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A Study of Antichrist Typology in Six
Biblical Dramas of 17th Century Spain

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Spanish

by

Jason Allen Wells

December 2014

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. James Parr, Chairperson
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The Dissertation of Jason Allen Wells is approved:

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Study of Antichrist Typology in Six
Biblical Dramas of 17th Century Spain

by

Jason Allen Wells

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Spanish
University of California, Riverside, December 2014
Dr. James Parr, Chairperson

This dissertation examines Antichrist types manifested in the primary antagonists of six biblical dramas of seventeenth century Spanish theater. After researching the topic of biblical typology in the works of theologians Sir Robert Anderson, G.H. Pember, Arthur W. Pink, and Peter S. Ruckman, who propose various personages of both the Old and New Testaments that adumbrate the Antichrist, I devise a reduced list based on extant plays of the Spanish Golden Age whose main characters match the scriptural counterparts of my register. These characters are Cain, Absalom, Haman, Herod the Great, Judas Iscariot, and the Antichrist himself. I consult the Bible to provide the reader with pertinent background information about these foreshadowings of the Son of Perdition and then I compare and contrast these characteristics with those provided by the playwrights in their respective works. By making these comparisons and contrasts the reader is able to observe the poets' embellishments of the source material, artistic contributions that in many instances probably satisfy the reader's desire for details not found in the biblical

narratives. I take into consideration ecclesiastical demands placed on the playwrights that can account for omissions or modifications in their theatrical productions of the source material. I also analyze how the authors make use of non-scriptural sources and incorporate them into their portrayals of my proposed Antichrist types. Unlike many dissertations in the field of Spanish, which offer alternative readings to classic works of literature, this study is unique in that it examines relatively unknown biblical dramas of seventeenth century Spain by implementing the novel approach of typology, focusing not on heroes but rather anti-heroes.

A Note on the Chapter Titles

Given the subject matter of my dissertation - Antichrist typology in six biblical plays of 17th century Spain - I have maintained the biblical theme in the titles of the chapters. The following is an explanation of each chapter title:

- 1) **Genesis** = to discuss the genesis of the work; how the idea came about.
- 2) **Revelation** = to reveal Antichrist's characteristics from a biblical perspective as well as from Medieval commentators' points of view.
- 3) **Chronicles** = to discuss social and historical events that people in the Middle Ages attributed to the coming Antichrist; namely, the Black Death, the Great Schism
- 4) **Psalms** = to discuss writings on Antichrist's features from early church fathers as well as from 15th century Castilla
- 5) **Acts** = to discuss the Antichrist in medieval drama and the treatment of the figure of Satan in Golden Age Theater. Plays consist of 3 "acts," hence the heading title. However, the titles of the plays studied in this dissertation will have chapter headings under their respective names.
- 6) **Exodus** = to conclude the dissertation; to "exit" from it.

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GENESIS

The concept for this study began while I was undertaking an independent study on various plays written by twentieth century playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo. One work in particular, *En la ardiente oscuridad*, was especially appealing for its depiction of the militant Christ figure Ignacio, a new student whose arrival at the school for the blind immediately disrupts and rejects the apparent optimism enjoyed by his peers. Through this rejection of the pupils' happy world the protagonist emphatically insists they are unwilling to face reality and succeeds in demonstrating the impracticality of their collective delusion. Like Jesus, who recognized that his teachings would clash with the accepted philosophies and ideologies of his time and thus warned his disciples: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34), Ignacio so advises his new classmates: "Yo os voy a traer guerra y no paz" (74). This paraphrasing of the verse from Matthew's gospel emphasizes that the messianic role of Ignacio is also militant, alluding to an aspect of Christ that is often ignored. It is this neglected feature that prompted me to write a paper titled "Ignacio and the Power of Negative Thinking in Buero Vallejo's *En la ardiente oscuridad*."

Interested in biblical themes and the Bible itself, I wanted to know if Buero Vallejo had ever written a biblical drama; that is, a dramatic representation of a story rooted in the Scriptures and one that took place in biblical times. I soon discovered and became immediately fascinated with *Las palabras en la arena*, a play consisting of only one act yet the first of the playwright's works to receive critical acclaim (Pennington 56).

The work is based on the text of John 8:1-1, the story of the adulterous woman forgiven by Jesus just prior to being stoned to death. Buero Vallejo maintains the basic premise of the gospel account yet embellishes it by adding depth to the characters of the Pharisees, assigning proper names to them and giving each a distinct personality. However, the apogee of the playwright's creativity in this brief yet powerful drama can be observed in the words that *el Rabí* writes in the sand, words that directly address the specific sins of the five men who had accused the woman. This detail is not found in the scriptural episode.

After some investigation it was determined rather quickly that there really were not any known or at least accessible biblical plays from the same time period in which Buero Vallejo wrote. It was not until winter quarter 2012, when researching a topic for my final paper in a course on Golden Age Theater that I realized that the corpus of *comedias bíblicas* resided in this epoch of Spanish literature in drama. Now there was material out there from which to work, and based on my independent study of the Bible, specifically the prophecies of Daniel and the book of Revelation, I began to formulate a topic for the Long Paper and eventually, the doctoral dissertation. The study of typology in the Bible has always intrigued me and thus, given the extant plays that were available I was able to develop the concept of types of the Antichrist in seventeenth century Spanish drama, selecting three works based on Old Testament stories and two from the New Testament, plus a play on the Antichrist himself.

The subgenre of the *comedia bíblica* constitutes somewhat of an anomaly in my opinion, the reason for which probably has to do with the religious culture that existed in

Spain at the time the respective poets developed their plays. Since the Roman Catholic Church discouraged the masses from reading the Bible, regarding itself as the interpreter of the Scriptures, many people would not have had the proper frame of reference to maneuver through a work such as Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo* or Lope de Vega's *La hermosa Ester*. In an article about the latter play, Edward Glaser writes that the reader's private knowledge of the source story (in this case the biblical book of Esther) enables him or her to grasp the significance of the unfolding of events in the theatrical version of the scriptural account. Glaser's observation can obviously be applied to other books of the Bible and their literary counterparts, and so this is precisely the contribution that I believe I can make to the study of the subgenre of the *comedia bíblica*: my knowledge and study of various books of the Bible offers an insight not often encountered in the field of Golden Age drama, and combining this feature with literary criticism I am able to provide a unique analysis of the topics of seventeenth Spanish theater in general and Antichrist typology in biblical plays in particular. For example, my familiarity with passages from Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, both describing Satan/Lucifer before his fall, allow me to identify and explain the significance of the opening scene in Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*. Likewise, believing that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is the same beast as that of Revelation 13, I am able to detect how exactly Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, through his character Elías Falso, weaves together a composite picture of the main character coming up out of the sea in *El Anticristo*. Something that makes my approach unique is that I am able to support my arguments by consulting scriptures and secondary sources. Oftentimes medieval exegetes

and contemporary literary critics will make assertions about the biblical aspect of a particular play without providing a reason for the assertion. Throughout this study we will examine some of these assertions.

In the next section we will look at the revelation of Antichrist's characteristics from a biblical perspective provided by me and by selected Bible scholars such as G.H. Pember, Sir Robert Anderson, and Clarence Larkin, and also from the point of view of medieval commentators and contemporary theologians and professors such as Richard K. Emmerson, Bernard McGinn, and José Guadalajara Medina.

REVELATION

The first verse of the last book of the New Testament makes clear the point that the contents of the apostle John’s epistle, written between 91-96 A.D. during his banishment to the island of Patmos under the reign of Roman Emperor Domitian, deal with the revelation about Jesus Christ given to John by God’s angel. For purposes of this study, however, portions of the book will be treated as a *punto de partida* to present to the reader a revelation of Antichrist’s characteristics. While much of the information concerning his features will be conveyed in the analyses of the six *comedias bíblicas* themselves, it is helpful to provide an overview of the source material from which these seventeenth century Spanish dramas glean their respective plot developments. Before continuing, however, a relevant linguistic observation by José Guadalajara Medina in his book *El Anticristo en la España medieval* is in order: “El prefijo *anti* ofrece una doble posibilidad significativa: la idea de sustitución o suplantación, o bien la de oposición con respecto a algo o a alguien. Este segundo aspecto es el que debe considerarse sobre todo en la significación del término ‘Anticristo’” (16). The following table illustrates some examples of such oppositions:

CHRIST	ANTICHRIST
Son of God (John 9:35)	Son of Perdition (2 Thess. 2:3)
A man of sorrows (Isa. 53:3)	The man of sin (2 Thess. 2:3)
Fulfilled the mystery of godliness (1Tim. 3:16)	Fulfills the mystery of iniquity (2 Thess. 2:7)
The true vine (John 15:1-3)	Will be the vine of the earth (Rev. 14:18)

Perhaps for the reader not very familiar with the Scriptures this source material derives solely from the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, due in part because the “seven-headed beast that rises out of the sea (Apoc. 13:1) is the symbol most consistently identified with Antichrist in the medieval exegetical tradition,” noted by Richard K. Emmerson on page 22 of his book *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*. No doubt this tradition has spilled over into contemporary notions of the being in question, including its horrifying physical features and the practically universally known number of the beast, found in verse 18 of the same chapter. However, one also finds in the book of Revelation two other chapters that are significant to our study. The first of these is chapter 16, where in verse 13 John writes: “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” In the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, one can observe a satanic trinity that is a counterfeit of the Holy Trinity. Thus in the dragon Satan (Anti-God) is pictured, in the beast the son of perdition (Anti-Christ), and in the false prophet the Anti-Spirit. Medieval commentators concur with this assessment, deviating only with the characterization of the false prophet, whom they claim is made up of the disciples and messengers of Antichrist (Emmerson 23).

Emmerson explains how these medieval exegetes understand the role each member of the satanic trinity plays: the dragon or Satan gives power and authority to the other two members and receives worship from them; the Antichrist teaches false doctrine, is worshipped by false Christians, and in turn persecutes the true church; the false prophet

influences people to worship the beast by false preaching and performing miracles. I agree with the medieval commentators regarding the functions of Satan and the false prophet; one scholar even suggests that “there will probably be a ‘fire-test’ between Elijah and the False Prophet, and the test as to who is God of Mt. Carmel will be repeated” (Larkin 129). However, as far as Antichrist persecuting the church is concerned, there is a problem with the time element involved in his appearance on earth because when he does come on the scene, the church will have already been taken away¹ and therefore there will not be any Christians to persecute. Also, according to my understanding of the Scriptures, certain conditions have to be met before Antichrist’s arrival. In his book *The Antichrist*, Arthur W. Pink explains it in the following manner:

Before the Antichrist can appear the Holy Spirit must be “taken out of the way” (2 Thess. 2:7); the old Roman Empire must be revived and assume its final form – divided under ten kings – before the “Little Horn” comes into prominence (Dan. 7:24 – he rises “after them”); Israel must be restored to their land and the Temple be rebuilt, etc., etc...But when all believers of this dispensation have been “caught up to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16), and the Holy Spirit has departed from the earth, all restraint will be removed, and Satan will be allowed to bring forth his false Christ, who will be “revealed in his time” (2 Thess. 2:6). (59)

While I contend that the Bible itself lays out different time periods or dispensations in which God relates to mankind in distinct ways under different covenants, the discrepancy in the medieval understanding of Antichrist’s appearance is likely attributed to the fact that this branch of apocalypticism did not exist as a conventional

¹ The word “church” is last used in Rev. 3:22 and is not used again from chapters 4-21. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is described as being in the midst of the churches on earth in chapters 2 and 3. Yet, the Spirit is found up in the third heaven in Rev. 4:5, indicating that there has been a change in the churches’ position.

hermeneutic tool in the medieval era. Bernard McGinn writes in his book *Antichrist:*

TwoThousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil:

The rise of futurism is associated with John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and the Plymouth Brethren. Darby was the originator of “dispensationalism,” the theory that Christ would end the present era, or dispensation, of history by an imminent secret rapture of the faithful to heaven (see 1 Thess. 4:16). This belief is still a powerful factor in contemporary Protestant Fundamentalism. Such eschatological positions did not, of course, put an end to all presentist uses of the Antichrist legend, and repetitive predictions of futurist views of Antichrist continued to be advanced. (247)

Before concluding the discussion on the satanic trinity and how it pertains to our study, it is important to provide the reader with an overview of the terms used by McGinn and how they fit into the broader area of biblical hermeneutics, which is the study of the principles of interpretation regarding the books of the Bible. Comprising this system of scriptural exegesis are essentially four schools of thought associated primarily with the book of Revelation. The first of these is the preterist branch, which interprets prophecies of the Scriptures as events that have already taken place. The contents of Revelation are viewed as events that occurred in the first century, with specific reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The historicist is the second school of thought, and can be described as associating biblical prophecies with actual historical events and identifying symbols as historical persons or movements. The different seals, trumpets, and vials in the book of Revelation prefigure specific historical happenings such as the advent of Islam, the rise of the Roman papacy, the Reformation, and the French Revolution (Martínez 527-8).

The idealist school of biblical hermeneutics sees the events described in prophecy as neither past, present, nor future, but rather representative of broader principles or ideals. In this branch the book of Revelation is perceived as an ongoing struggle between the forces of good and evil, rendering its message solely a spiritual one.

The fourth school of interpretation is known as futurism, referenced above in McGinn's remarks. Futurists view the prophecies of Revelation as having their fulfillment in the future. This form of hermeneutics is associated with dispensationalists and premillennialism, the belief that Christ will actually return to earth before the millennial reign. My endorsement of this last school of biblical hermeneutics was solidified after much in-depth study of the Olivet Discourse, found in Matthew chapter 24. The prevailing notion found in the medieval commentaries cited by Emerson in *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* and elsewhere is that the verses in Matthew 24 apply to the years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Take for instance the following statement made by Lynette Muir in *The biblical drama of medieval Europe* regarding the treatment of the destruction of Jerusalem in theatrical productions of that era: "In popular Christian writings, Josephus' historical account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 66 A.D. (believed to be foretold by Jesus in the gospels, cf. Matthew 24: 2) soon acquired legendary accretions..." (147). The parenthetical insertion seems to suggest an axiom, which ought to prompt the reader invested in the topic to closely examine the passage.

Without entering into a lengthy discussion and citing all the verses that make up Matthew 24, some items nonetheless merit consideration. To begin, there is the phrase

from verse 6 – “wars and rumours of wars,” which the author believes cannot be applied to the immediate context, or to the apostles who lived before 70 A.D. There is no mention of “wars” or “rumors of wars” in the book of Acts, written anywhere between 59 and 65 A.D. It is possible the phrase refers to the siege in 70 A.D., but this really does not rise to the level of wars since Roman dominion had not been contested for around two centuries and went undisputed long after 70 A.D. The “end” in verse 6, in my view is a reference to the end of the Tribulation and not to the end of the apostolic age. Regarding verse 7, “For nation shall rise against nation...and there shall be...pestilences and earthquakes...” The first birth-pang or throe is war, not local wars but rather universal wars. In my opinion this corresponds to the opening of the second seal in the book of Revelation, when the red horse went forth, “and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword” (Rev. 6:4). Also, there were no known pandemics or worldwide natural disasters at the time. Finally, verse 9 states: “Then shall they deliver you up...and ye shall be hated of all nations...” None of the apostles addressed in Jesus’ discourse were delivered up and hated of all nations after 70 A.D. because none of them were alive except John, who was exiled to the island of Patmos.

Therefore, based on the explanation given of the passage in question, it is my opinion that Matthew 24 cannot apply to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. but rather refers to events yet to be fulfilled. Armed with an alternative interpretation of this portion of Scripture, readers of Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón’s *Los desagrazios de Cristo y Jerusalén destruida por Tito y Vespasiano*, for example, have the opportunity to arrive at

different conclusions provoking thoughtful discussions of the work, keeping in mind of course that the poet likely subscribed to a preterist point of view.

Returning now to the topic of the satanic trinity, Emerson quotes from Bruno of Segni² to make the point that in symbolic terms, all three members of this triumvirate can be viewed as Antichrist: “For Antichrist is called the dragon because of the strength and success of deception; and he is called the beast because of cruelty; and he is also called the false prophet because he pretends to be Christ” (23). This is significant to our study of Antichrist figures in seventeenth century *comedias bíblicas* because, although it can be observed that, strictly speaking, a character like Amán (Haman from the book of Esther) foreshadows Satan, this designation does not undermine or detract from the central premise postulated in this dissertation. One could liken this to the elements of hydrogen and oxygen; they can take on a liquid form, a solid form, or a gas form, yet the same two elements are contained in all three forms.

This leads us to examine the development of a typology of Antichrist. The apostle Paul seems to advocate a typological reading of the Scriptures, for in 1 Corinthians 10:11 he writes: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The preceding verses in this passage reveal the context, namely that the “things” referred to are the tempting, the murmuring, the fornication, and the idolatry committed against God by the children of Israel. The early Christian commentator Tertullian embraced a similar approach, “en cuya extensa obra pueden vislumbrarse algunas muestras sobre los signos precursores del

² (c. 1047-1123), Italian Catholic Bishop of Segni and Abbot of Montecassino.

Anticristo...” (Guadalajara Medina 83). Unlike symbolism, typology does not discount the historicity of the original [Old Testament] text. As Erich Auerbach succinctly observes, the “*figura* is something real and historical which announces something else that is real and historical” (29). This is a relevant point to keep in mind, especially for those who may criticize the futurists’ view of the book of Revelation, because while the latter generally hold to a literal interpretation of John’s apocalyptic epistle, they recognize the beast as a symbol of Antichrist and as such it is not physically or historically real. Someone like Absalom, on the other hand, is both a physically real and historical type of the anticipated physically real and historical son of perdition. Regarding the use of symbols and types in the context of Antichrist, Emmerson writes:

“Type” and “symbol” of Antichrist are separately distinguished not primarily to argue a distinction between typology and allegory, however, but to emphasize two important kinds of scriptural sources for the tradition. Exegetes identify Antichrist not only with symbols of evil...but also with historical figures who in the past were in opposition to Christ, his people, and his church. Furthermore, medieval exegetes recognize the interrelationship between the symbols and types. The symbols may refer both to types of Antichrist and to Antichrist himself. (24-25)

Emmerson’s acumen pertaining to the biblical tools at one’s disposal for identifying the son of perdition allows us to consider a specific symbol from Revelation 12. In verse 3 John writes: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” This dragon is identified as Satan in verse 9 – “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...” Of interest here is the symbolism attached to the seven heads of the dragon offered by Abbot Joachim of Fiore, considered one of the most original and important apocalyptic writers of the twelfth century. Joachim

characterized himself not as a prophet of a new revelation but rather as an ordinary believer and commentator to whom the Almighty had given the ability to discern truths already revealed in the Scriptures. As Christian writings began to serve as a supplement alongside the canonical texts of the New Testament, the expansion and distribution of apocalyptic perspectives made way for the genre of the commentary.

Since the end of the fourth century, the approach employed to interpret the book of Revelation centered on a moralization of the apostle's imagery to depict the soul's struggle against vice (McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* 101). Joachim distanced himself from this type of reading and saw the Revelation as prophecy for historical events that were easily identifiable. The application of this new type of exegesis can be best observed in the abbot's *Book of Figures*. McGinn elaborates:

The great seven-headed dragon of the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse is the image in which the abbot sees the whole history of the church's persecutions, past, present, and future, revealed to the believer. In the figure and its accompanying text Joachim historicizes the symbolism of the final book of the New Testament by making it an explicit prophecy of the seven major persecutions of the church... (106)

Joachim identifies the first head of the dragon as Herod persecuting the Jews. The second head represents Nero and his torture of the apostles and early Christians. The third head depicts Constantius' persecution of the heretics. The abbot perceives the fourth head of the dragon as Mohammed afflicting the Saracens while the fifth head symbolizes Mesemoth and his persecution against the sons of Babylon. The sixth head is Saladin persecuting the Turks and the seventh head is Antichrist (136).

I recognize that Joachim of Fiore's historicist interpretation of the seven heads of the dragon of Revelation 12 is highly regarded in medieval apocalyptic literature,

differing somewhat from views held by Berengaudus and Rupert of Deutz (Emmerson 32), yet I propose an alternative understanding of the identifications of the seven heads. Based on the notion that the Bible itself encompasses the kingdoms Satan uses to control the earth from the beginning to the end of history, and that these kings and kingdoms are pictured by the seven heads of the dragon, I suggest that these can be found in the Scriptures.

The first head represents Nimrod, the first Gentile king who ruled Babel (Gen. 10:10) around 2400 B.C. He qualifies as the second Antichrist type after Cain, who cannot symbolize one of the heads because nowhere is it recorded in the Bible that he ever established a kingdom. Nimrod's career is treated in Antonio Enríquez Gómez's *La soberbia de Nembrot y primer rey del mundo*. I have been unable to acquire a legible copy of this play.

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt until around 800 B.C. who enslaved the children of Israel (Exodus 5:2) is the second head with which Satan has ruled the world. Pharaoh is actually referred to as a dragon in Ezekiel 29:3 and plays a significant role in Antonio Mira de Amescua's drama *Los prodigios de la vara y capitán de Israel*.

The third head found on the dragon is Sennacherib, King of Assyria³. He rules until approximately 606 B.C. In 2 Kings 18:13 he is described as attacking Jerusalem in an effort to annihilate the Jews, just as Antichrist will do in the Tribulation according to futurists and perhaps others.

³ The Antichrist is called "the Assyrian" in Isaiah 10:5-6; 30:27-33.

I contend that the four remaining heads can be found in the book of Daniel, regarded by many students and scholars of eschatology as the companion text to Revelation. In chapter 3 of the prophet's writings the fourth head can be located – Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon who reigned until about 536 B.C.

The kingdom that follows Babylon is Media-Persia (Dan. 5:28). Darius, who befriends the Jews, takes over as king of Persia until around 330 B.C. He is a friend of Israel, and the Antichrist will also be a friend of Israel during the first half (3.5 years) of the Tribulation.

There appears to be no doubt as to the identity of the sixth head of the dragon. Years before Greece ever became a power under Alexander the Great, the prophet was told in Dan. 8:20-21 that it would be the next kingdom under him. Although he is not mentioned by name in the Bible, there is no question this king is the son of Phillip of Macedonia. "We are told by Gabriel that the 'great horn' that was between the eyes of the 'he-goat' represented the 'first king' of Greece). Now this king, as all historians know, was Alexander the Great" (Larkin, *The Book of Daniel* 162). G.H. Pember elaborates on this, rather more convincingly, in volume 2 of his series entitled *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries Concerning Israel and the Gentiles*, in which he writes:

Gabriel then explains, that the Ram represents the Emperors of Medo-Persia, and the He-goat the Emperor of Greece. Here we must carefully notice the distinction in number, which is in exact accord with the facts of history: for, although there were several monarchs of Medo-Persia, there was but one who swayed the whole of the Grecian dominion – that is to say, Alexander the Great, who destroyed the Medo-Persian Empire. Hence, in all the actions of the He-goat against the Ram, Alexander is regarded as the embodiment of the former. (290)

The seventh head is the kingdom that conquers Alexander the Great and assumes dominion over the known world, just prior to the first advent of Christ (cf. Luke 1:68-71; 2:1) – the Roman Empire under Caesar Augustus, from approximately 100 B.C. until 346 A.D.

Thus in my interpretation of the seven heads of the dragon of Revelation 12 as well as the contributions by medieval exegete Joachim of Fiore, symbols represent Antichrist and his types. Medieval commentators and contemporary biblical scholars alike identify prefigures of the son of perdition in the Old and New Testaments “and even in later church history, since the full revelation of Antichrist is not to take place until the end of the world” (Emmerson 26). From the Old Testament, medieval writers identify personages such as Abimelech, Nebuchadnezzar, and Antiochus Epiphanes⁴ as types of the Antichrist. New Testament forerunners include Herod, Simon Magus, and Judas, while the emperors Nero, Diocletian, and Domitian are some examples from early church history.

Regarding Antiochus Epiphanes, Emmerson writes that the impudent king of Daniel 11 represents him according to Jerome. While this belief is maintained throughout the medieval Antichrist tradition, I am convinced that the text in question refers only to the coming Antichrist. The phrase “the abomination that maketh desolate” of Dan. 11:31 indicates the taking away of a literal sacrifice, which is made in a literal temple (cf. Rev.11:1-4) in the future (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-6). All passages point to a literal fulfillment in

⁴ Greek ruler who attempted to suppress Jewish law, he is chronicled in 1 Maccabees, regarded as a canonical book of Scripture by the Catholic, Coptic, and Orthodox churches.

the middle of Daniel's Seventieth Week to take place after the rapture of the church. Therefore, in my estimation, the impudent king of Daniel 11 cannot refer to Antiochus Epiphanes. Commenting on Dan. 11 in his book *The Coming Prince*, Sir Robert Anderson writes: "I am inclined to believe that the entire passage from ver. 5 of Dan. xi. will receive a future fulfillment, and I have no doubt of this as regards the passage beginning with ver. 21. See especially ver. 31. But the future application of the portion quoted in the text is unquestionable" (195). Additionally, Edward Pusey, in *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford* observes that

There are traits which have nothing to correspond to them in Antiochus, which are even the exact contradictory of the character of Antiochus, but which do reappear in St. Paul's account of the Antichrist to come. The image of the Antichrist of the Old Testament melts into the lineaments of the Antichrist himself... One trait only of the anti-religious character of Antichrist was true of Antiochus also; "he shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods." Blasphemy against God is an essential feature of any God-opposed power or individual. It belongs to Voltaire as much as to Antiochus. (93)

The characteristics of the impudent king of Daniel 11 are: self-exaltation above every god; contempt for all religions; blasphemy against God; a turning away from the God of his fathers; disregarding the desire of women; and the honoring of a god whom his fathers did not recognize as the true God. Of these six traits, only one matches Antiochus Epiphanes, as observed by Pusey.

Generally speaking, contemporary biblical scholars confine their treatment of Antichrist types to the canonical scriptures, meaning that the books of the Apocrypha are not considered. For example, in the aforementioned book *The Antichrist*, Arthur Pink lists

the following ten persons from the Old and New Testaments: Cain, Lamech, Nimrod, Cherdorlaomer, Pharaoh, Abimelech, Saul, Goliath, Absalom, and Herod the Great (140-42). Dr. Peter Ruckman offers a variation to Pink's cast of Antichrist characters with the following additions in his book *The Mark of the Beast*: Balak, Sisera, Ahab, Jeroboam, Nabal, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, and Judas (68-71).

The scope of this study will encompass five biblical dramas treating Antichrist types plus an analysis of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo*. I have based my selection on characters to be examined on the availability of extant works from seventeenth century Spanish theater. As a result of much investigation, the following literary figures will be treated: Cain in Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*; Absalón in Calderón de la Barca's *Los cabellos de Absalón*; Amán in Lope de Vega's *La hermosa Ester*; Herodes el Grande in Tirso de Molina's *La vida y muerte de Herodes*; and Judas Iscariot in Damián Salucio del Poyo's *La vida y muerte de Judas*. The background for these five identifications as foreshadows of Antichrist will be explained in the respective analyses of the plays in the section appropriately entitled "Acts," which constitutes the body of this study. Information pertaining to the literary context involved in the development of Alarcón's *El Anticristo* will be reviewed in another section.

In addition to the Revelation as being a valuable tool for opening up types in order to examine Antichrist's characteristics, three Old Testament prophetic books also merit attention. The first of these is Ezekiel. In the first and tenth chapters there are beasts called cherubim. They are also found in Gen. 3:24 and in Lope de Vega's dramatization

of this latter passage in *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*. Remnants of these beasts can be observed in Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hittite monuments. In Ezekiel 1 and 10 there are four cherubim present, yet in Ezekiel 28:14 there is a fifth, and only of this one is it written by the prophet “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth.” This is significant because the Hebrew word for “anointed” is “messiah,” and the word for it in the New Testament Greek is “Christ.” Thus this cherub is a Christ, but not the Lord’s Christ. The phrase “that covereth” seems to imply that this cherub was over something, probably a throne; this implication will be treated in detail in comments on the opening scene of the above cited play by Lope.

The cherub of Ezekiel 28 is so important that in verse 12 he is said to seal “up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” In verse 13 he is said to have been in the Garden of Eden, and in verse 15 he is described as being the originator of iniquity. There is no doubt that he is the Lucifer of Isaiah 14:10-13, who is commonly and mistakenly perceived as a fallen angel. Nowhere in the Scriptures is it stated that Lucifer was an angel. As “the anointed cherub that covereth,” he had wings according to the descriptions of cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10 before his fall, and in the Bible angels do not have wings; several passages reveal that in fact angels appear as men; Judges 13:3-6 is but one example. It is likely that this misconception can be attributed to such writings as Milton’s *Paradise Lost* or the *comedias de santos*; regarding the latter, in an article entitled “Vivir para contarlo: la caída del Ángel en la comedia de santos,” Luis González Fernández writes that “los dramaturgos representan explícitamente al Demonio como el ángel caído,

aquél que libró batalla contra Dios y sus ángeles Buenos en una asombrosa Guerra celestial que estaba destinado a perder” (306).

The second Old Testament book of prophecies dealing with Antichrist that will be treated in this study is Daniel. In *Las profecías del Anticristo en la Edad Media*, José Guadalajara Medina notes that “la verdadera identificación del Anticristo con un símbolo daniélico se produce sobre todo con la <<visión de las cuatro bestias>>, que, históricamente, se refiere a la sucesión de los imperios caldeo, medo, persa y griego seléucida” (50). The standard interpretation is that the four beasts of Daniel’s vision in chapter 7 correspond to the four metals of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream ⁵ (cf. Dan. 2:31-45). In brief, the dream of the image consisted of a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet part iron and part clay. If the prophet’s vision matches the king’s dream, then why is it necessary to repeat the revelation?

The answer is, that men and God see the nations from a different standpoint. Man sees in them the concentration of wealth, majesty, and power, as seen in the “Golden Headed Image.” God sees them as a set of rapacious wild beasts devouring one another. He sees them as bestial in character, and as maintaining their supremacy by brute force. The lion devours, the bear crushes, the leopard springs upon its victim and sucks its blood, and the character of the “fourth wild beast” is such that there is no beast in nature to which it can be compared. (Larkin, *Book of Daniel* 120)

While I credit Clarence Larkin’s acumen in his view of these two aspects, this does seem to constitute a legitimate reason for interpreting the vision of the beasts as a virtual repetition of Daniel chapter 2. The earlier vision would need to be considered just as

⁵ This view is sustained by third century theologian Hippolytus (Emmerson 44) as well as by certain contemporary Bible scholars such as Sir Robert Anderson, G.H. Pember, and Clarence Larkin.

divinely given and inspired as the one here in Daniel 7. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar did not conceive the image for himself, nor does it symbolize a merely human idea of things. Furthermore, the fourth part of the image, with the iron subduing, breaking, and crushing all opposition to it, is every bit as merciless as the actions of the four beasts. In any case, we shall proceed with a description of this vision.

According to Dan. 7:4, the first beast the prophet saw come up out of the sea was like a lion, with wings like those of an eagle. Its appearance suggests that it was a symbol of both the Babylonian Empire and of its first king, Nebuchadnezzar, and that it corresponded to the head of gold of the image. Larkin observes that in “this ‘eagle winged lion’ we see a combination of the ‘king of beasts’ and the ‘king of birds,’ typical of the ‘absolute monarchy’ of Nebuchadnezzar, and his conquering flight over the nations” (121). However, as Daniel looked at this beast he noticed that its wings were plucked, insinuating quite possibly that the glory of the Babylonian Empire began to fade because Nebuchadnezzar became complacent in his conquests and instead devoted himself to building palaces.

The second beast, the prophet writes in verse 5, resembles a bear. Lacking the majesty and agility of the lion, it carries out its conquests with extreme force. These were said to be characteristics of the empire of Media-Persia, as it “did not gain its victories by bravery and skill, but usually overwhelmed its enemies by hurling vast masses of troops upon them” (Pember 273). It is not hard to imagine how vast masses of troops could “devour much flesh” as stated in verse 5 of the vision. Exegetes agree that the side of the bear which raised up, ready to attack, signified Persia, the superior of the two entities

comprising this dual empire. The bear is said to have had three ribs between its teeth, and these ribs are believed to have represented the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt that formed a triple alliance to keep the empire of Media-Persia in check, yet not prevailing (Larkin 122). While this empire was more powerful than the Babylonian Empire, it was considered inferior in its form of government and its prestige.

Daniel 7:6 states that the third beast was like a leopard, having four heads and four wings. As an animal with a sleek build, yet strong, quick, and ferocious, it qualifies as an appropriate symbol for Alexander the Great, who, accompanied by small yet extremely courageous Greek armies, quickly subdued not only Persia but also the entire civilized world. The four heads of this leopard most likely represent the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided after his death, namely Egypt, Macedonia, Syria, and Thrace.

Daniel 7:7-8 contains the description of the fourth beast of the prophet's vision, a description that will prove rather significant later in this study when the beast that comes up out of the sea in Alarcón's *El Anticristo* will be treated. According to Daniel, the fourth beast was like no other beast on earth, for it had iron teeth and brass nails, making it an extremely strange sight to behold. The fact that it had iron teeth and ten horns seems to suggest that the iron teeth matched the iron legs of Nebuchadnezzar's dreamed image, while the ten horns corresponded to the image's ten toes, making the fourth beast a symbol of the Roman Empire. What probably perplexed Daniel, however, was the little horn that came up among the ten horns, because he did not see a little toe spring up amid the ten toes of the image. The little horn with its "eyes of a man" and its "mouth speaking

great things” most likely indicated an added revelation that was intended for Daniel and his people, as the last half (six chapters) of the book concerns God’s dealings with the Jews in the “latter days.”

Another aspect of the fourth beast, found in Dan. 7:23, is that it “shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” Regarding the significance of the phrase “devour the whole earth,” G.H. Lang writes in his book *The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel*: “No empire ever yet has fulfilled this prediction. All the old empires knew of vast territories that they did not and could not subdue. But Antichrist will fulfill this prediction” (83). This appears to speak of the universality of the rule of Antichrist, and the current trend towards globalization is a relevant factor in my opinion. Wireless communication and transcontinental transportation have certainly contributed to international commerce, and politics have followed the trend. Generally speaking, nations no longer practice isolationism, seeing their need to be a “world player.” These aspects could be conceived as preparing Antichrist’s future platform. If in Dan. 2:35 it is said of the stone cut without hands, that is, Messiah’s kingdom, that “it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth,” then why would Antichrist’s kingdom not exhibit a universal sovereignty, given that his characteristics represent a mirror image of the true Christ’s in every detail?

It was stated at the beginning of the explanation of the prophet’s vision that the uniform interpretation is that the four beasts of Daniel 7 match the four kingdoms of Daniel 2. I do not agree with this interpretation, due to a key phrase found in Dan. 7:17 –

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth.”

Daniel is writing in the last years of the kingdom of Babylon, and even though it is in “the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon” (cf. Dan. 7:1), Belshazzar is murdered in Dan. 5:29-30 and the Media-Persians take over. Therefore, the lion matches Media-Persia; the bear matches Greece; the leopard matches Rome; and the fourth beast matches “behemoth” or Antichrist’s kingdom, identical to Rev. 13:2. The author notices that, upon comparing Dan. 7:1 with Dan. 7:17, the four beasts cannot come up until after Belshazzar is finished, who is the last king Babylon has.

The third prophetic book of the Old Testament that offers the reader a glimpse into Antichrist’s features is Zechariah. As stated in the beginning of this section, the prefix “anti” in the term Antichrist indicates an opposition to the true Christ. Just as the Father had committed all power to the Son, so the dragon should give his power to the beast. In every detail the parallelism is complete, and another example can be found in the eleventh chapter of Zechariah. In his book *The Antichrist, Babylon, and the Coming Kingdom*, G.H. Pember writes:

That passage contains a prediction of the Good Shepherd’s appearance upon earth, of his rejection, and of his betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. But what are the words that immediately follow? “And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd: for, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claw in pieces.” Here, therefore, the idol shepherd⁶, who comes in his own name and interests, is sent in righteous judgment for the rejection of the Good Shepherd. (9-10)

⁶ The Hebrew word rendered “idol” by the translators of the King James Version is a noun in Hebrew. Source: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia with Westminster Hebrew 4.2 Morphology*. Additionally, metaphorical compound words known as “kennings” were used especially in Old English poetry; for example, the phrase “whale road” for “ocean” in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

In the chapter “Antichrist in the Minor Prophets” in his book *The Antichrist*, Arthur Pink also references this text: “Zechariah denominates him ‘the Idol Shepherd that leaveth the flock,’ and then pronounces judgment upon him – ‘The sword shall be upon his arm and upon his right eye’ (11:17)” (103). The purpose of exhibiting Antichrist’s likeness to the chief shepherd of an idolatrous and apostate religious system is to provide the reader with a thematic context with respect to the characterization of the Antichrist type Herodes in *La vida y muerte de Herodes*, who dresses as a shepherd (a false shepherd, just as “idols” are false gods) in order to seduce Mariadnes and eventually assume the throne that was destined for his brother Faseló.

In addition to the biblical sources, there were of course early noncanonical writings that dealt with the Antichrist. From approximately 175 to 180 A.D. Irenaeus wrote extensively about Antichrist in his *Adversus haereses*. The fifth book of this work contains essentially a reinterpretation of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. The following is a summary of Antichrist’s characteristics based on Irenaeus’ reading of the biblical material, taken from page 17 of José Guadalajara Medina’s *El Anticristo en la España medieval*: he will establish his kingdom in Jerusalem by passing himself off as the Christ; his reign will last three and one-half years and will be preceded by a division of the [revived Roman] Empire into ten parts; with power given to him by the Devil he will perform miracles and will possess immense seductive capabilities; he will come from

the tribe of Dan; his number will be 666 and perhaps his name will be Teitan ⁷; Christ will kill him and send him to the lake of fire. With respect to Antichrist's number,

Irenaeus explains that 666 is a suitable number for Antichrist because it is composed of 600 (the age of Noah when the deluge came), 60 (the height in cubits of Nebuchadnezzar's statue), and 6 (the statue's breadth in cubits). The number is fitting, since in the last days sin in the world will be as it was in the days of Noah, and since Nebuchadnezzar's statue was used to force idolatry on, and to persecute, God's people. (Emmerson 40)

The apocryphal *Apocalypse of Peter* and *Gospel of Nicodemus* from approximately the second and fourth centuries respectively, contain predictions of Elijah and Enoch ⁸ exposing Antichrist. Also, in *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*, Bernard McGinn summarizes the contents of the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, which is actually a series of oracles rather than an apocalypse. Chapter two of the *Apocalypse* contains a description of the various signs that will precede the Antichrist. Chapter three outlines the miracles the "Lawless One" will perform, excluding the ability to raise the dead: "He will do the things which the Christ did, except only for raising a corpse – by this you will know that he is the Lawless One: He has no power to give life!" (excerpt of chapter 3 from the *Apocalypse of Elijah* qtd. in McGinn 69). Verses 15-17 of chapter three of the *Apocalypse of Elijah* provide a physical description of Antichrist:

He is a small *pelec* [word of uncertain meaning], thin-legged, tall, with a tuft of grey hair on his forehead, which is bald, while his eyebrows reach to his ears, and there is a leprous spot on the front of his hands. He will transform himself in the presence of those who see him: at one time he will be a young boy but at another time he will be an old man. He will transform himself in every sign, but the sign of his head he will not be able to change. (qtd. in McGinn 69)

⁷ Teitán is the name given to Antichrist in Lope de Vega's play *El Antecristo*.

⁸ These two personages will be treated extensively in our analysis of Alarcón's *El Anticristo*.

Two details of this description could possibly have their inspiration in the Bible. The first is the leprous spot on Antichrist's hands, calling to the reader's attention Daniel's vision of the third beast – the spotted leopard. In the Bible spots always have a bad connotation, in contrast to Christ, pictured as a lamb without spot or blemish. The second detail is Antichrist's transformation in the presence of those who see him, alluding perhaps to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 11:14 of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light.

Other texts not a part of the canonical Scriptures that contributed to the Antichrist legend were the *Acts of Peter* of the second century and the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* of the fourth century. Both of these texts treat the life of Simon Magus, one of the many Antichrist types classified by medieval commentators. A significant work treating the political expectations of the Antichrist tradition is the *Tiburtine Oracle*, based on a Latin prose translation of a fourth century Greek prophecy (Emmerson 49). This work demonstrates how a king of the Greeks and of the Romans, known as the Last World Emperor, will establish a peaceful reign prior to Antichrist's dominion.

CHRONICLES

It is no strange thing that the peculiar occurrences of a given period in human history weigh on the consciences of individuals and certain attitudes and behaviors begin to take shape that, in other circumstances, would be considered surprising. The intensity with which peoples of the Middle Ages dealt with the Antichrist phenomenon is no exception.

In his book *Las profecías del Anticristo en la Edad Media*, José Guadalajara Medina perceives that a determining factor in explaining the complex expressions of thoughts and feelings of the medieval psyche has to do with the psychology behind collective fears, inseparable in his view from the historical events that define the various phases of the Middle Ages. For example, fears of the unknown and of the Devil, and uncertainties with respect to wars and foreign invasions caused the collective conscience of Western culture to be drastically shaken. Guadalajara Medina notes that the “hombre de los siglos XVI y XVII experimentaba este mismo terror” (95), a rather significant observation given that the playwrights who will be examined in this study and who wrote about the Antichrist and his forerunners all lived during the seventeenth century.

Thus this sensitivity with respect to the unknown as well as the dread caused by the circumstances of everyday life allows one to better comprehend the effect that sermons, writings, and reports about the advent of Antichrist and the end of the world had on a society receptive to these kinds of messages. People living in the Middle Ages understood calamities such as epidemics, climactic changes, famines, and wars as divine punishment inflicted on a sinful human race. Guadalajara Medina points to three major

historical events that people in Europe, especially those of an apocalyptic mindset, attributed to the coming Antichrist.

The first of these is the famous Black Death of 1348. The lack of knowledge of its etiology prompted scores of people to search for causes not based on medical reasons but rather supernatural ones. Guadalajara Medina provides the following citation from the Spanish translation of Barbara Tuchman's book from 1978, *A Distant Mirror: the Calamitous 14th Century*:

Para el pueblo en sentido amplio no cabía sino una explicación: la ira divina. Acaso los planetas satisficieran a los eruditos, pero Dios estaba más cerca del hombre medio. Una calamidad tan abrumadora, desprovista de causa visible, sólo podía concebirse como el castigo que el Ser Supremo aplicaba a los pecados humanos. Inclusive tal vez fuera la muestra de su definitivo desengaño. (qtd. in Guadalajara Medina 98)

The above excerpt is taken from the book's fifth chapter, significantly titled <<*Es el fin del mundo*>>: *La muerte negra*, a fitting affirmation for the medieval attitude if one considers the pandemic's inexplicable mortality, the psychology surrounding the collective fears of the times, and the incessant religious practices implemented in order to attempt to control its effects. Moreover, the idea that the Black Death was the result of a supernatural calamity was reinforced upon observing its horrible symptoms (Guadalajara Medina 98) such as the vomiting of blood, foul body odor, extremely high fevers, and swelling of the tongue.

Guadalajara Medina indicates that one of the most outlandish ways conceived of in the Middle Ages to cleanse oneself of the grave sin of the Black Death was through the practice of self-flagellation, the purpose of which was "la necesidad de ofrecer a Dios un sacrificio y acto de contrición que limpiase la mancha del pecado y liberase al hombre del

castigo” (99). While the flagellants did not doubt the supernatural origin of the pandemic, with some extremists even blaming the Jews for it, others looked to other agents to explain it, such as air pollution and stagnant water.

Perhaps by associating the Bubonic Plague with a verse from Revelation⁹ as intimated by Guadalajara Medina, death became anthropomorphized, the results of which can be observed in literature, with the *Danzas de la muerte*, painting, and sculpture. Of the influence of the anthropomorphism of death Guadalajara Medina writes:

La familiaridad con que su presencia permanente acompañaba al hombre de la Edad Media, sobre todo a partir del impacto dramático de la Peste Negra, puede considerarse como un factor contextual de gran importancia, que, junto con otros aspectos de la realidad social y religiosa, ha contribuido a reforzar la ancestral convicción de la venida inmediata del Anticristo y la destrucción del mundo al final de los siglos. (101)

The second major historical occurrence that people living in the medieval era attributed to the coming Antichrist was the Great or Papal Schism. Guadalajara Medina notes that the “eminente cardenal Pierre d’Ailly interpretó el grave cisma que dividiría a la Iglesia entre 1378 y 1417 como un <<preámbulo del Anticristo>>” (106). A summary of material extracted from pages 532-536 of *Western Europe in the Middle Ages, 300-1475* will follow in order to provide the reader with the context surrounding this ecclesiastical split and how the Antichrist figures into it.

Due to conflicts in central Italy, the papacy was moved to Avignon. During this time, a series of French Popes were elected. Also during this time, the Papacy became a money making machine more interested in funding its lavish lifestyles than in serving the

⁹ 6:8 – “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him...”

people. They did this by the selling of indulgences, official pardons for sins committed by paying money to receive this pardon. In 1378, the Great Schism occurred. The papal curia (the financial division of the Papacy) returned to Rome in 1377. Pope Gregory (a Frenchman) died at Rome the following year. This provided the opportunity for Roman citizens to demand that the next pope be Roman or at least Italian. The Roman crowd was afraid that if another French Pope was elected, that they would continue to dominate the Sacred College and eventually move back to Avignon. Mobs ran the streets demanding a new Roman pope and even stormed into the conclave during election proceedings. The conclave elected Bartholomew Prignani, an Italian, to the post. He became Pope Urban VI (1378-1398). The mostly French conclave felt that they had elected an Italian (to keep the masses happy) and someone who would cow tail to their desires. They were wrong. Immediately Urban VI began chastising the cardinals and sought to reform the curia. He went so far as to call cardinals liars, fools and traitors. In the summer of 1378, the cardinals withdrew from Rome and on August 2 issued a manifesto declaring the election of Urban invalid due to duress by mobs of Romans. They called for the resignation of Urban, who refused. On September 20, the cardinals elected a new pope, Clement VII, and returned to Avignon.

