Pedro de Alvarado and the Invasion of Ecuador (1534)

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Edited by
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Abstract

Pedro de Alvarado (1485–1541) is best known as the right-hand man of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) in the conquest of Mexico (1519–21) and as the ruthless conqueror of Guatemala in his own right some years later. Far less known is his intent to muscle in on the conquest of Peru and subjugate Quito, a wealthy domain in the northern extents of the Inca Empire. While his delusions of grandeur conjure up Peru, it was Ecuador that suffered the worst of Alvarado's depredations. To justify his invasion, if fooling no one but himself, he construed the Kingdom of Quito as lying beyond territory already ceded by royal authority to Francisco Pizarro (1478–1541) and his partner Diego de Almagro (1475–1538) for them to conquer. A mammoth task once set, Alvarado undertook the construction of a fleet, work on which began in Iztapa, a port on Guatemala's Pacific shore, in April 1530, two years after Alvarado's audience with Emperor Charles V in Burgos, Spain. The *capitulación* or concession that His Catholic Majesty granted him, formally certified in Medina del Campo on 5 August 1532, made it clear that, whatever Alvarado's peregrinations in the course of exploration, at all costs he must avoid encroaching on, and intruding into, lands laid claim to by any other party with whom the Crown had struck an accord. The armada made its way along the Central American coast, first to the Gulf of Fonseca, where two ships were lost in a howling storm, and from there on to Puerto de la Posesión, or Realejo, in Nicaragua. A sheltered, inland port with nearby forests of prized timber, it was at Realejo that the finishing touches were put to the fleet, "the likes of which," Alvarado boasted, "in these parts has never been seen." Costs incurred in mounting the expedition – amounting to over 130,000 gold pesos and indebting him a further 40,000 – exhausted his resources,. Twelve ships in all set sail from Realejo on 23 January 1534. On board were some 450 Spanish combatants, 200 Black slaves, and over 1,000

DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

Indigenous conscripts, Kaqchikel Mayas foremost among them; this was the price they had to pay for first aligning with Alvarado in the conquest of Guatemala, only to rebel against him soon thereafter. The accoutrements of war for the Ecuador campaign included firearms, crossbows, steel weaponry, ferocious dogs, and much-feared horses. Knowing he was headed south to Peru but having to declare otherwise so as not to violate the terms of his *capitulación*, Alvarado alleged that his ships sailed west, although contrary elements prevailed. Untoward weather and hazardous sea conditions, he contended later, forced him for safety's sake to command that his chief pilot, Juan Fernández, steer the vessels to the nearest shore.

After a rough passage of thirty-three days, during which time horses were thrown overboard to save diminishing supplies of water, the armada made landfall on 25 February 1534 at the Bahía de Caráquez. The locals are said to have offered a warm welcome, feeding and accommodating the strangers in their midst. To approach Quito, however, Alvarado had to traverse what is today the province of Manabí, whose terrain and peoples he knew nothing about. From late February to the end of July, the intractable topography of the Ecuadorian coast hampered his progress at every turn. Confounded and lost, soon to become incensed at not being given reliable counsel on how to reach Quito, Alvarado vented his rage on the native population, sacking community after community in a swath of destruction: Charapotó, Manta, Ramadas (Montecristi), Jipijapa (Del Oro), Paján (Las Golondrinas), to name but a handful of those places ransacked. The Ecuadorian scholar Wilfredo Loor compares Alvarado's actions to those of Attila the Hun. A five-month rampage eventually saw the invasion force approach the western slopes of the Andes at the foot of two volcanoes, the towering Chimborazo (elevation 6,268 meters) and the craggy Carihuairazo (elevation 5,108 meters). A calamitous crossing of the pass between them, which took an untold number of Indigenous lives, was to prove the expedition's undoing and mark the end of Alvarado's Peruvian aspirations.

