Imitating Africans, Listening for Angels: A Slaveholder's Fantasy of Social Harmony in an "Ethnic Villancico" from Colonial Puebla (1652)

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A Voice for Everyone at "The Happiest Stable"?

Across the Spanish Empire, ensembles of Spaniards and their "pure-blooded" descendants enjoyed imitating Africans, Native Americans, Galicians, and other non-Castilian groups as a part of their festivities at Christmas and Epiphany. Chapelmasters programmed the vernacular

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devotional pieces known today as "ethnic villancicos" as a regular part of liturgical worship in the service of Matins on these feast days.[1] In their time they were labeled *villancicos de naciones* or named according to the group they represented: *asturiano*, *gitano* (Roma or "Gypsy"), *indio*, or, when Africans were the subject, *guineos*, *negrillas*, or *villancicos de negro*.[2] The pieces survive in manuscript parts used for the performances and in leaflets of poetic texts printed to commemorate or promote the events. A notable corpus of such pieces survives as part of the villancico sets for Christmas Matins in the 1650s at the Cathedral of Puebla de los Ángeles in New Spain (now Mexico), composed by chapelmaster Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c. 1590–1664). Earlier examples may be found among the villancicos by Gaspar Fernández at Puebla Cathedral around 1610. Subsequently, the explosion of poetic imprints after 1630 from Seville, Toledo, Zaragoza, and the Royal Chapel in Madrid testifies to a widespread interest in these pieces, coinciding with the rise of the villancico genre in general, which continued for at least another century.[3]

Ethnic villancicos have piqued the interest of scholars and performers since Robert Stevenson first speculated in the 1960s that the pieces preserved traces of African and Amerindian music.[4] Performers have revived a handful of such villancicos, often in fanciful, exoticized renditions, as though they were recovering the lost voices of oppressed peoples.[5] Some scholars still mistakenly assume that these pieces were

[1] This article expands on my abbreviated treatment in Andrew A. Cashner, *Hearing Faith: Music as Theology in the Spanish Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 25–29; and Andrew A. Cashner, ed., *Villancicos about Music from Seventeenth-Century Spain and New Spain*, Web Library of Seventeenth-Century Music 32 (2017), 7, www.sscm-wlscm.org/main-catalogue/browse-by-composer/406-villancicos-about-music-from-seventeenth-century-spain-and-new-spain-1.

[2] Geoffrey Baker, "The 'Ethnic Villancico' and Racial Politics in 17th-Century Mexico," in *Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450–1800: The Villancico and Related Genres*, ed. Tess Knighton and Álvaro Torrente (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 399–408; Álvaro Torrente, "El villancico religioso," in *Historia de la música en España e Hispanoamérica*, vol. 3, *La música en el siglo XVII*, ed. Álvaro Torrente (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica de España, 2016), 435–530; and Juana Luís Alves Simão, "The *Villancicos de negros* in Manuscript 50 of the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra: A Case Study of Black Cultural Agency and Racial Representation in 17th-Century Portugal" (master's thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2017).

[3] Cipriano López Lorenzo, "El villancico sevillano del siglo XVII (1621–1700)," *Calíope* 21, no. 2 (2016): 59–92.

[4] Robert Stevenson, "The Afro-American Musical Legacy to 1900," *Musical Quarterly* 54 (1968): 475–502. See John Swadley, "The Villancico in New Spain 1650–1750: Morphology, Significance and Development" (PhD diss., Canterbury Christ Church University, 2014), 121–49.

[5] For example, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Música de la Catedral de Puebla de los Ángeles*, Ars Longa de Habana, directed by Teresa Paz, Almaviva DS-0142, 2005, compact disc; Jeffrey Skidmore, *New World Symphonies: From Araujo to Zipoli; An A to Z of Latin American Baroque*, Ex Cathedra, Hyperion CDA67380, 2003, compact disc; and Drew Edward Davies,

actually created by Africans and Native Americans.[6] In contrast, Geoffrey Baker has concluded, after analyzing a selection of ethnic villancico poems, that these pieces reflect only the perspective of slaveholding Spaniards and present denigrating racist caricatures that perpetuated the myth of the happy slave.[7] He further argues that the racism inherent in the pieces is amplified when we perform them today, unless perhaps we can find a "postcolonial" way to present them in a critical light.[8] John Swadley protests that ethnic villancicos form only a small proportion of the villancico repertoire and argues that we would be better off simply ignoring them.[9] Nevertheless, these pieces remain popular choices for early-music ensembles hoping to diversify their repertoire.

The problem with both the celebration of ethnic villancicos by performers and their censure by scholars is that there has been almost no serious study of the actual music, and few scholars have situated individual pieces in specific local contexts. As a result we have little understanding of what these pieces meant to the Spaniards who created them, or how they might have affected the people represented within them. Swadley is right about the proportion of ethnic villancicos to other subgenres of villancicos, which include, among other topics, pieces about angels, shepherds, and birdsong.[10] But the Royal Chapel in Madrid performed at least one ethnic villancico every Christmas in the 1640s and 1650s.[11] There is a clear connection between this ensemble's musical pictures of Africans and their royal patron's deep investment in the slave trade, one that we cannot afford to overlook if we want to understand how the most powerful sovereignty of the time used music to establish and maintain its power. Baker is right that these pieces represent a Spanish perspective, and any traces of African or Native American language or music that might be preserved in villancicos are distorted through a darkened lens of racialized prejudice. But as we have precious few sources of Black and Native voices from this period, it is worth inquiring whether the

"Finding 'Local Content' in the Music of New Spain," *Early Music America* 19, no. 2 (2013): 60–64.

[6] See, for example, Carmen Fracchia, who misconstrues my interpretive suggestions to indicate that the pieces represented authentic Black voices. Carmen Fracchia, *"Black but Human": Slavery and Visual Art in Hapsburg Spain, 1480–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 17–32.

[7] Baker, "The 'Ethnic Villancico.'"

[8] Geoffrey Baker, "Latin American Baroque: Performance as a Post-Colonial Act?," *Early Music* 36 (2008): 441–48.

[9] Swadley, "The Villancico in New Spain," 121–49.

[10] Alain Bègue, "A Literary and Typological Study of the Late 17th-Century Villancico," in *Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450–1800: The Villancico and Related Genres*, ed. Tess Knighton and Álvaro Torrente (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 231–82.

[11] Biblioteca Nacional de España, *Catálogo de villancicos de la Biblioteca Nacional, Siglo XVII* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1992), s.v. "Madrid."

racialized musical stereotypes contained in these sources can tell us anything about the people the Spaniards subjugated. And even if they do only give us an elite Spanish perspective, that is a point of view that students of the early modern world need to understand. Ethnic villancicos are documents of historic ideas about race that actively shaped the way Spaniards viewed their colonial subjects and affected the life experiences of those subjects.

This article analyzes an ethnic villancico first performed at Puebla Cathedral in 1652, *Al establo más dichoso* (At the happiest stable), which bears the designation of a common subgenre, *ensaladilla*.[12] The composer, chapelmaster Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, was both a university-educated Oratorian priest and a slaveholder.[13] In this "little salad," the anonymous poet or compositor of the text tosses together several different groups who are coming to Bethlehem to worship the newborn Christ. The narrators introduce in turn a group of shepherds, a mule-driver and his mule, and a band of mountain-folk. Finally they welcome a "troop" of Africans who offer their own dance, until at a climactic moment they are suddenly joined by the choir of angels singing Gloria.

This villancico puts the social hierarchy of New Spain on display according to the idealized conception of its Spanish composer and his ensemble. Through this music they imagined themselves as the rightful rulers in a divinely ordained hierarchy, with enslaved Africans at the bottom, Native Americans just above, and at the top, the communion of saints, the angelic hosts, and ultimately the Holy Trinity. In keeping with the Christmas festival's traditional emphasis on social inversion, the villancico welcomes lower-caste characters around the manger of Christ and affirms their value within society. In his concluding Gloria, Gutiérrez de Padilla invites listeners to discern an echo of the chorus of the angels through the song of slaves. In another section he has Indigenous characters say of Christ, "in his eyes I see myself," challenging listeners to see the lowliest people as bearing the image of Christ. These positive aspects are undercut in three ways, however. First, the representations are framed by mocking narrators. Second, instead of including the actual voices of Indigenous or African people, the Spanish musicians used their own voices to impersonate them, effectively silencing them. Third, every time Gutiérrez de Padilla left the cathedral and went home to his African

[12] Puebla, Catedral, Archivo Capitular (hereafter MEX-Pc), Leg. 1/3; please refer to my critical edition, Cashner, *Villancicos about Music*, 27–28 (notes), 43–47 (poem and translation), 193–217 (music). A recording, from an unknown edition, is in Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Maitines de Navidad, 1652*, México Barroco/Puebla VII, Angelicum de Puebla, directed by Benjamín Juárez Echenique, Urtext UMA2011, 1999, compact disc.

[13] Gustavo Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil: Un *corpus* documental," in *Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla y la época Palafoxiana*, ed. Gustavo Mauleón Rodríguez (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura, 2010), 179–242.

slave, he proved his commitment to the oppressive social order. There is no way to resolve the inherent contradictions of an image of social harmony that is rooted in both Christian theology and racist ideology, but this music can help us understand how that paradoxical worldview was built and how it affected people's lives.

Building on Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic philosophy I argue that although the world presented *within* this performative text is imaginary, the representation was shaped by social relationships in the world "behind the text," and in turn shaped social values in the world "in front of the text."[14] These three worlds of the text are the historical circumstances that shaped it, the structures and relationships within it, and the new world of imaginative possibilities projected in front of it by the encounter between the reader and the text. The concept of these three worlds enables us to consider the historical context, poetic and musical structure, and interpretive possibilities of this music. Since Ricoeur's work focused on written verbal texts, we need to draw on performance and ritual studies to understand how a musical performance communicates, embodies, and ritually enacts a view of the world. The primary source in front of us is a set of individual performing parts (not a single score that can be "read"), which encode instructions for performance that enabled an ensemble to create a musical realization of a poem. What I am calling the performative text includes both the instructions (the notated words and music) and the resulting sounds that were presented for the audience to hear. In this case, the performative text represents groups of characters and relates them to each other.

When we look at the world of the text, then, the goal is to understand how, within the text itself, the composer and performers use music to differentiate characters. My analysis focuses primarily on rhythm. Both the "mountain folk," who I argue represent Indigenous people, and the African characters sing in the same triple meter, but the composer makes each group move rhythmically in a distinct way. Only extensive corpus studies will be able to give us a deep understanding of the conventions and musical topics at play here, but Gutiérrez de Padilla's use of different styles to depict distinct character types and social situations offers a rich starting point.

Looking "behind" the text in this case means the traditional musicological work of finding out the historical circumstances that shaped the music. What connections can we make between the characters of the musical representation and the shepherds, muleteers, mountain-folk, and

[14] Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976); and Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

people of African descent in seventeenth-century Puebla? Evidence from the text itself must be read together with archival sources of social history.

The most important goal, however, is to enter the world "in front of the text." Through our own encounter with the text we can begin to consider the multiple meanings it might have had to its first hearers, and how this performance might have shaped their conceptual world in a way that affected people's lives. In the case of the characters referred to as *negros*, the enslavement of African people depended on slaveholders imagining that there could be such a thing as "slaves" (rather than people subjected to enslavement), and that in turn depended on them seeing Africans not as people but as *negros*. These imaginary concepts, *esclavo* and *negro*, were converted to brutal realities in colonial society. The way Spaniards imagined society in this music, I argue, both reflected and shaped the way they proceeded to build colonial society. The roles they allotted to lower-caste characters in their musical representations, especially as indicated through distinct types of rhythmic movement, shaped the ways that Spaniards forced their real-life counterparts to move through the newly imposed social structures.

At the same time, I argue that these Spanish practices of representing Others in music were in part a response to practices of impersonation among Indigenous and African communities, in particular the Black Kings festivals held by African-descended people across the Ibero-American world. This music can help us envision not only a Spanish slaveholder's fantasy of society but also a more complex colonial world defined by conflicting ways of imagining society.

