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Mexico in Verse

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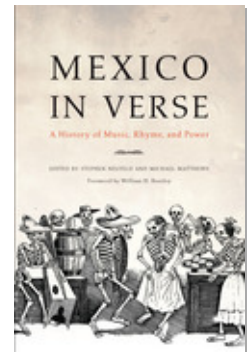
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Vuela, vuela palomita,
párate en aquel palmar
anda y dile a los del Valle
que su papá es Quintanar.

Fly, fly little dove,
alight on that palm tree afar
go and tell those in El Valle
that their dad is Quintanar.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the writer of this corrido characterize his enemies? What symbols and specific language does the writer employ?
2. How would listeners of this song interpret the use of gendered language in attacking their enemies in verse?
3. Why would the writer of this corrido characterize cristero enemies as Bolsheviks without country or flag?

CHAPTER FIVE

Singing for Cristo Rey

Masculinity, Piety, and Dissent in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion

Stephen J. C. Andes

Mexico's epic civil war known as the Cristero Rebellion (1926–1929) was less than a year old when a contingent of Catholic insurgents led by Pedro Quintanar established control over the region of Huejuquilla el Alto, Jalisco. From their stronghold in Huejuquilla, *cristero* rebels attacked federal troops and pro-government militias (*agraristas*) in many of the country's central-western states: Zacatecas, Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango.¹ The constant raiding by Quintanar's soldiers won praise and plaudits from cristero allies and sympathizers. However, it enraged, infuriated, and generally exasperated local anti-cristero *agraristas* in Valparaíso, Zacatecas, a town just thirty miles away

from Huejuquilla. The rivalry between *cristeros* and *agraristas* in the area resulted in back-and-forth fighting throughout the conflict. The opposing sides used song as a medium to vent their hatred for each other. One *agrarista*, Rito Betancourt Luna, fired the first wordy salvo in 1927. As a native of Valparaíso, which locals referred to as El Valle, Betancourt penned a corrido condemning the *cristeros* as fanatics. He made fun of the religious medallions they wore and poked fun at what he viewed as their austere piety; he also called them *beatas* (“holy women”), in essence questioning *cristero* manhood. Moreover, he accused them of being bandits who had cruelly robbed Valparaíso and its citizens.

Not to be outdone, of course, the Catholic rebels in Huejuquilla shot back with their own ballad, descriptively, and perhaps humorously, titled “Corrido de la Contestación a las Estupideces del Bandido Rito Betancourt” (Ballad of Response to the Stupidities of the Bandit Rito Betancourt). The song was anonymous, although Antonio Avitia Hernández attributes it to Lidio Pacheco, a famous *cristero corridista* from the area.² The balladeer had this to say regarding Betancourt’s insults of *cristero* religion:

¿Qué nos ofende diciendo
fanáticos con medalla?

a nosotros no nos manchan
las babas de la canalla.

Estas beatas que así veis,

tan cultas y silenciosas,

no se parecen en nada
a vuestras viejas babosas.³

Do you think you’ve offended
taunting fanatics with medals
divine?

we’ll never be upended
by the drivel of swine.

These holy women that you see
in us,

so piously educated and soft
spoken,

are nothing in the least like
your idiotic old ladies so broken.⁴

The song provides a clear apologia of *cristero* manhood, valor, and piety, and rejects accusations of weakness, treachery, and fanaticism. The *cristero* balladeer also hurled his own insults, calling the soldiers of El Valle “Bolsheviks” without loyalty to country and without religion. The corrido continued with a flurry of lyrics dedicated to undermining the courage and masculinity of the troops in Valparaíso, even calling one *agrarista* “Fidel el Panzón” (“Potbellied Fidel”). The song casts anti-*cristero* leaders in El Valle as timid, valiant only because they drank before battle, and “trembling like a woman” with fear in the face of combat. The *corridista* finishes

with a flourish, which modern-day aficionados of the English-language taunt “Who’s your daddy?” might appreciate:

Que si son veras hombres
y veras valientitos,
que salgan a conocer,
a sus meros papacitos.

If true men you would be,
and if valiant laddies,
then come out to meet,
who’s really your daddies.

Vuela, vuela palomita,
párate en aquel palmar
anda y dile a los del Valle
que su papá es Quintanar.⁵

Fly, fly little dove,
alight on that palm tree afar
go and tell those in El Valle
that their dad is Quintanar.

The ballad provides an earthy, witty—at times even comical—snapshot of the cristero struggle. It also reveals constructions of masculinity by which cristeros and their enemies sought to define themselves vis-à-vis their opponents. Catholic rebels certainly fought with guns and bullets when available, and they especially became available in victory, as dead federal soldiers could offer no complaint to their ammunition being requisitioned for new purposes. But even in that first year the war fought for Cristo Rey (Christ the King) began to carry a tune: Catholic rebels used rhyme, rhythm, and verse against their enemies. They immortalized their heroes with ballads and recounted their exploits in songs of battle. Anti-cristero troops likewise extolled their own cause in lyrical verse, denouncing the religious crusaders as cruel, villainous miscreants. And although scholarship on ballads written during the period has rightly noted the historical value of the ballad genre, it has overlooked the usefulness of corridos in illuminating the color, quality, and characteristics of religion practiced and lived by Catholic militants.⁶ Mexican corridos became avenues for popular news and for the preservation of memory. Yet, as artistic compositions, they also reflected more than merely the nuts and bolts of history: they not only chronicled important dates and names, but also created arenas in which identities were represented, performed, and interpreted. The ballads of the Cristero Rebellion therefore add nuance and depth to historical scholarship on Catholicism in Revolutionary Mexico (c. 1910–1940).

Popular balladeers composed their verses within a distinct context of religious and social upheaval that transformed early twentieth-century Mexico. The Cristero Rebellion, alternatively called the Cristero War or Cristiada, was a local and regional rebellion fought by lay Catholics against government anticlericalism. It was also a diplomatic and political struggle between Church and state elites. Between the years 1926 and 1929, rural

Catholic militants rose to contest anticlerical legislation incorporated in the Constitution of 1917. The most troublesome articles for Catholics included a ban on religious primary education (Article 3) and monastic orders (Article 5); restrictions on public worship (Article 24) and the nationalization of all ecclesiastical property (Article 27); the constitution also reinforced state control over clerical ministry, which required priests to obtain government-issued licenses, prohibited clerical garb in public, and enabled governors to set the maximum number of priests within state boundaries (Article 130). The legislation threatened community values, traditions, and autonomy, most notably in areas where clerical religion had the strongest foothold, especially in the west-central region, which was, in effect, Mexico's Catholic heartland. It was there that fighting spread across approximately thirteen states and took the lives of some ninety thousand Mexican combatants. However, even within the clerical center-west, local communities each had their own historical and cultural character that largely determined whether militants joined the pro-Church movement or took up arms against the *cristeros*. Varying relations with long-term government land policies, with the local Catholic hierarchy, and with neighboring towns were crucial factors in why communities just miles apart, such as Huejuquilla el Alto and Valparaíso, found themselves on opposite sides of the battlefield. Internal feuds and longstanding rivalries within these two towns compelled many to join one side or the other. The geographical, communal, and culturally embedded nature of Mexican Catholicism in the center-west provided the specific contexts from which arose a diversity of political allegiances.⁷

By 1929, Church and state elites brought the local rebellion to an end. In June, United States ambassador Dwight Morrow helped negotiate a Vatican-backed *modus vivendi* between Church and state. The American government desired to bring about internal peace in Mexico while the Mexican government viewed the cease-fire as an opportunity to end a costly insurgency.⁸ The accords led to a momentary alleviation of hostilities, but did not fundamentally solve the religious conflict. *Cristero* veterans only begrudgingly accepted the Church's mandate to lay down their arms. The hierarchy's temporizing policy led to a rift between Catholic militants and Church leaders in Mexico. By the end of 1931 the Church-state battle reignited once again, and renewed anticlericalism led to another Catholic uprising (though far smaller) known as the *Segunda* (1934–1941).⁹

Research on the *Cristero* Rebellion and on religion in general during the Revolutionary period has undergone something of a revival. On the one hand, a new generation of scholars has expanded our view of the period. Local religion has received special attention, as well as the role of women and gender.¹⁰ Where once the pioneering works of Jean Meyer and Alicia

Olivera de Bonfil stood out as the relatively sole exemplars giving voice to voiceless *cristeros*, a veritable historical choir of new studies has been published.¹¹ Each has added depth and tone, pitch and resonance to our understanding. Yet, the new historiography has not focused on *cristero* musical production. On the other hand, a growing number of scholars have focused on *cristero* corridos, but much of this work does not relate it to the new historiography of the religious conflict, especially in terms of gender and local religion.¹² This chapter represents an initial step in that direction, describing how the ballads produced during the period expressed *cristeros'* desire for local autonomy articulated through gendered lyrical compositions. The essay then provides examples of religious dissent voiced in ballads written by non-*cristeros*, as well as how *cristero* ballads could display ambivalent responses toward official Church policy, especially the unpopular Church-state cease-fire of June 1929. Corridos produced during the rebellion became avenues through which Mexicans voiced their political affiliations, expressed beliefs about religion and the Church, and revealed their convictions regarding the gendered nature of Catholicism.

