

CONSTRUCTING THE LIMINAL:  
*LA PORTENTOSA VIDA DE LA MUERTE*

By

KATLYN ROCHELLE SMITH

Bachelor of Arts in Art History & Spanish

Washington and Lee University

Lexington, Virginia

2016

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
July, 2018

CONSTRUCTING THE LIMINAL:  
*LA PORTENTOSA VIDA DE LA MUERTE*

Thesis Approved:

Dr. Cristina González

---

Thesis Adviser

Dr. Jennifer Borland

---

Dr. Heather McLaughlin

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Cristina González, for her outstanding guidance throughout this project, as well as for introducing me to *La portentosa vida de la muerte*. Rene Harvey at the Gilcrease Museum has also been wonderful to work with throughout my research. Thank you to my committee members, Jennifer Borland and Heather McLaughlin, for their advice and inspiration for this past year. Finally, I could not have made it through this year of research without the support of my mother and my fellow graduate students at OSU. You all have been amazing to work with and alongside!

Name: KATLYN ROCHELLE SMITH

Date of Degree: AUGUST, 2018

Title of Study: CONSTRUCTING THE LIMINAL: *LA PORTENTOSA VIDA DE LA MUERTE*

Major Field: ART HISTORY

Abstract:

Written in 1792 by Fr. Joaquín Bolaños, the rare book, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, chronicles the life and exploits of Death. She appears neither as deity nor human, but as a skeletal personification with attributes of both man and woman. The constructed view of Death as a physical being in the prints that accompany the text offers the opportunity to explore artistic problems with respect to depicting the ambiguous. Within this thesis, I will use the conceptual framework of liminality to interrogate the boundaries of such constructed categories as art, ornament, trademark, gender and genre. Original research also centers the discovery of a vast array of watermarks that appear specifically in the Gilcrease Museum's copy of the book.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Publisher and Publication .....	2
The Artist: Eighteen Engravings.....	3
Project Summary.....	5
REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	9
CHAPTER I: A LIMINAL GENDER CONSTRUCTION .....	14
Gender in New Spain .....	14
Masculinized Female Portraits.....	21
Authoritative Male Portraits .....	24
Conclusions.....	30
CHAPTER II: LIMINALITY & HYBRIDITY OF GENRE .....	34
Pictorial Genres.....	35
Literary Genres .....	40
Conclusions.....	43
CHAPTER III: PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION & LIMINALITY .....	45
Sun Watermarks.....	48
Frame-design Watermarks .....	48
Horse and Lettering Watermarks .....	50

Figural Watermarks .....	52
Hands in Watermarks.....	54
Conclusions.....	55
CONCLUSION.....	59
APPENDIX I: OTHER ENGRAVINGS FROM <i>LA PORTENTOSA</i> .....	62
REFERENCES .....	68
FIGURES .....	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. First inscription, <i>La portentosa vida de la muerte</i> .....	72
2. Second inscription, <i>La portentosa</i> .....	73
3. Third inscription, <i>La portentosa</i> .....	74
4. Frontispiece, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	75
5. Death as a Child (with Adam and Eve), <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	76
6. Tomas Mondragon, <i>La alegoria de la muerte</i> , 1856 .....	77
7. José Mota, <i>Madre Gerónyma de la Assumpción</i> , 1713 .....	78
8. Mariano Salvador Maella, <i>King Charles IV of Spain</i> , 1792 .....	79
9. Maella, <i>King Charles IV of Spain</i> (detail), 1792 .....	80
10. Attributed to Andrés López, <i>Viceroy Matias de Gálvez</i> , c. 1785 .....	81
11. Death presiding over the death of her beloved doctor, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	82
12. Death on horseback with sodiers, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	83
13. Death with demon and male figure, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	84
14. Death speaks to a group, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	85

15. Title page illustration, <i>De humani corporis fabrica</i> by Andreas Vesalius, 1543.....	86
16. Anatomical sketch of human skeletal form, <i>De humani corporis fabrica</i> by Andreas Vesalius, 1543 .....	87
17. <i>Allegory of Death</i> , Cesare Ripa’s <i>Iconologia</i> , 1645 .....	88
18. Untitled, <i>La portentosa</i> , Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792 .....	89
19. <i>Folding Screen with the Conquest of Mexico</i> , anonymous, late seventeenth century.....	90
20. Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, <i>María/Margarita, daughter of Philip III</i> , c. 1603 (photo) .....	91
21. Full sun design, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 100-101).....	92
22. Partial sun design, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 54) .....	93
23. Oval frame design with sun, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 128).....	94
24. Bell-shaped frame design, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 149).....	95
25. Full frame design, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 124-125) .....	96
26. Spanish watermark (c. 1800-1805) .....	97
27. Partial horse (outer margin), <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 22-23).....	98
28. Partial horse (center margin), <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 88-89) .....	99
29. Horse watermark, c. 1700, Madrid .....	100
30. Block lettering and partial leg, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 22-23) .....	101
31. “ACM” watermark from <i>Pharmacopea Tubalense</i> , 1735 .....	102
32. Silvestre watermark, <i>Reales Ordenanzas Militares</i> , 1810.....	103
33. Block lettering (OOO), <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 124).....	104



34. Spanish triple-ring watermark designs, c. 1720s-1750s .....	105
35. Partial horse with block lettering, <i>La portentosa</i> (p. 276) .....	106
36. Antonio watermark, <i>Reales Ordenanzas Militares</i> , 1810.....	107
37. Full figure on horseback, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 204).....	108
38. Figure on horseback (watermark), Castile-Leon, 1772 .....	109
39. Figure on horseback, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 64) .....	110
40. Shield design with castle, <i>Reales Ordenanzas Militares</i> , 1810.....	111
41. Possible figure on horseback, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 170).....	112
42. Rider on horseback with shield (watermark), Galicia, 1779 .....	113
43. Figural silhouette, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 151).....	114
44. Circle with inscribed cross, <i>La portentosa</i> (opposite p. 254) .....	115
45. Hands in watermarks, 16 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> centuries.....	116
46. Jáuregui firm advertisement, 1783.....	117

## INTRODUCTION

The idea of liminality refers to objects, events or ideas that occupy a metaphorical middle ground or in-between space.<sup>1</sup> It “involves a potentially unlimited freedom from any kind of structure,”<sup>2</sup> and can help us to understand relationships between seemingly unrelated concepts. Such a freedom from structure can then force us to question the boundaries of categories that we perceive as being clearly defined. *La portentosa vida de la muerte* (The Marvelous Life of Death), an eighteenth-century text that defies traditional categorization in a myriad of ways, offers the opportunity to interrogate the limits of constructed categories such as art, ornament, gender, and genre.

Written in Mexico at the end of the eighteenth century by Fr. Joaquín Bolaños, *La portentosa vida de la muerte* chronicles the exploits of Death as a female figure. The 1792 text claims to be based in Catholic ideology, and as such comparts several biblical stories into which Death becomes integrated. For example, Death is present in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. She also

---

<sup>1</sup> Bjørn Thomassen, *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between*, (Farnham, Surrey: Routledge, 2014), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Thomassen, 10.

frequently interacts with sinners, and even directly intercedes with God. However, at least one authority took issue with the book's content and suggested that it be censored by the Inquisition.<sup>3</sup> Although contemporary scholars have often cited the satirical character of the text as the main reason for its suggested censorship, I believe it seemed especially dangerous to religious authorities because as far as literary genre, it resides within the space between religious devotional literature and full satire, thus giving it the potential to misguide the faithful.<sup>4</sup> This level of liminality—or hybridity—with respect to genre will be discussed more fully in the second chapter. It should be noted that the intended audience for this book would have been upper-class members of colonial society, specifically those Catholics who the Church felt were in danger of being persuaded by Enlightenment ideals. The full title of *La portentosa* explicitly suggests that its content would appeal to those “men of good taste.”

### **Publisher and Publication**

In the late eighteenth century, typographic workshops rarely printed texts to sell as goods for profit. Instead, they sold their services to authors, other

---

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Ignacio Gentil's commentary is included in the 1983 facsimile of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, in which he requests the censorship of the book.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, “La casada imperfecta: A Woman, A Print, and the Inquisition,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2002), 236. In this essay, Donahue-Wallace also notes that religious authorities were especially concerned with printed images in this regard, as people had come to believe that they were inherently imbued with truth.

businesses, and even religious and governmental entities. Thus, Friar Joaquín Bolaños hired the firm of José de Jáuregui to publish his controversial text, using either his own funds or the support of a like-minded patron. This firm was founded in 1753 as the Imprenta de la Biblioteca Mexicana and obtained by the Jáuregui family in 1767.

The family business stands out as one of the preeminent typographic workshops of eighteenth-century Mexico City. Upon the original typographer's death in 1778, relatives took control of the firm and continued its operation until 1796.<sup>5</sup> It was under the management of Francisco de Sales Quintero (José de Jáuregui's nephew-in-law) that *La portentosa vida de la muerte* was published in 1792. Little else is known of the firm's history, except that they purchased their "letters" and other typographic materials from a manufacturer in Madrid. As paper production was technically illegal in the Spanish colony, the firm would also have purchased paper from suppliers in the Old World, unless they engaged in business with one of the few known illicit paper manufacturers in the viceroyalty.

### **The Artist: Eighteen Engravings**

In addition to the typographic element of the book, eighteen prints accompany the text of the volume. Interestingly, by the eighteenth century

---

<sup>5</sup> Marina Garone Gravier, "El comercio tipográfico matritense en México durante el siglo XVIII," *Secuencia*, Núm. 88 (Enero-Abril 2014), 14.

typographic workshops were no longer employing print makers in their shops, opting instead to simply outsource image-making whenever the need arose.<sup>6</sup> This explains how the artist Francisco Agüera Bustamante came to construct the images for *La portentosa*, all of which depict Death as a humanistic, skeletal figure.

We know that artists working in the eighteenth-century printmaking trade did not rely on intermediary draftsmen, but rather orchestrated their own designs. Unfortunately, if and when they did use the drawings of others for inspiration, they rarely cited their sources.<sup>7</sup> Given this history, we may never know the original sources for Death's representation that is often at odds with both scientific reality and even the text itself. For while author Joaquín Bolaños describes Death as an ethereal, spiritual concept, Francisco Agüera Bustamante depicts a figure that is recognizably corporeal. The construction of these images even echoes the ephemeral nature of death itself, which was an important aspect of colonial religious discourse.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Prints and Printmakers in Viceregal Mexico City, 1600-1800*, (ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 2000), 144-145.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 263-279.

## **Project Summary**

The first chapter in this study proposes that the concept of liminality appears within the construction of Death as a gendered being. Such an analysis makes apparent the liminal status of Death as a gendered figure, while also suggesting that a fragmentation of the categories woman and man must occur in order for the author's and artist's messages to become clear. The construction of Death's gender identity appears to be neither fully female nor male in nature. As a woman, Death is allowed certain liberties that eighteenth-century women would not have been afforded. The creators of the book seem to lend Death authority by toying with her gender identity, often posing her in masculine ways or drawing attention to her less-than-womanly behavioral attributes. This chapter will explore Death's gender construction, particularly by comparing her depiction to the longstanding genres of religious, royal and viceregal portraiture. There are even scholars who refrain from gendering Death when they translate Bolaños' text and the captions to Bustamante's engravings, opting instead to use neutral pronouns (i.e. 'its' rather than her/his).<sup>9</sup>

The fragmentation inherent in Death's gender construction will likely link back to the issues that the Inquisition cited as deserving censorship, while it also mirrors the liminal status of the book between literary genres. *La portentosa vida*

---

<sup>9</sup> Lomnitz, 289.

*de la muerte* draws heavily on the tradition of saintly biographies, or *vitae*, but has also been considered one of the earliest Mexican novels. Within my discussion of gender, I will draw upon comparative images from each of these genres to demonstrate that Death occupies an in-between status and displays characteristics of each.

From here, I explore the categorical liminality (or hybridity) of the text as situated between religious devotional, saintly biography, and novel. I will also investigate the liminal aspects of the images themselves, as they draw from various pictorial genres, or traditions. Categories to be discussed include religious and secular portraiture, scientific/anatomical illustrations, Spanish and Mexican posthumous child portraiture, history painting, and emblem books. I hope that with this work, we will be able to interrogate the boundaries of such constructed categories by which we differentiate works of art. The work of Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins will guide the second chapter, as their ideas regarding the complex and ill-defined boundaries of genre relate directly to my research on the liminal status of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.

My research helps to construct a social history of the book and its publication, while highlighting the ways that multiple traces of history are able to be seen in this one object. In addition to the signature of the author and the obvious contributions of the artist, the literal signature of one of the owners of the Gilcrease copy of the text is inscribed within the book's beginning pages (Figures

1-3).<sup>10</sup> While these inscriptions bear text that reads “twenty-five,” we cannot know if that refers to a date, and if so to which century. Nonetheless, the phantom of one previous owner/reader of the book provides another layer of trace within the volume. We are also able to physically see the work and input of the publisher who printed and bound the book,<sup>11</sup> as well as that of the multiple papermakers who literally left their mark on history.<sup>12</sup>

The various ways in which the physical construction of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* exists within levels of liminal space will be the topic of the final full chapter of this thesis, “Physical Construction and Liminality.” An array of watermarks within one of the surviving copies of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* that currently resides in the Gilcrease Museum’s rare book collection in Tulsa, Oklahoma provides the most relevant embodiment of this idea. The watermarked

---

<sup>10</sup> The beginning pages bear three distinct inscriptions, each in cursive script. The first reads “Veinte y cinco” (twenty-five) in dark ink, with “La muerte cruel y livana” (Cruel, soft Death) below in pencil (Figure 1). The next inscription appears on the reverse of the same page, and bears the name Eduardo Diaz V[illegible], with additional illegible writing above that has been struck out, and the word “Propiedad” (Property) below (Figure 2). The final inscription, appearing on the back of the engraved frontispiece depicting Death, contains the name Eduardo V[illegible] Diaz (with middle and last names reversed) and text below reading “[illegible] dueño propio” (owner) (Figure 3). While these inscriptions likely refer to one of the book’s previous owners, no further information regarding this individual has come to light. It also remains unclear if the “Veinte y cinco” inscription relates to a year, and if so whether it would refer to 1825 or 1925. Perhaps future analysis of the ink used in these inscriptions could help untangle some of these details.

<sup>11</sup> Printing signatures, which are unique to the publisher, appear throughout the text marking his own organization system.

<sup>12</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” *Of Grammatology*. Corrected ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), xv-xviii.



images—newly discovered and shown in this thesis for the first time—show sun motifs, block lettering, partial bodies of horses, and even complete figures on horseback. These watermarks are all situated in the margins of the text and typically perpendicular to the prints and wording of *La portentosa*.

This chapter's focus will rely on the physical construction of the little-studied Gilcrease Museum copy of the book,<sup>13</sup> and more specifically on the multitude of watermarks present within its pages. I assert that these images maintain liminal status by blurring the boundaries between art, ornament, and trademark. This draws on the history of the book and papermaking in Mexico, a subject which is rich but imbalanced, as the vast majority of scholars tend to focus on the first few decades after the establishment of the printing press in the colony, c. 1539, rather than on the later colonial period in which *La portentosa vida de la muerte* was published.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> As nothing has been published regarding the Gilcrease copy of *La portentosa* in particular, it is worth noting some information about this specific volume. It is bound in light-colored calfskin that may or may not be original to the book, and features two leather knots on the front cover that align with two leather hoops on the back cover that would have originally been used to hold the book closed. However, the loops no longer reach the knots due to natural changes in the leather, which has likely shrunken over time. The text "VIDA DE LA MUERTE" (The Life of Death) is embossed within a rectangle on the top section of the book's spine, with traces of the gold inlay still partially visible within the letters and their rectangular frame.

<sup>14</sup> Martha Whittaker, *Jesuit Printing in Bourbon Mexico City: The Press of the Colegio De San Ildefonso, 1748-1767*, 1998, (ProQuest Dissertations and Theses), 1-3.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the first chapter, I focus on liminality with respect to Death's gendered depiction by Francisco A. Bustamante. Relevant sources have been drawn from the disciplines of Sociology, Anthropology, Gender & Women's Studies, and Art History. Judith Butler's essay, "Imitation and Gender Subordination," provides the foundational understanding of gender performance and construction, as well as compulsory heterosexuality,<sup>15</sup> upon which I base my observations relating to Bustamante's engravings.<sup>16</sup> As Death is—by linguistic necessity—female, throughout the text she engages in (unconsummated) marriages with multiple men. However, aside from this fact, her character is constructed to perform gender in a stereotypically masculine way.

J. Halberstam's groundbreaking work on female masculinity also informs my ideas of gender and liminality, particularly as I compare the figure of Death to

---

<sup>15</sup> Although I acknowledge that scholars prior to Judith Butler—such as Adrienne Rich, for example—have theorized compulsory heterosexuality, for this study I found it beneficial to draw upon Butler's engagement with the concept.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Subordination," *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss. (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13-30.

masculinized female portraits from the colonial period.<sup>17</sup> Some indigenous cultures in New Spain had understandings of gender that superseded the European idea of a dichotomous system,<sup>18</sup> and Halberstam's work in many ways speaks to these earlier understandings by offering categories of masculinity that can be applied to those typically viewed as strictly *women*. This, combined with Butler's description of compulsory heterosexuality, helps to construct an understanding of the way that Death's gender is constructed and performed by the figure in Bustamante's eighteen engravings.

The second chapter deals with liminality of genre, breaking this down into both literary and pictorial genre. This chapter draws from more consistently art historical work, as much of the content is dedicated to the genres of portraiture, history painting, scientific illustrations, and posthumous child portraiture. The literary genres included are religious devotional, saintly biography, and the early novel. Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins' work on gender and genre in the art of New Spain provides a solid foundation for my engagement with the way that these categories intersect and overlap to allow for a liminal/hybrid nature of both gender and genre in *La portentosa*.<sup>19</sup> As such, the work by Rappaport and

---

<sup>17</sup> J. Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Maria Lugones, "Heterosexuality and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," *Hypatia*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter, 2007), 200-201.

<sup>19</sup> Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins, "Genre, Gender, Género," in *Beyond the Lettered City*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

Cummins appears in both my first and second chapters.

The final chapter engages with the ideas of ornament, art and trademark as categories into which objects are typically sorted. While I have not included specific research relating to art—as the topic is so extensive—I have done a significant amount of foundational reading from scholars who have theorized about ornament.<sup>20</sup> The most influential of these theorists was John Ruskin, specifically his work *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, in which the author argues that a key component of an ornament is the evidence of the worker’s hand.<sup>21</sup> Thus I argue that watermarks serve as a manifestation of ornament, because they exist

---

<sup>20</sup> The study and theory of ornament is a vast academic field that encompasses a broad range of scholars. While I consulted the following sources, none were as relevant to my own research as those mentioned explicitly in my literature review: María Judith Feliciano, “The Invention of Mudejar Art and the Viceregal Aesthetic Paradox: Notes on the Reception of Iberian Ornament in New Spain,” in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, ed. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); E.H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, (London: Quaritch, 1910); Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell. (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1908); Alois Reigl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Gottfried Semper, *Style in the Technical Arts, or, Practical Aesthetics*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004); James Trilling, “Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-cultural Idiom,” *Arte Medievale*, Vol. 9: (1995).

<sup>21</sup> John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (New York: J. Wiley, 1859), 19-45.

as traces of papermill workers.<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Hay’s book, *Sensuous Surfaces*, furthered my engagement with the idea of ornament, by asserting that ornamentation cannot be divorced from its support, or the very object on which it appears. In this way, it would seem that the watermarks in *La portentosa* are actually a part of what Hay would call the *surfacescape* of the object.<sup>23</sup>

The concept of trademark, or branding, has come from my research of watermarks themselves, particularly in the work of Hans Lenz entitled *La historia del papel en Nueva España*.<sup>24</sup> Dard Hunter’s 1947 text on bookmaking processes also briefly mentions the trademark/branding aspect of watermarks.<sup>25</sup> As I sought to center watermarks as the main element of my final chapter, the work of Michael Camille became incredibly useful. His conceptualization of marginal imagery—and how to center an argument on marginalia—(from the book *The Image on the Edge*) was critical to my conceptualization of watermarks as

---

<sup>22</sup> Alina Payne, *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Architectural Modernism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 10. In working through the idea of trace, Gayatri Spivak’s interpretation of the work of Jacques Derrida was also useful. She gracefully explains his notion of trace as the absence of presence in her translator’s preface to *Of Grammatology*, which helped me to think through the watermarks as trace evidence of the life and hand of the worker. Gayatri Spivak, “Translator’s Preface,” *Of Grammatology*. Corrected ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), xv-xviii.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China*, (Honolulu University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 75.

