

FRAY MARCOS DE NIZA: IN PURSUIT OF FRANCISCAN UTOPIA IN AMERICAS

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SUMMARY

In this paper we follow Fray Marcos de Niza from Nice, his native city, to Peru and Ecuador, with Francisco Pizarro and Pedro de Alvarado. The cloudiest part of his biography, his life in Nice and Peru, is enlightened. Fray Marcos lost works are evoked, through Juan de Velasco's History of the kingdom of Quito. His role in the defense of Indians, his testimony as direct witness during the conquest of Peru, his place in the Franciscan Utopia in Americas and his closed relationship with Bartolomé de Las Casas are shown. Finally his motivation on writing his Relation of Cibola is discussed, with a last question: was he a conquistador?

SUMARIO

En esto artículo seguimos a Fray Marcos de Niza, desde Nice, donde nació, hasta Perú y Ecuador, con Francisco Pizarro y Pedro de Alvarado. La parte mas nebulosa de su biografía, en Nice y en Perú, esta alumbrada. Las relaciones perdidas de Fray Marcos están evocadas, utilizando la Historia del reino de Quito de Juan de Velasco. Mostramos lo que hizo en la defensa de los Indianos; tratamos de su testimonio como testigo directo de la conquista del Perú; hablamos de su puesto en la Utopía franciscana en las Américas, y de su próxima relación con Bartolomé de Las Casas. Finalmente discutimos de su motivación cuando escribió su Relación de Cibola, con una ultima pregunta: fué Fray Marcos un conquistador?

FRAY MARCOS IN NICE

Fray Marcos was born in Nice about 1495. Nice, whose history diverged from that of Provence in 1388, was then a part of the House of Savoy, an independent state straddling the boundaries of today's France, Italy, and Switzerland. On the French side, this included the County of Nice (Barcelonnette, Colmars-Les-Alpes, and the valley of Ubaye); Bresse and Bugey, and finally Savoy (with Chambery, original fief and capital of the Duchy, until it was replaced by Torino). On the Italian side Savoy encompassed the Piemont and the valley of Aoste. And in Switzerland, some fiefs around Geneva. Nice was at the time the only Mediterranean harbor of the States of Savoy. Marcos was thus a citizen of the Duchy of Savoy, a state that no longer exists, tugged between two antagonistic powers, the France of François I and the Empire of Charles V.

We know almost nothing about his first years; in a letter that Niza (1885) wrote to Juan de Zumárraga in 1546, we learn that he was an orphan. As for Marcos' childhood, we can presume that, educated in a county orphanage, perforce a religious institution, he was chosen there to enter an order. Like most natives of Nice, he certainly spoke French, Italian, and Nissart (the local idiom). And he was to learn Latin while studying theology. This knowledge of romance languages was to aid him later in learning Spanish, though his relatively advanced age at that time was to be an obstacle to his writing it very well.

Once again, we know very little about his formative and novice years; the Franciscan annalists say that he became an Observant of the Order of Friars Minor of the Province of Saint Louis in Aquitaine. Indeed, throughout the sixteenth century Nice was part of the Franciscan Province of Aquitaine, despite its separation from Provence in 1388. According to oral tradition, Franciscan presence in Nice began in 1214, when Saint Francis himself, returning from Spain, left some disciples. These first Franciscans settled in the district of Lympia, in the church of Saint Recoubéré. In 1250, they moved to the foot of the hill of the castle. Aside from harassment in 1256 by Nice's bishop, the history of this convent presents few remarkable events. There were several expansions and episodes of embellishment of the building. Meanwhile the original rule of the order was replaced with a certain laxness. As they abandoned the life of common poverty and a prescribed austerity, through exemptions and mitigations, the friars gradually transformed into Conventuals, devoting their lives to theoretical works and to theological studies. Over time they lost contact with the populace at large.

However, the people of Nice, who no longer recognized in these Conventuals the spirit of the founder of their order, requested the return of Observants (that is, those who strictly respected the rule of Saint Francis). In 1460, Anne of Lusignan, Duchess of Savoy and Queen of Cyprus, having obtained authorization from Pope Pius II, built the Observants of Nice a new convent. Nice was then enjoying a period of peace, that everyone expected would be of long duration. On the strength of that expectation, the new convent was built, very imprudently, outside the protective walls of the city, in a suburb situated to the west of Nice, in a place called The Old Carme. The Observants occupied their new convent in 1461. It is therefore very likely in this convent of The Holy Cross, the only monastery of Observants in Nice, that Marcos spent his novitiate, and took the habit of the Franciscans, as Béri reported it (1938).

The convent of The Holy Cross was to become well known less than a century after its building. In 1538 the Congress of Nice brought together the King of France, François I; Emperor Charles V; the Duke of Savoy, Charles III; and Pope Paul III. The goal of the congress was to find a resolution to the continual state of war between the King and the Emperor, known as the War of Italy. The negotiations attempted to establish an arrangement for sharing or dividing the Duchy of Savoy and the states of northern Italy.

François I took up residence at Villeneuve-Loubet, with his army, his wife, Eleonore of Austria (sister of Charles V), and a very numerous suite. When Charles V arrived in Nice, he asked to be lodged in the castle, for reasons of security. Charles III, the Duke of Savoy, refused the emperor's request. In fact the duke was himself fortified in the Castle, then an impregnable citadel in the heart of the city. Charles V therefore prudently chose to locate at Villefranche, an harbor very close to Nice, from where he refused to depart, since he was protected only by his fleet.

As for Paul III, he was obliged to establish his suite in the only house large enough to lodge him, the convent of The Holy Cross. The citizens of Nice, frightened by the presence of so many armies, had refused the pope access to the city and had closed its gates. The Pope's intention was to serve as ambassador between François I and Charles V, traveling between

Villeneuve-Loubet and Villefranche. In this endeavor he did not hesitate to take with him the queen of France to sway her brother the emperor. Thanks to the success of his embassy, a "truce of ten years" was finally concluded on June 18, 1538.

But the destruction of the convent of the Holy Cross was soon to follow its pivotal role in the congress. Nice was such a tempting prize for François I that, four years later, he ordered Jean-Baptiste Grimaldi, Lord of Ascros, to resume hostilities. In 1542, therefore, the ephemeral truce was broken. The following year, after several successive violations of the treaty of 1538, the French, under the command of the duke of Enghien, besieged Nice, while the Turkish fleet, allied to France, blockaded the harbor. The citadel resisted, but the city of Nice was looted and burnt, its environs devastated. The convent of The Holy Cross, without protection, capitulated in 1543, under assault from the Turkish corsair Khayr-Al-Din, "Red Beard". For some time thereafter, the convent sheltered the attackers, and the Turkish Crescent floated from its summit. The sack that followed was complete, the convent was entirely destroyed by fire.



Figure 1. Nice besieged in 1543, drawing by Eneas Veco. At left, the convent of the Holy Cross.

The Observant Franciscans, having saved some relics, resettled in 1546 in a safer place, where their monastery is today, in Cimiez. In 1568 the citizens of Nice erected a monument where the original convent had stood, to commemorate the visit of the Pope to Nice. A cross under a dome supported by four columns, the monument has given the name to the suburb where it is located, Marble Cross. Today it is the only tangible reminder of the one-time existence of the convent of The Holy Cross where Marcos likely took the habit.

For the study of Marcos' career, the main consequence of the sack of The Holy Cross was the almost total destruction of its archives. That makes discovery of documents dealing with the Nice period of the friar's life very unlikely. Indeed, even if we suppose that the Franciscans were able in 1543 to save some archives from The Holy Cross and to transfer them later to Cimiez, successive expulsions of the friars from their new convent (during the French Revolution, which saw desertion of the monastery from 1794 to 1816; and then as a result of dissolution of religious congregations by Victor Emmanuel II, king of Piedmont-Sardinia, in 1855) leave little hope that any will now be found. Research conducted by the

curator of Cimiez' Franciscan Memorial Museum, Mr. Roland Marghieri, as well as made by myself, approaching the Province of Saint Thomas (Torino) and the Province of Saint Louis, have been unfruitful. In addition, the Archivio Generale dei Frati Minori in Rome holds no documents concerning Fray Marcos and confirms that the archives of the Province of Saint Louis were destroyed at the time of the French Revolution.

We must admit that Marcos' surname will be forever unknown. Also will be his activities and studies at the convent, and indeed his thinking, his experience, and any other information about him before 1530. All of that could, of course, have contributed to a better understanding of his subsequent work. Certainly he was an experienced friar when he has been chosen by his superiors to go to Peru with the title of commissary general. As such, he had authority over other friars and was responsible for the conversion to christianity of an entire country to be conquered and for establishing there the permanent presence of his Order. Nevertheless, for us he is an anonymous, unknown friar about to stand out in History!

