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Conquistas and Chronicles: A Social History of the Fernando de Soto Expedition of Conquest, 1538-1543

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by

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ABSTRACT

Over the course of the last century, Fernando de Soto's conquest of Florida has been a central topic of debate among scholars of the United States. In particular, the written sources generated by expedition members during and after their time in Florida have been used primarily by archaeologists and anthropologists for ethnohistoric data on Native American societies in the early-sixteenth century southeast. However, there are two central problems in the historiography that have plagued the field of Soto studies, both of which are the central focuses of this study. First, there has never been a full-length historical study conducted on the expedition, meaning that historians have failed to provide a contextualizing analysis of Soto and his over seven hundred followers within the broader field of conquest history. Second, archaeologists, anthropologists, and amateur historians alike have primarily focused on four accounts when gathering information about the expedition, its time spent in Florida, and the interactions its members had with Native Americans. Additionally, the historical veracity of these four sources have received increasing criticism from scholars over the past three decades.

By introducing a large body primary archival sources related to the expedition, the study accomplishes two main goals. First, utilizing a variety of documentary sources in conjunction with the four popular accounts – known collectively as the "chronicles" – the study lays out a prosopographic analysis of the over seven hundred men, women, and children that journeyed to Florida. Called into question are social characteristics of the group such as places of origin, age, sex, race, social class, education level, and post-Florida experiences of the expedition's

members. Such an analysis portrays a sketch of the entire expedition hitherto unexplored in the historiography, and allows one to deconstruct the misguided stereotypical interpretations of Soto and his followers prevalent in many past studies. On a larger scale, a comparison between the social make-up of the expedition with other ventures from the same period allows one to observe broader social patterns in Spain's conquest enterprise during the sixteenth century. For example, even though many past studies have emphasized that most Spanish migrants in the early colonial period came from Andalusia, Soto's expedition, along with other colonial ventures, reenforce the notion that many explorers during the period also hailed from Extremadura. In another vein, the same comparison demonstrates that the most common regional origin of explorers on each venture typically mirrored that of the expedition's leader. Therefore, what comes into focus are the local kinship networks within Spain that facilitated the recruitment of participants for each conquest expedition. Second, the study shifts more to an evaluation of the primary sources related to Soto's *conquista*. What is emphasized is that an incorporation of the larger body of archival sources into an analysis of the expedition not only introduces new voices with which to better understand the Florida venture. It also allows for an evaluation of the historical credibility of the four chronicles by comparing their contents to the information found in archival documents. Overall, what is stressed is not only the essential need for scholars in the future to incorporate the documentary source material into studies on the expedition. The study further reveals that the four chronicles, some of which have been dubbed as pseudohistories by past historians, each merit significant historical value and are essential sources to utilize when examining the Florida venture.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, the Mississippi Historical Society held a conference to present the most recent scholarly findings on the Fernando de Soto Conquest Expedition of Florida (1539-1543).[1] In dedication to the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the expedition's presence in southeastern North America, anthropologists, archaeologists, and historians came together to produce the most comprehensive scholarly analysis of the expedition to date. Experts in the field of Soto studies such as Patricia Galloway, Charles Hudson, José Ignacio Avellaneda, and others, presented papers that covered a wide range of topics, including critical assessments Soto's life and the expedition, Spanish-Native relations during the venture, and the *entrada's* legacy in Euro-American history.[2] Additionally, one of the centrally discussed themes at the conference was the concern over the problematic nature of the four most utilized "primary" historical

[1] For a comprehensive overview of the studies and arguments within the collection, see Paul Hoffman, "Hernando de Soto: A Review Essay," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 41, No. 2 (Spring, 2000), 235-237. The name "Hernando de Soto," and the shortened "De Soto" have been used by authors of scholarly work and popular literature in the United States since the early twentieth century and even before. Yet two aspects must be discussed in understanding Soto's name and how it has been problematically portrayed in the literature. First, the name "De Soto" in reference to his last name is a misuse of the particle "de" by Anglophone authors. Because the "de" separates his first and last names, it is not correct to include the "de" as part of the last name, but rather as a conjunction between the first name and the surname. Therefore, as opposed to English-speaking authors in the past, I will be referred to him as "Soto" when mentioning him without his first name. Secondly, it seems that Soto himself habitually signed his first name as both "Hernando" and "Fernando," as the letters "f" and "h" were synonymous in the early modern Spanish language. Yet in records found in both Seville's Royal Archive of the Indies and the *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla*, Soto overwhelmingly recorded his name as "Fernando de Soto." In order to recognize the way in which he frequently signed his own name, I will use "Fernando" when referring to his full name. For multiple examples of his personal use of "Fernando," see *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla* (hereafter cited as AHPS) Protocolos Notariales, 5859, especially 36v.

[2] Throughout this study, *entrada* – a term used by the explorers to refer to expeditions od conquest – will be used synonymously with terms such as "expedition" and "venture."

sources regarding the expedition, known collectively as the "De Soto Chronicles." The four are comprised of Luis Hernández de Biedma's *Relation of the Island of Florida*, penned in 1544; Rodrigo Rangel's account of the Florida expedition, first published in 1851 but written not long after the end of the expedition; the Gentleman of Elvas's *Relaçam Verdadeira*, published in 1557; and El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *La Florida del Inca*, published in 1605.[3] Concerns over the chronicles included anything from the "incestuous" nature of their authorship to the uncritical use of the chronicles by historians and archaeologists alike over the past two centuries.[4]

However, in one of her papers delivered at the conference, Patricia Galloway highlighted what she considered the central problem in contemporary scholarship on Soto: the lack of solid historical work on the expedition.[5] What has hindered archaeologists in their assessment of the archaeological record of the southeast for evidence related to the expedition, she argued, is the lack of rigorous historical studies of the four chronicles and the broader expedition itself, therefore rendering the use of the four accounts as ethnohistoric references – at least in a critical way – as highly problematic.[6] Other arguments presented at the conference relayed similar

[3] The most up to date translated editions of the four accounts are found together in Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore, eds., *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1993).

[4] The papers given at the meeting were then published in the edited collection by Patricia Galloway in 1997. Patricia Galloway, ed., *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). In the collection, Galloway, Martin and Ivana Elbl, and David Henige all carry out studies on the problematic nature and the possible "intertextual" relationships between specifically the Elvas, Rangel, and Garcilaso accounts. The uncritical use of the accounts by scholars from Irving to Hudson is also a common argument in all three of these pieces. Patricia Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); David Henige, ""So Unbelievable It Has to Be True" Inca Garcilaso in Two Worlds," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[5] The paper in concern here is Patricia Galloway, "*Conjoncture* and *Long Durée,*" in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[6] I use the term "ethnohistory" to describe the practice of studying Native peoples, societies, cultures, and the encounters they had with Europeans and Africans during the colonial period by utilizing historical texts produced by Native or European authors. For more on the definition of ethnohistory and its application in the field of history as a framework of analysis, see Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History,"

messages: a practice that has plagued southeastern archaeology of the sixteenth century has been the sole reliance on the same four historical sources for ethnohistoric evidence.[7] Thus, Galloway highlighted the need for a critical historical analysis of the expedition itself, one that would entail moving away from a strict reliance on the four chronicles and that would delve into the large corpus of other known documentary sources on the expedition. In doing so, not only would scholars retrieve valuable historical information on the expedition and the Native Americans they encountered, but the new sources could also be used to better assess the validity of the information held within the popularly used chronicles. Only then will archaeologists be able to move forward with a better and more comprehensive understanding of the Soto expedition as a whole, along with being able to more critically utilize the chronicles as ethnohistoric sources of the sixteenth-century southeast.[8]

Galloway's veritable call-to-arms for a further historical analysis of the expedition and all of its existing sources is the foundation of this present study, which seeks to critically assess and synthesize the vast body of documentary evidence related to the expedition into a coherent social history of the conquerors of *La Florida*. The documentary sources include not only the four chronicles, but also the vast corpus of Soto-related archival material contained in passenger

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Latin American Research Review 38, no. 1 (2003), especially 113-115. Besides some of the earlier histories of the expedition from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the chronicles have most recently been used as sources to gather ethnohistoric information on the indigenous peoples of the Southeast, especially since the 1980s. The ethnohistoric evidence has been used to assess native societies from their social relations to their political organizations. For example, see Chester B. DePratter, "Late Prehistoric and Early Historic Chiefdoms in the Southeastern United States," (PhD. diss., University of Georgia, 1983); Marvin T. Smith, "Depopulation and Culture Change in the Early Historic Period Interior Southeast," (PhD. diss., University of Florida, 1984).

[7] Arguments similar to Galloways, but more specific to each of the problematic nature of the four accounts are found in Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 11-12; Henige, "So Unbelievable," 155-156. For an example of esteemed arguments on the expedition that exclusively rely on the four chronicles, see Hudson's preface in *Knights of Spain* where he argues that the four chronicles contain "most of what can be presently learned about the De Soto expedition." Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, xxx.

[8] Galloway, "*Conjoncture* and *Longue Durée*," 287-289.

manifests, judicial cases, letters, contracts, and petitions related to various members of the expedition. Analyzing the additional materials gives voice to other individuals present on the expedition, therefore making it possible to juxtapose their stories with those related in the chronicles. A comparison of the different accounts thus serves to assess the validity of the proposed "incestuous" narratives by providing a larger backdrop of information on which to view chronicles' relation of events on the expedition. And as discussed below, given each account's own set of logistical setbacks, a comparison of their contents actually shows a large degree of authorial autonomy between the famous four accounts and further demonstrates their veracity as historical sources.

However, at the same time, in carrying out an assessment of all the Soto-related sources, the study goes beyond an assessment of the validity of the chronicles and examines the social make-up of the group of conquistadors who accompanied the expedition. Since Soto's Florida venture has never received a thorough academic social history, as pointed out by Galloway, the thesis assesses the biographic information of the different individuals found in the documental sources mentioned above, identifying their names, ages, places of origin, social status, educational background, and, for the individuals who survived the Florida venture, the events of their lives after the conquest. Such an examination of the group's personal qualities mirrors other studies on the social compositions of conquest-era *entradas*, such as James Lockhart's pioneering work, the *Men of Cajamarca*.[9] An investigation into Soto's followers can then be

[9] James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1972). Other studies on the genre of the social patterns of conquest expeditions include Mario Góngora, *Grupos de conquistadores en Tierra Firme (1509-1530)* (Santiago de Chile, 1962); José Ignacio Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes de La Florida: The Survivors of the De Soto Expedition* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Libraries, 1990.); José Ignacio Avellaneda, *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.); J. Michael Francis, *Invading Columbia: Spanish Accounts of the Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada Expedition of Conquest* (University Park: The

compared to the make-up of other expeditions during the early colonial period found in studies such as that by Lockhart and others. This comparison helps to enhance our understanding of the early-conquest world by connecting Soto's group to more general social patterns in the Spanish conquest, such as the organization of expeditions, and even broader trends such as Spanish emigration patterns to the Americas during the early sixteenth century.[10]

In April of 1538, after almost one year of preparation and planning, Soto's *entrada* set sail from the port city of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in southwestern Spain. After a brief stop on the island of Gómera in the Canaries Islands, the fleet made its way across the Atlantic to Cuba, landing first in the town of Santiago de Cuba before making its way north to Havana. After spending almost one year on the island, Soto and roughly seven hundred followers (not including an untold number of slaves, servants, and mariners who accompanied the expedition) departed from Havana and made their way up the west coast of peninsular Florida, making landfall at *Bahía Honda*, or what is believed to be present-day Tampa Bay in late May of 1539. There, the newcomers established the settlement of *Espíritu Santo* on the Day of the Holy Trinity in early June.[11] Over the course of the next four years, the expedition made its way north from peninsular Florida, crisscrossing the North American southeast and covering thousands of miles across the future states of Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi,

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Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); J. Michael Francis and Hannah Tweet, "Anatomy of a Sixteenth-Century Florida Expedition: Sancho de Archiniega and the 1566 Armada," (forthcoming).

[10] An assessment of emigration patterns from different parts of Spain within the population of Soto followers can complement larger studies on Spanish sixteenth-century emigration patterns to the Americas found in Ida Altman, *Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

[11] In a letter written by Soto in Espíritu Santo to the Royal officials in Santiago de Cuba on July 9, 1539, he claimed that, after sending ashore the lieutenant general, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, days earlier with a contingent of men, the rest of the armada disembarked on a beach to regroup with Porcallo on Sunday, Day of the Holy Trinity. See *Archivo General de Indias* (hereafter cited as AGI) Documentos Escogidos, 1, No. 32, fol. 1.

Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana. By mid-1543, with half of the expedition lost to disease, hunger, desertion, and skirmishes with southeastern Natives, the remaining survivors abandoned the attempted conquest and colonization of *La Florida*. On hand-made brigantines they sailed down the Mississippi River and made their way back to Spanish settlement in Mexico by October.

In regard to the expedition itself and its overall purpose – that is, to find and settle areas with exploitable resources and large Native populations – Soto's *entrada* was an unmitigated failure. No permanent settlements were established and the resource-rich Indigenous empires, at least on the scale of those located in central Mexico and Peru, which the expedition fervently sought to locate, were never found. In addition, more than half of the original participants perished during the nearly four-and-a-half years in Florida, including Soto himself, who is believed to have died in 1542 on the banks of the Mississippi River in a settlement named Aguachoya.[12] Yet, despite its failure, Soto's expedition has proved invaluable for other reasons, particularly in regard to modern scholarship and our understanding of indigenous populations of sixteenth-century southeastern North America.

Because the *entrada* was the first major Spanish expedition that spent a prolonged period of time in the interior southeast, Soto's venture has attracted much attention from scholars in the United States over the past two centuries. Initially, historians in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century took most interest in the expedition. However, more recently, archaeologists

[12] For an overview of the different numbers given surviving individuals, see José Ignacio Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 10. The Gentleman of Elvas account gives Soto's death date as May 21, 1542. Garcilaso de la Vega gives the date as sometime in late June. For Elvas's estimates, see The Gentleman of Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, in *The De Soto Chronicles*, eds. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1993), 137. For Garcilaso's numbers, see El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, in *The De Soto Chronicles*, eds. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1993), 447.

and anthropologists of the southeast, beginning with J.R. Swanton's *Final Report* (published in 1931), have composed most of the academic literature on the expedition.[13] Soto and his followers were the first Europeans to come into contact with dozens of indigenous peoples and cultures across the region. Thus, surviving written accounts penned by expedition members of their experiences in Florida and the Native Americans they encountered have served as an information bank for scholars with which to recreate an ethnohistoric window onto the lives of pre-colonial southeastern Native Americans. Scholars have utilized sources from the expedition for a variety of topics regarding the early colonial southeast, including the mapping of Native settlements throughout the region, indigenous communication networks and political systems, the potential spread of disease through the region after the arrival of the European and African explorers, shifting populations patterns in Native societies, and many others.[14] Yet of particular concern is that these ethnohistoric studies have relied almost exclusively on the four chronicles, and even more so that some have treated their contents rather uncritically.[15]

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[13] Some early historical studies by "non-professional" scholars include the works of Theodore Irving's 1835 narrative of the expedition *The Conquest of Under Hernando de Soto* (first published in 1835), which is considered the first historical piece on the expedition in the English-speaking world. Various other "nonacademic" historians also published works on the expedition in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, most of which have come to fall under the category of "great men" histories for their concentration on the romanticized actions of Spanish leaders, like Soto. Patricia Galloway, "Commemorative History," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 412, 418-419. For Swanton's work on the expedition, see John R. Swanton, *Final report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission* (1939. Reprinted, Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985).

[14] Some of these studies include Alejandra Dubcovsky's *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), especially 22, 31-40; Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492-1715* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), especially 59-64; and Galloway, ed., *The Hernando de Soto Expedition*, especially the essays contained in part 2-4. Each of these studies exemplify the diverse ways in which the chronicles have been used as sources on the expedition and for ethnohistoric purposes; they also demonstrate how most academic works that discuss *entrada* obtain their information solely from the chronicles.

[15] For examples of the criticism by certain scholars on the uncritical use of the chronicles in academic studies, see Galloway, "Commemorative History,"413-430; Henige, ""So Unbelievable It Has to Be True,"" 163-165; David Henige, "Proxy Data, Historical Method, and the de Soto Expedition," in *The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543*, eds. Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 165-169.

However, of paramount interest to archaeologists assessing the chronicles for ethnohistoric material, from Swanton to later Soto experts such as Charles Hudson, has been the recreation of the route that the expedition took through the southeast. Doing so would not only provide a detailed sketch of indigenous cultures and peoples in the early-sixteenth century southeast. By viewing the accounts of later *entradas* that visited some of the same locations as Soto, such as the Juan Pardo expedition of the 1560s, one can theoretically assess the rate of change in Native American society over the course of the early colonial period.[16] However, of concern to us here is not the archaeological studies that have been and continue to be carried out on the expedition, nor the route construction itself. The topic here centers on the written sources – including the chronicles and the greatly overlooked corpus of other documentary evidence on the expedition – which beckon the thorough examination they have thus far been denied by most scholars.

When discussing primary sources related to Soto's *entrada*, the term "source" refers to any written piece of information concerned with the expedition itself or its participants, whether it was created by an actual expedition member, a witness to an event either before or after the expedition, a Spanish official reporting on the venture, or a contemporary chronicler. After almost five hundred years since Soto and his followers set out for *La Florida*, it is striking that

[16] Charles Hudson, "The Historical Significance of the Soto Route," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 314. Charles Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*: *Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), xxxi-xxxii. Also, see Robbie Ethridge's forward in the 2018 edition, xxii-xxiv. Swanton's version of the route, which was the precursor for Hudson's route project, can be found in Swanton, *Final Report*, 343c-348c. Patricia Galloway argues in her essay "Conjuncture *and* Longue Durée" that Swanton used a rather uncritical methodology in his treatment of the historical sources and did not anchor much of his study in the archaeological record of the day. Galloway, "*Conjuncture* and *Longue Durée,*" 285-286.

even a single piece of written information has survived. Indeed, a vast corpus of primary sources on the expedition exist in archival collections across Spain and possibly elsewhere in the Americas.[17] Seville's *Archivo General de Indias* alone contains thousands of pages of documents related to Soto's Florida venture that cover a wide variety of genres, including petitions, passenger manifests, litigation cases, letters, and others. But over the past nearly two hundred years, as mentioned above, historians and archaeologists concerned with Soto's expedition have endlessly toil with the same four sources without introducing new information found in other sources.[18]

Without question, the four chronicles together contain a trove of information on the *entrada* from its start in Spain to its abandonment in 1543. However, they contain their own set of inherent problems as viable sources, most of which stem from the fact that only one is a true "primary" source. Of the four, the only account confirmed to have been written by an individual present on the expedition is that of Luis Hernández de Biedma. Biedma was the royal *factor* of the expedition and penned his own relation of general events on the journey through Florida, which he presented to the Royal Council of the Indies in Santo Domingo after the expedition's end.[19] However, as is the case with all historical sources, Biedma had an agenda while writing

[17] For the amazing opportunity to work with such a large body of primary sources on the expedition and, in general, the early colonial period, scholars are indebted to the centuries-old Spanish use of *papeleo*, or the cultural practice of setting of great importance on paperwork (and subsequently, its conservation).
[18] During the nineteenth century, starting with Irving's work in 1835, most histories concerning the expedition used Garcilaso de la Vega's *El Inca de La Florida* and the Gentleman of Elvas's account as their sole sources. Rodrigo Rangel's account, which is contained in Oviedo's *Historia General*, part 1, book 17, remained in manuscript form until it was published in Spain 1851. Similarly, Luis Hernández de Biedma's account was not translated into English until 1866 by Buckingham Smith. Garcilaso, Elvas, Rangel/Oviedo, and Biedma's accounts all acted as the main root of information on the expedition until well into the twentieth century. The trend in using strictly the four chronicles can also be seen as far as into the works of Hudson. Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 12. For the first translation of Biedma, see John E. Worth's introduction to the Biedma account in Clayton, Knight, and Moore, eds., *The De Soto Chronicles*, 223. Irving, *The Conquest of Florida Under Hernando de Soto*, preface, iv.
[19] The original account can be found at AGI Patronato 19, R.3 under the title *Relación de la jornada de Luis Fernández de Viedma: Florida*.

his account, and he omitted many of the negative details about the expedition's failure before he presented his relation to the Royal Council. Therefore, rather unfortunately for contemporary scholars, Biedma's account is the briefest of the four in both detail and length, leaving the other three to supply most of the details and narrative information about the *entrada*.[20] The other three sources – those by the Gentlemen of Elvas, Rodrigo Rangel, and Garcilaso de la Vega – have received sharp criticism in recent decades from scholars due to the fact that they are not actually primary accounts, but rather secondary or even tertiary in nature. Rodrigo Rangel, Soto's personal secretary on the expedition, wrote an account of the journey similar to that of Biedma, although lengthier and more detailed. However, Rangel's account was then picked up by Spain's royal chronicler, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, which he copied into the second volume of his lengthy history of the conquest, *Historia General de las Indias*. Yet Oviedo inserted into the account a heavy dose of his own personal commentary in which he expressed his disapproval of Soto's character and his conquest of Florida, depicting a particularly "black" portrayal of the expedition, such as the conquistadors' brutal treatment of Natives throughout the journey.[21] Unfortunately, Oviedo's version of Rangel's account is the only version known exist.

[20] Ida Altman argues in her article titled "An Officials Report" that Biedma had a reason for penning such a short and general narrative of the expedition. With his audience in mind, that being the Spanish Crown's representative authority in the Americas, the Royal Council of the Indies, to which he was tasked with providing a report of the expedition, Biedma chose to portray a view of the journey that highlighted the sufferings undergone and overcame by the expedition and downplayed the fact that the expedition was a complete failure in regard to its primary objectives, which was to find precious metals and create permanent settlements. Thus, his account leaves out the rich detail of people and events that can be found in the other chronicles. Ida Altman, "An Official's Report: The Hernández de Biedma Account," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 7.

[21] There are various studies that assess Oviedo's overall negative depiction of Soto and the conquest and his strong depiction of violence throughout the journey. Many authors believe that Oviedo's condemnation of Soto has much to do with Soto's affiliation with Pedrarias Dávila, the leader of the conquest of Panama in the 1510s and 20s and whom Oviedo had a bitter distaste for dating back to his own involvement in the Panama conquest. Martin Malcolm Elbl and Ivana Elbl, "The Gentleman of Elvas and His Publisher," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 58-59; José Rabasa, "The Representation of Violence in the Soto Narratives," in *The Hernando de*

The still-anonymous identity the Gentleman of Elvas, the author of another of the four chronicles, has sparked much controversy over whether he was even an actual expedition member or if it is simply a copy of the Oviedo/Rangel manuscript penned by its publisher, Andrés de Burgos.[22] Garcilaso de la Vega's *La Florida del Inca* was originally published in 1605 and is a composite piece made up of oral testimonies and two short written accounts of the expedition that Garcilaso allegedly had in his possession while writing the account some fifty years after the expedition. His piece is by far the most extensive and detailed, yet it contains a heavy dose of rhetorical devices common to Renaissance-era historical literature. Thus, his account and its credibility, along with the contemporary historians and archaeologists that continue to cite it abundantly as a source, have recently come under intense scrutiny.[23]

One of the main criticisms of the chronicles is the aforementioned alleged "incestuous" relationship between them, and particularly between the accounts of Rangel, Elvas, and Garcilaso, which raises even more questions about their reliability as viable sources of the expedition. Oviedo's volume two of the *Historia General*, which contained his version of the Rangel manuscript, as Patricia Galloway suggests, may have fallen into the hands of one of his publishers in Seville, Andrés de Burgos. Burgos, after moving to Portugal near the middle of the century, then published the Gentleman of Elvas's Account in 1557. Additionally – as Galloway

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Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 401-402.

[22] For Galloway's argument that Elvas is a tertiary piece, see Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 27. Martin and Ivana Elbl believe the opposite, arguing that due to the "mental landscape" of the Elvas piece, along with another intertextual assessment between Elvas and Oviedo, leads them to believe that the Elvas account was likely written by a single individual, likely of Extremaduran ancestry. Elbl and Elbl, "The Gentleman of Elvas," 56-57.

[23] For a criticism of Garcilaso's use of rhetoric and how it contributes to the problematic nature of his account, see Henige, ""So Unbelievable It Has to Be True,"" 156-159. Garcilaso also had other reasons for writing his account, such as his overall message, which, as a Mestizo writer living in colonial Spain, was to argue for the equality in providential history between the Spaniards and Natives of the Americas. For an assessment of Garcilaso's overall message and his literary style and influences, see Lee Dowling "La Florida del Inca: Garcilaso's Literary Sources," in in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), especially 1010-102.

points out in a textual comparison between the two pieces – certain descriptions of Florida's landscape and events on the expedition in Elvas closely match those in Ovideo's Rangel, although these similarities in descriptions could be coincidental, as many of the colonial-era writers from Europe had common familiar reference points to compare with descriptions of the Americas.[24] Lastly, as noted by historian David Henige, Garcilaso claims in his rendering of the conquest that he used only three sources, two from manuscripts and one from the conversations that he had with a survivor, Gonzalo Silvestre, at least thirty years after the expedition had ended. Not only does the possibly faulty memory of someone remembering events decades after the expedition as a main source raise questions about the validity of the material, but there also appear to be elements in *La Florida del Inca* that closely mirror those of Elvas, hinting at a possible borrowing of information between the accounts, even though Garcilaso does not claim to do so in his narrative.[25] However, a textual analysis carried out in Chapter Three shows evidence that contradicts arguments in favor of incestuous authorship. Details such as references to different expedition members and how each author recounts events on the venture show that the strong degree of individuality between the Rangel, Elvas, and Garcilaso accounts.

Finally, another central problem with using the chronicles as the only sources on the expedition is just that: their seemingly sole authority as the only voices of the Soto *entrada*. Numerous historical interpretations of Soto's conquest, from the chivalric depictions of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, to the combined archaeological and historical analyses of Swanton's *Final Report*, to Charles Hudson's work on the route, and even all the way up to

[24] For an example of the perceived intertextual relations between Oviedo and Elvas, Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 22-23. For a different take on the same textual example as not a sufficient establishment of the evidence of textual borrowing, see Elbl and Elbl, "The Gentleman of Elvas," 55.
[25] Henige, ""So Unbelievable It Has to Be True," 160-161; Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 34.

present-day studies in the year 2022 have restricted themselves to assessing the expedition through the same four narratives.[26] Thus, it is not surprising that scholars such as Patricia Galloway expressing frustration with the lack of comprehensive study on all of the known Soto-related materials, which would not only bring new information to light but also aid in better understanding the chronicles.

In order to break from the seemingly endless circle of toiling with the same four sources, we must begin to incorporate the larger corpus of existing Soto-related material into an examination of the expedition, thereby introducing a number of new voices and characters that partook on the journey, which can then be juxtaposed with the narratives found in the chronicles. Comparing the details in the different chronicles with the various other documentary evidence related to the *entrada* and its members helps expose the possible truths and/or inconsistencies therein. However, at the same time, exposing the different individuals' identities as found in the other sources allows us to construct a detailed biographic picture of the expedition's members and of the group as a whole. Who were these individuals and where did they come from? What social ranks did they occupy in Spanish society and on the expedition? What were their occupations? Were they skilled craftsmen or professional soldiers? Asking these questions while examining Soto's followers helps us to answer the central question of 'who were these individuals collectively referred to the as the conquistadors?' On a larger scale, exploring the

[26] Early publishing on the expedition were not restricted to Theodore Irving. Other writers from the same era include John Monette, Lambert Wilmer, J.F.H Claiborne, Buckingham Smith, Edward Gaylord Bourne, and others. For a solid covering of the historiography of the early as well as later generations writing on Soto, see Galloway, "Commemorative History," 413-419. For an overview of the sources used in the *Final Report*, see sections in the original forward titled "Investigation in Spain" and "Translation of the Printed Material" in Swanton, *Final Report*, viii. For Hudson's view on the importance of the chronicles as the authoritative sources on the expedition, see the quote mentioned above in footnote 6 from the preface of his *Knights of Spain*. For a recently released study on the *entrada* that uses historical evidence strictly from the chronicles, see Dennis Blanton, *Conquistador's Wake: Tracking the Legacy of Hernando de Soto in the Indigenous Southeast* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2020).

personal identities of these individuals enables us to compare Soto's expedition with other *entradas* of the same era. By observing patterns in the social characteristics among different expeditions, the study thus provides an alternative lens through which to understand of the nature of Spain's conquest enterprise in the Americas during the early to mid-sixteenth century.

Surviving archival records that contain the voices and identities of members from the Florida expedition cover a wide range of genres, including passenger manifests from the Spain's *Casa de la Contratación*, letters, contracts, judicial cases, and a uniquely Iberian genre of document called the *probanza de mérito*, or proof-of-merit petition.[27] Particularly with the last two – judicial cases and *probanzas* – additional stories are uncovered regarding the people and events of the expedition from the voices of participants themselves, some of whom are not even mentioned in the chronicles.

The surviving *probanzas* represent the majority of sources through which to hear the voices of other individuals from the expedition. They contain the stories of multiple Florida *entrada* participants who recounted their experiences during the expedition and after the survivors reached Mexico. A proof-of-merit petition was precisely what the title infers: a petition to the Spanish Crown in which the petitioner gave an overview of their experience in the conquest, highlighting (and often exaggerating) past deeds accomplished and/or misfortunes endured during their 'service to the Crown.' Following their relation of events, the petitioner would request compensation for their past experiences in the form of offices, titles, pensions, or other goods.[28] The format usually included a section where the petitioner highlighted deeds,

[27] For a brief assessment of the history and creation of the *probanza* and its transfer over into the conquest of the Americas, see Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11-13.

[28] *Ibid*, 11-12. During the sixteenth century, and particularly in areas under Hapsburg rule, such as Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands, royal patronage was the "fuel which kept the wheels of sixteenth century political society

services, and misfortunes in a series of questions, to which a group of witnesses were called to give validity to the petitioners' claims. Witnesses usually included individuals who had been present on an expedition or in a place with the petitioning individual during the time in question and supplied testimony of the events, as well as gave their name, age, and, if they were literate, had to provide a signature. Therefore, we obtain additional information about the expedition and also about the body of individuals that accompanied it.

For example, in 1572, Hernán Suárez de Mazuelas, the ordinary magistrate (*alcalde ordinario*) of the village of Antequera del Valle de Oaxaca, New Spain (present-day city of Oaxaca, Mexico) penned a lengthy *probanza* to the Spanish Crown petitioning for higher office in the settlement's local government.[29] By the 1570s, Mazuelas, a veteran of the conquest and well into his fifties, had participated on multiple conquest expeditions across present-day Mexico and Guatemala. However, in his *probanza*, he begins his story with his journey from Spain as a *mozo* (young lad) to the conquest of La Florida with Hernando de Soto. When speaking of the expedition, he recounted the many years of hardship and suffering that he and the others experienced:

> [With Don Hernando de Soto], I served with my own weapons and horse, all at my own cost, and after wandering for much time and many years in the said provinces [of Florida], the said *adelantado*, and for the last two years [of the expedition], the captains forcibly abandoned the cause due to our needs and the

turning," as stated by one historian. Royal patronage, particularly under the reign of Charles V and Philip II in Spain, functioned as a two-way system between the Crown and its vassals. For example, monarchs needed the participation of individuals – preferably of higher social status – to carry out the growth and maintenance of the kingdom. In order to persuade individuals to do so, the noble elite would elicit bribes in the form of gifts, whether in money or in other forms, such as political offices, titles, or land. These royal 'gifts' were referred to as *mercedes* in Spanish society. Thus, individuals from the lower rungs of sixteenth-century European society all the way up to the lower nobility jockeyed for the King's granting of *mercedes* by acts of 'civil service.' In the Americas during the early conquest period, these services 'in the name of the King' often took the form of participating on expeditions of conquest, which, either successful or not, could be argued as that individual's direct intention of expanding the King's domain. For a deeper explanation of patronage and bribery under Charles V and Philip II's rule, see H.G. Koenigsberger, *Estates and Revolutions: Essays in Early Modern European History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971), esp. 166-169.

[29] Mazuelas's petition can be found at AGI Patronato, 77, N.1, R.1.

