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Chapter 5. Early Style Scripts

5.1. Introduction

The 1872 Villacorta–Cobán script that Bode published in her thesis is not only the earliest copy known but one of the most conservative. Nearly identical are: the script Bode collected from Sacapulas, which she dates to 1895; the script Samuel K. Lothrop collected from San Miguel Totonicapán dated 1926; and the script Roland Baumann collected in Ciudad Vieja dated 1961. These texts reveal a core on which the other variants are constructed through additions, substitutions, and other deliberate modifications. These texts thus provide the closest approximation of the 16th–17th century original. As will be shown, they may in fact be very close to the original, as judged by the poetic structure and conventions consistent with the *siglo de oro* style. This would suggest that, excepting the concluding dedication to the municipio saint occasioned by the dance's dispersion, significant modifications to the text did not occur before the late 19th century.

I begin then with this conservative or early style group, analyzing the poetic form and dramatic content of the text as the closest reference to the original. This will be followed by study of the other major text lineages involving close analysis of changes made since 1870 in both respects. It will become apparent through this and subsequent historical analyses that while the original text lived up to standards for *siglo de oro* religious theatre, the post-1870 changes enabled it to function better in public performance in relation to changing economic, religious, social and political circumstances of Maya communities in Guatemala.

5.2. Poetry and story

The poetic forms, action and dialogue for each part will be explained in expository detail, with some commentary on its relation to the historical events of February 1524. This will followed by analysis of the narrative structure of these early-style conservative texts and suggestions of agendas behind the original text including and in addition to its function as theatre of conversion.

5.2.1. PART I

5.2.1.1. Scene 1: Q'umarcaaj

The first scene takes place in the royal palace in Q'umarcaaj.

a. Monologue by Rey K'iche': Three *coplas de arte menor*, with a *redondilla abrazada* inserted between the second and third *copla*.

Rey K'iche' is alone, musing about a letter he has received from the Aztec emperor Motecuhzoma who has been made a vassal of the Spaniards and has then been baptized so he could die a Christian. Rey K'iche' is indecisive and invokes the help of the gods in the opening line, *Valedme, Dioses, Valedme* (Help me, Gods, help me). The threat is imminent, as Alvarado and his forces are already encamped near Palajunoj¹ awaiting the summer before they attack. Rey K'iche' would like to kill Alvarado and considers an ambush that will involve closing off the pass that enters Palajunoj. To ensure surprise, he could pretend to offer submission to Alvarado. But despite these possibilities, Rey K'iche' ends his soliloquy as it began: bitter and despondent.

b. Dialogue between Rey K'iche', the Princes and the Malinches. *Redondillas abrazadas* + amplified *décima*

Immediately after Rey K'iche' concludes his opening monologue, the Princes and Malinches enter. Seeing Rey K'iche' despondent, they beg him to explain the reason. Rey K'iche' admonishes his young children, saying they can neither understand his problem nor help him solve it. In response the Malinches throw themselves at his feet.

The dialogue among these five is in the form of *redondillas abrazadas* but changing personage every one or two lines. A more complex form is introduced at the climax of this dialogue with a variant-rhymed *quintilla* (ABABA) by Rey K'iche' amplified into a variant *décima* by the succeeding lines of dialogue.

c. Rey K'iche' monologue: Four *décimas*

Beginning with the words *Hijas mías, levantad* (Arise my daughters) Rey K'iche' explains the desperate situation in greater detail, asking his children to tell him if they should encounter a solution. Most of Rey K'iche's speech is presented as a quote from Motecuhzoma's letter.

Motecuhzoma has written that his reign and majesty have ended and he is now prisoner of a foreign king who defeated him in battle. These foreigners intend to continue their conquest of the whole world, to make vassals of all they see. Their people are clever in the arts of war. They come with magical arms that emit thunderbolts causing many deaths. The renowned captain [Alvarado] is sent by Cortés to bring about the Rey K'iche's ruin. His military discipline always gives him advantage and he comes out

¹ Palajunoj is an abbreviated form of the name Pa Lajuj Noj, "At 10 Incense." Ten Incense is the mountain now called Cerro Quemado.

victorious in spite of resistance. Motecuhzoma has concluded by warning that the Spaniards are valiant men and their god is very powerful.

d. Dialogue between Rey K'iche', the Princes and the Malinches: *redondillas abrazadas*

Upon finishing his recitation of the letter, Rey K'iche' addresses the youths and explains that this was the cause of his preoccupation. Despondent, Rey K'iche' foresees the end of his reign, his treasures, and his happiness. But unlike Rey K'iche', the Princes have a plan that they can put into action. They will go to Xelajuj (Quetzaltenango) and fetch Tekum, Tzunun and the other *Caciques* to mount a defense.

5.2.1.2. Scene 2: Quetzaltenango

a. Dialogue among the Princes, Tekum, *Caciques* and Ajitz: *redondillas abrazadas*

The Princes open the dialogue by admonishing Tekum for his carelessness when the enemy is already knocking at his doors. Tekum is startled, as if from a trance. He doesn't yet understand the import of the Princes' message and wonders if he is dreaming. The Princes tell Tekum to wake up and organize a defense, as the Spaniards draw near.

The next portion of this dialogue is comprised of a form common in the *Conquista* in which each of the subordinates speaks in the precise order of their line formation, thereby moving down the hierarchy. These short speeches give each dancer a solo but they are often merely repetitive declarations of loyalty and willingness to participate in battle that do not advance the action. The tone changes with the *gracejo*, always the last to report, who gives a more colourful and narrative speech of comic or dramatic character and sometimes greater length. I refer to these hierarchically sequential contributions as 'reports'. In this section of *Cacique* reports, Tzunun, identified as the *Cacique* of Zunil, is thus the first to respond with his willingness to fight for the king and is personally thanked by Second Prince. Chávez responds similarly and is thanked by First Prince. Then in order Tepe, Saquimux, and Ixcot recite their *redondillas* assuring the Princes of their loyalty and valour.

The last member of the line to report is the *gracejo*, the priest-diviner Ajitz who serves Tekum. Here Ajitz suggests that the *Caciques* go to the volcano to see what the gods will say about the looming threat, presumably through making offerings and performing divination.

b. Dialogue among Tekum and *Caciques*: *redondillas abrazadas + copla de arte menor*

This section contains a monologue by Tekum, followed by a unison *Cacique* response. The poetic form may be understood as four *redondillas abrazadas*, however the central two *redondillas* actually form a *copla de arte menor*.

In the first two *redondillas*, Tekum reassures Ajitz, advising him not to fear a contrary fate. Tekum avers that he himself does not fear death or torture, and he is also confident that he can defeat Alvarado. In the third *redondilla*, Tekum turns to the *Caciques*, encouraging them to follow him to render their loyalty to the king. With the final *redondilla*, the *Caciques* in unison respond obediently.

5.2.1.3. Scene 3: Q'umarcaaj

a. Dialogue among Rey K'iche', Tekum, *Caciques* and Ajitz: Couplet + two variant *décimas*

As Tekum and the *Caciques* kneel before Rey K'iche', Tekum speaks a formal greeting. Rey K'iche' asks him to rise and appoints the *Caciques* as his generals for the coming war. Tekum and the other *Caciques* thank Rey K'iche' for the honour he has bestowed and pledge their loyalty and valour in the usual report format. Ajitz concludes the reports by asserting that the K'iche' need not fear defeat, as his friend Lucifer will obey his wishes.

The poetic form of this dialogue is particularly complex. Rey K'iche' begins with a *redondilla abrazada*, Tekum and the *Caciques* each follow with a pair of lines, and Ajitz concludes with a *redondilla abrazada*. However, while the two lines of dialogue recited by each of the six speakers between Rey K'iche' and Ajitz would appear to resolve into three *redondillas abrazadas*, some rhyme aberrations stand out. When scanned as a whole, this 20-line section instead resolves into two aberrant *décimas* in which the first *quintilla* of each *décima* is in the ABBAB form rather than ABBA. The second *quintilla* of each follows the normal AABBA pattern.

b. Monologue by Rey K'iche' : *décima* with two intervening couplets

In a private conversation with Tekum, Rey K'iche' explains the desperate situation. Rey K'iche' is despondent, with visions of his people enslaved. In a dream he learned that Motecuhzoma has died and that Tekum will suffer a bloody death, a loss from which Rey K'iche' could never recover.

c. Monologue by Tekum: *Copla de arte menor*.

Tekum responds to Rey K'iche's gloom with words of encouragement. He tells Rey K'iche' to guard his own palace, while he, Tekum, will advance to El Pinal with his "furious lions" to confront the Spanish squadrons. Tekum promises to bring the king the heads of the Spaniards.

d. Dialogue between Rey K'iche' and Tekum: *Redondilla abrazada*

In this *redondilla* shared between Rey K'iche' and Tekum. Rey K'iche' hands Tekum a pennant signifying his authority to lead the defense of the nation, and Tekum responds that he will stain the river [with Spanish blood] in honour of the king's crest.

5.2.1.4. Scene 4: *Quetzaltenango*

a. Monologue by Tekum: *décima* split by 13 couplets.

Beginning with the words “*Ya mis caciques aliados, pronto iremos al pinal*” (Now my allied *Caciques*, we will soon go to El Pinal), Tekum first encourages his *Caciques*, his generals for the coming battle, and then explains the situation more fully to them. Alvarado, sent by Cortés, has conquered Chiapas and is now on his way with Indigenous Mexican soldiers from Tepeaca intending to conquer the K'iche'. Tekum tells the *Caciques* that they will meet the invaders in the flats of El Pinal with conch shell trumpets sounding. He argues that it is not so easy to conquer this land and it would be arrogance for Alvarado to think he can subdue Quetzaltenango. Tekum then organizes the defense. Tzunun will defend Quetzaltenango while Tekum advances to Chuipache (near El Pinal). Mam forces will assist in this advance. Then other K'iche' soldiers will be stationed in the hills of Olinstepeque to rain down arrows on the Spaniards, while Tekum and the Mam close in on them from behind. Ultimately Tekum will kill Alvarado.

b. Reports: *Caciques* and Ajitz: *décima* split by three couplets

The *Caciques* then report to Tekum, each expressing their enthusiasm for the coming battle. Ajitz concludes the report by promising Tekum to harass the Spaniards, taking the form of quetzal birds to torment them.

Again the author plays with the relation between *redondillas* and *décimas*. Tzunun begins and Ajitz ends this section each with a *redondilla abrazada* while the other four *Caciques* speak two lines each, though not forming either a couplet or half a *redondilla*. Instead, scanning the whole passage reveals that the *redondillas* beginning and ending the section each borrow a line from one of the *Caciques* to form a *décima*. The remaining six lines resolve into three couplets in which a *Cacique's* two lines form couplets with adjacent lines from the preceding and succeeding *Cacique*.

5.2.2. PART II.

5.2.2.1. Scene 1. Spanish Camp.

a. Monologue by Alvarado: Three *décimas*

Part II begins with the *entrada* of the Spanish forces. Alvarado opens his address to his troops with the words “*Caballeros y señores, Leales hijos de España*” (Knights and Gentlemen, loyal sons of Spain). Alvarado announces confidently and with authority that they are about to begin a campaign in which they will be victorious. He calls for trumpet and drum to announce their triumphal entrance into Quetzaltenango, noting that their subtle martial skills will gain each position for them (as they advance). Alvarado then warns his captains that Mam and Kaqchikel peoples are skilled at deceiving by constructing false fortifications. Finally he asks his captains to join him in urging the Holy Spirit to aid in this victory and accept it as an offering, since this wretched people must be baptized to His honour and glory. With this prayer Alvarado encourages his captains to begin the march that will bring them into confrontation with K'iche' forces.

b. Dialogue among Alvarado and Spanish Soldiers: *redondillas abrazadas (+copla de arte menor)*

Alvarado's speech is followed by reports from his captains. These reports differ from those in part I spoken by the *Caciques* in that Alvarado responds to each captain in turn. As with the *Cacique* reports, the first, here spoken by Carrillo, is given special emphasis. Carrillo speaks a full *redondilla abrazada*, to which Alvarado responds with half of another *redondilla* that is completed by Carrillo's response to Alvarado. These two *redondillas abrazadas* may be considered to form a *copla de arte menor* that is also tied to Alvarado's preceding *décima* by repeating as their A-rhyme, that of the concluding *quintilla*. The other captains, Cardona, Portocarrero, Calderón, and Moreno, each speak half a *redondilla* which Alvarado completes with his response. The content of these reports is simple: each Captain expresses his loyalty and valour and Alvarado responds to each with his faith in the officer.

c. Monologue by Don Quirijol: *décima* split by three couplets

As appropriate, Don Quirijol (or Crijol) the *gracejo*, concludes the reports with a comic speech. Unlike Ajitz, who must combine the character of a *gracejo* with that of a pagan priest in league with the devil, Don Quirijol takes on the more typical characteristics of the *gracejo* in *Siglo de Oro* theatre. Quirijol speaks in hyperboles and biblical references—here Samson and the Philistines. He claims to be the bravest Spaniard and the most handsome. In one mouthful he can swallow three turkeys and a capon. He can eat a sack full of pasta and drink ten calabashes of *agua de nixtamal*.² And he can beat the *Indios marranzos* (Indian pigs) with 20,000 blows.

² *Nixtamal* is ground maize mixed with water and quicklime to form a dough that can be made into tortillas or tamales. *Agua de nixtamal* may be *posol*, the drink made by mixing dried flour of cooked and ground maize with water.

d. Dialogue among Alvarado, Carrillo and Cardona: *redondillas abrazadas* and *coplas de arte menor*

Alvarado then begins a more private conversation with his two highest ranking officers, Carrillo and Cardona, concerning an embassy to Tekum. This passage begins with a conversation in which Alvarado states that he will arrange an embassy to determine Tekum's intent. Carrillo immediately volunteers to carry the message. Alvarado accepts the offer and when he appoints Cardona to accompany Carrillo, Cardona agrees. In this conversation, Alvarado speaks twice, using the *redondilla abrazada* form. Each time one of the officers responds to him with a *redondilla abrazada* using the same A-rhyme, so that each statement and response forms a *copla de arte menor*.

e. Monologue by Alvarado: two *décimas*

Alvarado then explains the message his Ambassadors are to carry. They are to say to the general (Tekum) that Cortés, who conquered Mexico, has sent Alvarado to make them understand that they must believe in one God, the crucified Christ. If they receive baptism peacefully the king will treat them with clemency, but if they do not agree, they will suffer the punishment imposed by the laws of war, which is to lose their life and lands without clemency from the king.

f. Dialogue among Alvarado, Carrillo and Cardona: *redondilla abrazada*

The two ambassadors take their leave in unison with the first half of a *redondilla abrazada* that Alvarado completes with his two lines, wishing them a safe journey.

5.2.2.2. Scene 2. Unspecified Location on the Way to Quetzaltenango

a. Song by Malinches: *romancillo a-a*

The two ambassadors encounter the Princes and Malinches on their journey. Before they know others are present, they hear the song of the Malinches who call on the volcano to destroy the Spaniards with its fire.

b. Dialogue among Carrillo, Cardona and the two Princes: *romancillo a-a*

As usual for this text, the subsequent conversation continues the six-syllable *romancillo* form, most commonly with a quatrain or four lines of dialogue for each character speaking. Carrillo begins the conversation, wondering who might be singing a song, the sweet tones of which contrast with its bitter words condemning of the Spaniards. Cardona catches sight of the Malinches and asks them how such beautiful, enchanting nymphs could say such terrible things. First Prince then sees the Spaniards and

tells the Malinches to stop singing. As the Spaniards approach, Second Prince asks them what they seek and suggests they leave. Carrillo is outraged but calms his anger, noting that they are only children. He takes his leave of the youths and the Princes tell both to go in peace and never return. After they part ways, Carrillo comments on the surprising splendour of the youths and Cardona responds that were it not for his duty, he would have liked to remain with them, implying his attraction to the Malinches. Carrillo finishes the conversation by noting that it is getting late and thus it is time to move on.

5.2.2.3. Scene 3. Quetzaltenango

a. Dialogue between Carrillo and Cardona: *romancillo a-a*

As they near Quetzaltenango, the two Ambassadors reach the post where Ajitz is acting as sentry. They see Ajitz before he notices them, and Cardona comments on Ajitz's infernal appearance. Carrillo suggests they approach him, recognizing Ajitz as a *brujo* (sorcerer or witch) who guards the king [Tekum].

b. Dialogue among Carrillo, Cardona and Ajitz: *romance a-a; romance a*

The ambassadors draw closer and Carrillo addresses Ajitz, switching to the eight-syllable *romance* form which, with few exceptions, will dominate the remainder of Part II. Again interchanges usually involve a quatrain.

Carrillo orders Ajitz to stop hopping around and to listen if he is capable. He then orders Ajitz to tell his king they want to talk with him. Ajitz responds with deference, addressing the Spaniards as "*hijos del sol*" (children of the sun), and asking them politely to wait while he advises Tekum. Cardona adds that Ajitz should tell Tekum that the Spaniards come in peace, sent by Alvarado, and that they wish to enter.

c. Dialogue between Tekum and Ajitz: *romance a*

Ajitz goes into Tekum's palace and advises him that the Spaniards wish to speak with him. Tekum agrees to the audience but insists that the Spaniards be blindfolded. He says that if this is not acceptable, they can just return, because trying to look upon him would cost them their lives. Ajitz takes his leave of Tekum, saying that if the Spaniards do not obey this command, he will bewitch them.

d. Monologue by Ajitz: *copla de arte menor*

Ajitz then returns to his sentry post and, breaking the *romance* pattern with a *copla de arte menor*, delivers Tekum's conditions of entry to the Spaniards.

e. Dialogue among Carrillo, Cardona and Ajitz: *romance a; romance i-o*

Carrillo speaks aside to Cardona, offended at the arrogance and bad intentions of this “*indio reyesuelo*” (little Indian king), but Cardona wisely suggests that they appear compliant in order to discover the strength of the forces at Tekum’s command.³

Carrillo then openly addresses Ajitz, inviting him to get on with the blindfolding so that they can be led to his king and deliver the message for which they were sent.

f. Monologue by Ajitz: *romance ar*

As Ajitz carries out the blindfolding and binding of the two Ambassadors, he insults them by comparing these gestures to tightening the cinch and putting on the halter of a horse, warning each not to kick or buck as he does so. When finished he ‘harnesses’ them together for traveling. Greatly enjoying his joke and the Spaniards’ helpless condition, Ajitz decides to lead the Ambassadors dancing, so he instructs the musicians to play the *pito* (reed flute) as accompaniment.

g. Single quatrain by Ajitz: *romance ol*

Arriving inside Tekum’s palace, Ajitz presents the Spaniards, warning Tekum to watch for any tricks.

h. Dialogue among Tekum, Carrillo, Cardona: *romance a-o*

Tekum invites the Spaniards to deliver their embassy and explain what Alvarado wants. Carrillo, again offended, chides Tekum for his lack of courtesy in not offering the Spaniards a chair before they deliver their message. Tekum reacts angrily to this demand, calling the Spaniards arrogant and insolent. Don’t they know he is king of Quetzaltenango, Tekum asks, so how could they imagine he would offer a seat to humble soldiers.

Tekum then demands that Alvarado’s message be delivered. Carrillo begins by noting Alvarado’s wish that Tekum understand he was sent by Cortés who had conquered Mexico and can also conquer the K’iche’, so that it behooves the K’iche’ to make peace by submitting. In the name of the Spanish king, Alvarado also demands that the K’iche’ be baptized, thereby becoming part of the flock of the pious pastor who died on the cross to redeem the world, and the entire human species. If the K’iche’ believe

³ Note that if the Spaniards are blindfolded they are unlikely to discern the strength of K’iche’ forces. This plot point seems contradictory in the context of the *Conquista* and this is likely because the idea of the blindfold had been transferred from the *Moros y Cristianos* genre on which Conquest dances are based.

in this God and not in their false idols, then they will retain their lands and vassals. But if they refuse to join the Christian union, death is certain. Cardona then adds that, in the latter case, Tekum will suffer the pains of the condemned. He will be despoiled of his sceptre and crown, his possessions and estates, because God is the sole owner of all he has created and it belongs by inheritance only to his children, the Christians. Cardona concludes by reiterating the ultimatum that Tekum must choose between becoming a slave or earning friendship by rejecting his false gods.

By this point Tekum can no longer restrain himself and demands that the Spanish be silent. Furiously he exclaims that were they not ambassadors they would be flogged and torn to pieces. He instructs them to tell their captain that the K'iche' are not Mexicans and it takes ingenuity to defeat them rather than just force. Tekum is surprised that they expect these crazy ideas about religion to convince him. He argues that his gods are superior to this crucified one, because they are of fine metal and not wood. He argues that this king Don Carlos has nothing to do with him or his vassals. The king's demands are so crazy, he must be delirious. Refusing submission, Tekum says that the K'iche' and Spaniards will meet in battle. Then Tekum tells Carrillo and Cardona to get out; he doesn't want to hear any more.

Carrillo responds that he will take Tekum's answer to Alvarado. Carrillo warns that Tekum and all Quetzaltenango will be punished for the pride and insolence of his response and for his insults to them. Tekum then responds that he will treat them even worse on the battlefield. Cardona says they are leaving but will have revenge for this treatment—they will meet in battle on the plain [of El Pinal] if he continues to refuse submission.

i. Dialogue among Carrillo, Cardona and Ajitz: *romance a-o*

Ajitz then guides the ambassadors back to his sentry post. Unbinding them, he states that they are now free and can go to the devil. Carrillo responds that they cannot do so because it is Ajitz who is with the devil. But Cardona restrains him, saying it is best not to argue with a beast and a fool.

j. Monologue by Ajitz: *romance a-o*

Cardona's comment provokes a speech from Ajitz that combines the *gracejo* roles of relating the events of the drama to the current situation of the audience, and presenting a comic speech involving puns and biblical references. Ajitz begins by fulfilling the first role. His words dripping with bitterness, he remarks that the Spaniards have spoken truly, because no matter how distinguished an Indigenous person might become, he will never be more than an animal to the Spaniards, at best a horse, even if such a person could write better than the "*ladinos*."⁴

⁴ The term '*ladino*' has taken on different meanings since the Spanish invasions of the Americas. In the early colonial period, when the text for the Dance of the Conquest was written, the term referred to

Ajitz continues with the second role in posing a riddle involving a number progression from one to four.

