

THE DEVIL AND THE IRISH KING:

DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO, THE INQUISITION AND THE
POLITICS OF DISSENT IN COLONIAL MEXICO CITY

By Andrew Philip Konove

Submitted to Professors James Krippner,
Susan Stuard and Bethel Saler
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of
History 400: Senior Thesis Seminar

19 April 2004

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Translation Note	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 The Proclamation of Independence And the Policing of Spiritual Crime in New Spain	12
Chapter 2 The Just Judgments of God: Don Guillén Lombardo's Escape From Prison and the Inquisition's Edict of Faith	34
Chapter 3 The Heretic and the Auto de Fe	53
Conclusion	69
Appendix	74
Works Cited	81

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all of the people who made this project possible. John Pollack, at the Henry Charles Lea Library of the University of Pennsylvania, helped me navigate Penn's Inquisition collection—without him I would have never discovered Don Guillén. I thank the staff of the New York Public Library's Rare Book Room for extending a warm welcome to an undergraduate researcher. At Haverford College, I am indebted to Margaret Schaus, who always responded to my vague research questions with a cart full of books, and to Rob Haley, who engaged in last-minute diplomacy on countless occasions to let me hold on to borrowed sources. I am also incredibly grateful for Israel Burshatin's help in deciphering some of the Inquisition's most peculiar language. Of course, I could not have completed this thesis without the guidance of my Haverford history professors. James Krippner, Susan Stuard and Bethel Saler have provided invaluable insight throughout the process. I owe a special thanks to Lisa Jane Graham, who sparked my interest in history four years ago and has been there for me ever since. Lastly, I thank my parents for giving me so many opportunities and for supporting all of my endeavors.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this thesis are my own. In transcribing seventeenth-century Inquisition documents, I have modernized spelling, capitalization and punctuation in some places in order to clarify meaning. However, in most instances, I have tried to maintain the records' original language in order to give the reader direct contact with the source material.

When I received help with translations, it came from Professor Israel Burshatin. I appreciate and admire his knack for unraveling the complicated syntax of Early Modern Castilian.

INTRODUCTION

WILLIAM LAMPORT AND DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO DE GUZMÁN

On 26 October 1642 Captain Felipe Méndez Ortiz denounced his neighbor to the Tribunal of the Holy Office in Mexico City, claiming that the man was planning to name himself viceroy of the colony and declare independence from Spain. Méndez told the Inquisitors that Don Guillén Lombardo, an Irishman living in Mexico, had informed Méndez of his intentions to rise up against the colonial government and liberate the oppressed blacks, Indians and *mestizos* of New Spain.¹ Don Guillén had shown Méndez a five-page letter he received from the Duke of Braganza, the King of Portugal, as well as letters to the Pope and the King of France in which Don Guillén expressed his loyalty to the Catholic faith and sought assistance for his rebellion. There was also a long letter to King Philip IV, asking that he remove the current viceroy, the Marqués de Villena, because he was “unfaithful” and showed “little loyalty” to the crown.² Under normal circumstances, these crimes of sedition would have fallen under the jurisdiction of the secular authorities, but the nature of his offenses warranted an inquisitional hearing.

¹ Luis González Obregón, *D. Guillén de Lampart: La Inquisición y la independencia en el siglo XVII* (Mexico City: Librería de la Vda de C. Bouret, 1908), pp. 73 and 81. The source of the author’s information is often unclear. Given the number of direct quotations he provides from Don Guillén’s testimony and writings, we know that he read some or all of the Inquisition’s records for the case—located in Mexico City and Madrid—though he does not always reveal the archives or the specific documents from which he draws his quotations.

² *Ibid.*, p. 83. Here González Obregón is quoting Don Guillén’s words, as recorded in the *Causa contra D. Guillén de Lampart*, found in vols. 21 and 22 of the Inquisition manuscript collection of Mexico’s Museo Nacional. These documents may have been relocated to the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City since the original publication of González Obregón’s book.

Méndez reported that he had seen the Irishman give the mind-altering drug peyote to an Indian friend, at which point the devil began speaking through the Indian, encouraging Don Guillén to persist in his scheme and assuring him victory. Furthermore, Don Guillén had consulted an Indian astrologer in order to predict the outcome of his rebellion.³ The denunciation was sufficient for the Inquisitors: Don Guillén had committed spiritual as well as political crimes. At ten thirty that same evening, the constable of the Holy Office went to the Irishman's home and took him to jail.

Don Guillén Lombardo de Guzmán was born as William Lamport between 1611 and 1615 in Wexford town, Ireland.⁴ He came from a Catholic Old English family that had originally emigrated to Ireland in the twelfth century.⁵ He was, according to the testimony he gave before the Mexican Inquisition, descended from the finest Irish blood—from a family that had been loyally Catholic for over 1200 years.⁶ In 1628 he went to study in London, where he learned mathematics and Ancient Greek with a “heretic teacher.”⁷ At age eleven or twelve, Lamport wrote a pamphlet that criticized the English king⁸ and was subsequently forced to flee the British Isles. He spent the next few years aboard a pirate ship in the seas off Western Europe and then landed in Santiago de Galicia, Spain, where he studied “philosophy and other arts” at St. Patrick’s College.⁹

Around this time, he hispanicized his name to Guillén Lombardo de Guzmán, adding the

³ Ibid., p. 84.

⁴ See Fabio Troncarelli, *La Spada e la Croce: Guillén Lombardo e L’Inquisizione in Messico* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1999), p. 152.

⁵ Fabio Troncarelli, “The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro: William Lamport of Wexford” *History Ireland* 9:3 (2001), p. 22.

⁶ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 100.

⁷ Rodrigo Ruiz de Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...* (Mexico City: La Imprenta del Secreto del Santo Officio, 1660), p. 107. Note: the edition I used for this research did not have page numbers. I have added them for the purpose of more accurate citation. Page 1 falls on the first printed page of the book.

⁸ This could have been either King James I or King Charles I.

⁹ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, loc. cit. See also Troncarelli, “The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro,” loc. cit. Zepeda Martínez’s *relación* refers to this institution as the “School for Noble Sons,” while Troncarelli identifies it as St. Patrick’s College.

second last name as a symbol of gratitude to his patron, Gaspar de Guzmán, the Count Duke of Olivares.¹⁰ The Inquisition generally referred to the Irishman as Don Guillén Lombardo in their edicts and records, and I will use the same name in this thesis.

The Irishman drew the attention of Olivares and ultimately King Philip IV when he miraculously converted 250 heretic sailors who had docked in La Coruña, Galicia. This feat secured Don Guillén a position in Spanish royal court society. He continued his studies at the universities in Salamanca, El Escorial and Madrid and rose to the rank of captain in the Spanish army. He fought against Protestant Swedish troops at Nordlingen (1634) and against the French at Fuenterrabia (1638). Known as a skilled swordsman and a ladies' man, the short, red-haired Irishman had his portrait painted by both Peter Paul Rubens and Anton Van Dyck in 1634-1635 (see appendix, fig. 2).¹¹ In 1640 Don Guillén left Spain for Mexico as part of the entourage of the new viceroy, known as the Marqués de Villena or the Duque de Escalona, and the Visitor General of Inquisition,¹² Juan de Palafox. Olivares's reasons for asking Don Guillén to travel to Mexico, and the nature of the Irishman's activities there, are not clear. The 1660 *relación* or chronicle written by the Inquisition's attorney, Rodrigo Ruiz de Zepeda Martínez, reveals little about how the Irishman ended up in the New World, not even mentioning that he came over with Villena and Palafox. From that document, we cannot determine how much the Inquisitors knew or believed about the prisoner's royal connections; in the printed evidence they left behind, they inform their audience that Don Guillén was a fraud, that

¹⁰ See González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 66.

¹¹ See Troncarelli, *La Spada e La Croce*, Illustrazione I.

¹² Seymour Liebman describes this position as a "one-man government investigating committee" for the Inquisition. See *Jews and the Inquisition of Mexico: The Great Auto de Fe of 1649* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1974), p. 6.

he could not possibly have known the places and events of which he spoke, and that he was a dangerous heretic.

DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO AND HISTORY

This thesis uses the case of Don Guillén Lombardo to probe the historical proceedings of the Inquisition in seventeenth-century Mexico. As a microhistory, it follows in the tradition of the Italian historians who in the 1970's, led by Carlo Ginzburg and Giovanni Levi, began publishing social histories that placed individuals at the center of their analyses. Jacques Revel notes that in these works, the “individual is not conceptualized as antithetical to the social: the hope was to achieve a new angle of vision by following the thread of a particular destiny.”¹³ This approach to writing history attempts to reveal the “complex tangle of relations in which that [individual's] destiny became involved;”¹⁴ it ties the life of the extraordinary, though often obscure, character into larger historical patterns. Inquisition documents and criminal records that contain the testimonies of the accused provide historians with access to the voices of individual actors; they allow us to use their language “to point the way toward broader and deeper inquiry aimed at the construction of multiple, malleable social entities.”¹⁵ Studying the life and trial of Don Guillén Lombardo in the context of the Baroque European and Mexican cultures in which he lived sheds light on colonial mechanisms of social control and popular dissent.

¹³ Jacques Revel, “Microanalysis and the Construction of the Social,” *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: The New Press, 1995), p. 496.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

In researching this thesis, I was not able to read any of the original Inquisition records for the case of Don Guillén Lombardo. The edict of faith and the relation are both Inquisition documents *about* Don Guillén, but do not represent the actual proceedings of the Tribunal. Furthermore, I have relied on nineteenth and early twentieth-century “histories” of Don Guillén Lombardo to piece together his life story and extract examples of his written and oral testimonies. While Rodrigo Ruiz de Zepeda Martínez’s 1660 *relación* includes a number of quotations from the infamous heretic, we can only read the Don Guillén’s words through the Inquisition’s interpretation of them. This problem points to a broader issue regarding the use of Inquisition records as historical evidence: the information we gather from these documents has been “rethought and reshaped according to the preoccupations and mental “filters” of the judges.”¹⁶ Transcriptions of prisoners’ testimonies and written work provide historians with access to the ideas and beliefs of individual actors, but we should keep in mind that an inquisitional hand was responsible for preserving that evidence.

Despite their deficiencies, Inquisition records can be invaluable resources for the social or cultural historian. Recognizing their blind spots and assumptions allows us to tease other information from them. Carlo Ginzburg’s work in the Italian Inquisition archives, particularly his ability to find quirky and exceptional characters in the institutional records and extract broader significance from their stories, provides a model for interpreting the case of Don Guillén Lombardo. In many ways, the Irish “heretic” rebel reminds us of Menocchio, Ginzburg’s Friulian miller. Both believed they were

¹⁶ John Pierre Dedieu, “The Archives of the Holy Office of Toledo as a Source for Historical Anthropology,” trans. E.W. Monter, *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods*, eds. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi in association with Charles Amiel (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1986), p. 168.

devout Catholics, yet denied the authority of established religious doctrine and institutions. A witness in Menocchio's trial, speaking of the accused, remarked: "What popes! What prelates! What priests!...He simply did not believe in these people."¹⁷ Nearly one hundred years later, thousands of miles away, Don Guillén asserted that Christ had only given power to popes in the spiritual world and that they had no legitimate authority in the temporal.¹⁸ Both men developed idiosyncratic interpretations of religion, which they eagerly practiced and disseminated, but neither recognized that he had diverged from orthodox Catholicism.

Yet the meaningful connection between the two characters grows from Ginzburg's belief that Menocchio's cosmos was a fuzzy, intermediate zone between oral and print cultures. The convergence of the spoken and written worlds helped the miller to synthesize ideas and practices into his unique form of Christianity. In the case of Saccardino, the jester, distiller and imposter whom the Italian Inquisition burned at the stake for defiling holy images, Ginzburg provides another fascinating example of a religious deviant who served as a cultural intermediary. He bridged the gap between "court and *piazza*" by printing pamphlets about the deception of doctors and contemporary medicine, and by teaching people that religion "was pure fakery"—using his relatively high level of education to foster dissent among popular groups.¹⁹ Saccardino's blending of oral and print cultures also enabled a collage of learned and popular language, knowledge and concerns; he was able to speak to the people while threatening the authorities by using "elite" methods of communication.

¹⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 4.

¹⁸ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee*, p. 117.

¹⁹ Carlo Ginzburg, "The Dovecote Has Opened its Eyes: Popular Conspiracy in Italy," trans. J. Tedeschi and Erdmut Lerner, in Henningsen and Tedeschi, *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 92-93.

The concept of the religious criminal as a “go-between”²⁰ guides our attempts to unravel the case of Don Guillén. The complexity of the crimes Menocchio, Saccardino and Don Guillén committed made them threatening to authorities; they all resisted classification into the existing categories of spiritual crime. Situated at the friction points between “high” and “low” culture, the individuals Ginzburg researched were dangerous because they confounded the Inquisitors. Don Guillén Lombardo brought to New Spain the elite culture of Early Modern Europe—including a reservoir of classical and Renaissance knowledge and a burning desire to write—and he used it to subvert royal and religious authorities in a colonial context. Through Don Guillén, this culture collided with Amerindian practices and grievances to produce his plan for Mexican emancipation. He used the kind of public, “ephemeral” writing²¹ that was emerging in Europe to criticize the Inquisition and mobilize the residents of Mexico City. Don Guillén was testing European ideologies and forms of expression in the virgin land of the Americas; he was also exploiting the new spaces for interpretation and resistance that Colonial Mexican society was continuously opening.

As defined by Walter Mignolo, these are “the spaces in between produced by colonization as location and energy of new modes of thinking whose strength lies in the transformation and critique of the ‘authenticities’ of both Western and Amerindian legacies.”²² The borders between old and new, between European, *negro*, and Indian were “often porous, permeable, and flexible—[they move] and can be moved.”²³ The

²⁰ See Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: the Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 22-23.

²¹ See Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. Linda G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987).

²² Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. xv.

²³ Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, p. 23.

absence of fixed boundaries separating these groups allowed the “in between” spaces to flourish and complicated the Spanish Crown’s project of forging “one soul and...body unified in a community of historic destiny.”²⁴ These gaps are the moments when power relations can be temporarily reversed—when authorities cannot enforce their laws or when their power loses its legitimacy in the eyes of their subjects.

Don Guillén’s case points to three colonial gaps: first, the Inquisition lacked the manpower to police religious practices in the Americas and suffered from bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption. Second, the Inquisition confronted both Old and New World forms of heterodoxy in Mexico; its agents needed to understand and control indigenous beliefs as well as more traditional heresies that colonists were importing from Europe. These practices often blended together in New Spain, producing hybrid forms of religious deviance that resisted categorization. Finally, the inquisitorial authorities relied on outdated or inappropriate language to express their power. They communicated their expectations through ecclesiastical Spanish, unintelligible to millions of Amerindians and uneducated colonists (though authorities also encountered the problem of linguistic diversity in Europe). Perhaps more importantly, the Inquisition’s categories of religious dissent no longer made sense in a place where heterodoxy was more routine; overt, organized heresy was less prevalent than subtler, more everyday forms of resistance.²⁵ Don Guillén, though labeled a heretic, defied traditional definitions of the term and repeatedly and publicly proclaimed his Catholicism; he took advantage of the gaps the

²⁴ Louis Cardailiac, “Vision simplificatrice des groupes marginaux par le groupe dominant dans l’Espagne des XVI et XVII siècles,” in Augustin Redondo, *Les Problèmes de l’exclusion en Espagne, XVI-XVII siècles* (Paris, 1983), p. 12. Quoted in Deborah Root, “Speaking Christian: Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth-Century Spain,” *Representations* 23 (1988), p. 122.

²⁵ See Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México 1571-1700* (Mexico City.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), pp. 170-71. I will discuss the differences between Old and New World heresies at greater length in Chapter 3.

Mexican Inquisition left open and enlarged them by exerting pressure on its disciplinary categories.

This thesis will examine Don Guillén Lombardo's case in the context of religious crime and policing in seventeenth century Mexico—looking at the nature of his offenses, the ways in which he perpetrated them and the patterned responses of the Inquisition. My primary purpose is not to reconstruct the life of this eccentric personality, as Troncarelli has done in *La Spada e la Croce*. Nor will I attempt to prove that Don Guillén's experience represented common trends or practices of his time. His story is intriguing precisely because he was an anomaly; his ideas represent a syncretization of European thought and American experiences and are not themselves indicative of major currents in popular culture.

