

## *Francisco López de Gómara and his Works*

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FRANCISCO LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA'S work became the first real history published of the conquest of the Indies down to about 1550 when he finished it. The number of editions of the books printed in Italy and France and finally in England showed the general acclaim with which his work was greeted. Although efforts were made by Felipe II to have another general history written, the various *Cronistas* appointed to the task produced nothing until Antonio de Herrera brought out in 1601-15 his *Historia General*. This covered almost exactly the same period as that of Gómara's two books, but Herrera had the advantage of having more material to work with. Herrera had the manuscripts of the *Historia Verdadera* of Bernal Díaz del Castillo, those of Bartolomé de las Casas, and of Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, besides others less important. The result was a more voluminous work which superseded that of Gómara for a long time. Díaz' *Historia Verdadera* was printed in Madrid in 1632, and in recent years his work has been taken by the public as a true history, as its name implies. As Díaz severely criticizes Gómara's *Conquista de Mexico*, Gómara's work was thus overshadowed. William H. Prescott in his *Conquest of Mexico* wrote that his two principal sources were the works of Gómara and Díaz. Later in his book, however, he alludes to Díaz in very uncomplimentary terms as unreliable; he had probably changed his mind. Nowadays the tendency among Spanish writers is to exalt Gómara over Díaz. Díaz

had, however, one good ground to stand on; Gómara, he said, was not an eyewitness of any of the events he writes about. This raises the great question as to whether an eyewitness of events is more competent to describe them than some later writer who could have the accounts of several eyewitnesses to choose from. Eyewitnesses to a single disaster seldom agree about the details, and in describing a battle, the evidence of eyewitnesses or participants is often discarded. Although Díaz may not have known Gómara, he certainly never so stated in his book. There were other eyewitnesses of the conquest in Spain with Cortés who were probably with him when he died in 1547. Their oral and written evidence was quite as good as that of Díaz and probably better. Cortés himself was the principal eyewitness, but whether he gave Gómara information or not is uncertain. Gómara had Cortés' published letters and copied them extensively; he also may have had some unpublished letters and reports to Cortés, but I doubt it. Cortés had almost certainly left his archives in Mexico. In the case of his suits before the *Consejo de Indias* he several times asked for delays because of the length of time necessary to bring evidence from Mexico. Gómara was in Spain, and probably in Valladolid when these suits were being tried and consequently obtained some evidence from witnesses in the *Residencia* proceedings.

From Gómara's own words we learn that he considered the *Historia* and the *Conquista* to be only one. This is evident from the way the *Historia* is arranged. It begins with a geographical description of America in which there is a short description of the Northwest Coast of America taken from the account of the voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, whose name, however, he does not mention. The highest point is the Sierras Nevadas in 40°. Nevertheless, he says that the coast continues to the north until it ends at Labrador,

thus making America an island and not part of Asia as commonly believed at that time.

Gómara, before discussing the discovery by Colón, refers to an account of a pilot who had discovered some land to the west and who died on Madeira. Gómara, however, in the next chapter says Colón, who set out to discover the Antipodes, did not reach the Cipangu of Marco Polo.

After discussing the voyages of Colón, Gómara begins at the north of Labrador to describe the country southward, the Bermudas, discoveries of Estéban Gómez and of Chicora. Then he returns to Cortereal. He then follows the east coast of America to the end of Florida and then follows the Gulf of Mexico to the west. He was much interested in northeastern America and especially in Iceland and Greenland. Iceland, he thought, was the ancient Thule. He repeated the stories current in the Middle Ages about some Indians who were supposed to have reached Germany through the Northwest Passage. Most of this information he obtained from Olaus Magnus, and he even says that Greenland was only fifty leagues from the Indies by the country which they call Labrador, in other words, by some strait north of Labrador. Labrador, he said, was 400 leagues from Fayal in the Azores and 500 leagues to Ireland and 600 from Spain. He then discusses the expeditions of Narváez and Cabeza de Vaca, Pánuco, Jamaica, and Nueva España, beginning with the discovery of Francisco Hernández de Córdova, Grijalva and Cortés. The note is very short, and then he says he returns to Cuba and Yucatan. Of the last, especially the conquest of Montejo, he writes the first published account. He then continues on to Honduras and Veragua and the Isthmus of Panama of which a long account is given. He then tells of the discovery of the South Sea by Balboa and his discovery of the coast to the south, and his death.

Then Gómara returns to the west coast of South America and describes Cartagena and the discovery of the emeralds, that is, Columbia, then a paragraph on Venezuela and ends with the discovery of pearls. Then he tells of Cumaná and the founding of Casas' colony and the massacre of the Dominicans at Chiribichi. Here occurs the paragraph about Bartolomé de las Casas which so offended him. He then tells of the customs of the Indians and their councils. He continues with an account of Peru and the discoveries of Pinzón in 1499, and he tells of the Marañon (the Amazon) and the Cabo de San Agustín and then of the Rio de la Plata.

