historical memory fails or is intentionally clouded. Like a skilled physician, however, the objective historian can restore a healthy perception of the past. In March, at the Society's joint session with the Texas State Historical Association, our commentator, Sherwood O. Jones, reminded us of the insight and depth of Pope Pius XII, a figure about whom much has been "forgotten." During recent years, however, writers such as Fulbright Scholar Sister Margherita Marchione with her 1997 book, *Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in Wartime Italy*, (Paulist Press), have begun to restore to historical memory that which the World War II generation actually knew about Pope Pius XII. Scholars like Sister Marchione, dauntless in the face of controversy, illustrate once again that in the study of Church history the light of objectivity reveals that even in the most troubled times, there are always those who are brilliantly faithful to their Christian calling.

Father James T. Moore
President

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Virtue and Transgression:
The Certification of Authentic Mysticism in the Mexican Inquisition

Nora Jaffary

Of the many prophecies that have been made over the past twenty years, this is the final one. Notice is given to all faithful Christians of the news that the staff of God's divine Justice is raised and that he is poised to obliterate this kingdom with bolts of fire.¹

So begins a letter composed by Getrudis Rosa Ortiz, a poor mestiza woman, which she then posted up around several Mexico City churches and convents in early March, 1723.² Ortiz was convicted two years later for the crime of being an "ilusa and of faking revelations and divinations."³ Her inquisition trial is a fascinating source of information on a whole range of issues in colonial Mexican history, including class, gender, and race relations, medicine, and social criticism. This article will concentrate, however, on the reasons behind the Mexican inquisitorial court's judgment that Ortiz was a "false" mystic. By examining inquisition trials and spiritual guides, this paper will attempt to unearth the criteria used by the Mexican inquisitorial court to distinguish what it defined as two types of "false" mystics—*ilusas* and *almbrados*—from those women and men the Church revered as

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²Mexico, Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter cited as AGN), Inquisición 805, exp. 1 f. 3.
³Including the churches of San Bernardo, San Gerónimo, and the convents of the Encarnación and San José de Gracia.
⁴AGN, Inquisición 805, exp. 2 f. 229.
bonafide visionaries. It will be argued that the court’s judgements had very little to do with evaluations of mystical phenomena themselves, and much more to do with assessments of the nature and character of the people who claimed to experience them. As will be shown, the Mexican tribunal was predisposed to the condemnation of the behavior and beliefs of certain types of women and men who claimed to have been blessed with mystical gifts. The discussion will focus principally on the question of how violations of gendered codes of behavior influenced the inquisition’s decisions to convict particular individuals.

Before proceeding, it will be useful to recall some background information on “bonafide” and “deviant” mysticism. The objective of the entire mystical enterprise in Christianity is the achievement of a state of intensive spiritual bonding, literally referred to as matrimonio espiritual (spiritual marriage), between the mystic’s soul and God. In order for this to be accomplished, the mystic must totally surrender her will to God. Progress along the journey towards mystical union is usually marked by the reception of any number of God’s “gifts.” Carolyn Bynum has pointed out that reception of these, which included “trances, levitations, catastrophic seizures, or other forms of bodily rigidity, miraculous elongation or enlargement of parts of the body, swellings of the throat... and ecstatic nosebleeds,” have a historical association with women in the European tradition. Indeed, the religious expressions of both John of the Cross and Ignatius Loyola, two of the most celebrated male mystics in the history of Catholicism, are notable for their de-emphasis of “paramystical” experiences.

As well as being an almost exclusively female practice, experience of “the paramystical” was also one of the few areas in which women were occasionally able to claim spiritual authority in Catholicism. But the Church has always been wary of mystics, because in claiming the ability to directly communicate with God, they pose grave threats to the very necessity of the Church’s existence. Even Saint Teresa, who

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after her death in 1582 became the most revered visionary seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spain and its colonies, was investigated by the Spanish Inquisition for the crime of alumbreda during her lifetime.

