PORTUGUESE PRESENCE IN SPANISH COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA IN THE SIXTEENTH AND EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

MARIAH WADE*

A vast literature documents the Portuguese colonial presence in the continents of Africa and Asia. To date little is known about the presence of the Portuguese in the North American Continent and their individual impact on some of the most important Spanish colonial enterprises during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The volunteer enrollment of the Portuguese in these expeditions to New Spain[1] highlights the free movement of people, skills and wealth across different nations and European Empires and the involvement of priests, knights, pilots, sailors, craftsmen and settlers in hazardous colonial enterprises. In some cases, these religious and commercial colonial ventures were undertaken while the Portuguese Crown was subsumed to that of Spain, while others did not. That raises questions as to the covert primacy of commercial and personal interests over political ones or, alternatively, to the enterprising influence of individuals. This chapter follows the archival traces of the Portuguese involved in these colonial endeavors and argues that nationality was not a consideration in joining these expeditions, and that economic conditions, religious fervor, expediency, self-interest and personal aggrandizement led these Portuguese to the New World.

* University of Texas, Austin.

[1] The geographical definition of the Spanish colonial territory designated as New Spain changed through time. For the purposes of this chapter it included all the Spanish possessions in the Western Hemisphere, most of South America, Central America, the West Indies and, Florida and the modern United States territories west of the Mississippi River.

INTRODUCTION

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries people in Europe were on the move. The Hapsburg rulership blurred boundaries, hybridized governance structures and traditional ways of seeing the world, and it acted as a flux for multinational enterprises that offered economic and social opportunities to skilled and experienced individuals. One could refer to this phenomenon as transversality in which cultural worlds crisscrossed and intercepted with political and personal consequences. Alternatively, one could speak of «grassroots globalization«[2] whereby peoples on the move evaded national boundaries and structures often to be caught up by webs of colonial globalizing and singular events.

The Portuguese traced and discussed in this chapter were from different social classes and backgrounds. In different ways they procured wealth, prestige, adventure, economic opportunities or simply a place to settle that might provide some share of all that. They did not expect to perish, but most did. They chose to participate in enterprises, and in doing so initiated a sequence of events that resulted in their death though that was not the agent's wish or expectation. They fell prey to the «composition effect – an outcome of an aggregate of acts… each of which is intentionally carried out. But the eventual outcome is neither intended nor desired by anyone»[3]. As it happens, the foreground event connecting the lives of these Portuguese (and others) is the narrative of Cabeza de Vaca first published in Zamora in 1542 and again in 1555, but this time including Cabeza de Vaca's *Commentaries* that refer to his journey and experiences in South America (Río de la Plata). The Infanta Juana, who married João III of Portugal in 1552, authorized and set up the price of the book, as regent of her brother Prince Phillip, who became Phillip II of Spain in 1556[4].

On June 17, 1527, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca left the port of San Lúcar de Barrameda on a voyage to the New World. Emperor Charles V appointed him as crown treasurer to the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez, a position of importance and trust as Cabeza de Vaca was responsible for the king's property and for collecting the tithes expected to result from the expedition's discoveries. This expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's decisions, actions and official narrative, *La Relación*[5], were catalysts for a chain of singular events that spanned over a century and resulted in multiple webs of intended and unintended personal and historical consequences. To assume that «*human agency can be defined only in terms of intentions*»[6], is misconceiving the reality, as Anthony Giddens has demonstrated. Further, «*unintentional doings can be separated conceptually from unintended consequences of doings*», but again Giddens' dissertation on the subject shows that to be a moot point since an actor's

[2] RAUNIG, 2002.

[3] GIDDENS, 1984: 10.

[4] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 178, 178n3.

[5] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 1-41.

[6] GIDDENS, 1984: 8.

intentionality does not affect the issuing consequences[7]. These conceptual notions concerning the nature of agency, actors and intentionality apply to Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, its outcomes, and to the Portuguese (and others) who became enmeshed in the events the expedition engendered.

The Narváez expedition was charged with Spanish royal authority to explore and conquer the lands between the modern Florida Peninsula and the Río Panúco (near Tampico, modern State of Tamaulipas, Mexico). Though at least one maritime expedition mapped the coastline between Florida and the northeastern coast of modern Mexico[8], the hinterlands were unknown. Of the six hundred people who left Spain with the Narváez Expedition only four survived: Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, Cabeza de Vaca and Estevan (Estevánico), a native of Azamor (Azemmour, Morocco)[9]. These four spent six years on the Texas coast living and traveling with Native American groups, before embarking on a long and very arduous land journey across Texas and Mexico to return to Mexico City. Of these four survivors only Cabeza de Vaca returned to Spain. Castillo and Dorantes remained in New Spain, while Estevánico, Dorantes' slave, was killed as he traveled to the Pueblo Country in preparation of Francisco de Coronado's Expedition to the mythical Golden Seven Cities of Cibola, which were thought to be towns (pueblos) in the Native American southwest, specifically in modern New Mexico.

Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Lisbon in August 1537, and sometime after that reported on his trip to the Audiencia Real and to Emperor Charles V (Charles I of Spain). When Hernando de Soto began preparing his expedition to Florida he knew the Narváez Expedition had run into trouble but he did not know, nor did anyone else, the extent of the debacle until later. In fact, the royal concession De Soto received for the conquest of Florida was given on April 1537[10]. De Soto tried to convince Cabeza de Vaca to join the new expedition to Florida without success, but De Soto benefited greatly from the recent and detailed information Cabeza de Vaca provided the Audiencia and the King on harbors, landscapes, resources and indigenous peoples. Equally relevant was the encounter with Juan Ortíz who was lost, or defected, during the Narváez Expedition. Ortiz's knowledge of the landscape,

[7] As Giddens notes, the complexity of the relationships between actions and consequences separated in time and space is to be considered. He states, «In general, it is true that the further removed the consequences of an act are in time and space from the original context of the act, the less likely those consequences are to be intentional – but that is, of course, influenced both by the scope of the knowledgeability that actors have and the power they are able to mobilize.» These are highly relevant parameters relative to causality and consequences when considering the Hernán de Soto and Coronado's expeditions. GIDDENS, 1984: 11.