Corridos of the *Cristero* Rebellion

What becomes abundantly clear when reading or listening to ballads written by *cristeros* is that they said very little about the larger political context of the era. This is not surprising, as many popular ballads from the Revolutionary period likewise did not provide broader context. Generally, Mexican corridos often focused only on specific battles or the deeds (and even misdeeds) of heroic individuals. In fact, a large number of ballads we might include as distinctly *cristero*—because of their content or authorship—are not unlike non-*cristero* songs. Corrido scholars Vicente Mendoza, Merle Simmons, and Américo Paredes spent a large part of their careers defining a genre of Mexican ballads they referred to as epic/heroic, which reached its florescence between 1910 and 1930, roughly covering the Revolutionary era. A specific formula characterized these epic/heroic corridos. They usually consisted of an introduction (“Voy a cantarles un corrido”); verses that set the time, place, and date of the events narrated; the entrance of the protagonist, as well as the hero’s words, which were set up by formulaic phrases used in countless ballads; then followed the heroic deeds of the protagonist, usually concluding in his death (it was often, but not always, a man); and finally, the *despedida* (farewell) of the corridista ended the song.¹³ A large portion of *cristero* corridos fit within this epic/heroic formula. At least in terms of form and style, nothing differentiated a *cristero* ballad such as

the well-known “Corrido de Valentín de la Sierra” from one written about a non-cristero subject. The ballads of the Cristero Rebellion therefore form part of a much larger corpus produced over three decades of revolutionary upheaval and national reconstruction. Cristero corridos are found embedded within the *cancioneros* (songbooks), unedited collections, and loose broadsides of the period; many of them were only preserved orally, sung by the regional *cantantes* in locales where they were first composed.¹⁴

A recent study by Antonio Avitia Hernández has nevertheless endeavored to catalogue the corridos from the cristero uprising, extracting them from the general corpus of Revolutionary ballads. Avitia has collected sixty-nine such corridos, the majority of which originated in locations where the rebellion took place and evidence popular authorship. These songs naturally do not represent all of the cristero corridos written during the period. For example, Olivera de Bonfil and Jean Meyer cite the titles of cristero ballads that Avitia did not include in his study, an oversight that stems from the fact that a copy of these songs could not be located.¹⁵ Many of the cristero corridos were in fact saved from historical oblivion through the intrepid work of scholars who ventured into the sierra to record local musicians playing songs unknown out of their immediate region. Irene Vázquez Valle and José de Santiago Silva preserved nine cristero corridos from Los Altos region of Jalisco and from Zacatecas, releasing them on a 1976 vinyl edition produced by Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History.¹⁶ Avitia notes that in the case of two corridos he included in his list (“Corrido de Maximiliano Viguera” and “Corrido del Conflicto Religioso y Los Arreglos”), the ballads were first recorded in Los Angeles, California, and San Antonio, Texas, respectively, revealing that corridos traveled as people did.¹⁷ These two cities received large influxes of Mexican emigrants between 1920 and 1930, especially from the western-central region where the cristero uprising resulted in massive unemployment and community dislocation.¹⁸ As Julia Young argues, although not all of these Mexican emigrants held cristero sympathies, both Los Angeles and San Antonio (as well as other cities such as El Paso and Chicago) saw the creation of many local pro-cristero organizations, and also played host to exiled lay militants and other religious emigrants who actively promoted the cristero cause in writing, religious processions, and marches: priests, nuns, monks, seminarians, bishops, and archbishops who fled Mexico or were deported in the course of hostilities.¹⁹ While the exact reason these two ballads were recorded in the United States remains unclear, cristero corridos likely found a welcome audience among Mexican immigrants with cristero sympathies, providing yet another vehicle for popular expression and solidarity with their coreligionists in rebellion. However, within Mexico, many songs

chronicling the rebellion remained within the regions where the events took place. Only rarely did the ballads become known—or even more rarely, popular—in Mexico more broadly. The relative freedom of movement and expression afforded to Mexican immigrant communities in the United States, as well as their transfer via recordings, probably allowed for the wider diffusion of the ballads north of the border.

Avitia's collection of cristero ballads displays a good deal of geographic diversity, split temporally between the two cristero uprisings. Of the sixty-nine corridos he located, forty-eight refer to events during the first Cristero War (1926–1929) and twenty-one to the Segunda (1934–1941).²⁰ The states of Jalisco and Durango produced the most, with eighteen a piece. Yet, many other states in which the rebellion happened also elicited ballads: Zacatecas (seven); Guanajuato (six); Michoacán (six); Aguascalientes (three); Colima (one); Mexico State (one); Nayarit (one); Oaxaca (one); Querétaro (one). In four cases, two states are listed, revealing how the events of the conflict often spilled over state boundaries: Jalisco/Zacatecas (one); Guanajuato/Michoacán (one); Aguascalientes/Zacatecas (one); Querétaro/Guanajuato (one). Although no battles took place in Mexico City, Avitia includes one corrido on his list that originated in the Federal District, as its cristero protagonist (Maximiliano Viguera) hailed from the capital and was captured, tortured, and executed there. The remaining two ballads have no geographical connection, although they appear to reflect popular attitudes toward the Church strike and the *arreglos* (“Aniversario del cierre de las iglesias” and “Corrido del Conflicto Religioso y Los Arreglos”).²¹

A number of other corridos from the era might be worth adding as well, especially as their themes touched on the Church-state conflict generally (i.e., “Corrido del Convención,” “Atentado contra el General Obregón,” “La muerte del General Obregón,” “El Jurado de Toral,” “El fusilamiento de José de León Toral,” “Corrido de Tomás Garrido Canabal,” “Corrido del General Cárdenas”). These ancillary corridos expose the problematic nature of deciding which songs should be included and which should not. Although they might have been written by well-known “official” corridistas from the capital, especially in the case of Felipe Flores, who wrote several, they certainly appear to reflect popular sentiments about the religious conflict, even if they do not narrate specific battles of rebellion like the majority of the other ballads. Including these compositions would bring the number to approximately seventy-six. A majority of the cristero corridos that have been located by Avitia display a clear pro-cristero perspective (forty-six). The remaining ballads showcase an anti-cristero bias (twenty) or a neutral position (three).²² The ballads of the Cristero Rebellion reflect the

complexities of the political and religious conflict and express a range of vantage points, from piety and dissent, to rancor and ambivalence.

Masculinity and Devotion to Cristo Rey

Religious motivations alone (though important) do not wholly explain why Mexicans chose to fight as *cristeros* or as *agraristas*.²³ Matthew Butler argues that socioeconomic historical realities and local religious traditions created by and through the specific context of the nation's center-west helped form political identities.²⁴ A quest for local autonomy, mediated through a fight over religious practices, became a key factor in why many Catholics chose to rebel. *Cristero* corridos reflect these complex motivations, where issues of religion and autonomy were articulated through gender representations. By analyzing performances of gender in *cristero* corridos we discover how contested understandings of Mexican masculinity often became the battleground on which *cristeros* fought for political power, national inclusion, and community autonomy.

Masculinity is a concept that bears some discussion. Scholars are unanimous in differentiating biological sex—the physical characteristics shared by men or women—from social gender, or the “collection of behaviors, attitudes and attributes [men or women] may or may not exhibit (but that, perhaps, they ought to)” according to societal conventions.²⁵ Biology is natural; gender is learned within specific historical contexts that change over time.²⁶ Thus, “femaleness” and “maleness” are terms used to describe physical states, while “femininity” and “masculinity” depict a spectrum of learned behaviors, enacted in day-to-day circumstances, that are dialectically engaged, and embedded within popular cultural productions. Recent scholarship has stressed the performative aspect of gender, as femininity and masculinity are “determined more by the judgments of others than by an intrinsic quality.”²⁷ Men and women perform their gender identities in relation to other men and women, who are then judged more or less “masculine” or “feminine” by a set of assumed, or even imagined, characteristics. In the case of Mexico, the “violence-prone, overly emotional, fatalistic *machos*” or the “overly religious, fearful, conservative, family-obsessed” women are some of the well-worn gender stereotypes.²⁸ Yet these imagined categories reveal how definitions of the masculine are constructed in relations of power: with women, between heterosexual men and marginalized male sexualities, and through ethnic, racial, and class-based dichotomies. The masculine self is known by what it rejects, thereby making the study of

excluded others integral to the study of masculine gender identities. Corridos from the Cristero Rebellion likewise present masculinity in relation to these “others.” Even as they present a picture of the ideal cristero (virile, loyal, courageous), they reflect that masculinity was defined through actions, that masculinity could be won or lost by what one did (or failed to do). The ballad genre became a stage on which to perform the ideal, where cristero men could be found wanting and cristero women were vindicated.

Masculine identities in Mexico have been intricately linked to debates over national identity. This is not peculiar to Mexico; Roman “manliness” (*virtus*) was defined in relation to one’s service to the Republic.²⁹ And so too, definitions of what it meant to be a man in Mexico have historically been included in a larger discussion of what it meant to be authentically Mexican. As Robert McKee Irwin argues: “the imagined communities constructed in nineteenth-century literature were communities of men.”³⁰ Interactions between men—“homosocial bonds”—symbolized national unity. By the turn of the twentieth century however, the threat of homoeroticism, transvestism, and effeminacy called into question the homosocial “allegory of the nation.”³¹ Most notoriously, the 1901 scandal of the transvestites ball, the so-called famous 41, where police raided a private Mexico City gathering of cross-dressed men, projected male effeminacy and homosexuality onto the popular imagination as “both the other that would define a macho heterosexual national model and an other that in fact was itself intrinsically Mexican.”³² Gender scholar Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba writes that in early twentieth-century Mexico, “effeminacy constitut[ed] a device for emasculating political enemies” and that effeminacy was itself represented as antinational.³³ During the Revolution, representations of the hypermasculine male came to symbolize nationality to a new degree. As Victor M. Macías-González and Anne Rubenstein note, insurgents such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata “tacitly accepted the Porfirian conflation of nation, state, family honor, and male power.”³⁴ The “exaggerated masculinity” of Revolutionary militants seemed to “make up for their lesser class and ethnic status, marking them as true citizens of the nation they were hoping to remake.”³⁵ Cristero constructions of masculinity likewise associated national inclusion with male power, although cristeros further intertwined piety with notions of the sexualized heroic man (e.g., the repeated reference to cristeros as “papacitos”), ready to die for Cristo Rey and *la patria* (the Fatherland), who flaunted government authority and fought for autonomy from a corrupt paternalist state. The Revolutionary state embodied a failed patriarchy to cristero militants: a godless

state could neither model authentic masculinity nor promote a durable Mexican national identity when it rejected Catholic faith and ritual.