> labors that we experienced, and we came to the New Spain dressed in animal hides, destroyed and miserable.[30]

Many times, the language used in these depictions is exaggerated. But aside from the often-dramatic relation of events, these accounts reveal an individual's perspective on the expedition, along with those of the other Florida members who testified in the proceedings. In Mazuelas's petition, four individuals who accompanied Soto to Florida acted as witnesses and gave their testimonies of the expedition. One of them – Alonso de Argote – discussed the battle of Mabila, perhaps the bloodiest battle between Soto's forces and Native Americans during the entire expedition.[31] Apart from personal stories about the expedition, the *probanzas* contain additional information about the occupations and internal organization of the venture, such as, for example, a section from Rodrigo Vazquez's petition where he mentions that he and his brother were captains of a squadron men on foot.[32] Thus, by examining *probanzas* like those of Mazuelas and others, which is one of one of seventeen known petitions that contain Soto expedition individuals, we obtain more information about the venture from multiple new perspectives. Although equally problematic in their own sense, the testimonies of different members found throughout the *probanzas* and other sources can be compared to the events as told in the chronicles, therefore not only exposing new stories of the expedition, but also allowing one to gauge the validity of the different sources by comparing their contents.[33]

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[30] AGI Patronato, 77, N.1, R.1, fol. 35r. The exact date of the interrogatory given here is June 23, 1572.
[31] Argote's testimony can be found on *ibid.*, fol. 51v-54v.
[32] The claim to captaincy in Rodrigo Vazquez's petition is found at AGI Patronato, 60, N.5, R.7, fol. 1v.
[33] A few individual petitions have received some degree of attention from scholars over the past half-century, such as that of Gonzalo Silvestre in M. José Duran's "La Memoria de Gonzalo Silvestre," *Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien*, No. 7, (1966), 45-46. Juan de Añasco's petition has received some degree of examination in Robert S. Weddle, "Soto Problem with Orientation: Maps, Navigation, and Instruments in the Florida Expedition," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 220-230. David Ewing Duncan's study on the expedition seems to at least catalogue various Soto petitions, but the extent to which he uses their contents is questionable. David Ewing Duncan, *Hernando de Soto: A Savage Quest in the Americas* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.)

It is through the *probanzas* and a lengthy litigation case that other voices of Florida survivors can be heard. The legal battle, which was fought between Isabel de Bobadilla, Hernando de Soto's wife, and Hernán Ponce de León, Soto's business partner, took place mainly between 1546 and 1547. During the trial, over twenty-five Florida participants gave testimony of their experiences before, during, and after the expedition. Yet with the *probanzas* and the Ponce versus Bobadilla case, not only is additional narrative information about the expedition revealed, but one can connect the biographic details of each witness and petitioner to where they appear in other sources, such as licenses. Therefore, the different sources can be used in tandem to construct a biographic sketch of Soto's expedition while also obtaining new stories about the Florida venture, which can be compared with the four chronicles. Essentially, the end result is a broader understanding of both the expedition's many diverse participants and an increase in the number of stories about events during the Florida conquest.

Identifying survivors particularly matters because it can help discern those who actually made it to Florida in 1539, as it is evident that not all who received royal license to depart from Spain reached Florida. Some may have simply not departed with the ships from Spain, while others remained in the Canary Islands or in Cuba. However, identifying those who survived the venture also allows one to track where individuals moved on to after the expedition ended. José Ignacio Avellaneda's study *Los Sobrevivientes de La Florida* to date is the only study on the expedition's survivors that utilizes the testimonies from the *probanzas* and the legal battle between Ponce and Bobadilla. However, his study of the survivors is only the beginning of a larger project that greatly deserves attention. *Los Sobrevivientes* is mostly concerned with the

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José Ignacio Avellaneda's study *Los Sobrevivientes de La Florida* is still to this day the most comprehensive study of the biographic information in the *probanzas* and court cases.

biographical information of the surviving expedition members and does not connect the patterns of their region of origin, age, or social class to other early-conquest expeditions. Therefore, Avellaneda's study does not allow a comparison of Soto's expedition to other Spanish expeditions during the early colonial period. Nor does it contextualize the boarder patterns of movement of the survivors within the larger emigration patterns of the day.[34] Thus, by picking up where Avellaneda left off, this study reconstructs the identity of the expedition's individuals, adding information from new documents and following those who left from Spain and survived Florida, which add to larger studies on patterns of emigration from Spain to the Americas and also within the Americas themselves during the early colonial period.[35]

There are a number of other genres of sources that will be utilized throughout this study as well. Beyond the information found in the *probanzas*, passenger manifests from Spain's *Casa de la Contratación*, or Royal House of Trade, contain the biographic information of 655 individuals who at least received license participate in the expedition – if these individuals made it to Florida though, is another matter.[36] However, assessing the individuals who received license

[34] Avellaneda's analysis of the Soto expedition survivors in *Los Sobrevivientes* was a preliminary study for his PhD. dissertation, in which he carried out the same type of social analysis of the first six expeditions that participated in the conquest New Kingdom of Granada in the 1530s and 1540s. Therefore, as more of a preliminary study, it lacks the depth of analysis that he carried out in his dissertation, *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada*, and in other studies on the social composition of expeditions, such as Lockhart's *Men of Cajamarca*. At the end of his preface in *Los Sobrevivientes*, Avellaneda admits that the study of Soto individuals could be used to carry out analyses of emigration patterns from Spain that mirror that of Altman's work in her *Emigrants and Society*, but he never carried out those ambitions.

[35] Such studies include on emigration patterns, both transcontinental and intercontinental include Ida Altman's *Emigrants and Society*, and her brief study on intercontinental movement in Ida Altman, "Moving Around and Moving on: Spanish Emigration in the Age of Expansion," in *Discovering the Americas, 1992 Lecture Series* (College Park: Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Maryland at College Park, 1994.)

[36] The number 656 comes from personal research conducted with Dr. J Michael Francis on the original licenses found at AGI Contratación, 5536, L.5. Other data for total number of individuals that received license differ slightly. Antonio de Solar y Toboada and José de Rújula y Ochotorena in their study *El Adelantado Hernando de Soto: Breves noticias y nuevos documentos para su biografía* (Badajoz, 1929) gave a total number of 651 individuals and another study by Cristóbal Bermúdez Plata in the 1940s gave the number of people as 657. Cited from Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 6.

provides a rough overview of the group that likely arrived in Florida. Throughout the colonial period, every individual who departed Spain for the Americas was, in theory, supposed to acquire license of passage from Seville's Royal House of Trade. In the Archive of the Indies, there exists today the registries of thousands of individuals who received these licenses.[37] Registries from 1538 record the names, birth places, and parents' names of 655 individuals who received license to Florida with Soto.[38] As the stopover in the Canary Islands and Cuba for a year mixed up the group, allowing for some original members to stay on the island and new members to be recruited in Cuba, the only way to understand who was in Florida is to look at those who survived and those mentioned as perishing during the journey. However, from these licenses we can begin to understand the make-up of the Florida expedition. As discussed further in Chapter One, patterns in the identities of the expedition members becomes apparent almost immediately in the licenses. A large percentage – almost fifty percent – of Soto's followers came from Extremadura and even more specifically from the province of Badajoz, which was the home province of Fernando de Soto himself. Thus, by looking at the licenses, one may raise question such as what role did kinship connections among the conquistadors play in assembling expeditions during the early sixteenth century? When looking at Soto's expedition, among others, it becomes apparent that kinship networks played an essential role in the recruitment of *entradas* for the Americas. Because of strong familial recruitment tactics coupled with the fact that Soto's expedition was substantial in size, it seems that the Florida venture may have

[37] Scholars throughout the past, such as Peter Boyd-Bowman, have used these registries to understand the broader emigration patterns from Spain to the Americas, especially during the early colonial period.
[38] The number 656 comes from personal research conducted with J. Michael Francis on the original licenses found at AGI Contratación, 5536, L.5. Other data for total number of individuals that received license differ slightly. Antonio de Solar y Toboada and José de Rújula y Ochotorena in their study *El Adelantado Hernando de Soto* (Badajoz, 1929) gave a total number of 651 individuals and another study by Cristóbal Bermúdez Plata in the 1940s gave the number of people as 657. Cited from Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 6.

constituted one of the largest contingents of *extremeños*, or more specifically, *pacenses*, that ever embarked for the Americas during the early colonial period. Additionally, the licenses include details about the Florida group's race and gender, demonstrating that not all of it members fit the Iberian male stereotype that has defined the popular image of the conquistadors. Furthermore, all of these characteristics that are found in the licenses can then be compared to other expeditions to the Americas during the early-colonial period and contribute to a broader understanding of the conquest. [39]

Accompanying the *probanzas* and licenses, judicial records and licenses are other genres of documents that add to the body of both narrative and biographic information of the *entrada*. Letters such those written by Fernando de Soto himself, one when crossing the Atlantic and another written in *Bahía Honda* in Florida, give additional insight into the expedition. Other sources include the writings of Juan de Añasco, the expedition's *contador* (comptroller), who penned the first letter to the Crown after the expedition's arrival in Mexico, as well as a detailed letter with other expedition officials before departing from Havana in 1539. Additionally, personal contracts with servants and mariners of the expedition – who, to date, have not been discussed in any published study on the expedition – exist in notary archival collections in Seville, which only further enhance our understanding of the organization of the expedition and who made up its ranks. Additionally, a list of survivors at the end of Biedma's account also yields clues to the occupations of many expedition members. Although the list does not account

[39] For an example of a race-related assessment of the early conquest period and the participation of free and enslaved Africans in the conquest to which this study contributes, see Mathew Restall "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57, No. 2, (2000). See also, Mathew Restall, ed., *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), especially 15-22.

for everyone who survived,[40] and not every individual listed has an occupation, it reveals that there were various roles played on the conquest that do not generally come to mind when we imagine the "conquistadors." The Biedma list identifies shoemakers, scribes, tailors, mariners, carpenters, blacksmiths, priests, clerics and friars, a hosier, a swordsmith, and a trumpeter.[41] When looking at the seemingly endless list of other sources to take into consideration when examining this expedition, it seems ineffective to only concentrate on the four chronicles alone. Not only is there more information available, but what one can do with that information exceeds far beyond an assessment of the four famous chronicles that dominate Soto scholarship. It allows for a broader social and biographical study of one of the largest European conquest expedition that ever ventured to Florida, along with an analysis of the expedition's place within the broader world of the early-conquest period.

The underlying methodology of this study differs from those typically used in the historical reconstruction of the early conquest. As opposed to using the narrative style common in most many past histories – which favors reconstructing a narrative of the historic moment to explore its events and peoples – central to this study are the patterns of social characteristics among the explorers, or those typically referred to as the "conquistadors." The aim of the study is to provide a social analysis – a backdrop – of the over seven-hundred men, women, and children who accompanied Soto to Florida on the expedition between 1538 and 1543. Following in the ideological footsteps of past studies such as James Lockhart's *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru*, the principal interest here is not the conquest itself, but rather, the social patterns in the lives of the venturers, which, when explored

[40] Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 9-10.
[41] AGI Patronato, 19, R.3. The list, which is in a different hand than Biedma's report and appears to have been attached to the back of the document later on, has no folio numbers.

in-depth, can be used as a stage on which to better understand the narrative elements of the story. Also prevalent in many past (and present) historical interpretations of the conquest is the strict focus as expedition leaders as the protagonists of the narrative; a style of writing now referred to as 'great men' histories. By concentrating on individual people – popular figures in the Spanish conquest, such as Christopher Columbus, Hernando Cortés, and Francisco Pizarro – the lens through which to view these complex historical moments and processes is completely skewed, favoring to tell the story not only from the Spanish perspective, but through the eyes of its elite. By paying closer attention to the social and biographic patterns and identities of the broader group of "conquistadors," the focus shifts from a concentration on the perspective and identities of leading figures and provides a more encompassing window for assessing and understanding the conquest as a social event as opposed to a story dominated by 'exceptional men.'[42]

The thesis is divided into two parts, each dealing with different themes in the field of Soto studies, those being the lack of a proper social history of the expedition and the difficulties associated with using the four chronicles. Both revolve around a closer examination of the large body of primary sources that have been underutilized in past studies. Part One focuses on carrying out a social analysis of the expedition's member and their place within the boarder world of the Spanish conquest. Chapter One contains an assessment of the social makeup of the expedition similar to that of James Lockhart's *Men of Cajamarca*. Lockhart's central goal in the

[42] For an overview of Lockhart's over methodology concerning social patterns in the conquest, see Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 3, 17, and especially Ch. 6, 103-118. Here, the definition of exceptional men refers to a past trend in the historiography of the early-twentieth century and before that retold the story of the conquest by fixating on the profile and actions of expedition leaders, which were often highly inflated. For a discussion of the ideological roots and construction of 'great men' histories, see the chapter "The Myth of Exceptional Men" in Restall, *Seven Myths*, 1-26, especially, 11-15; Patricia Galloway, "Commemorative History," 410-413.

Cajamarca study was to concentrate, as he put it, not the conquest itself, but on "the pattern in the lives of the conquistadors." He argued that a recognition of the "general within the particular" – here applying to the specific lives of individual conquistadors within the broader patterns of conquest-era expeditions – is essential for better understanding the group of individuals we that we collectively call the conquistadors.[43] Therefore, the chapter closely follows the style of analysis found in Lockhart and later studies, picking up where Avellaneda left off in his *Los Sobrevivientes*. The core of the chapter functions on the practice on prosopography, or the examination of common characteristics among a group of people, particularly whose individual biographies may be overshadowed by others in the historical record. Prosopography functions to build a collective biography of the group in question, accounting for both the personal characteristics of an individual and how those characteristics may form patterns of similarity and difference within the population.

The chapter analyses in separate subsections the personal characteristics of individuals that journeyed to Florida, which help draw a more accurate sketch of who these individuals were. The characteristics include their places of origin, age, sex, race, social class, status of enslavement, occupation, and other experiences such as prior and military experience in the Americas, and later the destinations of the survivors after Florida. What is found is that Soto's expedition defies all stereotypes associated with the "conquistadors," and introduces new characters in the story of the venture. As opposed to being gallant knights or vile Medieval ruffians, the faces that arise from the pages of the different sources reveal the men, women, and children that made up the expedition's ranks. They came from many social, economic, and racial

[43] Lockhart, *Men of Cajamarca*, 3. Lockhart's quote on the need for scholars to see the general within the specific when observing colonial history is cited here from Restall, "A History of the New Philology," 113.

backgrounds, and many were skilled artisans, craftsmen, mariners, and servants. Many individuals were also literate, displaying a high level of education among many of the expedition's participants. Also, many individuals of African descent also played an essential crucial role on the expedition, some of whom were even free and may have been of higher social status. Above all, the analysis of the social characteristics of the expedition directly contradicts the unfounded stereotypes so prevalent in past studies.

Chapter Two transitions from looking specifically at the Florida venture and compares the characteristics of the Soto *entrada* to the make-up of other early-colonial-era expeditions, such as those in Panama, Peru, the New Kingdom of Granada, and later expeditions to Florida. Looking at characteristics among the different groups such as the regional origin, age, and racial make-up of participant members on the different expedition, the chapter contextualizes Soto's followers within larger visible social patterns among other expeditions of the conquest period. These patterns include larger migration patterns between Spain and the Americas during the sixteenth century and the role that kinship networks among expedition members played in the recruitment tactics for conquest expeditions. Therefore, the chapter contributes to both the greater body of studies on conquest history and emigration patterns to the Americas during the early colonial period while also contextualizing Soto's expedition within the broader trends. As discussed below, Soto's expedition had many unique characteristics that testify to the social diversity on early conquest ventures.

Part two centers on an examination of the narrative elements found in the different sources. The section's lone chapter – Chapter Three – explores the narrative elements (including the appearance of different characters) as found in the different accounts. The chapter is concerned above all with the debate over the validity of the four chronicles and the information

they put forth about the expedition. The chapter grapples with the central question of 'how do we use the chronicles, and what does a comparison with additional archival sources reveal about the four's reliability as primary sources?' Yet as opposed to the theoretical approach of retelling a history of the expedition in the format of a narrative, a methodology is adopted based on the premise put forth by one historian that "theories of history actually privilege one side [of the story] as if the other did not matter.[44] Following a non-narrative approach to discussing the expedition similar to the two previous chapters, Chapter Three analyzes the biographic and narrative elements regarding the people and events in the chronicles, as well as other pieces of narrative information in archival sources such as in the *probanzas*, personal contracts, judicial cases, and letters written by onlookers and participants of the Florida expedition. Above all, the underlying goal of the chapter is to provides a set of tools, or a guide for that matter, with which to better understand the various and sometimes competing narrative of the Florida expedition. In the chapter, an assessment of the documentary sources against the chronicles shows that the four accounts, as opposed to previous arguments by scholars, are independent sources of each other and likely do not contain any incestuous relations. Furthermore, the analysis displays that each of the chronicles has inherent historical value in their own ways, especially Garcilaso's *La Florida*, which is one of, if not the most indispensable source on the expedition.

In his influential study, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Michel-Rolph Trouillot argues that "history is always produced in a specific historical context" and that the historical narrative often times empowers the voices of some historical actors while

[44] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 22.

simultaneously silencing those of others.[45] In the process, our interpretation of the event as present-day onlookers may be greatly distorted – or indeed totally incorrect – given the inherent silences in the historical record and the privileging of others that we hear. Within a one-sided history that focuses on the voices of a small group of historical authors, the greater context in which historical events occurred can be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and the Soto expedition has been no exception to this phenomenon. With the fixation on the four chronicles and the subsequent neglect of the greater body of archival material regarding the expedition – much of which is still yet to be found – scholarly interpretations of the expedition have lacked a fuller understanding of the hundreds – potentially even thousands of individuals who arrived on the shores of Florida in 1539. Here, we will explore their identities, their life experiences, and the stories they told about their time spent in Florida. By doing so, we may better understand the expedition itself, its place in the broader world of the early colonial period, and the sources with which we use to view them.

[45] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 22-30.

PART ONE:

WHO WERE THEY?

THE MEMBERS OF THE FLORIDA EXPEDITION

CHAPTER TWO:

LA GENTE DE LA ARMADA: THE PEOPLE OF THE FLORIDA EXPEDITION

In 1997, archaeologists Charles Hudson and Robbie Ethridge dedicated a book-length study to understanding the nature of early colonial interactions between European explorers and Native Americans in southeastern North America. Titled *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms*, the work focused on the impact that early-sixteenth century Iberian expeditions to the region had on indigenous populations they encountered. Central to *Knights of Spain* and various other works by Hudson was the impact of the Fernando de Soto conquest expedition, which traversed what is now the southeastern United States for more than four years between 1539 and 1543. As discussed before, due to the expedition's prolonged time in the region, archaeologists such as Hudson have fixated on the expedition and the paper trail of written sources left by some of its seven hundred or so members in order to create an ethnohistoric window into the region in the early-sixteenth century. Most important to Hudson and other ethnohistorians of the expedition are two main factors. First are the observations that the explorers provide in their accounts concerning the Native American societies with which they came into contact. These observations have been used to better understand factors such as the locations of Native settlements, their cultural practices and characteristics, and their relations with the colonial newcomers. Secondly, and perhaps most

importantly, the written accounts can be used to help gauge the potential impact and the lasting legacy that the expedition had on the region's inhabitants.[46]

Yet in order to understand the expedition, its actions, and its subsequent effects on Native societies, Hudson and Ethridge created what they intended to be as a social biography of the expedition and its members – an architype for the common "conquistador." Citing past authors and following the time-worn interpretation of Spaniards as battle-hardened veterans of the *Reconquista*, the authors depicted the newcomers as "tough, arrogant, quick to take offense… and extravagant in their actions." They were "more medieval than modern in the way they thought and acted," insinuating that they lacked any capabilities other than brute force and violence in their relations with other, such as Native Americas. They came from a society that was "basically agricultural and pastoral… a world that was slow-moving and seemingly immutable…[and] were given to religion and extravagant imagination." And yet, these "Spaniards dreamed of acquiring wealth, and the quicker it could be obtained and enjoyed the better [because] they disdained labor."[47] The authors also fixated on Soto himself, seemingly attempting to understand the expedition's route and its collective actions through its leader's personality traits. For the two, Soto's character and personality were "shaped by two harsh parents: the Reconquest of Spain and the Conquest of Latin America." He was schooled by brutal mentors in his youth during the conquest of Panamá and had "frontier manners" and an

[46] Hudson's general argument for the study can be found in the preface in Charles M. Hudson and Robbie Ethridge, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), xxix-xxxii.
[47] Hudson and Ethridge, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 8-11, although these stereotypes of "conquistadors" run throughout the book. As is directly stated by the authors in the notes section, their interpretations were based primarily on those by J.H. Elliot in his *Imperial Spain* (1963). *Ibid*, 484, n.1.

"impetuous personality… having no compunction about killing anyone whom he defined as an enemy [and] subjecting people to mutilation."[48]

Other Soto scholars have portrayed similar depictions of Soto and his followers that contain familiar elements of the Black Legend regarding the stereotypes of 'conquistadors.' According to one scholar, after the battle-hardened and well-heeled Soto had returned to Spain after serving in the conquests of Central America and Peru, his "restlessness" and "greed to a fault" led him in a "stunning act of arrogance" to take up the conquest *La Florida* in the late 1530s. However, Soto's "get-rich strategy" of conquest ended in his death before the expedition's end in 1542 somewhere along the banks of the Mississippi River.[49] Others have depicted Soto as a paradox of contradictory personality characteristics that inspired expedition members, yet doomed them to a perilous journey through Florida:

> He was a colossal paradox of a man in an age of contradictions: grim and engaging, fascinating and contemptible, pious and hypocritical, prudent and reckless, at once enterprising, destructive, arrogant, bold, and savage. Medieval in his certainty and disregard for human life, he was Renaissance in his tactics and individualism, and modern in his megalomaniac worship of himself… an offspring of two hemispheres conceived in violence, vitality, and an insatiable lust to move forward.[50]

Similarly, his followers have been portrayed as "uneducated, medieval peasants, just dimly aware of what they were facing [in Florida]."[51] These depictions of Soto and his followers revolve around popular notions of the Black Legend, or the idea that Spaniards were uniquely

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[48] Hudson and Ethridge go into detail about their depiction of Soto's personal character in chapter two of *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 39-47.
[49] This interpretation of Soto can be found in Blanton's *Conquistador's Wake*, 1-6. Blanton's interpretation of Soto and the Spanish, along with the goal of paying close attention to the expedition's movements and actions, falls closely in line with Hudson and Ethridge's study. In fact, as Blanton says himself, *Conquistadors Wake* can be seen as a methodological continuation of Hudson's work, although it takes less of a narrative format and reads more like an archaeological survey. *Ibid*, 4-5.
[50] Duncan, *Hernando de Soto*, xxxiv.
[51] *Ibid*., 244.

brutal colonial figures who systematically subjugated and victimized their Native subjects more than other European colonial powers, such as England, France, and the Dutch.[52]

Choosing to retell a narrative which casts the colonial newcomers and their leader as a band of vile and Medieval killers accomplishes two things. First, it distorts the complex social entities that early colonial Iberian expeditions to the Americas were, and second, it oversimplifies and incorrectly predetermines the complex relations that the newcomers had with Native American societies they encountered. These depictions are also representative of the lack of proper historical analysis paid to the Soto expedition and the sources that scholars have used to understand its actions and events in Florida.

One of the remedies to this dilemma is to conduct an in-depth social analysis of the hundreds of individuals who accompanied Soto to further understand who in fact these individuals were. Apart from Avellaneda's work in on the survivors, there has been no real comprehensive social analysis of the expedition that seeks to understand the biographic makeup of the group's many members. Excluding Avellaneda's *Los Sobrevivientes*, only a handful of previous studies have consulted other sources apart from the chronicles, such as the licenses and the *probanzas* of a few surviving members.[53] However, never has there been a study published on the expedition that has included an analysis of the more than fifty mariners who participated in the expedition. At the same time, there has never been a study that explores the lives of the individuals that returned to Spain. Both of these groups play an important part in this study, shedding light on some of their identities for the very first time. Constructing a better

[52] For a brief but helpful explanation of the concept of the Black Legend and its perpetuation in protestant English and Dutch literature during the colonial period, see Restall, *Seven Myths*, 118-119.
[53] For example, Solár and Rújula's *El Adelantado*; José Durand, "La memoria de Gonzalo Silvestre"; Weddle, "Soto's Problems of Orientation," 217-230.

understanding of who these individuals were by analyzing their personal characteristics as a group greatly aids in contextualizing their identities and actions as opposed to simply labeling them as vile, Medieval, and greedy peasants. As mentioned before, these characteristics include their places of origin, race, sex, age, occupation, education, and social rank, and experiences after the Florida expedition.

As will be seen in later chapters, the biographic analysis carried out here will also act as an information bank for the following chapters, which will utilize the prosopographic data for two primary objectives. First and foremost, it will be used to connect the Soto expedition with a broader body of literature concerned with the social analysis of early-sixteenth-century conquest expeditions. By comparing the Soto group with other bodies of explorers, larger trends may be observed such as migration patterns from Spain to the Americas, similar social characteristics among the groups, and the kinship networks that shaped early conquest enterprises. A better understanding of such characteristics assists in conceptualizing the conquest as a complex social event as opposed to the two-dimensional Spanish-Native dichotomy. Second, paying close attention to the voices of different expedition members as they appear throughout both the documentary sources and the chronicles allows one to examine stories of the expedition side by side. A comparison of the different sources, evaluating where they agree and disagree on events during the expedition, aids in weighing the validity of the different sources of information. However, the connection between the social characteristics and narrative information will be left for following chapters. Here, we must first delve into understanding the backdrop of who these different individuals were.

The Expedition

Fernando de Soto and his roughly seven hundred recorded followers set sail from Sanlúcar de Barrameda sometime in April of 1538. After the Atlantic crossing, the expedition spent nearly a year in Cuba, where Soto had also been appointed as governor. His contract with the Crown stipulated that he was to be governor of the island and the land to the north, known as *La Florida*. Cuba would serve as a base from which to launch multiple exploratory expeditions to Florida. The contract outlined that he was to explore the region and settle a number of towns, along with erecting three stone fortresses in the new land, giving Spain a permanent foothold in the region.[54] After smooth sailing across the Atlantic, the expedition arrived at Santiago de Cuba on the island's western end, and shortly thereafter made its way by land and sea to Havana. After almost a year of preparation and conducting reconnaissance missions to Florida to locate an ideal port for landing, the expedition set sail from Cuba in May of 1539.[55]

The exact number of expedition members who participated on the Florida expedition continues to be a subject of debate. Two of the chronicles give numbers of individuals leaving Spain between 600 and around 950, while Seville's General Archive of the Indies holds records containing the names of 655 individuals who received license to go to Florida with Soto.[56] Other individuals, participants themselves, commented a year later that there were seven hundred men who left Spain in 1538. Furthermore, the fact that the expedition made a brief stop on the island of Gómera in the Canary Islands, followed by a year spent in Cuba complicates efforts to

[54] For Soto's specific *asiento*, or contract with the Spanish Crown, see AGI Indiferente 415, L.1, specifically fol. 42r.
[55] Three of the famous chronicled sources give the date of the expedition's departure from Cuba as sometime in early May 1539. See Clayton, Knight Jr., and Moore, eds. *The De Soto Chronicles*, vol. 1, 57, 253; vol. 2, 95.
[56] For an overview of their specific numbers, along with other estimates of those leaving Spain, see Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 6-10. For the passenger manifests from 1538 containing the licenses to Florida, see AGI Contratación, 5536, L.5, folios 62v, 68r, 85r, 271r-296v, 300r, 301r-322v.

determine who in fact went on the expedition and who may have abandoned the venture before Florida. Thus, the only way to determine the identities of those who participated is to find where they appear in other records and accounts during the expedition, and after the survivors reached Mexico in 1543. Sources that shed light on the venture during its time in Florida are the four chronicles, the *probanzas*, and the Ponce versus Bobadilla case, while other records such as a list of survivors drafted by Luis Hernández de Biedma after their arrival in Mexico, and a handful of letters, allow us to identify for certain who made the journey to Florida or not. Collectively, the four chronicles mention 174 different individuals, a handful of whom may be duplicates. In his study *Los Sobrevivientes*, Avellaneda identified 258 expedition survivors who reached Mexico. It is with these numbers and sources that the current study will carry out the examination of the men, women, and children who ventured to Florida in 1539, moving between the three separate yet intertwined groups of those who received licenses, those who appear in the chronicles, and those who emerge later as survivors.

Backgrounds and Characteristics

Of central concern to studies in the past related to the social makeup of expeditions has been the topic of regions of origin, that is, where did they come from? Dating back to studies by Mario Góngora and James Lockhart in the mid-twentieth century, great importance has been placed on understanding the regional origins of expedition members, which can yield rich information regarding Iberian migrations patterns during the early colonial period and the underlying kinship networks and recruitment campaigns that went into forming conquest ventures.[57] Among license

[57] Lockhart investigates the Peru expedition's regional origins in Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 27-31. Góngora analyzes the Panama encomenderos' regional origins in Góngora, *Los grupos de conquistadores en Tierra Firme*, 75-83.

recipients and the survivors, the trend in regional origin is striking (see Table 1.1). Of the individuals who received license in Seville, almost half came from Extremadura in southern Spain and, more specifically, from the Province of Badajoz, who make up 288 of the 312 individuals from Extremadura. A breakdown of the Extremadura contingent can be seen in Table 1.2. Fernando de Soto was born in the town Jerez de los Caballeros in the southwestern portion of the Province of Badajoz.[58] Therefore, such a high rate of recruits from Badajoz is indicative of the strong regional kinship ties that formed the base of recruitment for American ventures. Following trends with other expeditions from the early sixteenth century, the two other most common regions of origin were Andalusia and Castile and León. Table 1.3 displays the top seven cities with the most Florida recruits. Not surprisingly, five of the seven cities are located in Badajoz province, with one of the other two being the major Andalusian port city of Seville. Kinship networks and recruitment methods did not exclude those from outside Spain's borders either, as many of the individuals who claimed to be from Badajoz in their licenses were from Portugal, even though the recruitment of foreigners in the American venture was prohibited under Spanish law. Individuals came from far and wide across Iberia to partake in the surge of expeditions to the Americas during the years after the discovery of Peru, and Soto's expedition was no exception.

[58] There has been a long-held dispute over where exactly Soto was born. The three candidates have been the towns of Jerez de los Caballeros and Barcarrota, and the city of Badajoz, all of which are located in the present-day province of Badajoz. However, for a settling of this debate, which was in fact Jerez de los Caballeros, see Juan Luis Fornieles Álvarez, "El capitán Hernando de Soto, natural de Jerez de los Caballeros (Badajoz), vecino del mundo," in *Al-Andalus y la Historia en Jerez de los Caballeros y su entorno. II Jornadas de Historia en Jerez de los Caballeros*, ed. R. Segovia Sopo (Badajoz and Jerez de los Caballeros: Xerez Equitum, 2017), esp. 201-205. Fornieles Álvarez discusses the long-held debate over whether Soto's birthplace was in Jerez, Barcarrota, or Badajoz. He traces roots of the dispute back to its origins, which lie partly in Garcilaso de la Vega's *La Florida del Inca*, in which El Inca stated that Soto hailed from the town of Barcarrota. He finds textual evidence against this claim, as well as the other that Soto hailed from the city of Badajoz. All three of the locations were close knit communities during the sixteenth century, and Soto absolutely had family in all three locations. However, Fornieles Álvarez locates a handful of documents that allow him to determine that Soto was in fact from Jerez.