<sup>24</sup> Hans Lenz, *Historia del papel en Mexico y cosas relacionadas: 1525-1950*, (Mexico City: Miguel Angel Pomia, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*, (New York: Dover Publications, INC., 1978), 259-265.

relevant, primary visual imagery.<sup>26</sup> While Bustamante's engravings might typically be considered the primary visual material in *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, the watermarks that appear in this specific copy of the text provide another angle from which to approach the overall visual culture of the book.

---

<sup>26</sup> Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 9-55.

## CHAPTER I

### A LIMINAL GENDER CONSTRUCTION

In this chapter, I pair sociological theory with pictorial analysis to demonstrate the fact that Death occupies a liminal, “third sex” gender category. Looking closely at several images from among the book’s eighteen engravings, and using excerpts from the text of *La portentosa* to supplement my findings, I assert that Death takes on several masculine attributes—attributes that can be seen in contemporaneous portraits of both masculinized women and authoritative men. Key indicators of Death’s masculinity lie in Bustamante’s treatment of her clothing and setting, as well as in her body positioning. Throughout the text, author Joaquín Bolaños also supplements these visual markers of masculinity by affording Death power and authority in the realm of religion.

#### **Gender in New Spain**

Although some indigenous cultures in New Spain held non-binary understandings of gender and sexuality, the Spanish colonizers imposed a strictly dichotomous gender system that recognized only men and women as legitimate

categories, based on reproductive sex and a notion of compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>27</sup> Arguably, this dichotomous system was used to reinforce Spanish power and dominance, while being simultaneously linked to the values of the Catholic church and the proliferation of ruling-class capitalist aims.<sup>28</sup> Despite the Spanish insistence on a gender binary, the figure of Death in *La portentosa vida de la muerte* occupies a liminal status between woman/man as depicted by Francisco Agüera Bustamante. In fact, Joaquín Bolaños' text even offers some description of Death that exceeds strict gender roles, opting to lend her authority by freeing her from the rigid expectations to which she would have been subjected, were she really a woman in colonial New Spain. By drawing upon traditional ways of masculinizing portraits of clergywomen, as well as from the genres of royal and viceregal portraiture that show authoritative male figures, Bustamante effectively creates a liminal gender category for his version of Death that appears within the pages of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*. Meanwhile, the author of the accompanying text has granted Death the ability to intercede with God, a powerful tradition that would typically be reserved solely for male religious leaders.

Eighteenth-century New Spanish ideas of the sexes were strongly influenced by a body of theological texts that consistently described women as

---

<sup>27</sup> Lugones, 200-201.

<sup>28</sup> Lugones, 202.



imperfect, weak and inferior—ideas that had unfortunately been perpetuated within the Catholic faith for centuries.<sup>29</sup> In biographies of nuns and other holy women, significant portions of the text are dedicated to teaching women to overcome their “vile female flesh” and “weak interior nature.”<sup>30</sup> Most strategies for accomplishing this feat centered on subjecting oneself to the authority of men—whether a father, husband, or religious figure. If women were incapable of overcoming their perceived deficiencies without the aid and authority of a male, clearly creating a female figure—such as Death—who embodied power and authority would prove quite difficult to conceptualize.

Gender was most certainly a primary concern for colonial artists, especially those depicting the portraits of male and female clergy which would accompany their biographies. As the genre of such *vitae*—which will be discussed more fully in the following chapter—would have heavily influenced the creation of *La portentosa*, we can expect that the gender construction of Death posed a problem that the artist would have been quite aware of as well. With respect to the genre of religious biographies, Kelly Donahue-Wallace even states that “male and female biographies differed in ways that affected the representational strategies in

---

<sup>29</sup> Kelly Donahue-Wallace, “Bajo los tormentos del tórculos: Printed portraits of Male and Female Clergy in Eighteenth-century New Spain,” *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2005),” 110.

<sup>30</sup> Donahue-Wallace, “Bajo los tormentos,” 110.

the portraits that accompanied them.”<sup>31</sup> Despite the linguistic necessity of depicting Death as a woman (fem: la muerte), colonial views of women’s role and behavior in society would have made it difficult to show a womanly figure as possessing the authority that a demigod would command.

In her article, “La casada imperfecta,” Donahue-Wallace comments on the colonial discourse surrounding gender and popular notions regarding women:

“...the image of womanhood in early modern Spain and its colonies was far from good. Historians agree that women of all castes and classes were believed to be capricious, indiscreet, greedy, vain, and irrational. They were subject to bouts of passion and fell easy prey to the temptations of the flesh. Because they were governed by their bodies and not by reason, women were universally understood to have inferior intellects. Naturally possessing no virtues other than their virginity, girls were to be instructed by their families and the Church in the proper behaviors of Christian women. Without instruction and guidance, their inherent weaknesses threatened the social order that used legitimacy and *limpieza de sangre* to decide matters ranging from inheritance to public office.”<sup>32</sup>

Bustamante combats elements of this discourse by downplaying Death’s feminine gender and neglecting to dress her, leaving her skeletal frame completely exposed in nearly all of his eighteen engravings. The only exceptions to this artistic decision exist in the frontispiece, in which Death wears a luxurious fur-trimmed royal cape (Figure 4), and in the depiction of her as a child, in which she is partially covered by a small blanket in her cradle (Figure 5). Bustamante’s representational strategy of gender liminality worked to deflect normative ideas of

---

<sup>31</sup> Donahue-Wallace, “Bajo los tormentos,” 110.

<sup>32</sup> Donahue-Wallace, “La casada imperfecta: A Woman, A Print, and the Inquisition,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2002), 243-244.

a female figure as naturally vain, specifically by causing viewers to focus more carefully on her actions than her attire—actions, as I will demonstrate, that were more typical of masculine norms from the colonial period.<sup>33</sup>

I posit that Death's gender construction in *La portentosa* is, in fact, liminal, a hypothesis that aligns with the ideas of Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins, who explore in-depth the links between gender and genre, and the complexity of such terms when applied to the colonial discourse. Although they never use the framework of liminality to describe the content of their work, Rappaport and Cummins state with direct reference to gender in the viceroyalty of New Spain that “the colonial world is an amalgamation, one of constantly blurring boundaries.”<sup>34</sup> That is to say, that while the colonial authorities recognized gender as strictly dichotomous, the reality of colonial culture presented other in-between genders. These scholars refer to the non-conforming identities as being like a “third sex,” a category that I believe encompasses

---

<sup>33</sup> Later representations of Death often show the figure as at least partially clothed, and specifically in ways that mark her feminine gender. For example, the 1856 painting *La alegoría de la muerte* offers a view of Death that is exactly half-clothed in an elaborate dress (Figure 6). However, the left side of her body is fully undressed. Interestingly, the artist—Tomas Mondragón—elected to also portray Death as half living in this work, so the clothed form is fleshy and lifelike, in contrast to the nude, bare skeletal side of her figure. Later representations of Death, such as this example, show a clear interest in marking Death as decidedly feminine, an avenue that Bustamante strays from in significant ways.

<sup>34</sup> Joanne Rappaport and Thomas Cummins, “Genre, Gender, Género,” in *Beyond the Lettered City*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 57.

Death's gender, as it exceeds the binary colonial system, and lies instead somewhere between man and woman.<sup>35</sup>

While Death's masculinized attributes will be elucidated below via comparisons to known masculinized portraits of holy women, her feminine qualities may at first seem less explicitly obvious. As previously mentioned, the feminine gender of the Spanish noun for 'death' dictates that Death be understood as a female figure. However, other elements of the book also expand upon her feminine gender. For example, as a woman, Death engages in multiple marriages to men—men who can never consummate their relationships with Death, which ultimately leads her to become the wife of all sinners. Based on our understanding of the colonial gender system—and its clear roots in compulsory heterosexuality—it becomes clear that while Death takes on masculine attributes, she is indeed still viewed as a female figure.<sup>36</sup> In investigating the constructed nature of Death's gender identity, key ideas from the work of Judith Butler are central—namely, her notion of gender performance and construction, as well as her borrowed ideas regarding compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Rappaport and Cummins, 59.

<sup>36</sup> Greta Gaard, "Towards a Queer Ecofeminism." *Estudos Feministas* Vol. 19, No. 1 (2011), 197-200.

<sup>37</sup> Again, I would like to acknowledge that Butler was not the first scholar to establish a theoretical understanding of compulsory heterosexuality. However, her interpretation of the idea has informed my research.

Butler claims that gender is both constructed and performative, and that a gendered being cannot exist without first acting (or performing) in a gendered way.<sup>38</sup> These gendered performances rely upon normative standards of compulsory heterosexuality. To extrapolate from this widely accepted sociological theory, I posit that the gender of figures in representational art—such as that in *La portentosa vida de la muerte*—must be constructed by the artist individually along with the influence of socio-cultural and/or textual sources that guide them in their depiction.

For instance, Francisco Agüera Bustamante would have been responsible for creating Death's gendered attributes, though he would have been informed by his own society's views on gender roles and possibilities, as well as by Joaquín Bolaños' textual descriptions of her gendered actions and behaviors. Just as an individual's gender cannot exist without the intentional performance of that individual, Death's perceivable gender could not exist without the decisions that the artist would make regarding her "performance," or the construction of her gendered attributes.

As it is clear that Death is intended to be read as female, but also takes on many masculine traits, the conceptual framework of liminality helps to explain the type of gender that Death embodies. The work of J. Halberstam similarly engages

---

<sup>38</sup> Butler, 18-24.

with this type of ambiguity, or in-betweenness, as the author argues for a multiplicity of genders rooted in studies of female manifestations of masculinity.<sup>39</sup> Bustamante has constructed Death's gender in a way that allows for female manifestations of masculinity, effectively making her gender liminal. As she takes on masculine attributes and behaviors through the artist's attempts to lend her power and authority, the figure nonetheless claims membership in the category of woman. In line with Halberstam's proposed idea of a gender continuum—along which exists a range of genders between those of the clearly-defined man and woman—I posit that Death has been liminally constructed in *La portentosa* to reside along just such a spectrum, in a metaphorical in-between space that can account for the masculine qualities taken up by a decidedly female character.<sup>40</sup>

### **Masculinized Female Portraits**

The contradiction between the ideal of *woman* and the expectations associated with authority necessitated the creation of a liminal gender category from which the artist could draw typically masculine characteristics to help demonstrate the power of Death despite her womanhood and the flaws inherently linked to the identification of woman by colonial viewers. The idea of

---

<sup>39</sup> Halberstam, 2-6.

<sup>40</sup> Halberstam, 2-4.

masculinizing female portraits to allow them a level of authority, however, was not entirely new in colonial culture. Artists working in the previous century had recognized the contradiction inherent in representing a powerful, authoritative woman and had opted to “masculinize” the likenesses of female nuns, authors and abbesses in ways that mirrored the “manly” attributes recounted in their biographies.<sup>41</sup> Donahue-Wallace’s observations on the portraits of clergywomen can be applied to my analysis of Death’s gender liminality, particularly as she states “that Mexican painters and printmakers applied masculine portraiture conventions for these women.”<sup>42</sup> The author provides the example of Madre Gerónyma de la Assumpción’s portrait, created by José Mota in 1713 as an example of the masculinization of a clergywoman’s portrait (Figure 7).

In the accompanying text, Bolaños also affords Death the ability to intercede directly with God, as well as to teach sinners, both of which were against Catholic doctrine of the period (for women).<sup>43</sup> Cristina González expounds upon the limitations of female religious figures’ actions and responsibilities in her work regarding images of crucified abbesses, wherein she engages with the sermon of Francisco Frías y Olvero. Within this sermon—also

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Donahue-Wallace, “Bajo los tórculos,” 114.

<sup>43</sup> Joaquín Bolaños, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, (Mexico City: Jaúregui, 1792). Examples of Death addressing God directly appear in the form of several monologues from Death.

written in 1792—the preacher extolls the virtues of the recently deceased abbess, Sor María Ignacia.<sup>44</sup> Anger was sparked by the author’s insistence that a woman could teach, perform religious rites, as well as engage in other actions that were typically reserved for priests, prompting the condemnation of Frías’ sermon by the Inquisition.<sup>45</sup>

In relation to Frías’ funerary sermon, the Holy Office of the Inquisition is cited as saying that “the public word of a woman on matters of scripture and such can more often destroy than build; thus, they are not allowed to teach publicly but rather learn silently.”<sup>46</sup> Given this contemporaneous source of Inquisition records that clearly demonstrates disapproval of women holding public religious positions, it becomes even more surprising that Bolaños allowed the female figure of Death to engage in direct conversation with God, as well as intercede with sinners from a position of authority. Throughout the text, there are several asides in which Death engages with God, mostly in the form of first-person monologues addressing the Catholic deity directly.

---

<sup>44</sup> Cristina Cruz González, “Beyond the Bride of Christ: Crucified Abbesses in Mexico and Spain,” *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (December 2017), 105-106.

<sup>45</sup> González, 110.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*



### **Authoritative Male Portraits**

The artistic solution to the problem of Death's gender resulted in the creation of a liminal gender category for the figure to occupy that drew upon the tradition of the aforementioned masculinized female portraits. However, in the frontispiece image, Death takes the stance of a powerful male authority—a stance that colonial women do not appear in with regard to similar portraits (Figure 4).<sup>47</sup> She dominates the entire frame of the image with both of her arms outstretched. Meanwhile, the printed frame cannot fully contain her actions and command of the space, as the scepter which she holds in her right hand presumably juts outside the boundaries of her “portrait.” In addition to the scepter, Death is accompanied by other objects that allude to her powerful position. Both the crown and fur-trimmed cape that she wears evoke images of similar items worn by European male rulers in their portraits.<sup>48</sup>

The masculine posturing of Death by Bustamante mirrors the work of royal portrait artists, as well as those artists who portrayed New Spanish viceroys. In fact, a contemporaneous portrait of King Charles IV of Spain displays the

---

<sup>47</sup> Studies have shown that expected gender performances effect bodily comportment and the way that an individual either does or does not take up space. By showing Death in a wide-reaching, masculine stance, Bustamante has allowed her to escape the strictures of feminine bodily comportment. Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality,” *Human Studies*, Vol. 3, (1980), 137-156.

<sup>48</sup> See Figure 9 for example of royal cape.

monarch in a near-identical stance (Figure 8). While Bustamante likely would not have seen this exact work—as it was created in 1792, the same year that *La portentosa* was published—it is clear that this tradition of royal portraiture migrated to the Spanish colonies and informed stylistic choices there. Royal portrait artist Mariano Salvador Maella participated in this pictorial tradition when he depicted the current monarch, much like Bustamante did in his depiction of Death.

Another link between Death and royal power can be made in the way she is addressed by sinners in the text. For example, in the eighth chapter of *La portentosa*, Death is approached by a group of men who wish to negotiate terms with her. In their monologue addressing the figure, they refer to her as “muy poderosa Señora (very powerful woman).”<sup>49</sup> This display of reverence demonstrates the authority that Death held in the minds of the group of men, an authority typically denied of women in religious positions.

The pose of authority and dominance that Death assumes draws not only upon Spanish royal portraiture, but also upon the long history of governmental portraits in New Spanish art. In fact, her exact posture is mirrored in several portraits of viceroys. For example, in the 1783 portrait of Viceroy Matías de Gálvez (Figure 10), the governor’s body position is almost identical to that of

---

<sup>49</sup> Bolaños, 51.

Death in the frontispiece to *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.<sup>50</sup> It would be reasonable to assume that Bustamante would have been familiar with similar images, if not this exact portrait attributed to Andrés Lopez.

In his portrait, Viceroy Gálvez is posed confidently in a wide stance, with his feet pointing outwards and his arms outstretched widely. This posturing allows the figure to easily dominate the pictorial space, although a smaller scene in the background vies for the viewer's attention. Matías de Gálvez holds an object reminiscent of a scepter (similar to that held by Death) in his right hand, which juts out towards the viewer in an example of traditional foreshortening. Meanwhile, the governor's left hand subtly points towards the students and implied drawing lesson nearly in progress behind him. Death also appears to gesture with her left hand, although there is nothing else evident on that side of the frame.

Both Death and Viceroy Gálvez are positioned to effectively create a pyramidal spatial hierarchy with the head of the figure in the highest position, just one more way in which each figure is centralized and prioritized. Although this

---

<sup>50</sup>Matias de Gálvez governed the colony of New Spain as viceroy from 1783 to 1784. During this brief period of governance, Gálvez championed Enlightenment ideals and supported the training of New Spanish artists. Serving as representative of Spain's king Charles III, he promoted the creation of an institution where locals could be taught drawing skills. Ultimately, Viceroy Gálvez would come to be known as the founder and great supporter of the Academy of Fine Arts in Mexico City, which even offered beginners' grants to impoverished, talented youth.

prioritization of the sitter in a portrait is to be expected, given the aims of the genre, the diminution in size of the additional figures that accompany Gálvez makes the arrangement of his composition seem decidedly intentional—and therefore all the more important for Bustamante to recreate in his depiction of a female Death that embodies the authority of a powerful—typically male—figure.

In an apparently cognizant effort not to diminish the powerful, dominant stance of the governor, the artist has depicted the two children in rather unrealistically-rendered proportions. Their odd size and bodily configurations seem at odds with the artist's otherwise logical use of perspective. However, these two boys in the painting's middle ground appear to be approaching their drawing lesson, holding examples of the free supplies that were provided to students of the Academy that Gálvez had founded.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, their tattered clothing betrays their position as members of a lower social class, a detail that serves to highlight the compassionate nature of the institution and the fact that poor students of talent could find financial assistance to study the arts there. Emphasizing the charitable inclinations of the institution he has founded further enhances the idea of the viceroy as a powerful beacon of authority and power, while also underscoring his compassionate nature. This compassionate nature is not meant to convey the

---

<sup>51</sup> Jaime Cuadriello, "The Paintings Department of the Royal Academy of San Carlos: Origins, Development and Epilogue," *Painting in Latin America: 1550-1820*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 208-211.

sitter's masculinity, but rather the reaches of his authority—a theme echoed in the work of Bustamante.

Although Death is not accompanied by additional figures in the frontispiece image to *La portentosa*, her compassion is highlighted in other engravings in a way that similarly promotes simultaneously her power and compassion. For example, in a print that shows her presiding over the death of a doctor who she cherished, Death is depicted as both compassionate for having looked over the man and also as powerful through the image's hierarchical spatial organization (Figure 11). This compositional arrangement serves to promote a vision of Death as compassionate and welcoming for those who have lived good, Christian lives, while still allowing for the existence of her underlying religious authority.<sup>52</sup>

Like Death's attire in the frontispiece image, which evokes a powerful, royal status, the clothing of Viceroy Gálvez provides an additional layer of authority within his portrait. The governor's immaculate attire that features intricate detailing offers yet another way of displaying authority and elite status. While his (presumably) powdered wig would have been an immediate social marker of his governmental and social power to his contemporaries, even the

---

<sup>52</sup> In the accompanying text, author Joaquín Bolaños describes Death specifically as a welcoming and compassionate being to those who embrace Christian values—presumably the intended audience for the book.

embroidery on his jacket serves to promote this aspect of Gálvez' identity. The long, royal blue coat shows finely painted gold designs as stand-ins for embroidery, painted with the delicate implication of grandeur. The gold in the jacket brings out the gold designs in his bright red undershirt as well, designs that match—if not rival—the jacket's intricacy. The governor's cuffs and neckerchief feature seemingly translucent, flowery lace accents. Even the gentleman's knee-high stockings shine in a near-perfect imitation of satin. The decadence espoused by the materials that make up the viceroy's clothing again points toward his upper-class status and position of power in New Spanish society. This same decadence is suggested by Bustamante in his treatment of Death's scant material attributes.