Social and Theological Harmony in the Puebla Cathedral Project

Gutiérrez de Padilla's villancicos contributed to the larger reform agenda of Puebla's bishop, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, who took charge of the stalled project to build a new cathedral and got as far as consecrating the high altar of the still-unfinished building in 1649 before he was recalled to Spain.[15] Founded in 1531 as a city for Spaniards only, by the 1650s Puebla had grown into a multiethnic city in which Spaniards were vastly outnumbered by the people they controlled. Its chief export was textiles: the wool was primarily produced by Indigenous pastoralists in the country and processed in the city's mills by Native laborers

[15] María Gembero-Ustárroz, "*Muy amigo de música*: El obispo Juan de Palafox (1600–1659) y su entorno musical en el Virreinato de Nueva España," in *Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla y la época Palafoxiana*, ed. Gustavo Mauleón Rodríguez (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura, 2010), 55–130; and Montserrat Galí Boadella, ed., *Rituales sonoros en una ciudad episcopal: Puebla, siglos XVI–XIX* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2013).

alongside enslaved African and Asian people.[16] The new cathedral was not only a physical center for the urban community; it proclaimed a theological and political vision for the colonial project—a sanctified city in which these diverse groups would live in harmony with each other and with God under the protective wings of the Church.[17]

The visual art of Palafox's cathedral projected an image of harmony between heaven and earth for the colonial congregation. The massive retable designed by Pedro García Ferrer centered on an image of the Virgin Mary as Immaculate, being assumed into heaven amidst a consort of angel musicians and cherubs dancing in the round.[18] But before worshippers' eyes could ascend with Mary, they would see two paintings of Christ visited by people from the margins of society: on the left of the altar, the shepherds, one of whom was a portrait of Palafox himself; and on the right, the magi, one of whom was depicted as a Black African.[19] This depiction echoes Palafox's devotional writings, in which he invited his "flock" to imagine themselves journeying with the shepherds to meet Christ in his lowliness.[20] In Catholic theology this imagined pilgrimage could lead only to the altar, where the community could together encounter Christ in the Eucharist. There, commoners and kings alike would be joined together as one body. The influential contemporary Biblical commentator Cornelius à Lapide (1567–1637) cited Saint John Chrysostom to say: "That which the Magi saw in the manger, in a little hut, and with much veneration and fear approached and adored, you, when you perceive the same thing not in a manger, but on the altar, should show even greater piety than those foreigners."[21] The Puebla congregation, therefore, who believed themselves to be united with Christ through his sacramental presence in the Eucharist, were to model their devotion on that of the shepherds and kings. Not only the altar images and pastoral teaching, but also the music helped Puebla

[16] Miguel Ángel Cuenya and Carlos Contreras Cruz, *Puebla de los Ángeles: Una ciudad en la historia* (Puebla: Océano, 2012); and Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531–1706* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[17] Geoffrey Baker, "The Resounding City," in *Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Geoffrey Baker and Tess Knighton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–20.

[18] Montserrat Galí Boadella, *Pedro García Ferrer: Un artista aragonés del siglo XVII en la Nueva España* (Teruel: Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 1996). This image is on the cover of Cashner, *Hearing Faith*.

[19] Eduardo Merlo Juárez, José Antonio Quintana Fernández, and Miguel Pavón Rivero, *La Catedral Basílica de la Puebla de los Ángeles* (Puebla: Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, 2006), 188; and Paul H. D. Kaplan, *The Rise of the Black Magus in Western Art* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985).

[20] Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *El Pastor de Noche Buena: Practica Breve de las Virtudes; Conocimiento Facil de los Vicios* (1644; Barcelona, 1730).

[21] Cited in Cornelius à Lapide, *Commentarii in scripturam sacram*, vol. 8, *In quatuor Evangelia* (London: J. B. Pelagaud, 1868), 672, on Lk. 2.

worshippers find parallels between the diverse group of visitors in the Biblical story and the different types of people in their own contemporary society.

To furnish the new space with music just as others had supplied it with paintings, sculptures, and candles, Gutiérrez de Padilla provided annual cycles of Christmas villancicos in the 1650s, of which eight sets survive, that mirror the theological and social goals of the cathedral project.[22] Each of his villancico cycles presents a microcosm of colonial society, with a range of distinct styles that would appeal to the ears of different listeners.[23] Most of the cycles include an *ensaladilla*, a subgenre of villancico that includes multiple types of music within one piece, making it a microcosm within the microcosm. Gutiérrez de Padilla continued the tradition established by his predecessor Gaspar Fernández of symbolically bringing a range of characters from the lower strata of the Spanish colonial social structure to Bethlehem, including representations of Indigenous and African people.[24]

The sights and sounds in the cathedral proclaimed a Neoplatonic worldview, resurgent in early modern Spain, whose proponents heard music as both a metaphor for the hidden harmony of creation and as a means of embodying it—a tool that could be actively employed to order society.[25] Neoplatonic theology saturated the religious literature of Puebla's seminary and convent libraries, and would have been central in Gutiérrez de Padilla's university education. Spanish Catholics learned from writers like Fray Luis de Granada to think like Saint Augustine and see the

[22] On his Latin-texted music, see Ricardo Miranda, "'. . . de Ángeles también el coro': Estética y simbolismo en la misa *Ego flos campi* de Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla," in *Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla y la época Palafoxiana*, ed. Gustavo Mauleón Rodríguez (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura, 2010), 131–53.

[23] E. Thomas Stanford, *Catálogo de los acervos musicales de las catedrales metropolitanas de México y Puebla de la Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia y otras colecciones menores* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2002); select Christmas cycles edited in Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Tres cuadernos de Navidad: 1653, 1655 y 1657*, ed. Mariantonia Palacios and Aurelio Tello (Caracas: Fundación Vicente Emilio Sojo: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura, 1998).

[24] Gaspar Fernandes, *Cancionero musical de Gaspar Fernandes: Tomo primero*, ed. Aurelio Tello (Mexico City: Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información Musical Carlos Chávez, 2001); and Ireri Elizabeth Chávez Bárcenas, "Singing in the City of Angels: Race, Identity, and Devotion in Early Modern Puebla de los Ángeles" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2018), chaps. 3–4.

[25] Cashner, *Hearing Faith*, 44–52, 73–83; Geoffrey Baker, *Imposing Harmony: Music and Society in Colonial Cuzco* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 22–31; Drew Edward Davies, "La armonía de la conversion: Ángeles músicos en la arquitectura novohispana y el pensamiento agustino-neoplatónico," in *Harmonia Mundi: Los instrumentos sonoros en Iberoamérica, siglos XVI al XIX, ed. Lucero Enríquez* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2009), 37–63; and Luis Robledo, "Pensamiento musical y teoría de la música," in *Historia de la música en España e Hispanoamérica*, vol. 3, *La música en el siglo XVII*, ed. Álvaro Torrente (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica de España, 2016), 531–618.

created world as an imperfect reflection of the higher reality of God.[26] Neoplatonic writers on music like Pedro Cerone and Athanasius Kircher, drawing on Boethius, taught them to hear the world as a hierarchy of harmonies: played and sung music (*musica instrumentalis*) could create harmony between the human body and soul, and in society (*musica humana*); and could put these in tune with the order of creation (*musica mundana*) and its Creator, whose triune essence was the highest form of music.[27]

Gutiérrez de Padilla's vision of harmony between heaven and earth depended not only on counterpoint but on rhythm, a distinctive but understudied aspect of the villancico genre.[28] Spanish composers learned rhythmic notation as a foundation for counterpoint, and good harmony required each voice to move at the proper time.[29] They knew that according to Augustine music required "knowing how to move well."[30] According to Kircher, movement enabled music to affect individuals and groups through a principle of sympathetic vibration, as sonic structures resonated with the humoral composition of their bodies.[31] Spanish colonizers heard the difference between themselves and Others in rhythmic terms, from Cortez's order to begin an assault on the Aztecs in May 1520 by cutting off the arms of their ritual drummer, to theatrical depictions of Africans as perpetually drumming and dancing.[32] When Gutiérrez de Padilla summoned an array of social groups to his imaginary Bethlehem, he used rhythm to characterize each one with a distinct way of speaking and moving, emphasizing their differences but, by combining them in one "salad," also pointing toward a hidden harmony among them.

The World of the Text: Shepherds, Slaves, and Angels

Each of the four contrasting sections in *Al establo más dichoso* brings a different kind of person to Christ's stable:

[26] Luis de Granada, *Introducción del símbolo de la fe*, Biblioteca de autores españoles 6 (1583; Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1871).

[27] Pedro Cerone, *El melopeo y maestro* (Naples, 1613); and Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis, sive Ars magna consoni et dissoni in X. libros digesta* (Rome, 1650), two copies in Puebla.

[28] Swadley, "The Villancico in New Spain," 121–27; and José Vicente González Valle, "Relación música/texto en la composición musical en castellano del s. XVII: Nueva estructura rítmica de la música española," *Anuario musical* 47 (1992): 103–32.

[29] Cerone, *El melopeo y maestro*, 484–85, 495–515; and Andrés Lorente, *El porqué de la música, en que se contiene los quatro artes de ella, canto llano, canto de organo, contrapvnto, y composicion* (Alcalá de Henares, 1672), 145–59.

[30] Augustine, *De musica* 1.3.4 ("musica est scientia bene mouendi").

[31] Kircher, *Musurgia universalis*, 552; and Penelope Gouk, "The Role of Harmonics in the Scientific Revolution," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 223–45.

[32] Gary Tomlinson, *The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 171–72.

1. El *nuevo Troyano* (The new Trojan) presents a shepherd-boy playing panpipes and leading his fellow shepherds in song;
2. *El arriero* (The mule-driver) features the mule-driver Bartolo, whose she-mule, looking for straw, has dragged him into the manger;
3. *El papalotillo* (The butterfly) is a dance of the *serranos* or mountain-folk, farm laborers who in the Puebla context were probably understood to be Indigenous people; and
4. *La negrilla* (Little black song) presents Minguelillo from Angola leading a "troop" of Africans who sing and dance their way to the manger bearing gifts like the Magi.

A chorus of unmarked narrators introduces groups one, two, and four, while Bartolo introduces the third group. In the final section, the Angolans are briefly joined by one more group of beings, the angels (table 1).

TABLE 1.
Structure of sections and characters.

Mm.	Section	Characters	Voicing (Texture)
	1. *El nuevo Troyano*		
1–16	a. Introduction	Narrators	SATB I (Homorhythmic declamation)
17–58	b. Song/Dance	Shepherds (Indigenous?)	SI solo, SATB I (Call/response)
	2. *El arriero*		
59–74	a. Introduction	Narrators	SATB I (=1a)
75–96	b. Song/Dance	Bartolo (Spaniard?), mule	TII, BII *bajón* (Solo/accomp.)
	3. *El papalotillo*		
97–136	Song/Dance	Farm workers (Indigenous?)	SI, TI solo, SATB I (Call/response)
	4. *La negrilla*		
137–152	a. Intro. to scene	Narrators	SATB I (=1a, 2a)
153–214	b. Intro. to villancico form	Minguelillo, Angolans	SI, TI; SATB I/TB II (Duo dialogue; call/response)
215–223	c. Gloria	Angolans, Angels	SAI, add SAII (Polymetric counterpoint, C vs. C3)
224–238	d. *Estribillo*	Angolans	SATB I/TB II (Call/response)
239–261	e. *Coplas*		TI, TII solo; SATB I/TB II (Call/response)
262–276	d. *Estribillo* rep. after each copla		

The genre of *ensalada (ensaladilla* is the diminutive form*)* originally developed in late-medieval Spain as a medley of references to other poetry and music, often of popular origin.[33] Listeners expected to hear familiar tunes and song types rearranged into a clever mixture. The sources for Gutiérrez de Padilla's text remain unknown; like his peers he often borrowed poems that circulated in printed leaflets, but this anonymous text does not appear in any known print. The first three sections likely refer to existing song or dance types. The *negrilla* is not a dance but rather a subgenre of villancico (also known as *villancico de negro*) that represented Black characters. This last part comprises a complete villancico form on its own, with the conventional sections: an introduction for soloists, the full-ensemble section known as the *estribillo*, strophic verses or *coplas*, and a repetition of the *estribillo*. The piece is dramatic in that it features dialogue between named characters who are said to dance and sing, though it was probably not staged in the cathedral due to Palafox's disapproval of theatrical elements in church.[34]

The Choral Narrators

The poetry and music of the choral narrators establish a norm within the piece against which listeners would naturally compare the other characters. Each of the three times the narrators appear, they sing the same type of poetry to identical music (ex. 1). The poetic meter is *romance*, a common form for villancicos and popular ballad-type poetry: quatrains of eight-syllable verses with assonance in the final two vowels of the even-numbered verses, here *o–a* (*victoria–venturosa*).[35] As the narrators set the scene at the stable and introduce the shepherds, their diction is well-formed Castilian, fluent in the conventions of villancico poetry: they describe the stable as *dichoso* (blessed) and call the shepherd a *zagal*.[36] The language lacks special features that would evoke a particular group,

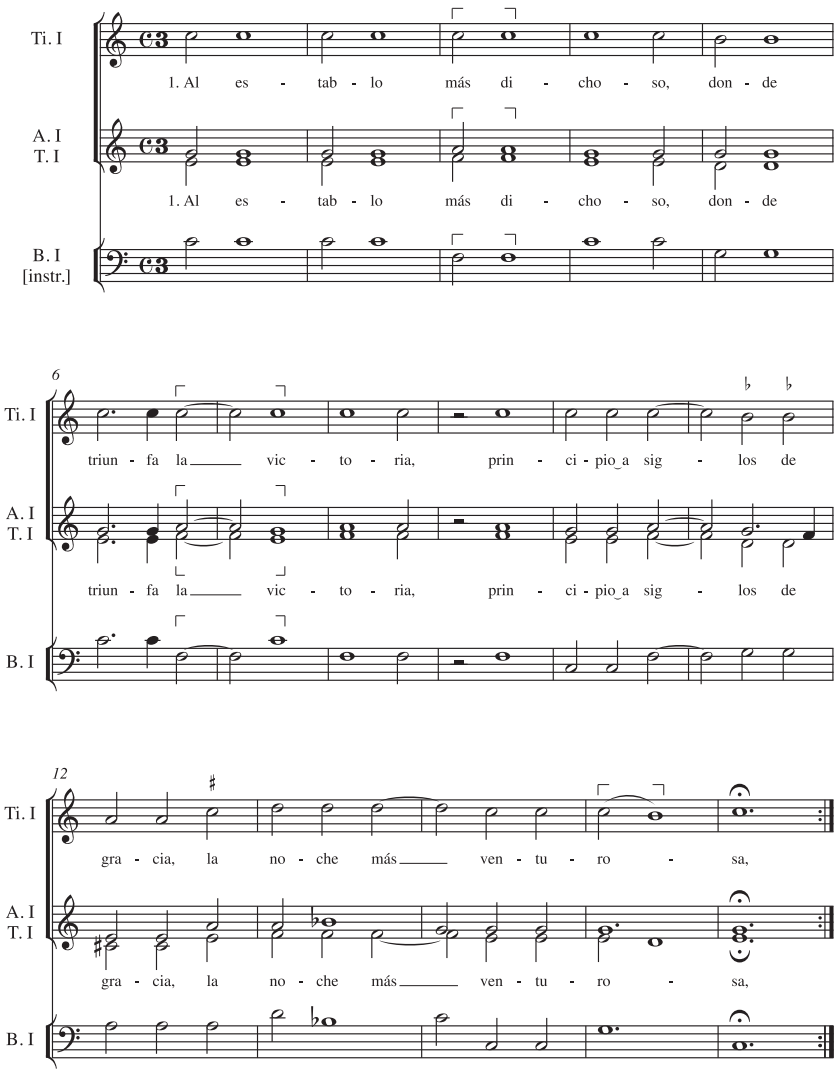
[33] Pepe Rey, "Weaving *ensaladas*," in *Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450–1800: The Villancico and Related Genres*, ed. Tess Knighton and Álvaro Torrente (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 15–52.

