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Secret Lives, Public Lies: The Conversos and Socio-Religious Non-
Conformism in the Spanish Golden Age

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Kevin Ingram

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Professor David Ringrose, Chair
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2006

The Dissertation of Kevin Ingram is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm:

Chair

University of California, San Diego
2006

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Secret Lives, Public Lies: The Conversos and Socio-Religious Non-Conformism in
the Spanish Golden Age

by

Kevin Ingram

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2006

Professor David Ringrose, Chair

The dissertation examines the conversos (men and women whose recent ancestors had converted from Judaism to Christianity) as socio-religious non-conformists in early modern Spain. My contention is that converso middle-sort

professionals were at the forefront of sixteenth-century Spain's socio-religious reform movement. Humanism was particularly appealing to this group. As adherents to a humanist credo conversos could attack the unacceptable face of Catholic Spain without making obvious their backgrounds. Nevertheless, for many converso humanists this was not sufficient. For these intellectuals there was also a deep-seated psychological need to defend the converso against accusations of inferior blood; to attack Old-Christian Spain's illiteracy and ignorance; and to celebrate a Sephardic cultural inheritance. It is these elements, subtly woven into the Spanish humanist tapestry, that are so often overlooked in our examination of Golden-Age Spain.

The Introduction to the dissertation expands upon the argument I have adumbrated above. Chapter 1 examines the conversos in Spanish historiography and in particular the Spanish academy's reluctance to countenance the conversos as important members of the Golden Age pantheon of writers and artists. Chapter 2 charts the converso involvement in an incipient humanist movement in the late fifteenth century and their connection with a Christian reform movement that formed around the figure of Erasmus. Chapter 3 examines the converso reformers during the period before the Tridentine reforms, in an atmosphere of tension and oppression created by the growth of Protestantism in northern Europe. Chapter 4 follows the converso humanists' fortunes in a Counter-Reformation environment and looks at the strategies used by this group to present their non-conformist message. Chapter 5 presents five case studies of humanists in Counter-Reformation Seville. These humanists, heretofore presented as men of orthodox views, were, I contend,

antagonistic to an orthodox Catholic religion. Chapter 6 examines the background and works of the painter Diego Velázquez. I argue that Velázquez was nurtured in Seville's converso-humanist environment and that his works display the same non-conformist characteristics found in an earlier generation of converso-humanist writers.

INTRODUCTION

THE CONVERSOS AND GOLDEN-AGE DUPLICITY

“Mas si yo no me engaño y el ojo no me miente, otras gracias tiene vuesa merced secretas, y no las quiere manifestar.”

“Si tengo,” respondió el pequeño; “Pero no son para el público, como vuesa merced ha muy bien apuntado.”

Miguel Cervantes, “Rinconete y Cortadillo”

“Aunque pusieron silencio a las lenguas, no le pudieron poner a las plumas, las cuales, con más libertad que las lenguas, suelen dar a entender a quien quieren lo que en el alma esta encerrado.”

Miguel Cervantes, *Don Quijote*

Converso Problems

The first problem we encounter in studying the conversos, is the term itself—a misnomer. The conversos, at least most of the ones who are the subjects of this study, were not converts at all. They were the descendents of those Jews who had converted to Christianity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, usually under pressure. The first major wave of conversion occurred directly after the infamous 1391 pogrom, when as many as fifty percent of Spain’s Jewish population (that is to say fifty percent of the Jewish population that had survived the violence) converted to Christianity. These newcomers to the Christian religion were, quite reasonably, called converts; but

so too were their children and grandchildren, who had been born, ostensibly, into Christian families. Obviously, as far as Spain's Old-Christian population was concerned, the term "converso" was not a mere reference to neophytic religious status but to a much more profound problem that neither time nor religious assimilation was capable of erasing.

In the Old-Christians' eyes the converts and their heirs were aliens. There were a number of reasons for their holding this opinion. First, Old-Christian society regarded the Jews not only as a religious group, but as a race, whose malevolence and perversity—demonstrated in their rejection of the messiah—were congenital; in other words they carried a taint that would not wash clean in a baptismal font. Second, the converted Jews and their descendents remained isolated from the Old-Christian community, in their own neighbourhoods, associating with other conversos or, very often, with Jews, thus confirming the Old Christians in their belief that they had remained essentially Jewish. Third, the conversos were often wealthier than most of their Old-Christian neighbors; some, indeed, became immensely affluent and politically powerful, reinforcing the Old Christians' view that they had merely adopted Christianity to control or subvert society.

The *limpieza de sangre* (clean blood) laws, starting with the 1449 *Sentencia-Estatuto* of Toledo, formalized what Old-Christian society had long felt: the converts and their heirs were not authentic co-religionists and thus should not be allowed to become bona fide members of Christian society. These statutes forbade the conversos access to positions in religious, civic and educational institutions on the grounds that

they were inherently untrustworthy. Under the terms of the statutes all candidates applying for entry into the above institutions were submitted to an official inquiry into their family backgrounds (usually up to four generations past). If Jewish blood was detected in the candidate's background, then he would be automatically disqualified from entry into the institution. In this way Old-Christian society aimed to bridle the social ambitions of the converts and their heirs.

However, many conversos had also married into important noble families. Under the conditions of the *limpieza* statutes the heirs of these families would also be considered conversos, that is to say second class citizens. Thus it soon became obvious that the *limpieza* legislation not only affected the target group but potentially a large section of the Spanish population. Indeed, few could be absolutely certain that they were not, so to speak, contaminated. This uncertainty soon gave rise to an obsession with clean blood, which no one could actually demonstrate they possessed with any degree of certainty. Everyone could, however, make a demonstrative exhibition of their Christian piety; they could also display (or at least) feign Old-Christian cultural attributes—a delight in pork, for example—while rejecting Jewish, or converso, ones—bodily cleanliness, industry, frugality, intellectual activity. According to Americo Castro, it was in its rejection of certain characteristics associated with Jewish culture that Spain sowed the seeds of its own decline. While this argument would seem to be somewhat facile, there can be little doubt that in promulgating the *limpieza de sangre* statutes Old-Christian Spain hoist itself with its own petard.¹

¹ Cervantes makes this point very clearly in his interlude, *El retablo de las maravillas*, in which two rogues persuade the dignitaries of a small town that they possess a machine capable of reproducing

Ironically, however, what was designed to demoralize and oppress the conversos promoted a greater self-consciousness among them.² This was particularly evident among a converso intellectual/professional class, the group most affected by the *limpieza* statutes. The present study focuses on this group, its confrontation with an Old-Christian moral majority, and its efforts to create a new socio-religious environment while dissimulating its Jewish roots and non-conformist vision.

The Converso as Protagonist

It is now over fifty years since Americo Castro outraged many of his fellow Hispanists by asserting that the intellectual life of sixteenth-century Spain was dominated by men from *judeoconverso* backgrounds. In the wake of this claim, however, a number of studies appeared which, collectively, demonstrated its veracity. These studies established that Spain's professional middle sort was formed largely of *conversos*; they indicated a strong interest in literacy and intellectual pursuits among *conversos* that was for the most part absent among their Old-Christian countrymen; and they presented either conclusive or strong circumstantial evidence that Spain's

wonderful scenes from the past: however, these scenes are only visible to those with clean blood. Naturally, the dignitaries delight in the spectacle.

² When I refer to someone as converso in the following pages, I mean he is a direct descendent of Jews on at least one side of his family, has grown up in an environment among people who are also direct descendents of Jews and has been marked psychologically by that experience, or so I believe. Diego Velázquez is, in my opinion a converso; so too, I will argue, is Ignatius de Loyola. Cervantes is, of course, the converso par excelance.

great Golden-Age literary figures were of Jewish extraction. Yet, despite the information available on the importance of conversos to early-modern Spanish culture, Spanish mainstream history continued to promote the fallacy that Spain's Golden Age of letters was predominantly an Old-Christian affair. The situation was summed up succinctly by Stephen Gilman in his 1972 biographical study of Fernando de Rojas:

The Jewish origins of many important Spaniards of the past are first of all denied (in the case of Rojas, as recently as 1967); and then, if the denial cannot stand up in the face of the evidence, they are ignored...The belief that only the caste of Old Christians was truly Spanish and truly honorable was so in rooted that it has endured over four centuries. There even seems to prevail among some of our colleagues, peninsula and otherwise, the tacit notion that to bring to light the background of a Rojas or a Diego de San Pedro (not to speak of a Saint Teresa of Avila) is an unpatriotic act, a virtual deletion of their works from the national Honor Roll.³

In the thirty years since Gilman wrote the above lines the situation has changed, but not significantly. No hispanist is now foolhardy enough to deny the conversos a place in early modern Spanish letters; however, through prejudice, ignorance (or wilful ignorance), apathy or misplaced diplomacy this involvement is still not fully addressed. It would seem as if we were abiding by an unwritten accord to acknowledge that the conversos made an intellectual contribution to Spanish culture while sidestepping the extent or significance of that contribution. The present mainstream spin on the conversos' participation in Golden-Age intellectual life is something akin to that presented by Ángel Alcalá in a 1994 compilation of essays on Spanish Jewry, *Judios. Sepharditas. Conversos*. In his introduction to the work Alcalá writes, "El hecho, cualesquiera sean las razones que se busque, es que algunos de los

³Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, Princeton University, 1972, 27.

más excelos escritores, humanistas, reformadores cristianos, mysticos y santos del siglo tenían en sus venas sangre de no remoto origen judío.” While the statement sounds balanced, it is in reality tendentious, subtly asserting that the Golden Age of letters is still by and large an Old-Christian phenomenon. However, as those of us who have studied converso involvement in Golden Age culture must now be well aware, “el hecho” is not that some of the most important writers, intellectuals, reformers and mystics were converso, “el hecho” is that almost all of them were. Spanish prose fiction was dominated by converso writers: Cervantes, Aleman, Rojas, Jorge Montemayor, Francisco Delicado, Luis Velez de Guevara were all from converso backgrounds. Spain’s great sixteenth-century mystics Teresa of Avila, Juan de Avila, Juan de la Cruz and Luis de Leon were also conversos, as were Spain’s foremost humanists, among whom were Nebrija, Vives, the Valdes brothers, Juan de Vergara, Brocense, Ambrosio Morales, Arias Montano, and Pedro de Valencia. Conversos also predominated in early sixteenth-century theater; and there is some reason to believe that the later playwrights Tirso de Molina and Lope de Vega were also of Jewish provenance.⁴ Indeed, where substantial information is available on a Golden-Age writer, the evidence normally points to a converso family background—unsurprisingly, given that most writers came out of Spains converso-dominated middle sort. Of course, there are those scholars who continue to dispute the converso

⁴ There is some indication that Tirso de Molina’s mother was a converso. His father may have been the Duque de Osuna. See José-Carlos Gómez –Menor, “Linaje judío de escritores religiosos y místicos españoles del siglo XVI” in Ángel Alcalá ed. *Judíos. Sefarditas. Conversos*, Ambito, Madrid, 1995. For Lope de Vega’s possible converso origins see Diane J. Pamp, *Lope de Vega Ante el Problema de la Limpieza de Sangre*, Smith College, Massachusetts, 1968.

character of many Golden-Age figures (including a number of the above) on the grounds that the evidence is not conclusive, by which they normally mean that no Inquisition document exists indicating that the writer or members of his or her family was convicted of Judaizing. Thus, for example, many *Cervantistas* refuse to countenance the idea that Cervantes was a New Christian despite substantial evidence in his biography and works which points to his converso background. These scholars ignore biographical information that alludes to a Jewish family background, including the fact that Cervantes father was a medical man in a period when Spanish medicine was the preserve of the converso; they pass over Cervantes proclaimed distaste for pork (something no Old-Christian would admit to); and they sidestep his almost militant defense of the converso in his novels and plays.⁵ In their view, Cervantes remains Old-Christian by virtue of the fact that no document exists which categorically states he is not. While a number of Hispanists continue to attribute this rigidity to scholarly scrupulousness, others, myself included, consider it to be little more than prevarication, or naked prejudice cloaked in the rigorous scholar's robes.⁶

In maintaining the pretense that the Spanish Golden-Age of letters was predominantly Old-Christian we not only overlook important themes or arguments in

⁵ For Cervantes' attacks on the *limpieza de sangre* statutes see chapter five of Barbara Fuchs, *Passing for Spain, Cervantes and the Fictions of Identity*, University of Illinois Press, 2003.

⁶ While old-school *cervantistas* continue to insist upon Cervantes Old-Christian provenance, many of their colleagues now consider him to be from a *converso* background. The *cervantista* Alberto Sánchez writes: "El humanismo renacentista en combinación con la crítica erasmiana no excluyen que Cervantes sea un *outsider* de la sociedad española por sus orígenes *confesos*. En suma, todo se confirma de forma complementaria y casi necesaria. Así lo han admitido hoy un grán número de cervantistas--Zamora, Vicente, Meregalli, Rossi, Eisenberg etc." A. Sánchez, "Nuevas Orientaciones en el Planteamiento de la Biografía de Cervantes", in *Cervantes*, Madrid, 1995. The work is a compilation of papers presented in 1994 in a three-day conference at Alcalá de Henares, organized by the Centro de Estudios Cervantinos and *Edad de Oro*.

the Golden-Age writers' works, we also form erroneous conclusions on the character of the period itself. There is still a belief abroad that Spain's Golden-Age of letters was linked symbiotically to a Medieval conquest spirit or spirituality. In this narrative, the energy or fervency with which the Old-Christian *hidalgo* (nobleman) attacked and defeated the Moor in the late fifteenth century was channeled into a sixteenth-century *hidalgo* literary production.⁷ However, this scenario is maintained by ignoring an important fact. Old-Christian *hidalgos*—most of whom were at best semi-literate—demonstrated little interest in literary or intellectual pursuits. Those few noblemen who achieved some fame as men of letters—The Marquis of Santillana, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, Jorge and Gómez Manrique, Garcilaso de la Vega— were all members of families who maintained close business and familial ties with converso middle-sort professionals.

It was the converso middle sort who formed sixteenth-century Spain's literate class, and it was this newly enfranchised group who were the great beneficiaries of the age. It was they who had profited economically as financiers and provisioners of the

⁷ Spanish scholars still cite sixteenth-century panegyrics as proof that Golden-Age writers were from *hidalgo* families with roots firmly entrenched in the Viscayan mountains (ie in Old-Christian territory, away from Arab and Jewish communities and the possibility of *converso* roots). Curiously, these scholars seem oblivious to the fact that. "Vizcayan" backgrounds were so prevalent in sixteenth-century biographies that they became a standard joke. Indeed, the terms "vizcaino", "asturiano" and "galiciano" were often used ironically as synonyms for converso. In *El Donado Hablador*, Alcalá de Yañez notes that the Segovian cathedral, which he likens to Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, was built with contributions from Segovia's wool merchants, whom he describes as men of all nations: "Montañes, Vizcainos, Gallegos, y Portugueses." As the perspicacious reader would have realized, Yañez was referring to conversos, the Segovian wool trade being controlled by Jewish and *converso* merchants. See Sanford Shepard, *The Lost Lexicon*, p. 48. In his *Cronica*, Francisco de Zúñiga also makes fun of Old-Christian *hidalgo* pretensions. Zúñiga claims that he was born "en los montes de las Asturias (que es en el par del reino de Galicia) quando Nuestro Señor un Infante pobre, llamado Pelayo, del linaje de los reyes godos de donde yo descendio. However, he also states, waggishly, that he is "Duque de Jerusalem por derecha sucesion, conde de los mares Ruben y Tiberiades." For the Spanish nobility's lack of interest in letters, see Nicholas G. Round, "Renaissance Culture and its Opponents in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Modern Language Review*, 57, 1962, pp. 204-215.

final Reconquest drive and as middlemen in Spain's expanding wool trade; and it was they who had filled most of the administrative positions that a growing late fifteenth-century state bureaucracy had created. The majority of Spain's sixteenth-century literary figures emerged from this despised upwardly-mobile social group, and their works often reflected the group's aspirations and anxieties, its heterodox religious ideas and reformist sentiments. Of course, disaffected New-Christian writers were not so foolish as to champion social and religious reform in the name of a loathed social minority; when they disseminated contentious religious attitudes or socially reformist views they did so not as conversos but as humanists.

Humanism was attractive to many converso professionals for obvious reasons.⁸ As members of Spain's socially dynamic middle sort, the conversos were drawn to a movement that challenged an old, static order in which the three estates were enjoined to maintain their social positions; as New Christians in search of a generic religion and not an elaborate and alien doctrine, they were inspired by a Christian humanism that advocated a minimalist Christianity based on an evangelical message; and as members of a minority group victimized by an Old-Christian society for its inferior blood, they were impressed by a credo that was predicated on the view that nobility was conveyed by *virtud* (or merit), and not by one's family tree. They saw themselves, or at least projected themselves, as members of a unique group—not the tainted and vilified *alboraique* of Old-Christian slander, but that new elite referred

⁸ Note, I am not stating that all conversos were non-conformists, but rather that Spain's humanist (non-conformist) movement was predominantly converso.

to by Saint Paul in his Epistles; a group of “new men” who had sloughed off their past to embrace a future in which Christians would be judged on merit alone. Likewise, they presented themselves as latter-day examples of the *novus homo* of ancient Rome, high-minded public figures like Cicero and Horace whose fame, prestige, and, ultimately, nobility rested not on their immaculate blood line but on their talent and industry.

As adherents to a humanist credo conversos could attack the unacceptable face of Catholic Spain without making obvious their backgrounds. Nevertheless, for many converso humanists this was not sufficient. For these intellectuals there was also a deep-seated psychological need to defend the converso against accusations of inferior blood; to attack Old-Christian Spain’s illiteracy and ignorance; and to celebrate a Sephardic cultural inheritance, which they did by promoting the view that the ancient Hebrew world was as culturally significant as classical Greece or Rome and that the Hebrew Bible was central to the Christian tradition and not merely a prologue to it. It is these elements, subtly woven into the Spanish humanist tapestry, that are so often overlooked in our examination of Golden-Age Spain.

Secrets and Lies

While it is true that Spain’s converso humanists were careful to hide their true beliefs behind a smokescreen of conformity, we have little excuse for not penetrating this subterfuge, for they continuously draw our attention to it. They tell us how

important it is to be discreet and prudent in their world, by which they mean how necessary it is to masque one's background and religious persuasion. Yet we remain obtuse to their message, and so we continue to quote them without skepticism, as if they were in the business of purveying truths and not disguising them. Spanish humanists like Benito Arias Montano and Juan de Malara (both examined in Chapter Five) were well aware of the dangers of revealing their true beliefs, so they prudently, discreetly dissimilated them. They made believe they were aping classical authors as earnest students of style, not secret propagandists for heterodox values; they feigned orthodox views while writing personal paeans to Erasmian ideals or Jewish learning. They wrote for two audiences, a general public and an intimate inner circle, or as Mateo Aleman puts it in *Guzman de Alfarache*, for the "vulgo" and the "discreet reader."⁹ By "vulgo" Aleman meant that contemptible, dangerous Old Christian bigot for whom the author was forced to mask his hero's converso background and his heterodox character; "discreet reader" signified those people privy to his game. In writing his *Philosophia vulgar*, Aleman's fellow Sevillian, Juan de Malara was well aware of his two distinct audiences; those who would take his glosses on popular proverbs at face value, and those who would perceive in them a hidden meaning.¹⁰ For the first group the humanist's gloss on the proverb "A manos lavados, dios les da que coman" is an inconsequential discussion on bodily cleanliness; to the second group, I

⁹ Mateo Aleman wrote two introductions to his *Guzman de Alfarache*, one for "el lector discreto", the other for "el vulgo". In his work *The Lost Lexicon*, Sanford Shepherd examines in some detail the hidden messages contained in converso authors works. The majority of these double entendres are found in picaresque fiction, a literary genre created and dominated by conversos fully aware of their marginal status.

¹⁰ See chapter four.

would contend, it is a subtle assertion that a clean body was much more important than clean blood (*limpieza de sangre*) as a guide to spiritual purity.¹¹ The same assertion is made by Malara's friend and disciple Cristobal de Mosquera, in an anecdote on the Seville friar Fernando de Contreras. Contreras, Mosquera tells us, was "un amigo de limpieza". Given the debate taking place in the late sixteenth century on the need for making *limpieza de sangre* a requirements for entry into the religious orders, a contemporary reader might, with good cause, have assumed that Mosquera was referring to Villanueva's anti-*converso* stance. However, Tomas de Villanueva was a friend only of physical *limpieza*, and in particular, of clean saints, "y asi tomaba por recreación ir a lavar los corporales [the icons] al rio, y, metido en un barco, en parte que no hubiera gente, con dos o tres compañeros los lavaba y enjustes [slimmer] los traia a la iglesia." This story eventually found its way into the Mercenarian's *proceso* for beatification, even though it clearly reveals an irreverent attitude towards mainstream religious observance.¹²

The word "limpieza" held a special appeal for converso writers, allowing them to proclaim subtly that they were members of a hygienic, New-Christian culture, while

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cited from Luis Sala Balust y Francisco Martín Hernandez, *Obras Completas del Santo Maestro Juan de Ávila*, vol 1, BAC, Madrid, 1970, 33. Fernando de Contreras was influenced by a Spanish humanist movement that shunned ceremonies in favour of moral education. Encouraged by the Erasmian Archbishop of Seville, Alonso Manrique, Contreras founded, in 1525, a school for instructing poor children in letters and Christian doctrine. This school, was, it seems, the model for St. Juan de Avila's schools for the poor established in Andalucia between 1535 and 1548. For Contreras's likely converso roots see Juan Gil, *Los conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana*, vol. III, p. 526. The narrator of the story, Cristóbal Mosquera was also from a converso background. See Ruth Pike, " " Bodily cleanliness was fundamental to Jewish religious observance. As Malara made clear in his gloss, it was seen as an outward manifestation of spiritual purity. It was for this reason that many converse families continued to observe Sabbath bathing rituals several generations after converting to Christianity.

feigning to be members of a dirty, Old-Christian one obsessed with clean blood. Thus the Cordoban humanist Ambrosio Morales could, in his father's funeral oration, describe Morales senior as "limpio en todas partes" without strictly speaking telling a lie, even though it is evident that Morales was from a *converso* background.¹³ With a similar regard, or disregard, for veracity, Francisco Pacheco informs us that Juan de Malara's family was "gente onrada y limpia"¹⁴ and that the painter Diego Velázquez (Pacheco's son-in-law) had *limpieza y buenas partes*.¹⁵ This of course begs the question, why did Morales and Pacheco mention *limpieza* at all, thus appearing to protest too much these people's Old-Christian background? In all probability, they did so to counteract rumors that their subjects (in Morales case, his own family) were New Christians. Why haven't these rumors come down to us? To some extent because negative information on Spanish Golden-Age figures has disappeared from the archives; but largely because the rumor mongers did not write the books; converso humanists like Francisco Pacheco wrote the books, and when it came to their friends' and colleagues' genealogies, they were not averse to playing with the facts.

In his *Libro de Descripción de Verdaderos Retratos de Ilustres y Memorables Varones* Francisco Pacheco constantly plays with the facts. A series of prosopographies of Spanish humanists, the majority of whom were related in some way to Seville, the work stresses these men's virtue (probity, erudition, industry) while

¹³ For Ambrosio Morales' converso background see Chapter Three.

¹⁴ Francisco Pacheco, *Libro de descripción de verdaderos retratos de ilustres y memorables varones*, Diputación de Sevilla, 1985, 357.

¹⁵ Francisco Pacheco, *El Arte de la Pintura*, Catedra, Madrid, 1990, 202.

circumventing their blemishes including, very often, their tainted blood. *Converso* laundering was, of course, not unusual in humanist circles. Rodrigo Caro, a close friend of Pacheco, also uses his book of prosopographies, *Varones insignes en Letras naturales de la ilustrisima ciudad de Sevilla* to disguise a few Jewish backgrounds (including his own), as does Gonzalo Argote de Molina in his *Nobleza de Andalucia*, a work undertaken by the author with the central purpose of inventing a new genealogy for his family and friends. Argote, the son of a wealthy Seville judge whose name was Francisco de Molina y Zatico (not Francisco Argote de Molina, as Pacheco states in his *Retratos*) invented a lineage for himself which descended to those Vizcayan knights who led the first wave of reconquest. Had this impeccable noble line really existed, Argote would certainly have applied for entry into one of the noble military orders. However, application for entry into the order of Santiago or Calatrava would have entailed a lengthy investigation of his family background, during which time his fellow Sevillian citizens would have been questioned about his *limpieza*. Argote wisely rejected this route to nobility; instead he paid a fortune to marry the illegitimate daughter of the Marques de Lanzarote, who had been given the Marques's lesser title of Conde (Condessa) to attract a wealthy husband.¹⁶

While *converso* writers were concerned, for very good reasons, with hiding their family roots and religious tendencies from their Old-Christian countrymen, this did not prevent them from making furtive references to them in their works. The discreet reader is sometimes alerted to the author's hidden message by the words

¹⁶ Celestino Lopez Martinez, "Gonzalo Argote de Molina, historiador y bibliófilo", *Archivo Hispalense*, num. 58-59, pp. 3-5

“escondido” or “secreto” in the text, as in Alonso Nuñez de Reinoso’s *Clareo y Florisea*, in which the converso author states that “debajo de su invención hay grandes secretos”.¹⁷ Juan Perez de Moya’s work *Philosophia secreta* I would suggest, is also an allusion to hidden messages, not merely the moral messages ensconced in the Greek myths, but also discreet references to his own converso-humanist vision which, like Juan de Malara, he surreptitiously introduces into his glosses.¹⁸ In his exposition of the myth of Bacchus (Bk. 2, Ch. 28), Perez de Moya notes that while the Greeks attributed the invention of wine to this god, the real inventor was Noah, at the beginning of the second age of man. It was during this same time, the author states, that men began to eat meat, God having told his people “Yo os doy licencia que comáis de todas las cosas que quisiéredes, asi como libremente coméis de las hierbas y frutas, sacado esto sólo: que no comiesen carne que no fuese desagrada, porque comiéndola con sangre parecía crueldad y de bestias.” While this comment has nothing to do with the myth of Bacchus, it is not, I would contend, a pointless aside; it is rather a surreptitious defense of Jewish dietary laws, from whose practice conversos were forced to desist. In his exposition of the myth of the Caledonian pig (Bk. 4, Ch. 6), Perez de Moya again defends a Jewish dietary custom. The “Caledonian pig” was the enormous wild boar sent by the gods to punish the Caledonians for forgetting to worship Diana, the goddess of the hunt. The “pig” is thus clearly an allusion to the hunt; the Caledonians’ retribution for disrespecting the goddess arriving in the form of

¹⁷ Alonso Núñez de Reinoso, *Los amores de Clareo y Florisea y los trabajos de la sin ventura Isea*, ed. Miguel Angel Teijeiro Fuentes, Universidad de Extremadura, 1991, 196, n.145.

¹⁸ Juan Pérez de Moya, *Philosophía secreta*, ed. Carlos Clavería, Catedra, Madrid, 1995.

large game animal that destroys their community. However, Perez de Moya offers us a more original interpretation of this wild beast's significance. The pig, he states, is a symbol of the Caledonians' pride, the gods having chosen this animal because pride like the pig was filthy. Again, I would suggest that the author uses his gloss to interpolate a personal message into his text; in this instance his view that the pig was an unclean animal (that is, an animal unfit to eat).¹⁹

Perez de Moya's *Philosophia secreta* became an essential guide for many Spanish Baroque poets and painters interested in rendering a moralist interpretation to Greek mythology. Diego Velázquez himself owned a copy of the work, and it is reasonable to assume that he referred to it to depict Bacchus in *Los Borrachos* ("The Drunkards"). Indeed, it is evident that Velázquez, like Perez de Moya, uses the Bacchus myth to make a forceful attack on Old-Christian Spain—not its bestial eating habits, but its spiritual and intellectual impoverishment, its ignorance and superstition, and most of all its prejudice against the converso, all of which the artist contrasts with humanist enlightenment.²⁰

¹⁹ In sixteenth-century Spain pork eating had become something of a shibboleth: the test of one's *limpieza de sangre*. Although many conversos were physically nauseated by the taste of pork, they often ate pork products in public to reinforce their claim to Old-Christian blood. Other conversos—Arias Montano is an example—disguised their distaste for pork by presenting themselves as vegetarians. Golden Age literature contains many furtive references to the *converso's* distaste for pork. Again one of the most famous allusions occurs in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, where Lazarillo steals his blind master's pork sausage, replacing it with a parsnip. However, on discovering the trick the blind man forces his large nose into the boy's mouth making him sick. The scene is full of covert references to both the boy's and the master's Jewish roots. Velázquez's bodegon *El almuerzo* is, I would suggest, based on this scene: two young rogues smile out at the viewer, while an old man, who appears to be blind, picks up a raw parsnip from his dinner plate.

²⁰ See chapter six, pp. 256-261.

The present study was originally conceived as a detailed examination of Seville's post-Tridentine humanist community, my contention being that this group, in which I included the brilliant Diego de Velázquez, was heir to a pre-Tridentine, converso-dominated reform movement, which had coalesced around the figure of Erasmus. Far from being supporters of a Counter-Reformation political and religious program, as a number of Spanish scholars have argued, these Seville artists and intellectuals, I intended to prove, were, covertly, its radical antagonists. However, it soon became evident that while this was an important part of the story I wished to tell, it was not the whole story. My views on post Tridentine Sevillian humanism would lack trenchancy, I realized, unless I first established that Spanish humanism was from its origins onward a reform movement steered by New-Christian intellectuals. I would thus need to treat in some detail Spain's incipient humanist movement. Furthermore, I felt increasingly compelled to devote a chapter of this study to a Spanish old-guard scholarly community that had continually applied *limpieza de sangre* guidelines to its own studies, creating a sanitized (*castizo*) Golden Age. These scholars had either turned a blind eye to the conversos, or had willfully negated their historical significance in studies that treated them as a minor intellectual force, interested only in imbibing the mores of Old-Christian society; a stand still taken by a number of academics. In the face of this continuing intransigence, it was necessary, I believed, to reaffirm the view that early modern Spanish culture was the result of an ongoing clash, or dialectic, between New-Christians anxious to create a more equitable society, in which they could better flourish, and an Old-Christian moral majority that jealously

guarded its claim to superior status. This dialectic is of course rarely overt because, as I have already noted, the New Christians themselves were careful to hide their background and their intentions from the general public; as Gregory Hutchison appositely remarks, the converso voice was by necessity “a voice of ambivalence” that desired “both to collude with the status quo and to subvert it.”²¹

²¹ Gregory Hutchison, “Cracks in the Labyrinth”, *La Coronica*, Vol. 25.1, Fall 1996, p.43

CHAPTER ONE

SPANISH HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE CONVERSOS

The Colombina archive in Seville houses a copy of a *memoria* (discourse) written by Fray Agustin Salucio, at the end of the sixteenth century, in which the Dominican friar examines, with a good a measure of irony, the question, “Who is an Old Christian?”¹ While there were no studies available on the subject, Salucio observes, the obvious answer to the question is that an “Old Christian” was the person who converted to Christianity before the “New Christian”. However, to appreciate fully the term “Old Christian”, it was necessary to understand that Spaniards of his own day stemmed from four different social groups: the conquerors, the conquered, those who were neither conquerors or conquered, and a mixture of some or all of the above. The conquerors were those people who initially fled north during the Moors’ invasion of Spain in 711, preferring to live in the Asturian and Vizcayan mountains than to exist under the yoke of Muslim rule. From their mountain retreat, these valient Christians waged war on the Muslims and, in the first wave of reconquest, wrested

¹ *Tratado del origen de los villanos, a quienes llaman cristianos viejos en Castilla*. Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina (Sevilla) Ms. 28-7-33. A number of studies exist on Fr. Agustín Salucio, (see, for example, Hipolito Sancho, “El Maestro Fr. Agustín Salucio, O.P. Contribución a la Historia Literaria Sevillana del siglo XVI”, in *Archivo Hispalense*, XVI (1952) 9-47; and Alvaro Huerga’s introduction to Fray Agustín Salucio, *Avisos para los predicadores del santo evangelio*, Barcelona, 1956) All of these studies skirt the issue of Salucio’s heterodox views and his converso background. It is evident, however, that the maternal side of the prelate’s family were *conversos*. In 1570 the Bishop of Cordoba, Bernardo de Fresneda, wrote to the king informing him of a widespread *alumbrado* (heretical) movement in his diocese that was centered on the *converso* community; and he linked Salucio, “hijo de Genoves y no de buena madre”, to the movement (Instituto Valencia de Don Juan no. 89-393). Salucio was a close friend of Juan de Avila and Fr. Luis de Granada, and shared their views on spiritual reform. He also maintained close ties with the Seville group of humanists which formed in the 1570s and 1580s around Fernando de Herrera and Licenciado Francisco Pacheco. I will examine Salucio career and his connection to the Seville humanists in a later chapter.

Spanish territory from the invaders.

The second group of Spaniards, “the conquered”, were those Moors and Jews who, reluctant to abandon their farms and businesses after the northern Christian forces had reconquered the southern territory (from the twelfth century onward), remained in Christian Spain. These base (*vil*) individuals later converted to Christianity, preferring apostasy to the constant attacks from their Christian neighbors. These were known as “New Christians.”

The third group of Spaniards were those Christians—the vast majority—who remained in Moorish territory after the Muslim invasion. Resisting the call of their co-religionists in the north, these Christians—Mozarabs as they became known—preferred to cohabit with the Moor, whom they found much more acceptable than the tyrannical Visigothic king whom the invaders had deposed. Like the New Christians these were base (*vil*) people, who were referred to by their Arab hosts as *marranos*, a term meaning apostate or deserter (a jibe by Salucio at 16th-century Old-Christian society, who used the derogatory term *marrano*, which they associated with swine, to refer to New Christians); the northern resistance movement referred to these Mozarabs as *mixtos*, in reference to their religion which was mixed with that of the Moors. For their part the collaborationists--Mozarabs--labeled the northern Christians “rebels”, and depicted their king, Don Pelayo, as a charlatan who took up arms against the Moor not for the Christian faith, but for his own political interests.

At the end of the first wave of reconquest, then, Christian Spain was made up of converts from Judaism and Islam (New Christians), Mozarabs who had for

centuries practiced an ersatz or tainted form of Christianity, and a group of Christian (or “Old-Christian”) conquerors from the north. This last group of Spaniards were not only pure Christians, they were also Spain’s true nobility (here Salucio seemingly panders to the Spanish *hidalgos*’ conceit that their ancestors were Vizcaino nobles who moved south with the armies of reconquest); however, Salucio goes on to inform us that the names of these noble northerners were now lost to history; the present-day Old-Christian society, nobles and commoners alike, had no idea who their distant ancestors were. It was highly probable, indeed, that the majority of Old Christians came from one of two groups: base Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity, or base Mozarabs. Regrettably, Salucio writes, in recent times laws had been legislated (*Limpieza de sangre* statutes) banning New Christians from positions in the Church and other institutions on the grounds that they were of an inferior status. These laws were illogical; there was only one difference between Old and New Christian Spain: Old Christian Spain had no idea who its ancestors were.

No doubt a more prudent converso apologist than Fr. Salucio would have written a study indicating how the New Christian could be the equal to his Old-Christian neighbor in moral probity and in the sincerity of his Christian beliefs. However, in Salucio’s account the Old and the New Christians are united not in virtue but in self-interest and moral turpitude. The author also notes—in a seemingly gratuitous aside—that the Moors were able to conquer Spain so easily because they were considered an improvement on Visigothic rule (Old Christians, as Salucio well knew, lauded the “virtuous, Christian” Visigoths, whom they regarded as their

ancestors). Furthermore, he notes, the head of the Christian resistance movement, King Pelayo (an Old Christian icon), may well have been motivated more by political ambition than by Christian fervor.

Allowing for a certain converso combativeness, Salucio's account is an honest attempt to present Spanish history in its less than glorious reality, and a bold challenge to the anti-converso legislation that was undermining his society. Unfortunately, Old-Christian Spain was in no mood to countenance either historical realism or attacks on its *limpieza de sangre* legislation; Salucio's clandestinely published attack on the *limpieza de sangre* statutes, in which the above views were incorporated, was withdrawn from circulation and its author reprimanded by Philip II for his forthright opinions.²

For three centuries after Salucio wrote the above study Spain continued to turn its back on its historical reality, or to stifle reality with national myth. In the popular consciousness, the Spaniard remained a pure-blooded product of the Vizcayan mountains, a member of a warrior race who swept south to rid the peninsula of the infidel in the Middle Ages and reestablish Spain's purity of race and religious purpose. From this warrior caste there sprung magically, like Athena from Zeus's head, the brilliant literary works of the Spanish Golden Age: melancholic and mystical

² *Discurso hecho por fray Agustín de Salucio, Maestro en santa Teología, de la Orden de Santo Domingo, acerca de la justicia y buen gobierno de España en los Estatutos de limpieza de sangre: y si conviene, o no, alguna limitación de ellos.* B.N. sig. R/29.688. In his discurso Salucio proposed a one-hundred year moratorium on the *limpieza* statutes, at which point everyone would be an Old Christian (that is to say their ancestors would have converted more than four generations previously). In this way Spanish society could avoid the "scandals and nightmares" that the *limpieza* laws caused. See Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y América*, Ediciones Istmo, Madrid, 1978, pp. 89-90.

testaments to the Spaniard's intensity of faith and his singularity of religious vision. In this historical interpretation, the Jews and Muslims became a nefarious miasma that was purged from Spain in 1492 leaving no cultural legacy of any importance. As for the converso, after being exposed by the Inquisition for his Judiazing ways, he headed for Spain's historical backwoods, rarely to show his face. Of course, it was easy to write a jaundiced version of history when many of Spain's great sixteenth-century *converso* figures had, so to speak, collaborated in the deception by fabricating for themselves false genealogies. As these bogus documents told later investigators exactly what they wanted to hear (i.e. that their subjects were Old Christians), there was little interest in corroborating them against other sources. In the event that no genealogical study existed, then the tendency was to link the Golden-Age figure cavalierly to a northern *hidalgo* clan that bore the same name.

The first serious attempt to examine the Jewish contribution to Spanish history in any detail came in 1848, with *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos en España*, in which the author, Amador de los Ríos, lamented his country's ignorance of the Sephardic culture. "Facil nos seria poner aquí," wrote Amador, "un largo catálogo de producciones, en donde se han pintado caracteres, ya verdaderos ya falsos, de aquella raza: en donde se le han atribuido hechos mas ó menos ciertos, mas ó menos odiosos. Pero con dificultad podrá entre nosotros hallarse una obra, en que se haya tratado de estudiar a los descendientes del rey profeta [King David], durante su larga permanencia en España, teniendo en cuenta sus leyes, sus costumbres y las

relaciones que guardaban con el pueblo cristiano.”³ In contrast to the many prejudicial myths circulating in Spanish society on its Sephardic community, Amador’s study presented a picture of an enormously important minority group who in the late Middle Ages became the most ardent cultivators of science and literature in the peninsula.

Thirty years after publishing *Estudios históricos*, Amador returned to the same theme in his three-volume *Historia social, política y religiosa de los judíos de España y Portugal* (1875-1876). This time he wrote, “Ni habría podido por cierto hasta la presente edad intentarse siquiera obra de tal naturaleza, sin que cayese sobre su autor la reprobación universal, anatematizado y perseguido hasta el exterminio del nombre judío en el suelo ibérico por largos siglos.” Nevertheless, it is curious, given his professed belief in his country’s new-found liberality towards its Jewish past, that Amador has almost nothing to say on converso involvement in modern (post-1492) Spanish society. True, he makes a passing attack on the Inquisition for unjustly accusing *converso* men of science and learning of Judaizing; but, save for one occasion, he does not refer to any of these intellectuals by name, and even then he is sufficiently ambiguous to leave the reader wondering whether he is referring to New-Christian or Old-Christian victims of Inquisition intolerance. Amador writes:

El siglo denominado *de Oro* por los partidarios del Renacimiento presenta, no obstante, manchadas a cada paso las páginas de su clásica historia con la difamación del *Sambenito*, pues que son muchos los esclarecidos cultivadores de ciencias, de letras y de artes a quienes alcanzaron las terribles sospechas y insaciables iras del Santo Oficio. Ni se respetaron tampoco las más acendradas virtudes ni los más altos merecimientos; y al lado de un Hernando de Talavera y de un Bartolomé Carranza, clarísimas lumbreras de la Iglesia y de la ciencia;

³ Amador de los Rios, *Estudios sobre los judios de España*, Madrid, 1848, x.

al lado de un Arias Montano y un Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, glorias inpercederas de la filología clásica y de la filología clásica y de la filología oriental; al lado de un Pablo de Céspedes y de un fray Luis de León, envidiados ornamentos de la ciencia arqueológica, del divino arte de la pintura y de la poesía, colocó la inexorable mano de los inquisidores con no escatimada prodigalidad los nombres de otros mil esclarecidos ingenios sobre cuyas frentes intentaba poner el estigma del judaísmo.⁴

The implication here is that Hernando de Talavera, Bartolomé Carranza, Arias Montano, El Brocense, Pablo de Céspedes, Luis de Leon, and “otros mil esclarecidos ingenios” unjustly accused of Judaizing were conversos; however, the author avoids stating this directly. It would seem, despite his protests, that Amador was not at all sure his readers were ready to accept *conversos* into the Golden-Age literary pantheon.⁵

Amador de los Rios published his *magnum opus* on Sephardic Spain in the early years of Spain’s restoration regime, at a time when Spanish intellectuals were beginning to reflect upon the origins of their country’s decline from a world power to an underdeveloped and politically unstable state overshadowed by its Western European neighbors. In 1876, the year in which the last volume of Amador’s *Historia Social* appeared in print, Gumersindo de Azcárate published an article on Spain’s political situation in which he singled out intolerance as the villain behind his country’s political and economic stasis. This article soon gave rise to a heated debate

⁴ José Amador de los Rios, *Historia Social, Política y Religiosa de los Judíos de España y Portugal*, Aguilar, Madrid, 1960, p. 842.

⁵ As the paragraph comes directly after a section in which Amador criticizes the Inquisition for its attacks on *converso* intellectuals, I am led to believe that he is intimating that Arias Montano etc were *converso* victims of Inquisition aggression.

among a number of conservative and liberal scholars on Spain's intellectual insularity. For the liberal group, Spain's decline in fortune was the direct result of an obscurantist Church and its reactionary watchdog the Inquisition. For the group of Catholic apologists, led by Marcelino Menendez Pelayo, the Inquisition was blame-free; the country had declined not through closed-mindedness, but through embracing, on certain occasions in its history, foreign pagan views. There was some disagreement among the Catholic apologists as to when the rot had set in. Some believed that it had arrived with the Renaissance, while others, including Menendez Pelayo, laid the blame at the Enlightenment's door. Both Catholic and Liberal apologists agreed on one thing, however: Spain needed to recover its unique spiritual identity before it could once again triumph in the world.⁶

Spanish spiritual regeneration increasingly preoccupied Spain's late nineteenth-century intellectuals. For Miguel Unamuno, writing at the turn of the century, his country's spiritual essence was a subterranean stream moving stealthily through history, surfacing occasionally to leave its mark on an age.⁷ This intrahistoric spiritual force, according to Unamuno, had emerged in the Golden Age, achieving greatest visibility in Cervantes knight, in the Spanish mystics, Juan de la Cruz, Teresa de Jesus, and Juan de Avila, and in the pictorial reveries of El Greco.⁸ Ironically,

⁶ For an examination of the debate see Antonio Santoveña Setién, "Una alternativa cultural católica para la España de la Restauración." *IH* 12 (1992), 237-253.

⁷ Unamuno's views on Spain's intrahistoric spiritual force, which he termed "la tradición eternal" were put forward in his work *En torno al casticismo* (1895). The theory is mostly an amalgam of Hegel's *svolkgeist* and William James' "stream of consciousness". See Guyana Jurkevich, *The Elusive Self: Archetypal Approaches to the Novel of Miguel de Unamuno*. University of Missouri Press, 1991.

⁸ "[El Greco] came to Spain," Unamuno wrote in 1914, "to give us, better than anyone else, the pictorial

however, four of Unamuno's emblems of Spanish essentialism were conversos, and the fifth was a Greek ex-patriate whose mystical vision mostly conformed to that of his converso clerical patrons.⁹ Those characteristics that Unamuno had attributed to atavistic Iberian spiritual traits were in fact much more the result of New-Christian disquiet.

Spain's spiritual regenerationists had resorted to facile pseudo-scientific and quasi-philosophical notions to explain Spain's decline; this folly was clearly discerned by Amerigo Castro in *La Realidad de España* (1965). According to Castro the regenerationists—he singled out Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset—had taken refuge in fables in which a Celtoíbero race, pure in blood and spirit, had traversed the ages affected only by certain Roman and Visigothic cultural influences. In these fairy tales Spain's Muslim and Jewish cultures had no place.¹⁰ The reality, according to Castro, was quite different; in his own view the cultural entity known as Spain was formed in the Middle Ages, and was the product of the confrontation between three groups:

and graphic expression of the Castillian soul; and he revealed, with his brushes, our spiritual naturalism. I say spiritual nationalism and not idealist realism, because the Castillian soul of Don Quijote and the mystics is not, in effect, idealist, but spiritualist...Idealism is of this world, it is pagan, platonic, of the Renaissance. Our Castillian spiritualism is mystical, of another world, medieval." Quoted from José Alvarez Lopera, *De Cean a Cossio: La Fortuna Critica del Greco en El Siglo XIX*. Madrid, 1987, p.98.

⁹ Don Quijote's epithet "de la Mancha" is almost certainly a play on words, presenting the discerning sixteenth-century reader with both the knight's geographical and genetic provenance. El Greco's close association with Toledo's converso community and his heterodox religious views are examined by David Davies in his article "The Ascent of the Mind to God: El Greco's Religious Imagery and Spiritual Reform in Spain" in José Alvarez Lopera ed., *El Greco: Identity and Transformation. Crete. Italy. Spain*. Foundation of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Madrid, 1999. pp. 187-215.

¹⁰ "[Ortega y Gasset] afirmaba que los árabes no habían sido "ingrediente" en la historia de los españoles; y ni de soslayo tuvo presentes a los hispanohebreos. Un tamaño error en persona tan esclarecida no ha de ser censurado, sino entendido. Los mejores españoles, aquellos sin los cuales muchos no pensaríamos como hoy lo hacemos, buscaban refugio en remotos y brumosos "españolismos", o en las capas profundas y silenciosas de lo humano español, en la "intrahistoria" de Unamuno, en las latencias de la vida que corre y subsiste--según él decía--, sin "expresarse en libros y papeles y monumentos". *La Realidad Historica de España*. 9th ed. Editorial Porrúa, México, 1987, vi.

Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Furthermore, during the Medieval period the peninsula's intellectual life was confined mostly to Muslim and Jewish communities; when intellectual pursuits entered Christian courts, they did so through Jewish and converso advisors. As for Spain's Golden-Age of letters, that was, by and large, the product of converso talent. Old-Christian society had reacted to this *converso* threat by introducing the *limpieza de sangre* laws, creating a society so sensitive to Jewish taint that its members distanced themselves from everything that might suggest a Jewish background, and this included intellectual pursuits. It was this neurosis, born of fear and hatred, that was behind Spain's decline and not the loss of some intra-historic spiritual force.

Castro had first presented his views on Spain's three-caste culture in *España en su Historia*, published in 1948. On that occasion he was much less abrasive towards Spain's old-guard intellectuals than he later became; not that this made his opinions any more palatable to many of his colleagues. One of Castro's earliest and most vitriolic critics was the medievalist Claudio Sanchez Albornoz. A historian, like his mentor Menendez Pelayo, whose historical vision was informed by his fervent Catholicism, Albornoz regarded Castro as a Spanish apostate, willfully, perversely intent on undermining Spain's true culture, and he set out to expose the treachery. The Jews, he opined, had no visible influence on Spanish ("Hispano") culture. The Spanish people had graciously allowed this minority group into their country, but instead of showing their appreciation, they had continually plotted to overthrow their hosts. They had become money lenders, tax farmers and merchants to finance their revolution,

which would be signaled, they believed, by the arrival of their messiah. Unable to tolerate the Jewish subterfuge any longer, the Spanish had expelled them from the country in 1492. As far as Albornoz was concerned there was a Jewish mentality and a Christian mentality, and these remained separate throughout Spain's history.¹¹ As a corrective to Castro's erroneous vision of Spanish cultural development, he offered his own interpretation--a theory which harkened back to Unamuno's intra-historic Spanish spirit. In Albornoz's view the Spanish character, like all national characters, had been determined in prehistoric times by its geographical circumstances. This character, or elements of it, surfaced throughout Spanish history in its heroes--those men who through their ideas or actions changed the country's historical path. Spanish history (that is to say the history of the "Hispanos" opposed to the Moors and Jews) was formed by its heroes, the daring of the race, and its destiny, all determined by the supreme will of God.¹²

At the same time that Sanchez-Albornoz was attacking Castro's historical analysis, a number of works began to appear, most notably by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Julio Caro Baroja, which added weight to Castro's views on the importance

¹¹ Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórica*, Buenos Aires, 1956, 2 vols. Bension Netanyahu examines Sánchez Albornoz's anti-semitic statements in "Una Visión Española de la Historia Judía en España: Sanchez Albornoz", *Judíos. Sefarditas. Conversos*, pp 89-121

¹² See Claudio Sanchez Albornoz, *España, un enigma histórico*, chapter three; and *Espanoles ante la historia*. Editorial Losada, Buenos Aires, 1958, 231-254. See also José Luis Martín, "Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz en la historiografía sobre la edad media hispana", *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos*, XLII, 107, 1995, 171-195. For an examination of Sanchez Albornoz's anti-semitism, see Bension Netanyahu, "Una visión española de la historia judía en España: Sánchez Albornoz" in Ángel Alcalá ed. *Judíos. Sefarditas. Conversos: La expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias*, Ambito, Madrid, 1995, 89-121.

of the converso to sixteenth-century Spanish society.¹³ These studies indicated that conversos were prominent in artisanal occupations--especially textile and leather production, and silver smithing; they were conspicuous as merchants, doctors, printers, notaries and lawyers; they were university professors, civil and clerical bureaucrats, and advisors to royal and noble courts. Indeed, conversos predominated in all those positions that called for intellectual formation—the administrative office for trade with the Indies, the *Casa de Contratacion*, was, for example, controlled by men from converso backgrounds. Conversos may have been a social minority, but they dominated professional and economic life of Spain's most important urban centers, as studies on a number of early-modern Spanish cities began to attest. Gomez Menor's study of sixteenth-century Toledo indicated a large population of conversos who controlled the city's commerce.¹⁴ Many of these New Christians had used their

¹³ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos de la edad moderna*, Madrid, 1955; and Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, 3 vols, Madrid, 1961.

¹⁴ José Carlos Gomez-Menor Fuentes, "La sociedad conversa toledana en la primera mitad del siglo XVI" in *Simposio Toledano Judaico* (Toledo 20-22 Abril, 1972), Toledo, 1972. Gomez-Menor believes it was the *converso* community's size that made Toledo's Old-Christian society fearful of it, and that this fear led to the bloody uprising against the *conversos* in 1457. In a more recent study Linda Martz cites a contemporary document which reveals that 2,300 of Toledo's conversos were reconciled by the Inquisition in 1486. As these figures were taken from only 17 of the city's 21 parishes, Martz estimates that the true number of reconciled conversos was around 3,000, or 17% to 20% of the city's population (estimated to be between 15,000 and 18,000 in the late fifteenth century) It is obvious therefore that the total number of conversos--both reconciled and unreconciled--represented more than 20% of the population. (Linda Martz, "Converso Families in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Toledo: The Significance of Lineage," *Sefarad* XLVIII 1, 1988). A census for Talavera de la Reina taken between 1477 and 1487 reveals that Jews made up 20% of the town's population. (See Maria Jesus Suarez, *La Villa de Talavera y Su Tierra en la Edad Media (1369-1504)*, University of Oviedo, 1982, p. 118). It is thus very likely, given the fact that by the late fifteenth-century urban conversos were more numerous than Jews, that half the population of Talavera was Sephardic. This may also have been the case in those other important medieval Jewish centers Segovia, Toledo, Trujillo, Ocaña, Soría, Avila, Zamora and Murcia. Seville's Jewish community was decimated in the anti-Jewish riots of 1391, and never recovered its former importance. However, the city's converso community was very visible up until the arrival of the Inquisition in 1481, when many fled the city. This community recovered rapidly in the early fifteenth century, dominating commerce and the city guilds. (Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La*

wealth to enter into marriage alliances with members of the lower nobility, forming what Gomez-Menor terms a “mestizo” urban elite with a powerful presence in Toledo’s cathedral chapter and city council. Ruth Pike’s studies of sixteenth-century Seville also emphasized the importance of the city’s conversos as artisans, merchants and professionals. Like their Toledo counterparts, Seville’s wealthy conversos also used their money to gain access to the nobility, either through marriage alliances or through the purchase of those positions on the city council which conveyed an *hidalgo* status. Seville’s conversos also formed important endogamous alliances, strengthening their position in the commercial and political life of the city.¹⁵

Not only did the above studies indicate the importance of conversos among early-modern Spain’s middle sort, they also divulged the converso backgrounds of many influential Golden-Age figures. Meanwhile other studies appeared by Antonio Márquez Villanueva and Stephen Gilman which, in examining the converso backgrounds of important early-modern literary figures, also presented a picture of a literary and intellectual environment dominated by New-Christians.¹⁶ The conversos

Clase Social de los Conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna, Universidad de Granada, 1991, 14).

¹⁵ See Ruth Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, Ithaca, New York, 1972. A number of important studies have appeared subsequent to the works by Gomez Menor and Ruth Pike examining the *converso* presence in other Spanish cities. See, for example, Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial: The Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (Jerusalem, 1981); Stephen Haliczer, *Inquisition and Society in the Kingdom of Valencia 1479-1834* (Berkeley, 1990); Máximo Diago Hernando, “Los judeoconversos en Soria despues de 1492”, *Sefarad* LI 2 (1991), 259-97; Pilar Huerga Criado, *En la raya de Portugal: Solidaridad y tensiones en la comunidad judeoconverso* (Salamanca, 1993); Pedro Luis Lorenzo Cadarso, “Esplendor y Decadencia de las Oligarquias Conversas de Cuenca y Guadalajara (Siglos XV y XVI)”, *Hispania*, LIV/1, no. 186 (1994) 53-94.

¹⁶ Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Alvarez Gato*, Madrid, 1960. Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, Princeton, 1972. See also the more recent biographies, Y.H. Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso, a Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, London, 1971; and Y. Kaplan, *From Christianity to Judaism: Isaac*

had, at last, entered Spanish Golden-Age history as important protagonists; however, not everyone chose to recognize the extent of their presence. As Stephen Gilman stated in his biography of Fernando Rojas (quoted above), the normal response was to ignore the evidence or to downplay it. Writing in 1967, after several of the above works had been published, Eugenio Asencio, a Sanchez Albornoz disciple, was unable to deny that a number of Golden-Age figures were from converso backgrounds; however, these figures, he asserted, were few; moreover, it was they who had been influenced by Spanish Old-Christian culture, and not vice versa.¹⁷ Santa Teresa's mysticism, Luis Vive's pacifism and Luis de Leon's stoicism were the products not of their converso condition but of the intellectual milieu (Old-Christian according to Asencio). Fray Luis, for example, may have been technically speaking a converso, but it was not unusual for the people in the world in which he moved--Salamanca University and the Augustinian religious order--to have a drop of Jewish blood in their veins; Fray Luis's own drop of Jewish blood did not affect his religious writings, which, in fact, revealed a man every bit as orthodox as that excellent Old Christian Arias Montano.¹⁸

Asencio's comparison of Luis Leon with Arias Montano is an apt one, but not for Old-Christian orthodoxy. For although Arias Montano's family roots remain somewhat obscure, everything about the Spanish humanist points to a converso

Orobio de Castro, Oxford, 1989.

¹⁷ Eugenio Asencio, "La peculiaridad literaria de los conversos", *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, no.4, 1967, 327-351.

¹⁸ "Su biblismo, si le hace blanco de malsines, también le vincula a excelsos cristianos viejos, como Arias Montano." *Ibid*, 331.

background: his birthplace, Fregenal de la Sierra—renowned for its large converso community;¹⁹ his converso adoptive parents, Antonio de Alcocer and Isabel Vélez; his close friendship with the converso merchant Diego Núñez Pérez, whom he referred to as his cousin; his equally close relationship with the Antwerp converso merchant banker Luis Pérez; his choice of academic studies—Hebrew—in a period in which Old-Christian Spain was careful to avoid any intimation of Jewish roots; his interest in Old-Testament exegesis and his indifference to the works of the Church Fathers—most unusual for a Catholic theologian. These characteristics may not have impressed Eugenio Asensio, they did, however, impress Montano’s famous contemporaries Lope de Vega and Francisco Quevedo, both of whom made allusions to Montano’s Jewish roots. Arias Montano and his friend Fray Luis de Leon certainly shared certain characteristics, but Old-Christian orthodoxy was not among them. Both men were, to use their old-Christian antagonist Leon de Castro’s term, “*hebreazantes*”, that is to say scholars interested in emphasizing the importance of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish culture to Christianity. This interest led to Leon’s imprisonment from 1570 to 1575. Arias Montano was luckier; certain friends in high places were able to protect him on a number of occasions from the Inquisition’s grasp.

In 1972, a study appeared on Arias Montano by the Dutch historian Ben Rekers, in which the author expressed the view that Montano had become involved

¹⁹ “The people of the town,” writes Henry Lea, “were mostly descendants of conversos, resorting to perjury and every other means to conceal their origin.” Lea notes that in this small town between 1491 and 1495 162 people were executed for Judaizing and a further 409 were given lighter sentences. By the end of the fifteenth century 599 *sambenitos* (the cloak worn by *conversos* convicted of Judaizing) hung in the town’s churches. Seventy years later only a handful of these symbols of disgrace remained. In 1576 the Seville Inquisitor ordered that new *sambenitos* be made to replace all those that had gone missing. H. C. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition in Spain*, New York, 1906, vol. III, 167-168.

with the Flemish sect “The Family of Love” while living in Antwerp between 1568 and 1573. What to my mind is interesting about this work is not the fact that it demonstrates Montano’s religious non-conformity—which is, in any case, patent—but that Rekers so readily dismissed the possibility that this had anything to do with a converso background. Rekers writes,

Whether Montano actually was of Jewish origin seems difficult to establish with certainty. Notwithstanding the thorough mixture of the two races in Spain during the Middle Ages, every Catholic Spaniard in the sixteenth century called himself an “old-Christian”. According to Cardinal Mendoza’s famous letter during the pogroms, however, none even of the *Grandeos* could rightly pride himself on having “pure blood”. Montano’s later interest in the Talmud testifies to a liking for modern scholarship rather than an affinity with Jewish forefathers. During his lifetime the purity of his blood was otherwise never called in question.²⁰

But Rekers’ statement rings disingenuous; for the belief that Arias Montano was a *converso* is not based on the rumor of some distant (and thus insignificant) miscegenation, as he implies, but on a life in which the humanist’s *converso* character was often manifest. Writing the afterword to the Spanish edition of Rekers’ study, Ángel Alcalá was even less inclined than Rekers to countenance the humanist’s converso background. The fact that Arias Montano was shown to be involved with “The Family of Love” was, Alcalá opines, much more important to understanding the

²⁰ B. Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano*, The Warburg Institute, Leiden, 1972, p. 3. Rekers reference to a Cardinal Mendoza letter written during a Jewish pogrom is confusing. Perhaps the author is conflating two separate documents: a letter written to the Cardinal in 1481 by his friend the converso letrado Hernando Pulgar criticising the Inquisition for its attacks on conversos, and Fernán Díaz de Toledo’s *Instrucción del relator*, written in 1450, in reply to the 1449 Sentencia-Estatuto, prohibiting conversos from entering public office in Toledo on the grounds that they stemmed from an inferior cast. In his *Instrucción*, Díaz, like Pulgar another converso letrado, notes that the majority of the Spanish nobility also carry Jewish blood.

humanist than those claims, based on “criterios banales”, that he was a converso: “la especial ideología de Montano,” writes Alcalá, “no se debe a su talento de converso, sino a su vinculación a la secta familista de Plantino.” The problem with this analysis, of course, is that Montano’s “especial ideología” did not begin in 1572, when, according to Alcalá, the forty-six year-old humanist came into contact with the Flemish sect, but was evident much earlier in his career, as is revealed in Luis de Leon’s trial proceedings, in which Montano’s name appears on a number of occasions, linked to suspect religious works. Montano’s heterodoxy, I would argue, was the result of formative years spent in *converso* humanist environments—first in Seville and later at the university of Alcalá de Henares—and not of an encounter in middle age with an Antwerp religious sect. Indeed, it is evident that Montano was drawn to “The Family of Love” precisely because it recommended, for the benefit of social harmony, that its adherents maintain the pretense of religious orthodoxy in public while observing their true spiritual beliefs in private; in other words the sect countenanced what the Spanish humanist was already practicing.

There remains a reluctance among Golden-Age scholars to explore the New Christian’s influence on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century letters. As Gómez-Menor wrote as recently as 1994, “Me consta que normalmente se ocultaba la ascendencia conversa a la hora de redactar la biografía de una personalidad destacada: así, en los casos de Juan Luis Vives, Juan de Avila, Teresa de Jesus (de Ahumada), fray Luis de León, y tantos otros.”²¹ But not only do scholars continue to circumvent the

²¹ José-Carlos Gómez-Menor, “Linaje Judío de Escritores Religios y Místicos Españoles del Siglo XVI” in Ángel Alcalá ed. *Judios. Sefarditas, Conversos*, Ambito Ediciones, 1995, p.596.

backgrounds of those writers whose Jewish roots are incontrovertible; they also often unobtrusively protest the Old-Christian character of figures whose social identities are to say the least ambiguous. Anyone who has read those critical essays that form the introductions to the Castalia and Catedra editions of Golden-Age works will have encountered a number of these brittle orthodox protests. In the introduction to Fray Luis de Granada's *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, José María de Balcells writes, "En 1504, el mismo año de la muerte de Isabel la Católica en Medina del Campo, nacía Luis de Sarriá en Granada, en el seno de una familia modestísima de cristianos viejos, o de sangre pura." And several lines later, he returns to Fray Luis's *limpieza*, pointing out that the monk graduated from the Dominican college of San Gregorio in 1529 "no sin haber sido atestiguada, con el máximo rigor, su limpieza de sangre". Why is Balcells so intent on underlining his subject's Old-Christian roots? Undoubtedly because Fray Luis's "limpieza" is by no means certain; indeed, the only evidence we have that Fray Luis was Old-Christian comes from a seventeenth-century hagiography, in which the author states formulaically, "Los padres de Fray Luis no fueron ricos o hazendados, ni de esclarecido linaje, sino pobres y humildes aunque Christianos viejos, limpios y libres de toda raza de Judios como Moros, y sin mezcla de mala sangre." Fray Luis himself wrote almost nothing about his family background; we do know, however, that the family surname was taken from a Spanish town (Sarria, in Galicia), which itself suggestive of converso roots.²² As for the fact that Fray Luis

²² Conversos often took their surnames from the town in which they converted to Christianity. For example, an examination of the census taken in 1510 of *conversos* in Seville, reveals numerous surnames taken from towns of substantial medieval Jewish communities: Sevilla, Jerez, Toledo, Cordoba, Carmona, Lereña, Marchena, Gibraleón, Zafra, Tarifa, Sanlúcar, Palencia, Palma, Aguilar,

passed the *limpieza de sangre* tests for the Dominican college, this, as Balcells must surely know, is no proof of Old-Christian origins; sixteenth-century *limpieza de sangre* statutes were usually sidestepped without too many difficulties by conversos, who predominated in the higher administrative offices of the Church. One of the most celebrated Dominicans of the early sixteenth century was the converso Francisco de Vitoria (his name taken from the northern Spanish town), who between 1529 and 1546 occupied the prime chair in theology at Salamanca University.

Another Golden-Age figure who continues to be portrayed as Old-Christian with little justification is the sixteenth-century Seville humanist Pedro de Mexía. In the introduction to the Catedra edition of Mexía's *Silva de varia leccion*, Antonio Castro writes:

El humanista sevillano Pedro Mexía provenía, según todas las referencias de sus contemporáneas, de un antiguo linaje oriundo de Galicia, (on Galicia see Marquez villanueva, Concejiles) que echó raíces y se expandió por toda Andalucía, especialmente por las zonas de Córdoba y Sevilla, desde los mismos tiempos de la reconquista de estas dos importantes capitales, a mediados del siglo XIII, por el rey castellano Fernando III el Santo.

Entre los antepasados remotos de Pedro Mexía encontramos caballeros y clérigos principales que participaron con Fernando III en las conquistas de Córdoba y Sevilla (como don Juan de Arias Mexía y don Juan Arias, arzobispo de Santiago), importantes cargos de las ordenes militares (como don Gonzalo Mexía, maestre de Santiago, que intervino activamente en las luchas civiles entre Pedro I y Enrique II de Castilla) y nobles de título (como don Gonzalo Mexía, señor de La Guardia y marqués de Santofamia).²³

Burgos, Ecija... See Claudio Guillén, "Un padron de conversos sevillanos (1510)", *Bulletin Hispanique*. In his *Libro de Oración* (III parte, Tratado Segundo, II, I) having recommended a frugal diet, Granada makes the comment that in his experience New Christians live longer than Old Christians because they eat less. It seems to me that Granada is not only making a subtle allusion here to Old Christian greed, he is also linking himself to a more spiritually correct converso population. In other words the statement is a typical piece of converso *double entendre*.

²³ Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección*, vol. I, ed. Antonio Castro, Catedra, Madrid, 1989, p. 9.