Investigating his life and Inquisition case does, however, highlight some distinguishing features of Colonial Spanish American society. Don Guillén's plan to sever Mexico's ties with Spain had a distinctly New World flavor in its designs: it sought to join nearly every segment of the Colonial population in rebellion against the crown, 150 years before Creole revolutionaries executed a strikingly similar plot. He proposed to "unite Creoles, Indians, *mestizos*, the middle classes, the army, royal officials, the Church, and all of Spain's enemies, whether internal or external, into a solid group."²⁶ In an independent Mexico, he would create a society where people lived in religious purity, where evangelical justice replaced the Inquisition as law, and where blacks and Indians could pursue the same offices as whites.²⁷ We cannot say when or where Don Guillén began to devise his utopia, but its characteristics suggest that it grew out of a fusion

²⁶ Henry Brenner, "The Auto de Fe of 1659 and Don Guillen Lombardo de Guzman" (Masters thesis, University of Texas, 1961), p. 72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

between the ideas he developed from his European schooling and his experiences in the New World. A seed that may have been planted and fertilized in Europe was allowed to flower in Baroque Mexico. While the ambiguities and gaps of colonial society helped produce the Irishman's ideas (and were simultaneously widened by his actions), the political environment and the nature of the inquisitional institution during the mid-seventeenth century also played vital roles in both Don Guillén's attempt to foment rebellion and in the authorities' responses to that threat. In order to grasp the slippery dynamics of colonial culture, we must begin by fleshing out the political and religious contexts in which they took place.

The first chapter of this thesis situates the Inquisition proceedings of Don Guillén Lombardo in the context of the political upheaval and social turmoil that plagued Spain and its dependencies in the mid-seventeenth century. It will then examine Don Guillén's "Proclamation of Independence" and the charges the Mexican Inquisition leveled against him for his alleged crimes against the Christian faith. In the second chapter, I discuss Don Guillén's escape from prison, when he posted placards around Mexico City that asserted his identity as a pious Catholic and lambasted the Inquisition for its unjust practices. The chapter also examines the broadsides—which were both read aloud and nailed to Church doors—that the Inquisition used to warn the public about the dangers Don Guillén posed. Much of the analysis this chapter draws from the content and language of one of these edicts—issued on 31 December 1650 to encourage public denunciations of the escaped criminal. I also utilize a transcription of one of Don Guillén's placards, which a nineteenth-century Mexican historian has included in his "historical novel" about the life of the Irish "heretic." The third and final chapter of the

thesis relates the story of Don Guillén's final years in prison, when he penned 918 Latin psalms on his bed sheets and developed an increasingly powerful hatred for the Inquisition and Catholic clerical society. I trace the authorities' gradual construction of Don Guillén as a "heretic" to his appearance in the 1659 *auto de fe* (act of faith) and subsequent "relaxation" to the secular arm of the Spanish state. The latter part of the chapter looks at the ritual of the *auto de fe* and the printed *relación* (relation, or chronicle) that followed the event, focusing on the machinery of colonial power and the serious limitations it encountered in New Spain. In this analysis, I use the Inquisition's *relación*, printed in 1660, particularly from the sections that address the Irishman directly. I also utilize Gabriel Méndez Plancarte's edited collection of Don Guillén's psalms. Although this work does not include the entirety of the prisoner's writings, it gives a taste of his language and his visions for reforming society.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE POLICING OF SPIRITUAL CRIME IN NEW SPAIN

SPAIN AND THE SPANISH DEPENDENCIES IN 1640

The Count Duke of Olivares called the year in which Guillén Lombardo arrived in Mexico, “the most unfortunate this monarchy has ever experienced.”²⁸ The political and economic troubles of the empire that had been mounting over the previous decades reached a boiling point in 1640. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Spanish American economy was no longer expanding; the Spanish had not improved the inefficient mining techniques Indian and African slave laborers used in Mexico and Peru, while the colonists grew self-sufficient, relying less on European imports for basic goods and stifling trans-Atlantic trade. Rampant inflation in Spain and labor shortages in Castile and the Americas, both suffering from depopulation, made the situation worse.²⁹ While the entire empire faced the consequences of declining trade and profits, the problem was particularly acute in New Spain: the diminishing Indian population and the exhaustion of mineral resources left its trade-based economy at a standstill. Spanish ships carried so little silver back from the Americas in the late 1630’s that in 1639 “the

²⁸ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716* (New York: Meridian, 1963), p. 343.

²⁹ John Lynch, *Spain Under the Habsburgs* vol. II (New York: New York University Press, 1981), p. 203.

fleet to New Spain was cancelled in order to concentrate available resources on that to Tierra Firme [Peru].”³⁰

As Spain was reeling from economic decline, the empire lost its political integrity. In May 1640 peasants and casual laborers revolted in Catalonia, quickly infiltrating Barcelona and triggering a wave of mass violence.³¹ In December, the Portuguese nobility followed suit, with the Duke of Braganza proclaiming himself King John IV of an independent Portugal.³² While the revolt of the Catalans threatened the political cohesion of the Iberian kingdoms, Portugal’s secession presented more serious problems. Spain could hardly afford to lose the economic contribution of a country with an overseas empire and Atlantic colonies.³³ To outsiders, these revolts “suggested that the Spanish monarchy was on the verge of dissolution and gave corresponding encouragement to Spain’s enemies.”³⁴

The events taking shape on the Iberian Peninsula had visible and profound effects on Mexican society. After word of the Portuguese revolt reached the colony in the spring of 1641, the relationship between the Spanish and Portuguese populations grew tenuous.³⁵ Spaniards had long associated the Portuguese with crypto-Judaism, often failing to recognize the difference between Portuguese New Christians (converted Jews), of which there were a fair number in Mexico, and Portuguese Old Christians.³⁶ In 1642, under the guidance of Juan de Palafox, who served for a brief period in 1642 as Visitor General of

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 205-207. Lynch notes that private receipts of American silver totaled 25.7 million pesos from 1616-20, while they amounted to only 11.6 million from 1636-40.

³¹ Ibid., p. 113.

³² Ibid., p. 123.

³³ Ibid., p. 117.

³⁴ J.H. Elliott, *Spain and its World 1500-1700: Selected Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 131.

³⁵ J.I. Israel, *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico 1610-1670* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 210.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 124.

the Mexican Inquisition and viceroy of New Spain, the Inquisition uncovered the “Great Conspiracy” of Portuguese crypto-Jews. Over the next four years, the Holy Office prosecuted about 150 Jews for their deviant practices.³⁷ Spain’s political and economic troubles at home kindled xenophobic sentiments abroad, providing support for the Inquisition’s rejuvenated attempts to secure spiritual and moral uniformity in Mexico.

The aggressive activity of the Mexican Inquisition that began in the early 1640’s marked a significant change from the previous decades. Solange Alberro notes that between 1610 and 1630 the Inquisitors handled a generally steady caseload, but that most of the cases focused on accusations of witchcraft and other, more minor offenses. During this period, the Tribunal relied mostly on denunciations from the populace, taking a passive approach in its investigation of religious crimes. The decade of 1630-1640 saw a steep decline in the number of cases, which Alberro does not fully explain, but was followed by approximately twenty years of the most vigorous inquisitional activity in the Mexican institution’s history.³⁸

The complacency that Alberro detects in the attitude of the Holy Office during the first half of the seventeenth century might have been related to the difficulty of the task with which it was charged. Whereas Spain had a different tribunal for each region, the Mexican Inquisition’s jurisdiction stretched from New Spain north to the present-day southwestern United States, south through what is now Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua and even included the Philippines (see area map; appendix, fig. 1).³⁹ The region’s rugged terrain and sparse population only complicated the institution’s

³⁷ Israel, p. 214.

³⁸ Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, pp. 148-51. Note also Gráfica I, which plots the number of proceedings by the year in which they occurred.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

mission. The Mexican Inquisition, located in the capital, consisted of only two Inquisitors, a *fiscal* or prosecutor, a notary, and a warden—a smaller staff than that of many Spanish tribunals.⁴⁰ The Inquisitors appointed *comisarios* (representatives, usually parish priests) charged with reporting suspicious activity in the rural villages, and *familiares*, ordinary citizens who spied for the Holy Office. But these agents were not professionally trained as inquisitors and their effectiveness was often hampered by poor communication and local politics.⁴¹ Furthermore, the Inquisition had no jurisdiction over the Indians, who comprised a significant percentage of the population.

The limitations the Mexican Inquisition faced point to the broader challenges of governance in the Americas. The colonial bureaucracy was “ponderous and inefficient.”⁴² Communication between Mexico City and Madrid was extremely slow, as ships sailed between Spain and the colony only once a year for most of the colonial period. Their physical distance from the Crown provided colonial authorities with semi-autonomy, prompting the expression, *Obedezco pero no cumplo* (I obey but do not comply); both the Inquisition and the secular authorities, though ostensibly subservient to the government in Madrid, tended to make their own decisions. The administration suffered from endemic corruption and guilty officials rarely received punishments that corresponded with their crimes.⁴³

Don Guillén, who worked as a surveyor for the colonial administration when he arrived in Mexico, understood the bureaucracy’s shortcomings; he also knew that the

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

⁴¹ Linda A. Curcio-Nagy, “Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico,” *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 168.

⁴² Michael C. Meyer, William L. Sherman and Susan M. Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 147.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 147-48.

Spanish state was in dire fiscal and political positions and planned his rebellion to take advantage of this instability. Yet the same volatility that Don Guillén planned to exploit also energized religious authorities to squelch the practices of Jews, heretics and other non-conformers living in Mexico. The Inquisition he faced was not only more active than it had been in previous years; it was also more potent. Palafox, as the *Visitador General* and a religious figure who enjoyed wide popular support among Spaniards in Mexico, represented a more socially and politically puritanical face of Spanish authority. While Church and state had always been intimately connected in Iberian politics, Palafox wove the agendas of the two institutions into an almost singular project; “In his mind, religion and politics, morality and administration were all closely linked.”⁴⁴ Like Machiavelli, he sought to maximize the effectiveness of the state. Yet Palafox believed one could accomplish this goal only by maintaining a seamless Christian society. “A kingdom without virtue,” he claimed, “is like a body without blood.”⁴⁵ As the Spanish world was teetering on the edge of collapse, the state was being reinvented and reinvigorated in Mexico.

One of the central tasks in that effort was to close the “spaces” that had opened under the past half-century of casual religious enforcement—which meant monitoring, categorizing, prosecuting and removing all signs of moral or spiritual heterodoxy in the colony. The ethnic diversity of colonial society, however, made realizing that project difficult. In 1650, when Mexico’s population was near its lowest point (1.7 million), the colony had 1.3 million Indians; 185,000 whites (14,000 European-born settlers and 171,000 Creoles); 116,000 mulattoes (offspring of white and black parents); 109,000

⁴⁴ Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 201.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

mestizos (persons of mixed white and Indian heritage); and 35,000 blacks.⁴⁶ The number of non-Spanish Europeans living in Mexico—mainly Portuguese, Italians, Frenchmen and a handful of Irishmen—probably did not exceed 2,000 in the seventeenth century, but nonetheless added to the problems religious and secular authorities encountered.⁴⁷ The colonial officials had to enact laws that people from these disparate backgrounds would understand and obey—a task that demanded more manpower than the colonial government possessed.

KING OF AMERICA AND EMPEROR OF THE MEXICANS: UTOPIA AND THE INQUISITION

When Felipe Méndez denounced Don Guillén on 25 October 1642, he told the Inquisitors that his first instincts were to “clutch his dagger and kill” the Irishman for conspiring to depose the king. Méndez’s testimony suggested to the Inquisitors that Don Guillén had committed political, spiritual and moral crimes, the most devious and calculating of which was his plan to overthrow the viceroy of New Spain and declare independence from Spain—naming himself as the Marqués de Cropani, monarch of the new state. The Inquisition’s interpretation of this scheme, which early twentieth century Mexican historian José Toribio Medina has transcribed for us, asserts that as viceroy—or “emperor”—of Mexico, Don Guillén would discontinue all commercial and political relations with Madrid, establish formal trade with France, Holland, Portugal and other

⁴⁶ Mark A. Burkholder with Suzanne Hiles, “An Empire Beyond Compare,” in Meyer and Beezley, *The Course of Mexican History*, p. 125.

⁴⁷ Israel, *Race, Class and Politics*, p. 117.

European states and provide freedom and equal opportunities to blacks and Indians.⁴⁸ It was a call for radical social change in Spanish America. Don Guillén would eliminate taxes and tributes from the lower classes and abolish the Inquisition, setting its prisoners free.⁴⁹ According to Méndez, his neighbor believed that the only man who had the right to be king of New Spain was the one the natives elected.⁵⁰ He saw himself completing a “divine mission” of defending the weak, supplanting the powerful, and creating a society governed by Evangelical justice and religious purity.⁵¹

Parts of the plan, however, were contradictory: he sought to end the caste system and institutionalized oppression that kept blacks, *mestizos* and Indians mired in poverty, but also claimed that he would “reward” descendents of the conquistadors and promote many of the officials appointed by King Philip IV.⁵² He wanted to revolutionize colonial society, but only selectively; his egalitarian vision remained framed by an instinctive attachment to hierarchy. This tactic probably stemmed from his desire to unite the entire colonial population against the Crown and the Inquisition. Although we have little evidence he was able to rally any support for the rebellion,⁵³ his plot, and the dangerous ideas that spawned it, threatened religious and secular authorities. It grew out of the encounter between Old World ideas and New World experiences and openly challenged the state’s dual project of political and spiritual homogenization.

⁴⁸ José Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México* (Mexico City.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1991), pp. 327-28.

⁴⁹ Henry Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” pp. 70-71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵¹ Luis González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 66. See also Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 117.

⁵² Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 70.

⁵³ We know that Don Guillén had talked to an Indian friend about summoning 300 Indian archers and a number of foot soldiers for the rebel army, but the Inquisition’s documents do not indicate whether there was any chance the request would be fulfilled. See Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 71.

While the details of Don Guillén’s vision were new and disturbing to religious authorities in Mexico, the concept of an idealized society in the Americas was far from novel in the seventeenth century. Europe’s discovery of the American continent opened the door to a wide spectrum of Renaissance-era utopias. Sixteenth and seventeenth-century writers, inspired by the rebirth of classical knowledge and expansion of humanist thinking in Europe, superimposed ideal worlds on imaginary locations in or around the New World. The inhabitants of distant, tropical islands overcame the social ills that plagued Europe, and did so predominantly through the practice of a purer Christian faith. As one scholar commented, “The perfect moral commonwealth rested on a vision of a society perfected by the perfect moral and social performance of its members; the flaws of an imperfect society would be overcome by Christian moral renewal.”⁵⁴ On both sides of the Reformation divide, there existed a widespread desire for a “more godly community.”⁵⁵ The appearance of the New World on European maps helped inspire this literature, but some writers, particularly by the seventeenth century, did not see America itself as a utopian landscape. In Francis Bacon’s unfinished work, *New Atlantis*, published posthumously in 1626, “the great Atlantis (which you call America)” is a kingdom in decline; while it once “abounded...in tall ships,” it now has but “junks and canoes.”⁵⁶ In his book, *New Atlantis* is the *new* New World, a land whose inhabitants “marvel...not at the thin population of America, nor at the rudeness and ignorance of the people.”⁵⁷ Such literature reflects the bleaker seventeenth-century views of society that

⁵⁴ J.C. Davis, “Utopia in the New World, 1500-1700,” *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*, eds. Roland Schaer, Gregory Claeys, and Lyman Tower Sargent (New York: The New York Public Library/Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵⁶ Francis Bacon, *The Essays: “The Wisdom of the Ancients;” “New Atlantis”* (New York: Cassell and Company, Ltd, 1908), p. 302.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

contrast the optimism of the sixteenth-century Renaissance. To the baroque eye, America was starting to look less and less ideal.

