

4-1-1934

Fray Marcos de Niza

Henry R. Wagner

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

Wagner, Henry R.. "Fray Marcos de Niza." *New Mexico Historical Review* 9, 2 (1934).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol9/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu, lsloane@salud.unm.edu, sarahrk@unm.edu.

FR. MARCOS DE NIZA

By HENRY R. WAGNER

IN Number two of the first volume of the NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW Percy M. Baldwin published a translation of the account of Marcos de Niza. In his introductory remarks he stated that Niza was the first white man *indisputably* to enter New Mexico. Dr. Baldwin was evidently not aware of what I had written on the subject in my *Spanish Southwest*, so I directed a communication to the editor which appeared in the following number to the effect that I, for one, did dispute the fact. I did not, however, enter into my reasons for this statement expecting to elaborate the subject later. The matter escaped my mind and it was only recently that I noticed my remarks on the subject in the REVIEW. As I have continued my interest in Niza I now present more fully my views, believing that the subject has not been approached with the documentary evidence which has come to light in the last twenty or more years. I am of the opinion that the accuracy of Niza's story has been taken entirely too much for granted. The question is largely one of the credibility of the man, and to determine this we can only rely on the record of his life and services.

Before proceeding to examine in detail his own account and the circumstances surrounding the journey I wish to set down what I have been able to find out about the man himself, and his earlier career. That is little enough. For some reason which we may suspect but not know, his contemporaries had very little to say about him and the early chroniclers of the Franciscan order even still less. A general statement usually found is that he was a native of Nice in the Duchy of Savoy. For this reason it has been generally supposed that he was an Italian. We have, however, positive evidence to the contrary. An Augustinian in Mexico, Gerónimo Ximénez de San Estéban, who knew Niza wrote a letter in October, 1539, in which he stated that "it is a year

from the past month of September that a friar of San Francisco, French by nationality, departed from this city of Mexico in search of a country of which the governors of these parts have had notice but have not been able to find." I shall have occasion later to refer to this letter but the statement that the friar, that is Niza, was French is in my view conclusive. There are other reasons also, less conclusive, for thinking that he was French. Gonzaga in his *Origine Seraphicae Religionis*, Rome 1587, states that he was born in the province of Aquitaine and this was repeated by later writers of the same order. The Franciscan province of Aquitaine occupied the south central portion of France and Toulouse was the center of it; Nice on the contrary belonged to the province of Genoa or perhaps, at that time, to St. Ludovicus, usually called Narbonne, and which separated the province of Genoa from that of Aquitaine. It is true that the statement of Gonzaga is in all probability taken from Pedro Oroz's lost *Varones Venerables de esta provincia*¹ to which Gonzaga had access. Gerónimo Mendieta, who also no doubt made use of this, states, however, that he was a native of Nice. While Gonzaga adopted the rest of the statement of Oroz as copied by Mendieta he omitted that part perhaps because he had better information.

The name by which Fray Marcos was usually known, Marcos de Niza, would of course indicate that he was a native of Nice, unless we should be warranted in assuming that he adopted the name for some other reason when he entered the order. This was by no means an uncommon procedure but there could hardly be a good reason why a Frenchman should take the name of an Italian town, because Nice at that period was an Italian town, although it no doubt had French inhabitants, being so near the border

1. In his *Capítulos de la Historia Franciscana*, Mexico, 1933, Fernando Ocoranza gives an account of this work with a list of its contents, among which will be found a life of Niza. The work was written in 1585 by Pedro Oroz, one of the most conspicuous members of the Franciscan order in Mexico at that time. Beristain mentions the work and states that it was translated into Latin and published by Gonzaga. Probably Gonzaga only made extracts from it.

of France. Indeed, that may be the explanation. He may have been born in Nice of French parents who for some reason or other had come there and who sent him back to their native country to be educated. According to Gonzaga, "he professed in 1531 and then started for New Spain but stopped in Santo Domingo from where he went to Peru, recently conquered. Not finding there the means to convert the natives he came to New Spain and the province of Santo Evangelio."

In order to test this assertion it will be necessary to examine the chronology of the conquest of Peru although that is by no means settled. It was only in January, 1531, that Francisco Pizarro captured Tumbez and not until September (Prescott says May), 1532, that he started south leaving Sebastian Benalcazar in San Miguel. November 16 he captured Atahualpa.² During this period very few recruits arrived beyond Benalcazar, who seems to have joined Pizarro from Nicaragua some time before Pizarro reached Puna at the end of 1530. In February or March 1534, Pedro de Alvarado arrived accompanied by Niza. To suppose therefore that Niza had gone to Peru from Santo Domingo by way of Panama, or even Guatemala, he necessarily had to return to Guatemala before January 23, 1534, the day when Alvarado sailed from Realejo in Nicaragua. Bartolomé de Las Casas went to Peru, according to his biographers, early in 1532, from Realejo in Nicaragua, on a ship containing small reinforcements and some supplies for Pizarro.³ He carried a *cédula* from the king directed to Pizarro and his partners about their conduct towards the Indians, and it is stated that he presented this to Pizarro and Diego Almagro who promised to obey it. Las Casas

2. The chronology is taken from Volume I of Pedro Pizarro's *Relation of the Discovery and Conquest of the Kingdoms of Peru* translated by Philip Ainsworth Means, New York, 1921. I assume that Mr. Means has given this matter profound study and I accept his results although they differ from mine.

3. Perhaps he accompanied Hernando de Soto who must have arrived in the early part of 1532. Herrera in his *Historia General, Decada IV, Lib. VII*, says that Benalcazar arrived with Mogrovejo de Quiñones at Puerto Viejo while Pizarro was there, that is in 1530.

then returned to Nicaragua. The only trouble with this story is that Almagro was in Panama at the time and did not reach Pizarro until the close of December, 1532, or in February, 1533. This is but a sample of the little agreement we find between contemporary evidence and the facts cited by the biographers of both Las Casas and Niza. As far as Niza is concerned the matter is further complicated by a pious fiction which arose in later years that he was the founder with eleven others of the Franciscan province of the Doce Apóstoles in Peru. There seems to be no contemporary evidence whatever as to the foundation of this province. None of the Franciscan chroniclers was able to produce any and consequently they fell into grievous errors.⁴ Even Gonzaga, who ought to have known, states that the Franciscan convent in Lima was founded by Pizarro in 1530,⁵ whereas a matter of fact Lima itself was not founded until the early part of 1535. When the province finally emerged from obscurity it was a custodia of that of Santo Evangelio in Mexico, a clear proof that it had been founded by friars from that province, although not necessarily from Mexico itself because at that time Guatemala and Nicaragua were both included in the province of Santo Evangelio. There is not a single contemporary reference to Niza's being in Peru to be found at all but we know by his own statement that he went there in January, 1534, with Alvarado. Whether or not he returned with Alvarado in the latter part of the year we do not know, but he was certainly back September 25, 1536, when he appeared as a witness for Alvarado in an investigation held in Santiago, Guatemala, regarding Alvarado's expedition to Peru. The question is of considerable importance because a very long time later several books relating to the early history of Peru were attributed to Niza by a Jesuit writer, P. Juan Velasco.

Niza made what we might call an affidavit regarding what he claimed to have seen in Peru. It was published by

4. This subject is dealt with at considerable length in my *Spanish Southwest*, page 48.

5. *Op. cit.* 1311-12.

Las Casas in the *Breve Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias Occidentales*, first printed in Seville in 1552. I quote what he has to say on the subject. In speaking of the cruelty to the Indians in Peru Las Casas says:

I wish here to refer to a few matters of this kind which a friar of San Francisco saw in the early days and signed with his name sending copies by way of those parts and others to these kingdoms of Castile. I have in my possession a copy with his own signature which reads as follows:

"I, Fray Marcos de Niza, of the order of San Francisco, commissary⁶ over the friars of that order in the province of Peru who were some of the first Christians to enter those provinces, speak, giving a truthful account of certain matters which I saw with my own eyes in that country, more especially about the treatment and conquest of the natives.

"In the first place I was an eyewitness and through a certain experience found out that the Indians of Peru are the most benevolent people that have been found among the Indians and are attached to and friendly with the Christians.

"I saw that they gave the Spaniards an abundance of gold, silver, and precious stones, and everything asked of them which they possess and could be of service. The Indians never made war on them but were always friendly except when they had some occasion on account of the bad treatment and cruelties practised on them. They received the Spaniards with all kindness and honor in their towns, furnishing them with food and whatever slaves they asked for service.

"I also am a witness and give testimony to the fact that, without these Indians giving any cause or occasion therefor, the Spaniards, as soon as they entered their country, and after the great lord, Atahualpa, had given the Spaniards more than two millions in gold and all the country in his possession without any resistance, burned the said Atahualpa, who was the lord of all the country, and after him burned alive his chief general, Cochilamaca, who had come peacefully to the governor with other principal men.

6. This office was one conferred by a superior authority, usually to some friar who had charge of a party. It always implied a delegated authority. Later Niza signed himself *vice-comisario* but Zumárraga in his letter of April 4, 1537, says that the friars in Peru elected him *custodio*. If Niza went to Peru with any delegated authority that fact has not yet come to light, and the statement that he was elected *custodio* would negative the idea.

Also a few days after this they burned Chamba, another very important lord of the province of Quito without any fault committed by him nor for any reason. They also burned Chapera, the lord of the Canarios, unjustly. Also they burned the feet and tortured in many other ways Aluis, [Huyes in Velasco] the great lord of those in Quito, to force him to reveal where the gold of Atahualpa was, a treasure of which it seems he knew nothing. They also burned in Quito Coçopango, the governor of all the provinces of Quito, who came peacefully by reason of certain demands made on him by Sebastian Benalcazar, the captain of the governor, because he did not give as much as they asked of him. They burned him with many other chiefs and principal men. As far as I could make out the idea of the Spaniards was to leave no lord in the whole country.