[34] Andrew A. Cashner, "Playing Cards at the Eucharistic Table: Music, Theology, and Society in a Corpus Christi Villancico from Colonial Mexico, 1628," *Journal of Early Modern History* 18 (2014): 383–419, at 395–96. Gutiérrez de Padilla's penchant for skit-like villancicos may be linked to his membership in the Oratorian Society, whose Puebla *oratorio* building was consecrated in 1651; see Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil," 239–40; and Rafael Castañeda García, "Ilustración y educación: La Congregación del Oratorio de San Felipe Neri en Nueva España (siglo XVIII)," *Historia crítica* 59 (2016): 145–64.

[35] Tomás Navarro Tomás, *Métrica española: Reseña histórica y descriptiva* (1956; New York: Las Americas, 1966).

[36] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, ed. Cashner, *Villancicos about Music*, 43, lines 1–4, 9–12: "Al establo más dichoso, / donde triunfa la victoria, / principio a siglos de

EXAMPLE 1. Sec. 1a, *Introducción* to *El nuevo Troyano,* Choral narrators.



leaving the narrators unmarked. Thus the narrators would seem to present the perspective of the Spanish elite like Gutiérrez de Padilla. The way they introduce each group expresses different degrees of

gracia, / la noche más venturosa, // [. . .] Un zagal de aquel contorno, / en su templada zampoña, / tocando el Nuevo Troyano, / cantó en la pajiza choza."

EXAMPLE 2. Trochees.

condescension, from good-natured teasing of the mule-driver to outright mockery of the Africans.

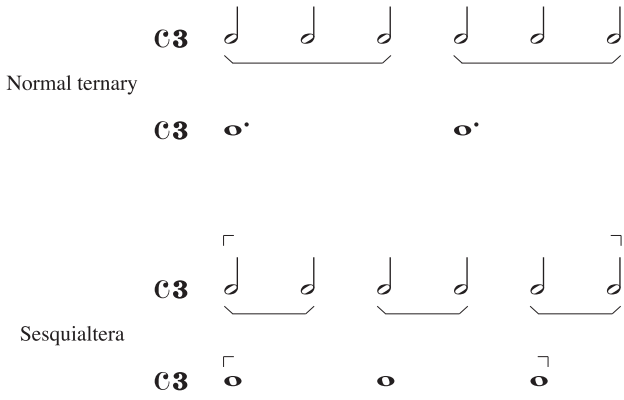
Gutiérrez de Padilla's musical choices have the primary effect of allowing the chorus to declaim the text clearly, in a way that seizes listeners' attention. The composer uses a homophonic texture, with the four voices of Chorus I—three singers and an instrumental bass line scored for *bajón* (dulcian)—all moving in the same rhythms through simple chordal harmonies. They sing in the three-beat meter most commonly used in seventeenth-century villancicos, notated C3 or in the Spanish cursive shorthand CZ.[37] The poetry uses binary stress accents (strong vs. weak), but the ternary groupings of the musical meter give the composer the flexibility to play with both qualitative accents (strong/weak) and quantitative ones (long/short). Gutiérrez de Padilla sets the strophes to a regular rhythmic pattern in which the ensemble moves vigorously in trochees (*AL es- TAB- lo*): these groups are qualitatively strong–weak and quantitatively short–long. He adds extra emphasis and variety to the end of the line with a strong–weak/long–short trochee (*MÁS di- CHO- so*), just as one would do in reading it (ex. 2). He uses the cross-accent pattern known as *sesquialtera* to end the phrase with an even stronger stress on the word "victoria" (ex. 3). In this pattern, colored-in noteheads in the mensural notation cue the musicians to fit three imperfect semibreves in the place of two perfect ones. With this opening, the chorus creates an exciting, upbeat mood: the repeated chords evoke a strumming vihuela or guitar accompaniment and enable the chorus to act collectively like a carnival barker or theatrical master-of-ceremonies. In contrast to the other sections, which all feature solo voices, the uniform movement of the Chorus I here embodies a monolithic group, all in agreement in representing a normative perspective.

El nuevo Troyano: The Shepherds

When the shepherds enter, their diction seems by contrast less conventionalized and more concrete. The shepherds are singing on their way to the manger, just as Biblical interpreters said they did, still dazzled by what

[37] Lorente, *El porqué de la música*, 165; and Cashner, *Villancicos about Music*, 6, 11.

EXAMPLE 3. *Sesquialtera* (broken square brackets indicate mensural coloration).



they have just seen and heard from the angelic choir, and squinting in the stable to see the sign the angel promised.[38] They sing that God has "confined himself" as a tiny child, like "fire amid the snow," where "every piece of straw is a lantern."[39] Symbolically, the title "New Trojan" fits the light-and-fire imagery, since Troy was of course known for burning; and it presages the next scene's parodic "Trojan mule."

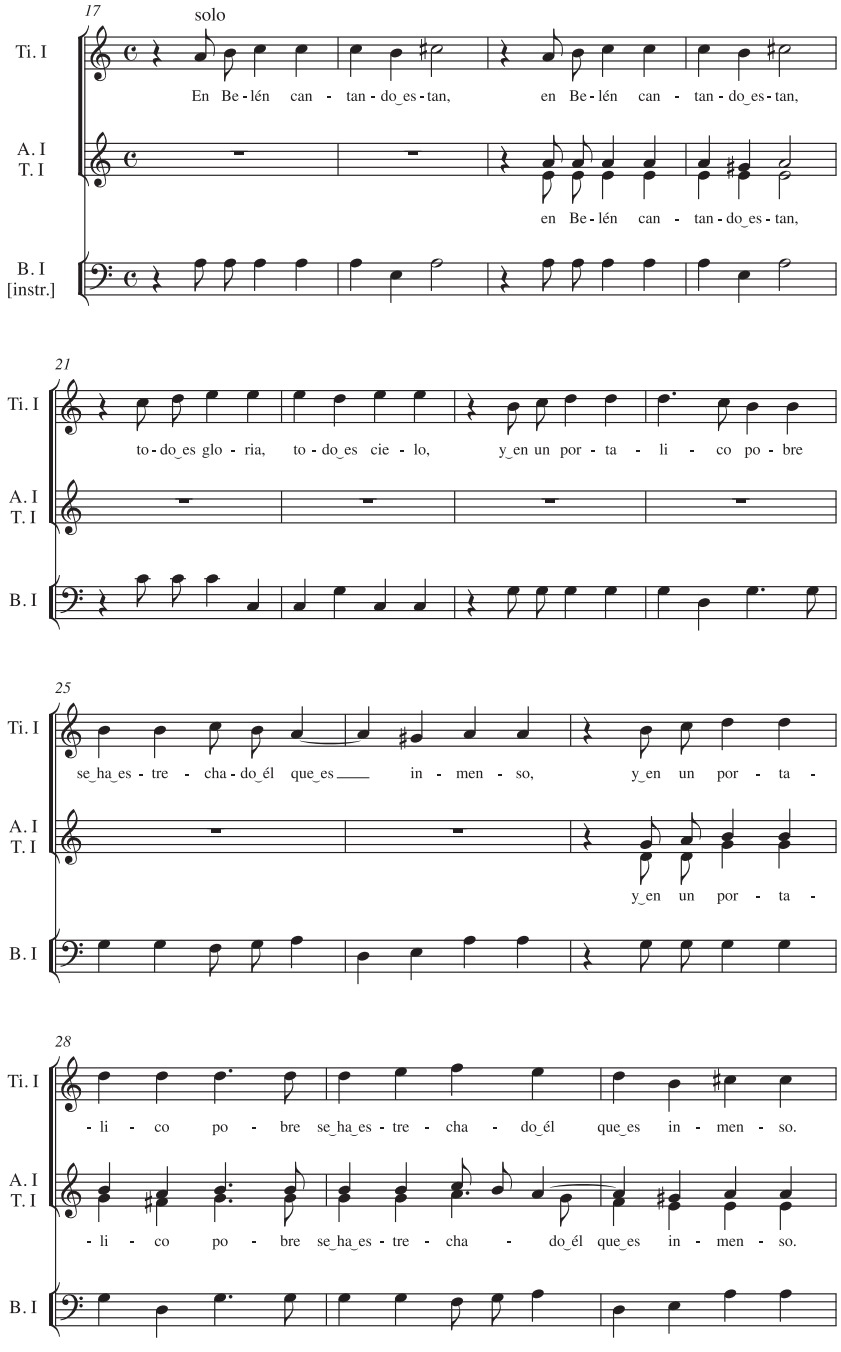
Gutiérrez de Padilla characterizes the shepherds with a completely different type of movement to that of the narrators (ex. 4). The poetry continues in *romance* meter, but the stresses are now iambic rather than trochaic. Gutiérrez de Padilla sets the words to the two-beat musical meter notated C (*compasillo*).[40] The rhythmic movement alternates strong and weak beats that match the poetic stresses (ex. 5). In the musical texture he creates the scene of a shepherd boy leading his fellows through a call-and-response structure with a boy treble (*tiple*), soloist, and chorus. The highly patterned rhythmic motion and phrasing support the conjecture that the *Nuevo Troyano* is an existing song or dance tune. The combination of harmonic and melodic rhythm creates a back-

[38] Lapide, *In quatuor Evangelia*, in Lk. 2.

[39] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 13–24: "En Belén cantando estan, / todo es gloria, todo es cielo, / y en un portalico pobre / se ha estrechado él que es inmenso. // Fuego derrite la nieve, / y entre tanta nieve el fuego / a cada llama bosteza, / lo acendrado deste estremo. // Míranse por todos lados, / en cada paja un lucero, / una antorcha a cada aviso / y un Dios grande aunque pequeño."

[40] On this meter, see Cerone, *El melopeo y maestro*, 537; and Lorente, *El porqué de la música*, 156, 210.

EXAMPLE 4. Sec. 1b, *El nuevo Troyano*, shepherds.



EXAMPLE 5. Duple-meter iambic accentuation.

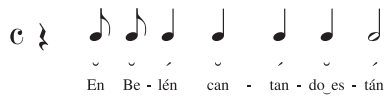


TABLE 2.
Twelve syllables "confined" to the space of eight.

se‿ha‿es-	tre-	cha-	do‿él	que‿es	in-	men-	so
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
y‿un	Dios	gran-	de‿aun-	que	pe-	que-	ño

and-forth shuffling or marching movement. This music does not leap or skip; rather, it stays close to the earth, like the shepherds themselves.

Gutiérrez de Padilla creates an unusual phrase structure here that deepens the meaning of the scene both theologically and dramatically. A soloist begins with a two-measure phrase, and then the chorus imitates the same music, making a combined four-measure phrase for the first poetic line. In the next phrase, however, the soloist begins with a similar two-measure gesture, but then sings the rest of the poetic strophe as a single six-measure-long sentence: "y en un portalico pobre / se ha estrechado él que es inmenso" ("He who is immense has confined himself in a poor little stable").[41] The only way to scan that text in octosyllabic meter is to elide the twelve possible syllables of *se ha estrechado él que es inmenso* into the space of eight (table 2). Thus the composer compresses these words into eight notes in a syncopated rhythm. This is a clever way to use poetic and musical structure to convey the theological concept of the infinite God confining himself to a baby's body, a classic Incarnation trope. It also paints the shepherds' character as craftier than their humble appearance would suggest.