Traslado a Juan Avendaño	Juan Avendaño was moved
Entre Juanes anda el cuento	Between the Juans, goes the story
A que no los han contado	That hasn't been told/counted.
Tres fueron los enemigos	There were three enemies
Y uno fué el crucificado	And one was crucified.
Domingo resucitó	The one who was nailed [on the cross]
Al que habian enclavado	Revived on Sunday.
Y de los tres dos cojió	And of the three he chose two,
Porque el otro hizo venado	Because the other became a deer.
Con que si hacemos la cuenta	So that if we count
Desde el miércoles al sábado	From Wednesday to Saturday,
En no metiendo al Domingo	Not including Sunday,
Resultarán por fuerza cuatro	There can only be four.
Adivinen los mirones	Let the curious figure out
Este enredo de Don Sancho.	Don Sancho's riddle.

This enigmatic text requires some commentary though it leaves most problems unresolved. In the 14th to 15th centuries, the Avendaño family was one of the most prominent in the Vizcayan region, now the Spanish province of Biscay, but I have found no clear relation between family heads named Juan and the reference in Ajitz's speech. Following the Avendaño reference comes a pun, relating the count (*la cuenta*) to a story (*el cuento*). Biblical references to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are clear, while referring to the damned thief as a deer may be inspired by a local Mesoamerican association of deer with sacrifice. However, a parallel appears to be made between Juan Avendaño moved between two Juans and Christ crucified between two thieves. Further, the phrase "*Entre Juanes anda el cuento*" recalls the Spanish proverb: "*Entre bobos anda el juego, y todos eran fulleros*" (It is a game of fools and they were all cheats). This proverb was current in the 16th to 17th centuries and was made into a play by Rojas Zorilla ca. 1638, drawing on earlier works of similar title. The reference to Don Sancho is not clear in this context: in the 16–17th centuries in Spain "Don Sancho" often referred to King Sancho II of Castile, known as Sancho the silent. Hence the common phrase, also used in *siglo de oro* theatre as well as in Cervantes' Don Quixote, "*al buen callar llaman Sancho*" (He who keeps silent well is called Sancho). Depending on the date of the *Conquista* text, the name Don Sancho could also refer to Don Quixote's squire, Sancho Panza. As for the phrase "*enredo de Don Sancho*," if the terms "*enredo*" and

speakers of Spanish. This implication of non-Indigenous status was broadened and concretized in the late Colonial period (see Gotkowitz 2011: 15–16).

“Don Sancho” are meant to relate to each other, they could refer to the play *El Celoso Prudente*, a play of the type known as *comedia de enredo*, written by Tirso de Molina before 1621. This play features a major character named Don Sancho and it also cites the phrase “*al buen callar llaman Sancho*” (Rogers 1973: 15).

5.2.2.4. Scene 4. Spanish Camp

a. Dialogue among Alvarado, Carrillo and Cardona: *romance a-o*

The two Ambassadors return to the Spanish camp and announce to Alvarado that they have completed their mission. Alvarado asks what the “*indio malvado*” (wicked Indian) had to say, and whether he has agreed to Alvarado’s proposal. Carrillo replies first, saying that Tekum’s response was shameful, and adding that Tekum was angry and presumptuous, even telling him to shut up. Carrillo continues that Tekum asked him to relate to Alvarado that the K’iche’ are not Mexicans and that it takes ingenuity rather than sheer force to conquer them. He adds that Tekum found the religious arguments crazy, and thus he will soon be coming to the encounter, replying with arrows. Cardona then continues, noting that Tekum had said his gods are greater than crucified Jesus because they are of fine metal rather than wood. Cardona adds that Tekum had said that the Spanish king has nothing to do with him or any of his vassals and he must be crazy and delirious. Tekum then sent them away, not wanting to hear more. Alvarado then invites the ambassadors to rest before the coming battle.

b. Reports by Portocarrero, Calderón and Moreno: *romance i-a*

The other officers report to Alvarado, this time with more dramatic content. Portocarrero affirms that Tekum’s pride and grossness merit blood and fire, so he should be conquered. Calderón agrees that Tekum’s impolitic action demands retribution. And Moreno suggests hanging Tekum on a hilltop, burning the body and scattering the ashes.

c. Monologue by Quirijol: *décima*

As usual, the officer reports are followed by a speech from the *gracejo* don Quirijol, who argues that in his opinion the Indian men should be killed while the Indian women should be left to cook. Then the Spaniards can choose the best of the women and give her to Quirijol so than he can live happily and form a (mixed race) regiment of little Indians: sons of the sun.

d. Monologue by Alvarado: *romance i-a*

Returning to the *romance* form, Alvarado responds to all the officers, appreciating their reaction to Tekum’s refusal of submission, but adding it is prudent to wait for the cavalry to arrive. Alvarado then

outlines his battle plan: Carrillo and Cardona will command the infantry; Portocarrero and Calderón will lead the cavalry and help where they are needed; Moreno will lead the rear guard with the artillery. Having concluded his orders, Alvarado announces that with God's help on that day, they will have absolute victory.

e. Unison response by all officers: free verse

The Spaniards in unison then salute the king of Spain and Alvarado.

5.2.3. PART III.

5.2.3.1. Scene 1. Quetzaltenango

a. Dialogue between Tekum and Tzunun: *décima* split by two couplets + *redondillas abrazadas*

As the scene opens Tekum relates that he is feeling very confident about achieving victory over Alvarado, who through his messengers attempted to reduce him to submission. Tekum then commands that Tzunun and Ajitz go to the king to explain the Spanish terms, including Alvarado's insistence on abandoning their religion and god Quetzalcoatl.⁵ Tekum concludes with a *redondilla*, ordering that Rey K'iche' is to be told that Tekum is resolved to do battle on this day. He is secure in the strength of his army as well as their rightness to prevail. Beginning a second *redondilla*, Tekum sends Tzunun off, and, completing the quatrain, Tzunun expresses his willingness to comply.

b. Dialogue between Tzunun and Ajitz: *romance a-o* + couplet

Tzunun goes to Ajitz and they engage in a comic dialogue in which Tzunun functions as Ajitz's "straight man." Tzunun invites Ajitz to accompany him to Q'umarcaaj but Ajitz refuses. He wouldn't go if Tekum, Tzunun, or even his mother told him to. Tzunun tells Ajitz to stop joking as it is getting late. Ajitz is frustrated. Does he have to speak clearer to get through to Tzunun? Ajitz does so, saying he is pissing himself from fear that those men will come upon them on the path. If that happens, he will shit his pants and there will be no women around to wash them for him. Then Rey K'iche' will be able to say rightly that their speech stinks!

Tzunun, ever practical, calls Ajitz a despicable coward and asks who it is that will come upon them, to which Ajitz answers that it will be the bearded ones. Using colourful language associated with domestic

⁵ Quetzalcoatl is a well known Aztec deity, though the cognate Gukumatz appears in the Popol Vuh. At the time this play was written, knowledge of Aztec religion was much fuller and more widespread than knowledge of religion in the Maya region of Mesoamerica. Also, the friar who wrote this text may have been stationed in the Nahua region Central Mexico before coming to Guatemala.

animals, Ajitz asks who will keep the Spaniards from assaulting them, prodding them with their goads or at least making them jump. And what will they do without utensils to defend themselves? Ajitz ends with a couplet telling Tzunun that if he is so brave he can make the trip alone.

5.2.3.2. Scene 2. *Q'umarcaaj*

a. Dialogue between Rey K'iche' and Tzunun: *romance u*

The scene begins as Tzunun kneels and formally greets Rey K'iche', who then asks him to rise and convey the message from Tekum.

b. Monologue by Tzunun: *décima*

Tzunun responds that he has been asked to advise the king that Alvarado sent a challenge, intending to baptize the whole kingdom and proposing that the K'iche' reject their own gods and adore his god.

c. Dialogue between Rey K'iche' and Tzunun: *quintilla + redondillas abrazadas*

Rey K'iche' muses, in *quintilla* form, that he is filled with fear and can barely understand what he is being told. Everything fills him with horror—his valour has ended. Rey K'iche' then responds to Tzunun, beginning a dialogue in the *redondilla abrazada* form. Tzunun is to tell Tekum that he should arrange whatever he wants, since it was always the plan that when he dies, Tekum would succeed him as king. Tzunun tries to encourage Rey K'iche', saying that the gods will grant him a long life and reign. But Rey K'iche', still despondent, addresses the Christian god, asking him to leave their nation in peace and not cause the death of his people.

d. Song by Malinches and dialogue among Rey K'iche', Malinches, Princes: *romancillo i*

The Malinches then interrupt with a song, as always in *romancillo*, a form that will continue through the dialogue to the end of the scene. The Malinches beg their father not to cry as his grief is killing them. The Princes, continuing the *romancillo*, second the Malinches' sentiment and ask them to continue their song to distract their father. Again the Malinches sing, addressing the volcano and asking why it permits the Spaniards to afflict the K'iche' king. At this point Rey K'iche' interrupts, begging the Malinches to stop singing as they are breaking his heart. They are so young, and when he has been killed they will be exposed to rape by the Spaniards. The Princes valiantly exclaim that they will protect their sisters from such dishonour.

5.2.3.3. Scene 3: *Quetzaltenango*

a. Greeting between Tekum and Tzunun: *romance ado*

Tzunun greets Tekum who asks what has been the response of the Rey K'iche'.

b. Monologue by Tzunun: *décima*

Tzunun replies that Rey K'iche' was both disconsolate and stunned. He explains that Rey K'iche' has virtually abdicated, handing the government over to Tekum, now the sole king responsible for upholding K'iche' law.

The two *quintillas* of Tzunun's *décima* are tied to the previous and following dialogue lines. The A-rhyme of the first *quintilla* repeats the ...*ado* rhyme of the preceding *romance*, while the A-rhyme of the second *quintilla* will be repeated in the A-rhyme of the *redondilla abrazada* that opens the succeeding dialogue.

c. Dialogue and reports among Tekum, Tzunun, and other *Caciques*: *redondillas abrazadas* + couplets

Tekum responds to Tzunun's narrative by asking him to rest. Then, beginning with Tzunun, the *Caciques* report, each pledging loyalty.

Again repeated rhymes tie the dialogue together. Not only does Tekum's *redondilla* repeat the A-rhyme of Tzunun's second *quintilla*, but Tzunun also begins his report with the same A-rhyme, which could be considered to form a couplet with Tekum's last line or indeed to transform Tekum's *redondilla* (ABBA) into a *quintilla* (ABBAA). As the reports continue, each *Cacique* speaks two lines, the first of which forms a couplet with the second line of the previous speaker, and the second of which forms a couplet with the first line of the succeeding speaker. This continues until the lines of the last two *Caciques* form a *redondilla abrazada*.

c. Ajitz monologue: *romance e-a*

As usual, these hierarchically ordered reports are followed by a *gracejo* speech. Although the speech is in *romance* form, the author again links it with the previous segment by opening with the same rhyme (...*a*) that formed the A-rhyme of the *redondilla abrazada* ending the reports.

Ajitz begins this speech by again promising to damage the invasion force. He offers to let the Spaniards try some of their *nixtamal* (maize treated with quicklime before cooking) but contaminated with small pox. Ajitz clarifies how this contamination might be accomplished. He notes that women are already making tortillas for the invading army, so the audience can fill in that they must obtain their *nixtamal* locally. Ajitz is presumably referring to Tlaxcalan women, relatives of the Tlaxcalan soldiers

who accompany the invasion, because he adds that they are not to be blamed for having been born swine. It is the fault of those that bore them, who were great beasts, who have surrendered to the Spaniards in distant lands and for whom they have sung the sad requiem. These 'great beasts' would be the Tlaxcalan kings who quickly allied with Cortés and Alvarado, especially Xicotencatl who gave his daughter Luisa to be Alvarado's wife.

5.2.4. PART IV.

5.2.4.1. Scene 1. Quetzaltenango.

a. Monologue by Tekum: *décima* split by seven couplets

Part IV begins with two parallel scenes as both armies prepare for battle. K'iche' preparations are examined first in a scene that opens with Tekum's most dramatic monologue, "*Hecho un mar de confusiones*" (Made a sea of confusion). Tekum's confusion arises from a recurring dream inspired by his contemplation of the Spanish enemy and their vile intentions. In the dream a dove aided the Spanish armada in decimating his squadrons, even though dragons from hell defended them. When a sudden shift made their position hopeless, Tekum rose into the air three times and three times he fell, the last time with his heart pierced. When the dream vision departed, Tekum was left wondering if what he saw could come true. But after this display of confusion, indecision and vulnerability, Tekum summons up his courage and resolve. "On to the attack," Tekum exclaims, "to death or victory!"

Again the author works to integrate the passage through rhyming pattern. The rhyme of the "A" line of the opening *quintilla* of his *décima* is composed of the syllables "...ones" beginning with the word "*confusiones*," which reappears in alternate couplets of the intervening couplet portion before the second *quintilla*.

b. Cacique reports: *redondillas abrazadas*

Tzunun then begins the usual round of "reports," delivered this time with a complete *redondilla abrazada* for each *Cacique*. Each encourages Tekum by dismissing the vision as merely a strange dream and by vowing to defend the nation against forced conversion and vassalage to the Spanish king. Ajitz as usual concludes the segment on a different tack, but this time with a single *redondilla* rather than an extended speech. In it, he offers to summon the furies of hell to protect the K'iche' army.

c. Dialogue between Tekum and *Caciques* in unison: *redondilla abrazada* + *romance a-o*

Tekum adds another *redondilla* to rouse the troops to valiant action, and the *Caciques*, in *romance* form, respond in unison with martial cheers: “Long live Rey K'iche'! Death to Alvarado and all the Spaniards. Long live Quetzaltenango.”

5.2.4.2. Scene 2. Spanish Camp.

a. Dialogue among Alvarado and his Officers: *redondillas abrazadas*

It is Alvarado's turn to rouse his troops. He notes that from the sounds of *bombas* and kettle drums has revealed that the K'iche' are taking their positions on the battlefield. His statement is followed by the usual series of reports. First Carrillo suggests a surprise attack before the K'iche' get an advantage, then the remaining officers proffer formulaic declarations of valour and willingness to fight.

b. Monologue by Don Quirijol: *romance e-a*

As usual, the officers' reports are followed by a comic speech by the *gracejo* Don Quirijol, with word play and biblical references. The meaning of some parts of the speech is questionable, due to considerable and inconsistent degrading over time, though the overall sense is clear. Quirijol first talks of the large and excellent group of soldiers under his command, noting their use of the bayonet.⁶ But Quirijol says he has another group of soldiers who he has kept apart because they are mixing with the Indigenous population, the racially mixed results of which he compares to mules. He admits he is afraid of potential disruption, concluding by saying that if they are not careful they will wake up as wild beasts or as the traitor Judas, cutting out everyone's tongues.

Quirijol's reference to wild beasts suggests the notion that Spaniards who mix with natives will revert to savagery, while the point that they might wake up in this form might refer to the *Golden Ass* of the Roman writer Apuleius, a book that was popular in the European Renaissance. The biblical reference to Judas is dual. The traitor Judas is of course Judas Iscariot who repudiated and betrayed Christ. The tongue reference is instead to the martyrdom of Judas Maccabeus, along with that of his mother and brothers, as described in horrifying detail in chapter 7 of *Maccabees 2*. The family was tortured to death because they refused to give up Judaic monotheism for Greco-Roman idolatry. Logically this theme gained renewed popularity and dramatic representation in the period of the *Reconquista* and the conquest and conversion of the Americas. These two Judases set a good and bad example concerning adherence to monotheism, a prelude to the battle in which Tekum will die refusing monotheism in favour of idolatry—the antithesis of Judas Maccabeus.

⁶ This point differs greatly in the current versions. Quirijol may be describing their valour in battle by saying that they stick the bayonets up everybody's rear ends.

5.2.4.3. Scene 3. The battlefield at El Pinal

a. *Desafío* by Alvarado, Tekum, and their followers: *redondillas abrazadas* and free verse

As both forces enter the battlefield, both leaders rouse their troops and both groups of followers respond in unison shouting martial cheers. The juxtaposition of utterances from the opposing forces constitutes a *desafío* or challenge, even though the two forces are out of earshot and do not address each other.

Alvarado begins the sequence, noting that since his armies are now prepared, it is time so sally forth and meet the enemy. His officers respond with their cheers: “Long live the Spaniards; Death to the Indians.” The cries of the *Caciques* are also heard: “Long Live the Indian People. Death to the Spaniards.” All end their cries with: “To arms. War.” Then Tekum gives his rousing *redondilla*, shouting death to the “children of the sun.” “Let hell and earth tremble,” he says, and “death to the Spaniards.”

Alvarado speaks to his troops again in a *redondilla* that seems contradictory. He says the field is red with the blood of tyrants, but then enjoins his troops to attack immediately and to turn the plain red. Perhaps the first part is a reference to biblical battles, the crusades or the *Reconquista*, so that Alvarado would then be suggesting that his forces achieve similar victories. In the process, Alvarado has labeled Tekum a tyrant.

In contrast to later modifications, in this older form the combatants never address each other. So the following battle portion involves dialogue by both leaders but in each case addressed to one of their followers, not to each other.

b. Monologue by Tekum: *copla de arte menor + redondilla cruzada* (amplified *romance e-e*)

Tekum is the first to break from battle. He laments that they have lost many men—a *jiquipil* (8000) have perished. Admitting that he is distraught, Tekum asks Tzunun for advice. And it is not only his soldiers’ deaths that worry him. He explains to Tzunun that he has already risen into the air twice with the aim of decapitating Alvarado. Tekum, Tzunun and the audience are aware that he has had dream predicting his death the third time he rises up.

As is common in the early style texts, the switch from introspective to active language in a monologue is accompanied by a switch to the *redondilla*, but this time unusually the *cruzada* form that perhaps serves as an amplified *romance*. In this passage, Tekum summons the furies of hell to bring him happy fortune by transforming themselves into common soldiers who will destroy the Spaniards.

c. Monologue by Alvarado: *romance a*

From his side Alvarado now speaks. He seeks out Portocarrero. Referring to Tekum, he complains that the “ferocious animal” has left him without a horse. He asks for Portocarrero’s lance with the intention of seeking out and killing Tekum.

d. Dialogue between Tekum and Tzunun: *redondillas abrazadas*

In the earlier style texts, Tekum’s death speech is brief but contains important information. Tekum addresses Tzunun, saying that his heart has been pierced. Admitting that he has been mortally wounded, he hands Tzunun the pennant, the sign of military authority, thereby assigning Tzunun command of the K’iche’ forces.

Tzunun is incredulous because he was watching Tekum and saw no one touch or wound him. This point continues the legend that it was Tekum’s eagle alter-ego or *nawal* that flew up, attacked Alvarado, and was itself struck by Alvarado’s lance. The death of his *nawal* thus means the death of Tekum. As will be discussed later, in the late 19th century the eagle *nawal* came to be understood as a quetzal.

e. Monologue by Tzunun: *décima*

As Tekum dies, Tzunun reverts to his practical attitude. He addresses the *Caciques*, advising them that Tekum has died and he is now in charge. With such authority he tells the *Caciques* that he will not continue the war but will instead follow Alvarado’s religion. He wants to be baptized and become a true son of the humble lamb who died crucified.

f. Dialogue between Tzunun and the *Caciques*: *redondillas abrazadas*

The *Caciques* respond in unison—the B-rhyme of their *redondilla* repeats the A-rhyme of Tzunun’s second *quintilla*—saying that conversion is also their wish. They suggest a message be sent to Rey K’iche’ to advise him of these events. Tzunun responds that he must instead go in person with all of the *Caciques* and commoners, to return Tekum’s crown to the king. The *Caciques* then suggest taking the body of Tekum with them for burial. Tzunun agrees, asking them to carry Tekum’s body, and adding that Tekum’s noble lineage and his death in defense of the “*patria*” merits a grand burial.

g. Monologue by Ajitz: *romance e-e + romance a-a*

Before they leave, Ajitz takes a moment to mourn his lord. Unfortunately the corruptions of this text are so severe that it is impossible as yet to approximate an early form. The content is fairly consistent, however. Ajitz laments that the Spaniards have killed Tekum, piercing his heart with a wooden lance.

He asks what use are their firearms and what they have come to seek in his land, calling them a foreign rabble. By the end, he is so overcome with grief he can do no more than curse.

5.2.4.4. Scene 4. Q'umarcaaj

a. Statement by Tzunun: *redondilla abrazada*

Arriving at Q'umarcaaj, Tzunun carries out his official duty by presenting Rey K'iche' with Tekum's crown and calling attention to his coffin.

b. Monologue by Rey K'iche': *décima + redondilla abrazada*

Addressing the corpse of his son and heir, Rey K'iche' laments that Tekum's brilliance is now extinguished and his body lifeless. Rey K'iche' then accuses Alvarado of leaving him this cold cadaver. When he wonders what instrument pierced Tekum's heart, Rey K'iche' recalls that he had foreseen this event in a dream but Tekum would not believe it, thinking the dream to have deceived him. Changing tone and addressing Tzunun with a *redondilla abrazada*, Rey K'iche' says that as he can no longer bear the mournful sight, Tzunun should take Tekum away and bury him immediately.

c. Song by the Malinches: *romancillo i*

When Tzunun leaves, the Malinches sing for the king. The Malinches first address the plains of El Pinal as a living being who must feel sad at the blood spilled on it. They then address the green trees and ask who could tinge them with the human blood of the unhappy Indian. They wish that their tears could wash away this tint. They then acknowledge that Alvarado's lance has pierced Tekum's heart. The Malinches finally address Rey K'iche' and say he will continue to reign [under the Spaniards].

d. Monologue by Rey K'iche': *romancillo i*

As usual, the *romancillo* form of the Malinches' song is continued in subsequent lines. In this form, Rey K'iche' asks the Malinches to stop singing by saying they should put down the engraving tool with which they draw the disaster. He then notes that Tzunun has returned.

e. Dialogue among Rey K'iche', Tzunun, and the two Princes: *romance a-o*

Reverting to *romance* form for the remainder of the scene, and indeed for most of the remainder of the entire text, Rey K'iche' addresses the Princes, saying that they must carry his message to Alvarado. They are to tell Alvarado that Rey K'iche' wants to become a Christian and that he invites Alvarado to

his palace on the mountain in order to make a pact. Rey K'iche' cautions the Princes to explain to Alvarado that he is trustworthy.

Tzunun offers to carry the message himself, as the Princes are young and could get lost. The Princes respond that they cannot become lost because they are of noble blood and never take the wrong path. The Princes then take their leave of Rey K'iche'.

