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### Title

Drawing Aside the Veil: A Proposal for 21st-Century Editions of the Documents of the Hispanic Southwest

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“Drawing Aside the Veil:  
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*Update: 5/27/2023; 7/12/2023*

By far the finest publication ever achieved with regard to the colonial Southwest is the series of volumes published by John L. Kessell and his collaborators at the University of New Mexico (Kessell 1989, Kessell and Hendricks 1992, Kessell et al. 1995, 1998, 2000, and 2002; see the last page of the handout). One of the virtues of their project was the decision to make the Spanish texts available to their readers, though after the first volume, the Spanish transcriptions were distributed only in the form of microfiches (Hendricks 1988, 1992, Hendricks et al. 1993), corresponding to the first three volumes of the series. The inconvenience of that format has long been notorious; in the final volume (2002:xii), the editors announce the availability of a CD containing the transcriptions of the entire project, but I understand that technical difficulties have delayed its appearance. In any case, the CD will make it a simple matter to have access to the Spanish texts of the thousands of pages of documents that the Vargas team translated. *As of this update, the CD has not been published.*

My purpose here is to make a comparison of a Vargas transcription, chosen at random, with its source. There are minor initial difficulties. The location of the various transcriptions within the microfiche collections is not indicated in the printed text, nor can one find in the transcriptions any indication of the portion of the printed text a given transcription corresponds to. But since both the transcriptions and the contents of the printed volumes follow chronological order, it requires no great effort to match transcription with translation. It will surprise those familiar with the Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies (= HSMS) microfiches tradition (followed here, cf. MacKenzie 1986) that the transcriptions follow the concordances (the contents of the second volume of microfiches [Hendricks 1992] are listed on the first page of the handout; a sample page of the concordance appears as item two on page three of the handout). *For this publication the contents of the handout have been merged with the text of the lecture while the facsimiles of the manuscripts and the transcription have been placed in the "Supplemental Material" file where they can be downloaded .*

Text chosen:

Diego de Vargas to the Conde de Galve, El Paso, 19 April 1691, L[etter] S[igned].

Original: AGNMex Historia 37, exp. 2, fols. 40r-46v (lacunary).

Contemporary Copy: AGI Guadalajara 139, fols. 14r-19v.

Transcription: Hendricks 1992:1450-1455.

Translation: Kessell and Hendricks 1992:52-56.

Contents of Hendricks 1992: 7 microfiches, 2125pp.

fiche 1:	fiche 4:
Stop list 1	“Clear” Spanish text (cont.) 963-1287
Frequency 6	
Concordance 101-312 embarazos	fiche 5:
fiche 2:	“Clear” Spanish text (cont.) 1288-1449
Concordance 313 embargo - 637 reinos	“Semipaleographic” text 1450-1612
fiche 3:	fiche 6:
Concordance 638 reincidencia - 773 zun~is	“Semipaleographic” text 1613-1937
“Clear” Spanish text 774-962	fiche 7:
	“Semipaleographic” text 1938-2125

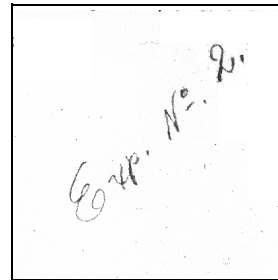
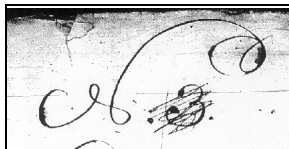
The original is badly damaged (see item 4 on page 5); the lacunae were filled from the contemporary copy (see item 5 on page 6). In the original, Vargas’ letter occupies the right-hand column; the left-columns are contain the reactions of viceregal officials to the letter. In the single-column contemporary copy, Vargas’ letter is copied continuously in full, then the official statements. The transcribers adopted the latter approach.

