

election campaign, and concerned over *entradas* as, say, the people of Salem were over voyages in the pepper trade. They had farms, families, trade; they grew vegetables and grumbled about the upkeep of wooden houses in a tropical climate.

The word "families" must be taken in an elastic sense. A number were entirely conventional, made up of Spanish wives and children, with perhaps one or two female relatives who, it was hoped, would soon become wives themselves. Many armada men came with their sons (one brought three); several had brought their Spanish mistresses "so as not to sin with the Indians"—a nice distinction—among them, two royal captains, *hidalgos* both, who somewhat to their dismay soon found themselves married to their socially undesirable companions. One of these cases Oviedo found particularly distressing; the lady was not only vulgar, but ugly and overage as well. Finally, there were the households where an Indian woman and her half-Spanish children lived as securely as a legitimate family. Sometimes, indeed, rather more securely; Corral's *Elvira*, for instance.

Santa María had improved. The surrounding jungle had been cut back, letting in sun and air; the paths to the sea had been widened and surfaced with logs in the boggy parts, so that freight could be hauled in oxcarts. Houses were still basically the same as those of the Indians (there was not one building of stone or adobe in the settlement), but while many were only a short step removed from the simplest *bohío*, in others the native model had been adapted to dwellings of some pretension, with two stories and an attic, and those narrow balconies dear to the Spanish heart running across their cane façades. (Oviedo says he spent 1500 pesos on his and that it was fit to receive royalty, but this mansion was not built until 1521.)

Mostly from Oviedo's descriptions, we can picture quite well one of the better homes—"a desirable residence well situated on a plot nearly two hundred feet deep; eighty-four-foot frontage on the street," as the house agents would say. This house is a single-story structure ("ranch type"), framed with adzed lumber. The foundations consist of large stones set at about three-foot intervals, on which are laid heavy beams of some rot-proof wood like *guayacán*. The walls are made of canes, which, if cut in *menguante* (the waning moon) are very durable; the roof, which has an overhang of at least five feet, is

heavily thatched with a marsh grass which was considered superior to European thatch. Altogether, a cool, ventilated construction most suitable for the climate. Floors, sills, door, and shutters are of choice hardwoods sanded down to show the grain. The furniture is very like that the owner would have had in Spain: chairs, often with seats and backs of hide, heavy tables, presses, chests, beds with soft, kapok-stuffed mattresses, patterned rugs woven of cotton or colored reeds.

The house presents a rather blank face directly on the street. There is a strip of garden down one side, and a large yard and garden behind, where a surprising assortment of vegetables and herbs contend with chickens. It is shaded by trees of home: orange, lemon, lime, pomegranate, fig; there may even be an arbor hung with grapes of Málaga, for the colonists had learned, even as agronomists of the last decades, that by drastic pruning vines will yield in the tropics. Served hand and foot by naborias and slaves, our prosperous householder is by now more comfortable than he would care to admit.

According to the residents themselves, there were now not many more than 600 Spaniards in the colony (of whom about 435 were away on *entradas* or in *Acla*).¹ The farms fingering up the valleys round about could feed them and their Indians well. Here were corn in season, feathery fields of yuca, patchwork squares of native vegetables, rows of spiky pineapples. There were pigs, some cattle, sheep and goats, a few horses, and (since there was at least one jackass) probably some young mules.

In many parts of these latitudes corn is harvested twice a year, but in Darién only one crop was sown. At least every two or three years new land for it was cleared, turned over, and left for three months "to fertilize." (The custom has persisted through the centuries, producing the problems born of deforestation with which these countries contend today.) The time for seeding was the first quarter of the April moon; if the soil were dry, it was watered down two days beforehand. The actual planting resembled a stylized dance, a rhythmic invocation of the fecund earth. The sowers stood in line a pace apart, each with a planting stick in his hand and a bag of seed hung at his waist. As the foreman gave the word, they advanced in a stately measure: a thrust of the sticks, an inclination to drop four or five kernels in each hole, a sweeping movement as the loose earth was replaced, a slow stamp-

ing as the soil was firmed—then one pace forward and repeat. Something of the kind can be seen today. The corn sprouted in a few days; it was weeded, watered if necessary, watched over as it matured by small boys stationed on platforms, and gathered in September—quickly, lest it rot or wild pig and deer harvest it first. The Spaniards used the meal in all the ways learned from the Indians—in bread, dumplings, tortillas, as a mash for beer, toasted to sweeten bad drinking water.

Corn meal was, however, much more perishable than cassava, the flour made from yuca, about which baquiano colonists from Hispaniola knew more than the Indians of the Isthmus. The natives of Castilla del Oro cultivated yuca only as a vegetable, whereas in Hispaniola cassava was the staff of life. The settlers taught their *naborias* how to prepare it.

Yuca was grown on the stagger, or three-blind-mice, system. Its roots are edible at one year, better at two, and at three good only for fodder. It was planted sometimes in hills, but usually in *montones* (mounds) about thirty inches high and thirty to thirty-six inches across. Each mound produced a minimum of five pounds of cassava. Casas remarks that a plantation of tender, five-month yuca, 20,000 or 30,000 *montones* long by 5000 or 10,000 wide, was a beautiful sight. It must also have been one to put modern large-scale farming to the blush. A plantation 30,000 *montones* long would have stretched for thirty miles; one of 20,000 by 10,000 mounds would have covered 128,000 acres and yielded, over a two-year period, not less than a billion pounds of cassava. Even considering the heavy consumption (reckoned at fifty pounds a month per capita), this is a lot of cassava.

The list of European vegetables which Oviedo claims were grown successfully would please a dietician.² It is unexpected, and not only because of the climate; somehow one does not think of the *conquistadores* as vegetarian in taste. However, although the lettuce and cucumber of home may have provided a welcome change in menus, the colonists were well satisfied to rely mostly on indigenous products: half a dozen kinds of roots (“a cured sweet potato is not inferior to the best marzipan”); several kinds of squash, some legumes; the leafy vegetables known collectively in Cueva as *yraca*; herbs the Spaniards called by familiar names, like chicory, basil, parsley, cress, *salvia*,

verbena. They discovered the delicious native fruits—*chirimoya*, *mamey*, *anón*, *aguacate*, and a dozen more; they waxed lyrical over pineapples, of which there were three varieties. Coconuts, particularly on the Pacific coast, were a drug on the market. *Cápera* seeds, toasted, were exactly like hazelnuts. (For some reason, they did not learn to roast peanuts, and hence dismissed *maní* as poor stuff, more suitable for pigs than for human consumption.) A kind of bindweed (Cuevan: y) which covered much of the open land was found excellent pasturage, and its roots most satisfactory for fattening pigs.

The colonists adopted the medicinal plants of the Indians—then, as now, it seems that few growing things in these regions were not specifics for some human ill—and used the products at hand as substitutes for expensive imported ones. Soap berries and roots were fine, if drastic, detergents; dried crocodile dung made the best of pumice; mangrove bark was perfect for tanning. A kind of terebinth tree yielded turpentine; certain bees made an amberlike substance which was superior to any pitch or resin. There were fibers which made stronger rope and canvas than those of Spain, cotton both wild and cultivated, fleecy white kapok. Palms had a hundred uses. Plantain-like *bihao* leaves, huge and flexible, were invaluable for waterproof wrappings or shelters. The thick round leaves of *guayabara* and *copey*, on which white lines can be easily engraved, served for note paper and playing cards.

The settlers learned which woods to use for posts (*guayacán*, *macana*, *mangle*), which for house-trim and furniture (mahogany, cedar, *roble*), which for charcoal or firewood or gunpowder, which for light strong yokes and saddle-trees (*guásimo*, *totuma*). They also learned what to avoid: the poison tree they named manzanillo, which is more potent than any poison ivy, and—after an unfortunate compañero had used its leaves as toilet paper—a furiously caustic plant called *guao*. And they discovered that timber must be felled only during the waning moon, because otherwise it quickly rots.³

As the Reverend Mr. Borland remarked two and a half centuries later, “concerning the Bestials of this country, there is a great variety.” In general, the larger the Bestial, the less it troubled the colonists. Jaguar and puma were fairly common, but except for one or two rogue males they did little harm; the chicken-killing opossum and

weasels were much worse from a householder's point of view. Monkeys were a nuisance: they were dirty and mischievous, they advertised the presence of troops or hunters to the prospective victims; they threw things with disconcerting accuracy. (One hit a *compañero* in the mouth and knocked out five teeth.) But honey bear, ocelots, and coatis made amusing pets, and armadillos were delightful, so like little chargers fully housed that they provoked a question as to whether horse-armor had been first copied from, or by, armadillos.

The Spaniards complained less of snakes than of toads, and accepted vampire bats as a normal occupational hazard. What really disturbed them were the insects. They were plagued by spiders, scorpions, predatory crickets, battalions of ants as big as wasps, blond, three-inch cockroaches "that fly when they wish and have a bad smell," super-botflies which respected neither man nor beast, centipedes, termites. (It was noted, however, that termites, like hurricanes, decreased greatly once the Host was installed in the churches.) And here, too, molestation was in inverse ratio to size. Mosquitoes and sand flies were "importunate and insatiable," but they were a lesser curse than chiggers and the almost invisible mites called *yaibí*. Jungle craft as learned by the conquistadores included things like taking bearings by testing the thickness of bark and recognizing the trees which stored sweet water in their stems or roots, but the unromantic knack of extracting burrowing niguas and mites was the most important, and in many districts it had to be practiced nightly, however exhausting the day's march.

Returning to the larger fauna, one is struck by the apparent plenty of game and fish. How could the colonists ever go hungry? There were deer, rabbit, half a dozen tasty representatives of the guinea-pig family, droves of wild pig. Manatee yielded, it was said, five flavors of meat, all good; tapir was tough but sustaining. Frogs, a delicacy to the Indians, were not popular, but iguanas were delicious, and could, moreover, be eaten on fast days because, being "neutral animals," they could conveniently be classed as fish. Seals were fairly common, turtles much more so, especially in Careta. There were several kinds of "turkeys" and "pheasants," and at the time of migration the sky was dark with birds. Fish ranged from tuna and swordfish to minnows, in infinite variety.

Scarcity amid all this abundance is less strange than it appears. Hunting is difficult in rugged, densely jungled country, particularly when the country is also hostile. Migrating flocks do not fly within crossbow range, and although ducks and geese came down to rest in the marshes, this was only during a few weeks each year; also, they were hard to kill and still harder to recover in the deep swamps which lay in unfriendly territory. The big fish ran only at certain seasons of the year, which were those of the heavy winds.

The Spaniards picked up some interesting zoological data. The unending warfare between seals and sharks fascinated them, as well it might. One fancied, however, that the seals could have held their own even against sharks organized "like German mercenaries" had they been left alone by the Spaniards. Seal fur, incidentally, never ceased to answer to the sea; old and moth-eaten, it still flattened or stood erect according to the state of the ocean. It was noted that Providence had neglected to provide crocodiles with an organ of evacuation; also that the reptiles gave off an agreeable perfume. From such observation as could be made of the migrating birds comes the surprising information that except for ducks and geese they were "small eagles and medium-sized ones and even royal eagles," or at any rate, all birds of rapine; they passed over Darién in March and early April, headed south, and since they never returned, it was concluded that they continued their flight around the world.

The tapir was perplexing: "it has a trunk like an elephant, but it is not an elephant; a hide like a bull's, but it is not a bull; its hoofs resemble those of a horse, yet it is not a horse." It was also useful; an excellent heart medicine could be made from its hoofs, and "it breeds in its entrails a stone which is an effective antidote to poison." And the sloth, otherwise dull enough, was interesting for its musical ability, since it sings all night in a descending chromatic scale—except, as Oviedo scrupulously points out, that it pronounces "ha, ha, ha . . ." instead of "do, ti, la, sol . . ."⁴

On the whole, however, the conquistadores were probably more surprised at what they did not find than by what they did. They had been prepared for much stranger beasts. A world where even familiar animals promptly developed unfamiliar habits, particularly mating habits, could surely produce more startling phenomena. And in fact, in

three reported instances it did: one in the air, one on land, and one in the sea.

To be fair, none of these was proper to Darién or even to Castilla del Oro. But two of them were reported by men of the colony, and the other figures in an account of Nicuesa and Hojeda—which in view of their fascination is excuse enough to include them here.

The air monster was a demon—not a beautiful boy-demon like Tuíra, but an evil and oppressive one in the shape of an immense bird. From time to time he swept down from his home in the Cordillera on the hamlets of the Atrato Valley, and his coming brought earthquake and flood. When he hovered over a village his wings shut out the sun; he could carry a man in his talons as an eagle might a field mouse, and he demanded human sacrifice. The Indians described him and his visitations in impressive detail; the Andean condor has never been more magnificently presented.

The sea creature—or rather, creatures, for there were two—are not so readily explained. They were seen in full daylight and at close range by Oviedo, the noted pilot Juan Cabezas, the canon of the cathedral of Castilla del Oro, Father Lorenzo Martín, an hidalgo named Sancho de Tudela, and the rest of the passengers and crew of a small caravel Panama-bound from Nicaragua in 1529. The monster which was nearest the ship was much bigger than the other (Oviedo thought they might be father and son), and both were in fine fettle. For some time they put on a singular exhibition, alternately rearing far out of the water and falling back with a resounding splash which rocked the caravel. “What he [the larger one] showed above water, which was his head and two arms and from there down a part of the body, was much taller than our caravel with its masts . . . about five times the height of a fairly tall man.” Head and body were about the same thickness, some thirteen or fourteen feet in diameter. It was thought that they might be some kind of whale, but Oviedo remarks that the arms of the nearer animal were twenty-three feet long and as big around as a cask, “and some people said that whales do not have them.” He adds, firmly, “What I saw is what I have stated, for I was on the caravel.”

The third monster appeared in a book by Charles Fontaine—*Description des terres trouvées de notre temps*, published in 1559—

and, it may be safely said, only there. Fontaine says it was found on the beach of Veragua on January 4, 1543, and that he had its description, together with a drawing of it from life, from an eyewitness, a Portuguese gentleman named Varallo, who was on his way home from India at the time. An illustration taken from Varallo's sketch and chastely labeled *Merveille* is inserted—in the middle of an unintentionally diverting account of the adventures of “Alphonse” (Hojeda), “Ancise” (Enciso), “Pisator” (Pizarro) *et al.*

It is a superb portrait. The Marvel has a large, elusively human face, a huge tusk-filled mouth, a snout which looks like a length of pipe wrapped with insulating bands; its ears, edged by a ridge of spines, curl like spiked pretzels, a similar spiny crest runs down the center of its forehead and smaller dittos serve it as eyebrows. Its body, covered with large scales, terminates in a tail like that of a nightmare mermaid; its forelegs (all it has) might be those of an arthritic dragon, and its expression is utterly malignant. Fontaine's text supplies further information. It was fifteen paces long, its head was the size of a cask and its eyes as big as plates, the end of its tail was furnished with functioning snake heads. The apparent wrappings of its snout, which was as thick as a man's thigh, were really collapsible sections which could be extended like a telescope; the “Merveille” shot water from this remarkable organ to the length of an arquebus shot. It was killed by artillery fire. Not the least interesting feature of the story is that Varallo found himself in the western Caribbean while sailing from India to Portugal.

Perhaps it was a pity that there were not more marvels to amuse the colonists. Santa María, in late 1516, was reasonably prosperous and healthy, but it was undoubtedly dull. Since manual labor was disdained and diversions were few, time must have been heavy on the hands of the vecinos left at home. There was small incentive to improve further a settlement which everyone knew to be doomed if Pedrarias had his way, or to extend agriculture when the number of settlers continued to shrink, or to build a proud church such as colonists elsewhere erected to dominate dreary villages. On fiesta days they could dress up and enjoy a violent game of cañas, or compete in cutting off the heads of buried chickens while passing at a dead gallop,

but fiestas were few and far between. So were ships from home, and the tempered joys of public auctions. Cockfights were limited by the small supply of gamecocks. Betting, on anything from the outcome of an entrada to a battle of matched cockroaches, was an ever-present pastime, and so were cards, dice, chess, and pitching pennies, but not everyone can find unwearying satisfaction in gambling day after day, year after year. Even lawsuits are a sport that can sometimes pall.

One imagines the bored groups lounging in the plaza, endlessly turning over and re-embellishing the same stale gossip, quick to seize any fresh bit of scandal to refurbish the too familiar stock. No wonder differences became quarrels, and that, in the Hieronymites' words, the gravest problem in the Indies was "to calm the burning breasts of these Castilians, which make them so wicked one with the other that we think all the material remedies in the world would not suffice to cure them, but only divine grace."

In the settlement a man could sleep safe in a downy bed, be well served at a table, sit in a comfortable chair; he could deal at shops which carried goods from Spain and make a little himself from occasional private commerce; he could enjoy the children, white or brown, who grew up in his house. Yet all in all, one imagines that the expeditionaries in unsubdued country, held to concord by common action and common risks, were more contented than the vecinos compelled to the tedious security of Santa María.

XXVIII

WHEN Espinosa got back to Darién, he was able to report that the settlement at Acla, then six months old, was already the equal of Santa María, and so abundantly provided with food that "one eats there as well as in Seville." This, in its way, was Balboa's most remarkable achievement, for it represented manual labor on the part of the Spaniards. As Unamuno remarks, the conquistadores were prepared "to conquer at the cost of a thousand hardships but not by force

of hard work." Lacking native serfs, the fighting men of Castile, lords of a subject world, had cut and cleared, built houses, tilled the soil, felled trees, and shaped lumber for the ships they would one day build at the Pacific. Even Balboa could not have inspired so unique an effort had he stuck to the conventional role of commander. He accomplished it because he worked side by side with his men, "the first to set an example," and took the most strenuous tasks for himself.

Espinosa's returning expeditionaries, relaxed and well fed, told Balboa all he had never been permitted to verify for himself about the land he was supposed to command. The skeleton of what they had to relate is in a lengthy report submitted by Espinosa to Pedrarias. The inserts and appendices mentioned in the text are missing, and, being composed *in usum Delphini*, it leaves out much that we would most like to know, but since it is the only such report in the history of Darién to be preserved, it makes the alcalde's expedition the best documented of any that went out from Santa María. In conjunction with the chronicles (more colorful than accurate) and other data, it presents a story easier told in a volume than in a few paragraphs.¹

Espinosa, after hearing of Badajoz' experiences, had wasted little time on the impoverished rebels of Cueva. Making directly for more lucrative reprisals, he did what damage he could in the course of a rapid march down the Bayano Valley, and pushed through to Natá, where he arrived at the end of March 1516. Here he stayed four months, sending out raids to neighboring chiefdoms (Coclé, Escoria, Cherú, *et al.*) while he waited for the additional troops asked of Pedrarias.

In late July he decided to proceed. The reinforcements had not arrived, and an embassy to Parisa of four Natán Indians had returned in June, less one of their number, to report failure, but these negative factors were offset by others which had more weight. Food was running short in Natá; the Indians had thus far been easily subdued, in part because they were terrified of the expedition's horses, and therefore did not seem to present danger from the rear. More important, it had been learned that both Escoria and Parisa were at the moment as weak as they might ever be. For some reason they had indulged in one of those wars so useful to a common enemy. Waged with uncom-

mon ferocity, it had left few of the towering, fair-skinned warriors of Escoria alive, and even Parisa was in no state to withstand fresh aggression.

On July twenty-ninth the expedition left Natá. Escoria was taken by assault the same night, and on August first the Spaniards reached the site of Cutatara's capital to find it turned into a deserted cemetery. The space between the gutted houses was paved with the bones of Escorians and Parisans, making a grisly avenue which terminated in a great mound of skulls. Cutatara, however, did not give up easily. He mustered the warriors left to him and sallied forth to give battle to the invaders. The encounter took place in open ground somewhere between the old capital and the new (i.e., between the present towns of Pesé and Los Santos), and lasted for six hours. At nightfall the Spaniards were victorious; three days later their position was assured by the arrival of Valenzuela and his troops.

From mid-August until the end of the year the main portion of the expedition scoured the Azuero Peninsula, where most of the chieftains were vassals of Cutatara. The remaining troops, in five big canoes, explored the coast as far as the Gulf of Montijo. This contingent was led by Bartolomé Hurtado, "a handy man with canoes," and included two experienced pilots. On January 3, 1517, the main section started from Parisa on the homeward way; the canoe detachment caught up with it in Cherú apparently about the end of February, and three weeks later the expedition was once more in Santa María.

The foregoing gives no idea of the interminable looting, slaving, and slaughter of the fifteen-month campaign; Fray Francisco de San Román, who was there, said that 40,000 Indians were killed. Neither does it convey the hardy valor of the troops whom Espinosa sent out under subaltern captains to raid and conquer. (The commander was careful of his person; his official report of the entrada fails to reveal a single instance in which he took the lead in either scouting or action.) Condensed, an account of the brutal saga would be little more than a dreary catalogue of cruelties. A few incidents may be noted; they suggest the whole.

One event, the most outstanding from Espinosa's viewpoint, was the finding of Badajoz' loot, stored in an isolated hut in a rugged, forested spot three miles from Usagaña. It was revealed by two Indians

whom Chief Cutatara, unable to withstand Spanish pressure and unwilling to appear cowed, had planted as captives with instructions to “betray” its location. Badajoz and his companions, who probably claimed a half interest, indicated they had lost 80,000 to 100,000 pesos (an estimate which Casas, typically, raised to 140,000). Andagoya, speaking for an expedition which naturally wanted to share as little as possible, said the recovered loot came to 30,000 pesos, and that it was “intact, with nothing missing.” Oviedo, on the basis of the veedor’s records, agrees that 30,000 pesos was found, but adds that Cutatara had repossessed himself of his own gold, leaving untouched that of other chiefs.²

Two examples of Espinosa’s methods of coercion will suffice. Before starting back from Parisa, he had the captive chief of Chicacotra torn in pieces by dogs, with the casual explanation that because of the torture he had undergone he was valueless anyway, and that he was suspected of invoking evil spirits against the Spaniards. The latter is a reference to the chief’s warning that the expedition should steer clear of Parisa on the return journey, because “devils” would open the earth and swallow them—a prophecy which had punctual, if partial, fulfillment in a violent earthquake. And two weeks after disposing of Chicacotra, Espinosa wound up ten days of sack and pillage in Escoria by murder of its hostage chief.

Hurtado’s sub-entrada by canoe—which was comparatively humane and which left the important chieftain of Cebaco Island a technical Christian, surnamed for his friendliness “*el cacique amigo*”—went smoothly without loss of a man, “except,” Espinosa noted laconically and enigmatically, “for Messer Codro, who in view of his condition could not escape.” Codro’s end came on Cebaco; Oviedo says that the Spaniards saw him die without care and without pity, and that when he threatened to accuse Valenzuela of responsibility, that captain laughed and quipped, “I’ll give a power of attorney to my father and forefathers, to answer you in the next world.”

In lighter vein, one may note the pleasing reports of a two-headed, round-footed race living somewhere beyond the Gulf of Montijo, and the deification of a jackass. The donkey made the round trip (though not, as one historian states, as a mount for the commander) in signal honor. The natives were easily convinced that the strange creature

with the terrible voice was a god incarnate, whose blared demands for tribute might not be denied.

In Comogre, Espinosa found Serrano encamped with eighty followers. The alcalde's report says that Serrano had been sent to chastise the Comograns for killing some "tame" Caretan porters (those who had accompanied the dean from Chimán), but if this was his object, he had approached it by a roundabout route. Serrano had started from Santa María in May of 1516 (after having spent six to ten weeks cruising the coasts of Urabá in search of news of B Herrera), apparently just before Balboa graduated from caged criminal to Governor's son-in-law. The entrada had gone first to Nombre de Dios, and from there via Pequení, Chagre, and Capira to the Pacific. Beyond this it is not clear how it spent its time; Serrano was a fellow who neither publicized his deeds nor inspired others to do so. Also, his expedition, though successful enough, was overshadowed by that of Espinosa, particularly as regards the proceeds—just over 7700 pesos of gold against Espinosa's 55,300; 3200 pesos in slaves compared to Espinosa's 8600 pesos' worth.

(Incidentally, it would be interesting to know how the 50,400-peso profit, net of quinto, from Coiba was apportioned under the new discretionary system, and still more, how it was made to appear as to fineness. As nearly as can be reckoned from Puente's disingenuous bookkeeping, Serrano's gold—none of which was declared as guanín—was distributed at only 320 maravedís to the peso.)

Balboa's satisfaction at seeing so many prospective recruits return to Darién must have been tempered by a certain pique. Most of the profit registered by Espinosa and Serrano had come from *his* gobernación. He can scarcely have refrained from some simple addition, based on declared returns from the entradas that had invaded his territory after Pedrarias knew of his appointment: Morales + Badajoz + Serrano + Espinosa = 103,865 pesos gross proceeds. However, it was no use crying over spilt cream; the thing to do now was to claim men for his own undertaking before they could be dispersed in other entradas. To this end he hurried to Santa María in March 1517.