Finally, a comparison of the setting of Death's frontispiece image and Viceroy Gálvez' portrait shows further similarity. Death is situated in a plain space, seemingly atop a pedestal, but no decoration is present on her stage. The only detail added is that of the implied shadow behind her that cuts diagonally across her frame in extremely dark cross-hatching. She gazes straight out at the viewer with a chilling, penetrating stare emanating from her darkened eye sockets.

A similarly chilling aura is evinced in the viceroy's portrait through the lack of architectural ornamentation in the constructed space. A sole architectural

element appears in the form of one column protruding from behind the painted curtain, but otherwise the walls impart a feeling of total austerity. The evident austerity of the architectural space is likewise echoed in the stern gaze of the Viceroy Gálvez, as his piercing stare confronts the painting's viewer. The solemn expression he wears offers no respite from the severity of the sitter's gaze, instead enhancing the overall feeling of a paternalistic condescension—a feeling which is not relieved by his creased brow and flushed cheeks.

### **Conclusions**

That Death's gender is at times both liminal and ambiguous in Bustamante's engravings has been shown via comparisons with masculinized female portraits and authoritative male portraits. However, the in-between nature of Death's gender presentation is also echoed in Bustamante's depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden—an image in which the infantile form of Death can be seen in a crib in the foreground (Figure 5). Here the two lively human figures show little differentiation between their nude forms. Both appear to be a similar height, with their backs to the viewer and hair loosely tied back at the nape of their necks. The physique of both male and female varies quite little, and the couple holds hands in a way that lets neither enter a position of dominance over the other. While there is the subtlest suggestion of a breast on the figure to the right, the snake coming down from the tree above them addresses the figure on

the left, which should be Eve, according to tradition. In this print, Bustamante has elected to leave the gender of both Adam and Eve rather ambiguous, which suggests the artist's awareness of the issues with depicting gender—issues that he would ultimately break with in his depictions of Death in *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.

If, as Donahue-Wallace suggests, a woman's only means of salvation in New Spain was through remaining chaste and being confined to the home, or through becoming a nun, this figure of Death in *La portentosa vida de la muerte* becomes even more revolutionary from a gendered perspective.<sup>53</sup> Not only does Death engage in many male-patterned behaviors and appear in powerful poses associated with male authority, she also exists frequently outside the confines of domestic space. For example, in another of Bustamante's prints, the artist depicts her atop a horse—not seated sidesaddle, like a traditional woman. In this scene, Death appears to lead a group of soldiers (Figure 12). Given the colonial view of women's intellectual and physical weakness, Death as merely female could not engage in such actions. The liminal and slightly masculinized depiction of her skeletal frame, however, allows Bustamante to imagine a situation in which a female Death can escape the confines of the domestic sphere and fully participate in the social realm typically accessible only to men.

---

<sup>53</sup> Donahue-Wallace, "La casada imperfecta," 243-244.



That there was a level of awareness of the non-binary nature of gender apparent in New Spain during the eighteenth century offers us a new way to engage with colonial imagery. Although formal theorizing of the ways in which female bodies can perform masculine behaviors and actions would not come about for another two centuries, it is clear in the work of Bustamante, as well as in that of artists depicting masculinized clergywomen, that colonial artists were able to recognize and engage with ideas of an in-between gender, or “third sex.” Perhaps this ability came from interactions with indigenous cultures that had long recognized the existence of more than two genders.<sup>54</sup>

By interrogating the ambiguously-constructed nature of Death’s gender, we gain valuable insight into colonial understandings of gender more broadly. Although the dichotomous system rooted in compulsory heterosexuality was the only officially-accepted gender and sexuality system, Death’s liminal gender allows us to see that there may have been more flexibility in colonial popular culture. I posit that these more flexible ideas surrounding gender may be attributable to the hybridization of indigenous and Spanish cultural beliefs—especially because natives had long recognized more than two distinct genders. In

---

<sup>54</sup> Paula Gunn Allen, “Who is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism,” *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 209-221.

addition, this type of research allows us to explore and push the boundaries that we imagine exist for a host of different categories.

## CHAPTER II

### LIMINALITY & HYBRIDITY OF GENRE

In this chapter, I will be using the concept of liminality rather loosely and in a manner more consistent with notions of hybridity. The nature of both the images and text within *La portentosa* reflect a blending of pictorial and literary genres. By comparing Bustamante's engravings to the several categories of images from which the artist may have drawn inspiration, the complex and hybrid nature of these engravings can be seen. In addition, the existence of the text as a mixture of various literary styles and traditions can speak to the role the book was meant to play in colonial New Spain. With this research, I hope to emphasize the fact that images and objects can rarely be classified into a single, static category.

The Spanish word "género" can be translated to English as both gender and genre, and as a term, it "works to define, to distinguish, and to categorize so as to bring into proper focus social and cultural specificities."<sup>55</sup> However, as I will argue via the concept

---

<sup>55</sup> Rappaport and Cummins, 53.

of liminality, *La portentosa vida de la muerte* defies categorization into a distinct genre, effectively challenging the very nature of the term “género.” While genre is typically thought of in terms of “clarity, propriety, and proper distinction,”<sup>56</sup> Bolaños’ book resides in a liminal space between the literary genres of saintly biographies, religious devotional text, and early Mexican proto-novel. Bustamante’s engravings also occupy a liminal, hybrid status, drawing upon the pictorial genres of royal and viceregal portraiture, scientific illustration, emblem books, history painting, and posthumous child portraiture (or *angelitos*).

### **Pictorial Genres**

I have posited that the illustrations that accompany Bolaños’ book mimic the characteristics of multiple pictorial genres, thereby offering another entry into the idea of liminality or hybridity. My work with ideas of liminality of genre parallels that of Thomas B.F. Cummins and Joanne Rappaport:

“...genres are not as fixed as they attempt to be. Rather, pictorial genres can be reconfigured, mixed, and confused so as to express the change in various categories of being.”<sup>57</sup>

While Cummins and Rappaport do not explicitly invoke the term liminality to explain their ideas of the ill-defined boundaries of genre categories, I feel that their research fully

---

<sup>56</sup> Rappaport and Cummins, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Rappaport and Cummins, 71.

supports my notion of genre liminality and hybridity within Bustamante's engravings completed for *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.

To draw upon my research in the previous chapter, I will begin by expounding upon the similarities between Bustamante's engravings and the genres of royal and viceregal portraiture. I have previously called attention to the similarities between Bustamante's engravings of Death and multiple royal and viceregal portraits from the late colonial period in both Spain and the viceroyalty of New Spain. The settings and bodily positioning of many governmental officials are mirrored in the frontispiece image of *La portentosa*. To reiterate, these figures were all male, and by invoking their stances, Bustamante was able to afford the female figure of Death more authority than eighteenth-century women would have experienced in their daily lives. The fact that Bustamante draws influence from these sources speaks to the ambiguous and liminal nature of the genre in which his engravings reside.

Perhaps the most obvious pictorial genre that Francisco Agüera Bustamante allows to influence his depiction of Death is that of scientific illustrations of anatomy. While Kelly Donahue-Wallace has argued that Bustamante's engravings in *La portentosa* demonstrate scientific accuracy, there is at least one exception to this hypothesis.<sup>58</sup> In the image of Death that precedes the seventh chapter of the book, the figure's ribcage protrudes at an unrealistic angle, and its arms are of noticeably different lengths (Figure

---

<sup>58</sup> Donahue-Wallace, "Prints and Printmakers," 113.

13). In this image, the right arm of Death even appears to be longer than her legs. The oddly protruding ribcage appears again in another of Bustamante's engravings as well (Figure 14). However, in this engraving Death's arms seem to be of equal length and proportionate to the figure's legs.

That is all to say, that although Bustamante's engravings may not demonstrate strict scientific accuracy, they do imitate the pictorial genre of scientific/anatomical illustration. For example, in a sixteenth-century anatomy publication by Andreas Vesalius, the author incorporated multiple woodcuts (attributed to a student of Titian) to illustrate his scientific findings.<sup>59</sup> The title page image to his publication even features the skeletal figure of Death hovering slightly above an ongoing anatomy lesson (Figure 15). The accuracy with which the human skeletal frame is depicted in this print is remarkable for its time, even surpassing the much later work of Francisco Agüera Bustamante. However, Bustamante's engravings of Death are clearly influenced by these earlier scientific works. Another woodcut from Vesalius' text focuses solely on the skeletal human frame (Figure 16). Bustamante's engravings of Death have clear roots in earlier scientific works such as this one.

---

<sup>59</sup> Andreas Vesalius and Charles Donald. O'Malley, and Saunders, J. B. De C. M. *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels; with Annotations and Translations, a Discussion of the Plates and Their Background, Authorship and Influence, and a Biographical Sketch of Vesalius*, (Cleveland: World Pub., 1950).

Emblem books are another genre that informed Bustamante's depiction of Death in *La portentosa*. Many emblem books offer specific guidelines for depicting allegories of Death, and one of the most prominent books in this genre of artistic instruction, Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, advises on proper depiction of the figure, as well as the attributes appropriate to associate with Death:

“The personification of Death, a skeleton, lies on a bier within an elaborate catafalque decorated with skulls and many lamps...wrapped in a rich robe...and wears a laurel crown symbolizing the rule over all mortals...The motto above the catafalque reads: ‘Death makes all men equals.’”<sup>60</sup>

The engraving that accompanies this description in *Iconologia* (Figure 17) bears striking resemblance to another of Bustamante's engravings from *La portentosa* (Figure 18).

Given the prevalence of emblem books during the colonial period—and the relative popularity of Ripa's text specifically—it would seem plausible that Bustamante may have been informed by either the *Iconologia* or a similar work.

The sheer number of engravings in *La portentosa* also liken the book to the emblem tradition. In the previous chapter, I highlighted the similarities between Bolaños' text and saintly vitae—using the hagiography of Gerónyma de la Asunción specifically. It should be noted that while the image of Gerónyma that accompanies her vita exists as the

---

<sup>60</sup> Cesare Ripa, *Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery: The 1758–1760 Hertel Edition of Ripa's Iconologia with 200 Engraved Illustrations*, ed. Edward A. Masser (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 18-20.

sole image in the work, Bustamante provided an astonishing eighteen engravings to accompany *La portentosa*. Although the book certainly mirrors *saintly vitae* in many ways, the high number of prints contained in the volume stray from the genre of hagiography—coming to resemble that of the emblem book all the more. These subtle distinctions serve as evidence that *La portentosa* resists categorization into a single genre, instead adopting characteristics of several traditions.

History painting also influenced Bustamante's depictions of Death, most notably in the previously discussed image of Death on horseback, leading soldiers in some type of military endeavor (Figure 12). This particular engraving draws inspiration from colonial conquest imagery. During the late colonial period in New Spain, nostalgic, celebratory works proliferated that served as reminders of the Spanish conquest.<sup>61</sup> One such painting, *Folding Screen with the Conquest of Mexico*, was painted on a ten-panel, folding biombo screen in the second half of the seventeenth century (Figure 19). This anonymous work depicts battles upon horseback, violent infantry confrontations, and indigenous civilians fleeing from danger—all of which were meant to celebrate the longstanding victory of Spanish forces in New Spain. In figure 12, Bustamante engages with this tradition by depicting Death on horseback, in similar fashion to the Spanish

---

<sup>61</sup> Kevin Terraciano, "Competing Memories of the Conquest of Mexico," *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 55-77.



forces that appear on the biombo screen painting and in equestrian portraits celebrating military successes.

The final pictorial genre that I believe Francisco Agüera Bustamante may have drawn inspiration from is that of posthumous child portraiture, commonly referred to as *angelito* paintings. This genre has early roots in Spain, but proliferated in Mexican culture, even existing well into the era of photography.<sup>62</sup> The basis for this genre is the belief that “children who die at a young age...are believed to become angels who acquire the ability to mediate on behalf of the surviving family members who remain on earth.”<sup>63</sup> The role that these children are believed to have resonates with the role of Death in *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, in that Death would similarly mediate between men and God. Upon their death, the *angelitos* would be dressed as small members of religious orders, and their portraits would be painted—typically with the child shown in a sleeplike position (Figure 20). This positioning of a deceased child figure mirrors that of Death in the engraving in which she appears with Adam and Eve (Figure 5). Although this may not be a direct influence on Bustamante, as an artist working in the colonial period, he would have been familiar with the genre of *angelitos*.

---

<sup>62</sup> Elisa C. Mandell, “Posthumous Portraits of Children in Early Modern Spain and Mexico,” *Hispanic Issues On Line*, Vol. 7 (Fall 2010), 68-80.

<sup>63</sup> Mandell, 69.

## Literary Genres

In addition to the pictorial traditions that influenced the images in the book, several literary genres also came together to create the ambiguous nature of the literary genre to which *La portentosa* belongs. This is evident by the way different scholars have sought to categorize the text. Juan Pedro Viquiera—a Mexican social historian who uses Bolaños’ book as one of two case studies in his influential essay “El sentimiento de la muerte en el México ilustrado del siglo XVIII através de dos textos de la época”—asserts that *La portentosa* exists as a purely religious text.<sup>64</sup> The background of Fray Joaquín Bolaños as a devout Franciscan who was affiliated with the Zacatecas missionary college would seem to corroborate this reading of the text.<sup>65</sup> However, Elizabeth C. DeRose—in her article “Pictorial Satire in Viceregal Mexico: Francisco Agüera Bustamante’s Engravings for *La portentosa vida de la muerte*”—argues that the work as a whole exists as one of the earliest forms of Mexican satire.<sup>66</sup> In addition to these two readings of *La portentosa*’s literary genre, Claire Voon describes the work as one of the earliest Mexican novels.<sup>67</sup> Clearly, there has been some disagreement among scholars as to the exact genre

---

<sup>64</sup> Juan Pedro Viquiera, “El sentimiento de la muerte en el México ilustrada por el siglo XVIII através de dos textos de la época,” *Relaciones*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (Winter 1981), 50-53.

<sup>65</sup> Espinosa, Isidro Félix De, and Juan Domingo. Arricivita. *Chronica Apostolica Y Seraphica De Todos Los Colegios De Propaganda Fide De Esta Nueva-España, De Misioneros Franciscanos Observantes Erigidos Con Autoridad Pontificia Y Regia Para La Reformacion De Los Fieles Y Conversion De Los Gentiles*. (Mexico: Por La Viuda De D. J.B. De Hogal, Impr., 1746), 499-508.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth C. DeRose, “Pictorial Satire in Viceregal Mexico: Francisco Agüera Bustamante’s Engravings for *La portentosa vida de la muerte*,” *Hemisphere*, Vol. 2, (2009), 84.

<sup>67</sup> Claire Voon, “A 1792 Mexican Novel Shows Early Day of the Dead Iconography,” *Hyperallergic*, (April 25, 2017).

that the *La portentosa* should occupy. I posit that such uncertainty about literary categorization is due to the liminal, hybrid status of the book's genre.

Again, the images in *La portentosa* also evoke those of saintly biographies, such as that of Gerónyma de la Asunción. The reason for the parallel imagery between these types of texts can be explained as the result of *La portentosa*'s liminal status with respect to genre. In fact, it calls upon the tradition of hagiography in several ways, although departing from it in significant ways as well. Among the similarities between the genre of hagiography and that of *La portentosa* is an overall concern with promoting the piety of the primary subject of the text. Writers of saintly vitae frequently cite the upstanding character of their subjects, often starting with examples from their early life and childhood. Bolaños similarly conveys Death's piety and morality from a young age, beginning in the early chapters of *La portentosa*.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the similarities between *La portentosa vida de la muerte* and the genre of hagiography, Bolaños' book also relies heavily on the format and content of a religious devotional text from the late colonial period. As both Juan Pedro Viquiera and Claudio Lomnitz have explained, beginning in the 1780s, Enlightenment ideals began to infringe upon the official doctrine and teachings of the Catholic church. Colonial elites—having adopted a rational, scientific explanation of the natural world—were questioning

---

<sup>68</sup> Bolaños, 1-94.

the validity of the church's ideas about death and the afterlife.<sup>69</sup> Such questioning prompted religious leaders such as Joaquín Bolaños to seek new ways of inspiring devotion and a fear of God among the Spanish and Creole elite of New Spain—particularly through works like *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.<sup>70</sup> The religious content of the text falls in line with this type of work. Bolaños even integrates his figure of Death into multiple, well-known biblical narratives.

While *La portentosa* certainly displays elements of both saintly vitae and religious devotional texts, it has also been referred to as an early Mexican novel—and in many ways, the book does read like a novel. The central character, Death, is followed from her birth, throughout her early life and well into maturation. She takes part in biblical stories, makes friends, gets married (multiple times), and mourns the loss of her beloved doctor. The general ambiguity surrounding the genre of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* serves as proof of my hypothesis that the book resists distinct categorization and instead, occupies a liminal literary genre—or perhaps, exists within a hybrid literary genre that draws inspiration from various sources.

## Conclusions

It is clear that many genres influenced the overall production of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*. Because of this, and by demonstrating the multiple ways in which *La*

---

<sup>69</sup> Lomnitz, 265-277.

<sup>70</sup> Viquiera, 51-52.

*portentosa* resists traditional modes of categorization—either into distinct literary or pictorial genres—the boundaries of these categories have been fully explored. While the framework of liminality was stretched to include hybridity with respect to genres, I hope that it will still remain a useful tool for this type of research moving forward. Although it may be easy to place an object into a distinct category, this inevitably keeps us from investigating the multiple ways that a culture or society can exert influence on the production of a given work or object from other, perhaps less obvious, angles.

## CHAPTER III

### PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION & LIMINALITY

This chapter will focus heavily on the watermarks which I discovered and that frequently appear within the pages of the Gilcrease Museum's copy of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.<sup>71</sup> Because the designs vary dramatically in form and content, it can be expected that they do not represent the production of one, but several, paper mills. These may have been manufacturers from Europe, or even illicit producers of paper in the viceroyalty. This conversation adds to existing knowledge of paper-making and book publication in New Spain, while also engaging with ideas about the categories of art, ornament, and marketing/branding. By considering the liminal status of watermarks, I argue that they reside between all three of these categories, and therefore offer us the opportunity to break free from potentially limiting structures.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Similar watermarks do not appear in the copy of the text currently in the Nettie Lee Benson Library's collection in Austin, Texas. I have been unable to get information regarding other extant copies.

<sup>72</sup> Thomassen, 10-12.

The paper that makes up the pages of the text and accompanying prints has been identified as linen-based,<sup>73</sup> and many sheets within this copy of *La portentosa* contain faint watermarks. The marks resemble those of several different papermills in Spain, which will be offered as comparisons below. It seems likely that the variety of watermarks visible in *La portentosa vida de la muerte* is due to the fact that the publishing firm of José de Jáuregui in Mexico City would have obtained paper from several sources due to the commodity's scarcity.<sup>74</sup>

A similar occurrence of multiple watermarks appearing in a single volume from the eighteenth century has been documented in the case of Rodrigues Coellos' 1735 copy of *Pharmacopea Tubalense*.<sup>75</sup> Although that volume was published in Spain (and therefore printed on European paper), as it was illegal for linen-based paper to be manufactured in the viceroyalty, we can expect that colonial publishers faced similar circumstances surrounding paper shortages as their counterparts in Europe, provided they were opposed to obtaining illegally-manufactured paper from within the colony.<sup>76</sup> Because of the laws regarding papermaking in New Spain during the colonial period, and the general shortage of paper caused by the trans-Atlantic transportation process,<sup>77</sup> the

---

<sup>73</sup> This identification was made by Gilcrease Museum Collection Research Librarian, Rene Harvey.

<sup>74</sup> Whittaker and Harlan, 5.

<sup>75</sup> Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "Curiosa serie de filigranas del papel de un solo libro," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 42 (Octubre 1974), 1043-1052.

<sup>76</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Prints and Printmakers*, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Whittaker and Harlan, 5.

