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Don Diego de Vargas: Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Conquistador

J. MANUEL ESPINOSA and W. CHARLES BENNETT, JR.

Three individuals may be considered today as a great triumvirate in southwestern colonial history: don Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1510–1554); don Juan de Oñate (1549–1626); and don Diego de Vargas Zapata Luján Ponce de León (1643–1704). Coronado led a large expedition that traversed much of the American Southwest in 1540–1542, exploring as far east as Kansas, in search of cities of wealth and exotic peoples. Although he found no riches, the expedition helped give the Spaniards a fairly accurate concept of the area that would become the American Southwest. Oñate is known as the colonizer of New Mexico after he established the first Spanish colony in the Southwest in 1598 near the Pueblo Indian village of San Juan on the Rio del Norte or Rio Grande.

J. Manuel Espinosa began his research on don Diego de Vargas in 1931 as a graduate student of Herbert E. Bolton at the University of California, Berkeley, where he obtained his doctorate in 1934. He is the author of two books on Vargas: *First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico, 1692* (1940), and *Crusaders of the Rio Grande, The Story of Don Diego de Vargas and the Reconquest and Refounding of New Mexico* (1942). He is also author of *Spanish Folktales from New Mexico* (1937), and *The Folklore of Spain in the American Southwest* (1985), and has written articles on New Mexico history for various journals.

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Full-length painting of don Diego de Vargas that hangs in the chapel of San Isidro, Madrid, Spain. Photo courtesy of J. Manuel Espinosa.

Diego de Vargas, the third of the triumvirate, led the reconquest of New Mexico and reestablished Spanish rule in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The reconquest followed the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, when all Spanish inhabitants of New Mexico were forced to withdraw to El Paso del Rio del Norte (present Ciudad Juárez). Indeed, with the Pueblo Revolt the northern frontier of New Spain was pushed back more than three hundred miles. For twelve years the Pueblo Indians held New Mexico as their own and destroyed much of the Spanish culture that had surrounded them. Between the years 1692 and 1696, Vargas changed all that.

Vargas, a Castilian nobleman, had assumed the office of royal governor and captain general of New Mexico in El Paso early in 1691. After assuming the duties of office, he made plans to reconquer New Mexico. In summer 1692 he marched north with a small army and found the previously hostile Pueblo Indians of the upper Rio Grande in a conciliatory mood. Returning the next year, however, Vargas met with resistance and was forced to fight pitched battles at Santa Fe, provincial capital of New Mexico, and elsewhere. Between 1694 and 1696, the Spaniards waged almost continuous warfare with the rebellious Pueblo Indians, but peace was eventually achieved and the permanence of European occupation of the region assured. Since the days of Governor Vargas this distant corner of the old Spanish empire in America, now a part of the United States, has continued to be a community in which Spanish blood, culture, and tradition have contributed to the region's uniquely Hispanic character. In light of these developments Vargas stands out as a significant figure in the history of European conquest and colonization in North America.

Unfortunately, no contemporary portraits or pictorial representations of Coronado or Oñate have been found. Slightly more than fifty years ago, however, in 1934, American historians for the first time became aware of the existence of the only known contemporary painting of Vargas, a full-length oil painting that presently hangs in the San Isidro Labrador Chapel in the residence of descendants of the House of Vargas in Madrid, Spain. J. Manuel Espinosa, senior author of this article, had the good fortune to be the first American to learn of the existence of this original late seventeenth-century painting. He subsequently published a photograph of the painting in black-and-white with a description on the front page of the Fiesta edition of the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, on September 1, 1934.¹

1. José Perez Balsera López de Zárate Bocos y Ramírez de Haro, *Laudemus viros*

In spring 1985, Espinosa obtained a color photograph of the original Vargas painting through Ramón Bela of the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (Institute of Hispanic Culture) in Madrid. Bela, with the permission of the Vargas descendants, arranged to have the painting photographed by the Portillo Studio in Madrid. The photograph is large enough to enable the viewer to observe every detail. Now, for the first time, Americans who have not had the opportunity to visit Madrid and see the original painting of the leader of the reconquest and refounding of New Mexico for Spain in the last decade of the seventeenth century, have at hand a color photograph of the original portrait.²