[8] Alonso Álvarez de Pineda mapped the Gulf of Mexico coastline in 1519 but no original account of this voyage has been found. The chronicler, Bernal Díaz del Castillo mentions the voyage, as does Hernán Cortes, who conquered Mexico. Juan Vespucci also produced a map of that coastline.

[9] There were two other survivors, Juan Ortiz, who was found by Hernando de Soto's Expedition, and Lope de Oviedo, who is known to have survived for some years. For information on Lope de Oviedo see KRIEGER, 2002: 189.

[10] *Concession Made By The King Of Spain To Hernando De Soto Of The Government Of Cuba And Conquest Of Florida With The Title Of Adelantado.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 359-365.

as well as of Native Americans' behavior and languages became invaluable to the De Soto Expedition while traveling in the southeastern United States.

As Hernando de Soto readied in Spain for his voyage to Florida, in Mexico City Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza planned an expedition to northwest New Spain and the Pueblo Country. This expedition, entrusted to Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, was spurred by the travels of Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions and the news of presumed riches the Pueblo Country could provide. Mendoza acquired Esteványico, Dorantes' slave, for his knowledge of the country and the indigenous people. In 1539, Esteványico accompanied the Franciscan Fr. Marcos de Niza in an exploratory mission as preparation for the expedition of 1540-1542. As mentioned, Esteványico was killed during that mission, likely because he broke some Native American taboo.

It is unlikely that Cabeza de Vaca intended his narrative and the information it contained to result in the expeditions that followed and in which he was not involved. In fact, it is quite clear that he expected the hardships he endured and the knowledge he acquired during his travels in New Spain to legitimize his royal appointment to the next expedition to Florida[11]. Instead his experiences and narrative provided others with information they used to advance their own projects and agendas, and in the process those same experiences resulted in intended and unintended consequences.

The principal objective of this chapter is to document the Portuguese presence in the colonization of North America. To do so, it is necessary to locate their traces, often faint, in archival documentation. This chapter uses primarily the expedition narrative of Cabeza de Vaca[12], the various narratives of the expedition of Hernando de Soto, but particularly that of The Gentleman of Elvas[13], the Castañeda narrative of the Coronado Expedition[14] as well as various archival documents connected with these expeditions. For the Juan de Oñate colonization period several archival documents were used, though the most important was the Valverde Inquiry[15]. The Portuguese were actors entangled in other people's webs of action, and their transversality moves affected, or were affected, by the decisions of others. Intentionally or not, they were links in chains of events that produced consequences. In fact, it is only because the actions of the Portuguese were relevant to the colonization that we can locate their presence in the archival record.

The actions and narrative tension between Providential discourse and personal agency permeate all the expeditionary testimonies discussed in this chapter. For most of the cases discussed and for the presence of Portuguese individuals in the unfolding colonial discoveries of North America, the analytical focus is the accumulation «*of events deriving from an*

[11] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 24.

[12] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 24.

[13] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 359-365.

[14] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002.

[15] HAMMOND & REY, 1953.

initiating circumstance without which that cumulation would not have been found»[16]: Cabeza de Vaca's narrative is that initiating circumstance.

In the context of the colonial discoveries in which the crowns of Portugal and Spain were involved at this time, Cabeza de Vaca's narrative is the first text that tracks in time and space the movement of Europeans through the southeast of the United States. This had to be the primary and only text available to potential literate colonizers who had their sights on North America. It is also noteworthy that while exploratory trips from Cuba to the Florida coast had been undertaken since 1513, none went farther westward. Additionally, at the time Cabeza de Vaca reached «Florida» Hernán Cortes had barely managed to conquer the Aztecs and hold the Basin of Mexico (1519-1522). The territorial extent and characteristics of «La Florida» as well as those of northern Mexico were unknown. In fact, aside from Cuba and some areas of Florida nothing was known of the North American Continent.

A LAND OF CHRISTIANS

The multinational expeditions of the sixteenth century to the New World incorporated mostly people from Central and Western Europe: Portuguese, Spanish from all parts of modern Spain and regionally identified, Italians from several regions, a few French and some from the British Isles as well as from Spanish and Portuguese islands, «discovered» and colonized from the fifteenth century onward. In general, the specific «nationality» of the agents did not seem to be noticeable to the writers of the narratives. Within the multiplicity of languages, ethnicities and customs, the writers found an identity that made it possible to speak of the commonality of their experiences: they identified themselves as Christians. With Europe on the move and explorers facing the novelty, excitement and fear of new, «barbarous» worlds, the common denominator to provide stimulus, bolster their resolve and shield them from the inhumanity of their acts was their unified beliefs as Christians against an undefined barbary.

Throughout the *Relación,* Cabeza de Vaca consistently refers to the members of the expedition collectively as Christians[17], and so do The Gentleman of Elvas[18] and Luys Hernández de Biedma[19], both authors of narratives of the Hernando de Soto Expedition to Florida. On the other hand, Pedro de Castañeda, who authored the *Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola* on the Coronado Expedition[20], seldom refers to Christians, opting generally to speak of the Spanish and identify people, Europeans and Native Americans, by the region from which they came.

[16] GIDDENS, 1984: 12-13.

[17] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 24.

[18] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993.

[19] BIEDMA, 1993.

[20] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002.