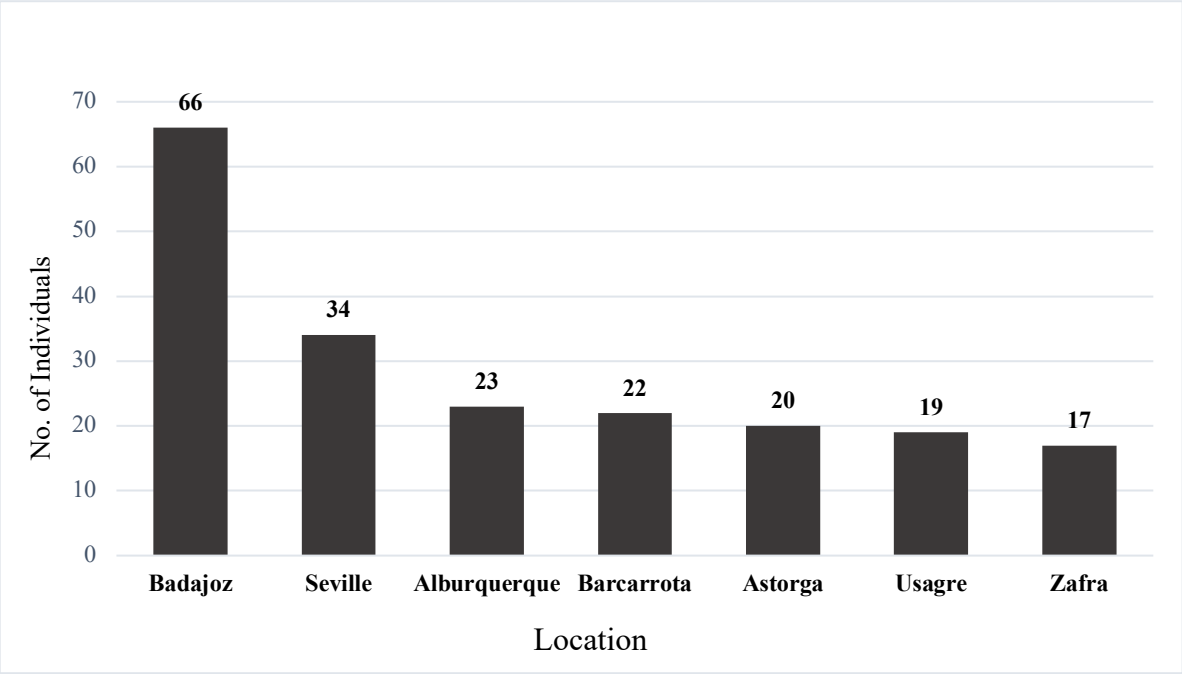
Table 1.1: Spanish Regions of Origin (from Licenses)

Spanish Regions	Number of Individuals	Percent
Extremadura	312	47.6
Castile and Leon	145	22.1
Andalusia	77	11.8
Castile-La Mancha	36	5.5
Basque Country	14	2.1
Galicia	8	1.2
Asturias	6	.9
Aragon	2	.3
Catalonia	1	.1
Navarre	1	.1
	602	91.9
Unknown	53	8.1
Total	655	100%

Table 1.2: Origins of the Extremadura Contingent

Region	Florida
Badajoz	228
Cáceres	23
Unknown	1
Total	312

Table 1.3: Top Seven Cities from Licenses



Regional trends amongst the survivors paint a similar picture. As seen in Table 1.4, of the 258 individuals found in proof-of-merit petitions, letters, court case records, survivors mentioned in the chronicles, and other post-expedition documents, thirty eight percent were *extremeño*, well above the regions of Andalusia and Castile and León, with eleven and ten percent of the overall surviving group.[59] When considering those who appear in the chronicles, the regions of origin are more difficult to determine due to the reliability of the data. Many of the same individuals found in the licenses and in later records appear in the chronicles, especially elite, including Soto

[59] The data used here for survivors' regional origins can be found in Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 67-69. He calculates the average for 258 individuals. However, in a chapter article written for the Mississippi Historical Society's 1993 symposium on the Soto expedition, Avellaneda states that he later found another individual from Badajoz that was not included in *Los Sobrevivientes*. See José Ignacio Avellaneda, "Hernando de Soto and His Florida Fantasy" in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 218, n.27.

and other high-ranking officers. Of the 170 individuals identified in the four accounts, eighty-nine were confirmed as being from Spain, ten from Portugal, and five from Cuba, with sixty-three individuals mentioned without their home country or region. Of the eight-nine Spaniards identified in the chronicles, forty were from Extremadura, thirty-nine of them from the Province of Badajoz. Twenty-one individuals came from Andalusia – the vast majority from Seville – and fifteen from the province of León in Castile. Therefore, the chronicles generally mirror both the licenses and the survivors list.[60]

Table 1.4: Places of Origin of Survivors (from Avellaneda)

Place of Origin	**Number**	**Percent**
Spanish Provinces:		
Extremadura	100	38
Andalusia	29	11
Leon	26	10
New Castile	16	6
Vizcaya	10	3
Galicia	7	2
Aragon	1	.03
Foreign:		
Portugal	11	4
France	1	.03
Italy	1	.03
Other Foreigners	4	2
Survivors:		
Origin known	241	
Origin unknown	17	
Total	258	100%

[60] All of the computations regarding the chronicles are from the author's own research.

Other measurable characteristics of the expedition include the age and prior military experience of its many members, indicating if the recruits were young and inexperienced, or if they were indeed the aged, seasoned veterans of either the Americas or European military service. In the case of the Soto expedition, the average participant age can only be inferred through the survivors, as the licenses authorized in Seville prior to the expedition only recorded the individual's name, place of origin, and parents' name and place of origin.[61] Therefore, age can only be deduced in later records, such as proof-of-merits and court testimonies in which survivors acted as witnesses and provided their rough ages at that particular moment.[62] Of the 258 survivors, only fifty-seven can be given an approximate age at the beginning of the expedition (see Table 1.5).[63] The most common age group was between twenty and twenty-nine, with an average age of 24.6 and a mean age of 24. Many of the expedition's officials were older, including the royal comptroller, Juan de Añasco, Arias Tinoco, Captain Pedro Calderón, and Soto himself, all of whom were in their late thirties and early forties. The chronicles make little mention of age, although Garcilaso offers a few general references including men he recorded as being "young" and one older man, named Juan Mateos, whom he stated was older and "gray."[64] The two youngest to be recorded were Gonzalo Méndez de Sotomayor, who, given his testimony in a *probanza* 1561, was around the age of fourteen at the start of the expedition, and Ana

[61] As was the typical license format in the early sixteenth century, along with the small biographical information given regarding the license recipient was also a conformation given by the Casa that the individual was not one of the "prohibited ones" (*los prohibidos)*, including anyone of North African or Jewish ancestry, who were by Spanish law not allowed in the Americas. Also mentioned in these licenses is the name of the ship on which the individual was to depart, and the name of the ship's captain.

[62]As was typical in the sixteenth century, many individuals would give their age followed by the almost formulaic "más o menos," or "more or less." Very few individuals seem to have known their definite birth year and many would simply give an approximate time frame of their birth. Therefore, age is calculated less in specifics and more in ranges.

[63] Ages for the survivors can be found in Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 69-70.

[64] For the reference to Juan Mateos, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 319.

Méndez, a servant of Soto's nephew-in-law, don Carlos Enríquez. In a petition in Jerez de los Caballeros, Spain in 1560, Méndez stated that she was born around 1529, which would have made her only ten years old when she arrived in Florida.[65]

Table 1.5: Age of Soto Expedition Members

Age (years)	Soto Expedition Survivors (in 1539)
9 to 14	2
15 to 19	13
20 to 24	15
25 to 29	15
30 to 34	7
35 to 39	4
40 to 44	1
Total Known Ages	57
Unknown Ages	201
Total	258
Average Age	24.6
Mean Age	24

Even less information has been found regarding prior military experiences for group members. Many of the higher-ranking officials were either veterans of the American conquest or of military service in Europe and, in the case of many of the Portuguese individuals, North Africa (see Table 1.6); for the rest of the participants, it seems that most were newcomers to the New World. Of those experienced in the conquest campaigns in the "Indies," most had served in Peru alongside Soto or in other areas such as New Spain. Soto's *maestre de campo*, or field marshal, Luis de Moscoso, had served on expeditions with his uncle, Pedro de Alvarado, in New Spain and Guatemala, and had spent time in Peru prior to joining Soto. Baltasar de Gallegos,

[65] For Sotomayor's age, see AGI Patronato, 51, N.3, R.1, fol. 39r-40r. For Ana Méndez's age, see AGI Patronato, 51, N.3, R.2, sin fol. (IMGs 24-28).

chief constable on the Florida venture, was a kinsman of the famed Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and had served with Hernando Cortés on the expedition that settled Santa María de la Victoria in Tabasco, Mexico. Captains Nuño de Tovar and Juan Ruiz Lobillo had served in Peru, the latter of whom had likely taken part in the Cajamarca expedition.[66] Andrés de Vasconcelos de Silva and other prominent Portuguese individuals had served under their home country's banner in North African campaigns, while various Spaniards – most of them minor nobility – had served in the Spanish Crown in campaigns in Italy, Vienna, and Tunis prior to Florida. However, it must be noted that among individuals of lesser ranking on the expedition, many do not seem to have had much formal military experience before the expedition, and even fewer were experienced in the Indies. Upon its arrival in Cuba, the expedition appears to have been composed of mainly newcomers to the Americas, although the potential dispersal of many licensed individuals once in Cuba and the recruitment of countless unknown others who were already on the island may have altered the overall rate of prior military experience.

Table 1.6: Documented Prior Experiences

Places	**No. of Men**
The Americas	5
Europe/Africa (military)	8
Both	1
Total	14

Education, literacy rate, and social rank among expedition members are also accessible for surviving individuals in the written record. As opposed to being a group of illiterate peasants,

[66] The Juan Ruiz, native of Alburquerque, mentioned by Lockhart may have been the same individual as our Juan Ruiz that served in Florida. See Lockhart, *Men of Cajamarca*, 346-348.

or, from the opposite end, a group of gallant knights (as was the popular depiction in much of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century literature) these expeditions contained a diverse body of individuals that came from varying social classes of sixteenth-century European society. In terms of the Florida group, certain trends are beginning to emerge.

As stated by one historian, there were "a welter" of Spanish words that designated some degree of nobility regarding an individual, which makes the exact meaning or significance of an individual's social rank somewhat ambiguous. At the other end of the spectrum, this ambiguity is even more pronounced while attempting to understand what constituted a "peasant," or *anyone* of low social status, for that matter.[67] However, regarding the Soto group, there appear to have been a significant number of individuals that held either minor nobility status or even the markings of the gentile class. As shown in Table 1.7, there are twenty-two individuals (including Soto) who maintained some sort of traceable social rank. These are typically identified by the different honorifics and titles that proceed their names as they were recorded in licenses, the chronicles, or amongst the survivors in later testimonies. Of the twenty-two, five have been found to have carried the honorific of "don," including Soto. In sixteenth-century Spanish society, the honorific "don" was associated with individuals of higher nobility: dukes, lesser counts, and other lords.[68] Those referred to as "dons" on the Soto expedition included don Antonio Osorio of Astorga, who was said to be a kinsman of the Marques of Astorga.[69] Others included don Lorenzo of Seville, don Diego de Mendoza of Illescas, Toledo, and don Carlos

[67] Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 31. Lockhart explains the nature and ambiguity of Spanish honorifics on pages 31-34.
[68] *Ibid*, 32.
[69] Osorio received license from the Casa in Seville on March 8, 1538 (AGI Contratación, 5536, L. 5, fol. 316v). He is also mentioned multiple times in the chronicled sources, always bearing the honorific of "don."

Enríquez.[70] There was also a doña Isabel Mejía, a native of Burguillos del Cerro, Badajoz, who received license to journey to Florida along with her spouse, Mendo Mejía. She is the only female mentioned in the licenses recorded with the "doña" honorific.[71] Those of lesser nobility, including lesser lords, typically retained the title of "hidalgo" (literally meaning *hijo de algo*, or the "son of someone"). Not always did individuals who occupied lesser nobility status carry the title, however, and often they are recognized through context and the social qualities they exhibit. Consider for example García Osorio, who was never referred to in any account or testimony as being a hidalgo. Yet in his proof of merit petition penned in 1560 in Mexico City, Osorio states that he sold a village of vassals he owned in the kingdom of León to secure the funds needed to partake in the Soto expedition.[72] Osorio would thus be recorded as a "borderline case" on the expedition. He is never mentioned specifically as a hidalgo, yet he exhibits the social qualities and familial relations of one (he was a kinsman of the don Antonio Osorio mentioned above). Thus, there were four individuals referred to directly as "hidalgos" and thirteen of the "borderline cases" who were possibly lesser nobles. Also, their regions of origins, including those of higher nobility, seem to have been centered in Seville, the Province of Badajoz, and Astorga, León.

Table 1.7: Presumed Social Rank

Rank	No. of Men
Don	5

[70] It is unclear, however, if these individuals partook on the expedition, as both are only mentioned as receiving licenses to journey to Florida. See AGI Contratación, 5536, L. 5, fol. 313r and 317r.
[71] Doña Mejía is listed in AGI Contratación, 5536, L. 5, fol. 301r. It is unclear what her relationship to Mendo exactly was, although it would not be surprising if he were her husband. It is also curious that he was not mentioned as being a "don," although this omission may have been a scribal error.
[72] AGI Patronato, 51, N.3, R.1, fol. 29r-43v. Osorio in his petition mentions that he was a "caballero principal" on the expedition, but he never states directly that he was a "hidalgo." He was also related to the don Antonio Osorio mentioned earlier, although their relation is not totally understood.

Table 1.7 (Continued)

Rank	No. of Men
Doña	1
Hidalgo	4
Borderline cases	13
Total	22

The task of attempting to gauge the education level of expeditionaries is more daunting. In the past, historians have used literacy rates as an indicator of one's prior education. In the case of Soto participants, unless they produced personal written accounts of their endeavors (which few did), the common way to judge literacy rate is through one's ability to sign their name. As was standard in court testimonies and petitions, witnesses were asked to sign their names on the original transcript at the end of their testimony, which can be used at the very least to generally measure one's literacy. Signatures may range from a well written script to an illegible scribble, with some simply leaving an "x" for their mark. On other occasions, some simply stated to the scribe that they did not know how to sign their name. Thus, there are different categories of classifying signatures varying from clean and legible to crude. When an individual's handwriting was extremely poor, it is often inferred that they may have been illiterate yet had the ability to at least sign their name. Although this system is not flawless, as many variables can complicate the matter. Firstly, and most importantly, there is always a possibility that an individual that had some degree of formal educational background may have simply had poor penmanship. Also, oftentimes documents including these testimonies were copied multiple times by scribes, and many ended up in archives across the Americas and Spain. In a copy, a scribe either recorded the individual's name if they signed, or stated that the witness did not know how, making it difficult for the reader to assess the state of the witness's handwriting. Yet given its flaws, assessing these

signatures merits some attention in that it can give us at least a rudimentary picture of these individuals' educational backgrounds and the differences between them.

For the group of Soto survivors, there are currently ninety individuals who have discernable literacy rates, all of whom are found in either the surviving proof-of-merit petitions, or other court cases. As seen in Table 1.8, the majority of those who signed have been found in later copies of the original documents, so their original signatures are not included. Yet of the ninety individuals, only two stated that they could not sign their name, those being Francisco Redondo and Ana Méndez, the young servant of don Carlos.[73] Given the previous information, only six percent of the recorded people could not sign their name, which directly contradicts the depiction of a band the illiterate peasants found in past works on the expedition. It seems that most had the ability to at least sign their name, making them potentially literate, while eight individuals – those including Soto himself, other high-ranking individuals on the expedition who were shown to have signed their names, the scribes recruited for the expedition, and those who left personal accounts of the journey, including Soto's secretary, Rodrigo Rangel.[74]

Table 1.8: Literacy Rate (based on survivors)

Extent	**No. of Individuals (Florida Survivors)**
Definitely literate	8
Could sign	
Doubtless truly literate	-

[73] Francisco Redondo was a witness in the petition of Sebastián Villegas Prieto in Mexico City in 1569 (AGI Patronato, 69, R.2, sin fol. (IMGs 10-12)). Ana Méndez was the servant of don Carlos Enríquez, Soto's nephew. She stated later in a petition in Spain in 1560 that she was only around the age of ten at the beginning of the expedition (AGI Patronato, 51, N.3, R.2, sin fol. (IMGs 24-28).

[74] Rangel was one of the authors of the four main chronicled accounts, which in its original state was picked up by the royal chronicler, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés. Apart from Soto and other high-ranking officers and officials, those who left personal accounts include Juan Coles and Alonso de Carmona, both of whom wrote the accounts – now lost – that acted as some of the main sources for Garcilaso de la Vega's account of the expedition. For an explanation of his sources used in writing his account, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 54-56.

Table 1.8 (Continued)

Extent	No. of Individuals (Florida Survivors)
Copy contained unoriginal signature	57
Literacy cannot be deduced	21
Crude signature, probably illiterate	2
Illiterate	2
Unknown	168
Total	90

Within the sources, occupations held by individuals on the Soto expedition are also a definable characteristic. Contrary to another popular image of the conquest in which the adventurers are depicted as armed units of trained professional soldiers, battle-hardened veterans of the Reconquest, these individuals constitute a wide variety of skilled craftsmen and other professionals who brought with them their skills and trades. Firstly, the stereotypical image of the conquistador as an armed soldier is one that distorts who these individuals were and how the conquest expedition functioned. These individuals were not paid soldiers; the idea of the conquistador as a soldier is a more recent invention. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the "conquistadors," as they did frequently called themselves, did not refer to their positions on expeditions as soldiers, and only later in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century do Spanish individuals begin to refer to themselves as "soldiers" in the Americas.[75] At the time of Soto's expedition, these individuals bought into the conquest enterprise – gambling their armaments, property, and life – with the hope and expectation they would reap the rewards of the

[75] For more on the creation of the stereotype of the conquistador-turned-soldier, or what historian Matthew Restall refers to as the "Myth of the King's Army," see Restall, *Seven Myths*, ch.2, especially 28-33.

American enterprise. These rewards could take the form of seized material wealth or the repayment by colonial officials with lands, titles, *encomienda* grants, and other goods.[76] Yet, while they were not professional soldiers in the same way a present-day military functions, most of the recruits were self-armed and trained in combat, as was typical in early-modern Europe; during expeditions, the surgeon and the tailor would have fought as armed combatants given the proper scenario.

Along with being able to serve in combat, many of the Soto participants served a wide array of other occupations, such as skilled artisans and craftsmen, tasked with sustaining the expedition and the needs of its members. Tables 1.9 and 1.10 show a breakdown of the different occupations mentioned in both the four chronicles and documents produced after the expedition ended in 1543. Due to the questionable accuracy of the chronicles, especially regarding the occupations of individuals of lower social rank, the information has been recorded separately. Of the fifteen different occupations mentioned in the Biedma list and the over thirty occupations mentioned throughout the chronicles, we begin to see the inner functioning of the expedition and the various duties carried out by its members, from the general to the trumpeter, from the Royal factor to the tailor and the mariner. Note the mariners mentioned below are only those identified in the chronicles and the Biedma list, and are not related to the mariners that received private contracts with Soto, which will be dealt with separately later.

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[76] An *encomienda* was essentially a grant of Native labor awarded to an individual who oversaw the Native workers, referred to as an *encomendero*. The goal of the *encomienda* was twofold: first, the Natives who worked for the *encomendero* worked a variety of extraction, agricultural, or production jobs whose labor monetary benefits were taken in by the holder of the *encomienda*. Therefore, the *encomendero* owned the labor and products of the group of Natives allotted in the grant. Second, the *encomendero* was charged with serving the crown's military and political needs in the colonies, along with supplying the material and spiritual well-being of their allotted Natives. Thus, the *encomienda* functioned to generate wealth for the grant holder while also facilitating the conversion of Native Americans to the faith. For a general description of the relationship between *encomenderos* and Native communities, see Steve J. Stern, "The Rise and Fall of Indian-White Alliances: A Regional View of "Conquest" History," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, No.3 (1981), 465-471.

Table 1.9: Occupations (mentioned in Chronicles)

Occupation	**No. of Individuals**
Ecclesiastics	
Fray	5
Cleric	2
Cleric Priest	2
Missionary	1
Governmental Representatives	
Contador	1
Royal *factor*	1
Treasurer	1
Military Occupations	
Soldier (general)	14
Cavalryman	5
Cavalry captain	4
Captain of men-on-foot	3
Field marshal	2
Captain General	2
Chief constable	2
Halberdier	2
Archer	2
Captain (general)	1
Crossbowman	1
General Second Lieutenant	1
Trumpeter	1
Assistant to the Sergeant General	1
Captain of Crossbowman	1
Footman (specified)	1
Chamberlain	1
Professionals, assistants, etc.	
Page	4
Servant	2
Mariner	2
Engineer	1
Principal pilot	1
Notary	1
Governor's Groom	1
Total	70

Table 1.10: Occupations (Biedma's list of survivors)

Occupation	No. of Individuals
Mariner/Seaman	19
Tailor	6
Blacksmith	3
Fray	3
Scribe	2
Shoemaker	2
Carpenter	1
Cleric	1
Sword maker	1
Factor	1
General	1
Priest	1
Stocking maker	1
Treasurer	1
Trumpeter	1
Total	44

It is problematic that the sources that mention more of the military roles are the chronicles, and particularly Garcilaso, whose account was not penned until five decades after the expedition had ended. Yet particularly when looking at the Biedma list and other non-military positions mentioned in the chronicles, occupations seldomly associated with the 'conquerors' come to the surface. They were mariners, tailors, blacksmiths, religious figures (there were reportedly twelve at the onset of the venture), carpenters, shoemakers, hose or stocking makers, and sword makers, servants, pages, scribes, notaries, and engineers. Of the 655 licensed individuals, we only know of a handful of their professions and duties on the expedition from later accounts, such as the Biedma list and what is given to us through the chronicles. Yet an increasingly clearer picture of the lives of its members is created through these bits of seemingly mundane life.

The last elements of the expedition's social background we will explore include the gender and racial diversity of its ranks. There do not seem to have been a significant number of Spanish women who ventured to Florida with Soto, although a few do appear throughout the scattered sources. Five women received licenses in Seville in 1538, one of whom was the aforementioned doña Mejía. The remaining four included the wife and daughter of Juan Clemente, Mariana, the wife of Aparicio Gómez, and a woman named Leonor de Bolaños who, like doña Mejía, was a native of Burguillos del Cerro.[77] Some of the leading officers also state in their *probanzas* that they brought their wives to Florida. In his petition in Mexico in 1545, Baltasar de Gallegos, the chief constable of the expedition, declared that he had brought his "wife and belongings" along with him to Florida.[78] Although it later appears that the wives of individuals like Gallegos and others did not make the journey to Florida, but rather stayed in Havana along with Soto's wife – doña Isabel de Bobadilla – waiting for the expedition to establish permanent settlement in Florida; an event that never transpired.[79] Other women include the only Spanish woman mentioned by name in the chronicles as being in Florida, Francisca de Inostrosa, who supposedly perished in the fire during the battle of Chicaza. Ana Méndez was also present in Florida, according to her 1560 testimony. Additionally, two Spanish women received contracts to accompany Baltasar de Gallegos and his wife, doña María de Guzmán with the rest of the expedition from Seville. Costanza Jentin Palavesina and Teresa Suárez were both recruited to act as housekeepers, or *dueñas*, of Gallegos and Guzmán in late 1537 and early 1538 in Seville prior to the expedition's departure, although it is unclear if either of the women made it

[77] Isabel and Inés Herrera are mentioned on AGI Contratación, 5536, L. 5, fol. 288v; Mariana on *ibid,* IMG 282r; and Bolaños on *ibid*, fol. 301r.
[78] AGI Mexico, 204, N. 16, sin fol. (IMG 10).
[79] See Doña María de Guzmán's personal testimony on the Ponce versus Bobadilla case in 1546. AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 819r-822r.

to Florida or stayed behind to tend to Guzmán in Cuba.[80] There were also an untold number of enslaved African women mentioned in passing who were either vassals of Soto, or of other officers. These women included two female slaves registered by Soto in Seville in 1538 (although it is unclear if they made it to Florida), and a single female slave mentioned in the *probanza* of Juan de Añasco. Calculating the numbers of women is problematic in that many were likely left undocumented or were mentioned without names in passing, such as in Rangel's account where he states that a group of Christian women, all of whom were slaves of Soto, fought to defend themselves during the battle of Chicaza in 1540.[81] It is unclear from this statement if these women were of African or European descent. In sum, there have been twelve Spanish and African women identified as taking part in the expedition, while only three of whom (Inostrosa, Méndez, and the slave of Añasco) are confirmed to have been in Florida, while the rest await to be uncovered in other sources.[82]

Individuals of African descent are another group that undoubtedly played a role on the Soto expedition, as they did on every expedition to the Americas during the early colonial period. Free and enslaved Africans served a variety of roles in the conquest, and their voices, although subdued by the triumphalist narrative that centers on the deeds of Europeans, can be heard in many places.[83] Individuals of African descent served as both armed and unarmed

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[80] Both Palavesina and Suárez were commissioned to embark on the expedition for three to four years, as stipulated in their contracts. Palavesina was a widow who described herself as a *vecina* of Seville, while Suárez was a married woman whose spouse was living in the Indies at the time that she signed the contract with Gallegos and Guzmán. Based on the language used in either contract, it seems clear that Palavesina was hired to stay in Cuba to tend to Guzmán; Suárez's contract is less specific, which means she may have been brought along to Florida. For the two's contracts, see AHPS Protocolos, 2275, sin fol. r-v (2 fols.); and *ibid*, 2276, sin fol. r-r (3 fols.).

[81] Rodrigo Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest and Discovery of Hernando de Soto*, in *The De Soto Chronicles,* Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore, eds., (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1993), vol. 1, 292.

[82] For Francisca de Inostrosa, see Clayton, Knight Jr., and Moore, eds. *The De Soto Chronicles*, vol. 1, 108; vol 2, 370. For the record of the two women slaves of Soto, see AGI Contratación, 5760, N.2, fol. 2r-2v.

[83] Matthew Restall argues that the phenomenon of the overshadowing of the presence of individuals of African descent in the conquest – what he refers to as the "Myth of the White Conquistador" – is a product of the writings of the conquerors themselves. As the central goal of writings of conquistadors was to highlight their own actions and

auxiliaries on expeditions of conquest. Some were free before the venture left Spain, while many others were enslaved with the potential of gaining their freedom whilst serving their owners during the expedition. Some who participated in colonial ventures had been born in Africa prior to being sold into slavery, while others – some of whom were of mixed-race ancestry – may have been born in either Portugal or Spain.[84]

Of particular significance when viewing the Soto expedition and its members of African descent is the fact that the majority of its members, including the elite, came from the province of Badajoz. Extremadura, and particularly Badajoz in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a focal point for the overland African slave trade with the Portuguese. As the entire western border of Badajoz shares itself with Portugal – who had the monopoly on the African slave trade up to the late sixteenth century – a large slave trade was sustained overland throughout the region that supplied Spain with a large portion of its slaves. Consequently, Extremadurans participated in the lucrative slave trade and hosted some of the largest slave markets in Iberia along with Seville and Lisbon. The largest of these markets (which took place at events called *ferias*) were in the province of Badajoz and, in particular, the town of Zafra.[85] Badajoz, Zafra, and other locations in the south and west of the province were the hometowns of many Soto members, who likely participated along with their families in the acquisition and selling of slaves. Thus, it is of no

deeds, while simultaneously downplaying the presence and actions of others, African descended individuals were effectively written out of the popular conquest narrative. Yet their appearance in the documents regarding the conquest, although largely sidelined, is undeniable. See Restall, *Seven Myths*, Ch. 3, especially 53-63.

[84] For an examination of the general role of Africans as armed auxiliaries on conquest expeditions, examples of their experiences, and how they potentially attained freedom and other benefits from serving as men of combat, see Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors," especially 175-196.

[85] Rocío Periáñez Gómez in her chapter "La intorducción de los negros por la frontera extremeña y su distribución posterior" examines the slave trade in Badajoz during the sixteenth century. Having poured through notarial records in Badajoz and Záfra, she demonstrates the immense scale of slaves introduced to Spain via Badajoz and how they were transported from major hubs like Záfra across the Iberian Peninsula. Rocío Periáñez Gómez, La Introducción de los Negros Por la Frontera Extremeña y su Distribución Posterior." In *La esclavitud negroafricana en la historia de España, siglo XVI y XVII*, edited by Aurelia Martín Casares and Margarita García Barranco, 35-53.

surprise that many members of the Soto expedition claimed to have brought their own slaves, and there were a handful of mixed-race *extremeños* who took part on the Florida expedition as well.

Another opportunity to potentially identify some of the enslaved individuals that partook on the expedition is through viewing the baptism records found in parish records of Zafra's church of Santa María de la Candelaria, which possibly retains information regarding some of the enslaved individuals of Florida member from before the expedition departed from Spain. The oldest of the baptism records still in existence today dates to the year 1534, and is bound in a *legajo* (or bundle) with baptism from that year until 1538 that took place in Santa María de la Candelaria. As shown in a past study by the *zafarense* historian Fernando Cortés, between the years 1538 and 1580, 652 enslaved individuals – most of whom were likely of African descent – were baptized, making 8.2% percent of the baptisms during this period.[86] Many of these baptisms are recorded in the *legajo* from 1534-1538. Multiple Florida expedition members who hailed from Zafra were mentioned throughout the records, including Juan de Alvarado, the brother of Luis de Moscoso, and Gonzalo Cuadrado, who was part of the Jaramillo family. Both individuals appeared as godparents in multiple baptism entries between 1534 and 1538. However, neither individual, nor any other future Florida member from Zafra are recorded as baptizing one of their slaves. Yet the sheer volume of enslaved individuals that appear in the pages of these baptism records attest to the large numbers of enslaved peoples present in *zafarense* and greater Extremaduran society during the early-sixteenth century, and give us an

[86] Fernando Cortés Cortés, *La población de Zafra en los siglos XVI Y XVII* (Badajoz: Diputación Provincial, 1984), 129. For Cortés's entire discussion on the presence of slaves in Zafra during the sixteenth century as demonstrated by the parish records, see *ibid*, 128-139. According to Cortés, there were more enslaved individuals residing in Zafra during the sixteenth century than had been previously though before this study's findings, and enslaved individuals played an integral role in the *zafarense* community throughout the period.

idea of the likelihood that many of expedition members from this region ferried their slaves along with them to Florida.[87]

Fernando de Soto's *asiento*, or royal contract with the Crown, stipulated that he was permitted to bring to Florida fifty black slaves purchased from the Portuguese Crown, one sixth of whom would be free of the royal tax known as the *almojarfazgo*. Of these fifty slave licenses, there are records that Soto filled eleven of them, nine men and two women. Beyond these eleven, it is uncertain how many licenses were filled, although we may assume that the governor brought what he was permitted to (and perhaps more).[88] Perhaps Soto wished to purchase the rest of the slaves once the expedition arrived in Cuba so as not to have to pay the slaves' cost of passage across the Atlantic. However, there are records of Soto purchasing enslaved individuals in Seville prior to the expedition's departure, such as his purchase of Diego for fifty *ducados de oro*, who was described as being around twenty years of age and *de color negro*.[89] Other slaves of African descent can be found in petitions claiming the property and slaves brought to Florida, such as in that of Juan de Añasco, where he stated that he brought one female slave and two male slaves to Florida, one of which survived until Mexico.[90] There is also evidence that Añasco purchased an enslaved individual from the West African coast in Seville prior to the expedition's departure in 1538 named Pedro, who was described as being twenty-five years of age and *de*

[87] Unfortunately, there are very few racial references to the slaves being baptized in the *legajo* from 1534-38. However, there is an entry that mentions the baptism of an *esclava india*, or Indian slave named Catalina who was baptized on February 3, 1538. Therefore, we may assume that many of the slaves that lack racial indicators were of African descent. Today, the parish records from Zafra's *Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria* are housed in the *Archivo Diocesano de Mérida-Badajoz* hereafter cited as ADMB). For the baptism of Catalina, see (ADMB), Eclesiásticos, Fondo de Zafra, Bautismos, Book 1, 001, fol. 63v. For entries that contain Juan de Alvarado, see *ibid*, fol. 5v, 13v, and 65r; for Gonzalo Cuadrado, see *ibid*, 21v and 30r.

[88] There are multiple records referring to the one hundred slave licenses that Soto was permitted by the Crown in the archive of the Casa. For the stipulations in Soto's original license, see AGI Indiferente, 415, L.1, fol. 42v-43r. For the registry that he completed of the eleven slaves, see AGI Contratación, 5760, N.2, fol. 2r-2v.

[89] The contract that records Soto's purchase of Diego from Toribio de Guerta, see AHPS Protocolos, 5859, folder from January, fol. 101v-102v.

[90] AGI Patronato, 57, N.1, R.4, fol. 13v.

color negro. Añasco paid fifty *ducados* during the transaction.[91] Was Pedro one of the African slaves mentioned in Añasco's petition, and was he the individual who survived to see the end of the venture in Mexico? It is difficult to say. However, from the different archival sources, we can begin to piece together the different individuals of African descent that played a critical role on the expedition.

