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Cavaliero Carrance  
The pearl hunters  
in the gulf of Ca.  
1668

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BAJA CALIFORNIA TRAVELS SERIES

General Editors: Edwin Carpenter and Glen Dawson





*The Pearl Hunters*  
*in the*  
*Gulf of California*  
*1668*

Summary Report of the Voyage made to  
the Californias by Captain Francisco de Lucenilla.

Written by Father Juan Cavallero Carranco.

Transcribed, translated, and annotated

by

W. MICHAEL MATHES

1966

*Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, California*

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For my Mother, Rilla F. Mathes



## *General Introduction*

SHORTLY following the conquest of Mexico, Fernando Cortés expanded his holdings to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, where, in 1524, he began the construction of ships for the exploration of the Pacific coast. Following the failure of the Alvaro Saavedra Cerón voyage to the Moluccas and that of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza along the west coast of New Spain, Cortés outfitted two ships, the *San Lázaro* under Hernando de Grijalva and the *Concepción* under Diego de Becerra, to search for the fabled Kingdom of California. The *San Lázaro* and the *Concepción* sailed from New Spain in October, 1533, and on the first night of sailing were separated, with the former being forced westward while the latter ship was driven to the north. Fear beset the crew of the *Concepción*, and in an ensuing mutiny Becerra was killed. Under the command of the pilot, Fortún Ximénez, the mutineers continued the voyage, making landfall at La Paz Bay (Santa



Cruz). Following a skirmish with the Indians and the resulting death of Ximénez and others of the crew, the survivors sailed the *Concepción* to the coast of Jalisco, where they were captured by Cortés' rival Nuño de Guzmán. During their captivity by Guzmán, the survivors of the *Concepción* told of the wealth of pearls which they had seen adorning the Indians at La Paz, and thus began the tale of great riches to be found in California.

This fabled wealth in pearls, together with the hopes of even greater discoveries, gave impetus to further voyages to California. In 1535 Cortés personally led an expedition to La Paz, and in 1539 Francisco de Ulloa led an expedition which explored the Gulf of California to the mouth of the Colorado River and then returned southward, doubled Cabo San Lucas, and reached Cedros Island in the Pacific. With the establishment of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, the exploration of California continued, and in 1540 Hernando de Alarcón sailed to the mouth of the Colorado River, while two years later Juan Rod-

ríguez Cabrillo explored the Pacific coast northward to southern Oregon.

By 1543 California had become known as a geographical entity, and exploration was diverted across the Pacific to the Philippines. Nevertheless, interest in California continued, due primarily to the fabled wealth in pearls awaiting exploitation. The Viceroyalty, however, was not interested in the task of exploitation, and fifty years passed before a company with sufficient capital for a pearl fishing expedition was formed.

In 1585 a license was granted to Hernando de Santotís, Antonio del Castillo, and Pedro Lobato del Canto, giving them exclusive rights for ten years to trade and fish for pearls in the Gulf of California, providing that action was taken within four years. The Santotís company proceeded with the construction of ships for this enterprise at the port of Navidad; however, in 1587 the English corsair, Thomas Cavendish, raided Navidad, burned Santotís' ships, and thus delayed compliance with the license provisions.

Following this setback, Castillo made several trading voyages into the gulf using small boats, but the company was unable to raise sufficient capital to outfit new ships. By 1592 Santotís was still unable to comply with his license, and in that year Sebastián Vizcaíno, Melchor de las Roelas, and nine others formed a company and brought suit against Santotís for the transference of his license. Vizcaíno and his company promised one-fifth of all pearls and one-tenth of all fish taken as well as the exploration of the gulf, and in July, 1593 a decision was reached by the Audiencia of Mexico providing for the transference of the pearl fishing license to Vizcaíno.

In November, 1593, Vizcaíno was issued a Royal Patent to pearl trading and fishing rights in the Gulf of California for a period of twenty years, and he began preparations to carry out his plan. By June, 1596, Vizcaíno had prepared three ships for his expedition and in that month he set sail for California. Upon arriving at La Paz Bay, Vizcaíno established a small colony there and, with two of his ships, continued north-

ward along the east coast of Baja California in search of pearls. Hostile Indians, storms, and a leaking ship forced Vizcaíno to return to La Paz without success. Vizcaíno prepared to return to New Spain for supplies, but he found the colonists to be on the verge of mutiny, and, to increase problems, a high wind carried sparks from a cooking fire, setting the colony ablaze. With half of the buildings destroyed, Vizcaíno was forced to abandon his colony and return to New Spain.

The failure of Vizcaíno to establish a colony in California and a rise in interest in the development of the Pacific coast of the region caused a lapse in efforts to exploit pearl fishing in the Gulf of California. In 1600 Graviel Maldonado petitioned the Viceroy for pearl fishing privileges and was refused, as was Vizcaíno, who was ordered not to enter the Gulf of California during his voyage to the Pacific littoral of California in 1602. Between 1597 and 1613 no positive action was taken to use the provisions of Vizcaíno's license, and pearl fishing was done only by those

daring to cross the gulf from Sonora and Sinaloa in small boats.

A revival of interest in pearls came about in 1613 with the founding of a pearl fishing company in Seville by Tomás and Nicolás de Cardona. The Cardona company was granted Vizcaino's license and in July, 1613, sailed from Seville with six ships. Halting in the West Indies to obtain Negro pearl divers, the Cardona company fished for pearls off Isla Margarita and then continued to Veracruz. From Veracruz, the company went overland to Acapulco; and, during the trip, Francisco Basili, the company's ship captain, died and was replaced by Juan de Iturbe. At Acapulco, Iturbe carried out final preparations for the voyage to California, and in March, 1615, set sail with three ships. Iturbe cruised northward into the Gulf of California and for six months carried on relatively successful diving and trading for pearls. Returning to Zacatula on the Colima coast, one of Iturbe's ships was captured by the Dutch corsair Joris van Spielbergen and another of his ships was ordered to Cedros



Island to warn the Manila galleon of the corsair's presence. With only one ship available for pearl fishing, the Cardona company was forced to abandon its enterprise and, after only six months of actual fishing and trading, again left the exploitation of the Gulf of California open to entry.

Following the Cardonas' withdrawal, some fishermen in small boats entered the gulf, but not until 1623 was formal action again taken to revive pearl fishing. In that year Nicolás de Cardona again attempted to comply with the terms of his license, but three of his ships were wrecked en route from Panama and the project was abandoned.

By 1628 conflicting evidence relative to the worth of California and petitions for pearl fishing licenses had reached such a proportion that in August of that year a Royal Order opened hearings in Mexico which were to resolve the most practical means for exploiting and colonizing California. While the hearings were in progress and depositions were being taken, in 1631 a pearl fishing license was granted to Francisco

Ortega. Ortega met with relative success during three fishing voyages to the gulf in 1632, 1633, and 1634; however, during his voyage of 1635-1636 his ship was wrecked near La Paz, thus ending operations.

During the term of Ortega's license, law suits were again opened for the transfer of the license. In 1635 Nicolás de Cardona sued for the enforcement of his rights as holder of the pearl fishing monopoly in California, and Pedro Porter y Casanate applied for the license. Both Cardona and Porter were unsuccessful, and in 1636 the license was granted to Francisco de Vergara of Puebla. Vergara, financially unable to mount an expedition to the Gulf of California, then sold his rights to Francisco Esteban Carbonel, who began the construction of ships for the enterprise. While preparing for his expedition, Carbonel was denounced as being a French subject and following a two-year trial was denied the right to enter the Gulf of California.

With Carbonel's loss of the pearl fishing license, in 1637 Pedro Porter, in partnership with

Captain Alonso Botello y Serrano, reapplied for fishing rights. Notwithstanding Porter's service to the crown in Flanders and Aragon, the Consejo de Indias, pressed by litigation and reams of depositions, had in November, 1636, suspended all licenses for pearl fishing in the gulf; and hearings were continued to determine what action should be taken in California.

Following almost four years of hearings, in August, 1640, a pearl fishing license was granted to Pedro Porter. While Porter was preparing his expedition, Cardona, in 1642, sent Luis Cestín de Cañas into the gulf as a symbol of disregard for Porter's license. Cestín was unsuccessful, and in December, 1643, Porter sailed from Acapulco up the gulf to reconnoiter the location of pearl oyster beds. Returning to the Sinaloa coast, Porter commenced the construction of ships for a full expedition, but while he was in Mexico, in April, 1644, his ships were burned in the ways.

Porter was thus delayed by the loss of his ships, but in May, 1646, he received an appointment as Governor of Sinaloa, which aided his

enterprise by giving him an income. By 1647 Porter had built two new ships; however in 1648, his duties permitted him only a little more than two months of fishing for pearls, and the following year only three months were devoted to the enterprise. After six years of service, in 1651, Porter left Sinaloa to serve in Chile and the pearl fishing in the Gulf of California was again abandoned.

