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# Many Rivers, One Sea, and the Dry Land: Jews and Conversos in the Political Theology of Alonso de Cartagena

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## **ABSTRACT**

This essay explores a range of works by Alonso de Cartagena, bishop of Burgos from 1435-1456, and places them within the context of fifteenth-century debates about Conversos, nobility, and Castilian and Spanish national identities. Through careful attention to the role of Jews and Judaism within Cartagena's thought, it shows that the bishop worked to forge a Judeo-Christian identity for Spain in which Conversos were not simply included or tolerated but required, precisely because of their Jewish lineage, for the Church Militant and the Spanish "nation" to fulfill their divinely-ordained missions. To counter the developing racial logic of opponents to Conversos' integration, Cartagena distinguished between the relative roles of lineage and will in the Jews' fall from theological nobility. However, the logic of this approach entailed the exclusion of observant Jews, along with "pagans" and Muslims, from the civil and religious community that Cartagena envisioned.

**KEYWORDS:** Conversos; nobility; theology; Alonso de Cartagena; Castile.

## **RESUMO**

Este artigo analisa um conjunto de obras de Alonso de Cartagena, bispo de Burgos entre 1435 e 1456, situando-as no contexto dos debates quatrocentistas em torno dos conversos, da nobreza e das identidades nacionais castelhana e espanhola. Com especial atenção para o lugar ocupado pelos judeus e pelo Judaísmo no pensamento de Cartagena, o presente trabalho demonstra como o bispo tentou forjar uma identidade judeo-cristã para Espanha na qual os conversos não eram simplesmente incluídos ou tolerados, mas necessários, precisamente por causa da sua linhagem judaica, para a Igreja militante e para a "nação" espanhola cumprir a sua missão divinamente ordenada. Para contrariar a crescente lógica racial dos opositores à integração dos conversos, Cartagena distinguiu entre os papéis relativos da linhagem e da vontade na queda dos judeus

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da nobreza teológica. Contudo, a lógica desta abordagem implicou a exclusão dos judeus observantes, junto com os “pagãos” e os muçulmanos, da comunidade civil e religiosa imaginada por Cartagena.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Conversos; nobreza; teologia; Alonso de Cartagena; Castela.

In the aftermath of the anti-Jewish violence of 1391 and the preaching tour of Vincent Ferrer that guided, dragged, or shoved an unprecedented number of converts from Judaism into the Christian fold, both Jews and Christians strove to redefine the physical, political, and legal boundaries of their communities and to reinstate the distance between Christians and Jews that had enabled Spanish society to function with relative stability.<sup>1</sup> In 1449, insurgents in Toledo attempted to redefine their city as a community free from tyranny by killing, robbing, and expelling Conversos from the city, and by barring all Conversos “past, present, and future” from public and private offices there.<sup>2</sup> Their leaders’ readings of scripture helped them to identify and define their tyrants as Jews in mind and body, if not in name.<sup>3</sup> Alonso de Cartagena, bishop of Burgos from 1435-1456, recognized that the Toledan rebels’ arguments could sweep through the religious, social, and political landscapes of Castile, destroying, uprooting, and gathering debris in their force. With an audience that included churchmen, knights, and monarchs, the bishop, royal counselor, and diplomat played an active role in the major intellectual, political, and religious, developments of his day.<sup>4</sup> Having devoted considerable energy to developing political theory and ecclesiology during his exalted diplomatic and religious career, the bishop was uniquely poised

<sup>1</sup> David Nirenberg, “Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain”, *American Historical Review*, vol. 107, October 2002, pp. 1065-1093.

<sup>2</sup> Eloy Benito Ruano, *Toledo en el siglo XV: vida política*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Medievales, 1961, pp. 34-38; “Sentencia-Estatuto de Pedro Sarmiento”, *De la Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento a la Instrucción del Relator*. Ed. Tom González Rolán and Pilar Saquero Suárez-Somonte, Madrid, Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2012, p. 358.

<sup>3</sup> Erika Tritle, “Anti-Judaism and a Hermeneutic of the Flesh”, *Church History and Religious Culture*, n.º 95, 2-3, 2015, pp. 182-202; Marcos García de Mora, “Apelación e suplicación del bachiller Marcos García de Mora en su favor e de Pero Sarmiento y de esta çibdad de Toledo en tiempo del rey don Juan el segundo”, *De la Sentencia-Estatuto...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>4</sup> Luis Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena, 1385-1456: Una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV*, Valladolid, Junta de Castilla y León, 2002; Francisco Cantera Burgos, *Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos: historia de la judería de Burgos y de sus conversos más egregios*, Madrid, Instituto Arias Montano, 1952. Luciano Serrano, *Los conversos, d. Pablo de Santa María y d. Alfonso de Cartagena, obispos de Burgos, gobernantes, diplomáticos y escritores*, Madrid, Escuela de Estudios Hebraicos, 1942.

to integrate these concerns with the question of the place of Jews and Conversos within the mystical bodies of Castile, Spain, and Church.

