

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Travel and Exploration

The history of travel writing dates back to the Bible, Caesar, the Vikings and the Crusaders, and its many themes include war, trade, science and recreation. Explorers from Columbus to Cook charted lands not previously visited by Western travellers, and were followed by merchants, missionaries, and colonists, who wrote accounts of their experiences. The development of steam power in the nineteenth century provided opportunities for increasing numbers of 'ordinary' people to travel further, more economically, and more safely, and resulted in great enthusiasm for travel writing among the reading public. Works included in this series range from first-hand descriptions of previously unrecorded places, to literary accounts of the strange habits of foreigners, to examples of the burgeoning numbers of guidebooks produced to satisfy the needs of a new kind of traveller - the tourist.

The True History of the Conquest of New Spain

Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492–1584) was a foot soldier in the army of Mexico's conqueror Hernán Cortés, and participated in the campaigns that led to the fall of the Aztec empire in 1521. This 1928 translation of his journals derives from the 1904 edition by the Mexican historian Genaro García – the first edition based on the original manuscript. Written as a corrective to accounts that overemphasised Cortés's exploits, Díaz's epic focuses on the experiences of the common soldier. The most complete contemporary chronicle of the Mexican conquest, this important historical document is also a captivating adventure narrative that combines factual accuracy with many dramatic anecdotes. Volume 1, in which Díaz recounts his first two expeditions to the Yucatán coast and the beginning of his service in Cortés's army, contains chapters 1–81 and includes part of García's 1904 introduction to his edition.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection will bring back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The True History of the Conquest of New Spain

VOLUME 1

BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO

EDITED BY GENARO GARCÍA



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108017053

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1908

This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-01705-3 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

The original edition of this book contains a number of colour plates, which cannot be printed cost-effectively in the current state of technology. The colour scans will, however, be incorporated in the online version of this reissue, and in printed copies when this becomes feasible while maintaining affordable prices.

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/9781108017053

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

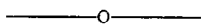
Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

WORKS ISSUED BY

The Hakluyt Society.



THE

CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN.

SECOND SERIES.

No. XXIII.

ISSUED FOR 1908.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MEMBERS OF THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY, RESIDING ON THE
CONTINENT, CAN PAY THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND RECEIVE
THEIR VOLUMES THROUGH

MESSRS. A. ASHER & CO.,
56, UNTER DEN LINDEN,
BERLIN.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

HAKLUYT SOCIETY

Ser. II Vol. 25



After J. Munsig, 1600

Juan Gualtero engraving for P.N.

Hernando Cortés

From an oil painting in the Hospital de Jesus Nazareno, City of Mexico

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE TRUE HISTORY
OF THE
CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN

BY
BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO,
ONE OF ITS CONQUERORS.

From the only exact copy made of the Original Manuscript.

EDITED AND PUBLISHED IN MEXICO,

BY
GENARO GARCÍA.

Translated into English, with Introduction and Notes,

BY
ALFRED PERCIVAL MAUDSLAY, M.A.,
HON. PROFESSOR OF ARCHÆOLOGY, NATIONAL MUSEUM, MEXICO.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY.

MDCCCVIII.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LONDON :

PRINTED AT THE BEDFORD PRESS, 20 AND 21, BEDFORDBURY, W.C.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TO
FRANCIS C. A. SARG,
LATE HIS IMPERIAL GERMAN MAJESTY'S CONSUL
AT GUATEMALA,
TO MARK THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP
AND HIS UNTIRING HELP
IN THIS AND OTHER WORKS ON CENTRAL AMERICA
AND MEXICO.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

COUNCIL

OF

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY.

SIR CLEMENTS MARKHAM, K.C.B., F.R.S., Ex-Pres. R.G.S., *President*.

THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD AMHERST OF HACKNEY, *Vice-President*.

THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD PECKOVER OF WISBECH, *Vice-President*.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BELHAVEN AND STENTON.

THOMAS B. BOWRING.

COLONEL GEORGE EARL CHURCH.

COLONEL CHARLES FREDERICK CLOSE, C.M.G., R.E.

SIR WILLIAM MARTIN CONWAY.

THE REV. CANON JOHN NEALE DALTON, C.M.G., C.V.O.

MAJOR LEONARD DARWIN, late R.E., Pres. R.G.S.

