THE MAESTRO AND THE DANCE

Xipe Projects: Latin American Masks and Popular Art / December 6, 2014 - March 1, 2015

The Maestro and the Dance

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Peter Markman
essays/edit

Alison Heney, PhD
graphic design/layout/production

Peter Dworin
studio photography

Nelson López Rojas
spanish/english translations

Indie Printing - Downtown LA
printing/binding

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"The Maestro and the Dance"
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Xipe Projects

Latin American Masks and Popular Art

Xipe Projects is a non-profit educational foundation established in 2011 for the purpose of promoting the study and appreciation of the masked dance tradition and popular art of Latin America.

The Foundation serves to disseminate information about and stimulate interest in Latin American masking and popular art through conducting and underwriting research and exhibitions of material drawn primarily, but not exclusively, from the Peter and Roberta Markman collection.

Peter T. Markman, Director

Dr. Alison L. Heney, Curator and Assistant Director

Dr. Jesse Hoffman, Staff Consultant

Hangman Designer Services, Exhibition Installation

Peter Dworin, Studio Photography

Armando Colina and Victor Acuña
Representatives in Mexico

Foreword

The Maestro and the Dance and the Loa Project

In 2006, my colleague Mariana Grajales and I were invited to Guatemala to help catalogue a series of dance texts that had been collected by a local *maestro* in Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa.

What we were met with when we arrived were literally stacks of notebooks and slips of papers numbering in the hundreds, mostly handwritten, that had been collected by village *maestro* Florencio Valey in the middle parts of the twentieth century. As we read through them, we found that each small book contained what looked like a series of short plays and prologues (most between 100 and 300 verses) which a *maestro* like Florencio would carry around as a kind of play script in order to teach the actors their lines for the religious festival.

While both Mariana and I had some familiarity with the Guatemalan dance tradition (or *Bailes*) such as the "Dance of the Conquest" or the "Moors and Christians," what we happened upon that summer was evidence of a quite different, although integral part, of the masked dance tradition - the *Loa*.

While some work had been done on the *Loa* by Gustavo Correa in 1961, his research was based on a sample of only 60 individual pieces, now housed by the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University.

During our stay in Guatemala, Ms. Grajales and I were in the very privileged position of sorting through literally hundreds of examples dating back as early as the 1920's. It was a position, I'm eager to say, that has only grown more exciting with the Valey family's recent decision to entrust this very same collection, along with a wonderful cache of masks and costumes, to us at *Xipe Projects*.

With sincerest thanks to Gio Rossilli of Antigua Guatemala whose efforts made all of this possible, the Tinker Foundation, and most of all, the Valey Family Estate, I am excited to announce that we are laying the foundation for what we hope will be a significant contribution to the study and preservation of this part of the Guatemalan dance tradition – *The Loa Project*.

Over the course of the next few years, it is our plan to conserve, translate, and make accessible these documents through an online archive for future generations. This exhibit is just the beginning.

As I hope this exhibition and catalogue show, the study and appreciation of cultural performance by *Xipe Projects* is very much rooted in the idea that the dance is a living expression.

There is so much more to come.

-Alison Heney, PhD, Curator
December 2014

THE MAESTRO AND THE DANCE

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Maestro

Who was Florencio Valey?

Florencio Valey, Maestro de la Danza

According to his youngest son, Exequiel Valey Garcia, Florencio "was an enthusiastic person who very much enjoyed the experience of the dances. He had a great passion for the music that he played [on the accordion] for the *bailes* and *loas*. His life was organized around the dances and his work at the *finca*."

Florencio was born on October 15th, 1923 to Micaela Valey in San Miguel Chicaj, Baja Verapaz, Guatemala. At the age of nineteen, he came to *Finca El Bálsamo*, a sugar cane plantation near Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa on the Pacific slope of Guatemala. He spent the rest of his life there, working as a laborer and security guard, marrying Fabiana Garcia, and raising seven children. According to Exequiel, "he was tall with a dark complexion and black hair with dark brown eyes. He liked to wear a hat and long sleeve shirts. He was friendly, respectful, honest and was an especially hard worker." He is the man holding the accordion in the troupe of devils pictured on our catalogue's title page (pg 6).

These are the bare facts of his life, but all that is displayed in this exhibition testifies to his deep and enduring love for the traditional dances of Maya Guatemala. He designed and paid for the making of these costumes. He bought the masks, repainted them from time to time, and and replaced them when he had to. He accumulated well over a thousand texts of *bailes* and *loas* of which we have about 750.

Preparing for the annual Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th and the celebration of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph on December 23rd actually went on for the entire year as plans were made, costumes were repaired and replaced, and texts were recopied. And Florencio was in charge of all of this.

In addition to orchestrating the festival dances at the *finca* and in Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa, he rented costumes, masks, and texts to other maestros in order to make the money needed to finance his activities as maestro. And he occasionally rented costumes and masks from *morerias* in Totonicapan in order to produce one of his favorite *bailes*, the *Baile de los Tres Venados*. All of these activities were part of his role as a *maestro*; he was in charge of producing the dances of the festival and his wife, Fabiana, was in charge of preparing the tremendous amount of food needed. Interestingly, one of the exhibited copy books containing dances has a shopping list inserted and the names of those responsible for getting each item. Truly, as Exequiel said, "he liked the dances, traditions, and the culture, and he liked to participate in all the activities prepared by the *finca*."

The Festival

When do we perform?

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Florencio Valey's favorite *loa*, the *Desafio*, presented in facsimile in this catalogue and translated by Nelson López Rojas on page 35, ends with this poetic *despedida*, or leave-taking, spoken in unison by all four actors. It provides a key to an understanding of the tradition of the loa as an expression of the cult of Mary, especially in her role as the Virgin of Conception.

Seguid fieles devotos, seguid,
y del error no os guiés
pues el ejemplo está patente
que religión, solo la presente.
Y por eso hoy gritamos
con voz potente.
Viva nuestra Religión
Viva nuestra virgen de Concepcion

While the immaculate conception of Mary may involve a complex theological argument and the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception may be seen as "a representation of a doctrine of the church,"[i] on December 8th in Maya Guatemala generally and on the *Finca El Bálsamo* particularly, she became a living reality.

On that day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Mary was celebrated as the heart and soul of *nuestra Religión* - that is to say, the *costumbre* religion as discussed by Rhonda Taube. The fireworks, the food and drink, and above all, the loas that were performed were all intended to glorify *nuestra virgen de Concepción*.

i. Tony Pasinski, *The Santos of Guatemala*, Vol.1 (Guatemala, DIDACSA, nd), p. 122.

Dance

What is a Loa?

The Loa

The easy answer to that question is that it is a short dance/drama meant to be performed during festivals celebrating the Virgin by the Maya of Guatemala. Most often it is connected to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and generally includes an invocation of the Virgin at the beginning and at the end. Unlike the longer and more complex *bailes* that can last several hours (and often seem interminable), *loas* almost always take less than half an hour, sometimes considerably less.

The great majority of them have five or fewer actors; in the Valey collection there are several that have only one. In addition to their religious function, they are meant to be entertaining. Sword fights, crazy devils with fireworks exploding from their backs, folks confronted by forces they can't understand or control, all of these situations are designed to captivate the audience. The *loa* is popular drama, folk theater at its most entertaining.

The Guatemalan *loa* in its contemporary form is the distant heir of a dramatic form prevalent in 15th century Spain at the time of that country's expulsion of the Moors (the *Reconquista*) and its conquests in the Americas (the *Conquista*). The Spanish *loa* was basically a prologue to a play. It praised the audience and sometimes asked for their "acostumbrado silencio."[i] (In today's terms that would be, "please turn off your cell phones.") This short prologue became an independent play when it came to the Americas along with the *conquistadores*. The missionary friars used the *loa* along with other Spanish dramatic forms in their attempts to replace indigenous religious practices with Christian ones. Since dance played a major role in indigenous religion, the friars introduced Spanish folk dance/drama with religious subjects.

Most popular were variants of the Moors and Christians dances celebrating the *Reconquista*, and when these were shortened to the *loa* format, they became dance/dramas like the *Desafio* reproduced and translated in this catalogue.

These were embraced by the indigenous population despite the seeming identification of the Moors with the Maya as the enemy vanquished by the Christians. The other *loa* reproduced and translated here represents another frequent plot, this one featuring devils who are always defeated by angelic forces. But whatever the story, the veneration of the Virgin is a constant.

And the Virgin is central in contemporary performances in another way as well. Loas are generally performed at festivals devoted to the Virgin, especially the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. In these festivals in the larger highland Maya towns, a *baile*, such as the *Baile de la Conquista*, will be presented in front of the church, and *loas*, will take place at designated points along the route of the procession of the Virgin through the town. [ii]

Now, of course, the tradition is changing due in great part to influences from North American popular culture. As Rhonda Taube puts it, "the indigenous-traditional dances seek to resurrect and maintain the local Maya world of their ancestors, while the … [new and very different dances] attempt to incorporate and emulate the enigmatic and often elusive other world of '*Gringolandia*' into immediate local space and imagination" (Taube, "Foreign Characters, p. 118). What happened to the tradition of Maya dance at the time of the Conquest seems to be happening again.

i. Joseph A. Meredith, *Introito and Loa in the Spanish Drama of the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1928), p. 105.

ii. Much of this discussion is drawn from Gustavo Correa and Calvin Cannon, "La Loa en Guatemala," in *The Native Theater in Middle America* (New Orleans: Tulane University Middle American Research Institute, 1961), pp. 1-96.

Special Note: Xipe Projects houses 770 separate dance texts. Of these, 631 are of loas and 139 are bailes.

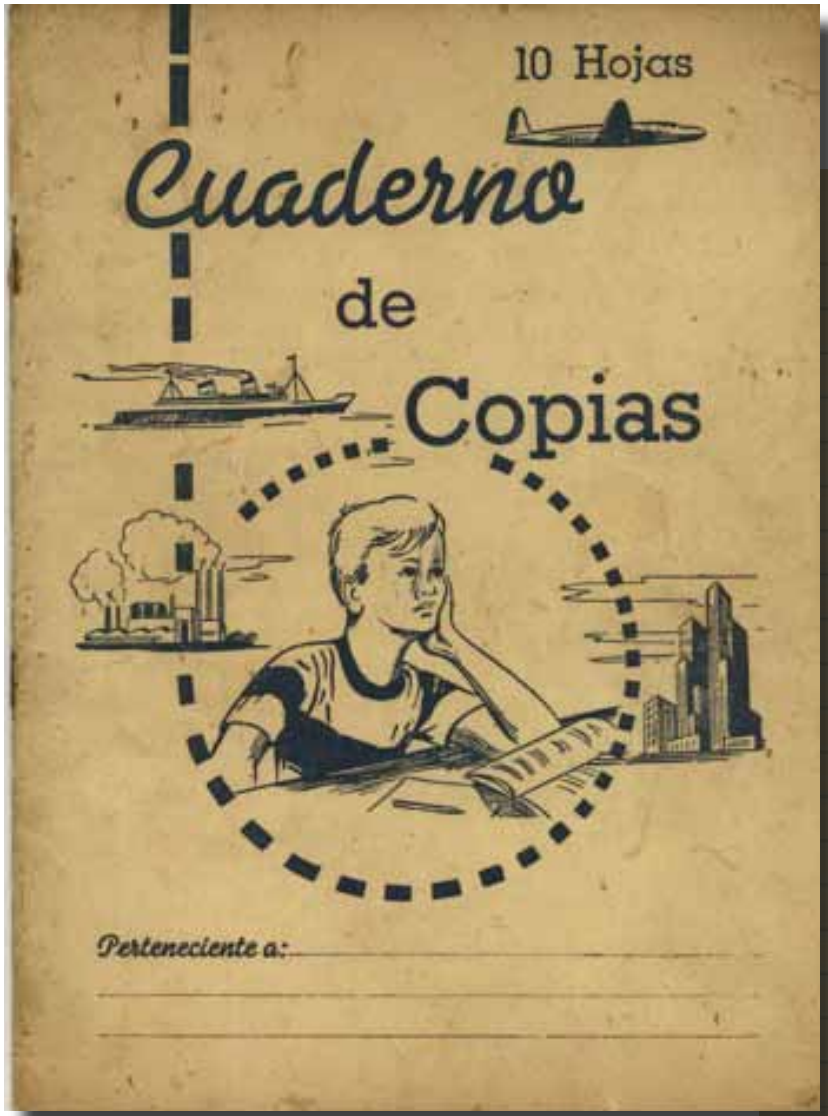
Among the loa texts there are 159 full texts of loas and 472 partial texts, almost all of them "originales" or "papeles," that is to say, the speeches of a single character written out as a separate text.

Among the baile texts there are 27 full texts of bailes and 112 partial texts. The collection contains 34 bound "copy books" with multiple dance texts.

THE MAESTRO AND THE DANCE

El Diablo

The Devil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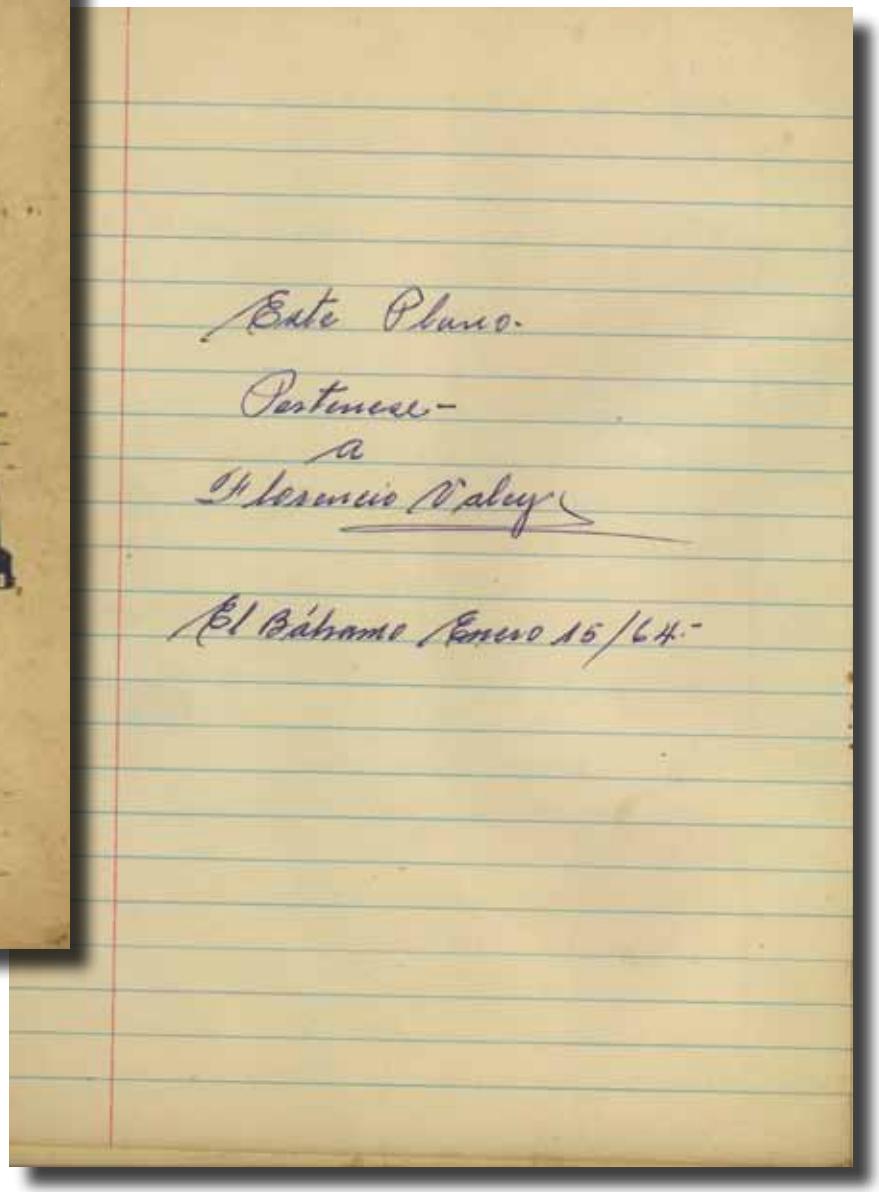
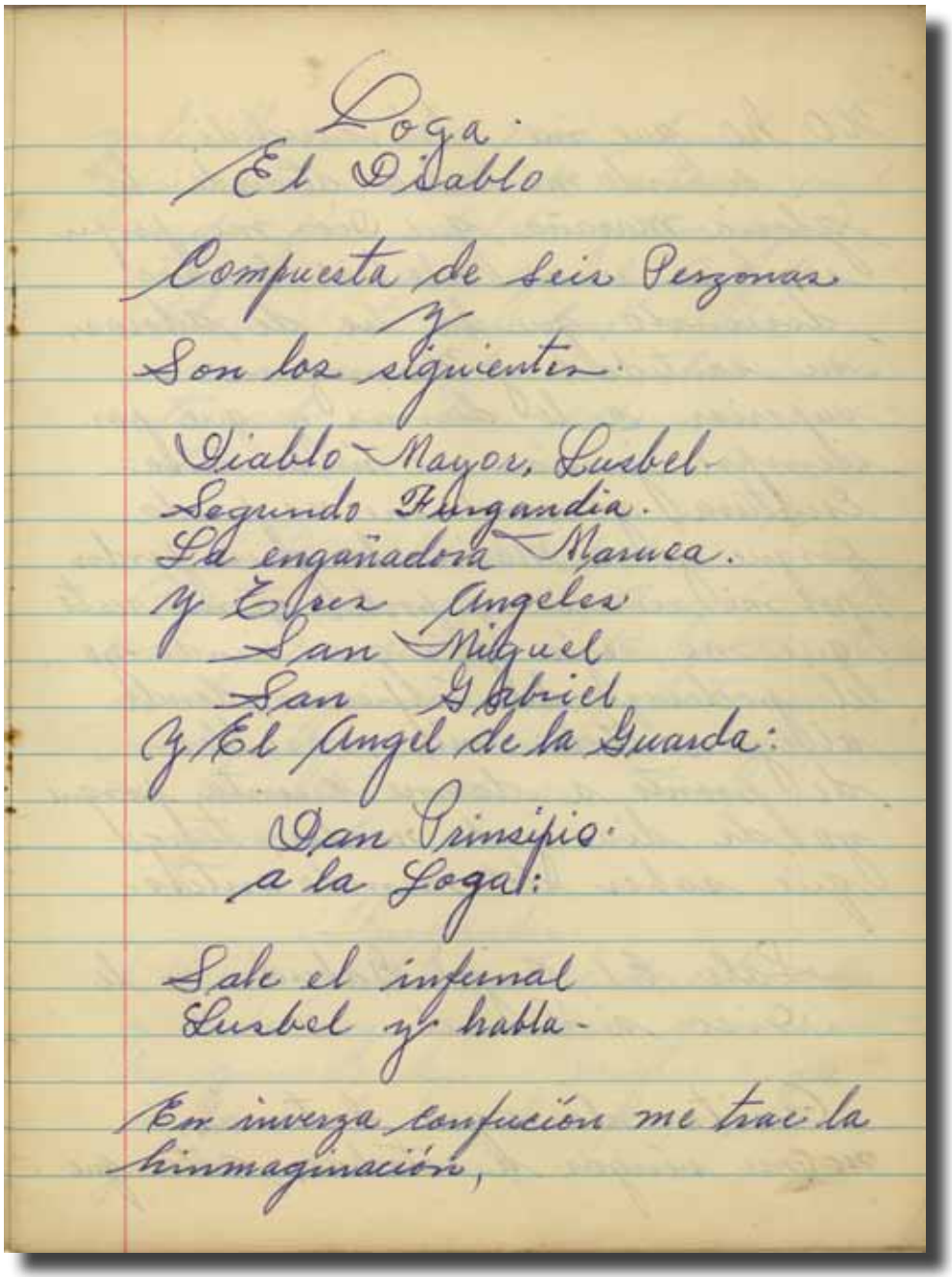

Este Plano.
Pertenece-
a
D. Lorenzo Valey
El Bálsamo Enero 15/64.-


Loga.
El Diablo
Compuesta de seis Personas
y
Son los siguientes.
Diablo Mayor, Lusbel.
Segundo Hurgandia.
La engañadora Maruca.
y Tres Angeles
San Miguel
San Gabriel
y El Angel de la Guarda:
Dan Principio.
a la Loga:
Sale el infernal
Lusbel y habla.
En inverza confucion me trae la
himaginación,

Loga [1]
The Devil

Cast of Characters

Lucifer, Senior Devil.

Segundo Hurgundia.

Maruca, The Deceiver.

And Three Angels:

St. Michael.
St. Gabriel.
and the Guardian Angel:

Initiate the Loga.

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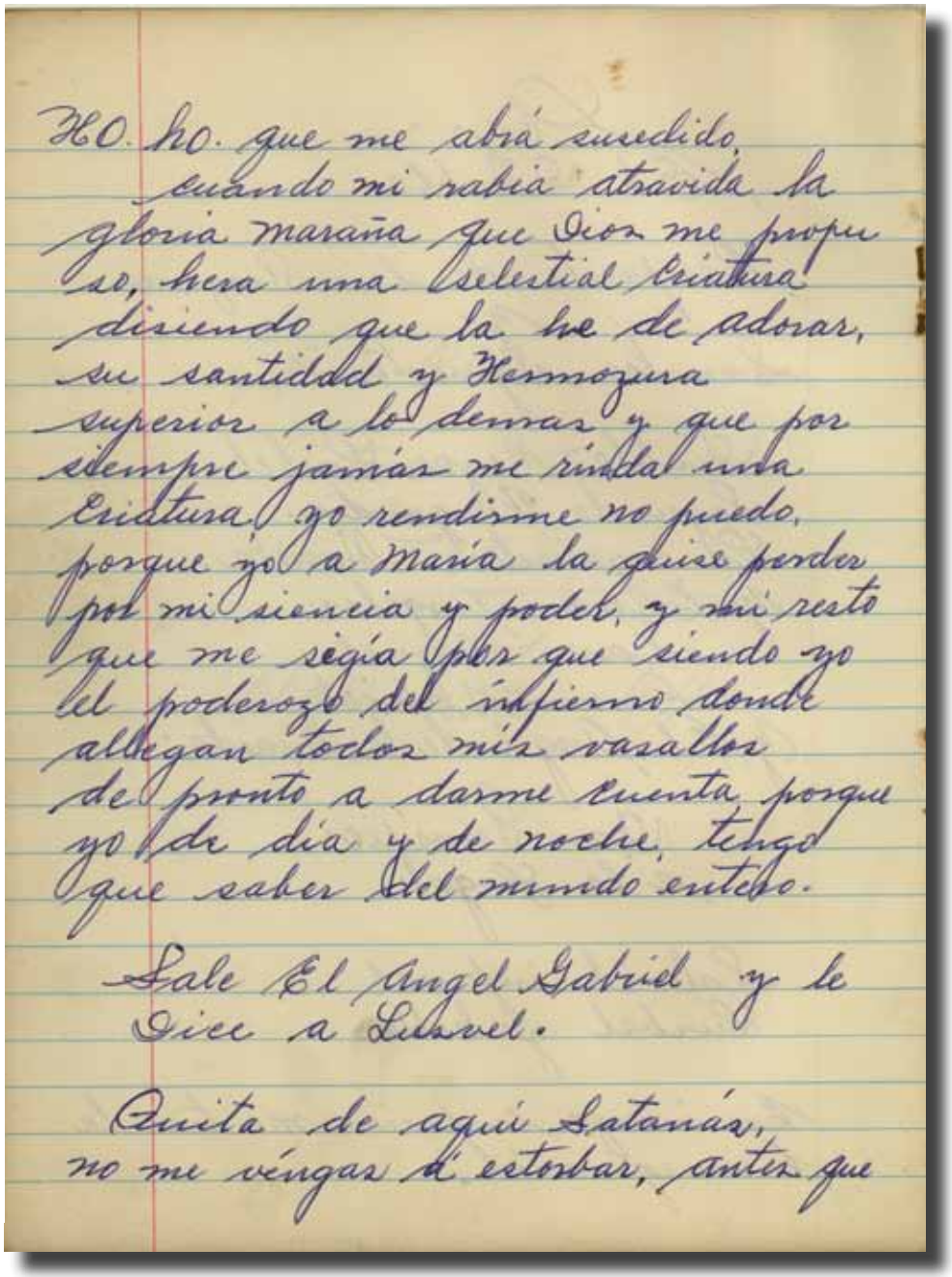
1. The play writer has chosen spoken language in Spanish to convey the meaning of what is being said. Loga or Loa refers to a short dramatic praise, or to put it in Shakespeare's words, a prologue.



The infernal Lucifer comes out and speaks:

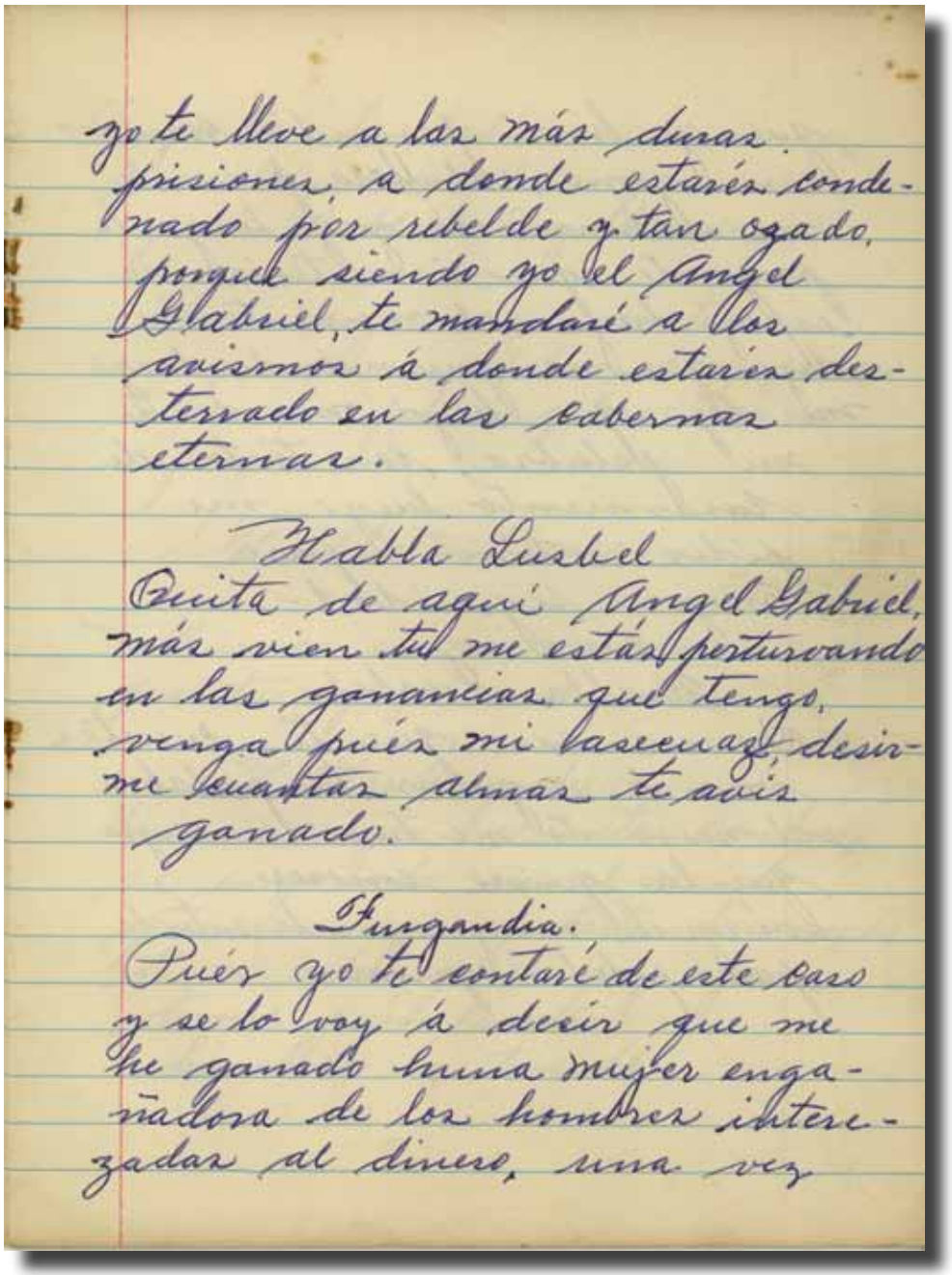
My imagination has brought me in inverted confusion.

Oh, oh! What has occurred to me?
During my daring rage, in the tangled glory that God proposed to me, there was a celestial creature saying that I shall adore it. Its holiness and beauty are superior to anything else I've ever seen, but I shall never ever adore a creature. I cannot surrender because I was about to lose Mary due to my science and power, and everything else that has followed me.

I was the powerful one from Hell where all of my vassals arrive, sooner or later, to be held accountable, because I -either day or night- have to know about the whole world.

The Angel Gabriel comes out and says to Lucifer:

Get out of here, Satan! Don't you get in my way or I will take you to the hardest prisons where you will be condemned for being a rebel and for being so bold.


yo te lleve a las más dunas
prisiones, a donde estarás conde-
nado por rebelde y tan osado,
porque siendo yo el Angel
Gabriel, te mandaré a los
avismos á donde estarás des-
terrado en las cabernas
eternas.

Habla Lusbel
Quita de aquí Angel Gabriel,
más vien tú me estás perturvando
en las ganancias que tengo,
venga pués mi bascenaz, desir-
me cuantas almas te abís
ganado.