This act divided Europe causing the Great Schism, with half of Europe supporting Rome and Pope Urban and the other half supporting France and Pope Clement. Neither side was willing to back down. Not only were there two popes but each pope appointed people to run the same areas. Locals were confused. It continued this way, with two popes, until 1408 when the majority of cardinals from both sides became so disillusioned

with their people that they declared both popes to have forfeited their right to the papacy because of their crimes of schism and heresy and elected a new pope, Alexander V. Unfortunately, since neither previous pope accepted this decree both retained influence and now there were three popes instead of two!

A new assembly, the Council of Constance, met in 1414. Its leaders were determined not only to end the schism but also to remedy all other major ills of the church. All the great nations sent representatives 29 cardinals, more than 200 bishops, and 100 abbots, over 300 doctors of theology, Pope John XXIII, and King Sigismund (Germany). Their task was to end the schism, root out heresy, and reform the church. Since John summoned the meeting, he expected that he would be elected as the true Pope but because of an odd even, instead of a straight vote (which the Italians and John would have won); the group gave each country just one vote. John who had promised to abdicate, a ceremonial move designed to elicit support to be re-elected, withdrew the offer and fled from the meeting. Sigismund took control and the council agreed to meet until they had succeeded in their mission. They created a constitution, *Haec Sancta* on April 6, 1415. On May 14, 1415, they suspended Pope John XXIII under charges of fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, and poisoning his predecessor. On May 29 he abdicated. The Roman line was dead. Pope Gregory XII, of the Alexander line, lost all his supporters. By July 4, he resigned. Only Pope Benedict XIII of the Avignon line was left. He refused to resign but by July 26, 1417, he was deposed as a heretic, schismatic, and a perjurer. The council then ended the Great Schism by the end of 1417 when they elected Cardinal Odo Colonna as Pope Martin V (1417-1431).

One can imagine the deep impact that the Great Schism must have had on a society in which the Catholic Church permeated practically every aspect of everyday life. No doubt the repercussions of this event profoundly shook the Christian conscience, explained by Guadalajara Medina in the following manner: “Este gravísimo acontecimiento de la historia de la Iglesia sumió a esta institución en una crisis y desprestigio incalificables, que muy bien podía ser interpretado, en un ambiente saturado de imágenes apocalípticas, como un signo evidente del advenimiento del Anticristo” (107). Additionally, he observes, the cardinals that had elected Urban as pope and then proclaimed the illegality of the process, in a later manifesto referred to him as the Antichrist, an apostate, the Devil, a tyrant, etc. (107).

José Guadalajara Medina also shares how historian Steven Runciman, in his book *Historia de las Cruzadas*, chronicles how the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 638 was viewed as an allusion to the imminence of Antichrist. Runciman writes that patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem likened caliph Omar’s occupation of the city as the abomination of desolation (Guadalajara Medina 110), a clear allusion to the son of perdition. Furthermore, by titling the second chapter of his book “El reinado del Anticristo,” Runciman, discussing the Muslim dominance just prior to the Crusades, makes it known that in the eyes of the Christians at the time, “los infieles se presentaban como una imagen encarnada del Anticristo” (qtd. in Guadalajara Medina 110).

Given the cultural and literary parameters of this study, the logical question becomes: did sentiments towards Muslims as a sign of the Antichrist extend into Spain?

We will explore the answer by consulting material from José Guadalajara Medina's book *El Anticristo en la España medieval*.

In the second half of the ninth century there existed in Córdoba a group of *mozárabes* who incorporated into their Christian faith “la más absoluta repulsa contra el mundo islámico” (39). This movement began to develop during the final years of the reign of Abd al-Rahman II and into the first years of the rule of Muhammad I; in other words, from approximately 850 to 859. This last year marked the death of Eulogio, considered to be the group's leader.

Known as “mártires voluntarios” according to Guadalajara Medina, the group consisted of fifty men and women who, after publicly speaking out against Islam, were sentenced to death. The aforementioned Eulogio testifies to this in his three most important works: *Memoriale Sanctorum*, *Documentum martyriale*, and *Apologeticus Martyrum*. The group's differentiation between Christianity and Islam led it to attribute to the prophet Muhammad characteristics that were unique to Antichrist, thus identifying him as a genuine forerunner to the Son of Perdition. An excerpt from Eulogio's *Memoriale Sanctorum*, which stems from Matthew 24:24¹⁰, demonstrates this characterization:

Y de ellos, este profeta vuestro es el mayor de todos: él, poseído por las hechicerías del antiguo enemigo, seducido por los engaños de los demonios, entregado a los sacrilegios de los maleficios y corrompiendo los corazones de muchas personas maleables con un veneno mortal, los ha abandonado a las trampas de la maldición eterna. Así, carente de toda prudencia espiritual, acomoda la fe de aquéllos a su príncipe Satanás, con quien él mismo va a padecer los más duros tormentos de los infiernos, y

¹⁰ “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

también a vosotros, sus seguidores, os ha condenado a arder con él en las inextinguibles hogueras del fuego eterno. (qtd. in Guadalajara Medina 40)

Although not in the above citation, Guadalajara Medina maintains that the specific application of the term “Antichrist” to Muhammad abounds in the *Memoriale Sanctorum*, as do the phrases “ángel de Satanás,” and “hombre endemoniado, mago, adúltero y mentiroso.” The prophet is also accused of organizing “orgías y placeres de la carne en el Paraíso” (qtd. in Guadalajara Medina 40). As Henri de Lubac has observed, such polemical interpretations of Antichrist “result from the medieval desire to actualize scripture by taking biblical images and applying them to fresh circumstances” (Emmerson 67).

Another *mozárabe* committed to this movement was Albaro de Córdoba, author of the *Indiculus luminosus*, a book that directly attacks Islam. In many parts of the work Córdoba shows that he is completely convinced that he is living in a time marked by utter persecution against Christians, which affords him the opportunity to establish parallels of an apocalyptic nature in his writing. For example, he uses the symbolism of Daniel’s fourth beast, in particular the “little horn,” as a reference to Muhammad.

Both Eulogio and Albaro de Córdoba partially adopted the apocalyptic tradition in that their motivations were geared towards depicting the prophet Muhammad as the Antichrist (Guadalajara Medina 41), as the diabolical incarnation of all that oppressed the culture and religion of Christians living in the Muslim territory of Córdoba, Spain. Consequently, there is a lack of a complete picture of Antichrist’s trajectory as applied to Islam; that is to say, there is no mention or reference to Allah, only to his prophet.

PSALMS

In the Hebrew canon of the Bible “the Psalms” is the first book making up the *Ketuvim* or “writings,” and since this section explores two foundational writings on the person of the Antichrist from which Juan Ruiz de Alarcón gleaned much of his material in the development of his play *El Anticristo*, it seems appropriate to title this section “Psalms” in accordance with the thematic titles of the other portions of this study.

In terms of a biography of Antichrist, the monk Adso of Montier-en-Der undertook the task of writing a complete account of this evil personage shortly after 950 A.D. in a letter to Queen Gerberga, sister of Otto I and wife of Louis IV. In *Apocalyptic Spirituality* Bernard McGinn provides a translation of Adso’s treatise from which we will base the present discussion. Addressing the significance of the Letter, the form chosen by the monk to develop his treatise, McGinn writes: “As a practiced hagiographer, Adso could scarcely help but be marked by the influence of this widespread genre. The clarity it gave to his presentation of the origin, career, and fate of the Man of Perdition will be evident to anyone who compares his work with the rich but diffuse *Treatise on Christ and the Antichrist* written by Hippolytus about the year 200” (87-88).

In the treatise’s “Prologue to Gerberga,” Adso writes to the queen: “You even want to learn about the wickedness and persecution of the Antichrist, as well as of his power and origin” 989). The question may arise as to why the queen would request such a treatise from the monk. Both Adso and Queen Gerberga lived in a society marked by extreme violence. The collapse of the Carolingian Empire had given way to a state of chaos in which armed warriors had free reign over the lower classes without intervention

from the state (McGinn 83). Life was thus viewed as a struggle between good and evil, and the latter forces seemed to always prevail. This conflict was to reach its apogee in the uttermost persecution by the Antichrist. In order to survive the imminent battle with the Son of Perdition, the good of society needed to be forewarned about his origin, campaign, and the signs indicating his arrival. These are the reasons why Adso wrote to the queen about Antichrist.

The monk begins his treatise with an explanation of the name of Antichrist as meaning contrary to Christ, providing some examples: “Christ came as a humble man; he will come as a proud one. Christ came to raise the lowly, to justify sinners; he, on the other hand, will cast out the lowly, magnify sinners, exalt the wicked” (90). Adso then identifies what he calls the ministers of Antichrist’s malice, ranging from the known types such as Nero, Domitian, and Antiochus, to “anyone, layman, cleric, or monk, who lives contrary to justice and attacks the rule of his way of life and blasphemes what is good (Rom. 14:16) is an Antichrist, the minister of Satan” (90).

Adso next writes of Antichrist’s origin, evoking the Scriptures to make the case that he will be born of the tribe of Dan¹¹, and from the union of a mother and father. To fully illustrate how the Antichrist will be conceived in sin, with great detail the monk contrasts Mary’s conception with that of the mother of Antichrist:

Just as the Holy Spirit came into the mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ and overshadowed her with his power and filled her with divinity so that she conceived of the Holy Spirit and what was born of her was divine and holy (Luke 1:35), so too the devil will descend into the Antichrist’s mother, will completely fill her, completely encompass her, completely master her, completely possess her within and without, so that with the devil’s

¹¹ Gen. 49:17.

cooperation she will conceive through a man and what will be born from her will be totally wicked, totally evil, totally lost. (90-91)

As for the Antichrist's place of birth and rearing, these will be Babylon and Bethsaida and Chorazin, respectively. Regarding these latter two cities as the places where Antichrist will be brought up and cared for, Adso consults Matthew 11:21, where Christ reproaches the two cities saying: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" Educated by magicians, enchanters, and wizards, he will go to Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, circumcise himself, and pretend that he is the Son of God. While at Jerusalem he will torture and kill all of those who he is unable to convert to his cause.

Adso provides a vivid description of the miracles Antichrist will perform: "He will make fire come down from heaven in a terrifying way, trees suddenly blossom and wither, the sea become stormy and unexpectedly calm. He will make the elements change into differing forms, divert the flow of bodies of water, disturb the air with winds and all sorts of commotions, and perform countless other wondrous acts" (92). By performing these signs and miracles, the monk adds, even the upright and perfect in God's eyes will begin to wonder whether or not he is the true Christ.

Adso informs that Antichrist will wage an all-out persecution of the elect in three ways: by terror, gifts, and prodigies. Those who embrace him will receive gifts in the form of gold and silver. Those who reject him will be met with terror, and if the latter method of persuasion does not work he will employ seduction with signs and prodigies. He will carry out public tortures and executions on those he is unable to seduce. The monk then references Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:16, 21 to describe the tribulation that will be experienced throughout the earth by those who decide to remain faithful to the

true Christ. They will perish “through sword, or fiery furnace, or serpents, or beasts, or through some other kind of torture” (92). In accordance with the Bible, Adso indicates that the period of tribulation will last three and one-half years.

Also in line with the Bible (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3), the falling away or defection before the advent of Antichrist is interpreted by Adso as the departure of all political power from the Roman Empire. Immediately following this the Antichrist will be revealed as the son of perdition, “that is, the son of the devil, not through nature but through imitation because he will fulfill the devil’s will in everything. The fullness of diabolical...will dwell in him in bodily¹² fashion; for in him will be hidden all the treasures of malice and iniquity” (93).

According to the monk, Antichrist’s demise will be hastened by his execution of Elijah and Enoch, who had been sent to preach against him and convert the sons of Israel to the true faith. Adso does not make clear whether Antichrist will be destroyed by Christ himself or by the archangel Michael, but what he does state for certain is that this power will come from the Lord and not from any angel. Adso identifies the Mount of Olives as the location of Antichrist’s death, the same place where Jesus gathered together Peter, James, John, and Andrew to warn them of the things that would precede his second advent.

The diffusion of Adso’s *Libellus de Antichristo* will have an impact on the treatment of Antichrist in medieval and Golden Age drama, particularly in the twelfth

¹² In contrast to Christ, of whom Paul writes “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

century *Ludus de Antichristo* and in Alarcón's *El Anticristo*, both of which will be examined later in this study.

As far as writings about the Antichrist in Spanish are concerned, the work that probably most bears the influence of Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo* is the *Libro del Anticristo*, written by Aragonese aristocrat Martín Martínez de Ampíés around 1496. As evidenced by the following excerpt from the introduction from Françoise Gilbert's critical edition, the edition we will consult in our discussion of the text¹³, Martínez de Ampíés views his endeavor as a calling to fulfill a moral obligation – to present to the masses in an easy to understand language information about Antichrist and the Final Judgment so that they will be equipped to defend themselves against the enemy's tyranny:

Fue ordenado en las mejores palabras que pude, y del estilo es todo llano, dexada qualquiera forma de oración retorizada, por que los menores puedan perceber y aprovechar, y los entendidos no me reprehendan, pues ya los aviso que dexo en la obra presente lo que ya en otras guardé como pude. Las tribulaciones del Anticristo y del Juicio Final postrimero serán generales a todo el mundo, por ende mi habla en estos libros debió ser muy llana en lo que ser pudo; que los menores, medianos y grandes entender la puedan, y vivan armados para defensión. (63)

The expression “vivan armados para defensión” underscores the moral component to the work because even by the end of the fifteenth century the medieval apocalyptic mindset still conceived of Antichrist as being responsible for inciting the faithful Christians to resist his future cajoleries.

¹³ Parenthetical citations will include the chapter, indicated by Roman numerals, and the corresponding page number from Gilbert's edition.

Martínez de Ampiés cites ninety biblical passages from the books of Genesis, Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation. He also references the encyclopedic work *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis*, whose authorship has been attributed to Hugh of Strasburg, and a work that was directly influenced by Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo* (Gilbert 19). Patristic sources consulted by Martínez de Ampiés include excerpts from the writings of Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and other church fathers. He also references works of literature from Aristotle, Virgil, Boethius, and others.

The *Libro del Anticristo* consists of forty-five chapters, each one with a corresponding epigraph that summarizes the content of its respective chapter, much like what the reader observes in Cervantes' masterpiece. Each chapter is accompanied by a xylograph situated just below the epigraph. In the xylographs depicting the Antichrist he appears in purely human form, yet the presence in each image of a horned demon located behind him points to his true diabolical nature. Each illustration is drawn with such precision as to capture the essence of what is about to be discussed in the text that follows, or as José Guadalajara Medina explains it in *El Anticristo en la España medieval*: "Así pues, la lectura del epígrafe y la visualización de la imagen nos ofrece ya, sin necesidad de la glosa, un conjunto muy completo, compuesto por lo que hoy denominaríamos una foto con su pie explicativo correspondiente" (153).

Taking into account all of the various materials compiled by its author, from biblical texts, patristic writings, and portions from literary works, to epigraphs and

detailed xylographs, the *Libro del Anticristo* can easily be considered one of the more eclectic works of medieval apocalyptic literature on the person of the Antichrist.

The content of the *Libro del Anticristo* can be divided into three parts: his birth, his activity or “career” in the world, and his death. The first detail presented with regards to Antichrist’s birth is that, and like we observed in Adso’s treatise, he will come from the tribe of Dan. Antichrist will be the product of an incestuous relationship between a father and his daughter, one that is orchestrated by Satan. This is described in chapter three. Martínez de Ampiés does not deviate from the already established tradition that Antichrist will be born in Babylon and raised and instructed in Bethsaida and Chorazain.

The second part of the *Libro del Anticristo*, and that which encompasses the largest portion of the text – chapters V to XLIII – centers around Antichrist’s activities in the world. This part begins with his circumcision in Jerusalem and the welcome he receives by the Jews: “Perseverando el mal espíritu en este hijo de la maldad, ha de venir en Jerusalem, donde se hará circuncidar, y ser dicho verdadero Messías; y el judaysmo, pueblo obstinado¹⁴, será de su parte y adherente a la prophanada secta suya” (V, 79). His behavior and negative qualities (hypocrisy, concupiscence, cruelty, blasphemy, etc.) begin to take shape, and Martínez de Ampiés highlights these in a series of contrasts: “Ha de ser todo contrario, porque Jhesú fue vaso lleno de virtudes, y el será pozo lleno de vicios. Christo baxó del cielo a enxalçar los humildes y justificar los pecadores; el

¹⁴ Françoise Gilbert explains in the introduction that the anti-Semitism that existed in Western culture no doubt contributed to the author’s characterization of the Jews as obstinate people: “Así, cada vez que se menciona al pueblo judío en el *Libro del Anticristo*, se le califica de <<obstinado>>” (25).

Anticristo se levantará con el infierno a perseguir los humildes y magnificar los peccadores” (VI, 85).

Among Antichrist’s malicious acts are the reconstruction of the demolished temple at Jerusalem, experimentation with alchemy, the burning of sacred books, false preaching, and some so astonishing such as the following: “Mandarà sallir el Anticristo un cavallero armado de la cascara de un huevo, y un venado de una peña, y colgará todo un Castillo en una veta de hilo y lo hará estar en peso assí en el ayre” (XVII, 114).

Another deed that could be considered as equally amazing is Antichrist’s ability to make a statue speak: “En esta parte resfuera mucho el Anticristo su mala secta delante los reyes y grandes hombres que han de venir a ver sus obras de gran engaño; hará en presencia de todos ellos que una estatua hable así como persona, y que dé respuesta de lo demandado” (XXVIII, 139). The scriptural corollary to this is Rev. 13:15 – “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should...speak...” In his comments on this verse Walafriidus Strabo writes in his *Glossa Ordinaria in Apocalypsim Joannis*: “Hará por artificio mágico que hable una estatua y predique el porvenir” (qtd. in Gilbert’s footnote, page 139; translation also provided by Gilbert). This episode, along with the added detail by Strabo of the statue capable of foretelling the future, reminds me of the *aventura de la cabeza encantada* in the second part of *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, in which a bronze head, controlled in actuality by don Antonio Moreno’s nephew, was able to respond to questions. Perhaps like those in attendance at Moreno’s party in Cervantes’ novel, the

kings and men of renown in the *Libro del Anticristo* were ignorant of the antagonist's artifice.

The preaching of Elijah and Enoch that is to occur “entre el oculto advenimiento del Anticristo que será quando naciere, y el manifiesto que parecerá quando oyrán su predicación y persecuciones” (X, 97), covers several chapters. The intervention of these characters as messengers informing of Antichrist's deceits, provides the moral counterbalance to the work. While the campaign of Antichrist and the erroneous preaching of his disciples reach the kingdoms of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya, the presence of the two witnesses serves to remind the followers of the true Christ to stand firm against the Son of Perdition's temptations. Although both of the witnesses will be killed in accordance with the tradition, three and one-half days later their bodies will be gloriously resurrected and they will ascend into the clouds in the presence of their killers: “Después de los tres días y medio que fueron muertos Enoch y Elías, han de resuscitar y, los matadores presentes, será oyda una voz del cielo que llamará estos sanctos varones, los quales luego en vista del pueblo serán arrebatados en una nube y subidos al cielo” (XXXVIII, 162).

Before his actual demise, Antichrist will fake his own death and therefore will be able to rise from the dead in an effort to reinforce the faith of his followers:

Al tercero día que será puesto el Anticristo en la sepultura, se fingirá que resuscita por dar a entender a todos que él es verdadero Messías prometido en la ley, con la qual astucia y mal engaño pensará confirmar sus discipulos y sequaces su ley abhominable y convertir a los contrarios de su intención, los quales con esperança del remedio del cielo vivirán en la fe de Cristo Jesú nuestro Maestro. (XL, 168)

In my opinion this detail is significant because it creates a dramatic effect of double deceit – the Antichrist’s act of pretending to die which in turn allows him to pretend to come back to life, when in reality he was alive all along – not at all found in the scriptural account of Antichrist’s activities in the world. Martínez de Ampiés successfully embellishes the Bible’s characterization of the son of perdition as to make him even more cunning. With the exception of a comment (that appears in a footnote) by Haymo of Halberstadt, a German Benedictine monk and noted author, which in part reads: “...para engañar las almas de los muy débiles, en imitación del verdadero jefe Cristo, dirá que estuvo muerto y resucitó después de la muerte [...]” (XL, 168), this aspect of Antichrist’s last ditch effort to maintain the support of his disciples seems to be an original creation by Martínez de Ampiés.

After having presented himself as a true god and worshipped as such, the Antichrist finally meets his doom, an event that constitutes the moral pinnacle and the *desengaño didáctico* of the work. The antagonist’s death comes at the hands of the archangel Michael and is described by Martínez de Ampiés in the following manner:

Nuestro Señor Dios poderoso, ya no queriendo sufrir la gran soberbia del Anticristo sobre las injurias y abominaciones cometidas a la real Magestad con otros engaños de ypocrisía y el peccado de ydolatrar y destrucción de los devotos, luego le dará muerte mandando a Sant Miguel que haga la execución de aquella, y assí lo fará como sté puesto en el ayre en manos de los demonios. (XLIII, 176)

After Antichrist is taken to hell by devils and all of his followers are also killed, Elijah and Enoch return to convert the world to the faith of the true Christ. The text concludes with an invocation to Mary, who, after the terrible tribulations brought on by Antichrist, will be “nuestro scudo, medio, camino y Puerto, y defensora” (XLV, 184).

Another component to the didactic illumination that is inherent to the Antichrist tradition has to do with terror. Take for example the following passage in which Martínez de Ampíés discusses the alliance formed between the peoples of Gog and Magog with Antichrist:

He lo mismo leydo que han de ser estas gotas y magotas un linaje tan bárbaro y fiero que han de comer las carnes de los hombres y beber de la sangre, que de lo hablar a muchos pone terrible spanto. Pues, o Señor, podemos decir, quieranos librar de las bocas de los fieros leones y de los dientes de carnes tan fieros por tu infinita misericordia, la qual siempre usas en nuestros defectos y tribulaciones. (XXIII, 128-29)

Here Martínez de Ampíés uses the cruelty associated with the inhabitants of Gog and Magog for a moral purpose – to provoke either an attitude that is inclined to effectuate a religious conversion or at least an abstinence of devious conduct.

ACTS

In discussing the presence of the Antichrist in medieval drama we will refer to material contained in Richard Kenneth Emmerson's *Antichrist in the Middle Ages. A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*. Antichrist drama follows the basic characteristics of the tradition; that is to say, the organization of Antichrist's campaign and the particulars concerning his reign of tyranny and deceit. The tradition usually depicts Antichrist's miracles, especially the ability to raise the dead, his blasphemous claims in an introductory diatribe, the preaching of Enoch and Elijah, and the crucial roles of the Jews first as his supporters and then as converts to the two prophets.

In the *Perugia Doomsday Play* (ca. 1320-40) the Antichrist tradition is developed from an introduction consisting of ninety-six verses until its representation of the Last Judgment. The work begins with two kings talking about the son of perdition's imminent arrival based on heavenly signs. The Antichrist then abruptly appears on stage converting Jerusalem's populace. He proceeds to mark his converts, threaten those who resist him, and perform miracles such as calling fire down from heaven, causing a dry tree to bloom, and raising the dead. The action progresses rapidly with the arrival of Elijah and Enoch warning of the coming judgment. The Antichrist kills them but their deaths are avenged by Gabriel who in turn kills the son of perdition at Christ's request. While those who were deceived now repent the Antichrist is carried to hell by demons and the Last Judgment takes place. The *Perugia Doomsday Play* thus follows a pattern of presenting Antichrist on stage: first a warning of his coming; next his blasphemous claims, threats,

and miracles; followed by the preaching of the two witnesses; and finalized by the Antichrist's demise.

This pattern is more fully developed in the German Corpus Christi cycle from Künzelsau (1479). In the case here, before Antichrist's appearance on stage the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins is presented in which Jesus describes the false Christs that will appear. Künzelsau proceeds with the traditional trajectory of announcing the Antichrist's grand entrance on stage while relating many details about his diabolical origins and tricks. At one point a devil will tell Lucifer that "our comrade" is born. This play also focuses on Antichrist's Jewish support. They become his most loyal followers when the figure known as Archsinagoga identifies Antichrist as the Messiah and asks him to wage war against the Christians. After the prophets Elijah and Enoch arrive and are beheaded and later resurrected by Gabriel some devils escort the Antichrist to hell and the Last Judgment is pronounced.

Among various other medieval and Renaissance plays that dramatize the Antichrist myth Emerson selects three and of those we will concentrate first on the Latin drama *Ludus de Antichristo*¹⁵, available in a unique manuscript from Tegernsee, Bavaria between the years of 1160 and 1186. According to Karl Young in his *Drama of the Medieval Church* it represents "the best literary product of German ecclesiastical life in the twelfth century" (395). It gleans material from Jerome's Vulgate, the liturgy, and

¹⁵ Citations will be taken from the Latin/Spanish bilingual edition developed by Luis Astey V. In the prologue Mauricio Beuchot explains the drama's title: "La obra no tenía título en el manuscrito (conservado en la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek), pero el editor alemán le puso el de *Ludus de Antichristo*, es decir, *Juego del Anticristo*, pues ese nombre de *ludus* (juego) se aplicaba también a las piezas teatrales" (10-11).

Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo*. While Emerson concedes that the topic of the Last World Emperor demonstrates political relevance based on the similarities between the Emperor's claims and twelfth century imperial philosophy as well as a sharp nationalistic bias against France, he maintains that the work's religious importance is undermined due to a reading of the *Ludus de Antichristo* as an early example of German nationalism in general and as an exaltation of Frederick Barbarossa in particular. Such an interpretation, naturally, has led to the identification of the Emperor with Frederick; similarly, other characters such as the pope, kings, Babylon, the Hypocrites, and the Heretics have been linked to contemporary historical figures.

The Last World Emperor is first and foremost an eschatological personage. Thus, when he relinquishes his crown in Jerusalem the drama does not change from a historical context to one of the last days. He does not start off as Frederick I and then become the Last World Emperor. While the actions of all characters involved in the *Ludus de Antichristo* are inevitably depicted from a twelfth century viewpoint because that was when the work was penned, they are best understood in terms of the Antichrist tradition. For example, the Christian king of Jerusalem may represent the Latin counterpart set up during the crusades, yet he also pictures the Jerusalem of the Antichrist myth, where the Antichrist will ascend to prominence. Babylon is commonly known as the birthplace of the Antichrist and when its king orders the heathen to attack Jerusalem it will also represent the multitudes of Gog and Magog surrounding the remnant.

The *Ludus de Antichristo* begins with the songs of the three religions. La Gentilidad defends polytheism:

La inmortalidad de los dioses
por todos debe ser venerada
y su pluralidad
temida por todas partes. (I, 1-4)

The character known as Sinagoga in turn praises God and attacks the notion that salvation is found in Christ because he succumbed to death:

Error es considerar
esperanza de salvación en el nombre de Cristo.
Es extraño que si él sucumbió a la muerte
otorgue la vida a otros. (I, 35-38)

The figure of la Iglesia emerges and proclaims “Ésta es la fe de la que surge la vida” (I, v. 45). With the songs of praise and condemnation from three distinct perspectives a religious context is established even before the Emperor utters his first words of the drama. Emmerson points out the significance of the order of the three religions’ appearance on stage, explaining that it “alludes to the three periods of salvation history: natural law, the Mosaic written law, and the ‘new law’ of grace” (167). From these different viewpoints the Emperor’s motivation to restore Christianity will emerge. He will defend Jerusalem against Babylon, enter the temple to pray, and there lay down his crown and scepter:

Recibe, pues, lo que con corazón benigno ofrezco.
A ti, Rey de los reyes, entrego el poder imperial,
a Ti, por quien los reyes reinan, único que Emperador

puede ser llamado y que de todos eres gobernante. (II, 147-50)

As an eschatological figure the Last World Emperor must fulfill his prophetic role by first conquering the world and then abdicating the throne.

The third segment of the drama marks the Antichrist's initial appearance on stage accompanied by the symbolic characters la Hipocresía to his right and la Herejía to his left. He commands them to erase any memory of Christ on earth:

Ved: a Cristo honran las naciones,

lo veneran y lo adoran.

Anulad, por lo tanto, su recuerdo

transfiriendo a mí su gloria. (III, 159-62)

Specifically, he orders la Hipocresía to deceive the laity (“Tú acumula el favor de los laicos”) and la Herejía to rid the clergy of their doctrine (“Destruye tú la doctrina de los clérigos”). An example of Antichrist's trickery follows. He pretends to back away in meekness at the Hypocrites' proposition that he reform the church when he says “¿Cómo se hará esto? Soy un varón desconocido.” With the Hypocrites' help, however, he defeats the king of Jerusalem and lays down the robes that covered his military breastplate (“despojándose de sus vestiduras exteriores”), a gesture which symbolizes the change in disposition from humility to pride. Antichrist proceeds to attack la Iglesia and establishes his throne in the temple, ushering in what the prophet Daniel calls the “abomination of desolation”.

In the *Ludus de Antichristo* the title character attains power through terror, gifts, and miracles. Antichrist says “al Rey de los Francos ofreceréis obsequios, / a quien, con

los suyos, convertiréis a nos mediante ello” (III, 219-20). Regarding the Greeks, on the other hand, Antichrist commands: “subyugad a los griegos o mediante terrores o mediante guerra” (III, 200). The German monarch rejects Antichrist’s bribe – “Séale su riqueza para perdición. / Severa venganza espera a esta injuria” (III, 243-44).

Nonetheless, the Antichrist eventually succeeds in deceiving the German King into thinking that he can perform miracles. For example, Antichrist pretends to raise a dead man, his greatest feat. This is not shown to be false in the representation of the action; however it is clear from the stage direction (p. 45: “...yace alguien que simula haber sido muerto...”) that the man only pretends to be dead. What matters is the deception, in terms of the Antichrist’s powers, and with the German’s king’s conversion the last hold-out of Christianity submits to the son of perdition. As other kings convert they receive his mark on the forehead (p. 47: “Entonces el Anticristo, marcando en la frente a él y a los suyos...”). The mark is a common feature of the tradition and in Emerson’s opinion “the play is concerned more with accurately dramatizing specific expectations of the tradition – here the mark of Antichrist – than with portraying realistic political situations” (170).

Sinagoga, the last character to be deceived, embraces the Antichrist as the prophesied Messiah. Enoch and Elijah arrive, denounce Antichrist (“No es Cristo sino, según las Escrituras, / él mismo es cabeza de los Hipócritas.”), and convert the Jews to Christianity. The integrity of the tradition is maintained with the presentation of the Jews’ initial conversion to Antichrist followed by their acceptance of the true Christ. Sinagoga exposes Antichrist as he threatens the prophets and the Jews and kills Enoch and Elijah.

Antichrist gathers his followers together but a loud noise emanating from above disrupts their reunion. As they flee the once deceived Christians rejoin la Iglesia. The drama does not present Christ or Michael the archangel defeating Antichrist, nor does it conclude the latter's campaign with a scene portraying the Last Judgment; instead, la Iglesia calls the faithful together and the play ends. In this respect the *Ludus de Antichristo* deviates from the tradition. Moreover, and unlike later vernacular plays, it does not allude to Antichrist's birth nor does it make mention of his rearing.

The Old French *Jour du Jugement*, on the other hand, develops Antichrist's evil from the beginning. It is the only medieval French Antichrist play in existence, with a fully illustrated manuscript located at the Bibliotheque municipale de Besançon (Emmerson 172). Like the examples presented thus far it has been examined through political lens and combines the Antichrist and Doomsday myths. Emmerson approximates its date of composition at 1330 and alludes to Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo* as a likely source of inspiration. The *Jour du Jugement* embellishes the tradition with its length of 1,691 lines (compared to the 417 lines of the *Ludus de Antichristo*), numerous characters, and an emphasis on the devils. It also brings in a didactic element not found in other dramatic renditions of the Antichrist myth. Near the beginning of the work a preacher presents "un sarmon" which serves to warn the masses of the end of days and coming judgment. This character provides a detailed description of Doomsday and offers a prayer for all to be prepared to resist Antichrist so that they may enter Judgment Day without sin. The didactic impetus is demonstrated by the pope and Christians who heed the preacher's admonition and stand against Antichrist as examples

for the spectators. Emerson notes that in instances like these in the *Jour du Jugement* the audience is often placed in a position to judge the characters' actions.

Perhaps as a parody of Christ's appellation of Alpha and Omega, Satan begins the *Jour du Jugement* with a speech that, while outlining Antichrist's dramatic trajectory, ultimately points to the end of time. The audience learns from the work's opening verses that a Jewish whore from the tribe of Dan will give birth to a child in Babylon who is to be called Antichrist and whose father is a devil. Through flattery, miracles, and false doctrine he will become the object of worship for the multitudes. The council of devils then sends the character Angingnart to Babylon where he adopts the form of an adolescent, seduces the woman, explains that she will conceive the one who will destroy Christianity, and then reveals himself as a devil. This revelation is significant as it indicates a deviation from the "traditional theological subtlety explaining that Antichrist is born of human parents but possessed by the devil who enters his mother's womb..." (Emmerson 174). In the *Jour du Jugement* Antichrist's father is a devil. The audience must understand Antichrist's evil nature from the very beginning. This subtlety will be examined in the first and last plays of this study, in the context of Cain's birth in Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* and that of the Antichrist's himself in Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo*.

After Antichrist's birth in the *Jour du Jugement*, Satan deploys two devils to teach him. Then a chorus of angels calls Enoch and Elijah to preach God's law on earth. They arrive, explain their role in the Tribulation, outline their ministry of three-and-one-half-years, and foretell their death. A sermon follows in which the prophets warn that, as a

result of mankind's sins, God will allow Antichrist to perform miracles and therefore it is vital for the other characters to repent and prepare to stand against the "Beast."

Antichrist begins his reign with the traditional proclamation of religious and political dominion as God on earth. He decides to mint a coin depicting his image, a scene that "reflects both 'the image of the beast' and the 'mark of the beast' expected in the Antichrist tradition, for the speeches of Antichrist's devilish messenger, Pluto, make it clear that all peoples will need to display the coin or they will suffer persecution and death" (Emmerson 174-75). The image of the Antichrist on a coin in the *Jour du Jugement* evokes an historical incident described in *The Two Babylons* in which Pope Leo XII, on the occasion of the jubilee of 1825, "struck a metal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a 'Woman,' holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a cup, with the legend around her 'Sedet super universum,' 'The whole world is her seat'" (Hislop 6). Emmerson contends that, if the playwright were trying to imagine how Antichrist would mark his followers in fourteenth century France, he would do so in a manner more realistic than the marking of the forehead portrayed in the *Ludus de Antichristo* hence the use of the coin. Strickly speaking, one could argue that the *Ludus* is more faithful to the biblical text (Rev. 13:16), yet it is possible that the poet of the *Jour du Jugement* interprets the mark to be symbolic of an identifying sign that will be required to buy and sell goods, probably based on the very next verse of the referenced biblical text from Revelation. The playwright exercises discernment in distinguishing between what is literal and what is allegorical.

An example of the elaborate dramatization of the Antichrist tradition in this French play can be seen in the antagonist's methods of converting people. As proof of his divinity he implements miraculous cures, healing a blind man, and a leper. After being challenged by a ruthless bishop, Antichrist performs his greatest miracle of raising a man from the dead. Nonetheless, ten kings that Emerson identifies in the play as rulers initially deceived by Antichrist but later rise up as his political supporters are not quite convinced; therefore they come to interview him. When the Antichrist gives alms to four poor persons the kings decide he is legitimate.

In addition to performing miracles, the Antichrist of the *Jour du Jugement* ascends to power by means of threats and false teachings. His speeches to paupers, the sick, the kings, and the bishop could be characterized as an assault against Christ with a two-edged sword (cf. Heb. 4:12). First, and quite simply, he claims to be God, using various titles that are synonymous with the Deity (*Juge, Rédempteur, Créateur, etc.*). Second, he denies the divine aspect of Christ's incarnation, arguing that Jesus was merely Mary's son and not God's son. He repeatedly refers to Christ as "Jhesu, le fil Marie." The emphasis the play places on Antichrist's attacks against the virgin birth of Jesus can possibly be attributed to the significance of the Marian tradition in France during the High Middle Ages (Emerson 178). The antithesis of course to Mary is Antichrist's mother, whose key role in the *Jour du Jugement* is to fulfill the prophecies regarding Antichrist's birth from a Jew from the tribe of Dan who resides in Babylon. Symbolically speaking, however, she represents the whore of Babylon of Rev. 17, speaking here in the French drama of her faith in Mohammed:

Je met m'esperance trestoute
En Mahon et en sa puissance.
Fol sont trestuit cil sanz doubtaunce
Qui ne croient ces vertuz belles!¹⁶

The denial spoken of alludes to 1 John 2:22,¹⁷ a significant reference from the medieval tradition that identifies Antichrist as the one who will deny Christ. His campaign of deceit in the *Jour du Jugement* continues as he labels Jesus an impostor (“le pautonnier”) born of human parents. When the kings and the bishop are finally converted they too deny Jesus: “Jeshus renoions et sa mère / Et vous faisons tresttuit hommaige.”

With respect to the reappearance of Elijah and Enoch, the *Jour du Jugement* deviates somewhat from the tradition in that it portrays the Jews as resisting the prophets as opposed to the conventional dramatization of having them be the first group of people converted. They complain to Antichrist that Enoch and Elijah are traitors, hypocrites, and false prophets. Much like Pontius Pilate, who famously washed his hands of Jesus, in the *Jour du Jugement* Antichrist hands the prophets over to the Jews who kill them. Later, the pope refers to Antichrist as *Egipcien*, which may be an allusion to the anticipation that the bodies of Elijah and Enoch will lie in the streets of the city “which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt” (Rev. 11:8). The prophets are called out of the grave by a host of angels led by John the Evangelist, who marks his debut on stage by ordering the

¹⁶ These verses (418-21) are taken from the sample text of *Besançon 579*, on page 91 of *Antichrist and Judgment Day: the Middle French Jour du Jugement*.

¹⁷ “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”

ministering spirits to torment Antichrist and his followers and ultimately send them to hell. Six angels systematically inflict punishment while condemning them.

Although the *Jour du Jugement* does not portray Antichrist's death at the hands of Christ or Michael the archangel, it clearly indicates that he will be destroyed.

Additionally, one by one Antichrist's miracles are revealed to be nothing more than an elaborate hoax: the "healed" leper and blind man assume their afflictions, and Baucibuz (Beelzebub) speaks in the body of the man supposedly resurrected by Antichrist. Later in the drama those previously deceived repent and turn toward Christ and pray to the virgin they had once renounced. As in the beginning of the play, the devils meet in council and Baucibuz suggests that they call on the nations "De jayans et de Jupians¹⁸" for military support. The work concludes as God prepares for the Last Judgment.

Unlike the Latin Antichrist drama, the *Jour du Jugement* focuses on the supernatural characters by revealing Antichrist's devils on the one hand and Christianity's angelic supporters on the other. Because "the devils and angels play such important roles... the play lacks the sense of human conflict so effectively developed in the *Ludus de Antichristo*" (Emmerson 179). By not deviating from the tradition in this regard the *Jour du Jugement* develops a straightforward perspective concerning the action highlighting its eschatological and didactic tones.

The human conflict about which Emmerson speaks will however re-surface in the Baroque plays to be examined that treat Antichrist typology within 17th century biblical theater in Spain. While one of the works, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo*, does have

¹⁸ According to Emmerson, these probably stand for the nations of Gog and Magog.

as its main character the son of perdition as the title indicates and as such follows the literary tradition outlined in the 12th century *Ludus de Antichristo* and the 14th century *Jour du Jugement*, the first five plays presented in this study will feature protagonists that are quite human and as such are incapable of performing miracles as the Antichrist does in medieval and Golden Age dramas alike. Yes, these characters are no doubt influenced or even commissioned by Satan to carry out evil deeds against those who follow God, but they themselves do not possess supernatural powers. For example, it is evident in Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* that Satan or Luzbel interacts with Cain and provokes him to rebel and murder his brother, but Cain certainly does not, for instance, command the jawbone to miraculously appear and strike Abel! He has to exert the effort to carry out the fratricide. The notion exists, nonetheless, that Cain's origins are diabolical in nature. This topic will be treated specifically in our analysis of that play. In addition to Cain, the Antichrist figures of the remaining four plays are Absalom, Haman, Herod, and Judas. Each one is of course human and yet all of them exhibit characteristics associated with the Antichrist. While they lack the "superpower" element that he possesses, they effectively demonstrate on stage and page alike the battle between good and evil, with their falling on the side of evil costing them dearly. On this point, it will be shown that even their manner of death alludes to the Antichrist suffering a head wound. In a literary context, spectators and readers of these dramas are no doubt prepared for Antichrist's coming as they observe how the playwrights are able to portray the struggles and ultimate demise of his forerunners.

Before beginning our examination of the six biblical plays, it is important to provide an overview of the presence of the figure of the Devil and Antichrist in 17th century Spanish theater. While it is quite possible that *autores* and spectators of these dramas did not distinguish between the two members of the Satanic Trinity, Emerson demonstrates how a lack of discernment on the part of contemporary critics can lead to a misplaced identification of the figure in question:

It would be mistaken, for example, to detect Antichrist figures wherever a wicked character is portrayed. Furthermore, merely recognizing or identifying a character as Antichrist or Antichrist-like will seldom add to our understanding of a literary work unless we realize the complexity of the medieval tradition and distinguish between Antichrist, the devil, and other wicked individuals. It makes little sense to identify the Canon of Chaucer's *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* as "a false prophet, one who conducts black masses, and more exactly, the antichrist," and then refer to him as "the devil, or at least his most trusted assistant" (147).

Applying Emerson's point to the *comedias bíblicas*, one realizes that not all of the bad characters in Old Testament plays, for instance, qualify as Antichrist types. The question arises, therefore, what constitutes an Antichrist type in the specific dramatic contexts laid out in the plays? The primary attribute that they all must possess is a disdain and or hatred towards characters that are either connected to God's people or are part of God's people themselves. In *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* Cain is set at odds against his brother Abel, a type of Christ who brings forth the blood of a lamb as an offering unto Jehovah; in *Los cabellos de Absalón* the title character rebels against his father David, king of Israel and one of the more notable types of Christ in the Scriptures, by wanting the throne for himself while not caring about betraying the family's legacy; *La hermosa Ester* features Haman who seeks to destroy the Jews; in the third act of Tirso

de Molina's *La vida y muerte de Herodes* the title character attempts to eradicate any semblance of the Christ-child with the Slaughter of the Innocents; and finally Judas Iscariot, who in Damián Salucio del Poyo's *La vida y muerte de Judas* famously betrays Jesus for his own gain.

The first member of the Satanic Trinity, Satan, only appears in one of the plays that we will be examining. Going by the name of Luzbel, in Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* he appears initially in heaven contending with Michael the archangel and then on earth tempting Eve and planting seeds of pride and envy into the "seed of the serpent" Cain, the first Antichrist type in our study. While the ministries of Satan and Antichrist differ somewhat, mainly in the fact that the latter receives his power from the former, attitudes towards their representation on stage during 17th century Spain were basically the same.

In his study "Las comedias las carga el diablo: de la Sagrada Escritura a la escritura dramática en la escena barroca" Javier Rubiera explains that Baroque theater was an ideal ambiance for the figure of the Devil to show and express himself in all his grandeur, unleashing his dramatic potential in two ways. First, he possesses an ability that is essential to theatricality – that of being able to transform bodies and things. On this point Rubiera references an article written by Jindrich Honzl entitled "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theater" in which the Czech drama scholar treats the subject of the liberation of the theater, arguing that the stage is not confined to a specific structure on the set but rather is a matter of function, a place where the action of the play is depicted. From this liberation of the stage from a particular architectural construction, Honzl contends that

other aspects of the theater can be freed as well. For example, when he states that “we can free the concept of ‘actor’ from the restriction which claims that an actor is a human being who represents a dramatic character in a play” (qtd. in Taylor 90), he seems to suggest that other signs on stage can assume the role of actor and that actors are not limited to human beings. Ultimately, according to Honzl, theatrical signs are ambiguous, arbitrary, and unstable; for this reason Rubiera refers to it as “la movilidad del signo teatral” in his study (318).

The second ability the Devil possesses has to do with the deceit of the senses. The manipulation of sounds to trick characters into thinking they are hearing voices is a technique employed by Lope de Vega via his diabolic dramatic creation Lucifer or *Luzbel* in *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*. Dramatizing the initial verses of Genesis chapter three in which the subtle serpent convinces Eve to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Lope’s antagonist deceives her by essentially transferring his conscience into her psyche by means of imbedding an audible voice into Eve’s mind which only she can hear. Naturally the voice guides Eve to consume the forbidden fruit and persuade her husband to do the same. The cyclical nature of the *engaño/desengaño* dichotomy bears itself out when Adam and Eve come to a moment of truth when they realize they are naked and need a covering.