Jáuregui publishing firm used paper produced in multiple locations (whether at home or abroad), which explains the appearance of a vast array of watermarks within this single text published by the firm. Interestingly, though the firm would have outsourced the production of the eighteen engravings that accompany the volume, no discernable difference between the paper containing the prints and the pages containing the text is evident.<sup>78</sup>

The process of creating watermarks has been practiced by papermakers since the Middle Ages.<sup>79</sup> It involves twisting small pieces of wire into the desired design, which would be affixed to the molds where sheets of paper were created, causing the design to be impressed on each sheet.<sup>80</sup> Technical scholars have long sought to derive symbolic meaning from these maker's marks, but little has been agreed upon except that they represent trademarks of various paper-manufacturing mills.<sup>81</sup> The variety of marks present in the Gilcrease Museum's copy of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* suggest that several mills—whether in the New World or in Europe—contributed paper to the construction of this particular book.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Both Donahue-Wallace and Whittaker note the absence of printmakers from the majority of typographic workshops in and around Mexico City at the time of the book's publication.

<sup>79</sup> Hunter, 261-264.

<sup>80</sup> Hunter, 260-262.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> No similar watermarks are seen in the copy of *La portentosa* that currently resides at the Nettie Lee Benson Library in Austin, Texas. Information on other copies of the text has not been found.



## Sun Watermarks

This copy of *La portentosa* contains forty-seven watermarks depicting suns, some with varying designs (Figure 21). The rays of the sun shown in Figure 21 alternate between straight and wavy lines, and three abstract shapes that may suggest the presence of face-like features can be seen in the sun's center. The design straddles two pages of text that were printed on a single sheet of paper, which accounts for the complete nature of the image. Geometric forms also appear within this second sun design although they are less reminiscent of anthropomorphized facial features (Figure 22).

Despite research into eighteenth-century watermarks, no similar examples have come to light. However, the differences between the internal designs of these sun watermarks can be explained by the process of watermark creation mentioned above—often the small, delicate wire used to create the designs would become damaged and be reconfigured by the mill operators.<sup>83</sup> This accounts for the slight variation in design, meaning that these marks do not necessarily indicate the work of separate papermakers.

## Frame-design Watermarks

However, a vastly different watermarked image prevalent throughout the pages of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* brings together two seemingly unrelated motifs. One of the images consists of an ornate frame in the shape of a half-oval with a small sun in its

---

<sup>83</sup> Hunter, 262-263.

center (Figure 23). The other includes a bell-shaped frame design, with indistinct markings in its center (Figure 24). Each of these motifs appear on exactly twenty-one separate pages, prompting investigation into whether or not they could be related. Ultimately, the two designs were found to come together on the center of a single sheet of paper to form a complete image (Figure 25), likely the mark of a mill different than the one that used the above sun designs.

Although the sun motif is repeated in this image, its size and style vary from the suns that appear without additional ornamentation discussed above. The sun depicted within the ornate frame design is approximately two-thirds the size of the independent suns, and no markings are evident within its center. Unlike the individual sun designs that vary slightly in style, however, these suns—and the frames that accompany them—remain stylistically consistent across their twenty-one iterations. While this exact design has not been found in relation to a specific papermaker in Spain, its general shape was a common form for watermarks in this era (Figure 26). In each of these examples, an ornate framing device encompasses various motifs—whether a sun as in *La portentosa*, or a bird in this Spanish example from a papermaker in Galicia.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Jose Luis Basanta Campos, “Filigranas en documentos gallegos, Archivo histórico provincial de Pontevedra,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1967), 887.

## Horse & Lettering Watermarks

Along with the translucent designs mentioned above, four partial horses can be seen in the margins of this copy of *La portentosa*. The first example appears on the outer margin of p. 22 alongside an engraved image (Figure 27). Showing the lower half of a horse's body, this faint image lacks in stylistic quality compared to other horses within the series of watermarks that appear in the text. The hooves in particular seem underdeveloped, while the tail also lacks the intricate detailing that can be seen in other horse watermarks. The same is true of the second partial horse that protrudes from the center margin of the engraving that accompanies p. 88 (Figure 28). Both of these images could be compared to this simple horse watermark credited to a papermaker in Madrid from around 1700 (Figure 29). The hooves of *La portentosa*'s full watermark horse, as well as its lack of ornamentation, represent striking similarities to the two partial horse designs discussed above.

In addition to the lower portion of a horse's body shown on the outside margin of page 22, there are two letters ("A" and "G") as well as the outline of a human leg on the page's internal margin (Figure 30). While the "A" and partial leg in this image stray outside the margin of Bustamante's print, the "G" resides entirely within the confines of the print, suggesting that these designs were not meant to be seen as part of the book or its illustrations. Watermarks from the period often incorporate letters or entire words that relate either to the name of the maker, or the city where manufacture took place. For example, in a watermark from the aforementioned *Pharmacopea Tubalense*, the similarly

staggered letters “ACM” make up one design, (Figure 31). Another text that comprises paper with watermarks from various sources, the 1810 edition of *Reales Ordenanzas Militares*, even contains full names in its watermarks (Figure 32).<sup>85</sup>

Watermarks bearing similar block lettering occur two other times in the pages of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*. For example, three “O”s appear on a page containing another of Bustamante’s prints (Figure 33). Watermark designs that contain similar strings of three “O” shapes appear to have been quite prevalent in the Spanish papermaking world, although these are typically accompanied by further ornamentation unlike this example from *La portentosa* text. A technical study of watermarks common in Galicia—executed by José Luis Basanta Campos—has shown several such images from the 1720s throughout the late 1750s (Figure 34).<sup>86</sup>

Also, an additional partial horse is situated above block lettering that spells out “ANTONIO” in all capital letters opposite page 276 (Figure 35). The size and spacing of this design—though the horse’s body is cut off at the center margin—seem consistent with the layout of the watermarks that appear in the *Reales Ordenanzas* mentioned above (Figure 32). This suggests that it was common for some papermakers to incorporate their names beneath the designs of their watermarks in a semi-standardized format. In the case of Figure 35, the image and text run perpendicular to those of the book, and span

---

<sup>85</sup> Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, “Filigranas en la edición 1810 de las Reales Ordenanzas Militares,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1983), 1013-1044.

<sup>86</sup> José Luis Basanta Campos, “300 años de filigranas en los papeles de una familia en Galicia,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 131 (Enero 1997), 85-101.

approximately four inches. Another mark that appears in the *Reales Ordenanzas Militares* even contains the name “Antonio” (Figure 36), although it is not accompanied by further design elements such as the partial horse seen in *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.

### **Figural Watermarks**

Perhaps the most fascinating of the transparent designs that have come to light in this copy of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, however, depict four figures—three of which are on horseback. The clearest of these images resides on the outer margin of the print page that precedes chapter thirty-two (Figure 37). As compared to the partial horses, this rider’s horse appears to have been completed with more effort and skill—even the tail of the horse shows the artist’s interest in ornamentation. A round, shield-like object with small designs in its center balances behind the rider atop the horse. Although as yet unidentified, the designs within the circular shield motif resemble the outlines of a castle and perhaps a flower.

A survey of maker’s marks from the Castile-Leon region has revealed watermarks with figures on horseback, although none appear with shields or in as much detail as the example in the Gilcrease copy of *La portentosa*.<sup>87</sup> A 1772 example from this study depicts a rider carrying a spear, but as with the partial horses above, the horse shows little

---

<sup>87</sup> Taurino Burón, “Estado actual del estudio de las filigrinas en España: Proyectos futuros, Filigranas en Castilla-Leon,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 124 (Abril 1995), 317-330.

stylization or ornament (Figure 38). In fact, this ornate example of a horse watermark may represent one of the most stylized examples ever to have been discovered. No similar examples seem to have been published.

The next figure on horseback—which differs significantly from the first example discussed above—appears with the engraving opposite page 64, extending from the center margin (Figure 39). Though this figure is also shown with a shield-like object on the back of the horse, the motifs within it differ from those in Figure 37. However, each shield features a castle similar to the one depicted in a lone shield design from the aforementioned study of watermarks common in Castile-Leon (Figure 40). This second figure is similarly shown in profile with the outline of three fingers visible, but one major difference between the riders in Figures 37 and 39 are the depiction of the individuals' chests. The chest of the first rider shows grooves/ridges that may represent some type of chest plate or even the figure's ribcage, while the chest of the second rider is completely flat. With both figures, however, the shoulders appear to be left uncovered. The variances in style between these riders demonstrate the wide range of skill within the papermaking trade, as individual workers would have been responsible for creating the designs, and also suggests that the paper came from separate mills.

Another horse bears what appears to be an additional figure, although the outline of the upper body remains unclear (Figure 41). The angle of this figure's leg that can be seen draped over the side of the horse indicates that the rider faces the opposite direction as the horse, looking toward the shield-like design that accompanies it. The image within

this oval object is vastly different from that of the two figures above, showcasing a more abstract design similar to that seen in an example from the study of Galician watermarks (Figure 42). The horse in Figure 41 also seems to be rendered less expertly than those above, with a tail that seems more consistent with those of the partial horse images discussed previously. The head of this horse also lacks the realism conveyed in those examples, with features that seem altogether less finished and more reminiscent of earlier European examples.

The final figural representation discovered in the pages of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* stands alone, rather than being seated atop a horse (Figure 43). However, due to the fragmentary nature of this figural image, it is impossible to discern whether it too was meant to be shown on horseback. Also shown in profile, this figure folds its arm across its stomach—much in the same manner as the other figures. Its dress lacks ornamentation, making it the least detailed of all the figures found within the margins of the book.

### **Hands in Watermarks**

The last of the transparent marginal images that will be discussed contain circles inscribed with crosses, flanked by hands (Figure 44). This motif occurs twice within the book, once on the introductory page and again opposite page 255. While evoking traditional heraldic imagery, this watermark also draws upon a longstanding tradition, as

hands have been used in maker's marks for centuries (Figure 45).<sup>88</sup> The Spanish examples in Figure 45 span a period of two hundred years. The use of the hand in these designs has been related to the craft of handmade papermaking and is thought to symbolize fidelity and labor.<sup>89</sup> Several of the Spanish watermarks even echo *La portentosa's* hand designs, in that they incorporate central motifs that the hands then accompany on the margins of the full design.

### **Conclusions**

The watermarks offered as examples as comparisons to those found in the Gilcrease Museum's copy of *La portentosa vida de la muerte* were all drawn from studies of Spanish papermakers, representing a vast geographic area. That is not to say, however, that the paper used by the Jáuregui publishing firm was necessarily from Spain. While paper manufacture was forbidden in the colony, and typographers were required to purchase their supplies from Spanish merchants, these merchants distributed paper made by mills throughout Europe. This was especially true in times of paper shortage, as the Spanish crown would authorize the purchase of paper from Italy, England and France.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to these sources, the residents of New Spain could also find paper that had been made illegally in the colony. One such location was the Rancho el Molino del Papel, near enough to Mexico City that the Jáuregui firm could easily have procured

---

<sup>88</sup> Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "La filigrana de la 'mano' en documentos de Galicia (España), de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 22 (Octubre 1969), 1069-1086.

<sup>89</sup> Hunter, 269.

<sup>90</sup> Donahue-Wallace, *Prints and Printmakers*, 15.



paper there.<sup>91</sup> Surely the papermakers at Rancho el Molino conformed to the centuries-old tradition of imbuing their products with maker's marks.

That the tradition of watermarking stems from a desire to market a given manufacturer's product cannot be denied. The marks of most prominent mills would have been easily recognizable to their respective customers, and could carry significant weight in a patron's evaluation of the quality of a certain paper. In many ways, watermarks represent one of the earliest attempts by businesses to capitalize on their reputation through the process of branding their products. However, businesses from the period—when they did advertise overtly—nearly always included mention of the owner's name, business name, and/or address of the firm. For example, the Jáuregui firm put forth an advertisement in 1782 showcasing their new typographic fonts just purchased from Madrid (Figure 46). In this contemporaneous marketing attempt, the business conspicuously notes the location of the shop in large, vertical font on the outer edges of each side of the page.<sup>92</sup>

I argue that in addition to watermark's function as trademarking, and due to the craftsman's apparent interest in symbolic decoration over overt, textual reference to a particular paper mill, watermarks can also be seen as a manifestation of ornament. Only one instance of naming occurs within *La portentosa*, visible in the form of lettering that spells out "ANTONIO" in all capital letters (Figure 35). As this is the only explicit

---

<sup>91</sup> Lentz, 125-126; Donahue-Wallace, *Prints and Printmakers*, 14.

<sup>92</sup> Gravier, 30.

example of branding that uses direct textual reference to a name, I posit that watermarks served not only as a marketing tool, but also exist as ornament. A nineteenth-century architect who takes up the topic of ornament, John Ruskin, cites as a prerequisite that ornament make evident the life and hand of the maker—as is the case with the watermarks in *La portentosa*, in which even today we are able to see the residual trace of the craftsmen who created them.<sup>93</sup> In fact, there is a long history of depicting hands within watermark designs to symbolize the role of the worker and the hands that create both the paper and the watermarks. Some such designs even appear within this text.

In addition to their significance as trademark and ornament, however, watermarks also appear in a variety of forms and stylistic iterations, likening them to art in many ways. For example, the partial horse designs discussed above seem to denote various levels of skill on the part of their creators, or perhaps even the evolutionary progression of one papermaker. Unfortunately, due to the nature of papermaking and distribution, it will be impossible to discern which is the case. Paper could be produced and stored for various amounts of time before being purchased, or purchased and then stored by typographic or printing workshops for indiscriminate amounts of time before actually being used. Despite the fact that all of the watermarks do appear within the confines of a single volume, the paper that comprises the book could have been created over several decades. Were this the case, it is unlikely that a single craftsman would have been

---

<sup>93</sup> John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (New York: J. Wiley, 1859), 44-45.

responsible for every individual horse design found within the pages of *La portentosa vida de la muerte*.

Regardless of the time or place of manufacture, it is evident that these watermarks highlight the ill-defined boundaries of the categories of art, ornament and trademark.

## CONCLUSION

With this thesis, I have sought to use the framework of liminality (in a broad sense) to demonstrate that traditional means of categorization can sometimes fall short, depriving us of the ability to engage meaningfully with the ambiguous. Whether in the form of watermarks, gender, or genre, engaging with that which is not immediately definable affords the opportunity to think critically about our apparent desire for clearly-defined boundaries. This opportunity can create avenues of understanding that deepen our knowledge of the past, as well as our knowledge of other cultures. Interrogating the bounds of the liminal or ambiguous can even cause us to question facets of our own society and time.

“A Liminal Gender Construction,” focused on the way in which Death’s gender has been constructed, drawing particular attention to its ambiguous nature. That Death resides in a liminal gender category in *La portentosa vida de la muerte* has been proven via comparisons of contemporaneous portraits of masculinized women and authoritative men. While the text dictates that Death is in fact female, it also allows Death to behave in traditionally masculine ways. Some scholars have even refrained from translating Spanish text from *La portentosa* into English with gendered pronouns, as further

evidence that Death's gender was meant to be quite ambiguous.<sup>94</sup> The "third sex" category into which Death becomes integrated—though certainly not recognized by Spanish or Catholic authorities—has roots in indigenous understandings of a non-binary gender system. By studying the liminal gender of a printed character from the colonial period, we are able to trace this influence of indigenous cultures on the broader culture of the colonizers, while also continuing to explore the boundaries of constructed categories. I posit that because of the amalgamation of feminine and masculine traits that Death embodies, Bolaños and Bustamante's figure may actually transcend gender.

In the second chapter, I argued that a multiplicity of genres informed the work of Bustamante in his engravings for *La portentosa vida de la muerte*. In addition, I posited that various literary traditions informed Joaquín Bolaños' writing of the book. There is a clear hybridity of pictorial genres that come together in Bustamante's engravings, namely portraiture, scientific illustration, emblem book images, history painting, and posthumous child portraiture (*angelitos*). Meanwhile, the literary genres of religious devotional, saintly vitae, and the early novel come together to create the hybrid genre category that *La portentosa* belongs to. Exploring the limits of traditional genres, this research allows us to see elements of the images and text that otherwise may not seem clear.

In "Physical Construction and Liminality," I share my original discovery of watermarks within the text. While there is a long tradition of studying the history of

---

<sup>94</sup> Lomnitz, 289.

paper, my research has incorporated this into a broader analysis of what constitutes art, ornament and trademark, respectively. By thinking through these issues, the fact that categories are rarely well-defined became apparent. This study brings together diverse areas of research and inquiry to support my overall argument that much can be learned by focusing on objects, or aspects of a single object, that would otherwise not be prioritized. In a sense, by emphasizing the importance of the liminal, the ill-defined, the marginal, I have sought to broaden the scope of what can be considered art historical research in colonial New Spain.

My hope is that by using the conceptual framework of liminality, as scholars we may begin to not only question the validity and usefulness of clearly-defined categories, but also work to prioritize marginal, or fringe, imagery and content. Also, the importance of studying one physical object closely cannot be overstated. Without the opportunity to work directly with the Gilcrease Museum and their copy of *La portentosa*, the amazing array of watermark designs discussed in Chapter 3 would not have been discovered. This research has offered original findings in this respect, while also working to create an understanding of the non-binary nature of gender in colonial New Spain and the confluence of genres during the period more broadly.

APPENDIX I

OTHER ENGRAVINGS FROM *LA PORTENTOSA VIDA DE LA MUERTE*

I.



*Exaudi me miseram deprecantem! Judith.*

II.

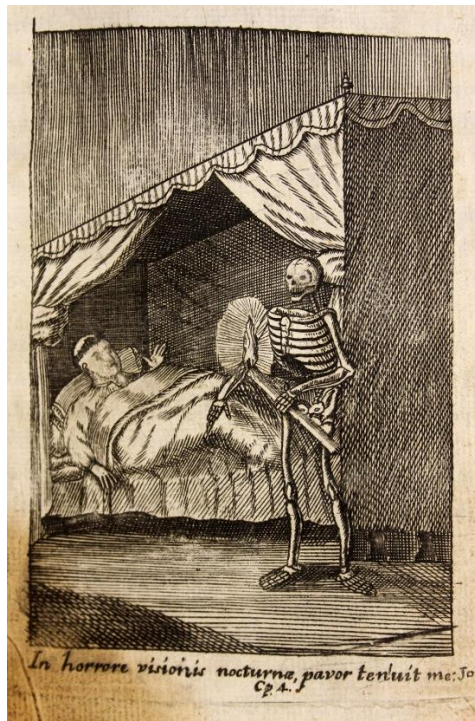


III.





IV.



V.



VI.



VII.



VIII.



*Spes ejus frustrabitur, et videntibus cunctis precipitabitur: Job. cp. 10.*

IX.



*Ascendit mors per fenestras nostras Jerem. cp. 9.*

X.



XI.



## REFERENCES

- Allen, Paula Gunn. "Who is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism," *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).
- Bolaños, Joaquín. *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, (Mexico City: Jaúregui, 1792).
- Burón, Taurino. "Estado actual del estudio de las filigrinas en España: Proyectos futuros, Filigranas en Castilla-Leon," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 124 (Abril 1995).
- Butler, Judith. "Imitation and Gender Subordination," *Inside/out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss. (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- Camille, Michael. *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
- Campos, José Luis Basantos. "300 años de filigranas en los papeles de una familia en Galicia," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 131 (Enero 1997).
- Campos, José Luis Basanta. "Filigranas en documentos gallegos, Archivo histórico provincial de Pontevedra," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1967).
- Carreira, Gonzalo Gayoso. "Curiosa serie de filigranas del papel de un solo libro," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 42 (Octubre 1974).
- Carreira, Gonzalo Gayoso. "Filigranas en la edición 1810 de las Reales Ordenanzas Militares," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1983).
- Carreira, Gonzalo Gayoso. "La filigrana de la 'mano' en documentos de Galicia (España), de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 22 (Octubre 1969).
- Cuadriello, Jaime. "The Paintings Department of the Royal Academy of San Carlos: Origins, Development and Epilogue," *Painting in Latin America: 1550-1820*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).
- Cummins, Thomas B.F. "Genre, Gender, Género," in *Beyond the Lettered City*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
- DeRose, Elizabeth C. "Pictorial Satire in Viceregal Mexico: Franciso Agüera Bustamante's Engravings for *La portentosa vida de la muerte*," *Hemisphere*, Vol. 2, (2009).

