

# La felice victoria



*La felice victoria: Bartolomé de Flores's A Newly Composed Work, Which Recounts the Happy Victory That God, in His Infinite Goodness and Mercy, Was Pleased to Give to the Illustrious Señor Pedro Menéndez (1571)*

Translated by E. Thomson Shields Jr. and Thomas Hallock

In spring 1562 the French explorer Jean Ribault cruised the north-flowing St. Johns River, what he called the "River of May," below present-day Jacksonville, Florida. Two years later, the Calvinist Huguenot explorer René Goulaine de Laudonnière established a fort nearby, challenging shipping lanes off the Atlantic coast. The French Protestant threat caught the attention of Roman Catholic King Philip II, who sent the formidable Asturian Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to eradicate the fort and establish a Spanish fort there. Acting as *Adelantado*, an entrepreneurial governor who invested his own money in the enterprise, Menéndez answered his charge with military and religious zeal. He demolished the French fort, slaughtered most of the Huguenots, and established

St. Augustine—a city that now bills itself as the nation’s oldest continuously occupied city. The year 2015 marks the 450th anniversary of these events, and with the commemoration of St. Augustine’s founding, it serves to recognize that the European contest for *la Florida* held literary as well as historical importance.

An outsized body of writing emerged from the struggle for this obscure corner of empire, one work being Bartolomé de Flores’s 1571 *La felice victoria que Dios por su infinita bondad y misericordia, fue seruido de dar, al Illustre señor Pedro Melendez* (*The Happy Victory that God, in His Infinite Goodness and Mercy, Was Pleased to Give to the Illustrious Señor Pedro Menéndez*). Flores’s poem, published in eight quarto (20 cm x 15 cm) pages and translated here for the first time, has three parts. The first part includes a brief invocation, followed by a description of Menéndez’s charge against the Huguenot settlers, which Flores freely sets against the range of Spanish conquests in the Americas. The second part celebrates the beauty, natural resources, and people of *la Florida*—again, situating the wonders of one colony against broader imperial claims. A *villancico*, or carol, finally, sings of a joust, offering Menéndez’s victory as a martial conquest for the Christian realm. The parts may appear disjointed, but in its loose associations, *La felice victoria* provides a valuable window into Spanish perceptions of empire.

Flores’s verse tribute adds to the substantial—if undervalued—literature about St. Augustine’s founding, a body of work that cuts across several languages and rhetorical positions. Before the Spanish attacked the French Huguenot colonial efforts, Jean Ribault, in England because of the religious wars in France, penned *The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida* (1563), a book-length promotional account of the St. Johns expedition that mixed pastoral jubilation with topographic detail. At least two early English poems described the far-off territory. Robert Seall’s 1563 broadside, *A Commendation of the Adventerous Viage of the Wurthy Captain M. Thomas Stutely Esquyer and others Towards the Land Called Terra Florida*, paid tribute to Thomas Stucley (or Stuckley), who vied to set up a colony there. And a slightly better-known 1564 ballad would ask, “Have you not h[e]ard of floryda,” where natives “Fynd glysterynge gold / And yt for tryfels sell?” The swift Spanish victory and dubious Huguenot defense in 1565 sparked a considerable body of writing, much of it legal or procedural, and often with a rhetorical agenda. Multiple biographies of Menéndez chronicle the battle for *la Florida*, and French survivors penned two accounts. Laudonnière’s *L’histoire notable de la Floride* (1586) was published posthumously and translated in part by Richard Hakluyt, while Nicolas Le Challeux offered his own version in *Discours de l’histoire de la Floride, contenant la trahison des Espangnols, contre les subjects du Roy* (1566). The most famous record of this imperial struggle, finally, came from Jacques le Moyne de Morgue, whose 1591 *Brevis narratio eorum quæ in Florida Americæ provincia Gallis acciderunt ...* (*Brief Narration of Those Things Which Befell the French in the Province of Florida in America ...*) included Theodore de Bry’s engravings of native Timucuans, spurious images of Florida’s “first people” that circulate widely to this day.

Many of these sources are known to historians and critics, although *La felice victoria* has escaped attention. Scholarship on this and other scenes of imperial struggle has remained fixed on the accounts of participant-observers; quasi-literary works have found their way into undergraduate textbooks and appear ripe for commentary, even by scholars who do not read Spanish. But a poem, especially one by a non-participant, does not carry the same historical weight, leading to its neglect. Yet *La felice victoria* illustrates how empire was understood in Spain, how victories were celebrated, and how the little-regarded territory of *la Florida* fit alongside more significant triumphs.

What little we know about Bartolomé de Flores comes from his work. Between 1570 and 1572, he apparently experienced a burst of energy, resulting in five verse pamphlets. According to *La felice victoria*, Flores was “natural de Malaga y vezino de Cordoua,” a Malagueño living in Córdoba. Internal evidence highlights Flores’ being Malagueño, especially the presence of seseo, the Andalucían pronunciation of z and s both pronounced like the letter s in English. Another pamphlet poem identifies Flores as a “colchero,” or quilter, suggesting he was a middle-class tradesman. These verse pamphlets reflect everyday attitudes of the times about Spain’s engagement with the world. Some are laudatory, praising victories in the reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula or celebrating the marriage of Princess Anna, daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. Others tell of the 1570 earthquake in Hungary, floods in Flanders, and losses by the Muslim armada of Turkey. The range of subjects indicates that Bartolomé de Flores wrote from reports, not experience. As such, *La felice victoria* is a valuable record of popular attitudes and beliefs—a source of insight into middle-class Spanish attitudes toward imperial rivalries, perceptions of native peoples and resources in places like *la Florida*, and for the suggestion of how victories like the one by Menéndez were celebrated.