Hurgandia.
Pués yo te contaré de este caso
y se lo voy á decir que me
he ganado buna mujer enga-
ñadora de los hombres interé-
zadas al dinero, una vez

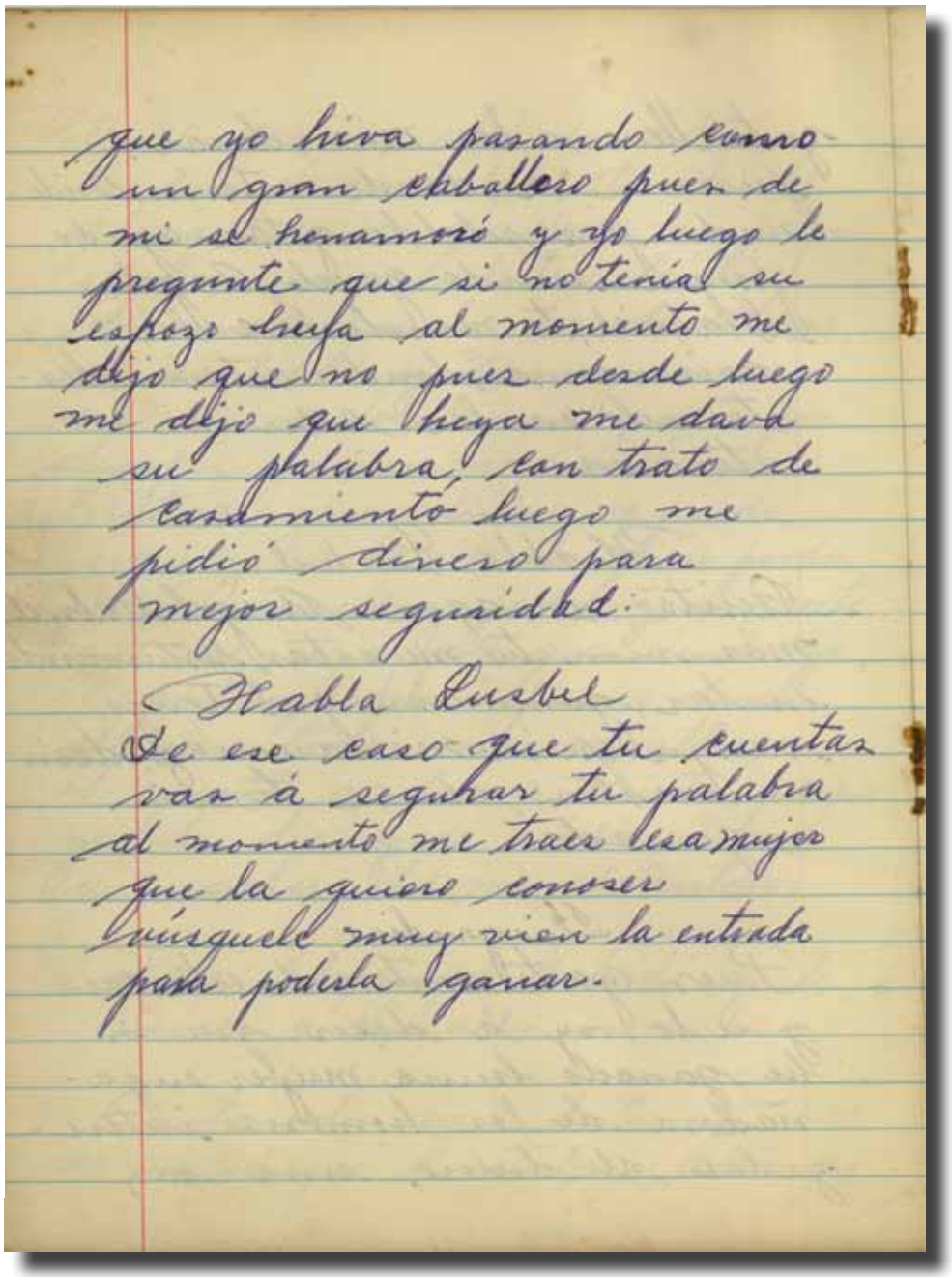
I, being the Angel Gabriel, will send you to the depth of the abyss where you will be exiled in the eternal caverns.

Lucifer speaks:

Get out of my way, Angel Gabriel! Rather, it is you who perturbs me in the gains I should be making. Come, then, my henchman, tell me, how many souls have you won?

Hurgundia:

Well, then, I shall tell you about this case and I shall say that I've won a gold-digging woman who deceives men. There was this time that I was passing by, like a great gentleman; she fell in love with me. I then asked her if she did not already have a man. At the blink of an eye she said no, and of course she said she would give me her word, provided that I asked her hand in marriage.

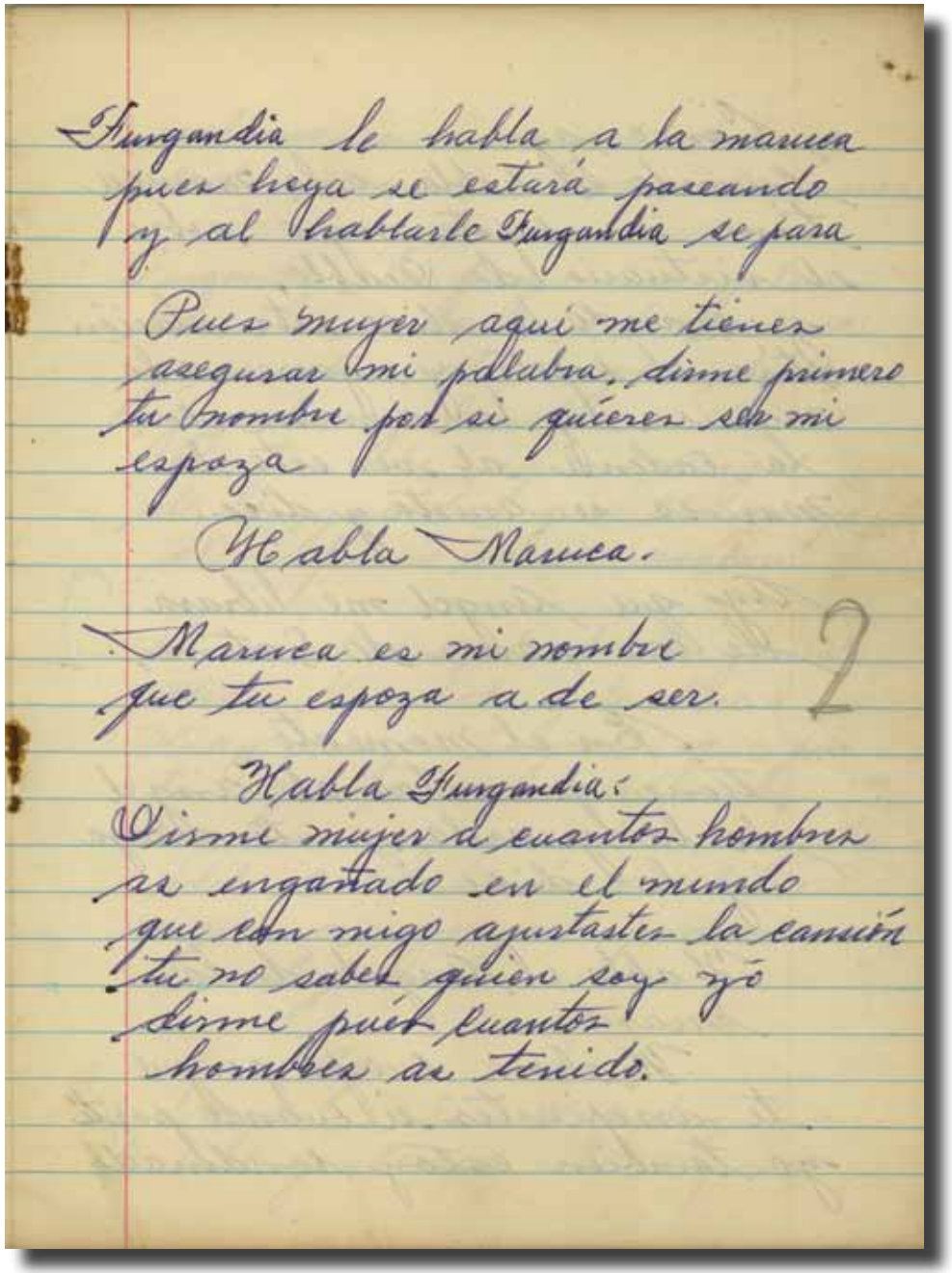

que yo hiva pasando como
un gran caballero pues de
mi se henamoró y yo luego le
pregunte que si no tenía su
esposa luega al momento me
dijo que no pues desde luego
me dijo que hoya me daba
su palabra, con trato de
casamiento luego me
pidió dinero para
mejor seguridad.

Habla Lusbel
De ese caso que tu cuentas
vas á seguhar tu palabra
al momento me traes esa mujer
que la quiero conocer
búsquele muy bien la entrada
para podela ganar.

She then asked me for money, as a proof of faith, for security.

Lucifer talks:

That case of yours that you speak of, you have to give me your word. In the meantime, bring me that woman - I want to meet her. Think about how to get to her so that you can win her.


Hurgandia le habla a la maruca
pues bieya se estará paseando
y al hablarle Hurgandia se para

Pues mujer aquí me tienes
asegurar mi palabra, dime primero
tu nombre por si quieres ser mi
esposa

Habla Maruca.

Maruca es mi nombre
que tu esposa a de ser.

Habla Hurgandia:
Dime mujer d cuantos hombres
as engañado en el mundo
que con migo ajustastes la camión
tu no saber quien soy yo
dime pues cuantos
hombres as tenido.

Hurgandia talks to Maruca. She will be walking and when Hurgandia speaks to her, she halts.

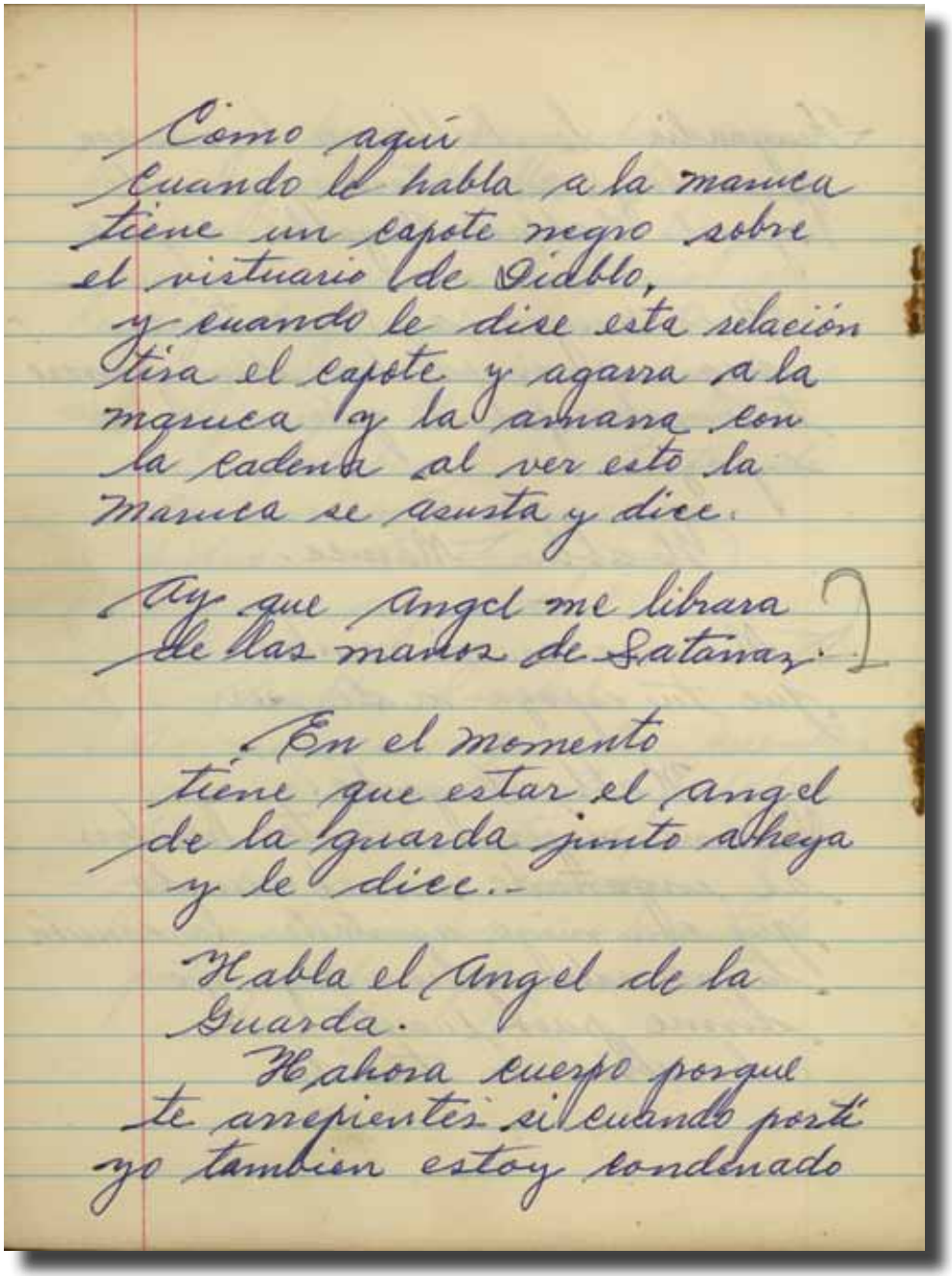
Woman, here you have me, giving you my word; but first of all, I need to know your name, if you will be my wife.

Maruca speaks:

Maruca is my name, and your wife I shall be.

Hurgandia talks:

Hear me, oh woman - how many men have you deceived in this world? Am I the last one in your hunt? You have no idea who I am. Tell me then, how many men have you had?


Como aquí
Cuando le habla a la maruca
tiene un capote negro sobre
el vistuario de Diddlo,
y cuando le dice esta relación
tira el capote y agarra a la
maruca y la amarra con
la cadena al ver esto la
maruca se asusta y dice.

Ay que Angel me librara
de las manos de Satanas.

En el momento
tiene que estar el angel
de la guarda junto alheya
y le dice.-

Habla el Angel de la
Guarda.
Ha ahora cuerpo porque
te arepientes si cuando porté
yo tambien estoy condenado

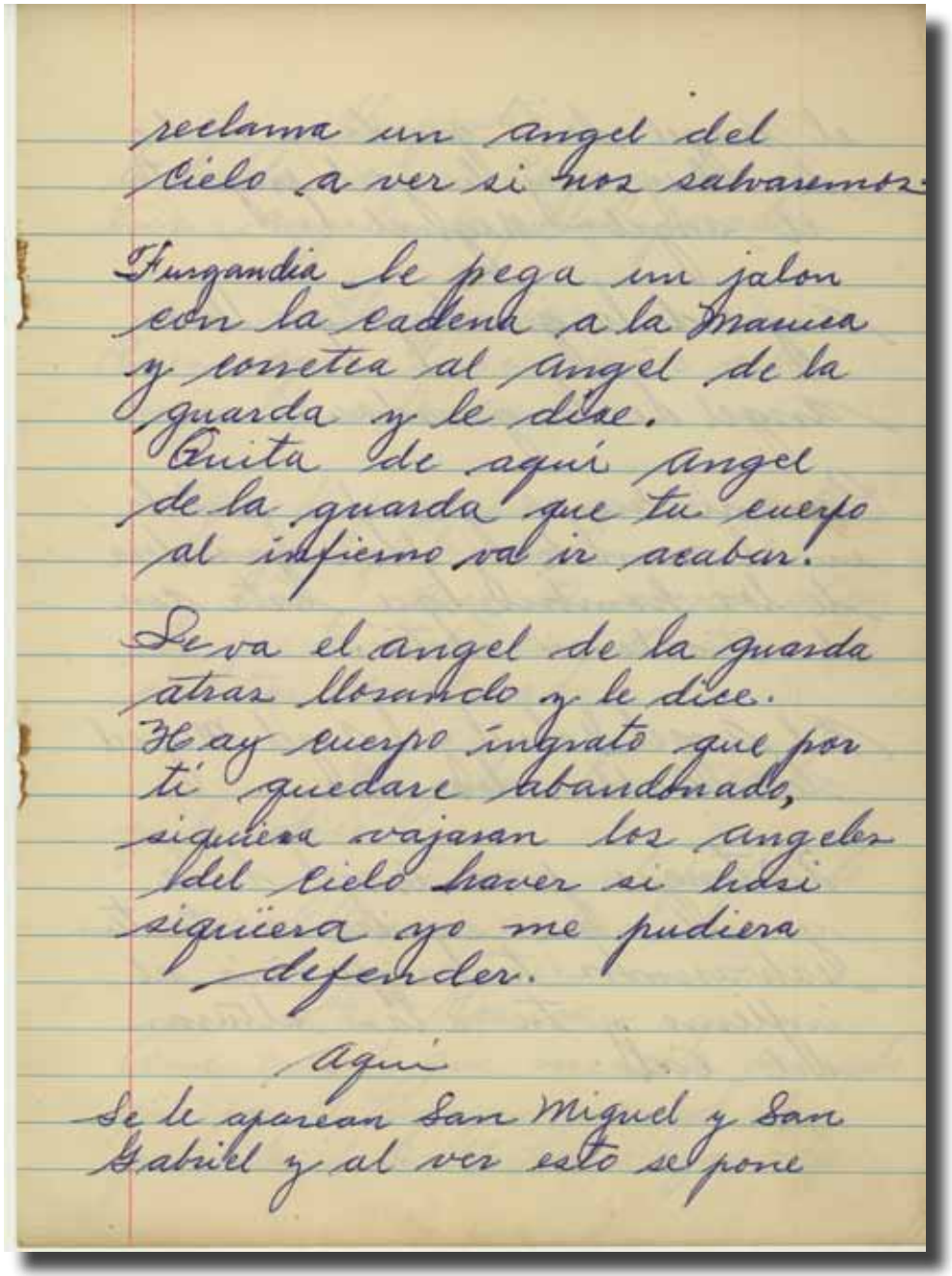
When he talks to Maruca, he has a black poncho over the Devil's dressing room.

And when he says these words, he then throws the poncho on the floor and grabs Maruca and he ties her with the chain. Upon these happenings, Maruca gets scared and says:

Oh! What Angel will free me from Satan's hands?

At that moment, the guardian Angel situated himself next to her and he says:

This is the Guardian Angel. Why is it that your body is repenting now? Now because of you I am also condemned. Summon an Angel from heaven to see if we can both be saved.


reclama un angel del
Cielo a ver si nos salvaremos

Furgandia le pega un jalon
con la cadena a la Maruca
y corretea al angel de la
guarda y le dice.
Quita de aquí angel
de la guarda que tu cuerpo
al infierno va ir acabar!

Se va el angel de la guarda
atras llorando y le dice.
Hay cuerpo ingrato que por
ti quedare abandonado,
siquiera bajaran los angeles
del Cielo haver si hubi
siquiera yo me pudiera
defender.

Aquí
Se le aparean San Miguel y San
Gabriel y al ver esto se pone

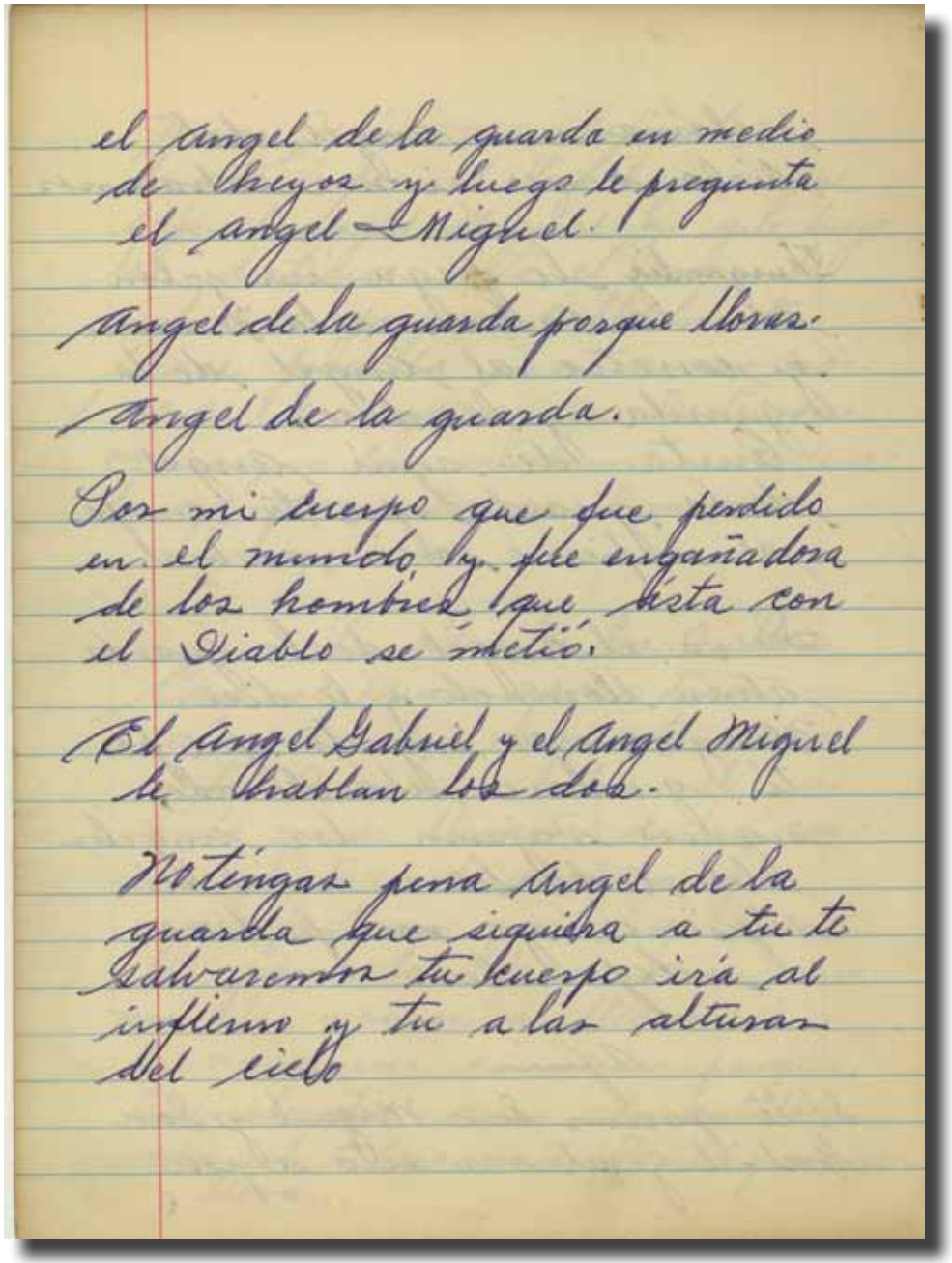
Hurgandia tugs Maruca's chain and chases the guardian Angel and says:

Get out of here, Guardian Angel, unless you want your body to end up in Hell.

The guardian Angel leaves crying and says:

Oh, ungrateful body, because of you I shall be abandoned! If only the Angels from Heaven could come down here so that I can get forces to defend myself.

Here Saint Michael and Saint Gabriel appear to him. When he sees this, he stands up and gets between them.


el angel de la guarda en medio
de llenos y luego le pregunta
el angel — Miguel.

angel de la guarda porque llorar.

angel de la guarda.

Por mi cuerpo que fue perdido
en el mundo, y fue engañadora
de los hombres que hasta con
el Diablo se metió.

El angel Gabriel y el angel Miguel
le hablan los dos.

No tengas pena angel de la
guarda que siquiera a tu te
salvaremos tu cuerpo irá al
infierno y tu a las alturas
del cielo

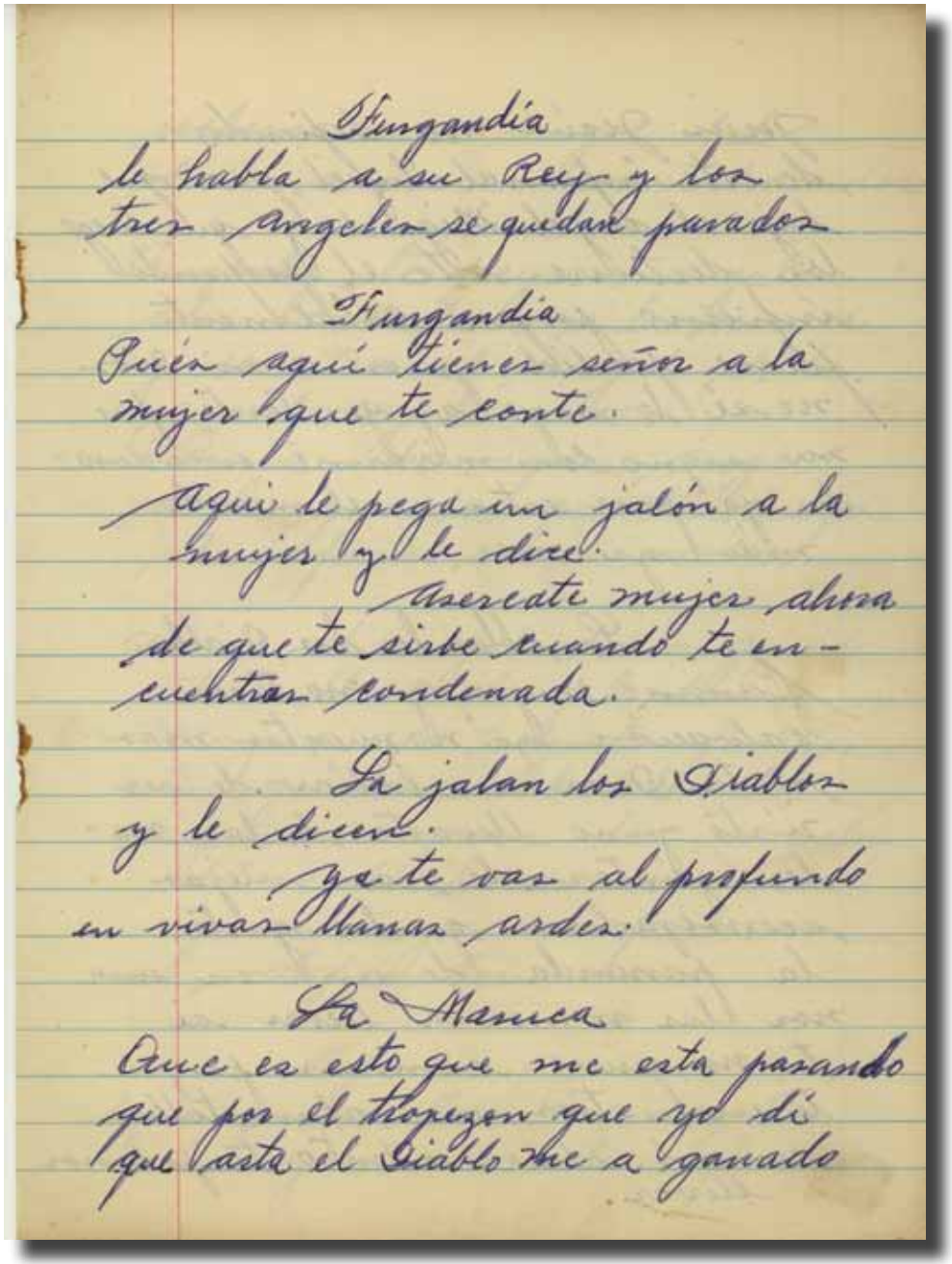
Soon after, Angel Michael asks:

Guardian Angel, why are you crying?

Guardian Angel:

Because my body was lost in the world… it went on deceiving men and it even dealt with the Devil.
Angel Gabriel and Angel Michael talk among themselves.

Don't be ashamed, Guardian Angel. Let your body go to Hell, since we've come to save your soul and take it to the heights of Heaven.


Hurgandia
le habla a su Rey y los
tres angeles se quedan parados

Hurgandia
Quien aquí tiene señor a la
mujer que te conte.

Aquí le pega un jalón a la
mujer y le dice.
Acercate mujer ahora
de que te sirbe cuando te en-
cuentras condenada.

La jalan los Diablos
y le dicen.
Ya te vas al profundo
en vivas llamas arder.

La Maruca
Que es esto que me esta pasando
que por el tropezon que yo dí
que asta el Diablo me a ganado

Hurgandia
Talks to his King and the three Angels remain standing.

Hurgandia:

Here you have, oh Lord, the woman that I told you about.

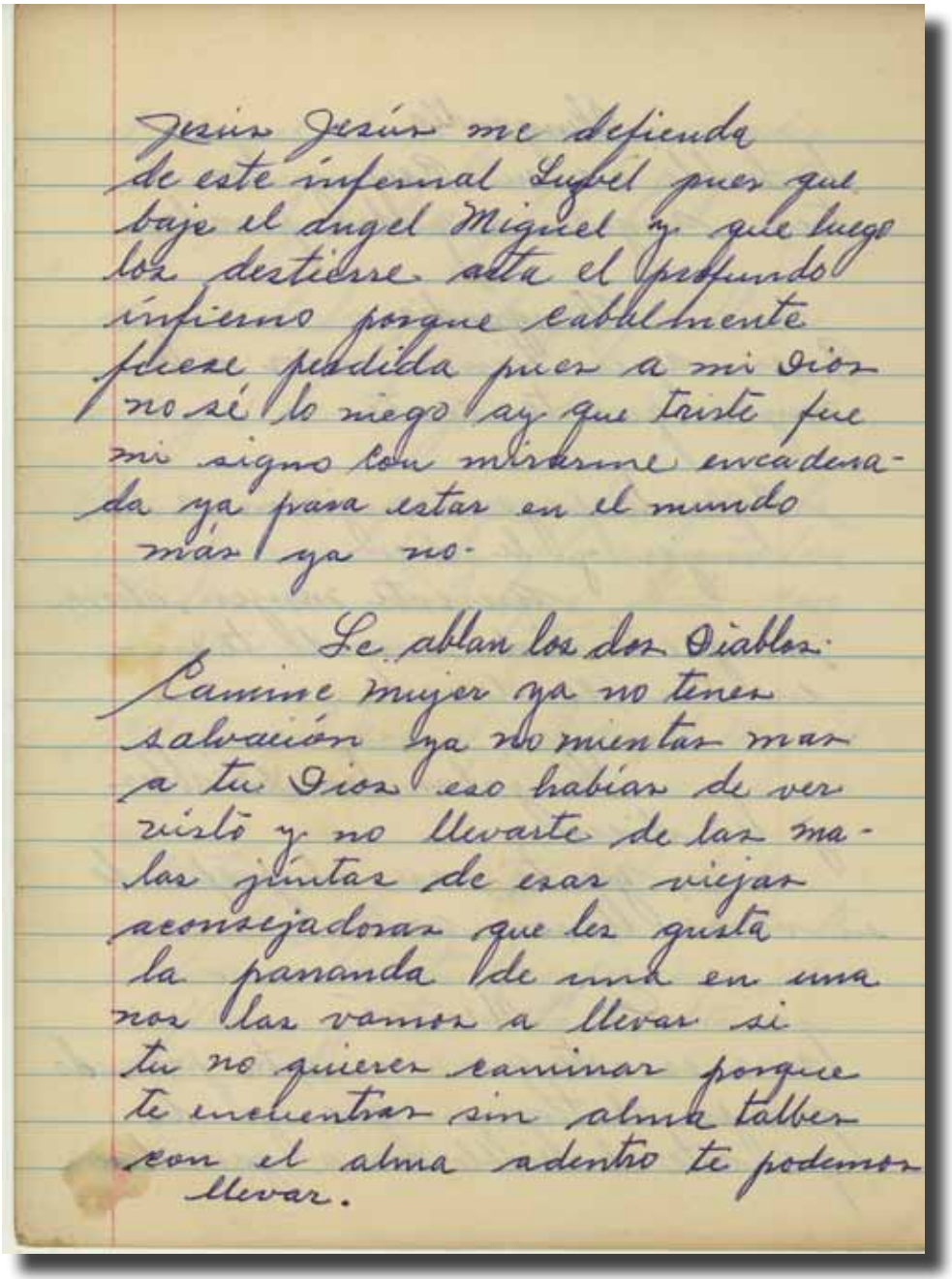
He then yanks her up and says:

Come closer, woman. What good does it serve you now that you have been condemned?

