

The book known nowadays as *Naufragios* by Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca is one of the most important testimonies about the discovery and conquest of the New World. The first half of the 16th century saw many exploration and conquest travels in which thousands of sailors, explorers, conquerors and soldiers had to face the reality of the just discovered continent. It is really interesting to see how those who wrote about this event experienced it.

*Naufragios* has always been read as a source of historical and anthropological information, but it has been also studied for the literature elements which we can find in it. In my thesis, I tried to look at the work in its complexity: see the literature influences in it and find those elements that we could call literature elements, but also I wanted to focus on the unusual experience of the author and look into the testimony of his experience with the American reality and see how this experience changed him.

My thesis begins with a historical introduction which I consider very important to situate the work in its context. I tried to explain the events which led to the discovery of the New World and also the reaction of the Old World to the discovered one.

After this general introduction my work continues with analysis of the first literature that treated the reality of the new continent. I focus on chronicles, letters and relations which are the only sources of information that we have about the first meeting of the New World. When treating testimonies like letters and relations, we have to think first about all their characteristics: the authors of them are at the same time usually the only protagonists and witnesses of all that they narrate, they had to inform the King about their enterprises; therefore their works respond to an obligation and also we have to think that to narrate their acts was also an excellent opportunity for them to achieve their personal goals. It is also very important to know that the historiography of those times was not so far away from the literature. The goal of it was not only to inform or to collect exact information, as it may be for us nowadays, but it wanted also to transmit the information in a elegant and pleasant way.

*Naufragios* was written originally also as an official relation, but Cabeza de Vaca reelaborated it and decided to publish it.