Here he inserts an account of Magellan's voyage. This covers several chapters. Then follows a chapter on the discoveries of the New World under the Spaniards and Portuguese and some later Spanish expeditions to the Moluccas.

Gómara, having exhausted the history of discoveries everywhere except in Central America, now turned back to Peru and most of the rest of the book is concerned with that country.

To trace Gómara's sources for the conquest of Peru is most difficult. Several accounts by eyewitnesses of that event had been published in Spain before 1550, and numbers of the participants had returned to Spain with spoils of the Inca empire.

P. Juan Velasco, an expelled Jesuit in 1767 from the province of Quito, wrote in Italy a history of Quito in 1789. This manuscript, or a copy of it, fell into the hands of Henri Ternaux who published it in French in 1840 in the Second Series of his *Voyages Relations* etc. as the *Histoire du Royaume de Quito*. In this work Velasco quoted from several works he alleged had been written by Fr. Marcos de Niza. One of these works he described was copied by Gómara. Velasco also thought that Gómara had taken some of his facts about the conquest from Niza, but that his account

was original. The first was apparently the *Conquista del Quito*.<sup>1</sup> Not having Niza's history from which to prove this story I am obliged to discard it. Possibly such a work actually existed but was mistakenly attributed to Niza by Velasco. The chapter in Gómara's book relates to the conquest of Quito by Benalcázar but does not mention Ampudia.

The portion of a letter which Casas appended to his *Brevissima Relación*, when published in 1552, reads very much like the *Relación* referred to by Father Velasco. It relates to the campaign of Benalcázar and that of Ampudia. It ends with the founding of a Spanish town at Popayan.

After finishing the account with the return of Gasca to Spain, he returns to the pearl islands in the Gulf of Panama and then occurs the story of Gil González de Ávila in Honduras and Nicaragua in 1522.

Gómara then returns to the west coast of Mexico and tells something of the discoveries of Cortés, Nuño de Guzman, Soto, and the Coronado expeditions. The book ends with some general descriptions of the Indians, the story of Atlantis, and some account of the Canary Islands. The last chapter is a eulogy on the valor of the Spaniards.

The *Historia* is well planned. It is not in strict chronological order, but rather in a topical system. The distribution of space to the different countries is generally in proportion to their importance. The text is also interlarded with a list of distances from point to point in the west and in almost every case he gives some notice of the customs of the natives. He seldom speaks of himself. As the book extends to 1550, and the *Conquista de Mexico* ends with the death of Cortés in 1547, one would readily believe that the *Historia* was written last and indeed it seems probable that a good part of it was. We know that the *Conquista de Mexico* was underway in 1545. Cortés' friends in Spain may have sup-

<sup>1</sup> *Historia*, Ch. 146.

plied him with information. He even speaks in the *Conquista* about having received some information from Tapia.

The book is really a life of Cortés and continues after the conquest with his trouble with Nuño de Guzman and his expeditions in the South Sea. On this enterprise Gómara says he spent 200,000 ducats, more than he had expected, and added sarcastically, "more the noise than the nuts." At the end is a description of the life, history and rites, sacrifices and customs of the natives. The last chapter deals with Cortés in Spain after 1540 and concludes with a eulogy of him. At the end he says "As I stated, this book began with the birth of Cortés; I end it with his death."

Both books are written in good vigorous Spanish, usually short sentences and highly intelligible. Besides these, he left three manuscripts which were not published until recent years, two in Spanish and one in Latin.

Our knowledge of the life of Gómara is almost entirely derived from his *Annales* and the *Crónica*. In the *Annales* we learn that Gómara was born on February 2, 1511, in the town of Gómara in old Castile. Between 1530 and 1540 he lived usually, if not always, in Italy in company with Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. As Gómara was in Holy Orders, it is fair to assume that he was the chaplain of the ambassador, but he nowhere says so. He came back to Spain about 1541.

According to Alonso de Santacruz in his *Crónica*<sup>2</sup> one Diego de Mendoza accompanied Carlos to Italy in 1529 as part of his retinue. This, I feel certain, was Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, the patron of Gómara, and I am inclined to believe that Gómara accompanied him. I base this opinion largely on the fact that Gómara in his *Historia* refers to conversations that he had held with Olaus Magnus in Bologna and Rome. Olaus had gone to Rome in 1527 and was no doubt present at the coronation, and I find no other

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 3, p. 71.

reference by Gómara to his having been in Bologna. His account of the coronation in the *Annales* is very short. From various references to Olaus in his *Historia* it appears that Gómara had received a great deal of information about Scandinavia from him.<sup>3</sup> Hurtado de Mendoza was in Rome, apparently in 1531, and so was Gómara. Mendoza was not appointed ambassador to Venice in 1530, because, according to Santacruz, the emperor appointed Ródrigo Niño, a citizen of Toledo, as ambassador to Venice at the time of the coronation. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Mendoza was appointed ambassador to Venice in 1539, having been previously sent to England in 1537 to arrange two marriages, one between Henry VIII and the Duchess of Milan, and the other between Prince Louis of Portugal and Mary Tudor. There is nothing in the *Annales* of Gómara to indicate any journey to England in 1537 by anybody.