Religious dramas in which the Devil plays a significant role attempted to redirect the audience’s focus towards a divine order by having the works conclude on a more hopeful note. Nonetheless, plays of this sort as well as secular productions were harshly condemned by some of the most radically conservative sectors of the Catholic Church

that viewed the representations on stage as the epitome of the eradication of morals in society. Many attempts in the form of speeches and briefs were made to ban such plays on the grounds that the actors did not behave professionally, the wardrobes were indecent, and the scripts were laced with obscenities. One such treatise that was critical of Baroque drama that featured the Devil as a key figure is the *Diálogos de las comedias*, a collection of correspondence between two characters known as the Teólogo and the Regidor. Each employs rhetoric and quotations from early church fathers to condemn the plays as products of the Devil's workshop: "Los santos llaman a los teatros escuelas de vicios, universidad de maldades, peste de la república, hornos de Babilonia, oficinas de pecados, ferias de los demonios, y otros nombres semejantes, todo por la infinidad de pecados que allí se cometen" (qtd. in Rubiera 318). However, the Teólogo believes that if the plays dealt with serious subject matter, were well developed, and whose actions were portrayed by honorable actors, they would not have such a negative stigma associated with them. When asked the question regarding "de qué habían de ser tales comedias," the anonymous theologian responds with a panegyric to biblical topics:

Digo que de la Escritura Santa, del *Génesis*, *Éxodo*, *los Jueces*, *de los Reyes*, *Judith*, *Tobías*, *Esther*, *Daniel*, *Macabeos*, *Actos apostólicos*, y cosas semejantes [...] Aquí sí que hallarán raros metamorfosios y transformaciones, porque las de Ovidio y otras, de solo haber introído o soñado las de la Sagrada Escritura se fingieron. Aquí sí que hay aventuras y fortunados sucesos [...]. Aquí sí que hay altibajos de fortuna, en que de pastores o pastoras suben a reyes y reinas [...] Aquí sí que hay guerras y valentías [...] (Ibid., p. 319)

With the repetition of the phrase "aquí sí que..." the Teólogo seems to imply that within the Scriptures there is more than sufficient material to serve as inspiration for religious dramas, with all of the transformations of life that they depict. Representations offered by

Ovid and other Roman poets, he argues, pale in comparison to those found in the Bible. The Teólogo goes on to say that "...solo Dios tiene ideas en sí de donde copia todas las figuras, quedándose con los originales que son infinitos, que los hombres no criamos flores, sino solamente juntamos ramilletes de las criadas (Ibid., p. 319). In other words, all ideas that have ever been conceived of were first conceived of by God, and thus the image of God as the creator of the flower and humans as the gatherers of them in bouquets.

The Teólogo then turns his attention to Lope de Vega, about whom it had been said that he committed more heresies in his plays than Luther did in his writings (Ibid., p. 319). He asks about the playwright: "¿Dónde vuestro Lope o lobo carnicero de las almas, tan celebrado de los críticos, llegó a ingeniar o inventar amores como los de Jacob y Raquel, dónde enredos como los de Tamar, dónde aventuras y valentías como las de David? Lléguese a fingir gallardías como las de Judith y Esther y bravezas como las de Sansón [...]" (Ibid., p. 319). As Rubiera points out, by that time Lope had already written biblically-based dramas, like those about Esther and Tobias, but either these did not fit the Teólogo's criteria or he simply was not familiar with them.

Next Rubiera discusses how the books of the Bible contain very distinct situations that have the potential of being represented on stage. After selecting a biblical narrative/episode with which to work, the playwright needs to decide which elements from the story he will select for theatrical adaptation and amongst those, which will be acted out and which will be told to the audience. The poet knows that the spectators are familiar with the stories in the Scriptures being depicted and as such they have certain

expectations as to what is to appear on stage. As the critic expresses it, “Estamos hablando de teatro: quieren presenciar y ver famosas acciones que tantas veces han oído contar” (320). Thus are extremely important the manner in which the playwright manipulates scene sequences as well as the process of increasing or decreasing the number of characters in order to focus on a particular one. This is frequently the case in dramatic adaptations of biblical episodes, in which a satanic character (or Satan himself) is introduced that does not appear in the original source. For example, in the drama *El Arca de Noé* the Devil plays a crucial role in the plot development, while in the account in Genesis he is nonexistent. Another work like this, in which the Devil figures prominently in the action of the play but not in the scriptural account, is Vélez de Guevara’s *La corte del demonio*, based on the story of the prophet Jonah and the salvation of the city of Nineveh.

Rubiera reminds us that, aside from his incarnation as Satan in the book of Job, the Devil’s appearances in the Old Testament are scarce. In this respect it could be said that the analysis of Antichrist typology primarily in Old Testament plays fills this void. In the New Testament there is the temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4; Luke 4) that Jesus endures at the hands of the Devil, but above all is the imagery contained in the book of Revelation involving the incarnations of the dragon and beast in chapters twelve and thirteen respectively. I believe it is reasonable to suppose that most literary critics and biblical exegetes would concur on this point with Rubiera, who goes on to state that by relating these references (“poniéndolas en relación”) from John’s vision to passages in Old Testament books such as Numbers, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, commentators establish a

composite picture of, on the one hand, the battle in heaven that ensues as a result of Lucifer's rebellion, and on the other, the account in Genesis 3 of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Important for its influence in iconography and in Spanish theater, Rubiera reproduces in his article the text of Revelation 12:1-9:

Apareció en el cielo una señal grande, una mujer envuelta en el sol, con la luna debajo de sus pies, y sobre la cabeza una corona con doce estrellas, y estando encinta gritaba con los dolores de parto y las ansias de parir. Apareció en el cielo otra señal, y vi un gran dragón de color de fuego, que tenía siete cabezas y diez cuernos, y sobre las cabezas siete coronas. Con su cola arrastró la tercera parte de los astros del cielo y los arrojó a la tierra. [...] Hubo una batalla en el cielo: Miguel y sus ángeles peleaban con el dragón, y peleó el dragón y sus ángeles, y no pudieron triunfar ni fue hallado su lugar en el cielo. Fue arrojado el dragón grande, la antigua serpiente, llamada Diablo y Satanás, que extravía a toda la redondez de la tierra, y fue precipitado en la tierra, y sus ángeles fueron con él precipitados. [...].

To the extent that the Lucifer of Isaiah 14:12, the anointed cherub of Ezekiel 28:14, and the great red dragon of the passage above are all manifestations of the same entity – Satan – is clear, but beyond this, what Rubiera contributes appears to reflect a limited reading of the text in question. After quoting the verses from Revelation, he states: “Estos fragmentos en los que el profeta de Pathmos cuenta su visión de una poderosa mujer, llamada a ser madre, con un dragón a sus pies se leerán como un cumplimiento de lo que Dios habría anunciado a la Serpiente tras la primera culpa del Hombre” (321). Instead of including the detail about the dragon being under the woman's feet as part of what could possibly constitute a Catholic Reading of the passage, Rubiera inserts the phrase “con un dragón a sus pies” before the “se leerán” of his statement to seemingly convey that the dragon is in fact under the woman's feet, yet the text does not state that; it states that the moon is under her feet. Interestingly, the critic provides in a footnote the portion of

Michael's speech from Lope's drama *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* in which the archangel declares that the woman "quiebra la soberbia frente / del dragon precipitado" (qtd. in Rubiera 321). In this instance, at least, it appears that Rubiera's reading of the biblical text – the dragon being under the woman's feet – is substantiated with material from a work of literature.

Summarizing his understanding of the passage of Revelation 12 and its relationship to the Old Testament, Rubiera writes: "De este modo mediante una identificación de aquella mujer majestuosa con la Virgen María y del dragón pisoteado con la serpiente diabólica, se vincularían Antiguo y Nuevo Testamento..." (321). One familiar with the prominence of the figure of Mary in Roman Catholicism is likely not surprised to encounter representations of or allusions to the woman of Revelation 12 as being directly linked to her, which is precisely the case in Lope's play where Michael foretells of Christ's birth, referring to the woman as "aquella que entre sus brazos / un bello infante le ofrece / a Dios" (qtd. in Rubiera 321). The fact that Lope identifies the woman as Mary does not in any way diminish the literary value of his work, nor that of the other two Genesis-based plays that Rubiera examines in his piece, *La creación del mundo* by Vélez de Guevara and *Los Triunfos de San Miguel* by Cubillo de Aragón.

While the identification of Mary as the woman of Revelation chapter twelve may not be as known or important to Antichrist tradition of the Middle and Golden Ages as the belief that Elias and Enoch will appear as the two witnesses of the preceding chapter, it nonetheless merits some attention in the context of looking at the scriptural features that contribute to the development of the *comedias bíblicas*. From a strictly textual

perspective, I believe that a more complete exegesis of the passage reveals that the woman is Israel. One only has to be reminded of Joseph's dream: "Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me" (Gen. 37:9). In the context, Joseph is dreaming and he tells his father Jacob ("Israel") about the dreams. It is important to notice that the only difference between Rev. 12:1 and Gen. 37:9 with respect to the stars is their number – twelve stars in the former reference and eleven in the latter. Next the text states "And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (Gen. 37:10).

In the passage (in Gen. 37:9-10), the reader is told that "the sun" represents Israel, the father; "the moon" stands for Rachel, the mother of Joseph; "the eleven stars" refer to Joseph's brothers; and Joseph is the twelfth star. In Revelation 12:1 a woman is clothed with the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars. Taking the position then that the Scriptures interpret themselves, I conclude that the woman is Israel. Furthermore, we have the minor prophet's record of God speaking to Israel: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hosea 2:14-15). Israel will be called out into the literal wilderness where she wandered in the book of Numbers. This wilderness is mentioned three times in Revelation 12. Thus, Israel is prophesied to go back into the wilderness as a "woman."

When she goes she is told to go as she came out of Egypt. When she came out of Egypt in the Old Testament, she exited on two wings of an eagle. When this is repeated in Revelation 12, the woman will go out on two wings of an eagle.

In addition to biblical sources, Rubiera references the writings of Augustine of Hippo as material essential to the Christian understanding of evil as personified by the Devil. In a particular passage from *La ciudad de Dios*, for example, the literary critic notes the ancient theologian's use of rhetoric when discussing how the good vs. evil opposition embellishes a poem. "De igual modo – dice – que estos contrarios opuestos entre sí dan su belleza al discurso, así una especie de elocuencia no de palabras sino de cosas hace resaltar la belleza del universo por la oposición de los contrarios"¹⁹ (qtd. in Rubiera 322). Here then we are presented with an aesthetic principle that affirms the need for evil as a contrastive element in order that the good in the cosmos shine that much more.

¹⁹ "For even as the juxtaposition of contraries lends beauty and point to language, so the opposition of contrasts adds brilliancy to the symmetry of the world by an eloquence of things." This translation of Augustine's passage is taken from the full text of *St. Augustine's treatise on the city of God, abridged by F. R. Montgomery Hitchcock*, available on Internet Archive – archive.org.

La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre

It seems appropriate to begin our analysis of the biblical plays with a work that is based on the first four chapters of the book of beginnings, Genesis. According to Julio Duarte in his critical edition, which will be cited in this first segment of our study, Lope de Vega wrote *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* sometime after 1618 and before 1624. In addition to the scriptural account it is believed that Lope gleaned inspiration from the *Victoria Christi* by Bartolomé Paláu as well as the *Auto de Caín y Abel* composed by humanist theologian Jaime Ferraz. Act 1 describes Lucifer's fall from Heaven, the creation of the world, and Adam and Eve's [original] sin; act 2 concentrates on Cain's fratricide; and the third act details Cain's death at the hands of Lamech. While the play's three acts treat distinct actions from the scriptural account there is a "centro de expresión poética – una unidad moral, y la unidad formal de desarrollarse dichas tres jornadas en el seno de la familia de Caín" (81)²⁰. In other words, the common thread that binds the action developed in each of the *jornadas* is Cain and his family, and given that Cain is the first type of Antichrist in the Bible in my opinion, it is especially suitable to start our study with *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* in which the archetypal first murderer figures prominently. Supporting the assertion that Cain is identified as a forerunner of the son of perdition José Guadalajara Medina writes in *Las profecías del Anticristo en la Edad Media*: "A lo largo del Antiguo Testamento desfilan una serie de personajes que, por sus características intrínsecas, reúnen las condiciones

²⁰ This quote is taken from the *nota preliminar* of the edition of the play found in Vega Carpio, Lope Félix de. *Obras Escogidas. Tomo III, Teatro*. Madrid: Aguilar, 1962.

necesarias para convertirse en modelos arcaicos del Anticristo... Tal sucede con figuras... como Caín, Lamec, Nimrod, Abimelec, Saúl, Absalón, Goliat, etc.” (38). In his book *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* Richard Kenneth Emmerson notes that Gregory the Great identifies Cain as one of three members of Antichrist’s false church, with Judas and Simon Magus being the other two (20).

Before presenting himself as the tempter to Adam and Eve in the garden, Satan appears in act 1 of Lope’s play as *Luzbel* (Lucifer), which reminds the reader of Isaiah 14:11-15, the only passage in the entire Bible where this name is used to refer to him. In this passage Lucifer’s pride leads to envy to be like the Most High God and consequently he is cast out of the third heaven. Moreover, examining the drama’s opening stage direction will provide more details into Satan’s character. The poet informs: “Suena música dentro y descúbrese un trono muy bien aderezado. Al lado derecho, SAN MIGUEL, con espada y escudo, y al lado siniestro, LUZBEL, ambos con tunicelas.” For readers familiar with Ezekiel 28, in part a companion passage to Isaiah 14, the description here in the *comedia* of music playing around a highly decorated and covered throne with Lucifer present evokes items from the biblical text. It is to be noted first that in this passage in Ezekiel 28 God is addressing Satan through the king of Tyrus (v.12) in much the same manner Jesus addressed him through Simon Peter in the New Testament.²¹ However, in verse 13 the addressee is Satan himself, and the prophet writes “the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou

²¹ Matthew 16:23 “But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

wast created.” Before his fall Satan or Lucifer produced music from instruments of percussion (tabrets) and wind (pipes) on the morning of creation and hence the description of music playing at the start of Lope’s drama. By comparing scripture with scripture one can surmise the time element involved with this heavenly choir and orchestra, for in Job 38:4-7 Elihu records God’s questions to Job: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” It is interesting to note that in the above cited passage of Isaiah 14 Lucifer is called the “son of the morning” (v.12) and was playing another instrument during the creation anthem – “...and the noise of thy viols:” (v.11). The topic of music will resurface in the play’s third act with the character of Jubal.

The *trono muy bien aderezado* in the stage direction calls to mind Ezekiel 28:14, where Satan is told “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth;” It seems likely that he was responsible for covering the throne of God before being deposed and given the scriptural material put forth in connection with the music mentioned at the outset of the play, it appears this is what is being suggested by the playwright; perhaps the *tunicela* or tunic worn by Luzbel, adorned with precious stones (cf. Ezekiel 28:13) thus making the throne “muy bien aderezado” (very well adorned or dressed), aided him in this heavenly duty. Furthermore, just as Christ is the “anointed one” of the New Testament, his antithesis is the “anointed cherub²²” who seeks to imitate and even surpass him. Such

²² While there is no indication in Lope’s drama that Luzbel ever adopts the form of a cherub, it is worth providing a definition from Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*: “The cherubs, in Ezekiel’s vision, had each four heads or faces, the hands of a man and wings. The four faces were, the face of a bull, that of a man, that of a lion, and that of an eagle. They had the likeness of a man.”

pride is exhibited by Luzbel in his opening lines of *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*:

Tan bello en mi ser me vi,
que porque admirar se pueda,
no sé si a Dios le conceda
primero lugar que a mí.
Pues cuando de su grandeza
puso en mí tanto caudal,
pienso que hizo en mí otro igual:
poder, virtud y belleza. (I, 82)

Lucifer thinks that just because God made him with so much fortune (caudal) this entitles him to be considered an equal with God and thus admire himself whenever he gets the chance. Michael the Archangel replies by telling Lucifer that it is foolish for the creature to compare itself with the Creator:

Confiesa, loco, tu error,
pues hay (¡vana competencia!)
de ti a Él la diferencia
que de criatura a Criador. (I, 82)

However, Lucifer insists that he is equal to his creator: “Igual le soy en poder, / igual en naturaleza, /... /” (I, 82). As a result of this insolence and in the vein of the prophet Isaiah who wrote “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (14:12), he is banished from heaven as indicated by the poet’s notation “(*Cae Luzbel*)” to which he

defiantly responds “Caí, pero no vencido” (I, 83). This is certainly evident given what is about to take place in the garden with Adam and Eve.

Explaining the context of the material up to this early point in the play, material not directly found in the primary source (Genesis chapters 1-4), Duarte writes:

Lope parte de una escena previa a la creación del mundo. Es la que escenifica la caída de los ángeles rebeldes. Se descubre un trono, supuestamente el de Dios, y aparecen San Miguel y Luzbel. Surge un vehemente diálogo entre las dos figuras angélicas. San Miguel le reprocha a Luzbel sus atrevidos pensamientos de creerse igual a Dios en poder, virtud y belleza. Empero, Luzbel no rectifica; al contrario, persevera en su arrogante actitud. Pierde el favor divino y cae del cielo. Es la primera “caída” en la acción teatral y el origen del mal en el propio reino celestial... los padres de la Iglesia utilizaron varios pasajes bíblicos que bosquejan ese momento anterior a la creación del mundo y del hombre. En el Apocalipsis se lee... (42-43)

Duarte concisely summarizes the contentious initial exchange between Lucifer and Michael, rightly pointing out that the fall of the angels occurs before the creation of the world and man. However, with respect to the early church fathers selecting passages from Revelation 12 (the complete citations are included in Duarte’s comments) to explain events in heaven prior to the creation narrative, perhaps another lesson can be learned from Paul’s admonition to “rightly divide the word of truth” (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15).

Although Genesis appears first in the Bible clearly there are passages that chronologically take place before the creation of the earth; namely, Job 38, Ezekiel 28, and Isaiah 14, which have already been examined to give the reader an idea of Satan’s position and characteristics prior to his fall and thus to provide a context for the play’s opening text. Chronology is also crucial when commenting on the book of Revelation. From a Futurist perspective (the position taken in this study) only the first three chapters of the final book

of the Bible refer to the current church dispensation, with the remaining chapters applying to a period still future. Therefore, it would not make sense to use a Tribulation era passage such as Revelation 12 to refer to happenings prior to Genesis 1:1, even if the same figures are involved – Michael and Satan/Lucifer. It should be noted that Michael the Archangel does not appear in the passages in Job, Ezekiel, or Isaiah, and that his accompaniment with Lucifer before the latter’s banishment in Lope’s drama is likely the influence of Catholic exegetes at the time of the play who by and large adopted the preterist view of Revelation. Moreover, that the dragon (Satan) and his angels were not cast out of heaven at the time of the former’s rebellion (which antedates the present earth), and confined to some “prison,” is clear, for he was at liberty to visit the Garden of Eden and tempt Adam and Eve, and he had access to God in heaven in the days of Job, and he was free to visit the earth in Christ’s day and tempt him in the wilderness, and later to sift Peter. In the end, “Lope, al presentarnos la versión de la caída de los ángeles, combina las noticias esparcidas por la Biblia y las interpreta a la luz de las enseñanzas de los santos padres” (Duarte 44).

Returning now to the play, when the archangel Michael exits the stage Luzbel begins to reason within himself in a lengthy speech. He begins by asking

¿Qué importa que del cielo me haya echado
injustamente Dios? ¿Qué importa agora
si con la ciencia infusa me ha dejado?
¿No es perpetuo mi ser? ¿Pues cómo ignora
que igual tengo que ser a su grandeza,

por la que en mi infinita se atesora?
¿Puede acabarse en mi naturaleza?
Angélica materia me asegura,
que eterna viva mi infernal belleza.
¿Qué importa que me arroje de su altura
si mi soberbia sube hasta su asiento,
y aun el espacio imaginario apura?
Mas, ¡ay de mí!, que ya mi agravio siento,
que a lanzadas de envidia me maltrata
fiero penar y desigual tormento. (I, 83)

Displaying what could be classified as a cavalier attitude marked by the repetitive and rhetorical *¿Qué importa?* questions, Luzbel expresses that it does not really matter what God has done to him because he sees his existence as eternal, in the form of *angélica materia*. From a scriptural perspective this would suggest that Satan *appears* as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) imitating “the light of the world” of John 9:5, but that in his original position was a cherub, and cherubim are not angels. Nonetheless, at this point in the play the reader only knows that Luzbel appears “dressed as the devil” with a coat of mail and a long undergarment (con cota y faldones y tocado de diablo).

Attributing the “lanzadas de envidia” that he feels to “fiero penar y desigual tormento,” Luzbel vows revenge and sees his immediate adversary as man, who right now in the drama is in the process of being created:

Del polvo infame, del infame lodo

del campo damasceno, está formando
al hombre vil, para enfrentarme en todo.
Ya su fábrica heroica está acabando,
ya el alma racional le está infundiendo:
¡Tal honra en tal bajeza! ¡Estoy rabiando! (I, 83)

The adjectives *vil* and *infame* together with the exclamations in the last verse emphasize Luzbel's disdain for man, who in his mind is not worthy of being created with reason. The antagonist takes his disdain a step further by discussing the meaning of the first man's name (Adam), contrasting the obedience owed him by the animals with the fact that he was created from mud:

Que humildes le obedezcan y leales
dice Dios, a pesar de quien derrama
en barro quebradizo honras iguales.
Ya le da nombre Dios, Adán se llama;
del nombre mismo su bajeza arguyo;
como quien tierra es pretende fama. (I, 83)

Essentially what Luzbel is saying is that he bases his low regard of Adam on the fact that his name is associated with mud; hence his inferiority or *bajeza*. This sentiment is echoed by Julio Duarte who writes: "El enojo y la envidia de Luzbel están basados, además, en el hecho de que se considera superior al hombre. Adán es formado por Dios del polvo y lodo 'infames', mientras que él, Luzbel, es una criatura celestial y eterna" (86-87). This etymological observation can be corroborated in Hebrew and English lexicons that show

that the noun “Adam” is the masculine form of the word *adamah*, which means “ground” or “earth.”

The next scene opens “donde está hecho un jardín o paraíso, con muchas flores y fuentes, pájaros y animales, y al lado derecho estará Adán, y al siniestro, Eva, ambos admirados mirándose el uno al otro.” Marvelling over Eve’s creation Adam says to her “que sois carnes de mis carnes” and “si no un cuerpo con dos almas, / un alma, sí, con dos cuerpos,” lines that match Genesis 2:23-24 respectively. Recognizing that she was created from one of his ribs, Eve replies “que sois mi esposo y mi dueño, / que fuisteis material mía”. At this point the Adam of the drama assumes some key roles not found in the biblical account. Analogous to what I believe to be the divine and human authors of Genesis, Lope de Vega is of course the creator of *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* and he uses his character Adam as the spoken (as opposed to written) vehicle through which the six-day creation narrative as well as the stern warning to avoid eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are communicated to the reader/spectator. Adam seems to embrace this role as God’s spokesman as he tells Eve “oíd: que deciros quiero / nuestros principios humildes, / de Dios los altos secretos” (I, 84). He then proceeds to describe for his wife the deeds of the Creator day by day; it is interesting to note the manner in which he conveys the activities of the last “work day”:

En el sexto día, esposa,
viernes, que repare en esto,
crió fieras y animales,
desde el león al cordero. (I, 84)

In Genesis 1:25 the Bible only states that God made “cattle,” “creeping things,” and “beasts,” but via Adán the playwright gives the significant examples of *fieras* and *animales* as being a lion and a lamb. These are significant for two reasons. First, throughout the Scriptures Christ is likened to a lion (cf. Rev. 5:5 – “the Lion of the tribe of Juda”) and of course to a lamb (cf. John 1:29 – “Behold the Lamb of God”). However, Satan is also likened to a lion (cf. 1 Peter 5:8 – “as a roaring lion”) and by process of elimination he would have to be the one referred to here, adopting of course a typological posture, for a lamb is never used to symbolize Satan or anything evil, and the fact that the *león* is mentioned first in the pair evokes the curious detail that in the Bible at least negative types precede positive ones in the Old Testament. Observe for example: The iron spear, Cain, before the good shepherd, Abel; The hairy, “red” Esau before the “Prince in Israel,” Jacob; The bond man of the earth, Ishmael, before the “chosen seed,” Isaac; Reuben, the unstable, before Judah, the “lion of the tribe.” Regarding the mention of *viernes* as being the sixth day of creation Robert N. Shervill attributes the insertion to a Jewish tone that prevails in the work: “Una última concesión de Lope en ese sentido, agrega el crítico, es su cuidado por dejar establecido que el sexto día de la creación fue viernes, haciendo así caer el *Sabbath* en sábado” (Duarte 61-62). Perhaps it is not so much a question of a Jewish tone as it is a novelty to have the character utter a specific day of the week given that the biblical account only uses ordinal numbers before the word “day”; e.g., “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made...” (Genesis 2:2).

Returning to Adam's description of creation to Eve, he speaks of his creation in a curious and rhythmic fashion – “crió al hombre, en cuyo nombre / se incluyen entrambos sexos” (I, 84), reminding the reader/spectator that the word *hombre*, like its English equivalent, can refer to *Homo sapiens* in general and thus include women. He then seems to compare man's tri-part nature of body, soul, and spirit with a spirit that in turn is compared to the Trinity:

se parece a Dios en esto:
que siendo Dios trino y uno,
nuestro espíritu asimismo
es uno en esencia, y trino
en tres potencias su imperio. (I, 84-85)

This theological conception of one God manifested in three persons can be seen in other religious dramas written by Lope²³. The playwright's frequent allusions to the doctrine of the Trinity possibly serve a didactic function as well – to explain to the spectators in a simple and interesting way this mystery of the Church because it was believed that the majority of people did not possess sufficient theological knowledge to correctly comprehend it. Adam goes on to say that God

Hízole a su semejanza,
.....
Hízole dueño del mundo,

²³ For example, in the auto sacramental *La siega*, the allegorical character Pride (*la Soberbia*) begins a lengthy discourse with the triune God in mind: “Estaba Dios en sí mismo, / un Dios, aunque tres personas,”

Hízole capaz del cielo,

Hízole inmortal por gracia... (I, 241-51)

With the anaphoric repetition of *Hízole* Lope enumerates in parallel verses the faculties granted to the first man by God. Adam then passes on the stern warning

que aquel árbol no toquéis;

.....

El que probare su fruta,

inobediente del hecho,

está condenado a muerte,

su gracia eterna perdiendo. (I, 85)

As in the play's opening scenes, where Lope presents the origin of evil in the celestial kingdom with Luzbel's rebellion, here the playwright begins to develop the theme of disobedience in the earthly realm with Adam conveying to Eve God's express prohibition. Considering the anguish (*pena*) that would visit them if Eve were to disobey these divine precepts Adam adds "que en considerarla tiemblo" (I, 85). Offended by her husband's presumptuous attitude, Eve replies

Creed que aunque soy mujer,

las manos de Dios me hicieron

como a vos, y de materia

ilustrada en vos primero.

Él del lodo os hizo a vos,

a mí de vos; con que pruebo

que ni vos seréis más firme
ni yo seré firme menos:
bien podré ver y tocar
el árbol. (I, 297-306)

Her syllogistic reasoning is that since Adam was made from mud and in turn she was made from him that is proof enough that neither one is stronger than the other; therefore she is perfectly capable of looking at and touching the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The choice of the word *firme* to describe Adam and Eve's nature is peculiar given the wet, sticky, soft earth (*el lodo*) from which the man was formed. It is not clear if there is any symbolic significance behind the use of the terms, yet one could argue that an apparent lack of character or *firmeza* (because mud is not firm), attributed to a failure to comply with God's precepts leads to a curiosity against which Adam advises but Eve nevertheless embraces:

ADÁN. Quien la ocasión huye, es cuerdo;
 que nunca curiosidades
 fueron de ningún provecho.

EVA. Hasta ahora, ¿en qué lo has visto?
 deso nos falta el ejemplo;
 que ni curiosos ha habido,
 ni ocasionado sucesos. (I, 312-18)

After Adam exits the stage, Eve carries on a soliloquy in which it is indicated by the playwright that she speaks a total of five times; after each time a voice designated (*dentro*) responds to Eve's questions, guiding her to take of the fruit. For example:

EVA. ¿Qué puedo perder en ver
La fruta vedada?

(*Dentro.*) Nada.

EVA. Pues si yo no pierdo nada,
¿qué haré en viéndola?

(*Dentro.*) Comer. (I, 327-30)

Commenting on this occurrence in the work Duarte writes: “No está muy clara la intervención personal de Luzbel en la tentación de Eva. Es probable que la voz dentro que responde al soliloquio de la primera mujer sea la del ángel rebelde o que represente sólo la proyección o signo exterior de algo dentro de la propia naturaleza de Eva” (87). It is not clear from where the voice emanates; it could be the voice of Satan but it could also represent Eve's inclination. What is clear is the distinction in the treatment of Eve's temptation between Lope's *comedia* and the biblical account. In the latter it is the serpent who, in direct dialogue with Eve, entices her to eat the forbidden fruit (cf. Gen. 3:1-5). However, to the playwright “...le parece mejor no presentar en escena un actor disfrazado de serpiente sino utilizar a uno de los ángeles caídos, Luzbel, para que haga el papel y cumpla la misión dramática de aquella” (Duarte 44). The critic does not explain why it seemed better for Lope to have Satan's character appear as the fallen Lucifer as

opposed to an actor dressed up as the serpent, but one could surmise that the reason had to do with the latter's mere appearance on stage as being unconvincing to the audience. In fact, throughout the rest of the play there is no indication that Luzbel does not present himself *con cota y faldones y tocado de diablo*. This seems to suggest that Satan possesses the power to become visible in the likeness of human form, fashioning himself as an angel of light under the guise of the Edenic serpent. However, instead of confronting Eva directly with the Devil himself, the playwright utilizes an unknown voice from her soliloquy that appeals to her desires. Thus, since Eve is already predisposed to allowing herself to be tempted, the "voice" easily succeeds in her following her inclination to eat the fruit: "De la fruta he comido" (I, 369).

Appealing to Eve's desire for knowledge Luzbel appears in the scene and urges her to convince Adam to eat of the fruit as well:

Pues para que consigas
la deseada ciencia de las gentes,
.....
conviene que tu esposo
coma de aqueste fruto milagroso. (I, 381-86)

Luzbel exits and Adam appears for the seventh and final scene of the first act. "Es la escena de más importancia de la jornada y de toda la pieza. En ella ocurre el hecho que constituye la esencia de la representación: la desobediencia del primer hombre y, por lo tanto, el origen del pecado en el mundo" (Duarte 71). The fundamental theme of the play, the origin of sin in the world, is treated in this pivotal scene, thus a thorough exposition

of its activities is necessary. We start by turning to the woman. Succumbing perhaps to the demands of her voice (*dentro*) and no doubt to Luzbel himself after she had already eaten of the fruit, Eve tells Adam:

Comed, esposo amado:
gozaréis de la fruta más sabrosa
que el Paraíso ha dado;
y es infalible cosa
que no sin causa Dios nos la ha negado,
porque ella te alcanza
igual ciencia, igual bien y semejanza. (I, 411-17)

For the purpose of dramatic effect, by using a character's dialogue as opposed to a written narrative, Lope deviates a bit again from the biblical account, which only states in Genesis 3:6 that Eve "...gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." By having Eve tell Adam to eat of the fruit for the benefit of obtaining knowledge Lope makes his female character more convincing as being responsible for leading her husband to disobedience. Also there is the fact that Eve glorifies this knowledge or *ciencia*, referring to it as *infalible cosa*. She even admits "que no sin causa Dios nos la ha negado", that is to say, that God did not deny knowledge to Adam and Eve without a reason; one supposes he already knew what would happen: man would begin to place knowledge above God as a result of having committed *el pecado original* which essentially is dramatized in Lope's play. As Duarte explains, "El asunto principal de *La creación del mundo* no es otro, a nuestro juicio, que la presentación dramática de esta doctrina católica

de la inocencia el casto ser perdimos. (I, 478-83)

Once again the term *ciencia* is invoked, which in the present context of the play refers to the “knowledge” spoken of in Genesis 2:17. In the Latin Vulgate this verse reads: *de lingo autem scientiae boni et mali ne comedas*. It is believed that the Bible Lope consulted while writing *La creación del mundo* was precisely Jerome’s Latin Vulgate (Duarte 38). It is also worthy to note that in such Spanish Bibles as those produced by Casiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera of 1569 and 1602 respectively, the word *ciencia* (and not *conocimiento*) is used in the verse. The sense of the term in the drama, the recently acquired *ciencia*, produces a knowledge not only that they had sinned, but also of their inherent sinful condition as human beings. It could be argued that, realizing their appearance in the *desnudo traje*, they discern something is radically wrong with their “clothing.” All the animals around them grew their own clothes, but they had no covering because they were naked!

While in the Bible I believe one can perceive the personal intervention of God throughout the first four chapters of Genesis, in his drama Lope de Vega makes use of the elements of nature to show Adam just how displeased the Creator is with his disobedience. First, Adam asks himself a series of questions that allude to his imminent banishment from the garden:

¿Qué sombra habrá que me ampare?

¿Qué ramo habrá que me quiera?

¿Qué tierra que me permita?

¿Qué gruta que me consienta? (I, 498-501)

Here the poet combines the repetitive use of the interrogative *Qué* with a series of nouns (sombra, ramo, tierra, and gruta) and verb forms in the present subjunctive mood (ampare, quiera, permita, and consienta) in order to compose these four symmetrical and harmonious verses in which Adam puts into words nature's perturbed reaction to his disobedience.

Another instance in which the void of direct interaction between God and Adam is filled in the play occurs within the context of Genesis 3:17-19²⁵. In this passage God clearly interacts with Adam, explaining to him that as a result of his disobedience the entire creation will suffer. In the drama the poet replaces the famous cursing of the ground with a discourse by Adam (a continuation of the above cited four verses) that definitely seems to explain how "...the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:22).

Los humildes animales,
que ya domésticos eran,
con rostro airado me miran,
con voz me amenazan fiera.

La tierra, que daba flores
donde yo los pies pusiera,
espinas me da, y abrojos,
que crueles me penetran.

²⁵ "And unto Adam he said...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread..."

Las aves, que en dulces cantos
tenían voces compuestas,
ya con nocturnos gemidos
me amenazan y amedrentan.
Las fuentes y los arroyos,
que vivos cristales eran,
si risueños me alegraban,
ya murmurando me alteran. (I, 502-17)

From the land and the sea to the plant and animal kingdoms, Adam demonstrates that nature does not show any forgiveness towards him although it was not always the case as evidenced by the contrasting verb tenses after each item of nature is mentioned. In each case the imperfect is used first to describe how life was before man's fall, followed by the present to indicate the current condition in which the natural world finds itself. Thus it should come as no surprise to the reader to encounter pleasant associations with the imperfect verbs and unpleasant ones with the present tenses conjugations. For example, speaking about the temperament of the animals before defying God, Adam states that they were tame or domesticated (*que ya domésticos eran*), but after the consumption of the forbidden fruit they look upon Adam with wrath (*con rostro airado me miran*), as wild beasts that undoubtedly pose a serious threat to him (*con voz me amenazan fiera*). Another perspective regarding the structure of the passage is offered by Duarte: "Una serie de sustantivos, al comienzo de versos de sentido paralelo, contribuye grandemente a la belleza lírica del pasaje en que Adán, abrumado por la conciencia de su grave culpa,

piensa que la primera desobediencia ha roto la armonía paradisíaca entre el hombre y la naturaleza” (117).

Commenting on the burden that is now placed on man to provide sustenance Lope’s Adam affirms:

Los árboles y las plantas
sabroso fruto me niegan;
con hambre y con sed me aflige
mi propia naturaleza. (I, 522-25)

There is now a need for Adam to sustain himself which in turn implies the need to work. The affliction expressed here – *me aflige mi propia naturaleza* – seems to coincide with the “sorrow” of Genesis 3:17, of having to dig *into* the ground for one’s “meat” or food. This of course suggests a change in dietary habits, presuming that before the fall Adam and Eve ate fruits and vegetables *above* the ground. This is based on Genesis 1:29²⁶, particularly the phrase “which is upon the face of all the earth”, and on previous verses in the play. Earlier in act 1 of *La creación del mundo* Adam declares:

y este, firmísimo suelo,
llenó de plantas la tierra,
que al momento produjeron,
unas, provechosos frutos
y otras, fragantes alientos. (I, 204-208)

²⁶ “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be meat.”

Because the plants were able to produce *provechosos frutos* there was no need to dig into the ground, described here as *firmísimo* or extremely firm or hard. The theme of having to work for meat continues into the beginning of the second act of the drama. Adam speaks of “nuestro ordinario sudor, / exhalado de las venas, / es el pan del pecador” (II, 554-556). Describing sweat as the sinner’s nourishment evokes the already cited “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (cf. Gen. 3:19), reminding himself, Eve, and of course the reader of this inconvenient truth.

Before examining another inconvenient truth which is pivotal to the present thesis that Cain is an Antichrist figure, there is a significant detail found at the opening of the *jornada segunda* that is worth mentioning. We read “*Salen ADÁN y EVA vestidos de pieles*”; taking note of the phrase “*vestidos de pieles*” the reader is able to cross-reference it with Genesis 3:21 – “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” From the standpoint of fallen man one could argue that this is the most important verse in Genesis to this point because it shows that God did something to remedy man’s condition – clothing him with coats of skin. In Lope’s drama Adam and Eve’s “dress habits” change from their *desnudo traje* (I, 480) to their *vestidos de pieles*. Regarding these skins, if one surmises that they are in fact lamb skins (cf. Gen. 4:4, 22:8, and Exodus 12) and that therefore the first death came by way of the blood of a lamb, then the typology is quite obvious and thus Edward Glaser’s observation that Lope’s drama “bears on the comprehensiveness of the redemptive work of Christ and not on the universal prevalence of sin and death” (cited in Duarte 68) merits some consideration. With a detail like this, however, concerning the *pieles* or skins, a bit of

reading between the lines (knowing which scriptures to consult) is required in order to discern the connection between the *pieles* and the blood atonement of Christ. To extend the example, one would have to be familiar with the description of Christ as a lamb without spot or blemish (cf. 1 Peter 1:19) in order to fully appreciate the significance of Abel's sacrifice at the end of scene 2 of act 2:

Corderos blancos daré,
porque conozca el Señor,
en su inocencia, mi amor,
y en su blancura mi fe. (II, 816-19)

Therefore, to imply that the redemptive work of Christ is the predominant theme of *La creación del mundo* is not quite accurate. The reader must remember that God dressed Adam and Eve *after* he killed the substitute. For a hassock of dead fig leaves he clothed them with the skin of a living creature, and it was not the wool which could have been fleeced without death but rather the skin of an animal that had to die. One can recall that in act 1 the topic of sin was treated directly through dialogue between San Miguel, Luzbel, Adán, and Eva; especially these last two, who tempted and were tempted, recognized they had sinned through their nakedness, and now realize at the beginning of act 2 that they have passed on their sin to their offspring. Clearly then Lope's drama does in fact emphasize the prevalence of sin and death.

Exiled in Hebron Adam makes mention of the hereditary transmission of original sin in the opening scene of the *jornada segunda* when he says "y dos hijos que tenemos / esclavos son del pecado, / aunque en distintos extremos" (II, 561-63). As we will shortly

see, the brothers' lives could not be any more distinct, representing two extremes in Christian typology: Abel as a type of Christ and Cain as a type of Antichrist. After the archangel Michael informs them that they are being denied re-entry into Paradise – “Para que no entréis los dos, / tiene reservado Dios / un querubín y una espada” (II, 610-12) – Adam says of his first two sons:

Abel, humilde, apacible,
temeroso y agradable;
Caín, soberbio, intratable,
precipitado y terrible
en su valor, mal contento,
de condición inhumana; (II, 637-42)

One can see how the playwright makes use of modifiers for artistic purposes. Here Lope heightens the expressiveness of these verses by using several adjectives in series. The contrasting nature of the two brothers is described by their father in two series of antithetical adjectives. Unlike the biblical account, in *La creación del mundo* the conception and/or birth of Cain and Abel is not given although in the second scene the latter says to his older brother “que más pequeño nací” (v. 723), which seems to corroborate the information in Genesis 4:1-2 that Cain was born first unless Abel was merely referring to his physical stature at the time of his birth. However, in the play the reader learns about the brothers' personalities (albeit via Adam) almost immediately in the initial scene of act 2 whereas in Moses's text their attitudes only begin to surface after their vocations are given and after the acceptance and rejection of their respective

sacrifices by God. An interesting attribute into Cain's character according to Adam is that he is "de condición inhumana". In his survey of the characters involved with *La creación del mundo* Julio Duarte points out that the brief scriptural references to Cain were amplified and transformed by patristic tradition to include the notion that Satan and not Adam was Cain's father. Duarte adds that this interpretation could coincide with 1 Juan 3:12 (96) because the latter states that Cain "...was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." The wicked one is a reference to Satan and the position taken here is that somehow he was involved in Cain's conception instead of Adam. This is based on the wording of the cited verse in John's epistle and on the idea that every characteristic of Cain's nature matches the end-time "man of sin" or "the beast". Note the following similarities: Cain and the Antichrist are both "seeds" of the serpent (1 John 3:12; 2 Thessalonians 2); Cain and the Antichrist both have marks by which they are identified (Gen. 4:15; Rev. 13:13-18); Cain and the Antichrist are both murderers and liars (John 8:44); Cain and the Antichrist both have a curse in connection with them (Psalm 119:21).

The opening stage direction to scene 2 reads: "Sale Caín por una puerta, y Abel por otra,...", emphasizing once again the stark contrast between the two brothers, with the playwright having Cain enter through one door and Abel through another as opposed to having them both enter through the same one. Continuing his war against man, Luzbel makes his presence known very early on in this scene:

Ya en Caín voy escupiendo
de mi veneno infernal,

y ya con rabia mortal

de envidia se está muriendo. (II, 654-57)

Not satisfied with the fall of Adam and Eve, he transfers his envy, pride, and ambitions to Cain of whom he says “buen discípulo he sacado / de soberbias y ambiciones” (II, 708-09). In fact, Luzbel’s interventions in the second act are less frequent and briefer than in the first act. In his place Lope utilizes Cain who, like his teacher, is able to bring to the stage the themes of envy, pride and an affinity for vengeance. Similarly, in the case of Cain’s on-stage presence compared to Abel’s, Duarte explains:

No vemos a Caín y Abel hasta la jornada segunda. La intervención de Caín concluye con la comedia... Por el contrario, la presencia de Abel es muy corta: comienza y termina en la jornada segunda. Desde el punto de vista estrictamente dramático el papel de Caín es mucho más importante que el de Abel; su trágica vida lo convierte en personaje capital de la representación. (81)

This observation of Cain emerging as a primary character in Lope’s drama sets the tone for the remainder of this study in the sense that, with the exception of Amán (Haman) of *La hermosa Ester*, also written by Lope, the other Antichrist types are undoubtedly the main characters in the plays in which they appear; these include: Absalom, Herod, Judas, and the Antichrist himself.

Returning now to *La creación del mundo*, the imagery Luzbel conjures up is quite peculiar because it is associated with the very being (serpent) of the biblical account that he replaces in Lope’s dramatized version of events. Applying this imagery to events unfolding in the drama surrounding Cain, the reader can observe, for example, how the venom of rabid envy spit by Luzbel effects him when he gripes:

Tanto amor, tanta terneza,

tanto Abel, ¿qué más quiere él?

No hay en casa más que Abel:

en él se acaba y se empieza. (II, 690-93)

The repetition of *tanto* here emphasizes that Cain is tired of all the attention and admiration that Abel receives, complaining that everything begins and ends with his brother. As Luzbel's symbolic venom spreads throughout Cain one gains a greater understanding into just how different his worldview is from that of Abel. Notice how he sees their occupations as keeper of sheep and tiller of the ground:

Si es pastor de sus ganados,

esos montes y esos prados

les dan sustento, que él no.

Yo que cultivo la tierra,

y para que dé su fruto

dé el ordinario tributo

estoy en perpetua guerra

con el azadón y arado,

sé que es padecer, y sé

que cuando Dios me lo dé,

lo tengo bien trabajado. (II, 695-705)

As a tiller of the ground Cain sees his job as very burdensome, characterizing himself as being in perpetual warfare with his pickaxe and plough. This should come as no surprise as he is working with a cursed ground, yet despite this divine act Cain attributes any

success he has cultivating the land to work that he has done without considering God's involvement. Thus when talking about Abel's occupation as a shepherd he points to the vegetation along the hills and meadows as being the agent that sustains his brother's flocks whereas Abel would give God the credit for having provided. This assumption is based on an earlier exchange between Eve and Abel. After his mother asks "¿Diz que se muere el ganado?" (II, 678), suggesting that perhaps the sheep are dying off, he replies:

Eso es mayor interés,
que Dios da ciento después
por uno que se ha llevado.
Dame a besar, madre mía,
la mano. (II, 679-82)

Unlike Cain, Abel turns a negative scenario – a sheep getting stolen or running astray – into a positive one by looking to what God can do despite the situation and rejoicing over it. It seems apparent by the wording of "que Dios da ciento después / por uno que se ha llevado" that the poet has somewhat altered the parable of the lost sheep²⁷ uttered by the Good Shepherd to approximate the context as it is given here by the first shepherd. This constitutes one of "varios elementos en la comedia que indican el interés de Lope en presentar a Abel como figura de redentor" (Duarte 99). Both versions of the parable treat the topic of restoration but from slightly different perspectives. In Luke's account the man starts with one hundred sheep, loses one, finds it, and then rejoices. In the Old

²⁷ Luke 15:4-5 "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."

Testament (and Luke 15 is technically still under the Old Testament) God’s people were Israel and they were likened to sheep; throughout Ezekiel 34 they are called “my flock”. The parable is given in response to one group of Jews (the scribes and the Pharisees) complaining about another group of Jews (publicans and sinners) seeking out Jesus’s counsel. In Abel’s illustration from *La creación del mundo*, on the other hand, a sheep is lost and then God gives one hundred more to make up for the missing animal. It is likely that the playwright’s artistic liberty in juxtaposing the numbers one and one hundred can be attributed to Abel’s desire to emphasize the replenishing component to God’s nature.

