived during the six and a half years spent along the coast and in the coastal interior of the Gulf of Mexico in present-day Texas. The plenty that Cabeza de Vaca reports in this area became even more bountiful in Sinaloa, where the rainfall is even greater (see chap. 9).

## 2. SONORA RIVER CULTURE

These lands and peoples of maize cultivation, permanent settlements, and, from the European perspective, properly modest feminine attire cover an area of a hundred leagues in Cabeza de Vaca's (f54v) description. Women dressed in cotton shifts and buckskin and wore shoes; native peoples continually solicited the travelers' magical touch and blessing (f55r-v; 609b, 610a) and seemed convinced that the men had come from the sky (f55v). Oviedo (609b) gives a similar characterization of the sweep from the first maize settlements to those of Corazones, telling how the men went on for some eighty leagues, coming upon settlements every two or three days. We can assume, with Baskett (317), that Oviedo's eighty-league reference, like Cabeza de Vaca's reference to a hundred leagues, applied to the distance between the first maize area and Corazones. Oviedo (610b) too identified the region by "that form of dress and habitation," and the greater detail he offers in comparison to Cabeza de Vaca suggests that the Joint Report contained precise information on the topic.

The cultural complex that Cabeza de Vaca (f54v-f55v) describes for the one hundred leagues from the permanent settlements in northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora to Corazones is known archaeologically

as the Sonora River Culture, described as extending from the upper reaches of the San Miguel, Sonora, Moctezuma, and Bavispe Rivers in the north, through the Moctezuma where it becomes the Yaqui, and then continuing southward along the upper portions of the Mayo, Fuerte, and Sinaloa Rivers in the south (*Historia general de Sonora* 233, 241).

Although Sauer (“The Road” 16–17, “Aboriginal Population” 26) and other route scholars (Davenport 28:148; Krieger, “Nuevo estudio” 168, “The Travels” 470) have described the native inhabitants of Sonora as Opatas, it was not until the seventeenth century that continuous European settlement was established in northern Sonora and the native inhabitants identified as Opatas. Thus we prefer the more inclusive, archaeologically based designation of Sonora River Culture as appropriate to the range of subsistence economic activity that prevailed over a broad area.

The Sonora River Culture was characterized since about A.D. 1300 by permanent habitation with structures with foundations of stone and walls of adobe. Agriculture was the most important subsistence activity, and by 1500, maize, frijoles (the *tépari*), various types of squash (*calabaza*, *bule*), and cotton were regularly cultivated (*Historia general de Sonora* 242). The great number of *malacates* (perforated ceramic weights used in spinning thread) found in the most recent archaeological sites suggests significant textile activity, oriented toward the production of *mantas* likely used for exchange with other groups. The presence of copper bells, conch shells, and ceramics suggests a trade network extending to the east, north, and south (*Historia general de Sonora* 242–43).

### 3. TRADE AND COMMERCE

Although trade between the great commercial center at Casas Grandes and central Mexico had long since fallen into decline by the time the Cabeza de Vaca party passed through the area (*Historia general de Sonora* 245, 257), local routes of exchange likely continued to flourish as former Casas Grandes inhabitants migrated westward to Sonora. As the Cabeza de Vaca party traveled along on north/south routes in order to head west, they continued to discover similar groups as well as to hear more news of the prosperity of the north. Both Oviedo and Cabeza de Vaca characterize the traversal of northwestern Mexico more by the party’s interactions with the peoples who inhabited it than by its topography, and both provide the earliest European descriptions of long-distance trade between northwestern Mexico and the pueblo country of present-day New Mexico.

The recently acknowledged importance of Western and Northwestern Mesoamerica as zones of ancient civilization has revealed the complexity and

prominence of pre-Hispanic routes of commerce and migration between Central and Northwestern Mesoamerica; the many routes that crossed this extensive area are but one of the factors in assessing the political and economic relationships between central Mexico and the areas to the west and northwest (Weigand and Foster 3–4). Archaeologists differentiate between two broad arteries of exchange in this region; one, the generally coastal trade routes that served the high populations of the polities of Western Mesoamerica existing along its course as well as coastally oriented communities to their southeast; the other, a series of inland routes passing through the eastern flanks of the Sierra Madre Occidental and serving central Mexico in its links with the far northwest (Weigand and Foster 3–4).

When Oviedo (610b) speculates that the people of northern Chihuahua or Sonora learned their form of modest feminine dress from the more cultivated peoples of the north, he implies that it was from them that these people received the cotton mantles and turquoises they gave to the Narváez survivors (see 609b). As Oviedo's comment suggests, the northern lands and peoples stand out in this segment of the accounts, both of which point to long-distance trade and communication between Sonora and the pueblo country of the north. The party received here many deerskins and cotton mantles; the latter were described as being "better than those of New Spain" (f55r), thus suggesting the northern provenance of the woven goods and the coastal trade routes along which they came south. The men also received corals from the South Sea and turquoises and "emeralds" made into arrowheads, which these Indians had acquired in exchange for the feathers of parrots and other plumage that they had traded (f55r).

These "emeralds" were possibly the stone called *chalchihuitl* in Nahuatl. When he inquired about their origin, Cabeza de Vaca (f55r) understood that these precious green stones had come from the north, from very high sierras where there were many people and great houses. Consulting the 1571 *Vocabulario en lengua mexicana y castellana* of Fray Alonso de Molina (f19r) in which the *chalchihuitl* was described as a false or coarse emerald ("esmeralda basta"), Smith (*Relation* 170) described this *chalchinite* in the language of the Navajo (Dinéh) as "shades of apple or pea green, passing into blue," having nearly the same constituents as Persian turquoise and originating in the Cerrillos mines about twenty miles southeast of Santa Fe as "the most ancient of cavities whence are derived these Indian gems."

More recently, Karttunen (45) defined *chalchihuitl* as "precious green stone, turquoise" and added the definition of Molina as well as that of Rémi Siméon (*Dictionnaire de la langue nahuatl ou mexicaine* [1885]) as "rough emerald, pearl, precious green stone." In 1611, Covarrubias (548ab) defined the emerald as a precious green stone and added to his account of famous



emeralds in ancient and medieval history an early modern example, that is, “the five emeralds that Hernán Cortés brought when he came from Mexico in 1540 and which he lost in the war in Algiers,” which suggests Covarrubias’s possible conflation of the accounts of Cabeza de Vaca and Cortés with the “five emeralds” being those given to Dorantes (f55r). (Covarrubias also mentioned the great emerald mine made known to Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada in Colombia at the time of that region’s conquest and designation as the Castilian kingdom of Nueva Granada in the late 1530s.)

Cabeza de Vaca’s reference to emeralds as trading goods from the high sierras to the north was of interest to Oviedo (618a), who, upon reading about them in Cabeza de Vaca’s published account, added the note to his own. The Castilian party was not able to ascertain, Oviedo (610b) observed, whether the well-populated northern lands of great houses and cotton had gold. In short, as Oviedo reminds his readers, the four men continued to receive confirmation of the promise of northern wealth—first suggested by the copper bell and cotton mantles they had received at the Sierra de la Gloria in Coahuila—as they traveled through these permanent settlements of northwestern Mexico: “[a]nd so these Christians believed, from what they told them there, and from what they had seen before entering into the sierras, that the [copper] rattle and cotton blankets that they gave them, (as this history has recounted) came from above, from that other sea and coast, as was said; and thus they told them that it was settled, with many people and much food” (Davenport 28:60).

Clearly, long-distance trade shaped the range of commodities found in the settlements in the Monclova area of Coahuila. Copper and the cotton blankets the men received there were, as Oviedo judged, northern products and manufactures. The wild species of cotton, *Gossypium thurberi*, was found along the main mountainous backbone of Mexico and the area later to be the southwestern United States, but the domesticated *Gossypium hirsutum* was cultivated in the same area, having spread, as noted in our Part 6 commentary (chap. 7, sec. 7), northward from its center of variability in southern Mexico and Guatemala (Hutchinson, Silow, and Stephens 57–58, 103–05). Although Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 153) suggested that the cotton garments described here by Cabeza de Vaca were likely to have come from central Mexico or the western area to where the “people of the cows” were going to carry maize to plant, Cabeza de Vaca’s judgment that they were superior to the same items from New Spain contradicts the suggestion and implicitly echoes Oviedo’s statement that they came from the north.

The maize known but not found among the “people of the cows” back at La Junta de los Ríos was familiar to those people because of trade, and, due to a two-year drought, even the stored maize in the first permanent

settlements of Chihuahua or Sonora might have been traded rather than grown and stored in situ. In general, maize is described as the most widely exchanged and popular trade food in pre-Hispanic times, and turquoise “was worked in most pueblos into beads, pendants, and fetishes and traded as a finished product” (Ford, “Inter-Indian Exchange” 712–13).

Cabeza de Vaca also suggests that trade in bison robes, deer meat, and other products was not necessarily confined to this northwestern area; he had mentioned bison in the Gulf Coast region (f34r), worked with hides—probably deerskin—in the same general area (f38r, f40v), and spoke of receiving bison robes at Monclova in Coahuila (f49r) (on bison, see chap. 6, sec. 14). Bison meat, tallow, buckskin, and deer meat were traded from north to south (Ford, “Inter-Indian Exchange” 713); the deer fat that the four men ate on their thirty-five-day journey up the Rio Grande and into Chihuahua was quite possibly a trade item that had come to the “people of the cows” either from the north or the hunting valleys to the south (f54v). In sum, the reports of prosperous and settled northern peoples (f55r; 610b), as well as evidence of long-distance trade with them, constituted the most remarkable news that the Cabeza de Vaca party brought back to New Spain; with varying success, subsequent expeditions set out to confirm it.

#### 4. THE PROMISE OF SPIRITUAL WEALTH

If the promise of lands seen and unseen was material wealth, the experience of the lands traversed in Chihuahua and Sonora produced spiritual riches. Yet, contrary to the assertions of casual commentators, neither Cabeza de Vaca nor Oviedo claimed that the four men converted the natives to Christianity. Cabeza de Vaca (f55v) describes instead the efforts the men made among all these Sonora River Culture peoples to conserve and strengthen their authority, to achieve mutual understanding between themselves and a great variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, to effect the cessation of wars among enemy groups, and to simply tell the Indians about the Christian religion without presuming to convert them. The latter efforts were met by responses that could be interpreted by readers either as reverential or merely superstitious: the people came out at sunrise and raised their hands to the sky and then ran them over their bodies (f56r). All these people of the hundred leagues of the Sonora River cultural area were described by Cabeza de Vaca as being “of good disposition and diligent [and] well equipped to follow any course” (f56r).

Oviedo remarks that so many people came from ten to twelve leagues’ distance for curing that the men were nearly overwhelmed. He estimates that they took with them upward of a thousand and sometimes more

than three thousand people (609b–10a). This pattern continued, he says, until they came out onto the plain, near the coast (610a). Both accounts mention the multitudes who came to the men for blessing (609b, 610a; f55r–v) and emphatically make the point that, had it not been for the lack of a common language, they would have been able to convert these many peoples to Christianity (f56r; 610a). Although Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo underscore the fact that conversions had not taken place due to the mutual unintelligibility of languages, they make considerable claims to the natives’ predisposition to become Christian. We treat the traditions of which these interpretations form a part below (sec. 12.A).

##### 5. FROM THE HOUSES OF MAIZE TO CORAZONES: TERRAIN AND ORIENTATION

According to Oviedo (610ab), in the course of crossing Sonora, the Narváez party came out of the sierras and onto the plain upon a cluster of settlements that they called Corazones. When they arrived there, Oviedo (610a) calculates that it had been eight months since they had entered the sierras. Although it is impossible to eke out eight months from the beginning of the prickly pear season of 1535 to Christmas of that year, which is when Oviedo (611a) says they arrived at the Río Yaqui, his reference to the breadth of the area of mountain travel, if not its time span, is helpful.

Oviedo’s reference to highland travel begins at the sierra of seven leagues’ breadth in Coahuila, for he says that after finding the copper bell there, “another day they entered the sierra toward the west” (606a); he confirms this interpretation later when he remarks that the men had received the information about wealthy habitations to the north *before they had entered the sierras*, that is, upon receiving the copper bell and cotton mantles (610b, emphasis added). Thus he considered as their entrance into the sierras the area we identify today at Monclova in Coahuila; the men would not emerge until coming out onto the Pacific slope in Sonora.

Cabeza de Vaca (f50r) also conveyed this impression of mountainous terrain when he spoke of the valleys full of game through which they had passed in Coahuila soon after receiving confirmation of the bell’s significance at the settlement by the “beautiful river” (the Nadadores or one of its tributaries) on the western side of the Sierra de la Gloria. In addition, he later described arriving at La Junta de los Ríos by referring to the settlement located near “a river that flowed between some mountains” (f52v), and he characterized the second period of seventeen days spent traveling beyond La Junta as traversing plains and high sierras (f54v).

The lack of any reference by either narrator to difficulties of travel due to rugged terrain during this portion of the journey from La Junta de los Ríos to the maize settlements indicates not so much the passability of the areas now traversed as the men's general condition of being "hardened to the task" (f55v). Their initiation and apprenticeship to extremely difficult highland travel had occurred in the previous segment of the journey, from Tamaulipas to La Junta de los Ríos (see chap. 7), when they had passed through "fifty leagues of deserted land in very rugged mountains" (in Coahuila) that were so dry there was no game in them, and the Indians who accompanied them suffered even greater hunger and harm than they: "many of the people we brought began to fall ill from the great hunger and hardship they had suffered in those sierras, which were bitter and difficult in the extreme" (f51r). These desert mountains of Coahuila in the northern section of the Sierra Madre Oriental that extends from the Big Bend region in Texas to Monterrey in Nuevo León (Raisz) was the men's most challenging portion of the journey due to the combination of rugged desert terrain and the lack of sustenance.

The passage through the sierras of northern Chihuahua and Sonora was different on two counts. Even though the parallel ranges of the Sierra Madre Occidental with its north-northwest-tending faults, folds, canyons, and rivers proved difficult, the travelers came every two or three days to settlements that practiced agricultural cultivation (609b). Additionally, the men were by now capable of great physical endurance; Cabeza de Vaca (f55v) reported that even the Indians were astonished that he and his companions could travel all day without eating anything and then at night consume very little.

Apart from the highland territories the party traveled, the most significant feature geographically of this portion of the journey that takes the four men from the first maize settlements to those they called Corazones is the north/south orientation of the river valleys and therefore of the men's corresponding direction of travel. Even though their exact itinerary through these highlands of northern Mexico eludes us, their orientation is clear. If they found the first maize settlements along the Río Casas Grandes, for example, they might have descended its river system to connect with the Bavispe; if it was on the Bavispe that they came to the first maize households, they might have ascended its eastern fork and descended its western one, then headed west along it until coming to the Moctezuma (upper Yaqui), following it southward to the lower Yaqui. Only descent on the Sonora River system seems less likely, since from that river the distance between the sierra and the coast is much greater than either Cabeza de Vaca or Oviedo indicates, as we will see below.

When at last the four men came to the river where they found signs of Europeans, it too was on a north/south orientation. Although this river has universally been identified as the Yaqui (Baskett 319; Davenport 28:162; Krieger, “Nuevo estudio” 216), no one has provided a convincing interpretation corresponding to the evidence about distance given in the original accounts. Only Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 216) has attempted to justify it in the face of contradictory evidence. The distance between the Río Yaqui and the Río Petatlán (Sinaloa) is actually some fifty-five leagues, yet the estimates given by Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo for the distance between the flooded river to the north and the encounter with the Christians to the south were ninety-two (or ninety-seven) and one hundred leagues, respectively.

Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 208, 216–17) explained the near doubling of the actual distance by the additional trip into the mountains to the large encampment of Indians who had taken refuge from the Spanish slave hunters. This is a possibility, but a simpler explanation might be given, thanks to an insight that Krieger had but did not fully exploit; that is, that the four men calculated their arrival at the Yaqui on the river’s north/south course, well above the point where the river veers in a westerly direction toward the sea near Cócorm (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 264 [map]) and perhaps as far north as where the river is today called the Moctezuma or even the parallel-running Bavispe, which forms part of the same river system. This could significantly alter the figure of fifty-five leagues that separated the lower (east/west-tending) Yaqui from the Petatlán, and it suggests the general north/south (rather than east/west) orientation that must be kept in mind during this part of the journey.

Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 207) argued that the men came upon the Yaqui where it was running southward and that, finding it impassable due to the inundation, they nevertheless followed its western bank for twelve leagues before arriving at the Indians who recalled Guzmán’s incursion into the area of two years earlier. Krieger acknowledged that neither Cabeza de Vaca nor Oviedo says that this is what happened, yet he presented it as the only viable way to explain Cabeza de Vaca’s calculation of the distance of twelve leagues between where the four men encountered the flood and where they had news of the Christians. Given that Oviedo is clear that both the flood and the receipt of news of Christians occurred at the same river (611a), Krieger’s (“Nuevo estudio” 207–08) suggestion of the party’s following along its western bank around the westward bend in the river (about twelve leagues from the coast) is the only way to correlate Cabeza de Vaca’s calculations of distance and description of events with those of Oviedo.

Apart from the topography of the river valleys, the north/south axis orients both accounts’ descriptions of the entire area related to the Mar del

Sur (Gulf of California/Pacific Ocean). Summing up the cultural features from the first maize settlements in northwestern Chihuahua or northeastern Sonora to the river “discovered by Guzmán” (the Río Yaqui), Oviedo (610b), as already noted, characterized the entire area by “that form of dress and those houses,” referring to tall houses and full-length skirts of deerskin and cotton bodices worn by the women while the men went naked. From Guzmán’s river forward (by which he meant westward to the coast), such was not the case; the houses were of straw, and the women were covered only to the waist, others more modestly to the knee (610b). As the river he described flowed from north to south, this poor area consisted of the band of land along the coast, between the river and the coastline; this dry coastal plain lay to the west of the southward-running portion of the river. This interpretation is borne out by evidence of the archaeological cultures of the area; the coastal people were hunters and gatherers in contrast to the agricultural peoples of the interior.

Cabeza de Vaca presents a similar north/south orientation, for he calls Corazones the gateway to the northern provinces of the South Sea and warns that the coast was populated by people who fish (on rafts rather than in canoes) and eat grasses but do not cultivate crops (f56r). Although Sauer (“The Road” 16–18) identified these hunters and gatherers as Seris and the agriculturalists as Pimas and Opatas, we prefer, as already noted, to retain the more generic descriptions of the original accounts rather than attempt retrospective ethnic identifications that cannot be made with any measure of certainty.

Both accounts place the large and prosperous settlements on a north/south axis parallel to (but not on) the coast. Cabeza de Vaca (f56r) speculates, “We believe that near the coast along the route of those communities that we brought [with us], there are more than a thousand leagues of populated land. And they are well provided because they sow frijoles and maize three times a year.” This declaration is a complicated one. He says that they *believed* that there were lands that had much sustenance to the north. Here he repeats his occasional practice of projecting information that he had about one situation onto another, claiming abundance in a nearly infinite north on the basis of the information he had at the time of his writing (1538–40) about the area to the south of his position at this point in the journey. Oviedo (610b; Davenport 28:59–60) also presents the information about wealth to the north along the coast and emphasizes that it was based on natives’ reports: “[t]hese Indians told them that along all that coast from the south toward the north (which is better put, and the call should have been, not ‘from the south,’ but ‘northerly’) there were many people, much food, much cotton, and large

houses.” The road to the north led to a land of plenty; critical to locating it were the settlements called Corazones.

#### 6. THE LOCATION OF CORAZONES

Corazones was the area of settlement in Sonora so named by the four men because there they received more than six hundred open and dried hearts of deer (f56r; 610b), in addition to the five “emerald” arrowheads (f56r). Cabeza de Vaca refers to Corazones as a single village while Oviedo (610b) describes it as a cluster of several settlements (“este pueblo, ó mejor diciendo pueblos juntos”). Oviedo (611a) also mentions that it was Christmastime. Apart from Cabeza de Vaca’s (f58r) reference to the hot climate in this Sonora/Sinaloa area in January, this temporal reference to late December (1535) or early January (1536) is the only one given in either account from the time of the men’s departure from the Avavares in the summer of 1535 until they left San Miguel, Culiacán, for México-Tenochtitlán on 15 May 1536 (f63v).

It is difficult to assess the amount of time Cabeza de Vaca attributes to their stay at Corazones because he interrupts its description with comments on different topics. First, he describes three types of deer found there. He describes one of them, and just as the reader expects him to characterize the other two, the next sentence refers abruptly to the permanent dwellings of the people, and the one following that to the type of poison produced by a certain kind of tree (f56r–v). When he then states, “We were in this village for three days” (f56v), it is unclear whether he refers to Corazones or another settlement. If Oviedo’s description is correct, it is likely to be one or another of the settlements called collectively Corazones.

Oviedo stated that the men came upon these settlements when they emerged from the sierras, some twelve to fifteen leagues from the sea (610ab). His description is quite clear in contrast to Cabeza de Vaca’s, although the latter also specifies its location as twelve leagues from the coast, according to information received from natives of the area (f58r). According to Cabeza de Vaca, the crucial feature of Corazones was that it stood as the gateway to the bountiful northern provinces. The best clue to interpreting his remarks about its location is to suppose that he offers information to his readers as potential explorers of the area. That is, he interrupts the narration of his own journey presumably to orient future expeditions to Corazones, which he described as “the entrance to many provinces that lie toward the South Sea” (f56r). Yet going along the coast is perilous, because there is little sustenance; thus he warns about the dangers of staying on the coast and signals the important advantages of entering “along the route of those

communities that we brought [with us],” which would lead to “more than a thousand leagues of populated land.”

The construction of his narrative reveals that he defined Corazones in reference to the barrenness of the coast along which northbound expeditions would be traveling, rather than with respect to the highlands filled with abundance from which he and his companions had emerged. Thus, Cabeza de Vaca advises, if one travels a safe twelve to fifteen leagues from the coast as is customarily done, one must be alert to find Corazones: it is necessary to leave the northwestward-tending coastal plain and travel directly to the north. If this is not done, the little sustenance available along the coast will be insufficient to sustain the men and animals of any expedition because the inhabitants of the coast subsist on pigweed, grasses, and fish (f56r).

Previous route scholars have customarily assigned Corazones a location twice as far inland as the twelve to fifteen leagues specified by the original accounts. Baskett (318), for example, speculated that Cabeza de Vaca approached Corazones from the north and drew his route through Sonora by coming down the Río Sonora from its northern extremities. Baskett (318) judged that Corazones was located by the Coronado expedition narrators as being “near the valley of the Sonora river, not far from the head of the cañón in the neighborhood of Ures.” Davenport (28:149) accepted the same location as accurate: “[t]he indisputable testimony of the Coronado chroniclers locates Corazones in the lower Sonora Valley, at or near the present site of Ures.” He specified the site as being located “where Río Sonora emerges from its mountain gorges onto the coastal plain” (153). Davenport (151) rejected, however, a northern entry into Corazones, arguing that if the men had followed such a course they would have had firsthand information about the “more than a thousand leagues of populated land” to the north about which both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo spoke so vaguely. Sauer and several other route scholars also accept the Ures location; Sauer (“The Road” 17) locates the site of Corazones about eight miles north of present-day Ures.

All these commentators relied on the Coronado chroniclers to locate Corazones. Yet the Coronado expeditionaries had so much difficulty in finding it that they can hardly be vouchsafed as having made a correct identification when they finally reached permanent settlements. Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 185, 186) recalled the difficulty that Coronado twice had in finding Cabeza de Vaca’s Corazones, as revealed in the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza’s letter to the emperor and Coronado’s to the viceroy (both appear in English translation in Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 50–53, 162–78) and in Sauer’s (“The Road” 27) and Krieger’s (“Nuevo estudio” 186) deductions that Fray Marcos de Niza did not reach it. Coronado’s failure to find the pass



into the mountains and his loss of cattle due to lack of food reproduced the error against which Cabeza de Vaca had warned his readers. Furthermore, it is impossible to accept the Ures location of Corazones because of its distance of over a hundred miles from the coast.

It is equally impossible to propose an alternate location with precision, although Krieger’s (“Nuevo estudio” 183–95, “The Travels” 471–72) proposal has the merit of restoring the coastal proximity indicated by the original accounts. He pointed out that previous route interpreters had been misled by reading the Coronado chroniclers, who had in fact provided sufficient clues to confirm that Corazones was much closer to the coast (some fifty miles inland) than the distance of 115 miles as posited in the identification of today’s Ures as the site. The Coronado reporters indicated that Corazones was not in the Sonora River valley but rather in another one at a distance of a day’s travel or ten leagues to the south. Thus, Krieger (“Nuevo estudio” 195, 201, “The Travels” 472) suggested that Corazones lay some forty-five to fifty miles from the Gulf of California, and he located it between twelve and twenty-five miles south-southwest of Hermosillo on a tributary of the Río Sonora in the vicinity of “Torres on the highway and railroad which cross Sonora from north to south.”

While Krieger’s proposal brings the four men closer to the coast than the previous estimates, we argue that they did not go so far west in Sonora but rather descended the rivers (the Bavispe or the Moctezuma-Yaqui) farther east in Sonora; that is, that they had not earlier crossed the upper Yaqui (Moctezuma) en route to the Río Sonora but rather crossed the Yaqui at a point much farther south where it was tending east/west and likewise coming to within twelve to fifteen leagues of the coast. We would therefore locate Corazones around the area of Onavas on the Río Yaqui, upstream from where its tributary stream the Río Chico flows into it. Sauer (“The Road” 18–19) considered Onavas to be a subsequent site in the men’s itinerary (where the party received their first news of Christians) because he judged Corazones to be at Ures in Sonora. However, his remark about heavy settlement at Onavas, calling it traditionally a notably large settlement, suggests that it would be an appropriate site for Corazones in the itinerary that descended the Río Yaqui.

In Cabeza de Vaca’s principal narration regarding Corazones (f56v), he describes it or another settlement south of it as a place at which the men spent three days before traveling a day’s journey to another settlement where the rains overtook them. They could not cross the swollen river and stayed in this area for fifteen days; “during this time” they found the Indian wearing ornaments made of iron and were told that other men like them had “arrived at that river.” In this version, he makes no further mention of crossing

another river, and he has separated Corazones from the village where the rains overtook them.

His second version of these events comes in his summation of this part of their course (f58r). Here, he specifies the distance between (the probable) Corazones and the village of heavy rains as five leagues. Now, however, he separates the settlement where the rains overtook them from the river where they received news of the Christians, and he furthermore separates this river from the one to which Diego de Guzmán had arrived. He says that the distance from the village where the rains obstructed their progress to the river where they learned about the Christians was twelve leagues. He does not calculate a distance between this river and the one discovered by Diego de Guzmán.

The river Cabeza de Vaca introduces in this summation, contradicting his earlier narrated account by separating Guzmán's river from the one where they learned about the Christians, is the source of the confusion. The suppression (see f58r) in the Valladolid (1555) edition of the five-league distance between the village where the rains overtook them and Corazones compounds the problem. If one omits the addition of another river in the summation and recalls that after finding the Indian wearing the iron ornaments Cabeza de Vaca mentions no further rivers or river crossings until the arrival at the Petatlán, the distances he gives from the site of the floods to finding the Indian (twelve leagues) and the relationship of Corazones to the coast (at a distance of twelve to fifteen leagues) can be approximated to a journey down the Río Yaqui. The journey from Corazones (Onavas) or another village first mentioned in the possibly missing text (see f56r) to the place where the men were detained by the flood took them downstream to the portion of the Río Yaqui that swelled with floods, probably the area of today's Presa Álvaro Obregón.

