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The Deposition of García López de Cárdenas, *maestre de campo* during Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's Exploration of New Mexico 1540-1542: An Extract

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**The Deposition of García López de Cárdenas, *maestre de campo*
during Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's Exploration of New Mexico 1540-1542,
Taken down by Licenciante Andrés de Cianca, February 20, 1546
An Extract**

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia, legajo 1021, número 2, pieza 1

Transcribed and Edited by Jerry R. Craddock

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Preface

So far as I am aware, the Cíbola Project (https://escholarship.org/uc/rcrs_ias_ucb_cibola) has so far attracted no competitors or emulators in its efforts to make the Spanish texts of the colonial Southwest available to the learned public in paleographic transcriptions with facsimiles of the originals, which is a shame, since even with over 120 electronic publications, besides a considerable number in print, they together constitute only a drop in the ocean of the documentary records of the region. The Cíbola Project has reached a fairly large audience, to judge by the number of consultations (“hits”) and downloads reported by the eScholarship Repository, which maintains the Project’s web site, i.e., 830 and 460, resp., for the month of February 2019 alone (figures which include perhaps 20% involving linguistic and literary items not directly related to the Cíbola Project).

In my continuous but unsystematic reading of publications in the field, I look out for any that include transcriptions or translations of Southwest documents, and if my curiosity is sufficiently aroused, I attempt to locate the Spanish original, and, if the moment seems propitious, I acquire scans of the document, transcribe it, and post the results with a brief introduction and textual notes among the electronic publications of the Cíbola Project. Rather often I find that the transcriptions I come upon fall short of proper paleographic standards and the corresponding translations suffer from the results of occasional or frequent misreadings. Without transcriptions, the translations, however unexceptionable they may be, give in general but a pale reflection of the original Spanish¹.

Recently I happened upon an article by Nugent Brasher (2019) which includes a brief excerpt from the deposition² mentioned in the title above, which narrates in a most interesting way an eye-witness report of the first encounter of Coronado with the Zuni Indians in 1540. The excerpt is transcribed and translated by Richard Flint, well known for extensive publications on the Coronado expedition in collaboration with Shirley Cushing Flint, who have from the beginning made it a point to publish transcriptions of the Spanish texts as well as translations. But however admirable the work of the Flints in other respects, their method of transcription is the despair of philologists, or at least of one philologist, as it is deplorably eccentric. In fact all of the Flints’ transcriptions need to be retranscribed with traditional paleographic norms if they are to be of any use to philologists. My views on their method of transcription were made public in 2008, but I have come across no subsequent discussion of the matter on the part of the Flints or of any other scholar.

Below I offer a transcription of the same passage transcribed by Flint for Brasher’s article, with some textual notes, followed by facsimiles taken from a microfilm of the original. Some preliminary observations are in order. The deposition of García López de Cárdenas was translated by Hammond and Rey (1940:337-368) and Flint makes some highly critical remarks about that translation. Ironically enough, I find myself in the awkward position of having to defend here the work of Hammond and Rey, since I have on numerous occasions criticized their translations, which are often markedly defective. But the fact is that Flint has erred in three

instances where Hammond and Rey got it right.

(1) frame 377 (of the microfilm I had scanned; the document lacks foliation) lines 13-15

a la media noche dieron en este confesante e en los que con el | estaban en el dicho paso
muncha copia de yndios e de los gritos e | voces e flechas que los dichos yndios tiravan se
espantaron | los cavallos

Flint reads erroneously “gritos a- | Vezes” and translates “occasional shrieks”, which really makes little sense, while Hammond and Rey’s “cries and shouting” (1940:344) is perfectly adequate. The reading “e | voces” seems quite clear in the facsimile.

More serious is the following.

(2) frame 378, lines 4-5

. . . . e llegaron çerca de donde los dichos yndios | estaban, halagandolos e mostrandolos
señales de paz

The verb *halagar* ‘to flatter, cajole’ is quite common in modern Spanish and in the manuscript “halagandolos” offers no difficulties for the transcriber. How to account then for the fact that Flint editorially emends the gerund to “(h)alargando”, a verb with a meaning completely out of place in the context. Hammond and Ray translate (1940:344) more or less reasonably “they coaxed them”, not perhaps the verb I would have chosen, but Flint’s “advancing towards them” is nonsensical; when, indeed, does *alargar* ‘to lengthen’ ever mean ‘advance’? The blunder is compounded by Flint’s footnote to the passage: “Again Hammond and Rey embellished the Spanish text by adding the words “they coaxed them,” which have no correlate in the Spanish.”

A third case involves a difficult reading which I was unable to resolve on my own.