Mystical experiences, which had formed an important element of Christianity since its inception, proliferated in post-Tridentine sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain and its colonies. This growth was accompanied by an increased persecution of those groups, like the alumbreda, who the Church perceived were practicing “false mysticism.” The alumbredas were a religious sect first detected in Toledo in 1571, which experienced many individual and regional developments over the next century of Spain’s history. Three of its characteristic elements remained fairly constant throughout the course of its development: an endorsement of a doctrine of internalized religion; contempt for ceremonial aspects of worship; and a belief that adherents to the sect reached a certain high degree of spiritual union with God, released from any possible sinful ramifications of their bodily particularities—practices. Several historians have deemed that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Spaniards viewed the beliefs and practices of alumbredas as particularly threatening because the court saw them through the guise of the dominant religious crimes investigated during each century—t

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sixteenth, crypto-Judaism, and in the seventeenth, the rising specter of Protestantism.¹¹

The first accusations of alumbradismo in Mexico occurred in 1598, and continued until the Inquisition was disbanded with independence. The charge was used fairly interchangeably in Mexico with accusations of being an iluso or an embuster (a trick or faker) and in the later eighteenth century, with accusations of Molinismo.¹² Unlike in Spain, and contrary to earlier historians’ findings regarding these crimes, however, the numbers of those accused of being alumbrados or ilusos in Mexico experienced no decline during the course of the eighteenth-century.¹³

Indeed, if considered in terms of the Inquisition’s purported eighteenth-century contraction,¹⁴ it is apparent that there is actually a proportional increase in the numbers of those accused of alumbradismo and iluminismo in the later colonial period.

The term iluso simultaneously connotes enlightenment and delusion. It does not have as historically specific an etymology as does alumbrado, although many authors and inquisitors use the term iluminismo interchangeably with alumbradismo. In the context of Mexico, iluso is most accurately understood as designating a person who the Church believed to be practicing a type of false mysticism free of any formalized doctrine. Inquisitors believed false visions could originate either in demonic ilusiones (delusions) or else from strictly internal inspiration. The term was also used to refer to people who had succeeded in

“deluding” others into believing they were experiencing “real” mysticism.¹⁵

The need to search for “extra-mystical” explanations behind distinctions the Church drew between bonafide mystics and ilusos-alumbrados is demonstrated by the fact that this classification was based on objective evaluations of actual mystical experiences. Comparisons between the religious experiences of alumbrados and ilusos v those of revered mystics, reveal that a high degree of similarity existed in the religiosity practiced by both condemned and condemned groups. Accounts of ecstatic raptures, visions, locutions, illness, stigmata, episodes of demonic possession contained in biographies of visionaries endorsed by the Church greatly resemble testimonies of these experiences contained in iluso and alumbrado Inquisition trials. Th illustrated in the following two examples.

Antonia de Ochoa was a Spanish beata convicted in the late 16th century for alumbradismo. She was the central figure in a religious communitarian women and men, clergy and laity located in Mexico City.¹⁶ In denunciation of de Ochoa to the Inquisition, Doctor Antonio Córdova described one rapture which he had witnessed at table, in the house of Joseph de Villa Alta, a merchant. Córdova explained that as the first dish was being served, Ochoa appeared “as if absent outside herself, letting her head fall back and fixing her feet upon the edge across from the table.” A slave held her from behind, Córc continued, while Antonia proceeded to “sob as if demonstrating the pain in her heart.”¹⁷

Dofia María Moreno, the wife of Francisco Carrasco, a merchant at whose house Ochoa had also habitually eaten undergone mystical raptures, testified to the court that during one of these occasions she had given Ochoa some bread and wine as she had reque. Ochoa had then retreated into a corner and began “speaking with bread and wine, and then on one side of her chest this witness noted she had a red wound and that on the palms of her hands she had s little red or purple marks.”¹⁸


¹²Charges against supporters of seventeenth-century spiritual writer Miguel de Molinos, whose Glosa Espiritual was condemned by the Spanish Inquisition in 1687.

¹³Many historians have relied on the statistics of José Tomás Medina as presented in his Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elentrubiana, 1905). Medina based these, however, on the Relaciones (reports) of cases found in the National Archives of Madrid. These holdings provide useful, but by no means complete information on all the cases held in the colonies. Lewis Tamshe, basing his analysis on Medina’s numbers, wrote in 1965 that only one charge of alumbradismo was brought to trial in the eighteenth century. See “The Inquisition in Eighteenth-Century Mexico,” The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Colonial History 22 (1965): 167–181. However, out of the total ninety-five cases of alumbradismo or iluminismo discussed in this article, forty-seven occurred in the eighteenth century.