It was asserted by Casas that Gómara was the chaplain of Cortés. He should have known, as he was in Spain in 1542 and 1543, and he tells us that he talked with Cortés at that time.<sup>4</sup> Gómara was in Valladolid in 1545. Beyond the documents in connection with the payment of the 500 ducats to him in 1553 by the second Marqués del Valle, nothing more is known about him. He probably died in 1566, or just before, as Pedro Ruiz, his nephew had already inherited his manuscripts in that year. The further fact that Ruiz had given or loaned to Honorato Juan some of his uncle's papers just before the bishop's death, which occurred in 1566, and the further fact that on August 7, 1566, the cédula of November 5, 1553, to collect Gómara's printed works was reissued, all seems to indicate that he had just died.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78. Olaus published a map of Scandinavia in Venice in 1539.

<sup>4</sup> *Historia de las Indias*, vol. 4, p. 448.

*López de Gómara's Published Writings*

Crónica de los Muy Nombrados Omiche y Haradin  
Barbarrojas.

Manuscript in the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, and printed in vol. 6 of the *Memorial Histórico-Español*, Madrid, 1853.<sup>5</sup>

This book is singularly lacking in references to the author but we can count a few. After recounting Barbarroja's return to Constantinople in 1539, he says: "The following year while I was in Venice with don Hurtado de Mendoza, the son of the Conde de Tendilla, and who was then and now is the ambassador there for the Emperor don Carlos, the king of Spain, a man notable and distinguished in these kingdoms in letters and affairs, six Spanish soldiers came there."<sup>6</sup> In 1529, Carlos sent Diego from Barcelona to the Queen with important documents and speaks of him as "Of our Council" and the Queen was requested to give him every consideration. Diego, according to the above statement, was still ambassador at Venice in 1545, but in 1546, he was made ambassador to Rome.<sup>7</sup> Gómara's statement implies that he was in Hurtado de Mendoza's household and as he was a *clérigo* he was probably also his chaplain. The family ties of the Mendozas were very strong, and they had tremendous influence in official circles in Spain.

The dedication to don Pedro Álvarez Osorio is one of the most interesting things that Gómara wrote:

Your very illustrious lordship, there are two ways of writing history, one when you write the life and the other when you recount the deeds of an emperor or of some valiant captain. The first method was used by Sutorius, Tranquilius, Plutarch, San Hierónimo, and many others. The other kind is the one now in common use which all write to satisfy the reader and in which it is sufficient to relate only the heroic feats, victories and defeats of the captains. In the first method you have to tell about the vices of the person of whom you are writing, in fact, whoever writes a life has to speak clearly and openly.<sup>8</sup> You cannot write a good life of a man who is not yet dead, but you can speak of the wars and his great deeds even although he be alive. The affairs of the other most excellent captains who today are living, speaking without any prejudice against anyone, I have attempted to write, and although I do not know whether my talent is equal to my valor nor whether my pen will

<sup>5</sup> A copy of the manuscript of this was found in the possession of Pedro Ruiz, Gómara's nephew; with a notation at the end that it had been examined by Dr. Juan Ginés Sepúlveda at the king's command.

<sup>6</sup> *Crónica de Barbarrojas*, p. 428.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

reach to where it is directed, I will put at least all my power into telling about their wars. No one can reprehend me at present if I should say something or omit something in this work of mine, for I am writing not a life but a history, although I expect to write also their lives if I live long enough.

I well know, your illustrious lordship that in order to write the life or history of don Hernando Cortés and of Haradin Barbarroja, and of similar personages much leisure and great preparation are necessary, and at my age nothing can be well done in any manner in a short time. Nevertheless, with all this I was engaged in seeking a portion of the life of Barbarroja here in Valladolid, and which a few months ago I had corrected in order to send to your lordship. I take this occasion to send you so boldly the whole history of Omiche, who was the first Barbarroja, and is still living. As you have taken on a relationship with the Marqués del Valle, whose history I am writing, by marrying don Alvaro Pérez de Osorio, your eldest son to his eldest daughter, doña Maria, as well as for your own virtue and merit, I confide in the goodness and sincerity of your worship. If, for being a Christian and a priest, as I am, if for not unsheathing a sword nor having taken part in the battles and wars about which I write I do not know or cannot tell the truth about the history of them I am worthy of reprehension from anyone, but if it is said I am to be criticized Eusebius was a bishop, Paulus Osorius, the Spaniard, Paul the Deacon, and many other Christians were priests and even some of them saints. They wrote about the wars and the saints of their own time and even of past times, and not only of their own races, but also of barbarous ones and foreigners. The Greeks wrote about the Persians, the Medes and other people. I also, writing about the marvelous deeds of Cortés, desire to write of those of Barbarroja to give him a companion. The corsairs, in the course of forty years to the present time have taken away from our Spain more captives and prisoners than in the eight hundred years before. The emperor, our lord, very well understands all this and has even tried out the remedy for them. Now with the many great and grave affairs which outside of these kingdoms hang on his majesty and with which he is very much loaded and fatigued he cannot undertake or carry on so lightly a matter like this which requires expense, power and counsel.

