

# THE NEW MEXICAN "SHEPHERDS' PLAY"

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The Pioneer Report on the Spanish miracle plays in the American Southwest was the article published in the *Journal of American Folklore* for April 1893, by Captain John G. Bourke. It described a nativity play called *Los Pastores* (The Shepherds), which he saw at Rio Grande City, Texas, during the Christmas season of 1891. In 1953, a Hollywood lithographer published a *Los Pastores* text from California, claimed to be the work of a Franciscan missionary who lived at Soledad Mission from 1803 to 1818. Between 1893 and 1953, at least one hundred twenty-five copies of this play relating to Christ's nativity have been discovered in the American Southwest and in Mexico. No one, to my knowledge, has made a complete collation of all manuscripts. A number of scholars, especially A. L. Campa, Aurora Lucero-White Lea, George C. Barker, and Stanley L. Robe, have published texts, and both J. E. Englekirk and Juan B. Rael have contributed valuable information as to the original geographical centers in the American Mexican terrain from which the plays may have been disseminated. The present study attempts to examine some New Mexican texts and to relate them to the general pattern of other published texts, with commentary on the treatment of themes and their adaptation to local audiences.<sup>1</sup>

A monastic book inventory in New Mexico, dated 1776, contains an item *Ortus Pastores, no se ve autor*, "author unknown"; since there is no Spanish word *ortus*, the word may well be *autos*, "religious plays," which joined to *Pastores* would read "Shepherds' Plays."<sup>2</sup> In 1726, at the town of Santa Cruz in New Mexico, a villager who came from Old Mexico and served as town notary and uncrowned poet laureate (and who was troubled about his religious faith) reported that a settler came to his house and asked him to write a Christmas play, but he was "too upset to make a play to celebrate God in his Nativity."<sup>3</sup> These references in New Mexico, joined to the California Soledad Mission text, are slender documentation for the dating of Southwestern miracle plays. Most of the manuscripts now

available are in notebooks, the paper and binding of which are not older than sixty or seventy years, but archaic elements in presentation, theme, and language certainly remove them from a modern period of reference.<sup>4</sup> In Old Mexico, allusions to *coloquios* and *autos sacramentales* on the Christmas theme are found in sixteenth century missionary chronicles, where they are described as agencies for instructing and converting the Indians.<sup>5</sup>

M.R. Cole, who in 1902 translated the text supplied by Captain Bourke to the American Folklore Society, believed that the missionary priests not only presented the *autos sacramentales* but adapted them from Spanish sources as well. Cole points to passages written by professional Spanish dramatists in the seventeenth century which may have furnished episodes and dialogue for the Mexican and Southwestern nativity plays. In one scene from these identified plays the Archangel Michael contests with Lucifer for the soul of a shepherd. In another, a young couple named Bato and Gila quarrel in a comic vein, much as Mexican shepherd Bartolo and the shepherdess Gila in *Los Pastores* quarrel on their way to see the Christ Child at Bethlehem.<sup>6</sup> Such analogues as these between anonymous nativity plays and printed Spanish *autos sacramentales* are strikingly climaxed by Cole's identification of a song "Aprended flores de mí," written in 1621 by Luis de Góngora, founder of a school of romantic Spanish poetry in his day.<sup>7</sup> That quatrains of this famous lyric, born in the brilliant courts of Spain, should have made their way to the adobe plazas of New Mexico is a tie between sophisticated literary circles and folk literature that needs to be underlined. Yet despite the analogues of text and character, no professional play has been found as a complete source for any of the numerous manuscripts of *Los Pastores* ("The Shepherds' Play").

