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VIVA EL REY!

By ELEANOR B. ADAMS*

SATURDAY NOON, January 24, 1748, the bells of the Church of St. Francis in the Villa of Santa Fe rang three long and joyous peals. Sargento Mayor don Joaquín Codallos y Rabal, governor and captain general of the Kingdom of New Mexico, had issued an edict announcing the oath of allegiance to Ferdinand VI of Spain on January 25.¹ This date may have been chosen because it was the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, patron of the Franciscan missions of New Mexico. Now, on the eve of the proclamation of the new King, who had succeeded to the throne at the death of his father, Philip V, in July, 1746, the bells were summoning the populace to the parade of the royal standard. At four in the afternoon the procession rode through the villa:

“At the head was the infantry regiment, all with bare swords, followed by the Alférez carrying the banner and all the officers with their lieutenant in command of the presidio. Behind them came the distinguished citizens dressed in the best clothes they owned. They were followed by the lieutenant general and me [Fray Lorenzo Antonio Estremera, author of the report we are quoting]. Then came the royal standard, a thing of rare beauty, embroidered with gold and the finest silver with cords of the same. And since there was no Alférez

* Library 217, University of New Mexico.

1. Certification by Fray Lorenzo Antonio Estremera of the celebrations and oath of allegiance to Ferdinand VI, Santa Fe, January 24-27, 1748. [Santa Fe], March 2, 1748. Biblioteca Nacional, México, legajo 8, no. 37. Estremera, who signs himself “secretary,” had come to New Mexico with Commissary Subdelegate Fray Juan Miguel Menchero in 1747. The first paragraph of a letter from Menchero to Fray Carlos José Delgado, missionary at Isleta, dated February 3, 1748, reads as follows: “Because this bell tower of the capital of this kingdom is without bells, and because the oath of allegiance to and coronation of our King and natural lord, Don Fernando, is to be celebrated, the Lord Governor and I have decided to bring four of the eight bells there are in that mission [of Isleta]. By virtue of this Your Paternity will be able to order them handed over to the person whom the said Lord Governor may send to bring them. And let them be here in time to serve the purpose.” BNM, legajo 8, no. 48. Since both the Estremera certification and the Menchero letter are originals and it seems improbable that there can have been any good reason for Estremera to falsify the dates of the celebrations, the most likely explanation for the discrepancy in dates is that Menchero inadvertently wrote February for January. The bells from Isleta must have been borrowed for use at the governor’s palace, not the parish church.

Real, the said Lord Governor, clad in a very rich tunic with gold embroidery, carried it, with the Very Reverend Father Fray Juan Miguel Menchero, as Royal and Military Commissary General,² on his right, and the present Reverend Father Custos of this Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul, Fray Juan Joseph Pérez de Mirabal, on his left. After the parade through the villa was over, the royal standard was set in a very seemly public place upon a velvet cushion under a canopy. And that night there were many luminarias,³ with sundry close volleys by the soldiery and divers peals of the bells in our church, so that the atmosphere was filled with rejoicing. Then came a resplendent triumphal chariot with the arms of Spain and an imperial crown and scepter. And riding in this chariot was a personage who acted in three different parts a very learned *loa*⁴ in praise of our King and Lord don Ferdinand the Sixth, to great acclamations by the people with many huzzas and 'Long live our King and Lord don Ferdinand the Sixth.' This brought the night's festivities to a close."

Sunday morning, January 25, the parade with the royal standard again proceeded through the streets of the town and came to a halt in the plaza before a platform erected for the occasion, decorated with the royal arms and with a portrait of the King under a canopy. The kings-of-arms, the notary who attested to the taking of the oath, and the governor carrying the standard ascended the platform, accompanied by Father Menchero, and the "oath of allegiance was made by the lord governor and kings-of-arms with the customary ceremonies, after which the military fired many close volleys."

The origin of the ceremony performed that January day on the northernmost frontier of the Spanish Empire in America was an ancient custom inherited from the conquering

2. Father Menchero was one of the outstanding Franciscans of New Mexico in the eighteenth century. In 1747-1749 he was very active in attempts to bring the apostate Hopi Indians back into the fold and to convert the elusive Navajos.

3. Small bonfires used for illumination on special occasions. The candles in sand-filled paper bags now called by this name are of comparatively recent origin and are properly termed *farolitos* (little lanterns).

4. A short dramatic panegyric, often in verse, usually allegorical, in honor of an illustrious person.

Goths. In those days the victorious rulers themselves were lifted on high, but in later times the royal standard came to symbolize the person of the monarch. The Spanish kingdoms in the New World observed the centuries-old tradition of the kingdoms of Spain, celebrating the oath of allegiance in their capitals after the accession of a new monarch.