In a later exchange between the brothers the poet further develops their “gratitude attitude” or lack thereof:

ABEL.	Monte y tierra cultivada debemos a Dios los dos.
CAÍN.	Tú le deberás a Dios; que yo no le debo nada.
.....	
ABEL.	¿Pues si Dios no te enviara su rocío, y no lloviera? ...
CAÍN.	Cuando no lloviera, diera lluvia el sudor de mi cara. (II, 750-61)

As the dialogue reveals, Abel owes everything around him to God while Cain thanks his own labor for the provisions (*frutos*) he has. Abel attempts to persuade his brother to rely on God for his sustenance by posing a hypothetical situation in which it does not rain, but

his efforts are met with sarcasm when Cain replies that the sweat from his face would provide rain.

Regarding the topic of the offerings that Cain and Abel present before God, Genesis 4 does not address the brothers' intentions or motives behind their sacrifices nor does it directly explain why Abel's is accepted while Cain's is rejected. Lope therefore deems it necessary in the play to highlight the brothers' intentions so the audience can better comprehend why God, who is never present, reacts the way he does. Cain makes it quite clear that the reason for his sacrifice is to avoid punishment and has nothing to do with honoring the Creator:

Lo que me dio
le daré porque le obligue,
si a hacerme mercedes no,
para que no me castigue. (II, 784-87)

He even tries to trick God by giving him “mies que con grano parezca, / aunque nunca tenga grano” (II, 794-95). Luzbel approves of Cain's deceit, stating “Éste sí que ha desprendido / ciencia de que gusto yo” (II, 796-97). As the reader can anticipate at this point in the drama, Abel's intentions in sacrificing an innocent lamb radiate from a purer conscience: one of reverence (“porque en su esplendor confío”); one of love (“en su inocencia mi amor”); and one of faith (“y en su blancura mi fe”).

Due to the brevity of scene 3, its initial two verses uttered by Adam – “¡Cuán diferente es la ofrenda / y la intención de los dos!” (II, 824-25) - will serve as a transition from the brothers' mindset before being in God's presence to the point of presenting their

offerings to him. In the biblical narrative we read “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof...” (Gen. 4:3-4). There is no record of any words uttered by the two brothers as they present their offerings unto God. Lope transforms the act of “bringing” an offering into one in which Cain and Abel each speak to God as they are presenting him with their sacrifices. For the purpose of examining the characters’ speeches they are shown here side-by-side and are slightly shortened:

<u>Caín</u>	<u>Abel</u>
Este manojó de espigas	este cordero os ofrezco
os doy, Señor: si es acepto	en humilde sacrificio,
a vuestros ojos, tomadle;	de mi ganado el más bello.
que bien sé que satisfecho	Recibid en él mi amor:
estáis de que yo trabajo	en él os doy lo que puedo
para ganar mi sustento;	de mi pequeño caudal,
todo me cuesta sudor,	supuesto que todo es vuestro,
su vida me da, y es cierto	no porque premio me deis,
que con pensión tan pesada	ni porque castigo temo,
es como tenella a censo. (II, 857-66)	sino por ser Vos tan digno...(II, 914-23)

As has been alluded to earlier, the items being sacrificed bear significance to the individuals offering them as well as to God’s approval of one and rejection of the other.

In Cain's case the Bible states that he brought of the "fruit of the ground"; Lope specifies that this fruit consists of a "manejo de espigas" or a bundle of ears of corn. Besides the issue of bringing the wrong sacrifice as it was precisely "the fruit" that Adam and Eve ate which plagued mankind, Cain approaches God according to the dictates of own conscience as evidenced by the phrase "que bien sé que satisfecho / estáis de que yo trabajo". In other words, how can he possibly think that God will be satisfied with his offering given his defiant disposition up to this point in the drama? An observation of an example of this disposition from earlier in act 2 proves to be quite relevant to our present analysis:

El temperamento del hijo es asociado directamente con el pecado original. Además, el hecho de trabajar para comer es motivo de que Caín no reconozca deuda alguna con Dios. Cuando su padre le pide dar las mejores ofrendas a la divinidad, Caín le pregunta <<¿Come Dios?>> (II, p. 94) y, ante la respuesta negativa de Adán, le ofrece mies sin grano. El contraste entre la divinidad y el hombre, en cuanto a la necesidad de alimentarse, ratifica la mala intención del personaje. (Campbell 404).

Unlike his brother Abel, who does offer his best to the Deity ("de mi ganado el más bello"), Cain sarcastically reasons that since God does not eat there is no point to ensuring that his offerings "sean las mejores" as advised by his father. It is also interesting to note that, despite the grudge Cain seems to hold against God because of the need to nourish oneself in order to stay alive, he once again connects his sweat with vitality ("todo me cuesta sudor, / si vida me da..."); the irony here is that the *sudor* is a reminder that he is attempting to bring an acceptable sacrifice from a ground that is cursed – cf. Gen. 3:17, 19 and 4:12. In the end he sees life as a burden – "si vida me

da...es como tenella a censo.” Following “the way of Cain” (cf. Jude 11) leads to the conclusion that one cannot get blood from a turnip.

Abel, on the other hand, approaches God humbly and says nothing of his efforts; he offers a sacrifice simply because God is worthy (“...por ser Vos tan digno”) and is not motivated by fear or reward (“no porque premio me deis, / ni porque castigo temo,”). Also of course is the significance of his offering – “este cordero,” of whose kind God already killed to clothe Adam and Eve and is a picture for generations to come within Christianity that the only sacrifice from man that God wants is a lamb without spot or blemish. Fire consumes his sacrifice in a sign of approval which a voice, presumably from God or an angel, confirms: “Abel, Dios ha recibido / tu amoroso ofrecimiento” (II, 925-26).

Although no such voice informs Cain that his offering is not accepted, it is clear from his reaction that this is the case. Lope makes abundantly clear the notion that envy and vengeance are the passions that push Cain to commit the archetypal fratricide. Notice his allusion to this future crime as he expresses internally his disdain for his brother:

Enfadado vuelvo

con Abel del sacrificio (*Aparte.*)

De ver su humildad me ofendo:

todas sus cosas me cansan:

sus dichas me tienen muerto.

¡Vive Dios que le he de hacer

un pesar! (II, 952-57)

Cain himself even announces at the beginning of scene 6 that envy is what has brought him to the place of confronting Abel: “Presto me trujo la envidia” (II, 983). Armed with a jawbone he strikes his brother in the head and makes the peculiar statement “No soy hermano” (v. 989) responding to Abel’s question “¿Qué es esto, hermano?” Before falling dead to the ground Abel asks God “Perdonad mis muchos yerros, / y perdonad a Caín / mi muerte” (II, 991-93). After Cain confirms his brother’s death by checking to see if there was any movement left in his body (“Álcele un brazo y déjele caer”) he confesses:

Maté a Abel, terrible culpa;
yo he sido el hombre primero
que abrió a la muerte las puertas
del mundo, y parezco en esto
a mi padre, aunque la abrió
por quebrantar un precepto,
y yo por sólo esgrimir
este bestial instrumento. (II, 1005-12)

Cain’s declaration that “he sido el hombre primero...” together with his previous statement “No soy hermano” as well as Julio Duarte’s observation that “Su condición inhumana, destacada por Adán al comienzo de la jornada segunda (v. 642), queda confirmada por el crimen horrendo” (96), all point to substantiate the notion that there is a strong relationship between the Devil and Cain; furthermore, that Cain is the subject of

John 8:44²⁸ and not Satan because the latter never killed anyone in the beginning; Cain was the first murderer.

It is evident that Cain is aware of his wrongdoing and for a moment exhibits a measure of humility when he hears God's voice – “Esta voz turbado temo” (v. 1014), but he immediately returns to his defiant ways when asked about Abel's whereabouts, replying:

¿Qué sé yo? ¿Soy yo la guarda
de mi hermano? ¿A dicha tengo
obligación yo de daros
cuenta de él? Cubrirle quiero; (II, 1015-18)

Cain knew exactly where his brother's corpse was located; otherwise, why would he say that he wanted to cover it up? The reader cannot fail to notice the double meaning attached to “Cubrirle quiero”: wanting to cover up the horrible deed as well as the dead body. Not only is Cain a liar but also his self-righteous indignation manifests itself when he says “¿Soy yo la guarda / de mi hermano?” He did not consider it his duty to *keep* his brother, but he considered it his duty to murder him (cf. vs. 987-88 – “Pues yo te pagaré agora / esa voluntad.”)!

At the end of scene 8 Adam discovers Abel's body but conceals it from Eve knowing that the mere sight of it would devastate her:

Mas ¡ay! que su madre viene;

²⁸ “Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning...”

cubrirle con ramos quiero;
que la matará el dolor
si llega piadosa a verlo. (II, 1063-66)

However, approximately half way through scene 9 Eve sees her husband crying as he is engaged in a lengthy soliloquy in which he grieves for his firstborn son. It is in such a soliloquy where the accentuated lyric quality of *La creación del mundo* is illustrated, particularly in the poet's use of epithets which reveal his expressive will. The frequent use of epithets in the work is directly related to the structure of the characters' lines. Unlike dialogues, monologues or soliloquies easily lend themselves to this kind of dramatic recourse and here in Adam's 43-verse speech the poet inserts 14 epithets. One portion in particular coincides with the presentation of Cain as a type of the Antichrist:

¿Qué león inhumano
de las rapantes uñas prevenido,
que odioso tigre hircano,
o que celoso toro, que ofendido
del fuerte compañero,
usó en vos tal crueldad, rigor tan fiero? (II, 1092-97)

The epithets *león inhumano*, *rapantes uñas*, *odioso tigre hircano* and *celoso toro* undoubtedly refer to Cain and evoke images of a rabid beast, and given the zoomorphic imagery used in the Scriptures (notably in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13) to describe the man of sin (i.e., the Antichrist), it is reasonable to link Cain with this arch foe of Christ. In fact, as we continue our journey examining other Antichrist types in subsequent

biblical plays it will be observed that this same imagery is employed when alluding to these evil-doers (e.g., Haman characterized as a dragon, Herod as a wolf, etc.).

Scene 10 opens in stark contrast to the previous one dominated by Adam's anguish-filled soliloquy. Michael the archangel descends to offer Adam comforting words, saying that God "..., quiere / consolar tu desconsuelo, / dar tolerancia a tu muerte" (II, 1129-31). This is brought about by theologically justifying Abel's death, assuring Adam it will make his firstborn son "Primer mártir de su Iglesia" (v. 1136) and that his martyrdom will be celebrated by "los católicos y fieles" (v. 1139). In this portion of the scene the poet alludes to the [future] prominence of Roman Catholicism which should come as no surprise as the primary objective of religious drama of 17th century Spain was to exalt the Church. Michael states that the Catholics and the faithful will be the ones commemorating Abel, and this may be a reference to this institution's practice of the canonization of saints, although what seems to be clearer by the overall tie between Adam as a *padre universal* to the *católicos* who constitute *su Iglesia* according to Michael is precisely the assertion that such an universal church is God's church.

Having ascended as the curtain is drawn Michael continues to address Adam. His goal now is to instill hope in him by revealing God's eventual plan for providing redemption to mankind through Christ's sacrifice. The archangel sets out to accomplish this by chronicling major biblical events that are still future to Adam, beginning with Noah's construction of the ark and the subsequent salvation of him and his family from the universal flood:

Esta fábrica que ves,

que trescientos codos tiene
 de largo, siendo a las aguas
 monstruo de madera leve,
 mandará Dios fabricar
 a Noé, tu nieto, en que entre
 él y toda su familia,

 Él sólo será, y sus hijos,
 segundo padre a las gentes,
 nuevo poblador del mundo
 y observador de sus leyes. (II, 1144-59)

In accordance with scriptural specifications Michael gives the ark's length of three-hundred cubits (cf. Gen. 6:15) and describes it as a wooden monster on the sea. While Michael refers to Noah as Adam's grandson it is evident in Moses' account that the blood relationship between the two men is much more distant. It is not known why the playwright altered the genealogy in this instance but a possible reason could have to do with the role as progenitor they share. If Noah is going to be the "segundo padre a las gentes" or the "nuevo poblador del mundo" it can obviously be deduced that Adam was the *primer padre* or the earth's *antiguo/original poblador*. Of either man it could be said that he was an "observador de sus leyes" but the obedience is short-lived: as has been examined so far in the play Adam's defiance takes place when he consumes the fruit; In Noah's case the disobedience manifests itself with the latter's drunkenness.

Michael continues his speech with attention now given to Nimrod and the Tower of Babel:

Aquel soberbio edificio
que con arrogancia quiere,
coronado de ambición,
juntar al cielo su frente,
han de fabricar los hombres
aspirando a defenderse
de semejantes diluvios:
locura que a Dios ofende. (II, 1160-67)

The description here corresponds to the narrative in Genesis 11, where the inhabitants, presumably led by Nimrod, desire to construct a tower that might reach heaven. In the play the poet personifies the infamous tower, stating that with arrogance the proud tower wants to touch the sky with its forehead. At the same time, however, we read that the purpose for its edification is to insure their safety in the event of future floods. The irony here is that it was precisely mankind's pride, much like the pride exhibited by the tower, which precipitated the flood in Noah's days. Standing at the foot of the tower

es el soberbio Nembrot,
que el cielo conspirar quiere;
pero de Dios la justicia
aquel querubín previene,
que confundiendo sus lenguas

su arrogancia desvanece; (II, 1170-75)

The adjective used to describe the first Gentile ruler can also be seen [as a noun] in the title of another biblical play, *La soberbia de Nembrot y primer rey del mundo*, written by Antonio Enríquez Gómez. While it cannot be established that this title inspired Lope's characterization of Nimrod, what is evident is the correlation between the synopsis of Enríquez Gómez's drama and the description provided by the archangel Michael in the text before us. In her article "*La soberbia de Nembrot y primer rey del mundo* de Antonio Enríquez Gómez según el manuscrito de 1635" Constance Rose writes:

Y como indica el título, la comedia se centra en Nembrot, hijo de Cus y nieto del maldito Canaán, quien es un tirano absoluto, un monstruo que maltrata a todos mientras que se jacta de su poder al ser el primer rey del mundo...La acción sigue su curso normal, la construcción de la Torre, su caída y finalmente el castigo de Nembrot quien como todos los que quieren subir hasta penetrar en la esfera de Dios, se cae de un peñasco y se desvanece en el aire. (711)

Rose points out attributes that could easily qualify Nimrod as an Antichrist type: an absolute tyrant; boastful about the power he possesses, similar to Cain who boasted about his works; also like Cain he comes from a cursed seed; and like Luzbel before him and other Antichrist figures to follow, Nimrod possessed an uncontrollable desire to ascend to a status equal with or superior to God's status.

Another characteristic about Nimrod not mentioned in Rose's summary of Enríquez Gómez's drama is his connection to astrology, alluded to above by Michael when he says "que el cielo conspirar quiere". Interestingly this notion of imploring the assistance of the heavens is also found in the opening verses of the Sephardic biblical ballad *Nacimiento y vocación de Abraham*: "Cuando el rey Nimrod al campo salía, /

miraba en cielo y en la estrellería”. Later in this study, when examining the hunt motif in Tirso de Molina’s *La vida y muerte de Herodes* and the parallels between Herod and Nimrod, documentation from Alexander Hislop’s *The Two Babylons* will identify Nimrod with the constellation Orion.

Lope de Vega also evokes the personage of Nimrod in another of his biblical dramas, *La hermosa Ester*. The antagonist in the work is Haman, whose arrogance Mordecai likens to that of Nimrod when the king of Babylon is mentioned in the second act. He is referenced in the work’s final act in order to parallel Haman’s demise with his. The significance of Nimrod’s treatment in both of Lope’s biblical plays is to show similarities and differences between him and the Antichrist types that are the focus of this study.

After describing Nimrod, the Tower of Babel, and the cessation of its construction by God, Michael now treats the heart of the matter – explaining to Adam that God’s design for providing redemption to humanity involves a “woman”:

Aquella hermosa mujer
que como el sol resplandece,
y calzada de la luna
quiebra la soberbia frente
del dragón precipitado
que siete cabezas tiene;
aquella, que entre sus brazos

un bello infante le ofrece
a Dios, parto, e hijo suyo,
puesto que doncella siempre,
es María, mar de gracia,
y de todas gracias fuente,
a quien llamará Gabriel
bendita entre las mujeres. (II, 1178-91)

Readers possessing a keen familiarity with the Bible recognize that Lope's character Michael juxtaposes two scriptural references in order to show that Mary is the woman who is going to bring forth God's Son. In the first place we have "Aquella hermosa mujer / que como el sol resplandece, / y calzada de la luna" compared to Revelation 12:1 – "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,..." The *dragón precipitado que siete cabezas tiene* matches the "great red dragon, having seven heads" of Rev. 12:3. The next portion of Michael's speech – "aquella, que entre sus brazos / un bello infante le ofrece / a Dios, parto, e hijo suyo" – seems to parallel Rev. 12:2 particularly with the use of *parto* which would correspond to the pains and travailing described in the scriptural reference. While many in the Protestant realm understand the woman of Revelation 12 to be the church and biblical apologists postulate that she is Israel, Roman Catholic dogma insists that she is Mary. Published by the Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, *En torno al Apocalipsis* is a book containing a series of essays that explore various aspects of the last book of the New Testament. In the installment entitled "Notas para el estudio de la iconografía de la

mujer apocalíptica” René Jesús Payo Hernanz writes: “El significado que debe darse a la preñez de la mujer ha de relacionarse con la concepción de Cristo en el seno de María” (196). Thus it stands to reason that a Spanish poet writing in 17th century Catholic Spain would interpret the woman of Revelation 12 to be Mary. The other scriptural reference alluded to by the archangel to substantiate this identification comes from Luke’s gospel. Michael tells Adam that the woman referred to earlier “es María, mar de gracia, /... / a quien llamará Gabriel / bendita entre las mujeres,” which corresponds to the physician’s account – “And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women” (Luke 1:28).

The archangel concludes his lengthy discourse by pointing out to Adam that the referenced child will be the only sacrifice that will appease God’s wrath and assuage Adam’s guilt:

Aquella ofrenda que ves
dará al Padre omnipotente
satisfacción de tus culpas,
y se abrirán igualmente
al infierno obscuras puertas,
y al cielo puertas alegres. (II, 1192-97)

It is interesting to note the antithesis evoked here by the imagery associated with the phrase *abrir las puertas*. Adam used it early in the drama to indicate his culpability in bringing death into the world – “Abrí a la muerte las puertas” (I, 489) – followed by Cain, the first to welcome murder into the world: “yo he sido el primero hombre / que

abrió a la muerte las puertas” (II, 1006-7). This is all set in contrast to the joyous doors that will be opened to heaven thanks to Michael’s promise to Adam that “pues el mismo Dios... / vendrá a hacerse tu pariente” (II, 1200-01).

The third act begins with a monologue by Luzbel consisting of 78 verses, and like Adam’s soliloquy that was already examined it makes abundant use of epithets to enhance the expressiveness of the character’s intervention. Recalling how Cain’s diabolical tendencies were favorable for what he set out to accomplish against God Luzbel says:

Conocí su inclinación,
y hallándole a mí conforme,
impaciente, mal sufrido,
ingrato, soberbio, y torpe, (III, 1208-11)

The Devil then describes that after planting seeds of discord or *envidias atroces* into Cain, the latter

Quedó tan rico de vicios,
cuanto de virtudes pobre,
necio en alabar a Dios,
docto en blasfemar su nombre, (III, 1224-27)

Here the playwright manipulates the antitheses of the adjectives (rico-pobre; necio-docto), nouns (vicios-virtudes), and infinitives (alabar-blasfemar) in order to describe poetically Cain’s spiritual condition. Ignorance or foolishness towards worshipping God coupled with an instruction on blasphemies toward his name are attributes Cain

possesses, and ones the reader would expect to find in an Antichrist figure. This brings up the famous “mark of the beast” pertaining to Cain, which is mentioned in the biblical account²⁹ but only implied by Luzbel:

Mas, ¡ay! que aunque su delito
cuantos le ven reconocen,
maldice Dios al que fuere
su homicida, dando al torpe
lugar para arrepentirse...(III, 1242-46)

The idea is that they are able to recognize him by a mark; otherwise, what would lead them to believe that he committed the *delito*? This of course would further link Cain to the Antichrist, who has and gives a mark in the forehead (cf. Rev. 13:1, 16-17).

However, here Cain has God’s protection and has the opportunity to repent yet elects not to do so as will be seen shortly.

The scene concludes with Luzbel calling on his malignant spirits (*espíritus fieros*) to become a snare to man:

Vibrad las feroces lenguas,
exhalad veneno torpe,
y siendo opuestos a Dios,
sed asechanza del hombre. (III, 1276-79)

Once again Luzbel conjures up reptilian imagery with his allusions to ferocious vibrating tongues and the discharge of venom to draw men into a trap, much like he did with Cain

²⁹ Gen. 4:15 “...And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”

at the beginning of the second scene of act two – “Ya en Caín voy escupiando / de mi veneno infernal” (II, 654-55).

Luzbel exits and leaves the stage physically empty until Cain, Adam, and Eve appear to open the second scene of act three. However, when the former finishes uttering the final words of his lengthy monologue a voice from one of Cain’s parents is heard advising their son not to be afraid. Then Cain’s voice is heard pleading “Hombres, matad a Caín” (III, 1282). Thus, although for a few moments there is no one on stage, the action of the play continues without any interruptions until the next characters arrive. With this theatrical recourse the poet is able to fill the material void between the two scenes. Scene two begins therefore with Adam asking Cain how he could say such a thing, referring of course to the plea “Hombres, matad a Caín,” a plea that will be given two more times in this scene. Cain’s response to Adam resembles the biblical account:

No hay piedad para mi culpa
en Dios, porque son mayores
mis yerros que su piedad,
y que mi fe, mis temores.
¡Hombres! matad a Caín... (III, 1290-94)

Cain’s narcissism is evident; the self-serving “son mayores mis yerros que su piedad” implies that his mistakes are greater than God’s forgiveness. Likewise, when the biblical Cain says in Genesis 4:13 “My punishment is greater than I can bear” the implication is that God is unrighteous for punishing him since he cannot handle it. Furthermore, both the “every one that findeth me shall slay me” of Gen. 4:14 and the phrase “¡Hombres!

matad a Caín” from the drama present an enigma because they intimate that there were other people around besides Adam, Eve, and Cain, and Luzbel and Michael in the case of the play. Since Cain and his wife have not yet conceived with Lamech³⁰ there would not be anyone else around to slay Cain. While I believe there are indications in the Scriptures of the existence of “sons of God” before the time of Adam no such clues exist in *La creación del mundo* and thus it would be inappropriate to take manuscript evidence from the Bible and attempt to create allusions of significant points in the literary text.

The central part of scene two consists of a tense and short dialogue between Adam and Cain which in part is reproduced below:

ADÁN. Ablándale con tus lágrimas.
CAÍN. Ya no es posible que llore.
ADÁN. ¿Por qué, si eres hombre humano?
CAÍN. Son mis entrañas de bronce.
ADÁN. Pide perdón de tus culpas.
CAÍN. Primero abrasado goce
de las llamas del infierno
que a tal humildad me postre. (III, 1314-21)

In this rapid exchange in which each character’s response consists only of one verse (with the exception of Cain’s last intervention) - hence the quick, fluid reading - father and son express their opposing sentiments with respect to God. Like a man boasting about having an iron constitution (“Son mis entrañas de bronce”) Cain’s pride and lack of faith prevent

³⁰ In Gen. 4:17 Cain’s wife gives birth to Enoch, not to be confused with the Enoch of Gen. 5:18.

him from seeking a divine pardon. He even seems content with his fate looking forward to hell's consuming flames, in contrast to the fire that consumed his brother's sacrifice as a sign of approval.

The scene ends with Cain rebuffing also his mother's admonition for him to seek forgiveness. However, his prideful attitude slowly begins to turn to pathetic desperation as he audaciously assigns blame to Eve for his evil ways:

¡Plugiera a Dios que al nacer
fueras víbora, que rompe
sus entrañas, porque yo
causara tu muerte entonces
en castigo de engendrar
la criatura más enorme! (III, 1336-41)

Cain wishes that he could cause his mother's death for having given birth to a monster such as him. The descriptions of Eve as a *víbora* and of him as a *criatura* evoke once again the notion that Cain was the seed of the serpent. He exits the stage leaving Adam and Eve to converse in what becomes scene three, a very brief dialogue, totaling seven verses, between the parents.

In the fourth scene the playwright introduces the reader/spectator to Lamech³¹. As already indicated, in the play he is Cain's son while in the Bible he is a great-great-great grandson to the first murderer. Also, in Genesis there is no indication that Lamech was

³¹ The Catholic Church's position on marriage as a sacrament likely influenced Lope's decision not to portray Lamech's bigamy on stage.

the inventor of weapons yet this is how he introduces himself to Adam and Eve in *La creación del mundo*:

Vuestro nieto Lamech soy,
que ingeniosamente he hallado,
para que más os asombre,
estas armas, porque el hombre
nació de ellas desarmado. (III, 1355-59)

An extraordinarily important and appropriate invention is attributed to Cain's son. These weapons or new "ayudas a la muerte" will assist man at defending himself and hunting according to Lamech. In addition to these elemental functions Lope's character seems to prophesy about the enduring influence weapons will have on the human race. For example, men will fear each other, separate from one another into nations, and form empires:

Por aquestos ministerios
los hombres serán temidos,
y en el mundo divididos
establecerán imperios. (III, 1372-75)

Also, violence will prevail over love:

Tendrán igual competencia
la tiranía y amor,
pero la gente mayor
se llevará la violencia. (III, 1376-79)

Furthermore, society will be grouped into classes which in turn will promote inequality:

Habrá excepción de personas
no habiendo más de un Adán;
unos, villanos serán,
y otros, ceñirán coronas. (III, 1380-83)

Finally, basic human decency will essentially disappear:

Y al fin, con tal fortaleza,
con el estruendo y rigor,
con las armas y el valor,
mudarán naturaleza. (III, 1384-87)

As Duarte points out, the 16th and 17th centuries experienced a significant development in military weaponry. Gun powder, cannons, mines, and other important instruments of war began to be implemented, a fact which Lope may have had in mind while composing these verses uttered by Lamech.

Adam clearly perceives the danger involved with Lamech's invention or "ingenio tan riguroso" and anticipates its future curse as he warns him: "y mi maldición te caya / si con los hombres lo usares" (III, 1402-03). And thus we arrive at a likely reason why the playwright altered Lamech's genealogy, for the latter will use one of his inventions to kill his father Cain, thereby establishing the immediate link between the first fratricide and patricide. Duarte explains: "Con el propósito quizá de síntesis dramática y, además, para destacar mejor la idea de la cadena de consecuencias del pecado original, Lope presenta a Lamech como el homicida de 'su padre'" (47). Therefore, by having Lamech in the role

as his father's murderer insures the immediate succession of sin within Adam's lineage without a break in the chain to a remote relative.

Based on Luzbel's prior interaction with Cain and his ability to manipulate him into killing his brother it shall come as no surprise that he will be the puppet master directing Lamech to kill his once *buen discípulo*. This occurs in scene eleven after Cain has fled to the mountains in desperation and is mistaken for a *monazo* (ape) by Jubal and Lamech while they are out hunting. Luzbel intervenes and instructs Lamech so that he can fire off a clean shot with his harpoon at what he thinks is a wild beast; in fact, it is Luzbel who guides the arrow after telling Lamech to release it:

Dispara el duro harpón;
que de mi intención guiado,
yo sé, Lamech, que no harás
tiro avieso, suerte blanco. (III, 1690-93)

He then explains to the audience (but not to Lamech) why he guided the arrow so that it would strike Cain:

Así mi furia mitigo; (*Aparte.*)
muera Caín a las manos
de su hijo, porque sean
comprendidos entrambos
en la maldición de Dios. (III, 1694-98)

Through Luzbel's desire for God's curse to be upon both Cain and Lamech, the playwright is able to drive home the point regarding the hereditary nature of sin.

With respect to Cain's mortal head wound (*Cae rodando Caín, atravesadas las sienes con una saeta*) it is interesting to note in the Bible as well as in other biblical plays the number of Antichrist figures who die in this fashion. For example, Sisera from the book of Judges is murdered by Jael who drives a tent peg through his head (5:26); Antonio Mira de Amescua's rendition of events in *El clavo de Jael* also depicts the tyrant's demise as Jael pronounces "la punta pongo en sus sienes / por las hojas de laurel" (109). Also from the book of Judges it is recorded that Abimelech dies at Thebez as a result of a millstone crushing his skull (9:53). In 1 Samuel 17:49 David kills Goliath embedding a stone in the giant's forehead. And finally in Alarcon's *El Anticristo* the heroine Sofia literally fulfills Genesis 3:15 by placing her foot on the Antichrist's head before he descends into hell – (*Cae EL ANTICRISTO y SOFÍA le pone el pie en la cabeza.*).

Before concluding our initial study of Antichrist typology in *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre* manifested in Cain, another character worth examining is Jubal. In the Bible he is Lamech's offspring but in the play he is presented as Adam and Eve's son. However, both primary source and its inspired literary creation depict Jubal as the founder of music. Genesis 4:21 states that "he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." In the drama he informs his parents "yo la música he hallado" (III, 1416). A peculiar detail is found nonetheless in the introduction to the scene in which he first appears; it reads as follows: "Vase LAMEC y sale JUBAL con un tambor al cuello y tocando una flauta." Noting the specified musical instruments here the reader recalls from the beginning of this study that these are precisely the kinds of

instruments played by Satan as the anointed cherub in Ezekiel 28:13 and do not match the harp and organ of the Jubal of the Scriptures. While this alteration with respect to the musical instruments may or may not have been intentional on the part of the playwright it is quite intriguing given the suggestion in the literary text that the pleasure created by music can lead to devilish temptations and thus the chain of sin continues. First, describing the pleasures associated with music Jubal says

Soy inclinado al contento:
boquiabierto estoy un hora
oyendo un ave cantor
dar gorgoritos al viento. (III, 1420-23)

But then he describes the drum he found as something “que inquieta los pensamientos” and “que con la flauta y con él / las piedras haré bailar”. The shift from the tranquility of *oyendo un ave cantora* to the restlessness created by percussion instruments perhaps could be analogized in contemporary terms to the sound of a violin sonata compared to the screeching electric guitar so characteristic of Heavy Metal music.

Previously an explanation was offered as to why the playwright altered Lamech’s genealogy; now let us examine a possible motive for why Lope made Jubal Adam’s son instead of a descendent of Cain: “¿Qué hay en este desacuerdo genealógico: un simple descuido o un indicio significativo del arte de Lope, pues raramente daba puntada sin hilo? En mi opinión podría interpretarse como una propuesta consciente de no emparentar el entretenimiento, la música, el teatro mismo, con la rama mala o negra de la estirpe cainita y por lo tanto diabólica” (Rubiera 329). This is a keen observation and one that

strengthens the premise of Cain as an Antichrist type; however, even as Adam's son, and not forgetting that in *La creación del mundo* human sin began with Adam and Eve, Jubal is destined to carry on this nature and thus the music that originated with him at the very least will be susceptible to diabolical influences.

With Lamech and Jubal's respective inventions of weapons and music posing the threat of exacerbating the degradation of society Lope again succeeds in his depiction of the perpetuation of sin, yet the source of this perpetual motion emanates from Cain. Yes, Adam and Eve brought sin into the world initially, but this sin was violently perpetuated first by Cain as the first murderer. Furthermore, throughout the drama Luzbel interacts more intensely with Cain than with any other character, the reason for which can be attributed to the belief that Satan was somehow involved in Cain's conception, identifying him as the seed of the serpent and thus an ideal Antichrist type. In Luzbel's penultimate intervention he states "Con ese tormento quiero / vivir...", and in literary terms he will live on through other Antichrist figures to be examined in this study.

The play concludes with Cain and Luzbel's descent into hell – (*Húndense el Demonio y Caín por un escotillón, y salgan llamas, y al mismo tiempo suba el Ángel.*) - followed by some final words from Adam:

Esta es, Senado, la historia
de aquel antiguo pecado,
primera culpa del hombre,
principio de males tantos. (III, 1862-65)

With these concluding four verses Lope synthesizes the main theme surrounding the dramatic action. As was customary of Spanish Golden Age theatre, a portion of the work's title appears in its final lines: "primera culpa del hombre."

Los cabellos de Absalón

Renowned Surrealist Salvador Dalí was a master of the double image, a technique in painting that acquired aesthetic importance within the artist's "paranoia-critical-method" of the 1930s. With what Dalí characterized as a "spontaneous method of irrational understanding based upon the interpretative critical association of delirious phenomena" (Bradbury 124), he used this creative approach to highlight hallucinatory images or forms in his paintings. One of Dalí's most recognized works that employs the double image is *Swans Reflecting Elephants*, however for the sake of present analysis we will discuss another example, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*. It is related how the inspiration for this painting originated from a conversation overheard between two fishermen talking about a man who was known for staring at himself in a mirror for long periods of time. One of the fishermen said this man had a "bulb in his head," a colloquial expression meaning that he was crazy (Bradbury 120). Dalí used this mental picture along with the Greek myth of Narcissus in creating *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*. The observer can notice that the hand on the right that holds the egg, out of which springs a narcissus flower, mirrors the form of Narcissus and his reflection in the lake. A similar shape can be seen to the right of the giant hand and off towards the charcoal mountains, where the figure of Narcissus stands on a platform admiring his body. A scavenging dog and ants can be seen around the hand, perhaps symbolizing death and decomposition. Armed with this surrealistic, yet powerful depiction of the transformation of Narcissus, the reader can all the more appreciate the words of the famous Spanish lexicographer Sebastián de Covarrubias in the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*:

Los poetas fingen haber sido un muchacho, hijo del rey Cefiso y de la ninfa Liríope, de extraña hermosura, el cual, llegando a una fuente y viendo en ella su figura, se enamoró della y se fue consumiendo hasta que los dioses le convirtieron en esta planta y flor. Temo que hoy día hay muchos destos Narcisos, que en la fuente de sus espejos se enamoran de sí mesmos... (1306-7)

A classic manifestation of the Narcissus complex in seventeenth century Spanish theater is Calderón de la Barca's *Los cabellos de Absalón*, a biblical drama that treats the life of king David's narcissistic and rebellious son Absalom from the time of his victorious campaign against the Moabites until his tragic death when his "head caught hold of the oak."³² The biblical source of inspiration for the drama is based on 2 Samuel 13-19, yet a review of the material in chapters 11 and 12 is crucial for understanding the unfolding of events in the lives of David's offspring as portrayed not only in the play in question but also in other dramas³³ of Golden Age Spanish theater. In chapter eleven David has relations with Bathsheba, she bears a son, and David orders her husband Uriah the Hittite killed. In chapter twelve, God's displeasure towards David's evil acts is voiced through Nathan, who tells the king a story about a rich man who had the opportunity to help a traveler by providing him one of his sheep, but who instead opted to take from a poor man. In his biblical drama entitled *El arpa de David*, Mira de Amescua represents the exchange between the two men:

NATÁN. Dime: ¿qué pena merece

³² "El título de la obra es una alusión al símbolo de su obsesión narcisista: sus dorados cabellos. Al mismo tiempo representan el castigo a su proceder: colgado de ellos, muere." This quote is taken from page 47 of Helmy Fuad Giacoman's critical edition of *Los cabellos de Absalón* (Editorial Castalia, 1968), the edition to which we will refer throughout our analysis of Calderón's biblical drama.

³³ Tirso de Molina: *La venganza de Tamar*; Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón: *El mejor rey del mundo y templo de Salomón*; Pedro Calderón de la Barca: *La sibila de Oriente y gran reina de Sabá*.

quien tiene muchas ovejas,
y una sola que tenía
un pobre quitó por fuerza,
dándole muerte por ello?

DAVID. Vive el Señor que gobierna
los cielos y el mundo, que es
digno de muerte.

NATÁN. Sentencia
contra ti mismo pronuncias;
tú eres digno de esa pena:
muchas mujeres tenías
sin que la muerte le dieras
a Urías tras su deshonra.
Dios te amenaza con guerras,
con pestilencia, con hambre,
con agravios, con afrentas;
tú has de engendrar el cuchillo
que tu misma sangre vierta. (III, 3207-24)

After listening, David realizes that he is the villain in Nathan's story and as such he is the one who will have to pay fourfold for his sins – “And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity” (2 Sam. 12:6). As sheep are often

presented in the Bible as a type of people, the stern prophecy uttered by Nathan indicates that four of the king's children will suffer for his sins.

The first casualty is the baby born to David and Bathsheba. The infant's death is recorded in 2 Sam. 12:18 but is not mentioned in *El arpa de David*. The next victim of Jehovah's wrath kindled against David is Tamar, who is raped by her stepbrother Ammon. Tirso de Molina treats this incest motif in *La venganza de Tamar*. From this work Calderón borrows the third act and converts it into the second act of *Los cabellos de Absalón*. By doing this

Calderón tiene que darle un impulso magistral al desenlace: tiene que cumplirse el fatídico destino de los *cabellos* del egoísta y ambicioso Absalón que, en aras de esa concisión que hemos referido, es capaz de transmitirle, sin querer, a su padre, el rey David, y a través de un diálogo rico en matices de condescendencia paternal, la traición de la que va a ser capaz él, su hijo. (Josa 89)

Departing from the incest theme, Calderón focuses on the third "sheep" of David who must suffer punishment – the rebellious and politically ambitious Absalom. His role in the vindictive fatalism that now marks the Davidic line is further explained in the following manner:

Por encima de los personajes principales, por encima del mismo rey David, se destaca en la historia bíblica la figura de Absalón. Es él quien actúa como brazo de la providencia y dirige la ofensiva. David está tratando generosamente de resolver o perdonar los errores y delitos de Absalón. Es el príncipe quien, sirviéndose de planes diseñados con gran visión política, toma el pretexto de la venganza de su hermana Tamar para poder justificar a los ojos del pueblo de Israel su conducta. (Giacoman 26)

In accordance with the emphasis placed on Antichrist typology throughout this study, in our analysis of *Los cabellos de Absalón* we will attempt to demonstrate that Absalom stands out as yet another foreshadowing of the son of perdition in four ways: he

obtains the kingdom peaceably, with flatteries; he rebels against David, a type of Christ; he is perfect in beauty; and finally, he suffers a violent death, as do all the Antichrist figures in the biblical dramas comprising this study.

The characters comprising the cast of *Los cabellos de Absalón* are David, Absalón, Adonías, Jonadab, Teuca, Eliazar, Ensay, Joab, Salomón, Amón, Tamar, Aquitofel, Semey, and some shepherds. Six of these characters appear in the play's opening scene, with David returning to his children after successfully defeating the Moabites. The king embraces them and greets them with affectionate nicknames:

Adonías valiente,
llega, llega otra vez. Y tú, prudente
Salomón, otra vez toca mi pecho,
en amorosas lágrimas deshecho.
Bellísimo Absalón, vuelve mil veces
a repetirme el gusto, que me ofreces
en tan alegre día. (I, 23-29)

As outlined above, one characteristic that Absalón shares with the Antichrist is physical beauty. Regarding the latter personage, Ezekiel 28:15 states: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." This is referring to the anointed cherub or Satan, before his fall from heaven. Absalom is also known for his beauty:

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore

he polled it) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. (2 Sam. 14:25-26)

Before exploring how Calderón treats this attribute of the prince in *Los cabellos de Absalón*, it is important to note the connection between the mythological Narcissus and the imagery of flora in the drama, specifically the flower that bears his name, as it becomes a key motif in relation to the protagonist. The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE)* defines the word *narciso* as: “Planta herbácea, anual, exótica... con perigonio partido en seis lóbulos iguales...” Two details of this definition correspond to Absalón. First, like the exotic quality of the narcissus flower, so is the prince's hair, whose value was based on the amount of shekels it weighed. Also, the perigynium is split into six lobes of equal size. In biblical numerology it is generally believed that 6 is the number of man while 666 is the number of a [specific] man (i.e. the Antichrist); thus, Absalón is a man who typifies the man of sin.

The bearer of the narcissus flower in the play is Teuca. Inspired by the scriptural woman of Tekoah from 2 Sam. 14, in *Los cabellos de Absalón* she is a prophetess who predicts the rise and fall of the protagonist, a forecast that is made known during the initial encounter between the two characters in scene 9 of act 1. Upon seeing Absalón for the first time the Ethiopian woman shouts: “¡Ay de mí!, rabiando vivo. / ¡Ay de mí!, rabiando muero” (I, 755-56). These verses are peculiar in that they simultaneously reflect both a symmetrical (the repetition of “¡Ay de mí!, rabiando” in both verses) and antithetical (by the use of verbs with opposite meanings – *vivo* and *muero*) structure in order to underscore Absalón's chaotic nature. Teuca repeats this exclamation within the

same scene, adding the detail about the prince's hair which serves to introduce Calderón's use of dramatic irony in the work:

Ya veo

Que te ha de ver tu ambición

En alto por los cabellos.

¡Ay de mí!, rabiando vivo;

¡Ay de mí!, rabiando muero. (I, 783-87)

Absalón is so proud of his hair that he refuses to cut it, and this will prove quite costly for the prince. In other words,

Teuca's prediction is ambiguous, and it provides Calderón with an opportunity for dramatic irony; so does the prediction of the old hag in *El príncipe constante*. Absalom assumes from Teuca's words that his vanity and ambition will be satisfied. In fact, they foretell the opposite: Absalom's designs upon the throne will lead directly to his premature and violent death, and death by hanging, entangled by the very hair which he assumes will ensure his succession. (Sloman 105)

Having the desire to hear what he perceives to be adulation, in reality Absalón misinterprets Teuca's words, but his fascination with his own physical appearance prohibits him from comprehending the hidden warning uttered by the strange Ethiopian woman:

Luego justamente infiero

Pues que mis cabellos son

De mi hermosura primeros

Acreeedores, que a ellos deba

El verme en tan alto puesto;

Y así, vendré a estar entonces

En alto por los cabellos. (I, 820-826)

It is evident from these verses that Absalón does not understand the meaning of *alto* here; he takes it to represent something superior or paramount having to do with his political ascension, yet the prophetess uses the term to refer to impeding or stopping something, in this case the prince's distorted ambition. The narcissus flower that Teuca gives to him symbolically serves to set in motion the catastrophe. She explains:

Vuestra hermosura enloquece

a toda vuestra nación:

narciso sois, Absalón,

que también os desvanece.

Cortaos esos hilos bellos;

que si los dejáis crecer,

os habéis presto de ver

en alto por los cabellos. (I, 1751-1758)

Nevertheless, the protagonist continues to be confused by the prediction, as one critic notes: "Absalom, moreover, is given a narciso, which he recognizes as symbolic of self-love, with a prophecy that he will see himself 'en alto por los cabellos'; he interprets this favorably, but we recall 2 Samuel 18:9³⁴" (Dixon 305). If one were to only consult the scriptural reference given by Dixon, then Teuca's prophecy would appear to unfold rather

³⁴ "And Absalom met the servants of David, and Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away."

abruptly; however, the treatment of Absalón's death in the drama allows the spectator/reader to imagine how the protagonist must have felt as he was dying. Before Joab jabs the spear in his side to finish him off, the prince says to himself:

Mas, ¡ay de mí!, desbocado,
sin obedecer al freno,
por la espesura se entra
de las encinas, que en medio
se me ponen (¡ay de mí!).
¿Qué es esto, cielos, qué es esto?
¡Que en las copadas encinas
se me enredan los cabellos! (III, 3117-24)

In his essay "La Biblia en los corrales de comedias: Tirso y Calderón," Isaac Benabu describes the work's embellishment of the scriptural account in the following manner: "Todo lo que la comedia logra expresar dramáticamente, se disimula en el texto bíblico en una técnica de narración que más pretende apelar a la imaginación del lector para que pueda sacar las justas conclusiones a manera de *exemplum*" (59).

As one can observe, therefore, some details can only be found in the Bible (e.g. the weight of Absalom's hair in shekels) while others manifest themselves solely in the play. Here of course we are referring to Teuca. While she does exist in the biblical narrative as the wise woman of Tekoah, her involvement in the plot that revolves around Absalom is limited to her pretending to be a widow with two sons who hate each other (like David's sons, Cain and Abel, etc.), with the objective of gaining the king's

sympathy, a plan hatched by Joab so that David and Absalom can reconcile. Calderón's Teuca, on the other hand, plays a significant role in the plot development of *Los cabellos de Absalón*. When she distributes different flowers to each of David's four sons in scene 13 of act 2, in effect she is providing the reader with an insight into the characters' personalities and/or destinies. For example, Amón is given the *azucena* and the *espadaña*, an allusion to his desire to possess Tamar and his subsequent death by a sword (*espada*) for having raped her. Also, Salomón receives the *corona de rey*, indicating that one day he will become king. And of course we have the *narciso* given to Absalón, a sign of the protagonist's link with Antichrist, the epitome of narcissism. Moreover, Teuca makes it clear that she is aware of her role as arbiter between father and son, knowing full well that the outcome will be tragic for Absalón:

¿Yo instrumento de hacer dos amistades?

¿Yo unir dos tan discordes voluntades?