The essential plot is based upon the New Testament narratives of the birth of Christ, supplemented by Christian legends which furnish the background for the celestial battles between Michael and Lucifer. Through the religious services of the Catholic Church the nativity story began to find its way into drama as early as the eleventh century, when preliminary to the Christmas mass a rite called the *Officium Pastorum* ("Office of the Shepherds") was performed. A manger was prepared at the side of the altar and images of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child were placed in it. Then a boy, dressed to represent an angel, sang the Annunciation from a lofty place, and shepherds entered through the main door of the choir, crossing to the manger. In chorus they repeated the words of the

Annunciation, and were answered by a choir singing the *Gloria* from the high corridors of the church. The shepherds then drew near to the manger, singing as they went. They were greeted by midwives who questioned them and then pulled aside the curtains to reveal the Virgin and Child. The midwives quoted Isaiah's prophecy, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." The shepherds, after adoring the sacred pair, departed, singing "Alleluia."<sup>8</sup>

The framework of the "Shepherds' Play" is here, with the essential properties, stage setting, characters, and minimum plot. Certain formal elements of staging in the "Office of the Shepherds" still persist in the presentation of the New Mexican "Shepherds' Play": the procession down the aisle of the church; the static group in the manger; the choir supporting the actors with songs, like a Greek chorus; the intonation of the shepherds in choral responses and comments. In some presentations, a red tent in the center of the hall reproduces the Hell Mouth, which was a stage constructed outside the medieval churches; and by the thirteenth century the Hell Mouth had been placed on what was called a pageant wagon where it could be drawn to various playing stations in the community. In nearly all the New Mexican presentations, the Star of Bethlehem is pulled down the center of the hall on a wire, just as it once preceded the shepherds in the chancel of a medieval church. These details of staging point out some of the elements linking ecclesiastical and secular productions of *Los Pastores*. In this paper I wish especially to point out the increased popularizing and secularizing of materials as they appear in New Mexican versions of the "Shepherds' Play."

I have used the title "Shepherds' Play" to cover such varied names as *Los Pastores*, *La Pastorela*, *Pastores Chiquitos*, *Coloquio de Pastores*, *Estrella* and others because, although there are numerous texts and a number of somewhat varied plots, the core materials of plots and the central characters are identical in all. Doubtless the first *Los Pastores* play in the New World was a synthesis of Old World materials. Later versions began to rearrange episodes, change characters, and innovate action and dialogue. All who have investigated these texts point to the parallel transcriptions in many of them and to the obvious derivation from a limited number of original sources. Professor Englekirk, after examining some seventy manuscripts, writes of only eight "relatively independent variants," of which four enjoyed "a fairly widespread popular existence." Of these four, he describes one found in southern Colorado as a truncated form of the best known of the others, thus reducing his chief texts to

three. Professor Rael also identifies the central texts known in the Southwest area as three: 1) the Texas (Rio Grande City) text published by Cole; 2) the New Mexico (or San Rafael) text, versions of which were also published by Cole and by Professor Campa; and 3) a southern Colorado text still unpublished. My own studies point to the Bourke (Cole) - Rio Grande City text (1891), the De Busk-San Rafael text (1889), and a synthesis of these two texts said to have been brought to New Mexico in the year 1856, or thereabouts, by a Mexican named Valentín Flórez. According to testimony furnished Lorin W. Brown, a worker for the New Mexico Writers' Project in 1937-1938, Flórez came to Agua Fria, New Mexico, and organized a troupe of actors in Santa Fe and elsewhere who produced a version of *Los Pastores*. A copy of the same Mexican source or of the Agua Fria play is to be found in a manuscript dated 1895 and handwritten by Candelario Barreras of Las Palomas, New Mexico. Then there is a fourth important text. It is entitled *El Día de la Nueva Aurora* or "The Day of the New Aurora." In Spanish, *aurora* may mean either "dawn" or the Greek goddess. The title, therefore, may be translated "The Day of the New Dawn," or "The Dawn of a New Day" (*La Aurora del Nuevo Día*), or it may appear as a translation which honors the Virgin Mary, i.e., "The Day of the Dawn Goddess." This allegorical drama, involving two of the devils (Sin and Craftiness) assisting Lucifer, is shorter than the traditional plays and reworks familiar materials, but it does not echo the dialogue in any of the texts mentioned above, and it has certain sophisticated touches in staging which the others lack. Space will not permit much description of these texts, but their salient characteristics follow:

- 1) The Bourke (Cole)-Rio Grande City text introduces into the nativity plot a pious Hermit and portrays him as a defender of the shepherds; a clown named Cucharón supplements the efforts of a lazy shepherd named Bartolo in providing entertainment for the audience, and despite Bartolo's amusing appetite and laziness, he is presented with some sympathy as the husband of Gila, the only woman in the play; references to the Church and to the Spanish throne set this script apart from the New Mexican manuscripts.
- 2) The De Busk-San Rafael text begins with a separate little play known as *Las Posadas* ("The Inns"), which seems to relate it to a San Antonio, Texas, play, summarized by M.R. Cole when he published the Rio Grande City text; the New Mexico play introduces a second feminine character, named Dina, and allows her to bring word of the Annunciation instead of one of the shepherds making the report; allegorical personages appear in this text, as they do in certain of the Mexican versions of *Los Pastores*; and finally, the Hermit, so pious in the Rio Grande text, turns out to be a bad character as well as a clown.

3) The Agua Fría and the Las Palomas texts are divided into two parts, one of which (called *Los Pastores Grandes*) carries the archetypal plot to be summarized later in this paper; the minor half of the play (usually presented first and called *Los Pastores Chiquitos*, "The Little Shepherds") introduces two humorous fellows who, having heard the angelic voices and found their way to Bethlehem, become so enamored of the Christ Child that one of them tries to steal the Babe from the manger; he is persuaded to give up this project just before Lucifer meets with St. Michael in the first of two battles, in both of which he is overthrown. 4) The play called *El Día de la Nueva Aurora* is in six scenes, with directions for a cave or pit representing Hell and other huts as dwellings of the shepherds, a table for eating, and equipment for showing the flames and figures in the infernal regions (*violenta mutación vista de infierno alumbrado transparentemente figurando en ella*): three men, three women, three devils, and St. Michael are the cast, making it possible for the shepherds to pair off in pastoral dances; one couple sings romantic arias to each other in semihumorous rustic parody and after the battle between the devils and Michael, the play ends with the shepherds lifting their glasses in a toast to the newborn Jesus; they never seem to arrive at the manger.<sup>9</sup>

Candelario Barreras transcribed his copy of *Los Pastores* in an old ledger used to keep the accounts for the family flour mill at Las Palomas. An entry for grinding corn is dated January 1, 1895. The son of Señor Barreras writes that his father was born at Las Palomas in 1876; that he was an educated man; and that he coached the actors and took one of the parts himself. Of the episode in the play where the Infant Jesus is stolen, Henry Barreras says,

I remember very clearly about the part where the infant Jesus is stolen and taken to some home. Some family, in anticipation, has prepared a feast as an offering of religious faith as well as to arouse the spirit of the season. Then all the actors and some invited people make a procession to search for the Child, pretending they don't know where He was. They would end at this home, but before the Child was returned, they would sing and pray. As a rule it ended in a *velorio* or 'wake,' and they would sing and pray all night. When the Child was returned, they were asked to stay for a big dinner. This was the only part I liked!<sup>10</sup>

*Los Pastores Grandes*, that is, Part Two of the Agua Fría and Las Palomas texts, makes use of materials from both the Rio Grande City and the San Rafael plays. It reproduces the Góngora song found in the Rio Grande City text, and it introduces the bad Hermit from the San Rafael play. The novel pair of characters, Martín and Martínico, who startle the audience