The devils pull her and tell her:

You are now going to the depths; you are already burning in consuming flames.

Maruca:
What is this that is happening to me? Because I once stumbled, now even the Devil has defeated me.


Jesús Jesús me defienda
de este infernal Lubel pues que
baje el angel Miguel y que luego
los destierre alla el profundo
infierno porque cabalmente
fuese perdida pues a mi Dios
no sé lo niego ay que triste fue
mi signo con mirarme encadena-
da ya pasa estar en el mundo
más ya no.

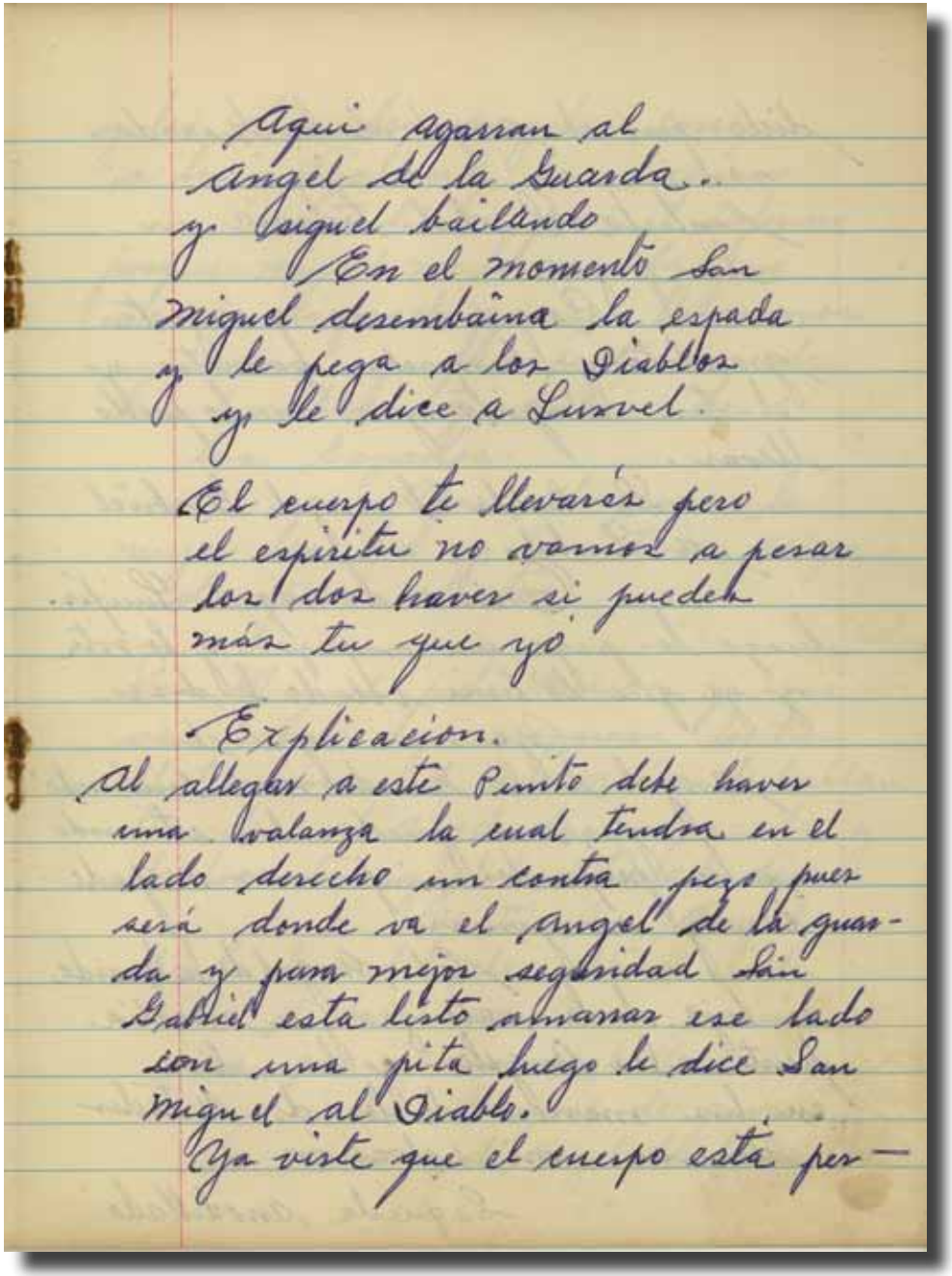
Le ablan los dos Diablos.
Camine mujer ya no tenes
salvación ya no mientas mas
a tu Dios eso habías de ver
visto y no llevarte de las ma-
las juntas de esas viejas
aconsejadoras que les gusta
la parranda de una en una
nos las vamos a llevar si
tu no quieres caminar porque
te encuentras sin alma talbes
con el alma adentro te podemos
llevar.

Jesus, may Jesus defend me from this infernal Lucifer.

May Angel Michael come down here and exile them all the way to the depths of Hell. I feel lost, and I don't deny this to my God. Oh, how sad I'm feeling, how sad I look being chained… I don't want to live in this world like this.

The two devils talk to her:

Walk, woman. You have no salvation anymore. Don't lie to your God anymore. You should have seen this coming… you should have avoided the bad advice that those gossip-loving, party-going old women you were friends with gave you. We will find them and take them one by one. If you don't want to walk because you are soulless, maybe we shall take you with your soul inside.



Aquí agarran al
Angel de la Guarda.
y Miguel bailando
En el momento San
Miguel desembaina la espada
y le pega a los Diablos
y le dice a Lusvel.

El cuerpo te llevarás pero
el espíritu no vamos a pesar
los dos haver si puedes
más tu que yo

Explicación.
Al allegar a este punto debe haver
una balanza la cual tendra en el
lado derecho un contra peso pues
será donde va el angel de la guar-
da y para mejor seguridad San
Gabriel esta listo amarrar ese lado
con una pita luego le dice San
Miguel al Diablo.
Ya viste que el cuerpo está per—

Here's when they grab the Guardian Angel, and keep dancing.

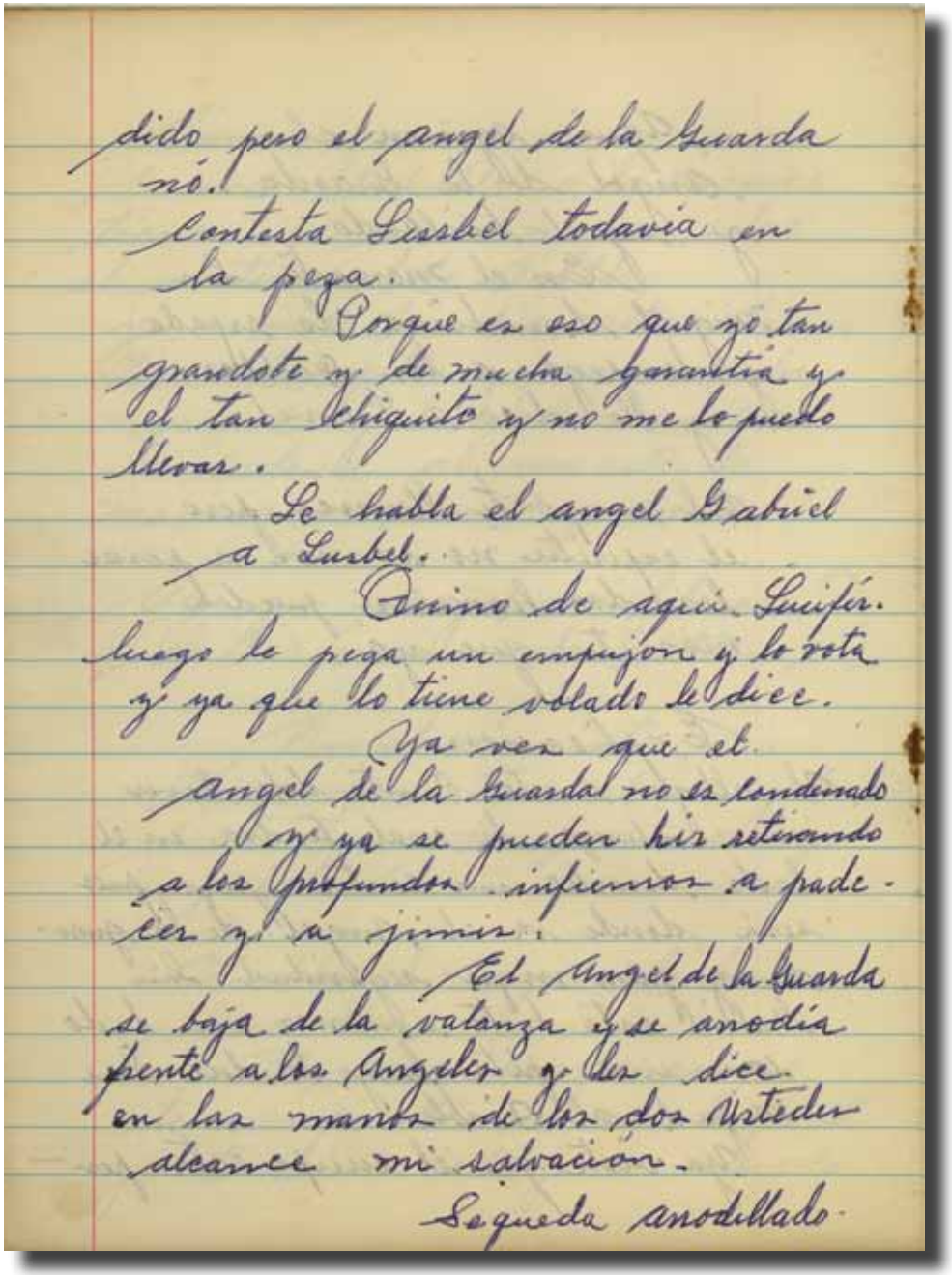
At that moment, Saint Michael draws his sword and beats up the devils. Then he says to Lucifer:

The body you shall take, but not the spirit. Let's weigh ourselves! Let's see if you are more powerful than I.

Explanation: Upon arriving at this moment, there should be a scale which will have on the right side a counter-weight (this is where the Guardian Angel will be), and for added security, Saint Gabriel will be ready to tie up that side with a rope.

Saint Michael then says to the Devil:

You see, the body is lost, but not the Guardian Angel.


dido pero el angel de la Guarda
nó!
Contesta Lusbel todavia en
la pega.
Porque es eso que yo tan
grandote y de mucha garantia y
el tan chiquito y no me lo puedo
llevar.
Le habla el angel Gabriel
a Lusbel.
Vamos de aqui Lucifer.
luego le pega un empujon y lo rota
y ya que lo tiene rotado le dice.
Ya ves que el
angel de la Guarda no es condenado
y ya se pueden ir retirando
a los profundos infiernos a pade-
cer y a gimir.
El Angel de la Guarda
se baja de la balanza y se anodia
frente a los Angeles y les dice
en las manos de los dos Ustedes
alcanse mi salvacion.
Se queda anodillado.

Lucifer answers –still on the scale:

But why is it that I am bigger and surely to win, but I cannot defeat him, being so little!

The Angel Gabriel talks to Lucifer:

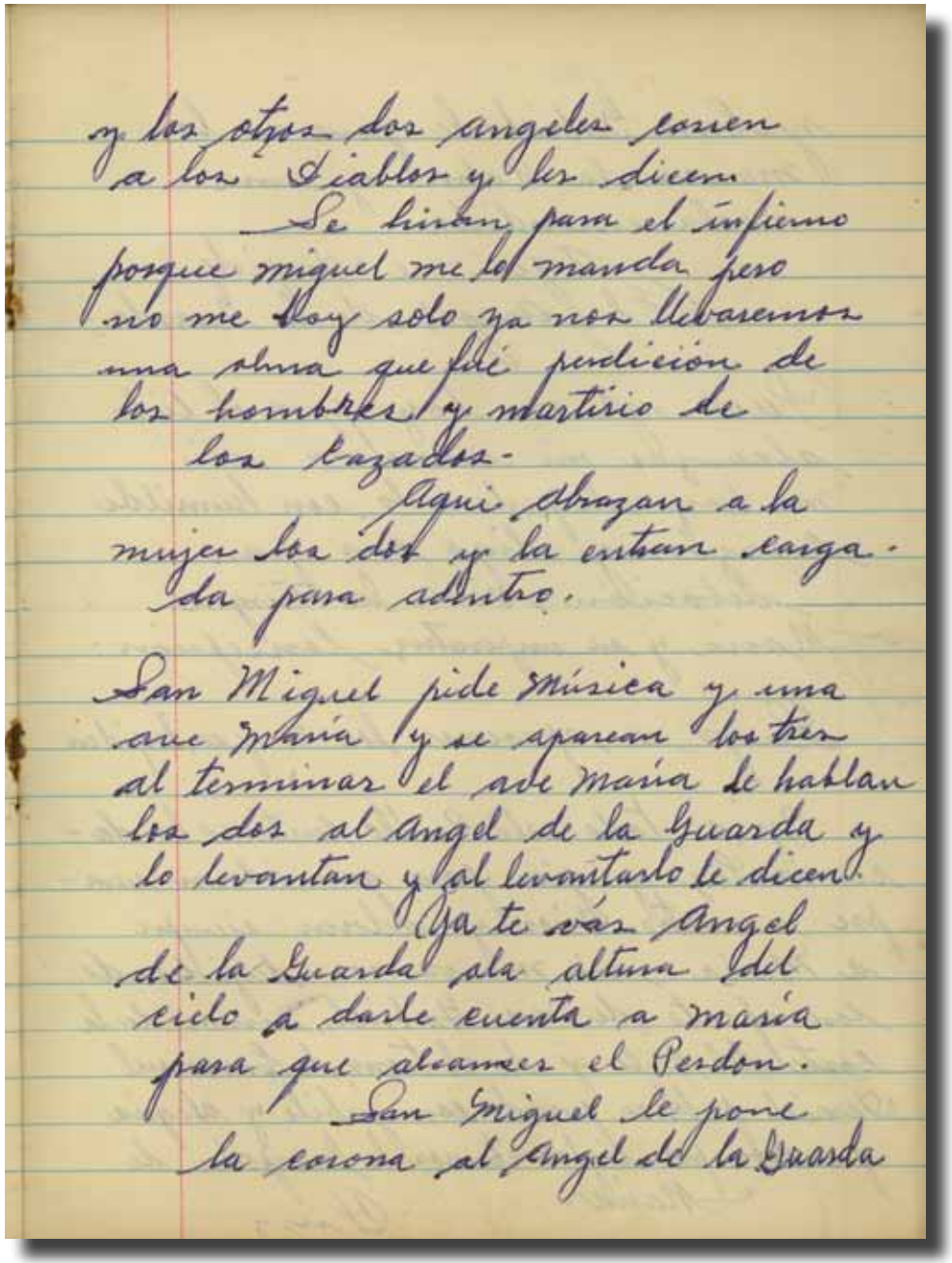
Get out of here, Lucifer!

Then he pushes him and sends him to the floor. Once he has him where he wants him, he says:

See? The Guardian Angel has not been condemned. You may now leave to where you belong: to the depths of Hell, to suffer and moan.

The Guardian Angel gets off the scale and kneels before the Angels and says:

In both of your hands I reached my salvation.
He remains on his knees.


y los otros dos angeles corren
a los Diablos y les dicen
Se miran para el infierno
porque miguel me lo manda pero
no me voy solo ya nos llevaremos
una alma que fué perdicion de
los hombres y martirio de
los casados.
Aqui abrazan a la
mujer los dos y la entran carga-
da para adentro.

San Miguel pide Música y una
ave María y se aparean los tres
al terminar el ave maria le hablan
los dos al Angel de la Guarda y
lo levantan y al levantarlo le dicen
Ya te vás Angel
de la Guarda ala altura del
cielo a darle cuenta a maria
para que alcances el Perdon.
San Miguel le pone
la corona al Angel de la Guarda

The other two Angels chase down the devils and the devils say:

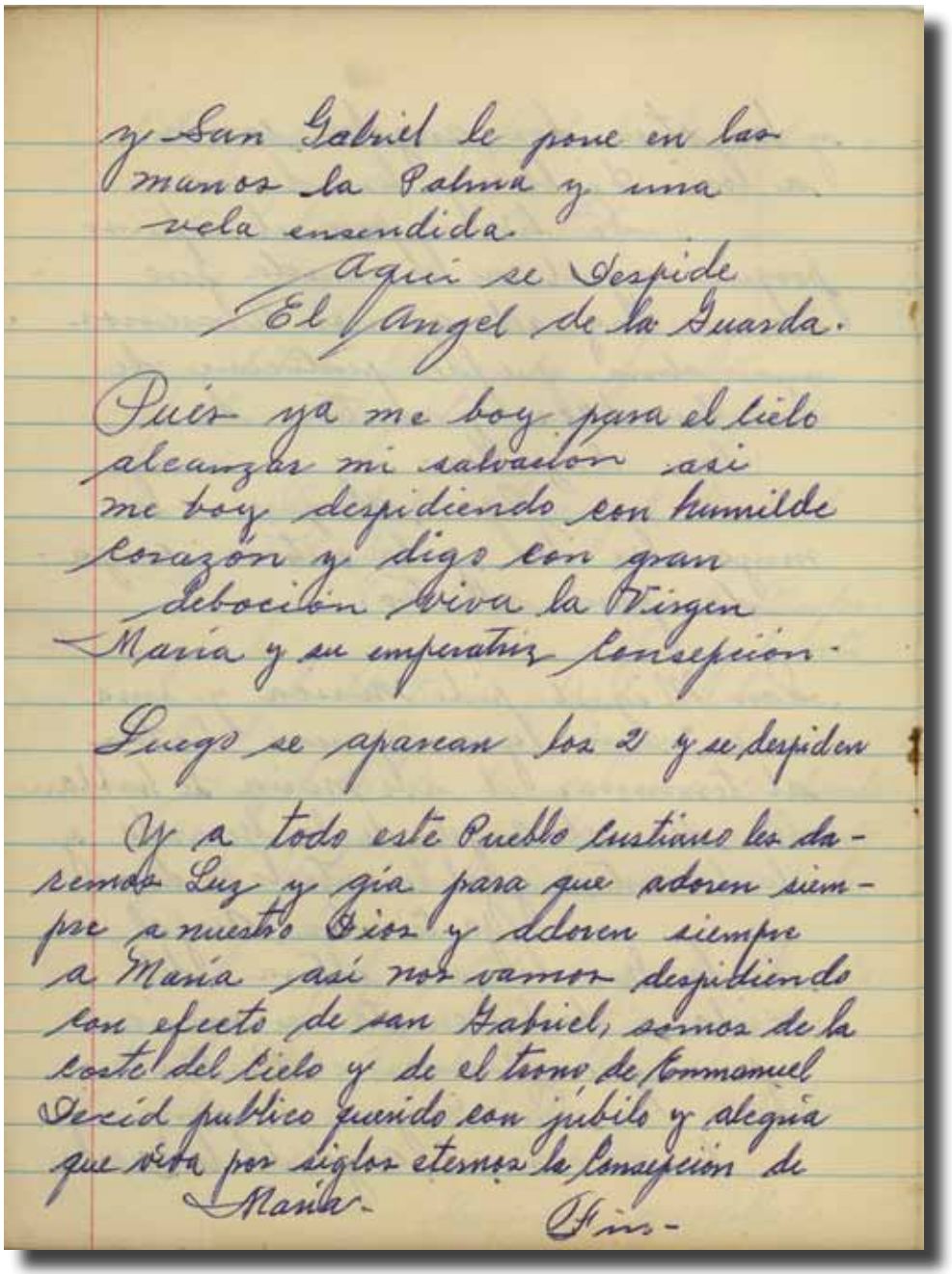
We're leaving for Hell because Michael has ordered it, but we will not leave alone. We will take a soul that was the martyrdom of men and the downfall of the married ones.

Here they both embrace the woman and carry her inside.

Saint Michael requests music and a Hail Mary. The three of them appear when the Hail Mary is done. Then they both talk to the Guardian Angel and raise him. When he is raised they tell him:

Guardian Angel, you are leaving. You are going to the heights of Heaven to be held accountable to Mary for your actions, so that you may reach her pardon.

Saint Michael puts the crown on the Guardian Angel, and Saint Gabriel puts in his hands the Palm and a lit candle.


y San Gabriel le pone en las
manos la Palma y una
vela ensendida.
Aquí se despide
El Angel de la Guarda.

Pues ya me voy para el Cielo
alcanzar mi salvacion asi
me voy despidiendo con humilde
Corazon y digo con gran
debocion Viva la Virgen
María y su emperatriz Consepcion.

Luego se aparecen los 2 y se despiden

Y a todo este Pueblo Cristiano les da-
remos Luz y gia para que adoren siem-
pre a nuestro Dios y adoren siempre
a María asi nos vamos despidiendo
con efecto de san Gabriel, somos de la
corte del Cielo y de el trono de Emmanuel
Decid publico gueido con jubilo y alegria
que viva por siglos eternos la Consepcion de
María.
Fin.

Here is when the Guardian Angel bids farewell.

I'm leaving for Heaven, to reach my salvation. I say good-bye with a humble heart and I say with great devotion: Long live Virgin Mary and her Immaculate Conception!

Then the other two appear and say good-bye.

And to all of these Christian People we shall give you light and guidance so that you may always adore our God and always adore our Mary.

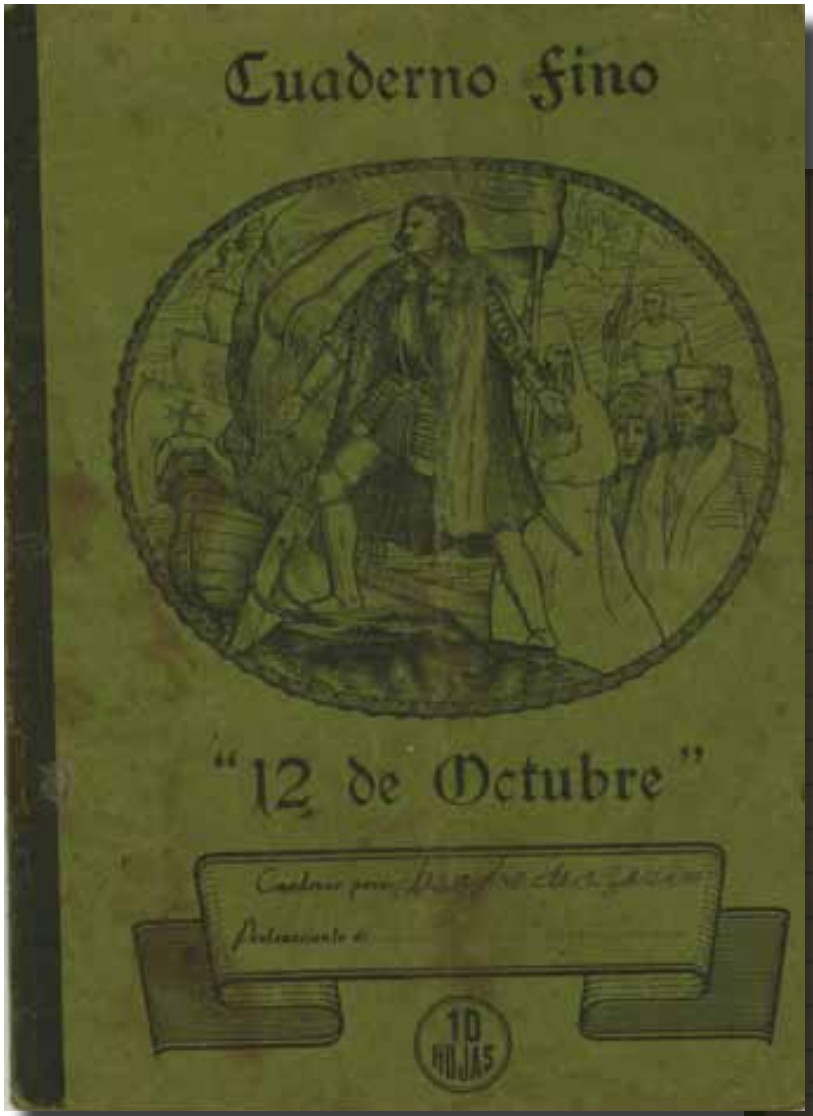
We are leaving with the effect of Saint Gabriel; we belong to the Heavenly court and to the Throne of Emmanuel.

Say ye, dear audience, with jubilee and happiness: May the Conception of Mary live for ever and ever!

THE END

Desafio

Defiance



Desafío, Propiedad de

Florencio Valey

"El Bálsamo" 11 de Septiembre de 1952

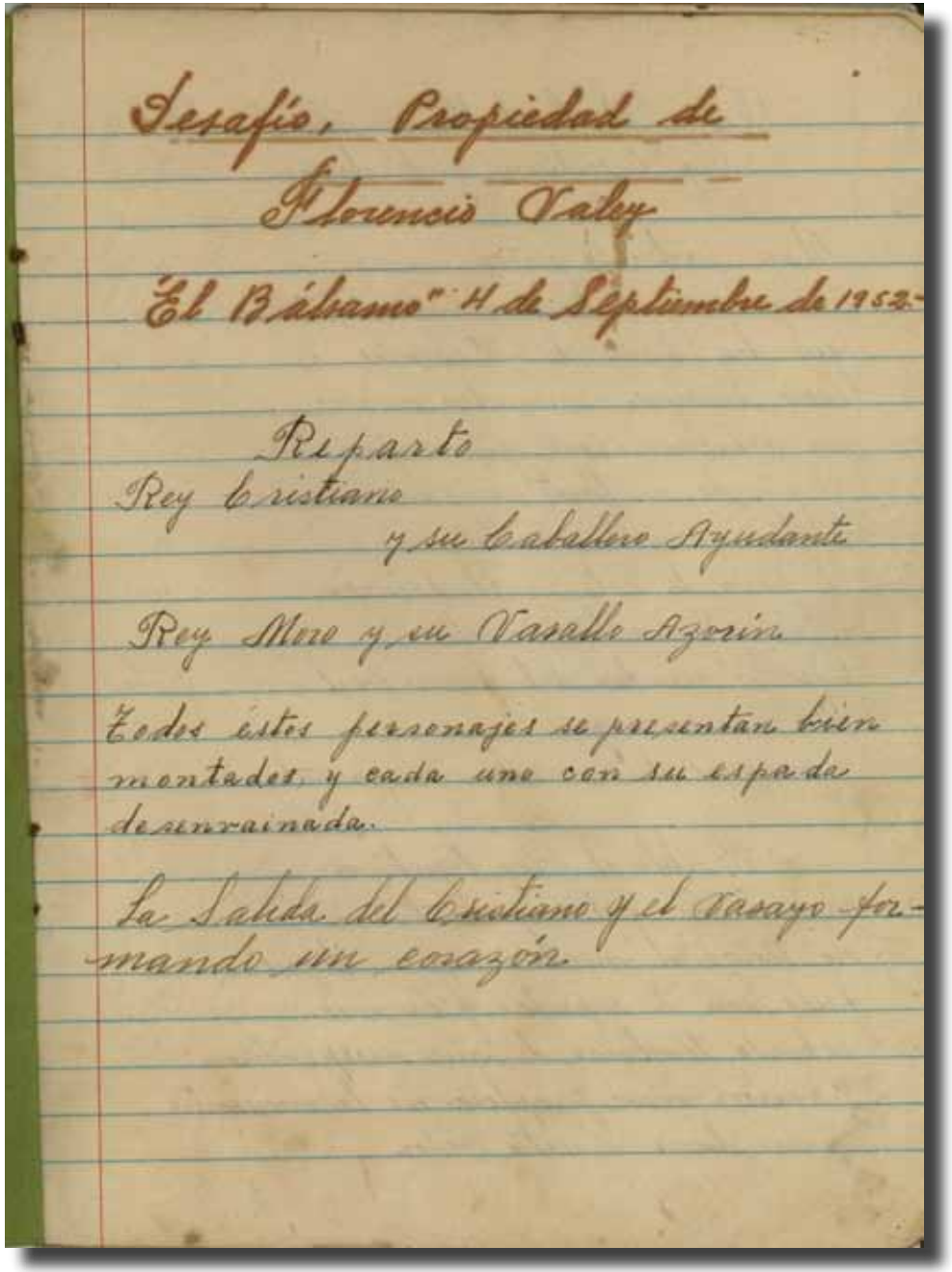
Reparto

Rey Cristiano y su Caballero Ayudante

Rey Moro y su Vasallo Azorín

Todos estos personajes se presentan bien montados y cada uno con su espada desenvainada.

La Salida del Cristiano y el Moro formando un corazón


Desafío, Propiedad de
Florencio Valey
El Bálsamo" 4 de Septiembre de 1952-
Reparto
Rey Cristiano
y su Caballero Ayudante
Rey Moro y su Vasallo Azorín
Todos estos personajes se presentan bien montados y cada uno con su espada desenvainada.
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Loa
Defiance

Property of
Florencio Valey

"El Bálsamo," September 4th, 1952.