There were definite regulations governing the order of events on these occasions, although the accompanying display varied greatly according to local wealth and importance. In general these celebrations inspired floods of high-flown adulation and description:

*Hereon a thousand quatrains
all do write,
Because they are in transports
of delight.
There is no quill
But soaring to Pindaric heights
doth sing
To glorify our sovereign lord
the King.
And even some with ample purses
wrote countless verses.⁵*

Father Estremera's laconic report from New Mexico is decidedly out of the ordinary in this respect. Perhaps he was not impressed by the comparatively modest provincial function, or perhaps the fact that the ceremony in Santa Fe was sandwiched in between rugged campaigns against enemy Indians may explain his failure to succumb to the usual impulse to commemorate the occasion in purple prose or rapturous doggerel. No doubt the author of the "muy docta loa" let himself go with more of the traditional gusto. It may be a pity

5. "Al assumpto mil coplas / escriven todos, / y es porque con el gusto / se han vuelto locos: / no hay pluma, / que no ronde la altura / del Pindo, / en gloria del invicto / Rey nuestro, / y hasta un rico compuso / no se que versos." Chamberga.—*Describe el Real acto del levantamiento de el Estandarte en la solemne Aclamacion de nuestro Rey, y Señor Don Fernando Sexto, que Dios prospere, en el día 10. de Agosto por un ingenio Alcaladino*. Listed in *Jenaro Alenda y Mira, Relaciones de solemnidades y fiestas públicas de España*, 2 vols., Madrid, 1903, vol. 2, pp. 31-32. The ironical reference to the literary efforts of the rich undoubtedly reflects the fact that many men of letters of the period were dependent upon the patronage of the well-to-do and highly placed for their bread and butter.

that this composition has not survived for its interest as a regional literary curiosity, but I suspect that, like most pieces of its kind, it would be quite unreadable today. A Spanish bibliography of such writings lists no less than eighty-five items on the accession of Ferdinand VI—from various prose and verse accounts of the proclamation and celebrations in Madrid, August 10-12, 1746, and in other Spanish cities at different dates, to a *Verdadera relación en un curioso Romance*, in which a gentleman of Jerez de la Frontera tells a friend in Sevilla about the *Máscara Joco-Seria* with which the Gipsy tribe celebrated Ferdinand's exaltation to the throne. This masque, which took place on February 11, 1747, included a representation of the surrender of Moctezuma to Cortés. Another typical item is a "Metrical-Heroic dialogue between Spain and America," entitled: *Amorosas respiraciones, y alegres regocijos que plausiblemente gozosa, y placentera, respira la gran Monarquía de las Dos Españas, por la venturosa, feliz, y justa aclamación de su natural dueño, y sacro Catholico Monarca Don Fernando VI. . . .*⁶

A few of these effusions were promptly reprinted in Mexico, and the colonists also seized the opportunity to display their loyalty and their talent for description and panegyric. One learned lady, Doña Ana María González y Zúniga, who "dared to compete with the best poets of the Mexican Parnassus," more than once won prizes in the literary competitions often held on occasions of public rejoicing. The titles of her contributions on the proclamation of Ferdinand VI in Mexico City, Saturday, February 11, 1747, may be translated: "Melpomene's tears dried in the solemn oath of allegiance to our King and Lord Ferdinand VI, God keep him, and rejoicing restrained by the death of Philip V; Glories of beautiful Calliope revived in the festive celebrations of our desired and venerated monarch Ferdinand VI."⁷

But to fill in the gaps in Father Estremera's account of the "customary ceremonies" it will be better to consult an unadorned statement of the prescribed procedure for the *jura*

6. Alenda y Mira, *op. cit.*

7. J. T. Medina, *La Imprenta en México (1539-1821)*, 8 vols., Santiago de Chile, 1907-1912, Vol. 5, pp. 89, 133-134.

of a new king in Mexico City in the eighteenth century.⁸ On the day of the oath the *ayuntamiento* of Mexico City rode from the *casas de cabildo* to escort the Viceroy, Audiencia of New Spain, and the other tribunals to a platform erected on the north of the plaza mayor near the door of the viceregal palace. Here, under a velvet canopy, was a portrait of the King, covered by a curtain, a chair for the Viceroy, with caparison and cushion, and chairs for the *oidores*, the *alcaldes del crimen*, and members of the other tribunals on either side. The benches for the city officials were on the right, and those of the *escribanos de cámara* on the left. Behind the latter was another bench for the Indian governors of San Juan and Santiago Tlaltelolco in Mexico City, and of six more Indian municipalities in the environs, "where the said governors are seated, handsomely attired in their native dress, and the other officials of the Indian towns stand on the stairs to the said platform."⁹ When all were seated the Corregidor formally asked the Viceroy's permission to go for the Alférez Real, who led the procession to the palace, bearing the standard and escorted by the ayuntamiento and the nobility, all magnificently dressed. The standard was placed on a silver pedestal in front of the Viceroy, the infantry drew up on the west, and the kings-of-arms at the four corners called the crowd to attention: "Silence! Silence! Silence! Hear! Hear! Hear!"