with their plan to kidnap the Child Jesus, create an episode in Part One which is a kind of Spanish *entremés*, or comic interlude, placed between the serious acts of a longer play. Martín is the Spanish *gracioso* clown and merry fellow, and the dialogue provided for both Martins is colloquial and amusing. It is not surprising to find that this play became the model for most of the other manuscripts found in villages scattered all the way from Las Palomas, New Mexico, to the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. I have found copies in Socorro, Albuquerque, Los Griegos, Corrales, Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Galisteo, and Taos. The texts of plays produced in southern Colorado appear to be parallel to *Los Pastores Grandes*, Part Two of the Agua Fría, Las Palomas play, with the addition of a character named *Estrella* (Star) who heads the opening procession and makes the first speech of the play. Some realistic details as to the snow, the cold, and the threat of wolves also appear as emphases in the Colorado texts, but details of this sort are found in the other texts, too. Whether its origin be Mexican or not, this play (Agua Fría, Las Palomas) has through innovations in plot, dialogue, and stage business become a New Mexican production. Distinctive to it are such elements as the four groups of shepherds, the two visits to Bethlehem by the groups in each part of the play; two pitched battles between Lucifer and Michael; the duplication of processions, offerings; the unique comic episode of the two Martins. In some texts the play has added a quarrel between Bato and Gila taken from *El Día de la Nueva Aurora*. The Agua Fría play has a comic interlude appended to it in which a Navajo Indian joins the *pastores* and makes an offering at the manger in Bethlehem. In combining traditional material with improvisation this play illustrates the adaptation which kept the "Shepherds' Play" alive for generations of audiences and actors.

The traditional materials may be shown by synthesizing them into twelve main episodes. Not all of these episodes appear in each of the texts, but most of them do. With the exception of episodes I, II, and VI, all the other scenes appear in every New Mexican "Shepherds' Play."

## I

Las Posadas (The Inns). The visit of Joseph and of Mary to various inns at Bethlehem is enacted at a number of homes in the village; Lucifer conceals himself in each home and rejects the wayfarers; then he finally welcomes them at one house where a *nacimiento* or creche has been

prepared for the Christ Child. Some copies of the play summarize these events in an opening song by the choir.

## II

**The Song of the Star.** Several of the plays open with a hymn describing the Star of Bethlehem and the event it symbolized. The role of the Star, usually nonspeaking, is described in two texts as played by either a young man or a young woman. A silver-tinsel star is placed on the forehead of an actor, who speaks a quatrain identifying his part. In the Salomón Apodaca text, from Socorro, New Mexico, the Star walks at the front of two processions and sits beside the manger during the play. A small flashlight on the forehead of the actor is used to illuminate the orb. The title *Estrella* is given to one New Mexican play.

## III

**The Processional.** The great majority of the texts I have examined bring the entire cast on the stage with the singing of hymns, such as *La Gloria, De la Real Jerusalén* and others. Leading this procession are Joseph and Mary, who move down the hall to the *nacimiento* (manger), a kind of altar holding a cradle. Mary takes the image of the infant Jesus from the cradle on the *nacimiento* and puts the figure in a larger cradle placed before the chairs where she and Joseph are to sit. The shepherds march around the hall until they arrive at a spot in the center marked by a campfire.

## IV

**The Camp Scene.** *Los Pastores*, from the point of view of entertainment, begins here, because the vivid human personalities appear in this scene and the elements of profane subplot begin. Men are assigned to protect the flock from wolves. The shepherdess Gila quarrels with her husband or with several of the shepherds as she calls for wood to prepare her fire. The Hermit joins the shepherds. Finally, the guards return to report hearing heavenly music and the song of the angel Gabriel. In some texts *El Primer Paseo* or The First Promenade occurs here; in this *paseo* the shepherds march around the hall indicating the passage of time.

## V

**The First Appearance of Lucifer (Luzbel, Dragón).** The Devil enters the play in some texts immediately after the Processional. This gets the play off to a vigorous start. He leaps on the stage with an explosion of firecrackers. His costume usually consists of red tights, tunic, cape, mask, horns, and tail. Lucifer denounces Heaven and its powers; he decries the reports he has heard of the Messiah and proclaims his determination to make war on mankind. "*Viva el Infierno!*" he cries. "Hurrah for Hell, and war against Heaven!" In other texts, Lucifer enters the play after the first Camp Scene. Encountering the shepherds, he provokes one or more of the comic interludes. Additional devils are sometimes introduced to reinforce the comedy.