This translation continues the effort of early Americanists to recover forgotten traditions for twenty-first-century readers. The documentary transcription of the original is included because, although there was an edition of the poem published in 1898, it contains errors and takes a few liberties with the text without marking them. Regarding form, the bulk of *La felice victoria* is in *copla real* (with exceptions), i.e., stanzas of ten rhymed octosyllabic lines, with the closing *villancico* in mainly stanzas of eight octosyllabic lines. Our translation does not attempt the impossible task of replicating the rhythm or rhyme scheme, and because Flores often sequenced his thoughts around end-rhymes, we take some liberty in reordering the lines for fluidity. The goal has been to render a poem in English, not a literal rendering of the Spanish. Those who want to compare the translation with the Spanish are encouraged to use the side-by-side transcription and translation or to consult the page images.

The editors initially worked separately and unbeknownst to one another. E. Thomson Shields Jr. prepared the transcription from a copy at the John Carter Brown Library, and we later consulted scans generously provided by the JCB. The following translation was developed by comparing the two versions, combining

through each line for meaning, continuity, and fluidity. Our goal is to present a work that, we feel, helps alter the shape of the early American canon, that argues further for the multilingual roots of what would later become part of the United States, and that documents the difficult attempts to understand events in a new world that cut across imperial boundaries, religious and linguistic differences, and, of course, an ocean.

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« **Obra nvevamente compvesta, en la qual se cuēta, la felice victoria que Dios por su infinita bondad y misericordia, fue seruido de dar, al Illustre señor Pedro Melendez, Almirante y Capitan de la gouernacion de la mar, de las Indias, y Adelātado de la Florida.**

« **A newly composed work, which recounts the happy victory that God, in His infinite goodness and mercy, was pleased to give to the illustrious *señor* Pedro Meléndez, [\[i\]](#) Admiral and Captain of the government of the seas, of the Indies, and *Adelantado* of *la Florida*.**

Contra Ivan Ribao de na [sic] nacion Frances. Con otros mil Luteranos, a los quales passo à filo de espada, cõ otras curiosidades que pone el auctor, de las viuuiendas de los Indios dela Florida, y sus naturales fayciones. Cõpuesta en verso Castellano, por Bartholome de Flores, natural de Malaga y vezino de Cordoua.

Against Juan Ribao of the French nation, with another thousand Lutherans who met the blade of the sword, and with other curiosities provided by the author, on the dwellings of Indians of *la Florida*, and their natural features. [\[ii\]](#)

Written in Castilian verse by Bartolomé de Flores, a native of Málaga and resident of Córdoba.

« **Comiēça la obra,**

« **Inuocacion.**

Emperador de la gloria  
Dios poderoso clemente  
haz profunda mi memoria  
porque con tu gracia cuente  
vna tan alta victoria,  
Y vos virgen soberana  
despertad mi lengua ruda  
pues por vos la gēte humana  
tuuoo redempcion y ayuda  
del daño de la mançana.  
Y a mi torpe entēdimiēto  
ofuscado en negra bruma  
dad claridad, y a mi pluma  
porque diga lo que siento  
desta nueva en breue suma,

• **The Work Begins,**

• **Invocation.**

Emperor of all glory,  
Merciful and Powerful God,  
grant my memory profundity  
so that, by your Grace,  
I may tell of a high victory.  
And you, the sovereign Virgin,  
awaken my crude tongue,  
because through you all humanity  
has received help and redemption  
from the damning apple.  
And to my slow understanding  
now obscured in black fog,  
grant clarity, so this pen  
may recount shortly, in brief,  
my feelings about this news,

• **Comiença.**

Despues q̃el rey sinsegũdo  
de la Española nacion  
gouierna con discrecion  
la region del nuevo muudo [sic]  
descubierta por Colon.  
Embio segun se halla  
Naos de armada de Seuilla  
para mejor descubrilla  
y regilla y conquistalla  
con la gente de Castilla.

• **It Begins.**

Ever since the peerless  
king of the Spanish nation  
governed with discretion  
that part of the New World  
discovered by Columbus,  
he sent, as can be seen,  
an *armada* from *Sevilla*  
for its greater discovery,  
conquest and government  
by the people of *Castilla*.

• **Prouincias ganadas.**

Do con animo y pujança  
con semblante denodado  
la mayor parte han ganado  
hiriendo a punta de lança  
con coraçon esforçado  
Y haziendo a nuestra grey  
esta nacion Indiana  
de la gente Mexicana

se conquisto por el Rey  
la Veracruz y Hauana.  
Siguiendo de aquesta vez  
la victoria y buen estrena  
gano luego a Cartagena  
el fuerte Martin Cortes  
a Perù con sancta Elena.  
Nombre de Dios, y Hõduras  
gano luego y la Dorada  
a Pamplona la nombrada  
las Amazonas y alturas  
del Gran reyno de Granada.  
Otras prouincias mayores  
Españoles subjetaron  
do gran riqueza hallaron  
mas nuestros conquistadores  
la Florida no ganaron.  
Que los Indios dela tierra  
despues de ser muy ligeros  
son indomitos y arteros  
y truecan paz por la guerra  
porque son grãdes flecheros.