El arriero: The Mule-driver Bartolo and His Mule

Next the choral narrators return with their upbeat triple-meter declamation to introduce Bartolo and his mule. Although his poetic speech is in the same *romance* meter as the narrators and his music is in the same ternary meter, Bartolo's character stands out boldly through the composer's distinct musical choices. The chorus acknowledges Bartolo as

[41] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 15–16.

a character familiar to the congregation ("Next up, Bartolo—you know the one").[42] He was in fact a stock character in Christmas villancicos and in the skits (*entremeses*) of Spanish minor theater, regularly appearing alongside Gil, Pascual, and Bras.[43] This time around, Bartolo is an *arriero*, a merchant who transported his wares by mule and cart. This muleteer is a Quixote-like figure, "a swordsman in days of old," and now a candy vendor.[44] His mule has left the cart and stumbled into the manger in search of straw, and Bartolo follows, braying worse than his beast. He has scarcely begun to flatter "Sir Baby" (*Señor Niño*), apologizing "for all this Troy"—an idiom for a disastrous mess—when he catches himself beginning to swear.[45] He addresses the baby Jesus in language that mixes a military man's deference to a commanding officer with the salty colloquialisms of a highwayman, directed spitefully at the mule.

Bartolo is a man of authority who cannot control his own cart and is shown to be a fool. Not only his diction characterizes him this way; the meter and accentuation as well are highly irregular, and Gutiérrez de Padilla gives him music to match his coarse speech and disordered character (ex. 6). He puts accents on weak syllables, making the soloist sing what should be trochaic (*YA lo DI- je Y‿ES- to SO- bra*) with musical stresses that make it iambic: (*ya LO di- JE y‿es- TO so- BRA*). As though fighting with the mule, the tenor singer is pulled this way and that, until he reasserts his control with a forceful rhythmic emphasis on the normal triple-meter downbeat at the end of the strophe (ex. 7). Gutiérrez de Padilla sets both voice and instrument in high tessituras that would encourage pinched, mulish timbres. Perhaps the dulcian is meant to represent the she-mule herself.

The foolishness and fun of this scene reflected the inversions at the heart of Christmas theology. Another Puebla villancico from the same year begins, "Let us all come to the stable, / let us all look like fools."[46]

[42] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 25–36: "Después Bartolo, él de marras, / arriero de cala y gorra / que fue espadachín de antaño, / y hoy mercader de panochas, // En busca de una mulilla / que se le fue por tramoya, / a darse una buena noche/ en las pajas misteriosas, // Al portal con los pastores / se entró arrojando bramonas / y a quién ocupa el pesebre, / dice como que se entona."

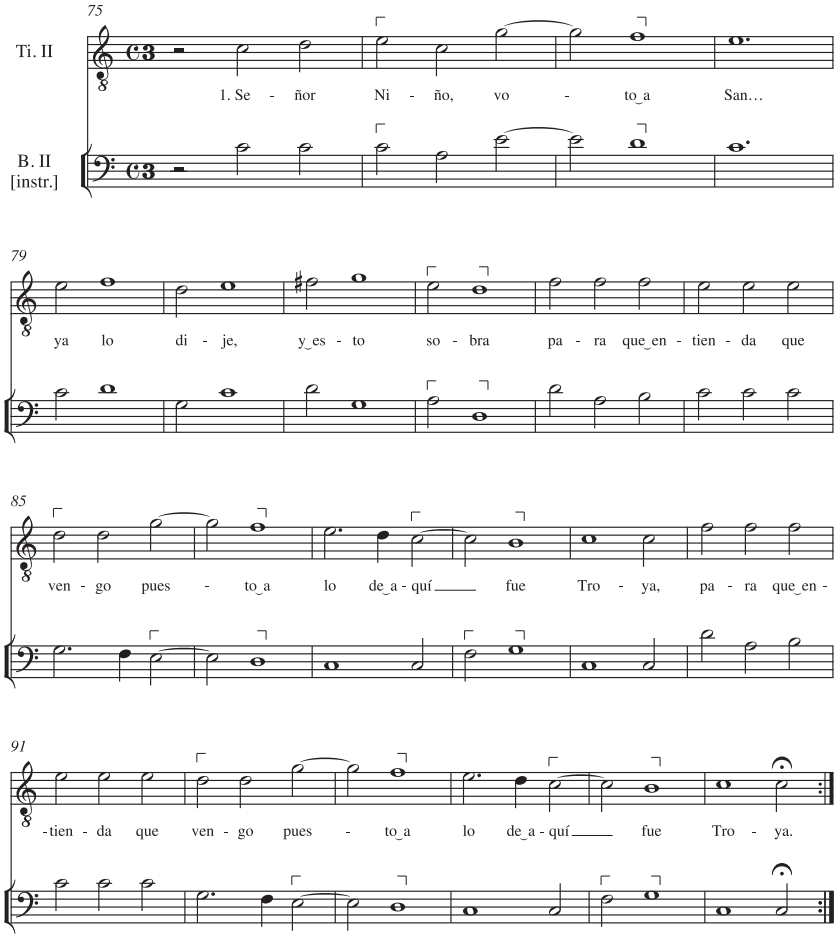
[43] Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, ed., *Colección de entremeses, loas, bailes, jácaras y mojigangas desde fines del siglo XVI a mediados del XVIII* (Madrid: Bailly-Baillière, 1911); and Cashner, *Hearing Faith*, 29–32.

[44] The candy he sells are *panochas*, which (despite the term's vulgar meaning in Mexican slang today) were probably brown-sugar candies related to the *penuche* still made in the southern United States: *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "penuche," www.oed.com.

[45] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 37–40, 45–48: "Señor niño, voto a San . . . / ya lo dije, y esto sobra / para que entienda que vengo / puesto a lo de aquí fue Troya. // [. . .] Es bueno que de mis mulas / la más lucia [sucia?] y la más gorda / me la traiga a este pesebre / sin decir esta es mi boca."

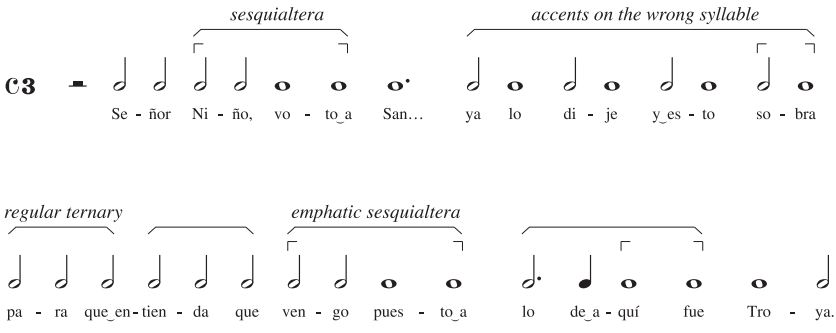
[46] MEX-Pc, Leg. 1/3: *Al portal venimos todos, parecemos bobos.*

EXAMPLE 6. Sec. 2b, *El arriero.*



Bartolo begins the scene as one Biblical type of fool—the stiff-necked, wayward figure of Solomon's Proverbs and Christ's parables—but becomes "enamored" of the Christ-child and in the end joins in the foolishness of childlike faith (Mt. 18:1–6, 1 Cor. 1:23), as he gives out his sweets for all to share and pledges to serve his new boss. In light of the prophecies of Isaiah (9, 40, 52) read in Christmas Matins, Bartolo and his pack-mule would seem to be reconfigured as travelers on the holy "highway" of Is. 35:8–10, on which "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (KJV).

EXAMPLE 7. Rhythmic patterns in the *Arriero* solo



El papalotillo: The (Indigenous) Mountain-folk

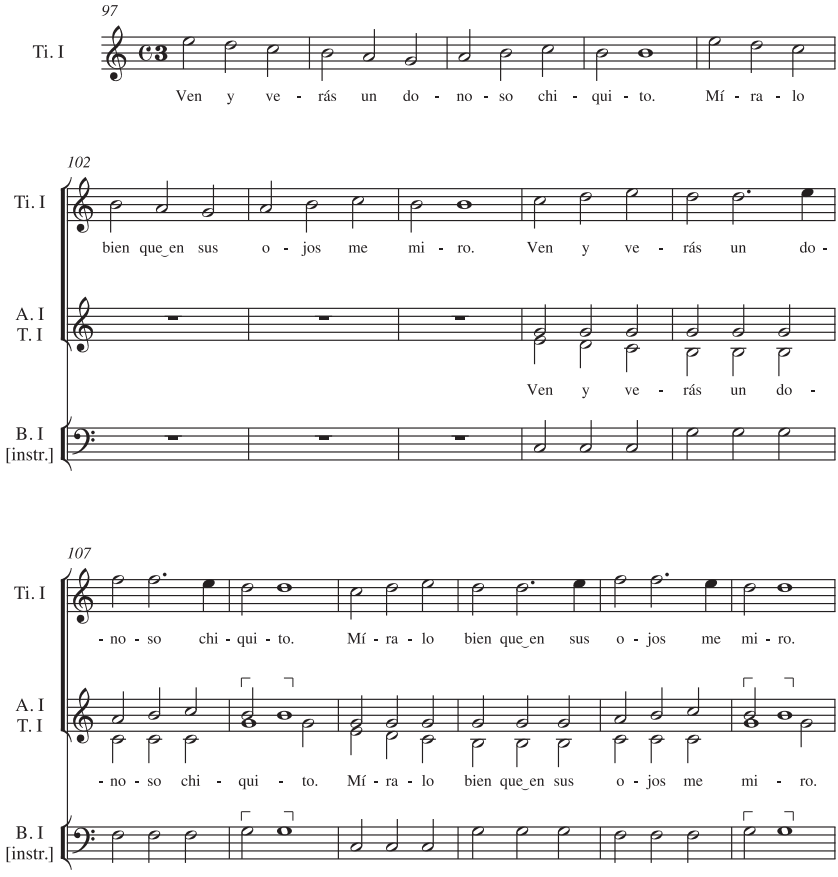
Bartolo introduces the next group as *serranos* or mountain-folk, telling the Christ-child, "They want to do a dance for you, which they call *papalotillo*." The name means "kite" in Spanish, but the term alone suggests that these characters might be Indigenous, as it originally comes from the Náhuatl word *papalotl* (butterfly).[47] Poetry and music again shift dramatically in style to distinguish the new characters, who speak in pairs of fully rhyming eleven-syllable verses. The diction and imagery of the *papalotillo* is plain and clear, without jokes or complex conceits. In stark contrast to Bartolo's language, the poetic accentuation is in a regular dactylic pattern with almost no deviations.

To match this, Gutiérrez de Padilla creates yet another kind of rhythmic motion within the same ternary meter (ex. 8). Unlike every other character's music, there are no irregular rhythms. After the narrators' aggressive trochaic declamation, with emphasis on beats 1 and 2 of each measure, the rustics seem to twirl with gently flowing motion, with a light accent on beat 1 and a secondary accent on beat 3 (ex. 9). The texture and melody are simple: a boy soprano solo sings a call-and-response pattern with a four-voice chorus, and the melody outlines one of the basic "scales" of the day (the "hard" hexachord on G in Guidonian solmization). The lilting music does seem to float in the air like a butterfly.

The language of these *serranos* suggests that they are farm laborers, who manifest some antagonism toward the pastoralists whose livestock

[47] *Diccionario de la Real Academía Española*, 23rd ed., s.v. "papalote," https://dle.rae.es; and Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana* (Mexico City, 1571), s.v. "papalotl."

EXAMPLE 8. Sec. 3, *El papalotillo.*



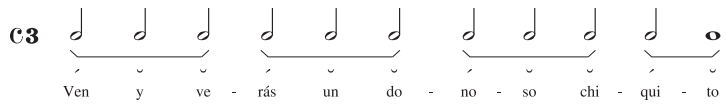
damaged their fields.[48] They say Christ is "a fertile grain hidden in the straw" and that "he will give us a fertile harvest."[49] While the shepherds might use straw for fire or feed, the *serranos* use it for planting. Now, they say, Christ may be "a tiny little shepherd," but "when he is big he will be a *labrador.*"[50] The term denotes not a manual laborer like them but their

[48] Peter Bakewell, *A History of Latin America: Empires and Sequels 1450–1930* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 188–89.

[49] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso,* lines 75–76, 79–82: "Ven y verás un donoso chiquito. / Míralo bien, que en sus ojos me miro. // [. . .] Míralo bien entre pobres alajas, / grano fecundo escondido entre pajas. // Míralo bien que aunque agora se estrecha, / nos ha de dar una fértil cosecha."

[50] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso,* lines 87–88: "Míralo bien, pequeñito pastor, / pues cuando grande será labrador."

EXAMPLE 9. Regular, ternary, dactylic pattern.



employer, the landowner. In the Puebla context, farm laborers from the mountains would have been primarily Indigenous people. The poetry and music mark them as plain, humble country-folk, as disingenuous and playful as children, and this depiction accords with contemporary Spanish attitudes toward Native people. The farmworkers identify with the Christ-child, saying, "Come and you will see a genteel little boy. / Look on him well, for in his eyes I see myself."

La negrilla: The Angolans

For the concluding *negrilla*, the choral narrators introduce the last group as a "troop" of Angolans, "marshaled" by one "Minguelillo" (diminutive for Miguel), who do not want to be left out of the celebration. They mock Minguelillo's voice in racialized terms:

Dejando el tumbacatumba	Leaving the *tumbacatumba*
y gruñendo a lo de Angola	and grunting like the Angolans do,
desenvainó con la voz	he unsheathed his voice
de su tizón La Tizona.	like pulling a sword from his charred log.[51]

Tumbacatumba is apparently a nonsense word referencing both the mythical perpetual drumming of Africans and the sound of their Bantu languages, such as Kikongo. The previous year Gutiérrez de Padilla had his Black characters sing the similar nonsense refrain *tumbucutú, cutú, cutú* in his *Quedito, señores (Ensaladilla).*[52] The narrators describe Minguelillo's singing as "grunting" or "groaning"—like an animal sound—and they associate the vocalization with a stereotypical Angolan identity, *a lo de Angola* (in the Angolan manner). Playing on the image of Minguelillo as leader of a "troop," they compare the act of singing to that of unsheathing a sword. The wordplay on *Tizona/tizón* heightens their mockery: *La Tizona* was El Cid's famous sword, while *tizón* was a charred log. By saying that he has to pull his

[51] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 95–98.