Keywords: Conquest of Ecuador and Peru; Diego de Almagro; Francisco Pizarro; Hernán Cortés; Pedro de Alvarado; Province of Manabí

1 Introduction

The exploits of Pedro de Alvarado (1485–1541) as the right-hand man of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) in the conquest of Mexico (1519–21) and his leading role in the conquest of Guatemala (1524–40) have long been acknowledged. His doomed attempt to muscle in on the conquest of Peru in order to wrest a share of the spoils from rivals Francisco Pizarro (1478–1541) and Diego de Almagro (1475–1538), however, remains a little-known episode in Spanish American history. While Peru exercised a delusory grip on Alvarado's lust for fame and fortune, it was Ecuador that suffered the worst of his depredations. To justify his invasion, he construed the Inca Kingdom of Quito as lying beyond the territory ceded Pizarro in a *capitulación* (royal contract) dated 26 July 1529.[1] But to approach Quito, Alvarado's forces first had to traverse what is today the province of Manabí, its coastal environs oppressively hot and its terrain hampering them at every turn. After a meandering trek through dense tropical forests lay the ascent of, and passage across, the foreboding

DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

Andes. Freezing cold and blinding blizzards encountered while crossing the mountains would exact a horrific toll, especially among hapless natives coerced into service, and marked the expedition's undoing.

2 Departure and landfall

On 23 January 1534, Alvarado set sail from the Nicaraguan port of Realejo, purportedly for the Islas de la Especiería, the Spice Islands, on the far side of the Pacific Ocean, the Mar del Sur.[2] A *capitulación* negotiated with the Crown, drawn up on 5 August 1532, spelled out that, whatever Alvarado's peregrinations in the course of his exploration, he must at all costs avoid encroaching on territory laid claim to by another party with whom Emperor Charles V already had struck an accord.[3] Neither Peru nor Pizarro are mentioned in the contract, but Alvarado surely knew the persons and lands the royal decree referred to in stipulating that he honor prevailing circumstances. In correspondence with His Catholic Majesty, Alvarado states that *doze velas* [twelve ships] constituted his armada, carrying 450 Spanish combatants and 200 Black slaves.[4] An Indigenous contingent, among them Kaqchikel Mayas abducted following their defeat in Alvarado's brutal conquest of Guatemala, numbered in the hundreds if not thousands.[5]

After thirty-three days at sea, on 25 February 1534, Alvarado's fleet sought the shelter of a mainland bay and dropped anchor off the shores of Caráquez (see Figure 1) in Manabí province.[6]

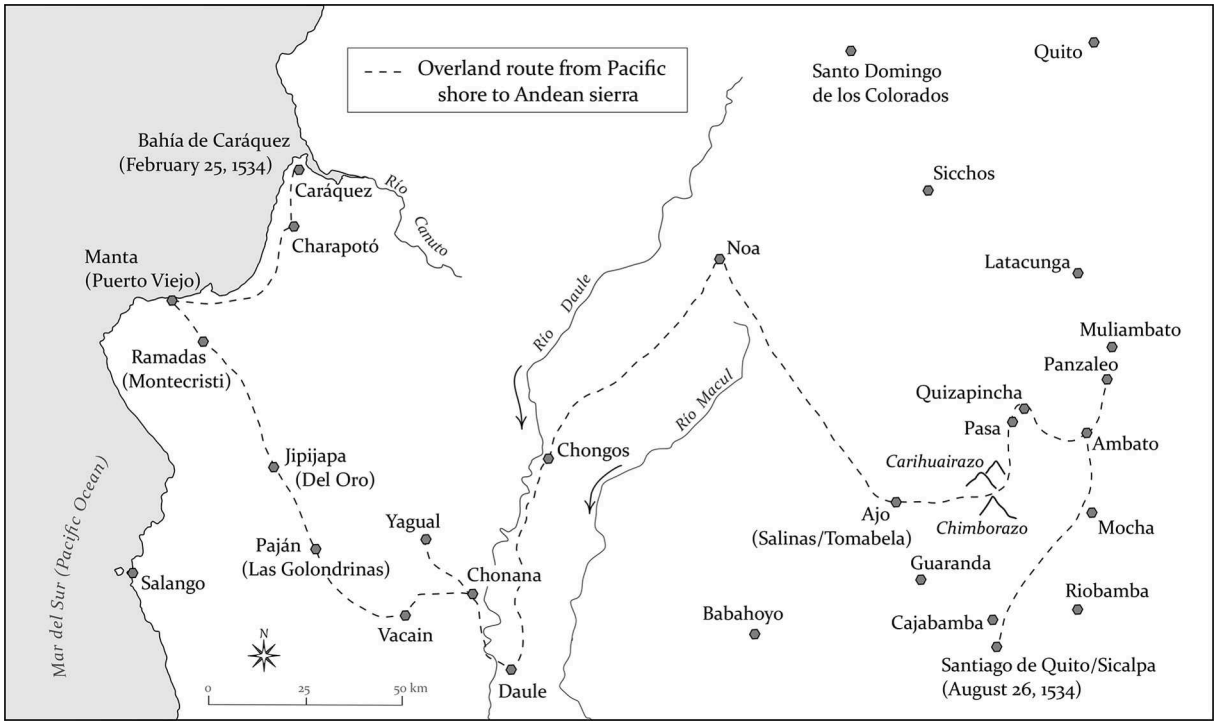

Figure 1: Pedro de Alvarado's overland route from Pacific shore to Andean sierra in 1534

Source: Map courtesy of Jennifer Grek-Martin.

DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

Knowing where he was headed but having to justify otherwise, Alvarado claimed that, despite "always sailing to the west, in accordance with Your Majesty's instructions, and covering almost four hundred leagues," the elements had proven too formidable. "Strong currents" and "contrary winds" put the fleet at risk, he maintained, forcing his decision to forego westward navigation and instead "make my way, impelled to do so, toward the land of Peru."[7] In order to maximize safe passage, Alvarado informed Charles V he had been "obliged to throw overboard more than ninety horses" prior to entering the Bahía de Caráquez. He added pointedly: "Perhaps it would have been necessary to lose all the others, and even some on the expedition itself, because of lack of water, had we not landed without knowing what part of Peru it was."[8] His assertion that he did not know where he had come ashore is contradicted by his reckoning that "the beach called Caraque [Caráquez]" lay "more than three hundred leagues" from Pizarro's location.[9]

Alvarado's head pilot, Juan Fernández, had been in these parts some two years and three months before. As master of the *Santiago*, one of two ships that made landfall in Ecuador on 15 November 1531, Fernández arrived from Nicaragua with "a party of about thirty men and twelve horses" under the command of his partner Sebastián de Belalcázar, who was on a mission of assistance for Pizarro.[10] It is Fernández who is credited with steering Alvarado's fleet "con mucha dificultad" ["with great difficulty"] to secure harbour in Caráquez rather than, as originally planned, have it pull into a cove at Charapotó, due to adverse weather and sea conditions.[11] The locals are said to have greeted Alvarado hospitably, but they informed him that some three weeks before another Spaniard, one Hernán Ponce, "had landed here and laid to waste five towns lying between Puerto Viejo, ten leagues west of Caraque [Caráquez], and the promontory of Santa Elena."[12] While Alvarado was in Caráquez, "a ship captained by Cristóbal Rodrigues also arrived, with twenty Spaniards and five horsemen aboard." Learning of Alvarado's presence, these men sought him out, and volunteered to join his ranks. "Given their willingness," Alvarado states, "I helped them out, taking care of their freight costs and other debts that they owed."[13]

Rodrigues, it transpired, was among the men who had accompanied Gabriel de Rojas aboard the brigantine *San Pedro*, dispatched from Realejo by the governor of Nicaragua, Francisco de Castañeda, to alert Pizarro of Alvarado's intention to leave for Peru. Alvarado learned from Rodrigues that many Spaniards had become so disaffected with Pizarro, and their lack of prospects under his leadership, that they were willing to cast their lot with a rival conquistador. While Pizarro was off waging war in the interior, and enriching himself from the proceeds, they had languished in San Miguel de Piura, as neglected as other Spaniards marooned there by the lack of ship traffic.

Alvarado saw an urgent need to establish and make operative a strategic coastal base from which to orchestrate the movement of people, horses, goods, and services along the Pacific, back and forth from Panama.[14]

He proposed this two weeks after his landfall in a letter to the governor of Panama, Francisco de Barrionuevo. "The residents of San Miguel are desperate," he wrote.

> In all the governorship there is no other Spanish town. And with Pizarro himself so far removed, it strikes me that in order to sustain San Miguel, and assist anyone who comes to these parts, that it would be a good idea to found a town in this district where I am.

Slyly he adds: "I don't wish to be the judge of this, and am not myself disposed to undertake such a thing. But His Majesty would be better served in this province were that to be the case." Meanwhile, lest resourceful people, stranded and aggrieved, give up on Peru

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and abandon it altogether, Alvarado alleviated their plight by diverting some of his ships from exploratory ventures to embark on a mission of rescue to San Miguel. As he did with Rodrigues and his alienated insubordinates, he "assumed the arrears of these notable men, bringing them and what they have to offer back into His Majesty's fold" – a gesture that included looking after much-prized horses.[15]