Antonio Castro's assertion that Mexía came from a northern (and by implication Old-Christian) hidalgo family is, in fact, based on the genealogical studies by Mexía's Seville contemporary Gonzalo Argote de Molino, who used his *Nobleza de Andalucía* to fabricate a noble lineage for the paternal and maternal (Mexía) branches of his own family.²⁴ Pedro Mexía belonged to no noble clan. He was, like Argote, the son of a successful *letrado*, and like Argote he used his family wealth to buy himself noble status (in Mexía's case this was conveyed through his position as city councillor). In Mexía's *Silva de Varia Lección* the reader is made fully aware of the author's lack of noble lineage by his insistence that nobility is achieved through merit. In the *Silva* IV, 3 of the work, Mexía takes Cicero (a man he clearly identifies with) as an example of true nobility:

[E]n la *Oración por la ley agraria* [Mexía writes] confiesa Cicerón, de sí propio, que no tenía ymages [coats of arms], como hombre que era de nuevo linage; aunque, por la exelencia de su persona (assí por ser en las letras eminentíssimo, como por su prudencia maravillosa y eloquencia estremada), tuvo principal lugar en su tiempo en Roma y meresció estas y otras preminencias de los nobles y patricios. Assí que, en la postrera *Oración contra Berres*, dize él cómo, por sus trabajos y servicios, quando avía sido edil, le avían sido otorgadas ymágenes [coat of arms] y otras cosas que allí cuenta.²⁵

Whether or not a Galician nobleman named Mexía took part in the first Reconquest drive is a moot point; it is, however, a fact that the name Mexía was prominent among sixteenth-century Seville's converso-dominated merchant and

²⁴ Conversos very often fabricated false genealogies claiming descendants in Vizcaya or Galicia, which Old-Christian Spain chose to believe were zones in which Jews had not infiltrated. See my note 4.

²⁵ Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección* II, Catedra, Madrid, 1990, 329. See my comments on merit versus blood in my examination of Spain's fifteenth-century converso humanists, in chapter 2.

professional groups, as an examination of that city's notarial records attests; indeed, a Pedro Mexía figures among a group of converso tax collectors who fled Seville in 1481, on the arrival of the Inquisition, thus creating a grave financial crisis in the city.²⁶ Mexía's intellectual formation, both humanist and scientific (he was employed as a cosmographer in the *Casa de Contratacion*) also points to a converso background, as does his interest in an Erasmian clerical reform program. Furthermore in his works Mexía not only demonstrates a much greater interest in the Old Testament than the New Testament, he also presents the Jewish culture as the intellectual equal of the Greek and Roman cultures—a prominent concern, as I have already stated, among converso humanists.²⁷

The Spanish academy's predilection for a converso-free Golden-Age pantheon has, at least until quite recently, led it into an almost naïve acceptance of all sources establishing the Old-Christian roots of its great artistic and literary figures. Curiously, however, this naivety is transformed into rigid skepticism when sources indicate the Jewish provenance of an important figure. In her articles examining the converso backgrounds of the playwright Diego Jiménez de Enciso and the poet Juan de

²⁶ Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana*, Vol. 1, Universidad de Sevilla, 134. Diego Velázquez's maternal grandmother was also a Mexía.

²⁷ For example, in *Silva* III, 3, Mexía writes, "Los primeros libros y librerías que hubo en el mundo, es de creer que fueron en el pueblo de los judios; que, assí como ellos tuvieron primero letras y el uso dellas, también ternían cuydado de guardar lo que escivían." For humanists, the word, and especially the written word, was central to the civilization process. In associating the first written words with the Jews Mexía was, I believe, giving them a central place in his humanist credo. In both his *Silva de varia leccion* and in his *Coloquios*, Mexía demonstrates a much greater interest in the Old Testament than the New Testament. Of the *Coloquios*, Antonio Castro notes "un fuerte desequilibrio en las menciones al Antiguo y al Nuevo Testamento, con numerosos referencias al primero y escasísimas al segundo", without commenting on why this was so. See Castro's introduction to the *Silva de varia leccion*, Catedra, Madrid, 1989.

Jáuregui, both from Seville, Ruth Pike calls our attention to this phenomenon. Pike notes that in his 1914 study of Enciso, the eminent Spanish scholar Emilio Cotarelo y Mori presented the Enciso family as Old-Christian and noble “despite evidence to the contrary in the documents that he [Cotarelo] utilized, namely, the inquiries conducted in 1624 and 1626 into the qualifications of two of the dramatist’s nephews for entrance into the Order of Santiago. Cotarelo dismissed the seventeenth-century charges against the writer’s family as vicious attempts at slander by jealous enemies.” Pike further notes that “Cotarelo’s description of the noble and Old-Christian ancestry of the Encisos has been generally accepted, even though it was based on a purely subjective interpretation of the facts.” Pike’s own investigation into the playwright’s background reveal that members of his family appeared in early sixteenth-century *composiciones*, or contracts drawn up between the Crown and groups of conversos, under the terms of which the king returned to those condemned by the Inquisition or their heirs all confiscated property in return for a large contribution to the royal treasury.²⁸

In Pike’s article on the converso lineage of Juan de Jáuregui (a man of some importance to the present study²⁹), Pike notes that Jáuregui’s biographer, José Jordan de Urries y Azara, had concluded “despite substantial information to the contrary, that the poet’s family, on all sides, was of Old-Christian and Hidalgo origin.” In fact, as Pike pointed out, Jáuregui’s mother, Isabel Hurtado de Sal was a member of a wealthy

²⁸ Ruth Pike, “The converso Origins of the Sevillian Dramatist Diego Jiménez de Enciso,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, vol. LXVII, no. 2, April 1990, pp 129-35.

²⁹ See my discussion of Diego Velázquez’s “Los Borrachos” in chapter 5.

and influential Sevillian converso clan.³⁰

Unfortunately, the editor of the 1993 Catedra edition of Juan de Jáuregui's collected poems, Juan Matas Caballero, appears not to have been aware of Pike's article; thus his introduction to the compilation perpetuates the Jordan de Urries bias for an Old-Christian Jáuregui. Matas writes:

Su [Jáuregui's] distinguido origen viene avalado por la condición de sus padres, el riojano don Miguel Martínez de Jáuregui—que fue Veinticuatro de la capital hispalense desde 1586, y cuya hidalguía se remonta a mediados del siglo XV en la jurisdicción de Vergara donde se hallaba la casa solariega de los Lizarralde y Jáuregui—y la sevillana doña Isabel de Sal—de elevado linaje sevillano, entre cuyos ascendientes destaca Pedro Gonzalez de la Sal, quien en 1472 fue “Jurado” de Sevilla, y entre sus parientes más cercanos sobresale su primo hermano, el famoso doctor y poeta Juan de Salinas y Castro. Sin embargo, ni su familia paterna se vio exenta de problemas de hidalguía, ni la rama materna libre de acusaciones de limpieza de sangre; graves cuestiones que, a la postre, se resolvieron a favor de ambas familias.³¹

In fact Jáuregui underwent a long, expensive and enormously painful *limpieza de sangre* investigation, which began in 1616, when the poet applied for entry into the noble order of Calatrava, and ended twenty-three years later with the coveted title. In the intervening period Jáuregui was subjected to four separate inquiries, each one of which brought forth new denunciations, and, in 1628, thirteen years into the investigation process, a humiliating rejection by the Council of the military orders. Nine years later a new committee reversed the earlier decision for reasons that are not altogether clear, although it appears that Jáuregui, like his friend Diego Velázquez

³⁰ Ruth Pike, “Converso Lineage and the Tribulations of the Sevillian Poet Juan de Jáuregui,” *Romance Quarterly* XXXVIII (1991), pp 423-29. The paternal side of Jáuregui's family came from Nájera, Logroño, where they were involved in the iron trade.

³¹ Juan de Jáuregui, *Poesía*, Catedra, Madrid, 1993, pp. 11-12.

received his noble insignia only through the intervention of a benevolent Philip IV.³²

³² Ruth Pike, "Converso Lineage..." op. cit. p. 427.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM TOLEDO TO ALCALA: CONVERSO HUMANISM AND REFORM IN THE FIFTEENTH AND EARLY-SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

The majority of Spain's New Christians converted to Christianity under duress, first in the period directly after the 1391 Jewish pogrom, and later in the period directly prior to the Jewish expulsion of 1492. It has been estimated that in the 1391 riots against the Jews around a third of Spain's Sephardic population was murdered, a third managed to flee its assailants, and a third converted to Christianity.¹ In this atmosphere few conversos sincerely embraced the Catholic Church or Old-Christian society; indeed, most congregated in converso neighborhoods, where the Sephardic culture continued to exert a strong influence on their lives. For its part, Old-Christian Spain did nothing to entice conversos to the fold; Old-Christians remained antagonistic towards the new converts, whom they regarded (with some justification) as lukewarm Catholics; and this antagonism grew throughout the fifteenth century as a converso middle sort, free from the social and commercial restrictions applied to the Jews, came to dominate business and professional life on the peninsula.

Those Jews who converted to Christianity in the wake of the 1391 pogrom found themselves in an advantageous position vis-a-vis both the Jewish and

¹ See Heim Beinart, "The Converso Community in Fifteenth-Century Spain," in R.D. Barnett ed. *The Sephardic Heritage*, London, 1971, p. 425.

Old-Christian communities. As New Christians they were no longer subject to the restrictions that had hampered Jewish merchants and professionals. As literate men (all Jewish males were required to gain a basic level of literacy in order to read the Torah), often with a sound knowledge of trade and finance, and with important contacts in Jewish financial and mercantile circles, they were able to compete at an advantage with an Old-Christian urban community. A number of these new converts accumulated large fortunes, which they used to advance their social positions within their cities. One method of social advancement was through the purchase of administrative offices within the church and local government; another method was to form marriage alliances with that other *arriviste* group, Castile's new nobility—families like the Ayala, Mendoza and Manrique, who through wise political maneuvering had risen rapidly to the top of Spain's fifteenth-century social hierarchy.²

The conversos' increasing commercial and social prominence in Castile's urban centers inevitably led to clashes with the Old-Christian community. One of the most dramatic confrontations occurred in Toledo in 1449, where a converso agent of the crown, Rodrigo Cota, was made responsible for collecting an extraordinary tax levied to aid Juan II prosecute his war against a French incursion into Navarre. Predisposed to see this tax as an example of converso avarice and malice, the Old-Christian community rose up against its New-Christian neighbors, looting and burning their neighborhoods. Ordered to put a stop to the violence, the *alcalde mayor*, Pedro

² All three of these families prospered as a result of their support of the successful pretender to the throne Enrique de Trastamara. See Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance*, New Brunswick, N.J., 1979, chapter two.

Sarmiento, merely used his power to inflame anti-converso feeling even further, and to introduce a statute, the *sentencia-estatuto*, prohibiting conversos from occupying public office--that is to say from comporting themselves as nobles.³

The Toledo statute was soon rescinded and its author exiled from the city. However, it was clear to a number of influential conversos at court that the *sentencia-estatuto* needed to be condemned in writing before it induced other urban centers, where anti-converso sentiment also ran high, to pass similar legislation. The converso *letrados* Alonso Díaz de Montalvo, Fernan Díaz de Toledo, Alonso de Cartagena, and Diego de Valera all wrote lengthy replies to the statute.⁴ All pointed out that the Jews had occupied a foundational role in Christianity, and all emphasized that through baptism all Christians were equal. Nevertheless, it was clearly not enough to defend the conversos' Christian character; it was also necessary to attack the claim—implicit

³ For a detailed examination of the Toledo uprising, see Eloy Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV*, CSIC, Madrid, 1961, pp. 33-81.

⁴ For an account of the converso reaction to the Toledo statute, see Albert Sicroff, *Los Estatutos de limpieza de sangre*. Controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII, Taurus, Madrid, 1985, chapter two. For an examination of Díaz de Toledo's reply to the statue, the *Instrucción del Relator*, see Nicholas G. Round, "Politics, Style and Group Attitudes in the Instrucción del Relator," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 46 (1969), pp. 280-319. In his *Instrucción del Relator*, Díaz de Toledo stated plainly that the major practical problem posed by *limpieza de sangre* statutes: if imposed without discrimination they would effectively disenfranchise Spain's most noble families, all of which carried Jewish blood. And Díaz notes with some pride that several of these noble families were genetically linked to his own. Díaz also informs his readers that the Jews were both the first and the best Christians, as it was they, and not the Gentiles, who were the descendents of God's chosen people. These combative sentiments were also echoed by Alonso de Cartagena in his *Defensorium unitatis christianae* and by de Valera in his *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*. For Cartagena, Christianity was a redirection and a deepening of the Jewish faith: the Old Law had merely evolved into a more ideal form. Jews who embraced Christianity were embracing an evangelical spirit that had been present in their faith, in men like Moses and Aaron. The Gentiles did not have this foundation; none of their writings made reference to the coming of the Christ or to the Trinity. They were sons who after a long absence returned home; the Jews (for which read conversos), were daughters who had never left the paternal house. In his *Espejo*, Diego de Valera writes: "Si de la nobleza de los judios autoridades queremos, muchas podemos fallar, ca escripto es en el quarto capitulo de Deuteronomio, onde fablando de los judios dize 'qual es otra nasción así noble?, como si dixese ninguna.'"

in Sarmiento's statute—that the New Christians, like their Jewish ancestors, were of an inferior caste, which militated against their suitability for public offices, traditionally regarded as the domain of Spain's Christian nobility.

Alonso de Cartagena answered this attack by emphasizing the theological, moral and civil nobility of the ancient Hebrew nation. This was not to infer that all Jews were nobles, Cartagena made clear, but to state that they had the capacity to form a noble class. While this argument may have served Cartagena, whose own ancestors had been members of a Sephardic elite, it was less effective for those conversos, the majority, who had acquired their status in fifteenth century society through their own toil or that of a recent family member. This was the case of Diego de Valera, the son of a court physician, who occupied a number of important administrative positions at the courts of Juan I and Enrique IV. In his *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, written around 1451, Valera, like Cartagena, emphasised the noble character of the Jews. However, he rejected the proposition that nobility was based on genealogy. Men gained noble rank, according to Valera, when the civil authority recognized that they had qualities that separated them from the plebian estate. Genealogy may be a factor in gaining noble title, but virtue (for which read merit) is no less important: “bien asi como por virtudes, de baxo linaje muchos fueron levantados, ennoblecidos y ensalçados, asi otros viciosamente biviendo, perdieron la nobleza e dignidades que sus progenitores con grandes trabajos ganaron.”⁵

⁵ E. Michael Gerli, “Performing Nobility: Mosén Diego de Valera and the Poetics of Converso Identity,” *La Coronica*, Vol. 25.1, Fall 1996, p. 26.

The view that character and not lineage was the decisive factor in attaining noble status was one that naturally appealed to Spain's converso professional class, beleaguered by accusations of inferior caste. Writing in the same period as Valera, the converso scholars Alvarez Gato, Pero Guillén, Juan Poeta, and Rodrigo Cota (the man at the center of the 1449 Toledo riots) also championed character as the criterion for judging nobility, although these men wisely chose to present their views as Christian moralists and not New-Christian professionals. "Puso esta copla," wrote Alvarez Gato, introducing a poem on social harmony, "para que veamos claramente como somos duna masa, y que esos deuen ser auidos por mejores, que touvieren mas virtudes que linaje..."⁶

In the 1460s and 70s Gato, Cota, Guillén, and Poeta formed part of a literary circle established around the Archbishop of Toledo, Alonso de Carillo, a Renaissance-style patron in whose court scholars and cultivated knights rubbed shoulders. Taking advantage of his patron's interest in the martial arts, Pero Guillén used the knight errant as a symbol of nobility through merit, contrasting the nobleman who won his spurs in battle with his counterpart, the sedentary noble whose social status was merely a fluke of birth. "Y tanto quanto el onbre es mas claro y noble," wrote Guillén, "tanto deue tener mayor cuydado de la virtud y tener que las herydas rresçebidas en tan justas causas son señales de gran nobleza; de que se sigue que mucho mejor es

⁶ Quoted from Gregory B. Kaplan, "Towards the Establishment of a Christian identity: the Conversos and Early Castilian Humanism", *ibid.* pp. 53-68. In his article Kaplan examines the theme of nobility through virtue in the works of Gato, Guillén, Cota, and Poeta. For a discussion of these converso writers and their involvement in Archbishop Alfonso Carrillo's literary circle see Carlos Moreno Hernández, "Algunos aspectos de la vida y la poesia de Pero Guillén de Segovia", *Anales de Literatura Española* 5 (1986-87) 329-56. See also Antonio Marquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Alvarez Gato*, 1960.

nobleza que se gana con tales peligros y se saca de tan aspero lugares, que la que se dexa por hereditat a los subçesores.”⁷ In using the knight to illustrate true nobility Guillén was linking his own cause to that of Spain’s new nobility, men who had only recently gained their noble titles, and thus, like himself, were unable to boast impressive Old-Christian pedigrees.⁸ Furthermore, these noble families had formed, in their rise to power, important marriage alliances with wealthy and influential conversos, and this made them as open to converso professional ideas as they were sensitive to *limpieza* attacks. Pedro Guillén’s patron, Archbishop Carrillo, was himself a member of one of these noble clans.⁹

The view that nobility is acquired through merit is also prominent in the converso Fernando de Pulgar’s *Claros Varones de Castilla*, published in 1485. In this work Pulgar, also closely connected to the Carillo circle, takes twenty two of his generation’s most politically influential noblemen and clerics and demonstrates that their illustrious name was based on their “virtudes y en las habilidades que tovieron, asi en ciencia [learning] como en armas”. Pulgar states directly that three of these figures, the prelates Alfonso de Cartagena, Juan de Torquemada, and Francisco de Toledo were conversos, making plain his view that Old-Christian blood was not a *sine qua non* for religious office or noble status. Pulgar might also have stated that the majority

⁷ Kaplan, p. 63.

⁸ See Ottavio Di Camillo on Lucena and virtue as a means to an end not an end in itself. 192.

⁹ Archbishop Carrillo’s mother’s family, the Ayalas, were linked through marriage with the family of Alonso de Cartagena, author of the *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*. Cartagena’s father was Pablo de Santa María, the influential converso Bishop of Burgos, who, before converting to Christianity, in the anti-Jewish pogrom of 1391, was a rabbi.

of his subjects carried Jewish blood, as his contemporary Díaz de Toledo had done in his *Instrucción del Relator*,¹⁰ but this would have made *Claros Varones* too obviously a converso polemic, and may well have been detrimental to its author's purpose, that being to sell his readership on the importance of merit for noble status. Nevertheless, Pulgar does make the opportunity to attack, albeit subtly, the Old-Christians' claim that they were spiritually and socially superior to their converso coreligionists. In his section on Alonso de Cartagena, Pulgar notes that the converso prelate was "muy limpio en su persona y en las ropas que traía y el servicio de su mesa y todas las otras cosas que le tocaban hacía tratar con grand limpieza y aborescía mucho los omes que no eran limpios. Porque la limpieza exterior del ome dezía él que era alguna señal de la interior."¹¹ Here Pulgar links spiritual purity and moral probity not to the Old-Christian concept of clean blood but to physical cleanliness—a Jewish belief shared by many conversos. His account of Cartagena's domestic habits is in fact a veiled claim that it is this converso Bishop, and not his noisome Old-Christian antagonists, who is the more noble and spiritually upright. Later, in the sixteenth century, as anti-converso statutes proliferated in civil and clerical institutions, the emphasis on bodily cleanliness would become a converso literary topos, a barbed reference to unclean Old-Christians, who languished in the conceit of their *limpieza de sangre* and *olor de santidad*.

¹⁰ See note four.

¹¹ Fernando de Pulgar, *Claros Varones de Castilla*, ed. Robert Brian Tate, Oxford, 1971, p. 10. While Tate's study provides a useful historical backdrop to Pulgar's work, it sidesteps his *converso* background and its implications for his work. For a discussion of Pulgar's defense of the conversos see Francisco Cantera, "Hernando de Pulgar y Los Conversos", *Sefarad*, Madrid 1944, Fasc. 2, 295-348.

While converso professionals increasingly exploited the view that nobility was determined by merit, the idea itself was not their own; it came rather from Italian humanist circles, where professional men with an even more highly developed group consciousness had been agitating for some considerable time for a social system that rewarded wisdom and ability. These Italian professionals—lawyers, professors, scribes, grammarians, civil administrators, court advisors and, increasingly, clerics—found a model for their social pretensions in the statesmen-scholars of classical Rome (Cicero, Horace, Seneca...), men who had achieved fame, fortune and noble recognition through their great talent. For the humanists these classical figures became the gurus of correct thought and style, and they used their works to attack those elements in their own society that they found unpalatable—like, for example, the clerically oriented scholastic educational system. Thus, while classical authors were championed for their elegant Latin prose, their moral concerns and their regard for the commonweal, the scholastics were berated for their rudimentary Latin, their penchant for recondite and otiose theological exegesis, and their mental, and often physical, isolation from their fellow man.

Of central importance to Italian humanism as a socio-political credo was moral philosophy, which humanists often used as a vehicle to attack church dogma and to promote a social ideal advantageous to themselves. They celebrated the marriage union (challenging the church's idealization of celibacy), they emphasized the dignity of man (confronting the concept of original sin), they championed both the active

Pulgar was an outspoken critic of the Inquisition and its attacks on the converso community. For these opinions he was dismissed, at least temporarily, from the royal court.

(secular) as well as contemplative (spiritual) life, and, above all, they advocated nobility through virtue, citing Classical authors as their authorities.¹²

Humanism first took root not in the Italian universities (dominated by scholasticism), but in the noble houses of the fourteenth-century Florentine city republic, where a new breed of scholar was able to captivate the minds of patrician families like the Medici, themselves only recently advanced from middle-sort mercantile status. By the late fifteenth century humanist ideals had begun to penetrate Italian court society, the Italian nobility (often new nobility) having succumbed to the view that an interest in letters, even if feigned, would somehow reinforce its claim to classical noble ancestry.¹³ At the same time humanist ideas began to advance into the north of Europe, where they became increasingly associated with a secular middle-sort agitation towards church reform, or *devotio moderna*, and in Spain where they formed the basis of a converso assault on an Old-Christian *status quo*.

Like their Italian counterparts, Spain's fifteenth-century professionals were attracted to humanism as a movement that would advance the intellectual, cultural and political predilections of their social group. However, Spain's professionals were not only middle-sort, they were also predominantly New-Christian; and it was these two characteristics in conjunction that shaped Spanish humanism from its inception, as becomes apparent when we examine the peculiarities of this small but enormously influential group.

¹² For an account of Humanism as a middle-sort socio-political movement, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol I, chapters 4 and 8.

First, as I have already stated, Spanish humanists advocated nobility through virtue not only as middle-sort professionals, bridled by a Medieval social order, but also as New Christians chastised by Old-Christian society for their Jewish (tainted) blood. True, the latter argument is not always overtly apparent in the works of men who, for practical reasons, were reluctant to reveal their Jewish roots. Nevertheless, a careful inspection of these humanists' works often reveals covert references to their own condition, particularly through double entendre references to cleanliness (*limpieza*), as exemplified by Fernando de Pulgar's description of Alonso de Cartagena, cited above.¹⁴

Second, while Spanish humanists proclaimed the philosophical, ethical, artistic and literary excellence of the classical Roman world, they also often paid tribute to the Hebrew intellectual tradition, evoking the Old Testament Writings—the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Book of Job—not only as spiritual guides but also as important works of moral philosophy and literature. While it is true that Italian and, particularly, Northern humanists were also increasingly attracted to the Hebrew Bible, their interest was, for the most part, philological.¹⁵

¹³ See, for example, Lisa Jardine's comments on Federigo da Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino in *Worldly Goods: A History of the Renaissance*, Doubleday, New York, 1996, pp. 183-198.

¹⁴ For converso double entendre and secret references, see Sanford Shepherd, *Lost Lexicon: Secret Meanings in the Vocabulary of Spanish Literature during the Inquisition*, Ediciones Universal, Miami, Florida, 1982. These references are mostly taken from Spanish picaresque fiction. There are, however, other converso topos, like for example, *la envidia del vulgo*. In Spanish humanist works, the *vulgo* invariably signifies an ignorant and prejudiced Old-Christian society, its *envidia* directed against a successful converso community.

¹⁵ While the great figure of Christian Humanism, Erasmus, appreciated the need to study Hebrew for Biblical exegesis, he paid relatively little attention to the Hebrew scriptures. In fact he wrote, "I wish it were that the Christian Church did not place such importance on the Old Testament." Natalio Fernández

Third, Humanists were often at pains to establish strong historical links between the ancient Hebrew culture and Spain. Thus Tubal, the son of Noah, was presented as either the first Spanish colonizer or, more significantly, the first civilized presence on the peninsula; a man who, according to the Seville humanist Juan de Malara, introduced into Spain “toda policía de buenas costumbres y sanctas leyes.”¹⁶ This link to ancient Israel was established by Saint Isidoro in the seventh century and mentioned by Archbishop Jimenez de Rada in his twelfth century work, *Historia Gothica*. However, it was not until the mid-fifteenth century that the Jewish charter myth began to gain currency. The first chronicle to refer to the Jewish settlement in Spain was the *Refundición de la coronica de 1344 (New Version of the 1344 Chronicle)*, written, significantly, at the time of the 1449 *sentencia estatuto*. The author of the *Refundición*, according to Mendez Pidal, a converso from Toledo, not only refers to Tubal’s colonization of Spain but also to a later wave of Jewish settlement by the heirs of King David. At the same time that this work appeared, Juan de Valera, taking advantage of the Old-Christian interest in its Gothic past, claimed (without a doubt, cynically) that the Goths themselves were descended from an ancient tribe of Israel. This work may have inspired the Jewish writer Isaac Arabanel to make a similar claim. Both Arabanel and his fellow Jewish scholar Solomón Ibn Verga, writing in the late fifteenth century, also fabricated, in their own scholarly works, a long history of Jewish settlement in Spain prior to the first century A.D. This Jewish

Marcos y Emilia Fernández Tejero, *Biblia y humanismo*, Fundación Universitaria Española, Madrid, 1997, p. 20.

¹⁶ Juan de Malara, *Philosophia vulgar*, Biblioteca Castro, Madrid, 1996, p 29.

charter myth was repeated by a number of sixteenth-century converso chroniclers, including the Jesuit Juan de Mariana. Like the author of the *Refundición*, Mariana not only presents Tubal as the colonizer of Spain, he also states that Jewish exiles from Judah at the time of the Babylonian captivity founded important settlements on the peninsula (including Toledo, Escalona, Noves, Maqueda, and Yepes), citing, obscurely, “libros de los Hebreos” as his source.¹⁷ It would seem evident that the above claims were made with at least two aims in mind: first to establish an important Jewish presence in Spain before the birth of Christ, thus absolving the Jewish (and converso) community of the crime of deicide; and second, to promote the idea of a pluralist ancient Spain, in which the Jews were a dominant presence.

Converso Humanists and the Noble Courts

Fifteenth-century Spain’s small intellectual elite was overwhelmingly converso; and it was through these converso writers, many of whom maintained close

¹⁷ See Jaim Beinart, “¿Cuándo llegaron los Judíos a España?”, *Estudios*, 3, Inst. Central de Relaciones Culturales Israel-Iberoamerica, España y Portugal, 1962, pp 5-18. Writing in the same period as Mariana (at the end of the sixteenth century) Jerónimo Román de la Higuera, also a Jesuit, fabricated a series of ancient documents in order to back up his claim that the Jews were present in Spain before the birth of Christ. Among Higuera’s claims was that five hundred of Jesus’ Judean followers arrived in Spain soon after the Messiah’s death, where they successfully converted many of the peninsula Jews to Christianity. Thus, according to Higuera’s fallacious account, the Sephardim formed the first Christian communities in Spain. See Juan Gil, “Judíos y conversos en los falsos cronicones,” *Iberica*, no. 14, 2003, pp. 21-43. Another sixteenth-century converso chronicler, Florian de Ocampo repeated the Tubal foundation myth in his *La Corónica General de España*. He also stated that Chaldean was the language spoken throughout the peninsula before the Celtibero invasion many generations later, and that an expeditionary force of Spain’s early Jewish colonists founded Rome, whose name is in fact a name often given to Jewish women. See *La Corónica General de España*, Madrid, 1791 [B.N.M. 1/9022] chapter XX. The Jewish settlement of Spain was particularly appealing to Seville’s sixteenth-century humanist community. Pedro Mexia, Juan de Malara, Benito Arias Montano and Pablo de Céspedes all assert that Spain was colonized and civilizad by the ancient Hebrews. See chapter five of the present study.

contact with Italian scholars, that humanist ideas began to penetrate the Iberian peninsula.¹⁸ As in Italy, these ideas were at first propagated not in the universities but at court, either at the royal court, increasingly dominated by converso bureaucrats (*letrados*) or in the courts of a number of noble families who had formed professional relationships and, often, marriage unions with a wealthy urban converso patriciate, and in so doing had adopted this group's interest in intellectual pursuit. A number of nobles were so inspired by this intellectual contact that they took up the pen themselves, despite the fact that among many of their noble peers scholarly activity was still considered a somewhat effete and undignified occupation, more appropriate for a Jewish scribe than an Old-Christian knight.¹⁹ Fernán Pérez de Guzman, Íñigo López de Mendoza (the Marquis of Santillana), and Gomez and Jorge Manrique, the

¹⁸ Rodríguez Sánchez Arévalo (1404-70), Nuño de Guzman (c. 1405-after 1467), Juan de Lucena (c. 1430-1506?), Alonso de Palencia (1423-90), Juan de Mena (1411-56), Joan Margarit (1421-84) all studied in Italy; so too did Antonio de Nebrija (1444-1522), who was also very probably from a converso family (see Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España América*, Istmo, Madrid, 1978, pp. 163-4). While Alonso de Cartagena did not study in Italy, he travelled there on a number of occasions and maintained close relationships with Italian humanists, including Leonardo Bruni (see Di Camillo, op. cit. pp.203-25).

¹⁹ For the Spanish nobility's lack of interest in letters, see Nicholas G. Round, "Renaissance Culture and its Opponents in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Modern Languages Review*, 57, 1962, pp. 204-15. Round writes (p.205), "In fact, the enthusiasm of the king [Juan II] and the erudition of several contemporaries did not succeed in creating a class of nobles either literate in Latin or favourably disposed to learning even when it was profitable morally and enlightening spiritually." In the late fifteenth-century, the Italian humanist Peter Martyr wrote: "Los jóvenes de España, desde los tiempos de sus abuelos y tatarabuelos hasta nuestros días, han estimado erróeamente que se había de menospreciar a quien siguiera las letras, porque hasta ahora han creído que las letras son un impedimento para la milicia, que es lo único en lo que etiman honroso poner su afán y esfuerzo." Cited in Luis Gil Fernández, *Panorama social del humanismo español (1500-1800)*, Tecnos, Madrid, 1995, p. 293. Martyr had been invited to Spain by the Archbishop of Seville, Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, who encouraged the humanist to establish a school for letters in his nephew Íñigo López de Mendoza's court at Granada. It is possible that the Spanish mystic Luis de Granada was one of Martyr's pupils. See Fray Luis de Granada, *Introducción del Símbolo de la Fe*, edición de José María Balcells, Catedra, Madrid, 1989, p. 15.

four most cited examples of fifteenth century noble litterateurs were all formed in environments dominated by *converso* scholars.²⁰

‘Aquel Séneca espiró/ a quien yo era Luçilo’ wrote Fernan Perez de Guzman on the death of his friend Alonso de Cartagena, acknowledging his intellectual debt to the converso Bishop of Burgos.²¹ This debt is clearly evident in *Generaciones y Semblanzas*, Perez’s book of noble prosopographies. Not only does the work reflect Cartagena’s stylistic influences, it also mirrors the prelate’s views on the importance of letters to a nobleman’s formation. However, Cartagena’s influence is most evident in Perez’s biographical sketch of the Bishop’s father, Pablo de Santa Maria, in which he praises the ex rabbi’s scholarship, and describes him as a man of great lineage, echoing Cartagena’s views on his family’s noble Jewish line. Furthermore, Pérez uses his prosopography of Santa Maria to defend the conversos against the recent Toledo attacks, insisting that their conversion under force impeded their adoption of Christian values. This reluctance to accept the Christian religion, writes Pérez, was especially prevalent among converts from humble backgrounds, who, unaccustomed to self-reflection (a veiled attack on the conversos’ Old-Christian antagonists?), adhered to

²⁰ In *The Mendoza Family*, Helen Nader puts forward the all but unsustainable thesis that humanism grew up among a Spanish nobility as a political response to a Trastamaran state-centralization program. As Nader views it, on one side of this political divide were the noble humanists, on the other side were the *letrados*—men of scholastic inclination in the service of the Crown. However the *letrados*—that is to say professional men trained at university—are not so easily categorized. Some followed traditional (scholastic) precepts, others were drawn towards the new, humanist ideas, which they came into contact with either through studying in Italy (often in the Spanish college at Bologña) or through their contact with men who had done so. *Letrados* inclined towards humanism entered both the royal court and those few noble households that were disposed towards intellectual inquiry. Spanish humanism was not per se a noble phenomenon, although a handful of noble families promoted its study.

²¹ Pérez de Guzman also maintained close relations with Cartagena’s brother, the historian Alvar García de Santa María. See Fernan Pérez de Guzman, *Generaciones y Semblanzas*, edición crítica por R.B. Tate, Tamesis Books, London, 1965, p. xi.

their religion for no other reason than that they were born into it. On the other hand, Pérez wrote, there were those New Christians whose devotion to Christianity had led them to reform corrupt religious establishments, while others, Alonso de Cartagena for example, had written “*algunas escrituras de grande utilidad a nuestra fe.*” One of these texts of “*grand utilidad*” that Pérez refers to was, presumably, Cartagena’s *Oracional de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán*, written for Pérez, in which the Bishop anticipates Erasmus in his advocacy of a religion in which the evangelical message is guided by the rationality and eloquence found in the pagan writers.²² Although Pérez de Guzmán considered himself a spokesman for a nobility assaulted by a growing bourgeois professional class, he had, through his close relationship with Cartagena, clearly imbibed the latter group’s interest in socio-religious reform.

Like Pérez de Guzmán, The Marquis of Santillana (Pérez’s nephew), also regarded Cartagena as his intellectual mentor, and often solicited the prelate’s views on questions of scholarship and culture. It was in response to a question from Santillana that Cartagena wrote *his Doctrinal de caballeros*, a manual on correct noble comportment, executed by a converso for one of Spain’s most powerful *grandees*. Naturally, the work emphasised the importance of study in a nobleman’s formation: “*Los cavalleros han de ser entendidos,*” wrote Cartagena, “*porque el entendimiento es la cosa que más adereça al hombre y más le extrema de las otras criaturas.*”²³

²² See Francisco López Estrada, ‘La Retórica en las “Generaciones y Semblanzas” de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán,’ *Revista de Filología Española*, XXX, 1946, pp. 346-349.

²³ Noel Fallows, “El ‘Doctrinal de los Cavalleros’ de Alfonso de Cartagena, segun el ms. Gaml. Kongl. Saml. 2219 de la Real Biblioteca de Copenhague”, *Hispania*, LIV/3, núm. 188, 1994, p. 1115.

Cartagena was only one of many converso professionals to have maintained close ties with the Marquis. In fact, conversos ran the Mendoza court at Guadalajara, from whence they were able to guide Santillana in his intellectual endeavours.²⁴ For although the Marquis is often lauded as a man of great learning, he was in reality an enthusiastic amateur, whose poor knowledge of Latin required him to lean heavily on his converso secretary, Dr. Pero Díaz de Toledo, as translator and classical guide.²⁵ The relationship was not, however, all one sided. The marquis' interest in scholarship was used by Díaz in his *Dialogo e razonamiento en la muerte del Marques de Santillana*, published on the noble's death, not only to extol the genius of his employer, but also to promote letters as a noble pursuit.²⁶ These views were echoed by another of the Marquis's converso secretaries, Diego de Burgos, in his *Triunfo del Marques*, another encomium published on Santillana's death. Before Santillana, wrote

²⁴ For the converso character of Santillana's cultural circle, see, for example, Ángel Gómez Moreno, "Judíos y conversos en la prosa castellana," in *Judíos en la literatura española*, ed. I. M. Hassán and R. Izquierdo Benito, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Cuenca, 2001, pp. 57-86. Luis Giron Negrón believes that Santillana maintained a close relationship with Jewish scholars in the aljama of Carrion de los Condes, the town in which he was born. See Luis Giron Negrón, "Huellas hebraicas en la poesia del Marqués de Santillana," in *Encuentros y Desencuentros. Spanish Cultural Intersection Throughout History*, ed. Carlos Carrete Parrondo, Marcelo Dascal, Francisco Márquez Villanueva, and Ángel Saenz Badillos, University Publishing Projects, Tel Aviv, 2000, pp. 161-211. For the converso presence in Guadalajara, see Francisco Cantera Burgos & Carlos Carrete Parrondo, "Las juderías medievales en la provincia de Guadalajara," *Sefarad* 34.1 (1974): 43-78; and 34.2 (1974): 313-86; and Pedro Luis Lorenzo Cadarso, *Esplendor y decadencia de las oligarquias conversas de Cuenca y Guadalajara (siglos XV y XVI)*, *Hispania*, LIV/1, num. 186, 1994, pp. 53-81.

²⁵ For Pedro Diaz de Toledo's relationship with Santillana and his contribution to fifteenth-century scholarship, see Maria Laura Giordano, *Apologetas de la fe: elites conversas entre inquisición y patronazgo en España (siglos XV y XVI)*, Fundación Universitaria Española, pp. 39-57. Giordano notes that most fifteenth-century translations of Latin works, both religious and profane, were made by converso letrados. *Ibid.* p. 38.

²⁶ The first part of the *Dialogo* between Santillana and Díaz is a philosophical-theological examination of life, which leans heavily on a Senecan stoicism. Díaz assumes the role of mentor, Santillana of curious disciple. Ottavio di Camillo, *El Humanismo Castellano del Siglo XV*, Fernando Torres, Valencia, 1976, p. 126 fn

Burgos, no nobleman, neither layman nor cleric, had dared to dedicate himself to letters. Santillana had applied his talents to the emulation of the Greeks and Romans, and had restored Spain's past glory. Santillana, wrote his secretary, "es el que nuestras Españas a librado de la çiega ygnorancia ylustrandolas por lunbre de caridad verdadera, e trayendo a noticia de todos el conosçimiento del mayor bien que en la vida mortal se puede buscar por los onbres, esta es la çiencia en la qual quanta parte alcanço no solo los nuestros en esta rrigion de oçidente mas los muy rremotos e estraños lo saben..."²⁷

For the converso professional Diego de Burgos, Santillana was an immensely important prize: he was a nobleman whose literary interests could be utilized—if enough care were taken—to make scholarship palatable to a semi-literate nobility, and in so doing raise the status of the intellectual, who was still perceived to be either an eccentric or a Jew. But to sell the image, it was necessary to pitch it in a way that would capture the target audience; hence the use of martial imagery. Burgos's Santillana is not merely a scholar, he is an intellectual conquistador, a man who uses his literary skills, as a Spanish knight uses his sword, to free the country from barbarism. *Triunfo del Marques* is at one and the same time an encomium, written by a retainer in praise of his noble master, and a subtle manifesto, written by a New-Christian professional, advocating a society based on "new", middle-sort, tenets.

The Mendozas were at the vanguard of humanist studies and (as we will see) religious reform precisely because of their close relationship to a converso

²⁷ Ibid. p.125 fn.

professional class that was intent on changing Spanish social and religious mores. Pedro González de Mendoza, Santillana's youngest son, an astute and ambitious man, who rose rapidly through the clerical ranks to become Archbishop of Seville (1473-1482), was, like his father, influenced by a close circle of converso advisors. In his chronicle of the Catholic Kings, Andres Bernaldez intimates that Mendoza prevaricated in cleansing Seville of judaizers, despite the many appeals of "good Christian clerics," because of his close links to the converso community. This image of Mendoza as a man sympathetic towards the New Christians is also apparent in the letter written to the Cardinal by the converso scholar Fernando de Pulgar, attacking the Inquisition and its violence towards New Christians. It is quite obvious that Pulgar would not have shared his views with Mendoza if he had not been certain that the prelate was of the same opinion. Indeed, it is probable that the letter was authorized by Mendoza; as Archbishop of Seville, he was too close to the Catholic Monarchs to make a direct stand against Inquisition attacks on the conversos; however, he could indirectly lend his support to such a campaign by agreeing to be the recipient of an anti-Inquisition epistle.²⁸

Another Mendoza affected by his propinquity to converso professionals and scholars was the Cardinal's nephew, Iñigo López de Mendoza, the second Count of

²⁸ Cardinal Gonzalez Mendozas close connections to the converso community are also evident in Rodrigo de Cota's parody of the wedding between Mendoza's niece and the son of the converso courtier Arias Davila. Cota, probably out of peak because he was not invited to the nuptials, likens the occasion to a Jewish wedding. See Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporanea* I, 30. It was the Cardinal who was responsible for inviting the Italian humanist Peter Martir to his nephew's court at Granada to attempt to educate Spanish youth who "desde los tiempos de sus abuelos y tatarabuelos hasta nuestros días, han estimado erróneamente que se había de menospreciar a quien siguiera las letras..."

Tendilla. Having distinguished himself as a diplomat in Italy, the Count was, in 1492, presented with the governorship of the recently conquered Moorish kingdom of Granada. From the beginning of his office, and in opposition to a hard-line faction at court, the Marquis rejected enforced baptism of Granada's Moorish population; instead, he supported the converso Bishop of Granada Fernando de Talavera in his attempts to gradually educate the Moors in the ways of the Christian faith. In his own campaign for a more equitable policy towards the Moors, Mendoza instructed his converso secretary and representative at court, Francisco de Ortiz, to cite the Roman occupation of Palestine, as recorded by the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus, as an example of how not to treat a subject nation. As Helen Nader points out in her work on the Mendozas, the Count appears to have been oblivious to the fact that he was addressing a court intolerant of the Jews and Jewish welfare, and that his use of Josephus to support his own views on religious clemency was, in the circumstances, inappropriate.²⁹

Mendoza's son, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, inherited his family's concern for scholarship and for a humanitarian approach to Spain's New Christians. In his three-volume account of the 1567 Morisco rebellion in the Alpujarras, Mendoza showed himself sympathetic to the rebel leader Abén Humeya and the economic and social problems of Granada's Morisco population. Some scholars have attributed the Picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* to Mendoza, based on the noble's Erasmian temperament. Although it is improbable that Mendoza was the author of this work, he

²⁹ Helen Nader, op. cit. p. 187.

certainly shared its anticlerical sentiments. It was Mendoza who in 1530 wrote to his friend, the Bishop of Arras, that the best solution to the Protestant problem was to issue a general pardon to the heretics and accept them back into the Church. If, after publicly acknowledging their Catholicism, they wished in private to worship according to their conscience, or if they had opinions at variance with Catholic doctrine, they should be left unmolested.³⁰ This public hypocrisy was one that Mendoza's circle of converso friends would have found particularly attractive. Indeed, Mendoza's views were essentially those of the Family of Love, a Flemish sect which later claimed a number of converso humanist adherents in post-Tridentine Seville.

Tied to the Mendozas through marriage, the Manrique family also maintained close contact with converso professionals.³¹ Gomez and Jorge Manrique, the other two members of the quartet of noble scholars mentioned above, were both associated with an otherwise converso intellectual group that formed around Archbishop Carillo in the 1470s.³² Gomez Manrique's sympathy toward the converso community was demonstrated when, as corregidor in Toledo, he persuaded Queen Isabel to delay establishing an Inquisition tribunal in that city; when the tribunal was eventually established, he made every effort to ensure that its sentences for Judaizing were light

³⁰ See Varquez Rose, *Cartas de Don Diego Mendoza*, pp. 119-20.

³¹ Pedro Manrique de Lara, the first Duke of Nájera, maintained close ties with the Jewish aljamas in his señorío, providing them with favorable conditions for expansion. The Duke's mayordomo (territorial administrator) was a rabbi. See José Luis Lacave, *Juderías y Sinagogos Españoles*, Mapfre, Madrid, 1992, p. 232.

³²For accounts of the Manriques' involvement in the Carrillo circle see John G. Cummins, "Pero Guillén de Segovia y el ms. 4.114 El Cancionero," *Hispanic Review* XLI, 1973, pp. 28-32; and Antonio Serrano de Haro, *Personalidad y destino de Jorge Manrique*, Editorial Gredos, Madrid, 1966.

ones, involving only the payment of fines.³³ These liberal ideals were inherited by another family member, the Erasmian Alonso Manrique, who, while Archbishop of Seville (1524-38), galvanized the converso Juan de Avila into propagating an evangelical Christianity throughout Andalucia. In his burlesque chronicle on the court of Charles V, Francisillo Zúñiga (another converso) associates the Archbishop with a converso court society, and uses the name Manrique as a synonym for New Christians, giving full reign to the rumor that the Manrique family ancestry was also in part Jewish.³⁴ It was the archbishop's son, Rodrigo Manrique who wrote the following lines to Luis Vives in 1534, lamenting the imprisonment of their mutual friend Juan de Vergara: "Es la pura verdad lo que dices: nuestra patria es envidiosa y soberbia. Añade, también, bárbara. Pues ya se tiene por cierto entre ellos que nadie hay medianamente cultivado en las buenas letras que no esté repleto de herejías, errores, judaismos, de tal manera que a los sabios se les ha impuesto silencio."³⁵ Here, Manrique illustrates the major problem facing Spain's humanists: in the popular consciousness, intellectual inquiry was a Jewish conceit; it was natural, therefore, that

³³ Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV*, C.S.I.C., 1961, p. 136. Gomez Manrique was married to Juana Mendoza who was the patron of Alfonso Cartagena's erudite niece, Teresa de Cartagena and the dedicatee of two of Teresa's Works, *Arboleda de los enfermos* and *Admiración Operum Dei*. A number of Teresa's brothers married into the Mendoza family. See Maria Laura Giordano, *Apologetas de la fe: elites, conversas entre Inquisición y patronazgo en España (Siglos XV y XVI)*, Fundació Universitaria Española, Madrid, 2004, p. 58.

³⁴ Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judios en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, Istmo, Madrid, 1986, vol. 1, p. 313. In a letter to Antonio Manrique de Lara, 1st duke of Nájera, the converso wit Francisco de Villalobos stated: "Si algún bien saliese de vuestra casa, a nosotros se debe, que somos genus electum, regale sacerdotium." Cited in Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La Clase Social de Los Conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, Archivum, Granada, 1991, p. 163, note 21.

³⁵ Luis Gil Fernandez, *Panorama Social del Humanismo Español (1500-1800)*, Tecnos, Madrid, p. 457.

scholars like Vives and Vergara (both conversos) and Manrique himself (a noble closely linked to conversos) would be associated with Jewish infidelity.

Converso Religiosity and fifteenth-century Religious Criticism

Scholars often contrast the Spanish Jews' reaction to the pogrom of 1391 with that of their Northern coreligionists in similar circumstances during the First Crusade. Whereas the Northern Jewish communities resisted the Christian aggression, preferring martyrdom to the renunciation of faith, many of the Sephardim chose the path of least resistance, converting to Christianity. Why did the Spanish Jews react the way they did?

The Jewish mass conversion is seen largely as the result of a lack of cohesion within the Jewish community itself, and in particular the rift that had developed between rank and file Jews and a wealthy and erudite Jewish courtier society, often indifferent to Judaic law. This courtier group had evolved in the rarefied intellectual atmosphere of Islamic Andalusia during the tenth and eleventh centuries, where it had become influenced by Greek rationalist philosophy, very much in vogue in al-Andalus during that period. When these court Jews, or their intellectual heirs, later entered the Christian realm, they increasingly clashed not only with orthodox Jewish leaders but also with the mystical Cabbalists whose recondite interpretations of the scriptures were, it seems, to some degree a reaction to the rationalism of the courtier society.³⁶ These conflicting intellectual and spiritual tendencies within the Jewish elite naturally

³⁶ For Averroist ideas among the Jews and conversos, see Yitshak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1978, vol. II, pp 253-9.

created a certain insecurity in the *aljamas*, and this was exploited by the new mendicant orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans, in their aggressive proselytizing campaigns during the fourteenth century, and by the same religious forces in the period immediately after the 1391 pogrom.

Of the many Jews who embraced Christianity in the period after 1391, some were undoubtedly sincere converts, touched by the mendicant friars' message; others were skeptics, who saw little difference between nominal Judaism and nominal Christianity—certainly they felt the difference was not worth dying for. The majority, however, were both sincere Jews and pragmatists—pragmatism being something that they had absorbed from their leadership—who believed that they were not committing apostasy if, after their baptism, they continued to observe the Jewish faith in private while resolving to return openly to Judaism at the first safe opportunity.³⁷ After conversion, these *anusim* (the forced ones) remained in their old neighborhoods, where they continued to lead a Jewish lifestyle.³⁸

³⁷ Here the great Maimonides set a precedent. Confronting the Almohades' 12th-century Jewish pogrom, the Jewish rabbi and philosopher opined that Jews could convert to Islam in exceptional circumstances, provided that they continued to observe their own religion in private. See Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*, Free Press, New York, 1994, p. 81.

³⁸ Contemporaneous accounts--both those of detractors and sympathizers--concur that substantial numbers of conversos continued to Judaize three and four generations after their ancestors had converted to Christianity. It is instructive to note that while the converso writers Alvaro de Palencia, Fernando de Pulgar and Juan de Lucena berated the Inquisition for its inhumanity towards the New Christians, all three men recognized that Judaizing was prevalent in the converso community, especially in Andalucía, where, Palencia noted, "se habia extendido entre los conversos la carencia de que estaba próxima la venida de falaz Mesías." Fernando de Pulgar also indicated, that Judaizing was widespread in the south of Spain, when, in attacking Inquisition brutality and rapine, he wrote, "como los viejos [Cristianos] sean allí [en Sevilla] tan malos cristianos, los nuevos son tan buenos judíos...[C]reo que mozas doncellas de diez a veinte años hay en Andalucía diez mill niñas, que dende que naçieron nunca de sus casas salieron, ni oyeron ni supieron otra doctrina sino loa que vieron hazer a sus padres de sus puertas adentro. Quemar todos estos sería cosa crudelissima y aun difícil de hazer." (Francisco Cantera, "Fernando de Pulgar y los conversos", p.308) Like Palencia and Pulgar, Juan Ramirez de Lucena also reproached the Inquisition for its treatment of the New Christians, accusing the Holy Office of acting

As for the court Jews, or court conversos as they now were, it is apparent that many among this group continued to place their faith in the rationalism of pagan Classical philosophers. From contemporary references, it seems that Epicurean ideas were popular among this intellectual elite, and that these views soon infiltrated the converso community at large.³⁹ The epithet “Epicurean” did not, however, necessarily imply that the person was a student of Epicurean philosophy, merely that he or she did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and thus rejected the idea of Jesus the

“por avaricia e cobardicia más de ganar muchos cuentos que las ánimas de los proximos...” ; nevertheless, Lucena did not claim that the conversos were sincere Catholics, merely that they were technically innocent of the charge of heresy. How could they be considered Christian heretics, Ramírez argued, when the majority of their families had been forcibly baptized in 1391, and thus had not embraced the Christian religion freely. (Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana*, Sevilla, 2000, vol. 1, 77.)

Despite the evidence from late fifteenth-century sources that many New Christians continued to Judaize, the historians Benjamin Netanyahu (*The Origins of the Inquisition in fifteenth-century Spain*, New York, 1995) and Norman Roth (*Conversos, Inquisition and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, Madison, Wisconsin, 1995) maintain that Judaizing was virtually non-existent by the time the Castilian Inquisition was established in 1480. Both men maintain this position by either studiously avoiding or, in Roth’s case, seriously misinterpreting, those contemporary chroniclers who stated that Judaizing was a problem. Roth writes that Alonso de Palencia and Fernando de Pulgar “concur in the hypocrisy of charges of heresy [by the Inquisition] against the conversos.” This is untrue. Both chroniclers attacked the Inquisition for being more interested in gaining access to the conversos’ wealth than in saving their souls, but neither man denied that Judaizing was a problem among conversos, as I make clear above. Roth also states that Palencia’s comment on the Andalusian conversos awaiting their messiah is ambiguous, and that the chronicler may have been referring to the second coming (ie the return of the Christian messiah). In fact, Palencia leaves his reader in no doubt as to his meaning when he writes that the conversos were awaiting “su falaz Mesías”. Netanyahu bases his case for a sincerely Christian converso community on a number of *responsa* from Spanish rabbis, who stated that these converts should no longer be regarded as Christian. However, this does not necessarily reflect the conversos’ religious beliefs. Certain rabbis may have emphasized the converso apostasy to arrest the wave of conversion, which was clearly a problem for the contracting fifteenth century Jewish aljamas. Other rabbis, on the other hand, stated clearly that they regarded the conversos as Jews, as Moisés Orfali makes clear in his study, *Los conversos en la literatura rabinica. Problemas juridicos y opiniones legales durante los siglos XII-XVI*, Salamanca, 1982, pp. 32-33, 41-42.

³⁹ Francisco Márquez Villanueva, “The Converso Problem: An Assessment”, *Collected Studies in honor of Americo Castro’s Eightieth Year*, Oxford, 1965, p. 11. Márquez writes: What we observe in fact much more among the converses is a heretic attitude of denying every supernatural perspective, Jewish as well as Christian...In the inquisitorial lawsuits these are accused of maintaining that ‘we live and die as the beasts’, or of various similar expressions of disbelief or a crude Epicureanism. We may regard this attitude as a consequence of enforced conversion and of the demoralization produced through it, although there, too, old trends of Averroism can be detected and the survival of a Sadducean attitude.”

Messiah. “Averroist” or “Sadducean” were adjectives also used regularly in fifteenth-century literature to express a similar incredulity. It appears that Alfonso de Cartagena himself entertained such notions, at least according to his contemporary Juan de Lucena.⁴⁰ Certainly, the Bishop was attracted to pagan scholarship, and in particular to Senecan stoicism, an interest he shared with many of his fellow intellectuals who formed literary circles in the noble courts of Ínigo López de Mendoza, the Marquis of Santillana, and Alfonso de Carillo, Archbishop of Toledo. Stoicism, whether found in Seneca, or in the Hebrew Scriptures (*Job* and *Ecclesiastes*) was naturally appealing to men whose delicate position as courtiers and conversos encouraged them to search for a certain inner constancy or equanimity.⁴¹

Immersed in their private religious or philosophical realms, the first and second generation conversos paid little more than lip service to the Christian religion.⁴² This situation began to change with the 1449 *Sentencia-Estatuto*. Now it became clear to many conversos, especially among the professional elite, that they could no longer hide behind the mask of religious conformity; they had to confront their adopted religion head on and fashion a public Christian credo that they could genuinely uphold. Their ally in this venture was Saint Paul, the most erudite and cosmopolitan of the evangelists, who had written of a Christianity founded not on

⁴⁰ Alejandro Medina Bermúdez, “Los inagotables misterios de Juan de Lucena,” *Dicienda, Cuadernos de Filología Hispánica*, 1999, 17, p. 307.

⁴¹ Seneca’s importance to fifteenth-century Spanish humanism is treated in some detail in Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Álvarez Gato*, Madrid, 1960, Ottavio Di Camillo, *El Humanismo Castellano del Siglo XV*, Valencia 1976, and, more recently, in Maria Laura Giordano, *Apologetas de la fe: elites conversas y patronazgo en España (siglos XV y XVI)*, Madrid, 2004.

⁴² See note 38.

ritual and ceremony but on an interior, mystical connection with the deity. Above all Paul had emphasized that Christ's body was a metaphor for the Christian Church, in which all the members were of equal importance. It was this allusion that appealed most of all to the New Christians. Whether or not those conversos who now cited Paul as an example of the true Christian message were themselves convinced Christians is debatable; some were undoubtedly believers; others saw Paul and Jesus as figureheads for a syncretic credo based on the moral tenets found in pagan (in particular Senecan), Hebrew, and patristic texts. This syncretism is clearly visible in both Pedro Díaz de Toledo's *Introducción a los proverbios de Séneca* and Alfonso de Cartagena's *Oracional de Fernan Pérez de Guzmán*. In the latter work, the author reveals his belief that the ways of God are unknowable and thus beyond speculation, a clear indication, it would seem, of the prelate's religious skepticism.⁴³

In the mid-fifteenth century the interest in an interior, or Pauline, religious observance, began to enter those religious orders in which the conversos maintained an important presence; chief among these was the Hieronymite order, a wealthy and privileged religious establishment, which appears to have been particularly attractive to New Christians. One of the order's early converso novices, later its general, was

⁴³ See Ottavio Di Camillo, *El Humanismo Castellano del Siglo XV*, Fernando Torres, Valencia, 1976, pp. 156-166. Camillo notes that while Cartagena's father, Pablo de Santa Maria, converted to Christianity in 1391, his mother remained Jewish. Ottavio speculates (p. 166): "El contacto tan íntimo con creencias distintas pudo llevarle a considerar la relatividad de Dios, a quien, en definitiva, se ha de llegar por un acto de fe. Sea como fuere, es el caso que su idea de que la sabiduría es inalcanzable esconde una actitud de comprensión y tolerancia, pues implica que las diferencias entre sectas no involucran a Dios sino a los modos en que El se ha revelado a los hombres." See also Francisco López Estrada, "La Retorica en las 'Generaciones y semblanza' de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán", *Revista de Filología Española*, XXX, 1946, pp. 339-349. For Alfonso de Cartagena's interest in St. Paul, see María Laura Giordano, op. cit., ch. 1. "El Cristianismo Paulino como fenómeno de elite."

Alfonso de Oropesa. In 1465, Oropesa published his *Lumen ad revelationem gentium* (*Light to Enlighten the Gentiles*), a work which anticipates Erasmus's *Enchiridion* in its allusions to the body of Christ as a symbol of religious harmony and unison. However, Oropesa was interested in the Pauline allusion not only as a Christian humanist but also as a converso who was intent on defusing the tension between Old- and New-Christian religious in his own order. Unfortunately, the friar's attempt to create a harmonious religious environment was stymied when, soon after his book was published, crypto-Jewish cells were discovered in the Hieronymite houses at Guadalupe and Toledo. Thereafter the Hieronymites took a reactionary turn, introducing a *limpieza de sangre* statute, in 1489, to discourage converso entry.⁴⁴

As converso humanists propagated a Pauline egalitarian Christianity, so too did they begin to attack their Christian assailants with accusations of corrupt Christian practice. In his *De confessione*, published in 1477, Pedro de Osma, Antonio Nebrija's intellectual guide at Salamanca University, denied that indulgences had any worth, questioned the clergy's power to grant absolution of sins, and challenged Papal infallibility. For these proto-Lutheran sentiments, Osma was banished from the

⁴⁴ For an examination of *Lumen*, in which Oropesa, like his contemporaries Alfonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera, also emphasises the Jews' importance to Christianity, see Albert Sicroff, "Anticipaciones de Erasmismo Español en *Lumen ad revelationem gentium* de Alfonso de Oropesa," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, tomo XXX, 1981, no. 2. For an account of the Jewish cell in the Hieronymite monastery at Guadalupe, see Albert Sicroff, "Clandestine Judaism in the Hieronymite Monastery of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe," in Izaak A. Langas and Barton Sholod eds *Studies in Honor of Mair J. Bernardete*, Las Americas, New York, 1965, 89-125.

University of Salamanca, in 1579, to a convent at Alcalá de Henares; at the same time all copies of the *De confessione* were collected and burnt.⁴⁵

Osma's incarceration had coincided with the establishment of the Castilian Inquisition, an organization that was inclined to regard any manifestation of indigenous religious non-conformism as an expression of Jewish malfeasance, as Rodrigo Manrique noted in his letter to Luis Vives (cited above). In the circumstances, many conversos felt it was best to place their faith, literally, in those evangelical and mystical works of the Northern *devotio moderna* movement, whose reform message appeared to be more palatable to the Holy Office. Both Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ* and Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, works that emphasized private prayer and moral self-renewal became popular middle-sort devotional manuals in the period directly after the establishment of the Inquisition. However, the Northern writer who most galvanized the converso intellectual community, at least from the early sixteenth century onwards, was *devotio moderna's* enfant terrible, Erasmus of Rotterdam.

Although Spain was not one of the first nations to embrace Erasmus, it did eventually produce some of his most ardent supporters. Enthusiasm for the Dutch humanist was stimulated by the arrival, in 1517, of Charles V's Flemish court. Soon thereafter Erasmian ideas began to infiltrate certain noble households and the universities, in particular the University of Alcalá de Henares, recently founded by

⁴⁵ Luis Gil Fernández, *Panorama social del humanismo español (1500-1800)*, Editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 1997, p. 562. José C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdés y los orígenes de la Reforma en España e Italia*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico D.F., 1979, pp. 100-101.

Cardinal Jimenez Cisneros. In founding the university, Cisneros had envisaged an educational establishment of theological diversity, where both Thomist and nominalist theories would be available to the student body. Diversity was also visible in both the trilingual college of San Ildefonso, the ornament of the University, and in the Complutense Polyglot Bible, a project directed by Cisneros, in which, for the first time, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Chaldean versions of the Scriptures were incorporated in one work. This emphasis on linguistic study, enticed many converso scholars to Alcalá, many of whom now became Erasmus adherents. A number of these men (among whom were Juan de Vergara, Bernadino de Tovar, Juan de Valdes, Juan Castillo and the chancellor of the university Pedro de Lerma) were later tried by the Inquisition for protestant heresy.⁴⁶

There is no mystery in Erasmus's appeal for the conversos. His interest in a faith in which pagan texts enriched the Christian message, his rejection of ceremonies and rituals, his focus on a Pauline message of equality within the Church, his belief that Christ had created a new man through His emphasis on interior religious reform, all these were views that had been circulating in erudite New-Christian circles since the mid-fifteenth century. For many converso scholars, Erasmus was clearly a fellow traveler in the war against Old-Christian chauvinism and superstition.⁴⁷ Erasmus's

⁴⁶ See Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1997, pp. 89-91.

⁴⁷ The conversos also clearly reveled in Erasmus's comparison, in the *Enchiridion*, of Old-Christians mired in ceremonial practice to Pharisees who had forgotten the true message of Judaism, a statement they used as a counter-punch against Old-Christian accusations of converso Judaizing. The conversos conveniently ignored the anti-semitic aspect of Erasmus' statement. For Erasmus's judeophobia, see Shimon Markish, *Erasmus and the Jews*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996. It is possible that Erasmus was aware that his following in Spain was predominantly converso, and that this group was utilizing him in its own parallel reform campaign. In a reply to attacks from Spanish scholars on his

greatest attraction for conversos, however, was his popularity. Indeed, it is clear that a number of converso mystics often exaggerated their interest in Erasmus in a bid to disguise an illuminist orientation that the Holy Office was wont to associate with crypto-Judaism.⁴⁸

Unfortunately, the Erasman honeymoon soon came to an end. In 1529, Erasmus's great ally, the Inquisitor General Alfonso Manrique, fell out of favor at court and was banished to his Seville see. At the same time Carlos V traveled to Italy, taking a number of influential Erasmians with him. In the political hiatus created by these events, Erasmus's enemies within the Holy Office began prosecuting the Northern humanist's supporters, often on the pretext that their views were intimately linked to those of the proscribed *alumbrado* sect. By the time of Erasmus's death, in 1534, his Spanish adherents were already on the retreat. From now on when Spanish Erasmians displayed their views in public, they generally did so with careful artifice.

The Alumbrados

As I have already noted, an important figure in Spain's early sixteenth-century reform movement was the head of the Franciscans, Cardinal Jimenez Cisneros.

Although no religious revolutionary, Cisneros was moved by the spirit of *devotio*

Enchiridion, Erasmus wrote: "Let Zuñiga and Carranza fling themselves after heretics of another sort, who have already littered the fields of the Lord more than enough. Certain Jews, half-Jews, and quarter-Jews are getting even stronger, pushing their way among us, bearing the name of Christian but carrying all Moses in their souls..." (*Erasmus and the Jews*, p. 77)

⁴⁸ This may have been the case of the illuminist María de Cazalla. See Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992, p. 87.

moderno not only to found a new university, at Alcala de Henares, but also to renovate his own order. One aspect of this renovation process was the establishment of eight *recolectorios*, where Franciscan friars received guidance in *recogimiento* (gathering of the senses), a mystical method in which the practitioners learnt how to distance themselves from all ideas, even the most saintly, silence the intelligence and the senses, and obliterate all desire, so that they could finally fill themselves with the presence of God. However, at the same time that *recogimiento* was gaining adherents within the Franciscan order, another mystical method, known as *dejamiento* (freeing of the senses) was becoming popular among certain members of the clerical and lay communities in close proximity to the *recolectorios*. *Dejamiento* was, in many respects quite similar to *recogimiento*; what most differentiated it from the “orthodox” practice was its adherents’ belief that no particular ritual or ceremony was required to achieve mystical union with God, only a sincere wish to open oneself to His love. It also appears that many practitioners of *dejamiento* believed that in abandoning themselves to God they achieved an immaculate state during which their acts were free from sin; some may have seen this as a license to surrender themselves to general hysteria or sexual licentiousness; most viewed it merely as a challenge to the Catholic Church and its claim that only through its indulgences and dispensations could the individual be freed from sin. What drew people to *dejamiento* was, above all, its simplicity and informality; unlike *recogimiento*, it did not require that its practitioners had clerical training, or that they observed a precise ritual; it was a mystical practice for men and women who believed in a private Christianity, unencumbered by

elaborate ceremony and dogma. It was, indeed, its implied disrespect for Church authority that made it so offensive to the Inquisition.

The mystical practice *dejamiento* has become synonymous with the *alumbrados*, heretical religious thinkers who formed clandestine cells, or conventicles, in the provinces of Toledo, Segovia and Guadalajara in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century. The term *alumbrado*, or illuminated one, was applied to these groups by their antagonists in reference to their deviant mysticism. There was, however, much more to the *alumbrados* than mystical practice. The name, in fact, was often used as an umbrella term for anyone espousing radical religious ideas, whether evangelical, millenarian, mystical, messianic, or just plain eccentric. The one thing that *alumbrados* did have in common was their socio-religious roots; they were all, it seems, conversos.