8. Eusebio Bentura Beleña, *Recopilación sumaria de todos los autos acordados de la Real Audiencia y Sala del Crimen de esta Nueva España*, Madrid, 1787, Part III, Nota III, pp. 364-367.

9. The Indian officials had not always enjoyed these privileges. A colorful description of the proclamation of Philip IV in Mexico City on August 15, 1621, the centennial year of the conquest, tells us that after the first proclamations the Audiencia (governing in the interval between the departure of Viceroy Marqués de Guadalcázar to Peru and the arrival of the Marqués de Gálvez) summoned the governors and other officials of the two Indian municipalities in Mexico City. "All of them . . . and many more Indian principal men and officials, with fine artifacts, pineapples, and garlands of fresh and fragrant flowers to present to the aforesaid gentlemen (as they did), were standing bareheaded at one corner of the platform waiting for (the end of this solemnity) to show that they were humble vassals of so lofty a Majesty. The reason for the ceremony was explained by their interpreter, Pedro Vázquez, who told them it was right that they too, as members of the body of the Crown, should acknowledge their King and Lord, since they were natural vassals of these his kingdoms and dominions, saying in their mother tongue that inasmuch as they pertained to the royal patrimony of Castile and León, they were and would be for His Majesty, just as they had been for his glorious father and grandparents. They responded with no little joy, acclaiming him. The gentlemen [of the Audiencia] ordered me to take great care to record these things, for (although it had never been done on similar occasions before), now it seemed most fitting, because of the new trend of the times. And they, who had sloughed off the rough

Then the Viceroy came forward, took the standard, and, waving it, cried three times in a loud voice: "Castile: New Spain for the Catholic Majesty of the King our lord, don [Fernando VI], King of Castile and León, God keep him many happy years." To which the tribunals replied "Amen," and the people shouted, "Long live, long live the King!" At the same moment the infantry fired a volley and the cannons of the palace roared, while the bells of the Cathedral and all the churches of Mexico City joined the clamor with their pealing. The dignitaries on the platform threw coins minted for the occasion to the populace.¹⁰ After this the Alférez Real made the proclamation twice more, from the right and left sides of the platform, to the same response. Then the royal portrait was unveiled and the standard returned to its silver pedestal. The Alférez Real asked the Viceroy's permission to continue with the usual proclamations, and the procession with the ayuntamiento and nobility, escorted by a column of infantry, proceeded to a platform at the Archepiscopal Palace, where the Archbishop and ecclesiastical dignitaries distributed their coins, stamped with His Majesty's portrait. The final proclamation was made from a third platform in front of the city hall, where the royal standard remained, guarded by the four kings-of-arms, for the remainder of the three days the celebrations lasted. When the Royal Ensign left the first platform and the military had passed in review before the Viceroy, the latter withdrew to the palace with his retinue.

Although frontier New Mexico could hardly attempt to emulate the magnificent display at the viceregal court of New Spain, the essential elements of the ceremony were carried out, and the governor, who through necessity had to act as

exterior of their forebears, were overcome with joy to realize that the King our Lord, through his ministers, was showing them the esteem due them as his vassals, and that they too, along with the Spaniards, were figuring in such an ornate function, worthy of being recorded in print forever." Arias de Villalobos, *Obediencia que México . . . dio a la Majestad Católica del Rey D. Felipe de Austria*, in Genaro García, *Documentos inéditos o muy raros para la historia de México*, vol. 12, México, 1907, pp. 172-174.

10. In Luis González Obregón, *México Viejo*, México, 1900, p. 587, there is an illustration showing the medals struck for the *jura* of Ferdinand VI. One hundred fifty of the Mexican coins were sent to the King, and by his order two gold medals and three of silver were sent from Madrid to the Viceroy of New Spain to be presented to those "en quienes haya observado V. E. mayor esmero de fidelidad y aplauso de todas las prosperidades de S. M." Archivo General de la Nación, México, Reales Cédulas, vol. 67, nos. 52, 93.

royal ensign also, undoubtedly performed his role in the same manner as the Viceroy and with equal dignity as His Majesty's personal representative. It seems unlikely that there was much, if any, tossing of coins to the people, hard money being practically non-existent in New Mexico. Possibly a few of the coins struck in honor of Ferdinand VI were sent from Mexico for token distribution to the most prominent citizens, just as a limited number were sent from Madrid to Mexico.

