



*Governor Marín,
Mapmaker Miera,
and the swap of
Tajique and Quarai*

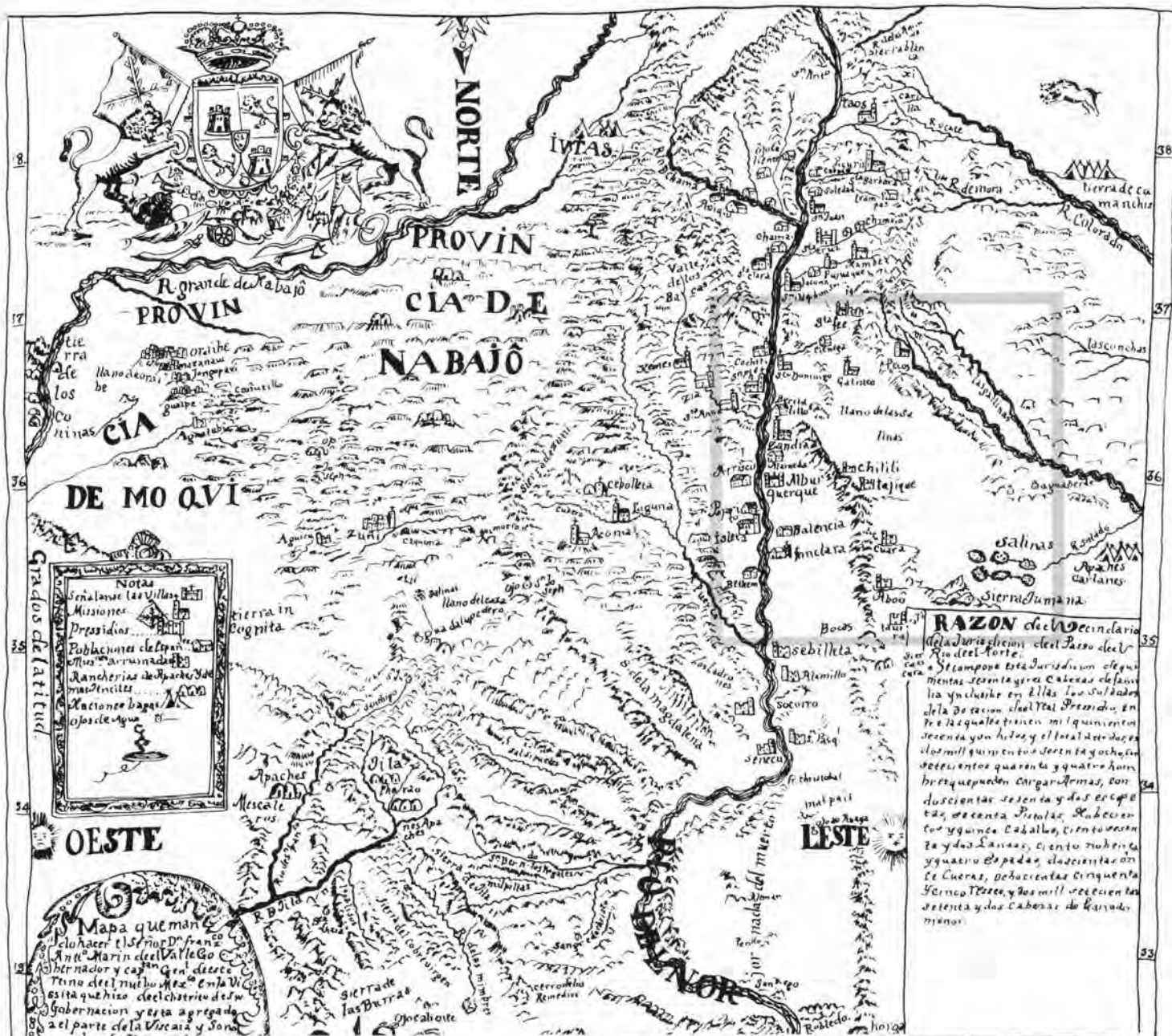
A TALE OF TWO PUEBLOS

By John L. Kessell

IF THE SURVIVING RECORD of his deeds is any indication, vain, volatile, publicly pious Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle, governor of New Mexico from 1754 to 1760, must have preferred dead Franciscans to live ones.¹ It was Marín—best remembered as patron of Our Lady of Light chapel whose carved stone reredos today graces Santa Fe's Cristo Rey church—who sought, dug for, and found the remains of saintly Fray Jerónimo de la Llana, then, to offer proof, altered the map to fit his claim.