Espinosa learned of the existence of the painting in early 1934 as a result of discussing his research on Diego de Vargas with visiting Spanish scholar Angel González Palencia. González Palencia told Espinosa that a friend of his, José Pérez Balsera, a descendant of the House of Vargas in Madrid, had recently written a history of his family ancestry, which he believed might well be the same family of which Diego de Vargas was a member. González Palencia wrote to Balsera to obtain a copy of the work, and within three weeks Espinosa received three complimentary copies of the privately printed book. The book was indeed about the ancestors of Diego de Vargas. Espinosa retained one copy and sent the others to the Palace of the Governors (history department of the Museum of New Mexico) in Santa Fe, and to Zimmerman Library in the University of New Mexico.

Balsera's book contains a mine of information on the House of Vargas, including photographic reproductions and extensive references to specific Spanish archival sources and other material. As an unanticipated boon, the book contained among its illustrations a large photograph, in black-and-white, of the portrait of Diego de Vargas.³ The original Vargas painting, executed by an unknown artist, hangs in the Chapel of San Isidro Labrador in the Balsera family residence at Calle Pretil de Santisteban, Madrid, and measures approximately sixty-four by forty-two inches. Espinosa described the physical characteristics and dress of Diego de Vargas as he appears in the painting in the Santa Fe *New Mexican* article and elsewhere.⁴

gloriosos et parentes nostros in generatione sua (Madrid: Tipografia Catolica, de Alberto Fontana, 1931).

2. This color photograph was donated by J. Manuel Espinosa to the Palace of the Governors (history department of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe), where it is on file.

3. For genealogical information on Vargas, see Pérez Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*.

4. See J. Manuel Espinosa, trans., *First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico, 1692*

Vargas was baptized on November 8, 1643, and departed for America in summer 1672. If the portrait was painted in Madrid prior to Vargas' departure for the New World, he would have been approximately twenty-nine years old when he posed for it. Espinosa included photographs in black-and-white of the original Vargas painting, taken from the photograph in Balsera's book, in several of his later publications; subsequently, it has been reproduced by several authors in works relating to New Mexico history.⁵

At the end of his article on the Vargas painting in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Espinosa wrote: "It is my earnest hope that in due time a movement will be inaugurated to have a copy of this remarkable Vargas portrait, in the form of a painting or statue, set up in a permanent and fitting place in Santa Fe. This would be a suitable monument to don Diego de Vargas, Santa Fe's favorite hero." This hope was realized in 1957, when a special copy of the original painting was made by the modern Spanish painter, Julio Barrera, and sent as a gift to the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe from the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica in Madrid.⁶ This copy of the portrait has been on display

(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 30; and J. Manuel Espinosa, *Crusaders of the Rio Grande: The Story of Don Diego de Vargas and the Reconquest and Refounding of New Mexico* (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit History, 1942), 30. Diego de Vargas' *prueba de legitimidad*, recorded in Madrid on June 21, 1672, and based on the information of witnesses who knew him, described him as "a young man of medium stature, straight hair, and a broad face, who lisps somewhat and cannot pronounce some words." See John L. Kessell, "Diego de Vargas: Another Look," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 60 (January 1985), 16, 27, n. 16.

Based on his knowledge that Balsera and his family moved to Segovia for safety during the Spanish Civil War, and that Balsera's property was looted by anti-Franco supporters during the siege of Madrid, Espinosa believed in 1940 that the Vargas painting had been lost. He learned later, however, that the painting had remained intact in the family chapel in Madrid. See Espinosa, *First Expedition of Vargas*, 25, n. 8.

5. Espinosa, *Crusaders*, frontispiece, 28, 29; J. Manuel Espinosa, "Governor Vargas in Colorado," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 11 (April 1936), 178-79; Espinosa, *First Expedition of Vargas*, frontispiece; Aurelio M. Espinosa, *España en Nuevo Méjico* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1957), frontispiece; Paul Horgan, *The Centuries of Santa Fe* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1965), 68; Kessell, "Another Look," 14; John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico 1540-1840* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1979), 242.