This disillusionment, however, had not always characterized European views of colonial society. Mexico, in particular, provided the site of well-known utopian experiments. Vasco de Quiroga, the first bishop of Michoacán (1538-65), had “beautiful hopes for New Spain;”⁵⁸ he attempted to establish a “new social order” in Michoacán, under which the Purhépecha Indians would adhere to strict moral and religious norms.⁵⁹ To Don Vasco, the indigenous people were “morally superior to [the] corrupt and greedy Europeans,” but needed the guidance of an imposed Christian “order”⁶⁰ to control their unruly tendencies. He designed and implemented a Mexican micro-society that sought to recreate Catholicism as a purer, more compassionate religion—one that relied on “tough-love” to maintain the population’s moral and spiritual health.

Thus, Europeans could test emerging theories about religion and social organization in New Spain. Don Guillén Lombardo’s plan, bizarre and seemingly impossible as it was, was not unique in its ambition to correct European societal ills by building a model civilization in the New World. In Mexico, Don Guillén might have discovered the full extent of Spain’s imperial excesses and institutionalized corruption; he also witnessed first-hand the effects of its repressive policies toward Indian and African laborers. When Don Guillén was a surveyor in the Taxco region, the Indian mine workers complained to him that their Spanish overseers were abusing them. Upon returning to the capital, the Irishman reported that the colonial government needed to

⁵⁸ James Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest: Power, Politics, and the History of Early Colonial Michoacán, Mexico, 1521-1565* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 75.

⁵⁹ Bernadino Verástique, *Michoacán and Eden: Vasco de Quiroga and the Evangelization of Western Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), p. 134.

⁶⁰ Krippner-Martínez, *Rereading the Conquest*, p. 76.

create “a more equitable division of land which would benefit not only the king but small landowners as well.”⁶¹ Mexico was a place where the flaws of European civilization were painfully apparent, particularly by the mid-seventeenth century, but was also a territory of expanding possibilities. While Europe experienced violent political revolts (Catalonia in 1640), civil wars (England, beginning in 1639), and wars between nation-states (The Thirty Years War, from 1618 to 1648) during the first half of the seventeenth century, American society was comparatively peaceful. For Don Guillén and other idealistic colonists, social change in the Americas was as feasible as it was necessary.

We know less about Don Guillén’s plans to build a devoutly Catholic Mexico than we do about his desire to eliminate the province’s racial hierarchy. When the Inquisition ordered his arrest in 1642, they demanded to see everything he had written. They found letters addressed to the Viceroy and the Spanish monarch, forged decrees from foreign kings allegedly supporting Don Guillén’s rebellion, and “instructions” for the conspiracy to overthrow the Spanish government.⁶² Don Guillén had drafted a “Proclamation of Independence” in which he outlined the design of the new Mexican society—a social order that promised equal rights to all of the nation’s inhabitants. This striking statement of “*la igualdad de oportunidades*” (equal opportunity) asserted the preeminence of natural rights and the fundamental capacity of all human beings:

*Lo trece: lo mesmo de los demás géneros de gente, de cualquier calidad o condición que sea, sin que en adelante haya desigualdad en lo tocante a ser capaz del premio merecido en ninguno, como hemos dicho, pues todos son libres y hijos de sus hazañas en adelante y capaces en lo eclesiastico como en lo secular y milicia, como los españoles.*⁶³

⁶¹ See Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” pp. 62 and 71.

⁶² González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 75.

⁶³ Transcription located in Gabriel Méndez Plancarte, *Don Guillén de Lámport y su “Regio Salterio”*—MS. latino inédito de 1655 (Mexico City.: Ábside, 1948), p. 101.

The thirteen[th]: the same as the other sorts of people, regardless of quality or status, so that in the future there will not be inequality with regard to the reward that everyone deserves, as we have said, since from now on all [men] are free and are the sons of their own deeds and capable [eligible] [to join] Church, secular [professions], or the militia, just as the Spaniards.⁶⁴

All people, regardless of class, gender or social condition shared these basic rights, whether they performed religious, secular or military duties. In Don Guillén's Mexico, slavery would end, Indians would regain the lands they owned before the *Conquista* and the once-persecuted races would enjoy “*voz y voto*” (voice and vote).⁶⁵ In one of the 918 psalms he began writing while in prison in 1654, Don Guillén asserted that the “humble Indians” and “poor Ethiopians” were, like the Europeans, children of God. The Lord, working through the pious radical, would protect “*los pequeños*” (the little ones) and avenge the injustices they suffered.⁶⁶ While Don Guillén's compassion for Mexico's ultra-poor likely grew out of the relationships he developed with the Indian miners of Taxco and the astrologer who helped him formulate his independence scheme, some of those humanistic, egalitarian ideas were probably born in Europe—ideals that Don Guillén imported to New Spain, where he saw both the need and the potential to realize them.

Without access to the full collection of Don Guillén Lombardo's Inquisition records, I cannot determine precisely what he read; yet, his belief that the Spaniards had, “with little fear of God,” “usurped” the “natural right[s]” of Blacks, *mulatos* and other peoples,⁶⁷ resonates with the reformist language of seventeenth-century England.

Concurrent with Don Guillén's arrival in New Spain, a movement with political concerns

⁶⁴ I thank Professor Israel Burshatin for his help translating this quotation.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 99. Transcribed from Psalmo 680.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 21. Transcribed from his “Proclamation.”

similar to his own was gaining momentum in England. In November 1640, the British MP Sir Simonds D'Ewes announced "that the poorest man ought to have a voice, that it was the birthright of the subjects of England." While the views of parliament-men grew drastically more conservative in the following years,⁶⁸ D'Ewes's statement nonetheless illustrates the proliferation of a new, consistent language of "rights." Two of the fundamental principles the Levellers espoused in their Agreement of the People (published 3 November 1647) are strikingly similar to those contained in the plan the Mexican Inquisitors discovered five years earlier: the Levellers demanded that the landless poor gain the right to vote and that the government "be limited by the principles of natural justice"—meaning that "all laws must apply equally to all subjects," with no estate privileged over another.⁶⁹ In Don Guillén's independent Mexico, all people would be capable of earning titles, *encomiendas*, and royal appointments, while those who chose to continue working the land would become "themselves lords."⁷⁰

The radical populism that shook English society in the 1640's may not have directly influenced Don Guillén and his proclamation of equal rights, as it took shape while he was in prison across the ocean, but it likely grew out of the same intellectual currents that had inspired the Irishman. He studied in London in 1628, until he was expelled for writing a pamphlet against the king entitled, *Carolus Angliæ Regem & fuam fidem*.⁷¹ Thus, he might have encountered subversive political groups at the impressionable age of 11 or 12. Yet we should highlight that even though his views of

⁶⁸ David Underdown, *A Freeborn People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 55.

⁶⁹ David Wootton, "Leveller Democracy and the Puritan Revolution," *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. J.H. Burns (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 412.

⁷⁰ Méndez Plancarte, "Regio Salterio," p. 22.

⁷¹ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 107.

natural rights developed in step with contemporaneous European movements, they were not identical to them.

His ideas were, to begin, not nearly as developed as those the Levellers advocated. He had no means of implementing his ideal community and few, if any people to support his cause. Don Guillén's conception of "natural rights" differed from the continental tradition because it was not as firmly rooted in the rule of law. When he spoke of "justice," he employed a more abstract and religious interpretation of the concept. For the Levellers, a primary concern was that laws needed to be "good" laws, and "not evidently destructive to the safety and well-being of the people."⁷² The only law that figures prominently in Don Guillén's proclamation is God's law. The Lord, with the help of the monarch, would impose universal justice in Spanish America. The Irishman's call for independence was radical and ahead of its time, but it was also firmly rooted in a Catholic, absolutist tradition. While Don Guillén shared the Levellers' belief that "even the poor should have the right to vote," he did not appear to have any plans to form a representative assembly.⁷³ The black and indigenous populations would be allowed to vote, but only for their king; Don Guillén intended the monarch (presumably himself) to maintain supreme authority in the Mexican state.⁷⁴ His proposed political and social reforms were radical, but they maintained the framework of a monarchical government.

Don Guillén's plot to recreate the Viceroyalty of Mexico as a utopian community threatened the inquisitional authorities for a number of reasons. Despite the fact that he

⁷² Wootton, "Leveller Democracy," loc. cit. For more discussion of 17th century Protestant theories of natural rights, see Richard Tuck's chapters on Hugo Grotius and John Selden in *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 58-100.

⁷³ Wootton, "Leveller Democracy," loc. cit.

⁷⁴ See Brenner, "The Auto de Fe of 1659," p. 74, where he notes that Don Guillén claimed that the only legitimate ruler of Mexico was "the one whom the natives wanted."

showed “*rasgos de locura*” (signs of insanity) even in the initial interrogations,⁷⁵ he had developed a semi-coherent plan to overthrow the Spanish crown and abolish the rigid social order of the colony. His contempt for authority only grew more apparent as he spent time in prison; he induced the other prisoners to communicate with each other—to compare their cases and declarations—and offered them writing materials and homemade ink that he created from candle soot and lime juice.⁷⁶ Even more troubling for the religious authorities were his immense reservoir of Classical knowledge and his command of Catholic dogma; he was, in the words of the Inquisitors, “*demasiado entendido*” (too wise).⁷⁷ According to the Inquisition file, he had two Papal bulls of the Holy Crusade in his papers, and recited “Pater Noster, Ave Maria,....Confession and Commandments of the Law of God and of the Church in Latin, all very well said, and knew all the rest of the Christian doctrine.”⁷⁸ Yet he had also consulted an Indian astrologer, practiced magic (*hechicería* or *magia*) and sold peyote. He possessed a vast amount of secular and orthodox religious knowledge, but had also engaged in illegal forms of “knowing.” The political and spiritual nature of Don Guillén’s crimes, combined with his intelligence and willingness to disseminate devious ideas, made him a threatening figure in the eyes of the Inquisitors.

The Inquisition, in part because it did not have jurisdiction over acts of political sedition, listed “Astrology and [forming] a pact with the Devil” as the principal charges against Don Guillén in 1642.⁷⁹ The details of his agreement with the Devil, which by the

⁷⁵ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 91.

⁷⁶ Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 76.

⁷⁷ Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio*, p. 319.

⁷⁸ Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 75.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

time of his death in 1659 had become “at least an implicit pact,”⁸⁰ are scant. Felipe Méndez, the neighbor who denounced Don Guillén, told the Inquisitors that he saw his neighbor give the Indian Don Ignacio the “prohibited herb” peyote. When the Indian took the drug, Satan began speaking through him, encouraging him to pursue his plan for independence for the sake of the poor indigenous and Spanish populations of the Taxco mine region.⁸¹ By taking peyote, Don Ignacio had opened the door for the Devil. The nature of this act helped the Inquisition explain Don Guillén’s deviance in religious terms. The Inquisitors needed to make sense of his crimes within the boundaries of an established language and set of categories, and they needed to justify the proceedings to their superiors in Madrid. Don Guillén’s offenses, which included practicing magic, consulting astrologers, providing peyote to an Indian, and in later years, “inventing new heresies,” illustrate the preoccupations of religious authorities; they reflect Old World fears in a New World setting.

The “*Magia prohibida*” (prohibited magic) that the Inquisition accused Don Guillén of practicing consisted of “curing another person of an attack of impotence” by giving him a certain remedy, and of “invoking a character out of the darkness” at the time of dispensing the medicine.⁸² While the inquisitional documents provide few details about the incident, we can see from their brief description how Don Guillén’s crime relates to a long and complicated relationship between mystical healing and the Church. During the medieval period, the Church did not so much condemn magical practices as it sought to reign them in and bring them under its control. As Keith Thomas notes, the Church “acted as a repository of supernatural power which could be dispensed to the

⁸⁰ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 105.

⁸¹ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 84.

⁸² Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, loc. cit.

faithful to help them with their daily problems.”⁸³ The attitude of the medieval Church, far from eliminating popular belief in magic, made supernatural possibilities a central component of the religion—thus helping magic in its pure and impure forms survive several more centuries. Thomas asserts that, “even in the years after the Reformation it would be wrong to regard magic and religion as two opposed and incompatible systems of belief.” Orthodox religion still contained magical elements and popular magic often took a religious tone.⁸⁴ However, by the seventeenth century, the Catholic and Protestant Churches found little room for unofficial superstitions or miracles. The Inquisition in Mexico actively attempted to eliminate the ambiguities surrounding *hechicería* and *magia* in order to impose a uniform system of belief.

According to Christian doctrine, supernatural activity could arise only from God or the Devil; those who tried to create miracles, apart from the men who were religiously ordained and therefore qualified to invoke God’s powers, were allying themselves, “either tacitly or expressly, with Satan.”⁸⁵ Individuals were not capable of producing miracles themselves—they could only be agents for the non-worldly forces of Good or Evil. As Don Guillén was not a priest, he must have cured the man of his illness and made someone appear out of the darkness with the help of the Demon.⁸⁶ Although Zepeda Martínez’s *relación* from 1659 does not state that Don Guillén committed these crimes with the assistance of an Indian friend (as was true of his astrology and peyote offenses), we know that New World magic frequently served as a “go-between,” a point

⁸³ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), p. 32.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁸⁶ Zepeda Martínez does not elaborate on Don Guillén’s ability to “*invocar un personaje de las tinieblas*,” (invoke someone from the darkness). Without access to the Inquisition records, we cannot know the details of Don Guillén’s act of magic. See Zepeda Martínez, “Auto General de la Fee...,” p. 105.

where centuries-old European fears and practices met with the unique opportunities of life in Mexico. Solange Alberro, in her analysis of the mass denunciations of healers and wizards that occurred in Celaya in 1614 and 1615, argues that while Indians were often the providers of magic potions and illegal “cures,” the substances used in those concoctions came primarily from Europe.⁸⁷ America’s indigenous inhabitants, because they were perceived to have more “natural” powers than Europeans,⁸⁸ became intermediaries between white colonists and the irrational world of magic and healing.

Alberro suggests that the secret network of magical rituals in Mexico allowed autochthonous and African elements of society to combine with popular European beliefs to create spiritual, though not necessarily religious, syncretism. If a colonist such as Don Guillén incorporated an Indian into the healing process, the resulting “potion”—or practice—could no longer be purely European; it was a form of resistance that defied classification. The religious authorities, in attempting to standardize and control their subjects’ spirituality, confronted long-time foes like magic that grew more difficult to police in the Americas. The New World absorbed the subversive traditions and beliefs of its white settlers and transformed them into messier, more complicated popular currents. Don Guillén imported European heresies to Mexico, corrupting the Indians with those ideas and also “going native” by learning new forms of heterodoxy from the Americans. The Inquisition thus fought to impose its orthodox Catholicism on two, poorly-delineated fronts: it faced Old World deviance, New World ignorance and the hybrid practices that grew out of that encounter.

⁸⁷ Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, pp. 301-302.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 300.

Don Guillén's use of an Indian astrologer in his plans for independence offers a clearer example of this process of cultural collision and creation. Astrology in the seventeenth-century world occupied a curious place: it was not exactly a science, nor was it a religion or a form of magic. Astrology was not the same as astronomy, mathematics, psychology or alchemy, but it drew from all of those disciplines. Rather, the study was "a unique divinatory and prognostic art embodying centuries of accreted methodology and tradition."⁸⁹ Astrology presented a particular order, an understanding of the universe that left nothing to chance. It was a "coherent and comprehensive system of thought"⁹⁰ that provided an intellectual explanation for poorly understood events, but contained a certain mystical quality that distinguished it from scientific disciplines. Practitioners of the art could make general predictions, based on future movements of the heavenly bodies, and "elections," or astrologically-informed decisions about the "right time" for the "right action."⁹¹ The belief that one could understand the past and determine the course of future events by studying the positions of stars and planets challenged Christianity by offering secular explanations for topics within the traditional domain of religion. Astrologers were attempting to make sense of things that only God was supposed to understand. The Church's belief in man's free will led it to deny the human ability to predict future behavior—the heavens could not determine what someone may or may not do. The power to make such a prediction signified that the astrologer was in league with the Devil.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ann Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 9.

⁹⁰ Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 330.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 286. These were the services that the Indian astrologer likely provided for Don Guillén, who was seeking advice on the best time to launch his rebellion.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 362.