It was also Marín who enticed Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, colonial New Mexico's premier map maker, to move from El Paso to Santa Fe. Miera joined Marín on his inspection of the colony in 1757 and early the next year drew a map to accompany the governor's report. This 1758 Miera map showed the ruined missions east of the Manzano Mountains, the so-called Saline missions, in their proper order, from north to south: Chililí, Tajique, Quarai, Abó.² On another, more elaborate map in color, evidently drawn in 1759, Miera inked in the names of the abandoned Salinas missions in the same correct order. Then, as a result of Governor Marín's quest for the holy remains of Fray Jerónimo, the dutiful cartographer painted out Tajique and Quarai and transposed them.³ Henceforth, on all his maps, Miera perpetuated the error.

The Miera map of 1759-60 (above) shows Tajique to the south of Quarai (Cuarac), a switch from his earlier map depicted on the opposite page.



Miera's map of 1758 has Tajique placed correctly to the north of Quarai (Cuara), and both are represented by the symbol for "ruined missions." Below: Signatures of Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle and Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco.

Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle
Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco

Governor Marín did not leave his fame to chance. He had his good works fully documented. The dossier "Measures Taken for Care of the Body of Venerable Father fray Jerónimo de la Llana," copied by Adolph F. Bandelier in 1888, explained the mistaken shift of Tajique and Quarai.⁴ Fray Jerónimo, who had labored with distinction in the missions of New Mexico until his death in 1659, was known as a wonder-worker, even as late as Marín's day. To recover the bones of this holy man during the centennial of his death, along with those of another exemplary friar buried at Picurís, and to enshrine these relics in Santa Fe, struck Governor Marín as a worthy act.

Before he set out from the capital with his archaeological expedition, the governor studied a statement by one Fray Nicolás de Freitas (Fleytas), who had buried Jerónimo de la Llana in the church at Quarai in 1659 and ten years later

López, who made Quarai "Puaray"),⁸ but the people of the Río Abajo, who hunted, tended sheep, and chased marauders on the other side of the mountains, needed no maps. When, in the early nineteenth century, they petitioned for lands in the area, they knew precisely where these places were.

Bandelier, who transcribed by hand the lengthy record of Marín's successful body hunt, was not fooled either. He had visited Tajique and Quarai himself, and he knew that Vetancurt was unreliable. George Kubler, who had neither Miera's correct 1758 map nor Bandelier's transcript, was very nearly fooled. More recently, however, the view of Bandelier (and of Francisco el Témpano) has prevailed.⁹

Lest we ourselves be judged, we ought not to condemn Governor Marín too roundly. Probably he was not the first New Mexico "archaeologist" to adjust the historical record to fit his excavations and expectations. And certainly he was not the last. ■

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The church at Quarai as it appears today, where Governor Marín, digging in 1759, failed to find the remains of Fray Jerónimo de la Llana.

Footnotes

1. Adams 1954: 25-26; Adams and Chavez 1956: 33-36, 246-47; Chavez 1965: 101-15.
2. Kessell 1979: 385-86, 507-12.
3. Kessell 1979: op. 167.
4. Marín del Valle 1759; Lange, Riley and Lange 1975: 514-25.
5. Témpano 1696.
6. Vetancurt [1698] 1870-71, III: 324-25.
7. Scholes 1929: 48, 53-54; Scholes and Adams 1952: 29-31.
8. Navarro García 1964: fol. 456.
9. Bandelier 1892: 261 n. 3; Lange, Riley and Lange 1975: 364-67; Kubler [1940] 1972: 88-89; Wilson 1973: 19.