Other individuals of African descent are recorded throughout the chronicles. Some are referred to by their names, such as Robles, Juan Vizcaíno, and others. Rodrigo Rangel also mentions an anonymous Black horseman during the battle of Mabila in 1540, a man who ordered Rangel to go and aid the governor during the attack.[92] However, it is most common for individuals of African descent to be referenced to simply in association with their slave owners, leaving their names obscured. Other racial designations are mentioned in passing in the chronicles as well, such as a handful mentioned as being of North African ancestry, while others were of Native American ancestry and hailed from locations such as Cuba, such as the individuals named Pedro Morón and Diego de Oliva [93]

Finally, as seen in the licenses and other accounts, there were also a handful of free Black conquistadors that took part on the expedition. At the moment, there have been at least five free individuals of African descent identified. These individuals were named Alonso de Pereda, Luis Moreno,[94] Pedro de la Torre, Bernaldo, and Juan Martín, each of whom received a license from

[91] Añasco's purchase of Pedro can be found at AHPS Protocolos, 3324, fol. 724v-725v.
[92] For the appearance of this perplexing figure, see Clayton, Knight Jr., and Moore, eds. *The De Soto Chronicles*, vol. 1, 293.
[93] Robles, Vizcaíno, and the others are mentioned exclusively in the Rangel and Garcilaso accounts. Morón and Oliva are only mentioned in the Garcilaso account. See Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 134-135.
[94] Luis Moreno was mentioned in his license from the *Casa* as being a servant of Luis Hernández de Biedma, who appeared as a witness during Moreno's licensing. Moreno also signed a contract with Biedma in February of 1538 guaranteeing his servitude over the next five years, including their time spent in Florida. The contract outlines that Biedma was to pay for one-third of Moreno's passage to the Americas, as well as his provide his food, drink, and clothes as guaranteed to a servant throughout the five-year period. For Moreno's license, see AHPS Protocolos, 1539, sin fol. (2 fols.).

the *Casa* to venture to Florida.[95] The five men presented *cartas de ahorro*, or letters that confirmed their free status as free individuals, to royal officials before receiving license.[96] Each of them were described as *de color loro*, a term that some have translated to mean a greenish-brown coloration, and was also used to signify someone of mixed-race ancestry.[97] This indicates that these individuals were likely the offspring of a Spanish father and African-descended mother and had grown up as free individuals in Spain. Such is the case with Pedro de la Torre, whose mother was described as *de color loro* in his license. One question is whether one of these five individuals was the Black horseman that Rangel mentioned in his account? Unfortunately, it is too difficult to say at the moment. However, what is certain is that these five free Black conquistadors – who have been largely excluded from most past studies on the expedition – represent a larger group that directly contradicts the stereotype of the white conquistador that is so prevalent in the popular imagination of the conquest.[98]

Far less frequently mentioned in the sources are individuals of Jewish ancestry, which do not make an appearance in any of the expedition's accounts, or so it would seem. There is a likelihood that many individuals on the expedition, in one degree or another, had Jewish ancestry, although it is not always made apparent in the paper trail. After the expulsion of the Jewish people from the kingdom of Castile in 1492, many individuals were forced to convert to

[95] Following the same order, their licenses can be found in AGI Contratación, 5536, L.5, fol. 283v, 285r, 295r, 912r, and 921v.
[96] *Cartas de ahorro were sometimes referred to as cartas de libertad*. Unfortunately, it seems that none of the five *cartas de ahorro* still exist for these Florida participants, which likely would have been housed in Seville's *Archivo Histórico Provincial*. However, examples of other *cartas de ahorro* are plentiful, and can be found in provincial archives across Spain. For example, see *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Badajoz* (AHPB), Protocolos, 4, sin fol., letter from November 11, 1563.
[97] For a discussion of interpretations of the descriptor "*de color* loro," see Nancy van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 9. Moreno was typically synonymous with the term *negro*, or "black," to describe individuals of darker complexions.
[98] African descended individuals on the Soto expedition have been briefly discussed in other studies, such as in Restall, "Black Conquistadores," 182. Although the vast majority of studies have concentrated on the fifty African slaves that Soto was permitted to bring to Florida, as opposed to these five free individuals.

Christianity in order to remain within the realm of the kingdom; these individuals were often simply referred to as *conversos*, or converts. Based on documentary evidence, the only individual of *converso* descent that has been identified on the expedition is the adelantado himself, Fernando de Soto, who had Jewish blood from his mother's side of the family.[99]

Table 1.11 displays a breakdown of the different individuals mentioned with distinct ethnic and racial identifiers in the sources. In total, including those referred to specifically in slave licenses, the *Casa* licenses, petitions, contracts, and the chronicled sources, there have been over thirty different individuals identified in the sources, give or take a degree of marginal error due to potential repeats. Dozens more might be found in other archives across Spain and possibly the Americas.

Table 1.11: Ethnic and Racial Designation of determined Soto Members

Designation	**No. of Individuals**
Of African descent	
Black (*Negro*)	22
de color loro	5
Mixed race/*mulatto*	1
Of Native descent	
Indian (*indio*)	1
Mixed Race/ *mestizo*	1
Of North African descent	
From Barbary (region)	1
"Moor"	1
Of Jewish Ancestry	1
Total	33

[99] For a discussion of Soto's Jewish ancestry, see Fornieles Álvarez, "El capitán Hernando de Soto" 204-205.

Post-Florida Experiences: Migration and Life Patterns

Amongst the survivors, the locations journeyed to after the expedition reached Pánuco, Mexico in late 1543 demonstrate the diverse patterns in mobility amongst colonial individuals during the early sixteenth century. Upon their arrival in Mexico, most left Pánuco for Mexico City, where many of them, especially the leading officials, informed the Viceroy, don Antonio de Mendoza, of the expedition's failure. In Mexico City in 1545, Francisco de Sagarra testified in the *probanza* of Baltasar de Gallegos that, upon hearing that the expedition had arrived in Pánuco, he ventured from Mexico City to receive Gallegos. On the road to the coast, Sagarra remarked that he saw many of the survivors making their way to Mexico City, "all came dressed in furs, without any other clothing."[100] After reaching the city, many accounts from later years tell that the men dispersed across the Americas, with some returning to Spain. Many leading officials, such as Luis de Moscoso, Baltasar de Gallegos, and Juan de Añasco remained in New Spain for years after the expedition. Other members stayed in New Spain, and some even rose to certain prominence in colonial society. Hernán Suárez de Mazuelas, who appeared to have been of lesser social rank on the Soto expedition, participated on other expeditions in New Spain to areas such as the Yucatan, Tabasco, Cozumel, Golfo Dulce, and finally in the valley of Oaxaca where, by 1572, after acting as a primary settler of the Spanish settlement in the valley, rose to prominence acting as the *alcalde ordinario*, or magistrate of Oaxaca and the holder of an *encomienda* grant over the Zapotec Natives.[101]

[100] AGI Mexico, 204, N.16, sin fol. (IMG 18).
[101] For Mazuela's experiences on expeditions after Florida, see AGI Patronato, 77, N.1, R.1, fol. 35r-36r. For a later petition where he refers to his encomienda over the Zapotecs, see AGI Mexico, 207, N.14.

Other individuals returned to Spain fairly quickly after the expedition, seeking to better their fortunes at home. These included Captain Pedro Calderón and other individuals from the Province of Badajoz.[102] By the 1560s, some Florida survivors were still alive and active in their communities. In particular, Alonso Gutiérrez de Cardona, who was at the time living in the city of Badajoz, appears in many documents dated to the year 1562. In the most detailed case, Cardona sued a man from the nearby village of La Albuera for allegedly stealing one of his heads of cattle. Others found in the Badajoz's notary records include Francisco Martín de Sandoval and Andrés de Vega, both of whom appeared in the Gonzalo Silvestre's 1558 *probanza*, recorded in Badajoz.[103] Many individuals also decided to stay in the Americas after reaching Mexico. Some appear to have returned to Spain much later in life, while others may have lived the rest of their lives in the Americas. Of the individuals, many ventured to Peru in the years after the expedition, some leaving shortly after the they reached Mexico. Even in the 1540s, a decade after Pizarro had captured the Inca Atahualpa at Cajamarca, Peru continued to draw large numbers of European migrants and settlers. As indicated by many of the proof-of-merit petitions, most of the Florida survivors ventured to Peru to participate in the royal army raised to suppress Gonzalo Pizarro's rebellion in 1544. The accounts of Juan Coles and Alonso de Carmona – some of the principal informants in Garcilaso's account – along with *probanzas* of many individuals such as Pedro Árias de Cañedo, Juan Cordero de Aponte, Gonzalo Silvestre,

[102] For Calderón's appearance as a witness in petitions in Spain, see for example AGI, Indiferente, 2048, N.26, sin fol. (IMGs 9-10). He is also mentioned by Garcilaso de la Vega in his account *La Florida* to have returned home to Spain, among others.

[103] Most of the documents relating to these former Florida members are found in the earliest *legajo* contained in the *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Badajoz,* which is dated to the year 1562. Unfortunately, all of the provincial records from Badajoz before this date have been lost. For the specific reference of Cardona suing for the stolen cow, see AHPB Protocolos, 1, fol. 444r-444v. Documents related to Sandoval can be found in *ibid*, 520r-v; for Vega, *ibid*, 135r-137v.

demonstrate that many of the Soto survivors journeyed to Peru.[104] Some made a name for themselves too: Gómez Arias de Ávila, a kinsman of Soto's wife and a native of Segovia, was sent to Peru from Nicaragua where he served as a captain and managed to secure the governorship of the Peruvian province of Guánuco and the right to collect tribute from the Chupacho Natives.[105] The experiences and success rate of attaining higher social position among survivors of the Soto expedition vary, but above all, their scattered migration patterns and ability to acquire titles, lands, encomienda grants, and in some cases governorships, demonstrates the diverse nature of movement and social mobility in the Americas for explorers and settler during the century. These trends are generally demonstrated in Table 1.12.[106]

Table 1.12: Destinations after Florida

Places	No. of Men
New Spain	59
Peru	18
Spain	15
Cuba	1
New Kingdom of Granada	1
	87
Total survivors	258

The Mariners

The last group of expedition participants to be discussed are the mariners who manned Soto's many ships that transported the expedition from Spain to Cuba and Cuba to Florida. Found buried in the records of Seville's notary archives from the first half of the sixteenth century are

[104] Aponte's *probanza* can be found at AGI Patronato 105, R.6; Cañedo's can be found at AGI Patronato 111, R.7; and Silvestre's can be found at AGI Patronato 111, R.18.
[105] Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 15. A petition by Ávila's descendants claiming their rights to the father's encomienda after his death in 1563 can be found in AGI Patronato, 97, N.1, R.6.
[106] Much of the data provided here has been taken from Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, 73.

the contracts that Soto negotiated with over fifty professional mariners. Soto commissioned these mariners in Seville to crew his four or five ships from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to Florida, including the year-long stop in Cuba; the only individuals he did not recruit for the Florida voyage were a handful of captains who were hired specifically to ferry men and supplies from Sanlúcar to Santiago. Therefore, many of these mariners arrived on the shores of Florida in 1539, and some of them may have even joined the expedition inland. However, until now, these individuals have never been assessed in a published academic study, and have largely been left out of the expedition's story. However, the faces of those fifty-eight individuals will be recounted in depth here for the first time.[107] Moreover, their group characteristics, such as their regional origins, literacy rates, and ages will be compared to members of the terrestrial expedition, providing an even deeper understanding of the social makeup of its members. Lastly, it should be noted that these individuals have been treated as a separate group of the expedition due to their overall biographical distinction and their lack of appearance in other sources.[108]

[107] The mariners as found in their contracts with Soto have been discussed in depth before in an unpublished manuscript housed at the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History by Hugo Ludeña, titled *Investigación en España sobre la expedición de Hernando de Soto a la Florida*" (August 1986), which part of the Soto Trail Project directed by Michael Gannon at the University of Florida. Some of the licenses that make up the fifty-eight total discussed here were not mentioned in the Ludeña piece. He recounts fifty mariners that departed with Soto, which has now increased to fifty-eight in this study. For his breakdown of the mariners, along with the ships they departed on, see Ludeña, "Investigación en España sobre la expedición de Hernando de Soto a la Florida," *The Soto Trail Project* (Gainesville: Unpublished, 1986), 59-62. For his detailed references to the mariners' licenses, see *ibid*, appendix 5, 1-14. I am grateful to James Cusick, curator at the P.K Yonge Library for his assistance in locating and gaining access to Ludeña's study.

[108] There are many men referred to as mariners in both the chronicles and the Biedma list of survivors. Therefore, it seems strange there is no overlap between the mariners found in the contracts and those mentioned in the other sources. The nineteen mariners mentioned in the Biedma list, and the handful mentioned in the chronicles do not match up with any in the contracts. This leads to a few possibilities, all of which could be the case in any order: many of the mariners found in the contracts departed Florida shortly after arriving; the ones who stayed behind potentially perished and were therefore not mentioned in the survivors list; or the many mariners mentioned in the other sources joined the expedition when they were in Cuba.

The licenses explored below are all housed in Seville's *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla*. Almost all of the contracts are found in oficio 10 between *legajos* 5858 and 5859, except for one (that of the ship master named Miguel de Jauregui) which is found in AHPS Protocolos, 3324, sin fol. v-r (2 fols).

Between early October of 1537 and late February of 1538, Soto recruited several professional mariners in Seville to act as the crew for his fleet that was departing from Sanlúcar de Barrameda that spring. Each mariner signed a contract (at least that we know of) that bound them in service to Soto during the upcoming transatlantic journey. To date, there have been fifty-eight contracts found that Soto personally negotiated with the mariners, although there may be many more that he yet to be discovered in the archive or have not survived. Each contract outlined the specific occupations the mariners were to have throughout the voyage. Yet they also give other details about the contract's recipient, such as their name, their place of origin or residence, their age (if they were under the age of twenty-five), a breakdown of the salary they were to earn during the trip, and occasionally the ship on which they were assigned (see Table 1.13). Thus, from contracts, we receive an overview of the social characteristics of this separate yet vital part of the expedition, most of whom were specifically required in their contracts to accompany the voyage until Florida.

Table 1.13: Ships, Ship Masters, and Number of Mariners (from Contracts)

Name of Ship (as found in the contracts)	**Ship Master**	**No. of Mariners**
San Cristóbal	Luis Pérez	10
La Magdalena	Pedro de Solís	12
San Juan (small galleon)	San Juan de Acheaga	5
San Juan	Juan Rodríguez	3
La Magdalena	Miguel de Jauregui	1
		31
Unassigned		27
Total:		58

When looking at their original places of residence, not every mariner was given a location, and many were simply referred to as being an *estante*, or impermanent resident of Seville, meaning they were not natives nor permanent residents of that city. Still, of the fifty-eight individuals, twenty-nine were identified with an original place of residence or at least a location where they permanently resided (see Table 1.14). Of those twenty-nine mariners, three were not from the Kingdom of Castile, which is surprising given the Spanish crown's prohibiting of *los prohibidos*, which included all "foreigners," from traveling to the Indies. However, it was fairly common for mariners on Spanish ships to come from other ethnic backgrounds. Part of the reason was due to the fact that there was often a labor shortage of Spanish mariners, so Spanish shipowners often sought out whatever help they could in Spain's bustling port cities which, after the "discovery" of the Americas became international hubs of trade and commerce in Europe, especially Seville. A second reason, which falls more on part of the mariners, is that because non-Spanish individuals were technically prohibited from receiving license from the *Casa de la Contratación* to make the transatlantic journey, many individuals became mariners as a means of bypassing the *Casa* to secure passage to the Indies. Upon arrival, one could then simply jump ship and disappear in any American port. Therefore, it is not surprising that there were two Portuguese and one Greek individual who landed contracts with Soto. The frequency in which foreign mariners worked aboard Spanish vessels bound for the Americas may also account for why many of men commissioned by Soto neglected to give their place of origin, instead simply stating they were *estantes* in Seville.[109] If that was indeed the case for why some mariners opted

[109] For a discussion of the crucial role that non-Spanish mariners played in Spain's maritime empire during the sixteenth century, see Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by Carla Rahn Phillips (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 49-62. Although Pérez Mallaína's study concentrates Spain's Indies fleet during the latter half of the sixteenth century, there appears to be a similar phenomenon happening on the earlier fleets of conquest expeditions before the middle of the century. For a discussion of individuals using the occupation of mariners as a ticket to the Americas, see *ibid*, 24-27.

against giving their places of origin, that means half of the mariners in Soto's fleet may have been from outside Spain.

Table 1.14: Mariners: Places of Origin or Permanent Residence

Place	Number
Spain	
Andalusia	
Cádiz	6
Huelva	6
Seville	7
Castile and Leon	
Salamanca	1
Galicia	
A Coruña	1
"Gallego"	2
Basque Country	
"Vizcaíno"	2
	26
Portugal	2
Greece	1
	29
Unknown	30
Total	58

Also noteworthy is the fact that, of the mariners whose place of residence was recorded, the regional make-up differs significantly from that of the rest of the expedition. As compared to the individuals who were recruited by Soto for the terrestrial expedition, the overwhelming number of whom were from southern Extremadura, many of the mariners appear to have come from western Andalusia, specifically the provinces of Cádiz, Huelva, and Seville. It is also of little surprise that the second and third highest ranking areas are Galicia and Basque Country, which had strong ties to Spain's Atlantic maritime culture during the early modern period.

Individuals from western Andalusia, Galicia, and Basque Country made up the backbone of Spain's maritime workforce from the fifteenth century until the late colonial period.[110]

Arguably the most definable characteristics of the mariners contracted by Soto are the occupations they were hired to fill during the voyage. Table 1.15 below shows a breakdown of the different occupations as found in the contracts. The most common position was that of the general mariner, who was tasked with the general job of making sure the vessel functioned at its highest capacity, whatever that entailed, and directed the vessel as commanded by the ship's master or pilot. Some mariners were also hired to perform other duties on board along with the general tasks of the ordinary seaman. These other positions included the steward, who was in charge of rationing out food and beverage to the crew; gunners, who specialized in operating the ship's firepower; and caulkers, who had the unpleasant task of replacing the pitch – or rope covered in tar, which acted as a sealer – between the planks on the underbelly of the ship: likely one of the most essential tasks on the ship. The boatswain was charged with keeping the order of operations flowing smoothly on deck, while the pilot was responsible with safely navigating the vessel, in this instance, across the ocean, which was a monumental task given the state of navigational technology of the day. Masters maintained the highest authority on the vessel only second to the ship's owner – and many times, masters were partial or full owners of the vessel. As opposed to the captain, who was typically only in charge of the vessel during military operations, the master was essentially the superior of the boatswain, and made sure that all operations ran smoothly on the ship. Pages – often the youngest members of the crew – were in charge of attending to the minor needs of the mariners and the ship's officers, as well as conducting certain religious rituals. Lastly, the eighteen cabin boys of Soto's fleet are a curious

[110] For a discussion of the influence of sailors from western Andalusia and northern Spain's Cantabrian coast, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 52-56.

group given how many there were. However, it seems unlikely that Soto's fleet of a handful of ships needed almost twenty individuals tasked with similar jobs to that of the page. What is more likely is that these men – many of whom were still boys – were actually apprenticing mariners, meaning they were older than the average page and were training to become fulltime mariners, although since they were younger in age, they could be paid a lower wage than the average seaman.[111] This leads to our next two points: the ages, literacy rates, and salaries of the mariners.

Table 1.15: Occupations of Soto Mariners

Occupation	No. of Individuals
Mariner	19
Cabin boy/apprentice	18
Ship Master	9
Mariner and Steward	4
Mariner and Gunner	2
Mariner and Caulker	2
Pilot	2
Boatswain	1
Gunner	1
Ship's Page	1
Total	58

Observing the ages of the different mariners allows one to get a glimpse of the different life stages that the seamen hired were in around the time they came to Florida, which only further enhances our understanding of the Florida venture. As shown in Table 1.16, the contracts present some information regarding the ages of the seamen. The scribes give the age of a mariner or cabin boy, who was likely to be younger than someone of a higher occupation whose positions demanded a certain degree of specialization, such as masters, pilots, or types of specialized

[111] For an overview of the different occupations onboard sixteenth century vessels, including a thorough explanation of each, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 75-92.

occupations other than mariner. Therefore, individuals above the occupation of general mariner were often more advanced in age. In the contracts, individuals over the age of twenty-five were not mentioned with an age; conversely, if one were younger than twenty-five, the scribe would often give a rough estimate of the person's age. For example, the only individual hired as a page, Juan Ruiz, stated to the notary that he was older than fourteen but younger than twenty-five. Therefore, it may be safe to assume that Juan was around the age of fourteen or fifteen.[112] Among Soto's mariners, twenty-three of the fifty-five individuals with recorded ages were under the age of twenty-five and at least nine were younger than twenty. The mean age was over twenty-five, that is if we can trust the numbers that the mariners gave to the notary. That age conforms well with the average age of mariners given by historian Pablo Pérez-Mallaína's in his work on the Spain's treasure fleet that traversed the Atlantic biannually on the *Carrera de Indias*.[113] Pérez-Mallaína's assessment of the treasure fleet between the 1570s and 1590s that the average age of mariners, at least in the latter half of the sixteenth century, was around twenty-nine years old, with sailors in their late forties and fifties already being considered somewhat old for the job.[114] The same trend common was on Soto's expedition in the late 1530s as well, with the majority of his mariners claiming to be over the age of twenty-five. On another point, when combining the mariners' ages with the available ages of the rest of the expedition, it appears that the overall average age of the mariners was only slightly higher: most of the survivors and mariners were in their mid to late twenties.

[112] Juan's contract can be found at AHPS Protocolos, 5858, folder from October, fol. 75r-75v.
[113] The *Carrera de Indias* was the route taken by Spain's treasure fleet, which traversed the Atlantic biannually to ferry back precious metals and other goods from the Indies to Spain. For a discussion of the *Carrera* and the fleet system, which grew substantially in size after the middle of the sixteenth century, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 8-21.
[114] Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 78.

Table 1.16: Ages of Soto Mariners by Occupation

Occupation	Estimated Age	No. of Individuals
Mariner	Over 25	11
	Early 20s	6
	ca. 23-25	2
Cabin boy/apprentice	ca. 18-20	6
	Early 20s	5
	Potentially over 25	4
	ca. 15-16	2
	ca. 16-17	1
Ship master	Over 25	5
	Unknown	3
Mariner and Steward	Over 25	4
Mariner and Gunner	Over 25	2
Mariner and Caulker	Over 25	2
Pilot	Over 25	2
Boatswain	Over 25	1
Gunner	Over 25	1
Ship's Page	ca. 14-15	1
Total known ages		55
Mean Age		Over 25

The literacy rates based on the signatures (or lack thereof) of the mariners can also be used to gauge literacy rates, which can in turn be used to postulate on the level of education of the different individuals as compared to their occupation. Furthermore, these general rates of literacy can also be compared to those of the other expedition members. Table 1.17 lays out the literacy rates of the mariners as compared to the survivors of the Florida expedition that arrived

in Mexico in 1543. On the mariners' end, it is apparent from their signatures that only ten of the overall fifty-eight were undoubtedly literate. Four individuals crudely signed their names, making it difficult to assess their educational background, although it was probably minimal. Lastly, forty-two individuals, or seventy-two percent, claimed that they did not know how to sign their names. These include individuals like Antón González, a cabin boy from Galicia in his early twenties, and Antonio Portugues, a mariner from Portugal, both of whom claimed in their contracts they did not know how to write.[115] The percentage of illiteracy among the sailors is much higher than that of the ninety surviving members whose literacy rates we can account for, of which only two claimed to be illiterate. However, the fact that many of the mariners were poorly educated as far as literacy goes is not a surprise. There were substantial differences in social prestige between the different occupations onboard a vessel, whether it was a merchant or a war ship. And there is not better to gauge the ship's social hierarchy than by observing the differences between the crew members' salaries.

Table 1.17: Literacy Rate Compared (Survivors vs Mariners)

Extent	No. of Survivors	No. of Mariners
Definitely literate	8	10
Could sign		
Copy contained unoriginal signature	57	-
Literacy cannot be deduced	21	-
Crude signature, probably illiterate	2	4
Illiterate	2	42
Unknown	166	2
Total	90	58

[115] González's contract can be found in AHPS Protocolos, 5859, folder from January, fol. 33v-34r. That of Portugues can be found in *ibid*, folder from December, fol. 9r-10r.

The salaries that Soto agreed to pay the different seamen is indicative of two major points: the social hierarchy between the different maritime occupations onboard and the harsh reality of poor payment that these individuals received, and particularly those of lower rank. Table 1.18 outlines the average salaries of fifty-three individuals by their occupation while at sea in Soto's fleet. Seamen were paid two different wages during the course of their job: they were paid a standard monthly salary when they were at sea, and generally a half-share payment when in port.

Table 1.18: Mariner Occupation by Salary (while at sea)

Occupation	**Average Salary (per month)**	**Number of Individuals (with salary information)**
Pilot	14.5 ducats	2
Ship Master	8.5 ducats	3
Boatswain	≈ 5.7 ducats	1
Mariner and Steward	4.5 ducats	4
Mariner and Caulker	4 ducats	2
Gunner	3.5	1
Mariner and Gunner	3.24 ducats	2
Mariner	3 ducats	19
Cabin boy/apprentice	2 ducats	18
Page	18 reales (≈ .144 ducats)	1
		53

The average mariner in Soto's fleet earned about three *ducados* of gold per month, equaling about 1,125 *maravedis*, which gave mariners moderate buying power in Spain economy in the middle of the sixteenth century.[116] To put it in perspective, in Seville in the 1540s a kilogram of veal cost about thirty maravedis and one liter of wine around ten, while preserves and distilled

[116] The specific number of equating one *ducado* to 375 *maravedis* was specified upon in the contracts. However, this rate of exchange was common for Soto's time. See Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 101.

spirits were more.[117] Yet their salaries still did not equate to much, especially given the grueling nature of the work. Cabin boys and apprenticing mariners earned a monthly average of two ducats per month on Soto's voyage, and the page made eighteen silver *reales*, which equals to around .144 ducats. As enslaved individuals were a valued 'commodity' of the day, a healthy male slave in their twenties would have fetched around fifty *ducados*, far above the annual pay of an average mariner; the cost of slave would even have been pricey for a well-paid pilot or ship master in the 1540s.[118]

As was typical in the day, mariners who also had other occupations such as stewards, caulkers, gunners, and others received higher compensation for their specialties. Stewards were paid well, and boatswains even better. Yet far above everyone else was the pilot, followed by the ship's master. The master, since many were part owners of the ship, paid themselves quite well, and they were able to substantially increase their profit by selling off some of the cargo they ferried in the ship's hull. Yet the highest paid individuals in Soto's fleet were the two pilots. Typically, pilots were well educated individuals, at least in terms of celestial mapping and navigation. However, they also had to know how to write, or at least how to read navigational charts and solve basic mathematic equations. Still, in the sixteenth century, a pilot's education was better than most others of the working class.[119] Therefore, because of their extensive training and valuable task of safely navigating the fleet across the Atlantic to Cuba and Florida, Soto's

[117] For a breakdown of the average cost of daily products in Seville in the 1540s, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 116.
[118] For references to the price tag for enslaved African males in Seville in the 1540s, see transaction prices in AHPS Protocolos, 5859, folder from January, fol. 101v-102v; or *ibid*, 3324, fol. 724v-725v.
[119] A discussion of the common salaries for mariners in the sixteenth century can be found in Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 98-102. For a look at how these salaries transferred into buying power for men of the sea in sixteenth-century Spain, see *ibid*, 114-122.

two pilots – a *Gallego* named Gonzalo do Porto and a native of Moguer, Huelva named Juan López – were paid handsomely.[120]

The group of mariners who accompanied the expedition to Florida made up an essential part of the venture that has been, until now, left out of the popular narratives. Yet when dissected as a group for their biographical characteristics, we obtain a detailed sketch of the mariners that shows their similarities and differences when compared to the main body of the expedition, thus furthering our understanding of the different individuals and groups of individuals that made up its ranks.

As with most past studies regarding the prosopographic analysis of a conquest expeditions, somewhere the author will admit to the reader that a 'study of this kind is never truly finished.' Yet even though the phrase has been used repeatedly, it is almost impossible to omit its presence from this study. As seen throughout this chapter, there are gaps in the data and unknown questions that still have yet to be answered; questions whose answers have yet to be further uncovered in parish and provincial archives across both Spain and the Americas. Local archives in many locations, whether in Havana, Mexico City, Seville, or elsewhere likely contain an abundance of new information on both the families of those that went to Florida, and those that survived the expedition. Although, as mentioned by one historian, a study of this size, even for one expedition, would be the work of years.[121]

The expedition led by Fernando de Soto to Florida in 1539 comprised of a vast group of people from various social, geographic, and ethno-racial backgrounds. Their profiles provide an

[120] Porto's contract can be found at AHPS Protocolos, 5858, folder from November, fol. 46r-46v. López's is located in *ibid*, fol. 30v-31v.
[121] Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, xv.

alternative vantage point to viewing the conquest venture. Viewing the expedition as a whole and including its many diverse members steps away from focusing on its leader to tell the story and moves away from understanding the group through a heap of common stereotypes. On the contrary, the use of prosopography allows one to observe the complex social make-up of the expedition within the broader context of the conquest. Even though the study's scope is limited to one expedition, it is an attempt to step away from the potentially problematic nature of retelling history through a single narrative. By paying close attention to the many as opposed to the few, highlighting as best as possible the identities of all individuals present, elements such as the Black Legend and 'great men histories' fade from view. The depiction of Soto and his followers as gallant knights of Spain or ignorant peasants is overtaken by a much deeper understanding of who these individuals were, chipping away at common stereotypes surrounding the conquistadors. These individuals were men, women, and children from many social backgrounds in European society. Besides the officers of the expedition, most were young and inexperienced in the Indies. Given the sources available to us, a large majority of the recruits appear to have had some degree of education, while only a few were illiterate. As opposed to gallant knights, these individuals were skilled professionals in a wide variety of professions. They were tailors, blacksmiths, scribes, and shoemakers, carpenters, clerics, stocking makers, and servants. There were many women on the expedition as well, some of whom were Iberian in origin, while others were enslaved and of African descent. Black conquistadors, whether free or enslaved, also journeyed to Florida under Soto's command. By dissecting the expedition for its constituent members, what comes to light are the faces of the many diverse individuals that participated on Spanish conquest expeditions during the early colonial period; they are the conquistadors. However, the next question is, was Soto's expedition unique in any of these

senses? In order to contextualize the expedition further, it is necessary to compare its social make-up with other expeditions of the era, which is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE EXPEDITION BEYOND FLORIDA

Historian James Lockhart introduced one of the sections in his work *The Men of Cajamarca* with the argument that comparing the different group characteristics between conquest expeditions, such as participants' regions of origin, for example, made little contribution to the history of Spanish immigration to the Americas during the early colonial period. As he suggests, the size of each expedition was not substantial enough to gauge larger migration patterns between Spain and the Indies as compared to other studies that utilize sources such as the *Casas's* passenger manifests, which are more comprehensive in scope since they do not focus specifically on expeditions.[122] However, Lockhart goes on to assert the practice of comparison serves to emphasize several points in the data. Above all, assessments of different expeditions, especially on a larger geographic and chronological scale, have shown that the groups of explorers were always of diverse origin, yet in roughly the same proportions as the broad Spanish population in the Americas at the time.[123] Therefore, a comparison between conquest expedition and the social diversity of individuals in their ranks serves a greater purpose in understanding broader trends in Spain's colonial enterprise.

[122] For an example of studies that gauge migration patterns based on the *pasajeros a Indias* records in the AGI, see Peter Boyd Bowman, *Índice geobiográfico de cuarenta mil pobladores españoles de América en el siglo XVI, Tomo I* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1964). For another study by Boyd-Bowman on the same subject, see below.
[123] Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 108.