For a time he was kept dangling. The Governor was once more determined to go in person to the Pacific, specifically, to Panama and

Coiba. He reasoned that where so much treasure had been secured, much more must be available, and for once he was right: in one already plundered village Espinosa, in 1519, was able to loot graves to the tune of 330 pounds of gold. The Indians of Coiba had been effectively softened up; it had been learned that Veragua was accessible by an established route in six or seven days from Escoria; Hurtado had intelligence of rich, easily traversed chiefdoms beyond the Gulf of Montijo. The information about the great western kingdoms, where people cultivated the arts in opulent ease, had not been forgotten. Neither had the ambition to move the capital from Santa María to a strategic location on the South Sea.

It is awkward to combat the enterprise of a parent-in-law who is also a political superior, especially when the surface amenities are fulsomely preserved. Fortunately for Balboa, his dilemma was resolved by the arrival of dispatches on the first of June. Having read them, the Bishop and the officials joined in serving an injunction on the Governor to remain in Santa María and to send out Balboa, Albítez, and Tavira without delay. Their motives were explained in the document. They were, apart from Pedrarias' health, Carlos' continuing absence from Spain (which meant the continuing regency of Cisneros), the bitter contentions in Castile (which meant uncertainty as to where the power would fall), the expected arrival of a judge-investigator and that of the Hieronymite governors, and the ominous tidings that special orders could be expected from the Royal Council. In short, anything might happen, and when it did, it would probably be unpleasant.

The Governor had no choice but to obey an injunction concerted by all his associates in government. (It is diverting to think how the necessary unanimity must have been arrived at: Tavira holding out until Puente agreed to drop his opposition to the long-planned Atrato expedition; Puente extorting approval of Albítez as the price of including Balboa; the Bishop insisting on clearance for Balboa before underwriting the unpalatable Puente-Albítez proposal.) As a result Balboa was able to get away by early July, and Tavira in the latter part of September. Albítez, with 1500 pesos of Crown gold in his pocket, was already in Hispaniola, laying—it was hoped—the groundwork for his expedition. He needed no fresh authorization from the

Governor and the officials, his sponsors since 1515, but he could not do without special license from the King or the Hieronymites; Balboa's grants expressly stated that no one might stay in his gobernación save by his consent.

The Tavira expedition proved a fiasco beside which Balboa's locust-plagued attempt in the same direction paled. The factor started with two hundred men (Hernando de Soto and Pizarro among them) in a fleet of three ships and seven canoes. He got about seventy leagues up the Atrato without recorded incident for good or ill, and there, while trying to transfer from one ship to another, he was drowned, taking with him in desperate embrace his treasurer, Virués. The expedition, minus a few more men picked off by river Indians, got back to Santa María in December—under Pizarro, the perennial stopgap. It had cost Tavira 8000 pesos; its total gross proceeds were fifty-two pesos of guanines. By way of consolation, Pizarro and as many expeditionaries as cared to accompany him were allowed to make another entrada, billed for Abraime but actually, according to Puente's accounts, to the Pacific coast. Its itinerary may explain why its doings went unreported, save for a bookkeeping entry from which it appears that it was over within six months and got nothing except a few slaves.

Albítez was never able to put his project into effect. In September he returned to Darién to tell his backers that the Hieronymites had turned him down. Toward the end of the year he was sent to try again, if necessary in Spain. With Andrés Niño as aide and future partner, he reached Santo Domingo in January. The Hieronymites, adhering to Cisneros' line, were still cool, but before long word came of the Cardinal's death, and Niño went on to negotiate the business in Castile. He arrived to find it had already been concluded: on March twentieth, Charles had signed an order to the Hieronymites to give Albítez his asiento, and thus bilked, Niño stayed in Spain. The rest of the story continued the sequence of near misses: before the King's cédula was received in Santo Domingo Albítez went back to Darién; before word of it reached Santa María, he had given back the gold advanced for organization of his expedition and gone off on a raid to Veragua; and before he finally learned of it, a situation had developed which made his plan unfeasible.

As for Balboa, freed at last to go to the gobernación bestowed on him two and a half years before, he lost no time in profiting by the officials' injunction and the permit to leave that followed. The Governor's manner of yielding was, however, wholly in character: assuming an attitude of paternal benevolence, he yet gave not one inch more than he had to. He could not forbid Balboa to develop his territory, but he could refrain from making it easy for him to do so. None of the subsidies and credit scheduled for Albítez were available to the Adelantado of the South Sea; Pedrarias, as he later pointed out with complacency, had given orders that the expedition was to be made without touching the royal treasury or goods. And the contract of the previous year was neither renewed nor extended, although more than half of an already niggardly time allowance had passed. Of the contract itself only an isolated paragraph is known—one which Pedrarias afterwards extracted and had certified for uses of his own. It would be interesting to know what the rest of it said, and why Pedrarias suppressed it when it would have been normal to introduce the whole document. Perhaps, in the first flush of reconciliation and kinship, he had dictated more liberal authorizations than could be conveniently admitted later on.

The excerpt which was preserved is as follows:

. . . And having concluded this, you the said vasco nuñez de valboha Adelantado, with the people who seem good to you will go to the river of the chief of ponca, which is on the south sea slope and which flows into the gulf of sant miguel, and there in what appears to you the best situation, with the shipwrights you take with you, you will see that ships are built with all diligence. And you will endeavor to see and talk to the said chief of ponca and to have complete peace and friendship with him and to reduce him to the service of their highnesses without doing him any hurt; and you must do the same with the other chiefs bordering the said settlement of acra [Acla] because their friendship and quietude are very necessary for the conservation of the said settlement.

How many of the men who seemed good to Balboa were allowed to accompany him in 1517 is an open question. As nearly as can be reckoned, he took about a hundred and seventy-five from Santa María to add to the sixty personal followers he had in Acla. Most of the

surviving baquiano colonists were of the number, but they were a minority; it was said that only forty of the true veterans were left. One old-timer who was missing was Leoncico. He would have been an elderly conquistador by then, but that was not why he was absent from the roster. An unidentified enemy of his master had poisoned him. The canicide was a Spaniard, which is rather ironic when one thinks how many Indians had spared the white tibá's dog.

About thirty of the expeditionaries can be named. One was Valdarrábano, the recording notary of the discovery of the Pacific. Another was Hernando de Argüello, who had registered the oath to deny Nicuesa; he remained in Darién to serve as Balboa's resident representative. Four were pilots: Martín de los Reyes, Gonzalo de los Ríos, Juan de Castañeda, and Bartolomé Pimenta³—good men with whom to explore an untraveled ocean. Two members of the expedition wrote about it afterwards—Diego de la Tobilla and Pascual de Andagoya, future titular governor of the coast south of the Gulf of San Miguel. Hernando de Soto joined them after he returned from Tavira's entrada. Others of Balboa's men, like Bartolomé Hurtado, Juan Tello, and the ubiquitous Alonso Martín de Don Benito, became famous in their time in Central America and Peru; Andrés de Garabito was to gain renown of a sort for his part in Balboa's end. And there were two otherwise obscure expeditionaries who were to achieve in their dying a celebrity previously denied them: Hernando Muñoz and Luis Bortello.

The expedition was entirely self-financing. (Pedrarias subsequently threw out remarks that it had cost him a lot, but neither he nor anyone else ever substantiated them.) Balboa, apparently while in Acla, had formed "The South Sea Company." Among its principal shareholders were Argüello, Tobilla, Rogel de Loria and Beltrán de Guevara (of the board of directors); Diego Rodríguez (attorney); Diego Hernández; and the chaplain, Rodrigo Pérez, a muscular cleric who was archdeacon of the cathedral, and who contributed 210 pesos. Balboa put in what he could from his mining claims, and the proceeds of the business he had conducted for Arbolancha with the exception of 300 pesos which had somehow gotten into the hands of Espinosa.

Diego Hernández' investment was the cost of recruiting and outfitting volunteers from Hispaniola and Cuba. He had not long returned

from Spain,⁴ and since his family was prominent in Seville, he must have been able to give and receive a good deal of information during his stay in that center for colonial affairs. It is significant that when he got back to Darién, he threw in his lot with Balboa. With Pedrarias' sanction, a certain sum in company gold for purchase of supplies, and letters for the Hieronymite governors, he sailed for Santo Domingo, perhaps on the same ship which had brought the disturbing dispatches.

Balboa had no intention of lingering in Darién to invite fresh obstacles. Hernández' recruits would be useful, but they were not essential to a captain who had carried a world-shaking expedition to triumph with a force of eighty-three men. The injunction had been presented to Pedrarias on June ninth, and some days must have passed before he acted on it. Three weeks later Balboa and his men were already in Acla, bound for the South Sea.

XXIX

WHILE Balboa applied himself in Acla to preparations for the move to the Pacific, one of his officers—Francisco Compañón, nephew to Albítez—went with a small company to the Gulf of San Miguel to select a site for the shipbuilding camp. When he returned, he was again sent out, this time with thirty Negro slaves (origin unspecified), to build a way station on the other side of the pass. Immediately afterwards the transfer to the South Sea began. The date appears to have been late August of 1517.

It was heavy going. Other expeditions made marches far longer and more perilous, over more difficult terrain, but none, perhaps, deliberately undertook one in similar condition. For, lacking native porters, the Spaniards themselves carried their baggage and the material they had assembled for the ships. Balboa himself packed one of the heavy planks—which, three to four inches thick, would have weighed close to a hundred pounds. Anyone who has moved even a light plank by a crooked, constricted and overgrown path can imagine

what it was like to carry the heavy-hewn ship-lumber in tropic heat over a mountain track. Veterans of the expedition who in after years compiled proofs of merit usually passed lightly over its orthodox hardships, but they were emphatic about that unorthodox portage.

At first glance it seems odd that any lumber should have been taken. Pitch, cordage, gear, sails, the anchors which taxed gangs of sweating compañeros—all these, yes. But why lumber, when there was more timber around the Gulf of San Miguel than coal in Newcastle? The reason was that Careta was believed (mistakenly) to produce a timber peculiarly adapted to shipbuilding in that it was impervious to broma;¹ furthermore, it could be prepared while waiting for clearance to go to the Pacific, where time could be better spent in exploration and exploitation. Albítez had the same idea.

Balboa's contract had stressed the necessity for friendly relations with the chief of Ponca, in the erroneous belief that the Chucunaque was his river. But the established way from Careta to the Gulf of San Miguel via the Chucunaque Valley left Ponca well to the northwest. Balboa undoubtedly took the easy pass to the Subcutí. From here he had a choice of routes. One was to follow the Subcutí to its confluence with the Chucunaque and then go down the Chucunaque; it was long, due to the demented twisting of the river, but *if* the water were high and *if* canoes were available, the last part of it was restful. The other route was by the Indian trails which cut across the low divides between one affluent of the Chucunaque and another, and by which the main river could be gained far down towards the present village of Yavisa. Whichever was taken in the first transfer from Acla, the overland route seems to have been that subsequently used.

What cannot be said with certainty is the location of the ship-building camp. It was on a river, at some distance from the Gulf—but which river? The expeditionaries called it Río de la Balsa or Río Balsas, and the latter name was long applied to the lower Tucutí, which comes into the estuary of the Tuíra from the south. And on a seventeenth-century manuscript map, the triangle between the mouth of the Balsas-Tucutí and that of the Vagre (Marea) is marked: "*here blasco nuñez de balboa built his bergantines 1515.*" But on the chart drawn by Pizarro's pilots in 1526, only eight years after the ships were built, the Río de la Balsa is, beyond question, the Chucunaque—

which, after all, was that specified in Balboa's contract. On this basis (shifting names and later statements to the contrary), and bearing in mind that the camp was situated above the head of tides and at a point where the river was narrow enough for the expeditionaries to throw a bridge of lianas across it, one must conclude that the site was on the Chucunaque just above Yavisa.

All in all, Compañón seems to have chosen well: a place where there was level ground for the camp, where the river ran deep between firm banks, and where the back country was fertile and well settled with Indians of the Cuevan tongue living in scattered, self-governing clans. It was clear of the tremendous tides which affect the Tuíra for eighty miles or more and are felt even on the Chucunaque as far as Yavisa; and the so-called "rapids" between it and the estuary appear to have been no more than riffles, in evidence only when the river was low. There are healthier, airier regions around the Gulf, but even had they been otherwise suitable, they were much less accessible from Acla. For that matter, although the Yavisa district had a bad name for malaria and other ills (in addition to an extraordinary concentration of chiggers), it is notable that there was not a single death among the expeditionaries.

Thus Balboa's troubles at Río de la Balsa—and they were many—were not due to poor judgment, unless the very undertaking of such a venture with no more than eight months to do it in and without a maravedí's worth of government aid could be so labeled. They were caused by inadequate labor and transport, defective or insufficient materials, and the incalculable accidents of Isthmian weather. These were enough to make a Sisyphean hades of the next few months, when each difficult bit of progress was quashed by a fresh reverse.

The first concerns were to make a clearing, erect shelters, set up stages for the sawyers and ways for the ships, and to throw the bridge, woven Indian-fashion of lianas, across the river. It was then discovered that the lumber was only enough for two bergantines; worse, much of it was already rotten, either because it was the wrong kind of wood or because, to save time, it had been cut at the wrong season of the moon. Balboa therefore set one third of his company to logging and associated chores; another third were assigned to foraging, and the

remainder to transportation and improvement of the trail over the pass.

Just when actual construction was to begin, the river rose in sudden flood. The camp was deluged before anything could be done to save the supplies,² and the expeditionaries, perched in trees, could only watch helplessly as their precious lumber and provisions were swept away. When the river had gone down a little, Compañón volunteered to lead a party to look for food (the foraging contingent was away). The liana bridge had held firm, although part of it was four feet under water; Compañón and his men managed to cross it, and got back from their mission just in time to save the rest of the company from starvation.

At this point Balboa called a meeting and asked his associates if they wanted to abandon the enterprise. It may be that for a moment he lost heart; it would not have been strange, after battling adversity for three and a half years. If so, it was not the motive for the conference. That was called for exactly the reasons that prompt any joint-stock company which has lost most of its capital and equipment at the time that its license to operate is about to expire. The shareholders faced the problem, and unanimously declared that they wanted to stay in business.

This decided, the requisite was more of everything: more men, more materials, more time. Balboa left at once to see to it. He did not, however, go farther than Acla lest he be trapped in the bureaucratic coils of Santa María; Hurtado went on to Darién with his reports, a little gold, and the request for an extension of the contract. The petition, submitted by Argüello to Pedrarias, was granted on January 13, 1518—but only for a miserly four months from the original expiration date. Meanwhile, Hernández had turned up with twoscore volunteers from Hispaniola. These and twenty more proceeded with Hurtado to Acla, and were promptly inducted into conquest in the Balboa manner. Laden with assorted gear and the provisions Hernández had secured in a call at Jamaica, they were all at the Balsas in February.

Meanwhile, the men at the camp had recovered some lumber from the river mud and prepared more from timber felled nearby. In May the ships were finished. This was the end of the dry season, and the

river was inconveniently low, but by patient effort, digging channels through the intervening riffles, they were eased down to the estuary and the passage to the Gulf. And there at their moorings, leaking at every wormy pore, they quietly settled to the bottom.

It would seem that even for such stubborn adventurers this would be the end, particularly as the four months' grace allowed them was almost gone, and Pedrarias refused to be pinned down to a decision either for or against another extension. The Governor's attitude, coupled with a response to Balboa's appeal for funds which had the look of an unpleasant joke (a loan of 100 pesos, which was repaid, perhaps in protest, almost at once), was a gauge of the assistance which could be expected from Santa María.

The expeditionaries, camping near the half-submerged product of ten months' struggle, weighed their chances and resolved to go on. Somehow they had to float the bergantines and get away in them; not even Pedrarias, it was felt, could recall Their Highnesses' Adelantado of the South Sea once he was fairly launched on exploration and colonization of his gobernación. This, they were to learn, was a miscalculation.

As a first objective Balboa fixed on the Pearl Islands, which were near enough to be gained, with luck, in the wallowing bergantines, and yet conveniently removed from too easy communication with Santa María. The ships were hauled ashore and careened as well as circumstance allowed, messengers were dispatched to Darién to advise of the departure, and in several rather alarming trips the expedition passed to Terarequí. Here, in something less than three months, two larger vessels were completed, and this time they were seaworthy.

Despite Casas' offhand statement that Balboa "looted and scandalized the big Isle of Pearls, and who knows, killed and captured many people," the fact is that there were few native inhabitants left to plunder. They had begun to move out immediately after Morales' visit; in 1516 Espinosa had found Chief Toé living on the mainland as a vassal to the lord of Chimán, and it was stated in 1522 that no more than 317 Indians were living in the archipelago.³

Toward the end of September, Balboa took eighty or a hundred men and set out in the new ships for the mainland, leaving the rest of his force to build two more ships at the island.⁴ It was said at the time

that he had received a letter from the Archbishop of Seville, telling him that if he sailed west he would encounter people with body armor and lances, and if he went west, "great riches and gain." The story is ridiculed by both Oviedo and Casas, who, however, do not explain why they find it impossible. In any case, Balboa could not go far in any direction until he had enough ships for his whole expedition. He did coast for thirty-five or forty miles south of Garachiné—a bearing the conquistadores continued to call "east" long after it must have been clear that the South Sea was south only of the middle Isthmus. He reached the harbor he named Puerto de Peñas (Port of Rocks),⁵ but did not land. It was getting dark when the bay was sighted and, Casas says, a school of whales close inshore looked like a dangerous reef; the ships waited out the night at sea, but in the morning the weather was bad and the pilots preferred to run for the Gulf.

Balboa disembarked in Chochama (Casas) or Pequeo (Andagoya)—the names are probably synonymous, another instance of the interchange of those of chieftains and their domains.⁶ Casas disposes of the stay there by saying that the adelantado spent "some days" in killing and robbing, and then returned to Terarequí; he adds that Balboa was animated by a desire to avenge Morales—all things considered, a singularly unlikely motive. Andagoya says that Balboa camped there for two months, collecting Indians to fetch pitch and cordage from Acla. A few days after landing he dispatched Valdarrábano and an escort to Darién with "the proceeds of his voyage," a report of progress, and yet another plea for a renewal of his asiento.

The messengers found official Santa María unexpectedly tense and hostile. The Governor was, even for him, in uncommonly evil humor—the end product of the frustration and insecurity which had started in June 1516, and which had been brought to a head about a fortnight before the men from the Pacific arrived.

For two years Pedrarias had lived in the shadow of dismissal and investigation. He had been put in his place by Cisneros, and it had been curtly specified that the place was subservient to the authority of three monkish reformers in Hispaniola. He had been censured, with Espinosa, for the expedition to Coiba; he had even been ordered to repatriate its captives and make restitution of its gold, and although the order had been quietly shelved on arrival, it might still rise to

plague him.⁷ In Spain his agents were ignored and his petitions suspended sine die. People had brought suits not dared before: Zorita, over the booty from Santa Marta and the gold stolen by Ayora; Zamudio, for restitution of the property he had left in Darién in 1511. He had sponsored Albítez, and Albítez had been turned down. A plan to recruit five hundred men in Castile for Tierra Firme, if it concerned Castilla del Oro (neither the name of the colony nor that of Pedrarias figures in it), had been soon abandoned.⁸

In April or early May, Albítez and sixty new settlers turned up in a chartered caravel, bringing news which presaged better things. Two months later a ship from Spain arrived with more ample information. It came to Pedrarias like sunshine after rain. Cisneros was dead; Carlos was in Spain; Fonseca was once more functioning. (The peculiar activities of Casas, now again in Castile, were as yet concealed.) The still omnipotent Flemish favorites, judging from their thriving trade in posts and preferment, might be disposed to put revenue ahead of righteousness. In Hispaniola the retirement of the much-trying Hieronymites was thought to be a matter of months, if not of weeks; in Cuba, Velásquez had dared to refuse to submit to a residencia by Zuazo. The King had acceded to Albítez' petition, and whereas this did not, as is sometimes stated, cancel Balboa's grants and privileges, it tacitly sanctioned trespass on them. Best of all, there was no word of another governor for Castilla del Oro.

One or two things were less satisfactory. The Hieronymites had written to Pedrarias to "let Vasco Núñez do what he wants," which meant that whereas the Governor could side-step a definite commitment to prolong Balboa's contract, he could not risk canceling it. And—more to Puente's sorrow than to the Governor's—Albítez, cheated by persistent quirks of timing, had no good of the royal consent to his plan. But these were no more than minor flaws in an otherwise pleasing whole.

And then, when Pedrarias had adjusted himself to confidence, the blow fell. On September first, Santa María learned that a new governor had been chosen for the colony.

A number of factors had contributed to the decision to remove Pedrarias—not least of them Casas, who spared no effort to that end. Fonseca had ceased to be a bulwark; it may be that at this time he

could not have rescued a discredited functionary even had he so desired, and in any case he did not choose to rescue Pedrarias: his answer to a renewed recital of the Governor's misdeeds had been a curt, "I have already said that we ought to throw that man out of there." (If he stuck to this opinion—and there is some evidence that he did not—Pedrarias was unaware of it, for he continued to christen new outposts in honor of the Bishop.) Formal appointment of the new executive had not yet been made, but his identity was an open secret. The Governor-designate was Don Lope de Sosa, since 1505 Governor of the Canary Islands.

Pedrarias concentrated his ill-humor on Balboa, a reaction as inevitable as it was illogical. Balboa had long since given up wishing for the Governor's removal, nor could his previous strictures (already outdated) have produced a change of administration by their own power. Even Puente and Corral, tireless in incitement against the adelantado, could brandish no recent faults beyond the indelicate failure to send Indians as gifts. Pedrarias' irritation over the letter received from the Hieronymites no doubt ricocheted against Balboa—it is one thing to concede a permit as a favor (with careful limitations in the fine print), and quite another to be ordered to do so as a duty—but it was scarcely a prime issue. Yet now, when the hatred he had cherished, openly or covertly, had no longer even rivalry to feed it, he was impelled to destroy Balboa, apparently as a scapegoat.

Only apparently. The real motives were more practical. The Governor had envisaged for years the delightful satisfaction of doing away with the object of his detestation, but what brought the aspiration to a crashing climax was the opportunism of crisis.

Pedrarias was due for a residencia, and he was perfectly aware that it could be extremely damaging even if Balboa were absent. With Balboa in attendance it might spell total ruin—or so, at least, seemed likely to the Governor, who even in calmer moments was not one to understand a mentality to which a buried hatchet was something interred for good. Treasonous defiance of the King's instructions, invasion and wholesale looting of another's gobernación, misprision, were only the beginning of the charges which could be brought against him, not to mention the claims for damages which could accompany them: had not Ovando, much less vulnerable, been sued by one optimistic

colonist for 260,000 pesos? In the circumstances, removal of Balboa seemed an elementary precaution.

This was not all. Pedrarias “was mad to get away before the Governor could arrive,” but he had a very good idea that neither the vecinos nor the officials would allow it. It occurred to him that his problem would be in great part solved were he to be constructively occupied somewhere outside Castilla del Oro when Sosa reached Darién. The coveted and, indeed, the only possible field for this was the Pacific coast. The plan collided head-on with Vasco Núñez; *ergo*, Vasco Núñez must be eliminated. (Six years later, confronted with a similar emergency, Pedrarias repeated the stratagem to the letter.)

Circumstances played to Pedrarias’ hand. Balboa had no inkling of his father-in-law’s state of mind. Bishop Quevedo, believing his protégé safe, had left for Spain. And finally, ingenuous to the end, Balboa himself provided an excuse. As a pretext, it was good, perhaps, for a reprimand; Pedrarias and his confederates made it serve for judicial murder.

XXX

BALBOA learned of the supposedly imminent change of governors in November. Ironically, it was because it now seemed to him undesirable that he conceived an inoffensive project which his enemies branded as a revolutionary plot.

As he reasoned, Pedrarias was an ally—not, perhaps, a very constructive ally, but still, by virtue of a relationship not lightly entered into in that day, a permanent one. However hesitant in the past about giving Balboa free rein, now, when he was to lose his own gobernación, he would not ruin that of his daughter’s husband just when it could become a family asset.

A new governor was a very different matter. He would undoubtedly summon Balboa to Santa María, if only because all executive officers were liable to investigation. He might take Balboa’s troops for projects of his own, and cancel the expedition as primarily an initiative of Pedrarias; alternatively, he might try to take it over. In addition to

these considerations there was the almost certain risk that the expedition would disintegrate of itself. Many of his veterans, the hard core of his company, had lost much by reason of their friendship with him; they could not be expected to forgo the chance to recoup their fortunes in the residencia. They would go to Darién, and so would the greater part of their companions, who would want to ingratiate themselves with the incoming captain general and see what opportunities offered under his aegis.

Turning these things over in his mind, Balboa called a conference of his closest collaborators—"honorable men," Andagoya says, who he thought could be trusted to put the expedition before anything else. They met in the evening, in Balboa's hut, and evolved a simple plan, which went as follows:

Valdarrábano, Garabito, Muñoz, Botello, and Archdeacon Pérez would go to Darién to report progress and ask for aid. One of them, however, would push ahead to Acla, gain Balboa's house in secret, find out if Sosa had arrived, and backtrack to inform the others. If "Pedrarias, my lord" (the form of reference proper to a father-in-law) had not yet been supplanted, the delegates would proceed to Santa María, where, it was hoped, they would find help and encouragement. If, on the other hand, Sosa was already in residence, they were to turn back at once. Balboa would then take the expedition to found a settlement at Chepavare.