Not until 1664 was another licensed pearl fishing voyage made. In that year, Bernardo Bernal de Piñadero sailed into the gulf, but because of disputes between Piñadero and his crew, the voyage failed. A second attempt was made by Piñadero in 1666, and again the voyage failed. As a result of claims by his crew, Piñadero was involved in lengthy litigation, and his license was given to Francisco de Lucenilla.

Lucenilla suffered from the same problems as his predecessor Piñadero and, as a result of dissention among his crew, was forced to return to New Spain after a three month voyage. Lucenilla's lack of success effectively ended pearl fish-

ing expeditions to Baja California, for no further licenses were granted and the next voyage made to the region, that of Isidro Atondo y Antillon and Father Eusebio Francisco Kino in 1683, was for missionary and colonizing purposes.





## INTRODUCTION TO

### *Father Cavallero's Report*

THE ORIGINAL of the document translated and published herein is housed in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Spain, as Manuscript 18.758<sup>14</sup>, is of folio size, and is forty-four pages in length. The entire document is in Father Cavallero's hand and bears his signature. The document in its complete form, published herein for the first time in any language, is, as its title states, a "Summary Report of the Voyage made to the Californias by Captain Francisco de Lucenilla..." Part two entitled "Principal causes of the failure of this voyage," is a highly critical discussion of the failure of Lucenilla and his men to give adequate effort to evangelization and colonization, directed toward showing that God, disdaining the worldliness of the expedition, brought about Lucenilla's lack of success. The third part of the document, "Regarding the quality of the persons who came on this conquest of the Californias,"

is a listing of the members of the expedition, a short biographical sketch of each, and, in most cases, a discussion of their poor qualities.

Despite the general downgrading of Lucenilla's expedition, Father Cavallero's "Report" is the most complete account of the voyage available. Lucenilla's voyage, while of short duration and of little historical importance in itself, reflects the problems and results of the majority of pearl fishing voyages to California during the seventeenth century. Incompetence coupled with unrealistic expectations and greed describes most of the crew members on such voyages, and inadequate capital was the nemesis of most of the pearl fishing license holders. While Father Cavallero was lax in supplying nautical and geographical details of the voyage, his descriptions are adequate to enable identification of Lucenilla's anchorages, and the "Report" thus complements the descriptions of Baja California during the pre-Kino period of seventeenth century exploration of the region.

*Summary Report of the  
Voyage*

MADE TO THE CALIFORNIAS BY

*Captain Francisco de Quenilla*

UNDER COMMISSION OF THE

*Marqués de Mancera,*

VICEROY OF NEW SPAIN.<sup>1</sup>



Written by FATHER FRAY JUAN CAVALLERO CARRANCO,  
Professor of Theology and Commissary of this voy-  
age by order of the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition  
and the Most Excellent Father Commissary General,  
FRAY FERNANDO DE LA RUA.<sup>2</sup>





**I**N SEPTEMBER, 1665 Captain Francisco de Lucenilla, a native of the Villa of Paradas<sup>3</sup> in the Kingdom of Andalusia, left Spain. He arrived in the Kingdom of New Spain with various types of merchandise, both his own and that under commission from others; and, since business during that period was not as good as usual, he found it necessary to remain in the City of Mexico on business and was unable to leave with the fleet for Spain. While he was occupied in the sale of his merchandise, news of the imagined wealth of the Kingdom of Californias came to Lucenilla's attention through some friends; and his heart was filled with a great desire to make a voyage to that Kingdom as others had done. Those who counselled him convinced him of the worth of his plan by stating that such a voyage could be

<sup>1</sup> Don Antonio Sebastián de Toledo, Marqués de Mancera, served as Viceroy from 1665-1673.

<sup>2</sup> Fray Fernando de la Rúa, Commissary General of the Order of Saint Francis from 1666 to 1671, was known for his economic reforms and building of convents. Vetancurt, *Teatro*.

<sup>3</sup> Paradas, Province of Seville, is near the city of Marchena.

made for less than four thousand *pesos*<sup>4</sup> in less than one year's time, and that he would gain great wealth as well as fame; a fact which he believed even more strongly because of what had been written relative to that Kingdom of California. Also at that time in the City of Mexico there was a gentleman named Don Bernardo Bernal de Piñadero who, with the title of Admiral, had gone on that undertaking to California twice; and, although on both voyages he had done nothing in the service of God or the King, he insisted strongly upon making a third voyage.<sup>5</sup>

All of these factors gave Lucenilla yet greater yearning to realize his wishes. He consulted various individuals and read various reports, all of which furthered his intent. Considering himself to be a young man with money and initiative, desirous of fame and wealth, he, together

<sup>4</sup>A *peso* was valued at \$1.58 in 1668.

<sup>5</sup>Don Bernardo Bernal de Piñadero made voyages to California in 1664 and 1666 and continued in his attempts to make a return voyage until, in 1679, his petition was removed from consideration by Viceroy Fray Payo de Rivera Enríquez, who assigned Don Isidro Atondo y Antillón to make the voyage. Archivo General de Indias, Seville, México, 51.

with Captain Alonso Mateos,<sup>6</sup> decided to present a memorandum to His Excellency, the Viceroy, offering to settle the Californias within one year, to build two large ships for the enterprise, to take fifty men and twenty horses, and, above all, to take two priests for the conversion of the inhabitants of that Kingdom.

A law suit between Francisco de Lucenilla and Don Bernardo Bernal followed, and it was decided that Francisco de Lucenilla should make the voyage to California and that Don Bernardo Bernal should desist from so doing. At the same time, litigation took place between the Sacred Order of the Society of Jesus and the Seraphic Order of my Father Saint Francis as each wished to serve on this enterprise.<sup>7</sup> After various documents were presented, it was decreed that, out of justice, the order of my Seraphim Francis should serve because it was the first order in these King-

<sup>6</sup>Mateos was a native of Jerez de la Frontera. According to Father Cavallero, Mateos only "ate, drank and spoke badly of the priests"—Part 2 of Father Cavallero's "Report."

<sup>7</sup>The Jesuits and the Franciscans were in dispute as to prior rights to missionization because territorial limits were vague in northwestern Mexico.

doms and in the conversions of New Spain, having served on other occasions since the time of the Marqués del Valle, Don Fernando Cortés, and because it was charged with this conversion by a Special Royal Order of His Majesty.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, two regular priests, one being the writer and the other being Father Fray Juan Bautista Ramírez, were named to go to California. Both of these priests were from the Province of the Santo Evangelio<sup>9</sup> and came to the Province of Los Angeles<sup>10</sup> from Spain in the year 1665. The writer is a native of the Villa of Guadalcanal in the Province of Extremadura,<sup>11</sup> and the other priest is from Ayamonte in Andalucia.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A Royal Order was required due to the Real Patronato, an institution whereby the King of Spain was empowered to determine areas of missionization, collect tithes, name episcopal candidates, and otherwise intervene in ecclesiastical matters.

<sup>9</sup> Santo Evangelio, the Holy Gospel, was the name applied to the Franciscan mission area of central Mexico.

<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles is the present day city of Puebla, and the province of the same name included an area somewhat greater than the present day state of Puebla.

<sup>11</sup> Guadalcanal is due north of Seville in the present province of Seville.

<sup>12</sup> Ayamonte, a town famous for its mariners, is at the mouth of the Rio Guadiana.

Having obtained this license, Captain Alonso Mateos left the City of Mexico in the month of February in the year 1667, taking in his company thirty comrades to build the ships on the South Sea<sup>13</sup> coast in a place where such an operation seemed most convenient. As a result of reports received from the residents of those regions, it was decided to build the ships in the Port of Chacala,<sup>14</sup> jurisdiction of the City of Compostela,<sup>15</sup> fifty leagues<sup>16</sup> from the City of Guadalajara.<sup>17</sup> This decision was reached because the site is good land, abundant in woods and fruits, has cattle ranches nearby, has the City of Compostela at a distance of twelve leagues, is convenient for corn and other necessities, and is an area of many fruit trees left from older ports

<sup>13</sup> The South Sea, Mar del Sur, was the usual name given to the Pacific Ocean.

<sup>14</sup> Chacala is a small bay near San Blas, Nayarit.

<sup>15</sup> Compostela is present day Tepic, Nayarit.

<sup>16</sup> A league was the equivalent of five kilometers, approximately three statute miles.

<sup>17</sup> Guadalajara, Jalisco, was the political and ecclesiastical center of northwestern Mexico and was the seat of the *Audiencia* (a judicial-executive-legislative body) and the Bishop of Guadalajara.

established there.<sup>18</sup> Due to the great enthusiasm of the entire company for making this voyage, they labored personally in the shops to the extent that they won the admiration of all the residents of the region. This admiration was based upon their seeing Spaniards who would work personally with such great effort and care. Nevertheless, much as the company labored, the operation did not meet with their desires since they had thought to prepare the ships in four months and could not do so even in fourteen. This was primarily because they had no more than one foreman, as the other who had come there, Miguel de Cádiz, left for Mexico following some disputes with Alonso Mateos. The operation was further delayed because all fifty men were not good workers; some were pampered, and the good workers were disgusted when they saw others who slept and ate all the time and yet

<sup>18</sup>The coast of Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit was the center of shipbuilding and supply for California expeditions from 1615. Acapulco had previously been the center of this activity; however with the growth of pearl fishing, ports closer to the fishing grounds were developed.

were more greatly esteemed by the Captain. Because the immediate recompense was nil, with no wages or salaries being paid, and because the future would be the same under the terms of the contract drawn in Mexico, those who labored wanted the work to be equal; and since such was not the case, disputes arose after the initial fervor, and the operation was thus further delayed.