An excellent starting point in analyzing masculine identities articulated in *cristero* corridos is the devotion to Cristo Rey, which became extremely popular during the rebellion. The cult was not entirely new. It developed as an adaptation of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French visionaries—Marguerite-Marie Alacoque being the most famous—claimed to have seen Jesus, spoken with him, and observed his loving heart, exposed and wounded by human disobedience and scorn. The message of the visions was that the faithful had a role to play in repairing Christ's wounds, through intercession to the Virgin Mary and consecration of the family, the home, and even the nation to Jesus's divine and sacred heart.³⁶ European Jesuits popularized the cult and Society missionaries spread the devotion across the seas to Asia, Africa, and the Americas. New French missionary congregations also brought the devotion to Latin America. For example, by 1900 over three hundred nuns of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary (Picpus Fathers and Sisters) worked throughout the region.³⁷ French missionary societies, including a variety of those dedicated to the Sacred Heart, "saw the missionary challenge as a struggle against secularization and liberalism, even though that battle was far from over within France itself."³⁸ Moreover, the devotion received support from the Vatican. Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) exhorted the Catholic world in his encyclical *Annum sacrum* (1899) to take part in consecrations to the Sacred Heart because these pious acts could "establish or draw tighter the bonds which naturally connect public affairs with God."³⁹ The individual's indifference to Christ's commands did not alone account for wounding the Sacred Heart, according to the Pope. Christ's afflictions had also been caused by a general societal apostasy, represented in the rise of secular pretensions to authority that had little regard for the Church or religious legitimacy. Catholic anxieties regarding the expansion, consolidation, and vehemence of secular nation-building in the twentieth century provided much of the impetus for the adaptation of the Sacred Heart devotion, transforming the depiction of Jesus from suffering servant to conquering king.

Latin American Catholics quickly took up Pope Leo's call for dedications to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the early twentieth century. Pious societies, especially women's associations, organized crusades of consecration, where an icon of the Sacred Heart would be enthroned in family homes.⁴⁰ While the official cult of Christ the King was not exclusively Mexican, the country's Revolutionary context created national tones to the devotion. Mexican Catholics, with the blessing of the counter-Revolutionary dictator

Victoriano Huerta, consecrated the nation to the Sacred Heart in 1914. Thereafter, the devotion to Christ the King rose in popularity. In 1923, Catholic militants in Mexico planned the erection of a large statue of Christ outside Guanajuato on Cubilete Hill. The event provoked the ire of President Álvaro Obregón (1920–1924) and resulted in the expulsion of the apostolic delegate, who had taken part in the public ceremony inaugurating the statue's construction. Dedications soon included the act of enthroning the Sacred Heart, an adaptation that lay at the root of the new Cristo Rey devotion.

Pope Pius XI (1922–1939) established the worldwide feast of Christ the King in his 1925 encyclical *Quas primas*. Pius selected the last Sunday of every October as an annual day of celebration, when the Church Universal would proclaim the temporal reality of Christ's reign on earth. In other words, Christ was not to rule simply in heaven, but also in the here and now, through a rechristianized society evidenced in respect for Church authority and Christian values. The evolving cult to Cristo Rey proclaimed the "socio-temporal" reality of Christ's Kingdom, which embraced "all mankind" and announced the Church's "independence from the civil power" (cf. *Quas Primas*).⁴¹ Clear confrontational overtones were expressed in the bold proclamation of Christ's royalty. If Christ was king, then all earthly "Caesars"—including President Calles—were not. The annunciation of Christ's authority carried the implicit proclamation that Jesus's divine power trumped all other claims, especially from secular government rulers. In essence, the masculine, even virile, nature of Jesus represented an ideal type, a legitimate form of paternal authority that, according to devotees, dwarfed dysfunctional government paternalism in Mexico. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the often feminized late nineteenth-century Jesus of the Sacred Heart variety grew into the masculine "Christ the King," reconquering society through an organized army of active lay Catholics.⁴²

Allegiance to Cristo Rey in Mexico came to represent a rejection of ungodly government authority embodied in President Plutarco Elías Calles. The "Christ-Caesar" binary was easily applied to Mexico: Calles was often called "Nero" or a "Turk" by *cristeros*.⁴³ One rebel wrote: "Comrades, I have come to raise the banner of Christ the King, because we are tired of the constant tyrannies of the Turk Plutarco Elías Calles."⁴⁴ In the "Corrido a la Hacienda de San Juan Capistrano," written by Father José Adolfo Arroyo in 1927, Calles was depicted as a "heretic" whose impious machinations to destroy religious faith were impeded by *Cristo Rey*:

Si podrá, Calles hereje,
acabar con nuestra Patria,

If he could, Calles the heretic,
would destroy our Nation,

pero Dios que nunca muere
guardará nuestra fe santa.

but God who never dies
will protect our holy faith.

Esos pocos combatientes
que tú ves, de mala traza,
no combaten en su nombre,
su Rey Cristo los ampara.⁴⁵

These few fighters
that you see, so ill-equipped,
do not fight in their own name,
their King Christ helps them.

Despite the small number of troops, which were ill equipped for battle, Father Arroyo claimed that their victory came because Christ the King had aided them. The holy cause for which they fought assured divine intervention to preserve the Catholic identity of the nation.

The title “cristero,” in fact, stemmed from the battle cry “¡Viva Cristo Rey!” (“Long Live Christ the King!”), which Catholic militants used during the rebellion, as well as in less violent arenas like public manifestations and in pro-Church propaganda. The phrase became a mark of loyalty to the cause and a proclamation identifying the individual as a defender of religion. Cristeros, government troops, and agraristas in the field used the phrase as a kind of litmus test in determining one’s political affiliation. “¿Quién Vive?” (“Who lives?”), the first group of combatants might enjoin. And if the response came back “¡Viva Cristo Rey!,” the opposing sides commenced fighting.⁴⁶ Devotion to Christ the King became a sign of rebellion as well as a model for Christian manhood and sacrifice. In President Calles, the rebels perceived a corruption of national fatherhood that had endangered Mexico’s holy and patriotic family. As cristero Ezequiel Mendoza wrote: “I think it is better to die fighting for Christ the King and the Virgin of Guadalupe and all Their family, and not take a single step against the one true God, even if the Devil is angered.”⁴⁷

Throughout cristero testimonies and, as evidenced in their corridos, invocations to Christ the King and the Virgin of Guadalupe dominate; specialist and local saints are less common, although they do appear, such as Saint James (“Santiago”; see below). The predominance of Christ the King and Guadalupe, perhaps peculiar on the surface, given that local religious cults were so important to many Mexican villages, finds an analogy in William Christian’s research on local religion in sixteenth-century Spain: “like Mary, Christ was consulted as a divine generalist, and he took over a combination of problems from the specialist saints,” especially in times of drought, calamity, and economic stagnation.⁴⁸ Moreover, many communities in the central-western region where the uprising took root had strong links to the institutional Church (for example, high rates of sacramental

participation and frequent contact with priests and other religious officials), which heavily promoted the “official” cults of Christ and Mary. Evidence for the influence of a Hispanized, institutional variety of Catholicism on cristero identities can also be found in the interesting fact that the official battle hymn of the cristeros was sung to the tune of Spain’s national anthem, the “*Marcha Real*.”⁴⁹ It appears that cristeros appealed to the Virgin of Guadalupe and Christ the King as national symbols, who might be enlisted to assist even in the local/regional conflicts that precipitated the rebellion. While local cults dedicated to the Virgin Mary, for instance, continued to be venerated (e.g., the Virgin of Zapopan in Jalisco), Guadalupe and Christ the King became the preferred divine intermediaries of the cristero struggle and represented the ideal models for a cristero gendered Catholicism.

Santiago Bayacora: Authority and Fatherhood

Themes of authority, masculinity, fatherhood, and nationality all played important roles in the experience of cristeros from Santiago Bayacora, Durango. Francisco Campos wrote that the decision of the townsfolk to rise against the government was forged through community consensus. In July 1926, a notice appeared on the door of the local church, stating that fines would be levied against anyone ringing the bells of the *templo*, teaching their children to pray, for keeping saints in one’s home, or for wearing any religious medals.⁵⁰ Jean Meyer notes that the announcement probably did not exist in the form Campos described, but that it captured the sense of moral outrage at the government’s attempt to regulate religious practices.⁵¹ “Well, after seeing that manifesto,” wrote Campos, “certainly we felt that the government is to be respected, but in these and other circumstances, this did not sit well with us and the people would rather be smashed to pieces than conform with what the Government said.”⁵² The president’s reform of the penal code in 1926, which enacted the religious articles of the Constitution of 1917 (e.g., fines and/or imprisonment), represented a clear attack on the religious traditions of Santiago Bayacora. Many in the town gathered to deliberate on a course of action. All those present were asked their opinion. And according to Campos’s account, “to defend Religion,” everyone agreed to “fight to the death.”⁵³ The town chose Trinidad Mora as its military leader and Francisco, along with his brother Agapito, pledged their support. Government officials sent to facilitate the transfer of the town’s church to a group of laymen in accordance with the new ordinances

were beaten by angry *santiagueros*. On September 29 a detachment of federal troops was dispatched to quell the unrest. Knowing the beatings and insults delivered to the government functionaries would bring official retribution, Trinidad Mora gathered weapons and those willing to fight. When the soldiers arrived, the rebels managed to gain the upper hand, ambushing the federal troops. Campos thanked God, Saint James, and the Virgin for helping them gain victory.⁵⁴