One of the first and most outspoken alumbrado leaders was Pedro Ruiz de Alcaráz, a lay preacher who grew up in Guadalajara, at the court of Don Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza, the son of the Marquis of Santillana. Later Alcaráz worked in succession for Pedro Hurtado's son-in-law, Don Diego de Mendoza, the third count of Priego, for Don Benito Cisneros, the nephew of Cardinal Cisneros, and, finally, for Diego López de Pacheco, the second Marquis of Villena. It was while in Villena's employment that Alcaráz met and influenced the Marquis's page, the young Juan de Valdes, who, like Alcaráz, was from a converso background.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See Alastair Hamilton, *op. cit.* pp. 26-27. For Alcaraz's possible influence on Juan de Valdes, see José C. Nieto, *Juan de Valdés y los orígenes de la Reforma en España y Italia*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Mexico D.F., 1979, pp. 108-139.

At Alcaraz's Inquisition trial in 1519, the prosecution accused him of espousing the following errant views: Hell did not exist; Christ was not physically present in the Eucharist; fasts and other pious acts of contrition had no benefit; the pope's indulgences and pardons were worthless; oral prayer was unnecessary—only mental prayer was required; confessions were pointless (he himself only confessed to appear to conform to the views of the ignorant masses); Saint Augustin's soliquys were mere fantasies; married men and women engaged in the sexual act were closer to God than when they were praying; to save one's soul one had only to open oneself to God; and having gained God's love through this process of *dejamiento* one could not err either venially or mortally.⁵⁰

Certain of these views eventually led the Inquisition to suspect that Alcaráz, and other *alumbrados*, had been touched by the Lutheran heresy. However, in this the Holy Office was probably mistaken; the *alumbrados* may have entertained heretical ideas, but these ideas had their roots in *devotio moderna* (a common font for both Luther and the Spanish religious reformers), and New Christian iconoclasm. Alcaráz's own New-Christian condition is evident in at least two ways. First, unlike the northern European devotees of *devotio moderna*, his theology is not Christocentric; at his trial it was stated that both he and his followers “[n]o mentavan el nombre de Jhesu Christo, ni de Santa Maria, ni hablaban de la pasyon de nuestro Redemptor”.⁵¹ Furthermore, he had often stated that God gave his love unconditionally to all peoples, not only

⁵⁰ Manuel Serrano y Sanz, “Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, iluminado alcarreño del siglo XVI”, *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 1903, num. 1, p. 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 12.

Christians; Alcaraz's deity, it appears, was a generic concept, unburdened by the weight of Christian (or Jewish) dogma. Second, it is clear that Alcaráz was hostile not only towards the Catholic Church but also towards an Old-Christian Spanish society. One witness at his trial noted that Alcaráz had actually rejoiced on hearing of the recent victory of the Barbary pirates against the Spanish forces.⁵² This antipathy towards Old-Christian society emerges on a number of occasions in the *alumbrados'* trials. Alcaraz himself had noted that Fr. Francisco de Ocaña, also influential at the Marquis de Villena's court, believed that all those who governed the Church were fallacious Christians and should be cast out "como puercos" (a probable allusion to a pork-eating, or tainted, Old-Christian presbytery). Another *alumbrado*, Pedro Cazalla, a wealthy Valladolid merchant, had, according to his maid, delivered the following harangue against the Spanish Crown and Inquisition, on being detained by the Holy Office officials: "[Q]ue no tenemos Rey sino un bobo, e que el diablo avía traydo a la Emperatriz a Castilla, que era una bívora como su abuela [Isabela] la qual avía traydo esta mala ventura de Inquisición a Castilla e que ella la sustentava. Que pluguiese a Dios que viniese de Francia guerras o que duraran las Comunidades para que destruiran la Inquisición, que los tenía echado a perder a todos..."⁵³

The man who expressed the above sentiments was the brother of Maria Cazalla and Fr. Juan de Cazalla (auxiliary bishop of Avila), and a friend and patron of the *beata* Francisca Hernandez; all of these figures were prominent religious radicals

⁵² José C. Nieto, *op.cit.* p. 127.

⁵³ Bataillon, *op.cit.* p. 181.

whose ideas on Church reform had attracted a substantial following in a number of urban centers in central Castile, including Alcalá de Henares. It is thus to be supposed that Pedro Cazalla was expressing sentiments shared by these *alumbrado* leaders and by many of their adherents. Indeed, in her study of the *alumbrados*, Angela Sanchez notes that antagonism towards Old-Christian Spain was widespread among this group, a phenomenon she attributes directly to:

[H]ostilidad inconsciente y reprimida contra el mundo hispanico y cristiano, un mundo que sus padres hubieron de aceptar a la fuerza y que luego les niega la misma categoria que a los otros ciudadanos. Precisamente este “resentimiento,” en forma sublimada, es fuente de inspiración y de deseos por resugir otra vez como el “pueblo elegido” para descubrir y revelar aquellas verdades del cristianismo que la Iglesia debilitara con su formalismo y legalismo.⁵⁴

The Cazalla family’s hostility towards the Old-Christian Spain was inherited by the following generation; all of Pedro Cazalla’s children were prominent members of the protestant cell uncovered in Valladolid in 1557.⁵⁵

Although it is impossible to determine exactly where and when the *alumbrado* phenomenon began, it is known that one of the first *alumbrado* conventicles was established around 1512 at the Mendoza court at Guadalajara, where a Franciscan tertiary, the conversa Isabel de la Cruz, preached her singular Christian ideology to the

⁵⁴ Angela Sanchez Barbudo, *Algunos aspectos de la vida religiosa en la España del siglo XVI: los alumbrados de Toledo*, pp. 130-12. Doctoral dissertation cited by José C. Nieto, *op cit.* p. 127, note 77.

⁵⁵ Alastair Hamilton, *op.cit.* p. 105. The Cazallas came originally from Palma del Rio, where they were merchants and retainers at the court of Don Luis Fernández de Portocarrero, Count of Palma. The Portocarrero family, like the Mendozas and Manriques maintained close ties with the converso community. See ch. 3 of the present study.

Duke of Infantado's household.⁵⁶ In the following decade other radical converso voices became prominent at noble courts throughout Castile. At the Marquis of Villena's court at Escalona Isabel de la Cruz's disciple, Pedro Ruiz de Alcaráz, related his and Isabel's religious views to Don Juan Pacheco and his attendants; meanwhile, at the Admiral of Castile's court, the converso Juan López de Celaín captivated Don Fadrique Enriquez, for a short period at least, with his ideas for evangelizing the noble's extensive territories with twelve hand-picked disciples—most of whom were men connected to *alumbrado* conventicles in Alcalá and Toledo.⁵⁷ At the same time, at Nájera, the second Duke of Nájera, Antonio Manrique de Lara employed the radical New-Christian preacher Francisco Medrano as a chaplain, and even spoke out in his defense when, in 1532, he fell foul of the Inquisition. The Duke of Nájera's brother was the celebrated archbishop of Seville and Inquisitor General Alfonso Manrique, whose 1525 edict of faith condemned the majority of *alumbrado* propositions as heretical; yet the same Alfonso Manrique supported Erasmians, whose religious propositions often differed little from those of the *alumbrados*; Manrique was himself the patron of the Latin master Juan de Castillo who was closely associated with the *alumbrado* conventicle at Alcalá de Henares. Castillo was executed for heresy in 1534.⁵⁸

Another high-placed cleric closely involved with early sixteenth-century religious reform was Alfonso de Fonseca, Archbishop of Toledo from 1523 to 1534.

⁵⁶ Serrano y Sanz, *op. cit.* p. 3.

⁵⁷ Alastair Hamilton, *op. cit.* pp. 24-25 and 80-81. López Celain was later burnt at the stake for heresy.

Fonseca was the great grandson of Juan Diaz de Ulloa, a converso leather manufacturer from Ulloa in Galicia. In the mid-fifteenth century the Ulloa family had formed a number of important marriage unions with the FONSECAS of Toro, a modest hidalgo family that may also have been, at least in part, of Jewish provenance.⁵⁹ In little more than two generations the Ulloa-Fonseca clan not only established a number of important noble houses, it also produced three politically powerful clerics, all of whom were named Alfonso de Fonseca. All three Alfonsos were religious non-conformists; the first, who occupied both the Seville and Santiago de Compostela sees, was often accused of dressing in a manner ill befitting an archbishop, for paying too much attention to astrological readings, and for publicly declaring himself in sympathy with Sadducean beliefs.⁶⁰ The second Alfonso, nephew of the first, and, like the first, archbishop of both Seville and Santiago de Compostela, was a man of strong humanist convictions, who, in 1575, enticed the Spanish humanist Antonio Nebrija back to Spain from Italy to work in his Seville court. This Alfonso's son, the product of the Archbishop's relationship with Maria de Ulloa (the FONSECAS and Ulloas formed endogamous alliances for several generations), was also closely attached to humanist reformers, promoting Erasmian views in his own see at Toledo. In 1532, Alfonso's

⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 80-83 and 86.

⁵⁹ The family was also linked through marriage with another converso clan, the Castillos. For the Fonseca's converso connections, see *El Tizon de la Nobleza Española*, pp. 138-144. In her study of the Fonseca family, Adelaida Sagarra notes that certain genealogists have indicated that the FONSECAS were from a Jewish background, but she does not identify these sources. See Adelaida Sagarra Gamazo, "El protagonismo de la familia Fonseca, oriunda de Portugal y asentado en Toro, en la política castellana hasta el descubrimiento de América," *Anuario 1993 Instituto de Estudios "Florian Ocampo"*, p. 422.

⁶⁰ Ottavio y Camilo, op. cit. p. 249.

secretary, Juan de Vergara, a close friend of Erasmus, was prosecuted by the Holy Office as a Protestant heretic. On hearing of Vergara's incarceration, the Archbishop offered the Holy Office the enormous sum of 50,000 ducados to secure his release.⁶¹ Previous to this, Alfonso had been instrumental in prizing Ignatius Loyola from the Inquisition's grasp, when the young Loyola, a student at Alcalá, had been investigated by the Toledo tribunal for *alumbrado* activities.⁶²

Mainstream Mysticism and the Conversos: Francisco Osuna

Given the New Christians' "outsider" position within Spanish society, it should come as no surprise that the majority of Spain's sixteenth-century religious reformers—whether radicals, like the *alumbrados*, or moderates, like Juan de la Cruz or Teresa de Avila—were conversos. However, in the past, Spanish mainstream history has either ignored or underplayed the importance of these reformers' backgrounds; this is especially the case of the more moderate reform voices, whose temperance has been regarded as a sign of their Old-Christian orthodoxy. In fact, what often appears to be conformity is, in reality, circumspection or prudence—the

⁶¹ Charles Henry Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols, New York, 1906-8. Vol III, p. 417.

⁶² See the section, in the present chapter, on Ignatius Loyola. Another Fonseca-Ulloa family nonconformist was the radical Juan Ulloa de Pereira, who, in the Protestant trials at Valladolid, in 1557, was charged, along with members of the Cazalla family, with disseminating Calvinist ideas. For his crimes, Ulloa de Pereira was stripped of his title and possessions and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. See *Viaje de Turquía*, edición de Fernando Garcia Salinero, Catedra, Madrid, 1995, p. 67. Salinero believes that Juan Ulloa Pereira was the author of *Viaje de Turquía*, and not doctor Laguna, as Marcel Bataillon claims. Yet another member of the same clan was Pedro Rodriguez Fonseca, who moved from Toro to Badajoz in the late fifteenth century, where he, and later his son Juan, formed marriage alliances with the Figueroa family. A descendant of this branch of the FONSECAS was Diego Velázquez's friend and patron, Juan Fonseca y Figueroa. In 1618 Velázquez painted for Fonseca y Figueroa "The Waterseller", a painting which, to my mind, reflects both Velázquez's and Fonseca's religious non-conformism. For my comments on "The Waterseller", see Chapter Five.

fine art of maintaining a conformist façade while disseminating, often in deliberately equivocal or ambiguous prose, certain nonconformist sentiments. This is the case of the Franciscan Friar Francisco de Osuna, whose *Tercer abecedario* became a guide for a generation of converso Spanish mystics, including Juan de Avila, Teresa de Avila, Juan de la Cruz, and many of the first Jesuits.

Francisco de Osuna (1497?-1540?) took his religious name from the Andalusian town in which he was born in the last decade of the fifteenth century, and where his family had worked as retainers to the Giron family (later Dukes of Osuna). Osuna's spiritual work, the *Primer Abecedario* is dedicated to Tello Girón, Conde de Ureña and señor de Osuna; his *Tercer Abecedario* to Tello Giron's brother Diego de Pacheco, Marques of Villena, in whose court Osuna resided from 1526 to 1530, in a period in which Pacheco was also entertaining a number of *alumbrados*. Although almost nothing is known of Osuna's background, the friar's spiritual works, several of which were written while he resided at the Franciscan monastery at Salceda (near Guadalajara) reveal a New-Christian temperament.

Francisco de Osuna entered the Franciscans in a period in which the order was undergoing rigorous internal reforms under the aegis of its general, Cardinal Cisneros. One aspect of these reforms, as I have already mentioned, was the establishment of eight *recolectorios* where Franciscan friars devoted themselves to mystical communion with God. It was in the *recolectorio* of Salceda that Osuna began writing his six *abecedarios espirituales*, the idea taken from Old Testament spiritual guides of

David, Solomon and Jeremías.⁶³ It was also while at Salceda that Osuna came into contact with the *alumbrados* and their radical religious views and, indeed, was captivated, at least for a short period, by the charismatic *beata* Francisca de Hernandez. In his *Tercer abecedario*, published in 1527, Osuna is careful to draw a distinction between his own brand of mystical practice (*recogimiento*) and that of the alumbrado sect (*dejamiento*) that had recently been castigated by the Inquisition; nevertheless, it is apparent in reading the *abecedarios* that the Franciscan friar carefully dissimulates his own non-conformist tendencies. “Sus palabras,” writes Melquiades Andres, “están muchas veces cuidadosa, por no decir sibilinamente cortadas y graduadas.” And in examining his views on mystical comunión, Marcel Bataillon notes that Osuna “hace verdaderos derroches de ingenio para sugerir la parte preponderante de la gracia divina en la vida espiritual más elevada, sin negar el valor del esfuerzo humano.”⁶⁴ Above all, Osuna shares with the Spanish illuminists a converso self-consciousness, a characteristic which manifests itself, as Melquiades Andres has noted, in his constant use of the Old Testament to explicate his religious views, in his attacks on race and blood prejudice (Andres might also have added, in his attack on lineage as a gauge of an individual’s worth),⁶⁵ and in his defense of the

⁶³ “E quise los copilar por abc, y en número ternario, por imitar a Jeremías, y al sabio Salomón, y al rey David, los cuales solos en la Sagrada Escritura se hallan haber escrito por abecedario en cierta manera de metros que entonces se usaba, comenzando ordenadamente por las letras abc” Prologue to the *Primer Abecedario*

⁶⁴ See Melquiades Andres introduction to the *Tercer abecedario*, B.A.C., Madrid, 1972, p.39; and Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus en España*, 1966, p. 168.

⁶⁵ Melquiades Andres, « Los alumbrados de Toledo en el Cuarto Abecedario Espiritual, o ley de amor, dr Francisco de Osuna (1530),» *Archivo Iberoamericano*, 1981, no. 161-162, p. 466. Another indication of Osuna’s converso provenance, not mentioned by Melquiades, is his attack on a society obsessed with correct lineage. See, for example the *Primer Abecedario*, Medina del Campo 1544, f.

conversos as both sincere Christians and true Hebrews. Andres particularly calls our attention to a passage in the *Cuarto abecedario*, in which Osuna writes:

Segun San Gregorio, la madre de Cristo carnal es la sinagoga, y sus hermanos son los hebreos, cuyo linaje tomó esta madre y hermanos: no quieren entrar en el templo de la Escritura a buscarlo, sino estánse fuera en la corteza y sentido literal..., y por tanto no ven a Cristo ni lo verán hasta que entren debajo del velo que...tiene Moysén puesto en la cara por no ver a Cristo; y dícense escroira por ser pocos y viles; ca no han quedado sino el desecho de los buenos que se han incorporado en Cristo, cabeza de los escogidos, quedándose algunos como heces de ya no se hace cuenta...Pues los verdaderos israelitas, que son los encorporados en Cristo, entra dentro en la letra...por ver a Cristo con los ojos de la fe y creen que es palabra del Padre, que ha de ser oída y hecha por obra de amor en la voluntad.⁶⁶

While it is not inconceivable that an Old-Christian writer could have written the above lines, it is most unlikely; rather, Osuna's comment, as Andres notes, would appear to be that of a converso who is intent on drawing a distinction between those New Christians, the true Isrealites, who sincerely believe in the New Law, or *Ley de Amor* as Osuna calls it, and those false conversos, who are still attached to the formal and formulaic religion that is Judaism.

For obvious reasons Francisco de Osuna did not make overt references to his Jewish roots in his spiritual works; nevertheless, for those investigators interested in prying between the lines of his texts, there are a number of indications that the Franciscan friar was not merely a New Christian, he was, on occasion, an indignant one. In reference to Osuna's converso character, Melquiades Andres has drawn our

122v: "Todas las hidalguías hallaréys que se fundan en tiranías y riquezas mal ganadas; e por uso e antigüedad venimos a dezir que este linage es mejor que aquel...lo qual yo nunca puedo acabar de entender, ni he podido saber en qué está la tal mejoría."

⁶⁶ Melquíades Andres, op.cit. p. 466.

attention to the Franciscan's attacks on race and blood prejudice, and his focus on the Old Testament as an expository text. However, there are in Osuna's works other, more subtle, indications of his New-Christian provenance. In the *Tercer abecedario*, for example, Osuna states that while morose Christians are unable to enjoy mystical communion with God, joyful Christians gain much from this practice; on the other hand joyful Christians are not particularly drawn to the Passion, while lugubrious ones are much more attached to the ceremony. Here Osuna discreetly distinguishes between true Christians, those who are genuinely disposed to embrace the transcendental aspects of their religion, and the impaired variety, obsessed with the image of an agonized Christ, the victim of Jewish (and, by association, converso) malice. A similar criticism of Old-Christian prejudice is implicit in the *alumbrados'* view that the Passion should be approached with joy, not sadness, and that Mournday Thursday, like Resurrection Sunday, should be an occasion for rejoicing. This viewpoint was, incidentally, condemned by the Inquisition in its edict of 1525, undoubtedly because it smacked of Jewish subversion.⁶⁷

An intellectual in an order that viewed intellectual activity with suspicion, the precocious Francisco Osuna was, it seems, regarded as an odd fish at the Salceda monastery. His interest in mystical practice also made him a figure of suspicion, as did his dress, diet and lineage, as he notes in his *Tercer abecedario*. Although he does not

⁶⁷ See Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, Mexico, 1966, p.176. Osuna wrote: "Lo que he conocido en esta vía del recogimiento es que aprovechan poco en ella los que son naturalmente tristes; y los que de sí mesmos son alegres y ordenna su alegría a Dios aprovechan mucho, y en el ejercicio de la sacra Pasi6n es el revés." It was not until the sixteenth century that Spain's Holy Week ceremonies evolved into the grandiose melancholic spectacles that we still see today. It is no coincidence, I think, that this interest in representing Christ's agony should evolve during the same period that Old Christian Spain was also presenting the conversos as tainted Christians.

elaborate on why his family background or his eating habits should have caused consternation in his order, he does indicate a possible reason why his fellow friars would attack his dress; it seems that Osuna was somewhat fastidious about personal cleanliness: Osuna writes, “Los perfumes deben rechazarse lo mismo que los malos olores; pero si hay que escoger entre las dos cosas, más vale un buen olor que uno malo, pues el primero es peligroso porque puede hacerse causa de deleite , el segundo provoca en *el hombre limpio* una manera de indignación, y así es más inquietado.”⁶⁸

While this statement appears innocuous enough, it is, in effect, a carefully aimed barb at an order whose religious prided themselves on their lack of personal hygiene, believing that their filthiness was a measure of their purity of faith.⁶⁹ This pride in an unclean body was also present in secular society, where it became, like idleness, a demonstration of one’s Old-Christian roots; cleanliness, by corollary, was the mark of the religiously tainted converso. Osuna’s insistence on bodily cleanliness, is, I would suggest, yet a further indication that he was from a background in which personal

⁶⁸ “En llegandote a Dios has de ser notado por soñoliento y tu sosiego sera llamado pereza...Seras notado en el comer y vestir como si fuese de la hacienda de sus padres; y cuando aqui no pudieran entrar, podran tachar en tu linaje o en la edad...” Francisco Osuna, *Tercer Abecedario*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1972, p. 568.

⁶⁹ “The mendicant Spanish monks, according to their practice of setting up a directly antagonistic principle, considered physical dirt as the test of moral purity and true faith; and by dining and sleeping from year’s end to year’s end in the same unchanged woolen frock, arrived at the height of their ambition, according to their view of the odor of sanctity, the *olor de santidad*. This was a euphemism for “foul smell,”but it came to represent Christian godliness, and many of the saints are pictured sitting in their own excrement. Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros, himself a Franciscan, induced Ferdinand and Isabel to close and abolish the Moorish baths after their conquest of Granada. “They forbade not only the Christians t the Moors from using anything but holy water. Fire, not water, became the grand element of inquisitorial persecution.” Richard Ford, *Gatherings from Spain*, cited by John A. Crow, Spain, *The Root and the Flower*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p. 33.

hygiene was regarded as an essential component of correct religious practice and not as an impediment to it.⁷⁰

Ignatius Loyola and the First Jesuits

Ignatius de Loyola had much in common with Francisco Osuna. Like Osuna, he studied at Alcala de Henares in its radical heyday,⁷¹ wrote a mystical manual, believed Christian ritual should be subordinate to private spirituality, and maintained close contact with a number of *alumbrados*. These commonalities were not, of course, coincidental. Like Osuna, Loyola's formative years were spent in converso environments where radical New-Christian reform voices were often present. This close proximity to conversos, most unusual for an hidalgo from a region which closely guarded its Old-Christian integrity, leads one to suspect that Loyola was himself a New Christian; and, indeed, there is a strong suggestion in the saint's biography that this was the case. Curiously enough, however, although almost every aspect of the saint's life has been analyzed *ad nauseum* by Ignatius scholars, the saint's possible New-Christian background is a subject that has, to my knowledge, never been broached.

Biographers (or hagiographers) have, on the other hand, made much of Ignatius de Loyola's noble background, as if this noble (pure-blood) line somehow

⁷⁰ In 1532, at the height of the alumbrado trials, Osuna left Spain for Paris, from whence he moved, at the beginning of 1534, to Antwerp. Here, during the next three years, he preached to the Spanish merchant community, while preparing two spiritual works for publication. In 1537 he returned to Spain, where he died in 1540 or 1541.

⁷¹ Osuna studied at Alcala from 1520 to 1523. Loyola entered Alcala in 1525 and left the following year, under pressure it seems from the Inquisition who regarded him with suspicion.

provides clues to the saint's spiritual trajectory. The Loyolas, it is true, were of an old Guipuzcoan family, whose hidalgo lineage possibly stretched back to the thirteenth century. But the family was by no means wealthy or prestigious. Ignatius's maternal family, on the other hand, were well-heeled parvenus, men who had become rich through the iron trade in the fifteenth century, before turning their attention towards improving their social status. Ignatius's maternal grandfather, Doctor Martin Garcia de Licona (his name taken from the Basque port town) was both a trader and a *letrado*, who had risen through the royal court's bureaucratic ranks to become *auditor* for the Court of Appeal at Valladolid and advisor to the Catholic Kings. In 1459 Licona bought himself a *mayorazgo* (title of mortmain) from an impecunious Guipuzcoan hidalgo, Ladron de Balda, and with it noble status. Eight years later, in 1467, Licona married off his daughter, Marina Sanchez Licona (Loyola's mother) to Beltrán de Oñaz (Loyola's father), thus strengthening the family's *hidalgo* status. For the Licona family the union was another step towards social respectability. For the Loyolas it was a profitable business transaction, bringing a much needed cash dowry of 1,600 florins and a link to court society—unlike the Liconas, the Loyolas were not well connected at court.

Was Ignatius de Loyola's maternal family converso? The fact that they were wealthy merchants is not in itself proof of a converso background—trade was not entirely dominated by New Christians. However, Martin Garcia de Licona was not just a merchant, he was a man of letters and a financial advisor at court—that is to say his

profile is very much that of a converso merchant professional.⁷² But it is not only his maternal family's merchant-professional background that hints at Loyola's converso provenance; there is also the saint's own biography, played out among conversos, first as a page in the Velázquez Cuéllar household, later as an itinerant preacher and student, and finally as the founder of the Jesuits, a religious order that maintained an open policy towards conversos long after the other orders had closed their doors to them.

Although born in Guipuzcoa (in 1492), Ignacio de Loyola did not remain long in the northern province. At the age of fourteen or fifteen he traveled south to the town of Arévalo, near Segovia, where he entered the household of Juan Velázquez Cuéllar and his wife María de Velasco, to whom Loyola was related, so we are told, through his mother's family. Juan Velázquez Cuéllar, administrator of the royal palace at Arévalo, was a member of the Cuéllar clan, a large, extended converso-merchant family who had taken their name from their town of origin near Segovia. This family, like the majority of successful Segovian merchants, had become wealthy through the wool trade before branching out into other merchant activities. In the early sixteenth century the Cuéllars maintained an extensive business network, with representatives in Spain, France and the Low Countries. Unlike other members of this extended family, however, the Velázquez Cuéllars had gained success not through trade but through royal service. Both Juan and his father were *contadores mayores* to the royal court, a

⁷² For Martín de Licona, see Darío de Aretillo, "Nuevos datos sobre el abuelo materno de san Ignacio de Loyola", *Archivum Historium Societatis Iesu*, XXVI, 1957, pp. 219-29.

position traditionally held by Jews or conversos, experienced in the ways of finance.⁷³ It was undoubtedly while Loyola was page to Juan Velázquez Cuellar, a position he held for twelve years, that he came into contact with those wealthy merchant families of Segovia and Medina del Campo, whom he would contact later in Antwerp for his own business venture—the founding of a religious order. It may also have been at Arévalo that Loyola first made contact with radical religious reform, for the Velázquez Cuellar family maintained close contact with one of Spain's most notorious *alumbrados*, the *beata* Francisca Hernandez, who was prosecuted by the Inquisition in 1529 for her heretical (illuminist) beliefs. There is documented evidence that Hernandez was a guest of Loyola's patron María de Velasco at the family's residence in the town of Jaramiel, in 1527. She was also a guest of María de Velasco's daughter Catalina de Velasco and Catalina's husband Bernadino de Velasco in their Valladolid home. Indeed, Francisca Hernandez was in permanent residence there during the eighteen months prior to her 1529 Inquisition trial.⁷⁴ The close relationship between the Velázquez Cuéllar family and Hernandez was probably forged after Loyola left Arévalo, in 1517. However, it would seem likely that the *beata* was a conduit for the family's nonconformist religious views rather than the source of these views; that is to

⁷³ The most famous of Spain's converso *contadores mayores* was Diego Arias, the *contador mayor* of Enrique IV, whose son became the Count of Puñorostro. For conversos as royal financial administrators, see Julio Caro Baroja, *op. cit.* vol. 1. p. 130. For the Velázquez Cuellar family, see Luis Fernández Martín, "El hogar donde Iñigo de Loyola se hizo hombre 1506-1517," *Archivum Historia Societatis Iesu*, XLIX (1980), pp.21-85, and Máximo Diago Hernando, "Los Velásquez de Cuellar, tenientes de Arévalo, en el horizonte político a fines de a edad media," *Cuandernos Abulenses*, 1991, pp. 11-40.

⁷⁴ Luis Fernandez, "Iñigo de Loyola y los alumbrados," *Hispania Sacra* (35), 1983, pp. 623-624.

say the views were very probably circulating in their court while Loyola was a page there.

In 1517, when Juan Velázquez Cuéllar died, Loyola moved north from Arévalo to Nájera, the home of the Duke of Nájera, Antonio Manrique de Lara, who was also distantly related to Loyola's mother's family. The Manriques, as I have previously mentioned, had gained a reputation as a noble house with close familial and professional ties to the converso community. One converso closely linked to Antonio Manrique's court was the radical curate Francisco Medrano, a disciple of the *alumbrado* Francisca Hernandez. Outspoken and provocative, Medrano found himself, on a number of occasions, in trouble with the Holy Office. On each of these occasions he was defended by the Duke.⁷⁵

It was while fighting in the Manrique ranks against a French incursion into Navarre, in 1521, that Loyola sustained a serious leg injury and was forced into a long convalescence at his family home in Guipuzcoa. It was during this convalescence, we are told, that Loyola was first drawn towards a spiritual vocation. However, it would seem likely that Ignacio's meditation on spiritual reform did not begin in his sick bed in Loyola, but some considerable time previously in the Velázquez Cuéllar and the Manrique de Lara courts, where radical religious views appear to have circulated freely.

Having decided to redirect his life along a spiritual path, Loyola set out, in January 1522, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The first leg of this trip took him to the monastery of Montserrat, near Barcelona, a center for *devotio moderna*. Loyola

remained at Montserrat for three days, during which time he confessed and did penance under the supervision of Fr. Juan de Chanones, a man who had devoted his life to disseminating the reform message in Spain. On leaving the convent, Loyola, for some reason, did not go directly to Barcelona, but made his way to the nearby town of Manresa, where he was befriended by a group of women led by Ines Pascual, a cotton merchant, with business interests in both Manresa and Barcelona. This pious group, so we are told, had been on their way to visit the Monstserrat monastery, something they did every Saturday, when they bumped into the pilgrim. Struck by Loyola's pious demeanor, Pascual found lodging for him in Manresa, and here he remained for almost a year, perfecting his spiritual exercises.

The above story comes down to us through a number of sources, all of which are Jesuit: Loyola's own autobiography, Polanco's and Ribadeneira's early chronicles of the Society, and a series of interviews with members of the Manresa community that formed part of the Jesuits' application for Loyola's canonization. What all these studies do not state is that Manresa, like those towns around Segovia in which Loyola had passed his youth, was a center for the textile trade and that this trade was controlled by conversos. The cotton merchant, Ines Pascual, Loyola's patron at Manresa, was, I assume, a converso; as indeed were her circle of friends who formed the small band of Loyola adherents. A list of these people appears in the application for Loyola's canonization in 1595, along with their professions: Bernardo Matella, tendero de lanas y telas; Juan Rossinyol, comerciante de lana; Mauricio Bertran, lanero; Magdalena Casamijana, viuda de Francisco que había sido negociante; Eleonor

Africana, mujer de Mateo Africà, que fue sastre; Eufrasina Roviralta, mujer de maestro Bernardo, mercader; Juana Malgarriga, viuda de Andrés que tiempo atras fue boticario...

I think it most unlikely that Loyola's meeting with Ines Pascual was fortuitous; nor do I believe that Ines and her friends became attracted to spiritual meditation as a result of their contact with this strange pilgrim. And I would like to suggest the following as an alternative scenario. In the late fifteenth century Abbot García de Cisneros, the cousin of Cardinal Cisneros, introduced *devotio moderna* practices into the Montserrat monastery near Manresa. It is my belief that these ideas gradually began to penetrate a predominantly converso middle-sort lay community in the nearby town, in the same way that those mystical practices of the Franciscan monks at the monastery of La Salceda had penetrated the converso community of Pastrana where one of the first *alumbrado* cells was detected. Ines Pascual and her friends who, we are told, visited the monastery at Monserrat every Saturday,⁷⁶ were, I would suggest, already adherents to Christian reform, and they were introduced to Loyola by someone at the monastery of Montserrat, perhaps Chacones himself, as kindred spirits. It is noteworthy, I think, that Loyola was not particularly well received by the community at Manresa, and it appears that this had as much to do with the company he kept as with his his own eccentric demeanor. In an interview with Jesuit chroniclers in 1582, Inés Pascual's stepson, Juan Sagrista Pascual, stated the following: "There were no

⁷⁶ The fact that Ines and her friends visited the monastery on a Saturday is a further indication that Manresa was a converso merchant town that maintained Saturday as the day of leisure. This was also the case of Castilian merchant center Medina del Campo. Indeed Medina has maintained this tradition up to the present day.

lack of envious and malicious people [in Manresa] who publicly attacked and muttered against these saintly exercises and against the person who practices them and his followers, in particular Juana Serrano, in whose house [Loyola] was a guest, and above all against my mother Inés Pascual, saying that she was the inventor and instigator of these disturbances and novelties as she had brought their author to the town and had kept him and protected him there.”⁷⁷ This vituperative attack on the Manresa community by Juan Sagrista Pascual would seem to indicate that Ines Pascual was head of a small faction in the town that had gained the reputation for unorthodox beliefs long before Loyola entered the story.

Loyola left Manresa for Barcelona in February 1523, where he remained a month before continuing his journey to Jerusalem. On returning from his pilgrimage in 1524, he renewed his ties with Ines Pascual, staying in the merchant’s house in Barcelona while he studied Latin under the humanist Jerónimo Ardévol; the classes were paid for by Inés. During this period Loyola also made the acquaintance of Ines’s brother, Antonio Pujol, a wealthy merchant whose interest in intellectual pursuit had led him to create an impressive library, which Loyola was now given free access to.⁷⁸ During his period in Barcelona Loyola also became acquainted with the court of the viceroy Fadrique de Portugal, and in particular with two members of the viceroy’s

⁷⁷ Ricardo Garcia-Villoslada, *San Ignacio de Loyola: Nueva Biografía*, B.A.C., Madrid, 1988, p. 205. “No faltaron envidiosos y maliciosos[en Manresa] que públicamente contradijeron y murmuraron de estos ejercicios santos y del que los hacía, y también de sus secuaces, en particular de Juana Serra, en cuya casa estaba recogido, y sobre todo se murmuraba de mi madre, Inés Pascual, diciendo que ella era la inventora de estos alborotos y novedades y su fomentadora, pues había traído al autor de ellos a la ciudad y lo sustentaba y amparaba en ella.”

⁷⁸ Testimony of Juan Pascual in Ignacio de Loyola’s proceso for beatification, 1582. Ibid, 259.

entourage, Lope de Caceres and Calixto de Saa. These two young men later took up residence with Loyola at Alcalá de Henares when he entered the Complutense university in 1526. Both men were from merchant backgrounds; Calixto de Saa was from a Portuguese merchant family; Lope de Caceres was a member of the Caceres family of Segovia, a converso merchant clan that had been prominent in the comunero rebellion of 1521.⁷⁹

In March 1526 Loyola moved from Barcelona to Alcalá, where he formed close ties with a Portuguese priest, Manuel Miona, who became his confessor, and the Alcalá printer Miguel de Eguía, who was in the process of producing a Castilian version of Erasmus's *Enchiridion*. Both Miona and Eguía were members of a circle who had formed around the *alumbrada* Francisca Hernandez, who, as I have noted previously, was also closely connected to Loyola's first patrons, the Velázquez Cuéllars; both men were tried for heresy in 1530.⁸⁰ Writing in 1988, Loyola's latter-

⁷⁹ See Francisco de Borja Medina, "Íñigo de Loyola y los mercaderes castellanos del norte de Europa. La financiación de sus estudios en la Universidad de Paris," *Hispania Sacra* (51) 1999, pp. 183-186. It is possible that Loyola had been familiar with members of the Caceres family while at Arévalo and with Don Fadrique de Portugal who was Bishop of Segovia from 1508-1511. Two of Loyola's devotees while he was in Barcelona were Don Juan de Zúñiga and his wife Estafania de Requesens, who were also attracted to the lay preacher Juan de Castillo, later executed as a Lutheran heretic. See Bataillon, *op. cit.* p. 185.

⁸⁰ Although Loyola always denied having any connection with the *alumbrados*, this was clearly untrue. Both Miona and Eguía formed part of his close circle, as did Beatriz Ramirez, who was denounced in 1532 to the Toledo tribunal of the Inquisition as an active participant in the illuminist movement of Alcalá. See John E. Longhurst, "Saint Ignatius at Alcalá 1526-1527," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, XXVI, 1957, pp. 252-256. Loyola also denied having been influenced by Erasmus. However, the Erasmus scholars Marcel Bataillon, A.H.T. Levi and James McConica seriously question this denial. Both Bataillon and McConica note that the *Spiritual Exercises* were influenced by Erasmus's *Enchiridion*, which was published in a vernacular version by Eguía in 1527, the same year that Loyola produced an early draft of his own work. A.H.T. Levi notes that the preface to Erasmus's commentary on Matthew's Gospel, published in 1522, "contains all the major features of Ignatius's spirituality embryonically, including the principle of the *discretio spirituum* (the discernment of the spirits) and, among much else taken by Ignatius, the idea of imaginatively reconstructing the episodes of Jesus' life for meditative prayer that was to form the body of the *Spiritual Exercises*." See A.H.T. Levi's

day biographer Ricardo Garcia-Villoslada describes the printer Eguia as an hidalgo. To be precise, the Eguias were wealthy wool merchants from Estella in Navarre, who had used their own wool money to found entailed estates (*mayorazgos*) and fund chapels, thus giving themselves a noble veneer.⁸¹ Two members of the family later joined the the Jesuit order. As for the printer Miguel Eguía, after serving a term in the Inquisition gaol, he reentered Estella society, where he used his fortune to buy himself a position on the town council.

Ignatius Loyola was not long at Alcalá de Henares before his own evangelical tendencies came under the scrutiny of the Inquisition. In November, 1526, Inquisition officials from the Toledo tribunal, acting on rumors that Loyola and his followers were engaged in clandestine illuminist activities, traveled to Alcalá to investigate the charges. However, after making some initial inquiries the Holy Office agents turned the case over to the Archbishop of Toledo, Alfonso de Fonseca, who, in turn, placed it in the hands of his vicar general Juan Rodríguez de Figueroa. On November 30, 1526 Rodríguez interviewed Loyola at the Archbishop's palace, at which time he informed him that he and his young followers should refrain from donning religious habits (Loyola and his friends were habitually clad in brown robes) which gave the erroneous

introduction to Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, Penguin, 1993, pp. xxxii-xxxiii; see also Bataillon op. cit. pp. 212-14 and 590-92; and James McConica, *Erasmus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 60.

⁸¹ In the thirteenth century Estella rivaled Burgos as an important mercantile center, its wealth generated by its Jewish merchants and bankers (*cambianistas*). However, in 1328 the town attacked and massacred its Jewish inhabitants, as a result of which its economy declined. By the sixteenth century Estella lagged far behind Burgos as a commercial center; nevertheless, it did maintain a strong mercantile community which, like its Burgos counterpart, had grown rich on the wool trade--Miguel Eguía's father was himself head of Estella's wool guild. This community, like the larger merchant community of Burgos, was dominated by conversos. For the Eguía family, see "El impresor Migel de Eguía procesado por la Inquisición (c. 1495-1546)" Miguel Eguía's chosen profession, printing, was

impression that they were authentic, theologically trained, friars. Three months later, Loyola was interviewed once again by Rodríguez, on this occasion in the Archbishop's prison, where he had been interned following more reports of his illuminist activities. It was during this second interview that Rodríguez asked him if he observed the Sabbath—which suggests that the vicar took it for granted that he was a converso. In reply, Loyola stated that in his country [Guipuzcoa] there were no Jews. This was perfectly true. In 1527 there were no Jews anywhere in Spain, at least officially. There were however a large number of uneasy New Christians, many of whom, despite popular myth, were located in the Basque country.

Despite the fact that the depositions from a number of witnesses had presented Loyola as the leader of an illuminist conventicle, Rodríguez did not prosecute him; he merely banned him and his disciples from evangelizing in Alcalá for three years. Why was the vicar so lenient? Why, indeed, was he even investigating a case that should have been investigated by the Inquisition? Could it have been that pressure was placed upon the Holy Office by the Archbishop, Alfonso de Fonseca, perhaps on the request of Loyola's noble contacts, to hand Loyola over to the archdiocese? It is significant, I think, that having been informed of his very light punishment, Loyola traveled to Valladolid for a personal interview with Alfonso Fonseca, who was at that moment attending the famous Valladolid hearing on Erasmus—as one of the Dutch humanist's supporters. Loyola himself says that he went to place the case in the Archbishop's hands, which a number of Loyola scholars have interpreted to mean that he was

dominated first by Jews and later by conversos. See J. Rubio's introduction to José Maria Madurell's *Historia de la Imprenta y Librería en Barcelona*, Barcelona, 1955.

petitioning Fonseca to rescind the ban on his preaching in Alcalá. However, it is more likely that Loyola was formally summoned to Valladolid, where the Archbishop proposed that he and his followers move to Salamanca, with the view to entering the university college that the prelate was in the process of establishing in the city.⁸² Here, Loyola and his disciples would have been able to gain theological qualifications, allowing them to preach with a certain amount of security, while being protected by the Archbishop himself. When Loyola writes, in his autobiography, that at the Valladolid meeting the Archbishop (whom he addresses as *voz* and not *usted*) “offered him everything,” I believe it likely that he was referring to this cloak of protection.⁸³

As it turned out, Loyola took advantage of Fonseca’s hospitality for only six weeks. In September, 1527, after having been questioned once again by religious authorities, he left Salamanca for the University of Paris, having decided, no doubt, that his increasing notoriety in Spain was detrimental to his plans for creating an evangelical organization.

It is at Paris, where Loyola studied from 1527 to 1535, that his close connections to a converso community become most evident. In fact, Loyola and a number of his student adherents were supported by converso merchant money for the

⁸² The college, established to provide Salamanca students with a humanist education, was opened in 1528. See Espinosa Maeso, “El Maestro Fernan Pérez de Oliva en Salamanca,” *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, vol. XIII, 1926, p.456.

⁸³ The Fonseca clan was a powerful presence in Salamanca. This power base had been established over three generations in which Fonsecas, as Bishops of Santiago de Compostela, also wielded power over Salamanca which, by some quirk formed part of the Archbishop of Santiago’s ecclesiastical jurisdiction. In 1523 Fonseca demonstrated his authority in the city by intervening in the trial of the converso illuminist Antonio Medrano, gaining his release from Salamanca’s diocesan authorities. See Luis Fernandez, “Iñigo Loyola y los alumbrados,” *op. cit.* pp. 596-597.

duration of their studies. Some of this financial aid came from certain patrons in Barcelona, prominent among whom was Inés de Pascual; much of it came from the converso merchant communities of Bruges and Antwerp.⁸⁴ One of these wealthy merchants was Juan de Cuéllar, in whose home Loyola often stayed during his business trips to Antwerp. A merchant from Segovia, Cuéllar had for some reason left Spain in 1506, never to return. While it is unlikely that Loyola had known the merchant personally while he lived in Segovia, it is probable that through his early patron, Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, he had become acquainted, in his youth, with other members of this merchant's extended family.

Another of Loyola's northern merchant patrons was Gonzalo de Aguilar, whom he stayed with while soliciting money in Bruges. Aguilar, a Burgos merchant, was married to Ana de Castro, a member of an enormously wealthy and politically influential converso merchant dynasty from Burgos. Loyola, it seems, was put in contact with Aguilar by Juan de Castro, a member of the Castro family whom he had befriended in Paris. While in Paris, Loyola had also formed close attachments to Pedro de Garay, Alfonso, Bernadino and Jerónimo Salinas, and Pedro de Maluendo, all of whom were members of Burgos' converso merchant families well situated in the business communities of Bruges and Antwerp. It is thus likely that Loyola also contacted these families while on his missions of finance in Flanders. Later, a number

⁸⁴ For Loyola's connection to the Spanish merchant communities of Amsterdam and Bruges see Francisco de Borja Medina, *op. cit.* pp. 159-206.

of the Flemish merchants named above became benefactors of the infant Society of Jesus.⁸⁵

It was at the University of Paris that Loyola also gathered about him six men who, several years later, would become the first members of the Society of Jesus. These men were Pedro Fabro, Francisco de Javier, Diego Lainez, Alfonso Salmerón, Simón Rodríguez and Nicolás Bobadilla. Of these men, it was an open secret that Diego Lainez and Nicolás Bobadilla were from converso families. As for the others, the only reason, in my view, that they remain Old-Christian is because Jesuit chroniclers have shied away, wherever possible, from making a close examination of their backgrounds. Francisco Javier is usually described as an hidalgo; in fact he was from a family of jurists and *letrados* who had only recently purchased *mayorazgos* or entails. Javier was also the brother-in-law of the Alcalá printer, Miguel de Eguía, whose own family sported a similar professional profile to his own. As for the *Toledano*, Alfonso Salmerón, a close friend of Lainez from the two scholars' student days at Alcalá, he is described as an Old Christian solely on the testimony of the early Jesuit historian Pedro Ribadeneyra, who, intent on covering up the early Jesuits' Jewish roots, wrote formulaically that the Salmerón family were “pobres, pero limpios y virtuosos.” Salmeron, like Ribadeneyra himself, was an outspoken defender of the conversos' rights to enter the religious orders. “Superiors of religious orders,” he

⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that converso money also financed Juan de Avila's Andalusian colleges and the first Barefoot Carmelite convents established by Teresa de Avila.

wrote to Ribadeneyra in 1553, “must be warned that no greater pestilence can spread among religious men than the creation of distinctions between races.”⁸⁶

Like the majority of Spain’s sixteenth-century religious reformers, Ignacio Loyola was formed in converso environments, among men and women who most needed to redefine the term “Christianity”. A converso aura envelops both Loyola’s

⁸⁶ William V. Bangert S.J., *Claude Jay and Alfonso Salmerón: Two Early Jesuits*, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1985, p. 247. Another early entrant into the order was Jerome Nadal, a man who exemplifies the mixture of fervency and disquiet that characterizes the Society of Jesus in its infancy. Although he is invariably presented as a somewhat judeophobic Old Christian, Nadal was almost certainly a member of the converso commercial and professional community of Palma de Mallorca, where the surname figures prominently in Inquisition investigations. Nadal himself revealed nothing of his background in his writings, although we do know that his father was a wealthy attorney. In 1526 Nadal entered the University of Alcalá, where he studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Here he became acquainted with Nicolas Bobadilla and Diego Lainez. Later at the University of Paris he renewed his acquaintance with these students who probably introduced him to Loyola. Nadal appears to have been both attracted to Loyola’s evangelism and repelled by his non-conformity, or so he stated much later. On leaving Paris, in 1536, he journeyed to Avignon, where he was housed by a Catalan merchant while he completed his studies at the city’s university. (Avignon boasted a large community of Catalan and Mallorcan merchants who conducted business with their Florentine and Genovese counterparts in this papal enclave) While in Avignon, Nadal began studying Hebrew with rabbis in the city’s well-protected Jewish *aljama*. Impressed by the Spanish scholar’s knowledge of Hebrew, this community soon asked him to be their chief rabbi. According to Nadal, in an account of the incident written many years after the fact, he had replied: “Out of my sight you pigs, you heretics tied to the Mosaic Law, a law you neither understand nor observe. What have you seen in me to make you imagine I would leave the faith of Christ to become a Jew?” Reacting to this attack, the Jews had then denounced him to the city authorities as an illegal alien (Francis I had recently decreed that all Spanish nationals should leave France on pain of death). When, however, Nadal began to assail his accusers in Hebrew, the local officials believed that they were in the presence of some internal Jewish dispute, and they released him from their custody. Soon after this incident, Nadal succumbed to a long period of depression and spiritual examination which resulted, finally, in his joining the Jesuits.

What should we make of Nadal’s strange encounter with Avignon’s Jewish community? Did the leaders of this community really offer an Old-Christian student of Hebrew the chance to lead them? Or did they offer the position to a converso who had expressed an interest in both their language and culture? My own belief is that the Avignon encounter reveals a New Christian who was torn between embracing his Sephardic past and rejecting it. Finally, it seems, he chose rejection. Although Nadal was not himself in favour of introducing *limpieza* restrictions into the Jesuit order, he was extremely sensitive to attacks on the Jesuits lack of orthodoxy. It was Nadal who recommended that Juan de Avila’s followers be closely vetted on theological issues before being allowed to become Jesuits. Nadal also has the reputation of having edited Loyola’s *Autobiography* to produce a sanitized, politically correct account of the early movement. For an account of Nadal’s confrontation with the Jews of Avignon and his misgivings about allowing Avila’s disciples into the Society, see William V. Bangert S.J., *Jerome Nadal, S.J. 1507-1580*, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1992, pp. 8-2 and 104-108. For Nadal’s influence on the final version of Loyola’s autobiography, see John W. O’Malley, op. cit. pp. 65-69.

biography and that of his order, especially during its infancy. This was not the organization that was later seen as a bulwark to Protestant heresy, but a non-conformist religious body that rejected monastic seclusion in favor of urban interaction, and scholastic exegesis in favor of mystical devotion and a humanist syllabus—characteristics that many churchmen associated with Erasmian heterodoxy. But what most conveyed upon the Jesuits an air of radicalism, or even subversion, was its New-Christian membership. It was this converso character that brought the Jesuits into conflict with the archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez Siliceo, when in 1551 it founded a college at Alcalá de Henares. Siliceo, whose animosity toward converso curates had led to the infamous Toledo *limpieza de sangre* statute of 1547, was adamantly against allowing a religious establishment in his diocese that was renowned for its New-Christian composition.⁸⁷ The Archbishop thus made it evident that his approbation for the college was contingent on the Jesuits adopting a *limpieza* requirement, similar to his Toledo statute. This Loyola refused to countenance; however, to avoid an ugly and protracted conflict with the venomous primate, he gave Silicio to understand that no conversos would be involved in the Alcalá college. There is no indication that Loyola took this assurance very seriously; in fact, without his investigating the backgrounds of the Jesuits involved in the college—something he refused to do—there was no possibility of his rigorously enforcing the ban.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ In 1547 Salicio introduced a *limpieza* requirement into the Toledo Cathedral chapter. The archbishop's action promoted increased interest in *limpieza* legislation in other religious and civil institutions. See J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, Penguin Books, London, 1990, pp. 221-223.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 294-295. The Jesuit order was continuously attacked during these early years for Jewish composition. In 1572, for example, the rector of the Jesuit college at Córdoba wrote to the new general Francisco Borja, stating that all those boys in the city who believed they had a vocation for a religious

Pressure to prohibit New Christians from entering the Society did not only come from outside the order. There was also, in these early years, growing agitation among an Old-Christian section of the Jesuits for a *limpieza* requirement. Despite this pressure, Loyola remained firm to his conviction that the Society was to be free to all Christians.⁸⁹ Indeed, the General expressed his solidarity with the New-Christian membership in forthright terms, stating, on more than one occasion, that he wished he himself were of Jewish ancestry, as Jesus Christ was a Jew—a remark which undoubtedly scandalized many of his contemporaries;⁹⁰ as far as Old-Christian Spain was concerned Jesus' Jewishness was an unfortunate impediment that had been corrected, fortunately, by his mother's immaculate status. So why did Loyola state that he wished he were Jewish? Once again, I believe, we are face to face with the perennial converso dilemma. On the one hand there was the practical need to dissimulate one's Jewish roots (as I believe Loyola had done in his interview with Rodríguez Figueroa at Alcalá, in 1526) and, on the other hand, there was the psychological necessity to defend the equal, if not superior, Christian status of one's

order entered the city's Dominican convent, as the Jesuit college had the reputation of attracting only Jews. *Ibid.* p. 190.

⁸⁹ One of the most ardent supporters of a *limpieza de sangre* statute within the order was Antonio Araoz, the nephew of Loyola's sister in law, Magdalena de Araoz. Araoz continually called for a *limpieza* statute, citing the court's displeasure at the Society's reluctance to impose this ban. In reply to these demands, Loyola told his relative categorically that under no circumstance would the Society exclude New Christians on grounds of race. William V. Bangert S.J. *Claude Jay and Alfonso Sameron*, op cit. p. 247.

⁹⁰ John W. O'Malley, op. cit. p. 190.

family. Loyola's openly provocative statement was, I would suggest, a small act of defiance against a society that had forced him to reject his antecedents.⁹¹

⁹¹ In his biography of Loyola, José Ignacio Tellechea writes, "Strangely enough we do not find Ínigo making the slightest allusion anywhere to his mother." Tellechea himself attributes this reticence to Marina Sanchez de Licona's death while Ignacio was still an infant, which "left its indelible mark on the deepest part of his psych." José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras (translated Cornelius Michael Buckley, S.J.), *Ignatius of Loyola. The Pilgrim Saint*, Loyola University Press, Chicago, pp. 18-19.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM ALCALA TO SEVILLE: CONVERSO NON-CONFORMISM IN PRE-TRIDENTINE SPAIN

Because much of our information on early sixteenth-century religious non-conformism comes from the Toledo Inquisition tribunal archive, the tendency is to see the phenomenon as one limited to the Toledo area. This is an error. There is no reason to believe that those heterodox views expressed by the *alumbrados* of Guadalajara or by certain humanists at Alcalá were not shared by conversos throughout the peninsula—especially by those in the south, where converts were, according to contemporary accounts, much less resolute Catholics than their northern counterparts. It is thus probable that many of the opinions attributed to the *alumbrados* Pedro Ruiz de Alcaráz or Maria Cazalla and her brother Juan were current among conversos throughout Andalusia, where, in fact, the Cazallas were born into a converso professional family who worked as administrators for Pedro Puertocarreros, the Count of Palma, another nobleman closely linked to the New-Christian community.¹

The conversos of Andalusia, like those of New Castile, dominated the middle sort society of the cities and major towns of their region. And like their New-Castilian counterparts they maintained close ties with certain members of the local nobility, introducing humanist and evangelical ideas into a number of Andalusia's major noble households. The strength of the relationship between certain Andalusian noble

¹ Luis Puertocarrero, the first Count of Palma, gave refuge to many conversos on the run from anti-converso attacks in the last decades of the fifteenth century. From the Ciudad Real Inquisition trial records of 1483 it is evident that many of these conversos reverted to their old religion while residing in the town of Palma (near Cordoba), and that they did so with the nobleman's knowledge. See Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial*, The Magnes Press, University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 1981, p. 68.

families and the middle sort converso community becomes apparent when we examine the reaction of the nobles to the establishment of the first Inquisition tribunal in Seville in 1480. Noble families not only defended their converso accountants and advisors against the Inquisition officials, they also provided safe havens for converso merchants and artisans on the run from a rampant Holy Office. During the first months of Inquisition activity in Seville, eight thousand persons fled to territory controlled by Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, while many others made for Sanlucar de Barrameda, the *señorio* of the Medina Sidonia family, a longtime ally of the New Christians.² Other nobles who leant support to the conversos during this period were Fadrique Enriquez , the Marquis de Tarifa (who I will return to in later section), Pedro de Puertocarrero, the Count of Palma, and Fernando Rodriquez de Cordoba, Marquis of Priego, the head of a noble clan that, like the Mendozas, was strongly influenced by converso religious reformers.

The Fernandez de Cordoba family was characteristic of the new nobility; that is to say, it descended from a poor but ambitious northern hidalgo who came south in the late thirteenth century looking to grab land in the Reconquest.³ Later, in the fourteenth century, the family sided with Enrique Trastamara in his rebellion against his half brother King Pedro the Cruel, and as a result of this support was awarded large tracts of land in the province of Cordoba, when the pretender became King Enrique II,

² We should not get carried away with the idea that these were totally altruistic gestures on the part of the nobility; the conversos were a valuable economic commodity which noble families were reluctant to see destroyed.

³ According to the Enciclopedia Heráldica y Genealógica the Priego family descended from one “Muño o Nuño Fernandez, Ricohombre de Galicia, Señor de Témez y de Chantada y Conquistador de Córdoba y Sevilla.”

in 1367. Having ascended several rungs of the noble ladder, the Fernandez de Cordoba consolidated its position as a family of substance by forming lucrative ties to Cordoba's wealthy converso community. When this community found itself under threat in the violent anti-converso riots of 1473, it was Alonso Fernandez de Cordoba (or Aguilar) who came to its rescue.⁴ Later, in 1506, it was Alonso's son, Pedro, the first Marquis of Priego, who clashed with Cordoba's brutal Inquisition official, Diego Ródriguez Lucero, storming the Inquisition gaol and releasing its inmates—almost all of whom were conversos convicted of Judaizing. In the same year, the Marquis refused to allow Inquisition officials into his territories when they came to claim money from the converso community for a *composición*. For these actions an enraged King Ferdinand stripped him of all his Crown offices, bonds and grants.⁵

Pedro's daughter, Catalina, Marchioness of Priego, was also influenced by her close ties to the converso community, and in particular to the converso preacher Juan de Avila, whom she supported in his missionary work, undertaken essentially among the New-Christian community of Andalucia. It should be underlined that the Marchioness was not patronizing the orthodox Catholic preacher of hagiographic fame, but a controversial figure who had early in his preaching career been imprisoned by the Holy Office for his radical views. It was Avila who introduced the

⁴ See Antonio Dominguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y America*, 26. Fernandez de Cordoba personally confronted the Old-Christian ringleader, a blacksmith, and ran him through with a lance.

⁵ Joseph Perez, *Crónica de la Inquisición en España*, 110 and fn 50; and Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana*, vol. 1, 57. Another member of the Fernandez de Cordoba family, el Gran Capitán protested the introduction of the order of Jewish expulsión in the kingdom of Naples while military governor in 1504. As a result of his action the order was suspended. It was not until 1534 that it was reintroduced. See Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y America*, Ediciones Istmo, Madrid, 1978, p. 47.

Marchioness's family to Ignatio Loyola's recently founded Company of Jesus. The Marchioness was personally instrumental in founding a Jesuit college in the town of Montilla, where her family resided, and in Cordoba; and the Marchioness's son Antonio de Cordoba, who had joined the Jesuits in 1554, was nominated the Cordoba institution's first rector. Again, it should be noted that in supporting the Jesuits, the Fernandez de Cordoba family were allying themselves with a religious group whose controversial character was intimately linked to its converso membership.

Unlike the Mendozas or the Manriques, the Fernandez de Cordoba family did not produce men of letters. Their court at Montilla was, however, associated with scholarly activity. One member of this erudite enclave was the first Marquis's physician, Dr. Antonio Morales, a man renowned for his learning, who was the first occupant of the Chair of Philosophy and Metaphysics at the University of Alcala. The Marquis is said to have bought a building in Cordoba, reputed to have been built on the site of Seneca's birth, and presented it to Morales, stating that it was only fitting that another wise Cordoban live there. Dr. Morales wife, Mencia de Oliva, was the daughter of another medical man and scholar, and the sister of the famous humanist, Fernan Pérez de Oliva. One of Mencia's and Antonio's sons, Agustin Oliva was also a physician and scholar; their second son, Ambrosio de Morales, was another celebrated humanist, author of the *Cronica general*, a history of Spain to the time of Charles V.⁶

⁶ For Ambrosio Morales family background see Rafael Ramirz de Arellano, *Ensayo de un catálogo biografico*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 349-351.

Agustin Oliva's Leg of Ham

No scholar to my knowledge has broached the subject of Ambrosio Morales' converso character; yet his family background, dominated by erudite medical men, would indicate that this was the case. There is, however, a stronger piece of evidence for such a proposition; this is a work, now located in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, in which Morales' brother, Dr. Agustin Oliva and a certain Diego Lopez accuse each other in verse, over the space of seventy four pages, of being New Christians and heretics. This work was cited by William Atkinson in his 1927 monograph of Fernan Pérez Oliva, attributing it, inaccurately, to Pérez Oliva's father. Anderson had undoubtedly viewed the work, and yet, curiously, he makes no mention of its theme. He uses it only as proof of Pérez Oliva senior's literary pretensions, stating tersely that he exchanged verse correspondence with a Diego López "arising out of a gift from López to the doctor of 'unas pocas cerdas y esta copla,' and that "its sprightly quintillas abound in good-humoured personalities."⁷ In fact the dialogue begins with Lopez, a Cordoban schoolmaster, sending Dr. Agustin de Oliva, (Ambrosio Morales's brother) some pork, informing him snidely that if the meat makes him ill, he can, being a doctor, use medicine to cure himself. This provokes a long exchange in which both men accuse each other of coming from New-Christian backgrounds, López intimating that the Olivas were Muslims while Oliva responds with accusations that López's family were Jews. Oliva states that members of the López family were silk

⁷ William Atkinson, "Hernan Pérez de Oliva, a Biographical and Critical Study," *Revue Hispanique*, 71, 1927, p. 311. Curiously María Luisa Cerrón Puga, who has recently written a number of critical studies on Pérez de Oliva, makes no reference to the poem.

merchants and tax farmers (converso occupations); López retorts that Oliva's family were money lenders and spice merchants (other converso occupations, albeit ones that are normally associated with Jews and Judeoconvertos rather than with Mudejars and Moriscos). Both make allusions to *sambenitos* (the sackcloth worn by conversos convicted of heresy), although, understandably, neither man cites specific instances of Inquisition prosecutions. And both men accuse each other of having non-Christian eating habits—of consuming garlick and eggplants, and of rejecting all pork products. In one passage of the document, López accuses Oliva of buying pork, but only to sell it later—a tantalizing remark, given the fact that on his death in 1591 Ambrosio Morales (Oliva's brother) had stored in his house sixteen pounds of ham, several pounds of which was moth-eaten.⁸ In another section, López attacks the surname Oliva, which he states is a corruption of Olivares, a name associated with conversos. Oliva replies that one's surname does not necessarily provide clues to one's background. And to illustrate his point he mentions the Marques of Carpio (López de Haro) who has the same surname as his antagonist, and the Duke of Infantado whose family name, Mendoza, was also that of a Cordoban dog catcher. While this introduction of the López de Haro and Mendoza surnames would seem to be casual, it is, I would claim, yet another example of converso double entendre, in this case a sub-textual nod at the two noble families' own close ties to the New-Christian community.

⁸ See the inventory of Ambrosio Morales possessions in Rafael de Ramirez de Arellano, *Ensayo de un Catálogo Biografico*, Madrid, 1922, p. 380. The entry reads: "Eleven pounds of bacon in two pieces. Two small moth-eaten hams weighing five pounds. It seems to me that this is again proof that while conversos abandoned their religion they did not, indeed could not, abandon elements of their culture."

Oliva's and López's final round of epistolary sniping takes place while the former is resident at the country estate of Pedro de Puertocarrero, the Count of Palma, where he is treating the nobleman for some illness.⁹ Oliva writes to López, telling him that the Count has been inquiring about López's family, and that, not wishing to lie, he had informed the nobleman about their Jewish roots. In reply to this attack, López writes to Puertocarrero, denouncing the Olivas as backsliding conversos. The Count responds by defending the doctor, while stating that López's grandfather and other family members were burnt by the Inquisition as heretics. In his reply to this accusation López recommends that the Count examine his own family's coat of arms, which, he states, has stains (*manchas*) on both its Aragonese and Portuguese sides. And at this point the work comes abruptly to an end.

The above exchange between Oliva and Lopez was not an unusual one in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain. Indeed, it would appear to have formed part of a literary subgenre already apparent in the *Cancionero de Baena*.¹⁰ In his work *Los Judiós en la Espana Moderna y Contemporánea*, Caro Baroja notes a number of such exchanges. One of these concerns the Admiral of Castile, Fadrique Enriquez, and his retainer, the poet Gabriel Mena. It is reported that one day Enriquez (whose grandmother was a convert) sent some pigs' trotters to the converso Mena with the following lines attached: *Estos pies de puerco tomo/El señor que no los come* (These

⁹ See note 1 for the Puertocarrero family's close links to a converso community.

¹⁰ For examples of converso burlesque poetry in the *Cancioneros*, see Cristina Arbos Ayuso, "Los cancioneros del siglo XV como fuente para la historia de los judíos españoles," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World congress of Jewish Studies*, World Union of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1982, pp. 35-42; and Yirmiyaha Yovel, "Converso Dualities in the First Generation: The *Canioneros*", *Jewish Social Studies*, vol 4 no. 3, 1998, pp. 1-28.

pigs' trotters are received by the gentleman who does not eat them). In reply Mena merely added a "d" to the first word in the second line, so that it now read: Estos pies de puerco tomo/Del señor que no los come (These pigs' trotters are received from the gentleman who does not eat them).¹¹

While many of these exchanges appear acrimonious to a present day reader, their vituperative character may have been merely a required component of the genre. For example, while Dr. Oliva accuses López of Judaizing, he continues to call him his friend and to provide medical care for his family. Furthermore, he sends his son to López's school, even though he insists that the schoolmaster is using it, out of hours, as a synagogue. Why then did the two men exchange these verbal attacks? The most likely explanation is that it was a ritual catharsis—a means of laying open one's secret history in the form of a somewhat formulaic verbal joust with another erudite New Christian. This could explain why Oliva not only retained the correspondence, but also transcribe it in the form of a literary work, apparently for an intimate circle of scholars associated with the court of the Duke of Palma. However, it is also likely that in collating the two sets of verse, Dr. Oliva had another purpose in mind, to show that few—at least among the middle-sort and noble social strata—were immune to accusations of tainted blood. It is not accidental, I think, that the work ends with López stating that the noble Puertocarrero family was also of dubious lineage. Perhaps, then, Oliva's aim was, in part, to attack the hypocrisy of *limpieza de sangre*.

¹¹ Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, Istmo, Madrid, 1986, p. 307 fn 50. Baroja also notes that the converso Francisco López de Villalobos maintained a long bantering correspondence with the Admiral of Castile, both men making humorous references to the other's Jewish roots. See Julio Caro Baroja "Un perfil renacentista: el doctor Francisco López de Villalobos," *Tiempo de historia*, VI (1980), no. 70, 108-121.

