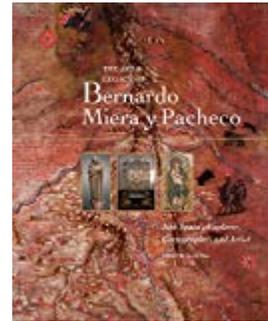




Josef Diaz, ed. *The Art and Legacy of Bernardo Miera y Pacheco: New Spain's Explorer, Cartographer, and Artist.* Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2013. 151 pp. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-89013-585-3.



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Miera y Pacheco's Life

This new volume, *The Art and Legacy of Bernardo Miera y Pacheco*, is both timely and a significant contribution to late colonial New Mexico historical studies. The book celebrates the diverse accomplishments of one of our most noteworthy, but often overlooked citizens. Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco was a native of Burgos in northern Spain, and, as noted by John Kessel, in his recent biography (2013), a true Renaissance Spaniard who possessed and exercised a wide range of military and artistic skills during his four decades in Nuevo Mexico. As Felipe R. Mirabal describes him (in his 2011 lecture at the New Mexico History Museum), Miera was a polymath, a person of encyclopedic learning who was proficient in astronomy, cartography, mathematics, geography, geology, geometry, military tactics, commerce, husbandry, oenology, metallurgy, languages, iconology, iconography, liturgy, painting, sculpture and drawing. In addition, Miera was an explorer and ethnographer who accompanied many groundbreaking expeditions, among them, explorations by Fra Juan Menchero, Governor Marin del Valle, Fray Silvestre Vázquez de Es-

calante and Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez, and Juan Bautista de Anza.

Editor Josef Diaz has collected five detailed essays which document the many facets of Miera's New Mexico career, including cartography, ethnography, altar screen sculpture, and the introduction of what became New Mexico's santero tradition of sculpted and painted devotional images.

Thomas Chavez begins this collection of essays by providing a thorough historical context and an overview of Don Bernardo's life and career. Miera began his military career in El Paso, becoming a captain in the militia and making his first maps during several military expeditions and inspections of various parts of New Mexico. After twelve years serving in El Paso, Miera relocated to Santa Fe, where he served under governor Marin del Valle, creating several maps of the region and crafting the famous altar screen (relocated to Cristo Rey Church in Santa Fe) for the governor's new military chapel, Nuestra Señora de La Luz, also known as the Capilla Castrense,

in 1761. Don Bernardo ceased making maps for some sixteen years until he was recruited by Escalante for an exploration toward the Hopi mesas in search of a route to the new California missions. He joined Dominguez and Escalante on their famous expedition northward into western Colorado and Utah and produced his noteworthy maps of that journey. Miera continued making maps under the next governor, Juan Bautista de Anza, documenting Anza's campaign against the Comanche on the southern Plains.

Dennis Reinhartz's chapter addresses the body of Miera's cartographic work, which many regard as his major contribution to colonial New Mexico. Between 1747 and 1779, Don Bernardo surveyed, explored, and created more than a dozen highly detailed and accurate maps of the New Mexico region. Many of his maps have survived up to the present day, but most are poorly published. Miera was the first serious cartographer resident in the colony, preceded only by Enrique Martinez, who drew the first map of the region (based on second-hand information) in 1603 for Juan de Onate. Reinhartz's review of Miera's cartographic contribution is long overdue—the first comprehensive treatment since 1957, when Carl Wheat devoted a full chapter of his five-volume *Mapping of the Transmississippi West* to Miera's maps. Then only four maps by Miera were recognized; three were variants of his Dominguez-Escalante expedition map in six manuscript copies. Today, more than a dozen have been identified, although four of those are still lost. Thus, Reinhartz's review is particularly appropriate, providing the deep context of these milestones of New Mexico cartography.

Charles Carillo's chapter on Miera's ethnographic efforts complements Reinhartz's discussion of Miera's cartography, drawing on many of the same maps and map legends. Although ethnic identities began to appear on French and Italian maps (i.e., Sanson and Coronelli) during the mid-seventeenth century, these geographic attributions were largely inaccurate, based merely on travelers' accounts, until the next century when Menchero, Escalante, and, finally, Don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco began to plot ethnic localities in New Mexico accurately, based on their own personal observations. Like his European contemporaries, Miera embellished his maps with scenic elements and pictures of the native peoples. Unlike those contemporaries, Miera's examples were based on personal observation and often accurately rendered

native clothing and implements. Carillo deciphers these ethnographic portraits, identifying their ethnic identities and comparing them with later nineteenth-century photographs. His study thus credits Don Bernardo with some of the earliest ethnographic observation in the Southwest.

Robin Farwell Gavin and Donna Pierce address an aspect of Miera's legacy often overlooked outside New Mexico: altar screens, or *retablos*, crafted by Don Bernardo, one of which still graces the sanctuary of Santa Fe's Cristo Rey Church. Miera crafted several others, including one at Zuni, surviving portions of which are now in the Smithsonian and Brooklyn Museums. As Gavin and Pierce point out, Miera probably completed several other *retablos*, in the process helping to introduce the Baroque style to New Mexico, leading to a unique New Mexican style in religious art.

William Wroth expands on the analysis presented by Gavin and Pierce, tracing Miera's influence on the distinctive santero artforms which have become so characteristic of New Mexico's religious art. Wroth persuasively contends that Miera's Old World academic style had little influence of the increasingly popular production of *santo* icons, although, undoubtedly, Miera's participation in the growth of the more classically styled *santos* among New Mexico's elite encouraged a parallel popularity among lower-class common settlers and native inhabitants. Wroth details the more regional influences which produced the florescence of this unique New Mexico tradition during the nineteenth century.

In conclusion, this volume provides a fascinating and significant contribution to the history of New Mexico by articulating the diverse endeavors of one of our state's prominent, but often overlooked, artistically and scientifically skilled citizens, Don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco. Unfortunately, the volume is somewhat marred by numerous typographical and notational flaws. More than a dozen typographical and lexical errors were encountered during this reviewer's first reading. A musket, for example, has a "barrel," not a "barrow" (p. 58). Figure numbering is incomplete and inconsistent. The first half-dozen figure are unnumbered, and an unidentified figure is referenced in chapter 1 as "Figure TK," but cannot be located. The distance from Zuni Pueblo to Isleta Pueblo is given as 50 miles instead of the more than 120-mile actual distance.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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