5.2.4.5. Scene 5. Quetzaltenango

a. Dialogue between the Princes and Quirijol: *redondillas abrazadas + romance a*

The Princes arrive at the sentry station outside Tekum's palace in Quetzaltenango now occupied by the Spaniards. They call for the sentry and Quirijol appears, wondering if someone has brought him a meal. He is startled at the sight of the Princes: their brilliant plumage reminds him of peacocks. The Princes straightforwardly ask Quirijol to tell Alvarado they bear a message from Rey K'iche' and would like to enter. Quirijol is again charmed by their plumage. Calling them parrots, he invites the Princes to enter and says he must accompany them.

b. Dialogue among Alvarado, Princes and Quirijol: *romance a*

Inside the palace, Quirijol presents the princes, referring to them as little birds. Alvarado asks the Princes what they want, addressing them as "sons." The Princes respond by explaining their noble rank, but thank Alvarado for his courtesy. They say that their father, the K'iche' king has sent them to deliver a message. Continuing his courteous reception, Alvarado invites them to sit first, noting their high rank, and again the Princes thank him.

c. Dialogue among Alvarado and the two Princes: *romance a-o + romance a-e*

First Prince then delivers Rey K'iche's message that he has meditated and resolved to become a Christian. Rey K'iche' therefore asks that Alvarado come to his palace in the mountains and there they will consult to celebrate the pact. They add that he should not mistrust Rey K'iche' who has an unblemished reputation.

Alvarado then asks what has become of Tekum and Second Prince answers that he has been buried but they do not know where, adding that he was pierced in the heart. They also explain that when Tekum died, command was passed to Tzunun who had never wanted to hurt the Spaniards, so he went to Rey K'iche' and explained this. With Tekum dead, there was no longer an obstacle against submission to Alvarado, so Rey K'iche' resolved that all should be baptized.

Alvarado responds that his forces will come, trusting that the king will not go back on his word. First Prince reassures him, saying that the sun will fail to rise before Rey K'iche' deceives Alvarado. Both Princes salute Alvarado to take their leave, so Alvarado asks why they are departing so soon instead of waiting for the Spaniards to be ready for the march. The Princes respond that it is to advise the king so he can come forward to meet Alvarado upon his arrival.

d. Dialogue among Alvarado and his Officers: *romance a-e*

When the Princes have departed, Alvarado asks his officers their opinion of the two youths, stimulating a report-like series of responses. Carrillo answers that they seem well educated and regal, while Cardona, recalling the sweet sounds of the Malinches' song, compares them to angels. Portocarrero and Calderón suggest that they leave soon as it is getting late. Moreno suggests that Quirijol take charge of the baggage so the rest can go faster.

e. Monologue by Quirijol: *romance a-e*

Moreno's suggestion provides Quirijol with an opportunity for another comic *gracejo* speech. Quirijol says he would rather go first and let the others follow behind, because he wants to find an Indian girl to marry, or, better yet, two. He argues that one woman is not enough to feed, clothe and shoe him. He adds that this is what the "real men" are doing.

5.2.4.6. Scene 6. Q'umarcaaj

a. Dialogue Rey K'iche', Alvarado, and Spanish officers: *romance a-o*

Alvarado greets Rey K'iche' with formal humility and extends this greeting on behalf of his soldiers. Rey K'iche' greets Alvarado with the embrace of friendship and also with formal humility and extends his welcome to the Spanish soldiers. The Spaniards echo the formality of these greetings.

b. Monologue by Rey K'iche': *romance a-o*

Immediately thereafter, Rey K'iche' begins a long monologue, maintaining the *romance* form. Rey K'iche' narrates to Alvarado a dream in which a dove, speaking in his own language, revealed to him how he had been deceived. The dove identified himself as the Holy Spirit, the true God, and not the K'iche' false gods. He told Rey K'iche' to reject idolatry and superstition, witchcraft and spells. He said the Spanish invasion and conquest were His instrument for bringing about such conversion. He asks Rey K'iche' not to disparage the heaven for which he was created, noting that He [Christ] came into the world to redeem them, and passed many labours, suffering many torments that He will not recount because it would re-awaken the pain at seeing how ungrateful mankind is. He notes that He died on

the cross between thieves, bound with arms outstretched, in order to cleanse the sin of the human species. The dove then told Rey K'iche' that if he is not baptized he will have no place in His kingdom and instead will be condemned (to hell).

c. Dialogue among Rey K'iche', Alvarado, and the *Caciques: romance a-o*

Rey K'iche' then asks Alvarado to baptize him because he wants to be a Christian and serve Alvarado's god and carry out his orders. He adds that the king (of Spain) may then do what he likes with these his new vassals. The *Caciques* ask for the same and ask Alvarado to name their community's patron saint. Finally, Alvarado asks the king for an embrace and ushers him and his vassals the *Caciques* into the church where they will swear loyalty to the king so that they may be baptized.

5.3. Consistent use of Poetic forms

The author employs a small number poetic forms in thoughtful and fairly consistent manner. Consistent aspects involve the use of specific forms to foreground the character of a personage or circumstance but not as consistently involving mood as in peninsular theatre. These consistent features may be briefly reviewed, first concerning forms used for monologues and subsequently those used primarily for dialogues.

5.3.1. Décima

Speeches using the *décima* format are associated with persons of highest authority, whether spoken by them or with their intent conveyed by others. These speeches tend to be declarations rather than precipitating dialogue or action. The unembellished *décima* is the most static of the monologue forms in this play, and is associated with the two characters, Alvarado and Tzunun, who are most practical and indeed one-dimensional in their lack of introspection. This form contrasts with the *décima* embellished by the inclusion of couplets between the opening and closing *quintilla*, a form used for monologues of more active format as in planning a defense strategy, or more emotional content as in recounting a dream foretelling disaster. The embellished *décima* is thus spoken by more three dimensional characters who are introspective and at times vacillating or vulnerable, specifically Rey K'iche' and Tekum. Considering its association with authority, it may be significant that Tekum only uses the (embellished) *décima* after he has been granted special authority by Rey K'iche' giving him the standard, and only until mid-battle when his authority crumbles and K'iche' defeat appears inevitable. Of the main characters it is only Ajitz, who is outside of the social hierarchy, who never uses the *décima*.

Surprisingly, the *gracejo* Quirijol uses both types of *décima*. Considering the *décima*'s association with authority, fate, and strategy it is ironic for Quirijol to use this form in delivering his hyperbolic

speeches about gluttony and inter-racial marriage. Perhaps the author chose the *décima* form for Quirijol precisely to highlight his function as a foil for Alvarado—an anti-Alvarado. This function of contrast is facilitated by the fact that in scenes with only Spaniards, Alvarado often begins a scene with a monologue in *décimas* and Quirijol often ends a scene in the same way, with intervening dialogue spoken in *redondillas abrazadas*. This juxtaposition is most evident in the first appearance of the Spaniards, the scene of their *entrada* that begins part II.

5.3.2. Copla de arte menor

Monologues in the *copla de arte menor* form tend to be more active than those even of the couplet-embellished *décima*. The subject tends to be the planning of military action. The *copla de arte menor* is more associated with Tekum than any other character. Rey K'iche' actually begins the play with a speech in *copla de arte menor* but this is his only speech in which he ponders a strategy of resistance. Ajitz speaks only once in this form, and that is when he is relaying Tekum's words on the conditions of audience to the Ambassadors. The only real exception to the general use of this form is the shared rhyme of two *redondillas abrazadas* that begin the Spanish officers' reports in their scene of *entrada*.

5.3.3. Redondilla abrazada

The *redondilla abrazada* is used largely for dialogues of a formal kind in which each personage either speaks a full *redondilla* or speaks half, with the other half provided by the next or preceding speaker. The *Cacique* and Spaniard reports especially are normally in this form. In addition, monologues delivered by Rey K'iche' and Tekum in the *décima* or *copla de arte menor* formats usually end with a *redondilla abrazada*, most commonly to signal a shift from introspective declaration to addressing another personage and thereby beginning a formal dialogue. As this kind of shift indicates a more rounded personality, the use of a *redondilla abrazada* to conclude a speech never occurs with the more one-dimensional and non-introspective Alvarado or his foil Quirijol.

5.3.4. Romance

The *romance* is a looser form than the *redondilla abrazada* as it permits but is not limited to rhyme only in alternate (even numbered) lines and only involving vowels (assonant rhyme). This more fluid and thus more elastic form appears in the *Conquista* text from the shortest passages, such as formal greetings beginning a scene or unison rejoinders by *Caciques* or Spaniards that end a scene, to the longest passages of dialogue. These longer passages represent informal exchanges particularly associated with dialogue between K'iche' and Spaniards. Thus the *romance* form dominates parts II and IV in which Spaniards appear. There is also a tendency to continue the same *romance* rhyme among different speakers and even through different scenes, perhaps to provide more dramatic unity. Thus in

Part II, the same *a-o* rhyme appears in 75 repetitions (150 lines) encompassing the Ambassadors' interview with Tekum, their sendoff by Ajitz, and their report to Alvarado. Similarly, Rey K'iche's final, dramatic monologue maintains the romance form and *a-o* rhyme of the entire scene in which it is spoken.⁷ The *romance* form also tends to be associated with Ajitz, the character who interacts most intensely with the Spaniards, and is thus used by him for comic speeches, even when no Spaniards are present.

5.3.5. Romancillo

The *romancillo* is specifically associated with the songs of the Malinches. It is introduced each time the Malinches sing and it is carried on in a portion or all of the succeeding dialogue of that scene, and in one case into the beginning of the next scene.

5.3.6. Relational Patterns

In addition to these associations between the poetic forms and particular characters or content, the author's choices of specific forms also appear to represent a means of articulating relationships between situations or speakers: a relational rather than associative approach to the construction of meaning.

Many choices of poetic form derive from an underlying scale from formal to informal, from greatest to lesser authority, and from stasis to action. For monologues, the *décima* represents the most formal, authoritative and static form, especially when used by Alvarado and Tzunun, though its character becomes more active and dramatic when accorded couplets intervening between the two *quintillas*. In contrast to the *décima*, the *copla de arte menor* is less formal and more active, used especially for strategic planning. As an example, Rey K'iche's first monologue, when he speculates on a strategy of resistance, is in the *copla de arte menor* form, whereas his next dialogue in the same scene, wherein he recites Emperor Motecuhzoma's letter, is in *décima* form. For dialogues, the *redondilla abrazada* is more formal and static, while the *romance* is more informal and active.

Some of the author's choices of poetic forms appear designed to construct specific relations of hierarchy within particular passages. An example involving monologues occurs in scene 3 of Part I, where Rey K'iche' addresses Tekum with a *décima* split by couplets, and Tekum responds with a *copla de arte menor*. An example using dialogues appears in scene 1 of Part III, where the formal dialogue between Tekum and Tzunun in *redondilla abrazada* form is followed by a comic dialogue between Tzunun and Ajitz in *romance* form.

⁷ The *a-o* rhyme is perhaps the easiest to accomplish as it characterizes the past participle of verbs as well as many masculine adjectives.

These consistent standards seem idiosyncratic and are certainly far, for example, from Lope de Vega's use of the *décima* for complaints or laments. The *Conquista* text also differs from peninsular *siglo de oro* theatrical scripts of the same period in the rationalized and structured use of a select number of poetic forms. Furthermore, the overall structure of this play is uncommonly reduced and refined, since the four parts or acts are themselves structured as if a rhyming quatrain: Parts I and III involve only K'iche' personages and a general theme of preparation for war; Parts II and IV involve these as well as the Spaniards, and thus deal with confrontation and the conflict that is the premise of the whole work. The structure is thus ABAB, which in terms of Spanish verse would be called a *redondilla cruzada*. But considering the different degrees of tension, evident in the varying size and attention of the audience, one might express it as aBaB. I would argue that a highly rationalized structure with reduced variation is the predominant characteristic of the original *Conquista* script, and it will be seen shortly to affect the narrative structure as well, as in the elimination of sub-plots.

5.4. Relations to the *Moros y Cristianos* genre prototype

The text for the *Conquista* follows many of the *Moros y Cristianos* conventions including the two opposing sides ordered hierarchically by rank with the leader at the upper end and a *gracejo* at the lower end. However these ranks are treated differently. The ranks of Moors and Christians in the *Moros y Cristianos* genre are more individually differentiated in action and character than the ranks of K'iche' and Spaniards in the *Baile de la Conquista*. In the *Conquista*, the first two Spaniards under Alvarado have an important role as ambassadors, the first K'iche' under Tekum is Tzunun with a crucial role in Parts III and IV, and both sides terminate with distinctive *gracejos*. However this leaves three Spaniards and four K'iche' with no contribution to the plot and no distinctive characteristics. They fill out the ranks, and they are given generalized statements for the serial reports that punctuate the texts. Viewing the script as text, these repetitive reports tend toward the vapid—their interest arises only from their function in performance, giving those who will be needed in the battle a chance throughout to dance and recite text. Until fairly recently, each character was introduced with a solo dance accompanied by a *son* or tune that belonged only to that character.

Both the *Moros y Cristianos* dances and the *Conquista* involve two embassies in which the *gracejo* characters introduce the ambassadors to their superiors. Of these two embassies in the *Moros* genre, the first involves attempts by the Christians to achieve submission without war, and the second involves a mission by the non-Christians to advise that war will ensue. In the *Conquista* likewise the first embassy is sent by the Christians to induce surrender rather than war. The difference lies in the second embassy which in the *Conquista* is directed not to the opposing Christian/Spanish camp but to the royal court, this being Tzunun's embassy that constitutes the action of Part III. The author also adopted the *Moros y Cristianos* conventions of a climactic battle in which there is a decisive duel. In

both *Moros y Cristianos* texts and the *Conquista*, the drama culminates with the death of a pagan leader and conversion of the remainder, leading to the final *convivencia*: living together in harmony.

Adapted from the *Moros y Cristianos* dance genre, the culminating scene of baptism in *La Conquista* exemplifies the overriding concept of this dance-drama as theatre of conversion. In the last lines of the *Conquista* text, Alvarado invites Rey K'iche' to "go to the church with all of your vassals, where you will swear loyalty to the king so that you may be baptized." In the *Conquista* as in Spanish practice, the defeat and/or capitulation of an Indigenous group meant that its leaders would swear loyalty to the Spanish Crown, an act that also involved becoming a Christian. It may be that in the Americas the *Moros y Cristianos* dance genre helped instigate this practice of immediate conversion upon defeat. Converted leaders, later called *caciques*, generally embraced baptism because becoming a Christian subject would enable them to retain their status and control over a group's labour and resources. As the *Conquista* text points out, the earth belongs to God's children, the Christians. This baptism of leaders, whose followers then followed suit (Van Oss 1986 : 145), was characteristic of the initial phase of colonization, with conversion based on submission rather than on understanding and accepting the tenets of the Christian religion. It was perhaps Bartolomé de Las Casas who broke with this pattern in Guatemala and instituted conversion through explanation of the Christian faith. His experiment began with the conversion of the lord of Sacapulas and his followers upon being exposed to a series of theatrical performances of Christian themes instigated by Dominican friars under Las Casas's direction (Remesal 1964: 227-30; Ximenez 1929-31: I, 190-97).

In contrast to the *Baile de la Conquista*, the other extant conquest dance in Guatemala, the *Baile de Cortés*, adheres more closely to the *Moros y Cristianos* template. For example, the *Baile de Cortés* retains the dual embassies and the non-Christian princess who allies with the Christians. The *Baile de Cortés* is unusual as a conquest dance in that it foregrounds the Tlaxcalans and in particular goes against historical events by portraying the Tlaxcalans as allied with Motecuhzoma against the Spaniards. Although the script for Indigenous personages is written in K'iche', it would appear that Tlaxcalans collaborated in its creation, whether those in Tlaxcala or those in the Guatemalan communities descendant from the fighters who came with the Alvarados, including one such community in the K'iche' region at Totonicapán. This is suggestive because the elements that do not follow the *Moros* template in the *Baile de Cortés* concern Guatemalan characters, the K'iche' king and his leading fighter, Zaqi K'oxol. It is possible that these sections were added later and that they may have been influenced by the *Baile de la Conquista*, since according to the story of the *Baile de Cortés* the K'iche' characters had to be brought from Guatemala, similar to the *Conquista* story in which Tekum had to be brought from Quetzaltenango.

The *Baile de la Conquista* also reveals several major differences from the *Moros y Cristianos* genre. First, unlike even the Mexican dances of conquest, there is no adult non-Christian female character who defects to the Christian side in Guatemala's *Baile de la Conquista*. This entire subplot is eliminated

in favour of a more tightly structured narrative, a character also noted concerning the manipulation of poetic forms.

Second, the K'iche' *gracejo*, Ajitz, goes beyond the usual *siglo de oro* construction of a *gracioso* in his characterization as a pagan and idolatrous priest in league with the devil, a representative of precisely what the Spanish intended to stamp out and replace with Christianity. Indeed, the *Baile de la Conquista* itself was intended to assist in this goal, turning audience members away from their native religion and accepting baptism in the Christian faith. As will be seen, giving Ajitz this more important and symbolic role has also led, over the centuries, to a subversion of the author's intent, depicting Ajitz as a hero who resists assimilation and maintains Maya identity through *Costumbre*, especially the Indigenous practice of divination.

Third, the royal court led by the Rey K'iche' is constructed as a third major character group that mediates between the antagonistic Spanish and *Cacique* sides. One function of this group is to provide four child characters who can represent the future and thus the intended proselytizing goal of the dance drama. They also serve further plot functions, as they are the first to actually encounter the Spaniards, bringing out these foreigners' simultaneous attraction and repulsion to the K'iche'. The Princes also serve the important function as messengers, both to Tekum in Part I and to Alvarado in Part IV.

This mediating position of Rey K'iche' requires a shift in the nature of the culminating pagan death. In the *Moros y Cristianos* genre, the Moor king refuses to submit and convert and thus pays with his life, though the depiction of this event varies widely. As the Moor king heads the Moor side of the dance ground, he is structurally equal in position to Tekum who heads the non-Christian side in the *Baile de la Conquista* and who similarly dies, preparing the way for others to convert. Then it is the Moor hero, usually the son of the king, who wholeheartedly converts and becomes loyal to the Christian king. As second in the Moor line, this hero is structurally equivalent to Tzunun who likewise decides on submission and conversion. Thus in the *Baile de la Conquista*, in which the K'iche' hero refuses conversion and dies in battle, it is the Rey K'iche' who heads the new third group positioned as intermediaries between the two sides, and who leads the conversion and submission of his nation and people.

The importance of Rey K'iche's mediating position is that his climactic conversion can be portrayed as a shift in allegiance from the "pagan" Tekum to the Christian Alvarado. The author used parallel constructions to point up this shift: in Part I, Rey K'iche' invites Tekum and the *Caciques* to Q'umarcaaj to plan for war, whereas in Part IV, after Tekum's burial, he invites Alvarado and the Spaniards to make peace. Though it is not clear whether the practice dates from the early colonial period, the masks worn by the members of the court also articulate their mediating position, with dark eyes of the K'iche' characters but light skin and hair of the Spaniards. By comparison, on the Lienzo of Quauhquechollan

(Akkeren 2007), Christianized Tlaxcalans appear with white skin while their Maya adversaries are dark skinned. Skin colour was thus used to identify a distinction between rebellious unconverted pagans and baptized Christian subjects of the Spanish empire.

As pointed out by Díaz Roig (1983: 187), in contrast to the *Moros y Cristianos* genre, Conquest dances tend to somewhat denigrate the victorious Spaniards while dignifying the Indigenous group, since it was important that spectators be able to identify with their conversion. In *La Conquista*, Ajitz manages to humiliate the Spanish Ambassadors, in contrast to the dignity with which Rey K'iche' is treated. In the *Moros* genre, the Moors have committed a crime and must be brought to justice, and it would have been possible to portray Rey K'iche' and the K'iche' kingdom in a similar light, since historically the excuse for Alvarado's invasion was K'iche' incursions into Spanish-held Soconusco. This rationale is never mentioned in the *Conquista*. Instead Rey K'iche's crime is merely not being a Christian subject of the Spanish empire—basically a crime of ignorance. So likewise there is no debate about good and evil in the lead up to battle, and no argument little Tekum's death that the Christian god has shown his superiority to the pagan god. Thus whereas in the *Moros* genre the battle is often stopped because a Moor leader has recognized the truth of Christianity as a religion, in the *Baile de la Conquista* the battle is stopped to avoid further slaughter. This absence of a strong theological argument is not entirely unique to the Guatemalan Conquest Dance. Díaz Roig (1983: 187) notes that the 1692 Conquest Dance from Mexico lacks a strong theological component, as there is no religious figure to instruct and convert. Likewise, in the spectacle staged in Alcalá in 1571 in the form of a Conquest drama in New Spain, there is no evidence of a theological discussion. Instead of demonstrating conversion of the pagans, the report of this spectacle performance focuses on the capture, subjugation and humiliation of Motecuhzoma (Harris 2000: 212–13).

5.5. Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is a popular and widely expanding field, due to the need to move from an origin in analysis of literature to diverse media that continually alter the landscape of story-telling. Rick Voithofer synthesizes much of this theoretical material in his 2003 proposal for skillful and culturally relevant use of narrative to create an engaging online educational experience. He demonstrates the usefulness of various schemes of analysis opening up a series of questions that we can easily adapt to interrogate the *Conquista* script. These questions may be divided into two groups: 1) the structure of the narrative action, in other words the sequence of events and their relation through cause and effect; and 2) the framework provided for that action such as the construction of its characters, revealing aspects of the negotiation of power through discursive acts.

5.5.1. Structure of the Narrative Action

Voithofer cites Labov's synthesis of the much-earlier Propp analysis of the structure of Russian

Fairytales, resulting in six elements or stages required for narrative. In his discussions, Voithofer elaborates on these, allowing me to abstract from his argument a nine-stage sequence that is strikingly appropriate to the early style *Conquista* script. The nine stages would be:

- a. Precondition that is problematic
- b. Complication that will require a response involving change or adaptation
- c. Narrowing of possible choices
- d. Crisis that provokes making a decisive choice
- e. Climax in which the negative consequences of the decisive choice are experienced
- f. Change of knowledge based on the negative consequences, leading to making the opposite choice
- g. *Denouement* in which the complication is untangled
- h. Resolution in which equilibrium is restored
- i. Coda in which audience members are brought back to their own time and place

The *precondition that is problematic* is not overtly stated in the text of *La Conquista*, perhaps because it was too obvious, since it is the premise for all evangelizing dance-dramas: that is, the K'iche' are not yet Christian subjects of the Spanish crown. Once the performance was staged, that precondition could be indicated in the opening dance, but there is no evidence that the author knew that such a purpose would be served, and in such a manner. As time wore on and *La Conquista* was continued no longer to encourage conversion but now to maintain traditions laid down by the ancestors, this balletic depiction of this pre-existing condition became essential.