WILLIAM FOSTER, B.A.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR GEORGE TAUBMAN GOLDIE, K.C.M.G., D.C.L.,
LL.D., F.R.S., Ex-Pres. R.G.S.

ALBERT GRAY, K.C.

EDWARD HEAWOOD, M.A., *Hon. Treasurer*.

JOHN SCOTT KELTIE, LL.D.

ADMIRAL SIR ALBERT HASTINGS MARKHAM, K.C.B.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR EDWARD HOBART SEYMOUR, G.C.B., O.M.

LIEUT.-COLONEL SIR RICHARD CARNAC TEMPLE, BART., C.I.E.

BASIL HOME THOMSON, Esq., M.A.

ROLAND VENABLES VERNON, B.A.

BASIL H. SOULSBY, B.A., F.S.A., F.R.G.S., *Hon. Secretary*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
EXTRACTS FROM INTRODUCTION BY SEÑOR DON GENARO GARCÍA	i
BERNAL DÍAZ DEL CASTILLO : HIS LIFE	ix
INTRODUCTION BY THE TRANSLATOR	xliii
NOTE ON SPELLING, ETC.	lxii
ITINERARY—FEBRUARY 8, 1517, TO APRIL 21, 1519	lxiii
PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR	3

BOOK I.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE EXPEDITION UNDER FRANCISCO HERNÁNDEZ DE CÓRDOVA.

CHAPTER I.

The Beginning of the Story	5
--------------------------------------	---

CHAPTER II.

How we discovered the Province of Yutacan.	14
--	----

CHAPTER III.

How we coasted along towards the west, discovering capes and deep water, roadsteads and reefs	18
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Concerning the attack made on us as we stood among the farms and maize fields already mentioned	22
---	----

CHAPTER V.

How we agreed to return to the Island of Cuba and of the great hardships we endured before arriving at the Port of Havana	26
---	----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

X

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
How twenty of us soldiers went ashore in the Bay of Florida, in company with the Pilot Alaminos, to look for water, and the attack that the natives of the land made upon us, and what else happened before we returned to Havana	28

CHAPTER VII.

About the hardships which I endured on the way to a town called Trinidad	33
--	----

THE EXPEDITION UNDER JUAN DE GRIJALVA.

CHAPTER VIII.

How Diego Velásquez, Governor of the Island of Cuba, ordered another fleet to be sent to the lands which we had discovered and a kinsman of his, a nobleman named Juan de Grijalva, went as Captain General, besides three other Captains, whose names I will give later on	36
---	----

CHAPTER IX.

How we followed the same course that we had taken with Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, how we landed at Champoton and how an attack was made on us, and what else happened	42
--	----

CHAPTER X.

How we went on our way and entered a large and broad river to which we then gave the name of the "Boca de Términos"	44
---	----

CHAPTER XI.

How we arrived at the Rio de Tabasco which we named the River Grijalva, and what happened to us there	45
---	----

CHAPTER XII.

How we followed along the coast towards the setting sun, and arrived at a river called the Rio de Banderas, and what happened there	49
---	----

CHAPTER XIII.

How we arrived at the Rio de Banderas, and what happened there	51
--	----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

XI

CHAPTER XIV.

	PAGE
How we arrived at the Island now called San Juan de Ulúa, and the reason why that name was given to it, and what happened to us there.	55

CHAPTER XV.

How Diego Velásquez, the Governor of Cuba, sent a ship in search of us, and what else happened	58
---	----

CHAPTER XVI.

How we went on exploring the coast as far as the Province of Panuco, and what else happened before our return to Cuba.	59
---	----

BOOK II.

THE EXPEDITION UNDER HERNANDO CORTÉS.

THE VOYAGE.

CHAPTER XVII.

How Diego Velásquez sent to Spain to petition His Majesty to grant him a commission to trade with, and conquer the country, and to settle and apportion the land as soon as peace was established	64
--	----

CHAPTER XVIII.

Concerning some errors and other things written by the His- torians Gomara and Yllescas about affairs in New Spain	66
---	----

CHAPTER XIX.

How we came again with another fleet to the newly dis- covered lands with the valiant and energetic Don Hernando Cortés (who was afterwards Marqués del Valle) as Captain of the Fleet, and the attempts which were made to prevent his going in command	67
--	----

CHAPTER XX.