"I also [saw?] that the Spaniards collected a great number of Indians and shut up in three large houses as many as these would hold, and then set fire to them and burned them all, although they had not done the least thing against the Spaniards or given the least cause for it. It so happened that a priest, named Ocaña, rescued a boy from the fire in which he was burning. Along came another Spaniard, took him out of his hands and threw him into the middle of the fire where he was reduced to ashes like the rest. This same Spaniard who had thrown the Indian into the fire, while returning to the camp the same day, fell suddenly dead in the road and I was of the opinion that they should not give him burial.

"I also affirm and I myself saw with my own eyes Spaniards cut off hands, noses and ears of Indian men and women without any reason except that it pleased them to do so, and in so many places and regions that it would take a long time to enumerate them.

"I saw the Spaniards set dogs on the Indians in order to tear them to bits and I saw them so do to many. I also saw them burn so many houses and towns that I would not know how to recount the number but there were many. It is also true that they took by the arms children at the breast and threw them as far as they could and other outrages and cruelties without purpose, which caused great horror, with other innumerable atrocities which I saw and would take long to recount.

"I also saw that they called the chiefs and principal

Indians to come in, assuring them of peace and promising them safety and when they arrived they at once burned them. They even burned two in my presence, one in Andon and the other in Tumbalá,⁷ and I could not prevent them from burning them no matter how much I preached to them.

"In God and my conscience, so far as I can understand, it was for no other reason than this bad treatment, as appears clear to everybody, that the Indians of Peru rose in revolt, and with much reason as had been given them for it. It was because they have not been treated truthfully nor have the promises given them been kept, but contrary to all reason and justice they have been destroyed tyrannically with the whole country, that they determined rather to die than to suffer such treatment. I also say that by the account of the Indians there is much more gold hidden than has come to light, and this they have not wished to disclose on account of the injustices and cruelties which the Spaniards have practised on them nor will they disclose it while they receive such treatment; instead they wish to die like their predecessors.

"In all this the Lord, our master, has been much offended and his majesty badly served and defrauded by losing the country which could furnish a plentiful supply of food to all Castile, and which it will be extremely difficult and expensive in my opinion to recover." [Las Casas then continues:]

All these are the formal words of the said friar and they come also signed by the bishop of Mexico, affirming that all this was what the father, Fray Marcos, had said. It must be considered here what this father said he saw, because it occurred over fifty or 100 leagues of country and took place nine or ten years ago, as it was the very beginning and they were very few in number. At the sound of gold four or five thousand Spaniards went there and extended over many and great kingdoms and provinces for more than 500 and 700 leagues, which they have entirely

7. The mention here of his presence at these burnings would seem to indicate that he had not been present at the others. I cannot locate Andon but Tumbalá was the chief of the natives in the island of Puna, although his name is spelled differently in other accounts, for instance, Tomalá by Herrera. There is no other record that he was burned but if so it must have happened while Pizarro was in the island and consequently, according to Means' chronology, in December 1530, or January 1531. According to Means, Soto had already arrived and Herrera states he arrived while Pizarro was at Puna, although other chroniclers state that he arrived after Pizarro captured Tumbez.

desolated, perpetrating such deeds as above related and others more ferocious and cruel.

Las Casas assures us that the *Breve Relación* was finished in November 1542, so we can assume from the last paragraph quoted that Niza had seen these things in 1532 or 1533. It is not easy of course to pick out from such a long tirade any special event that can be identified from contemporary evidence beyond the burning of Atahualpa and the actions of Benalcazar in Quito. The execution of Atahualpa (he was burned) took place August 29, 1533. It is hardly possible that Niza was there at the time, nevertheless he states that he was a witness to it. Benalcazar came to Quito about January, 1534, or perhaps a month or two later. Nothing can be more certain than that Niza was not with him then or later, except possibly after the summer of 1534. No doubt, he did see many of the cruelties which he recites as a witness while he was in Peru with Alvarado and of course if he had been there before he might have seen others which he relates. It is impossible therefore to be certain from this account whether or not he was in Peru in 1532 or early 1533; we have only Las Casas' word for it, but he should have known. The Inca ransom was assembled in May 1533 and distributed June 17. It was as a result of this enormous booty that Alvarado undertook to invade the country. News of it therefore must have reached Guatemala some months before January, 1534, in order to have given Alvarado time to assemble his force and make the necessary arrangements. P. Juan Velasco tells us that Alvarado before going to Peru sent Garcia Holguin with two ships to spy out the coast, and that he came back to tell Alvarado of the great riches of Quito. It seems to me that Niza may have returned with him.

As previously remarked P. Juan Velasco wrote a history of the conquest of Quito. It was dedicated to Antonio Porlier, one of the Spanish ministers and dated at Faenza, Italy, March 15, 1789. In some way this manuscript, obviously written in Spanish, came into the possession of Henri

Ternaux and was published by him in a French translation in Paris, 1840, as Tome VII of his second series of *Voyages Relations* etc., with the title *Histoire du Royaume de Quito*. This formed the second part of Velasco's manuscript. Velasco was one of the Jesuits who had been expelled from Quito in 1767 and had accumulated some original manuscript documents on which he based his work. Among these were several he stated to have been written by Niza: *Conquista de la provincia del Quito*; *Las dos lineas de los Incas, y de los Scyris en las provincias del Peru y Quito*; *Ritos y Costumbres de los Indios*; and *Cartas Informativas de lo obrado en las provincias del Peru y del Cuzco*. He does not say where he found or left these documents, nor does Ternaux state whether or not he owned the work of Velasco himself, which seems to have been in Madrid in 1840. The only other reference I have ever found to the Niza documents is in Antonio Alcedo's manuscript bibliography of America in the John Carter Brown Library. The text of Velasco's work is interlarded with citations from various sources and occasionally by a quotation from one. These, besides Niza's works frequently cited, comprise the well-known printed histories of Peru and several in manuscript. Before noting the references to Niza's works it may be as well to state that sometimes he mentions Niza and his movements without giving any authority; presumably, however, he must have taken the facts from some one of Niza's writings as none of the other printed books mentions Niza, and I have not been able to locate the unpublished ones.

In the bibliographical notes in Tome I Velasco states that Niza came to Peru with Pizarro and then went to New Spain. On page 306 he states that Niza came with Benalcazar and Hernando de Soto, who each had a ship, evidently before Pizarro left Tumbes March 16, 1532. He quotes Niza on the meeting with Atahualpa (322); on the battle with Rumi-Nahui (336); on the division of the spoil which he says took place July 25 (360); on the death of Atahualpa (378). He then proceeds to detail the movements of Benal-

cazar who he says left San Miguel for Quito at the beginning of October 1533 and although he does not state that Niza accompanied him, we infer as much from occasional citations from Niza's works. It is, however, necessary to explain that an entirely erroneous account of Alvarado's movements is given, and as we know that Niza was with Alvarado he consequently could hardly have been responsible for the account. Alvarado reached Puerto Viejo about March 10 and after crossing the mountains made his famous deal with Almagro August 26. Alvarado returned to Guatemala before May 12, 1535, in fact, probably by January. In Tome II we have other interesting references to Niza and his journey with Benalcazar, who as noted left San Miguel in October 1533. Niza was appointed chaplain by Benalcazar having gone to San Miguel aghast at the cruelties perpetrated at Caxamalca. He had then been in Peru a year and had learned enough of the language to serve as a passably good interpreter. Benalcazar entered Quito at the end of December and returned to Riobamba at the beginning of January 1534 and remained there until May 1534. Benalcazar (no date given) sent two soldiers to San Miguel to report to Pizarro, and Niza accompanied them with the pretext that he wished to send some friars to Quito, as several had come and he had been appointed commissary general in Peru. However, he went to New Spain disgusted at Benalcazar's failure to restrain Ampudia. At San Miguel he is said to have *rejoined* Alvarado, although no mention in Velasco's narrative can be found of his ever having previously been with Alvarado. Many direct citations are made to Niza's works and even a quotation from what is called an *Información á la corte y al obispo Zumárraga de Mexico* about Ampudia's burning the feet of various Inca chiefs. While the stories are found in Las Casas' *Breve relación* no mention is made there of Ampudia.

From this mass of contradictory statements I believe we can extract a few facts for which some basis can be found. Niza came from Guatemala with Benalcazar before

the arrival at Puna. He did accompany Pizarro to Tumbez and on his march south, witnessed the capture of Atahualpa and the division of the spoils. That he witnessed the death of Atahualpa or accompanied Benalcazar to Quito is most unlikely. After the contract with Almagro was made in August, he may or may not have gone to Xauxa, but more likely remained with Benalcazar until he returned to Guatemala with Alvarado, but he may have remained longer. A number of the occurrences in Quito related by Velasco which are attributed to Niza took place in the latter part of 1534 and in 1535, but the positive statement that Niza left Benalcazar and rejoined Alvarado could hardly have come from any other source than from Niza himself. That Niza again returned to Quito is most improbable. I take it therefore that as he had come with Alvarado he returned with him, and what he had to say of the subsequent events was derived from some other source.

September 25, 1536, Niza gave evidence in an investigation in Guatemala by which Alvarado hoped to escape the blame for conducting a forbidden expedition to Peru. As was customary in such investigations the witnesses were hand picked and a set of questions was submitted to them to which it was known in advance what answer they would give. The main object was to prove that he had not started for Peru at all but had been obliged to go there by stress of bad weather, but incidentally it was also sought to prove, what was no doubt true, that Alvarado had come to peaceful terms with Almagro. There were four witnesses called, among them Marcos de Niza. It is necessary to give the interrogatories as the answers do not disclose their nature.