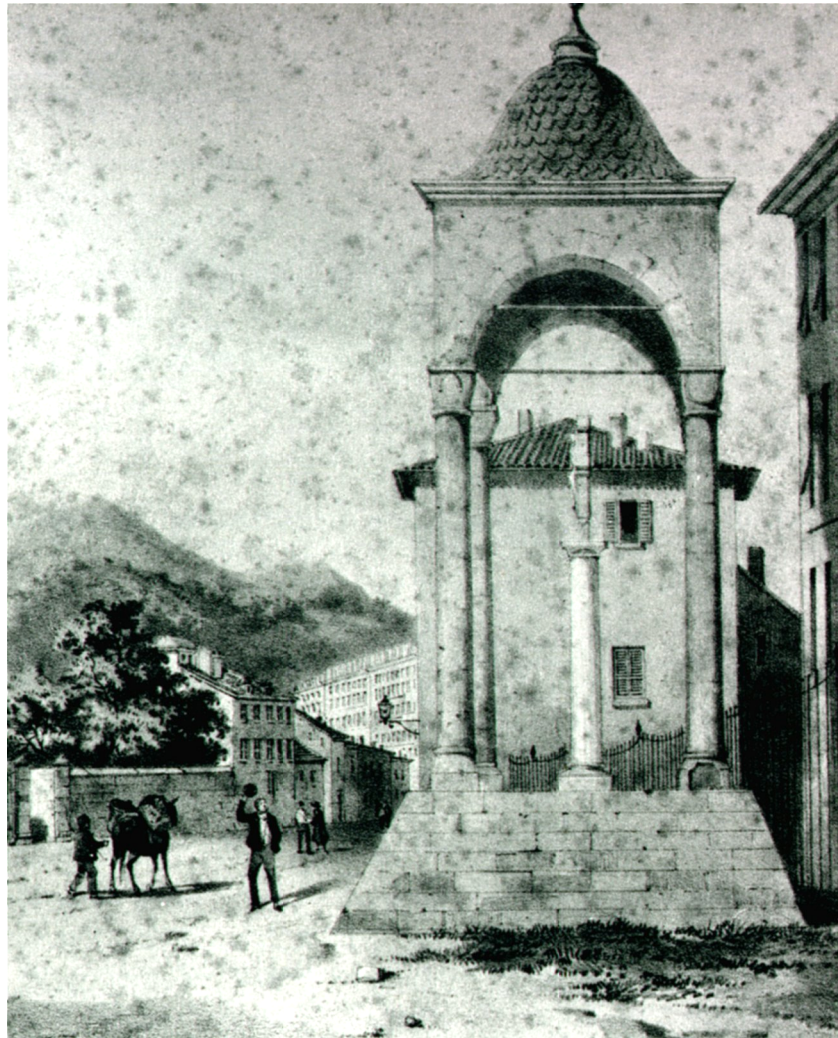


Figure 2. The Marble Cross, from a lithography by Daniaud.

FRAY MARCOS IN PERU AND ECUADOR

Arrival in Tumbes

In 1522, Spaniards had begun to search for a prosperous land to the south of Nicaragua. In November 1524, under the authority of Governor Pedrarias Dávila, Francisco Pizarro led the first expedition along the Pacific coast of today's Colombia. There was little immediate profit. Information obtained from native sources, however, led Pizarro to believe in a richer land farther south. One Franciscan, Fay Juan de Los Santos, participated in this first expedition. In 1526, a company including Pizarro, Diego de Almagro, and an ecclesiastic, Hernando de Luque, launched a second expedition. Again under field command of Pizarro, this expedition coasted farther south. Confronted by the wildness of nature, members of the expedition suffered extreme hunger and sickness. Near the end of the year, though, expedition pilot Bartolomé Ruiz approached a great sailing raft with a ten of Indians on board. From them came the first tangible signs of a prosperous civilization: silver mirrors, gold vases and cups, and dyed cloth of very fine wool.

The expedition ultimately reached the Indian city of Acatames in northern Ecuador. However, the Spaniards were in such a state of weakness that they were unable to subdue the city, and they retired to Gallo Island off the southern coast of Colombia. From there Almagro returned to Panama to recruit reinforcements. Complaints of ill treatment of expedition members came to the ears of Pedro de Los Ríos, Pedrarias' successor. In response, in 1527 he dispatched two vessels to Gallo to repatriate everyone who wanted to return. Pizarro argued in favor of staying on the island and convinced a small group of companions to do so. As a result, thirteen Spaniards established themselves on the neighboring island of Gorgona. Resupplied, they waited there for reinforcements.

Some months later Ruiz returned with a caravel, but without other troops. During the first half of 1528 Pizarro, the thirteen diehards and the sailors with Ruiz scouted the coast of Peru as far as Tumbes, where they acquired their first interpreters. The first embassies sent out by Pizarro and led by Alonso de Molina and Pedro de Candía returned with news of fortresses, temples, gold, and beautiful women. The Spanish force paraded in the streets of Tumbes. Pizarro ordered that its residents and their goods be respected. Then Spaniards performed coastal reconnaissance in the caravel, before returning to Tumbes, where Molina and others established themselves.

Pizarro then returned to Spain, where he remained from the end of 1528 till January 1530. On July 26, 1529, he obtained from Charles V the appointment as Governor for life and General Captain of Peru, now called New Castilla. The authority he was granted equaled that of a viceroy. In his absence from the New World, Almagro and Ruiz recruited an expeditionary force, finding the financing and signing up the necessary men. Thus, in January 1531 an expedition of three vessels, 180 men, and 30 horses left Panama under Pizarro's command. Almagro stayed behind in Panama to recruit further reinforcements. On the northern coast of Ecuador the expedition attacked the city of Coaque. A rich booty of gold and silver was taken there and sent back to Nicaragua and Panama with vessels that were to bring expected reinforcements.

Meanwhile, the religious orders had not remained inactive. Six Dominicans had accompanied Pizarro in his return trip from Spain. In March 1531, two additional Dominicans and two Franciscans arrived at León de Nicaragua with orders from their superiors to leave for Peru (Tibesar, 1953:7). While awaiting departure, they founded monasteries for their respective orders in Nicaragua. Before the end of May 1531, Licenciado Castañeda authorized the friars' departure for Peru (Tibesar, 1953:8).

Sebastián de Belalcázar was preparing at the time to depart to join Pizarro in Peru. He had previously attempted an unsuccessful landing in northern Ecuador in November 1530 with two vessels and 30 men, including a dozen horsemen. Belalcázar was a long-time veteran of the Indies, having held the title of captain for years. He chose not to join an expedition that his rival Hernando de Soto was preparing in Panama. Belalcázar left Nicaragua on a vessel owned by Juan Fernández, taking with him the Dominicans and Franciscans. After the customary stop in Panama, where the number of friars was augmented, Belalcázar rendezvoused with Pizarro's force at Coaque.

Who were the friars who arrived in Peru with Belalcázar? Among the Dominicans, the only one to be clearly identified is Fray Bernardino de Minaya, who said of himself (Tibesar, 1953:9) that he was the friar who founded the convent of his order in León de Nicaragua. His purpose in going to Peru was to promulgate a royal decree that forbade the enslavement of Indians. He had at least one unidentified companion, who could possibly have been Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas (Vargas, 1948), though this is strongly contested by most historians. These Dominicans would join the other friars of their order already taken to Peru by Pizarro.

Identifying the Franciscans attached to Belalcázar is more problematic. The Franciscans had planned to arrive in Peru in force, in the same way *Los Doce* (the first twelve Franciscans) had entered Mexico. And it was probably a dozen of them, led by Fray Marcos de Niza, who disembarked at Coaque. Very quickly, relations between the friars and Pizarro deteriorated; the decree forbidding Indian enslavement carried by Minaya, was received icily by the conquistadors, who had already begun very profitable trade in Indian women in Coaque (Clemence, 1932). It is also very likely that the friars criticized the levies made by Spaniards on the island of La Puná, where they had gone from Coaque. Pizarro's reaction was swift and without appeal: he withheld the friars' rations. This confrontation precipitated the departure of the friars; most reembarking for Panama. They took advantage of the return sailing of boats that had just brought additional reinforcements led by Hernando de Soto. Thus, on February 25, 1532, Licenciado de la Gama (Tibesar, 1953:6) wrote to the Empress:

The Dominican and Franciscan friars that left from Nicaragua for Peru returned fifteen days ago; and they speak very badly of the way that Pizarro governs.

Minaya and other Dominicans returned to Panama, leaving only Fray Vicente Valverde, close to Pizarro and admitted to his council, to represent their order in the conquest of Peru. Meanwhile, the number of Franciscans was almost cut in half. To stay as twelve in a hostile country without the endorsement of Pizarro, would have meant certain failure. A reduced staff might take the chance.

In Panama, those Franciscans who withdrew from Peru were to meet one of their brethren coming from New Spain on the way to the General Chapter of Toulouse, held there in May 1532. This is why the Vicar General of Franciscans, Nicholas Herborn, could announce in his sermon to the Chapter (Herborn, 1933) as well as in his "True Relation of New Islands" (Herborn, 1532):

A minister of Friars Minor has settled in Túmbez, with five friars.