6. A small photograph in color of the museum copy of the portrait is shown on the cover of this issue of *El Palacio* (September-October 1957), 276, and color postcard reproductions are sold at the museum. Valeriano Salas, director of the illustrated *Revista Geográfica Española* published in Madrid, helped effect this portrait copy. In 1948 he visited the United States as a guest of the Department of State to photograph examples of Spanish art and architecture in the Borderlands. At the time Espinosa was an officer of the Division of Cultural Relations, U.S. Department of State, where he helped Salas arrange his itinerary and appointments. As a result of his visit to the museum at Santa

for a number of years in a prominent place in the Palace of the Governors (once Vargas' seat of government) in an exhibition of historic New Mexican personages.

More recently the Palace of the Governors acquired a second modern copy of the Vargas painting, the work of a well-known copyist of the Prado Museum in Madrid, Graciano García Carrillo. This copy was executed on heavier canvas, superior to that used by Julio Barrera in painting the first copy. The two paintings are known as Palace of the Governors, Museum of New Mexico, catalog number 3737/45 (first or Barrera copy) and catalog number 10048/45 (second or García Carrillo copy). The second copy of the painting was the gift of Manuel Cabrera Kabana, a Spanish mining engineer with mining interests in the United States, and a member of one of the various well-known Spanish families of Madrid that claim lineage to the House of Vargas. Cabrera Kabana arranged to have the painting made, framed, and shipped as a gift to the Palace of the Governors through the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica. Unfortunately, this second copy of the painting is not a faithful copy of the original. Instead of the coat of arms found on the original painting, this copy has in its place an altered copy of a later version of the Vargas coat of arms, one which we refer to as the Twitchell version after New Mexico historian Ralph E. Twitchell, who used this more recent version of the Vargas coat of arms in his work, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico*.⁷

In January 1959, architect John Gaw Meem and his wife, Faith, visited the Balsera family residence and San Isidro Labrador Chapel in Madrid and saw the original Vargas painting. In summer 1980, Kristie Sivert, also from New Mexico, made a similar visit. Both Meem and Sivert wrote articles about their visits.⁸ Espinosa also visited the Balsera

Fe, and subsequent correspondence conducted by its director, Boaz Long, with the Institute of Hispanic Culture and the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C., the copy was painted, at the request of Ramon Bela. Formal presentation of the Vargas portrait copy was made to the museum by the Spanish ambassador to the United States in Santa Fe in June 1959. See "Portrait of Vargas Information," History Collections Office, Palace of the Governors, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.

7. Ralph E. Twitchell, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (2 vols., Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1914), 1: 64.

8. John G. Meem, "Vargas Lore: An Interview in Madrid, 1959," *El Palacio*, 66 (October 1959), 159-61; Kristie Sivert, "Don Diego de Vargas Descendant Sends Greetings," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 7, 1980, pp. 1-2. These articles deal mostly with their conversations with Balsera's daughters, María Teresa and María Luisa. Sivert's article includes a brief report on the visit to Santa Fe in 1960 by the Balsera sisters as guests of the community to participate in the 250th anniversary of the *Fiesta de Santa Fe*, celebrated annually since 1712 to honor Vargas' reconquest of New Mexico.

residence and San Isidro Chapel to examine the painting in 1959 and secured photographs of the exterior of the residence, the interior of the chapel, and the Vargas painting. In the chapel, Espinosa examined the various details in the painting and took notes. More recently other Americans have visited Madrid and examined the original Vargas painting, including the co-author of this article, Charles Bennett, in 1984.

The residence of José Pérez Balsera, at Calle Pretil de Santisteban, No. 3, is within short walking distance from Madrid's historic Plaza Mayor, built during the reign of King Philip III in the seventeenth century, and hub of much of Madrid's social life in that era. The lot on which the Balsera residence was built is a small part of a once large estate owned by the House of Vargas since the twelfth century.⁹ The present building, erected in 1856, now in a row of apartments, is a three-story stone edifice with long rows of windows a short distance up the street from the corner of Almendro Street.