No. 1 Question: May they be asked if they know Adelantado Don Pedro Alvarado, Marshal Diego de Almagro and Francisco Pizarro, governors of Peru, and if they have knowledge of the country and the coast of Peru.

Answer: He said he did.

No. 2 Question: If they knew, believed, saw, or heard say that Adelantado Don Pedro de Alvarado departed from the Puerto de la Posesion in the province of Nicaragua in the

month of January, 1534, with ten ships carrying 500 Spaniards and 230 horses to proceed to the South Sea.

Answer: He said he knew all this and knew it because he saw it and that there were 223 horses.

No. 3 Question: If they know etc. that on making sail with these ships the adelantado ordered the pilots and masters to sail to the southwest, by which route they could not reach the country of Peru, expecting to find some islands in the sea to the south where they could leave some of the force he took and go on in search of lands and rich islands.

Answer: He said he knew it and being asked how he knew it he said it was because he was present and saw the adelantado give the order in writing to the pilots.

No. 4 Question: If they knew that in following the direction of the southwest the ships were forced by lack of water, and contrary winds and currents which carried them into the Ensenada de Panama, to go to the land of Peru.

Answer: He said he knew this because he was with the said fleet.

No. 5 Question: Did they know that after the adelantado had reached the land of Peru he again undertook to sail with his ships in a southwest direction in order to keep away from the land of Peru but that with the strong currents and contrary winds he was forced to throw seventy odd horses overboard and return again to the land of Peru.

Answer: He stated that it is said the statement is correct that they threw into the sea eighty horses.

No. 6 Question: If they knew, etc. that after the adelantado had reached the land of Peru, because he could not do anything else, he endeavored to hunt for a way and road which would not bring him where Francisco Pizarro was through, some very rugged mountains, plains and deserts filled with snow where the adelantado and all those with him thought they were going to perish from cold, as these *sierras* are so frigid and uninhabitable, that he was obliged to vary his journey and arrive at Quito because he could not do anything else and because the guides which he had with him were lacking or had fled, and where he found Marshal Diego de Almagro.

Answer: He stated that he knew about this and being asked how he knew he said that it was because he himself was present through all of it.

No. 7 Question: If they knew etc. that the adelantado on reaching the province of Quito sent to Marshal Diego de Almagro certain messengers and after the return of these

sent Father Fray Marcos of the Order of San Francisco by whom he sent to demand on the part of his majesty that he allow him to pass peacefully beyond his government because he did not wish to do any damage in the country either to the Spaniards or to the natives; that to these messengers Almagro responded that they should tell the adelantado that by no means should he pass onward through the said province of Quito and if he did he would break down the bridges and clear from the roads the food and supplies.

Answer: He stated that he knew what was asked of him and being asked how he knew he said that he himself was the messenger and they even told him that they would take him prisoner and send him to Castile.

No. 8 Question: If they know etc. that the adelantado in hopes of convincing Almagro sent him other messengers to demand what he previously had sent to demand; that by these he sent back to tell the adelantado the same as he had before and not to bother him with more importunities over the question, as by no means would he give him the passage requested.

Answer: He said that he knew this because he was present.

No. 9 Question: If they know etc. that the adelantado seeing that Marshal Diego de Almagro was not willing to allow him to pass forward by Quito agreed to come with all his men to Riobamba where Almagro was with all his men; that when he arrived about half a league from where he was stationed the adelantado sent to tell him not to be disturbed or alarmed because he did not come to make any trouble or to do any injury but to see him, and that he would come to talk with him with only a page, and that he should order lodging to be given that evening and that the next day in the morning he would proceed to talk with him.

Answer: He said that he knew what was contained in the interrogatory and being asked how he knew he said he went with the adelantado and saw what took place.

No. 10 Question: If they know etc. that Marshal Almagro seeing the good attitude of the adelantado agreed to what had been asked of him and had him lodged near his camp and had him and all his men given supper; that the next day in the morning at daybreak the adelantado left his camp with only a page and Father Fray Marcos to go and discuss with the marshal as he had sent to tell him.

Answer: He said that he knew this and being asked how he knew it said it was because he saw it and was present.

No. 11 Question: If they know etc. that the adelantado, Pedro de Alvarado and Marshal Diego de Almagro, on meeting and talking together became very friendly and formed a company for all the country which was to be discovered beyond Cuzco and that Marshal Almagro agreed to give the adelantado 50,000 *pesos de oro* for the expenses which he had incurred in his fleet on the understanding that all the men who had been brought in it by the adelantado should remain with him and that within a year Almagro would give the adelantado 1500 men with which to make conquests and pass beyond Cuzco, from all of which the adelantado would give him a certain part both of the honor and of the profit which should be obtained. And if they know that all this was agreed to and sworn to between the above before four *escribanos* and was publicly proclaimed with trumpets, at which the men in both camps rejoiced greatly.

Answer: He said that he saw the adelantado and Diego de Almagro celebrate these contracts before the *escribanos* and that he saw that the *escribanos* who were Domingo de la Presa, Diego de Tapia, Espinosa and another whose name he does not remember, proclaimed this and read it in such a manner that those about heard it and that the trumpets were present and that all the Spaniards rejoiced. The witness heard the trumpets sound and also the *escribanos* declare that what was of Almagro was of the adelantado and what belonged to the adelantado belonged to Almagro and that all should know it.

No. 12 Question: If they know etc. that Marshal Diego de Almagro, after he had under his hand and banner all the force of the adelantado, was not willing to keep his word nor comply with anything which he had sworn and concerted to with the said adelantado and told Don Pedro de Alvarado to sell his fleet and go away and leave the country.

Answer: He declared that he knew what was asked and being asked how he knew he said because he saw that within four days he broke everything that had been agreed to.

No. 13 Question: If they know that the adelantado on seeing himself in such necessitous state, alone and without any force, because Almagro had it all under his command and at his orders, and that he owed a great sum of *pesos de oro*,

sold his ships to Diego de Almagro and Francisco Pizarro for 100,000 *pesos de oro* because he could not do anything else, and that he then went peacefully with Almagro from Riobamba to Xauja a matter of some thirty leagues to receive the payment for his ships.

Answer: He answered that he knew this and it was the truth because he saw it.

No. 14 Question: If they know etc. that the adelantado during all the time he was in the country of Peru did no damage in the land nor any evil or injury of any kind either to the Spaniards or to the Indians and natives of the country which the witnesses know because if any harm or damage had been committed or any act of force in the said Peru, it could not have happened to any of those mentioned unless the witnesses saw it, knew it or heard it spoken about.

Answer: He said he does not know more than that the adelantado took food and carriers and that the Spaniards committed no outrage and he affirms what is just said, and it is the truth by the promise which he made, and signed it with his name, and what this contains was a public matter to all the Spaniards who were in the company of the adelantado and of Diego de Almagro. Fray Marcos de Niza.⁸

It must have been shortly after making this declaration that Niza went to Mexico. In a letter from Zumárraga dated April 4, 1537, to some person unknown but in Spain he states

that although we are much occupied in processions and giving thanks for the health of our king I immediately took Fray Marcos whom I had in my house and caused him to declare and sign what your worship will see, which will cause you more sorrow than the letter which I am writing to Dr. Bernal, having heard part of it. This father is a great religious person, worthy of credit, of approved virtue and of much religion and zeal, and whom the friars in Peru elected *custodio*. When they departed and some came here after seeing the crimes and cruelties of those who call themselves Christians he wrote me from Guatemala. I wrote him to come here and so he came. I took him to the viceroy and his worship sent his account to his majesty and those of the council. He and everybody have been so occupied in sermons and confessions that he could do no more up to the

8. Translated from the original in the Archivo General in Seville 2-2-1 (old number).

present time, although with urgency some few are now going, in which he speaks as an eyewitness and your worship has to give a copy of these two into the hands of the emperor, our master, communicating it also to Dr. Bernal, to persuade strongly his Catholic heart to put a stop to these conquests which are opprobrious injuries to our Christianity and Catholic faith. In all this country there have been nothing but as many butcheries as there have been conquests and if his majesty should intrust the matter to his viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, I believe that they will cease. . .

At the end is a postscript in which Zumárraga says:

It seems to me that what the father says constitutes reasonable proof for my proposition but I will send a more exhaustive proof.⁹

It appears beyond reasonable doubt that the document forwarded by Zumárraga was the one referred to by Las Casas and which he incorporated in his *Relación breve*. What Las Casas might have had to do with it is hard to say. He was then in Guatemala or Nicaragua but no doubt had talked with Niza before the latter went to Mexico. Las Casas himself came to Mexico in the spring of 1539 and it was while on this journey that Motolinía had such hard things to say about him and his passage through Tlascala.¹⁰ He went to Spain, not in 1539 as is usually stated but about April, 1540. In another letter of Zumárraga's dated April 17, 1540, he says that

two friars of great esteem, of great zeal for souls, desirous of serving his majesty and worthy of being heard and believed have left here to kiss the hands of your majesty solely for what they can humanly do in their desire to serve your majesty to inform you of matters here as persons who

9. Translated from the original in the Archivo General in Seville 2-2-4/4 (old number). The letter is of further interest because of the indication that Zumárraga had already protested to the court about the treatment of the Indians. The letter is published in *Documentos Inéditos de los Siglos XVI para la Historia de Mexico* by P. Mariano Cuevas, Mexico 1914, page 83.

10. This famous letter dated January 2, 1555, has been several times published, first by Joaquín García Icazbalceta in his *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, Tomo I.

go well informed. One is named Fray Bartolomé de las Casas of the Order of Santo Domingo, who since he was a *clérigo* in these parts has greatly served both God and your majesty, the other is named Fray Jacobo de Tastera of the Order of San Francisco who was *custodio* here, and who after his triennial wished to travel through the very remote provinces where there was no notice of the Word of God, etc.