Locating Corazones at the site of Onavas on the Río Yaqui, north of the point where its tributary the Río Chico empties into it, is plausible because of the area's easy communication with the north. The vulnerability of the Yaqui below the confluence, where the natural tendency to flooding ultimately led to the construction of a great dam and reservoir, the Presa Álvaro Obregón (*Nuevo atlas* 81), coincides with Cabeza de Vaca's report about desiring to cross the river in order to continue their southward movement and being overtaken by rains; the river swelled, and they were forced to stop in their course for two weeks. After they managed to continue southward a fortnight later, they went some twelve leagues (approximately thirty-six miles) along it and came to the portion of it, tending east/west and not far from the coast, that Diego de Guzmán and other reconnaissance parties had reached in 1533 and afterward. As Cabeza de Vaca (f56r) had cautioned, missing

Corazones would lead expeditionaries westward parallel to the coast where there was little sustenance; finding Corazones was crucial because it would lead straight north, into the agricultural country. The situation of Onavas along the Yaqui is such that from there, travelers would head straight north and into higher elevations if they followed the river upstream.

There are several points of interest regarding the Corazones area: the abundance and variety of large game available to them, Cabeza de Vaca’s description of the people’s homes as similar to the *buhíos* found in the Antilles, the poisonous trees, and the extraordinary gift of over six hundred hearts of deer. About the houses, the identification of them as *buhíos* suggests that they were large, if we are to judge by Cabeza de Vaca’s (f6r) account of such dwellings on the coast of the Florida Peninsula, where he judged one to be capable of accommodating three hundred people. Other descriptions of *buhíos*, such as on the island of Española, typically characterized them as dwellings of great size (Casas, *Historia* 1:218 [bk. 1, chap. 43]).

The poison of the trees, described by Cabeza de Vaca (f56v) as being toxic in its fruit, sap, and even its leaves if soaked in water, was noted by subsequent expeditionaries. Two accounts of the Coronado expedition mention the poison found in this area. Juan de Jaramillo (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 297) wrote: “[t]here is a poison in this region, and, judging by what we saw of it and its effects, it is the worst that one could find. From what we have learned, it was obtained from the sap of a small tree like the lentisk [*lantisco*], which grows among broken shale and in sterile soil.” Another Coronado chronicler, Pedro de Castañeda Nájera (Mora 96 [pt. 1, chap. 17]), recalled that in Sonora (“Señora”) a soldier had been killed by a poisoned arrow after having received only a small wound in the hand. Smith (*Relation* 181) called the tree mastich, but we make no attempt to identify it here.

What was the meaning of the gift of six hundred hearts of deer? Las Casas carefully studied Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación* and cited it at length in his *Apologética historia sumaria* (1555–59). As noted by Smith (*Relation* 177), Las Casas (*Apologética* 2:182 [chap. 168]) theorized that this extraordinary gift was made as an offering, not as nourishment: “[t]he people of those provinces seem to use these hearts more to sacrifice to their gods than for food.” Las Casas (*Apologética* 2:183 [chap. 168]) supported this interpretation with the 1539 account of Fray Marcos de Niza and another, unnamed source. About Cabeza de Vaca and his companions’ reception at Corazones, Las Casas emphasized the reverential treatment they received from the Indians, who treated them “as though they were their own fathers.” By their receipt of the deer hearts, he implies that the four men were welcomed as gods. Subsequent interpreters of this Cabeza de Vaca episode, such as Villagrà (19

[canto 3, vv. 35–69]) in his epic poem *Historia de la Nueva México* (1610), would give similar explanations.

#### 7. THE DISTANCE FROM CORAZONES TO THE AREAS OF SPANISH EXPLORATION (RÍO YAQUI) AND ENCAMPMENT (RÍO PETATLÁN)

The distances south from Corazones to the northernmost area the Spaniards of Nueva Galicia had explored (the Río Yaqui) and the area where they were currently encamped (the Río Petatlán or Sinaloa) are the next significant calculations made in the two accounts. On the one hand, Cabeza de Vaca seems to suggest one day's journey (f56v) and/or five leagues (f58r) for the calculation of the distance from Corazones to the point of flooding on the Yaqui, which they hoped to cross. However, while we assume that his (f56v) reference ("este pueblo") is to Corazones, the broken character of the narrative that precedes it, as noted above, suggests that some lines of text might not have been printed (f56r–v). If such is the case, this mention of the *pueblo* might be to a different settlement farther south. Thus, after three days in the settlement that may or may not have been Corazones in Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, the party advanced to another settlement a day's journey ahead (to the south); there they were overtaken by the waters of a river that forced them to cease travel for two weeks (f56v). Cabeza de Vaca calculates the distance from Corazones to the village where the rain stopped them as five leagues and the distance from that village to the river where they received news of Christians as twelve leagues (f58r). Thus, he seems to suggest a trip of some seventeen leagues from Corazones south to the point of northernmost Spanish exploration.

Oviedo says that from Corazones (his reference is explicit), the party went thirty leagues to the mentioned river (610b–11a), that is, the one that "Nuño de Guzmán" (actually Diego) had discovered (610b), and that there it rained for fifteen days, forcing the men to stop (611a). Detained on their trip southward from Corazones by the flooded river, Castillo discovered during this two-week hiatus the Indian wearing as ornaments a Spanish sword belt buckle and a horseshoe nail (f56v; 611a).

Both authors calculate the distance from Corazones to the Río Petatlán, where the travelers met the party of Diego de Alcaraz. Oviedo refers to this distance between the place where the rains caught them and their initial encounter with other Christians as a hundred leagues or more (611a). Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) offers an elaborate count that totals ninety-seven leagues; his calculation is useful because it summarizes his interpretation of the significant and sequential landmarks along the route.

In reverse order, that is, going south to north, again suggesting the desire to orient future exploration, Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) calculates the distance from the Río Petatlán to the one that Diego de Guzmán discovered to the one “where we learned about the Christians” to have been about eighty leagues. From there to where the rains overtook them, he figured the distance as twelve leagues; from that spot to Corazones, he calculated five leagues. Cabeza de Vaca thus separates the river at which they found evidence of Christians (“el desde donde supimos de christianos”) from their arrival at the settlement by the flooded river (“al pueblo donde nos tomaron las aguas”) by some twelve leagues. Oviedo seems to refer to the arrival at the river and receipt of the news of other Spaniards as occurring at the same site (611a). Thus, Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) figures ninety-two leagues to Oviedo’s one hundred as the distance from the rain and flooded waters of the Río Yaqui to the Río Petatlán; the addition of the distance (five leagues) from the settlement where they were flooded to Corazones brings Cabeza de Vaca’s (f58r) total to ninety-seven leagues, as mentioned. If the deletion of this five-league reference in the Valladolid (1555) edition (f58r; V:f47r) is substituted by the equivalent of a day’s journey as ten leagues, then Cabeza de Vaca’s calculation from Corazones to where they learned of the Christians (the Río Yaqui) would be approximately twenty-two leagues, in comparison to Oviedo’s thirty. This eight-league discrepancy would repeat the eight-league difference that exists between Cabeza de Vaca’s (f58r) calculation of ninety-two leagues from “the village where the rains had overtaken us” to the Río Petatlán and Oviedo’s (611a) one hundred leagues from “where it rained on them until [they encountered] the Christians.”

Despite the minor discrepancy, both authors calculate the distance traveled from the flooded river that caused the two-week hiatus in the journey to the encounter with other Spaniards as approximately 275–300 miles. In this light, if we were to use the men’s estimates of distance as the sole criteria for determining the site of Corazones and subsequent settlements, then Ures (Sauer, Davenport, and others) or Torres (Krieger) would be more plausible choices for Corazones. However, since even the shortest possible route between any two points on foot was likely to have been indirect in this area and the estimates of distance were undoubtedly conversions from the calculations of units of time, map distances are not as reliable as the men’s own descriptions of the areas traversed. In this regard, descent on the Río Yaqui answers some of the conundrums posed by both principal accounts, combining both criteria of large settlements and flooding along a river course that (once again) is likely to have provided their itinerary.

## 8. THE DISCOVERY OF EUROPEAN ARTIFACTS

The calculations just discussed constitute a natural break in both Cabeza de Vaca's (f56r–v) and Oviedo's (610b–11a) narratives, drawing them to internal closure before (after, in Oviedo's case) starting the next episode, the topic of which is the receipt of news that there had been Christians in the area that they now traversed (f56v; 611a). Finding European artifacts, however, was not the first notice they had of their countrymen being in this territory. Oviedo (611a; Davenport 28:62) reveals that, thanks to an Indian who had guided those earlier Spanish visitors from their boats and back to them, the four Narváez men had been told repeatedly about people like them having been there. As they later learned when they arrived at Culiacán (611a), this Indian was a native of central Mexico who, like hundreds of others, had been left in the north after being taken on Nuño de Guzmán's conquest expedition.

The artifacts found by Castillo could have been of varied provenance. The earliest Spanish presence in the area came from the first South Sea exploration sponsored by Hernán Cortés, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's 1532 expedition into the Gulf of California and the men who briefly survived its shipwreck (León-Portilla 85–90) (see chap. 16, sec. 6.B). Diego de Guzmán's men found many items of European manufacture north of the Río Petatlán when they passed through the area in 1533 en route to the Río Yaqui (see chap. 17, sec. 10). These objects could have belonged to Hurtado de Mendoza's men, apparently killed some twenty leagues north of the Río Petatlán (Smith, *Colección* 101–02), or to the men of the second ship of the expedition, commanded by Juan de Mazuela; Guzmán (CDI 12:445–47) declared that natives killed Mazuela's men in the area of his jurisdiction. On the other hand, the items found by Castillo may have come from Diego de Guzmán's 1533 expedition itself or subsequent slaving incursions into the area.

Cabeza de Vaca explains that he and the others were at first elated and then saddened at the news of Europeans, thinking that these men had come inland from the coast on a voyage of exploration of the South Sea and had departed, never to return (f56v–f57r). They soon learned that the situation was otherwise.

## 9. FROM THE RÍO YAQUI TO THE RÍO PETATLÁN (CHRISTMASTIME 1535 TO SPRING 1536)

From the men's discovery of European artifacts onward, both narratives are concerned with the effects of the conquest of Nueva Galicia, which had been undertaken by Nuño de Guzmán in 1530–31, when he was president of the

First Audiencia of New Spain. Both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo (f57r–v; 611b–12a) describe the fear of the natives and the abandonment of the lands, which they would later learn were due to Guzmán’s men’s slave-hunting expeditions in the area; each author states how the party was repeatedly told by the Indians about other men like them having been there, burning settlements and carrying off men, women, and children (f57r–v, f58r; 611ab). Oviedo (611b) specifies that the slave hunters had made three incursions into this area; these had occurred since Diego de Guzmán’s northernmost expedition of 1533 to the lower Río Yaqui. They soon confirmed for themselves the news that the invaders had not been South Sea explorers but rather slavers, and both Cabeza de Vaca’s and Oviedo’s narratives detail the destruction that the party had seen (f57r–f58r; 611b).

Both accounts express the travelers’ fear that they would be confronted by hostile Indians as they went on, yet they marveled when they in fact found themselves the object of ever greater fear and respect (f57v–f58r; 611b). This was a very difficult journey from the Río Yaqui to the area of the Río Petatlán (a distance of about a hundred leagues, according to the estimates analyzed above) because of the fearful flight of the natives and the subsequent lack of sustenance. Although the Cabeza de Vaca party occasionally found nourishment, they sometimes had to subsist on the bark of trees and roots (f57r; 611b). These were agricultural lands, and, according to Cabeza de Vaca, they were very fertile and full of waterways and rivers (f57r). Yet the natives had not dared to work the land for some time because of their fear of the Christians (f57r–v; 611b, 612a). Traveling ten to twelve leagues from the coast over those hundred leagues (611a), the four men and their band traversed the rich coastal plains and river valleys of southern Sonora and Sinaloa.

These lands consisted of “parallel basins and ridges, here tending almost north and south” (Sauer and Brand 10), and flood plains. While some upland and lowland areas of this basin-and-range landscape were dependent on summer rains and supported one crop annually, the flood plains could support two sets of crops, the second one aided by early spring floods coming from the mountain snows and rains (Sauer and Brand 7–8). Archaeological investigation shows that the greater number of settlements was in flood plains or their margins, with the greater part of the population being supported by the products of these alluvial plains (Sauer and Brand 15).

#### 10. DIEGO DE GUZMÁN’S EXPEDITION OF 1533

The northernmost point in North America reached by Spanish explorers and conquerors prior to the Narváez survivors’ passage through the area was Diego de Guzmán’s expedition of 4 August to 30 December 1533 (Smith,

*Colección* 94–103). Guzmán’s account of that expedition and the “second anonymous account” of the conquest of Nueva Galicia, whose author we have identified as Jorge Robledo, shed light on the Río Yaqui area traversed by Cabeza de Vaca and his companions early in 1536 (see chap. 17, secs. 3.B, 9, 10). Robledo (“Segunda relación” 172, 174) described the Río Yaqui area in 1533 as being well populated, with settlements of the type found in the Mayo and Sinaloa regions farther south but bigger and of better construction; there were bovine animals in the area as well as deer “as large as those of Spain.” He described the lands of this area as flat, dry, and in good condition; the shore was separated from the main cordillera by approximately thirty or forty leagues of level terrain.

Robledo (“Segunda relación” 174) characterized the Indians from the Río Yaqui to the Río Petatlán as “all one people,” living on melons, maize, beans, and certain seeds that they made into bread; they did not drink *chicha* or have maguey plants, as did the people of the central valley of Mexico. Robledo (“Segunda relación” 165–66, 174–75) reported that from Culiacán to the Río Petatlán and from there to the Río Yaqui they found neither sacrifices nor idols nor cannibalism. These people were great archers, very astute in war; in fact, the single serious battle of Guzmán’s expedition was fought above the Río Yaqui, and it left twelve of the total seventeen horses wounded and one dead (“Segunda relación” 172). These natives were capable of much hard labor, because their main occupation was hunting. Some of the women were tattooed on the chin “like Moriscas,” and some of the men also had such ornamentation (“Segunda relación” 174).

There is no counterpart to this description in Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*. His (f57r) account of this route from the Yaqui southward attests to the abandonment of the land: “[w]e traveled through much land and we found all of it deserted, because the inhabitants of it went fleeing through the sierras without daring to keep houses or work the land for fear of the Christians.” His remarks confirm the general situation described in the various accounts about the flight of the natives to the sierras. In fact, many native groups who lived in the path of the conquest, from Michoacán northward, tended to flee into the highlands where horses could not easily go.

#### 11. THE HIGHLAND RETREAT

The 1533 Diego de Guzmán expedition accounts frequently spoke of being told that the natives of the area of conquest had fled to the sierras (Smith, *Colección* 99–100). It was to one of these highland retreats, somewhere along the rich but now abandoned course between the Río Yaqui and the Río Petatlán, that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were led by native guides.



Oviedo places this settlement some forty leagues north of Culiacán, and Cabeza de Vaca speaks of the considerable stores of maize he and the other Narváez survivors found there (f57v; 611b). Later, in order to feed Diego Alcaraz’s men and horses at the Río Petatlán, the Indians would bring down from this village maize that they had stored and hidden in sealed vessels (612b; see chap. 9, sec. 10). Sauer (“The Road” 19) prudently suggested that this mountain refuge was to be sought “in the sierra overlooking the modern Sinaloa [River], on one of the headwaters of the stream of that name.” Such a location is highly plausible, because Sauer based his assessment on Oviedo’s calculation that this village was located forty leagues from Culiacán.

From this refuge high in the sierras, Cabeza de Vaca and his companions sent out scouts to a settlement a three-day journey away; they found that village deserted, but in the course of this trip the guides were able to spy on Spanish horsemen who were transporting Indians in chains (f57v–f58r). (Enchained slaves in Nuño de Guzmán’s conquest of Nueva Galicia are pictured in the Huejotzingo Codex [see vol. 3, fig. 16].) The results of slaving activity that they witnessed there became fully apparent as the men traveled southward into Sinaloa and Culiacán. Oviedo (611b–12a) also recounts that their guides spied on the soldiers taking Indians as slaves and makes clear something that Cabeza de Vaca put differently; in fear of being captured, many Indians accompanying the men abandoned them and fled to their homelands back in the north (611b–12a). According to Cabeza de Vaca, although the Indians were greatly disturbed and “some of them returned to give notice through the land that Christians were coming,” he allows only that “these people would have done much more if we had not told them not to do it and not to have fear,” and that “with this they were reassured and very pleased” (f58r). (The 1555 Valladolid text reads, “Many more would have done this if we had not.”) In fact, Cabeza de Vaca insists that they tried but could not persuade the Indians to return to the safety of their homes as far away as a hundred leagues to the north.

The area Cabeza de Vaca and his companions would traverse from the Indians’ highland refuge to the Río Petatlán was deserted in 1536, but in 1533 it had been heavily populated, according to the accounts of Diego de Guzmán’s expedition. As described by eyewitness accounts (“Segunda relación” 167; Smith, *Colección* 96), the province of Sinaloa, located some thirty leagues north of the river, was populated by approximately twenty to twenty-five settlements of one hundred to three hundred houses each. These people lived in houses made of reeds, and they dressed in skins rather than garments of woven cloth (“Segunda relación” 165; Smith, *Colección* 97; “Tercera relación” 147; “Cuarta relación” 120).

Cabeza de Vaca describes his party's five-day journey from the highland retreat to the Río Petatlán. He and his companions left the mountain refuge the day after they had sent guides out to find the inhabitants of a native village some three days from there; they met the scouts, who reported finding no Indians but rather had spied on the Spaniards carrying Indians in chains. On the second day of their journey, they slept on the road; on the third day, their guides brought them to the place where, a few days before, they had seen the Spaniards. After debating that night who should go after the slave hunters on the following morning, that is, on the fourth day of travel from the mountain retreat, Cabeza de Vaca and Estevanico left in their pursuit. On the fifth day, they encountered the soldiers, who led them to their captain, Diego de Alcaraz (f57v–f58r).

Cabeza de Vaca (f58r–v) interrupts his narration to sum up the distance traveled from Corazones to the Río Petatlán, and he describes this area, today's states of southern Sonora and northern Sinaloa, as full of mineral wealth and hot in climate in areas of permanent settlement. This report implicitly contrasts his previous accounts of the area inland from there and stretching to the Gulf of Mexico, which he characterized as inhabited by migratory peoples and hunters and gatherers, particularly in the high desert sierras and plateaus of Coahuila and southwestern Texas and the coastal areas of southeastern Texas and Tamaulipas. This internal summary constitutes the effective conclusion to the account of the "captivity" that began when the survivors of Narváez's expedition were thrown from their rafts onto the northwestern shore of the Gulf of Mexico. As a result, he sums up a much longer trajectory than that from the settlements at Corazones in Sonora to the Río Petatlán. This account in fact embraces his experience of the North American continent from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to near that of the Gulf of California:

Throughout all this land where there are mountains, we saw great evidence of gold and antimony, iron, copper, and other metals. Through the area where there are permanent houses it is hot, so much so that in January there is great heat. From there southward, the land is uninhabited to the North Sea; it is very wretched and poor, where we suffered great and unbelievable hunger. And those who inhabit and roam that land are a people brutish and of very bad tendencies and customs. The Indians who have permanent houses and those farther back pay no attention to gold and silver nor do they find that there can be any benefit from it. (f58r–v)

That is, to the south of the area where permanent dwellings were found—in the area of La Junta de los Ríos (f52v) or, thirty-five days' travel later, in Chihuahua or perhaps Sonora (f54v)—there was a broad band of unsettled

land that ran all the way to the North Sea (the Gulf of Mexico). Emphasizing that he and his companions had suffered great hunger through the areas of Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Chihuahua, he here describes the people who inhabited those lands less kindly than he did when narrating the four men’s encounters with them.

Cabeza de Vaca distinguishes various levels of social organization among native groups in all areas, but his broadest characterization of native peoples contrasts the hunters and gatherers among whom the four survivors had lived in the coastal and coastal interior areas of Texas between 1528 and 1535 with the agricultural peoples they encountered at the confluence of the Río Conchos and the Rio Grande and then much farther west on the overland trip across Mexico between late 1535 and early 1536 (see f47v, f52v). Nevertheless, all these peoples, whom he divides into the categories of those who have permanent houses and those who do not, “pay no attention to gold and silver nor do they find that there can be any benefit from it” (f58v).

This last observation no doubt animated the hopes of successive explorers, and Oviedo (618b) cites this remark about precious metals in his own chapter 7, written after reading Cabeza de Vaca’s published *relación*. Without mincing words, Oviedo says he would like to know more about this mineral wealth and with greater specificity. Oviedo’s comment raises the possibility that the Joint Report did not support Cabeza de Vaca’s (f58r) claims of “great evidence of gold and antimony, iron, copper, and other metals.”

#### 12. “DOWN FROM THE SKY”

There is only one significant difference in interpretation between Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo on the way the natives received and treated the four Narváez survivors throughout this area. That is the inflection that each gives to the Indians’ notion that the party of four had “come from the sky.” At second hand, Oviedo (610a; see also 605b, 611b) takes the meaning to be something like “descended from heaven,” because he interprets all instances of native shyness or fear as spiritual reverence and devotion. Cabeza de Vaca (f55v), at first hand, stated that his locution “venido del cielo” meant the Indians said that the men had come down from the sky, which was how the natives of the Río Sonora area described the origin of anything the presence of which they could not explain: “because all the things that they do not have or do not know the origin of, they say come from the sky.”

Cabeza de Vaca’s original, 1542 explanation is suppressed in the 1555 edition of the *relación*, thus subtly enhancing the aura of divinity with which the Indians presumably imbued the men. In any case, coming “from the sky” in Cabeza de Vaca’s account was the men’s understanding of how the natives

of southeastern Texas and northern Tamaulipas explained the origin of the gourds that had come floating down the Rio Grande: “[a]nd they say that those gourds . . . come from the sky, because throughout that land there are none nor do they know where they might be, but only that the rivers bring them when they flood” (f46r).

“Coming from the sky” is also the explanation Cabeza de Vaca gives at the present moment in the *relación* (f56v) when he attributes it to the natives of northern Sinaloa, who thus describe the Spaniards who had previously come with horses, swords, and lances and attacked them. (The referent is the 1533 Diego de Guzmán expedition or a subsequent one.) Although these agents of death and destruction were seen as possessing magical and extraordinary powers, the Spanish horsemen could hardly be seen as heavenly visitors long awaited. Not surprisingly, Oviedo makes no reference to the mounted and armed Spaniards as “people come from heaven”; he declares only that the Indians referred to the party of “these other pilgrims” [estotros peregrinos] as such (611b, 612b). Thus, while in both accounts the men are described as holding a magical or supernatural (benevolent or malevolent) charm for the Indians, Cabeza de Vaca’s firsthand explanations do not make explicit the *praeparatio evangelica* notion conveyed by Oviedo’s (611b) view that the men were taken by the natives to be “holy and divine, as men come down from heaven.” Showing the men’s role in presenting this notion to the natives, Oviedo (612b) later interjects into Melchior Díaz’s speech to the Indians at Culiacán the idea that “these Christians came from heaven and walked over many territories, telling them [the Indians] to incline themselves toward heaven, where the lord of all creation lives.” In contrast, Cabeza de Vaca interprets references by different native groups to celestial points of origin as their way of denoting “origin unknown,” not foreshadowings of the coming of the Christian gospel (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 183–84).

#### 12.A. *The Tradition of “Men Come Down from Heaven”*

Cabeza de Vaca’s and Oviedo’s respective treatments of this subject merit an assessment of the somewhat bifurcated tradition of which they formed a part. Although they both wrote as devout Christians, the former (as firsthand reporter) tended toward ethnographic interpretation, the latter (as historian) toward the providential and the religious. The reports of many first encounters in the Indies insisted that the natives understood that the European strangers came “from heaven” in the sense of showing a predisposition toward the invaders as bearers of the Christian gospel. Columbus is the first to offer this view in his reports from his first transatlantic voyage, particularly his letter of 15 February 1493 to Luis de Santángel, exchequer of the royal

household who helped finance the enterprise. Subsequently, Columbus’s son and biographer, Hernando Colón, as well as his editor, Bartolomé de las Casas, underscored and reworked this supposed native perception according to their own providentialist interpretations of the Columbian voyages.

The other line of interpretation expressly emphasized the ethnographic. Like Cabeza de Vaca’s firsthand account, Fray Ramón Pané had reported on his personal knowledge of the Tainos from his participation in Columbus’s second voyage and subsequent stay in Española to proselytize the natives. In his understanding of Taino beliefs a few years after their initial encounter with Europeans, he reported that the natives now believed that the Spaniards’ presence fulfilled a traditional prophecy that had threatened the Tainos with doom and destruction (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 197n57). Two of Pané’s most prominent readers, Pietro Martire and Hernán Pérez de Oliva, took this information into account and therefore refrained from the hyperbolic interpretations made possible and promoted by the Columbuses and Las Casas. To gauge the resonance of such reports by the 1540s and how they affected subsequent interpretations of the Narváez survivors’ reported experiences, we review these significant antecedents.

In the previously mentioned “letter of discovery” (Colón, *Textos* 139–46) written to Luis de Santángel on 15 February 1493 and published in numerous editions from 1493 onward, Columbus described the Tainos’ reactions to the appearance of the strangers. We cite here the Morison (*Christopher Columbus* 208) translation:

And they know neither sect nor idolatry, with the exception that all believe that the source of all power and goodness is in the sky, and they believe very firmly that I, with these ships and people, came from the sky, and in this belief they everywhere received me, after they had overcome their fear. . . . [A]nd they are still of the opinion that I come from the sky, in spite of all the intercourse which they have had with me, and they were the first to announce this wherever I went, and the others went running from house to house and to the neighboring towns with loud cries of, “Come! Come! See the people from the sky!”

The interpretation to be made of Columbus’s remarks in this oft-published letter is clear: the Tainos took the Spaniards for gods. Hence many translators of this text have taken Columbus’s cue, further interpreting his locutions by translating *cielo* as “Heaven”: “‘Come! Come to see the people from Heaven!’” (Parry and Keith 2:61).

In editing Columbus’s journal of the first voyage, Las Casas continued the line of interpretation initiated by the Admiral in his letter to Santángel. In the log entry of 14 October 1492, Columbus (Colón, *Textos* 33; Dunn and Kelley

75) remarked that they understood that the natives of the northwestern shores of the island of San Salvador (Guanahani) were asking them if they came from the sky (“nos preguntavan si éramos venido[s] del cielo”) and that the natives called to their people to “[c]ome see the men who came from the heavens. Bring them something to eat and drink” [(v)enid a ver los hombres que vinieron del çielo, traedles de comer y de beber]. A similar remark appears in the entry for 3 December regarding the reaction of the people on the northeastern coast of Cuba near Baracoa. Whereas the 14 October entry seems to be a direct citation from the Admiral’s log, the 3 December comment makes clear that Las Casas, as editor, is doing the quoting: “[t]hey are people like the others that I have found (the Admiral says) and of the same beliefs, and they believed that we came from the heavens and they soon give what they have for anything that is given to them, without saying that it is too little; and I believe that they would do so with spices and gold if they had them” (Dunn and Kelley 197; Colón, *Textos* 71). The attribution of divinity made by the islanders regarding the white strangers is most clearly evident in the 14 October entry: “[m]any men came, and many women, each one with something, giving thanks to God, throwing themselves on the ground; and they raised their hands to heaven, and afterward they called to us in loud voices to come ashore” (Dunn and Kelley 74, 75). Decades later, Cabeza de Vaca (f56r) also recounts a spectacle of native peoples (in Sinaloa) raising their hands to the heavens, but in Columbus’s log, Las Casas makes an explicit interpretative link between this action and “giving thanks to God.” These gestures on the part of the natives were thus encoded from Columbus onward as acts of religious reverence.

In his version of Columbus’s account in the *Historia de las Indias*, Las Casas (1:206, 208 [bk. 1, chap. 41]) emphasized the point. For the day of 12 October, he observed that the Indians were very pleased to see the Christians and very eager to encounter them again and see their things, not so much because of the nature or apparent value of the goods but rather because they believed that these items, like the Christians, had come from the sky, and “they desired to have something that came from there.” For 14 October, and following Columbus’s original account, Las Casas narrated the exploration of the northwest coast of San Salvador by telling how two or three settlements of people came to the beach, “shouting to the Christians and giving thanks to God,” and how the people came swimming out to meet them, asking by way of signs if they came from heaven. Las Casas here clearly repeated the claims found in Columbus’s letter to Santángel.