Until now, not only has Soto's expedition lacked a thorough social analysis of its constituent members, but it has consequentially also been excluded from a broader body of scholarly literature that analyzes and compares the social origins of different conquest ventures in the early colonial Americas. Thus, with the information presented in Chapter Two regarding the group's social characteristics, the next critical step to better understand Soto's Florida expedition is to compare it with other sixteenth-century expeditions to the Americas. The aim will be to compare and contextualize the information regarding the Soto group within a broader body of literature dealing with the social composition of other expeditions in the Americas in the sixteenth century. Since there are only a few such studies in existence, the chapter is fairly limited in its scope, only comparing the Florida group to a handful of other expeditions that have had substantial examinations carried out on their participants. However, by comparing the Soto group with other bodies of explorers, we receive significant insight into topics such as the differences and similarities in social characteristics between the different expeditions, the regional kinship networks that formed the base of recruitment for these conquest ventures, and broader European migration patterns from Spain to the Americas during the early colonial period. For example, the data show that the social and regional origins of leaders on each expedition greatly determined the regional origins of recruits. At the same time, they also highlight that these expeditions always comprised of individuals from various parts of Spain, greater Europe, and Africa, whether looking at the terrestrial expeditions or the mariners. Conquest ventures thus can be used for two purposes. First, when viewed singularly, they are a sample population through which to view characteristics such as race, gender, kinship relations, social organization, and migration patterns in the conquest on a microscale. Secondly, when

comparing the makeup of multiple expeditions, the same assessment can be made on a macroscale and thus aids in conceptualizing broader social trends in the conquest.[124]

This chapter, like the last, is divided into two major sections. The first addresses Soto's terrestrial expedition, comparing it to five other major studies carried out on the social characteristics of early colonial ventures. These include assessments of the first *encomenderos* in Panamá in the late-1510s and early-1520s, the 168 men that accompanied Francisco Pizarro to Peru in 1532, the first conquerors of Chile in 1540, the first six major expeditions led into the New Kingdom of Granada (present-day Colombia), and finally a large group of settlers who arrived in St. Augustine, Florida in 1566 under the command of the Basque naval commander, Sancho de Archiniega.[125] The chapter will mostly deal with comparing regions of origin, average age per expedition, and prior experience in the Americas. It is by comparing Soto's expedition with these other groups that both the larger patterns among these groups and the uniqueness of the Florida venture emerges. Second, this chapter assess social characteristics such as the regional origins of Soto's mariners against other groups of mariners from the same century, including the mariners from an earlier expedition in the sixteenth century – that of Ferdinand Magellan – as well as later fleets, such as the Spanish Crown's armada of the *Carrera de Indias*. The comparison reveals that the identities of mariners of Soto's fleet closely mirror those present in other fleets during the century, greatly adding to our understanding of common social characteristics among sixteenth-century Spanish mariners.

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[124] For a similar discussion of the benefits of the methodology of working closely with an expedition body and its implications for broader arguments, see Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 106-118.

[125] The Pizarro expedition and elements of the Chile expedition are explored in Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*. The *encomenderos* in Panamá are discussed in Góngora, *Grupos de conquistadores en Tierra Firme*. The six expeditions led into Colombia are covered thoroughly in Avellaneda's *The Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada*. Francis's *Invading Columbia* also yields significant insight into one of these ventures in particular, that of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. Lastly, the discussion of the Archiniega expedition is covered in Francis and Tweet's "Anatomy of a Sixteenth-Century Florida Expedition."

Expeditions on Land

As in the preceding chapter, the first topic compared will be the regions of origin for each expedition or group. To sixteenth-century Spaniards, regional origin was one of the most defining characteristic of one's identity due to its significance in Iberian social and political life. As shown by past studies and the current one, places of origin were always an important personal characteristic to be declared by an individual; their family name and their place of origin defined them. For these reasons, place of origin, as stated by one historian, is the most significant quality to be traced amongst these individuals, not only because of its greater availability, but also because of its concurrent importance to the conquerors themselves.[126]

On March 20, 1539, shortly before his departure from Cuba, Soto drafted a letter addressed to the Spanish king that acted as a final report on the state of affairs before leaving for Florida. In it, he stated that the people that he was bringing to Florida were "all very honorable and men of Extremaduran families, sons of honorable citizens, all from diverse parts of Extremadura, and are gentlemen, *hidalgos*, and my experienced friends."[127] Following Soto's own words shown here, along with assessing the group's regional origins above, certain patterns have arisen regarding the Florida group, especially regarding the large percentage of individuals from Extremadura and specifically, the Province of Badajoz. However, when compared to other contemporary expeditions, even with those that were also led by Extremadurans, the comparison reveals some striking results. The Soto Expedition likely included the largest group of *extremeños*, or at least had the highest percentage of people from the region to emigrate to the

[126] For a discussion on how regional origins were an essential part of one's identity on sixteenth-century conquest expeditions, see Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 108.
[127] Quoted from a letter penned in Havana on March 20, 1539, in AGI Justicia, 975, N.2, R.2, fol. 12v. "…y la gente que llevo hes toda muy honrrada y hombres de Estremadura de sus casas hijos de vezinos honrrados todos los de mas de diversas partes de Estremadura son cavalleros e hijos dalgos mis amigos vezados…"

Americas as a single unit during the entire colonial period. And within Extremadura, the number of those from Badajoz province is even more significant. Table 2.1 displays the regional origin data for the five other groups in question plus the two major Soto groups of who received licenses and those found as survivors.[128] Dating back to the 1960s, scholarly works such as those by Peter Boyd Bowman, which catalogued the regions of origin of individuals who received licenses from Seville's *Casa de la Contratación*, stressed that the highest percentage of migrants to the Americas during the sixteenth century came from the Spanish region of Andalusia. In one of his most popular works, Boyd-Bowman demonstrated that between the year 1520 and 1539, thirty-two percent of all Spanish immigration to the Americas were Andalusian.[129] Comparing the regional origins of these six expeditions does not constitute a study of migration patterns on a scale as large as Boyd-Bowman's work. However, as emphasized by Lockhart, each individual expedition, and the comparison between them, function as micro samples through which to gauge regional migration to compare with the more comprehensive studies.[130] Overall, the make-up of early conquest expeditions support Boyd-Bowman's findings, with Andalusia as the most common place of origin. However, three of the groups mentioned in the table (two of which being associated with Soto's expedition) differ dramatically, and the reasons why lend significant clues to the nature of recruiting for expeditions to the Americas.

[128] For the information in the table, see for Panamá Góngora, *Los grupos,* 75-83; for Cajamarca, see Lockhart, *The Men*, 27-31; for Chile, see *ibid*, 108-114; for the complete data of NKG, see Avellaneda, *The Conquerors*, 57-63; and for Archiniega, see Francis and Tweet, *The Anatomy*, 27-31.
[129] A more recent publication of Bowman's work on the first half of the sixteenth century can be seen in Peter Boyd-Bowman, "La emigración peninsular a América: 1520 a 1539" in *La formación de América Latina: la época colonial*, ed. Silvio Zavala, et. all (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992), 16-17. Even though the overall numbers of emigrants are low, which is likely due to gaps in the passenger manifests in the AGI the numbers provide a notion of the volume and scope of the patterns of movement to the Americas.
[130] For the same argument concerning the potential benefit of using these expeditions as micro-examples of migration patterns, see Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 108-109.

Table 2.1: Places of Origin Compared (percent)

Place of Origin	Founders of Panama, 1519	Men of Cajamarca, 1532	Conquerors of Chile, 1540	Conquerors of the New Kingdom of Granada	Archiniega Expedition	Soto Licenses, 1538	Soto Survivors
Spanish Regions							
Andalusia	34.7	25.9	22.5	27.4	30.0	11.8	11.2
Aragon	1.1	1.5	.09	1.6	3.0	0.3	0.0
Asturias	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7	0.9	0.0
Baleares	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0
Basque Provs.	8.3	7.6	10.8	4.8	7.8	2.1	3.9
Canaries	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.0	2.1	0.0	0.0
New Castile	9.5	11.4	16.2	11.1	14.0	5.5	6.2
Old Castile	10.6	13.0	7.2	15.9	18.6	16.6	0.0
Extremadura	21.4	27.5	15.4	12.7	8.3	47.6	38.5
Galicia	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.0	6.8	1.3	2.7
León	5.9	11.4	12.6	9.9	?	5.3	10.1
Murcia	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.6	0.6	0.0	0.0
Navarre	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.1	0.0
Valencia	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0
Spaniards	79=94%	129=98.5%	?	230=91%	1738=97%	602=92%	240=93%
Other Countries							
France	-	-	-	4.4	.13	-	0.3
Italy	-	-	-	-	.77	-	0.3
Portugal	-	-	-	-	5.3	-	4.2
Others	5.9	2	5.5	4.4	5.96	-	1.5
Total Foreigners	5=5.9%	2=1.5%	?=5.5%	22=8.7%	88=12.3%		18=6.6%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	251=10.8%	53=8.0%	18=6.6%

The only other Extremadura-based expedition in the table besides Soto's was that of the Pizarro venture to Cajamarca. Before departing for Peru with official license from the Crown, Francisco Pizarro recruited many individuals from his hometown of Trujillo and the surrounding area in the Province of Cáceres. The numbers of *extremeños* and specifically those from Cáceres on the Cajamarca expedition demonstrates how these expeditions were formed within kinship and local community ties in many leaders' hometowns and regions.[131] Soto's case was no exception. Before his departure from Spain in 1538, he and his second-in-command, Luis de

[131] Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 28-31.

Moscoso, carried out recruitment campaigns across their home province of Badajoz. Moscoso was a native of Zafra and was kin to one of the most influential individuals in the province, the *Duque de Feria*, whose relation which would have provided him an honorable reputation and strong connections across the province. On his mother's side of the family, Moscoso was also related to Pedro de Alvarado, Hernando Cortés's second-in-command on the expedition that invaded the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1519. Upon the expedition's arrival in Mexico in 1543, Moscoso penned a letter to the Crown in which he highlighted his honorable heritage on both sides of his family in order to petition for the *repartimiento*, or labor grant, of his deceased uncle in Mexico. He stated:

> [And] very many and great were the deeds of my grandfather, Juan Parra, who served the King without being rewarded or repaid by anyone. Nor have the deeds of my uncle in the Indies, the *adelantado* Pedro de Alvarado, been rewarded... And Your Majesty well knows that he has passed away so poor that his bones had to be carried from a *pueblo* of *indios* to [Mexico City], where they are now buried. He did not have any belongings left, not even one *indio* in a *repartimiento*… At his own cost, [my uncle] won, and conquered, and placed many under your royal dominion, so I plead your Illustrious Lordship as one of the closest inheritors of the *adelantado*… bestow up him and myself Your Majesty's royal conscience, giving me a *pueblo* of *indios* named Suchimilco [Xochimilco] so that I may be able to eat… because I am so poor.[132]

Because of his familial prestige on both sides of the family in both Spain and the Indies, Moscoso was charged with spearheading Soto's recruitment campaign; he even went as far as Elvas in eastern Portugal to find willing applicants. For this reason, many individuals from eastern Portugal found their way into the expedition's ranks, such as Andrés de Vasconcelos.[133]

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[132] Cited from a letter written by Luis de Moscoso to the Crown and the Royal Council of the Indies in Mexico City dated to October 17, 1543. AGI Mexico 95, fol. 370r-371v.

[133] For a discussion of Moscoso's familial connections with both the *Duque de Feria* and the Alvarado family, along with his role as the primary recruiter for the expedition and his efforts in doing so in both the Province of Badajoz and Elvas, see Juan Luis Fornieles Álvarez, "Luis de Moscoso. Un zafarense en la Conquista de las Indias," José María Moreno González and Juan Carlos Rubio Masa, eds., *Cuadernos de Çafra: Estudios sobre la historia de Zafra y el Estado de Feria* (Zafra: Imprenta Rayego, 2019), especially 50-64, 74-78.

Therefore, by viewing the regional breakdown of the different expeditions, it becomes apparent that their recruitment methods were fueled by kinship ties that allowed new of expeditions to spread across large geographic areas in Spain and beyond.[134] Thus, given Soto and Moscoso's strong familial ties throughout the Badajoz, it comes as no surprise that many volunteers came from far and wide from across the province to enlist in the Florida venture.

What is more indicative of these recruitment methods and their relationship to home regions and the importance of regional identity is the difference between the Peru and Florida expeditions' Extremadura contingent. Table 2.2 displays the Extremadura contingents compared between the two expeditions, which displays the Pizarros' emphasis on recruiting in Cáceres/Trujillo and Soto's emphasis on Badajoz. These trends effectively support the role that kinship and regional identity played in determining the make-up of these early expeditions.

Table 2.2: Origins of the Extremadura Contingent (Present-day Demarcations)

Region	Florida (from licenses)	Peru
Badajoz	228	13
Cáceres	23	23
Unknown	1	
Total:	312	36

Other major traits worthy of comparison between these groups include the average age of the explorers at the start of each venture and their amount of experience in the Indies prior to the

[134] For the functioning of kinship ties across larger geographic spaces, see Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, 140-143. For the use of kinship networks in recruitment campaigns, see *ibid*, 166-168.

expedition, which each aid in determining if these expeditions were typically furnished with experienced veterans of the Americas, or if they were comprised of new recruits, and whether or not age necessarily constituted experience on these early expeditions. In regard to an individual's amount of military experience in the Americas, a major factor is whether or not the expeditions were assembled in the Americas as opposed to Europe. For example, because one of the previous expeditions to Florida before Soto – that of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón in 1526 – recruited its members on the island of Hispaniola, most of the individuals who arrived in Florida were more likely to have been seasoned veterans of the Americas. In the case of Soto's venture, given the available sources, it seems that most of his recruits had little or no prior experience in the Indies. And compared to other expeditions, Soto's case was not unusual (see Table 2.3). The Cajamarca expedition was fairly experienced in terms of military service in the Americas, as much of the expedition had been put together in the Indies prior to its arrival in Peru, along with the recruits brought from Spain. As seen in Table 2.4, the largest age group (making up thirty-eight percent of known ages) were in their mid to late twenties.[135] Another early venture, that of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada to the New Kingdom in 1536, shows that his expedition was composed mostly of individuals who were inexperienced in the Americas. Also, fifty-nine percent of Quesada's followers were younger than thirty, and the largest age group – that of twenty to twenty-four – made up thirty-eight percent of the total known ages.[136] The ages and prior experience for the Florida expedition mostly come from the survivors' accounts and testimonies during the years after the expedition. Therefore, the data for the overall expedition is largely skewed. However, trends do appear among the reduced population.

[135] All the statistics regarding the Cajamarca group come from Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 23-27.
[136] All of the data regarding the Quesada group can be found in Francis, *Invading Colombia*, 5-8.

The question of prior experience for Soto followers is difficult to answer, given that it seems that most individuals were not experienced in the Americas, while those who were typically provide little information as to exactly when they arrived. Six individuals definitely had prior American experiences before Florida. One of them being Soto, who had spent close to twenty-five years in the Indies. Others with previous experience in the Americas included Baltasar de Gallegos, Luis de Moscoso, Juan Ruiz Lobillo, Nuño de Tovar, and Vasco Porcallo, a resident of Cuba. Not coincidentally, most of the individuals with prior experience in the Indies constituted the higher ring of officers on the expeditions. As seen in Chapter One's Table 1.6, it seems that more Soto followers had military experience in European campaigns as opposed to the Americas. As compared to other expeditions that contained many newcomers to the Americas, like the Quesada expedition, most Florida venturers were young and only in their twenties at the time of their arrival.

Table 2.3: Documented Prior Experience in the Americas Compared

Places	No. of Men (Peru)	No. of Men (New Granada)	No. of Men (Florida Survivors)
Almost none	37	59	
Less than 5 years	12	18	
c. 5	28	3	
c. 10	14	12	
c. 15	2	1	
c. 20	7		
c. 25	1		1
Number of years unclear			5
Unknown	67	86	252
Total	168	179	258

Table 2.4: Age at Time of the Expedition

Age (years)	Men of Cajamarca	Soto Expedition Survivors (in 1539)	Quesada Expedition
9 to 14		2	
15 to 19	5	13	20
20 to 24	29	15	46
25 to 29	41	15	28
30 to 34	19	7	9
35 to 39	8	4	16
40 to 44	3	1	2
45 to 49	1		
50 to 55	1		
Total Known Ages	107	57	121
Unknown Ages	61	201	58
Total	168	258	179

The question of race is another poorly understood element when considering the collectivity of these expeditions. We have recounted the twenty-nine identifiable individuals of non-European descent or mixed ancestry that did (or potentially did) make their way to Florida in 1539, including eleven of the one hundred slaves allotted to Soto in his *asiento*. The overall lack of evidence regarding individuals of African, North African, and Native descent on the expedition seems to be a common problem regarding the sources of other expeditions as well; the six expeditions to the Kingdom of New Granada present the same challenge. All six likely contained a large population of African descended slaves, but their appearance in the sources is almost nonexistent. Yet the identities of some are mentioned in brief passing and provide us a snapshot onto their lives and their presence on the expeditions. There were numerous African descended individuals present between the six expeditions, some of whom were mentioned by

name, and at least one was free. North Africans appear to have been less common.[137] There were two recorded individuals of African descent that shared in the ransomed treasure at Cajamarca in 1532, while there was an unidentified yet apparently small number of Black slaves that accompanied the explorers.[138] And it appears that there were no individuals of African descent who accompanied the 1566 Archiniega expedition (although they were likely present). As scholars continue to expand their understanding of these expeditions and find new evidence regarding their participants, it is with hope that our understanding of the role of African descended individuals in the conquest – which is at this point undeniable – only continues to improve. An increased view of the racial makeup and other social characteristics of these expeditions and their many members will only lead to a more complex understanding of the conquest as the social phenomenon that it was.

Expeditions at Sea

As with most of the individuals discussed above, region of origin was a defining personal feature of European mariners in the sixteenth century. Just as with individuals from other occupational groups in sixteenth-century Spanish society, mariners were subject to the same cultural practice of one's social status being rooted in their place of origin and family name, as is seen in the contracts that Soto's mariners signed. Even though many *hombres de mar* came from the lower socioeconomic class in Spanish and European society – sometimes climbing the ranks to attain higher positions such as pilot or even *maestre* – one's regional origins and family name

[137] The free individuals mentioned here was Pedro de Lerma, who accompanied the Jerónimo Lebrón expedition inland in the 1530s. José Ignacio Avellaneda covers the African presence on the six expeditions in Avellaneda, *The Conquerors*, 63-66.
[138] Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 35-36.

were always central identifiers of their prestige and honor.[139] Therefore, regional origin was always included as a self-identifying characteristics in documents such as the mariner contracts. At the very least, these had to provide some degree of regional identity to be commissioned for a voyage, as seen in contracts settled between Soto and the fifty-eight mariners of his fleet. Therefore, regions of origin remain the most adequate means by which to compare Soto's mariners to those on other fleets during the century. Even though half of the mariners commissioned to go to Florida only provided locations of their impermanent residence in their contracts – such as many claiming to be *estantes* in Seville – we can still utilize the information of the other half that gave their documented region of origin to compare Soto's mariners to other groups of sixteenth-century sailors.

The three other groups that Soto's mariner's will be compared are from slightly different time periods. One is from two decades earlier in the century – the expedition of Ferdinand Magellan and Sebastián Elcano in 1519-1522, which had a similar makeup to that of Soto's fleet given its closer proximity in time. The other two groups the vessels that made up Spain's treasure fleet on the *Carrera de Indias* during the last few decades of the century.[140] The latter groups are divided chronologically and by designation of vessel. Since the treasure fleet's main objective was to ferry precious metals and other goods from the ports of South America and Mexico back to Spain, many of the ships were outfitted as merchant vessels (also referred to as the *flota*) in order to ferry the goods back across the Atlantic. The other section of the fleet, referred to as the *armada*, was mainly outfitted for combat and was either used for military

[139] For a discussion of social prestige and relative socioeconomic flexibility of mariners in Spain in the early colonial period, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 35-45, esp. 42.
[140] A discussion of all three fleets can be found in Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*. For a discussion of the mariners in Magellan fleet, see *ibid*, 54-55, although Pérez-Mallaína cites his figures from an examination of the expedition carried Martín Fernández Navarrete in his *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde finales del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1964). For a discussion on his numbers of the *armada* and *flotas*, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 54 and the tables on 253, notes 71 and 72.

operation or the defense of the *flota* during its travels to and from the Americas.[141] Thus, these groups make up two separate entities whose mariners are comparable to those found in other fleets throughout the century. Given their differences, a comparison between the four is possible, and not only allows one to better understand the differences and similarities of Soto's group of mariners, but it also allows us to postulate on the broader evolution of Spain's maritime enterprise throughout the century.

Table 2.5 below shows the general regional origins of three of the different groups, those being Soto's mariners, the mariners of the *armada* fleet of the Indies between the years 1573 and 1593, and the members of the merchant fleets from 1593-1594.[142] The information regarding Magellan's fleet of three ships will be discussed congruently with the information in the table since historians have still neglected to give the crew a full-length social examination. However, given the lack of thorough study, some of important points about Magellan's crew that have been mentioned by historians should not omitted from this discussion.

Table 2.5: Regional Origin of Seamen Compared

Region of Origin	Soto's Mariners (1538-1539)	Armadas of the Indies Fleet (1573-1593)	Merchant Ships in the Indies Fleet (1593-1594)
Andalusian	19 (32%)	294 (41.7%)	1619 (78.8)
Canary Islands	-	5 (.7%)	27 (1.3%)
Cantabrian	5 (8.6%)	352 (50%)	238 (11.5%)
"Other Castilians"	1 (1.7%)	34 (48%)	80 (3.9 %)
Aragon	-	20 (2.8%)	99 (4.8%)
Non-Spanish	3 (5%)	-	-
Unknown	30 (51.7%)	-	-
Total	58	705	2,603

[141] Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 50.
[142] The organization of the table follows the methodology of Pérez-Mallaína in his analysis.

One of the central problems with the numbers mentioned below accounting for foreigners on the different crews. It is suspected that many of the individuals listed as having an "unknown" regional origin in the Soto crew may have come from outside of Spain's sixteenth-century borders. Most of these individuals had Spanish names, such as Amador de Barcelona, who stated that he was an *estante* Seville and nothing else. Other *estantes* of Seville included Duarte de Borge, who was hired as a mariner and gunner in Soto's fleet.[143] It is possible that many of these individuals, especially those with Spanish names, were of Portuguese or Italian descent. However, there is also evidence in other sources that foreigners presented hispanicized versions of their names to receive contracts or licenses in Spain. Therefore, the task of identifying non-Spanish individuals is difficult in many cases, as stated by Pérez-Mallaína in his analysis of the treasure fleet. Since most mariners seem to have lied about their regional origins to receive positions on board, Pérez-Mallaína omitted foreigners from his analysis of the fleet and chose to strictly analyze the individuals that identified as being of Spanish descent, as seen above in Table 1.18. However, he suspects that the number of non-Spanish individuals was likely high given the difficulty of supplying such a large number of mariners simply with the Spanish stock.[144] In other instances, we do see that other expeditions recorded the regional origins of their non-Spanish crew, whose numbers were higher. This is the case with Ferdinand Magellan's crew, who were commissioned by the Spanish Crown to circumnavigate the globe between 1519. Being himself Portuguese, Magellan sailed with a crew of which 90 of the 265 men (35 percent of the total crew) were not of Spanish descent. Instead, many of the sailors came from all over

[143] Barcelona's contract can be found at AHPS Protocolos, 5858, folder from November, fol. 18v-19r. Borje's can be found at *ibid*, fol. 16v-17r.
[144] Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 53-55.

Europe, including Italy, the eastern Mediterranean, Flanders, the British Isles, Ireland, and France. However, the proportion of non-Spaniards were of Portuguese descent, which makes sense given that the commander of the fleet himself was *Lusitano*. However, the contracts do not reveal the true identity of the Magellan crew. Rather, in an undated document drafted after the expedition's return to Spain, it appears that forty-eight individuals from outside of Spain partook on the circumnavigation, even though Magellan claimed otherwise.[145] Therefore, the identification of most foreigners is difficult, although it is curious why three of Soto's crew were mentioned in their contracts as being from outside Spain's realm. Is suspect, although without substantial evidence, that many of the crew members that set sail with Soto in 1538 were also of Portuguese descent, given the commonality of Lusophone mariners on Spanish ships bound for the Americas at the time.

Given the difficulties of identifying foreigners crew, a comparison between the portion of the mariners that identified as Spain on each crew provides some noteworthy points. Above all, given the information available to us, Soto's Spanish crew was made up mostly by individuals from Andalusia. In Soto's time, as well as before and after, Andalusians made up an integral part of Spain's maritime workforce. Given that Soto's expedition took place before the rise of the treasure fleet in the latter half of the century, comparing it with the fleets of the *Carrera* show some curious patterns. Unfortunately, the statistics are not available for the breakdown of Spanish individuals on Magellan's ships. However, on the later ships in the *armada* and the *flota*, there was a common trend that merchant vessels were mostly made up of Andalusian-based crews, while warships in the *armadas* had crews mostly of Cantabrian, and above all, Basque origins. That latter's frequent appearance on gunships has roots in the pre-colonial period in

[145] *Ibid*, 55. That document is housed in the AGI in Patronato, 34, R. 4.

Spain's naval forces, which dating back to at least the Medieval period was made up mostly of sailors from Spain's northern coast.[146] The pattern of Andalusians as the primary merchant sailors and Basques and other Spaniards from the north coast making manning many of the combat-related vessels is somewhat reflected in the Soto's fleet. For example, the highest percentage of mariners identified with regional origin information came from Andalusia. Unfortunately, the only three contract for gunners in Soto's fleet available to us do not convey where the individuals came from. However, although it may be a stretch, two of the last names may be indicative of Cantabrian heritage. Duarte de Borge and Juan de Pontevedra were two of the gunners licensed by Soto. Borge is a Spanish surname of Basque origin and Pontevedra is a city in Spain's northern region of Galicia. These two individuals may represent the common trend of Cantabrians commonly filling roles associated with combat on Spanish vessels.[147] Other patterns between the different bodies of mariners, such as the fact that the overwhelming majority of most individuals came from either Andalusia or Cantabria, with few mariners being from other parts of the peninsula, is seen across the different fleets. However, given the gaps in the data, it seems apparent that, at least in Soto's fleet, that most prominent group of mariners on expeditions in the first half of the sixteenth century were from Andalusian descent.

As seen from the individuals that made up Soto's land and sea expeditions, there are many characteristics of the Florida venture that highlight both its similarities and differences as compared to other groups of mariners and explorers active in the sixteenth century. Comparing the defining feature of regional origin between the different groups proves to be the most fruitful. Soto's expedition, whether looking at the licenses or the group of survivors, had the highest

[146] For statistics on the regional make-up of the *flotas* and the *armadas*, see Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 54-56.
[147] Both individuals were only listed as *estantes* of Seville in their contracts. For Pontevedra's contract, signed February 11, 1538, see AHPS Protocolos, 5859, folder from February, fol. 19v-20r.

number of participants from Extremadura (or at least who claimed to be from Extremadura). Some of the individuals who claimed to be from Badajoz in their licenses are discovered only later to have been from Portugal in documents created after the expedition. These individuals include individuals such as Andrés de Vasconcelos, Juan Cordero de Aponte and Alonso Martínez, who hailed from Elvas in eastern Portugal. When looking at the broader picture, the expedition that contained the second highest number of Extremeños was that of Francisco Pizarro, the only other *extremeño* leader of the ventures examined in this chapter. Especially when looking at the breakdown of the Extremaduran contingents in the Soto and Pizarro groups, it is apparent that participants frequently hailed from the same province as leaders, reinforcing the notion that expedition leaders frequently recruited people in their home settlements and provinces for the ventures. Therefore, the data strengthens arguments regarding the strong influence of kinship ties in the recruitment tactics of expeditions as argued by historian Ida Altman and others. Furthermore, the data also proves that Andalusians did not always make up the majority of migrants immigrating to the Indies, and that people from other regions of Spain – particularly from Extremadura – played an essential role in Spain's early colonialization efforts.

In terms of age and prior experiences in the Americas, there are other discernable patterns in the data. Between Pizarro's Peru venture, Quesada's expedition to New Granada, and Soto expedition survivors, it appears that most Florida members, excluding some of the high-end officials, were generally unexperienced in the Americas. In terms of age, just as with other expeditions, documents show that it was most common for conquistadors of ordinary rank to be between the ages of twenty and thirty, while officers may have been slightly more advanced in age.

Lastly, when looking at Soto's mariners as compared to groups of seamen on other Spanish voyages in the sixteenth century, certain patterns are discernable, especially in terms of the men's' regional origins. By utilizing Pérez-Mallaína's study on the *Carrera* fleet and the Magellan voyage, we see that, given the data available to us, Soto fleet mirrored social patterns visible on other voyages of the century. Above all, it is not unusual that Soto's expedition comprised mainly of mariners from Andalusia, as well as many other who were potentially from outside of Spain. In fact, it seems that Pérez-Mallaína's argument that ships in the treasure fleet during the last quarter of the century comprised mostly of Andalusian and Cantabrian sailors, along with a heavy influence from non-Spanish seamen, was also the case during Soto's time some sixty years prior. And as is seen with Magellan's fleet from 1519-1521, where a large percentage of the fleet's mariners were of Portuguese descent even though they stated otherwise, there is a strong possibility that Soto's expedition reflected these same social patterns as well.

Given Lockhart's statement that comparing conquest expeditions only provides a small fraction of the number of European transatlantic immigrants in the sixteenth century, his argument in favor for the use of these comparative assessments is well merited. Especially when looking at the regional origins of expedition members, there is a window onto social trends in the Spain's conquest that only becomes visible when viewing the different colonial ventures side by side. Indeed, some of the expeditions throughout the century were quite large, with Soto's expedition consisting of well over seven hundred men and women and the Archiniega fleet containing over 2,300.[148] Therefore, I would argue that it is essential that historians continue to observe the social make up of expeditions in future scholarship, expanding the depth of our

[148] Francis and Tweet, "Anatomy of a Sixteenth-Century Florida Expedition," 4.

understanding of these large social events that – especially when observed as a whole – can provide a beneficial lens through which to view Spain's colonial enterprise during the sixteenth century and beyond.

PART TWO:

WHAT ARE THEIR STORIES?

APPROACHES TO THE NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE SOURCES

CHAPTER FOUR:

BEYOND THE CHRONICLES:

ARCHIVAL EVIDENCE AND THE FAMOUS FOUR ACCOUNTS

> I believe there are clearly demonstratable relations of dependence among three of these accounts: André de Burgos's Elvas, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdes's *Historia General de las Indias*, and the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *La Florida*… [A] unidirectional chain of influences can, I believe, be established among them.
>
> Patricia Galloway, 1997[149]

> Garcilaso saturated *La Florida* with many details, making it difficult, and even somewhat pointless, to attempt to use any of it for diagnostic purposes, not least because it is virtually impossible to put it to any test other than that of its own plausibility.
>
> David Henige, 1997[150]

> The fact is, however, that it is amazing just how much of the real story is told in Garcilaso's work, despite his literary embellishments [and] the secondhand nature of his reporting… We cannot take Garcilaso at anything approaching face value, but neither can we peremptorily dismiss him.
>
> Charles Hudson, 1997[151]

> I believe, but without evidence, that Garcilaso has functioned as an oral historian in [*La Florida del Inca*] – that he interviewed many of the survivors… that he used written sources, both those he named and Elvas, and that he then labored to recreate the chronology of the expedition as the matrix into which he could incorporate the legendary material of [Gonzalo] Silvestre and others.
>
> George Lankford, 1993[152]

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[149] Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 10.
[150] Henige, "So Unbelievable It Has to Be True," 162.
[151] Hudson, *Knight of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 451.
[152] George E. Lankford, "Legends of the Adelantado," in *The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543*, eds. Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 190.

Over the past few decades, discussions concerning the nature of primary sources have taken center stage in scholarly debates regarding the Soto expedition. Predominantly, the discussion has revolved around the four sources most frequently used by scholars – those referred to collectively as the *DeSoto Chronicles* – and the veracity of their depictions of Soto's Florida expedition. Dating back to the late-nineteenth century, historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists alike have focused almost exclusively on these four accounts when discussing the expedition (the Gentleman of Elvas, Rodrigo Rangel, Luis Hernández de Biedma, and Garcilaso de la Vega, El Inca).[153] Yet some of the more recent scholarship on the expedition has exposed the problematic characteristics of each account, most prominently regarding their potential "incestuous" authorship, thereby eroding their reliability as historical sources. The point of this chapter is to further address the problem of source reliability by breaking outside of the constraints imposed by relying solely on the contents of the four popular accounts. By utilizing other documentary sources left undiscussed by most scholars and exploring different elements in the sources – whether contained in the famed four accounts or in other documentary sources – the chapter will investigate the many alternative ways to understand and utilize the chronicles.

The chapter is divided into four major sections. The first explores the disparate arguments about the historical reliability (or the lack thereof) of the four chronicles. The second and third sections present new documentary evidence to discuss the veracity of the chronicles. Section two deals with the information regarding the different individuals that appear in the throughout sources, using information on expedition members provided in Chapter One as its base. Lastly,

[153] For an introduction to these four sources, their authors, and the details of their publication, etc., see the introduction of this study. See also the introduction for a discussion of the Soto Expedition's historiography. For additional information, see Galloway, "*Conjuncture* and *Long Durée*" and Patricia Galloway, "Commemorative History and Hernando de Soto" in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), esp. 413-431.

section three offers an analysis between some of the key events during the expedition as found in the documentary sources, which will be juxtaposed with those recorded in the chronicles. The chapter brings new source material and new voices into the picture and also uses those sources to better understand the four famous accounts. Above all, a comparison between the different sources in terms of the participants they mention and the events they portray emphasizes the authorial integrity of the four chronicles. Furthermore, the chapter also highlights that each of the four, although in their own ways, merit a significant degree of historical value.