That minister was Fray Marcos de Niza, as he revealed himself (Niza, 1958):

... one of the first religious to have entered with the first Christians the said provinces [Peru].

Who were the Franciscans who accompanied Fray Marcos? Lists of his companions, varying from four to ten have been published, by Buenaventura de Salinas (1630), Wadding (1931-34, XVI), and Córdova de Salinas (1957). I accept the opinion of Antonine Tibesar (1953:14-15), that the most likely lists are those published separately by Pablo Pastells (1919)

and Manuel de Odriozola (1873) who added two names on Córdova de Salinas' list. Their complete list comprises, besides Fray Marcos de Niza as superior, twelve other names:

Fray Juan de Monzón, Fray Francisco de Los Angeles, Fray Francisco de la Cruz, Fray Francisco de Santana, Fray Pedro Portugués, Fray Alonso de Escarena, Fray Francisco de Marchena, Fray Francisco de Aragón, Fray Mateo de Jumilla, Fray Alonso de Alcanizes, Fray Pedro de Cabellos, and Fray Antonio de Aro (or Haro).

Although we find traces of these Franciscans in the history of Peru at various dates, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of this list, nor are we able to specify which were the five to remain in Tumbéz with Fray Marcos. Franciscans themselves are largely responsible for our ignorance of these points. Little interested in pointing out their merits, or in publishing their works or in preserving their archives, it was only at the beginning of the seventeenth century that the Franciscans appointed their first archivist, Fray Córdova de Salinas, who had to reconstitute the entire history of the first decades in Peru.

Cajamarca

The Spaniards under Pizarro remained some while in Tumbéz, but were obliged to leave, judging it insecure. They founded a city, San Miguel, near the Indian settlement of Piura. Then they marched to Cajamarca, where they met the "Lord of all lands", the Inca Atahualpa. Though the Spaniards were not aware of it at the time, their coming occurred at a very opportune moment.

First, at the end of the 1520s an epidemic of smallpox, introduced to America by Europeans, had considerably weakened the country. One of the first victims had been the Inca Huayna Cápac, Atahualpa's father. He had got news of the presence of Spaniards in South America during the Pizarro's second expedition. After several decades spent in Quito, his last territorial conquest, Huayna Cápac had finally decided to return to Cuzco, his ancient capital. With the announcement of Pizarro's landing, the messenger brought smallpox germs, of which the Inca very shortly became a victim. Brought back to Quito, he died there, in December 1525.

Second, a fierce civil war pitted partisans of two of Huayna Cápac's sons, Huascar and Atahualpa, against each other. They had previously shared governance in the name of their father. As soon as the news of the death of the Inca was known, the court in Cuzco chose Huascar as the new ruler. Meanwhile, in Quito, Atahualpa took control of the army and held the newly conquered regions of Colombia and Ecuador.

It is necessary, before proceeding, to refer to the work of Juan de Velasco. This Ecuadorian Jesuit, born in Riobamba, devoted his life to preparing a monumental testimony to the glory of his native country, his *History of the Kingdom of Quito*. Begun in Ecuador and finished in exile in Faenza, Italy, between 1767 and 1790, this book attempted to rescue the kingdom of Quito from oblivion. While the history of the Inca empire and Cuzco had been largely written as early as the sixteenth century, no one had taken the trouble to write Quito's history. Velasco's *History* has three parts: "Natural History", "Ancient History" (covering the period from the origins of the kingdom of Quito to the Spanish conquest of Colombia), and "Modern History" (from the end of the Spanish conquest to 1767).

One of Velasco's main sources for the section on "Ancient History" was Fray Marcos de Niza. Indeed, Velasco himself wrote (1996:213):

In a word: there is only one history that can be called history of the ancient kingdom of Quito and of the civil wars of the two brothers, it is that of Fray Marcos de Niza.

Velasco referred to five documents attributed to Fray Marcos that he used as sources (Niza, circa 1534):

- 1) *The two lineages of the Lords of Peru and Quito;*
- 2) *History of the conquest of the province of Peru;*
- 3) *History of the conquest of the province of Quito;*
- 4) *Rites and ceremonies of the Indians;*
- 5) *Supporting letters on the work accomplished in the provinces of Peru and the Cuzco.*

Velasco, however, appears to be the only historian ever to have seen these documents.

Since the content of his "Ancient History" is quite different from the traditional historiography of the conquest, a hot controversy has ensued between defenders of Velasco, representatives of strong indigenist Ecuadorian thought, and his opponents, partisans of a Spanish or Peruvian vision of the history of Peru and Ecuador. His detractors accuse Velasco of having falsified the existence of the Marcos de Niza documents. In their view, having noticed similarities in the works of López de Gómara (1965), the cacique Don Jacinto Collahuaso (17xx), and Dr. Bravo Saravia (17xx), Velasco assumed the existence of a common source, a Franciscan whose presence in Peru and Ecuador was certified by Las Casas: Fray Marcos de Niza. Velasco then, according to his detractors, attributed fictitious works to Fray Marcos, in which he claimed to find the information that he needed to support his own writings and challenge other historians, without risking contradiction. His "Ancient History", in this view, would thus be a blend of fantasy, the portion attributed to Fray Marcos, and information from well known sources (the Inca Garcilaso (1963), Pedro de Cieza de León (1984), Francisco López de Gómara, the Father Josef de Acosta (1590), and William Robertson (1999), as well as from some very seldom used sources, but ones recognized as genuine (the cacique Jacinto Collahuaso, Dr. Bravo Saravia). The aim of Velasco's purported fraud would have been to put the glory of Ecuador's history on a par with that of Peru.

To these charges Velasco's defenders reply that it is possible that he had Marcos' texts in his possession. Certainly, there is in the Jesuit archives in Quito an inventory of goods that Jesuits brought with them when they were expelled from Quito in 1767. Velasco appears to have been authorized to take with him 27 books and four manuscripts of the conquest and two bundles of linen for his personal use. Among these manuscripts, or well concealed in the linen bundles, he could have taken with him Fray Marcos de Niza's manuscripts. Even after the expulsion of Jesuits from the empire, Spanish king Charles III commissioned Velasco to write a history of the kingdom of Quito. His status as official historian to the Crown allowed Velasco access to archives, like Salamanca's one, that also could have included papers of Fray Marcos.

Furthermore, Velasco's history was submitted to the Royal Academy of History, which gave its endorsement. Though this does not certify Velasco's work, it is, in effect, a statement of conformity, proof that what he wrote was not glaringly false. None of the twenty members of the academy made the least insinuation of falsification. We note finally that there needs to be some source for the information Velasco attributes to Marcos concerning such topics as the birth of Atahualpa, the battle of Cajamarca, and the death of Atahualpa. Collahuaso, Saravia and Velasco himself, who are born long after the events of conquest, could, perforce, only work from documents. Other conceivable sources among Marcos' contemporaries, Las Casas and Gómara, for instance, were not witnesses of what they reported. Velasco's attribution of his manuscript sources to Fray Marcos appears therefore entirely plausible. The debate, however, is far from over. Only eventual discovery of the lost manuscripts would permit definitive closure of the discussion. Be that as it may, in writing about Marcos it

would be imprudent not to discuss what Velasco reports. We must bear in mind that what he reveals to is provisional. And we will try, whenever possible, to confirm or discredit his statements, by comparison with other sources.

With that we return to the narrative of events in Quito. Huascar was the legitimate son of Huayna Cápac and his first wife, the *Coya* (empress) Rava-Ocillo. Regarding the birth of Atahualpa, we find many theories generally confirming his bastardy or, at least, his second rank (Boriello, 1993), but that was not unusual. The stability of the Inca empire was built on a system of numerous alliances, the Inca marrying or taking as concubines the daughters of the heads of important families and tribes, and Huayna Cápac supposedly had several hundred such children. Only male children of the *Coya* or princesses of the highest rank were addressed as Inca.

Fray Marcos, in "The two lineages of the Lords of Peru and Quito", as reported by Velasco, wrote down a version at odds with those who find in Atahualpa's supposed illegitimacy a justification for the Spanish conquest. According to Marcos through Velasco, Atahualpa was the son of Huayna Cápac and Paccha, daughter of the last king of Quito, Cacha Duchicela, fifteenth Scyri (title of the lords of Quito), defeated by Huayna Cápac. By thus marrying Paccha, Huayna Cápac would have therefore become king of Quito, sixteenth Scyri, by marriage and not by conquest. Atahualpa, as male offspring of that marriage, was, therefore, the seventeenth Scyri, legitimate heir of the kingdom of Quito.

Many historians, relying on succession rules of the European courts, have presented Atahualpa as an usurper. In this view, his power being illegitimate, the conquest needed no justification. Recognizing native succession rules that legitimate transfer of power through the mother, Fray Marcos, by way of Velasco, asserted the opposite conclusion. In either case, however, the conclusion is an eurocentric interpretation of Incas' practices. Meanwhile, Incas' history shows that the presumed "legitimate" son did not always succeed the father and that competition had almost always been the rule. Often the most powerful sat on the throne, which served to strengthen the empire. If we understand Velasco's intent in legitimating Atahualpa as king of Quito as increasing Quito's prestige, what could have been Marcos' motive? Perhaps an attempt to find a legal basis for nullifying the validity of Spanish conquest and having the land given back to the native people?