3 Delegation of duties

Though the passage from Realejo had taken its toll – the loss of so many horses was a considerable setback, people were weak and weary, and his ships required repairs – Alvarado wasted no time in addressing his forces, rallying them for the task ahead: to make their way to Quito and the treasure that there lay waiting, bounty enough for everyone. But before traversing the coast en route to the Inca citadel high in the Andes, bearings had to be established and a division of labor struck for the party to proceed toward its goal as an organized, coordinated collective. Cieza de León, that lauded "prince of chroniclers," interviewed participants a decade or so later, and recorded what was relayed to him in a page-turning narrative. He words Alvarado's clarion call thus:

> In this place [Caráquez] the Adelantado spoke to the people with the words that governors here used to mislead in order to carry out their deeds. He said that he had plenty for himself [as] he was governor of Guatemala, but so that all could become rich, he wanted to take on the present endeavor.
>
> Because it was expedient to put the field regiment in order, he decided to choose captains and other necessary officers. He then named Diego de Alvarado [his cousin] as his campmaster [*maestro de campo*], and as captains of the cavalry, Gómez de Alvarado, his brother, and Luis de Moscoso [his nephew]. He chose Don Juan Enríquez de Guzmán as captain of the infantry. [Rodrigo de] Benavides [took command] of the arquebuses and Mateo Lascano of the crossbowmen. He encharged Francisco Calderón to be general standard bearer [*alferez general*] and ordered Rodrigo de Chaves to be captain of the guard [*capitán de la guarda*]. And he named as chief justice [*justicia mayor*] of the camp Licenciate [*Licenciado* Hernando de] Caldera, and Juan de Saavedra as high constable [*alguacil mayor*]. All of these offices were given and announced with the agreement of Licenciate [*Licenciado*] Caldera and the highest leaders.
>
> Alvarado decided that the ships would go to Puerto Viejo [Manta] and that the people should march on land with the horses and the service people, many men and women whom they took from Guatemala and Nicaragua, and many of whom died either because of the sea or from the great hardship they suffered on land.[16]

Having been contemplated for years, though downplayed or denied for just as long, Alvarado's meddling in the conquest of Peru was about to unfold where it mattered most – on the ground, in territory nominally part of Pizarro's governorship, but with the Governor himself fortuitously absent.

4 Pillage and looting

Alvarado's landfall at Caráquez coincided with Pizarro's spearheading operations to assert control over the Inca capital, Cuzco, which culminated in a Spanish foundation being laid

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there on 23 March 1534.[17] When Pizarro was last in the vicinity of Caráquez is unclear, but that he had been, and indeed had subjugated that part of the Ecuadorian coast, Almagro affirmed when he addressed the Crown from San Miguel de Piura on 8 May 1534. Almagro states that Pizarro had sent him to San Miguel to attend to the needs of Spaniards arriving from Panama who planned to join Pizarro's ranks and "in short order populate and pacify lands where the Governor currently is." When he arrived in San Miguel, however, Almagro found people, "Spaniards and natives alike, much altered." He attributed their agitated state to Alvarado's actions following his arrival "some two months ago, with many foot soldiers and horsemen in tow, further up the coast at Puerto Viejo." Although Puerto Viejo and towns close to it fell within Pizarro's governorship, were administered from San Miguel, and had been "at peace and under the protection of Your Majesty since the time Pizarro himself passed through," Alvarado had gone on a rampage and reversed a stable state of affairs.[18]

Almagro describes Puerto Viejo (today Manta) as a pivotal stop on the way farther south, where ships were repaired, supplies replenished, and Spaniards took rest, received in good faith by native leaders whose people "lodged and fed them, attending to their every need before they moved on."[19] However, because of Alvarado's intent to reach and conquer "a province called Quito, rich in gold that lies inland from Puerto Viejo," he turned on the locals as a means of helping him get there, "casting them in chains and roping them together to serve as carriers" for the expedition. His behavior was so barbarous and extreme, Almagro alleges, that natives fled their communities and took up arms to repel the invaders, killing "one or two Spaniards and wounding several others when they raided a town on the Santa Elena headland, which was formerly at peace." Almagro feared a full-scale insurrection and, once Pizarro learned of Alvarado's plundering, which included the seizure a ship destined to assist the Governor, conflict arising between the two. "May God forgive him," he ends his missive, "but never in all his life will Alvarado be able to make amends for the evil he has perpetrated on such a prosperous land" – and such a peaceful people.[20]

Five months later, Almagro supported his claims of egregious behavior in a deposition dated 12 October 1534, in which fourteen individuals gave sworn testimony to as many as thirty damning allegations.[21] At least five of those who testified – Vicente de Bejar, Pedro Bravo, Antonio Picado, Bernardo Ramírez, and Diego de Vega – had left Nicaragua aboard Alvarado's fleet and were party to what took place in the immediate aftermath of landfall at Caráquez.[22] Their statements thus constitute eyewitness accounts, which coincide and do not contradict.