## VI

**Entremés or Interlude of Cucharón.** In the Rio Grande City play, a young shepherd named Cucharón (meaning "Big Spoon," or as María López de Lowther translates it, "Ladle Mouth") encounters the Devil while the other shepherds are sleeping. He is so slow-witted that when the Devil asks about what *patria* (country) he comes from, Cucharón says his *padre* (father) is dead, and when Lucifer questions him about the *Mesías* (Messiah), Cucharón thinks the Devil is asking about his cousin Matías (Mathias), who was banished for killing a man. Cucharón then goes on to trace the ancestry of Matías back to *Matusalém* (Methuselah). Lucifer finally is so exasperated by the simpleton that he seizes him; then Cucharón cries out in the name of the God and is saved. Cucharón runs to the other shepherds telling what he has experienced. I have found no manuscripts in New Mexico employing this character or this episode.

## VII

**Entremés or Interlude of the Hermit.** In the Rio Grande City play the character of the Hermit is a serious one. He leaves his desert retreat to help the shepherds in their search for the Messiah, and he challenges Lucifer, helping to ward him off. In the New Mexican versions, the Hermit becomes a figure of comedy. He steals mutton and a coat from the shepherds and (at the suggestion of the Devil) he tries to kidnap Gila. He is beaten by the leader of the shepherds, Bato, and another shepherd gives him a blow on the head. As Sister Joseph Marie remarks, in her study of the religious drama in New Mexico: "The missionaries would not have included a scene in which a hermit is held up to even a mild



derision, nor would they have stressed scenes in which a person, dedicated to giving a good example to others, would be accused by Lucifer of stealing, or of desiring to run off with Jila. This ironic scene is obviously a folk addition."<sup>11</sup>

### VIII

**The Second Appearance of Lucifer.** Lucifer usually tries to join the main body of the shepherds, after previous encounters with one or more of them outside the camp. He appears as a lost wayfarer, seeking food and fellowship. When he is confronted by the Archangel Michael, he cries, "The shepherds whom you defend will not escape me." "Yield thy neck to the power of Heaven," recites Michael, whose role is always played by a young boy. After a rhythmic touching of swords Lucifer falls down vanquished. Because of his antics, Lucifer is obviously a favorite with audiences and in some versions he makes a final appearance before the shepherds complete their offerings at Bethlehem.

### IX

**Entremés or Interlude of Bartolo.** From the first discovered text to the last, Bartolo is the chief clown in the "Shepherds' Play." Whether he is portrayed as the husband of Gila, an uncle of a shepherd, or just one of their number, all join in berating him for his laziness and insatiable desire for food. He talks to his bedroll with loving affection and lies down at every opportunity. In one or more scenes when he dominates the stage, Bartolo puns on the phrases with which his brother shepherds encourage him to "get up and go." Exhorted to use the *caminos* (roads), Bartolo answers, "*Comemos*," (Let's eat); to *llegar* (arrive) at Bethlehem, he replies *cenar* (supper); to hurry to see San José, he answers drowsily, *café* (coffee). When at last, Bartolo reaches the *portal* of Bethlehem, Tebano makes his final persuasion:

En Belén está la gloria  
Bartolo, vamos allá.

In Bethlehem there is glory  
Bartolo, let us go there.

Bartolo replies:

Si quiere la Gloria verme  
Que venga la Gloria acá.

If Glory wishes to see me  
Then let Glory come here.