Agustin Oliva's burlesque poem is of interest to us for a number of reasons. First, it suggests that the noble Puertocarrero family played host to an intellectual circle that was, like those associated with the Mendoza and Manrique courts, predominantly converso. Second, it presents us with yet another example of sixteenth-century Spain's obsession with Jewish and Moorish taint—something to which Oliva and his antagonist López were particularly sensitive as middle-sort professionals forced to make public denial of their family history. And third it confirms to us what we already surmised, that the humanists Ambrosio Morales and Fernan Pérez de Oliva were conversos. Indeed, not only were they conversos, it seems, but they were from a converso family in which converso issues were discussed openly. Of course, neither Morales nor Pérez de Oliva were at liberty to make overt references to their New-Christian background in their published works as Agustin did in his private poem; nevertheless, it is apparent from examining their works—and particularly those of Pérez de Oliva—that their converso status strongly influenced their humanist credo.¹²

¹² As I have stated above, the exchange of humorous barbs was not unusual in Judeoconverso circles. What is somewhat unusual about the Oliva-Lopez exchange is that one of the protagonists, Dr Oliva, is accused of coming not from a Jewish, but a Muslim background. Indeed, the claim would appear to be somewhat spurious, given the fact that the Oliva family's professional activities (medicine, trade, money lending) are those generally attributed to a middle class urban Judeoconverso community; in contrast, Spain's Morisco population is associated with the more humble agricultural pursuits or with street vending. One is tempted to conclude that Agustin Morales changed his own converso status from Jewish to Muslim in the editing stage, all the better to deny it. A passage from Fernan Pérez de Oliva's *Razonamiento para la navegacion del rio Guadalquivir* also seems to indicate that the Olivas were of Jewish background. Pérez Oliva writes: "Cierto, si las otras ciudades de España a ella [Cordoba] parecieran, no fuera el tirano Rodrigo señor de España, no entrarán en ella moros, no echarán de nuestros templos nuestra sancta religión, no sembrarán en los corazones de los cristianos la secta maldita de Mahoma, no nos dieran que llorar en la sangre de los nuestros hasta nuestros días." Here the nuestro would appear to be a subtle reference to the Jews not Christians, who have just been described as religious turncoats (or mozarabs). Certainly the phrase "nos dieran que llorar en la sangre de los nuestros hasta nuestros días" would seem to be more applicable to a persecuted Jewish (and judeoconverso) community than a Christian one.

Fernan Pérez de Oliva (1494?-1532)

Fernan Pérez de Oliva was born in Cordoba in or around the year 1494. We have no information on his mother, not even her name, although there are the usual perfunctory references to her coming from a distinguished family. His father, also named Fernan Pérez de Oliva, was a well-to-do physician and scholar, who took charge of his son's early studies. In 1508 Oliva entered the University of Salamanca, where he studied philosophy and the humanities. From here he moved first to the recently established Complutense University, to perfect his Latin, and then, in 1512, to the University of Paris. Two years later he was in Rome, living with an uncle who was employed at the papal court, and pursuing yet more studies in philosophy and the humanities. When this mysterious uncle died, Pope Leo X offered Oliva his office and benefices; however, the nephew turned down the offer believing he would be unable to execute his duties and study at the same time. He then moved once more to Paris where, he tells us, he studied a number of subjects, including Aristotle's *Ethics*. In 1524 he returned to Cordoba. Here he wrote the first of his two *razonamientos*, or critical studies, *El razonamiento sobre la navegación del Guadalquivir*. Two years later he moved once more to Salamanca, this time taking his nephew Ambrosio Morales with him, where he temporarily substituted Doctor Juan Martínez Siliceo in the chair of Natural Philosophy.¹³

¹³ William Atkinson, op. cit. p. 321. Juan Martínez Siliceo, later Archbishop of Toledo, was responsible for the famous (or infamous) 1548 *limpieza de sangre* statute banning all conversos from clerical office in his cathedral.

This teaching position at Salamanca was, it seems, Oliva's first taste of employment. His long duration as a student, over sixteen years, is testimony not only to his love of letters but also to a not inconsiderable private income. We gain some indication of the extent of this income in a letter Oliva wrote to an archdeacon in Seville in 1525, in which he offers to exchange a number of the benefices he held in Cordoba for that of the archdeaconry. These benefices were: "en el obispado de Cordova la prestamera de Montemaior y la de Belmonte, y en El Cañaverál otra, y en Chillon un beneficio y en Sancta Marina de Cordova otra, y en este obispado uno muy bueno en Las Cabeças." Clearly, the thirty-three-year-old Oliva was not attracted to Salamanca University by its professorial salaries alone, which, in any case, were meagre. My own view is that he entered the university to help transform it from a conservative, scholastic institution to a progressive, humanist one, an objective indicated in Cristobál Villalón's *El Scholastico*, in which a loquacious Oliva expatiates on the dire state of university education at Salamanca.

El Scholastico describes a meeting held by a group of friends from Salamanca University in the summer of 1528, in a hamlet on the banks of the river Tormes, where the scholars have repaired to escape the city heat and to discuss the state of Spanish scholarship. Among this group (which appears to be predominantly converso) are Villalón himself, Francisco de Bobadilla y Mendoza (subsequently the Bishop of Burgos and author of the famous *Tizon*), Francisco de Navarra (the rector of Salamanca University), Alonso Osorio (son of Charles V's mayordomo, Alvaro Osorio), Antonio de Velasco (son of Velázquez Cuellar, Loyola's first patron), Alvaro

de Mendoza, (son of the Count of Rivadavia), Francisco de la Vega, Alberto de Benavides, Francisco Manrique, Gabriel Manrique, and Fernan Pérez de Oliva, who generally leads the discussions.¹⁴ The debates focus on a number of questions related to scholarly formation, all of which provide the author, mostly through the mouthpiece of Oliva, with an opportunity to attack a hidebound university system that continued to reward indolence and ignorance while shunning a classical scholarship merely because it was written by pagans. In a passage that echoes both Elio Nebrija in his *Gramática latina* and Desiderius Erasmus in his *Anibarborum liberes*, Oliva inveighs against “unos barbaros idiotas los quales se entremeten sin saber ni ser examinados a enseñar haziendo gran profesion de letras / loando sus necedades / estimando verdaderos barbarismos y solecismos sin saber lo que es.”

Estos tales [Oliva continues] luego presumen decir mal de las doctrinas y lecturas de los sabios antiguos: de aquellas poesias y coloquios diciendo que corrompen las buenas costumbres / y que dañan el juicio aquella gentilidad. Asi estos varones de archadia (verdaderos asnos en el saber) hallo yo que son veneno y pestelencia para los juicios y ingenios de la juventud: y que estos son total causa de su perdition y del aborrescimiento y destierro de las buenas letras y saber. Y el remedio desta falta esta a cargo de los gobernadores y rectores de las republicas y universidades / a cuyo cargo esta todo lo demas / quanto mas deven proveher en esto de que tanto cuelga el ser suyo propio / y el de la republica.¹⁵

¹⁴ The four members of this group I have been able to identify--Bobadilla y Mendoza, Velasco, Villalon and Pérez de Oliva all come from converso backgrounds. For Bobadilla's converso lineage, see the introduction to his *Tizon*; for Velasco's converso background see Chapter Two of this study; for the author Cristobal Villalon's background see Joseph J. Kinkaid, *Cristobal de Villalón*, Twayne Publishers Inc, New York, 1973, pp. 137-141 and 150. Once again the Mendoza and Manrique families are closely aligned to what is essentially a converso reform movement. Villalón's scholarly gathering takes place almost a year to the day after the famous Valladolid conference of 1527 that examined Erasmus' religious orthodoxy. At the Valladolid conference the University of Valladolid professors formed most of the prosecution panel. In *El Scholastico* Villalón is reversing the situation. Here an Erasmian group, led by Pérez de Oliva, places Salamanca's orthodox professors on trial for intellectual barbarism.

¹⁵Cristóbal de Villalón, *El Scholastico*, C.S.I.C, Madrid, 1967, p. 64.

Moved by Oliva's words, Navara, at that moment Salamanca University's rector, proposes that "los que tenemos alguna facultad para poderlo remediar [esta situación], lo procuremos." In fact, Oliva himself had already begun to move in this direction. In January 1528, some months before Villalón's informal colloquium took place, he had accepted the Archbishop of Toledo Alonso de Fonseca's invitation to be a foundation member of his colegio mayor, the Colegio del Arzobispo, an institution created by the reform-minded cardinal with the view of offering students a humanist education based on Erasmian principles.¹⁶ Shortly after the college's foundation, Oliva was made rector of the institution, a position he held up to his death in 1531. Also around this time, and as the result of some elaborate behind the scenes machinations, he became university rector, a post that gave him an opportunity to initiate a number of reforms along humanist lines. Just five days into his tenure, he announced to the university senate that there was "mucha necesidad de aver exerciçios de gramática en este studio; que avia neçesidad que se hiçiesen seys cursos para el exerciçio della con salario conveniente"¹⁷ The courses were duly organized and masters of Latin grammar appointed. One of the texts for study suggested by Oliva was Erasmus's *Copia Verborum*.¹⁸

¹⁶ There were four foundation members of the Colegio del Arzobispo, two of whom, Antonio and Juan Fonseca, were members of the Archbishop's family. The fact that Oliva formed part of this familial body indicates that he was on close terms with Fonseca and of a similar reformist bent.

¹⁷ Espinosa Maeso, "El Maestro Fernán Pérez de Oliva en Salamanca," *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, vol XIII, 1926, p. 456.

¹⁸ William Atkinson, p. 328. Oliva was interested in correct Latin and in providing guidelines for the correct use of the Spanish language. This interest was shared by his friend Villalón and his nephew Morales, both of whom wrote works on Castilian grammar.

Oliva's entry into Salamanca University in 1526 had coincided with a period of tremendous optimism among Spain's humanist reformers. Humanism, it seemed, led by its standard bearer Erasmus, was gaining adherents and prestige. Not only was Erasmus championed by the two most important clerics in the land, Alfonso Manrique, Inquisitor General, and Alfonso de Fonseca, Archbishop of Toledo, he was also finding favour with the king himself, who had already invited him to share his views in person at the royal court. When, in 1530, Charles nominated Fernan Pérez Oliva instructor to his infant son Felipe (undoubtedly on the recommendation of Archbishop Fonseca), both the nominee and his close circle of scholarly friends must have believed that the signs augured well for a future kingdom headed by a humanist monarch. The dream was never to be realized. Oliva died before he was able to take up the position, which passed to the scholastic Martinez Siliceo, a man who appears to have instilled in his royal charge a suspicion of religious reform and, above all, of *conversos*. It is tempting to speculate what would have happened if Oliva and not Siliceo had taken control of Philip's schooling; although it is doubtful whether the forthright Oliva would have lasted long in a court which, after 1530, increasingly turned its back on humanist reformers. The fact that Martinez Siliceo substituted Oliva as the infante's educational guide was itself an indication that times had changed.

Fernan Pérez Oliva formed part of a wave of reform that had surfaced in the universities of Alcalá and, albeit to a lesser extent, Salamanca in the second and third decades of the fifteenth century. The exponents of this reform were young intellectuals who had found in humanism a blueprint for a society directed by the classical *novus*

homo—literate, ethical, industrious and self-made. Perez de Oliva's own works, written between 1524 and 1531 reflect the goals of this movement, they also reflect a sense of socio-religious discomfort that is peculiarly converso.

Razonamiento sobre la navegación del río Guadalquivir

Fernán Pérez de Oliva's *Razonamiento para la navegacion del rio Guadalquivir* is an essay recommending that the Guadalquivir river be made navigable from Seville to the author's home town of Córdoba. The work was obviously written on behalf of a merchant lobby; nevertheless it is also a very personal plea made by a man whose roots were in Córdoba's middle-sort community, and who had witnessed this community's steep decline in fortune. The author begins by reminding his readers of Córdoba's illustrious history, which he compares to that of Paris and Rome. However, he notes, contemporary Córdoba was a decadent backwater, abandoned by the one class—the merchants—whose money, work ethic, and civic vision could reverse its decline. Oliva then presents us with the two reasons for the merchants' absence. First, Cordoba had benefited throughout the Middle Ages from being a frontier town, where the Christian forces were armed, clothed and provisioned for their confrontation with Islamic al-Andalus. But this source of income had come to an end with the defeat of the Kingdom of Granada in 1492. As a result many of Córdoba's merchants had left for Seville to take advantage of the Indies trade, or for Granada where the Crown was offering financial incentives to traders and artisans in order to repopulate a city abandoned by the Muslim middle sort. The second reason for the merchant abandonment of Córdoba was, in Pérez Oliva's

opinion, persecution. And while the author does not expand on this remark, it is clear that he was referring to the recent persecution of the city's converso middle sort by the Inquisition, and in particular by the Inquisition official, Diego Rodríguez Lucero, who established a reign of terror in the city from 1500 to 1507. Cordoba now had the opportunity to heal the wounds caused by this persecution, Oliva writes, by supporting a project that would lead to the return of the merchants. These able and industrious men would help create a thriving city with a market, a mint and prestigious public buildings; they would also help sweep the city clean of idleness and those vices it spawned, envy, gossip, discord, gambling, robbery, rape, and adultery, all of which he associates in particular with irresponsible members of the nobility.

Oliva's *Razonamiento para la navegación del rio Guadalquivir* is not only an apology for a middle sort work ethic, it is also, I believe, a veiled attack on a city that had collaborated in the destruction of its converso community. In the *Razonamiento*, Oliva attacks the received view that virtue resided in men of noble lineage, while vice lurked in a merchant class ambitious for wealth and political power. It is precisely the middle class, according to the humanist, who are the morally upright members of Córdoba society. They are also the most Christian, for Christianity is based above all on two criteria, wisdom and will power (*voluntad*), as Oliva makes clear in a later work, *Triunfo de Cristo en Jerusalem*, a sermon for Palm Sunday, written four years after the *Razoamiento*, in which he once again make a plea for religious and social toleration.

Triunfo de Cristo en Jerusalén (Sermón para el domingo de ramos)

Oliva begins his *Triunfo de Cristo* by contrasting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with a Roman general's entry into Rome on his victorious return from "batallas crueles que la invidia les hazia." To begin with, writes Oliva, part of the city wall was pulled down to make the general's entry more spectacular. Through this gap came a long procession: first, those enslaved during the campaign; next the Roman citizens, waving palms and olive branches, signifying victory and peace; after which appeared trumpeters announcing the general's entry; finally, the triumphant military leader appeared on a carriage, wearing a crown and a scarlet cloak embroidered with golden stars.

It is not at all casual, I think, that the above description of the Roman victory parade is reminiscent of a Roman Catholic procession during Holy Week. Oliva is surreptitiously comparing the triumphalism of Rome, celebrating its subjugation of other cultures, with the triumphalism of a Roman church that was not honoring God's victory over sin, but its own victory over rival religions, who it had also attacked "cruelly and out of envy". As a contrast to this spectacle, Oliva presents us with the first Palm Sunday procession, which he takes as a model for peace and acceptance. In this procession Jesus had also broken down walls; not the walls of the city, however, but the walls that encased the Jews hearts: "¿Veis? Ya los muros se derruecan que tenían muy cerrados los pechos de los judíos; veislos ya dónde caen con aquellas voces las almenas a donde están sus fundamentos." And having made clear that the first people to embrace Jesus were Jews, Oliva calls upon his Palm Sunday

congregation to follow their example. They too must open up their hearts, he tells them, so they can receive Jesus' message. But first they must cast out ugly thoughts and make clean that which was tainted: "Por eso, las cosas feas sacalas dél, y limpiad lo que estuviera suzio..."¹⁹

In Oliva's opinion there were three paths to perdition: ignorance, idleness, and negligence. But these could be combated by good will, as the angels had announced while Jesus made his way through the streets of Jerusalem: "Gloria a Dios en el cielo, y en la tierra paz a los hombres de buena voluntad." And in this message, we are told, the angels echoed King David, who wrote, "Oiré lo que me habla el señor, porque dirá cosas de paz para su pueblo y para los sanctos y aquellos que a él se convierten." Here, Oliva subtly reminds his audience that it was the pagans who were considered the original converts to Christianity, and not the Christianized Jews, who were already members of God's *pueblo*; he also reminds them that converts, like all other Christians, were entitled to peace. However, in order to present this harmonious message, Oliva was forced to misquote psalm no 85, which, in fact, makes no reference to converts at all, but reads rather, "Escucharé lo que hablará el Dios Jehová, porque hablará paz a su pueblo y a sus píos, para que no se convierten a la locura."²⁰ Here Oliva deliberately misquotes the psalm in order to emphasise the importance of accepting the convert.

¹⁹ Op cit. p. 219.

²⁰ Psalm 85, 8. The translation is from Casiodora de la Reina. See Fernán Pérez de Oliva, *Dialogo de la dignidad del hombre. Razonamientos. Ejercicios*, edition by María Luisa Cerrón Puga, Catedra, Madrid, 1995, p. 223, note 14. The St James Bible translation presents a similar rendition of the psalm: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly."

Jesus had come not in anger to punish them, but in peace to pardon them, Oliva tells his listeners; he had come not to condemn, but to save. And as proof of this, Oliva cites the Old-Testament prophet Zacharias, whose spirit, Oliva states, led the Palm Sunday procession: “[N]o temas Jerusalen,” said Zacharias, “que tu rey viene manso a visitarte.”²¹ And if those present really wanted to become part of this wonderful celebration, they could do so now by following Jesus’ carriage with palms and olive branches in their hands, while singing, “¡Hosana fili David! ¡Hosanna in excelsis! ¡Salvanos hijo de David! ¡Sálvanos en lo alto!”; in other words they could demonstrate their true Christianity through prayer, peace and victory.²² However, by victory, Oliva tells his listeners, he does not mean triumph over another culture or credo, but the triumph over base instincts, worldly wealth, and, above all, the opinion of the *vulgo*, which was by far the most difficult to achieve because public opinion was such a powerful force. Those who liberated themselves from this yoke, however, also liberated themselves from the majority of sins. On the other hand, those who followed the *vulgo* hoping to save themselves from the anger of the ignorant would find themselves condemned by God to Hell.

Perez de Oliva’s Sermon for Palm Sunday is, I would suggest, a subtle assertion of Christianity’s Jewish roots, as well as an appeal for a harmonious Christian religion in which conversos are equal participants. This religion is built not

²¹ Oíd que es Zacarías que delante el carro dize: *no temas Jerusalén, que tu rey viene manso a visitarte!*...Por la cual entendemos que no a condenarnos, sino a salvarnos viene nuestro rey; no acompañado de furo para castigarnos, sino de mansedumbre para perdonarnos.” Op.cit. p. 224.

²² Pérez de Oliva had noted at the beginning of his sermón that the Romans in their victory celebrations used olive branches to signify peace and palm fronds to signify victory.

on public ceremonies and rituals, nor is it based on the subjugation of other cultures, but on the individual's rationality and self control. It is, in other words, the manifestation of a humanist ethical credo, in which wisdom and prudence define the true Christian, as Oliva makes clear in another work, his *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* (written in 1530), in which his protagonist Antonio describes rationality and, in particular, self control, as the keys to the true Christian man.

Dialogo de la dignidad del hombre

The *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*, based on Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, is a scholarly debate between two friends on the nature of man, with a third friend adjudicating the contest. Aurelio, the pessimist, believes that no more care has been taken in the creation of man than in the creation of the beasts. Indeed, in many respects man has fewer resources than the beasts, which need no tools, weapons or clothes, to survive. Nor is man ethically any better than the animals, as his lust for war and killing attests. He is capable of rational thought and of self control, but his primitive urges almost always dominate his behaviour. His lifespan is short and if he happens to learn anything from life's experiences, he is left with little time to put these lessons into effect. He is vainglorious, constructing buildings and monuments to proclaim his immortality, choosing to ignore the fact that all such constructions crumble and fade. Even his written works will with time be forgotten. Thus nothing will remain of him except a few dry bones in a coffin, as inanimate as the stones that cover them.

In reply to Aurelio's grim analysis, Antonio concentrates on man's many perfections: his erect body, enabling him to look up to the stars, and not down at the ground like the beasts; his finely crafted hands; his well-sculpted face; his gift of language. But what most separates man from the beast is his rationality, which allows him to have control over himself instead of being prey to base instinct. This rationality, Antonio admits, may often be dominated by impulse, as Aurelio had claimed; nevertheless this was not an inevitable condition of existence. For Antonio willpower is the key to the Christian man. It was his temple created to honor God, to carry out His commandments and to receive His glory. It was a personal edifice adorned with virtue and full of God's love and the pleasure that accompanied it: "Ésta es el templo, donde a Dios honramos, hecho para cumplir sus mandamientos y merecer su Gloria; para ser adornado de virtudes y llena del amor de Dios..."²³

Naturally, the judge, Dinarco, adjudicates in favour of Antonio's view of man, a wise decision, given that the alternative would have been to vote in favour of an Epicurean or atheistic stand. Nevertheless, far from condemning the loser Aurelio as a dangerous heretic, Dinarco praises his ingenuity of argument. A later editor of the text, Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, changed the tone of this judgement, believing that through some oversight, or carelessness, Pérez de Oliva had not attacked Aurelio's views sufficiently for their lack of Christian dogma. But this was clearly no oversight. Oliva formed part of a community of intellectuals in which Epicurean, Stoical, mystical and Pauline religious views circulated freely, as is evident from Juan de

²³ Ibid. p. 155.

Lucera's description of Alfonso de Cartagena's intellectual circle, cited in the previous chapter.²⁴ For Oliva non-conformist religious views were thus not acts of deviancy, but manifestations of a God-given liberty of choice, as he makes clear through his mouthpiece Antonio: "Asi que esta incertidumbre en que Dios puso al hombre responde a la libertad del alma: unos quieren vestir lana, otros lienço, otros pieles; unos aman pescado, otros la carne, otros frutas. Quiso Dios cumplir la voluntad de todos hacziéndolos en estado en que pudiesen escoger, y pues es así, no devemos tener por aspereza lo que Dios nos concedió como a hijos regalados."²⁵

Both Aurelio and Antonio are religious non-conformists. Aurelio chooses to reject the idea of a divinity concerned with man's wellbeing; Antonio embraces God, but rejects formal religious observance. For him, and one assumes for his creator Pérez de Oliva, the temple in which he honors God is not the community church, filled with religious icons, but a metaphysical edifice called *voluntad*, which is adorned with nothing but virtue and the love of God.

Ambrosio Morales (1513-1591)

In June 1532, a year after the death of Fernán Pérez Oliva, Ambrosio Morales entered the Saint Jerome of Valparaiso monastery, outside Córdoba. This escape into religious cloisters may have reflected a spiritual anguish experienced on the death of

²⁴ See Chapter two, pp. 53-54.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 151.

his uncle, with whom he was close; it may equally well have reflected a need to escape an academic environment that was becoming more dangerous for humanists, especially those associated with a vociferous reforming vanguard.²⁶ Whatever the reasons for his monastic reclusion, the retreat was short lived. Soon after taking his religious vows in June 1533, Morales was found in his cell in a pool of blood, having emasculated himself, so the story goes, with a crude guillotine device. This act was reported in an early seventeenth century text, *Casos notables de la ciudad de Cordoba*, in which the anonymous author notes that it was a very strange action for such a rational man. Ironically, it may have been Morales obsession with rationality and self control (the keys according to his uncle of the truly Christian man) that had promoted the dementia. Losing the battle to his base instincts, the humanist may have decided on a radical solution to his problem. According to the anonymous author of *Casos notables*, everyone in Cordoba, both young and old, admired Morales for his act; not so the prior of the monastery, who expelled him from the institution for having committed “the heresy of Origen.”²⁷

²⁶ In his *Antigüedades*, folio 113 vto., Morales writes: “Hombres excelentes en letras naturales de Cordoba pudiera señalar algunos de nuestros tiempos, y fuera el principal el maestro Fernan Perez de Oliva mi tio y mi señor que me crió; mas temo la sospecha de aficion, que engendra el parentesco. Aunque viven insignes prelados y caballeros en España que habiendole conocido, juzgaran por injusto este mi miedo y silencio.” It is significant that Morales uses the word fear to describe his silence, indicating that he was concerned with the possible implications of being too closely associated with his uncle. Morales sensitivity to attack for non-conformist views is also evident in his “Protestación del autor”, at the beginning of *Los cinco libros postreros de la Corónica General de España* (Cordoba, 1585), in which he writes, “El Consejo Real mandó ver esta tercera parte de mi Corónica de España, y en la censura se aprobó toda ella por muy católica y muy conforme a la fe cristiana, y provechosa para las buenas costumbres. Mas todavía yo como fiel christiano y obediente hijo de la santa madre iglesia Romana protesto, que si alguna cosa uviere en todo lo que aquí he escrito, que en alguna manera contradiga a la Santa fe Católica, o perjudique a las buenas tradiciones y costumbres de la iglesia: *que desde agora lo doy por no dicho, y por mal dicho.*”

²⁷ Ramirez de Arellano op. cit. p. 353.

Having left monastic life under a cloud, Morales repaired to Alcalá de Henares, where he taught humanist studies privately for some years before occupying the chair in Rhetoric at the Complutense University. During his long association with the university, he formed close personal attachments to a number of students who would later become important public figures. One of these was the nobleman Cristobal Rojas y Sandoval, later Archbishop of Toledo, one of a handful of public figures who supported Agustin Salucio's 1599 *anti-limpieza memorial*. Soon after the *memorial* was published, Rojas wrote to Salucio a letter of solidarity, in which he confessed to his own converso family roots: "Certifico a V.P. que soy el hombre del mundo menos linajudo."²⁸

Two other close friends of Morales from his Alcalá period were the Hebrew scholars Benito Arias Montano and Pablo de Céspedes. Both Montano and Céspedes later collided with religious authorities over their non-conformist views—Montano over his sympathy for Jewish Biblical exegesis, and Céspedes as a result of his impassioned attack on the Holy Office for the imprisonment of Bartolomé de Carranza on charges of Protestant heresy. In his 1576 *memorial* "Prision de el Arzobispo de Toledo D. Fray Bartolomé de Carranza..." Morales also defended the Archbishop, albeit with more discretion. Although written at the request of Philip II, the "Prision de el Arzobispo" is an ironic account of the Archbishop's 1559 arrest, in which Morales presents Carranza as a victim of political intrigue. Morales reserves his sharpest barbs

²⁸ Cited in Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y América*, Ediciones Istmo, Madrid, 1978, p. 90, note 15. The Rojas family's converso background was, in fact, an open secret at court. See Chapter four.

for Carranza's arresting officer, Rodrigo de Castro (later Archbishop of Seville), whom he presents as a devious and manipulative careerist. Castro's malice is nicely indicated by Morales when he states that the mule presented to the Archbishop to convey him from Alcalá de Henares to the Inquisition prison at Valladolid was not provided with reins: "caso raro y que admira ver un tan gran prelado que no hay otra mayor dignidad ni aun como ella en España, reducido a esta deplorable miseria, o por su poca ventura, o por envidia ciega de sus enemigos..."²⁹

Although a man of discretion, Morales was, like his uncle Fernan Pérez Oliva, firmly attached to a humanist program of social and religious reform. Morales' own humanist ideals are clearly evident in his *Quince discursos* (published in 1586, in a work that also included a number of his uncle's essays, including his *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*), in which he focuses on Spain's socio-cultural maladies: an uneducated nobility that spends more time training its falcons than it does its children;³⁰ a scholarly community that is falsely erudite;³¹ and a fatalistic society that

²⁹ "Prision de el Arzobispo de Toledo D. Fray Bartolomé de Carranza..." CODDIN, vol. V, Madrid, 1844, pp. 465-494.

³⁰ Discurso XIII: "Lo mucho que importa la buena criança de los hijos." Here Morales advocates the creation of institutions for educating orphans similar to those established by Juan de Avila. It is noteworthy that Morales left money in his will to Juan de Avila's Cordoban school. In defence of a sound education, Morales also cites Philip II's secretary Gabriel de Zayas who believed the nobility "tratan de criar en sus hijos solo los cuerpos y no las almas." Zayas who was a friend to both Morales and Arias Montano is discussed in Chapter Four, in relation to the Antwerp Polyglot Bible.

³¹ Discurso VII: "En que consiste principalmente ser un hombre necio, y qual esta condenada por la mayor necesidad de todo." Here Morales cites Ana Castilla, the sister-in-law of the Erasmian Cardinal Alfonso Manrique, whom the humanist describes as a woman famous for her wisdom. According to Morales Ana remarked that "quando un necio oviere estado un gran rato en un aposento, lo avian de fregar con vinagre fuerte, para quitarle la pestilencia..." The essay reflects the views expressed by Perez de Oliva on ill educated scholastics in Cristóbal de Villalon's *El Scholastico*, albeit, as always, in a more discreet fashion.

does nothing to improve its condition.³² Morales also employs the discursos to reiterate Pérez de Oliva's views that the man of faith is defined by his stoical self-possession.³³ There is, of course, nothing in all this that overtly calls attention to Morales' New-Christian background, but then the object of the exercise was to change social and religious mores while disguising the fact that one was doing so as a member of a despised social group.

On a number of occasions Morales does, however, hint at his family's Jewish (or Muslim) origins, and in typically converso fashion. For example, in the prologue to his history of Spain, the *Continuación de la Corónica*, Morales writes of his father, doctor Antonio Morales: "mi padre fue hombre estimado entre casi todos los señores del Andalucía, tanto por ser (como suelen decir) muy sabio en Romance, como por su buena casta..." And in his *Antigüedades de España*, Morales returns to his father's important social status, stating that Doctor Morales was "insigne en filosofía natural y moral, y en medicina, que era su principal profesión...Esto todo junto con su buena casta, y mucha bondad, se hizo uno de los hombres más señalados y estimados de su tiempo." In both the above descriptions, Morales intimates that his father is Old-

³² Discurso III: "Quanto oviere Dios que hagamos todo lo que a nosotros es posible en todas las cosas, aunque suplicandole por ellas, esperemos del el buen sucesso." Using two Biblical episodes, one concerning Ezechial the other St Paul, Morales advocates a middle-sort work ethic. The essay reflects Juan de Malara's views expressed in his adage, "A Dios rogando con el maco dando". See Chapter Four. In all his discursos Morales backs up his views with references to classical pagan works and to the Old Testament. Save for St. Paul, he makes relatively few references to New Testament authors and even fewer to the Church Fathers.

³³ Discurso XII: "Una consideración por donde se puede bien entender como algunas veces las estrellas tienen poder sobre todo el hombr." Morales writes, reflecting the views once again of Pérez Oliva, "La mayor excelencia del anima del hombre es aver sido criado a imagen y semejança de Dios, y ser capaz de conocerle y amarle...Y entre las de mas es grande excelencia suya,el tener tan gran señorío sobre si mismo con el absoluto poder de su libre albedrío, que ni aun al cielo ni a las estrellas no tiene sujeción..."

Christian, without using the term itself. Instead he uses the ambiguous term *buena casta* (good stock). Morales deliberate choice of ambiguous language to describe his father's background is even more strident in the epitaph he wrote for him, and which he also includes in *Antiguedades*. Morales writes: "Aqui se dice, con mucha verdad, todo lo que del difunto hubo: que fue de noble linaje y por todos partes muy limpia." Here, Morales is all but announcing to the reader that he is playing a game of *double entendre*. This game involves on one hand the superficial affirmation that his father is an hidalgo from a family whose four branches were Old-Christian, and on the other hand the sub-textual assertion that while Morales senior is of noble stock, he is also from a culture that emphasises bodily cleanliness, hence the statement "clean in all his parts." In other words, Morales is stating, surreptitiously, that his father is a converso. This type of *double entendre* was, as I have already stated, prominent among converso professionals, who felt obliged to disguise their family backgrounds without actually renouncing them.

Juan de Avila's Converso-Humanist Mission

Juan de Avila was born around 1500 in the La Mancha town of Almodovar del Campo. His father, Alonso de Avila, was a wealthy merchant, his mother, Catalina Xixon was, according to a number of sources, from the minor nobility. Although Avila's converso background was an open secret during his lifetime, both of the *beato's* early biographers were reluctant to make the information available to posterity. Luis de Granada, in a study published in 1588, avoids the subject altogether,

stating only that the Avilas were one of the richest and most honorable families of the town;³⁴ while Avila's second biographer, Luis Muñoz, openly lies about his subject's background, presenting his family as "pura y limpia, sin mezcla de aquella sangre que una gota dicen que inficiona mucha Buena."³⁵ In the introduction to the critical edition of Avila's works, written in 1952, Avila's latter-day biographer, Luis Sala Balust states that Avila's matriarchal family were hidalgos, citing information contained in the beato's application for canonization. Ballast determines that Avila's father's family may have carried some Jewish blood, although, characteristically, this is presented as of remote origin; the unspoken conclusion being that Avila's Jewish background had no significant affect on his religious character.

For an account of Avila's childhood and formative years we still must rely heavily on Avila's friend and disciple, Luis de Granada. There is no reason to suppose that in essentials this account is inaccurate, although it is undoubtedly tendentious, skirting material that would have provided Avila's many enemies with further proof of his unorthodoxy. According to Granada, at the age of fourteen Avila was sent by his father to Salamanca to study Law. Four years into these studies and on the point of graduating, the future saint abandoned the university and returned Almodovar del Campo. Touched by a sudden religious epiphany, so Granada would have us believe, Avila left university only weeks before gaining his degree certificate. This may be true, although some modern scholars have speculated that a *limpieza de sangre* statute recently imposed by the university was the determinant factor in Avila's decision not

³⁴ "de los más honrados y ricos" Cited in *Obras*, I, p.19.

³⁵ *Ibid* p.19, fn 23. L. Muñoz, *Vida*, 1635.

to graduate. In order to gain his degree, Avila would have had to prove that none of the four branches of his family were sullied by Jewish blood. As this was an impossible task, he went down empty handed.³⁶ For the next three years, Granada tells us, Avila meditated on religious themes in an alcove of the family home at Almodavar del Campo, after which he moved to the Complutense University at Alcalá de Henares. Here he studied three years of sciences (*artes*), followed by three years of theology. It was probably at Alcalá that Avila became acquainted with the works of Erasmus, which clearly influenced his own Christian humanist vision—although, Granada, naturally, makes no mention of this.

In 1526, with twelve years of continuous study behind him, Avila traveled to Seville, having made up his mind to sail to the Indies as a missionary. Once in the Andalusian capital he formed a close friendship with two religious reformers, the converso prelates Fernando de Contreras and Domingo Valtanás. Valtanás, a voluble defender of the New Christians, was placed on trial by the Seville tribunal of the Inquisition in 1561 for Protestant heresy and sentenced to perpetual house arrest. Contreras, who died in 1544, appears to have escaped Inquisition scrutiny, although it is significant, I think, that his elementary school for Christian instruction, established in 1524, later became a clandestine center for Lutheran activity. Of course, in

³⁶ In 1509 the Inquisitorial tribunal of Valladolid informed the University that it was not to award degrees to persons recently converted from Judaism. Ibid, p.27 fn. 77.

Contreras's canonization process, the cleric's reformist views were suppressed and his orthodoxy exaggerated.³⁷

Both Contreras and Valtanás were instrumental in shaping Juan de Avila's early evangelical career. Through Contreras, Avila was introduced to the school for Christian doctrine, which became a model for his own schools, established throughout Andalusia in the following years. Contreras also introduced Avila to the Erasmian archbishop of Seville, Alfonso Manrique, who, according to Luis de Granada, persuaded the *beato* to focus his missionary activity not on the New World but on Andalusia. Through Valtanás, Avila was introduced to a number of wealthy and influential patrons, including the noble Priego family, with whom the *beato* maintained close ties throughout his life. It was also on the advice of Valtanás that Avila moved, in 1527, to Ecija, a prosperous town which boasted a large converso merchant class. Here the young evangelist was supported by wealthy friends of Valtanás, don Tello de Aguilar and doña Leonor de Inestrosa.

Between 1527 and 1533 Avila took his reform message to the towns around Ecija, attracting, so Granada tells us, a large following. He also attracted some strong criticism. Soon rumours began to enter the Inquisition tribunal in Seville that the *beato*'s sermons contained heretical views, and that he was organizing clandestine meetings in which suspect mystical practices were encouraged. In 1531 Avila was incarcerated in the Inquisition prison in Seville, where, for the next nine months he was required to respond to his detractors many accusations, among which were the

³⁷ For an indication of Contreras's non-conformism see the Cristóbal Mosquera's anecdote, cited in the introduction.

following: Avila had stated that those burnt by the Inquisition as heretics were martyrs; he had said that Christ was in the Eucharist like a man with his head covered (meaning, presumably, that it was impossible to identify his presence); and that the Virgin before conceiving Jesus had sinned venially, because nobody was exempt from original sin. Avila was also accused of conducting a number of secret meetings in which those present were exhorted to forget their *Pater* and *Ave* in favor of quiet meditation, activities that smacked of the dreaded illuminism.

In July 1533, Avila, who appears to have acquitted himself well in his defense, was released from prison with a warning to guard his tongue in the future on pain of excommunication. There is no evidence to suggest that he was particularly chastened by his brush with the Holy Office; indeed, it appears to have strengthened his resolve to continue his evangelical mission, as is clear from a letter he wrote to his supporters in Ecija while incarcerated: “Oh hermanos, míos muy amados! Dios quiere abrir vuestros ojos para considerer cuántos Mercedes nos hace en lo que el mundo piensa que son desfavores, y cuán honrados somos en ser deshonorados...”³⁸ Avila goes on to tell his supporters that in the eyes of God they are honorable men and women, whose *limpieza* (virtue) is a product of their suffering. “Y si algo padeciéredes de lenguas de malos (que otra cosa no hay que padezcáis), tomadlo en descuento de vuestras culpas y por merced señalada de Cristo, que os quiere limpiar con lengua de sucias, y vosotros limpios con el sufrir, y vuestro bien esté cierto en el otro mundo.”

It was while Avila was in the Inquisition prison that he began writing *Audi, filia*, a work in which he feigns a didactic exposition of Christian worship, while

³⁸ Ibid, p.42.

setting forth his own vision for a new church in which conversos and Old Christians enjoy equal status. The title *Audi Filia* is taken from a passage in the Hebrew Bible in which, according to Avila's interpretation, "el profeta" David calls upon his people to embrace Jesus, the bearer of a reformed Jewish faith: "Oye hija, y ve, inclina tu oreja, y olvida la casa de tu padre. Y cobdiciará el rey tu hermosura." While in the Hebrew Bible David delivers this message to the Jews, it is clear that Avila sees it as applicable to Jew and Gentile alike or, more accurately to conversos and Old Christians; both groups should abandon their old ways and follow the ways of Jesus, the religious catalyst. "[Jesus] hizo paz entre los contraries pueblos, judios y gentiles, quitando la pared de emistad que estaba en medio, como dice San Pablo; conviene, a saber, las ceremonias de la vieja ley, y la idolatria de la gentilidad para que unas y otras, dejadas sus particularidades y ritos que de sus pasados traian, viniesen a una nueva ley de debajo de un fe..." Although Avila states that Jesus "made peace" between the Jews and Gentiles, it is evident that the *beato* saw Jesus's mission—and by extention his own mission—as an ongoing one; the task was to unite the pagans (Old Christian society) and Jews (conversos resistant to Christianity) in a faith that shunned *ceremonias, ritos* and *idolatria*.

While *Audi, Filia* is a call for rapprochement between Old Christian and New Christian Spain, it is clear that the *beato*'s own sympathies lie with the beleaguered latter group, who are for him, as for many of his fellow converso humanists, the first among Christian equals. Jesus, he reminds his readers, preached only to the Jews. Later Christ's apostles took his message further afield, "y agora lo es, acrecentándose

cada día la predicación del nombre de Cristo a tierras más lejos, para que así sea luz no sólo de los judíos, que creyeron en El, y a los cuales fue enviado, mas también a los gentiles, que estaban en ceguedad de idolatría lejos de Dios.” And several lines later Avila returns to this theme: “Y Cristo predicado es luz entonces y agora para los judios que le quisieren creer; porque grande honra es para ellos venir de ellos, y principalmente a ellos, el que es Salvador de todo el mundo y verdadero Dios y hombre.”³⁹ These two passages and many more were later changed by the Inquisition censors to conform to a more orthodox Christian view.⁴⁰ These changes could not, however, totally disguise *Audi, filia*’s central arguments, these being that Christianity was based on simple moral tenets found in the Old Testament scriptures, and that evangelical reformers like himself were members of a New Israel that was attacking latter-day paganism and prejudice. An example of this prejudice was his society’s glorification of its noble lineage.

Para que te glorias con nobleza tu linaje? [Avila asks] Un hombre y una mujer hizo Dios en el principio del mundo, de los cuales descendió la muchedumbre del genero humano. La nobleza del linaje no de la igualdad de naturaleza, mas la ambición de la codicia; y ninguna

³⁹ Ibid p. 537

⁴⁰ For many years *Audi, filia* circulated among a select group of Avila adherents in manuscript form, before being published by the Alcalá de Henares printer, Juan de Brocar, in 1556. The published work, much amplified to augment and, prudently, to dilute Avila’s original message was financed by Luis Puertocarrero, Count of Palma, whom we have already met, as a protagonist in Dr. Augustin Oliva’s converso poem. Three years after its publication, Avila’s work was placed on the Inquisition index. In 1576 a new version was published with some extensive amendments to rid the work of its Erasmian content and Jewish sympathies. In the censored version, the line “Para que así sea luz [Cristo] no sólo de los judíos que creyeron en El y a los cuales fue enviado...” was changed to “a los cuales predicó en propia persona.” Ibid, p. 870. The line “porque grande honra es para ellos venir de ellos y principalmente a ellos el que es Salvador de todo el mundo” became “Y Cristo así predicado es luz, entonces y ahora, para los gentiles que le quieren creer, y es luz y honra para los judíos que también quieren creer.” Ibid, p. 841. In the 1556 version, Avila also stated that Pilato “crucified” Jesus. In the censored version of 1574 this reads “sentenced to death”. For Avila, the villain is not the Jew but the Roman governor, for the Old Christian censors Pilato was merely the conduit for Jewish malice.

diferencia puede haber entre aquellos a los cuales el segundo nacimiento engendró, por lo cual así el rico como el pobre, el libre y el esclavo, es de linaje, y sin el no son hechos hijos de Dios.⁴¹

Avila's message is that genealogically all Christians are equal, and should be judged only on the strength of their faith. "La verdadera fe cristiana no está arrimada a decir: 'naci de cristianos,'" Avila tells his readers; and the beata makes a number of pointed references to real or spiritual *limpieza*, (as opposed to the false *limpieza de sangre*). It is through prayer that one gains God's "preciosa limpieza," Avila writes, for it is God who will clean us; and he quotes the Old Testament prophet Isaiah: "el señor lava las suciedades de las hijas de Sion," which the beata understands to mean that it is through faith in God that our stains are washed away.⁴²

Soon after leaving Inquisition prison in 1534, Avila moved to the town of Montilla, near Cordoba, home of Catrina de Cordoba, Marchioness of Priego, whose son Antonio de Cordoba was already an Avila disciple. The beata rapidly established a close relationship with the Marquesa and spent long periods in the town, where, with the Priego family's support, he established one of his schools for poor children. Eventually, Avila began to use Montilla as a base from which he mounted his many evangelical excursions into the towns of Andalucia and Extremadura renowned for their large converso communities.⁴³ One of these excursions was undertaken with the

⁴¹ Ibid, p.523, l 4353

⁴² Ibid, p. 471, ll 1773-6. "Y el profeta Esaías dice que el Señor lava las suciedades de las hijas de Sión, y la sangre de en medio de Jerusalén en espíritu de juicio y en espíritu de ardor, dando a entender que el lavar el Señor nuestras manchas..."

⁴³ Avila not only targeted the New Christian himself, he recommended that others do likewise. In 1565 he wrote to the newly ordained Bishop of Granada Don Pedro Guerrero asking him to direct his preachers to the converso and morisco communities of his diocese. *Obras*, Vol. V carta no. 179.

young Dominican friar Luis de Granada, who, a recent graduate from the Dominican San Gregorio College, gravitated towards Montilla in search of Priego patronage. In 1539 Avila and Granada travelled to Zafra, a merchant town in southern Extremadura under the control of Pedro Fernandez de Cordoba, the fourth Count of Feria, who was the son of Catrina de Cordoba and the third Count of Feria, Lorenzo Suarez de Figueroa.

Like the Priegos, the Feria family maintained close ties with a middle-sort converso community, which they encouraged to settle in the town of Zafra and to establish what was to become one of the more important trade fairs in the peninsula. Here local converso merchants traded in spices, slaves and textiles with their opposite numbers on the Portuguese side of the border, built splendid houses in the town square, and took control of the town's religious and cultural life.⁴⁴ Indeed, Zafra's conversos, or rather their taxes, had helped establish the Feria family as a wealthy noble house whose expensive Renaissance style fortress-palace became a center for humanist activity.

From July 1539 to August 1540 Juan de Avila and Luis de Granada took their reform message to the conversos of Zafra and to other New Christian communities from Zafra south to Fregenal de Sierra, a town whose population was rumoured to be almost totally converso.⁴⁵ In the years to come this region would provide Avila with many loyal disciples; it would also present him with some serious problems, as overly

⁴⁴ According to the Dominican friar Alonso de la Fuente, of the seventy priests in Zafra, sixty were "Judios", that is to say conversos. See Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados*, University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 121.

⁴⁵ See chapter one, note 19.

fervent supporters became too incautious in their mystical practices. In the 1570s the Dominican friar Alonso de la Fuente began to compile a dossier on mystical groups in Extremadura. According to the friar, these conventicles rejected the commandments of the church, its fasts and sacraments, for a life of mental prayer, meditation, and ecstatic trances, and were encouraged in their illuminist error by Ignacio de Loyola, Luis de Granada, and Juan de Avila, whose works, *Ejercicios espirituales*, *Libro de la oración*, and *Audi, filia*, they read passionately and indiscriminately.⁴⁶

All the time that Avila was proselytizing, he was also founding primary schools. Between 1535 and 1569 Avila or his disciples founded a dozen of these establishments, whose name, *colegios de los niños de la doctrina cristiana*, accorded them a veneer of orthodoxy. In reality, of course, the schools were established to create a generation of literate Christian practitioners and as nurseries for a new breed of prelate instructed in Avila's Christian humanism. At the same time Avila founded colleges for higher education in Granada, Cordoba, and Jerez de la Frontera; and in 1539, with the aid of a wealthy converso backer, Rodrigo López, employed at the papal court, he established the University of Baeza, an institution that became a placement center for converso scholars, many of whom were Avila's close followers. The town of Baeza also became a center for the publication of religious texts—mostly mystical—supervised by Avila himself.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 117. Fuente also attacked the two recent bishops of Badajoz, Juan de Ribera and Cristobal Rojas y Sandoval, both conversos, both closely linked to Avila and the Jesuits, who, according to the Dominican friar, were turning a blind eye to "alumbrado" activity in the region. It appears that these illuminists also rejected Jesus as the messiah. The leader of the sect, Hernando Alvarez said that Jesus Christ was good for nothing except to be a gypsy. See Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, op. cit. p. 129.

In 1549 two prominent members of the University of Baeza's faculty, the Avila disciples Bernadino Carleval and Gaspar Loarte were arrested by the Inquisition and charged with possessing suspect religious works. Although both men were released some months later, the Inquisition continued to cast a suspicious eye over the University, attacking the establishment with increased vehemence in the 1570s, after Avila's death. In these later attacks the university staff were berated for their opposition to the *limpieza de sangre* statutes and for claiming that *conversos* were purer Christians than their Old-Christian neighbours. But what most concerned the Holy Office were the private prayer groups that a number of the professors had formed, which, allegedly, disrespected the Holy orders and sidelined sound Catholic doctrine and vocal prayer in favor of mental prayer and meditation. To the Holy Office officials this smacked of illuminism, and they prosecuted Avila's Baeza disciples as *alumbrados*.⁴⁷

By the early 1550s, Avila, in ill health, began to look to the recently established Society of Jesus to take over his educational establishments and accommodate his disciples. Loyola was enthusiastic. However, others, close to the General, advised caution. The Jesuits were already under attack for their heterodox views and converso composition. Did they really want to merge with another organization that was being tarred with the same brush? Avila's organization was full of conversos, Padre Nadal informed Loyola in 1553. This in itself was problematical. But it was also apparent that a number of Avila's disciples, less discreet than their master, were antagonizing the Inquisition. In the circumstances, too close contact with

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 102 and 112.

Avila was not advisable.⁴⁸ Negotiations continued up until Loyola's death in 1555, with Avila using himself as the bait: he too was prepared to join the Jesuits but only on the condition that they took responsibility for a number of his colleges—in particular the University of Baeza—and his disciples. As far as the Jesuits were concerned, however, the impediments were too great. Avila never entered the Company and his organization began to stagnate and fall apart, even before his death in 1569.

In the years following Avila's death, his apologists, their eyes set on the *maestro's* future canonization, were at pains to present him as a man of essentially orthodox character, and they focused particularly on his interest in the Eucharist as evidence of his doctrinal correctness. But for Avila the Eucharist and baptism (the only two sacraments he demonstrated any real interest in) were unifying agents in a new church based on the spirit of Jesus and the moral tenets of the scriptures (that is to say the Old Testament scriptures and Saint Paul). Avila's works barely disguise his indifference to Church tradition (the dogmatic pronouncements of the papacy), icon worship, and elaborate rituals;⁴⁹ and while he championed charitable work, he clearly

⁴⁸ “Síguenle muchos cristianos nuevos, no sólo en los que siguen su consejo, de diversos stados, mas también de los que le siguen *modo* semejante al nuestro, en los cuales ha tenido alguna persecución, y tiene actualmente: que tiene la Inquisición en Córdoba al Dr. Carnaval (sic), y ténese que sea anotado.” Ibid p. 166. Nadal is a curious figure. A depressive, clearly traumatized by his converso background and his religious uncertainties, he used the Jesuits to refashion himself. As the editor of Loyola's autobiography he also, it seems, tried to refashion the life of the General himself to create a suitable foundation myth for the order. Another Jesuit sensitive to the organization's radical image, was Loyola's nephew, Antonio Araoz. Araoz infuriated Avila by what the beata discerned as anti-semitic views. Of course, Araoz was linked to Loyola through marriage (he was the brother of Loyola's sister-in-law) and not through blood. Unlike his uncle he had no reason to be sympathetic to the conversos' plight.

⁴⁹ According to Avila, Catholicism, like Judaism, was marred by Pharisees. “Quién es el fariseo? Un hombre ataviado de fuera con mucho ayunar, con pagar bien sus diezmos, con traer a la Ley, aquí, colgando los ojos, con guardar las ceremonias de la Ley; un hombre que, si la santidad consiste en esto, santísimo.” Ibid. p. 171. This same view was expressed by Erasmus in his *Enchiridion*.

did not believe that “good works” were essential to gaining God’s grace, as is evident in his *Audi, filia*, in which he writes, “dice San Pablo, que la que es verdaderamente justicia delante los ojos de Dios, es justicia por ser de Jesucristo, porque no consiste en nuestras obras propias, mas en las de Cristo, las cuales se nos comunican por la fe. Y así nuestra justicia está en El, así si somos oídos de Dios, no en nosotros, mas en El.”⁵⁰ This was published eight years after the Council of Trent had ruled that Works were fundamental for attaining God’s grace. Naturally, the highly censored version of *Audi, filia*, published in 1578, reworked this passage to stress the importance of Works.

In his lifetime Avila was a controversial figure who was continuously linked to men of suspect religious practice, a number of whom were prosecuted in the famous Protestant trials of Valladolid and Seville in 1557 and 1558. One of these men was García Arias, to whom Avila wrote in 1538 recommending that he read the works of Erasmus. In 1556, Arias, by then the Prior of the Hieronymite monastery of San Isidoro, Seville, was uncovered as the head of a group of heretical monks, all of whom conversos, that flourished in the heart of the convent. Although the Inquisition described this group as Protestant, the term is a singularly inappropriate one, implying that Arias and his fellow monks were led into heresy by reading Luther or Calvin. While it appears the monks had recently come into contact with some Calvinist texts, the truth is that their heretical views were those endemic to humanist and evangelical circles in Spain; there was no need for the Inquisition to look further afield for a source. Among Arias’s sins, so we are told, was the suppression in his monastery of

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 406.

fasting, self-mortification and icon worship, and the substitution of canonical prayer, that is to say vocal prayer, for the reading of the sacred scriptures.⁵¹ While the Inquisition chose to associate these views with those of Luther, they could just as easily have linked them to Erasmus, Loyola or Juan de Avila. Indeed, perhaps the only difference between Arias and the three other reformers was that he was indiscreet. He did not heed the advice given to him by Avila eighteen years previously in the same letter in which the *beato* recommended that he read Erasmus. “What happens in your heart in relation to God,” Avila told him, “be careful to keep to yourself, as a woman should keep to herself that which occurs in the marriage bed with her husband.”⁵²

The Conversos and Non-conformism in pre-Tridentine Seville

It is no coincidence that Seville is closely associated with both the Jewish Pogrom of 1391 and the first Inquisitional activity almost a century later. The Jews had always been a highly visible component of society in the Andalusian capital, occupying important positions in trade, finance and court administration both during Muslim and Christian domination. It was this high profile that made them a target for popular malice and resentment and led to their downfall in 1391. In that year, Seville’s large and flourishing *aljama* was decimated, its occupants—those who did not flee to

⁵¹ Ibid p. 199.

⁵² “Lo que en su corazón pasa con Dios, cállelo con grande aviso, como debe callar la mujer casada lo que con su marido pasa en la cama.” *Obras Completas*, vol. 5, carta cinco. In the early published editions of the letters “en la cama” was cut, as was the name Erasmus among the list of authors Avila recommended to Arias. In the trial of the Valladolid Protestants one witness stated that Cristobal Padilla, later burnt as a heretic, had read out to them a letter from Juan de Avila, or so he claimed, in which the maestro had stated that there was no need for penance because Jesus had already done penance for everyone. *Obras*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

safer zones—murdered or forcibly converted to Christianity. While Seville’s Jewish population never recovered from the 1391 pogrom, the city’s abruptly expanded New-Christian community took advantage of the trading opportunities that the expanding port had to offer in the fifteenth century. By 1480, the year the Inquisition tribunal was established in Seville, there may have been as many as eight thousand conversos residing in the city, suggesting that possibly twenty percent of Seville’s population was New Christian.⁵³ However, almost before the Holy Office had chance to open its doors for business, the majority of these men and women had fled to the territories of sympathetic nobles: Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cádiz, Enrique de Guzman, Duke of Medina Sidonia, and Pedro Puertocarrero, Count of Palma.⁵⁴ Very soon the city was in financial straits, having lost not only a vital source of income, but also those agents—the converso tax farmers—who collected it. Faced with an economic crisis, the crown offered the conversos a deal: for a cash payment, a family could wipe the taint of a conviction from the Inquisition records. The conversos, at least the wealthier ones, accepted the offer and began to return to a city that was now in the throes of the great Indies adventure.

⁵³ In the population census of 1494 2,000 conversos were registered out of a total population of 40,000. However, this census took place after fourteen years of Inquisition activity, during which time hundreds of conversos had been burnt at the stake, and several thousand had fled the city. The chronicler Juan Bernal stated that in 1481 over 8,000 conversos fled Seville to the territory of Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cádiz, and Ponce de Leon was only one of several nobles who offered the conversos refuge. Juan Gil, *op.cit.* Vol 1, pp.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Gil notes that king Ferdinand vacillated between threatening and bribing the nobles into cooperating in the prosecution of rich conversos. For allowing the Inquisition to prosecute conversos in his territory Ferdinand offered the Duke of Medina Sidonia a third of the confiscated property. It becomes patently clear when one examines the Inquisition activity in its early years that this organization was driven as much by avarice as by religious zeal.

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, Seville's converso community recuperated its losses. Wealthy converso merchants bought positions for their family members on the city council and in the Cathedral, from which vantage points they once again took a prominent part in civic affairs. Most of these rich New-Christian parvenus were interested in their secular or clerical offices only in as much as they guaranteed social respectability and financial security; others used their positions to create and promote civic reform. One of the more altruistic public figures was Rodrigo de Santaella (Maese Rodrigo), a wealthy canon who used his substantial fortune to found the Santa Maria de Jesus college, an institution of higher education (it eventually became the University of Seville), with academic professorships in theology, canon law, civil law, medicine and the liberal arts. In the college's constitution, Santaella categorically prohibited his institution from discriminating against professors or students on the grounds of lineage. The college, wrote Santaella flippantly, was to admit all Christians, whether their ancestors were "Canarians, Indians, gentiles [Old Christians], pagans, Jews, Saracens, nobles, non-nobles, rich, poor, good, bad, urbanites, rustics, free men or slaves." And the prelate went on to justify this clause by citing Saint Paul's description of Christ as a unifying religious force that had eliminated differences between Jews and Gentiles. Unfortunately, Santaella died before the college was opened, in 1516, and was thus unable to impress his liberal attitudes upon its first rector Martín Navarro, who quickly wiped the non-discriminatory clause from the college's constitution and imposed a *limpieza de sangre* requirement.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The *limpieza* examination was, in practice, easily circumvented. Indeed, it is clear that many converso

The College of Santa María de Jesús' *limpieza de sangre* statute (1519) was implemented at the same time as similar legislation was being passed in the Cathedral chapter (1519) and in the Dominican college of Santo Tomás (1521). All three statutes reflected an atmosphere of open hostility towards a converso community that was once again prosperous and politically powerful. One Seville faction particularly incensed by the conversos' presence in the city's public life was the noble Ponce de León clan, who viewed the close relationship between converso city councillors and its noble rivals the Guzmán family as prejudicial to its own interests. In 1520 the Ponce de León led a riot against the city's wealthy converso merchants, its aim to break the conversos' economic power and oust them from the local government. The rebels failed, however, to capture substantial public support and were soon dispersed by the forces of Enrique de Guzmán, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and those of Don Fernando Enriquez de Ribera, a noble, like the Duke, who maintained close ties to Seville's converso patriciate.

In fact, Don Fernando Enriquez de Ribera was himself technically speaking a converso, his grandfather Fadrique Enriquez having, so to speak, "tainted" the family line through his marriage to the conversa Teresa Quiñones. However, it was not through the Enriquez but through the Riberas that this noble family's close contact with Seville's converso community was forged. Or to be precise it was through the illegitimate offspring of the Ribera family, who very often formed marriage alliances

scholars, including the humanist Malara used the university merely to gain graduate papers after studying in other institutions where students were submitted to a much more rigorous *limpieza* test before graduation. It is probable that Navarro imposed the *limpieza* regulation only to protect the College from accusations of being a converso institution.

with wealthy conversos. Several of these alliances were with the Alcázar family, which may in itself account for Don Fernando's defence of the beleaguered converso merchants in 1520—the merchant Francisco de Alcázar was on that occasion one of the rebels' primary targets. The Enriquez de Riberas ties to the Alcázar family may also explain Baltazar de Alcázar's long association with this noble house. The poet and humanist served Don Fernando's son Per Afan de Enriquez de Ribera, the first duke of Alcalá, for over twenty years as his private secretary.

The Enriquez Riberas' close contact with Seville's converso merchants was also undoubtedly promoted through that noble family's commercial activities, for it gained the bulk of its income from the soap industry. A licence to produce soap in Seville had been awarded to the Enriquez family by Juan II in 1423. Gradually, through further royal privileges and as a result of Don Fernando's mother Catalina de Ribera's canny business sense, the family gained a monopoly on soap production in the region. This lucrative business allowed Fadrique Enriquez de Ribera, the first Marquis of Tarifa, to convert one of the family residences into a splendid Renaissance palace, where he played host to the city's literary elite. The palace became known popularly as the *Casa de Pilotos* (the house of Pontius Pilot), a reference to Don Fadrique's trip to the Holy Land, via Italy, which apparently inspired him to expand and refurbish the family home. The name itself appears to have generated little curiosity on the part of local historians, and yet it is clearly derogatory. Branded, along with the Jews, as Christ's slayer, Pontius Pilot was one of the most hated men in

Christendom. One is tempted to conclude, indeed, that the name is a snide reference to the Ribera family's links to Seville's religiously suspect converso community.⁵⁶

As patrons of Renaissance art and literature, the Enriquez Ribera family were at the vanguard of humanist reform in Seville during the sixteenth century. It was perhaps only natural, therefore, that certain members of the family would also become attracted to Seville's evangelical movement, which took root during the 1530s, and even to its radical offshoot, the so-called Protestant conventicle. The first duke of Alcalá's illegitimate son Juan de Ribera, the product of his relationship with a member of the converso Caballeria family, was closely drawn to the evangelical mission of Juan de Avila and Luis de Granada.⁵⁷ He was also a champion of the young Jesuit order, whose activities he encouraged while Bishop of Badajoz. Ribera was also suspected of encouraging illuminist activity in his Extremaduran diocese, although no case was ever brought against him. Ribera's aunt, Doña María Enríquez de Ribera and her husband Pedro Puertocarrero, Marquis of Villanueva del Fresno, adherents of the "Protestant" prelate Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, were investigated for heresy in 1557. Neither was placed on trial, although their converso secretary Alonso de Baena was convicted of Protestantism and sentenced to ten years confinement. The Duke of Alcalá's secretary, Gaspar Zapata, another converso, was also convicted of Protestant heresy, albeit in absentia. Zapata, who had been arrested as early as 1550 for transporting Protestant literature, was burnt in effigy in Seville's 1562 *auto de fe*.

⁵⁶ Before the house was purchased from the state by the Enriquez Riberas it belonged to a wealthy Jewish merchant who fled Seville in 1480 to avoid an Inquisition trial.

⁵⁷ For Ribera's converso roots, see Juan Gil, op. cit. vol III, p. 127. For the prelate's support of the mystical movement in Extremadura, see Alexander Hamilton, op. cit. pp. 117-118.

Seville's "Protestant" cell

It is apparent that the Protestant scare in Spain in the late 1550s was manufactured by the Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdes, in a bid to bolster his declining political currency at Court. What Valdes sold to the old and fearful Charles V and his son, the inexperienced Philip II, as Protestant expansion was in reality little more than converso religious radicalism, an eclectic blend of Erasmian humanism and New-Christian illuminism. The heretics of Seville and Valladolid certainly read imported iconoclastic texts, including Calvinist and Lutheran works; however, by the 1550s middle-sort non-conformists had been reading this literature for decades, the works entering into their communities through a clandestine book trade organized by converso merchants in France and the Netherlands.⁵⁸ While these texts undoubtedly reinforced many non-conformists in their religious views, they did not inspire these views, nor did they define them. Even those figures regarded as Spain's most dyed-in-the-wool Calvinists, the radical clerics Cipriano de Valera, Cassiodoro de la Reina and Antonio Corro, who fled the Seville's San Isidro Monastery in 1557, were in reality

⁵⁸ In 1520 Luther's commentary on Galatians was translated into Spanish, followed soon after by his *Freedom of the Christian Man*. These translations were published in Antwerp and shipped to Spain by Spanish merchants. In 1521, the papal nuncio Jerome Aleander wrote that "through the efforts of the Marranos", Spanish versions of Luther's works were being produced in the northern port. In July of 1521, the nuncio rounded up a number of these works and had them publicly burnt. This did not stop the trade. In 1524 a ship head from Holland to Valencia was captured by the Spanish, who unloaded its contents in the port of San Sebastian. Amongst its cargo were two casks of Lutheran books. These were seized and burnt. Eight months later, three Venetian ships brought large quantities of similar works to a port in the province of Granada. The corregidor seized the works and imprisoned the the captains and crews. In 1527 the Inquisition wrote to the Dominican provincial at Lugo ordering him to investigate reports of heretics and heretical literature entering Spain through the city, which was one of the chief ports of commerce with northern Europe. See Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* Vol III, London, 1922, 413, 421, 422; and John E. Longhurst, "Julián Hernández Protestant Martyr", *Bibliothèque D'Humanisme et Renaissance*, Geneve, 1960, XXII, p. 94.

men of independent religious vision, who in exile moved in converso circles and clashed constantly with Calvinist dogma.⁵⁹

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Old-Christian attacks on the converso communities—through Inquisition prosecutions and *limpieza* legislation—had done little to moderate the urban middle-sort New Christians' tendencies towards religious non-conformism. It did, however, make the New Christians more circumspect in voicing their beliefs publicly, at least in the first four decades after the establishment of the Holy Office, in 1480. But by the 1520s this situation began to change, as Erasmian religious radicalism spread openly and, it seemed, with impunity, throughout the country. As far as Seville is concerned, the climacteric year would appear to be 1524, when the Erasmian cleric Alonso de Manrique was made Archbishop of the see and immediately set out to introduce a religious reform message into his diocese. Manrique was particularly successful in attracting well-educated, religiously radical preachers and educators into the city, who tapped into a large reservoir of religious discontent. One of these men was Juan de Avila, another was Juan de Castillo, a Toledan scholar, like Avila a converso, who established a school in Seville under Manrique's guidance. When Manrique became Inquisitor General in 1526, Castillo and a number of his pupils accompanied the prelate to the Holy Office's headquarters in Toledo. Here, Juan, along with his brother and sister, Geronimo and Petronila Lucena, became involved in Erasmian and illuminist conventicles. When Castillo's friend Juan de Vergara was charged with Lutheran heresy in 1531, Castillo,

⁵⁹ For Valera's, de la Reina's and Corro's problems in Protestant exile see Paul J. Hauben, *Three Spanish Heretics and the Reformation*, Libraire Droz, Geneva, 1967.

who had shared proscribed Lutheran literature with Vergara, fled the country. The Inquisition eventually tracked him down to Bologna, in 1535, and brought him back to Spain to stand trial. He was burnt at the stake in an *auto de fe* in Toledo on March 18th, 1537.⁶⁰

In disfavour at Court since 1529, confined to his archbishopric, Manrique was in no position to come to the aid of Castillo in his confrontation with the Inquisition. He was, nevertheless, still a powerful political presence in Seville, where, up until his death in 1538, he continued to attract men of heterodox religious views. Two of these figures were the preachers Juan Gil, always referred to as Doctor Egidio, and Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, who entered the city in the early 1530s, armed with a reform message they had acquired as young scholars at the Complutense University. Both men would soon become the nucleus of what was a predominantly converso religious reform movement in the city. Prominent among this large clandestine group, formed by members of Seville's lay and clerical communities, were the New-Christian religious of the Hieronymite monastery of San Isidoro and its sister organization the convent of Santa Paula. In 1557, several months before the Inquisition began to strike out at the Seville conventicle, several of the errant monks from the San Isidoro monastery successfully fled to Geneva. Historians often comment on the remarkable resilience and ingenuity of these escapees, as if they undertook this precarious exodus alone and without resources. In fact, it seems likely that they were spirited away from Spain to Geneva by the same sophisticated converso merchant network that was responsible for bringing Protestant literature to the Andalusian port. One of the key

⁶⁰ Bataillon, pp. 183-4, 188-9, and 478-80.

figures in this secret enterprise was Marcus Pérez, a wealthy merchant stationed in Antwerp, who used his wealth and extensive family organization (which included the Nuñez Pérez merchant family of Seville) to transport Lutheran and Calvinist texts from the book fairs at Frankfurt via Antwerp and Bordeaux to the Spanish ports, and thence, through his agent, Peter Tilman, to the fairs at Medina del Campo; from here the books infiltrated the towns of central Castile.