Hernando Colón’s biography of his father offers a similar interpretation, taking up the same themes as he narrated the first voyage. For the emblematic encounter on 14 October on the northwestern coastline of San Salvador,

Colón (*Vida* 94; Keen 64 [chap. 25]) remarked, “The natives, seeing him go by, ran along the shore crying out, offering him food, and calling others to see the men who had come from Heaven; they prostrated themselves and raised their hands as if giving thanks for the Christians’ coming.” He repeated the account in telling how, on 10 December, their guide from San Salvador, “saying many good things of the Christians and declaring they came from Heaven,” persuaded the fearful inhabitants of Española “to return, confident and secure” (Keen 76; Colón, *Vida* 107 [chap. 31]).

Fray Ramón Pané’s account of the Tainos, which offers a chronologically subsequent perspective, was published by Hernando Colón in his *Vida del Almirante* (186–206; Keen 153–69 [chap. 62]). Colón interpolated Fray Ramón’s ethnographic description, which was the first European study of native Amerindian customs undertaken in the New World, in his own chapter 62 devoted to the customs of the inhabitants of Española. Pané (Colón, *Vida* 186, 201; Keen 153, 165 [chap. 62]) recorded a prophecy according to which Yucahuguamá, the “immortal being in the sky whom none can see and who has a mother but no beginning,” had told a cacique that “those who succeeded to his power would enjoy it only a short time because there would come to his country a people wearing clothes who would conquer and kill the Indians, and that they would die from hunger.”

At first, Pané continues, the Tainos thought these invaders were the Caribs, but since they merely attacked, robbed, and went away, it was decided that the prophecy referred to other people. “That is why,” Fray Ramón (Keen 165; Colón, *Vida* 201 [chap. 62]) declared, “they now believe that the idol prophesied the coming of the Admiral and the people who came with him.” Thus, the “people coming from the sky” who were welcomed in Columbus’s reports of his first encounters on the first voyage became, some years after the second voyage, the authors of Taino destruction as described by Pané. Pané identified the bearded strangers not on the basis of their being “from heaven” but rather for their role as the source of doom (Adorno, “The Negotiation” 197n57).

“Coming from the sky” did not mean being from the place of the origin of creation or the afterlife in Pané’s account of Taino lore; the Tainos located the sites of the beforelife and the afterlife on their own landmass. The origin of humanity was identified with a province on the island in which there was a mountain having two caves, from which came the majority of the people who inhabited the island (Colón, *Vida* 187; Keen 153 [chap. 62]; Anghiera, *Décadas* 192 [dec. 1, bk. 9]). Likewise, the afterlife was found not in “heaven” but in a province on the island. Thus, the notion that the Spaniards (as the agents of destruction) should have dropped out of the sky is quite logical according to Pané’s understanding of Taino beliefs.

Pané, the religious man and observer of customs trying to record the substance of what he understood he was told, set forth this explanation with no apparent concern for the natives' negative interpretation of the Spanish presence thus revealed. Just as he contradicted and corrected Columbus's earlier assertions about the absence of idolatry and superstition among the natives by detailing their practices, his account also contradicted Columbus's views about the natives' original assertions about the Europeans' identity. Pané made it clear that the Tainos felt not reverence but fear for the Spaniards; like their fear of the Caribs, it was the fear of their final destruction.

As already indicated, Pietro Martire read Columbus's account, as well as Pané's, and reported both in his *Primera década* (published in 1511). The humanist scholar (Anghiera, *Décadas* 106 [dec. 1, bk. 1]) preferred Pané's ethnographic approach to Columbus's exaltations and reported the natives' supposed first impression of the strangers not as "people come from heaven" but rather as "people who had fallen out of the sky" [una gente caída del cielo]. Martire d'Anghiera (*Décadas* 191–98 [dec. 1, bk. 9]) reported Pané's entire account, concluding it with the friar's report of the Tainos' remarkable interpretation of prophecy as "something else worthy of telling" [otra cosa digna de recuerdo] (198). When the Tainos saw the Spaniards invade their island, they put together all their conjectures on the subject and concluded that these were the people announced in the prophecy who would come wearing clothes and kill the Indians. Martire added that the Tainos had not been misguided in this belief inasmuch as they were now all subjugated to the Spaniards, and those who had resisted them were all dead.

In his *Historia de la invención de las Indias*, which is a gloss of Martire's *Primera década*, Hernán Pérez de Oliva (46 [narr. 1], 70 [narr. 3]) likewise did not exploit the "people from heaven" theme. Instead, he made his principal concern the natives' fear of the Spaniards and the liberation of the former from the Caribs (Pérez de Oliva 54, 60 [narr. 2]). He also reiterated the prophecy of destruction but, unlike Martire, who made no comment on it, referred it to Satan's intervention. On the subject of being from heaven, Pérez de Oliva (78–80 [narr. 4]) put in his account of the second (not the first) voyage a speech by a wise old man on the island of Cuba who admonished Columbus to treat the natives well, because "there are two roads which men's souls take after they leave their bodies—one joyful, the other dark and obscure." On hearing Columbus's reassurances that he had come precisely to teach about those two paths, he merely asked if Columbus "was sent by Heaven." Pérez de Oliva put in Columbus's interpreter's mouth only an indirect reply, describing instead "our princes and the grandeur of Spain."

In Pérez de Oliva's (110 [narr. 8]) interpretation, the natives were subdued through either negotiation or war, and they finally accepted subjugation so



that, in the Admiral’s words, their “captivity [might] turn into liberty, sudden fear into tranquillity, and poverty into abundance.” Yet elsewhere Pérez de Oliva summarized Pané’s account. He repeated the prophecy recorded by Pané to the effect that the natives believed that there would come a people, fully clothed, who would destroy their religion and customs and in whose power many of their descendants would die and others lose their freedom (Pérez de Oliva 114 [narr. 9]); he attributed their understanding that these were the Spaniards to the devil’s doing. He commented that it seemed that Satan had facilitated the conjecture about the arrival of the Spanish and that he “wanted those whom he had deceived to help him lament his flight.”

Despite this disclaimer about the source of the prophecy, Pérez de Oliva, like Pietro Martire, emphasized not the providential presence of the Columbus expedition in the Antilles but rather the conduct of its soldiers. The Admiral’s final speech to the defeated Tainos, which proclaims that the Tainos sought the Spaniards’ enmity when the Spaniards wanted only their friendship, also includes the utterance: “[n]ow that you have seen what kind of enemies we are, you should try our friendship” (Pérez de Oliva 110 [narr. 8]). Like Martire and Pérez de Oliva, Oviedo emphasized the moral conduct of the conquistadors, and in reference not to Columbus but to the four survivors of the Narváez expedition he also underscored the workings of divine providence.

Overall, we can say that in the early 1540s the phrase “vienen del cielo” carried with it a heavy and bifurcated interpretative cargo regarding native beliefs and European perceptions of them. The religious significance attached to it by Oviedo, Las Casas (*Apologética*), and others is but one strand of a complex developing tradition regarding the four Narváez survivors’ experiences. In contrast, the approach that Cabeza de Vaca took is reminiscent of the more ethnographically oriented line of interpretation that began with Fray Ramón Pané and that, alongside the *praeparatio evangelica* interpretation, also constituted the legacy of religious men of the sixteenth century.

All this notwithstanding, Cabeza de Vaca’s remarks about the four men being thought to have “come down from the sky” are easily interpreted in light of other incidents he narrates in such a way as to attest to their perceived divinity. For example, he notes that when women who traveled with them gave birth, they would insist on bringing the infants to them afterward to touch (or bless) them (f55r–v). Oviedo (610a) adds the information that, in addition, the mothers would put three or four kernels of maize in the infants’ hands and invite the men to accept the grains from them; it was his understanding that in doing so, the mothers felt that their offspring would be kept from sickness or pain. Thus, while Cabeza de Vaca keeps his

claims minimal and his descriptions mundane, the overall effect is still one of miraculous intervention on the Narváez survivors' behalf. The spiritual resonances of the four men's actions, as understood by their native and Spanish interlocutors, would likewise play a role in the next segment of the narrative of their journey.

## CHAPTER 9

### Part 8: The Journey from the Río Petatlán to México-Tenochtitlán (Spring 1536 to 23 July 1536) (f58v–f63v)

This section begins with the “liberation” of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions from captivity, that is, the end of their long sojourn among the native peoples of North America. What did “captivity” mean to a sixteenth-century Castilian? Cabeza de Vaca uses the term in two ways in this section of his account as he reflects on its end as they were reunited with their countrymen in Nueva Galicia. On the first occasion, he uses it simply to refer to their long separation from Spanish civilization: “[a]fter we saw clear signs of Christians and we understood that we were very near them, we gave many thanks to God our Lord for wanting to take us out of so sad and wretched a captivity” (f58v). He had used the term in this same general sense earlier, when he described how he and his companions had been with the Avavares in southeastern Texas from September 1534 to summer 1535. There, he said, they had moved about and acted relatively freely, not as slaves (f41r); nevertheless, he remarked, “And for myself I can say that I always had complete faith in his mercy that he would deliver me from that captivity. And so I always said to my companions” (f37v). When reflecting on their return to Spanish-held territory, he uses the term “captivity” in the literal sense of being held captive as he reckons the time since he and his three companions left the Avavares at the beginning of the prickly pear season of 1535: “in the two thousand leagues that we traveled by land and through the sea on the rafts and another ten months that we went through the land without stopping *once we were no longer captives*” (f63r, emphasis added). Here “freedom” commenced with the ten months of overland travel.

The concept of captivity in the sixteenth century is perhaps best elucidated in the *Siete partidas* (1256–63), the authoritative and encyclopedic legal code compiled under the direction of Alfonso X of Castile (1221–84). “Those are properly called captives,” the *Segunda partida* declares, “who come under the control of men embracing another belief, for these have the power to put them to death after they have taken them prisoners, on account of the contempt which they have for their religion, or they can subject them to cruel punishments, or make use of them as slaves, compelling them to perform

such arduous tasks that they will prefer death to life” (Scott, *Las siete partidas* 516–17 [part. 2, tit. 29, law 1]). In addition, captives may suffer the loss of all property, the separation from family and friends, the latter being regarded as a “a very serious matter, for as the union of love surpasses and is superior to that of descent and everything else, so is the affliction and sorrow greater when they are torn asunder.” To be a captive, in sum, “is the worst misfortune that men can endure in this world” (Scott, *Las siete partidas* 517 [part. 2, tit. 29, law 1]). When describing his life among the Indians of the Texas coastal interior in the Joint Report, as rendered by Oviedo (599b), Dorantes echoed these sentiments, saying that if his fate had been in his own hands, he would have preferred that they died in that land, alone and as men of ill fortune, asking God for mercy for their sins, rather than live among such beastly and wretched people as the Mariames.

Although Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) marks the narrative transition of his return to the “land of Christians” with a reflection that invites the reader to imagine the men’s pleasure upon release from so long a period of travail and hardship (“may the pleasure we felt on this account be judged by every man”), he presents as the greatest challenge the one that still lies ahead: negotiating with the Spanish slave hunters on behalf of the Indians. This will produce a reflection on how people can deceive themselves, believing that just when they have gained their liberty, the reverse turns out to be true (f60v): “from which it is evident how much men’s thoughts deceive them, for we went to them seeking liberty and when we thought we had it, it turned out to be so much to the contrary.” Despite the fact that this segment of the journey reintegrates the four Narváez expedition survivors into the activities of their countrymen, it ironically turns out to be one of the most stark portions of the narrative: “[a]nd after this we suffered many annoyances and great disputes with them, because they wanted to enslave the Indians we brought with us” (f59v). As in the previous section of the *relación* (f54v–f58v), the Spanish invasion (1530–31) of northwestern Mexico continues to provide the pertinent backdrop against which to consider Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative; we will again refer to the Guzmán conquest accounts where appropriate.

The area of the Río Petatlán had been first traversed by the Spanish in 1531, when Lope de Samaniego’s expedition sent out by Nuño de Guzmán reached this river. Samaniego found people living in houses made of reed mats, clothed in animal skins, and of such poor skills (“gente de tan ruin arte”) that he decided to return to Culiacán (“Primera relación” 157; “Cuarta relación” 120). It was at this point that Guzmán decided to pursue a course over the sierras to the Gulf of Mexico (“Cuarta relación” 120), a proposed overland march that was identified by others (“Primera relación” 157)—but not by Guzmán or the participants in his expedition—as the search for

the Seven Cities (see chap. 17, sec. 9.D). Passing through the Río Petatlán (Río Sinaloa) area in 1533 on the Diego de Guzmán expedition to the Río Yaqui, Jorge Robledo (“Segunda relación” 165) said that they called the river the “Petatlán” because the houses were covered with reeds, that is, “in the language of Mexico [Nahuatl] *petates*.” He too remarked that the dress of the people of this region was not cotton but rather animal skins.

#### 1. REUNION AT THE RÍO PETATLÁN (SPRING 1536)

We begin our Part 8 commentary with Cabeza de Vaca’s arrival near the Río Petatlán, where he encountered in person the Spanish slave hunters about whom the Indians of Sonora had given the four survivors many reports (f58v). As he sets off with Estevanico to track down the Spaniards in the area, Cabeza de Vaca assumes a self-sacrificing pose, declaring that he had to go forward in pursuit of his countrymen because his companions, though younger and more fit than he, begged off from doing so (f58v). Oviedo (612a), on the other hand, tells that while Cabeza de Vaca went in search of the mounted soldiers in the area, his companions stayed behind to perform the equally important and difficult task of calling together more than four hundred of the native inhabitants of the area who had fled from their homes in fear of the slave hunters.

Cabeza de Vaca’s meeting with the mounted soldiers occurred on the men’s fifth day of travel since leaving the natives’ mountain refuge (f57v; see chap. 8, sec. 11) and the second day of his search, accompanied by Estevanico, for the Spaniards whose passage through the area they had discovered by the stakes to which their horses had been tied (f58r). Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) says that he and Estevanico passed through three places where the Spaniards had slept and that he traveled ten leagues “this day” (f58v), implying that he and Estevanico covered in one day the ten-league distance that the Spanish party they were pursuing had traveled in three. Oviedo (612a) confirms the fact that Cabeza de Vaca encountered the slave hunters the morning of the second day. In Cabeza de Vaca’s (f58v) account, he encountered four mounted Spaniards; there were twenty, according to Oviedo (612a).

These men greeted Cabeza de Vaca with enormous shock at his appearance (“upon seeing me so strangely dressed,” he says euphemistically) and for being in the company of Indians (f58v). While Cabeza de Vaca recalls his own reaction to the stupefaction of the horsemen on first seeing him, a fragment of a manuscript in the Historia de las Misiones section of the Archivo Público de México (qtd. in Sauer, “The Road” 20), offers a brief account of that historic meeting and specifies (rightly or wrongly) the site.

The tenor of the document suggests that it was testimony given in an investigation of the conduct of the conquest of Nueva Galicia. Although both Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo present the initial encounter as occurring solely to Cabeza de Vaca, the interest of this soldier's testimonial account is its reference to the location of the meeting. The fragment (Sauer, "The Road" 20118) begins:

From the *villa* of Culiacán some captains and soldiers began to make hostile incursions into the land of Sinaloa and they placed the Indians whom they could get their hands on, by force or by guile, in miserable captivity and sold them as slaves. . . . The one who most boldly penetrated the area of Sinaloa was the captain Diego de Alcaraz, who with a company of soldiers went about taking slaves from which followed great profits.

This witness goes on to state that it was in the area called "de los ojos," three leagues from the native settlement of Ocoroni in the direction of Carapoa, that they saw approaching the great throng of Indians that carried the Narváez survivors forward. Ocoroni was a native settlement on the tributary river (of the same name) of the Petatlán (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 273 [map]). Three leagues from there "toward Carapoa" would mean away from the Río Petatlán and north toward today's Río Fuerte, known in colonial times, according to Gerhard (*The North Frontier* 273b), as the Carapoa, Zuaque, or Sinaloa (not to be confused with today's Río Sinaloa [the colonial Río Petatlán], which is our current point of interest). The leader sounded the alarm to prepare the firearms and advance to capture them but halted the operation when on closer view he saw among the Indians "three men of strange figure," that is, the three white men. Either he did not discern Estevanico among them or dismissed his presence as unworthy of mention.

Oviedo (612a) begins his narration of this fateful reunion by locating Cabeza de Vaca's encounter on the second day of his journey south from where he had left his companions "near a river" where the Spanish troop had provisionally ("en salto") set up camp in desperation after not having seen a single Indian for two weeks. Oviedo (612a) mentions the river (Petatlán) without naming it. He also adds a religious note, saying that these twenty astonished horsemen "gave many thanks to God our Lord for so new and so great a mystery" (612ab).

Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) reported the amazement of these Spaniards, "so astonished that they neither spoke to me nor managed to ask me anything." Upon regaining their composure and at Cabeza de Vaca's request, they took him half a league ahead to their captain, Diego de Alcaraz. The glow of religious faith with which Oviedo enhances this scene is not a part of the Spanish reactions as Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) describes them. Diego de Alcaraz

brings up more practical matters such as the need for food that he and his men and horses suffer because of the flight of the Indians into the sierras.

At the end of his account of this face-to-face meeting with Alcaraz, Cabeza de Vaca (f59r) mentions that it occurred near a river, which he identifies only before and after the fact as the Petatlán. Cabeza de Vaca refers to it as the “Petután” in his internal summary of the previous part of the journey from Corazones (f58r) and subsequently the “Petachán,” when he recapitulates the event (f61v). As noted earlier (see chap. 8, sec. 7), Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) had estimated the distance from the village “where the rains had overtaken us” to the Río Petatlán (Río Sinaloa) as either ninety-two or ninety-seven leagues; Oviedo (611a) measured the distance “from where it rained on them until [they encountered] the Christians” as about a hundred. The time of the reunion at the Río Petatlán was sometime in the spring of 1536.

## 2. DIEGO DE ALCARAZ

Diego de Alcaraz was the captain in charge of the Spanish company Cabeza de Vaca met, and Alcaraz would later put him and his companions in the care of a local colonial magistrate (*alcalde*) named Cebreros (Lázaro de Cebreros), who would lead them to the province of Culiacán (f60v). Modern scholars (García Icazbalceta 2:xlvi; Carrera Stampa 153n204) have attributed to Alcaraz and Cebreros either participation in the 1531 Lope de Samaniego reconnaissance mission that Nuño de Guzmán had sent north from Culiacán and that had arrived at the Río Petatlán or the 1533 expedition of Diego de Guzmán that arrived at the Río Yaqui. However, the source referred or alluded to in each case is the account of Fray Antonio Tello in his *Crónica miscelánea de la sancta provincia de Xalisco*, written about 1650–53 (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 54b).

Tello’s account is confused and inaccurate, because, as we have discovered, he used as a source the second anonymous account of the conquest of Nueva Galicia. We demonstrate elsewhere that this account was that of Jorge Robledo, one of Diego de Guzmán’s captains on the 1533 expedition to the Río Yaqui (see chap. 17, sec. 10). Tello, however, had identified as the subject of this account the Lope de Samaniego reconnaissance to the Río Petatlán (which he attributed to 1532 but which took place in 1531) and then collapsed that event with the Narváez survivors’ 1536 appearance in Sinaloa.

According to Tello (243 [bk. 2, chap. 60]), Diego de Alcaraz and Lázaro de Cebreros had been captains in the conquest of Nueva Galicia who had accompanied Captain Pedro Almíndez Cherino (it was actually Lope de Samaniego) on his explorations as far north as Sinaloa. However, the account that Tello gives is exactly the one given for the 1533 expedition of Diego

de Guzmán from Culiacán to the Río Yaquí, right down to the detail of a particularly strange encounter in which seven hundred men of Sinaloa came forth, each bearing a single reed as a sign of humility and submission (Tello 244 [bk. 2, chap. 60]; “Segunda relación” 168; Smith, *Colección* 96). An event unique to Jorge Robledo’s account and absent from Diego de Guzmán’s journal of the expedition concerns the manner in which the Indians of Sinaloa performed guard duty; Tello’s description of this custom reveals that Robledo’s report was his source (“Segunda relación” 169; Tello 244–45 [bk. 2, chap. 60]).

Upon continuing his paraphrase of Robledo’s report of the Diego de Guzmán expedition, Tello’s (249 [bk. 2, chap. 61]) fabulous account has Alcaraz and Cebreros return from the Río Yaquí to the Río Petatlán in 1532, where they hear that four strange men are in the area, and they set out to look for them. Having thus grafted the Cabeza de Vaca party’s return in 1536 onto the Diego de Guzmán expedition of 1533, which he presents as the supposed Alcaraz/Cebreros exploration of 1532, Tello now inserts the Narváez survivors’ apocryphal presentation of a final report to Almíndez Cherino as the concluding act of their mission. Delighted with the news about the returning Narváez survivors, Almíndez Cherino personally receives them in his headquarters, “since he knew them because they had been his friends before leaving for *Florida*” (Tello 253 [bk. 2, chap. 62]). This fanciful episode aside, we do know that Diego de Alcaraz later participated as a captain in the Coronado expedition, as evidenced by the appearance of his name on the muster roll of 1540 (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 104).

The ruthlessness that Cabeza de Vaca attributes to Alcaraz and his men seems to be borne out by other accounts. Chronicles of early Sinaloa pertaining to the Coronado expedition include reports about Alcaraz’s activities and demise (see Sauer, “The Road” 52–58). He was evidently killed in a massacre at a Spanish settlement he had established while on the Coronado expedition. Accounts of the particulars vary, given that the testimony available is either secondhand or farther removed from the events. In one, he was killed along with some thirty other Spaniards in a massacre at the outpost in Sonora called San Gerónimo that he had established with forty Spanish settlers in the early 1540s. Witnesses in the inquiry conducted afterward blamed Alcaraz for the revolt of the Indians because of his ill treatment of them.

One Martín Pérez, reporting at second hand Pedro de Perca’s account of the viceroy Mendoza’s attempt to “emulate the glories of the conquests of New Spain and Peru with that of Quivira,” included the story of Alcaraz among the misfortunes that occurred. One dark and tempestuous night, Indians attacked Alcaraz’s settlement in rage over his abductions of Indian



girls and women; only three Spaniards survived (Sauer, “The Road” 52; Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 104). Antonio Ruiz, a participant in the Francisco de Ibarra expedition of 1565, told of coming upon the ruins of the Spanish settlement and learning about the massacre from the reports of its sole survivors, a cleric and a black slave (Sauer, “The Road” 55). Presenting a petition in 1582, Francisco Díaz de Vargas (CDI 15:126–37), who was the son of a conquistador of New Spain and served the viceroy Martín Enríquez in many capacities, declared that Diego de Alcaraz had settled a *villa* of more than a hundred Spaniards in the “Valles de Corazones” on the Coronado expedition but that he and his men were later massacred; the sole survivor, in this account, was an Indian woman (“una india su amiga”) who escaped and carried the news back to New Spain (CDI 15:128–29).

### 3. THE NARVÁEZ SURVIVORS’ MEETING WITH ALCARAZ

Upon meeting with Alcaraz, Cabeza de Vaca (f59r) recalls that he asked that the precise time of his arrival be set down and certified; this act would be part of fulfilling his legal obligation to report on the expedition. Oviedo (612b) describes this certification scene as having occurred when all four men were present, and he picks up the narrative with Alcaraz asking the naked strangers to help him obtain food and Indian slaves for his company. Cabeza de Vaca does not reiterate here the date of that act of certification, probably because he considered it irrelevant to his current purpose, which was to provide a lengthy, personal narration expressly for the emperor. Since the date had been officially recorded and communicated at the time, it faded in importance, as had the details of other official communications prepared during the journey (see chap. 12, sec. 2.A). Obviously occurring sometime in the spring of 1536, Baskett (339) placed the Narváez survivors’ arrival at the Río Petatlán sometime in April.

Cabeza de Vaca says that he sent Estevanico and some Indian messengers to bring Dorantes and Castillo to Alcaraz. He tells how Estevanico guided three horsemen and fifty Indians to the men (f59r), all of whom arrived five days later, bringing with them more than six hundred people from the mountain refuge to which the Spaniards’ aggression had caused them to flee (see f57r–v). The extra three-day wait in a round-trip journey that should only have taken two (the distance was ten leagues, one way) was occasioned by Dorantes and Castillo’s efforts to gather the Indians from the mountain retreat as well as the difficulty of traveling with so large a band. Dorantes and Castillo had sent out messengers one day, and some three hundred men and women came forward the next; on the third day, there appeared about a hundred more. These four hundred people, plus about two hundred more

who had accompanied the men from as far north as Corazones, then went on with Dorantes and Castillo to the Río Petatlán (f59r).

According to Oviedo (612a), the mounted Spanish party was in dire need; since the Indians had fled, they had not been able to take any captives during the previous two weeks. The Spaniards were hungry and needed nourishment for their horses; Cabeza de Vaca says that Alcaraz commanded him to bring down more people (f59r; 612b). After he and his companions sent out messengers (one on behalf of each of the four men) in the accustomed fashion (612b; f57v; see chap. 7, sec. 12), these scouts managed to bring down another six hundred people who brought maize in clay-sealed vessels (f59v). The Indians had stored it in this fashion, says Oviedo (612b), because of their flight into the highlands out of fear of the slave hunters.

At this point, Cabeza de Vaca reports considerable antagonism between his party and the slave hunters, who wanted to take as slaves the multitude of Indians now assembled. Oviedo does not report this conflict, and it raises the question of whether it appeared in the Joint Report. If it had been absent there, this exchange may be part of Cabeza de Vaca's larger strategy to solicit the emperor's trust and the grant of a future royal commission. This episode registers once more Cabeza de Vaca's departure from the content of the Joint Report in order to craft an account that would serve his future ambitions (see chap. 12, secs. 3.B–C, 6.A). Cabeza de Vaca (f59v) tells how he and his companions refused to allow Diego de Alcaraz's men to take the just-arrived Indians as slaves and how they appeased the slave-hunting party by giving them many Turkish bows, leather pouches, and arrows; in their agitation, they left behind and lost the five precious green arrowheads they had carried from Corazones (f55r).

#### 4. TURKISH BOWS

Seldom described, these so-called Turkish bows are mentioned in many sixteenth-century conquistadors' accounts of northern New Spain and the territory that would become Spanish Nuevo México (the area included in today's Chihuahua, Sonora, and portions of the southwestern United States). One source, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà (8 [canto 1, vv. 188–90]), enumerated the Indians' formidable weapons of war in his *Historia de la Nueva México*. He began his exposition with a brief description of the *arco turquesco* as the

Bent Turkish bows, well strung,  
Broad quivers, broad and of a capacious size,  
Well stuffed with arrows light.

Hammond and Rey (*Expedition* 57) note that among later expeditionaries to the area, Baltasar de Obregón and Diego Pérez de Luján made frequent

reference to “Turkish bows” among other native weapons. Samuel Purchas had spoken of Indian bows made from bison horns with sinews, but Hammond and Rey (following Hodge) considered that the bows would be made of wood in these areas and perhaps “bound at the grip with sinew to afford greater elasticity and strength.” Hammond and Rey (*Expedition* 57) cite E. Douglas Branch, *The Hunting of the Buffalo*: “[b]ows were usually made of wood but the best and strongest were made of pieces of bone and horn—buffalo, elk, or mountain sheep—spliced and glued together, and wrapped with sinews of buffalo,” which were also used for the bowstrings. These indigenous weapons, whether of bone or wood, were sufficiently noteworthy to engage the attention of the Spaniards time and again. The reason for calling the bows Turkish, however, is more problematic; it suggests that they seemed to Spanish soldiers to be in some way reminiscent of arms they had seen used in Europe by the military forces of the Ottoman Turk.