Mas sí, que ya vendrán a iras atroces. (III, 2383-2385)

An aspect of Absalón's beauty that merits attention has to do with effeminacy. In scene 10 of act 1, after the first encounter between Teuca and Absalón, the latter finds himself conversing with his half-brother Salomón. They discuss how to interpret the prophetess' words, and when Salomón hears that Absalón has misinterpreted them by associating political and military success with the length of his hair, he asks the ambitious prince:

Pues, ¿quieres que una hermosura

afeminada, en los pechos

de todos engendre más

amor que aborrecimiento? (I, 829-832)

The use of the subjunctive *engendre* appears to suggest that Salomón himself does not think it is a good idea for Absalón to display feminine qualities if he wants to win the people's support, perhaps because during the time of the Pentateuch it was not acceptable for a man to resemble a woman or vice-versa.³⁵ This attitude is reflected in the rhetorical question posed by the future heir to the throne of Israel. In his article "Imagistic Patterns and Techniques in Calderón's *Los cabellos de Absalón* and its indebtedness to Tirso's *La venganza de Tamar*," Walter Holzinger postulates that the effeminate features seen in Absalón can be attributed to his asexuality thanks to the imagery of the narcissus flower. Contrasting the treatment of the characters in *La venganza de Tamar* and *Los cabellos de Absalón*, Holzinger points out that Calderón "... identifies Amón exclusively with lechery, and the beautiful Absalón expresses no interest whatsoever in women, but is dominated by an all-consuming ambition for power" (243). Therefore, "Teuca's offering of the non-phallic narcissus to Absalom suggests his asexuality" (240). It is important to note that Holzinger does not quote from the portion of Teuca's speech that would logically support his point of view. Her command to the prince to "Cortaos esos hilos bellos" (II, 1755) generates some questions. For example, it is possible that the action of *cortar* alludes to the surgical procedure of castration (hence the reference to his

³⁵ Deuteronomy 22:5 – "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God."

asexuality) while the direct object *esos hilos bellos* could simultaneously represent Absalón's hair and the literal roots of the narcissus flower.

The second way in which Absalón prefigures the son of perdition is by attempting to obtain his father's kingdom through flatteries. Of the Antichrist, it is stated in Daniel 11:21 that "...he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." Also in the Bible, specifically 2 Samuel 15:2-6, Absalom operates in like manner. The phrase "so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" in the latter part of verse six will prove pertinent to our discussion of the literary Absalón. In the scriptural account, the prince's political strategy was to win over the people with his good looks, grand entrances, friendly embraces, and apparent concern for justice. Many were fooled and switched their allegiance. Later, however, Absalom turned out to be an evil ruler.

In Calderón's drama, the implementation of this seductive technique by Absalón occurs in scene 9 of act 3. He explains to Aquitofel that:

Demás que yo aun no tengo
bastante gente que pueda
seguirme, y aquí pretendo
granjearla con mi asistencia. (III, 2321-24)

The use of the word *granjear* is significant. In the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* it is defined as an act of "negociar con diligencia alguna cosa de provecho y adelantamiento" (996). Without a doubt Absalón's desire to obtain the throne of his father David can be considered a step forward in political terms at least in his mind.

Moreover, in the *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*, Corominas defines the word *granjear* as “ganar, lograr, captar” (Vol. II, p. 769).

Now then, how does Absalón plan to gain the people’s trust? Still in scene 9, he promises to bring justice to those who have grievances against King David, telling Aquitofel:

Saldréme al campo, y en viendo
que un pretendiente se queja,
ya de mala provisión,
ya de contraria sentencia,
le llamaré y le diré
que como a mí me obedezca,
le haré justicia. (III, 2329 – 2335)

The use of the anaphora *ya* seems to suggest that Absalón is not really concerned about these complaints but rather is willing to justify his own abuses as prince. Furthermore, the use of *obedezca* reveals the insidious scheme behind the protagonist’s true motives. In other words, it is not a question of whether or not the people will obey him despite the subjunctive mood of the verb. The Absalom of the Bible likewise did not hesitate to accept reverence – “And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him” (2 Sam. 15:5). One cannot ignore the similarity between this gesture and the famous sign of betrayal displayed by Judas Iscariot in Matthew 26:49 – “And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and

kissed him.” In *Los cabellos de Absalón* the prince kisses David after the latter asks him to spare Amón’s life:

En mis labios tus pies pon,
y añadido a tantas mercedes,
porque satisfecho quedes,
señor, el venir a honrar
mi esquilmo, pues da lugar
la paz, y alegrarte puedes. (II, 1486-91)

This affectionate act serves to give the king a false sense of assurance that Absalón will honor his request, as the reader soon discovers that the protagonist has no intention of allowing his brother Amón to live after raping Tamar.

It is important to keep in mind that Absalón’s lack of temperance stems in part from his sister Tamar’s rape at the hands of Amón, and this is manifested in a progressive manner in scene 9 of act 2. In fact, later in scene 13 Absalón tells Jonadab:

Sobre el trono me he de ver
de mi padre coronado.
Muera en el convite Amón,
quede vengada Tamar,
de la corona lugar
a que la herede Absalón. (II, 1765-70)

However, this is merely a pretext; we know this because earlier he had stated “que a quien aspira a reinar, / cada hermano es un estorbo” (I, 217-18). Political aspirations are

the primary motivating factor in the protagonist's dramatic trajectory, and it is precisely this theme of the prince's frenzied ambition that distinguishes *Los cabellos de Absalón* from *La venganza de Tamar*. Eventually, these impulses reach a boiling point:

La pasión de reinar de Absalón, que llega a su apogeo en la escena en que, solo en el aposento de David, se ciñe la corona real y expresa su intención de matar a Amón, no sólo por vengar el ultraje inferido por éste a Tamar, hermana suya, y no hermanastra, sino por eliminarlo del trono; y su intención de rebelión contra su padre y matarlo. (Ruiz Ramón 251)

After putting forth the notion that David is no longer capable of carrying out justice because of his reluctance to punish Amón for his violation of Tamar, Absalón enters the king's chamber and beholds his father's crown:

La corona en una fuente,
Una corona en un bufete

con que ciñe la real frente
mi padre, grave y compuesto.

.....

Si es el reinar tan sabroso
como afirma el ambicioso,
no he de perder tal bocado. (II, 1391-99)

He then imagines how it would feel if he were to put the crown on his head, at which point he decides in a blink of an eye: "Mi cabeza quiero honrar" (II, 1404). Finally, he grabs the crown, puts it on his head, and exalts himself:

Bien está: vendréisme así
nacida, y no digo mal,

pues nací de sangre real,
y vos nacéis para mí. (II, 1410-13)

Declaring the blessings that are bestowed upon he who reigns, the reader notices the significance of the prince's statement "pues nací de sangre real" in that it evokes one of the main aspects that defined the concept of honor in seventeenth century Spain – purity of blood. The irony here is that, although Absalón is one of many offspring of the Davidic line from which Christ's origins can be traced, deviant acts committed by his sibling symbolically stain the royal family's reputation as noted by Joab:

Desde aquel infeliz día
que, convertido en tragedia,
la real púrpura de Amón
manchó de Absalón la mesa,
Absalón se fue a Gesur,
haciendo del reino ausencia,
por ser la provincia donde
Tolomey, su abuelo, reina. (III, 1959-66)

Absalón's action of entering the king's palace and exalting himself resembles the opening scene of act 3 of the anonymous medieval drama *Ludus de Antichristo*. In this work Antichrist appears, concealing a cuirass under his garments and accompanied by the allegorical characters la Hipocresía and la Herejía, to whom he sings:

Ha llegado la hora de mi reino.
Mediante vosotras, por tanto, sin demora

hágase que me siente en el regio solio,
que a mí el mundo adore y a otro no. (35)

Granted, in *Los cabellos de Absalón* the protagonist does not enter the temple accompanied by anyone, nor is he wearing a breast-plate but rather places his father David's crown on his head. Nevertheless, the prince's act of adorning himself with the royal crown in Calderón's drama as well as that of the Antichrist of wearing ancient armor in the medieval play seem to symbolize the decision made by both characters to assume absolute power. In the case of Absalón this would be total control of his father's kingdom; regarding Antichrist, his dominion would encompass the entire world. It is interesting to note the similarity between how each character demands to be the exclusive object of worship: in the *Ludus de Antichristo* the title character insists "que a mí el mundo adore y a otro no"; in *Los cabellos de Absalón* the prince exclaims "y vos nacéis para mí." The actions of both of these literary personages mirror the deed of the biblical Antichrist, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). In *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, Emerson points out that, in addition to the book of Revelation, 2 Thessalonians 2 is regarded as the most significant and possibly the most interesting sources for the interpretation of Antichrist (37). Therefore, Absalón's deeds in King David's palace validate the notion of the former being a type of the son of perdition, so named in the passage alluded to by Emerson.

An etymological connection to Absalón's attempts at winning over the masses through flatteries can be observed in the meaning of the protagonist's name. In the

introduction to his critical edition of *Los cabellos de Absalón*, Helmy Fuad Giacoman describes the protagonist in the following way: “Al príncipe ambicioso Absalón – cuyo nombre significa <<príncipe de la paz>> - le caracteriza como obsesionado por la sed de gloria” (46). There is no doubt that Absalón is obsessed with the idea of ascending to the throne at all cost; however, his name does not mean “prince of peace”³⁶ as Giacoman suggests, but rather “father of peace.” The prefix *ab* denotes “father”³⁷ while *salom* means “peace.” This definition is supported by the New World Encyclopedia, which states “**Absalom** (אַבְשָׁלוֹם, Hebrew: **Avšalom**, "father of peace").”³⁸ Furthermore, in the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, Covarrubias offers the following about Absalón: “Hijo de David. Persiguió a su padre siendo amado tiernamente de él. Es nombre hebreo, y entre otras interpretaciones vale *patris pax*, por lo que David pretendió tener con él,…” (28).

Like the Antichrist and several of his forerunners that are examined in this study, Absalón suffers a violent death. In scene 27 of the play’s final act, as he is being pursued by David’s men, Absalón is on his horse when suddenly his long hair gets caught in tree branches: “¡Que en las copadas encinas / se me enredan los cabellos!” (III, 2123-24). One cannot fail to observe the tragic irony – that Absalón’s pretty head and long hair ended up being his undoing, symbolic of how pride can be its own undoing. As the prince finds himself dangling from the tree, his horse leaves and Ensay, Joab, and other soldiers approach him armed with lances. Calderón’s version of events concurs with the scriptural

³⁶ “Prince of Peace” is actually one of the titles attributed to Christ in Isaiah 9:6.

³⁷ Romans 8:15 – “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

³⁸ www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Absalom.

account (cf. 2 Sam. 18:14) with respect to the number of lances or darts that are thrust through Absalón's heart by Joab, who declares to the prince:

Aun con dos no estoy contento;
tres son las que contra ti
me manda blandir el cielo;
por fratricida la una,
la otra por deshonesto,
y la otra por ser hijo
inobediente. (III, 3154-60)

Unlike the biblical narrative, however, the Joab of the drama provides a plausible explanation as to the significance behind the number of lances used to execute Absalón, whose final words are:

Yo muero
puesto, como el cielo quiso,
en alto por lo cabellos,
¡sin el cielo y sin la tierra,
entre la tierra y el cielo! (III, 3160-64)

While not explicitly stated, it is possible that Absalón's position between heaven and [the heart of the] earth is a reference to being cast into a pit, as expressed in 2 Sam. 18:17 – “And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him...” Thus, like Judas Iscariot he hangs from a tree and then, like the Antichrist himself, is cast into an abyss.

La hermosa Ester

Lope de Vega's *La hermosa Ester*, based on the Old Testament book of Esther, presents a dramatic picture of the Jews that remained in the Persian Empire after the Babylonian captivity. Within this picture is Ester, a Jewish woman who becomes queen after Vastí's disobedience before her husband Asuero (Ahasuerus), the Gentile king. The action takes place primarily in and around the king's palace in Susa (Shushan), capital of Persia. Through her older cousin Mardoqueo (Mordecai), Ester learns of the chief prince Amán's (Haman) plot to annihilate the Jews. She denounces Amán before the king, who not only orders the evil prince's execution by hanging, but also issues a decree favorable to the Jews, authorizing them to defend themselves from their enemies. The Feast of Purim or Lots commemorates these events. It is named after the fact that Amán cast lots to decide the day the Jews would be killed.³⁹

One of the most peculiar aspects about the book of Esther is that its author Ezra never uses the words "God" and "Lord." It is the only book of the Bible with this unique quality. The omission of these two words seems to lend credence to the concept of the providence of God. This means that, although the words "God" and "Lord" do not appear in the book, it is obvious that the Deity is directing the circumstances of the characters' lives behind the scenes for a particular purpose. Moreover, when one examines the book of Esther, he or she does not read about God parting the Red Sea, causing fire to fall from heaven, or miraculously healing someone. Typical, everyday instances are chronicled,

³⁹ Esther 3:7 – "In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth *month*, that *is*, the month Adar."

like a man entering a room at an inopportune moment, a woman asking a favor of her husband, or a person receiving an invitation to a banquet. These events may not seem significant, but each one determines the destinies of individual lives and nations.

As Edward Glaser points out in his article “Lope de Vega’s *La hermosa Ester*,” the playwright preferred the Septuagint to the Masoretic Text when developing his biblical drama. Written almost 200 years after the death of Christ and the apostles, the Septuagint contains the Apocryphal Esther, which does in fact include several direct references to God and his divine characteristics (Canning 18). Naturally, these mentions of the word “God” carry over into *La hermosa Ester*, where in the play’s opening scene Egeo (Hegai), keeper of the women, asks in amazement regarding the grandeur of the banquet:

¿Qué anales, qué historias cuentan
desde que Dios formó a Adán
y a la hermosísima Eva,
hasta aquel diluvio insigne
con que castigó la tierra,
.....
que haya durado un convite
por más de ciento y ochenta
días, donde se ha mostrado
tan inaudita riqueza... (I, 103)

Despite the use of the terms *Dios* and *Señor* in the work before us, we will attempt to demonstrate in our analysis of *La hermosa Ester* that this addition in no way diminishes the presence of the providence of God in this *tragicomedia* of 1610. Furthermore, and in accordance with the central premise of this study of examining forerunners of the Antichrist in seventeenth century biblical dramas, Amán will be shown to be a type of the Devil. Like Pharaoh and Antichrist, he persecutes the Jews; he also suffers the same fate as Absalom and Judas – death by hanging.

La hermosa Ester commences with a vivid description of how king Asuero plans to entertain his guests at a banquet. After revealing to the lords and commoners the sumptuousness of his palace, Asuero desires to show off the queen's beauty to the courtiers:

Príncipes de la India y Etiopía,
hoy por ultimo día
quiero enseñaros la grandeza mía.
No en ricos vasos de oro,
no en joyas de diamantes y rubies,
.....
Vastí, mi mujer bella;
Vastí, que así se llama, porque basta
para saber por ella,
después de su virtud honesta y casta,
que no dio el cielo al suelo

mayores muestras del poder del cielo. (I, 104)

In his speech, Asuero wants to demonstrate to his guests that his happiness is not found in treasures or material goods, but rather in his beautiful wife Vastí. However, the reader learns of her disobedience through the king's soldier Setar, who informs his majesty:

A la Reina mi señora
dije tu mandato y gusto,
y responde que no es justo
que eso le mandes agora;
que ella está allá con sus damas,
con debida honestidad,
y que a toda una ciudad
no has de enseñar lo que amas;
finalmente, da a entender
que el convite te ha dejado
con poco seso. (I, 104)

Angered by the fact that Vastí has made him look ridiculous – “Ella ha dado / gran pesar a mi placer” (I, 104) – Asuero orders her expulsion from the palace: “¡Salga de Palacio al punto / la Reina: no quede en él!” (I, 105)

In the scene in which Ester and Mardoqueo appear for the first time, the reader will begin to witness the unfolding of the providence of God as it pertains to the title character, who here not only laments the state of oppression of the Hebrew people in Persia but also her personal circumstance of being orphaned:

No siento tanto el duro cautiverio,
amado tío, aunque sentirle es justo,
ni el ver a nuestro pueblo en vituperio,
pues que a su Dios ingrato por su gusto,
.....
como el ver que me voy quedando sola
entre enemigos de mi pueblo hebreo... (I, 106)

In spite of this bleak outlook due to the subjection of the children of Israel to the Babylonian captivity as well as the loss of her parents, Mardoqueo assures Ester that God has a purpose for her life:

Así pasamos cautiverio triste;
mas tú no llores tanto el desamparo
de los honrados padres que perdiste,
pues vivo yo, que tu virtud amparo.
Con hermosura y discreción naciste,
y con divino entendimiento claro,
vivir sola pudieras; pero el cielo
algo pretende de tu santo celo. (I, 106)

A bit later Mardoqueo specifies what this purpose will be:

No temas;
que Dios te dará favor,
porque por tu medio sea

su pueblo restituido

a su primera grandeza... (I, 109)

This appears to refer to the restoration of Israel, as the replacement of the Gentile bride (Vastí) by a Hebrew bride (Ester) is analogous to the “times of the Gentiles” running out and God once again dealing solely with the Jews. Glaser seems to concur with the notion of the providence of God at work, stating that the protagonist “...receives a commission from the Almighty through Mordecai. Her uncle, acting as if it were given to him to see into the designs of God, compels her to take the step so as to be able to effect the rescue of her people (...)” (116). In her monograph *Lope de Vega’s comedias de tema religioso: re-creations and re-presentations*, Elaine Canning describes the significance of the above verses uttered by Mardoqueo in the following manner:

Mardoqueo’s predictions are significant because they anticipate the plot of the play and the course of action which Ester must take without pinpointing details. His speeches serve to increase the expectation of the audience in the corral – those individuals who do not know the plot of the story will be forced to reflect on what the main action will consist of before it happens; others, who are familiar with the tale, will wonder how Lope will bring it to life on stage. (30)

This leads us to the second example of the providence of God in Lope’s play.

Later in act 1, Egeo appears before the king to inform him that he has someone in mind to replace Vastí as queen:

Deseo de servirte y de curarte,
porque ninguno iguala mi deseo,
y así traigo, señor, que presentarte
la bella Ester, cuya hermosura creo

que será poderosa a consolarte
del amor de Vastí, porque es tan bella,
que tiene el mismo sol envidia della.
.....
a tus ojos remito el milagroso
juicio... (I, 111)

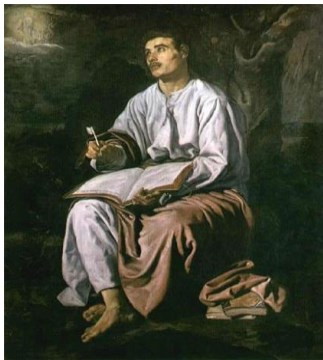
What one can observe in these verses is the hand of God working behind the scenes. There was no logical reason for Egeo to favor Ester above the hundreds of other young ladies that were there unless divine intervention was moving the heart of the man.

The exchange is made official when king Asuero states “En mi trono real recibir quiero / tan Hermosa mujer; poneos al lado” (I, 111). After the pomp and circumstance (“Música y acompañamiento y damas...”), the reader immediately discovers the difference between the disobedient Vastí and the humble Ester, who declares before her new husband:

Mi humildad, poderoso rey Asuero,
no es digna de besar tu rico estrado;
mas la obediencia, por quien ser espero
admitida en tus ojos, me ha forzado
a osar ponerme en tu real presencia;
que el mejor sacrificio es la obediencia. (I, 111)

There is a notable contrast between the serenity with which act one concludes and the constant tension of the second act in which Amán sets out to exterminate the Jews.

Mardoqueo's dream in the opening scene, borrowed from the Apocryphal Esther (Canning 19), serves to introduce this tension. The similarity in the phraseology of the character's dream and that of the respective visions of the apostle John and Elías Falso⁴⁰ is remarkable. The following diagram conceived of by me, and with the visual aid of Velázquez's *San Juan Evangelista en la isla de Patmos*, illustrates the resemblance:



- Mardoqueo
Yo vi romperse el cielo por mil partes
con horrisonos truenos, y hacer guerra
uno con otro dos dragones fieros,
a cuya confusión vi que salían
dos ejércitos fuertes a batalla
- El apóstol Juan (Rev. 13:1,7^a)
Y me paré sobre la arena del mar, y vi subir del mar
una bestia que tenía siete cabezas y diez cuernos; y
sobre sus cuernos diez diademas; y sobre sus cabezas
un nombre de blasfemia... Y le fue dado hacer guerra
contra los santos, y vencerlos.
- Elías falso
Vi salir del mar hinchado
una bestia, cuyo aspecto
daba terror a la tierra,
guerra amenazaba al cielo.

In the above three text fragments each personage observes a beast that approaches and desires to make war. Each character perceives an element of terror, reflected in the language used to convey to the reader their respective vision or dream.

Of interest here is Mardoqueo's dream, particularly the figure of one of the dragons. When fellow Hebrew Isaac asks him "¿Consultaste al Señor sobre este caso?," and "¿Quién es aqueste?" as to the identity of the creature, he replies: "Este es Amán, un príncipe / que preside a los otros, tan soberbio / con el imperio, que me causa enojos" (II, 112). This identification is supported later in the work, when Mardoqueo tells Ester about

⁴⁰ The false prophet in Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo*.

the dream, just before the villain is hanged: “Aquel dragón feroz que peleaba / con el otro dragón menos furioso, / era este Amán. Que su poder acaba” (III, 129). As Covarrubias points out in the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, the Scriptures associate the dragon with Satan:

Por este nombre de dragón es significado el demonio en las Sagradas Letras y particularmente en muchos lugares del *Apocalipsi*, cap. 12: <<*Michael et Angeli eius proeliabantur cum dracone*>>. En otros significa los tiranos, monarcas, emperadores, reyes paganos que han perseguido la Iglesia y el pueblo de Dios antes y después del advenimiento de Cristo Nuestro Señor. (732)

Thus the assertion that Amán is a type of the Devil is sustained, and as is developed in *La hermosa Ester*, as a tyrant he will persecute the Jews many years before Christ comes on the scene.

In order to give the reader/spectator a sense of the anti-hero's pride, the playwright inserts a brief episode of his own creation:

AMÁN. ¿Quién sois vos?
PORT. Yo soy, señor,
 de la Audiencia Real portero;
 hacedme aqueste favor.
AMÁN. Ni agora puedo ni quiero
 servir.
PORT. ¡Qué extraño rigor!
AMÁN. ¿Vos, quién sois?
SEG. Pobre soldado
 que de Numidia ha llegado.

AMÁN. ¿Mejor no fuera servir
 hasta morir, que venir
 a ser ocioso y cansado?
 ¿Y vos, viejo?

TERC. Yo serví
 a Vastí.

AMÁN. Ya no hay Vastí.
 ¿No sabéis que reina Ester?
 ¿Qué os cansáis en pretender?
 ¡Hola! Apartadlos de aquí.

(Entrese.)

TERC. ¡Mal fuego del cielo baje
 sobre tu casa crüel,
 que tanta soberbia ataje. (II, 113)

Evoking the action of Elijah of calling down fire from heaven to consume the prophets of Baal (cf. 2 Kings 1), the third petitioner comprising the audience received by the prime minister wants to put a stop to the latter's arrogance and cruelty because he has dismissed their rightful demands. The scene underscores Amán's loathsome conduct and "conversely, enhances the stature of Mordecai. He appears not only as the champion of Israel, but of all those who suffer at the hands of the arrogant grandee" (Glaser 119).

This attribute as the defender of the Jewish people can be initially observed in Mardoqueo's second conversation with Isaac:

MARD. No pienso, Dios de Israel,

Hacer a tu culto ultraje.

ISAAC. Yo la rodilla le hiqué

con temor.

MARD. Yo, sin temor,

quedé cubierto y en pie.

ISAAC. No he visto tanto rigor. (II, 113)

The importance of the character of Isaac, another invention by the playwright, is succinctly explained by Aurelio González in his article “Mecanismos dramáticos de Lope de Vega: *La hermosa Ester*, del texto bíblico al texto teatral,” in which he states:

“También tiene función dramática importante Isaac, personaje de nombre paradigmático ⁴¹ que aparece en la segunda jornada como interlocutor amigo de Mardoqueo y que permite solucionar los antecedentes no mostrados escénicamente y establecer un contrapunto caracterizador de la dignidad de este último cuando entra Amán” (382).

González’s observation about the role of Isaac in the plot development serves to segue into the central conflict that characterizes the second act of the play – the enmity ⁴² between Amán and Mardoqueo, which stems from the latter’s refusal to pay respect to

⁴¹ “There can be no doubt that Lope deliberately selected the name of Isaac, one of the great patriarchs of the Old Testament, for his character. The inability of this character to take a stand against the royal favourite, having been named after the heroic biblical figure who convinced the Lord of his obedience in Genesis, magnifies the courage and steadfastness of Mardoqueo” (Canning 33).

⁴² The term “enmity” is used by Glaser on page 119 of his article to describe the conflict between the [male] hero of the play and the anti-hero Amán. The reader may recall that the same term is used in Genesis 3:15 to depict the warring between the seed of the serpent and that of the woman. Its use here is thus appropriate given the premise of our analysis of *La hermosa Ester* that Amán is a type of the serpent or Satan.

the former by bowing down before him. “Since Persian etiquette demanded the proskynesis, Mordecai’s behavior proved perplexing to readers and learned commentators alike...” (Glaser 119). For example, in her article “Fearful Symmetry in Lope de Vega’s *La hermosa Ester*,” Nancy Mayberry writes: “The canonical Biblical source does not explain why Mordechai will not bow to Haman” (18), but this statement is misleading. If one consults scripture with scripture, then the reason should be clear as to why Mordecai does not show reverence to Haman. In Esther 3:1 the evil prime minister is called “the Agagite,” which means he is a descendant of Agag. According to 1 Samuel 15:8, Agag was a king over the Amalekites during Saul’s reign in Israel. God ordered Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites for having ambushed Israel in the wilderness in Exodus 17:8-16. In the last verse of this passage God vows war against the nation of Amalek. Furthermore, Numbers 24:7 states that “his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” Therefore, the reason Mordecai does not bow down to Haman is because he is a Jew and because of what had been recorded concerning Amalek.

In a sonnet-monologue, a dramatic device to which the playwright has frequent recourse, Lope de Vega clarifies Mardoqueo’s motivation for conducting himself in a seemingly disrespectful manner in the previous scene with Isaac:

Dios de mis padres, no es soberbia mía
no me rendir a Amán, tan arrogante
como Nembrot, aquel feroz gigante
que escalar vuestros cielos pretendía;

introdújose así la idolatría;
no es bien que con el culto se levante,
debido a quien no tiene semejante,
quien no tiene poder seguro un día.
Vos sois la majestad a quien debida
es nuestra adoración, y por quien vierte
sangre en las aras donde sois servida.
Nadie con vos es poderoso y fuerte;
que como sois el dueño de la vida,
también tenéis el cetro de la muerte. (II, 113)

Strict in his observance of Jewish customs, Mardoqueo declares that a person may not offer to a mere mortal – Amán, Nemrod, etc. – an honor intended for God alone. By revealing the passing nature of human achievements in comparison and contrast to the omnipotence of the Almighty, through Mardoqueo Lope establishes a general antithesis that is made more specific with the likening of Amán to *Nembrot*. Lope's use of the Italian to reference the first Gentile king and second Antichrist type in the Scriptures evokes Dante's *Inferno*. In her book *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy*, Joan M. Ferrante observes the following: "The first giant Dante sees here is Nembrot, who built the Tower of Babel to reach heaven, leading to the confusion of tongues, the destruction of communication among different peoples; his pride harmed not only his own, but all peoples" (83). Thus, taking into account Mardoqueo's sonnet-monologue and Ferrante's perspective, the reader is able to notice an opposition at work. Nimrod's aspiration of

reaching the heavens, conveyed by the verb *escalar*, is contrasted by his implicit descent into hell. His introduction of *idolatría* into the world is countered by the *adoración* that is owed to God. Finally, Mardoqueo ends his speech by stating that both *la vida* and *la muerte* are controlled by God.

The underlying objective of the sonnet is to expose Amán for the prideful, arrogant man that he is. To further contrast the villain's attributes against Mardoqueo's heroism, the playwright has the latter, immediately following his initial confrontation with Amán, uncover the plot hatched by chamberlains Bagatán and Tares to assassinate king Asuero. The biblical account states: "And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told *it* unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name" (Esther 2:22). Lope is able to take this straightforward verse of scripture and successfully dramatize it into two dialogues, the first of which depicts Mardoqueo's revelation of the conspiracy to Ester:

MARD. ¡Sobrina!

ESTER. ¡Tío!

MARD. Deseo
 darte un aviso.

.....

MARD. Al Rey quieren darle muerte.

ESTER. ¡Al Rey, tío! ¿De qué suerte?

MARD. Todo el remedio te fío;
 a Bagatán y Tares,

porteros del Rey, lo oí... (II, 114)

After Ester informs the King of the attempt on his life, the two doorkeepers are hanged and the royal pair has the following exchange:

ASUERO. ¿Quién te contó
de aquestos el mal deseo?

ESTER. Un hebreo me avisó.

ASUERO. ¿Y es su nombre?

ESTER. ¡Mardoqueo! (II, 115)

Moreover, the King officially recognizes Mardoqueo's bravery as he instructs his scribe Adamata:

Si me escribieres
los servicios destes días,
tú que después los refieres,
pon que me dio Mardoqueo
vida, y con doble deseo
desta traición me libró. (II, 115)

Despite this recognition Mardoqueo has yet to receive a recompense for his actions.

As the adversary of the honorable Mardoqueo, Amán by definition is wickedness personified. He immediately challenges the Jew's courage, stating: "Confiesan tantas maldades, / que es poco cuchillo y fuego" (II, 115). The implication is that, if Mardoqueo truly wanted to demonstrate his bravery to the king, he would have intervened personally to thwart the attempted assassination by exerting some force of his own. In the next

scene, after another instance in which Mardoqueo refuses to bow down to Amán, telling Marsanes “Solo al Supremo Señor / pongo la rodilla en tierra,” the vizier becomes enraged and expresses his anger in the following verses:

¡A mí, que al salir del Oriente
el sol se humilla a mi frente!
.....
¡A mí, que si quiero, al suelo
haré humillar las estrellas
y los planetas del cielo,
.....
¡A mí, de quien tiembla agora,
desde el Gange hasta el Jordán,
cuanto el sol ilustra y dora!
¡Al virrey, al rey Amán,
de cuanto mira el aurora!
¡A mí, que en amaneciendo
cantan mil himnos las aves,
.....
solo mi nombre diciendo!
¡A mí, un triste, un vil hebreo! (II, 116)

The outburst, marked by the exclamatory anaphoric phrase *¡A mí...!* emphasizes Amán’s self-centeredness, a trait found in all of the Antichrist types in this study, and notably in

Lucifer.⁴³ In fact, a parallel can be drawn between Amán's use of the anaphora and the son of the morning's repetition of "I will..." in the biblical text. Glaser opines that Amán's diatribe "offers a prime example of Lope's mastery of the art of fitting speech to character. Moreover, it compels attention because of the contrast to Mordecai's monologue, marked throughout by quiet and dignity" (121). Unlike the valiant Jew, who trusts in God to override men's fortunes ("que como sois el dueño de la vida, / también tenéis el cetro de la muerte."), Amán aspires to be a deity much like Lucifer did before the foundation of the world.

Specifically, the evil prime minister deceives himself into believing that he is the master of the universe. For example, he speaks of the sun, stars, and planets humbling themselves before his sight ("el sol se humilla a mi frente..."). On the point of the *sol*, if one were to press the Antichrist typology, one could argue that Amán expects the Sun of righteousness (cf. Malachi 4:2; a type of Christ in my view⁴⁴) to bow down and serve him, just as he expects of Mardoqueo. Regarding the *himnos*, typically sung to worship Christ, Amán insists that they are meant for him. Furthermore, like the traitors Bagatán and Tares who were brought to justice and condemned to death thanks in large part to Mardoqueo, Amán has his eye on the prize of attaining royal eminence (¡Al virrey, al rey Amán...!) thus qualifying him as a turncoat as well because as prime minister he is supposed to serve Asuero, not attempt to usurp him. The irony then of Amán's speech is

⁴³ Isaiah 14:13-14 – "...I will ascend into the heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

⁴⁴ Procopius concurs with this notion, "intimating the time of his abode on earth as man, wherein to those who came to him he afforded the light of day" (qtd. in Govett 324).

that it reveals the hubris that will ultimately be his undoing. In *Pathos y tabú en el teatro bíblico del Siglo de Oro*, Juan O. Valencia explains this paradox in the following manner: “En claro contraste con su sentimiento vano de propia seguridad, vemos en Amán la inseguridad de una grandeza cimentada en la soberbia. Es un personaje desgarrado por <<los contrastes>>: su vanagloria le lleva a querer escalar las estrellas y su suerte lo arroja hasta los suelos” (67), much like his predecessor Nimrod, who at the *suelo* of the Tower of Babel attempted to reach *las estrellas*.

Armed with this hatred for Mardoqueo and all of the Hebrews, in the next scene Amán provides the king with details of their beliefs and practices in hopes of convincing him to issue a decree calling for their annihilation:

Los hebreos que trajo de Judea
Nabucodonosor no te obedecen.
Lo primero, no adoran a tus dioses,
porque al Dios de Abraham y de sus padres
sacrifican en altos holocaustos ⁴⁵
la blanca oveja y el dorado toro;
estos pervierten los demás vasallos,
estos hacen mil fieros latrocinios,
y destos nace quien desea tu muerte. (II, 116)

⁴⁵ “Era un sacrificio particular que los judíos hacían a Dios, en el cual no se reservaba ninguna cosa de la víctima sino que todo se consumía en el fuego” (Covarrubias 1063).

As a skilled deceiver, Amán weaves some truth in his ball of lies. For example, while Exodus 32 does report that Aaron made a golden calf (*el dorado toro*) and the children of Israel offered up to it burnt offerings or *holocaustos*, he fails to mention that Moses burnt the calf in the fire and ground it to powder. Also, there is no indication anywhere in *La hermosa Ester* that the Jews desired the king's death; quite the contrary given Mardoqueo's intervention.

This comportment on the part of Amán definitely establishes him as a type of the Antichrist. The irrational desire to kill every Jew is evil to say the least, and satanic according to Revelation 12. And just like those who refuse to bow down and worship the image of the beast and suffer death by beheading⁴⁶, Amán vows to carry out the same punishment, which is apparent by the exchange he has with Marsanes, another invented character by Lope who serves to increase tension in the play:

MARS.
para que el miserable Mardoqueo
vea si es bien que humille la cabeza
a los virreyes del divino Asuero.

AMÁN. Humillarála presto sin el cuerpo
y bañaráse en sangre de su infame
progenie, porque en Susa irá corriendo
como en las tempestades los arroyos. (II, 116)

⁴⁶ Revelation 20:4 – "...and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image..."

Given Amán's pledge to exterminate the Jewish race, coupled with his use of the term *holocausto* when misrepresenting to king Asuero their religious practices, contemporary readers of *La hermosa Ester* are able to perceive an undeniable parallel between this forerunner of the son of perdition in a seventeenth century Old Testament drama and the twentieth century dictator Adolf Hitler who was responsible for the Holocaust that included the killing of six million Jews, whose bodies were disposed of mainly by fire. On page 120 of the book *Sieg Heil!* by Stefan Lorant, there is a photograph of Hitler when he registered with the Nazi Party in Austria showing 555 as his identification number. Some believe this signifies that Adolf Hitler is the last world tyrant before the appearance of Antichrist, whose number is 666. However, military history journalist Robin Cross, in his book *Hitler: An Illustrated Life*, explains the controversy surrounding the identification number. Cross writes:

This membership card was exhibited during the Nazi era, claiming that Hitler was the fifth member of the German Workers' Party (DAP). In reality he was the fifty-fifth, and his membership number was later doctored to 555 so that the party would appear to have more members. Various versions of Hitler's DAP card have surfaced since, featuring numbers as diverse as 5, 555, and 7. (38)

Returning now to our analysis of *La hermosa Ester*, we have seen thus far that Amán's plan to destroy Mardoqueo occupies the majority of act two. Ester's invitation to the prime minister and Asuero serves to remind the reader of the principal conflict in the dramatic trajectory. Puffed up with pride, Amán perceives in the queen's gesture yet another indication of special favor that will not allow him to put aside Mardoqueo's audacity. It bothers him so much that he must constantly remind himself of his enemy's

repulsiveness. Ruminating on his self-made quandary, he reveals his sense of helplessness to Marsanes:

¿No habéis visto un perro humilde,
que con lengua ladradora,
alrededor de un mastín
pretende que huya y corra,
y que el mastín se está quedo,
y apenas abre la boca,
como que ni ve ni siente
que la cabeza le rompa?
Pues pensad que Mardoqueo
es este mastín. ¿Qué importa
que yo le ladre y sentencie,
que ni las rodillas dobla,
ni aun humilla la cabeza? (II, 121)

In his unpublished doctoral dissertation “The Old Testament Drama of the Siglo de Oro,” Robert N. Sherwill comments on the antagonist’s turmoil: “Amán is the one true psychological character portrayed in Lope’s Old Testament dramas. Amán develops a definite neurosis, a persecution complex that borders in madness” (qtd. in Valencia 67). Even when it appears that Amán possesses power over Mardoqueo, he is unable to find peace of mind. Marsanes fuels the vizier’s anger and humiliation by pointing out to him “Esa culpa tuya es toda.” He then tells him:

Haz que dentro de una hora,
de cuarenta pies en alto,
labre tu guarda una horca
tan enfrente de Palacio,
que la Reina tu señora
y el Rey, estando comiendo,
la puedan ver, y que pongan
les ruegas en ella al hebreo,
para que muera sin honra,
y comas con gusto tú. (II, 121)

Confident that at last he will prevail with the erection of a gallows from which to hang Mardoqueo, Amán boasts of this cunning:

que no hay oro, seda y telas,
granas tirias, persas joyas,
gobiernos, reinos, imperios,
mesas, deleites, aromas,
que causen tanta gloria
como vengar los agravios de la honra. (II, 122)

Readers familiar with the book of Esther know that Amán's gloating is in vain because "...they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:8), an irony that is echoed by Asuero when he says "ocupar la horca Amán / que esperaba Mardoqueo" (III, 129).

The primary objective of the opening scene of act three is to make a record of the fact that Mardoqueo still has not been rewarded for foiling the assassination plot against Asuero. Like many of the servants of Golden Age Theater, one of Egeo's roles in *La hermosa Ester* is to provide information (González 380), and thus he conveys the following to the king:

EGEO. Este día, Mardoqueo
 descubrió, secreto y cauto,
 la conjuración de Tares
 y Bagatán.

ASUERO. ¿Qué le han dado?

EGEO. Ninguna cosa, señor. (III, 123)

With the intention of compensating Mardoqueo, the King asks for Amán's advice regarding the most appropriate way to honor such an upright man for whom he has much appreciation:

Amán, si un Rey disease
honrar un noble varón,
para dar satisfacción
del gusto con que le amase,
¿qué es lo que haría por él? (III, 123)

Convinced that the King is referring to him, Amán replies:

 He pensado
que si el Rey le quiere hacer

honra, le mande vestir
sus vestiduras reales,
pedras y joyas iguales,
y que le mande salir
con su cetro y su corona
a pasear la ciudad,
y por más autoridad,
acompañe su persona
un príncipe que el caballo
lleve de rienda...(III, 124)

While the events leading up to Amán's demise – the vizier's inopportune visit to the palace, the banquet offered by Ester, and Mardoqueo's triumphal ride through Susa – closely follow the biblical account, for Lope “fidelity to the source never means renouncing his creative freedom as the construction of the scenes and the development of their dramatic potentialities show” (Glaser 125). One elucidating example is the manner in which the playwright treats the antagonist's humiliation. Amán, who had constructed a gallows for Mardoqueo, is obligated to bestow upon the Jew the accolades that he had coveted the most. He laments his situation in the following manner:

¡Cuan mejor puedo decir,
soberbia, en este lugar,
que es comenzar a bajar
no tener más que subir!

¿En qué tendré confianza,
o quien no se pierde en ella,
pues un caballo atropella
lo mejor de mi esperanza?

.....

En una horca pensé
subirle: mi afrenta callo,
pues subido en un caballo,
pone en mi cabeza al pie.
¡Cielos! ¿Quién hay que os entienda?
Él parece que me ahoga,
pues a quien buscaba sogas
le voy llevando de rienda. (III, 124-25)

As Juan Valencia previously stated, Amán is governed by contrasts that underscore his doom. The absence of fulfillment of his aspirations is emphasized by the use of contradictory terms (*bajar-subir*, *caballo-pie*, and *soga-rienda*) that form the deliberate structure of his speech. At last he comes to terms with the fact that his exaggerated hubris has caused him to be an outcast, and ultimately a victim.

For the purpose of providing swiftness and unity to the action, Lope condenses into one banquet the two that are presented in the closing chapters of the biblical Esther. After pleasantries are exchanged, the guests take their seats and the musicians play a song about Nimrod's reckless attempt to reach the heavens. The song begins and ends with the

verses “Dios ensalza los humildes / y derriba los soberbios,” taken from James 4:6, to reiterate the recurring theme of the work – that God gives grace to the humble Ester and Mardoqueo while resisting the prideful Amán.

La hermosa Ester reaches its climax with the title character’s straightforward denunciation of the evil prime minister – “Este Amán, / aqieste enemigo nuestro” (III, 128). In a last ditch effort to save himself, Amán tries to persuade the queen to exercise mercy:

mira estos ojos que ayer
tuvieron tanto poder,
que bañan de llanto el suelo,
e imita en piedad al cielo
como en hermosura, Ester.
.....
Más en perdonarme adquieres
que yo en vivir, pues es más
que ser yo, ser tú quien eres. (III, 129)

However, his last act of desperation only serves to expedite his execution, which Asuero orders immediately:

Llevadle y ponedle en ella,
porque vea mi Ester bella
cuánto soy agradecido
al favor que he recibido

de los hebreos y della. (III, 130)

Amán's final plea is another invention by Lope, the motivation for which may have had to do with pressures by the [Catholic] *autores* of the era to insist that the playwright portray Ester as a type of Mary, given that the antagonist's supplication to the queen elevated her status as someone who could dispense mercy at will, as is the case of Rome's teachings of Mary as a co-redeemer alongside Christ. In his article "Lope de Vega, un puesto de cronista y *La hermosa Ester (1610-1621)*," Jack Weiner articulates this point of view:

... es de particular interés la historia de Ester, reina judía persa y esposa del rey Asuero. En el campo de las prefiguraciones dicha reina lo es de la Virgen María. Los exégetas del Nuevo Testamento concluyen que, como ella intercede con Asuero para salvar al pueblo judío del mal que es Amán, María intercede con Cristo para salvar al mundo entero del mal que es el Diablo. (724)

In fact, the song with which the play concludes seems to support the interpretation of Ester as a foreshadowing of Mary:

Hoy salva a Israel
la divina Ester.
Hoy, Ester dichosa,
Figura sagrada
de otra Ester guardada
para ser esposa,
más pura y hermosa,
de más alto Rey.
Hoy salva a Israel

La divina Ester. (III, 131)

However, in my estimation there are problems with such an interpretation. Its proponents contend that, just as Ester saves the Jews from the wrath of Amán, so Mary saves the human race from Satan (Canning 41). While this may comport with Catholic literature and theology alike, it must be remembered that *La hermosa Ester* is a *comedia bíblica* and not a *comedia de santos*, and as such I believe one must look within the Bible to determine if this reading can be substantiated. In the first place, there is not a single verse or passage of Scripture that suggests that Mary saved anyone from anything. In fact, the last mention of Mary in the Bible occurs in Acts 1:14⁴⁷, where she is in a state of supplication and is not the object of worship or anyone's prayers. Also, according to Paul in 1 Timothy 2:5, there is "...one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," which argues against the idea of an intercessor other than Christ.

Furthermore, upon revisiting the song at the end of the play, it speaks of "*otra Ester guardada / para ser esposa, / ... / de más alto Rey.*" Roman Catholic tradition would probably argue that this description applies to Mary because she is thought of as the queen of heaven, but again, we are dealing with a biblical drama and so from a scriptural standpoint⁴⁸, I maintain that since the story of Esther in prophetic typology is the story of Israel being restored as the wife and queen of Jehovah the king, therefore

⁴⁷ "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

⁴⁸ The book of Hosea, for example, deals primarily with the temporary rejection of Israel as a cast off wife (2:1, 14) who will later be reconciled to her husband (Isaiah 54:5).

Esther herself prefigures this bride. In another study about the figure of Esther in Golden Age drama⁴⁹, Weiner thinks that the song itself merely represents “un fin convencional” rather than “uno de base temático-estructural” (42).

⁴⁹ Weiner, Jack. “La reina Ester en el teatro del Siglo de Oro español: dos puntos de vista.” *En busca de la justicia social. Estudios sobre el teatro español del Siglo de Oro*. Ptomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1984.

La vida y muerte de Herodes

In five of the six biblical plays that comprise this study, the scriptural source is the basis for all three acts of these works, yet in *La vida y muerte de Herodes* Tirso de Molina uses as his source material the third volume of Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* for the first two acts, and Matthew chapter 2 for the third and final act. The first act is divided into three main scenes or *cuadros*. The initial *cuadro* takes place in the palace of the old Idumean king Antípatro, who is arranging marriages which will be politically favorable for his eldest son Faseló and daughter Salomé. He plans on marrying them off to Mariadnes and Aristóbulo, children to the king of Jerusalem, Hircano. Antípatro explains the importance of the arrangement in the following manner:

De Hircano hijos los dos son,
como Salomé y Faseló
míos, si permite el Cielo
darme en ellos sucesión,
del alcázar de Sión
poseerán el solio real,
y con ventura inmortal
gozará sangre idumea,
mezclándole con la hebrea,
un reino sacerdotal. (I, 91-100)

Antípatro is obviously thinking of his political legacy; the use of the term *solio* is appropriate, as it refers to the throne of David.⁵⁰ Although Antípatro does not use the word *solio* to allude to brothers battling over political ascendancy, this is precisely what transpires later in the play and thus his words represent a foreshadowing of the fraternal quarrel that is about to unfold between Faselos and Herodes.