▪ **Provinces Won.**

Where with courage, power  
and with bold countenance,  
through valiant hearts  
and the point of the spear,  
the greater part has been won,  
and this Indian nation  
of Mexican people,  
was added to our flock,  
Veracruz and Havana were  
conquered in the King's name.  
Following that period  
of victory and great gifts,[\[iii\]](#)  
the mighty Martín Cortés[\[iv\]](#)  
then won Cartagena, and through  
Santa Elena,[\[v\]](#) he took Peru.  
Nombre de Dios and Honduras  
were next won and La Dorada,  
then to the famed Pamplona,  
to the Amazon and the heights  
of the great Kingdom of Granada.  
Other greater provinces  
were made subjects of the Spaniards,  
where they found great riches,  
but our conquistadors  
could not take *la Florida*.

For the Indians of that land,  
besides being very agile,  
are indomitable and artful,  
and because they are great archers,  
they trade peace for war.

• **Como salto en tierra.**

Dexando pues esto a parte  
de su viuienda y hechura  
recontara mi escriptura  
de la batalla vna parte  
lo de mas de su natura  
A veynte del mes de Enero  
Pedro Melendez llego  
a la Florida y salto  
en tierra, y el buen guerrero  
su gente desembarco.

• **How He Reached Land.**

Leaving aside, then, the rest  
of their life and qualities,  
my words will recount  
but one part of their nature,  
that being the battle.  
On the twentieth of January  
Pedro Meléndez arrived  
in Florida, made landfall, [\[vi\]](#)  
and there the good warrior  
made his people disembark.

• **Como vino Iuani.**

Do mando luego hazer  
alarde de sus Soldados  
do todos fueron juntados  
para vencer el poder  
delos Indios esforçados.  
Y estando cabe la mar  
con toda su compañía  
contra los nuestro venia  
Iuani, y empeço a hablar  
Francia Francia, en este dia.

• **How Juani Arrived. [\[vii\]](#)**

The governor next ordered  
a muster of his soldiers,  
who gathered in formation  
to defeat the force  
of valiant Indians.  
And close by the sea,  
with all his company  
against ours came Juani,  
who had started this day

saying France, France.

» **Como los metio por vn valle.**

La qual razon entendio  
el capitan san Vicente  
donde luego al continente  
el gran Iuani lo metio  
por vn valle con su gente.  
Veynte y tres millas corrierõ  
los Christianos como digo  
con aspero desabrigo  
y en poco tiempo se vieron  
con Iuan Ribao su enemigo.

» **How He Led Them through a Valley.**

The captain San Vicente  
then understood who was  
nearby on the continent,  
the great Juani led him through  
a valley with his people.  
These Christians, as I said,  
ran twenty-three miles,  
raw and without cover,  
and shortly found themselves  
with their enemy, Juan Ribao.

» **Como los nuestros mataron dos centinelas.**

Luego la lengua Iuani  
reconocio los paueses  
y los luzientes arneses  
y a los nuestros dixo ansi  
veys a do estan los Franceses  
Luego con gran vigilancia  
los nuestros ponen sus velas  
y encendidas sus candelas  
delos Ereges de Francia  
mataron dos centinelas.

» **How Our Soldiers Killed Two Sentinels.**

Then the interpreter Juani  
spied the pavises, the shields,  
and the glowing armor  
and he said to our men,  
do you see the Frenchmen?  
Then with great reverence  
our men took their candles  
and lit their fuses,  
killing two of the French  
heretic sentinels.

» **Como quemarõ el fuerte.**

Con esta buena suerte  
los nuestros encontrã luego



y el timulto pueblo ciego  
paso dolorosa muerte  
con mil maneras de fuego.  
su murallon de faxina  
quemo nuestros Adelantado  
dexando despedaçado  
el fuerte y su larga mina  
de tierraplene cercado.

✧ **How They Burned the Fort.**

With this stroke of luck,  
our soldiers discovered them,  
and wreaked havoc on the blind people,  
bringing a painful death  
with a thousand licks of flame.  
Our *Adelantado* burned down  
the daubed wood walls,  
leaving the fort in pieces  
and the long mine  
of terreplein besieged. [\[viii\]](#)

✧ **Como mataron treziētos.**

Fue cosa de grande espāto  
ver los Christianos inuitos  
matar a aquellos malditos  
y su muy esquiuo llanto  
dando temerarios gritos  
Trezientos y treynta y vno  
matan sin dalles clemencia  
que no valio su potencia  
mas seys cientos de consuno  
huyeron sin resistencia.

✧ **How They Killed Three Hundred.**

It was a frightful sight  
to see the unconquered Christians  
slaughtering the damned,  
with those heretics crying  
back in contempt and scorn.  
Three hundred and thirty one  
were killed without clemency, [\[ix\]](#)  
their strength was useless,  
and six hundred more fled,  
without any opposition.

✧ **Como se retiro Iuan Ribao.**

Los Españoles christianos  
van matando, y van hiriendo  
y ellos se van recogiendo  
y España Vandalianos  
la victoria van siguiendo  
Con arcabuzes y lanças

les dauan guerra sangrienta  
y porque entendays la cuêta  
enel campo de Matanças  
el Iuan Ribao se aposenta.

» **How Juan Ribao Retreated.**

The Spanish Christians  
went killing, wounding,  
and the French began retreating,  
and so the vandals of Spain [\[x\]](#)  
secured their victory.  
With harquebus and lance,  
they waged bloody warfare,  
and so that you understand the story,  
Juan Ribao takes his place  
in the *campo de Matanzas*. [\[xi\]](#)

» **Como le embio vn correo.**

Despojado de su arreo  
por seguir tal interesse  
a Melendez le paresce  
embiar luego vn correo  
a Iuan Ribao que se dicesse,  
Diziendole por su carta  
que se dicesse a sus prisiones  
con amorosas razones  
y que se rinda y se parta  
el con todos sus varones.