[52] Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Quedito, señores (Ensaladilla)*, MEX-Pc, Leg. 1/2 (Christmas Matins 1651).

voice out of a log, they are characterizing Minguelillo's voice as deep, gravelly, produced with difficulty, and as black in sound as the color of the skin on his muscular, log-like throat.

Like the other groups, the Angolans speak and move in a distinct way. The biggest difference in the poetry is that the characters are incompetent speakers of Spanish. They employ the same type of pidgin dialect used in other villancicos and Spanish theater to represent Blacks (given here with a speculative translation in "proper" Castilian, in italics):

Diga plimo, donde sa	*Diga, primo, ¿dónde está*	Tell me, cousin, where is
la niño de nacimenta	*el niño de nacimiento?*	the baby who was born?
pluque samo su palenta	*porque somos sus parientes*	for we are his relatives
y la venimo a buscá.	*y lo venimos a buscar.*	and we come to seek him.[53]

This so-called *habla de negros* is an artificially corrupted version of Spanish that caricatured African speech as perceived by Spaniards.[54] The poet has followed substitution rules like swapping *r* and *l* (table 3). The linguist John Lipski concludes that villancicos from New Spain are "at best a highly exaggerated version of the Spanish pidgin" spoken by unassimilated Africans.[55] Gutiérrez de Padilla's *negrilla* of the previous year even suggests that this fake dialect was not meant to be understood: his narrators exhort the audience to "hearken[. . .]to the Black nation" as they sing "in half-formed tongues" (*medias lenguas*) that "no one understands / and they don't even understand themselves."[56] The poet portrays the characters as having a limited vocabulary, giving them simple rhymes devoid of elaborate metrics and employing numerous stereotypical dialect-defining markers.

These Africans have come "to seek him" like the Black Magus on the cathedral's retable. In fact, they make the extraordinary claim that they are Christ's relatives. They find the child as the shepherds did, "a candle among the straw," nestled near the ox and *mulita*—perhaps Bartolo's mule.[57] They do not want to wake the child, but they are depicted as unable to resist a primal urge to sing and dance, so they alternate

[53] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 99–102.

[54] Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1995), 21–27.

[55] John M. Lipski, *A History of Afro-Hispanic Language: Five Centuries, Five Continents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 139.

[56] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Quedito, señores (Ensaladilla)*, lines 1–8: "Atentos al baile: / la nación morena / tambien se combidan / y todos se alegran. // Esdrújulos cantan / en sus medias lenguas, / que ni ellos se entienden, / ni hay quién los entienda."

[57] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 103–107: "Aytá, aytá, / cundiro entle pajita / su ojo como treyita / y uno buey y uno mulita / con su baho, cayentá"

TABLE 3.
Rules for creating artificial Black dialect Spanish.

Castilian	"Black Spanish"	Transformation Rule
primo	*plimo*	$r \rightarrow l$
está	*sa*	Omit initial vowel, $st \rightarrow s$
el niño	*la niño*	Swap genders inconsistently
porque	*pluque*	Swap *r* and vowel, $r \rightarrow l$, $o \rightarrow u$ (quasi-Portuguese)

between calling on each other to join in and shushing each other. The characters imitate the Magi by bringing gifts, but instead of the symbolic royal offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Mt. 2:11), they share the homely yet practical gifts of a potato, butter with honey, toys, and diapers.[58] As they say, "We know how it goes" ("savemo habra") with babies, a sentiment that calls to mind both the poverty of these characters and the work of enslaved African women as nannies.

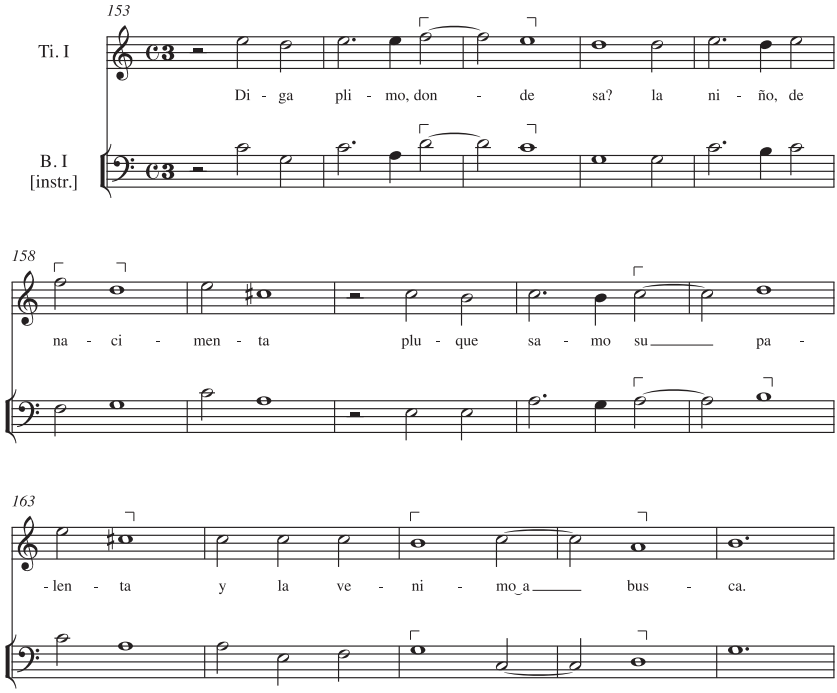
The narrators' introduction sets up a joke for the moment when Minguelillo and his compatriots actually sing. First off, the solo singer does not have a deep, gravelly voice at all—he is a boy soprano. His "cousin" is a high tenor, probably also a boy or adolescent. And despite the mention of swords and troops, there is nothing military-sounding about the music. Gutiérrez de Padilla matches the confused dialect of the Angolans with an equally mixed-up musical style (ex. 10). The introduction is metrically irregular, matching closely the prosody and character of the dialogue (ex. 11). The soloist representing Minguelillo sings irregular patterns composed from uneven groupings of *sesquialtera*, dotted patterns, and short–long groups with forced accents on weak final syllables. His melody moves repetitively within a narrow range in awkward skips and hops with clipped phrase endings. The music portrays a character that is clownish and grotesque, but perhaps also endearing, even cute.

Gutiérrez de Padilla changes styles when he brings in the rest of the ensemble for the *estribillo* to sing *Turu turu yegá* (possibly "Todos, todos llegan," Come on in, everyone) in a more regular, dance-like ternary motion (ex. 12). They emphasize the first beat of each group strongly

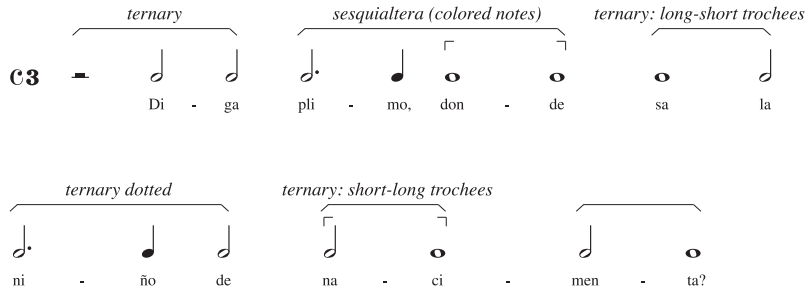
(possibly, "Ahí está, / candela entre pajitas, / su ojo como estrellita, / y un buey y una mulilla / con su bajo callentar").

[58] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 119–129: "Caya, caya, chiquito, aytá. / Que tlaemo plecente, aytá. / Mantiya pañalito, aytá. / Y uno papagayito, aytá. / Que savemo habra. // Mi siñol Manuele, aytá. / ese papa he sablosa, aytá. / pluque sa linda cosa, aytá. / mantequiya con mele, aytá. / ay, Sesú, le, le, le, le, aytá. / ro, ro, ro, ro, caya."

EXAMPLE 10. Sec. 4b, *La negrilla, introducción.*

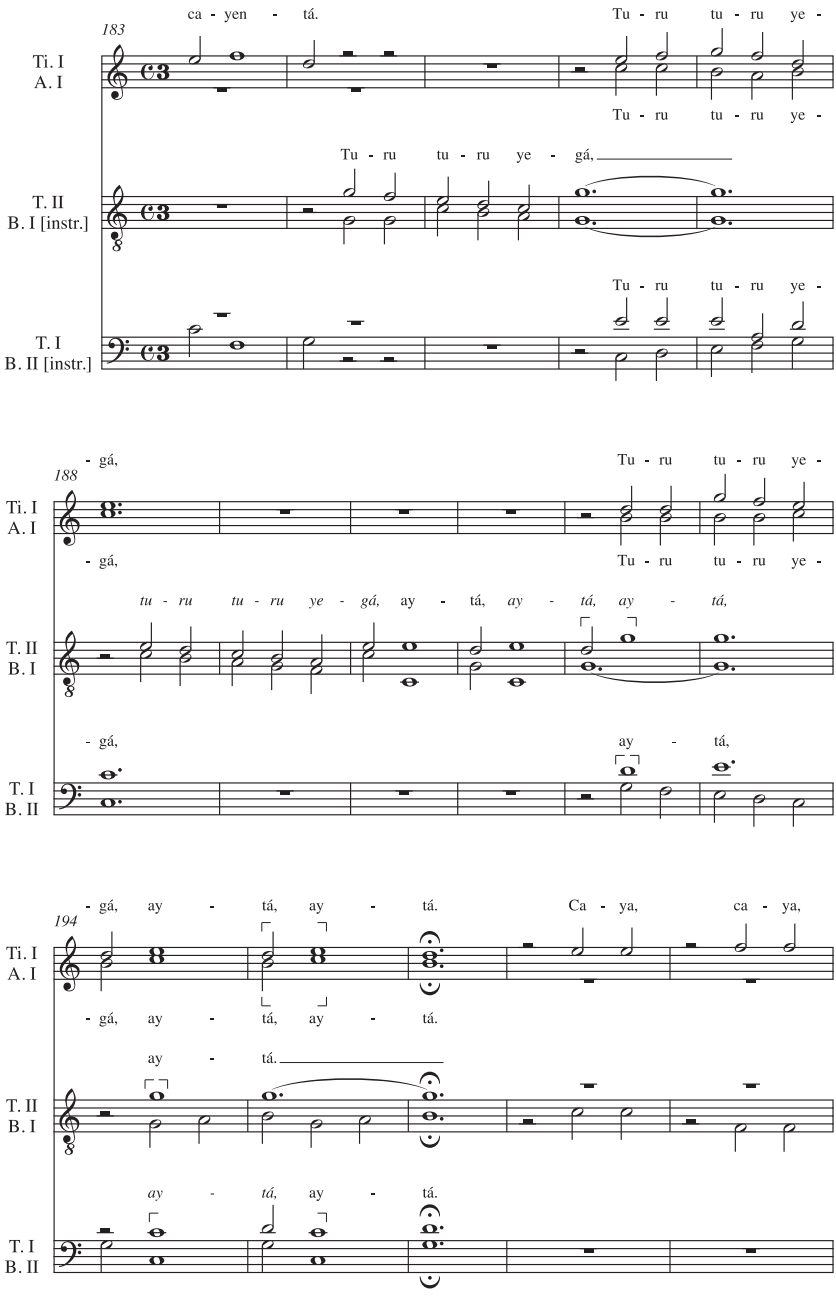


EXAMPLE 11. Jumbled rhythm in the introductory dialogue.

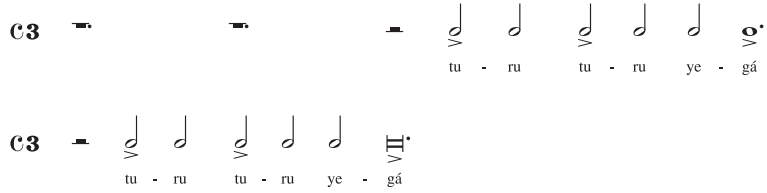


after which syncopations propel them toward the next downbeat, and their melodic patterns keep descending in a scale and then jumping back up, creating the effect of a vigorous, leaping dance (ex. 13). Most of the textual accents are on the end of lines, which would be unusual for

EXAMPLE 12. Sec. 4b, *Negrilla*: Entry of the full ensemble.



EXAMPLE 13. Dance-like rhythm in the full-ensemble section (showing implied accents).



Castilian, and allows for a more emphatic kind of musical phrasing. The voices here move somewhat recklessly between chords on the downbeats, as though the singers do not know how to make proper counterpoint. The Angolan characters perform with wild, barely restrained jubilation.