¹⁵This distinction is outlined by Jiménez Ruiz, Hagiias y Supersticiones, 161.

¹⁶AGN, Inquisición 539, exp. 25 f. 326–340 and 538 exp. 1 f. 308.

¹⁷AGN, Inquisición 538, exp. 1 ff. 5.

¹⁸AGN, Inquisición 539, exp. 25 f. 377.
These descriptions of Ochoa's raptures are very similar to those contained in trials of other women accused of being ilusias or alumbradas. But neither do they differ markedly from the fits that "bonafide" mystics, either in the European or colonial traditions, are described as experiencing. Francisco Pardo, for example, in his 1676 biography of Madre María de Jesús, a mystical poblanan nun of the conven of Immaculate Conception, described the frequent ecstasies she experienced in her adolescence. He wrote that on one occasion, while contemplating Jesus Christ's stigmata in a rapture, María had felt "on the bottoms of her feet two wounds so penetrating that they passed from the upper parts of her insteps to the lower parts of her soles."[19]

If differences are hard to detect between accounts of bonafide mystical ecstasies and those of condemned ilusias and alumbradas, the same can also be said of the fits they experienced when undergoing demonic possession, which in some cases were seen as further manifestations of God's love for authentic visionaries. In her testimony to the inquisitorial court, María Lucía Celi, who would be condemned in an auto de fe in 1803 for her illusions, described how Lucifer, leading legions of demons, repeatedly appeared to her to torment and tempt her sexually:

Grasping her by the hair, he whipped her, while pinning her shoulders against the wall, and he pulled her head from side to side with her hair, while whipping her, saying "I'm not letting you go, you lousy dog, until I have ripped you to pieces." And other demons did not stop shouting oaths and saying impure and dishonest things, at the same time as displaying their private parts.[20]

Let us compare this description of demonic tormenting with similar episodes described in the biography of a nun whose mystical experiences were endorsed by the Church. Madre Sor Sebastiana Josepha de

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[19] Francisco Pardo, Vida y virtudes heroicas de la Madre María de Jesús, religiosa profesa en el conven de la Limpia Concepción de la Virgen María en la ciudad de los Ángeles (Mexico City: Imp. de la Vida de Bernardo Caldasí, 1676), 14.
[20] This citation comes from a reproduction of a trial, transcribed by Edelmira Ramírez Leyva, María Rita Vergara, María Luisa Celi, Historia de las religiosas de la orden de Santa Clara (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1988), 146.

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la Santísima Trinidad was a Claris nun of the Convent of San Juan la Penitencia. Her biography, written by Joseph Eugenio Valdés, was published in Mexico City in 1765. In one passage in the Vida admirable y penitente de la venerable Sor Sebastiana Josepha, the devil is described ripping into the nun's body with his hand, and tearing out her intestines.[21] Later, the devil is depicted returning to torture S Sebastiana day and night with horrible faces, and sometimes he appears in human form to tempt her to "illicit acts because he then came in her vision in unspeakable dishonesty, and sickening licentiousness, taught her imagination with horrible suggestions and sending her burns messages of sensual fire."[22]

The similarity of these passages gives us some indication of how difficult it would have been for inquisitors to evaluate the veracity of "paramystical" phenomena, not to mention the theologian's problems such evaluations would present. That such evaluations did not lie at the core of the court's determination of "false" mystics is amply illustrated by statistical evidence from a body of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ilusias and alumbrados Inquisition trials.[23] Nearly every iluso or alumbrado trial contains a denunciation of at least one type of paramystical experience with ecstatic visions being the most common occurrence,[24] but it is difficult to detect differences in the nature of mystical experiences between the slightly greater than fifty per cent of the cases which led to guilty convictions, and the slightly less than fifty per cent which did not.[25] If evaluations of "authentic" mystic experiences were not based on examinations of these in themselves upon what, then, were they based?[26]
The issue of the state in which a person's soul is left from a mystica experience was not a standard frequently invoked by inquirers or confessors (theological evaluators). Discussion of the possible revoluntary or non-conformist content of mystical experiences was much more common in the trials. Let us return, for example, to the story of Getrudis Rosa Ortiz, the case referred to in this paper's opening. In an initial evaluation of her prophecies, Licenciado Pedro Navarro de Islas Inquisitor Fiscal, wrote that he did not object to Ortiz' statements about sinful Mexico's imminent destruction at the hands of a wrathful God—an apocalyptic warning about the need for moral reform to which he would have found much resonance both in scripture and in the writings of many theological authorities. He did object, however, to Ortiz' beliefs about the types of morally offensive behavior Mexican had been engaging in that had provoked God's wrath. In one of his audiences before the tribunal, Ortiz summarized these as enunciating the fact that Christians had been entering Church to worship in inappropriate attire men appeared unhaven and with long hair, while women presented themselves to worship in "dishonest outfits," not to mention the fact that, because of the way they dressed, "one could not distinguish the men from the women." While concurring with Ortiz admonitions regarding the scandalous nature of women's dishonors outfits, Navarro de Islas found Ortiz' preoccupations with these matters of dress ridiculous and unpertinent and, as such, demonstrated that her visions could not possibly have originated with God.