Leaving this aside, because it hurts us, I return to my proposition to undertake these histories. I have been very diligent and I still am and shall be from now on in order to be able to tell the whole truth, without having to forge lies or mere likenesses as those do who do not reach to the truth of the histories and those who write about ancient things and about other centuries. It is very difficult and most laborious to find the truth even in modern history; how much more so in the ancient world because in this we must have recourse to what is old and perhaps to what is forgotten and in the other we have to take the opinion of those who were present in the wars and the affairs about which we treat, and even at times of someone who heard somebody tell what he had seen. All of them are accustomed either by hatred or jealousy or for reasons of grace and adulation to cover up the truth, telling about matters exactly the reverse of what they were. If I should fall in some such error as this, or be fortunate enough to tell the truth by some method of determining it with those who better understand it, at least I never would repent having written about Cortés nor even about Barbarroja, in the account of whom, your most illustrious worship, I hope to satisfy you and my profession by recounting matters plainly. It seems to me madness to put down matters of opinion, as ugly or beautiful or bad or good, and not in reason, because whoever or of whatever land or people he may be who takes as his guide the natural course of events can easily reach the summit of virtue.

I write in Spanish what I write in Latin with the desire of augmenting and ennobling our language so as to take revenge in part for the affront to our nation which so many books of lives make as exist in Spain. The excess, the superfluous and the rotten are reprehended here and even ought to be prohibited by the justice and by the Inquisition in order to truly make the good. It would be madness to censure the old and of whatever everybody approves as I desire that all those who write in Spanish like the present authors of books of chivalry should be as pleasant, as well reasoned, and as eloquent.

Valladolid, September 5, 1545.

La Istoría de las Indias. Y Conquista de Mexico. Zaragoza,  
1552.

[Colophon]: Fue impressa la presente istoria de Indias y conquista de Mexico en casa de Agustín Millán. Y acabose vispera de Naudidad Año de Mil y quinientos y cinquenta y dos en la muy noble y leal Ciudad de Caragoça.

On the verso of the title is a note that although the two works are different, they make one single history and are therefore issued together. Then follows a short list of historians of the Indies, including Pedro Martyr de Angleria, the letters of Cortés, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, and himself. All the others he states who published anything, write their own experiences and very little so that they are not in the class of historians. In speaking of himself he says he finished the book in the same year, 1552. After this is a peculiar statement: "I have a license and privilege from the prince our lord for ten years, dated in Monzon, October 7, of the present year, for the kingdoms of Aragon."<sup>9</sup> Then follows: "This history was read and approved by the Archbishop of Zaragoza, don Hernando de Aragon, and who gave license to print it." Then a tassa of two maravedís for each sheet (that is four pages).

The title-page *La Conquista de Mexico* follows with beneath it 1552 "With license and privilege of the prince our lord."

The book contains two woodcut maps, one of the Old World and one of the New.

On the first title of the Zaragoza, 1553, edition, is a statement that the book contains the history up to 1551. Another statement about the privilege is printed at the top of the page. The prince of Aragon at that time was Felipe, the son of Carlos V, and the archbishop was the illegitimate son of King Fernando.

<sup>9</sup> The privilege is printed on the recto of the last leaf of the book. I have not been able to ascertain whether a privilege in Aragon was held good in Castile. It would seem that it was only good for Aragon. In 1554 a stringent law was enacted that after a book was printed it had to be submitted to the council with the original manuscript in order to see if any changes had taken place while it was in the press. Then only was it approved and a price set on it.

Editions of both books together were issued in Medina del Campo (Castile) in 1553. No privilege appears in this edition although the statement that the archbishop had given the license for the work is retained. Again the two books appeared in Zaragoza in 1554, by the original publisher. This was reissued with the date 1555. Both books were reprinted in Antwerp in 1554 and issued by three different publishers. This edition also carries a privilege (probably the original one). Both books were republished in the *Historiadores Primitivos* of Andrés González Barcía with the general date of 1749, but stated to have been printed in 1735, and were reissued from this edition in 1852 by Enrique de Vedia, and reissued also in 1877. Vedia prefaced his reprint with an entirely inaccurate account of Gómara's life.<sup>10</sup>

The *Historia* is dedicated to Carlos V in a simple dignified manner, because, Gómara writes "The Indies have been discovered in your time and by your vassals." Before the dedication there are three notes: "A los leyentes," "a los impressores," and "a los trasladores."<sup>11</sup> In the latter he states that he is translating the work into Latin. In this part there is a brief mention of Cortés, whom he says he will write about like Polybius and Sallust. He tells something of the Grijalva expedition, but only relates that of Hernández de Córdoba in his description of Yucatan. At the end is an account of the Coronado expedition.