» **How He Sent a Courier.**

Taking off his battle gear  
to pursue the course  
he then thought proper,  
Meléndez sent a courier  
with a letter to Juan Ribao,  
establishing in writing,  
on clement terms, that Ribao  
should be put in chains  
and surrender his position  
as well as all his men.

» **Como pidio vn cofre Iuan Ribao.**

Con el mensagero vn paje  
a Iuan Ribao embio  
y el Frances quando lo vio  
toda su fuerça y coraje  
en aquel punto perdio.  
Sin hazer casi mudança  
lenta su fuerça y ardil  
quiso ver por su esperança  
y perder la confiança  
vn su cofre de Marfil.

» **How Juan Ribao Asked for a Coffe.**

A messenger and page  
were sent to Juan Ribao,  
and when the Frenchman  
saw it, he lost all  
courage and resolve.  
He barely moved a muscle,  
ardor and force slackened,  
all hope and confidence  
were gone, he wanted to see  
his own coffe of ivory.

» **Como se lo llevo sant Vicente.**

Do mando que se tornasse  
el paje y el mensagero  
y que le den lo primero  
el cofre, porque entregasse  
las armas gente y dinero,  
Vista pues tan buena estrena  
y el bien que de todo resta  
a la conclusion de sexta  
Sant Vicente con Villena  
lleuaron cofre y repuesta.

» **How San Vicente Took It to Him.**

He asked that the page  
and the messenger return,  
and when they gave Ribao  
the coffe, so he could surrender  
his arms, his money and men,  
it was seen as a good start,  
a good sign for the remainder,  
and as the noon hour closed, [\[xii\]](#)  
San Vicente returned with Villena,  
bearing the chest and response.

» **Como entrego Iuã Riboa, vna cadena oro cõ vna llaue.**

Conuertido en triste lloro  
los ojos puestos al cielo  
lleno de tormento y duelo  
saco su cadena de oro  
llorando su desconsuelo,  
Y dixo pues que los hados  
quieren que tan presto acabe  
mi Francelini canabe  
saquen doze mil ducados  
del cofre con esta llaue.

» **How Juan Ribao Delivered a Gold Chain with a Key.**

Moved to mournful tears,  
crying over his misfortune  
with eyes pressed to the sky,

filled with torment and grief,  
Ribao removed his golden chain.  
And as he declared, the fates  
had wanted this sudden end,  
my Francelini Canabe, [\[xiii\]](#)  
and with this key he drew  
twelve thousand ducats from the chest.

• **Como se entrego cõ la gête.**

Enel arena arrojo  
su cadena tan preciada  
y en ella la llaue atada  
y sant Vicente allego  
para quitalle la espada,  
Mirando con buen subjeto  
quan pocos le quedan viuos  
de sus Luterros esquiuos  
con los demas en efecto  
vino a darse por captious.  
Y al tiẽpo qẽl sol doraua  
los dos cuernos con su rayo  
a los diez y seys de mayo  
el alua se leuantaua  
en las montañas de acayo  
Con el color de difunto  
la vida esta desseando  
sospira siempre llorando  
viendo en quã pequeno pũto  
esta su vida colgando.

• **How He Surrendered with His People.**

Onto the sand he threw  
his chain and the attached  
key, so precious to him,  
and San Vicente stepped forward  
to strip Ribao of his sword.  
Noting rightly how few  
of the wild and disdainful  
Lutherans remained left,  
Ribao surrendered himself  
as captive, along with the rest.  
And on the sixteenth of May,  
the morning broke, with the golden  
rays of the sun splitting  
the two horns of Taurus  
over the mountains of Acaea. [\[xiv\]](#)  
The color of a corpse,  
still longing for life,  
Ribao cried with each breath,  
recognizing the tiny point

upon which his life now hung.

» **La orden que se tuuo para matallos.**

El general Vizcayno  
manda que ninguno aguarde  
porque cerraua la tarde  
y en vn hermoso camino  
hizo de todos alarde,  
Y el adelantado ensaya  
lo que bien le satisfaze  
que sant Vicente cerrasse  
en haziendo el vna raya  
con Ribao, y lo matasse.

» **The Order He Had to Kill Them.**

The Biscayne general  
ordered that none delay,  
the afternoon was ending,  
and a handsome path was made  
by the men stationed on display.  
And the *Adelantado* declared  
it would satisfy his will  
for San Vicente to finish  
the deed with a stripe  
on Ribao, killing him.

» **Como matarõ seys ciētos.**

Todos por este concierto  
en hordenança passaram  
y la señal denotaron  
en conclusion q̃muy cierto  
a los seyscientos mataron,  
Todos dizen viua el rey  
y la fe del redemptor  
y Iuan Ribao con dolor  
dixo alli memento mei  
misericordia señor.  
Alli quedo concluyda  
la defensa Luterana  
y por la gente Christiana  
el reyno dela Florida  
y sancta yglesia Romana,  
con su poder fulminante  
Dios cūple nuestros desseos  
haga fiestas y torneos  
nuestra yglesia militante  
con tan subidos tropheos.

» **How They Killed Six Hundred.**

Everyone was in agreement,  
the order was sent down,  
and when the sign was given,

in short, it was determined  
that they kill the six hundred.  
They repeated, long live the King  
and the faith of the Redeemer,  
and Juan Ribao, in anguish,  
recited there his *memento mei* [\[xv\]](#)  
pleading his Father for mercy.  
And so the Lutheran defenses  
in the kingdom of Florida  
were brought to an end  
by the Christian people  
and the All Powerful  
holy Roman church.