#### 5. FROM THE RÍO PETATLÁN TO SAN MIGUEL DE CULIACÁN (THIRTY TO FIFTY LEAGUES)

Cabeza de Vaca calculates the distance from the Río Petatlán to San Miguel de Culiacán, the northernmost *villa* established by the Spaniards in Nueva Galicia and located on the Río Ciguatán or Ciguatlán (today’s Río San Lorenzo in Sinaloa), as about thirty leagues; Oviedo (613a) records the distance between the Río Petatlán and the Spanish “villa de Culiacán” as thirty-five leagues. Varying somewhat from the men’s estimate in the Joint Report as rendered by Oviedo, Jorge Robledo (“Segunda relación” 165) had estimated the distance as about fifty leagues in his account of his 1533 exploration of the area with Diego de Guzmán. According to Cabeza de Vaca’s (f63v) mention of the date of their subsequent departure from San Miguel de Culiacán, we estimate their arrival there to have been about 1 May 1536.

At the Río Petatlán, the four men sought to persuade the Indians to return to their settlements and sow maize (f59v, f60r; see also 613a). Both the Joint Report, as cited by Oviedo (613a), and Cabeza de Vaca (f59v) emphasized that the natives wished to remain with the four men, being convinced, according to Cabeza de Vaca, that they would die if they did not do so. He presents a continuation of the dispute between the Spanish soldiers and his party, but Oviedo makes no mention of this exchange or the earlier one.

In Cabeza de Vaca’s *relación*, the first confrontation had occurred between the Spanish slavers and himself and his companions (f59v), this second one between the Spanish slavers’ interpreter and the ones they carried with them in their own party (f59v–f60r). Often cited by readers of the *relación*, this

second dispute interests us because of Cabeza de Vaca's comment about the language used. The Indians, he said, defended his party to Alcaraz's native interpreter, and they made the same known to the other Indians via "a language that they had among them by which we understood one another." He adds, "And those who speak it we call Primahaitu, which we found used in more than four hundred leagues of those we had traveled, and we found no other in all that distance" (f60r).

The Valladolid (1555) edition (V:f49r) adds a clarifying parenthetical note about the language called Primahaitu "(which is like saying Basques)." This suggests that although Cabeza de Vaca and his companions heard this trade language used over a territory estimated as four hundred leagues, they personally found it so confusing and obscure as to be unintelligible. This is the meaning of his equating it to Basques and the Basque language (*vascongados*, *vascuence*), for which one of the figurative connotations to Castilian speakers was unintelligibility (DRAE 1324bc). Although trade languages used in long-distance travel and commerce in native North America have been studied for a later period (Ford, "Inter-Indian Exchange" 719–20), Cabeza de Vaca provides the earliest European testimony about them. The broad use of such a language clearly facilitated the friendly receptions and rapid travel of the four Narváez survivors across northern Mexico.

Upon recalling their being led forward toward the settlement at San Miguel de Culiacán by Cebreros and his men, Cabeza de Vaca (f60v) laments that, having sought deliverance and thinking that he and his companions had found it, things turned out to be just the opposite. They were deliberately led, he said, through difficult, depopulated areas that had no water. So serious was this shortage as they went south from the Río Petatlán that seven of the natives accompanying them perished from thirst; the Indian allies struggled, on foot, to reach the area where they finally found an adequate supply of water two days later.

#### 6. EARLIEST SPANISH CONTACT IN THE PROVINCE OF CULIACÁN

The men experienced the same hardships in this area between the Río Petatlán and Culiacán as had the Lope de Samaniego reconnaissance mission in 1531. The third anonymous reporter of the Guzmán conquest ("Tercera relación" 146–47) narrated that journey, heading north from Culiacán to the Río Petatlán (the opposite direction of travel of the Cabeza de Vaca party in 1536). A native guide had forewarned that it would be a ten-day journey without water along a densely covered plains area. Samaniego and his men traveled sometimes in the highlands, sometimes on the coastal plain, finding only two pools of rainwater. For five more days they found very little water

until arriving at an Indian settlement in the sierras; a day later they arrived at a very big river (the Petatlán). A few days after that, traveling downstream on this river, they came to a settlement of some five hundred houses made of *petates*, or reeds, where the people dressed in skins and twenty-five hundred warriors confronted them. In contrast to this picture of high population and dense settlement, Cabeza de Vaca's account pertaining to his journey five years later speaks only of the desolation of the region.

Regarding terrain and agriculture of the area south of the Río Petatlán, Cabeza de Vaca (f60r) echoes his earlier remarks (f57r) about the area to the north, from the Petatlán to the Yaqui, as consisting of fertile lands and abundant waterways. As mentioned above (chap. 8, sec. 9), his (f60r) observation that the agriculturalists of Sinaloa sowed here three times a year means that the area had the benefit of flood plains. While other upland and lowland areas of this basin-and-range landscape were dependent on summer rains and produced one crop annually, the flood plains could support two crop cycles, the second being made possible by early spring floods coming from the mountain snows and rains (Sauer and Brand 7–8). As noted earlier, archaeological investigation shows that the greater number of settlements were in flood plains or their margins, with the larger part of the population being supported by the products of those alluvial plains (Sauer and Brand 15).

Accounts of Nuño de Guzmán's conquest offer much information about the area the four survivors now visited. The valley of Culiacán was described by one of the accounts ("Primera relación" 156) of Guzmán's military incursions as being located twelve leagues beyond the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán and constituting "the most well-populated land ever seen in the Indies": "[t]hrough this valley of Culiacán passes a very good river—better than any we had seen previously. There must be nine leagues of flat land from the coast to the beginning of the sierras. In all these nine leagues, there were settlements on one side of the river or the other, a half to three-quarters of a league apart, each consisting of five or six hundred houses." The author of the fourth anonymous report ("Cuarta relación" 119, 125) offered a similar account about the importance of the river (identified by Carrera Stampa [156n214] as the Culiacán) and the number of settlements along it. The fourth reporter described it as the most well populated province "ever seen on the Ocean Sea," plentifully supplied with maize and frijoles, *ají* and fish, and a great abundance of cotton. The women dressed in cotton garments that extended to their feet and were "the loveliest in the Indies" but the men went about naked and were very crude ("sin ninguna policia"). No lord in Spain had a game reserve more well stocked than this province; the houses

were large, the women wove their clothing, and they had a great market, or *tianguéz*.

According to the third anonymous reporter of Guzmán's conquest, there were abundant native settlements not only on the flood plain but also in the sierras at least as far as the Spaniards could reach on horseback ("Tercera relación" 145). After some lords of Culiacán who were captive were made to gather up people taking refuge in the sierras, many other lords came down with great pomp and assured the Spaniards that some two hundred settlements, all subject to the lords of Culiacán, were to be found in the high country ("Tercera relación" 150).

The first anonymous reporter and participant ("Primera relación" 156–57) in the Guzmán conquest of Culiacán recalled that the Spanish had a major encounter with the Indians in the valley of Culiacán, which was not surprising considering the size of its native population. The writer of the fourth report, an enemy of Nuño de Guzmán, declared that it was carried out "without reading them the *requerimiento* or giving them any warning whatsoever" ("Cuarta relación" 118). They were defeated, and Nuño de Guzmán settled his camp in the area and began to trade with the natives, who came forth peacefully. The first reporter considered these to be people of very great reason; they held their lords in high esteem and were civil in their dress and bearing and astute in their dealings. According to the first reporter ("Primera relación" 156–57), the principal lords and ladies wore adornments of turquoise, although they had no knowledge of gold or silver.

The natives of the Culiacán valley had great markets and traded fish and clothing and fruit and the variety of goods found in central Mexico ("Primera relación" 156; "Tercera relación" 145). On this matter, Jorge Robledo ("Segunda relación" 174–75) also offered the testimony that fruit—particularly plums—was as abundant in the valley of Culiacán as olive groves were in Andalusia and that fish were in great plenty, caught in traps the Indians built to catch them. Fishing was extraordinarily good, due to the flow of the sea tide up the river. (Both Robledo and the first anonymous reporter referred to the Río Ciguatán, the modern San Lorenzo, as the Horabá.) The Spaniards established the *villa* of San Miguel in the Horabá (Ciguatán) valley where the river's tide would flow up to the settlement. There a trap made of cane was set to catch skate or striped mullet and "other types of very good fish." This harvest was so great, according to Robledo, that there was fish sufficient to supply a city as large as Seville ("Segunda relación" 174). Such was the province of Culiacán when first encountered by the Europeans some five or six years before the four Narváez survivors arrived in the area.

## 7. SAN MIGUEL DE CULIACÁN (FOUNDED 1531)

The first Spanish *villa* encountered by the four men was this northernmost municipal establishment of Nueva Galicia, San Miguel de Culiacán. After Cristóbal de Barrios organized its settlement, Nuño de Guzmán officially founded San Miguel de Culiacán on the Río Ciguatán (Río San Lorenzo) after the summer flood season of 1531, probably in September, with ninety-six residents (*vecinos*) (“Tercera relación” 143n180, 149–50; Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 261a; CDI 14:461). Guzmán created the municipality after being frustrated in his attempts, based on Gonzalo López’s explorations sixty leagues overland to the east, to traverse Mexico and develop a route to connect Nueva Galicia with Pánuco and the North Sea (see chap. 17, sec. 9.B).

As previously mentioned, San Miguel was located twelve leagues south of the valley (and river) of Culiacán (“Primera relación” 156), the measure of which corresponds roughly to modern approximations of the distance between the sixteenth-century sites (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 257 [map]). Guzmán left Captain Diego de Proaño at San Miguel as chief magistrate (*alcalde mayor*) (“Primera relación” 158; “Cuarta relación” 124). At some undetermined later date, the first anonymous reporter took over the administration of the *villa* (“Primera relación” 156, 158, 160). This reporter (“Primera relación” 158) told how the Spanish settlement was moved five leagues downstream from its original site along the river (which he called the Horabá) in order to bring the natives forth peacefully and administer the entire district that extended from the valley of Culiacán south to the Río de la Sal and Río Piaxtla. Robledo (“Segunda relación” 174) described the settlement’s second location as being two leagues from the sea. Gonzalo López (CDI 14:460–61) characterized the area as being filled with abundant provisions of foodstuffs, including fruits, plums, and great fisheries; the people were all similar, but those of the province of Culiacán were more well clad (“de telas ceñidas”) than the rest.

The foundation of San Miguel de Culiacán was preceded and followed by disaster for the peoples of the region. The Guzmán expedition accounts of San Miguel’s ruin reveal the condition in which Cabeza de Vaca and his companions found the area upon their arrival in May 1536, and they explain the urgency of Melchior Díaz’s request that the four Narváez survivors help repopulate the land.

As Nuño de Guzmán turned his entire army around to head back southward to Culiacán around the beginning of July 1531, the thousands of Indian allies, knowing that no provisions lay ahead or behind, abandoned their cargo and fled to the mountains; some forty stallions and mares were thus lost, as well as two thousand hogs (“Tercera relación” 150). On arriving at

the principal native settlement of the province, the Spanish discovered that Indian allies who had been too ill to travel onward to the north had burned and destroyed the villages after the Spaniards had passed through them (“Cuarta relación” 119).

On this issue, both Guzmán’s partisans and his enemies agreed that he had attempted without success to keep their native allies from burning everything in their path. No friend of Guzmán’s, the fourth reporter (“Cuarta relación” 103) declared that Guzmán tried diligently to keep them from burning villages because it grieved him very much; nevertheless, “the allies we carried with us were of such a type that, even though they were threatened with being burned alive themselves, they would not refrain from igniting everything around them.” By the time Guzmán’s forces arrived at Culiacán, the fourth reporter (“Cuarta relación” 117) observes, they had left most of the settlements behind them destroyed. Given the devastation of the formerly rich and productive area, it would not have been surprising if Guzmán now issued slaving licenses, as the author of the fourth report (“Cuarta relación” 124) claims, stating that it was well and publicly known, and that Guzmán made provision to have them granted after his departure (see chap. 17, sec. 5.A).

As to the fate of the Mexica and Tlaxcalan allies who had accompanied Guzmán’s army, as well as those branded and taken as slaves from Jalisco, the fourth reporter (“Cuarta relación” 124) observed that they were left at Culiacán when the army headed homeward to Compostela. After two years of carrying cargo over roads and mountains, building huts for the Spaniards to sleep in each night and finding them food, the payment for the services they rendered was to be “made slaves from free men, chained by the neck or locked into stocks, so that they were prevented from coming after us, shouting and weeping as they saw us depart.”

At the end of 1531, when the Guzmán expedition returned to Jalisco from Culiacán, the entire area was at peace except for the provinces of Chiametla and Aztatlán, which were in revolt, according to Gonzalo López and the fourth anonymous reporter (CDI 14:461; “Cuarta relación” 126); in 1533, Jorge Robledo (“Segunda relación” 175) reported that the *villa* of Espíritu Santo in Chiametla province was in as much difficulty as the one in Culiacán had been.

When Cabeza de Vaca (f58r) remarked that Indian spies had seen Indians in chains as they traveled from the Río Petatlán to Culiacán (see vol. 3, fig. 16), he confirmed that slaving continued in Nueva Galicia (as we will see in discussing the viceroy Mendoza’s orders) despite its royal prohibition on 2 August 1530. In his letter to the empress from Compostela of 12 June 1532, Nuño de Guzmán (ENE 2:146) acknowledged the new royal prohibition



against taking slaves in war (*esclavos de guerra*) or by exchange (*esclavos de rescate*); he reported that he had the law proclaimed in Compostela but could not yet do so in San Miguel, because it was 110 leagues away and the route was neither safe nor secure at that time.

The first reporter (“Primera relación” 160–61) testified that in 1531 Nuño de Guzmán had left the new foundation in peace, but soon thereafter the Spaniards left there to settle ceased planting in order to buy maize and other foodstuffs from the Indians. This trade was frustrated because the Indians could not supply the great needs of the new settlers and their households and livestock; thus, Proaño permitted the Spaniards to take the Indians by force. Soon they were stealing everything the Indians had, and so the natives decided to rise up and hide their stores of provisions in outlying areas and burn their own settlements and flee. The settlers then began pillaging the land, “and the land began to be destroyed as it now is.” This unnamed official who apparently succeeded Diego de Proaño as chief administrator of San Miguel considered this *villa* to be potentially “the best in all the Indies” (“Primera relación” 160). Rich mines were subsequently found in the area, and this was the means by which the Spaniards came to support themselves. Obviously, Spanish mining interests required that the natives of the area be resettled, as the land had gone some years without cultivation (“Primera relación” 161).

In 1533, Jorge Robledo (“Segunda relación” 173–74) reported that Culiacán was up in arms when he and his men returned there from the Río Yaqui at the end of that year; his assessment of the causes echoed those of the first reporter. The Indians had killed many Spaniards, who were desperate and starving. Robledo blamed the devastation on the fact that the settlers had failed to make their first priority the cultivation of the very fertile lands in the area. He added that, had it not been for assistance from Jalisco (Gonzalo López with a thousand branded slaves and abundant stores of food), the settlement would have been abandoned (Carrera Stampa 173n264).

In 1535, the situation in San Miguel was still grave, according to two letters that Nuño de Guzmán wrote, one to the Council of the Indies, the other to the emperor on 7 and 8 June, respectively. Guzmán (CDI 13:416–17, 446–47) complained that Hernán Cortés had entered his jurisdiction of Nueva Galicia and had provoked a war with the Indians of the area with the result that Guzmán’s *villa* of Espíritu Santo, located on the Río Presidio, was attacked by the Indians. In grave danger, many of the settlers fled with Cortés’s men, and others abandoned the settlement and returned to Compostela. Espíritu Santo included the Río Piaxtla area in its jurisdiction (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 252 [map]). With its abandonment, the residents of San Miguel were left with no Spanish outpost between themselves and Compostela; they faced

great difficulty in communication and trade because the Indians along the entire eighty-league route had raised arms against them (CDI 13:477). (Cabeza de Vaca [f63v] would report the same situation a year later.) Thus, Guzmán reported, the settlers were ready to abandon San Miguel, despite the richness of the silver mines just found in the area. Such was the background to the continuing crisis that Melchior Díaz faced in the late spring of 1536 when the four Narváez survivors arrived in the province of Culiacán.

By the time of the Cabeza de Vaca party's passage through the area in 1536, it was overgrown with chaparral and dense thickets in the more elevated terrain where the Indians had taken refuge, according to Oviedo (612ab). Cabeza de Vaca (f60r) explains that great portions of the coastal plain had become overrun by underbrush due to the fact that the natives had stopped cultivating their lands because of the slave-hunting incursions. Sauer and Brand (8) described the thorny scrub covering coastal plain, mesas, and *cerros* as gray and leafless most of the year, growing to heights of eight to ten feet in Sonora and twelve to thirty feet in the southern areas of Sinaloa and Nayarit as the rainfall increased to the south. Hence at Culiacán, columnar cacti such as the pitahaya and saguaro overtopped the rest of the vegetation, while south of the Río Piaxtla, they were "imbedded in taller elements of the monte." Leguminous, spiny brush predominates today; Sauer and Brand (8) emphasize the difficulty of determining the earlier composition of the small trees native to the scrub ranges as they had been exploited for a considerable period of time.

Now speaking about the Culiacán province (the area of Sinaloa in general), Cabeza de Vaca (f60r) observed that here too there were signs of mines of gold and silver; he had made the same statement—which Oviedo challenged—in his summary of the area of Sonora (see chap. 8, sec. 11). Cabeza de Vaca (f60r–v) also suggests that the people of the Sinaloa region who served the strangers did so with good will, that they were very capable and of better inclinations than the natives of the central valley of Mexico, whom he would have identified as practitioners of human sacrifice. He closes this assessment by commenting, "And, finally, it is a land that lacks nothing in order to be very good" (f60v).

This summation is significant; Cabeza de Vaca uses it to frame the immediately subsequent account of the resettlement of the native peoples of Culiacán. Cabeza de Vaca's presentation of these events reveals that this achievement not only culminates his and his companions' years of dealing with native peoples but that it vindicates the failure of their entire expedition: they succeeded at the peaceful subjugation of native peoples, thus carrying out an "ideal conquest" in stark contrast to Nuño de Guzmán's devastation of the same area (Adorno, "Peaceful Conquest" 84).

Cabeza de Vaca resumes his narration to tell how their party was led southward to meet Melchior Díaz. Oviedo (613a) offers a similar account of their escorted trek southward; it is nearly identical in detail to Cabeza de Vaca's except for the ambiguous designation of the settlement from which Melchior Díaz came out to meet them. This difference has caused considerable confusion among scholars as to whether "Culiacán" and "San Miguel" referred to the same location and entity. As we will see, Culiacán was used to refer both to the Spanish municipality (*villa*) (Oviedo) and the native settlement (Cabeza de Vaca) as well as the province, which takes its name from the Río Culiacán. The Spanish *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán, however, was located not on that river but on the Río Ciguatán (today's Río San Lorenzo).

#### 8. CABEZA DE VACA AND HIS COMPANIONS' MEETING WITH MELCHIOR DÍAZ (LATE APRIL 1536)

Both accounts indicate that the four men met Melchior Díaz at a settlement of peaceful Indians where their escort had left them (f60v; 613a). Cabeza de Vaca (f60v–f61r) says that after twenty-five leagues of travel with their escort (i.e., from the Río Petatlán) they arrived at an Indian settlement called Culiacán, whence Lázaro de Cebreros went three leagues farther to fetch Melchior Díaz, who came forth "praising God our Lord for having shown so much mercy to us." Oviedo (611b, 613a) gives the distance between the natives' mountain retreat and Culiacán ("Culuacán, donde estaban los españoles") as forty leagues, the distance between the Río Petatlán where the party met Alcaraz's men and "la villa de Culuacán," that is, the Spanish municipality of San Miguel de Culiacán, as thirty-five leagues or more. If both references refer, as they seem to, to the Spanish settlement, then Oviedo calculates the distance from the Indians' mountain refuge to the Río Petatlán as five leagues.

Oviedo locates the municipality "on the coast of the South Sea, to the west," just as Robledo ("Segunda relación" 174) had described it as being two leagues from the coast. Oviedo (613a) continues that some eight leagues before arriving at the Spanish settlement ("ocho leguas antes de la villa"), Melchior Díaz, the local governor (*alcalde mayor*) of the province of Culiacán, came forth to greet and receive the four men in a valley that was settled and at peace, unlike many others in the area. Thus Oviedo locates this native settlement twenty-seven leagues from the Río Petatlán; Cabeza de Vaca places it twenty-five leagues from the same river.

Oviedo (613a, 614a) concludes the main body of his account of the Narváez expedition survivors (book 35, chaps. 1–6) with the resettlement that the

Cabeza de Vaca party effected at the request of Melchior Díaz at this place, that is, at “a valley populated in peace” [un valle poblado de paz]. The “peaceful valley” is the last site Oviedo mentions; his location of it as eight leagues from San Miguel corresponds in principle, if not in specific distance, to the estimate of twelve leagues given by the first reporter with respect to the distance from San Miguel to the valley of Culiacán (“Primera relación” 156).

Cabeza de Vaca tells how, at the request of Melchior Díaz, they went to a native settlement in the province of Culiacán and performed there their successful efforts at resettlement (f61v–f62v). Only after this is completed do they go on to the *villa* of San Miguel (f62v). In other words, the Culiacán river valley and its southernmost extension seem to be the site of their pacification efforts; afterward they went some leagues farther south to the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán located on the Río Ciguatán or San Lorenzo (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 257 [map]). Cabeza de Vaca seems to refer to the native settlement in two ways, first calling it the Indian *pueblo* of Culiacán (“un pueblo que se llamava Culiacán”) (f60v), then referring to it as “Auhacán” (f61r) and again calling it a *pueblo* (f61v).

Cabeza de Vaca calculated on one occasion (f59r) the distance from the Río Petatlán to the Spanish *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán (“el pueblo de los christianos que se llama Sant Miguel”) as thirty leagues and noted later (f60v) that he and his companions had walked with Cebreros twenty-five leagues from the Río Petatlán to a settlement of peaceful Indians (“un pueblo de indios de paz”); three leagues beyond it was the previously mentioned “settlement called Culiacán” [un pueblo que se llamava Culiacán], where Melchior Díaz was currently located. Since Cabeza de Vaca is explicit about the names of these sites, it seems that he refers here to a native settlement called Culiacán (where Díaz happened to be at the moment) instead of the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán, which was the place of Díaz’s residence. Cabeza de Vaca’s calculation of thirty leagues is not far from the thirty-five leagues that Oviedo (613a) assigns to the distance from the Río Petatlán to the Spanish *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán. A greater discrepancy proportionately is the distance of two leagues (Cabeza de Vaca) versus eight (Oviedo) for the distance between the Spanish *villa* and the Indian settlement, if indeed the latter reference refers in both accounts to the same place, that is, if Cabeza de Vaca has not introduced a second native settlement as the location of Melchior Díaz when he received the news of the men’s arrival.

In any event, the Spanish settlement would have been established near a native settlement to ensure ready access to labor and foodstuffs. As previously mentioned, San Miguel de Culiacán was strategically located to take advantage of the area that went, according to Gonzalo López and the first reporter (CDI 14:460; “Primera relación” 158), from the Río Culiacán

to the Río Piaxtla. There was also a major native settlement located on the Río Ciguatán itself. Oviedo (*Historia* 3:577b [bk. 34, chap. 8]) calculated the distance from the native settlement on the Río Ciguatán, which he identified as Ciguatán, “meaning pueblo of women,” to México-Tenochtitlán as about three hundred leagues. Basing his information on Gonzalo López’s account, Oviedo (*Historia* 3:576b [bk. 34, chap. 8]) described this native settlement as consisting of about a thousand dwellings, well built and laid out in an orderly arrangement and located on the best, most fertile, and most pleasant lands of the area. The location of the Indian settlement of Ciguatán would have been a compelling factor in determining where to establish the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán.

#### 9. MELCHIOR DÍAZ, ALCALDE MAYOR OF SAN MIGUEL DE CULIACÁN

In 1536, as *alcalde mayor* and *capitán*, Melchior Díaz was the chief civil (administrative and judicial) as well as military officer of the Spanish province of Culiacán. In 1539 he would be one of the captains sent to Cíbola by the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to verify Fray Marcos de Niza’s reports about the Seven Cities, according to the viceroy’s letter to the emperor of 17 April 1540 (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 157). Díaz, Juan de Saldivar, and twelve others would go from Culiacán to explore some 220 leagues to the north. Turning back without finding anything of importance, they cast grave doubts on what Fray Marcos claimed to have seen and heard. In 1540, Díaz would participate in the Coronado expedition to Cíbola (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 106). Pedro de Castañeda Nájera, who had been with Melchior Díaz on the Coronado expedition, named him among its captains; he described Díaz as having been a “captain and former *alcalde mayor* of Culiacán who, although not of gentle birth merited the position he held” (Mora 70 [pt. 1, chap. 5]).

At the present time (spring 1536), Melchior Díaz was eager to help the natives of the area return to their customary way of life. His task, in other words, was to undo the harm done by the slave hunters in the area since the foundation of San Miguel de Culiacán in 1531 and the apparently ruthless governance of Diego de Proaño in order to make northern Nueva Galicia a productive province of New Spain.

#### 10. RESETTLEMENT AT CULIACÁN: NATIVE STRATEGIES AND SPANISH LAW

How this resettlement was accomplished is told simply by Oviedo (613b), who says the men sent out messengers with the ritual gourd. Cabeza de Vaca

(f61r) explains that they had to overcome the obstacle of not having any of their own Indians “or any of those who usually accompanied us and were skilled in these matters.” But it occurred to them to ask two Indians, captives of the Spaniards and natives of the Culiacán area, who had been with the slaving party when Cabeza de Vaca and his companions met them. Thus, these two had seen the throngs of people who had accompanied the four Narváez men from the area of Corazones and farther south in Sonora as well as the mountain refuge in Sinaloa (f58v, f59r) and had witnessed firsthand the authority they exercised over the native peoples; they had heard about the “wonders” [maravillas] the strangers had performed, the sick they had cured, and many other things (f61r–v).

The men sent off these two Indians with the ceremonial gourd. This artifact seems to have become in itself a type of lingua franca. Encountered first among the people just south of the Rio Grande in Tamaulipas in their use for ceremonial dancing and curing (see chap. 7, sec. 5), the gourds were used only by the elites designated for these tasks (f46r). It was on the inland-oriented route, also in present-day Tamaulipas after a three-day journey that separated the men definitively from groups of the coastal interior, that two of the native physicians gave the men gourds so that they could use them ceremonially (f48v). Carrying the gourds now into the highlands above the valley of Culiacán, this “principal insignia and emblem of our great estate” (f61v) served again as a lingua franca. The Indians sent forth returned seven days later, bringing three of the native lords who had fled to the sierras and fifteen of their men as well as gifts of turquoises, beads, and plumage (f61v; 613b). Only Oviedo (613b) mentions that some of these groups had taken up arms against the Spanish invaders instead of fleeing, which suggests that some had gone into the sierras not to hide but to regroup in order to resist the Spaniards. Cabeza de Vaca does not mention native insurgency in Sinaloa.

Meeting with the three lords of Culiacán face to face, Melchior Díaz ordered the reading of the *requerimiento* (f61v–f62r; 613b), the legal ultimatum imposed in 1526 as a requisite feature of all Spanish conquests (see chap. 1, sec. 4). As a component of the first important body of law explicitly concerned with “the manner of conducting conquests and the good treatment of the Indians” (Hanke, “The Development” 78), the *requerimiento* provided the mechanism whereby captains were to inform the Indians that they had been “sent to teach them good customs, to dissuade them from vices such as the practice of eating human flesh, and to instruct them in the holy faith and preach it to them for their salvation” (Hanke, “The Development” 75). This corresponds exactly to Díaz’s message here, as read through the interpreter, which goes on to offer the natives the alternative of accepting the Christian

faith and pledging obedience to the Castilian crown or being subjected to war and slavery.