In view of the unfounded but persistent belief that Santa Fe was a royal villa with the resounding title of "La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Assisi," it should be noted here that Father Estremera's certification of the oath to Ferdinand VI, like all documents of the colonial period, refers simply to the villa, or capital villa of Santa Fe. Surely if Santa Fe had any claim to entitle itself a royal villa—and there is absolutely no evidence that it did—on this of all occasions the title would have been set down in all its glory.¹¹

Father Estremera tells us that immediately after the proclamation the cortege "proceeded to the church and the royal standard was placed on the Gospel side of the high altar. And with the assistance of many religious who had been invited by the said Reverend Father Royal Commissary the Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated. Bachiller don Santiago Roybal, ecclesiastical vicar of this villa,¹² sang it solemnly. The orator who preached the sermon of thanksgiving was the said Very Reverend Father Royal and Military Commissary, who crowned the occasion with his Very Reverend Pater-nity's usual notable and famous energy."

In Mexico the ecclesiastical observances were sometimes deferred to the second day of the celebrations. There was usually a pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving in the cathedral, attended by the Viceroy, Audiencia, and officialdom in full array, with a panegyric sermon by one of the more distin-

11. See also Lansing B. Bloom's comment in *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, vol. 20, pp. 108, 187, and E. B. Adams and Fray Angélico Chávez, *The Missions of New Mexico, 1776*, Albuquerque, 1956, p. 13, n. 3.

12. Father Roybal, for a long time the only secular priest in New Mexico, was a native son who received his education in Mexico City. For details about his career see Adams and Chávez, *op. cit.*, p. 35, n. 59, and Chávez, "El Vicario Don Santiago Roybal," *El Palacio*, vol. 55, pp. 231-252.

guished members of the clergy. Afterwards the royal tribunals made a formal call on the Viceroy. The Archbishop and the Cathedral Chapter made their ceremonial visits of congratulation on the morning of the third day, while the bells of the Cathedral pealed incessantly. In the afternoon the Chapter of the Collegiate Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe also paid their respects.

The city was decorated for the royal celebrations with lavish splendor, with magnificent hangings,^{12a} banners, canopies, and all kinds of ingenious conceits. In honor of Ferdinand VI a "pyramid" was erected in the plaza mayor near the fountain opposite the main door of the palace. "This was a high column on a pedestal, with a bust of His Majesty at the top, his robe and imperial crown being made of gilded iron." This monument remained in the plaza until 1790.¹³ The city was illuminated by night and there were sumptuous displays of fireworks, with many elaborate set pieces. All kinds of entertainment contributed to the atmosphere of public rejoicing—triumphal chariots, *mojigangas* and masques, comedies, bull fights, sports, banquets, dancing, music.

Father Estremera makes a brief statement about the popular diversions in Santa Fe: "On the twenty-sixth, for the entertainment of the villa and to solemnize further the oath of allegiance to our King, there was a *juego de toros* in the morning and afternoon. On the twenty-seventh there was a very good play, which brought the festivities to an end with many huzzas and 'Long live our King don Fernando,' the people giving many thanks both to the said Lord Governor and to the aforementioned Reverend Father Royal and Military Commissary General. And I note that on Sunday afternoon, the twenty-fifth, there were, in token of rejoicing, many different dances by Indians who came from the missions nearest this villa."

It is unfortunate that the Father Secretary did not take

12a. For example, the balconies of the city hall displayed rich tapestries of the story of Don Quijote de la Mancha, "so vivid that it was wonderful entertainment for the learned as well as the ignorant." José Mariano de Abarca, *El Sol en León, Solemne aplausos con que . . . Fernando VI . . . fue celebrado . . . por la Ciudad de México*, Mexico, 1748. Quoted in Manuel Romero de Terreros y Vinent, *Las artes industriales en la Nueva España*, Mexico, 1923, pp. 129-130.

13. Francisco Sedano, *Noticias de México*, México 1880, Vol. 2, p. 86.

time to describe these amusements. The playing of the bulls probably had little resemblance to the formal bullfight of modern times, but was more likely to have been a sort of free-for-all in which anyone who felt inclined might have a go at the bulls in his own way and with his own weapons. It may, indeed, have had some of the features of the Southwestern rodeo, such as lassoing and throwing the bull, and even riding it. We know that these novelties had appeared in Spain more than a century before as American introductions. Sometimes the bull was hamstrung before the crowd—or the dogs—were turned loose to finish him off in the most brutal and sanguinary manner.¹⁴ As for the *comedia*, there are scattered references to theatrical performances in Santa Fe on special occasions, but with the exception of certain traditional folk dramas, we have practically no information about their nature. The Indian dances alone have come down to us so little changed that New Mexicans and visitors to New Mexico can easily picture for themselves the scene in the plaza of Santa Fe on the afternoon of January 25, 1748, when the original citizens of New Mexico performed in honor of their Spanish ruler, Ferdinand VI.

14. José Deleito y Piñuela, *También se divierte el pueblo*, Madrid, 1954, pp. 129-136, *passim*.