How Cortés prepared and continued the arrangements necessary for the despatch of the Fleet	72
---	----

XII

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXI.

What Cortés did when he arrived at the Town of Trinidad, and concerning the soldiers who there joined him to go in his company, and other things that happened . . .	PAGE 77
--	------------

CHAPTER XXII.

How the Governor Diego Velásquez sent two of his servants post haste to the Town of Trinidad with orders and authority to cancel the appointment of Cortés, detain the Fleet, arrest Cortés and send him as a prisoner to Santiago . . .	79
--	----

CHAPTER XXIII.

How the Captain Hernando Cortés with all the soldiers sailed along the south coast to the Port of Havana, and how another ship was sent along the north coast to the same port, and what else took place . . .	82
--	----

CHAPTER XXIV.

How Diego Velásquez sent a servant named Gaspar de Garnica with orders and instructions that in any case Cortés should be arrested and the Fleet taken from him, and what was done about it . . .	88
---	----

CHAPTER XXV.

How Cortés set sail with all his Company of Gentlemen and Soldiers for the Island of Cuba and what happened there . . .	90
---	----

CHAPTER XXVI.

How Cortés reviewed all his army and what else happened to us . . .	92
---	----

CHAPTER XXVII.

How Cortés came to know that the Indians of Cape Catoche held two Spaniards in captivity, and what he did about it . . .	93
--	----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

How Cortés allotted the ships and appointed captains to go in them, and gave instructions to the pilots and arranged lantern signals for the night time, and what else happened to us . . .	98
---	----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

XIII

CHAPTER XXIX.

	PAGE
How the Spaniard named Jerónimo de Aguilar, who was a prisoner among the Indians, heard that we had returned to Cozumel and came to us, and what else took place	100

CHAPTER XXX.

How we again embarked and made sail for the Rio de Grijalva, and what happened to us on the voyage.	103
---	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

How we arrived at the Rio de Grijalva, which in the language of the Indians is called Tabasco, of the attack which the Indians made on us, and what else happened to us with them	107
---	-----

CHAPTER XXXII.

How Cortés ordered two of his Captains each with a hundred soldiers to go and examine the country further inland and what else happened to us	113
---	-----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

How Cortés told us all to get ready by the next day to go in search of the Indian host, and ordered the horses to be brought from the ships, and what happened in the battle which we fought	116
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

How all the Caciques of Tabasco and its dependencies attacked us, and what came of it	118
---	-----

CHAPTER XXXV.

How Cortés sent to summon all the Caciques of those Provinces and what was done about it	122
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXVI.

How all the Caciques and Calchonis from the Rio de Grijalva came and brought a present, and what took place about it	126
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Showing that Doña Marina was a <i>Cacica</i> and the daughter of persons of high rank, and was the mistress of towns and vassals, and how it happened that she was taken to Tabasco	132
---	-----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

XIV

CONTENTS.

BOOK III.

THE MARCH INLAND.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

	PAGE
How we arrived with all the ships at San Juan de Ulúa, and what happened there	136

CHAPTER XXXIX.

How Tendile went to report to his Prince Montezuma and to carry the present, and what we did in our camp	142
--	-----

CHAPTER XL.

How Cortés sent to look for another harbour and site where to make a settlement, and what was done about it.	146
--	-----

CHAPTER XLI.

What was done about the bartering for gold, and other things that took place in camp	149
--	-----

CHAPTER XLII.

How we raised Hernando Cortés to the post of Captain General and Chief Justice, until His Majesty's wishes on the matter should be known, and what was done about it	154
--	-----

CHAPTER XLIII.

How the party of Diego Velásquez tried to upset the powers we had given to Cortés, and what was done about it	158
---	-----

CHAPTER XLIV.

How it was arranged to send Pedro de Alvarado inland to look for maize and other supplies and what else happened	160
--	-----

CHAPTER XLV.

How we entered Cempoala, which at that time was a very fine town, and what happened to us there	163
---	-----

CHAPTER XLVI.

How we entered Quiahuitztlan, which was a fortified town, and were peaceably received	167
---	-----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

XV

CHAPTER XLVII.

	PAGE
How Cortés ordered the five tax gatherers of Montezuma to be taken prisoners and gave out that from that time forward neither obedience nor tribute should be rendered to the Mexicans, and how the rebellion against Montezuma was started	171

CHAPTER XLVIII.