In constructing the building careful plans were made to build a chapel on the site of the stable where San Isidro Labrador (Saint Isidor the Tiller of the Soil), the patron saint of Madrid, kept his oxen. This is on the property of Ivan (or Juan) de Vargas, a wealthy landowner of Madrid in the twelfth century and an ancestor of Diego de Vargas. San Isidro Labrador and his wife, Santa María de la Cabeza, were servants of Ivan de Vargas, who worked in the fields on the Vargas property. It is believed that on Ivan de Vargas' property between the bridges of Segovia and Toledo, in present downtown Madrid, where San Isidro tilled the land, the saint performed the miracle of the spring, causing a spring of water to gush forth where he struck the ground with his ox goad. The spring is said to exist there to this day.¹⁰

The chapel originally had two street entrances, the one on Calle Pretil de Santisteban and one on Calle Almendro, which was the principal entrance. In 1859, the owner, don Ignacio José López de Zárate, Marqués de Villanueva de la Sagra y de la Nava de Barcinas, obtained

9. The best history of the Vargas family is Balsera's work. Summaries largely based on it may be found in Espinosa, *First Expedition of Vargas*, 19-24; and Espinosa, *Crusaders*, 25-28. Additional documents on Vargas have been discovered in the private archives of several other descendants who reside in Madrid. See Kessell, "Another Look," 11-28.

10. San Isidro Labrador is venerated in folk tradition in New Mexico as well as in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries as an intercessor for rain. In former years his image was taken in procession to bless spring plantings and to call on him in times of drought. Figures of the saint in popular art in Spain and the Hispanic world, including New Mexico, show him kneeling in prayer, with angels driving his oxen while he is praying.

authority from the Church to permit mass to be celebrated in the chapel and for services to be open to the public. Since then it has been visited frequently by devotees of San Isidro Labrador, especially on his feast day, including recent Catholic monarchs of Spain.¹¹

The Chapel of San Isidro Labrador on Calle Pretil de Santisteban may be entered through a doorway to the left of the hallway inside the entry to the building. The chapel itself is modest in size, about thirty feet wide and fifty feet long, with walls constructed of stone blocks. Behind the altar there is a large crucifix, with statues of San Isidro Labrador and his wife on either side. Under the altar the mangers of the original stable are still in place. On the side wall to the left of the altar, looking from it, hangs the portrait of Diego de Vargas. On either side of the Vargas painting hang nineteenth-century paintings of scenes from the life of San Isidro. The one on the right shows the kneeling figure of San Isidro with angels watching over his labors; the painting on the left depicts the saint standing and Ivan de Vargas kneeling before the miraculous spring. The chapel also contains an original full-length painting of Juan Antonio López de Zárate y Alvarez de Medina, first Marqués de Villanueva de la Sagra (1646–1698), of approximately the same size as that of Vargas, which may have been painted by the same unknown painter of the Vargas portrait. Juan Antonio López de Zárate was the older brother of Ignacio López de Zárate and married Diego de Vargas' daughter, Isabel María.

In an examination of the original Vargas painting, there are, in addition to the central figure of Vargas, three other parts of the original painting that merit close study: the coat of arms in the upper right corner (to Vargas' right); the legend in the lower left corner; and the somewhat obscure battle scene along the upper left side of the painting. The Vargas coat of arms is a shield divided into quarter sections. The top right quarter consists of three horizontal wavy bands of blue on a silvery white background and represent the Vargas family heraldry. The blue waves represent the miracle of the spring performed by San Isidro Labrador.¹² Balsera quotes the following verses on the Vargas

11. Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 113–15. The mortal remains of Madrid's patron saint are kept next to those of his wife, Santa María de la Cabeza, in the Cathedral of San Isidro in Madrid, a large baroque structure faithfully reconstructed after it burned in 1936.

12. Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 92, 114; data provided through correspondence by the Spanish authority with the author on Spanish heraldry, Marqués de Ciadoncha, of the Archivo Heráldico de los Señores de Rújula Cronistas Reyes de Armas de S. M., Madrid, Spain. Earlier versions of the Vargas family coat of arms included only this heraldic emblem.

heraldry from don Luis de Zapata's book *Reino de Toledo* (*Kingdom of Toledo*):

Los Vargas gentes nobles y enforzadas
De los que oigo mil cosas y no dudo
Son unas nobles Bandas ondeadas
De azul y blanco a lo ancho en el Escudo.
De Las hazañas de estos señaladas
Su loor en Sevilla no esta mudo;
Su loor en muchas partes y en Sevilla,
Pero es su antiguo origen de Castilla.

The Vargases a people noble and brave
Of whom I hear a thousand marvelous things and do not doubt
Are represented by noble wavy bands
Of blue and white across the family crest.
Of the heroic deeds which these designate
Their praise in Seville is not silent;
Their praise is in many places as well as in Seville,
But their ancient origin is Castile.¹³

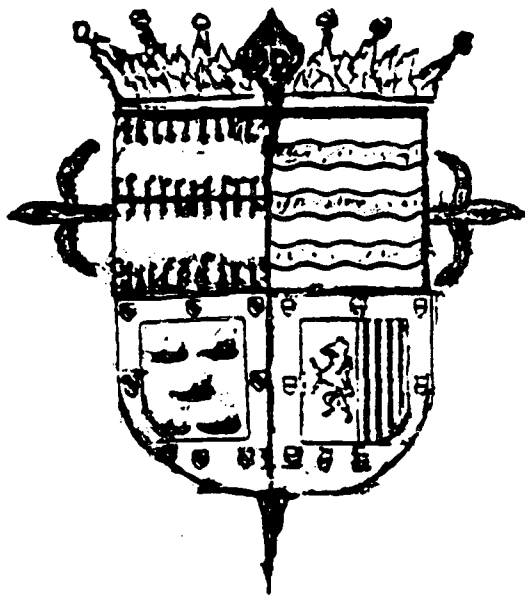
The bottom left quarter of the coat of arms shows five gold shoes on a field of red, bordered by eight small shields of red, each with a diagonal black band, also on a field of red. The shoes represent the heraldry of the Zapata Luján family. The Zapata and Vargas families are two of the oldest and most famous noble families of Madrid. The upper left quarter consists of three horizontal viridian bands on a silver background, each with the edges broken on either side giving the appearance of sections of an embattlement. We have not yet been able to ascertain the specific heraldic meaning of this quarter section of the Vargas coat of arms.¹⁴

The fourth quarter of the coat of arms, on the bottom right, is divided into two parts. On the left is a lion rampant on a field of silver; on the right side are four vertical red rods or canes on a field of gold. This quarter is bordered by eight small gold shields each with a blue band across it. Solid documentation on the specific meaning of the two parts of this quarter section remains unavailable. It may be the heraldry of the Ponce de León family, closely related to the Vargas family for

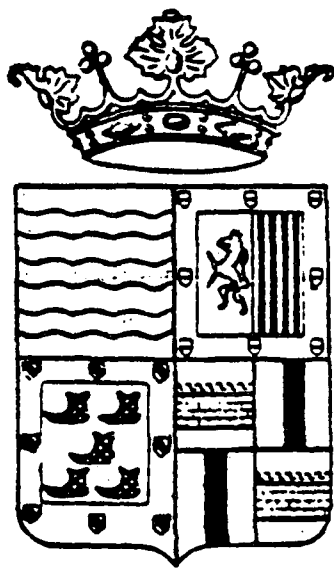
13. Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 93.

14. José Antonio Alvarez y Baena, *Hijos de Madrid, ilustres en santidad, dignidades, armas, ciencias, y artes* (4 vols., Madrid: Graficas Bashende, 1973), 1: prologue; correspondence with Marqués de Ciadoncha.

Coat of Arms of Diego de Vargas



Vargas crest as reproduced from the original portrait of don Diego de Vargas.



