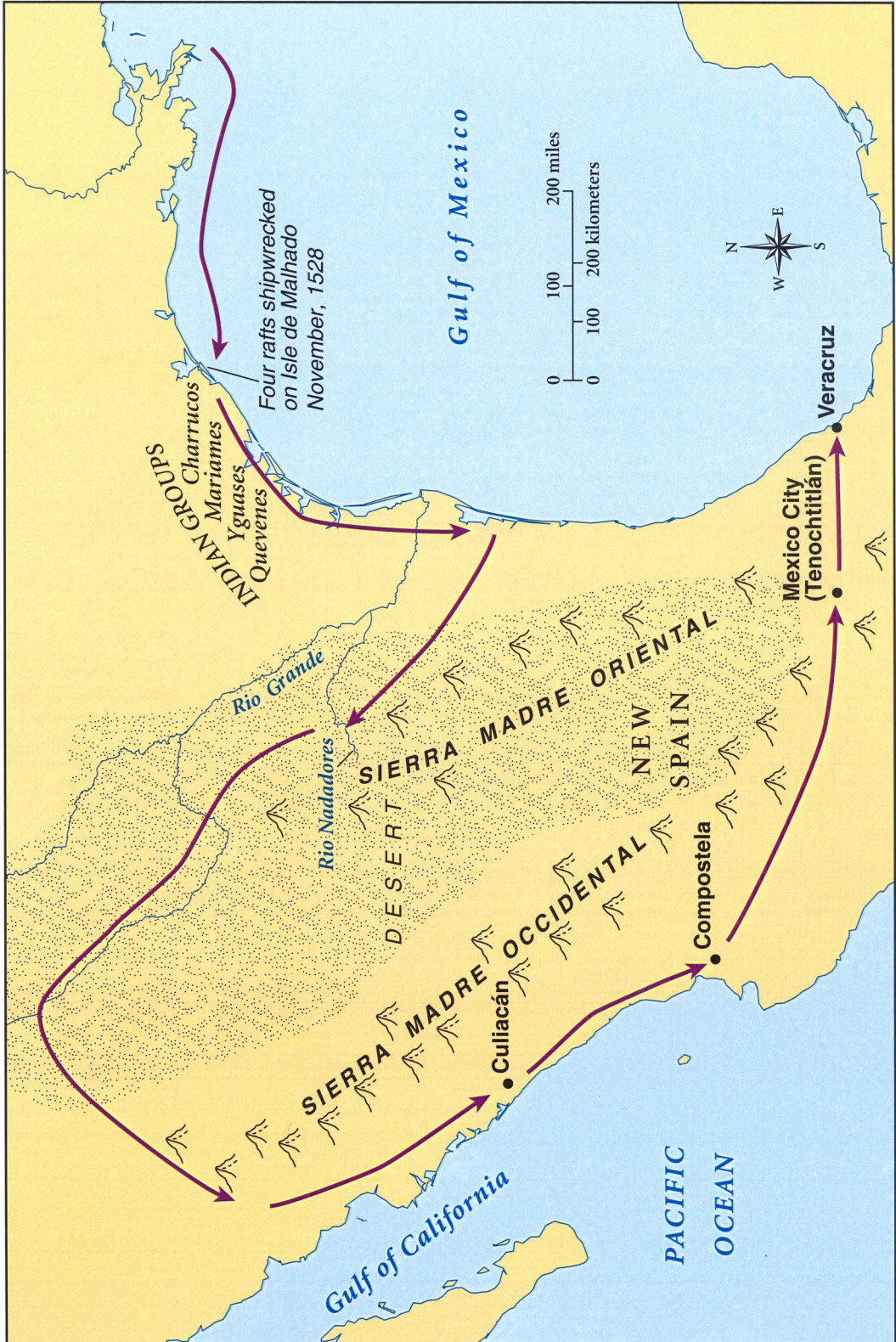


Source: Map created from various sources.

Cabeza's Trek Across Texas and Mexico



**Source:** Compiled from *The Relación of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, 1542*, the explorer's personal account of his long adventure.