It is not clear what Marcus Pérez's motives were in financing a very costly clandestine book trade. Perhaps he merely wished to be a perpetual thorn in the side of a despised Catholic Church, or perhaps he believed that an underground reform movement, if extensive enough, could lead to open rebellion. This indeed occurred in his hometown of Antwerp in 1566, when religious riots developed into what would become known as the Dutch revolt. Pérez himself was a leading figure in this revolt, using his wealth to finance rebel activity and his many connections to unite, or at least attempt to unite, Lutheran and Calvinist groups behind a common anti-Catholic banner. Although a convert to Calvinism, Pérez was by no means zealous in his adopted faith, as he demonstrated by sheltering Cassiodoro de la Reina in 1564, when the querulous Spanish cleric found himself under attack by fellow Calvinists for his heterodox views. Pérez appears to have joined the Calvinist Church because it was the largest of the Protestant congregations in Antwerp and thus offered most scope as a political pressure group. Politics apart, the merchant followed a characteristically converso path of non-conformist non-conformism.⁶¹

⁶¹ P. J. Hauben, "Marcus Pérez and Marrano Calvinism in the Dutch Revolt and the Reformation;" *Bibliothèque D'Humanisme et Renaissance* XXIX, Genève, 1967. Marcus Pérez's brother Luis Pérez,

In Seville, the first wave of attacks against Protestantism came in 1549, when the Inquisition prosecuted Doctor Egidio and a small group of book smuggling accomplices, several of whom were based in Paris and Antwerp. Egidio's trial lasted over two years, during which time he was found guilty of and abjured the following beliefs: only faith was required to gain God's grace; acts of penitence were unnecessary, as Jesus had already absolved us of sin; only God merited worship, the worship of saintly images was idolatry and should be prohibited. For these so-called Protestant errors Egidio was sentenced to a year in the Inquisition prison of Triana and thereafter forbidden to leave Spain; also for a year after his release he was not to celebrate mass, and for ten years he was suspended from preaching. The sentence was not rigorously applied, however. In 1553 Egidio was restored to his position as preacher in the Cathedral and was still practising when he died a year later. His death saved him from what would have been certain execution in the later Protestant trials. As it was, his bones were disinterred and burnt along with those of his fellow preacher Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, who had died in the Inquisition gaol in 1557 while awaiting sentencing.

Egidio's 1553 prosecution appears not to have affected Seville's clandestine Protestant book trade. Indeed the canon's light sentence may have led to overconfidence and even carelessness on the part of the book traffickers. In 1557 one of the chief traffickers, Julian Hernandez, delivered, by mistake, some Calvinist texts to a Seville clergyman who did not share the reformers' views. This literature was then

a member of the Family of Love religious sect, was a close friend of the Seville humanist Arias Montano. For Luis Perez see Chapter Five.

handed to the Inquisition and an investigation was launched that would eventually lead to the prosecution of over a hundred people, the majority of whom were conversos.⁶² These prosecutions probably represented only a fraction of the people in Seville that were attracted towards the reform movement and who had read the prohibited texts. However, lack of space in the Inquisition prison and the snail's pace of the trials themselves militated against the Holy Office casting its net wider. Two of Seville's reforming faction who narrowly escaped prosecution during this period were the humanists Benito Arias Montano and Juan de Malara.⁶³ Another of the city's humanists, Sebastian Fox Morcilla, was not so lucky. Fox Morcillo, whose brother Francisco was one of six Hieronymite monks burnt at the stake in 1561 for Protestant heresy, had himself been accused of voicing heterodox beliefs while a student at the University of Louvain in the mid 1550s. In 1560, Sebastian, who had recently been appointed tutor to Philip II's son Don Carlos, was lost at sea, it appears while fleeing an Inquisitorial inquiry.⁶⁴

In 1559, at the height of the Protestant trials, the Archbishop of Toledo Bartolomé de Carranza was arrested by the Inquisition and charged with heresy. Carranza, who veered strongly towards Erasmian reform, was not entirely an innocent

⁶² See Juan Gil, *op. cit.* vol. 1, Ch. VII.

⁶³ For Juan de Malara's and Benito Arias Montano's converso backgrounds and religious non-conformism see Chapter Five.

⁶⁴ See Ruth Pike "The Converso Origin of Sebastian Fox Morcillo," *Hispania*, LI (Dec. 1968), 877-882; and the same author's *Aristocrats and Traders*, Ithaca, New York, 1967, pp. 144-147. Sebastian's grandfather Hernando, a hosier appeared in the Sevillian composition of 1510. For Sebastian Fox Morcillo's involvement in a heterodox circle at the University of Lovain, see J.L. Tellechea, "Españoles en Lovaina 1551-1558. Primeras noticias sobre el bayanism," *Revista Española de Teología*, XXIII, 1963, pp. 28-29.

victim of Holy Office malice. Nevertheless, even if he had been guilty of heresy, as the Inquisitor General Valdés claimed, Carranza's status as primate of Spain should still have provided him with immunity from an Inquisition inquiry. Yet, despite protests from the papacy, the Archbishop remained a prisoner of the Inquisition for the next seven years before being allowed to travel to Rome to stand trial. Indeed, Carranza's arrest became something of a test case for Inquisition authority, with Philip II taking the part of his own religious institution in its conflict with the Holy See. The Spanish monarch was now firmly convinced that it was only through the activities of a strong Holy Office that Spain would avoid the Protestant heresy—in his view fomented by the conversos—that was now attacking northern Europe. "I cannot and must not fail to support the Inquisition," Philip wrote to Pope Pius V in 1569, in answer to protests from the papacy, "as I shall always do all the days of my life."⁶⁵

With the Protestant trials and the arrest of Carranza, Spain entered a period of increased social and religious repression, in which the Inquisition, confident of the king's support, struck out with greater determination than ever against Spain's religious non-conformists. In this tense atmosphere it was inevitable that Old Christian Spain would be eager to flaunt its *limpieza de sangre* as proof of its religious and social authenticity and to penalize those Spaniards, the New Christians, who lacked this certificate of authenticity. How Spain's converso humanists reacted to this affront is the subject of the next chapter.

⁶⁵ Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain*, Yale, 1997, p.236. For Philip's view on the converse involvement in the Protestant heresy, see *ibid.* p. 83: "all the heresies in Germany, France and Spain have been sown by descendents of Jews, as we have seen and still see every day in Spain."

CHAPTER FOUR

CONVERSO VOICES IN POST-TRIDENTINE SPAIN

On December 4, 1563 the Council of Trent officially came to an end. The Council had been convoked eighteen years previously by Pope Paul III to discuss religious reform and to attempt to reconcile doctrinal differences between the Catholics and Protestants. When it became clear, however, that religious rapprochement was impossible, the Protestant delegates went home, leaving their Catholic counterparts, mostly Italians and Spanish, to set forth a doctrinal and institutional reply to the new churches.

For the majority of Spanish humanists, Trent must have been a grave disappointment. True, the Council had made strides towards a more disciplined church; the sale of indulgences had been banned, for example, and decrees had been passed requiring bishops to reside in their dioceses, give up their concubines, and make regular visits to the parish churches; furthermore, every diocese was ordered to establish a seminary for the education and training of the clergy, something that would have been welcomed by humanists for whom clerical ignorance was a major stumbling block towards religious renovation. Nevertheless, on the subject of church doctrine and ceremonial practice, the Council had voted in favor of tradition. Church authority was still to reside in both the scriptures and papal decrees, all seven sacraments were to be observed, works (donations, fasts, acts of contrition) were to be considered as important as faith in acquiring God's grace; and the worship of the

saints, through their icons, and the observance of ceremonies were to remain essential elements of Catholicism.

Faced with these well broadcasted official rulings, Spanish humanists could no longer plead ignorance if attacked over their errant beliefs, as Juan de Avila had done with regard to the first version of his *Audi, filia*. Their only recourse was to feign compliance with Trent, while subtly, surreptitiously, alluding to their true beliefs in works that circulated among like-minded friends. However, it was not always easy for men of strong humanist convictions to contain their contempt for an orthodox credo. In 1584 the celebrated humanist Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, el Brocense, was summoned before the Inquisition's Valladolid tribunal, accused of making the following statements in front of his students in Salamanca: Church icons should be banned and would have been banned at Trent if it were not for the fact that the councillors were afraid of following Protestant dictates; the people who knelt down in front of the images displayed in the Easter processions were idiots; the virgin had not given birth in a stable, this was merely an allegory; and theologians knew nothing; if he were a theologian he would burn them all himself.¹

In the course of his trial, the Valladolid Inquisitors focused their attention not only on Brocense's religious views, but also on his background. What were the names of his paternal and maternal grandparents? The humanist stated that he did not know their names; nor did he know the names of his father's brothers and sisters or even his own brothers. This reluctance to give the Inquisition information about his family, has

¹ A. Tovar y M de la Pinta, *Procesos inquisitoriales contra Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas*, C.S.I.C. Madrid, 1941, pp. 31-33

led a number of scholars to suspect that Brocense was a converso. Indeed, his family background conforms to a converso stereotype. He was born in Las Brozas, near the Portuguese border, an area that included substantial converso communities; his parents names, Sanchez and Nuñez were favored by conversos in these borderland communities; his father, an upholsterer, was involved in an industry, textiles, dominated by conversos; and three of his family members were medical men, a profession also dominated by conversos. Furthermore, Brocense married twice into a family, the Pesos, well known in Salamanca as converso merchants, moneylenders and judaizers.² Indeed, perhaps it was rumors concerning Brocense's wife's family that led the Inquisition tribunal to question the humanist on his own background; or perhaps the Holy Office had merely come to associate, with some justification, unorthodox views with converso roots.

The Tridentine Council's resistance to change was irksome to scholars like Brocense, brought up on Erasmian ideals; it was not, however, the only blow the Council dealt to Spain's humanists. It also warned against too great an interest in the Old-Testament scriptures, other than those narratives that foreshadowed the life of Christ and in particular the Passion. This ruling was a response to the Protestant church's contention that the scriptures were the sole religious authority. While

² Francisco Martínez Cuadrado, *El Brocense: Semblanza de un humanista*, Badazoz, 2003, pp. 23-25. For his temerity, the Valladolid tribunal recommended that Brocense's possessions be confiscated and that he be placed in prison; however, the Supremo now under the control of Gaspar de Quiroga, a man of liberal disposition, rejected their advice, issuing Brocense with nothing more than a warning to guard his tongue in future on pain of rigorous castigation. Unfortunately, the humanist did not heed the advice, and in 1600 he found himself again in front of the Valladolid tribunal, accused of another series of indiscretions, among which was the statement: "Those who criticize Erasmus are either friars or madmen." Brocense's death, occurring while the trial was still taking place, undoubtedly saved him from a long prison sentence and dispossession of property.

Protestants began to pay greater attention to the Hebrew Bible and even to Jewish scriptural analysis, the Catholic Church, never totally comfortable with its Jewish ancestry, divorced itself even further from the Old Law, at the same time underlining its adherence to its Medieval, Gentile traditions. The message was evident: Catholicism was the religion of the Gentiles; Protestantism was for heretics and traitors who had abandoned their faith and kind for an unholy alliance with those other wilful deviants, the Jews. But the Council's ruling was not only an attack on Protestantism, it was also an affront, albeit unintentional, to those converso humanists for whom the Old Testament provided an indispensable antechamber into what was often an inimical Old-Christian world. The Old Testament was, indeed, fundamental to many converso humanists' Christian identity; it was a source of psychological comfort and intellectual and artistic inspiration, and was not easily abandoned.

In 1571 the Spanish Hebraist Fray Luis de Leon was imprisoned by the Inquisitorial tribunal at Valladolid, charged with attacking the Septuagint; with preferring rabbis and Jews to the saints as expositors of the scriptures; with circulating a Castillian translation of the *Song of Songs* and describing it as a love poem from Solomon to his wife; with stating that in the Old Testament there was no promise of eternal life; and with asserting that the Vulgate contained many falsities and that a better version could be made of it by a closer study of Hebrew sources. Leon's arguments are those of a Christian humanist who bases his biblical exegesis on

philological criteria; they are also those of a converso for whom Christianity was an extension of Judaism, not a rejection of it; the two interpretations are inseparable.³

Leon's sense of his own unique, New-Christian, identity, (an identity influenced by his antecedents culture) not only directed him towards Hebrew studies, it propelled him into the dangerous business of using the *Talmud* and not the *Old Testament* as his Biblical source; it also led him into many heated public disputations at the University of Salamanca, during which he was much too eager to demonstrate his superiority to Old-Christian colleagues in Old-Testament exegesis. Even before his brush with the Inquisition in 1571, Leon considered himself an outsider at Salamanca. This sense of isolation is evident in his poetry, in which he adopts the Horacian ode to express his own stoical views, his animosity towards the *vulgo* (specifically, ignorant scholastics), and his desire to retire to a quiet place, not a country villa, as in Horace's case, but "un cumbre airosa," where he can achieve spiritual tranquillity away from the malice of envious colleagues. However, as far as Leon was concerned, academic envy was only part of the problem; the real issue was Old-Christian obscurantism and prejudice, as the friar made clear in both his poem "En una esperanza que salió mala" (in which he wrote "En mí la culpa ajena se castiga/ y soy del malhechor) and in the following reply to his adversaries while in prison:

...perdonarme han las orejas honestas y religiosas...y así hablaré de cosas que la naturaleza hizo para fin honesto, con palabras usadas, las cuales si el uso vicioso la entorpece, *el juicio limpio* y que trata sólo del conocimiento de la verdad, las *limpia*, porque a *los limpios* y buenos,

³ For Luis de Leon's converso family background see Albert Sicroff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre: controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII*, pp. 17-18

que no pervirtieron en nada el uso natural, todo lo natural les es *limpio*, y sólo el vicio que es desorden de la naturaleza les ofende.⁴

Leon's statement is reminiscent of that made by Juan de Avila to his supporters while incarcerated in the Inquisition prison in Seville. Both men subtly contrast true *limpieza*, which is the purity of those who seek the truth, with the false *limpieza* of their antagonists, which only serves to corrupt nature. In his *Los nombres de Cristo*, also written while he was in prison in Valladolid, Leon returns to the *limpieza* issue, comparing the situation in Spain with the Christian society spoken about by Saint Paul, in which everyone was equal. According to Leon, his own government's desire to divide society into groups of honorable and tainted members was not only un-Christian, it was also clearly detrimental to the commonweal:

Y no solo dañan a su [the government's] honra propia quando buscan invenciones para manchar la de los que son gobernados por ellos, mas dañan mucho sus intereses y ponen en manifiesto peligro la paz y la conservación de sus reynos. Porque assí como dos cosas que son contrarias, aunque se junten, no se pueden mezclar, assí no es possible que se añude con paz el reyno cuyas partes están tan oppuestas entre sí y tan diferenciadas, unas con mucha honra y otras con señalada afrenta. Y como el cuerpo que en sus partes está maltratado y cuyos humores se conciertan mal entre sí, está muy ocasionado y muy vezino a la enfermedad y la muerte, assí por la misma manera el reyno adonde muchas órdenes y suertes de hombres y muchas casas particulares están como sentidas y heridas y adonde la diferencia, que por estas causas pone la fortuna y las leyes, no permite que se mezclen y se concierten bien unas con otras, está sujeto a enfermar y a venir a las armas con cualquiera razón que se ofrece. Que la propia lástima e injuria de cada uno, encerrada en su pecho y que bive en él, los despierta y los haze velar siempre a la ocasión y a la vengança.⁵

⁴ Quoted from Emilia Fernández Tejero, "Fray Luis de León, Hebraísta: El *Cantar de los Cantares*," Sefarad, XLVIII 2 (1988), p. 273.

⁵ Fray Luis de Leon, *De los nombres de Cristo*, Catedra, Madrid, 1997, pp. 376-7. In 1609 Doctor Alvaro Piçario de Palacios denounced this passage to the Inquisition as a piece of Jewish propaganda against the king and the Holy Office. See Bataillon, *Erasmus en España*, FCE-España, sixth edition, 1998, p. 767, note 77. [note that Juan de Vergara and Constantino also attack *limpieza*]

Far from bowing him low, Leon's long prison sentence appears to have steeled him in his humanist quest. At least this is the impression one gets from reading *Los nombres de Cristo*, in which the friar blames barbarous theologians for creating a congregation too ignorant and confused to be given access to a vernacular Bible. As a corrective to the scholastics' "libros dañosos y de vanidad" Leon offers up his own work, a vernacular evangelical text, which makes constant, one might even conclude, wilful reference to the Old-Testament scriptures. It is also noteworthy that *Los nombres de Cristo* is dedicated to the royal councillor Don Pedro Portocarrero, a man whose family was closely linked to the converso community and to converso religious reform. Don Pedro's grandfather, Luis Puertocarrero, not only nurtured the Cazalla family at his Andalusian court, several of whose members were later tried for illuminist and protestant beliefs, he also provided a safe refuge, in the late fifteenth century, for hundreds of conversos in flight from social uprisings in Seville and Ciudad Real; his uncle, also Luis, who figures in Agustín Oliva's converso poem (see chapter 3), was a close friend and patron of Juan de Avila, and the dedicatee of Avila's first, prohibited, version of *Audi filia*; as for his parents, Don Pedro Portocarrero and Doña María Enríquez de Ribera, the Marquises of Villanueva del Fresno, they were closely associated with Seville's converso-dominated Protestant cell, only narrowly escaping prosecution themselves in the Seville trials of 1559.

As well as dedicating *Los nombres de Cristo* to don Pedro, Fray Luis also dedicated a collection poems to the nobleman, many of which, written in the Inquisition prison, attack the Holy Office. In one of these poems, Leon presents

Portocarrero as an example of the right kind of nobility, not the nobility attained through an immaculate bloodline (something which, in any case, the Portocarrero family could not boast), but through personal merit: “Bien eres generoso/ pimpollo de ilustrisimos mayores;/ mas esto, aunque glorioso, son títulos menores,/ que tú, por ti venciendo”.⁶

Luis de Leon’s trial dragged on for five years until, overcome by inertia, the Valladolid tribunal was forced to present its findings and recommendations to the Supreme Council for adjudication. The *Suprema*, now headed by the liberal-minded Gaspar de Quiroga, found in favor of the accused, recommending only that he be reprimanded in private. Leon was released from prison in December 1575 and immediately resumed his teaching duties. He is reported to have begun his first lecture to his students with the statement, “As I was saying yesterday...”

Although Fray Luis’s prison term was long, it was not, by Inquisition standards, particularly harsh. Certainly, the three converso scholars, Gaspar de Grajal, Martínez de Cantalapiedra and Alonso Gudiel, all arrested around the same time as Leon for their “judaizing” tendencies, were subjected to much crueller treatment. Of these three men, Grajal and Gudiel died in prison. Martínez Cantalapiedra, survived his five year confinement but in broken health and with his reputation destroyed; unlike León, he was not permitted to regain his teaching position at Salamanca. “I have labored to interpret scripture before the whole world,” Cantalapiedra told his

⁶ Fray Luis de Leon, *Poesía*, Catedra, Madrid, 1997, p. 186. Pedro Portocarrero was the second son of the marquises of Villanueva del Fresno. He studied law at Salamanca, where he was rector on two occasions. In 1580 he became a member of the Royal Council and two years later a member of the Supreme Council of the Inquisition. In 1589 he was made Bishop of Calahorra and in 1596 Bishop of Cordoba.

prosecutors in 1577, “but my only reward has been the destruction of my life, my honor, my health and my possessions.” And he concluded, as many humanists and conversos had done before him, that “it is better to walk carefully and be prudent.”⁷

While post-Tridentine Spanish society could boast a number of important religious innovators, these men and women succeeded in changing the religious landscape despite Tridentine rulings rather than because of them. One of these figures, perhaps the most celebrated of Spain’s post-Tridentine religious reformers, was Teresa of Avila, a woman whose mystical practices ran counter to Trent’s emphasis on a public, sacramental faith, and brought her into confrontation with both her own order, the Carmelites, and the Holy Office. That Teresa managed to avoid a serious clash with the latter institution while establishing fifteen barefoot Carmelite houses in Spain and beyond, must be attributed to her impressive powers of dissimulation, for as an intelligent woman, a mystic, and above all a converso, her situation was, to say the least, a delicate one.

In 1485, Teresa of Avila’s paternal grandfather, Juan Sánchez de Cepeda, a wealthy Toledo silk merchant, confessed to the recently established Inquisition tribunal that he had committed “many grave crimes and offenses” against the Catholic Church. This confession was made during the Inquisition’s forty day period of grace, in which conversos were encouraged to admit their apostasy in order to receive light sentences. During this period 2,400 conversos, (15 percent of the city’s total population of Old and New Christians), presented themselves to the Inquisitors for

⁷ Kamen, *op. cit.*, p. 125

sentencing. It is unlikely that all these people were, in fact, Judaizers; they were, however, members of a minority group that lived in its own neighbourhoods, formed endogamous marriages and endogenous business unions, and maintained discrete cultural practices (bathing on the Sabbath, refraining from eating pork products), and this visible social non-conformity made them potential targets for Holy-Office aggression. Clearly, the majority of Toledo's conversos believed that it was wiser to genuflect before the Holy Office in this period of amnesty, rather than await a later attack that would carry far greater consequences. What they did not realize, however, was that in volunteering information on their Jewish backgrounds they were presenting the Holy Office with important data that it would use against them and their families in the future. This, indeed, was the case of the Sánchez de Cepeda family.

As punishment for his grave crimes against the church, Juan Sánchez de Cepeda was ordered to walk, with his family, in penitential processions to Toledo's churches on seven consecutive Fridays. While the sentence was a light one, for Juan it undoubtedly represented an enormous blow to his civic dignity, and very probably led to his decision to move his business headquarters to Avila, a small city 100 miles north west of Toledo, with a growing textile industry, and, significantly, no Inquisition tribunal. It was here in 1519 that Juan's son Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda attempted to buy himself noble status.

A successful textile merchant like his father, Alonso Sánchez de Cepeda used his wealth to purchase the outward trappings of nobility. A city mansion adorned with coats of arms, a thoroughbred horse and a number of expensive Toledo swords all

testify to Alonso's social ambitions.⁸ All that was missing was an official certificate recognizing the merchant's *hidalgo* status. The opportunity to gain this came in 1519, when Charles I, in need of funds to sue for the title of Holy Roman Emperor, introduced a new tax. Alonso and his three brothers refused to pay this tax on the grounds that they were *hidalgos* and thus tax exempt. This refusal then led to an investigation by the court of the Royal Chancery at Valladolid, which, in 1520, found in favour the brothers. Contesting tax payment was of course a common stratagem used by conversos to acquire a certificate of nobility. It was expensive—witnesses and court officials had to be bribed—but generally effective. Unfortunately, for the Sanchez de Cepedas, the council of finance appealed the Valladolid tribunal's decision, producing evidence from the Toledo Inquisition records that the family was of Jewish background. In light of this evidence, the tribunal was forced to amend its previous ruling. Alonso and his brothers could still flaunt their *hidalgo* status, but, according to the revised certificate, only in the district of Avila.⁹

It is perhaps understandable, given the Sanchez de Cepeda family's background, that Alonso's daughter Teresa de Ahumada would herself become so

⁸ Francisco Márquez Villanueva, "Santa Teresa y el linaje," in his *Espiritualidad y literatura en el siglo XVI*, Alfaguara, Madrid, 1968, pp. 141-152. See also Stephen Clissold, *St Teresa of Avila*, Sheldon Press, London, 1979, p.7.

⁹ Two copies (*traslados*) of the original ejecutoria are housed in the Archivo Silveriano of Burgos. Both official copies have been manipulated so that we now read that the hidalguia of Don Alonso and his brothers "*sea guardado...especialmente en Avila, Majalbáago y Hortigosa*", not *solamente* in these places as specified in the original document. In 1540, Teresa's brother, now a successful merchant living in Peru, asked his sister to send him a copy of the hidalgo certificate. Teresa wrote back: "He dicho que enviaré, cuando vaya Antonio Moran, un traslado de la ejecutoria, que dicen no puede estar mayor, y esto haré con todo cuidado." Was this copy, "que dicen no puede estar mayor", also adulterated? See P. Tomás Alvarez, "Santa Teresa de Ávila en el drama de los judeo-conversos Castellanos", in Ángel Alcalá ed., *Judfos. Sefarditas. Conversos: La expulsión de 1492 y sus consecuencias*, Ambito, Valladolid, 1995, pp. 611-12.

obsessed with the question of social status and honor. Indeed, it appears that Teresa entered the expensive and fashionable Carmelite convent of *la Encarnacion*, precisely because it gave her the opportunity to act out the role of the noble, virtuous woman. Soon, however, the young nun became tormented by her spiritual vacuity and this led to what appears to have been an intense neurotic illness. It was while convalescing from this illness, away from the convent, that Teresa read Francisco Osuna's *Terceer Abecedario* and took the first steps on a mystical path that would lead to her founding her own religious order.

At the same time that Teresa was puzzling out her social and religious identity at the *Encarnacion* convent, a group of humanist prelates, predominantly, if not exclusively converso, began gathering together to discuss social and religious reform within the city. Influenced by the *devotio moderna* movement and, in particular, the evangelical program of Juan de Avila, this coterie of reformers established a Colegio de Niños in 1556 and a seminary in 1572, both modelled on Maestro Avila's own institutions. Members of the group also maintained a close relationship with the infant Jesuit order, promoting the establishment of the San Gil Jesuit college in 1553.¹⁰

Teresa's mystical experiences and her critical attitude towards the religious life of the *Encarnacion* convent eventually brought her into contact with Avila's reforming faction. It was through her relationship with several members of this group that she became convinced of the need to found a reformed—or barefoot—branch of her own Carmelite order. The first of these convents, St. Joseph's, was established in

¹⁰ For Avila's religious reform movement, see Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Avila of Santa Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City*, Cornell University Press, 1989, pp. 78-107

Avila in 1562 and was soon followed by other convents in Medina del Campo, Malagón, Valladolid and Toledo. Unlike the unreformed Carmelites, Teresa's order did not employ a *limpieza de sangre* statute, which may account for its high level of converso patronage, although converso middle sort patrons were also undoubtedly attracted to religious establishments that emphasised quietist practice.¹¹

One of Teresa's early Avila patrons was the rich widow, Doña Guiomar de Ulloa. The Ulloas were a successful converso merchant family that had used its wealth to establish its members in church and state offices and to forge a number of marriage alliances with Old-Christian and New-Christian *hidalgo* families. Like the Fonseca family, with whom they were closely linked, the Ulloas were drawn towards Church reform; indeed one of its members, Juan de Ulloa Pereira was an active participant in Valladolid's famous protestant cell. It appears that the leader of this cell, Dr. Agustin Cazalla, had tried to convert Doña Guiomar to his radical views just before he ran foul of the Inquisition, in 1557. The noble lady had refused his offer; nevertheless, the very fact that she was approached by Cazalla suggests that she was a woman of strong non-conformist tendencies.¹²

Closely associated with mystical (to many, *alumbrado*) practice, tied to converso money, Teresa's reformed Carmelite convents attracted constant criticism during the first years of their existence. Aware of the precariousness of her

¹¹ Teresa's principle backers in Avila, Medina del Campo and Toledo were all conversos. In Toledo convent's ties to converso money created serious problems for Teresa. See Jodi Bilinkoff, op. cit. p. 130 and p. 146

¹² Bilinkoff, op. cit.p. 141. It is noteworthy that Teresa was Doña Guiomar's house guest during the period 1557 to 1559, that is during the time that Cazalla made his visit.

organization, Teresa did all she could to allay her critics fears. In both her autobiography and in *The Way of Perfection* Teresa is careful to emphasise the post-Tridentine orthodox nature of her foundations. Her plan, she tells her readers, was to create institutions in which groups of poor, secluded, unworldly nuns could pray for the Catholic Church in its struggle against the Lutherans. But it would be unwise to take all these statements at face value. Teresa may not have been well disposed towards Protestantism, but this had hardly propelled her towards founding a religious order. Her new organization was created in reaction to the moral laxity and intellectual poverty of the Spanish regular clergy, as becomes clear from her many criticisms of Spain's religious in her works;¹³ her major influence was a pre-Tridentine evangelical reform movement, led by Juan de Avila, a converso and mystic like herself driven by the need for personal and institutional purification. On the subject of Teresa's religious motivations, Rowan Williams writes,

We do not begin to understand her as a religious, as a reformer, as a theologian, unless we see her as a 'displaced person' in the Spain of her day...[S]he cannot but do her religious reflection from the specific point of view she occupies: as a woman and a Jewess, undergoing ecstatic experiences, and claiming certain kinds of authority, at a time when any one of these would guarantee her not being taken seriously in Church and society, except as a threat and a pollutant. Reading the *Life*, we become more and more aware of how she has to negotiate her way in an almost wholly suspicious environment. But, reading her work as a whole, we can see how the experience of impurity and dishonour itself becomes the keystone of a recovery of certain aspects of the primitive Christian story and proclamation no less radical than that of her reforming contemporaries in Northern Europe.¹⁴

¹³ See for example chapter VII of her *Life*

¹⁴ Rowan Williams, *Teresa of Avila*, Continuum, London, 1991, p. 49

In the tense atmosphere of post-Tridentine Spain, religious reformers like Teresa of Avila were forced to move with extreme caution if they were to avoid a clash with the Holy Office. The Tridentine Council's call for a more pious and better educated clergy did, however, give the reformers an opportunity to attack those bastions of religious conservatism, the regular orders, and in so doing take an important step towards creating a revitalized church. One of the religious orders most powerful opponents during this period was Cristóbal de Rojas y Sandoval, a Teresa supporter, who from 1571 to 1580 was Archbishop of Seville.

Cristóbal de Rojas y Sandoval was born in Fuenterrabia, Guipuzcoa, in 1502, the illegitimate child of the Marquis of Denia, Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval and a certain Dominga de Alcega. In 1542, don Cristóbal officially wiped clean the taint of illegitimacy by papal dispensation. However according to some, Rojas "natural" birth was not his only impediment; there was also the matter of his converso background. While Rojas himself remained mute on this subject, his nephew, Bernardo Rojas y Sandoval, was less abashed. In defending Fr. Agustin Salucio's *memorial* on the *limpieza de sangre* statutes in 1599, Bernardo, later Archbishop of Toledo, wrote: "Certifico a V.P. que soy el hombre del mundo menos linajudo."¹⁵

While we have little information on Cristobal de Rojas early education, it is likely that his evangelical religious outlook was the product of the private liberal tutelage he received on his father's estate at Lerma. Later these religious tendencies were cemented at Alcalá de Henares, where he studied from 1524 to 1535 and at Charles V's humanist court, in which he passed his early career. Between 1542 and

¹⁵ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y America*, Ediciones Istmo, 1978, p.90.

1571 Rojas became, in succession, Archbishop of Oviedo, Badajoz, Cordoba and Seville. In each of these sees he undertook a program of reform, attacking the regular orders, while favoring evangelical prelates. At Badajoz, Rojas encouraged preachers formed in Juan de Avila's seminaries and members of the recently established Jesuits, and, according to the Dominican friar Alonso de la Fuente, turned a blind eye to the *alumbrado* sect that began to take root in the region during his office.

In 1565 Rojas, as the eldest bishop in Castile, was chosen to head the Council of Toledo, the most important of the five provincial councils established by Philip II to work out a program for enforcing the dictates of the Council of Trent. The choice did not meet with universal approval. Rojas had already gained a reputation for his bias against the unreformed religious houses, and some of the regular clergy felt that he would use his position as president of the Council to pursue his attacks with even greater vigour. The Archbishop's call to Juan de Avila to present a guideline for reform, only served to underline the clerics' fears. Soon anonymous letters were arriving at court questioning the propriety of the Rojas presidency: not only was the Archbishop's dogma dubious, so too was his Old-Christian lineage. Disturbed by these letters, Philip II proposed an investigation to unearth and interrogate their authors. Rojas, however, demurred. As a man of Christian character, he explained, he would prefer to turn the other cheek rather than seek retribution. The matter was dropped.¹⁶

Meanwhile, as his opponents had feared, Rojas began to move against the relaxed religious houses of his sees: first Cordoba and later, from 1571, Seville. Rojas occupancy of the latter see had coincided with a move among a group of Carmelite

¹⁶ Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, leg. 89, no. 61.

friars to make sweeping reforms within their own order. Rojas immediately lent his support to this movement and in 1573 helped establish a barefoot, or reformed, Carmelite monastery within the city.

To make sense of this post-Tridentine wave of reform, it is important to note that Philip II was himself in favour of reforming or eradicating the unreformed or observant monasteries. In order to execute this reform the king felt it necessary to give the initiative to Spanish Bishops, who, unlike the Generals of the orders, were based in Spain and had first-hand experience of the situation; they were also men whose activities Philip could more easily control. In December 1566 the fervent reformer Miguel Ghislieri, recently invested to the Holy See as Pope Pius V, gave Philip the necessary brief to appoint two apostolic delegates with powers to found new reformed convents and reform old ones, deposing or transferring the priors of unreformed houses, if necessary. At the same time the new pope was issuing this brief, however, the Carmelite General Giovanni Battista Rossi, himself moved by the spirit of reform, had begun a tour of the Spanish Carmelite houses. The stage was set for a clash of interests.

Although unimpressed by the state of many of the Carmelite houses in Spain, Rossi did not favor a radical renovation program of the sort suggested by Philip II. He did, however, take the surprising step of allowing the inexperienced Teresa of Avila, prioress of the order's only barefoot convent, to embark on a program of barefoot foundations. However, for a group of Andalusian Carmelite friars, Rossi's reform measures were inadequate. Backed by a number of local nobles, these rebels now

called upon the two recently appointed apostolic delegates to make independent assessments of the Carmelite priories. On learning of this subterfuge, Rossi immediately persuaded Pius V to issue a new brief revoking his earlier decision appointing the delegates. When, however, the papal nuncio in Spain insisted that the delegates should continue their work until the end of their three year term of office, Rossi instructed his provincials to physically resist the papal officials, and he created a nineteen-man police force, "Defenders of the Liberties of the Order," to assist them. The two groups now entered on a long and bitter dispute which came to a head in 1576, when unreformed Carmelite convents throughout Andalusia openly clashed with the new apostolic delegate, Baltasar Gracian (a barefoot Carmelite friar and close friend of Teresa of Avila), rejecting his authority over them.

In the summer of 1576, the Seville Carmelite friars dismissed their prior, a reformer forced upon them by Gracian, and refused the delegate entry into their priory, ignoring his threats of excommunication. When Archbishop Rojas approached the friars to remonstrate with them, he too was met with abuse. In a letter to Philip II, Rojas noted that the Carmelite friars had been joined by the religious of other unreformed houses, who were persuading the Carmelites to resist while investing an enormous amount of money in a campaign to gain papal support for their cause.¹⁷

In August 1576, as the Carmelite conflict continued, Teresa of Avila arrived in Seville where, in defiance of the Carmelite general's orders, she founded yet another barefoot convent. Inevitably Teresa's institution soon found itself enmeshed in the local imbroglio. There were rumours that her barefoot nuns were *alumbrados*; the

¹⁷ Ibid. The letter is dated 16 April, 1576

Inquisition began an investigation. At the same time the royal court began to receive reports of corrupt practices, both religious and administrative, in the Archbishop's palace. One of the authors of these reports was the Franciscan friar Bernardo de Fresneda, who in 1571 had succeeded Rojas as Bishop of Cordoba.

Confessor to the young king Philip II, Bernardo de Fresneda had for a number of years been one of the most politically powerful clerics in Spain. In 1559 Fresneda had conspired with Fernando de Valdes against the Archbishop of Toledo Bartolomé Carranza, whose rise to prominence, more meteoric even than his own, he envied, and whose position he coveted. It was even rumoured during the first years of Carranza's imprisonment that should the Archbishop die, Fresneda would occupy his place. In the event, however, Fresneda did not receive the Toledo see but that of Cuenca, a bishopric close enough to Madrid to allow its incumbent to interfere in court politics; something Philip II found increasingly vexing. In 1571, the king transferred Fresneda to Cordoba, recently vacated by Rojas y Sandoval, with the instructions to behave like a model post-Tridentine bishop and occupy himself with the spiritual welfare of his flock. In the spring of 1575, in conformity with the Tridentine dictate, Fresneda undertook a tour of his diocese, or at least the southern part of the diocese, an area associated with large converso communities. In the 1530s and 1540s Juan de Avila had taken his evangelical mission to these same communities, offering crypto-Jews and lukewarm Catholics the opportunity to join a new church based on mystical communion and a moral program central to both Judaism and Christianity. Many of the conversos of the region had become Avila adherents, although, as far as their

critics were concerned, this had served only to underscore their tainted religious identity. In a letter to Philip II on returning from his 1575 tour, Fresneda wrote: “de los diez mill confessos y confessas [in the region] no se confiessan diez con christianos viejos...” The archbishop further noted that in several of the towns there were an enormous number of beatas, all of whom conversas, who formed secret mystical conventicles in their homes. According to the prelate, these people were being encouraged by certain errant friars, mostly, but not exclusively, Jesuits, whom he refers to as “teatinos”. But there was yet another, even bigger culprit: the Archbishop of Seville himself, who had supported groups of *alumbrados* while bishop of Badajoz and continued to lend his support to similar groups in Andalucia; indeed, many of the troublemakers in the region were clerics who had been formed in his Badajoz seminary and had followed him to his subsequent sees.¹⁸

One of the *agent provocateurs* singled out by Fresneda for attention was Fr. Agustin Salucio, whom the Bishop described as “hijo de Genoves y no de buena madre” that is to say, the offspring of an Italian trader and a converso mother. Salucio, of the Dominican order of preachers, would later gain celebrity for his emotive sermons and notoriety for his pamphlet attacking the *limpieza de sangre* statutes. Published in 1598, the pamphlet was almost immediately withdrawn from circulation, while a royal committee evaluated its propriety. As I have noted above, one of Salucio’s most ardent supporters during this incident was the Archbishop of Seville’s nephew, Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval, later primate of Spain.

¹⁸ Ibid, leg. 89, no. 393.

Fresneda returned to the subversive friars and their patron, the Archbishop of Seville, in subsequent letters to the king. In an undated missive (although probably written in the Spring or early summer of 1576) Fresneda attacked the apostolic visitor Fr. Gracian who was at that moment confronting the regular clergy of Cordoba.¹⁹ The Archbishop admitted that there were many clerics in Cordoba who were lacking moral probity, but not all those in the orders were bad, and those who proclaimed this did not have true Christian intentions. This was the case of Fr. Gracian, who was a sworn enemy of all the orders. He and his group of “arrogant little barefoot friars” were now walking around the city telling everyone that the religious of the Franciscan monastery were not true friars and that to give them alms was to commit a mortal sin. This undermining of the religious orders in Andalucia had been going on for over six years now, orchestrated from afar, according to the Archbishop, by a certain Padilla. Who was this Padilla? Fresneda doesn’t tell us; although the king would know the prelate was referring to Licenciado Padilla, an agent of the Archbishop of Seville, Cristóbal Rojas y Sandoval.

It should be clear from the above that post-Tridentine Spain was not the land of rigid conformity often presented in our mainstream histories. True, in the period immediately following the discovery of the Protestant cells conservative religious voices were in the ascendant; but this situation gradually changed as Philip II, ever jealous of his religious authority, broadened his attack to include the ultramontane religious orders. Thus, for a decade or so after 1563, the king found himself,

¹⁹ Ibid, no. 396

ironically, in the vanguard of religious reform and often in an uneasy alliance with men and women of a more radical religious bent. Encouraged by the change of atmosphere, humanists began once again to assume the role of religious and social critics, although for the most part with circumspection. Forthright Erasmian apologies were, of course, not advisable. If humanists wanted to hold forth on Erasmian ideas they needed to conceal them within less notorious philosophies: the Neoplatonism of the Ficino academy, for example,²⁰ or, later, the Neostoicism of Justus Lipsius's *De Constantia*, both of which were based on a natural morality that implicitly challenged a religion predicated on recondite theology and elaborate ritual.

Justus Lipsius's Neostoicism and Seville's Post-Tridentine Humanists

Justus Lipsius' Neostoic philosophy was the product of a life led in that religious battle zone, the Spanish Netherlands. Born in Oversycche, a village near Brussels, in 1547, Lipsius spent much of his life on the move, very often escaping religious strife. As a young man Lipsius studied first with the Jesuits in Cologne and later at the Catholic University in Louvain. After leaving University he was briefly the secretary of Cardinal Granvelle in Rome, before returning to Louvain in 1570. Two years later, while he was on a trip to Vienna, his house was sacked by Spanish troops. Lipsius reacted to this crisis by moving to the Protestant city of Jenö, where he converted to the reformed religion in order to teach at the city's university. However, a

²⁰ Ficino's neoplatonic credo, based on Plotinus's views on the soul's alienation in time and space and its search for reunification, was enormously influential in humanist circles, inspiring such works as Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* and Desiderius Erasmus's *Enchiridion*. In Ficino's account of the soul's ascent to beatitude religious perfection is intrinsic to moral fulfilment.

number of his fellow academics suspected that the conversion was motivated solely by practical necessity, and soon forced his dismissal. In 1574, Lipsius found himself back in Louvain, where his house was once again looted by Spanish troops. In search of greater security, he now moved to the new Calvinist university at Leiden, in whose tolerant atmosphere he spent the next thirteen years, composing during this period his two major works, *De Constantia Libri Duo* (Two Books on Constancy) and *Politicorum sive Civilis Doctrinae Libri Sex* (Six Books on Politics or Civil Doctrine).

In *De Constantia* Lipsius presents the view that life's problems should be dealt with not by changing one's physical location (that is to say by flight) but by changing one's mental perspective. Specifically, one should develop constancy, an immovable strength of mind, neither elated nor depressed by external or chance events. The constant person embraces reason while controlling his emotions which, based on nothing more substantial than opinion, lead to distress and imbalance. A lifetime spent in a fractured society had led Lipsius to the conclusion that social and religious strife could only be avoided if citizens held their opinions in check. This was the practical stimulus for both *De Constantia* and *Politicarum*, a work in which Lipsius expatiates on the best form of government, concluding that in order to avoid chaos everyone should be prepared to submit himself to the will of the prince, at least in public.

It has been noted elsewhere that Lipsius's views on civic responsibility (and in particular his implicit call for religious dissimulation) bear a close resemblance to those of the religious sect, the Family of Love. This is no coincidence. Lipsius was a close friend of both the Familist leader Henry Jansen Barrefelt and of one of the sect's

most fervent adherents, the printer Christophe Plantin; and while we cannot be certain that Lipsius ever considered himself a member of the sect, he was clearly drawn to a religious group whose members practiced a personal inward religion while remaining indifferent to the church ceremonies and sacraments in which their society required them to partake.²¹

One of Lipsius's early supporters, the Spanish cleric Benito Arias Montano, was also attached to the "Family of Love". Arias had become interested in the "Family" while he was directing the Polyglot Bible project in Antwerp from 1568 to 1572, and had later spoken admiringly of the sect to friends at Escorial, where he was court librarian, and in his native Seville. When *De Constantia* was published in 1584, Arias was one of its first readers, and once again he transmitted his enthusiasm to his humanist friends, who became some of Lipsius's first adherents on the peninsula. Writing to Lipsius from Seville in 1592, Arias attempted to animate his friend, recently attacked for his Nicodemist tendencies, by sending him a list of his Seville supporters:

²¹ In 1608 Lipsius's Calvinist friend Adrianus Saravia gave the following account of Lipsius's religious views in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury:

He [Lipsius in Leyden] never professed the evangelical doctrine; but, as far as I know, while he was living with us, he never openly opposed it. It seemed to us that in controversies he sided with the majority, that he liked peace and harmony and hated trouble-makers. But it is the custom of the H[enry] N[iclaes] family not openly to oppose the religion established by public authority; they wish to give the appearance of being adherents of that religion. He claimed to be disgusted by the crass idolatry of the Roman Church, which, however, he supported in his book on the idol of Halle. I was convinced by his words and actions that he was not averse to the religion that we profess. But I believed that the reason why in these general, large-scale religious differences he committed himself to no party was because he did not wish to offend any of his many friends who were of varying religious persuasions...

At another time, when I heard him say that he disapproved of nothing in our religion, I asked him why he did not join us at our Sunday communion services. "Oh", he said, "you are a lucky man to have a wife who agrees with you in religious matters. Mine does not. I must be able to live at home in peace with my wife if I am to survive.

Cited from B. Rekers, Benito Arias Montano, Warburg Institute, London, 1972, p. 101.

Habes hac in urbe aequissimos tibi non paucos, in his litterarum ac uirtutis nomine praestantes, SIMONEN TOVAREM [Simon Tovar], nobilem Lusitanum, LVCIANVM NEGRONIVM [Luciano Negrin] et PACIECVM [Licenciado Francisco Pacheco], theologos et canonicos, FRANCISCVM SANTIUM [Francisco Sanchez], Aesculapii spiritu plenum, et in extrema Bethica, PETRVM VALENTIAM [Pedro Valencia], rarissimum nostro aevo pietatis et eruditionis exemplunt.²²

What attracted this group of post-Tridentine Seville humanists to the philosophy of Justus Lipsius? Evidently they were men who found themselves in a similar situation to that of the Dutch scholar. They were not, of course, in a country assailed by civil war and religious upheaval; nevertheless, they were in an inimical environment. This environment had not changed their humanist sympathies—they still believed in a society in which noble character was predicated on virtue (merit) and not on genealogy, and in a religion constructed on a moral code and not on sacramental ritual. But they had become much more sceptical about the possibilities of creating such an environment. They were also aware of the dangers of too forcefully expressing non-conformism in a society dominated by a powerful Inquisition, rigid *limpieza de sangre* laws, and a suspicious *vulgo* mired in social and religious ritual. Thus, while they continued to set forth their humanist ideology, they did so discreetly, or as they would say, *con prudencia*. At the same time they escaped into safe private havens: the tranquil country estate (recommended by Horace and Ficino, two authors whose popularity increased during this period); or into the interior world of quietist religion and neoplatonic contemplation. They also escaped into the world of neostoicism, a land in which dissimulation (something they were forced to practice as both non-conformists and *converos*) was converted into a noble and pious credo.

²² Ibid. p.19.

In recent years Seville's post-Tridentine humanist community has received a great deal of scholarly attention. These scholarly studies have in general avoided the errors of earlier works, which presented the humanists as gilded emblems of the Golden-Age, without penetrating, to any extent, into their lives or works. However, the more recent studies also suffer from a problem: the tendency to focus on their subjects' Classical erudition, while skirting the issue of their socio-political and religious character. Thus, while modern scholars have noted that a number of these men had Erasmian sympathies, they have all but avoided exploring the nature and extent of this non-conformism. In the following section I examine five of Seville's most celebrated post-tridentine humanists: Juan de Malara, Benito Arias Montano, Francisco Pacheco, Fernando de Herrera and Pablo de Cespedes.²³ It is my contention that all five of these men were socio-religious dissenters, whose views (usually, but not always, cushioned in discreet prose) had been shaped in a pre-Tridentine radical humanist environment dominated by frustrated, and often militant, converso professionals. There is of course no conclusive evidence that any of the following humanists was of converso origin; nevertheless, the circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that this was the case.

²³ Although a *cordobés*, Cespédes spent a considerable period of time in Seville towards the end of his career where he became close friends with Arias Montano, Pacheco, and Herrera.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONVERSO HUMANISM IN POST-TRIDENTINE SEVILLE: FIVE CASE STUDIES

Juan de Malara (1524? -1571)

Although to my knowledge no one has previously suggested, at least in print, that Juan de Malara was of Jewish lineage, it is evident that his immediate ancestors were members of the converso community of Ciudad Real, a city with a long history of clashes between its Old-Christian and New-Christian inhabitants. In September 1483, three years after it had established a tribunal in Seville, the Inquisition opened a second tribunal in Ciudad Real. One of the first suspects to be tried by the Holy Office was Juan Gonzalez Panpan, who had moved away from the town nine years previously and was thus tried in absentia. From the records of his trial it is clear that Panpan was a leading member of the city's converso community and one of its most fervent judaizers. He was said to have been circumcised and to have been connected with circumcisions that took place in the town. It also appears that he slaughtered meat for himself and other conversos to eat and that his house served as a place where conversos prayed. In 1473 Panpan left the town, it is believed to lead a Jewish life in a more favourable environment. Four years later he returned briefly to attempt to persuade his wife Maria Gonzalez to leave with him for his new home. Maria refused; Panpan went away and had not been heard of since.

At the same time that the Inquisition was investigating Panpan, it was also investigating his wife Maria Gonzalez. Accused of observing the Jewish religion, like Panpan, Maria stated that she had been forced to do so while living with her husband, but later, after he had left, she had become a good Christian, only occasionally observing the Sabbath. Despite the testimonies of three defence witnesses that she was a good churchgoer, Maria was found guilty of Jewish observance and was burnt at the stake, along with her husband's effigy, on February 24, 1484. One of the three witnesses in Maria's trial was her godson Lope de Malara, who lived next to her, on the fringe of the city's Jewish quarter.

While Lope de Malara was giving evidence in favour of his godmother, Maria Gonzalez, he was also involved in the trial of Leonor Gonzalez, wife of the rag merchant Alonso Gonzalez de Frexinal. Leonor and her husband had fled Ciudad Real during the anti-converso riots of 1474 and had taken up residence, like many other conversos, in the town of Palma (the noble residence of Pedro Puertocarrero), where they openly observed the Jewish religion.¹ From Palma, Maria and Alonso had moved to Alonso's birthplace, Frejenal de la Sierra, and from there, on Alonso's death in 1483, back to Ciudad Real. Some weeks before the Holy Office set up residence in the city, Maria left for Portugal. In February 1484 Lope de Malara testified that about twenty years previously he had entered into Alonso Gonzalez' house just after the family had finished eating and noticed that Alonso blessed a silver cup containing wine, before sipping its contents and passing it to his wife and children. While Malara

¹ This Pedro Puertocarrero was the grandfather of the Pedro Puertocarrero who was the dedicatee of Juan de Avila's *Audi, filia*, and a protagonist in Agustin Morales poem concerning a leg of ham, both works discussed in chapter three.

was in this instance a witness for the prosecution, we should not assume that he was antagonistic towards this family. When he testified before the Inquisition, Leonor Gonzalez was already a condemned woman, her fate sealed by the testimony of a rabbi recently converted to Christianity, who recalled her Jewish fervency during her sojourn in the town of Palma, and by her own precipitous escape several months previously. Nor was Malara actually doing her any physical harm, as she was already safe in Portugal. He was, however, in all probability doing himself some good; for although the Inquisition documents do not state as much, there can be little doubt that he was himself a converso.²

Some eighty years after the above events took place, the Seville humanist Juan de Malara penned the introduction to his work *Hercules Animoso*. This work, recently discovered in Biblioteca de Ajuda in Lisbon, compares Hercules' twelve labours to the political trials of Charles V, and in so doing presents us with a humanist mirror for princes.³ Malara's underlying argument, one that he returns to in his other major works, *La Psyche* and *Philosophia Vulgar*, is that true nobility is the product not of

² All of Leonor's children confessed their crimes in the period of grace and were restored to the church. One of Leonor's children, Juan de la Sierra, who, like his siblings, had confessed his crimes and had been restored to the church in the period of grace, also became a prosecution witness against his mother. Juan was persuaded to travel to Portugal to convince his mother to return to stand trial in person. Leonor agreed to this, no doubt believing that she would escape, like her children with a heavy fine. In fact she burnt at the stake. Later Juan returned to the Jewish faith, escaping the Inquisition by fleeing, as his mother had done earlier, to Portugal. He was burnt in effigy in 1527. Heim Beinart, *Records of the Trials of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real*, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1974, p. 536. In Lope Malara's deposition in the Alfonso and Leonor trial he states that he is the neighbour of one Juan de Madrid. Madrid was also burnt at the stake for Judaizing.

³ Biblioteca da Ajuda, ms. 50-I-38.

genealogy but of virtue or moral probity.⁴ However, Malara was conscious of the fact that this message would have greater resonance if it were put forward by an author who, like Hercules and Charles V, could boast both virtue and a noble lineage. For this reason he takes the opportunity in his introduction to *Hercules Animoso* to present the reader with a few facts about the noble Malaras. First of all, he tells us, the name should not be pronounced Malara, nor Mallara, but Mal Lara, because his family was a branch of the noble Laras. He also states that the family had its own crest and that his uncle Lope de Malara, a resident of Alcázar de Consuegra (today Alcázar de San Juan) had taken out an official certificate which contained information on his family's legal position (in other words, a letter patent of *limpieza de sangre*). Furthermore he notes that his grandfather, Diego Ruiz de Malara, a native of Ciudad Real, took part in the siege of Granada, thus further establishing an orthodox Old-Christian character for the family.

Ironically, in presenting an image of a noble Old-Christian background, Malara has given us clues to his family's converso origins, for there can be little doubt, given the uncommon nature of the surname Malara, that the Lope de Malara of the Ciudad Real trials and Diego Ruiz de Malara, Juan de Malara's grandfather, also from Ciudad Real, were members of the same family. Indeed, I would suggest that Lope de Malara was Diego Ruiz de Malara's father and Juan de Malara's great

⁴ Malara's object in recounting the Hercules story is diametrically opposed to that of the fifteenth-century noble author Enrique de Villena, who uses the Greek myth to present a picture of a rigidly stratified society in which everyone maintains his or her own place. See the introduction to Enrique Villena, *Obras Completas*, Biblioteca Castro, 1994. In *La Psyche* Malara once again presents a fluid social system in which nobility is achieved through virtuous actions. After being abandoned by her lover Cupid, Psyche travels across the world overcoming many ordeals before she is reunited with the god of love and made immortal by Jupiter.

grandfather. Sometime after the 1484 trials, I believe, Lope moved with his family, including his son Diego, to Alcázar de Consuegra, a town with a large Jewish and converso population, situated some fifty miles to the north of Ciudad Real.⁵ Here, at the end of the fifteenth century, Malara's father, also named Diego, and his uncle Lope (named, presumably after the grandfather) were born.⁶ Lope, it appears, remained in Alcázar, where, as an adult, he purchased some kind of legal certificate establishing the Malaras' Old-Christian bloodline. Diego, a painter, left the La Mancha town in early adulthood for Seville, where he married Beatriz de Ortiz and fathered, according to Pineda Novo's biographical study, six children, including Juan. Malara himself only refers to one of his siblings in his own writings: his brother Fernando, who left Seville as a young man to find his fortune in the Indies.⁷

We know little about Juan de Malara's childhood, and what we do know comes mostly from his own pen. By Malara's own account, his early schooling was undertaken by his father, who, in Malara's words, "procuró descubrirme la herencia de

⁵ Alcázar de Consuegra was one of the Castilian towns that paid the most tribute to finance the war against Granada, a tribute that fell heavily on the shoulders of the Jewish population. This indicates that the Alcázar aljama was one of the largest in Castille in the late fifteenth century. María Jesus Suarez Alvarez, "La Villa de Talavera y Su Tierra en la Edad Media (1369-1504), Universidad de Oviedo, 1982, p. 121. According to an Inquisition census of 1495, some 350 conversos lived in the town, representing 30% of the population. One of Alcázar's converso families was the Mora, which formed the nucleus of a large crypto-Jewish group, tried by the Inquisition in the famous Quintanar de la Orden trials of 1589. See Vincent Parello, "Los Mora de Quintanar de la Orden: un criptojudasmo familiar a finales del siglo XVI," *Separad*, 61:2, 2001, pp. 395-415.

⁶ In his *Libro de Descripción de Verdaderos Retratos*, Francisco Pacheco writes, "De los Malaras, gente onrada i limpia, naturales de Alcázar de Consuegra, deciendo el maestro Juan de Malara, varón de resplandeciente virtud i admirable ingenio, hijo desta ciudad [Sevilla], i de un pintor de opinión della"

⁷ In his biographical study, F. Sanchez Escribano deduces that Malara had five siblings from references to five brothers or sisters-in-law in his will. However, these in-laws may have been siblings of his wife. There is a reference in a notarial document contained in Seville's Archivo de Protocolos to a sister, Catalina de Saucedo, although the document does not give the source of this information.

las letras.” Later he studied Latin grammar and some Greek in the school of the Pedro Fernandez, which appears to have been one of the more reputable educational establishments in the city. In 1538, at the age of fourteen, Malara entered Salamanca University as the page or companion to Alvaro de Loaysa, brother of Garcia de Loaysa, later Archbishop of Toledo. Malara does not tell us how he came into contact with the Loaysas, a well-heeled patrician family from Talavera de la Reina, with clear signs of being of converso provenance;⁸ however, he appears to have maintained a close relationship with Alvaro and his brothers throughout his life.

At Salamanca Malara soon made the acquaintance of the university’s most celebrated scholars, including Hernan Núñez (el comenedor Griego) and Francisco Sánchez (el Brocense), who became a close friend.⁹ However, Salamanca’s conservative education program was not to his taste, and in 1544 or 1545 he moved to Barcelona to study under the physician and scholar, Francisco Escobar. From Escobar, Malara acquired a teaching method which he later incorporated into his own Latin grammar classes in Seville. Escobar was not only a grammarian, however, he was also a humanist with strong Erasmian leanings, something his young pupil undoubtedly found attractive.

⁸ Alvaro and Garcia Loaysa were from a professional family based in Talavera de la Reina, a town whose combined converso and Jewish population made up at least 40% of the population at the end of the fifteenth century. The name Loaysa was adopted by the family because of its Old-Christian noble character. The paternal family were in fact Girones who formed marriage unions with the Talaveras and Carvajals, both names associated with conversos.

⁹ Malara refers to both of these humanists in his *Philosophia vulgar*. Both men had encountered serious problems with the Inquisition as a result of their heterodox religious views. Hernan Núñez, who held the chair in Greek at Alcalá de Henares from 1519 to 1523, was a member of the town’s pro-comunero group during the comunero rebellion. Persecuted for his political sympathies and his Erasmian views, Núñez was forced to abandon Alcalá for Salamanca in 1523. Here, in 1555, his *Refranes o proverbios en romance* was published, a work, like Malara’s *Philosophia vulgar*, inspired by Erasmus’ *Adages*.

From Barcelona, Malara moved back to Salamanca in 1547, where he remained for several months before returning to Seville. Here he entered the University of Seville, graduating in arts the same year. Shortly after leaving university, Malara opened his own school, where he instructed his pupils in Latin grammar and those humanist ideals which he later gave voice to in his *Philosophia Vulgar*.

We know almost nothing of Malara during this period of his life, although there is some evidence that he was connected to a group of radical religious reformers, several members of which would later be prosecuted for their Protestant sympathies. In 1556, one of the leaders of this group, Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, was elected to the office of *Canónigo Magistral* in the Cathedral. This election had been vigorously opposed by the Archbishop Juan de Valdes on the grounds that Constantino was a converso. The Archbishop was unable, however, to sway the Cathedral chapter, many of whose members shared Constantino's tainted origins and Erasmian sympathies. Malara had taken the occasion of Constantino's election to write a number of poems celebrating the appointment and this had apparently gained him some notoriety as a man of radical religious views. Five years later, when leaflets were distributed throughout the city attacking the Church in verse, Malara became the Inquisition's prime suspect, and found himself incarcerated in the Triana prison.¹⁰

¹⁰ The only reference to Malara's imprisonment appears in a letter from the Seville tribunal to the Suprema, which states, "Ayer mañana vinieron a este Castillo (de Triana) muchas personas que traxeron muchos papeles scriptos en copla de la misma manera de otros que avemos enviado a V.S. y con algunas cosas añadidas de Nuevo y de la misma letra, uno de los quales enviamos a V.S. con la presente. Hasta agora no se ha podido hallar rastro del autor dios lo descubra. Hanse hecho muchas diligencias y ase procedido y procede contra algunas personas por indicios, señaladamente contra un bachiller malara maestro de gramática que suele hazer coplas y versos—y los hizo a favor de costanº quando le dieron la canonjía magistral desta Santa Iglesia. El qual esta preso sobre razon..." The real author of the verses, the clergyman Sebastián Martínez, was burnt at the stake on February 26, 1562.

Although Malara was released after three months, when the real culprit was apprehended, the experience had clearly shocked and distressed him, as is evident from a reference to his confinement in his epic poem *La Psyche* written soon after his release.¹¹

In *La Psyche* Malara refers to the great love and support he had received from his wife, Maria Hojeda, during this bleak period of his life. Although no marriage certificate has been located to provide us with the date of their union, a notarial record, presenting details of Maria's wedding dowry (in which the humanist very clearly signs his name Malara, and not Mal Lara) suggests that the two married in 1557, when Malara was thirty three years old. From the dowry we learn that Maria was the daughter of Beatriz de Zamora and Cristóbal Diaz de Savalero and that her maternal grandparents were Caterina de Veas and Juan de Zamora. The surnames Veas, Zamora and Hojeda all appear in Seville's Inquisition lists of persons condemned to death for Judaizing. Although we have no information on Maria's antecedents, it is noteworthy that Juan Gil's recent investigations into the converso community of Seville reveals that all three of the above names coincide in converso marriage unions.¹²

See Daniel Pineda Nova, *Juan de Mal Lara, poeta, historiador y humanista sevillano del siglo XVI*, pp. 28-29.

¹¹ Malara refers to his imprisonment in *La Psyche* in these terms:

¡Qué sufrimiento grande y qué cordura
 Mostró la fiel alma, cuando sólo
 Estuve en aquel término de verme
 Sin hazienda, sin vida, honrra y esperanza
 De no ser ya en el mundo más entre hombres!

¹² Juan Gil, *Los conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana*, vol. III, p.351 and vol.V p.494. María de Hojeda's sister was given the name Luisa de Grajeda. The Grajedas in Gil's study are also closely connected with Zamoras. Luisa married Malara's great friend and pupil Diego Girón. There is some evidence that

Juan de Malara and Maria Hojeda's marriage produced two daughters, who were given the unusual names Gila and Silvestra. Silvestra died in infancy; Gila, who took her father's surname, later married twice, first to Jerónimo de Pereda, and later, after Pereda had deserted her, to Juan Caro de Sotomayor y Consuegra. Both men were merchants involved, like Malara's brother, in the Indies trade.¹³

Malara, it seems, authored a great number of works, including poems, histories and plays.¹⁴ Of these works, all that have survived are a handful of short poems, a book of emblems, a grammatical primer *Syntaxin Scholia*, a long account of Philip II's only visit to Seville, el *Recebimiento*,¹⁵ two epic poems, *La Psyche* and *Hercules Animoso*, and his *Philosophia Vulgar*, modelled on Erasmus' adages. *Philosophia Vulgar*, the most enduring of these works has promoted a number of studies, the first, and still the most perceptive of which is Americo Castro's "Juan de Mal Lara y su 'Filosofía vulgar'", published in 1927, before Castro had begun his own investigations into Spain's converso writers.

Castro observes that while Malara makes only occasional reference to Erasmus in his *Philosophia Vulgar*, his debt to the northern humanist is evident throughout the work. However, Castro also notes that Malara's comments on the religious and social abuses of his day lack the northern humanist's trenchancy. This reticence he attributes

Girón was from a merchant family native to Jeréz de los Caballeros, in southern Extremadura. This town also had the reputation of being home to a large converso community.

¹³ The second husband's surname suggests that he too was from the town of Alcázar de Consuegra.

¹⁴ For a list of Malara's works and attributed works see F. Sanchez Escribano, Juan de Mal Lara, *Su Vida y Sus Obras*, Hispanic Institute, New York, 1941, pp. 119-172.

¹⁵ *Recibimiento que hizo la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla a la C.R.M. del rey D. Philipe N.S.*

not only to the precarious position of humanists in Counter-Reformation Spain, but also to a personal lack of courage on the part of Malara. Castro writes, “Mal Lara carece del brio afirmativo de Mirándola o de Erasmo, tanto por la época de Contrarreforma en que vive, como por lo templado de su espíritu; conoce el problema, pero manejará con tiento sus razones.” Here, I think, Castro is unjust to Malara. The Seville humanist was certainly aware of the dangers of attempting to disseminate his beliefs to a broad public, but he was also aware of its futility. Like other Counter-Reformation humanists, he contented himself with presenting an encoded message to a reduced group of friends and adherents. Indeed he states his intentions (in encoded terms) in the prologue of his work. Referring to Aristotle’s use of proverbs, Malara writes, “Assí que la Philosophía fue tratada en dos maneras: o según sus secretos misteriosos, que Aristotéles guardava para declarar a su Alexandro y los que le oían solamente, o según los que el vulgo solía recibir y entender en cosas palpables...”¹⁶ Like Aristotle, Malara was writing for two different readers: those who would focus only on the superficial gloss and those who would understand the hidden message. For this second group the author’s intentions are evident from the very first pages of his work, in which he examines, in what appears to be a prolix and desultory manner, the proverb “A dios rogando y con el maço dando.”