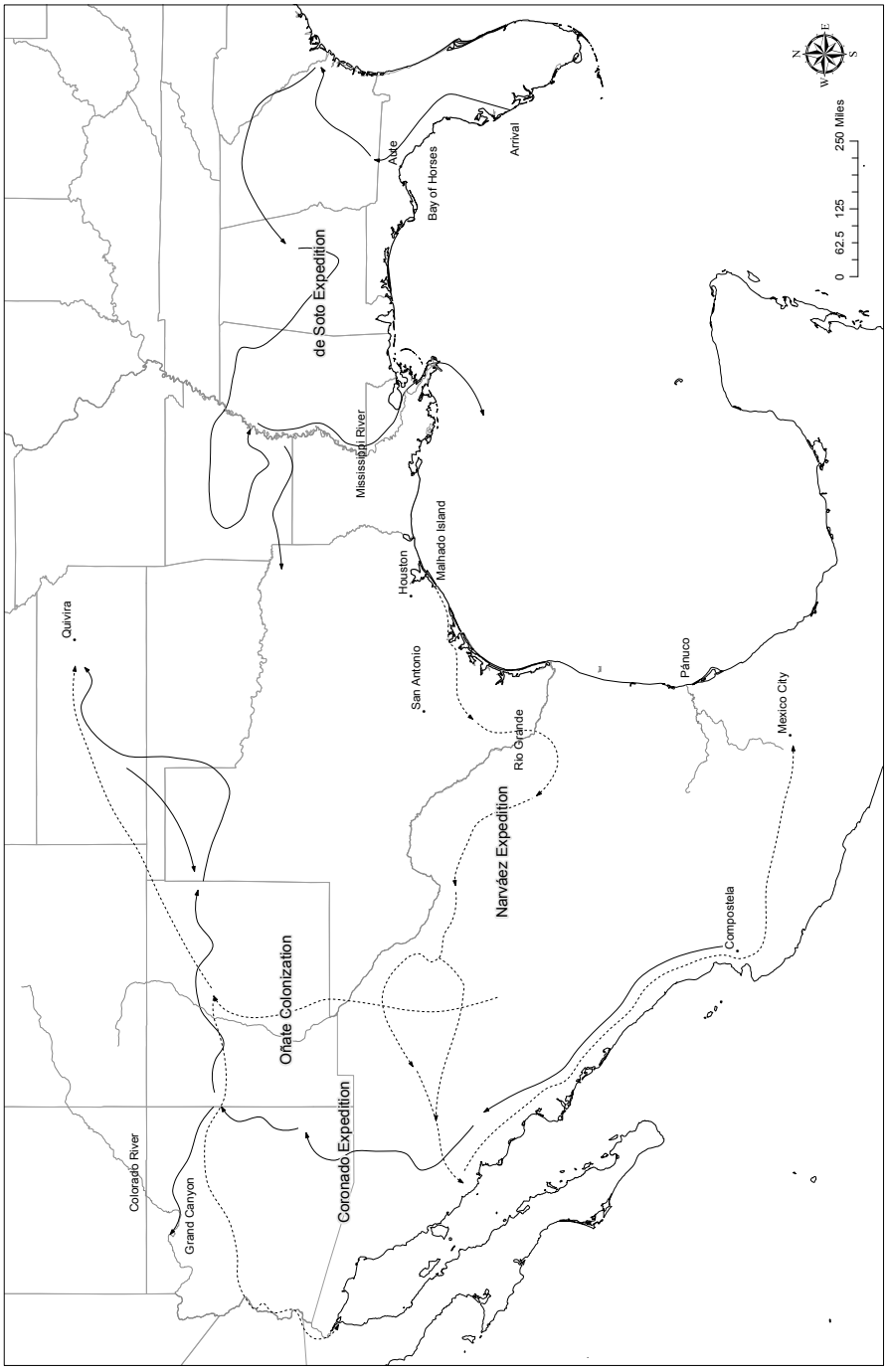

Figure 1: Map to show the routes travelled by the Narváez Expedition, Coronado Expedition, de Soto Expedition and the Oñate Colonization. Figure by Paul Holloway.

THE NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION TO FLORIDA, 1527-1536

The Narváez Expedition was the first European expedition to penetrate the southern portion of North America from Florida to Mexico and it provided Europeans with the first information on the landscape, climate and on the indigenous peoples of the southern United States. It brought to the indigenous populations that met the colonizers mostly transitory experiences with violence and long term deadly encounters with pathogens, though those were already present in some areas[21]. The expedition reaffirmed some of the stereotypes Europeans held about the New World and exposed Native Americans to different types of animals; weaponry and warfare, as well as to a whole range of material culture that unhinged native reluctance to engage with the «aliens», and through time caused social change. The experience also should have deeply affected would-be colonizers since the loss of human life emphasized the difficulties and gamble of conquest. Conversely, Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* must have surprised its readers, because Native hospitality was likely unexpected as might have been the gruesome episode of cannibalism the «Christians» committed on each other to survive[22].

The colonizers proceeded from the Florida Peninsula to the Mississippi River (fig. 1), some traveling by sea and others by land. The expedition members soon wore out any tolerance locals might have had, as they raided their crops and engaged Native populations in several skirmishes. When they reached the Bay of Horses, they were in desperate straits and forced to slaughter their horses for food. In tatters, starved, emaciated and sick the conquistadors were eager to reach the only known harbor in northeast New Spain, Pánuco (near modern Tampico, Mexico), but they no longer had ships for the voyage. Among the remaining two hundred and forty members who took to the sea was Álvaro Fernández, a Portuguese sailor and the only carpenter on the expedition. His skills and actions proved vital to the advance of the expedition and to its ultimate outcome[23]. Indeed, without his intervention, it is possible that Cabeza de Vaca would not have survived, the story would not have been told, the web of events that his narrative engendered would not begin, mapping knowledge of the southeast United States would not be available to Hernando de Soto[24] and considerable information on the landscape and on the Native populations would not be available to modern Native Americans and researchers.

Álvaro was the only craftsman on the expedition capable of coordinating the building of barges and recycle the iron to nail the barges' planks together. Aside from gathering appropriate wood and shaping it into sea worthy vessels, melting iron and making molds to fashion nails in the wilderness required innovative and improvising skills.

[21] HANN, 2003: 54-57

[22] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 87-90.

[23] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 73.

[24] BISHOP, 1933: 53.