After some years of peace, Atahualpa and his brother Huascar, the territorial expansion of each blocked by the other, went to war. Huascar was first to engage in open hostility, supporting the revolt of the province of Cañar against Atahualpa. After initial success at Tumbamba, Huascar suffered an irreversible defeat, his army being crushed by that of his rival, led by the generals Quizquiz and Callcuchima. Thus he fell into his brother's hands. It was only at that point that Atahualpa added to the emerald he wore on his forehead (symbolizing the kingdom of Quito) the *Fleco Carmesi* (red turban made of *vicuña* wool), sign of the masters of Cuzco. In this way he became the fourteenth Inca.

It was therefore through a weakened country, ravaged by the epidemic and civil war, that Pizarro marched, proposing alliance to Huascar and then to Atahualpa, in turn. As the Spaniards and the Inca's force approached the valley of Cajamarca, Pizarro sent a detachment under command of Hernando de Soto to invite Atahualpa to a meeting. This meeting at Cajamarca has been presented as a double ambush: one by Atahualpa, who stationed approximately twenty thousand armed Indians around the city; one by Pizarro, who, in response to that of Atahualpa, concealed his troops, 168 horsemen and infantrymen, around the central plaza of Cajamarca.

On this day, November 16, 1532, Atahualpa went, accompanied by 5-6,000 men, to meet Pizarro, who appeared to be virtually alone, with only about twenty infantrymen in the middle of the plaza. The Crown specified that conquistadors

recite to their future vassals an exhortation, the *Requerimiento* (summons) (Palacio Rubios, 1513), in which were set forth the rights of the Crown and the Pope to the territories of Indies. At the conclusion of this recitation, the Indians were "invited" to adopt the Catholic Faith and to recognize the Spanish authority, under penalty of war and total destruction if they refused. It was the Dominican Fray Vicente Valverde who had the sad privilege of reciting the *Requerimiento* to Atahualpa. What followed is famous: when Valverde stated, displaying a bible, "This is God's Word", Atahualpa lifted the bible to his ear and then threw it to the ground, saying that he heard nothing. This act triggered the capture of Atahualpa and the massacre of 5-7,000 Indians, first fired by arquebuses and cannon, followed by the slashing of swords (Velasco, 1996:243):

They were so many to die, because ours did give sword hits only with the point, following the advice given by Fray Vicente de Valverde.

How are we to explain the weak resistance of Indians? Gómara says (López de Gómara, 1965) that they did not fight, though they had weapons, because they did not receive the order. The capture of the Inca at the very beginning of the fight precluding any initiative. Fray Marcos, in Velasco's telling, goes farther (Velasco, 1996:244):

Niza demonstrates clearly that they had no weapons; though so many thousands of dead men were left on the plaza, no weapons were found on them, only objects made of gold and silver, that were used for parade and religious ceremony.

This view was also laid out by Las Casas (Las Casas, 1958 a:169):

A few days after arrived the universal king and emperor of these kingdoms, whose name was Atabaliba [Atahualpa], accompanied by a crowd of people without clothing and with laughable weapons.

Again according to Fray Marcos / Velasco, Atahualpa had consistently ordered (Velasco, 1996:244):

"Do not offend the foreigners, because they were sent by gods". And he treated Hernando Pizarro and Soto this way, during the first visit at the baths; and he considered them that way, in accordance with the prediction of Viracocha, and resigned himself to receiving them peacefully, not only with respectful submission, but also with demonstration of love and kindness.

In this way Velasco reports that Fray Marcos was present during the meeting at Atahualpa's baths. He quotes Atahualpa as reported by Marcos, addressing the Spaniards (Velasco, 1996:245):

"Princes Viracochas, welcome to my states." And then speaking to his own suite, "See, the dress, figure, color, and beard, are the same that those of our god Viracocha, as our ancestor Yaguar-Guacac desired that they were represented in a statue of stone".

Fray Marcos would have been familiar with the Inca legend of Viracocha. This god, brother of Manco Cápac and legendary founder of the Inca empire, it was said, had appeared to the young prince Inca Ripac, son of Yaguar Huacac, the seventh Inca. He had revealed to him that the province of Chicaysuyo would revolt. Thanks to Viracocha, Inca Ripac was able to put down this rebellion, and he replaced his weak father on the throne. Inca Ripac, during his coronation, changed his name for Inca Viracocha. He erected a temple to the god, in which there was a statue of Viracocha, represented as bearded and with an European-looking face. The god had given one final prediction: one day the Viracochas would return to take possession of their country. To this, Velasco adds:

This prediction was known everywhere, even in the most distant parts of the empire; this was the reason, according to Fray Marcos, why the Spaniards were called Viracochas, because in all, the people recognized in them the same signs that they knew to be on the statue; and they believed therefore that the time had come to lose their land.

According to the prediction, one further element would confirm the arrival of Viracochas, the eruption of Cotopaxi volcano. This eruption occurred on the day of the encounter between Atahualpa, Hernando Pizarro, and Hernando de Soto. The prediction was therefore fulfilled, and the days of the Inca empire were numbered. For this reason it was a submissive Atahualpa, without weapons and ready to worship his new masters, who came to Pizarro in Cajamarca. For Marcos / Velasco this rendered the useless massacre even more odious.

This version of events is far from unanimously accepted. It is opposed by the conquistadors themselves, who consistently presented the massacre of Cajamarca as a response to Atahualpa's trap. It is also opposed by those historians who, from the sixteenth century to the present, have minimized the responsibility of Spain in the deaths of native peoples of South America. For instance, Raúl Porras Barrenechea writes (Porras Barrenechea, 1937:35):

The French report [anonymous translation to French, in 1534, of a lost letter attributed to Licenciado Espinosa or Licenciado de la Gama], that agrees with those of Jérez, Estete, Pedro Pizarro, and Trujillo, confirms, finally, with the declaration of an eyewitness, these assertions that we cannot deny any longer about the imprisonment and death of Atahualpa: First, that Indians entered Cajamarca with weapons, the description of the procession is sufficiently explicit on this subject; Second, that Atahualpa sent a division of 4,000 men to prevent the Spaniards' withdrawal; Third, that Atahualpa threw to the ground the book of the Holy Gospels that Fray Valverde presented to him; Fourth, that Pizarro, armed with a sword and shield, went up to the Inca and made him captive personally; and Fifth, that Atahualpa prepared a conspiracy against Spaniards.



Atahualpa's capture by Pizarro. Drawing by Guamán Poma de Ayala.

And what Porras Barrenechea wrote goes farther to challenge the veracity of Fray Marcos / Velasco through insistence that (Porras Barrenechea, 1937:17):

The Franciscan Fray Marcos de Niza...was in Peru, in the region of Quito only, and this during some months in 1534.

meaning that he could not possibly have witnessed the capture of Atahualpa at Cajamarca two years earlier. And later he wrote (Porras Barrenechea, 1941:18):

Las Casas was the first to vilify the conquest of Peru and to speak of the hell of Peru, without ever having been there. His most suspicious informant was the Franciscan Marcos de Niza, foolhardy inventor of the Eldorado of Cibola in Mexico, who was not at Cajamarca and did not know Pizarro, because he never left Quito and was only the witness of the excesses of his chief, Alvarado. From the false testimony of Marcos, amplified by the loudspeaker of Las Casas, comes all the legend against Pizarro.

Let us review the two major points of this criticism. Did Fray Marcos personally know Francisco Pizarro? The question should be reversed: how is it possible that he did not know him, having been in Tumbes with him, as we have already seen? The presence of Marcos in Cajamarca is a more interesting question and a thornier one. His presence in Peru in 1532 is indisputable, but was he with the rearguard in San Miguel de Piura, and thus not an eyewitness to the events at Cajamarca? Or indeed, was he with the conquistadors at Cajamarca on November 16, 1532? To reply to this question, it is necessary to refer to Atahualpa's later ransom. To obtain his freedom, he had promised Pizarro that he would fill a room of the palace of Cajamarca with gold and silver. In response to his order, thousands of pesos of gold were brought everyday to Cajamarca. The gold arrived from Jauja, Pachacamac, and Cuzco, brought by dignitaries of the Inca Empire, such as Inca Illescas, brother of Atahualpa, or brought by small Spanish expeditions guided by Indians, such as those of Martín de Mogueús and Hernando Pizarro.