As this, and other examples in ilusos and alembreado trials illustrate some discussion was devoted, to the question of the degree to which their content conformed to accepted doctrinal traditions. However several other issues were made much more prominent in theologica experts' assessments of "bonafide" visionaries. Both spiritual tracts and Inquisition trials demonstrate that inquirors based their condemnation of false mysteries on assessments of women's practice of virtue rather than on the precise nature of their mystical experiences. They convicted women whom they believed had not adhered to the four convents...
vows of obedience, poverty, chastity, and confinement. And they censured those who failed to embody the “heroic virtues”—the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the four cardinal ones of prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude.

Miguel Godínez, Antonio de Arbiol, and other contemporaries were in agreement that the most important sign of a true visionary was her devotion to practicing these virtues and upholding these vows. Godínez repeatedly referred to this idea in his Práctica. He wrote, for instance, that one must always be suspicious of a “person who has many revelations, visions, raptures, and other favors, without sufficient penitence, humility and obedience,” which people, he said, demonstrate more “of a deceiving spirit than a true one, because it does not pertain to God, but rather to the Devil, to build golden spires of visions without first constructing the solid foundation of the moral virtues.”

Application of this standard is evidenced in every single Inquisition trial studied here. Returning to the case of Getrudis Rosa Ortiz, with which this paper opened, for instance, calificador Domingo de Quiroga’s opening statement indicates that her visions could not possibly have come from God because authentic visions are meant to “cause the moral virtues of obedience, humility, and patience to appear in the soul, and to cast the opposite vices away from it.”

It may seem somewhat curious that inquisitors and theologians were so set on enforcing these strict monastic virtues and vows in the cases of religious lay women and beatas. This can be explained by the very fact that beatas were a particularly threatening category of women to colonial ecclesiastical officials. Unlike nuns, beatas lived outside the supervision of the convent’s cloistered walls. Unlike most lay women, they did not live within the confines of the institution of marriage. They were single women who were exposed on a daily basis to the many temptations presented by the world beyond the cloister. Some of

them created associations between themselves and established religious orders by donning the habit worn by its members. Beatas’ exposure to the world, especially in the context of association with a religious order, made it imperative that these women uphold the Christian virtues, perhaps even more rigorously than cloistered women, who were safely isolated from public scrutiny and earthly temptation.

Church officials’ paranoia about the possible harm these unclotted religious women could inflict upon both their communities and themselves is expressed in a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century sources. Their greatest concern was directed at women who were lone beatas, as opposed to those who lived in communal beatarias, or who were members of the third religious orders. A late seventeenth-century Spanish religious tract which also circulated in Mexico during the colonial period, Aviso de gente recogida en especial al servicio de Dios by Diego Pérez, aimed to provide beatas with a set of moral directives.

The tract began by noting that “the beatas who now are found in our Spain, who are not nuns, nor regular beatas [i.e. living communally] must also maintain the state of virginity.” Pérez later went on to discourage beatas from forming any close personal connections to other secular people. He also warned his readers about the deceitfulness of beatas who had adopted spiritual lives in order to avoid performing physical labor. The existence of particularly strong mistrust of lone beatas is also reflected in the conviction percentages of the Mexican alumbros and ilusos trials. Lone beatas were convicted more than twice as frequently as terreristas (members of the third orders).