They built five barges thirty-three feet long and though some were lost at sea, eventually three barges and eighty survivors were caught by a hurricane and were shipwrecked on the Texas Gulf Coast in November 1528. As Cabeza de Vaca states, «so much can necessity do, which drove us to hazard our lives in this manner, running into a turbulent sea, not a single one who went having any knowledge of navigation»[25]. The three barges came ashore at different points of the coast separating the conquistadors and placing them with different local Native groups. It seems Álvaro remained with Cabeza de Vaca's group at Malhado Island (Bad Luck Island, Galveston Island, modern Texas), and at least temporarily with the same Native hosts. After several weeks and some ghastly episodes, including the first recorded episode of cannibalism the conquistadors committed on their European shipmates, Cabeza de Vaca ordered Álvaro, three other Europeans and a Native, to travel southwestward to attempt to find the land route to Pánuco. Álvaro was chosen because he was a good swimmer and there were several large rivers to cross on the way to the south. Only two other members of the expedition were noted as «*chripstianos nadadores*»[26]. Later Andrés Dorantes let it be known that Álvaro and two others sent to scout the route to Pánuco had perished from hunger and cold[27]. Álvaro's carpenter expertise provided the knowledge to build barges allowing the «Christians» to sail westward, which eventually resulted in the survival of Cabeza de Vaca. Conversely, Álvaro's swimming capability did not return the travel knowledge expected and likely resulted in his demise.

It would take several years of captivity and a long trek through Texas and the northern regions of modern Mexico before Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions reached northern New Spain (Mexico). The report of their exceptional journey, travails and survival captured the imagination of prospective explorers and resonated with the political elites seeking further wealth, prestige and power. When the newly appointed (1535) Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza heard the report of the survivors he purchased Estevánico from his master, Andrés Dorantes. Viceroy Mendoza used Estevánico's knowledge of northern Mexico and his skill with Native Americans to explore the route to the mythic Seven Golden Cities of Cibola[28], the Pueblo Country of modern New Mexico.

THE FRANCISCO VÁSQUEZ DE CORONADO EXPEDITION, 1540-1542

Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza sponsored the expedition of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado to the Pueblo Country. The expedition was to follow the land route Estevánico

[25] BISHOP, 1933: 53.

[26] CABEZA DE VACA, 2003: 89n1.

[27] BISHOP, 1933: 89.

[28] The Seven Cities of Cíbola are thought to have been another version of the Portuguese Seven Cities of the Antilles, or the legend of Antillia – A Ilha das Sete Cidades. For more information on the influence of this myth among the early explorers, see CHAVEZ, 1968: 16-6.

had taken earlier to New Mexico, and Fray Marcos de Niza, who accompanied Estevánico part of the trip, apparently never actually entered the Pueblo Country though it is said that he reported on riches and on seeing a pueblo glittering under the sunlight[29]. The Europeans traveled from Northern Mexico to the northern reaches of modern New Mexico and between 1540 and 1542 they made long exploration trips westward to California and eastward to Kansas. They did not find the fabled Seven Cities of Cíbola nor did they uncover golden treasure, but they did record for the first time the magnificence of the Grand Canyon and provided invaluable and unique information on geography, on the landscape and on the many Native groups they encountered. Though the expedition was a great disappointment for those who undertook it and invested in it, as Pedro de Castañeda recorded at the time, some later wished to return. The enthusiasm to conquer that country did not wane; it was only temporarily postponed[30]. Unfolding the web of unintended consequences, Coronado's Expedition laid a foundation of indigenous mistrust for those explorers who came after, but provided modern Native Americans and researchers with the first, the best, and sometimes the only, pristine geographic, environmental and cultural information on a vast territory.

Among the 250 or so expedition members were several Portuguese. Unlike other expeditions, we know that all those who applied to be included in the expedition had to provide considerable and specific material resources to gain admission. There are at least five people listed either as Portuguese or whose names indicate they were Portuguese, and one likely from Cape Verde. Andrés do Campo, said to have been a gardener[31], joined the expedition early on and participated with three horses, local weapons and a buckskin breast plate as listed in the Muster Roll. Of the total participants contributing horses only 34 out of 222 cavalrymen brought to the expedition more than three horses; most contributed one horse[32].

In 1541, a large group of Spaniards including Coronado traveled from their headquarters in New Mexico to the Central and Southern Plains (fig. 1) to look for the mythical Kingdom of Quivira, presumably rich in gold, and to explore the area and hunt bison. Andrés do Campo might have been among those who made that journey. This trip did not lead to the discovery of precious metals but introduced the conquistadors to the immense bison herds roaming the plains and to the potential wealth to be had in meat, pelts, fat and glue, products that later would be central to the economy of New Spain. Pedro de Castañeda, who wrote a detailed narrative of the events of the overall expedition, was part of the journey to the plains and provided the first information on the landscape, on the fauna and flora of the Southern Plains of the United States and on two

[29] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 43.

[30] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 13.

[31] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 325.

[32] AITON, 1939: 556-570.

native groups they encountered, the Querechos and the Teyas[33]. The contact the explorers made with these native groups was the first historically recorded view Europeans had of a unique hunting and gathering mode of living based mostly on the resources the bison provided. The subsistence and economic patterns Castañeda witnessed in 1541 were vital to the Plains Indians of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but his report showed the antiquity of the subsistence pattern and made it possible to link it to pre-Columbian times.