I have not been able to identify the sources from which Gómara obtained his account of the conquest of Peru. It is not continuous but interspersed with descriptions of the country and the genealogy of Atahualpa. A convenient way to identify the original author is to select some story or anecdote which he tells which is copied by the next author. One of these is the story of Felipillo, the Indian interpreter of Pizarro. This man, Gómara says, became enamored of one of Atahualpa's concubines and lied to Pizarro about Atahualpa's intentions for the purpose of getting him out of the way. Neither Xerez nor Pedro Sancho mention it but it can be seen in Oviedo. From his account it was copied by Prescott. Oviedo's account had not been published by 1552, and it seems unlikely that Gómara saw the manuscript. The references to Tomás de San Martín, however, indicate that Gómara had some informa-

<sup>10</sup> These Spanish editions and the translations into French, Italian, and English are fully described in the author's *Spanish Southwest*, Berkeley, 1924, and Albuquerque, 1937 (2d edition).

<sup>11</sup> In the Vedia edition of 1552 the paragraph "a los Impressores" is omitted. This is the edition to which the notes refer. Vedia's version of the *Conquista* was based on one of the 1553 editions of Çapilla, judging from the omission of "a los impressores."

tion from him. San Martín had gone to Peru in 1533 or 1534, probably with the party of Dominicans under Bishop Berlanga in 1534. This was the party which Casas accompanied from Santo Domingo. Both he and San Martín had lived in the Dominican convent in Santo Domingo for some years and were well acquainted with each other. Casas never reached Peru but San Martín remained there until he returned to Spain with Gasca in 1550.

### Conquista de Mexico.

The *Conquista de Mexico* is at bottom nothing but a life of Fernando Cortés. It begins with his birth and continues to his death, but there is very little regarding him after his return to Spain in 1540, and properly speaking, there is no detail about his various expeditions between 1532 and 1540. Many writers have supposed that Cortés himself was the author of the book. This statement was first made by Garcilasso de la Vega in his *Comentarios Reales de Peru*,<sup>12</sup> who claimed that this was patent to anyone who read the book. I wonder then, who wrote the *Historia de las Indias*.

I believe I was the first to call attention in my *Spanish Southwest* in 1924 to the expressions about Cortés himself and about his mother which appeared in the early editions of the book and were omitted beginning with that of 1554. The fact that in the latter part of 1553 an effort was made to put a stop to the sale of the book and that these efforts were repeated later have, I believe, some connection with these changes. The reference to Cortés' mother occurs in the very beginning where she is stated to have been "muy honesta, religiosa, rezia y escassa; el [that is the father] devoto y caritativo." The expressions, "rezia y escassa," which might be translated as "hard and stingy," were not at all complimentary, and when we come to the résumé of Cortés himself and his character at the very end of the book we get a picture of the conqueror that could have been anything but pleasing to the conqueror's son.

After the legal proceedings at the end of 1553 another edition of the book was issued in 1554 in Zaragoza by the same booksellers who put out the one of 1552. In this edition the words "rezia" and "escassa" and the whole résumé of the character of Cortés were omitted. There is another change in this edition which, as the editor of the *Crónica de los Barbarrojas* says "da que pensar." In the original edition, in speaking of the

<sup>12</sup> Lib. 2, cap. 8.

Argel campaign of 1541, Gómara asserted that he was present, but in the 1554 edition this was omitted. It may also be noted that in the *Annales*, Gómara's only mention of this campaign was that it was waged by the emperor with the same bad fortune as Diego de Vera and Hugo de Moncada had encountered before. It seems to me that if he had been present he would have had more to say about it. In 1553 the second marqués paid López de Gómara 500 ducats for *having written the Conquista*. He paid this either as a debt due the author from his father, or for making the changes above mentioned, or possibly for the dedication to him.

When we come to examine the *Conquista* for the possible sources which Gómara had for writing it we are confronted with an embarrassment of riches. First and foremost are the printed letters of Cortés, himself, which were issued in 1522 to 1524, naturally the fullest and the most important, and the letter of the *Regimiento* of July 10, 1519. Next we may take into consideration the unpublished letters of Cortés, especially the now lost first letter.<sup>13</sup> The latter certainly existed as late as about 1600. Fr. José de Sigüenza in 1605, published in Madrid, his *Tercera Parte de la Historia de la Orden de San Gerónimo*. Fr. José was a member of the Hieronymite order and later librarian in the Escorial. In this work he makes the distinct statement that he had in his possession the *Relación* which Cortés himself sent to don Carlos from the city of Veracruz, wherein he set forth at length his voyage and stated that he was the first who could with undersanding declare the true news about the Tierra Firme and the province of Yucatan. Just before this statement, in speaking about Cortés' relations with Velásquez, and after telling about the capitulation with him, he says that Velásquez tried to back out and that Cortés then borrowed money with which he bought two ships, six horses, and much clothing. This last statement occurs word for word in the account of Gómara.<sup>14</sup> Gómara changed the first person of the letter to the third person. In later years, in several *probanzas* and in the *residencia*, Cortés made various statements about his relations with Velásquez, but in not one did he mention that he bought "two ships, six horses, and much clothing." In this same connection it may also be stated that Gómara repeated the statement about a capitulation between Cortés and Velásquez which, as a matter of fact, was not a capitulation at all, but simply instructions to Cortés, unless to be sure some contract