Donahue-Wallace, Kelly. "Bajo los tormentos del tórculo: Printed portraits of Male and Female Clergy in Eighteenth-century New Spain," *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2005).

Donahue-Wallace, Kelly. "La casada imperfecta: A Woman, A Print, and the Inquisition," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2002).

Donahue-Wallace, Kelly. *Prints and Printmakers in Viceregal Mexico City, 1600-1800*, (ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, 2000).

Espinosa, Isidro Félix De, and Juan Domingo. Arricivita. *Chronica Apostolica Y Seraphica De Todos Los Colegios De Propaganda Fide De Esta Nueva-España, De Misioneros Franciscanos Observantes Erigidos Con Autoridad Pontificia Y Regia Para La Reformation De Los Fieles Y Conversion De Los Gentiles*. (Mexico: Por La Viuda De D. J.B. De Hogal, Impr., 1746).

Feliciano, María Judith. "The Invention of Mudejar Art and the Viceregal Aesthetic Paradox: Notes on the Reception of Iberian Ornament in New Spain," in *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, ed. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

Gaard, Greta. "Towards a Queer Ecofeminism." *Estudos Feministas* Vol. 19, No. 1 (2011).

Gombrich, E.H. *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

González, Cristina Cruz. "Beyond the Bride of Christ: Crucified Abbesses in Mexico and Spain," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (December 2017).

Grabar, Oleg. *The Mediation of Ornament*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

Gravier, Marina Garone. "El comercio tipográfico matritense en México durante el siglo XVIII," *Secuencia*, Núm. 88 (Enero-Abril 2014).

Halberstam, J. *Female Masculinity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 2-6.

Hay, Jonathan. *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China*, (Honolulu University of Hawaii Press, 2010).

Hunter, Dard. *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*, (New York: Dover Publications, INC., 1978).

Jones, Owen. *The Grammar of Ornament*, (London: Quaritch, 1910).

Lentz, Hans. *Historia del papel en Mexico y cosas relacionadas: 1525-1950*, (Mexico City: Miguel Angel Pomia, 1990).

- Lomnitz, Claudio. *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, (New York: Zone Books, 2005).
- Loos, Adolf. *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell. (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1908).
- Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," *Hypatia*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Winter, 2007).
- Mandell, Elisa C. "Posthumous Portraits of Children in Early Modern Spain and Mexico," *Hispanic Issues On Line*, Vol. 7 (Fall 2010).
- Payne, Alina. *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Architectural Modernism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).
- Reigl, Alois. *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- Ripa, Cesare. *Baroque and Rococo Pictorial Imagery: The 1758–1760 Hertel Edition of Ripa's Iconologia with 200 Engraved Illustrations*, ed. Edward A. Masser (New York: Dover Publications, 1971).
- Ruskin, John. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, (New York: J. Wiley, 1859).
- Semper, Gottfried. *Style in the Technical Arts, or, Practical Aesthetics*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson. (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2004).
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Translator's Preface," *Of Grammatology*. Corrected ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
- Terraciano, Kevin. "Competing Memories of the Conquest of Mexico," *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
- Thomassen, Bjørn. *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-Between*, (Farnham, Surrey: Routledge, 2014).
- Trilling, James. "Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-cultural Idiom," *Arte Medievale*, Vol. 9: (1995).
- Vesalius, Andreas, Charles Donald. O'Malley, and Saunders, J. B. De C. M. *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels; with Annotations and Translations, a Discussion of the Plates and Their Background, Authorship and Influence, and a Biographical Sketch of Vesalius*. (Cleveland: World Pub., 1950).
- Viquiera, Juan Pedro. "El sentimiento de la muerte en el México ilustrada por el siglo XVIII através de dos textos de la época," *Relaciones*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (Winter 1981).

Voon, Claire. "A 1792 Mexican Novel Shows Early Day of the Dead Iconography," *Hyperallergic*, (April 25, 2017).

Whittaker, Martha and Robert D. Harlan, *Jesuit Printing in Bourbon Mexico City: The Press of the Colegio De San Ildefonso, 1748-1767*, 1998, (ProQuest Dissertations and Theses).

Young, Iris Marion. "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spaciality," *Human Studies*, Vol. 3, (1980).



FIGURES

Figure 1: First inscription, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*

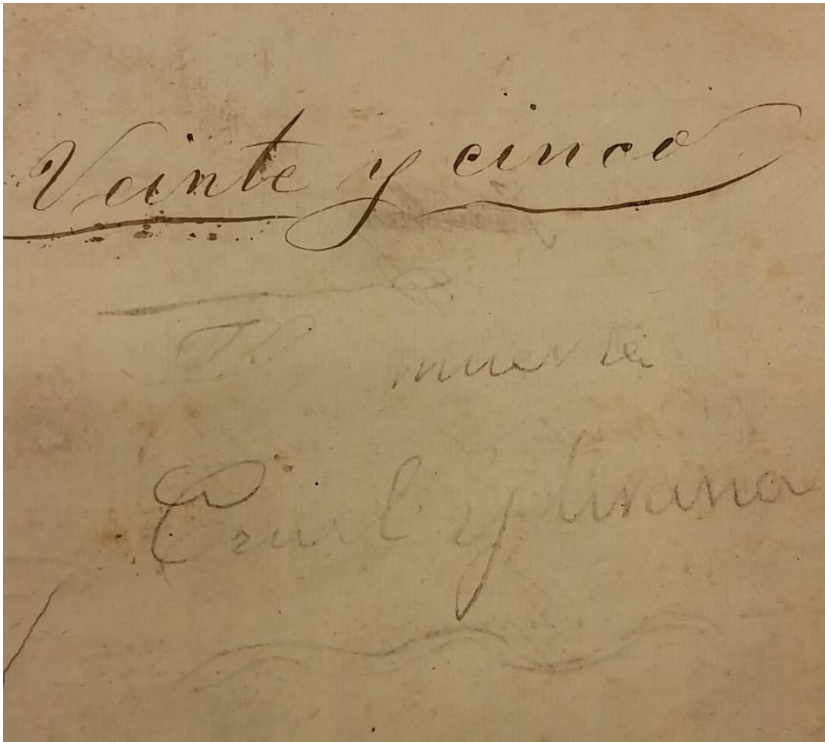


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research

Figure 2: Second inscription, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*

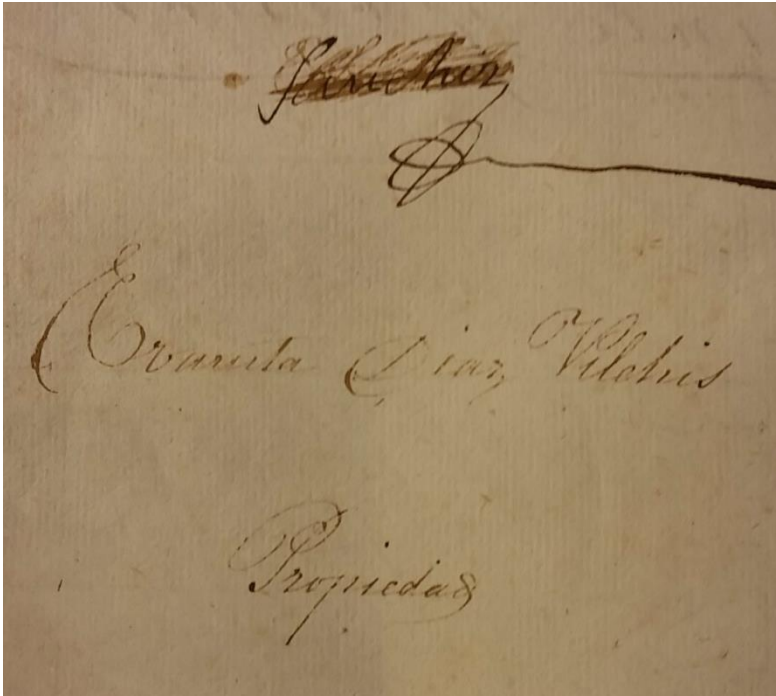


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research

Figure 3: Third inscription, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*

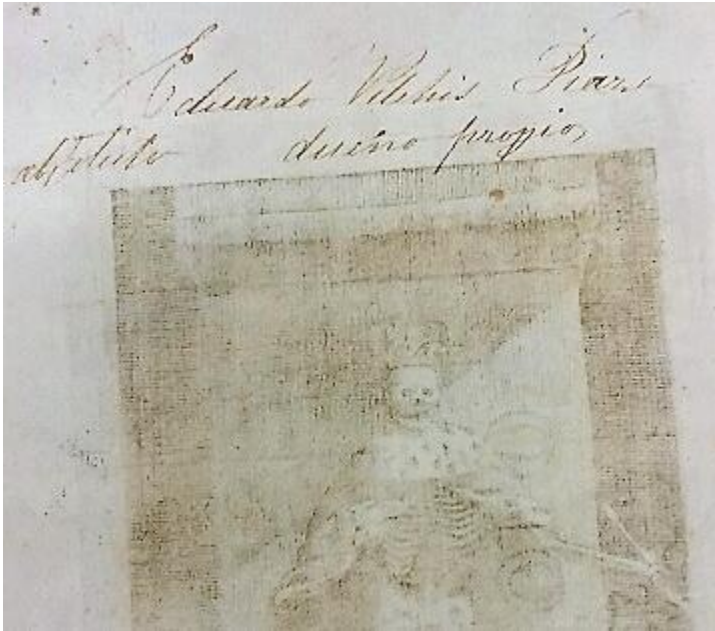


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research

Figure 4: Frontispiece, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792



Figure 5: Death as a child with Adam and Eve, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792

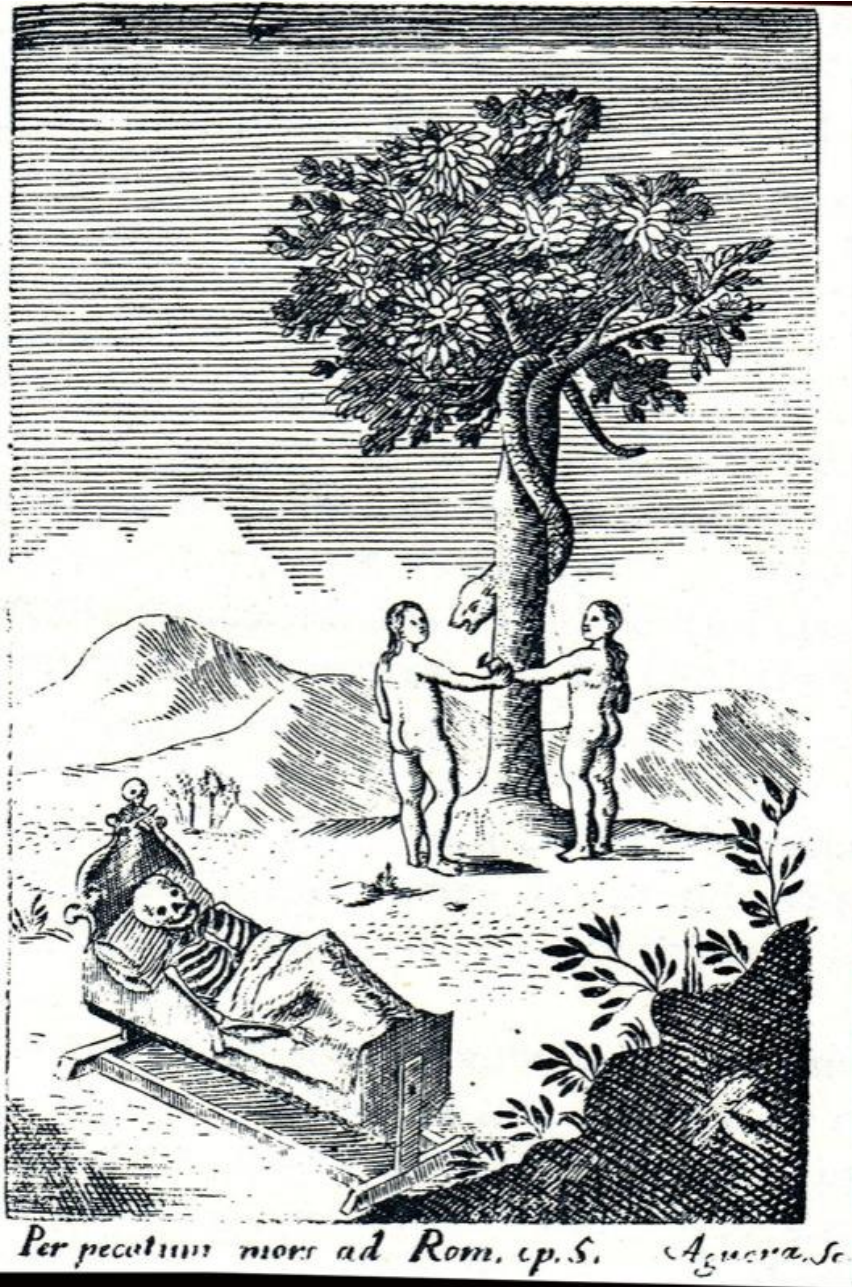


Figure 6: Tomas Mondragón, *La alegoría de la muerte*, 1856.

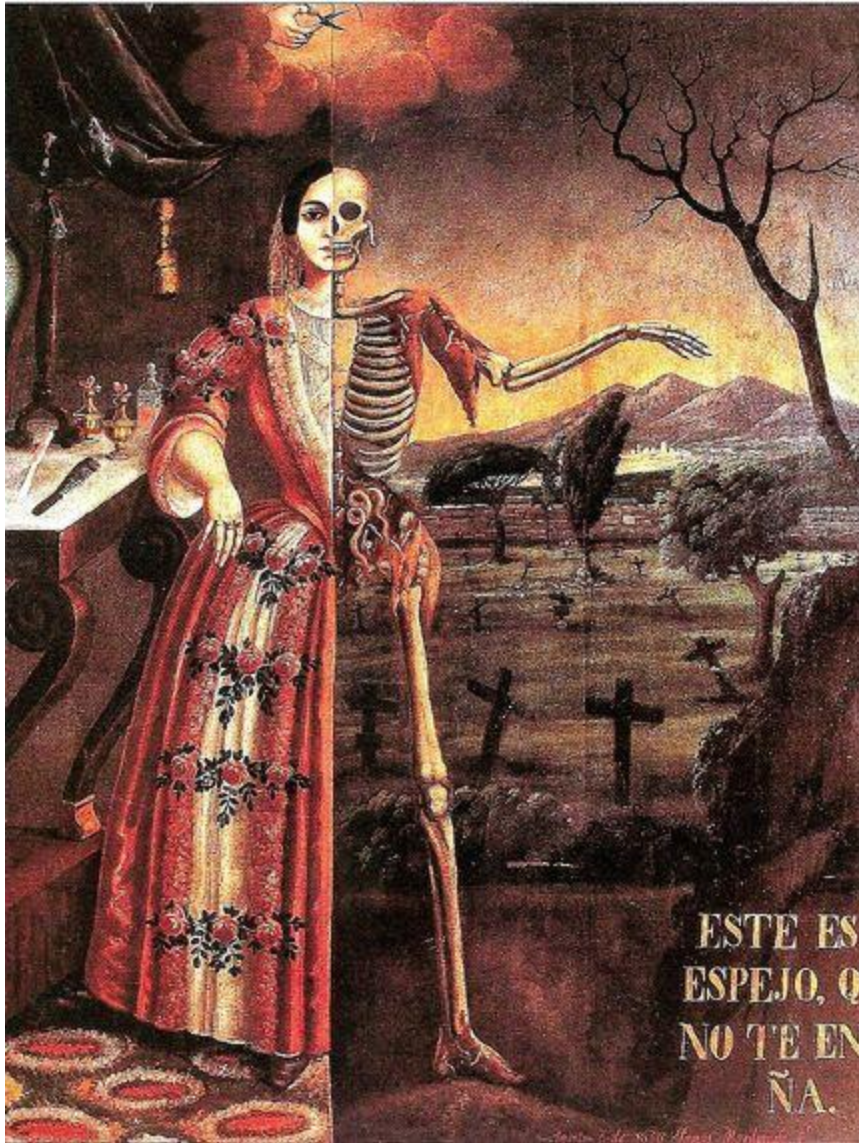


Figure 7: José Mota, *Madre Gerónyma de la Assumpción*, 1713.



Figure 8: Mariano Salvador Maella, *King Charles IV of Spain*, 1792.





Figure 9: Mariano Salvador Maella, *King Charles IV of Spain* (detail-royal cape), 1792.



Figure 10: Attributed to Andrés López, *Viceroy Matias de Gálvez*, ca 1785, oil on canvas, 217 x 146.5 cm. Tepotzoatlán, Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.



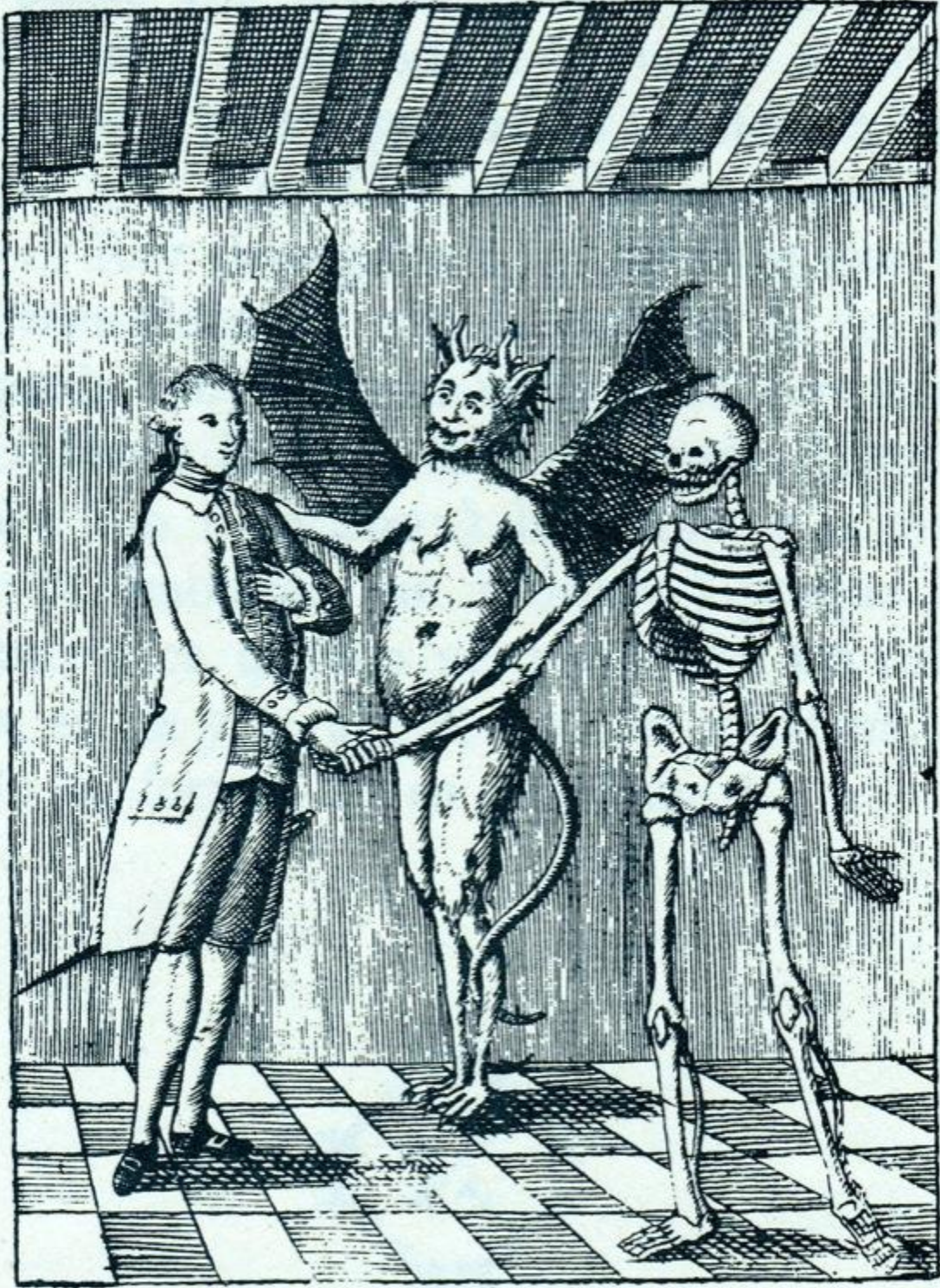
Figure 11: Death presiding over the death of her beloved doctor, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792