On May 13, 1533, smelters were fired and Indian workers transformed their ceremonial objects into ingots for the Spaniards. The nine ovens produced a daily average of 250,000 pesos of gold. Then on June 18, the resulting total was distributed among those who had been present at Atahualpa's capture, a total estimated at from 1.5-2 million gold pesos. Neither the rearguard that remained at San Miguel de Piura nor Almagro and his reinforcements who arrived later, were included in the distribution. Pizarro's secretaries Francisco de Jérez and Pedro Sancho on two separate lists, one for silver and the other for gold, recorded the names of the recipients, as well as their shares. The original lists were copied by Pedro de Cieza de León in 1550 and consolidated into a single list. Francisco López de Caravantes and later Buenaventura de Salinas recopied Cieza's list, before it was lost and then rediscovered in the twentieth century and published by Rafael Loredó. These versions are the principal sources of information on who was in Cajamarca when Atahualpa was taken captive. They are in close agreement, but present some notable differences, due to the process of making successive copies.

On the list of infantrymen we find a Juan de Niza. About this individual, James Lockhart writes (Lockhart, 1972:440-441):

All that is known about this man is his presence at Cajamarca and his share. His name alone would appear to say much, to speak of origins in the town of Nice in Savoy and of concomitant maritime associations.

Was the city of Nice represented by two of its sons during the conquest of Peru, one named Juan and the other Marcos? Or, as I suggest, should we read Marcos de Niza in place of Juan de Niza on the distribution list, the transformation being the result of copying error? In support of this thesis, we also note a Juan Delgado on Cieza's list, who becomes Juan Delgado Menzón on Caravantes', and Juan Delgado de Monzón on Buenaventura de Salinas'. Clearly, mistakes in copying were made. Juan Delgado, a mason, left other traces that allowed Lockhart to reconstruct briefly his biography. According to Lockhart, Monzón was never a part of his name. To me this suggests a copyist's blending of two names, Juan Delgado and Juan de Monzón, one of Fray Marcos' twelve companions, inducing that both Juan de Monzón and Marcos de Niza were present at Atahuallpa's capture, though scribal errors have obscured that fact.

We have, thus, two indications of the likely presence of Fray Marcos and one of his companion friars at Cajamarca, on November 16, 1532. This adds to his presence during the meeting at Atahuallpa's baths as reported by Velasco. Together, these references strongly hint that he did not remain with the rearguard in San Miguel de Piura and certainly did not see only Quito. They are not enough to certify the veracity of what Velasco reports, or of the content of Marcos' "Information to the Court". However, he becomes an important witness of events in Peru, and his statements can no longer be swept lightly aside.

Despite payment of the ransom, Atahuallpa's death was assured. At liberty he would have been too dangerous, so great was his authority among his people. During a parody of trial, Atahuallpa was sentenced to death. According to Velasco (Velasco, 1996:259-260), he was accused:

First, of being a bastard who had dethroned his brother Huascar and taken him prisoner; Second, of having Huascar killed; Third, of being idolatrous in allowing and even ordering human sacrifices; Fourth, of keeping a great number of concubines; Fifth, of having used for himself, even from his prison, treasures that belonged to the conquistadors; Sixth, of having fomented a plot against Spaniards and having ordered his vassals to be ready to take up arms.

Of the 24 judges, 11 did not vote for death. Velasco, again well informed, reported the names of those 11 (Velasco, 1996:261):

Francisco de Cháves, Diego de Chávez, Francisco de Fuentes, Pedro de Ayala, Francisco Moscoso, Fernando del Haro, Pedro de Mendoza, Juan de Herrada, Alfonso Dávila, Blas de Atienza, and Diego de Mora.

He does not record his sources, just saying "historians reported their names". In contrast, scholar Bernard Boriello (Boriello, 1993) has stated that almost nothing is known about Atahuallpa's judgement, that Spanish witnesses reported no detail.

However, the names quoted by Velasco are likely ones, found in the Harkness collection of manuscripts (Clemence, 1932-1936): Francisco de Cháves was a captain; Francisco de Fuentes was a *regidor* (town councilor) in Chachapoyas; Pedro de Ayala is mentioned in a deed in 1549; Hernando de Haro was *veedor* (inspector) in Cuzco; Juan de Herrada was one of the men who assassinated Francisco Pizarro; in 1537, Alonso de Avila and Diego de Mora were living in Los Reyes (Lima); Blas de Atienza wrote his last will, on June 5, 1531, in Coaque. Moreover, Francisco de Fuentes and Pedro de Mendoza were present in Cajamarca, when Atahuallpa was captured (Lockhart, 1972). Among the eleven names reported by Velasco, nine can be authenticated as in Peru, which argues for the credibility of the list. Velasco's source, though not

specified, was very well informed, and a direct witness: Fray Marcos? This adds strong credit to the existence, once, of Fray Marcos' manuscripts.

Thus ended the life of Atahualpa, baptized Francisco in the honor of Pizarro by Fray Vicente Valverde. Fray Marcos and other Franciscans probably assisted him in his last moments. Francisco de Jérez (Jérez, 1938) wrote "friars attended Atahualpa's funeral". His use of the plural implies necessarily that Franciscans were present with Fray Vicente, since they were the only to share this title with Valverde.

With Pedro de Alvarado in the Kingdom of Quito

The events surrounding Atahualpa's death were certain to precipitate a deep rupture between Fray Marcos and Francisco Pizarro. Marcos' criticisms of conquistador behavior were more pointed and virulent after Atahualpa's death, as for instance (Niza, 1958) (translation Wagner, 1934):

I also am a witness and give testimony to the fact that, without these Indians giving any cause or occasion therefore, the Spaniards, as soon as they entered their country, and after the great lord Atahualpa had given the Spaniards more than two millions in gold and all the country in his possession without resistance, burned the said Atahualpa, who was the lord of all the country...

Afterwards conquistadors dispersed, some remaining on the spot, others leaving to conquer Cuzco. The Franciscans acted similarly. Fray Mateo de Jumilla stayed to care for the Indians of Cajamarca and its environs. He took over the ancient temple dedicated to the sun situated in the plaza of Cajamarca, which had been transformed by Pizarro into church dedicated to Saint Francis. Fray Alonso de Escarena went to evangelize the Indians of Lambayeque. Fray Pedro Portugués followed the conquistadors to Cuzco, where he built a small residence against a hill near the city. As for Fray Marcos, he retired to San Miguel de Piura.

In October 1533 Sebastián de Belalcázar, benefiting from the recent arrival of reinforcements, prepared to leave San Miguel (where he had been posted by Pizarro), with an army of two hundred eighty men, including 80 horsemen and 50 arquebusiers (Velasco, 1996:280-281). According to Velasco, he took with him as chaplain of his expedition,

Fray Marcos de Niza, of the Order of Saint Francis, very different of Valverde, detesting violence.

Fray Marcos would thus have accompanied Belalcázar during his entire campaign of conquest of Ecuador through the seizure of Quito against Rumiñahui in December 1533. But the presence of Fray Marcos with Belalcázar is impossible, as he himself testified (Niza, 1536), in January 1534 he was in Nicaragua, where he embarked in the fleet of Pedro of Alvarado, who had left the government of Guatemala to seek a fortune in the Inca empire.

Therefore Velasco was wrong on this point. Must we then view his entire work as a fraud and reject everything he reported? I suggest instead we can suppose that, because Fray Marcos was present in Ecuador with Alvarado from the beginning of 1534 and collected testimony from those who participated in the conquest of Quito, Velasco, with Marcos' "History of the conquest of the province of the Quito" in his possession, thought Marcos had been an eyewitness. Some credence is lent to this possibility by the fact that Marcos' criticisms leveled against Belalcázar's campaign to take Quito and the northern Inca territory never mention his own presence and seem indirect, as though learned second hand (Niza, 1958).

On August 5, 1532, at Medina del Campo, Pedro de Alvarado obtained a capitulation from Charles V (Charles V, 1864-1884) authorizing him to make a conquest, under the condition that he not enter territories conceded to Pizarro. On

October 11, Charles V sent him new instructions (Charles V, 1532) concerning the friars that he should take with him and their special role in choosing the Indians to be distributed in *encomienda* (attribution of Indian bondsmen to Spaniards). In the harbor of Iztapa, near Santiago de Guatemala, Alvarado had a fleet of ten vessels built. Before leaving for Peru, he dispatched a reconnaissance under Captain García Holguín with two ships that coasted Ecuador and Peru. It was probably with Holguín, or with the vessels returning after having taken reinforcements to Belalcázar in September 1533, that Fray Marcos temporarily left Peru. His arrival in Guatemala with one of his companions offered Alvarado a providential opportunity to follow royal instructions. He persuaded them to join his expedition, as he wrote to Charles V in January 1534 (Alvarado, 1534):

Thus, I bring in my company two friars of the Order of Saint Francis, staunch ones, persons of all religion, good life, and example, so that the royal conscience of Your Majesty may be unburdened.