While an orthodox post-tridentine writer might have used the proverb “A dios rogando y con el maço dando”, to affirm the importance of both faith and good works, Malara chooses instead to underline the humanist’s belief in education and self

¹⁶ Juan de Mal Lara, *Obras Completas, 1: Philosophía vulgar*, edición Manuel Bernal Rodríguez, Biblioteca Castro, 1996, p.30. See my comments on writing for two readerships in the introduction to the present study.

improvement, citing the Jewish writer, Philo, to point out man's perfectability: "Que es, por cierto, gran contento verlo pintado en Philón, aquel sapientísimo hebreo, quando trata de la hechura del mundo, como va contando las perfecciones del hombre sobre lo del Génesis..." When, in the same gloss, Malara mentions religious practice it is not to champion the Counter-Reformation environment, but to attack it. In referring to the importance of prayer, Malara writes, "...assí todas las cosas se remediasen con *A Dios rogando*, y aquí encomienda la oración, assi la vocal, como mental. Ponemos el blanco de nuestras demandas, y dize A Dios, no a los dioses, ni otras falsedades en que las gentes ocupavan su entendimiento, apurando esta verdad de aver Dios, y que a Él solo aviamos de adorar, de servir y amar..." And several lines later he returns to his attack, this time assailing religious ritual and complex dogma as an aberration of the faith handed down to the Jews by God: "No fueron menester tantas artes, tantos instrumentos, tantas maneras de oficios, no diera Dios tantas leyes a los hebreos, si con solamente rogar a Dios, sin alguna diligencia más, se acabara todo."

Having attacked certain religious practices of his day, Malara goes on to set forth his own private and mystical religious vision in his second gloss, in which he writes: "No es menester que te pongas en medio de las plaças para que te venga a hallar la merced de Dios. En un rincón, en lo más Escondido, proveerá tu necesidad y te buscará. Entrará a verte, cerradas la puertas, como entendemos del sancto Evangelio, porque al que Dios quiere bien la casa le sabe."

Although less forthright, Malara's humanist ideals are, I would argue, essentially those of Erasmus. Nevertheless, the *Philosophia Vulgar* and the *Adagia* are fundamentally quite different works, something that the normally perspicacious Americo Castro failed to discern in his own study. In writing the *Adagia* Erasmus was at pains to show the harmony between the Classical wisdom of the Greeks and Christian teaching, as he makes clear in his adage "Among friends all is common:

What other purpose has Plato in so many volumes [writes Erasmus] except to urge a community of living and the factor which creates it, namely friendship? If only he could persuade mortals of these things, war, envy and fraud would at once vanish from our midst; in short a whole regiment of woes would depart from life once and for all. What other purpose had Christ, the prince of our religion? One precept and one alone He gave to the world, and that was love; on that alone, He taught, hang all the law and the prophets.¹⁷

Here Erasmus asserts the common humanist principles of the Classical Greek and Christian societies at the expense of the Jews, who, he notes, preferred elaborate laws and prophecies to a simple credo based on love. While Malara shares Erasmus's view that Christian values underpin a pre-Christian classical world, unlike Erasmus, who was antagonistic towards the ancient Hebrew culture, he places the Jews at the center of his Christian-humanist credo. In the prologue to his *Philosophia Vulgar*, he writes that proverbs reflect God's natural wisdom, and that this wisdom was first handed to the ancient Hebrews, who then passed it on to "los tristes ciegos de gentilidad", the Egyptians "y destos a los que vinieron a ser sus discípulos." Furthermore, he notes that the nearer one gets to the source of God's wisdom the more perfect it becomes, indirectly pronouncing the superiority of the Hebrews, who

¹⁷ Cited from James McConica, *Erasmus*, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 27.

received this wisdom at first hand. In his gloss on the proverb “Cada hombre tiene su nombre” Malara reaffirms this view. Names were given by God to man from the beginning of time, he writes, as a sign of his individuality, and those who first took names, “como primeros en el mundo, y primera en sabiduría, que tan cerca tenían la mano de Dios y tan tiernos estaban los hombres en el saber, fueron los hebreos y caldeos...”¹⁸

However, Malara is not merely intent on establishing the intellectual importance of the Jews, he is also interested in forging an iron link between them and Spain, pointing out that it was Túbal, the grandson of Noah, who “viendo a nuestra tierra, enriquecido con tal mercadería [learning], puso en ella todo policia de buenos costumbres y sanctas leyes, y enseñó aquella doctrina rescbida y artes, que traían los hombres de Hespaña, ocupados en honestos ejercicios.”¹⁹ While Malara’s claim that civilization entered Spain with Noah’s grandson is based on a Saint Jerome commentary on Ezekiel, his own Túbal is not the first colonist of Spain, but, significantly, the head of a group of Levantine immigrants who bring enlightenment to a benighted land. It was through the efforts of this group of people, who settled on the peninsula thousands of years before the Roman occupation, that Spain emerged from barbarism: “De manera que, poco a poco, se hizo la tierra (feroz antes y dada a la

¹⁸ *Philosophia vulgar*, p.867.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 28.

Guerra) discreta y avisada, mejorando su buen ingenio con eminentes maestros, que quanto dezían eran admirables secretos de Dios y la naturaleza.”²⁰

It is clear, however, that Malara believes his own society has turned its back on the Hebrews’ “honestos ejercicios”. His glosses present the Spanish as violent, ostentatious, excessively interested in caste, bad administrators, unskilled in business, and prone to idleness, gambling and brutish pastimes. Malara makes only a few references to the Jews in his *Philosophia*; however, when he does so, it is to present them as the antithesis of the Spanish *vulgo*. In his gloss on the adage ¿A do bueno, don Fuda? A Alcalá si el dio me ayuda”, Malara recounts the tale of a poor Jewish clothes merchant who, travelling to Alcalá de Henares, encounters another Jew laden with wares. When he asks the second merchant where he is going, he replies “To Alcalá, with God’s help”. Malara uses the refrain to return once more to the importance of self help and individual enterprise. Unable to make a living in his town, the Jew, Don Fuda (Don because it is a title “que solían tener los judíos antiguos”) is moving in the hope of encountering a more favourable situation elsewhere. Malara notes that this encounter takes place in Spain before the Catholic Kings expelled the Jews. This is not, I think, a redundant comment, but a subtle attack on the expulsion that rid the

²⁰ Ibid, p.29. Pedro Mexía, an author Malara cites on a number of occasions in his *Philosophia*, makes similar claims in his *Silva de varia lección*: [N]o es de dubdar,” writes Mexía, “sino que Adam y sus hijos, [pues] que tan sabios y entendidos fueron, son los inventores de las letras... Aunque después, en la confusión de las lenguas que contamos aver acaecido en la edificació de la torre de Babylonia, pudo ser que la más de las gentes perdieron las letras y quedó el conocimiento dellas en la familia de Heber, de do los hebreos descien den.” Mexía also notes that letters existed in Spain two thousand years before the Romans arrived, which signified that “uviess e letras en nuestra España en tiempo de los nietos y aun los hijos de Noé, que las vinieron a poblar.” Like Malara, Mexía specifically links the ancient Hebrew presence in Spain with a pre-Roman intellectual tradition. Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección*, 2 vols. Catedra, Madrid, 1990, vol II, silva III, 1. For convero humanists interest in creating a Spanish foundation myth in which the Jews were promin ant, see Chapter 2, pp. 45-47.

country of a resourceful community.²¹ In his gloss on the adage “Anuncia, que el dio dara”, Malara once again uses a Jew as an example of superior comportment. Like all children, Malara tells us, the Jew’s son is continually imitating people with physical afflictions. This disturbs his father so much that he tells the son: “Feign it and God will give it to you”. This, the humanist opines, was a necessary reprimand because there is nothing amusing in imitating the afflicted.

On two occasions Malara uses the Jews to point up Old-Christian hypocrisy. In his gloss on the adage “De villano favorecido y de judío atrevido”, Malara compares the arrogance of the well treated peasant with the natural boldness of the Jews.²² These Jews are no longer in the country, the humanist once again notes, because the Catholic Kings threw them out. Nevertheless, the saying should be rendered in its entirety, “porque si algún atrevimiento es dañoso, es el del judío, que se atreve a la honra y a los dineros.” In other words the Jew’s boldness lies in the fact that he seeks honor and wealth like his Old-Christian counterparts. In his commentary on the adage “Esperando marido cavellero, danme tetas abaxo el pecho”, Malara returns to the theme of honor.²³ He tells us that this is the complaint of a woman who awaits a husband of good lineage. And the humanist cites the Roman writer Martial, who puts a similar sentence in the mouth of a certain Gelia. Finally, unable to find a Roman with a noble background, Gelia marries a Jew. Here, it would seem that Malara is slighting

²¹ *Philosophia vulgar*, part I, adage 14. Malara returns to the subject of self help in his gloss on the adage “Quien se muda, Dios le ayuda”. Here he uses the Old Testament Jews as an example of the importance of self help. “Exemplo tenemos en Abraham, que se mudó de su tierra. En el patriarca Jacob, quando dexó su tierra por venirse Egipto. En los mismos hijos de Israel salir de Egipto. Y diráse para los que son perezosos que tomen buen ánimo.” Ibid, centuria II, adage 67.

²² Ibid, centuria II, adage 87.

²³ Ibid, centuria IV, adage 35.

the Jews. However, the commentary clearly admits another interpretation, that being that the Jew is the only candidate available with a noble background.

The probability that Malara was a converso is also supported through his numerous attacks on society's obsession with correct lineage. Through the adage "Dejemos padres y abuelos, por nosotros seamos Buenos" ("Let us forget fathers and grandfathers, for we are good in ourselves"), Malara puts forward his plea: let us not judge people on blood, but only on merit. "Este consejo es para los que gastan su tiempo en contar sus linages," writes the humanist, "en buscar el blasón de sus armas, en escribir los arboles de su genealogia..."; and he continues with citations from classical authors supporting his argument that true nobility is derived from one's actions alone. Sophocles, Malara tells us, "aconsejaba al rey Antígona, que en sus amigos no preguntasse de quién avían nacido, sino quién y quales eran por si"; while Sócrates "siendole dado en cara de ser de baxos padres, respondió: "Pues por esso soy digno de más honra, que de mi comiença mi linaje."

Amidst these ancient authorities, Malara also includes two contemporaneous Spanish ones, Hernando de Pulgar and Pedro Mexia. "El honrado cavallero Pedro Mexía," Malara writes, "que no se contentó con ser bueno de linage, sino ser él por sí notable, hizo un capítulo, que es el 36 del segundo de su *Silva*, en que cuenta los que nascen de humildes padres cómo deven procurar ser claros." Pedro Mexia may well have been in Malara's opinion "bueno de linage", but his was not a noble Old-Christian lineage as the term implies. The Mexias were, as I have already indicated, a family of professionals, almost certainly of converso background; there was, therefore,

nothing disinterested in Pedro Mexia's claim that nobility was gained through merit.²⁴ Malara's other contemporaneous source, Hernando de Pulgar, was a *converso* advisor to the Catholic kings and an outspoken critic of *limpieza de sangre*. Pulgar's *Claros varones de Castilla*, which Malara cites "para confirmar nuestro refrán de aquellos que por sí quisieron ser buenos", was a work written by a converso courtier anxious to contest the argument that nobility was determined by lineage.²⁵

In his gloss on the adage, "Al hombre bueno no le busquen abolengo (The good man does not look to his lineage), Malara once again asserts the importance of virtue in determining nobility. Good and honourable men, writes the humanist, have no interest in titles, "porque saben que solo a su bondad es bastante testimonio de su nobleza, como se dixo en el refrán: *Por nosotros seremos buenos.*" Malara further states that these honorable men should not be required to answer questions on their lineage in order to attain important positions in society, "porque basta honrallo el conocer su bondad, que la virtud del hombre es la que se ha de estimar...A los que eran de esta suerte, concedieron los pueblos sus oficios y dignidades, como a M. Tulio [Cicero], que aunque era hombre nuevo, que assí llamavan a los que començaran a tener officios en la República, lo hizieron cónsul..." Here, Malara makes a clear allusion to the *limpieza de sangre* statutes, a theme he returns to on several other occasions. In the adage "La oracion breve sube al cielo", Malara illustrates the efficacy of a short prayer by giving the example of the leper who confronts Jesus with

²⁴ For Pedro Mexia's probable converso background, see Chapter 1, pp. 32-34.

²⁵ For my comments on Pulgar's *Claros varones de Castilla*, see Chapter Two, p. 48.

the words, “Señor, si quieres, puedesme limpiar”. To which Jesus replies, “Quiero”. In other words, it is Jesus who purifies us through our faith in him. The observation is reminiscent of that made by Juan de Avila in his *Audi, filia*, in which *el maestro* writes, “[E]l profeta Esaías dice que el Señor lava las suciedades de las hijas de Sión, y la sangre de en medio de Jerusalén en espíritu de juicio y en espíritu de ardor, dando a entender que el lavar el Señor nuestras manchas...”

The adage “A manos lavadas, Dios les da qué coman” provides Malara with another opportunity to make a veiled attack on the *limpieza* statutes, this time by discussing the relationship between bodily cleanliness and piety. Malara notes that the ancient Hebrews washed their hands before their sacrifices or before eating, cleansing themselves in order to receive God’s blessing. This, the humanist tells us, was why the Pharisees were concerned when Jesus’ followers sat down to eat without first washing; they felt that these men were guilty of a spiritual solecism. Malara shares the Pharisees view on the importance of outward cleanliness: “Quiere dezir la limpieza exterior, que es como señal de la interior, que tan bien parece a los que la miran, y gana el que la muestra nombre de limpio...” However, he is careful to add that this is not always a sound indication of one’s godliness: “Porque no ay gentes que más usen este lavarse, antes que entren en sus mezquitas, que los moros, y no ay quien más suzios sean en peccados...” In other words, of the two clean cultures, the Jews and the Muslims, only the Jews are spiritually correct.

Although stated more circumspectly, Malara’s views on bodily cleanliness are those attributed by Fernando Pulgar to the converso bishop of Burgos, Alfonso

Cartagena, who according to Pulgar, was “muy limpio en su persona y en las ropas que traia...y aborescía mucho los omes que no eran limpios. Porque la limpieza exterior del ome dezia el que era algun señal de la interior.”²⁶ Clearly for both Alfonso de Cartagena and Juan de Malara, bodily cleanliness, practiced by Jews and many conversos in their pre-Sabbath preparations, was a much more adequate test of religious piety than that of *limpieza de sangre*.

There is yet another theme treated extensively by Malara in his *Philosophia Vulgar* which, I believe, reveals a converso sensibility: the importance of being able to die in of one’s homeland. In both his glosses on the adages “A quien dios quiere bien, en Sevilla le dio de comer,” and “La tierra do me criare demela dios por madre” the humanist stresses the importance of being able to pass one’s life passively in one’s place of birth, without being forced through want or exile to travel. However, it is in his gloss on “El hijo del bueno vaya hasta que muera o bien aya” that he treats the theme in some detail.²⁷ There are two types of absence from one’s homeland he begins: voluntary and enforced. And the humanist argues that the first kind can be of great service if it is undertaken for motives of self-improvement (a subtle criticism of Philip II’s ban on study abroad, perhaps?). Unfortunately it is the best people of Spain who feel the need to travel (like the Jew don Fuda?), leaving the worst to take advantage of that which the good leave behind. The voluntary traveller can be either

²⁶ See Chapter Two, p. 42.

²⁷ *Philosophia vulgar*, centuria I, adage 15; centuria II, adage 10; and centuria VII, adage 23.

praised or vilified, Malara opines, depending upon his reasons for travel; as for the second kind of traveller, the exile, he deserves nothing but forgiveness and mercy.²⁸

Arias Montano (1527-1598)

Arias Montano's religious non-conformism has already been mooted by Ben Rekers in his study of the Seville humanist published in 1970.²⁹ In this work Rekers presented the view that Montano had converted to the religious sect the Family of Love while directing the Polyglot Bible project in Antwerp from 1568 to 1572. Rekers argued that Montano had arrived in Antwerp an advocate of Counter-Reformation Catholicism, but converted to an irenist or religiously tolerant outlook as a result of his relationship with the Antwerp printer Christophe Plantin and a number of the city's converso merchants who were Family adherents. Rekers further argued that on his return to Spain in 1577, Montano spread Familist views among the Hieronymite community of the Escorial palace-monastery, where he was employed as royal librarian, and among a small group of friends in Seville, including the cathedral canons Francisco Pacheco, Luciano Negrón, and Pedro Velez de Guevara.

Based on Montano's proximity to Family adherents and of his evident attraction to the mystical ideas of the Familist leader Hendrik Jansen Barralfeldt (Hiël), Rekers view that Montano was attracted to the Flemish religious sect is clearly

²⁸ Malara cites Aristotle's *Ethics*: "Que en as cosas que de voluntad se hazen ay lugar para loor y vituperar; y en los que no son voluntarias, solamente entra el perdon y misericordia."

²⁹ See Chapter 1, pp. 29-31.

incontrovertible. However, his belief that this represented a radical change in the humanist's religious views is, in my opinion, much less convincing. It is my view that Arias Montano's religious non-conformity was formed in his youth within his extended converso-professional family, and that these views were reinforced when, as a middle-aged man, he came into contact with the Flemish sect. Like the members of the Family of Love, Montano was an adherent of a minimalist Christianity that rejected ceremonies, sacraments and icons in favour of interior, mystical, religious practice, and like the Familists, he was used to disguising his true beliefs behind a cloak of religious conformity. Arias Montano was attracted to the Flemish sect, I would argue, precisely because it reflected his own religious outlook, an outlook engendered in the converso environment of his youth.

Arias Montano was born in 1527 in Fregenal de Sierra, a small town in the province of Huelva, known to have had a large converso population.³⁰ We know nothing of Montano's parents, save for their names, Isabel Gómez and Benito Arias, and his father's occupation: he was a notary. Montano tells us that his interest in Latin and Astrology began at his father's knee, which would indicate that Benito Arias took responsibility for his son's early education. Montano does not reveal how or where he became interested in the study of the Hebrew language and culture, but it would seem probable that it began at the same time, under his father's guidance.³¹

³⁰ See Chapter One, note 19.

³¹ It was a common practice in converso families for the father to initiate his sons' education. This phenomenon stems from the Jewish tradition which required fathers to impart basic literary skills to

At the age of twelve or thirteen Montano moved to Seville where he was nurtured by friends of his father, Antonio de Alcocer and his wife Isabel Vélez. The Alcocers were an important converso merchant clan from Toledo who, like Santa Teresa's family, had gained their wealth through the silk trade. Antonio de Alcocer was himself a successful *letrado*, who maintained close contact with the Seville business community. One of his daughters, Isabel Vélez, married the wealthy converso merchant Diego Díaz Becerril; another daughter, Mencía de Alcocer married another converso merchant, Gómez de León. Gómez de León was imprisoned in 1559 for his involvement in Seville's clandestine "Protestant" cell. During these "Protestant" trials, Diego Díaz Becerril acted as trustee for the property of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, a man regarded by the Inquisition as the leader of the "Protestant" group. Montano was very close to both Díaz Becerril and to León, whom he referred to in his letters as his "brothers."³² This term could be interpreted as merely an affectionate form of address; it could, of course, also have religious connotations; the fifteenth century Flemish sect the Brethren of the Common Life addressed each other in this fashion, as did the *alumbrados* of Guadalajara and Valladolid in the early sixteenth century.

In Seville Montano was also closely associated with the Nuñez Lopez family, whom he referred to as his relatives (*deudos*). The Nuñez Lopezs were members of a powerful converso clan with family members in Lisbon, Bordeaux and Antwerp.

their sons so that they could read the Torah. The study of Astrology was also much more prominent among Muslims (Moriscos) and Jews (Conversos) than it was among Old Christians.

³² See Juan Gil, "Benito Arias Montano en Sevilla" en Arias Montano y su tiempo, p.102

While Montano was in Antwerp directing the polyglot Bible project he formed a close relationship with a wealthy member of this clan, Luis Pérez, who was an adherent of the Family of Love. Luis Pérez's brother was the Calvinist Marcos Pérez, who was responsible for most of the clandestine Protestant literature shipments to Seville in the mid-sixteenth century.³³

From 1548 to 1555 Montano studied Latin and Hebrew at the University of Alcalá de Henares. His knowledge of the latter language was such that his fellow students dubbed him a second Jerome, a reference to Jerome's own extensive knowledge of Hebrew, which he used to translate the Hebrew scriptures into Latin. However, Montano's interest in Jewish culture was not confined to the scholarly examination of the Old-Testament. Like Juan de Malara and Pablo de Céspedes (a close friend), he was also interested in establishing close links between the ancient Jews and the Iberian peninsula. Like Céspedes (examined in the following section), Montano maintained that many of Spain's foremost towns were founded by early Jewish settlers and that the names of these towns were corruptions of Hebrew words.³⁴ In contrast to his interest in the Old-Testament scriptures, Montano demonstrated relatively little interest in the theology of the Church Fathers. He was, however, an avid reader of Erasmus, all of whose works were to be found in his student library.³⁵

³³ For Montano's relationship with the Nuñez Pérez family, see Juan Gil, *Arias Montano en su entorno*, Merida, 1998, pp. 130-141 For my comments on Marcos Pérez, see Chapter Three of this study.

³⁴ Juan Gil in *Arias Montano y su tiempo*, pp. 105-6

³⁵ While studying at Alcalá, Montano made two lists of his books. The complete works of Erasmus in nine volumes are found in both lists. Ben Rekers, p. 2.

In 1553 Montano returned to Andalusia, where he now divided his time between Seville and his hermitage at Aracena, some fifty miles to the west, in the Sierra Morena. The hermitage had been ceded to Montano by the Seville Cathedral, with the aid of his friend Pedro Vélez de Guevara (a relative of Montano's adoptive mother Isabel Vélez), who was prior of the hermitages of the archdiocese. In the next six years Montano converted the run-down hermitage into a comfortable country villa, where, accompanied by another scholar, named Ruano, and a servant named España, he devoted his time to the study of the scriptures. Montano also found time to study Medicine and Botany with his friend the physician Francisco de Arce, also from Frejenal de la Sierra, and to graduate in Arts at the University of Seville, although it is unlikely that he did much studying at the university itself.³⁶

In June 1559, three months before Seville's "Protestants" were paraded through the city in the famous auto-de-fe, Montano was detained at his country villa by the mayor of Aracena and brought in chains to the Andalusian capital. The document describing Montano's arrest states that he had been accused by a certain Morales, of Fregenal de la Sierra, of "el pecado etc". Given the religious upheaval in Seville in 1559, given also Montano's own religious predilections, it is tempting to interpret this vague description as a reference to Protestant or Jewish heresy, although

³⁶ Like Juan de Malara, Montano left Seville to study, yet he used the Seville University to graduate. One is tempted to speculate that Seville's lax *limpieza de sangre* examination may have been influential in both scholar's decisions to graduate in their home town.

other interpretations have also been mooted.³⁷ Whatever, Montano's alleged offence, he was soon released from his prison cell, presumably for lack of evidence.

Soon after he left prison Montano applied for and gained entry into the Order of Santiago. In May 1560 he was received into the order at the Saint Marcos priory of Leon, where he now donned the monk's habit, emblazoned with the red Saint James cross. A number of Montano scholars have pointed to the humanist's noble insignia as evidence for his Old-Christian background. If the humanist were a converso, they argue, it would in all likelihood have been revealed in the rigorous *limpieza de sangre* investigations that preceded his entry into the order. In fact, while the order's investigations were often extensive, they were rarely rigorous. Candidates were usually able to direct the investigation towards friendly witnesses, some of whom were clearly bribed to present favourable information. Entering the military orders could be an expensive process; however, with careful groundwork the results were usually favourable. Arias Montano was himself very careful in planning his entry into the Order of Santiago. First he built a church dedicated to the saint in the village of El Castaño de Robledo, near his country retreat at Aracena. Then he founded a confraternity dedicated to the saint's cult. Only then did he make formal application for entry into the noble order. The entry procedure itself was rapid and, as often was the case, perfunctory. A dozen or so people were selected as character witnesses; all confirmed that the humanist's antecedents were *hidalgos*, unblemished by trade or Jewish blood. Once inside the order Montano demonstrated little interest in the saint

³⁷ Juan Gil believes Montano was being accused of sodomy, and it is for this reason that the chronicler is reluctant to state clearly the charge. "Arias Montano en Sevilla" in José María Maestre ed. *Humanismo y Pervivencia del Mundo Clásico*, Madrid 2002, pp. 263-80

or indeed the cloistered life of the Santiago monastery; he did, however, wear his monk's robe, with its all important noble insignia, everywhere he went.

For Montano, the order of Santiago was a social carapace, protecting him from accusations of tainted origins or errant beliefs.³⁸ It was also a means of impressing the “right” people and advancing his career. One of these right people was the Bishop of Segovia, Martin Pérez de Ayala, who was also, significantly another member of the Núñez Pérez extensive family network. It was Martin Pérez who invited Montano to form part of a Spanish delegation to the third Council of Trent, giving the young humanist the chance to show off his rhetorical skills in two well received interventions: one on divorce, the other on communion. It is noteworthy that in supporting his views, the humanist cited the scriptures, but not church tradition.³⁹

It was while a delegate at Trent that Montano formed a close attachment to a number of Jews, who were observing the proceedings. Montano was particularly impressed by a certain Simon de Mantua, whom he described as “un hombre alabado por sus costumbres y la integridad de su vida.” In a discussion on the Messiah, Mantua asked why it was that the world had not experienced the messianic peace that the Old-Testament prophets had spoken of if, indeed, He had already arrived. In the face of

³⁸ It is significant that Montano chose the period of the Seville “Protestant” trials to enter the order. It is equally significant that his brother Juan Arias de la Mota and his close friend Gaspar Vélez (son of Montano's adoptive parents Antonio Alcocer and Isabel Velez), whom he also referred to as “brother”, chose the same period to obtain licences to move to Peru.

³⁹ Alfredo Albar Ezquerra, “Montano y El Concilio de Trento” in *Arias Montano y su tiempo*, pp. 126-127. In his intervention 19 June, 1562, Montano stated, “Confieso que voy a sacar todo el contenido de mi argumentación y mi discurso de las Sagradas Escrituras y de la verdad revelada por Dios...”

this argument Montano admitted that he had had no reply.⁴⁰ It was during the Trent conference that Montano also came into contact with a group of Jews from Milan (a city state at that time under Spanish rule), who later solicited the humanist's help in renewing the Milan Jewish community's licence for residency.

On leaving Italy in 1563, Montano did not return to the San Marcos convent in Leon, but to his country retreat at Aracena, where he once again dedicated himself to the study of the scriptures. These private meditations were brought to a close in March 1566, when the humanist was summoned to court and awarded the position of royal chaplain. Thus, Montano was, conveniently, on hand when, several months later, Philip II went in search of someone to oversee the Polyglot Bible project that was already underway in the Antwerp print shop of Christophe Plantin.

Philip II should never have consented to patronize the Antwerp Polyglot Bible; that he did so reveals much about the nature of his rule. For although Philip was a diligent monarch who pored endlessly over his state papers, he was not as firmly in control of government policy as he liked to believe. In fact, he was often guided into decision making by ambitious and skillful secretaries who selected the correspondence he read and the people with whom he met. One of these secretaries, Antonio Pérez was not only able to use his close proximity to the king to malign a political rival, he was also able to persuade Philip to have this man assassinated.⁴¹ Pérez's contemporary

⁴⁰ *Arias Montano y su tiempo*, p. 106.

⁴¹ J.H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, Penguin, 1990, pp. 264-8.

Cristobal de Zayas, does not figure as large in the history books as Pérez; yet it is clear that he too was a resourceful politician, with considerable influence on Philip II's decision making. Indeed, it was in large measure through Zayas's manoeuvring that the doctrinally dubious Antwerp Polyglot Bible gained Philip's support.

Although Cristobal de Zayas served as a royal secretary for over twenty years, our history books reveal almost nothing about this influential *letrado*. What we do know is that he was a member of a well-to-do family from Ecija, near Seville, and that he studied at Alcalá de Henares. It was at Alcalá that Zayas became friends with Arias Montano, with whom he shared an interest in classical languages.⁴² On leaving Alcalá, Zayas entered the royal court bureaucracy under the protective wing of Gonzalo Pérez, the father of the infamous Antonio and Philip II's most able secretary.

Soon after he arrived at court, Zayas accompanied Prince Philip on a state visit to the Netherlands, where he became acquainted with Christophe Plantin, a French bookbinder and leatherworker who had moved to the thriving Netherland's city in 1548, in search of work and a more liberal religious atmosphere. In 1555 Zayas commissioned Plantin to make a small leather box to hold a gem stone he wished to send to Spain as a gift for Charles V's queen, Margaret of Austria. It was while delivering the box to Zayas that Plantin was attacked and wounded in his right hand, as a result of which he was no longer able to continue bookbinding and was forced to take up printing. This, at any rate, is the story told by Plantin's grandson, Baltasar

⁴² Vicente Bécares Botas ed. Arias Montano y Plantino: El libro flamenco en la España de Felipe II, Universidad de Leon, 1999, p. 244. According to Plantin's Calvinist financier Goropio Becano, Zayas was "homo litteratissimus".

Moretus to the Jesuit chronicler Gilles Schoondonck in 1604.⁴³ It is likely, however, that Plantin's decision to enter the printing business was prompted not by an arm wound but by the offer of finance from a number of wealthy backers. Plantin's biographer, Colin Clair, believes that one of these men was Gabriel Zayas; the others were prominent Calvinists or, like Plantin himself, devotees of the Family of Love prophet Henry Niclaes.⁴⁴

When Plantin entered the printing business in 1555, Antwerp was along with Paris and Venice one of the three most important publishing cities in Europe; it was also a center for clandestine Protestant literature. Many of these Calvinist texts had already found their way into Spain through a secret supply network organized by the

⁴³ Colin Clair, *Christopher Plantin*, Plantin Publishers, London, 1987, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Clair believes that Plantin's first printshop was established with financial aid from Gabriel Zayas and Alexander Graphaeus, a businessman who was greffier (registrar) of the city. In 1567 a letter was found in the house of a Spanish merchant which contained a list of the city's prominent heretics. Both Christopher Plantin and Alexander Graphaeus appear on the list. Also on the list are Marcus Perez ("Spagnol. Juif de rache"), Fernando de Berny ("Spagnol. Juif de rache"), Cornelis van Bonbergue, Carle de Bonbergue and Goropio Becano. The Bonbergues, Graphius and Becano were all associates of Plantin. All fled Antwerp when the Duke of Alba's forces entered the city in 1567, as did Marcus Pérez, whose brother Luis was also closely associated with the Plantin's print shop. See Colin Clair, *op. cit.* p. 58. In a letter written in 1608 to the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Calvinist Adrianus Saravia, a friend of Plantin, provides us with an intimate glimpse at of the printer's religious views: "Plantin's wife, and his servants and family, with the sole exception of the elder Raphelengius, his son-in-law [a Calvinist], were Papists. He [Plantin] seemed to me to think that that religion [Catholicism] was better adapted to uncultivated minds. At one time when Lipsius, Plantin and I were walking in the country, we talked a great deal about religion, and Plantin said: "There are, and always have been, many and various religions, all hostile to each other. They all have a lot of simulation and concealment but they are not to be despised, provided they involve no crime, since they are useful to feebler minds. The common people have need of such elementary aids; they cannot grasp the heavenly and divine in any other way. There is only one piety, which is simple and quite without show. The world has always contained many religious men, but very few truly pious ones." Ben Rekers, *op. cit.* pp. 101-2. One of our sources for much of our information on Plantin's affiliation with the Family of Love is a 160-page manuscript, titled *Cronika des Hüsgesinnes der Lieften*. The anonymous author of the chronicle writes: "At that time—around the year 1550—he [Henrik Niclaes, the founder of the sect] converted also to his manner of thinking a certain native of France named Christopher Plantin. This man was a bookbinder who earned his bread by the labour of his hands; for the rest, a man prudent and astute in business matters, from whom he could reap certain advantages..." Clair, *op. cit.* p. 29. For an account of Plantin's involvement with the Family of Love, see Clair, *op. cit.* pp 28-36.

converso merchant Marcus Peréz. While the Protestant trials held at Valladolid and Seville at the end of the decade dealt a blow to this clandestine trade, they did not seriously affect the production of protestant literature in the Netherlands itself, where dissenting religious sects, like the Family of Love, continued to attract new adherents. It is clear that Plantin's press was from its inception a source of non-conformist works and that this clandestine production continued, off and on, throughout the next thirty years. In February, 1562 it was reported to Margaret, Duchess of Parma, Philip II's half sister and regent of the Netherlands, that the printer Plantin, a man "tainted by the heresies of the new religion," had recently printed an heretical text in his Antwerp print shop. Margaret placed the matter in the hands of the Margrave or Chief Constable, Jan van Immerzeele, who announced that Plantin had departed for Paris several weeks previously. Immerzeele also reported that he had searched the printer's workplace and interviewed his family, but had been unable to discover any evidence of heretical literature. It is likely, however, that Immerzeele, himself a secret Calvinist, had not probed very deeply into Plantin's affairs.⁴⁵

Plantin remained in Paris for eighteen months before returning to Antwerp to take charge of his printing business. On his return he entered into a business partnership with four wealthy merchants, Karel and Cornelis van Bomberghen, Joannes Goropius Becanus and Jacopo Scotti; all were related, all were Calvinists

⁴⁵ Colin Clair, *op.cit.* pp. 23-25.

(three fled Antwerp in 1567, when the Duke of Alba's troops entered the city) and all, it seems, were conversos.⁴⁶

While Plantin's business was expanding and flourishing, the political and religious situation in the Netherlands was rapidly deteriorating. In 1564, encouraged by the growing agitation against the Duchess of Parma's government, Calvinist ministers began holding open air meetings to which large crowds were attracted. At the same time a faction of the Dutch nobility, led by William of Orange, began calling for the abolition of the Dutch Inquisition and for freedom of religious practice for Protestants and Calvinists. This religious agitation culminated in August 1566 with the so-called iconoclastic fury, during which time Catholic churches throughout the southern Netherlands were raided and burnt by militant Calvinists. It was during this period of religious strife that Plantin decided to approach Philip II with a proposal for a new polyglot Bible.

The polyglot Bible had occupied Plantin's thoughts for some considerable time before he offered the project to the Spanish king. The printer's initial plan, it seems, was to publish the work under the patronage of the Erasmian bishop of Arras Cardinal Granvelle, with the financing provided by a consortium of merchants led by the von Bomberghens. However, these plans were dashed in the summer of 1566 when

⁴⁶ The van Bomberghens' cousin, we are told, was Fernando de Bernuys, another of Plantin's partners. In a contemporary document listing Antwerp's heretics (see note 61) Bernuys, like Marcos Pérez, is described as "Spagnol. Juif de Rache". Daniel van Bomberghen (Cornelis's father) "was renowned as a printer of Hebrew books and had owned a flourishing press in Venice until the decrees of the Inquisition and the open hostility of the nobility of Venice forced him to leave the city." (Claire, p. 39) It was from the van Bomberghens that Plantin bought the Hebrew typeface with which he printed the Hebrew text of the polyglot bible. Plantin's close association with the converso community in Antwerp and with Hebrew scholars suggests to me that he himself was from a converso background. Unfortunately, we have little information on the printer's family, and what information we do have is confusing. See Clair pp. 1-10.

Plantin's business associates openly declared themselves Calvinists. It was now obvious that the polyglot project would only succeed if it were placed under the aegis of someone of impeccable religious orthodoxy. The obvious candidate was, of course, Philip II himself. The problem was how to steer the Spanish monarch around the thorny topic of Plantin's own heretical reputation. Luckily, in this task the printer was able to count on the persuasive skills of Cardinal Granvelle and Gabriel de Zayas, who, in November 1566 became Philip II's Secretary for Flanders and as such became an important conduit between Philip and his Dutch subjects.

Plantin approached Philip II, in 1566, because he knew that Zayas would present him and his project in the best possible light. Indeed, it is highly likely that Plantin's formal application to the king via Zayas was preceded by an informal agreement between the secretary and the printer, an agreement to which Cardinal Granvelle was also a party. The polyglot was, of course, presented to Philip as a monument to his Catholic piety, wisdom and, above all, his pre-eminence among Christian princes. In reality, however, the Antwerp bible was a pre-Tridentine humanist project that not only attempted, like its famous predecessor, the Alcalá bible, to present the oldest and thus most authentic versions of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin scriptures, but also, surreptitiously, to introduce a Latin translation of the Old Testament that was a more accurate rendition of the Hebrew text than the sanctified but error-ridden *Vulgate*. In fact, the Polyglot Bible served to undermine rather than underline the traditionalist nature of Counter-Reformation Catholicism.

The task confronting Zayas in 1566 was a delicate one. Not only did he have to whet Philip II's appetite for this dubiously orthodox religious fare (Plantin had already engaged the controversial Biblical scholars Andres Masius and Guillermo Postel as collaborators⁴⁷), he also had to steer Plantin's proposal towards an adjudicating panel of scholars who would enthusiastically endorse the project. One of these adjudicators was Martinez de Cantalapiedra, who, along with Luis de Leon, was later imprisoned for attacking the *Vulgate* and promoting Rabbinical scriptural exegesis; another adjudicator was Zayas's friend Arias Montano, who was also chosen to head the project. All of this begs the question: was it merely a coincidence that Montano was called to court soon after Zayas became secretary for Flanders and shortly before Plantin offered the polyglot to Philip II? Or did Montano himself form part of an elaborate plan to publish a work which challenged Tridentine orthodoxy? Was Montano's relative, the Antwerp merchant Luis Pérez also involved in this plan? It is significant that the Familist Luis Peréz, a close friend of Plantin, advanced the printer money on several occasions during the Polyglot production process, enabling him to continue working on the Bible even when Philip II's promised aid was not forthcoming.

When Arias Montano arrived in Antwerp in March 1568, he found that the Aramaic Old Testament and the Syriac version of the New Testament had already been edited and were ready for printing. Within two years of the Spanish humanist's arrival the entire work was completed, a tribute to Montano's and Plantino's work

⁴⁷ See Rekers, op. cit. p. 51.

effort;⁴⁸ Montano, himself, had written much of the *Apparatus*, which formed the eighth and final volume of the polyglot, and included treaties on the culture and antiquities of the Jews. However, it is unlikely that the Bible would have been finished so rapidly, had it not been for the fact that its censors, a team of theologians from the University of Louvain, had raised few objections to Montano's and Plantin's proposals, even though the two men had included, along with the *Vulgate*, a sixteenth-century translation of the Hebrew Bible by the Italian converso scholar Sante Pagnini.⁴⁹ When, however, Montano sent proofs to a group of scholars at Alcalá de Henares, who had also been selected to examine the work in progress, the reaction was quite different. All three men (one of whom was Montano's friend Ambrosio Morales) were worried that Montano may have taken his commission much too far; and all advised him to gain papal approval for the project before going to print, as security against later attacks from irate and indignant Catholic clerics. Montano ignored their advice, almost certainly because he too realized that the work was heading for trouble, and that its best chance of survival lay in it being presented to the pope as a printed and published *fait accompli*.

By the end of 1571 the Polyglot was printed and bound in eight volumes. As far as Philip II was concerned, however, the work remained unfinished while it lacked the pope's blessing. Thus in February Montano shipped a copy of the Bible to Rome

⁴⁸ The philological work was completed by May 1570. It took another year to set up and print the texts. Rekers, p. 52.

⁴⁹ The *Apparatus* contained interlinear Latin translations of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament. The Hebrew Bible translation was by Sante Pagnini; the interlinear Latin version of the Greek Bible was the Vulgate with certain amendments by Montano. Colin Clair, p. 71. The Louvain theologians were, to quote Eustacio Sanchez Salor, men "impregnados del erasmismo." See Sanchez Salor, "La imprenta de Plantino" en *Arias Montano y Su Tiempo*, p. 143.

for papal analysis. A month later Pope Pius V reported to the king's ambassador in Rome, Luis de Requeséns, that the work would need to be subjected to a rigorous examination by a committee of theologians before he would be in a position to pass a definitive verdict (apparently, he set little store in the Louvain theologians' opinion). However, it was clear that his holiness was already of the opinion that the work was tainted. He noted, for example that one of the scholars involved in the project, Andreas Masius, was a man of evident heretical beliefs, and that the *Apparatus* (the eighth volume of the polyglot, mostly composed by Montano), contained many references to the Talmud as well as a treatise, *De Arcano Sermone*, that appeared to be Cabbalistic. In the circumstances the pope felt unable to give Plantin's press the requested privilege to print the work.

On hearing the disturbing news, Philip II ordered Montano to travel to Rome in order to "explain the matter in such a way as to put an end to any doubts"⁵⁰ Fortunately for Montano Pope Pius V had died before his arrival and had been succeeded by Gregory XIII, who, anxious to forge closer links with Philip II, proved to be much more malleable than his predecessor. Aided by Cardinal Granvelle, Montano was soon able to persuade the new pontiff to grant Plantin the all important privilege to print the work.

As Montano explained it to Philip II, Rome had created problems for the Polyglot out of jealousy that such an important project had been instigated not by the papacy but the Spanish monarch. However, it was not only the papacy that found fault with the work. One of the polyglot's most virulent antagonists was the Spanish

⁵⁰ Philip II to the Duke of Alba, 17 March 1572, in Rekers, p.56

theologian Leon de Castro, the man responsible for the incarceration of Montano's friend, Luis de Leon. In 1574 Castro embarked on a rigorous campaign to prohibit the Polyglot, which eventually led to the establishment of a *Congregatio Concilio*, headed by Cardinal Belarmine, to examine the work. In January, 1576, after several months' deliberation, the council announced its verdict. In respect for Philip II, who financed the venture and with whose name it was associated, the council gave the Bible its lukewarm approval. At the same time it made clear that had the Polyglot been presented to it for adjudication in an unpublished form, it would have condemned it as a work unworthy of royal patronage. The council noted that many of the authorities cited in the work were heretics, both Protestants and Jews; and it recommended that the Pope make the *Apparatus* (a work containing Pagnini's translation of the Hebrew Bible and Montano's treatises on Jewish culture and language) exempt from the privilege.

Pope Gregory XIII did not exempt the *Apparatus* from the privilege already awarded to the Polyglot; instead he diplomatically deferred final judgement on the whole eight-volume work to the Spanish Inquisition, now under the generalship of the moderate Gaspar de Quiroga. To assess the work, Quiroga chose the Jesuit scholar Juan de Mariana, who, like Montano, was a humanist, Hebraist and converso. However, despite the fact that Mariano's sympathies lay with Montano, his analysis of the work concurred with that of the *Congregatio Concilio*. He criticized Montano for having quoted Sebastian Münster as an authority and for employing the scholars Lefèvre de la Boderie and Guillaume Postel to prepare and comment on the Biblical

texts, both of whom were of suspect doctrine. He also criticized Andre Masius's Chaldaic paraphrase, a work which relied almost entirely on Rabbinical scholarship. Finally, he attacked Montano's treatises in the *Apparatus*, in which he quoted Jewish commentaries while ignoring the Church Fathers' views on the same subjects. Nevertheless, the Jesuit scholar approved the work, stating, generously, that he did not believe it was in conflict with doctrinal principal.⁵¹

When Mariano pronounced his verdict on the Antwerp Polyglot, in August 1577, Arias Montano was once again in Spain, having been recalled by Philip II to occupy the position of royal librarian at the Escorial palace. Montano had initially balked at the idea of returning to his homeland, pointing out to the king that his talents would be better employed in Antwerp, where his knowledge of the political situation would make him a useful advisor to the newly appointed governor Luis de Requeséns. It is clear, however, that Montano's reasons for returning to the Netherlands were motivated by other considerations than his political usefulness to Philip II. For one thing, he was anxious to avoid further confrontation with the dangerous Leon de Castro, who was still accusing him of Protestant and Jewish heresy. Above all, however, he had become used to living in a relatively liberal environment among men who shared his Nicodemist religious outlook. One of these men was his relative Luis Pérez, a wealthy merchant with whom Montano maintained a close relationship for the rest of his life. It was through Pérez's influence, it seems, that Montano became increasingly critical of the Netherland's governor the Duke of Alba, whose tenth-penny taxes and draconian military measures were creating a climate inhospitable to

⁵¹ Rekers, pp. 62-64.

the Antwerp business community.⁵² Pérez may also have been responsible for initiating Montano into the secrets of the Family of Love, of which, like Plantin, he appears to have been a member; it is equally likely, however, that Montano was, at the very least, acquainted with the sect before he arrived in the northern port, his source being the Perez-Nuñez family of Seville, who maintained close contact with their converso relatives in Flanders.

While it is not certain that Montano ever considered himself a member of the Family of Love, it is evident that he shared the Familists' distain for the ceremonial and doctrinal trappings of organized religion, as well as their predilection for private, mystical practice. He was also taken with the Biblical exegeses of the Family leader Henry Jansen Barrefelt (who assumed the Hebrew name "Hiël), and specifically with Barrefelt's interpretation of the Apocalypse, which he, Montano, plundered to write his own *Elucidationes in omnia Apostolorum Scripta*. However, while Montano believed Barrefelt to be a gifted interpreter of the more arcane scriptures (his gift, according to Montano, being that of the non-scholar unburdened by theological training), he did not consider him his mystical mentor. Montano's own mystical epiphany, as related to his friend Fr. José de Sigüenza, had occurred at his country retreat at Aracena, in 1558, where God had revealed to him the meaning of the

⁵² "Esta tierra está al presente enferma y muere alguna gente de peste; Dios lo remedie. Mas sobre todo está muy afligida con el edicto de diez por ciento que se ha publicado. Porque cierto, si no se declara de otra manera que agora se entiende, la mercancía desta tierra es desbaratada, y esto se hará muy de prisa...Mas visto lo que ha salido...arruinarán del todo la tierra y enriquecerán a los vecinos y enemigos..." Letter Montano to Zayas, 28 August, 1571, *CODOIN*, tomo 41, p. 253.

scriptures in just one night.⁵³ This revelation did not however include the Apocalypse, which remained stubbornly intransigent until Hiël had shed light on its mysteries, as Montano noted in the introduction to his *Elucidationes*.

I confess that, although it is thirty years ago since, with divine help, I entered the way of the Lord and trained myself in the Holy Scriptures, yet I failed to understand almost everything in St. John's Apocalypse, except for one or two, or at the most three chapters, and those not consecutive, even after I had consulted many commentaries and interpretations. I often used to say that I, who admitted I did not understand it, understood the Apocalypse better than the commentators I had happened to read, since they went on expounding the text in their commentaries as if they had grasped the meaning and as if this were easy to express; but their various interpretations made the text still more obscure and more difficult for me to read than before. I continued in this opinion and this constant desire for understanding until by God's Providence it was brought about that, through the work and help of a certain living witness of Christian truth, to whom the very power and truth of Christ gave the name of Hiël, another share of light was put before me, by which I could see all the mysteries of this book...⁵⁴

The passage indicates once again that Montano had found in the Family of Love a sect that reinforced rather than changed his views on religious observance and scriptural interpretation. What Montano had found in Antwerp, I would argue, were fellow travellers who had animated him in his own reform mission. It was this mission

⁵³ Montano also makes note of this revelation in a latin ode contained in his *Comentaria in duodeim prophetas*. In Sigüenza's Inquisition trial in 1592, a fellow Hieronymite friar, José de Ronda, noted that Fray Luis de León "había dicho a un fraile de esta orden que todo cuanto sabía Arias Montano lo había sabido dentro de quince días." See Luis Gomez Canseco, *El humanismo después de 1600: Pedro de Valencia*, Universidad de Sevilla, 1993. Montano also stated in his first intervention at the fourth Tridentine council (19 June, 1562) "He sido como inspirado por un soplo divino y ya lo veo todo claro y así lo voy a exponer." Alfredo Albor Ezquerro, "Montano y El Concilio de Trento" in *Arias Montano y su tiempo*, p. 127.

⁵⁴ The passage is taken from Montano's forward to his commentary on the Apocalypse, in B. Ariae Montani *Elucidationes in omnia S. Apostolorum scripta*, Antwerp 1588. Translation by B. Rekers in Rekers op. cit. p. 92.

that in 1576 the forty-eight year old humanist took to Philip II's palace-monastery at the Escorial.

The Escorial was already well under construction when Arias Montano returned to Spain in the Spring of 1576. Philip II's original idea was to construct a monument to his religious piety and regal authority. Gradually, however, as construction progressed, the Escorial took on other characteristics. By the time the complex was finished in 1588, the palace-monastery had become associated with Solomon's Temple, its royal occupant compared to the wise and prudent King Solomon himself. Where had this association come from? The obvious source is the king's librarian Arias Montano, who arrived at the Escorial just in time to witness the construction of the royal Basilica and Library, and to offer his recommendations on their religious iconography. In fact the only iconographic elements in the Escorial that link it to King Solomon are those incorporated by Montano, in these two buildings. These are the six statues of the Jewish kings, including Solomon, that now grace the façade of the Basilica, recommended by Montano as a substitute for the earlier geometric figures (four pyramids supporting orbs) chosen by the architect Juan de Herrera; and the Old-Testament representations of four of the seven liberal arts on the library ceiling, in the midst of Greek and Roman icons.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Grammar is represented by the tower of Babel and Nebucodonoser's school of grammar in Babylon where Daniel studied; Arithmetic by Solomon, who solved the puzzle presented to him by Queen Saba; Music by David playing his harp; and Astronomy by the infirm king Ezequias who is cured after moving into the shadow of the sun. See Cornelia von der Osten Sacken, *El Escorial: Estudio Iconológico*, Bilbao, 1984.

It is to be assumed that Philip II was flattered by the comparison of himself to an Old-Testament monarch renowned for his great wisdom, and thus consented to the promotion of the image. Yet, given the open antagonism in the Spanish church towards those who displayed too great an admiration for the Hebrew culture, the analogy would appear to be of dubious propriety. Once again, I believe, Montano was using the king's enthusiasm for self-promotion to advance his own religious message, one diametrically opposed to that of his monarch. For Philip II, equating the Escorial with Solomon's temple and himself with the Old-Testament king was a means of emphasising his political and religious preeminence among Christian princes. For his humanist librarian, the association provided yet another opportunity for presenting a vision of Christianity founded on the bedrock of Classical pagan and Jewish cultures.⁵⁶

From Montano's letters to his friends, written from the Escorial, it is clear that he found his librarian's duties tedious and somewhat demeaning.⁵⁷ The place did offer a number of distractions, however; the iconographical decorations of the basilica and

⁵⁶ We have no idea when Philip II began to be referred to as the new Solomon and the Escorial the new Salomon's temple, although the first written reference to this appears in Fr. Juan de San Jerónimo's *Memorias*, published in 1591. In his *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo*, published in 1605, Montano's disciple Fr. José de Sigüenza also devotes a number of pages to comparing the Escorial with Solomon's temple. Arias Montano's interest in the temple began sometime before he entered the Escorial in 1576. In the Apparatus of the Polyglot Bible Montano includes a model of Solomon's temple drawn by the humanist. The Escorial as the new Solomon's temple is examined in some detail by Cornelia von der Osten Sacken in chapter six of *El Escorial: Estudios Iconológicos*, Bilbao, 1984. On the subject of inappropriate royal analogies, we also have Ambrosio Morales' comparison of Philip II to San Hermengildo, which the monarch enthusiastically endorsed. Obviously Philip felt in comparing himself to a Visigothic martyr he was emphasising his religious and ethnic purity. However, Hermengildo was a converso (he converted to Catholicism from Arianism) traitor and revolutionary, challenging his father, King Leovigildo on religious grounds. For examination of Philip II's interest in San Hermenegildo see Francisco J. Cornejo, Felipe II, San Hermenegildo y la imagen de la 'Sacra Monarquía' in *Boletín del Museo del Prado*, tomo XVIII, no. 36, 2000.

⁵⁷ He referred to the work as "soul-destroying". Rekers, p. 106.

library, for example, as well as the chance to purchase literary works, including many Hebrew texts, without Inquisition interference. He was also able to interact with the monastery's Hieronymite monks, to whom he taught Hebrew. It was either during these classes, or in informal extra-curricula tertulias that Montano began to share his own religious views with the monks and to introduce them to the ideas of certain Familist friends in Antwerp. A curious letter, written by Plantin, in 1580, in reply to one of Montano's Hieronymite pupils, gives some indication of Montano's proslytising activities:

I was overjoyed by your letter, Reverend Father of Christ, for various reasons, of which the chief is that it tended to the greater glory of God, and the other that you can now be a comfort to our Montano, since you tell me that you have entered the true path, following him who by the grace of God preceded you in it...But what use is all this to you since, as your letter states, you now have before you someone whose example you can rightly follow? For, to tell you the truth, I cannot accept any of the praise you heap on me in your letter. And so take care, Reverend Father, if, as you write, you love me and wish to be loved by me in return, which through the grace of God I am bound to do, lest you ascribe to me, a bodily, visible and thus corruptible person, what belongs to another, to the invisible and incorruptible God...⁵⁸

It is clear from Plantin's caveat that he was perturbed by his correspondent's unconstrained euphoria and, it seems, imprudent remarks. Unfortunately, the monk's letter has not survived, and thus we can only guess at the nature of its contents. We do, however, have a much more informative account of Montano's religious instruction at the Escorial, this provided by another Hieronymite pupil, his friend and disciple Fr. José de Sigüenza.

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 106-7.

In 1592 Fr. José de Sigüenza was denounced to the Inquisition by a number of fellow monks for certain heretical beliefs, which, as it became clear in the trial that followed, he had imbibed from his mentor Arias Montano. In the trial Sigüenza was reported as proclaiming, “Que me deje a Arias Montano y La Biblia, no me da nada que me quite los demas libros.”⁵⁹ Sigüenza did not deny the comment, although he tried to dismiss it by stating that he did not read much (clearly a lie) and that Montano provided an accesible summary of a broad theological corpus. In the course of the trial Sigüenza was also said to have made the following disrespectful remarks: “los Santos dicen imaginaciones muchas veces y no el sentido de la Santa Escritura;” “pierde mucho tiempo con los estudios de la Teología esolastica y que son poco provecho;” “para entender la Santa Escritura no se han de seguir a los Santos sino acudir al hebreo, no haciendo en esto el caso que se debía a la declaración de los Santos ni de la Teología escolastica;” “muchos bárbaros y gentiles, turcos y moros, aunque no tengan conocimiento ninguno de nuestra fe, sólo creer y entender que había un solo Dios y vivir conforme a la ley natural, se podía salvar;” “dio por consejo a uno que dejase de leer los libros de devoción y leyese el Evangelio y se encomendese a Dios, que El le alabraría.”⁶⁰

Despite the fact that Sigüenza’s prosecutors had called for a death sentence, the friar managed to escape his ordeal with nothing more serious than a short term of imprisonment. This sentence must certainly have come as a surprise to Montano, who had left the Escorial for Seville at the beginning of the trial, undoubtedly fleeing what

⁵⁹ Rekers, p. 160.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

he believed to be his own imminent incarceration. In Seville, at least, he was surrounded by his family and intimate friends. He was also next to a port, which would offer him the chance of rapid escape if the Inquisition turned its attention towards his own “heretical” activities.

Montano would, of course, have had little difficulty in escaping Spain, given his close relationship with the Nuñez Pérez family, who had contacts throughout Europe. This merchant family had maintained a close relationship with Montano throughout his career, helping to transform his bureaucratic emoluments into a small fortune. For his part, Montano had been of service to the Nuñez Pérez clan on at least two occasions; once in Antwerp during his Polyglot Bible period, when he had acted as a channel for Luis Pérez’s and his merchant friends’ grievances against Alba to Philip II; and later, in 1577, on his return from Antwerp, when he had become involved in a dispute between a group of Spanish converso merchants, operating out of Lisbon, and the Portuguese king.

The Portuguese affair began in 1576, when King Sebastian demanded that the Spanish merchant community residing in Lisbon pay a fee, similar to that paid by Portuguese converso merchants, which would indemnify them in the event that they were prosecuted by the Portuguese Inquisition for Judaizing. This royal requirement obviously posed a major problem for the Spanish merchants: if they paid up, they would be admitting to having converso roots, something they had always been very careful to deny, at least officially. If they did not pay, then they undoubtedly risked the ire of the Portuguese king. Their response was to wax appalled and offended, and to

write to King Philip, through their spokesmen Alonso Núñez Contador, Gonzalo Pérez Martínez and Diego López, asking that the royal chaplain Benito Arias Montano (“que es y ha sido en partes donde nos conoce a nosotros y a los nuestros”) be allowed to investigate their case. In 1578 Montano travelled to Lisbon, where he spoke with the merchants, many of whom were members of the converso merchant families he was acquainted with in Seville and Antwerp. As a result of Montano’s report, in which he assured Philip II that the merchants were men of proven *limpieza de sangre*, a clear lie, the Spanish king intervened on their behalf and the Portuguese monarch withdrew his demand. It is inconceivable, of course, that the Lisbon merchants would have written to the king, soliciting Montano’s services, without first contacting the humanist himself, who, as they pointed out, was well known to them. It is thus likely that the Lisbon trip was stage-managed by Montano and the merchants, with Montano using his clout at court to deliver some converso friends from a potentially ruinous situation.⁶¹

In March 1578, having concluded his Portuguese business, Montano returned to Spain via Seville, laden with a cartload of seashells which later decorated the roof of his country retreat at Aracena. This was not merely gratuitous adornment. For Montano the shell was a manifestation of the perfect symmetry of God’s universe; it was also a symbol of his own stoical philosophy, protecting him, wherever he went,

⁶¹ For the Lisbon merchant affair, see Alfredo Alvar Ezquerra, “Bentio Arias Montano en Portugal”, in *Arias Montano y su tiempo*, pp. 197-204. Alvar relates the story as if Arias Montano was a dispassionate intermediary. It seems he is unaware of Montano’s close ties to the Nuñez Lopez merchant clan.

from the barbs of his many detractors.⁶² No sooner had he arrived in Seville than these attacks began once again, this time emanating from a Dominican convent, whose friars were walking around the city “burlando de mis escritos y mi nombre.”⁶³ While Montano does not elaborate on the nature of these attacks, it is likely that they were comments on Montano’s Jewish background and sympathies.⁶⁴

Snide remarks aside, Montano’s visit to Seville, which lasted eighteen months, was a relaxed period, spent in the Andalusian capital or in the quiet of his country retreat among congenial company. From Montano’s letters to Zayas and Plantino, as well as from a number of other sources, we are able to create a composite picture of the humanist’s close circle of friends, whose character was clearly converso: the merchant Diego Nuñez Pérez, to whom Montano was related; the Cathedral prior Pedro Velez de Guevara, who was a relative of Montano’s adoptive mother, Isabel de Velez; the physicians and scholars Francisco Sánchez de Oropesa, Francisco de Arce (who Montano referred to as “mi preceptor en Cirugía) and Simón Tovar; the Hebrew scholar Juan de Cano; the poet Fernando de Herrera and the Cathedral clerics Luciano Negrón (scion of a wealthy banking family) and Francisco Pacheco (second cousin to the painter Francisco Pacheco). It is from Pacheco’s *Second Sermon on Liberty*

⁶² See Manuel José de Lara Ródenas, “Arias Montano en Portugal. La Revisión de un Tópico sobre la Diplomacia Secreta de Felipe II” in Luis Gómez Canseco ed. *Anatomía de Humanismo. Benito Arias Montano 1598-1998*, Universidad de Huelva, 1998, p. 365.

⁶³ Letter to Zayas in CODOIN 41, p. 407. Note Quevedo’s and Lope’s attacks on Jewish roots.

⁶⁴ Montano’s detractors were probably making allusions to his Jewish sympathies, as Leon de Castro had done the previous year. Judging by Lope de Vega’s malicious attack in the following verse, it would seem evident that rumours of Montano’s Jewish background were widespread:

Jamón presunto de español marrano,
de sierra famosa de Aracena,
adonde huyó del mundo Arias Montano

See “Epístola a don Gaspar de Barrionuevo” in *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 36, p. 427.

(examined in the next section) that we gain an intimate picture of this group of friends, brought together by Montano in his isolated country house to discuss science and scripture without fear of social reproof.

It is tempting, of course, to compare this Seville group of non-conformists described by Pacheco in his sermon with Montano's circle of Familist friends in Antwerp; and in many respects the comparison is an apposite one, the members of both groups being attracted to a stoical and quietist practice. However, once again it is important to emphasise that the Seville group's views were formed independently of the Family of Love, in a peculiarly Spanish, New-Christian setting. Thus while Montano undoubtedly relayed Familist secrets to his Seville friends (it would be naïve to believe otherwise), there is little to suggest that he created a Familist cell on Andalusian soil

Montano left Seville for the Escorial in September 1579, but returned south often during the next decade, finally retiring to Andalusia in 1592 when Jose Sigüenza's trial made life at King Philip's palace-monastery too unpleasant to sustain further. During the last six years of his life, Montano divided his time between his country estate at Aracena and a villa in the suburbs of Seville, devoting himself to his scientific and scriptural studies. Just before his death in June 1598, he took up residency in the Santiago monastery in Seville. Once again, however, his association with the order appears to have been perfunctory. In fact, Montano all but ignored the monastery's cloisters during his final days, preferring to spend his last moments in the

house of his relative Diego Núñez Perez, whose widow Doña Ana Núñez prepared his corpse for burial.⁶⁵

Francisco Pacheco (1540?—1599)

There is much about canon Francisco Pacheco's biography that is a mystery; first of all the canon's date of birth. On his tombstone Pacheco is presented as dying at the age of 64, which would mean he was born in 1535. However, in a document signed by the canon shortly before his death, his birth date is presented as 1532, and in two much earlier documents, as 1540. As the date 1540 was given by Pacheco himself, it is tempting to take this as the correct date of birth. But, if this is so, then Pacheco would have graduated from Seville University in arts and letters at the tender age of fifteen, if, indeed, he had studied at the university between 1552 and 1555, as he claimed. And here we come to the second mysterious area of Pacheco's biography: his university studies. In 1570, Pacheco stood before a university committee claiming that he had graduated from that university in 1555 with a diploma in arts and letters, and then had gone on to study for his bachelor's degree (for three years from 1560-1563, and one other year subsequently) in theology. He was now asking for official recognition of these studies, and to support his case he presented four students who testified that they had studied with him during his time at the university. As a result of these testimonies, and without any official record of his attendance at the university, or any evidence that he had taken an exam, he was awarded a degree in theology on

⁶⁵ Rekers, p. 122.

March 20, 1570. It is perhaps noteworthy that one of the members of Pacheco's adjudication committee was his good friend Pedro Vélez de Guevara, a powerful presence in Seville's cathedral, whose support could quite easily have influenced a university committee in its task of reaching the right decision.⁶⁶

The third mysterious aspect of Pacheco's biography is his lineage. In a *limpieza de sangre* examination undertaken from 1 to 24 September 1592 to gain a canonry, Pacheco stated that his father was the son of Hernando Aguilar Pacheco from the town of Villasevil de los Pachecos in Vizcaya and that his mother was Elvira Lopez de Miranda, whose family came from Miranda de Ebro.⁶⁷ The apostolic notary in charge of the investigation, Juan Santillana, was thus dispatched to Villasevil where he interviewed seven people, four of whom were, unlikely though it may seem, nonagenarians. All stated that Hernando Aguilar Pacheco (Pacheco's father), who had left the village some eighty years previously, was the son of Juan Vallejo Pacheco of Villasevil and Mencia Villegas de Castaneda from Santa Maria de Cayon, half a league away from Villasevil. No one knew Francisco Pacheco, but all said that they understood he was the son of Hernando Aguilar Pacheco and a certain Elvira Lopez de Miranda, whom Hernando had met and married in Jerez de la Frontera. All the witnesses described both paternal grandparents as *hildalgos* and Old Christians, without any Jewish or Moorish stain; indeed, all noted that the area was famous for its Old-Christian character.

⁶⁶ Pedro Vélez de Guevara was also a close friend of Arias Montano. See my comments on p. 60.

⁶⁷ Archivo Catedral de Sevilla, "Pruebas de Sangre", Leg. F, no. 7)

Having concluded his investigation in Villasevil, Santillana travelled to Miranda de Ebro, a town whose Jewish population on the eve of the 1492 expulsion represented almost a quarter of its citizens.⁶⁸ Unsurprisingly, given the fact that the Lopez Mirandas had left the town for Jerez de la Frontera around the time of the expulsion, that is to say three generations previously, the investigator was unable to find anyone who was able to provide him with information on them. Thus the next step was to return south and conclude his investigations in Jerez de la Frontera, where Francisco Pacheco was born, where his parents were married, and where three generations of his mother's family, the Lopez Mirandas, had resided; if the object of the exercise was to determine whether or not Pacheco was from an Old-Christian background, then a visit to Jerez de Frontera was essential. However, inexplicably, Santillana concluded his inquiries in Miranda de Ebro. On September 30, 1592, Francisco Pacheco was awarded his canonry, although no information was provided to the adjudicating committee on the background of his mother's family.

Why had the *limpieza de sangre* investigation not included Jerez de la Frontera, a day's journey from Seville? The most obvious answer is that Pacheco's maternal family, at least, were conversos, and an investigation in Jerez would have likely revealed this fact. However, Pacheco's converso origins are not only suggested by his carefully orchestrated *limpieza de sangre* examination; they are also apparent, I would argue, in two of his works, *Una satira apologetica en defensa del divino Dueñas* (1569?) and *Dos sermons sobre la instauración de la libertad del espíritu para vivir recta y felizmente* (1575), both of which are modelled on Horace's critical

⁶⁸ See Francisco Cantera, *La judería de Miranda el Ebro, Sefarad* I and II, 1941-42.

Sermones and *Epistolae*. The first of these works, *Una satira*, is an attempt to draw a distinction between a small group of intellectual poets and the mass of versifiers who plied their rhymes in the streets of Seville. Pacheco refers to the second group as a *musaica pestilencia*, corrupting an anti-semitic term (*mosaica pestilencia* or Jewish plague) in order to express his own prejudice for ignorant bards.