While the institutions of Christianity were opposed to astrology, astrologers were not necessarily opposed to Christianity. William Lilly, whom Ann Geneva identifies as the seventeenth century's leading practitioner of astrology, went to great lengths to convince authorities that his art was not incompatible with Church ideology.⁹³ Don Guillén Lombardo shared a similar conviction: while he initially told the Inquisitors that his interest in astrology was "*puro pasatiempo*"⁹⁴ (just a pastime), the psalms he wrote a few years later illustrate his steadfast belief in the orthodoxy of his faith. To Don Guillén, astrology was not only permissible under God's law, it was necessary. In one poem, he told his audience that the cosmos controlled man's movements and then instructed his readers to "adore God, [and] all of the Angels."⁹⁵ Indeed, "it was heresy to negate the influence of [the cosmos] in inclining man toward Good or Evil."⁹⁶ The stars did not compete with organized religion; they worked in concert with it. The two systems were inextricably linked.

His "*Astrología católica*"⁹⁷ (Catholic astrology) represented a worldview that combined scientific, intellectual and spiritual elements. Receiving advice from an Indian astrologer complicated his understanding of Christianity and the universe even further. He incorporated fragments of indigenous beliefs into his already syncretic religious views. In taking astrological advice for his plot to overthrow the colonial government, Don Guillén made a seditious act more menacing. The practice of astrology, like magic, represented the intersection of European and indigenous cultural currents—all of which threatened the Holy Office. This collision of dangerous ideas and customs made the act

⁹³ Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind*, loc. cit.

⁹⁴ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 118.

⁹⁵ Méndez Plancarte, "*Regio Salterio*," from Psalm 52, p. 63.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

of policing more difficult in the New World. The criminal taxonomy designed and implemented on the Iberian Peninsula proved inadequate when transplanted onto Mexican soil.

In addition to its accusations of *magia* and *astrología*, the Inquisition also charged Don Guillén Lombardo with selling peyote. The hallucinogen, extracted from cacti in the Chihuahua Desert of Northern Mexico, was believed to possess magical powers by the Huichol Indians who used it in religious rituals. When the Inquisition began operating in Mexico in 1571, it immediately banned consumption of the drug, claiming that its seemingly supernatural effects were actually the work of the Devil.⁹⁸ An edict the Inquisition issued on 29 June 1620, which Irving Leonard has reproduced and translated, announces:

Inasmuch as the use of the herb or root called Peyote has been introduced into these Provinces for the purpose of detecting thefts, of divining other happenings, and of foretelling future events, it is an act of superstition condemned as opposed to the purity and integrity of our Holy Catholic Faith.⁹⁹

The prohibited “herb” provided the means for achieving supernatural knowledge, although it was obvious that “the Devil [was] the real author of this vice.”¹⁰⁰ It was a medium through which religious deviants could summon Satan to the temporal world. The mind-altering substance was an element of the native landscape that offered a vehicle for the realization of un-Christian, foreign (European) designs. Interestingly, the inquisitional edict confuses this point, stating that peyote “has been introduced” into New

⁹⁸ Richard Rudgley, *Essential Substances: A Cultural History of Intoxicants in Society* (New York: Kodansha International, 1993), p. 85.

⁹⁹ Irving Leonard, “Peyote and the Mexican Inquisition, 1620,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series 44:2 (1942): 326.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

Spain. While the small, grey-green, spineless cactus¹⁰¹ was indigenous to Mexico, the religious crimes associated with its consumption were not. The imported aspect of peyote was the way in which Indians and colonists used the drug; according to this document, its effects were similar to those of magic or astrology. Furthermore, the inquisitional authorities had imported (or exported) to the Americas a particular framework for understanding religious crime; peyote was necessarily a “foreign” and corrupting influence on the exercise of pure Catholic faith. The hallucinogen was a native enabler of familiar heresies—a chain that linked Old and New World crimes and the authorities who sought to extinguish them.

Examining the details of Don Guillén’s planned rebellion and the nature of the spiritual and religious charges against him illuminate Colonial Mexico as an environment where people tested innovative ideas. In the vast expanses of America, practitioners of religious heterodoxies could seek refuge from the unrelenting persecution they suffered in Early Modern Europe. The sheer size of the territory and limited capabilities of the Inquisition meant that there “was not and could not have been orthodoxy” in New Spain.¹⁰² Rodrigo Ruiz de Zepeda Martínez even acknowledges that “these lands of America are exposed to...Judaism [and] malicious heresy...to those who go contaminating, looking to pervert and pierce its most pure Religion”¹⁰³—though that fact only made the Inquisition pursue these offenders more aggressively. The colony was a primitive “laboratory of modernity,”¹⁰⁴ where subjects experimented with visions of

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 324.

¹⁰² Elias Trabulse, “Tres momentos de la heterodoxia científica en el México colonial,” *Quiipu* 5:1 (1988), p. 8.

¹⁰³ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,” *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Stoler and Cooper (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 5.

social organization and religious purity, and invented new ways of acting out “old” cultural practices. It was also a space in which European governments sought to reinvent societies—a motivation especially apparent in the ideology of Juan de Palafox, Mexico’s Visitor General during this period.

The case of Don Guillén Lombardo provides us with an opportunity to place all of the colonial actors—colonizers, colonists and colonized—as well as some of the dominant cultural currents of the time into “one analytic field.”¹⁰⁵ This interpretive model accommodates the complex range of experiences that characterized New World society. By examining the old and new, indigenous and European, and resistant and repressive elements of baroque Mexican civilization in the same analytical space, we can attain a clearer vision of the constantly opening and closing “gaps” of Spanish American society. The Mexican Holy Office did not comprehend the complex nature of American heterodoxies and lacked the manpower to police these crimes effectively. The Inquisition, in its case against Don Guillén, employed traditional, Old World mechanisms for asserting its power. The institution fought vigorously to eliminate religious difference during the period between 1640 and 1660, but it applied outmoded methods that could not close the holes Don Guillén and other subversives had torn in the imagined fabric of Catholic New Spain.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

CHAPTER 2

THE JUST JUDGMENTS OF GOD:

DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON AND THE INQUISITION'S EDICT OF FAITH

On the evening of 26 December 1650, Don Guillén and his cellmate Diego Pinto Bravo escaped from prison. After tearing three sheets, two shirts and a pillow into strips and braiding them together, Don Guillén and Pinto Bravo lowered themselves out the window and onto a low wall outside the building. From there, armed with his libelous placards, the Irishman separated from his cellmate and proceeded to the main door of Mexico City's cathedral, where he posted a scathing condemnation of the Inquisition and an eighteen-page, meticulously written letter to the Viceroy of New Spain.¹⁰⁶ The former, which he also placed in prominent locations on the streets Tacuba and Donceles, he titled, *Declaración de los justos juicios de Dios* (Declaration of the Just Judgments of God).¹⁰⁷ It contained an attack on the inquisitors, with a particular focus on the recently deceased Archbishop and Visitor General, Juan de Mañozca. The inquisitional authorities responded swiftly, printing two different edicts over the next few days, which *pregoneros* read aloud and then displayed around the city. Through these broadsides, the

¹⁰⁶ Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio*, p. 330. Fabio Troncarelli identifies the new viceroy as Alba Aliste, a man whom Don Guillén apparently saw as honest and thus far untainted by the Church's corruption. See Fabio Troncarelli, "The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro," p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio*, p. 333.

Holy Office highlighted the danger Don Guillén and his accomplice posed and demanded that the city's inhabitants denounce them.¹⁰⁸

In this section, I examine the implications of these events, using the edict the Inquisition released on 31 December 1650. By suggesting the threat Don Guillén posed and by outlining the authorities' response to that threat, the document illuminates the role of printing, writing and reading in the negotiation of power between the Inquisitors and an outspoken, literate dissident. In the story the edict depicts, we see the process by which one man exploited and widened gaps in the Inquisition's moral and religious control—an effort that met with aggressive attempts to close those openings and prevent others from forming. We also observe how Don Guillén used public writing to fashion himself as a political revolutionary and a devout Catholic—an identity that the Holy Office contested through their own printed edicts.

THE EDICT OF FAITH

Before looking at some of the broader implications of the *edicto de fe*, we should explore the significance of the document itself. The first official edict of faith appeared in 1571 when the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Madrid established the Inquisition in Mexico. On 10 November of that year, the newly formed Tribunal published a letter and addressed it to every inhabitant of the district, commanding him (and her) “to aid the Inquisition in every way and to denounce and persecute heretics as

¹⁰⁸ For the most complete published accounts of Don Guillén's escape from prison, see Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio*, pp. 329-34 and González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, pp. 142-67.

wolves and mad dogs.”¹⁰⁹ The Holy Office issued *edictos generales* periodically to warn and instruct its subject populations about the entire range of punishable crimes, and *edictos particulares* to stress the danger of a specific crime, such as possessing banned books or practicing astrology, or to alert people about a fugitive offender, such as Don Guillén.¹¹⁰ The edict of faith made it a crime to know about suspicious activity and not report it.

The Inquisition printed these edicts in Mexico City, had them read aloud in public squares and then sent them to every parish in the Viceroyalty. *Comisarios*, the institution’s representatives in the towns and typically the parish priests,¹¹¹ would read the edict in Church and then nail the broadside to the main door of the building.¹¹² Determining the efficacy of reading and posting these letters of instruction is difficult; Henry Charles Lea champions their success in rooting out non-conformers, pointing to the widespread denunciations that frequently followed the publication of an edict.¹¹³ Solange Alberro, however, notes that the relatively complex and abstract Spanish the Inquisitors used, when combined with the inefficiencies of the inquisitional bureaucracy, (which often prevented the edicts from ever reaching the *comisarios*), limited the edict’s ability to convey a convincing message to its audience.¹¹⁴

Since we cannot assess the effectiveness of this method of instruction, we should examine the significance of the mechanisms it employed. The language of inquisitional power—that is, the ways in which the *Santo Oficio* communicated with the public—is

¹⁰⁹ Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 202-203.

¹¹⁰ Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, pp. 75-77.

¹¹¹ Curcio-Nagy, “Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico,” p. 168.

¹¹² Seymour B. Liebman, *The Jews in New Spain: Faith, Flame, and the Inquisition* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970), p. 100.

¹¹³ Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 227.

¹¹⁴ Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, p. 76.

revealing. The institution exerted control through hispanization; it used Castilian Spanish to express its expectations for correct Christian practice, making Spanish fluency a necessary component of being an obedient Catholic. As the Italian political philosopher Tommaso Campanella noted, “Language is the instrument of religion, of prudence, that is, of the goods of the soul.”¹¹⁵ It allows governments to exercise power over the minds, rather than merely the bodies, of their subjects.¹¹⁶ In the society of Spanish-speaking believers that religious authorities sought to create, knowledge, or the imposition of knowledge, was to replace the overt violence of the *Conquista*. Despite the fact that many indigenous Americans living in small towns did not speak or comprehend Spanish, the Inquisition chose to spread its message in its own tongue—a decision that may demonstrate a flaw in their plan for universal indoctrination, but may also suggest that for those reading and listening to the edicts, Spanish had become the language of power. Language thus created a bridge between Iberian rulers and Americans, as it enabled colonial authorities to acculturate and subjugate the inhabitants of New Spain, and a barrier because it could never be disseminated evenly.

The broadsides further illustrate how the Inquisition imposed a monopoly on religious discourse. The imagery and metaphors these documents espoused influenced the ideas people expressed about “themselves, their city, indeed all of life.”¹¹⁷ Terms such as “*los herejes enemigos de nuestra santa Fe catholica*” (the heretic enemies of our

¹¹⁵ Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 55.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹¹⁷ See Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1980), p. 125. Perry writes specifically about religious rituals in Spain and their ability to interpret reality for *sevillanos*, though her comments on the monopolization of religious discourse are equally pertinent here.

holy Catholic faith),¹¹⁸ which the Inquisition used repeatedly in its edicts, became the language in which people could understand religious and moral crimes. If the “populace explained public executions as the consequences of sin,”¹¹⁹ then people were using the official language of instruction to explain events that unfolded around them. This is not to say that they necessarily believed what the Inquisition was telling them; rather, the documents helped to construct the reality of everyday religious life in Mexico by providing a consistent vocabulary for describing it.

The edicts of faith also perpetuated a discourse that pitted the Inquisitors and faithful Christians against *los herejes enemigos*. The edict published on 31 December 1650, which demanded that people denounce and hand over the Irishman and his writings, illustrates the construction of the collective “we”. It addresses the letter to every person who resides in the district:

*Hazemos saber a todas, y qualesquier personas de qualquier estado, dignidad, grado, localidad, que sean exceptos o no exceptos, así Ecclesiasticos, Seculares, como Regulares, estantes, y habitantes en todo nuestro distrito...*¹²⁰

We make it known to all people, regardless of status, position, class, [or] location, whether exempt or not, and likewise whether ecclesiastical, secular, [or] regular...residents of our entire district...¹²¹

This list differs from the one that appears in a 1620 edict reproduced in Solange Alberro’s *Inquisición y Sociedad*, which does not make the same effort to appeal to the

¹¹⁸ (Mexican Inquisition) “Nos los Inquisidores Apostolicos, contra la heretica pravedad...”, broadside, Mexico: 22 August 1628.

¹¹⁹ Perry, *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville*, loc. cit.

¹²⁰ (Mexican Inquisition) “Nos los Inquisidores Apostolicos, contra la heretica pravedad...”, broadside, Mexico: 31 December 1650.

¹²¹ An 18th century dictionary and a modern one both define “*estante*” as a shelf or rack, which does not make sense in this context. It appears to be a filler word, similar in meaning to “*inhabitantes*,” so I have deleted it in the translation. See *Diccionario de la lengua castellana: en que se explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las frases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refranes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua* vol. 3 (Madrid: R. Academia Española, 1726-39), p. 628; *Collins Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), p. 286.

entire colonial population.¹²² The Inquisitors now asserted that all people currently under the Tribunal's jurisdiction, regardless of race, class or occupation, must heed the instruction the letter provided. The edict is threatening, but inclusive. All of "us," which includes everyone listed at the beginning of the broadsheet, must fear and condemn Don Guillén and his accomplice, who have "committed grave crimes and slanders" against the "most reverend Señor Don Juan de Mañozca" and "our holy Catholic faith."¹²³ Here, the "we" refers to "NOS LOS INQUISIDORES APOSTOLICOS," the authors of the document, whose names are the first and largest on the page, and also to the greater religious community. It is the "popular voice"¹²⁴ of the authorities and their subject peoples, which appear as a united front against heretics like Don Guillén. In the society that this edict imagines and seeks to realize, the community of believers responds to the printed and spoken word of the Inquisition and turns on the men who threaten the popular moral code.

THE (NEW) CRIMES OF DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO

According to Luis González Obregón, the author of a 1908 book about Don Guillén, the eccentric Irishman saw his escape from prison as a "heroic, just and Christian" act;¹²⁵ he was not, as the Inquisition suggested, violating the norms of the Christian community. Writing and posting a scathing condemnation of the Inquisition, which singled out the Archbishop who had just died on 13 December 1650, seemed to be a necessary and noble duty. Juan de Mañozca, in addition to being Archbishop of

¹²² See Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, p. 82.

¹²³ Broadside, 31 December 1650.

¹²⁴ Benzion Netanyahu, "The Primary Cause of the Inquisition," *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, ed. Angel Alcalá (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 21.

¹²⁵ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la Independencia*, p. 150.