(3) frame 378, lines 14-18

. . . . el dicho Francisco Vazquez torno a requerir de paz a los | dichos yndios e que no lo
qujsieron hazer e que el dicho Francisco Baz- | quez mando que ronpiesen con ellos
porque los dichos yn- | dios se bolvjan a los dichos españoles en hablandoles de paz | e
que de aquel ronpimiento mataron algunos yndios

Hammond and Rey translate (1940:345) “Francisco Vázquez again summoned them to peace, but they would not submit. Then Francisco Vázquez ordered that they be attacked because the said Indians rejected their offers of peace. In that attack they killed some Indians...”. Flint’s version is radically different (Brasher 2019:90): “Francisco Vázquez once again delivered the *requerimiento* [summons to peace] to them [the Indians]... Because they refused to do that

[submit] Francisco Vázquez ordered that [the expeditionaries] attack them [the Indians]. The Indians were turned into lovers of peace because in that attack they killed some Indians...”

A apropos of this passage, Flint avers (Brasher 2019:87, n.) “Because Hammond and Rey did not also publish their transcription of the Spanish original, I cannot determine how they came to the peculiar translation they did.” However, one might in similar fashion say of Flint that because he did not also provide facsimiles of the Spanish original one cannot determine how he came to the peculiar transcription that he did, as in the case of “(h)alargando” above. Flint’s version does not lack imagination, but it requires that one ignore the syntax, which links “los dichos yn- | dios se bolvjan a los dichos españoles en hablandoles de paz” with the previous clause, not the following. Hammond and Rey translate a bit freely, but quite reasonably in the context. Flint reads “en hablandoles de paz” as “en los amables de paz”, which is utterly implausible. I confess I was stumped by the passage in question, having been only able to perceive “en los canebles de paz”, i.e., a bit of gibberish. I took the sensible recourse of consulting my good friend and colleague Juan A. Sempere Martínez, San José State University, who solved the reading (message of March 25, 2019) as “en hablandoles de paz”, which, when one goes back to contemplate the facsimile, is absolutely convincing. Here is his analysis which he has kindly allowed me to quote: “La supuesta ‘l’ de ‘las’ es en realidad una ‘h’ que tiene una raya abajo como en el ‘hazer’ de dos líneas más arriba (línea 16), por lo que no es una ‘l’. La presunta ‘s’ de ‘las’ es en realidad una ‘b’. Lo que parece una ‘b’ en ‘canebles’ no es más que una ‘d’ con una ‘o’. La ‘d’ es como un huevo recostado, aunque aquí al estar abierta a la izquierda parezca una ‘e’ y una ‘b’. La ‘o’ está pegada a la ‘d’, justo debajo. Luego viene ‘les’: ‘en hablándoles de paz’. The translation of the passage is therefore “the said Spaniards turned upon the Spaniards while they were speaking to them of peace”.

As matters stand, readers of Brasher 2019 will no doubt carry off the impression that Flint’s corrections are justified, since they lack any immediately convenient means of verification. Hopefully this publication will provide such means to all interested parties.

For the norms of transcription, the reader is referred to any of the publications of the Cíbola Project (https://escholarship.org/uc/rcrs_ias_ucb_cibola).

Notes

1. Only recently I received a work that constitutes a brilliant exception to the generality of documentary publications concerning the colonial Southwest, Norris 2017. It is a model of the most rigorous textual criteria carried out with exceptional clarity and precision.
2. “Deposition” seems appropriate, since in the Spanish of the time “confesión” is a bit of a false friend with regard to English *confession*. It is the statement of an accused person, but carries no prior or necessary implication of an admission of guilt, indeed, as often as not presents vigorous affirmations of innocence.

References

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frame 376

20 Preguntado que diga e declare las entradas e rencuentros en que este confesante se hallo desde que fue provejdo por maestro de campo

[left margin] *cuenta lo que | paso desde | Cuynacan | a Siuolo*

hasta que dexo de sello. Dixo que dende la dicha provinçia de Cu-
yuacan el dicho Francisco Vazquez entro en demanda de Çibola con
sesenta de cavallo pocos mas o menos e la demas gente dexo
25 en la dicha provinçia e a don Tristan de Arellano con ella e que
este confesante fue vno de los que fueron con el dicho Francisco
Vazquez hasta la provinçia de Çivola e hasta llegar tres
o quatro leguas de la dicha Çibola no huvieron rencuentro
njnguno con yndios e que llegados allj este que depone yba de-
30 lante con ocho o diez de cavallo e vio çiertos yndios subi-
dos en vn cerro e se adelanto solo este confesante hazia donde
estaban los dichos yndios haziendoles señas de paz e regalos e

¶ va entre reglones o diz maestro de campo e testado o diz general **M co**

frame 377

dandoles de los rescates que llevaba e con esto baxaron algunos
de los dichos yndios e tomaron los rescates que este confesante
les dava e les dio las manos e estuvo de paz con los dichos yndios
y este confesante les djo vna cruz e les dixo por señas
5 que fuesen al pueblo e dixesen a los que en el estaban que venjan
de paz e que querjan ser sus amigos e que con esto se fueron
los dichos yndios al pueblo y este confesante se quedo
allj aguardando al dicho Francisco Vazques e a los demas que con el
venjan e que en el mesmo lugar donde hallo los yndios hizie-
10 ron noche esperando los dichos yndios e que este confesante
con çierta gente se puso a guardar vn mal paso que avia por
que si los yndios venjesen de guerra no les ofendiesen e