Qué bestia habrá que tenga ya pacencia
Que tome la pluma y haga guerra
Contra aquesta musaica pestilencia⁶⁹

The satire, Pacheco tells us, in a short, tongue in cheek, introduction to the work, came about in the following way. One day in 1569, he and his friend licenciado Dueñas were in conversation in the Cathedral when a certain scandalous youth and “poet” by the name of Cuevas, the son of a physician, had walked by without doffing his cap. Insulted, Dueñas had cited some verse which made an allusion to bad manners. This angered the young man to such an extent that he got together with some of his poet friends and wrote a satire against Dueñas. This, in turn, inspired a whole spate of satires, in which the two rival poetic groups attacked each other’s artistic credentials and family lineage. Some had even fled the city, Pacheco tells us, waggishly one assumes, after being accused of being “submissives” (“*someticos*” for which read sodomites and Jews, *semiticos*).⁷⁰ In the middle of this melee, Pacheco himself had written a satire in defence of Dueñas which he had read out on *las gradas*

⁶⁹ ll. 1-3.

⁷⁰ “[Cuevas] convocó á otros poetas amigos suyos para entre todos componer una sátira contra el dicho Dueñas, sobre que hubo motivo de hazerse otras diversas sátiras unos contra otros, en las cuales se picaron de tal suerte, que se vinieron á retar de sométicos, y algunos huyeron de Sevilla por esto.” “Una Satira Sevillana del Licenciado Francisco Pacheco,” *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 1907, núms. 7 y 8, p. 5.

(the Cathedral steps, a public meeting place), in the Plaza de San Francisco and in other public places. Shortly thereafter, two “poets” from the rival groups had loudly discussed the merits of the poem outside the house of the *corregidor*, who immediately arrested them and many others besides, so that very soon the city gaol was full of poets. At which point, Pacheco, according to his account, wrote yet another satire, this time in defence of the gaoled poets. Placated by these verses, the *corregidor*, who considered himself something of a bard (Pacheco quotes some of his inane doggeral), immediately released all the poet prisoners.

Pacheco’s short introduction sets the tone for the satire itself—a trenchant and ribald attack on bad poetry, full of sexual and scatological innuendo, with numerous references to the New-Christian character of the city’s bards. Many of these references are all but opaque to a modern reader;⁷¹ others are much more evident: the poet Fernando Herrera’s Jewish background, for example, indicated in his verbal joust with his poetic rival, “el gorrero” (“Llámense [el gorrero y Herrera] de judíos hideputas/ No mienten las poetas en sus cantos)⁷²; or Juan de Malara’s semitic features, an allusion to which is subtly inserted into a passage in which Pacheco notes how few financial rewards the humanist had gained from his epic poem *Hercules animado* (Y si él [Malara] no toma otra mejor derrota/ Hércules, por vengarse, con su porra/ Hará

⁷¹ Surprisingly, there is no critical edition of the satire. In 1907, Rodríguez Marín published the poem with some brief notes, promising a fuller analysis in the future. This never materialized, one assumes because the material was too racy for the Seville scholar to handle.

⁷² “La sátira apologética en defensa del divino dueña” ll 692-3. In *Una sátira sevillana del Licenciado Francisco Pacheco*, *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, XI, julio y agosto, 1907.

pasagonzalo en su narota)⁷³; or even a subtle hint, perhaps, at his own New-Christian origins (Ya yo viví otro tiempo en ese engaño [writing bad poetry]/ Y hacía más coplas en un hora/ Que Bernal [one of the city's physicians] mata enfermos en un año/ Aquella, cierto, fué una vida mora [a Moor's life or wretched period])⁷⁴

While Pacheco's satire is clearly styled on the satires of Horace (a poet favored by Spain's post-tridentine humanists), it would also appear to borrow heavily from a home grown tradition of poetical satire, visible in the *cancioneros*, in which conversos make humorous and very often vicious allusions to each other's Sephardic backgrounds. Here, of course, Pacheco's theme is not the conversos per se but the intellectual and cultural impoverishment of his society, a theme he returns to in his *Sermones sobre la instauración de la libertad*, a much more serious work, written several year after the *Satire*.

Pacheco's *Sermones*, both of which are directed to his friend Pedro Velez de Guevara, chart the decline of society from a mythical golden age to its present state of corruption.⁷⁵ The first satire begins with an image of an Arcadian idyll, where there are no laws, no money, no kings, titles or clerics greedy for the bishop's mitre, and in which man's life "transcurrió en medio de una felicidad dorada al frente de las cosas mientras fue dueño de si mismo." Then impiety and greed enter this utopia in tandem, impairing man's sense of freedom, his virtuous conduct and his wisdom. Soon

⁷³ Ibid. ll 523-5.

⁷⁴ Ibid. ll 88-91.

⁷⁵ Pedro Vélez de Guevara, a witness in 1569 at Pacheco's examination for his university degree, was a canon in the Seville cathedral and a legal consultant for the Sacro Colegio de la Iglesia of Seville.

ambition triumphs over liberty and virtue; men thirst for private property; laws appear to defend this property. Forgetting the true faith, men begin to worship stone idols; they convert god into a magus who exists only to satisfy their own private caprice. Monarchies arise accompanied by wars. People are enslaved. A nobility emerges obsessed with its titles and coats of arms. It promotes the idea that “el valor de los hombres radica en su sangre”, ignoring the fact that all men have been created equal “con el mismo barro y con el soplo de la misma llama.” And yet the stupid *vulgo* holds these men and their ill-attained wealth and titles in high esteem, while it regards men who gain their living in peaceful pursuits as lesser mortals.⁷⁶

Pacheco now focuses on court society, where the king and nobles strut like peacocks in their fine apparel, a colorful veil hiding a putrid and corrupt core: “¡...que ambiciones, que espíritus, más bajos que la hez de los esclavos, que iras y qué brutales voces, qué atroz sed de sangre y de dinero!; ...¡con qué mezquina ambición y con qué ganas procuran, cuando la envidia los devora, aplastar la fuerza de los demás y no sufrir a nadie igual que ellos!” This same greed for power and riches also affects clerical society where men like Apicio (a pseudonym), like an astute politician, uses his wealth, influence and charm to buy himself a bishop’s mitre, whereupon he fills his bishop’s court with family, courtesans and social parasites.

As a contrast to this noble and clerical corruption, Pacheco presents us with two *letrado* friends, Juan de Ovando and Juan López de Velasco, men who devote

⁷⁶ Semon I, ll. 145-150: “...y por haber violentado con guerras los derechos de los pueblos y la Concordia divina de la madre Naturaleza, profanando cosas sagradas y asolando todo con actos de rapiña, el estúpido vulgo los sintió ilustres, en tanto que estimó faltos de linaje a los inocentes que pasaban los años sin derramar sangre, en una paz fructífera...”

their lives to the state, an onerous task for which they gain little praise: “¿Qué hombre en sus cabales podría tenerte envidia, Velasco, por haber recibido a tu cargo las pesadas tareas y los asuntos de un reino tan grande, por ejecutar las decisiones que el gran Felipe toma después de consultarte... ¡cuántas veces hemos visto que un puesto preeminente como éste y el goce del favor han sumergido en la envidia a un desprevenido, y que la fortuna lo ha arrojado de su alta posición con una gran tormenta, dejándolo sin habla!”⁷⁷

Faced with social violence, deceit, corruption, and hypocrisy, Pacheco believes his own salvation is through the cultivation of a stoical serenity: “la Libertad del Espíritu, que no tiene culpas sobre su conciencia y está libre de ambiciones mezquinas y de miedos, y que desprecia las riquezas y los honores vanos y no se permite ninguna acción servil.”

In his second sermon Pacheco elaborates on the stoical code that he and his friends adopt to combat the harsh reality of their society. He begins by likening his stoical tranquillity to that of a man safe on a headland observing a stormy sea. Separated from those people who traverse these treacherous waters in search of power and wealth, he has protected himself from the volatile world they inhabit. The stoical man resides in a private fortress, notes Pacheco, changing his metaphor, insulated from “el insano torbellino de los vientos del pueblo” and the “innoble vulgo... movido

⁷⁷ A member of the Ovando family, Pedro Mexía de Ovando, was responsible for “La Ovandina”, a genealogical work, published in Lima in 1621, in which the Ovandos are presented with an immaculate noble trajectory from Visigoths of Vizcaya and Galicia. The work, as Marquéz Villanueva has pointed out (Investigaciones sobre Juan Alvarez Gato, p. 77, fn 104), was the creation of a man who saw the profitability of selling false genealogical studies to wealthy *Peruanos* whose true ancestry was best kept a secret. The Mexías were certainly conversos. The Ovandos appear to have been a well to do professional family from Cáceres in Extremadura.

por un deseo pertinaz de venganza o por un arranque de rabia...” Pacheco compares this Christianity infused with a stoical spirit to that of a Christianity dominated by laws and edicts which do nothing to put troubled minds at ease. The ideal spiritual environment, the humanist opines, is a pastoral setting, and he suggests that he and Vélez de Guevara, the recipient of the satire, escape to such a place: the country house of Benito Arias Montano at Aracena, where a microcosm of the Golden-Age society, described in the first sermon, awaits them.⁷⁸ “And what say you,” Pacheco asks Velez, “if your friend the owner also turns up, playing a song that makes the river Jordan sing, the peaks of Mount Hermón shimmer and Nazarite nymphs, on the Jordan’s banks, applaud?”⁷⁹

Here, in Aracena, among their friends Arias Montano, Juan de Caño, a certain prelate named Parma (all of whom are Hebraists) and Francisco Yáñez (the grandson of Nebrija) they will celebrate the daily mass “con las lenguas y las mentes limpias”; here they will immerse themselves in their pastoral setting, preparing simple food from the produce found in Montano’s garden. And after they have eaten their modest fare they will engage in urbane conversation enlivened by jokes and laughter. Caño will talk of the enigmas of the scriptures; Montano will regale them with his great

⁷⁸ It would seem that the second satire on liberty was written several years after the first one. In the first satire Pacheco refers to Juan de Ovanda in the present tense, indicating that Ovanda was still alive. This dates the writing of the first satire to the period before 1575 (when Ovanda died). The second satire refers to a trip to Arias Montano’s country villa at Aracena. As Montano did not return to Seville until 1577, the second satire, which makes reference to the Polyglot Bible controversy, could not have been written before that date.

⁷⁹ “¿Y qué dirías si además llegase tu amigo, el piadoso morador de la Peña santa, con las sienas cubiertas de laurel merecido, tañendo los hilos canoros a cuyo ritmo canta el Jordán removiendo sus aguas, y ondula sus cumbres el Hermón, cubierto de escarcha, mientras las Ninfas de Nazaret aplaudan a los coros por las riberas[?]” ll 229-33.

knowledge of astrology and botany, “y muchas cosas más, contenidas en libros divinos pero ignoradas por todos”; and Parma will lecture to them on the mysteries of the sacred word, “lo que el traductor del caldeo ha escrito correctamente y en concordancia con nuestras Musas.” Here, Pacheco makes a discrete reference to Andreas Masius’s controversial Chaldean Old-Testament, which formed part of Arias Montano’s Polyglot Bible. However, while Pacheco voices his support for Masius’s text, labelled rabbinical by a papal council, he is careful to point out that his own interest in Hebrew and Aramaic scriptures is that of an orthodox Catholic, who wishes only to unmask “el embajador circunciso, refutándolo con su lengua propia, y de todo lo insolito y lo grandioso que los Padres antiguas dijeron para conformer nuestras conductas y afianzar nuestros dogmas.”⁸⁰

But Pacheco’s orthodox apology rings false. The abiding image of the Aracena community is that of a secret brotherhood that has rejected the mores of its society—the violence and avarice of the nobility, the cupidity and vacuity of the church, and the ignorance and envy of the *vulgo*—for a clandestine world in which science and scripture can be probed without fear of rebuke. It is this description of an intellectual retreat, which Pacheco himself had obviously visited, that transforms his “sermons on the restoration of liberty” from a somewhat formulaic, albeit impassioned, humanist trope into a very personal appeal of a professional man (he clearly sees himself as a *letrado* rather than a cleric) for religious and social change.

Pacheco’s sermons are above all the works of a middle-class professional frustrated by the restraints his society has placed on his social, religious, and

⁸⁰ Ibid. ll. 325-28.

intellectual mobility. However, despite his moralizing, Pacheco was himself a highly ambitious man, who used the church to gain wealth and social prestige, and not always through legitimate means. In 1595, a commission created to investigate the finances of the *Hospital del Cardinal*, a wealthy religious foundation directed by Pacheco, reported that the canon had abused his power, ignoring the health of the hospital's inmates, taking hospital food for his own table, giving employment to members of his family (although prohibited by the foundation's charter), and paying them excessive salaries. In January, 1596, Pacheco was officially relieved of his position and ordered to pay back all the money that he and his family members had expropriated from the hospital's funds over the previous five years.⁸¹

Of course, there was nothing unusual in taking advantage of church wealth; Rodrigo de Castro, the Archbishop of Seville in the period we are referring to, spent his career abusing the rules to enrich his own household and provide his extensive family with lucrative ecclesiastical positions. One suspects, however, that Pacheco's real crime was not nepotism, or even avarice, but hubris. It is clear from his sermons that Pacheco was a man of forthright opinions, and this undoubtedly made him few friends among the religious community of Seville. Indeed, it is apparent that the official investigation into Pacheco's conduct was instigated by the prior of Seville's Hieronymite monastery, who was verbally abused by Pacheco while in the process of making a periodic visitation of the hospital. Pacheco had stated on that occasion that his shoe had more idea than the prior how to run a religious foundation. It would seem

⁸¹ For the Pacheco investigation see Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, leg. 89, no. 32, Fol. 91 to 95.

then that Pacheco's downfall was in large part the result of his own arrogance; he had forgotten an important humanist dictum: be discreet.

Pablo de Céspedes (1534?—1608)

When Pablo de Céspedes appears in scholarly works on Golden-Age Spain, it is usually in his capacity as baroque artist or baroque art theorist. However, a recent discovery in the Granada Cathedral archive of Céspedes' letters and papers, reveals that the humanist was a keen Hebraist, who was eager to demonstrate Spain's Jewish cultural origins. In his study based on the Granada documents, Jesus Rubio Lapaz argues that Céspedes, like his friend Arias Montano, linked Spain to the ancient Hebrews as a Counter-Reformation propagandist who wished to strengthen Philip II's image as a great Catholic prince. However, this view is not borne out by Céspedes' biography or his works, neither of which suggest that the Cordoban humanist was a partisan of Philip II's imperialist vision or his Catholic ideology. In fact, it is clear that Céspedes' religious views, like those of his friend Arias Montano, were often at odds with his monarch's Tridentine orthodoxy. As a young man Céspedes was forced into exile precisely for his outspoken defense of Archbishop Carranza, the Spanish prelate whom Philip II persecuted as a Protestant heretic. On returning to the peninsula, in 1577, to occupy a position (*racionero*) within the Cordoba cathedral, Céspedes continued to confront orthodox practice, never saying mass, and insisting on passing through the cathedral when religious ceremonies were in progress—actions

for which he was reprimanded on more than one occasion.⁸² On being asked who were the three people from his own time that he most revered, Céspedes replied, Elizabeth I, the Turkish sultan, and Ignacio de Loyola, the representatives of three different faiths (curiously Loyola, attacked by many for his heterodoxy, and not Philip II, was chosen to represent Catholicism).⁸³ The story may be apocryphal; nevertheless, it is certainly in keeping with the character and tone of the Granada documents, which introduce us to a man, who was determined to create the impression that sixteenth century Spain was the product of a rich and diverse cultural mix, in which the Jews were prominent participants.⁸⁴

⁸² Rubio Lapaz, op. cit. p. 38

⁸³ “Solía hablar con todo este respecto del Gran Turco y de la Reina de Inglaterra: “El Señor Gran Turco, la Señora Reina.” Comió una vez en el colegio de la Compañía, día del beato P. Ignacio, y sobremesa, estando con todos los padres, dijo muy mesurado: Tres personajes valerosísimos ha llevado este siglo: Barbarroja, el P. Ignacio y la Señora Reina de Inglaterra.” Ibid. p. 41.

⁸⁴ Once again the burden of proof for Céspedes’ converso background falls upon his works. What little we do know about the humanist’s antecedents is contained in a short, cautious *limpieza de sangre* examination to which Céspedes was subjected in 1577 in order to occupy the position of *racionero* in the Cordoba cathedral. Like the majority of *limpieza de sangre* examinations for church office, this was a carefully orchestrated charade, paid for by the candidate and undertaken by his own nominees, in this case two members of his own family, Pedro Martinez de Arroyo and Alonso de Céspedes (clerigo presbitero). In these investigations, the church was interested in two issues only: the candidate’s legitimacy and his *limpieza de sangre*. Céspedes had stated that his parents were Alonso de Céspedes and Aulalia del Arroyo, his paternal grandparents Alonso de Céspedes and Francisca de Mora, and his maternal grandparents Cebrian Arroyo and Pascuala Martin. The humanist’s delegates took dispositions in Alcolea and Ocaña, the native towns of the mother’s and father’s family, to corroborate this information. In Alcolea six witnesses were brought forth, all of whom stated that the information presented by Céspedes was correct and that his mother’s line was free of Jewish taint. One of the witnesses, Licenciado Andres de Muñoz, a priest, added that Céspedes uncle, Pedro Martinez de Arroyo (the investigator?) was a *familiar* of the Toldedo Inquisition tribunal, and that the witness knew this for a fact because he had been called upon to give evidence in that *limpieza de sangre* investigation also. In Ocaña, Alonso de Céspedes collected several more depositions testifying to the Old-Christian roots of Céspedes’ paternal grandparents. One of the witnesses stated that Céspedes’ grandfather was a native of the village of Noblejas and his grandmother a native of Los Barrios. Other than this, no details were provided on the humanist’s family background. This, of course, was not unusual; the object of the majority of *limpieza de sangre* investigations was to conceal information, not reveal it. It is, however, significant that in the fifteenth century Ocaña had one of the largest aljamas in Castille (see Antonio Dominguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos...* p. 26), and that many of the city’s Jews had remained in the city after converting to Christianity. In a census of Ocaña’s New Christian population, taken by the Inquisition in 1537, in which 92 *vecinos* (heads of family) are listed, both the surnames

In document XIII of the Granada collection, Céspedes argues that the Cordoban region was first settled by Noah's grandson Túbal and that an etymological analysis of the names of a number of the region's settlements, including Cordoba, reveals their Hebrew origins. According to Céspedes, Córdoba itself was derived from a Hebrew phrase meaning fortified plain in which virtue, diligence and industry were cultivated. This city, established on a bedrock of humanist principals linked to a Judaic culture, was, Céspedes informs his readers, the home to many enlightened men, first during the Roman occupation (Céspedes notes that Seneca was a Cordoban native) and later during the Moslem caliphates. In the latter period, Céspedes writes, the city's schools produced "hombres eccelentisimos en filosofia y medicina tanto, que de lexos tierras venían aun los mismos reyes de otras provincias a curarse de sus enfermedades incurables, como el rei don Sancho que llamaron el Gordo, donde por los médicos della fue restituido a su primera sanidad."⁸⁵ Céspedes also notes that in the period after reconquest Cordoba continued to produce important scholars, presenting as an example the converso letrado and poet Juan de Mena, who was "estimado y tenido príncipe de los poetas españoles." Finally, the humanist pays tribute to the noble

Céspedes and Mora (a popular converso surname in the region) appear: Francisco de Céspedes, presbitero, Diego de Mora, boticario and Juan de Mora (AHN, Inq., leg. 120 exp. 39). There is no evidence that these conversos were related to the humanist's grandparents, who had left the town some years before the census was taken; however, the fact that Francisco Céspedes is listed as "presbitero", a popular profession in Pablo de Céspedes family, is suggestive. More suggestive still is the revelation that Céspedes' uncle, Dr. Pedro de Céspedes, rector of Alcalá de Henares university, was one of a small group of Toledo clerics who opposed Archbishop Salucio's infamous *limpieza de sangre* statute of 1548 (Amador de Los Rios, pp. 818-819). While it is possible that the rector was an Old Christian acting out of a sense of solidarity with his New-Christian colleagues Diego de Castilla and Juan de Vergara, it is more likely, I think, that his opposition to the statute was that of a New Christian with a professional career at stake.

⁸⁵ Although Céspedes does not state as much, the man who treated Sancho for obesity was Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the famous Jewish physician and advisor to the Caliph of Cordoba, Abd-ar-Rahman III.

Fernández de Córdoba family, and their efforts to rid the city and Spain of “tiranía Barbara” and “maldita superstición” in the form of the Moors.

While his essay on Cordoba presents Céspedes as a skilled Hebraist, there is nothing here that indicates that he was placing his etymological skills at the service of a Counter-Reformation ideology. Céspedes study is a celebration not of nationalist or religious sectarianism, but of cultural pluralism. For Céspedes, Córdoba’s greatness is based not on its Catholic character but on virtue, diligence and industry, characteristics found in four different cultural settings: Hebrew, Roman, Muslim, and Catholic. And he contrasts these humanist traits with the base vices of tyranny and superstition, which he is careful to associate with a Muslim society expelled from Spain in 1492, although the implication is that moral vices, like moral virtues are not confined to one culture. It is noteworthy, I think, that the Fernandez de Cordoba family (the Marqueses de Priego) whom Céspedes praises for liberating Spain of Moorish tyranny, also liberated Cordoba, in 1504, of its tyrannical Inquisitor Diego Rodríguez de Lucero. As Céspedes was well aware, this same noble family was closely associated with Spain’s evangelical reform movement, first as supporters of Juan de Avila, and later as patrons of the *colegio de Santa Catalina*, the converso-dominated Jesuit college established in Cordoba in 1559 and to which he himself was closely attached. The unwritten message, I would suggest, is that the mission to liberate Spain of tyranny and superstition, in which the Priego family formed a part, had not ended in 1492, but was an ongoing one.

In document XV of the Granada collection, Céspedes returns to Cordoba's Hebrew roots, this time arguing that the site occupied by the city's cathedral was not only that of the great mosque—a building he praises for its fine workmanship—but also of Roman and Hebrew temples. The opinion that a Roman temple, dedicated to the God Janus, had once stood on the Cathedral site had already been mooted by Ambrosio Morales among others; the view that a Hebrew temple had preceded the Roman structure was, however, original to Céspedes. The Hebrew temple, he argues, in a long quasi-scientific discourse, was built by the heirs of Noah's nephew Tubal and named after the Hebrew patriarch himself. Over time, however, the Hebrew religion had been abandoned for pagan practice and the temple's name corrupted to that of Janus, a god modelled on Noah who, according to Céspedes, was also regarded as bicipital, in view of the fact that he contemplated both a pre-diluvian and post-diluvian world. Céspedes' intention was obviously to demonstrate that a Hebrew culture was in place prior to the Roman presence in Spain and that this culture had influenced classical society. However, to back up his claim that Janus was a pagan version of Noah, the Cordoban humanist was forced to cite the Italian humanist Giovanni Nanni, whose work *Antiquitatum variorum volumina XVII cum comentariis* had already been discredited by a number of humanists, including Luis Vives, for its fabrication of antique sources.

Céspedes' interest in establishing a pre-Roman civilized Spain, also led him, in the same essay, to present an Iberian society intimately linked to Carthage. The ruins of the city of Sagunta, the humanist claims, demonstrate that it was not only of

Carthaginian origin, but almost as splendid as Carthage itself, an ancient metropolis that rivalled Rome in grandeur. Carthage was not only a great city and empire, however, it was also, as Céspedes was quite aware, a rival to Roman culture and a possible conduit for the Hebrew language and customs, the Carthaginians themselves being of Semitic (Phoenecian) origin.

In his *Historia de Toledo*, written several years after Céspedes essays on a Hebrew Cordoba, the Jesuit Román de Higuera stated that both Jews and early Jewish converts to Christianity had entered Spain through Carthage, a Pheonician city with close ties to ancient Israel. According to Higuera there were three major waves of Jewish immigration; first during the time of Kings David and Solomon, when they were present as both traders and court ambassadors; next, during the Babylonia captivity, when they fled to Spain, establishing important communities in Sagunta, Numancia and Toledo; and finally, in the period after Christ's death, when 500 of the Messiah's original 1500 followers moved to Spain, where they entered the established Jewish communities, converting many of the peninsula's Jews to the new religion. Roman Higuera based his account of Jewish colonization on a first-century chronicle of a Catalan bishop, Flavio Dextro and of a twelfth-century chronicle by a Toledan prelate, which he had fortuitously discovered in the church of Santa Justo in Toledo. Both works were forgeries, manufactured by Higuera himself in a bid to establish a Jewish presence on the peninsula before the death of Christ, as well as to present these Jews as Spain's first Christian converts.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ There was nothing new in Higuera's claims. In the fifteenth century, at the time of the anti-Jewish riots in Toledo, a letter was produced, purportedly written by members of a first century Toledan Jewish

Los libros plumbeos del Sacro-monte, discovered between 1593 and 1598 in Granada, represent yet another attempt by Cespedes' New-Christian contemporaries, this time Moriscos, to establish an important role for themselves in the development of early Christianity. These thin lead tablets covered in Arabic script, were purportedly the work of Saint James the Apostle's Arab disciple Saint Tesifón, named Aben 'Atar before his conversion to Christianity. Saint Tesifon, as he reveals in one of the tablets, was born blind and his brother Ebnelradi, later Saint Cecilio, born deaf. Hearing of Jesus' miracles, Tesifon's father brought the boys from Hus to Jerusalem where, once cured by the Messiah, they converted to Christianity. Later, entrusted to Jesus's disciple James, the neophytes accompanied the future saint on his famous mission to Spain, where, according to Tesifon, it was prophesied, they would be martyred. The message, of course, was clear: Muslims (like the Jews in Roman Higuera's narrative) formed an important part of Spain's early Christian community.⁸⁷

The two Morisco translators entrusted with deciphering the Granada tablets, Alonso de Castillo and Miguel de Luna, were also almost certainly their true authors. Indeed, Luna had already been responsible for a false chronicle, the *Historia verdadera del rey don Rodrigo*, published several years before the Granada find. Not everyone was fooled by the subterfuge. However, both Roman de Higuera and Pablo

community, and later translated on Alfonso X's orders from Aramaic to Castilian, opposing their coreligionists crucifixion of Jesus. BNM, MS 838, fo. 3: "Carta que fiz traducir de caldeo en latin e romance el noble rey don Alfonso que la vila de Toledo conquiro e yaze en el armario del ayuntamiento de Toledo." The Refundición de la crónica de 1344, in Menéndez Pidal's opinion written by a converso in the middle of the fifteenth century, also established the Jews in Spain prior to the crucifixion. See Chapter Two of the present study.

⁸⁷ Darío Cabanelas Rodríguez, *El morisco granadino Alonso del Castillo*, Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, Granada, 1991, pp. 261-289. For an account of Spain's false chronicles, see Manuel Barrios Aguilera, *Los falsos cronicones contra la historia*, Granada, 2004.

de Cespedes (along with the converso Bishop of Granada, Niño de Guevara) were fervent supporters. Cespedes, who was, it appears, a friend of Luna's, wrote in his essay on the Jewish origins of Cordoba that the Granada humanist was "hombre insigne, assi en su profesión de filosphia i medicina, como por la gran noticia desta lengua como se ha visto en las traducciones que a hecho de ciertos historia de arabigo en español..." Of course, unlike Roman Higuera or Miguel de Luna, Pablo de Céspedes did not fabricate documents to create the impression of a polyvalent early Spanish Christianity; yet, it is obvious that his strong interest in this proposition led him into a credulous acceptance of works by authors who were far less scrupulous propagandists.⁸⁸

Fernando de Herrera (1534-1598)

Despite Fernando de Herrera's fame as one of Spain's foremost Golden-Age poets, virtually nothing is known about his background. Francisco Pacheco, who was undoubtedly in a position to provide us with details on the poet's family, is characteristically vague. Herrera, he tells us tersely, "fue de honradas padres, dotato de gran virtud"; in other words, in humanist terms at least, Herrera was of impeccable lineage. However, it is clear that not everyone shared Pacheco's view of Herrera's

⁸⁸ Pablo de Céspedes' papers and letters were entrusted to his friend Bernardo José de Aldrete after his death. Aldrete himself was a fervent opponent of the claim that the Jews had entered Spain before Christ, as he makes evident in his *Del Origen y principio de la lengua castellana*. One is thus tempted to speculate that Céspedes wrote more on this subject but that it was edited out of his papers by Aldrete. For an account of Aldrete's attack on Spain's false chronicles, see Bernardo José de Aldrete, *Del Origen y Principio de la lengua Castellana o romance que oi se usa en España*, Edición de Estudios de Lidio Nieto Jiménez, CSIC Madrid, 1972 t. II, pp. 351-366.

noble character. Pacheco writes, “La profesion de sus estudios se componia de muchas partes, aunque muchas vezes se indignó contra el vulgo porque le llamara el Poeta, no ignorando la que para serlo perfectamente se requieren, pero sabía la significación vulgar deste apellido.” Although Pacheco does not say so expressly, *poeta* was in the popular consciousness synonymous with Jew, the Jews and conversos having a reputation for versifying (witness the *Canioneros*, for example). This Jewish connotation is clearly visible in Licenciado Francisco Pacheco’s *La satira apologética*, in which Herrera and another poet call each other “judios hideputas”; to which Pacheco adds, “Ni mienten los poetas ni sus cantos.”

While we have no conclusive evidence that Fernando de Herrera was from a converso background, his character—aloof, melancholic, reclusive, disdainful of the *vulgo*—conforms to a stereotype that both Americo Castro and Marcel Bataillon have discerned in Spain’s converso illuminists and mystics. Herrera’s resistance to preferment in the Church—he occupied throughout his life a minor clerical position, which did not require him to say mass—also suggests a retiring man who had little interest in the organized religious life of his city, or little interest in undergoing the necessary *limpieza* examination for such a position. Introspective, isolated (save for a small group of friends among whom were Juan de Malara, Pablo de Cespedes and Agustin Salucio, author of the famous attack on the *limpieza de sangre* statutes), Herrera took refuge in his poetry, through which he hoped to find spiritual fulfilment and social standing. This was, in Herrera’s view, an heroic and noble mission, one he equated, in true humanist fashion, to that of Spain’s military heroes.

In his poem on the battle of Lepanto, Herrera underlines the noble character of Spain's military forces, inspired to victory by virtuous intentions, and the poet draws a close parallel between these latterday religious warriors and the ancient Jews, battling their foes, aided by the hand of God.⁸⁹ This allusion to the Old Testament has been interpreted by the Herrera scholar Cristobal Cuevas as an example of Herrera's Counter-Reformation orthodoxy. Cuevas writes: "Nuestro poeta se siente la voz cantora de la España de su tiempo, a la que cree nuevo Israel, pueblo que representa la causa de Dios... Por eso recurre, a mi entender, a textos bíblicos [the Old Testament] para cantar a Lepanto o Alcázarquivir... [L]a vision contrarreformista de la España de Felipe II se hace en Herrera poesía." However, the Counter-Reformation vision is by no means as clear as Cuevas states. True, Herrera links the Spain of Philip II with a God-guided Israel; however, his subject is not Catholicism against Protestantism, but a united Christendom against an expansionist Ottoman Empire, and his theme is the importance of virtuous actions in public life. According to Herrera the Christian forces triumph at Lepanto because they are united and virtuous; they fail at Alcázarquivir because they act with arrogance and vanity; and he cites Israel as a nation that defeats its enemies only when it is virtuous and united. The views are essentially those of a moralist who believes that society's spiritual and social salvation is dependent not solely upon its choice of religion but upon its own ethical conduct. In other words, Herrera is writing as a Christian humanist not as a Counter-Reformation orthodox propagandist; in associating ancient Israel's religious battles with those of sixteenth-

⁸⁹ "Canción en alabanza de la divina majestad por la victoria del señor don Juan," in Fernando de Herrera, *Poesía castellana original completa*, ed. Cristóbal Cuevas, Catedra, Madrid, 1997, pp. 257-264.

century Christendom, Herrera is incorporating the Jewish culture into a humanist vision, as his friend Arias Montano had done in his choice of iconography for the Escorial library.

Herrera's poems, the painter Francisco Pacheco tells us, were the fruit of his youth, implying that the humanist abandoned poetry entirely when, in middle life, he began to dedicate himself to historical prose, a liberal art which did not carry poetry's taint. Herrera's most important historical work, his *Historia general del mundo hasta la edad del emperador Carlos Quinto*, completed in 1590, went missing soon after the humanist's death in 1598. Herrera did, however, leave us with two published historical narratives, the *Relación de la guerra de Cipre y suceso de la batalla de Lepanto* and a biographical study of Thomas More, *Tomas Moro*. In both works Herrera champions the virtuous life while attacking rulers for their lack of ethical standards.

In his *Relacion de la guerra de Cipre*, (of which the previously cited poem forms an epilogue) Herrera celebrates the selfless and virtuous conduct of Philip II and his half-brother Don Juan of Austria, who led the Spanish forces to victory at Lepanto. In contrast to these Spanish paragons of probity, the Turkish sultan is presented as a man occasionally honourable but in general unethical and cruel, not only to subject nations, but also to members of his own faith and race. Unethical conduct is also, on occasion, levelled against Spain's ally Venice who, Herrera tells us, lost Cyprus to the Turks because their harsh rule alienated their Cypriot subjects. Of course, cruelty to members of one's own nation and oppressive rule abroad could also have been

levelled against Philip II himself, as Herrera was well aware. Indeed, it is obvious that the humanist's criticisms of the Turks and Venetians are also attacks on Spanish misrule at home and in the Netherlands, where the Duke of Alba's strong-armed tactics were alienating Spain's Dutch subjects.

Despite its chauvinistic veneer, the *Relacion* is far from being a Spanish nationalist panegyric. It is, in fact, a call for a united Europe guided by a strict moral conscience. Christian nations, Herrera opines, must cauterize their own wounds before setting forth to meet the Turkish menace:

Verdaderamente quien considerára en aquella sazón el estado lloroso de la cristianidad, escondida en los postreros términos de Europa, y desnuda de aquella grandeza y resplendor antiguo, con que levantó la cabeza gloriosa entre todas las religiones, no hallára quien pudiera poner freno al libre y ambicioso deseo de Selin [the Turkish leader], pues de una parte las herejías y de otra las discordias intestinas la tenían casi toda opresa.⁹⁰

This view echoes that put forward by both Erasmus in his *Querela pacis* and by Herrera's hero Thomas More in his *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*. More writes:

Howbeit, if princes of Christendom everywhere about would, where as need was, have set to their hands in time the Turk had never taken any one place of all those places. But partly dissension fallen among ourselves, partly that no man careth what harm other folk feel, but each part suffreth other to shift for itself; the Turk is in few years wonderfully increased, and Christendom on the side very decayed. And all this worketh our wickedness, with which God is not content.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Fernando de Herrera, *Relacion de la guerra de Cipre y suceso de la batalla naval de Lepanto*, in C.O.D.O.I.N. XXI, 1852, p. 251.

⁹¹ Thomas More, *Selections from his English Works*, ed. P. S. and H. M. Allen, Oxford, 1924, p. 118.

Like More, Herrera believes that politically short-sighted and ethically lax Christian princes are largely responsible for Europe's precarious position vis a vis the Turks. Nevertheless, the Spanish humanist is careful to absent his own monarch from his general condemnation. Obviously, this is not because Herrera was blind to Philip II's character flaws, but because he knew it was both dangerous and counter-productive to criticize the Spanish king, especially in a moment of national triumph. It was much better to use the battle of Lepanto as an excuse to write a "mirror for princes", in which a flawless Philip II is held up as an exemplum of correct Christian behaviour. However, it should be noted, that Herrera's model prince is not a paragon of Catholic piety, but of humanist or, more precisely, stoical virtue. "What is striking about Herrera's relación," writes Mary Gaylord, "is the extent to which it concentrates on the human sphere. Lepanto manifests God's design for man on earth, but in an immediate sense, man affects the course of history, and precisely through his mastery of the inner self. The inner man becomes the true protagonist of history; moral perfection, the lever by which Destiny is manipulated."

In *Tomas Moro*, written some twenty years after the *Relacion de la guerra de Cipre*, Herrera returns to his theme of virtuous individuals against tyrannical rule. However, now the oppressor is not a foreign force, but one's own prince. Herrera's More, a virtuous and dedicated counsellor, is persecuted by a capricious and cruel king who forces his subjects to subordinate their religious (and moral) precepts to his own dynastic interests. Unlike Henry's other counsellors, who abandon their principles out of fear, or ambition for political preferment, More remains firm in his Christian

convictions. He is, as Mary Gaylord writes, “the perfect Christian gentleman”, although perhaps “perfect Christian-humanist gentleman” would be a more appropriate description; that is to say More is a man made noble through virtue, ability and self sacrifice. Like Herrera, “de linaje más onrado que noble,”⁹² More’s success at court is the result of hard work and sound judgement; like those “new men” of classical Greece and Rome, cited by Malara in his adages, the English chancellor gives “verdadera nobleza a su familia” through his labours.

While Herrera is careful not to demonstrate too close a familiarity with More’s work, it is obvious that his study of the English humanist, which focuses almost exclusively on his religious confrontation with Henry VIII, is influenced by the first book of *Utopia*,⁹³ in which More’s hero, Raphael Hythlodæus, recently returned from the island of Utopia, is urged by his listeners to impart the knowledge he has gained to the rulers of Europe. Hythlodæus refuses to do so, stating that the European monarchs were so “saturated and infected with wrong ideas” that it would be impossible to reform them. Indeed, it was likely that the counsellor who proposed beneficial measures would soon find himself “banished or treated with ridicule.” It is Hythlodæus’s opinion that Kings do not take kindly to honest and forthright men, but prefer ciphers, who flatter them and support their capricious and nefarious actions. A wise counsellor could do no good at court because he would be forced to work with

⁹² Fernando de Herrera, *Tomas Moro*, ed. Francisco López Estrada, *Archivo Hispalense*, XII, 1950, p.35.

⁹³ As López Estrada has pointed out in his edition of *Tomas Moro*, Herrera is clearly familiar with a body of early sixteenth-century literature which theorized on the nature of the perfect prince and perfect counsellor. See *Tomas Moro*, pp. 21-22.

these hypocrites who would “easily corrupt even the best of men before being reformed themselves.”⁹⁴

Herrera’s More is an example of the wise and virtuous counsellor described by Hythlodæus: a man of sound principles who falls victim to a tyrannical monarch and a court full of timid and self-serving advisors.⁹⁵ While Herrera, for the most part, limits this attack to the royal house of Tudor, he does on occasion broaden his base to present a blanket condemnation of Europe’s governing bodies. Herrera writes:

Pero lo que en esta sazón se me ofrece a la consideración, como una cosa maravillosa i de estimación grandísima, es la buena suerte i particular merced, que haze Dios al reino, que es gobernado de príncipe, que procura más ser, que parecer bueno, i cuán agradecidos deven estar los onbres, en cuya edad reluze con la Majestad Real la virtud i ecelencia de costumbres.⁹⁶

As Herrera does not present Philip II as an example of a prince who is genuinely a good ruler, we must assume that the Spanish monarch was included in his general indictment; likewise, it is evident that Herrera’s vituperative attack on royal counsellors is aimed at all European courts without exception:

Esforçaron la opinion del Rei, los ministros i consejeros, i los aduladores, pestilencia perpetua de las casas reales. Estos, como pensavan crecer i valer por este camino, olvidando el respeto i el temor, devido a los onbres i a Dios, le aconsejaron, que pusiese su intento en ejecución, i con razones coloradas i compuestas a su gusto, lo incitaron de tal suerte, que hizieron despeñar al que corria sin freno en seguimiento de su voluntad.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Thomas More, Utopia, in *The Complete Works of Thomas More*, vol. 4, ed. Edward Surtz, S.J. and H.J.Hexter, New Haven, Conn., 1965, p. 103.

⁹⁵ Mary Gaylord notes that Herrera’s portrait of More, the perfect magistrate, also bears a close resemblance to Erasmus’s instructions about the selection of public officials in the *Institutio principis Christiani*. Mary Gaylord Randel, p. 139.

⁹⁶ Herrera, *Tomas Moro*, op. cit. p. 40.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 39-40.

Herrera, it would seem, was as dismayed as Raphael Hythlodæus by the state of royal rule and equally pessimistic about its prospects for reform in his own time. In *Tomas Moro*, the humanist continually contrasts “la miseria de nuestra edad” with a bygone age “cuando florecía más la caridad en los coraçones de los onbres.” Sir Thomas More is a remnant of this halcyon period, a member of a small humanist elite who believed, like Plato, that princes, guided by erudite and virtuous men, could create a better world. Indeed, More’s friend Erasmus had dedicated his *Institutio principis Christiani* to Charles V, in the hope that the young Emperor would inaugurate a new age of European harmony. Herrera, clearly shared this mission, as is evident from his *Relacion de la guerra de Cipre*, in which a virtuous Philip II serves as a model of princely comportment. However, twenty years after writing his *Relacion*, Herrera is much less sanguine about his monarch’s capacity for just conduct, as is apparent in the concluding lines of *Tomas Moro*, in which Herrera tells us that he has written the work not in the belief that it will influence European rulers, but merely to demonstrate “que puede haber y se hallan varones grandes y dignos de toda alabanza en el imperio de malos principes.”⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 52. Clearly Herrera’s reflection is based upon that of the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus, who wrote, “Let all those, whose habit is to admire acts of civil disobedience, realized that great men can exist under bad emperors, and that compliance and an unassuming demeanor, if backed by energy and hard work, can attain a pitch of glory...” See Andrew Lintott, “Roman Historians,” in John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, Oswyn Murray eds., *The Roman World*, OUP, Oxford, 1991, p. 281. Herrera is, however, less sanguine than Tacitus on the ability of good men to produce anything worthwhile under bad leaders. Herrera’s study was written at a time when humanists were once again theorizing on the necessary moral characteristics of a Christian prince. This interest was particularly evident among the Jesuits; witness, Pedro Ribadeneyra, *Religion and the virtues of the Christian Prince against Machiavelli*, Francisco Suárez, *A Treatise on the Laws and God the Lawgiver*; and Juan de Mariana, *The King and the Education of the King*, in which the author states it is permissible to oppose and execute a tyrannical prince. See Skinner, op. cit. vol II. pp. 172-3 and p. 346.

CHAPTER SIX

DIEGO VELÁZQUEZ'S SECRET HISTORY

Given the fact that the great Renaissance and Baroque painters were very often men of intellectual curiosity who moved in humanist circles, it would seem likely that their art would demonstrate, on occasion, the same non-conformist sentiments that we have come to associate with the works of their humanist literary colleagues. According to David Davies this is the case of El Greco, who was closely attached to a predominantly converso coterie of humanist clerics in Toledo, and whose work reflected the Erasmian and mystical ideals of this group. While El Greco did not actually reject Tridentine orthodox artistic themes, he presented them in such a way to subordinate external demonstrations of faith to a private mystical religious experience.¹

It is my view that Diego Velázquez's situation in Seville was similar to that of El Greco in Toledo. Velázquez was also, I believe, closely connected to a group of non-conformist humanists, again predominantly converso. Like El Greco, Velázquez, who I will argue, was himself from a New-Christian background, feigned compliance

¹ David Davies, "The Ascent of the Mind to God: El Greco's Religious Imagery and Spiritual Reform in Spain" in *El Greco: Identity and Transformation*, Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid, 1999.

with the religious dictates of Trent, while introducing a dissident message into his art.

Velázquez's Family Background

As Antonio Palomino tells the story, it was at the Escorial during Easter week 1658 that Philip IV offered Diego Velázquez a noble title, inviting him to choose the military order he would most like to enter.² Velázquez, who entertained few doubts as to the nobility of his vocation, chose the highly prestigious Order of Santiago.

Before the painter could claim his knighthood, however, he had first to demonstrate that his was a noble background, unblemished by Jewish or Moorish blood, unsullied by artisanal or mercantile endeavours, and free from Inquisitorial prosecution. On July 15, 1658, Velázquez presented his genealogy to the Council of the Orders. His father, he informed the Council, was Juan Rodríguez de Silva, his mother Geronima de Velázquez. Both parents were natives of Seville, as were his maternal grandparents, Juan Velázquez and Catalina de Zayas. The painter's paternal

² Antonio Palomino, *Vidas*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1986, pp. 154-197. *Vidas*, whose original title was "El Parnaso Español Pintoresco Laureado" (and formed part of Palomino's larger work, *Museo Pintorico*, published in 1726) consists of 226 short biographies of Spanish artists and "aquellos extranjeros ilustres que han concurrido en estas provincias". Palomino did not know Velázquez personally; he was, however, a friend of the painter's disciple Juan de Alfaro, who provided information for his study. Palomino also relied upon Francisco Pacheco's *Arte de la pintura* (1649) for background information on Velázquez--scant though this is. The major nineteenth-century work on Velázquez is Carl Justi's *Diego Velázquez und sein Jahrhundert* (1888). For his account of Velázquez's background, Justi borrows from Pacheco's and Palomino's works, as well as making use of the painter's *probanza* for the Order of Santiago. He also repeats Palomino's unfounded assertion that Velázquez's paternal and maternal family lines were noble. In 1960, to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of Velázquez's death, the Dirección General de Bellas Artes published the two volume *Varia Velázqueña*, which included much of the documentation up to that point available on the painter's life. In 1999, the year commemorating the four hundredth anniversary of Velázquez's birth, I published an article "Velázquez's Secret History" in the *Boletín del Prado*, (tomo. XVII, núm. 35), with new documentation discovered in the Seville Provincial Archive. Part of the present chapter incorporates information first presented in that article.

grandparents were, he stated, Diego Rodríguez de Silva and Maria Rodríguez, and were from the city of Porto in the north of Portugal.³

As Spain had been at war with Portugal since 1640, the Council of the Orders decided, after some deliberation, to conduct its Portuguese investigations in and around the Spanish town of Tui, which lay some one hundred kilometres north of Porto, in the province of Galicia. The other investigations were to take place in Madrid and Seville.

On November 1, 1658, the two investigators, Don Fernando de Salcedo and Don Diego Lozano Villasandino, both members of the Order of Santiago, arrived in Galicia to conduct their inquiries. During the next month the two men interviewed seventy-five people. The majority of the interviewees, as was to be expected, had no knowledge at all of Velázquez's paternal grandparents, although a number of them pointed out that the name de Silva was considered a noble one, without hint of Jewish or Moorish blood. One witness, Juan Feixo de Noboa,⁴ a second lieutenant in the Spanish infantry, stated that he had heard mention of Velázquez's grandparents while he was stationed in Porto in 1640, and that they had the reputation of being nobles whose blood was clear [of racial impurity]. Another military man, captain Diego de Vegas Hoyos,⁵ told the investigators that he had met an Alonso Rodríguez de Silva in Porto in 1627, who had claimed to be a relative of Diego Velázquez. Alonso had heard

³ For Velázquez's *probanza* for the Order of Santiago see *Varia Velazqueña*, Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Madrid, 1960, 301-377.

⁴ Witness no. 23.

⁵ Witness no. 64.

it said that Diego Rodríguez de Silva and his wife were Old Christians, and that they had not been involved in any mechanical or otherwise low or vile work. Two or three of the other witnesses also made specific reference to the Rodríguez de Silva family, albeit without offering any more concrete evidence as to its noble or Old-Christian status.

From 20 December, 1658, to 11 January, 1659, Salcedo and Lozano were in Madrid, taking depositions from another 23 witnesses, a number of whom were knights of the orders of Santiago or Calatrava. The painters Francisco Zurbarán and Alonso Cano were also interviewed.⁶ Zurbarán stated that he had known Velázquez for forty years. Although he did not know either the paternal or maternal grandparents personally, he did know that the Velázquez were people of high standing and that the Silvas came from an area of Portugal (the north-west, between the rivers Douro and Minho) where their surname was famed for its noble and illustrious character (an observation made by a number of witnesses). Alonso Cano, who had known Velázquez for forty-four years, could offer no information on the painter's background, save that he understood his parents were nobles, legitimately married, and untainted by Jewish or Moorish blood, or at least he had heard nothing to the contrary. The other Madrid depositions were of a similarly monotonous and inconclusive character: the Silva surname was a noble one; the Silva grandparents were said to be from noble and Old-Christian backgrounds, as were the Velázquez; no one in the painter's family had been engaged in an artisanal, mercantile, or

⁶ Witnesses nos. 84 and 86.

otherwise base profession, as far as anyone knew.

The Seville depositions, taken between 31 January and 16 February, 1659, were somewhat more informative as to Velázquez's noble background. Most of the witnesses stated that the acid test of a man's noble status in Seville was provided by his exemption from the meat tax; and that Velázquez's father, Juan Rodríguez de Silva, his grandfathers, Juan Velázquez and Diego Rodríguez de Silva, and his maternal great grandfather, a certain Andres de Buenrostro, all enjoyed this privilege. The investigators also produced information from the meat-tax registers, located in the city-council offices, corroborating these statements. Juan Velázquez and Andres de Buenrostro were exempted on 7 July, 1600, and 13 February, 1609, respectively, while Diego Rodríguez de Silva's and Juan Rodríguez de Silva's successful petitions (for which no dates were given) were recorded on pages 33 and 168 of the 1613-1642 register. To conclude their report, the investigators also submitted information from the church of San Pedro's records, confirming that Diego Velázquez was baptized on 6 June, 1599, and that he was the legitimate child of Juan Rodríguez de Silva and Geronima Velázquez.⁷ Curiously, no information was supplied on Velázquez's parents' marriage, despite the fact that this event was also recorded in the San Pedro church registers.⁸

Don Fernando Antonio de Salcedo and Don Diego Lozano Villaseñor submitted their report to the Council of the Orders on 26 February, 1659. Five weeks

⁷ See *Varia Velazqueña*, p. 213, doc. 2.

⁸ *Ibid*, doc.1.

later, on 2 April, 1659, the Council published its findings. The good news was that no evidence had been submitted to suggest that Diego Velázquez's family was converso; unfortunately, neither was there any firm indication that his antecedents were nobles—the exemption from the meat tax having been rejected, unsurprisingly, as proof of blue blood.⁹ Velázquez could, therefore, only enter the noble order of Santiago, the Council informed the king, with papal dispensation. On 1 October the Pope issued the necessary brief; and on Friday, 28 November, 1659, in a formal ceremony held in the *Convento de Religiosos de Corpus Cristi*, Diego Velázquez became a knight of the Order of Santiago.¹⁰

Antonio Palomino tells us that the Council of the Orders obstructed Velázquez's petition out of envy of the painter's position of privilege at Court.¹¹ This may have been so; nevertheless, Palomino's statement is misleading, intimating that the Council had victimized a man of noble lineage. While it is possible that the Council was not well disposed towards Velázquez's candidacy,¹² this does not alter

⁹ Meat tax exemption was given to nobles, churchmen, university degree holders, *familiares* of the Inquisition, and others. Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga, in his *Anales eclesiasticos de Sevilla*, (año 1515), writes, "Volver la blanca de la carne absolutamente no es prueba de hidalguía." Quoted from Carl Justi, *Velazquez y su Siglo*, Espasa Calpe, Madrid, 1953, p. 760.

¹⁰ Palomino, *Vidas*, 192.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 191.

¹² To understand better the Council's reaction to the Velázquez candidacy, one needs to examine it against the Council's ongoing dispute with the Crown. The relationship between Philip IV and the Council, and between the king's *privado*, the Count-Duke of Olivares, and the Council, was often fractious. The Council resented the Crown presenting it with dubious candidates for titles and then interfering in its decision making; the Crown objected to the Order's stringent regulations regarding a candidate's noble ancestry and *limpieza de sangre*, which too often created difficulties (although not insurmountable ones) for Crown favourites. Olivares was particularly insensed by the Council's *limpieza de sangre* regulations, and introduced a measure, the "*Patria Común*", to bypass them; the "*Patria Común*" stated that the Court was a historical unity equal to a candidate's country of origin, and

the fact that the evidence presented to it in support of the painter's noble ancestry was scant. It was also, as the Council may well have surmised, false.

In fact, the painter was lying through his teeth; so too were the two investigators and the all those witnesses who had stated that he was an *hidalgo*. Velázquez was not from a noble background; and even if exemption from the meat tax were proof of noble provenance, the Velázquez family would still fail the test, for the Juan Velázquez who appeared in the meat tax registers of 1600 was not Diego Velázquez's grandfather. The painter's grandfather was the hosier (*calcetero*) and merchant Juan Velázquez Moreno, who died of the plague in 1599.¹³ Furthermore, Velázquez's maternal grandmother was not Catalina Zayas, but Juana (or Ana) Mexia Aguilar.¹⁴ Thus, while the man who gained exemption from the meat tax in 1609, Andres de Buenrostro, may have been the legitimate father of a Catalina de Zayas, he was certainly not Diego Velázquez's great grandfather.¹⁵

could thus be a substitute for the true *patria* in investigation proceedings for the noble orders. Portuguese *conversos* in particular took advantage of the "*Patria Común*" privilege to avoid in-depth inquiries into their ancestry. It was this privilege that Velázquez was referring to in his letter to the king of 29 June, 1658 (see page 9). For a description of the Council of the Orders and its relations with Philip IV, see Elena Postigo Castellanos, *Honor y Privilegio en la Corona de Castilla: El Consejo de los Ordenes y los Caballeros de Habito en el Siglo XVII*, Junta y Castilla y León, Valladolid, 1988, especially 138-180.

¹³ In June 1602 Fernando Velázquez, the painter's uncle, submitted himself to a *limpieza de sangre probanza* (see page 21). One of the *probanza* witnesses, Juan Fernandez Roman, noted that Juan Velázquez Moreno and his wife, Ana Mexia, had died of *landres* (bubonic plague) in 1599. See Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla (APS) Oficio 13, 1602, libro 5, fols. 255-257. This *probanza* is one of twenty-four notarial documents I have discovered in the Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla which treat Velázquez's maternal family. The documents are contained in the *legajos* of the notarial offices 1, 11, 13 and 21, and span the period 1566-1602.

¹⁴ Diego Velázquez's parents' marriage certificate states that the bride's mother was Juana Mexia (and not Catalina de Zayas, as the painter claims in his *probanza*). This is confrimed by three documents that I have discovered in the Simón Pineda notarial records. See fn. 51.

¹⁵ In the catalogue *Velazquez y Sevilla*, published in conjunction with the 1999 exhibition of the same

Velázquez had lied about the paternal side of his family too. It was his paternal grandmother that was the Rodríguez de Silva; his paternal grandfather was merely a Rodríguez. Doubtless, the painter had presented his grandfather as a Silva to give the impression of an even stronger link to the noble family he claimed to be part of. These discrepancies would, naturally, have come to light had the Council of the Orders been allowed to view Velázquez's parents wedding record; that indeed, one suspects, is why the investigators never submitted it.

The two investigators had clearly ignored material that was detrimental to Velázquez's petition; they had also selected witnesses who, through friendship or, perhaps, venality, were disposed to corroborate the false genealogy. These deceptions were, of course, not unique to the Velázquez case. Antonio Domínguez Ortiz notes that such were the irregularities in the military orders' genealogical investigations that in 1654 (four years before Velázquez's petition) the Council of the Orders opened a full-scale inquiry into the situation.¹⁶ Ruth Pike's examination into the converso origins of the Sevillian dramatist Diego Jimenez Enciso presents us with a specific

name, there is an essay by Luis Méndez Rodríguez titled "La familia de Velázquez: una falsa hidalguía". In the article Méndez makes the mistake of tracing Velázquez's line through the names presented by the painter in his probanza, presenting his study as an examination of the painter's family background. In fact he has presented us merely with the genealogy of the family Velázquez adopted for purposes of gaining his noble title and not his real family. See my letter "Los abuelos de Velázquez," *Boletín del Museo del Prado*, tomo XVIII, núm. 36, 2000.

¹⁶ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y America*, Ediciones Istmo, Madrid, 1971, p. 202. The number of successful *converso* families in Seville seeking noble titles had created a situation, in the early seventeenth century, in which deception and bribery were inevitable. A particularly unsavoury product of this environment was the *linajudo*, a man who examined the family lineages of suspected *conversos* with the intention of either stymying a candidate's petition for noble title, or of extorting money in return for favourable testimony. See *ibid*; and Ruth Pike, "The Dramatist Diego Jiménez de Enciso and the *Linajudos* of Seville", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* (1993), pp. 115-119. See also Postigo Castellanos, *Honor y Privilegio*, p. 149.

example of the intrigue and corruption that often accompanied the military orders' investigations into candidates' backgrounds.¹⁷ In the 1620s Enciso, a converso with enemies in the Seville city council, had tried to gain greater social status by securing Santiago knighthoods for his two nephews. While the investigations conducted by the Santiago officials supported the Enciso version of the family ancestry, certain letters sent to the Council of the Orders indicated that the Encisos were a converso-merchant family, one of whose members, the silk merchant Juan de Jerez, appeared in the Sevillian *composición* of 1510.¹⁸ By bribing witnesses, the letters claimed, the Encisos had succeeded in disguising their true origins.

Accusations of misconduct were also made against Juan de Jáuregui's investigating committee when the Seville poet (a friend of Velázquez's mentor Francisco Pacheco) applied for entry into the Military Order of Calatrava in 1627.¹⁹ Those witnesses who had presented information on Jáuregui's *converso* background had been filtered out of the report, it was claimed, while others had been bribed to

¹⁷ Pike, "The Dramatist Diego Jiménez" op. cit.

¹⁸ In the first years of the sixteenth century, the Crown, strapped for money, gave *conversos* the opportunity to buy back property taken from their ancestors in Inquisition prosecutions. Lists were then made of the interested parties; later, these lists were used by *linajudos* to unmask New Christian candidates for noble titles, or by the Inquisition in proceedings against alleged Judaizers. See Claudio Guillén "Un Padrón de Conversos Sevillanos (1510)" *Bulletin Hispanique*, LXV (1963).

¹⁹ Ruth Pike, "Converso Lineage and Tribulations of the Sevillian Poet Juan de Jáuregui", *Romance Quarterly* XXXVIII (1991) pp. 423-29. For a longer account of Jáuregui's petition for entry into the Military Order of Calatrava, see José Jordán de Urríes y Azara, *Bibliografía y estudio crítico de Jáuregui* Est. Tipografía Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, Madrid, 1899. Jordán de Urríes concluded, despite what Ruth Pike states was "substantial information to the contrary", that Jáuregui's family, on all sides, was old Christian and of *hidalgo* origin. The biographer of Enciso, Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, writing in 1914, also stated that his subject was an Old-Christian hidalgo, again ignoring substantial evidence to the contrary (Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, "Don Diego Jiménez de Enciso y su teatro", *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 1 (1914), pp. 208-48, 385-415, 510-50). Lamentably, the tendency to expurgate the *converso* from Golden-Age letters is not confined to these two scholars, nor to their generation. See my comments in Chapter one.

testify to his Old-Christian origins. In a subsequent inquiry into the allegations, it was revealed that the poet was a member of the Sal family, a successful converso-merchant clan which had used its wealth to buy prestigious government offices, thereby dissimulating its converso background.²⁰

Had Diego Velázquez, like Juan de Jáuregui and Diego Jimenez Enciso, coached or bribed his witnesses into lying about his Old-Christian background? The Council of the Orders had stated, it is true, that Velázquez's blood was clear of blemish; however, this conclusion was based solely on the testimony of witnesses who, as we have seen, had lied about the painter's nobility. Had these people also lied to disguise the candidate's Jewish lineage?

The possibility that the Velázquez family, or at least the paternal line, were conversos has already been broached by the Spanish art historian Julián Gállego in his study, *Velázquez en Sevilla*.²¹ Velázquez's paternal grandparents must have entered Spain, Gállego determines, in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. It was during this period that Portuguese *conversos* began crossing the border, fleeing an Inquisition that was proving to be even more rigorous in its prosecution of Judaizers than its Spanish counterpart.²² What Gállego does not mention is that two of the more popular

²⁰ Despite the evidence that both Jáuregui and Enciso's two nephews were from Jewish backgrounds, all three men eventually received their noble titles. It is likely that the Count Duke of Olivares, a friend of both Jáuregui and Enciso, and himself vehemently opposed to the *limpieza de sangre* statutes (see fn.11), was instrumental in gaining the candidates their knighthoods. Philip IV personally intervened on Jáuregui's behalf. See Pike, "Converso Lineage" and "The Dramatist Diego Jiménez Enciso".

²¹ Julián Gállego, *Velázquez en Sevilla*, 2nd edition, Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1994, pp. 20-21.

²² Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La Clase Social de Los Conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna* Universidad de Granada, Granada, 1955, p.82.

surnames adopted by Portuguese conversos were Silva and Rodríguez, as a glance at the seventeenth-century Inquisition trials of suspected Judaizers will testify. Indeed, it appears that the name Silva suffered a loss of prestige in the seventeenth century due to its association with Portuguese conversos.²³

There is yet a further indication that Velázquez's Portuguese roots may have been Jewish ones. This concerns the painter's reaction to the news that the investigation into his Portuguese family was to be conducted on the stretch of Portuguese border closest to the city of Seville . On 29 June, 1658, the normally phlegmatic Velázquez wrote to the king beseeching him to have these inquiries take place not on the border but in the Spanish capital, as had previously been the policy when men of Portuguese backgrounds had petitioned for knighthoods.

Velázquez was right; in the past military-order investigations into Portuguese candidates had taken place not in Portugal but in Madrid. However, it had become clear that this practice was aiding many Portuguese conversos to gain noble titles, and for this reason had been abandoned. As the Council of Orders pointed out to the king in a letter of 5 July, 1658, the practice of conducting the Portuguese inquiries in Madrid had given rise to a number of problems (*inconvenientes*); the Council had thus changed its investigation policy, and it was not recommendable that Velázquez be made an exception to this ruling. However, given the close relationship that existed between the king and the candidate, the Council was disposed to conduct the Portuguese investigations on the northern Portuguese border closest to the city of

²³ Edward Glaser, "Referencias Antisemitas en la Literatura Peninsular de la Edad de Oro", *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispanica* VIII (1954) p. 49.

Porto, where the candidate had stated his family were from. (As Spain had been at war with Portugal since 1640, investigations could not take place inside Portuguese territory).

Velázquez had claimed his Portuguese ancestors were from Porto, I would suggest, with the intention of directing the genealogical investigation away from their true domicile. Unfortunately for the painter, the Council had ignored the bait, opting to conduct its inquiries on the Portuguese border closest to Seville. It was this decision that prompted Velázquez's anxious appeal to the king. The Council then responded by informing the candidate, subtextually, that it would now conduct the investigation in a safe place--ie not in the south, which was clearly making him uneasy, but on the border closest to Porto, where the painter had wanted the inquiries held all along ("que es donde da el pretendiente sus orígenes por la genealogía que a presentado en el Consejo").²⁴

²⁴ The Council's response to Velázquez's request that the Portuguese investigations be made at Court: "Señor.--Por decreto de 29 de junio pasado se sirbe Vuestra Magestad remitir a este Consejo el Memorial, que bino con el, de Diego de Silba Velázquez, y manda Vuestra Magestad que sobre su pretension se consulte lo que se ofreciere y pareciere. Diego de Silba Velázquez, aposentador de palacio y ayuda de camera de Vuestra Magestad, refiere que le tiene echa merced Vuestra Magestad de habito de la Orden de Santiago, y respecto de aver nacido sus abuelos paternos en el reino de Portugal, supplica a Vuestra Magestad se sirva mandar que los informantes que ubieren de acer sus pruebas en Sebilla, de adonde es natural, no pasen a la frontera a acer las que tocan en aquel reino por sus abuelos paternos, sino se agan en esta Corte lo que tocara a esta parte como se avia echo generalmente con todos los que tenían dependencia en aquel reino y quando esto no aya lugar, se agan en Sebilla, adonde vinieron y bivieron sus abuelos. Y haviendose visto en el Consejo, ha parecido representar a Vuestra Magestad que aunque antes de los capítulos generales que ultimamente se celebrarian en esta Corte se solia dispensar con los caballeros portugueses haciendo en esta Corte sus pruebas, reconociendo los inconvenientes que resultavan de esto, se cerro la puerta por una de las Constituciones de los Capítulos, y siendo tan proxima la prohibicion, si se iciese este exemplar, todos queran balerse de el y abria aprovechado poco el remedio que procuraron poner los Capítulos, pero reconociendo el Consejo que el pretendiente se alla sirbiendo tan cerca de la real persona de Vuestra Magestad, parece al Consejo proponer a Vuestra Magestad toda la gracia posible, como lo sera si Vuestra Magestad se sirbiese que se allaren mas proximos a la ciudad de Oporto, que es adonde da el pretendiente sus orígenes por la genealogía que a presentado en el Consejo...Madrid, julio 5 de 1658." See *Varia Velazqueña*, p. 302.

Velázquez's family did not, I am led to believe, issue from the north-west of Portugal, as the painter claimed, but from Portugal's eastern borderland. It was along this thin strip of rugged terrain, Caro Baroja informs us, that the vast majority of Portugal's converso population resided;²⁵ and it was from here that the majority of *emigres* issued in the late sixteenth century, bearing names like Nuñez, Castro, Silva and Rodríguez. Most of the men and women who crossed the border were involved in activities related to the textile industry (weavers, tailors, cloth and clothes merchants), time honoured practices of a Jewish community resident in the Spanish/Portuguese border area.²⁶ Once in Spain these new arrivals gravitated toward converso communities (usually in Extremadura and Andalucía), where they formed business and marriage alliances with Spanish socio-cultural counterparts, often involved in like activities. This, I would suggest, is a profile of Velázquez's paternal-family background.²⁷ As for the painter's maternal family, that is much more revealing.

While I have so far been unable to unearth new information on the Rodriguez family, my investigation into the Velázquez family has revealed some interesting

²⁵ Julio Caro Baroja, *Los Judios en la España Moderna y Contemporanea* (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1961), pp 203-206.

²⁶ Ibid, 206. See also Pilar Huerga Criado, *En la Raya de Portugal: Solidaridad y Tensiones en la Comunidad Judeoconverso* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1993), 36-37.