The Polymetrical Gloria: Slaves and Angels Together

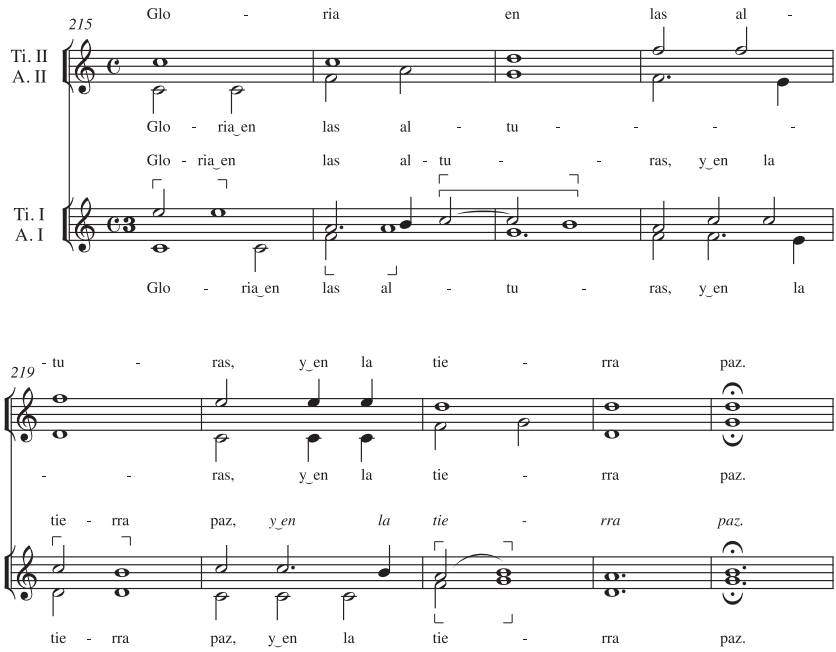
The *ensaladilla* reaches its climax when Gutiérrez de Padilla suddenly introduces a group of angels to join the song of the Africans. Minguelillo sings in dialect, "Listen, for we are singing like the angels" ("sucuchá, que cantamo lo angelito"),[59] and then his group sings "Glory be to God in the highest," the angelic song from Luke's gospel, in uncorrupted Castilian. Their music continues the triple-meter C3 movement of the *negrilla*, including *sesquialtera* and trochaic syncopations. Just after Minguelillo says they will sing like the angels, the bass drops out and two voice parts enter that have thus far been silent: the two highest boys' voices of the second chorus, apparently representing the angels. These join the Angolans in singing Gloria with the same words—but their music is in duple C meter (ex. 14). The highest angelic voice may quote the intonation of a common plainchant "Gloria in excelsis" from the Mass liturgy (beginning C–D–F–E).[60]

This appears to be a unique example in villancicos of having two meters sung at once. The singers must strictly maintain the three-to-two proportion of minims between the two meters (C3 and C). Gutiérrez de Padilla originally composed this passage in a single meter with *a 3* texture, that is, for three voices (Tiple and Altus I plus Tiple II) all in C3. But

[59] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, line 113.

[60] This exact intonation is specified for double and solemn feasts (such as Christmas) in the official Roman missal authorized by Clement VIII: *Missale Romanum, Ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilij Tridentini restitutum, Pii V. Pont. Max. iussu editum, et Clementis VIII. auctoritate recognitum* (Antwerp, 1627), 294. See also *Liber Usualis* (Tournai: Desclée & Cie., 1956), 26.

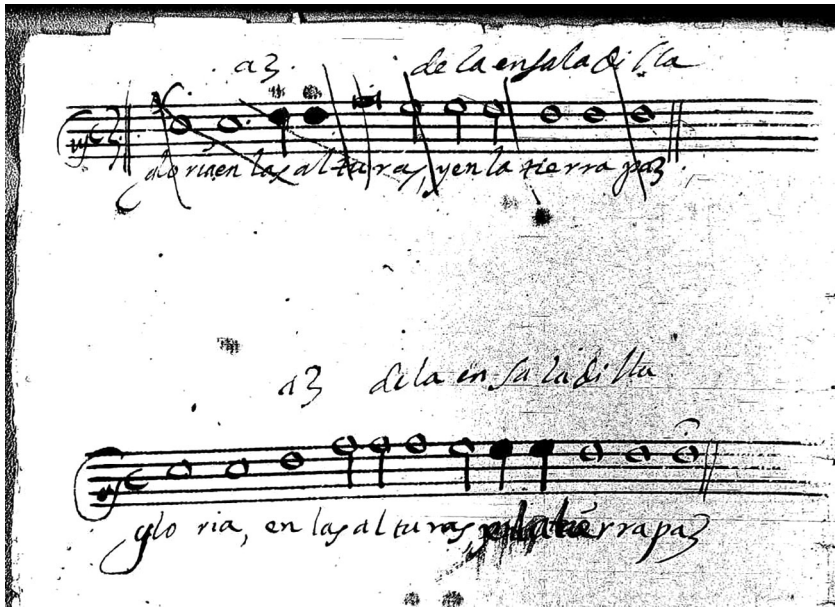
EXAMPLE 14. Sec. 4c, Polymetrical Gloria.



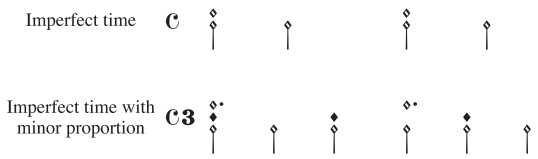
sometime after all the parts were copied, he crossed out the original Tiple II part and replaced it with the new version in C (fig. 1). He found a blank page in the Altus II partbook to notate a second voice in C and made several adjustments to the Chorus I parts to fit the new polymetrical idea. Although there were now four voices, he probably left the heading *a 3* as a rehearsal mark so he did not have to correct all six other parts.

He constructs a hierarchy of musical meters in which the duple meter of the angels ranks higher than the triple meter of the Angolans (ex. 15). Putting triple meter below duple meter might seem to reverse the polarity of the well-known medieval symbolism where ternary meter symbolized the Trinity, but in fact C3 ranked lower in the symbolic hierarchy of Spanish church music than C. Spanish composers used C or ¢ for solemn sacred polyphony with texts in Latin, and C3 for the comparatively worldly villancicos in the vernacular. The meter C3 or CZ was *tiempo imperfecto de proporción menor*, a proportion of duple C, such that there were three minims per semibreve in C3 in proportion to the two in C. Above the lower angel voice's movement in C minims, Gutiérrez de

FIGURE 1. Manuscript of Tiple II partbook: Gloria, original in triple meter and correction in duple.



EXAMPLE 15. Hierarchy of musical meters in original mensural notation (black notes in C3 indicate *sesquialtera*).



Padilla creates yet a higher rhythmic level in the top voice: it moves in semibreves at half the rate of the other, as though in ¢. In the rhythmic motion per measure, then, there is a 3:2:1 proportion between Chorus I, Altus II, and Tiple II.

The setting embodies both unity and variety, similarity and difference, in a quintessentially Neoplatonic manner. The two angelic voices move primarily in perfect second-species counterpoint (two notes against one), in all consonant intervals with emphasis on perfect fifths

and octaves. The lowest Angolan voice (A. I) mirrors the pitches of the corresponding angelic voice (A. II) and even matches its rhythmic divisions with near equivalents in ternary meter. The Angolan voices also imitate each other rhythmically: the treble passes off his starting syncopated gesture (written with blackened noteheads) to the alto; later the voices swap two-measure patterns (mm. 218–19 vs. 220–21) like a rhythmic voice exchange. At several points, the four voices sing multiple permutations of the two meters at once, with the triple-meter versions imperfectly imitating the duple paradigms. For example, in m. 218 the top angel voice sings two minims while the other angel sings a dotted-minim–semiminim figure. The Angolans mirror this in ternary, with the top voice singing three minims and the bottom one, a minim–dotted-minim–semiminim figure.

In this way Gutiérrez de Padilla forms a contrast between different levels of earthly musics and maps it onto the hierarchy of earthly and heavenly music, pointing listeners upwards in the chain of being. The Gloria embodies a trope, cultivated across confessional lines in the seventeenth century, of using complex imitative counterpoint to point to the music of heaven.[61] The effect is of hearing all the possible layers of rhythm reverberating against each other at once, like a glimpse of celestial clockwork. In the midst of a pseudo-African dance, the heavens break open and the congregation can hear for a brief moment an echo of the true music of the world beyond. Suddenly it becomes clear that "little Miguel" and his "troop" are types of Saint Michael the Archangel and the heavenly hosts—central figures in the devotional world of the "city of the angels." In Neoplatonic terms, the highest rational beings join in harmony with the lowest ones, while each remains on its own plane.

The World behind the Text

What correspondences might there be between the way characters move in Gutiérrez de Padilla's imaginary community of Bethlehem and the rhythms of life in colonial Puebla? I argue that the characters in the *ensaladilla* can all be matched to categories of people in the world "behind the text." Evidence for Puebla's muleteers, Indigenous people, and Angolans, and their links to the composer, enables us to understand the reciprocal relationship between social representations and social structures.

[61] David Yearsley, "Towards an Allegorical Interpretation of Buxtehude's Funerary Counterpoints," *Music & Letters* 80 (1999): 183–206. Schütz even hid choirboys in the balcony to sing angelic counterpoint; see Gregory S. Johnston, "Rhetorical Personification of the Dead in 17th-Century German Funeral Music: Heinrich Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien* (1636) and Three Works by Michael Wiedemann (1693)," *Journal of Musicology* 9 (1991): 186–213.

Bartolo the *Arriero*: Muleteers on the Puebla Trade Routes

Muleteers (*arrieros*) were common figures in Puebla, often leading large pack-trains along the dangerous trade route between Mexico City and the port of Veracruz, or making shorter treks across town. *Arrieros* in New Spain came from multiple social strata and racial categories: in seventeenth-century records 53% were *indios*, 25% *mestizos*, and 14% *españoles* (Spaniards); it was also one of the common occupations of Black slaves.[62] Their social position might be compared to that of long-haul truckers in the United States today.[63]

In the *ensaladilla*, Bartolo's description as an *espadachín* (swordsman) seems like a distinctly Spanish characterization. Listeners in Puebla would have encountered rough characters like this in the square or on the road to Oaxaca, and perhaps some of them did carry on the swaggering ethos of the Spanish soldiery the way Bartolo does. Bartolo is selling the sweets from his own cart, which suggests he is a small-business proprietor transporting his own wares. The *panocha* candies he sells are a distinct Puebla inflection, as the city was famed for the candies made by nuns on its Calle de los Dulces, where sweets of all kinds are still sold.

Gutiérrez de Padilla himself would have had occasion to interact with muleteers as part of his private business ventures. Beginning in 1633 notarial records document the composer's involvement with his musical assistant Simón Martínez in a wind-instrument business.[64] Gutiérrez de Padilla commissioned a craftsman to build the *bajones* and *chirimías* (dulcians and shawms) that he and Martínez sold down the road to Oaxaca.

Shepherds and Farm laborers: Indigenous Peoples

Puebla residents would have imagined the Biblical shepherds through what they knew of the pastoralists of central Mexico, who were mostly Indigenous people. The shepherds' imagery of fire amid the snow is notable, since snowfall would not have been common at Christmas in most of the Spanish Empire (or, indeed, in Palestine). In Puebla, though, fire and snow went together, as the city was built in the shadow

[62] Bernd Hausberger, "En el camino: En busca de los arrieros novohispanos," *Historia Mexicana* 64 (2014): 65–104, at 89; and Peter Boyd-Bowman, "Negro Slaves in Early Colonial Mexico," *The Americas* 26 (1969): 134–51, at 146.

[63] Thanks to Pablo Sierra Silva for this insight.

[64] Archivo General de Notarias de Puebla (AGNP), Notaría no. 4 (caja 147), Protocolos de Alonso Corona Vásquez, Año de 1633, f. 1166r–1166v, in Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil," 218–19.

of two white-capped volcanoes. Shepherds were central to Puebla's textile-based economy, and they "watched their flocks by night" (Lk. 2:8) on the slopes of nearby Mount Popocatépetl.

The scene with the "mountain folk" seems even more clearly to depict Indigenous people. As the characters perform their *papalotillo* dance with its Náhuatl-derived name, the representation reinforced Spaniards' association of Native Americans with dancing and their ongoing efforts to regulate their dances.[65] At a brisk tempo, the music of this section might suggest the spinning dance of the Indian *voladores*. Still today, these "flyers" perform death-defying acrobatic acts, tying themselves to the top of poles and spinning around them.[66] An Indigenous chronicle of the Puebla neighborhood of San Juan del Río records one occasion on which this ritual turned to disaster, when "the pole broke in three parts" on the same day that Queen Isabel died (October 6, 1644).[67] The childlike representation of the *serranos* accorded with the Spanish laws that treated Native Americans like children and with the paternalistic policies of Bishop Palafox.[68]

Gutiérrez de Padilla had a personal relationship with an Indigenous craftsman as part of his wind-instrument business with Simón Martínez. In 1639 he entered into a contract with one Pedro Martín, identified as an *indio* born in Oaxaca.[69] Martín, a maker of *tudeles* (part of the dulcian), sackbuts, and trumpets, agreed to "enter into service" of Gutiérrez de Padilla for two years (May 1639–41). Martín was to set up a workshop to build these wind instruments in the chapelmaster's house, located across the street from the cathedral archive (now Avenida 2 Sur). Martín supplied his "hands, labor, tools, and water for soldering" and Gutiérrez de Padilla supplied the brass, silver, and other matériel. The craftsman was also charged with "traveling outside the city to tune those instruments that they had gone to sell." In exchange, the chapelmaster pledged to pay Martín a salary for his work and teach him musical fundamentals:

[65] Paul A. Scolieri, *Dancing the New World: Aztecs, Spaniards, and the Choreography of Conquest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).