Linked with Antípatro's desire to attain political solvency is the topic of *limpieza de sangre*; he states that his Idumean blood will reap the benefits of a priestly reign once it is mixed with Hebrew blood. The mere mention of this proposed adulteration appears to suggest that the king already realizes that pure blood does not come from the Idumean line. Furthermore, in order to govern in Judea one had to be one of the Hasmoneans, a detail acknowledged by Antípatro:

Descendiente generoso
es de Judas Macabeo,
que al linaje Asamoneo
dio blasón limpio y glorioso; (I, 71-74)

It is worth noting that Judah the Maccabee was the son of Mattathias the Hasmonean and was regarded as the hero of Judea's fight for independence from the Syrian Greeks (Fornoff 70). María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, in her biography *Herodes: su persona, reinado y dinastía*, offers the following explanation regarding the issue of a tainted blood line surrounding the protagonist:

⁵⁰ The reader may recall that in *Los cabellos de Absalón*, David's rebellious son and title character employs the term in the context of his brother Ammon, who represents an impediment to his Absalom's political aspirations: "quedo yo más cerca al solio; / que a quien aspira a reinar, / cada hermano es un estorbo" (I, 216-18).

Un motivo básico de la impopularidad de Herodes en su reino era su condición de extranjero; no sólo no pertenecía a ninguna de las dos familias reales, la davídica ni la macabea –ni al linaje sacerdotal de Aarón–, sino que,..., nadie ignoraba que era originario de la Idumea (que sólo tres generaciones antes había adoptado el judaísmo por la conquista de Juan Hircano). Tal circunstancia creó un odio que, con toda su habilidad, Herodes jamás supo vencer,... (27).

From a biblical perspective, in order to comprehend the reason for which Idumean blood is considered unclean, it is recommended that the reader review Genesis 25:24-34 as well as the short book of Obadiah. In these two sources the judgment of God against Esau or Edom (from where we get the word Idumean) is revealed. As the name indicates, the Idumeans were descendants of Esau, Isaac's oldest son who sold his birthright to Jacob (later called Israel); in a similar way, this is what occurs in Tirso's work between Faselos and Herodes. In his description of the relationship between Judea and Edom, Josephus does not mention any sort of sibling rivalry between them; thus it is possible that the rival depicted in the Bible between the founders of these two tribes influenced the poet's characterization of Antípatro's two sons.

This rivalry between Jacob and Esau, the eponymous heroes respectively of Israel and Edom, is an important scriptural motif establishing the spiritual superiority of the people of Israel as bearers of the messianic cup, and biblical sentiment towards the Edomites is for the most part disapproving (Amos 1.11; Psalms 137.7-9f), though the people of Israel are enjoined in Deuteronomy 23.7 not to abhor the Edomite "for he is your brother..." (Fornoff 69-70)

To reiterate, the rivalry motif is significant in *La vida y muerte de Herodes* because from it emerges the title character as a type of the Antichrist. The reader will recall that Cain and Absalom, also Antichrist types, fought with their brothers as well and eventually committed fratricide. In the section "Herod out of history" from the introduction to

Frederick Fornoff's critical edition of *La vida y muerte de Herodes*, the editor points to a source that supports the designation of Herod as an Antichrist type: "In the ninth century, Hrabanus Maurus singles out Herod as an Idumean who, by usurping the Jewish throne, fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 49.10 and Numbers 24.18. It seems likely that Tirso, at some level, has conceived of Herod as Antichrist" (26).

The peculiar and precise structure of Herod's extensive opening lines of the play sets in motion the typological reading of *La vida y muerte de Herodes*. The speech is divided into two parts, and according to Fornoff this division alludes to a duality that is analogous to the dual nature of Christ. The analogy consists of a formal identity of two entities that are essentially antithetical; in other words, the duality of Herod is profane while Christ's is sacred. Therefore, it appears as no accident that the first 83 verses (171-254) of Herod's initial speech describe his lust for blood while the last 83 (255-338) reveal his amorous tendencies.

In the first half of the discourse Herod returns victorious from battle from his native Ascalón. The ruthless disposition of the protagonist is made known immediately with images of his enemies' blood flowing like the Ganges river: "al Ganges, porque se corra /... / sangre, que aumentó sus olas" (I, 196, 202). With a boastful tone he recounts his victories, proud to recognize his cruelty along the way. The following portion of Herod's speech employs contrasting metaphors that highlight good and evil in light of the tyrant's military conquests:

No perdoné ningún sexo:

lirio cano, joven rosa,

caña humilde, roble fuerte,
madre casta ni hija hermosa.
Pero donde se ve más
mi venganza victoriosa
fue en la pueril inocencia,
pues de las madres piadosas
arrancando tiernos hijos,
mostré que mi sed provoca
sangre en leche de inocentes
medio blanca y medio roja. (207-18)

On the one hand, it could be argued that this section represents a foreshadowing of the slaughter of the innocents that takes place in act three, yet what is of interest here is the manner in which the poet develops antithetical metaphors using the colors red and white. In the present context, the whiteness that is associated with the children's innocence, an innocence emphasized by the adjective *pueril*, is stained with the bloodshed by Herod. In the last three verses of the above cited fragment the protagonist explains that his thirst for war and death (symbolized by the blood) eclipsed the children's thirst for life (symbolized by the milk), and therefore, was able to carry out his brutal campaign.

In a more general way which encompasses the central premise of the analysis of *La vida y muerte de Herodes*, one could say that the use of the colors red and white alludes to a greater antithesis involving Herod and Christ. Having already indicated that Herod was a descendant of the Idumeans, who were from the line of Esau (also known as

Edom), it is curious to note that Isaac's firstborn "...came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau" (Gen. 25:25). Moreover, taking into account that Esau was an astute hunter and that generally speaking red is associated with war and evil (like the great red dragon of Rev. 12:3) it is not difficult to establish a connection between Herod and the color red. This leaves the color white, which is typically used to connote purity. Also, and according to Paul in 1 Cor. 3:1-2 and Peter in 1 Peter 2:2, milk is a metaphor for the words of scripture that testify of Christ.

The second part of Herod's inaugural speech begins with "entré en una galería" (I, 255), referring to the portrait gallery located inside the Armenian castle recently sacked by Herod and his men. Leaving the desolation outside and the subsequent entering into the gallery are actions analogous to the change in tone between the first half of the discourse, characterized by the shedding of blood, and this second half, when Herod's emotions are revealed; and if the soul is the seat of the passions, and these are satisfied by the fine arts, then it is natural that Herod would be drawn to one of the portraits:

Pero, entre tantas bellezas,
la que por fénix de todas
gozaba el lugar supremo
en la mitad de la lonja
era una hermosa judía (I, 287-91).

Herod falls in love with the woman in the portrait, and he seems to justify his inflamed passions by citing cases in the Old Testament of David and Solomon, who succumbed to the seductive powers of temptation:

precipitar victoriosa
Bersabé al Profeta Rey
(que aun cantando creo que llora),
y, en fin, bien pudo rendir
las letras, que el amor postra,
del Rey pacífico y sabio
la hermosura de Etiopia. (I, 305-310)

It is worth pointing out that in a similar vein, the Renaissance poet Cristóbal de Castillejo, through his interlocutor Fileno in *Diálogo que habla de las condiciones de las mujeres* (1546), demonstrates how love overshadows all other emotions:

No hay señor
tan grande ni emperador
que a mujeres no haya sido
inclinado y sometido
por gozar de su favor
y afición;
y tras esta obligación
van debaxo de sus leyes
grandes, príncipes y reyes,
como lo fue Salomón
poderoso,
y su padre glorioso,

gran rey de Jerusalén;
Herodes después también,
y el gran Hércules famoso
y otros tales.

Furthermore, Herod describes the effect of looking intensely at the painting:

Y como un alma pintada,
dejando en prendas la propia,
salí de mí y del castillo
sin libertad ni memoria. (I, 319-22)

The “dejar el alma en prendas” evokes images of a soul broken in several pieces. The irony here is that, for a few moments at least, the gallery offers Herod an escape from the very chaos that he created, but in the end he leaves the castle a slave to his passions and with no tranquility of spirit.

Upon discovering that the woman in the painting is his brother’s future wife Mariadnes, and when Faselos insists on reminding Herod of his envy of the promised bride’s beauty by saying

pues adoras del sol los rayos rojos,
mi cortedad perdona y con tu dama
coteja esa belleza, aunque en pintura,
y alaba, si no envidias, mi ventura (I, 383-386),

the protagonist becomes infuriated and vows to get even with Antípatro’s firstborn:

Antes que le dé la mano,

cuando el corazón la di,
un nuevo Caín en mí
verá Faseló, mi hermano, (401-404)

The typology is evident. Cain, as a type of the seed of the serpent and "...*who* was of that wicked one" (1 John 3:12), had a mark that identified him as a murderer. Likewise, the mere mention of this biblical personage by Herod will in turn identify him as another fratricide, and more significantly, as a precursor to the Antichrist.

The second *cuadro* of act one takes place in the palace of Hircano, king of Judea and high priest of Jerusalem. It is clear from what he dictates to the scribe Eliacer that he perceives the union of the two kingdoms as beneficial to himself. Referring to Antípatro, he says:

es mi amigo y comarcano,
diome el Senado romano
por su intercesión el reino.
Hame pedido a mi hija
para esposa de Faseló,
nuestra ley guarda, y el Cielo
me aconseja que le elija. (I, 541-47)

In other words, the influence that Antípatro has in Rome is necessary for Hircano's tenure in office, and the spiritual reputation of Hircano's lineage is vital for the improvement and fusion of Antípatro's temporal powers. In terms of the structure of the drama to this point, if one accepts the first two *cuadros* as occurring simultaneously as

Fornoff suggests, then the reader can appreciate the symmetry and harmony developed by the playwright with respect to Edom and Judea, which historically were antagonistic powers. When Hircano inquires about his children Aristóbulo and Mariadnes, Eliacer informs him “A caza querían salir” (604).

As was discussed in the case of Haman as an Antichrist figure in *La hermosa Ester*, with his relationship to Nimrod and Pharaoh, the hunt motif in *La vida y muerte de Herodes* is significant because it is another element in Tirso’s drama that connects Herod to the son of perdition. Taking into account the established link between Herod and Esau and the fact that the latter was an astute hunter like Nimrod, consider as a literary precedent from the Middle Ages the Sephardic biblical ballad *Nacimiento y vocación de Abraham*, a portion of which is reproduced here⁵¹:

Cuando el rey Nimrod al campo salía,
Mirava en el cielo y en la estrellería,
Vido una luz santa en la judería,
Que había de nacer Avraham Avinu.

Avraham avinu, padre querido,
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel.

Luego a las comadres encomendava
Que toda mujer que preñada quedava

⁵¹ Lyrics taken from: <http://www.jewishfolksongs.com/en/cuando-el-rey-nimrod>.

Y si hijo pariere al punto lo mataran

Que havía de nacer Avraham Avinu.

In the article “The Biblical Ballads of the Sephardic Jews” Royce Miller attributes some of the peculiarities of this narrative song to a lack of comprehension of the original source and also to the proximity of Nimrod to the events in the ballad in question:

Some changes are based on misunderstandings of the original story. Nimrod, identified by Attias as a king of Babel, appears in the role of the Pharaoh of Egypt in “Birth and Calling of Abraham”, confusion based probably on the proximity of the Biblical Nimrod (Gen. 10) to the account of the ballad narrative (Gen. 11). The same ballad further confuses the narrative of the birth of Abraham with that of Moses: the king looks out over the Jewish quarter of the city, sees signs of the imminent birth of Abraham, and orders the death of all the firstborn sons of the Jews. (354-5)

Nimrod in effect is placed in the role of Pharaoh, as it was the latter who had ordered the killing of all newborn males⁵² and not his counterpart who was the first to reign over Babylon. Miller suggests that this juxtaposition is the result of the proximity in appearance in the Scriptures between Nimrod and Abraham.⁵³ However, it is hard to fathom that within Sephardic Jewish tradition such confusion was even generated, given the distinct places Abraham and Moses hold in the history of Israel. This textual perplexity is further evidenced in the relationship between Nimrod’s actions of going to the countryside and that of consulting the stars, a practice known of the Moors many centuries after the cessation of the construction of the Tower of Babel:

Cuando el rey Nimrod al campo salía,

⁵² Exodus 1:22 – “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.”

⁵³ 48 verses separate them: Gen. 10:8-11:26.

miraba en el cielo y en la estrellería,

Given the Bible's description of Nimrod as an avid hunter it is logical that the first verse of *Nacimiento y vocación de Abraham* depicts him leaving for the fields with the intention of catching something. However, the insertion of the term *estrellería* in the second verse, to suggest that Nimrod had resorted to astrology to receive the order to kill all male babies in an effort to prevent the birth of the future patriarch of the Hebrew people, does not have a basis in the Scriptures.

It is thus pertinent to discuss the perspective offered by Alexander Hislop in his work *The Two Babylons*, which traces the origins of papal worship to the veneration of Nimrod and his wife Semiramis. Of specific interest here is the connection Hislop makes between Nimrod and Astrology. At the beginning of the chapter entitled "Objects of Worship" Hislop cites a book called *Nineveh and its Remains*: "The zodiacal signs.... Show unequivocally that the Greeks derived their notions and arrangements of the zodiac [and consequently their Mythology, that was intertwined with it] from the Chaldees. The identity of Nimrod with the constellation Orion is not to be rejected" (13). Taking into account that, according to Greek mythology Orion was a gigantic hunter who suffered a violent death caused by an arrow shot by Artemis, one can understand why it is stated that the connection between Orion and Nimrod cannot be denied. In one of the appendices of his work, Hislop continues:

Now the knowledge of this widely diffused myth casts light on the *secret* meaning of the Aurora, given to the wife of Orion, to whose marriage with that "mighty hunter" Homer refers (*Odyssey*, lib. V. II. 120, 121). ... As Orion, according to Persian accounts, was Nimrod; and Nimrod, under the name of Ninus, was worshipped as the *son* of his wife, when he came to be deified as the sun-god, (305)

Given the import of *The Two Babylons* the reader can now establish a link between Nimrod and the allusion to the stars in the ballad without diminishing the devotional value of the composition – the birth of a son (Abraham). Moreover, in cases where the Scriptures do not provide many details, as in the announcement of Abraham’s birth, oral tradition assumes the role of divulging such news. The electronic magazine *Jewish Heritage Online* explains it in the following manner:

Many of these *Midrashim* tell of the evil King Nimrod, a famed hunter and astrologer, who not only foretold the birth of Abraham but learned that Abraham would overthrow his idolatrous regime with a new faith in one God. In order to prevent this outcome (especially threatening since the king thought himself a god), Nimrod sets out to destroy all newborn baby boys. Abraham is miraculously saved and goes on to outsmart the King and survive a fiery furnace. *Cuando el Rey Nimrod* is a Ladino song that celebrates the birth of Abraham. It incorporates many elements taken from the Nimrod *midrashim*. This song is sung as a Shabbat *z'mira* (table song) and at circumcisions. The exact date of its origin is unknown but it probably dates from the 16th or 17th century. (Zucker)

Another internet source⁵⁴ that is dedicated to bringing awareness to the topic of Jewish folklore in these musical compositions suggests that *Nacimiento y vocación de Abraham* is based on an account within the *Me'am Lo'ez*, a compendium of the Talmud believed to have been written by Rabbi Yaakov Culi.

Returning now to *La vida y muerte de Herodes*, the third *cuadro* of act one represents a convergence in Bethlehem of the action initiated in the first two *cuadros* in Ascalón and Jerusalem. As a result of the change in scenery from court to village, “the plans of men are disrupted and subordinated to a divine plan through the instrumentation

⁵⁴ <http://www.jewishfolksongs.com/en/kings-and-queens#cuando>.

of Herod, Antipater's second-born son, who wants Mariamne for himself" (Fornoff 78). In other words, in this scene the spectator begins to see how the hunt motif allows Herod to concoct his plan of having Mariadnes and stripping his brother Faselos of his authority. The scene begins with two shepherds Pachón and Tirso, whose function essentially is that of bearing witness. They engage in humorous conversation concerning Fenisa, a shepherdess with whom Pachón is in love; however, she does not have the same feelings for him, responding to his amorous advances with punches to the face. Tirso then announces that Aristóbulo and Mariadnes – "Nuevos Príncipes serán / que a volar garzas saldrán" (I, 835-6) – are the ones that have come to hunt. Meanwhile, Herod and his servant Josefo appear, and once again the former alludes to the first fratricide as a stern warning to his brother if he does not permit him to take Mariadnes for himself:

No la gozará Faselos,
por más que lo intente Hircano,
aunque del primer hermano
renueve agravios al cielo. (I, 854-857)

When Josefo asks him how he plans on preventing the already arranged marriage, Herod first responds with envious rage, regretful of the fact that Faselos did not have to put any effort into getting Mariadnes:

Loco estoy y necio estás;
amor que no se ha adquirido
con dificultad no sé
que tenga estima ni fama. (I, 860-63)

And then he explains his sinister, deceitful plan:

Veré mañana a mi dama;
mi hermano la pintaré
de suerte que lo aborrezca.
Diré que es desagradable,
descortés, tosco, intratable,
y porque mal le parezca,
.....
pintaré en él el extremo
de un esposo, un Polifemo,
de un Coricleo, un Tersites. (I, 864-73)

Herod's references to characters of epic poetry highlight the extent to which he will go to slander his own brother. First, he likens Faselto to Polifemo, the Cyclops whose eye Odysseus gouged out in order to escape from the cave; from this the reader can gather that Herod sees himself as the hero and Faselto the villain. He then refers to his brother as a Tersites, who, according to Fornoff's endnote at the end of his edition of the play (page 321, note #37), was the ugliest Greek at Troy who gouged out the eyes of Queen Penthesileia while she lay dying. With this reference Herod seems to intimate that Faselto is inferior in terms of beauty and that he cannot be trusted to care for his future bride.

The frequent mention of painting in this first act of the play, coupled with the gouging out of the eyes of the Greek characters referenced by Herod here in his conversation with Josefo, evoke observations made by Anita K. Stoll in her article "The

Sacred and Profane in Tirso's *La vida y muerte de Herodes*." She mentions how both royal families in the play are exceedingly prideful and the superior value they place on worldly beauty. With respect to the title character she notes: "Herodes represents the extreme to which one member of this society may go" (24). With pride and ambition comes envy, and as Stoll observes, "Herodes repeats the sin of envy of Cain, the sin of disobedience of Adam and Eve, the sin of overweening pride of Lucifer; he is bloodthirsty, vengeful, and lacking in self-control" (24). Regarding the "sin of disobedience of Adam and Eve," who disobeyed their heavenly Father by partaking of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, this refers to Herod's disobedience of his father Antípatro's wishes that Faseló marry Mariadnes:

¡Muera mi hermano traidor
y mi padre, pues que pasa
las leyes que mi amor tasa,
porque yo con ellas muera! (I, 431-34)

And once again one can see the case being made for Herod being a type of the Antichrist, especially with Stoll's allusion to the former's pride being like the "overweening pride of Lucifer." And like the Antichrist figure Absalom in Calderon's *Los cabellos de Absalón*, Herod is the appropriate embodiment of ambition in Tirso's drama.

Returning now to the play, at the end of the conversation between Herod and Josefo the former responds to noises heard around them in the countryside by inquiring of his servant "¿qué gentes son éstas?" (I, 874) As the shepherd Tirso previously indicated, they are Mariadnes and her brother Aristóbulo, who have embarked on a hunt. After

hearing sounds of a horse galloping, signaled by the playwright's annotation *Ruido de dentro, como que corre un caballo*, the voice of Tirso suddenly cries "¡Tened, tened!" (I, 904) pleading for someone to help Mariadnes because she has just fallen from her horse. Herod then takes Mariadnes in his arms and, as if confiding in the shepherds as to his obsession for the princess, says:

Pastores, sentid conmigo
hoy la pérdida mayor
que pudo hacer el amor;
llamadme, si es que os obligo,
venturoso, desdichado,
en el hallazgo que he hecho. (I, 914-19)

Reacting to Herod's double-mindedness, Pachón jokingly asks "Mas ¿si se ha descalabrado?" suggesting that one might think Herod also hit his head during Mariadnes' fall from the horse.

Tying together the hunt motif and Herod as an Antichrist type (hence the previous allusions to Nimrod and Esau, hunters from the book of Genesis who were also forerunners of the Son of Perdition), Fenisa makes a brief yet profound comment:

Esta caza
diola al diablo, nunca ha hecho
si este bien a los que engaña. (I, 933-35)

The Devil is going to work through Herod to accomplish his purpose, namely that of destroying anything associated with the true Christ. Along the way Herod is of course

going to employ deceit, starting with the immediate aftermath of Mariadnes' accident, which really is not an accident in the playwright's grand scheme of things. In the article "El concepto de la fortuna en *La vida y muerte de Herodes*" the author explains

Sin embargo, la caída de Mariadnes es más que un accidente físico y se debe considerar tan simbólica como la de Rosaura en *La vida es sueño*, por ejemplo, o la del Comendador en *Peribañez*. En la obra de Tirso sirve para indicar la índole de Mariadnes, la cual, como posteriormente se nota, casi iguala la de Herodes en obstinación y egoísmo. Ella es, en efecto, quien se empeña en convencer a su padre que la deje casarse con Herodes. Cuando el padre se da por vencido, nota que ella ha abandonado su antigua discreción "con tan indigna afición" (Smith 187-88).

In any case, after carrying the princess to refuge onto a straw bed Herod starts to plan his ruse:

Obligaréla cortés,
si sabe que he refrenado
apetitos al cuidado,
ganancias al interés;
para asegurarla, pues,
mudarme intento el vestido
por el de pastor fingido,
ya que asegurarla quiero,
que en viéndome caballero
ha de juzgarme atrevido. (I, 1060-69)

Herod will inform Mariadnes that, although he could have taken advantage of her unconscious body, he refrained from such lustful desires. Consequently, she will regard him as a true gentleman. A key phrase from the above outlined plot, "mudarme intento el

vestido / por el de pastor fingido,” together with a cross-reference from the book of Zechariah, serve to further link Tirso’s protagonist with the Antichrist. Zechariah 11:17 states “Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.” The Antichrist is an idolater who uses images, so as an imitation (a false messiah or prophet) of Jesus Christ he is called the “idol shepherd” in the verse before us. In Tirso’s work treating Herod there is no indication that the title character suffered from a bad eye or shriveled arm, but what is apparent is that he will successfully pass himself off as a shepherd (*pastor fingido*) in order to deceive Mariadnes. It is interesting to point out, however, that this “shepherd” is pictured in another Old Testament passage by Jeroboam, the king who led the ten northern tribes into idolatry and who had his hand withered for defying the “man of God” in 1 Kings 13:4-5. Another curious link to Zechariah 11:17, and by extension the Antichrist, comes in the form of a non-biblical figure. Baybars I, according to the on-line edition of Encyclopedia Britannica, was a Mamlūk sultan of Egypt and Syria known for his military campaigns against Catholic crusaders, notably those led by Louis IX of France. The entry indicates that he had a cataract in one of his eyes and was fond of hunting, two traits associated with previously mentioned Antichrist types. In fact, an icon depicting the sultan is that of a panther with one eye.

Now dressed as a shepherd, Herod returns to the hut where he left Mariadnes to recuperate from her violent fall. Anxious for answers she inquires how she ended up in a

“despreciada choza / mis vestidos descompuestos” (I, 1112-13). The story Herod concocts is as follows:

Lloraban vuestra desgracia
las aves deste desierto,
las flores de aquestos prados,
las fuentes, guarnición dellos,
cuando llegó presuroso
un atrevido mancebo,
si villano en sus acciones
en un traje caballero,
y honrando con vos sus brazos
en mi humilde alojamiento,
el ébano y el marfil
tuvieron envidia al heno. (I, 1182-93)

Stylistically speaking, one can observe how Tirso involves both fauna and flora (*las aves* and *las flores*) in lamenting Mariadnes’ condition. Furthermore, the topic of *menosprecio de corte*, or denigration of courtly pretense, is manifested with Herod’s comment that “el ébano y el marfil / tuvieron envidia al heno”; literally, that beds made of marbled canopies envy those consisting of hay. This contrast between court and country seems to imply that those of the *corte*, particularly the man supposedly responsible for ravishing Mariadnes, while on the outside appearing sophisticated and well-to-do, in fact lack any sort of substance in terms of the inner character that those of the *aldea* possess. The irony

behind this is of course that the clothes that Herod offers up to the princess as proof that she was visited by the would-be assailant,

Aún no le dejé tomar
las ropas reales, que ofrezco
en muestra de mi valor
y prueba de sus intentos; (I, 1234-37)

are actually his, but this goes unnoticed by her because Herod was dressed in shepherd garb. This phantom, this *atrevido mancebo* that Herod has conjured up is none other than his brother Faselo, whom he identifies in a supposed exchange between the two, with Herod accusing him of violating Mariadnes:

Y despreciando las voces
con que dijo: “Hombre grosero,
advierte que a quien injurias
es al príncipe Faselo,
que, a pesar de pretendiente,
a ser de la infanta vengo,
venturoso poseedor,
si no legítimo dueño...” (I, 1214-21)

Herod and Mariadnes then leave the hut before “Faselo” returns; meanwhile, the real Faselo, Hircano, Aristóbulo, Salomé and others search for Mariadnes, who is believed to be dead, expressed in Hircano’s opening lines as the aforementioned characters appear on stage, lines that beautifully liken her demise to shattered crystalline glass

Muerta la Infanta mi hija,
quebró el cristalino espejo
en que la Naturaleza
se miraba. (I, 1290-93)

The princess' father then accuses the shepherds of having robbed and killed her, "Sin duda, que, por roballe, / estos villanos le han muerto," even though Faselio discovers Herod's original clothes: "Estos vestidos, ¿no son / de mi hermano?"

Herod's disguise and deceit carry over into the beginning of scene 1 of act 2.

Commenting on the significance of such trickery and the overall superficiality employed thus far in the play, Stoll notes:

The element illusion/deception plays the key role in the downfall of the principal characters. In Act 1 the proud Mariadnes falls from her horse, symbolically foreshadowing her later fall...Herodes is also caught in the web of deception of illusion. He wins Mariadnes through deception: he pretends to be a rustic, he fabricates the story of his brother's attempted rape of her, and even misrepresents himself as the exact opposite of what we have seen him to be: proud and ambitious (25).

Responding to Mariadnes' enigmatic question as to how he can be both a rude shepherd and a just knight ("Las dudas satisface, di cómo eres, / si rústico pastor, galán discreto."

[II, 98-99]), Herod tells her:

En fin, determinado
de huir soberbias cortes,
destierro de verdades
y amparo de ambiciones,
compuse una cabaña

de ramos y de adobes,
donde pobrezas ricas
huyen riquezas pobres. (II, 279-86)

The use of the rhetorical figure of speech known as chiasmus, in which two or more clauses are related to each other through a reversal of structures displaying inverted parallelism, serves to make a larger point. Before examining this literary device here in Tirso's biblical play it seems appropriate to analyze an example of its use in the Bible itself. It should be mentioned first that the structure of a chiasmus can be expressed through a series of letters, each letter representing a new or distinct concept. For example, the structure ABBA refers to two concepts (A and B) repeated in reverse order (B and A). A case from the first book of the New Testament is relevant in the context of Herod's pride: "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). Using the ABBA form, the concepts of exaltation and abasement or humility are repeated in reverse order in the above-cited passage of Scripture. As previously stated, the chiastic structure is used to emphasize a greater truth, namely that [in the example before us] a man's pride will knock him down a notch or two, while honor upholds the humble in spirit. Recalling the reader's attention to another Antichrist figure already examined in *La hermosa Ester*, Haman's pride brings him low and then hangs him high, to put it bluntly. Returning now to the chiasm found at the end of the fragment of Herod's long speech – "donde pobrezas ricas / huyen riquezas pobres" – the ABBA structure can be easily applied. The concepts of *pobrezas* and

riquezas are repeated in reverse order to emphasize that true fortune can only be obtained when one sees his or her ambitions as meager.

After the playwright's stage direction concerning Mariadnes and Herod informs the reader that "Mientras que ella vuelve a ver los que vienen, se quita el sayo rústico y queda en calzas y jubón de tabí, muy bizarro," the latter admits to the princess that he is in fact "tu siempre esclavo Herodes" (II, 482). Intimating that love happens by chance or opportunity and not by pre-conceived plans - "hoy mostraré a la Corte / que amor es coyuntura;" (II, 502-503) – Mariadnes is prepared to marry Herod no matter what Faseló's reaction is:

Perdonará Faseló,
y cuando no perdone,
¿qué importa, como sea
esposo mío Herodes? (II, 507-510)

While this is taking place the royal entourage continues to look for Mariadnes and Herod in the second scene of act 2. After Tirso records precisely how each member of the group expresses his or her grief for the apparent loss of Mariadnes and Herod, the latter appear, although Herod stays back. The princess embraces her father Hircano, who informs her that the wedding to Faseló is still going as planned:

Mirad, Infanta, que espera
vuestros brazos Salomé
y el Rey Antípatro, a quien
debe tanto mi corona

y es vuestro padre también,
dándoos su hijo, pregona
triunfos a Jerusalén. (II, 626-32)

Hircano's emotions regarding his daughter's disappearance and subsequent return are quickly replaced by a contagious lust for power which will be passed on to Faselos and then of course to Herod. The king of Judea then presses Mariadnes for details surrounding her absence. She employs the same deceit used by Herod on her, telling her family that a shepherd saved her honor; she first alludes to the identity of her "savior" with the subtle "¿Y si este fuera pastor...? (II, 708); Hircano then asks her; under the assumption that what she is telling him is true, if she now has feelings for him. Their conversation is as follows:

HIRCANO. Y tú, que por él alegas,
si es verdadero el enigma
y por un rústico ruegas,
¿cómo a un pastor sin estima
las prendas del alma entregas?
¿Quiéresle bien?

Mariadnes. La ocasión
en que guardó mi honra y vida,
¿no es digna de obligación? (II, 733-38)

However, the king's doubts linger, questioning his daughter's discretion for having been involved with such a rustic in the first place: "De tu mucha discreción, / hija, has ya degenerado / con tan indigna afición" (II, 763-65). Appealing to her father's economic interests Mariadnes employs a bank metaphor that equates [the false shepherd] Herod to a creditor in a bank and her to his debtor:

mas dime: si el acreedor
en nobleza me igualase,
¿mereciera que el deudor
con la deuda le negase
la obligación de su honor? (II, 773-77)

Concerned still about his promise to Edom's King Antípatro, Hircano cries "la palabra no estorbara / que he dado al rey idumeo" (II, 781-782), to which the princess quickly responds "¿No estriba lo que les has dado / en que me case con su hijo?" pointing out that as long as she marries a son of the king, the latter will be satisfied. Both Hircano and Antípatro eventually cede to Herod's marrying Mariadnes, perceiving it as a transaction that Fасelo loses. On the one hand, Antípatro says: "no es bien que yo a Herodes quite / lo que ha perdido Fасelo." (II, 845-46); Hircano in turn declares: "Si Herodes ganó por mano, / Fасelo por postre pierda" (II, 857-58). Obviously angered by this chain of events Fасelo decides to align himself with Marco Antonio, Herod's rival in the war against Augustus Caesar.

Marco Antonio en Asia rige
la monarquía romana

y la célebre gitana,

.....

conmigo noble ha guardado

las leyes de la amistad;

con César Augusto tiene

guerras por la monarquía,

.....

y pues Herodes injusto

a Marco Antonio se opone,

hoy mi venganza dispone

tragedias contra su gusto.

Referiré a Marco Antonio

mi agravio con su delito; (II, 935-56)

A plan is revealed in a letter from Emperor Marco Antonio to Faselos that Herod and Mariadnes are to be taken prisoner: “Aventajárase a todos si, trayéndome preso a su hermano el Infante Herodes,..., y será dichoso pronóstico de mi victoria si para premio della viene en su compañía la Infanta de Jerusalén Mariadnes,... Yo el Emperador.” (II, p. 149) Faselos complies by having Hircano and the others put under guard – “Mi padre y el Rey Hircano / tengan, Herbel, por prisión / el alcazar de Sión;” (II, 1109-1111) – as well as Herod, who appears in chains alongside his servant Josefo:

que al punto mismo que sepas

que la muerte ejecutó

en mí el natural poder
que no permite excepción
se la des a Mariadnes. (II, 1337-41)

This is all done to prevent Faselos from defiling his love for the princess.

The third act of *La vida y muerte de Herodes* commences with Caesar Augustus prevailing over Marc Antony: “Marco Antonio huyó vencido” (III, 77). Augustus then formalizes the transfer of power to Herod by taking the crown from Faselos and placing it on his head – “Quítale a Faselos la corona de laurel y pónesela a Herodes.” He then takes Faselos prisoner and leaves him in Herod’s custody as he departs for Egypt to capture Marco Antonio once and for all. Later Herod intercepts from Efraím a letter intended for Faselos that accuses Josefo of committing adultery with Mariadnes; the letter reads in part:

“...Josefo, el Gobernador
que diste a Jerusalén,
a la Infanta guarda bien,
mas no con ella tu honor.” (III, 267-70)

Herod is skeptical of the letter’s veracity given that it lacks a signature yet his jealous rage compels him to continue reading, thinking that his own sister Salome’s correspondence is meant for him.

¡Cielos! ¡Oh celos! ¿Creeré
lo que este papel afirma?
No; porque carta sin firma,
si no miente, no hace fe.

Pues, ¿cómo satisfaré
sospechas que hace el temor? (III, 271-76)

Herod then leaves for Jerusalem immediately to find out whether he has been dishonored:

a Jerusalén, engaños,
que son los instantes años.
¡Averigüemos, desvelos,
si son infiernos los celos,
lo que serán desengaños! (III, 356-60)

The second scene or *cuadro* of act 3 opens with Salomé informing her husband Aristóbulo that she sent the letter inventing the infidelity between Josefo and Mariadnes to exact revenge on the latter, who constantly boasted of her *limpieza de sangre* or unblemished bloodline. She recalls for her spouse a conversation with Mariadnes in which Hircano's daughter told her

...que eres, en fin, idumea.
Yo, que de Abraham desciendo
y de David he tenido
la corona que pretendo,
por mil años he traído
la sangre real que estás viendo,... (III, 415-20)

Hircano urges his daughter not to allow her emotions to get the best of her – “Anda, no mires, mi bien, / en aquesas liviandades;” – and they exit as Mariadnes and Josefo appear

on stage. What ensues is a brilliant display of metatheater. Josefo decides to adopt the role of Herod in an effort to distract any thoughts of grief Mariadnes might have:

no llegues a persuadirte
que es muerto tu esposo; mas
imagínate que viene
por Rey de Jerusalén,
y porque se haga más bien,
si es que aquesto te entretiene,
finjamos que Herodes soy,
.....
a transformar tu tristeza
en abrazos y alegría
que ya suceder podría
salir mi ficción certeza. (III, 525-38)

As Stoll explains,

In Act III Josefo and Mariadnes act out the scene of Herodes returning safely in order to assuage Mariadnes' distress at the turn of fortune which placed Herodes in his jealous brother's power. This scene deceives Herodes into believing that the anonymous letter hinting at unfaithfulness which he had received told the truth. The illusion is seen as truth and causes the fall of Mariadnes, a fall which she really brought on herself. (25)

The princess' fall here signifies her captivity by Herod. In each of Mariadnes' "falls," whether literal or metaphorical, pride is the catalyst.

In scene 3 of act 3 pride is also the agent that contributes to Herod's demise; however, through consulting the Scriptures and the text of the play itself it will be demonstrated that geography plays a considerable role in the protagonist's destruction because it signifies the direction from which Herod's future rival proceeds. In the opening lines of the scene Efraín announces

Tres Reyes que en el Oriente
diademas Arabia da,
y de Tarsis y Sabá⁵⁵
ciñen nobles cada frente,
con soberbia ostentación
y variedad de vasallos,
dromedarios y caballos
traen tu corte en confusión. (III, 729-36)

The term *Oriente* appears in this scene five times including the first mention here. The next mention, in an exchange between Herodes and Efraím, coincides almost word-for-word with Matthew 2:2.

EFRAÍM. Y ellos, por plazas y calles,
Preguntan a cuantos ven
Adónde está el que ha nacido
Rey de los judíos.

⁵⁵ Psalm 72:10 "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts."

HERODES. Tente.

EFRAÍM. “*Vimos su estrella en Oriente,*

Y adoralle hemos venido.” (III, 787-92)

In order to understand the geographical significance of *Oriente* in Tirso’s work it is instructive to understand its importance in Scripture. The following table represents a sample of the *east/west* and *west/east* occurrence in the Old and New Testaments:

1. When God drove Adam and Eve out, He drove them out to the east (Gen. 3:24).	1. When God called Abraham to the land, He called him to go west (Gen. 12:1-6).
2. When Cain left God’s presence, he went out toward the east (Gen. 4:16).	2. When Jacob was restored and returned home, he traveled westward (Gen. 32-35).
3. When Jacob fell and ran from Esau, he went eastward (Gen. 28:10).	3. When the Jews entered Palestine, God made them traverse the Dead Sea so they could come in east to west (Num. 19-25).
4. The first tribes to go into captivity settled east of Jordan (Num. 32).	4. When the Jews returned from captivity they travelled westward (Ezra-Nehemiah).
5. When the Jews were carried captive they went eastward (Jer. 52).	5. God forbade the gospel to go eastward to Asia, thus it spread westward to Europe (Acts 16:6-10).

From these scriptural events it is obvious that nearly all movements “from the east” constitute positive movements in the Bible while those proceeding from the west make up negative ones. Hence in the text of *La vida y muerte de Herodes* the use of the term *Oriente* is a reminder to the tyrannical protagonist that his antithesis [and that which represents good and truth] comes from the east. Herod himself acknowledges this when inquiring of the identity of the future king of the Jews:

¿Quién es éste que a una estrella

manda ser su embajadora?
¿Este que con ella avisa
tres Reyes y cortes hace,
éste que al punto que nace
coronas de Oriente pisa? (III, 807-12)

Angered and perplexed by the prognostication Herod asks “¿para qué Augusto me elige?” (III, 817), wanting to know why Caesar Augustus would choose him (an Idumean) to rule Judea under Rome’s support if the sacred position rightfully belongs to the prophesied infant of Jewish blood. This sentiment is echoed in the biblical account – “When Herod the king had heard *these* things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him” (Matt. 2:3). In the play, the protagonist’s initial response is to order the execution of all who are of the Davidic lineage – “No quede hombre en Israel / que sangre de David tenga,” (III, 841-42). He then boasts of the fame that such cruelty will bring to his name:

Sangre mi rabia derrame,
que en ella mi reino fundo;
quien cruel fuere en el mundo,
Herodes desde hoy se llame. (III, 849-52)

In Matthew 2:4 the publican writes “And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.” In the case of Tirso’s Herod we read

los escribas convocad,
no quede escriba o prudente

en los libros de la ley
y profeta que no acuda
a sacarme desta duda. (III, 855-59)

An observation is in order as to the value Herod places on the written word. He expects the Jewish scriptures to be able to accurately foretell the future and he is so convinced they can that he is willing to commit murder.

Herod's final words of this scene, "túmulo suyo será / en vez de trono su cuna." (III, 871-72), represent a curtain in the sense that, as the curtain closes on Jerusalem with the use of *túmulo* or tomb, another one opens on Bethlehem indicated by the word *cuna* or cradle (Fornoff 352). This acumen reminds the reader/spectator of the typology at work in the play. The literal transition from darkness to light provided by a literal curtain alludes to the more significant contrast between the evil and death associated with the Antichrist figure Herod and the newness of life that the Christ-child offers to the world. Thus in the opening of scene 4 the shepherds Tirso, Pachón, Bato, and Fenisa marvel over the infant, but it is Tirso who provides the doctrinal, liturgical, and biblical testimony pertaining to the identity of the babe. He blesses the child ("¡Válgate Dios por chicote, / por pesebre y por portal!"), covers him with a pelt ("que quitándome el pellico / en somo dél se le eché,"), alludes to the Trinity ("Para en uno son los tres,"), provides the direct reference to Luke 2:14 sung by the angel heralding the birth, and officially suggests that the child is in fact the Messiah ("Si es el Mesías el chico,"). There can be no coincidence as to the character's name given the shepherd/dramatist's involvement in this particularly religious *cuadro*. Just as the shepherd Tirso within the play gives details

surrounding the advent of the Christ-child, the dramatist Tirso “makes manifest God’s own love for this Child in his role as priest, shepherd, and creator (of the coherent universe of the play)” (Fornoff 353).

The playwright’s ritual concerns are further made manifest through Liseno, who announces to the shepherds that the Epiphany is taking place in Bethlehem: “Y guiados al portal / ... / aquel brinco de Dios ven” (III, 1041-43). And as the curtain opens we read “*Descúbrese un portal de heno, romero, y paja, lleno de copos de nieve, y en él la Adoración de los Reyes como se pinta.*” This last phrase, *como se pinta*, indicates that the depiction is customary or typical within Roman dogma and throughout the Christianized world yet it is worth pointing out, in the spirit of a purely “biblical play” and acknowledging the dramatist’s access to the Latin Vulgate, that in Matthew 2:8-11 Jesus is a young child at the time of the visit by the wise men, who enter a house, while he is a babe in a manger (as depicted here in the play) at the time of the shepherds’ visitation. The decision to conform to standard church practice over biblical accuracy can in part be explained by the following observation made about Tirso’s biblical plays and their ideological implications: “El componente teocéntrico del estado español de los siglos XVI y XVII convierte a la Biblia en una obra política de indudable valor... La exaltación de la Iglesia fue, ..., uno de los grandes objetivos de la actividad escénica” (Bravo Vega 222). While the Bible was considered a valuable work, the primary objective in 16th and 17th century Spanish theater was to exalt the Church. Commenting on the religious scenes and characters as a totality Anita Stoll succinctly notes

These scenes of the Nativity and Adoration of the Magi and the following recounting of Christ’s passion provide the contrasting aspect of the themes

of love and ambition... Thus for all the ephemeral values held by the royal families, Tirso here describes eternal values to be espoused by the audience. For worldly power there is heavenly; for blind love complicated by deception there is the love of God which brings peace; for ephemeral worldly beauty there is the lasting beauty of nature; and for worldly life there is the eternal life made possible by Jesus' sacrifice. (26)

The religious content that comprises this portion of the drama is pivotal, for it inevitably sets the stage for the figure(s) of Antichrist (Herod) to wage war against anything associated with Christ. In the Gospel we read: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, ..." (Matthew 2:16). In the play this is communicated by Niso, who informs the shepherds

que el furor de un Rey tirano,

lobo de tiernos corderos,

.....

Degollar los niños manda

que de dos años abajo (III, 1133-37)

Tirso applies the metaphor of Antichrist figures being likened to a wolf that does not spare the flock to Herod the Great, especially in the drama's final scene. Like the bloodthirsty wild canine in search of its next prey the protagonist exclaims "Hidrópico estoy de sangre, / más sed tiene quien más bebe," (III, 1181-82), reflecting on how his honor and realm have been snatched from him by seemingly unfaithful siblings and a child. To exterminate any remnant of this seed Herod declares

No ha de quedar de David

hombre o niño en quien conserve
la esperanza que ha fundado
el reino sobre su especie.
La parca soy de las vidas:
cortaré en pámpanos verdes
los sarmientos que en Judá
para atormentarme crecen. (III, 1189-96)

In the last half of these cited verses that make up Herod's opening speech of this fifth *cuadro* he employs allegory when describing the mass murder of the children from Bethlehem. Metaphorically, the children are tender plants that had blossomed from Jewish seeds to be harvested by Herod (Hughes 104). Using a similar metaphor and assuming the image of the voracious wolf, he later likens the children to lambs, then to tender plants:

Lobo soy, corderos busco,
vuestra sangre me sustente;
espigas sois de David,
en berza es razón que os siegue;
racimos sois de Judá, (III, 1279-83)

The tyrannical Herod's bloody rampage culminates in his death, as reported by Efraím, who had discovered the body: "Murió el bárbaro rabiando / ahogando los dos Abeles...." Again an analogy is made to Antichrist types or descriptions; here, as highlighted earlier in the drama, the reference is to the first fratricide Cain, with Herod

strangling the children called *los dos Abeles*, or the two Abels. As with the other Antichrist types studied thus far, from Herod's pride and ambition spring forth evil and death. From Anita Stoll's perspective, the particularly familial turmoil and deceit witnessed throughout the play ultimately led "to the murder of brother by brother, and by extension to the tragic destruction of mankind by mankind. *La vida y muerte de Herodes* is, in essence, an illustration of two contrasting ways of life with no question left as to the proper choice to be made by the audience" (27). It definitely led to the destruction of one man—Herod the Great—but to suggest that all of mankind was destroyed seems a bit exaggerated given the fact that "se libró Jerusalén / de sus tiránicas leyes." and as such, those who did manage to survive the carnage brought on by the main character are presented with a simple choice, life or death, as intimated in the play's title; or given the focus of this study one could characterize the choice as one between Cain's "fruit stand" religion or Abel's faith in God; Antichrist or Christ.

La vida y muerte de Judas

Along with Cain, the figure of Judas Iscariot holds a special place among the Antichrist types that have been examined thus far in this study in that both are suggested as actually sharing kinship with the son of perdition. This assertion is strengthened by the fact that Christ himself alludes to this typology in John 17:12: “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” The apostle Paul uses the same expression in his description of the Antichrist assuming the identity of God in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he has God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” As José Guadalajara Medina points out in his book *Las profecías del Anticristo en la Edad Media*, “las expresiones <<hombre de iniquidad>> e <<hijo de perdición>> que, sin lugar a dudas, junto con la imagen de la cuarta bestia de Daniel y la de las dos bestias del Apocalipsis, se han erigido en los símbolos más utilizados para referirse al Anticristo” (55). Therefore, one could infer from both these passages that there is an inextricable link between Judas Iscariot and the Antichrist, a link we will explore in the biblical drama *La vida y muerte de Judas*, written by Damián Salucio del Poyo.