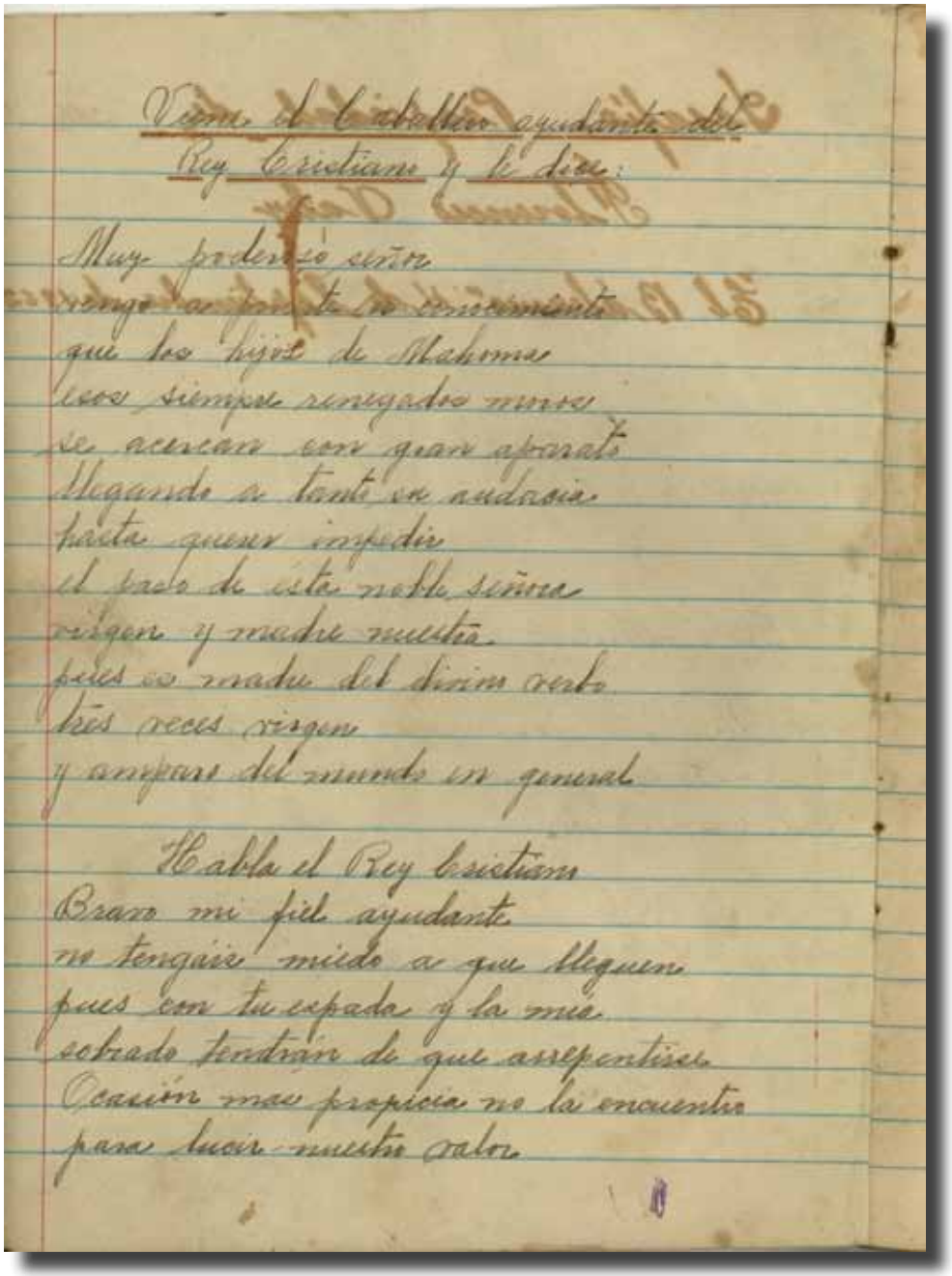
Cast of Characters

Christian King
And his Adjutant

Moorish King
And his Vassal Azorin

All of these characters are shown with full armor and each with a drawn sword.

The Christian and the vassal come out, forming the shape of a heart.


Viene el Caballero ayudante del
Rey Cristiano y le dice:

Muy poderoso señor
vengo a participarte mi sentimiento
que los hijos de Mahoma
esos siempre renegados moros
se acercan con gran aparato
llegando a tanto su audacia
hasta querer impedir
el paso de esta noble señora
virgen y madre nuestra
pues es madre del divino verbo
tres veces virgen
y amparo del mundo en general

Habla el Rey Cristiano
Bravo mi fiel ayudante
no tengais miedo a que lleguen
pues con tu espada y la mia
sobrado tendrán de que arrepentirse
Ocasión mas propicia no la encuentro
para lucir nuestro valor

The Christian King's Adjutant comes in and says:

Most powerful Lord, I have come to inform you that Mohammed's children –those ever-renegade Moors– are coming closer with their troops.

And their audacity is such that they even want to hinder the passage of our noble Lady, Virgin and Our Mother, since she's the mother of the Divine Verb. Three times Virgin and shelter of the world as a whole.

The Christian King speaks:

Bravo, my faithful servant! Do not be afraid of those arriving because with your sword and mine, they will have more than enough and they will have to repent. I cannot find a better occasion to make our valor shine.

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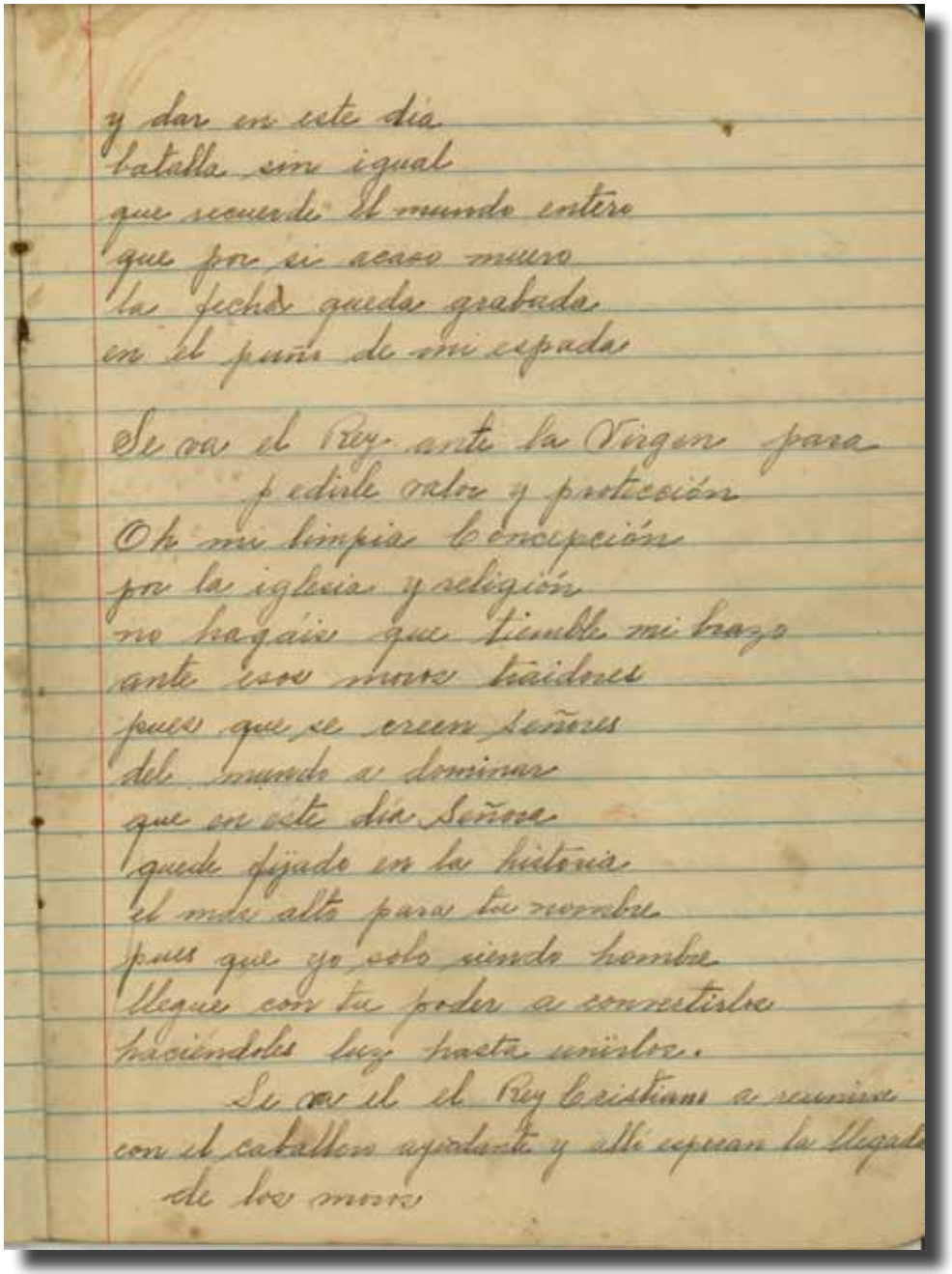

y dar en este día
batalla sin igual
que recuerde el mundo entero
que por si acaso muero
la fecha quede grabada
en el puño de mi espada.

Se va el Rey ante la Virgen para
pedirle valor y protección
Oh mi limpia Concepción
por la iglesia y religión
no hagáis que tiemble mi brazo
ante esos moros traidores
pues que se creen Señores
del mundo a dominar
que en este día Señora
quede dejada en la historia
el más alto para tu nombre
pues que yo solo siendo hombre
llegue con tu poder a convertirlos
haciéndoles luz hasta unirlos.

Se va el el Rey Cristiano a reunirse
con el caballero ayudante y allí esperan la llegada
de los moros

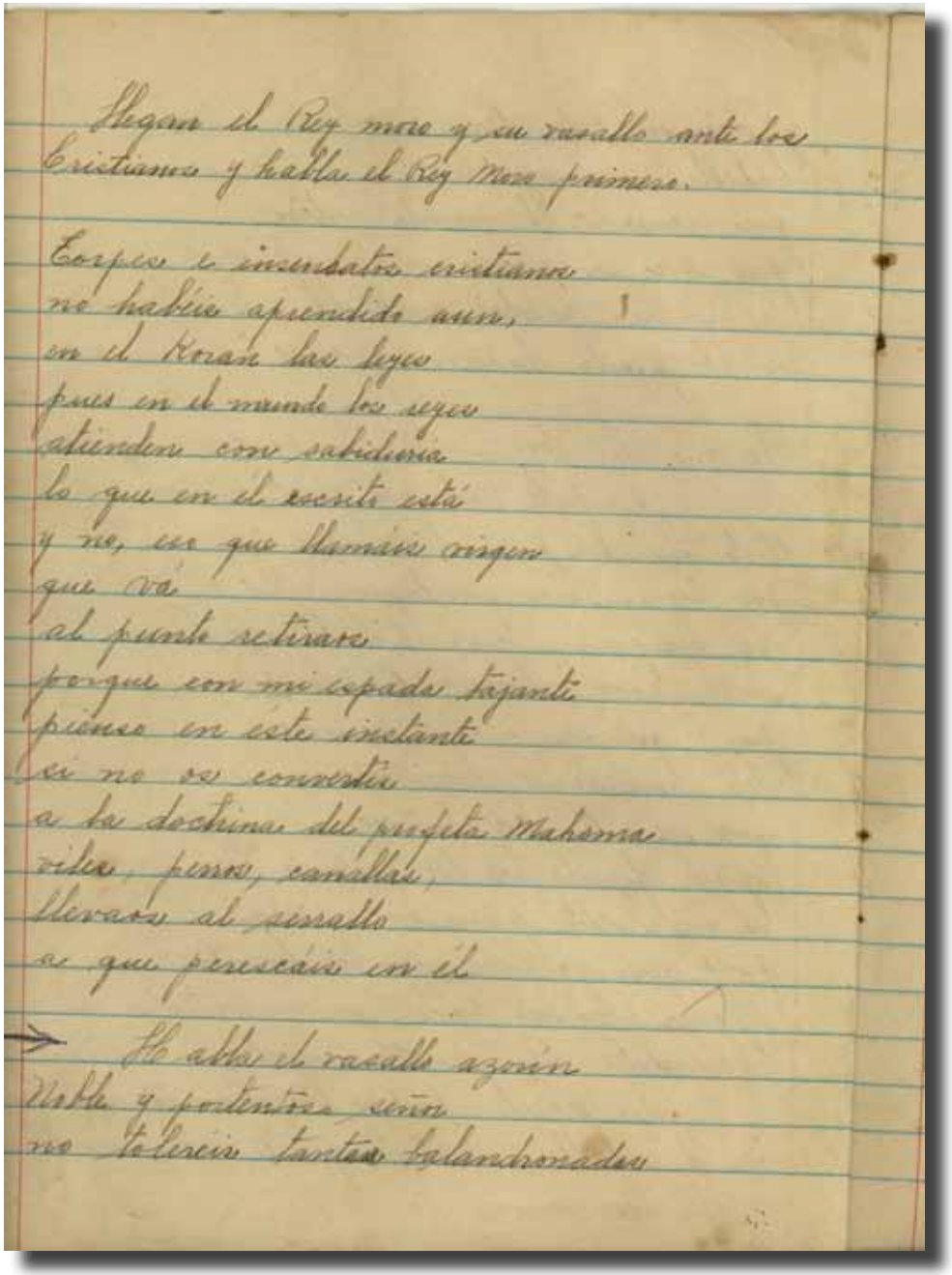
We shall give them on this day, a battle like no other. May the whole world remember, just in case I die, that the date has been recorded on the hilt of my sword.

The King goes before the Virgin to ask for courage and protection.

Oh, my clean Conception! For our church and religion, may my arm not tremble against those traitor Moors. They think they are Lords of the world to dominate.

May this day Lady, remain stuck in history
The most high for your name
And being that I am a simple man
May I convert them with your power
Make them see the light, all the way, to bring them together.

The Christian king leaves to meet the Adjutant so they can wait for the arrival of the Moors.



The Moorish king and his vassal have arrived before the Christians.

The Moorish king speaks first:

Stupid and imprudent Christians!
Have you not yet learned the laws
In the Qur'an.

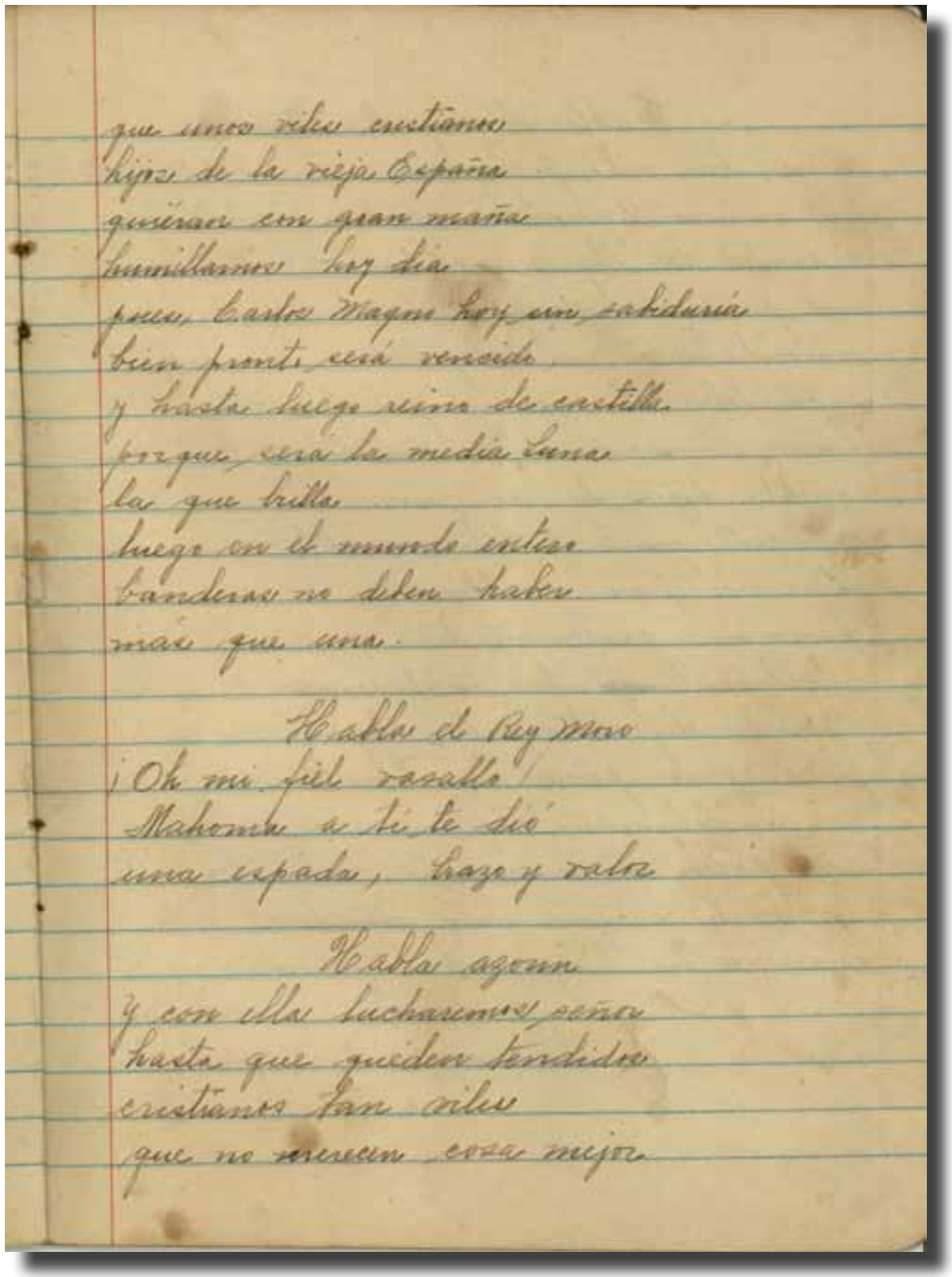
Because in the world the kings follow what is written in it with wisdom

And not what you call Virgin. Not at all.

Now, retreat because with my sharp sword
I'm thinking that, at about this instant, if you will not convert to the doctrine of the prophet Mohammed, vile, despicable dogs, we will take you to the harem so that you can die there.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

Noble and magnificent Lord,
Do not tolerate so much bragging that these vile Christians, children of the Old Spain, want to humiliate us nowadays with their tricks.


que unos vilez cristianos
hijos de la vieja España
guiñan con gran maña
humillarnos hoy día
pues, Carlos Magno hoy sin sabiduría
bien pronto será vencido
y hasta luego reino de castilla.
porque será la media luna
la que brilla
luego en el mundo entero
banderas no deben haber
más que una.

Habla el Rey moro
¡Oh mi fiel vasallo
Mahoma a ti te dió
una espada, braza y valor

Habla azorin
y con ella lucharemos, señor
hasta que queden tendidos
cristianos tan viles
que no merecen cosa mejor.

Carlo Magno, today without knowledge, will soon be defeated.

And so long, Kingdom of Castile. It will be the Half Moon that will shine.

Then in the whole world, there will be no other flags, but one.

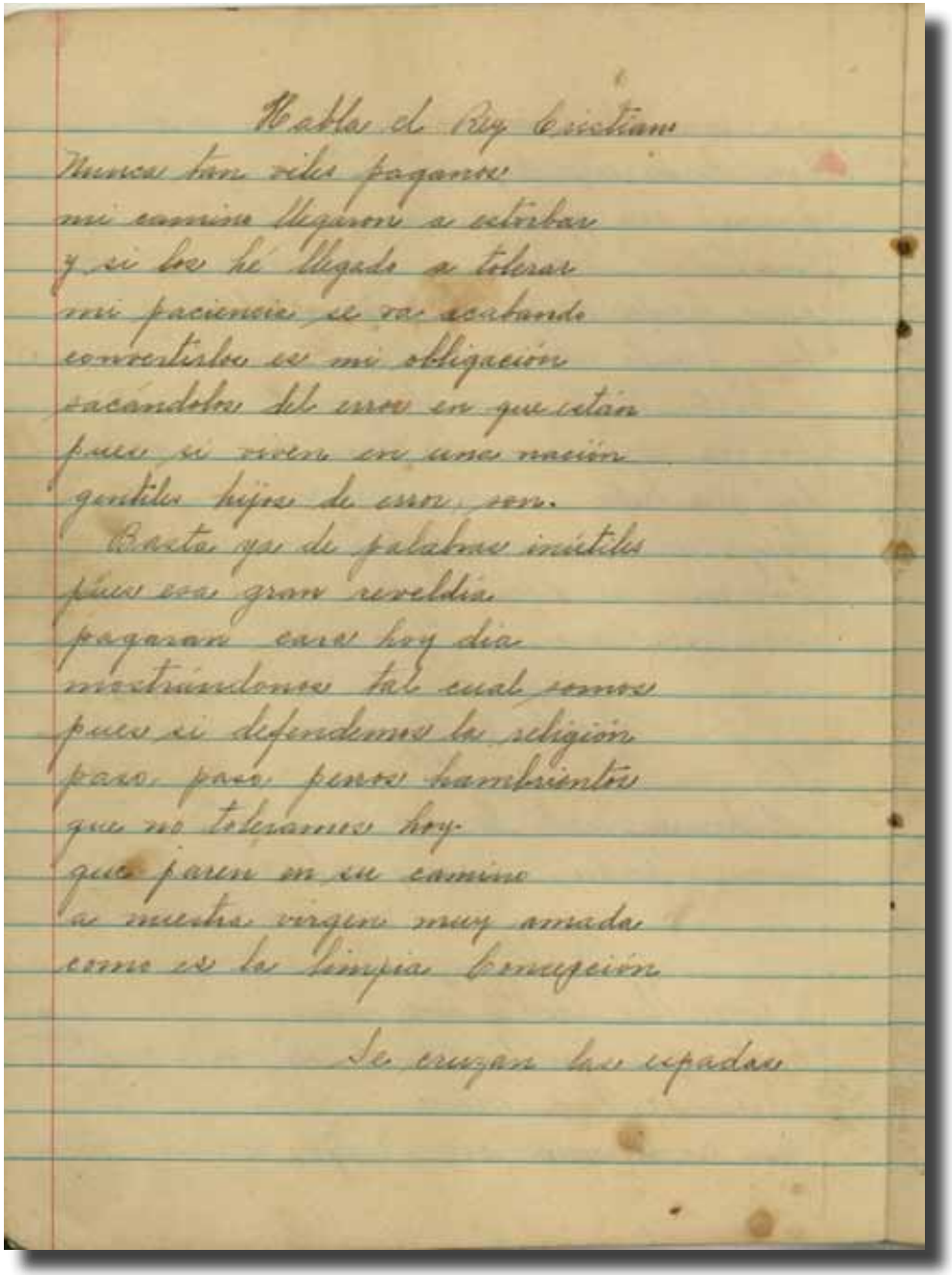
The Moorish king speaks:

Oh, my faithful vassal!

Mohammed has given you a sword, arms and valor

Azorin speaks:

And with it we shall fight, my Lord! All the way until we see these vile Christians laying on the ground, they don't deserve any better.



The Christian king speaks:

Never have such vile pagans disturbed my way, and yes, I have tolerated them, but my patience is running out.

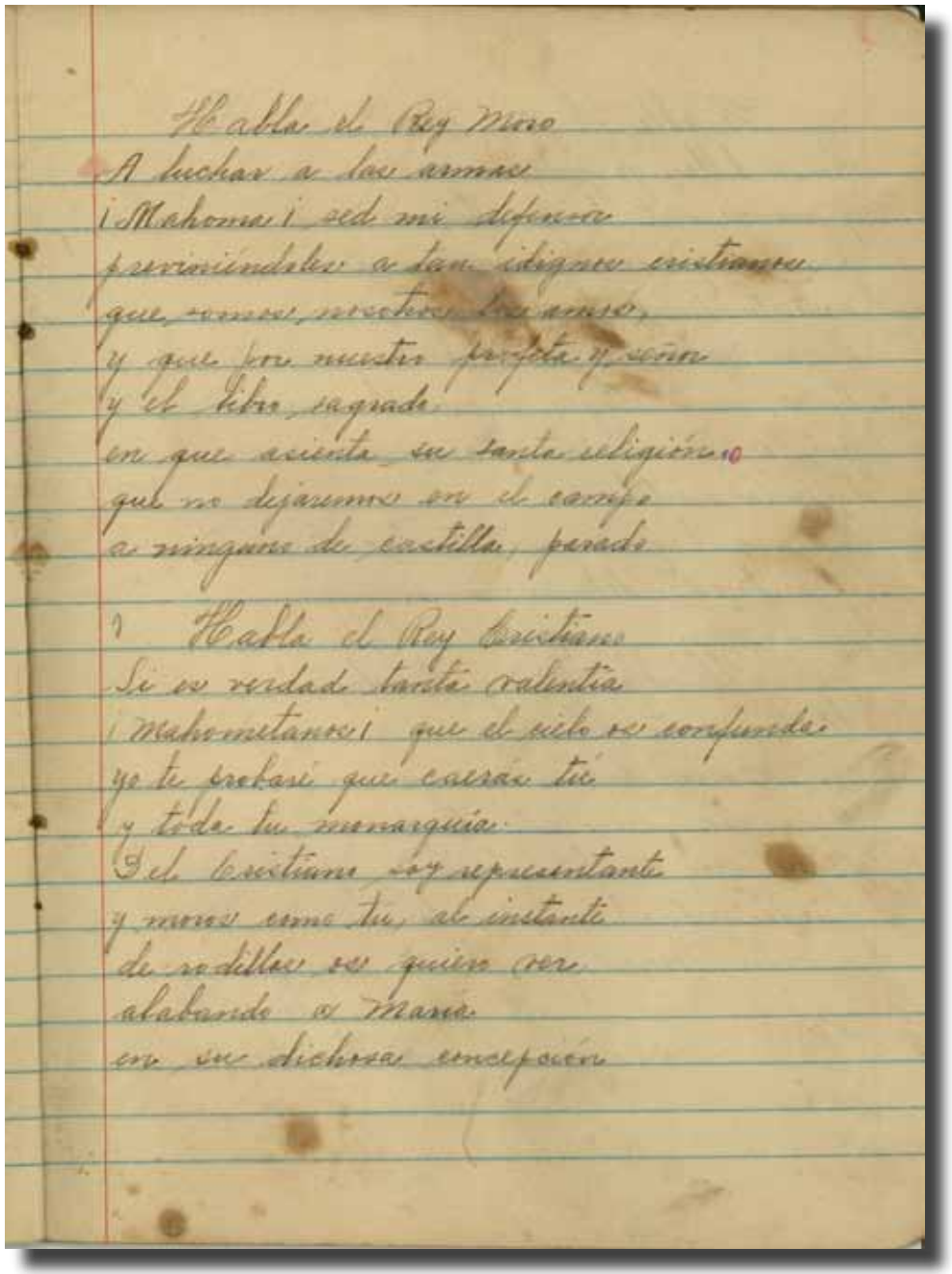
It is my duty to convert them, to take them out of their error in which they live.

If they live in a gentile nation, they are children of the error.

Enough of useless words! Today you will pay a price for your rebelliousness.

We are here, showing you who we are, because we do defend our religion, step by step, you hungry dogs. We shall not tolerate that you stop our Virgin in her way, our very loving Virgin, our most pure Conception.

They cross their swords.


Habla el Rey Moro
A luchar a las armas
¡Mahoma! ced mi defensa
previniéndoles a las indignas cristianas
que somos nosotros los amos,
y que por nuestro profeta y señor
y el libro sagrado
en que asienta su santa religión
que no dejaremos en el campo
a ninguno de castilla, parado

Habla el Rey Cristiano
Si es verdad tanta valentía
¡Mahometano! que el cielo se confunda
yo te probaré que caerán tú
y toda tu monarquía
Del cristiano soy representante
y moros como tu, al instante
de rodillas se quiere ver
alabando a María
en su dichosa concepción

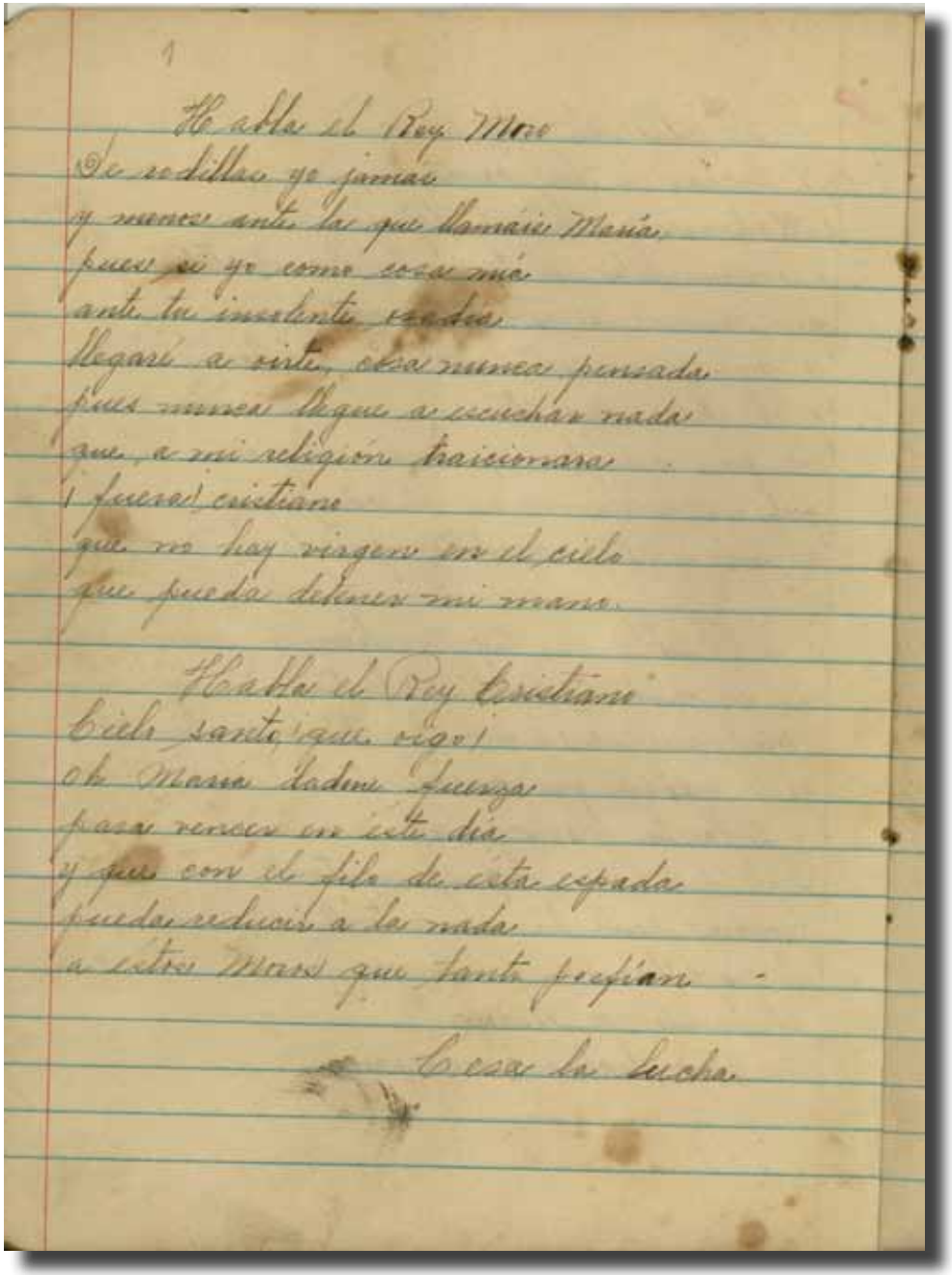
The Moorish king speaks:

Let's fight! Let's take up the arms!
Mohammed! Be my defender. Warn these unworthy Christians that it is we who are the masters, and that through our prophet and Lord and our sacred book, in which his holy religion is found, we shall not leave anyone from Castile alive in this field.