While the men worked in the shops, the Captain attended to the other necessities of the voyage in the City of Mexico. Aided by Captain Juan de Cavueñas, who spent with a holy zeal because Captain Lucenilla had no capital, they met to examine the men needed to comply with the number of crew required by the license and agreement. Having completed all of these requisites, we left the City of Mexico on the day of Corpus Christi<sup>19</sup> in the afternoon. We were accompanied by friends in carriages as far as Chapultepec,<sup>20</sup> one league from Mexico, where with

<sup>19</sup> June 9, 1667.

<sup>20</sup> Chapultepec, at present a section of Mexico City, was an outlying suburb which was generally the final point of departure from the capital during the colonial period.

genuine good wishes and happiness we took our leave from everyone. The trip was continued with some discomfort, and thus we spent more than two months in arriving at the shipyard. The Saucedos, at their estate of Guarache,<sup>21</sup> were exceptionally kind to us; and they fed and housed us most sumptuously for two days. This is a hospitality which they extend to all passers-by in accord with their status, and for this reason the Saucedos have wider and greater fame than any other gentlemen of New Spain. In the City of Guadalajara we were hospitably received by the President of the Audiencia,<sup>22</sup> Bishop<sup>23</sup> and Judges. The Bishop gave me the title of Judge and Vicar General of the Kingdom of the Californias, as the Diocese claims the right of prelacy over the region; and the Bishop asks that all

<sup>21</sup> Guarache was in the Bajío, the present day adjoining sectors of Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Jalisco, and Michoacán.

<sup>22</sup> Don Antonio Alvarez de Castro; the Judges (Oidores) were Don Juan Zezati del Castelo, Don Juan de Bolivar y Cruz, and Don Jerónimo de Luna.

<sup>23</sup> Doctor Don Francisco Verdín y Molina.



who go to California do so as his ministers.<sup>24</sup>

After attending to some business matters in the City of Guadalajara, we continued our trip to the City of Compostela, where there was a man selling goods contracted for by the Captain and where we supplied ourselves with the items necessary for the work in the shipyard. We arrived at Compostela on the eve of Santiago<sup>25</sup> and, after resting for a few days, it was decided that Father Fray Juan Bautista should continue to the shipyard with the men in order to say Mass for the company and console the men in whatever manner was necessary. I was to remain in the city to aid in whatever business was necessary as well as maintain my health, because the shipyard is an unhealthy place during the rainy season; and with so many men, if both of the priests were ill, the voyage would have to be postponed. Therefore, I remained in the city and my companion

<sup>24</sup> With the creation of the Bishopric of Guadalajara in 1547, the northwestward extension of the diocese was not clearly defined, and the bishops considered California to be within their jurisdiction.

<sup>25</sup> July 25, 1667.

accompanied the men to Chacala, where he was of great solace and comfort to all.

In this peace and quiet we all remained. My companion aided the crews, and I helped in business matters which arose, heard many confessions, and preached many sermons, which were well received, until the beginning of December when the *Sindic*, Don Cristóbal Guerra, came to open the conflict between the Captain and ourselves, the priests.<sup>26</sup> The *Sindic* came to join the voyage to the Californias without a license from the Viceroy and without having advised my Commissary General; he merely had dispatches from the Bishop of Guadalajara. Seeing this situation, I wrote to the Captain to the effect that the arrival of this cleric would cause a problem and therefore, to avoid such, I should be given permission to write to my Prelate<sup>27</sup> to determine whether or not he wished the *Sindic* to accompany us. Because of this situation we, the priests, were involved in a great deal of conflict with the

<sup>26</sup> The *sindic* was the diocesan treasurer.

<sup>27</sup> Fray Fernando de la Rúa.

Captain; and it reached such a point that he dispatched a secret letter to Mexico in opposition to us, requesting that no regular priests be allowed to go and that only the aforesaid secular priest should go. The Captain was already governed by the dictates of other badly intentioned clerics who felt envious that regular priests, and not secular priests, should go, not only on this enterprise but also on all others. However, God, who always favors the causes of the little man and particularly those of my Sacred Order, disposed that the Captain was ordered from Mexico that we should be taken and the secular priest should be left on the mainland, as this was more practical and was obligatory, thus creating a situation which the Captain felt most strongly and which pleased the well intentioned and harmed the malevolent.

The time having arrived for everything to be prepared and the ships to be afloat, the Captain was reconciled with us and ordered the voyage to commence on the first of May. Beforehand, a solemn procession from the church to the beach

was held with four priests carrying on their shoulders the image of the Sovereign Queen of the Angels. Father Fray Juan Bautista said Mass on the beach in sight of the ships; I preached a sermon with the greatest spirit possible, through which all were consoled and became fervent to make the voyage; and we took our leave from the residents who had come to wish us farewell. These past days had been the most active ever seen in those parts. So that all might see the love and peace with which we embarked, as soon as Mass was over, and after we had tenderly embraced the Captain and shed many tears, the Captain removed his helmet and, on his shoulders, took the two priests<sup>28</sup> aboard ship, asking our pardon many times for the displeasure which he had caused us. We asked the same, not only of the Captain, but of the entire company and asked all those present particularly to commend us to God.

Everything which seemed necessary for such

<sup>28</sup> Fathers Cavallero and Ramírez. The author makes an unexplainable change of person at this point in the original document.

a long voyage, arms and supplies for fifty-four persons, having been obtained and taken aboard, we set sail at sunrise on May first. We noted with particular pleasure that the two ships had started well; they were large enough to make the run to Spain, light and well finished. The second day, with a fresh wind, we sailed along the coast; and, in sight of the Port of Matanchen,<sup>29</sup> the foremast of the captain's ship broke and we made anchor; the port is a very good one and is twelve leagues from the Port of Chacala. Another foremast was installed, and we happily continued our voyage.

We arrived next at the Port of Mazatlán, from whence we were to cross over to California.<sup>30</sup> Water and firewood were replenished with some effort and here a marvelous thing happened: everyone aboard was concerned with not having a bell, and Domingo de la Rocha<sup>31</sup> found a medi-

<sup>29</sup> A small inlet to the south of San Blas, Nayarit. It is more sheltered than San Blas and was used as a port until the development of San Blas in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>30</sup> Mazatlán, Sinaloa, was the final supply point prior to crossing the Gulf of California.

<sup>31</sup> Domingo de la Rocha, a Portuguese, was highly thought of by Father Cavallero; Part 2 of Father Cavallero's "Report."

um sized bell in the sea; it had a good tone even though time had damaged it. Here also are located pearl oyster beds like those found in the Californias,<sup>32</sup> and, in some oysters we ate, we found pearls which were of poor quality, but we well know from reports of the residents of these parts that good pearls do exist.

Everything in order, we began to navigate the passage which, on modern maps, is called the Vermilion Sea.<sup>33</sup> I do not know for what reason it has this name, since it is the same color as all other seas. We did not have favorable winds and, therefore, spent six days in crossing, despite the fact that there are no more than eighty leagues between the Port of Mazatlán and Cabo San Lucas.<sup>34</sup> The port is in twenty-three and a half de-

<sup>32</sup> Mazatlán, while more convenient to reach than California, was never considered a pearl fishing area and was not exploited as such.

<sup>33</sup> The Vermilion Sea, Sea of Cortés, Bay of California, and Mouth of California were all names applied to the Gulf of California. [The name Vermilion Sea (Mar Bermejo) was applied to the Gulf because the waters sometimes are colored brilliant red during the warmer part of the year by extensive growths of micro-organisms.—Ronald L. Ives.]

<sup>34</sup> Cabo San Lucas is the southernmost point of the Baja California peninsula.

grees and Cabo San Lucas is in the same latitude. In this section of sea from Chacala, there are some small, unpopulated islands, all within sight of land; some are called Las Marías,<sup>35</sup> others are called Los Frailes,<sup>36</sup> and others are without names. Different fish, such as whales, tuna, sardines, and other varieties, abound in this sea, and some say that the abundance of whales is a sign that there is much ambergris along the coasts.<sup>37</sup> The prevailing northwesterly winter winds in this sea are generally good for coming from the Californias to New Spain; and, in the summer there are southwesterly and southerly winds which are good for going to the Californias and running northward along the coast. Therefore, it should be stated that those who wish to make this voyage or discover the strait

<sup>35</sup> The Islas Tres Marías (María Madre, María Magdalena, and María Cleofas) are off the coast of San Blas.

<sup>36</sup> Los Frailes, a name given indiscriminately to off-shore rocks, probably refers herein to the Islas de Mazatlán.