Version of the Vargas crest as reproduced by Ralph E. Twitchell.

many centuries. The many intermarriages among members of the Vargas, Zapata, Luján, and Ponce de León, and other noble families had their alliances through marriages represented in their heraldry. Thus, descendants of the House of Vargas had different last names such as Vargas Ponce de León, Zapata Ponce de León, Vargas y Luján, Luján y Vargas, Zapata de León, Vargas Zapata y Luján, and so on.¹⁵

On the original Vargas painting, extending in red from the four sides of the coat of arms, are the four ends of the cruciform insignia of the Order of Santiago, which is shaped like a dagger. As worn by the members of the illustrious Spanish Military Order, the pointed blade of the dagger is slightly longer than the visible ends extending from the coat of arms make it appear. Scores of Vargas' direct ancestors and close relatives through marriage were knighted members and proudly wore the insignia of the royal Order, including thirteen in the seventeenth century alone.¹⁶

Placement of the quarter sections of the Vargas coat of arms in the original painting and design of the gold crown above it, as well as other details, differ from those shown in the black-and-white copy of the coat of arms reproduced by Ralph E. Twitchell. Twitchell's is an old but more recent version of the coat of arms. This is evident by the fact that the crown above the coat of arms in the latter version is that used by a marquis, and Vargas received the title of Marquis de la Nava de Barcinas in 1699, some twenty-five years after the date of the original painting. Also, the insignia of the Order of Santiago is absent.¹⁷

Along the upper side of the original painting, opposite the side depicting the Vargas coat of arms, there is what appears to be an opening in the room in which Vargas stands, perhaps a doorway or window, vaguely showing an outdoor battle scene with soldiers, military weapons, and a cannon and cannon balls in the foreground. In

15. Correspondence with Marqués de Ciadoncha; Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 28, 29, 35, 43, 45–47, 49.

16. See genealogical chart of the Vargas family, Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 135. There is no documentary evidence that Vargas was a member of the Order of Santiago, Kessell, "Another Look," 20, 28, n. 32.

17. Twitchell, *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, 1: 64; Ralph E. Twitchell, *Old Santa Fe: The Story of New Mexico's Ancient Capital* (Santa Fe: Santa Fe New Mexican Publishing Company, 1925), 68. Irving A. Leonard, trans., *The Mercurio Volante of Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: An Account of the First Expedition of Don Diego de Vargas into New Mexico in 1692* (Los Angeles: Quivira Society, 1932), 42; Espinosa, *Crusaders*, frontispiece; Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown*, 242. Whereabouts of the original version of the coat of arms first published by Twitchell in 1914 is unknown. From the visible small section of a circular stamp on the lower corner of the original Twitchell copy, it appears that it was obtained from a heraldic archive or museum in Spain. See Julio de Atienza, *Nobiliario Español* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), 20; Espinosa, *Crusaders*, 319, 339.

the background, a distant murky sky covers a larger area. The precise significance of this scene is unknown. It is probably an evocation of the military exploits of members of the Vargas family, so many of whom distinguished themselves as soldiers in defense of the Spanish crown.¹⁸

In the lower left corner of the painting, below the battle scene, there is a legend with a decorative gold border that was clearly, on close examination, superimposed on the original painting after Vargas' death in 1704. It reads:

El Señor Dⁿ Diego de Bargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon Marques de la Nava de Barcinas del Orden de Sⁿtiago Governador, Conquistador, Pacificador, y Capitan General del Nuebo Mejico, perdio la Vida en Canpaña Rasa por libertar los Vassos Sagrados en el Sitio de Bernalillo ano de MDCCIV.