Figure 12: Death on horseback with soldiers, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792



Figure 13: Death with demon and male figure, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792



*Paruimus fauus cum morte. Isaia. cp. 28.*

Figure 14: Death speaks to a group, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792

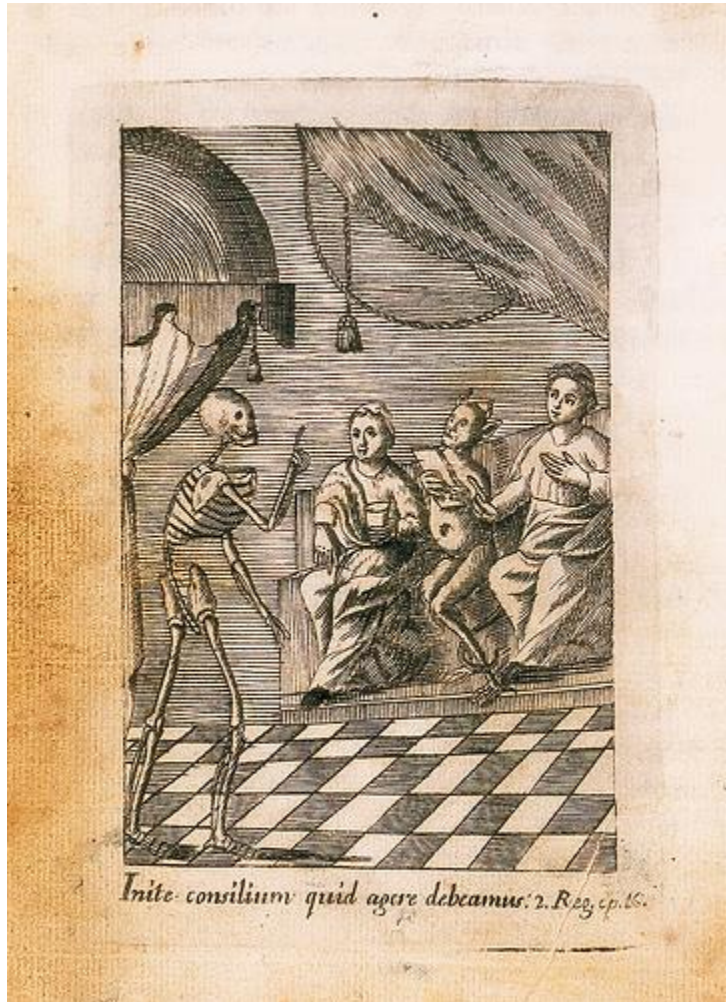


Figure 15: Title page illustration, *De humani corporis fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius, 1543



Figure 16: Anatomical sketch of human skeletal figure, *De humani corporis fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius, 1543

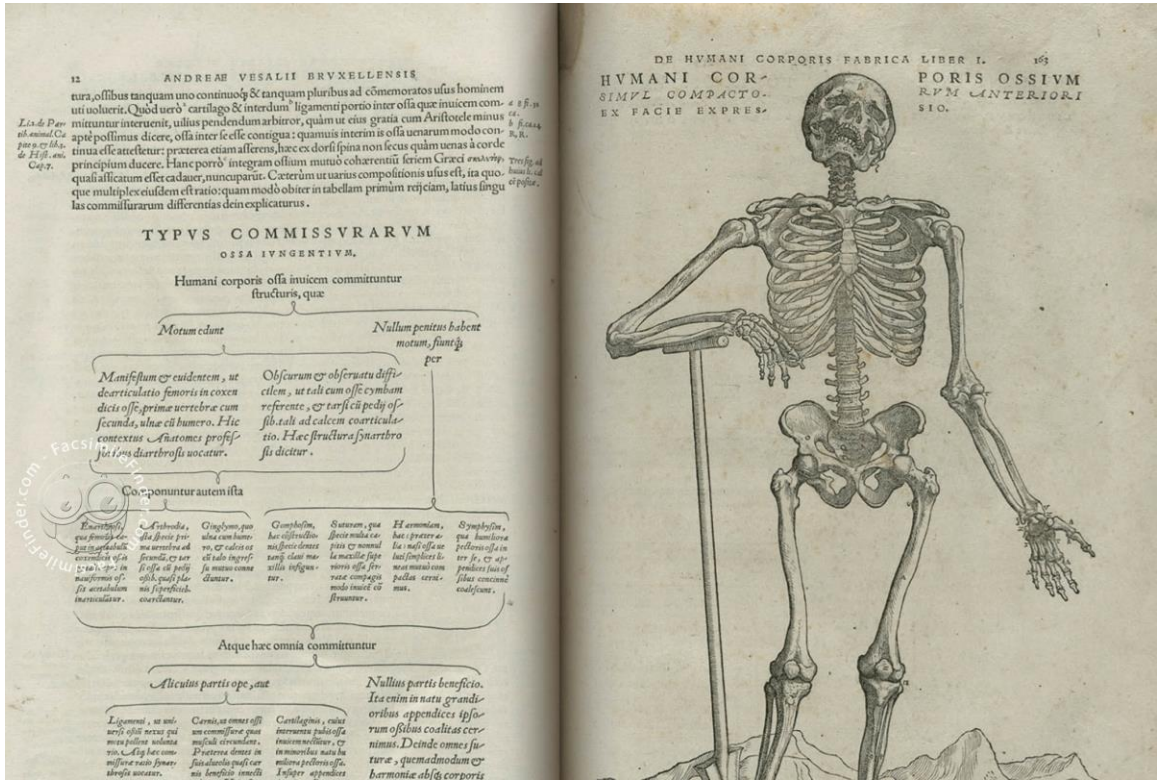




Figure 17: *Allegory of Death*, Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, 1645

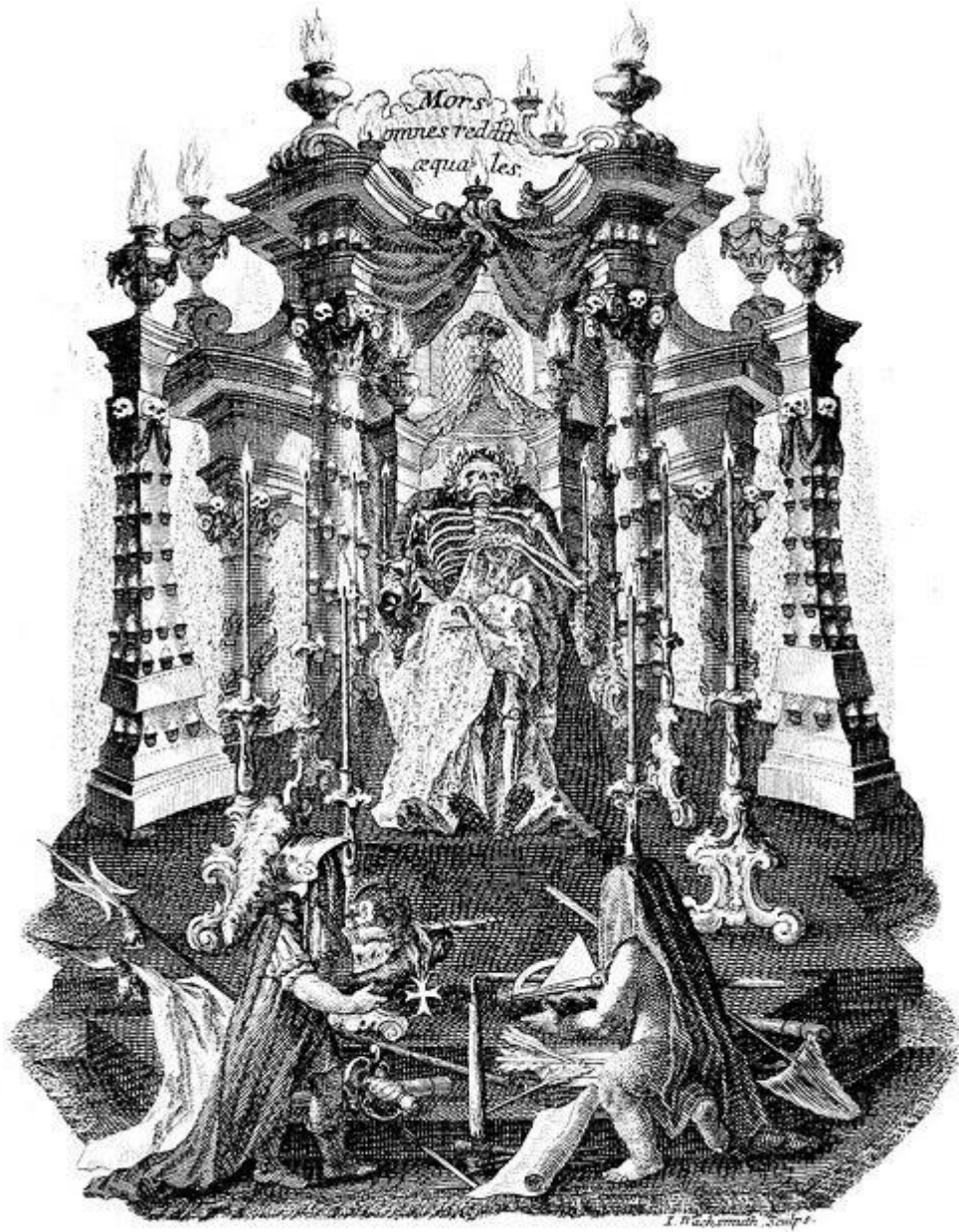


Figure 18: Untitled, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, Francisco Agüera Bustamante, c. 1792

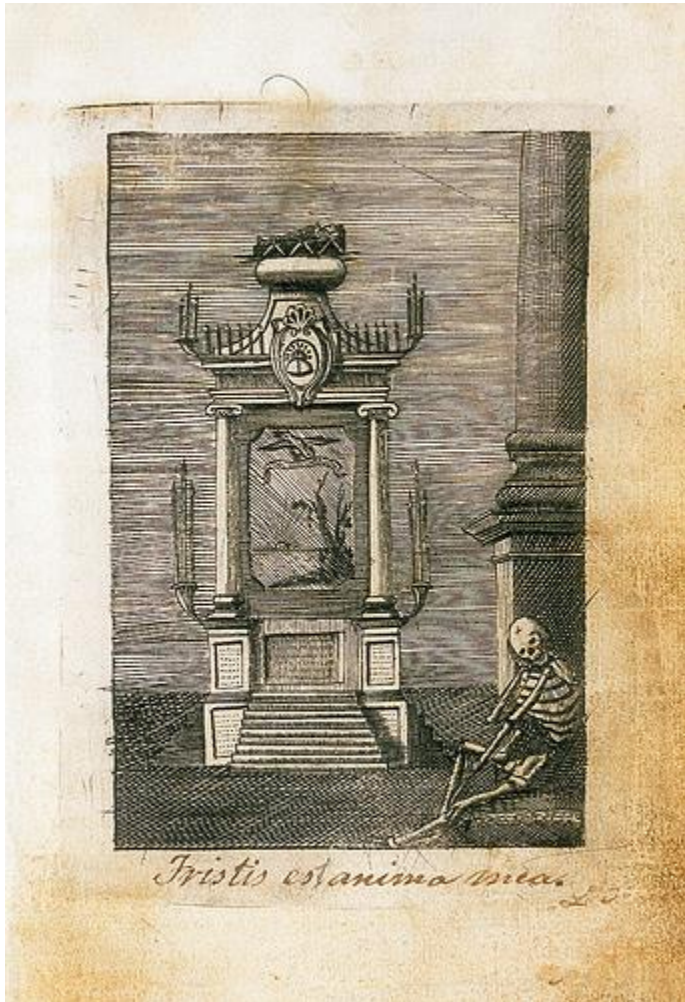


Figure 19: *Folding Screen with the Conquest of Mexico*, anonymous, late seventeenth century



Figure 20: Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, c. 1603. *María/Margarita, daughter of Philip III*. Oil on canvas. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales. Work in the public domain; photograph by Elisa C. Mandell.



Figure 21: Full sun design, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, p. 100-101

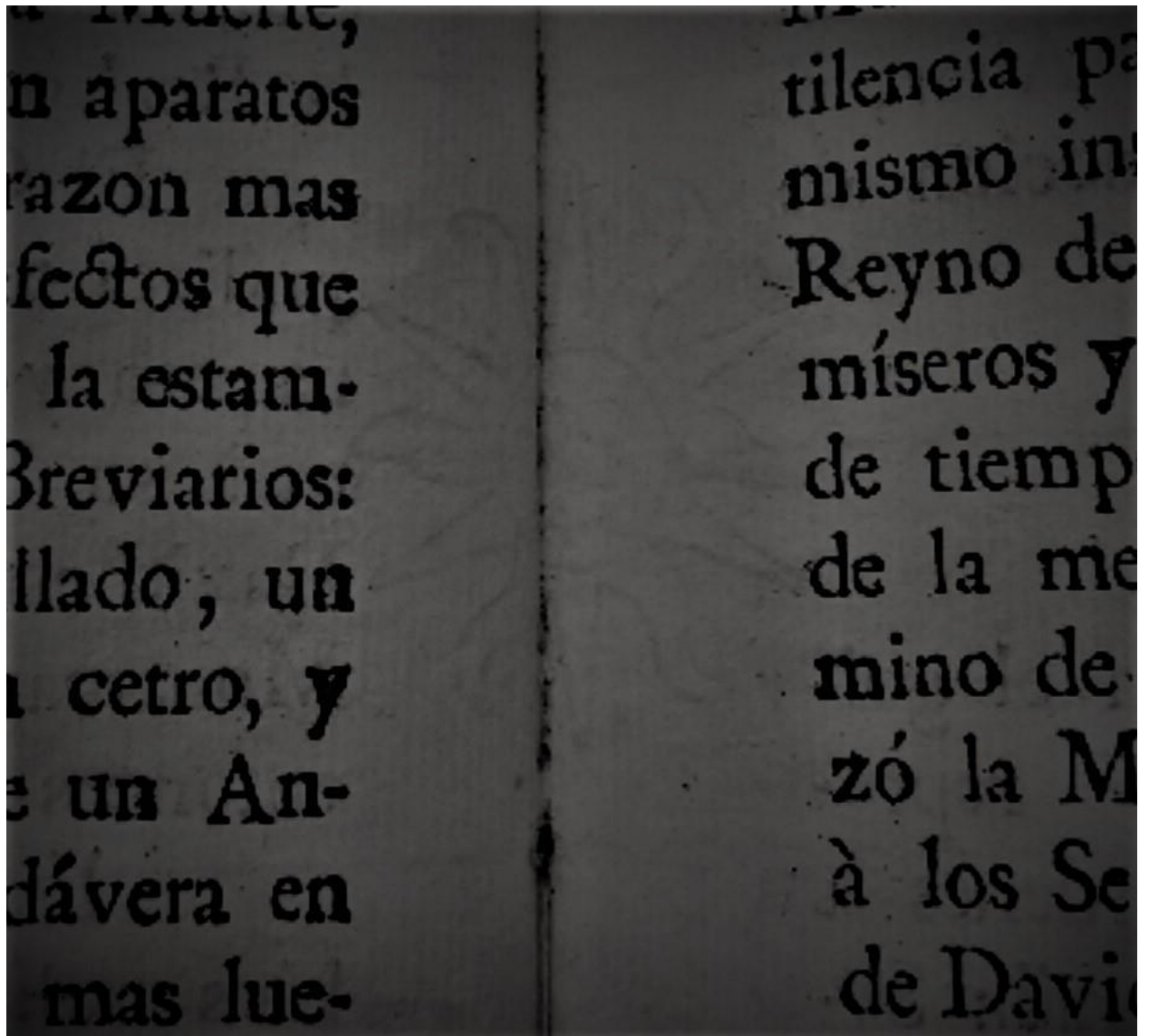


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research

Figure 22: Partial sun design, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, p. 54

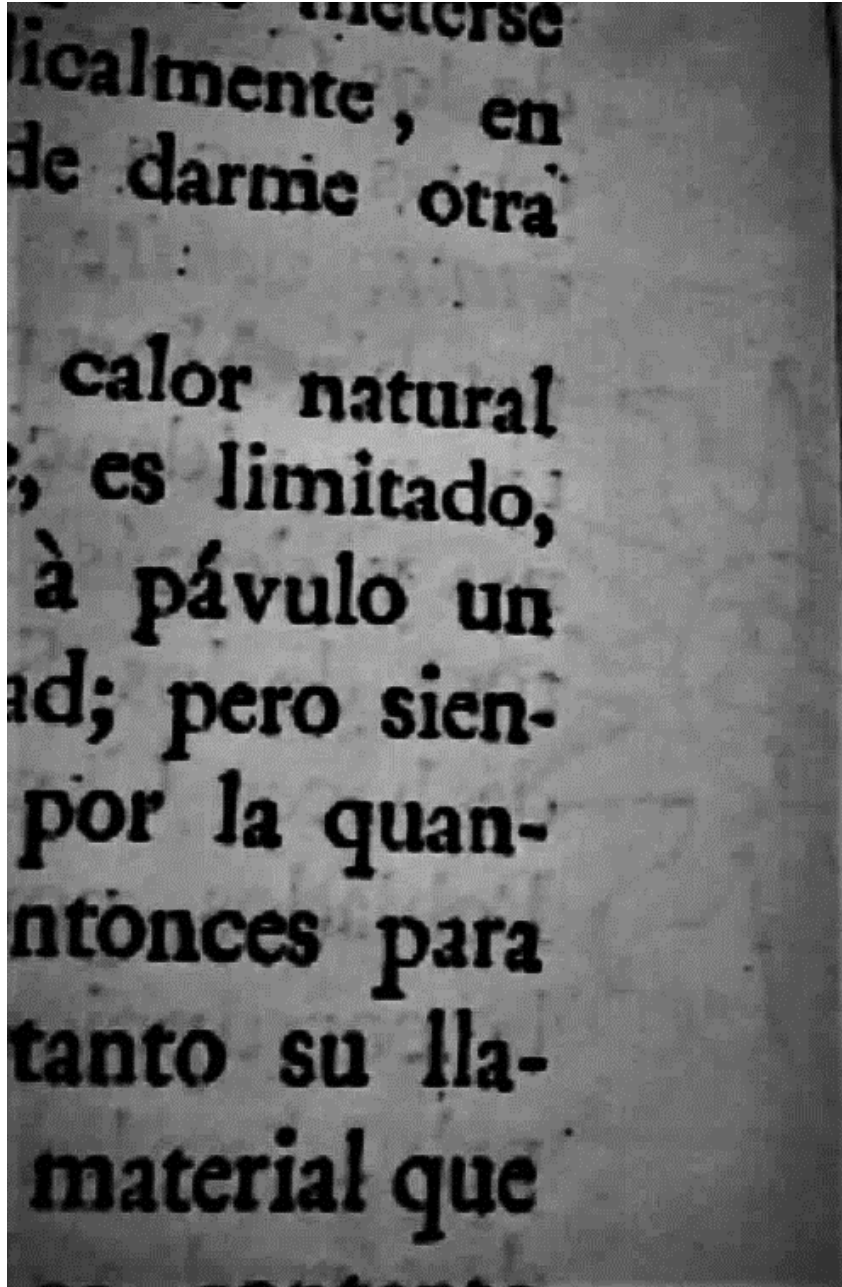


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 23: Oval frame design with sun, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 128