[66] Grazia Tuzi, "The Voladores Dance: Traces of the Past for the Interpretation of the Present," *Flower World: Music Archeology of the Americas* 2 (2013): 159–76.

[67] Lidia E. Gómez García, Celia Salazar Exaire, and María Elena Stefanón López, eds., *Anales del barrio de San Juan del Río: Crónica indígena de la ciudad de Puebla, siglo XVII / Transcripción y traducción en el siglo XVIII por Don Joaquín Alexo Meabe* (Puebla: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2000), f. 8.

[68] Bakewell, *A History of Latin America*, 159; and Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Virtues of the Indian/Virtudes del indio: An Annotated Translation*, ed. and trans. Nancy H. Fee, introduction by Alejandro Cañeque (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

[69] AGNP, Notaría no. 3 (caja 80), Protocolos de Juan Guerra, Año de 1639, legajo V, f. 596r–596v, in Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil," 231–33.

> In addition to this, he shall teach him to play bajón and chirimía, and to sing polyphony correctly [cantar diestro canto de órgano]; so that at the end of said two years, he will know that which is necessary in order to be a *ministril* [church instrumentalist] and cantor, and to give him good treatment and not dismiss him; otherwise he shall pay him said salary as if he had served him, and the Indian may study with another teacher said polyphony and playing said instruments.[70]

Martín thus pledged himself to be both Gutiérrez de Padilla's assistant and apprentice. No record has yet been found that Martín later made good on his education in the employ of an ecclesiastical chapel, but it is certainly possible that he became a *ministril*, if not in Puebla, then in Oaxaca. Indians frequently served as instrumentalists in Spanish American cathedrals and in their own parish churches, as in the many cases documented in Bolivia and Peru.[71] In the contract the interpreter Jusepe Baptista vouched for Martín both as a skilled crafstman and as a "ladino en lengua castellana," meaning he could speak Spanish and was well assimilated.[72] Like the mountain-folk in the *papalotillo* with their plain diction, Martín could express himself clearly enough in Spanish for his employer to communicate with him and trust him.

Minguelillo and His Troop: Enslaved Central Africans

Living under the same roof with Pedro Martín was an Angolan man named Juan, enslaved by the chapelmaster. Notarial documents record that on January 22, 1635, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, identified as *maestro de capilla de la catedral*, purchased a new slave for the sum of 380 pesos from Captain Tomás Méndez of Veracruz through his intermediary in Puebla, Martín Muñoz. One document describes this enslaved man as a fourteen-year-old *negro Angola*, while the other simply calls him "Juan Angola," just like "El Angola Minguelillo" in the villancico.[73] Prior to 1640, most of the African slaves sold in Puebla were brought through traders from the Portuguese colony of Angola and the neighboring independent kingdom of Kongo.[74] Gutiérrez de Padilla was given four

[70] Original quoted in Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil," 221–23.

[71] Bernardo Illari, "Polychoral Culture: Cathedral Music in La Plata (Bolivia), 1680–1730" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001); and Baker, *Imposing Harmony*.

[72] Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (Madrid, 1611), s.v. "ladino."

[73] AGNP, Notaría no. 4 (caja 150), Protocolos de Alonso Corona, January 1635, f. 83v, courtesy Pablo Sierra Silva; and AGNP, Notaría no. 3 (caja 75), Protocolos de Juan Guerra, Año de 1635, legajo V, ff. 1064r–1065r, in Mauleón Rodríguez, "Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla desde el ámbito civil," 220–221.

[74] Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico*.

months to pay off the debt, and his instrument business and the extra payment he received for composing villancicos would have helped him do so.[75]

The Performers: Spaniards and Their Descendants

The performers of the Puebla Cathedral ensemble in 1652 were apparently all men and boys of Spanish descent and high social status, to judge from the names in a 1651 roster in the cathedral chapter acts.[76] The chapelmaster was from Málaga and lived in southern Spain until he was thirty. Based on the names in the performing parts, the role of Bartolo was played by the singer and harpist Nicolás Griñón, who had just been rehired as a cantor by the cathedral chapter on December 20, 1652, after a stint at Mexico City Cathedral.[77] The dulcian part representing the she-mule may have been played by Simón Martínez, described in Gutiérrez de Padilla's business filing as a *ministril bajón*. In the *negrilla*, the part of Minguelillo, written for an unchanged boy treble voice, was performed by the altar boy Francisco Rodríguez.[78] The tenor voice that answers him was supplied by the versatile Griñón, presumably adapting his voice and manner from his earlier role as Bartolo.

Knowing who the performers were reveals that behind the representation of each group in the villancico stood at least two groups of real people: those portrayed and those portraying them. Those in the first category could be defined by their labor as shepherds, muleteers, farmhands, slaves, and servants, or by their ethnicity and social position as lower-class Spaniards, Native Americans, and Africans. In the second

[75] For the terms of his contract, see Robert Stevenson, "The 'Distinguished Maestro' of New Spain: Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 35 (1955): 363–73.

[76] MEX-Pc, Actas del cabildo (AC) 12, ff. 354–55; Omar Morales Abril, "La música en la catedral de Puebla de los Ángeles (1546–1606). I: Magisterio de capilla," *Heterofonía* 129 (July–December 2003): 9–47. More research is needed, however, since there were two Black performers in the ensemble before Gutiérrez de Padilla's tenure: see Omar Morales Abríl, "El esclavo negro Juan de Vera: Cantor, arpista y compositor de la catedral de Puebla (*florevit* 1575–1617)," in *Historia de la música en Puebla* (Puebla: Secretaría de Cultura del Estado de Puebla, Dirección de Música, 2010), 47–62; and Alfredo Nava Sánchez, "El cantor mulato Luis Barreto: La vida singular de una voz en la catedral de México en el amanecer del siglo XVII," in *Lo sonoro en el ritual catedralicio: Iberoamérica, siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Patricia Díaz Cayeros (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2007), 105–20.

[77] MEX-Pc, AC 12, f. 786.

[78] A 1651 payment record in the chapter acts described Rodríguez as "monacillo desta Santa Iglesia y cantor" (MEX-Pc, AC 12, f. 393, December 22), and in that year his name appears in the Tiple I and II villancico partbooks, without the title *Señor* that the adult performers used. By 1655 his voice seems to have changed, as his name then appears in the Tenor I part.

category were musicians from the Spanish mainland (termed *españoles* or *peninsulares*) like Gutiérrez de Padilla, other educated adult clerics and musical artisans raised in New Spain, and male children of the colonial elite (typically called *criollos*, though this is a simplification of the complex Spanish caste system).[79] This means that the world within the performative text is really a Spanish world, a manifestation of the Spaniards' biases, fascinations, and fantasies. The prejudice of the composer and performers shaped their portrayals, and their distorted representations reveal how the colonial elite saw these other groups. The *ensaladilla*, taken by itself, is a window into Spanish attitudes, not a record of subaltern voices. If anything it is a document of how the Spanish *suppressed* those voices, by speaking for them and controlling their representation. But the text is also full of clues that we can follow toward the real people in the local community whose labor made colonial society possible. The Spanish priest Gutiérrez de Padilla's work as a musician among the colonial elite depended on the paid labor of an Indigenous craftsman, Pedro Martín, and the forced labor of an African man given the name Juan Angola, to name only the specific documented connections. He could never have imagined the world he built for Puebla's Christmas in 1652, with its shepherds, farmhands, and Angolans, without the real Indigenous, African, and lower-class Spanish *poblanos* who were familiar to him and his audience.

The specific case of the composer's relationship with the Indian craftsman Pedro Martín reveals much about the Native role in creating the music of the New World, since Martín literally made the instruments with which the music was played. In the mule-driver scene, the kind of person with whom Martín probably negotiated shipping rates for metals to make dulcians is represented by a duo with that very instrument, probably played by Simón Martínez, the chapelmaster's other partner in the same business. At the same time, Martín was working his way up the social ladder by combining indentured servitude with an apprenticeship in music.

In Front of the Text: The Imagined Worlds of Colonial Society

The world in front of a text, in Ricoeur's conception, is the horizon of imaginative possibilities that opens up as a result of an encounter between the reader and the text. What possibilities, then, did Gutiérrez de Padilla's music create for its first hearers? And what does this representation of society allow us today to see that we could not otherwise? The characters in the imaginary world are certainly caricatures, created by people at the top of the social hierarchy impersonating those below

[79] Jesús A. Ramos-Kittrell, *Playing in the Cathedral: Music, Race, and Status in New Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

them. Readers encountering this text today must wrestle with the fact that these caricatures from another time must have had some basis in lived experience *as the creators perceived it*. In addition to the dialect of the Angolan characters, their music must have sounded African in some way to Spanish listeners. Having said that, the caricature by itself does not allow us to separate fact from fiction. No one has yet demonstrated a concrete connection between Spanish villancicos and African musical traditions, comparable to the identifiable continuities in instrument-building, performance practices, and rhythmic patterns that Gerhard Kubik and others have demonstrated between traditional music of Angola and Brazil and traced back to the colonial period.[80] There are no distinct rhythms or styles in the *ensaladilla* that can be matched with known African legacies in the New World. The most likely feature reminiscent of central African traditions would be the call-and-response texture, but the composer uses that texture throughout the whole piece. Some of the elements that listeners today perceive as African, or at least exotic, may actually stem from earlier Moorish influence on Iberian music, such as can be heard in *flamenco*.[81] Such was the perception of Spanish vernacular music by the Dutch polymath Constantijn Huygens in 1673, who appraised a set of songs (*tonos*) and villancicos sent to him from Madrid as Moorish-influenced in general: "I am very grateful," he wrote, "to see these Spanish airs in musical notes, where I see the true genius of the people, very African, in my opinion, and it will never entirely free itself from that Punic and Libyan from overseas."[82]

Whether or not Gutiérrez de Padilla had an ear for African music, there is evidence that his ensemble's impersonation of Native and African people mirrored those people's own practices of impersonation. Africans across the Ibero-American world celebrated Black Kings festivals at Epiphany (*fiesta de los Reyes* or the Festival of Kings in Spanish). Confraternities of Africans, enslaved and free, elected a whole royal court and staged elaborate processions and dances in their honor, wearing scarlet garments and carrying swords.[83] Cécile Fromont shows that these

[80] Gerhard Kubik, *Angolan Traits in Black Music, Games and Dances of Brazil: A Study of African Cultural Extensions Overseas* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar, 1979); and Walter Hirschberg, "Early Historical Illustrations of West and Central African Music," *African Music* 4 (1969): 6–18.

[81] John Walter Hill, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580–1750* (New York: Norton, 2005), 266; and K. Meira Goldberg, "Sonidos Negros: On the Blackness of Flamenco," *Dance Chronicle* 37 (2014): 85–113.

[82] Letter from Huygens to Sébastien Chièze, May 30, 1673, quoted and trans. in Rudolf Rasch, "Music in Spain in the 1670s through the Eyes of Sébastien Chièze and Constantijn Huygens," *Anuario musical* 62 (2007): 97–124, at 111.

[83] Cécile Fromont, "Dancing for the King of Congo from Early Modern Central Africa to Slavery-Era Brazil," *Colonial Latin American Review* 22 (2013): 184–208. On Black confraternities, see Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico*, 161.

practices originated in the intercultural accommodations between African and Portuguese culture in the Christian kingdom of Kongo. New-World Africans, in turn, adapted these traditions to their colonial context. Through these practices of impersonation, Africans imagined their own vision of society in which they, like the Black Magus, were the kings. Christmastide *negrillas* likely reflected Spanish perceptions of these festivals, though more evidence will be needed to understand the connection. Manuel Carlos de Brito relates accounts of Africans in Portugal wearing scarlet uniforms (like those worn in Kongo *sangamento* dances) and playing marimbas in processions for Corpus Christi and the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. Brito recalls seeing a villancico from the Portuguese Royal Chapel that "refers to young 'blacks' dressed in scarlet costumes and red caps just as they appeared in the Corpus Christi processions."[84] When Gutiérrez de Padilla's chorus introduces Minguelillo as leading a quasi-military troop and compares his voice to a sword, this makes sense as a reference to the swords and military regalia worn by Black confraternity members in their festivals.

The Indigenous people of central Mexico cultivated their own practices of impersonation. Palafox sent pastoral visitors to regulate worship in Native parish churches of the settlements around Puebla.[85] In a 1644 instruction for these visitors, the priest Pedro Salmerón, who worked closely with Palafox on ceremonial rules, aimed to stamp out certain abuses that he considered dangerous, "irreverent," or "indecent," but he took for granted that Indians would dance in church buildings.[86] He forbade the dance of the *voladores*, and he specified that when dancing, the Indians should not carry crosses or holy images in their hands, nor should they dance on top of altars.[87] Admitting that "they do this a lot," Salmerón pleaded that "the Indians in their dances should not dress in women's clothing" because the practice led to "gravest sins." Not only did men dress as women, but apparently Indians had a custom of

[84] Manuel Carlos de Brito, "Sounds from the Discoveries: Musical Aspects of the Portuguese Expansion," *Review of Culture* 26 (1996): 5–22, at 19, although he does not cite the title.