The *complication that will require a response involving change or adaptation* is revealed in the opening lines of the text: Alvarado is leading an invasion force to impose Spanish rule and the Catholic religion on the K'iche', just as his superior, Cortés, had done with the Aztec under Motecuhzoma.

Rey K'iche's response to this imminent danger is less than desirable. He considers an ambush under cover of feigned submission. The Princes' response is more decisive: they bring Tekum so that he can be invested with sole authority for the kingdom's defense. By these acts, Rey K'iche' surrenders the ability to make choices and invests Tekum with that ability. Tekum's investiture is thus a *narrowing of possible choices* because from this moment until the his death, decisions on how to deal with the invasion threat are up to Tekum.

In Part II the Spaniards arrive and are introduced, after which Alvarado selects two ambassadors and details their mission to deliver terms of surrender to Tekum. The terms are that the K'iche' submit to the Spanish crown and convert to Catholicism or there will be war, with the result that lands and other property will be confiscated and survivors will be enslaved. Through these terms, possible choices are narrowed a second time.

The interview in which Tekum rejects these terms of surrender constitutes the *crisis that provokes making a decisive choice*. Tekum has not previously encountered Spaniards and is unaware of their military advantages, so he confidently resists surrender, aware that this choice will lead inevitably to war. His insufficient knowledge of the conditions involved mean that his act will bring unforeseen and disastrous consequences.

In Part III, Tzunun advises Rey K'iche' of Tekum's choice, and Rey K'iche' panics and virtually abdicates. This does not alter the outcome but, as will be shown, carries a different importance related to character arc.

The battle is the *climax in which the negative consequences of the decisive choice are experienced*. Tekum's decisive choice to refuse submission proves disastrous. Tekum first sees many of his soldiers killed and then is himself killed by Alvarado.

Tekum's death puts Tzunun in charge of the K'iche' forces. Tzunun then demonstrates the *change of knowledge based on the negative consequences, leading to making the opposite choice*. Tzunun is now aware that continuing the battle will inevitably lead to a K'iche' defeat, so he makes a choice opposite to what Tekum had chosen in the moment of crisis: Tzunun accepts the terms of surrender. When he reports Tekum's death to Rey K'iche', the king also accepts the terms and regains his authority and ability to make choices. He therefore summons the Spaniards for a formal surrender.

The final scene at the K'iche' court in Q'umarcaaj provides the necessary *denouement* in which the complication is untangled. Voithofer (2003: 66) explains that a *denouement* solves a mystery or ties up loose ends. Rey K'iche's monologue in this scene unlocks a backstory that in a dream he had previously been warned by the Holy Spirit that he must convert. Alvarado then baptizes Rey K'iche' and the *Caciques*.

As Voithofer suggests (2003: 66) the *resolution in which equilibrium is restored* is closely tied to the denouement. Rey K'iche's realization, conversion and submission changes everything and restores equilibrium but on a more desirable level. He has become a legitimate ruler because he is now a Christian subject of the Spanish crown.

Voithofer's analysis leaves a space for the use of a *coda in which audience members are brought back to their own time and place*. This function is served in some texts for the *Baile de la Conquista* but the coda texts do not appear to be original. If the original author had provided a coda, it does not survive.

The original *Conquista*, insofar as it may be reconstructed, thus follows a logical narrative arc with little extraneous detail and no subplots. Simply put, the improper pre-condition of the Rey K'iche' as an

autonomous non-Christian ruler is complicated by Alvarado's invasion. His decision to invest Tekum with the defense of the kingdom narrows his choices, especially when, in the climax moment, Tekum rejects the terms of surrender. In battle Tekum suffers the consequences of his decisive choice, allowing Tzunun to learn from his mistake and choose the opposite path. The situation is resolved when Rey K'iche' leads in submission to baptism. He is now a proper Christian ruler under Spanish authority and equilibrium is restored.

As his interest is education, Voithofer (2003: 67) also questions what new knowledge or skills the narrative has inspired the viewer to integrate into everyday life. This point is pertinent, considering that the final action of the play, the baptism of Rey K'iche' and the other K'iche' personages, was designed as a model for viewers to imitate by seeking their own baptism. Thus as an evangelizing play, the *Baile de la Conquista* was intended to affect viewers' everyday lives by inspiring them to follow Rey K'iche's example—to convert and to become committed Christians as well as loyal subjects of the empire.

5.6. Dramatic Framework: Characters

5.6.1. Character ranks

Voithofer notes that personages in the narrative are generally distinguished as major or minor. This might depend on how much they have to say within a dramatic script, but perhaps more importantly it depends on the degree to which they advance the narrative. Considering the personages of the *Conquista* according to these criteria, three character ranks may be distinguished, here called primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Among the *Cacique* group, Tekum is of primary importance and becomes the crux of the action through the choices he makes. Tzunun and Ajitz function as secondary characters who advance the action but in more restricted ways. Tzunun, the second-in-command, is the most variable in importance. He is one of the minor *Caciques* for the first and second part but increases in importance in the third part. His first independent act is as a secondary character when he takes Tekum's message to the Rey K'iche'. But after Tekum's death in Part IV he briefly acts as a primary figure, making the choice to stop the war and accept the Spanish conditions. After he sees to Tekum's burial, the Rey K'iche' takes over this authoritative responsibility and Tzunun slips into a tertiary role. In contrast, Ajitz, both priest and *gracejo*, acts as a secondary character throughout most of the narrative, becoming tertiary only after Tekum's burial, and he achieves his greatest impact in his scenes with the Ambassadors. The other *Caciques*—Chávez, Tepe, Saquimux and Ixcot—are tertiary characters who follow the lead of primary and secondary characters but do not independently advance the action.

In the Spanish camp, Alvarado is the primary character. Secondary characters in his ranks include Carrillo and Calderón, his ambassadors in the second part, although they slip into a tertiary role in the

third part. Portocarrero has one moment of secondary status, when he hands Alvarado the lance. The *gracejo* Don Quirijol is also made by secondary his distinctive comic speeches, and he contributes to the action very briefly as the sentinel in the third part. The other two officers—Calderón, and Moreno—are tertiary characters who do no more than follow the actions of primary and secondary characters.

In the royal court of Q'umarcaaj, Rey K'iche' is of primary importance and regularly advances the action, whether by indecision or decision. Secondary characters are the two unnamed Princes who advance the action through their two embassies to Quetzaltenango. The two Malinches, also unnamed, hover between secondary and tertiary status. Their autonomy exists only in their dialogue, mostly sung, which does not follow that of any other character but also does not advance the action.

In comparison, the primary characters in each group are most responsible for advancing the action, and these are also the three characters who each begin a part with a monologue. Secondary characters fulfill specific roles. The role of messenger is taken by the Princes from Q'umarcaaj, Tzunun from Quetzaltenango, and Carrillo and Cardona from the Spanish camp. The dual role of *gracejo* and sentry is taken by Ajitz from Quetzaltenango and Don Quirijol from the Spanish camp. Tertiary characters fill in the ranks.

The lack of strong female characters deserves further comment, as it is one of the characteristics that differentiates the *Baile de la Conquista* from the *Moros y Cristianos* genre, in which a princess typically defects to the Christian side for love of a Christian officer, and indeed from later dances like the Dance of the Deer or Dance of the Mexicans. The author might have developed a part for the wife of the Rey K'iche' as a queen. Or he might have included a love interest for Tekum, as the 19th century non-Maya playwright Silva Leal did, or as depicted in the spectacle version of the *Conquista* at Rabinal described by Teletor. But the *Conquista* author chose instead to eliminate subplots and focus attention on the central theme of submission and conversion as represented by the movement of Rey K'iche' from an allegiance to Tekum and the old ways to an allegiance to Alvarado and proper Christian leadership within the Spanish empire. His perspective may be even more limited, since in contrast to the *títulos*, the text refers to Christ and the Holy Spirit but not to the Virgin Mary. The Malinches' weakness as characters is further evident in their depiction as passive, if inappropriate, sexual objects, when the Ambassadors are attracted to them at their first meeting, and when Rey K'iche' imagines their rape as Spaniards overrun his capital. Their role is also reflected in Quirijol's generalized but repeated desire to acquire Indigenous wives, noting specifically that it would take two women to properly serve his needs.

5.6.2. Depth of Characterization

Voithofer (2003: 62) suggests useful methods for analysis of how characters are drawn, based on a series of criteria. One question he asks is whether a personage is drawn fully rounded, with multiple levels of thought and emotion and therefore multiple possibilities of action, even to making

unpredictable choices; or whether the personage is drawn flat, with few character traits, no inconsistencies and therefore incapable of doing something surprising.

Despite being secondary characters in terms of advancing the narrative, the *gracejos* are among the most complex and sharply drawn figures, with multiple character traits and contradictions that make them fully three-dimensional. Each demonstrates some of the classic *Gracejo* traits of *siglo de oro* Spanish theatre, but each also reveals surprising sides to his character. Quirijol is a low-status soldier with an adolescent's self-absorbed obsession with sensual gratification. Yet he persistently examines inter-racial marriage from different perspectives, on the one hand obsessed with obtaining one or more Indigenous wives and having interracial children, but on the other hand noting the disruptive potential of such relations for soldiers who have thereby 'gone native.' Ajitz carries the *gracejo* trait of cowardice but he is also a timorous priest relying on magic. Ajitz also delivers poignant commentaries, on the Tlaxcalan collaboration with the Spaniards in the conquest of the Aztec empire and the K'iche' and on the discrimination suffered by Indigenous populations under colonial rule. Except for his one comic interchange with Tzunun in scene 1 of Part III, nothing Ajitz says is really funny. His largely serious role reaches its climax with an outpouring of grief over Tekum's death.

Primary characters tend to be less surprising and more consistent in their thoughts and actions, a choice that may be explained by the importance of providing a clear message to serve the play's proselytizing function. However the primary characters also differ greatly in their complexity of character.

Alvarado's character seems flat. He is clearly on a mission to convert the K'iche' to Christian imperial subjects. Alvarado expresses this quest in his first speech and never varies from it, without a moment's indecision. Though his actions are decisive to the drama's outcome, Alvarado is a foil and a catalyst who causes other characters to react by making choices but does not himself deviate from the plan he had in mind before he entered the scene. He never surprises. In comparison, though he does undergo a change of mind when he stops the war after Tekum's death, the part of Tzunun is written almost as flat as that of Alvarado. As noted, this may be why both characters share the unembellished *décima*, the most rigidly controlled poetic form used in the text.

The character of Alvarado in the *Conquista* early style texts also corresponds to Voithofer's (2003: 55–56) analysis of the combination of travel narrative and quest that he terms expansion narratives. Voithofer notes that expansion narratives tend to create characters that are binary opposites in their representation of the primitive and the civilized, which has been shown to characterize the distinction between Tekum and Alvarado in the *Conquista* text. He also notes that the traveler/explorer on a quest is shown as steadfast in pursuing his goals and courageous in overcoming obstacles, like the character of Alvarado. Also in such expansion narratives, the viewpoint is that of the imperial eye, to use Pratt's

reverberant term, with human and natural obstacles presented as the problem to be solved in order that territory be appropriated and brought under the explorer's standards of control.

Rey K'iche' is more fully drawn, revealing various levels of thought in his three monologues and clearly displaying a range of emotions. But his attitude rarely varies from resignation, despair, and even panic. Tekum is equally complex in part because he is given the opportunity of choice on several occasions, as will be detailed farther on. Tekum's attitude is largely heroic and courageous, but he does express vulnerability, doubt and indecision when he narrates his dream and when he addresses Tzunun during the battle.

5.6.3. Foils as Opposed Characters

Voithofer (2003: 62) notes that a foil serves as a contrast to another character, putting the nature of both in relief. The convention of a two characters who act as foils for each other is one of the more important elements of the *Baile de la Conquista* script.

Through much of the play, Alvarado and Tekum represent opposites as Christian and "pagan" leaders fighting for king and country. The fact that they share heroism, courage, and leadership ability allows their differences to strike the viewer more sharply. Their different religions and loyalties provide the obvious contrast, emphasized in Tekum's refusal of the terms of surrender, and their clash in battle. But the author also demonstrates subtler differences by creating parallel situations in which these two opposed characters react differently. For example, in two parallel scenes involving embassies to Quetzaltenango, the sentry informs the leader that two messengers have arrived, after which they are brought into the leader's presence and an interview takes place. The first of these is the climactic interview between Tekum and the Spanish Ambassadors. Tekum's treatment of Carrillo and Cardona is presented as uncouth and arrogant. Tekum insists to Ajitz that before the Ambassadors may enter they must be blindfolded so that they cannot see his majesty. When they enter, he denies them a seat, arguing that they are too lowly to deserve one. His barbarism is also presented in terms of religion, as he claims materialistically that K'iche' gods are superior because their images are made of fine metal rather than wood. The contrasting scene involves the Princes' audience with Alvarado. When Quirijol informs Alvarado of their arrival, Alvarado invites the Princes in without conditions. At the start of their conversation Alvarado offers the Princes a seat, defers to their royal rank, and courteously inquires about the fate of Tekum. Alvarado is thus depicted as the epitome of civilized society, in contrast to the barbaric Tekum, who, during the battle, Alvarado referred to as an "animal." Another stark contrast appears in their religious convictions. Alvarado appeals to the Christian god for the success of his mission, whereas during the battle Tekum summons the furies of hell to fight on his side. Note also that despite their centrality to the drama and the fact that their duel is the turning point of the action, Tekum and Alvarado never speak to each other in the early style texts.

At the lower end of the ranks, the two *gracejos* function as foils. They share a servile status, but they operate in quite different worlds. Though added pantomime shows these two *gracejos* repeatedly harassing each other in performance, in the early style texts, these two characters are never brought into interaction and, like Tekum and Alvarado, never speak to each other. Subsidiary elements of their characters are distinct. Quirijol is randy and gluttonous, obsessively interested in sex, food and comfort. Ajitz is superstitious, equally obsessive in his desire to retreat to his mountain shrine and seek guidance from the gods. Both Quirijol and Ajitz act as foils in another way, revealing otherwise unknown aspects in their roles as intermediaries to the audience, able to discuss events that are in the future of the story at hand, but are in the past or present of the audience and are known to them. Thus Quirijol predicts that by marrying Indigenous women his soldiers will create a community of mixed-race children, and Ajitz predicts that the Spanish will continue to see Indigenous people as animals even if well educated.

In some situations, other pairs of characters act as foils for each other. In their first encounter during Part I, Rey K'iche's passive fatalism in reaction to the Spanish invasion is strongly contrasted with Tekum's determination to resist. Later, Rey K'iche's descent into panic in Part III, as Tzunun reports that Tekum has decided to go to war in resistance, is contrasted with Tekum's heroic statement in the monologue that begins Part IV. In this monologue, Tekum has foreseen his death in battle with the Spaniards who are protected by a supernatural dove, but chooses the heroic path of fighting to the death:

*Pués si he de morir riñendo,
Vamos luego acometiendo
Hasta morir o vencer.*

Well if I am to die fighting,
Then we continue attacking
Until death or victory.

Then later in Part IV, Rey K'iche' not only remembers that he advised Tekum to heed the message of his dream, but also narrates his own dream, one that also features a dove. But this dove identifies himself as the Holy Spirit and tells Rey K'iche' that the Spaniards are his instrument for bringing Christianity to the K'iche', and that he must accept baptism in order to avoid being damned. Rey K'iche's acceptance of this dream-delivered advice and of Christianity thus contrasts with Tekum's refusal to learn from his own dream.

A further example of character as foil would be the climactic relation between Tekum and Tzunun. At the point of Tekum's death, Tzunun becomes his foil, making the opposite choice for submission, a choice that will lead not to chaos and war but to a new order and peace.

Finally, in the ranks of both *Caciques* and Spaniards, the *gracejos* also function as foils for their respective leaders. *Gracejos* are characterized by excess, which renders them imprudent and immoderate, the opposite of their leaders' practicality and self-control. In the relationship between

Alvarado and Quirijol, underlined by their mutual use of the *décima*, Quirijol's excess is merely an amusing contrast to Alvarado's sober and one-dimensional exercise of authority. As their difference is incommensurate, and Quirijol's speeches have nothing to do with military strategy, Alvarado ignores them.

The relationship between Tekum and Ajitz partially parallels that between Alvarado and Quirijol. As Tekum's role is to mount a military resistance he likewise makes no comment on Ajitz's plans to attack or harass the Spaniards by other means. However, their relationship is complicated by Ajitz's attachment to Tekum as his priest-diviner—not a buffoon but a devoted servant with powers of foresight. Thus rather than ignore Ajitz's warning in scene 2 of Part I, Tekum responds to him directly, meeting Ajitz's fears with heroic determination. The viewer is reminded of this contrast again in scene 1 of Part IV, when Tekum himself has foreseen disaster and responds with defiance.

This thoroughness with which the *Conquista* author paired characters as foils represents another contrast with the *Moros y Cristianos* genre, and is facilitated in part by the *Conquista* author's reduction of elements by involving fewer primary and secondary characters and eliminating subplots like the defection of the non-Christian princess. With fewer characters and a simpler plot, the author was able to indulge in sharp character contrasts and thus powerfully draw moral lessons from the historical event.

5.6.4. Character arc

Finally, Voithofer (2003: 62) suggests thinking about characters in terms of the degree to which they change during the course of the narrative. This method of analysis provides an important key to the techniques and goals of the original author. As neither *gracejo* changes importantly, and Alvarado doesn't change at all, it is best to concentrate on the other two primary characters, Tekum and Rey K'iche'. By analyzing the changes they undergo, it will become clearer that the author used different dramatic conventions as a means to structure their transformations.

Tekum's character remains steadfastly heroic and courageous until Part IV. Thus when he is given an important choice to make in the interview with the Ambassadors in Part II, he does not hesitate in choosing to resist, believing his forces to be superior to Alvarado's invading army. Though the audience is aware, Tekum has not seen that the Spaniards have horses that will give them a formidable advantage. But this is only the first time Tekum is given a choice. The second time occurs in the dream monologue that begins Part IV. Tekum has foreseen that the Spaniards are protected by a greater supernatural power than his infernal dragons and therefore that he will die. Again he could choose to submit, but instead he chooses to fight unto victory or death. Tekum's third opportunity comes during the battle. As he sees his soldiers being slaughtered, he becomes indecisive and turns to Tzunun for advice or support. He could stop the slaughter instantly by submitting, as Tzunun will do later, but

again Tekum composes himself and decides to continue, summoning the furies of hell to replace his dead fighters. Shortly thereafter, Tekum is wounded and dies. Though Tekum has been given opportunities to change, and thereby displays complexity of thought and emotion, he refuses to change, pursuing the consequences of his first decision to the death. The model for this kind of character arc is the “heroic tragedy” brought to a high state of development in classic Greek theatre and undergoing a revival during the Renaissance.

To further understand the aspect of the *Conquista* that functions as a heroic tragedy and especially Tekum as the tragic hero, it is useful to compare this story to the Aristotle’s understanding of tragedy as expressed in his *Poetics* and Northrop Frye’s analysis of tragedy derived in part from that source (Frye 2006: 193–208). Among Aristotle’s six components of tragedy, the first two are significant here. One is the tragic hero’s *ethos* or character. The typical tragic hero is extremely highly placed in society, a position that leads him or her to *hubris* or over-weening pride and self-confidence that will make the ultimate fall all the more precipitous and tragic. Tekum, military commander and heir to the throne, of course fits this characterization, which is brought into sharpest relief in the *Conquista* scene in which Tekum interviews the Spanish ambassadors. Tekum believes he understands sufficiently the threat posed by the Spaniards and their Tlaxcalan allies, but his knowledge is insufficient, as he has not before encountered firearms, cannons, or horses in battle. Thus he is guilty of *hamartia*, an error in judgment that will bring unintended consequences resulting in his downfall.

Concerning the *mythos* or plot, characteristically the tragic hero undergoes *peripeteia*, the change in fortune that for Tekum occurs during the battle in which his troops are overwhelmed. Second comes the *anagnorisis*, the moment of realization that the wrong path has been chosen, which the hero may or may not understand but the audience does recognize. In the *Conquista*, this moment comes with Tekum’s death and Tzunun’s realization of his error in resisting the Spanish onslaught. A third stage is *catharsis*, when the tragic hero has died and society is able to reorder and rectify itself at the conclusion, represented in the *Conquista* by the concluding scene of K’iche’ and Spaniards uniting in friendship and *convivencia* (living together in harmony) as Christian subjects of the Spanish Empire.

Frye (2006: 195–96) further investigates the tragic hero and the source of his tragedy, noting two models. One attributes the hero’s tragic end to the force of fate, and the other to a fatal flaw in the hero’s character. These two combine neatly in the story of Tekum. Inexorable fate appears in the teleological recognition that the K’iche’ must be conquered and converted: this linear sequence is necessitated by Catholic dogma as much as by imperial expansion. Tekum’s response to Ajitz’s fears in scene 2 of Part I reveals his awareness that he is resisting such a fate.

The previous event that sets this fateful progression in motion (Frye 2006: 200) is the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Cortés’ sending of Alvarado to subdue the K’iche’. As explained in Rey K’iche’s final speech, the Spaniards are doing the work of God. Submission and conversion constitute a

tide of change governed by inexorable time, so that Tekum's resistance of such a supposedly beneficial change arises from a flaw in his character and results in an imbalance of nature. Since this change must indeed come and nature's balance must be restored, the tragic hero Tekum, as the force resistant to change, must be eliminated for society to progress, and indeed early audiences would likely recognize that his resistance had failed to affect their current circumstance. As Frye (2006: 199–200) notes, the audience is expected to be ambivalent at this outcome, knowing that the hero's sacrifice is essential but pitying his disastrous fall from the heights, and at the same time understanding the irony involved in the distinction between what was and what could have been if the hero had made a different choice. These reflections would be recognized as important to the audiences' own lives, and in the time during which the *Conquista* served as a theatre of conversion, the contrast between Tekum's tragic flaw and Rey K'iche's salvific recognition would have been a powerful inducement to accept baptism.