Postulating the notion that the Antichrist manifested himself through Judas Iscariot, let us first consider the perspective offered by G.H. Pember in his collection of essays entitled *The Antichrist, Babylon, and the Coming of the Kingdom*:

His entrance into the world is, perhaps, described in the ninth chapter of the Apocalypse, where Satan, the star that had fallen from heaven, receives the key of the Abyss, and immediately opens its shaft to let loose upon the miserable earth a stifling sulphurous smoke teeming with the infernal locusts under the direction of their king. Now that king's name, the extreme importance of which appears in the fact that it is given both in Hebrew and in Greek, is Abaddon, or Apollyon, that is, the Destroyer – a well beseeeming title for him who is to oppose the Lord Jesus, the Saviour. (31)

The king is the angel of the bottomless pit. This angel is the death angel (cf. Rev. 6:8), “the Destroyer,” whose name is translated “perdition” in the above cited passages. Thus, if one considers the idea that the Antichrist incarnated himself in a human being in the New Testament at the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, this would seem to indicate that he was living as a man before John wrote the book of Revelation, not living at the time he wrote, and who is now in “his own place” (cf. Acts 1:25) in the bottomless pit, and who will come up out of it later and go into perdition.

Is there a man in the Bible who meets these qualifications in type? We have already observed that Judas Iscariot is the one called “the son of perdition” in John's Gospel. Furthermore, like the Hebrew and Greek names given to the king of the bottomless pit, the imposter's first name “Judas” is the Greek for the tribe of “Judah,” from whence Christ came. The surname “Iscariot” is Hebrew, a man of Kerioth. Moreover, as Cain, born of woman, was “of that wicked one” (cf. 1 John 3:12), Judas journeyed with the other apostles preaching and performing miracles, yet his master said of him, “Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot...” (John 6:70-71).

The typological relationship between Judas and the Antichrist was also a consideration in the Middle Ages in the context of the members comprising Satan's false church: "Gregory the Great (540-604) identifies the members with Cain, Judas, and Simon Magus. These...biblical characters...became, in medieval apocalyptic interpretations, figural representatives of Antichrist...Judas, the great hypocrite and traitor, symbolizes Antichrist's hostility to Christ in the last days" (Emmerson 20, 27). Guadalajara Medina concurs with this characterization, citing the medieval scholastic theologian Bonaventure:

Buenaventura (1221-1274) incluye en sus *Collationes in Hexaemeron* un interesante apartado sobre el Anticristo. La *Collatio XV* recuerda cómo en los doce misterios de Cristo se descubre la actuación futura del hijo de perdición [...], prefigurado en diversos personajes del mundo antiguo: Lamec, Nemrod, Dan, Balaán, Acán, Abimelec, Goliat, un rey descarado, Antíoco, Judas, Simón Mago y la bestia del abismo. (165)

Given this medieval precedent it is not difficult to imagine Judas Iscariot depicted as a forerunner of the Antichrist in a seventeenth century biblical drama in Spain.

In the Bible the writers of the Gospels trace Judas' life from adulthood (when he pretends to be a disciple of Jesus) to his suicide by hanging. The four biographers do not provide details pertaining to Judas' origins; they only indicate that Simon was his father.⁵⁶ However, it is believed that a simple etymological exercise can reveal something about the diabolical nature of the character in question. To begin, the full name Judas Iscariot means "Judah – a man of Kerioth⁵⁷," a definition that, in Del Poyo's work, is

⁵⁶ John 6:71; 12:4; 13:26.

⁵⁷ Judas is the only one among of the twelve who did not come from Galilee.

given towards the end of the second act in a lengthy speech by Arbolea, the protagonist's mother:

Llevaba el bolsico dentro
tres dineros, y un renglón;
decía en la tapa así:
<<Judas, varón de Carot>>.
Naciste en esta ciudad,
que por tu vida, desde hoy
será más famosa al mundo,
que la torre de Nembrot. (II, 56)

In this scene Arbolea explains to her son how she and his father Simon had placed him in a chest in a river just after his birth, and that he came from a city that one day will be more famous than the Tower of Babel for all of the atrocities that he will commit.

Commenting on the meaning of Judas' surname, Sebastián de Covarrubias states in his *Tesoro*: "Vale en hebreo Escariote tanto como *vir occisionis, vir homicida*" (1139); that is to say, a man who kills. It is worth noting that Kerioth is located in Moab (cf. Jer. 48:24), and the significance of this geographical relationship is succinctly explained in the following excerpt from a commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations:

The somewhat lengthy forty-eighth chapter is taken up with the Word of the Lord to these descendants of inglorious Lot and his wretched firstborn daughter,...Typically, these Moabites picture that large and careless class today who "hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1), called in Hebrews 12:8 "bastards, and not sons." Illegitimately born, Moab was without claim to an inheritance in Israel, yet a near neighbor, dwelling upon the eastern shores of the Dead Sea (Ironside 169).

The commentator's words evoke not only an absence of a pure blood line, but also the incestuous relationship between Lot and his firstborn daughter⁵⁸, a relationship that will be repeated in *La vida y muerte de Judas* between the title character and his mother.

Before treating this taboo topic in Del Poyo's drama it is necessary to explore the motive behind which Judas' mother uttered the words "por tu vida" in the portion of her speech just cited. In other words, because of his diabolical, unclean heritage, Judas will commit endless acts of violence culminating in the betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. In the Bible, the Devil assumes control of Judas after Jesus gives him the sop⁵⁹, but in *La vida y muerte de Judas* this satanic dominion occurs much earlier in the protagonist's life, while he is still an infant:

Pues en ese tiempo, Rey
habiendo á la mar salido,
en la playa de Ascalon
dentro una caja hallé un niño;
.....
Y así guardé la criatura,
dándote, Herodes, aviso
de que sucesión tenías, (I, 7)

⁵⁸ Gen. 19:33, 37: "And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father... And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day."

⁵⁹ John 13:27: "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." Curiously, the sop is an acronym for the son of perdition.

In this scene of the play's first act the queen explains to her husband Herod how she stumbled upon the baby Judas, discovering him in the chest in which he was placed by his "biological parents." The queen continues:

aunque después, Rey, tuvimos
a Arquelao, hijo obediente,
justo, afable, manso y pio.
.....
pero él es de inclinación
tan perverso, y tan maldito,
que escandaliza su vida
y ponen temor sus vicios (I, 7).

The contrast described by the queen concerning Judas and her actual son Arquelao⁶⁰ evokes the differences between Cain and Abel, allowing spectators to anticipate a future conflict between the former pair. Herodías also tells of how Judas mistreated people as a youth: once he bit the nipples of five nannies; on another occasion he pulled a boy's eye out of the socket with his fingers; and as an adolescent he killed four men. The queen continues emphasizing Judas' illegitimate and evil nature:

y este un diablo advenedizo
por la mar, dentro de un arca,
.....

⁶⁰ Historical figure whose existence is confirmed by Josephus on page 202 of volume 3 of *Antigüedades de los judíos*. In the fourth section of the chapter Josephus describes how Arquelao ascended to the throne after mourning his father Herodes' death.

donde venía metido
este demonio, porque este
¡no es tu hijo; no es tu hijo! (I, 8)

Twice in this fragment the queen says that Judas is a devil, and twice she tells her husband that he is not his offspring. This diatribe of sorts seems to radiate from the adjective *advenedizo*, which portrays the title character as a vagabond, another feature he shares with Cain⁶¹.

Later in act one Judas murders his stepbrother Arquelao with a dagger:

JUDAS. ¡Muera tu hijo,
y vénguele á ti su padre!

(Saca la daga, y dále á Arquelao, y cae muerto, y dále un
Bofetón á la Reina, y vase.)

ARQUELAO. ¡Muerto soy! (I, 10)

The significance of the timing of this fratricide is explained in detail by the following critical observation:

Salucio del Poyo's dramatic treatment of de Voragine's legend adds further details, not always consistent with biblical history nor chronology, which tend generally to humanize rather dehumanize the title character... The supposed brother, murdered by Judas, is named Arquelao. The motivation for this assassination, in the *Legenda Aurea*, was Judas' belief that his brother carried news of Judas' misconduct to Herod in order to weaken the king's love for his elder son. Del Poyo reverses the chronology of his source to present Herodias' revelation of Judas' origin as affording the reason (revenge/retaliation) for Judas' murder of Arquelao (Gregg 346).

⁶¹ Gen. 4:14: "Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth..."

The misconduct here refers to the mischief and crimes committed by Judas as a youth. The temporal displacement in the plot of the drama actually affords the spectator the opportunity to recognize the playwright's creativity with respect to Judas' origins; if he had been introduced *in medias res* as in the Bible, perhaps the audience would have become frustrated because of the inevitable gaps in his dramatic trajectory. When one attends a play, one expects to be entertained. The element of diversion is successfully conveyed when the spectator experiences satisfaction with being familiar with the plot of the work in general and comprehending the motive behind the protagonist's actions in particular; when the latter are depicted in a humanizing manner, as Gregg observes, such gaps in the plot are filled with details embellished by the poet. One could point out, on the other hand, that the Scriptures were given to instruct and inform, and not to entertain, and thus biblical personages are highlighted at pivotal moments in their lives, usually characterized by crucial decisions that must be made. From such circumstances perhaps the reader can take away some moral lesson.

The references to Judas in the New Testament do not especially focus on the reasons for which he betrays Jesus, but rather show how this betrayal affects the central figure of the Gospels. However, in Del Poyo's drama *Judas Iscariot* is the main character whose diabolical motives are in fact developed. As we have already begun to observe in *La vida y muerte de Judas*, with the discovery of the infant Judas in the river and his subsequent acts of violence, the playwright adds features to the protagonist's biography that do not exist in the biblical account. One such feature is the reciprocal influence between Pontius Pilate and Judas. As far as the setting in motion of the plot to betray

Christ, in the Bible Judas only has dealings with the Sanhedrin led by the high priest Caiaphas, but in Del Poyo's drama the negotiation extends to the Roman governor.

After murdering his stepbrother Arquelao, the true successor to the throne, Judas flees to Jerusalem but does not immediately arrive at his destination. Along the way Del Poyo creates a series of events in Judas' life before he begins to serve Pilate. One event is the protagonist enduring shipwreck off the shores of Galilee and his subsequent rescue by fishermen and thieves. He boastfully tells them about the crimes he had committed en route to the sacred city of peace, responding to each act of kindness done unto him with maximum cruelty. For example, when a governor of a castle who had pity on Judas ("Pero de piedad movido") opened the gate for him for clear passage, Judas returned the favor in the following manner:

Paguéle esta buena obra,
porque no lo publicase,
con darle seis puñaladas,
matéle Paso adelante. (I, 20)

Later, after traversing some treacherous mountain terrain tired and hungry, a shepherd tends to him ("remedió mi hambre"). When the gentleman went to sleep Judas shares how

díle sobre la cabeza
con una piedra tan grande,
que no habló más; desnudéle,
y vestíme Paso adelante. (I, 21)

Next, he recounts falling in love with a bronze-skinned woman (“Enamoréme de un bronce”⁶²) whose husband kept a close eye on her. The woman decides to bring a false accusation against her jealous spouse so that he will be placed in custody and she can be alone with Judas. However, the son of Simon tells his rescuers that when he went to her dwelling one night

no quiso su mujer darme
gusto, cortéla la cara,
y para que no gritasen
sus criados, maté á cuántos
serian Paso adelante. (I, 21)

It is worth noting that each above-cited portion of Judas’ speech to the fishermen and thieves ends in the same way – “Paso adelante,” as if he were chalking up points as part of some twisted competition to determine who could be the most sinister towards his fellow man.

After listening to Judas’ presumptuous summary of his dealings leading up to his shipwreck, the good Samaritans advise him to change the course of his life; even the thief Grismas believes he is too evil:

¿Qué has de hacer, sino haber sido
el hombre más endiablado

⁶² Taking into account the typological reading that has been proposed throughout this study, it is possible that *bronce* takes on an additional meaning. Although on the one hand it is evident that it refers to the woman based on what follows (“que con su esposo tenía / excusas de no hablarme.”), it could also be a reference to the Antichrist’s fascination for idols; the previous verses speak of rubies, a diamond, and the value of each.

que de mujer ha nacido? (I, 24)

Despite this pessimistic tone, they all urge Judas to seek out and serve John the Baptist, “que al viejo Elías imita”, as he is identified by Andrés. It is of interest to note that the superlative used by Grismas to describe Judas – “el hombre más endiablado / que de mujer nacido” – is almost a perfect contrast to the one employed by Jesus when talking about the possible new master to the vagabond Judas: “Porque os digo que entre los nacidos de mujer, no hay mayor profeta que Juan el Bautista...” (Lucas 7:28⁶³). The antithesis “hombre más endiablado/mayor profeta” to a certain extent underscores the typological reading of *La vida y muerte de Judas*, with Judas as a type of the Antichrist while John the Baptist in the role as a forerunner to the true Christ.

Although Judas informs his rescuers that he plans on changing his life (“en la memoria, y haré / desde hoy más, libro de nuevo.”), he begins to have doubts. When he arrives at Jerusalem he encounters the *capitán* of the thieves that had saved his life. Now it is the captain, known as Judas el Sedicioso, who needs help. Pontius Pilate is looking for him because at some point in the past the captain had actually held Pilate captive and demanded a ransom be paid for his release:

Pues no soy yo Judas el Sedicioso,
si la vida á Pilatos no le cuesta,
ser avaro, y ingrato, y codicioso. (Vase.) (I, 29)

⁶³ Here the scriptural reference is provided in Spanish to better illustrate the contrast.

Judas tells the captain to seek refuge inside the temple, yet when Pilate and his men arrive, the former reveals to them the location of the captain, who is promptly executed by the governor's sword. As a reward, Pilate bestows upon him the status of financial steward. When asked "¿Qué es aquesto?" by Longinos, Judas justifies his betrayal of el Sedicioso citing cases from mythology and the Old Testament:

Eneas sobornado, vendió a Troya,
por más que escribió Homero el contrario;
y los hermanos de Joseph vendieron
á su hermano también; y así no es mucho
vender un salteador, que por dineros
puede un hombre vender su padre y madre. (II, 41)

One could easily make the case for linking the motive *vender por dineros* to the famous words of the apostle Paul: "For the love of money is the root of all evil..." (1 Timothy 6:10), because, for instance, what could be more evil than Joseph's own flesh and blood selling him out by selling him into slavery? The reader can anticipate, given his or her knowledge of the source material, that Judas's betrayal of Christ is likely the only treacherous act that could be considered more sinister than family members conspiring against one another. Thus, Judas' disclosure of the captain's hiding spot to Pilate serves as a "trial run," not to mention the foreshadowing of Judas selling out his mother and father; to be precise, he will carry out parenticide against Simon and Arbolea, set in motion Jesus' homicide, and ultimately commit suicide.

Next, the playwright introduces spectators to the episode of the apples. One day while Judas, Pilate, and his wife Neja are walking by Simon's orchard, the woman desires to eat from one of his apple trees⁶⁴. Judas promptly obliges her by jumping a wall, an action of which Simon does not approve. What follows is a peculiar and quarrelsome dialogue between father and son:

SIMON. ¿Y pareceos á vos justo,
 porque á vos se os ha antojado?
 Por Dios, hijo, que habeis hecho
 muy mal.

JUDAS. No nos igualemos,
 padre honrado, y más extremos
 no hagais, porque si lo he hecho
 todo á doce, vive Dios,
 que os dé, villano, á entender,
 si yo vuestro hijo he de ser,
 siendo un hortelano vos.

SIMON. ¿Solo en eso reparais?

JUDAS. Solo en eso he reparado.

SIMON. Pues tambien yo estoy picado,
 de que padre me llamais,

⁶⁴ Gregg indicates that on this point Del Poyo's drama differs from the *Legenda Aurea*, which portrays Pilate as the one wanting the apples.

que si vuestro padre fuera,
me pesara haber tenido
hijo tan descomedido, (II, 47-48)

In his article treating *La vida y muerte de Judas* Gregg states that Simon and Judas are not aware of their blood relationship (346); another possibility is that Simon refuses to believe that he is Judas' father. What is curious throughout their exchange is the use of the terms *padre* and *hijo*. Perhaps they denote the kinship between the two men, or they could be used as cordial greetings between strangers young and old.

With regards to Pilate's wife Neja, in the New Testament she is unnamed and the only reference to her exists in a single sentence from Matthew's Gospel. In the drama before us, on the other hand, she figures more prominently. Like another Eve in another garden in another Testament⁶⁵, one could infer that the concupiscence of the eyes on the part of Neja is what triggers a sequence of depraved actions that culminate in the murder of Simon at the hands of his son Judas Iscariot:

SIMON. Muerto soy; ¡ay de mí!
(Dále Judas con el palo á Simon, y cae muerto.)

JUDAS. Muy justamente lo estás.

ARBOLEA. ¡Ay, que ha muerto á mi marido! (II, 48-49)

As a result of this action, Judas marries the widow, his own mother. After the ceremony, Arbolea insists that Judas tell her more about who he is exactly ("decidme quien sois también." II, 52), and he responds boasting of his supposed noble heritage:

⁶⁵ Gen. 3:6 – "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes..."

En fin, yo soy despensero,
mas tan bien nacido soy,
que el Presidente, mi amo,
no es tan bueno como yo.

Hijo soy de un Rey. (II, 53)

As if her ears perked, Arbolea asks “¿Qué dices?,” and Judas replies “Que una Reina me parió, / y un Rey es mi padre.” Putting together all that Judas has told her, Arbolea then shares with him a prophetic dream she had before his birth:

Estando de ti preñada,
en sueños una visión
me dijo, que pariría
con increíble dolor,
la más infernal criatura,
el más maldito varón,
que nacería en el mundo,
ni que hasta entonces nació,
y diciendo que daría
muerte á sus padres, huyó
la sombra. (II, 55)

And she concludes by harshly censuring the protagonist:

¡Judas, mataste a tu padre,
Judas, Simon te engendró,

yo soy tu madre, hijo Judas,
tu madre, y tu mujer soy! (II, 56)

Confronted with his mother's version of past events, Judas becomes angry and accuses Arbolea as being the one responsible for all the wrongdoing in his life:

vos, madre, pues no creistes
lo que os dijo la visión,
que si entonces me matarais,
no matara á tantos yo. (II, 56)

Three observations are in order. In the first place, and according to Gregg, the details of the dream as provided by Del Poyo's character share more of a resemblance with the description given by Basilio in *La vida es sueño* of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Segismundo than with Ciborea's dream in Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. In both *La vida es sueño* and *La vida y muerte de Judas* a warning is given to the pregnant woman that her child will cause much harm to the parents because of its monstrous nature, and that its birth will coincide with weather disturbances. In both instances (Segismundo, Judas), following the birth of the infant a decision is made to remove the child from its place in the monarchy. Gregg characterizes the birth of Judas as a breech birth (359), perhaps because upon entering the world, he

En vez de llanto, en naciendo,
dio bramidos de león,
aullidos dio como lobo,
y como sierpe silbó. (II, 55)

The zoomorphic imagery provided by Arbolea evokes the same creatures used by the authors of the Bible to describe the Devil and his cohorts. In our treatment of the Antichrist figure Haman in *La hermosa Ester*, the reader may recall the citation of 1 Peter 5:8 that likens Satan to a lion; as far as the *sierpe* or serpent is concerned, one only has to consult Genesis chapter three; the allusion to the wolf⁶⁶ does not refer to Satan directly but rather to those who are at enmity with believers and who desire to do them harm.

Returning to the similarities observed by Karl Gregg between *La vida y muerte de Judas* and *La vida es sueño*, an earthquake followed by a storm are mentioned in the context of the prophesied births of Judas and Segismundo. Compare the following descriptions:

La vida y muerte de Judas

Tembló la ciudad entonces,
y con notable furor
se alzó una gran tempestad,
escureciéndose el sol. (II, 55)

La vida es sueño

Los cielos se escurecieron,
temblaron los edificios,
llovieron piedras las nubes,
corrieron sangre los ríos. (696-
99)

⁶⁶ John 10:12; Acts 20:29.

Simon's reaction to his wife's dream evokes the famous words uttered by Segismundo in the nineteenth scene of the second act of *La vida es sueño* – “y los sueños sueños son”; moreover, it is also a reaction of skepticism:

con razones mi marido
me consoló, y persuadió,
que no reparase en sueños,
que los sueños, sueños son. (II, 55)

However, when Judas is born Simon has a change of heart according to Arbolea:

Simon con estos prodigios
de mi sueño se acordó,
dando crédito á mi espanto,
y alguna fé á mi visión. (II, 55)

Like the use of the word *sueños* in both dramatic works, the phrase *dando crédito* here also appears in the same context in *La vida es sueño*, when Basilio indicates that he finally accepts the prophecy concerning Segismundo:

Pues dando crédito yo
a los hados, que adivinos
me pronosticaban daños
en fatales vaticinios, (730-33)

Given these and other “coincidences” between the two plays, it is not improbable, according to Gregg, that “Calderón could have had del Poyo's work, and perhaps the nature of its protagonist, in mind while writing his masterpiece” (360). By discussing Del

Poyo's relatively unknown play about the man who betrayed Jesus with a kiss alongside one of the crowning achievements of seventeenth century Spanish theater, Karl Gregg invites the reader to examine *La vida y muerte de Judas* with more critical attention.

The second observation treats the topic of incest in *La vida y muerte de Judas*. As was previously mentioned, besides the Bible the main source that Del Poyo likely consulted for the development of his work was the *Legenda Aurea*, written by Jacobus de Voragine between 1270 and 1275. Approximately one-half of the chapter on Matthias is dedicated to Judas Iscariot, and from the text the origins behind the incorporation of the incest theme in Del Poyo's drama are discovered. In his essay "The Medieval Legend of Judas Iscariot," Paull Franklin Baum suggests that these origins can be traced back to Greek tragedy: "The majority follow Greith⁶⁷ in believing that the classical story of Oedipus is the root and the medieval stories of parricide and incest were its branches" (586). This may remind the reader of the mention of parricide and incest in Arbolea's diatribe against Judas - "¡Judas, mataste a tu padre, /... tu madre, y tu mujer soy!"

Transitioning from figurative roots and branches to literal ones, we now come to the third and final observation concerning Judas' reaction to his mother's accusations. This perspective centers on the very name of Judas' mother – Arbolea. In etymological terms, there seems to be an evident link between the name of Judas' mother and trees, or *árboles*, which could also indicate a biblical significance in relation to the culpability that Arbolea shares (along with Satan, presumably) in the destruction of her son. One can think of Eve, who, in spite of the clear warning, partook of the tree of the knowledge of

⁶⁷ Karl Johann Greith (1807-1882), Swiss Archbishop and Catholic historian.

good and evil; as a result, her children would be born with the sin curse. In a similar manner, and applying the phrase “mas el árbol malo da malos frutos”⁶⁸ to Arbolea, one could say that she was responsible for having given birth to such an evil [human] being, which to a certain extent justifies Judas’ accusation against her. Ironically for the protagonist, the *árbol*, together with the rope, serve as instruments of Judas’s suicide as revealed by the poet towards the end of the play, when Judas says “Este árbol, y esta soga darán nombre / al suceso infeliz,…”(III, 80). This same sense of irony, involving the association of trees with death, can also be observed in the cases of Haman and Absalom. In one of the last verses of *La hermosa Ester*, king Ahasuerus (Asuero) proclaims “ocupar la horca Amán / que esperaba a Mardoqueo” (III, 129); likewise, in *Los cabellos de Absalón* the title character shouts “¡Que en las copadas encinas / se me enredan los cabellos!” (3123-4) as his long hair gets tangled in the branches of a tree.

Returning now to the action in *La vida y muerte de Judas*, the protagonist, unable to control his anger, throws his mother into a well in the garden. In order to pay for his crime, Judas plans to hang himself, but his friend Longinos intervenes and convinces him to seek out Jesus. However, at the beginning of the play’s final act he unexpectedly offers to betray the Nazarene for thirty pieces of silver or *dineros*. The use of the adverb “unexpectedly” is appropriate because, from the time of the dialogue between Judas and Longinos at the end of the second act until Judas’ initial words at the beginning of the third, when he does in fact speak with Caiaphas about his proposal, there are not any textual clues to which his change of heart can be attributed. Only after the initial

⁶⁸ Matthew 7:17.

conversation between Judas and the high priest does the reader perceive a possible motive for which he decides to betray Jesus. Seated in the midst of Caiaphas and the others, he explains:

La causa principal con qué yo vengo,
Judíos, á vender á Jesu Cristo,
es el cielo de Dios, porque no tengo
por ciertos los milagros que le he visto. (III, 60)

Before this scene, the final exchange in the second act could perhaps serve to fill in gaps in the dramatic trajectory of the protagonist:

LONGINOS. Pon esta sogá en el templo
con que te ahorcabas.
JUDAS. Dios
Sabe si buscaré otra,
ó si vendrá á ser peor. (II, 57)

As was previously indicated, Judas was going to commit suicide after killing his mother but Longinos persuaded him not to do it; and in order for him not to be tempted to try again, he tells him to leave the rope in the synagogue, yet notice how Judas responds: “Dios sabe si buscaré otra,” [soga] as if forecasting a future use of the rope for his condemnation, and that of course is precisely what transpires in the drama. This omen fits well with Paul’s statement in Galatians 3:13 – “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree,” because as an antithesis to Christ who became a curse according to the apostle,

Judas was born cursed (from a cursed tree – Arbolea) and died cursed, with his final earthly condition as that of hanging from a tree.

Before finalizing our journey through the dramatic trajectory of *La vida y muerte de Judas*, highlighting along the way all of the artistic contributions not found in the biblical narrative concerning Judas Iscariot, it is worth discussing the importance Judas ascribes to the number thirty in the play. Thirty pieces of silver⁶⁹ constitute the fee for which Judas will betray Christ - “Treinta dineros vale justamente; / por vuestra cuenta, el número perfecto” (III, 61). According to Judas’ calculations, Christ himself owed him the tenth part of the ointment that was rightfully his:

treinta dineros solos, que descuento,
me debe del unguento de María,
porque tasado estaba aqueste unguento
en trecientos dineros, que á esta cuenta
de trecientos, á mí me vienen treinta. (III, 62)

The reader may recall how Judas characterizes this number thirty: “...el número perfecto / es él que... / vuelve á su mismo ser” (III, 61). It is possible that when Judas says that the number thirty “vuelve a su mismo ser,” he is in essence conveying that it returns to its source, in the sense that it fulfills its role in the prophecy concerning Christ’s betrayal. Now, what is this source? It seems apparent that Del Poyo was familiar with the prophecy in question:

⁶⁹ In the Old Testament, thirty shekels of silver was the recompense for an ox goring a slave (Exod. 21:32); it was also the redemption price of a woman at the Tabernacle or Temple (Lev. 27:4).

CAYFAS.

Muy justo es. (III, 80)

Regarding some of the embellishments Del Poyo adds to the story of Judas Iscariot, two characters figure prominently: Malchus (Malco) and Barabbas (Barrabás). Beginning with the latter, according to Luke 23:19 “(Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)”, yet was released by Pilate at the behest of the angry Jewish mob. With respect to the figure of Barabbas in theater of medieval Europe, in her book *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* Lynette Muir comments: “...Barrabas, who in a few plays has a small speaking role before running off free” (134). In *La vida y muerte de Judas*, a seventeenth century biblical drama, on the other hand, Barrabás has a much more active role, speaking sixty times total. In most of the play he is presented as a depraved man with no hope. A good example of his depravity takes place at the end of the first act, when he attempts to rape Susana, wife of the old rustic Leví:

BARRABAS. He de gozarte.

SUSANA. No harás.

BARRABAS. Pues mataréte.

LEVI. ¡Cuitado
de mí, si soy deshonorado!

DIMAS. ¿Qué es aquesto, Barrabas? (I, 30)

Dimas, the “good” thief, intervenes to make peace in general and preserve Leví’s honor in particular. Nevertheless, two scenes later Barrabás is still persevering, likening his desire to have Susana (“pues no alcanzo esta mujer”) to war (“tengo al Cielo de mover /

guerra, porque me la ha dado.”), a desire that culminates in the murder of Leví, as the following exchange reveals:

LONGINOS. La espada ensangrentada el caso indicia.

SUSANA. Pague el traidor su culpa, y su malicia,
pues con fin deshonesto me ha traído
del campo á la ciudad, para quitalle
á mi esposo la vida, y deshonralle. (II, 42)

Here is a case in point of how the playwright contributes to the story of Barabbas. The Bible only tells us that he was a robber and a murderer, but in *La vida y muerte de Judas* there are details that trace the circumstances that lead to murder, and the spectator does not have to wonder about the particulars of the crime, like when Barrabás appears on stage with a bloody sword and Susana shouts “¡Justicia, que me ha muerto mi marido!” just before the dialogue between Longinos and Susana.

Another aspect of Barabbas’ life not given in the Bible is his reaction upon learning that Pilate had authorized his release in exchange for Jesus. Del Poyo develops a scene in which Barrabás’ name appears in the sentence read by the scribe (“...al ya condenado á muerte, por / sedicioso, Barrabas”; III, 78), a sentence that calls for not only his crucifixion, but also that of the other thieves Dimas and Grismas. However, at the conclusion of the reading of the sentence Barrabás shouts “Salto, y bailo de placer, / ¡en la calle me he de ver!”(III, 79), confirming the agreement between the Roman governor and the Sanhedrin. This rejoicing continues all the way to Calvary, where he recognizes in Malco’s presence: “La libertad en que estoy, / se debe á Jesus” (III, 80). One could

point out that Barrabás testifies of a propitiation rooted in a peculiar etymology: the “son of the father” (*bar abba*) attributing his new life to the “Son of the Father.”

With respect to Malchus, in the Bible he appears in all four Gospels but is only named in John; such is the case also with the man who maims him – Simon Peter. Moreover, only in Luke and John is it indicated that the right ear is the one cut off. Also, Luke’s is the only account that reveals the miracle Jesus performs by touching Malchus’ ear and healing it. After the incident in Gethsemane he is not mentioned again in the Scriptures. We will set out to show briefly how in Del Poyo’s drama Malco plays an important role in relation to Judas, serving initially as his tutor and then as his confessor. After betraying Jesus (“...á quien yo le diere un beso / de paz en el carrillo...”; III, 62) yet before returning the thirty pieces of silver to the Sanhedrin, Judas encounters his former mentor:

JUDAS. ¿Eres Malco?

MALCO. Judas, sí;

Malco soy, á quien cortó

Pedro la oreja en el huerto,

y agora digo que es cierto,

Cristo es Dios, pues me sanó. (III, 68)

Judas has come face to face with a different Malco who has been transformed by Christ. In this same lengthy discourse, and as is natural for a new convert to speak about the object of his or her faith, Malco evokes some of the Old Testament prophets who allude to Christ in their writings:

Y como el mismo Esaías
dice en el cincuenta y tres:
No tiene figura, ni es
rostro el rostro del Mesías.

.....

Y él como manso Cordero
va al sacrificio cruel,
como Jeremías dél
lo había escrito primero. (III, 68)

He continues with a reference to a particular prophet whom has already been cited in our analysis of *La vida y muerte de Judas*:

desamparan al Mesías
todos, como Zacarías
profetizó desta suerte.
Tú le vendiste, y la venta
en treinta dineros fué,
porque en Zacarías se vé
que había de ser en treinta. (III, 68)

Malco essentially links Judas to the prophecy, which supports the notion of a connection between the mention of the number thirty in the play and the scriptural reference to Zechariah 11:12-13.

In the same discourse Malco insists that Judas repent; the latter's reaction and the subsequent response by Malco are significant:

JUDAS. Malco, pequé.

MALCO. Díle eso á Cristo, confiesa
que es Dios, pídele perdon,
que más que de su pasion,
de tu perdicion le pesa.

JUDAS. Tarde es ya.

MALCO. Jamás es tarde.
para Dios, vamos allá.
que solo un <<ay>> bastará
para que un siglo te aguarde.
Con esto Dios se contenta;
véle á buscar. (III, 69)

Judas is not capable of turning from his ways; that is to say, even if he confesses to what he has done, he cannot repent of what he is - “¡Penitencia! ya estoy desesperado” (III, 80). Returning to the comparative study “Del Poyo's Judas and Tirso's don Juan,” we examine that Karl Gregg likens Judas' spiritual condition to that of don Juan in *El burlador de Sevilla*, when the protagonist exclaims “Deja que llame / quien me confiese y absuelva” (III, 2770-71). There seems to exist the capacity for Judas and don Juan to redeem themselves, but either they do not want to or they cannot take advantage of the

free will that they possess. Divine justice condemns don Juan to death; Judas, on the other hand, has to impose his own punishment by means of suicide.

In spite of the similarities between the two characters, Gregg points out that “There is, however, a difference between them. Judas’ deeds, perhaps because of our prior awareness of his historical identity, are the more malevolent, the less explicable in terms of youthful brashness and abandon... The crimes of don Juan, unjustifiable as they are, do not excite our horror to the extent that do those of Judas” (353). It is to be expected that the actions of a historical personage appeal more to the spectator than those of a strictly literary figure because it is easier to relate to a character about whom there is textual precedent (in this case the four Gospels) that records the events of a flesh and blood being.

Malco, on the other hand, did in fact repent, explaining that, when he said “le comencé á confesar” (III, 68), he implied that this meant much more than a physical healing to his ear - “que sanar Cristo, es curar / alma y vida todo junto” (III, 68). As with the case of Del Poyo’s Barrabás, perhaps this aspect of Malco’s personality, together with his comprehension of the symbolism associated with Calvary (“Ya en el Calvario se han puesto / vuestros pecados y mios,”; III, 80) as it relates to Christ’s death (“Ya en el Calvario se han puesto / vuestros pecados y mios,”; III, 80), allude to a sense of catharsis for the spectator because, “In common with many other plays of the time *La vida y muerte de Judas* demonstrates the concept that even the worst sinner can be saved through, or as the result of, sincere repentance and subsequent emendation of his ways;...” (Gregg 348).

El Anticristo

We began our analysis of the presence of definite Antichrist types in biblical theater of 17th century Spain with Lope de Vega's *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, a brief work with much material gleaned from the biblical account of Genesis chapters 1-4. We now conclude with Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo* which depicts the origins, deeds, and demise of the subject of this typology himself. Works that influenced Alarcón's drama include Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo*, Martínez's de Ampies' *Libro del Anticristo*, and passages from the books of Daniel and Revelation. In his article entitled "*El Anticristo*, de Ruiz de Alarcón," Jaime Concha writes: "Más que al mismo Apocalipsis veo ligada esta comedia, por su espíritu y por su texto, al libro de Daniel... el pasaje en que Alarcón describe el animal apocalíptico sigue al pie de la letra el relato de Daniel" (59). Soon the reader will learn that Concha's opinion is validated.

The primary cast consists of the following characters: el Anticristo; Sofía, a Christian and the drama's heroine; Elías Falso, a false prophet and mouthpiece for the Antichrist; Elías, the true prophet; la madre del Anticristo; and Balán, a Jewish shepherd and the play's source of comic relief. The geographical setting can be described as follows: the first act takes place in the desert plains of Bethsaida and Chorazin and later in Babylon; the second act is developed in Babylon and its surroundings; the third act is set in Jerusalem, later in Megiddo, and finally at the Mount of Olives. Unlike the previous five biblical plays that have been examined in this study, *El Anticristo* does not conform to a standard chronology as it essentially takes place "...en tiempos posteriores al tiempo bíblico" (Valladares Reguero 265).

Reminding the reader of the Satanic Trinity discussed earlier one could observe from Alarcón's work that the title character and Elías Falso constitute two-thirds of this diabolical grouping with only the dragon or "anti-god" being absent. This entity represents Satan, who is not a character per se in Alarcón's drama yet is alluded to by the true prophet Elijah when he testifies of God in act two: "Dios, el Mesías, que al dragón profundo / hiciese Guerra" (II, 443). Antithesis to the third member of the Trinity, Elías Falso appropriates for himself the visions of the Beast provided by John in Revelation 13 and Daniel in Daniel 7 in order to announce in spectacular fashion Antichrist's arrival:

Vi salir del mar hinchado
una bestia, cuyo aspecto
daba terror a la tierra,
guerra amenazaba al cielo.
Era admirable de horrible,
sin semejanza ni ejemplo
de cuantas fieras y monstruos
han dado nombre a los tiempos.
Corvas uñas le formaba
y agudos dientes el hierro
con que deshace coronas,
pisa y despedaza cetros.
Su portentosa cabeza
era armada de diez cuernos

cuyas puntas amenazan

diez diferentes imperios. (I, 419)

Both the apostle John of the Scriptures and Alarcón's false prophet Elías convey that in their respective visions a beast comes up out of the sea (commonly identified as the Mediterranean Sea) desiring to wage war with all who oppose him. With respect to the characterization of the beast's splendor, here Elías Falso's words read more like Daniel's. Alarcón's devilish spokesman for the Antichrist describes the beast as "admirable de terrible" and proclaims that, of all the monsters that have ever existed ("de cuantas fieras y monstrous / han dado nombre a los tiempos") there has never appeared on earth one like Antichrist ("sin semejanza ni ejemplo"). Daniel writes that "it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it" (7:7). And like Daniel's fourth beast, the one described in the play by Elías Falso has one head ("portentosa cabeza") with ten horns; however, the verses "cuyas puntas amenazan / diez diferentes imperios" appear to match the "diez diademas" of John's vision (Rev. 13:1) as Daniel's does not mention crowns, although I believe his fourth beast is in fact John's beast. It is possible that with the insertion of this detail into Elías Falso's vision the poet wanted to emphasize that, because the horns are crowned, the Antichrist is at the height of his power, an appropriate inclusion by Alarcón in order to [literally] set the stage for Antichrist's grandiose introduction.

Regarding the zoomorphic imagery associated with the Antichrist, Elías Falso does not name specific animals when relating what he had seen; he only states "Corvas uñas le formaba / y agudos dientes el hierro" while the account in Daniel 7:4-6 identifies the first three beasts of the prophet's night vision as a lion, bear, and leopard. However, it

is not a stretch of the imagination to associate the “corvas uñas” with the claws of a bear or the “agudos dientes el hierro” with the “great iron teeth” of Daniel’s fourth beast.

Another similarity between the language used in the book of Daniel and that employed by Elías Falso concerns the beast’s actions and movements. For example, in Daniel 7:7 we read that it “devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it,” and the false Elijah in turn announces in Alarcón’s drama that the beast “...deshace coronas, / pisa y despedaza cetros” with its “agudos dientes” and “corvas uñas.” The *cetros* mentioned here and corresponding to the “residue” of the biblical text are believed by some at least to refer to kingdoms or empires. The entry in the *Tesoro de la lengua* for the term states that “El cetro significa el imperio” (514).

Yet another parallel the reader can observe between the vision of the beast presented in *El Anticristo* and the book of Daniel deals with “the little horn” or the Antichrist himself. Continuing with his grand introduction of Alarcón’s title character, Elías Falso states:

A la Asiria babilónea
llegó el decacorno horrendo,
y allí, en medio de los diez,
otro germinó pequeño.
Este ilustraban dos ojos
como de hombre, y en acento
humano hablaba una boca
en él horribles misterios. (I, 419)

The mention of *Asiria* is relevant, as “Daniel saw that the ‘little horn’ was to rise on the ‘Syrian horn’ of the ‘He-Goat,’ in other words that the ‘little horn,’ or ‘Antichrist,’ shall come out of Syria, and as Syria included Assyria...” (Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* 114). The depiction of the little horn sprouting among the ten (“...en medio de los diez, / otro germinó pequeño”) coincides with the “there came up among them another little horn” portion of Daniel’s statement. Additionally, the seeming facial features ascribed to the little horn by Elías Falso, such as its *ojos como de hombre* or *boca* that uttered horrible mysteries using human speech (*acento humano*), match Daniel’s detail that “in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

Furthermore, the initial presentation of the Antichrist as this little horn is succinctly explained by Emerson in *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*: “He is pictured as a little horn, for at first he will have little power. But as he is the agent of Satan, his power will grow so that he will overcome the kings of Africa (Libya), Egypt, and Ethiopia. After this military victory (over the three horns), Antichrist will perform great wonders and deceive all nations” (44). Alarcón’s title character alludes to this a bit later in the first act of the drama while instructing his false prophet as to what to communicate to the masses:

y los diez cuernos, diez reyes,
que imperan en esta edad;
y el que empezando a nacer
tres de ellos aniquiló,
soy yo; que a tres reyes yo
he de quitar el poder;

siendo mi fama veloz
tan espantosa a los siete,
que a mi imperio los sujete
sólo el eco de mi voz. (I, 426-27)

Taking into account Emerson's observation about the size of the horn as a deliberate detail by the major prophet to show the progression of Antichrist's power, we see in these verses how he gains traction, from "empezando a nacer" to achieving "fama veloz." Also is Antichrist's reference to the three African kings whom he will eventually overthrow; in fact, this is confirmed in act three of the play when he boasts "ofreciéndome sus cetros / Etiopía, Egipto y Libia" (III, 440). In the last two verses here he claims that the mere sound of his voice will subdue them, to which Elías Falso responds "De maravilla tan alta / soy testigo..." (I, 427), perhaps an exchange aimed at mocking a similar occurrence in the Gospels: "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:6).

Returning to the topic of zoomorphic imagery present in Elías Falso's opening lines of the drama the reader is able to perceive degeneration in the evil prophet's vision of the beast(s) much like the devaluation of the metals contained in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the Colossus in Daniel 2. Granted, with no specific animal names given by the false Elijah in *El Anticristo* this degeneration is not evident perhaps at first glance; in Daniel 7 the descent is from the lion, the king of the beasts, to a monster (little horn) that practically defies description. However, Elías Falso's presentation equally demonstrates digression, for the beast starts off with "corvas uñas" and "agudos dientes", traits one

would expect to find in a recognizable predator such as a lion, leopard, or bear, and morphs into a creature consisting of a horn with a mouth and eyes. It is possible that with this degeneration of the beast, the poet desires to parallel mankind's inclination towards depravity. Jaime Concha elaborates on this point in his article about the play:

La deformidad de la figura, mil veces amplificada, coincide aquí con la maldad moral y teológica en su grado más extremo, absoluto habría que decir desde el punto de vista ortodoxo, pues el Anticristo es el diablo en vestidura mortal, el demonio hecho hombre. Reaparece y sobresale, por lo visto, el viejo prejuicio bíblico y cristiano-medieval de la correspondencia entre la carne y el espíritu, la ecuación inequívoca entre la apariencia repugnante y la misma del alma. (Concha 62)

If one accepts Concha's view as an axiom of medieval and 17th century thought concerning the link between flesh and spirit, that a diabolical entity will inevitably reveal its true nature in its physical manifestation(s), then the wolf who is the Antichrist will have to put on sheep's clothing in order to be able to convince people into thinking that he is the true Messiah.

The process by which the Antichrist begins to assume the form of a man is now described by Elías Falso:

Luego le vi, transformado
en un bello infante tierno,
.....
[...] de espíritus puros
fue educado, y le dio el leño
de la vida inmortal vida
y profundas ciencias ellos. (I, 419)

The education of the Antichrist child is also portrayed in the *Jour du Jugement*, when Satan instructs his two devils Hazart and le Matam to go to Babylon:

You will tell the mother of Antichrist
to teach him our black magic
and never to remind him of God.

Go there without any delay! (434-37⁷¹)

Emmerson traces the influence of these verses from the 14th century French play to the primary source of inspiration for *El Anticristo* aside from the Bible, Adso's *Libellus*, where, according to the abbot on page 91, "Antichrist will have magicians, enchanters, diviners, and wizards who at the devil's bidding will rear him and instruct him in every evil, error, and wicked art" (qtd. in Emmerson, *Antichrist and Judgment Day* 20).

Elías Falso expresses how he was amazed at Antichrist's venerable presence and strikingly human appearance:

Postréme a la majestad
de su venerable aspecto,
y él, admitiéndome humano,
así me dijo severo:
Yo soy el rey; yo, el Mesías
prometido a los hebreos;
reinaré en Jerusalén,

⁷¹ Citation taken from: *Antichrist and Judgment Day: the Middle French Jour du Jugement*. Edited and translated by Richard K. Emmerson and David F. Hult. Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 1998.

reedificaré su templo;
Betsaida y Corozáin
ciudades bellas un tiempo
y ahora apenas humildes
reliquias de lo que fueron,
en sus desiertos me albergan; (I, 419)

Upon maturing into a charismatic man (“Súbitamente creció /a hermoso y fuerte mancebo”⁷²) Antichrist is confident in being able to proclaim himself as the promised Messiah. Included in this pronouncement are elements consistent with the Antichrist tradition established in the Bible and early, non-canonical sources. For example, he states that he will reconstruct the temple at Jerusalem and rule there, a notion put forth by Adso in his *Libellus de Antichristo*: “Después, viniendo a Jerusalén, [...] establecerá su sede en el templo santo. Este templo destruido, que Salomón había construido para Dios, lo reedificará, y lo restaurará en su estado [...]” (qtd. in Gilbert, “*El Anticristo* de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón” 100). Also, the allusion to Betsaida and Chorazin as places of refuge for the Antichrist in these verses evokes the statement by Martín Martínez de Ampiés in his *Libro del Anticristo*, in which he declares that the Son of Perdition “ha de ser criado en las ciudades de Bethzayda y Corozáim, las cuales nos demuestra el Evangelio de San

⁷² These verses appear to be an antithesis to Luke 2:40 – “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.” Elías Falso is concerned with depicting Antichrist’s superficial physical beauty, while the gospel writer Luke focuses on Christ’s intrinsic spiritual charisma.