[85] Lidia E. Gómez García and Gustavo Mauleón Rodríguez, "Un acercamiento a las capillas musicales en los pueblos indios del obispado de Puebla-Tlaxcala, siglos XVI–XVIII," in *Ritual sonoro en catedral y parroquias*, ed. Sergio Navarrete Pellicer (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 2013), 175–202.

[86] Pedro Salmerón, "Apuntamientos para la visita del clero, y ciudad de los Angeles" (Manuscript, Puebla: Biblioteca Palafoxiana, R419/074, location no. P3/C348/L2); and Jorge Garibay Álvarez and Jesús Joel Peña Espinosa, *Inventario general de manuscritos de la Biblioteca Palafoxiana* (Puebla: Secretaría de Gobierno del Estado de Puebla / Madrid: Fundación Mapfre Tavera, 2004), no. 2526. For the ceremonial rules, see Pedro Salmerón, *Ceremonial de las ceremonias del santo sacrificio de la Missa: conforme al Missal reformado por la santidad de Vrbano Octauo, y comentos del doctor Bartolome Gauanto, consultor de la Sacra Congregacion Romana de Ritos* (Mexico City, 1647).

[87] Salmerón, "Apuntamientos para la visita del clero," paras. 9–12.

impersonating Spanish clerics as well. Salmerón found this unacceptable:

> In almost all the Indian neighborhoods it is a custom that they set up a gallows, that they make a representation of a hanged man, that they carry a Christ [figure], that someone in the garb of a cleric assists with this, says the Creed, etc.—it is indecency: at least if it is going to be allowed no cross should be carried, nor Creed said, etc., nor should there be a person in the habit of a churchman.[88]

Salmerón and Palafox may have been concerned about the persistence of masking traditions in both Native American and African religions.[89] The first Provincial Council of Mexico in 1555 had allowed Native dances but permitted "neither ancient insignias nor masks that raise any suspicion."[90] In addition to idolatry, the "gravest sins" probably included homosexual behavior. In 1658 fourteen men were burned in Mexico City for sodomy, out of 123 accused. Most of them were Indian, Black, or mixed-race residents of Puebla or the capital, along with a contingent of Spanish students (and notably, one harp player).[91] Their trial records document that many of these men enjoyed dancing dressed as women. In the musical representation, then, the Spaniard Bartolo could have several reasons to worry that the mountain-folk would "try something."[92]

Real Indian dancing could be transgressive in polyvalent ways. With regard to Africans, the threat of not just "indecency" but actual rebellion may have motivated Salmerón to warn Puebla clergy to investigate such practices not only among Indians but "also Blacks, mulattoes, and mestizos."[93]

It is sharply ironic that in Salmerón's decree, Indians were not allowed to dress and speak like clerics, while every year at Christmas, a group of Spanish cathedral canons, priests, and altar boys put on a sort of musical pageant impersonating not only Indians but the whole lower class of Puebla society. In the 1651 Christmas *ensaladilla*, these men had even represented female characters.[94] In real life, of course, there was no

[88] Salmerón, "Apuntamientos para la visita del clero," para. 13.

[89] Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of African Societies to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 83–84, 111, 235–36, 254–59.

[90] Quoted and translated by Lorenzo Candelaria, "Bernardino de Sahagún's *Psalmodia Christiana*: A Catholic Songbook from Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67 (2014): 619–84, at 636.

[91] Serge Gruzinski, "The Ashes of Desire: Homosexuality in Mid-Seventeenth-Century New Spain," trans. Ignacio López-Calvo, in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 197–214.

[92] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Al establo más dichoso*, lines 67–68: "Y pida que estos serranos / no pretenden otra cosa."

[93] Salmerón, "Apuntamientos para la visita del clero," para. 12.

[94] Gutiérrez de Padilla, *Quedito, señores (Ensaladilla)*.

problem with Indians imitating the Spanish: Gutiérrez de Padilla's Native assistant was an assimilated *ladino* whose objective was to possess the same skills as the Spanish cathedral cantors. Indeed, this kind of assimilation and training was one of the primary goals of the colonial project. But for Indians or Africans to dress as Spaniards in a way that might mock them, or even just to imitate their ceremonies without the proper respect, was "indecency."

There is a key difference, though, between the Spanish representation of society and the practices of impersonation it imitated: the Spanish actually held the power to require everyone to fit within their way of imagining society. The Spanish colonizers forced people who otherwise would have identified as Mexica or Kongo to navigate a society in which they could only be *indios* or *negros*. Both concepts—the Indian and the Black—are imaginary. There is no real *indio* or *negro*, and thus we should not expect to find any in ethnic villancicos. What we find instead is a performative text that worked powerfully in its time to shape those imaginary conceptions, which in turn shaped the actual lived experiences of the people who were given those labels. This music validated and perpetuated an unjust society, appeasing the consciences of slaveholders while feeding their appetite for drawing pleasure from the bodies and labor of the people they kept in subjugation, as Eric Lott writes of minstrelsy in the United States.[95] Whatever its usefulness might be to us for revealing a world behind the text, or whatever aesthetic value we might place on the text itself, its social function in its own time was to define the way different types of people were categorized from the Spanish perspective. Its contrasting rhythmic patterns enacted concepts of how their bodies and voices moved, and worked to define the horizon within which colonial subjects could move.

At the same time, the Black Kings and Native cross-dressers should remind us that people have always found ways of reasserting their humanity in the face of oppression. Perhaps the music in Puebla Cathedral did enable some Native and African listeners to see themselves as part of the Christian community. Perhaps it even prompted a few Spanish listeners to consider that the newborn Christ had something in common with the lowliest members of their society, and perhaps some even rose to the ethical challenge that the music implied. But certainly, as in colonial contexts across the globe, colonized subjects found ways to reappropriate the colonizers' arts for their own ends. The relationship between villancicos and Black Kings festivals may be analogous to that between the blackface cakewalk in the United States and its origins among slaves. In the

[95] Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, 20th anniversary ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

cakewalk, white performers mocked a dance of Black performers, not knowing that the dance had originated as a way for slaves to mock *them*. The slaves were parodying the aristocratic airs put on by their white masters, who in turn were mimicking European upper-class customs.[96] A similar chain of imitations appears to be at play here, in which case the pieces could have had quite different meanings for different listeners.

The idealistic aspects of the *ensaladilla*—particularly the polymetrical Gloria—suggest that from the Spanish perspective the piece really was meant as a way of giving voice to every part of society around Christ's altar. Within the Catholic theological framework of the time, the Spanish choir probably saw its role as a form of intercession, speaking for the community to God "in the tongues of men and angels" (1 Cor. 13:1). When Gutiérrez de Padilla's musicians represented the Christmas shepherds and invited worshippers to journey with them to Bethlehem, the cathedral choir itself stood as a kind of metaphor for the whole colonial community, which the *ensaladilla* actively reinterpreted in light of the Christian story. The piece might even be heard as an attempt, however misguided, to model for colonial subjects how *they* as Christian worshippers could appropriate the sacred story for themselves—what it might sound like if visitors came to the Bethlehem stable from Angola, by way of Puebla.

But the paradox of this representation, which denigrates even as it exalts, is embodied in the rhythmic movements of the Gloria. The Africans, to whose song the angels add the missing *cantus firmus*, can only imitate, reflect, and point to that higher music in Neoplatonic fashion. The angels sing in the white notes of chant and sacred polyphony; the Angolans, in the literally colored meter of their earthly dance. Gutiérrez de Padilla cannot stress the similarity between the music of slaves and the music of angels without at the same time highlighting the vast difference between them. Outside the performance, the boys who represented both angels and Angolans may have served the same *maestro* as Juan, the enslaved Angolan man, but they inhabited different worlds. The harmony between them was hidden, like the mysterious resonances between the heavenly bodies and the bodily humors. Only from the perspective of heaven could the likeness between the highest and lowest beings be discerned. This must have seemed a beautiful vision to Gutiérrez de Padilla and his peers, as awe-inspiring as Puebla's retable. In its aesthetic beauty, though, lay its ethical danger.

Today, both scholars and performers have an ethical responsibility to try to understand the work these pieces did in colonial society and to assess the work they can do when unleashed in our communities. As

[96] Claude Conyers, "Cakewalk," *Grove Music Online*, accessed August 6, 2020, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.A2092374.

Baker argues, in our eagerness to recover subaltern voices we must not mistake caricature for ethnography, nor underestimate the power of these texts to reinforce our own prejudices.[97] Performers who want to revive ethnic villancicos today need to be aware that when they are singing in fake Black dialect they are not promoting diversity but rather reincarnating a slaveholder's fantasy. But by studying and teaching ethnic villancicos, we could be "using objects of intolerance to promote tolerance and social justice," the motto of Ferris State University's Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia.[98] They document an early stage in the genealogy of racial representation that extends through minstrelsy as far as recent animated films and concert music.[99] Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov essentially created a modern-day *negrilla* in his celebrated *Pasión según San Marcos* (2000), which opens with the single word "AFRICA" as a performing instruction for "a tribal, uncovered voice." In order to represent a "dark Jesus, not a pale European Jesus," Golijov "'Africanized' the Spanish to fit the drums," explaining,

> I wanted to translate to an oral half-African, half-Spanish language. So it's all Spanish but it's "Africanized" in that the phrases always end with the accent on the last syllable. I managed to have all the phrasing be Spanish but to sound African.[100]

If nothing else, an informed study of ethnic villancicos could help our music students avoid repeating the worst parts of music history in this way.

Ethnic villancicos can open a window into the complex and shifting ways that Spanish subjects in the colonial era negotiated their identities, if we can gain a critical perspective that recognizes the interplay between the imagined world of the text and the historical world behind it. Behind the fake *indios* and *negros* were real people like the instrument-maker and cantor-in-training Pedro Martín; like the enslaved Juan Angola, cleaning up after the Spanish choirboys while the chapelmaster taught them to "sing like the angels." Behind the imitation of twirling Indians and leaping Blacks were Puebla's Native dancers—men bearing crosses and dancing on the altar, perhaps even in dresses, when there was no official present to stop them—and proud subjects of the King of Kongo who donned crimson capes and brandished swords to march through the plaza in honor of

[97] Baker, "Latin American Baroque."

[98] Museum website, www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/.

[99] For a strikingly analogous case of a musical utopian vision undercut by racial impersonation, see Tanine Allison, "Blackface, *Happy Feet*: The Politics of Race in Motion Capture and Animation," in *Special Effects: New Histories, Theories, Contexts*, ed. Dan North, Bob Rehak, and Michael Duffy (London: BFI/Palgrave, 2015), 114–26.

[100] Osvaldo Golijov, *La pasión según San Marcos* (New York: Ytalianna Music/Hendon Music/Boosey & Hawkes, 2002), viii–ix, 12.

the Black King. Their ways of reimagining society helped them survive being forced by the Spaniards into the order *they* imagined. Their creativity, manifested in so many Afro-Latin musical traditions that have outlasted colonization, kept colonial society from turning out the way the Spaniards envisioned. Their voices are not recorded in the ethnic villancicos of Spanish cathedrals, but that music still documents their historical presence in colonial society. The music allows us both to see the world as a slaveholder imagined it and to glimpse something of the world behind it. Our challenge is to find a way to use ethnic villancicos in a way that does not perpetuate the work they were originally meant to do. Instead we need to think critically about what kind of society we are trying to build, and if we are serious about giving everyone a voice, we need to start listening.

ABSTRACT

Church ensembles of Spaniards across the Spanish Empire regularly impersonated African and other non-Castilian characters in the villancicos they performed in the Christmas Matins liturgy. Although some scholars and performers still mistakenly assume that ethnic villancicos preserve authentic Black or Native voices, and others have critiqued them as Spaniards' racist caricatures, there have been few studies of the actual music or of specific local contexts. This article analyzes *Al establo más dichoso* (At the happiest stable), an *ensaladilla* composed by Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla for Christmas 1652 at Puebla Cathedral. In this performance his ensemble impersonated an array of characters coming to Christ's mangers, including Indian farm laborers and African slaves. The composer uses rhythm to differentiate the speech and movement of each group, and at the climax he even has the Angolans and the angels sing together—but in different meters. Based on the first edition of this music, the article interprets this villancico within the social and theological context of colonial Puebla and its new cathedral, consecrated in 1649. I argue that through this music, members of the Spanish elite performed their own vision of a hierarchical and harmonious society. Gutiérrez de Padilla was himself both a priest and a slaveholder, and his music elevates its characters in certain ways while paradoxically also mocking them and reinforcing their lowly status. Building on Paul Ricoeur's concept of the "three worlds of the text," the article compares the representations imagined within the musical performance with archival evidence for the social history of the people represented and the composer's own relationships with them (the world behind the text).

Looking to the world projected "in front of" the text, I argue that these caricatured representations both reflected and shaped Spaniards' attitudes toward their subjects in ways that actively affected the people represented. At the same time, I argue that Spanish representations mirrored practices of impersonation among Native American and African communities, especially the Christmastide Black Kings festivals, pointing to a more complex and contradictory vision of colonial society than what we can see from the slaveholder's musical fantasy alone.

Keywords: Ethnic villancico, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, Puebla Cathedral, colonialism, race, rhythm