<sup>37</sup> Ambergris, whale vomit, was highly prized for the manufacture of perfume. Fray Antonio de la Ascensión first described ambergris in California in his report of Sebastián Vizcaino's voyage in 1603.

so desired by the Crown,<sup>38</sup> may do so by leaving in March or April and crossing the gulf on a southeast-northwest course. However, returning to our voyage, I state that we crossed the gulf east to west without any alteration in the currents since the sea is very peaceful and calm.<sup>39</sup>

We made landfall in the Californias on the morning of Sunday, May twentieth, the first day of the feast of the Holy Spirit. On several occasions I asked to come aboard the captain's ship to say Mass in thanks for the completion of a safe voyage and for the solemnity of the day; but, as on earlier occasions, I was prevented from doing so because the thing of least concern to the company was to do the Divine Will in compliance

<sup>38</sup> The Strait of Anian or Northwest Passage was sought for almost two centuries. Based upon the concept of geographic symmetry, it was believed that if a southern strait from Atlantic to Pacific existed, so must a northern passage. During the mid-seventeenth century, the reports of such a strait had given rise to great interest in its discovery. The first claim to the strait's discovery was made by Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado in 1588, and the myth of Anian gained such momentum that, until the latter half of the eighteenth century, the passage was shown on almost all maps.

<sup>39</sup> It is rare that the Gulf of California is calm; however, the most propitious time for crossing is still considered to be the spring of the year.



with His holy laws. As soon as the men sighted the hills of the Californias, as if they were made of gold, pearls, or ambergris, the question of the division of wealth was opened to see to whom each share would fall. The major question was that of the conversion of souls, however, since all was in order concerning wealth. The old contract was cancelled so that everyone might revalidate it with some new points relative to greater peace and accommodation of consciences; however, nothing was agreed upon and the company remained even more devoid of free expression. At night we made anchorage near shore in a large, deep bay which we named Espiritu Santo.<sup>40</sup> On the shore of the bay there was a *ranchería*<sup>41</sup> of Indians<sup>42</sup> with about one hundred men and women who built large fires and, throughout the night, shouted and made a great

<sup>40</sup> Espiritu Santo Bay, from the description given herein, is probably Bahía de las Palmas.

<sup>41</sup> A settlement of Indians; a term widely used in connection with California groups.

<sup>42</sup> The major Indian group found in the area of Espiritu Santo was the Cora.

deal of noise. Aboard the ships there was no less noise, and it was rare that anyone slept. Much of the noise was from fear and much was from pleasure, and the men made it seem to themselves that centuries would pass before the opportunity of seeing pearls would arrive.

Monday, at sunrise, with the men in formation, the Indians were called aboard. They came in *balsas*,<sup>43</sup> showing great pleasure, and even though at first they refused to come aboard the ship, they later did so. All of the men and some of the women came aboard; the latter event being something never before experienced, according to those who had come to California on other occasions, since the Indians are very cautious with their women. All of the [male] Indians were naked; but the women were very modest and wore thread petticoats, similar to a wavy net, folded at the waist and reaching to the ankles. As soon as we met, the Indians told us that water was located in two nearby places, one of which

<sup>43</sup> A reed canoe common among Baja California and Southern California coastal groups.

was a stream.<sup>44</sup> We gave them corn and hardtack, for which the Indians gave us some small ropes, feathers, and seashells,<sup>45</sup> all items of little value. The Indians were very peaceful and were strong, well-featured, and appreciative. They equipped themselves with some gourds to carry water, and they brought it at a run; the water was sweet and full of golden iron pyrites. Throughout this day the men insisted upon going ashore to explore the waterholes, but the Captain did not wish to carry out such a reconnaissance, and the company felt very strongly about it. As soon as the sun was up and the Indians arrived on board, the men began to ask for pearls, which were called *Vobo*, giving the Indians knives in exchange.<sup>46</sup> This continued all day; however, what was bartered was of little value. Everything then being quiet and the ship at anchor, I stated that I

<sup>44</sup> Probably the Arroyo Santiago.

<sup>45</sup> These were the most highly prized objects, other than food-stuffs, possessed by Baja California Indians.

<sup>46</sup> Knives were the most common trade item exchanged for pearls in Baja California, as they were cheap to the Spaniard but highly prized by the Indians, who had no native metal implements.

wanted to say Mass because it was the feast of the Holy Spirit; and on the first day Mass had not been said. The Captain denied my request, stating that they were occupied with bartering and it did not seem convenient to him that Mass should be said. I insisted strongly, and finally I said Mass with many Indians and their leader aboard ship. Watching Mass caused great wonder among the Indians, and all day men and women remained aboard the ship and were happy.

At ten o'clock at night we left Espiritu Santo Bay for the north in search of the port of La Paz<sup>47</sup> as well as some islands nearby. These islands, according to reports, were rich in pearls and, along the coast, many pearls could be bartered. The Captain's plan was to coast before landing and to barter for as many pearls as possible and, after that, if they were few, to go ashore to search for more. Although he was advised several times that the first reconnaissance and the

<sup>47</sup> La Paz, discovered by expeditionaries of Fernando Cortés in 1534, has since that time been the major port of Baja California and the center of pearl fishing activities.

first act should be to go ashore, fortify, and build a church and houses, he did not wish to do so, stating that he first wanted to see what wealth was available. The food supplies at sea were rapidly deteriorating, and we recommended to the Captain that he look into this matter and stop soon; however, he only looked to see if there were pearls and nothing else.

Tuesday morning we were six leagues from Espiritu Santo Bay in sight of another *ranchería* and an island. We came alongside; and, after anchoring, some pearls, few and poor, were bartered. Because the pearls were few, they were prized, and the Indians were greatly pleased. On Wednesday we were at the place where Don Bernardo Bernal, that character, cast Pedro de Escandón and Don Luis ashore.<sup>48</sup> We asked the Indians about them, and they replied that enemies known as Guaycuros<sup>49</sup> had come and had

<sup>48</sup> Pedro de Escandón and Luis de Segura were put ashore by Bernardo Bernal de Piñadero in 1664, an act which later led to his trial before the Audiencia of Guadalajara. A.G.I., México, 51.

<sup>49</sup> Guaycuros were the most bellicose of Baja California Indians and were well known for their proficiency with bow and arrow.

killed them. God forgive the Guaycuros and reward such a great act as that of two men remaining alone among savage Indians at war between themselves. If the two men did so for a good purpose, they will have a great reward in Heaven; but if they did so for greed, it was very foolhardy. No pearls were bartered at this place nor at a beautiful bay further along,<sup>50</sup> despite the great deal of reconnaissance made among the Indians. The latter, with their suspicious and fearful actions, led us to believe that they had been those who killed those two wretched young men to take from them what little they had. One can believe anything of such savage people. We searched for a port with protection for the ships where we could set up huts, but we could not find a comfortable place here. Therefore, we continued our voyage in search of the port of La Paz. We were greatly disappointed with the few pearls bartered, and the land we saw was disagreeable to the sight, ash-colored hills without trees, grass, nor signs of metals. The first an-

<sup>50</sup> Probably Bahía de los Muertos.

chorage, which we named Espiritu Santo Bay, was the place which pleased the priests, and we wished to stop there. To us it was mysterious; we had arrived on the day of the Holy Spirit when the Sovereign Dove came down from Heaven on tongues of flame to embrace all hearts with its preaching; we had seen the Indians in the sight of God making greater commotion and signs of happiness; we had experienced the Indians' freely giving us some other items as well as more pearls than other Indians; we had found a stream full of sweet water with beautiful signs of golden iron pyrites; we had found firewood in abundance and large plains at this place; we had seen the women come aboard, something which they did not do in other places; and finally, we noted that the Indians would listen to the ministry, an effect which was possible because of our being the first to minister to them. These Indians stole our hearts and we would gladly remain to preach to them, since when Christ, our Life, sent the Apostles out in the world to preach, they did so beginning at the place where they

first arrived in the Kingdom or Province and from thence proceeded to other places. However, on this voyage the purpose was to gain pearls and not souls. Therefore, the latter were depreciated in order to search for the former, and our wishes were not carried out. Nevertheless, I told everyone that if conversion were not begun at that place, the voyage would certainly be a lost venture. I am tenacious in my dictates and am wont to assert them; God grant that I am correct in this.

This day<sup>51</sup> we anchored offshore from a large mountain range across from Isla Cerralvo.<sup>52</sup> The island, first in the gulf, is three leagues in circumference, mountainous, useless, and uninhabited. Following our course, we arrived off some red hills which appear rich in minerals.<sup>53</sup> Although the men proceeded to scrutinize the hills with the greatest of care, some men who know matters relative to mines stated that the hills only

<sup>51</sup> Probably Thursday.

<sup>52</sup> Isla Cerralvo was named by Francisco de Ortega for the Marqués de Cerralvo, Viceroy of New Spain (1624-1635).