The transcription begins (Hendricks 1992:1450; item 1 on page 2 of the handout) with the title page of “expediente” 2 of Historia 37 (see item 3 on page 4 of the handout):

[fol. 1r]  
N<umer>o' (3)  
El Cap<ita>n' D<o>n' Juan Fer-  
nand<e>z' de la Fuente: Autos  
sobre la union de Armas  
5 de las Prov<incia>s' de Sinaloa,  
Sonora y Paso del Rio del  
Norte  
La Nuevo Mexico  
*Diego de Vargas to the Conde de Galve, El Paso,  
19 April 1691, LS.*  
[fol. 1v]  
Ex<celentisi>mo s<en~>or''  
[fol. 2r]  
Ex<celentisi>mo'' sen~or s<en~o>r' Devido rendim<ien>to'' mio es

Fol. 1r of the transcription corresponds to fol. 39r of the original.

The parentheses around the number 3 indicate that it was deleted, but not by the transcribers; the deletion was done in the original, so that in the HSMS tradition (Mackenzie 1986:14), a caret should appear after the opening parenthesis: (^3). It would have been appropriate to note the more recent numbering of this expediente, as illustrated below on the right (see item 6 on page 7 of the handout):



The phrase “La Nuevo Mexico,” which I have not seen elsewhere in exactly that form, also occurs in the text (AGNMex Hi 37 fol. 41v9-10, “de la | dicha Nuevo Mexico”/ AGI Guad139, fol. 16r5, “de la dicha Nuevo Mexico”); however, as a heading it appears not on the title page of the expediente, but on the first page of the document (fol. 40r = 2r; see item 7 on page 7 of the handout):

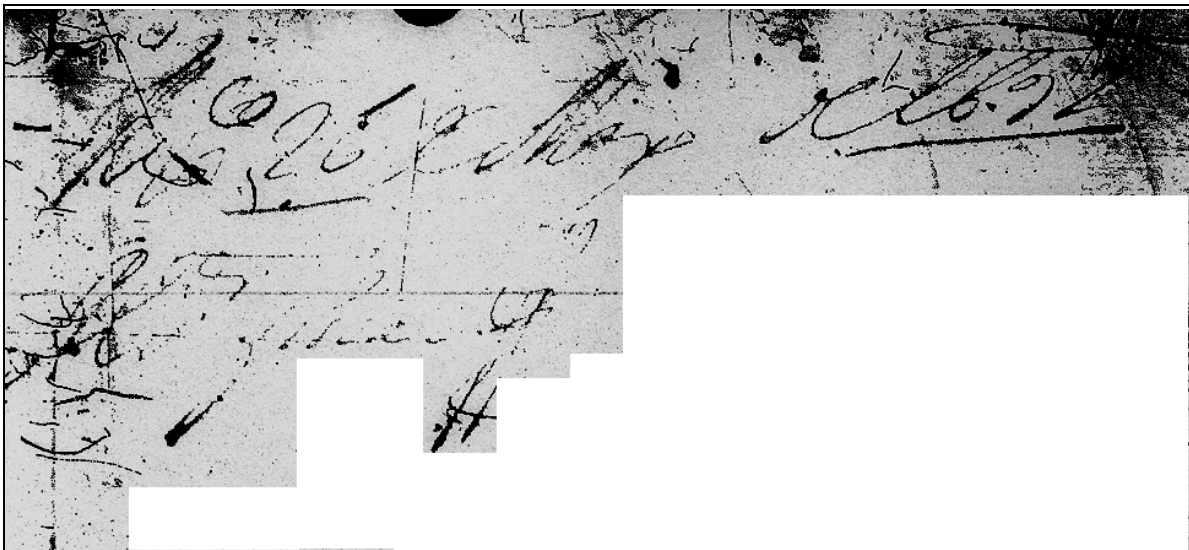


In the microfilm I used, the verso of the title page (fol. 39v = 1v) is blank, so I am surprised to see a salutation of the Viceroy transcribed there.

The document proper begins on fol. 40r = 2r. At this point, the transcribers have not reproduced some notations that appear written faintly over the heading of the letter, just readable if enhanced:

Mexico 26 de Mayo de 1691  
El señor fiscal [rubric]

Cadena



Since this material constitutes the heading of the first column, it is transcribed after Vargas' letter, exactly as in AGI Guad139, 17v10-13 (Hendricks 1992:1453, 5v8-11).