Matheo a los onze capítulos⁷³: *Ve tibi Bethsayda, ve tibi Corosaiim, etc. Dize: << Maldición a ti Bethzaida, etc. >>.*” (77). These cities are appropriately considered by medieval exegetes as the places of the Antichrist’s rearing, as the context of the biblical text seems to reveal that they were cursed for remaining incredulous to the miracles performed by Christ there.

Another aspect of the Antichrist tradition that merits attention and that is first mentioned in *El Anticristo* in Elías Falso’s opening speech of the drama is the iconography surrounding the mark of the beast. After the nostalgic mention of Bethsaida and Chorazin, Antichrist informs his messenger:

y para que se acredite
esta visión en tu pecho
te imprimo mi carácter
en la diestra con mi sello. (I, 419)

The term “carácter” used here undoubtedly refers to the mark of the beast of Revelation 13:16⁷⁴, and evidently one purpose in revealing it to Elías Falso and then branding him with it is to authenticate the vision he had of the beast. As the false prophet resumes speaking, he relates to his band of soldiers that this is precisely what occurred:

[...], y en oscura sombra
se resolvió, y yo al momento

⁷³ Matthew 11:21 – “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

⁷⁴ “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:”

desperté, y en esta palma

hallé el carácter impreso.

(Muestra en la palma de la

Mano derecha esta señal: P.) (I, 419)

When discussing the presence of the Antichrist in medieval drama earlier in this study, specifically with respect to the twelfth century *Ludus de Antichristo*, it was observed in that work that the title character marked his followers simply with the letter “A”:

“Entonces el Anticristo, estampando la primera letra de su nombre en la frente del Rey y de todos los suyos...” (III, 41). While it might be said that each of these dramatic depictions of the mark of the beast lacks creativity, the “P” in Alarcón’s play obviously does not stand for the first letter of the antagonist’s name but rather is supposed to be a parody of the image allegedly witnessed by Constantine. Nonetheless, at least one critic believes that Alarcón could have been more attentive to detail. Concerning the mark he writes:

Esta marca... remite a un elemento presente en un tratado dedicado a la figura apocalíptica que nos interesa. En efecto, en la obra de Honofre Manescal⁷⁵, la marca que imprime el Anticristo en la palma y la frente de sus discípulos tiene que ser una P cruzada por una X, siendo ésta atravesada por una saeta. Este símbolo paródico de la *Pax Christi* de Jesús está representado aquí sencillamente por la letra P... Quizá se trate sólo de un olvido, o de una imposibilidad técnica del tipógrafo: en efecto, resulta extraño que Alarcón, que sigue muy fielmente la tradición ligada al Anticristo, no respete este detalle muy característico. (Gilbert, “*El Anticristo* de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón” 100)

⁷⁵ Manescal, Honofre (1611): *Miscellanea de tres tratados, de las apariciones de los espíritus el uno, donde se trata como Dios habla a los hombres y si las almas del purgatorio vuelven: De Anticristo el segundo, y de Sermones predicados en lugares señalados el tercero*, Barcelona, Sebastián Matheud, 1611.

In addition to the writings of the theology professor from Barcelona, Beato de Liébana's conceptualization of the mark of the beast also includes the "X" (Guadalajara Medina, *El Anticristo en la España medieval* 37). In the eighteenth chapter of his *Libro del Anticristo* Martínez de Ampiés explains how the Antichrist will mark his disciples and that they will be easily recognizable because of it:

El carácter – si quiere señal – de huego mandará poner a los judíos en medio de las fuentes y en las manos derechas, porque assí después señalados sean conocidos por seguidores de su yrrónea y malvada secta...No será poca tribulación a los cristianos ver que los judíos, y otras naciones tan enemigas del nombre de Cristo, por el señal de aquella bestia fiera y dañosa tengan el mando sobre los signados del Sancto Crisma... (116-17)

Three Spanish theologians, from three different time periods, concur with respect to the monogram containing both the "P" and the "X", a fact which seems to strengthen Françoise Gilbert's argument that Alarcón was somewhat careless with his representation of the mark of the beast. However, when looking ahead slightly in act one of the play, where it is still just the letter "P," the reader could contend that the image stands alone as an element used to parody that which is associated with the true Christ. In the context of Elías Falso informing the two *judíos* that the Antichrist will show up in the same location where he had given the false prophet the vision of the beast, the reader encounters the following stage direction: "(Aparece EL ANTICRISTO en lo alto, los ojos en el cielo y una bandera roja en la mano, con esta señal negra en ella: P.)" (425). While nothing indicates the presence of the letter "X" in this description, the black "P" surrounded by the red background of the flag adds a dimension perhaps not considered – that the red could symbolize the blood of the martyrs of Jesus while the black emblem simply

connotes evil. Another instance where it could be argued that the “character” or mark of the beast adequately manifests this detail of the Antichrist tradition without additional iconography occurs at the beginning of act two, where Antichrist instructs Elías Falso:

Lo primero que has de hacer
es que se publique un bando
en que determino y mando
que a cuantos mi carácter
en la diestra o en la frente
no trajeren, desde luego,
se prohíbe el agua y fuego
y el comercio de la gente. (II, p. 435)

Practically a word-for-word parallel to Revelation 13:16-17, the order is for the false prophet to publish an edict which declares that people that do not exhibit the mark in the forehead or right hand be prohibited from buying and selling goods. Again, while there is no monogram associated with the mark of the beast, it still serves the purpose as a universal bar code of sorts, allowing the Antichrist to limit financial transactions to only his followers.

Alarcón now shifts the emphasis on Antichrist’s origins. It is interesting to note the transition into the scene; specifically, how it sharply contrasts with the Antichrist’s grandiose introduction by Elías Falso: “Salen el Anticristo, vestido de hierba, y su madre, de pieles.” Françoise Gilbert explains the significance in his article “*El Anticristo* de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón: reelaboración de un mito por la dramatización”: “Se asemeja así a la

figura del salvaje, presente en otras obras del Siglo de Oro, e indicando el estatuto marginado del personaje: situado fuera de la norma” (104). The character’s mother obviously plays an important role in this, as her opening lines in the play reveal her son’s unclean roots:

¿No te bastó ser parto incestuoso
del que, siendo tu abuelo, fue tu padre,
con que, lascivo ahora, en amoroso
lazo te unieses a tu misma madre? (420)

In these verses which initiate the only dialogue in *El Anticristo* between the title character and his mother, a dialogue that culminates in matricide, the reader discovers immediately that the main character is the product of the incestuous union between his grandfather and mother; actually, he is the product of a double incest, as his mother is the daughter of

Mancer hebreo, dogmatista injusto,
en Babilonia oscuro descendiente
de Dan, movido de venéreo gusto,
en su hermana Sabá... (I, 420)

In the aforementioned article by Gilbert, the critic points to a textual precedent with regards to the incest motif present in Alarcón’s drama. In the third chapter of the *Libro del Anticristo*, Martínez de Ampiés writes:

Contra las leyes y lo que vieda la Santa Madre Y glesia, el Anticristo será concebido y hecho por el padre en su misma fija; serán sus padres del tribu de Dan, del pueblo de Israel. Y como fue el Spíritu Sancto en la concepción de Cristo Jhesú, en la qual su madre bendita fue alumbrada de sol divino, así por el contrario en la concepción de esta bestia maligna será

la infusión diabólica, y la madre suya será enchida de las tinieblas de malos espíritos. (70-71)

The first characteristic concerning Antichrist's genealogy that Martínez de Ampié discusses is his Jewish origin, coming from the tribe of Dan⁷⁶. In Alarcón's drama the Antichrist confirms this when he says to his mother "de la sangre de Dan que en ti he heredado" (I, 424). The other feature of course deals with the topic at hand – the carnal union between a father and his daughter, orchestrated by Satan, in order to bring forth the counterfeit Messiah. With this aberration the title character's perverse nature is positioned in the foreground of the drama's action.

Taking into account the similarities between the words spoken by the Antichrist's mother in the play and those quoted from the *Libro del Anticristo*, it seems apparent that, at least in part, the latter text served as a source of reference for Alarcón when developing his version of the Antichrist tradition in his theatrical production. It is interesting to note what the Antichrist declares before murdering his mother:

Resuelto al parricidio detestable,
por ser a Jesucristo todo opuesto,
te quise hacer del todo abominable,
cometiendo contigo torpe incesto;
que fué su madre Virgen inviolable
después y antes del parto, y yo con esto
incestuosa madre vine a hacerte

⁷⁶ Genesis 49:17 – "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."

en la cuna, en el parto y en la muerte. (424)

In what amounts to be a curious paradox, the antithetical comments by both writers which divulge the essential features of the contrasting natures of Christ and Antichrist are so similar that it would be difficult to conclude that Alarcón had not consulted the *Libro del Anticristo*.

The revelation of his shameful genealogy is what will give Antichrist a sense of having a mission on earth, allowing this *golpe de teatro* to be the catalyst for his rebellion. Driven by pride, he utters the following words to his mother which seem to represent an outbidding of this revelation:

Di más, repite, multiplica, aumenta
odios, injurias, iras, maldiciones;
que deleitosamente se apacienta
mi obstinación en tus execraciones; (I, 423)

He then blames his mother for having permitted his birth:

de ti nací, por culpa tuya vivo;
acusa a tu descuido que debiera
a un hijo de tan torpe ayuntamiento
fabricar en la cuna el monumento. (I, 423)

In Antichrist's mind, it appears, his mother should have known to oppose such a destiny. The reader may recall how two previous Antichrist figures in our study, Cain and Judas, also resented their respective mothers for having given them life, and like the latter

character in *La vida y muerte de Judas*, Alarcon's Antichrist kills his mother; he tells her as much just before committing the act:

quien tal hijo parió, a sus manos muera.

(Mátala y échala en una sima.)

The accumulation of the incest, followed by the above depicted matricide which in effect allows him to [temporarily] erase all traces of his true origins, will place Antichrist in a position where he can begin his diabolical career:

Tu sima oscura,

en quien este cadáver deposito,

guarda en tu investigable sepultura

mi origen siempre oculto y mi delito,

que simulada luz de virtud pura

desde este punto ostento y acredito,

porque dé la engañosa hipocresía

principio a mi tirana monarquía. (I, 425)

The deposit of his mother's corpse into an abyss or pit (*sima*) as an act which serves to symbolize the erasure of his devilish identity appears to ironically foreshadow Antichrist's demise.

In the next scene of act one the witty shepherd Balán guides Elías Falso towards the ruins of the cities of Bethsaida and Chorazin. He conveys a certain conscience and sensitivity with respect to the things of the past, specifically regarding the annihilation of entire cities. The allusion to Bethsaida and Corazin is in effect fulfilled prophecy based

on the scriptural admonition from the Gospels. The Antichrist then emerges and explains his mission to his false prophet, instructing him to

Parte a Babilonia, pues,
.....
que allí le dispone el cielo
la infancia a mi monarquía.
De allí la potencia mía
propagada a todo el suelo,
vencerá cuantos estima
soberbios reyes del mundo,
desde el centro más profundo
al más elevado clima; (I, 426)

The language employed by the Antichrist here is sensitive about the passage of time, understood by him as progress towards achieving his goal of world domination. With these verses Jaime Concha appears to make his case even stronger for an inextricable link between *El Anticristo* and the book of Daniel:

Esta historización del espacio, de acuerdo al providencialismo bíblico-agustiniano, es lo que da interés e importancia al vínculo de *El Anticristo* con el libro de Daniel, que antes tratábamos de enfatizar. No hay libro en el Antiguo Testamento más pleno de sensibilidad para las transiciones históricas, más receptivo al alzarse y derrumbarse de los imperios. Con fuerte condensación cronológica, por medio de un increíble *raccourci* de los tiempos antiguos vemos desfilan y sucederse los reinos asirio-babilónico, medo-persa, macedonio y seleucida-ptolomaico. Desde Nabucodonosor y aun antes de Antíoco, transcurren reyes y dominaciones ante los ojos videntes del profeta. (76)

The acumen for transitions that occur throughout world history, specifically in the case of the rise and fall of empires depicted in Daniel 2 with the prophet's interpretation of the king's dream of the great image, is reproduced in the play *El bruto de Babilonia*,⁷⁷ a collaborative effort between Agustín Moreto, Jerónimo de Cáncer y Velasco, and Juan de Matos Fragoso. Here Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar:

En la cabeça, que el oro
ciñó de altivez augufta
fe mueftra tu Monarquía,
.....
El pecho, y braços de plata,
la Monarquía fegunda,
fignifica, pues tu imperio
en las edades futuras
ha de paffar a los Perfás,
.....
El vientre de cobre, que es
geroglífico, y figura
del Imperio de los Griegos.
.....
Mas al fin el quarto Imperio,

⁷⁷ An effort has been made to retain the original orthography of the work, available to me in a PDF document from the *Cervantes Virtual* website.

que folamente fe funda
en el hierro, y pies de barro,
dexará a la Griega turba
fepultada en el olvido,
poque las dos rizas plumas
de las Aguilas de Roma,

From the biblical source, to the playwrights, to their literary Daniel, we find the four great world empires in their unity and historical succession. These empires are not only made known as to number, but their names, in the order of their succession, are given: first, the Babylonian, as evidenced by the fact that in the scene Daniel is speaking directly to Nebuchadnezzar when he says to him “fe muestra tu Monarquia,” referring to the *cabeça de oro*; the second, the Medo-Persian or *los Perfes*, symbolized by the *pecho, y braços de plata*; the third, the Grecian or *Imperio de los Griegos* pictured as a *ventre de cobre*; and finally, the Roman, apparently with the eastern and western divisions represented by *las dos rizas plumas / de las Aguilas de Roma*. Before defining the stone that eventually crushes this image as Christ, Daniel makes a revealing summary statement about his interpretation of the king’s dream:

Deftas partes fe compone
la eftatua que vifte inculta,
a quien tocando una piedra,
fu arrogancia defcoyunta.

The idea presented here is that, when the statue comes in contact with the stone, the latter will disjoin the former; hence the verb *defcoyunta* conveys the increasingly unstable nature of the government of the different empires. The Babylonian empire was an absolute autocracy while the emperor of the Medo-Persian Empire was bound by certain laws, called the “Laws of the Medes and Persians.” The Grecian empire was a monarchy supported by a military aristocracy that was weak as the ambitions of its leaders. The Roman emperors were nominally elected by the people, but the people were prohibited from legislating for them, thus their despotic sway is appropriately represented by the *hierro* because Rome was noted for its iron-rule. However, the form of government grows weaker when the feet and toes, composed of iron and clay, are examined. Imperialism, symbolized by the iron, mixes with the clay which stands for democracy. In short, the form of government passes from an absolute autocracy to a democratic monarchy, to the rule of the head [of the image] by the feet, to a system in which the masses control the government.

Ultimately in *El Anticristo*, this is what occurs with the title character, yet his vanity prevents him from seeing it. Talking about how he will defeat prideful kings (“vencerá [...] / soberbios reyes del mundo”), Antichrist employs the polar expression “desde el centro más profundo / al más elevado clima” to symbolize the vastness of his theocratic campaign, much like the character Daniel expresses in *El bruto de Babilonia* with respect to the image, from a head of gold representing Babylon to the divided kingdoms of iron and clay. In fact, later in the play *Elías Profeta* alludes to “El imperio

romano dividido” (II, 444) while reminding the masses of the divine prophecies that have already been fulfilled.

Thus far in our analysis of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón’s *El Anticristo*, it has been demonstrated in symbolic terms that the title character is an amalgamation of the beasts described in Elías Falso’s vision; now as he gives his “marching orders” to his trusted prophet he must instill in him this same attribute in the sociopolitical realm, which amounts to a completely integrated world leader, like the one described by John in Revelation 13:7 – “...and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” While Alarcón does not indicate explicitly that his Antichrist possesses these traits, the following exchange seems to suggest as much. After Elías Falso expresses some reluctance in being able to preach, defend, and validate Antichrist’s message (indicated in the context as a *maravilla*), in the form of the following question,

pero ¿cómo, si me falta
fuerza para defendella,
ciencia para acreditalla,
me envías a predicalla,
por precursor tuyo y della? (I, 427)

Antichrist assures him, as if preparing him to give a speech before the United Nations, that he will be sufficiently equipped to realize the task:

No temas; en mí confía;
que para tu justa hazaña
espíritu te acompaña,

sabio patrono te guía,
que de infusa enciclopedia
te dotará, y elocuentes
tus labios, los diferentes
idiomas de Asiria y Media
sabrán, y cuantos Babel
vió en su ciega confusión. (427)

Just as Jesus performed miracles in the power of the Spirit, Elías Falso is likewise told “espíritu te acompaña.” Also, armed with encyclopedic knowledge (“infusa enciclopedia te dotará) he will be able to communicate eloquently in different languages, thereby creating an ecumenical environment not far removed from the one that existed during the period of Genesis 11 and the known account of the Tower of Babel. In act two of the play Elías Profeta refers to this incident to show that pride is the motivating factor behind Antichrist’s desire to ascend above God:

La torre de Nembrot y su soberbia
contra el cielo atrevida, ¿no es figura
de que en esta ciudad su monarquía,
como lo veis cumplido, empezaría? (II, 444)

The biblical personage and geography referenced here are of course Nimrod, the first Gentile king and Antichrist type (after Cain), as well as the city where his kingdom began (cf. Gen. 10:10). Throughout this study Nimrod has been mentioned several times by

characters in the plays under review. The following chart recapitulates key direct references to him in three of the dramas examined thus far:

<i>La creación del mundo</i>	<i>La hermosa Ester</i>	<i>La vida y muerte de Judas</i>
es el soberbio Nembrot, que el cielo conspirar quiere; pero de Dios la justicia aquel querubín previene, (II, 1168-75)	no me rendir a Amán, tan arrogante como Nembrot, aquel feroz gigante que escalar vuestros cielos pretendía: introdujose así la idolatría; (II, p. 113)	Naciste en esta ciudad, que por tu vida, desde hoy será más famosa al mundo, que la torre de Nembrot. (II, p. 56)

In *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, during the archangel Michael's lengthy speech to Adam in which he outlines future biblical events, he identifies Nimrod as the one responsible for the construction of the Tower of Babel; Michael also employs the figure of the cherub as symbolizing God's judgment against the Babel builders. In Lope de Vega's other biblical drama, *La hermosa Ester*, Esther's older cousin Mordecai likens Haman's aspirations for political ascension to Nimrod's desire to literally ascend up to the heavens. In Damián Salucio del Poyo's drama about Judas Iscariot, the traitor's mother Arbolea states that because of his deeds, Judas's birthplace of Kerioth will be more well known than Nimrod's tower.

In each of the above cases, it is a favorable character that evokes the name of the son of Cush to illustrate the perils involved with misguided ambitions. Likewise, in *El Anticristo* it is the true prophet Elías the one who cites Nimrod, a possible reason for which offers Jaime Concha:

...se nos habla de la torre de Nemroth (...), aludiendo una y otra vez a la actitud bíblica que condena las obras del hombre como hijas de una soberbia irreflexiva ante el poder de Dios. Esta especie de teodicea de la civilización, que aparece intermitentemente en Alarcón a la vista de grandes y gigantescas construcciones materiales y que pugna con su actitud positiva ante la creatividad mágico-tecnológica, se orienta en nuestra comedia a una singular percepción natural y artificial. (72)

Concha seems to postulate here that the advancement of civilization is what leads to the moral decay of humanity, thus the defense offered by Elías Profeta of God's goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil. This theodicy is set in contrast to the overly positive attitude towards the edifices that make up Babylon, as expressed by the *caminante*:

Veinte leguas tiene el muro
de circunferencia, y tiene
de altura cincuenta estados,
y doce de latitud;
tanto, que en la plenitud
de su cumbre, emparejados
van seis carros, y de Belo
(que ésta es mayor maravilla)
la torre tiene una milla
desde el capitel al suelo. (II, p. 445)

In fact, at the beginning of the play's final act Antichrist enters Jerusalem, receives the keys to the city from its old mayor Eliazar, and instructs him to proceed with the construction of the temple at Zion as an example of his powers:

ANTICRISTO.

Desde hoy

da principio al edificio
del templo, con prevención
de que en grandeza, hermosura,
riqueza y arquitectura
exceda al de Salomón.

ELIAZAR.

A servirte me consagro,
tanto, que el templo ha de ser
milagro de tu poder,
siendo tu poder milagro. (III, p. 451)

The chiasmic structure involving the words *milagro* and *poder* no doubt is employed to emphasize Antichrist's dominion by means of realizing miracles, thereby subduing the masses to his grandeur, whose culmination can be seen when he erects an image of himself:

El dios Maozin ha de ser
mi nombre, cuya grandeza
significa fortaleza,
majestad, gloria y poder.
Mi estatua el sagrado asiento
ocupará en el altar
que un tiempo se vió ocupar
del Arca del Testamento. (III, p. 451)

In part these verses, coupled with Antichrist's pronouncement "Mi nombre es el dios Maozín; / su gloria habéis de cantar" (III, p. 454), coincide with the prophetic utterances of Daniel 11:38-39 - "But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory..." The phrase "God of forces" used in the Authorized Version is expressed as "god of fortresses" in modern English translations; in Spanish, similarly, the *dios Mauzim* found in the revisions of Casiodoro de Reina of 1569 and Cipriano de Valera of 1602⁷⁸ has been replaced with *dios de las fortalezas* in modern Castilian translations. With the proper name *Maozin* and its definition of "cuya grandeza significa fortaleza" given by Antichrist, the above verses encompass both archaic and contemporary expressions of this peculiar title for Satan, the god whom Antichrist will honor. In addition to the reference to Daniel, the verses also evoke the frequently cited passage from chapter two of Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians,⁷⁹ particularly verse 4: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,

⁷⁸ It is interesting to point out that the marginal note for Daniel 11:38 in each of these Spanish Bibles, which reads "De las fuerças. q. d. de fola fu potencia y fuerças cofiará," agrees with the reading in the Authorized Version of "God of forces." On the other hand, according to G.H. Pember in volume 2 of *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries Concerning Israel and the Gentiles*, "Theodotion makes it a proper name – Μωζείμ; and the Vulgate and Luther accept his explanation. It is, however, unhesitatingly, and, as it seems to us, rightly, rejected by modern scholars" (439).

⁷⁹ On pages 37-38 of *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* Emerson writes: "In addition to the Johannine texts, the most important, and perhaps the most interesting, single source for the interpretation of Antichrist is 2 Thessalonians 2:3-11. The passage...adds much detail concerning the deeds of Antichrist and the timing of last-day events."

shewing himself that he is god.” In the lines here from *El Anticristo* this is portrayed with the *estatua* of Antichrist replacing the *Arca del Testamento* in the temple.

While Antichrist’s monstrous physical characteristics gave way to a human appearance at the beginning of act one of *El Anticristo*, his propensity for psychological barbarity never ceased. It could be said that he even derives sadistic pleasure from imagining which forms of torture to apply to his victims. An example replete with sinister Roman emperors shall suffice, where Antichrist orders his false prophet to carry out these tortures first on Eliazar, who had just confessed Christ, and then on other Christians:

Parte a ejecutar, Elías,
en él y en cuantos cristianos
me ofenden, los más tiranos
tormentos, las más impías
penas que inventó el romano,
el scita y el macedón;
a Falaris, a Nerón,
a Decio y a Diocleciano,
pide cuantos instrumentos
fabrican dolor tan fuerte
que aun más allá de la muerte
puedan pasar los tormentos. (III, 461-62)

Antichrist’s hatred is so great that he wants his victims to suffer even after they die a horrible death at his hands. He appropriately evokes the names of Roman emperors who

were known for their extreme cruelty against Christians. Perhaps the most recognizable name is that of Nero, who was emperor from 54 to 68 A.D. and who would illuminate his garden at night with the burning bodies of Christians. Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigento who reigned from 570-554 B.C., had among his instruments of torture a bronze bull, inside which victims were shut and roasted alive, and their shrieks represented the bellowing of the bull (Covarrubias 877).

In order to combat the antagonist, Alarcón, faithful to the Antichrist tradition developed in early patristic writings and in medieval drama, dispatches the two witnesses Elijah and Enoch to preach against the man of sin for forty-two months. “Of all the legends that were attached to the Antichrist tradition during the Middle Ages, the belief in the appearance of Enoch and Elias was the most popular and widespread in theological discussions, literature, and art” (Emmerson 41). Given the significance and ubiquity of the topic or legend surrounding these two biblical figures, it is therefore beneficial to provide the reader with an understanding as to why they are identified as the two witnesses of Revelation 11, and whether or not this identification can be substantiated by a complete exegesis of the text. The presence of the two witnesses in *El Anticristo* will then be examined.

As was evidenced in our cursory review of the treatment of the Antichrist tradition in medieval drama, Elijah and Enoch are in fact the characters who play the role of the two witnesses who arrive to minister against Antichrist, are killed, and then are resurrected to see his demise. In his treatise *Libro del Anticristo* (1496), Martín Martínez de Ampié provides details concerning the selection of the two men from the Old

Testament. The heading for the work's tenth chapter reads as follows: "Cómo han de venir Helías y Enoch a predicar la ley de Cristo Nuestro redemptor, para confirmar los cristianos ante que se demuestre el Anticristo." The preaching of Elijah and Enoch, which shall come to pass "entre el oculto advenimiento del Anticristo que será quando nasciere, y el manifiesto que parecerá quando oyrán su predicación y persecuciones" (97), covers several chapters in the work.⁸⁰ According to Martínez de Ampíes, the involvement of these two characters, who are contrary to Antichrist and who carry forth a message of resistance against his deceits, offers a moral counterpart in the eschatological context. While both witnesses are killed according to tradition⁸¹, they will be gloriously resurrected and will ascend beyond the clouds in the presence of their killers.

Now to the text of chapter ten of the *Libro del Anticristo*. Martínez de Ampíes justifies the selection of these two male characters as the two witnesses of Revelation 11 first by citing the last book of the Old Testament: "según se scrive en el último capítulo de Malachías"; however, upon consulting the indicated verses by the author, one discovers that they only mention Elijah: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6). It is worth pointing out that in his book *El Anticristo en la España medieval* (2004), José Guadalajara Medina indicates that sixth century Latin church father Apringio de Beja, in his commentary on the book of

⁸⁰ X, XI, XII, XXXVII, XXXVIII y XLV.

⁸¹ *Compendio de la teología*, libro VII, capítulo XIII; Revelation 11:7. Françoise Gilbert, editor of the edition of the *Libro del Anticristo* that will be consulted in this study, documents these textual references in the footnote at the bottom of page 160.

Revelation, also had doubts as to the identity of Elijah's companion: "Quizá sea de destacar la duda planteada en la exégesis sobre quién acompañará al profeta Elías en la predicación contra el Anticristo, que, según se declara, podría ser Eliseo, Moisés o Jeremías, algo que no cuajó con posterioridad, pues sera Enoch el que figure tradicionalmente en los textos" (31).

Martínez de Ampié continues with a reference to Rev. 11:3-6; what is curious here is that one can see that the biblical citation that appears in a footnote is not the same as what is contained in the text; the latter is more of a paraphrase, for in parenthesis he writes: "Y daré a dos testigos míos, es a saber Elías y Enoch, que profetizarán, vestidos de sacos..." (98). Martínez de Ampié decides upon this identification despite the fact that they are not named in the biblical passage. We shall return to the *Libro del Anticristo* shortly.

In an earlier book, *Las profecías del Anticristo en la Edad Media* (1996), José Guadalajara Medina highlights the book of Revelation as the most important New Testament biblical text when treating the subject of the Antichrist. Like his counterpart from five-hundred years earlier, Guadalajara Medina affirms the identification of the two witnesses as Elijah and Enoch: "Otro aspecto aportado por el Apocalipsis a esta tradición literaria es la breve historia de los dos testigos, que, identificados como Elías y Enoch, profetizarán <<durante mi doscientos sesenta días, vestidos de saco>> (Apocalipsis 11.3),..." (61). Without a doubt the verse speaks of two witnesses who will prophesy for a period of three and one-half years; what is lacking is a reason for which Guadalajara Medina selects Enoch as one of the two. It is proposed that an exegesis of the entire

context of the passage (Rev. 11:3-6) will reveal that the two witnesses are Elijah and Moses. To begin, it is important to note in verse 4 that the two witnesses are called “...the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” The student of the Scriptures is reminded of the passage from the prophet Zechariah⁸² that explains what the two olive trees symbolize; the two witnesses are people – “These *are* the two anointed ones...”

Returning to Revelation chapter 11, we read in verses 5 and 6: “And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies... These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues...” The two anointed men who stand by the Lord of the whole earth destroy their enemies with fire⁸³, and one of them has the “power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.” Upon consulting James 5:17 the reader is left with no doubt as to who this witness is – “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” Furthermore, Elijah stood before the Lord of the earth⁸⁴ and appeared with Jesus at the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17) along with another man, Moses.

⁸² 4:11-14: “...What *are* these two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? And he answered me and said... These *are* the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

⁸³ Moses in Numbers 16:31, 34-35; Elijah in 2 Kings 1:10.

⁸⁴ 1 Kings 17:1 – “And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”

It is interesting to notice the placement of the colon in Revelation 11:6, immediately after the word “prophecy,” because all that follows pertains to the other witness, who possesses “power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues...” It seems quite obvious that the other witness is Moses. Chapters 7-12 of Exodus describe the plagues⁸⁵ with which Jehovah afflicted Egypt, and the man used of God to multiply his signs and wonders throughout Pharaoh’s land was Moses. Moreover, and also like Elijah, Moses stood before the Lord – “And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock” (Exodus 33:20-21).

In summary, the following can be observed: Moses and Elijah were anointed, yet Enoch never was; Moses and Elijah stood before the Lord of the earth, but Enoch never did; Moses and Elijah destroyed their enemies with fire, but such was not the case with Enoch because in the passage that treats his life (Gen. 5:18, 21-24) there is no indication that he had any enemies; Moses and Elijah respectively afflicted the earth with plagues and prevented rainfall for three and one-half years, yet Enoch realized no such feat; and finally, Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration without Enoch. It is worth noting that Moses and Elijah are the last individuals mentioned in the Old Testament⁸⁶ in relationship to Jesus. This seems natural, taking into account that, like Jesus who endured temptation at mount Sinai for forty days without eating (Luke 4:2),

⁸⁵ Varied were the manifestations of these plagues: blood (7:20), frogs (8:6), flies (8:24), and hail (9:24).

⁸⁶ Malachi 4:4-5 – “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

both Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) did the same thing at the same location.

One could suppose that the reason contemporary literary critics like José Guadalajara Medina, or theologians from centuries ago like Martín Martínez de Ampié, contend that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are Elijah and Enoch is because they are the two Old Testament saints who were caught up to heaven (see Hebrews 11:5 and 2 Kings 2:11) without experiencing death. In fact, in a footnote that corresponds to the first mention of Enoch without Elijah in the *Libro del Anticristo*, the editor explains:

De Enoch también cuenta la tradición que subió al cielo, en Génesis, V, 24: <<Caminó, pues, Enoc con Dios, y desapareció porque le llevó Dios>> (véase también Eclesiástico XLIV, y Pablo Hebreos, XI, 5-6); por eso, como testigo vivo de los secretos de Dios, volverá a luchar contra el Anticristo antes del Juicio Final (véase Apocalipsis XI ,3-6, citado en la nota nº143, *supra*) (102).

However, it is my belief that a key verse is being overlooked, for Jude 9 informs: “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Michael refers Satan to a higher authority, who was going to use the body of Moses in the New Testament in Matthew 17 to complete “the law” (Moses) and “the prophets” (Elijah). For this reason the position is taken that Moses’ body did not stay buried, as Deuteronomy 34:5-6⁸⁷ appears to infer. Moreover, it is true that Enoch was a prophet (Jude 14-15), but the Bible never refers to him in the context of standing before the Lord.

⁸⁷ “So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab...And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab...but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day.”

Finally, the two witnesses of Revelation 11 die, yet Enoch never died nor is there any indication in the Scriptures that he ever will die.

The first mention of Enoch and Elijah in *El Anticristo* occurs in the second act, when Elías Profeta proclaims “hemos de predicar Enoc y Elías / mil y doscientos y setenta días.” Later the character asks the rhetorical question “Ciegos, ¿no veis cumplir a Enoc y a Elías, / contra su falsedad, las profecías?” (444). Then, preaching to Antichrist’s followers, the true Elías speaks of four specific manifestations of God’s wrath to come; quite curiously, these manifestations match the four powers attributed to the two witnesses of Revelation 11:5-6.

Generación depravada,
rebelde y adulterina,
pues no merecéis piedad,
sentiréis de Dios la ira.

El austro os niegue sus lluvias,
y en las regiones de Asiria
no fructifiquen sus campos;
el sol con llamas estivas
os dé abrasados alientos;
el mar y las fuentes frías
sangre os ofrezcan por agua,
y escojáis en las fatigas
de pestilentes contagios... (II, p. 445)

Treating the verses that reveal these powers, we read first “El austro os niegue sus lluvias,” which corresponds to Rev. 11:6 – “These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.” Next, Alarcón’s character proclaims “el sol con llamas estivas / os dé abrasados alientos,” whose scriptural counterpart is Rev. 11:5 – “And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies.” Then, we encounter the verses “el mar y las fuentes frías / sangre os ofrezcan por agua,” that go with the phrase “and have power over waters to turn them to blood” from Rev. 11:6. Finally, the prophet mentions the “pestilentes contagios” that evoke the phrase “and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will,” also from this last biblical verse.

Alarcón’s drama does not depict the killing of Elías and Enoc by Antichrist, yet Elías alludes to their death once they have been apprehended:

y ya tu pueblo tirano
ha puesto en prisión cruel
a Enoc, porque a nuestras almas
les des tú, que nos condenas, (III, p. 455)

However, words later uttered by Eliazar do coincide with the scriptural account⁸⁸ of their dead bodies in the streets and their subsequent resurrection:

Vi que porque el mandamiento
del rey, muerto Enoc y Elías,
habiendo estado tres días

⁸⁸ Rev. 11:8, 11, 12 – “And their dead bodies shall lie in the streets...And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them...And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud...”

para público escarmiento
sus cadáveres helados
en la plaza, resurgieron,
y gloriosos ascendieron
a los asientos sagrados. (III, p. 460-61)

The other character Alarcón employs to combat and eventually overthrow Antichrist is Sofía. While the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 states that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of Antichrist, it seems reasonable to contend that the poet attributes this act to a woman herself, in accordance with some Catholic interpretations that Mary is the one who will deliver the death blow to the son of perdition. As a soldier of Christ, Sofía reveals the portion of said prophecy that she will effectuate:

Mas yo, que soy el soldado
más humilde que en defensa
del crucífero estandarte
ofrece el pecho a la guerra,
he de vencerle y poner
el pie sobre su cabeza. (I, p. 430)

The bruising of the head alluded to in these last two verses is a reference to Armageddon, where Satan, incarnate as the beast (Rev. 19), is crushed (Dan. 2) by a blow coming down directly on his head. In fact, at the beginning of the final act of the drama, Antichrist explains to his false prophet

En los llanos

hallarás de Magedón,
para la persecución
y muerte de los cristianos,
los ejércitos valientes
de Gog y Magog sujetos
a ejecutar mis preceptos
con innumerables gentes; (III, p. 451)

Keeping in mind the eschatological context, Satan's power is curtailed for one thousand years, but in the last days it is increased again when Antichrist gathers the armies of Gog and Magog. In his book *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, Emmerson explains the scriptural precedent used by theologians to better understand the significance of these two entities:

Since interpretations of the Apocalypse first associate Gog and Magog with the armies of Antichrist, medieval exegetes also interpreted the Old Testament sources of Gog and Magog, Ezekiel 38 and 39, to further add to their knowledge of the last days. Summoned from hiding "after many days" (Ezek. 38:8), Gog and Magog will overrun the people of God... With their leader – Antichrist – they will be destroyed eventually by God (Ezek. 39:21-22). The legend of Gog and Magog greatly expanded in the Christian Sibylline literature, thereby becoming an important feature of the medieval understanding of Antichrist and the events of the last days. (42)

In anticipation of the destruction of these armies of Antichrist, Sofía encourages her followers:

¡Ea, cristianos valientes,
mostrad esfuerzo y valor,
pues el cielo os da favor
contra estas perdidas gentes!

Los campos de Magedón
cubren sin número armados
de Gog y Magog soldados;
no temáis, que pocos son
a la espada de dos filos
que profetizó San Juan; (III, p. 456)

The scriptural companion to these verses is Rev. 20:8-9, where the apostle John writes: “And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea...and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” The playwright’s attention to detail is once again evident. The phrase *soldados sin número* corresponds to John’s likening of the innumerable armies of Gog and Magog to grains of sand that cannot possibly be counted. Also, when Sofía tells her fellow Christians “el cielo os da favor” because Antichrist’s forces “...pocos son / a la espada de dos filos / que profetizó San Juan,” the reader associates this with the fire coming down from heaven coupled with John’s statement in the opening chapter of his epistle – “...and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword” (1:16).

From the standpoint of the action in *El Anticristo*, the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 is shown in the following stage direction - “(Cae EL ANTICRISTO y Sofía le pone el pie en la cabeza.)” However, Antichrist does not die here, and in fact Elías Falso kills Sofía and Balán. The title character’s death is recorded just prior to the play’s conclusion -

“...en lo alto aparece UN ÁNGEL con espada desnuda, y dale un golpe, y cae el ANTICRISTO...” (466). Prior to this, the reader is informed that, among the soldiers that go out to battle the armies of Antichrist there is “un ángel con túnica blanca manchada de sangre y una espada desnuda y levantada en alto” (457), a detail that intimates that the angel is Christ upon cross-referencing Rev. 19:13, 15.⁸⁹ Finally, “Abrese el escotillón del teatro, y por él entran EL ANTICRISTO y ELÍAS FALSO, y salen llamas” (466), a particular that matches the account in Rev. 19:20 – “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” It is interesting to observe how the playwright adopts details from the Bible for his drama. For example, the act of the two members of the satanic trinity being cast into a lake of fire is depicted on stage with the characters entering the *escotillón* or trap door. “Actors occasionally used the upper level of the balconies to affect a descent from a wall or mountain. *Tramoyas* (stage machinery) served to raise angels; opened trap doors through which flames could penetrate carried out the punishment of sinners...” (Ziomek 32)

Alarcón’s theatrical improvisation with the use of the *escotillón* to represent the two characters’ descent into hell reminds the reader of Lope de Vega’s employment of the same technique for the same symbolism in the first play examined in our study. Perhaps a thematically appropriate phrase here is alpha and omega: in the first play, *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, Satan and Cain’s demise is described as

⁸⁹ “And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations...”

follows – “Húndense el Demonio y Caín por un escotillón, y salgan llamas”; likewise in the last play, *El Anticristo*, the title character and his false prophet meet the same fate – “Ábrese el escotillón del teatro, y por él entran el Anticristo y Elías Falso, y salen llamas.” Furthermore, the final lines of the respective characters of each play are strikingly similar:

La creación del mundo

Esta es, Senado, la historia
de aquel antiguo pecado,
primera culpa del hombre,
principio de males tantos.

El Anticristo

[...]. Y ésta será
la historia del Anticristo
según la interpretación
que a los profetas han dado
los doctores; al senado
pide el poeta perdón,
pues en materias tan altas,
y que están por suceder,
ni en él es mucho caer
ni en vos perdonar sus faltas.

As was pointed out at the end of the analysis of *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, it was customary in Golden Age Spanish theater to include a portion of the play’s title in the concluding verses. The same can be observed at the end of Alarcón’s drama. Also, both use the term *senado* as a reference to the spectators.

EXODUS

It is my hope that, throughout this study, the reader has been able to observe how the six biblical dramas of seventeenth century Spanish theater have embellished the stories of Scripture from which they are based, an experience similar to that of the television viewer who can now enjoy watching his or her favorite program in color, when for the longest time such programs were only available in black and white.

In Lope de Vega's first biblical drama examined, *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, the playwright was successfully able to bridge the chronological gap between the time of Luzbel's occupation as guardian of the throne in heaven and the creation of the earth and Adam and Eve, providing an opening scene that, and in conjunction with the author's explanation of the passages in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14, contextualized the dramatic trajectory of the Devil and his subsequent influence on Cain. Concerning the latter, the first Antichrist type established herein, the reader was able to detect how Lope filled the gaps of the biblical account by giving him personality traits that underscored his dissimilarity with Abel. The Antichrist typology with respect to Cain was further supported in his manner of death, suffering a fatal head wound at the hands of his son Lamech, which constituted another artistic contribution by the playwright because in the biblical version of events Cain's death is not written about in any detail. The reader was also able to imagine how the inventions of weapons of warfare and music by Lamech and Jubal, respectively, could conceivably impact future society in a negative manner.

In *Los cabellos de Absalón* Calderón de la Barca developed extensively the woman of Tekoah from the biblical account of 2 Samuel 14, renaming her Teuca in his drama and adding great depth and significance to her role as not only being the distributor of the narcissus flower to the protagonist thereby establishing one of the key leitmotifs in the work, but also by serving as the one who would accurately predict Absalón's demise, a prediction that the protagonist's pride and narcissism would not allow him to properly comprehend. Another invention by the playwright was the scene in which Absalón entered his father David's palace and signified his unchecked ambition of wanting to overthrow the king and have the reign all to himself upon placing the crown on his head. This action was significant in that it constituted yet another reason for asserting that Absalón qualified as a type of the Antichrist, who, like his forerunner, carries out the abomination of desolation upon entering the temple in Jerusalem and sitting at the throne, pretending to be God (cf. 2 Thess. 2). This defiant act committed by the title character in *Los cabellos de Absalón* also serves to remind the reader of the relevance of the passage of 2 Thessalonians 2 as being one of the most important sources for the interpretation of Antichrist in medieval apocalypticism as observed by Richard K. Emmerson in his book *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*.

The second biblical drama written by Lope de Vega addressed in this study is *La hermosa Ester*. Of the six plays comprising our treatment of Antichrist types, this work is probably the most faithful to its biblical source. The reader who is familiar with the book of Esther is likely able to read through Lope's drama and mark along the way the stage directions and characters' speeches that correspond precisely to the verses in the

scriptural text. Yet the playwright succeeds in providing details not found in the Bible that make for an intense reading of the work. For example, he inserts the dream of Mardoqueo in which Ester's uncle imagines battling a dragon that ends up being personified by Amán. This prepares the reader to grasp the barbarity of which this foreshadowing of Satan/Antichrist is capable. Moreover, in the biblical book of Esther, Haman's call for the destruction of the Jewish people is preceded by the mere observation that their laws are diverse from all people and that they do not keep the king's laws (cf. Esther 3:8), whereas Lope's Amán explains to Asuero what these "strange" laws were – from the worship of the *toro dorado* to the sacrifice of *altos holocaustos*.

Tirso de Molina's *La vida y muerte de Herodes* cast the title character in the most unfavorable of lights, as the ruthless and jealous brother of Faselso who would not attenuate his quest until the kingdom was his. The brutality carried out by the proud military man in the play's initial scenes is just one of several examples that qualify him as yet another type of the Antichrist. The scene of the hunt was also explored, in which Herodes posed as a shepherd and concocted an episode in which Mariadnes was supposedly ravished by some vagabond after the terrible fall from her horse, allowing the protagonist to appear as her savior. It was also commented how her fall served a symbolic purpose as well. Then of course was the culminating scene of the third act of the Slaughter of the Innocents, in which Herodes sought out to destroy the Christ child by massacring the infants.

A lesser known playwright, Damián Salucio del Poyo, in *La vida y muerte de Judas*, provides a well-rounded portrayal of the Antichrist type from the New Testament,

Judas Iscariot, chronicling his life from the time he was an infant until his eventual suicide. In the four Gospels there is no information given about Judas' youth and adolescence, yet the playwright filled in these gaps quite effectively, describing in the drama how Judas was found as a baby floating in a river, listing the many brutal acts of violence he perpetrated upon innocent people for no reason, and detailing his service to Pontius Pilate. Del Poyo also answered the question some may have had with respect to Malchus: what became of the man whose ear was hacked off by Peter and was miraculously healed by Jesus? As was discovered in our analysis of this character, he never forgot that selfless act and chose to repent and eventually became a disciple of Christ.

We finished our study with an examination of the Antichrist himself in Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El Anticristo*. We observed how the playwright made effective use of the imagery from the book of Daniel as well as that from the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation to create a picture of a beast such as has never before been seen, to borrow the wording from the prophet of the Old Testament. It was also demonstrated how Alarcón made use of material from Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo* and Martínez de Ampiés' *Libro del Anticristo* to provide the reader with a background on Antichrist's origins, from his birth in Babylon as the product of incest, rearing in Bethsaida and Chorazin, to the repetition of the cycle of incest with his own mother, who he subsequently murdered. Alarcón's introduction of the character Sofia into the story of Antichrist as the heroine who ultimately dies a martyr could be considered by some as an homage to the mother of Jesus.

Also in closing, I would like to recapitulate a couple of parallels that were highlighted throughout the study. One was the visual conceptualization, from the analysis of *La hermosa Ester*, of the similarities in the wording used in Mardoqueo's dream and the visions of the beast experienced by the apostle John from Revelation 13 and by Elías Falso from *El Anticristo*. A second parallel treats the manner of death of the evil personages studied. Caín and el Anticristo suffered mortal head wounds while Amán, Absalón, and Judas all experienced death by hanging. Tirso de Molina does not explicitly convey how Herodes died.

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