As far as male ilusos or alumbros were concerned, court officials invoked notably different standards when evaluating the likelihood of their being “bonafide” mystics. Partially, this is due to the fact that men charged with these crimes, for the most part, participated in quite

30 Bell and Weinstein point out the Church has always been more concerned with the appraisal of these virtues than in other indications of sincerity in its evaluations of candidates for sainthood, Saints and Sainthood, 141–143.
31 Godínez, Práctica, 382. See also pgs. 388, 389. Similar views are expressed by Arbiol, Desnudas, 77; Bayarta, Práctica, 206, and by De la Peña, Vida de la Venerable, 5.
32 AGN, Inquisición 805, exp. 5. 2 f. 19.
33 Beatas were religious women who lived communally or individually outside of convents, often because they had been unable to afford conventual dowries. Although professing many of the same vows as nuns, beatas experienced little or no formal supervision by a religious order.
34 Leto van den Dennen’s forthcoming article in the Colonial Latin American History Review regarding the perception of these two types of beatas in colonial Peru.
35 See other contemporary literature containing strict preclusions on the potential moral dangers embodied by unclotted beatas, see the measures supported by the 1771 meeting of the Corte Provisional de Méjico IV (Querétaro, 1898) Libro 3, Tit. XVI, “De las Regulares y Monjas.” See also late seventeenth-century tract published by the Spanish Inquisition against beatas and alumbros who were failing to demonstrate the “service and obedience” they owed to their parents and husband by adopting religious lifestyles.Quoted in Fernando Iwaiu Cault, “Mujeres al borde de la perfección,” in Una Parteola del Cielo, ed. Luis Miliones (Lima: 1973), 75.
36 Doctor Diego Pérez, Aviso de gente recogida en especial al servicio de Dios, (Madrid, 1678), 2.
different kinds of activities from women. Priests and friars composed the largest group of men accused of being alumbreados or ilusas. The majority of this group was suspected because of the support—financial or spiritual—that they had given to female ilusas. The other activity for which they were most frequently accused was the solicitation of these women. Apparently, they often prefaced their propositions with the alumbreada tenant that they had achieved God-given dispensation from any sinful ramifications of their bodily activities.

The religiosity of male ilusos and alumbreados which most closely resembles that of their female counterparts is expressed by the five beater and ermitaños who appear before the court between the mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Some of these men expressed their religiosity by writing spiritual tracts, claiming that these were based on divine inspiration. Some wandered about in the streets of Puebla and Mexico City, espousing criticism of the Mexican clergy. They are the only group of men accused of being false mystics in whose religious expressions the paramystical phenomena (visions, trances, raptures, and supernatural illness), so predominant among women alumbreadas and ilusas, played a significant role. Female alumbreadas and ilusas were castigated for not upholding the virtues of humility and obedience, but concern over the failure to uphold a slightly different code of moral virtues is discernible in the cases of these beatos and ermitaños. In these men’s trials, the inquisitors turned their attention, instead, to the virtue of honesty.

The inquisitors’ preoccupation with honesty in the male subjects who appeared before them is evident in the case of the ermitaño Fray Sebastián Victoria, condemned for being an alumbrado for his “false” visions in 1659. In their accusation of Fray Sebastián, the inquisitors wrote that they knew his visions must be false because “revelations and favors from God do not fall on deceitful and lying subjects.” Fray Sebastián, they determined, was just such a subject. The inquisitors first pointed out that while claiming to be a native of Victoria, Fray Sebastián had, in fact, been born in Marina. His judges were also perturbed that he had denied to the court that he was a member of any religious order and they had uncovered that he had actually belonged to a Capuchin friary when he had been living in Spain.

Theologians’ guides concerning the assessment of “bonafide” visionaries, we have seen, are concerned with the issue of the practice of virtue among people claiming to be mystics. A second notable feature of these guides is the commentary they make on woman’s nature and its relationship to mystical experiences. Many of them state that women’s emotional natures predispose them to the receipt of mystical gifts. But they also claim that women’s fickleness and deviousness, coupled with the fact that they are deprived of access to channels of power normally reserved for men, mean that women are likely to fake the experience of receiving these gifts. In his treatise, Antonio de Arbiol reported a conversation that he had had with a learned woman, calling attention to her ideas about the need to be suspicious of poor women, because women who

are born rich and noble, since they already have established positions and estimation in the world, do not look for estimation with invention; but as regards poor, ordinary, and common women, as you will note, in being taken for virtuous and saintly, they gain public praise and are given enough for the convenience of their lives. They are easily tricked in this way by the devil, and for this reason, there are so many more ilusas and embusteras who are common women than there are rich and noble ones.