The Christian king speaks:

If so much bravery is true, Moor! May the Heavens confuse you. I shall prove to you that you and all of your monarchy will fall.

I am a representative of all Christians, and Moors like you, instantly, I want to see you all on your knees, praising Mary, in her worthy Conception.



The Moorish king speaks:

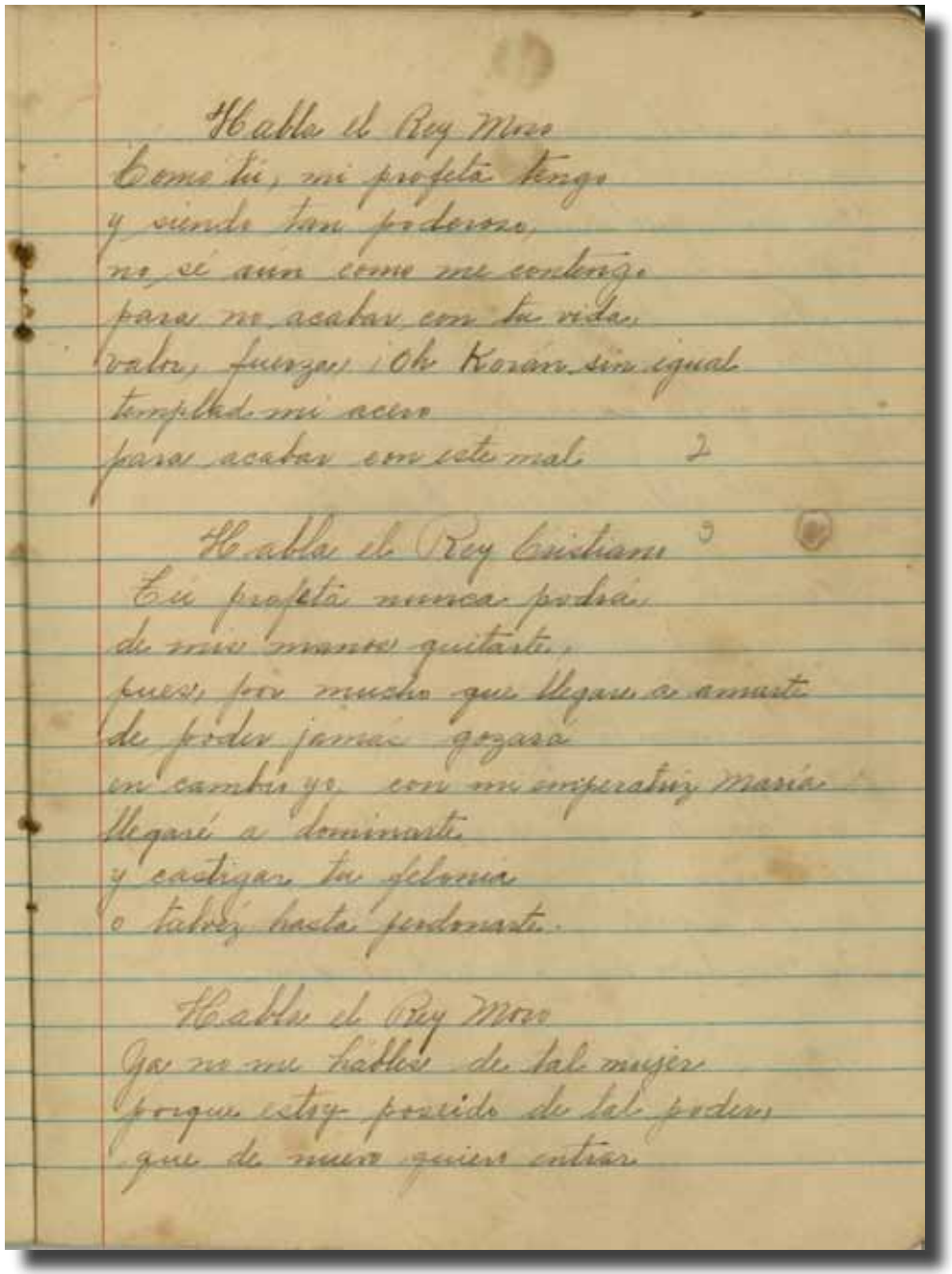
Me? On my knees? Never!
And even less before what you call Mary.
If I ever were to lend an ear to your insolent boldness, it'd be something never even thought of, since I would never ever hear anything that might betray my religion.

Out! Christians. There is no Virgin in Heaven able to stop my hand.

The Christian king speaks:

Holy Heavens! What am I hearing?
Oh, Mary, give me strength to be victorious today, and that with the sharpness of this sword I may reduce these persistent Moors to nothing.

Fighting stops.


Habla el Rey Moro
Como tu, mi profeta tengo
y siendo tan poderoso,
no sé aun como me contengo
para no acabar con tu vida.
Valor, fuerza, ¡Oh Koran sin igual
templad mi acero
para acabar con este mal 2

Habla el Rey Cristiano 3
Tu profeta nunca podria
de mis manos quitarte,
pues si fue mucho que llegara a amarte
de poder jamas gozara
en cambio yo con mi emperatriz Maria
llegaré a dominarte
y castigar tu felonia
o talvez hasta perdonarte.

Habla el Rey Moro
Ya no me hables de tal mujer
porque estoy provisto de tal poder
que de nuevo quiero entrar

The Moorish king speaks:

Like you, I also have my prophet, and being that he is so powerful, I don't understand how I can refrain myself from finishing with your life.

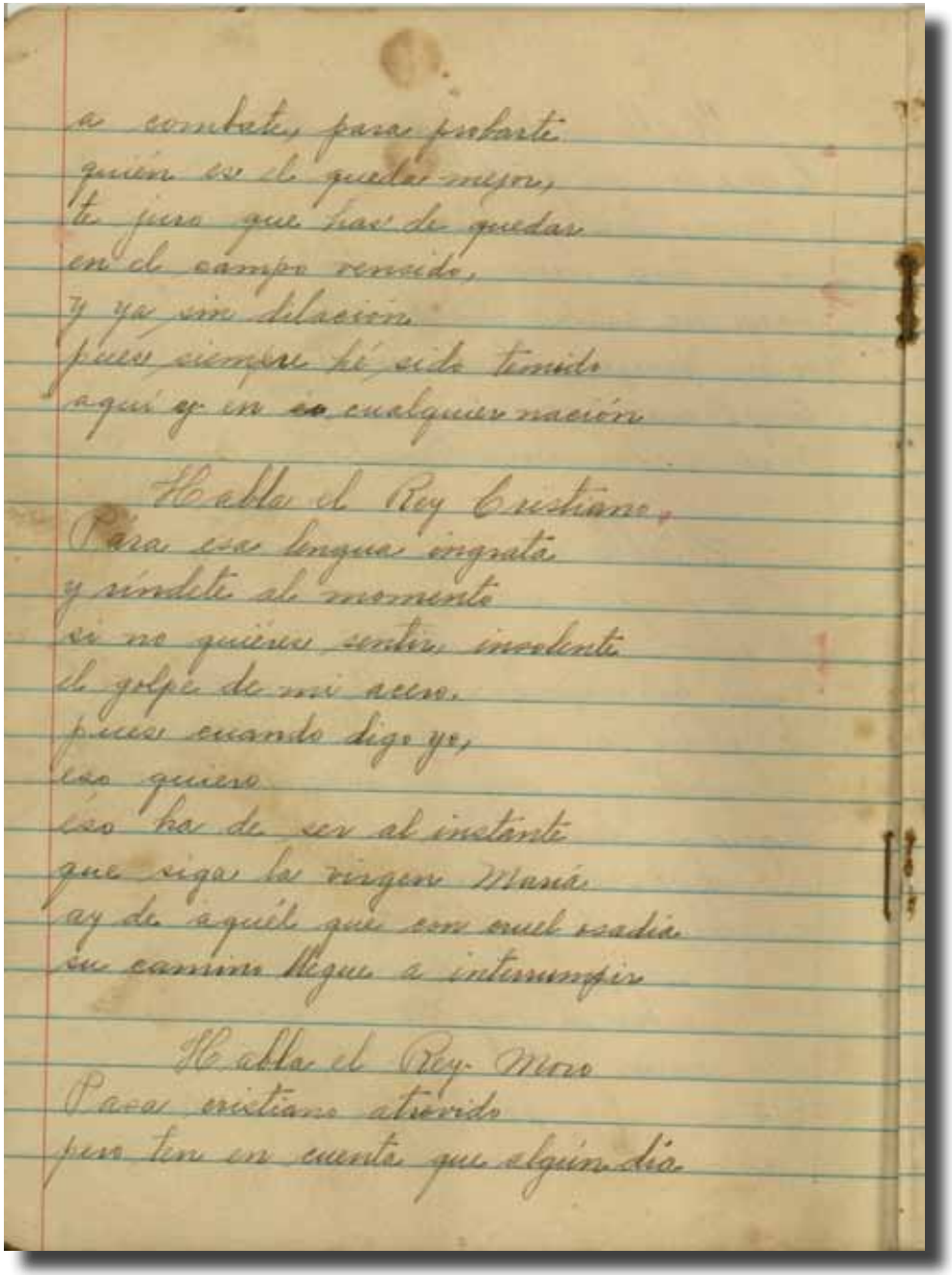
Valor, strength, oh, Qur'an like no other, warm up my steel so that I can finish off this evil!

The Christian king speaks:

Your prophet will never be able to get you away from my hands. Even if he loved you that much, he will never have the power. I, on the other hand, with my Empress Mary, shall dominate you. I shall punish your felony, or maybe I shall even forgive you.

The Moorish king speaks:

Stop talking about such woman, because I am possessed with such power. I want to fight you again to prove to you who the best in combat is.


a combate, para probarte
quién es el quedar mejor,
te juro que has de quedar
en el campo vencido,
y ya sin dilación
pues siempre hé sido temido
aquí y en cualquier nación

Habla el Rey Cristiano.
Para esa lengua ingrata
y ríndete al momento
si no quieres sentir insolente
el golpe de mi acero,
pues cuando digo yo,
eso quiero
eso ha de ser al instante
que siga la virgen María
ay de aquél que con mucha osadía
su camino llegue a interrumpir

Habla el Rey Moro
Para cristiano atrevido
pues ten en cuenta que algún día

I swear to you that you will remain in this camp, defeated.

Now let's fight without delay, since I have always been feared here and in every other nation.

The Christian king speaks:

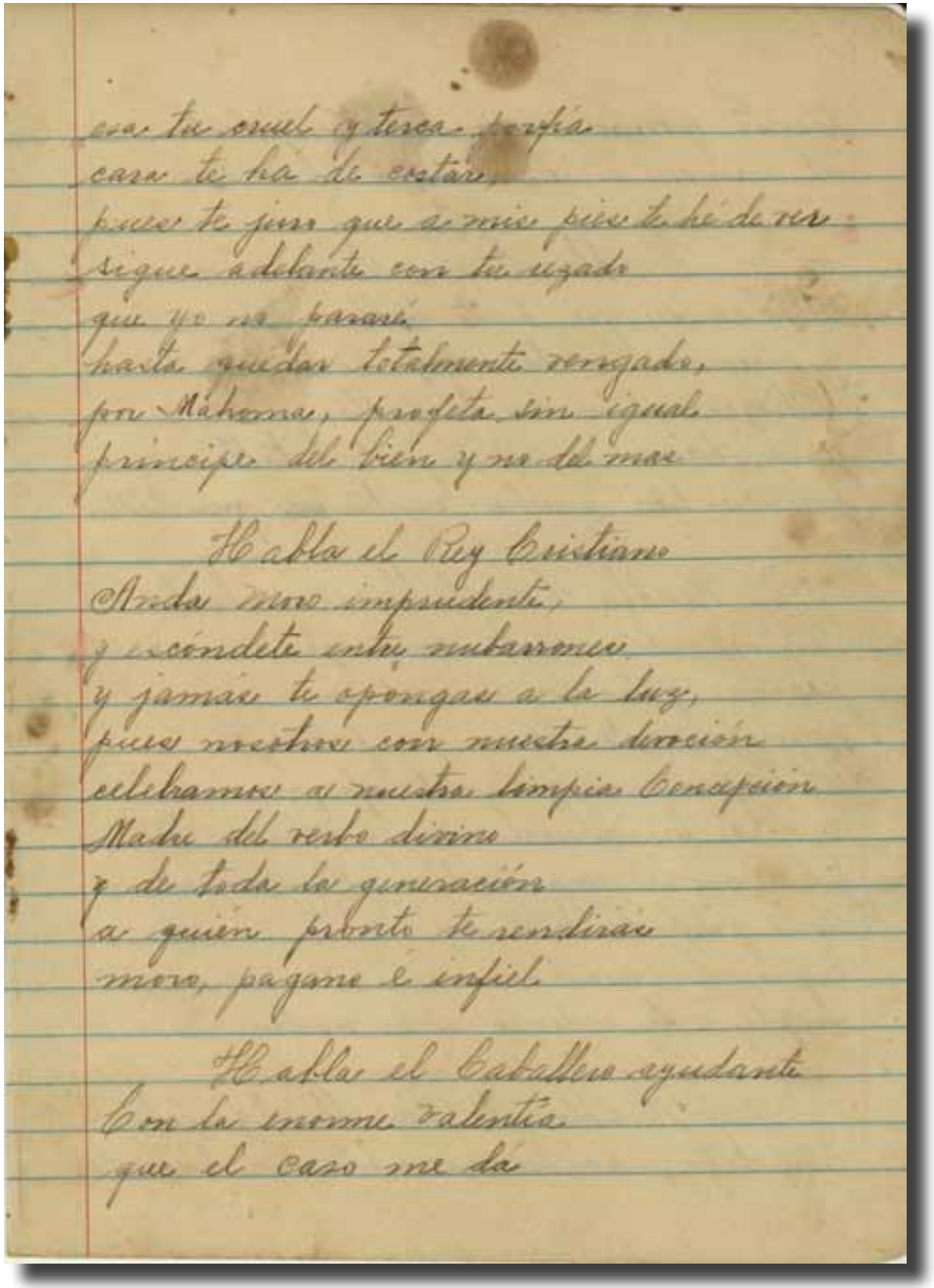
Halt that ungrateful tongue of yours and surrender immediately, unless you want to feel the insolent strike of my blade. You must understand that when I say this is what I want, it gets done instantly.

May the Virgin Mary continue!

Oh poor is he who her path dares to interrupt!

The Moorish king speaks:

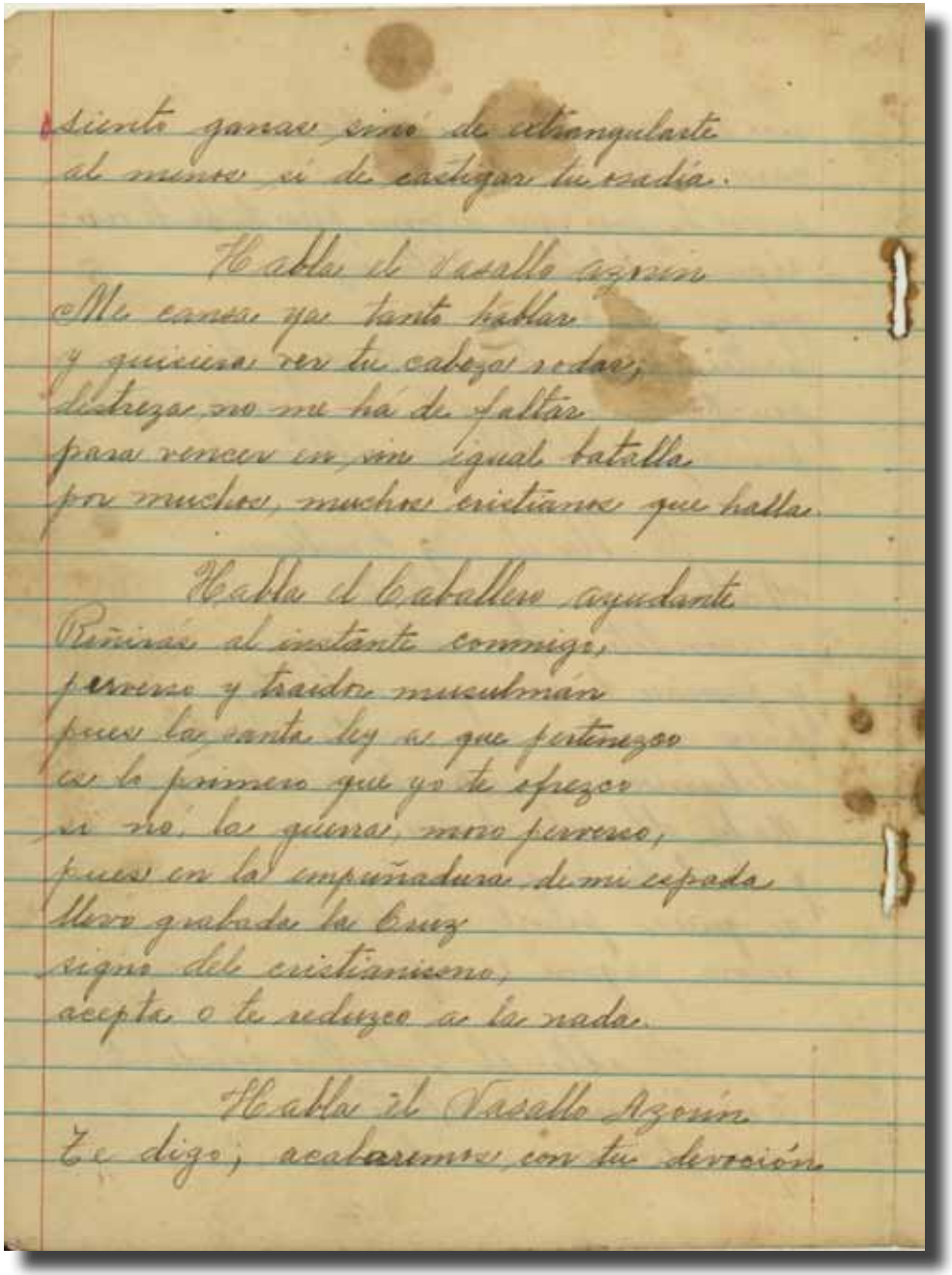
Come in, daring Christian, but keep in mind that someday your cruel and obstinate persistence will cost you a lot.



I swear that you shall be defeated at my feet. Keep on with your prayer and I shall not stop until I am totally avenged for Mohammed, prophet like no other, prince of the good and not evil.

The Christian king speaks:

Go on, imprudent Moor, hide yourself among the storm clouds, and never ever fight the light, because, we with our devotion celebrate our most clean Conception, mother of our divine Verb, and of all the generation that you shall surrender to, you pagan and unfaithful Moor.



The Adjutant speaks:

With the great bravery that this case gives me, I feel nothing less than the desire to strangle you or to at least punish you for your boldness.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

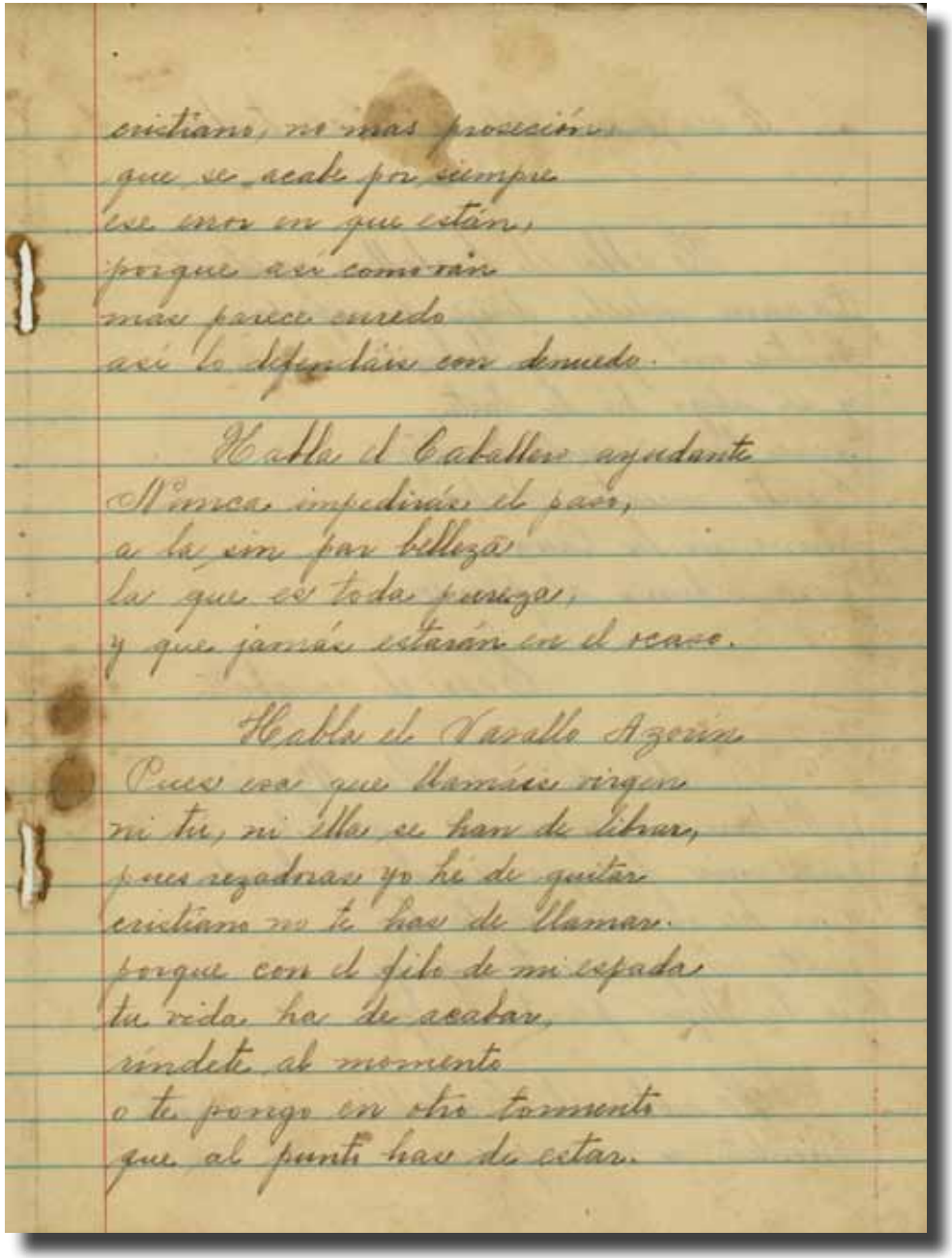
I'm tired of hearing you talk, and I'd love to see your head roll. I shall not lack skill to defeat you in this battle, not matter how many Christians there shall be.

The Adjutant speaks:

You will fight with me now, evil and traitor Muslim. In the name of the Holy Law that I belong to, the first thing that I offer you is not the war, evil Moor, because in the hilt of my sword, I have engraved the Cross, the symbol of Christianity. Accept my faith or I shall reduce you to nothing.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

I'm telling you, let's get your devotion over, Christian. No more processions! May the error in which you live be over forever.


cristiano, no más proseción,
que se acabe por siempre
ese error en que están,
porque así como irán
mas parece enredo
así lo defenderán con denuedo.

Habla el Caballero ayudante

Nunca impedirás el paso,
a la sin par belleza
la que es toda pureza,
y que jamás estarán en el ocaso.

Habla el Vasallo Azorín

Pues esa que llamáis virgen
ni tu, ni ella se han de librar,
pues rogativas yo he de quitar
cristiano no te has de llamar.
porque con el filo de mi espada
tu vida ha de acabar,
ríndete al momento
o te pongo en otro tormento
que al punto has de estar.

The way you have it, it looks like a mess, even when you try to defend it with valor.

The Adjutant speaks:

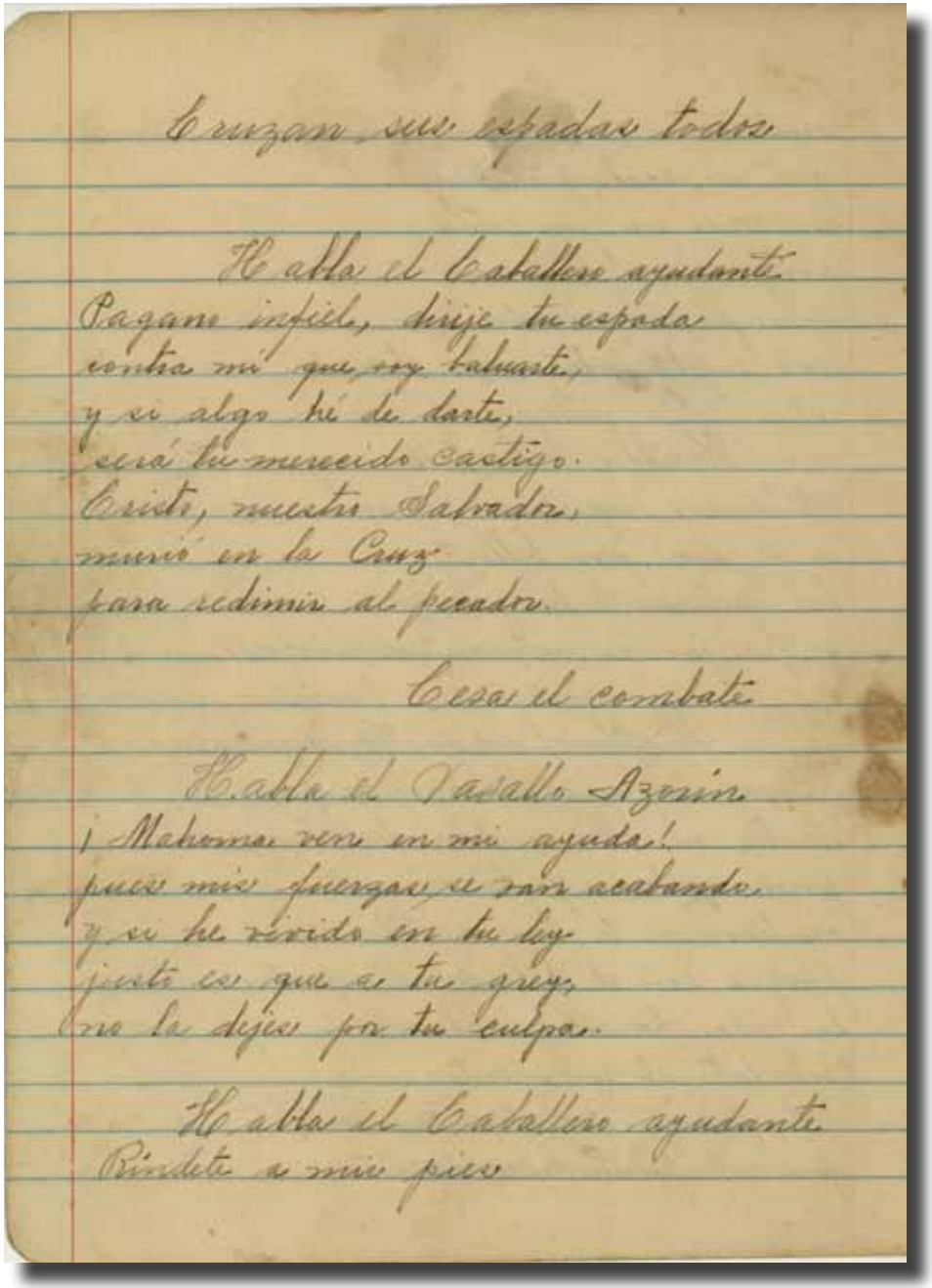
You will never impede the passing of our beautiful one, the one that is all pure, and who shall never be in decline.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

Well, then, she who you call Virgin, not even you or she will be spared. All prayers I shall abolish, and you shall no longer be called Christian. The sharpness of my blade your life is going to take.

Surrender right now or I shall put you in another torment.

And I can tell that you are ready for it.


Cruzan sus espadas todos

Habla el Caballero ayudante

Pagano infiel, dirije tu espada
contra mí que soy Baluarte,
y si algo hé de darte,
será tu merecido castigo.
Cristo, nuestro Salvador,
murió en la Cruz
para redimir al pecador.

Cesa el combate

Habla el Vasallo Azorin

¡ Mahoma ven en mi ayuda!
pues mis fuerzas se van acabando,
y si he vivido en tu ley
justo es que a tu grey,
no la dejes por tu culpa.

Habla el Caballero ayudante

Ríndete a mis pies

Everyone crosses their blades.