A Brief History of Discussions Surrounding the Chronicles

From the nineteenth-century novels written on the expedition up to more contemporary works, scholars have relied almost solely on the four chronicles when interpreting the history of the expedition. Perhaps the fields the four have been most indispensable to are anthropology and archaeology, given that the sources provide detailed ethnohistoric information. Yet starting in the 1990s, historians and anthropologists alike began to express more hesitance towards trusting the words of these accounts at face value, and particularly the works of Rangel, The Gentleman of Elvas, and Garcilaso. Most prominent among these reservations has been whether the three accounts share incestuous roots in terms of their authorship. As stated by one anthropologist, "without a clear grasp of the possibilities for interdependence [between the three accounts], we cannot evaluate the quality of the data they make available."[154] For example, if the Rangel account was copied and elaborated by the author of the Gentleman of Elvas, whose work was then used as a major source by Garcilaso in his *La Florida del Inca*, do either of the last two have any merit as historical sources? Further exacerbating the problem is the frequency in which

[154] Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 11.

many scholars, both past and present, have used these sources uncritically. For example, many have chosen one of the accounts to act as the main framework of their study, followed by the uncritical sprinkling of details from the other accounts at will to bolster to their narrative.[155] As the debate seems to be ever ongoing, it is here that we begin our analysis.

Without exception, every author who has endeavored to unveil the interconnectedness of the Rangel, Elvas, and Garcilaso accounts has followed a similar methodological approach. As is concisely laid out by George Lankford in his essay "How Historical Are the De Soto Chronicles?," the authors follow a certain set of questions and procedures with which to critically assess the texts and their authors. Those questions entail establishing the history of the document, an identification of the author, an identification of the literary genre (including a discussion of the writer's intended audience), and lastly a textual or "empirical" analysis of the texts itself.[156] Since each of the previous studies have followed this same formula of queries, the chapter concentrate less on the first three points relating to the authors and their audience, which have already been well discussed. The main objective here is to explore the different textual analyses carried out by scholars, to assess their methodologies, and how each scholar (although some more than others) has provided compelling yet often conflicting conclusions.

Debates surrounding the presence and pitfalls of the chronicle's interconnected authorship have produced a myriad of arguments, and some scholars have even pushed back against the notion of incestuous relationships. Since the late 1980s, several studies have been published concerning the problem, the most prominent of which include studies by David

[155] *Ibid*, 11. For a discussion of this practice in the historiography of the Garcilaso account, see Henige, "So Unbelievable It Has to Be True," 164-167.
[156] George E. Lankford, "How Historical Are the De Soto Chronicles?," in *The Search for Mabila: The Decisive Battle Between Hernando de Soto and Tascalusa*, ed. Vernon James Knight Jr. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009), 32.

Henige, Charles Hudson, Patricia Galloway, Martin Malcom Elbl and Ivana Elbl, and George Langford. Henige's work on arguably the most controversial of the four sources – that of Garcilaso – stands as an appropriate starting point for the discussion.

Henige's many works on *La Florida del Inca* stand as the pinnacle for criticism of Garcilaso's account in Soto scholarship. Being the by far the longest and most detailed of the four chronicles – and reading more like piece of late-Renaissance chivalric adventure literature than a personal recounting of the expedition – *La Florida* (published in 1605) has received the highest degree of skepticism from many scholars, with Henige's work being at the forefront. Between the 1986 and 1997, he published three major studies in which he criticized *La Florida's* credibility as a historical source, arguing that "[it] would be fatuous to rely on *La Florida del Inca*, whether in ostensible corroboration of other evidence or as a repository of data to be found elsewhere." He continued to say that the work undoubtedly has "a great deal of historiographic interest, but no demonstratable historical worth."[157]

Henige's arguments are based on a combination of three main aspects: assessing *La Florida's* literary genre, attempting to gauge the reliability of Garcilaso's sources of information on the expedition, and a textual analysis of its contents compared to characteristics in the other chronicles. Some of his main conclusions include the argument that *La Florida* is less reliable as a historical source due to Garcilaso's use of Renaissance-style rhetoric. Second, he criticizes the uncritical yet frequent use of *La Florida* by historians and anthropologists, which has plagued examinations of the expedition and broader ethnohistorical studies of the southeast.[158] However,

[157] This particular quote is pulled from David Henige, "Proxy Data, Historical Method, and the de Soto Expedition," in The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543, eds. Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman, 156. His other two works on Garcilaso's account are David Henige, "The Context, Content, and Credibility of La Florida del Ynca," *The Americas* 43, n.1 (July 1986), 1-23; and Henige, "So Unbelievable It Has To Be True."

[158] Rhetoric popular to the Renaissance and Baroque periods of European literature entailed the author trying to persuade readers with the notion of verisimilitude rather objective truth and was a popular tactic among historians

of most concern here is his textual argument in which he seeks to discredit the reliability of Garcilaso's account, which he does by highlighting El Inca's supposed exaggerations throughout the account, as well as questioning *La Florida's* potential incestual authorship. On one end, Henige argues that certain empirical elements in *La Florida* discredit its value as a reliable source because of its substantial differences when compared to the corresponding events and numerical data given in the other chronicles. Here, Henige sees Garcilaso's (or his sources') seeming exaggerations, such as the number of explorers and Natives mentioned, the numbers of recorded causalities from warfare between the two, and the dates and distances given for the expedition's journey as a sign of the *La Florida's* unreliability.[159] For example, Garcilaso estimates the number of individuals who embarked on the expedition for Florida at about one thousand, while Rodrigo Rangel gives the number of 570 and Luis Hernández de Biedma of 620. He also references the number of Spanish causalities at the battle of Mabila (Biedma: 20+; Elvas: 18; Rangel: 22; Garcilaso: 47/82),[160] and the number of Native casualties at the same battle (Biedma: 5,400; Elvas: 2,500; Rangel: 3,000; Garcilaso: 11,000+), among other events. Although the numbers from Garcilaso tend to be higher, neither I nor certain other authors see

and chroniclers of the time. Garcilaso as the narrator of the story uses his authorial power of telling the reader he is truthfully conveying the details of his sources rather than providing direct evidence for his depictions. Examples of this can be seen in many instances throughout the piece where Garcilaso insists that he is 'being truthful' in his depictions to convince the reader of his "true" relation of event rather than supplying direct textual evidence. Henige goes into much detail regarding the history and uses of rhetoric by late Renaissance and Baroque writers of Garcilaso's time. See specifically Henige, "So Unbelievable It Has to Be True," 157-158. For another discussion of Garcilaso's literary style, although less concerned with the discussion of rhetoric, see Henige, "The Context, Content, and Credibility of La Florida del Ynca," 7-12. For an even deeper assessment of the literary styles and rhetorical tactics present in *La Florida*, see Dowling "*La Florida del Inca*: Garcilaso's Literary Sources."

[159] For Henige's argument referencing the number of casualties, see Henige, "The Context," 14-18. For his discussion on the differences in dates and measured distances between the four accounts, see Henige, "Proxy Data, Historical Method, and the de Soto Expedition," 159-162.

[160] As is mentioned by Henige, Garcilaso explicitly mentions that 47 men were killed during the battle, and that an additional 35 died afterward from their injuries; an attention to detail that Henige sees as another ploy by Garcilaso to achieve greater verisimilitude. Henige, "The Context," 15.

these numerical differences as a testament to the unreliability of *La Florida*, especially in terms of its overall historical significance; an argument that will be returned to below.

In Henige's other major textual argument, he asserts that Garcilaso lacked sufficient sources to recreate his narrative of the expedition and therefore argues that many of the elements in *La Florida* were taken from other, uncited sources, most notably, the account of the Gentleman of Elvas. Throughout his work, Garcilaso makes the case that he only used three sources to construct the account. The first being the oral testimonies of his longtime friend, Gonzalo Silvestre, a survivor of the Soto expedition, who apparently held lengthy discussions in Spain with Garcilaso about Florida some three decades after the expedition's end.[161] The other two were brief written accounts that El Inca acquired from Juan Coles and Alonso de Carmona, also survivors of the Florida expedition.[162] With these three sources – the first of which being the oral testimony of a man of advanced age and the last two being written accounts no longer than ten pages each – just how Garcilaso was able to recount the entirety of events on the expedition (and accurately for that matter) has been a call for great skepticism by scholars. Garcilaso states that he consulted other published sources on Florida, such as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* and another source that he does not identify by name, which raises some suspicion; there were also four unnamed books about Florida found in his library at the time of his death in 1616.[163] Still, Henige endeavors to show that El Inca used some other source of information that

[161] Garcilaso does not actually mention Silvestre by name but rather refers to him as "his author". However, since Silvestre plays such as prominent role in Garcilaso's narrative, it has long been assumed by scholars that Silvestre is the anonymous author. See discussions about this topic in Henige, "The Context," 4-5; Dowling, "*La Florida del Inca*," 130; Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 33-34. For Garcilaso's introduction of his author, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, vol. 2, 54.

[162] Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 55.

[163] Evidence of Garcilaso using Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* for contextualizing events on the Soto expedition are found, for example, during the scene in *La Florida* that Juan de Añasco finds the Bay of Aute, where Cabeza de Vaca had visited with Panfilo de Narváez's expedition in 1527-1528. See Vega, *La Florida*, 201-204. For Garcilaso's mentioning of another source that he neglects to name, which he states he used while writing his narrative on the Florida expedition, see *ibid*, 57. For the reference to the four unnamed books in Garcilaso's

he does not mention to construct the foundational framework of his piece, the most plausible of which was likely Elvas's *Relaçam*, given that it was the only other chronicle published in the sixteenth century.

Henige's argument can be reduced to a handful of main points in which he believes to see evidence for textual borrowing from the *Relaçam*, most of which are rather insubstantial. They revolve around the chronology of events, geographic descriptions, and the details of certain events mentioned in the two accounts. First, Henige recounts how Garcilaso omits fifteen months of the expedition's time in Florida, the same fifteen months, he states, that Elvas omitted. However, he contradicts his own argument for the specific connection between the two when he goes on to state that all four of the accounts omit the same fifteen months.[164] Second, there is a similarity in the way both accounts incorrectly describe the shape of the lower Mississippi River, a detail that Henige perceives as too suspicious to pass as mere coincidence.[165] Lastly, and perhaps convincingly, Henige notes the suspicious parallel between both accounts' portrayal of the life of Juan Ortiz in Florida: his capture, that a chief's daughter saved him from certain execution, and other events during his time living among the chiefs of Ucita and Mocoço (Hirrihigua and Mucoço in Garcilaso's account). Juan Ortiz – a Spanish captive from the Panfilo de Narváez expedition who had lived among Native on the Florida coast for twelve years – appears in all four chronicles. However, although the version of the story is much longer and more elaborate in *La Florida*, the core of the narrative is highly similar to that in Elvas, which raises some suspicion.[166]

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possession at the time of his death, see José Durand, "La Biblioteca del Inca," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 2, n.3 (1948), 254.

[164] Henige, "The Context," 4-5.

[165] Henige, "So Unbelievable," 161-163.

[166] *Ibid*, 161.

Given these examples, Henige's arguments present some conflicting notions. On the one hand, he sees the difference in empirical data between the accounts as indications of *La Florida's* faultiness as a reliable source as compared to the other chronicles. That Garcilaso appears to give faulty distances, dates, and numbers of men and casualties leads Henige to argue that *La Florida* is too much of an outlier to be used for, as he says, "diagnostic purposes." Yet when viewing similarities between *La Florida* and the others, especially in the case of the *Relaçam*, he also discredits the piece on the grounds that Garcilaso could not have relied on his three informants to attain the information and therefore likely borrowed it from other sources. Henige asks "[is] it really likely that Elvas, Rangel, and Silvestre would independently have remembered and deemed worthy of preservation an almost identical ensemble of events?"[167] The question is well merited, although Henige comes to some hasty conclusions in his declaration that *La Florida* is a "pseudohistory." This question involves a deeper look into the role of personal experience and the creation of legends, which in turn likely guided many of the stories retold by expedition survivors such as Elvas, Rangel, and Silvestre. However, before exploring the expedition's legends, we must examine scholars' opinions on the other two accounts: Rangel and Elvas.

Concerning the Gentleman of Elvas and Rodrigo Rangel, there has also been scholarly debate as to whether there is evidence of textual borrowing, significantly on part of the *Relaçam*, which, if true, threatens to reduce the account to simply an offshoot of the Rangel narrative. Patricia Galloway's study takes centerstage in the debate. In her essay "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," she examines both authors' identities and their texts. She argues that Andrés de Burgos, a *Sevillano* publisher who previously worked for Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés's in Seville, may have had access to and copied the Rodrigo Rangel narrative from

[167] Henige, "The Context," 21.

Oviedo's manuscript of the second volume of his *Historia General* in Seville in 1546.[168] She also notes the strange coincidence that Burgos, who later published the Elvas account, did so in Evora, Portugal in 1559, the same year that Oviedo died.[169] Galloway then continues that the circumstantial relationship between Oviedo and Burgos is corroborated by the textual similarities between the two accounts, arguing that "there is very little in Rangel that is not also reflected, with embellishment, in Elvas." She stresses the common sequence of events in the two pieces chronologically and structurally and also cites specific examples of potential overlap, such as how both mention Native clothing made from mulberry bark and clothing styles that resembled those of bohemians or Egyptians (or gypsies in Elvas). Other potentially borrowed elements include how both described the fortifications at the settlement of Tuasi almost identically, and how both authors use the Nahua term *petaca* to describe a neckless of pearls.[170] However, due to the certain information available in the *Relaçam* that is missing in the Rangel account, Galloway concludes that there were other sources blended into the Rangel-based narrative, such as the testimonies of a surviving cavalryman from the expedition who helped Burgos pen the account.[171]

Yet another examination of the Elvas account by Martin Malcolm Elbl and Ivana Elbl reached slightly different conclusions about the Elvas account, most of which allude to its independence from the Rangel account. Going back and carrying out a detailed analysis of the

[168] Rangel presented his account of the expedition before the *Audiencia Real de las Indias* in 1544 in Santo Domingo. Thereafter, he was ordered by the council to hand over a copy of his account to Oviedo since the latter had been appointed as the royal chronicler for the Spanish monarchy in the Indies. Since Oviedo was warden of the fort in Santo Doming at the time, Rangel must have delivered him a copy of his account before the chronicler left for Spain in 1546. Rather unfortunately, Oviedo never published his volume two of *Historia General*, which did not see publication until the nineteenth century. See Langford, "How Historical," 33-35; Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 12.
[169] Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 18-23.
[170] *Ibid*, 26.
[171] *Ibid*, 26.

Relaçam, including looking at the key points of overlap between it and the Rangel account, the authors argue that it is less likely that Elvas is a borrowed account with new additions. The two are less convinced by Galloway's examples for textual borrowing, such as the instance with the mulberry clothing and references to gypsies, given that comparisons drawn between 'Old World' and "New World' flora, fauna, peoples were a commonplace in writings of explorers. They support the claim with an example of a similar description of gypsies by members of the Francisco Vázquez de Coronado expedition to southwestern north America during 1540s. However, both Gallaway and the Elbls fail to mention that another source from the Soto expedition also made references to indigenous clothing made from mulberry bark. Fray Sebastián de Cañete, a friar on the Florida expedition, penned a now-lost account of events that took place in Florida. There only exists a fragment of a document that contains a summary of his account. Yet in the fragment, which contained many descriptions of the *flora* and *fauna*, Cañete described in one part how some Natives went about clad in "blankets of mulberry root and marten." Therefore, the argument in favor of Elvas borrowing the Mulberry description from Rangel's account is not entirely convincing. Yet in spite of missing Cañete's description, the Elbls argue that the *Relaçam* is not necessarily an offshoot of Rangel but rather something different.[172] However, in accordance with Galloway, they argue that the Elvas account is actually a composite piece, comprised of two layers of text: one from the perspective of an individual of Extremaduran descent, potentially higher in status, and close to Soto on the expedition, while the other being of an author partial to the Portuguese Resendian style of literature." However, they conclude that, until further research is provided, the *Relaçam* should be regarded as equally "as authentic as Rangel and infinitely more so than Garcilaso."[173]

[172] Martin Malcolm Elbl and Ivana Elbl, "The Gentleman of Elvas and His Publisher," 55-56.
[173] *Ibid*, 56-57, 72-73. For their conclusion, see pp. 73.

Returning to the Garcilaso's account, Galloway makes similar assumptions to Henige, arguing that El Inca used the Elvas account as the "main armature" to for the construction of *La Florida*. Yet her argument greatly reflects the main points made by Henige in that she criticizes Garcilaso's apparent use of only three informants (especially his use of Silvestre), and cites the same textual elements, including that the author failed to mention the same sections of the journey as Elvas. What she concludes is that Garcilaso penned the account using the three sources he mentions combined with the memories of stories that he heard from expedition survivors in Peru as a young adult, along with the Elvas account.[174] However, in a much more convincing manner, Galloway argues that Garcilaso's overall goal in *La Florida* was not necessarily historical or ethnohistoric accuracy, but rather to use his *mestizo* identity and knowledge to prove his vision of Native Americans' place in providential history, portraying them as equal in all respects to the Europeans. Evidence of this can be seen throughout *la Florida* in his portrayal of Natives as equally honorable as Spaniards, a feature that is lacking in the other three chronicles. Galloway asserts that because Garcilaso depicted Florida Natives in a way to fit his own narrative, *La Florida* is highly problematic as an ethnohistoric source for the sixteenth-century southeast. However, it has continued to be religiously by scholars for that same purpose.[175]

Arguments from the opposite side of the spectrum push for the notion of inherent value of each of the chronicles and vehemently oppose the arguments in favor of textual borrowing.

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[174] *Ibid*, 31, 33-34, 36-37.
[175] *Ibid*, 31-32. Lee Dowling makes a similar yet far more complex argument about the role of Garcilaso's *mestizo* identity and his vision of Native Americans' place in providential history and how that shaped his depiction of Natives and their interactions with the explorers in Florida. Dowling, "*La Florida,*" 139. For her argument on the problematic use of Garcilaso's source for ethnohistoric evidence, see Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives." David Henige also makes the same claim, and heavily criticizes scholars' use of *La Florida* for ethnohistoric data. See Henige's argument against works on the Soto route through the southeast in Henige, "Proxy Data, esp. 165-169. For his critique on how *La Florida* has been used by US historians (along with the route reconstruction), see Henige "So Unbelievable," 163-166.

Firmly rooted in this camp is Charles Hudson, whose major works regarding the expedition are associated with his attempted reconstruction of Soto's route through the southeast. Hudson used the information put forth in four chronicles to reconstruct his route, utilizing primarily Rangel's account as the core narrative, while adding additional elements from each of the other chronicles where he saw necessary. His argument for the benefit of the route was to be able to pinpoint the locations of sixteenth-century Native Americans settlements by overlapping the ethnohistorical information from the written sources with the archaeological record, creating what he refers to as a "braided narrative" of the route.[176]

Given that the chronicles were a fundamental element of his work, Hudson gave his own testament to the validity of the four texts. He fundamentally disagrees with both Henige and Galloway about any sort of incestuous relationship and urges that each of the four chronicles has its own degree of historical merit. He argues that the Rangel and Biedma accounts are the most trustworthy since they were both written by individuals on the expedition, although he acknowledges that they also pose their own set of flaws. In the Rangel accounts, one problem is that Oviedo inserted his own commentary on Soto and the expedition, which poses a problem with authorial voice throughout the narrative. However, given Oviedo's commentary, which often condemns Soto's actions, Hudson argues that Oviedo would have had little reason to tamper with the overall sequence of events, making it a somewhat stable primary source with some added commentary on top – an argument with which Galloway would likely agree.[177] The

[176] The culmination of Hudson's work on the route can be found in his study *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando de Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms*. His argument for the benefit of the "braided narrative" between the archaeological record and written sources can be found in Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, xxx-xxxii. Another overview of his argument can be found in Charles Hudson, "The Significance of the Soto Route," in *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 314.

[177] Hudson, *Knights of Spain*, 442. For a similar argument made by Galloway, see Galloway, "The Incestuous Soto Narratives," 18.

Biedma piece is not as saturated with detail and reports more on the logistics of the expedition. Therefore, Hudson concludes the only problems a handful of "copyist errors." These include instances such as, after landing in Florida, Biedma states the expedition headed due west before heading northwest, which is impossible given that the expedition landed on the west coast of Florida.[178] Although, historian Ida Altman argued that even though Biedma's account seems straightforward and without any personal narrative, the brevity of his piece can be attributed to his own personal agenda. Since he had to present his report of the expedition to the Council of the Indies, he penned his account in such a way that downplayed the expedition's search for material wealth (which it failed to find) and emphasized more of what the expedition overcame, such as the logistical problems and hardships the members endured and survived. Therefore, just as the other accounts, Biedma's should not be regarded as "more reliable" than any of the other narratives.[179]

Where Hudson's argument gets more heated is when he discusses the Elvas and Garcilaso narratives, which he believes were independent sources. Concerning the Rangel and Elvas accounts, he argues that, while other authors see agreements between the two as evidence of textual borrowing, he sees the similarities as indications of their differences, being two different accounts based on the same series of experiences. Hudson agrees with the Elbls' argument that shared descriptions, such as the references to gypsy attire and the use of the word *petaca*, are not convincing enough to accuse Elvas of plagiarism on any level higher than possibility. He also cites how the variations in place names and dates mentioned by Elvas and Rangel indicate a different diarist for the Elvas account.[180] In terms of Garcilaso's account,

[178] *Ibid*, 18.
[179] Altman, "An Official's Report," 9.
[180] Thus, Hudson's argument against Elvas plagiarism is based heavily in the argument of Martin and Ivana Elbl. Hudson's examination of the Elvas account and its contents versus those in Rangel can be found in *ibid*, 44-47.

Hudson argues against the notion of Elvas acting as *La Florida's* armature, citing a number of textual examples that highlight its individuality from the other chronicles. Garcilaso's idiosyncratic recording of dates, chronology, place names, and geography reinforce the argument that Garcilaso acted without aid from the other Florida narratives. He consistently transposes place names from one location to another – such as Acuera to Ocale and Ocale to Potano – and gets some major events notably out of chronological order – such as events happening on river happening on another. Thus, Hudson argues that since there is no substantial evidence of Garcilaso copying from any of the other chronicles because of the question 'if he did use the other sources, why did he not rely on them to establish a chronology for his piece?'[181] Yet to David Henige's argument as to whether or not we can use Garcilaso's account as a reliable source for "diagnostic purposes" given its problematic characteristics, Hudson cites another study that poses a different approach to understanding the contents of *La Florida*: one that explores the role of legends from the expedition.

In his chapter "The Legends of the Adelantado," George Langford examines Garcilaso's account using a methodological approach common in oral history that revolves around examining the formation legends and their impact on the broader narrative. He hypothesizes the following:

> I have hypothesized that the memories of the expedition in the minds of the survivors would first have taken the form of memorates (personal experience narratives); then as they were told and performed around the campfire those stories would have been altered and smoothed into tellable legends acceptable to the group. Moreover, in the years of the expedition such legends would have changed even the memorates into more standardized legend forms so that ultimately the soldiers would have emerged from the experience with roughly the same body of lore committed to memory by repetition.[182]

[181] For clear evidence of Garcilaso's errors with place names and the clearly visible distinctions in his chronological timeline, see the table of "Indian Proper Names" in Clayton, Knight, and Moore's *The De Soto Chronicles*, 499-502.
[182] This direct quote is pulled from Langford, "How Historical," 39. For a more extensive version of his argument and explanation of his methodology, see George E. Langford, "The Legends of the Adelantado," in *The Expedition*

Thus, if Garcilaso's claim to have received the majority of his information from Silvestre testimony is true, then Garcilaso would have received most of his information about the expedition in a legend-story format. Langford then lists what he sees as eighty-two stories found in *La Florida* that further indicate the presence of legends. Some of these include the fight between a Spanish and French ship in Cuba; the attempt of Soto's business partner, Hernán Ponce de León, to defraud Soto in Havana; the death of don Carlos at the battle of Mabila, and others.[183] These legends also may account for the aforementioned blunders regarding chronology, place names, and geography; if Garcilaso acquired most of his information from oral testimony (especially from survivors years after the expedition), is it a stretch to assume that these reasons can account for his so-called errors and dramatization of numbers? In the end, Langford agrees that Garcilaso *did* use Elvas for at least his general chronological reconstruction, although given his convincing argument for the presence of story-legends throughout *La Florida*, combined with the periodically substantial difference between Garcilaso's chronology and the others, there is more to Garcilaso's independence and veracity than scholars have thought. Furthermore, the presence of other voices throughout the account, such as those of Silvestre, the two written accounts, and potentially others, gives *La Florida* a distinct historical significance that sets it apart from the other accounts.

As one can see, there has been significant disagreement over many aspects regarding the chronicles. Unfortunately, many of these debates have ended in gridlock since they have repeatedly toiled with the same four sources, failing to consider other sources to aid in their

of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543, eds. Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 173-175.

[183] See Langford's lists in Langford, "Legends,"177-178, 182-185.

assessments. It is therefore a debate starved of new information. However, the discussion below introduces other sources with which to better understand the expedition and the four chronicles. The proceeding sections display the same style of analysis past studies on the chronicles, giving brief mention of the authors and the genres of the documentary sources. However, what differentiates this study from the rest is that I will compare the contents of the chronicles with new, outside textual information.

The People of the Chronicles and the Documentary Sources

As seen throughout Chapter One, there are countless individuals mentioned throughout the historical sources related to the expedition. Collectively, the four chronicles identify between 150 and 174 individuals.[184] Likewise, in the other combined sources there are between 780 and 860 identifiable individuals, not including the sixty mariners who were contracted to make the journey to Florida. Yet when looking at the chronicles, which individuals are mentioned? Do the four authors make reference to the same individuals throughout their narratives? Which of the four mentions the most (or least) individuals? Likewise, how many individuals mentioned in each chronicle can be found in other sources? The central aim of these questions is to answer one aspect above all: can looking at the profiles of individuals as they appear in the chronicles and other sources give new insight into the historical veracity of the four sources, and can it give another angle from which to view the problem of incestuous authorship?

Let us begin with the number of individuals mentioned in each chronicle. Of the four accounts, it is no surprise that Biedma references the least number of individuals. Throughout the

[184] The number of persons mentioned in this section are from the author's own work, unless specified otherwise. The range of 150 to 174 is due to the question of potential duplicates. There are specifically nineteen individuals mentioned between the four sources that may be the same person, although there is not enough biographical information given to make the decision either way.

few dozen pages of his account, he only references six explorers: Soto, Juan de Añasco, captain Francisco Maldonado, Juan Ortiz, and himself. Elvas's *Relaçam*, which goes into much more depth about the details of people and events on the expedition, contains forty-seven explorers. Rodrigo Rangel's account documents fifty individuals, including himself. Lastly yet not surprisingly, Garcilaso mentions 128 different expedition members in *La Florida*.[185] Given that his narrative is almost twice the size of Elvas, which is the second longest account of the four, Garcilaso mentions by far the highest number of individuals. With these number mentioned above, we arrive at the range between 150 to 170, given the possibility of duplicate individuals between the different chronicles.

Next, we must look at which individuals are mentioned by which author, as well as instances where individuals appear in more than one account, which aids in assessing the accounts for textual borrowing (see Table 3.1 below). Rangel's account will be discussed first. In his recounting of events in Florida, Soto's secretary mentioned twenty-nine individuals that are referenced to exclusively in his account. Additionally, Rangel and Garcilaso both reference one individual who is not mentioned in the Elvas account, bringing Rangel's total number of individuals to thirty-one. Of these thirty-one, some of the more recognizable names include Cristóbal de Mosquera, Hernando Arias de Saavedra, the chief pilot of Soto's armada named Alonso Martín, and Rangel himself. When looking at Elvas's account, the Portuguese author makes reference to twenty-one individuals who are not mentioned by Rangel, and interestingly, many of them were of Portuguese descent. These include Andrés de Vasconcelos, Fernando Pegado, Juan Cordero de Aponte, and others. Also of strange coincidence is that Elvas mentions many of the officers on the expedition that Rangel excluded from his writings. These include

[185] Of these 128, four of them may be duplicate individuals, all of which are individuals Garci mentioned with identical or almost identical names.

Arias Tinoco, Juan Gaitán, García Osorio, Diego Tinoco, and Captain Juan de Guzmán. It is notable that Elvas mentions many of the Portuguese participants on the expedition, and that he further mentions several Spanish officers and cavalrymen who are not found in Rangel's writings. These numbers firmly demonstrate some degree of the *Relaçam's* autonomy from Rangel and further prove the Elbls' argument that the Elvas author – whoever they were – was someone of high rank on the expedition and familiar with many of the officers and cavalrymen in its ranks. Although Rodrigo Rangel does fit that profile perfectly, the difference in their accounts in the manner above hints at slightly different authorship.

Table 3.1: Numbers of Explorers Mentioned in the Chronicles Compared

Chronicler(s)	**No. of People Mentioned**
Biedma	5
Elvas	47
Rangel	50
Garcilaso	ca. 128
Mentioned by all three chroniclers (Rangel, Elvas and Garcilaso)	15
Mentioned by Rangel and not by Elvas	29
Mentioned by Elvas and not by Rangel	21
Mentioned by Rangel, Elvas, and not by Garcilaso	5
Mentioned by Rangel, Garcilaso, and not by Elvas	1
Mentioned by Garcilaso, and not by Rangel or Elvas	96

Garcilaso's account proves even more different from the rest in terms of the specific individuals mentioned, which highlights its uniqueness and value as a historical source of the expedition. *La Florida* is teeming with prosopographic content that is not found in any of the other four accounts, all of which can be verified with outside sources. Garcilaso mentions ninety-six expedition members who are not referenced by any other chronicler. Many of these individuals can also be found in other sources. They include Alonso de Argote, García de Godoy,

Francisco Reynoso, Gonzalo Cuadrado, Gonzalo Silvestre, Juan Coles, Rodrigo Gallegos, among others. El Inca also mentions many individuals who are only found in other sources outside of the chronicles. These individuals total sixteen and include persons of both higher and lower social status on the expedition, among them Juan de Abedí, Juan López Cacho, and Luis de Moscoso's father, Diosdado de Alvarado, who was not present on the expedition. [186]

Another angle from which to view Garcilaso's account (or any of the accounts for that matter) is to double check where the chroniclers place each individuals' original place of residence (OPR). Among those listed directly above, Garcilaso gives them the same OPR as they claim in archival documents. Therefore, Garcilaso had sufficient access not only to these individuals' names but to other information about them as well. There are many pieces of information in Garcilaso's account that can even help better read the documentary sources. For example, in the Biedma's survivors list, the author mentions *un clérigo françes*, an anonymous French cleric whom Biedma records without a name. The Frenchman does not appear in any other sources for the expedition except *potentially* in Garcilaso's account. In the last chapter of *La Florida*, Garcilaso mentions a priest named Dionisio de París. Is this the same individual as the one mentioned by Biedma? Could there have been two French clerics on the expedition? It is difficult to say. However, it seems probable that Garcilaso knew a great deal about the expedition, and far more than he has been given credit for by many scholars.[187]

Another note that may lead to some understanding of El Inca's relationship with the other two accounts is to conversely observe the individuals that are mentioned by both Rangel and

[186] Twelve of these individuals, all of whom are only cited in *La Florida*, are unquestionably found in other outside sources. Including those mentioned above, they are Rodrigo Gallegos, Álvaro Nieto, Juan García Pechudo, Francisco Reynoso, Álvaro de Sanjurjo, Pedro Sánchez of Astorga, Gonzalo Silvestre, Juan Rodríguez Terrón, and Gonzalo Cuadrado. The other four are less certain given that their profiles contain less definable information. These include Pedro Moreno, Francisco de la Rocha, Francisco de Salazar, and Pedro de Atienza.
[187] The French cleric is mentioned by Biedma in AGI Patronato, 19, N.3, sin fol., (last page). For Garcilaso's reference to Dionisio de París, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 556.