Godinez expressed similar views and stated that while one should not be alarmed if men of good position within the Church experience mystical visions, one should always regard with suspicion claims to these made by any “melancholic beatas in ecstasy in churches, as well as by any young nuns of little understanding” and also by “disheveled, idiotic,

*Priests and friars make up sixty percent of the total men accused of being ilusas or alumbreadas.

The only other cases of priests expressing false visions surround the late seventeenth-century trial of Antonia de Obes.


*AGN, Inquisicion 445, exp. 1, f. 165. See also f. 168. For another example of the court’s fixation on male honesty, see AGN Inquisicion 743, exp. 1, f. 78, 296.

*Arbiol, Desengaños, 78. See also Godinez, Púnicas, 115–119.
popular hermits who are friends of stupidity, applause, praise, and
gifts.447

The fact that inquisitors dealt especially harshly with people accused
of being ilusos or almbrados who originated from these strata of the
population is well documented in this body of Inquisition trials in which
a clear correlation exists between the frequency of convictions of guilt
and the accused party's status in relation to the Church. People within
the Church hierarchy—priests, friars, and nuns—form the largest body
of those accused of almbradismo and iluminismo, accounting for nearly
forty percent of the total accusations studied here. Beatas, beatos, and
ermiñas compose just one third of the cases. The laity follow with
the smallest representation, at just over one quarter.48

The telling statistic here, however, concerns the frequency with
which each of these groups was convicted. Both the "institutionalized"
religious population and the lay population have rates of conviction at
slightly under fifty percent for each group.49 In contrast, the beata, beato,
and ermitana category has a much higher rate of conviction, at almost
seventy-five percent,50 demonstrating that the inquisitors may well have
heeded the warnings made by the theological writers noted above
regarding the need to be doubly suspicious of mystics who originated
from this sector of the populace.

In addition to cautioning inquisitors against the mystical experiences
of women who did not embody the heroic virtues, as well as against
melancholy beatas and disheveled hermits, mystical authorities inform
their readers they must guard themselves against the ruses of another
group of suspect women—those who demonstrate that they possess
curious natures, over-active imaginations, creative impulses, or
intellectual yearnings. As de Arbiol expressed in his Desengaños mysticos,
"is there nobody to tell curious women, that they sin mortally, wanting
to know by Divine revelation that which it is not important for them to
know?"51 Fortunately, Arbiol provided his readers with a solution for

deeding with the disruptive behavior of these overly curious women,
commenting that,

The discreet and prudent woman, says Saint Ambrose, should
only ever be inside her house, and should never be proud, not
even during communal visiting; because any person of good
judgment recognizes that women must be laborers. A woman,
through the work of her hands is good, and maintains her
Christian modesty with less difficulty the busier she is, because
the more she attends to her work, the less modesty she loses
looking to other things.52

Application of this idea is again clearly evidenced in iluso and
almbrado Inquisition trials. In his evaluation of Getrudis Rosa Ortiz'
religiosity, for instance, Licenciado Pedro Navarro, Inquisitor Fiscal,
waite the most damning aspects of her writings was not their
content, but rather her claim to interpretive powers over them and her
penchant for displaying them in written form. He stated that the
dubious nature of her visions was revealed by the fact that she had
never experienced any uncertainty about either their origins or their
meanings even though God had always seemingly expressed himself in
very indirect ways to her. He elaborated, writing that the manner in
which she claimed to receive her visions was highly suspect, especially
the fact that she had stated, "that it seemed to her, that God gave her
to understand that he wanted to punish Mexico and would begin with
the clergy because if it was a real vision, it wouldn't have been revealed
to her with such uncertainty, letting her arbitrarily conjecture what it
signified without instructing her in a revelation."53 He did not think
Getrudis Rosa Ortiz could be a true mystic because she grafted her own
precise interpretations on to visions that came to her very obliquely. He
condemned her for stating that "God gave her to understand that which
she knew of on her own." Words, he elaborated, which "indicate these
ideas are her own discourse, her own conjectures and imagination."54