The Adjutant speaks:

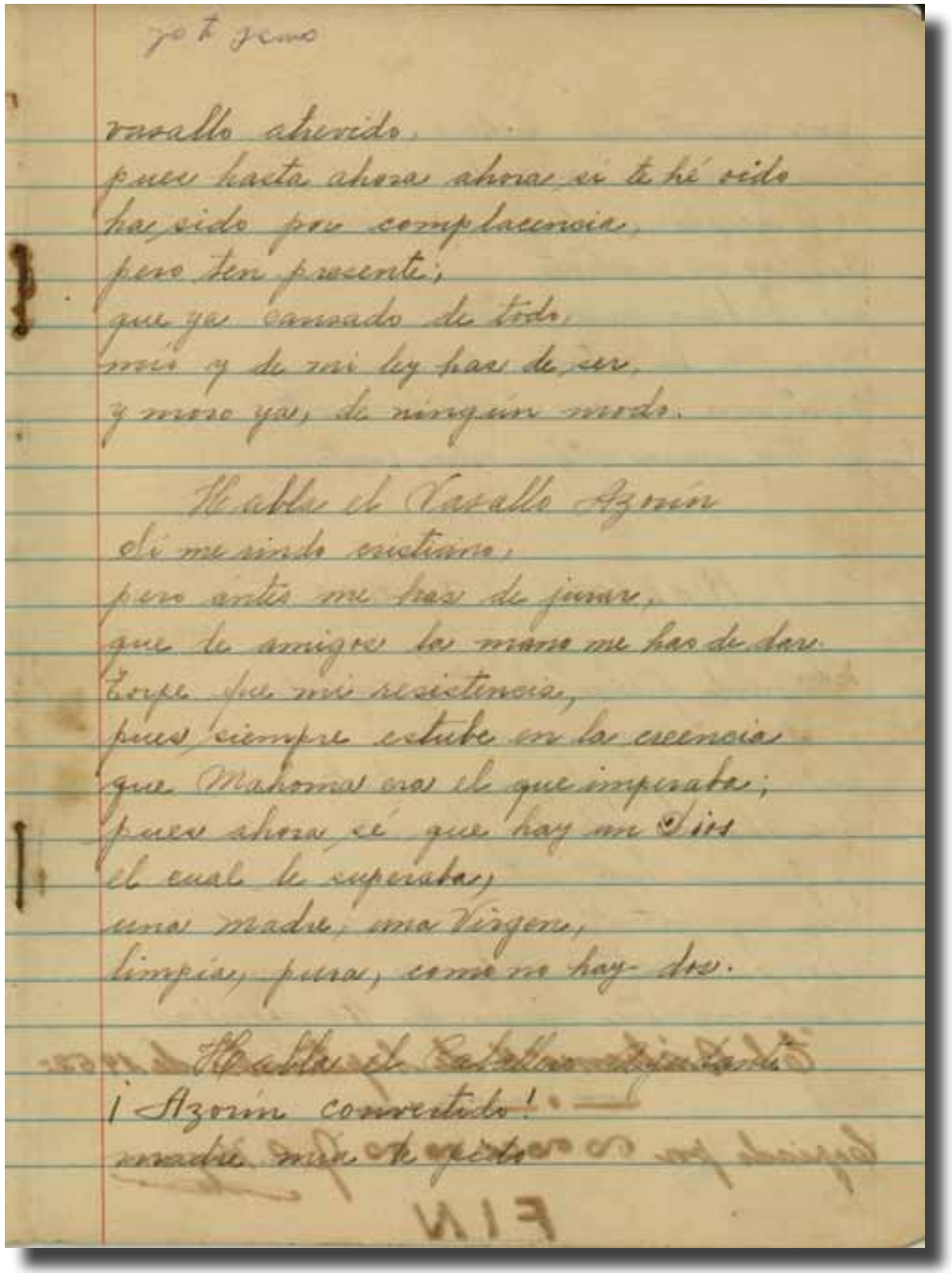
Unfaithful pagan, drive your sword towards me. I am a bastion, and if there is something I should furnish you, it shall be your deserved punishment.

Christ our Savior
died on the Cross
to redeem the sinner.

The combat ceases.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

Mohammed, come help me!
My strength is running out, and if I have lived in your law, it is just fair to come rescue your flock.



The Adjutant speaks:

Surrender at my feet, daring vassal!

If I have been listening to you it has been out of pity, but keep in mind that I am sick of everything. You shall be mine and of my law, and Moor you shall no longer be.

The vassal Azorin speaks:

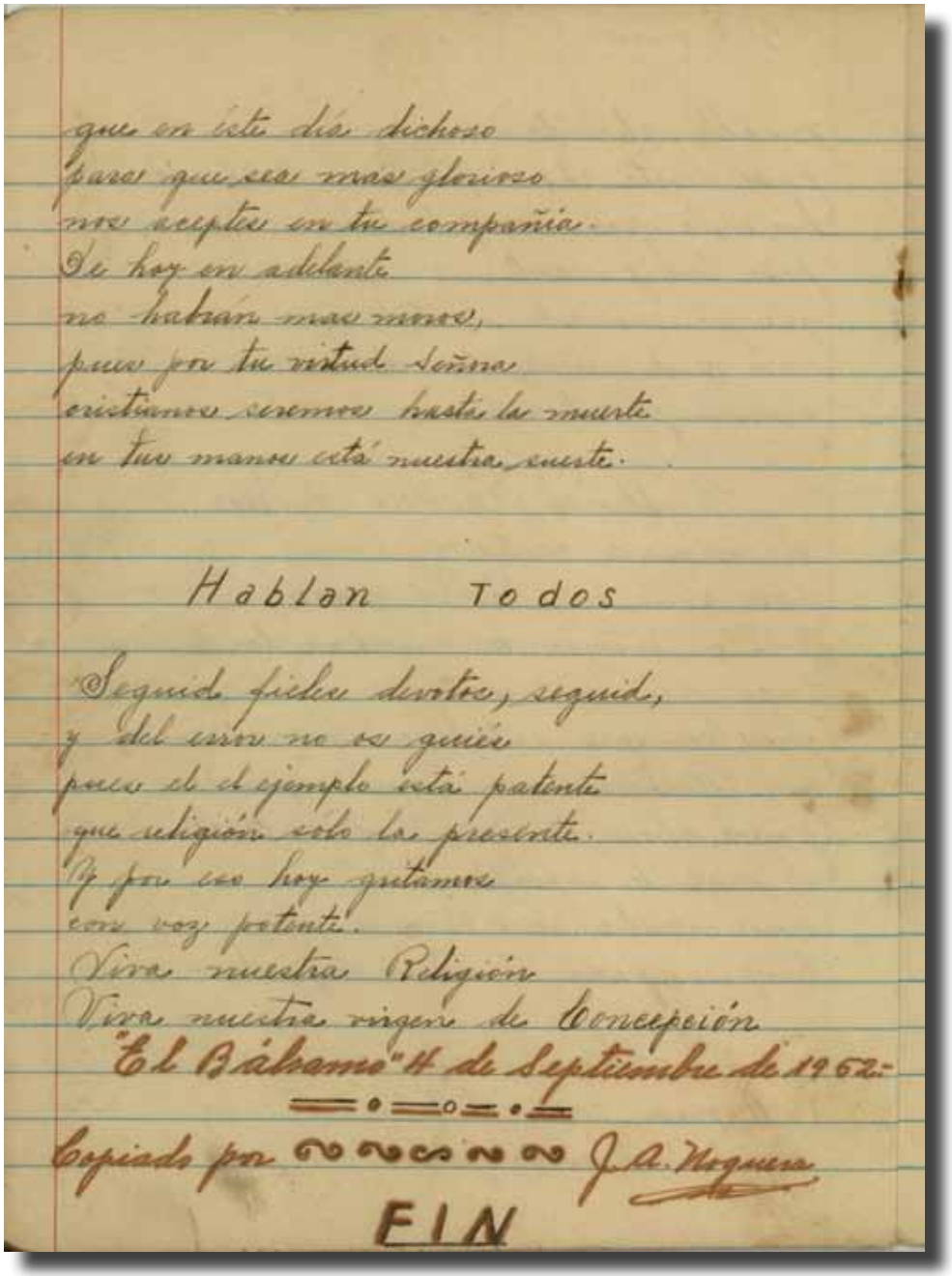
Yes, I surrender, Christian.

But before, you must swear that you will shake my hand as a friend.

It was stupid of me to give you any opposition, but I always had the belief that Mohammed was the one who reigned. Now I know that there is a God who surpasses him, a Mother, a clean, pure Virgin like no other.

The Adjutant speaks:

Azorin has been converted!


que en éste día dichoso
para que sea mas glorioso
nos aceptes en tu compañía.
De hoy en adelante
no habrán mas moros,
pues por tu virtud Señora
cristianos seremos hasta la muerte
en tus manos está nuestra suerte.

Hablan Todos

Seguid fieles devotos, seguid,
y del error no os guíe
pues el ejemplo está patente
que religión sobre la presente.
Y por eso hoy gritamos
con voz potente:
Viva nuestra Religión
Viva nuestra virgen de Concepción
"El Bálsamo" 4 de Septiembre de 1952.
Copiado por J.A. Noguera
FIN

Oh Mother I ask you that in this blessed day, so that it can be even more glorious, please accept us in your company.

From now onwards, there shall be no more Moors, since because of your virtue, oh Lady, we shall be Christians until death.

In your hand we place our destiny.

EVERYONE SPEAKS:

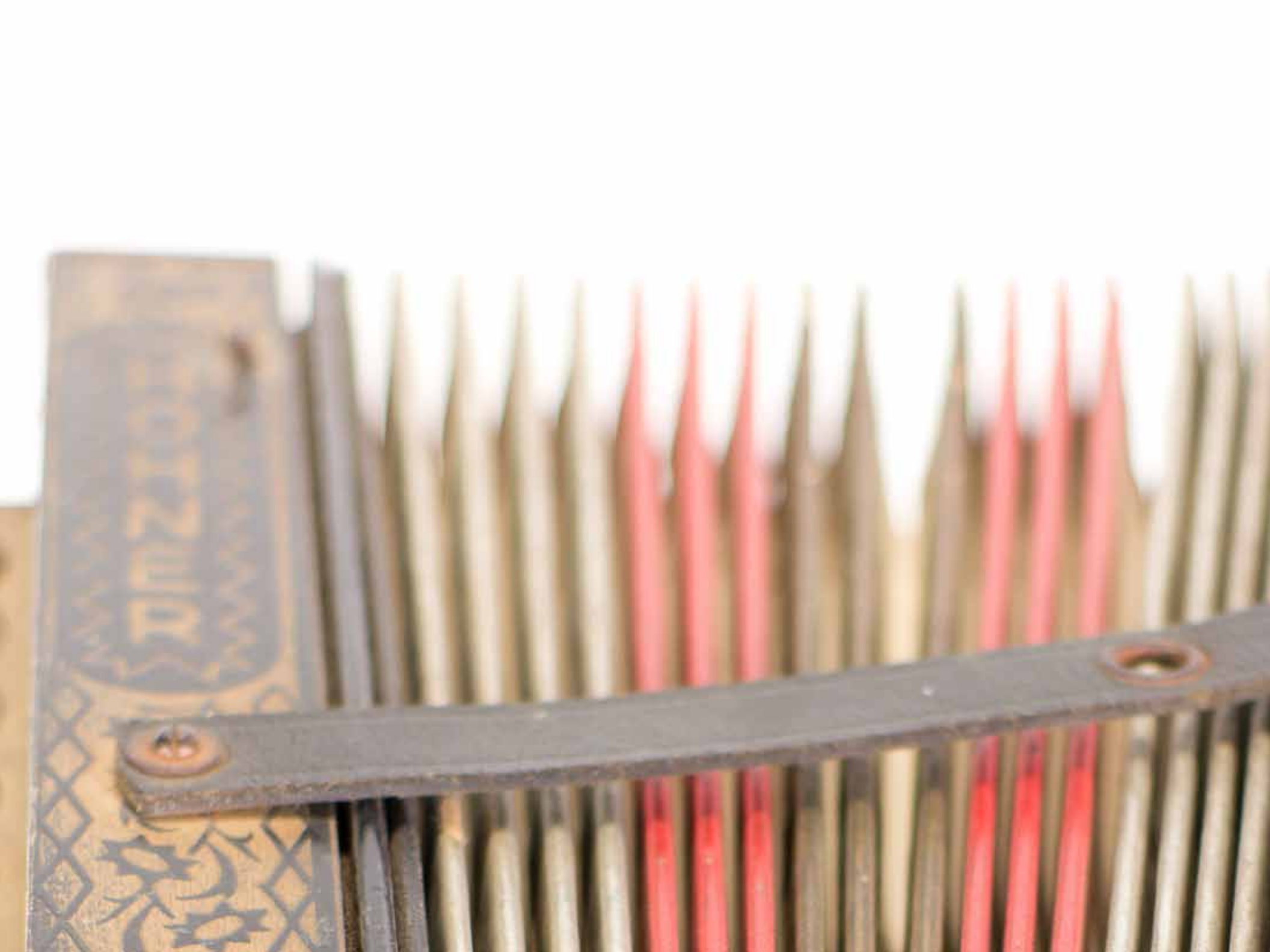
May you continue faithful devotees, may you continue and may you stay away from the guidance of the error. The example is present, and therefore we shall scream with a potent voice:

May long live our Religion!

May long live our Virgin of Conception!

"El Bálsamo," September 4th 1952.
Transcribed by J.A. Noguera

THE END



Translations by Nelson López Rojas, PhD

Nelson López Rojas (San Salvador, 1977) is the Chair of the Spanish Department at Saint Joan Antida High School where he teaches courses for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. He is also a Lecturer in Latin American Studies at UWM and Professor of literature and communications at Don Bosco University in El Salvador. He holds a doctorate in Translation from Binghamton University in New York. Nelson served as the Associate Director for the Latin American and Caribbean Area Studies Program at Binghamton University. As a translator, he published the first-ever complete translation of Salarrué's *Cuentos de barro*, which gained him praise from the L.A. Times. Other translations include the Brazilian Machado de Assis, Roque Dalton's *Poem of Love*, and he's currently working on Ellen Moodie's *El Salvador in the Aftermath of Peace*.

Masks

Masks are important to the dance because they allow the immediate identification of the character by the audience just as a one recognizes a person by his or her face. When the actor dons the mask, he is no longer José, your friend and neighbor. He has become *El Diablo*, and that mask enables José to enter the being of *el Diablo* in the world of the play.

The masks owned by Florencio Valey are very well carved examples of the early to mid 20th century mask maker's craft. Florencio probably purchased the original sets from a *moreria*, or commissioned a *moreria's* carver to produce them, perhaps in the 1940's or 50's.

Over the years of their use, both in *Finca El Bálsamo's* festivals and when they were rented to other maestros, they were often repainted and repaired so that the *Moros* with their elaborate golden mustaches, the *Cristianos* with their bushy black eyebrows and mustaches, and the *Diablos* with their reptiles and red faces would seem forever new. Sometimes rented masks were lost or masks were destroyed in the rough and tumble of the dance, and you can easily spot the masks Florencio purchased to replace them since they differ, often considerably, from those in the original set.

Most featured here are hand-carved from hard wood and a few are set with glass eyes. Later on, some, like the one featured to the left, were made from whatever was on hand - such as an old loofah or a cotton rag.






Cristianos Christians






Cristianos Christians






Cristianos Christians






Moros Moors






Moros Moors






Moros Moors






Diablos Devils






Diablos Devils

Monkeys are characters in a great many *bailes* and *loas*. In addition to playing a part in the dance/drama being performed, the *micos* or *monos* control and entertain the crowd. As ritual clowns, often interacting with particular individuals, they are basically tricksters, comically testing and questioning social norms, frequently in sexually provocative ways.

Mono Monkey

Costumes

The costumes in this exhibition were designed by Florencio Valey who then had them made by seamstresses. They were clearly inspired by the elaborate costumes made at the *morerias*, but often Florencio couldn't afford the *moreria's* finer fabrics or fancy embroidery and fringes. His early costumes were made of durable cotton, the later ones of inexpensive synthetic fabrics. To replicate the *moreria's* intricate and striking embroidery, Florencio used adhesive press-on gold and silver foil ornamentation. The red, crescent-topped crowns of the moor were built on modified *sombreros*, and he fabricated the Christian and Moorish crowns from sheet metal. The Moorish crowns and the larger Christian ones each had a bell hung inside them to add to the merriment of the festival.

Despite all the compromises Florencio was forced to make, his costumes still succeeded in suggesting the grandeur of the costume copied by the *morerias*: that of a king or courtier of the Spanish Renaissance. Wearing their decorated crowns and costumes and brandishing their swords (mostly painted machetes), the actors could count on their audience's imagination to transform them into the Christian King and his Adjutant facing down the infidel King of the Moors and his vassal Azorín.

On this and the opposite page; two rattles. One is fashioned from the jawbone of an animal and the other from a forked tree branch. Both use bottlecaps strung on wires to produce their music.


MORELIA

Moreria

The *moreria* is a peculiarly Guatemalan institution whose basic function is to rent dance costumes, masks, and texts to communities putting on the traditional dances. The name is no doubt derived from the dance of *los Moros y Cristianos* since *moro* has become a generic term for a traditional dancer in Guatemala. In existence since at least the 18th century, these private institutions throughout Guatemala employ carvers who carve and repair the masks, seamstresses who make and repair the costumes, and scribes to copy the texts.

Thus they serve to ensure the continuity of the tradition. They often brand or carve the initials of the *moreria* into the back of the masks, and identify the texts they own with their stamps, practices that ensure the return of the rented material and provide useful information for collectors and scholars. The costumes they produce are often elaborate and very well made with colorful embroidery on relatively fine fabrics, and their masks tend to be well-carved individualized depictions of the characters. Though not marked as such, the masks Florencio Valey owned were probably carved in a *moreria* and later branded inside with a painted letter "F" to identify them as Florencio's.

Here are photos of Don Ignacio Calel in his *moreria* in Chichicastenango branding one of his masks. Below is a document signed by Don Ignacio recording the rental of costumes and swords for the *Baile de Tres Venados* to Florencio Valey and Eusebio Anselmo Mixtu in 1989.

Los señores Autores del baile regional denominados los TRES Venados, de la Colonia Vista Hermosa de Santa Lucia Cotz Escuintla; don Florencio Baley y Eusebio Ancelmo Mixtu Lopez, alquilaron 18 trajes que son los siguientes 3 venados, 4 capitanes, Negro, Bisnieto, María Dolores, Viejo, 1 toro, 2Perros, 2 momos, 1 tigre y 1 leon total 18 trajes y 6 espadas.

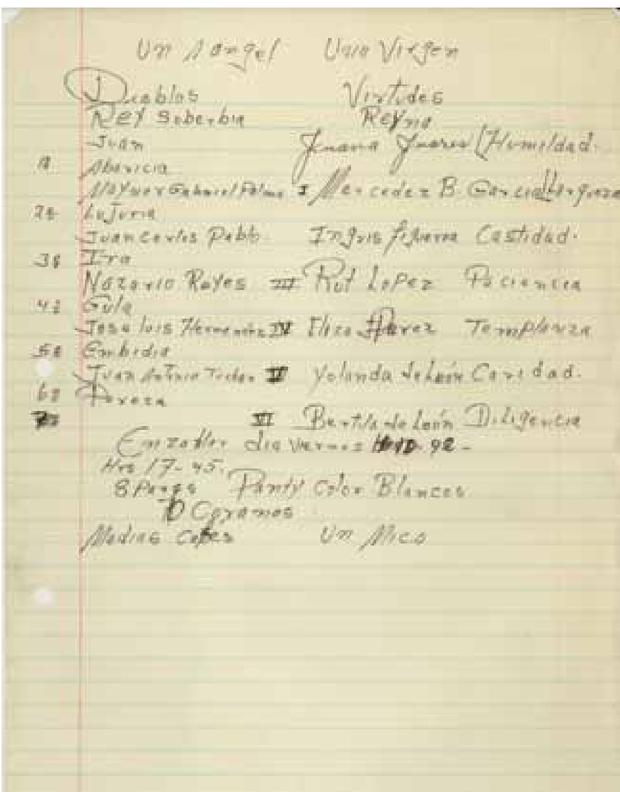
Hoy dejaron un anticipo de alquiler lo regresan la ropa para el 26 de este mes sin ninguna falta junto con el saldo.=

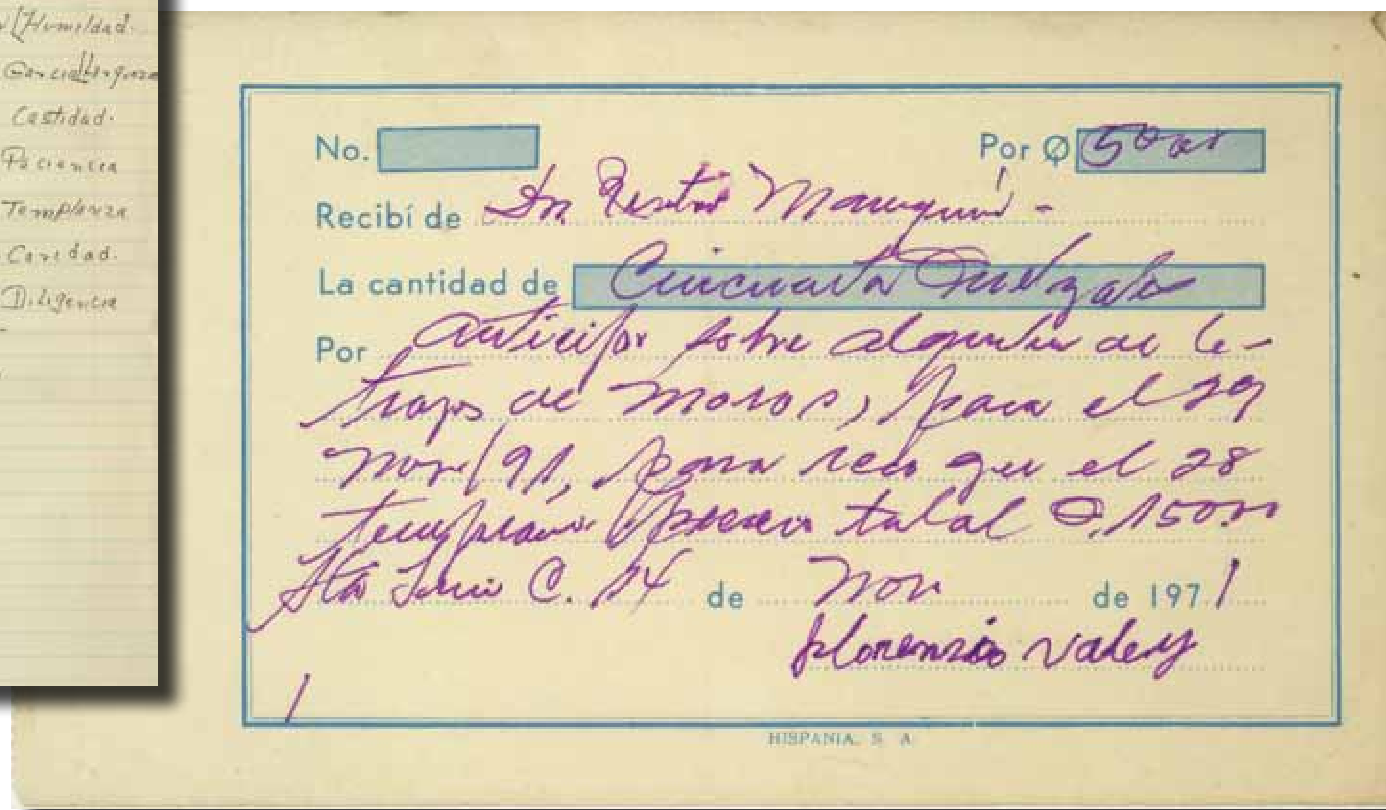
MORERIA
DE
MIGUEL IGNACIO E HIJO
CHICHICASTENANGO
DEPTO. EL QUICHE GUATEMALA, C. A.

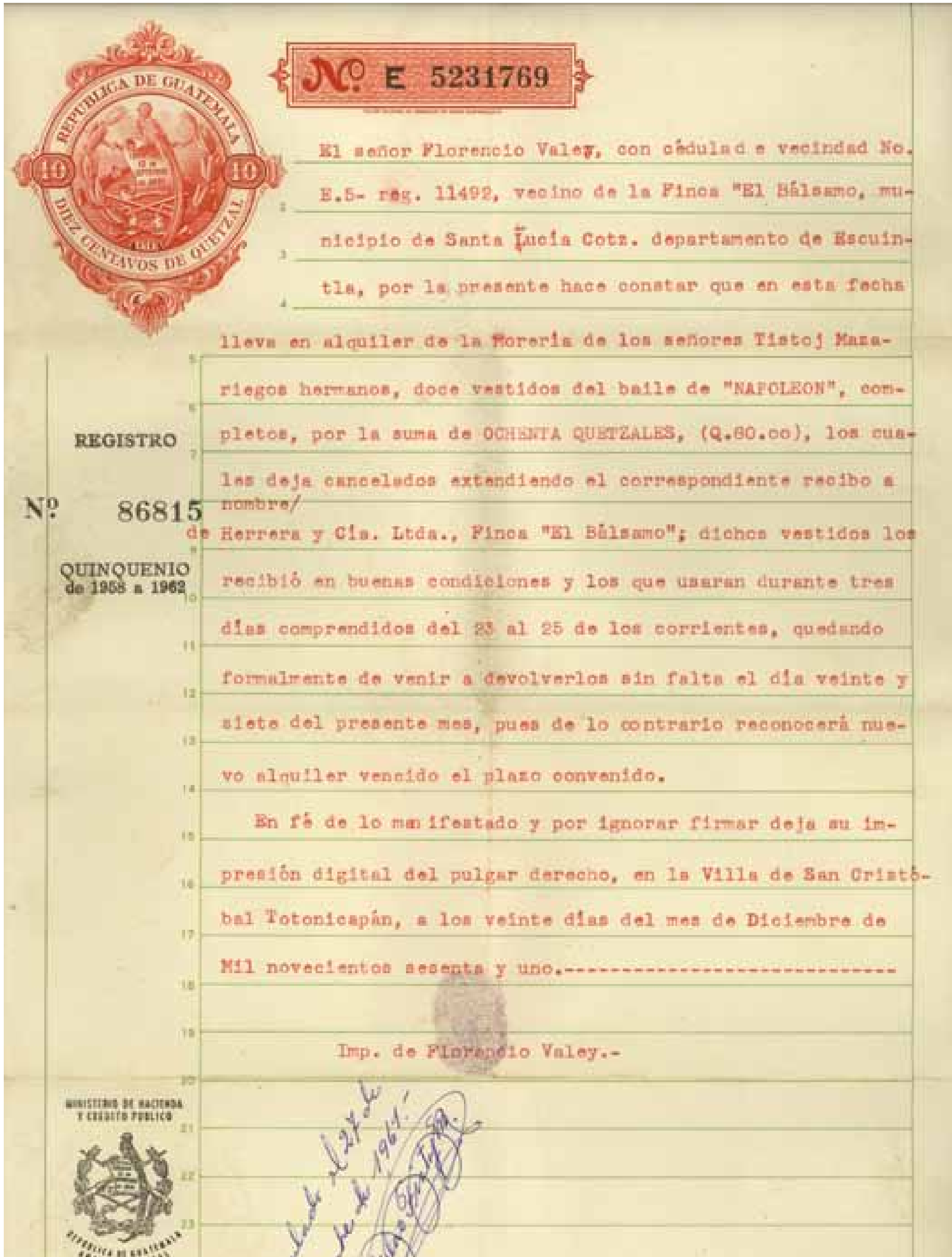
Santo Tomás Chichicastenango, Diciembre 19 de 1989

Miguel Ignacio C.-

Featured on this and the opposing page are four documents from Florencio Valey's papers, from left to right: 1) Florencio's list of characters with the names of the actors playing the parts for the *Baile de las Siete Virtudes*; 2) a 1971 receipt for payment to rent costumes for moros signed by Florencio; 3) an elaborate document from 1967 registering Florencio's return of costumes for the *Baile Napoleon* that he had rented from the *moreria* of *José Alejandro Tistoj Mazariegos e Hijos* in Totonicapan; 4) a document from the *Tistoj moreria* recording Florencio's rental in 1986 of costumes for the *Baile Napoleon.*


Un Angel Una Virgen
Diablos Virtudes
Rey Soberbio Reyna
Juan Juana Juarez (Humildad
Avaricia
Lujuria
Juan Carlos Pablo Castidad
Ira
Nazario Reyes Rut Lopez Paciencia
Gula
Templanza
Envidia
Yolanda de León Caridad
Pereza
Bertila de León Diligencia
Panty Color Blancos
Un Mico


No. Por Q 50.00
Recibí de Sr. Restituto Manzanares -
La cantidad de Cincuenta Quetzales
Por anticipo sobre alquiler de trajes de moros, para el 29 nov/71, para recoger el 28 ... total Q.150.00
Sta. ... C. 14 de Nov de 1971
Florencio Valey
HISPANIA, S. A.



REPUBLICA DE GUATEMALA 10 DIEZ CENTAVOS DE QUETZAL 10

Nº E 5231769

El señor Florencio Valey, con cédula de vecindad No. E.5- reg. 11492, vecino de la Finca "El Bálsamo, municipio de Santa Lucía Cotz. departamento de Escuintla, por la presente hace constar que en esta fecha lleva en alquiler de la Morería de los señores Tistoj Mazariegos hermanos, doce vestidos del baile de "NAPOLEON", completos, por la suma de OCHENTA QUETZALES, (Q.80.oo), los cuales deja cancelados extendiendo el correspondiente recibo a nombre/ de Herrera y Cía. Ltda., Finca "El Bálsamo"; dichos vestidos los recibió en buenas condiciones y los que usaran durante tres días comprendidos del 23 al 25 de los corrientes, quedando formalmente de venir a devolverlos sin falta el día veinte y siete del presente mes, pues de lo contrario reconocerá nuevo alquiler vencido el plazo convenido.