<sup>53</sup> The Sierra Cacachilas.



showed signs of being badlands, without hope of being anything worthwhile since they were only hills of burned, uninhabited earth. Because of this conclusion, and because the sea had become rough, we continued our voyage. We arrived next at the bay of the port of La Paz; it is a most beautiful sight and has a circumference of twelve or fourteen leagues, but there is so little depth to the water that Saturday, eve of the Holy Trinity,<sup>54</sup> we were almost lost, with the captain's ship aground. I reminded everyone on this occasion of what I preached when we embarked: that the sea would go dry and the mountains would become sea if we did not make service to God and peace among ourselves our goal. Since this goal was lacking, we were now found with the sea gone dry.

On the day of the Holy Trinity, we were again lost and aground, no doubt punishment for my not having been allowed to say Mass during such great solemnity. However, God willed that we should enter the port by the channel—this en-

<sup>54</sup> May 27, 1668.

tire bay is very shallow, and it is necessary to proceed through the channel along shore to be able to enter the port. Surrounding this bay are barren hills with little firewood, and next to the anchorage there are trees and plains, but the area was not explored to see if the lands were good. There is a fresh water stream lined with reeds near the shore, but we found it to be so poor that we would become ill were we to drink from it. The Indians found at this port were deformed, with their lips perforated through the cartilage and their ears split and perforated with cane tubes fitted in the openings.<sup>55</sup> The Indians were very coarse, striped with colors and very bellicose; and I saw that they did not wish to come aboard the ships even though we continued to treat them kindly. These were not seagoing Indians as were the others we had met, and they are continually at war. We did not see that the Indians had anything of value, and therefore that place seemed a poor site for settlement. By common accord we left the port the following

<sup>55</sup> Probably Indians of the Guaycuro group.

day and came in sight of a large island offshore<sup>56</sup> where, according to reports, we hoped to find many Indians and many pearls. However, we did not find a single Indian on the entire island, nor a drop of water, nor any human convenience, since everything was barren, without vegetation, without water, or anything worthwhile. Therefore, we left the island and turned to search for Espiritu Santo Bay to take on water, wash clothing, and rest if a port could be found nearby, because all of the supplies were deteriorating and spoiling without being utilized in any way.

On Corpus Christi<sup>57</sup> we found a bay where, onshore, there was a beautiful stream lined with reeds and a great deal of fresh water.<sup>58</sup> The bay was surrounded by large ranges of hills which appeared to contain mineral deposits for mining. It was good land for settlement, but the ships had no anchorage next to the fresh water, and this was not what we were seeking. A few peaceful

<sup>56</sup> Isla Espiritu Santo.

<sup>57</sup> May 31, 1668.

<sup>58</sup> Probably Bahía de la Ventana.

Indians arrived, and we treated them well. We followed trails to different *rancherías* where we found Indians as poor and miserable as the others we had seen,<sup>59</sup> but we did not find a site with the comforts sought for settlement. Therefore, we went on to Cabo San Lucas and San Bernabé Bay,<sup>60</sup> where we found over four hundred people, all as naked as the others we had seen and without houses or means of sustenance other than eating what they fish and hunt.<sup>61</sup> In this bay there are fish of many varieties and tuna like those in Spain.<sup>62</sup> There is a stream lined with reeds which has some fresh water, and there is some salt on its banks; but we saw no other form of human convenience. The Indians are peaceful and friendly; but as the company sought only riches, it was decided to run northward along the coast from *ranchería* to *ranchería* bartering for what

<sup>59</sup> Indians of the Cora Group.

<sup>60</sup> San Bernabé, in the lee of Cabo San Lucas, was well known by mariners and was strongly recommended for settlement by Fray Antonio de la Ascensión.

<sup>61</sup> Probably these were Pericú Indians.

<sup>62</sup> Probably the yellowfin tuna.

pearls were available and searching for an appropriate port, for we were already afflicted with illness.

Everything took place in reverse of what had been expected because the end which was sought was opposed to the one which was promised. Since the first day of our arrival in the Californias, it was demanded that the first act would be to search for pearls and promising mines; and this was done, leaving God's cause until later. This was certainly the case, since it had been promised to carry supplies and other necessities to advance God's cause first. Seek, said Christ, first the Kingdom of God for yourself and your fellow man, and with this you will have all things at your command;<sup>63</sup> but everything was done to the contrary and resulted to the contrary of what had been desired.

We went from *ranchería* to *ranchería* searching for pearls and a port in which to anchor, but we could not find an appropriate port and the pearls were poor and few. The land gave no in-

<sup>63</sup> Saint Matthew, 6:33; Saint Luke, 12:31.

dication of minerals because it was seen through the eyes of men with the desire to leave or because there were mountains at the seashore, and it was common knowledge that in similar areas there are never mines. Nevertheless, when the mountains were scrutinized from the ships, without a doubt the men thought they would find some hills of silver so refined it could be seen from the ships. We went ashore several times, both on land and on all the islands; on the islands, we found no water, firewood, nor Indians; on the mainland, so few and such poor pearls were bartered that most of the men were so disconsolate that they clamored and shouted: Let's go from this land; let's go!; or, Let's leave, once and for all!

Across from the last island, Espiritu Santo, we found a protective area for the ships with fresh water and firewood. There were very wide trails going inland, and the Captain decided to go ashore with twenty soldiers and my companion priest to see some of the interior. Three leagues from the sea they found a beautiful plain

with a spring of water and some Indians, naked and without houses.<sup>64</sup> The company walked about eight leagues and then returned because the rest of the land appeared to be poor mountains with little fruit.

It was decided, after much dispute, to run northward along more of the coast to seek our fortune and not to return to New Spain rapidly and without glory, as those with few obligations had wished. On the day of Saints Peter and Paul,<sup>65</sup> we arrived at the best port that God has on the shores of His seas.<sup>66</sup> It must be over eighteen leagues in circumference, of good depths, and protected from all winds. In the surrounding area there are Indians fairer than the others we saw in other places and more so than those of New Spain.<sup>67</sup> There is fresh water in several places at this port, and there are good mountains and plains in the surrounding area. In conclu-

<sup>64</sup> Indians of the Cora group.

<sup>65</sup> June 29.

<sup>66</sup> Probably Bahía Concepción, the only bay in the Gulf of California approaching Father Cavallero's description.

<sup>67</sup> Probably Indians of the Didio group.

sion, it is a very fine port for commencing settlement. However, since the company saw no riches there, all became disconsolate and clamored contemptibly to return; and therefore, on July second, a council was held and the resolution was made that we should return and that we should report unfavorably on the land of the Californias. Thus, we returned to New Spain lost and without glory. While it had been intended to return to the Port of Chacala where we had embarked, the winds and currents opposed us in such a manner that for all the attempts that were made during many days, we could not make headway at all and were carried northward by the currents. There were some violent storms, and the flagship lost all of its cables and anchors or grapplings which it carried; and considering themselves lost, the crew decided to ground the ship on the coast of Sonora in the area where some pagan and Christian Indians, the Guaymas, live.<sup>68</sup> In this circumstance it was also necessary

<sup>68</sup> Guaymas Indians were the peaceful group occupying the mouth of the Yaqui River.



for the captain's ship to anchor, and the voyage was ended some twenty leagues north of the Yaqui River.<sup>69</sup>

This region of Sonora is not over twelve leagues from the land of the Californias, since from the beach we could clearly see the mountain ranges of the Californias, and since the coasts are so close together, the hills and valleys are of the same region. The more one goes to the north, the closer the land of New Spain reaches toward that of the Californias. From Mazatlán we found eighty leagues of sea passage, and when we came from the Californias to Sonora, we measured twelve leagues. It could be that farther to the north the two lands join and their conquest would be more simplified; I believe this to be the case.<sup>70</sup> We all try to go out to the Christian settlements so that from them we may search for a mode of life. The secular priests and we regular

<sup>69</sup> The Yaqui River was a major landmark of the Sonora coast and was considered as a safe landing place in emergency.

<sup>70</sup> Father Cavallero's belief in the peninsularity of California was unusual, as most geographers of the seventeenth century considered California as an island.

priests search for provisions to return to Mexico to our Province. Some others find ourselves deluded, believing that this voyage has been a dream, since, in less than three months, we began it and ended it, when two years had been spent in preparing it. Our disgrace will shortly be known everywhere. I now end the true report of this tragic voyage in order to write of some of the causes present which brought about its failure, so that they may serve as a warning to those, who, in the future, wish to return to the Californias and so that they may try to remedy them.

## PRINCIPAL CAUSES FOR THE

### *Failure of this Voyage*

THE FIRST and major cause must be found in the Divine Will which was heard because the time determined for the conversion of these people had not yet arrived and because our sins did not permit God to employ His mercy upon them at this time; He did not will that this voyage should be successful. However, leaving these causes as being supernatural, it would be well to discuss the human causes which led to this failure. I find that there were many joint causes and that each one was sufficient to cause failure. I shall state in summation those which occur to me.