[left margin] *dieron en ellos | mucha copia | de indios*

a la media noche dieron en este confesante e en los que con el
estaban en el dicho paso mucha copia de yndios e de los gritos e

15 voces e flechas que los dichos yndios tiravan se espantaron
los cavallos qu'este confesante e los otros tenjan e se huyeron
e quedaron a pie e que sy no fuera por dos de a cavallo que
tenjan por çentinelas e guarda matar[a]n a este confesante
e a diez conpañeros que con el estavan guardando el dicho
20 paso e que otro dia por la mañana llego Francisco Vazquez
con la demas gente e sabido lo que aquella noche avia aca-
esçido desde allj todos juntos en orden camjaron hazia Çibola. Vieron qua-
tro o çinco yndios e en viendolos torno a parar la gente
e este confesante se adelanto de la otra gente solo a ha-
25 blar con los dichos yndios haziendoles señas e muestras de
paz e que no le aguardaron e que visto esto en la mjsma or-
den que yvan camjaron hasta llegar çerca de Çibola adon-
de hallaron toda la gente de yndios de Çibola e de otros lu-

frame 378

gares que se avian juntado puestos en armas esperandolos e que
visto esto, este que depone e vn fray Luis de la orden de San Francisco e vn
escriuano que servia de secretario al dicho Francisco Vazquez se adelantaron
de la otra gente e llegaron çerca de donde los dichos yndios
5 estavan halagandolos e mostrandolos señales de paz e
dexaron las armas para que vinjesen a ellos e que los dichos
yndios tambien las dexasen e que los dichos yndios no lo qujsye-
ron hazer, antes se venjan hazia este confesante e al dicho frayle
e secretario tirandoles munchas flechas (^e he) e dieron al frayle
10 vn flechazo en los abitos e al dicho escriuano otro en los vestidos
e armas e visto esto por el dicho Francisco Vazquez llego con toda
la demas gente que con el estava. Llego a fauorescer a este con-
festante e que ansi llegado antes que ronpiesen con los dichos

[left margin] *requieren de | paz a los indios*

15 yndios el dicho Francisco Vazquez torno a requerjr de paz a los
dichos yndios e que no lo qujsieron hazer e qu'el dicho Francisco Vaz-
quez mando que ronpiesen con ellos porque los dichos yn-
dios se bolvjan a los dichos españoles en hablandoles de paz
e que de aquel ronpimiento mataron algunos yndios
20 e que otros se metieron en el pueblo de Çiboa e que a pa-

[left margin] *diez o doze | indios despues | del requirimiento*

resçer deste confesante no fueron arriba de diez o doze

los que murjeron de los dichos yndios e que despues de metidos en el pueblo los dichos yndios el dicho Francisco Vazquez los torno a requerir de paz y estando en esto lleo fray Marcos de

- 25 Njça, frayle francisco que hera el que gujava el dicho exerçito español e Francisco Vazquez le dio quenta de todo lo que avia pasado e oydo por el dicho frayle e visto como los yndios estavan encastillados dixo el dicho frayle “tomen rodela e vayan a ellos” e ansy el dicho Francisco Vazquez e algunos de los que con el estavan lo hizieron e fueron a los dichos yndios e al entrar del pueblo de Çivola dieron al dicho Francisco Vazquez dos o tres pedradas que le derribaron

¶ va testado o diz e he

frame 379

- en el suelo e que sy no le socorrieran este confesante e otros que con el estavan le mataran e con el mal herido se retiraron e despues desto los yndios por señas dixeron a este que declara que no les hiziesen mal porque ellos se querjan salir del pueblo e que
- 5 este que declara les dixo a los dichos yndios que si se querjan estar que se estoviesen e que todos estarian de paz e que no qujsieron syno yrse e que ansi se fueron syn que se les hiziese mal por los dichos españoles e les dexaron a los dichos españoles el dicho pueblo de Çivola sola e se entraron e aposentaron e estovieron en el hasta
- 10 dos o tres meses poco mas o menos todos los dichos españoles.

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Textual Notes

frame 376

[left margin] *Cuynacan* for Cuyuacán, a variant of Culiacán.

Siuolo for Cíbola

- l. 22 *sello* alteration of *serlo*; the infinitive ending *r* frequently assimilated to the initial *l* of clitic pronouns in medieval and early modern Spanish
- l. 22 *dende* antiquated synonym of *desde*
- l. 33 this is a “salva”, or list of corrections made on this page in the manuscript; the corrections refer to the first portion of the page, not transcribed here. Scribal annotations of this sort used a very antiquated language, thus “o diz”, good medieval Spanish, for *donde dice*. “Testado” means *tachado*. See also frame 378, l. 32. Juan Sempere kindly assisted me in deciphering the “salva”.

frame 377

- l. 18 *matar[a]n* *ms.* *mataron*; the context requires the pluperfect subjunctive, *hubieran matado* in modern Spanish. Cf. the same grammatical construction frame 379, line 2.

frame 378

- l. 25 *francisco* *ms.* *frn^{co}* for *franciscano*