Mexico, was the *Visitador General*—a position that Seymour Liebman describes as a “one-man government investigating committee” for the Inquisition.¹²⁶ The Tribunal of the Holy Office consisted of two Inquisitors and the Visitor General, whom the *Suprema* in Madrid appointed to oversee the proper conduct of the institution. Mañozca, however, was the cousin of one of the inquisitors, and may have been less than vigilant in his investigative activities. Don Guillén was certainly displeased with his performance; González Obregón relates the prisoner’s testimony about how he came up with his plan to attack the memory of the corrupt *visitador*, in which he decries the “great injustice” the man committed by failing to oversee his trial, recognize his innocence and free him from prison.¹²⁷

Neither González Obregón nor the Inquisition’s edict from 31 December 1650 provides much more information about why Don Guillén felt compelled to condemn Mañozca or what he wrote about him (though we learn that Don Guillén believed Mañozca was in hell and had released the prisoner with a hand of fire).¹²⁸ In the historical novel *Memorias de un impostor*, however, Vicente Riva Palacio includes a transcription of one of the *papelones* Don Guillén posted on the door of Mexico City’s Santa Iglesia Catedral and on well-traveled streets nearby. Don Guillén claimed that the Inquisition had wrongfully seized the assets of over sixty Portuguese families and had forced false confessions from Jews, Muslims and heretics—many of whom died in prison from hunger, exposure or suicide. He went further, stating that the Inquisitors “circumcised many [people], obligated Catholic children to say they were Jewish and fabricated malicious testimonies in order to take the lives of [those children’s]

¹²⁶ Liebman, *The Great Auto de Fe of 1649*, p. 6.

¹²⁷ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 151.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

parents.”¹²⁹ The Inquisition, according to Don Guillén, had falsified royal decrees and attributed them to him in order to make him look “less Catholic than he was.” They left him in prison “without God, without king and without law.” The Inquisition’s justice was arbitrary and subject to the whim of “three treacherous idiots” [the Inquisitors] who were only interested in their own financial gain.¹³⁰

By writing these inflammatory words and posting them in highly visible locations, Don Guillén was using a particularly threatening mechanism to question the authority of the Inquisition. While the role of seditious, ephemeral reading matter has attracted little attention from historians of Colonial Latin America, scholars of Early Modern European cultural history have produced a rich conversation about the type of literature Don Guillén produced. Roger Chartier, looking at print cultures in seventeenth and eighteenth-century France, notes that the *placard*, which people typically used for administrative or commercial purposes, sometimes became an instrument for protest. When food scarcities struck the population in 1725 and 1768, handwritten sheets appeared, accusing those in power of grain speculation and of attempting to starve the people.¹³¹ Christian Jouhaud adds that these “injurious” or “defamatory” handbills, like those Don Guillén tacked to the cathedral door at 3 a.m.,¹³² were posted clandestinely and usually in the middle of the night.¹³³ The printed and illustrated *placards* Jouhaud

¹²⁹ Vicente Riva Palacio, *Memorias de un impostor: Don Guillen de Lampart, Rey de México* vol. 2 (Mexico City.: Editorial Porrúa, 1946), p. 186. This book was originally published in 1872.

¹³⁰ Ibid. See also González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, pp. 177-78.

¹³¹ Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. Linda G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 231.

¹³² González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 154.

¹³³ Christian Jouhaud, “Readability and Persuasion: Political Handbills,” *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 235. Statistics on the literacy rate in Baroque Mexico and Mexico City have proven elusive. While we can assume that the overall rate was still very low during this period, Irving Leonard notes that “seventeenth century Mexico City was [considered] ‘the Athens of America’ ...the

discusses reflect the employment of emerging technologies for semi-organized political subversion; the broadsides Don Guillén Lombardo produced, however, indicate a slightly different process in action. Chartier eloquently describes the place of these more informal responses, suggesting that: “These handwritten posters that proliferated in periods of tension attest in their own way to the progress of the diffusion of printed matter. They imitated the forms of printed matter and so tried to appropriate their impact.”¹³⁴ In attempting to spread his message about the corruption and injustice of the Holy Office, Don Guillén imitated the methods the authorities employed for their own agendas. He was using the same medium that the Inquisition used to assert their control—or a derivation of that medium—to subvert its power. In order to do this, Chartier continues, he “set in motion mechanisms of public reading, either silent or aloud, with the more forward leading the less able.”¹³⁵

The Mexican Inquisition undoubtedly worried about popular reading; one of the primary reasons the *Suprema* established the Holy Office in New Spain was to halt “the deluge of suspicious printed matter from Europe that was entering [the territory].”¹³⁶ As early as 1573, *calificadores* (censors) worked with the Inquisition to monitor the circulation of printed matter in the colony.¹³⁷ The Holy Office periodically issued edicts of faith to warn the public about recently-banned books. The edict published on 22

literary metropolis of the New World.” Colonial Mexico attracted a large number of “literary migrants”—mostly Spanish “writers and thinkers” who sought the greater intellectual freedom America’s vast expanses offered. Thus, even though Mexico City’s literacy rate may well have been below those of Spanish and European cities, it certainly possessed vibrant reading cultures to which Don Guillén marketed his lampoons. See Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico: Seventeenth-Century Persons, Places, and Practices* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1959), pp. 53-55 and 78.

¹³⁴ Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print*, loc. cit.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Richard E. Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 158.

¹³⁷ Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 264.

August 1628 highlights a number of dangerous ephemeral works: one is only a single *pliego* (sheet of paper), while another is a twelve-page manuscript. The broadside does not summarize the content of the dangerous literature, as doing so would fuel its dissemination, but condemns the texts for having the “soul of Purgatory.”¹³⁸

Thus, the prospect of Mexico City inhabitants waking up on the morning of 27 December 1650 and reading the things Don Guillén had written about the Inquisition—either to themselves or aloud to others—unnerved the religious authorities. González Obregón describes the efforts the investigators took to learn who was present when the Irishman posted his *papelones*, who might have read them, and who was now privy to the information contained in them. They interviewed a number of people in the days following the incident to try and assess the damage Don Guillén had incurred, and discovered that individuals had had varying degrees of contact with the papers and their ideas.¹³⁹ The silent and shared reading of these documents presented different but related threats to the Inquisition and its officials. Reading a text independently “gave unheard-of persuasive force to the fabrications of fictional texts,” provoking “the use of verbs of wonderment such as ‘to enchant’, ‘to marvel at’, ‘to charm’ (*encantar, maravillar, embelesar*)” to describe its effects.¹⁴⁰ Silent reading, in the eyes of authorities, “made readers vulnerable and...weakened their resistance.”¹⁴¹ Direct, personal contact between a resident of New Spain and the libels of Don Guillén Lombardo was dangerous because

¹³⁸ Broadside, 22 August 1628.

¹³⁹ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, pp. 169-74.

¹⁴⁰ Roger Chartier, “Reading Matter and ‘Popular’ Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century,” *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), p. 277.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

it made the reader especially susceptible to the seditious knowledge the broadsides advertised.

Yet the effects of these handbills were certainly not limited to those who read them directly; “the print piece or manuscript was like a hub from which innumerable receptions might emanate...”¹⁴² The original broadside could have affected a wide audience, whose members understood and interpreted its significance in markedly different ways. Traveling from readers to listeners may have mediated Don Guillén’s message, but it did not make it any less threatening. The intricate relationship between print and oral cultures meant that one played off the other, allowing the information a written document contained to flow across literacy boundaries and permeate a society that had little competence in reading or writing. Just as “popular” and “elite” readers could not be separated into two truly distinct groups,¹⁴³ our characterization of “readers” as a category has its own limitations.

The edict published on 31 December 1650 illustrates the fluidity of this definition: it threatens to punish anyone who possessed Don Guillén’s papers, as well as anyone who “read, translated, published, or helped read, translate or publish” those works. “Readers” might have been people who saw the broadside and only understood parts of it or who heard its contents when someone read the papers aloud. The movement of dangerous ideas was not confined to literate circles. At each step in the process, the heretic’s ideas seeped deeper into society and evolved as different readers and listeners interpreted them. Print cultures transformed oral cultures but they did not abolish them. On the contrary,

¹⁴² Margit Frenk, “ ‘Lectores y oidores’: La difusión oral de la literatura en el Siglo de Oro,” *Actas del Séptimo Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, publicadas por Giuseppe Bellini* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1982), 1:115-16. Quoted in Chartier, “Reading Matter and ‘Popular’ Reading,” loc. cit.

¹⁴³ See Chartier, “Reading Matter and ‘Popular’ Reading,” pp. 274-75.

they often stimulated the spoken word by giving “people something fresh to talk about.”¹⁴⁴ By posting his *Declaración de los Justos Juicios de Dios* in prominent locations around Mexico City, Don Guillén had challenged the authority of the *Santo Oficio* and introduced subversive ideas to the city’s reading and listening public—ideas that, by appearing in writing, were easily dispersed, thereby presenting a serious test for the authorities charged with controlling them.

Don Guillén also contested the authority of the Holy Office by fashioning himself as a religious and political reformer—an intellectual who fought for popular interests. Through his placards, Don Guillén portrayed himself as a victim of the Inquisition’s tyranny and constructed the Holy Office as the “threatening Other” that must be “attacked and destroyed.”¹⁴⁵ Engaging in “Renaissance self-fashioning,” the Irishman refused to accept the identity the authorities had prescribed for him and instead designed, through the act of writing, a persona that was in every way unlike the heretic the Inquisition sought to apprehend. The public writing that appeared on the streets of Mexico City in late December 1650 provided the battleground for two competing “fashioning” processes: that of the Inquisition, which fought to maintain its image as the sole arbiter of religious right and wrong, and that of Don Guillén, who claimed that it was the Inquisitors, not he, who had perverted proper Christian practice.

“CAUSING GRAVE HARM TO THEIR CONSCIENCES”: THE INQUISITION’S RESPONSE

¹⁴⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 214. See also Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 92.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 9.

The Inquisition officials acted quickly to capture Don Guillén and stem the proliferation of his dangerous ideas. They published an edict on 27 December 1650, immediately following the appearance of the letters on the church door, and another on 31 December, which demanded that residents of the city turn the criminal over to the authorities “within six hours.”¹⁴⁶ The latter document explains that Don Guillén and Diego Pinto had committed grave crimes against the Visitor General and other members of the inquisitional Tribunal. It instructs its audience members that they must not only denounce the criminals to their authorities, but also hand over Don Guillén’s papers “without tearing, hiding or burning them.” The Inquisitors wanted to know exactly what the fugitive had written about them, and were worried that people would have, out of their own volition, destroyed the slanderous writings. As an organization that used surveillance as one of its methods of exerting control, the Inquisition needed to understand and record the crimes it policed. Its network of *comisarios* and *familiares*—lay members of the public who performed various duties for the Inquisition—extended the reach and visibility of the institution beyond major cities, but was not primarily a system of intelligence-gathering. For this task, the Inquisition relied on ordinary people, who responded to edicts of faith or sought to achieve personal vendettas through denunciations.¹⁴⁷ Despite their power, the Inquisitors depended on popular cooperation to display and enforce their authority.

The edict from 31 December 1650 illustrates the Inquisition’s attempt to tap that source so its officials could comprehend, and therefore contain, the threat Don Guillén

¹⁴⁶ Broadside, 31 December 1650. See Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio*, pp. 331-33 for a transcription of the 27 December edict.

¹⁴⁷ Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 143.

posed. These efforts correspond to an evolving language of governance—one that “searched for the things hardest to perceive—the most hidden, hardest to tell and to show, and lastly most forbidden and scandalous.”¹⁴⁸ Foucault’s characterization of the development of an apparatus to catalogue and retell the lives of “infamous” men enriches our understanding of Don Guillén’s case. The Inquisition pursued the minute details of the seditious mind, creating a discourse for the most infamous, unspeakable crimes and bringing that language into a public (printed) setting. The religious authorities sought to extract the smallest, most un-heroic details of the criminal’s life and use them in their efforts to quell future acts (or thoughts) of non-conformance. This process intended to make subjects feel vulnerable—to instill in people the fear that authorities knew about even the slightest deviances from established religious norms.

Using the edicts of faith, the Inquisition revealed the illegal actions of criminals to the public and provided explicit expectations for proper, moral behavior. By printing these documents, they were “fixing” or “preserving” the rules they contained. Just as the development of printed laws meant that “it was no longer possible to take for granted that one was following ‘immemorial custom’ when granting an immunity or signing a decree,”¹⁴⁹ the proliferation of printed edicts made moral and religious codes more concrete. While exercising authority through print did not necessarily lead to a greater public adherence to religious doctrine, it did eliminate some of the gray areas of proper practice. When the Inquisition used the same language to condemn heretical or immoral behavior in nearly every edict (*la heretica pravedad...los libelos infamatorios*,

¹⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, “Lives of Infamous Men,” *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 1994), p. 173.

¹⁴⁹ Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, p. 83.

...*gravissimos crimines y calumnias*, etc...),¹⁵⁰ and sent identical edicts to the far corners of the province, it left little room for people to claim that they misunderstood the rules. Publishing the edict about Don Guillén and his accomplice was a way to induce residents of Mexico City to denounce the fugitives and also make the dangerous nature of their crimes, and the harsh penalties for committing, them explicit, consistent and fixed.

The use of a printed medium for exerting social control also increased the visibility of the Inquisition. Potential criminals heard about the Inquisition's activities from the *pregoneros* in the streets and their friends and family members in conversation, and also read the literature on broadsides. The placards helped bring "the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life,"¹⁵¹ in this form of Panopticism (the Foucauldian term describing the modern authorities' institutionalized surveillance of their subjects), the edicts of faith represented for the delinquent-heretic another side of the "central tower from which he is spied upon."¹⁵² Of course, the posters themselves were not a means of surveillance, but they symbolized the power and the penetration of inquisitional law; they helped make the Inquisition (but not the inquisitors) a visible and threatening presence for the ordinary individual, and instilled in him the fear that he too was constantly under surveillance.

Fostering this culture of fear was a central component of the inquisitorial mechanism. The edict demanding the capture of Don Guillén and Pinto Bravo promised excommunication, hefty fines, 400 lashes and/or six years of imprisonment for people

¹⁵⁰ Broadside, 31 December 1650.

¹⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 198.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 201.

who were caught aiding the criminals.¹⁵³ Correcting the misguided soul often seemed like a secondary objective to that of creating an obedient and religiously homogeneous society. The words of one of the Inquisitors in the Spanish Inquisition echo this distinction; in 1578, Francisco Peña wrote that, “We must remember that the essential aim of the trial and death sentence is not saving the soul of the defendant but furthering the public good and terrorizing the people,” and later added that, “instructing and threatening the people by publicizing the sentences...[was] a good method” for achieving that goal.¹⁵⁴ The Inquisition used pedagogical devices like edicts and printed *relaciones* to instill fear that penetrated the spaces the institution’s members themselves could not reach.

Bartolomé Bennassar identifies secrecy, the memory of infamy and the threat of misery as the sources of the pervasive fear the Inquisition fostered.¹⁵⁵ The broadside published on 31 December 1650 related almost nothing about what Don Guillén had written about Juan de Mañozca, nor does it provide any information about how the Tribunal and its “legal” processes operated. The only information it offers comes in the form of direct or implied threats. By fixing the names of Don Guillén and Diego Pinto in print, they had made them infamous characters in Mexican society. Ten years later, in the *relación* the Inquisition printed to commemorate the 1659 *auto de fe*, the author mentions the Irishman in the introduction, noting that he was “*famoso en tramar embustes*” and well-known around the city.¹⁵⁶ The edict turned rumor into fact, and indefinitely prolonged the infamy of a criminal—a frightening thought for its readers and

¹⁵³ Broadside, 31 December 1650.

¹⁵⁴ Bartolomé Bennassar, “Patterns in the Inquisitorial Mind as the Basis for a Pedagogy of Fear,” in Alcalá, *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, p. 178.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

¹⁵⁶ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, pp. 9-10.

listeners. Furthermore, the edict provided a clear threat of misery with its promises of corporal punishment and expulsion from the Viceroyalty for Don Guillén's collaborators. On the printed page, these threats became permanent and indisputable. The criminals endangered the public good and should be avoided by ordinary Christians. The Inquisition taught its subjects to fear not only the Holy Office, but also the deviants who threatened the neat fabric of colonial society.

The edict of faith against Don Guillén and his writings cultivated fear by imposing direct threats, but it also encouraged the development of a self-policing apparatus. After listing the lashes, prison term and excommunication that Don Guillén's cohorts would receive, the edict's authors then emphasized the offenders' abstract, but ultimately more severe punishment: the "grave harm" their acts would cause to "their consciences."¹⁵⁷ The true terror that criminals would suffer came not come from above, but from within. Norbert Elias argues that Europe's "civilizing process" caused individuals to internalize the battle between proper and improper behavior:

The monopoly organization of physical violence does not usually constrain the individual by a direct threat...[Rather,] the actual compulsion is one that the individual exerts on himself or herself...as a result of his knowledge of the possible consequences of his or her moves in the game in intertwining activities.¹⁵⁸

The Inquisition's threats were only the first part of the policing process: they established the rules of the "game" in which the colonial subjects were players. The more effective social control came from people's internalization of those constraints and from their imposition of those rules on their peers. Gauging the extent to which inhabitants of

¹⁵⁷ Broadside, 31 December 1650.