This was the extent of Balboa's "plot." Even Andagoya, the Governor's criado, and Tobilla, who was evidently free with charges and criticism as a rule, had nothing more damaging to record. The details which Oviedo recites as fact turn out to have been gleaned from hostile testimony in Balboa's trial, and will be considered in that context.

A settlement was obviously essential; its absence was Balboa's greatest weakness, and, once established, it could not be readily abandoned, much less abolished. Chepavare must have been selected for it with Albítez in mind, for with the news about the new Governor had come information that Albítez' license had been granted, and it was known that he had proposed to make his headquarters in Chepo. Chepavare was about fifteen miles from Chepo on the way to Panamá; if Albítez was still bent on his plan, he would find a prior establishment there inconvenient, to say the least.

The emissaries left with an escort of thirty-five men. Luis Botello was chosen to go ahead to Acla; entering the village after dark, he was spotted by a night watchman, arrested as a suspicious character, and hauled before the local magistrate. The magistrate was Francisco Benítez, the onetime *compañero* whose crass behavior to Nicuesa Balboa had punished with the lash. Seven years or so was no great time for a Spaniard to hold a grudge. Benítez extracted Botello's story from him, put him in irons, and happily informed Pedrarias of the affair.

The rest of the committee, hearing nothing from Botello, concluded rightly that Pedrarias was still in office, and wrongly, that they could advance with confidence. They went on to Acla, and were promptly detained.

Here was Pedrarias' pretext. After consultation with Puente, he hurried to Acla, leaving to the Treasurer the congenial task of compiling a bill of accusal calculated to damn Balboa from the outset of his career to date. He then wrote to his prospective victim "very delightfully, as a father," inviting him to come to talk over matters of common interest which would be to the advantage of the expedition. Balboa received this charming epistle early in December; if Casas is right, while engaged in an excursion to the island of Tortuga(?). To his simple mind it meant no more than it said, and he was eager to comply. Lest this seem artless to the point of stupidity, it must be kept in mind that Balboa was as ignorant of what had happened to his emissaries as he was of his father-in-law's sentiments and intentions. It is, however, regrettable that he was not a believer in astrology. Had he been truly superstitious, he might have guessed at a hidden menace, for he had been given a sign.

Years before, Messer Codro had sketched for him a certain conjunction of planets, and given him a solemn warning: When the stars stand *thus*—the Italian had said—you will be in mortal danger; if you escape, you will become one of the greatest captains in the Indies, but if not, you will be utterly destroyed. About the time Pedrarias' summons was delivered, Balboa saw the heavenly portent, and laughed at it. It only showed, he exclaimed gaily, how foolish it was to put one's faith in astrologers. Why, he had never been in better case in all his life. A day or so later he set out for Acla.

Among those who went with him were Andagoya, Bartolomé Hurtado, Andrés de Segovia (late of the Governor's guard) and the men who had brought Pedrarias' letter. The couriers were probably uninformed as to the scope of Pedrarias' intentions, but they knew that he was in a dangerous mood, and, of course, that the representatives of the South Sea Company were in custody. After a little they broke down and told Balboa. They risked a great deal in doing so; it must have been rather deflating when Balboa brushed aside their warnings, cheerfully replying that there could be nothing more than a misunderstanding, which would be dispelled as soon as he talked with the Governor.

Balboa may have felt more dubious about the triumph of virtue when, before reaching the way station, he met a heavily armed posse commanded by Pizarro, come to conduct him as a prisoner to Acla. Somewhat shaken, he addressed its leader reproachfully: "What does this mean, Francisco Pizarro? Not so were you wont to come forth to meet me!" Pizarro's reply presumably explained that the señor adelantado was to stand trial for treason.

In Acla first impressions were rather encouraging. The settlers welcomed him in a body. He was confined at first in the house of Juan de Castañeda, which, while less comforting than his own home, was much more so than the common jail to which he was later relegated. Hurtado was sent to the Pacific as interim commander, instead of some ambitious outsider. And Pedrarias came to visit Balboa, all suavity and reassurance: "Do not be mortified, my son, over this arrest and trial which I have ordered; for I have done so only to satisfy the treasurer, Alonso de la Puente, and to establish your loyalty clearly and beyond cavil."

Before long the gloves were off. In a second interview the Governor denounced Balboa furiously: he had betrayed the trust and paternal affection bestowed on him; he had plotted revolt against the King and his appointed representative in the colony. "Since you have sought to rebel against the Crown of Spain," Pedrarias concluded, "there is no reason to treat you longer as a son, but rather, as an enemy. Therefore, expect nothing from me save this, which I now declare."

Balboa defended himself with spirit. The accusations were wholly false, and the proof of his innocence was that he had come to Acla.

Had he ever conceived a plot, he need only have stayed at the Pacific, where he had men, ships and opportunity to put it into effect. Certainly undeveloped lands were not lacking to choose from. Instead, he had come at once, believing in the Governor's sincerity. Stung by the last two observations, Pedrarias flung out and ordered "more irons and guards for Vasco Núñez." The trial proceeded under forced draft to its forgone conclusion.

These were the chief artificers of Balboa's death, apart from Pedrarias and Puente, together with such of their motives as their contemporaries ascribed to them:

Corral: His motives are already known. He was Puente's agent and presented the accusations formulated by the Treasurer and counter-signed by the conformist Contador.

An unnamed sentry: This *compañero* had been on duty outside Balboa's headquarters when the plan was made to ascertain the situation in Darién. According to Casas, a sudden downpour had driven him to shelter under the eaves, when he had overheard, and misinterpreted, a fragment of the conversation within.

Espinosa: He is said to have made a secret pact to take over Balboa's ships and men once the Adelantado had been eliminated. It may be added that the plan was realized.

Garabito: He had been Balboa's companion and confidant, and, as one of the committee from the Pacific, was under arrest. He turned informer under promise of immunity and reward, offered him because of his willingness to lend the prosecution a helping hand. His antipathy to Balboa, a recent growth unguessed—need one say?—by its object, derived quite naturally from the fact that he had done a wrong to Balboa. Or rather, what is still more conducive to vindictiveness, he had tried to do a wrong, and failed. And the cause of it all was the daughter of Chief Chima of Careta.

The little girl had grown up; she was lovely and Balboa's mistress, and Garabito wanted her. (Garabito was an enterprising fellow where other men's women were concerned; in Hispaniola he had been knifed by Cortés for that reason.) In January, when he was in Acla with the Adelantado, he had done his best to break her resistance, telling her that she would soon be cast off; her lord had married the Governor's daughter. The argument was not without merit, for the Indian women

must have noted with disapproval the narrow exclusiveness of Spanish wives. But the girl merely repulsed her unwelcome suitor, and referred the whole affair to Balboa.

Balboa behaved as might be expected: he administered a sharp rebuke to Garabito, and dismissed the matter from his mind. Garabito assuaged his twice-wounded pride by writing to the Governor to point out that Balboa's affection and consideration for a native was an insult to Pedrarias' daughter and augured ill for his conduct as a husband, and, it is said, also to accuse his chief of subversive ambitions. Such a letter would explain why he was approached at once to serve the prosecution. No other of Balboa's companions (except the befuddled sentry) is known to have testified against him; indeed, no other adverse evidence, as distinct from the official accusations, is mentioned anywhere.

If evidence was scanty, not so the accusations. One packet included every criminal charge brought in Balboa's residencia, exhumed by order of Pedrarias.¹ There were those compiled by Puente with the collaboration of Corral, a certainly meaty compendium. There were charges that Balboa was guilty of "crimes, excesses, violence, and abuses . . . attempted or committed against the Indians"; specifically, that he had impressed innumerable natives to bring supplies from Acla, and that five hundred of them had died from overwork. (Casas says he was privately informed that the true number of victims was over two thousand.) Finally, there were the allegations concerning the recent "plot." Puente's composition, like the record of Pedrarias' secret inquiry of 1514 and those of the residencia, is not extant, and the records of the present trial soon disappeared, but one illuminating document has been preserved. This is an extraordinary recital of Balboa's crimes dictated by Pedrarias. It scorns details and supporting evidence, but in its sweeping way it appears to cover everything that could possibly—or, for that matter, impossibly—be alleged against the Adelantado.

Pedrarias had hoped to leave the onus of accusal on others, and to keep his instructions for a death sentence purely oral. When forced to go on record, however, the result was a masterpiece of misrepresentation. Much of it is absurd, a prize item being a passage which attributes Hojeda's misfortunes to Balboa, but on the whole it can be

judged as well by its omissions as by its statements. Purporting to be a précis of Balboa's life in the colony, it omits any reference to his appointment as interim captain-general in Darién and totally ignores those as adelantado and Governor—and, of course, the discovery which prompted them. It does refer to him as "the adelantado," but so far as any mention of his rights and privileges, of the King's instructions and the Hieronymites' orders is concerned, the title might have been a nickname bestowed in infancy. Vasco Núñez, in fact, appears as an upstart compañero who but for Pedrarias' forbearance would have been long since condemned to the extreme penalty, and whose command at the South Sea was purely by Pedrarias' favor.

The basic crimes for which Balboa deserved to die were, according to Pedrarias, insurrection, usurpation, sabotage, and high treason. The instances cited are these:

Balboa had been the chief cause of "the departure and death of Governor Diego de Nicuesa and of Bachiller Martín Fernández de Enciso and of the other governors who have come to these realms."

He had starved to death the veedor, Alonso Pérez, and then possessed himself of the veedor's stamp. (Pérez, who did not leave Castile until after June 5, 1510, died in Santa María on April 15, 1511. His death was known in Hispaniola and Spain, but no one suggested that Balboa was remotely responsible for it, or that his official stamp should have been buried with him.)

He had "maliciously and with intent to deceive" misled Pedrarias with false information and counsel, contrary to the interests of the Crown and the colony, and had thus brought about all the misfortunes, deaths, and failures of the entradas under armada captains.

Sent at his own insistence to conduct an expedition to Dabaibe, he had failed miserably because of his "notorious incompetence," by reason of which the colony was plunged into "hardship, trial, and want."

He was responsible for Tavira's death and the failure of the entrada (because he had talked so much of the riches of the upper Atrato), and hence, for the "unprecedented hardship and penury and debt" which resulted to the colony. (It will be remembered that Tavira paid his way to the tune of 8000 pesos, and that the colony had just been enriched by nearly a hundred thousand pesos in gold

and slaves; another 7800 pesos was declared from mines at about the same time.)

Balboa, not yet acquitted of the grave charges in his residencia, had "without Their Highnesses' license and authority, or mine," sent to Hispaniola and Cuba for troops, thereby provoking "great scandal and tumult in the city"; and but for his arrest at that time "would have rebelled and contrived to go away secretly as best he could, and he so attempted and endeavored."

He had grossly mistreated the Indians, in violation of Pedrarias' instructions and desires.

Balboa, being most guilty of the accusations brought by Enciso, and having "committed and perpetrated many crimes for which he deserved the gravest punishment," had been spared by Pedrarias in a magnanimous effort to transform him into a loyal servitor of the King. He had cynically betrayed the trust and comfort consistently given him by the Governor, repaying them with trickery and evil deeds.

Finally, Balboa had crowned years of indiscipline and treachery by shameless revolt. By Pedrarias' generosity he had been given the sixty men brought by Garabito and three hundred more of the finest troops; he had received the most patient encouragement; every effort had been made to reform his evil nature by kindness. The result had been black treason to the King and his representatives in Castilla del Oro.

There was one awkward weakness in the Governor's exposé. Why, when he had been convinced from the beginning that Vasco Núñez was a dangerous criminal and incompetent to boot, had he (a) resisted sending him to Spain for judgment, (b) accepted him as counselor, (c) relieved him of the criminal charges of the residencia, (d) made him captain of an expedition to Dabaibe? And—a more embarrassing question—why, just after receipt of what he claimed was proof of Balboa's duplicity and intention to rebel, had he married his daughter to him? And why did he then entrust him with the finest men in the colony for an expedition to the Pacific?

Pedrarias realized that something would have to be done about these glaring inconsistencies. Yet the facts which could account for them—the Sovereign's grants and favor to Balboa, and the exploits which provoked them; the chief justice's nol-pros conclusions as to

the criminal counts in the residencia; even the considerations born of the change of regime in Spain—were precisely those to be deleted at all costs. Thus, he could only insert long and unconvincing passages to the effect that his lenience, support, and bestowal of his child had been all a selfless endeavor to further the interests of the Crown and the well-being of the colony: in short, a noble sacrifice, basely frustrated. As explanations, they would not have satisfied a toddling child, but in the circumstances they were the best Pedrarias could find.

After reading this document Andagoya's laconic statement of Pedrarias' motives has a special flavor: The Governor was angry because Balboa had not sent him any slaves, and he did not like him anyway.

XXXI

THE case against Balboa, despite the plethora of accusation, hung on the alleged rebellion—or rather, on the allegedly intended rebellion—of the previous month. And although Oviedo says that he was also condemned for what he had done to Nicuesa and Enciso, the statement appears to be a wishful supposition rather than fact. According to the only direct record of the decision—a declaration by the chief justice himself—judgment was exclusively on the count of the recent “plot.”

A treasonable conspiracy which consisted in sending to find out if a new governor had arrived and, if he had, in avoiding contact with him until a settlement had been established, was scarcely adequate for Pedrarias' and Puente's purposes as it stood. Even the most willing court would experience a certain embarrassment in pronouncing sentence of death on such grounds, particularly when the accused was carrying out a royal mandate in territory where he had life tenure as adelantado for the King. The affair had to be embellished, at least enough to show that Balboa, who obviously had not revolted, meditated doing so.

It was therefore charged that the scheme had been for the messengers to return to headquarters with the glad announcement that Vasco Núñez had been named Governor of the whole land—or as Oviedo reported it, more picturesquely, they were to re-enter the camp shouting: “A reward! A reward for good tidings! Adelantado Vasco Núñez de Balboa is Governor of Tierra Firme!” They would then back up the proclamation with faked dispatches. Whereupon Balboa, “by force or guile,” would make off with the expeditionaries and the ships to set himself up somewhere else in defiant independence. It was added that the archdeacon had been instructed to bring back any non-conformist members of the emissaries’ escort in chains, which seems a large order for one priest.

That this was an infantile production, as full of holes as a grid, is beside the point: it was not too childish to send five men to the block. However, there is little object in discussing it, since we are told that the colonists—who undoubtedly explored every cranny of the circumstances of this *cause célèbre*—held it to be false. In fact, of all the accusations recorded against Balboa, the only ones that must be weighed are those regarding his treatment of the Indians. These are important: not because they figured in his death, but because if true, either his reputation and his own averments were a gigantic hoax, or he suffered a sea-change at the Pacific to become exactly the kind of captain he had consistently deplored.

The first proposition is ruled out by the evidence: it is inconceivable that Balboa’s known behavior was all a wily charade, acted with the connivance of a large number of native chieftains and persisted in when, after Pedrarias’ coming, it could do him nothing but harm in Santa María. But what of the second? People do change, all too frequently for the worse.

Now, there was nothing seraphic, or even starry-eyed, about Vasco Núñez de Balboa. It is impossible to be simultaneously a conquistador and a saintly pacifist. He had an independent mind, but it was still a mind of his century, not a fantastic throw-forward, so to speak, to the extreme of twentieth-century liberalism, and it was molded to the tenets and institutions of his time. He was convinced that Christian conquest of the Indies was God’s will, and Castile His instrument. Without doubt he would have considered many of Casas’ labor laws

(e.g., two pounds of meat a day for miners, three hours off for lunch, only native overseers) as kindness carried to excess, and the abolition of *encomiendas* to be thoroughly objectionable. When force was necessary to his ends, he used it without compunction, and he approved of enslaving cannibal or hopelessly recalcitrant tribes—and, of course, Africans, a point on which Casas warmly agreed.

His distinction was that he believed that the Spanish mission in the New World should be carried out with a minimum of oppression and dislocation. It was the distinction between Fagin and an essentially amiable Victorian parent who, accepting the cane as a necessary means of education, yet preferred to resort to it as seldom and as lightly as possible. Balboa said frankly that in his opinion consideration and kindness toward the Indians were good tactics, but he would not have thought so unless this jibed with his inclinations. He had the same attitude toward his own people. He had also declared that kindness was peculiarly “expedient” in the conquest and settlement of new territories—which is what he was proposing to do at the time he was said to have been perpetrating wholesale outrages.

In one particular he did change. At least so far as is known, his denunciations of abuses ceased when he became Pedrarias’ son-in-law. He must have heard of Espinosa’s brutal excesses in Coiba; there is no evidence that he commented on them. Although one can hardly see him refusing to marry the Governor’s daughter, the fact remains that he *could* have done so, sacrificing his rights and ambitions in a noble gesture of protest—which, incidentally, would assuredly have been his last. It would have meant turning over the Pacific coast to the sort of exploitation he decried, but it cannot be claimed that this is what decided him. The indication is clear that he sold out his liberty to criticize for that to develop his *gobernación* in security.

When we come to his subsequent behavior, however, the evidence is that his character and methods did not alter. It is significant that when Pedrarias wished to punish the Indians of Careta for the killing of Olano, he had to send someone else to do it, and that, only after Balboa was well away from Acla.¹ On the other hand, this is no answer to the accusations to be examined, which were limited to his actions at the South Sea.

The charges were these: (1) that Balboa was consistently ruthless,

killing, capturing, and branding as slaves “innumerable” Indians (Pedrarias); (2) that he plundered, “probably” slaughtered and took captive large numbers of Indians, especially in Terarequí and Chochama—in the latter place, from a desire to avenge Morales (Casas); (3) that he sold Indians from the Pacific in Santa María, with or without a declaration as to their status (Oviedo); (4) that he caused the death of five hundred—or of two thousand—natives from overwork in bringing supplies from Acla (Oviedo, Casas).

Items 1 and 2 can be to some extent discounted: Pedrarias’ mendacity on other points weakens anything he says, and he gives no instances, while Casas’ general statements are the offhand kind he made when he did not know just what had happened and suspected the worst. We will look at them later. Item 3, about the sale of slaves, is easily disposed of. The official records of such sales have been preserved, and they prove that not one Indian from Balboa’s expedition was declared or sold as a slave so long as he was alive. The only Indians from the South Sea Company who were ever auctioned in Santa María were sent after Balboa’s death and by Pedrarias’ authorization.² But the fourth charge is reasonably definite and better substantiated. Both Casas and Oviedo heard it in Barcelona in 1519. This was when Pedrarias’ first communications about Balboa’s “crimes” were received at Court, which by itself would seem enough to put it on the fiction list. But Casas cites as his source a confidential memorandum written by Quevedo, who was then in Spain, and says that the “true” figure of over two thousand killed in the work of portage was given to him by Quevedo’s private secretary.

This would seem very nearly conclusive. But is it?

“The cleric,” as Casas liked to call himself, was then engaged in a no-quarter fight against the agents of evil (anyone who disagreed with him) and in pursuit of a government-financed concession to colonize in his own way a thousand leagues of mainland coast “principally with the end of throwing Pedrarias out of Darién and all that mainland.”³ He proposed to do this with fifty estimable friends from Hispaniola, several hundred Negro slaves, and some farmers. His Flemish protectors were extremely helpful, but otherwise the scheme was opposed, and Quevedo was one of the opposers. Although the Bishop later endorsed it, Casas was still angry enough after fifty years to

present him as a devil's advocate of dubious honesty ("it was believed that Diego Velázquez greased the Lord Bishop's palm").

There seems to be no doubt but that the Bishop did prepare another of his memorials exposing the cruelties to which the Indians had been subjected, or that, although it was confidential to the Throne, Casas' friends showed it to him before it was delivered to the King: he gives a graphic picture of taking it to the light of a taper to run through its pages. But the memorial is not extant, and the only bit of it Casas recalled was the item about Balboa. The questions then are: Was Casas' recollection in 1560 of a document hastily perused one night in 1519 infallible, though it was faulty on other things of that time? Did Quevedo single out the man he had championed, to whose qualities he had sworn by his holy consecration, for attack on what can only have been hearsay report—hearsay from people whose virtue and veracity he had impugned for years? If Casas portrays his own behavior to the Bishop accurately, he was insufferable; certainly he was identified with the foreign group detested by Castilian churchmen.⁴ How was it that Quevedo's private secretary was passing on to him damaging information which his chief had suppressed?

This said, the accusation remains. Does the statement that two thousand Indians, or even five hundred, died as porters stand up in the light of the facts we know?

Everyone agrees that the heaviest loads were carried by the expeditionaries themselves, both in the initial transfer and in the second major transportation of material after the flood at Río de la Balsa. No lumber was transported after September 1517, when native porters were lacking; it is repeatedly said that the anchors were carried by a crew of three Spaniards. Almost no provisions were taken from Acla (where the supply was small), because the expedition lived mainly off the country. This leaves little more than what might be called oddments: small gear, sailcloth, the cordage and pitch of which Andagoya speaks. And up to the time Balboa was summoned by Pedrarias, the quantity of these brought to the Gulf was moderate: Balboa's ships were very small and, since they are described as *fustas*, lightly rigged; only two of them had been completed, and for those on the ways in the Pearl Islands he was still organizing transportation of material. The standard load for an Indian porter was fifty pounds, and it is

sufficient to see what they carry today to explode the notion that packing it for a week over a trail improved, it was said, to the point where much of it was fit for horses could kill them.

No one suggests that every Indian on the job dropped dead. Even supposing a fifty-per-cent mortality, and that each conscripted Indian made only a single trip—an absurd hypothesis—and restricting the victims to five hundred, twenty-five *tons* of rope, pitch, and miscellaneous stuff would have been delivered; while by the same yardstick Casas' "true" figure of two thousand killed would give 200,000 pounds of freight transported. Bigger loads or a lower mortality would indicate quantities of porters and supplies before which even the cleric must have boggled.

Again—and this is pertinent to the general accusations—Balboa was operating in a populous region previously provoked to violent hatred of the Spaniards. Its tribes were allied and had demonstrated that they could be remorseless fighters when aroused: after Morales' rout, entradas had left the region severely alone. Balboa spent a year there. For the first five months only a third of his men were usually in camp at one time; the parties which went to Acla or foraged in the hinterland sometimes numbered around sixty men, sometimes no more than half that. In Chochama, scene of Morales' worst excesses and most crushing defeat, Balboa landed with a hundred men, but the number was immediately reduced by about a third when he sent the party to Darién with the October remittance of gold. Yet there is no mention of hostile Indians. In the whole fifteen months that Balboa passed at the Pacific his expedition did not suffer a single casualty.

Finally, we have the official record of the plunder. In the ten months before setting out from the Balsa, Balboa sent to Santa María 899 pesos and 3 tomines of gold, in five remittances averaging 180 pesos each, plus ten pesos' worth of pearls—results which Pedrarias must have attributed to willful negligence. In October he forwarded 2331½ pesos, bringing his total take in gold since starting from Darién to 3231 pesos. In all the accusations formulated by Pedrarias, Puente, and Co., there is no suggestion that Balboa embezzled or falsified the proceeds of his entrada; this, then, is all he got.

Reasoning from the evidence, one arrives at the following conclusions: that Balboa rounded up Indians for service, but that he did

not abuse them, much less slaughter them or sell them; that if any villages were occupied by force, it was the unvindictive kind, soon over, which the Indians understood and forgave; that he exacted tribute, but within rather modest limits. In other words, he continued to exercise that moderation which even the milder of Pedrarias' henchmen recognized to be political suicide, and remained the same sensible, fundamentally humane imperialist whose principles had made him a satisfaction to Fernando and a nuisance to the Governor.

Balboa's trial ran concurrently with that of his so-called accomplices Valdarrábano, Muñoz, Botello, Garabito, Argüello, and Father Pérez. Argüello had not been party to the scheme to send an exploratory mission to Acla, for the good reason that he was not then at the Pacific. He had, however, been Balboa's partner and representative; he had received letters from Balboa (contents unspecified), and at the time Pedrarias was refusing to decide either for or against a prorogation of the *asiento*, he had written to the Adelantado counseling him to persist in his enterprise and reminding him that it had been commanded by the Hieronymites to the service of God and the King. It was Pedrarias' habit to intercept, and frequently to impound, the colonists' private correspondence, and he had obtained possession of Argüello's letter. On these grounds Argüello was declared a traitor.

Since they were token trials, they went quickly. Before January twelfth, Espinosa had concluded them and pronounced all the defendants guilty. Garabito was pardoned in recompense for his helpful depositions; Balboa and the others promptly appealed to the Throne.

At this point Espinosa hesitated. He could judge a capital offense, but he could not legally pronounce sentence, much less execute it. The right of appeal to the King and his Council had been guaranteed to the colonists,⁵ and execution of the death penalty had been expressly prohibited in Castilla del Oro, except in fulfillment of a sentence emanated by this supreme judicial authority. Execution and public autopsy of a petty pilferer had been safe enough: the wretch was quite unimportant. Execution of Their Highnesses' Adelantado and Governor of the Coast of the South Sea was another matter. Even in Castile an adelantado could not be condemned save by the Sovereign and the Royal Council.