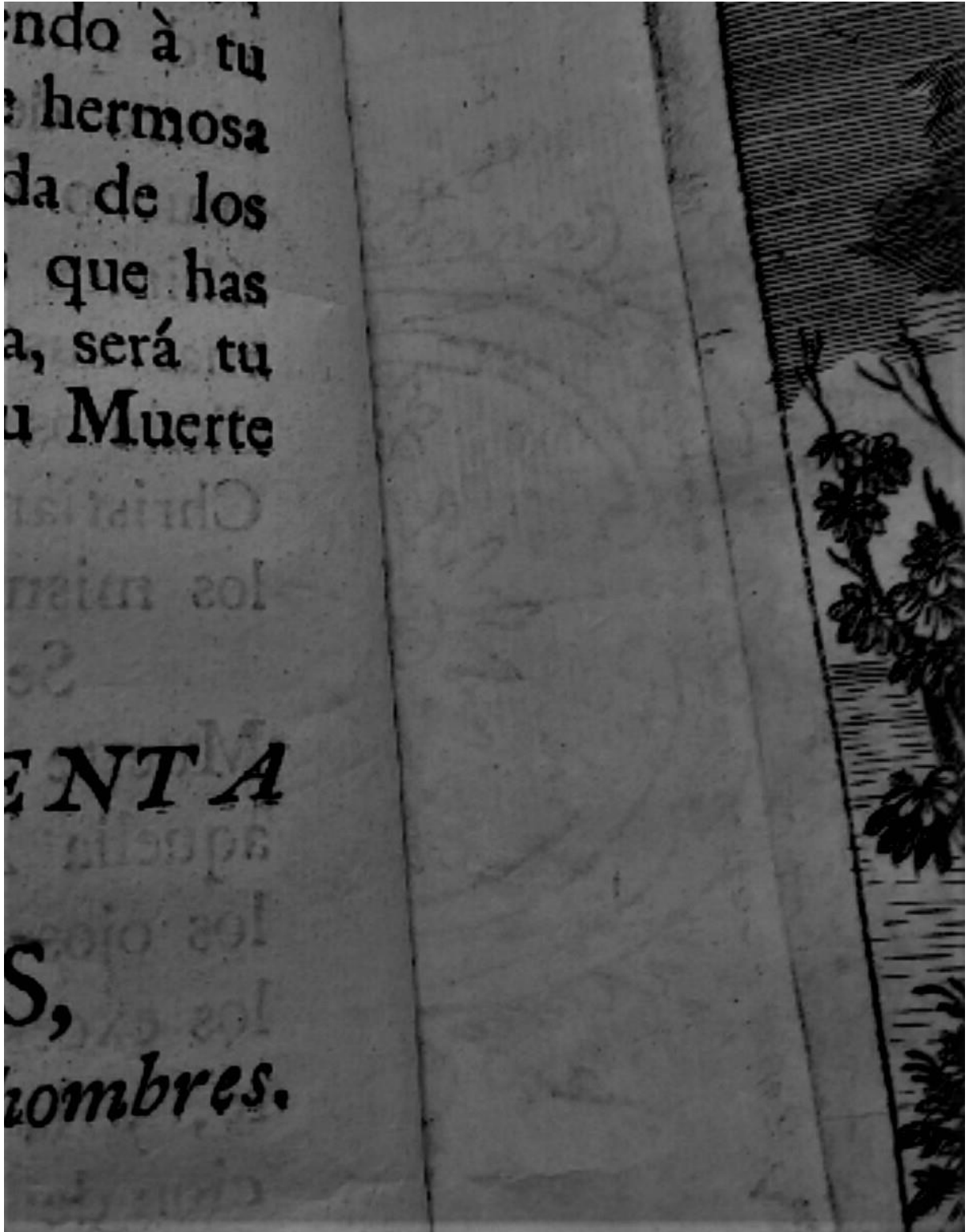


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 24: Bell-shaped frame design, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, p. 149

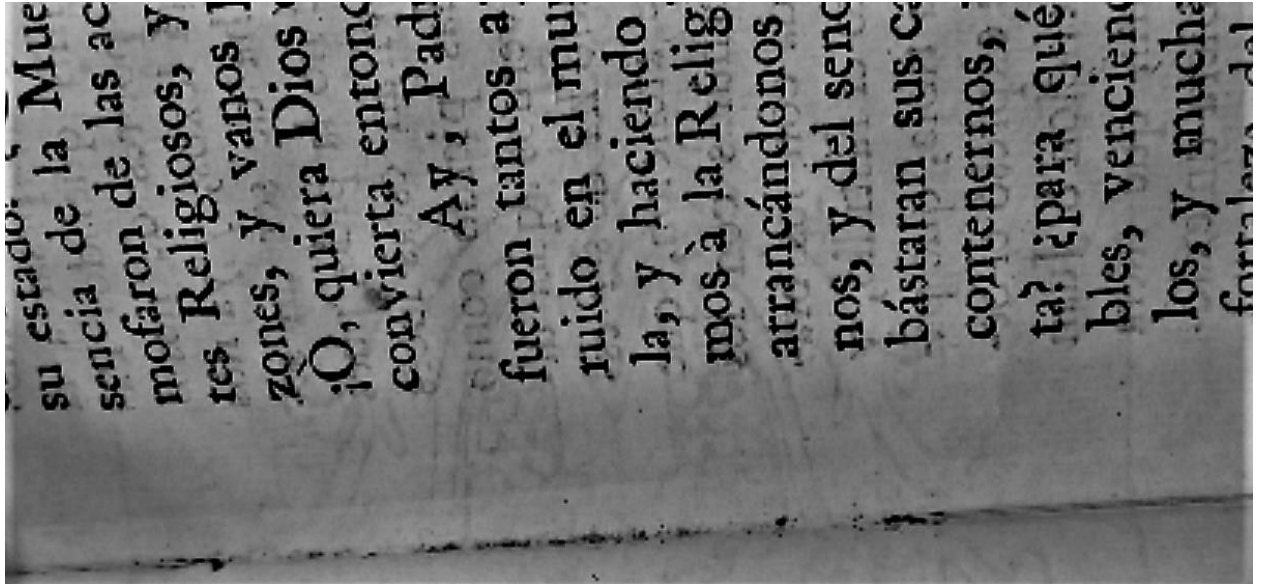


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017



Figure 25: Full frame design, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, p. 124-125

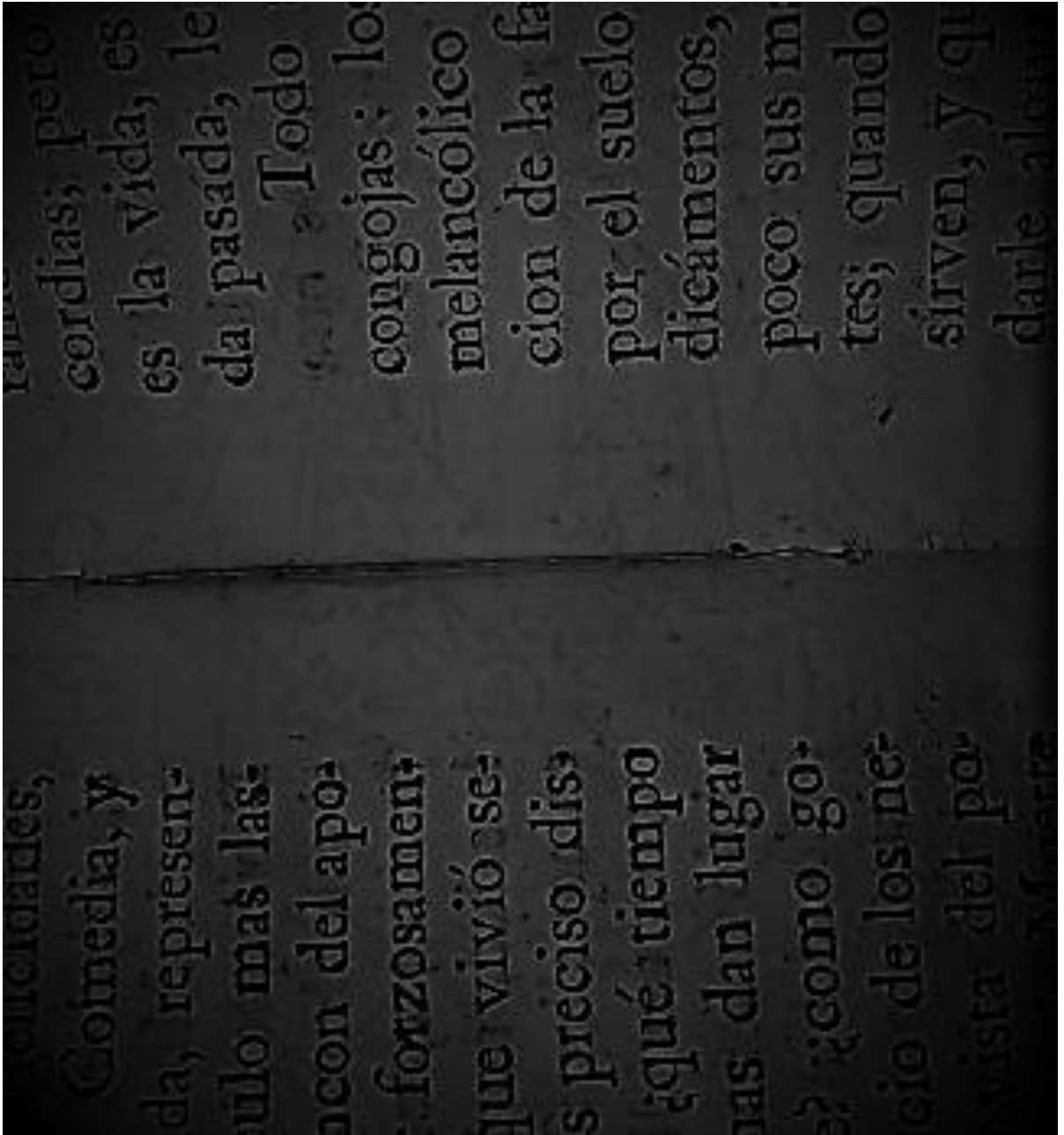


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 26: Spanish watermark (c. 1800-1805), Archivo Historico Provincial de Pontevedra, Cofradía de la Peregrina

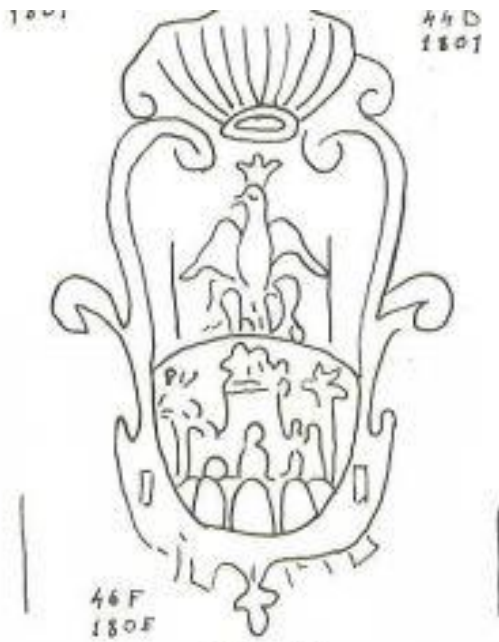


Photo: José Luis Basanta Campos, "Filigranas en documentos gallegos, Archivo histórico provincial de Pontevedra," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1967), 887.

Figure 27: Partial horse design, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, printed page between p. 22-23 of text

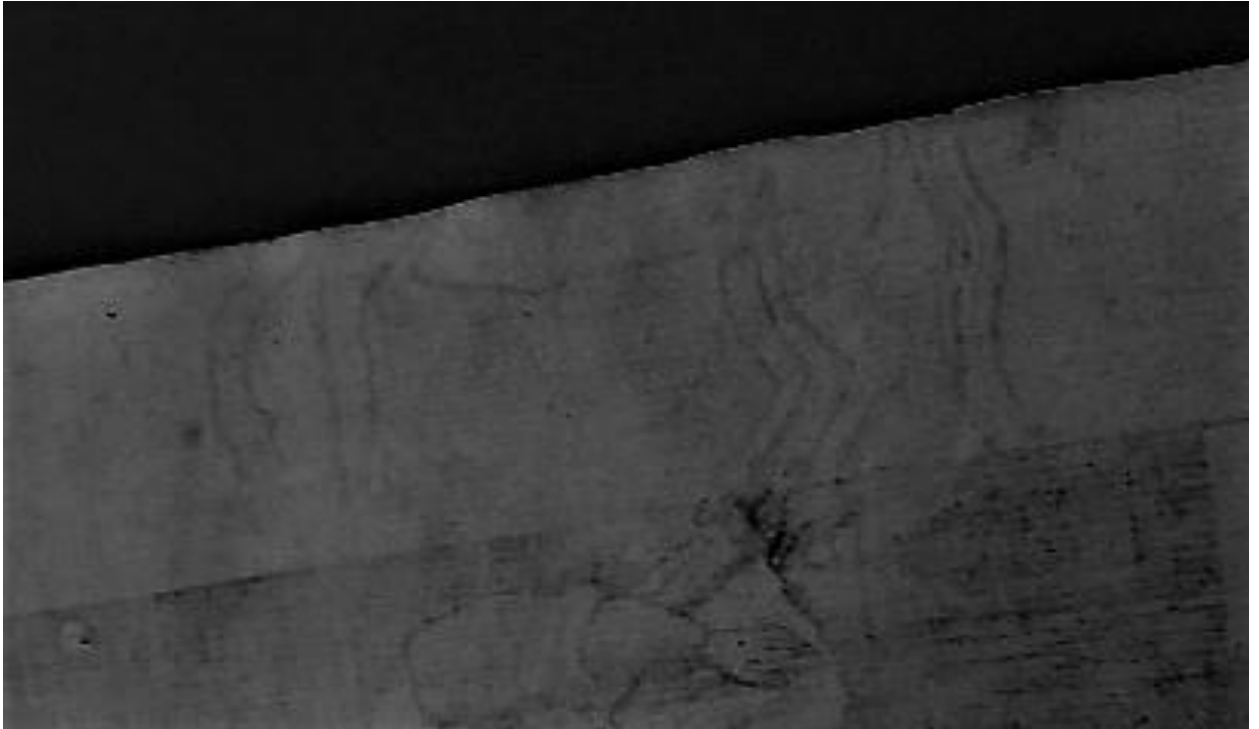


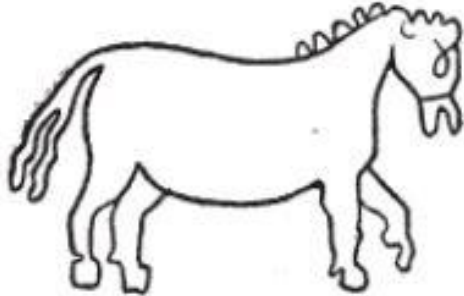
Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 28: Partial horse (center margin), *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, printed page between p. 88-89 of text



Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 29: Horse watermark, c. 1700, Madrid



290. 1700 (?), Madrid.

Archivo Real Casa, Madrid.

Photo: Francisco De Asís De Bofarull Y Sans, *Los Animales En Las Marcas Del Papel*, (Villanueva Y Geltrú: Oliva, Impresor, 1910), 56.

Figure 30: Block lettering and partial leg, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, printed page between p. 22 and 23 of text

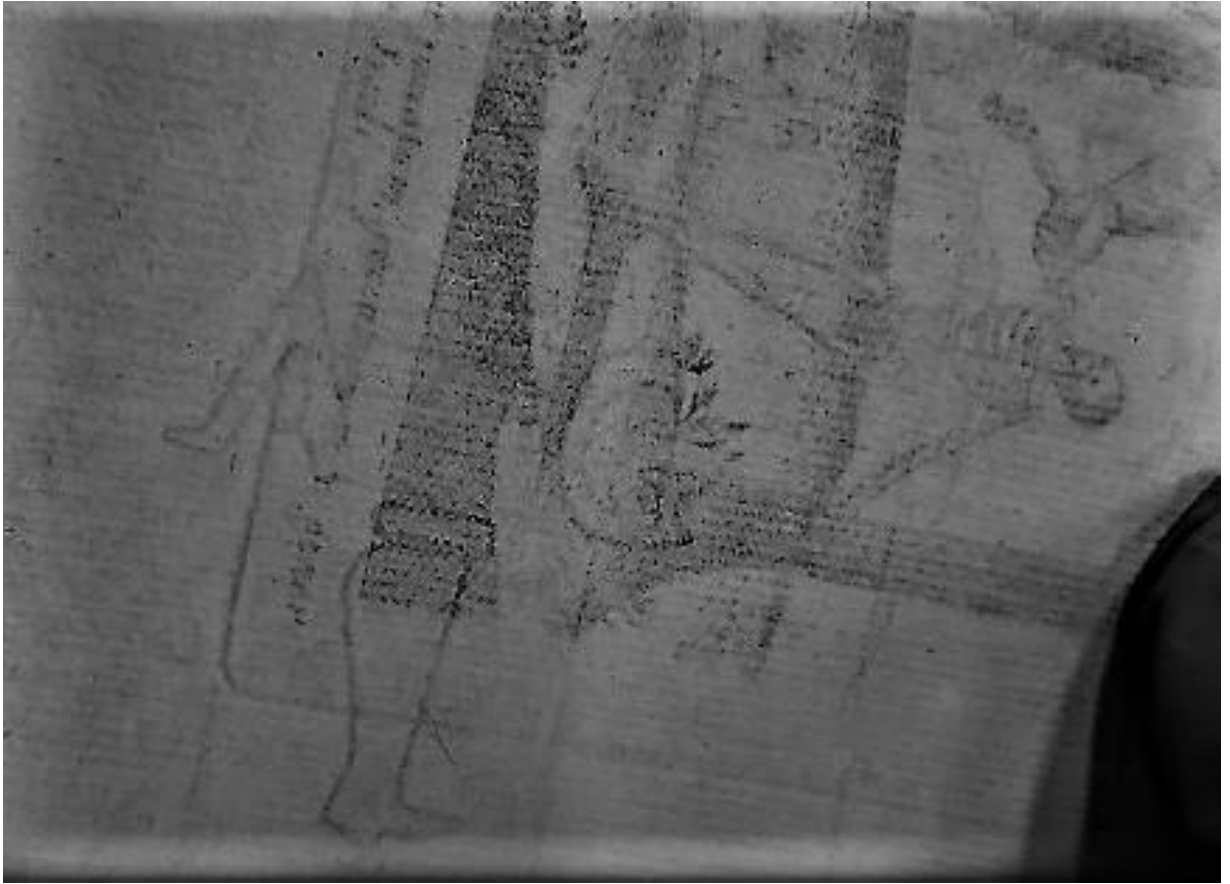


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 31: “ACM” watermark, from *Pharmacopea Tubalense*, 1735

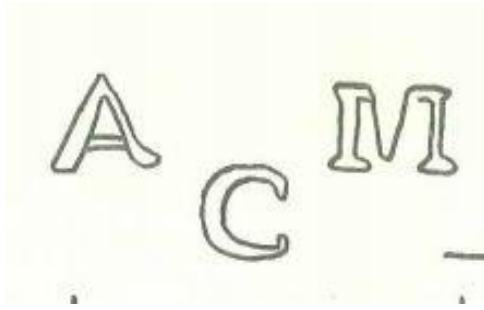


Photo: Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, “Curiosa serie de filigranas del papel de un solo libro,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 42 (Octubre 1974), 1048.

Figure 32: Silvestre watermark, *Reales Ordenanzas Militares*, 1810



Photo: Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "Filigranas en la edición 1810 de las Reales Ordenanzas Militares," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1983), 1026.