Using Frye, Monica Leoni (2000: 21–25) delves into relationships between comedy and tragedy. An example would be the tendency for comedy to treat characters as a social group and tragedy to focus on a single individual, with the result that the audience is more likely to identify with the hero of a tragedy than with the stock types presented in a comedy. This distinction may also be compared with Eric Bentley's differentiation between type and archetype (Leoni 2000: 21). In this scheme, comic figures are types because they typify minor aspects of character such as foibles and eccentricities, while tragic heroes are archetypes because they interrogate larger issues. For example, as a tragic hero, Tekum's story deals with resistance to change, complicated by the inability to recognize that the change is necessary and inevitable.

Frye (2006: 201–03) also discusses three characters who are ancillary to this tragedy, all of whom figure in the *Conquista*. One is a soothsayer or prophet who foresees the tragedy, in this case Ajitz whose fears Tekum disregards. A second is the "plain dealer" who is often the hero's faithful friend but who is put in a position of refusing the tragic choice. In the *Conquista*, Tzunun is positioned as such a faithful friend but actually is unable to see the problem and resist Tekum's choice until after Tekum's death, when he stops the war, ready to submit and convert. A third is the suppliant, the pathetic and helpless character whose pleas for aid are rejected by the tragic hero. This suppliant character type relates best to Rey K'iche', since if Tekum had made the choice to surrender when confronted by the Ambassadors, he would have spared Rey K'iche' an emotional collapse and would have avoided his own tragic death. The difference from Frye's description is that Rey K'iche' does not ask Tekum to submit to the Spaniards. I suggest that Rey K'iche' breaks from Frye's model because he fulfills a much more important role in the *Conquista*, which may be recognized when his own character arc is explored.

Rey K'iche's character arc is more varied in part because his emotions are laid bare: the only personage in the *Baile de la Conquista* to be treated in this way. Analysis of his transformations reveals Rey K'iche' to be the central focus of the original drama. His varied emotional responses both in monologues and

dialogues allow us to chart these changes in detail. Rey K'iche's first words reveal that he is sad, oppressed, and fearful. His plans to deal with the Spanish invasion vacillate. He ends his first monologue anticipating bitterness and torment. In his second monologue he quotes from Motecuhzoma's letter, ending despondent with anticipation that his rule, his treasures, and his joys have all ended. Later in Part I, as Rey K'iche' explains the situation to Tekum, he envisions a bloody death. Rey K'iche' has no lines in Part II, but when he encounters Tzunun in Part III it is clear that his attitude has continued to deteriorate. After confiding in Tzunun that he is overwhelmed with fear, that everything horrifies him, that his courage has vanished, Rey K'iche' recedes farther from rule, virtually abdicating as he says that Tekum should do whatever he likes since he will be king anyway. The Malinches sing to Rey K'iche' but he begs them to stop. His heart is breaking, he says, as he realizes that when he is dead and he cannot protect his daughters from Spanish ravages. Rey K'iche's moment of greatest crisis comes when Tekum's body is brought to him. In a short but heart-rending monologue, he mourns at the sight of the bloodied, cold body. He laments that Tekum did not believe in his dreams of disaster. Overcome, he begs Tzunun to quickly bury Tekum as he can no longer bear the sight of his dead son and heir.

This downward emotional spiral comes to an abrupt end and reversal when Tzunun returns from having buried Tekum. Suddenly Rey K'iche' is decisive and authoritative. He knows submission is the only possible choice and sends the young Princes to invite Alvarado and the Spaniards to Q'umarcaaj to make peace. In his final monologue he reveals more fully that he has become allied with Christianity, and by asking Alvarado for baptism, Rey K'iche' also acknowledges submission to Spanish authority. This transformation resolves the initial problematic of the play. Rey K'iche' has been transformed from an improper autonomous and non-Christian ruler, plagued with fear and doubt, to a proper Christian ruler and Spanish subject, sure of his mission and status. Furthermore, by turning from an alliance with Tekum that left him weak and useless as a ruler, to an alliance with Alvarado that restores his strength and authority, Rey K'iche' encapsulates the moral of the play.

Recognizing Rey K'iche's character arc as the core of the play suggests that to some extent Tekum and Alvarado function as manifestations of the poles of Rey K'iche's journey. But in undertaking this journey, Rey K'iche' also represents all K'iche' who must make the same transformation from autonomous pagan to Christian subject. In this regard, the model for Rey K'iche' and his transformation would be the medieval morality play, a format also explored in the early modern period by Shakespeare and other playwrights. Rey K'iche' then, is the "Everyman." As an "Everyman," Rey K'iche's religious and political alteration represents a large scale social transformation. His virtual mental breakdown is metonymic for the breakdown of his society so that it can be rebuilt in a new fashion. In this sense, the structure of the text for the *Baile de la Conquista*, like much religious theatre, also participates in the paradigm for ritually enacting social transformation systematized by Van Gennep and Turner as the Rite of Passage. Indeed Turner's analysis of the liminal stage, the middle of the three stages in this model, is apropos (Turner 1979). The liminal stage is associated with suspensions or inversions of the

normal social order, and thus with a chaotic environment. Rey K'iche's panic and temporary abdication certainly qualify for such a chaotic suspension of the social order, made more apparent as a literary device by his sudden recovery after Tekum's burial.

It therefore appears that the *Conquista* author relied on three standard types for the construction of the three main personages: Tekum as the hero of a tragedy inherited from ancient Greece; Rey K'iche' as the "everyman" of a medieval morality play; and Alvarado as the explorer of the newly minted imperial expansion narrative.

5.7. Chronological and Structural investigations of the *Conquista's* *gracejo* characters

The two elements of the *Conquista* text that most strongly signal a relationship with Spanish theatrical texts of the *siglo de oro* are the use and style of poetic form and the focus of comic relief on the characters known as *graciosos* in Spanish literature but as *gracejos* in Guatemala. On the one hand the character of Quirijol and Ajitz can be related to the well-documented evolution of the Spanish *gracioso*. On the other hand their function as foils for the leaders and each other may be treated in terms of more general theory on their place in the construction of a Spanish drama from this era. A major source for both approaches is Monica Leoni's 2000 analysis of the *siglo de oro gracioso* entitled *Outside, Inside, Aside*.

5.7.1. Relation to the evolution of the *gracioso*

The comic male figure was a staple of Spanish theatre from the mid-16th through the mid-17th centuries, evolving through a series of stages. In the middle of the 16th century, the dominant comic male type was the *pastor bobo*, a rustic figure associated with rural life who often became tangled in theological debates with friars or theologians, as in the works of Diego Sánchez de Badajoz (Cazal 1994). Later in the century, influence of the *zanni* characters like the Harlequin from the Spanish adaptation of the Commedia dell'arte tradition led to the development of the type known as *el simple* (Leoni 2000: 30–46). Unlike the *pastor bobo*, the *simple* is a servant. In the works of playwrights such as Lope de Rueda and Timoneda, the *simple* may display characteristics such as gluttony, laziness and cowardice and he often lacks interest in things that occupy his master. While he provides comic relief, the *simple* does not drive the action or resolve the play's problem (Diago 1994). The mature *gracioso* character is considered to have been introduced by Lope de Vega in a play dated 1593. Lope's *gracioso* is often a servant like the *simple*, but he tends to display all of the *simple* characteristics as a constellation. As a further change, Lope's *gracioso* contributes importantly to the plot, often acting on his own volition to pursue schemes he has originated, and he may speak directly to the audience (Leoni 2000: 3–10, 38, 53). By the mid-17th century, the *gracioso* takes on a more intelligent character and moves to the centre of the action as the dominant manipulator of the plot, as with Rojas Zorilla's 1638 play, *Entre Bobos Anda el Juego* (Leoni 2000: 16, 91).

The two *gracejos* in the *Baile de la Conquista* are firmly within this Spanish *siglo de oro* tradition, though categorizing them according to this evolutionary outline is not clear-cut. Quirijol's boasting and his preoccupation with food and women and Ajitz's cowardice as well as their mutual position as lower class, servant-like, fit both the Timoneda *simple* and the Lope *gracioso*. Also more typical of the *simple* is their lack of impact on the plot, as they do not act on their own decisions, and the fact that while they reference the audience's present they never address the audience with an aside.

Leoni (2000: 15) notes that Tirso de Molina continues this older *simple* type, in which this character does not alter the plot or become involved in the final resolution, into the early 17th century. Leoni (2000: 12–15, 64) also demonstrates that Tirso at times contrasted two *gracioso* characters within the same play, with one as a more intellectually sophisticated side-kick and the other as a fool whose function is solely to incite laughter. This contrast is at least partially applicable to the *Conquista*, in which Ajitz is a more sophisticated side-kick to Tekum, taking on the role of priest as well as servant, and thus taking on a more important role in the action in Part II, while Quirijol is a kind of servant to all the other Spaniards and with the briefest exception in his role as sentry (a mere 14 lines of dialogue), his only function is to deliver humorous speeches. Furthermore, Ajitz's fear of shitting his pants may be a reference to the Tirso de Molina play, *El Vergonzoso en Palacio*, dated 1605–1606. If the *Conquista* seems particularly related to the style of Tirso in its characterization of the two *gracejos*, it may suggest ripples of influence radiating from Tirso's brief appointment as a Mercederian missionary in the West Indies from 1615–1617.⁸

By comparison, the construction of the *gracejo* role in the *Conquista*, in its focus on lower class status and exaggerated sensuality, departs significantly from the *gracejo* roles in the *Moros y Cristianos* genre as seen in examples from Guatemala. In these, *gracejos* function primarily as servants and sidekicks and less as comic relief. Often they have a single speech of comic exaggeration—frequently this is their first utterance—and thereafter become less interesting, though with predictable boasting about their fighting valour and interest in food. Likewise they lack the cowardice and lust that characterize the *Conquista* *gracejos*. Also in contrast to the *Conquista*, the *gracejos* in the *Moros* genre contribute more importantly to the plot, especially as messengers and jailors. These differences may be due to the much older source for the *Moros* genre plays.

These comparisons of the *Conquista* *gracejos* and the Spanish *simple* and *gracioso* reinforce the suggestion that the *Baile de la Conquista* was written between 1570 and 1620. A few other elements of the text also relate to this half-century span. For example, the interest in Greco-Latin theatre (the tragic hero and the Aristotelian unity of time and action) along with a growing interest in historical themes, compares with the works of Juan de la Cueva (Thacker 2007: 16–17). Thacker (2007: 21) notes other applicable innovations in the 1570s and 1580s, including versification of the script becoming

⁸ Wikipedia article on Tirso de Molina: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tirso_de_Molina

standard, with association of particular verse forms with particular character-types or situations, and the breakdown of genre boundaries. The *Conquista* for example, involves characteristics of Spanish comedies and serious dramas including tragedies, religious plays and historical plays as defined by Thacker (2007: 146–48). The four part structure of the *Conquista* is also more in line with the late 16th than early 17th century works of Spanish theatre. On the other hand, the dream in which Rey K'iche' recognized his pagan religion as a delusion, according to Raúl Álvarez-Moreno⁹ corresponds to a 17th century theme in Spanish literature. He notes Calderón de la Barca's 1635 play *La Vida es Sueño* as an example. Also, near the end Don Quixote part II, published by Cervantes de Saavedra in 1615, the eponymous hero similarly realizes his delusion in a dream.

5.7.2. Hero and *Gracejo*; Tragedy and Comedy

To conclude this section on the *Conquista gracejos*, I apply literary interpretations assembled and insights made by Monica Leoni (2000) concerning the *gracioso* character in *siglo de oro* theatre and this character's relationships to other the more central figure, often the play's hero, categorized as a *galán* (gentleman).

Leoni (2000: 21–22) argues that *siglo de oro* playwrights constructed a generalized armature upon which the complexities of each particular *gracioso* character could be fleshed out. Basic to this armature is the function of eliciting laughter from the audience by amusing them with word and action. In this way *graciosos* make a direct appeal to the audience and they are able to function as a bridge between play and audience, actors and spectators, the restricted world of the play and the broader world outside (Leoni 2000: 19, 143–44). On the basis of this dual role of facing inside and outside, as Leoni demonstrates, the *gracioso* can also directly address the audience through asides. These asides may or may not be heard by the other characters on stage, but many asides relate the time and world of the play to the time and world of the audience and would thus be unintelligible to the other characters. As noted, the *Conquista gracejos* do not direct asides to the audience, but they do comment on the time and world of the audience. Thus in the *Conquista* Quirijol speaks repeatedly of the mestizaje that will be one of the major unforeseen effects of the Spanish invasion. Ajitz relates even more directly to a presumably K'iche' audience by noting that in the future (the present of the audience), even an educated Indigenous person will still be considered a subhuman animal by the Spaniards. In this way such asides also reinforce the audience's understanding that what they are witnessing is *performance* and thus designed not merely to be enjoyed but also to be interpreted (c.f. Leoni 2000: 99). Such speeches, and thus the function of the *gracejo/gracioso* as both inside and outside of the play, masked and unmasked, differentiate the *Conquista* from surviving texts of the *Moros y Cristianos* genre in Guatemala, wherein the *gracejo* follows a comic speech with the functions of a servant but does not relate their speech to the audience and their world.

⁹ Personal communication, 2009.

Leoni (2000: 64) argues that a general theory of the *gracioso* must also account for his subversion and suspension of “what should be”. She shows through reference to Bakhtin and his notion of the carnivalesque, that the *gracioso* embodies an inverted or liminal relation to normalcy. Leoni (2000: 47) also invokes Northrop Frye to argue generally that the *gracioso* takes the audience on a journey in which a carnivalesque disruption is followed by the comfort of reordering and renewal through which a new society is crystallized at the play’s conclusion. As noted, this carnivalesque disruption is analogous to the liminal stage of a rite of passage, and we have seen that disruption followed by reordering, renewal, and the crystallization of a new society certainly characterize the Conquista narrative, though it is more the responsibility of Rey K’iche’ to take the audience through this process.

Frye (Leoni 2000: 47) notes the tendency to include in this newly reordered society as many of the play’s characters as possible. Those characters who have blocked such a formation may be reconciled or converted to it or may be repudiated. Furthermore, Leoni (2000: 86) notes that the *gracioso* who represents the suspension of “what should be” becomes incidental to the conclusion in which such order is renewed. Among those more dramatically repudiated may be the *figurón* or *poseur* in later 17th century plays, or the hero of a tragedy. As discussed above, the tragic hero resists this transformation and must ultimately be eliminated for the reordering of society to occur (Leoni 2000: 22). By comparison, in the *Conquista*, Tekum has been eliminated by the conclusion and Ajitz does not speak in the final scene.

Leoni (13–14, 84) notes that the *gracioso* character’s traits of lust, hunger, and cowardice may all be directly related to the physical body. The *gracioso* seeks to pleasure his body with food and sex and the avoidance of pain that can result from fighting. These traits are characteristic of *gracejos* in the *Conquista* text, with the addition that Quirijol bragging about his good looks could be ascribed to the same material–body theme. More obvious still are Ajitz’s claims that he is pissing himself and afraid of shitting in his pants. As Leoni (2000: 64, 84) asserts, this reduces the *gracejo* body to the material and mechanical.

The *gracioso*’s exaggerated materiality calls into relationship its binary opposite, the higher status main character or *galán* who subjugates the desires of the flesh in order to reach higher goals. As Leoni (2000: 97) notes, a *galán/gracioso* relationship is formed in which each half of the binary serves to construct the other. While neither *gracioso* nor *galán* can represent a whole society, together the *galán/gracioso* complementarity comes closer to a societal configuration. This would also indicate that neither can exist without the other, at least within the structure of *siglo de oro* theatre. However, despite their dependent existence, within the dramatic structure it is clear that the binary is hierarchic: the *galán* is generally the more significant character with the *gracioso* as a useful foil. Furthermore, as Leoni (2000: 97) suggests, in socio–political terms the master’s employment of a servant constructs his higher social position of wealth and authority.

Leoni (2000: 6–7) notes that, for Aristotle, humour is more associated with the lower class and vulgarity, hence the construction of the comic figure as slave, servant, or rustic, while tragedy is more suited to the higher class, with the optimal tragic hero being at or striving for the pinnacle of power. This opposition of lower class comic figure as *gracejo* and high status personage as *galán* also characterizes the *Conquista*, particularly in the relationship of Ajitz as the servant of Tekum, who stands at the pinnacle of K'iche' society.

The two *galán/gracioso* relationships in the *Conquista* are treated differently. As a *gracejo*, the low status soldier Quirijol takes on the role of a comic servant but the servant–master relationship is somewhat ambiguous. While Quirijol's speeches appear to be addressed directly to Alvarado, and while he serves as Alvarado's sentry in Part IV, it is not Alvarado but Moreno who suggests that Quirijol follow behind with the baggage when the Spaniards leave for Q'umarcaaj. Lack of clarification of master–servant relationships in this case relates to Quirijol's limited function as comic relief.

In contrast, Ajitz is situated in direct relationship to Tekum, literally his lord and master. Their particular binary is carefully delineated in the *Conquista* text. No K'iche' other than Tekum ever addresses Ajitz. They form a close master/servant, *galán/gracejo* binary coloured by the opposition of a semi-comic figure with a tragic hero, the opposition of a *gracejo* whose sphere of influence is limited with a tragic hero whose decisions affect the entire society.

Another clear contrast concerns the bodily preoccupation of a *gracioso* with the tragic hero's typical lack of bodily concern. Leoni (2000: 83–84) discusses Henri Bergson's insight that human bodily functions lend themselves too easily to comic ridicule and parody, explicitly rendered in Ajitz's protestation that he is pissing himself in fear and might easily soil his pants. Therefore: "The hero in a tragedy does not eat or drink or warm himself. To sit down in the middle of a fine speech would imply that you remembered you had a body" (Bergson 1956: 95 as quoted in Leoni 2000: 84). The inverse of the *gracioso's* concern with the materiality of his own body, resulting at times in cowardice, would be the tragic hero's moral, spiritual, and intellectual concerns with larger social or political issues, again the contrast in scale of the comic type and the tragic archetype. Thus while Ajitz refuses to accompany Tzunun to Q'umarcaaj for fear they will be surprised by Spaniards, Tekum virtually discards his body in favour of the morality of courage and defense of his religion, king and nation. In scene 2 of Part I, Tekum responds to Ajitz's fears by claiming he has no fear of pain and death, and in Part IV he rushes into battle despite having learned from his prognosticatory dream that he will surely die therein.

Leoni (2000: 23) suggests that whereas audience members identify with the hero of a tragedy, they do not identify with the types presented in comedy. However, considering the *galán/gracejo* binary expressed in the *Conquista*, we might presume that audience identification with both types is possible and encouraged. Partly this is because neither represents a fully rounded personality. But in general the

choice between sensual gratification and moral restraint poses a constant battle, and specifically in the conditions of a Maya K'iche' audience in the early colonial period, the choice of ensuring safety for the body or making a resistant moral choice was quite real and immediate. Ajitz's interest in physical self-protection is caricatured and clearly not admirable, while Tekum's choice to ignore his own interests led to self destruction. The median solution to these unacceptable opposites is presented by Rey K'iche's "Everyman" in his dream narration, inspired by the Holy Spirit's caution to work in his own interest for the salvation not of his body but of his soul.

5.8. Dramatic Framework: Orientations

Voithofer's scheme for literary analysis may be pursued further by examining major aspects of the dramatic framework, including the characters and their situation as well as their orientation in space, time, and point of view. In this section I use Voithofer's categories not to interrogate the text itself but instead the relationship of the text to historical events and personages.

5.8.1. Characters

Conflict between Alvarado and Tekum is central to the dramatic structure of the *Baile de la Conquista*. Its presentation of a duel between Tekum and Alvarado is drawn from the *títulos* written in K'iche' in the Samalá Valley region in the mid-sixteenth century with the intention of justifying retention of lands, position and privileges by a *Cacique* or his descendants. Some of these *títulos* that treat this duel have not been located since they were seen by Guatemalan chronicler Fuentes y Guzmán (1969–72: III, 94) in the late 17th century. Two are available only in later Spanish translations: the *Título Nijaib' I* (1550s) and *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun*, (dated 1567). The original K'iche' version of a third has been located, but is in fragmentary condition. It is known as the *Título Coyoi*. Names of the other Spanish officers and K'iche' *Caciques* who are followers of Alvarado and Tekum are taken specifically from the *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun*, dated 1567, in which the same names appear and in the same order. In addition to these, the author has intentionally added non- or quasi-historical figures to the narrative.

First, the author added the *gracejos* to the lower ends of the two opposing groups, following the convention of the *Moros y Cristianos* genre dance-dramas that were current in the colonies of New Spain. As noted, Quirijol closely follows *siglo de oro* conventions for a *gracejo* character, involving lust and gluttony, while Ajitz displays the *gracejo*'s characteristic cowardice. However Ajitz also fulfills the more important purpose of representing K'iche' religion as a pagan product of the devil's work that would cease to exist as the people converted to Catholicism. Thus Ajitz is described as dancing like a goat and calling Lucifer his friend.

While Quirijol and Ajitz are complete inventions, the Rey K'iche' is a quasi-invention. The K'iche' of course shared with Europeans an institution of rulership but in the K'iche' system there were two kings,

considered as primary and secondary (the *Ajpop* and *Ajpop K'amja*). Historically we know the calendar names of the two kings Alvarado encountered and executed in Q'umarcaaj were 3 Deer (Oxib Kiej) and 9 Dog (Beleheb Tzi), respectively. These two lords are among the few in the K'iche' dynastic sequence in the Popol Vuh who are listed with their calendric names; unlike most of the preceding and succeeding *Ajpop* and *Ajpop K'amja*, their personal or royal names are not recorded. In the dance-drama, the single ruler is named Quicab (K'ik'ab), a name taken by many K'iche' rulers and especially associated with the ruler under whom the Samalá valley and its surroundings were wrested from Mam occupants in the 15th century. The pairs of unnamed Princes and Malinches (Princesses) who appear with Rey K'iche' are generic inventions useful for dramatic purposes (Barrientos 1941).