As God grants our wishes  
with such fine trophies,  
our triumphant, martial church  
holds tourneys and feasts.

« **Aquí se tratan las grandezas de la rierra [sic] de la Florida.**

Y por dar mejor auiso  
quiero contar la grandeza  
la hermosura y belleza  
deste fertil parayso  
su gente y naturaleza,  
Es vn nueuo mundo lleno  
de deleytes y frescuras  
con muy diuersas pinturas  
prado florido y ameno  
con aues de mil hechuras.

« **Here Is Treated the Grandeur of the Land of la Florida.**

And to give better notice  
I wish to recount the beauty,  
the loveliness and grandeur  
of this fertile paradise,  
its people and nature.  
It is a new world filled  
with delights, fresh breezes  
and varied painterly scenes,  
graced with fields and flowers,  
and birds of a thousand kinds.

« **De vn Río.**

Animales diferentes  
Tunas, Palmas, y Higueras,  
Auellanos, y Nogueras,  
cinco maneras de gentes  
y frutas del mil maneras.  
Ya segun mi pluma toca  
de tan altas marauillas  
son cosas dignas de oyllas

que ay vn rio que de boca  
tiene quatrocientas millas.

• **Of a River.**

Animals of all types,  
palms, figs, and prickly pear,  
walnut and hazelnut trees,  
fruits of a thousand kinds,  
and five races of people.[\[xvi\]](#)  
Now my quill will sing  
of such lofty marvels,  
things worthy of hearing,[\[xvii\]](#)  
including a river that runs  
four hundred miles to its mouth.

• **Gentes de nueve codos.**

Y nauegando su altura  
cosa digna de contar  
puedo por cierto afirmar  
tener su legua de anchura  
tres mil leguas de la mar  
Y en la parte Ocidental  
viue gente tan crescida  
de gentilidad vencida  
que tienen justo y caual  
nueue codos por medida.

• **People Nine Cubits High.**

And sailing its length,  
a thing worthy to recount,  
I can affirm with certainty  
that it is one league wide  
three thousand leagues  
from the sea.  
And in the western parts,  
there lives a conquered  
pagan people who exactly  
stand nine cubits high.[\[xviii\]](#)

• **Satriba, y Autina, reyes.**

Esta tierra no consiente  
enfermedad ni dolencia  
ni reyna concupiciencia  
de partes del Oriente  
esta la nueva Valencia  
Aqui reyna Satriba,  
con Doresta su muger  
el qual tiene tal poder  
que el poderoso Autina  
jamas lo puede vencer.

• **Satriba[\[xix\]](#) and Autina, Kings.**

This country does not consent

to either sickness or pain,  
nor does concupiscence reign  
as it does in the Orient,  
it being the new Valencia.  
Here reigns Satriba,  
who with his wife Doresta,  
has such power that even the mighty Autina  
cannot conquer him.

✧ **Curucutucu, y Alimacani, Reyes.**

Tambien Curucutucu  
que nunca tal nombre vi  
en tierra de Cuncubi  
y en la Mocosa el Bacu,  
y el fuerte Limacani,  
En armas tan esforçado  
era el barbaro y ligero  
de rostro espantable y fiero  
muy velloso y desbaruado  
colorado todo el cuero.

✧ **Curucutucu, and Alimacani, Kings.** [\[xx\]](#)

Also Curucutucu, a name  
I had never before seen  
in the land of Cuncubi,  
and in the Mocosa el *Bacu*, [\[xxi\]](#)  
and the mighty Limacani.  
Courageous in arms  
and agile, this barbarian  
has a terrifying face  
and the hair all plucked  
from his red hide.

✧ **Sus fayciones y hechura.**

Sus cabellos denegridos  
en forma de cabellera  
cortos por la delantera  
por las espaldas tendidos  
sus carnes todas de fuera.  
Iamas no comio comida  
que no fuesse por guisar  
marisco, y peces del mar  
pan de Casabe molida  
y vuas cuesco de palmar.

✧ **Their Countenance and Form.**

Their black hair is styled  
like a *cabellera*, [\[xxii\]](#)  
long and straight in back  
but cut short in front,  
and their bodies, naked. [\[xxiii\]](#)  
Food is never eaten



that was not cooked:  
shellfish, fish from the sea,  
bread ground from cassava  
and grape-like seeds of palms.

• **Natura de arboles.**

Vn arbol grande y florido  
en aquesta tierra esta  
que ninguna fruta da  
el qual es atribuydo  
en rama y gusto, al Manna.  
Es arbol de tanta prez  
este, que los Indios tienen  
que de muchas partes vienen  
a comprallo en cierto mes  
que solo del se mantienen.  
Otro arbol nasce aqui  
que esta verde de contino  
de la hechura de Pino  
do sacan el Menjuy  
y el Estoraque mas fino,  
Vn arbol llamado Taca  
ay en las Indias de España  
del vno cogen con maña  
la fina Tacamahaca  
y del otro, la Caraña.