The alcalde mayor, his eye on the ships and men of the South Sea Company, was not averse to getting rid of their inconvenient commander. But he was understandably reluctant to take the responsibility for it. And he knew quite well that Pedrarias' oral instructions ("since he has sinned, let him die for it") would be no protection if a scandal developed. He therefore summoned the Governor to declare, before witnesses and by notarial act, what should be done with the prisoners and their appeals. He was careful to make clear in his writ that the trial had been held by command of the Governor, and that conviction had been on the count of contemplated rebellion. As to further proceedings the injunction was entirely neutral:

In order to be able to pass definitive sentence, His Lordship must consider whether he order that at least the case concerning the Adelantado Vasco Núñez in particular be remitted to Their Highnesses or the members of their most high Council, in view of the quality and title and eminence of his person; or, if he order that the Alcalde Mayor consider it and determine in all things according to the findings of the court, without making the said remand; or, what it be that he order with regard to the aforesaid.

Espinosa was credited, by Casas, with entreating the Governor to spare Balboa. Neither the text of the writ nor the alcalde's behavior bears this out. Espinosa had sole authority in judicial matters; he was empowered, or rather, obligated, to remand the prisoners to the King and the Royal Council. If he wanted mercy, he had only to do his duty under the law.

Pedrarias must have found his position infuriating; he had either to allow the appeals and fail in his objective, or subscribe to a legal public document which made him unequivocally responsible for the killing of a royal adelantado in blatant defiance of the law. But he had gone too far to turn back; it would be fatal now to allow Balboa to testify in Spain. He accordingly dictated the declaration of Balboa's crimes which we have already examined. Its conclusion—long, repetitious, and indicative of mounting emotion—was a categorical denial of the appeals and an urgent order to Espinosa to sentence Vasco Núñez and the other accused "with all haste and without any delay whatsoever . . . without stay or reprieve . . . to the extreme rigor

of the law; and having thus declared sentence . . . that you carry it to due effect and actual execution.”⁶

Espinosa hesitated no longer—or only long enough to compose another document setting forth his remarkable merits and a pressing request that he be appointed to the soon-to-be-vacated post of commander of the South Sea expedition, and to have it signed by a number of the expeditionaries. Other petitions presented by deputies of Balboa’s company, asking for pardon or admittance of the appeals, were set aside. A day or so after the *alcalde*’s injunction and the Governor’s reply, Vasco Núñez and his friends were condemned to death.

Sometime in the next week, between January 13 and 21, 1519, the Governor’s commands were fulfilled.⁷ Father Pérez alone escaped, thanks to his cloth; he was turned over to the dean—a particular friend of Corral—who sent him in fetters to Spain. There he was acquitted, and in time he returned to Castilla del Oro. For the others, there indeed was “no stay and no reprieve.”

The executions were, of course, public. They took place in the plaza.

It is easy to imagine the setting, so like a thousand tropical American hamlets today: the village square, overlarge because the prescribed size was calculated for eventual cities; the bordering houses, low, wide-eaved, standing shoulder to shoulder, flush with the street; the simple church; the green frame of forested hills, and over all that cobalt-and-cream sky which in those latitudes is an almost obtrusive part of every scene. And one can visualize the rest of the picture—the colonists in many-colored dress, the awed Indians huddled in the background, the flash and glitter of arms and armor where soldiers guarded a clear space at one side of the plaza. In the center of the space stood the block. It was an old, clumsy block, we are told, and before it stood a wooden trough to catch the severed heads.

The crowd was not large. There were not enough colonists in Castilla del Oro to pack a plaza; some were in Santa María, and over two hundred were at the Pacific. But we may be sure that everyone in Acla was in evidence—everyone, that is, but Pedrarias. There was none of the grisly holiday humor usually displayed at public executions in that day (and in our own); the people were uneasy and

affronted. "No one believed that Vasco Núñez was guilty," and from the Governor's references to the continuing state of ferment and insurrection in the "city," one may gather that they were kept in check only by a considerable show of force. They had probably been waiting for hours when Balboa appeared between his guards, "walking valorous and serene."

Balboa cheated his enemies of the cream of their triumph, for they had been unable to break his spirit. They could only kill him. As he advanced, the public crier went before, crying: "This is the sentence which the King our lord and Pedrarias his lieutenant in his name command be executed on this man, as a traitor and a usurper of the lands subject to the royal Crown . . ." and more of the same tenor.

"Vasco Núñez, hearing this as they led him forth, looked up and spoke: 'It is a lie, and perfidy, to say that I was in rebellion . . . Never has such a thing passed through my mind, nor did I think that such could be imagined of me. On the contrary, I have ever desired to serve the King as a loyal vassal, and to increase his dominions to the utmost of my capacity and strength.'

"His declaration availed him not at all. And thus, he having confessed and partaken of communion and put his soul in order as well as the time and the event allowed, they cut off his head."

The other victims were forced to watch. One by one they too were beheaded: first Valdarrábano the notary, then Botello, then Muñoz. When it came time to kill Argüello, it was already twilight. The shocked and sickened colonists fell on their knees, imploring mercy; God himself, they cried, had sent the night to put an end to slaughter. "Pedrarias was nowise softened, but rather replied with great passion": if they wanted that fellow to live, they must execute him instead. Argüello was beheaded. "And in this manner, amid the anguish and grief of all, and even some tears, those five perished that day." "And a pole was raised, on which the head of the adelantado was exposed for many days.

"And in a house that stood ten or twelve paces from the place where they were beheaded, one after the other like sheep, was Pedrarias, watching them between the canes which formed the wall of the house."

In blood and infamy a chapter of history had ended.

Epilogue

THERE is little more to tell of Darién. The sun and the birds had not finished with the gory thing nailed to the post in Acla before Pedrarias was at the Pacific to claim Balboa's gobernación. On January twenty-seventh he took ritual possession in Pequeo; two days later he performed an analogous ceremony at Terarequí, which he renamed Isla de Flores. He then returned to Acla and Darién,¹ and in May crossed again to the Pearl Islands, while Espinosa took a force by land to a rendezvous in Panama. In July he reluctantly handed over Balboa's ships and part of his company to Espinosa for another expedition to Coiba. In August he founded Panama.

(Seven years later he was capable of presenting the following statement in his residencia: that after Espinosa's first entrada to Parisa he, Pedrarias, "took the said troops and again prepared everything necessary, which was in the year 1517, and came to this coast of the south sea and pacified many of its chiefs and founded the city of panama and that of nata and built certain ships which he sent to explore westward . . .")

Pedrarias' choice of a site for his future capital, a spot a mile or so east of Old Panama, was possibly determined by the fact that it was just inside the domain of Chief Pacora, who—then aged thirteen—was easily held to complaisance. There is no other explanation for it since, as the colonists pointed out in vigorous protest, the location was

harborless, unproductive, and singularly unhealthy. The Governor overruled all objections. On August 15, 1519, he marked out the plan of the "city," and named it *Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Panamá*. He then returned to Darién, bent on quick dismantlement of Santa María.

At this point his program was held up by the refusal of the vecinos to abandon their homes and farms. As it turned out, the setback was not serious, for Lope de Sosa, arriving at Darién in May 1520, most opportunely died the same night. Pedrarias was happy to provide an elegant funeral, and to offer the most winning hospitality to Sosa's son, nephew, and other prominent followers. His most lavish attentions were reserved for Sosa's *alcalde mayor*, Alarconcillo. Within a month Alarconcillo, rescued from official limbo by an appointment as "lieutenant general of government" and quite literally eating from Pedrarias' hand, was warmly recommending that all Sosa's powers and privileges be vested in that noble servant of the Crown, Pedrarias Dávila, who "discovered the South Sea at great cost, and founded there the city of Panamá." At the same time, to the acid amusement of the colony, it was announced that Alarconcillo would take the *residencia* of his new patron, as of everyone else in official position. The royal officials refused to recognize Alarconcillo's authority, and the Governor's *residencia* was postponed; the other *residencias* were held in June and July.

Meanwhile, Doña Isabel had been sent off to Spain, her baggage heavy with the gold and pearls accumulated by her husband in six acquisitive years. Their young son Juan, who seems to have joined them a year or so earlier, stayed with his father.² To get the fortune safely away before it could be subject to the investigations and claims incidental to a change of administration had been an elementary precaution; besides, the *contador* of Hispaniola, Gil González Dávila, had turned up in Acla early in the year with a pouchful of unwelcome warrants and instructions, among them an order to audit and settle all Crown accounts in the colony from 1514 to date.

At the time the news of Sosa's death reached Spain (late in August) circumstances were favorable for Pedrarias. Charles, now Holy Roman Emperor, was again absent, and his Flemish counselors with him; the *comunero* risings which rocked Castile had begun; neither

well-meaning Adrian (left as Regent) nor the new grand chancellor, Gattinara, an Italian, was equipped to handle colonial affairs, and Fonseca was enjoying a return of influence; in the picture of the Indies, fabulous Mexico made Castilla del Oro—which so far had not produced one maravedí in revenue to set against years of trouble, controversy, and expense—look unimportant, something that could be attended to at a more convenient time. On September 7, 1520, Pedrarias was confirmed as Governor; three days later, Alarconcillo was authorized to conduct the residencias.

(Doña Isabel, whose remarkable talents as a lobbyist, backed by the gold she had brought from the Isthmus, were extraordinarily effective in Castile, is usually credited with achieving this victory. If so, she must have reached Spain before the date generally given for her arrival, that is, the early days of September. She was a clever, active, and determined woman, but she could not have reached Court in Valladolid, much less secured a decision and a brevet, in three or four days.)

Due to the comunero rebellion, there was a long interval in which no ships came to Castilla del Oro; the cédulas of September 1520 appear to have been delivered in Darién on July 1, 1522. Pedrarias' residencia was held in August and September. Its course was smoothed by advertisement of an impending distribution of Indians among the colonists: a neat, if obvious device which was most effective, especially as the awards were not made until after the residencia had been brought to a happy conclusion. On October seventh, Pedrarias emerged from his figurative ordeal whitewashed pure as any lily; on October twelfth, the encomiendas were signed and sealed.

In the latter part of 1525 it was learned that another Governor, Pedro de los Ríos, had been appointed for Castilla del Oro. What happened then is strangely familiar. Pedrarias had sent Captain Francisco Hernández de Córdoba to subdue and colonize Nicaragua—the object being to snatch the territory before Gil González, who had just explored it, could get it as a gobernación. Now, acting on reports that Hernández contemplated revolt, Pedrarias went to Nicaragua, had the captain beheaded out of hand, and when Ríos arrived was well ensconced in a region outside his successor's jurisdiction. Again it worked; and again full success came with the sudden demise of a

regularly appointed governor before he could occupy his post—in this case, that of Gil González. In 1527, Pedrarias was named Governor of Nicaragua. Old, infirm, frequently bedridden, he pursued unabated a career which might be called, Oviedo-style, “of the four g’s”: greed, grab, graft, and gangsterism. He died in office, aged nearly ninety, on March 6, 1531.

Pedrarias’ long survival was a political marvel as well as a physical one. He was denounced—at safe distance, in Spain, but with increasing boldness—for practically every kind of misconduct possible to an executive: extortion, malversion, fraud, intimidation, falsification of records, interception of mails, illicit pre-emption of land and encomiendas, arrogation to himself of royal preserves (specifically, Isla Rica and Otoque with their pearl fisheries and over eight hundred Indians), systematic brutality to the natives and mistreatment of Crown representatives, an organized private slave trade in “free” Indians, attempts at forceful annexation of the contested territories of Honduras and Guatemala—to name only the high points. Oviedo declared that two attempts to assassinate him (one nearly successful) were made on the Governor’s order; rumor said that the deaths of both Quevedo’s successor, Bishop Peraza, and Espinosa’s successor, Salaya, were from poison administered at his instigation. In the residencia he underwent after Ríos took over, despite a ruling secured by Doña Isabel which ordered that everything prior to 1522 be excluded from it, investigation was on forty-seven counts of malfeasance, resulting in indictment on twenty-three—exclusive of Oviedo’s accusations and other personal complaints. Yet he emerged unscathed, and was favored to the end.

The triumph belonged to that accomplished lady, Doña Isabel. Evidently subscribing to the theory that the best defense is to attack, she made her most exaggerated requests for concessions and rewards when her husband was under particularly heavy fire, and events proved her right: she not only saved Pedrarias; she obtained for him special recompense. And after his death, when she claimed utter destitution, she received unusual grants and allowances in recognition of his services. Her claim to abject poverty could have been rather easily disproved, but it was not contested.³ She was, by that time, an intimate friend of Charles’ young Empress.

Doña Isabel did not get quite all she asked for: a requested Nicaraguan fief of 1700 square miles was whittled down to a paltry 488 square miles with 2000 Indian vassals, and her plan to have her son, Arias Gonzalo (aged twenty-two), succeed his father was turned down. These, however, were only temporary checks. A few years later the gobernación of Nicaragua was bestowed on her son-in-law, Rodrigo de Contreras y de la Hoz. Contreras had married María, Balboa's phantom bride, who seems to have been not unworthy of her heredity; together they made the colony something close to a family preserve. Doña Isabel rounded out her achievements by marrying her youngest daughter to Hernando de Soto, when that caballero returned from Peru with 100,000 pesos of gold, and aiding him to secure the governorship of Cuba and Florida. Finally, Arias Gonzalo was created Count of Puñoenrostro.

Whatever passing anxiety Pedrarias may have experienced over exposure of his sins, he had no serious worry with regard to his treatment of Balboa. The Governor had things well in hand in Castilla del Oro. The almost total omission of any reference to Balboa in letters and reports of the years following his execution is so unnatural that it fairly shouts of a taboo laid on the very name of the Adelantado, observance of which was a *sine qua non* of life, liberty, and the pursuit of fortune in the colony. (A typical illustration of how this worked is a declaration of merits submitted in hope of favors by a conquistador whose chief title to consideration was his participation in both Balboa's expeditions to the Pacific. Handling an awkward problem with tact, he glides rapidly over that of discovery and describes the second thus: "Your Lordship commanded that four ships be built at the South Sea, which were built by various compañeros . . .") Any infringements of the taboo were apparently taken care of by the editing of official papers, censorship of private correspondence, and outright subtraction of inconvenient documents. Oviedo asserts that the main reason for the Pedrarias-inspired attempts on his life was that he had read, numbered, and countersigned every page of the records of Balboa's trial. As soon as he released the papers, the court notary rushed with them to Pedrarias in Panama—after which they appear to have been permanently mislaid.

Nevertheless, something got through to Spain. At first the guilt of

Balboa and his co-victims had been accepted on the authority of official reports from Santa María.⁴ But on April 11, 1521, a *cédula* of the Regency ordered that in view of Adelantado Vasco Núñez' great services to the Crown, his Indians were to be given to his brother Gonzalo. It was, of course, ignored (Pedrarias had long since assigned Balboa's Indians to Doña Isabel and a few deserving pets), but Charles reiterated it two years later, after his return to Castile. And on July 4, 1523, the Emperor dictated a *cédula* on the subject which is interesting in more ways than one.

The *cédula* is addressed to "our Governor of Castilla del Oro." In it, Charles states that he has been informed by Gonzalo de Balboa that Pedrarias Dávila, lieutenant general, "caused the said adelantado to be beheaded, out of envy, unjustly and without his being guilty in any way, in order that his services to us in that land, both in colonizing it and in discovering the South Sea at his own cost, might not be evident." After a discussion of the matter in Council, it had been resolved to refer it for judicial action to the Governor of the colony. "Therefore I command you," Charles continued, "to investigate the aforesaid at once, and, having summoned and heard the parties, to render and administer complete and plenary justice so that neither party receive injury of which they have reason to complain."⁵

Beyond showing that the Emperor, after his return to Castile in 1522, was at least disposed to entertain the idea that Balboa's execution was a deliberate miscarriage of justice, the *cédula* is significant for another, and overlooked, feature. It is, beyond question, directed to a Governor of Castilla del Oro who is not Pedrarias—at a time when by all accounts that caballero was in full and unshaken possession of his post. Ergo, there is a large hole in the accounts, and another *cédula* of neglected significance indicates what is missing. This is dated April 19, 1523, and it is addressed to a lieutenant general of Castilla del Oro named "peran zures de auilanzo" (Pedro Anzures de Avilanzo), instructing him to attend to certain matters previously confided to Lieutenant General Pedrarias. For some reason the appointment of Avilanzo was vacated (Doña Isabel again?) and another governor was not named until two years later, but the fact remains that in 1523 Pedrarias was, on paper, already supplanted—which explains a minute change in his title that altered its meaning from

“one who governs as deputy of the king” to “deputy governor.”⁶

Valdarrábano's heirs were also active, and since Espinosa was conveniently at hand in Castile, they demanded that he be condemned “to civil and criminal penalties” for his part in the death of Valdarrábano. In consequence, a *cédula* of April 1525 ordered Alarconcillo to send to Spain the original records of the trials together with two authenticated copies, made up into duplicate sets to be dispatched by different ships to ensure their safe receipt. Nothing seems to have come of this. It is probable that Alarconcillo's death took place before it was delivered, and it may be assumed that if Pedrarias was prepared to have Oviedo killed because he had checked the papers in question, he did not now dutifully send them off in triplicate. One may guess that if he had not already destroyed them, the oversight was rectified at this time.

No further action by Balboa's family is known. His brothers were painlessly removed from Spain: warmly recommended by the Emperor to Cabot—still in consideration of Vasco Núñez' signal merits—all three sailed with Cabot's armada to the South Atlantic in 1525, taking a nephew, another Gonzalo, with them. Gonzalo senior was treasurer of the ship *Trinidad* and fourth in line for commander of the expedition. He was killed, with brother Juan, at the Río Paraguay. The youngest brother, Alvar, who was *veedor* of *Trinidad*, got home safely, but, being a peace-loving fellow who hid in his cabin when intraexpeditionary quarrels became violent, he was not the man to battle potentates and powers in a forlorn cause.⁷

In Castilla del Oro the muzzled believers in Balboa's innocence were delighted, and those who had doubted it converted, by a Sign. It was vouchsafed in Acla.

On a Sunday morning in July 1522, Garabito—then Pedrarias' lieutenant in command of the settlement—was standing outside his lodging with a group of colonists, idling away the interval between church and dinner. Near by stood the post on which Balboa's head had been exposed; it now bore a newly affixed notice of Pedrarias' impending *residencia*, generally recognized as a farce designed to exculpate the Governor all along the line. “And there entered on the far side of the plaza fifteen or twenty hacks or mares, and began to graze . . . And, those animals being well distant, there came out

from among them a stallion which had belonged to the Adelantado Vasco Núñez, and his head high, rapidly and without pausing to graze or to study where he was going, after walking more than a hundred paces he came directly to where the notice or edict was posted, and seized hold of it with his teeth two or three times and tore it to pieces. And having done this, he walked . . . directly back to where he had started from.”

When Balboa was killed, Darién was condemned. The vecinos had balked Pedrarias’ plan to abandon it in 1519, and when Oviedo returned in 1520 (much disconcerted by Pedrarias’ accidental continuance in power) he made himself the spearhead of resistance to the Governor on that issue. For a time he seemed successful; Pedrarias, who had the residencia in mind, yielded the point and offered to make Oviedo his deputy in command of Santa María—an offer which the veedor, induced by certain material considerations, very foolishly accepted. He soon realized that he had been duped. The almost effective second try at assassinating him, and still more, the fact that he had contrived to have the would-be murderer punished before Pedrarias’ agent, sent posthaste from Panama, could rescue him, counseled Oviedo to make his escape lest a worse thing befall him. Again in Spain, he obtained in 1525 a cédula which forbade the abandonment of Santa María; by that time, however, it was too late to save it.

Even before Oviedo’s flight many residents of Darién had yielded to the pressures and promises which Pedrarias knew so well how to employ. In 1524 the Governor administered the *coup de grâce*. He went to Darién, persuaded Bishop Peraza to transfer to the dismal hamlet euphemistically designated “the Great City of Panama”—which, incidentally, was not yet a diocese—forced the remaining vecinos to leave, and stripped Santa María of everything in the way of installations and equipment, sending to Panama all that could be transported and destroying the rest. According to Oviedo, destruction of the settlement was an obsession with the Governor because it was, in a sense, a memorial to Balboa.

Thus in September 1524, Santa María del Antigua was a desolation inhabited only by a few people too sick to undertake a journey else-

where—expendables whose fate was a matter of indifference—and by one immovable die-hard: Diego Ribero, the mariner whose timely insubordination had brought about the rescue of Nicuesa and his castaways in 1510. Whereupon, as might have been foreseen, the Indians swooped joyfully on the defenseless remnant, killed Ribero, his household, and the invalids, and gave the wrecked settlement to the flames. In a few months the eager jungle had already reached out to cover the flimsy ruins; quite soon only some choked citrus trees in a patch of second-growth forest remained to mark the site of the capital of the first mainland colony in the Americas.

Santa María was never rebuilt. The name “Darién” was extended to all the territory westward to the Pacific, and in the end passed altogether from the Caribbean province. The true Darién, that of Cemaco and Balboa, is now the Colombian municipality of Acandí. It has 868 buildings in its 2730 square kilometers, and 3261 inhabitants. Outside of banana boats and contrabanders, its communications consist of a postal launch which, weather and other circumstances permitting, makes a weekly trip from Nicoclí, an only slightly less cutoff village on the eastern coast of the Gulf of Urabá about where Bastidas traded with the Urabae and Hojeda founded San Sebastián. Nature still guards its isolation. It has not a mile of road; indeed, the whole political division to which it belongs (the Department of Chocó), stretching south in mountains, swamp, and jungle far beyond the farthest explorations of the captains and *compañeros* of Santa María, has barely a hundred and twenty-five miles of road, recently acquired, although indomitable enterprise is doggedly pushing a highway from Antioquia to the Gulf. Remote, rugged, forest-clad, it is all much as it was nearly four and a half centuries ago, when a few hundred adventurous men from Castile took a corner of it to build a town and shape their arrogant dreams of subjugating half a world.

The two decades which followed the executions in Acla were crowded with dazzling conquests. Spanish exploration and occupation from Mexico to the borders of Chile, with the fantastic riches and internecine rivalries which accompanied them, Spanish circumnavigation of the globe and the resultant controversy with Portugal, Spanish efforts against the challenge of immense territories yet unwon, blazoned the triumphs and trials of the Golden Age. In this vast land-

scape of dominion the vanished pinpoint which had been Darién seemed lost indeed.

That it still shines in men's minds when other founding settlements are dim or forgotten has little to do with its year-by-year events, which are seldom considered; it is not even because it was the first continental colony in the New World, or because its conquistadores "went out from it for all that was done thereafter." It endures because of Vasco Núñez. If it died with Balboa, it also lives through him—one and indissoluble in achievement, defeat, and that remembrance which is the ultimate guerdon of history.

APPENDICES

Appendices

I

SOME CASTILIAN WEIGHTS AND MEASURES WITH APPROXIMATE EQUIVALENTS

Linear

Dedo .....	.685	inches
Pulgada .....	.914	inches
Palma (12 dedos)	8.22	inches
Pié (12 pulgadas or 16 dedos)	10.968	inches
Codo común (2 palmas)	16.44	inches
Codo real, or de ribera (used in shipbuilding)	23.37	inches
Vara (36 pulgadas or 48 dedos)	32.89	inches
Estado	5.5	feet
Brazo	5.5	feet
League, land or "Castilian" (3 Roman miles)	2.76	statute miles
League, marine or "Portuguese" (4 Roman miles) .	3.68	statute miles

N.B. Today, when the metric system is generally used, the vara is generally considered equivalent to 80 centimeters, and the (land) league to 5 kilometers; a pulgada means an inch. Stevens (1702) reckoned the codo real at 22.687 inches, from a vara of 33 inches.

Weights

Grano	.048	grams
Tomín (12 granos)	.575	grams
Adarne (3 tomines)	1.725	grams
Peso (8 tomines)	4.6	grams
Onza (50 tomines)	28.754	grams
Marco (8 onzas)	230.03	grams
Libra (16 onzas, or 100 pesos)	{ 460.06	grams
	{ 1.014	lbs. avoir.
Arrelde (4 libras)	4.057	lbs. avoir.
Arroba (25 libras)	25.356	lbs. avoir.
Quintal (100 libras)	101.425	lbs. avoir.
Bota or pipa (wine casks containing 27½ arrobas), 750 libras gross	760.686	lbs. avoir.
Tonel (1⅓ botas), 1250 libras gross	1267.81	lbs. avoir.

N.B. The tonel (cask) was used with reference to ships and freight in the same way as the British tun—to which, however, it was not equivalent—and hence usually as a unit, real or conventional, of cubic measurement. See Appendix III.

Liquid Measure

Cuartillo	.53	qts.
Azumbre (4 cuartillos)	2.13	qts.
Cuartilla (2 azumbres)	4.26	qts.
Cántara (4 cuartillas)	4.26	gals., U.S.
Bota or pipa (27½ arrobas, water or wine)	83.45	gals., U.S.
Tonel (1⅓ botas)	139.09	gals., U.S.
Tonel macho—"male" tonel (2 botas or pipas)	166.9	gals., U.S.