<sup>13</sup> See the writer's "The Lost First Letter of Cortés," *Hispanic-American Historical Review*, vol. 21, no. 4, November, 1941.

<sup>14</sup> P. 300.

was made between them which does not now exist. The long detailed account which Gómara gives of the voyage to San Juan de Ulua is obviously from Cortés' letter with perhaps some exceptions. Some of the stories contained in it he secured from the *Relación* of Andrés de Tapia.

The independent accounts available to Gómara were numerous, besides no doubt some early pieces published in Seville. Then, we have the *Fourth Decade* of Peter Martyr, first printed in Bâsle in 1521, and reprinted with the whole eight *Decades* in 1530, and further, Martyr's letters published also in 1530. Gómara took his account of the Hernández de Córdoba expedition from the *Fourth Decade*. Fernández de Oviedo begins his account, published in 1535, with the expedition of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, and then gives one of the voyage of Juan de Grijalva. From this Gómara took the list of articles obtained in trade by Grijalva and those given by him.<sup>15</sup> A very brief account of Cortés expedition follows and then Oviedo passes on to other subjects, stating that he will tell about the expedition in a later chapter. This chapter remained unpublished until 1851-55, and, although Gómara in the *Annales* speaks of Oviedo and must have known him, it is hardly likely that he examined his unpublished manuscript.

Francisco Cervantes de Salazar in his *Crónica de Nueva España* makes numerous references to Fray Toribio Motolinía and in the earlier part of his narrative asserts that he is copying Gómara who in turn copied Motolinía. These rather numerous quotations cannot be found in the *Historia de los Indios* of Motolinía and consequently must have been obtained from another of his works, *Guerra de los Indios de Nueva España*. Cervantes does not always connect Motolinía with Gómara, but frequently quotes from some manuscript of Motolinía's in his possession.

Fr. Juan de Torquemada informs us in his *Monarchia Indiana* that Gómara's account of the Coronado expedition was taken from a writing of Motolinía. As Motolinía's work, as now known, finishes in 1540, we have no means of verifying this statement. It is certain, however, that Gómara made no use of what Motolinía wrote in his *Historia* about the events of 1538 to 1540. It is much more probable that he took his facts about Niza and the Coronado expedition from *Relaciones* printed in Seville in 1540 to 1542 and now lost, or from another work of Motolinía's, the *Guerra*, also now lost. Motolinía was an ardent admirer of Cortés and wrote the best eulogy of him that I have ever read. He was very close to Cortés, and had been invited by him in 1527 to attend the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 198.

meeting of Cortés and his friends in Huejotzingo to discuss the perilous situation of Cortés in Mexico at that moment. Cortés had been banished from the city by Estrada and in the *residencia* proceedings it was alleged that he called the meeting to seek advice as to whether he should go to Spain or remain in Mexico and seize the government. Motolinía testified about this meeting but unfortunately his testimony still lies buried in the *justicia* documents in the archives of Seville. Cortés' friends advised him to go to Spain and he went. In view of this close friendship of the two men it is not at all unlikely that Motolinía wrote an account of the conquest to please Cortés, as in his *Historia de los Indios* he has said nothing about it.

We have various manuscript records of the conquest which have been published in recent years, some, no doubt, written before Gómara wrote, but which he probably never saw. However, there is one that he used, the *Relación* of Andrés de Tapia.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, I believe that nearly the whole of this work was embodied in Gómara's text. Tapia, I think, wrote it for him while he was in Madrid in 1543-44. The manuscript is incomplete, but I believe that it continued at least to the conquest and that Gómara used that part as well as the surviving part as his account embraces many events not mentioned by the other authors whom he consulted.

The *Conquista*, in fact, is a composite work. Besides the Tapia account we can recognize Cortés' letters, but that is about all. The rest was taken from other eyewitnesses, verbally or in written form.

### De Rebus Gestis Ferdinandi Cortesii.

A manuscript in the Archivo de Simancas discovered by Juan Bautista Muñoz about 1782. It was copied by him and from his copy in the Real Academia it was copied for Mr. Prescott, who sent a copy of it to Joaquín García Icazbalceta. The latter translated it into Spanish and published it in his *Colección de documentos para la historia de Mexico, Tomo I, pp. 309 et seq.* He gave it the title of *Vida de Hernan Cortés*, by which name I will call it. The Latin text he published at the bottom of the pages.