5.8.2. Time and Space

Historically, events dramatized in the *Baile de la Conquista* took place over a span of several days. Recalling Tekum to Q'umarcaaj took place not because a letter from Motecuhzoma had arrived, but because K'iche' soldiers escaping from the defeat at Xetulul would have raced into the highlands to inform the king, as noted in the *Título Nehaib' I* (Recinos 2001: 85–86). Four days after the battle in Xetulul the Spaniards met the K'iche' in the Samalá valley and Tekum was killed. Six days later the final defeat of the K'iche' army occurred in the flats of Urbina. It is not clear how many more days Alvarado spent in Quetzaltenango before accepting the invitation from the K'iche' kings and marching to Q'umarcaaj, but at least seven days are encompassed by these records.

A second layer of time concerns the *Conquista* script. One would expect a similar span of at least seven days in this context, considering that any round trip between Quetzaltenango and Q'umarcaaj would at least a full day each way, and there are three such round trips indicated (two undertaken by the Princes, a third for Tzunun's embassy) as well as Tzunun's one-way journey bringing Tekum's body to the capital. However, there is no indication in the script that a series of days are passing as there are no references to night time and many references to "today." The intent may be to conform to the Aristotelian emphasis on unity of time and action in drama, including a prescription that the events of the play should not exceed the span of a day (Thacker 2007: 27)

A third layer of time concerns the performance of the *Conquista*, which takes place in a single day, lasting an average of five hours. It may thus be suggested then that the lack of reference to the passage of the time in the script allows the performance of the *Conquista* to take on a greater degree of verisimilitude, since a performance is completed in one day.

A fourth layer of time that enters into the text concerns the time in which it was written, roughly fifty to a hundred years after the events portrayed. The impact of this time layer on the narrative is evident in two ways: 1) reinterpretation of historical events, to be discussed in the following section; and 2) *gracejo* comments on the early colonial context, including Quirijol's many discussions of inter-racial

marriage and children as well as Ajitz's comments deploring racial discrimination. Further layers of time following the origin of the *Conquista* and up to the present will be discussed in the sections on performance and on historical development of the dance.

The spatial configuration of events in the early style script is likewise generally logical and condensed. The journey of the Princes from Q'umarcaaj to Quetzaltenango to warn Tekum, his journey to Q'umarcaaj to confer with Rey K'iche' and then return to Quetzaltenango to oversee construction of barricades at entrances to the Samalá Valley are all consistent, as is the entrance of the Spanish to fight at El Pinar, their occupation of Quetzaltenango, and their journey to Q'umarcaaj at Rey K'iche's invitation. In contrast, two elements remain ambiguous. One is the burial place of Tekum, which has remained unknown to this day, though a legend has grown up that he was buried on Cerro El Baul, a foothill of Cero Quemado which overlooks Xelajuj Noj, the site of Quetzaltenango since 1529 (see below). The second is the place in which the Ambassadors encounter Princes and Malinches on the way to find Tekum in Quetzaltenango/Salcajá. The text does not specify exactly where this would have taken place. The text also does not clarify whether these are the same Princes and Malinches normally encountered at Q'umarcaaj, and if so what they are doing alone in the forest, far from their home, at a time of impending conflict.

Other considerations appear to have guided the author's pen in the construction of this scene of encounter, which is also an invention that does not advance the narrative in any way. One such consideration would appear to be his desire to construct this "first encounter" between K'iche' and Spaniard as a metaphor for a re-imagined first contact of European and Indigenous American, giving it a particularly positive cast by situating it in a bucolic forest setting. In this "tropical paradise," the contrasting reactions of the two groups could be highlighted, with the Spaniards charmed by the beauty of the Natives in appearance and voice, while the Princes and Malinches are repulsed, treating the Spaniards as the "snake in the garden of Eden." As will be discussed in a later section, Maya performers have assumed that the encounter took place in the royal court at Q'umarcaaj where the Princes and Malinches normally reside, and therefore that the Ambassadors' visit to the court, which defies the spatial logic of geography, represented a matter of protocol—calling on the ruler first before conferring with his heir.

5.8.3. Situation: Relation of the *Baile de la Conquista* Story to Historical Events

By the time the *Baile de la Conquista* was written, Spaniards and Indigenous people in Guatemala had rethought the nature and meaning of the events of February, 1524. The *Conquista* text gives evidence of some of that rethinking as well as other significant alterations of historical events for dramatic and moralizing purposes. In this section, some comparisons will be made between events as portrayed in the early style dance text and as suggested by other sources. These will be arranged topically rather than chronologically according to the sequence in the text.

Among the least common alterations involve historical narratives that are largely true but slightly inaccurate. An example is Tekum's description of Alvarado's forces and their preceding victories, in which he explains that Alvarado has conquered Chiapas with the aid of fighters from Tepeaca. Here the conquest of Chiapas also likely refers to the battle in Soconusco, the region on the Pacific coast overlapping the present boundaries of Chiapas state and Guatemala. As part of the campaign into Guatemala, Alvarado re-took Soconusco from the K'iche' whose continued military expansion brought them into direct conflict with the Spanish. Tepeaca is an important Nahuatl community near Cuauhtinchan, east of Cholula, in the present state of Puebla. While Alvarado may have had some Tepeacan soldiers among his forces, his primary Mexican contingent was composed of soldiers from Tlaxcala who owed loyalty to Alvarado because the Tlaxcalan king Xicotencatl had granted Alvarado his daughter, baptized Luisa Xicotencatl, as a wife, and she was in fact traveling with the invading expedition while pregnant with Alvarado's child.

Tekum's battle plan, articulated in the last scene of Part I, includes two features that are possible but cannot be verified. One is the assignment of Tzunun to defend Quetzaltenango. The second is to employ Mam forces in his army. The Samalá Valley region was occupied by Mam speakers before it was conquered by the K'iche', and some Mam communities survived in that region, as they do today. So it is possible that fighters from these communities were enlisted by Tekum for the resistance.

Of very different character is Tekum's refusal to grant the Ambassadors a seat, claiming they are too lowly to be seated in his presence. While this interchange appears designed to show the K'iche' as lacking in civilization, the author may also be reacting to customs he did not understand. It is evident from pre-Hispanic imagery of the lowland Maya that the seated position indicates highest authority, represented in many contexts by reference to the plaited mat on which one sits. For the K'iche' too, the seated position signaled authority: the title translated as king, *Ahpop*, means "He of the mat." So rather than evidence of uncivilized rudeness as the author understood such an act, in K'iche' views Tekum would have been adhering strictly to protocol.

A second topic concerns reversals of historical events in which actions carried out by the Spanish are instead presented as unfulfilled K'iche' plans. Two examples concern the final of three battles on the first day in which forces clashed in the Samalá Valley region, the day on which Tekum died. This third battle culminated in a massacre, probably at Olinstepeque, that included the death of Tekum. In the *Conquista* text, Tekum's battle plan involved using the Mam forces to help surround the invaders. This encircling never took place, and may not have been a K'iche' strategy, though it was a consistent Spanish strategy. The invaders chased the K'iche' army across the Samalá Valley and into the Olinstepeque hills. As hilly terrain was difficult for most efficient use of the cavalry, the Spanish forces pretended to retreat, drawing the K'iche' army back down into the valley floor where the cavalry surrounded them and they were massacred.

Similarly, Tekum's promise to Rey K'iche' that he will tinge the river reverses what had already become a distorted history. The river to which Tekum refers is the Xequiquel, a tributary of the Samalá, traversing the community now called Olinstepeque. Xequiquel (Xe Kik'el) means "Under Blood," a name that by the mid 16th century was understood to derive from the blood shed by the K'iche' in the massacre perpetrated there. This explanation appears for example in the most extensive of the Izkin Nahaib' *títulos* concerning a leading family of Momostenango (Recinos 2001: 91). So the reversal involves changing the local understanding of K'iche' blood tinting the river to Tekum's plan to tinge it with Spanish blood.

Either way, it turns out that the name Xe Kik'el preceded the 1524 battle. As Akkeren (2007: 32) shows, the term 'blood' in this name likely refers to the red colour of the hills overlooking Olinstepeque, so that "Under Blood" became the name of the community at the base of the hills. Xe Kik'el was thus the K'iche' name for the community that was renamed Olinstepeque by Nahua speakers, likely Tlaxcalans. But in rethinking the history of the Spanish conquest, the name Under Blood came to be associated with the massacre of K'iche' that occurred there, and was tied to the river traversing it.

Another reversal concerns Ajitz's plan to contaminate the Spanish with smallpox using the *nixtamal* dough for making tortillas. This is an ironic reversal of the fact that when Alvarado's invasion reached what is now Guatemala, European diseases of smallpox and measles traveling ahead of the army had already devastated the Indigenous population (Akkeren 2007: 41).

All three examples share the same strategy: the K'iche's actual suffering from small pox, from cavalry that easily encircled their troops, and from a massacre at Xequikel, are instead presented as ways in which the K'iche' attempted to harm the Spaniards, turning the blame on the victims. Alvarado himself followed a similar strategy, excusing his burning of the K'iche' kings and their capital by saying they were planning to burn the Spaniards by trapping them in Q'umarcaaj and setting it on fire. This accusation will be considered in more detail in the following section.

A third category concerns historical events that had become condensed or conflated and thereby simplified by the time of writing the *Conquista*. One obvious example is the conflation of dual K'iche' rulership into a single king on the European model and applying to him the name of an illustrious predecessor: K'ik'ab'. Also simplified is the notion that Motecuhzoma wrote Rey K'iche' a letter with his "own pen," which would refer to a European style letter rather the combination of largely pictographic writing and a messenger's verbal explanation that would have characterized an Aztec communication.

Another instance of this condensation process concerns this letter Rey K'iche' has received from Motecuhzoma. Motecuhzoma died in 1520, so he could not have sent Rey K'iche' a letter in 1524, though certainly news of events in central Mexico and the invasion force of Alvarado would have

reached Rey K'iche' by other means. On the other hand, *Título Nijaib' I* claims that in 1512 Motecuhzoma sent a messenger to Q'umarcaaj advising of the Spanish conquests (Recinos 2001: 84–85). This date is as inaccurate as the first and also may represent a condensation, combining early sightings of Spanish explorers in Mesoamerica in 1517 and 1518 with Cortés' campaign of conquest that began 1519.

Rey K'iche's response to the letter is to arrange an ambush of the Spanish while they are camped for three months at Palajunoj, the entrance from the Samalá River Canyon along the Cuesta de Santa María into the Samalá Valley region. This is the route Alvarado took, and Palajunoj was the scene of his first encounter with Tekum's army, but there was no encampment. Instead Alvarado broke through the K'iche' lines at Palajunoj, met a larger K'iche' force at El Pinal, and massacred the army at Xe Kik'el/Olintepeque, all on the day he arrived in the valley.

The invasionary force camped that night but on the next day occupied Salcajá, which they knew by the Nahuatl name, Quetzaltenango. This community had been the site of Tekum's headquarters and was deserted after the massacre. After the battle of Urbina three days later, Alvarado and most of his forces went on to Q'umarcaaj, leaving León y Cardona and a military contingent to control Salcajá/Quetzaltenango, when then became his encomienda. This took place in February, 1524. However, in 1529, most of the Spanish community of Quetzaltenango was moved to the location of another K'iche' community: Xe Lajuj Noj, now abbreviated as Xelajuj or Xela.¹⁰ This name refers to a community "under Lajuj Noj," the volcanic peak now called Cerro Quemado. The new foundation took place on May 15 of that year, which was the Pentecost, the feast of Expiritu Santo (Holy Spirit), for which reason the patron of Quetzaltenango became the Holy Spirit. Not long after these events of conquest and relocation, they became compressed in historical memory, so that Alvarado's arrival in February and the foundation of a new Quetzaltenango at Xelajuj in May were assumed to have taken place in the same year rather than five years apart, which would mean that Alvarado had camped from February to May before making his attack. This conflation also explains why the author refers to the location of Tekum's palace-headquarters variably as Xelaju or Quetzaltenango.

In Alvarado's first speech he also appears to conflate the current situation with events that came later, as well as, perhaps, other sources, when he remarks on the deceit of the Mam and Kaqchikel who use false fortifications. This reference is unclear. As recounted both in the *título* of Totonicapán and in the *Popol Vuh*, for an early battle between K'iche' and enemy nations, effigies are placed on the fortification walls to fool the enemy into thinking they are soldiers:

Then Balam Quitze, Balam Acab, Mahucutah, and Iqui Balam considered. They made a palisade around the edge of their citadel. They placed wooden planks and pointed stakes about their

¹⁰ Francisco Vásquez, who visited Salcajá (then Sakaja, Tzakaja, or Tzalkaja) in 1690 and interviewed descendants of León y Cardona, may have been the first to clarify this misunderstanding (1937: 18–20)

citadel. Then they made effigies that looked just like people. They arranged these on top of the palisade, arming them with shields and with arrows. They placed headdresses with precious metal on their heads. They adorned these effigies of mere carved wood with the precious metal of the nations that they had taken on the road. With these they encircled the citadel (Christenson 234–35).

It is likely that this story was not limited to the *Popol Vuh* but was widely known and picked up by the author of the original *Baile de la Conquista* text.

On the other hand, in 1524, the Kaqchikel were the Spaniards' allies, though they did not fight for the Spaniards until after the burning of Q'umarcaaj and its kings. Mention of the Kaqchikel as enemies instead recalls the battles two to three years later in which Pedro de Alvarado's brother Jorge led an invasion force against the rebellious K'iche' and Kaqchikel. One strategy that Maya groups used in defending themselves during this campaign, as graphically represented in the Lienzo of Quauhquechollan (Akkeren 2007), consisted of traps in pathways fixed with fire sharpened wood stakes and disguised with plants. Any horse that fell in would be killed or too severely wounded to continue. This strategy again shows that the Maya recognized the horse as the Spaniards' most formidable weapon, in contrast to the racist "myth" that Tekum was too ignorant to distinguish horse from rider.

As noted, Alvarado's defeat of the K'iche' involved three battles on the day of his entrance into the Samalá River Valley and a fourth battle at Urbina six days later. However in the *Conquista* all four are condensed into a single battle identified with the site of the second battle on the first day: the flats of El Pinal.

The most conspicuous, dramatic, and meaningful condensation of historical events concerns the duel between Alvarado and Tekum that in the *Baile de la Conquista* is constructed as ending the conflict between K'iche' and Spaniard. Alvarado's letter to Cortés argues strongly against such a duel. Alvarado records but takes no credit for the death of Tekum (who he identifies by rank rather than name) and he does not report the death of his horse, writing only that on this day some Spaniards and some horses were wounded (Restall and Asselbergs 2007: 31). Also, the K'iche' attacked again, six days after Tekum was killed, resulting in the decisive Spanish victory and massacre at Urbina.

In the *título* accounts, the K'iche' inability to defeat the Spaniards is partially credited to the differential power of their supernatural protectors and counterparts. In the longest of the *Título Nihai*' I, even before Tekum encounters Alvarado, other K'iche' military leaders lead forces in an attempt to subdue the invaders. The leader of Ah Xepach attacks in the form of his eagle *nawal* and later Izkin Nehaib attacks in the form of his lightning *nawal*. But each time the Spaniards are protected by the Virgin Mary surrounded by cherubim or seraphim and the Holy Spirit, the three beings described in the text as a

fair-skinned child, footless birds and a white dove. This apparition in both cases blinds the K'iche' fighters and makes them fall to the ground (Recinos 2001: 87–88). John Early (2006: 197–98) notes that images of the Virgin Mary with cherubs and Holy Spirit is consistent with imagery on banners carried into battle by the Spaniards in the Americas. He does not mention that Alvarado's invading army carried such a banner, known as "La Conquistadora" because of the Spaniards' victory over the K'iche'. This banner remained in Salcajá and was enshrined in the chapel built shortly after the conquest when the area had become the *encomienda* of Juan de León y Cardona. Vásquez (1937: 20–21) saw the banner, referred to as a *lienzo* (cotton cloth), which was the centre of a triptych, flanked by Saint John the Baptist and Saint Isabel. Cabezas Carcache (2012: 33) claims that the invaders also brought an image of the Virgen de la Merced.

With this establishment of the Virgin Mary and Holy Spirit as supernatural protectors of Alvarado and his forces, the duel between Alvarado and Tekum can be configured in the *títulos* as a contest between supernaturals. Tekum took flight as his *nawal*, an eagle, likely a description of a headdress involving an eagle crest embellished with quetzal feathers. In the *títulos* as in the dances, the defeat in such a duel signals the futility of further resistance, whether military or spiritual. Thus in the *Baile de la Conquista* as in the *títulos*, Tekum's defeat leads immediately to K'iche' submission.

The narration of such a duel in the *títulos* likely arises in from literary and theatrical precedent. The European literature of chivalry popularized this notion of an often-decisive duel, a battle of champions (Kellett 2008). A duel between champions encapsulating and resolving the dramatic opposition of Christian and non-Christian is also essential to the various iterations of the *Moros y Cristianos* genre, along with the understanding that one wins or loses according to the spiritual strength and rightness of one's supernatural protector. In pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica also, conquests were frequently represented as a relation between a single conqueror and defeated enemy. For example, in stone reliefs, lowland Classic Maya rulers celebrated conquests by having themselves depicted capturing a single important enemy. Aztec stones for gladiatorial combat such as the Stone of Tizoc show conquest in terms of the patron deity or supernatural protector of Tenochtitlan capturing the patron deity of the defeated city.¹¹ Thus it is likely that the depiction of a duel in the K'iche' *títulos* draws on the overlap between Mesoamerican traditions and the chivalric conceit performed in the *Moros y Cristianos* dances that were introduced to New Spain soon after the Aztec defeat.

The 16th century K'iche' *títulos* are also the source for the notion in the *Baile de la Conquista* that during the duel Tekum rose into the air three times in the form of his eagle *nawal*. In both *títulos* and *Conquista*, Tekum decapitates Alvarado's horse on the second flight and in the *Título Nihaib' I* he is

¹¹ Of a slightly different character, the 16th century Lienzo de Tlaxcala represents Spanish conquests, including Alvarado's conquest of Quetzaltenango, as an opposition between a mounted Spaniard with his lance and a fallen Indigenous opponent. This configuration instead recalls the widespread image of Santiago Matamoros (Santiago the slayer of Moors).

dismayed that Alvarado is not thereby defeated. So Tekum takes flight a third time and is pierced by Alvarado's lance. Though not clearly expressed in the surviving *títulos*, the story was apparently current at the time the *Conquista* was being written, that it was Alvarado's spearing of Tekum's *nawal* that causes Tekum himself to fall dead, which is why in the *Conquista* text, Tzunun is mystified that Tekum has fallen without his body having been touched by the enemy.

The *título* account of Tekum decapitating Alvarado's horse is referred to in the *Conquista* text when Alvarado claims that this "ferocious animal" has robbed him of his horse. Instead of asking to use Portocarrero's horse, Alvarado metonymically asks to borrow his lance, the weapon used when mounted, thus conflating the weapon and mount as a unit. As noted in chapter 1, in the 20th century, and perhaps well before, this image of Tekum attacking Alvarado's horse rather than Alvarado himself has been interpreted in racist terms as meaning that he must have thought horse and rider were a single beast.

In addition, I suspect the possibility that there might be text entirely missing at this point involving Alvarado being wounded in the single combat that killed his horse. Today, in several communities, this point in the performance involves demonstration that Alvarado has been seriously wounded in the leg—a wound from which he recovers sufficiently to subsequently defeat Tekum as the duel continues. While a pantomime developed for performance could easily and quickly spread, and thus does not in itself argue for textual support, this example has particular historic resonance, relating to the conflation of two events of the conquest period that might have soon lacked relevance without textual support. In the first, Alvarado continued his conquests in what is now southern Guatemala during 1524, reaching as far as Cuzcatlan (now San Salvador). During the push towards Cuzcatlan, Alvarado was seriously wounded by an arrow in his leg which caused him to limp for the rest of his life (Restall and Asselbergs 2007: 41–42). In the second, in 1541, Alvarado was killed in the battlefield in what is now western Mexico when the horse of one of his soldiers fell on top of him or trampled him.

These confluences, along with the adaptation of the duel from the *títulos* and *Moros y Cristianos* dances, serve to simplify the historic events of the conquest of Guatemala in order to draw a moral message from them, while at the same time giving the narrative a knife-sharp emotional and didactic impact that communicates that message more directly and powerfully. In the *títulos* the duel served to promote and remember Tekum as an almost superhuman defender of the K'iche', appropriate to his position as heir to the throne, after whose death defeat became inescapable. Thus in the *títulos* as in the *Conquista*, the battle of Urbina six days later is not mentioned. However, in the text for the *Baile de la Conquista* the duel also serves as a dramatic climax in the trajectory of a tragic hero, defeated by his own willful blindness. At the same time, it condenses the Spanish conquest into a single event that proved to be so powerful that since the 1870s it has come to represent the whole process of conquering Guatemala, understood for political reasons not only as subjecting Indigenous peoples to Spanish rule but also as bringing civilization and progress to a backward land. Thus in Guatemala's

national palace, built under President Jorge Ubico in 1939–43, the largest murals that form a pair over the grand staircase, show on one side the duel between Alvarado and Tekum and on the other side the post-conquest history of Guatemala's "progress" (see Chapter 20).

The moral message that could be drawn from this history was designed to further the missionary goals of evangelization. As an example of the theatre of evangelization, virtually the entire *Conquista* text can be understood as an idealized and paradigmatic construction of the Spanish conquest as a mission of Christianization. Though historical figures like Alvarado and Tekum dominate the action and relate it specifically to Alvarado's defeat of the K'iche' army, the text provides few details that individualize either *leader*. For example, it is never explicitly stated in the early style texts that Tekum is the eldest son of the ruler, but only that he is the heir. Instead, the actions of Alvarado and Tekum are generalized as the collision of Spanish invasion wherein the 'irresistible force' and Indigenous resistance as the 'immovable object.' This generalization explains many of the simplifications and condensations, including representing a single battle or a single K'iche' king. The resulting paradigm of conquest also explains how the *Baile de la Conquista* could become prominent outside the K'iche' region in which the events took place, and likewise how the liberal government that took over Guatemala in 1871 could begin the process of transforming Tekum into a national patriot, an heroic defender of his fatherland.