Dry Measure

Cuartillo	1.018	dry qts.
Celemín or almud (4 cuartillos)	4.07	dry qts.
Cuartilla (3 celemines)	12.21	dry qts.

Hanega (4 cuartillas), grain 48.864 dry qts.
Halda—sack containing 5 arrobas grain 1.95 bu.

Area

Solar, colonies (lot 50 x 100 piés) 45.7 x 91.4 feet
Solar de caballería (lot 100 x 200 piés) 91.4 x 182.8 feet
Fanega or fanegada—area required for sowing one
 hanega of grain; today, .64 hectare 1.58 acres
Huebra—area which could be ploughed in one day by
 a man with one yoke of oxen

Sources: Leyes (1538), fol. cclxxv; Leyes (1581), Libro V, Título xiii:
“Of Weights and Measures”; Haggard, *Handbook for Translators*; Hamil-
ton, *American Treasure*.

II

CURRENCY AND PRICES

The currency of Castile was reformed and stabilized in June 1497. Thereafter the three standard coins were the *maravedí* (of a copper and silver alloy called *vellón*), which was stipulated as the unit of reckoning in official and commercial transaction, the silver *real*, and the gold *excelente de Granada*, or *ducado* (ducat), 23¾ carats fine. The coinage was authorized also of half, quarter, and eighth reales, of half maravedies called *blancas*, of half and double ducats and (in limited quantity) of pieces of 5, 10, 20, and 50 ducats. The *castellano* was no longer coined, but continued to be a money of account, chiefly in the Indies, as the equivalent of a peso of gold, the hundredth part of a Spanish pound of 460.06 grams. Technically worth 450 maravedies, the *castellano* or peso was in fact subject to fluctuation and was convertible under par in the colonies.

(The maravedí cited in old codes was a gold coin. On the basis of the laws cited by Hugo de Celso (Leyes [1538], fol. ccxxi), and ignoring Celso's own arithmetical aberrations, the standard gold maravedí of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was worth 165 of the “modern”

vellón maravedíes; and a special maravedí called, variously, “old,” “good money,” or “King’s” maravedí, used in calculating legal penalties, was worth 990 “modern” vellón ones.)

The value of Castilian money following the reform of 1497, in terms of U.S. currency today, is as follows:

<i>Coin</i>	<i>Equivalent, maravedíes</i>	<i>Equivalent, U.S.</i>
Maravedí		\$.01
Real	34	.354
Ducado	375	3.91

What the real comparative value was—as purchasing power—is a more difficult question. Here are some examples, taken from documents of the first two decades of the sixteenth century, with special reference to the administration of, or voyages to, the New World colonies:

ITEM

<i>Salaries (yearly)</i>	<i>Maravedíes</i>	<i>U.S. Currency</i>
Governor of a colony	366,000	\$3,714.50
Treasurer of a colony	200,000	2,084.40
Veedor of mines and smelting	70,000	728.50
Pilot major of Castile	75,000	781.00
Indies pilot, first class	35,000	364.25
Military captain, colonies	48,000	500.00
Able seaman (plus food)	11,000	115.00
Ordinary seaman (plus food)	7,300	76.00

Prices (average)

Wheat, per bushel	294	3.06
Ship’s biscuit, per quintal	500	5.21
Salt mackerel, per barrel	1,550	16.15
Bacon, per lb.	8	.08
Olive oil, gallon	35	.36
Wine in bulk, low grade, gallon	8	.08
Wine in bulk, good quality, gallon	38	.40
Linen crash, yard	38	.40
Fine French lawn, yard	3,600	37.51
Silk velvet, yard	850	8.86
Shirt, plain	160	1.67

	<i>Maravedies</i>	<i>U.S. Currency</i>
Doublet, plain	675	\$ 7.03
Building nails, per 1000	1,300	13.54
Iron, sheet or bar, per cwt.	496	4.17
Tin, per cwt.	525	5.47
Copper, per lb.	22 . . . .	.23
Cordage, per cwt.	1,270	13.25
Sailcloth, per piece	1,500	15.63
Mule, medium quality	8,000	83.38
Stallion	30,000	312.66
Saddle, ornamented velvet, gilt nails	3,285	34.24
Slave (Negro)	12,000	125.00
Passage, Spain-Hispaniola, with food	3,000	31.27
Passage, Spain-Hispaniola, de luxe	5,500	57.32
Freight, Spain-Hispaniola general merchandise per tonelada	2,200	23.93
Freight, Spain-Hispaniola, cow or yearling	1,700	17.70
Charter ship to Indies, per tonelada	4,000	41.68
Charter, round trip to Indies, per tonelada	6,500	67.55
Caravel, to purchase, per tonelada	3,000	31.26
Rent small house, year	3,600	31.26
Rent "elegant residence," year	75,000	781.00

Despite violent fluctuations from year to year in commodity prices, the general level was practically unchanged in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In the colonies, of course, scarcity prices were the rule at first: in Hispaniola at the height of the 1502-1504 gold rush, they were from four to six times those of Spain—except for mining tools, which were anything the traffic would bear, e.g., \$70 for a pickax. In Darién pork sold for about 48 cents a pound and beef for 58 cents. Thirty years later Hispaniola had so many more cattle than inhabitants that beef was worth only a cent a pound.

Source: Leyes (1581), Libro V, Título xxi: "Of Money and Coinage"; Leyes (1538) fols. ccxxi, ccxxxiii, ccxxxiiii, cclxxv, cclxxvi; Hamilton, *American Treasure*; statements in contracts, accounts, reports, etc., between 1495 and 1520.

III

SOMETHING ABOUT SHIPS

The three kinds of ships used for voyages to, or exploration of, the New World during the first decades of discovery and conquest were the nao, the caravel, and the bergantín. The first was a large, square-rigged vessel, technically identical with the carrack of Venice; the Castilians, however, seem to have applied the term nao—which merely meant “ship”—to any good-sized square-rigger; bigger than average caravels, which were still a lot smaller than true carracks, were so designated. Bergantines were very small; they could be rowed as well as sailed, were sometimes decked and sometimes open “in the manner of pinnaces,” and could be carried aboard a fair-sized caravel to be put in the water once the Caribbean was reached. However, bergantines also faced the Atlantic under their own power: gallant little tubs scurrying between Spain and the Indies in tiny and triumphant challenge, a yardstick for Spanish seamanship, not so much because men sailed them across the Ocean Sea as because no one particularly remarked their daring. Easy to careen, the bergantines often outlasted their larger sisters, and saved many an armada from total loss when naos and caravels failed.

The caravel, the typical, maid-of-all-work ship, was a modern development, evolved by Portugal but early adopted by Castile. The Portuguese built it lateen-rigged; the Spaniards usually preferred it square-rigged, but since each type had its merits and shortcomings, King Fernando liked armadas to include both. An expert description of them, and of how they were sailed, is given by Morison in his *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*; see also Frederic C. Lane's *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance*.

The size of ships was expressed in terms of burthen—specifically, of the cubic cargo space below decks. The unit of measurement was, as in England, the largest size of wine cask. In England, this was a tun, and in Castile, a tonel, and the names of smaller casks also corresponded—pipe, *pipa*; butt, *bota*. The catch is that the capacity of the similarly named casks was different: a Castilian tonel held only a little more than half the amount in an English tun—to be precise, 55.2 per cent. In England the tun (252 gallons or 33.7 cubic feet content) became the shipping ton of

42 cubic feet, by allowing an additional 25 per cent for the cask and space lost in stowage. *If* the Castilians followed the same practice, their 139-gallon tonel worked out at a "shipping tonel" of roughly $23\frac{1}{4}$ cubic feet—but we do not know that they did so.

At the time of our story "tonel" and "tonelada" were synonymous. There was also, however, a "male" tonel or tonelada, equal in capacity to two botas or pipas. Before long this masculine measure, roughly reckoned as 1.2 toneles, became the official tonelada: 166.9 gallons, 22.3 cubic feet net, and 66.2 per cent of an English tun.

It is clear that to speak of a tonel—even a male one—as a "ton," or to translate *tonelaje* as "tonnage," is misleading. This, alas, is about all that is clear, and it is not much help in determining the size of the caravels used by the discoverers. And the laws on shipbuilding and tonelaje promulgated a century later (1615–1618) are equally frustrating. They look wonderful: that which establishes standard dimensions for ships provides a table of measurements with corresponding burthens, as well as formulas for calculating the cargo capacity of any vessel and its rating in toneladas. (It even tells how to get the prescribed proportions with the aid of a piece of string, the ancient system which I have seen used with perfect success by builders today.) The standard tonelada is fixed at two pipas or botas, and the conventional gauging tonelada at eight cubic *codos de ribera*. Yet it all comes to pieces in the hand if one tries to use it as a guide to ships of the early sixteenth century.

The burthen equivalents in the table of specifications do not agree with those produced by the (theoretically) corresponding formula. The table contemplates nothing smaller than a ship of $80\frac{3}{4}$ toneladas (17' 6" in the beam and 66' 2" overall), and if worked backward in the same ratios results in absurdity, such as a 41-foot ship with a depth from deck to keel of 35 inches and a rating of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ toneladas. The formula for finding the official tonelaje of ships which did not conform to the legal standard is of course useless, since it presupposes knowledge of the exact measurements to start with. Finally, not only were seventeenth-century ships constructed differently from those which interest us, but they were rated by a different gauge: the eight-cubic-codo tonelada (59 cubic feet) was twice the space needed to stow two $83\frac{1}{2}$ -gallon pipas.

(Happily, one source of possible confusion can be ignored in so far as the question at hand is concerned: the arbitrary tonelada equivalents decreed for various kinds of merchandise and packing, e.g., 36 bushels of wheat = one tonelada; 80 three-gallon bottles of oil = one tonelada; general merchandise in cases, anything from 25 to 42 cubic feet = one

tonelada. These were conventions established for purposes of safety and for reckoning freight charges and taxes.)

Faced with a problem which has baffled experts, I have evolved a private method for estimating the size of the caravels used for the Indies at the time of our story. It is intricate and scientifically execrable, and I have no intention of expounding it. It does, however, give quite reasonable results, which have the added advantage that no one can disprove them: for example, about 70 feet overall for an 80-tonel ship; roughly 46 feet overall for those 30-tonel caravels which bravely plied the Atlantic.

See: *Leyes de Indias*, Vol. III: Libro IX, Título xxviii, "Of the . . . building and fitting of ships, and their burthen," Título xxxi, "Of cargo-gauging and freightage"; *Leyes* (1581), Libro V, Título xiii, "Of weights and measures"; Veitia Linaje, *Norte de Contratación*; contemporary documents, specifically the contracts with Juan Aguado (1495) quoted by Angel Ortega, *La Rábida*, II, 282, and with García Alvarez (1496), Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 5, and the cédula of 1513 in Serrano, p. cccxvii n; Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, Vol. I, chap. 9, and notes. A few other sources, out of the very extensive literature on the subject, are cited in the Bibliography of this book.

Chapter Notes and Principal Sources

NOTE ON REFERENCES

The abbreviations of the titles of collections of documents and laws used in the notes are indicated in the Bibliography. Works repeatedly referred to by the author's name, without title, are marked in the Bibliography by an asterisk.

CHAPTER I

1. There was as yet no national capital of Castile. Isabel and Fernando were peripatetic sovereigns, moving their Court from place to place as circumstances dictated.

2. Only the title of Admiral was declared hereditary in the original grant. Extension of the right of inheritance to the other titles and privileges was expressed in later cédulas, which, in view of the fact that perpetual grants of offices involving judicial or civil administration were forbidden by law, provided a pretty point of issue in litigation between Columbus' heirs and the Crown. For the interminable wrangles over Columbus' privileges, see Schoenrich, *The Legacy of Christopher Columbus*.

3. See the anonymous memorial from Hispaniola (1515–1516?) apparently by a friar or priest (DIRD, II, 247–64); report of Martín Fernández de Enciso, 1516 (DIRD, X, 549). The suspicion probably arose from the

intention Columbus had at this time, and later abandoned, of bequeathing to the government of Genoa one tenth of the income from his estate and privileges (Torre, p. 309).

4. Hispaniola was the name coined by Martyr for the island of Haiti and Santo Domingo. The Castilian name for it was La Isla Española (The Spanish Island), or more simply, La Española.

CHAPTER II

Principal Sources

Bastidas' voyage: Oviedo, Bk. III, chap. 8; Bernáldez, chap. cxcvi; Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 2, 5; DIRDU, II, 262–66; VII, VIII, XXI, *passim* (testimony in the Pleitos de Colón); DIRD, II, 362–467; XXXI, 137, 230, 243–44; XXXIX, 61ff.; 331–427, *passim*; DIHHA, VI, 69–77; X, 3, 15, App. I; XIV, 51; Navarrete, *Viages*, II, 28, 244–46, 416–20; III, 538–91, *passim*; DSCC, Pt. III, Vol. II, p. 120; Leguina, App. III; Leyes (1538), fols. 10, 242; Guevara, *Epístolas familiares*; declaration by Bastidas, March 27, 1503 (MS in archives of Santa Marta, Colombia).

Balboa: Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 5, 62; Bk. III, chap. 39; Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, Proemio, chap. 2; see also sources of Note 2 below.

Bishop Fonseca: Guevara, *Epístolas familiares*; Alcocer, *Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca*; see also chronicles and genealogies referring to this period in Castile.

Maritime laws: Leyes de Indias, Vol. I, Libro VIII, Título x, Ley 1; Libro IX, Título i, Ley 56; Vol. II, Libro IV, Título ii, Leyes 1–11.

Notes

1. Medina (I, 36n, 236) says, “Balboa had four brothers younger than himself, almost certainly sons of another mother.” But as Medina’s own documents show, the record is of no more than three brothers, and, save for Alvar, there is no indication as to whether they were younger or older than Vasco Núñez. One, Gonzalo, had a son old enough to go with Cabot as *gentilhombre* in 1525; and certainly Balboa’s career and enlistment for the Indies followed a pattern already usual for younger sons. I believe that in order of age the Balboa brothers were: Gonzalo, Vasco, Juan, Alvar.

2. One can track the Balboa y Valcarcel family through the thickets of genealogy fairly well until the early fifteenth century after which

descendants through the female line—notably, Quirogas, Osorios, and their heirs—eclipsed the numerous male lines. In the time of its greatest glory (roughly, 1290–1414) the brightest stars were: Gutierre Fernández de Balboa, one of the first three Grand Masters of the knightly Order of Alcántara; Garcí Rodríguez de Balboa y Valcarcel, Adelantado and Merino Mayor (Governor and Supreme Justice) of Galicia, and his son of the same name, who also ruled Galicia; Fernán Rodríguez de Balboa, Grand Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (Hospitalers) and all-powerful minister of King Alfonso XI; Fray Gonzalo de Balboa (d. 1313), General of the Franciscan Order and Doctor of the University of Paris; Vicente Arias de Balboa (Vasco Núñez' great-uncle), Bishop of Palencia, a scholar and a fighting politician, who first defied and then dominated his sovereign.

The name of Vasco Núñez' father is supplied by Gándara (*Nobiliario*, ca. 1640), but Gándara's data are sometimes more copious than reliable. Cascales (*Discursos históricos*, ca. 1614, cited by García Carraffa, III, 79) says that Nuño Martínez de Balboa was head of the house about 1540, when he lost the castle of Balboa in a lawsuit. (See also, among others: Haro, *Nobiliario*, 1622; Salazar y Mendoza, *Origen de las dignidades*, 1622; Salazar y Castro, *Historia . . . de la casa de Lara*, 1696; Núñez de Castro, *Corona gótica*, 1739; Trelles, *Asturias ilustrada*, 1760.) The chronicles of the kings of Castile and Leon provide some colorful data on the more prominent Balboas.

3. The capricious use of surnames makes it hard to trace blood relationships in any but exalted families. Wives were known by their maiden names, and several legitimate children might bear entirely different surnames. Bastidas' most solidly authenticated relatives, aside from his wife, Isabel Rodríguez (or Ruiz) de Romero, and their son Rodrigo, were two nephews and a niece. These, surprisingly, were all called Bastidas, but since their parents were Alonso Sánchez and Catalina Gutiérrez, it is uncertain to which Bastidas was brother. Sánchez was a "carpenter" (shipwright); he died about 1507 and Catalina married the next year another carpenter named Juan Martínez (FAAP, I, 19–336, *passim*; DAAP, 29–188, *passim*; CPI [1930], 42, 153; DIRD, II, 435).

4. Juan de la Cosa, native of Santona and resident in El Puerto de Santa María, has been identified with another mariner of the same name, also of Santona, who was owner and master of Columbus' flagship on the First Voyage and who died in 1496. The confusion is cleared up by Morison (*Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, I, 187, 198). Our Cosa, who was a much better fellow, had sailed with Columbus on the Second Voyage as

able scaman and cartographer, and with Hojeda as chief pilot in 1499–1500. When Bastidas enlisted him as pilot and partner, he was engaged in drawing his famous *mappemonde*. The map bears the inscription: “Juan de la Cosa made this in Puerto Santa María in the year 1500.” It has provoked endless discussion because it depicts things officially unknown at that time: a continuous coast from Brazil to Labrador, broken only by a drawing of St. Christopher placed strategically over a doubtful section corresponding to the Isthmus of Panama; and Cuba, with reasonable accuracy, as an island. The theory that it was predated or later revised is negated by the fact that, whereas the coasts charted up to 1500 are defined and studded with place names, coasts explored after that year are vague and blank—including those discovered and mapped by Cosa himself in 1501–1502 and 1504–1506. (The fate of these charts, the first to depict Darién, is unknown. See deposition of Juan de Xéres [Ispizúa, *Historia de los vascos*, IV, 76*n*].) In any case, the pother over an explanation seems unnecessary. No one can say how many bootleg voyages were made to the New World between 1493 and 1500, but they were undoubtedly numerous, and Cosa would have heard a good deal about what they found from his seafaring friends.

5. The text of Bastidas’ contract with the Crown is in DIRD, II, 262–66, and Navarrete, *Viages*, II, 244 ff.; that with his twenty backers is in DIHHA, X, App. I.

6. In September, 1501, it was decreed that “any person in receipt of a license to discover by sea must take at least two ships of not more than 60 *toneladas* [burthen].” Each ship could carry no more than thirty men; she had to be provisioned for at least a year and was required to take certain essentials in duplicate: two anchors, two rudders, two pilots, and two priests (Leyes de Indias, Vol. II, Libro IV, Título ii: “Of explorations by sea”). For some notes on what toneles and toneladas meant in reckoning the size of ships (and, rather more definitely, what they did not mean), see Appendix III above.

7. “Martín Boriol, master and owner of the nao *Santa María de Gracia*, and Rodrigo de Bastidas, captain of *Santa María*, declare that they owe to Alfonso Núñez, merchant, 17,500 maravedíes which he lent to them for supplies for the said ship, which has to go to the Indies” (DIHHA, X, 15). On the same day Boriol signed a document in which he assumed sole responsibility for the debt (*ibid.*). After this, other evidence is superfluous, but it is not lacking: For instance, the pilot Antón García testified that he saw Bastidas leave Spain (DIRDU, VII, 220–21), and there is docu-

mentary proof that García was not back from the Vélez de Mendoza voyage to Brazil until February 1501. (Casas' passage on the subject has been misread; actually it supports the 1501 date.) The closed season for sailings to the Indies was from November 11 to March 11, (Leyes [1538], fol. 242); if Bastidas waited it out, he must have left immediately after, for he reached the Goajira Peninsula, just west of the Gulf of Venezuela, by the end of April. The erroneous October 1500 date evidently stems from Bernáldez, who stated that Bastidas returned to Spain in September 1502 after an absence of twenty-three months (*Historia de los Reyes Católicos*, chap. cxevi).

8. Bastidas did not name the river Magdalena "because it was the day on which that saint's conversion is celebrated." In 1501 that day fell on April 1, when Bastidas had not yet reached South America. The Magdalena was known only as the Big River for long after its discovery. It is possible, however, that subsequent bestowal of the name was in reference to its discovery on July 22, which is the saint's day.

9. Bohío del Gato means "House of the Cat," probably in reference to a tethered ocelot. It is now called Bahía del Gato, "Bay of the Cat."

10. The names of the islands have become sadly mixed. Those near Cartagena, christened San Bernardo by Bastidas, are now called Islas de Rosario; the group farther south, known to the Indians and all early geographers as the Islands of Barú (Barú being the mainland province opposite them), have acquired the name of San Bernardo. And, just to make it more difficult, the large, barely detached island which closes Cartagena bay on the south has been invested with the name Barú.

11. Just how far Bastidas and Cosa went along the Isthmian coast is a matter of disagreement. Testimony on the subject taken in connection with the lawsuit brought against the Crown by Columbus' son Diego Colón—the famous "*Pleitos de Colón*"—permits different conclusions (DIRDU, VII, VIII, *passim*). The maximum limit is the port of El Retrete, some 180 miles from Darién. The minimum, or Gulf-of-Urabá-only interpretation, is based on the fact that Bastidas himself claimed no more; always a clamlike witness, he limited himself to terse affirmation in answer to the specific question: Was it true that he and Cosa had been the discoverers of Urabá and Darién? And in 1521, citing his merits, he said merely that he had discovered "a great part of Tierra Firme, and islands, and Darién." But several witnesses were more precise, and I believe their intermediate version to be correct. According to this, Bastidas got about 110 miles beyond Darién, past the Isla de Pinos. It was when Columbus, coming

from the opposite direction in 1503, reached this point that he turned back from his fourth voyage.

12. Bancroft, in the course of a highly inaccurate account of Bastidas' voyage, tosses off the statement that Bastidas, having captured a great number of Indians in Darién, left them to drown on the sinking ships in order to save his gold. I have been unable to find the slightest support for this casual slander.

13. When Bastidas reached Santo Domingo, the acting Governor was Francisco de Bobadilla, Comendador of the Order of Calatrava, who had gone to Hispaniola in 1500 to investigate Columbus' alleged misgovernment and had sent the Admiral in fetters to Spain. His successor, Fray Nicolás de Ovando, Comendador of the Order of Alcántara, arrived in Santo Domingo on April 15, 1502. Bobadilla was drowned on his return voyage to Spain.

14. Neither Columbus' biographer-son Fernando, nor his friend Bernáldez (who has much to tell of the hurricane), nor, for that matter, the Admiral himself, says anything about a prescient warning.

15. Bastidas estimated that his ships, cargo, and treasure had been worth five million maravedies (testimony in his trial [Navarrete, *Viages*, II, 416–20]). He saved three iron chests containing seventy-five pounds of "good" gold and his pearls, plus a quantity of low-carat gold objects and native goods. See Casas, Bk. II, chap. 2; Pietro Rondinelli's letter of October 3, 1502, from Seville (DSCC, Pt. III, Vol. II, pp. 120–21); deposition of Vicente Yáñez Pinzón (DIRDU, VII, 267); cédula of March 1503 (DIHHA, VI, 72); deposition of Bastidas, 1521 (DIRD, II, 336–467).

16. Several responsible citizens having stood surety for Bastidas, the Queen ordered that he should not be dunned by his creditors until his case was decided in Council (MS document in the archives of Santa Marta, Colombia). He was acquitted on December 3, 1503; the executive decree was dated January 29, 1504. On June 22, 1504, he received a grant of privileges, but he may have already left for Hispaniola before it was delivered, for he was in Santo Domingo before Columbus got there in early August of that year, and it was not until 1515 that he asked the pilot Juan de Ledesma to bring from Spain the parchment "sealed with a leaden seal hanging by colored cords."

CHAPTER III

Principal Sources

Bernáldez, chaps. cc–ccix; Leguina, pp. 102–3, 187, 189–225; Puente y Olea, pp. 20–22, 53, 59, 92; DIRD, XXXI, 129–31, 378–80, 401; XXXII, 25–29, 43–54; XXXVI, 206–85, *passim*; XXXIX, 158, 166–67; DIHHA, X, 148–49; Medina, II, 396; Navarrete, *Viajes de . . . Vespucci*, p. 150; Navarrete (*Viages*, Vols. II and III) gives many pertinent documents, but most of his deductions are erroneous.

Cosa's voyage: Oviedo, Bk. III, chap. 8; Bk. XXVII, chaps. 1–3; Varnhagen, *Nouvelles Recherches*, pp. 12–14; DIRD, XXXI, 129–249, *passim*; XXXVI, 291–92; XXXIX, 44; DIHHA, VI, 231–33; X, 23, 28, 38; FAAP, V, 13, 14; Puente y Olea, pp. 21, 24–27; Leguina, pp. 169–88, *passim*; DIRDU, VII, 211, 213, 318–19.