• **Types of Trees.**

In that country there  
is a large, florid tree  
that bears no fruit  
but is likened to manna  
for its appearance and taste.  
It is a tree so prized  
that Indians from all parts  
come to make purchases  
during a certain month,  
living on this tree alone.  
Another tree that grows here  
is a type of evergreen,  
a pine from which they tap  
the aromatic Benjamin,  
and the finest storax.[\[xxiv\]](#)  
In the Spanish Indies  
there is a *taca* tree,  
from which people skillfully  
collect the pure *tacahamaca*,  
and from the other, *caraña*.[\[xxv\]](#)

• **Manera de hombres que comen carne humana.**

Otros barbaros mayores

de condicion inhumana  
ay en tierra de Hauana  
que passan a los açores  
para comer carne humana.  
Otras maneras de hombres  
ay dos mil leguas a tras  
que jamas viuen en paz  
que no se llaman por nōbres  
sino baylando de tras.  
El reyno de Parica  
con el reyno, de Chiri,  
la playa de Concubi,  
tambien la mar de Arica,  
y el gran reyno de Quibi.  
Los reynos de Yucatan  
con tierra de Patagones  
el Brasil, y los Marones,  
vencio nuestro capitan,  
tambien los Merediones.  
La prouincia de Acuti  
y el puerto de Chirinagua,  
y el cabo de Muloragua  
la tierra de Potosi  
la ciudad de Nicaragua.  
A Ialisco, y Topira,  
la nueua Francia Nebrola  
Panuco, y el puerto Mola,  
Sancta Marta, y Papira,  
Cancas, y la Fuen Iirola.  
Chichamaga, y tâbiẽ quito  
gano y el rio Serrano,  
y enel Sur de Magallano,  
gano segun esta escrito  
Abacal, y a Dastalano,  
tambien gano a Tacamala  
Veneçuela, y Rumagarta  
y porque bien se reparta  
gano al Cusco, y Guatimala,  
y Apanama, y la Tiarta.  
Curiosas cosas no cuento [sic]  
de animales ni arboledas  
cercadas de fuentes ledas  
con otras plantas sin cuenta  
nardoscina momos fresnedas  
Las faltas me supliran  
pues alo que entiendo y creo  
quede corto como veo  
mas bien se que entenderan

que fue largo mi desseo.

» **Fin.**

» **The Type of Men Who Eat Human Flesh.**

In the country of Havana  
are other great barbarians,  
people of an inhuman state  
who journey to the Azores  
to eat human flesh,  
and two thousand leagues away  
are other types of men  
who never live in peace,  
who one does not call by name  
without dancing backwards.  
The Kingdom of Parica  
with the kingdom of Chiri,  
the shores of Concubí,  
also the sea of Arica  
and the great kingdom of Quibi.  
The kingdoms of the Yucatán,  
with the land of Patagonia,  
Brazil, and the *Marones*,  
conquered by our captain,  
also the *Merediones*.  
The province of Acutí  
and the port of Chirinagua,  
and the cape of Muloragua,  
the country of Potosí,  
the city of Nicaragua.  
Also, Jalisco and Topira,  
New France, Nebrola,  
Panuco and the port of Mola,  
Santa Marta and Papira,  
Cancas and Fuengirola.  
Chichamaga and also Quito  
he won, and the River Serrano,  
to the south of Magellan,  
as written, he also won.  
Abacal and in Dastalanos,  
also victory at Tacamala,  
Venezuela and Rumagarta,  
and so he might divide the spoils,  
he won Cuzco and Guatemala,  
and Panamá and Tiara.  
Not of curiosities do I tell,  
nor of animals nor of trees,  
not of lush springs bordered  
by other numberless plants,

nor cinnamon, nards, groves of ash.  
These concessions are needed,  
for as I know and believe,  
as I see, this poem is cut short,  
though they may understand  
my desires run long.

» **Fin.**

» **Villancico.**

A la justa Cortesanos  
ganareys joya de gloria  
si derribays con victoria  
la cisma de Luteranos.  
Iuste pues el que quisiere  
que la tela es la prudencia  
y el caualllo es penitencia  
y la justa es porquien muere  
y la espada es la memoria  
de la fe delos christianos  
Para ganar la victoria  
delos falsos Luteranos.  
De fortaleza es la lança  
y el espaldar de virtud  
la Celada es de salud  
y el Escudo es temperança  
y el titulo dela hystoria  
es fuerça de nuestras manos  
Para vencer con victoria  
la cisma de Luteranos.  
La joya del vencedor  
del que mejor ha justado  
es Christo crucificado  
bien del triste peccador  
por donde la vanagloria  
de los Luteranos vfanos  
destruye Dios con victoria  
a fuerça de los Christianos.

» **Villancico.**

To the joust, Courtiers,  
to receive the jewel of glory  
if you topple with victory  
the Lutheran schism.  
Joust, then, he who longs  
for the flag that is prudence  
and the steed that is penitence,  
the joust is for he who dies,  
and the sword is the memory  
of the faith of the Christians,

securing victory  
over false Lutherans.  
Of fortitude is the lance,  
and the shoulder piece virtue  
and the helmet our health,  
and the shield temperance,  
and the title of the story  
is the force of our hands  
vanquishing with victory  
the Lutheran schism.  
The victor's jewel,  
for he who jousts best,  
is the sad sinner's balm,  
the crucified Christ,  
for where proud Lutherans  
once made vainglorious boasts,  
vengeful God is now victorious  
through Christian force.

✠ **Laus Deo.** ✠

✠ **Laus Deo.** ✠

- ✠ Fue impressa en Seuilla en casa de Hernando Diaz impressor de libros, a la calle de la Sierpe. Año de mil y quinientos y setenta y vno.
- ✠ Printed in Seville in the house of Hernando Díaz printer of books, on Sierpe Street. The year of one thousand and five hundred and seventy and one.
- ✠ Con licencia del Illustre señor, el Licenciado Alonso Caceres de Rueda, Teniente dela Iusticia de Seuilla y su tierra por su Magestad.
- ✠ With license from the Illustrious gentleman, the Licentiate Alonso Cáceres de Rueda, Deputy of the Justice in Seville and its land for his Majesty.