It would appear from the first part of these remarks that the friars might have left some time before but in the subsequent part of the letter it is obvious that the letter was expected to go in the same ship as the friars.¹¹

Nothing more is heard of Niza until September, 1538, when he was commissioned by the viceroy to make a trip in search of the walled towns by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca which have now become famous. There are many strange things connected with the journey of Cabeza de Vaca. He and his party had reached Mexico in the summer of 1536, and over two years had now elapsed, and no active steps had yet been taken to verify his story. This is not the place to consider that memorable journey but it appears from Mendoza's own statement that he had endeavored to persuade Andrés Dorantes, one of Cabeza de Vaca's companions to return from Vera Cruz to Mexico City where he induced him to remain in New Spain. In his letter to the emperor of December, 1538,¹² Mendoza said that he had agreed with Dorantes to proceed with a party of horsemen to explore more thoroughly the country through which he had wandered. For some reason, which Mendoza never explained, Dorantes never started. It became necessary therefore to find someone else and Niza was chosen to make the expedition. In the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada* of España it is stated that Niza was sent by Mendoza at the instance of Las Casas. This cannot be true because Las Casas was not in Mexico when Niza left. It is much more

11. Icazbalceta, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga*, Mexico, 1881. Apéndice No. 27.

12. First printed in Ramusio's *Navigazioni et Viaggi, Terzo Volume*, Venice, 1556, Folio 355. It is not dated but was written in December 1538, or early 1539.

probable that he was sent at the instance of Zumárraga who, as we have just seen, had a very high opinion of him. There was some need for Mendoza to move quickly. Cortés was accumulating a force and ships which in the following spring sailed under the command of Francisco de Ulloa on precisely the same errand that Niza undertook to carry out. Mendoza did everything possible to prevent this expedition from sailing but without avail.

The instructions given Niza by Mendoza were written in Mexico probably in October or early November, 1538, and forwarded to Niza who was then in New Galicia with Francisco Vásquez de Coronado. He acknowledged receipt of them November 20. In these Mendoza states that

Coronado will go with you as far as San Miguel de Culiacán and if you then find that there is a way to pass farther on you will take with you Estéban de Dorantes as a guide together with the Indians who came with Dorantes and such others as you may collect in those parts, provided it seems to you and him that you should take them.

The general character of the instructions indicates that an attempt was being made to do some discovery without an armed force, which reminds us of the remarks addressed to the emperor by Zumárraga in his letter of 1537. He was also required to take possession for his majesty in the name of Mendoza and when he returned to Culiacán to send notice to him with the greatest secrecy. The original account with the instruction and affidavits signed and affirmed by Niza exists in the archives in Seville in 1-1-1/20, No. 5, Ramo 10. In reality it is an authenticated copy but signed by Niza himself as vice-comissario. It first appeared in print in Italian in 1556 in the third volume of Ramusio's *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, folios 355-59. An English translation was published by Richard Hakluyt in the third volume of his *Principal Voyages*, pp. 356-373. It was also printed in the *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de America*, III, 324-351. Percy M. Baldwin's translation was made from this text. In its Italian form it is a very faithful translation

of the original with a few unimportant omissions and some interpolations.

Anyone who is at all familiar with early documents of the period will at once note the peculiarity of the original document. After the narrative there is an addition reciting that September 2, 1539, Niza appeared before the viceroy and the audiencia and stated that he affirmed and ratified as true the contents of the instructions and the relation preceding. In other words he swore to it although that is not the form which ecclesiastics used in such cases. A noticeable lack in the narrative, although not so unusual as the swearing to a relation of discovery, is an almost complete lack of dates with the exception that in the first paragraph he states that he left San Miguel March 7 and elsewhere speaks of May 9. At the end he states that on his return he went to Compostela where he found Coronado and from there wrote the viceroy and the provincial of the Franciscans that he had arrived and asking them to tell him what to do. No date is assigned to this letter but we know it reached Mexico before August 6 and probably before July 26.

The account has been several times translated into English besides the original translation from the Italian, but never to my knowledge except possibly in the Italian translation and in the French translation by Ternaux-Compans has the original text in the Archives of the Indies been used. The differences between this text and the one in *Tomo III* of the *Colección de Documentos Inéditos* used by other translators are so slight, however, that it does not seem necessary to translate it anew. It is not generally recognized, however, that Antonio de Herrera in his *Historia General*, *Tomo III*, pp. 199-205 has given a very good account of it, taken without doubt from the original document. In fact in many respects it is better than the original because much of the verbiage of Fray Marcos has been eliminated. It contains all but a very few of the substantial facts and for that reason I include herewith a translation of it. Herrera

first gives a preliminary account in which he asserts that Mendoza undertook to make discovery by friars, following the opinion of his good friend, Bartolomé de Las Casas, not to do so with an armed force. This seems to be a bit of an anachronism as Las Casas had not yet reached Mexico. Then follow the instructions to Niza, very similar to those given to Diego de Zúñiga for an expedition up the coast and then he proceeds to quote from Niza changing the narrative into the third person.

CHAPTER VII

. . . With the aid of the Lord our Master,¹³ and the Virgin his Mother and of the Seraphic San Francisco, Fray Marcos de Niza departed from the town of San Miguel de Culiacan on the 7th of March of this year [1539], taking as his companions Fray Honorato, and Estevanico with the domesticated¹⁴ Indians as interpreters, and those of Petatlan,¹⁵ for which place he took the road, all with great contentment and joy, and finding along the way great presents of flowers, food and other things. Having rested three days in Petatlan, after having traveled the sixty leagues to there from San Miguel, and leaving his companion sick, he continued his journey through the favor of the Holy Spirit, many people joining him wherever he passed with joy and contentment and receiving him very well, and giving him of their food, although this was little because they said that it had been three years since they had harvested any. In all this part of the way, about thirty leagues¹⁶ from Petatlan, he found nothing worth mentioning except that some Indians came to him from the island which the Marqués del Valle discovered. By these it was ascertained to be an island because he saw them pass over a space of a half a league to the mainland in *balsas*. There also came to see him from another larger island farther on other Indians, from whom he heard a story that there were thirty other small islands inhabited by poor people who wore pearl shells hanging from their

13. Not in the original.

14. Not in the original.

15. The original speaks here of a town called Cuchillo, fifty leagues from that town, and from where the Indians had come to Culiacan.

16. Twenty-five or thirty in the original.

necks.¹⁷ They did not however display them.¹⁸ He continued his journey through an uninhabited country for four days with many Indians from the island and from the country which he left behind. Then he encountered some other Indians who looked at him with astonishment, because they had no information about Christians¹⁹ as they did not trade with those whom he had left behind on account of the region being uninhabited. They gave the father much food, touched his clothing²⁰ and called him a man from heaven. Through the interpreters he preached to them about the knowledge that they should have of God.²¹ They told him that four days' journey inland where the main range of mountains ended there was a level opening of much extent, where the people wore clothing, had vessels made of gold, which he showed to them, and that they wore it hanging from their ears and noses.²² As this opening was away from the coast and he could not leave that, according to the instructions which he carried, he left it for his return and traveled four²³ days among this same people until he reached the town named Vacapa, forty leagues from the sea.²⁴ In this he was well received and he stayed there until Easter, in the meantime sending persons to the sea by three ways. One of those who went was Estevanico de Orantes.²⁵

At the end of four days some messengers²⁶ came from Estevanico advising Father Fray Marcos to at once follow him as he had heard an account of a great country which they called Cibola and was some thirty days' journey from where Estevanico was. One of the Indians whom Estevanico had sent confirmed this. The Indian said that there were seven great cities in that country which obeyed one master, with stone houses, one or two stories²⁷ high all side

17. Original "and also had maiz".

18. Original "although he showed them one as a sample."

19. This was incorrect, Spaniards from Culiacán had passed through this country several times previously.

20. *Sayota* in the original, but *Hayota* in Ramusio.

21. The original adds "and of his majesty in the land".

22. Original "and they had some little blades with which they scraped themselves and removed the sweat." To this Ramusio adds "the temples and walls were covered with it [gold] and they used it in all household utensils."

23. The original document has suffered some deterioration and especially on the folio at the upper right-hand corner where this word should be found. In transcribing it the number of days was omitted. In Ternaux-Compans it is three.

24. Original "two days before Passion Sunday".

25. Original "by another way".

26. Original "with a large cross".

27. Original "also three stories and that of the chief had four."

by side in order with the doorways very much ornamented with turquoises. The people, he said, wore clothing.²⁸ The father did not leave at once in order to await the messengers to the sea. They returned on Easter relating what was said above about the islands, and that they were thirty-four in number. With them were some Indians²⁹ from these islands who carried to present to the father some great cowhide shields; well worked and which covered them from head to feet, with some holes in the shields so that they could see from behind them. On this day three Indians arrived of the tribe they called "Pintados,"³⁰ with their arms and breasts decorated. These live towards the east, and go very near the Seven Cities of which they gave an advice. Having dismissed the people from the coast he departed from Vacapa the second day of Easter week, with two Indians from the islands who wished to go with the father for eight days and with the three Pintados, by the road and the course which Estevanico was taking. On the third day he found more messengers of his who came to urge him on, confirming the account of those great and rich lands of Cibola, the first of the Seven Cities. Farther on, he understood, passing by the Seven Cities, there were three kingdoms called Marata, Acus, and Tontecac, and that the people of these wore turquoises hanging from their ears and noses. By these Indians Father Fray Marcos was very well received. They gave him much food, brought the sick to him to be cured, over whom he said the Evangel. They gave him skins from Cibola, well tanned.