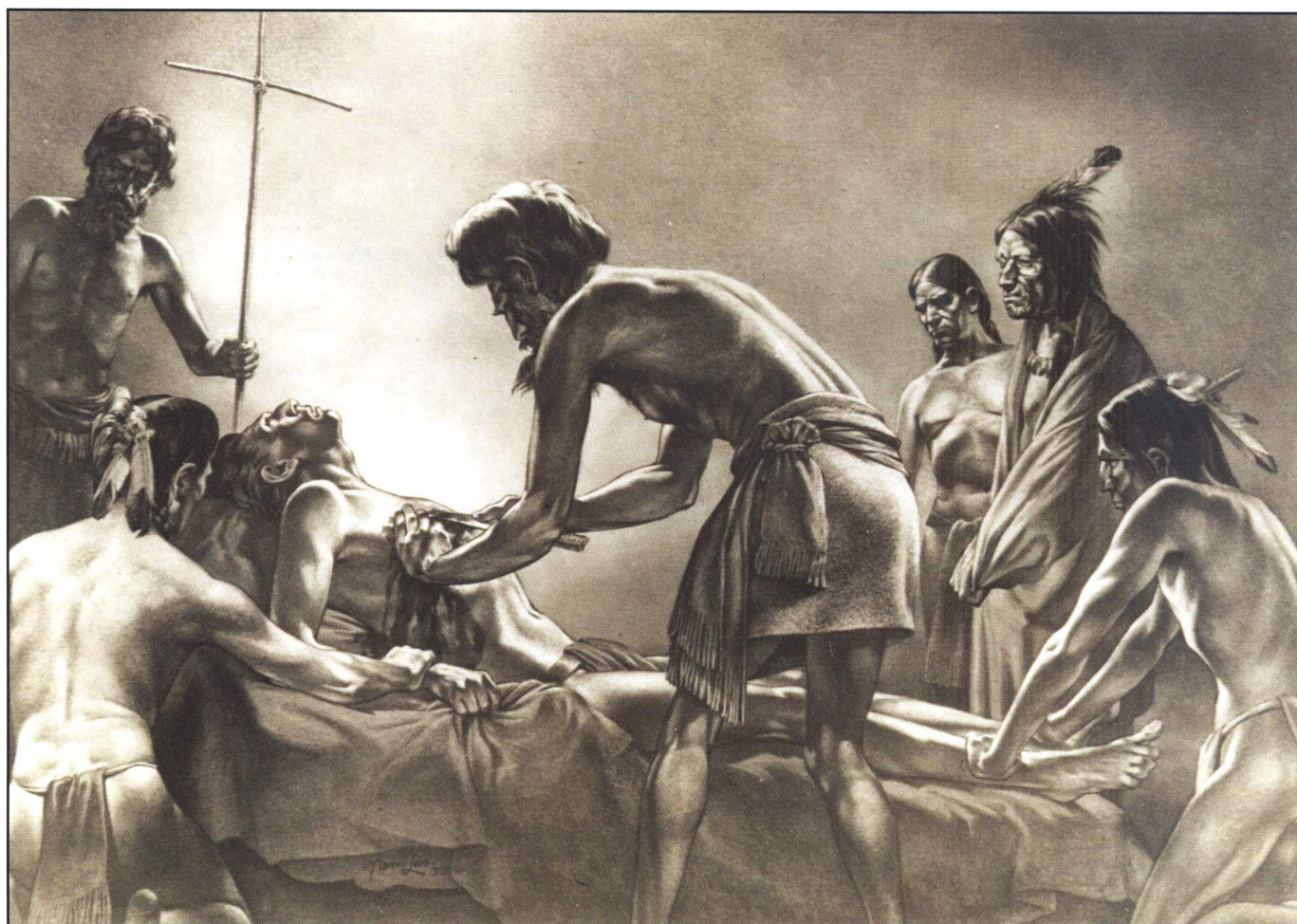
<b>The Art of Survival</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Cabeza's Response</b>
<b>Oct. 1528</b>	<b>Thirst</b>	With other raft survivors adrift in the gulf of Mexico, Cabeza drank water stored in hollowed-out horse-leg containers.
<b>1529 – 1532</b>	<b>Periodic hunger</b>	As a slave, Cabeza ate what was available, including berries, mollusks, rats, roots, lizards, snakes, and spiders.
<b>1530 – 1532</b>	<b>Distrust</b>	Cabeza befriended his captors and was therefore allowed to serve as a trader among Indian bands living within 150 miles of the Gulf Coast.
<b>1530 – 1535</b>	<b>Communication</b>	Cabeza learned four Indian languages, including Charuccos, plus sign language.
<b>1534</b>	<b>Cold / Despair</b>	Lost and completely naked, Cabeza happened on a smoldering tree that had been struck by lightning. He lit a branch in the dying flames and kept the torch burning as he walked. Each night he huddled in a hole that he'd dug and "around that pit placed four fires like the points of a cross."

**Source:** *The Relación of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, 1542.*

**Note:** In this excerpt from his narrative, Cabeza describes an operation he performed in 1535 on a Native American living near the Rio Nadadores. It is believed to be the first documented surgery done in North America.

Here they brought me a man, and they told me that a long time ago he had been wounded through the right shoulder with an arrow, and the point of the arrow rested over his heart.... With a knife that I had, I opened his chest to that place.... I inserted the knife point, and with great difficulty, at last I pulled it out. It was very long and, with a deer bone, ... I gave him two stitches. And two days later, I removed the two stitches from the Indian and he was healed. And this cure gave us a very great reputation among them throughout the whole land.

**Source:** Painting by Thomas Lea, courtesy of Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, 1965.





Cabeza de Vaca's ill-fated voyage