Figure 33: Block lettering (OOO), *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 124



Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 34: Triple-ring watermark designs, c. 1720s-1750s

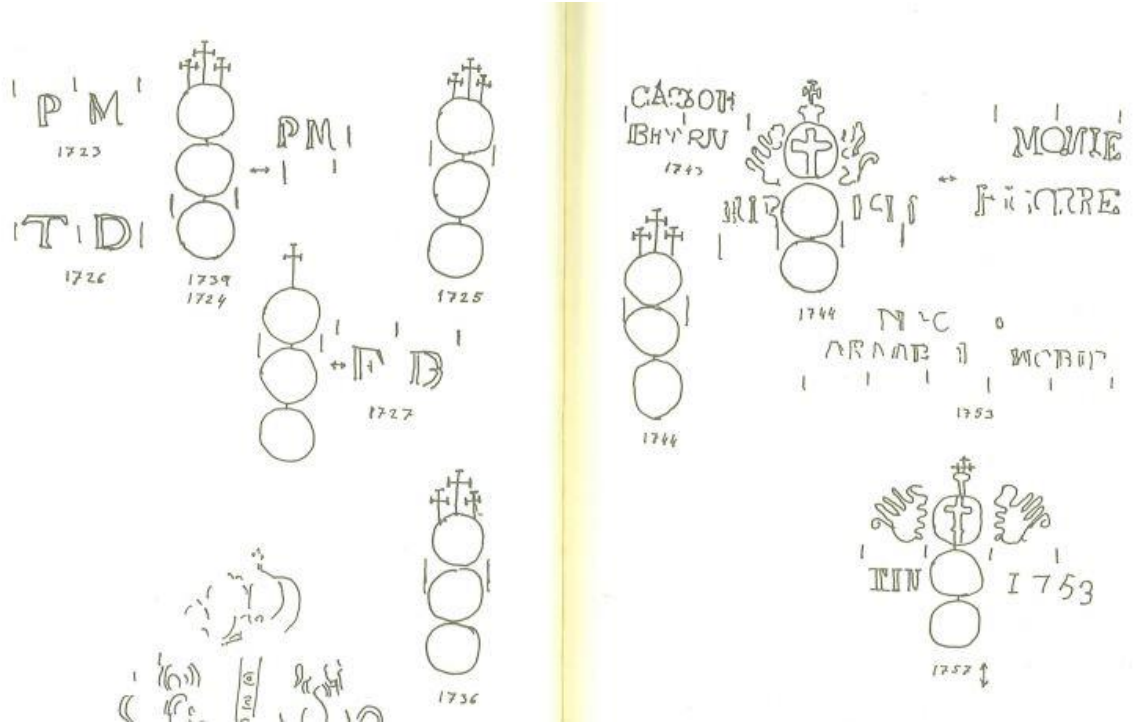


Photo: José Luis Basanta Campos, “300 años de filigranas en los papeles de una familia en Galicia,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 131 (Enero 1997), 94-95.

Figure 35: Partial horse with block lettering, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, p. 276



Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 36: Antonio watermark, *Reales Ordenanzas Militares*, 1810



Photo: Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "Filigranas en la edición 1810 de las Reales Ordenanzas Militares," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1983), 1028.

Figure 37: Full figure on horseback, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 204

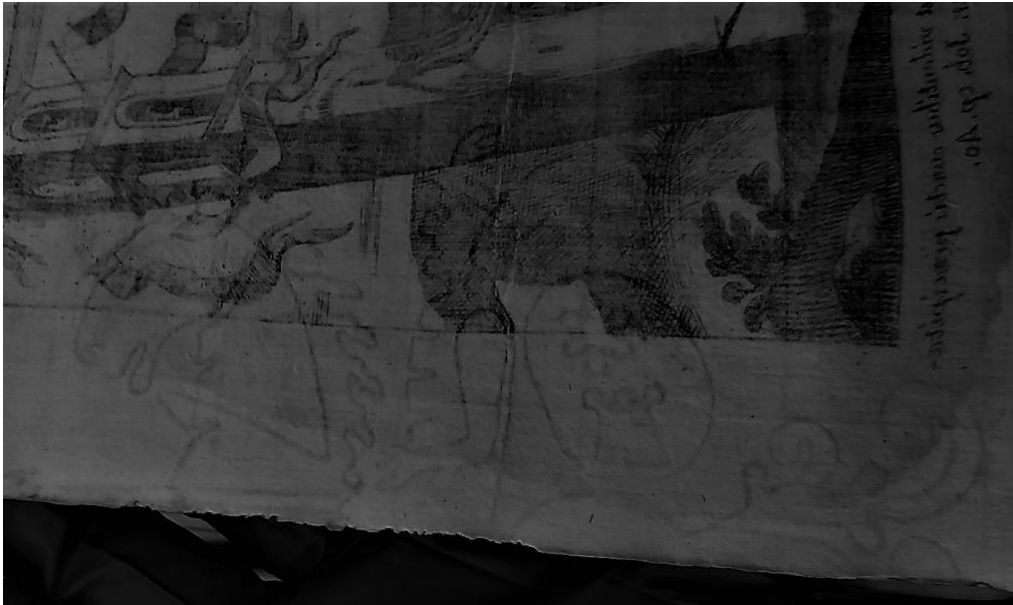


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 38: Figure on horseback (watermark), Castile-Leon, 1772



Photo: Taurino Burón, “Estado actual del estudio de las filigrinas en España: Proyectos futuros, Filigranas en Castilla-Leon,” *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 124 (Abril 1995), 329.

Figure 39: Figure on horseback, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 64



Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 40: Shield design with castle, *Reales Ordenanzas Militares*, 1810

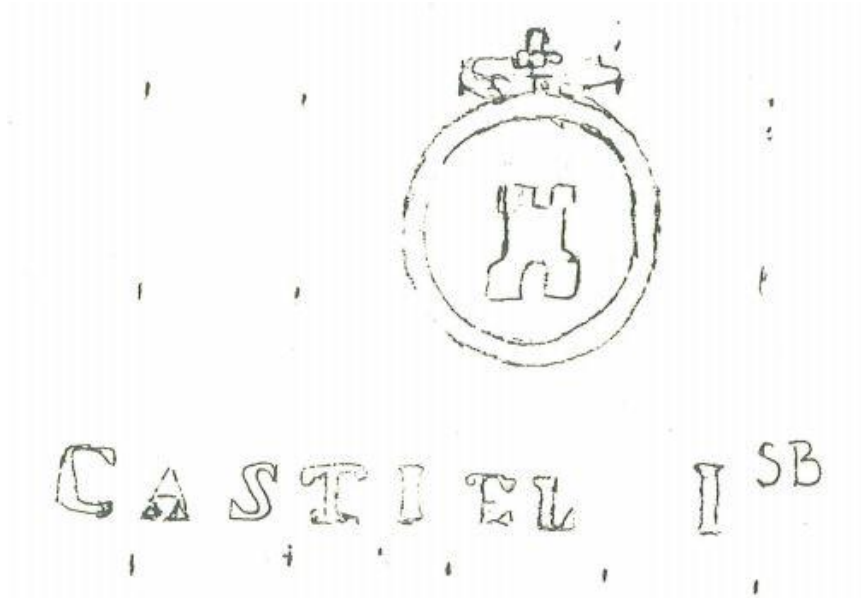


Photo: Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "Filigranas en la edición 1810 de las Reales Ordenanzas Militares," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1983), 1038.



Figure 41: Possible figure on horseback, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 170

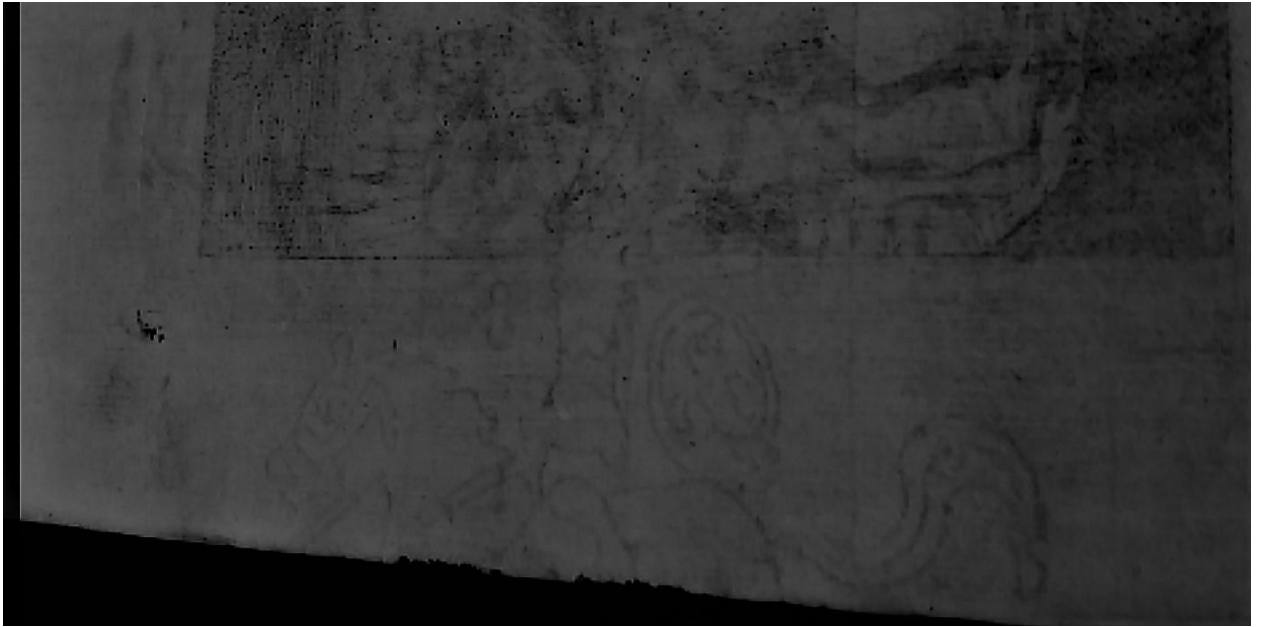


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 42: Rider on horseback with shield (watermark), Galicia, 1779.

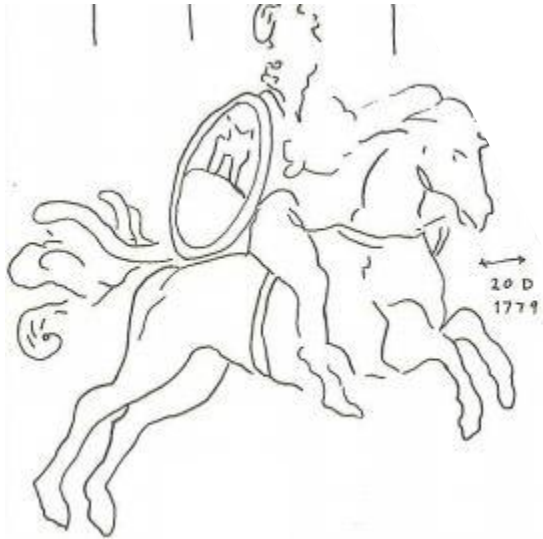


Photo: Jose Luis Basanta Campos, "Filigranas en documentos gallegos, Archivo histórico provincial de Pontevedra," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 14 (Octubre 1967), 883.

Figure 43: Figural silhouette, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 151

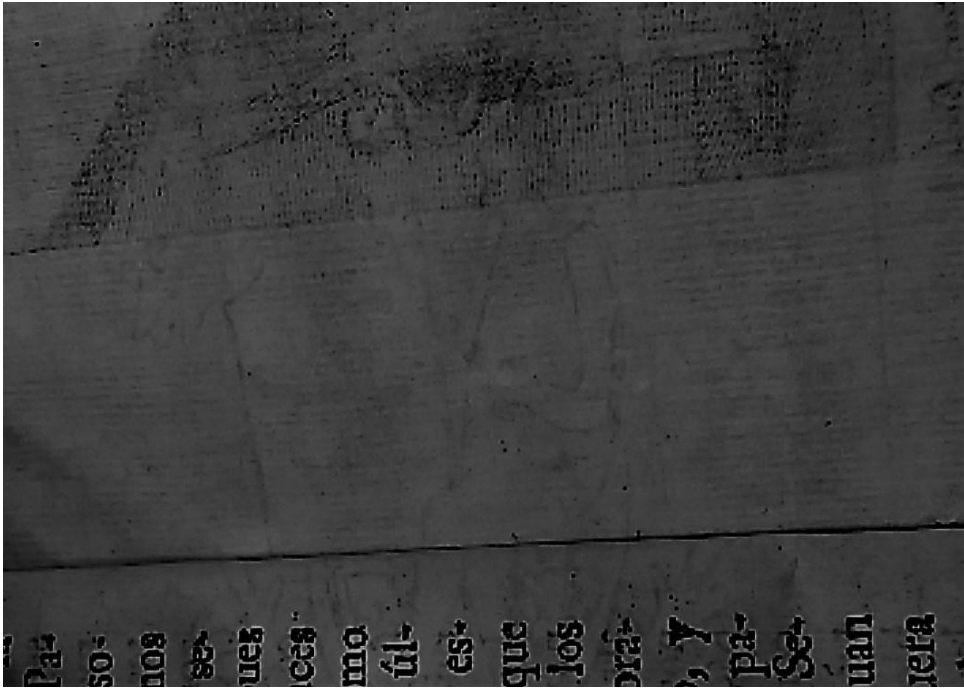


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 44: Circle with inscribed cross, *La portentosa vida de la muerte*, opposite p. 254

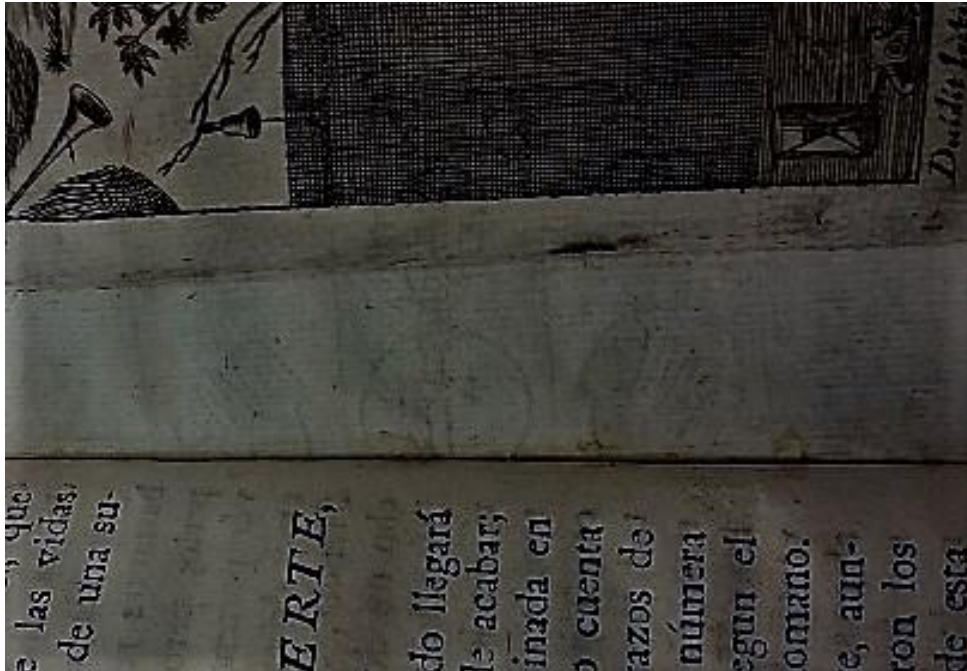


Photo: Katlyn Smith with permission of the Gilcrease Museum/Helmerich Center for American Research, October 2017

Figure 45: Hands in watermarks, 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries

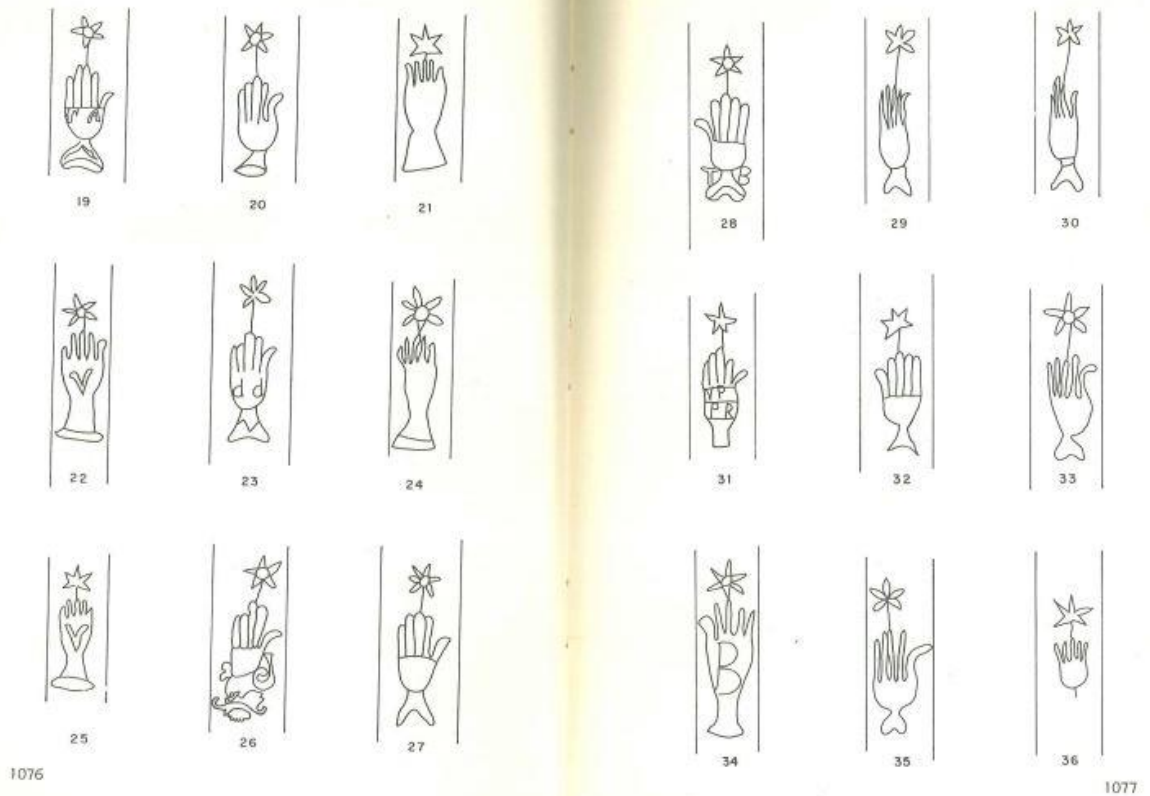


Photo: Gonzalo Gayoso Carreira, "La filigrana de la 'mano' en documentos de Galicia (España), de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Investigación y técnica del papel*, Núm. 22 (Octubre 1969), 1076-1077.

Figure 46: Jáuregui firm advertisement, 1782



**DEMONSTRACION DE LOS TAMAÑOS DE LETRA Y ADORNOS**  
**DE UNA NUEVA IMPRENTA MADRILEÑA,**  
*LA QUE DEDICÓ MI DEVOCION*  
**A MARIA SANTISIMA EN SUS DOLORES.**  
 VIVA VIVA

**NUM. I. PREGONER REDONDO.**  
 Si con la CIUDAD DE DIOS  
 Se estreñó, MARIA, la imprenta,  
 Esta con razon intenta  
 El estreñarse con Vos  
 A vuestras Plantas veloz  
 A ofrecerla se adelanta,  
 Quien vuestras grandezas canta,  
 Y porque su amor se vea,  
 Quiera que la MIERA sea  
 De su Oficina la PLANTA.

**NUM. II. CANTATA EN DOLOR.**  
 De esta muerte me preparo  
 A la Impresion por saber  
 Que LETRA NO PUEDE HACER  
 El que no tiene tu amparo.  
 Sendo pues este tan claro,  
 Señora, determiné  
 Buscar un favor en tí,  
 Segun mi pecho penetra,  
 Lo da el dolor a la letra  
 Una sola que es la T.

NUM. III. MEXICO

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Mexico  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. IV. MADRID

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Madrid  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. V. SEVILLA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Sevilla  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. VI. BARCELONA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Barcelona  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. VII. VALENCIA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Valencia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. VIII. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. IX. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. X. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. XI. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. XII. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. XIII. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

NUM. XIV. LISIENNA

A Vos como Patrona de  
 Banca la Imprenta de Lisenia  
 Puede Contarse en lo que  
 1.º Pasa Letras, y Juntas  
 2.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 3.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 4.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 5.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 6.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 7.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 8.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 9.º Pasa el papel, y Letras  
 10.º Pasa el papel, y Letras

de la Calle de San Bernardo. En Mexico, en la Imprenta

VITA

Katlyn Rochelle Smith

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: CONSTRUCTING THE LIMINAL: *LA PORTENTOSA VIDA DE LA MUERTE*

Major Field: Art History

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Art History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in August, 2018.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Spanish/Art History at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia in May, 2016.