Alvarado's expedition is a very large one of ten vessels, five hundred Spaniards, and two hundred and twenty-three horses (Niza, 1536). Its initial goal was discovery of new and rich islands in the *Mar del Sur* (the Pacific Ocean). Departure came on January 23, 1534, from Puerto de Posesión, near El Realejo in today's Nicaragua. After an initial tack to the southwest in an effort to avoid the coasts of Peru (Niza, 1536) (translation Wagner, 1934):

the ships were forced by lack of water, and contrary winds and currents which carried them into the Ensenada de Panama, to go to the land of Peru which Alvarado had no right to conquer.

A new departure, continuing contrary wind, and after having thrown eighty horses overboard, Alvarado resigned himself to putting into Los Caraques in Peru, where he landed on March 10, 1534 (Wagner, 1934:193). From there he proceeded by land in a direction that would not take him where Francisco Pizarro was. This after having supplied his troops and taken porters among the Indian population in the region of Puerto Viejo. But this route was catastrophic for the expedition; it led to (Niza, 1536) (translation Wagner, 1934):

very rugged mountains, plains and deserts filled with snow, where the Adelantado and all those with him thought they were to perish from cold, as these sierras are so frigid and uninhabitable that he was obliged to vary his journey and arrive at Quito because he could not do anything else and because the guides which he had with him were lacking or had fled.

Velasco's account agrees that is "was not practicable, even for Indians" (Velasco, 1996:295-296).

Meanwhile, Pizarro had sent Almagro to stop Belalcázar. Because of that, in the region of Quito, Alvarado met the troops of Belalcázar together with those of Almagro. The confrontation could have been bloody, prefiguring the later civil war between almagrists and pizarrists. But Alvarado sent Fray Marcos as ambassador to Almagro. During the first ensuing meeting Almagro threatened Alvarado (Niza, 1536) and promised to imprison Fray Marcos and send him as a captive to Spain. New messengers were sent, but the result was the same reply. Meanwhile, Felipillo, an Indian interpreter, left Almagro's camp and informed Alvarado of the weakness of Almagro's troops. This convinced Alvarado to go forward in peace to meet Almagro and his soldiers massed near Riobamba. He went to meet them without escort, accompanied only by a page and Fray Marcos. In the end, the intervention of Fray Marcos, Licenciado Caldera, and Captain Ruy Díaz facilitated an agreement (Atienza, 1864-1884). A preliminary contract of partnership was concluded between Almagro and Alvarado (Niza, 1536). But this agreement did not last. Four days later, having taken command of Alvarado's troops, Almagro simply proposed that he pay Alvarado's expenses to that point and offered him 100,000 pesos in gold.

On August 15, 1534, Almagro founded the city of Santiago de Quito on the site of the Indian city of Riobamba. Within two weeks (Clemence, 1936:10-18) Alvarado granted to Almagro and Pizarro the right of conquest that he held from Charles V, and he sold Almagro his fleet for 100,000 gold pesos. Then he gave Almagro and Pizarro the right to take immediate possession of that fleet. Two days later, on August 29, 1534, Fray Marcos approved the erection by Almagro, in his name, of a Franciscan monastery in Santiago de Quito. He referred to Almagro as the "spiritual father" of the custodia (Niza, 1936).

The gold promised as payment to Alvarado by Almagro was at Jauja, so the Spanish force moved south. It is probable that Fray Marcos accompanied it during that final battles in the defeat of Quizquiz and the Inca Huaynapalcón, brother of Atahuallpa. This series of battles marked the end of the conquest of the Inca empire and the kingdom of Quito. Alvarado traveled with Almagro during this campaign, in order to be paid by Pizarro, whom he met in Pachacamac. Pizarro was generous, granting Alvarado 20,000 extra pesos to indemnify him and to assure his abandonment of ideas of conquest in Peru and Ecuador. So, 120,000 gold pesos was the price of the peace (one half metric ton of pure gold)! Payment was made at the end of 1534 and immediately sent by ship to Guatemala (Clemence, 1936:218).

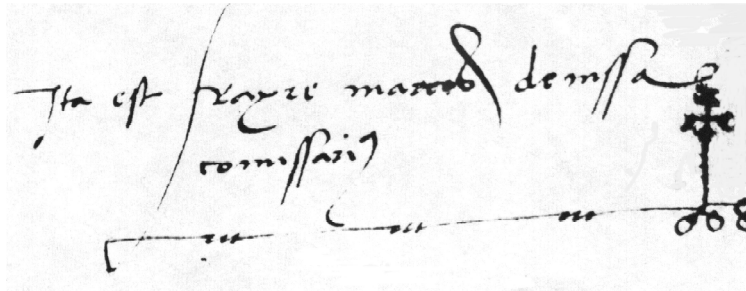
A black and white photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script. The text reads "Ita est Frayre marcos de nissa comissaris". The signature is written on a piece of paper with a horizontal line drawn across it. The ink is dark, and the handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the 16th century.

Figure 3. Fray Marcos signature. Poder al Mariscal.

"Ita est Frayre marcos de nissa comissaris"



Figure 4. Ecuador and Peru map.

It was probably during this period, from August to December 1534, between the end of hostilities and his final departure from Peru, that Fray Marcos collected the material he used to write the "History of the conquest of the Quito" reported by Velasco. For the section on Belalcázar's campaign, he must have taken testimony from participants. During Alvarado's campaign and the conclusion of the conquest, on the other hand, he would have been an eyewitness himself.

It was likely within that same interval that Fray Marcos converted Cachulima, cacique of Cacha, uncle of Atahualpa and brother of general Callcuchima, who had taken up arms and allied with Belalcázar against Rumiñahui. Fray Marcos baptized him Marcos Duchicela and established the principality of Cacha as an Indian parish, in a first attempt to materialize millenarian Franciscan utopia in Peru. And it was probably from Marcos Duchicela that he learned the origin of the kingdom of Quito and Atahualpa's lineage, which allowed him to write "The two Lineages of the Lords of Peru and Quito," one of the manuscripts purportedly consulted by Velasco. It may well have been from him also that he got the material for his "Rites and ceremonies of Indians" (Niza, circa 1534).

Some authors have claimed that no Marcos Duchicela ever existed, accusing Velasco of inventing him. According to them, the first Duchicela of the historic period (as opposed to the legendary figure) was Juan Duchicela, who wrote out a will in 1603. However, in the royal *Cédula de Indios a favor de Diego de Torres* of 1540 (Costales, 1992:145), there is

mentioned, among the lords of the province of Quito, a Duchizelam, also called Juan Marcos Duchicela, who could certainly be the Marcos Duchicela referred to by Velasco. Furthermore, Viceroy Blasco Nuñez de Vela wrote, on February 25, 1545, that all the province of Puruhay was governed by the lord named Duchicelan (Costales, 1996:25). These two instances argue strongly for Marcos Duchicela's historical reality.

Franciscan utopia ran against the limits of what was possible in Peru. Despite his services to the Crown, Marcos Duchicela was never recognized by Spaniards as a full fledged ruler, but like all the caciques who submitted to the king's authority, he was no more than a conduit used by the *encomenderos* to relay orders to and exact tribute from the Indian populace. Indeed, as soon as in 1534 the principality of Cacha was granted in *encomienda* to Don Pedro Cortéz, one of the first conquistadors to live in Quito (Costales, 1996:24). On June 7, 1549, Gaspar Ruiz Duchicela was mentioned as cacique of the Indians of Cacha, then in 1576, Gaspar Duchicela as principal cacique of the neighboring village of Yaruquíes (Costales, 1992). Neither Marcos Duchicela nor his descendants succeeded in terminating the *encomienda*. In 1639, a massive landslide engulfed Cacha and put a definitive end to Franciscan plans there. Some of the survivors settled in Yaruquíes. The lineage of Marcos Duchicela lasted until the end of the 19th century, nearly 350 years after the friar from Nice baptized him a Christian.

FROM PERU TO MEXICO

In the beginning of 1535, Alvarado leaves Peru to go back to his province of Guatemala. The gold having been delivered, he had no reason to stay, his relationship with Almagro and Pizarro having degraded. Almagro, indeed, had released in October 1534 an information, in the goal to gather proofs that Alvarado did not obey Charles V orders.

Its is probably in his company that Fray Marcos leaves, definitively, Peru and Ecuador, letting there an uncompleted work. It is indeed only after the end of the civil war between almagrists and pizarrists, and after the restoration of the royal government by Pedro de la Gasca, in 1548, that Franciscans will be really able to begin there their work of conversion to christianity. Despite his attempts, Fray Marcos could not have ceased the cruelties exerted by the conquistadors; the royal decree forbidding slavery has not been applied; the evangelization of Indians has been done very difficult by the behavior of Spaniards, in spite of an initially favorable mood, as in Tumbes. However, the principality of Cacha, with his cacique Marcos Duchicela / Cachulima, is a first success in setting up a Christian Indian community. The Order of Minors is strongly installed in Peru and in Ecuador. Finally, Fray Marcos has collected precious historical and ethnological testimonies.