Promulgated in Granada on 17 November 1526, the legal criteria in effect in 1536 for waging a just war against the Indians were the natives' refusal of obedience to the crown as offered to them by the reading of the *requerimiento*, and/or their armed resistance or defense against the Spaniards' attempts to look for mines or to remove gold or other precious metals (CDU 9:276–77). This body of law had been included in the *capitulaciones* signed by Pánfilo de Narváez on 11 December 1526 (CDI 22:224–45; Vas Mingo 236; Hanke, “The Development” 78). According to those legal requirements, Nuño de Guzmán's conquest of Nueva Galicia had been controversial not only because he had undertaken it in spite of considerable political opposition in the capital at the time but also because he did so without the benefit of ecclesiastical approval as required by law (no clergymen accompanied him) (see chap. 17, secs. 5.C, 6.A).

Here, Melchior Díaz carries out the legal stipulations concerning conquest with the assistance of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions. Díaz effects the “good conquest” by soliciting the cooperation of the natives of Culiacán instead of provoking a confrontation that could lead to conflict. Cabeza de Vaca (f61v–f62r) emphasizes the seeking of an agreement with the natives and, in effect, the arrangement of a treaty with them more than the presentation of a threat, which he nevertheless articulates in its customary formulation (“the Christians would treat them very badly and carry them off as slaves to other lands”). The text of the *requerimiento* as prepared for reading to the “Indians of Nueva Galicia” (CDI 3:369–77) was considerably more detailed than the regular proclamation, including as well “a long discourse on God, Adam and Eve, sin, Heaven, and angels plus a recital of robberies, deaths and burnings committed by the Indians” (Hanke, “Studies” 206). Cabeza de Vaca (f61v–f62r) conveys a sense of the document's tenor in reporting Díaz's declaration with its extemporized example about the nine-year peregrination of the four Narváez men. Subsequently the assembled lords accept Melchior Díaz's invitation to submit peacefully. Cabeza de Vaca (f62v) underscores the formal character of this “requirement” by noting that the lords agreed to its conditions; this was carried out in the presence of many witnesses, and the notary public (*escribano*) certified its occurrence.

As in accounts of the conquest of New Spain, the next ritual action is baptism; Cabeza de Vaca (f62v) tells that they now baptized the children of the principal lords. The baptism of all Indians held in *encomienda* had been mandated in the Laws of Burgos of 27 December 1512 (reproduced in Rumeu de Armas 435–53); in circumstances where clergy were unavailable to do so,

the Christian layman in charge of the settlement was required to perform the ceremony (Rumeu de Armas 443). The provision for the Christian education of the sons of native lords was also made in the Burgos legislation of 1512 (Rumeu de Armas 445); thus, the selection of these particular children conformed to the standard practice.

This is the first and only time that Indians are baptized in the *relación*, but the ritual was a common element of peaceful encounters designed to exemplify to all present the submissive conduct expected of the native groups. There were two types of common occurrences, one, like the present occasion, on which the baptism of the lords' children served an exemplary function to the community. Baptized male children were then customarily enlisted in the friars' evangelization efforts, learning Castilian and serving as friars' assistants and acolytes. Highborn female children, once baptized, were ready to be given to Spanish husbands; this is the second type of instance. The royal decree authorizing the marriage of Spanish settlers to Indian women had been issued on 19 October 1514 (reproduced in Rumeu de Armas 458–59). In the conquest of New Spain five years later, the practice of baptizing Indian women when they were given to the conquistadors was common, according to Bernal Díaz (Castillo 67b [chap. 36]), who numbered Doña Marina (La Malinche) among the first group to be baptized (“las primeras cristianas que hubo en la Nueva España”) by Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo. Bernal Díaz (Castillo 100b [chap. 52]) noted that the action that occurred at the Río Grijalva was repeated with other Indians at subsequent stops (such as Cempoala) on the journey to México-Tenochtitlán.

Here in Culiacán in 1536, Oviedo (614a) tells how the people came down from the sierras, built churches with crosses, and settled in peace, thanks to the efforts of the four “pilgrims.” Thus, he draws his narrative account of the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition's survivors to a close, ending it as they resettled the natives of the area at the “villa de Culucacán” (614a). It is very likely that the original Joint Report closed with the witnesses' statement about the absence of idolatry or human sacrifice in all the lands they traversed, since Oviedo (614a) uses this observation to conclude his own narration. Oviedo (614a) expressed the hope that the “savage peoples” encountered by the “three hidalgos” would come to the true knowledge of God and the full service of His Majesty, to whom the three men, “making a *relación* of the account just told, wrote it down, certifying that throughout the land, wherever they went, they saw neither idolatry nor men sacrificed, nor did the Indians know what such things were.” Remarking that they had certified that they had seen no idolatry, Oviedo explicitly reveals that the statement had been part of their legal deposition. (From Oviedo's statement, we surmise that the Joint



Report's reference, and therefore Cabeza de Vaca's in the *relación*, was to human sacrifice.)

Oviedo's and Cabeza de Vaca's accounts reveal the importance they both attached to the curing episodes and the pacification of the native peoples of Nueva Galicia. The former events, carried out all across Mexico and called "miraglos" (*sic*, "milagros" [miracles]) by Oviedo, culminated in both accounts in the pacification of the lands of Sonora and especially Sinaloa and the resettlement of their inhabitants. In Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, as well as in Oviedo's, the contrast between the four Narváez survivors and the slave hunters was painted boldly. Whereas Cabeza de Vaca (f59v–f60r) did it by narrating a speech he attributed to the Indian interpreters about the goodness of the four men, Oviedo (612b; Theisen 264–65) offered one of his moral commentaries in the form of rhetorical questions to set forth the difference:

Does it seem to you, Christian reader, that this passage, with the different actions of those Spaniards who were in that land, is worthy of contemplation? There were the four travellers who came curing the sick and performing miracles. As has been mentioned above, there were also some Spaniards who went about enslaving and assaulting people. From this you can surmise how great a part of these activities depends upon the good or bad intention, as well as the conduct, of these same Christians. By the number of those dead and those living you can conclude of which action you approve.

When recalling that the three Castilians were asked to give an account of their experiences to be sent to the emperor, Oviedo (612b) described the topic as "the manner in which they came and brought those peoples who followed them in peace and good will." He concluded his description of the resettlement efforts, so like Cabeza de Vaca's, with the following words: "[a]nd this happened through all that land which was settled in peace by our Christians" (614a).

Oviedo's account and Cabeza de Vaca's testimony bear out the final, unequivocal message Cabeza de Vaca communicated and that represented a most pressing issue in his time, that of renewing the productivity of lands torn apart and people dislocated and starving by conquest. In these episodes, Cabeza de Vaca anticipates the historian Francisco López de Gómara's dictum (*Historia general* 67 [chap. 46]): "[w]hoever fails to populate the land does not make a good conquest; without conquering the land, the people will not be converted. Thus, the maxim of the conqueror must be to settle the land."

In addition to the general instructions to "populate the land and put up their houses" (f62r), the men gave very particular instructions to the

natives to build churches, putting crosses at the entrance, to always be prepared to receive Christians by carrying crosses instead of bows in their hands when going to meet them, and “to build churches and put crosses in them, *because until then they had not made them*” (f62v, emphasis added). These indications correspond to long civic and popular religious traditions, including the Christian imperial tradition of uniting religion and political conquest (Constantine’s “In hoc signo vinces” [By this sign thou shalt conquer]), the popular medieval tradition of painting crosses on houses to ward off evil spirits (signifying a Christian presence in the land of devils), the use of the sign of the cross in beginning and concluding rites of exorcism, and the use of the cross in personal encounters to identify oneself as Christian.

All of these usages, from the imperial to the individual, are implied in Díaz’s instructions. Additionally, the healing power of the cross is inferred in all the cures performed under its sign. The curing episodes, the pacification of peoples in war-torn lands, and now formal submission and conversion come together to bring into being Christian civilization along the borders of New Spain. The ritual culminates in the reading of the *requerimiento* and its acceptance, the performance of baptism, and the sealing of the contract by making crosses, “because until then they had not made them.”

Subsequently, Cabeza de Vaca (f62v) declares, Melchior Díaz swore a solemn oath that he would neither take nor permit the taking of slaves in the territory the travelers had pacified until he was otherwise directed by the governor (Nuño de Guzmán) or the viceroy (Antonio de Mendoza). Apparently, the viceroy Mendoza did enact such ordinances, although we do not have a copy of the specific order. In his letter to the emperor of 10 December 1537, Mendoza (CDI 2:179–211) stated that, as he had earlier written to His Majesty, he had stopped the taking of slaves (there is no indication as to the date). Now (December 1537), however, Melchior Díaz had come to the capital to inform him that many residents of the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán had complained that they lacked the means of generating income since they were no longer permitted to capture Indians. In fact, Mendoza added, the settlers threatened to abandon the area if not relieved or compensated in some fashion. Considering the importance of the settlement, “because of being on the frontier, located where it is” (that is, at the northernmost permanent outpost of Castilian-held territory), Mendoza (CDI 2:196) decided to provide them with income from elsewhere until the emperor handed down a disposition on the matter.

Mendoza acted both before and afterward, first to regulate, then to prohibit Indian slavery. On 30 June 1536 he had issued his first ordinance regulating the services of free and slave Indians in the silver mines (Aiton 185), and in November 1538 he again gave orders to halt the taking of Indian

slaves in his instructions to Fray Marcos de Niza (CDI 3:325–28; Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 58). In preparation for the 1539 mission in which the Franciscan friar and Estevanico were to reconnoiter the territories visited by Estevanico and his companions in 1536, Mendoza (CDI 3:325) commanded that Fray Marcos's first duty upon arriving at the province of Culiacán was to demand that the Spanish residents of San Miguel treat the Indians well, assuring them that they would not be enslaved or taken from their lands but permitted to live as free people. Thus, Mendoza seems to have taken repeated measures to prohibit the slaving raids that continued to plague the Indians of Nueva Galicia years after the 1530–31 conquest. As we have seen, the Cabeza de Vaca party's report was simply the most recent in a series of concerned commentaries about the practices of Spanish settlement in the rich area of Sinaloa under the governance of Nuño de Guzmán.

Thanks to his efforts and those of his colleagues, Cabeza de Vaca (f62v, f63r) reports that the natives were settling again in peace. They learned this first from the Indians, when the four men arrived at San Miguel de Culiacán, and two weeks later Diego de Alcaraz's men confirmed it upon their arrival. These Indians had fought strenuously against the Spanish in 1531 but quickly came to peace at the time, according to the first anonymous reporter of Guzmán's expedition ("Primera relación" 156), who explained that Guzmán and his men had easily gained the peaceful submission of these people because they exercised great reason ("eran de muy gran razón") and engaged peacefully in commerce.

#### 11. CABEZA DE VACA'S CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE LAND OF HIS CAPTIVITY

Continuing his narration (our sole account of the Narváez survivors' journey from this point forward), Cabeza de Vaca (f62v) goes on to tell how the Indians, gathered at the native settlement he variously called a "pueblo que se llamava Culiaçán" (f60v) and a "pueblo" (f61v) called "Auhacán" (f61r), agreed to honor the Spaniards' God and king. This is the only instance in his entire narration where he suggests native belief in a monotheistic god of creation. The natives of the Culiacán area described their belief, according to Cabeza de Vaca, in a deity called Aguar (f62r), and Cabeza de Vaca boldly identifies Aguar with the Christian god. Las Casas (*Apologética* 1:651–52 [chap. 124]) would later cite nearly verbatim this instance as well as the remarkable passage about the absence of idolatry and sacrifice in supporting his own fundamental argument to the effect that the natives of the New World possessed an ancient but confused knowledge of the Judeo-Christian god and that therefore they could be converted easily to

Christianity. He argued that with the passage of time and lacking divine grace and Christian doctrine and committing sin upon sin, these peoples had been permitted by the just will of God to follow the false paths that the devil showed them (*Apologética* 1:638 [chap. 121]). Las Casas used the example of Cabeza de Vaca's Sinaloan people's belief in Aguar to reveal the remnants of that divine knowledge as well as humanity's universal propensity to seek its creator. Las Casas concluded that people of such weak beliefs could be persuaded that what they blindly and confusedly sought was not the sun or the moon but rather the creator who had made them (*Apologética* 2:262–63 [chap. 186]) (see chap. 13, sec. 4).

Cabeza de Vaca brings this portion of his narration to a close, directly addressing the emperor once more. Like Oviedo, Cabeza de Vaca expressed the hope that the natives would become Christians and loyal vassals. Echoing their common source in the Joint Report, Cabeza de Vaca (f63r) presents his own statement about the absence of native idolatry and human sacrifice by specifying it in time and distance: two thousand leagues of travel over sea and land followed by ten months of continuous journeying since the time they left their captivity. His reference to the trip of ten months' duration comprehends the itinerary from the coastal area of southeastern Texas through Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila into southwestern Texas along the Rio Grande, through Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa to San Miguel de Culiacán.

Cabeza de Vaca's (f63r) judgment that the breadth of Mexico was two hundred leagues was a common estimate. Nuño de Guzmán (77) gave the same figure for the coast-to-coast distance in reference to his trans-Mexico journey of 1533, and Pedro de Castañeda Nájera (Mora 64 [pt. 1, chap. 1]) likewise cited two hundred leagues as the calculation given by Guzmán's native guide from Oxitipa regarding the crossing. Two hundred leagues, approximately six hundred miles, is of course a low estimate; the distance from southern Texas across Mexico to the Gulf of California is at least nine hundred miles. The men's actual itinerary was considerably longer, and it included the distance they traveled northwestward through Nuevo León and Coahuila while heading westward and a similar northerly-southerly course in northwestern Chihuahua and northeastern Sonora as they headed west and ultimately south. The distance they traveled north as they moved westward, particularly the distance from the Río San Lorenzo/Conchos/San Fernando system in Tamaulipas to the Rio Grande southeast of El Paso, Texas, would be at least seven hundred miles, and the distance from the final crossing of the Rio Grande near El Paso to Corazones somewhere along the southward-flowing course of the Río Yaqui in Sonora would probably be an additional three hundred.

Cabeza de Vaca (f63r–v) also remarks, directly addressing the emperor, that they have come to understand that at the South Sea “there are pearls and many riches and . . . all the best and richest things are near it.” Thus, he underscores once again the promise of South Sea wealth that he had mentioned earlier but whose ultimate beginnings were the rumors about Columbus’s fourth voyage (1502–04) and reports received by Vasco Núñez de Balboa in 1511, two years before crossing the Isthmus of Panama and making his first sighting of the Pacific (see chap. 16, sec. 3).

12. SAN MIGUEL DE CULIACÁN TO COMPOSTELA (EIGHTY TO ONE HUNDRED LEAGUES, 15 MAY TO JUNE 1536)

Cabeza de Vaca (f63v) announces that the four men spent two weeks in San Miguel de Culiacán, departing on 15 May 1536. He cites as the reason for this long stay the fact that the lands to the south on the road to Compostela, the capital of Nueva Galicia, were depopulated or occupied by native groups who were warring against the Spaniards. He estimates the distance from San Miguel de Culiacán to Compostela as a hundred leagues (f63v); Nuño de Guzmán (73; CDI 13:447; ENE 2:146) calculated it variously as eighty leagues and, on one occasion, 110 leagues.

Cabeza de Vaca makes it clear that the journey from Sinaloa into Nayarit and Jalisco was a dangerous one. His party traveled with an armed escort of twenty horsemen on part of the journey from San Miguel to Compostela, either for the first forty leagues or to within forty leagues of Compostela; his (f63v) statement on this point is ambiguous. For the remainder of the journey the men were led by six Christians carrying five hundred Indian slaves (f63v). Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were guided southward, from San Miguel de Culiacán on the Río Ciguatán (Río San Lorenzo), across the Río Elota and the Río Piaxtla (roughly one cultural area, in the view of the earliest European observers [CDI 14:460]), and then down across the Río Quezala (modern Río Presidio), the Chametla (modern Río Baluarte), the Río Acaponeta, the Río San Pedro, the Río Grande de Santiago, through the native provinces of Aztatlán and Sentispac to Compostela in the historic province of Jalisco. Cabeza de Vaca reported that this entire area was up in arms. It was essentially the same report that Nuño de Guzmán (CDI 13:447) had given a year earlier.

13. COMPOSTELA (FOUNDED AS ESPÍRITU SANTO IN 1531) AND NUÑO DE GUZMÁN

Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were received by the governor, Nuño de Guzmán, at the capital of Nueva Galicia, Compostela (f63v), probably in

June 1536. The *villa* of Compostela had been founded by Nuño de Guzmán in 1531 with the name Espíritu Santo in the present-day state of Jalisco near the native settlement of Tepic. The Spanish were settled here by the cavalry captain Francisco de Verdugo under orders from Nuño de Guzmán of 18 January 1531 before the army marched north from Chiametla to the valley of Culiacán (CDI 14:439; ENE 2:11–13).

At the time, this was contested territory, since Hernán Cortés had sent Francisco Cortés de Sanbuenaventura there near the end of 1524; *encomiendas* had been assigned, but the Indians proved intractable. The two divisions of Guzmán's army "reconquered" it in 1530–31, and Guzmán reassigned the territories, either to the crown or to himself (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 138b–39a). In his letter to the emperor of 10 March 1534 (CDI 13:436–42), Guzmán (CDI 13:438) described its location as being in an area inhabited by Indians ("un lugar de indios") called Tepique (Tepic), two leagues from the native settlement of Jalisco, nine from Tetitlán, twelve from Aguacatlán, and from there to Iztatlán (Ixtlán?), which was forty leagues from Colima, nine leagues. He indicated that all these settlements served the city of Compostela and that he had found them unprotected and at war, because for five years no Christian had been there, meaning that he wished to demonstrate that Cortés had effectively abandoned his claims there.

In 1532, the town's name was changed to Compostela ("Compostela de Galicia de la Nueva España"), for the capital of Galicia in Spain, as Guzmán (ENE 2:143) records in his letter to the empress of 12 June 1532. As the capital of Nueva Galicia, it served as the residence of the governor, the first of whom was Nuño de Guzmán, followed by Diego Pérez de la Torre and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, the latter being officially appointed governor of the province on 18 April 1539 (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 5). In 1540 Compostela was moved southward to its final site; it remained the seat of the governor and subsequently the Audiencia until 1560, when that body moved to Guadalajara (Gerhard, *The North Frontier* 45b, 140a).

On arriving at Compostela, the Cabeza de Vaca party met the man whom they must have discussed a great deal as they traveled south from the Río Yaqui: Nuño de Guzmán, the controversial governor of Nueva Galicia whose Indies career had begun when he was named governor of Pánuco on 4 November 1525 (Guzmán 40; Chipman, *Nuño de Guzmán* 131). Cabeza de Vaca's remarks about Guzmán are brief; he says only that the governor treated them well and gave them clothes to wear (f63v) — clothes that for many days Cabeza de Vaca could not bear to put on. Cabeza de Vaca makes no further remarks about Guzmán, and his silence belies not the insignificance but, on the contrary, the larger-than-life notoriety of the noble Castilian whose ambition to eclipse the power and prestige of Cortés had led to crimes that

would result in Guzmán's imprisonment in January 1537, his forced return to Castile in 1538, and the passage of the rest of his life under house arrest as a prisoner of the court until his death at Valladolid on 26 October 1558 (Chipman, "The Will" 248n11) (see chap. 17, sec. 12).

About this meeting with the Narváez survivors, Guzmán (85) would remark some years later, in an account of his services to the crown, that he had given aid and succor to all who passed through his jurisdiction, including "those who came from the company of Pánfilo de Narváez." He proclaimed his generosity and couched it in a polemical response to the accusations about his conquests: "I did what I did to fulfill the obligations of who I am and to serve His Majesty and to save the lives of those Christians as a Christian." "Those Christians" referred to survivors of Cortés's expedition (Hernández de Arias and others) to the South Sea, certain Franciscan friars, and, after them, the famous survivors of the Narváez expedition. All of them, he said, would have suffered much more—as those of the Narváez expedition had in other territories—had it not been for his settlement of the lands achieved by his conquest of Nueva Galicia.

Although Cabeza de Vaca says no more about the encounter with Guzmán in June 1536, over a century later the Franciscan friar and historian Antonio Tello would claim that a serious confrontation had occurred. He declared in his *Crónica miscelánea de la sancta provincia de Xalisco* that Cabeza de Vaca and his companions, upon "seeing the disorder caused by the taking of slaves," criticized Nuño de Guzmán for it and "took out a *testimonio* [certified copy of a protocol] of the method used in taking slaves" that they took with them to Mexico, leaving an angered Guzmán at Compostela (Tello 2:309 [bk. 2, chap. 74]). Whether the incident is historical or apocryphal, the position Cabeza de Vaca explicitly takes on evangelization and colonization in his *relación* serves implicitly to condemn Guzmán's government.

#### 14. COMPOSTELA TO MÉXICO-TENOCHTITLÁN (120 LEAGUES, JUNE TO 23 JULY 1536)

The distance from Compostela to México-Tenochtitlán was calculated at about 120 leagues (Guzmán 73; Oviedo, *Historia* 3:561b [bk. 34, chap. 1]). After ten or twelve days spent in Compostela, Cabeza de Vaca (f63v) describes their triumphal march to México-Tenochtitlán: "[a]nd along the entire road we were well treated by the Christians. And many came out to see us along the roads and gave thanks to God our Lord for having delivered us from so many dangers." It must have been on this final trek that the men experienced, through the looks of wonder and curiosity on the faces of the Christians who

came out to the road to greet them, the thrill of the external verification of their miraculous and incredible survival. They arrived in the capital of New Spain on Sunday, 23 July 1536. We take up the specific date and subsequent events of their homecoming at the beginning of our Part 9 commentary (chap. 10, sec. 1).



## CHAPTER 10

### Part 9: México-Tenochtitlán to Lisbon, Portugal (23 July 1536 to 9 August 1537) and in Castile (Autumn 1537) (f63v–f65v)

The final section of Cabeza de Vaca's narrative closes his North American saga and opens onto a broad international panorama of maritime trade and piracy as he leads the reader briefly past the rivalries of the most powerful men in New Spain and into the perils occasioned by French privateering on the high seas.

Students of the route have attempted to calculate the duration and distance of various parts of the journey ending at México-Tenochtitlán. The two most complete such attempts were undertaken by Baskett (333–39) in 1907 and Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 227–30) in 1955 (see chap. 6, sec. 2.B). Ironically, the precision they attempt to lend to the enterprise reveals the futility of the effort. Even if it were possible to establish times and locations of various events, such data would simply reassert the questions about the incredible nature of the journey with which every reader begins and ends the contemplation of the *relación*.

We know that the party made its epic coast-to-coast trek between the summer of 1535, when they left the Avavares in southeastern Texas, and the spring of 1536, when they met Diego de Alcaraz's men near the Río Sinaloa. The entire distance they walked—from the area of today's Galveston to Mexico City—was probably in the range of 2,500 to 2,800 miles. Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 229) estimated a total of 2,480 to 2,640 miles from the Nueces River in Texas to México-Tenochtitlán. However, the itinerary we suggest, which maintains a more coastal orientation through southeastern Texas and northeastern Mexico, as well as indirect, north-south movement through the river valleys of upper Sonora while heading west, would make our estimate a few hundred miles longer.

For Cabeza de Vaca, the next significant phase of his journey was the sea voyage home, which departed on Palm Sunday, 10 April 1537, from Veracruz and arrived at Lisbon on 9 August 1537 (f64r, f65r–v). Cabeza de Vaca offers little insight into the events that occurred after the men's departure from San Miguel in Culiacán on 15 May 1536 (f63v), through the winter and early spring of 1537 spent in México-Tenochtitlán. Although these public issues and personal incidents were irrelevant to Cabeza de Vaca's narration

of the services he rendered to his monarch, they nevertheless constitute the political situation from which he would write his account and accordingly orient its contents. These circumstances included the state of war that existed in Nueva Galicia, from San Miguel de Culiacán to Compostela, as well as the tumultuous political climate of the capital of New Spain. The rivalry between the newly installed (1535) first viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza, and the now-titled Hernán Cortés as the *marqués del Valle* as well as the controversy surrounding the governor of Nueva Galicia, Nuño de Guzmán, that resulted in his imprisonment in January 1537 and the policy debates that included viceregal inquiries and ecclesiastical juntas with such prominent churchmen as Fray Juan de Zumárraga and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas absorbed the attention of residents of New Spain in 1536 and 1537. We consider the ambitions of Cortés, Guzmán, and Mendoza elsewhere (see chap. 16, secs. 6.B, 6.E; chap. 17, secs. 6, 7, 9; chap. 13, sec. 2); for the politically influential debates of the churchmen on conquest and conversion, we refer the reader to Parish and Weidman.

#### 1. IN MÉXICO-TENOCHTITLÁN IN 1536

We begin with the men's arrival at México-Tenochtitlán on Sunday, 23 July 1536. Krieger ("Nuevo estudio" 220) summarized the dates assigned by Bancroft, Bishop, Baskett, and Hodge as 23, 24, and 25 July; Coopwood (261), following the seventeenth-century Franciscan chronicler Antonio Tello (2:309 [bk. 2, chap. 74]), gave the date as 22 July. Yet it is clear from Cabeza de Vaca's (f63v) precise statement ("Sunday, one day before the eve of Saint James"), that is, the day before the day of the eve of the Day of Saint James (25 July), that the date had to be 23 July. Our calendric reconstruction confirms that in 1536, 23 July did indeed fall on a Sunday.

In his own right, Cabeza de Vaca treats the arrival in México-Tenochtitlán rather dryly. His exclamations about their deliverance and his summary of their experience as it probably appeared in the Joint Report had already been registered in his narration of their reunion with their countrymen at the Río Petatlán and their stay at the *villa* of San Miguel de Culiacán on the Río San Lorenzo (f58v, f63r; see chap. 9, secs. 3, 10). Here he neither pauses to reflect on the significance of their arrival nor expresses any surprise about the changed status of governmental administration, that is, the institution of the office of viceroy filled by Antonio de Mendoza and the reduced importance of Hernán Cortés despite his newly acquired title of nobility. The Narváez survivors' arrival in the capital of New Spain in July 1536 brought them face to face with changes in Indies affairs that they could not have anticipated when they were blown off the coast of Cuba in 1528 but about

which they were surely informed in the almost two weeks they had spent in Compostela.

Arriving in México-Tenochtitlán, Cabeza de Vaca (f63v) reports being received with pleasure and treated well by the viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, and the marqués del Valle, Hernán Cortés. On the day of the feast of Saint James, Tuesday, 25 July 1536, Cabeza de Vaca and his companions enjoyed the festivities that included bull fights and jousts, the famous *juegos de cañas*. Such spectacles deserve our attention here, for they reveal the character of ceremonial public life in the viceregal capital in the 1530s.

Among the popular amusements of the day that included choreographed representations, literary entertainments, and masquerades, sports involving mounted horsemen (*fiestas caballerescas*) were extremely popular (see Deleito y Piñuela 87–159). Men at arms were fond of *juegos de cañas*, and such events typically accompanied bull fights; as sumptuous and brilliant spectacles, the two went together. Sometimes mistranslated as “joust of reeds with bulls” (Smith, *Relation* 196; Hodge 121), the *juego de cañas* consisted of contests between teams of horsemen who, man to man, in pairs or teams, hurled lances at one another, generally without doing great harm. The *cañas* were lances made of wood, being straight and thick at one extreme and flexible at the other so they could bend over the croup of the horse. The object was to throw the lance at the opponent and defend oneself from his attack with a shield commonly gilded on the outside and lined with silver on the backside. Since the Muslims of Spain and North Africa had originated the sport, it was customary for half the horsemen to dress as “Moors,” the other half as Christians.