5.9. Viewpoint and Intention: Historical Engagement in the *Baile de la Conquista*

The author, most likely a Franciscan friar stationed in the Quetzaltenango region, expresses his institutional viewpoint most clearly through the text he wrote for Alvarado. Like friars in the early stages of missionization, Alvarado claims that his primary goal is to convert the population. While Alvarado's historically documented treatment of the K'iche' and Kaqchikel kings demonstrates that he was more concerned with material than spiritual goals, in the *Conquista* text, the word "gold" is never mentioned by Alvarado. Only Tekum refers to "fine metals" when he speaks of his idols. For the Alvarado of the *Baile de la Conquista*, war is a last resort if the K'iche' refuse the terms of surrender. When Alvarado is successful, he baptizes the new converts to Catholicism and Spanish rule. This characterization fits Franciscan policies, and thus the situation and experience of the author, better than it does the historical Alvarado's acts and intentions. This non-historical version of Alvarado in the text becomes the author's mouthpiece, directing the *Conquista* text also to serve his various goals.

The most obvious of the author's agendas concerns evangelization. This goal is dramatized by the last lines of the text, in which Alvarado agrees to let Rey K'iche' and the *Caciques* be baptized and become imperial subjects as they had requested:

Rey K'iche'

Rey K'iche'

*Te suplico me bautices
Pues ya quiero ser cristiano.
Y servir a vuestro dios
A cumplir con sus mandatos.
Y que disponga tu Rey
De estos sus nuevos vasallos.*

I beg you to baptize me
Because I want to be a Christian
And to serve your God
To fulfill his mandates.
And let your king do what he will
With these his new vassals.

Todos los Indios

All the Indians

*Nosotros pedimos lo mismo
Señor don Pedro Alvarado
Y que nos pongáis por nombre
Del santo que hoy celebramos*

We ask the same
Sir don Pedro Alvarado,
And that you give us the name
Of the saint we celebrate today.

Alvarado

Alvarado

*Ven a mi pecho bien rey
Te estrecharé hoy en mis brazos
Y vamos para la Iglesia
Con todos vuestros vasallos
Donde juraréis al Rey
Para que seáis bautizados.*

Come to my breast good king,
I will today press you in my arms.
And lets go to the church
With all of your vassals,
Where you will swear loyalty to the king
So that you may be baptized.

Of course, having just arrived at Q'umarcaaj, there cannot possibly be a church for the K'iche' to take part in these acts and they are not celebrating a saint's day fiesta. Mention of the saint's celebration and the church as the place of baptism refers to the performance situation. As with the famous *Siege of Jerusalem* spectacle performed in 1539 in Tlaxcala, this kind of theatre of evangelization is designed to encourage audience members to undergo the ritual as the drama concludes. The author may also have been drawing on previous evangelizing experience in Guatemala (Remesal 1620 :135–38; Ximenez 1929: 190–96; Van Oss 1986: 16), in which members of society's lower ranks follow the example of *caciques* in conversion. The author may thus have been correct in presuming that the dramatization of the Rey K'iche' and *Caciques* marching off to the church for baptism would encourage audience members to do the same. Aracil Varón (1999: 555) points out that this kind of evangelizing dance drama would at the same time have been designed to instill Indigenous religious and political obedience to the Spanish Empire, a task that would justify continued presentation of the *Baile de la Conquista* even after conversion of audience members. Her argument also suggests that the lines quoted above in which the K'iche' people are identified as the empire's new vassals express the

Franciscan millenarian ideal under which Indigenous Americans, once converted and loyal to the empire, could be considered free vassals, with the same rights as Spanish people.

An earlier chapter treated Aracil Varón's enumeration of the goals of evangelizing theatre. These may now be recalled to identify the ways in which the early style script for the *Baile de la Conquista* conforms to such goals. Already noted was the emphasis in the final lines on the linked submission to the Spanish crown and conversion to Christianity, as well dramatizing the expectation that when a ruler converts, so will his subjects. Other elements noted by Aracil Varón are also evident. For example, the threat of hell for non-conversion is explicitly stated in Rey K'iche's final monologue as inspired by the Holy Spirit:

Mirad, Quecab, lo que haceis,	Look at what you do, K'ik'ab,
Pues si no sois bautizado,	Since if you are not baptized,
No tendras parte en mi reino,	You will have no place in my kingdom,
Y así serás condenado.	And thus you will be damned.

Presenting the process of conversion as a movement from darkness into light is an aspect that does not appear explicitly in the text but may have been realized in performance. In contemporary performance, this process is demonstrated by mask colour. The dark masks of the *Caciques* contrast with the light masks of the Spaniards. Rey K'iche' and his young princes, who through conversion move from the darkness of paganism to the light of Christianity, wear light masks like those of the Spaniards. The evidence that this performance strategy may have already been developed in the 16th century comes from the *lienzo* of Quauhquechollan. In this 16th century painting of Jorge de Alvarado's 1526 reconquest of Guatemala, the converted Christian Quauhquechollans are painted with white skin, while the unconverted Maya resistors are painted with brown skin. Light versus dark skin color thus clearly differentiates converted from unconverted.

Aracil Varón also notes the practice of depicting non-Christian religion as a delusion instigated by the devil, a topic that is abundantly clear in the *Conquista* through the person of Ajitz who frequently refers to Lucifer as his friend, mentor and guide. That Ajitz is not condemned to hell for such affiliation is likely due to his conversion along with the other K'iche'

Also evident is the attempt to portray Indigenous gods and icons as inferior to Christian deities and icons. This point is made through satirical inversion, when during his interview with the Ambassadors, Tekum argues that his gods are better because they are made of fine metals rather than wood. On the other hand, depicting victory in battle as due to the assistance of the stronger Christian divinities is not stressed in the *Baile de la Conquista*, due to the focus on moral choice rather than supernatural aid. In contrast, it is abundantly present in the description of Tekum's duel with Alvarado in the 16th century

títulos, where the *nawals* of K'iche' leaders are no match for the Virgin Mary, Holy Spirit, and angels. This includes the *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun* on which the *Baile de la Conquista* is based.

Finally, as Aracíl Varón notes, the Catholic practice of campaigns to extirpate idolatry led to suppression of episodes that could remind audience of non-Christian rites and other practices. In the early style *Conquista* texts, there is likewise a suppression of problematic rituals. This will change in the late 19th century, when human sacrifice is directly mentioned.

Using a Tlaxcalan *auto* of Adam and Eve as described by Motolinía, Diana Taylor pursues a different approach to the potential messages carried by evangelizing dance dramas. She argues that the new world presented in such a play would carry several simultaneous messages advantageous to colonization, including: justifying Indigenous loss and displacement by legitimating appropriation of Indigenous land; making the familiar seem foreign and the foreign seem familiar; rendering Indigenous peoples as strangers in their own land, positionally marginal rather than central; and transforming the Indigenous majority into a political minority (Taylor 1991: 94–95). Of course, not all audience members would understand these messages, and of those that did, not all would accept them as proper or inevitable. Indigenous peoples attempted to both use and resist Spanish authority depending on what would turn each situation to their best advantage.

Other more limited agendas of the Franciscan author of the *Baile de la Conquista* relate to the current political situation in Guatemala and pertain to rehabilitating the reputation of Pedro de Alvarado. This need for rehabilitation arises from the attack on Alvarado by Bartolomé de las Casas, the Dominican friar who was the great defender of Indigenous rights in the 16th century. Las Casas did not agree that conversion of the Indigenous population was a sufficient justification for conquest. He argued that obtaining conversions through peaceful preaching and persuasion was not only morally right but also more effective in the long term. Further, he not only criticized Alvarado for the brutality of his methods but also for what he considered a disingenuous rationale of bringing Christianity to pagans, when his actual goal was self enrichment through the quest for gold. In attacking the man he considered to represent the greatest immorality and violence of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, Las Casas was accusing the whole enterprise as a pursuit of material rather than spiritual goals.

In 1537, taking advantage of Alvarado's absence from Guatemala, Las Casas was able to put his views concerning a peaceful spiritual conquest into practice. He obtained permission both from the government of Alonso de Maldonado, head of the *audiencia*, and the Bishop Francisco Marroquin to bring Dominican friars into an area that could not be subdued. For the five years they were granted for this project, the military and settlers left this region, referred to as the Land of War, and when the Dominicans proved successful, the region was appropriately renamed Verapaz, the True Peace. Las Casas himself left the region before the contract was up, returning to Spain in 1540 and dedicating himself to writing the *Brevísima Relación*, in which he launched his scathing attack on Alvarado, Cortés

and the enterprise of military conquest. He persuasively presented this manuscript to the Spanish court in 1542, the year after Alvarado's death, and published it in 1552.

Las Casas' condemnation of Alvarado reverberated throughout Guatemala. The missionary project in this region was marked by intense, heated rivalry between Dominicans and Franciscans. The two orders would likely take opposite sides on any issue. And so, whereas Dominicans praised Las Casas for his peaceful conversion of the Verapaz while excoriating Alvarado, Franciscans praised Alvarado for bringing Guatemala under crown and church. Within the *Conquista* text it is possible to recognize two topics that the Franciscan author takes on to rehabilitate Alvarado's reputation and that are recognized by their purposeful deviation from the history Alvarado himself recorded in his April, 1524 letter to Cortés.

One topic concerns the legality of Alvarado's invasion and conquest of the K'iche'. The *Conquista* author counters Las Casas' accusation that the conquest is illegal by structuring the second part of his text around the delivery and refusal of terms of surrender: that the K'iche' submit to Spanish authority and convert to Christianity or face warfare, appropriation of property, and enslavement of survivors.

Both the concept and the content of Alvarado's terms represent a dramatization of the *Requerimiento*, the legal document in force from 1513–1556 and designed to be read to Indigenous populations at first contact. As explained by Early (2006: 90), the *Requerimiento* arose from a challenge to the crown made by Dominican friars concerning justification for mistreatment of natives in Hispaniola and Cuba. The crown chose jurist Juan López Palacios Rubios in 1512 to formulate a legitimation of its presence and actions in the Americas. The *Requerimiento* begins with an explanation of how the authority of God came to be vested in Spanish monarchs by way of Saint Peter and subsequent popes. The *Requerimiento* further explains how Pope Alexander VI had granted sovereignty of the New World to the Spanish kings, who thereby acquire ultimate spiritual and material authority over Amerindians. The *Requerimiento* insists that Indigenous peoples recognize the ultimate authority of the church, the pope, and the Spanish monarchs, and that they permit friars to live with them and teach and preach to them. Rewards for compliance, addressed to male family heads, include ability to retain their wives and children and their lands. While submitting to the authority of church, pope, and king, they will not be forced to become Christian but may do so, in return for which the crown will bestow privileges, exemptions, and other favours. Punishment for refusal to accept Spanish and church authority will involve war with enslavement of survivors and confiscation of all possessions (Early 2006: 102–03). Though the *Requerimiento* does not require baptism as a condition of surrender, this act of conversion came to be seen as equally necessary through the missionary enterprise.

Alvarado's instructions to his Ambassadors follow the argument of the *Requerimiento* with a few adjustments. As with the *Requerimiento*, Alvarado begins by explaining the transmission of authority, and concludes with the contrast of rewards for compliance with punishment for refusal, the latter

specified as war and loss of possessions. Some differences from the *Requerimiento* are noteworthy. First, the transmission of authority is not explained as a movement from pope to king, but rather from Cortés to Alvarado, thus making Alvarado the representative of highest authority by virtue of conquests in new lands. Second, Alvarado adds a brief explanation of Christian religion as belief in a single God who is the crucified Christ. These points are derived from the *doctrina*, the condensation of Christian theology and practice developed for the purpose of instructing Indigenous Americans, and including prayers, sacraments, and articles of faith concerning God and Christ. They are stated both in the creed, one of the six prayers that are to be learned by Amerindians under Spanish rule, and in the fourteen articles of faith (Early 2006: 124–30). And third, Alvarado specifically requires baptism as the means of submitting to the authority of king and church. When Carrillo and Cardona deliver Alvarado's terms of surrender to Tekum, they add the necessity of submission to the Spanish king and further that Tekum must reject their gods and attendant idolatry, the latter point derived from the *doctrina* as well (Early 2006: 147–48). Although the terms of surrender are thus combined with doctrinal issues, the context in which they are presented, allowing Tekum a choice between acceptance and refusal, are specifically those of the *Requerimiento* as it was understood by the late 16th century.

These various points related to the *Requerimiento* and the *doctrina* are emphasized by repetition to the point that they dominate Part II of the *Conquista* text. The terms of surrender are explained when Alvarado instructs the Ambassadors, and when they present these terms to Tekum. Tekum's refusal to give up his gods and idols or to submit to the Spanish king are then repeated when the Ambassadors relay his response to Alvarado. Such repetition is likely designed to impress upon audience members both central tenets of Christian dogma and the need to comply with Spanish insistence that they become baptized subjects of the crown. In Rey K'iche's monologue concerning his dream that he delivers in the last scene, as the climax to his character arc, he presents a more spiritual side of the same process. Narrating the discourse of the Holy Spirit, Rey K'iche' presents the articles of faith in one true God and Christ's sacrifice to redeem human sin. He further explains that the Spaniards are God's chosen instruments for Amerindian conversion and that K'iche' must abandon their gods and idols. The Holy Spirit then presents a spiritual version of the *Requerimiento* involving a choice that Rey K'iche' must make, analogous to the choice Alvarado presented to Tekum. In this spiritual version, reward for baptism is not the ability to keep one's wife, children, lands, and status but the invitation to spend eternity in heaven, while punishment for refusal is not war, despoilment and enslavement but eternal damnation.

Alvarado did not, and legally was not required to, offer the terms of the *Requerimiento* to the K'iche' in the Samalá Valley. In his letter to Cortés, he claimed to have fulfilled the duties of the *Requerimiento* before attacking Xetulul (Zapotitlan), a city that had recently become a K'iche' outpost in their push toward the coast (Restall and Asselbergs 2007: 27–28). Even this offer of surrender may not have been necessary, because in the Spanish view the K'iche' were rebels who had gone back on their previous alliance with Cortés by attempting to seize Spanish-held territory in the coastal Soconusco region. It is

not clear whether the author of the *Conquista* text was aware of Alvarado's statements concerning the *Requerimiento* at Xetulul before heading up the Samalá River canyon, since Alvarado's letter had been published much earlier (1525), and thus the author placed the delivery of the *Requerimiento* in the Samalá Valley for the purpose of dramatic unity, or whether he was unaware and focused on Tekum's refusal of submission to present spiritual and legal justifications for the Spanish conquest of the K'iche' nation.

A second topic concerns Alvarado's treatment of the K'iche' rulers and populace at Q'umarcaaj. Historically, Alvarado was ceremonially welcomed into the K'iche' capital city but when he saw the narrow streets, he decided to camp outside. He then imprisoned the two K'iche' kings. He tortured them in order to stimulate their subjects to bring more gold, and when the quantity was insufficient he burned them alive. Resulting unrest among the population led him then to burn the city and summon help from his Kaqchikel allies to search the forest and round up those who had escaped in order to brand them as slaves. When Alvarado was tried in 1529 on several charges including his vicious treatment of the K'iche' kings, he claimed that he had been warned that the K'iche' were planning to trap him and his force in the city and burn it down, in order to kill the Spanish forces. This defense should ring hollow because he had used exactly the same excuse in his dealings with the lord of Tututepec in Oaxaca, as he revealed in a letter to Cortés, and that Cortés reported in his third letter to Carlos V (Cortés 1866: 268) :

...on the 4th of March of this year I received letters from the said Pedro de Alvarado in which he informed me that he had entered the province, and that three or four of its communities had placed themselves in resistance to him, but that they had not persevered in this; and that they had entered into the community and town of Tututepec, and had been well received in terms of what was shown; and that the lord, who had said that he should take lodgings there in some of his great houses that he had covered with straw, and that because they were in a place that was not advantageous for the cavalry, they wanted only to descend to a flatter part of the city; and that they had also done this because they had later learned of orders that he and all of his [men] were to be killed in this manner; that as all the Spaniards had been lodged in the houses that were very big, at midnight they were to set fire and burn all of them. And as God had revealed this business, he dissembled and had secretly taken with him the lord of the province and one of his sons, and he had detained them and had them in his power as prisoners, and they had given him twenty-five thousand castillians and that he believed, according to what vassals of this lord told him, that he had great treasure....¹²

¹² ... á 4 de marzo deste mismo año recibí cartas del dicho Pedro de Albarado, en que me fizo saber cómo él habia entrado en la provincia, y que tres ó quatro poblaciones della se habian puesto en resistirle, pero que no habian perseverado en ello; y que habian entrado en la poblacion y ciudad de Tututepeque, y habian sido bien recibidos á lo que habian mostrado; y que el señor, que le habia dicho que aposentase allí en unas casas grandes suyas que tenian la cobertura de paja, y que porque eran en lugar algo no provechoso para los de caballo, no habian querido sino abajarse á otra parte de la ciudad

Further evidence supports Las Casas' view that Alvarado's treatment of the K'iche' kings was generated by lust for gold. Upon return from Cuzcatlan to Patinamit (Iximche), still recovering from his leg wound, Alvarado demanded that the Kaqchikel deliver a quota of gold at regular intervals, and when this quota could not be met, he threatened to burn the two Kaqchikel kings as he had done with the K'iche' kings (Restall and Asselbergs 2007: 107).¹³ This threat sparked the Kaqchikel to abandon their alliance with Alvarado and flee into the forest. Nevertheless, when Alvarado was tried for his crimes in 1529, his word was accepted and he was exonerated.

The *Conquista* text ends with Alvarado preparing to baptize the K'iche', which he also did not do. Alvarado's concern was not really with saving souls, and it is still debated whether he even had any religious personnel on the expedition to invade Guatemala. Also, the *Conquista* author portrays Alvarado as behaving with great friendliness and magnanimity towards the K'iche' rather than with utmost cruelty and greed. But in order to focus on an ideal of missionization, the *Conquista* author also does not cast blame on Rey K'iche' for intending to hurt Alvarado. Instead, referring obliquely to Alvarado's assertion of K'iche' deceit, the author has Rey K'iche' advise the Princes to tell Alvarado that he is completely trustworthy.

Through these alterations of history in the *Conquista* text, Alvarado is presented as a noble servant of church and emperor. On one hand, this rehabilitation serves the agenda of proselytizing because it attempts to dissociate conversion from violence. But on the other hand, there were greater political and economic stakes in the rehabilitation of Alvarado. This attempt engages directly with an issue looming over the early colonial period: continuation or termination of the *encomienda* system.

Las Casas was appalled by the brutality of the *encomiendas* granted as a reward to *conquistadores*, in which Indigenous inhabitants were enslaved and often brutally maltreated. He argued successfully before the Spanish court that *encomiendas* must be dissolved, and the New Laws of 1542 were designed to carry out that demand. *Encomendero* opposition was too great and the New Laws were repealed in 1545, but enslavement of Indigenous people remained prohibited, and ability for *encomiendas* to be inherited rather than reverting to the state upon the death of the *conquistador* remained in contention. Typically Dominicans supported Las Casas, while Franciscans, who themselves conducted arrests, imprisonments, and tortures in Mexico, supported *encomenderos*.

que era mas llana; y que tambien lo habia fecho porque luego entonces habia sabido que ordenaban de e matar á él y á todos desta manera: que como todos los españoles estuviesen aposentados en las casas, que eran muy grandes, á media noche les pusiesen fuego y los quemasen á todos. Y como Dios le habia descubierto este negocio, habia disimulado y llevado consigo á lo bajo al señor de la provincia y á un hijo suyo, y que los habia detenido y tenia en su poder como presos, y le habian dado veinte y cinco mil castellanos; y que creia que segun los vasallos de aquel señor le decian, que tenia mucho tesoro.... (Cortés 1866: 268).

¹³ This information is derived from the Kaqchikel history called the *Memorial de Sololá*, formerly called the *Annals of the Cakchikels*.

This argument that the Franciscan author of the *Conquista* was attempting to support the perpetuation of *encomiendas* is supported by comparison with the contemporary writing by *encomendero* Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a *conquistador* who fought under Cortés before also helping to put down the rebellion in Guatemala. Bernal Díaz wrote what has become the standard narrative of the Spanish conquest in Mesoamerica. He claimed to be inspired to record his memories because of the inaccuracies of the account by Cortés' secretary, López de Gómara, noting that Gómara had never been to the Americas and had no first-hand experience. But Rolena Adorno (2007: 165–67, 183–87) reveals that Díaz's primary purpose was to fight the movement to terminate *encomiendas* begun by Las Casas. As Adorno explains, Díaz traveled to Spain in 1549 to present the *encomendero* case and attended the *junta* convened in 1550 in Valladolid by the Royal Council of the Indies to debate the issue of perpetuity for *encomendero* grants like his own. Despite his efforts, the *junta* failed to ensure this perpetuity. Adorno explains further that in 1552, within a year of his return, and the same year that Las Casas' *Brevísima Relación* was published, Díaz began writing his celebrated history of the conquest of New Spain, the *Historia verdadera*, which he was still revising when he died in 1584, in part to challenge Las Casas and thereby defend inheritance of *encomiendas*. Bernal Díaz's depiction of Alvarado is the inverse of Las Casas' attack. Where Las Casas describes Alvarado as a cruel butcher, Díaz portrays him as essentially trusting and good-hearted as well as clever and law-abiding. Where Las Casas understands him to have been concerned only with subjugation, Díaz continually relates that battles were preceded by a refused *Requerimiento*. Where Las Casas describes Alvarado as a gold-hungry tyrant, Díaz continually repeats the phrase that Indigenous leaders came to sue for peace with a present of gold, presumably unsolicited. Where Las Casas condemns Alvarado for burning the K'iche kings who had welcomed him, due to frustration with the amount of gold their subjects could produce, and Alvarado claims that he burned the kings to forestall rebellion as well as punish treason, Bernal Díaz enlarges on Alvarado's argument that it was a just punishment for the crime of treason. Like Díaz, the *Conquista* author presents Alvarado as noble and just, and he defends the conquest according to the terms of the *Requerimiento* as a means to spread Christianity.

In the same years that Bernal Díaz was writing his chronicle of conquest, church-educated members of the K'iche' community were writing their own chronicles, and these too have a bearing on the agendas to which the Franciscan friar directed his script for what would become known as the *Baile de la Conquista*. These K'iche' chronicles are the *títulos*, and they were designed to maintain or restore the rights of hereditary Indigenous leaders, by then known as *caciques*. The Spanish crown encouraged such activity, hoping that strengthening the power of some Indigenous leaders would help balance the growing power of *encomenderos*.¹⁴

¹⁴ The 17th century Guatemalan chronicler Francisco Antonio de Fuentes y Guzmán (1969–72: III, 291) includes one example of a royal cedula, dated 1558, that would to stimulate submission of such *títulos*.