We find him in Santiago de Guatemala, on September 25, 1536, where he testifies in favor of Alvarado, during an information released by the *Adelantado* in retort to the one instigated by Almagro against him. During the information, he has the knowledge of letter sent by Pizarro to Alvarado (Pizarro, 1536), and in which he invites him, in the name of the king, to come to help Peru. The colony is indeed threatened by a rebellion directed by Manco Cápac II, Spaniards having then very few troops (to the North, are left Belalcázar and other conquistadors to the conquest of Colombia; to the South, Almagro, followed by Ruy Díaz and Benavides, has launched himself in the campaign of Chile).

News is sad: the death of Almagro is reported (it is false news cleverly exploited by the rebel Inca); Cuzco is besieged and has not communicated for five month; Indians have achieved many victories on Spaniards. Pizarro says that he is

convinced that, without reinforcements, the colony cannot be saved (translation from the transcription of the manuscript by Gema Trujillo, paleographer in Seville):

This kingdom is in a such necessity that, if it did not receive help as a possession of His Majesty, what he gets and is always in right to expect of his vassals, and all specially of Your Lordship that has always shown the zeal that one should have to the service of his king, and if Your Lordship refused to me the means that I ask you, I believe without doubt that this kingdom would be lost without any remedy.

Fray Marcos incorporates this news in his "Information to the Court and to the Bishop...", but adds that Spaniards, and therefore Pizarro, their chief, are responsible of the rebellion because of their cruelties (Niza, 1958) (translation Wagner, 1934):

In God and my conscience, so far as I can understand, it was for no other reason than this bad treatment, as appears clear to everybody, that the Indians of Peru rose in revolt, and with much reason as had been given them for it. It was because they have not been treated truthfully nor have the promises given to them kept, but contrary to all reason and justice they have been destroyed tyrannically with the whole country, that they determined rather to die than to suffer such treatment. [...]

In all this the Lord, our master, has been much offended and His Majesty badly served and defrauded by losing the country which could furnish a plentiful supply of food to all Castile, and which will be extremely difficult and expensive in my opinion to recover.

This text illustrates very well Fray Marcos' thought, servant of both Church and Empire: the Franciscan utopia is not an ideal philosophy, but a concrete and pragmatic approach; to protect Indians is a necessity for the Crown, if Spain wants to settle on a long-term basis in these territories. Conversion to christianity and colonization drive to the defense of Indians. For Fray Marcos, Peru is already lost for the Spanish Crown. Alvarado will not reply favorably to the request of Pizarro, having always in memory the failure of his first attempt in Ecuador. Pizarro's letter was however copied and distributed everywhere in Spanish belongings. Many captains replied to this demand of help: Alonso de Alvarado returned from Chachapoyas; Diego de Ayala was sent to ask help to Panama, to Nicaragua and to Guatemala; from San Domingo, Alonso de Fuenmayor sent his brother Diego de Fuenmayor with Pedro de Veragua and a company of arquebusiers; Gaspar of Espinosa sent troops from Panama and Nombre de Dios; Cortés, finally, to whom the viceroy Mendoza had given a copy of Pizarro's letter, sent Rodrigo Grijalva with two ships armed on his own funds. Peru was thus saved, to the price of a second conquest, much more difficult than the first one, as Fray Marcos thought.

If not in Túmbez, it is very probably on the way of Guatemala that Niza met Las Casas (Vetancurt, 1982:37), who had come to evangelize the Indians of the *Tierra de Guerra* in Tezulutlán. Niza, then Alvarado's chaplain, doubtless helped him to obtain the necessary authorizations from Alvarado. It is why Las Casas, years after, could write (Las Casas, 1957):

A religious of Saint Francis, named Fray Marcos de Niza, whom I knew well...

In the end of 1536, the Archbishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, another Franciscan that owns Thomas More's "Utopia" among his books, convinces Fray Marcos to come in New Spain. In a letter "to an unknown ecclesiastic", who might well be Las Casas, he reports (Zumárraga, 1914) (translation Wagner, 1934):

...although we are much occupied in processions and giving thanks for the health of our king, I immediately took Fray Marcos whom I had in my house and caused him to declare and sign what Your Worship will see, which will cause you more sorrow than the letter which I am writing to Dr. Bernal, having heard part of it.

This father is a great religious person, worthy of credit, of approved virtue and of much religion and zeal, and whom the friars in Peru elected custodio. When they departed and some came here after seeing the crimes and cruelties of those who call themselves Christians, he wrote me from Guatemala.

I wrote him to come here, and so he came. I took him to the viceroy and His Worship sent his account to His Majesty and those of the council. He and everybody have been so occupied in sermons and confessions that he could do no more up to the present time, although, with urgency some few are now going, in which he speaks as an eyewitness and Your Worship has to give a copy of these two into the hands of the emperor, our master, communicating it also to Dr. Bernal, to persuade strongly his Catholic heart to put a stop to these conquests which are opprobrious injuries to our Christianity and Catholic faith.

In all this country, there have been nothing but as many butcheries as there have been conquests and if His Majesty should intrust the matter to his viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, I believe that they will cease.

In a postscript, Zumárraga adds:

It seems to me that what the father says constitutes reasonable proof for my proposition but I will send a more exhaustive proof.

The exhaustive proof whose Zumárraga speaks is undisputedly the final version of Niza's "Information to the Court and to the Bishop...", whose Fray Marcos gives a public perusal, in 1537 in Mexico City (Tibesar, 1953:107), in front of the viceroy Mendoza, very favorable to Las Casas' theses. Several copies of the document, signed by Fray Marcos and countersigned by Zumárraga, are sent in Europe, to the Court of Spain, to the Council of Indies. Las Casas will be one of the addressees, and, thanks to him, this testimony was preserved (Las Casas, 1958 a).

In a New Spain still marked by the memory of the cruel Nuño de Gusmán, where Indian tribes are always considered, in the North, as a pool of slaves, four men have just combined their forces, for the defense of Indians and the stop of cruelties: Marcos de Niza, Juan de Zumárraga, Antonio de Mendoza and Bartolomé de Las Casas. The conquistadors have been publicly warned of this change; Cortés will be angry against Fray Marcos to have denounced Pizarro, his friend: with him, all the conquistadors have been pointed at. The conquest of the northern territories will be strongly influenced...

THE FRANCISCAN UTOPIA

Franciscans of the New World: millenarians and utopians

Franciscans of the New World have a distinctive characteristic: they are all Observants, members of a fraction of their Order influenced by the theses of Fray Juan de Guadalupe, claiming for a return to the evangelic poverty as taught by Saint Francis.

This claim has been first received as revolutionary and heretic: two centuries ago, in Provence, four of their predecessors have been burnt by the Inquisition (Peano, 1975). In the 16th century, they find, in Spain and in Provence, more success for their ideas, and can build monasteries for their religious persuasion. They call themselves Minors, as the lesser friars of Saint Francis.



Figure 5. Spaniards' cruelties. Engraving by Theodore de Bry, illustrating Las Casas' Destruction.

Once discovered America and the millions of its inhabitants, Franciscans, then the largest monastic order of the Christendom, are among the first to react and to send missionaries. And from the arrival of the "Twelve Firsts" in New Spain in 1524, all the Franciscans who will cross the Atlantic Ocean will be, for long, Minors of Observance. Millenarians, they want to build in America Saint Augustin's *Civitas Dei* that should precede, according to the Father of Church, Saint John's Armageddon. Visionaries, they are ready for anything to reach their goal. They consider the Indians as Gentiles, having been concealed for centuries by God to the knowledge of mankind: Indians have the same nature than Europeans; simply they never knew God's Word, and they are always in a "natural" condition.

Their action will show three characteristics (Baudot, 1982):

- They do massive conversions: Motolinía reports that, from 1524 to 1536, more than five millions Indians have been baptized; Pedro de Gante says that he usually did 14,000 baptisms a day.
- They do ethnological studies, in order to determine the biblical tribes from which Indians are descending, and to link them to the Old Testament and the Creation; Franciscans become the champions of the defense of Indian languages: in the 16th century, they write 80 among 109 works on this topic in New Spain; Bernardino de Sahagún invents ethnography, collects the Indian memory, and publishes an encyclopedia, in both Spanish and Nahuátl languages.
- They attempt to create Indian elite in which God's City could be born: Zumárraga creates the Indian College of Tlatelolco, where Indians are taught and instructed in the Catholic Faith; most of teachings and preaches are done in Nahuátl, in order to keep Indians far from disastrous Spanish influence.

Fray Marcos is, undoubtedly, one of them:

- In Peru, Ecuador and Mexico City, he converts Indians.

- He collects precious ethnologic data in Peru and Ecuador (Niza, circa 1534). New readings of his *Relación* of Cíbola emphasize his ethnographical contribution (Reff, 1991). During his second travel to Cíbola with Coronado, he takes time to describe the religious rites and funeral temples of unidentified Indians, living close (30 km) to Zunis. Again, this is known only from Las Casas' work (Las Casas, 1957).

- Finally, he attempts to build an Indian Christian society, in Cacha, under the rule of Cachulima / Marcos Duchicela.

We do find in his work all the characteristics of the Observants' actions.