5 Murder and mayhem

Planning to meet up with them later, Alvarado dispatched half of his ships ten leagues along the coast to Manta, two having returned to Nicaragua (by way of Panama) to pick up more men and horses, another two (with Juan Fernández in command) continuing farther south.[23] Alvarado headed overland to Manta via Charapotó, which he hoped might serve, at least temporarily, as a base of operations. After "only two or three days," during which the party had been well fed and accommodated, the conduct of Alvarado and his men became so reprehensible that, according to Pedro Bravo, "the townspeople rose up against them." The Spaniards left in haste for Manta, taking with them "many Indian men and women, boys and girls too, chained or tied together." Not all of them survived the journey. Those who greeted the Spaniards at Manta fared no better, taken prisoner and "killed afterwards on the road to Quito because they tired along the way, exhausted and unable to carry the loads thrust on

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them."[24] Among the fatalities was the *cacique* of Manta, hanged for allegedly inciting "other Indians who live nearby to rebel." Such an accusation could never be proven, Bravo insisted, "because no common language facilitated such an understanding."[25] Equally distressing for Bravo was to have seen another *cacique* thrown to the dogs, one of his subjects burned alive, and others suffering the same fate simply "for not being able to show the Adelantado and his captains the road they should take to Quito."[26]

Bravo's testimony is echoed by the other witnesses, who add gory details to Alvarado's infamy, none more so than his erstwhile secretary, Antonio Picado. On the road to Manta, after the Spaniards had been driven out of Charapotó, Picado recalls seeing "the bodies of many Indians, male and female, littering the road – some dead from exhaustion, others killed by sword thrusts or their heads hacked off by knives." Children had been taken from their mothers and left behind to die, the women who had given birth to them forced relentlessly ahead. Even newborn babies were snatched and cast aside as their mothers were driven forward, laden down with camp equipment, not infant offspring. The sacking of towns was such that, having grabbed people from the safety of their homes to serve as human carriers on the route march to Quito, "hardly a house remained inhabited."[27] Alvarado's onslaught against "anonymous Indigenous masses" is deemed by one Ecuadorian scholar to be among "the greatest of scourges perpetrated by Spaniards in the Americas."[28] Another compares his pillage to that "of an Attila the Hun in miniature."[29]

6 Wayward meanderings

Quito may have been Alvarado's intended destination, but how to get there was to frustrate him for months. The expedition's collective strength was sapped, losing momentum time and again, on account of Alvarado failing to get accurate and reliable counsel about what route would take him to where he wanted to go. In Manta, Cieza de León tells us, "an Indian who said that he had seen, with his own eyes, the many riches that were in Quito promised to lead Alvarado on a safe route to the city."[30] A two-day march, according to Herrera, took the party to Ramadas, which Loor identifies as likely the present-day Montecristi.[31] The next stop was Jipijapa, which the Spaniards named Del Oro, "the place of gold, because of how much they found there."[32] After Jipijapa came Paján de Las Golondrinas, so-called because of its population of swirling swallows. It was here that the Indian guide, after barely one week of assistance, "saw an opportunity and fled," much to Alvarado's consternation.[33] The Adelantado's trek toward treasure was about to become a lament of the lost.

To determine how best to get to Quito, Alvarado ordered his nephew, Luis de Moscoso, to head in an easterly direction, reaching Bani or Vacain and then Chonana (see Figure 1). There Moscoso found abundant provisions, rounded up some locals to serve as replacement guides, and sent word to his uncle to join him.[34] Alvarado complied, acknowledging, however, that his own whereabouts and the road to Quito were still unknown. To allay confusion and ascertain their position, he organized two more forays in the hope that at least one of them would elicit information that could be acted on reliably. His brother Gómez, along with thirty horsemen and a party of foot soldiers, was dispatched to the north, getting as far as Yagual before arriving at Niza.[35] Rodrigo de Benavides, a trusted captain, struck off to the east, his party making it to the Río Daule, the site of another important settlement.[36] Despite the two missions having reconnoitered in different directions, both their leaders returned to Chonana to inform Alvarado that they had been told that Quito could be

DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

approached either way.[37] Alvarado chose the Benavides option, which he would later regret.[38]

No road awaited the Spaniards at Daule, though a navigable river did, which served the needs of the locals better than any Inca highway. Had Alvarado been better informed, following the river north to its headwaters would have taken him to within one hundred kilometers of Quito (see Figure 1). Instead, rafts carried men downstream south before they decided to reverse course, eventually abandoning the river in favor of an overland march that zig-zagged for weeks and months to the north and east, skirting the lower slopes of mountains without finding any way to cross them.