How we determined to found "La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz" and to build a fort in some meadows near the salt marshes, and close to the harbour with the ugly name (Bernal) where our ships were at anchor, and what we did there	174
--	-----

CHAPTER XLIX.

How the fat cacique and other chieftains came to complain to Cortés, that in a fortified town named Cingapacinga, there was a garrison of Mexicans which did them much damage, and what was done about it	178
---	-----

CHAPTER L.

How certain soldiers, partizans of Diego Velásquez, seeing that we positively intended to make settlements, and establish peace in the towns, said that they did not want to go on any expedition, but wished to return to the Island of Cuba	180
---	-----

CHAPTER LI.

What happened to us at Cingapacinga, and how, on our return by way of Cempoala, we demolished the idols; and other things that happened	182
---	-----

CHAPTER LII.

How Cortés had an altar made and set up an image of Our Lady and a Cross, and how mass was said and the eight Indian damsels were baptized	189
--	-----

CHAPTER LIII.

How we returned to Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz and what happened there	192
---	-----

CHAPTER LIV.

The narrative and letter which we sent to His Majesty by our proctors, Alonzo Hernández Puertocarrero and Francisco de Montejo, which letter was signed by a number of the Captains and soldiers	194
--	-----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

XVI

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LV.

	PAGE
How Diego Velásquez, the Governor of Cuba, learned for certain from letters, that we were sending proctors with an embassy and presents to our King and Lord, and what he did about it	199

CHAPTER LVI.

How our Proctors passed through the Bahama Channel in good weather and in a short time arrived in Castille, and what happened to them at Court	202
--	-----

CHAPTER LVII.

What was done in camp and the judgment which Cortés delivered after our ambassadors had departed to go to His Majesty with all the gold and letters and narratives	206
--	-----

CHAPTER LVIII.

How we settled to go to Mexico and to destroy all the ships before starting, and what else happened, and how the plan of destroying the ships was done by advice and decision of all of us who were friends with Cortés	208
---	-----

CHAPTER LIX.

About a discourse which Cortés made to us after the ships had been destroyed, and how we hastened our departure for Mexico	210
--	-----

CHAPTER LX.

How Cortés went to where the ship was anchored and how we captured six of the soldiers and mariners who belonged to the ship, and what happened about it	212
--	-----

CHAPTER LXI.

How we settled to go to the City of Mexico, and on the advice of the Cacique we went by way of Tlascala, and what happened to us in our warlike engagements and other matters	217
---	-----

CONTENTS.

XVII

BOOK IV.

THE WAR IN TLAXCALA.

CHAPTER LXII.

	PAGE
How we decided to go by way of Tlaxcala, and how we sent messengers to induce the Tlaxcalans to agree to our passage through their country, how the messengers were taken prisoners and what else happened . . .	225

CHAPTER LXIII.

Of the war which was waged and the perilous battles which we fought against the Tlaxcalans and what else happened .	230
---	-----

CHAPTER LXIV.

How we pitched our camp in some towns and hamlets called Teaoacingo or Tevaçingo and what we did there .	234
--	-----

CHAPTER LXV.

Concerning the great battle which we fought against the forces of Tlaxcala, in which it pleased our Lord God to give us the victory, and what else happened . . .	237
---	-----

CHAPTER LXVI.

How next day we sent messengers to the Caciques of Tlaxcala, begging them to make peace, and what they did about it .	240
---	-----

CHAPTER LXVII.

How we again sent messengers to the Caciques of Tlaxcala to bring them to peace and what they did about it and decided	245
--	-----

CHAPTER LXVIII.

How we agreed to go to a town which was near to our camp, and what we did about it . . .	248
--	-----

CHAPTER LXIX.

How when we returned with Cortés from Tzumpantzinco with supplies, we found certain discussions being carried on in our camp, and what Cortés replied to them .	251
---	-----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

XVIII

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LXX.

How the Captain Xicotenga had got ready twenty thousand picked warriors to attack our camp and what was done about it	PAGE 257
---	-------------

CHAPTER LXXI.

How the four chieftains who had been sent to treat for peace arrived in our camp and the speech they made, and what else happened	260
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXII.