In another town, the Pintados still following him, they received him well and gave him the same account of Cibola. Here he found a large cross which Estevanico had left as a sign that the news of the good land was increasing. They told him that he had left word that he would await him at the end of the first stretch of uninhabited land. Here he took possession of the country,³¹ and went on for five days,

28. Original "and turquoises in great abundance", and that farther on there were other provinces each one of which was larger than the Seven Cities.

29. Here there is quite an omission. The original states that the islands were inhabited by people who wore shells on their foreheads and were said to have pearls, and Ramusio adds, "much gold". It is also stated that Niza put down the names of the islands and towns in another paper. The people of the coast are said to have little food, like those of the islands, and that they trade with each other by way of *balsas*, and that here the coast runs directly to the north.

30. Original "because they had heard of me".

31. Original "and put up two crosses".

finding it always inhabited, great hospitality and many turquoises and cowskins. Here he found out that after two days' journey he would come on an uninhabited region which would require four days to pass and was without any means of subsistence, although already they had arranged to carry this and arrange some shelters. Before reaching the uninhabited country he found a fresh place where they were irrigating the fields with ditches. Many women came out to receive him dressed in cotton and cowskins which they consider the best dress. The chief of the town came out with these people and his two brothers, very well dressed in cotton and with turquoise necklaces. They presented him with cups, maize, turquoises and different other things, none of which he ever took. They touched his habit and told him that there was much of that material in Tonteach made from the hair of some small animals about the size of some Spanish greyhounds which Estéban had with him.

CHAPTER VIII

How Fray Marcos de Niza reached Cibola and the story with which he returned, and how the Indians of Cibola killed Estevanico.

On the following day, Father Fray Marcos entered the uninhabited country and during four days found food and huts where he could take shelter and then entered a valley containing many people. At the first place all the people came out to meet him dressed like those behind with turquoise necklaces and others in their noses and ears. The father found as much knowledge of Cibola here as there is in New Spain of Mexico, and many people who had been in it.³² He also had here an account of the woolen cloth in Tonteach. As the seacoast was extending much to the north he wished to see it and found that in 36°³³ it turned to the west. Returning to continue his journey he went five days through that great valley inhabited by splendid people, of abundance and freshness, all from irrigation,³⁴ and that the people went to Cibola to gain their livelihood. Here he found a native of that city who had fled from the governor

32. In the original here follows an account given by the natives of how the inhabitants of Cibola built their houses. Niza asked if they had wings in order to get to the upper stories and they laughed and showed him a ladder.

33. The original "35".

34. Original "sufficient to feed more than 300 horsemen (Ramusio 3000)".

who had placed in it the lord of the Seven Cities who had his seat in what is called "Ahacus." He was a man³⁵ of intelligence and desired to go with Father Fray Marcos in order that he might obtain pardon for him. He gave an account of the form of the city³⁶ and said that the others were like it. The principal one was Ahacus, while to the west³⁷ was the kingdom of Marata, where there once had been great towns with houses of stone and lime like in Cíbola but which was now very much diminished through the war which it had carried on with the lord of the Seven Cities. He said that the kingdom of Tontecac³⁸ was very rich and very well inhabited where the people dressed in cloth and were civilized. There was also another very large kingdom called "Acus" whereas Ahacus was one of the Seven Cities.³⁹ In this valley⁴⁰ they brought him a skin once and a half as large as a cowskin and told him that it was from an animal who had only one horn in his forehead which curved in towards the breast and from which a point extended straight out in which he had very great strength. The color was like that of a goat and the hair as long as a finger. Here came a dispatch from Estéban who sent to tell him that since he had been traveling alone he had never caught the Indians in a lie, so he could believe what they told him about the greatness of the country. The father also affirmed this, that in the 112 leagues which he had traveled from the place where he had received the first news of Cíbola he had always found exact whatever they told him.

In this valley he also took possession as he was ordered. The natives begged him to rest there for three days because

35. Ramusio inserts here "white".

36. Ramusio here makes an interpolation "and that the vessels that they used and their other ornaments are of gold", while the original states that the doors and the fronts of the principal houses were of turquoises.

37. Original "southeast".

38. Original "to the west".

39. In the original this reads as follows "He also said that there is another very large province and kingdom called 'Acus' because the Ahacus and Acus with aspiration is one of the Seven Cities, the principal one and without aspiration. Acus is a kingdom and province by itself". Here we see the words reversed. Ahacus with aspiration was Hawikuh, one of the Seven Cities, while Acus, without aspiration, was Acoma. In the original it is also stated that in that city (that is Ahacus) the people sleep in beds raised from the ground, covered by cloth and canopies.

40. Herrera omits to state that Niza traveled three days in this valley, and saw more than 2000 cowskins, extremely well tanned, and a great quantity of turquoises and necklaces, and also had news of the kingdoms of Marata, Ahacus and Totontecac.

from the beginning of the uninhabited country⁴¹ to Cibola it was fifteen long days' journey, and inasmuch as more than 300 men had gone along with Estevanico and were carrying food to last over the uninhabited country they wished to go with him to serve him and because they hoped to come back rich. He remained for these three days and those who were going to go with him being ready he departed and entered the uninhabited country May 9. On the first day they found a very wide road and signs of the fires which those traveling to Cibola had made. He traveled twelve days, always well supplied with food and wild hares and partridges of the same color and taste as those of Castile, although smaller. Here an Indian of Estéban's company came up very sad and fatigued. He said that one day's journey before reaching Cibola Estéban had sent his gourd with messengers, as he always had done, for them to know that he was coming. This gourd contained some strings of bells and two feathers, one white and the other red.⁴² On putting the gourd in the hands of the governor of Cibola he threw it down on the ground with great anger when he saw the bells, and told the messengers that he was acquainted with those people and that they should go away and not enter Cibola because he would kill all of them. Estéban, having told his companions that that was nothing and that they received him the best where they did such things, continued his journey and reached Cibola. They would not let him enter it, put him in a large house and took away whatever he had of barter, turquoises and other things which had been given him on the road. They kept him there for a day and a night without giving him anything to eat. This Indian on account of his thirst went out to drink in a stream nearby and said that he soon saw Estéban fleeing and they were killing some of those who had gone with him. Then the Indian hid and saved himself up the river. With this news many of those who were with the father wept. He consoled them saying that they should not believe this. They replied, affirming that the Indian did not lie, and so he went apart begging of the Lord to guide him in this business as He would be best served and to bring light to his heart. Returning to the Indians he opened his packs of barter and divided them among the principal men, ani-

41. Original "four days from there".

42. Ramusio adds here "as a sign that he demanded safe conduct and to show that he did not come to do any harm".

mating them to have no fear and to follow him. At a day's journey⁴³ from Cíbola they encountered two other Indians of those who had gone with Estéban, very bloody and badly wounded. On seeing them a pitiful weeping commenced among all.

When the father, who could not himself hold back his tears, was able to quiet them he ordered the two to tell what had happened. They said that among their fathers, sons and brothers more than 300 were dead and that they could not now go to Cíbola. They related that Estévan had sent his gourd and to tell the governor that he had come to cure them and bring peace and that the governor, throwing down the gourd, said that those bells were not like theirs. Altogether they confirmed in everything what the first Indian had said and further, that the next day in the morning Estévan went out of the house and some principal people with him and at once many from the city attacked them. In fleeing some of Estévan's people fell over the others who numbered more than 300 without counting the women. Then they shot arrows at them and gave them those wounds, and they threw themselves among the dead until the night, when they arose and fled. They saw that during the daytime many people were looking on from the roofs of the city at what was going on. They saw no more of Estévan, indeed, believed that they had killed him with arrows like the others. Father Fray Marcos was very much confounded with this news, not knowing what to do. He said that punishment would not fail to reach Cíbola, and they answered that no one was sufficient, because it was a powerful place. Very great were their continued weeping and lamentations. The father went aside to commit himself to God and on returning at the end of an hour found a Mexican Indian, named Marcos, crying, who told him "Father, these people have agreed to kill you because you and Estévan have been the cause of the death of their relatives and will also be of them." The father opened his chests and divided what remained of the barter and told them that they would get very little benefit from his death but he would get much since dying in the service of the Lord he would go to heaven. They must know, however, he said, that when his death was found out the Christians would come and make war on them. With these and other reasons he appeased them although

43. Original adds here "of five leagues".

their sorrow was not diminished. He begged that someone should go to find out about Estévan but nobody wished to go. He said that he could not return without seeing Cíbola. Only two of the principal men were willing to go with him, with whom, with their Indians and interpreters, he continued his journey until he came in sight of Cíbola, which he said was situated in a plain on the slope of a round hill, but with the best appearance of a town in all those regions, with stone storied houses and roofs, as it seemed to him from a hill where he placed himself to see it, and that the town was larger than Mexico.⁴⁴ Father Fray Marcos affirmed that he was tempted to enter the city but [he did not] considering that, if he should die, there could be no account of that country which seemed to him the best of what had been discovered.