Notes

1. The text of Cosa's contract is in DIRD, XXI, 220–29.
2. The licensing of three expeditions for the same region—a most unusual measure—was probably due to fear of Portuguese poachers. A year or so earlier the worry had been over possible English trespassers; Hojeda's contract for his 1502 expedition had specified that he erect markers to warn off English explorers. This was not, as Navarrete says (*Viages*, III, 41), because "Hojeda on his first voyage [1499] had found certain Englishmen in the immediate vicinity of Coquibacoa [Gulf of Venezuela]" (a statement for which there is no evidence whatever), but because the Spanish ambassadors in England had advised that Henry VII was licensing voyages to the New World. In 1503 it was known that although Henry had granted letters patent to mixed English-Portuguese expeditions to America in 1501 and 1502, their objective was Newfoundland; the immediate preoccupation was now with Portugal, which was reported to have sent one armada to the Caribbean and to be contemplating the sending of another. In August 1503 Cosa went on a confidential mission to Portugal to investigate the reports, which he discovered to be true (Puente y Olea, p. 21).
3. Hojeda's contract, dated September 30, 1504, specified that he leave within six months. On March 10, 1505, he was granted another four

months' leeway; in September the King informed Governor Ovando that Hojeda had already left, bound for Hispaniola (DIRD, XXXI, 258–68; DIHHA, VI, 109–10; Puente y Olea, p. 37).

4. There are two accounts of Cosa's 1504–1506 voyage. The first, dated December 23, 1506, was given to the government of Venice by Jeronimo Vianello, a rich and talented Venetian. Vianello had unusual opportunities for gathering information: He had gone to Castile in his own ship in early 1504, when his splendid and well-chosen presents to the sovereigns (in particular, a jeweled cross "worth more than 600 ducats" to the Queen; two Arab stallions and some hunting falcons to the King) had insured him instant favor. His knowledge of the African coast combined with his unusual gift for tactics made him chief advisor to the King and the Archbishop-Primate Cisneros in the campaigns against the Moors of 1505 and 1509, and their success was attributed to his counsel. Cisneros "held him in great esteem . . . and ordered that whenever . . . Messer Jeronimo Vianello should come, no door should be closed to him." In 1506, when Cosa returned, Cisneros was Regent of Castile and Vianello one of his right-hand men. (Vallejo, *Memorial de la vida . . . de Cisneros* [ca. 1530], pp. 66–67, 73–74, 77–79, 117–18, 120; Zurita, *Historia del rey don Hernando el Cathólico*, Bk. X.) The part of Vianello's report relating to Cosa's voyage is in the *Diarii di Marin Sanuto*, Vol. VI, and DSCC, Pt. III, Vol. II, pp. 185–87; it is given verbatim by Varnhagen, *Nouvelles Recherches*, pp. 12–14. (Humboldt's excerpts and reasonings therefrom are best ignored.) The second account of the expedition is in Oviedo's chronicle, Bk. XXVII, chaps. 1 and 2. The two complement each other: Vianello's is mainly concerned with the first part of the voyage; Oviedo's with the last.

5. The river has been identified with the Atrato—which it certainly was not—chiefly because of what appears to be one of those frequent slips in writing west for east. Vianello said it was two hundred leagues from Hispaniola and six hundred leagues from what is clearly Urabá.

6. Purely at a guess, the island may have been Santa Lucía, noted both for its fierce Carib inhabitants and its many venomous snakes.

7. A marco was eight ounces, half a Spanish pound of 460.06 grams. See Appendix II.

8. Cosa was paid his 50,000-maravedí pension, in December 1506, "out of the 491,708 mrs. which came to His Highness from the quinto on the profit in gold and aljófar obtained in the voyage on which Juan de la Cosa went as captain" (Leguina, p. 188). At this time the King received

only one half the royalties and revenues of the Indies, as bequeathed to him by Queen Isabel. The whole quinto on gold and aljófár was, therefore, 983,416 maravedíes, which according to Cosa's contract was one fifth the total proceeds. The item quoted above has been printed in several forms, sometimes with errors of which the worst is assignment to a date three years previous to the event.

9. Vespucci had a thriving trade with the Indies, from which a fellow Italian said he had made 13,000 ducats. It is not quite clear whether it was general trade, or slave trade in particular.

10. Felipe had some excuse. He had previously been recognized as coheir with Juana, and Castilian law established that "in the marriage of a female successor to the throne, the husband, even if he be of inferior lineage, should share the scepter and the name of sovereign, with the other pre-eminences conceded to the male in all the world."

11. There is frequent reference to these limits in the chronicles, but they are not stated in the contract. Hojeda's jurisdiction as governor appears in numerous cédulas as "from Cabo del Isleo westward to what is called Los Coxos" (DIRD, XXXI, 250-51, 258-68; DIHHA, VI, 3; *et al.*). Isleo means islet, and Cabo de la Vela has an island just off it; however, Cape of the Islet was a name rather freely applied in those times, often to a point not far from Cabo Codera (Carenero) in Venezuela, which Hojeda, in 1499, was the first to discover. Los Coxos (Cojos), the Lame, or Lopsided, Ones, presumably indicated islands off the Isthmian shore; it was specified that, as a boundary, they left the Gulf of Urabá in Hojeda's gobernación.

CHAPTER IV

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. I, chaps. 82, 102; Bk. II, chaps. 52, 56-59; Bk. III, chap. 31; Oviedo, Bk. XXVII, chap. 3; Bk. XXVIII, chap. 1; Martyr, Dec. I, Bks. 1, 2; Colmenares' memorials (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 3); DIRD, XXXIX, 499-509; Medina, II, 145-52; Altolaguirre, App. 60; Velásquez report, 1512-1513 (Sagra, *Historia . . . de Cuba*, Vol. II, App. I); DIRD, XI, 418-21, 425-26; XXII, 13-26; XXXI, 378-80, 401, 529-35, 547-51; XXXII, 29-45; XXXVI, 226, 245, 274, 284-85, 288-90; DIRDU, VII, 205, 209, 416; DIHHA, VI, 232, 283, 309, 335-41, 371-80; X, 146, 148-49, 151, 157, 163, 166-67; XIV, 7-11;

Autógrafos de Colón, pp. 48–52, 88; Medina, II, 2–7, 9–13; Puente y Olea, pp. 89, 93, 94; Leguina, p. 191; Leyes de Indias, Vol. II, Libro IV, Título iv; Libro VI, Títulos viii, x.

Notes

1. The contract is in DIRD, XXII, 29–43, and Medina, II, 2–7. According to Castilian law, all mines were the property of the Crown. In the first years of New World colonization the sovereigns conceded one half; a little later they reduced their interest to one third. In 1504 the royalty rate of one fifth was established on mines in the Indies (*Solórzano, Política Indiana*, Bk. VI, chap. 1).

2. Colón's ideas were regal rather than viceregal. Bearing in mind that his pretensions applied to all New World lands including those not yet discovered, it is interesting to consider some of his specific demands: exemption from any investigation or review of his government; complete freedom of civil and judicial appointments; legal jurisdiction, also including cases before the Casa de Contratación; ownership of one third of the land. On the financial side he claimed one tenth of all revenues including court fines, customs, church tithes, and the profits from Crown estates; one third of the profits from expeditions, to be calculated on the gross before deduction of royalties; one eighth of profits from trade, plus salaries (plural) as governor, as viceroy, and as admiral. (No wonder his father's will was based on an estimate of a minimum initial income of 8,750,000 maravedíes a year!) He did not, of course, get anything like this; however, after a few years in office, despite heavy expenditure and the building of an impressive palace, he was able to purchase a fief in Spain for 11,800,000 maravedíes, of which 10,000,000 had been paid when—in violation of a contractual obligation—he resold it soon after; and in 1520 he was in a position to help his cause by lending Charles V 10,000 ducats (Gestoso y Pérez, *Nuevos documentos colombinos*, pp. 29–31; Schoenrich, *The Legacy of Christopher Columbus*, I, 26–122). The legal battles of Columbus' heirs, with the Crown and among themselves, lasted the better part of three centuries.

3. Hojeda is usually presented in connection with this voyage as an unscrupulous, greedy adventurer with a shaky title to the enterprise. The origin of the picture is in Columbus' resentment, mirrored by Casas, and most of its features are surprisingly easy to disprove. Hojeda's contract was signed by Fonseca because the King was absent from Castile, but it could never have been given without royal consent. Far from trying to

get as much in gold and pearls as possible, Hojeda limited himself to a few "samples," and refused to pause in his rapid course to get more. His voyage was expensive and profitless, yet he was warmly commended and handsomely rewarded for his services to the Crown. Incidentally, it seems perfectly established that Amerigo Vespucci went with Hojeda from Spain—see the depositions of Hojeda (DIRDU, VII, 205; DIRD, XXXIX, 331) and Casas' chronicle (Bk. I, chap. 139) as well as Vespucci's writings. But, on evidence too long and involved to discuss here, it would seem that when Hojeda and Cosa made for Hispaniola after the hasty check of Columbus' mainland discoveries, Vespucci parted company with them.

4. King Fernando to Diego Colón, March 10, 1510 (DIHHA, VI, 231–33).

5. The Hojedas came from old Castile, but Alonso was born in Cuenca, apparently about 1470. Either Alonso was a favorite family name, or elder Hojedas tended to christen their children in honor of the famous Inquisitor, Alonso de Hojeda, our man's second cousin: another Alonso, also of Cuenca, who created an unpleasant stir in the Indies about 1520, has been confused with the Governor of Urabá, and yet another was a well-known merchant trading with the Indies. Our Alonso had been page and squire to Don Luis de la Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli, one of the richest and noblest grandees of Spain, whose principal residence was the castle of San Marco in El Puerto de Santa María. The Duke had been host to Columbus for two years, and had planned to back an expedition in search of the westward passage, even building ships for it in his own yards. Perhaps this explains why, despite youth and inexperience, Hojeda made his first voyage to the Indies in 1493 as captain of one of the Admiral's ships. As an Indian fighter for Columbus, he was admired for his reckless bravery even by his victims: The great chief, Caonabo, whom he had captured by a rather shady trick and whom Columbus kept chained in his house, refused to notice any other Spaniard, but when little Hojeda came by he got to his feet and bowed.

6. Nicuesa had been official carver to the King's uncle, a post of some social importance. He came to Hispaniola with Ovando in 1502. By skillful combination of concessions and *repartimientos* granted partly in consideration of his financial backing, and financial backing given him in view of his concessions and repartimientos, he soon amassed a large fortune. His trip to Castile in 1508 had been made as a *procurador* (agent) of the colony, charged chiefly with persuading the King to sanction a more generous interpretation of repartimientos.

7. Martyr, Dec. I, Bk. 2. Casas, writing forty years later, puts the date in November, which from other evidence would have been impossible. A memorial by Colmenares written in 1516 confirms the later date (Medina, II, 146).

8. The date usually given for Cosa's death is February 28, 1510, because King Fernando ordered that Cosa's widow be paid the pilot's salary "from January 1, 1510, to the last day of February of that year" (Leguina, p. 191). This, however, may well have been a bonus (Cosa had collected all his salary for 1509 before leaving Spain). From all other chronological indications the February 1510 date is more than two months late.

9. Talavera's theft, not mentioned in dispatches from Hispaniola of March 1510, was first reported in letters of June 10–12 (DIHHA, VI, 335–41; Medina, II, 15–16).

10. Report of Diego Velásquez, April 1, 1514, printed from a Muñoz Transcript by Ramón de la Sagra in *Historia física, política y natural de la isla de Cuba*, II, App. 1; Casas, Bk. III, chap. 31. Mejía said that San Sebastián had been abandoned seven months after it was founded.

CHAPTER V

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXVII, chap. 4; Bk. XXIX, chaps. 2, 6; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 2; Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 62–64; Colmenares' memorials (see sources of Chapter IV); Enciso, *Suma de geografía*, and memorials (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Vol. 128); Medina, II, 9, 44–46; Altolaguirre, Apps. 11, 12; DIRD, XXXI, 229–33.

Location of Darién: Enciso, *Suma de geografía*; Andagoya, *Relación*; Oviedo, Bk. III, chap. 8; Bk. IX, chap. 11; Bk. XXI, chaps. 6, 7; Bk. XXVII, chaps. 1, 12; Bk. XXVIII, chaps. 3, 30; Bk. L, chap. 3; *Sumario*, chap. lxxviii; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 9; Dec. III, Bk. 6; *Opus epistolarum*, Letter 542; Chaves, *Qvatri partitv*, chap. viii, ix; Laet, Bk. VIII, chaps. 1, 8; references in contemporary letters and reports.

Notes

1. Oviedo (Bk. XXVII, chap. 4) says that Balboa made his getaway hidden in the lateen sail on the mizzen yard. The difficulty of boarding a guarded ship and then getting unobserved into a furled sail would seem

to rule out this version—not to mention what would have happened when canvas was set at sailing time.

2. Leoncico was no beauty. He was built for use: a stocky, husky, yellow-brown fellow, covered with the scars of battle. But he was said to have had more than human intelligence—he could distinguish at once between a “good” Indian and an enemy one, and adapted his methods accordingly, occasionally offering an obvious rebuke to some conscienceless conquistador. He was undoubtedly paid well as a mercenary; however, one may question whether Oviedo really saw him earn more than five hundred pesos of gold in eight months (Bk. XVI, chap. 11).

3. The fact that the Tanela now turns to lose itself in the channels of the Atrato Delta is immaterial. Fairly modern surveys show it entering the sea directly, and in the map drawn in 1526 by Juan Vespucci, who had been there, it has an estuary. In Roger Barlowe’s translation of Enciso’s *Suma de geografía*, which has a flavor the original lacks, the passage about the situation of “the Darien” reads as follows: “And on the west parte v leges within the gulf is the Darien w^{ch} is inhabited with cristen people, and here thei gather fyne golde in certeine ryvers that descende from the hic mountaynes.”

4. Cédulas of February 28, 1510 (DIRD, XXXI, 229–33; Medina, II, 9).

CHAPTER VI

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 65, 66; Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 2, 3, 10; Oviedo, Bk. XXVII, chap. 3; Bk. XXVIII, chaps. 1, 3; Medina, II, 11, 12, 16; DIRD, XXXIX (Pleitos de Colón), *passim*.

Notes

1. If Nicuesa was relying on a copy of Bartolomé’s chart as we know it, he had some excuse. For one thing, he would have been waiting for the coast to turn sharp north before reaching Veragua. He was not the only person to have trouble finding the place. A colonizing armada sent by Diego Colón’s widow in 1536 first overshot it by nearly seven hundred miles in one direction, and then, returning, went ninety miles past it in the other.

2. Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 10; Dec. III, Bk. 4. He is the only source for the exact location, but he is extremely precise and equally positive. He had from Columbus information about the coast which is not found in other accounts of the Fourth Voyage, and he had been allowed to study charts in the Casa de Contratación which, unavailable to most people, were elucidated for him by Bishop Fonseca. Oviedo, so far as can be gathered, thought the island was Uvita, just off Puerto Limón (Bk. XXI, chap. 7; Bk. XXVIII, chaps. 2 and 4). He says that Nicuesa named the island Escudo, but he does not, like some later writers, confuse it with the obviously impossible Escudo de Veragua.

3. Columbus had apparently missed the harbor. His Puerto de Bastimentos, sometimes identified with Nombre de Dios, was an anchorage in the shelter of the (then) richly tilled islands west of Punta Manzanilla.

4. Nicuesa's report is not extant, but fortunately its contents are summarized in the King's reply of July 25, 1511 (Medina, II, 16). Since it is evident that neither the report, nor Ledesma and his companions, had anything to say about a new settlement, they must have left Belén before Nicuesa did—but not, in view of the fact that the fort in Nombre de Dios was completed in December, very long before. Incidentally, Oviedo's chronology of Nicuesa's adventures is wildly unreliable.

CHAPTER VII

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 64, 67, 68; Bk. III, chap. 39; Oviedo, Bk. XXVIII, chap. 3; Bk. XXIX, chap. 2; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 3; Medina, II, 44–46; Altolaguirre, Apps. 7, 12; DIHHA, VI, 335–41, 395–98; DIRD, XXXII, 284–88.

Notes

1. The document was preserved in the archives of Santa María, where Oviedo read it in 1514.

2. According to Casas, Nicuesa was forced to swear that he would go “without pause” to Spain to present himself to the King—which certainly would indicate that the colonists were very sure of themselves.

3. As judge, according to Martyr, as chief constable according to Casas. Colmenares, in 1516, out to ruin Balboa, claimed that Balboa “took

a nao which Rodrigo de Colmenares had brought and therein put the bachiller Enciso a prisoner, and sent him to Española Island." Enciso himself indicated that his imprisonment was over when he left, and said that he paid 50 pesos to "the ship which took me"—a sum which indicates joint charter rather than passenger fares; Enciso calculated full charter of a ship from Hispaniola to Darién at 100 pesos (Altolaquirre, App. 7).

CHAPTER VIII

Principal Sources

Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 3, 4, 6; Casas, Bk. II, chaps. 42, 60, 61; Bk. III, chaps. 5, 19, 24, 29, 36, 37, 39, 42; Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 1, 2; Bk. XXXVIII, chap. 3; DIRDU, VII, 59; XX, 228–29; DIHHA, VI, 271–424, *passim*; Medina, II, 14–27, 46; Altolaquirre, xxiii, xxix–xxxi, notes; Apps. 2–7; DIRD, V, 297; VI, 371; XXXII, 284–88, 356.

Notes

1. Enciso and his companions fetched Cuba on Easter Sunday (April twentieth). They had not yet arrived in Santo Domingo on May seventeenth, when dispatches were sent to Castile.

2. The date of Hojeda's arrival is not known, but it was after February 19, 1511, when the officials of Hispaniola wrote that nothing had been heard of him. His own report to the King was dated from Santo Domingo on May fifth.

3. Cédula of June 15, 1510 (Medina, II, 11–12).

4. The burthen of the letters and reports, which are not extant, can be gathered from the King's replies (Medina, II, 14–19, 26–27; Altolaquirre, pp. xxi–xxiv, and note).

5. Cédula of October 6, 1511 (DIRD, XXXII, 284–88; Medina, II, 20–21; Altolaquirre, pp. xxvii–xxviii).

6. This cryptic phrase is the abbreviation of a conventional formula which may be very freely translated as "the above must be scrupulously honored, or else . . ."

CHAPTER IX

Principal Sources

Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 3, 4; Oviedo, Bk. XXVIII, chap. 3; Bk. XXIX, chap. 3; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 39–42; Balboa's report of January 20, 1513 (Medina, II, 129–39; Altolaguirre, App. 8); Altolaguirre, Apps. 2–6.

Geography: Enciso, *Suma de geografía*; Andagoya, *Relación*; Oviedo, Bk. XXI, chap. 7; Bk. XXIX, chap. 28; DIRD, II, 538; Laet, Bk. VIII, chaps. 1, 9, 10; Cuervo, II, 275–77. See also the trans-Isthmian routes described by the buccaneers (Wafer, Esquemeling, Ringrose, Dampier) and the narratives of the Scots who attempted to found New Caledonia in the late seventeenth century.

Notes

1. There are two harbors in this bit of coast (not counting New Caledonia, made famous by the Scots' abortive effort to gain a foothold in the Isthmus in the late seventeenth century). One is between Isla Gorda and the mainland, and can be entered only from the south. The other, only a few miles north, is easier to get into, but less sheltered. Either may have been that which the colonists christened Port of Careta, but on the evidence of the distances given, Isla Gorda has a slight edge on Sasardí.

2. Relay of the adverse version of events in Careta is clear: Colmenares to Martyr to Casas.

3. Morison (*Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, II, 334, 345) says that Columbus, at Chiriquí Lagoon, "definitely learned that he was on an isthmus," and adds that "strangely enough, the proof that he was on an isthmus seems to have ended Columbus' search for a strait." But—aside from the question of whether it is really strange to cease looking for a strait when convinced one is on an isthmus—Columbus refused to admit he was on anything but a peninsula. He quoted the Indians as saying that the sea went around it, and likened it to the Italian and Iberian peninsulas ("Lettera Rarissima," DSCC, Pt. I, Vol. II, pp. 197–98). When he finally gave up, about eighty to a hundred miles from Darién, by his geography he could have expected any hour to see the triumphant vindication of all his dreams: the sea passage beyond which it was straight sailing to the

Ganges. His armada was in very bad shape, but it is significant that he turned back at about the point reached in 1502 by Bastidas and Cosa, of whose course he was informed. Superb navigator that he was, he must have recognized *then* what he would not concede: that he was indeed on an isthmus, with no strait to be found.

CHAPTER X

Principal Sources

All the chroniclers give information about the Indians, applicable in part to the Isthmus. The most extensive data on the natives the Darién colonists knew are in Oviedo, particularly in Books V–XVI, XXIX, LXIII, and in the *Sumario*, and in Andagoya's *Relación*. For the Cenú, see Enciso, *Suma de geografía*, and Simón, 1^a Noticia, chap. xxi. The transfer of the Indians from the east side of the Gulf to Urabá prior to 1535 appears in the documents cited by Matilla Tascón, *Viajes de Julián Gutiérrez*, and is confirmed by Cieza de León in the first part of his *Crónica del Perú*. The Indians described by participants in the abortive Scotch colony near Careta (late seventeenth century) and by the English buccaneers were post-Darién Cunas. Modern ethnological studies are too numerous to cite here, and their direct application appears dubious.

Notes

1. Bishop Quevedo of Darién to King Fernando; Licenciado Zuazo to M. de Chièvres, and to the Cardinal-Regent Cisneros (DIRD, I, 306–32; DIHE, II, 347–75).

2. As for the lands they occupied, they were, according to Oviedo, the true Hesperides. The chronicler indignantly denied that the Indies were ever visited by the Romans—a theory which arose from the alleged finding of a Roman coin in Darién—but he was equally positive that they had been discovered by Héspero, eleventh king of Spain, thirty centuries before Columbus sighted Guanahaní.

3. In Catío, *ura-bá*, or *urra-bá*, means “place of the eagle.” The lagoon near the conquistadores' landing place, and the hill just above it, still bear the same name in Spanish: Ciénaga, or Cerro, del Aguila.

4. Cenú was more properly called Finzenú, and was one of three

affiliated “provinces.” The other two, Panzenú and Zenúfame, to the south, were fantastically rich in gold, but Finzenú had a special cachet, perhaps because it was the original Catío home. The illustrious dead of Panzenú and Zenúfame were taken to Finzenú for burial together with their dearest wives, their best slaves, and the greater part of their treasure; in Finzenú, too, stood the Catío shrine: an immense structure in which twenty-four paired statues, presided over by a twenty-fifth, sat in state covered with massy golden ornaments. In 1534 a marauding expedition from Cartagena rifled the shrine, some of the tombs, and the memorial trees decked with golden fruit, and got between 3000 and 4000 pounds of gold (Simón, 1^a Noticia, chap. xxi).

5. *Bea*, in Catío, means “sown field,” specifically, a cornfield, from *be* (maize). The word Oviedo gives as used in *Bea* and *Çorobarí* for “eat,” is also Catío. The names of two rivers in the region, *Cutí* and *Cuití*, are frequently cited as proof of Cuna occupation, since, in Cuna, *Cuití* means River of Sand Flies, and *Cutí*, River of Lice. The evidence is not conclusive. *Tí* is pure Cuna, but *cui*, in Catío, means “to bathe,” and one meaning of *cu* is a sharp angle or bend—both good source words for the river names, if we admit a mingled Cuna-Carib population. Certainly something like Big Bend River sounds more reasonable than Lice River. Incidentally, by the principle whereby a prehistoric animal is reconstructed from a single vertebra, one may wonder if *Careta* were not an early Cuna enclave in the eastern Isthmus. *Andogoya* says that the site chosen for the settlement established there was called *Acla*, which means “bones of men.” *Ar-kala*, in Cuna, means “ribs.”

With regard to the language of *Cueva*, it is frequently impossible to be sure whether the Indian words noted by the colonists were true Cuvian or not. Here, in the spelling of the chronicles, are a few more of those explicitly labeled as Cuvian:

<i>chuy</i>	man
<i>yra</i>	woman
<i>chucra</i> (<i>chucbe</i>)	neophyte or greenhorn
<i>eracra</i>	house
<i>ochi</i>	jaguar
<i>beori</i>	tapir
<i>chuche</i>	peccary
<i>churche</i>	opossum
<i>coygaraca</i>	plant (medicinal)

perorica	.....	plant (kind of mint)
yayagua	.....	} varieties of pineapple
yayama	.....
boniamo	.....
toreba	.....	large olla
haboga	.....	fish
camayoa	.....	homosexual
canica	.....	excrement

Most of the words given by Martyr are Cuna, proper to the Río León and the lower Atrato, and were picked up from Colmenares. It should be noted that Martyr, at this time, usually employed the terms Urabá and Darién as synonymous: i.e., the gobernación and its capital.

6. See Paul Bergsøe's studies of pre-Columbian techniques in gold working (cited in the Bibliography). His findings are based on the gold wrought by Indians of northern Ecuador, but from Oviedo's remarks on gilded objects in the Isthmus, it would seem that the process there was the same, including the all-important acid herbal bath which was the final step.