²⁷ In the Simón Pineda notarial register for 1597 (1597, libro 3, fol. 1054) we find a tailor (confeccionario) Diego Rodríguez entering into a business agreement with a Fernando Vallejo. Diego Rodríguez describes himself as a resident of Seville, in the San Salvador neighbourhood, and the son of Manuel Rodríguez and Leonor Díaz, residents of Mora (Moura [?], 140 kilometers north-west of Seville) in the kingdom of Portugal. He is also, he informs us, the husband of Maria de Silva, the daughter of Pedro Hernandez and Isabel de Silva, residents of Seville. Is this a description of Velázquez's paternal grandparents? Unfortunately, the Simon Pineda registers have yielded no further information ; the document thus presents us with no more than an intriguing possibility.

details on the painter's maternal grandfather, Juan Velázquez Moreno, whose business dealings are recorded in Seville's *Archivo de Protocolos*. In his notarial contracts, Juan Velázquez Moreno (c1545-1599)²⁸ refers to himself as a maker of velvet breeches (*calcetero de terciopelo*) a craft, like silk weaving (to which it was linked), or tailoring, associated with converso artisans.²⁹ Making expensive breeches was, however, only one of Velázquez Moreno's activities; he was also a merchant, a renter of property and, on occasion, a moneylender. His associates were men in the clothes trade and silversmiths; his friends were Seville notaries.³⁰ He was clearly literate, as testified by his signature, executed in bold, confident strokes, which dominates all his notarial contracts. He was, in short, an exemplum of the Seville converso merchant.³¹

While the notarial documents offer little information on Velázquez Moreno's

²⁸ The information on Velázquez Moreno family comes from research undertaken in the notarial records of the Archivo Provincial de Sevilla in 1998. I discovered twenty references to the tailor and businessman, taking his story back to the year 1566. With more time available I could no doubt have gleaned enough information to present a more substantial biography. There is some indication for example in a record dating 1573 that Velázquez Moreno was a fairly wealthy money lender who had lost a small fortune in some Indies business.

²⁹ Domínguez Ortiz, *Los Judeoconversos en España y America*, 202-203; and *La Clase Social*, 149-151. See also Caro Baroja, *Los Judios en España*, vol. 1., 353-357.

³⁰ For Jews and *conversos* in the notarial profession see Caro Baroja, *Los Judios en España*, vol. 1, 353; and Domínguez Ortiz, *La Clase Social*, 149.

³¹ Velázquez Moreno made his breeches from velvet, for the quality end of the clothes market. The velvet was very probably woven by Juan's brother, Francisco, a velvet weaver based, it appears, in the city of Granada. Unfortunately, I have discovered only one reference to Francisco in the Seville protocolos, this contained in a document dated 10 May, 1567, in which he is presented as the hapless victim of two business rivals. The incident occurred on the night of Sunday 22nd of April, 1567, in Granada, where Francisco Velázquez, "*tejedor de terciopelo*", fell into conversation with two fellow weavers, the brothers Juan and Francisco Carranza. As the brothers seemed amiable Francisco Velázquez accepted their invitation to dine with them at their home. However, once they had dined, the two men drew their swords and attacked Francisco, inflicting wounds to his body and right hand, leaving him for dead. Three weeks later, while Francisco was still recovering from his wounds, his brother Juan appeared before the Seville notary Juan Bernal de Heredia to describe the incident and to give power of attorney to Pedro Perez and his wife Angela Bermudez, residents of Granada, to represent Francisco in the Granada high court (*la audiencia*).

tailoring business, they do indicate that he sold his product both domestically and overseas. In a document dated 11 January, 1576, he reveals that he is sending a consignment of yellow velvet breeches with yellow satin attachments to Martin Jerez, a *calcetero* resident in Sanlucar de Barrameda.³² On receiving these garments, which will be transported by Don Ramon de Espina de Figueroa, inspector (*veedor*) on the outgoing fleet, Martin Jerez is empowered to sell them to whomever he wishes and at a price he deems appropriate. The document may of course be a mere ruse to avoid paying the *almojarifazgo* (a tax levied on goods shipped to and from the Indies), a deception practiced by many of the Seville merchants; the *calcetero*'s velvet breeches may not have been on their way to Sanlucar de Barrameda at all, but to Nueva Espana. Indication that Juan Velázquez Moreno was, indeed, selling his wares across the Atlantic appears in a document written eighteen months later. Here we find the *calcetero* in debt to the merchant Juan Martinez de Villar for wood he has purchased to build a house in the Omnium Santorum district of Seville.³³ This debt, for 133 reales³⁴ will be made good, Juan assures the merchant, by the end of October of that year (1577), or even sooner, if one of the two fleets arrives from the Indies before that date.

Velázquez Moreno was operating his business during Seville's boom years,

³² Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla (APS) Oficio 21, Juan Bernal de Heredia. 1576, libro 1, fol. 652. 11 January.

³³ Oficio 21. 1577, libro 2, fol. 1187. 18 September.

³⁴ Conversion rates: 1 ducados = 11 reales or 375 maravedis. 1 real = 34 maravedis. As an indication of what 133 reales meant in an everyday context, an average monthly rent for a property in Seville at the end of the sixteenth century was 20 reales.

when merchants involved in the Indies trade, even modest merchants, could reap rapid financial rewards. The Indies trade was not, however, for the faint of heart. The ever present risk of losing one's merchandise at sea and having one's profits filched by representatives in the Indies or, equally likely, in one's home port by Philip II, led Seville's merchant community to examine other, safer, business activities. The Seville property boom, fueled by the city's burgeoning population, provided a major outlet for merchant capital in the last decades of the sixteenth century. That Velázquez Moreno was involved in the property market is indicated by nine of the notarial documents. I have already cited the document of 11 January, 1577, in which he pledges to pay a debt of 133 reales for wood to build a house in the *Omnium Santorum* area of Seville. This appears to have been a guest house (*posada*) whose rooms were rented out at two ducados a month. In a document dated 4 June, 1579, he was once again in debt to a merchant, on this occasion to Matheo Alvarez de la Vega for wood to the value of 180 reales, purchased to build yet another house in the same area.³⁵ If we examine the rental documents themselves, we find that four refer to buildings being rented out in the *Omnium Santorum* neighborhood, an area, on the northern side of the Seville, where much of the city's more modest housing projects were taking place during this period.³⁶ In one of these documents, Velázquez Moreno rents a house-cum-store, next to his own residence, to the tailor Gaspar Martinez;³⁷ in another document (23 July,

³⁵ Oficio 21. 1579, libro 2, fol. 1172. 4 June.

³⁶ Ruth Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders: Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century* Cornell University, Ithica, New York, 1972, p. 9.

³⁷ Oficio 21. 1589, libro 1, fol. 206. 18, January.

1591), he rents a house and oven in a small cul-de-sac (*callejon sin salida*) to a Lorenzo Guillen.³⁸ Both rentals are for two ducados a month, an average charge for a rental property during this period.³⁹ It appears that Velázquez Moreno set up residence in the Omnium Santorum area in the late 1570s, transferring from the central, and more expensive, business district of Santa Maria.⁴⁰

Two of the documents in the collection present Velázquez Moreno as a slave owner, a normal state of affairs in late sixteenth-century Seville, where slaves formed seven percent of the population, and were owned by everyone from the nobility to artisans. In 1574, he sold his female slave, Guiomar, to the old-clothes merchant (*mercader trapero*) Alonso de Mendosa.⁴¹ Guiomar, he assures the merchant, is around twenty eight years of age and healthy; she doesn't drink, steal, or run away; she is free from deamons, bubos and mouth infections; she is not blind, and she has not committed any crime which carries the death penalty or any other penal sentence.

A document of 18 November, 1588, again presents Velázquez Moreno as a slave owner.⁴² On this occasion his slave, whose name is not given, has run away from Seville and is being held in the gaol at Lucena, a small town on the road to Granada.

³⁸ Oficio 1. 1591, libro 2, fol. 934. 23, July.

³⁹ For an examination of rental prices in Seville during the late sixteenth century see Antonio Manuel González Díaz, *Poder Urbano y Asistencia Social: El Hospital de San Hermenegildo de Sevilla (1453-1837)* Diputación de Sevilla, Sevilla, 1997, pp. 170-171.

⁴⁰ In all the early documents Velázquez Moreno describes himself as a *vecino* of the district of Santa Maria (ie the city centre). The first reference to his residency in the Omnium Santorum area appears in a document of 18 September, 1577.

⁴¹ Oficio 21. 1574, libro 1, fol. 205. 6 February.

⁴² Oficio 13. 1588, libro 4, fol.1048. 18 November.

The slave, we are told, is around thirty years old; he is small, bearded and has the letters Ju and Ve [Juan Velázquez] branded on his cheeks. Velázquez Moreno gives Miguel Rodríguez Carrero, a resident of Lucena, the necessary power to present himself to the town authorities and gain the slave's release from prison. Once Rodríguez Carrero has taken possession of the slave, he is to sell him for whatever price he can get.

Several of the documents reveal Velázquez Moreno in financial difficulties. Again this is not unusual in a business environment which functioned on promissory notes to be redeemed on the arrival of the Indies fleets. In a document of 1574 we find him lending 733 reales to the Seville notary Bartolome de Zamora for some merchant venture, the latter agreeing to repay the debt within three months.⁴³ However, two years later Zamora has still not paid up, and Velázquez Moreno has transferred his collection rights to the silversmith, Sebastian de Aranda, who states his intention to collect the debt not in coin but in raw silver to the value of the original loan.⁴⁴ In 1580 Velázquez Moreno is owed money by the Indies merchant, Don Ramon D'Estupiñan, and has again ceded his collection rights to a silversmith, Fernando de Ocaña. In a document dated 7 March, 1580, Ocaña, as Velázquez's Moreno's assignee (*cesionario*), gives power of attorney to two merchants, Lope de Vergara and Bartolome de Zamora, to pursue the lawsuit against Estupian in the *Consejo de*

⁴³ Oficio 11. 1574, libro 1, fol. 716. 17 March.

⁴⁴ Oficio 21. 1576, libro 3, fol. 1219. 18 September.

Indias.⁴⁵

On two occasions Velázquez Moreno avails himself of lawyers (*procuradores*) services. In 1574, Juan Ruiz is hired to pursue a lawsuit against one Lope de Neyra in the *real audiencia*;⁴⁶ a year later the *procurador* Cristobal Ortiz is given the blanket commission to pursue all his lawsuits, whether civil or criminal, secular or ecclesiastical, and to represent him before the necessary authorities.⁴⁷ These notarial entries and a number of others in the collection, present Velázquez Moreno as a creditor, attempting to track down errant loans. However, it is equally likely that the merchant was as often the object of litigation as he was the litigator. In a document dated 2 May, 1596, we find him in the *real audiencia* prison, where he is being held for non payment of debts.⁴⁸ As he has no property or assets, he explains, to support himself, his wife and his many children, his only salvation is an early release.⁴⁹ He

⁴⁵ Oficio 21. 1580, libro 1, fol. 1419. 7 March.

⁴⁶ Oficio 11. 1574, libro 1, fol. 645. 1 March.

⁴⁷ Oficio 21. 1575, libro 3, fol. 322. 15 September.

⁴⁸ Oficio 13. 1596 libro 3, fol. 395. 2 May.

⁴⁹ Of Velázquez Moreno's wife and children the notarial documents reveal only scant information. His wife, Juana (or Ana as she refers to herself in two document) appears in three of the documents I have discovered relating to Velázquez's family. In 1590 she received power of attorney from her husband to rent out their properties in Seville (Oficio 13. 1590, libro 5, fol. 326); in 1594 she and her husband gave power of attorney to a Pedro de Seguro to collect rent for one of their houses in Omnium Sanctorum (Oficio 13, 1594, libro 1, fol. 756); and in June 1596 she gave her consent for her daughter Geronima to marry Simon Carta de Alfaro (Oficio 13. 1596, libro 4, fol. 372). She was illiterate and thus unable to sign any of these contracts. The marriage produced three surviving children, Geronima (Diego Velázquez's mother), Ana and Fernando. Geronima must have been born around 1580; Ana and Fernando were born some ten years previously (in 1589 Ana was already married and Fernando was working as a notary). Ana, who was married to a Alonso Moran, appears in two of the documents; in one she shares joint power of attorney with her mother and brother, while in the other she inherits a sizeable income from a Barbola Isidora, the daughter of the merchant Diego de Toledo (Oficio 13, 1589, libro 2, fol. 811) Fernando Velázquez also appears in a number of his father's documents nominated as either a business representative or guarantor. A Seville notary, Fernando worked in the

understands that his several creditors have asked that he give up his rights to a house that he owns in the district of Omnium Santorum so that the rent can be used to liquidate his debts. To relieve the suffering of his wife and many children, he agrees to hand over the aforementioned property. Velázquez's application for release from prison must have been successful, for a month after the above document was penned he appeared before the notary Simón Pineda to sign his daughter Geronima's marriage agreement.

Geronima Velázquez, Diego Velázquez's mother, was probably no more than seventeen or eighteen when she made her marriage promise before Simón Pineda and pledged her dowry of two hundred ducados: one hundred in gold, one hundred in household goods.⁵⁰ The pledge was made to a Simón Carta Alfaro, son of Simon Carta (deceased) and Francisca Alfaro, of the San Miguel district of Seville. Unfortunately, the Pineda notarial records have revealed no other information on Simón Carta Alfaro or his relationship with Geronima Velázquez. It is possible that the couple severed ties soon after the document was signed, perhaps as a result of Velázquez Moreno's impecunious circumstances; it is, however, equally possible that Carta Alfaro succumbed to a sudden fatal illness, not an unusual occurrence in the sixteenth

Simon Pineda firm from 1589 until 1602, when he left for what may have been a more prestigious notarial position-- at least the *probanza* (examination) to which Fernando submitted himself on 9 June, 1602, indicates that his new job carried some importance. In the *probanza*, Fernando states that he feels it necessary to provide evidence that he is the legitimate child of Juan Velázquez and Ana Mexia, who were "Old Christians and did not stem from Moors or Jews, nor had they been recently converted to the Catholic religion..." In support of his claims, Fernando presents the testimonies of four witnesses, all of whom were notaries, three of whom were associated with Simon Pineda's office.

⁵⁰ Oficio 11. 1596, libro 4, fol. 372. 11 June. Geronima Velázquez gave birth to her last child, Francisco, in 1617. I therefore estimate that she was born no earlier than 1577.

century.⁵¹ All we know for certain is that eighteen months after the above nuptial agreement was signed, Simón Carta Alfaro had disappeared from the Velázquez family tableau, replaced by the man soon to become Diego Velázquez's father, Juan Rodríguez de Silva.

Geronima Velázquez's marriage to Juan Rodríguez de Silva took place on December 31, 1597. The ceremony was not held in the church of San Pedro, but in the family home close by, Velázquez Moreno having applied for a special licence to have the ceremony performed in a secular setting.⁵² The *calcetero* had transferred his family to San Pedro after he left prison in the Spring of 1596, which suggests that the property he signed over to his creditors from his gaol cell was his own living quarters in Omnium Santorum. It was in the San Pedro home that Diego Velázquez was born in 1599, in the same year that both his maternal grandparents died of the plague.

The Artist as Young Iconoclast

Soon after Juan Velázquez Moreno's death, Juan Rodríguez, his wife and infant son Diego moved to the district of San Lorenzo, where, in short succession, four more children were born. It was perhaps this growing family that persuaded Rodríguez

⁵¹ Plague ravaged Seville in the period 1596 to 1599, killing ten percent of the city's population. It is possible that Simón Carta Alfaro died in this epidemic, as did Juan Velázquez Moreno and his wife Juana Mexia.

⁵² The ceremony was, however, recorded in the San Pedro church registers. See *Varia Velazqueña*, p. 213, document 1. There were three witnesses to Juan and Geronima's wedding ceremony in December 1597: a music teacher, Juan de Vargas, and two notaries, Antonio de Ripa and Simón de Pineda. Pineda figures prominently in Velázquez Moreno's story; he was the merchant's preferred notary during the last twelve years of his life; he was also the employer of Velázquez Moreno's son, Fernando, and a witness to the baptism of Juan Rodríguez's and Geronima Velázquez's second child, Juan, (named after the maternal grandfather, the first child, Diego, having been named after the paternal one).

to apprentice his eldest son, at the age of eleven, to Francisco Pacheco; although, it is also likely that he had noted some artistic promise in the boy, and believed that he, Diego, might make good use of this in a city in which wealthy religious institutions and well-heeled merchants were vying for the professional painter's services. The fact that Rodríguez chose Francisco Pacheco for Diego's *maestro* also indicates that he had put some serious thought into his son's career; for while Pacheco may not have been the most talented painter in Seville, he was certainly one of the better connected ones.

The painter to whom Diego Velázquez was apprenticed in 1610 was, like himself, from a tailoring background. According to a *limpieza de sangre* examination undertaken by Pacheco between 1593 and 1595, his father and two of his four brothers were tailors. His father, Juan Pérez, had practiced this trade not in Seville but in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, the seat of the powerful Medina Sidonia family, where Pacheco was born in 1564. It was in Sanlúcar that Pacheco's grandfather, also named Juan Pérez, gained his living as "un hombre del mar", working on the Indies fleet.

From the *limpieza* document we learn that Pacheco's paternal grandmother was named María López, which strongly suggests that it was through her that the painter and the celebrated Seville humanist, Licenciado Francisco Pacheco, were linked. María López and Elvira López Miranda, Licenciado Pacheco's mother, were, I believe, sisters; thus the licenciado was the painter's second cousin and not his uncle, as the latter was wont to state. It is, of course, quite natural that the young, ambitious painter would wish to create the impression of a strong familial relationship with the licenciado, who was both a potential source of clients, and, even more important, a

link to Seville's intellectual elite. It was through his association with this elite group that Pacheco looked to exchange his image as base artisan for that of noble (humanist) artist.

Pacheco was obsessed by his image of noble artist, as is evident from an examination of his two major prose works, *Retratos de varones insignes* and *El arte de la pintura*. The first of these works, a series of pen and ink portraits and prose prosopographies of Seville's literary (humanist) community, is above all a vehicle for the painter to showcase his own artistic virtues and to have them praised by friends in exaggerated poetic encomiums proclaiming his noble artistry. Following the same lines, the second work is both a guidebook for noble artistic practice and a proclamation of the author's own elevated position within the artistic community, a position attained, so he would have us believe, through his clear understanding of the semantics of pictorial expression. In contrast to this vaunted image, however, Pacheco's canvases, rigid and aseptic, present us with a man of only modest talent. Indeed, more than one commentator has posed the question: what exactly did Pacheco impart to the brilliant Velázquez, other than a healthy respect for his artistic calling? Not only is the young Velázquez technically more proficient than his maestro, he is also much more confident in expressing his personal vision of the world, a vision clearly at odds with the orthodox environment of Counter-Reformation Spain.

Although art historians continue to probe Velázquez's elusive early works for hidden meanings, they do so, it seems to me, without paying sufficient attention to the religious atmosphere in which these works were produced. In 1622, the year before

Velázquez left Seville to pursue his career at Court, the Inquisition began its investigations into an *alumbrado* sect operating within the city. The head of this sect, the *beata* Catalina de Jesus was a native of Baeza, where she was an adherent of Pedro de Hojeda, a Juan de Avila disciple, who was prosecuted for heresy in 1590.⁵³ Catalina's own non-conformism was an amalgam of the mystical-iconoclastic views of Juan de Avila (advocacy of mental prayer, rejection of church rituals and saint worship, hatred of the Inquisition) and the more eccentric characteristics (claims to prophetic abilities, for example) common to *alumbrado* leaders. These beliefs appear to have struck a cord with a large section of Seville's population. In their early letters to the *Supremo*, the Seville Inquisition officials described the *beata*'s following as massive, a view confirmed by the number of people—almost a thousand—who came forward during a period of grace to confess their religious errors. Clearly Catalina de Jesus had tapped into a reservoir of religious discontent in the city. Indeed, it seems apparent that the *beata*'s immense popularity was due to the fact that her non-conformist religious views, shorn of their eccentricities, were those long entrenched in Seville society. They were the views of those early Erasmian preachers, attracted by Archbishop Manrique to transform religious practice in his diocese; they were the views of those non-conformists, labelled "Protestants", prosecuted in Valdes's 1557 witch-hunt; and they were the views endemic to the post-Tridentine coterie of scholars examined in the previous chapter. They were also, I would argue, the views presented

⁵³ Pedro de Hojeda was rector of the University of Baeza, an educational establishment which Juan de Avila helped found. For the *alumbrado* movement in the University of Baeza, see Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 112-114

by the young Diego Velázquez in his early canvases.

In his early works, all of which were executed in, or in close proximity to, the humanist environment of Pacheco's workshop, Velázquez seems to spurn the dictates of a Counter-Reformation Church, while favouring a Christian faith based on those evangelical and mystical concepts common to Spain's pre-Tridentine evangelical movement. Clearly influenced by the stylistic and doctrinal militancy of Caravaggio, Velázquez borrows the Italian painter's naturalist approach to make a personal attack on Counter-Reformation iconography and to present us with his own private, mystical, religious credo.⁵⁴ Even when depicting those religious scenes used by the Counter-Reformation church as an affirmation of traditional Catholic dogma, the artist appears to introduce a contradictory or subversive message. For example, in *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, the Martha figure seems disillusioned with her earthly task, while the old woman, her mentor, is, with bent finger, directing her (and our) attention to the spiritual path represented by the painting or tableau vivant in the background. Here the emphasis appears not to be on works and faith, a concept central to Catholic dogma, but on faith alone—that is to say on a Christianity inclined towards an Erasmian, or quietist, message promoted by Spain's sixteenth century religious reform movement.⁵⁵ If we focus on the table on which the young Martha is working,

⁵⁴ This subterfuge was not peculiar to Velázquez. As I have noted at the beginning of this chapter El Greco, closely linked to a converso humanist community, also attached a reformist message to his religious art.

⁵⁵ It is my opinion that all of Velázquez's *bodegones* were executed for a select group of Seville patrons, and that the sub-textual views incorporated into the paintings were shared by the artist and the commissioners. *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* was, it appears, purchased by the Duke of Alcalá. Jonathon Brown and Richard Kagan, "The Duke of Alcalá: His collection and its evolution", in *Art Bulletin*, LXIX, 2, 1987, pp. 231-255. The Alcalá family was closely linked to both a humanist and

we note the absence of bread and wine—symbols central to post-Tridentine Christology. Instead Velázquez presents us with scaled fish and eggs—symbolic of an early Christian church—and, curiously, garlic and hot peppers—stereotypically New-Christian (Jewish and Muslim) condiments.

Equally ambiguous is Velázquez's *Supper at Emmaus*. Like *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, the story of Christ at Emmaus was utilized by the Counter-Reformation church to emphasize the veracity of Catholic Church dogma. According to the Biblical story, after His resurrection Jesus meets two disciples on the road to Emmaus. At first the two followers fail to recognize the Saviour; it is only when Jesus breaks the bread in two at supper that his identity becomes suddenly apparent to them. This scene was taken by the Counter-Reformation church to vindicate its belief in the Eucharist, or its insistence that Christ is physically present in the Host. However, Velázquez chooses to present us with a kitchen scene once again free of sacramental symbolism. Here there is no bread, a symbol of the Eucharist, only a table, unencumbered by food (save for a fist of garlic), behind which stands a young black servant or slave, whose posture, body placed against the wall to avoid detection, would suggest that her interest in the dining-room conversation is something other than spiritual. Indeed, it appears that the artist is intimating that she is spying on a domestic religious gathering taking place in the adjacent room.

a religious reform movement in Seville. The second duke's administrator, Gaspar Zapata (a *converso*), was accused of Lutheranism in the Seville Protestant trials of 1557-59, and fled to France. The first duke's sister, Doña María Enríquez, Marchioness of Villanueva del Fresno, was herself intimately connected with this group of "Protestant" clerics, although she managed to escape prosecution. See Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y La Inquisición Sevillana*, vol. 1., Sevilla, 2000, pp. 353-366.

In both *The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Immaculate Conception* Velázquez again takes popular religious themes and interpolates his own personal religious vision. In the former painting the artist uses the religious event to present a picture of his own family and its adoration of his first daughter, Francisca. The painter thus strips the Biblical story of any amazing birth attributes in order to present us with a private spiritual moment. In *The Immaculate Conception*, painted for Seville's Carmelite convent, Velázquez, again in iconoclastic mood, takes on the cult of the Virgin Mary's immaculate, or sin-free, character. Although the Immaculate Conception was not officially accepted as Catholic dogma until 1854, late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spanish society was obsessed with the idea. Behind this obsession, I believe, was Old-Christian Spain's equal obsession with *limpieza de sangre*; by presenting the Virgin as immaculate at birth, an Old-Christian society was attempting to mitigate her own and, more important, her son's Jewishness.

In Velázquez's canvas, however, there is no sign of the Virgin's uniqueness. Gone are the symbols—the mirror and lilies—that normally proclaim her exceptional status, gone is the abstract portrayal of spiritual beauty; instead, the artist presents us with a young woman (his pregnant sixteen-year-old wife, Juana Pacheco) who, although pious, is tangible and unexceptional.⁵⁶ In the pendant to this painting, *Saint John the Evangelist's vision on Patmos*, Velázquez takes the traditional image of the Saint contemplating the pregnant woman clothed with the sun (generally considered to

⁵⁶ A close comparison of *The Adoration of the Magi* with the *Immaculate Conception* reveals that Velázquez used the same model to represent the Virgin in both canvases. The *Adoration of the Magi*, *The Immaculate Conception* and its pendant, the *Vision of Saint John the Evangelist*, are all believed to have been painted in 1619, the year Juana Pacheco gave birth to the couple's first child, Francesca.

be the Virgin) and transforms it into his own contemplation of his young wife. Thus Velázquez presents us with two texts: a saint's vision of the Virgin and the artist's vision of his muse.⁵⁷ This is not the only occasion that Velázquez plays with religious and artistic reveries. A number of scholars have already pointed out the strong resemblance between Velázquez's *Saint Ildefonso, portrayed receiving his chasuble from the Virgin*, and his portrait of the poet *Luis de Gongora*, painted on his visit to the Court in 1623. This, to my mind, is no coincidence. What the young painter would have us believe is a painting of the saint receiving a gift from an unethereal Virgin, surrounded by a group of singularly unconvincing angels, is, in fact, a poet receiving favor from his muse, Etiope, accompanied by her siblings, the other muses of the liberal arts. Once again, I believe, Velázquez feigns an interest in the Immaculate Conception (Saint Ildefonso received his chasuble for defending the Virgin's impeccable birth), while presenting us with something much closer to his own heart, the mysteries of artistic creativity.

Significantly, the most spiritually evocative of Velázquez's early works, *An Old Woman Cooking Eggs* and *The Waterseller*, reflect a private, or domestic, religiosity. In the *Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, two people are caught in a moment of intense spiritual contemplation, while involved in the act of preparing food, the simplicity of the food, two eggs and a melon, indicating the purity of their spiritual

⁵⁷ "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars
And she being with child cried, travailing in Birth, and pained to be delivered. (Revelation 12, 1 and 2)

lives. Velázquez depicts the young boy in the process of handing a jug of oil to the woman, thereby linking the two figures in the domestic chore while, at the same time, suggesting a private spiritual complicity between the two. The woman, who bears a strong resemblance to the figure in *Christ in the House Martha and Mary*, once again appears to be a mentor figure, instructing her young charge in practical and spiritual matters. Here, as in *Martha and Mary*, religion is a private affair, passed from the old to the young in a household setting. Indeed, I would suggest that these two canvases, along with *The Waterseller*, present a domestic mysticism reminiscent of that described by Francisco de Osuna in his *Tercer abecedario* as *dejamiento*.

Like *An Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, the *Waterseller* captures a private spiritual moment between an old man (the mentor) and a young boy (the pupil). Here, the two figures are united spiritually through a finely cut glass goblet (or chalice) which they both delicately clasp. Clearly, this very dignified waterseller is no ordinary vender, plying his trade among the general public, but, rather, a private individual, catering to a select clientele in a rarefied atmosphere beyond the public's gaze.

It has been suggested that the fig at the bottom of the glass of water is a visual pun on the name Juan Fonseca y Figueroa, for whom, it seems, the painting was executed.⁵⁸ This does not, however, explain why the glass is full of water; surely, if this were merely a pun on the owner's name, the fig would be in an empty goblet, more accurately reflecting the name Fonseca. I would suggest that Velázquez was not

⁵⁸ Pérez Lozano calls attention to the fig in the glass as a reference to Fonseca y Figueroa in "Velázquez y los gustos concepcionistas: el Aguador y su destinatario", in *Boletín del Museo e Instituto Camón Aznar*, LIV, 1993, pp 9-10. For Velázquez's connection to Fonseca, see José Lope Navio, "Velázquez Tasa Los Cuadros de Su Protector D. Juan de Fonseca", *Varia Velázqueña*, Madrid, 1960.

merely interested in including a reference to Fonseca y Figueroa, his friend and patron, in the canvas, but in linking his family name with religious reform. In placing the fig in a glass of crystalline water, Velázquez is, I believe, associating Fonseca y Figueroa with the Christian humanist (or *devotio moderna*) movement—and its emphasis on an earlier and purer Christian faith.⁵⁹

In contrast to the intense spirituality of Velázquez's domestic scenes, the painter's portraits of the contemporary religious figures *Cristóbal Suárez de Ribera* and the Cistercian Mother Superior *Jerónima de la Fuente* are noticeably distant and unsympathetic. Suárez de Ribera, famed for his religious foundations, including a chapel dedicated to Seville's favorite saint, Hermenegildo, is depicted by Velázquez kneeling beneath the crest of the saint's confraternity, looking like a fat, pinched dwarf. Jeronima de la Fuente, painted by Velázquez just before she set sail for the Philippines on missionary work, is presented as a rigid adherent of the Church militant. With her Bible firmly closed and hidden under her arm, Sor Jeronima relies only on her crucifix, clenched like a dangerous weapon, to hammer home her Christian message among the natives.

Talented, original, non-conformist, Velázquez soon captured the interest of his father-in-law Francisco Pacheco's humanist friends, several of whom were now well-situated at Court, as members of the Count of Olivares inner circle of advisors. It was

⁵⁹ Fonseca y Figueroa was a member of an illustrious family closely associated with religious reform. Like Juan de Jáuregui, Fonseca was an important member of the humanist circle to which Velázquez's father-in-law, Francisco Pacheco, was connected. Also like Jáuregui, Fonseca was of Jewish ancestry. For my comments on the Fonseca family, see Chapter 2, note 56.

through the efforts of one of these men, Juan Fonseca y Figueroa, that Velázquez was summoned to Madrid in early 1623, where he was invited to paint the portrait of the eighteen-year-old Philip IV. The painting, it seems, met with the approval of the young monarch, who honoured Velázquez, on 6 October, 1623, with the position of court painter. Behind the nomination was, of course, the Count of Olivares, who since he took *de facto* control of the Spanish government in 1621 had been gathering about him men—many of whom from his native Seville—who shared his interest in socio-political renovation. Velázquez, recognized as a fellow traveller, was now conscripted by the *privado* to capture his regime's reform spirit on canvas.

At the Court of the Count Duke

With the death of Philip III, in May 1621, the Count of Lerma's political faction fell from power at Court, replaced by that of Don Gaspar de Guzman, the Count of Olivares, who as Philip IV's Favorite, now became the most powerful man in Spain. For the ambitious Olivares this was a dream come true. Not only did it provide him with the means to gain further titles and enter Spain's elite group of grandees, (something his predecessor the Count of Lerma had exploited to the full), but it also afforded him the opportunity of achieving lasting fame as a great, and virtuous, public figure.

To realize this goal Olivares turned to a reform program that had been mooted many times in humanist circles over the previous half century, including the circle he himself had belonged to as a young man in Seville: the reduction of emoluments for an

idle nobility parked permanently and ineffectually at Court; the rational distribution of taxes, taking the burden off the shoulders of the Castilian peasantry; the encouragement of domestic industry and the erection of import barriers to stimulate the national economy; the introduction of sumptuary laws to discourage profligate spending amongst the aristocracy; and the abolishment or, at least, curtailment of *limpieza de sangre* legislation, thus giving conversos the opportunity to enter civic and ecclesiastical positions without running the *linajudo*'s gauntlet.. Olivares, himself, was a vehement opponent of the *limpieza de sangre* statutes. In a Council of State meeting, convened in 1625 to discuss this issue, the *privado* stated: "The law prohibiting honors is unjust and impious, against divine law, natural law, and the law of nations...Without crime, without sin or offence against God, they [the conversos] find themselves—even when they excel all others in virtue, sanctity and scholarship—condemned not only without being heard, but without even the possibility of being heard...In no other government or state in the world do such laws exist..."⁶⁰

Olivares' interest in repealing the *limpieza* laws was not, however, impartial. The *privado*'s paternal grandmother, Francisca de Ribera Niño, was the daughter of Charles V's wealthy converso secretary, Lope Conchillos. Olivares was thus as sensitive to the *limpieza* issue as were his many converso advisors, who were forced to lie about their backgrounds to gain public office. In his application for entry into the military order of Alcántara in 1623, Olivares stated that all four branches of his family were Old-Christian, free from Jewish stain. No one, of course, contradicted him, even

⁶⁰ Cited from J.H. Elliott, The Count-Duke of Olivares, *The Statesman in an Age of Decline*, Yale University Press, 1986, pp. 10-11.

though his converseo background was an open secret at court.⁶¹

Olivares clearly had ulterior motives for supporting the abolition of the *limpieza de sangre* statutes. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to view his anti-*limpieza* stand as being motivated entirely by self interest. It is clear that Olivares' family maintained close ties with Seville's converseo community long before Pedro de Guzmán y Zuñiga, the first Count of Olivares, married his conversa bride in 1560. Indeed, it is to be supposed that the marriage took place precisely because Pedro's father, Juan Alonso Pérez de Guzmán, the third duke of Medina Sidonia, was singularly, or cavalierly, unimpressed by the *limpieza* neurosis that was affecting sixteenth-century Spain. Olivares had inherited this attitude. Not only was he vociferous in his condemnation of the *limpieza* statutes, he was also unabashed about his interest in the Jewish culture, applying to the Inquisition for a licence to own censored Hebrew literature. He even formed a close relationship with the Moroccan Jewish scholar Jacob Cansino, who acted as his emissary between the Madrid Court and the converseo (marrano) merchant community of Lisbon. In 1627, Olivares enticed a number of these Portuguese converseo merchants to Madrid to act as the Crown's bankers, ignoring demands from the papacy and Holy Office that he desist from such a dangerous enterprise.⁶² Once at court these wealthy merchants were shielded from the

⁶¹ For Olivares converseo background, see *ibid*, pp. 10-11. In 1623, the same year that he entered the military order of Alcántara, Olivares directed the Inquisitor General to collect and burn all copies of the *Libro verde*, a work which presented an Aragonese nobility infiltrated by converseo patrician families, like the Conchillos, his own ancestors. For the censorship of the *Libro verde*, see Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La Clase Social de los Conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, Universidad de Granada, 1991, p. 205.

⁶² J.H. Elliott, *op. cit.* pp. 300-304. For Olivares relationship with the Portuguese converseo merchants, see also James C. Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers at the Court of Spain, 1626-1650*, New Brunswick,

Inquisition by the *privado*, who also aided their entry into the noble orders, through a measure known as the *patria comun*, allowing Portuguese candidates to sidestep detrimental *limpieza de sangre* investigations. It was this same measure that Diego Velázquez would try to take advantage of in his *limpieza* examination for entry into the order of Santiago, in 1558.⁶³

Closely attached to a converso-humanist reform program, it was inevitable that Olivares would clash often with a court anxious to guard its noble privileges and the pretence of its honourable, Gothic, ancestry. One of the more vehement confrontations occurred in 1628, when Olivares lent his support to a campaign to make the recently canonized Teresa of Avila co-patron of Spain (alongside Saint James the Greater). The fact that Teresa was from a Jewish background, something that was almost certainly common knowledge at court, only served to confirm Olivares' many detractors in their view that the Count-Duke (he had recently gained the new title) was in league with anti-Castillian elements. Whereas Saint James, known by all as the Moor Killer, was associated with a pure, *castizo*, orthodox society and its drive against alien and heretical cultures, Santa Teresa's image was much more ambiguous. She herself had been attacked on many occasions by the Holy Office for her rejection of orthodox practice in favor of dangerous, mystical, meditation. Furthermore, she had, in her own religious organization, manifested a preference for merit over clean blood. Olivares undoubtedly saw Teresa as a symbol of the new

1983, pp. 103-132.

⁶³ See note 11 of the present chapter.

revitalized Spain that he was in the process, or so he believed, of creating. However, the Count-Duke may also have had more personal reasons for supporting Teresa as co-patron of Spain. He was, in fact, related to the saint through his conversa grandmother, Francisca de Ribera.

It was over the Teresa of Avila co-patronage issue that Olivares first clashed with the splenetic Francisco Quevedo, who, backed by an anti-Teresa lobby, published, in 1628, two tracts: *Memorial en defensa de Santiago* and *Su espada por Santiago*.⁶⁴ Quevedo's impassioned essays elicited equally emotional responses from members of Olivares close circle, including Juan de Jáuregui, who now entered into a protracted dispute with the Manchegan poet, whom he dismissed as a typical member of Spain's ignorant *vulgo*. There was nothing typical about Quevedo however; he was, rather, a complex, tortured soul, whose aggressive *castecismo* may well have been a reaction to his own converso family background, as J.H. Elliott has already suggested.⁶⁵ An intense, almost pathological anti-Semite, Quevedo increasingly blamed Spain's decline on a Machiavellian Jewish (converso) financial community, symbiotically linked to the Olivares government. These attacks culminated in Quevedo's work *La Hora de Todos*, in which Olivares, transformed into Pragas Chincollas (an anagram of Gaspar Conchillas, the surname being that of Olivares converso grandfather) is linked to an international conspiracy of Jews, whose intention

⁶⁴ For Quevedo and the co-patronage issue, see Pablo Jauralde Pons, *Francisco Quevedo (1580-1645)*, Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1998, pp. 541-572.

⁶⁵ J.H. Elliott, *Spain and its World 1500-1700*, Yale University, 1992, p. 195.

is to subvert Christian society. It was very probably as a result of this defamatory text that Quevedo was arrested by Olivares in January 1639 and incarcerated in the Saint Marcos prison in Leon, where he lingered until the *privado*'s fall from power, four years later.

While Olivares' early reform program did little to relieve the Crown of its financial problems, it did serve to associate him and his regime with un-orthodox views. This negative image was reinforced in 1628, when the *privado* became implicated in an investigation into the *alumbrado* activities of Madrid's San Plácido convent, a Benedictine institution founded by his close friend, Gerónimo de Villanueva, *Protonotario* for the Crown of Aragon.

It is apparent that Villanueva founded the Benedictine convent, which, through a special licence, he controlled totally, as a reformed religious institution in which Catholic dogma and ceremony were subordinated to intense mystical practice. Unfortunately for the *Protonotario*, the unconventional mystical methods of the convent's religious advisor, Francisco Garcia Calderon, soon created a community of confused and hysterical nuns. Inaugurated in 1624, the San Plácido convent had only been functioning for a year before the majority of its religious inmates, including the abbess (the institution's co-founder, Doña Teresa de Silva), began experiencing prophetic visions. Believing that the nuns were demonically possessed, or so he later claimed, Garcia Calderon attempted to exorcise their demons, while taking scrupulous notes of their prophesies, all of which were of a similar nature: the San Plácido convent would soon be the source of a reformation, not only of the Benedictine order,

but of the entire Church; the head of this reform movement would be Garcia Calderon, who, accompanied by eleven nuns from the convent, would set out to redeem the world; on the death of the incumbent pope, Urban VIII, Cardinal Borgia would occupy the Holy See; Borgia would then be succeeded by Garcia Calderon, who would rule for thirty-three years; during this period Jerónimo de Villanueva would be made a cardinal and would aid the new pope in his religious revolution.

Eventually rumours of the San Plácido nuns' visions reached the Inquisition, who mounted an inquiry into the convent's religious activities. In the course of this inquiry the Holy Office discovered that Garcia Calderon had introduced a type of *dejamiento* mysticism into the convent, convincing the nuns that in their mystical, transcendental, state they were free from sin. It appears that the monk had maintained close physical, or even sexual, contact with a number of the nuns; likewise, Jerónimo Villanueva, who lived next door to the convent, and was a constant visitor, was reported to have been on intimate terms with the abbess Doña Teresa de Silva.

The Inquisition was in no doubt that Garcia Calderon and the nuns of the San Plácido convent were engaged in *alumbrado* heresy. Garcia was sentenced to permanent incarceration, and the nuns, including Teresa de Silva, were dispersed to other Benedictine convents. Jerónimo Villanueva escaped prosecution, undoubtedly because of his close relationship with Olivares. The San Plácido affair was not yet over, however. In 1643, after Olivares fell from power, the Inquisition reopened its files on the convent's activities, this time charging Villanueva with heresy. In its

renewed attack, the Holy Office also made much of the fact that Villanueva, a converso, was a distant relative of the physician Pedro de Cabra, who had participated in the assassination of the first Inquisition official in Aragon, in 1485. The goal was clearly to link the Olivares regime once again to Jewish subversion. On February 7, 1647, the *Suprema* pronounced sentence on Villanueva: he was to abjure de *levi*, and then to be banished from Madrid for three years. Although, the sentence was light, the trial affectively destroyed his career.⁶⁶

An enormous scandal, the San Plácido affair generated all kinds of scurrilous rumours concerning the religious and sexual behaviour of the royal court. Several rumours focused on Philip IV, who was believed to have been romantically attached to one of the convent's nuns. It was even stated that Velázquez's *Christ on the Cross*, painted for the convent around the time of the first trial, was executed by the painter on the orders of a troubled and repentant Philip. In all probability, however, the painting was commissioned by Villanueva in a bid to associate the convent with spiritual peace, something that it had never really enjoyed.

Velázquez's *Christ on the Cross* recaptures the intense spirituality and inner calm of his bodegones, the *Old Woman Cooking Eggs* and *The Waterseller*. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the canvas reflected the artist's own spiritual or mental

⁶⁶ For the San Plácido affair, see Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, London, 1922, vol III, pp. 133-157; and Mercedes Agullo y Cobo, "El Monasterio de San Plácido y su fundador, el madrileño don Jerónimo de Villanueva, Protonotario de Aragón," *Villa de Madrid*, 1975, num. 45-45, pp. 59-68.

state at the time of its execution; for Velázquez was, it seems, unhappy during his first years in Madrid. Not only did the painter have to accustom himself to the life of an indentured servant, at the beck and call of his masters, he had also to contend with the envious comments of his fellow court painters. An acquaintance of Velázquez at this time, Jusepe Martínez, speaks of a rivalry between the newcomer and two of his elder colleagues, Eugenio Cajés and Vicente Carducho, who dismissed him as nothing more than a painter of heads. Carducho's negative assessment of Caravaggio, in his *Dialogos de la pintura* (published in 1633), is also believed to have been an attack on Velázquez, who was clearly influenced by the Italian's innovative works. In Carducho's opinion Caravaggio was an antichrist, "sin preceptos, sin doctrina, sin estudio, mas solo con la fuerza de su genio, y con el natural delante, a quien simplemente imitaba con tanta admiración." In other words, Caravaggio and, by implication, Velázquez were mere imitators of nature, ingenious craftsmen who lacked the intellectual expertise of the true artist.

It is my belief that Velázquez felt both entrapped and abused during his first years at court, and that these feelings are eloquently expressed in his canvas *Christ and the Christian Soul*, in which the humanist painter once again uses a religious theme to present a very private sentiment. In this case we find Velázquez equating his predicament to that of Jesus at his flailing, strapped to a pillar, hands bound, at the mercy of his captors. However, here the onlookers are not Roman soldiers and Jews, but a small child (the painter's daughter, Francisca) and an angel (his wife Juana, with strapped on wings) who can do nothing other than sympathise with the captive's

plight.

Christ and the Christian Soul is not the only occasion in which Velázquez expresses his sense of victimization on canvas. *Vulcan's Forge*, painted during his first period in Italy, is again, I believe, symbolic of his own frustrations as an artist relegated to the rank of servant. Here Velázquez compares his position with that of the god Vulcan (or Hefesto) who, despite his enormous talents, resides not with his fellow deities, on Mount Olympus, but in a dismal workshop. In his canvas Velázquez captures the hapless god and his assistants, the Cyclopes, face to face with an effete, gilded messenger, Apollo, who has brought them yet another assignment from above.

The theme of the noble, abused artist is also expounded in Velázquez's *Los Borrachos* (analyzed in some detail below) and *Las Hilanderas* (fig. 15), whose scenario is almost identical to that of *Vulcan's Forge*. In *Las Hilanderas* Velázquez invites us into a palace workshop, where several women are preparing yarn, while, in a room to the rear, a group of ladies is witnessing a court entertainment. These two worlds are quite separate; only a distracted glance from one of the ladies, and a message, delivered by a servant, whose head appears from behind a curtain to the left, link the two. The fact that two of the women in the workshop are Athena, the goddess of industry and art, and Arachne, weaver par excellence, makes no impression on the courtiers; for them the brilliant pair are merely servants employed to produce a backdrop for a palace theatrical performance.

Given Velázquez's sensitivity to his servile position at the palace, it would be reasonable to assume that he viewed Peter Paul Rubens' visit to Madrid, in 1628, with

some trepidation. Rubens was not only regarded internationally as a great and innovative painter, he was also considered to be a gentleman scholar, and an experienced and savvy politician; it was, indeed, in the latter capacity that he visited Madrid, carrying a diplomatic brief from Brussels, where he was employed at the court of Philip IV's aunt, Isabella. It was thus inevitable that the Flemish painter would steal the Spaniard's thunder. However, despite Ruben's superior social position at court, it appears that he was on quite close terms with his young colleague, at least according to Francisco Pacheco, who notes that the two painters visited the Escorial together to examine the palace-monastery's collection of art. It is, of course, not surprising that Rubens took an interest in the Spanish painter. Velázquez was one of the Conde Duque's court favorites; he was also, artistically, a head and shoulders above his court contemporaries and, like Rubens, an adherent of a modern, naturalistic approach to painting. But the two men were not only united by their artistic skills; they were both products of a post-tridentine humanist world heavily influenced by Neostoicism, or the philosophy of political restraint and religious dissimulation.⁶⁷

Peter Paul Rubens is regarded as the exemplum of the Baroque Catholic artist. An exciting, dynamic stylist, Rubens' proclaims a new, exultant and self confident Catholic church, the bold defender of Roman orthodoxy. However, there was nothing conventional about Rubens' religious background; he was rather the product of a non-conformist, or Nicodemist upbringing, in which religious affiliation was determined

⁶⁷ For Peter Paul Rubens Neostoical beliefs, see Frances Huemer, *Rubens and the First Roman Circle: Studies of the First Decade*, Garland Publishing Inc., New York, 1996, pp.55-85. For Seville's post-tridentine humanists' interest in Justus Lipsius' Neostoical ideas, see Chapter 4, pp. 152-156.

by practical considerations. One suspects that Rubens, like the Flemish scholar Justus Lipsius, with whom he was closely linked, adhered publicly to an orthodox Catholic faith because it made life easier for him.

In 1556, at the time of the Dutch iconoclasm, Rubens father, Jan, a wealthy lawyer and alderman, joined a group of Antwerp's middle class citizens (including the converso merchant Marcus Pérez⁶⁸), who openly declared themselves in favour of a Calvinist Flanders. On the arrival of the Duke of Alba's troops two years after the Calvinist uprising, Jan Rubens was forced, like Perez, to flee the city. Unlike Perez, however, he did not move to Calvinist Leiden but to Catholic Cologne, where his new faith continued to cause him problems. Finally, in the interests of a peaceful existence, or so it would seem, Jan Rubens reconverted to Catholicism.

In 1587, on the death of Jan Rubens, his wife Maria Pypelinx and her four surviving children, including the ten-year-old Peter Paul, moved back to Antwerp, waving the flag of Catholic orthodoxy. Whether or not Ana was sincere in her religious display is, however, debateable. The fact that her eldest son Philip soon became a disciple of Justus Lipsius, a man renowned for his religious flexibility, should perhaps alert us to the family's continuing non-conformism. In Peter Paul Ruben's *Four Philosophers* (1611), the painter depicts his brother Philip and Joannes Woverius sitting with their mentor Lipsius under a bust of the great Roman stoic,

⁶⁸ For Pérez see chapter 3, p. 130.

Seneca. Notably, the painter includes himself in this work, albeit to one side of the three humanist intellectuals, showing his affinity with Lipsius's philosophical views.

Did Rubens ever discuss his Neostoical beliefs with Velázquez? It is tempting to imagine such a conversation taking place during the painters' visit to the Escorial monastery—perhaps next to the murals of the royal library, designed by Lipsius' great friend Arias Montano. It is not, I think, inconceivable that the two men would have used this visit to talk more openly about themselves and their views on the role of the humanist artist. Perhaps, indeed, Velázquez used the occasion to discuss with the Flemish master a work in progress, in which his own humanist vision was expressed through a rendition of the myth of Bacchus. It is a compelling, if unlikely, scenario: *Los Borrachos* (perhaps the most eloquently iconoclastic of Velázquez's works) discussed by the artist himself in the same setting in which Arias Montano sowed religious heterodoxy under the nose of Philip II.

Two portraits of the artist at a noble man: *Los Borrachos* and *Las Meninas*

Interpreters of Velázquez's *Los Borrachos*, and there have been many, tend to fall into two categories: those that present it as a court burlesque, and those who depict it as a pictorial morality that alludes to the dangers and, or, virtues of wine drinking.⁶⁹ While I would agree that *Los Borrachos* is moralistic (it is certainly not a burlesque), I would suggest that the painting is neither an attack on nor a defence of wine drinking, but an intensely personal comment on two opposite and inimical doctrines: the

⁶⁹ For the many interpretations of *Los Borrachos*, see Steven N. Orso, *Velázquez, Los Borrachos, and Painting at the Court of Philip IV*, Cambridge, 1993, ch. 1.

humanist's and the *vulgo*'s. Velázquez chooses Bacchus as his subject because the wine theme allows him to draw a succinct pictorial contrast between these credos.⁷⁰ In the Velázquez canvas the god Bacchus, who represents the classical world, its erudition and rationality,⁷¹ is accompanied by four followers and by four peasants (the latter group being representatives of the Spanish *vulgo*, or ignorant moral majority). His followers are the three garlanded figures (the garland being a reference to their artistic status) and the cloaked man, all of whom turn their attention towards Bacchus, in contrast to the four peasants who remain oblivious to the god's presence.⁷² One of these peasants begs money unsuccessfully from another, while in front of him two somewhat inebriate companions gaze out at the viewer. One of these men holds forth a bowl of wine in a ritualistic gesture, seemingly inviting the viewer to partake of its contents. This wine is not, however, the amber-coloured liquid contained in Bacchus's followers' glasses, with which they toast the god, but a blood-red libation. Clearly, Velázquez is drawing a distinction between the two types of drinker. In one

⁷⁰ It is likely that one of Velázquez's sources for the Bacchus myth was Juan Pérez de Moya's, *Philosofía secreta*, which appears in an inventory of the artist's library. The title of Moya's work is itself an allusion to hidden messages. For my comments on Moya's work, see the Introduction, pp. 11-12.

⁷¹ Pérez de Moya writes of Bacchus as a mythological figure and as a presumed historical figure. Bacchus the historical figure was, according to Moya, a "capitán de gran valor que fue tenido por Dios por los grandes hazañas que hizo, como fueron apaciguar discordias y edificar ciudades." Pérez de Moya, op. cit. p. 305. Spanish humanists were drawn to the story that Bacchus had visited Spain in antiquity, where he founded the city of Nebrisa (Lebrija). See Steven Orso, op. cit. pp 97-108. See also Rosa López Torrijos, *La mitología en la pintura española del siglo de Oro*, Catedra, Madrid, 1995, pp. 337-349. The fact that Bacchus represented a link between Spain and the classical Greek world would have further inspired Velázquez to use this god as a symbol of the humanist credo.

⁷² To my knowledge all previous interpreters of *Los Borrachos* have viewed the men that surround Bacchus as a homogeneous, peasant, group. This is a natural enough mistake, one that the artist has deliberately provoked by bunching the figures together and by placing the cloaked figure within the peasant group on the right hand side of the canvas.

representation, the wine—a nectar—is associated with classical wisdom and veracity (Bacchus being the god of truth and civilization); in the other, it is associated with the opposite, with superstition, or the Eucharist (the transformation of wine into Christ's blood), which lies at the centre of Catholic dogma. The God Bacchus, with his face averted from the peasants and his legs crossed—a traditional pose signifying judgement⁷³—is clearly judging against the credo of the *vulgo*, and in favour of his own—the humanist's.⁷⁴

Los Borrachos is, I believe a humanist's attack on the Spanish *vulgo*, its idleness, its ignorance, and, most of all, its misplaced belief in the magical qualities of a cup of red wine. For Velázquez, an artist formed in a humanist environment, immortality is secured not through a belief in transubstantiation, but through the production of significant works (in the painter's case, significant works of art) that perpetuate one's name. In *Los Borrachos* this immortality is indicated by the evergreen garlands that crown three of Bacchus's followers, as well as the ivy

⁷³ Steven Orso, op.cit. p.26.

⁷⁴ This antipathy towards Spain's moral majority or *vulgo* is prominent among that coterie of Seville humanists often referred to as Malara's, or Pacheco's, Academy. See, for example, Malara's glosses to the popular sayings "A tu hijo, buen nombre y officio le procura o le dexa" (VI, 61) or "Marido tras del lar, dolor de hijar" (V, 99) in his *Philosophía Vulgar*, op. cit; Licenciado Francisco Pacheco, "Dos Sermones Sobre La Instauración de la Libertad del Espíritu para Vivir Recta y Felizmente", discussed in chapter five of this work; and Francisco Pacheco's, "Prólogo e Introducción de la Pintura a los Lectores" in his *El Arte de la Pintura*, Madrid, 1990. Pacheco begins his prologue with the following attack: "Muchos recebidos por doctos y sabios varones en todas las facultades y ciencias, por haber manifestado el maravilloso caudel suyo y fruto de sus vigiliass por escrito, han quedado sugetos a la temaria libertad del vulgo, que a ninguno perdona, cosa que muchas veces me quitó la pluma de la mano para no poner este mi deseo en execución." [Many acknowledged intellectuals in all branches of learning have been the victims of attacks by the *vulgo* for demonstrating their erudition. It is for this reason that I have in the past refrained from carrying out my desire [to write this book]]. These intellectuals were not only attacking the ignorance of the lower orders, they were also attacking, I believe, an Old-Christian society that celebrated idleness as a noble characteristic while assailing the *conversos* (who dominated Spain's small, industrious middle sort) as an inferior caste.

branches and ivy leaves that adorn their side of the canvas—a classical reference to lasting fame.

This, I believe, is what the painting is about in general terms. However, I would also suggest that *Los Borrachos* contains a parallel, and much more intimate, message. In my view, the kneeling figure at the centre of the canvas is the poet and painter Juan de Jáuregui, who formed part of the Pacheco circle, and shared Pacheco's and Velázquez's views on the essential nobility of the erudite painter.⁷⁵ In March 1628, several months before *Los Borrachos* was painted, Jáuregui, one of the Count-Duke's court favorites, was denied access to the military order of Calatrava on the grounds that he was from a Jewish background—that is to say he did not have *limpieza de sangre*.⁷⁶ It was this event, I believe, that inspired Velázquez to execute his canvas; the Bacchus theme was suggested by Jáuregui's famous poem *Orfeo* (the follower of Bacchus), published several years earlier, and dedicated to the Count-Duke.⁷⁷ In Velázquez's painting, Jáuregui (converted into a soldier, in reference to the

⁷⁵ Jáuregui collaborated on Francisco Pacheco's *Arte de la Pintura* and his *Libro de Descripción de Verdadero Retratos de Ilustres y Memorables Varones*. In the *Retratos*, Jáuregui provides poetic accompaniments to Pacheco's portraits of Benito Arias Montano and Baltasar de Alcazár. In his elegy to Alcazár, Jáuregui refers to the "blasón del arte" [art's noble crest], and to the artist's ability to immortalize both his subject and himself. In 1629, around the time that *Los Borrachos* was painted, Jáuregui formed part of a group of painters who petitioned the royal exchequer for exemption from the *alcabala* (sales) tax on the grounds that their artistic status conferred upon them noble standing, and thus relieved them of tax payments. Juan de Jáuregui, *Poesía*, ed. Juan Matas Caballero, Catedra, Madrid, 1993, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁶ See Ruth Pike, "Converso Lineage and Tribulations of the Sevillian Poet Juan de Jáuregui", *Romance Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1991) pp 423-429; and my article, *Diego Velázquez's Secret History*, op.cit. For Pacheco's relationship with Jáuregui, see Francisco Pacheco, *El Arte de la Pintura*, Catedra, Madrid, 1990, introduction and *passim*.

⁷⁷ *Los Borrachos* was painted sometime between September 1628 and June 1629 when the painting is first mentioned as forming part of the collection of Philip IV. Steven Orso, op.cit. p.35. Jáuregui's epic poem *Orfeo* was published in 1624. For an examination of Jáuregui's poem, see Juan de Jáuregui, *Poesía* op.cit., pp. 63-76.

military order of Calatrava, to which he was soliciting entry⁷⁸) is receiving his noble garland from Bacchus not for his correct genealogy, but for his artistic abilities. In bestowing this particular noble crest, the god (who represents the wise judge) has ignored a physically and intellectually impoverished Old-Christian *vulgo*, mired in its superstitions and prejudices, and in particular its prejudice for “clean blood.”

Who then do the figures that form a circle around Jáuregui represent?

Bacchus, like Jesus in *Christ and the Christian Soul* (the model is the same), is, I believe, once again Velázquez’s alter-ego; here the painter is presenting himself as arbiter, declaring in favor of Jáuregui’s noble status. The garlanded satyr is Velázquez’s father-in-law, Francisco Pacheco. This depiction of Pacheco was suggested, it would seem, by the Seville painter’s caprine features, apparent in Velázquez’s portrait of Pacheco, executed several years previously, and in *The Adoration of the Magi*, in which he is depicted as Saint Joseph. Thus Pacheco (the satyr) crowns his pupil Velázquez (Bacchus) with a noble garland, who in turn conveys the same honor to Jáuregui (the soldier, or Orpheus).

As for the cloaked figure, who appears to form part of the peasant group, yet turns his back on this group to face Bacchus, this, I believe, is Velázquez’s father, Juan Rodríguez, already used as a model in *The Adoration of the Magi*, in which the artist presents two histories: superficially, the wise men presenting gifts to the infant Jesus, sub-textually, he and his own family paying their respects to his young wife

⁷⁸ Significantly, in his *Memorial por el Patronato de Santiago*, Francisco Quevedo described himself as a soldier of his order, that being the Order of Santiago. See Pablo Jauralde Pon, *Francisco Quevedo (1580-1645)*, Editorial Castalia, Madrid, 1998, p. 546.

who has just given birth to the couple's first child.⁷⁹ In *Los Borrachos* the cloaked figure does not wear a garland because Juan Rodríguez was not an artist but a minor administrative official in the Seville Cathedral; Velázquez includes his father in the painting, albeit physically separated from the three painters, because he shares his son's humanist sentiments.

We now come to the shadow figure in the bottom left hand corner of the canvas, which appears to be the silhouette of someone observing the action from outside the painting. This someone might possibly be Velázquez himself, or even Peter Paul Rubens, who would not only have witnessed the painting being executed but would, I think, have sympathised with its social commentary. However, the most likely candidate is the Count Duke of Olivares, who besides being a friend of Jáuregui and the dedicatee of his *Orfeo* was also a vociferous opponent of the *limpieza de sangre* statutes.⁸⁰ Indeed, *Los Borrachos* could be viewed as a pictorial allusion to the Count-Duke's early reform program, in which old shibboleths were rejected for a more flexible society based on virtue, or merit. Olivares was included in the painting, I would suggest, because he was party to its radical sentiments.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Los Borrachos* was painted sometime between September 1628 and June 1629 when the painting is first mentioned as forming part of the collection of Philip IV. Steven Orso, op.cit. p.35. I am not suggesting that the Waterseller, the bearded figure in the *Adoration of the Magi* and the cloaked man in *Los Borrachos* are identical: they clearly are not. They are however quite similar, and this leads me to believe that they are various representations of the same person.

⁸⁰ It is noteworthy that Jáuregui eventually gained his knighthood, in 1639, due, it would seem, to the Count Duke intervening on his behalf. See Ruth Pike, "Converso Lineage and Tribulations of the Sevillian Poet Juan de Jáuregui", op. cit.. For Olivares relationship to Seville's *converso* patriciate, see the same author, "The *converso* Origins of the Sevillian Dramatist Diego Jiménez de Enciso", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, LXVII, (1990) pp. 129-35.

⁸¹ Although Olivares was not an artist, he had it seems considered himself something of a poet in his youth. His earlier connection with the poetic *tertulias* of Seville would have given Velázquez sufficient

In *Las Meninas*, painted almost thirty years after *Los Borrachos*, Velázquez once again returns to theme of the painter ennobled by his artistic ability. Here Velázquez presents himself painting in the king's apartments, in the midst of the young *infanta* and her ladies in waiting. On his chest he displays his Santiago cross, boldly, defiantly linking his title to a profession he had been forced to renounce during his examination for entry into the noble order. It is as if the painter was actually addressing his fellow courtiers in order to set the record straight: "Forget the *probanza* I have just undertaken," he tells them, "in which, as you are all aware, I lied about my Old-Christian hidalgo background. The fact is I have been knighted because I am great painter, as the present work bears witness."⁸² Velázquez had no illusions as to his noble Old-Christian family origins, as Ortega y Gasset fancifully claimed in his study of the painter.⁸³ As far as Velázquez was concerned his noble title was a prize for his artistry, not his ancestry.

pretext to award the *privado* an honorary emblem of artistic excellence.

⁸² Curiously, when Velázquez executed the painting in 1656, he had not yet applied to enter the Order of Santiago and was thus unable to boast the red cross on his doublet. This must have been added sometime after November, 1659, when the painter was admitted into the noble order. Antonio Palomino, Velázquez's first biographer, would have us believe that the cross was in fact a mere afterthought, added to the artist's doublet after his death by an artistic well wisher—"algunas dicen que su Majestad mismo se lo pintó." However, it is evident the Velázquez made careful provision for the emblem at the time that the work was executed: note the carefully positioned patches of red on the canvas (the ribbon on the lady-in-waiting's sleeve, the floral display on the princess' dress, the small jug, the curtain reflected in the mirror, the daubs of red paint on the painter's palette), all of which prepare the way for the addition of a red Santiago cross to the painter's stark black doublet. But if Velázquez intention was always to paint himself proudly showing off his noble insignia, why did he not wait until he had secured his knighthood before beginning the work? My own view is that he wished his painting to have a pre and post *probanza* look, so that he could present himself actually gaining a title while going about his profession.

⁸³ In his 1954 biography of Velázquez, Ortega y Gasset wrote, "No sólo es la de V. una familia de nobles emigrados y venidos a menos, sino que en ella debió ser obsesionant la leyenda de que los Silva provenían nada menos que de Eneas Sylvio, rey de Alba Longa. Pero fortuna habia sido adversa, y en la humildad presente la gloriosa tradición se estilizaba y depuraba en mito y religión. En el estrato inicial

Like the earlier generation of Seville humanists, examined in the previous chapter, Velázquez was, I believe, a man at odds with the mores of his society. While this non-conformism appears to have escaped the scrutiny of contemporary Velázquez scholars, it did not escape the attention of the painter's contemporaries at court, as Antonio Palomino, Velázquez's first biographer, reveals in his *Vidas*.

Aun después de la muerte [Palomino writes], le perseguio la envidia, de suerte, que habiendo intentado algunos malévolos destituirle de la gracia de su Soberano, con algunas calumnias, siniestramente impuestos; fue necesario que Don Gaspar de Fuensalida, por amigo, por testamentario, y por el oficio de Grieter, satisficiese a algunos cargos en audiencia particular con Su Majestad, asegurándole de la fidelidad, y legalidad de Velázquez y la rectitud de su proceder en todos...⁸⁴

According to Palomino, Velázquez was attacked both during his life and after it for infidelity and illegality. What did the biographer mean by these two terms? Illegality would seem to be an allusion to the artist's noble title, which he had been awarded even though he could not prove that his family was of noble stock. But this accusation would have had no effect upon Philip IV, who was well aware of the painter's *pechero* background; indeed, it was the king who was instrumental in gaining Velázquez his title by applying for a papal dispensation. The accusation of illegality, I would suggest, was not a reference to the painter's common stock but to his converso

más hondo de su alma, V. encontraba este imperativo: *Tienes que ser un noble*." J. Ortega y Gasset, *Velásquez*, Madrid, 1954, p. 19.

⁸⁴ "Even after death envy pursued [Velázquez]. Because certain malevolent people had tried to turn his Monarch against him, with slanderous words sinisterly conveyed, it was necessary for Don Gaspar de Fuensalida, as a friend, executor of his will, and as a court official, to satisfy the king, in a private audience with his highness, that these charges were untrue, and to assure him that Velázquez was faithful, legal [lawful], and upright in everything he did..." Antonio Palomino, *Vidas*, Alianza, Madrid, 1986, p.195.

background, allegations of which Velázquez had successfully managed to circumvent by presenting a group of favourable witnesses in his examination for entry into the military order. As for the accusation of infidelity, that could have meant that Velázquez was being accused of either *lese majesty* or heresy, or, indeed, given that heresy would also have been considered treachery, of both. These were very strong accusations. It was no wonder then that they were still circulating at court twenty years after Velázquez's death, when the young painter Antonio Palomino entered the king's service. However, rumours, whatever their trenchancy, eventually fade to silence, while written encomiums live on. And most of what we know about Velázquez's life comes from two encomiastic accounts; one by his father-in-law, Francisco Pacheco, who gratuitously protests the artist's *limpieza de sangre*, and the other by the painter Antonio Palomino, who uses his *Vida de las artistas* to polish the artist's image. We need now to treat these eulogies with greater scepticism, while paying much closer attention to the post-Tridentine converso-humanist milieu in which Velázquez was formed.

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