The father having, as stated, pondered everything which occurred to him, raised a pile of stones in that place with the aid of the Indians and put a cross over it, saying that he placed it there in the name of Don Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy and governor of New Spain, for the king of Castile and Leon, in sign of possession, which he thereby took of those Seven Cities and of the kingdoms of Tontecac, Acus and Marata, and that he did not go to them in order that he could return with an account of what he had done and seen. With this he returned to the people whom he had left behind, whom he reached in two days' journey. He passed the uninhabited country and on entering the valley great were the lamentations for the dead. On this account he at once took his departure, traveling ten leagues a day until he passed the second uninhabited zone to reach the opening, where it was said was the end of the mountains. There he found out that the opening was many days' journey towards the east. He did not enter it so as not to expose himself to danger, although he saw from the mouth

44. At this point Ramusio makes a long interpolation "which contains more than 20,000 houses. The people are almost white, they wear clothes and sleep in beds. They have bows for arms, and many emeralds and other jewels, although they do not esteem these as much as turquoises with which they adorn the walls of the portals of their houses, and their clothes and vessels, and which they use as money in all that country. They dress in cotton and in cowskins and this is the most esteemed and honorable apparel. They use vessels of gold and silver because they have no other metal and of which there is a great use and a greater abundance than in Peru. This they buy for turquoises in the provinces of the Pintados where there are said to be mines in great abundance. Of the other kingdoms I could not obtain such detailed information."

of it several reasonably sized towns in a very fresh valley of good land and from where many smokes arose and he found out that there was much gold among those people. He set up here two crosses and took possession and continued his return journey until he reached the town of San Miguel de Culiacan, believing that he would find in it the governor, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. Not having found him, however, he continued to the city of Compostela from where he gave an account of his journey to the viceroy and to his provincial. At once the fame of the account of Fray Marcos de Niza extended far and wide. The greatness and riches which he had found were not believed by everybody although they aroused the spirit of the viceroy to send to conquer and settle that country.

Herrera then continues with a brief summary of what happened until Cortés went to Spain and the viceroy began to get together money to raise an army to leave the following year.

The omissions in Herrera's account are numerous but of little importance. Fray Marcos repeated himself and told the same story over again several times about the wonders of Cíbola as he heard it from the Indians as he went along. No interpolations occur in the narrative; Herrera evidently simply made an extract from the original as we now have it. With Ramusio, however, the case is very different. Although he also omitted numerous passages he made some striking interpolations, in almost all cases referring to gold or silver or other riches. The references to gold in the original narrative solely relate to what Niza heard about the valley to the east, but Ramusio tells us that he said that there was much gold in Cíbola. The last interpolation (note 44) proceeds to tell where it came from. Now if we examine the circumstances under which Ramusio published his translation we find that following the account of Niza is a letter of Coronado, giving his account of the journey to Cíbola. In this he speaks about sending Melchior Diaz to the place which Niza had spoken of so highly, that is the valley in the mountains to the east. Diaz found nothing, to the grief of the whole company that a thing so highly com-

mended and about which Niza had bragged so much should be found so opposite. Later Coronado asserts that what Niza had said was entirely untrue with the exception of the names of the cities and the stone houses. The only thing of value which was found in the country were two points of supposed emeralds. Some turquoises were found but not a sign of gold or silver. Under these circumstances it is difficult to believe that Ramusio was responsible for the interpolations about precious metals and we are therefore forced to the conclusion, which I reached a long time ago, that Niza's account had been printed in Spain at the time it was received, some time in the early part of 1540. Such interpolations were entirely in order at that time among the booksellers in that country. Besides there is no doubt but that exaggerated stories had reached Spain about what Niza had said, and I do not regard it as at all improbable that he himself had been guilty of making some of these statements.

There is another almost conclusive indication that the narrative was printed at this time. Some time prior to May and possibly February, 1542, Battista Agnese, a Genoese cartographer working in Venice, produced four manuscript atlases each containing a world map on which the discoveries of Niza are shown. It is difficult to believe that Agnese could have had access to the manuscript. Here we find El Nuevo Regno de S. Francisco, Cibola, Marata to the southeast of it, Totontec to the southwest of it, Vacapa, Petatlan and San Michel de Culiacan, all names mentioned by him, and in fact, except the last two, given by him. There are other less conclusive indications that the account was printed at this time, namely, later allusions which seem to refer to such a publication; one by Father Kino and the other by Father Garcés, the latter very doubtful. Kino refers to a book by Niza, something which he would hardly have said about the account printed by Ramusio or that

printed by Herrera. Adolph F. Bandelier⁴⁵ discussed this question of later references at some length and seemed to think that some of them at least had been derived from some other source than Niza's own relation as we now know it. This of course is impossible. Accompanying the document in the archives is a part of a second copy. What exists seems to be the same as in the complete one but of course there may have been differences in what has now disappeared, but I doubt it. I do not believe that Niza ever wrote more than one account. The fact that he swore to the one we now have would naturally debar him from writing a different one. It is true that he speaks of putting down the names of the islands and towns all on another paper, but I take it that that was only a memorandum.

No contemporary statement has been located which gives the date of the arrival of Fray Marcos at Culiacan on his return or even at Compostela. The only thing we know positively is that he was back in Mexico by September 2, and most likely before August 23, the date of Zumárraga's letter quoted below. We have, however, in the shape of two letters addressed by Cortés to the viceroy some evidence from which we may draw some useful conclusions.⁴⁶ The first letter is dated July 26, 1539. I translate the part referring to Niza:

Of the coming of Francisco Vasquez I am infinitely pleased and of the news of Fray Marcos because although I was certain that a good country would be found there I did not think it was so near. My ships will find out what may be beyond, which I am sure must be something great. God desires that we shall not be idle but otherwise, because he placed us in these parts for each one to use his talents. As Fray Marcos will return so soon he will give more news. I beg of your worship to order that the particulars be

45. *Papers of the Archaeological Institute of America*, American Series V, Cambridge 1890.

46. In the *Proceso* 1-1-2/21 (modern signature Leg. 21). There are two copies of these letters in this *legajo* in different *testimonios*, Part III, pp. 109-112 and Part IX, pp. 140-1, both equally difficult to read.

written to me, especially about the place where it is, for I firmly believe he will have it marked down.⁴⁷

From this letter it appears that the one which Niza wrote to the viceroy from Compostela had reached Mexico several days before the 26th. It is difficult to say just how long it took in those days for one to travel from Compostela to Mexico. The distance is in the neighborhood of 500 miles and the time necessary could hardly have been over three weeks. We may therefore tentatively place the date of arrival of Niza at Compostela about July 1. The distance from Culiacan to Compostela is about 250 miles and due to the character of the country this could hardly be negotiated under two weeks at the least. It would seem therefore as if Niza must have reached Culiacan about the middle of June, having employed in his whole journal roughly three months, and returned in about three weeks.

In a recent publication by Dr. Carl Sauer, *The Road to Cibola*,⁴⁸ the author who is well acquainted with the Sonora region, is firmly of the opinion that to make this journey to Cibola and return in the time mentioned was a physical impossibility, and this has always been my opinion. As Dr. Sauer well states, the total distance from Culiacan to Zuñi is in the neighborhood of 950 miles, or counting going and coming 1900 miles. According to Fray Marcos he entered what we may suppose to have been the San Carlos Apache Reservation about May 9 and came in sight of Cibola some thirteen days or more later. The outward journey is not impossible but to return 950 miles in three weeks or even in one month at the most is clearly a physical impossibility considering the way he traveled and the character of the country. Much light is thrown on this journey by the different stories of the Coronado expedition, published by George Parker Winship in his *Coronado Expedition*.⁴⁹ We are not told in any of these to my knowledge that

47. That is on a map.

48. *Ibero-Americana*, III, Berkeley, California, 1932, pp. 21-32.

49. Washington, 1896.

Coronado followed the route which Niza took but there are indications that he did, certainly for the first part of the journey. With a party of horsemen Coronado sped on in advance. It took him about seventy-five days to go from Culiacan to Cibola (one account says seventy-seven and another seventy-three). As the distance was generally stated to be 300 leagues we arrive at a daily average traveled of four leagues. The league in use must have been one of about three miles, the usual land league at that time, and although there are some indications that Niza used a longer one it is probable that his was also three miles. Niza according to his own account made the journey in about seventy-seven days. Allowing for his stoppage of three days in Petatlan, seventeen days at Vacapa, three days in another town not mentioned, and his alleged journey to the coast (time not mentioned), and other stops which are only indicated and not stated in the narrative we find his traveling time was reduced to not more than fifty-four days, or in all probability not over fifty, indicating that he traveled on the average six leagues a day, two more than Coronado, who was in a hurry and was mounted. Whether Niza rode or not we do not know but he was accompanied by a large number of Indians who certainly were on foot and consequently he could not travel any faster than they did. A rate of travel of eighteen or twenty miles a day split up by several rests is not impossible, but in view of the experience of Coronado it is hardly credible. To return the 300 leagues to Culiacan in less than thirty days is even incredible.

We are now confronted with one or two possibilities: either there is something wrong with the dates in the narrative or else Fray Marcos never saw Zuñi nor came within 200 or 300 miles of it at the best. The date of his departure from Culiacan and the almost certain date of his return to Compostela are confirmed by contemporary evidence. We are therefore forced to accept the other hypothesis, namely, that he never saw Cibola. In view of his positive statement to that effect and other details in his narrative to be men-

tioned later, there seems to be ample foundation then for the statement both of Cortés and Castañeda that he was a liar. That may be a pretty bald way of putting it and to ascribe his statement to an overheated imagination better covers the case. Just how far Niza did reach will never be known. Dr. Sauer's opinion is that he did not get very far north of the Cananea plain in northern Sonora, having penetrated at most a very short distance into the modern state of Arizona. This statement may be somewhat too conservative. It is possible that he might have reached the Gila River and there are some indications of this in the narratives of the Coronado expedition. Between that and Zuñi the country is exceedingly rough and broken and any trail across it would be much longer than the airline distance. I traversed it in the spring of 1933 and was surprised to find how rough much of it was.