¹⁵⁸ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process, Part IV: Synopsis* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), p. 372.

Colonial Mexico monitored themselves is difficult; yet, we do have some indications that this subtler form of repression was succeeding.

Discussing the Mexican Inquisition's supervision of the popular use and abuse of religious images in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Serge Gruzinski notes that, "It was less the Inquisition's zeal that prevailed...than everybody's hurry to watch over the proper use of images and to demand the tribunal's intervention each time they thought it necessary."¹⁵⁹ The impetus for police action came from below, not above; the public, not the Inquisitors, was responsible for bringing the majority of infractions to light. "The crime committed against the image was felt as a blow to the *imaginaire* of all...The faithful were their own police."¹⁶⁰ The colonial populations had, to some extent, absorbed the rules and expectations that the Inquisition dictated to them through *autos de fe*, *edictos de fe* and other devices, and were using them to maintain a certain moral or religious standard among themselves. This process made "Christian practices accessible through the native registers of common sense, thus giving them the appearance of being natural and ubiquitous." Obedient Christians in Mexico had normalized self-discipline, making the Inquisitors' task easier.¹⁶¹

In the case of Don Guillén Lombardo, any number of factors could have compelled the residents of Mexico City to denounce him as quickly as they did. Francisco Garnica, the tailor who briefly let Don Guillén stay in his home, told the authorities about his houseguest immediately after going to Mass and hearing the edict

¹⁵⁹ Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)*, trans. Heather MacLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 155.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

¹⁶¹ J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Colonizing Souls: The Failure of the Indian Inquisition and the Rise of Penitential Discipline," *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, eds. Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 18.

that called for the Irishman's arrest.¹⁶² It is not clear from González Obregón's history of the event whether Garnica knew Don Guillén was a fugitive and was posting seditious *papelones* around the city prior to going to church; we do not know if it was the crime or the publication of it in an edict that ultimately made him go to the religious authorities. In either case, the Inquisition had succeeded in apprehending the escaped criminal within days of his initial flight, and had done so with the help of the general public.

Examining the edict the Inquisition published on 31 December 1650 illuminates some of the tactics the authorities employed to repair the damage Don Guillén's papers had caused and to prevent people from committing similar acts in the future. It represents the authorities' attempt to close the gaps in the inquisitional power structure that Don Guillén pushed open. By posting his writings in public spaces, he stimulated the distribution of seditious knowledge, which could flow through print and oral cultures and infect the minds of otherwise obedient Christians. He utilized the emerging medium of public writing to spread his ideas—a strategy that imitated the Inquisition's own method of producing and disseminating knowledge. In nailing his papers to the door of the church, Don Guillén had adopted and refashioned an inquisitional technique for asserting power in order to subvert that authority. The edict of faith illustrates how the Inquisition sought to stem the passage of the ideas he espoused by apprehending the perpetrator, seizing his papers, and posing both direct and more nuanced threats to Mexico's reading publics.

¹⁶² González Obregón, *Inquisición y independencia*, p. 162. The author relates the testimonies of a number of other inhabitants, including Indians, who had talked to the Inquisition about Don Guillén; see pp. 163-67.

CHAPTER 3

THE HERETIC AND THE *AUTO DE FE*

DON GUILLÉN LOMBARDO: INVENTOR OF NEW HERESIES

Don Guillén's capture and return to the Inquisition's secret prison in Mexico City marked the beginning of a new period in the life of the Irishman. As he seemed to gradually lose his sanity,¹⁶³ his anger toward the Inquisition and its agents intensified and the list of charges they leveled against him grew in length and scope. In 1642, when the Inquisitors first had Don Guillén arrested, they charged him with political subversion (a crime they could not technically prosecute) and the relatively minor crimes of selling peyote, practicing magic and consulting astrologers. By the mid-1650's, however, the Inquisitors were accusing Don Guillén of being a heretic. According to Zepeda Martínez's 1660 chronicle of the *auto de fe* in which Don Guillén appeared, the criminal demonstrated a "heretical spirit," an "inextinguishable anger," and an "innermost hatred of the *Santo Oficio*." His writings not only illustrated this un-Catholic "spirit" but also contained "many formal heresies of the heretics Luther, Calvin...and John Hus."¹⁶⁴ To

¹⁶³ According to the Inquisitors, Don Guillén was either showing "signs of insanity" or "feigned so maliciously" after 1655. Henry Brenner notes that Don Guillén fasted and prayed so often during this period that ulcers developed on his knees. "He neglected his person and had to be tied so he could be bathed." He also began to make mistakes in his testimonies before the Tribunal, saying "he did not remember asserting certain things that he had written or spoken, and even forgot his birthplace and who his father had been" ("The Auto de Fe of 1659," p. 126). It is difficult to say whether the prisoner's mental health was truly failing, or if he was intentionally making things difficult for his jailers. If the Inquisitors believed Don Guillén's insanity was a farce, it certainly did not affect their judgment of his sins.

¹⁶⁴ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, pp. 115-16.

the religious authorities, his words, both written and spoken, were becoming increasingly libelous and defiant. During Don Guillén's second term in prison, as his hatred for the Inquisition grew more potent, the institution gradually constructed him as a heretic and his activities as heretical.

Many of the Inquisition's gravest concerns arose from Don Guillén Lombardo's *Regio Salterio* or *Psalterio*—the collection of 918 Latin psalms the prisoner began writing on his bed sheets in 1654. Zepeda Martínez writes about the work:

*Generalmente la doctrina dél era impia, y sacrilegamente infamatoria, injuriosa, y contumeliosa, seismatica, temeraria, y escandalosa, proprissimamente seductiva de animos sencillos, peligrossa, y sospechosa en la Fé.*¹⁶⁵

Generally, his doctrine was impious, sacrilegiously defamatory, injurious, and contumelious, schismatic, imprudent, and scandalous, [particularly] seductive for simple souls, dangerous and suspicious in Faith.¹⁶⁶

The Inquisition's official chronicler claims that Don Guillén's *Salterio* came to the defense of Jews, heretics, "and other criminals," and that it is:

Una continuada narracion y celebracion de sobrenaturales revelaciones, apariciones, y milagros en orden a persuadir que Dios le avia constituido por autor de el, y embiadole por escritor, Profeta, Predicador para defender la Fe Catholica, y la justicia Evangelica...

A continuous narration and celebration of supernatural revelations, apparitions, and miracles in order to persuade [people] that God was the author and had sent [Don Guillén] as his writer, Prophet, [and] Preacher to defend the Catholic Faith and Evangelical justice.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁶⁶ The Real Academia's early modern dictionary defines "*proprissimamente*:" "*con grandisima propriedad*" (with much propriety). However, in the context of Zepeda Martínez's sentence, the word seems to be stressing the seductiveness of Don Guillén libels. Therefore, I have interpreted *proprissimamente* as "particularly," though this is by no means a precise translation. See Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, vol VI, p. 239.

¹⁶⁷ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee....*, p. 116. In this discussion, my evidence comes from what the Inquisition says about Don Guillén Lombardo's writings, rather than from the psalms themselves. While I was able to draw from many of the transcribed psalms Gabriel Méndez Plancarte provides in his book, *Don Guillén de Lámport y su "Regio Salterio"* in the first section of this thesis, the work was less useful for examining the prisoner's "heretical" tendencies. Méndez Plancarte is more interested in asserting the orthodox nature of Don Guillén's Christian beliefs (see Chapter XI: "*Ortodoxia de Don*

While he certainly believed in God, he had little respect for ecclesiastic authority; he was vehemently anti-clerical, not anti-Christian. He asserted that the Pope had no place in the temporal world—that Christ had given St. Peter power in the spiritual, not the material realm.¹⁶⁸ This belief was probably one of the most troubling for the Inquisitors, as it clearly echoed the views of the Protestant sects the Inquisition was vigorously trying to keep out of Spain and its dependencies. Saving his harshest words for the Inquisitors themselves, Don Guillén accused the institution of something “wholly opposed to the establishment of the *Santo Oficio*”—calling the office the “enemy of the Faith.”¹⁶⁹ In the “lampoons” he posted around Mexico City in December 1650, Don Guillén publicly denounced the institution for forcing false testimonies from innocents and confiscating private property for financial gain;¹⁷⁰ to do so, he used the same language to condemn the authorities that they were using paint him as a heretic. He called them “Jew-dogs and heretics,”¹⁷¹ maintained that they “wanted only to swallow the *bienes* [assets], *honras* [honor], and *almas* [souls]” of those they imprisoned, and even compared the Inquisitors to Martin Luther. They were “unfaithful...enemies of the Holy Faith, without authority to absolve or excommunicate.”¹⁷² Just as he used the same medium as religious authorities (public writing) to disseminate his libelous ideas, he utilized the inquisitorial language to make a scathing critique of the institution that had imprisoned him.

Guillen, pp. 56-60) than he is with providing a broad sample of his writing. Therefore, the edited collection of psalms does not contain any of the “heretical” material that Zepeda Martínez’s *relación* references.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹⁷⁰ See González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, pp. 177-78.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹⁷² Riva Palacio, *Memorias de un impostor*, pp. 184 and 188.

For Mexico's Inquisitors, the most confusing or frustrating aspect of Don Guillén's heresy might have been his insistence that he was an extremely devout Catholic. Like Menocchio, who told the Italian Holy Office, "I have always been a Christian, and remain so,"¹⁷³ Don Guillén saw his "Catholicism" grow more fervent even as his words appeared increasingly heretical to the Inquisitors. In one interrogation, he claimed that, "not even St. Paul spoke more Catholically than he."¹⁷⁴ At another point, he stated that all of his actions, including naming himself the "Marqués de Cropani, Viceroy of New Spain," were "directed to the service of his Majesty [King Philip IV], in order to warn him of any disturbance he might have discovered among the Portuguese" living in Mexico.¹⁷⁵ While this last declaration may have been one of the signs of insanity that the Inquisitors observed during his final years in prison, it also illustrates Don Guillén's conviction that he was a righteous subject of both crown and Church. With his vast secular and religious knowledge, he knew what it meant to be a perfect Christian; the authorities were the ones who misunderstood the faith.

The classically-educated Irish nobleman challenged the Inquisition by "knowing" Christianity better than it did. When in 1651 the Inquisitors accused Don Guillén of practicing astronomy, he responded by citing, among others: Daniel, Leviticus, Zoroaster, Plato, St. Basil, St. Isadora, Cardinal Hugo, and St. Thomas, "with many quotations in the original Latin, and [with] citation of volume and chapter numbers."¹⁷⁶ The Inquisitors attempted to correct his miseducation by forcing him to read books such as *Historia de los triunfos de Nuestra Santa Fe* [History of the Triumphs of Our Holy Faith] and a work

¹⁷³ Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, p. 103.

¹⁷⁴ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 115.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁷⁶ Brenner, "The Auto de Fe of 1659," p. 123.

by P. Rivadeneyra about the persecution of Catholics in England.¹⁷⁷ They tried to impose orthodox literature on a mind that was already saturated with Catholic dogma, and they had little success righting his “perverted” understanding. He would not accept responsibility for his crimes; worse, he refused to acknowledge the Inquisition’s superior authority in interpreting the word of God. By the fall of 1659, the Inquisition had charged Don Guillén Lombardo de Guzmán with committing 228 crimes against “Our Holy Faith” and was preparing to take more drastic action. The Irishman’s political schemes and heterodox religious practices were no longer the most serious threats; he publicly and consistently questioned the internal order of colonial society, making him the most dangerous type of criminal in Spanish and Spanish American society.

THE *AUTO DE FE* OF 1659

In light of the new crimes that Don Guillén had committed since his recapture in 1650, which included his written and spoken defamations of the faith and his continued refusal to make obeisance to the altars and images, let alone the Inquisitors in the audience chamber, the Inquisition convened in October 1659 to determine an appropriate sentence for the eccentric Irishman. On 30 October, having reviewed the prisoner’s most recent writings and testimonies, the Inquisitors voted unanimously to relax Don Guillén Lombardo to the secular arm of the government, which would have him burned at the stake after a general or public *auto de fe* later that year. The “ultimate, many and extremely grave crimes” (*últimos y muchísimos y gravísimos crímenes*) that he committed by speaking out against the Inquisition and its agents confirmed his identity as

¹⁷⁷ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 190.

a heretic.¹⁷⁸ He would be executed in the main plaza of Mexico City in an elaborate display of religious and secular power.

The *auto de fe*, or “act of faith,” was a sentencing ceremony that took place after an inquisitional proceeding. The Inquisition did not hold formal trials; rather, a number of different audiences, composed of Inquisitors and other officials, heard a case over an extended period of time. When the prosecution and the defense, such as it was, concluded their arguments, the trial would end with one of three possible outcomes. The accused could be “absolved” or “suspended,” where he was allowed to return to society, but could be called in for interrogation at any time; he could be punished and then “reconciled” back into the Church; or the Inquisition could “relax” the condemned prisoner to the secular arm of the state, which would burn him alive unless he confessed his sins at the last moment (in which case he would be mercifully strangled before being thrown into the flames).¹⁷⁹ The sentencing event was often private, held inside a church or the headquarters of the local tribunal, but was occasionally performed as a grandiose public spectacle.

The large-scale *auto de fe* began in Spain in the mid-sixteenth century. The Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdés devised a new “flamboyant public ceremony that would reaffirm the power of the Inquisition and reinforce its presence”—a reaction to the 1558 discovery of Protestant heretics in Spain.¹⁸⁰ The celebrations, according to the Inquisitorial Instructions of 1561, were to be held in public squares on feast days to ensure maximum attendance. All leading officials and members of the local elite were

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 197-203. See also: Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” pp. 128-29.

¹⁷⁹ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 196 and 198.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 205.

required to appear.¹⁸¹ The Inquisition forced the people it had recently convicted of religious and moral crimes to appear on stage and hear their offenses and sentences read aloud, and then executed the most unrepentant sinners. The authorities wanted the scene to resemble a *fiesta*; it was a theatrical production which evoked a sense of the colossal for its audience¹⁸²—a Renaissance display of royal and religious might that only grew more ostentatious in the Baroque.

The Tribunal in Mexico, like those in Spain, was only able to stage a limited number of *autos generales* (public *autos de fe*) due to the high cost of producing the event. Much more frequently, it sentenced convicted sinners in private ceremonies that took place in the Church of Santo Domingo in Mexico City or in the hall of the Tribunal. Of the 56 *autos de fe* the Inquisition held between 1574 and 1699, only a handful—those in 1574, 1596, 1601, 1659 and during the Great Conspiracy of 1642-1649—were the subjects of popular stories and commentary.¹⁸³ The largest and most memorable *auto de fe* in Mexico took place in 1649 when the Inquisitors virtually emptied the prisons of the Judaizers they had incarcerated over the past decade and brought them before the public in an enormous production. Forty Jews appeared before the people of Mexico City, including a number of members of the elite in this “most memorable *Auto* ever to be held outside the Iberian Peninsula (see appendix, fig. 6 for an artist’s depiction of the event).¹⁸⁴

The *auto de fe* of 19 November 1659, while not as large as the one staged a decade earlier, was the last great *auto* in the wave of inquisitional activity in mid-

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Consuelo Maqueda Abreu, *El auto de fe* (Madrid: Istmo, 1992), p. 127.

¹⁸³ Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, p. 78.

¹⁸⁴ Israel, *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico*, p. 246.

seventeenth-century Mexico. Zepeda Martínez, the official chronicler of the event, wrote in the introduction to his *relación*:

*Aunque en el numero de los reos no fue tan notable, como lo an sido otros Autos Generales, que se han celebrado por este Santo Officio; en la calidad de las causas, y variedad de sugetos en todo fue exquisito, y se hallaron castigados en el los mas enormes delictos contra nuestra Santa Fee Catholica que rara vez se suelen hallar en otros.*¹⁸⁵

Although the number of offenders was not as notable as in other *Autos Generales* celebrated by the Holy Office; in the quality of the cases and variety of subjects, it was exquisite, and in it was found the most enormous crimes against our Holy Catholic Faith that are rarely found in other [*autos*].