The Europeans left New Mexico disillusioned and with little to show for their efforts and expenditure of resources and time. They neither conquered nor settled the country and certainly did not acquire the mineral wealth desired. Instead they sowed the seeds of anger and distrust among the natives of the Pueblo Country. The Franciscan friars who accompanied the expedition did not fare better despite their efforts. In a misguided last conversion effort, Fray Juan Padilla vehemently requested to be allowed to remain on the plains against Coronado's wish. With the friar remained a black man who is said to have served as interpreter[34], a mestizo, some Native Americans who were part of the expedition and Andrés do Campo, mentioned as Portuguese in the Muster Roll[35] and as «español portugués» in Nájera's narrative[36]. After traveling to the plains, Fray Padilla was soon decapitated, achieving martyrdom as he desired, but Andrés managed to escape reportedly riding a mare. Apparently he traveled, mostly on foot, from around Kansas City, Kansas, to Pánuco on the Gulf of Mexico and then to Mexico City where he reported Fray Padilla's death. How he managed to find his way and negotiate passage through countless native territories is unknown. His remarkable and unrecorded trek between Kansas City and Tampico (about 1300 miles or 2100 km) took several months and would have required unusual skills.

Andrés reached Mexico City in 1543 and Fray Angelico Chavez speculated that Andrés «*must have been sworn to secrecy by Viceroy Mendoza.*» If the Franciscans ever questioned the man, they said nothing, wrote nothing. However, his adventures surely must have made him a hero among his peers, and he could not help but boast about them in the taverns. The gist of it got to Hernán Cortes and he, in turn, could have passed it on to his chaplain in Spain, Francisco López de Gómara. In 1552, the latter published his story of the conquest of New Spain, in which Gómara mentioned that «*Andrés do Campo, a Portuguese and gardener of Francisco Solís*» escaped with «*twelve Indians of Michoacán ( ) was soon captured but, after ten months of captivity, he escaped with a pair of dogs*»[37]. Andrés possessed extremely important information on an alternative route from the plains to Mexico, as

[33] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 191-214.

[34] CHAVEZ, 1968: 59.

[35] AITON, 1939: 44.

[36] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 322.

[37] CHAVEZ, 1968: 24.

Castañeda recognized[38], and despite the fact that no record has been found of his travels, people in power would have tried to obtain that information and use it. Chavez notes that, «*Gerónimo López, a man who bitterly hated the Franciscans ( ) had personally talked with the Portuguese following his return from Quivira. Writing to the King in 1547 to obtain royal favors López related that Andrés do Campo told him how he and Father Padilla had traveled for three hundred leagues after Coronado returned to New Spain*»[39].

Similarly to Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés' personal knowledge of the American wilderness resulted from surviving excruciating experiences. Unlike Cabeza de Vaca, who wrote about his journey and having lost the opportunity to return to La Florida parlayed that knowledge into the governorship of the Río de la Plata[40], the repercussions of Andrés' knowledge are hard to trace as only reported hearsay of his trip is presently available. Written and oral knowledge dissemination, exemplified respectively by Cabeza de Vaca and Andrés' experiences, produced different results, though social class likely played a role in accessing powerful officials, obtaining patronage and publishing a narrative. In the action webs individuals create and the unintended consequences of such actions, Andrés extraordinary feat of survival appears to have profited no one except perhaps the Native American groups of the Central Plains whose lives were sheltered from contact a spell longer. Had the Viceroy acted on Andrés' verbal account, a speedier route to the plains and to Quivira would have been found and European settlement would inevitably follow. As it was, that route was not developed until the late eighteenth century when Pedro Vial traveled from Texas to Santa Fé (New Mexico) and then to the plains. This route would eventually link Texas, New Mexico, the Plains and Louisiana[41]. Still, Coronado's lack of success to conquer and settle the Pueblo Country did not discourage others and soon another attempt was made to bring those lands into the fold of New Spain, subdue the native peoples who inhabit them and exploit their labor.

THE EXPEDITION OF HERNANDO DE SOTO TO LA FLORIDA, 1539-1542

When Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Lisbon on August 9, 1537, plans were already under way for another expedition to Florida[42]. Hernando de Soto returned a very rich man from conquering Peru and Emperor Charles V granted him «*all the land known as Florida*» in April of 1537[43]. This agreement dashed Cabeza de Vaca's hopes to return to the lands he had

[38] CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, 2002: 399.

[39] CHAVEZ, 1968: 68.

[40] Cabeza de Vaca was appointed to the Río de la Plata in March 1540 as adelantado and governor and the expedition left Spain for South America in December of the same year. For more information see BISHOP, 1933: 89.

[41] CHIPMAN, 2000: 208-9.

[42] BISHOP, 1933: 163, 167.

[43] BISHOP, 1933: 167.

so laboriously trekked and to use the knowledge he acquired at such great price. He learned that some of his kinfolk had signed on with Hernando de Soto and the latter tried in vain to entice Cabeza de Vaca to join his forthcoming expedition[44]. De Soto's expedition sailed from Spain on April 6, 1538. Among the six hundred conquistadors who set sail were two kinsmen of Cabeza de Vaca and eight Portuguese gentlemen from Elvas (Portugal)[45]. The Portuguese visited Hernando de Soto in Seville in January of 1538 and were accepted to join the expedition, though others from different places appear to have been denied admission. The Portuguese, Andrés de Vasconcelos, Fernan Pegado, Antonio Martinez Segurado, Mem Royz Pereyra, Joam Cordeiro, Estevan Pegado, Bento Fernandez and Álvaro Fernandez, are portrayed as displaying excellent armor and embarrassing the Castilians who preferred to be seen in fine clothing. If the description of what others had to sell to amass enough revenue to be admitted to the expedition is an indication of what the Portuguese had to sell to join in, they undoubtedly paid a considerable price[46].

One of those Portuguese conquistadors wrote the anonymous *Narrative of the Gentleman of Elvas*[47], arguably the most reliable and important source of information on the expedition. It has been assumed that Álvaro Fernandez was the writer of the narrative, though the authorship remains unclear. Five of the eight Portuguese mentioned perished during the expedition, including Andrés de Vasconcelos and two brothers said to be his kin[48]. Regardless of the authorship, the Gentleman of Elvas provides a second snapshot of the lands Cabeza de Vaca traversed, but often also first hand and unique information on the landscape, customs and on indigenous peoples inhabiting the southeast of the United States. Among these groups were some that suffered the colonial encounter with the Narváez expedition and were soon to fade from the archives. Hernando de Soto perished on the Mississippi River in 1541, and Luís Moscoso de Alvarado took the leadership. Had a Portuguese taken over the expedition's command at the time of Hernando de Soto's demise, which country would have claimed ownership of the lands traversed? And was participation of Portuguese *fidalgos,* minor nobility gentlemen, legally, politically and socially acceptable? It has been stated that the Portuguese gentlemen who joined the expedition were listed as residing in Badajoz, the quintessential frontier town, to avoid possible conflicts, and Elvas'

[44] BISHOP, 1933: 168-170.