How ambassadors from Montezuma, the great lord of Mexico, came to our camp, and of the present which they brought .	264
--	-----

CHAPTER LXXIII.

How Xicotenga, the Captain General of Tlaxcala, came to treat for peace, and what he said and what he settled with us .	265
--	-----

CHAPTER LXXIV.

How the old Caciques of Tlaxcala came to our camp to beg Cortés and all of us to go at once with them to their city, and what happened about it	271
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXV.

How we went to the City of Tlaxcala, and what the old Caciques did, about the present that they gave us and how they brought their daughters and nieces, and what else happened .	274
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXVI.

How Mass was said in the presence of many of the Caciques, and about a present which the old Caciques brought us .	277
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXVII.

How they brought their daughters to present to Cortés and to all of us, and what was done about it	279
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

How Cortés questioned Mase Escasi and Xicotenga about things in Mexico, and what account they gave of them	283
---	-----

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

XIX

CHAPTER LXXIX.

How our Captain Hernando Cortés decided that all of us Captains and soldiers should go to Mexico, and what happened about it	PAGE 289
--	-------------

CHAPTER LXXX.

How the great Montezuma sent four chieftains of great importance with a present of gold and cloth and what they said to our Captain	292
---	-----

CHAPTER LXXXI.

How the people of Cholula sent four Indians of little consequence to make their excuses for not having come to Tlaxcala, and what happened about it	296
---	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. Portrait of Hernando Cortés. From an oil painting in the Hospital de Jesus Nazareno, City of Mexico. From a photograph by Alfred P. Maudslay, F.S.A. *Frontispiece*
2. Part of a Mural Painting of a Battle, from the Ball Court Temple, Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. From a drawing by Miss Adela Breton *To face* 22
3. Reduced facsimile of Title-page of Decade II of Ant. de Herrera : *Historia General*, 1601-1616, fol. With portraits of Diego Velasquez, and Juan de Grijalva. From Mr. Thomas Grenville's copy in the British Museum. *To face* 36
4. *Id.*, Decade III. With portraits of Hernando Cortés, Cristoval de Olid, Gonzalo de Sandoval, the capture of Guatemala, etc. *To face* 58
5. *Id.*, Decade IX. Showing Mexican Gods, Temples, etc. *To face* 62
- 6-9. *Cartas Ynstruciones y Cédulas de su Magestad, etc.*, by Bautista Antoneli. 1608. Reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. Bernard Quaritch, who purchased the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

XX

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
illuminated MS. at the Amherst Sale at Sotheby's, December, 1908	To face 303
6. Facsimile of Title-page.	
7. Prefatory leaf.	
8. Fol. 135. Map of the Coast near San Juan de Ulúa, showing the City of Vera Cruz on the Rio Antigua, whither it was moved after its previous foundation near Quiahuistla.	
9. Fol. 139. Description and perspective of San Juan de Ulúa.	
10. Temple on the Isla de las Mugeres, Yucatan. Drawn by Miss Annie Hunter from a photograph by W. H. Holmes (<i>Archæological Studies</i> , Chicago, 1879), and a drawing by F. Catherwood (<i>Incidents of Travel in Yucatan</i> , by John L. Stephens, London, 1843	To face 105
11. Map of the Ruins of Cintla, after Dr. C. H. Berendt. Scale, 1 inch = 5 statute miles. Reproduced by H. F. Milne, R.G.S.	To face 108
12. Reduced facsimile of Title-page of Decade IV of Ant. de Herrera: <i>Historia General</i> , 1601-1615, fol. With portraits of Pedro de Alvarado, Diego de Ordás, the Volcano of Popocatepétl, etc.	To face 287
13-16. Masks of Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, given by Monte- zuma to Cortés, who sent them to the Emperor Charles V. From the originals in the British Museum :—	
13. Quetzalcoatl	To face 299
14. Quetzalcoatl	To face 300
15. Tezcatlipoca (front view)	To face 302
16. Tezcatlipoca (back view)	To face 302
17. Map of part of Mexico, showing the route of the Spaniards from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, 1519-1520. Scale, 1 : 950,400, or 1 inch = 15 statute miles. Prepared from the Mexican Staff Map, 1889-1907, (Scale, 1 : 100,000), by H. F. Milne, R.G.S.	In pocket at end.
18. The West Indies and Spanish Main, showing Coast-line known to the Spaniards, 1516. Scale, 150 statute miles = $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Prepared by H. F. Milne, R.G.S.	In pocket at end.