One of the criminals “most well-known around the city” was Don Guillén Lombardo, who was “famous for cooking up lies.”¹⁸⁶ Of all the offenders, Don Guillén was the worst—“all of his knowledge was diabolical.” When a pair of priests visited him in his cell the night before the *auto*, attempting to convince him to confess, he responded by “saying a thousand insults about the Inquisitors, affirming that in each of them there were a hundred legions of Demons.” “It was not possible to reduce him to reason...[as] it seemed that *el Demonio* had taken a seat in his chest.”¹⁸⁷

The next day, as many as 40,000 people braved the rain and mud to gather in Mexico City’s main square and witness the *auto de fe*.¹⁸⁸ The procession of the offenders began at six in the morning, with the sinners arriving in an order determined by the gravity of their crimes. The *relajados*, those the Crown planned to burn in person or in effigy, entered last and the officials did not finish reading their sentences until five in the afternoon.¹⁸⁹ Don Guillén was uncharacteristically silent throughout the ceremony. He

¹⁸⁵ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-29.

¹⁸⁸ Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 136.

¹⁸⁹ González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, pp. 221 and 229.

kept looking up toward the sky, “awaiting help from the Devil to free him.”¹⁹⁰ When he finally appeared at the *brasero* [stake], he had a large iron ring around his throat. The executioners’ intentions were to let the flames consume him while still alive, but at the last moment, having seen that “the Devil had tricked him” and would not come to his salvation, “he let himself fall suddenly, was strangled, and in a short while, the infernal man was ashes.”¹⁹¹

The elaborate spectacle of the Baroque *auto de fe* was, in the eyes of the authorities, a pedagogical device. It was a political and spiritual ritual in which God, Christianity, and the Spanish Crown triumphed over Satan and the condemned individual. The *auto de fe* provided a forum for displaying the “social model” of Mexico, just as it did in Spain; it explained the rules by which colonial subjects had to abide and showcased the men and women who attempted to break the mold, thus stigmatizing the crimes and their perpetrators.¹⁹² In grandiose public celebrations like the one that took place on 19 November 1659, the sacred and secular authorities came together in an event intended “to teach the community to conform to the norms of Tridentine Catholicism and the interests of the absolute monarchy.”¹⁹³ The Visitor General, the Inquisitors, the *corregidor* (chief magistrate) of Mexico and the *alcalde mayor* (provincial administrator)

¹⁹⁰ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee*, p. 46.

¹⁹¹ Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 137. Brenner is quoting Zepeda Martínez’s *relación*. See also: González Obregón, *La Inquisición y la independencia*, p. 231. The final minutes of Don Guillén Lombardo’s life are the subject of some historical controversy. The version that González Obregón relates here comes from Zepeda Martínez’s *relación*. However, the original record of Don Guillén’s *proceso* does not mention that the sinner strangled himself before being burned. It is not clear whether the *auto*’s chronicler added that part for dramatic effect or if the Inquisitors left the detail out of their record for a particular reason. They might have wanted to take the condemned heretic’s life themselves and were displeased that he had done it first.

¹⁹² See Miguel Avilés, “The Auto de Fe and the Social Model of Counter-Reformation Spain,” in Alcalá, *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, pp. 249–64.

¹⁹³ Alejandro Cañeque, “Theater of Power: Writing and Representing the Auto de Fe in Colonial Mexico,” *The Americas* 52:3 (1996), p. 323.

of Mexico City all took part in 1659 *auto de fe*.¹⁹⁴ The ceremony represented the fusion of religious and political authority in an attempt to assert a singular, Christian, and legitimate power over colonial subjects.

In this dramatic production, the authorities could end the lives of unrepentant offenders through the horrific act of burning them alive, or they could have them “mercifully” strangled if they repented after the death sentence was read. For those who confessed their sins prior to sentencing, the ceremony’s planners left a special place on the stage, where these people could be reconciled back into the Church.¹⁹⁵ The Inquisition expounded the *auto de fe* as a “theatre of such great mercy” (“*Teatro...de tan gran misericordia*”),¹⁹⁶ where the Church publicly forgave the errors of its subjects. The authorities asserted their power by creating a ritual in which divine, rather than worldly influences judged the guilty. That the *auto de fe* was a “mimesis of the Last Judgment” was not accidental;¹⁹⁷ the event unfolded in both the temporal and spiritual realms, with God as the force that ultimately decided the sinners’ fates.¹⁹⁸

Although the *auto general* initially appears to be an exercise of a monolithic imperial power structure, Michel Foucault’s work suggests that authority was negotiated during the spectacle as much as it was exerted. The execution of Don Guillén and the other heretics and Judaizers was an act of “revealing the truth,” of continuing, in the

¹⁹⁴ Brenner, “The Auto de Fe of 1659,” p. 135.

¹⁹⁵ Maureen Flynn, “Mimesis of the Last Judgment: The Spanish Auto de Fe,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22:2 (1991), p. 292.

¹⁹⁶ “*Poema heroyco, a el auto particular de fe que se celebró en la Ciudad de Granada, el día 31 de Enero desde presente año de 1723*,” Henry Charles Lea Collection, Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

¹⁹⁷ Flynn, “Mimesis of the Last Judgement,” p. 296.

¹⁹⁸ See also Richard van Dülmen, *Theatre of Horror: Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Germany*, trans. Elisabeth Neu (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), pp. 119-21.

public eye, the work of the judicial torture that occurred in private.”¹⁹⁹ It was a carefully scripted performance that displayed the “knowledge” interrogators had gathered during the trial process; it “published the truth of the crime in the very body of the man to be executed.”²⁰⁰ Yet, the meaning of the “truth” authorities sought to expose in the *auto de fe* was often ambiguous. Foucault writes:

...If the condemned man dies quickly, without a prolonged agony, is it not proof that God wishes to protect him and to prevent him from falling into despair? There is, therefore, an ambiguity in this suffering that may signify equally well the truth of the crime or the error of the judges, the goodness or evil of the criminal, the coincidence or the divergence between the judgment of men and that of God.²⁰¹

The public, as the “witnesses, the guarantors,” and the “main characters” of the event,²⁰² could thus draw some of its own conclusions from what it saw. The audience members viewed the elaborate display of religious and political power, but they may not have interpreted it as such. Furthermore, individual spectators may have understood the *auto de fe* differently, taking home with them varying impressions of what actually occurred.²⁰³

If Don Guillén did indeed strangle himself on the iron ring before the executioners could light the fire beneath him, then the act could have signified a partial defeat for both Christian faith and political authority. The Inquisitors had already failed to produce the desired “sorrowful manifestation of repentance” from the heretic, as Don Guillén refused to give a statement of “self-condemnation.” Making the guilty confess

¹⁹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 44.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 46.

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 57-58.

²⁰³ Max Harris discusses the ambiguities that colonial theater productions created, asserting that Mexican performances of biblical texts fostered a wide range of popular interpretations. See *The Dialogical Theatre: Dramatizations of the Conquest of Mexico and the Question of the Other* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), pp. 144-48,

his sins was one of the central goals of the ceremony; “Repentance was synonymous with the triumph of the Catholic faith.”²⁰⁴ The confession, according to Foucault, “had priority over any other kind of evidence” of a person’s guilt; “Through the confession, the accused himself took part in the ritual of producing penal truth.”²⁰⁵ It completed the disciplinary process and legitimated the justice of the inquisitional proceedings. When the sinner repented, he proved the authorities right; the Inquisition’s taxonomy stuck with the criminal and his crime. If a man labeled as a heretic admitted his misdeeds, then, in the eyes of the public, he must have been a heretic—an impurity that the Inquisition successfully cleansed from society. Therefore, in sentencing Don Guillén to be burned alive, the authorities revealed the defeat of both the individual sinner and the Christian religion. By refusing to confess and by taking his own life before the colonial government could do so, the Irishman exposed a weakness in the apparatus of punishment. The 40,000 spectators would have seen that the state did not execute the criminal exactly as planned, that its power was not absolute.

The congregation of such a large crowd in a single space posed a risk to the authorities that organized the event: the intended subjects of the pedagogical device could reject the spectacle. They could shout insults or even physically abuse the executioners, robbing the authorities of their disciplinary monopoly. The very place where imperial and religious power was made manifest could easily turn into a “center of illegality” if the audience did not accept the punishments as legitimate, or if its members detected a flaw in the carefully scripted proceedings.²⁰⁶ Even as the Inquisition and the colonial government were finally silencing Don Guillén, he was still publicly condemning them

²⁰⁴ Cañeque, “Theater of Power,” pp. 327-28. See also Avilés, “Auto de Fe and Social Model,” p. 252.

²⁰⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 38.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 59 and 63.

by refusing to repent and then committing suicide. The audience, even if it was happy to see the Irishman die, was nevertheless participating in a ceremony capable of generating multiple interpretations.

With the official *relación*, or chronicle of the *auto de fe*, the Inquisition sought to extend the event beyond the time and place of its execution—to inscribe it in official memory and popular legend. It employed the evolving technology of print to consolidate and disseminate the lessons the act of faith provided. Rodrigo Ruiz de Zepeda Martínez’s 130-page *relación* of the 1659 *auto de fe*, published the following year, “perfected all the possible readings that the spectators had made of the auto.”²⁰⁷ It listed all of the crimes Don Guillén had committed against the faith and the Spanish Crown, related the life story the heretic told Inquisitors while in prison, though it labeled many parts as elaborate lies, outlined his plan to establish an independent Mexico, recounted his escape from jail and seditious writings, and mentioned the offensive things he said about the Inquisitors. While Zepeda Martínez dedicates approximately half of the book to these “biographies” of criminals who appeared in the *auto de fe*, the other half is a narrative that describes the preparation and extravagant production of the ritual.

The *relación* asserted the legitimacy of the public celebration and helped spread the particular knowledge it imposed on the colonial population. Although it is difficult to judge the extent to which people had access to and read Zepeda’s *Auto General de la Fee...*,²⁰⁸ its appearance in print nevertheless meant that a wider audience than the one

²⁰⁷ Cañeque, “Theater of Power,” p. 334.

²⁰⁸ In his introduction to *Jews and the Inquisition in Mexico: The Great Auto de Fe of 1649*, Seymour Liebman states that these were chronicles that the Mexican Inquisition commissioned for the benefit of the members of the Supreme Tribunal in Madrid. The length and somewhat lofty language of the work suggest that the Inquisition may have intended the relations only for a highly-educated readers. Cañeque, however, asserts that the *auto de fe* reached a “wider audience” through these printed booklets (“Theater of Power,” p. 333), implying that their content seeped beyond the Tribunal offices. Even if the *relaciones* were

that had gathered in Mexico City's main square could now participate in the event and benefit from its instruction. The relation, like the edict of faith, fixed the criminals and their crimes in print. It reestablished the ritual of the *auto de fe* and reasserted the consequences of committing the sins it condemned. Furthermore, the printed document "grounded in truth" the performative, visual spectacle; it constituted a kind of "proof"²⁰⁹ of the ceremony's instructive power. Thus, publishing the *relación* allowed the authorities to expand the scope of the pedagogical device while sealing off interpretive gaps after the event had concluded.

Zepeda Martínez's *relación* also established rigid categories of moral and religious criminality and provided examples of the punishment each type of offense incurred. The groups included in the book are: "heretical blasphemers;" people "married twice;" "*falsarios*," which could have been liars or forgers; people who provided false testimonies; those who did not complete their penitence; subjects suspected of being Judaizers; witches; and men and women "*sospechosos en la Secta de los Hereges Alumbrados*" (suspected [members] of the 'illuminist' heretic sect). The most vile sinners, of which Don Guillén was one, had separate categories: "*Relajados en Persona*" and "*Relajados en Estatua*" (Relaxed in Person and Relaxed in Effigy). The smallest group, located at the end of the book, was the *Absueltos*, or the absolved. The organization of these crimes was more or less hierarchical, according to the gravity of the offense. Anyone who read or heard the list of convicted spiritual felons would see (or hear) the Inquisition's explicit expectations for religious behavior and know which

directed at a specific, elite group, the fact that they appeared in print meant that authorities could not ultimately control their distribution. Some of the information they contained would have likely reached popular readers.

²⁰⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 66.

transgressions were particularly serious. The *relación* codified a language for understanding crimes against the faith; each action had a name and brought a specific penalty.

In the unusual case of Don Guillén, however, we can see some of the limitations of these Old World methods of categorizing religious dissidence. He had consulted Indian astrologers, sold peyote, practiced magic, denied the worldly authority of the Pope, repeatedly insulted the officials of the Inquisition and attempted to subvert the king of Spain. Yet the Inquisitors had no adequate way of making sense of his misdeeds. In the list of the *relajados* that appears in the introduction to his relation, Zepeda Martínez describes Don Guillén only as a “heretic” (*hereje*).²¹⁰ The Inquisition used the same category to classify Don Guillén’s crimes that they did for the offenses of Jews, Muslims and Protestants. In the latter years of his prison sentence, when the Irishman began denouncing ecclesiastical figures and launched an attack on the Inquisition, the institution’s officials had enough evidence to label him a heretic. But Don Guillén was no Protestant. His hatred for the corruption and injustice of the Church and its agents, and the severe and dangerous nature of his other actions forced the Inquisition officials to use the only language that could sufficiently convey the magnitude of his wrongs.

Heresy, as a category of religious deviance, was increasingly outmoded in New Spain by 1650. Solange Alberro argues that relatively few people were secretly practicing Judaism in the colony, and even fewer followed the sects of Luther or Mohammed. Much more frequent were the instances of bigamy, polygamy, sexual solicitations in the confessional, and seditious speech. The heretics living in Mexico, whom the Inquisition persecuted aggressively only during the end of the sixteenth

²¹⁰ Zepeda Martínez, *Auto General de la Fee...*, p. 27.

century and from 1640-1660, practiced more casual, everyday forms of heresy than their European counterparts. Inhabitants of New Spain challenged Church orthodoxy by committing smaller infractions, or by simply ignoring the rules of moral and religious behavior.²¹¹ The Inquisition in Mexico was searching for an Old World heresy that in the Americas had evolved into a slipperier, more ambiguous set of beliefs and practices. Religious deviance was not the same in New Spain as it was in Castile, yet the Inquisition sought to eradicate it using an identical language.

Don Guillén's case illustrates that the Inquisition's criminal taxonomies were too simplistic. His offenses grew out of the fusion of European and Mexican knowledges and experiences; they represent a rabid colonial individualism and illustrate a distinctly colonial confusion of Christian, scientific and popular (European and indigenous) practices and beliefs. The authorities were looking for purveyors of traditional, organized heterodoxy but encountered a man who blended disparate forms of deviance into an ideology the Inquisitors had never seen. The Inquisition also had difficulty making Don Guillén's label stick. He refused to accept his identity as heretic, proclaiming himself a devout Catholic and claiming that the Inquisitors were the sinners. He rejected the language of the authorities and then threw it back at them. Don Guillén exploited this language gap by publicly fashioning himself—through print and performance—as an innocent believer and the Inquisitors as corrupt and impious.

²¹¹ Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, pp. 170-71. See also: Trabulse, "Tres momentos de la heterodoxia científica," p. 8.

CONCLUSION

Don Guillén Lombardo's ultimate downfall likely resulted from his fierce anticlericalism; he had a specific agenda for social change in Mexico that sought to replace the dominant "clerical culture" with a unique strand of Catholic "folk culture." Jacques Le Goff defines clerical culture as the "rational [heir to] aristocratic Greco-Roman culture"; it separates "good and evil...truth and falsehood...[and]...black magic and white magic, [with] Manicheism in the proper sense being avoided only through the omnipotence of God."²¹² Le Goff asserts that during the medieval period, this ecclesiastical culture gradually penetrated, "obliterated," and "denatured" a "basically ambiguous, equivocal" folk culture that tolerated "belief in forces good and evil at one and the same time."²¹³ Don Guillén's views fit the folk model in that they seamlessly integrated orthodox and heterodox practices in a popular (and populist), anti-ecclesiastical brand of Catholicism.