There are many other features of Niza's account which will not bear examination. For one thing, he distinctly stated that he had gone to view the coast of the South Sea and found that in 35° it turned to the west. Leaving aside the question that the latitude was three or more degrees too high we can dismiss his claim because there was not sufficient time allotted to make the journey. It may also be noted that in the early part of the narrative he betrays the fact that he had received either from Cortés or from someone who had accompanied Cortés an account of the latter's visit to the coast of Sinaloa from La Paz.⁵⁰ The long island mentioned is Guayaval, a long island about half a league from the coast, just as he says, and which extends between the Mocerito and Culiacan rivers. However, it is hardly possible that it was inhabited or that he saw it. He misstated its location as being north of the Sinaloa River. There is no such island on that part of the coast nor was there any then as far as we can ascertain from the narrative of Francisco

50. Little is known about this visit and it is impossible to say just how far north Cortés struck this coast, but it seems to have been somewhere north of the Sinaloa River.

de Ulloa. The island beyond to which Niza refers was probably intended by him to mean California, but there is no contemporary evidence whatever that the Indians in California had any craft by which they could cross the gulf in that latitude. The thirty other small islands do not exist except close to the California shore. The reference to the coast turning to the west in 35° seems to indicate that he had heard in Compostela after his return about the voyage of Ulloa up the gulf, although Ulloa gave the latitude of the end of the gulf as 34° .

The development of the drama to be enacted during the next few years now began. On August 6 Cortés wrote another letter to the viceroy from Cuernavaca in which he states:

Distinguished Sir: With the letter of your lordship concerning the news of Friar Marcos I was the recipient today of great favor and much happiness, for I had wished very much to receive it on account of what is being said around here about that country; I had not given credence to the latter until I saw your letter since your lordship had written me that you would have me informed of whatever Friar Marcos might say. These things are worthy of rendering praise to God, though they are not to be wondered at, for, judging by what has been witnessed and written, He has thus willed it, inasmuch as in our own times He is pleased to reveal to us these things which have so long lain hidden. And may we succeed in giving Him thanks for so great a boon by making proper use of it. Your lordship is quite right about hesitating in your decision because, in my opinion, one must consider the matter very carefully. I am satisfied that, with the wisdom which God has endowed the judgment of your illustrious person and the zeal to serve Him and our king that I have always observed in you [the matter will have a happy outcome]; if anyone is going to be successful in this affair, surely it is He. And so God wished to reveal this, not as the result of expenditures for huge fleets by sea and large armies by land, but through a single discalced friar so that we may better understand that [Latin quotation], and that to Him alone the glory is due and nothing can be attributed to man.

Your lordship requests me to take my part in making recommendations and giving my opinion on this subject. I am humbly grateful for the lofty concept that your lordship has formed of my good will; if, in accordance with the latter, I should succeed in giving good advice, your lordship would be right in saying that your flattering concept of me was the soundest. However, those who learned of what I had advised would be equally right in considering my opinions worthless. And so, not by thinking will I be useful but rather by obeying. If your lordship will tell me how you think you can make use of my advice, I will say what little my experience suggests with the sincerity and devotion that I owe myself which your lordship has always noted in me. If it should be necessary to go to the city where you are in order to give my opinion, that I will do if you command me. . .⁵¹

There is nothing in these letters of Cortés to more than hint that he claimed to have any knowledge of the country which Fray Marcos had described and he displays a willingness to cooperate with the viceroy which no doubt was entirely sincere. Something must have happened between August 6 and September 2 to bring about an entire change in the situation. Just what this was it is difficult, but not impossible to say. On August 24 the viceroy issued a proclamation forbidding anyone to leave the country by sea or by land without his license, a plain indication that he had decided to prevent the ships which Cortés had ready to send to the assistance of Ulloa from leaving, probably because he thought they were destined to search for the new land, and this was the claim afterwards made by Cortés himself. On this account a quarrel broke out between the two men and it is certain that Cortés now began to make statements about Niza to the effect that all he had said was what Cortés himself had told him. September 2 Mendoza had Niza appear before the audiencia and make an affirmation to his relation. On the same day, and no doubt immediately succeeding the ceremony, Niza, who was then in the presence of the viceroy,

51. Kindly translated by Dr. Irving A. Leonard of the University of California, Berkeley.

made an affirmation before him and certain witnesses. He was asked to declare in the sight of God and under his conscience if Cortés had given him any notice or any account of anything touching the discoveries he had made of the land, before he set out on the journey, or had given him any counsel regarding it. He declared that he had received no notice of it from Cortés nor any account whatever of the country from him, and that he went there by the order of the viceroy and that the Lord guided him and the Indians that he took with him. He added that if Cortés had had any news or account of that country he would not have sent his ships to Peru as he had done.⁵² This reference is to the two ships which Cortés sent to Peru to aid Pizarro in the earlier part of 1539 under the command of Hernando de Grijalva.

These proceedings were no doubt well known to Cortés and on September 4 he appeared before the audiencia and presented his famous petition which was printed under the title *Memorial sobre que no se le embarace el descubrimiento de la Mar del Sur*.⁵³ On September 11 the fiscal Benavente filed an answer to Cortés' petition with some documents, included among which were the two letters just cited from Cortés to Mendoza, and Cortés was asked to verify the signatures to the letters. This he did. September 12 Coronado presented a petition to the audiencia asking that Cortés be prohibited from sending out any expedition by land or sea, as it was reported that Cortés was planning to send one to look for the newly discovered land which Coronado claimed lay in his territory. After some further proceedings before the audiencia and the refusal of that body to take any action, a transcript of the record was made October 9 and Cortés removed the proceedings to the Council of the Indies in Spain. These were initiated by a petition of Yñigo Lopez de Mondragon in the name of Cortés March 1, 1540. Cortés

52. *Proceso*, Part II, page 83.

53. *Proceso*, Part III, pp. 1-7, and Part IX, 3 *et seq.* First printed from a copy among the manuscripts of the Academia de la Historia, Madrid, in the *Col. de doc. inéditos para la historia de España*, Tomo IV, 1844, pp. 201-208.

54. *Proceso*, Part IX, page 110 *et seq.*

in the meantime had left Mexico in December and reached Spain in April. June 25 he himself presented the memorial, commonly known as the *Memorial sobre agravios*,⁵⁵ in which he assailed Mendoza for hindering him from undertaking his expedition and for generally throwing obstacles in the way of his making discoveries under his contract of 1529. In this he makes the following statement:

At the time I came from that country [California] Fray Marcos talked with me and I gave him an account of the country and its discovery because I had the intention of sending him in my ships to prosecute the conquest of the seacoasts and country, because it seems that he had some knowledge of navigation. This friar communicated this to the viceroy and with his license it is said that he went by land in search of this same coast and country which I had discovered and which was and is part of what was conquered by me. After this friar returned he has stated that he came in sight of this country. I deny that he had seen or discovered it, instead, what the friar says he has seen he has stated and states solely through the account which I have given him of the news which I had from the Indians of the country of Santa Cruz whom I brought with me, because everything that the friar says is the same as those Indians told me. The putting forward of himself in this matter, manufacturing and stating what he had neither seen nor saw is nothing new, because many other times he has done this and it is a custom of his, as is well known in the provinces of Peru and Guatemala. Sufficient information about this will be given in this court when necessary.

The immediate result of this memorial was the sending of an order July 19, to Mendoza by the Council of the Indies not to interfere with Cortés' plans, but by the time it reached Mexico it was too late. The Coronado force was organized and had already left Mexico City. Mendoza, however, seemed to have had some doubts, perhaps he remembered the advice of Cortés to be a little cautious. He therefore ordered Melchior Diaz to take some horsemen and see if the story of Fray Marcos was true. Diaz left Culiacan

55. *Proceso*, Part II, page 5 et seq. and first printed in the *Col. de doc. inéditos para la historia de España*, IV, 1844, pp. 209-217.

with fifteen horsemen November 17 and on the 20th of March, 1540, Mendoza received a letter from him by Juan de Zaldívar in which Diaz gave some account of his journey. It is not necessary to repeat this; suffice it to say that after traveling 100 leagues Diaz got into a cold country and the farther he went the colder it got, so he decided to send back some messengers with a letter. Generally speaking he heard much the same stories about Cibola as those related by Fray Marcos, except that he did not hear any stories about any metals. The natives possessed some turquoises but not so many as Fray Marcos had talked about. He found an Indian who had been with Estévan, from whose stories he concluded that the population of the country was considerable. He confirmed the story that Estévan had been killed in the way related by Fray Marcos. One hundred and fifty leagues from Culiacan he found a well-populated valley. Mendoza's letter was addressed from Jacona April 17, 1540, where he stopped on his return from Compostela and Colima.⁵⁶ The news was none too reassuring but it was too late to draw back. Coronado with his imposing force had left Compostela and gone to Culiacan and five days after the letter was written he departed from Culiacan with an advance force, taking with him Fray Marcos and some other Franciscan friars.

Niza had now been elected provincial of the Franciscan order in Mexico. Just when this took place I have never been able to ascertain. On the whole it was an extraordinary proceeding as Niza was a comparative newcomer to Mexico, and had none of the prestige enjoyed by the original band of Franciscans, many of whom were still alive. It was also a most unusual proceeding for a provincial to absent himself from Mexico for such a long period as was now in prospect. There must have been some very strong reason for this election which we may well suppose to have been pressure exerted by the viceroy.

56. First printed by Ternaux-Compans in French in the *Relation du Voyage de Cibola*, Paris 1838, pp. 290-298, and subsequently in the *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos . . . America y Oceania*, Tomo II, Madrid 1864, pp. 356-362.