Following a procession into the plaza, the contest would begin with horsemen riding at full speed, throwing lances at their opponents, who responded in kind, all without stopping; expert horsemanship made the sport a showy and dramatic spectacle (Deleito y Piñuela 92–94). Upon chronicling the celebrations held at the court of the emperor Charles V in Valladolid in mid-1537, Alonso de Santa Cruz (3:465 [pt. 5, chap. 39]) noted that there occurred many contests of *juegos de cañas* and bullfights in which the nobility participated, “dressed in a very courtly manner,” their tournaments being judged each day by prominent officials and their nights spent dancing in the palace.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo offered a detailed and vivid account of these public festivals in México-Tenochtitlán. He recalled the festivities that were held in the capital in 1538, just two years after the feast of Saint James witnessed by the Narváez survivors, to celebrate the peace established between the emperor and Francis I of France. Bernal Díaz (Castillo 608b [chap. 201]) described the remarkable inventions, including a representation of the city

of Rhodes with Hernán Cortés as grand master, and amusements of all sorts, including four mock ships graced by Indians dressed as Dominican friars, “just as they come from Castile, plucking chickens,” while other mock friars fished from the deck. Sponsored by the viceroy Mendoza, the marqués del Valle Hernán Cortés, and the Royal Audiencia, these fiestas were more grand, says Bernal Díaz, than anything he had seen in Spain. Cortés himself was fond of participating in the *juegos de cañas*, and, on the festive occasion in 1538, Bernal Díaz tells us, the marquis suffered a lance blow to the instep of his foot that left him limping in pain (Castillo 610b [chap. 201]).

The presence of the four travelers in México-Tenochtitlán in 1536 was recalled at the time by a very famous resident of the city, the first archbishop of New Spain, the Franciscan friar Juan de Zumárraga. Reflecting on his conversations with the men in a formal opinion (*parecer*) that he offered to the viceroy on the subject of Indian slavery, Zumárraga (92) used their example to advocate peaceful evangelization as the only “Christian conquest.” Never referring to them as enslaved by the Indians or as victims of captivity, Zumárraga (91) instead described them as “having conversed with and been among the Indians many years” and having traveled over great and extensive lands where the gospel had never been heard. Even if the Indians had been Christian already, they could not have treated the men better than they did; “they held them in as much veneration as we do the saints,” Zumárraga (91) insisted. Referring to *Florida* as the “land of Narváez,” Zumárraga pointed to the men’s experience “as they themselves who come from there tell it and are going to inform His Majesty and those of his high Council, as Your Lordship [the viceroy Mendoza] knows.” Zumárraga clearly wrote this position paper when all four men were in the city of Mexico in the late summer of 1536 (see chap. 13, sec. 2).

Also in México-Tenochtitlán at the time the four men arrived was one of the veterans of the seagoing portion of the Narváez expedition that returned to Cuba in 1528, Alonso de la Barrera (Wagner, “Álvar Núñez” 14) (see chap. 4, secs. 2–3). Barrera later served as a witness in Alonso del Castillo Maldonado’s *información de servicios* (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1), drawn up in the viceregal capital on 9 December 1547, and it is there that his recollection from 1536 appears. Barrera was now a tailor who lived in the capital, and he had been in New Spain about five years when the four Narváez survivors arrived in 1536. In Castillo Maldonado’s *probanza*, Barrera (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f11r) recalled having seen the men at the principal church of the city “dressed in skins, just as they had arrived from the land of Florida” [vestidos de cueros como habían llegado de la dicha tierra de la *Florida*]. Weddle (226) recently cited Barrera’s statement to the effect that the four survivors appeared “almost naked” at the church. His

interpretation conforms to Dorantes's son Baltasar's (Dorantes de Carranza 265) seventeenth-century recreation of the event that emphasized their plight and hardship, rather than that of the eyewitness Barrera that suggests that the occasion was a ceremonial commemoration of their deliverance. To an early modern European, however, to be dressed in skins ("vestidos de cueros") probably had the same effect as appearing, as in Weddle's mistranslation, as almost naked ("en cueros"). Barrera further remarked that Dorantes and Cabeza de Vaca told him about the hardships they had endured since their separation from the ships in *Florida* in 1528 (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, fiov-f11r).

The reaction of the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza to the arrival of the four survivors of the Narváez expedition is noted in two letters, one of which he wrote to the empress on 11 February 1537, the other on 10 December 1537 (CDI 14:235–36; CDI 2:179–211). We take up elsewhere the second of these, in which Mendoza describes his foiled plan to engage Dorantes in further explorations of the north (chap. 11, sec. 1). In the February 1537 letter, Mendoza was, it seems, favorably impressed by the services the men had rendered. His response was twofold: he applauded their courage and perseverance and expressed the hope that their efforts would be properly rewarded so that others would be inspired to follow their example. At the same time, his interest in what lay to the north was greatly piqued. According to Fray Antonio Tello (qtd. in Coopwood 261), Mendoza had ordered the three hidalgos, upon their arrival in the capital from Compostela in July 1536, to prepare a map of their peregrinations and the lands they had seen because he proposed to continue exploration and make new discoveries. Cabeza de Vaca and Dorantes, says Tello (309 [bk. 2, chap. 74]), complied with this request. Cabeza de Vaca does not mention this episode, and Tello did not give his source for it. In any case, it is quite likely that Mendoza would have made such demands upon the men; obeying the orders of the emperor's recently installed viceroy would have been part of their adjustment to the new developments in Indies administration.

All of Cabeza de Vaca's reflections on such matters are absent from his narration; yet the position he took on them in relation to the way he would present himself to the emperor is apparent in the points he chose to emphasize in the *relación*, namely, conquest and evangelization conducted without the force of arms. Given his absence of nine years, the months Cabeza de Vaca spent in the capital of New Spain in 1536–37 would have been a time to acquaint himself with all the new events in the Indies, the new civil government under the authority of the viceroy, and, most of all, the news of the discovery of vast wealth in the Andes of South America because

of the conquest of Peru—a factor that no doubt would later stimulate his interest in the appointment to the *adelantamiento* and governorship of Río de la Plata (see vol. 1, “The Life,” secs. 7, 8).

## 2. WRITING THE JOINT REPORT

During the months of August and September that the three hidalgos spent resting in México-Tenochtitlán, their principal effort would have been the preparation of the Joint Report to dispatch to the emperor and the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, under whose jurisdiction the rim of the Gulf of Mexico (the province of *Florida*) lay. In his letter to the emperor on 11 February 1537, the viceroy Mendoza (CDI 14:235) informed him that the survivors of the Narváez expedition had already prepared their report for the crown and given it to the viceroy and that he, in turn, had forwarded it to His Majesty. Because Oviedo (582b [proem]) introduced his account of the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition by noting that its survivors sent a “*relación* to this Royal *Audiencia* which resides in this city of Santo Domingo,” readers have sometimes assumed that the Audiencia’s files were the sole or primary destination of the certified report. Its primary recipient, of course, was the emperor Charles V, as is apparent from the *relación* itself and confirmed by Mendoza’s 1537 letter as well as by such sources as Las Casas (*Apologética* 1:651 [chap. 124], 2:360 [chap. 206]; see chap. 12, sec. 2.B).

Mendoza’s remark confirms that the men had to have prepared their collective report to submit to the Audiencia during the months of August and September when Cabeza de Vaca says they rested in the capital. It would have been finished by the time Cabeza de Vaca left the city for Veracruz in order to return to Spain in late September or early October 1536 (f63v). It appears that Cabeza de Vaca was the only one of the three who planned to go home immediately that autumn, and he would have planned to carry the Joint Report with him for dispatch from Havana to Santo Domingo. At the time he wrote his account of the Narváez expedition, Oviedo (582b [proem]) was under the mistaken impression that all three hidalgos had gone together to Spain to give a verbal account to the emperor, stating that they sent their report to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo “on this island of Española, from the port of Havana, where they landed in the past year of 1539, going en route to Castile to give an account of the aforementioned to our lord the king-emperor and his Royal Council of the Indies” (614ab [chap. 6]). Oviedo (618b [chap. 7]) implicitly corrected this supposition when he commented on his subsequent reading of Cabeza de Vaca’s published 1542 *relación*.

## 3. MÉXICO-TENOCHTITLÁN TO VERACRUZ

The notion Cabeza de Vaca held about the importance of royal service (not to mention his own ambitions in relation to it) made it imperative that he return to Castile immediately. Although he had originally departed from the capital in October 1536, his plan to sail home was frustrated by a storm at Veracruz that capsized the waiting ship (f63v). Given the men's experience in the winter of 1527–28 when the expedition spent those harsh months in Cuba (f3v–f5v), Cabeza de Vaca was well acquainted with the fact that “in those parts it is a very harsh season in which to navigate” (f63v). He returned to México-Tenochtitlán and spent the winter of 1536–37 there.

On this score, Cabeza de Vaca again confronted the dangerous weather that plagued much of the sea traffic to and from New Spain and the Caribbean that passed through hurricane latitudes. Although it appears that a ship was ready to leave Veracruz for Havana in September or October 1536, in later years the fleet would avoid the tropical storm season altogether by departing from Veracruz in late winter or early spring (Parry, *The Age* 181, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* 251). As noted earlier, in 1537 Veracruz and Santisteban del Puerto were the only Spanish ports on the eastern coast of Mexico. Veracruz served as the major port of embarkation from New Spain, and its location was moved several times during the sixteenth century (see chap. 15, secs. 6, 9.D).

Cabeza de Vaca makes no comment concerning the overland trip from the capital to Veracruz. Barring unforeseen mishaps, of which there evidently were none, this would have been the most well traveled and therefore unremarkable portion of his journey. The distance was calculated to be approximately sixty-six leagues, according to a 1570s measurement (López de Velasco 192), that is, approximately two hundred miles. As captain general and governor of New Spain, around 1524 Hernán Cortés had attempted to regulate the activities of merchants on the road between Veracruz and México-Tenochtitlán by issuing a series of ordinances setting fair prices to be charged by innkeepers at inns and way stations established along the route (CDI 26:170–73). When he was president of the First Audiencia of New Spain in 1529, Nuño de Guzmán undertook the further development of the road from the capital to the chief port. Writing about this effort in his report of 1539 or afterward, Guzmán (53) considered one of his greatest services to have been the improvement of this artery to make it capable of transporting substantial loads of cargo. In the 1570s the official cosmographer and chronicler of the Indies (*cosmógrafo-cronista de Indias*) Juan López de Velasco (192–93) described a dual road system from the city of Mexico to Veracruz; according to their routes, one was designated for

passenger transportation (“el camino de la Puebla”), the other for cargo transport (“el camino de las Ventas”). When Cabeza de Vaca traversed it in 1536 and again in the spring of 1537, it would have been the single arterial road as improved nearly a decade earlier by Nuño de Guzmán.

#### 4. VERACRUZ TO HAVANA (10 APRIL 1537 TO 4 MAY 1537)

The viceroy Mendoza’s 11 February 1537 letter (CDI 14:235) to the emperor mentioned that “Cabeza de Baca y Francisco Dorantes” (*sic*) had decided to go in person to see the emperor to seek his favor and to share with him “any particularities” that might have been omitted from the report they were submitting collectively to the crown. Thus, Cabeza de Vaca again set out from the capital, this time accompanied by Andrés Dorantes, in order to sail for Spain; they embarked together from Veracruz on 10 April 1537 (f64r). Cabeza de Vaca considered it necessary to report this harrowing sea journey in his published *relación*.

At Veracruz Cabeza de Vaca left the ship he had originally boarded because it was taking on water; Dorantes remained on it, and the three ships set out as a convoy (f64r). Once having set sail, the two that leaked water turned back and returned to Veracruz. Not knowing that they had done so, Cabeza de Vaca’s ship went on to Cuba, arriving at the port of Havana on 4 May 1537. We have discovered the confirmation of Cabeza de Vaca’s ship’s arrival there in a letter from Juan Velázquez to the Casa de la Contratación of 31 May 1537 as extracted by Juan Bautista Muñoz (CDU 6:22–23). Velázquez declared that “on the second of May, a ship arrived from New Spain, having lost the other two of its convoy.” This was clearly the vessel on which Cabeza de Vaca was traveling, as confirmed by the discrepancy of only two days in Cabeza de Vaca’s and Juan Velázquez’s respective reports.

Dorantes’s ship did not arrive, and so Cabeza de Vaca’s ship went on alone, setting off from Havana on 2 June 1537. According to Parry (*The Age* 181), Havana guarded the only safe and convenient exit from the Gulf of Mexico for sailing ships, which refitted and victualed there before setting sail for Spain typically in early summer. The wait of one month described by Cabeza de Vaca thus served the dual purpose of making necessary preparations for the transatlantic voyage as well as waiting for the other ships of the convoy. Regarding Cabeza de Vaca’s task of arranging for the dispatch of the Joint Report to the authorities of the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, the month layover provided him ample time for the purpose, and he was obviously successful in accomplishing it.

In many ways, Cabeza de Vaca’s account reveals the pattern of Castilian maritime experience in the Indies in the 1530s. His ship was carrying gold



and silver, and it was meant to have been a member of a convoy in order to sail with greater security and protection. Castile had tentatively begun to employ convoys in the 1520s (Parry, *The Age* 180–81), the annual schedule of which would later become a May departure from Sanlúcar de Barrameda for New Spain and an August departure from Sanlúcar for the Isthmus fleet that unloaded goods for Peru and picked up Peruvian silver at Nombre de Dios before retiring to the fortified and sheltered harbor of Cartagena. Both fleets wintered in the Indies, the one from New Spain leaving Veracruz in February for a March rendezvous in Havana with the Isthmus fleet.

Being in poor condition in 1537, the ships preparing for the return voyage from New Spain did not leave Veracruz until April, and, as just noted, two of the three failed to make it to Havana. Cabeza de Vaca's treasure-laden ship left Cuba in early June in advance of the hurricane season, but it did not avoid a nearly devastating but predictable storm near Bermuda. While the weather subsequently provided no great challenges on the crossing, traveling unaccompanied did. Although Juan Velázquez's letter stated that the gold had been taken off the ship in which Cabeza de Vaca was presumably traveling prior to its departure from Havana so that it would not be vulnerable to privateers (CDU 6:22), the latter stated in his *relación* that the ship carried a considerable cargo in gold and silver, as we will see.

##### 5. FROM HAVANA TO THE AZORES AND AN ENCOUNTER WITH FRENCH PRIVATEERS (2 JUNE 1537 TO 2 JULY 1537)

Cabeza de Vaca's ship set off from Havana alone on 2 June 1537 "with much fear of encountering French ships, since it had been only a few days since they had taken three of our ships there" (f64r). The menace of French privateering was a fact of life for Spanish ships in the Caribbean in the 1530s. The Juan Velázquez letter of 31 May 1537 cited above had as its principal objective to report on a French corsair that had taken the ships docked in the Havana harbor three months earlier and had been lingering thereabouts lying in wait for the treasure ships from New Spain as well as the opportunity to sack the harbor town of Havana (CDU 6:22). After gathering intelligence about the Spanish plan to sink the corsair by using Indians and African divers, the French vessel "departed and was not seen again" (CDU 6:22).

Cabeza de Vaca's ship survived the terrible storm off Bermuda and proceeded without mishap until arriving at the Azores twenty-nine days later (1 July 1537). The following day, passing the island of Corvo (Cuervo), the ship encountered the dreaded French privateers who operated at the strategic site of the Azores as well as in the Caribbean. The intricate deception they played out by using a captured Portuguese slave ship as a decoy offers a glimpse of

life at sea in the 1530s, and Cabeza de Vaca's description gives a good idea of how these ruses often must have worked. The French corsair used the captured Portuguese galleon to menace the Spanish treasure ship loaded with silver and gold on which Cabeza de Vaca was traveling (f64v). Later in the day the sailors on the Spanish vessel sighted "another nine sails" at such a distance that they could not discern whether they belonged to friend or foe. The French corsair came near Cabeza de Vaca's ship at night, cutting it off several times, but it did not attack (f64v).

In the morning the Spanish ship found itself not only alongside the French ship but also surrounded (*cercados*) by the nine ships, which turned out to be the Portuguese armada. Finding itself threatened, the French corsair fled, but not before telling the Portuguese slave ship, as it released it, that the Spanish treasure ship was part of the French convoy (f64v). The captain of the Portuguese slave ship then informed the commander of the Portuguese armada that the Spanish treasure ship was French (f64v). As the Spanish ship approached the Portuguese armada, the Portuguese prepared to attack the supposedly French vessel (f65r). Luckily, the Spanish ship was able to salute the Portuguese ship and make its identity known. The Portuguese captain, Diego de Silveira, promised (and ultimately delivered) safe passage to the Spanish treasure ship, but not without observing, "You certainly come with great riches, but you bring a very bad ship and very bad artillery!" (f65r). The problem of overloading unwieldy vessels was not uncommon; Parry (*The Age* 180) observed that "the evidence is clear that in Spanish, as in Portuguese shipbuilding, size outran design." These large cargo ships—difficult to maneuver, heavily armed, and often overloaded—were vulnerable to the lighter, swifter corsairs that attacked them.

Further correspondence of the Casa de la Contratación (Muñoz Collection, A/108, f51r–f59r) for 1537 confirms the considerable threat posed to Spanish fleets by French piracy, and a letter to the empress of 4 August 1537, extracted by Muñoz, relates additional events pertinent to Cabeza de Vaca's account of his sea journey home. The Contratación letter makes reference to three ships that had been lost at Cuba when they went in pursuit of a French craft ("galeoncillo") that was menacing the area. These could well have been the three ships mentioned by Cabeza de Vaca (f64r) when he stated that upon leaving Cuba on 2 June 1537 he and his shipmates feared encountering French vessels because they had taken three Spanish ships just a few days earlier. We suggest a possible significant coincidence between events recounted by Cabeza de Vaca and the 4 August 1537 Contratación letter to the empress, because the gold that those Spanish ships had left at port when they pursued the French corsair was later boarded on a ship, coming from New Spain, at the port of "La Jaguano" (*sic*, La Havana). This same

craft, loaded with much silver and gold, arrived at Terceira in the Azores, where it ran afoul of two French ships. Another ship coming from Cuba, Muñoz's extract concludes (Muñoz Collection, A/108, f56r), also arrived at the Azores about the same time.

Cabeza de Vaca's ship, arriving at the island of Corvo about 2 July 1537 (the thirtieth day since departing from Havana; f64r–v), may well have been one of the two ships coming from Cuba, and it was probably the one that carried the extra gold. Despite the fact that Juan Velázquez's letter of 31 May 1537 stated that the helmsman (*maestre*) insisted that the gold on the probable Cabeza de Vaca ship remain at port until he could return to Spain and notify agents there to send ships for its escort (CDU 6:22), Cabeza de Vaca's testimony reveals that his ship came loaded with gold and silver. It must be acknowledged that there are discrepancies between Cabeza de Vaca's account and the 4 August 1537 Contratación letter: the former states that the encounter occurred at Corvo and that the French corsair fled; the latter, that the confrontation happened at Terceira and that the Portuguese armada freed the treasure ship from the two French ships that had run afoul of it and subsequently sank the two French vessels. Despite these differences, both accounts may well refer to the same treasure ship inasmuch as the Contratación communiqué to the empress was based on reports received from Portuguese merchants and, as in many secondhand accounts, there had been disagreement on the facts (in this case, whether the treasure ship had come from New Spain or Peru). Given Cabeza de Vaca's account, it is likely that the ship's port of departure had been New Spain and that the story received by the Casa de la Contratación officials from the Portuguese merchants told the fate of the ship on which Cabeza de Vaca was traveling.

Additional correspondence of the Casa de la Contratación extracted by Muñoz corroborates the coincidence and anticipates Cabeza de Vaca's next sojourn in the Indies to Río de la Plata. On 13 August 1537 the empress was informed that Don Pedro de Mendoza's ships were arriving at Lisbon from Río de la Plata and that the comptroller, Felipe de Cáceres, wrote the account of the misfortune suffered by Mendoza and his people in the conquest of that province (Muñoz Collection, A/108, f56v). In the same ship from Río de la Plata came Pedro de Alvarado, who had boarded it at Terceira. Obviously coming from New Spain, Alvarado met the men of the Río de la Plata ships in the Azores, suggesting that Alvarado and Cabeza de Vaca may have come together on the same ship from New Spain or, at the very least, that in July the two ships coming from New Spain after embarking from Cuba met the Río de la Plata returnees at Terceira in the Azores.

Just a few days later, on 18 August 1537, another letter brings together the Portuguese armada, Don Pedro de Mendoza's ships, and the Spanish

treasure ship. Muñoz summarized the letter as follows (Muñoz Collection, A/108, f57r): “with the armada from Portugal have come two ships from the Indies with all the gold that was in the Azores, which are 300,000 pesos and, likewise, another ship from Río de la Plata also arrived at the Azores with the news that on the Day of Saint Ann, coming in the said ship, Don Pedro de Mendoza died of hunger and they threw his body into the sea, and likewise many others of those who came with him died.” The sum of 300,000 pesos, precisely the sum quoted by Cabeza de Vaca (f65r) in the *relación* as being carried by his ship, confirms that it was one of the two ships mentioned in this letter and the previous two Casa de la Contratación communications of 4 and 13 August as well. Although the 4 August 1537 letter was inaccurate in certain details, it was correct in its general outline, and the doubt as to whether the treasure ship had come from Peru or New Spain is resolved in favor of New Spain. With the mention of the Portuguese armada and the cargo of 300,000 pesos of silver and gold in the 18 August letter, we can surmise that Cabeza de Vaca’s arrival at Lisbon on 9 August 1537 was thus recorded in the 18 August 1537 Contratación communication, of which we have seen only Muñoz’s extract. Traveling on the Río de la Plata ship from Terceira to Lisbon to assure a swifter arrival than the Portuguese armada or the poor Spanish treasure ship could provide, Felipe de Cáceres and Pedro de Alvarado went straight to court. The fact that Alvarado boarded the Río de la Plata ship at Terceira indicates that Cabeza de Vaca, along with the other returnees from New Spain, became aware of events in Asunción a few weeks before he even set foot on Castilian soil upon his return from *Florida*. Thus, the beginning of his South American sojourn was anticipated, however implicitly, in the conclusion of his North American odyssey.

#### 6. FROM THE AZORES TO LISBON, ARRIVING 9 AUGUST 1537

The Portuguese armada that saved the Spanish treasure ship from attack by French privateers included in its own convey vessels returning to Europe from Africa and India. The slave ship that had been captured and released by the French near Corvo had arrived at the Azores from the coast of West Africa, where the Portuguese had taken the slaves that were the ship’s cargo as well as its oarsmen. After arriving at the island of Terceira, Cabeza de Vaca’s ship and the Portuguese armada that had escorted it waited for two weeks, anticipating the arrival of a Portuguese ship that was coming loaded with cargo from India; it was to become part of the convoy of three spice-laden Portuguese ships that the armada escorted (f65r). Coming from India, the ship headed for the Azores would have carried large cargoes of pepper, which

Figure 7. Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's signature. Reproduced from Smith, *Relation* 200. Clements Library, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor).

came primarily from the Malabar (west) coast of India, possibly cinnamon from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and perhaps the “luxury spices” of cloves, nutmeg, and mace that came from the islands of Ternate, Tidore, and Banda in the Moluccas group of eastern Indonesia (Parry, *The Age* 41, 190).

The 1530s were the high point of the Portuguese spice trade, the greatest success of which came, according to Curtin (143), in the first few decades of the sixteenth century; at that time Portuguese shipping extended all the way to the Moluccas, and in the 1520s the Portuguese had built a trade fort on the island of Ternate. The Portuguese did not achieve a monopoly at that time, however, and by the end of the century they were competing not only with Asian merchants, including Chinese, Malay, Javanese, and Makassarese, but also with the Spanish, who had constructed fortified trading posts from Acapulco across the Pacific to Manila and south to the Spice Islands (Curtin 142–43). Although the Portuguese were never a territorial power in Southeast Asia, and over the years they lost a great number of ships in the East Indies trade, the extent and variety of Portuguese enterprises gave them considerable commercial success throughout the sixteenth century (Parry, *The Age* 245). Nevertheless, over one fourth of all the ships that sailed from Portugal for the Indian Ocean between 1500 and 1634 were lost at sea. Given outbound losses (frequently in the treacherous waters off the southern coast of Africa) and the number of ships that remained in the Indian Ocean for the rest of their commercial lives, only about four ships per year came back from the East (Curtin 142–43). Cabeza de Vaca (f65r) does not make clear whether the Portuguese ship expected from India arrived; he only states that after waiting two weeks at Terceira his ship and the Portuguese armada departed. If the East Indies trade vessel did join them, the awaited

ship would have been one of just a few per year that managed to return to Portuguese waters.

On 9 August 1537, Cabeza de Vaca's ship and the Portuguese armada landed safely at Lisbon. As the printers' annotation mentions, Cabeza de Vaca (f65v) here ended his *relación* by reproducing his coat of arms (see vol. 1, fig. 1) and signing his name. Although Smith did not give the citation of the Cabeza de Vaca signature he reproduced (fig. 7), a surviving manuscript autograph of Cabeza de Vaca is found in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, Justicia 1131, pieza 1a, f14r). At the time, Cabeza de Vaca could not have imagined that his coat of arms would one day be used in criminal charges against him, but so it occurred just three and a half years after the *relación* was printed at Zamora. Although the Zamora edition did not reproduce his coat of arms, it would later be hand-drawn in one of the documents charging him with crimes committed during his governorship of Río de la Plata (see vol. 1, "The Life," secs. 2.C, 9.A).

#### 7. IN CASTILE (AUTUMN 1537)

Although Cabeza de Vaca logically does not mention in his *relación* the busy months he spent from August through December 1537, following his return to Spain, we have discovered that he authorized his cousin Pedro Estopiñán Cabeza de Vaca to prepare a *probanza* on his behalf on 31 October 1537 (see vol. 1, "The Life," sec. 7) and that on 8 November 1537 the former royal treasurer of the Narváez expedition was summoned by the officials of the Casa de la Contratación to make a written declaration of "all the things he had seen and learned about the province of *Florida*." In the letter to the emperor that records this request (Muñoz Collection, A/108, f58v; CDI 42:525–33), it is also reported that Cabeza de Vaca had replied that he would depart for the court within the following four days to give a full account to the sovereign. Again, Río de la Plata affairs coincide with the conclusion of the *Florida* expedition. In the same letter of 8 November (CDI 42:528–29), the Contratación officials notified the emperor about matters pertaining to Río de la Plata. Following up on the August notices it had sent to court about the disastrous end of the Mendoza conquest of Río de la Plata and the return and death of its *adelantado*, the Casa de la Contratación detailed its efforts to facilitate the swift dispatch of two ships to the province. This documentation further suggests Cabeza de Vaca's knowledge about affairs in Río de la Plata even as he hastened to court in hopes of obtaining the royal commission for the conquest of *Florida* that, unbeknownst to him when he embarked from Veracruz for Spain on 10 April 1537, would be granted ten days later, on 20 April 1537, to Hernando de Soto.

## 8. THE PROPHECY OF THE MUSLIM WOMAN FROM HORNACHOS

Cabeza de Vaca's narration does not end here but rather adds in the manner of an epilogue an account that takes up the fate of the rest of the expedition, that is, the three ships and the one hundred persons (including ten women) who remained in them off the Florida Peninsula in 1528 and from there returned to Cuba (f65v). We have treated this addendum to the narration (f65v–f66v) in our Part 3 commentary (chap. 4, secs. 1–2), since its earliest events correspond chronologically to that earlier period. Cabeza de Vaca points out that in 1536 he found many of his former shipmates in New Spain (one of whom was Alonso de la Barrera, mentioned above) and later many others “here in Castile” (f65v).