Yet Don Guillén's classical education and noble origins suggest that the framework Le Goff uses to conceptualize medieval European society is too rigid to accommodate the complexities of seventeenth-century Mexican society. The antagonism between Don Guillén and the inquisitional authorities did not stem from a "division based

²¹² Jacques Le Goff, "Clerical Culture and the Traditions of Folklore in Merovingian Civilization," *Social Historians in Contemporary France: Essays from Annales* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 137.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-37.

on ignorance;”²¹⁴ rather, the Irishman was guilty of *knowing too much* and of using that knowledge to challenge the existing monopoly on religious discourse and practice. In the New World, the collision of European and Amerindian traditions created a folk culture that included non-folk people—that is, people other than rural, illiterate peasants. The intellectual and religious *mestizaje* of Colonial Mexico and the gradual diffusion of print and reading cultures helped to redefine the boundaries between folk and clerical cultures, while highlighting the porous, flexible nature of those divisions. Thus, Don Guillén’s case illustrates how the clerical culture’s “obliteration” of folk culture was uneven and incomplete. The border between these two cultures, in both Europe and the Americas, was not fixed. Furthermore, the weapons the Inquisition employed in its fight against popular (unorthodox) practice did not always succeed; the religious and secular authorities had power over the bodies of non-conformers, but, as Don Guillén illustrated in Mexico City’s 1659 *auto de fe*, those institutions’ efforts to correct the minds and souls of their subjects sometimes failed. The Inquisition curbed Don Guillén’s capacity to “invent new heresies”²¹⁵ when it took his life, but it had scored only a partial victory. The sinner did not accept responsibility for his crime and had certainly not internalized the Inquisition’s expectations for proper Christian behavior.

Don Guillén Lombardo did not represent a Colonial Mexican archetype—that is, his story does not symbolize a typical New World experience—but his life and inquisitional proceedings illustrate some of the ways power was exerted and contested in seventeenth-century New Spain. His case allows us to more closely examine the gaps in colonial authority—the instances when its legitimacy came into question. In reviewing

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

²¹⁵ See Zepeda Martínez, “Auto General de la Fee...,” p. 118.

Don Guillén's historical record, we can pinpoint the "spaces" that historians and literary theorists such as Serge Gruzinski and Walter Mignolo have identified as defining characteristics of New World society. Some of these gaps, such as the Inquisition's inability to communicate in a language everyone could understand, and the inherent risks that the production of an *auto de fe* posed to authorities, were not unique to Mexico. Others, however, reflected the particular challenges European governments faced on the American continent. The Inquisitors headquartered in Mexico City, despite their network of *comisarios* and *familiares*, could not control the moral and religious behavior of the inhabitants of such a vast territory. They did not comprehend the complex nature of New World spirituality, which was a hybridization of Catholic, indigenous, "folk," and orthodox practices. Furthermore, they classified religious crimes using an Old World taxonomy incapable of accommodating the challenges Mexican society presented. In the mid-seventeenth century, as the Spanish state struggled to maintain its political stability at home and abroad, the religious authorities in Mexico fought to close the gaps in its control. Dissidents such as Don Guillén, however, attempted to push those spaces open, and, even if the Inquisition ultimately apprehended them, enjoyed small victories.

In the years that followed Don Guillén's public execution, an investigation by the Visitor General Pedro de Medina Rico discovered that several of the Irishman's accusations about the Inquisitors were true. Archbishop Mañozca, whom Don Guillén attacked in one of the placards he posted in 1650, had, according to Medina Rico, "done nothing but persecute Bishop Juan de Palafox and some of the others whom Mañozca disliked."²¹⁶ The Inquisitors, wrote Medina Rico, were not only incompetent, they committed gross violations of Christian and secular law. On 17 May 1662, the *visitador*

²¹⁶ Brenner, "The Auto de Fe of 1659," p. 141.

read the sentences against the Mexican officials: the Inquisitors were guilty in matters of “self-interest...inconsistency, and taking of prisoners’ goods, inside and outside of auctions.” Juan Saenz de Mañozca, the cousin of the former Archbishop, had exercised excessive cruelty, resulting in the death of at least one prisoner in his jail cell. Another Inquisitor, Bernabé de la Higuera, had lived openly with two female slaves—a mulatto and an African—for twenty years, and had children with the latter.²¹⁷ Don Guillén continued to enlarge the gaps in colonial authority even after his death; the convictions of the corrupt Inquisitors might have vindicated the condemned heretic. For those who read or heard the Irishman’s accusations, the heretic, not the apparatus of justice appeared more righteous.

Don Guillén’s case illuminates the mechanics of colonial power, highlighting its capacities as well as its vulnerabilities. It shows the process by which the Inquisition constructed itself as Godly and its prisoners as heretics, and the ways these deviants could resist that classification by fashioning themselves, and the Inquisitors, as something different. These weaknesses in the inquisitorial system likely contributed to the institution’s loss of potency after 1660. The revitalization of religious persecution that occurred in mid-seventeenth-century Mexico, which led to the discovery of the Great Conspiracy of 1642 and the uncovering of Don Guillén’s plot to overthrow the viceroy, fizzled after the 1659 *auto*. Medina Rico’s indictment of the Inquisitors certainly damaged the Tribunal’s credibility, and the gradual stabilization of Spain’s political and economic situations in the latter half of the seventeenth century made spiritual consolidation less urgent; the need to shore up the empire’s fringes was not as great. Yet, the Holy Office might also have halted its “murderous activity” after 1660—it sentenced

²¹⁷ Ibid.

few heretics and held no more *autos de fe* on the scale of those staged in 1649 and 1659²¹⁸—because it lacked the legitimacy to perform the event. The sacred and secular officials might have feared that the spectacle of authority would turn into the “center of illegality” that Foucault describes—holding the *auto general* exposed the government to the risk that the public would reject the judicial process.

Don Guillén’s defiance of the Inquisition, and the penalty he received for his offenses, suggest that the greatest fear of the Holy Office was that it would lose control over its criminal categories. The brilliant Irish subversive, whose life story and strange ideas about politics and religion baffled the Inquisitors, refused to accept his identity as a heretic. When the authorities thought they had finally labeled and silenced him, displaying the sinner in front of 40,000 subjects, he took a final jab at the Inquisition by killing himself before the flames could consume him. In refusing to confess his guilt, he rendered “mimesis of the last judgment”²¹⁹ incomplete; in robbing the authorities of their power to kill, Don Guillén made the validity of the ceremony suspect. He refused to be fashioned by an institution that, in his mind, had perverted the Christian faith, and made every attempt to frame himself as a pious religious and political reformer before the eyes of the Mexican public.

²¹⁸ Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 240.

²¹⁹ I am borrowing Maureen Flynn’s term, the title of an article cited earlier in this thesis.

APPENDIX

- Figure 1:** 75
 Map of New Spain in the 17th Century.
 Source: Israel, *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico*, inside cover.
- Figure 2:** 76
 Anton Van Dyck's portrait of Don Guillén Lombardo, painted 1634-1636.
 Source: Troncarelli, *La Spada e la Croce*, insert after p. 176.
- Figure 3:** 77
 Cover of Don Guillén's *Regio Salterio*.
 Source: Méndez Plancarte, *Don Guillén de Lámport y su "Regio Salterio,"* fig. 1.
- Figure 4:** 78
 Don Guillén's signature and (invented) coat of arms.
 Source: Méndez Plancarte, *Don Guillén de Lámport y su "Regio Salterio,"* figs. 4 and 5.
- Figure 5:** 79
 Horoscope of Don Sebastián Alfonso Carrillo, drawn by Don Guillén.
 Source: Méndez Plancarte, *Don Guillén de Lámport y su "Regio Salterio,"* fig. 8.
- Figure 6:** 80
 Depiction of Mexico City's 1649 *auto de fe*.
 Source: Curcio-Nagy, "Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico," p. 171.

WORKS CITED

Primary Sources

From the The New York Pubic Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, Rare Books Division:

Zepeda Martínez, Rodrigo Ruiz de. *Auto General de la Fee...* Mexico City: La imprenta del Secreto del Santo Oficio, 1660.

From the Henry Charles Lea Collection, Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia:

(Mexican Inquisition). "Nos los Apostolicos, contra la heretica pravedad..." Broadside. Mexico City: 22 August 1628.

(Mexican Inquisition). "Nos los Apostolicos, contra la heretica pravedad..." Broadside. Mexico City: 31 December 1650.

"Poema heroyco, a el auto particular de fe que se celebró en la Ciudad de Granada, el día 31 de Enero desde presente año de 1723."

From the Rare Book Collection, Haverford College Library, Haverford, Pennsylvania:

Diccionario de la lengua castellana: en que se explica el verdadero sentido de las voces, su naturaleza y calidad, con las frases o modos de hablar, los proverbios o refrandes, y otras cosas convenientes al uso de la lengua. Madrid: R. Academia Española, 1726-39.

Secondary Sources

Alberro, Solange. *Inquisición y sociedad en México 1571-1700.* Mexico City.: Fondo de la Cultura Económica, 1988.

Avilés, Miguel. "The Auto de Fe and the Social Model of Counter-Reformation Spain." In *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, edited by Angel Alcalá. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984: 249-264.

Bacon, Francis. *The Essays: "The Wisdom of the Ancients;" "New Atlantis."* New York: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1908.

- Bennassar, Bartolomé. "Patterns in the Inquisitorial Mind as the Basis for a Pedagogy of Fear." In Alcalá, *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*: 177-186.
- Brenner, Henry. "The Auto de Fe of 1659 and Don Guillen Lombardo de Guzman." Masters thesis, University of Texas, 1961.
- Burkholder, Mark A. with Suzanne Hiles. "An Empire Beyond Compare." In *The Oxford History of Mexico*, edited by Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezely. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000: 115-149.
- Cañeque, Alejandro. "Theater of Power: Writing and Representing the Auto de Fe in Colonial Mexico." *The Americas* 52:3 (1996): 321-343.
- Cardaillac, Louis. "Vision simplificatrice des groupes marginaux par le groupe dominant dans l'Espagne des XVI et XVII siècles." In Augustin Redondo, *Les Problèmes de l'exclusion en l'Espagne, XVI-XVII siècles*. Paris: 1983), p. 12. Quoted in Deborah Root. "Speaking Christian: Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth-Century Spain." *Representations* 23 (1988): 118-34.
- Chartier, Roger. *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, translated by Linda G. Cochrane. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- _____. "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century." In *A History of Reading in the West*, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. 269-283.
- Collins Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993.
- Curcio-Nagy, Linda A. "Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico." In Meyer and Beezley, *Oxford History of Mexico*: 151-182.
- Davis, J.C. "Utopia in the New World, 1500-1700." In *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*. Edited by Roland Schaer, Gregory Claeys, and Lyman Tower Sargent. New York: The New York Public Library/Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965.
- Dedieu, Jean Pierre. "The Archives of the Holy Office of Toledo as a Source for Historical Anthropology," translated by E.W. Monter. In *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods*, edited by Gustav Henningsen

- and John Tedeschi in association with Charles Amiel. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986: 158-189.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process, Part IV: Synopsis*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993.
- Elliott, J.H. *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*. New York: Meridian, 1963.
- _____. *Spain and its World 1500-1700: Selected Essays*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Flynn, Maureen. "Mimesis of the Last Judgment: The Spanish Auto de Fe." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22:2 (1991): 281-297.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheriden. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- _____. "Lives of Infamous Men." *Power*, edited by James D. Faubion. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: The New Press, 1994.
- Frenk, Margit. "'Lectores y oidores': La difusión oral de la literatura en el Siglo de Oro." In *Actas del Séptimo Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, publicadas por Giuseppe Bellini*. Rome: Bulzoni, 1982. Quoted in Chartier, "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading," p. 277.
- Geneva, Ann. *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, translated by John and Anne Tedeschi. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.
- _____. "The Dovecote Has Opened its Eyes: Popular Conspiracy in Italy," translated by J. Tedeschi and Erdmut Lerner. In Henningsen and Tedeschi, *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*: 190-198.
- González Obregón, Luis. *D. Guillén Lampart: La Inquisición y la independencia en México en el siglo XVII*. Mexico City: Vda. De C. Bouret, 1908.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

- Greenleaf, Richard E. *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969.
- Gruzinski, Serge. *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)*, translated by Heather MacLean. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.
- _____. *The Mestizo Mind: the Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, translated by Deke Dusinberre. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Harris, Max. *The Dialogical Theatre: Dramatizations of the Conquest of Mexico and the Question of the Other*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.
- Israel, J.I. *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico 1610-1670*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Jouhaud, Christian. "Readability and Persuasion: Political Handbills." In *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Roger Chartier. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989: 235-260.
- Kamen, Henry. *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- _____. *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Klor de Alva, Jorge J. "Colonizing Souls: The Failure of the Indian Inquisition and the Rise of Penitential Discipline." In *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991: 3-22.
- Krippner Martínez, James. *Rereading the Conquest: Power, Politics, and the History of Early Colonial Michoacán, Mexico, 1521-1565*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*. New York: Macmillan, 1922.
- Le Goff, Jacques. "Clerical Culture and the Traditions of Folklore in Merovingian Civilization." In *Social Historians in Contemporary France: Essays from Annales*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972: 131-140.
- Leonard, Irving. *Baroque Times in Old Mexico: Seventeenth-Century Persons, Places, and Practices*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1959.

- _____. "Peyote and the Mexican Inquisition, 1620." *American Anthropologist*, New Series 44:2 (1942): 324-326.
- Liebman, Seymour B. *The Jews in New Spain: Faith, Flame, and the Inquisition*. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970.
- _____. *Jews and the Inquisition in Mexico: The Great Auto de Fe of 1649*. Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1974.
- Lynch, John. *Spain Under the Habsburgs*. Vol. II. New York: New York University Press, 1981.
- Maqueda Abreu, Consuelo. *El auto de fe*. Madrid: Istmo, 1992.
- Méndez Plancarte, Gabriel. *Don Guillén de Lamport y su "Regio Salterio"—MS latino inédito de 1655*. Mexico City: Ábside, 1948.
- Meyer, Michael C., William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds. *The Course of Mexican History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Mignolo, Robert D. *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Netanyahu, Benzion. "The Primary Cause of the Inquisition." In Alcalá, *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*: 11-32.
- Pagden, Anthony. *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513-1830*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Perry, Mary Elizabeth. *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1980.
- Revel, Jacques. "Microanalysis and the Construction of the Social." In *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*. Edited by Jacques Revel and Lynne Hunt. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer and others. New York: The Free Press, 1995: 492-502.
- Riva Palacio, Vicente. *Memorias de un impostor: Don Guillen de Lampart, Rey de México* vol. 2. Mexico City: Editorial Porru, 1946.
- Rudgley, Richard. *Essential Substances: A Cultural History of Intoxicants in Society*. New York: Kodansha International, 1993.
- Stoler, Ann Laura and Frederick Cooper. "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a

- Research Agenda.” In *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Edited by Stoler and Cooper. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Thomas, Keith. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971.
- Toribio Medina, José. *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1905.
- Trabulse, Elias. “Tres momentos de la heterodoxia científica en el México colonial.” *Quiju 5:1* (1988): 7-17.
- Troncarelli, Fabio. *La Spada e la Croce: Guillén Lombardo e L’Inquizione in Messico*. Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1999.
- _____. “The Man Behind the Mask of Zorro.” *History Ireland* 9:3 (2001): 22-25.
- Tuck, Richard. *Natural Rights Theories: Their Origin and Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Underdown, David. *A Freeborn People: Politics and the Nation in Seventeenth-Century England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Van Dülmen, Richard. *Theatre of Horror: Crime and Punishment in Early Modern Germany*. Translated by Elisabeth Neu. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.
- Verastique, Bernadino. *Michoacán and Eden: Vasco de Quiroga and the Evangelization of Western Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.
- Wootton, David. “Leveller Democracy and the Puritan Revolution,” In *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*. Edited by J.H. Burns. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.