The full-page illustration of fol. 40r (item 4 on page 5 of the handout) reveals the extent of the problem presented to the transcribers by the damaged leaves of AGNMex Hi37. Wherever its text is lacunary, they used AGI Guad139, but without any overt indication of when they pass from one source to the other.

Consequently, fol. 2r1-15 of the transcription is taken entirely from AGI Guad139 fol. 14r1-20, but line 2r16 corresponds to the first line of the second column of AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40v. The latter witness is then preferred, as can be verified by the variant spellings 2r16 “misiones” as in AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb1 vs. AGI Guad139 fol. 14r21 “misiones”, 2r17 “mil” as in AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb2 vs. AGI Guad139 fol. 14r22 “mill”, 2r17 “henbras” as in AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb2 vs. AGI Guad139 fol. 14r22 “hembras”, 2r17 “Yndios” as in AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb3 vs. AGI Guad139 fol. 14r23 “indios”, 2r18 “de el” as in AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb4 vs. AGI Guad139 fol. 14r24 “del.” It then comes as a surprise that the folio break “fol. 2v” is that of AGI Guad139 rather than that of AGNMex Hi37.

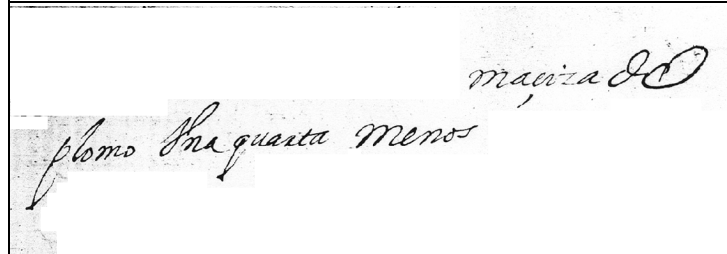
The transition from AGNMex Hi37 fol. 40vb30 to 41rb1 reads as: “[re]mitir quarenta, o si[n]- | q<sup>la</sup> arcabuzes” and the transition from AGI Guad139 fol. 14v26 to 15r1 as “Remitir | Quarenta ô Cinquenta arcabuzes.” The corresponding transcription fol. 2v | 3r “Remitir | quarenta o Cinquenta arcabuzes” reflects AGI Guad139 except for the lower-case initial letter of “quarenta,” which may be an oversight, but from the word “arcabuzes” forward, the transcription is from AGNMex Hi37. The same pattern continues, e.g., the foliation “4r” corresponds to that of AGI Guad139 fol. 16r, even though the text transcribed belongs to AGNMex Hi37.

The transcribers depart from HSMS norms by running together the lines of the manuscript, except, oddly enough, when a word is divided in the original. In that case, an explicit hyphen (i.e., not present in the original) is introduced, and the remainder of the word begins the next line of the transcription, even when the resulting line is extremely short, as in 2r15.

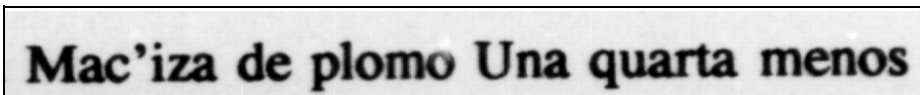
The transcription regularizes the use of u and v (against Mackenzie 1986:6); the former is exclusively vocalic and the latter exclusively consonantal. Otherwise the transcription is conservative, except that the letter h is regularly introduced as an editorial emendation “[h]” whenever modern Spanish orthography would require it in the corresponding words.

The transcription renders large letters in the original as capitals. In general this practice has no practical consequences, i.e., leads to no obvious misinterpretations. At times one finds it difficult to understand why a given letter is transcribed as a capital in one instance but as a lower-case letter in another. Compare the two word-initial m's in this passage (AGI Guad139 fol.15v1-2):

Item 8 on page  
8 of the handout



With their representation in the transcription (fol. 3v1):

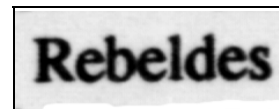
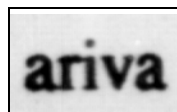
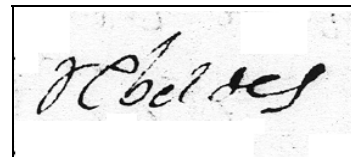
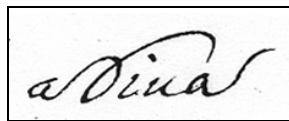


To my eye, in the original, the "m" of "menos" is larger than the "m" of "maçiza."