The task was very serious since it was no less than that of conquering, pacifying, and converting a large Kingdom (as are the Californias and adjoining areas). This was planned or intended with only a small force of fifty men, the quality of whom I shall discuss later, and with the small capital of six or eight thousand pesos which the

Captain had and which he thought would be sufficient. This can be clearly seen as being imprudence or madness for, as Christ, our life, said, he who wishes to build a tower before building the foundation should look again to see that he has everything necessary to finish it since it will not be his if he begins it and cannot finish it.<sup>71</sup> A King who wishes to mount an army to combat his enemy must do the same if he does not wish to lose or make a fool of himself. The Captain jousted with windmills, considering himself already to hold the title of Lord of the Californias and that he would acquire great wealth with the small amount of capital which I have mentioned; thus this poorly based plan was stopped by the wind alone.

This was enough to cause the failure of this voyage. However to destroy it completely, all of the currents, although contrary among themselves, were wont to join, as in the case of the sons of Job.<sup>72</sup> The voyage failed because of that

<sup>71</sup> St. Luke, 14:28-31.

<sup>72</sup> Job, 1:19.

stated above and because Captain Francisco de Lucenilla was not a man capable of such a task. He was a man without experience at sea nor experience in serious matters on land and therefore could not command in either place. He had no experience in wars or conquests and therefore was unable to achieve any success in such matters. If to reign or govern is, as the politicians say, the art of arts, how could Francisco de Lucenilla, a mere poor gentleman from the Villa of Paradas and raised in poverty without experience in handling serious matters, govern? He possessed only a good will and great compassion which made him vulnerable to anyone and caused others to lose respect for him. He was too cautious and therefore feared the great things and the small ones. He used his authority without consideration for the individual and therefore everyone disliked him. He was contrary in his command and disturbed those men whom he should have pleased and treated those who were of no importance well. He was thoughtful and kind to some for many days and then, in a mo-

ment, lost these friends due to small things done without prudence or cause and therefore had no solid friendships. He opposed both the Church and its clergy, attempting to discredit us by listening to rumors and to troublemakers claiming that this voyage would be a success only if the ministers of God could be done away with. How many Kingdoms have been lost because of this! He did not dare to punish any wrong, no matter how serious, and every day the soldiers lost respect for him as they lost respect for us, the priests. How certain it is that the voyage would fail where there was no respect for the minister of our King and Lord nor for the ministers of God! Since he had but little capital, few supplies were carried; and there was little clothing for the soldiers and little to eat, for the food was reduced to corn and dried meat with worms. Naturally the soldiers, being poorly fed and more poorly dressed, became disgusted. The Captain was partial to those who worked the least, for he treated them well. Those who worked became displeased when they saw that some were re-

quired to work and others were not. He was extremely greedy and everyone knew it. The men believed that if he had wealth, everyone should share in it, and they believed this even more when it was said that he had spent more than twenty-four thousand pesos; actually only a little over twelve thousand had been spent. He had the intention of hiding the wealth so as to usurp His Majesty's fifth<sup>73</sup> and the poor men's pay for their labor. Therefore, God wished to punish him. He proposed in Mexico and in other places that his goal was to convert souls in the Californias, but the truth was that his goal was to enrich himself. The money which he spent belonged to persons who had entrusted it to him in Spain and to His Majesty, and therefore he could not conscientiously begin this conquest with money belonging to others against their wishes. Furthermore, with a young wife and small children in Spain, he had an obligation to

<sup>73</sup> The King's fifth was a twenty percent *ad valorem* tax levied upon the sales of natural resources. While always referred to as the "fifth," the tax often varied from five to thirty percent *ad valorem*.

aid and support them and not spend money on this enterprise, leaving them in poverty. He did not take care with the food supplies nor see to it that the crew ate fish on Fridays, Vigils and during Lent, an act which caused great scandal. He did not see to it that Mass should be said but rather impeded it. The wood from which the ships were built was of poor quality from Compostela.<sup>74</sup> The pay was only harsh language. He had soldiers eat much fruit from the orchards for he thought that they as the King's soldiers, had a common right to property. These facets and many others were seen in the Captain.

We shall see the part that the soldiers played (it was not small). There were few men of great worth (I shall discuss each of them later), and most were but a group of men useless for this enterprise. They were generally men who were foot-loose in New Spain and who came on this voyage just to get something to eat. All who wished to serve, without exception, were re-

<sup>74</sup> Many tropical woods contained the larvae of *broma*, a wood boring worm.



ceived as soldiers, and no thought was given to a man's capabilities nor was he assigned a task; therefore, these men were absolutely useless. There were many men without obligations, and therefore they cared very little about the voyage. There were many from the city of Jerez<sup>75</sup> and many who wished to take command of the others and even replace the Captain (I speak of everyone except those whom I shall mention later). They would start a mutiny over a *tortilla*. They had continuous meetings on the foredeck to cause problems. Very few knew a fear of God nor respect for His ministers. The majority did not want to work since they were lazy or useless, and they disturbed those who were working. They came only to search for pearls, and since they found few, they lost spirit and clamored, "let's go, let's go," without settling. They sought a fine port for the ships with water, firewood, arable land, rich mines, pearl oyster beds, and many Indians all but an arquebus shot<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Jerez de la Frontera.

<sup>76</sup> Approximately sixty yards.

away from the anchorage; and when they did not find all of these things, they said it was a poor place. The terrain of the Californias is unpleasant to the eye; and since we went there during the heat of summer and no wealth nor supplies were found, the men, tired from much work, did not want to stop. Since the Captain and pilots were not versed in similar voyages, they did not bring good lines, anchors, rigging, or sails; and therefore the ships were in poor repair and the crews were disconsolate. There was no one to counsel the Captain correctly, and therefore he erred greatly in what he did. He did not do a thing which later did not seem a blunder. Nevertheless, despite his lack of understanding, the Captain further had the poor judgment of failing to consider the advice of the priests which he carried.

These are causes through which, in my judgment, not only a voyage but a kingdom would fail. But even above and beyond these, there are other causes most grave. One is that the Captain did not comply with the terms of his con-

tract with the Viceroy, despite all of the advice given him in Mexico. He was to carry twenty horses to explore inland; he was to leave a man with two thousand pesos in the port of Chacala to send clothing and supplies rapidly; and, above all, before searching for pearls and mines, he was to go ashore with the men, fortify, and little by little learn the language and go inland when the weather was not so warm. He was to search for wealth later and if a reasonable place to live was found, was to remain; and if no such place was found, he was to return honorably to report on the undesirability of the Californias. He did not comply with any of these things but rather acted to the contrary. They did not carry sufficient equipment, nor did they carry any horses, nor did a single peso remain in New Spain. The first act was to search for pearls without attempting to settle, and since the men did not find what they had hoped for, they caused disturbances. There were no horses to explore inland. The language was not known. The men saw that the Captain did not have the capital to feed or clothe

them, nor did he have supplies to repair the ships. They found themselves at sea and became disconsolate and clamored, "let's go," preferring openly to fail on the voyage rather than expose themselves to suffering the discomforts and risks which I have stated. It was not enough to encourage them by telling them, for example, stories of conquests won by great labors, nor was it enough to reprimand them, nor enough to beg them, for nothing was sufficient to keep the majority from mutiny or clamoring, "let's go." It was only enough that the men of this company were of the following quality:

*Regarding the quality of the persons who came  
on this conquest of the Californias.*

NO ENTERPRISE is gained by a number of persons if they are not as they should be. A few of the good usually do more than many of the bad. On this enterprise there were few men and they were bad. Those aboard the flagship were the following: (1) The first was Captain Francisco de Lucenilla, from the town of Paradas

in Andalucía, a good laborer but bad for this enterprise. (2) Esteban de Silva, the son of a Portuguese, from the Villa of Las Canarias,<sup>77</sup> was the pilot. He was not much of a pilot and was very unrealistic, a man who always spoke of conquering new worlds but never even owned his own shirt. He was a poor worker and was the major cause of the men's disconsolation, as he was always speaking badly of the Californias and of the risk we faced were we not to return to New Spain immediately. His intent was that some of his friends buy the ships so that he might go with them to conquer new worlds and other absurdities. (3) Francisco Ramírez, mate, from Ayamonte, came solely to search for wealth; and as soon as he found that there was none, he clamored to return and mutinied as well as incited mutiny among the mob so that everyone would clamor, "let's go"—a man of bad disposition who could not be satisfied. (4) Joseph Fernández, master of construction, from Portugal, was like the rest; he worked well in the shipyard but was

<sup>77</sup> Cavallero probably means the Canary Islands in this instance.

so noisy that he had the crew harassed. He wanted to control and command everyone so that they would all wait on him as well as have a thousand other honors. When he did not have things his way, all he did was stir up the mob and cause a thousand problems. (5) Domingo de la Rocha was Portuguese and better than all the others on sea and on land; there were few like him on the voyage. (6) Pablo Fernández de Cordoba, from Murcia,<sup>78</sup> was a silk maker, but he could not use his hands or feet because of illness. He had a big tongue and was a great advocate; he always spoke against the Captain and the voyage and in favor of the malcontent mob. (7) Juan Bautista Escorza, who came as ensign of the voyage, was a gentleman from Vizcaya<sup>79</sup> of very good judgment and intentions. He was disgusted with the Captain's actions, but as a young man, he did but a few things of importance. He was well thought of and was very active; he

<sup>78</sup> A major city of southeastern Spain in the province of the same name.