The defense of Indians

Fray Marcos is part of a small group of intellectual clerics, essentially Franciscans and Dominicans, who, in the 16th century fought for the defense of Indians. Franciscan approach is a pragmatic one. As Niza does in his "Information to the Court", Zumárraga tries to convince Charles V to keep Indians as farmers, and not to send them in mines (Zumárraga, 1837-1841):

If we introduce in this country some trees from Spain and the culture of silk worms, we will not export so much gold and silver; but, to reach this goal, we should not be afraid of some expenses; for, who want to harvest, should sow. But, if we neglect the culture of lands, which are excellent, to exploit mines, we will lose the country very soon.

The argument is simple: the interest of the Crown is in the defense of Indians. If they are badly treated, Spain will lose its colonies, either by Indian revolt, like in Peru, or by the quick extinction of the indigenous population, like in Hispaniola or San Domingo, due to a too hard work in mines. Nevertheless, if they officially say that Indians should become subjects of the Crown, they strongly act to build an independent Indian and Christian society.

Dominicans have a more political and theoretical approach. Bernardino de Minaya and Bartolomé de Las Casas convince Charles V, in 1531, to forbid Indian slavery. Las Casas obtains, in 1542, the promulgation of new laws softening the social status of Indians. Francisco de Vitoria, considered as the father of Indians' rights, writes theological and legal arguments taking the opposite view to the Requerimiento (Vitoria, 1532 & 1538). This is completed by Las Casas who writes in 1564 his "Treaty of the twelve doubts" (Las Casas, 1958 c) where he finds arguments that could drive to cancel the conquest and to give back the land to Indians.

Niza, Zumárraga, Minaya, Vitoria; lesser known ones as Antonio de Montesinos, or Cristóbal de Molina, said "The Almagrist"; above all an uncontested leader, Las Casas. Those few religious tried to fight against History. However, if their names are famous today, their failure was evident among their contemporaries. At the end of the 16th century, all the Franciscan hopes to build God's City in New Spain had fainted. They had been criticized; in their own Order, by Fray Fernando de Arbolancha, in 1567, who, in a letter to the council of Indies, protested against the use of nahuátl; and by the king Philip II, who, in 1577, confiscated Sahagún's work. Charles V laws were never applied: Spanish settlers simply refused them. Las Casas' arguments were not accepted in Spain: if clerics generally admitted that he won his "Controversy of Valladolid" (Las Casas, 1958 b) against Juan Ginés de Sepulveda, Spaniards did not change their mind about Indians. At the opposite, the publication of his "Very Short Relation of the Destruction of Indies" induced in Spain a jump of nationalism, Las Casas being accused to have forged "The Black Legend".

Niza does not avoid this failure. He found only half success in Peru. Being one of Las Casas' main informants, he is himself associated to the "Black Legend". And authors who want to prove he lied about Cíbola say he has always lied, even

in Peru, by exaggerating Spaniards' cruelties. From New Spain he led Coronado's conquest expedition, believing, with Zumárraga, in a pacific conquest (Zumárraga, 1885):

... the viceroy takes it [the conquest] for the emperor and desires to send friars ahead without arms and wishes the conquest to be a Christian and apostolic one and not butchery.

Reading such a sentence, we should speak no longer of utopia, but rather of gullibility! Who else than Fray Marcos, having followed the Spaniards in Peru, having seen them exerting their cruelties, could have been better placed to understand what a conquest expedition actually was? And the friars he took with him could not prevent Coronado's troops to burn rebelled Indians in Tiguex, though, as Castañeda wrote (Castañeda de Najera, 1993:90-92), Indians were not to be blamed.

Another sign is found in Niza being member of Mendoza's council of conscience during the repression of the Indian revolt, in New Galicia, known as "War of Miztón" (Tello, 1891). Though counseled by friars who had to tell him a "fair way" to fight Indians, Mendoza repressed very strongly this revolt: since New Spain was threatened, his generous ideas about Indians were forgotten! As to Fray Marcos, could he have shown himself more utopist than when believing it could be possible to do war in a fair way?

CONCLUSION

We have followed Fray Marcos de Niza from Nice, in the Duchy of Savoy, to Peru, Ecuador and Mexico. I have tried to rebuild the history of Fray Marcos, in its cloudiest part, his life before his arrival to New Spain. I have explained why it is very unlikely to find, one day, some documents related to his life in Nice. I hope I succeeded in drawing the most prominent lines of his life in Peru and Ecuador, and giving keys to understand him. His place in the history of ideas, the role that he played in the defense of Indians, his close relationship with Bartolomé de Las Casas have been emphasized.

There are good reasons to believe that Juan de Velasco's claims that he consulted several no longer extant manuscripts written by Fray Marcos de Niza concerning the conquest of the Inca empire are true. I have delineated in this paper the bits of documentary evidence that support the possibility of Marcos' presence in Peru and Ecuador intermittently from 1531 to late 1534 or early 1535. I have argued that he may well have been present at the capture of Atahualpa and at his subsequent execution. His outrage over the treatment of the Inca led him to leave Peru temporarily, only to return with Pedro de Alvarado. I have suggested that Fray Marcos was an eyewitness to many of the pivotal events of the conquest of the Inca empire, both in the south in 1532 and in the north in 1534. He also would have had ample opportunity to interview his associates in Peru and Ecuador to obtain information about events he did not personally witness. It was thus on the basis of firsthand experience, combined with reports he received directly from eyewitnesses not long after the events, that Marcos wrote to his friend and fellow advocate of Indian's rights Bartolomé de las Casas angry recriminations against activities of the conquistadors in Peru. As Las Casas later put Marcos' words in print (Niza, 1958):

I have seen...outrages and cruelties perpetrated without reason, which filled me with horror, so many that it would take me too long to recount.

In a similar tone and with evident interest in the welfare of the native peoples of Peru and Ecuador and hopes for their perfection of the Christian faith, Marcos likely wrote out the documents Velasco was later fortunate enough to see.

At this point two remaining questions should be asked. Was Fray Marcos a liar? This question, which has been continually asked since his journey to Cibola (Niza, 1999), should be reformulated in different questions: "to what extent

did he lie"? And "why did he lie"? To answer the first one would drive us far from the scope of this paper. I will try here to answer the latter one.

A classical theory is Sauer, Wagner and Hallenbeck's one. They created the character of the "lying monk", a Fray Marcos having spent his life to lie, due to a pathological imagination.

Sauer wrote (Sauer, 1932:80):

It is difficult to see how any one could have made even the half of the expedition which he [Fray Marcos] claims to have made, under explicit orders to report on country, people and route and then proceed to an official report so largely unrecognizable as to these particulars.

Followed by Wagner (Wagner, 1934:224):

After weighing all the evidence available in the case, it seems to me that the whole trouble lay in Niza's perfervid imagination...

And Hallenbeck (Hallenbeck, 1987:95):

So let us pigeonhole "The Lying Monk" with the other Munchausens of history.

My friend, Dr. Boriello, suggested me another theory: like most of Spaniards, Fray Marcos went to Indies *para medrar* (to prosper, to make a career). In Peru, his hopes were deceived, and Fray Vicente de Valverde got all the honors, becoming Cuzco's Bishop. In this view, when he discovered Cíbola, Fray Marcos never reached it, as Castañeda (Castañeda de Najera, 1993:67) reported it, went back to Mexico City and wrote an emphatic report based on Indians' relations only. He was convinced that Cíbola was a major discovery, and wanted all the merit for him. In case of success for Coronado's expedition, he could have become Cíbola's Bishop, or even have succeeded to Zumárraga in the Archbishopric of Mexico City.

This is not my favorite thesis. When he was in his journey to Cíbola, he met thousands of Indians. He heard about the "kingdoms" of Totontec and Marata, and could guess that large native populations inhabited these lands. For him, there were so much souls to save as Indians were. When the tragic death of Estéban occurred, he realized that the conversion to christianity implied a military conquest... And he wrote his *Relación* in order to provoke this conquest. He knew that, as soon as soldiers would have seen Zuni pueblos they would be angry against him and that he would be obliged to go back to Mexico City. That is why he took other friars with him, to convert Indians after his foreseeable departure.

Finally, was Fray Marcos a conquistador? If we look at his campaigns, the answer should be yes:

- campaign of Peru, from Túmbez to Cajamarca with Francisco Pizarro;
- campaign of Quito with Pedro de Alvarado;
- his own discovery of Cíbola;
- conquest of Cíbola with Francisco Vázquez de Coronado;
- repression of the War of Miztón, from 1541 to 1542, as member of Mendoza's council of conscience. Not all the conquistadors had such entitlements.

However, his goal was not gold or wealth. He went to Americas to convert Indians, to save their souls. He studied them, he learnt to like them, and he took their defense. He baptized them; he fought against their religion, considered as pagan and devilish. Being a friar in this 16th century, a so religious one, we could not expect him to have acted differently.

Zealous servant of the Empire and of the Church, he was a Conquistador of Faith.

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