Once the decision has been made to imitate the large letters of a document with capitals in a transcription, one must pay special attention to small and large "r." Word initial r is obligatorily a trill in Spanish, and was traditionally spelled either with two rr's or with a large R. The fact is that these two spellings were also used word internally, so that it is crucial to recognize a large word-internal R as the equivalent of double rr.

Even with regard to mere size, I find it hard to agree with the transcribers' choices (fol. 3v3, 4r3, resp.) in the following two cases (AGI Guad139 fol. 15v4, 16v4, resp.):

Item 9 on page  
8 of the handout



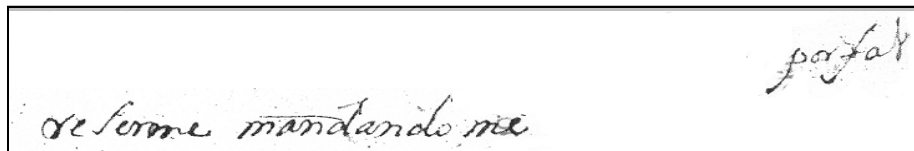
The essential fact is that the scribe wrote "aRiua" with a large "R" as a way of representing the trill in "arriba." The transcribers have failed to reflect the phonology of the original by using a single lower-case r.

The transcription records the punctuation of the original, but word division is generally modernized, with one exception: clitic pronouns are separated from the verbs they accompany. I assume departures from this practice involve oversights (fol. 4r13):

Item 10 of page  
8 of the handout

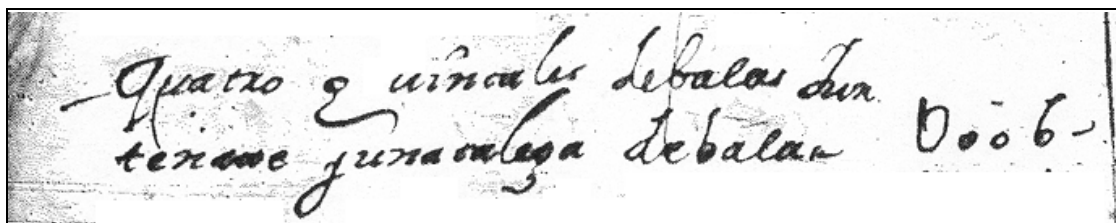
**por favoreser me mandandome**

In AGNMex Hi37 fol. 41vb21-22 the preferences for separation vs. agglutination are reversed:



de serme mandando me por favor

When more than one copy of a document was available to the transcribers, as in the present case, they took no account of variant readings. There are very few significant variants, i.e., those that suppose some actual linguistic difference in phonology, morphology, etc., as opposed to merely graphic variants, which are legion. However, one case illustrates that on occasion interesting information can be passed over. The following passage (AGNMex Hi37 fol. 41va4-5) mentions three kinds of container for bullets, presumably distinguished by size (item 14, page 11):



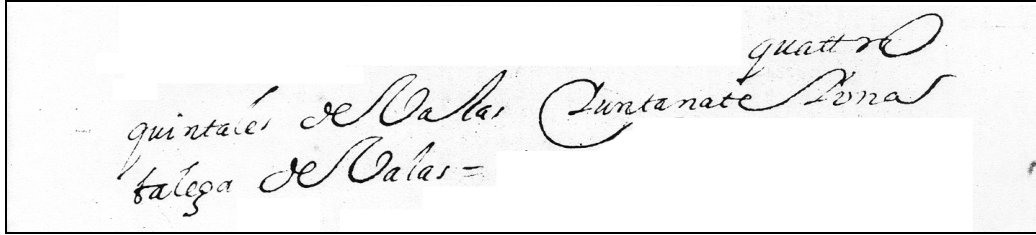
Quatro e uincales de balas de un tenante y una talega de balas 0006