<sup>79</sup> The coastal Basque region of northern Spain.

urged the Captain, who was timid, to punish the bad. He was raised in comfort and therefore could not work with the crew as was necessary.

(8) Juan Montero was from Paradas—a man of little capability, moderate work, and ill from the beginning. (9) Domingo Moreno, from Vinuesa,<sup>80</sup> was a capable man, an example of his region, and a good worker because of good health and also because he had a name to maintain. (10) Joseph de Arroñes, from Navarre,<sup>81</sup> was raised in comfort, worked as much as he could, but always followed the malcontents. (11) Juan Sarmiento, a servant boy, was raised in the country. He was from Ronda<sup>82</sup> with the capacity of a farm boy and was like a sail in the wind; he sided with the Captain and the mob but was a good worker. (12) Juan de Acosta, a creole<sup>83</sup> from Mexico, was a man of few years and less judgment. He was

<sup>80</sup> An old Roman town southeast of Burgos on the Río Duero.

<sup>81</sup> The mountain Basque region on the western Spanish-French border.

<sup>82</sup> A major city in the mountain area of the province of Málaga.

<sup>83</sup> A person of Spanish parentage born in the New World.

a great rogue and was shameless; while he was capable of good work, he rarely exercised this capacity. (13) Don Antonio de Bedoya, from Aracena, a well-intentioned gentleman, was deeply concerned with matters of honor; but he was elderly and could only work as a cook since he had to serve in a way similar to the others who could not do manual labor. (14) Luis Flores, from Seville, was a young man raised in comfort and not much of a worker; but he worked well at what he could because he had a name to maintain. (15) Diego de Salazar, a creole from Aguacatlán<sup>84</sup> in Nueva Galicia,<sup>85</sup> was a young man of little work and bad humor since he was overly presumptuous; nevertheless, he was not one of the worse. (16) Marcos de Valbas, a creole from Chimaltitán<sup>86</sup> mining camp, was well-born, a good worker, and good in all ways and all things. (17) Agustín Quijada, a creole barber from Mex-

<sup>84</sup>In the present Mexican state of Nayarit.

<sup>85</sup>Nueva Galicia included the present Mexican states of Sinaloa, Nayarit, Michoacán, Jalisco, and Colima.

<sup>86</sup>In the present Mexican state of Zacatecas.



ico, was a good person but a poor worker who allowed the mob to influence him. (18) Diego Hurtado, from Triana,<sup>87</sup> was an older man who only worked to eat and was not for this enterprise, although he did more than men younger than he. (19) Francisco Vastos, from San Lucar de Barrameda,<sup>88</sup> was a shoemaker of poor judgment and did not work more than was necessary on this enterprise. (20) Sebastián López, from Baeza,<sup>89</sup> was not able to do manual labor because he was ill; nevertheless, he was well-versed in matters of warfare and the sea. (21) Don Fernando Ponce de León, from the city of Jerez de la Frontera, was a man of poor judgment who was not raised to work and was therefore useless. (22) Don Baltasar de Medina, from the same city, was a good man but was raised in comfort and was not of value for this enterprise. (23) Martín Calderón, a barber from the same city,

<sup>87</sup> The Gypsy district of Seville on the west bank of the Río Guadalquivir.

<sup>88</sup> A major port at the mouth of the Río Guadalquivir.

<sup>89</sup> A major city in the province of Jaen and north of the capital city of the same name.

was a man of bad intentions since all he wished was to mutiny the men and be impudent toward the Captain and the priests. He spoke badly of everyone and on another occasion was the cause of a mutiny against Don Bernardo Bernal which brought about the failure of the voyage;<sup>90</sup> he did the same on this voyage. God free us from such a cursed man! (24) Andrés Pérez, from the same city, was a working man but perverted his fellow countrymen and therefore was bad. (25) Don Juan de Ibarra, a creole from Guadalajara,<sup>91</sup> had poor judgment but was not the worst man on this enterprise. (26) Alonsillo was the Captain's cabin boy. (27) Juan de Fragalva, *mestizo*,<sup>92</sup> was a good worker but was too old. (28) Juanillo, a mestizo, was an agile boy. (29) Damianillo, a mulatto<sup>93</sup> from Guadalajara, was lazy and good for nothing. (30) Alonso de Glaguo-toca was not a bad boy. (31) Periquillo was an

<sup>90</sup> See *infra*, notes 5 and 48.

<sup>91</sup> Guadalajara herein refers to the capital of the present Mexican state of Jalisco.

<sup>92</sup> A person born of Spanish-Indian parentage.

<sup>93</sup> A person born of Spanish-Negro parentage.

Indian boy. (32) Two orphan servant boys, (33) an Indian woman, and (34) another half-Spanish woman were of poor judgment even though they were not poor workers at what they did. These were the people who embarked on the flagship. Only God knows the problems which they caused by their foolishness and the continuous quarrels among themselves and with the Captain.

On the admiral ship, together with my companion priest, the following embarked: (35) Captain Alonso Mateos, who was in command, was from the city of Jerez de la Frontera. He was a man of some age and experience but was in poor condition and disgusted the crew. He only attended to eating, drinking, and speaking badly of the priests—he was a bad man. (36) Juan Mateos, his nephew, was of very poor judgment and was good for nothing, always disturbing the others, using his position as the commander's nephew. (37) Juan de Jerez, a young boy, had little judgment but was a good worker. (38) Rodrigo Camacho, from Jerez, was a good man with good intentions and good for everything. (39)

Andrés Pérez, from Seville, was very ill, of poor judgment, and was worthless. (40) Martín Delgado, from Andalucía,<sup>94</sup> was old and ill, of little judgment and stubborn—worthless. (41) Juan Felipe, a creole from Guadalajara, was a good boy, strong and a hard worker. (42) Juan Núñez, from Seville, was a good young man, a hard worker on land and sea but of poor judgment for following the mob. (43) Juan de León, from Seville, was a carpenter but was overly presumptuous and not good for this enterprise. (44) Juan de Anaya, from Mexico, was a pharmacist, good for pharmacies but not for conquests. (45) Juan de Valenzuela, from Seville, was a humble young man but not for such labors. (46) Don Alonso Rojel del Prieto, from Santa María,<sup>95</sup> was a sick gentleman who was unable to work. (47) Francisco García was an unfortunate pilot, ill and with poor judgment but good at sea. (48) Francisco Martín, from Seville, was of little cap-

<sup>94</sup> The extreme southern region of Spain to the south of the Sierra Morena.

<sup>95</sup> A major port on the north shore of the Bay of Cádiz.

ability but a good worker. (49) Agustín Maldonado, from Mexico, was a carpenter and not a bad worker. (50) Pedro de Salamanca, from Andalucía, was a noble and presumptuous young man and was not for such tasks. (51) Agustín Guerra was an honorable mestizo, a great worker, and good in all ways. (52) Diego Parras, an Indian from Jalpa,<sup>96</sup> was a good worker and acted like a good man. He was married to the Indian woman (53) Juana, who helped out well on sea and land. On the flagship also embarked (54) Gaspar de Pastranza, from Castilla la Vieja.<sup>97</sup> He was good for nothing at sea or on land and always followed the mob.

These were the persons who came on this conquest of the Californias; the prudent reader should judge if they were suitable for it when there were no Indian allies nor persons with experience to do the work which was necessary. It is certain that the rapid failure of something which cost so many months of labor shall be

<sup>96</sup> In the present Mexican state of Zacatecas.

<sup>97</sup> The region of Spain between Burgos and the Sierra Guadarrama.

appreciated. This was an enterprise which required many persons—all good workers. How could it be successful with so few persons of such poor quality? It required, as well as many persons, considerable capital, not the small amount which the Captain had. I must confess that some worked hard and some acted like good men; however, these were few. There were few good workers, few with a good name, and many bad men which, by necessity, caused the failure of this enterprise. Never can a few bad men accomplish anything of importance.

I sincerely feel, as do the most able men, that the Kingdom of the Californias should not be converted nor conquered by anyone other than the King, our Lord (may God guard him). The goal should be the conversion of all of the souls there; and if great wealth in pearls and mines (as is indicated at sea and on land) is found, all the better. His Majesty will be able to overcome whatever difficulties have been encountered by private persons who have gone there. Many people and much livestock can be settled in various

areas, and the Crown can cover the expenses for a few years until the land bears fruit. A stipend can be paid to the settlers as is done in the Philippines, New Mexico, Sonora, and other areas. These are things which private individuals, who spend a small amount and expect a one hundred to one return, do not do. The arrival in the Californias should be during the rainy season, so that the water may be used; and with horses all of the interior, or most of it, may be explored since there is no resistance from the Indians. The settlers who come should be hard workers and should be paid so that they know that if they do not realize great gains nor find riches, they will be paid for their labor and will not become disconsolate as our men did. Furthermore, with the hope that His Majesty will pay for their labors and heroic acts of conquest, even though there are few fruits, the soldiers will remain satisfied since no person works if there is no premium. May God, through His mercy, give His Majesty peace and free him from wars so that he may employ his patronage in this enterprise for the

continuation of conversions. The pagans of these areas not only do not resist but receive us with pleasure and are sad when we do not settle in their land as was the case on our voyage.