Muñoz was of the opinion that it had been written by Cristóbal Calvete de Estrella, one of the chroniclers of the Indies, and García Icazbalceta was inclined to agree with him, although he noticed the resemblance between many of the passages and many of those in Gómara's *Conquista*.

There is no doubt that this is one of the Latin versions of the life of Cortés, and that it formed part of some work entitled *De Orbe Novo*,

<sup>16</sup> Published by Joaquín García Icazbalceta in the *Colección de documentos, Tomo 2, pp. 554 et seq.*

which Gómara contemplated writing. In the *Vida* the author says that he had written copiously about Cristóbal Colón, and in fact such a work exists, *De Origine Vita et Gestis Christofori Columbi*. Besides this, there is another which Muñoz refers to in the Collegio del Sacro Monte de Granada, *De Rebus Gestis Vaccae Castris*, a manuscript of twenty books. These three apparently form part of the *De Orbe Novo*.

To connect these statements with those of 1572 is, I think, not very difficult. In that year on September 26, an order was issued to the corregidor of Soria to send to the town of Gómara, where López de Gómara had been a resident, and bring his papers. On October 3, in Soria, Salazar, the corregidor, nominated Martín García, a notary public, to comply with the cédula. García went to Gómara, which is in old Castile only a few miles southeast of Soria, and on October 5, he made a report that he had visited Pedro Ruiz, nephew of Gómara, had examined his papers and found nothing about the Indies, but Ruiz said that he had had two bound books, an *Historia de Guerras Navales* and an *Inquiridión*, and besides, twenty *pliegos* of paper written in Gómara's handwriting in Latin which treated of the history of the Indies. These he had given to Honorato Juan, the bishop of Osma, only a few days before the bishop died. Ruiz had gone to Osma to obtain the papers, but the servants refused to give them to him because don Carlos had ordered them sent to him, and Ruiz had never been able to recover them. Ruiz thought that these works were worth five hundred ducats. He also stated that some six years before, namely in 1566 therefore, he had loaned to Dr. Marrón, for fifteen days, a book bound in pergamino, three *dedos* high, and *de pliego entero* which treated of *Guerras Navales* and *Cosas de Indias*. Dr. Marrón had taken the book to Soria and he could not recover it from Marrón's heirs after Dr. Marrón died. García found in Ruiz' possession a copy of the Millán edition of 1554 of the *Historia*. He also had some other papers and notes referring to his book, which García left because he said they did not refer to the Indies. In Soria on October 21, an official was sent to Dr. Marrón's house to find the book which Ruiz had loaned to him. The nephew was brought up and declared that he had sold all his uncle's books and papers to Andrés de Santacruz of Soria for two hundred and fifty ducats. No further action appears to have been taken.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The above documents were published by José Toribio Medina in his *Imprenta Hispano Americana*, no. 268. The documents of 1553 and 1554 were printed by Cristóbal Pérez Pastor in the *Imprenta de Medina del Campo*, Madrid, 1895, pp. 90 *et seq.*

Honorato Juan, the bishop of Osma, and a friend of Gómara's had died in 1566. Evidently, therefore, Gómara had died before that date, and the fact that the *cédula* of November 17, 1553, had been reissued on August 7, 1566, is some evidence that he had just died, and in all probability in Gómara.<sup>18</sup> The biographers frequently place his death in 1560, but so much incorrect information has been printed about the man's life that no reliance can be placed on such a statement. He certainly died after 1557, and as I have just stated, probably before 1566, and just before, I believe, for the reasons above stated.

We may now note the circumstantial evidence regarding the *Vida*. It was in September, 1572, that the *cédula* was issued to search the papers of Gómara, and apparently it was also in September that the *Vida* was sent to someone unnamed from Osma. Possibly the documents which Gómara's nephew had given to Honorato Juan had been found in Osma and delivered to the authorities, and it may be that the searching of Gómara's papers was due to this fact. Probably don Carlos, who died in 1568, had not taken them away. The *Guerras Navales* and the *Inquiridión* are easily recognizable in the *Crónica de los Barbarrojas* and in the *Annales del Emperador Carlos Quinto*. The twenty *pliegos* in Latin in Gómara's own handwriting, which he translated from Spanish, may very well have been the *De Orbe Novo*. It is also probable that the *De Origine Vita* belonged to the same work. The document in the archives of Simancas, *De Rebus Gestis Ferdinandi Cortesii*, only covered eleven leaves in folio. A *pliego* when folded makes two folio leaves and consequently the one in Ruiz' possession comprised forty leaves, quite sufficient to allow for two or three chapters.

From the extraordinary similarity between the *Vida* and the first part of the *Conquista de Mexico*, coupled with the facts just set forth, the conclusion may be reached that Gómara, himself, was the author of the *Vida*. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as an independent account of the conquest or of the early life of Cortés which in reality is all the *Vida* amounts to, as it ends with his departure from Havana. In the course of the narrative, however, the author says, "As we shall tell in its place, he perished with all the money when Cortés was driven out of Mexico."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, this is only the beginning; probably no more was written.