The road to Quito had proven elusive. Demoralizing and debilitating though Alvarado's forced march along and across the coast had been, an even greater hazard lay ahead – attempting safe passage from one flank of the Andes to the other.

Notes

1 John Hemming, *The Conquest of the Incas* (Abacus Sphere Books, [1970] 1972), 26 and 501; William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru* (George Routledge & Sons, 1847), vol. 3, 279–86, reproduces the *Capitulación de Toledo* in its entirety. The city of Toledo in Spain was where Pizarro presented his credentials to Emperor Charles V following two earlier explorations of Peru, the first in 1524–25, the second in 1526–27.

2 Alvarado to the Governor of Panama, Francisco de Barrionuevo, 10 March 1534, in *Libro viejo de la fundación de Guatemala y papeles relativos a D. Pedro de Alvarado* (Tipografía Nacional, 1934), 291. Realejo was then also known as Puerto de la Posesión.

3 Drafted in Medina del Campo in Spain, the *capitulación* awarded to Alvarado has been transcribed and may be perused in several sources, including the *Libro viejo*, 284–5.

4 Alvarado to the Crown, 18 January 1534, in *Libro viejo*, 287. Of Alvarado's fighting force, 260 men are said to have been *de cavallo* [cavalry] and 100 to be *ballesteros y escopeteros* [crossbowmen or soldiers with firearms]. The rest of the troops fought with *espada y rrodella* [sword and shield]. The Black slaves are said to be *de los españoles* [belonging to the Spaniards].

5 A judicial inquiry, or *residencia*, into Alvarado's affairs, including his expedition to Peru, was conducted by royal order by the *oidor* [judge] Alonso de Maldonado, charged to do so on 27 October 1535 (Archivo General de Indias, hereafter AGI: Justicia 295 and 296). A transcription of this massive document by Julio Martín Blasco details all sorts of iniquities allegedly perpetrated by Alvarado, which he refuted or denied; see José María Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro de Alvarado, su proceso de residencia en Guatemala, 1536–1538* (Marcial Pons, 2008), vol. 2, 657–1132. Among the litany of charges made against him, it is claimed – all translations from Spanish into English are by the author, unless otherwise indicated – that "when he left the Puerto de la Posesión with his armada for Peru, Alvarado and those who went with him took 1,184 Indians, men and women, free and enslaved, many of whom died in Peru. Those who did not perish remained there."

6 Alvarado to the Crown, 15 January 1535, in *Libro viejo*, 294. Adrián Recinos, *Pedro de Alvarado, conquistador de México y Guatemala* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1952), 144–5, confirms Alvarado's departure from Realejo on 23 January 1534 and his landfall at Caráquez as 25 February, one month later.

7 Alvarado to the Crown, 12 May 1535, in *Libro viejo*, 299.

8 Alvarado to the Crown, 12 May 1535, in *Libro viejo*, 299. Regarding horses being thrown overboard, Wilfrido Loor, *Manabí: Prehistoria y conquista* (Editorial La Salle, 1956), 202 notes that this was not an action Alvarado would have undertaken lightly, "a horse in those days fetching in Peru between 3,000 and 4,000 pesos." Loor adds, echoing Alvarado, that had the armada not headed for the closest shore, a detour made "in the best interests of His Majesty," the rest of the horses would also have been in danger of being thrown overboard.

9 Alvarado to the Crown, 12 May 1535, in *Libro viejo*, 299, his precise words being that landfall was made "en una playa que se llama Caraque, bien mas de trecientas leguas de donde Pizarro estaba."

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10 James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (University of Texas Press, 1972), 8, who cites as his source AGI: Contaduría 1825. Belalcázar's men were "well received" by Pizarro, "though there was some grumbling at their small number, not the large party expected." Pizarro's disappointment at the size of Belalcázar's contingent, however, was compensated for two weeks later with the arrival "from Nicaragua and Panama of Hernando de Soto's party: two ships, perhaps a hundred men, and twenty-five horses." See also Rafael Varón Gabai, *Francisco Pizarro and His Brothers: The Illusion of Power in Sixteenth-Century Peru* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 22–3.