Bartolo cannot see why he should go to a baptism in Bethlehem unless he is to be the godfather, and he is afraid to view the ox warming the Infant Jesus for fear it will gore him with its horns. In the Mexican border

versions, such as those at Rio Grande City and San Antonio, and also in the recently discovered California text, Bartolo is a lazy old fellow, shirking work and always hungry, but he is addressed with some marks of humorous respect and with some condescension to his age. In the New Mexican presentations, he has degenerated to a shiftless shepherd, whom the shepherds put up with and laugh at, who even has the irreverence to ask the Child Jesus to give him all the presents the other shepherds have offered to their Savior. He also asks the Holy Child to find him a bite to eat and to cure him of his laziness!<sup>12</sup>

## X

**Las Caminatas (The Walkings, Promenades).** There are a number of *paseos* or promenades about the hall, indicating travel and the passing of time. The last of these *paseos* I choose to call *Las Caminatas*, because here the shepherds go individually or in pairs to make their offerings. They sing individually and in chorus, and as they walk forward they tap with their ornamented crooks or staves in rhythm to the music. In every "Shepherds' Play" I have seen, this effective tapping device is used, along with the *caminata* step, which is one step forward and one back on alternate feet, with a final step forward. The pattern of the *caminata* confirms lines which the shepherds speak about "dancing" their way to Bethlehem.

## XI

**The Adorations and Offerings.** The climax of design in all the "Shepherds' Plays" is the adoration of the Infant Jesus and the bringing of gifts. One might say that the emotional climax occurs in the battle between Michael and Lucifer, but the spiritual climax occurs when each of the shepherds goes to the manger to present his personal gift. There is considerable contrast between the gifts offered by shepherds in some of the Mexican versions and those in the New Mexican texts. In the Rio Grande City play, the Hermit offers a necklace, a rosary, his prayer book, his discipline or scourge, and a "richly wrought" silver relicary made by a craftsman of Mexico. Finally, he presents an herb, rosemary, which Mary is enjoined to rub on the infant's navel for healing. Only the herbs remain as his gift in one New Mexican text,<sup>13</sup> and white lilies in another.<sup>14</sup> Where the Mexican shepherds give a chain with a cross, a baby spoon, a lute, and a whistle, the New Mexican shepherds commonly give gourd cups, little charms, a fleece of wool or a lamb, a dish of stew and tamales,

even a bowl of bread crumbs. Humble gifts they are, but a shepherd called The Cripple, appearing in one New Mexican variant, offers a loaf of bread as a symbol of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>15</sup> This gift is paralleled by the offering of the Hermit in the Ibáñez-California text. Tubal in the Chávez manuscript of Albuquerque has nothing to offer but a dance which he does before the manger to entertain the Holy Family.

## XII

**The Lullaby and Las Despedidas (The Farewells).** Before *los pastores* say farewell, they sing a lullaby to the *Niño Dios*. These lullabies are an interesting study in themselves, with the refrain they all have in common: "*a la ru, a la me, a la ru.*" The shepherds sometimes dance after this song, singing to the Christ Child in the manger at Bethlehem a stanza that repeats the line, "*Me gusta y me gusta, y me gusta bien*" (I love and I love and I love very much). The Farewells usually consist of addresses to each of the members of the Holy Family (in some of which the parents are called Aunt Mary and Uncle Joseph); of calls to the flocks to turn homeward; occasionally, with greetings to the audience at the Christmas season. Two of the New Mexican plays allow Joseph and Mary to respond, thanking the shepherds for their gifts and offering the blessing of the Infant Jesus in return. Joseph assures them he is their true friend and obedient servant.<sup>16</sup>

This, then, is the traditional "Shepherds' Play" in which there are opportunities for innovations in the clowning of the Hermit and Bartolo and in the acting and extemporaneous "thunder" of Lucifer and his assistants. But greater innovations can occur when a separate episode or part is introduced, such as the kidnaping of Jesus episode or the Navajo Indian interlude. The latter is found as a kind of epilogue to the Agua Fria play, but it appears independently in a text called *Pastores Chiquitos*, identified as the manuscript of Juan Climaco Lucero.<sup>17</sup> In the Lucero script, the Indian greets the shepherds as they prepare to leave the manger. He salutes them with an "Ave, María," adding, "Listen to what I have to say." Then he turns out to be an entertainer, for he sings a comic song about a Comanche man and a Comanche woman who went to war; the man howled and an Apache grabbed the woman. Another verse of his song tells about a Pueblo girl who answered him in Apache when he tried to make love to her. The Agua Fria account has the Indian passing his hat to take up a collection. After his vaudeville, the Navajo kneels before the manger and says he is a Christian from the Rio Grande valley and

that he intended to bring Jesus a beautifully woven serape, but he left in such a hurry that he could find only a beet in his garden, but this he says is very good to eat with vinegar and oil.