44Gómmez, Préstamos, 466. See also p. 389, and De la Peña, Vida de la Venerable, p. 7.
45There are thirty-three cases against members of the "institutionalized" Church, twenty-nine against
beatas, beatos, or ermitanas, and twenty-four against lay people.
46Fifteen convicted out of thirty-three accused and eleven convicted out of twenty-four accused,
respectively.
47Twenty-one convicted out of twenty-nine accused.
48Arbiol, Desengaños, 78.
49Arbiol, Desengaños, 81.
50AGN, Inquisición 805, esp. 1, f. 17.
51AGN, Inquisición 805, esp. 1, f. 17.
continuing her writing practices, and instead concentrate only on praying through recitation of the rosary. They also recommended that she be forbidden from leaving her house except to go to mass, and that she "only apply herself to the work of sewing cushions, to suffering, and obeying her husband, and to complying with what a Christian must."56

Most often, rates of conviction can be correlated to particular characteristics of the accused as alumbreados and ilusos. But there is one instance in which a correlation does exist between a high rate of conviction and the expression of a certain type of religiosity, rather than a certain type of visionary. These involve cases in which women's religious behavior moved away from the traditional (female) mystical sphere, and into the realm of the traditionally masculine domains of theological writing and public declarations of a doctrinal nature—i.e. the writing of spiritual tracts, or the priestly functions of preaching and performing the sacraments. Women were convicted every time, with one exception, in which they were denounced for this type of activity—about twice as often as men denounced for similar activities. This high frequency of conviction was also the case in instances of the participation of the bruta, bruto, and ermitaño sector in these practices.

One fascinating case study which illustrates this type of behavior is presented by the trials of the Romero, four bruta sisters, accused of alumbreadismo in 1649, when all four, along with various supporters and their confessor, Diego José Bruñón de Veritza, were denounced for having staged ecstasies, prophecies, demonic possession, and divine and demonic illnesses.57 In the court prosecutor's evaluation of the nature of the ecstatic raptures of one sister, Josepha de San Luis Beitrán, in which she had made a variety of verbal and written pronouncements, ranging from denunciations of the heresies of Jews and Muslims,58 to demands for hot chocolate or cigarettes for the guardian angel who from time to time possessed her body;59 to meditations on the passion of Jesus Christ,60 Licenciado Andrés de Zabalea, stated that her ecstasies

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55AGN, Inquisición 692, exp. 2, fs. 117-118.
56Solange Abarca analyzes the trial of one of the sisters in "La licencia vestidad de santidad: Teresa de Jesús, falsa bruta del siglo XVII" in De la santidad a la perversión—o de porqué no se cumplió la ley de Dios en la sociedad moderna, ed. Sergio Ortega (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1985), 219-237.
57AGN, Inquisición 432, exp. 8, fs. 148-157, 213.
were suspicious because they were vocal rather than silent. In real ecstatics, he commented, "the person who suffers them is impeded from using their external senses." He added that her raptures were further suspicious because she had had them in front of audiences rather than in seclusion, where God would usually choose to communicate such gifts.

This commentary is especially interesting if seen in the context of a comment about the similarly vocal raptures of one of Josepha's sisters, María de la Encarnación, by her confessor, Brunio de Vértiz. When questioned about the verbal nature of María's fits, Brunio de Vértiz had explained to another priest that "there were two types of raptures—one for men and another for women and that those of men were in the interior, without speaking, and those of women, so that they would be credible, our Lord had wanted to make vocal." Presumably, the Romero sisters, then, were aware that they were acting against accepted notions of women's prescribed behavior during mystical experiences—to passively and silently accept overpowerment by the divine spirit—and had adopted a clever and divinely endorsed justification for their subversive behavior.

Earlier, a brief examination was made of the differently coded gender norms by which male and female mystics were evaluated with regards to the question of virtue. A further comparison can be made at this point concerning the reasons for the court's condemnation of men who were involved in particular religious activities. The emphasis in the court's condemnation of male beatos and ermitaños who either wrote mystical tracts, or made public pronouncements of a doctrinal nature, is quite distinct from its emphasis in cases of females engaged in such practices. Instead of condemning beatos and ermitaños for producing such material because to do so was to violate their gendered essences, the court condemned them for stepping outside of class and educational barriers.