Campos related the events of one early battle with government troops in a ballad he wrote titled “Corrido del Combate del Puerto de la Arena” in 1926. The rebels of Santiago Bayacora had received word that Federal General Ismael Lares asked President Calles if he could be sent to put down the uprisings in Durango. Campos recounted that a rumor began circulating that General Lares had boasted he would “bring all of us in the sierra back bound and tied up.”⁵⁵ The general and his troops traveled from operations in Chihuahua to the sierra of Durango. The federal troops soon discovered the *cristeros* led by Trinidad Mora at Santa Elena, a hacienda near Puerto de la Arena. Thinking that only a few rebels were holed up in the house built on the hacienda, General Lares approached the door: “Inside boys we’ve arrived,” he said standing outside. The second-in-command, a coronel, turned to Lares and suggested they wait: “Listen my General, let’s leave the fighting until tomorrow because it’s getting late.” Meanwhile, inside, Mora had instructed Campos and the other men to wait until he gave the signal, and then fire with everything they had. “There’s nothing to fear from these boys,” replied Lares to his subordinate. “¡Adentro!” repeated Lares taking a few steps forward. Mora then gave the signal and the *cristeros* opened fire, Lares unable even to take out his pistol before falling dead. Mora and his troops pursued the retreating force, which according to Francisco Campos comprised 250 men and a mule (which died in the firefight). The rebels took a cache of weapons, jewels owned by Lares, and a bag of money that contained a thousand pesos.

Campos explicitly linked religion and masculinity in his ballad, intoning “General Lares died a Mason and man of no consequence.”⁵⁶ Real men were not freemasons, according to Campos. Catholic faith inspired the virtue of valor, and without that faith, a man was of no consequence. The remainder of the corrido did not mention religion explicitly. However, Campos taunted President Calles, likening physical violence with sexual domination:

Vuela paloma y no te vayas a caer
handa dile a Calles

Fly dove and don’t let down
go and tell Calles

que aquí están sus papacitos
que lo quieren conoser [*sic*].⁵⁷

that his daddies are here
who want to get with him.

Calles, the father of the nation, had met his match in the victorious troops of Santiago Bayacora: the defeat of government troops, specifically the murder of Lares, who had been reportedly commissioned by Calles himself, represented a vindication of cristero masculinity and religion. Campos asserted cristero masculinity through the implicit act of homosexual sex (the phrase “who want to get with him” is a reference to copulation), where cristeros overpowered and violated federal troops.⁵⁸ According to Irwin: “contests of wit, authority, or brute force produce symbolic relations of sexual penetration, in which the loser cracks, gets fucked, and is feminized by the winner, who, in this way, enhances his masculinity.”⁵⁹ In a postscript to the corrido, Campos further emasculated General Lares by comparing him to an animal and an Indian (“sprawled out like an animal, the old Indian”), which were both subjects that could represent feminized identity because of their purported passivity in hierarchies of power (man dominates beast; white man dominates Indian man).⁶⁰ Campos represented the cristero battle with federal troops as a symbolic sexual encounter where, because of their virility and masculinity, the rebels from Santiago Bayacora had bested General Lares and delegitimized the authority of President Calles. The symbolic sexual violation of the federal troops called into question the very paternalism of the state.

Quintanar's Brigade: Loyalty and Betrayal

Ballads from the Cristero Rebellion praised the heroic deeds of individuals who remained loyal to the cause of Cristo Rey. However, they also told the story of betrayal. The uprising led by Pedro Quintanar began in August 1926. A rancher with a good reputation in the south of Zacatecas, Quintanar had been leader of the defenses against Villista attacks after 1914. He had military skill and experience leading men. He only reluctantly entered into the rebellion, his decision prompted by the arrest and execution of a parish priest and other townspeople from Chalchihuites.⁶¹ Another small-time cattle breeder from the area, Aurelio Acevedo, approached Quintanar earlier that summer about a planned uprising on August 1, but Quintanar demurred, waiting to see what would happen. The arrests in Chalchihuites compelled Quintanar to act and he mobilized a small force in an unsuccessful effort to free those taken prisoner. After their execution, Quintanar

rode into Huejuquilla el Alto, his hometown, with one hundred men to shouts of “¡Viva Cristo Rey!” Although at first hoping to come to terms with the government on the religious question before the incident in Chalchihuites, Quintanar no longer hesitated: “I’ve made a commitment to the Virgin of Guadalupe,”⁶² he reportedly told his wife. Acevedo joined Quintanar’s troops, later being promoted to general and even acting as the governor of Zacatecas when cristeros controlled the region. After the rebellion, Acevedo would become the main chronicler of cristero testimonies, promoting their stories in the publication *David*, a monthly periodical that ran from 1952 to 1968.⁶³

Quintanar’s victory in Huejuquilla established the cristero troops in the region. The town held strategic value, as Quintanar feared that established agrarista militants in Valparaíso would take the region if they did not. By 1927, when cristeros and agraristas were writing ballads about each other, Quintanar had established control over the south of Zacatecas and north of Jalisco.⁶⁴ In 1928, the new supreme commander of the cristero forces, Enrique Gorostieta, appointed Quintanar head of a brigade composed of five regiments: “Libres de Huejuquilla,” “Valparaíso,” “Guadalupe,” “Castañón,” and “Libres de Chalchihuites.”⁶⁵ At least three thousand troops were under his command.⁶⁶ Moreover, other regional cristero militias, such as Trinidad Mora and the Campos brothers from Santiago Bayacora, formally looked to Quintanar for leadership, but often operated autonomously.

The zone controlled by Pedro Quintanar and his troops produced one of the most iconic corridos of the Cristero Rebellion. The song narrated the death of Valentín Avila Ramírez, more famously known as “Valentín de la Sierra.” The original ballad, written by Lidio Pacheco in 1928, recounted how Valentín was captured by agraristas and provided information on the whereabouts of Quintanar’s troops. Thus, Valentín betrayed his fellow cristeros in order to save his own life. The corrido quickly became popular, not only among cristeros, but also with federal soldiers, and therefore it gained a wider audience outside of Jalisco and Zacatecas.⁶⁷ Federal troops probably liked the song because it told the story of a traitorous cristero, providing them with material to malign the Catholic rebels.⁶⁸ The ballad became an early radio hit, and because of the demands of the medium (the average song needed to be three minutes), the ballad itself was shortened to eight stanzas from its approximate original of twenty-five.⁶⁹ In addition to being cut, the radio version represented a complete inversion of the corrido’s original meaning: Valentín de la Sierra was recast as a hero, who was executed by agrarista troops from Valparaíso because he would not provide information on the location of Quintanar’s Brigade. The popularity

of the ballad even led to two films about the so-called historical Valentín (*Valentín de la Sierra* and *El caudillo*, both in 1967). But here again, the films further changed the original context of the events, locating the action to the 1910 Revolution and not the Cristiada.⁷⁰ Thus, the most recognizable cristero ballad from the era, symbolizing the valor of a hero facing his death, began as a song describing the tragic consequences of disloyalty to the cause of Cristo Rey.

Avitia has reconstructed the historical events behind the corrido. Valentín Avila came from San Cayetano, a small pueblo near Huejuquilla el Alto. Before the rebellion he worked trading goods in the mountains of the region, which provided his nickname, Valentín de la Sierra. He joined the uprising and operated under the orders of Quintanar, working as a spy, guide, and message courier. He probably operated in a unit of no more than fifteen men, stationed near the hacienda de Los Landa (which later was changed to “Holanda,” “los Andas,” or “Rancho de Holanda”). As seen in the “Corrido de la Contestación,” the agraristas from Valparaíso were the main enemies of the cristeros in the region. The ballad mentioned two: a captain of the agrarista militia, Epigmenio Talamantes, and J. Encarnación “Chon” Salas, who had assumed leadership of the town council of Valparaíso under agrarista control. During the back and forth fighting between Huejuquilla and Valparaíso, captured agrarista leaders were always released, until in January 1928, in an apparent move to take firm control over the region, five agraristas were executed. By the end of that year, the agrarista forces had regrouped and were in search of cristero detachments. In one of these expeditions, Talamantes invited Valentín to join the agraristas, as he seemingly did not know Valentín was attached to cristero forces in the region. His true identity was questioned by a woman who knew of Valentín’s cristero affiliation. The discovery led to an interrogation by Talamantes and Chon Salas, demanding that he give up details of where cristero detachments were located, or else face execution. Valentín provided information on the whereabouts of a group of rebels, offering the information to settle a score with a cristero named Ignacio Serrano, who had offended Valentín. The agraristas then thought better of the deal they made with Valentín, saying that if he had betrayed his friends, why would he be loyal to us? Before executing their prisoner, Chon Salas offered Valentín amnesty once again, if he would provide the location of the “curato” (“curacy,” or where clandestine masses took place, which later versions of the song changed to the nonsensical “jurado,” or “jury,” perhaps in order not to implicate Valentín in naming where sacraments were given out in secret, which would only underscore his betrayal) as well as information about a “Justo” (which

referred either to Justo Jaime, a rich cristero supporter in the region, or Justo Avila, an assistant to General Gorostieta). Realizing his situation, Valentín sought to redeem himself, denied the offer, and faced death instead of giving up further information.⁷¹

Authentic masculinity in the “Corrido de Valentín de la Sierra” was defined by the protagonist’s failure to exemplify loyalty and valor. The ballad exposes these weaknesses through a gendered comparison with two women who appear in the song. Both women demonstrate masculine ideal characteristics, thereby emasculating Valentín in the process. The first, an unnamed woman, arrives in company of muleteers and “was part of Quintanar’s people.” She reveals Valentín’s cristero identity, yet the ballad does not describe the woman’s actions negatively:

Se sentaron en el suelo,
juntos con el capitán,
y una mujer lo entregó,
que era de la gente
de éste Quintanar.