NOTE — Nos. 2-10, and 12-16 have been reproduced for the Hakluyt Society by Mr. Donald Macbeth, of 66, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EXTRACTS FROM THE INTRODUCTION

BY

SEÑOR DON GENARO GARCÍA.¹

THE *True History of the Conquest of New Spain*, written by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, one of the Conquerors, was known and appreciated by historians and bibliographers before it was published. Antonio de Herrera² quotes it frequently, Friar Juan de Torquemada³ also refers to it on several occasions, and

¹ The following extracts are translated direct from Señor Don Genaro García's Introduction. Any differences entertained with regard to the names of persons or places or the routes followed, will be explained in note attached to the translation of the text of Bernal Díaz's narrative.

² *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano*. Madrid, 1726-30, Decada 2^a passim. The first edition was published in 1601.

³ *Los Veinte i un libros rituales y Monarchia Indiana*. Madrid, 1723, Tomo I passim. The first edition was published in 1615.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

the Licentiate Antonio de Leon Pinelo¹ devotes some lines to it in his brief bibliography.

Although the original manuscript has always been kept in Guatemala, first by the Author, and afterwards by his descendants, and still later by the Municipality of the Capital, in whose archives it is preserved to-day, a copy of it was made in the sixteenth century and sent to Spain to King Philip II² and was there consulted by the Royal chroniclers. After its publication in Madrid by Friar Alonzo Remón of the Order of Mercy in the year 1632 the *True History* was universally accepted from that time onwards as the most complete and trustworthy of the chronicles of the Conquest of New Spain. A second edition followed almost immediately in the same city, some four years later a third, a fourth, and a fifth. It was translated into English by Maurice Keatinge in 1800 and John Ingram Lockhart in 1844; into German by Ph. J. von Rehfues in 1838 and Karl Ritter in 1848; into French by D. Jourdanet in 1876 and José María de Heredia in 1877,³

¹ *Epitome de la Biblioteca Oriental i Occidental, Nautica y Geografica*. Madrid, 1629. Page 75.

² So it was stated by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo de Medrano in 1579. In the *Historia de Guatemala ó Recordacion Florida*, by D. Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán. Madrid, 1882-83. Vol. i, page 398.—G. G.

³ The French translations were—although an interval of one year lay between their publication—written simultaneously by the distinguished author of the *Influence de la pression de l'air sur la vie de l'homme*, and the excellent poet to whom France is indebted for the inimitable *Les Trophées*. This synchronism

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EXTRACTS FROM INTRODUCTION.

iii

and into Hungarian by Károly Brózik in 1878 and Moses Gaal in 1899.

Several of these translations obtained the honours of a second edition, as that of Keatinge in 1803, that of Rehfuës in 1843, and that of Jourdanet in 1877.

* * * *

It must be pointed out that no secret has ever been made of Remón's extensive corruption of the original text. Don Antonio de Leon Pinelo, in his account of the *True History* in 1629, says, no doubt without malice, that Friar Alonzo Remón kept in readiness a "corrected" copy for publication. It was no sooner printed than the author of the *Isagoge Histórico Apologetico*¹ found in it "many things added which were not found in the original." More explicitly and with a better judgment Don Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán, the great-great-grandson of the author, and at that time the possessor of the manuscript, wrote at the end of the same century that the book, published by the reverend father Friar Alonzo Remón, differs considerably from the original, "for in some places there is more and in others less than what my great-grandfather the author wrote, for I find corruptions in chapters 164 and 171, and in the same way in other parts in the course of the history, in which not only is the credibility and fidelity of my

strongly indicates the extraordinary importance attributed to the *Historia Verdadera*.—G. G.

¹ Published in Madrid, 1892.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Castillo clouded over, but many real heroes are defrauded of their just merit."

Fuentes y Guzmán states that this corruption (of the text) was not the least important of the motives that induced him to write his own work.¹ At the beginning of the following century Friar Francisco Vázquez proved that Friar Bartolomé de Olmedo was not in Guatemala at the time of its conquest, as is stated in the edition of Remón, and therefore he was not the first to spread the Christian faith through that province, unless, as he says, one should concede another miracle such as that of Saint Anthony of Padua, who managed to be in two different places at the same time.