Elvas but not by Garcilaso. Between the two, Elvas and Rangel mention only five individuals who are absent from *La Florida*. However, some of these absences are puzzling. For example, all three accounts recount almost identically the same individuals who perishing at the battle of Mabila. However, Garcilaso fails to mention the death of Juan de Gámez, a native of Jaén. Given that the other two chroniclers mention Gámez, it seems like an odd omission for Garcilaso, especially if he used the Elvas account as reference.[188] Equally strange is Garcilaso's exclusion of don Antonio Osorio, who appears in Rangel's account after the battle of Chicasa, where he was described as follows:

> Don Antonio Osorio, brother of the Lord Marquis of Astorga, with a doublet of blankets of that land, torn on the sides, his flesh exposed, without a hat, bear-headed, bare-footed, without horse or shoes […] a sword without a scabbard, the snows and cold very great, […][189]

Since Garcilaso was so given to adding rich details to his narrative at every opportunity, it seems unusual that he would miss such a notable detail, unless he had no access to it. Lastly, yet most surprisingly, Garcilaso fails to mention one of the most senior men on Soto's Florida expedition: Juan Ruiz Lobillo. Lobillo was a comrade of Soto dating back to his days in Peru on the expedition with Francisco Pizarro. He also played a crucial role in the preparations for the Florida expedition in Spain, and he served a senior role as cavalry captain in Florida. That Garcilaso would omit such a character is surprising; perhaps his principal informant decided to exclude Lobillo from his stories? Whether or not this is the case, if El Inca had access to the Rangel or Elvas accounts, he surely would have mentioned Captain Lobillo.[190]

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[188] For the Gentleman of Elvas's reports on the casualties at Mabila, see Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 104. For Rangel's numbers, see Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 294. For Garcilaso's report, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 250-251.

[189] The translation here is not my own. See Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 296.

[190] Lobillo also makes an appearance in many of the archival sources related to the expedition from both before its departure from Spain and after the survivors had arrived in Mexico. For evidence of his assistance in the organization of the expedition in Spain, see records such as his *carta de fletamento*, or a ship's cargo contract in which he commissioned one of the ships that brought some of Soto's men and supplies from Spain to Santiago,

Yet paying close attention to how Garcilaso mentions individuals throughout *La Florida* gives particular insight into how he constructed his narrative. These include identifying where he cited names from and the discernable mistakes he made when mentioning individuals' names. If we are to believe that Garcilaso received all of his information from the three sources he mentioned (Silvestre's oral testimony and the two short written account by Juan Coles and Alonso de Carmona), is it possible to identify from which sources he gets names? The answer is a qualified yes. There are many grey areas throughout *La Florida* where Garcilaso does not mention or allude to where he got an individual's name. However, there are a handful of instances in which we can pinpoint where the names come from, especially when he gives block quotes from the Coles and Carmona accounts. Throughout the narrative, Garcilaso claims to directly quote passages from the Coles and Carmona accounts. In some of these passages, the two men recorded names of other expedition members; in other instances, Garcilaso simply acknowledges an individual's appearance in either of the two written accounts. However, between these two scenarios and excluding references to Soto, Carmona mentions twelve individuals and Coles mentions two, most of whom were high ranking officers in the expedition.[191] Since two of the individuals Coles and Carmona mention are the same, does that mean that Gonzalo Silvestre recounted the other 128 people in his stories with Garcilaso? A few instances in *La Florida* may help us to partly answer that question.

Cuba in AHPS, Protocolos, 3324, sin fol. (document dated December 11, 1537). See also his appearance in the Biedma survivors list in AGI Patronato, 19, N.3, sin fol. (second page from the end); and his appearance as a witness in the *probanzas* of Alonso and Rodrigo Vázquez in AGI Patronato, 60, N.5, R.7 and AGI Patronato, 51, N.3, R.2.

[191] Alonso de Carmona is cited in block text much more frequently than is Coles, which may lead to the significant difference in number of peoples mentioned. Those referenced to by Carmona are Gonzalo Cuadrado de Jaramillo, Nuño de Tobar, don Carlos Enríquez, don Diego (Francisco) de Soto, Tapia (a hidalgo from Arvélavo), Diego (Francisco) Guzmán, Captain Cristóbal de Espindola, Captain Juan de Guzmán, Juan Terrón, Captain Juan de Añasco, Luis de Moscoso, and Juan Ortiz. The two mentioned by Coles are Juan Ortiz and Captain Juan de Guzmán.

It is clear from certain references to people in his account that Garcilaso received his names directly from Silvestre's recollection, others indicate that El Inca undertook some degree of comparison between the sources at his disposal to determine what he thought was the most accurate rendition of the expeditionaries' names. The first point is exemplified with an instance that Garcilaso mentions as happening at the battle of Mabila. Just before the battle ensued, a Spaniard broke rank and fled into the woods to escape certain death. However, upon running into the brush it is told that he tripped and hit his head on a stone, after which he died. Garcilaso retells that man was from Badajoz, "a common man, very uncouth and rustic, whose name has been forgotten."[192] Who had forgotten the man's name? Unless it was recounted as being forgotten in the Coles or Carmona accounts – which Garcilaso does not claim it to be – the story, or may we call it a legend, was recounted in another source. Since Elvas and Rangel are silent on this individual, the likely source is Silvestre. Therefore, with the unnamed individual, we get a closer look into the types of conversations that Garcilaso and his principal informer were having and how names were certainly part of the discussion.

Another example of the author's treatment of names in *La Florida* with an individual who reportedly deserted the expedition at the settlement of Naguatex. Garcilaso gives the deserter's name as Diego de Guzmán, a native of Seville. However, he states that Alonso de Carmona mentions this individual with the name Francisco de Guzmán in his writings, which Garcilaso claims was incorrect. It thus appears that Garcilaso was receiving contradictory information about the deserter, but which of the two names are correct? A hint exists in the Elvas account, which records the same incident of Guzmán's desertion (although Elvas states it happened at the nearby settlement of Chaguete).[193] Elvas mentions him with the first name

[192] This translation can be found in Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 350.
[193] Elvas's reference to the story can be found in Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 141, 149.

Francisco, which adds to the case that Garcilaso may have been incorrect in giving him the name Diego. Other sources speaking of the incident may be included as well, such as there being a Francisco de Guzmán of Seville who received a license from the *Casa de la Contratación* to make the journey to Florida. Therefore, it seems likely that Garcilaso may have gotten this individual's name incorrect, but the episode shows that he likely received information from multiple outlets, but also that he was undertaking some degree of critical analysis when synthesizing his sources, including Silvestre's stories.

There are also other instances of errors related to names in *La Florida* that shed light on Garcilaso's narrative. These errors can be pinpointed with the aid of cross-examining the profiles of expedition members as they are found in *La Florida* and other outside sources, creating a system of 'fact checking' profiles. When looking at Garcilaso's individuals against those found in the other chronicles or the licenses, *probanzas*, and other sources, there is a noticeable trend in which Garcilaso often records individuals' first names incorrectly. However, a comparison between the sources usually confirms that individual mentioned by Garcilaso is the same person as another member with a different first name. These first name errors can typically be identified in two ways: first, by using additional biographic information about the individual in question, such as original place of residence, and second, from situational context. For example, Garcilaso refers to one of the captains on the expedition, named Francisco Maldonado, as Diego Maldonado.[194] Yet we know that Francisco and Diego were the same person for the same two reasons mentioned above. First, Garcilaso states that Maldonado was a native of the city of Salamanca in Spain, which matches not only where the other chroniclers place his OPR but also

[194] Garcilaso references Maldonado on several occasions throughout his account. See Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 244-246, 257, 325, 355, 550-52.

where Maldonado stated he was from during a court case in 1546.[195] Garcilaso also mentions him in reference to his role on the Florida expedition, retelling how he was sent back to Cuba from Apalache to give news of the expedition to Soto wife, Isabel de Bobadilla, after which he was tasked with sailing along the Gulf coast, waiting to resupply the expedition with additional or men or supplies from Cuba. The other chroniclers (even Biedma) also mention him with having the same task. Furthermore, Maldonado personally testified in 1546 that he returned to Cuba and then traversed to Gulf Coast while awaiting the expedition.[196]

From the Maldonado example, we can see that one can identify the instances in which Garcilaso is incorrect about individuals' first names and, upon further inspection, one notices this was a frequent error. Throughout the narrative, there at least nineteen different instances in which Garcilaso gives someone the incorrect first name or fails to give them a first name at all, simply referring to them by their last name and their OPR. In other instances, it seems that Garcilaso gives individuals different last names as well (see Table 3.2 below). Some of the repetitive mistakes he makes include his frequent and incorrect use of the name Diego, followed by his swapping of the last name "Ruiz" for "Rodríguez," a common error in other accounts as well.

Table 3.2: Names Altered in *La Florida del Inca*

Name in the Documents	**Name According to Garcilaso**
Certain Duplicates	
Francisco Maldonado	Diego Maldonado
Alonso de Argote	Bartolomé de Argote

[195] During the litigation case between Hernán Ponce de León and Isabel de Bobadilla, Maldonado testified in 1546 that he was from Salamanca. See AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 720v.
[196] Luis Hernández de Biedma, *Relation of the Island of Florida*, in *The De Soto Chronicles*, Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore, eds. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1993), 228; Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 73-74; Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 268. Also, AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 723r.

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Name in the Documents	Name According to Garcilaso
Mem Ruiz Pereira	Mem Rodríguez
Francisco de Soto	Diego de Soto
Francisco de Guzmán	Diego de Guzmán
Luis Bravo	Luis Bravo de Jerez
Álvaro de la Cadena	Antonio de la Cadena
Hernán Galván	Antón Galván
García de Godoy	Diego de Godoy
Diego de Silvera	Francisco or Hernando de Silvera
Less Certain Duplicates	
Diego Tinoco	Diego Arias
Hernando Figueroa	Francisco Figueroa
Alonso Car	Gaspar Caro
Luis de Carranza	Juan de Carranza
Baltasar Genti	Baltasar Hernández
[no first name recorded] Pozo, cleric priest	Francisco del Pozo, cleric priest
[no first name recorded] Sagredo	Francisco Sagredo
Antonio de Troche	Francisco de Troche
Juan de Viota	[no first name recorded] Viota

Curiously, the practice of swapping names in not seen in the Rangel or Biedma account, and it appears in the Elvas account only once: the Portuguese author references to Luis Hernández de Biedma as Antonio de Biedma, although for unknown reasons. There are two reasons for the name errors in Garcilaso's account, part of which can be understood through Biedma's list of survivors. Of the 218 individuals listed by Biedma, forty-six percent were identified only by their last names, along with their OPR. Similarly, Rangel – whose presence on the expedition we can undeniably confirm – referenced many individuals in the same way: simply by using their last name. These two sources may demonstrate that expedition members commonly referred to each other on a last name basis, followed by their OPR. An example can be seen in the case of the Gallego named Álvaro de Sanjurjo, whom both Garcilaso and Biedma in his list refer to simply

as Sanjurjo, *del Reyno de Galicia*.[197] Lastly, the first name confusion in *La Florida* may also be a product of Silvestre's faulty memory. Since the aged conquistador recounted the Florida venture to Garcilaso three decades after the fact, it is not surprising that Silvestre might have forgotten many names, especially if it was common for participants to know each other on a last name basis. However, Garcilaso's frequent errors with names demonstrates even further *La Florida's* distinct identity as an individual source.

Lastly, it is worth looking at the appearance of women and peoples of other racial backgrounds, including the enslaved, as they appear in the chronicles because it further highlights the difference between the four accounts. Unfortunately, there is no connection between the enslaved people who appear in the documentary sources and those who appear in the chronicles. As seen in Chapter One, there are records of Soto, Juan de Añasco, Baltasar de Gallegos, and many other individuals bringing enslaved African individuals – both men and women – to Florida. However, none of those men are recorded in the chronicles as having slaves. Yet, there are multiple slaves mentioned throughout the famous accounts. Biedma is silent on the subject of slaves in his relation, which comes as no surprise. Even more peculiar is the lack of any mention of slaves in the Elvas account apart from one instance. Upon Soto's death in Guachoya in 1542, Elvas states that the newly appointed leader of the expedition, Luis de Moscoso, sold Soto's remaining slaves at auction. They were two male slaves and two female slaves purchased along with Soto's other belongings.[198] Elvas does, however, mention the only woman mentioned in the chronicles present on the expedition to Florida, although he does not give her a name. Rangel mentions five slaves: Juan Vizcaíno, a black slave of Juan Ruiz Lobillo;

[197] Álvaro can be confirmed as being his first name since he appears in the Ponce vs Bobadilla case in 1546. See AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 526r.
[198] Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 138. It is unfortunate that these individuals are not recorded with any racial identifiers, at least in this translation.

Gómez, a black slave of Vasco Gómez; an unnamed black cavalryman; two other unnamed slaves, one of Native American descent from Cuba and the other described as "from Barbary." Lastly, he mentions an unspecified number of enslaved Christian women belonging to Soto. Garcilaso mentions eight identifiable individuals in this group. First, he mentions Francisca de Inostrosa, the same woman included in the Elvas narrative, although the Portuguese author failed to give her name. He also mentions seven individuals of non-European descent. Three of the seven are assumed to be free individuals, which include Pedro Morón, Diego de Oliva, and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa – *mestizo* cavalrymen from Cuba. The four enslaved individuals include two male black slaves of Andrés de Vasconcelos, one unnamed male slave of Carlos Enríquez from "Barbary," and a black male slave named Robles. Even given the small number of slaves mentioned between the four, the differences among them (excluding the enslaved individual from Barbary) clearly demonstrates the unique nature of each.

Beyond the Chronicles: Untold Stories of the Expedition

Just as exploring how the different characters that appear in the chronicles can be used to discern some degree of historical credibility, so too can the narrative information found in the four accounts be assessed to gain further insight into their validity. Similar to above, this section how stories and snippets of detail from the chronicles compare to each other and new voices found in other documents. The documentary sources used include *probanzas de méritos*, letters, and testimonies, some of which are found in the litigation case between Ponce de Leon and Bobadilla. Within these pages, the stories of onlookers and expedition participants from both during and after the Florida venture can be heard. One of the challenges with the archival sources is that the narrative information found in the different letters and testimonies is not as extensive

and in depth as the narratives contained in the chronicles. Yet through these different sources, the voices can be heard of many individuals who do not make a central appearance in the popular four accounts. We also receive insight into their perspective in letters, petitions, and testimonies that, as a whole, can be added to our knowledge of the expedition. Furthermore, comparing the new voices with the words of the chroniclers displays the unique characteristics of each account. In some instances, the accounts relay events in a similar manner; in others, they present conflicting information. Yet, above all, the juxtaposition of the different sources highlights the uniquenesses within each chronicle, reinforcing the argument that not only is each account a valuable historical source. It also demonstrates that an incestuous relationship between the four accounts is highly unlikely.

The section focuses on certain groups of information in its analysis that contain the richest descriptions of events in the archival sources, which prove to be the most ideal points for comparison between the chronicles and the documents. The topics include general descriptions of the journey found throughout the two bodies of sources, including the number of people and ships, descriptions of major conflicts, and lastly, an analysis of the most detailed events found in the documentary sources: the experiences of Juan de Añasco. A handful of Añasco's experiences throughout the journey are well documented in his 1544 *probanza*. The details supplied by him and the many witnesses who testify in the account are recounted in a coherent narrative format, making their depictions easily comparable to the same events found in the chronicles. The same style of comparison is also possible between serious episodes of violence found throughout the accounts, such as the famed battle of Mabila in 1540. Thus, a textual analysis between the different stories is not only possible, but the comparison highlights the uniquenesses of the

different accounts and stresses the notion of authorial integrity, while also introducing new voices and characters in these stories.

The first comparable characteristics in the sources are the number of expedition members and ships reported in the different accounts, whose similarities and differences may give us a general picture of the accuracy of the different accounts. Looking specifically at the number of persons, José Ignacio Avellaneda compared some of these figures in one of his studies on the Soto expedition. Since Soto's fleet departed from Spain in the spring of 1538 and then departed from Havana for Florida a year later in 1539, there are two sets of numbers for Soto's passengers (see Table 3.3). Although all the chroniclers did not comment on the numbers for both voyages, Avellaneda recounts the numbers that the four chroniclers provide. From Spain, the Gentleman of Elvas estimates that 600 men made the journey from Spain, while Garcilaso says that number is higher, 950 soldiers plus Soto's family, the mariners for the ships, and other necessary crew. Avellaneda cites the passenger registries from Seville's Royal House of Trade as well, although the numbers for individuals who received licenses found here comes from the research carried out in Chapter One of this study, which totals 655.[199] Lastly, Avellaneda also cites two individuals that gave their estimates for the Spain departees in *probanzas* decades later. These two – Juan López and Sebastián de Villegas – both stated that around 700 men departed from Sanlúcar de Barrameda with Soto that April. Although some comment on the number of departees, there are more reports on the number of people who left Cuba for Florida. Luis Hernández de Biedma states that 620 left from Havana, while Rangel gives the number at 570 and Garcilaso estimates the total to be around 1,000. Avellaneda's study also displays how the

[199] Avellaneda gives the number 657, which he cites from the study *El Adelantado Hernando de Soto* by Antonio de Solar y Toboada and José Rújula y Ochotorena (Badajoz, 1929). Two copies of individuals in the Solar and Rújula study is what accounts for the differences in numbers given here. See Chapter One.

royal officials in Havana gave the oddly specific number of 513 armed men departing (not including sailors), while two other survivors – Pedro de Arévalo and Francisco de Guzmán – both commented years later that 650 men had left for Florida.[200]

Table 3.3: Numbers of Departing Expedition Members

Source	No. of Passengers
Numbers of Persons Who Departed From Spain to Cuba	
Mentioned by Avellaneda	
Garcilaso de la Vega	950 plus
Gentleman of Elvas	600
Passenger licenses	655
Juan López	700
Sebastián López	700
From New Sources	
Juan López Cacho	500 or 600
Doña María de Guzmán	500 or 600
Fray Francisco de Torres	600
García Osorio	700
From Cuba to Florida	
Mentioned by Avellaneda	
Royal Officials	513
Luis Hernández de Biedma	620
Rodrigo Rangel	570
Garcilaso de la Vega	1,000
Pedro de Arevalo	650
Francisco de Guzmán	650
From New Sources	
Cristóbal de Gallegos	700
Juan López Cacho	700
Fray Francisco de Torres	600
Gonzalo Martín	300

[200] A discussion of these numbers can be found in Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes de la Florida*, 6-9. The numbers given by the "Royal Officials" comes from a letter that was sent to the King of Spain, Charles V, by Juan Gaitán, Juan de Añasco, and Luis de Biedma in Havana dated to May 18, 1539. They state that 330 men on foot were departing, as well as many cavalrymen, bringing the total number to 513. Thus, we may assume that Gaitán, Añasco, and Biedma meant that 183 cavalrymen departed from Havana. For a transcription of this letter, see Juan Gaitán, Juan de Añasco, and Luis Hernández de Biedma, "Letter to the King of Spain from Officers at Havana in the Army of De Soto," in Clayton, Knight, and Moore's *The De Soto Chronicles*, v.1, 372-373.

Yet located in other sources – and particularly the Ponce versus Bobadilla litigation case – are the numbers of departees from either Spain or Cuba reported by other individuals, including onlookers and participants in the expedition. Comparing these numbers with the highlights where some sources agree and where others (particularly one) do not. For those who departed from Spain in 1538, four witnesses in the court case testified that anywhere between 500 and 700 individuals made the journey. For those who left Cuba for Florida in May of 1539, many of the same witnesses stated that between 600 and 700 people departed from Havana, with one expedition member – Gonzalo Martín – giving the number of 300. If one excludes the outlier in each group (that being Garcilaso's account), the average estimates for the number of Spain departees was likely somewhere between 600 and 700 people; for those that departed Cuba for Florida, it seems there may have been around the same number.

Garcilaso's account stands as the major outlier, in which he gives the significantly larger figures of 950 departees from Spain and 1,000 from Cuba. Yet a closer look at the language used by El Inca to describe these individuals, as well as the language used by others, may give some insight into the different numbers given. Of course, it would seem more reliable to trust the numbers given in the primary sources as opposed to the chroniclers. Yet why is there such a disagreement between the numbers given by the Royal officials and other individuals found throughout the witnesses in petitions and court cases who were also present to the events? One answer might lie in the very cognitive function of human memory and how we utilize memories as historical sources. As argued by George Langford:

> Indeed, many oral historians and folklorists would argue that the detailed information, particularly statistical information, is precisely the sort of stuff that is

> poorly remembered, if at all, and is therefore the least trustworthy in a work of oral history and legend.[201]

If statistical information is typically the least correctly remembered, that makes most of these estimates problematic since, besides the reports of the officials in Havana, most of the men were remembering these figures years – or even decades – later. Therefore, it is no surprise that there is what seems like an exaggeration amongst the later witness' estimations. However, there is a second clue that may help understand the dilemma as well. Throughout the different testimonies, the witnesses mentioned above gave their estimated numbers followed almost unanimously by the term *hombres de guerra*, or "men of war." For example, in her 1546 testimony in the Ponce versus Bobadilla trial, doña María Guzmán stated that Soto departed from Spain with "five hundred or six hundred *hombres de guerra*."[202] Therefore, what the witnesses described were not necessarily the total number of individuals who embarked on the expedition, but rather the number of armed men, which do not include the women, slaves, servants, sailors, and other individuals who made either journey. The same scenario can be seen in the letter by the Royal officials, where they stated: "three hundred and thirty foot, as well as those mounted; all in all, five hundred and thirty men," although they mention that the sailors are not included in this figure. Looking at the chronicles, Elvas states simply states that 600 men departed from Spain, while Rangel's description – containing somewhat more detail – reads that 570 men (not counting the sailors) embarked, totaling around 700 in all.[203] Lastly, Biedma's 620 members

[201] Langford, "Legend of the Adelantado," 190.
[202] AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 820r.
[203] For either of their references to numbers of departees, see Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 50; and Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 253.

were simply described as "men" of the expedition, while Garcilaso's numbers were more detailed.[204]

The numbers given by Garcilaso for both those who departed from Spain and from Cuba are both significantly higher, almost double what the other accounts suggest. Yet there may be some degree of truth to El Inca's proposed figures. From Spain, Garcilaso states that around 950 "fighting men" embarked, and that 1,000 men, "all excellent people, well trained in arms, with equipment for themselves and trappings for their horses […]" departed for Florida.[205] Garcilaso also mentions that his numbers do not include the sailors that participated on the expedition. Yet recalling back to Chapter One, there were many individuals who joined the expedition who do not fit the category of *hombres de guerra*, or "fighting men." There were many slaves, servants, and women that embarked on both ventures, and those individuals are typically excluded from the pages of chroniclers and conquistadors alike. From the pages of the *probanzas,* slave licenses, and other sources, however, we see that there were dozens, if not hundreds of other people who accompanied the expedition, but fell outside the categorization of armed men. Individuals such as the slaves and servants mentioned by Juan de Añasco, Baltasar de Gallegos, and others in their *probanzas*, or servants like Costanza Jentín Palavesina and Teresa Súarez no doubt also made up a substantial part of the expedition. Yet are they included in these numbers? Let us look at a hypothetical situation for assistance.

To understand the gap between Garcilaso's estimates – if they are to be trusted – and the other sources, a helpful exercise is to estimate the potential number of slaves and servants brought on the expedition. In his 1544 *probanza*, Juan de Añasco's stated that he brought three

[204] Biedma, *Relation*, 225.
[205] The numbers and translations can be found in Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 74, 95.

slaves and four or five servants to Florida.[206] As seen in other *probanzas* of expedition survivors as well, many cavalrymen and officers brought slaves and servants to Florida, among them Baltasar de Gallegos, Andrés de Vasconcelos, García Osorio, and Alonso Vázquez, and others.[207] Using the estimate of 183 cavalrymen as given by Soto's officials, if one assumes that each cavalryman brought at least one slave and one servant on the expedition, that means that an additional 366 individuals may have participated, bringing the total to 879 people. Given this low estimate, along with the fact that Soto was permitted to bring one hundred slaves on the expedition according to his contract with the Spanish Crown, the actual number of participants could have exceeded 1,000. Therefore, if Garcilaso's estimation of 1,000 "men" included the slaves and servants or not, his figures, wherever he received them from, may be the most accurate of the four chroniclers.

Aside from the numbers of participants, the numbers of ships reportedly used on both the voyage from Spain to Cuba and Cuba to Florida sheds light on the similarities and differences between the sources as well. As seen in Table 3.4, many of the sources give the same or similar numbers of vessels. For the ships that left Spain, witnesses in the Ponce versus Bobadilla case give roughly the same numbers, averaging at five ships. The only chronicler who mentioned the specific number of departing vessels was Garcilaso, whose figures is well over the other accounts at ten total vessels.[208] Yet other documentary evidence hints at the numbers of ships that departed from Spain as well. In early March of 1538, not long before departing from the sandbar at Sanlúcar de Barrameda for Cuba, Soto registered with the *Casa* a handful of the

[206] These figures are also discussed in Chapter One. For the original, see AGI Patronato, 57, N.1, R.4, fol. 13v.
[207] Vasconcelos perished on the expedition from disease. However, his son, Gómez de Silva, drafted a *probanza* in the 1550s detailing the merits of his father in Florida. See AGI Indiferente, 2048, N.26. For a comprehensive list of the known *probanzas* containing Soto expedition survivors, see Avellaneda, *Los Sobrevivientes*, especially the "Notes" section in which he records the seventeen different *probanzas*, including those by the individuals mentioned above.
[208] Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 73.

enslaved African individuals that he was bringing on journey to Cuba. During his registry, he claimed the ship that each slave was to depart on in early April. He referred to each ship by its *maestre*, or captain, mentioning the ships of San Juan de Acheaga, Pedro de Solís, Luis Pérez, and Juan Rodríguez.[209] These four can be located in other registries of the *Casa de la Contratación* as well, such as records for incoming ships to Seville in early 1538.[210] Others include the private contracts in which Soto employed captains for the voyage, along with his *cartas de fletamento*, or cargo and shipping contracts that outlined the costs of the journey.[211] Yet there was another ship commissioned for Soto's venture that appears in both the *Casa's* ship registries and the *fletamento* contracts: a *maestre* named Miguel de Jauregui, captain of the ship named *La Magdalena*, was also commissioned in 1538 by one of Soto's associates, Juan Ruiz Lobillo, to carry some of the men and cargo from Sanlúcar to Santiago de Cuba.[212] Therefore, at least five ships (or their captains) have been located in other archival sources, which directly corroborates the reported number of vessels in other documentary sources and suggests that Garcilaso's numbers are inaccurate. Yet on one final note, Garcilaso is also the only chronicler to not only give a number for the ships departing from Spain, but also to mention their names. Of the seven ships he mentions by name, three are also found in other sources, those being the *nao San Crisóbal*, *La Magdalena*, and *San Juan*.[213] These names, and particularly the fact that Garcilaso mentions the *San Cristóbal* as Soto's flag ship are supported by other sources, such as the passenger registries that mention the ships ton which the Florida venturers departed. That

[209] AGI Contratación, 5760, fol. 2r-2v.
[210] The ships of Luis Pérez, Juan Rodríguez, Pedro de Solís, and San Juan de Acheaga can be found in AGI Contratación, 2898, fol. 101r.
[211] As cited in Chapter One, the personal captain's contracts and the *cartas de fletamento* can be found in Seville's *Archivo Histórico Provincial*. See Chapter One, pp. 61.
[212] Jauregui only signed a *fletamento* contract since he was only hired by Soto to ferry men and goods to Cuba. He was not commissioned, for example, to stay in Cuba and make the journey to Florida, as some of the other captains were. See AHPS Protocolos, 3324, sin fol. v-r (2 fols).
[213] Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 73.

three ships mentioned above are mentioned in the documentary sources and only in Garcilaso's account go to show that, as argued before, even though his numbers seem to be incorrect, Garcilaso knew more about the logistics and details of the expedition than he is credited.

Table 3.4: Number of Departing Ships

Source	No. of Ships
Numbers of Ships that Departed From Spain to Cuba	
Garcilaso de la Vega	10 total (7 large ships, 3 small ships)
García Osorio	5 or 6 total
Juan López Cacho	5 total
María de Guzmán	4 total
Fray Francisco de Torres	4 total
Don Fernando de Soto	5 total (with the fifth found in other sources)
From Cuba to Florida	
Garcilaso de la Vega	10 total (8 ships, 1 caravel, 1 brigantine)
The Gentleman of Elvas	9 total (5 ships, 2 caravels, and 2 brigantines)
Rodrigo Rangel	9 total (5 ships, 2 caravels, and 2 brigantines)
Royal Officials	9 total (5 ships, 2 caravels, and 2 brigantines)
Juan López Cacho	9 total
Doña María de Guzmán	7 or 8 total
Francisco Cepero	9 total
Fray Francisco de Torres	8 total (2 large ships, 1 smaller ship, 1 small ship, 2 caravels, and 2 brigantines)

The same approach can be taken when looking at the number of vessels that reportedly departed from Havana in May of 1539. Between the letter from the expedition's royal officials, a handful of the witnesses who testified in the Ponce versus Bobadilla case, and the Rangel and Elvas narratives, it appears that there were around eight or nine ships that sailed from Havana for Florida's west coast; Garcilaso gives the slightly higher estimate of ten total ships. What makes

the numbers of departing ships from Havana slightly more comparable than those that left Spain is that many of the accounts provide a breakdown of the different kinds of ships that Soto had acquired before his departure. As seen above, Elvas, Rangel, and the expedition's royal officials all give the total number of nine ships, but also state that these nine consisted of five general ships (presumably large and small), two caravels, and two brigantines. Many later witnesses simply gave the total number of ships, although one witness in particular, Fray Francisco Torres, stated in his 1546 testimony that Soto departed with eight ships: "two large ships, one smaller ship, one small ship, two caravels, and 2 brigantines."[214] Garcilaso gives the total of ten ships, with the breakdown of eight ships, one caravel, and one brigantine. Although these figures are slightly different, particularly the similarities between the Elvas, Rangel, and royal official estimates seem the most compelling. Since each of the accounts that go into more depth about the type of ships also agree that there were two caravels and two brigantines that went to Florida, it seems that these numbers may be more reliable than Garcilaso's figures. Perhaps in this case, El Inca's estimates were distorted by the long lapse of time between the events and his writing and the potentially faulty memory of Gonzalo Silvestre.[215]

Observing reports of violence, warfare, and death recorded in the different accounts is another approach to assessing the contents of the chronicles against the archival sources. Violence is a common theme throughout the chronicles. Especially in the Elvas, Rangel, and Garcilaso accounts, there are frequent mentions of smaller scale scenarios of violence between

[214] AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 798v.
[215] For Garcilaso's estimates for the ships from Cuba to Florida, see Vega, *La Florida del Inca*, 95. For the estimations of Elvas and Rangel, see Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas,* 57; and Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 252. For the royal officials' report, see Gaitán, Añasco, and Biedma, "Letter to the King of Spain from Officers at Havana in the Army of De Soto," 373. For the references made in the Ponce versus Bobadilla trial to the ships departing from Havana, see AGI Justicia, 750A, fol. 791r, 798v, 820r, 1011r.

Natives and the explorers, such as in the settlement of Napeteca in Florida. Particularly looking at the instance at Napetaca, we see a difference in which violent episodes in the chroniclers chose to describe in depth. Elvas recounts how the *indios* of Paracoxi, whom Soto had placed in chains and forced into servitude on the way to Apalache, revolted against the Spaniards near the town of Napateca. Elvas tells how the Natives rose up against the Spaniards and, before they could be quelled, one of the captives who was an interpreter for the Paracoxi struck Soto in the nose and caused it to bleed.[216] Rangel mentions the events at Napateca as well, but his version slightly differs from that in the Elvas narrative. He states that a captured *cacique* struck Soto in the face so hard that he "bathed his tenth in blood and made him spit out much of it."[217] Biedma does not record anything about the event. Garcilaso goes into even further detail and recounts how the *cacique*, whose name he incorrectly identified as Vitachuco, struck Soto in the face and afterwards let out a roar that could be heard for a quarter league. However, Soto's men then proceeded to kill the chief. Garcilaso even cites the Coles and Carmona accounts and retells how Soto lost two teeth during the event.[218] The skirmish at Napetaca represents just one of many minor instances of dispute between the expedition and Natives recorded in the chronicles. Yet the difference between them is also representative of the differences between the accounts and – I believe – their authorship. For example, if there were cases of incestuous authorship, and Elvas adapted and slightly altered the uprising at Napateca from on Rangel's account, why did Garcilaso make the antagonist in the story a chief, as opposed to an interpreter like Elvas, and why did he give him the incorrect name of Vitachuco, which was a name given to a different Native leader in the other sources? What is more likely is that the slight variations in the story

[216] Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 68-69.
[217] Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 266.
[218] Vega, *La Florida*, 179-180. Garcilaso incorrectly transposed the name Vitachuco from another *cacique* to the one who assaulted Soto.

are examples of the different authors recalling the incident in slightly different ways, apart from Garcilaso's rendition, which is differs greatly from the others.