CHAPTER XI

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 42-44, 117; Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 3, 4, 6; Dec. III, Bk. 6; Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 2; Balboa's report of January 20, 1513 (Altolaguirre, App. 8; Medina, II, 129-39); Balboa's letter of October 16, 1515 (Altolaguirre, App. 44 [misdated October 26]; DIRD, III, 526-38); Herrera, Dec. II, Bk. IV, chaps. 6-8; Cortés, *Cartas*, pp. 1-11; Bernal Díaz, chaps. 3, 27, 29; Medina, II, 36, 37, 319-23. *Geography*: Balboa's report and letter cited above; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 61, 62; Oviedo, Bk. IV, chap. 41; Bk. XXVII, chaps. 4, 10; Colmenares' memorials (see sources of Chapter IV); Laet, Bk. VIII, chap. 8.

Notes

1. Valdivia did not leave in the same ship which had brought him from Hispaniola, as Martyr, copied by Casas, says. He went in one of the bergantines. The ship lent to Valdivia by Colón was that of Alonso Pérez Roldán, which returned safely to Santo Domingo about November of the

same year (deposition of Juan Grande, July 1512 [DIRDU, VII, 135]; cédula of July 4, 1513 [Medina, II, 36–37]; report of Balboa, January 20, 1513 [Altolaquirre, App. 8; Medina, II, 129–39]).

2. Martyr says that the island was inhabited by fishermen, and that on it there were sixty villages of ten houses each. This is a lot of fishermen. Balboa's report does not mention so much as a stray hamlet on the island, much less an urban development.

3. The present village, called Dabeiba, is well up in the hills. The original one appears to have been about where Pavorandó is now.

4. Colmenares, for reasons readily appreciable, gave Martyr to understand that he had been up river with Balboa while these events occurred. Casas, however, who copies most of Martyr's account without question, contradicts him here: he says that Colmenares had been left in charge of the camp and was responsible for the ill-advised raids (Bk. III, chap. 43).

CHAPTER XII

Principal Sources

Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 5, 6, 7; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 43–46; Oviedo, Bk. XXVIII, chap. 3; *Sumario*, chap. xxvi; Balboa's report of January 20, 1513. (Altolaquirre, App. 8; Medina, II, 129–39); Colmenares' memorials (see sources for Chapter IV); Medina, II, 36, 38, 319–28; DIHHA, VI, 162; DIRD, XXXIX, 13–14; Altolaquirre, Apps. 20, 21.

Notes

1. The date of the abortive Indian rebellion is not stated, but it can be fixed within a week or so. The last contingent from the Atrato had already returned to Santa María, seven months after their expedition started; preparation for sending Quicedo and Colmenares to Spain had not begun, and these emissaries left on October 28, 1512.

2. Ocampo was not able to circumnavigate Cuba in 1508. On April 15, 1509, Ovando advised King Fernando that the project had not been completed for lack of caravels (cédula of August 14, 1509 [DIHHA, VI, 162]).

3. Balboa, in his report of January 20, 1513, says, “. . . we have lost, of the three hundred men what we numbered . . .” and then, himself lost in subordinate clauses, forgets to say how many.

CHAPTER XIII

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 28, 46, 47; Martyr, Dec. III, Bk. 1; *Opus epistolarum*, Letter 537; Oviedo, Bk. XXVIII, chap. 3; FAAP, V, 99–100; DIRD, III, 36; XXXIV, 121; XXXIX, 332; Altolaguirre, Apps. 2, 8, 20, 21; Medina, II, 58, 59, 335, 413; Navarrete, *Viages*, III, 538–91, *passim*; Sagra, *Historia . . . de Cuba*, Vol. II, App. I; Tapia y Rivera, p. 233.

Notes

1. Quiroga had intended to sail with Nicuesa, and to that end had started from Court in Valladolid on, or just after, September 1, 1509. He missed the boat. On February 23 of the next year his servant was given clearance to accompany him (CPI [1930]), but when they left is uncertain. He does not seem to have gone to Tierra Firme before the ill-fated voyage of 1513 (cédula of September 1, 1509 [Tapia y Rivera, p. 233]).

2. If the statement is exact that *Chapinera* arrived “while Vasco Núñez was alcalde mayor”—that is, before he received his brevet—Serrano cannot have been in Darién before the middle of 1513. *Chapinera* left Spain in December of 1512 (DIRD, III, 36; XXXIV, 121).

3. The small ship appears to have been *Chapinera*. She is not said to have been wrecked, yet her master remained in Darién, and so did the proceeds from the sale of her cargo, deposited with the treasurer of the colony (Medina, II, 413).

4. Oviedo—at least as printed—says that Balboa left with eight hundred *gente*. This must be a slip. *Gente* means either “people” or “troops,” but it was never applied to Indians.

CHAPTER XIV

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 3; Martyr, Dec. III, Bks. 1, 10; *Opus epistolarum*, Letter 537; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 47, 48; *Fuero Real*, Libro II, Título ix, Ley 2.

Geography: See sources for Chapter IX above; Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 1; Cuervo, Vol. II. The nineteenth-century surveys made with an eye to construction of an interocean canal contain much information on the eastern Isthmus.

Notes

1. Every expeditionary was a soldier: Reyes the pilot, Núñez the ex-alcalde of Nombre de Dios, Valdarrábano the notary, Maestre Alonso the surgeon, Escobar the tailor, León the silversmith, Martín the carpenter. The names of seventy-six of Balboa's companions are attested: they were written in witness to documents drawn at the Pacific. Nine others appear in declarations made in after years by men citing their services in the colony, and one more is vouched for only by Casas. Since this makes eighty-six and since Balboa—who was careful about figures—later said he had eighty, some of the vecinos who claimed the expedition as one of their merits must have been among the twelve who turned back to Careta after a few days.

2. Sixty-six, according to the writ made in the hour of discovery (Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 3).

CHAPTER XV

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 2, 4; Martyr, Dec. III, Bks. 1–3; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 48–51; Father Sánchez' deposition (Medina, II, 319–23); Bishop Quevedo's memorial of January 1515 (Medina, II, 434–41; Altola-guirre, App. 53).

Notes

1. Casas says that there were three scouting parties of twelve men each, their leaders being Francisco Pizarro, Juan de Escaray, and Alonso Martín de Don Benito; and that after two days Alonso Martín, one of whose companions was Blas de Atienza, came first to the ocean. But Casas is in error in supposing that this preceded the act of possession. The scouts were not sent out until after the men left in Quareca had come in, since Martín, Atienza, and Escaray were not with Balboa at the peak. Presumably they started on their reconnaissance the same day that Balboa took possession at the Gulf, for only twenty-six men were left to witness the

ceremony. Incidentally, one of the witnesses was Pizarro, which would indicate that Casas is wrong in assigning him to one of the exploring groups.

2. Martyr says that the Indians of Quareca had told Balboa of black and savage people in a village at one day's march from theirs. The reference may have been to Pacra. The Indians' use of the word "black" to signify "evil"—they even applied it to Spaniards—is at the root of the persistent myth that there were Negroes in southwestern Panama and northwestern Chocó in pre-Columbian times.

3. It was also a thirsty one. The tropical jungle may be wet, but away from the rivers it can be as unproductive of a drink as the Sahara.

4. Father Sánchez, in a combined claim for salary, declaration of merits, and attack on Balboa made in 1514 (Medina, II, 219–23) alleged that at Bucheribuca, when he and six ailing *compañeros* were cut off from the rest of the expedition by a sudden rise in the river, Balboa heartlessly went on without them, leaving them to follow as best they might. Oviedo, no friend to Balboa, presents a different picture of him: "He had another quality, especially in the field: that if in any march on which he was a man became tired or ill, he did not forsake him; on the contrary, if needful he went with a crossbow to look for a bird or fowl, and killed it and brought it and cooked it for him, as if for a son or brother, and heartened and encouraged him. In which thing no captain of all that have come to these Indies up to now, when we are in 1548, in the expeditions and conquests in which they have been, has done better or even as well as Vasco Núñez" (Bk. XXIX, chap. 2).

5. There is no reliable information about the proceeds from the expedition. Oviedo says Balboa brought back 2000 pesos of gold—possibly an error for 20,000. Casas, typically, says thirty or forty thousand pesos; Gómara boosts it to a hundred thousand. Martyr gives figures for the tribute from twelve chiefs, but Martyr was capable of extraordinary idiosyncrasies in reckoning weights and gold. In this case, although he counts in pounds and pesos, he remarks that a peso was worth a bit over thirty ducats (that is, *his* peso was, for the moment, equal to twenty-five official pesos) and that a pound—his pound—weighed eight ounces. On this basis the partial proceeds he reports come to 54,801 authentic pesos. Perhaps the best indication is an entry in the books of the Casa de Contratación: the receipt of 5337 pesos and 4 tomines of wrought gold in 1514. Only three entries of guanines appear between 1507 and 1517: Zamudio's in 1511 (1277 pesos, 5 tomines, 10 granos); a small quantity in 1513, pos-

sibly corresponding to a present taken by Quicedo and Colmenares; and the 1514 receipt cited above, which jibes with the date on which the quinto on Balboa's entrada is known to have been delivered. If it was the royalty payment, on which the rate had been reduced to a fifth, the gross proceeds in gold were 26,687½ pesos. Martyr also says that Balboa got two hundred choice pearls from Tumaca, two hundred and forty from Thevaca—of inferior luster owing to the local habit of cooking the oysters before opening them—and a quantity of low-grade ones of small value.

6. One of Casas' numerous inserts in the manuscript of his history after it was finished in 1562 states (Bk. III, chap. 42) that Balboa wrote to Diego Colón that he had hanged thirty chiefs and would be obliged to do the same with all he could capture, because the colonists were few. By implication this was in the letters sent by Valdivia—which, lost at sea, were never read. It was obviously untrue, and seems to be a curious inversion of the many statements that Balboa had made friends of thirty chiefs.

CHAPTER XVI

Principal Sources

Martyr, Dec. II, Bks. 6, 7; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 6, 45, 52; Colmenares' memorials (see sources of Chapter IV); DIHHA, VI, 433–35, 452; X, 228, 231, 235–37, 429, 437, 445–47; XIV, 16, 17; Altolaguirre, Apps. 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17; Medina, II, 26–60, *passim*, 104–5; Serrano y Sanz, pp. cccxii–cccxvii, cccxxii; DIRD, XXXII, 452; FAAP, IV, 73.

Notes

1. It is impossible to be sure whether, as is generally supposed, the two ships which arrived in Darién before Balboa's return were those of Arbolancha. Arbolancha certainly started from Spain with two—*San Miguel* and *Buen Jesús*—but they were carrying cargo for Puerto Rico and Hispaniola as well as for Darién, and there is reason to believe that one of them was left in Santo Domingo. In a claim made many years later in connection with the voyage, he said he took "a ship" to Darién (DIHHA, X, 231, 235–37; XIV, 16, 17; Medina, II, 97, 104–5).

2. On September 7, 1512, he signed the customary pledge to the Casa de Contratación, to deliver the freight entrusted to him (DIHHA, X, 236). On September seventeenth, a Sevillian lawyer gave him a power of attorney to sell a slave (FAAP, IV, 73). The documents referred to in this

and the previous note effectively dispose of the theory that Arbolancha left Spain soon after June eleventh (Medina, Altolaguirre) and of the notion that he was one of Balboa's expeditionaries (Martyr, Casas).

3. Serrano y Sanz places the effort to get Aguila as governor in 1513, after the reports brought by the procuradores of Darién were delivered to the King on May twenty-third. But apart from the fact that Pedrarias was named governor within three weeks of the receipt of the reports, Herrera (source of the information about Aguila) is precise: "The Comendador Diego del Aguila was chosen, and the King, being in Logroño, sent to summon him." Fernando was in Logroño from August till just after mid-December 1512.

4. On May thirty-first Fernando wrote the officials of the Casa that when Colmenares and Quicedo turned up in Seville, they should be sent to Court in Valladolid (Altolaguirre, App. 25).

5. On April 21, 1513, Fernando sent a letter to the officials of the Casa, telling them to send a special envoy to protest in his name to the King of Portugal; he enclosed a cédula to Colón, instructing him to send an armada to protect Tierra Firme against Portuguese invasion (Puente y Olea, p. 119).

6. Oviedo, for undisclosed reasons an almost fanatical partisan of Nicuesa, states that the procurador Zamudio fled into hiding in 1512 because of Enciso's charges concerning the ouster of Nicuesa. This is wishful thinking. Martyr mentions talking with Zamudio at Court (Dec. II, Bk. 3), but says nothing about his being in disfavor. In 1516 Zamudio stated that, having successfully negotiated the petitions of the colonists, he handed over the business to Quicedo and Colmenares when they arrived at Court in June of 1513, after more than twenty-six months as representative of the colony (Medina, II, 77). Casas criticizes Enciso severely for having restricted his complaints to matters concerning his personal interests.

7. Cédula of June 18, 1513 (Altolaguirre, App. 11; Medina, II, 36).

8. Casas (Bk. III, chap. 52) has another expedition in these months: Bartolomé Hurtado with forty men to "Benamachei and Abrayba." According to Casas, Hurtado ". . . did not leave a man alive of those he came upon in his first frenzy; he captured and enslaved everyone he could seize alive, and they stole all the gold and other useful or precious things in the whole land. When they could no longer find anyone, either peaceful or hostile, they all came back very victorious to Darién, with great strings of captive men and women." This brisk résumé seems to have no

basis in fact. It may have been born of confused recollections of stories about the expedition to the Atrato in 1512, and of the attempted offensive of the Indians which followed.

CHAPTER XVII

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 1, 6; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 7; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 53, 59; Herrera, Dec. I, Bk. X, chap. 17; Colmenares' memorials (see sources of Chapter IV); Altolaquirre, Apps. 9-17; Medina, II, 39-76, *passim*; DIHHA, X, 228, 245-49, *passim*; XIV, 31-32, 41, 50, 53; Alvarez, chap. ii and App. 5; Serrano y Sanz, pp. cclxiv-cclxix, ccxcvi-cccxi; Apps. 4, 10, 11, 14; Thobar, *Compendio de las bulas*, chap. 3. The most authoritative study of the organization of the new government and of the armada is that of Serrano y Sanz, "Preliminares del gobierno de Pedrarias Dávila en Castilla del Oro," *Orígenes de la dominación española en América*, pp. cclix-cccxxxviii and appendices.

Notes

1. Casas, who began to write his history at seventy-eight, planned other major works as he reached ninety; Belalcázar was a rampant conquistador at seventy; Carbajal, at eighty-four, scoured Peru with a demon energy that drove his exhausted men to near rebellion; it took an apoplectic stroke to stop Antonio de Lebrija from lecturing to crowded classes at the age of seventy-eight. Pedrarias' aunt-in-law, the Marquesa de Moya, was past sixty when she led a mounted assault on a castle which had been filched from her, retaking it by force of arms. Serrano, chief pilot of Pedrarias' armada, went with Magellan when he was sixty-five. One of the veterans of Darién who was in Lima in 1552 deposed that he was "a hundred years old, more or less."

2. Thobar, *Compendio de las bulas*, chap. 3.

CHAPTER XVIII

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXVI, chap. 10; Bk. XXIX, chaps. 1, 6, 7; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 7; Dec. III, Bk. 5; Dec. VII, Bk. 4; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 3-18,

54–57; Andagoya, *Relación*; Colmenares' memorials (see sources for Chapter IV); FAAP, IV, 76–80; DIHHA, VI, 429, 437; X, App. 16 and 228–49, *passim*; XIV, 13–45, *passim*; Puente y Olea, pp. 128–29, 132, 136, 137, 139–41, 393; Medina, II, 31–59, *passim*; 419, 422; Altolaguirre, Apps. 9, 11; Serrano y Sanz, pp. cclxxvi–ccxcvi, cccxvii–cccxxxviii, Apps. 5–9, 12, 13, 15, 16; Alvarez, App. 5; Navarrete, I, cxxx.

Requirement (versions differ slightly): Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 7; Medina, II, 287–89; Casas, Bk. III, chap. 57; Herrera, Dec. I, Bk. VII, chap. 14; Serrano y Sanz (“true text”), pp. ccxcii–ccxciv.

Ships and personnel of the armada: FAAP, Vols. IV, V; DAAP; DIHHA, Vols. X, XIV; CPI (1930 and 1940).

Notes

1. The instructions to Pedrarias are worth reading in full. The text is in Serrano y Sanz, pp. cclxxix–cclxxxviii.

2. The translation is from the text as published by Serrano y Sanz (pp. ccxcii–ccxciv). Compare with other versions (see Principal Sources above). The statement that Hojeda was the first to use the Requirement (at Cartagena in 1509) is an error.

3. In 1511, at Hojeda's request, arms had been dispatched to Hispaniola for Hojeda's gobernación. It is not known what became of them; perhaps Colón gave them to Velásquez for use in Cuba.

4. It is not surprising that pilots were stimulated to combine commerce with navigation. The salary of Juan Vespucci, Amerigo's nephew and pupil, who was pilot of Pedrarias' flagship, was 30,000 maravedies; Juan Serrano, chief pilot of the fleet and one of the famous navigators of the time, got 30,000 plus two *cahices* of wheat.

5. Upper-class recruits were allowed one box each; *hoi polloi* had to make do with two boxes for three men. It was not said how they were to manage their packing (Serrano y Sanz, App. 13).

6. A proposal for quilted-linen armor was also discarded, perhaps unwisely. It was effective—so much so that it is again in style.

7. Significantly, the men of property could use silk saddlecloths (which showed) but not silk undergarments. The penalty for a first offense was confiscation of the *corpus delicti*—to be given, half and half, to the judge and the prosecutor, who presumably could then cut up the underwear for saddle covers (Serrano y Sanz, pp. cclxxxvii–ixn).

CHAPTER XIX

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. VI, chap. 13; Bk. XXVI, chap. 10; Bk. XXIX, chaps. 6–8; Bk. L, chaps. 3, 5; *Sumario*, chap. lxxxii; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 7; Dec. III, Bks. 5, 6; Casas, Bk. III, chap. 59; Andagoya, *Relación*; Alvarez, pp. 88–89*n*, 90–91*n*; App. 10; Medina, II, 397, 419; Guevara, *Libro de los inventores del arte de marear*.

Notes

1. Alvarez (p. 72*n*) cites a Muñoz transcript to the effect that after the armada left, the pilot Juan de Camargo was ordered to follow it, with Captain Zorita, to pick up fifty-six islanders. But the Muñoz transcript from the Casa's "book of the armada" (Alvarez, App. 5) says that this caravel preceded the armada to the Canaries. Zorita was certainly on *Santiago*, and *Santiago* left Gomera before the rest of the armada. Also, if Camargo went as far as the Canaries, he came back quickly from there; he was in Spain in mid-1514.

2. Published in 1539; reprinted, under different title, by C. Fernández Duro, *Disquisiciones náuticas*, Vol. II.

3. Martyr, who wrote just after talking with returned shipmasters of the armada and reading the first dispatches about the journey, is positive that the expeditionaries did not see so much as a sign of a native in Dominica, nor does Oviedo mention Indians there. The reference in a letter of the King to Pedrarias' decision not to "hound" the natives of Dominica does not mean he saw any.

4. Oviedo, Bk. XXXIX, chap. 7. Martyr says, "The XI day of the calends of July," but this seems to be a slip or miscopy for "the VI day"—June twenty-sixth.

CHAPTER XX

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 6–8; Bk. L, chaps. 2, 3; Martyr, Dec. II, Bk. 9; Dec. III, Bks. 6, 10; *Opus epistolarum*, Letters 541, 542; Bishop

Quevedo's memorial of January 1515 (Altolaquirre, App. 53; Medina, II, 434-41); Oviedo's memorial (Medina, II, 259-66); Enciso, *Suma*; Andagoya, *Relación*; Altolaquirre, Apps. 22-30, 65, 74; Medina, II, *passim*; Balboa's letters (Medina, II, 216, 217; Altolaquirre, Apps. 6, 31); "Un religioso dominico" (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 5); Alvarez, Apps. 22, 23, 24; Leyes de Indias, Vol. II: Libro IV, Título xii, Ley 1.

Notes

1. "And whereas it might happen that allotting lands there be some question as to the measurement, we hereby declare that a peonía consists of: a lot 50 *piés* wide and 100 long, 100 *fanegas* of cropland for wheat or barley; 10 [fanegas] for maize; two *huebras* of land for irrigated crops and eight for planting other dry-crop trees; enough pasture land for ten sows, twenty cows, five mares, a hundred ewes, and twenty she-goats. A caballería is: a lot 100 *piés* wide and 200 long, and everything else like five peonías" (Leyes de Indias, Vol. II: Libro IV, Título xii, Ley 1). A huebra of land was as much as could be plowed with one yoke of oxen in a day.

2. Organization of the Ayora expedition was already well advanced by July thirteenth (Medina, II, 500).

3. The medically minded may be interested in the perplexing characteristics of modorra: (1) it affected the central nervous system, producing both lethargy and delirium; (2) it appeared to be highly contagious; (3) it closely resembled recent epidemics in Spain of a "new" pestilence which appears to have been typhus laced with bubonic plague; (4) it broke out over a month after the armada arrived; (5) it was previously unknown in Darién; (6) it did not seriously affect the veteran colonists or the natives of Gran Canaria; (7) it spared a settlement twenty miles from Darién and the ships which left before early August; (8) it did not recur. For the symptoms of modorra see Molina's *Tractado en que se contiene el modo preseruatiuo e curatiuo de pestilencia: juntamente con la cura de otra pesúfera enfermedad a quien el vulgo llama Modorra* (Granada, 1554).

4. Cédulas of August 2, 1515, in answer to Balboa's letters of August 1 and November 23, 1514, and to Pedrarias' report of November 20 (Medina, II, 72, 73; Altolaquirre, Apps. 36, 37).

CHAPTER XXI

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 8, 9; *Sumario*, chap. 61; Martyr, Dec. III, Bk. 6; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 60, 61; Andagoya, *Relación*; Medina, II, *passim*; Alvarez, Apps. 9, 10; Balboa's letters (Medina, II, 217-18; Altolaguirre, App. 33); Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 4.

Notes

1. Quevedo's memorial of January 1515, and his letter of January 20, 1515 (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 4). The Medina version of the letter is bad; the Harrisse translation of it (*Discovery of North America*, p. 484) should, in kindness, be ignored.

2. Puente was not alone in suggesting this. Bishop Quevedo expressed the same idea in his memorial of January 1515, with the difference that he strongly advocated that Vasco Núñez be restored to command. Pasamonte, no doubt influenced by the Bishop and Balboa, made the same proposal, adding that perhaps Quevedo should also be left in Tierra Firme (Medina, II, 243).

CHAPTER XXII

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 9, 10; Bk. XXXIX, chap. 1; Martyr, Dec. III, Bks. 6, 10; Andagoya, *Relación*; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 61-63, 67-68; Enciso, *Suma de geografía*; Herrera, Dec. II, Bk. I, chap. 2; Bishop Quevedo's memorial of January 1515 (Medina, II, 434-41; Altolaguirre, App. 53); "Un religioso dominico" (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 5); Altolaguirre, App. 78; Medina, II, *passim*; Alvarez, Apps. 9, 10, 18; Balboa's letters (Medina, II, 216-18, 398-412; Altolaguirre, Apps. 31, 33).

Notes

1. Four hundred is the number given by Pedrarias and the officials in reports of October 18 and November 26, 1514 (Medina, II, 221; Altolaguirre, p. 66). The Bishop increased it to four hundred and fifty (Me-

dina, II, 426). Enciso said they had two hundred, a figure accepted by Oviedo and Casas.

2. Cieza de León made their acquaintance in Urabá, whither they had moved sometime between 1525 and 1535, after the original Urabaes had sought more inaccessible country.

3. There was another Francisco de Avila in Darién who was with Balboa in the discovery of the Pacific. He was probably one of Serrano's men (his permit to leave Spain was dated February 11, 1512). Ayora's man, however, seems to have been the royal captain who went with Pedrarias.

4. This may be the same Garci Alvarez of Moguer with whom Fonseca made a contract for a voyage to the Indies in 1496 (Muñoz Transcripts N.Y., Rich 5).

5. A letter from the Bishop dated April second—not April eleventh, as printed by Medina (II, 209–10)—says in one paragraph that Gusmán got 40,000 pesos of gold. According to the records of the *fundición*, the total was 18,699 pesos, 7 tomines, plus 756 pesos of low-grade guanín. On the basis of the official statements as to the number of men with Gusmán, and of what each share came to in maravedíes, they marked the gold at about 14 carats.

6. Espinosa christened the boy Don Gaspar when he received him in encomienda in 1522. Pacora was then said to be fifteen or sixteen years old (Medina, II, 463). It may be noted that the ruler of a chiefdom called Tamame, adjoining Chimán and Pocosora, was also called Pacora.

CHAPTER XXIII

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 9, 10, 33; Martyr, Dec. III, Bks. 6, 10; *Opus epistolarum*, Letters 543, 558; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 65–68; Andagoya, *Relación*; Medina, II, 208–58, *passim*; 338; 399–441, *passim*; 495; Balboa's brevets (Medina, II, 73–76, 208–58, *passim*; 420; Altolaguirre, Apps. 25–30, 34, 35); Balboa's letters (Medina, II, 142, 217–20; Altolaguirre, App. 33); DIHHA, X, 265, 268; XIV, 36, 40, 41; Navarrete, I, cxxx.