Muy antes de Huejuquilla,
la mujer lo señaló,
iba con unos arrieros
y, en esto, la tropa

llegó y lo cercó.⁷²

They sat together on the ground,
together with the captain,
and a woman turned him in,
who was part
of Quintanar’s people.

Before arriving in Huejuquilla,
the woman singled him out,
she came with some muleteers
and, with this knowledge, the
troop

arrived and drew near to him.

Although speculative, the balladeer might have been suggesting that Valentín had ignoble motivations for joining the agraristas, either as a way to avenge his feud with Ignacio Serrano, or simply to save his own neck after the agraristas pressured him to join their troops. Refusing the invitation might have opened him to suspicions of a cristero affiliation. Valentín’s masculinity was first questioned insofar as a woman forthrightly declared the truth about his identity, while Valentín’s motivations remained unclear, murky at best. Moreover, Valentín did not show courage when interrogated, but rather the corridista claimed he gave up the information due to fear: “very scared he told them everything,” which further served to feminize the antihero. When “Tiva,” the second female character, enters the narrative, she mistakenly yells (“comenzó a gritar”) that Valentín would be killed for his religion, which highlights his duplicity, emphasizing the distance between the cristero ideal of martyrdom in imitation of Christ and the reality of Valentín’s treachery against his former allies. Tiva was the nickname

for a woman named Natividad González González, who led the clandestine support efforts of the Saint Joan of Arc Feminine Brigade in the region. Immediately after the entrance of Tiva, the balladeer says that “Valentín wanted to cry,” showcasing his timidity and lack of masculine courage. Filling the Judas archetype, Valentín had sold out the cristero cause and, in the process, lost his masculinity. Although in the last instant, he refused to give up any more information, the corridista claimed that Valentín’s story was that of a “man traitor.”⁷³ The ballad, in its original form, presents a cautionary tale where loyalty, honesty, and courage made one a true cristero, not simply one’s sex.

The ideal cristera, who constantly worked to bring ammunition and supplies to the rebels, as well as acting as intermediaries and message couriers, would be lionized in several other ballads: “Corrido de la Generala,” “Corrido de Agripina,” and the ballad “Combate de San Clemente.” In the first two, a woman is the sole protagonist, while in the third a long list of Feminine Brigade women are mentioned by name. The corridista intoned that “many young women” had risked their lives to bring provisions, clean clothes, ammunition, and even candies to those on the field:

Estas valientes muchachas,
unidas a las Mireles,
las Velasco y García de Alba,
trabajaban de verdá,
y era tan grande su audacia
y las argucias que empleaban
que, hasta sus perseguidores,
de su valor se admiraban.⁷⁴

These valiant girls,
united the Mireles girls,
the Velasco and García de Alba,
worked in truth,
and so great was their audacity
and chicanery that they employed
that, even their persecutors,
their valor they admired.

The valor, and audacity, of these women served to reinforce the masculinity of cristero soldiers. Men such as Valentín de la Sierra could be emasculated in comparison to courageous women. Especially in context of the mother-son relationship, cristeras urged their children to “man up”: “Sons, don’t be cowards, rise up, and defend a just cause!”⁷⁵ What is more, femininity was used to define what authentic manhood meant for cristeros, as well as for agraristas, where both sides taunted each other using gendered language: “If you don’t surrender, we will bring out our women to bugger you good and proper” and “If you let them, that means you are not men, and long live Christ the King, son of a whore!”⁷⁶

On the one hand, women served to reinforce constructions of masculinity when cristeras acted out ideal “manly” attributes: courage, audacity, loyalty, self-sacrifice. Yet, on the other hand, if women showcased these

characteristics too much, or even more than men, it could serve to feminize men (for example, female cristeras sexually violating agrarista men). Even in the highly gendered world of Mexican Catholicism, masculinity and femininity were elastic categories. Gender identity depended less on biological sex than on the performance of masculine and feminine ideals.

Los Altos de Jalisco: Roosters in the Henhouse of the Nation

President Calles notoriously commented to the governor of Jalisco in 1926 that nothing should be feared from the Catholics of that state, as Jalisco was the “henhouse of the nation” (*gallinero*). The phrase had a long history of attribution to men in the region of Jalisco, referring to alleged same-sex attraction, masculine religious fervor, and a supposed lack of marital potency.⁷⁷ Yet, as one cristero from the region wrote: “from within this henhouse emerged nothing but roosters that wore him out.”⁷⁸ The gendered language reflects the representation of authentic nationality, associated with virility and sexual prowess. Calles’ comment implied that Catholic piety feminized its male practitioners and became a strategy for exclusion from national unity. Cristeros, in addition to their claims of autonomy and critique of corrupt paternal authority, also sought to include piety in the homosocial bonds that tied Mexicans together. Just as Christ the King became a model for authentic Christian manhood evidenced through sacrifice, cristeros themselves, through extreme valor and bravery, became models of authentic masculinity, who represented the ideal Mexican man. Models of cristero heroic virtues were immortalized in popular ballads and exemplified in legendary figures. This becomes abundantly clear in the legend that arose around Victoriano Ramírez, better known as “El Catorce” (“The Fourteen”).⁷⁹ El Catorce the legend presented one ideal type of cristero man, which many Catholic rebels often endeavored to emulate. But in the course of the rebellion, competing ideals of cristero manhood would also gain a following. Domínguez-Ruvalcaba notes that “the border between hate and desire outlines power relations.”⁸⁰ The struggle to define authentic cristero manhood became a fight for power within cristero ranks.

Born March 23, 1892, in San Miguel el Alto (Jalisco), Victoriano Ramírez came to represent an idealized cristero masculinity, both in terms of his companions in war as well as in the popular legend that grew around him. His decision to rebel arose from respect for the *padrecitos* (little priests) that

the government was persecuting, but yet, also, he claimed he had scores to settle, to avenge wrongs that had been left unresolved. He respected the Church and its hierarchy. He went to Mass, and took off his hat when hearing church bells and when passing sacred places. Ramírez would not back down from a fight, according to the legend, but also refused to kill prisoners in cold blood.⁸¹ He earned his nickname before the rebellion. He had been arrested and jailed on charges of murder in his hometown of San Miguel; Ramírez managed to escape and local officials sent a posse in pursuit. When the manhunt caught up with the fugitive, Ramírez stood his ground, defeated them, and left all fourteen of the men tied up. He gathered up their weapons and sent them back to San Miguel with the message that the authorities should not send so few men to look for him next time.⁸²

The romantic masculinity of El Catorce included a well-known sexual prowess, keeping at least one wife and several lovers. On this point, he departed from Church teaching and he knew it, but he had no shame about it. Heriberto Navarrete, a twenty-six-year-old *cristero* who fought with Victoriano Ramírez and later became a Jesuit priest, recalled one conversation he had with El Catorce on the subject of women and marriage:⁸³

“Hey, Victoriano, what is your wife’s name?”

“Which?”

“Your legitimate wife.”

“¡Hum! any of them are legitimate.”

“That can’t be. You’re Catholic and now belong to the soldiers of Christ the King. You can’t ignore that the Church condemns concubinage.”

“Look, these are different things. I am Catholic and as often as I could I went to church; and it enrages me that the condemned Government persecutes the Priests and robs the churches. And I know how to pray (‘*Y sé rezar*’). But all this about being Catholic. About man’s use of women, what does that matter?”

“It matters a lot. The abuse of this faculty that God created to conserve the human race, it’s sin.”

“That depends, my friend. If you told me I violate girls by force, or that the ones that take up with me do so against their will, I would say yes. But these abuses will come back to you! And more than that, a woman that I fancy, I always support with the necessities of life. I don’t show favoritism.”

Valentín was a masculine contradiction to Navarrete. He respected the valor, virility, and courage of Ramírez, attributes he desired, writing in his

memoirs that had been witness to his fame among the people, his serenity in combat and his “superb marksmanship.”⁸⁴ “In reality, without passing into the realm of the marvelous, his steady hand never failed,” noted the young cristero.⁸⁵ But Navarrete’s attraction to the dynamic charisma of Ramírez was tempered by his apparent lack of a disciplined interior piety. “Victoriano, along with other cristero leaders, [. . .] lived their rebel adventure making great sacrifices, without considering it. They never took much (or even a little) care in perfecting their private life in paths of austerity.”⁸⁶ Like gender identity, notions of piety were fluid, elastic concepts, contested and performed by Mexicans during the Cristero Rebellion.

The dynamic tension between desire and rejection was showcased in Navarrete’s role in El Catorce’s execution by cristero forces in 1929. Ramírez commanded his own soldiers in the Los Altos region called “Los Dragones de El Catorce” (“The Dragoons of The Fourteen”).⁸⁷ Technically under the immediate orders of the rebel priest Aristeo Pedroza, Valentín’s unit, because of the fame of its leader, operated in semiautonomous fashion. As Enrique Gorostieta, the new commander of the troops in the region, began to consolidate the hierarchy of the cristero regiments under his own authority, Ramírez presented a problem for the new professionalization of the troops. El Catorce’s detachment was decommissioned in the process. Moreover, one of Gorostieta’s assistants, Mario Valdés, butted heads with Ramírez over the new policy of extracting money from the local population in 1929. Gorostieta instructed Valdés, along with Navarrete, to use the popularity of El Catorce as leverage for raising monetary contributions.⁸⁸ According to Valdés and Navarrete, Ramírez did not like the new arrangement, because up to that point, he had kept the money for himself. Further exacerbating tensions, Gorostieta placed Valdés and Navarrete in charge over the region.