## Notes

[i] *señor*: Less a general title like *mister* and more an honorific implying *master* or *gentleman*.

[ii] The terms *viuiendas* (*viviendas*) and *fayciones* (*faiciones*) illustrate the variable and changing language of the sixteenth century found throughout the poem. They are noted here as typical examples. *Viviendas* generally means “dwellings” but has a now obsolete meaning of “modo de vivir” or “manner of living.” And a review of dictionaries from the sixteenth through the early eighteenth centuries available online through the Real Academia Española’s [Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española](#) shows no standard way of writing or printing the word, not only the exchange of *u*’s for medial *v*’s, but also the exchange of *b*’s for initial *v*’s—*vivienda*, *viuienda*, *bivienda*, and *biuienda* all being found as main entries. Similarly, *faiciones* comes in several variant spellings (*fayciones*, *faciones*, settling in modern Spanish as *facciones*) and with several possible definitions, from factions to facial

features to manners or customs (*Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española*). There is even an interesting 1604 Spanish-French dictionary entry by Jean Pallet that brings together *vivienda* and *facción*, “biuienda, Vie, façon de viure” or “*vivienda*, See, manner of living [i.e., the now obsolete meaning of *facción*].”

[iii] *estrena*: A handsel or gift given for good luck at the start of a new year or new endeavor; according to Covarrubias, the gift recognizes the relationship between vassal and *señor*, between client and patron, etc.

[iv] A puzzling reference. Hernán Cortés, credited as the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, had two sons named Martín (one legitimate, the other illegitimate); neither participated in the conquest of Peru.

[v] *Santa Elena*: Most likely *Punta Santa Elena* in modern-day Ecuador. The other locations in this stanza are locations in South America, mainly in modern-day Colombia.

[vi] Here and elsewhere, Flores has the dates for events in *la Florida* wrong. Menendez landed and proclaimed the founding of *San Agustín* on September 8, 1565.

[vii] *Juani*: Juani appears to refer to Jean François, a mutineer from Fort Caroline (San Mateo), who figures largely in Solís de Merás biography of Menéndez, the *Memorial*. In Hakluyt’s English translation of Laudonnière, the same man is called Francis Jean and is described as “a traitor to his nation,” being “one of the mariners which stoale away my barkes, & had guided & conducted [the] Spaniards thither.”

[viii] *larga mina / de tierraplene*: A *mina*, or mine, is a tunnel dug under a fortification to destroy it with explosives; in this context, however, *mina* may be a mistake, with a moat, or *foso*, being meant.

[ix] There was a custom in medieval and early modern European warfare up to the mid-seventeenth century to ask for ransoms in exchange for high value captives taken in battle.

[x] *Vandalianos*: Natives of Andalucía, a region sometimes known poetically as *Vandalia* because the Vandals once ruled there.

[xi] *campo de Matanças*: Literally, field of slaughter, but also where the French were killed, near today’s Matanzas River or Inlet.

[xii] *a la conclusión de sexta*: The sixth, or noon, hour of prayer; the origin of the word *siesta*, or nap.

[xiii] *Francelini Canabe*: Unidentified; possibly an aside to a specific reader.

[xiv] *los dos cuernos . . . montañas de acayo*: May 16 falls within the

astrological sign of Taurus, the Bull, thus the sun “breaking with two horns,” with *acayo* being the mountain of Achaea, Greece. Flores misdates Ribao’s surrender, which occurred on October 11, 1565.

[xv] *memento mei*: Remember me. A reference to Luke 23:42: “[A]nd he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (KJV).

[xvi] *cinco maneras de gentes*: Literally, five manners or kinds of people.

[xvii] *oyllas*: Translated as *oir las*.

[xviii] *nueve codos por medidad*: A *codo*, or cubit, is the length from one’s elbow to the end of one’s finger, making these people of western Florida about thirteen feet tall in Flores’s description.

[xix] Here and below, a misspelling of *Saturiba*, a sixteenth-century Timucuan; without the letter *u*, neither line is octosyllabic.

[xx] *Alimacani* (also *Limacani*): A Timucuan village on Fort George Island, near present-day Jacksonville.

[xxi] *Mocosa el Bacu*: The Mocosos were a tribe on the east coast of Tampa Bay and *Mocosos* was the name of the tribe’s leader; *el Bacu* is an unclear reference or modifier for *Mocosos/a*.

[xxii] *Sus cabellos denegridos / en forma de caballera*: Their hair styled like a *caballera* most likely means a shock of hair in back, a ponytail, or a wig, the latter which was just coming into vogue by the late sixteenth century but would not be popular until the seventeenth century.

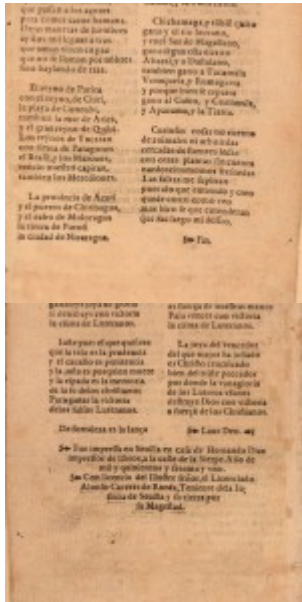
[xxiii] *sus carnes todas de fuera*: Covarrubias defines “*estar en carnes*” as going naked, suggesting a pun on food, *carne* meaning flesh, both as meat and nudity.