[45] In 1933, James Alexander Robertson in his Preface for the translation of the *True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas* intimated that the Portuguese were admitted because the town of Elvas was close to the town of Badajoz. Depending on the historical circumstances, Badajoz was sometimes under Portuguese rule and others under Spanish. Robertson states that the Portuguese were admitted because of the geographic location of the two towns «undoubtedly to satisfy any official inquiry that might be made.» See *The De Soto Chronicles*, v. 1, 27.

[46] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 49.

[47] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 38-219.

[48] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 104, 150.

anonymous authorship seems to agree with that[49]. Though shrouded in personal anonymity, the author chooses to be identified *precisely* by his birthplace, and reaffirms that information in the narrative about all who participated. To complicate matters further, the book was published in Évora in 1557, and most important the Inquisitor General approved the publication. Conversely, the other narratives of the expedition seldom identified anyone by their nationality or region, though they do so for the Portuguese and the Spanish[50]. Though nationality seemed not to matter in the constitution of the expeditionary crews, self-identification with a region or national identification by others (at least the writers), appears to have been noteworthy.

After De Soto's death the expedition continued westward but finding no food supplies to raid or wealth, eventually decided to return to the Mississippi River, build barges and sail to Pánuco, re-playing Cabeza de Vaca's sequence of choices. Elvas mentions the information Cabeza de Vaca provided Charles V, indicating that the Emperor shared it with Hernando de Soto. On their return trip they again passed by the Native town of Naguatex[51] and Elvas noted that they made pottery out of clay «*little differing from that of Estremoz or Montemor*», towns in the Portuguese Alentejo, another instance of unguarded association with a specific region of Portugal[52]. At the Mississippi River, a Portuguese from Ceuta sawed lumber and taught others to do so, a Genoese built the ships with the help of two Biscayan carpenters and a Genoese and a Sardinian caulked the ships, while the natives of the area provided ropes and garments to make sails[53]; on the spot multinational labor and skill-components, exemplifying the objectives of those who contracted the crews and resulting in mutual knowledge exchange. Again, the Elvas narrative makes a point of identifying people by their regions, as if to stress the importance of regionalism within a trans-national empire. They landed in Pánuco on September 10, 1543; destitute, some sick, but all grateful they had survived. It is unlikely they would have survived had they not profited from Cabeza de Vaca's experiences and transmitted knowledge. Correctly or not, all those who wrote narratives mentioned they passed by places where Cabeza de Vaca had been, legitimizing and linking their routes to the master narrative.

---

[49] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: n. 22.

[50] HERNÁNDEZ DE BIEDMA, 1993: 224-246; RANGEL, 1993 – *Account Of The Northern Conquest And Discovery of Hernando de Soto (drawn from Historia general y natural de las Indias by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés) Newly Translated and Edited by John E. Worth With Footnotes by John E. Worth and Charles Hudson*, p. 249-306. In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 270, 294.

[51] Naguatex was likely located on the Red River in the modern state of Louisiana.

[52] *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships*, 149. *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 149.

[53] It is to be noted that there may have been several other Portuguese among the expedition. *The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas.* In CLAYTON *et al.*, 1993: 151, 199, n. 131.

These three expeditions covered a large geographic portion of the United States and were the first windows into a Native American world facing the multiplicity of challenges European colonization caused. Nevertheless, beginning in 1513 several expeditions from Cuba explored Florida and the regions immediately westward. In the 1560s and 70s, the Portuguese were certainly involved in these endeavors but only a few emerge from the archives. Two of them were captured by Native Americans, lived among them for several years, and served as interpreters for other expeditions. One of them, Antonio Perez, a sailor, provided unique cultural information on the Tequesta and Calusa, influential and intriguing chiefdoms located in southern Florida[54].

Despite the loss of life and wealth and the scant rewards most of these expeditions seem to have provided the explorers, conquest fever did not diminished, but it was re-directed from Europe to New Spain (Mexico). Like the Coronado expedition, later colonization efforts originated in Mexico and contracted people already in New Spain, many second generation explorers, and some who had participated in previous expeditions, knew the country to be traversed, had had extensive contact with local indigenous groups and were capable of serving as interpreters and guides. Thus, the process and practices of conquest changed considerably as they arose from cultural and ethnic hybrid communities. Nevertheless the brutality and greed associated with conquest and domination did not abate; in fact, conquest became more virulent.

JUAN DE OÑATE'S COLONIZATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE NEW MEXICO, 1595-1607

After the Coronado expedition, the Pueblo Natives in New Mexico had been mostly left alone but not forgotten. They were very industrious, grew abundant crops, made beautiful cloth blankets and exquisite pottery. Despite the fact that their adornments used mostly turquoise stones they mined, the rumors of abundant silver and gold had never died. Puebloan crafts and labor ethic made them perfect for the *encomienda* system[55]. Forays into that territory in 1580s and 90s, in which some Portuguese were involved, did not result in long-term settlement, but by 1592 Don Juan de Oñate[56] may have been preparing to request royal permission to settle New Mexico, and he obtained the viceroy's approval in 1595[57]. To fulfill the terms of his contract, Oñate needed to amass considerable resources at per-

[54] Archivo General de Indias, Patronato 257, No. 1, G.3, Ramo 20 – PEREZ, Antonio (1573) – *Testimony on the Indians of South Florida.* In *Testimony on the Indians of South Florida*, February 28, 1573.