A New World Indian convert attending Christ at His Nativity, a Mexican shepherd offering a relic box before Christianity was established, Bartolo going to the baptism of Jesus thirty years before it occurred, these are some of the secular innovations illustrating the development of *Los Pastores* in the Southwest. Where the plays degenerated in religious feeling, however, and in literary style, they gained in action and audience interest. One element of audience adaptation is illustrated by contrasts in the food Gila serves her companions in various plays. Usually this campfire menu is of the simplest variety. In the New Mexican plays, mutton stew and tamales, with a garnish of cheese and a dessert of *buñuelos* (fritters) is served to the *pastores*. By contrast, the Ibáñez-California text supplies the shepherds with olives, ham, pickled fish, a stuffed hen, white bread and cheese, and chocolate turnovers (*empanaditos de coco*) and nougat for "sweets." This is the best menu for a shepherders' camp I have found in the plays. Stuffed hens and pickled fish were rare items to most of the audiences who would see these plays in New Mexico. The episodes with new characters, like the *Martíns* and the Cripple, the Navajo Indian singing about Comanches and Apaches, show how the plays were moving toward freer use of dramatic materials. Progress in this direction could have created a provincial theater, if there had been local resources to support it. There were not. An open plaza or a parish hall may be the beginning of a theater, but they cannot be the scene for a highly developed stage. The religious drama of New Spain never emerged from its limited background. Yet in both Old Mexico and New Mexico these plays fed the latent talent in scores of communities for dramatic expression. Perhaps they kept alive the genius that produced a *Cantinflas* or a *Dolores del Río*. The "Shepherds' Play" is still being produced, both above the Border and below it, to appreciative audiences. A kind of revival has occurred in New Mexico, where *Los Pastores* is now being enacted at Christmas time on school programs as well as in parish halls and community gymnasiums. Productions have recently been broadcast on both radio and television. As the chief vehicle of popular theater in Spanish, from colonial days to the present, the "Shepherds' Play" well merits the attention it has received from scholars and the general public.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The text of Captain Bourke's play was translated by M.R. Cole and published by the American Folklore Society in 1907. The Hollywood lithographer Homer H. Boelter presents the play *Los Pastores* in attractive format and reproduces a translation along with the Spanish text found in manuscript at the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. The translator is María López de Lowther of San Gabriel, California. Professor J.E. Englekirk reports that he has examined seventy texts of *Los Pastores* in New Mexico and Colorado and knows "of the whereabouts of some 45 others." Cf. "Notes on the Repertoire of the New Mexican Spanish Folk-theater," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, IV (1940), 231. Professor Juan B. Rael has related fourteen texts in Mexico to twenty in New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Cf. "More Light on the Origin of *Los Pastores*," *New Mexico Folklore Record*, VI (1951-1952), 2, n. 7. I have examined thirty-two texts: nine in print, six in typed or photostated manuscripts of the University of New Mexico, six in the files of the Writers' Project in Santa Fe, and eleven copies in type, mimeograph, or notations in my personal files. The two texts published by A.L. Campa appear in *Spanish Religious Folktheatre in the Southwest* (Second Cycle), University of New Mexico, Language Series, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1934. Mrs. Lucero-White Lea issued a mimeographed booklet from Santa Fe in 1940, and reprinted much of the same text in her *Literary Folklore of the Hispanic Southwest* (San Antonio, Texas, 1953). Two texts from Mexico have been issued in the Folklore Studies of the University of California: George C. Barker, *The Shepherds' Play of the Prodigal Son* (1953) and Stanley L. Robe, *Coloquio de Pastores from Jalisco, Mexico* (1954).