His Lordship Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon, Marques of la Nava de Barcinas, of the Order of Santiago, governor, conqueror, pacificator, and captain general of New Mexico, who lost his life in open battle attempting to rescue the sacred vessels at the place of Bernalillo, the year MDCCIV.¹⁹

Whether Vargas was a member of the Order of Santiago has not been substantiated. Moreover, ample documentation shows that he suffered a grave illness while campaigning against hostile Indians about fourteen leagues from the community of Bernalillo and that he was taken to Bernalillo where he died on April 8, 1704. A firsthand report describing in detail Vargas' last days is contained in a letter from Juan Páez Hurtado to Ignacio López de Zárate in Madrid, April 20, 1704. The report was uncovered recently by John L. Kessell in the personal

18. Examples include: the roles of the three Vargas brothers in the conquest of Toledo in 1080 and Madrid in 1083 during the reconquest of Spain from the Moors; a member of the Vargas family who fought bravely in the famous battle of Nava de Tolosa in 1212; and the famed Garci Pérez de Vargas, who distinguished himself in military victories at Cordoba in 1236, Jaén in 1246, and Seville in 1248, in the reconquest of Andalucía. There were others of military renown, including Francisco de Vargas, who with his courageous wife, María de Lago, were the victorious leaders in the defense of the Alcazar of Madrid at the time of the uprising of the *Comunidades*, or Communities, in Castile in the reign of Emperor Charles V. King Philip II inherited from his father, Charles V, the well-known Casa de Campo in Madrid, which Charles V had purchased from Francisco de Vargas. When one of the king's principal counselors asked him why he did not remove the Vargas coat of arms, the king is said to have replied: "Leave them, for those of such loyal vassals look well on the home of the royal monarchs." Balsera, *Laudemus viros gloriosos*, 113, 115.

19. "Report of the Royal Fiscal, Mexico City," August 4, 1704, legajo 142, Archivo General de Indias, *Guadalajara*, discussed in Espinosa, *Crusaders*, 358-59, n. 25.

archives of the present Marqués de la Nava de Barcinas in Madrid. Translated below is an excerpt from the letter:

Following the trail of the enemy with a group of soldiers and some friendly Indians, and having travelled with the said camp about forty leagues from this town [Santa Fe], he suffered a grave accident of fevers, caused by chills in his stomach, and seeing that he was very weak the reverend father preacher Friar Juan de Garaycochea, chaplain of said field expedition, urged him to return because he saw him so listless. And he answered the said father that there was no better place to lose his life than in the service of God and our lord the King. Nevertheless, since the accident was so grave, by force of pleading and urging he was returned on the shoulders of Indians to the town of Bernalillo, about sixteen leagues from this town, where I awaited him with some medicines to cure him, but these had no effect as there was no way that they could provide a remedy. He arrived as I say on the fifth of the present month, where . . . on the eighth day of the present month, at about five in the afternoon, he gave up his soul to his Creator. . . .²⁰

The significance of the Vargas painting is two-fold. First, it is the only known portrait of the leading figure in Spain's reconquest of New Mexico following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Second, our best evidence indicates that the portrait was painted during Vargas' lifetime and thus provides a contemporary likeness. Meanwhile, the residents of Santa Fe continue to keep alive the memory of Vargas and his exploits with their annual *Fiesta de Santa Fe*, celebrated first in 1712 to honor Vargas and the reconquest.

20. Juan Páez Hurtado to Ignacio López de Zárate, April 20, 1704. From a photocopy of a typewritten copy of the letter made available to Espinosa through the courtesy of John L. Kessell. The full text of this letter, in Spanish and English translation, appears in John L. Kessell, Rick Hendricks, Meredith D. Dodge, Larry D. Miller, and Eleanor B. Adams, eds., *Remote Beyond Compare: Letters of don Diego de Vargas to His Family from New Spain and New Mexico, 1675-1706* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza

Cleve Hallenbeck

Introduction by David J. Weber

Illustrations by José Cisneros

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY of Southern Methodist University and the 50th anniversary of its press, SMU Press is proud to publish this handsome new edition of a classic of Southwestern Americana, *The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza*.

First published in December 1949, *Fray Marcos* won honors for three extraordinary Southwesterners: author Cleve Hallenbeck, for his careful and spirited reconstruction of the route of Fray Marcos' epochal 1539 journey to the American Southwest; artist José Cisneros, for his elegant maps and line drawings of the principals in the story; and the foremost printer of the region, Carl Hertzog, for his exquisite design.

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