Notes

1. See letter of Puente and Márquez, elaborating this theme, January 28, 1516 (DIRD, II, 522–26).

2. The ships were *Santa María de la Consolación*, master, Andrés Niño, and *San Clemente*, later called *Santa María del Ayuda*, master, Bartolomé de Mafra. Judging from their brief careers, the expensive sheathing was a waste of money.

3. "An Adelantado is someone put over some country or province by the King, to rule and govern it in the King's name. And because it is a very great office, he must be a man of great lineage, and most loyal and able." An adelantado functioned also as supreme justice (*merino*), even hearing appeals. He was forbidden to marry anyone native to the province he governed (Leyes [1538], fol. x).

4. The entry in Puente's accounts does not state what this sum was for, or how it was arrived at. It was collected five days after Balboa's brevets were received (Medina, II, 412).

5. Morales had left by April 2. He was taken as far as the port of the Trepadera by ship, and was debited for ninety-five passenger fares at a half peso each. Badajoz must have started very soon after, for the second contingent of his expedition had gone before Balboa wrote to the King on April 30. His expedition was taken as far as Nombre de Dios in Mafra's leaded caravel, for which he was charged 7½ shares of his booty. This was only half what Téllez de Gusmán was charged for a similar service in 1514; presumably Gusmán used two ships to Badajoz' one.

CHAPTER XXIV

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. 111, chaps. 64–67; Martyr, Dec. III, Bk. 6; Dec. IV, Bk. 10; *Opus epistolarum*, Letters 554, 557; Oviedo, Bk. XIX, chap. 8; Bk. XXIX, chaps. 10, 12; Andagoya, *Relación*; Herrera, Dec. II, Bk. I, chap. 1; Alvarez, Apps. 17, 18, 19; Altolaguirre, Apps. 31 bis, 40–49, 52, 57; Medina, II, 43, 139, 200–59, 400–29, *passim*; DIRD, XXXVI, 380–83, 402–4, 425–27, 437–38; Balboa's letters (Medina, II, 139, 235–36, 237; Altolaguirre, Apps. 39, 44, 50); Pedrarias' memorial (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 4; Medina, II, 256 ff.; Altolaguirre, App. 52).

Notes

1. This is by far the best account of Balboa's second Atrato expedition—a very workmanlike job. Martyr, always badly mixed up where Dabaibe

was concerned, is a misleading source. Incidentally, Martyr's statement that "they went upriver in ordered squadrons four times: the first time, forty leagues; afterwards, fifty, and finally eighty" (which is three times) does not refer to this entrada alone as has sometimes been supposed.

2. Between August 8 and October 20, 1515, twelve letters are known to have been addressed to the King in which Balboa was denounced, mostly for his leadership of the Atrato entrada: six of them from Pedrarias and the officials jointly, three from Pedrarias alone, three from the officials alone. There was also a special report—clearly damaging—on the expedition, bolstered by a secret inquiry, both forwarded to the King via a certain Arriaga on August 8 or 10.

3. Some of the incidents told by Casas—and by no one else—are confirmed by references in proofs of merit made long afterward.

4. Balboa, with his customary moderation, said that twenty-five of Morales' men were killed (letter to the King, October 16, 1515 [Medina, II, 139; Altolaguirre, p. 80]).

5. It is possible that Morales had lost the other 3879 pesos' weight of pearls. However, it is not so stated.

6. It had been decreed that any outstanding piece of loot should be set aside for the King and its appraised value added to what was to be divided among the expeditionaries.

CHAPTER XXV

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 69–72, 74, 76; Martyr, Dec. III, Bk. 10; Oviedo, Bk. X, chap. 3; Bk. XII, chap. 7; Bk. XXIX, chap. 10; Andagoya, *Relación*; Medina, II, *passim*; Altolaguirre, Apps. 47, 51, 54–56; Alvarez, App. 10; DIRD, II, 538–49.

Notes

1. The ancient laws concerning the distribution of booty were codified in the *Espéculo* (Looking Glass), "which," a foreword explained, "means as it were 'mirror of all laws.'" They included both accident and property insurance, that is, payments for battle injuries and for damage or loss of equipment, according to a minutely specified schedule quite like those of modern policies. Only after these payments were made, and a sum set

aside for the ransom of Spanish prisoners for whom no countercaptives were available, was the booty divided—again, according to a complicated scale in which each item of the equipment of each soldier was considered as well as his rank. The commander got seven shares (Bk. III, Tit. vii). In Darién the distribution of loot was a much simpler business, and although at one time, displeased with Pedrarias' methods, the colonists asked that the old laws be applied, there is no evidence that the request was seriously considered. They probably did not know how extremely complex the provisions were.

2. Martyr, who talked with Badajoz in Spain not long after, says that seventy expeditionaries were killed in Parisa alone, out of a total of one hundred and thirty. Casas copies Martyr in these figures, but adds eighty "wounded without hope of living" in the Parisa encounter. Since this brings the dead and fatally wounded to twenty more than the Martyr-Casas total of expeditionaries, and exactly balances Balboa's version of one hundred and fifty expeditionaries, it is clear that the hopelessness of the injuries was somewhat exaggerated.

3. Oviedo confuses Juanaga (at the pass just south of Nombre de Dios) with Capira, in the hills west of Panama.

4. The massacre of Olano and his companions appears to have occurred in May 1516. News of it had not reached Darién when Cristóbal Serrano was dispatched, in April, to chastise other tribes, but it happened before the reinforcements went to join Espinosa, for Espinosa knew of it before he returned.

5. Balboa's *asiento* gave him eighteen months, presumably from the day he left Darién, and he received one extension of four months. Pedrarias later declared that he should have returned to report on June 24, 1518.

CHAPTER XXVI

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 11, 12; *Sumario*, chap. 29; Casas, Bk. III, chap. 74; Galíndez de Carbajal, *Anales breves*; Martyr, Dec. IV, Bk. 9; Colmenares' memorials (see sources for Chapter IV, and Medina, II, 152–54); Altolaguirre, Apps. 37, 38; DIHE, II, 375–79; VII, 572–74; DIRD, I, 248, 441; X, 549–55; XXXVI, 380–83, 402–4, 437–38, 441; Medina, II, 56, 72, 73, 221, 247; Bergenroth, *Calendar of letters*, I, 369; Alvarez, App. 12; Sandoval, *Historia*, I, 46–115.

Notes

1. Two cédulas of September 1513, addressed respectively to Doña Isabel and Tavira, were signed only by Conchillos and Fonseca. The dispatches which left Darién on August 8 or 10, 1515, and some of those written prior to May, did not reach Spain until December 15 or 23; those of October arrived after the King's death (Medina, II, 72, 73, 221, 247). What Fernando got, during the last months of his life, were probably résumés of official reports.

2. Charles' letter acknowledging Cisneros as sole regent was remarkably prompt: it was dated February 14, 1516. At Cisneros' request it was confirmed on June 9. Adrian had been rushed to Castile at the end of 1515 with open-dated letters patent as regent; King Fernando may or may not have known of these, but he had no illusions as to why his grandson had sent an ambassador at this time: "Tell him to go away," he said. "He has only come to see if I am dying." Although Fernando relented and received Adrian graciously, the Ambassador did go away. He was in Seville when the King died. In 1517, Charles' minister, Chièvres, sent Charles Piper, Seigneur of La Chaulx (known in Spain as Laxao), to assist in the Regency, and followed him with another stooge, Armerstoff ("Armers Toro"). Cisneros treated them with great politeness—and ordered that state papers should not be shown to them.

3. It is not clear what became of all the reports and memorials taken by the other special emissaries who went to Spain from Darién in 1515. Arriaga, who left Santa María in August with the official reports and secret inquiry on Balboa's expedition to Dabaibe, is not mentioned again, and the documents he carried are missing. (The single reference to him suggests he was someone well known in Court circles. Perhaps he was Luis de Arriaga, who got a license in 1502 to establish, with two hundred Spanish families, four settlements in Hispaniola.) Of Pedrarias the Nephew, who had started in February with the first representations against Balboa, we are told only that he retired to his home in Avila, where he was subsequently murdered; nothing is said of the papers he carried. Diego de Torres' secretary, Vera, may have delivered the provincial's reports, but there is no evidence that he did. About Cintado, the Bishop's envoy, we know only that he got Quevedo's memorial into the archives, and hence probably reported to Quevedo's superior, Cisneros.

4. On August 8, 1515, the officials of Santo Domingo wrote that Oviedo was about to leave for Spain. He should have been in Castile by mid-

November. However, he said that the King was in Plasencia when he arrived, and Fernando did not get to Plasencia until November twenty-ninth. Oviedo delivered 3000 pesos of gold to the Casa, and proceeded to Court with twelve "very handsome" Carib slaves, some samples of cañafistula, six loaves of sugar—the first produced in Hispaniola—and "thirty or more parrots of ten or twelve different kinds, and most of them could talk very well" (Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 11; *Sumario*, chap. 29).

5. Oviedo and Colmenares were back in Spain by October. On the sixteenth of that month Colmenares went to see Martyr, in company with a veteran of Badajoz' expedition, Francisco de la Puente (Martyr, Dec. III, Bk. 10).

6. The royal officials, whose salaries were small in relation to prices and to their responsibilities, counted on such compensation. However, they probably held fewer Indians than Casas says they did. Pasamonte, for instance, did not have two hundred Indians in Puerto Rico, as Casas asserts; he had forty-five (register of Indians held by officials in Puerto Rico, 1517 [Tapia y Rivera, *Biblioteca histórica*, p. 180]).

7. News of Fernando's death and Cisneros' regency reached Hispaniola in the first days of April. On April tenth the officials of Santo Domingo wrote to Cisneros in great agitation, full of their plans to forestall insurrection, invasion, and other crises, and requesting urgent dispatch of munitions. Cisneros' reply said, in effect, that they were fools, and suggested that they forget armament and coast guard cutters and settle down to doing their jobs.

CHAPTER XXVII

Principal Sources

The chief source of information on life in Darién is, of course, Oviedo, in passages scattered throughout his *Historia*. Much of the data on the natural history of the Indies in his *Sumario* and in the first fifteen books of the *Historia* are applicable to the Isthmus. Andagoya gives some information, and so do Casas and Martyr. A fair amount can be gathered from what was said in correspondence from Darién, for which see Altolaguirre, Alvarez, and Vol. II of Medina.

Notes

1. Six hundred at the end of 1515 (dispatch of November thirtieth [Medina, II, 246]); the sixty men brought by Garabito for Balboa had

been balanced by departures on December first and at the beginning of February 1516. Most of the surviving captains who were not with Espinosa had left before mid-1516 for Cuba, Hispaniola, or Spain: Fernando de Atienza, Zorita, Morales, Meneses, Francisco Dávila, Gamarra, Peñalosa, Badajoz. Of these only Badajoz returned.

2. Oviedo's list includes beans, celery, onions, lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, parsley, and other vegetables. One suspects that, like some of the fruit trees he speaks of, they were less plentiful and flourishing than he implies, at least in Santa María del Antigua. Oviedo always presented Darién—the country, not the settlers—sunny side up.

3. This is fact, not superstition, however it may offend the modern scientific mind. Anyone who, like the writer, has lived in these latitudes and had occasion to work with lumber, knows by experience that the rule applies to most woods. Timber is best felled in the last quarter of the moon, but in any case should not be cut until two or three days after the full moon.

4. Colombians say that he sings: "*O! mis piés, mis piés, mis piés . . .*" roughly equivalent to "Oh! my poor feet"—a reasonable plaint for a sloth.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chaps. 13, 33; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 72, 73, 77; Andagoya, *Relación*; Herrera, Dec. II, Bk. IX, chap. 9; Espinosa's report (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 5; Altolaguirre, App. 59; Ternaux-Compans, *Archives de voyages*, I, 51-76); Medina, II, 78-182, *passim*; 327-485, *passim*; Altolaguirre, Apps. 63-65; Balboa's asiento (Archivo de Indias, Sevilla, 2-5-2/15 [Libro de registro de Al. de la Puente]; Puente y Olea, p. 146; Alvarez, App. 30).

Notes

1. By far the best version of Espinosa's report is the manuscript in the Muñoz Transcripts in the New York Public Library. That given by Medina (II, 154-83) is clearly taken from the execrable one printed in DIRD, II, 467-522. Cf. Ternaux-Compans, *Archives de voyages*, I, 51-76; Altolaguirre, App. 59.

2. Casas gives an extensive, colorful, and choleric account of the expedition, but runs wild on figures. Espinosa did not start with 300 men; according to the documents, he cannot have had more than about 170 when he left Acla, since, of the original 212, twenty returned to Darién with Pedrarias and others stayed in Acla with Olano. Of these, not less than a score must have escorted Dean Pérez when he returned to Darién from Chimán. Nor did he get over 110,000 pesos of gold in Parisa; his total take was only about half that. And whereas he undoubtedly killed a shocking number of Indians, it may be questioned whether he really killed 40,000. Both Casas and Oviedo confuse this expedition with subsequent ones under Espinosa—from which the statement that Hurtado discovered as far as the Gulf of Nicoya and the reference to Espinosa's burial of 20,000 pesos of gold in Panama.

3. This is the “Maestre Bartolomé” who came to Darién in 1513, and who has been erroneously identified with Bartolomé Ruiz, Pizarro's pilot. Ruiz did not go to the Isthmus until 1519, as is abundantly proven in sworn depositions. Pimienta must have been popular because he was generally referred to by his given name; however, his surname appears in witness to the taking of possession of Terarequí in January of 1519 (Alvarez, App. 33).

4. It is not known when Hernández went to Spain, but his permit to return to Darién was dated October 27, 1516 (CPI [1930], #2247).

CHAPTER XXIX

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. IV, chap. 2; Bk. XXIX, chap. 13; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 74, 75; Andagoya, *Relación*; Martyr, Dec. IV, Bk. 9; Alvarez, Apps. 23, 99, 104; Medina, II, 77–81, 401–47, *passim*; Altolaguirre, Apps. 61, 62, 68; DIRD, III, 556–58.

Notes

1. In the beginning, information about the broma-resistant timber of Careta was credited to Chief Chima; later it was debited to Balboa.

2. It may seem odd that a hundred or so men could not save a pile of lumber and gear before it was washed away. But rivers like the Chucunaque can flood remarkably quickly and with very little fuss. I have seen

one rise thirty-three feet in three or four hours. If the flood came at night, the expeditionaries did well to save themselves.

3. By 1640, the number had been reduced to twelve, who spoke only Spanish ("Descripción de Panamá y su provincia," *Relaciones históricas y geográficas de América Central*, pp. 139–218).

4. The ships of the South Sea Company are variously described as four caravels, three or four bergantines and caravels, etc. The expeditionaries themselves told the King that they had built two caravels, a *fusta* (lighter), and a boat (Alvarez, App. 104). Espinosa said that the *fusta* was called *Santa María de Buena Esperanza*, and the boat *San Cristóbal*; their combined capacity was sixty-seven men (Medina, II, 276). Medina (I, 277, Note 22) thought that these were the two ships which were sold at auction in 1534 after Pedrarias' death. But this was not possible. González Dávila, who came to Castilla del Oro in 1519 with authorization to take Balboa's vessels for his own use, said in 1524 that he had been obliged to build new ones "because the first iv which were built in tierra firme xxx leagues [away] up a river were lost, as I wrote Y.M. in my previous letter" (Muñoz Transcripts, N.Y., Rich 5). Moreover, *San Cristóbal* and *La Esperanza* were stated to belong to Pedrarias and were auctioned in the settlement of his estate. The Governor had been criticized for building ships to use in personal commerce—specifically, commerce in peaceful Indians seized for slaves.

5. The name was early deformed to Puerto de Piñas (Port of Pineapples). The place is usually referred to today by the name of the village there: Jaqué.

6. There is also confusion over Chiruca and Chochama, both of which (or whom) are credited with lordship over the lower Sambú River. They may have been on either side of the river; on the other hand, it is possible that the chief killed by Morales was Chief Chiruca of Chochama, and that Pequeo was his successor.

7. The order, prompted by Cisneros, was relayed to Pedrarias by the Hieronymites and Zuazo. An otherwise unaccountable sentence in an attack on Zuazo by the officials of Hispaniola, in 1518, to the effect that he had given a judgment in Darién unfavorable to the King, may refer to this matter (DIRD, I, 354–55).

8. It has been said that the five hundred recruits were to have been conducted—or even that they were conducted—to Tierra Firme by Gonzalo de Badajoz, who was then in Spain, and were therefore certainly destined for Castilla del Oro. But the cédula concerning them does not

say that Badajoz should take the men. It says he can take letters from the officials of the Casa to the Hieronymite governors "because he is going to those parts" (Alvarez, App. 23). Badajoz got his permit to return to the Isthmus on May 19, 1517 (CPI [1940], §2509). There is no further mention of the proposed reinforcements.

CHAPTER XXX

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XXIX, chap. 12; Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 75, 76, 141; Andagoya, *Relación*; Martyr, Dec. IV, Bk. 9; Pedrarias' accusation of Balboa (Altolaguirre, App. 66; Medina, II, 557-63).

Notes

1. The criminal counts of 1514 could be resurrected because Pedrarias, with great foresight, had not allowed them to be disposed of by due process. He had "suspended" them by order, thus enabling himself to pose as a benefactor while keeping a sword of Damocles handily in the air.

CHAPTER XXXI

Principal Sources

Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 74, 76, 106, 132, 147, 152; Oviedo, Bk. VI, chap. 61; Bk. XXIX, chap. 12; Andagoya, *Relación*; Medina, II, 346-58, *passim*; 557-63; Alvarez, App. 132 and pp. 612, 625, 630; DIRD, XXXVI, 428-29; Altolaguirre, App. 66.

Notes

1. The man selected to lead the delayed punitive raid to Careta was Martín de Murga, and the time was July or August 1518. Murga's captives were auctioned on September twenty-ninth; in view of the retiring habits acquired by the surviving Caretaes, he did well to catch the 163 pesos' worth who were declared. Murga was later murdered by the Indians of Bea. Oviedo, who had returned from Spain and was serving as captain of Darién at the time, avenged the killing, but, rather oddly, not on the perpetrator of the crime (Oviedo, Bk. VI, chap. 61).

2. Pedrarias took over Balboa's gobernación and expedition, in person, at the end of January 1519. The Indians were taken to Santa María in late February, and auctioned on March fourteenth and March nineteenth. Together with some captured in Comogre, they sold for 2500 pesos (Medina, II, 417).

3. "In the end, the 1,000 leagues were reduced to 300 . . . but it went for 2 or 3,000 or more inland" (Casas, Bk. III, chap. 132). Later, Casas says that his gobernación was cut to about 260 leagues, but it took in the prize stretch known as the Pearl Coast. Casas' very lengthy relation of his negotiations, difficulties, and triumphs, and of his ill-fated attempt at colonization, are extraordinarily interesting, especially when compared with other accounts of the same events (Oviedo and Gómara).

4. The Chièvres-Chaulx clique was, for obvious reasons, rather generally hated, but the clergy had been particularly incensed by the appointment of Chièvres' nineteen-year-old nephew to succeed Cisneros as Archbishop Primate.

5. Guaranteed, but not, in practice, permitted. The appellate judges in Hispaniola complained that after Pedrarias went to Darién, not one appeal to them had been allowed from Castilla del Oro (DIRD, XXXVI, 428-29).

6. The text of Espinosa's injunction and Pedrarias' declaration is given by Altolaguirre (App. 66) and by Medina (II, 557-63).

7. The twelfth of January, when Pedrarias' order of execution was registered, was Saturday. It is probable that the prisoners were summoned to hear the sentence on Monday and that they were executed the following day, January fifteenth. The Governor was already in Pequeo on the twenty-seventh.

EPILOGUE

Principal Sources

Oviedo, Bk. XVII, chap. 21; Bk. XXIX, chaps. 14-16, 18, 20, 22, *et al.*;
Casas, Bk. III, chaps. 106, 108, 161-64; Andagoya, *Relación*; Alto-
laguirre, App. 67, *et seq.*; Puente y Olea, pp. 147, 149; DIRD, III,
549-56; XXV, 248 ff.; DIRDU, XXIV, 173-92; Medina, II, 89-93,
97-99, 277, 279, 445 ff.; Alvarez, Apps. 31-151.

Notes

1. On April 19, 1520, from Acla, Pedrarias wrote a long memorandum to the King on the requirements of good government in the colony. It does not mention the recent events (Alvarez, App. 42). Incidentally, this document is misdated in Medina, as of 1529. In 1529, Pedrarias was no longer governor of Castilla del Oro.

2. Alarconcillo to the King, June 7, 1519 (Alvarez, App. 77). The youth was given four hundred Indians for himself. Three of Pedrarias' sons were at various times in Castilla del Oro and Nicaragua, but curiously enough, little is said of them. The fourth, Francisco de Bobadilla, still more curiously, vanished into thin air. Pedrarias listed him as one of four sons and five daughters, all born of Doña Isabel, in the will he made in 1514 (Alvarez, App. 151). Doña Isabel, in 1531, ignored his existence: "of three male children that we had, two have died and only one remains to us." The one who remained was Arias González; Juan died in Nicaragua in 1529, and Diego in Spain in 1530 or 1531 (Alvarez, App. 138, 147). A Fray Francisco de Bobadilla went from Panama to Nicaragua in 1527 as vicar general, but he appears to have been a nephew or cousin.

3. It is true that when Pedrarias died, he left debts in Nicaragua and insufficient liquid capital there to cover them. But the Emperor was officially informed that all obligations could be paid, and a balance of 3000 pesos left over, with the gold due to be smelted from Pedrarias' mines (Alvarez, App. 144). The Governor's notorious profits were not kept in the colony, and his will disproves Doña Isabel's claim that he had sold or mortgaged everything he owned before leaving Castile.

4. In June 1519, Charles V heard from Pedrarias that Balboa, a traitor and a rebel, was in prison. In July or early August he learned that Balboa was dead. What else he was told we do not know. Pedrarias did not forward copies of the papers of the trial, but it may be taken that he sent a damning recital of Balboa's crimes. Certainly Charles was told that Balboa had gone to the Pacific coast without authorization from the King or from Pedrarias. In that understanding he assigned Balboa's ships for the use of Gil González Dávila. In September 1520, procuradores from Castilla del Oro informed the Regent, Adrian, that this was untrue (cédula of September 20, 1520 [Medina, II, 89]).

5. Medina, II, 92-93.

6. The cédula which confirmed Pedrarias as governor after Sosa's death had indicated that it was a temporary measure: "for the time being, and

until we order to the contrary." The cédula which supplies Avilanzo's name is printed by Alvarez (App. 95).

7. It was also, as now appeared, a cause which offered only moral rewards. The confiscated property of all five victims had amounted to only 3000 pesos. When Oviedo, charged with collecting the estates, got back to Darién, he found that a third of this had been eaten in "fees" by a special custodian whom Pedrarias had appointed. In the end only 947 pesos are known to have been recovered, of which 277 pesos was paid to Argüello's widow (Medina, II, 98, 99). In so far as Balboa's estate was concerned, it was already mortgaged to Arbolancha, Father Pérez, and other creditors. This must have been a slight shock to Charles as well as to hopeful heirs: in 1520 the King had ordered Oviedo to auction off Balboa's personal and household effects, and to forward his gold and other valuables "in one or two ships" (Alvarez, App. 68).

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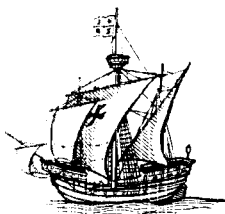
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Atlantic Ocean



palacios

SCALE OF MILES
0 100 200
ALL MODERN PLACE NAMES APPEAR IN ITALICS.

Balboa of Darién

DISCOVERER

OF THE

PACIFIC

“Just for an instant, as he stood there solitary between earth and sky, the immensity that stretched away below him was his and his only, vast and inviolate.

“ . . . and Andrés de Valdarrábano sat down to write in fair script the names of the sixty-seven ‘caballeros and hidalgos and worthy men who were present in the discovery of the South Sea with the magnificent and most noble lord captain Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Governor for Their Highnesses in Tierra Firme.’

“One can picture the battered compañeros, still somewhat moist-eyed, tearing themselves away from the panorama of descending ridges and distant silver water to bend over the escribano, making sure that the memory of them should endure.

“Having thus registered the discovery with both heaven and earth . . . Vasco Núñez de Balboa took possession of the Pacific Ocean for God and Castile.”



Lotte Jacobi

KATHLEEN ROMOLI

was born in California of British parents, and has spent varying periods of her life in Japan, India, England, Italy, New York City, and the Republic of Colombia. Her most recent work, *Colombia: Gateway to South America*, was remarkable not only for its scholarship but for its vivid, flowing style, and was considered by Lewis Gannett to be one of the forty best books published in 1941. She was decorated by the President of Colombia with the Cross of Boyacá, the first American woman to receive this honor.

Mrs. Romoli wrote BALBOA OF DARIÉN under a Guggenheim Fellowship, and had the able assistance of archivists, scholars, and librarians in Spain, America, and Latin America. Her proficiency in several languages has served her well in the accurate interpretation of original documents often previously misconstrued or never translated. It is seldom that a book combines such intensive research and scholarship with a style that has such brilliance, vigor, and humor.

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