K'iche' *caciques* stood to gain a great deal from submitting *títulos* that proved their prior rights to land and high status, as well as their service to the Spanish crown and loyalty to the Catholic church. These two aspects are linked, as clearly stated in the early style text of the *Baile de la Conquista*, spoken by Cardona in his interview with Tekum:

*Porque siendo díos solo dueño
De cuanto su mano ha creado
Pertenece por herencia
A sus hijos los cristianos.*

Because, God being the only owner
Of all that his hand created,
It belongs by inheritance
To his children the Christians.

As an example from central Mexico, Roland Baumann (1987: 150) notes that the Tlaxcalan nobles who took on the major roles for organizing festival dramas in their territory were those who, through conversion to Christianity and assistance to the Spanish in conquering other parts of New Spain, had won the privileges of wearing Spanish clothing, carrying a sword, riding a horse, and in some cases displaying a coat of arms. Aracil Varón (1998: 42) argues that Tlaxcalan nobles would have participated in this way because by demonstrating not only their Christian faith but also their willingness to fight for the Spanish throne to which they were obedient, they hoped to obtain those privileges that Baumann enumerates. These are the same claims of early conversion and assistance in the Spanish conquest that are articulated in the Guatemalan *títulos* which were designed to earn similar privileges for *caciques*, but also including exception from tribute.

The best known of these *títulos* is the compilation produced in Q'umarcaaj between 1554 and 1558, popularly known by the name given to it by the Abbé Charles Étienne Brasseur de Bourbourg: the *Popol Vuj*. The rights and ranks of high status K'iche' persons and offices are not only detailed but also situated historically in a narrative that begins with the most recent of the Maya cyclic creations and carries it to the moment of the book's completion. The famous stories of the Hero Twins in the *Popol Vuj* are a unique part of this *título*. In contrast, *títulos* produced in the western K'iche' region, in and around the Samalá River valley, usually open by setting Maya history into a biblical context. For example, the *título* that Brasseur named *Título de los Señores de Totoncapán*, and which bears the date 1554, begins with the genesis story, then uses elements of Exodus to frame the beginning of the story of the first four K'iche' men to explain how they came from biblical lands to Guatemala. It continues with K'iche' history to the dispersal of K'iche' leaders and enumeration of the locations and boundaries where they settled in order to document land claims of 16th century *caciques*.

Some of the Quetzaltenango region *títulos* carry their history through the Spanish invasion, and most of these refer to the great battles and to Tekum's death. A more limited number elaborates on Tekum's death by narrating the duel between Alvarado and Tekum, of which three have been located, as noted earlier. Robert Carmack, who translated the fragmentary text of the *Título Coyoí*, attributes it to the community of San Cristóbal Totoncapán and dates it to the decade of the 1560s (Carmack 2008–09: II,

16), a decade after the *Popol Vuj* and *Título de los Señores de Totonicapán*. Like these other two *títulos*, the *Título Coyoi* details the origins of the K'iche' people, their investiture with the insignia of leadership at Tulan and their subsequent building of successive capitals. The conquests of the K'iche' ruler known as K'ik'ab the Great are detailed, since it was through his campaigns that the Quetzaltenango region was wrested from its Mam populations. Through these campaigns, and the setting out of new boundaries, the rights of the Coyoi to lands and titles in this region are demonstrated. The subject then turns to the Spanish invasion, beginning with Alvarado's conquest of Xetulul and Tekum's gathering of troops and ceremonial preparation to lead the resistance. Here Tekum is identified with his proper titles as the *nima rajpop achij adelantado tecum umam rey q'uiche don q'uik'ab* (Captain General Tekum, grandson of the K'iche' ruler Don K'ik'ab) (Carmack 1973: 282, 302, 338). The text becomes more fragmentary when describing the battle and the aftermath in which the K'iche' leaders submit to Alvarado (Carmack 1973: 303–04), so that it parallels but adds little information to the description of these events in the *Título Nijaib' I*.

The *Título Nijaib' I* is presently known only from a Spanish translation. The original is dated by Carmack (1973: 33) to the 1550s and pertains to the Nijaib' family, *caciques* of Momostenango, a community known to the K'iche' as Chwa Tz'ak. The text begins with three campaigns of conquest into Mam territory in the 14th and 15th centuries, in the last of which Izkin Nijaib' takes part and is rewarded with conquered lands. Tribute paid by K'iche' rulers to the Aztec emperor are then described. The narrative picks up again in the 16th century with a letter arriving from Motecuhzoma, dated 1512, advising the Rey K'iche' of the Spanish conquerors. Then in 1524 Alvarado arrives and when he conquers Xetulul, the rest of the K'iche' territory is warned of his advance. The Nijaib' family takes important leadership roles in the army of ten thousand that Tekum gathers for the defense. Tekum is said to don his regalia consisting of a crown, quetzal feathers, jade, and the disguise of his eagle *nawal*. When Alvarado reaches the pass at Palajujnoj, he encounters the stone barricade quickly built by the K'iche'. As in other K'iche' sources, Alvarado is said to remain at Palajujnoj for three months (Carmack 2008–09: II, 106–07).

In the *Título Nijaib' I* the first encounter with Alvarado at Palajujnoj consists of three thousand men who attack at midnight. The leader in this battle, identified only as a man from Ah Xepach, takes the form of his eagle *nawal*. He tries to kill Alvarado but is unable to do so because the Spaniard is defended by the a white girl (the Virgin Mary) who makes the K'iche' fall to the ground unable to rise. When they can move, the K'iche' attempt to kill the white girl but she is then surrounded and defended by footless birds (angels) who take away the attackers' sight. After this unsuccessful attempt another attack is launched by Izquin Nijaib' in the form of his lightning *nawal*. This time Alvarado is defended by a white dove (Holy Spirit) who hovers above the Spaniards and defends them by blinding the K'iche' and making them fall to the ground (Carmack 2008–09: II, 107–08).

Izkin Nijaib' again encounters the Spanish army and, when he sees that they have brought with them two hundred prisoners from the Xetulul battle who they are torturing to find out where the K'iche' gold is kept, Izkin Nijaib' decides to offer himself as an ally to the Spaniards, telling Alvarado of great treasures, and providing food for the Spanish army. Tekum leads an attack against the Spaniards and sees Izkin Nijaib' supporting them. At this point Alvarado suggests that Tekum surrender but Tekum refuses. A three hour battle ensues in which innumerable K'iche' but not one Spaniard die (Carmack 2008-09: 108-09).

Finally Tekum, in the form of his eagle *nawal* and wearing the triple crown, rises into the air to attack Alvarado but only succeeds in killing Alvarado's horse. He flies again and this time Alvarado stabs him with his lance. Two dogs come to tear at the corpse but Alvarado, impressed by Tekum's regalia, protects the body. Especially impressed by the amount of quetzal feathers in this regalia, Alvarado names the town Quetzaltenango. At once the K'iche' retreat and the Spaniards follow them across the Samalá valley to Olintepeque where they are massacred (Carmack 2008-09: 109-10).

Following the battle, Alvarado occupies Quetzaltenango and there in his presence the friars who traveled with Alvarado baptize six K'iche' leaders, now called *caciques*, including Izkin Nijaib'. These *caciques* bring their treasure to Alvarado and in return Alvarado affirms their status as the principal men of their communities. More K'iche' leaders are baptized as *caciques*. Thirteen of the new Christian *caciques* are then given Spanish clothing (Carmack 2008-09: 110-12).

The *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun* is also known only from a later Spanish translation, but this includes the original date of 1567, making it roughly contemporary with the *Título Coyoi*. This *título* sets out to legitimate rights to lands in Quetzaltenango claimed by Huitzitzil Tzunun, baptized Martin Velásquez. The text briefly establishes that the K'iche' king K'ik'ab granted Tzunun lands wrested from the Mam (Gall 1963: 24), then moves on to the principle issue of the text, which is to demonstrate Tzunun's early and continuing devotion to the Catholic church and the Spanish empire. The text does this through detailed explication of both the conquest of the K'iche' and its aftermath.

This section begins by noting that the K'iche' king had received notice of Mexico's fall to the Spanish and Alvarado's advance toward the K'iche' kingdom, as in the *Conquista* text. While Alvarado is marching toward Xetulul, Tekum is invested with the K'iche' defense and names his captains, including Tzunun. This process takes place in the context of ceremonies and celebration. The text then describes the unfamiliar weaponry that Alvarado unleashed on Xetulul and mentions that he traveled with Franciscan friars (Gall 1963: 25-26).

According to this *título*, Alvarado's forces remain one month at Palajujnoj, after which Tekum leads the attack at Pinal, losing many men. Then Tekum flies in the form of a bird and wearing the triple crown. On the first flight Tekum accomplishes nothing, on the second he decapitates Alvarado's horse, and on

the third flight he is pierced by Alvarado's lance. With Tekum dead, the K'iche' leaders including Tzunun submit to Alvarado, who explains to them the Christian religion, after which the Franciscan friars baptize them with Alvarado's captains serving as their sponsors. Alvarado then grants an *encomienda* to Juan de León y Cardona consisting of territory in Totonicapán, Santa Catalina Sija, and Salcajá (Gall 1963: 26–29).

Tzunun's first service to the Spaniards is to accompany them to Q'umarcaaj and tell Alvarado that the K'iche' ruler planned to resist, giving Alvarado excuse to burn them alive. Tzunun then returns to Salcajá to serve León Cardona, setting out markers on hilltops to denote the extent of his *encomienda* (Gall 1963: 29–30). Tzunun's third service to the conquerors is to contribute to the construction of the Quetzaltenango church in 1532 (Gall 1963: 30–32).

Comparing these three *títulos* we may note the shared emphasis of being awarded lands prior to the Spanish arrival, then quick alliance with and service to the Spanish. These were criteria accepted by the Spanish crown as sufficient for *caciques* to retain their lands and titles and earn the privileges involving exception from tribute and adoption of the trappings of Spanish lifestyle. Comparing the *Nijaib' I* and *Huitzitzil Tzunun títulos* also reveals a certain degree of competition in terms of who was first to submit and convert and who performed the most service to the Spanish. This may also have been true of the *Coyoi*.

Although the story of Tekum's death in a duel with Alvarado is presented with great detail and great consistency among these three documents, it does not appear to make any direct claim that would serve as a criterion for special status. Izkin Nijaib' even allies with the Spanish before Tekum attacks. Instead the story of Tekum appears to function as a transformative event that marks a turning point in K'iche' history between autonomy and life under the authority of the Spanish church and crown, as it does in the *Baile de la Conquista*. As will be seen, this event was taken up in a similar manner in the 20th century to represent the transformative connection between pre-Hispanic and Hispanic Guatemala.

Of these three *títulos*, the *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun* has been recognized as the document most closely connected to the *Baile de la Conquista*. As Francis Gall (1963: 17) noted, the list of personages for the *Cacique* and Spanish sides appear to be drawn from this *título*. In addition to Tzunun, the list of first baptized *cacique* includes Chávez, Tepe, and Saquimux (Gall 1963: 28). The only *Conquista Cacique* lacking is Ixcot, who is the subject of a short appended *título*. And immediately following the list of baptized *caciques*, the Tzunun *título* lists the Spanish captains under Alvarado's command and in the same order: Carrillo, Portocarrero, Calderón, and Moreno (Gall 1963: 28). Only León y Cardona is missing from this list, but he is introduced in terms of his *encomienda* and Tzunun's service in marking out its borders.

A second connection between the Tzunun *título* and the *Baile de la Conquista* concerns the fact both foreground the actions of Tzunun as distinctive and of particular historical importance. In the *Baile de la Conquista*, Tzunun stands out from among the *Caciques*. He is sent as a special envoy to Rey K'iche'. As Tekum dies, he puts Huitzitzil Tzunun in charge of the K'iche' defense. As the new commander, Tzunun makes the decision to end the war and submit to the Spanish crown as well as convert to the Christian faith. When he takes the corpse to Q'umarcaaj, Rey K'iche' entrusts him with the burial. Then Rey K'iche' follows Tzunun's lead in deciding to submit and convert. In these ways, the text for the *Baile de la Conquista* operates as a kind of *título* or even a *probanza de méritos*, foregrounding Tzunun's contributions to the Spanish effort to raise the prestige of the Tzunun family.

Considering these two relationships between the *Baile de la Conquista* and the *Título Huitzitzil Tzunun*, it seems inescapable to conclude that the author of the *Conquista* had close knowledge either of the Tzunun *título* or of the Tzunun family, or both. This dual agenda of foregrounding concerns of the Tzunun family along with his own concerns to further the evangelizing project and to defend Alvarado and the *encomenderos* suggests that the text is the result of a collaboration between Maya and Spaniard. The aid of the Tzunun *cacique* family to produce the *Conquista* text in Spanish, and of the friars to produce the *título* texts in K'iche', argues for a profound transcultural exchange between Maya and Spaniard. Such exchange was facilitated by a somewhat analogous position of both friars and *caciques* as intermediaries between the Spanish colonists and administrators on one hand, and the general Indigenous population on the other hand. *Caciques* and friars must have recognized their shared interest in maintaining positions that allow them to both govern and to some extent to exploit the majority of the Indigenous population. This shared interest may also explain a particular deviation from the *Moros y Cristianos* genre: the lack of any K'iche' commoners among the personages depicted, as the K'iche' ranks are composed only of royals, *caciques* and a priest.

These concerns with status positions in colonial Guatemala also help explain viewpoints expressed by the two *gracejos* in the text for the *Baile de la Conquista*, both of whom demonstrate concern for the relation between race and social hierarchy. As the Spanish colonies developed, racial hierarchy was not only applied to the distinction between Indigenous, African, mixed blood, and Spaniard, but also to the distinction between *peninsulares* (those born in Spain) and *criollos* (those of pure Spanish blood but born in the Americas).

Though Quirijol takes up several topics in his comic speeches, the topic to which he returns most often is that of Spanish soldiers, including himself, marrying Indigenous women and having mixed-race children. Quirijol presents this practice as both inevitable and disruptive of the race-based social and political hierarchy. That this issue was of major concern to the author may also be evident from the fact that in the text the first encounter between Spaniard and K'iche' takes place when the Ambassadors meet and are charmed by the four youths and Cardona expresses a desire to stay with them.

Ajitz's most poignant remarks, in his sendoff to the Ambassadors, concern racial discrimination. He laments that even a well educated Indigenous person is considered lower than the most ignorant Spaniard. It must have been galling for members of these *cacique* families to learn the Spanish language, become literate, obtain a coat of arms, be given the privilege of riding a horse and carrying a sword, and to still be considered little more than an animal to Spanish *encomenderos* and administrators.

How did this education come about? Within a generation after Pedro de Alvarado's conquest of Guatemala, young men of *cacique* families were brought into monasteries to be educated by friars. As John Early explains (2006: 144), these monastery-educated men could become civil leaders, teachers, or *fiscales*. As *fiscales*, such men would remain closely connected to the friars, assisting in church rituals and, due to their bilingual abilities, teaching the tenets of Christianity to Maya youths on the basis of the *doctrina*. Though many friars also learned the Indigenous language of their *doctrina*, Early's argument on the overriding importance of the *fiscal* in the transmission of Christianity is based on evidence that many communities were rarely visited by a friar-priest, leaving the *fiscal* as the primary connection to the church (Early 2006: 178–79). Considering that the author of the *Baile de la Conquista* would have dealt with *fiscales*, probably educating some, and certainly relying on them to provide the music, run the rehearsals and stage the action of the *Conquista* for its first performance, it seems likely that the educated persons to whom Ajitz's refers are likely to be such *fiscales*.

The issue of racial hierarchies that the *Conquista* author expresses through the two *gracejos*, those characters capable of seeing into the future due to their function of bridging the time of the action with the present of the audience, were of great concern to both to *caciques* and friars. This shared concern would have pertained particularly to the point of their most intense intersection, that is, between friar and *fiscal*. These educated scions of the *cacique* families who became *fiscales* and who took on many of a friar's roles in his absence, were still prohibited by virtue of their race from becoming friars themselves. I thus further suspect that one hears the voice of *fiscales* in Ajitz's complaint about Indigenous subordination to even the most ignorant Spaniard.

5.10. Conservative Maintenance of the Text

The strong *siglo de oro* character of the early style texts and their relevance to early colonial period politics, as argued from copies made in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, suggests that there were very few innovations before the late nineteenth century, and specifically the period of the liberal revolution that took over the national government in 1871. This conservative maintenance of the early text in the intervening centuries was likely due in part to the social and religious context in which the *Baile de la Conquista* was first performed.

Those who transmitted this text, unchanged except for unintentional copying errors, were likely the *fiscales*. Their facility in Spanish, their closeness to the friars, and their role as teachers of the general Maya population, suggest that *fiscales* were likely the original *maestros* of church-sponsored conversion-oriented dance dramas like the *Baile de la Conquista* and the *Baile de Moros y Cristianos*. The role of a *fiscal* would also have been necessary to select and train the dancers and musicians for the initial production of the *Conquista*, as well as perhaps to compose the music. A *fiscal* would also have worked to ensure that dancers had memorized and could recite their lines exactly. Strikingly, either the performers were largely also members of *cacique* families, including *fiscales*, or they would not have understood the Spanish language in which their lines are written.

Such rote memorization and recitation of lines in a language that is not understood is precisely what *fiscales* were expected to accomplish in teaching the *doctrina* to Maya youth. Early (2006: 217) notes that the *fiscales* taught through memorization, conveying the monastic position that texts must be repeated exactly. He (2006: 217–18) also notes that their instruction of the *doctrina* was often reduced to memorization of the core prayers, and that Tomás López, *oidor* (judge) of the royal *audiencia* in Guatemala from 1549–1552, specifically complained that Indigenous peoples taught by *fiscales* were reciting the lines of these prayers without any understanding. Considering that few Indigenous people outside the *cacique* families could understand Spanish, but that the *fiscales* had familiarized them with memorization and recitation of lines that they did not understand, the *fiscales*' function and practice is directly appropriate to the production and transmission of the *Baile de la Conquista* as its early *maestros*.

It was likely not only a monastic position that religious texts must be maintained, memorized and recited exactly but also a result of *Costumbre*'s conservative dictum to maintain practices established by ancestors. Like other aspects of *Costumbre*, the text, music and performance of the *Conquista* are inherited from the ancestors and are offered to the saints, so they are sacred and must be repeated correctly. According to Early (2006: 221–22), as Maya religion (*Costumbre*) evolved, the importance of repeating a text exactly was continued, as mistakes or deviation could bring punishment from the relevant saint. But he also cites evidence that changes did creep into texts through mistakes when such a text is venerated, memorized and recited without sufficient understanding of its language. I have found this still to be true of the *Conquista* text when discussing what I saw as copying errors with *maestros* of various communities. For example I noted a copying mistake in one script, in which the words “*Sí Quicab*” (If K'ik'ab) had been run together, and this error had been repeated in further copyings, resulting in a belief that the proper and original word was “*siquicab*.” Rather than question this word as a simple copying error, the *maestro* had come to an understanding from the context that “*siquicab*” must be a version of the royal name, and was not interested in my providing an alternate explanation.

This view of the sacredness of the text and its transmission by *fiscales* as *maestros* is sufficient to explain the conservatism evident from preservation of the *siglo de oro* style through the late 19th century, about 300 years after it was written, with only unintentional copying errors creeping into the text rather than intentional efforts to modify it.

5.11. The Alternating Dedications

However, one intentional addition likely predates the 1870 watershed, because it appears in the 1872 Cobán text for *La Conquista*.¹⁵ This is the concluding dedication sequence in which each character praises the Virgin and dedicates the *baile* to her. In this sequence, K'iche' and Spaniard alternate according to social hierarchy with Alvarado and members of the court reciting first, then alternating the opposing *Caciques* and other Spaniards in order down to the *gracejos* Quirijol and Ajitz. Later alternating dedications appear in other texts, but they usually combine praise for the Virgin with a dedication to the local saint. In contrast, the Cobán dedications make no mention of Cobán's patron, Santo Domingo de Guzmán, likely because the manuscript from which Villacorta made his copy was not intended to be performed in Cobán. Another peculiarity of the Cobán dedication texts is that Tekum is one of the speakers, emphasizing the separation of this dedication text from the drama of conquest and conversion.

Those dedications added later than the Cobán example are generally strict in the assignment of a quatrain to each speaker. Here too the Cobán text is somewhat looser, as three speakers (Portocarrero, Calderón, and Moreno) recite eight lines each. Irrespective of this difference, one would expect that four-line stanzas would be composed in one of the *redondilla* formats, but this is the case only in the first half of the Cobán dedication speeches, which are in *redondilla abrazada* form. In the second half, the quatrains are composed in *romance* form, while the eight-line texts, though not fully consistent, suggest a form I do not recognize (ABBC DDDC) in which the same "C"-rhyme is repeated in all three examples. Those dedications composed subsequently, though varied in content, are largely consistent in use of *romance* form.

The form and content of these alternating dedications in the Cobán script suggest *loas* to the Virgin, a type of publicly performed and sometimes theatrical religious poetry popular in Guatemala in the context of religious festivals. There may also be some specific references to *loas* in this Cobán *Conquista* text: the term *loa* is used in verbal format with the word *loaremos* (let us praise); and a *marinero* (sailor) is mentioned that may relate to the popular *loa* of the *Marinero*. These terms do not appear in any of the dedications that I have seen written subsequently.

¹⁵ These alternating dedications also appear in the Almolonga text which was likely derived from the Cobán version or a common ancestor.

According to the study of Guatemalan *loas* by Correa and Cannon (1958), *loas* were introduced to New Spain in the 16th century, when they were often performed for religious festivals as an *auto sacramental*. In Guatemala *loas* were institutionalized as popular religious theatre by the end of the 18th century (Correa and Cannon, 5–7). As religious theatre, *loas* and *bailes* frequently borrowed from each other. Correa and Cannon note *loas* of the *Moros y Cristianos* and they note that the *Baile de los Toritos* and *Baile de los Costeños* are closely related to the *loa El Partideño*. On the other hand, the character of many *loas*, concerning preparations for a celebration to the Virgin Mary, also provides the context for the *Baile de los Toritos* narrative, in which the bullfight figures as an offering to the local saint in his or her *feria*. A somewhat related point concerning the Cobán dedications is the reference in the last line to annual repetition, presumably in the *fiesta patronal*. These comparisons offer some evidence that the alternating dedications present in the Cobán text were composed in the late 18th or early 19th centuries, in the final epoch of the colony or the early decades of the independent Republic of Guatemala.