Navarrete’s esteem for El Catorce turned increasingly to frustration. Gorostieta, Father Pedroza, and Father Vega represented a new order, intelligent and disciplined. In this order Navarrete found his own star on the rise, promoted first to major and second-in-command over the region, and then later as Gorostieta’s personal assistant. Ramírez, whose “most developed fighting skill rested in his personality,” presented a threat to the new orderliness.⁸⁹ Navarrete recounted that during the decommissioning of Ramírez, the troops, under Valdés and himself, now stood at attention, in silence awaiting their command. “We were heading in the straight direction of organization,” he wrote.⁹⁰ In contrast, the wild, untamed Ramírez mounted his horse, “giving his acts a theatrical seal” and “elegantly” rode away with his personal guard, which the cristero leaders allowed him to keep.⁹¹ Navarrete later explained that “the period of irresponsibility had

passed, of the initial chaos where the whims of a chief were almost sacred law in his tiny fiefdom.”⁹² Despite the bravado and courage that so attracted Navarrete, Ramírez had no place in the organized army of Cristo Rey, an army he hoped would establish the nation on a foundation of godly and ordered principles. Moreover, marginalizing El Catorce was a pragmatic effort to maintain unity among cristero troops, eliminating his challenge to rebel leadership.

A personal scandal added to Navarrete’s disillusionment with Ramírez. Valdés and Navarrete made romantic advances toward two sisters of one of El Catorce’s lovers. The women apparently rebuffed their advances and Valdés, in particular, held a grudge against Ramírez. The account was noticeably absent from Navarrete’s memoirs, yet Jean Meyer writes that the situation was well known among cristeros from the region.⁹³ In revenge, Valdés conjured up a supposed letter written by Ramírez to a federal commander, making it look like El Catorce had entered into correspondence with *callista* forces, presumably to betray the cristeros. Whether General Pedroza took the bait and believed Valdés, or simply used it as a pretext to marginalize Ramírez, is unclear. Nonetheless, Pedroza demanded that El Catorce respond to the charges in person, which he failed to do. Cristero troops rode into San Miguel el Alto in March 1929, and during a celebration held by the town, Ramírez appeared with his personal retinue. Pedroza ordered his arrest, which was carried out by another cristero leader, Miguel Hernández. Pedroza held an impromptu trial, where both Valdés and Navarrete spoke against Ramírez. Pedroza made the decision to execute Ramírez, which took place before dawn.⁹⁴ Popular outrage ensued, and some troops even abandoned the rebellion over the affair.⁹⁵

General Gorostieta, Father Vega, and Father Pedroza all met their deaths during 1929; popular opinion in Los Altos held that it was a sign of “punishment from heaven” for having executed their beloved El Catorce.⁹⁶ The corrido in honor of Victoriano Ramírez reflects the rift within the cristero forces. Moreover, the anonymous balladeer wrote that El Catorce had been executed to please the government, perhaps an effort to make sense of an event that appeared unfathomable to many:

Señores, de que me acuerdo,
ganas de llorar me dan;
que a Victoriano El Catorce
ya lo van a fusilar.

Válgame el Santo Niño
ya también el Padre Eterno,

Gentleman, when I remember,
it makes we want to weep;
that Victoriano El Catorce
they are going to execute.

Help me Holy Child
also the Eternal Father,

mataron a Victoriano
por darle gusto al Gobierno.⁹⁷

they killed Victoriano
to please the Government.

El Catorce's masculinity was central to his popularity. The balladeer's lament was thus an implicit vindication of the cristero manhood he embodied. After the execution, Navarrete's rebellion continued for only a few more months. When the cease-fire of June 1929 came, he sought amnesty and later entered the Jesuit order. After Navarrete rejected the unbridled masculinity he perceived in El Catorce, he pursued a model of piety found in the priesthood, which extolled the virtues of prayer, sacrifice, and celibacy.⁹⁸

Between Piety and Dissent: The Corridos of the Cristero Rebellion

The religious sentiments expressed in corridos from the Cristero Rebellion were diverse, multifaceted, and complex. If ballads from the period could articulate beliefs about authentic Christian manhood they could also voice dissent and even anticlericalism. A few ballads radically attacked the clergy or religion in general. Still others communicated an implicit dissatisfaction with actions of Church officials. In examining sentiments of "Revolutionary anticlericalism" in these corridos, it is important that we differentiate corridos written by cristeros and their sympathizers from ballads penned by non-cristero combatants or other observers. We begin with a discussion of ballads written by non-cristeros, agraristas, or other Mexican observers, and then follow with an analysis of what we might call popular cristero dissent.

Not all anticlericalism during the Revolution conveyed the same meaning.⁹⁹ Adrian Bantjes argued for a disaggregation of the term: "'anticlericalism' which specifically refers to opposition to clericalism, must, of course, be distinguished from anti-Catholicism, anti-Christianity, deism, irreligiosity, and atheism."¹⁰⁰ Ben Fallaw has identified three types of Revolutionary anticlericalism: radical iconoclasm, moderate reformism, and popular forms.¹⁰¹ Non-cristero corridos from the period reflect all three types of Revolutionary anticlericalism, though Jacobin iconoclasm shows up in relatively few ballads. An isolated example comes from Concha Michel, a radical activist, former Communist Party leader, and an organizer in the Revolutionary women's movement.¹⁰²

No queremos religiones,
ni más leyes con engaños.

We don't want religions,
nor laws with deception.

¡Vivan los trabajadores!

Long live the workers!

*¡Viva el pueblo proletario!*¹⁰³

Long live the people's proletariat!

Michel equated religion with restrictive and deceptive laws that kept the working class bound in false consciousness. Still, even Michel managed to differentiate between Christianity and what she refers to as the corrupting influence of the clergy:

*¡Maldito, maldito clero
que con engaño y maldad*

*Infernal, infernal clergy
who with deception and
wickedness*

*las enseñanzas de Cristo
nos ha venido a cambiar!*¹⁰⁴

*the teachings of Christ
have come to distort!*

The corrido was not an attack on Christ's teachings, but a critique of the clergy. Thus, although radical iconoclasts did indeed use ballads to express vehement anticlericalism, it was confined mostly to Revolutionary ideologues, who were concerned less with antireligion than with exposing the crooked behavior of priests.¹⁰⁵

Where anticlericalism does appear in non-cristero corridos of the 1920s and 1930s, it more often reflects Fallows's second and third categories: either moderate reformism, or popular forms. It comes as no surprise that appeals for religious reform were often expressed in ballads dedicated to avowed radicals, such as in "La muerte de Felipe Carrillo Puerto," written in honor of the Revolutionary governor from the state of Yucatán. The corridista claims that the Virgin of Guadalupe has been taken prisoner by priests and needed to be liberated:

*Presa te tienen los curas,
libre el pueblo te venera;*

*The priests have you held captive,
free, the people would venerate
you;*

*¡deja tus retablos! vente
por los llanos y las sierras.*¹⁰⁶

*leave your altars! and come
through the plains and
mountains.*

Corridos such as this one allude to the battle for a Mexican "laicity." Roberto Blancarte describes laicity (from the French *laïcité*) as a political notion, "a system of association whose political institutions are no longer legitimated by the sacred or by religious institutions but by popular sovereignty."¹⁰⁷ Thus we find in a ballad titled "Los recuerdos de ayer" that the singer cries out with a mournful "Ay! Qué dolor!" when describing the

root of the religious conflict: a battle between dueling sovereignties; on one side, the clergy invested with their traditional authority; on the other side, the Constitution of 1917 rooted in profane power.¹⁰⁸

A ballad dedicated to Lázaro Cárdenas from the 1930s shows that perhaps the revolutionaries fighting for Mexican laicity had made little progress. Francisco M. Chávez's "Corrido del General Lázaro Cárdenas" esteems the president for "fighting for the campesinos," and for "teaching men justice and reason." But why is Cárdenas able to govern, according to the singer? After mentioning the president's "great intelligence" and his "manner of thought," characteristics assisting him in battling his rivals, the balladeer made clear that "The Eternal One sent him to save the Nation." Moreover, the song articulated that, in fact, "God let him govern and will take him to glory."¹⁰⁹ Cárdenas might have called for radical reforms, in essence, but the sovereignty of God was still the source of his political power. Non-cristero ballads from the period provide evidence that political power remained rooted in the sacred, even when current officials, presidents, or governments claimed otherwise. Songs written by many non-cristeros contained anticlerical calls for moderate reformism. However, these usually differentiated the faith of the people, defined as veneration for the Virgin of Guadalupe, other popular devotions, and idealized Christian teachings, from corrupt ecclesiastical officials.

But what of ballads written by cristeros or their sympathizers? I have yet to find a corrido expressing radical iconoclasm in a ballad written by a cristero, which comes as no surprise. Cristero memoirs, such as the one written by Francisco Campos from Santiago Bayacora, repeatedly stated that Catholic rebels fought for religion.¹¹⁰ Counterintuitively, however, the ballads produced by pro-Church insurgents did contain sentiments critical of official Church policies. These attitudes appear to fit best within Fallaw's third type, described as popular forms. Two examples reflect the extent to which cristero songsters questioned Church policy. The first comes from a ballad titled "Aniversario del cierre de las Iglesias," written to commemorate the beginning of the religious struggle in 1926, when the Mexican hierarchy declared the cessation of the sacraments. The decision resulted in a Church strike where the nation's priests stopped administering the Eucharist, and performing marriages, confirmations, and baptisms in the nation's houses of worship. The corridista sings that the clergy made the decision and the president accepted it, implying that the faithful had no role in the transaction other than as passive recipients of the order. The people, with "pain and affliction" responded "with devotion and fervor" praying for God's pardon. They prostrated before the altar, participated "in

continuous procession,” and sought to make reparations to the Virgin of Guadalupe for the nation’s sins, which many felt had brought on the calista persecution. But, as floods, misery, and adversity continued, the balladeer asked where had the clergy gone?:

La gente, con grande amor,
y cual parvada de abejas
iban en busca del pastor
que dejaba sus ovejas.