[xxiv] *Menjuy* and *Estoraque*: *Menjuy* is also called *benjuí*, meaning *Benjamin* or gum benzoin. *Estoraque* is *storax*, also called *styrax*. Both are fragrant gums or resins coming from Asian trees of the genus *styrax*, used in medicines and perfume and often mentioned alongside other aromatic gums such as frankincense.

[xxv] *Tacamahaca* and *Caraña*: *Tacahamaca* is a Nahuatl word; *caraña* comes from an unidentified Central American native language. Both are aromatic resins coming from trees native to Mexico and Central America and which were believed to have medicinal qualities.







Bartolomé de Flores, *Obra nuevamente compuesta, en la qual se cue[n]ta, la felice victoria que Dios por su infinita bondad y misericordia, fue seruido de dar, al ... Pedro Melendez ... contra Iuan Ribao*. Sevilla, en casa de Hernando Diaz (1571).

Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

## Notes on the Transcription and Translation

For this diplomatic transcription of *La felice victoria*, original spellings have been kept. Diacritical marks (and the lack of diacritical marks) as well as overstruck tildes used to mark omission of one or more letters, usually an *m* or *n*, have been retained; the frequent early modern typographic practice of using an initial *v* to indicate either a *v* or *u* and a medial *u* to indicate either a *u* or *v* has been retained; similarly, the use of *i* to indicate either an *i* or *j* has been retained. A few typographical features that do not affect spelling or meaning have been omitted or modernized, such as omitting ligatures and the use of drop caps or changing the long *s* to a short *s*. However, for ease of reading, printer's ornaments before titles of sections have been retained and have been added to the two pages where they seem to have been accidentally omitted in the original (pages 2v and 3r, from the section titled "Como se retiro Iuan Ribao" ["How Juan Ribao Retreated"] to the section titled "De vn Rio" ["Of a River"]). In addition, spacing between stanzas and sections is not consistent in the original but has been regularized. For the English translation, original Spanish spellings of names, including diacritics, have been retained (e.g., *Melendez* for *Menéndez*); however, early modern practices concerning the letter pairs *v/u* and *i/j* have not been carried over into the translation (i.e., *Iuan Ribao* becomes *Juan Ribao*). Where they have special meanings and fit well into the flow of the poem, some of the original Spanish

has been retained in the translation.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the John Carter Brown Library for assistance in providing us with copies of the poem to work with as well as to publish alongside the translation. In addition, Bogdan Tarnowski of the Biblioteka Jagiellońska, at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland, graciously provided scans of an additional Flores verse pamphlet. We would also like to thank Anna Brickhouse of the University of Virginia as well as Amy Turner Bushnell of the John Carter Brown Library and Paul E. Hoffman of Louisiana State University for help in looking over and making suggestions concerning the translation. We particularly want to thank David Arbesú of the University of South Florida for his generous review of the poem and translation, including insights and information concerning Spanish Golden Age poetics and pronunciation. Shields lastly acknowledges the help of the ECU football team, whose *feliz victoria* in the 2014 field of battle over USF secured him “lead author” status.

## Further Reading

For historical usages, we relied upon the collection of online dictionaries available through the Real Academia Española’s site [Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española](#). We particularly consulted Sebastián de Covarrubias’s *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611); Covarrubias’ *Tesoro* is also available in a 2006 modern print edition, edited by Ignacio Arellano and Rafael Zafra. Flores’s poem appeared in José Toribio Medina, *Biblioteca Hispano-Americana* (1898), and is also available in the [Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes](#) with silently modernized spelling and punctuation. Bibliographic information about the author comes from Antonio Rodríguez-Moñino, *Nuevo diccionario bibliográfico de pliegos sueltos poéticos (siglo XVI)* (1997).

The poem “Have you heard of floryda” has been reprinted variously, first in Edgar Legare Pennington and Clark Sutherland Northup, “An Early Poem on Florida” (1928). Jean Ribault described the St. Johns in *The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida* (1563). René Goulaine de Laudonnière’s *L’histoire notable de la Floride située es Indes Occidentales* (1586) appeared in a 1587 English translation by Richard Hakluyt, *A Notable Historie Containing Four Voyages Made by Certayne French Captaynes Unto Florida* (1587); it has also been translated by the former Jacksonville congressman Charles E. Bennett in *Three Voyages* (2001). Bennett’s *Laudonnière and Fort Caroline: History and Documents* (2001) serves as a sourcebook on the Fort Caroline-Menéndez attack. Two contemporary accounts of Menéndez are important sources as well as interesting texts in and of themselves, both written about 1567 and both of which remained in manuscript until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Bartolomé Barrientos’s *Vida y hechos de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés* (first published 1902), which has been translated as *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Founder of Florida* (1965), and Gonzalo Solís de Merás’ *Memorial* (first published 1893), translated into English by Jeannette Thurber (1923) and more recently by David

Arbesú as *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the Conquest of Florida: A New Manuscript* (2015). Nicolas Le Challeux's *Discours de l'histoire de la Floride* (1566) first appeared in English as *A True and Perfect Description, of the Last Voyage or Nauigation, Attempted by Capitaine Iohn Rybaut, Deputie and Generall for the French Men, Into Terra Florida, This Yeare Past* (1566). Most of the early English works and translations are available through the *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) database. Selections from several of the French, Spanish, and English works mentioned are available through the [Early Visions of Florida: A History of the Imagination](#) website.

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