Yet other instances of violence found in the chronicles – particularly the two larger battles of the expedition – can be more properly assessed with the accompaniment of other outside sources to gauge their depiction of events. The two major disputes are the battle of Mabila, which took place in present-day central Alabama in the fall of 1540, and the battle of Chicasa, which took place in December of that same year. Each of these encounters are well documented in the chronicles; even Biedma offers insight into the events. In the documentary sources, there is only one detailed narrative of the events, a testimony from Alonso de Argote. Argote acted as a witness in the *probanza* of Hernán Suárez de Mazuelas in Mexico in Oaxaca, Mexico in 1572. He is one of many survivors who referenced Mabila in their testimony. For example, another member named Alonso Vázquez, during his *probanza* that drafted in Spain in 1560, recalled the battle at Mabila and stated he sustained a broken ankle during the battle and was unable to walk properly for a year afterwards.[219] Yet, it is common to only find minor details about events like Vázquez's experience throughout the different petitions. Argote's testimony, however, is the longest and most detailed rendering of the events at Mabila found in the *probanzas.*

First, we will look at the battle of Mabila. In his testimony, Alonso de Argote stated the following:

> In the province of Tascaluça in the *pueblo* of Mabila, we came in peace, and having the *cacique* with us and giving him the utmost treatment, bringing him on horseback and giving him a dark red cape, he committed treason against us and issued the call to war. All the people that [Tascaluça] had with him rose up and attacked us by surprise, so much so that we lost our allied *indios* that we had brought with us. We escaped the *pueblo* where great damage befell us, since we

[219] Alonso Vázquez testifies in two separate *probanzas*. For the reference to his broken ankle, see AGI Patronato, 51, N. 3, R. 2, fol. 6r.

> lost all our clothes and weapons and horses. During the retreat, they killed fourteen [Spaniards]; among those were two notable persons: don Carlos Enrique and Francisco de Soto, relatives of the Governor. They put us in such a bad place that the encampment was about to be lost, and there were certain Christians who had remained in a house in the pueblo at the time of the battle. In order to save them, [the Spaniards] had to fight in the pueblo, which was enclosed [meaning it was fortified]. There was great risk of danger and loss of people, who suffered many arrow wounds and blows from *macanas*. Of the 550 or so men who were present, almost none escaped without injury."[220]

The most poignant details in Argote's testimony include that Soto gave the chief Tuscaloosa a horse and a dark red cape; that the allied Natives abandoned the fight; that the explorers' lost many of their clothes, weapons, and horses during the battle; that fourteen Spaniards were killed, including two of Soto's relatives; and that several "Christians" were trapped in a house within the settlement during the fighting. Thus, the question is, how do these events compare to those in the chronicles' retelling of Mabila? Biedma's version of the events is similar, although not identical. For example, he states that Tascalusa came in peace with the expedition and that they were treated amicably upon their entering of the town of Mabila. He also tells of the sudden ambush of Tascalusa's warriors within Mabila, noting how that Spaniards were caught off guard and that they were forced to flee the settlement. He also mentions that the Spaniards who had entered the town were forced to retreat without their belongings. After the settlement caught fire and burned during the battle, many of the explorers lost their belongings. Biedma also states that twenty-four of Soto's men were killed and that 250 men escaped with wounds and that, in total, the men sustained 760 arrow wounds.[221] Although the general timeline is similar in both accounts, many of the details mentioned by Argote are not found in Biedma's text, such as the horse and cape that Soto gifted to Tascalusa, the death of Soto's relatives, the Native allies of the

[220] AGI Patronato, 77, N.1, fol. 51v-52r.
[221] Biedma, *Relation*, 232-235.

Spaniards escaping, and the explorers trapped within the settlement during the battle. Are these details recounted elsewhere?

Rangel includes many of the same elements of the battle that are found in Biedma's *Relation*, but he goes further in depth about events and includes additional details. He mentions the "scarlet" cape and horse that Soto gifted to Tascalusa, who required something in return from the explorers since he had agreed to supply them with several hundred *tememes*, or porters, for the expedition. Rangel also mentions that Mabila was a palisaded town and that the Spaniards entered it following Soto, who had been invited into the town by chief Tascalusa. Like Biedma, he also mentions that the Spaniards were forced to leave many of their belongings in the town during their retreat. Yet he notes specifically how the expedition, along with many other belongings, lost a great deal of its clothes in the fire that engulfed the settlement. However, unlike Biedma, he recounts the death of don Carlos and Francisco de Soto, whom he states were family members of the *adelantado*. He also adds that twenty-two explorers were killed during the battle and that one hundred and forty-eight were wounded with a total of six hundred and eighty-eight arrow wounds. Furthermore, he tells how a handful of pages, friars, clerics, a cook, and a group of enslaved Christian women belonging to Soto were all trapped in a hut inside Mabila when the fighting ensued, and that Soto and his men had to save them during the battle.[222] Therefore, we see a difference between Rangel and Biedma's relation of events at Mabila as compared to the Argote account, with Rangel's containing more of the details given by Argote. Yet one note omitted by Rangel and Biedma is the reference to friendly Natives: who were they?

[222] Rangel, *Account of the Northern Conquest*, 290-294.

Elvas's narrative reflects many of the events and descriptions found in the Rangel account, with a few minor differences. For example, Elvas also recounts how the situation was peaceful until fighting broke out in Mabila. He too tells of the Spaniards' retreat from the palisade and that they left behind many of their belongings, many of which were burned. Like Rangel, Elvas mentions that, along with the expedition's stockpile of pearls they had accumulated, the "Christians" lost possession of much of their clothing. Also too, Elvas mentions a friar, a priest, a few of Soto's servants, and an enslaved woman who was trapped in a hut in the village, and who needed to be rescued. Elvas gives the number of eighteen casualties on part of the explorers, including don Carlos and Francisco de Soto, although he does not mention the latter's name and only refers to him as Soto's nephew. Besides those killed, one hundred and fifty were wounded, receiving seven hundred arrow wounds.[223] There are a number of significant differences in Elvas's rendition of events, which deflates the argument that the *Relaçam* is simply an elaborated version of Rangel's account. Elvas fails to mention the horse given to Tascalusa by Soto, and he does mention a "scarlet cloak," but he refers to it in a different context than Argote and Rangel. The "cloak," as he calls it, was snatched by the *cacique* of Mabila, who was subject to Tascalusa's rule. After the Spaniards' abandonment of their belongings during their retreat and before the battle had ended, the *cacique*, whom Elvas refers to without a name, picked up the cloak from the explorers' belongings before making his escape. Elvas claims that the story was learned later from a Native woman the Spaniards captured after the battle. Although there is a strong similarity between the stories, and it seems suspicious that the cape would make an appearance in an alternative manner, the differences between the two versions are noteworthy. Given that the red cape also appears in the Argote account attests to the

[223] Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 95-104.

commonality of shared stories – or "legends" as Langford would say – that similarly find their way into the survivors' recounting of events, even if they contain slight variations among them. On another note, the Elvas account also omits the appearance of Soto's Native allies.

The last account to consider is that of Garcilaso, whose rendition of the battle is, as expected, the lengthiest and most dramatic. While the other accounts tell of the battle and the events leading up to it in a few pages, Garcilaso spends six full chapters retelling the same events. In many instances, El Inca reveals where he obtained information from the written accounts of Coles and Carmona; in other instances, we must suspect that he was getting the rest of the narrative from Silvestre, or possibly others. Still, Garcilaso mentions the peace that Soto maintained with Tascalusa until the fighting broke out in Mabila. He also speaks of Soto giving the horse to the chief on their journey from his town to Mabila, which was apparently a draft horse since Tascalusa was said to be of abnormally large stature; a description mentioned in all the chronicles. Citing the Coles and Carmona accounts, Garcilaso also states that Soto dressed Tascalusa in "scarlet" and gave him a cape. Similar to the other chronicles, although not mentioned by Argote, Garcilaso recounts the dancing women and the festivities that followed Soto's arrival at Mabila. Also like the other chronicles, Garcilaso mentions that Baltasar de Gallegos was also responsible for initiating the conflict at Mabila by killing its *cacique*, a vassal of Tascalusa. Curiously, Argote fails to mention this detail in his brief account. Garcilaso then recounts the Spaniards' retreat, the burning and sacking of their provisions they left in the settlement (although he does not mention clothes specifically), the death of don Carlos and Francisco de Soto (even though he goes into much more detail and refers to the latter as "Diego" instead of "Francisco"), and the explorers who were stranded in the town during the fighting. The number of Spanish casualties in *La Florida* includes forty-seven who were killed during the

battle, another thirteen who died in the four days afterward from their wounds, and twenty-two who died afterwards from the poor treatment allotted to them by the surgeon, totaling eighty-two. He also states that there was a total of more than 1,770 arrow wounds between those injured. Furthermore, he corroborates his numbers by stating that the Coles and Carmona accounts give the same figures.[224]

When looking at these accounts side by side, there are some points that should be noted that have to do with the augment of intertextual borrowing between the chronicles. Overall, the four accounts and Argote's testimony recount roughly the same events, although there is no doubt that the battle of Mabila would have been one of the best recalled events of the expedition due to the severity of the battle. Other scenes and skirmishes, such as the one at Napateca discussed above, would likely be less clearly remembered than other, more poignant moments for the explorers. Therefore, the similar ways in which most of the accounts recall similar details is significant, such as Soto giving the horse and red cape to Tascalusa, the death of Soto's relatives, and even the number of deaths and arrow wounds. That because Garcilaso, Elvas, and Rangel give similar descriptions of the deceased and wounded, even though Garcilaso's numbers are significantly higher, Patricia Galloway and David Henige would probably argue that there is likely a direct relationship between how these three chroniclers recounted their numbers: 'why would all three recount (relatively speaking) a similar number of arrow wounds, or any count of arrow wounds at all?' Yet we see that Alonso de Argote also made specific reference not just to deaths, but also to arrow wounds. Therefore, we begin to see that similar details recorded across the different accounts do not necessarily demonstrate a borrowing of material per say, but rather how a collectively shared group of legends can be identified in the stories of the survivors, just as

[224] Vega, *La Florida*, 327-354.

Langford argued. In spite of their many differences in minor detail, such as the appearance of Tascalusa's horse and red cape, which demonstrates the subtle difference between the accounts, the similarities between the chronicles do not demonstrate authorial continuity, but rather the individuality of each source.[225]

Other events that act as a strategic point of comparison between the different narratives are the actions of Juan de Añasco during the expedition. Añasco, who held the position of royal comptroller, appears frequently in the four chronicles due to his multiple reconnaissance missions on the expedition. Yet his petition proves to be an invaluable source of information given that it is one of, if not the most detailed proof of merit petition of any of the Florida survivors. Drafted in 1544 in Puebla de Los Ángeles, New Spain, Añasco petition recounts his merits and exploits in Spain, Cuba, and Florida between 1538 and 1543. As with any petitioner of a *probanza*, Añasco was the central protagonist in his story, and he recounts in great detail – almost in narrative style format – the important assignments he was tasked with from his time in Seville to the moment the expedition arrived at the Pánuco River. Since the scenes in his narrative are too many to recount, Table 3.5 highlights the major events and details found in his version of the story, along with a tallying of which chronicler also mentions the event.[226]

[225] This is the same argument that was emphasized by Hudson in *Knights of Spain*, 451-452.
[226] There were eight Florida expedition survivors that testified in Añasco's petition. However, their testimonies mostly corroborate the information given by Añasco and do not add additional narrative information. The witnesses were Miguel Tiedra, Juan García de León, Antonio Martínez, Arias Tinoco, Francisco de Reynoso, García de Godoy, Fabián Rodríguez, and Álvaro Fernández.

Table 3.5: Narrative Elements in the Petition of Juan de Añasco as Found in the Chronicles

Events (As retold by Añasco)	Biedma	Rangel	Elvas	Garcilaso
1. The expedition departs from Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Spain. Añasco labors hard in Seville and Sanlúcar preparing for the expedition. He is named the royal comptroller of Florida.			\	\
2. Añasco aids in the stopover of the expedition in Gómera in the Canary Islands			\	\
3. Soto dispatches Añasco from Santiago to Havana to oversee the city before the expedition's arrival. He travels by canoe from Bayamo, to La Trinidad, to Havana.				\[227]
4. Añasco oversees the reconstruction of Havana, which had been destroyed by French corsairs.				\
5. Isabel de Bobadilla and Soto's fleet traveled to Havana from Santiago.			X	X
6. Añasco made sure all of Soto's men had accommodations with residents in Havana.				
7. Soto comes over land from Santiago to Havana.			X	X
8. Soto sends Añasco to survey the coast of Florida, locate a suitable port, and find local translators.			X	X[228]
9. Añasco helped safely navigate the expedition to Florida.				
10. Soto sends a captain from Apalache to locate the sea in order to move the port closer to that settlement. The captain does not find the sea.				[229]
11. Soto sends Añasco to locate the sea. He finds it and the bay that Narváez made his boats. He takes an astrolabe reading to mark its location	X	X	\	X
12. Soto sends Añasco back to Espiritu Santo with thirty horsemen to move the port to the new location. They travel 130 leagues and cross three or four rivers. All thirty riders arrive safely.	X	X	X	X

[227] Garcilaso mentions Soto sending an expedition member to the Havana to aid in its repair after being destroyed by French corsairs. However, Garcilaso states the individual was named Mateo Aceituno, a native of Talavera de la Reina, instead of Añasco. See Vega, *La Florida*, 87.

[228] In *La Florida*, Soto makes Añasco venture to the Florida coast from Havana twice, the first time to survey the coast and obtain Native translators and the second time to find a suitable port, during which time he gathered two more translators. Garcilaso's account is the only one that mentions Añasco making two trips. See *ibid*, 89-90.

[229] Garcilaso mentions multiple captains searching the areas surrounding Apalache, although not necessarily looking for the sea. See *ibid*, 197-199.

Table 3.5 (Continued)

Events (As retold by Añasco)	Biedma	Rangel	Elvas	Garci-laso
13. Añasco oversees the loading of the brigantines and the *batel* and departs from Espiritu Santo. He navigates the vessels to the new port. Seventy men departed from Espiritu Santo.	X	X	X	X
14. Twenty-five days after departing, Añasco arrives with the ships at the new port.	X	X	X	X
15. Añasco "discovers" the town of Aymay and saves the expedition from starvation.		X	X	X[230]
16. After five years and Soto having died, the expedition decides to abandon the mission. They constructed seven brigantines in the town of Aminoya, on which they embarked down the Rio Grande.	X	X	X	X
17. In Aminoya, Añasco creates a map (*guja de marear*) using an astrolabe, a cross-staff, a nautical chart, and a ship's clock. He then uses these instruments to navigate the brigantines to the Pánuco River.				X
18. Before arriving to Pánuco, Añasco takes a celestial reading and determines the boats are near the river. He orders the boats to draw in their sails so as not to pass the river at night.			X[231]	\
19. The next day, five of the boats arrive at the Pánuco River. Two brigantines that did not trim in their sails passed the river during the night. Those boats had to make their way back windward to enter the river.			X	X
20. One of Añasco's slaves survives the journey.				

\ - indicates the event was mentioned but not Añasco (only applicable to events Añasco specifically mentions himself as being part of).

Since Añasco's *probanza* recounts events on the expedition in such detail, it is the ideal account with which to compare to how the chroniclers discuss the same events. The timeline in

[230] Garcilaso mentions Añasco finding the settlement, but he does not mention its name. *Ibid*, 280-284.

[231] Elvas mentions Añasco as having knowledge of the coast and advising Moscoso and the other brigantine captains which direction to go and whether to stay offshore or not, but he does not mention Añasco's use of any navigational tools or maps. Also, Elvas makes the decision of trimming in the sails in order to avoid passing Pánuco in the night sound more like a group decision than Añasco's idea, who does not make a special appearance in the decision making.

Table 3.5 runs in chronological order, although there are large time gaps between many of the events mentioned. Since Añasco recounted some of the more major events of the expedition, most are also mentioned to some degree by each of the chroniclers. Yet, as shown above, there are some distinct differences between which events are mentioned by Añasco and the different chroniclers. There are also two additional points. First, some of the chroniclers mentioned the same events as the royal comptroller in his petition but do not mention his participation specifically. Second, there are instances in which the chroniclers recount an event but with slightly differing details.

When looking at which chronicles include the details mentioned by Añasco, certain patterns arise between the different narratives. There are five events details listed in the table that are found in all four of the chronicles. They include major events on the expedition, such as Soto sending Añasco to find the sea from the settlement of Apalache, Soto dispatching Añasco with thirty horsemen back to the port of Espiritu Santo and relocate the port to the bay off Apalache, and other events. There is one event mentioned only by Rangel, Elvas, and Garcilaso: Añasco's discovery of the settlement of Aymay, which saved the expedition from starvation. Another curious detail is that Garcilaso is also the only chronicler who discussed events mentioned by Añasco that are not present in any of the other three chroniclers. These events include that French corsairs had attacked Havana prior to the expedition's arrival and that Añasco used a series of navigational tools to guide the seven brigantines from Aminoya to the Pánuco. El Inca's inclusion of these events reinforces the argument made above that he had access to more information about the expedition than he has been given credit for by scholars. Lastly, the Elvas and Garcilaso narratives together mention seven of the events highlighted by Añasco that are not found in the other two chronicles. However, there are some noteworthy aspects to these seven.

First, most of them are large general event on the expedition, such as when the venture left Spain, its stopover in Gómera, Bobadilla's departure on the fleet from Santiago to Havana, and Soto's march overland from Santiago to Havana. Therefore, it makes sense that Elvas and Garcilaso would mention these instances since they were some of the more major events on the expedition; the only reason many of these broader events were omitted from the Biedma and Rangel's accounts is because their narratives begin only once the expedition reached Florida.

The other noteworthy aspect is found in the minor differences in details between the two accounts, which further highlight their distinct authorship. The biggest difference in details between the two is found in El Inca's story of Añasco's voyage to Florida from Havana to find a port and Native translators, which differs greatly from Añasco and Elvas's rendition of the event. Añasco's *probanza* retells the following about his journey to Florid from Havana:

> Juan de Añasco then departed in a brigantine that he had made in the village of Havana, along with a caravel. He went to Florida to discover a port, which he found, and he brought back four *indios* to act as translators. With the four, he returned to Havana, where the *adelantado* don Hernando de Soto was awaiting him. On the said journey, [Añasco] survived many storms and dangers due to fact that it was wintertime. [232]

Elvas does not go into great detail about the voyage, only stating that Añasco sailed from Havana to Florida to locate a suitable port, which he accomplished, and returned with two Natives from Florida to act as translators for the expedition.[233] There is only the slight difference in the number of Natives that Añasco brought back to Havana that separates the two stories. Garcilaso's rendition of the same events, however, is much more elaborate and has some striking similarities to Añasco's portrayal of events that are missing from the Elvas account. El Inca states that that Añasco, being a great navigator and astrologer, was assigned the task of venturing

[232] AGI Patronato, 57, N.1, R.4, fol. 10v.
[233] Elvas, *An Account by the Gentleman of Elvas*, 56.

to Florida to find a future port for the expedition. Añasco left from Havana with two brigantines and, after traversing the coast, returned with two Natives whom he had seized. Hearing the good report of the coast, Soto then sent Añasco back again to take a more careful reading of the coast, during which time he captured two more Natives to bring bac to Havana. Garcilaso also includes that the Coles and Carmona accounts mention how Añasco's second journey was perilous because he and the crew had been washed ashore on a desert island during a storm from which they barely escaped.[234]

When viewing the three accounts side-by-side, it seems that Garcilaso's version of events acts as a bridge between the two other accounts, filling in some of the information excluded by the other authors. In one sense, Elvas's version lacks any detail and mentions that Añasco returned with only two Natives. Añasco's version states that he returned with four Natives and endured many storms and hardships during the journey. Although Añasco's account is concealed in the form of a *probanza*, in which the petitioner often exaggerates their hardships, Garcilaso's account may give some validity to Añasco's story. Since Garcilaso states that Añasco returned to Cuba the first time with two Native captives, Elvas's story seems plausible. However, with Garcilaso's retelling of Añasco's second voyage, in which he mentions the capture of two more Natives and the storm the crew survived, *La Florida* in turn corroborates two of the other elements found in Añasco's *probanza*.

Therefore, the example of Añasco's journey demonstrates the many subtle differences in the details and events found throughout the accounts, which illustrate two central benefits in comparing the different sources. First, like the example above at the battle of Mabila, juxtaposing the chronicles with the documentary sources is greatly beneficial for gauging the

[234] Vega, *La Florida*, 89-90.

presence of textual borrowing from one chronicle to another. The Gentleman of Elvas's version of events is different from that of Añasco, whose version was different from that of Garcilaso. Thus, there is strong evidence of different authorial perspectives. It seems the Gentleman of Elvas's author may have only heard of two of the Natives that Añasco returned with on the first voyage, while Garcilaso's informants may have witnessed the arrival of all four Natives. Whatever the case, it seems highly unlikely that Garcilaso borrowed information about the event from the Elvas narrative, and Elvas did not borrow the account from Rangel since the event did not appear in his relation. Second, the episode also exemplifies how comparing the different sources inversely allows one to better understand the documentary sources. For example, Garcilaso may have been incorrect when he stated that Añasco journeyed to Florida twice, since Añasco only alludes to a single voyage. However, Garcilaso's version of events shows that Añasco statement that he captured four Natives and that he suffered greatly during the storm are likely true as well. Therefore, what should be taken away from the episode above is that all of the sources, whether they be the documents or the chronicles, should always be assessed side-by-side when examining the expedition. Such a comparison aids in gaining a clearer picture of the details and events on the expedition and is the most effective approach to gauging the reliability of the events portrayed in each source.

This chapter presents only a brief overview of how comparing the documentary sources with the chronicles provides insight into the veracity of the famous four accounts. Unfortunately, it would be impossible to include all of the voices found in the documentary sources, which are too extensive in number to include in this chapter. Yet, the same comparative approach between their contents and the chronicles could be used to discuss many more events on the expedition.

Although they beckon further examination now, these studies will have to be the work of historians in the future, who will hopefully continue advance scholarship on Soto's expedition.

From the individuals and voices included above, however, there are many central conclusions that can already be drawn. Many scholars have argued for the presence of incestuous authorship between the different chroniclers and that the chronicles lack reliability as historical sources, especially Garcilaso's account. Yet from the examination carried out in this chapter, the opposite seems to be the case for both points. By looking characteristics in the different sources, such as the appearance of different individuals, the numbers of ships and participants given by the different authors, and the narrative events provided in the different accounts, the uniqueness of each of the four chronicles becomes apparent. In some instances, the information put forth in the different sources is in general agreeance; in other instances, information is missing, or the sources blatantly conflict one another. However, whether the sources agree on any given topic or not, what the data shows is that each one of the chronicles merits significant value as historical sources. Whether utilizing them as for historic or ethnohistoric purposes (excluding the dialogue between Spaniards and Native in Florida), the chronicles merit significant attention from scholars concerned with the expedition and should certainly never be disregarded as pseudohistories, especially Garcilaso's account, which has received the most criticism.

Of the four famous accounts, *La Florida del Inca* contains some of the richest biographic and narrative information about the expedition. Even in the unlikely chance that Patricia Galloway and David Henige's assumptions about incestuous authorship are true, Garcilaso mentions a significant amount of information that is only found in the documentary sources. Therefore, *La Florida* as valuable source on the expedition cannot be overstated. In terms of the Rangel and Elvas accounts, a comparison of their contents with each other and with the

documentary sources also shows a great deal of difference between the two, eroding arguments of favor of textual borrowing between the two. From the analysis above, what becomes apparent is that, as opposed to the chroniclers obtaining content from each other, the more likely case is that the different accounts were based on commonly shared stories and legends about the expedition. Consequentially, there are many similarities between the different accounts, but each contains its own unique set of variations in its stories about the expedition. Above all, the chapter shows that it is essential not only to utilize (although carefully) the four chronicles, but also that the large corpus of other documentary sources also need to be assessed when examining the expedition. Not only do the documents provide an outlet for other voices to be heard, but weighing their stories against those in the chronicles is the most effective way to understand more about Soto's Florida *entrada* and the historical sources used to interpret its events.

CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSION

> [Theories] of history actually privilege one side as if the other did not matter. This one-sidedness is possible because theories of history rarely examine in detail the concrete production of specific narratives. Narratives are occasionally evoked as illustrations or, at best, deciphered as texts, but the process of their production rarely constitutes the object of study.[235]

Telling a story – or a history – in the format of a narrative is often viewed as the most appealing way to discuss the past, especially when captivating embellishment is included to entertain the reader. However, as has been repeated throughout this study, the object here has not been to retell the story of Soto's expedition in the form of a narrative, which has been the undertaking of many scholars and novelists in the past. In discussing the history of the expedition in the form of a narrative, authors have either portrayed Soto and his followers in a romanticized or condemning fashion. What the expedition has lacked in terms of scholarship has been a detailed analysis of its constituent members and a thorough examination of its many sources. Until now, most full-length studies concerned with Soto's Florida *entrada* have depicted its participants using common architypes of the "conquistadores," and furthermore have only utilized a handful of sources to do so, those being the chronicles. Essentially, the goal here has been to examine the expedition using alternative methods of historical inquiry. These methods include utilizing outside sources related to the expedition, followed by an examination of how to

[235] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 22.

utilize their contents in order to better understand both the expedition itself and the famous chronicles, whose contents have dominated the field of Soto studies for almost two centuries. In a sense, the study is more concerned with how to understand and utilize historical sources related to the expedition rather than retelling a narrative of the venture.

By carrying out a social examination of the expedition, we gain a clearer picture of the many diverse members of the expedition, an undertaking neglected by scholars for decades. However, apart from simply never being done before – which was one of the central criticisms of Patricia Galloway during the 1993 symposium – examining the anatomy of the Soto expedition does far more than simply breakdown the social characteristics of the expedition. Once they have been organized, these characteristics, such as the regional origin, age, sex, race, education, social rank, and prior experience in the Americas can be used to try to better understand the expedition without viewing its participants through common stereotypes associated with the "conquistadors." Even further, viewing the social characteristics of the Soto expedition provides a sample of participants in Spain's colonial enterprise through which to dismantle these stereotypes.

In terms of the Soto expedition, most scholars have only focused on a few of its leaders, such as Soto, who has either been characterized as a diabolical or romanticized figure. Furthermore, his followers have either been depicted as arrogant peasants and ruffians or gallant knights of conquest. Yet when looking at the social characteristics of the expeditions members as found in the different sources, it becomes apparent that neither stereotype is accurate. The expedition was a complex social unit, and one whose diversity has been greatly overlooked by the majority of scholars. The many hundreds of individuals in its ranks included men, women, and children of a variety of social classes, professions, education levels, ages, and racial

backgrounds. However, even though the expedition members came from diverse social and economic backgrounds, they all shared the collective goal of attaining wealth and prosperity on Soto's Florida conquest venture, a goal that never transpired.

Above all, when looking at Soto's followers, it becomes apparent that the profile of the conquistador is too diverse to define based on one single profile. The available data show that there were many women and young adults on the expedition, with the average age of participants in their mid-twenties. However, many of the officers and individuals of higher social status were more advanced in age. Many individuals found in the documentary sources had some degree of literacy, disproving the argument that Soto's followers were uneducated. Women participants have never received proper attention in the scholarship on the expedition. Yet, from an examination of the sources, one sees that many departed with the expedition in 1538. Many of these women included those of higher social status, such as doña María de Guzmán, the wife of Baltasar de Gallegos, while others included her servant, Costanza Jentin Palavesina, whom she recruited to attend to her needs in Cuba. Other women surely made the journey to Florida with the expedition in 1539. There is a possibility that many joined the expedition in Cuba before heading north to Florida. This may have been the case for the Francisca de Inostroza, the only woman mentioned in the chronicles who made the trip to Florida. Other women who journeyed to Florida from Cuba were Ana Méndez, the young servant of Soto's nephew, Don Carlos Enríquez; other likely include Baltasar de Gallego's servant Teresa Suárez, and the multiple enslaved African women declared by Soto and other officers of the expedition, such as Juan de Añasco. Like the female participants, the many African descended participants have been excluded from much of the literature on the expedition. These individuals included both men and women, many of them enslaved, joining the expedition with their masters. Given trends on other

expeditions of the era, many of these enslaved individuals also likely filled combat roles during their time in Florida. From the available sources on the expedition, we know that at least five certainly did have combat roles in Florida, including the five free individuals found in the licenses. Some of these men may have been cavalrymen on the expedition, such as the instance in the Biedma account where he mentions a black horseman during the battle of Mabila. Lastly, an examination of the mariners who participated in the expedition also further adds to the social complexity of the expedition, displaying another group of individuals on the expedition overlooked by scholars.

Therefore, examining the Soto expedition in terms of its social characteristics allows one to gauge the accuracy of the typical stereotypes revolving around the conquistadores, which have been used so frequently by scholars when speaking of Soto's *entrada*. However, an assessment of the primary sources displays that the opposite was the case. The social complexities of the expedition immediately become apparent when examining the different sources, leading to a better understanding of the group of individuals that landed on the shores of Florida in 1539.

However, an examination of the characteristics of the Soto group makes it possible to draw conclusions about broader patterns in the Spanish conquest by comparing the Florida *entrada* to other expeditions during the period. The data presented in Chapter Two demonstrates how comparing the social make-up of different conquest expeditions lends broader insight into different aspects of the conquest. These aspects include broader migration patterns between Spain and the Americas during the sixteenth century and how kinship networks among elite member on each expedition function to recruit participants. For example, just as how Soto's recruitment endeavors were strongest in his home province of Badajoz, so too were Francisco Pizarro's in the Province of Cáceres near his home settlement, Trujillo. Furthermore, as opposed

to other studies in the past that have shown that the highest percentage of Spanish migrants in the sixteenth century came from Andalusia, some of the expeditions, such as those of Soto and Pizarro, show that the opposite was the case. Some conquest expeditions did not reflect larger migration trends, and display that regional recruitment campaigns in other parts of Spain outside of Andalusia played a key role in determining the regional make up of some expeditions. Therefore, observing the social make-up expeditions of helps to better understand broader trends in Spain's colonial enterprise that otherwise would be difficult to view. Since there have only been a handful of studies on expeditions using this style of comparative prosopography, scholars in the future should continue to build upon the scholarship and expand our understanding of sixteenth-century Spanish conquest expeditions to the Americas.

Yet in terms of the Soto expedition specifically, the inclusion of the identities and voices of expedition members that have long been overlooked by scholars has been an essential goal of this thesis; future studies on the expedition should also aim to do the same. A strict reliance on the four chronicles in the past helped to create many logistical problems for scholars. Not only was the corpus of available sources greatly reduced by concentrating solely on the same four sources, but many scholars were led to discredit the chronicles' reliability as historical sources due to the lack of outside evidence with which to assess their contents. The aim of Chapter Three was to break out of the cycle of toiling with the same four accounts and to introduce new information contained in the documentary sources that had scarcely been discussed by scholars before. The inclusion of the documentary sources, along with a comparison of some of its contents with the chronicles allowed for multitude of conclusion to be drawn, especially in terms of the reliability of the chronicles as historical sources. First, the notion of incestuous authorship between the four accounts crumbles with the introduction of details provided in the documentary

sources. Utilizing the archival material to fact check the contents of the chronicles provides sufficient evidence to disprove any convincing arguments in favor of the presence of authorial borrowing between the four authors. Whether examining the appearance of expedition members throughout the sources or how events and details are portrayed by the different authors, it becomes evident that an incestuous relationship between the Rangel, the Gentleman of Elvas, and Garcilaso's accounts does not seem to exist. Second, by disproving the notion of authorial borrowing, the value of the chronicles as "reliable" sources on the expedition increases, especially in terms of the Garcilaso account. Quite contrary to previous studies, what becomes evident is that Garcilaso's *La Florida*, which mentions many details, events, and participants only found in the documentary sources, is an indispensable source on the Soto expedition, as are other three chronicles.

The central goal here is that future researchers concerned with Soto's Florida venture have more knowledge on the different available primary sources. Furthermore, especially in terms of the chronicles, it is important that scholars know that the four accounts can and should be consulted (although with a critical eye) for historical content. Scholars must also acknowledge that the four chronicles are not the only voices of the expedition. Even though they are the most widely known and available accounts, the chronicles should always be used in tandem with the other sources, including the *probanzas*, litigation cases, contracts, and licenses. Only with a constant utilization of the different accounts and documentary sources together can the field of Soto studies continue to expand in the future.

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AGI: Archivo General de Indias

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