The people, with great love,
like a flock of bees
went in search of the shepherd
that had left his sheep.

Adios, padres, que dejáis
sin pastor vuestro rebaño;
quiera Dios pronto volváis

Goodbye fathers, that left
without a shepherd your fold;
grant that God helps you soon
return

y la halléis sin ningún daño.

and that you find it without any
harm.

The ballad then ended on a sullen note, unsure whether the Church’s decision would be for the best of religion in Mexico: “if it is or isn’t defendable; / history will be the judge.”¹¹¹

A second example of popular cristero dissent comes from a ballad written in 1929, celebrating the reopening of the churches and the end of the Cristero Rebellion. The anonymous author of the corrido narrated the religious conflict, beginning with the decision to rigorously apply the religious articles of the Constitution of 1917 to the rebellion inspired in protest against limitations on the liberty of conscience. The result of this conflict, declared the singer, was that the faith of Mexicans had not been destroyed. Yet, a certain satire was evident in the refrain, when the corridista exuberantly announced the outcome of the Church-state accords:

Ya no hay tiros ni trancazos,
toditito está arreglado,
jora sí puedo casarme,
por la Iglesia y el Estado!¹¹²

The shooting and fighting has
ceased,
everything has been fixed,
Now I can get married,
by the Church and the State!

The chorus underscored the disaffection felt by many cristeros at the time. The church strike had been called in protest of what many Catholics felt were unjust laws. Until these laws changed, the battle needed to continue. Nevertheless, the 1929 *modus vivendi* agreed to by the hierarchy and the

president left the same laws in place, and demanded that the *cristeros* surrender their weapons and give up the fight. The chorus thus lampooned the fact that nothing had changed, the battle of sovereignties continued without solution, leaving the Mexican people caught in the middle. True liberty of conscience had, in fact, not come to Mexico; Catholics had not gained the right to choose whether to be married by either the Church or the state. Everyday life continued to be dictated by forces outside the immediate control of many individuals. These examples therefore conveyed popular forms of dissent expressed through music produced by *cristeros* or their allies. They offered a popular critique of ecclesiastical decision-making, which produced little in terms of a fundamental reconfiguration of official Church-state relations.

Cristero Masculinity, Piety, and Dissent in Verse

The musical production of the *Cristero* Rebellion opens a window on the gendered aspects of Mexican Catholicism. The devotion to *Cristo Rey*, rooted in Marian practices and the Sacred Heart of Jesus—two religious traditions with a long history in Mexico—developed as a crucial moniker of rebellion. Adhesion to Christ the King signified a rejection of corrupt earthly authority incarnated in President Calles. Calles represented a mirror image of Christ: as a man loyal to the Virgin and Mexican traditions, as a virile warrior, and a just leader. The gendered invocation of both Christ and the Virgin (“Long Live Christ the King!” “Long Live the Virgin of Guadalupe!”) depicted the *cristero* ideal of traditional family on which the nation should be constructed. Many Catholics perceived that anticlerical laws had challenged that order, which needed to be preserved through action and suffering. Christ became a model of *cristero* manhood: as Christ remained loyal to his Mother, so too *cristeros* should persevere for the Church and the community in which that institution was rooted. The rebels in Santiago Bayacora defended these ideals. Trinidad Mora claimed to wage his war against the government “by his triple title as a Mexican, a Catholic and a parent [. . .] against the Nero that was persecuting the Church.”¹¹³ Francisco Campos asserted *cristero* religious autonomy through performance of masculine violence. *Cristeros* took on the role of “*papacitos*” who violated their enemy, feminizing the passive victim through racial epithets (“the old Indian”).

Corridos of the rebellion reveal that even if gender binaries (Christ and the Virgin) represented ideal types, they were often contested. Valentín de

la Sierra offered an inversion of masculine and feminine forms, where the man (Valentín) was emasculated by courageous cristero women. In addition to confirming that all notions of what “makes a man” demands comparison with constructions of femininity, the “Corrido de Valentín de la Sierra” collapses the boundaries between the world of men and women.¹¹⁴ Even in a supposedly segregated world of war and violence, women were ever-present during the Cristero Rebellion. Just as during the 1910 Revolution, Catholic women (mothers, wives, sisters, daughters) participated in the uprising and, because of their actions, even performed “masculinity” better than some men in particular. And yet, women remained the foil for defining the masculine, often reinforcing the gender hierarchy. Mothers wished martyrdom for their sons and exhorted them to valor. However, if women were perceived to be too mannish to an enemy, cristeras held the potential to emasculate Catholic men (“If you let them [bugger us], that means you are not men, and long live Christ the King, son of a whore!”).

Cristero corridos expose the conflict between an ideal imitation of Christ and desire for the sexualized hero. Homosocial interactions play an important part in the legend and corrido about Victoriano Ramírez, El Catorce. Domínguez Ruvalcaba has shown that autobiographical accounts of the 1910 Revolution (*El águila y la serpiente* and *Memorias de Pancho Villa*, both by Martín Luis Guzmán) “present us with the image of the hero as a desirable body, a body composed by the gaze that euphorically venerates the great men of the nation.”¹¹⁵ Heriberto Navarrete’s account of El Catorce echoed a similar desire: to ride with elegance, to be beloved by women, feared by enemies, and courageous in battle. And yet, homosocial relations are constrained by “fear of effeminacy.”¹¹⁶ Navarrete’s rejection of El Catorce as a model of masculinity coincided with his promotion in the cristero hierarchy, where he was put in charge of virile bodies, commanding his new regiment to attention (“¡Atención! . . . ¡Regimiento! . . . ¡Firmes! . . . ¡Presenten! . . . ¡Armas! . . . ¡Firmes! . . .”).¹¹⁷ The erratic, erotic, and chaotic sexualized hero was rejected in favor of the organized, controlled masculinity represented in Christ the King and the cristero army. In the “Corrido de Valentín Ramírez,” El Catorce was a popular vindication of the hero, revealing that masculine religious identities were contested within the cristero ranks. Aurelio Acevedo, cristero to the end, commented that “in this period the masculine element predominated in acts of worship.”¹¹⁸ However, the “masculine element” was always plural, disputed, and challenged.

Ballads of the Cristiada diversify our comprehension of religious dissent. The binary of faith versus impiety collapses as ballads from the period are

examined through the prism of gendered expectations and ideals. A spectrum of political identities found voice through the words of the corridista. Non-cristeros were not all alike in their attitudes toward the religious struggle. The soldiers for Christ likewise used song as a platform to express their dissatisfaction with Church policy, often defining their cause as separate from that of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Cristeros lauded their heroes, taunted their enemies, and memorialized their momentous struggle in song; their music revealed that cristeros were “engendered and engendering” beings, who fought for national inclusion as Catholics, but also as men and as women.¹¹⁹

Notes

Special thanks are due to David Seng and Katie Nisbet who provided valuable research assistance in preparing this chapter.

1. The agraristas were irregular militias recruited by the federal government in order to put down the Catholic cristero insurgency. Agraristas were so-named because many of them benefited from the Revolutionary government’s “agrarian” policy, consisting of the redistribution of communal land (*ejidos*) to villages; see Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

2. Antonio Avitia Hernández, *Corrido histórico mexicano: Voy a cantarles la historia* (1924–1936), tomo IV (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1998), 42.

3. Quotes in *ibid.*

4. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

5. Avitia Hernández, *Corrido histórico mexicano*, tomo IV, 43.

6. Vicente T. Mendoza, *El romance español y el corrido mexicano: Estudio comparativo* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1939); Mendoza, *El corrido mexicano: Antología, introducción y notas* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultural Económica, 1954); Merle E. Simmons, *The Mexican Corrido as a Source for Interpretive Study of Modern Mexico (1870–1950)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957); Américo Paredes, “With His Pistol in His Hand”: A Border Ballad and Its Hero (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958).

7. Matthew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico’s Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927–29* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2–13, 214; Jean Meyer, *La cristiada*, 3 vols. (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1973–74); and Christopher R. Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Michoacán* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), ch. 5.

8. The Cristero Rebellion exhausted at least 25 percent of the national budget; see José de Jesús López Nieto, *Diccionario histórico de México, 1800–2000* (México: Ediciones Quinto Sol, 2004), 310.

9. Approximately 7,500 cristeros took part in uprisings from 1934 to 1941 in Mexico’s central western states; see Meyer, *La cristiada*, 1: 367–68. By 1938, most cristero

militants had disbanded, although a small minority continued to fight. The last corrido of La Segunda details events from Durango in 1941 ("Corrido de Federico Vázquez").

10. Adrian Bantjes, "Religion and the Mexican Revolution: Toward a New Historiography," in *Religious Culture in Modern Mexico*, ed. Martin Austin Nesvig (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 223–54; Edward Wright-Rios, *Revolutions in Mexican Catholicism: Reform and Revelation in Oaxaca, 1887–1934* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Patience Schell, *Church and State Education in Revolutionary Mexico City* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001); Kristina A. Boylan, "Mexican Catholic Women's Activism, 1929–1940" (PhD diss., Oxford University, 2000); Robert E. Curley, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem: Catholics and the Political Sphere in Revolutionary Mexico" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2001); Patience A. Schell and Stephanie Mitchell, *The Women's Revolution in Mexico, 1910–1953* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007); Jocelyn Olcott, Mary Kay Vaughn, and Gabriela Cano, eds., *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Ben Fallaw and Terry Rugeley, eds., *Forced Marches: Soldiers and Military Caudillos in Modern Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012).