On this voyage we cruised more than two hundred leagues along the coast from Cabo San Lucas to the large bay across from Sonora which we called San Pedro and San Pablo.<sup>98</sup> Along this coast of the Californias, there are many small bays and some large ports. There are areas with water and small trees, and areas with large plains which might be suitable for livestock and farming. The most secure system is that of bringing, from the beginning, all of the necessities for human survival and leaving in New Spain a fund for remittances until the fruits of the land and livestock which may be raised in the Californias are known. All should come knowing that the first two years should be for the conversion of souls, learning of the language, and the exploration of the land from coast to coast. The latter is, I believe, a short journey, as is af-

<sup>98</sup> See *infra*, note 66.



firmed by those versed in cosmography, since both coasts run southeast-northwest; and therefore, California is long and narrow.<sup>99</sup> The Captain and the others on this voyage sought a secure port where, at water's edge, there would be fresh water, forests, farmland, mines, pearl oyster beds, and many peaceful Indians. This was something which in all the world cannot be found, since ports are usually only for the security of ships, and other things are sought inland. The coasts of Sonora are worse than those of the Californias and are less pleasant to the eye, but going inland twenty leagues, there are all forms of commodities and wealth; the same could be true of the Californias. May God will that His Majesty take charge of this enterprise as his own so that it will be successful and not employ some other method, if for no other reason than that which I discuss in the following treatise, with my Sacred Religion taking charge of the conversions as it does in Holy Places. All

<sup>99</sup> See *infra*, note 70.

private parties would fail at this without any gains.

That which has been written as well as some of those who have gone to the Californias at other times excessively extol the riches and other commodities. There has been no inland exploration because the coast is unpleasant to the eye—barren hills and badlands and small trees. Nevertheless, there are sites suitable for beginning settlement. There is fresh water and firewood; and there are trees with which to build houses. Six leagues from Cabo San Lucas, there are fine meadows next to a river or wash, and there are trees and fresh water. It would be well to form a settlement there as well as at Cabo San Lucas where ships could anchor.<sup>100</sup> In the last port which we saw, a settlement could be established quite easily, since there are many commodities there—peaceful Indians, good anchorage, abundant water and firewood, hills which promise minerals, and reasonably good meadows. The coast of Sonora is so near that there would not

<sup>100</sup>See *infra*, note 60.

be twelve leagues of passage for livestock and supplies.<sup>101</sup> In summation, there is no better area on the entire coast of the Californias. We did not stop there because riches were not found nor was it known how close we were to the coast of Sonora for supplies; the men were disgusted and tired from the heat and work and therefore clamored, "let's go."

The pearls which were traded from the Indians on this voyage were few and poor. I believe that the same has been true of previous voyages because the Indians have very few pearls and, although there are many oyster beds along the coasts of the Californias, pearls are not found in all oysters.<sup>102</sup> I avow that I have seen many oysters opened and no pearls removed, and it is foolish to spend large sums for building

<sup>101</sup>This estimate is greatly exaggerated. From Punta Concepción to Punta Lobos, Sonora, the distance is about eighty miles.

<sup>102</sup>The majority of pearl fishing voyages resulted in exploration with very little pearl fishing or trading. The greatest return from pearl fishing was realized by Francisco de Ortega; however, even the pearls found by Ortega were of poor quality; they had been obtained from Indians who opened the oysters in fires and most of the pearls were burned. AGI, Patronato 30.

ships and other necessities in order to search for pearls. If the cause of God were carried out among these pagans, it is certain that His Majesty would give, in recompense, many pearls and much wealth in this life and glory in the other. Nevertheless, those persons who, up to now, have gone to the Californias have sought riches and nothing else and have failed since they did not find them. Those who attempt these voyages are poor men and poor men can do little when much is necessary. All of the California Indians are poor and naked, and there is no need to seek riches from them for each gives what he has. I conclude by stating again that no private individual should attempt to carry out this conquest; and particularly they should not be poor, since then all will be ruined and fail as has happened on more than twenty voyages which have been made.<sup>103</sup> However, if Our King and Lord (may God guard him) counsels all those who go, they will do the greatest service to God imaginable by

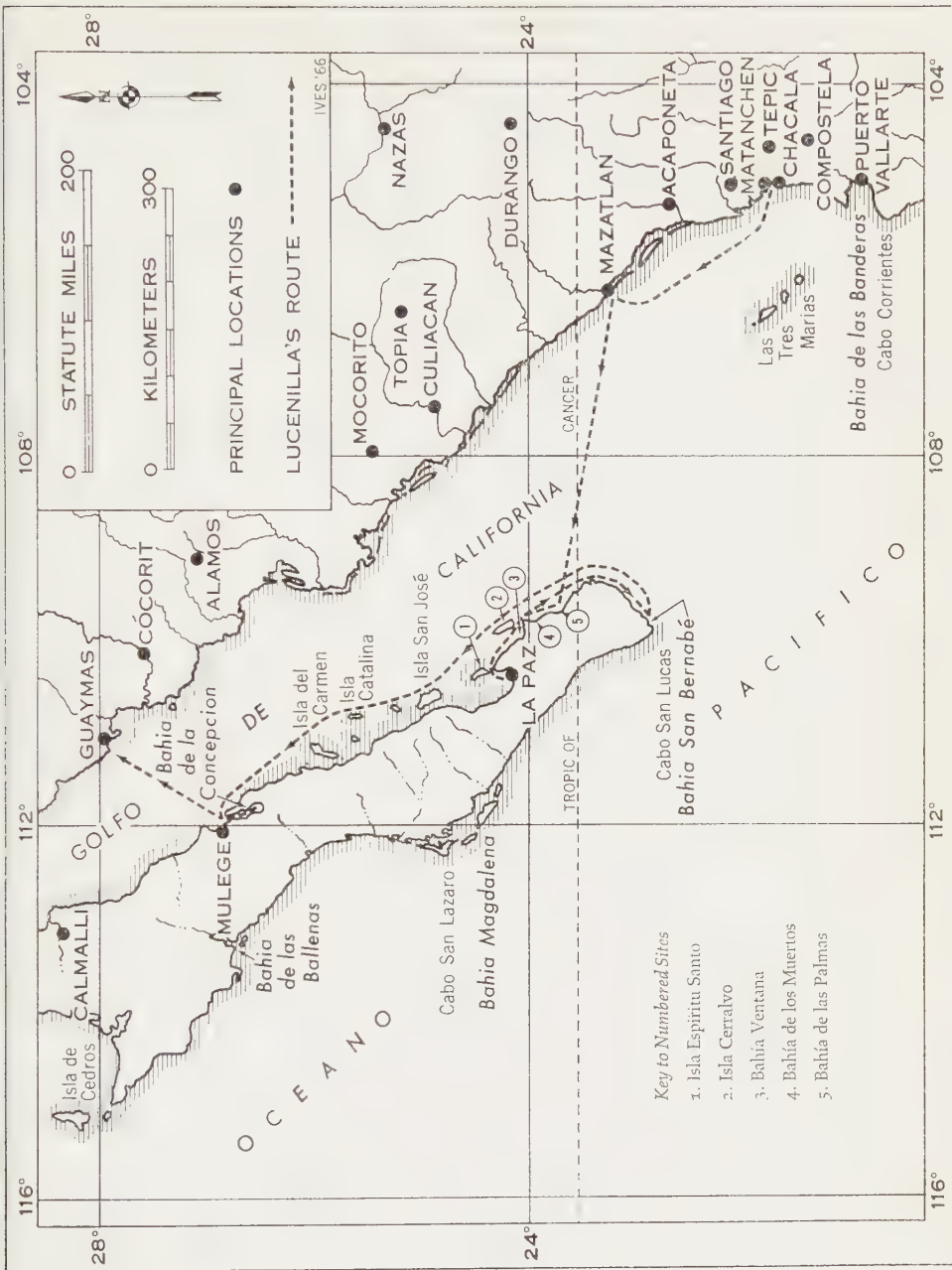
<sup>103</sup>Since the number of legal voyages to the Californias (Upper and Lower) could not exceed sixteen, Cavallero either exaggerates this figure or includes illegal voyages.

removing a great number of souls from the devil's power. With this I end the true report of the unhappy voyage to the Californias, and avow that it is not my desire in this or any other of my writings to contradict the sentiment of Our Holy Mother Roman Catholic Church. Terminated in the mining camp of San Miguel, Province of Sonora,<sup>104</sup> on September twentieth 1668.

FR. JUAN CAVALLERO CARRANCO

<sup>104</sup>Presently known as San Miguel Zapotitlán, Sinaloa.













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