The result of the Coronado expedition was disastrous to Fray Marcos' reputation. The members were disgusted because they found nothing which they had hoped to find and which they supposed had been seen by him. Castañeda, who asserts that Niza never saw Cíbola and only related what the Indians had told him, says that when they saw Cíbola such curses were hurled at Fray Marcos "that I pray God may protect him from them."⁵⁷ It would appear from this account that Fray Marcos was not with Coronado when the advance force reached that place but that he was behind with the rest of the army in the town of Señora, whence he returned to Mexico in August, 1540, with Juan Gallego because, as Castañeda says, he (probably Niza himself) did not think it was safe to stay in Cíbola, seeing that his report had turned out to be entirely false.⁵⁸ This is, however, unlikely. He probably meant that Fray Marcos was not then in Cíbola, as this was in the month of September. Gallego and Melchior Diaz had come from Cíbola and were the bearers of Coronado's letter to Mendoza dated August 3.

We have already seen in Niza's own account what he had to say about Cíbola and it may be admitted that most of what he says was simply what he had heard. At best he could not tell much about a town by looking at it from the top of a mountain a long way distant, but there is considerable evidence that he had exercised his imagination and in public had gone far beyond what he had said in his relation. Castañeda himself, in speaking of his return, stated that the kingdoms that he had told about had not been found, nor the populous cities, nor the wealth of gold, nor the precious stones which he had reported, nor the fine clothes, nor other things which had been proclaimed from the pulpits. This allusion to the pulpits is most interesting as it indicates that a kind of crusade had been preached. Perhaps the best account of what Niza had to say is contained in two contemporary letters, one written August 23, 1539 by Bishop

57. Winship, *Coronado Expedition*, p. 483.

58. Winship, *Coronado Expedition*, p. 484.

Zumárraga and the other by Fray Gerónimo Ximenez de San Estéban from Acapichtla October 9, 1539, to Fray Tomas de Villanueva in Burgos. I translate what they say:

[Zumárraga] . . . The country is at peace as you left it. Fray Marcos has discovered another much larger one, 400 leagues beyond where Nuño de Guzman is and near the island where the marqués was. Many people are moving to go there. The marqués pretends that the conquest of it belongs to him but the viceroy takes it for the emperor and desires to send friars ahead without arms and wishes the conquest to be a Christian and apostolic one and not a butchery. The people are more cultured in their wooden edifices of many stories and in their dress. They have no idols, but worship the sun and moon. They have only one wife and if she dies do not marry another. There are partridges and cows which the father says he saw, and he heard a story of camels and dromedaries and of other cities larger than this one of Mexico . . .⁵⁹

[Ximénez de San Estéban] It was in the month of September last year that a friar of San Francisco, French of nationality, left the city of Mexico in search of a country of which the governors of these parts had notice and had not been able to discover. He traveled over 500 leagues through inhabited territory and at the end of this passed through a desert for more than sixty leagues, and at the end came to a very well settled country with people of much culture who had cities walled about and great houses. They wear shoes and buskins of leather and many wear silk clothing down to their feet. Of the richness of this country I do not write you because it is said to be so great that it does not seem possible. The friar himself told me this, that he saw a temple of their idols the walls of which, inside and outside, were covered with precious stones; I think he said they were emeralds. They also say that in the country beyond there are camels and elephants.⁶⁰

The story handed down to us by Don Juan Suarez y Peralta is not quite so reliable as although he was in Mexico at the time he was then very young, and he wrote a half a century later. Niza exaggerated things so much, Don Juan

59. Icazbalceta, *Nueva colección de documentos*, II, 283.

60. Icazbalceta, *Nueva colección de documentos*, I, 194.

says, that everybody in Mexico wanted to go, leaving Mexico depopulated.⁶¹ This in a sense was just what Mendoza wanted. The place was overrun with necessitous young noblemen who had come out expecting to make their fortunes and were giving the viceroy lots of trouble. There have not been lacking writers who have claimed that the story of Niza was cooked up by Mendoza for the very purpose of getting these people out of town. I think we may at least take it for granted that Mendoza did nothing to throw cold water on Niza's boiling imagination.

Zumárraga's letter was written in a hurry to send by a messenger then leaving so as to catch a ship about to sail from Vera Cruz. No doubt the ship carried the news about Niza from the viceroy and perhaps was the same one which had orders to proceed to Spain without stopping, but did stop in Habana, notwithstanding, the captain making a declaration November 12 that he had been forced to enter the port due to sickness and lack of food and water. Several witnesses were called to testify about Fray Marcos. All swore that even a month and a half before, that is about October 1, the expedition to Cíbola was proclaimed and Coronado appointed to command it. They told much the same stories as will be found in the letters printed above, concerning the stories prevalent in Mexico about Niza's journey.⁶² After weighing all the evidence available in the case it seems to me that the whole trouble lay in Niza's perfervid imagination and the circumstances in which he found himself when he heard of the death of Estévan. I decline to believe that he ever saw Zuñi unless it was in a vision, something not at all unlikely in such a case. What he heard from the Indians in northern Sonora about the famous Seven Cities was substantially correct. He simply magnified everything

61. *Noticias históricas de la Nueva España*, Madrid 1878, pp. 144-5. He adds that Cortés proposed to Mendoza to prosecute the discovery jointly, but one of Mendoza's adherents warned him to beware of Cortés and to remember what happened to Diego Velásquez who received nothing; and Cortés came to Mexico.

62. *Proceso*, Part I. An extract of them will be found in Winship's *Coronado Expedition*, page 366, taken from the *Col. de Documentos inéditos de . . . America*, Tomo XV, pp. 392-8.

he heard, one turquoise became a hundred, a small town became a great city and everything else in proportion. It was unfortunate for him that some 300 men went out on the strength of his statements. When they turned out to be false it is not to be wondered at that these men came back to assail him bitterly as the author of their misfortunes.

I do not read the subsequent history of Niza so far as known as anything but a tragedy. All of the early chroniclers of his order are silent on the subject. Gerónimo Mendieta alone mentions him. He says that on his way from Spain in 1554 he passed through Jalapa where he found Niza crippled from the hardships through which he had passed. Thinking that the hour of his death was drawing near he was taken to Mexico to be interred with the ancient holy ones and there he finished his life's journey.⁶³ In the *Menologia Franciscana* of Fr. Augustín de Vetancourt it is stated that he died in Mexico March 25, 1558.⁶⁴ We have one glimpse of him in his later years. In 1546 he wrote a letter to Zumárraga, his old-time friend, which reads as follows:

With all due reverence and devotion I kiss the feet and hands of your reverence, and with devotion I ask your paternal benediction. You will know that on account of having left the hot country my health has become very bad. On this account the *padre provincial* orders me to return to it at Zuchimilco. As I, an orphan, have no father and mother, friend nor refuge except your lordship, whom I have found more than father in all my necessities, and all this without meriting it, through the exceeding charity of your lordship, I supplicate your lordship to make me for a few months a donation of a little wine, of which I am in great need, as my sickness is of lack of blood and natural heat. I will receive it as the very greatest charity; and if you can do this, write me for how many months and how much each month your lordship wishes to give, so I can send an Indian to get it at the proper time. Praying that the Lord God will guard and

63. *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana*, Mexico, 1870, page 541.

64. Mexico, 1697, page 37. It forms part of the *Crónica de la provincia del Santo Evangelio de Mexico*.

save your reverent person; from this your house, today, Friday, the lowest servant and chaplain of your lordship, Fray Marcos de Niza.

On this is a note of the answer :

To this I say, father of mine, servant of God, that during the months and the years that I shall live, while your sickness and necessity last, every month an *arroba* of wine shall be given to you. And from the present I send it to you and order Martin de Aranguren to give you for my account of the best that there is, and the hospital overseer, Lucas, or his companion, will give it to the Indian who comes for it if I should not be in the city. February 27, 1546.

[To which is added a postscript:] If more should be necessary it will be given with good will.⁶⁵

We have seen Bishop Zumárraga's statement that the Franciscans in Peru had elected Niza as *custodio* and no doubt his information was reliable. In that sense perhaps Niza may have been the leader of the Franciscans who formed a *custodia* which later became known as the Doce Apóstoles, the forerunner of the province of the Franciscan order in Peru of that name, but that there were eleven other Franciscans with him was certainly not true. The later idea seems to have been that because of the name there must have been twelve apostolic friars. One chronicler names six, but I have never seen any contemporary mention of any of these nor of Niza for that matter. Bishop Berlanga who reported to the king about the religious state of Peru in 1536 expressly stated there were but two or three friars in the whole country. Some few had gone to Peru *sueltos*, he said (that is without any authority) and had left the country. No doubt Niza was one of these and the word *sueltos* implies that none, not even Niza had any delegated authority, that is, was a commissary. Even the zealous Franciscan chroniclers of the province in the next century could not bring forward any proof that Niza had been one.

The whole history of the man so far as we know it, clearly indicates that he was given to loose statements and great exaggeration. It was his fortune to be cast as a

65. Icazbalceta, *Nueva Col. de documentos*, II, 292-3.

prominent actor in the drama then being enacted in the newly discovered treasure houses of Mexico and Peru. Men were crazy for gold. The first great gold rush of which there is any record was at its height. In such an overcharged atmosphere men will believe anything that promises gold, any story, no matter how wild, meets unhesitating acceptance. Some one is always forthcoming to provide the story. To stamp such people as unmitigated liars is not to the point, they are simply the victims of their own imaginations or hallucinations; what they wish to see or hear that they see or hear. Another cause for his fabulous stories no doubt lay in the then widely held belief that the North American continent was but a peninsula of Asia. In this view the famed dominions of the great Khan of Tartary of Marco Polo lay north of Mexico. The emeralds, gold, camels and elephants of which Mexico heard so much after Niza's return abounded in them. It was merely necessary to go far enough north to find them. In the good friar's mind I am sure the idea that he reached the very edge of this country of fabled wealth was paramount. A little beyond, a little beyond; always the steer a long way off has long horns. Perhaps even Fray Marcos was a Gascon.