11. Alicia Olivera de Bonfil, *Aspectos del conflicto religioso de 1926 a 1929: Sus antecedentes y consecuencias* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1966); Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion: The Mexican People Between Church and State (1926–1929)*, trans. Richard Southern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

12. A lone exception to this is the brief feminist analysis of a few cristero corridos, see María Herrera-Sobek, *The Mexican Corrido: A Feminist Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). The best recent analysis of cristero corridos, but which does not include gender analysis, is Antonio Avitia Hernández, "La narrativa de las cristiadas: Novela, cuento, teatro, cine y corrido de las Rebeliones Cristeras" (PhD diss., Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Iztapalapa, 2006). The late Jaime Nicolopolus, assisted by his students at the University of Texas, Austin, produced a web page dedicated to corridos of the Cristero Rebellion, "Corridos de la Cristiada," <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/jaime/cwp5/crg/index.html>, accessed September 25, 2012.

13. Simmons, *Mexican Corrido*, 17.

14. Avitia Hernández, "La narrativa," 635.

15. Meyer, *La cristiada*, 406–10; Alicia Olivera de Bonfil, *La literatura cristera* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1970).

16. Irene Vázquez Valle and José de Santiago Silva, eds., *Corridos de la rebelión cristera* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1976). A compact disc version was released in 2002.

17. Avitia Hernández, "La narrativa," 641.

18. In Los Angeles between 1920 and 1930, almost 37 percent of adult male Mexican immigrants came from the center-west, while in San Antonio during the same period, a large number of the 21,000 Mexican émigrés came from the same region; see Julia G. Young, "Cristero Diaspora: Mexican Immigrants, the U.S. Catholic Church, and Mexico's Cristero War, 1926–1929," *The Catholic Historical Review* 98, no. 2 (April 2012): 276; see also Richard A. García, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929–1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 28.

19. Young, "Cristero Diaspora," 278, 286, 288.
20. Avitia Hernández, "La narrativa," 639–40. Avitia's list of corridos number only 69, although the author says he collected 70, an apparent editorial oversight.
21. Ibid., 637–42. The term "arreglos" (Spanish for "fixes") referred to the Church-state modus vivendi, which ended the Cristero Rebellion in June 1929.
22. Ibid.
23. Like Butler, other scholars see the motivation for revolt more sharply in the convergence of local identities with sociocultural and political forces: see Purnell, *Popular Movements*; and Boyer, *Becoming Campesinos*, ch. 5.
24. Butler, *Popular Piety*, 214–21.
25. Robert McKee Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xvii.
26. Many scholars of sex and gender argue against strict sexual dimorphism. Thus, even biological differences between men and women are better conceptualized along a continuum. Matthew C. Gutmann cites work by Anne Fausto-Sterling, who "provides evidence of the existence of at least five biological sexes (hermaphrodites, male pseudohermaphrodites, female pseudohermaphrodites, females, and males"; see Matthew C. Gutmann, *Changing Men and Masculinities in Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 8.
27. Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, xviii.
28. Victor M. Macías-González and Anne Rubenstein, eds., *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 13.
29. Myles Anthony McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: "Virtus" and the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xiii, 2.
30. Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, xvii.
31. Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, *Modernity and the Nation in Mexican Representations of Masculinity: From Sensuality to Bloodshed* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2.
32. Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, xii.
33. Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, *Modernity and the Nation*, 3.
34. Macías-González and Rubenstein, *Masculinity and Sexuality*, 11.
35. Ibid.
36. Raymond Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 2.
37. Claude Pomerleau, "French Missionaries and Latin American Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century," *The Americas* 37, no. 3 (January 1981): 360.
38. Ibid., 351.
39. Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1878–1903* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 451–54.
40. Gertrude M. Yeager, "In the Absence of Priests: Young Women as Apostles to the Poor, Chile 1922–1932," *The Americas* 64, no. 2 (October 2007): 207–42.
41. Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903–1939* (Raleigh, NC: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 271–79.
42. See Matthew Butler, "Trouble Afoot? Pilgrimage in *Cristero* Mexico City," in *Faith and Impiety in Revolutionary Mexico*, ed. Matthew Butler (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007), 152–53.
43. Many Catholics who opposed the president's policies associated his paternal name "Elías" with the influx of Middle Eastern, especially Lebanese, immigrants in

Mexico; thus, the epitaph “el turco” (“the arab”) became a popular slur, linking his anticlericalism to a supposed non-Christian heritage. In fact, Plutarco’s paternal family clan was founded by a Catholic of low nobility named Francisco Elías González, who emigrated from the province of La Rioja, Spain, in the colonial period. As an illegitimate child of Plutarco Elías Lucero, Plutarco Jr. was raised by his uncle, Juan Bautista Calles, from whom he took the surname “Calles.” Only later in adulthood would the president incorporate his biological father’s surname, endeavoring to play up the Elías clan’s more notable standing in Sonora; see Jürgen Buchenau, *Plutarco Elías Calles and the Mexican Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 8–10.

44. Meyer, *La cristiada*: I, 311.

45. Avitia Hernández, “La narrativa,” 677–78.

46. Jean Meyer, *El coraje cristero: Testimonios* (Mexico: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1981), 20.

47. Meyer, *Cristero Rebellion*, 185.

48. William A. Christian, Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 22.

49. See the documentary film, *Cristeros, Soldados de Cristo* (2007). The cristero flag was emblazoned with the Virgin of Guadalupe. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer who highlighted this detail.

50. Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, 11.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, 11–16.

55. The following account comes from Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, 19–21.

56. Quoted in Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, 84.

57. *Ibid.*, 85.

58. The use of homosexuality to define masculine power relations in early twentieth-century Mexico was widespread. For recent research on homosexuality and the definition of criminality, see Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900–1931* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Robert Buffington, *Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

59. Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, xxiii.

60. Quoted in Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, 85; Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, xxix.

61. Meyer, *La cristiada*: I, 107.

62. *Ibid.*, 108.

63. *Ibid.*, 395.

64. *Ibid.*, 202.

65. Enrique Gorostieta, ex-Porfirian officer, was recruited by the League for the Defense of Religious Liberty in 1927 to take command of cristero rebel forces; see Marta Elena Negrete, *Enrique Gorostieta: cristero agnóstico* (Mexico City: Ediciones El Caballito, 1981).

66. Meyer, *La cristiada*: III, 106.

67. Antonio Avitia Hernández, “La verdadera historia de Valentín de la Sierra,” *Aztlán* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 73–90.

68. On the multiple uses of corridos by Mexican soldiers, see Stephen Neufeld, ch. 2 of this volume.

69. Avitia Hernández, "La narrativa," 688–93.
70. Ibid., 681.
71. Ibid., 685–87.
72. Ibid., 689.
73. Ibid., 693.
74. Herrera-Sobek, *Mexican Corrido*, 100–101.
75. Meyer, *La cristiada*: I, 121.
76. Meyer, *Cristero Rebellion*, 174–75.
77. Thanks are due to one of the anonymous reviewers who pointed out the rich history of the term "gallinero."
78. Meyer, *La cristiada*: I, 171–72.
79. Valentín Avila Ramírez and Victoriano Ramírez had no relation.
80. Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, *Modernity and the Nation*, 5.
81. Victor Ceja Reyes, *El catorce y la guerra cristera* (Mexico City: Editorial Universo, 1983), 22–23, 31, 77.
82. Heriberto Navarrete, *Por Dios y por la patria*, 4th ed. (Mexico City: Editorial Tradición, 1980), 178–79.
83. The following dialogue is quoted in ibid., 180–81.
84. Ibid., 179.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid., 182.
87. Ceja Reyes, *El catorce*, 45.
88. Meyer, *La cristiada*: III, 222.
89. Navarrete, *Por Dios*, 183.
90. Ibid., 188.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Meyer, *La cristiada*: III, 222.
94. Navarrete, *Por Dios*, 190–205.
95. Meyer, *La cristiada*: III, 222–23.
96. Ibid., 223–24, n. 72.
97. Avitia Hernández, *Corrido histórico mexicano*, 114.
98. Navarrete entered the Jesuit order on October 2, 1933; see José Gutiérrez Casillas, *Jesuitas en México durante el siglo XX* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1981), 621.
99. See in the special issue of *The Americas*: "Personal Enemies of God: Anticlericals and Anticlericalism in Revolutionary Mexico, 1915–1940," *The Americas* 65, no. 4 (April 2009).
100. Bantjes, "Mexican Revolutionary Anticlericalism: Concepts and Typologies," *The Americas* 65, no. 4 (April 2009): 468.
101. Fallaw, "Varieties of Mexican Revolutionary Anticlericalism: Radicalism, Iconoclasm, and Otherwise, 1914–1935," *The Americas* 65, no. 4 (April 2009): 482; and Knight, "The Mentality and Modus Operandi of Revolutionary Anticlericalism," in *Faith and Impiety*, ed. Butler, 23.
102. Jocelyn Alcott, *Revolutionary Women in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 1, 3, 93, 106.
103. Quoted in Simmons, *Mexican Corrido*, 409.
104. Ibid.

105. Fallaw, "Varieties of Mexican Revolutionary Anticlericalism," 494.
106. Quoted in Simmons, *Mexican Corrido*, 394.
107. Blancarte quoted in Bantjes, "Mexican Revolutionary Anticlericalism," 477, n. 40.
108. Simmons, *Mexican Corrido*, 390.
109. Quoted in Avitia Hernández, *Corrido histórico mexicano*, 205.
110. Quoted in Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, 22.
111. Quoted in Avitia Hernández, *Corrido histórico mexicano*, 44.
112. Ibid., 147.
113. Meyer, *La cristiada*: I, 379.
114. Gutmann, *Changing Men and Masculinities*, 19.
115. Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, *Modernity and the Nation*, 57.
116. Ibid., 74.
117. Navarrete, *Por Dios*, 188.
118. Quoted in Meyer, *El coraje cristero*, unpaginated original description on photograph titled "Comunión General."
119. Gutmann, *Changing Men and Masculinities*, 19.