<sup>2</sup>Sister Joseph Marie, *Early Drama in New Mexico* (Philadelphia, 1948), p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Fray Angélico Chávez, "The Mad Poet of Santa Cruz," *New Mexico Folklore Record*, III (1948-1949), 12. The phrase used was "*muy desviado de hacer coloquio para festejar al Niño Dios en su Nacimiento.*"

<sup>4</sup>Cole points to Bato's prayer for the King of Spain and the country where he resides, found in the San Antonio text (excerpts from which are printed in Cole's book), as evidence for a date before 1821 when the reign of Spain ended in Mexico. Verse forms such as the *gloza* and the *décima*, found in the Mexican "Shepherds' Plays," appeared in popular poetry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, according to studies by Vicente T. Mendoza cited by Stanley L. Robe, *op.cit.*

- <sup>5</sup> Religious plays, one of which dealt with the Annunciation of the Virgin, were presented in Tlaxcala as early as 1538 and 1539, according to Fray Toribio Motolinía. *Historia de los indios de Nueva España* (México, 1941), pp. 89 f. Informative discussions of these *autos sacramentales* in Colonial Mexico may be found in Stanley L. Robe's chapter "Spanish and European Origins," *op. cit.*, and in Sister Joseph Marie's Chapter II, "The Church Establishes the Religious Drama in the New World," *op. cit.* Cole translates material from Riva Palacio, *México á través de los siglos* (1887-1889); A.L. Campa submits documentation in "The Churchmen and the Indian Languages of New Spain," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, XI (1931), pp. 542-550. The work of clerics in the religious theater along with four of their earliest efforts in Mexico are both discussed and reprinted in *Autos y Coloquios del Siglo XVI*, prepared by José Rojas Garcidueñas (México, 1939). These plays, however, were under ecclesiastical supervision. As the "Shepherds' Plays" were produced in later periods, they were primarily under secular or lay sponsorship.
- <sup>6</sup> See Cole, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. xvii-xix. The Spanish sources are Antonio del Castillo, *El auto sacramental al nacimiento del Hijo de Dios* and Antonio Mira de (A) Mescua, *El coloquio de nuestro Señor*.
- <sup>7</sup> The song is found in *Obras Poéticas* by Luis de Góngora, Hispanic American Society of America, Vol. XVII (New York, 1921). Cole prints music for the text in his edition of *Los Pastores* (Philadelphia, 1907).
- <sup>8</sup> "Praesepe sit paratum retro altare et ymago sancte Marie sit in eo posita." *Pastores*, from Rouen MSS, in *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*, ed., Joseph Quincy Adams (Boston, 1924), p. 25.
- <sup>9</sup> Jacobo Armenta MS, Los Griegos, New Mexico; also in File #5, D. #5, Fo. #41, New Mexico Writers' Project, State Historical Library, Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe.
- <sup>10</sup> T.M. Pearce, "Tracing a New Mexican Folk Play," *New Mexico Folklore Record*, IX (1954-1955), p. 22.
- <sup>11</sup> *Early Drama in New Mexico*, p. 121.
- <sup>12</sup> Barreras-Las Palomas MS (University of New Mexico Library) and its derivatives.
- <sup>13</sup> Felipe Chávez-Albuquerque MS. The passage is: "Yo como pobre hermitaño, No tengo que llevar nada, pero llevaré unos raises corteados de mi montañño." *Raises* are roots rather than herbs. The use to which they were to be put is not indicated.

<sup>14</sup> Barreras-Las Palomas text.

<sup>15</sup> Barreras-Las Palomas, Felipe Chávez-Albuquerque, Lucero-White (Lea) Santa Fe.

<sup>16</sup> *Pastores Chiquitos, Segunda Parte—Los Pastores* (University of New Mexico Library); also in the Mary Austin Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