There is one chilling aspect of Cabeza de Vaca's summary of the events of 1527–28 that deserves mention here: his report of a “Moorish” (Muslim) woman's prophecy of doom about the Narváez expedition (f65v–f66r). Although he refers to her as “Moorish” (*mora*), it is possible that she was either a practicing Muslim or a Morisca, that is, a woman converted to Christianity from Islam. Reading the 1542 published *relación*, Gómara (*Historia general* 69 [chap. 46]), for example, referred to her as “a Morisca from Hornachos.” The source of her reported prophecy in the *relación* was one of the ten married Castilian women who accompanied the expedition, which serves as a reminder that settlement (“poblar las tierras”) was to have been one of the stated objectives of Narváez's grant (Vas Mingo 234; see chap. 2, sec. 6.c).

According to Cabeza de Vaca, the Castilian woman on the Narváez voyage had shared the prophecy with the members of the expedition before they had departed from Castile. After detailing its contents, he declares that “the entire voyage had occurred to us in the same manner that she had told us” (f66r), namely, that all had perished but that the Muslim woman's single caveat had been met: “if one of them were to come out, God would perform great miracles through him” (f65v).

The traditions of prophecy and foretelling the future had both elite and popular dimensions among the Muslim and Morisco populations of sixteenth-century Spain. Exemplifying the learned tradition, for example, was the Mora de Úbeda—a Granadine woman with considerable Islamic learning (López-Baralt 36). Our “mora de Hornachos” pertained to the popular practices of fortune-telling that would become stereotyped by anti-Muslim, anti-Morisco sentiment (García-Arenal 227–33). It is no surprise that the Muslim or Morisca to whom this tale is attributed should be identified with the town of Hornachos. Located in Badajoz in Extremadura not far from Trujillo, it was famous as a Morisco enclave. (A *comedia* entitled

“Los moriscos de Hornachos,” attributed probably incorrectly to Lope de Vega, appeared around that time.) According to the Inquisition census of 1594, Hornachos was by that time home to some four to five thousand Moriscos, a sum equal to the total registered for all of New Castile that same year (Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent 81, 115). Three decades after the expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain in 1609–10, Hornachos’s former inhabitants would petition Felipe IV, offering to desist in their privateering in the Mediterranean in exchange for the right to return to their Extremaduran homeland.

Cabeza de Vaca’s willingness to give this woman’s account credence can be taken as an indication of the popular outlook on the Moriscos. Cabeza de Vaca’s remark seems consistent with the early period of tolerance that existed toward the Muslim population after the fall of Granada in 1492, even though by the 1520s official Castilian attitudes began to harden in restrictive legislation against the Moriscos (Domínguez Ortiz and Vincent 20–21). In any case, strong anti-Morisco sentiment would be an unlikely response from the Andalusian caballero whose early life would have been spent in regular contact with the Muslims and Moriscos of southern Spain.

Cabeza de Vaca (f66v–f67r) ends his account by listing the names and origins of his companions on his long *Florida* odyssey. We take them up in the following chapter and also refer the reader to “The Life of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca” (secs. 8–10) in volume 1, where we consider Cabeza de Vaca’s affairs in Río de la Plata (1540–45) and his subsequent legal battles in Castile to defend himself from criminal charges relating to his governorship (1545–52). From the time of the publication of his *Relación y comentarios* in 1555 until we lose sight of his activities after the spring of 1559, Cabeza de Vaca’s final years are little known. While the precise date of his demise is undetermined, it is clear that he survived until the end of the decade of the 1550s and was probably buried in the city of his birth, Jerez de la Frontera.



## CHAPTER 11

### The Fates of the Overland Travelers

Cabeza de Vaca (f66v–f67r) closes his *relación* with brief remarks that tantalize the reader hoping to know more about his three companions, whom he had described as being “hardier and younger” [más rezios y más moços] (f58v) than he. We have little information about them, and what is available comes from customary sources on conquistadors and expeditionaries: the notarized first-person accounts and external testimonies (*informaciones* and *probanzas*) filed regarding services rendered in the case of Dorantes and Castillo Maldonado, and for Estevanico the observations written about him by Cabeza de Vaca, the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, and Fray Marcos de Niza.

Cabeza de Vaca (f66v–f67r) described Alonso del Castillo Maldonado as a native of Salamanca and the son of Doctor Castillo and Doña Aldonza Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes [de Carranza] as the son of Pablo Dorantes, a native of Béjar [del Castañar] and resident of Gibraleón, and Estevanico as an Arabic-speaking black man from Azemmour. For Castillo Maldonado, we have his *información de servicios*, taken in México-Tenochtitlán on 9 December, 1547 (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1). For Andrés Dorantes, we have no *información de servicios* compiled by him personally, although an account of his career is given in two nearly identical *informaciones* presented by his grandson Sancho Dorantes de Carranza in México-Tenochtitlán on 8 July and 19 August 1613 and their corresponding *probanzas de méritos* taken on 27 and 29 August 1613 and 20 September 1613, respectively. Both *informaciones* and *probanzas* prepared by Sancho Dorantes de Carranza are found in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2) and are read here from the microfilm copy in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley; the first of the two sets, taken in August 1613, is reproduced in Dorantes de Carranza (459–65, 465–89).

Another source of information about Andrés Dorantes was compiled by his son Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza in 1604. Baltasar’s *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España* included “individual notices of the legitimate descendants of the Spanish conquistadors and first settlers [*primeros pobladores*].” As is apparent from the lengthy title, its author, not unlike Cabeza de Vaca or Bernal Díaz del Castillo, found his initial inspiration in the desire to put before the sovereign an account of merits and services that

would prompt reward (Torre Villar 211). Here of course the reward was not to go to the conquistador Andrés Dorantes but rather to his heir, Baltasar. In addition to these sources, there are a few records about Castillo's and Dorantes's property holdings, which we take up in due course.

#### 1. ANDRÉS DORANTES DE CARRANZA

We consider elsewhere the evidence regarding Andrés Dorantes's planned (and aborted) return to New Spain in 1537 (chap. 12, sec. 2.E). There are just a few further pieces of information about the life he led prior and subsequent to his settlement in New Spain.

In a census report of conquistadors and settlers of New Spain who had been granted Indians ("Memoria de los conquistadores y pobladores que tienen yndios encomendados en esta Nueva España") compiled in México-Tenochtitlán around 1547 and reproduced by Francisco de Icaza (1:186–258, 2:1–144), Andrés Dorantes was described in the late 1540s as follows: the legitimate son of Pablo Dorantes of Béjar and Beatriz de Carranza of Las Montañas, he served the crown in the war against the Comunero rebellion, "all the time that it lasted," being wounded in the face in the course of it. He had arrived in New Spain in 1536, having been lost with the Narváez expedition, "living among the Indians, naked and enslaved, for nine years" (Icaza 1:195).

The report (Icaza 1:195–96) continues: after his arrival in New Spain, he married in 1536 a widow of a conquistador of Mexico who left an Indian settlement called Maycalcingo (Atzalan-Mexcalcingo) "on the coast of the North Sea." Dorantes purchased this property from the daughter of his wife's first husband for 1,500 pesos; for eight years he had been paying her an annuity on it. Because this settlement was located in the hot lowlands and had no sources of economic production, becoming poorer each day ("no ser pueblo de grangería . . . y que cada día es menos"), Dorantes could not get ahead financially; with nothing to occupy him there, he spent all his time in the mountains ("sienpre [*sic*] está en los montes"). He had four legitimate children (one son, three daughters), and "he has always had his arms and horse ready to serve His Majesty."

Regarding Dorantes's lineage, Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza (265) declared that his father was from Béjar del Castañar in Old Castile "or Extremadura, as is more generally said," ten leagues from Salamanca and ten from Plasencia. The nobility of the Dorantes and the Carranzas was verified in Granada, Baltasar (Dorantes de Carranza 265) declared, by the *hidalguías*, that is, the customary "litigation brought before the high courts concerning an individual's right to enjoy the privileges and exemptions

of the nobility” (Haliczer 270). The Carranzas came from the Santander port Castro Urdiales, the mountains of the Valle de Carranza, and the Torre de Molina, where their ancestral home was located. The Dorantes line originated in the same area and was related to the marqués de Dávila Fuente. Baltasar claimed that in recognition of this lineage and relationship he was honored by the viceroy of New Spain, the marqués de Villa Manrique “in words and in benefits received from his hand” (Dorantes de Carranza 265–66).

With respect to Andrés Dorantes’s enlistment in the Narváez expedition, Dorantes de Carranza (266) explained that his father had gone from Béjar to Seville to the house of the duke of Béjar, Don Álvaro de Zúñiga; on that occasion, notice was given of the *adelantado* Pánfilo de Narváez’s expedition to *Florida*. The duke sought and received from the emperor a grant and title for Andrés Dorantes as a captain of infantry on the expedition.

Never before cited is the grant that Dorantes also received to be a *regidor*, or city councilor, of the first municipality to be established by Narváez in the lands and provinces of *Florida* (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f26v–f27v). Dated 1 March 1527 at Valladolid, the royal warrant declared: “[c]onsidering your appropriateness and ability and the services you have done for us and that we expect you will perform for us in the future,” the crown granted to Dorantes, as to Cabeza de Vaca “from here and henceforth, for the time that it please us” the title of *regidor* (AGI, Casa de la Contratación 3309, 32-4-29/35, f27r). Given the virtual autonomy of the municipal corporation in the Spanish world, the office of *regidor* in the town council (*cabildo*) was a significant one. It implied the power to conduct all the affairs of the town and the outlying area from which it drew its income as well as to oversee and control judicial matters through the appointment of judges (*alcaldes*). In being granted this office Andrés Dorantes along with Cabeza de Vaca and a company of ten other men was to have become one of the most prominent of the new settlers of *Florida*.

In his encomium to his father regarding the *Florida* expedition in the *Sumaria relación*, Baltasar Dorantes asserted that the deeds of most conquistadors were merely great, but that those of his father were miraculous: “healing the sick, raising the dead,” where his fame spread to the most hidden parts of the land from which the Indians came out, “calling him ‘son of the sun’ and ‘son of God’” (Dorantes de Carranza 264–65; see chap. 7, sec. 4 and chap. 8, sec. 12). Baltasar calculated the length of these peregrinations as ten years, “six in slavery to the Indians and four, performing with the help of God the aforementioned miracles and marvels,” and Baltasar’s son Sancho would later cite a period of “more than ten years” in his *información de servicios* (Dorantes de Carranza 266, 460).

As to Baltasar's sources for his account of his father's life, he told his reader that he relied on two: *probanzas* prepared by his father, to which we regrettably do not have access today, and Cabeza de Vaca's 1555 edition of the *relación*, which Baltasar affectionately described as Dorantes's "printed history, set in type by the license and authority of the Royal Majesty of the emperor our lord Charles V, of glorious memory, which I have in my possession as something of great significance to me" (264).

It was no doubt from Andrés Dorantes's now-lost *probanzas* that the following episode was recounted, because a very similar one appears in Castillo's *probanzas*, as mentioned in our Part 9 commentary (chap. 10, sec. 1). After the men's much-heralded arrival in México-Tenochtitlán in July 1536, Dorantes de Carranza (265) said that soon afterward his father and his companions made a public appearance on a great occasion (the feast of Saint James of 1536), dressed just as they had on their peregrinations, that is, in deerskin that covered their private parts but otherwise "stark naked" [en cueros vivos]. Also recalled by a witness in Alonso del Castillo Maldonado's *probanzas*, the anecdote suggests that they prepared their *informaciones* at the same time, that is, around 1547, and called in some of the same persons to testify on their behalf.

Dorantes de Carranza (265) also seems to suggest that his father and his companions had returned together to Spain when he says that "in Spain, His Majesty the emperor took their reappearance as a miracle, and the people took to the streets to see these men whom they considered to be miraculous." Nevertheless, on the following page (266), he makes clear that it was Cabeza de Vaca who went to Spain, not his father.

Subsequent to Dorantes's unsuccessful attempt to embark for Spain in the spring of 1537, recorded by Cabeza de Vaca in the *relación* (f64r), the viceroy Mendoza wrote to Dorantes upon his return to port at Veracruz. He encouraged him to return to the capital to lead an expedition back to the north, taking horsemen and some friars, "to know for certain what it contained" (CDI 2:206). Mendoza's (CDI 2:179–211) letter to the emperor of 10 December 1537, which contained this information, was written at a time when the viceroy was of the understanding that Dorantes would do so. Dorantes ultimately declined, however, and although we have no evidence as to why, Mendoza commented to the emperor in a letter of 1539:

After this, having here with me Andrés Dorantes, one of those who went in the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez, I consulted with him many times. It seemed to me that he could render great service to your Majesty if he were sent with forty or fifty horsemen to lay bare the mysteries of that region. On that account I spent considerable money in providing what was necessary

for his journey, and I do not know how it was that the plan fell through and the undertaking was abandoned. (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 51–52)

According to Baltasar Dorantes (265–66, 268), after his father returned to New Spain, the viceroy quickly pulled him from the potential influence of Hernán Cortés by marrying off him and Castillo to two wealthy widows (“señoras de pueblos”); Dorantes’s wife was María de la Torre, who was the widow of the conquistador Álvaro de Benavides, according to a 1560 account of Indian settlements held in *encomienda* in New Spain (ENE 9:18). Her property was located in the “area of Jalapa toward Veracruz,” which is today in the central part of the state of Veracruz (ENE 9:18; Gerhard, *A Guide* 373a).

The *informaciones* and *probanzas* prepared by Andrés Dorantes’s grandson Sancho offer testimony to the effect that the viceroy kept the patriarch Andrés “always occupied in the most solemn and best enterprises of the administration of justice and other matters in New Spain and, continuing through them his service to His Majesty, gave a good and laudable account of all of them” (Dorantes de Carranza 461, 467). Sancho’s father, Baltasar (Dorantes de Carranza 267), specifically stated that Andrés had served in the company of the viceroy in the dangerous Mixton War (1541–42) in Jalisco and afterward occupied himself in the difficult task of settling an area that contained very few Spaniards but where there were many Indians, “who were greatly feared in those times.” Dorantes de Carranza (266–67) also declared that the viceroy enriched his father greatly, and, in addition to giving him many good Indians, he further occupied him in “offices of His Majesty’s service.”

The *encomienda* of Atzalan-Mexcalcingo held by María de la Torre and then by her second husband, Andrés Dorantes, was economically productive, despite the lament registered in the 1547 *memorial* cited above. Dorantes’s control of Atzalan-Mexcalcingo (also written as Maxcalzingo, Azala-Mexcalcingo, and Açalamescalçingo in the documents of the time) is registered in other sources. We find that Dorantes “was present in the said pueblo” in 1552 when he served as a witness for two transactions making certified copies of royal provisions on 13 July (ENE 6:168, 171). On 17 August 1553, the royal inspector (*visitador*) Diego Ramírez reported to Prince Philip that in the course of his inspection of the province of Pánuco, he temporarily reduced the valuation and tribute assigned to Andrés Dorantes’s *encomienda* due to the concerted lobbying of the *encomendero* and the principal lords of the area (ENE 7:61). Again naming Andrés Dorantes as the *encomendero* of Atzalan-Mexcalcingo, an undated “Relación del destrito y pueblos del Obispado de Tlaxcala” described the property as consisting of one large

nucleated settlement (*cabecera*) and six satellites (*estancias*, probably centers of agricultural enterprise privately owned by Dorantes but inhabited by the Indians of the area assigned to him in *encomienda*) that altogether had a total of 1,608 tributary Indians, the majority of whom spoke Nahuatl and the others Totonac (ENE 14:80; Lockhart and Schwartz 68–70).

In January 1560, the *relación* that assessed the value and types of tribute of the Indian settlements of New Spain declared that Mexcalcingo produced a considerable income in cotton goods, honey, beans, *ají*, chickens, fish, and maize. It also revealed that by January 1560, Andrés Dorantes was deceased (ENE 9:18).

#### 1.A. Andrés Dorantes in His Grandson's Informaciones (1613)

Given the time elapsed between the Narváez expedition to *Florida* and the *informaciones* and *probanzas* of Andrés Dorantes's grandson Sancho Dorantes de Carranza, the testimony gathered obviously reveals nothing new about Dorantes's experience during or after the expedition. Nevertheless, these *probanzas* are of interest on two counts. First, they reveal that Sancho Dorantes's merits rested firmly on the foundation of his paternal grandfather's service to the crown and viceroy as well as on the participation of his maternal grandfather (Juan Bravo de Lagunas) in the conquest of Mexico. Second, the *probanzas* suggest that the remarkable experience of the Narváez expedition's survivors was still part of the common lore of the capital of New Spain after the turn of the seventeenth century.

In two of Sancho Dorantes de Carranza's *informaciones de servicios* and *probanzas de méritos* that we have examined, Andrés Dorantes's participation in and survival of the Narváez expedition play a prominent role. (Evidently by 1613 and from Don Sancho's *criollo* perspective, his grandfather's service to the emperor in the Comunero revolution in Spain in 1520–21 had long since been eclipsed by his great North American adventure.)

Both *probanzas* contain assertions about Sancho Dorantes's grandfather's loyal service and lost decade on the Narváez expedition as well as the high esteem in which he was held by the viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, of New Spain in whose service he worked afterward (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f2v–f3r; Dorantes de Carranza 460–61). Six witnesses were presented in the *probanza* for which testimony was taken on 27 and 29 August 1613 and five in the one for which testimony was gathered between 20 September and 29 October 1613. In the *interrogatorio* of the first, the names of his companions “Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Alonso del Castillo Maldonado” are mentioned (Dorantes de Carranza 461); in the second they are not. In both, Andrés Dorantes is described as a “very important gentleman and caballero,”

with the viceroy occupying him “continually in the most solemn and best offices in the administration of justice in New Spain” (Dorantes de Carranza 461; AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f3r).

In the testimony taken on 27 and 29 August 1613, all six witnesses claimed to have known of the remarkable deeds and viceregal service of Andrés Dorantes. Two (Diego Valadés and Francisco Pacheco de Figueroa) made the claim on the basis that their fathers had been conquistadors of New Spain who talked about Dorantes’s feats, and one (Pedro Flores) declared that, as a very young boy, he had visited Andrés Dorantes’s home with his parents (Dorantes de Carranza 467, 480, 484). Flores claimed that one of his relatives, Gonzalo de Malpasso (a name that seems to fit the case), had also participated in the Narváez expedition to *Florida* and that he too suffered the same hardships as Dorantes; for this reason, Flores declared, he knew the assertions as stated in the *información* were true (Dorantes de Carranza 480). (Evidently, Malpasso had not joined the overland expedition into the Florida Peninsula but rather remained on the ships that eventually sailed to New Spain.) The other witnesses (Martín Núñez, Alonso de Solís, and Luis López-Bejarano) took Andrés Dorantes’s deeds and services to be true on the good authority, as Solís said, of “very old persons of this kingdom, on account of the Captain Andrés Dorantes de Carranza having been so well known in it” (Dorantes de Carranza 476).

In the *probanza* prepared in September and October 1613, the five witnesses gave similar affirmations; like his brother Francisco Pacheco de Figueroa, who testified in the earlier *probanza* (Dorantes de Carranza 484), Luis Salcedo de Figueroa declared that their father, a conquistador of New Spain named Gonzalo Hernández de Mosquera who had come to Mexico with Narváez in 1520 (Icaza 1:42–43), told him of Dorantes’s deeds. Salcedo added that many other conquistadors spoke of them also; he stated that he had met Captain Dorantes personally, obviously when Salcedo was quite young (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f16r–v).

Another witness and old-timer, Diego de Torres Haro, also claimed to have met Captain Dorantes when Torres was a very young child in the viceregal capital; the witness’s father, Diego de Torres, had been one of the royally recognized original Spanish settlers of New Spain (*primer poblador*), and his father-in-law, Hernando Torres, was a conquistador of Mexico (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f6r–v; Icaza 1:237). A third witness, Antonio de la Cadena, testified that his father had seen and known Captain Dorantes just after he arrived in New Spain after the *Florida* captivity (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f24v–f25r). Juan de Medina stated that he had seen Andrés Dorantes in the viceroy Mendoza’s service when Medina was a child, and Alonso Pérez de Bocanegra declared having

known about Captain Dorantes's feats "for as long as he could remember" from the accounts of "very old persons in that kingdom" (AGI, Patronato 86, no. 3, ramo 2, f11v, f20v–f21r). Clearly, the Narváez expeditionaries' tale of survival against all odds played a role in the popular imagination of early colonial New Spain, at least in the community of descendants of conquistadors and early settlers who had borne the proud distinction of being *primeros pobladores*.

## 2. ESTEVANICO

Perhaps no member of the Narváez expedition has aroused more current interest than Estevanico, described by Cabeza de Vaca (f67r) in the last line of the *relación* with the words "negro alárabe, natural de Azamor." We introduce him here by setting the scene of his place of origin and giving a sketch of the pertinent portion of the history of African-Iberian slavery (see chap. 1, sec. 5.A).

As a native of Azemmour, Estevanico was born in the city of that name in the province of Doukkala, which was one of the seven regions of the kingdom of Morocco as set forth by Leo Africanus in his *Description de l'Afrique* (1526). Leo Africanus (125) located Azemmour at the mouth of the Oum er Rbia River and in the 1520s described it as a large and well-populated city, frequented constantly by Portuguese merchants, inhabited by "civilized people, decently dressed" [gens policés et convenablement vêtus], and noted for its fishing bounty of shad from October to the end of April, as well as the production of wheat. The area of northwestern Africa that had been the breadbasket of ancient Rome attracted the Portuguese for its broad plains where wheat could potentially be grown by Muslim peasants under Christian domination, as had been done on the southern plains of Portugal and the Algarve; Prince Henry the Navigator's capture of the fortified city of Ceuta in 1415 marked the beginning of Europe's outward expansion with such objectives in mind (Birmingham 25).

Gold and slaves were the other great lures to the Portuguese in Africa (Birmingham 25–26). Although slaves were brought to Portugal in the early fifteenth century, they had been obtained by the common means of "capture in war, corsair raids, and purchase in Moroccan slave markets" (Phillips 137). Portuguese slaving along the coast of West Africa began in the 1440s when two Portuguese expeditions took captives (mostly Islamized Berbers and a few blacks) and returned to Portugal. Slave trading replaced raiding by the 1450s, and by 1460 black slaves began to be obtained in significant numbers as slaving expeditions went farther south along the Cape Verde coast of West Africa (Phillips 138–40).



By 1501, black slaves had been introduced into the Spanish colonization of the Antilles. Queen Isabel attempted to allow passage only to Christian slaves; the royal instructions of 16 September 1501 to Nicolás de Ovando for the governance of the “islands and mainland of the Ocean Sea” stipulated that although Muslims, Jews, heretics, former apostates reconciled to the faith (*reconciliados*), and new Christians were to be prohibited from passage to the Indies, “black or other slaves born under the tutelage of Christians, our subjects and native peoples” were to be allowed (CDI 31:23; Rumeu de Armas 375; Herrera y Tordesillas 2:389 [dec. 1, bk. 4, chap. 12]). In 1503, Ovando asked that black slaves no longer be brought to the Caribbean because they fled into the Indian population, taught the latter “bad customs,” and could not again be apprehended (Herrera y Tordesillas 2:457–58 [dec. 1, bk. 5, chap. 12]). Yet the importation of black slaves continued, and in 1510 Ferdinand ordered the Casa de la Contratación to send fifty African slaves to work in the mines of Española, and in 1511 Ferdinand mandated that means be found to bring more black slaves from Africa (“Guinea”) to the Indies because “the work of a single black is more useful than that of four Indians” (Herrera y Tordesillas 3:229 [dec. 1, bk. 8, chap. 9], 284 [dec. 1, bk. 9, chap. 5]). In 1518, Charles V granted exclusive licenses to Laurent de Gouvenot, one of his Flemish favorites, and Jorge de Portugal, allowing them to ship four thousand and four hundred slaves, respectively (Scelle 755; Phillips 185). Although his monopoly grant had originally been made without a fixed time limit, Gouvenot actually held the right to bring slaves from Africa to the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal as well as directly to the Indies from 1518 to 1528 (Scelle 139, 143). Although we have no record of the time of Estevanico’s migration from Portuguese Azemmour on the northern African coast, it is possible (though not likely, according to the law effected in 1526) that he was brought to Spain, probably Seville, by Gouvenot’s company or the Genoese agents to whom he sold his licenses.

By 1526, complaints like those of Ovando in 1503 to the effect that black African slaves should not be brought to the Indies because they rebelled, escaped, and subverted the Indians of Española resulted in a royal decree to regulate the passage of acculturated, Spanish-speaking Christian (*ladino*) black slaves. Ordered on 11 May 1526 to be proclaimed publicly “in the plazas, markets, and other customary places” in Seville so that no one could plead ignorance, the law limited the passage of black *ladino* slaves to those who had been one year or less “in these our kingdoms or in the kingdom of Portugal.” Exceptions required a special license obtained by the slave owner and were to be limited to those slaves who had been held and raised in the owner’s service (CDU 9:243). The gist of this law, while continuing to permit the exclusive exportation to the Indies of slaves who were Christian in creed,

was designed to keep out those who were highly acculturated to European ways and therefore capable of exercising their own prerogatives in the Indies societies into which they were introduced.

Andrés Dorantes might have purchased Estevanico in Seville expressly as part of the preparation for his planned settlement in *Florida*, for which, as we have seen, Dorantes held an appointment as *regidor* of the first Spanish municipality to be incorporated by Narváez in the new jurisdiction; on the other hand, Dorantes may have brought along Estevanico as someone already in his household service. Given Dorantes's evident social status and rank of captain on the expedition, he was no doubt of sufficient economic means to have acquired Estevanico for the voyage if not earlier as a member of his household. If Estevanico had been in Spain for more than a year under either circumstance, Dorantes would have had to purchase a special license from the crown to permit his passage.

Thornier problems concern the interpretation of Estevanico's ethnic and cultural heritage as described by Cabeza de Vaca (f67r): "es negro alárabe, natural de Azamor." Smith (*Relation* 205) translated the famous phrase as "an Arabian black, native of Açamor"; Bandelier (*Journey* 287) offered "an Arab negro from Azamor"; Bishop (77) called him "a negro from Azamor, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco"; Hallenbeck (101) rendered the phrase as "an Arab from Azamor, Africa"; Covey (140) used Smith's translation as "an Arabian black, native of Azamor"; and the 1993 translations by Favata and Fernández (*The Account* 121) and López-Morillas (127) opted, respectively, for "a black Arab and a native of Azamor" and "a black Moor, a native of Azamor." We have translated the phrase as "an Arabic-speaking black man, a native of Azamor" and identify Estevanico as such for the following reasons.

The crucial phrase is "negro alárabe." Due to the postposition of descriptive adjectives in Spanish, the noun used to identify Estevanico is clearly *negro*, a black man, with *alárabe* as an adjectival modifier, as usage common in the sixteenth century suggests. Las Casas, for example, describes the inhabitants of Mauritania, also called Morocco, as he noted, as "moros alárabes" (*Historia* 1:54 [bk. 1, chap. 9]). Apart from the grammar of the noun phrase, Cabeza de Vaca's specific textual references, discounted by some readers and translators, must be given their due. Like his last reference to the Moroccan, Cabeza de Vaca's (f27r; also f52v) first mention of him is clear: "Estevanico el negro." His subsequent references are simply "Estevanico" (f29v, f34v) and, more frequently, "the black man" (*el negro*) (f35v, f38v, f53r, f55v, f58v). Since *negro*, as a nominalized adjective, takes the place of a noun, Smith, Bandelier, Bishop, and Covey after Smith chose the correct option in their translations.

The difficulty lies with *alárabe*, which is an adjective in the present instance. Although the term was often used as a substantive, that is, as a nominalized adjective as in Las Casas's (*Historia* 1:347 [bk. 1, chap. 82]) *moros y alárabes* (Moors and Arabs) to describe the enemy in Queen Isabel's 1490s attempted conquest of Azemmour, we rule out that possibility here and therefore reject the translations of Hallenbeck and Favata and Fernández ("Arab") and find those of Smith, Bandelier, and Covey ("Arabian black," "Arab negro") also misleading. López-Morillas's "black Moor" is altogether unacceptable because Cabeza de Vaca does not introduce the term *moro* in his description. While the meaning of *moro* as "he who inhabits the land of Mauritania or Morocco" or "from the province of Mauritania" (Casas, *Historia* 1:54 [bk. 1, chap. 9]; Covarrubias 814b) is literally correct in Estevanico's case, the use of the term *moro* connotes the practice of Islam, which is an identification Cabeza de Vaca, Oviedo, and other period sources explicitly contradict in their references to Estevanico as a Christian.