Juan Bautista de Cárdenas, for example, was a Spanish hermit convicted in 1677 for being an iluso and alumbrado because of objectionable spiritual messages he had broadcasted. Roaming about the streets of Puebla, Cárdenas had informed anyone within earshot that it was unnecessary for him to confess with a confessor, because he had been given God's sanction to confess directly to Him. The court also condemned Cárdenas for his supposedly feigned public ecstasies, fits of demonic possession. In the opening lines of their accusation against him, rather than condemning him for transgressing his gendered position, as in the cases of Getrudis Rosa Ortiz and Doña Ana de Zayas, his inquisitors decreed the fact that he was an ignorant man who had attempted to speak of spiritual matters. They described him as "a complete idiot of a man, without any education whatsoever, not even of grammar, as an arrogant person, he interfered, and began to speak about parts of scripture." In Bautista de Cárdenas' transgression, in other words, was one of social status and education, rather than one of gender per se.

In the court's condemnation of Juan Bautista de Cárdenas, as well as in its judgment against María de la Encarnación, convicted in an auto de fe in 1659, we are left with a clear indication of the principal standards used by Mexican Inquisitors and calificadores to distinguish "true" mystics from alumbrados and ilusos: María de la Encarnación, along with Getrudis Rosa Ortiz, Ana de Zayas, and the many other women convicted for being false mystics in seventeenth and eighteenth century Mexico did not fault in having participated in traditionally feminized "paramystical" phenomena—in receiving visions, locations and prophecies from God, or in claiming the ability to perform minor miracles, to levitate, or to have experienced divine or demonic sicknesses. Rather, they were held under suspicion because they were beatos, and because they were women who the court believed had shunned the Christian virtues, particularly those of obedience and humility. Men were also convicted for having failed to uphold the moral virtues, but in their case, the Court was more preoccupied that they embody truthfulness, rather than obedience. Male beatos and ermitaños who had violated class and educational barriers were condemned by the court, while women were convicted because they were overly curious, dangerously intellectual, or threateningly

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\(^{8}\)AGN, Inquisición 1503, exps. 2, 3.

\(^{8a}\)AGN Inquisición 483, exp. 2 f. 69.

\(^{8b}\)AGN Inquisición 503, exp. 56 f. 301. This information was communicated to the court by Fr. Diego Benegas, Provincial, who overheard the conversation between them and appeared to give evidence in court in September of 1649.

\(^{8c}\)AGN, Inquisición 445, exp. 2 f. 89.

\(^{8d}\)Outrage at class and education violations is evident in the Court's evaluation of every beato and ermitaño studied here. See AGN, Inquisición 623, exp. 1 f. 209; 445, exp. 1 f. 224; 1501, cap. 1, f. 379.
confidant. By embracing these traits, they had challenged the Mexican inquisitorial court's notions of the acceptable behavior of virtuous women on a broad scale. And perhaps more disturbingly, they had dared to abandon the feminized confines of traditional mysticism by claiming interpretive or intellectual power over the meaning of their mystical experiences. In doing so, they had attempted to enter the masculine and clerical domain of the production of theological doctrine.

Religion and Ethnicity in San Antonio: Germans and Tejanos in the Wake of United States Annexation

Timothy M. Matovina

When Frederick Law Olmsted visited San Antonio in the mid-1850s, he noted that the most striking characteristic of the city was its "jumble of races, costumes, languages and buildings." He also observed that this ethnic pluralism was evident in the distinct German, Tejano (Texans of Mexican or Spanish descent), and Anglo-American neighborhoods through which the traveler passed on entering the city and the mix of architectural styles from various nationalities around the central plaza. Native San Antonian José María Rodríguez concurred with Olmsted, recalling years later that, after United States annexation of Texas in 1845, San Antonio "began to assume a more cosmopolitan appearance."

These shifts in the physical appearance of San Antonio reflect the city's changing demographic composition from annexation until the onset of the Civil War. The free-population schedule for the 1850 census showed that 42 percent of San Antonio's 3,268 free residents had Spanish surnames, 25 percent were Anglo American, and 15 percent were of German birth or parentage. Census figures for 1860 revealed that these three groups continued to predominate and that the city's population was 7,643 free residents, more than a twofold increase.

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