11 Gonzalo Molina García, *El capitán Francisco Pacheco en la conquista de América: Fundador de Portoviejo* (Casa de la Cultura de Manabí, [1986] 2004), 195.

12 Alvarado to Barrionuevo, 10 March 1534, in *Libro viejo*, 290. The "Puerto Viejo" referred to is the present-day Manta, which lies on the Pacific coast fifty kilometres southwest of Caráquez. San Gregorio de Puerto Viejo was not founded until a year later, on 12 March 1535, by Francisco Pacheco – see Loor, *Manabí*, 203 – and lies inland fifty kilometres to the south of Caráquez.

13 Alvarado to Barrionuevo, 10 March 1534, in *Libro viejo*, 290.

14 Considered to be the first Spanish foundation in Peru, San Miguel de Piura lay inland from the coast, not on it, hence Alvarado's suggestion to found a more functional port town to its north, in what is today Ecuador. Citing AGI: Contaduría 1825, Lockhart, *Men of Cajamarca,* 9, note 14, records San Miguel as already in existence by August 1, 1532.

15 Alvarado to Barrionuevo, 10 March 1534, in *Libro viejo*, 292.

16 Pedro de Cieza de León, *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru: Chronicles of the New World Encounter* (Duke University Press, [1553] 1998), 294–5. His designation as the "prince of chroniclers" is a common but deserving one. Cieza's life and times, and a critical appraisal of his writings, are nowhere better engaged than by Alexandra Parma Cook and Noble David Cook in their introduction to (and translation of) *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru* (Cieza de León [1553] 1998). When citing Cieza, the translation by the Cooks is the one deployed throughout. Much of Cieza's account is based on what members of Alvarado's entourage told him. Among those with whom Cieza conversed was Alvarado's nephew, Alonso de Alvarado, and the captains Garcilaso de la Vega and Juan de Saavedra. In referring to Alvarado as the "Adelantado" (supreme ruler), Cieza invokes the title bestowed on Alvarado by Emperor Charles V in Burgos on 18 December 1527 – see Recinos, *Pedro de Alvarado*, 123–4 – when he was in Spain seeking, and being granted, greater recognition and enhanced authority as governor of Guatemala. During his audience with the Emperor, Alvarado is said to have raised the matter of constructing a fleet in Central America that would navigate west across the Pacific to the Spice Islands or Moluccas, thereby expanding the imperial reach of Spain.

17 Hemming, *Conquest of the Incas*, 502; Varón Gabai, *Francisco Pizarro and His Brothers*, 73.

18 Almagro to the Crown, May 8, 1534, in José Toribio Medina, *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de Chile* (Imprenta Ercilla, 1889), vol. 4, 219–20.

19 Almagro to the Crown, 8 May 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 220.

20 Almagro to the Crown, 8 May 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 220–2.

21 Almagro to the Crown, 12 October 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 244–306. The fourteen witnesses, whose testimony was taken by the lieutenant governor Juan de Soto, were in turn (1) Blas de Atienza, forty-five years of age; (2) Francisco de Villacastin, forty years of age; (3) Bernardo Ramírez, thirty-five or thirty-six years of age; (4) Bartolomé de Segovia, clergyman, thirty-five years of age; (5) Hernando Varela, forty years of age; (6) Alonso Tellez Giron, thirty-three years of age; (7) Juan Avendaño, forty years of age; (8) Francisco Luis de Alcántara, thirty years of age, unable to sign his testimony because "no sabia escribir" – he does not know how to write; (9) Diego de Vega, thirty-four or thirty-five years of age; (10) Andrés Duran, fifty years of age, "who serves his Majesty as the mayor of San Miguel"; (11) Pedro Bravo, thirty-five years of age, Franciscan friar and former vicar general of Nicaragua; (12) Vicente de Bejar, forty years of age; (13) Antonio Picado, twenty-six years of age, who at the time of the reported incidents served as Alvarado's secretary; and (14) Álvaro Alonso Prieto, thirty years of age. The document transcribed by Medina was consulted at the AGI in Seville by Molina García, *Francisco Pacheco*, 197, note 3, who located it among the contents of Patronato 185, Ramo 9. He dates the document to the "últimos meses de 1534" – the last years of 1534.