The difference between the two accounts lies in greater elaboration of some of the events in the *Vida*, the suppression of others, and the inter-

<sup>18</sup> In 1553 Gómara's brother-in-law and sister were living in Gómara.

<sup>19</sup> The *Vida*, p. 560.

polation of accounts of Santo Domingo and of Cuba.<sup>20</sup> The first page or so is almost identical with that of the *Conquista*. A few details of no importance are added. A notable suppression is the story in the *Conquista* of Cortés' effort to go to Italy and of his return to Medellín where he received money to go to the Indies. The story of the voyage to Santo Domingo is almost exactly the same in both accounts, a little extended in the *Vida*. His reception on arrival in Santo Domingo is related somewhat differently but is essentially the same. In the *Vida*, however, the appointment of Cortés as *escribano* in Azüa and the statement that he lived there five or six years engaged in trading is now suppressed. All the story of Xuárez family and the affair with Catalina and her marriage to Cortés is dismissed in a few words—"Cortés now married (for to refer to all his history, point by point, would be long and tiresome), enjoyed happily his property which was not small although well acquired." The story of his troubles with Velásquez and his reconciliation with him are practically the same and he even adds in the *Vida* the story of how he was saved from drowning just as in the *Conquista*.

In a word, allowing for much padding and some significant suppressions, the two accounts are the same. I regard the most significant suppressions to be the accounts of Cortés' appointment as *escribano* in Azüa in Santo Domingo and all mention of Catalina, his wife. The appointment of Cortés as *escribano* to the town of Azüa implies a previous training in the profession and we now know that Cortés had enjoyed just such training. Presumably, Gómara suppressed it as beneath the dignity of a great conqueror, but why the *Vida* makes no mention of Catalina and Cortés' relations with her is problematical. It is most likely that part of the trouble between Cortés and Velásquez grew out of these relations.

### Annales del Emperador Carlos Quinto.

A manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, and a copy in the British Museum. In each of these, one page (the same) is missing. Both are copies, probably in very similar handwriting.

The manuscript was printed in Oxford in 1912 with a translation into English and a long Introduction by Roger Bigelow Merriman, a professor

<sup>20</sup> In this respect the story agrees with that of Cortés' brother-in-law, Juan Xuárez.

of history at Harvard. Merriman had some years before been at Balliol College at Oxford and at that time edited the manuscript. Merriman appended an abundance of footnotes to the translation, as writers of theses for the degree of Ph.D. usually do. Many of these notes rectify errors in the text and others simply supply dates for events recorded by Gómara without any. The rest are largely titles to works of other authors, largely Prudencio de Sandoval, who had copied from the *Annales*. Merriman paid little attention to identifying the author from whom Gómara took certain facts in the period between 1500 and 1530 when Gómara could hardly have used his own memory. For the earlier period Gómara relied on Peter Martyr's *Opus Epistolarum*, printed in 1530, and the *Annales Breves* of Lorenzo Galindez Carbajal, and that of Andrés Bernaldez, both manuscripts not published until recent years. He must also have used Paolo Giovio's *Historia sui temporis*, Venice, 1551, and Jerónimo Zurita's *Annales de Aragon*. Zurita's work was not published until after Gómara's death, but both were working at the same time, and Merriman suggests that Gómara used his notes. Merriman did not seem to have been acquainted with Lucio Marineo's historical writings and especially not with his *Cosas memorables de España* first published in 1530. Merriman was more interested in tracing the writers who had copied from the *Annales*, a subject of little interest.

Merriman poses the natural question: Why did Gómara write the *Annales*? To this he answered that it was probably due to a desire to regain the royal favor lost by magnifying the exploits of Cortés in his *Conquista de Mexico*. This idea in my opinion is extremely erroneous. In the first place, Gómara had not unduly magnified Cortés, but frequently criticized him. Merriman based his theory on the mistaken notion that the cédula of 1553 calling in copies of Gómara's *Historia* was evidence that he was out of favor with the crown. Elsewhere I have, I think, proven that the cédula was brought about by entirely different motives and there is no evidence that Gómara ever enjoyed any royal favor to lose.

From the carelessness with which it was written it seems more likely that it was merely a series of notes, as Merriman also suggests, from which Gómara intended to write a more extended work.

The *Annales* closes with the abdication of Carlos, just as Gómara said it would, in the opening chapter.

Gómara makes a few references to Cortés and Pizarro of no importance. He evidently still admired Cortés as when he speaks of his death

in 1517 he says, "Death of Hernando Cortés, a most Christian leader, who may be reckoned among the most distinguished men of our day."

The *Annales* adds nothing to Gómara's reputation. It contains a few interesting short biographies of Francis I, Henry VIII, Martin Luther, and various Spanish captains. Altogether, it shows Gómara's knowledge of Italian and Turkish affairs.

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