This is transcribed as (fol. 7r4-5):

**5 y una talega de balas 0006** **Quatro quintales de balas Y un tenante**

It is unfortunate that the transcribers felt unable to reflect the columnar arrangement of the text being transcribed (see item 11 on page 9 of the handout). The lines have been run on as in AGI Guad 139, fols. 18v-19r, but the numerical quantities, omitted by the latter, are maintained, a good illustration of how hybrid the transcription is at this point. The large character that precedes the numbers “006” represents the number 1,000. However, in this case it is just an empty place-holder in the thousands column. The other text presents a significant variant (AGI Guad139 fol. 19r5-7):





“Tanate” is the more common form of the word, as noted by Santamaría 1959, s.v. (item 15, p. 11):

**Tanate.** (Del azt. *tanatl.*) m. Espuerta cilíndrica de hoja de palma o tule tejidos, con ciertas rugosidades en el fondo, que le permiten sentarse muy bien. Los hay de todos tamaños; sirven como vasijas y los chicos, pintados de vivos colores matizados, como adorno típico nacional. Dícese también *tenate*.

The loss of lexical information brought about by the failure to note variants in the transcription is compounded by the translation (Kessell and Hendricks 1992:56):

Item 16, p. 11 of the handout

4 quintals of bullets  
a pair of tongs and a sack of  
bullets

One can only guess that the translators understood “unas tenazas” for “un tenatte,” but the context should have alerted them to the unlikelihood of their version. “Tanate” and its variant “tenate” come from Nahuatl, with the basic meaning ‘testicles’, a meaning preserved in the Spanish loanword (Santamaría 1959, s.v.; item 17 of p. 12 of the handout):

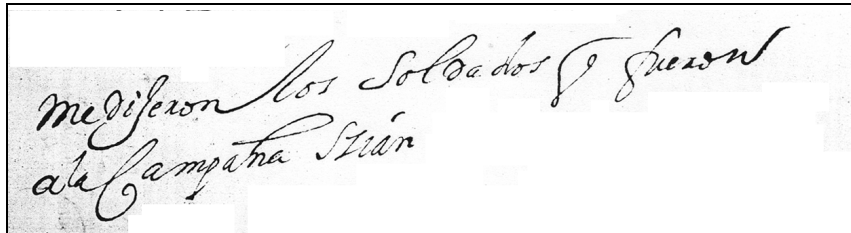
2. Por extensión, zurrón de cuero crudo y duro que se emplea en el acarreo del mineral en las labores y aun para trasportar cosas diversas.  
3. Escroto o bolsa de los testículos del toro, seca y restirada, que se usa también para echar o trasportar cosas.  
4 Generalmente, testículos.

The meaning ‘basket’ appears to involve a metaphor of the scrotum as the container of the testicles. In any case, I suppose I can speak at least for the men in the audience when I suggest that the notions of ‘testicles’ and ‘tongs’ should be kept rigorously separate. These non-existent tongs

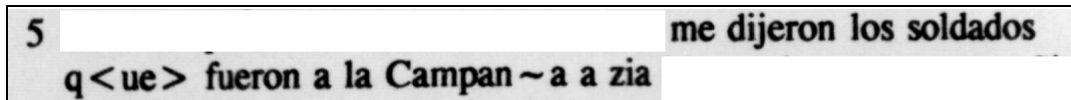
found their way into general index of the series, under the heading “Tools and hardware” (Kessell et al. 2002:426).

The HSMS tradition does not allow for tacit emendation. Consequently, I am not certain what occurred in the following instance (AGI Guad139 fol. 15v9, transcription fol. 3v5-6):

Item 18 of page  
of the handout



12



The phrase “a zia” is an interpretation rather than a transcription of the incomprehensible “szian” of the source.

In sum, though highly accurate and in themselves valuable, the transcriptions prepared by the Vargas Project team best achieve their purpose when confronted with facsimile reproductions of the source documents.