22 The names of four of the men – Bejar, Picado, Ramirez, and Vega – appear on an *alarde* (roll call) drafted at Realejo on 11 January 1534 (AGI: Guatemala 41). Though Bravo's name does not appear on

DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

the roll call, he is recorded as having been alongside notary Hernando de Sosa when the register was drawn up, boarding ship twelve days later. See Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador,* vol. 1, 156, for verification, beside Bravo's own disclosure (Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 289) that he "vino allí [Peru] con el armada del Adelantado" – that he went there [to Peru] with Alvarado's fleet.

23 Molina García, *Francisco Pacheco*, 196; Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 295, informs us that the galleon of the fleet, the *San Cristóbal*, was piloted by Fernández himself, sent south "to explore the land beyond Chincha, where the boundaries of Pizarro's governance ended."

24 Almagro to the Crown, 12 October 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 289–90.

25 Almagro to the Crown, 12 October 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos* 290. Molina García, *Francisco Pacheco*, 202, records the *cacique's* name as Lligua Tohali, who was betrayed "por culpa de un indio traicionero e intricante" – by a traitorous and scheming fellow native.

26 Almagro to the Crown, 12 October 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 290.

27 Almagro to the Crown, 12 October 1534, in Medina, *Colección de documentos*, 299.

28 Jacinto Jijón y Caamaño, *Sebastián de Benalcázar* (Imprenta del Clero, 1936), vol.1, 59–60.

29 Loor, *Manabí*, 208, who calls Alvarado "un Atila en miniatura."

30 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 295 and 300, the chronicler noting also that "Alvarado thanked the Indian who had declared to have seen the treasure and to have been to Quito, and promised him a substantial payment for it." Anticipating what he later narrates in detail, Cieza continues: "As best as they could, [the Spaniards] set out on the road. Those wretched natives carried most of their loads so that this expedition cost them dearly, and a prayer to God does not redeem the souls of the Christians who were responsible."

31 Antonio de Herrera, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano: Década Quinta* (Francisco Martínez Abad, [1615] 1728), 129; Loor, *Manabí*, 206.

32 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 300–1. He adds: "The natives had no warning of their coming, which was why [the Spaniards] took them by surprise. When they saw the horses among their houses, they lost the strength and spirit to offer resistance. Those who could escape saw themselves as very lucky."

33 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 301, commenting further that "the Adelantado was furious, [as the Spaniards] were all thrown into disarray because they did not know the land or which were the right roads." Loor, *Manabí*, 206, reckons that the Indian from Manta who led the Spaniards to Paján before abandoning them there did so as a deliberate ploy, designed to rid his home territory of such a loathsome and destructive presence.

34 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 301; Herrera, *Historia general*, 129.

35 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 302. "The Indians of all these lands fled," he observes, while "others became prisoners in power of the Spaniards. Some of them took up arms. They did not fare well because most of them were wounded and killed."

36 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 301–2; Herrera *Historia general* 129; Loor, *Manabí*, 209–10; Molina García, *Francisco Pacheco*, 202–3.

37 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 302–3; Herrera, *Historia general*, 129.

38 Cieza de León, *Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, 302–7. Of Gómez de Alvarado's sortie he states: "Those who had been captured said they knew the road to Quito and that they would take them there, that on this highway they would be there shortly. [Gómez] told [Alvarado] that the Indians were saying that where he had explored was the safest way to Quito, that it would be advantageous to take it. In spite of what the captives were declaring, the Adelantado decided that they would take the way Benavides had discovered."

References and further reading

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The most engaging contemporary account of the Spanish conquest and early colonization of Peru, Cieza's chronicle is in a class of its own, here nimbly translated by the Cooks, who make the original text eminently readable.

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DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1

Now more than half a century after its initial publication, during which time it has appeared in numerous editions and translations, Hemming's magnum opus remains the gold standard in English for understanding the events, contexts, and circumstances of the Spanish invasion of Peru and their defeat of the equally imperially minded Incas.

de Herrera, Antonio. *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano: Década quinta* (Francisco Martínez Abad, [1615] 1728).

Perhaps the most consulted printed source regarding Pedro de Alvarado's Peruvian debacle, book 6 (Libro sexto) of Herrera's *Década quinta* in his *Historia general* benefits considerably from the access he had as Coronista Maior de su Magestad de las Indias – His Majesty's Chief Chronicler of the Indies – to Cieza de León's original manuscript, some eight thousand folio pages in total.

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DOI: 10.4324/9780367347093-RERW239-1