Some years afterwards Don Andrés González Barcia, referring to the charge that Fuentes y Guzmán had launched against Remón, arbitrarily surmised that the differences that existed between the edition published by the latter and the original manuscript were matters of no importance, and simply inferred that it was "easy to believe that in copying the author should make some alterations, as ordinarily happens." This defence was not convincing, and on this account our great bibliographer in Mexico, Don Juan José de Eguíara y Eguren, delicately objected that P. Vázquez had declared even the first edition to be falsified, while in Spain the indefatigable chronicler Don Juan Bautista Muñoz endeavoured to procure a copy of the original

¹ *Historia de Guatemala ó Recordación Florida*, page 8.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EXTRACTS FROM INTRODUCTION.

v

manuscript with the object of ascertaining the alterations due to Padre Remón.

Finally, if there could be any doubt remaining about the bad faith of Remón, it was completely dispelled by the Guatemalan historians Padre Domingo Juarros, Don José Milla, the Bishop Don Francisco de Paula García Paláez, and Don Ramón A. Salazar, who from personal inspection fully corroborated what had been asserted by their predecessors the author of the *Isagoge*, Fuentes y Guzmán, and Vásquez.

As a matter of fact we can see at a glance in the following notes (par. iv. and Appendix No. 2)¹ that Fray Alonzo Remón in printing the *True History* suppressed whole pages of the manuscript, interpolated others, garbled the facts, changed the names of persons and places, increased or lessened the numbers, modified the style and modernised the orthography, moved thereto either by religious fervour and false patriotism, or by personal sympathy and vile literary taste. As all the later editions, and all the translations without exception were copied from the first edition published by

¹ This paragraph and appendix has not been translated. As we have now before us an accurate copy of the original text, the reader would not be much interested in a discussion of the corruptions of the text by Padre Remón. In most instances these corruptions of the text were introduced for the purpose of magnifying the importance of Padre Olmedo and the Friars of the Order of Mercy, of which Order Padre Remón was himself a member. In the edition of Don Genaro García these matters are fully investigated, and a complete bibliography is given.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Remón, it results that in reality we do not know the *True History*.

* * * *

On the 20th October, 1895, Don Emilio León, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Republic of Guatemala accredited to Mexico, presented in the name of his Government to ours, "as a proof of friendship and especial regard," a photographic reproduction of the original manuscript. It was then, with some reason, believed that, at last, we should see the *True History* published; but this could not be carried out, for accompanying the gift of the reproduction was a prohibition against its being copied and printed.

Five years later, when I wrote my book entitled "Caracter de la Conquista Española en America y en México," I was convinced that to perfect our Ancient history an exact edition of the *True History* was indispensable, and I desired to carry this work through.

Soon afterwards, in August, 1901, I wrote to the then President of Guatemala, Don Manuel Estrada Cabrera, telling him of my wish to print the precious manuscript.

This distinguished official had the kindness to reply on the first of the following month that on that very day he had decreed that "an exact and complete copy of the manuscript" should be made and sent to me for the purpose that I had stated. Señor Don Juan I. Argueta, Secretary of the Interior and Justice in that Republic, at once

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-01705-3 - The True History of the Conquest of New Spain, Volume 1

Bernal Diaz del Castillo

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

EXTRACTS FROM INTRODUCTION.

vii

began punctually to send me instalments of the copy as soon as they were made, which copy I corrected here, and perfected with all care and accuracy by comparing it with the photographic reproduction already referred to, which is preserved in our National Library.

* * * *

The author says that, after making a fair copy of his narrative, two licentiates of Guatemala begged him to lend it to them, and that he did so most willingly; but he warned them not to correct it in any way, neither by addition nor deletion, for all that he had written was true.

Assuredly with regard to truth the author would find no fault with us, for we have taken care to religiously respect the original text, without introducing the slightest variation, not even of the artless orthography or punctuation.

Any change would have been dangerous, and we might have fallen into the same error that we attribute to Remón; everybody knows that by a single comma one might reverse the meaning of a statement.

We reproduce in notes placed at the foot of the page all the erasures that can have any interest for inquiring readers, and in like manner we have transcribed all the various words blotted out, which, besides exhibiting important variations, give an idea of the method of composition employed by the author.

Occasionally, when a full understanding of the