Just as *moro* meant at the time "from Mauritania or Morocco," *alárabe* meant "from Arabia" or "inhabitant of Arabia," understood then to be generally the region of Asia located between Judea and Egypt (Casas, *Apologética* 2:142 [chap. 161]; Covarrubias 64b). Yet Estevanico was not from Arabia, as Cabeza de Vaca knew, but rather the opposite end of the Mediterranean in the kingdom of Morocco. Despite the fact that the bond between ethnic and religious identification of being an Arab and practicing Islam was quite strong in the view of sixteenth-century Castilians, Cabeza de Vaca was not referring to religion when he used the term *alárabe* because he clearly identified Estevanico as a Christian. Therefore he must have meant some other dimension of the Arabic cultural heritage, and surely it was Estevanico's knowledge of the Arabic language. Thus, we translate *alárabe* in the context of Cabeza de Vaca's acquaintance with the particulars of Estevanico's background as "Arabic-speaking," which Estevanico would have been since he was born and raised in the traditionally Muslim city of Azemmour.

To corroborate our interpretation of the use of the term *alárabe*, we turn to the issue of Estevanico's identity as a Moroccan Christian. First, he was born in a northern African coastal city that was coveted and held by Christian monarchs during the period. Portugal had taken and lost Azemmour between 1486 and 1502 (Leo Africanus 126n303), and Queen Isabel tried without success to conquer it and the Cape of Aguer for Castile in the late 1490s; Las Casas (*Historia* 1:347 [bk. 1, chap. 82]) briefly described this campaign in identifying the officers of Columbus's second (1493–96) expedition. Among them was Captain Francisco de Peñalosa, who went in command of the soldiers on Columbus's voyage. After exercising his captaincy for three years on the island of Española, Peñalosa returned to

Spain and, at Isabel's behest, set out with Alonso de Lugo to take Azemmour from the Muslims. Peñalosa, who happened to be Las Casas's uncle (his father's brother), was killed there in battle in 1499 or early 1500. Subsequently, the Portuguese again took Azemmour in 1508 under the command of Dom João de Meneses, who died as military governor of Azemmour in a battle in 1514 (Leo Africanus 126n303). According to Barcia (*Ensayo* 10b [año 1528]), Azemmour remained a Portuguese protectorate until 1540. Estevanico would likely have been born just prior to or sometime early in the period of Portuguese domination.

A second circumstantial factor relevant to properly identifying Estevanico is the law, mandated since the royal instructions to Nicolás de Ovando of 16 September 1501, that all African slaves approved for passage to the Indies be only those born and raised under the jurisdiction of Christians (CDI 31:23). Inasmuch as Estevanico was born in Portuguese Azemmour, he would have been considered to have met that early qualification; by the standards of the 1526 decree, however, he would have been too long acculturated as a Spanish-speaking, Christian Moroccan, which may have necessitated Dorantes's obtaining a special license for his passage.

Among other reasons for asserting Estevanico's identification as a Christian, the most important is his name, Stephen, for the first martyr of the Christian Church who was stoned to death around A.D. 35 (*Oxford Dictionary* 441). The imposition and use of a Christian name were essential as proof of creed due to the close relationship between name and baptism; whoever did not have or use a Christian name was not taken to be Christian. This proviso was set for the Moriscos of Spain in 1511 (Vincent 32) and would likewise have applied, by tradition if not by decree, to slaves from North Africa. The use of the diminutive form (Estevanico) was common practice for subalterns such as slaves and interpreters, African or Indian, in the service of Castilians.

In describing Estevanico, Cabeza de Vaca did not especially emphasize that this North African was a Christian; there would have been no need for him to do so since he would have assumed that his royal reader would understand that Estevanico was a Christian (raised as such or lately converted) and certainly not a Muslim, which would have excluded him from service on the Narváez expedition. (By law, African slaves who were Berbers or from the Levant or raised by Muslims had been eliminated from passage to the Indies or were subject to deportation from there since 1506; Herrera y Tordesillas 3:96 [dec. 1, bk. 6, chap. 20].) Although Cabeza de Vaca (f34r) did use the term "Christians" in referring to his three companions ("the six months that I was with the Christians") as he was patiently waiting (in the summer of 1534) for their first occasion after being reunited to flee the Indians of the Texas coastal interior and head for Pánuco, Oviedo stated more explicitly Estevanico's

Christian identity. Even though Oviedo referred to the three hidalgos on occasion as “the three Christians” or “the three Christian pilgrims” (612a, 613b), he also referred to the group of four as “those Christians” or “these Christians,” noting that when they sent out messengers to other Indians, the pattern was “[f]irst went four Indians, one in the name of each of these Christians” (607a, 613a). Finally, what was apparent to Cabeza de Vaca was less so to today’s reader. Although he had no need to use the term, Cabeza de Vaca’s description of Estevanico as “negro alárabe” might well have been extended to “negro alárabe ladino,” that is, “a Christian, Spanish-speaking, Arabic-speaking black man.”

Even if he had gone to the Indies in 1527 as an unacculturated African black (*bozal*), by 1536 he was a *ladino* of a very special kind. Cabeza de Vaca (f55v) summed up Estevanico’s crucial role as scout and mediator when he recalled, “The black man always spoke to them and informed himself about the roads we wished to travel and the villages that there were and about other things that we wanted to know.” This allowed the three Castilians to play a more distant role, as evidenced by Cabeza de Vaca’s immediately preceding comment: “[w]e had a great deal of authority and influence over them. And in order to conserve this we spoke to them but few times.” With Dorantes, according to Cabeza de Vaca (f38v), Estevanico was the last to take up curing, but it was he who was regularly sent ahead of the others as a scout or to communicate with the natives (f35v, f53r, f55v). On two occasions he was sent out with one of his companions. The first instance was his accompanying Castillo and the two women to the first settlement of the “people of the cows” at the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Río Conchos (f52v), and the second was his search, with Cabeza de Vaca, for the Spanish soldiers in the area of the Río Petatlán (f58v). As to how he was seen from the natives’ perspective, the only clue is offered by the Indians of gulf coastal Texas, about whom Cabeza de Vaca (f28r) reported that, at the end of his solitary years in that area (1529–33) and traveling with Lope de Oviedo, some Indians told him they had seen “three men like us,” which was the announcement of his eventual reunion with Castillo, Dorantes, and Estevanico.

As a slave, however, Estevanico slipped definitively into the background as soon as the four Narváez survivors returned to the world where the white man dominated when the Narváez survivors and the Spanish slave hunters met face to face for the first time. This occurred almost palpably in Cabeza de Vaca’s narration as he and Estevanico undertook their final mission together: pursuing the mounted Spaniards whose camps and tracks they had seen. These were the dramatic incidents of the final day and hours before their reunion with their countrymen after so many years’ separation. Here, as

Cabeza de Vaca (f58v) narrated the events, Estevanico, whose great skills he had acknowledged on other occasions (f35v, f53r, f55v), now slips from the reader's view:

But seeing their [Dorantes and Castillo's] will, the next day in the morning I took with me the black man and eleven Indians, and following the trail of the Christians that I found, I passed through three places where they had slept. And this day I went ten leagues. And the next morning I reached four Christians on horseback who experienced great shock upon seeing me so strangely dressed and in the company of Indians.

Likewise, when later testifying about his meeting with the survivors, one of Diego de Alcaraz's men remarked that he saw "three men of strange figure" (Sauer, "The Road" 20118). Estevanico had been eclipsed from view.

In Castillo Maldonado's *información y probanza* (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1), Estevanico was not mentioned in the questions of the *interrogatorio* concerning the expedition. However, two of the seven witnesses made reference to him in their testimony, and it is significant that both were veterans of Indies exploration and conquest and well aware that conquests were not made by hidalgos alone. These two men were Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, who had Estevanico well in mind as an unfortunate member of the Fray Marcos de Niza expedition, as his 1540 account reveals, and Alonso de la Barrera, the surviving member of the Narváez expedition to whose testimony we have already referred and who in 1528 had stayed with the ships and returned to Cuba rather than joining the three-hundred-man party that included the four eventual survivors of the overland expedition. Coronado (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f8v) mentioned Estevanico by name as "a black man called Esteban who traveled and came with them" [un negro que se llamaba Esteban que anduvo y vino con ellos], while Barrera mentioned only that a black man was one of the survivors, and he apparently included him in the appearance they made, "dressed in skins as they had arrived from the land of Florida," in front of the principal church of the capital (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f11r).

Although Sancho Dorantes de Carranza did not mention Estevanico in the *probanzas* devoted to his grandfather's service, Baltasar had given the story of Estevanico's death in the *Sumaria relación*. Consistent with his interest in celebrating his father's deeds, Dorantes de Carranza (266) resurrected the good name of Estevanico, whom he identified as his father's slave given to the viceroy "so that he could be a guide to the friars." Estevanico died thus, "when he went with Fray Marcos de Niza, shot through with arrows like a Saint Sebastian, in the service of His Majesty." Erroneously assuming that these people were the same groups the four men

had encountered in 1536, Baltasar speculated that in 1539 the Indians, “being of little faith and consistency and upon seeing him with new people,” were suspicious of Estevanico, thinking he had become a spy, and thus killed him. In Baltasar’s account, the remarkable black man was killed because he appeared with men (“gente nueva”) other than the three caballeros with whom he—like they—had been revered by the Indians.

The name of Estevanico, after Saint Stephen, the protomartyr of the Christian Church, seems ironically appropriate to the role he ultimately played in the exploration of the north. In 1537, the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza was desirous of commencing his own northern explorations in light of the four survivors’ reports, and so he purchased Estevanico from Dorantes. Mendoza needed a guide to serve on reconnaissance expeditions, and none of the three Castilians could be persuaded to go. Mendoza (CDI 2:206) considered that Estevanico would be appropriate for such a mission because he was a “persona de razón,” that is, a man of reason and ability; he surely would have been informed by the three caballeros of the great role Estevanico had played as scout and mediator.

Estevanico accompanied the Fray Marcos de Niza expedition that departed from San Miguel de Culiacán on 7 March 1539. On the basis of his thirdhand account from Indians who had escaped Estevanico’s fate, Fray Marcos surmised that after Estevanico and his people had spent the night in a large house on the outskirts of the city of Cíbola (in the pueblo country of Zuni), he and his companions were killed, “shot with arrows.” Fray Marcos said Estevanico was the victim of a massacre that claimed three hundred Indian allies who had accompanied the expedition (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 76–77). Mendoza (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 160; CDI 2:361) accepted this account as correct in his letter to the emperor of 17 April 1540, in which he quoted directly from Melchior Díaz’s letter concerning Estevanico’s death. A few months later, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado reported to the viceroy the results of the first five months of his expedition to the north. Writing from “this city of Granada and in the province of Cíbola” on 3 August 1540, Coronado reported that Estevanico’s death could be blamed on his cruelties and assaults on Indian women (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 177–78): “[t]he death of the negro is perfectly certain, because many of the things which he wore have been found, and the Indians say that they killed him here because the Indians of Chichilticale said that he was a bad man, and not like the Christians who never kill women, and he killed them, and because he assaulted their women, whom the Indians love better than themselves.” Such was the account that Coronado rendered to the viceroy about the death of Estevanico.

Another account of Estevanico's death was offered around that time (c. 1540) by Hernando de Alarcón, whose 1540 South Sea expedition sponsored by the viceroy Mendoza came upon news of the "bearded negro" in the lands of Cibola. Pursuing the lands to the north via the sea coast, Alarcón learned through an interpreter that the lord of Cibola had some European dishware and a dog similar to his own; these reportedly had been given to the chief by a bearded black man who had been there only a year prior to Alarcón (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 141).

The interpreter gave Alarcón an account of Estevanico's death more plausible than the stereotypical account of his murder attributed to his murder of Indian women. Alarcón was told by the interpreter that the lord of Cibola had asked Estevan if he had any brothers; Estevan replied that he had an infinite number of them and that they bore arms and were not far away. Upon receipt of this news, the lords assembled to determine what to do about this perceived threat; according to the account given to Alarcón, they decided to kill Estevanico so that he could not reveal their location to his powerful kin (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 145).

As to the time and place of Estevanico's death, period sources and modern scholarship reject Fray Marcos's assessment. Sauer ("The Road" 30) dismissed Fray Marcos's claim of having arrived at Cibola, and the friar himself seems to have given up the notion when he accompanied Coronado's expedition. Both Coronado and Castañeda rejected his claims, Castañeda stating that Fray Marcos and his party were sixty leagues from Cibola when they learned of Estevanico's death and then immediately turned back south (qtd. in Sauer, "The Road" 29). Fray Marcos seems to have gone no farther than the high grassy steppe country of northern Sonora, the high Cananea plateau located beyond the northern limits of the Opata settlements (Sauer, "The Road" 28, "The Credibility" 234); he obviously did not reach Cibola as he had claimed in his report certified on 2 September 1539 (Hammond and Rey, *Narratives* 78–79).

Given Sauer's calculations, Estevanico's death probably took place farther north along or beyond the Cananea plateau, but certainly not all the way to Zuni. Considering that Fray Marcos learned of Estevanico's death shortly after arriving at the *despoblado* of northern Sonora on or around 9 May (Sauer, "The Road" 28, "The Credibility" 234), we can surmise that Estevanico met his death in northern Sonora sometime in April 1539.

### 3. ALONSO DEL CASTILLO MALDONADO

Alonso del Castillo Maldonado is the only one of the three hidalgos for whom we possess an *información* and a *probanza* prepared under its subject's



supervision and with explicit reference to his service on the Narváez expedition. Some eleven years after his return “by way of Nueva Galicia” from the lands of *Florida*, Castillo filed his *probanza* of seven witnesses on 9 December 1547 (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1), and the Royal Audiencia of New Spain evaluated his request on 20 February 1548 (ENE 5:86–89). What follows is a summary and interpretation of the information this document and a few others provide us. Castillo Maldonado brought some prominent witnesses on his behalf, including an old friend from Salamanca, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, and a commander of the Order of Santiago, Don Alonso de Luzán.

Alonso del Castillo Maldonado was the son of Doctor Don Alonso del Castillo and Doña Aldonsa Maldonado, residents of the city of Salamanca who were described, both in the *interrogatorio* prepared by Castillo and by witnesses, as members of the caballero class; Juan de Altamirano and Cristóbal de Benavente, who claimed to have known the couple in Salamanca, described the family as such (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f12v, f15v). By sixteenth-century Castilian standards, this meant that they were superior to the hidalgo class and belonged to the middle-ranking nobility, who typically served in the city councils and municipal offices of Castile’s major cities (Haliczer 269). Such was the family’s occupation, according to the *interrogatorio*, which identified Doctor Alonso del Castillo’s brothers (the Narváez expeditionary’s uncles) as Doctor Cornejo, a judge (*alcalde de corte*), and Doctor Luna, a judge (*oidor*) of the city of Granada (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f2v); one witness, Alonso de Bazán, said he had known Doctor Luna (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f14r).

As an *alcalde de corte*, Cornejo was one of a “group of judges who formed the fifth chamber of the [Castilian] Royal Council whose judgments in criminal cases could not be appealed” (Haliczer 269). As an *oidor* of Granada, Doctor Luna would have sat in judgment on civil and criminal matters that came before the council of the autonomous city. Both positions reflect the type of offices held by caballeros, and the identification of Castillo as such by witnesses Alonso Pérez, who had been a student in Salamanca and knew the family there, Juan Altamirano, and, most importantly, Alonso de Luzán, a commander in the Order of Santiago (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f5v, f6r, f15v, f17r), verified the prestige of his social rank. The commander of Santiago emphatically described Castillo “as a caballero and one of the most socially prominent persons who came on the Narváez expedition” (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f17r).

The *probanza* also highlights the important position in the Indies of the conquistador’s brother, the *licenciado* Francisco Maldonado (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f2v). Recognized as Alonso’s brother by several witnesses

(AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f5r, f6r, f7v, f10r, f12r, f13v), Francisco Maldonado was appointed one of the four original justices of the First Audiencia of New Spain upon its creation on 13 December 1527; he and his colleagues arrived in the viceroyalty in December 1528 (Aiton 19). One of the witnesses in Castillo's *probanza*, the *bachiller* Alonso Pérez (f5r), testified that he had known Francisco Maldonado when both were studying at the University of Salamanca. He affirmed that he knew him to be a judge of the Audiencia and that he had firsthand knowledge of his death shortly after his arrival in New Spain (f5v). The previously mentioned Alonso de la Barrera also testified that Francisco Maldonado had arrived in New Spain in 1528 or 1529 (around the same time as he himself had arrived from Cuba after the aborted Narváez sea expedition) and that Maldonado had died soon afterward (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f10r). Maldonado died shortly after going to the Indies to take up his post; although some witnesses asserted that he died in office, Juan Altamirano declared that Maldonado was deceased before he could take up his duties (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f15v), as Pérez also seems to suggest.

As a justice of appeal on the highest governing body in the jurisdiction of New Spain, Francisco Maldonado would have been responsible, along with its president, its public prosecutor (*fiscal*), and three other judges (*oidores*), for overseeing the activities of the colonial governor (Hernán Cortés), monitoring the treatment of the natives by the settlers, and informing the court of the affairs of New Spain and making recommendations for improvement (Parry, *The Audiencia* 5–6). Had he lived, Francisco Maldonado would have been one of the most important and powerful men in New Spain at a time when the crown sought, precisely by the creation of the Royal Audiencia, to contain the enormous powers of Hernán Cortés. In addition, Maldonado would have served Nuño de Guzmán, the president of the First Audiencia, whom his brother would later meet in Compostela, Jalisco, as governor of Nueva Galicia upon the four men's return to Spanish dominions.

In the *interrogatorio* he prepared as part of his *información y probanza*, Castillo described his experience on the Narváez expedition as nine years spent as a prisoner and captive of the Indians, during which time he suffered "great dangers and hardships and hunger, walking naked and barefoot and expecting death each day at the hands of the Indians"; escaping from the Indians, he considered their ultimate arrival in New Spain to be "almost miraculous" (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f3r). The testimony in Castillo's *probanza* underscores the interpretation of these events as extraordinary as well as the fact that he and his companions' experience was the subject of much gossip and speculation in México-Tenochtitlán upon their return.

Like Andrés Dorantes and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Castillo Maldonado had his first experience in the Indies on the Narváez expedition. Given the social distinction of his family, it is not surprising that Castillo was granted the rank of captain (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f2v; Icaza 1:187); Cabeza de Vaca (f13v, f16r) twice made reference to his rank. As a result of his responsibilities, Castillo asserted, he had invested heavily in arms, clothing, and horses for the expedition (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f2r–v). Francisco Vázquez de Coronado testified that he had seen Castillo in Salamanca preparing for departure, gathering arms and supplies “at great expense” (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f8r). In the 1547 “Memoria de los conquistadores y pobladores que tienen indios encomendados en esta Nueva España” (Icaza 1:187), Castillo made the same assertions, declaring that he had sold part of his estate in order to finance his participation in the Narváez expedition and that he came with the rank of captain and held other important posts (“traya oficios preeminentes”).

In the *probanza*, Coronado called the survival of the four men an act of “the hand of God,” and Alonso Luzán considered it “a miracle” (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f8v, f14v). Yet the most interesting testimony was given by Barrera, Cristóbal de Benavente, and Alonso de Bazán. All three had been in México-Tenochtitlán when the four men arrived, and Barrera testified that he had learned from them personally (“les oyó decir”) about their experiences, particularly the bad will of the Indians and the men’s almost miraculous recovery and return (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f10v, f11r). In effect, Barrera renewed his acquaintance with Castillo on this occasion in 1536, because he explained that he had traveled to the Indies on the same ship as Castillo Maldonado (in 1527) (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f10v). Cristóbal de Benavente, the royal prosecutor (*fiscal de su Magestad*), also recalled having seen the Narváez survivors upon their arrival, “naked and ill treated” [desnudos y mal tratados], that is, in poor condition because of their hardships (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f12v). Alonso de Bazán testified that he had heard about their experience from all three men (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f14r); Bazán was described by Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza (269) as “a man known to hold the rank of caballero, and a very early settler” and the son of the conquistador, Captain Francisco Verdugo.

Like Andrés Dorantes, Castillo’s marriage to a wealthy widow was planned by the viceroy Mendoza. It had taken place in 1536, eleven years before the 1547 “Memoria” was prepared (Icaza 1:187). Castillo’s wife was Isabel de Sanabria (Torre Villar 208), the widow of an *antiguo conquistador*, according to two witnesses in Castillo’s *probanza* (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f6v, f14v). It is likely, although not altogether certain, that the one quarter of the territory

of Tehuacán that Castillo Maldonado held in *encomienda* in 1547 (Icaza 1:187) had been his wife's from her first marriage. The broad valley of Tehuacán is located in today's southeastern extremity of the state of Puebla and straddles the continental divide (Gerhard, *A Guide* 260a).

According to his *probanza*, however, Castillo lived with his wife and children in the capital (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f3v). Although boys and girls are indicated, the number of his progeny is not specified there; prepared the same year, the "Memoria" states that he had three children (Icaza 1:187). In his *Sumaria relación*, Dorantes de Carranza (266–67) later eagerly pointed out that neither of his father's two companions left heirs, that is, male children, and that Castillo "had no successors whatsoever because he was left only with daughters." One witness in his *probanza*, the attorney Cristóbal de Benavente, declared that Castillo was married twice (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f13r); there is, however, no other testimony to that effect.

Castillo Maldonado's administrative career is described in the 1547 "Memoria" as consisting of "preeminent offices of justice in the [Castilian] court and in this New Spain" (Icaza 1:187). He held several administrative offices after he settled in New Spain, as is indicated by the ninth question of his *probanza*, which asked whether he was a person held in high esteem by those who governed and if they entrusted him with offices of honor and responsibility (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f3r–v). In 1540, he was elected to the one-year post of *alcalde ordinario* of México-Tenochtitlán by the city council, according to several witnesses, including Coronado, who was at the time a member of the council (*regidor*) and had voted in favor of his compatriot's election to that body (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f6v, f9r, f13r, f14v). In his capacity as *alcalde*, Castillo served as a municipal judge of the first instance (Parry, *The Audiencia* 5). Apart from this post, he was made acting *veedor* (royal inspector) of Guatemala by the *licenciado* Alonso Maldonado, governor of Guatemala, according to a letter from the *licenciado* Maldonado to the emperor of 15 January 1545; the governor asked that Castillo be granted the position permanently by royal appointment (CDI 24:350–51). No such post was mentioned in the previously cited "Memoria" of 1547 (Icaza 1:187), and it has been impossible to confirm the appointment by other means.

Finally, Castillo Maldonado served as *corregidor* of México-Tenochtitlán (dates unspecified), which has been considered one of the most powerful positions in New Spain in the early colonial period (Parry, *The Audiencia* 31). Two prominent witnesses in Castillo's *probanza*, the royal *fiscal* Cristóbal de Benavente and the distinguished *vecino* Alonso de Bazán, testified that Castillo held this position (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f13r, f14v), and

appointment to that office appeared in the 1547 “Memoria” (Icaza 1:187). In this at least potentially powerful position, Castillo Maldonado would have combined judicial with administrative responsibilities, both serving as governor and representing the crown in municipal affairs (Parry, *The Audiencia* 5, 32). In addition, in 1546, Castillo Maldonado served as *alcalde de mesta*, according to Bazán’s testimony (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f15r), which probably meant that he would have been a judge with jurisdiction over cases involving pasturage and livestock (Haliczer 269).

At the end of 1547, when he prepared his *información*, Castillo Maldonado had larger occupations in mind. Noting the death of Andrés de Barrios, one of the *regidores* of the city of México-Tenochtitlán, he solicited the position for himself as a “person adequately prepared for such a post” [persona suficiente para el dicho oficio]. The petition was presented, according to a notation, with the support of the duke of Alba (AGI, Patronato 57, no. 4, ramo 1, f19r). After the *información y probanza* was filed on 3 December 1547, the Royal Audiencia, presided over by the viceroy Mendoza and consisting of the judges Tejada, Gómez de Santillán, and Quesada, made a ruling and in accordance with the New Laws conveyed their disposition to the Council of the Indies on 20 February 1548 (ENE 5:89). Considering the petitions for services rendered and expenses accrued by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, the Audiencia ruled in the case of Coronado that the investments he made in the expedition to Cíbola and as inspector of mines and governor of Nueva Galicia had not been as high as he had claimed and that therefore he should not be remunerated at the level he requested. Regarding their requests for administrative posts, the Audiencia ruled that neither Castillo Maldonado nor Coronado were of such capabilities as to merit the positions of governance they requested. Apart from these particular conditions, the royal body suggested that the king reward them in “whatever other ways” he saw fit (ENE 5:89). We do not know what rewards, if any, the crown offered, because in 1548 we lose the trail of Alonso del Castillo Maldonado and his family. All we know is that, in 1604, Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza (267) was anxious to claim that of the three original Narváez survivors, “there remain no other descendant lines but my own.”

#### 4. A FINAL ACCOUNTING

One other question remains in the testimony of the time: which of the two, Castillo Maldonado or Dorantes, made a trip from Mexico to Spain in 1541? This question is raised by the lengthy epistle written in that year by Fray Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía) from New Spain to Don Antonio

Pimentel, “sixth count of Benavente,” in tribute to the younger count and in memory of his father, who had been Motolinía’s patron (Benavente 2). In this dedicatory epistle to Motolinía’s book on the origin of the Indians of New Spain, their ancient rites, and “marvelous conversion,” Motolinía (Benavente 4) assured the count that the person who delivered the present account to him would be able to tell him much about the peoples who lived to the north of New Spain

because he with three other companions were captive as slaves for more than seven years, escaping [the fate of] the armada of Pánfilo de Narváez. Afterward they fled, and other Indians carried them and prepared a road for them for more than seven hundred leagues and considered them to be men fallen from the sky. And they discovered much land above Nueva Galicia, where now the Seven Cities are being sought.

The year 1541 was correct as twice stated (Benavente 8, 13), because in the same *relación* Motolinía mentioned having in his possession a letter “written in this very year, of how they have discovered an infinite number of people” in the province of Cíbola (Benavente 12). This is information received from the Coronado expedition of 1540–42, which had gone in pursuit of the Seven Cities Motolinía mentioned. Obviously, the Narváez expedition survivor in question was not Cabeza de Vaca. In 1541, he arrived at the island of Santa Catalina off the coast of Brazil and spent the year traveling to Asunción, arriving there on 11 March 1542 to take over the governance of the province of Río de la Plata.

Which one of the other two caballeros, Dorantes or Castillo Maldonado, would have been this 1541 traveler? It might have been Dorantes, since he had tried but failed to accompany Cabeza de Vaca to Spain in 1537, according to the *relación* (f64r). Yet it is possible that either he or Castillo made the voyage in 1541 to arrange other matters at home (Dorantes in Béjar del Castañar or Gibraleón, Castillo in Salamanca) or at court. The point to be made, however, is that both men settled and remained permanently in New Spain.

Of the four survivors of the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition, Cabeza de Vaca was probably the only one to have died in Spain. We know that Andrés Dorantes was deceased, most likely in New Spain, by January 1560. Castillo Maldonado also probably died there, but we have uncovered no clues regarding his later years. As for Cabeza de Vaca himself, we know that he survived in Spain at least through the spring of 1559. Ironically, although Estevanico’s life is so little known, his death is the most well (although indirectly) documented, since he was slain while scouting on Fray Marcos de Niza’s expedition somewhere in northern Sonora, sometime in April 1539.