[55] The encomienda system was a system of forced or unfree labor according to which the land grants included the labor of Native peoples living in the area. See for instance, SIMPSON, 1966.

[56] Juan de Oñate was from a prominent family and his wife was the granddaughter of Hernán Cortes and great-granddaughter of Montezuma, the last Aztec ruler.

[57] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 5.

sonal expense and through those who joined the expedition and would potentially obtain *encomiendas* and share in the wealth to be had. This was an elaborate political and financial negotiation process. Final royal approval of the contract was delayed until the summer of 1597, and in early January 1598, one hundred and twenty-nine males gathered in far northern Mexico (Río de Conchos, southern Chihuahua, Mexico) and were finally on the move to New Mexico. All the colonizers were recruited in New Spain and several brought along wives, children and slaves, as this was a settlement expedition and not one of discovery[58]. The royal contract required large quantities of a wide range of merchandise, from iron implements and weapons to shoes, socks, medical supplies, rosaries, gifts, and certainly food, spices, farm animals and horses[59].

The muster roll[60] taken on February 17, 1597 shows that at least eleven participants were Portuguese. Gaspar López de Tavora from Lisbon was given the job of Alguacil Real, an important political and legislative appointment. Lieutenant Juan González was from Terceira Island and brought along two servants; Commander (caudillo) Manuel Francisco was from Vila do Conde while Commander Gonzalo Hernández was from Coimbra. Gonzalo took along his «wife, children and family»[61]. Sancho de Acosta, was a soldier from Tavora, while Domingo Alvarez Canela was a soldier from Vila Nova de Portimão. Other Portuguese soldiers were Rodrigo Correa from Tavira, Antonio Rodriguez from Canes, Antonio Hernández from Braga, and Manuel Travasos from San Gonçalo de Amarante. Most of these people contributed horses, weapons and armor and very likely had to pay their way in in other ways.

The Muster Roll taken in January 1598 also shows Juan Rodriguez from Crestuma, Porto, who was about 40 years of age[62]. Most, if not all, of these participants had to be already in Mexico and likely represent second or third generation immigrants. This indicates that in the previous century, throughout Portugal, many people had migrated to Central America; a clear dynamic process of grassroots globalization. People were on the move for political and religious reasons, but certainly for economic ones; some settled down and some moved on to other discoveries and other conquests. Like the other expeditions, some of the participants originated from areas in Central and Western Europe, but this time the number of those who were shown to be from New Spain is overwhelming[63]. The conquest and settlement run afoul soon enough as the Europeans' ruthless methods faced the resistance of the native groups. Severe punishments such as amputation of hands and feet and instances in which pueblos were destroyed and people burned alive neither diminished the indigenous resistance nor aided «European» settlement.

[58] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 14.

[59] HAMMOND & REY, 1953:130-149.

[60] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 150-158.

[61] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 154.

[62] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 290, 862.

[63] At least 60 participants are identified as being from Mexico or from other towns in New Spain. That identification referred to place of birth.

In September 1578, Sergeant Major Vicente de Zaldívar, Oñate's nephew, traveled to the Southern Plains to explore and hunt bison just as Coronado had done before, and in June 1601 again they returned to the plains retracing Coronado's quest for Quivira. The reports of these excursions provide some environmental and cultural information, but the bulk of the important material actually comes from the legal inquiries made after 1602 when Oñate lost control of the military and settlers and when many fled New Mexico while he was on the trip to Quivira.

The Valverde Inquiry resulted from internal strife among the colonizers and the atrocities committed against the Native Puebloans. The inquiry began in July 1601 and continued through 1602. Many people were called as witnesses and their legal testimonies recorded. The testimony of Juan Rodríguez from Crestuma, provides some of the most relevant information on Native Americans. Rodríguez stated that he was a pilot and had gone to New Mexico as commander of Captain Francisco de Zúñiga's company and that he had taken part in all expeditions and discoveries Oñate made. It is beyond the aims and scope of this chapter to describe in detail the evidence Rodríguez provided, but a few things should be mentioned. Prior to Oñate and Rodríguez's reports next to nothing was known about most groups on the plains, with the exception of the Querechos[64], very likely those we now call Plains Apache, and the Teyas, likely those we now call Wichita[65]. Rodríguez observed and recorded information on the Jumano, the Escanxaque, and also on the Apache. The information on the Jumano and Escanxaque – the type and size of their settlements, social arrangements, clothing, body decoration, weaponry, dwellings, foods hunted, collected and obtained through trade, as well as on storage facilities is unique and invaluable. This is the *only* time we learn cultural information about the Escanxaque. The group did not disappear from the historical record and was encountered again in the 1650s and 1680s, though the information we obtained from the later encounters is negligible. Rodríguez was attentive to cultural characteristics, and he synthesized what he witnessed adding that information to his legal statements in the Valverde Inquiry. As for the Jumano, the information Rodríguez provided confounds further a complicated picture of one of the most intriguing native groups researchers have encountered. That information is invaluable to put together the historical puzzle of this group, which has been the subject of many books and ideas among scholars in Mexico, New Mexico and Texas. As a pilot, Rodríguez was a trained, keen observer and his report on landscape signposts, water and resources was invaluable to anyone who wanted to traverse the forbidding Southern Plains[66]. Other witnesses in the Valverde Inquiry who had traveled to the Southern Plains also provided information on

[64] The Querechos' subsistence strategies and later evidence makes it almost certain that these were Plains Apache. The Apache, a designation that incorporates several Native American groups, are Athabaskan speakers.

[65] Who the Teyas were is still a matter of heated debate. Cultural characteristics described in historical documents seem to indicate the Teyas were a group of the Wichita, a modern designation for a historical group that incorporated other groups. The Wichita are part of the large Caddoan linguistic family.

[66] HAMMOND & REY, 1953: 862-871.

these native groups but the detail, clarity and organization of Rodríguez's testimony stands apart from the others.