En fé de lo manifestado y por ignorar firmar deja su impresión digital del pulgar derecho, en la Villa de San Cristóbal Totonicapán, a los veinte días del mes de Diciembre de Mil novecientos sesenta y uno.-----------------------------

Imp. de Florencio Valey.-

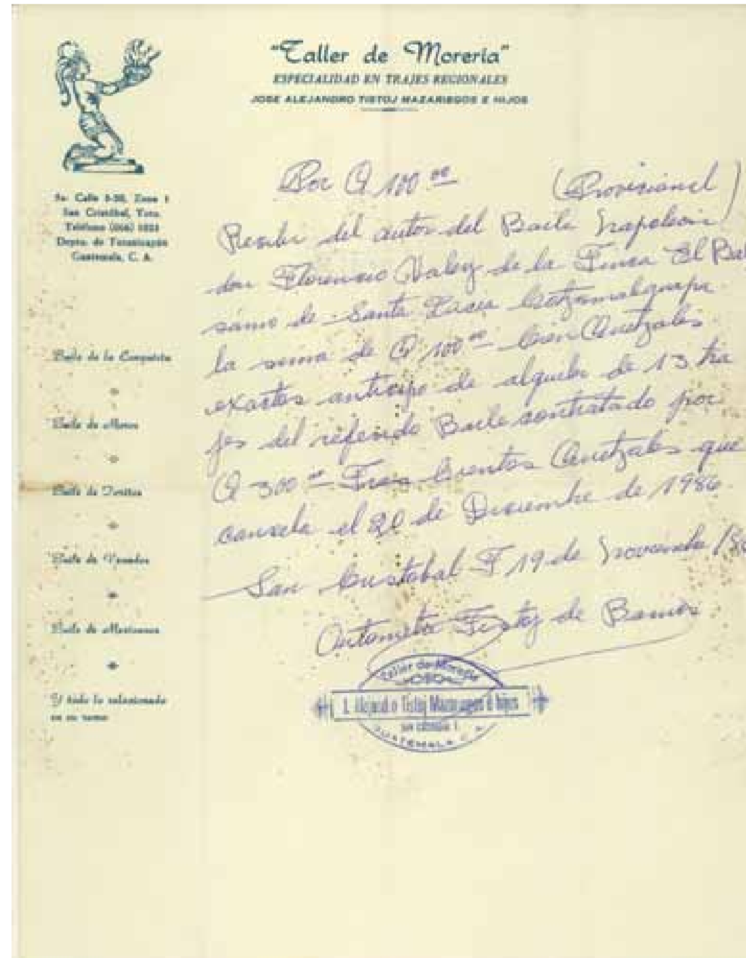
REGISTRO

Nº 86815

QUINQUENIO de 1958 a 1962

MINISTERIO DE HACIENDA Y CREDITO PUBLICO

REPUBLICA DE GUATEMALA AMERICA CENTRAL



"Taller de Morería"

ESPECIALIDAD EN TRAJES REGIONALES

JOSE ALEJANDRO TISTOJ MAZARIEGOS E HIJOS

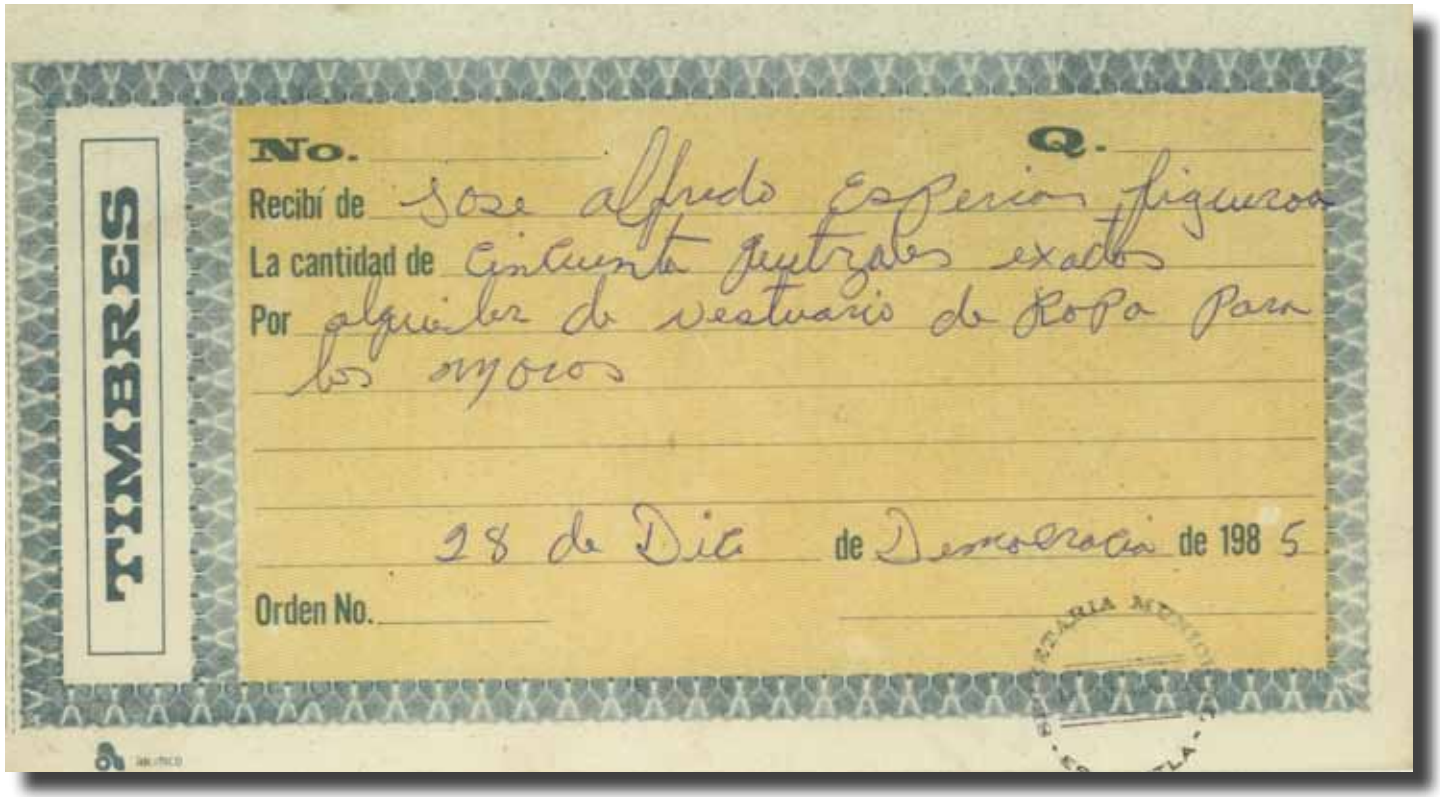
Por Q 100.oo (Provisional)

Recibí del autor del Baile Napoleón don Florencio Valey de la Finca El Bálsamo de Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa la suma de Q 100.oo Cien Quetzales exactos anticipo de alquiler de 13 trajes del referido Baile contratado por Q 300.oo Trescientos Quetzales que cancela el 20 de Diciembre de 1986

San Cristóbal T. 19 de Noviembre /86

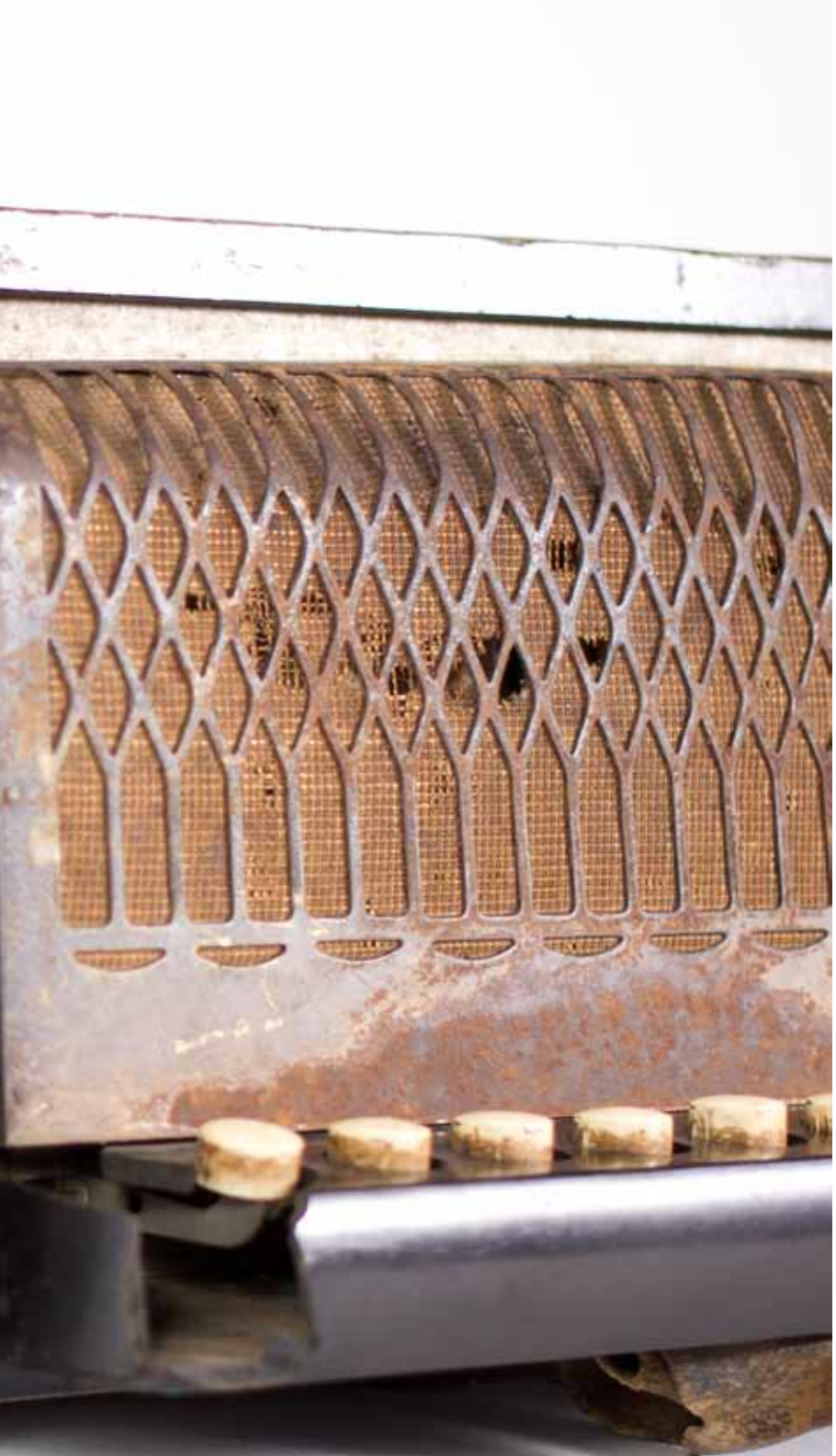
Antonieta Tistoj de Barrios

Taller de Morería — J. Alejandro Tistoj Mazariegos é hijos — San Cristóbal T. — Guatemala C. A.



Above is a receipt for payment to rent costumes for "*moros*" from Florencio. On the opposite page is a photo of the entrance to the *Santo Tomas Moreria* (taken in 2006), ond pictured in the image to the right of that is Miguel Ignacio's son and grandson, Jonathan.


SANTO TOMAS
ASK MAKERS
MIGUEL IGNACIO



When the Music Stopped.

It is interesting that several of the texts in this exhibition contain musical notation, a clear indication of the importance of music to the loas. These are dances, after all, and dances require music. Generally each of the characters has his or her own tune or song (Cruz Quiñones and Brown, 11), and often, especially in the ending *despedida*, a chorus of angels or of the characters in the loa sing praises to the Virgin.

Traditionally that music would have been played by marimbas, flutes, and drums, but lacking those, other instruments, such as Florencio's accordion, were used. And as Exequiel, Florencio's son told us, Florencio, "had a great passion for the music that he played for the *bailes and loas*."

With Florencio's death in 2002, the music stopped, and since the demand for traditional dances was waning and no one else could be found to play the music, the dances that were such an integral part of the festivals of *Finca El Bálsamo* and the life of Florencio Valey came to an end.

In the image below you can see Florencio and his family of dancers. In the top right, Florencio and his accordion are positioned next to the costumed cast for the *Baile de las Siete Virtudes.*

The photos on this page are of family members and others wearing Florencio's costumes and masks. We suspect most of these images were taken between 1970 and 1995.

Just to the left is Florencio's son, Exequiel in 2006 with his children (Florencio's grandchildren) featured below.




Below, Exequiel Valey Garcia models the costumes his father made - the red costume and mask of the "Moor" and and the blue costume of "Christian."

The History of the Dance in Mesoamerica

by Rhonda Taube

The history of the dance in Mesoamerica

Dance, theater, pageantry, and public drama formed mutually intelligible meeting grounds for the original act of hybridity, the merging of indigenous societies of the New World with their European conquerors. Dance, in many cases, transcended language as a means of communication between people who spoke entirely different languages and practiced widely different social customs. However, Europe and the New World each boasted traditions centering on a rich, community festival life that involved various populations in harmony with one another. This discussion focuses on three cultures, recognizing that this is but a small window into the variety of indigenous populations brought together in the New World.

First, I review the festival practices of the Spaniards, as they had an extensive religious festival cycle and tradition of dramatic theater, referred to as a "complex multi-act art form" (McKendrick 1992, 16). The Spanish conquerors and friars were responsible for importing European traditions to the Americas. The Spanish mendicant friars intentionally introduced the combination of Old World dance and drama as a means of supplanting indigenous religious beliefs and practices. Next, I will provide an overview of the dances of the Aztecs, as they were the original culture of the Conquest and the focus of the first proselytizing efforts in New Spain. The initial relationship between the Aztec and the Spaniards provided a blueprint for the conquest and conversion of other Indigenous American cultures, often through feast celebrations and theater.

Finally, I explore the ancient and contemporary Maya public performances, providing an overview of Mayan activities that will create a historic lens through which we can view contemporary cultural expressions.

The public *bailes*, Spanish for "dances" that generally refer to devotional forms of public performance and their festivals that are so much a part of the social and artistic life of Guatemala's indigenous and Ladino communities, derive from a variety of sources. They represent a complex repository of Spanish and New World cultural practices beginning with some of the earliest encounters between Europeans and the inhabitants of the New World. Although Spaniards, Aztec, and Maya spoke very different languages, worshipped extremely dissimilar entities, and expressed their beliefs through disparate cultural patterns, dance and performance provided an arena where these very divergent traditions could converge and share experiences. Dance, from all cultures, celebrated past accomplishments and reworked history with each new performance. For Spaniards, the Aztecs, and the Maya, dance was a way of "organizing, interpreting, and expressing their visions of the past" (Scolieri 2003, 17). Many scholars recognize that the Spaniards, the Aztecs, and the Maya, as well as other Mesoamerican groups, used dance as an allegorical format for transforming and revivifying history (Epton 1968, Harris 2000, Broda 1989, Clendinnen 1991).

For a number of years, scholars tended to view early colonial New World performance as "synchronistic," suggesting the dominant and victorious layering of Spanish Catholic worship over indigenous religious traditions (Madsen 1957, Bode 1961). More recently, we have moved in a new direction, preferring to read the survival of indigenous "resistance" and agency in public performance (Bricker 1981, Harris 2000, Krystal 2001). While both of these approaches illuminate explicit sets of information, neither methodology successfully answers what types of information survived or what different groups intentionally perpetuated, and to what gain. This interstitial space speaks to cultural adaptation and selection and provides the site for outlining cultural logic on the ground. It is therefore important to explore the sources of contemporary dances for specific characteristics in order to determine what particular elements of dance survive from these early convergences.

Dance in Spain

In Spain, the Catholic Church held sway over medieval and Golden Age theatre as early plays, or autos, performed on feast days making use of allegories and fables to illustrate and teach religious principles. McKendrick (1992) noted how *enseñar deleitando*, "teaching through pleasure," was a dedicated principle of Spanish medieval literature, and by extension its expression in theatrical form. The Spanish conquistadores and mendicants readily understood Aztec dance and its concomitant festivals as a means of constructing and negotiating hegemonic power. It easily corresponded to the Spaniard's definition of triumphant and religious performance involving the entire population in concert. The Europeans also transported to the New World a number of their own celebratory theatrical events, including auto sacramentals, allegorical dramas centered on the Eucharist. In addition, they imported many Spanish humorous pieces including *loas, entreméses* and *sainetes*, and *mojigangas*. Illustrious Golden Age Spanish authors such as Lope de Rueda, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio, Luis Quiñones de Benavente, and even Miguel de Cervantes, contributed to the popular and comic genres by scripting their own *loas, entreméses, sainetes,* and *mojigangas* to be performed during breaks of longer works staged in Spain (Harney 2002, 310).

Loa, which means, "to praise," was a short dramatic work that could appear during the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, celebrating a feast day of a particular saint, or during Holy Week (Correa and Cannon 1961, 5). *Loas* functioned as the beginning of any religious drama, either as part of the main play, or as a short work preceding it. Eventually it became separate from the main drama, and had its own regulations and rules providing a guide to its structure and content, and ultimately branching off into a variety of different forms, including sacramental, royal, and even private (ibid.).

Entreméses, *sainetes*, and *mojigangas* were short comic plays usually comprised of one act, performed during the intermissions of a longer, more dramatic work. They often included music and dance, which differentiated them from the serious theatrical event. The *entremés* usually followed the first act and the *sainete* appeared between the second and third acts (Kany 1926, cited in Harney 2002, 310). The *mojiganga*, also called fin de *fiesta*, "end of the festivity," expressed a more festive flair than the *entreméses* or *sainetes*, as it appeared at the end of the drama, marked the conclusion, and brought closure to the entire theatrical event (Bergman 2001, 18; Buezo 2005, 21). The intent of the *mojiganga* was to be festive, to be "happier, louder, and more colorful than the rest of the festivity" (Bergman 2001, 8). All consisted of a series of satirical and farcical scenes that portrayed everyday life and popular culture, such as defiant daughters and cuckolded husbands, presented in a combination of pageantry and comic relief (Bergman 2001, 9; Harney 2002, 310-311). McKendrick (1992, 138) notes they were exclusively comic, simplistic in plot, and placed in settings reflecting "plebian" or lower class folk. While the chief dramatic event featured respectable men and virtuous women, the *entremés*, *sainete*, and *mojiganga* highlighted shady, decrepit, and gluttonous characters of questionable integrity and dubious morals (Bergman 1970, 34-35). They provided a site for popular topics and tastes as well as unsavory characters inappropriate in the larger theatrical presentation. In other words, the audience's appetite for humorous topics drove the production of the short plays, often outside of the approval of the Church (Harney 2002, 312).

Spaniards--especially on the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula--had a longstanding tradition of dance to express ethnic, religious, and racial conflict with, for example, Jews and Moors (Ivanova 1970, 59). The best example of this type of Spanish celebratory dance is the *moros y cristianos*, which told the tale of the reconquest of Spain that began in 1085 CE with the fall of Toledo (Harris 2000, 31). One significant campaign occurred between the years 1227-1248, when kings of Aragon-Catalonia and Castile-Leon simultaneously drove the Moors south. Eventually Granada fell to Ferdinand and Isabella in January of 1492. The Spaniards commemorated the triumph and success of this event on a regular basis, reminding themselves of their hard won accomplishment.

Max Harris (2000, 32) suggested the earliest versions of the performance of the *moros y cristianos* was probably based on a combination of the tournament and the epic poem and not dances, since prior to 1492, there were very few accounts of such mock battles. He draws a comparison between the *moros y cristianos* and the numerous 12th century poems dedicated to *El Cid* (Harris 2000, 34). These however, were not romantic ballads merely attended by a stringed instrument, but were probably performed epic poems accompanied by dramatic mock battles (Harris 2000, 35). Harris additionally argues that the Spaniards based these presentations on the popular French tournament *mêlée*, an organized, armed fight.

Despite its military origins, one feature of the *moros y cristianos* incorporated the enemy into the dominant hegemony and live in peace (Harris 2000, 39). According to Harris, "Christian victory is characteristically gained, in the festivals of Moors and Christians, not by superior military prowess but by supernatural intervention, and the victory is manifest not in the slaughter of the enemy but in their conversion" (Harris 2000, 39). This ambivalence towards power is a theme that I will return to later.

Fiestas of the *moros y cristianos* were often produced in association with a pious tutelary being celebrated in their honor. They originally coincided with the festival of St. George [i], the saint invoked during the siege of 1276 over Moorish leader Al Azraq, who, like the dragon, was slain during battle (Epton 1968, 43). However, in Spain the association was with Santiago, the patron saint of the battle against the Moors, and later of the Conquistadors. "He displaces St. George in Spain as the saint who could be relied upon to slay the Moors," hence, his other moniker, *Santiago Matamoros*, or Moor Slayer [ii]. In Spain, the festival of Santiago is a weeklong event with much "panache and pageantry" (Epton 1968, 146). This affair was ultimately combined with the *autos sacramentales*, liturgical dramas commemorating the Eucharist. Most *autos*, or plays, in Spain originally designed for Corpus Christi, were later incorporated into other church festivities (Ravicz 1970, 29). Even today in Spain, processions and festivals in honor of Santiago are most closely associated with the festival of Corpus Christi in Spain (Scolieri 2003, 22). At least thirty-two different towns and villages in Spain celebrated *moros y cristianos* dating back to at least to the 15th century (Epton 1968, 44).

Prehispanic Mesoamerica: The Aztec

At the time of contact and into the early colonial era, numerous Spanish *conquistadores*, missionaries, and intrepid explorers turned author describe the discovery of Aztec civilization, including indigenous ritual theater. Many sixteenth-century Franciscan friars studied the Aztec annual, sacred festival cycle in order to understand its elaboration through public ceremony, dance, and song. Both Pedro de Gante and Toribio de Benevente, or Motolinía, recognized the cultural significance of ritual performance and its capacity to record and present a variety of information detailing various mytho-historical events (Boone, 2000). De Gante was unsuccessful at getting Nahuas--people of indigenous descent after the fall of the Aztec empire--to attend Mass until he discovered song and dance as indigenous modes of prayer. As a result, he incorporated melody and drama into the Christian display (Madsen 1961, 377; Trexler 1984, 193).

> Since I had seen this (pagan songs and dances) and that all their songs were dedicated to the gods I composed a very solemn song about the law of God and faith…I also gave them patterns to paint on their mantles so they could dance with them because this was the way the patterns had been used by the Indians…In this way they came to show obedience to the church and the patios were full of people [quoted in Madsen 1961, 377].

Motolinía (1973, 129) corroborates de Gante's descriptions of the significance of colonial indigenous ceremony: "They began to adorn their churches and make altarpieces and ornaments and have processions, and the children learned dances with which to enliven the latter" (1973, 129). This suggests the importance of dance and performative celebrations in Aztec religious life.

The Aztecs timed their agricultural and interrelated festival cycle according to their solar-year calendar known as the *xihuitl*, or *xiuhpohualli,* consisting of a 360-day period plus five extra days. This ritual schedule followed a sequence of eighteen *veintenas*, indigenous months consisting of twenty days. Each *veintena* featured a particular patron deity and concomitant celebration, comprised of various ceremonial activities including fasting and feasting, public singing and dancing, mock battles, processions, deity impersonations, as well as blood sacrifice. Mexica military traditions shaped the visual spectacle of their festivals. The Mexica's scripted battles in Tenochtitlan involved "impersonation, costume, script, dance, and a festive context that flowed through the streets and surrounding countryside, engaging all the senses" (Harris 2000, 74). Johanna Broda (1989, 70) discusses the enactment of Mexica myth as taking place within a very theatrical setting. According to Inga Clendinnen (1991, 248): priestly organizers of ritual were "contriving, by very different means, the kind of delirium we associate not with high reverence but with carnival."

In recent times, numerous scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have worked with indigenous manuscripts that illustrate and describe in their painted form various Nahua festivals and rites. Those early authors who contributed to a better understanding of the *veintena* cycle--the festival round that determined religious ceremonies and performances--and laid the groundwork for analytical and comparative research include Eduard Seler and Francisco de Paso y Troncoso. Seler's (1960-61) seminal studies at the end of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century form the basis for much of our understanding today. Additionally, his investigations brought Sahagún's writings to scholarly attention. Seler made numerous translations of texts, presented in-depth analysis of imagery, and provided an example of tireless methodology, all of which are central to any interpretation of ancient Mexican culture and are still important to scholars today. Likewise, Paso y Troncoso (1898) spent over two decades gathering source material and numerous facsimiles of painted manuscripts, many of which he published, making them available for scholarly investigation. Additionally, he intensely studied almost every aspect of the Codex Borbonicus, including its physical condition and visual qualities. Like Seler, Paso y Troncoso's work is fundamental to the study of ancient Central Mexican codices and their celebratory content.

Samuel Martí and Gertrude Kurath (1964), concentrate on the structure and significance of dance choreology and ethnology, especially interpretation of pre-Hispanic Aztec performance. They were the first scholars to write a book-length study of pre-Hispanic Central Mexican dances, including their character and style. In addition to her work on Aztec dance, Kurath (1960) also established the theoretical and methodological considerations within the field that she titled "dance ethnology." However, as noted by Paul Scolieri (2003, 26), contemporary readers of ethno-historical texts have a tendency to highlight European issues and themes when approaching the study of Aztec performance, and assume Western preconceived notions concerning the nature of public ritual. This is primarily because the same bias is present in the early contact sources, as well as the similarity shared by both cultures in terms of their organization of the ritual festivals according to the solar-year agricultural cycle. Moreover, like the Spanish, representing political domination was one of the goals of Aztec performance, as they absorbed ritual and military choreographies of defeated city-states (Scolieri 2003, 29). However, the motivation and underlying principles of the Aztec and Spanish ritual dance were quite different: it was movement not narrative, and creation, not expression that drove Aztec choreography (Scolieri 2003, 26). In other words, Aztec public ritual emphasized collective participation over the portrayal of a particular storyline or sequence of events.

Prehispanic Mesoamerica: The Maya

For the ancient Maya, dance and drama represented fundamental beliefs concerning relationships linking people, ancestors, and spiritual entities. They characterized and articulated these concepts through a cluster of activities that included re-enactments of creation mythology, ritual pageants, and even irreverent humor. These events defined human communities, expressed the responsibility of rulers, and rejuvenated the deities. It is clear that dance formed a conduit linking the living to the gods, ancestors, and other supernatural beings (Houston and Stuart 1996). There are not only meticulous renderings of distinct forms of dance, but also the accompanying glyphic texts that provide exact terms for particular dances. Epigrapher Nikolai Grube (1994), identified and deciphered the glyph indicating dance, which possibly reads as ak'ta. After this expression appears another glyph that signifies the particular variety of dance, and among these are dances with staffs, an axe-like scepter recognized as the god K'awiil, as an embodiment of lightening, and even live serpents. Additionally, there are allusions to a ballplayer dance and military dances.

Until recently, the variety of depictions of dance had been overlooked. Scholars identify dance in Classic Maya art through the accessories and paraphernalia carried and worn by the dancers, which include masks, rattles, and fans. Rosemary Joyce (2000, 15) noted that the objects sported and carried by royal dancers most certainly accumulated potency of their own through time, assuming an heirloom quality.

In addition, attendants such as singers and musicians, who play drums, trumpets, flutes, and rattles frequently accompany dancers. However, perhaps the clearest indications of dance are the poses adopted by these performers, a three-quarter position with arms bent and raised (see Taube 1989; Taube and Taube 2005).

Imagery depicting performances by nobles and other actors adorned in ornate attire abound in Maya art. Numerous media, including carved stelae, polychrome frescos, painted ceramic vessels, and small-scale exquisite objects of shell and stone illustrate aristocrats participating in acts of public display. The use of this variety of materials to represent theatrics, from luxury objects of carved jade to figures in clay indicates that they were available for both the common folk and the upper stratum of society (Taube and Taube 2005). Local artisans mass-produced popular objects, such as figurines, and disseminated their wares equally throughout the metropolitan cores and rural peripheries, which must have expanded the interest in and taste for these important ceremonial events.

Members of the royalty participated in specialized dramatic acts in order to publicly affirm their ancestry, identity, and current place within courtly society. Matt Looper (2009) argues that royal public performances provided a platform for demonstrating forged political alliances while also displaying their monopolies on the trade of foreign, luxury goods. Moreover, he suggests that royal pageantry and performance was directly related to a variety of pre-Hispanic socio-political realities, such as privileges related to rank and status.

From numerous magnificent works of art located in such renowned Classic Maya centers as Copan, Palenque, and Yaxchilan, it is apparent that rulers also identified with and embodied gods, representing their unique link to the supernatural world (Houston and Stuart 1996, Houston and Stuart 1998). Maya kings often impersonated and embodied particular deities. In Maya inscriptions passages that accompany these scenes may be read "in the famous image of" (Houston and Stuart 1996, Houston and Stuart 1998, 75-77). The name of the particular deity portrayed follows these texts. Such royal dancers were deemed not merely as accomplished performers but rather the spiritual incarnation of conjured beings. Moreover, Maya kings and other nobles undoubtedly reenacted stories and myths recounting the creation of the universe. For example, Michael Coe (1989) suggested that kings probably performed tales like the 16th century Popol Vuh at every royal palace throughout the Classic period.

Maya dance also celebrated military victories and such dances concerned the flaunting and parading of war trophies, including body parts, displaying the strength and virility of the male warriors. The Franciscan friar, Diego de Landa, mentions such war dances as the *Holcan Ok'ot* and the *Batel Ok'ot*.

These intense physical performances involved hundreds of warriors that would dance in long strides in perfect unison to the beat of the drum and must have resembled the Maori "Haka" war dance. Landa also points out that during the month of Pax, combatants would dance with the jawbones of the defeated enemies they had slain in battle. Likewise, various Classic Maya painted vessel scenes portray elaborately dressed warriors with captives, severed heads, and other remains, accompanied by musicians, probably representing scenes of celebratory war dances. One of the more elaborate portrayals of this type of triumphant dance is found in Room 3 of Structure 1 at the site of Bonampak', Chiapas, Mexico.

Aside from royal demeanor that the elite classes presented for admiration and respect, all members of society were vulnerable as subjects in Maya dance that frequently satirized and ridiculed inappropriate behavior (Taube 1989). Masked and costumed performers highlighted conventional models of conduct through burlesque and clowning, which is the direct opposite of the generally established rules portrayed by other dancers, quite frequently at the same occasion. "Ritual clowns are commonly portrayed in figurines of the Late Classic Maya, portable images that may well have been passed out at festival events as mementos" (Taube and Taube 2005). Often, such characters appearing in these farces and works of "popular" art represented aged beings that displayed brutish and inhuman facial and physical features. In addition, they wield dance rattles or fans, identifying them as performers. At times, artists paired these bestial and generally unpleasant creatures erotically clinched with attractive and youthful women, scenes certainly meant to be comical and entertaining.

Our understanding of the relationship between contemporary performance and Pre-Columbian dance would not be complete without the recent epigraphic and iconographic breakthroughs that have elucidated detailed information concerning the sacred and social nature of ancient pre-Hispanic Maya dance. In his article "Ritual Humor in Classic Maya Religion," Karl Taube (1989) observes the importance of lampooning and farcical behavior among the ancient Maya. Michael Coe (1989) was the first to suggest that great epic tales of creation, like the sixteenth-century Popol Vuh, were performed in public before a courtly audience, and may have held many of the same social connotations as the Ramayana in South Asia. David Freidel, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker's (1993) book *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path*, devotes an entire chapter to ancient Maya festival and pageantry. In it, they delineate specific dance positions from monumental art, as well as a number of different forms of dances, such as the Dance of the Rebirth of the Dead, a significant type that dancers continue to perform even now. In addition, masking and impersonation were not concepts introduced by the Spanish friars, but, rather, existed in pre-Hispanic times as well. Houston and Stuart (1996) demonstrate the importance that donning the guise of a supernatural or ancestral spirit held during the Maya Classic period. Although most likely restricted to rulers and nobility, masking and incarnating, or alterity, was an established religious practice recorded in hieroglyphic inscriptions and portrayed in monumental art.

