



ALLEGORY OF PALENCIA

Germán Calvo, Oil on canvas (1968)



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### TITLE: ALLEGORY OF PALENCIA

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Oil on canvas (1968)

It is divided into three parts:

**RIGHT:** On the front, a representation of the ecclesiastical sector can be seen. It was of great importance because, from the time of Sancho III of Navarre, Palencia was not ruled by a noble man, but belonged to the Bishop. Sancho III was also Count of Castile by means of his marriage with Lady Mayor. In fact, their son Ferdinand became the first king of Castile as Ferdinand I El Magno. As a consequence of all this, quarrels between the successive bishops and the town noblemen were frequent.

Palencia has always been an important bishopric and during its heyday became the biggest and wealthiest along with Toledo. The reason was that the different bishops were always related to the Castilian kings. Thus, Bishop Tello Téllez, who was King Alfonso VIII's uncle, set up the first university in Spain in 1208.

Above the priest, there are some women with a golden ribbon. King John I of Castile awarded the women of Palencia the privilege to wear a golden ribbon in reward for their heroic behaviour when troops under the orders of the Duke of Lancaster attacked the town in 1386. At that time, the men were fighting in Portugal with the King, who claimed his rights onto the Portuguese throne on the grounds of his marriage with Beatrice of Portugal.

Behind the women there is a group of soldiers. After his victory against the Arabs in the Battle of the Navas de Tolosa in 1212, King Alfonso VIII awarded the town with the two crosses that appear on its coat of arms, in gratitude to the Palentinian

soldiers who had fought on his side, including Bishop Tello Téllez himself.

It was during the reign of King Alfonso VIII when the town reached its period of greatest splendour. Both the first University and the first Council in Spain were established at that time, which made the town of Palencia an outstanding place of culture. The legend in the coat of arms of the Province, "Palencia, Arms and Science" dates back from that time.

In the background there are several buildings, cranes and factories which allude to the modern town.

**CENTRE:** A couple of Palentinians in working clothes. They represent the ordinary people performing their daily duties. The man is holding some wheat ears, allusive to the agricultural tradition of the province. A shepherd is playing the dulzaina, a typical Castilian musical instrument. There are also a few sheep, the most abundant cattle in Castile, and goats.

On the background two of the most remarkable buildings in the town: San Miguel Church, where legend has it that El Cid Campeador got married, and Puentecillas, Palencia oldest bridge.

A dry tree represents the mysticism and austerity of the Castilian landscape.

**LEFT:** Four women represented as muses of Fine Arts: Architecture, Sculpture (the one holding a statue of Our Lady of the Street, patron saint of the city), Painting and Literature. Behind, an architectural background shows the Churches of San Lázaro and Santa Marina, the Cathedral and the Town Hall. There are also two statues representing San Antolín and San Juan, the other two patron saints of the town.