While economic information was generally recorded and provided particularly during expeditions, cultural information about native groups was either very sketchy or absent. Conversely, in legal inquiries witnesses tended to provide a great deal more information, often cumulative, as different people witnessed (and perceived) different events. In conflict situations with Native Americans, as most of these were, the colonizers recorded the number of males as arms bearers and potential enemies, seldom including women and children. In New Mexico, where indigenous groups were essential to a functional and profitable encomienda system, knowledge and understanding of native peoples was important; that was true for the Jumano but not for the Escanxaque who were not encomendados, which makes Rodriguez detailed information more significant.

Despite several political moves and petitions, it was clear the colonization project was doomed since Oñate had lost the support and control of most colonizers and many had rebelled and fled New Mexico. On August 24, 1607, Oñate resigned his post as governor of New Mexico. Some of the colonizers remained in the Pueblo Country until 1609 and others stayed beyond that year and among these must have been some Portuguese. The Valverde Inquiry and other official inquiries resulted in the punishment of Oñate and several other colonizers though no Portuguese is listed; they were too far down the leadership pyramid.

CONCLUSIONS

The documents discussed in this paper are the foundational texts of Spanish America and the historical scaffolding of Native American studies in North America. The disastrous fate of the Narváez expedition ultimately led to the survival of only four individuals. Had the expedition succeeded in its objectives, these four survivors would not have walked from Texas to Northern Mexico, nor would they have experienced long-term and close contact with many Native American groups. Likewise, without the carpenter skills of Álvaro Fernandez, a Portuguese, Cabeza de Vaca might not have survived to write *La Relación*. That narrative brims with vicissitudes and struggle for survival; there is no wealth mentioned. And yet, the narrative became the linchpin for the next two Spanish expeditions and all those who participated in them, including the Portuguese, expected riches and glory. Instead, many of them perished and those who did not returned poorer but grateful to be alive. Oviedo thought they were all duped «and Narváez caught plenty of them, and other captains find as many as they wish, or at least more than they need, because the poverty of some and the greed of others and the craziness of nearly all doesn't let them realize what they are doing nor whom they are following»[67]. If they were duped in their venture,

[67] BISHOP, 1933: 27.

as Oviedo stated, the credulity that drove those who applied for admission was common to most regardless of class, background or profession.

Another way of looking at the risk the Portuguese, and others, took is to consider that in a multinational empire, held together with institutional velcro, national power structures held little sway over the lives of citizens and the concept of «nation» became operationally irrelevant within the scope of empire. That was not the case for the identification with «region»: thus, the Gentleman of Elvas' insistence on self-identifying with Extremadura. Region referred to a specific landscape and kin, and it mattered as it grounded people in *their* ancestral land and in *their* traditional social structures; their place of belonging. This grassroots globalization movement across empires and continents meant that people profited from loopholes to look for other ways and places to construct their lives. The personal disconnect with «patria» was such they were willing to self-expatriate.

But regardless of the perspective one takes on this phenomenon of transcontinental movement it remains a fact that the actions of these actors had consequences. Single, pedestrian, personal and communal acts, such as swimming a river or building a barge, produced intended and unintended outcomes that altered the course of many of lives, tweaked the course of history multiple times and involved several Portuguese who, intentionally or not, were instrumental in shaping history.

SOURCES

Archivo General de Indias, Patronato 257, No. 1, G.3, Ramo 20 – PEREZ, Antonio (1573) – *Testimony on the Indians of South Florida. In Testimony on the Indians of South Florida, February 28, 1573.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AITON, Arthur (1939) – *Coronado's Muster Roll.* «The American Historical Review», 44, p. 556-570.

BISHOP, Morris (1933) – *The Odyssey of Cabeza de Vaca.* New York: The Century Co., p. 53.

CABEZA DE VACA, Álvar Núñez (2003) – *The Account: Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca (ed. trans. and with an Introduction by Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz)*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

CASTAÑEDA DE NAJERA, Pedro (2002) – *Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola.* Chicago: The Lakeside Press.

CHAVEZ, Fray Angelico, O.F.M. (1968) – *Coronado's Friars.* Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History.

CHIPMAN, Donald E. (2000) – *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Concession Made By The King Of Spain To Hernando De Soto Of The Government Of Cuba And Conquest Of Florida With The Title Of Adelantado. In CLAYTON, Lawrence A., *et al., eds.* (1993) – *The De Soto Chronicles, The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*, vol. 1. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

GIDDENS, Anthony (1984) – *The Constitution of Society Outline of the Theory of Structuration.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

HAMMOND, George P. & REY, Agapito (1953) – *Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico 1595-1628*, vol. 1. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press.

HANN, John H. (2003) – *Indians of Central and South Florida, 1513-1763.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

HERNÁNDEZ DE BIEDMA, Luys – *Relation of the Island of Florida.* In CLAYTON, Lawrence A., *et al.*, *eds.* (1993) – *The De Soto Chronicles, The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*, vol. 1. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

KRIEGER, Alex D. (2002) – *We Came Naked and Barefoot, The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America (ed. by Margery H. Krieger, Foreword and Afterword by Thomas R. Hester)*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

RANGEL, Rodrigo (1993) – *Account of The Northern Conquest And Discovery of Hernando de Soto (drawn from Historia general y natural de las Indias by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés) Newly Translated and Edited by John E. Worth With Footnotes by John E. Worth and Charles Hudson.* In CLAYTON, Lawrence A. *et al.*, *eds.* (1993) – *The De Soto Chronicles, The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543.* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press. v. 1, p. 249-306.

RAUNIG, Gerald (2002) – *Transversal Multitudes, european institute for progressive cultural policies.* Available at http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/raunig/en.

SIMPSON, Lesley B. (1966) – *The encomienda in New Spain: the beginning of Spanish Mexico.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Gentleman of Elvas, True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now Newly Set Forth by a Gentleman of Elvas. In CLAYTON, Lawrence A., *et al.*, *eds.* (1993) – *The De Soto Chronicles, The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*, vol. 1. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.