Early Colonial New World Dance

Indigenous Central Mexican performances and performers fascinated the conquistadores that arrived in the New World and equally caught the imagination of the royal court back home in Spain. Chronicles and letters from contact period Mexico illustrate the variety of Prehispanic New World plays combined with dance and music (Mace 1985, 153). As early as 1529, Hernan Cortés sent dancers, jugglers, and acrobats to perform in the palace of Carlos V (Cline, 83-5). It is no surprise then, that the conquistadors kept a close eye on their hosts, given the language barrier that existed between the indigenous residents of the New World and the Spanish arrivals, "bodily behaviors, gestures and stances become paramount in their interpretation" (Scolieri 2003, 16). Conversely, many Spaniards felt the Aztecs could use some elegance and finesse in their physical composure. Among the variety of soldiers that accompanied Bernal Díaz del Castillo to the New World, were three dance masters (Acta de Cabildo, México, October 30, 1526, cited in Scolieri 2003, 15). In 1526, two of them, Maese Pedro and Benito Bejel, attempted to open a dance academy to edify the natives with refined dances brought from Spain. Soon the Church appropriated dance as a heuristic tool for proselytizing New World novitiates on a mass scale.

As part of the Papal bull of 1537, all subjects of New Spain were required to observe twelve Church festivals during the year (Mendieta 1980, 213). However, most ecclesiastical authorities in the New World had already began the process of developing liturgical theater as an instrument of the proselytizing effort.

Starting with the early evangelical efforts, the mendicants commemorated feast days of saints with theatrical events. Two of the most important feasts celebrated were those in honor of Santiago, the patron of the Spanish armies and St. Hippolytus, the patron saint of New Spain [iii]. Although the festivals celebrated the historical and dogmatic mysteries of Catholicism, the mendicant orders isolated certain aspects of Prehispanic drama, using and transforming them into instructional and moralizing didactic devices to make them more appealing to the Nahuas (Burkhart 1989, 16).

Fray Pedro de Gante, the Flemish mendicant, arrived in the New World in 1523 and many scholars credit him with giving rise to and authoring some of the earliest New World missionary dramas. In fact, Mace (1985, 154) suggests he was the first to organize a *baile* in New Spain for Christmas in 1526. De Gante recognized his lack of success attracting natives into the church patios for mass, but once he finally discovered the Nahuas considered singing and dancing forms of prayer, he incorporated them into the Christian liturgy (Trexler, 1984, 193). This suggests he recognized the modes of Aztec worship and was willing to meet the natives on their terms in order to get across his message. Likewise, José de Acosta, a sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit who traveled as a missionary in both Peru and México. He developed dance and music as a part of mass to attract indigenous worshippers (Trexler, 1984, 194).

Thomas Gage, the Irish Dominican friar who traveled to New Spain illegally as a stowaway in 1626, commented on liturgical presentations he observed. Gage related how dancers appeared to believe they had transformed into the both the saints and the impious characters they represented during a performance (Gage 1958, 54) [iv]. Dance dramas appeared to be the only dependable way to assure the natives would attend religious sermons and at the same time give them a tangible form to help them understand the mysterious tenets of the new religion.

In Guatemala, colonial indigenous theater incorporated didactic theological and moralizing loas that shared a special connection to the especially popular Marian cult in the celebration of Corpus Christi (Correa and Cannon 1961, 7). When brought to the New World, Spaniards associated *loas* not only with particular professions, such as vendors, but also with the indigenous populations (Correa and Cannon 1961, 7). *Loas* are folk dramas, in what Correa and Cannon (1961, 7) refer to as "cultural frontiers," a tradition that reaches into the margins of society. In Guatemala, they were important in the process of supplanting pagan religion with Christianity. They include The *baile de los animales*, *baile de San Jorge*, *baile de los costeños*, and the *baile de moros y cristianos*, among others (ibid.). Loa performances included dance and music and lasted approximately twenty-five minutes. They were most usually associated with the veneration of one of the Virgins and glorified various saints as well (Correa and Cannon 1961, 6). Their production featured a variety of supernatural and ethereal characters such as archangels and diablos.

Entreméses, *sainetes*, and *mojigangas* also traveled to the New World and were most often associated with the activities of Carnival. The must have provided a site for the perfect complement of Spanish comic interludes with the indigenous taste for theatrical satire, all the while educating indigenous masses on the new faith. In Spanish America, the farcical episodes lampooned, amused, and provided suitable levels of parody. Father Bartolomé de las Casas, referred to mojigangas as missionary theater with the acceptable function of evangelization, allowing a wide berth of activities, as the ends justified the means. They spilled out of the theater and into the public roads of the towns, becoming a form of comic street theater with wild costumes and gigantic figures, eventually separating from religious performances altogether. *Entreméses* also continued to supply secular relief to long, drawn out, and involved religious performances. Through their popular appeal, they also provided episodes that combined amusement and edification for the viewing pleasure of the indigenous religious novitiates (Pasquariello 1952, 44). Their original intention was to convey religious messages, but they also shifted focus when necessary to include satire and buffoonery, sometimes even directed at civil authorities (ibid). Many triggered heated struggles and encounters between the civil and church authorities that required royal intervention (ibid.). Even secular subject matter served the evangelizing mission of the church, as skits often undermined indigenous culture and practices, such as healing and "witchcraft," in favor of an affirmation of Christian faith (Pasquariello 1952, 52). Most all ended with the religious illumination of the various characters over their previous errant ways and an avid acceptance of the new faith.

Contemporary Dances

In spite of the fact that drama and theater in the New World developed as a way to attract neophytes to Spanish Catholic mass, it continued and flourished after the era of independence from Spain. Convinced that indigenous theatrics were a creation of the devil, Spanish priests tried to stamp them out or substitute new Christian dances (Mace 1985, 154). *Danzas tradicionales*, or "traditional dances" still play an important role in popular celebrations throughout México and Guatemala (Luján Muñoz 1985, 97). Both indigenous and Ladino townships even now perform the bailes during Christmas, *Semana Santa*, *Corpus Christi*, and the local saint's day of a community. Some have their thematic and narrative origins in pre-Columbian times, but all underwent some form of modification with the arrival of Spanish missionaries.

Various dances, such as the *Rabinal Achi*, "the Lord of Rabinal" that recreates a narrative of mythic origin as exemplified by a conflict between two princes, or the *Xajooj Keej*, the Deer Dance, maintain much, if not all, of their Prehispanic antecedents (Tedlock 2003; Akkeren 1999; Janssens and Akkeren 2003). The same Maya communities that scholars study for their adherence to traditional culture also perform other dramas such as *Pascal Rey*, or "Easter King." Although they bear a strong indigenous character, these particular dances were introductions from the Old World. In some cases, however, scholars of contemporary dance read too much pre-Columbian meaning into contemporary Maya dance, disregarding the natural shift cultures make over long spans of time.

Reading and interpreting *Xajooj Keej* through the lens of strictly Classic period art treats the Maya as a static culture frozen in time and elides all possibilities of recognizing the resiliency of the Maya and their ability to successfully adapt to their changing surroundings. At the time of European contact, Maya culture had already experienced serious disruptions to its socio-political and religious life, it shifted away from the adulation of the centralized authority figure of the ajaw, or king, who determined much of the spiritual practices of the community. Also, the tendency to view indigenous culture, of any era, as a static object and not a process fails to recognize the creative capabilities of its adherents. These dances, both in spite of and because of colonial dominance retain a complex layering of meanings.

Victoria Bricker (1981, 130-133) notes how the dances of Chamula, Chenalho, and Zinacantan of highland Chiapas are a historical and cultural pastiche. She argues for the existence of a thematic disjunction between costume and role, costume and action, and costuming (Bricker 1981, 133). During the festival of Carnival that occurs before Lent, all festivities appear to concern the passion of Christ. However, upon closer inspection, there are a number of different events commemorated spanning a great deal of time and sometimes even geographical space.

Entertainers prefer the costumes overlapped, with various costume elements coinciding from completely different historic eras, either remains from a previous dance genre, or the layering of attire from different time periods altogether. For example, the masks donned by the performers will be worn with a military coat and a busby headdress (a tall fur hat worn by British military guards), while the distinction between characters being performed is blurred. "Blackmen", monkeys, demons, Frenchmen, Turks, and even Ladino soldiers represent much more than the face portrayed on their masks. As Bricker (1981, 133) points out, it is the theme of ethnic conflict rather than the historical order that structures the message of the drama. In this way, dance provides a platform for constructing identity through alterity, the dance's power come from its ability to capture and merge these fantastic types, all contrasted from the people of the community in which it is performed.

The performances of the dance dramas are collective, at times involving numerous characters from various dances simultaneously (Thompson 2000, 194). As Bricker notes (1981) they do not just present overlapping dances, but overlapping times, as well. She refers to this as a "telescoping of time," a feature that allows various pasts to co-exist with the present and the future, yet always becoming, in present progressive tense (Thompson 2000, 191). This is what Barthes (1981, 7) referred to as imaginary narration, one outside the linear form of "scientific" historical narrative. In relaying a history, they accelerate or decelerate time and zigzag through different points in a particular period.

In Maya performances, *bailes* such as the Deer and the Monkey dances that are based on original Prehispanic events also run in tandem with Spanish history; even though the Dance of the Conquest derives from the dance of the *moros y cristianos*, both continue to be performed at the same time, suggesting they represent different historical acts. "The present has become an arena of performance for many histories as they have collided and bled into one another" (Thompson 2000, 197). Bourdieu (1980, 92) suggested that a ceremony is a practice that "can only be grasped in action," and for the Maya of Mexico and Guatemala, this is certainly the case. The Maya describe these dances as theirs, their history and *costumbre*, or custom, their performance is what makes them real. The dances imitate common problems and current issues such as, old age, deformity, deafness, animals, drunks, the insane, languages and costumes from other provinces, corrupt officials, disobedient children, illness, affairs, merchants, coughs and diseases, and wanton sexuality, including phallic and erotic humor (Mace 1985, 153). Through dance, the Maya perform their history, greatest concerns, and religion simultaneously.

Accompanying the rehearsals of the dance are various types of prayers, as dancers offer their *bailes* to mountain gods, rain gods, the lord of the hunt, and Christian saints (Mace 1985, 149-50). In many Guatemalan communities, the preparations, practice, and public presentations of the *bailes* are the most important events of spiritual and social life and constitute community building (Mace 1985, 150). They link the present and the past, as they evoke deceased performers, observers weigh productions against each other, and the elderly reminisce about abandoned dances.

Families carry the continuity from one year to the next through maintaining specific characters of the dance. However, the *bailes* themselves are also a form of prayer; spirits of ancestors, nature, and animals are all present for the dances and breathe new life, energy, and essence with their annual performances. In the Maya community of Chamula, in Chiapas, Mexico, one week before Carnival a prophecy that merges figures from several historical eras foretells the events to come, another way the past is connected to the forthcoming year (Bricker 1981, 135). The Dance of the Conquest contained elements of several dances and people spoke of performers from different dances as members of same dance, demonstrating that even dances are collapsed into each other (Bricker 1981, 151).

Following the tradition of Martí and Kurath, Matilde Montoya (1970) wrote a study focusing on the Dance of the Conquest that explored Guatemalan traditions after the arrival of the Spanish. Likewise, Barbara Bode (1961) wrote a monograph exploring the Dance of the Conquest in Guatemala. Although Bode's work is rich in ethnographic detail, she appears to have misunderstood the overarching ideological significance dance carries in most Maya communities and likens it to a pastime that relieves the monotony of peasant life. Rene Acuña (1978), on the other hand, wrote a seminal study of the festivals, games, and farcical dances of ancient Yucatan that captures the nuances of public ritual and continues to maintain its timeliness.

A pioneer in the comprehensive analysis of indigenous Guatemalan dance is the ethno-choreologist Carlos García Escobar (1987; 1989; 1990).

Along with documenting a large variety of contemporary dances and their specific costumes, he identified a number of dance studios and costume rental shops, provided explicit diagrams of choreography, and applied the Labanotation method of dance notation to indigenous forms of performance. One of his contributions is noting the significance of *pasitas*, the direction and order of dance steps as a means of constructing sacred space. About the same time, Luis Luján Muñoz (1987), the former director of the Museo Popol Vuh, published a seminal study on the origin and background of masked dances in Mesoamerica from Pre-Columbian times to the present. His discussion includes the first survey of the institution of the *morería*, the dance-costume rental shop unique to Guatemala. The name for the shops probably derives from the dance of the *moros y cristianos*, one of the earliest and most well known New World productions. Muñoz identifies all of the known *morerías* in the twentieth century, as well as the most renowned mask makers' signatures and identifying marks. The *morerías* are the tradition keepers; they manufacture, sell, and rent the costumes for the different *bailes*. They also provide the continuity from one generation to the next, maintaining designs and dance choreography in the same location. In Chichicastenango, the proprietor of the *morería* San Tomas, Miguel Ignacio Calel, is also an internationally renowned dance master who has composed a great number of dance arrangements.

He is the inheritor of a mask-making dynasty that stretches back into the middle of the nineteenth century. His position of great prominence and the esteem the local, national, and international community hold for him suggests the significance of his profession within and outside of Guatemala.

Contemporary Western Highland Danzas Tradicionales

Among the Aguacatec Maya of Totonicapan, Guatemala, as well as in other communities, the dancers do not perform primarily for enjoyment. It is very expensive and involves large sums of money to cover dues, costume rental, supplies and food for the festival, and payment to the religious leader (McArthur 1977, 10). For the majority of the men the cost equals approximately three months wages, a cumbersome sacrifice for most milpa farmers. However, it was a custom left by the ancestors, passed down from father to son and the performers believe they will die if they do not dance, as it fulfills the wishes of the dead (McArthur 1977, 10-11). Likewise, in Rabinal, in the state of Baja Verapaz, Guatemala, the dances delineate the reciprocal relationship and profound mutual interaction that exists between the living and the dead (Janssens and van Akkeren 2003, 9-13).

The Aguacatec Maya, like other groups in the highlands, do not consider their deceased relatives dead, but rather "bound" or "imprisoned" (McArthur 1977, 12). It is through the ritual of the dance that the living temporarily die, switching places with their predecessors, as they are "untied", allowed to walk around again in places where they lived.

Moreover, it releases the dead from the suffering caused by the binding in the afterlife (McArthur 1977, 13). According to McArthur (1977, 13), "the exhilaration of liberation is intensified by the atmosphere of conviviality created during the festival, in which the dead participate with the living in dancing, eating, and drinking, and often in accompanying them on the long trip to obtain costumes." Nevertheless, the relationship is not so straightforward, only the offspring of a specific past dancer has the capacity to release his ancestors (McArthur 1977, 13). This explains why descendants perform only in the same specific character their forbears played and they refer to the costumes as the property of the dead (McArthur 1977, 14-15). Thus, the *bailes* are gifts presented to the ancestors and the patron saints of Aguacatan in exchange for health, wealth, and long life (McArthur 1977, 16).

Maury Hutcheson (2003) explores the significance of cultural memory as an underlying component of identity construction present in dance-dramas among the Achi Maya of Rabinal, Baja Verapaz. Hutcheson argues that during two specific types of dramatic events, history is remade with each performance. In this regard, the past is continually available to those witnessing these events, while creating a site of negotiation and confrontation of present day identity. Hutcheson addresses the shifts that have occurred in Maya society due to globalization, changes in labor, as well as evangelization and suggests that contemporary theater, although largely secularized, also addresses ways of maintaining tradition and a conservative vision of Mayan culture.

In Momostenango, the *cofradía*, a group of four senior men, organize the annual festival in honor of Santiago Apostol, the patron saint of the community (Cook 2000, 35). They are the symbolic counterpart to indigenous governance and mediate the world of the spirits as opposed to the political realm (Cook 2000, 50). Through participation in these events, they elevate their status to *aj patan*, "burden carriers." [v] The alcalde pays for the fiesta and in return does not have to perform other tedious responsibilities, including sweeping the church (Cook 2000, 35). Each *cofradía* has a meetinghouse called an *armita*, an additional financial burden for the alcalde that stores the saints' image and serves as the space for gatherings. The *armita* also provides an additional hub of focus and activity for the saint's day. "The saint is carried in procession from the church to the armita and back again for the fiesta on a litter (anda) by the cofrades, who wear flower crowns" (Cook 2000, 36). During the procession, the alcalde leads the assembly holding the silver *cofradía* emblem on top of his staff (Cook 2000, 37). In addition, the *chuch axels*, the highest ranked women, flank the procession and are identified by the flower necklaces they wear.

Their procession through the town demarcates the sacred space of the community and establishes town borders. Worshippers carry the image of Santiago accompanied by incense, music, flowers and fireworks. People wait in their doorways for a view of the saint to slowly amble by, held as an enormous burden by the *cofrades*. In this manner, they constitute what Lefebvre (1994, 73) refers to as a "social space." This process "combines the city's reality with its ideality, embracing the practical, the symbolic and the imaginary" (Lefebvre 1994, 74).

They are organizing the logical order of the community, with all citizens as participants, either through the act of circumambulating through town with the litter, or by witnessing it passing past their homes and through the streets. This process establishes the form of the community, creating a juncture between inner experience—both past and present—and the physical nature of social space (Lefebvre 1994, 19). They create a shared, oriented space through the movement of their bodies, and the participation of the viewers (Scheflen and Ashcraft 1976, 6). The actions are both constructing sacred space and time, and bound by them. This procession is always on the most important day of the festival, July 25, the actual feast day of Santiago. This act connects the contributors and observers, as well as the boundaries of Momostenango as a sacred place, directly to the patron saint, and by extension, to the larger cosmological order.

Accompanying the processions in Momostenango are various types of dances that add to the feeling of conviviality and joy. As in Aguacatan and Rabinal, in Momostenango the dancers stage the festivals in honor of their patron Santiago and other saints in order to sustain the community's bond with the supernatural entities (Cook 2000, 51). Enrollment in a dance troupe is voluntary, based on the desire of an individual to form a closer relationship with a protective spirit.

"For these dedicated ritualists, service to their deceased predecessors (*primeros*) and the saints is a series of ordeals fraught with initiatory symbolism and the search for personal supernatural power. Those whose ritual is adequate and who serve an image and the *primeros* with total devotion, being of one heart, are rewarded with life, health, and prosperity" (Cook 2000, 63). Within indigenous Maya communities throughout various parts of Guatemala, dance opens and maintains the channels of communication between the living, their ancestors, and the realm of the spirits. Thus, at the dances, observers behave correctly, demonstrating harmony in the presence of the saint in order to bolster their supplications.

Dances in Momostenango function within the community much like Hopi *katsina*, or "spirit being" dances, they combine responsibility with pleasure (Kealiinohomoku 1988, 58). For the Hopi, through its energy-building acts, the dances must bring joy to all, and create a sense of what Kealiinohomoku (1988, 59) refers to as "withness," or a feeling of close-knit community, which requires audience participation from all members of the community. As Kealiinohomoku (1988, 60) notes, non-dancing participants are essential, their vigor attracts the spirits and pleases them, which in turn brings vigor and renewal back to the community. In Momos, similar attitudes and concerns about the dance and participation are present. For example, in the dance of the Monos and Animalitos (monkeys and little animals), it is crucial for the costumed animal dancers to spill out into the audience, interacting with as many spectators as possible.

The lions, jaguars, and monkeys perform tricks, beg for money, and generally provide comic relief. They especially seek out young children, partially as entertainment, and partially to inculcate them into the religious fold. Moreover, their interactive street antics involve the community as much as the high wire acts they later perform as a demonstration of faith and as feats of bravery. The more the audience is involved in the event, the more successful it is.

Los Mexicanos

Momostenango regularly features three types of danzas during the patron saint festival, *Los Mexicanos*, also known as *los vaqueros*, the "cowboys," los monos, "the monkeys," and a traditional *convite*, or invitation dance. In 2008, a fourth type of dance returned after a fifteen year hiatus, *la conquista*, or The Dance of the Conquest." All four dances start mid-morning and appear for a couple of hours. The dancers break for lunch, and then later appear again for the afternoon. All in all the dancers may spend as much as eight hours performing in the main plaza directly in front of the Church. In the summer of 2008, all four dances appeared side by side at the same time creating a critical mass of public performance. Once the dances begin it is near impossible to either move into or out of the plaza, as the streets are completely crowded.

The "*Mexicanos*" appear every year, and provide bawdy and burlesque humor with minimal narrative, although there are some basic underlying sequences and plot structures.

The dancers wear the garb of *mariachis* or *charros*: sequined sombreros and black bolero jackets emblazoned with elaborate gold or silver embroidery representing the Mexican eagle across the back, their slacks flaunt silver conchos down the side of their legs. They carry red, white and green rattles, the colors of the Mexican flag, which display the words "Viva Mexico." They sport pistols and whips, and bear large Mexican flags. Their carved and painted wooden masks are brown or dark, earthy red, and feature a long, protruding phallic-shaped nose, intended as a means of visually lampooning Mexican culture (Pieper 2006, 199).

The use of mariachis may also suggest the continuing tension between the two countries. The Momostenango *danza* performance of *mariachi* dancers, most noteworthy in Mexico as a symbol of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and one readily connected to Mexican national identity, portrays them as drunken, wild renegades, boastfully strutting about. *Mariachis* derive primarily from Jalisco in Western Mexico, the opposite end of the country from Guatemala. The summer of 2005, I repeatedly asked my friends and family, "Why Mexicans, why not Guatemalans?" They always shrugged this question off with an answer that suggested Guatemalans simply like to imitate people. Nevertheless, in separate conversations about Mexico, Guatemalans openly expressed hostility towards their neighbors to the west, indicating they still harbored resentment over losing Chiapas to them in the early and mid nineteenth century.

The *Mexicanos* dance features, *el patron*, the land lord boss, who accompanies the performers. His costume is much more refined, with a white button-downed shirt and a cowboy hat. His mask is similar to the type used for *la conquista*, with white skin, and white or golden hair, and a pointy beard. The *patron* is also the dance leader and is responsible for keeping all of the dancers in step and following the performance structure using his whip. His wife, Margarita, accompanies him, and her being there is the source of most of the ribald humor, namely lewd physical jokes and slapstick. A man always portrays her, as all of the dancers are male. The Margarita performer does not presume any overtly feminine characteristics, rather she looks like a man in women's clothes. Her obvious masculine attributes and swagger certainly add to the humor and make this type of clowning possible, breaching norms of social comportment between the sexes. Margarita, like the *Mexicanos*, also wears a sombrero, coupled with a female skirt, and a huipil, an indigenous blouse, that in this case, sports a large Mexican eagle on the front. Her painted mask is daintier than the male masks, and is white with rosy cheeks, feminine features, and either golden or light brown hair. Her presence prompts the dancers to all try to sexually tease and molest her throughout the dance in a series of scripted and impromptu gags.

The *Mexicanos* enter the plaza and line up to dance in two rows facing each other. The rows culminate in a red, white and green stage set, decorated to look like a *cantina*, again painted with the words, "Viva Mexico." They dance two at a time, swaying back and forth to the marimba music, equally frequenting both the prop *cantina* and the real bar conveniently located directly across the street. Closest to the stage bar is the *patron* and Margarita, dancing and swaying along with all the other performers.

While the performance of the *Mexicanos* highlights humorous sexual romps, the preparation and rehearsals for the dance are extremely serious business. Men who wish to participate must make their intentions known by November 1, All Saints Day. That is when the participants hold their first meeting, eight months before the festival (Cook 2000, 56). Immediately, *costumbre*, traditional religious practices, begin at the four sacred mountains around Momostenango that represent the cardinal directions (ibid). The dancers hold rehearsals for the next eight months, practicing regularly and maintaining their commitment to *costumbre*. For sixty days before the festival, in addition to practicing, they must abstain from sexual intercourse and light a candle every day. On July 18, three days before the *féria* begins, they venerate the costumes through drink, dance, and prayer (Cook 2000, 56).

I often participated in the opening days of the festival and attended Mass with the dancers. In 2008, on the very first day of the *féria*, the *Mexicanos*, in full garb, circulated through town and danced into the main church in the center of the central plaza.

Once inside the church, they parade right up to the images of Santiago, patron saint of Momostenango, and San Felipe, his secretary and kneel before them. A priest said a blessing over all of the dancers as a group, and then each dancer approached the saints individually and made an offering. The priest blessed each dancer separately with a bundle of flowers, which they kissed before leaving. Following the *Mexicanos* who appeared in full-blown costumes were the dancers not performing, but who would appear on alternate days, carrying their masks and folded garb into the church and the priest blessed them in the exact same manner. Next were the musicians, all of whom carried their instruments up to Santiago for blessing. The last were the wives and mothers of the dancers. Everybody then returned to the plaza, and the dancing began.

Ladino Convites in Guatemala

Community performances in Guatemala, such as *la conquista*, or the Dance of the Conquest, are not exclusive to indigenous communities of the western highlands. Numerous towns populated primarily by Ladinos throughout the country also produce and present dramatic festival performances. Loosely applied, Ladino refers to anyone in Guatemala who does not self-identify as indigenous in identity, marking difference and exclusion between these two groups. In addition to partaking in some of the same festival dances as the Maya, the Ladino community is responsible for inventing a new, hybrid form of dance called the *convite* that continually gains in popularity.

Although the word literally translates as "invitation" or "banquet," in reality, *convites* refer to much more. They are comic parades that pass through the streets of many different towns to invite all of the neighbors to the local festivities where participants will perform wearing disguises and masks. According to Carlos Rene Garcia Escobar (cited in Sandoval 2006, 16), *convites* dances are the contemporary version of *mojigangas*, the comic street theater of the colonial era, reworked for the 21st century audience. Like *mojigangas*, *convites* provide an opportunity to direct satirical and lampooning performances at specific institutions or individuals. Locals often say the *mojiganga* dances began as a way to make fun of the Spanish colonial authorities, and then in the later era after independence, civil servants or members of the community whose improper behavior drew attention and was in need of correcting. *Convites* continue this tradition of satirizing a variety of local, famous, and infamous individuals.

Citizens of Momostenango claim to have one of the longest standing records for performing Ladino *convites*, at 100 years, which they celebrated in 2006 (Perez 2006, 15). Different communities began organizing and presenting convites at different times, and new versions still appear from time to time. In Totonicapan, the *convite* dates to 1946, when residents claim it was a sad holiday and Ángel Pérez Quiroa began the dances as a way to bring joy to the community and to announce the holiday festival was about to arrive season (Espinoza 2006).

According to his son, Miguel Pérez Rivera (ibid), the first years of the dances the disguises featured primarily wild and domestic animals and his father made the masks with old newspapers or clay, and covered them with fur and paint. He fashioned the costumes in a similar manner, and began a new tradition in Totonicapan. With the arrival of television and cinema in Guatemala, as well as the development of fiberglass and manufactured textiles, the costumes have changed in a dramatic and brilliant way, leaving behind the simpler animals and things of the natural world. Costume designers drew inspiration for their creations from a variety of local and international characters, lending an added air of excitement to the events. The dances emphasize novel and original attire that changed with each new performance.

As indicated by Pedro Roberto Rodas, proprietor of "*Mascaras y Alquilar de Disfraces Toto*," the *convite* costume shop in Totonicapan, Guatemala, *convites* started in Ladino communities as an amusing imitation of traditional indigenous performances and dances (Pers. com. August 3, 2006). The founders of the dance intended this tension, and it still underscores the dances today.

One of the characters that often appears in costume in Ladino *convites* of both Totonicapan and Momostenango is dressed like a traditional K'iche' Maya. In Momostenango, Ladinos celebrate the *convites* every year on the 8 and 12 of December, the feast days of the Virgins of Conception and Guadalupe. During the colonial era, *loas* appeared at this time, suggesting *convites* drew inspiration form these performances, as well as *mojigangas*. According to Francisco Pineda (cited in Sandoval 2006, 16), member of the organizing committee in Momostenango, *convites* dances began there at the very beginning of the 20th century to ridicule people who benefited from the tithe, namely the indigenous population. Yet, the basic form and structure of the dances borrow directly from indigenous festival dances, highlighting the differences between the two groups. As an example of the pastiche of hybridity, *convites* provide a perfect illustration, as they borrow from Spanish, Hispanic America, and indigenous sources, continuing a long-standing tradition of blending different forms of dance at the same time they interlace a discourse regarding global culture, reminding us that dances are always changing and moving forward.

• • •

i.St. George, who was associated with Richard the Lion Heart, was also the Crusaders' saint and his apparition provided protection during the storming of Jerusalem.

ii. Santiago is Spain's patron saint. He came to Spain to evangelize and entered at Padrón, at the mouth of the Ría de Arosa. He remained several years in Galicia (Epton 1968, 144).

iii. St. Hippolytus, an obscure saint became important because the Spaniards conquered Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital, on his saint day.

iv. "When I lived amongst them it was an ordinary thing for him who in the dance was to act St. Peter or John the Baptist, to come first to Confession, saying that they must be holy and pure like the saint whom they represent, and must prepare themselves to die. So likewise he that acted Herod or Herodias, and some of the Soldiers that in the dance were to speak and accuse the Saints, would afterwards come to confess of that sin, and desire absolution from bloodguiltiness" (Gage 1958, 54).

v. Numerous ethnographers have written about the burden of cofradia service as a means of leveling wealth in the community (for example see Evon Vogt's 1969, *Zinacantan: A Maya Community in the Highlands of Chiapas*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press). However, in Momostenango, the opposite appears to be true, the cargos of the saints legitimate wealth-based stratification. After serving in the *cofrades*, consequently, dancers say they become wealthier because of their service—they are free to act more boldly in commerce (Cook 2000, 50).

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Rhonda Taube Biography

Dr. Rhonda Taube incorporated her love of Mesoamerican art into a career as an associate professor of Art History at Riverside City College. Taube holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, San Diego, and MA and BA degrees in Art History from Northern Illinois University. She moved to Southern California in 1998 and began teaching. In 2004, she became a full-time faculty member at Riverside City College.

Dr. Taube's research involves the contemporary K'iche' Maya response to trans-nationalism and globalization as enacted through community festivals and performance. She is currently working on a book covering her dozen years of fieldwork in the highland Guatemala community of Momostenango, exploring public dance and ritual. Because of her expertise in the region, from 2008-2012, she served as an academic consultant and assistant producer on the award-winning documentary *Gods and Kings*. *Gods and Kings* was filmed in Momostenango and takes place during the annual festival, where traditional dances are disrupted by an eerie spectacle in which horror movie monsters dance alongside Mayan gods and Cold War dictators. The movie premiered last March at the Royal Anthropological Institute's 13th Annual International Ethnographic Film Festival in the UK and garnered the "Intangible Culture" Prize in recognition of the music, dance and performances captured on film.

Among Taube's forthcoming articles are: "The Ideal and the Symbolic: the Use of Shared Orientational Space in Contemporary Highland Maya Performance in Maya Imagery, Architecture, and Activity: *Space and Spatial Analysis in Art History*, May 2015 and "Sexuality in Mesoamerican Figurines," in *The Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality*, published by Wiley Blackwell Press, spring 2015.

Further Reading

On the Masked Dance Tradition

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