Growing interest in the work and life of Alonso de Cartagena has enhanced our understanding of Cartagena's contributions to Castilian and Spanish identities and political thought through the development of notions of chivalry<sup>5</sup> and the legitimation of the Castilian monarchy,<sup>6</sup> and creative historiography and development of the so-called Gothic thesis,<sup>7</sup> among other areas. Long relatively neglected, his theological-juridical treatise *Defensorium unitatis christianae* has begun to receive more attention as well.<sup>8</sup> While some of these studies have addressed Cartagena's participation in mid-fifteenth-century debates regarding Conversos, few have considered the place of Jews and Judaism within the bishop's thought. That gap is closing with the work of Claude Stuczynski on Converso and pro-Converso use of the New Testament letters of the Jewish convert to Christianity par excellence, the Apostle Paul.<sup>9</sup> Stuczynski's work examines the positive role of Jews and Judaism within the work of thinkers such as Cartagena and wrestles with the tensions inherent in their thought regarding the relative weight they give to lineage and grace. Another scholar who has taken up the questions of Cartagena's view of Jews and Judaism is Bruce Rosenstock, whose essay engaging post-colonial theory's notion of "cultural hybridity" made valuable contributions to our thinking about the "productive miscegenation" that Cartagena advocated in his strategic "nation narration."<sup>10</sup> Rosenstock's monograph expands into an

<sup>5</sup> Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Alonso de Cartagena y el debate sobre la caballería en la Castilla del Siglo XV", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, serie III, n.º 26, 2013, pp. 77-118.

<sup>6</sup> Francisco Castilla Urbano, "Patriotismo y legitimación monárquica en el pensamiento de Alonso de Cartagena: los escritos de Basilea", *Revista española de filosofía medieval*, n.º 19, 2012, pp. 139-158.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Devaney, "Virtue, Virility, and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile", *Speculum*, vol. 88, n.º 3, 2013, pp. 721-749.

<sup>8</sup> María Laura Giordano, "The Virus in the Language: Alonso de Cartagena's Deconstruction of the 'Limpieza de Sangre' in *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*", *Medieval Encounters*, n.º 24, 2018, pp. 226-51; Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Teología y derecho en el *Defensorium* de Alonso de Cartagena", *Comunicación y conflicto en la cultura política peninsular. Siglos XIII al XV*. Coord. José Manuel Nieto Soria y Óscar Villarroel González, Madrid, Sílex, 2018, pp. 553-582.

<sup>9</sup> Claude Stuczynski, "Converso Paulinism and Residual Jewishness: Conversion from Judaism to Christianity as a Theological-Political Problem", *Bastards and Believers: Converts and Conversion between Judaism and Christianity*. Ed. P. Maciejko and T. Dunkelgrün, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press (forthcoming); Idem, "From Polemics and Apologetics to Theology and Politics: Alonso de Cartagena and the Conversos within the 'Mystical Body'", *Conflict and Religious Conversation in Latin Christendom: Studies in Honour of Ora Limor*. Ed. Israel Jacob and Ram Ben-Shalom, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014, pp. 253-275; Idem, "Providentialism in Early Modern Catholic Iberia: Competing Influences of Hebrew Political Traditions", *Hebraic Political Studies*, vol. 3, n.º 4, 2009, pp. 377-395.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce Rosenstock, "Alonso de Cartagena: Nation, Miscegenation, and the Jew in Late Medieval

extended reflection on the works of Cartagena and cardinal Juan de Torquemada as contributions to a distinctive “converso theology.”<sup>11</sup> Although it offers some insightful close readings of the major treatises of these two authors, the study falls into the traps that jeopardize any quest for a particular group identity,<sup>12</sup> relying on biography and genealogy to inform his reading and reproducing the discourses of the period he was studying.<sup>13</sup> This trap also may have led to his misreading of the place of Jews within Cartagena’s theology, in which Rosenstock sees a “positive treatment ... of not just *conversos* but also Jews” that anchors a “converso theology” informed by “a continuing identification with [that] people.”<sup>14</sup> This problem continues into his more recent essay comparing Cartagena’s thought with that of Francisco de Vitoria, born a century later.<sup>15</sup> In what follows, I will offer a more nuanced investigation of the role of ideas about Jews and Judaism within Cartagena’s thought. This reading will show how Cartagena worked to forge a Judeo-Christian identity for Spain in which Conversos were not simply included or tolerated but required, precisely because of their Jewish lineage, for the Church Militant and the emerging Spanish “nation” to fulfill their divinely-ordained missions. We must pay careful attention to Cartagena’s treatment of lineage and will with respect to the Jews, noting that the logic of his approach entailed the exclusion of observant Jews, along with “pagans”, heretics, and Muslims, from the Spain that Cartagena envisioned.

In “Against the Pagans” Rosenstock frames Cartagena as a prophetic voice of tolerance, inclusion, and separation of church and state in the face of a growing

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Castile”, *Exemplaria*, vol. 12, n.º 1, 2000, pp. 185-204, drawing especially on the work of Homi Bhabha.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology, and Society in Fifteenth-Century Castile*, London, Department of Hispanic Studies, Queen Mary, University of London, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Mercedes García-Arenal, “Creating Conversos: Genealogy and Identity as Historiographical Problems (after a Recent Book by Ángel Alcalá)”, *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*, vol. 38, n.º 1, 2013, pp. 1-19.

<sup>13</sup> One example is his assumption that Torquemada was a Converso. While the cardinal’s opponents accused him of this, our evidence consists only of a statement by Fernando Pulgar (1486) that also mistakenly places Torquemada’s origin in Burgos, and an anonymous note in an appendix of Pablo de Santa María’s *Scrutinium Scripturarum* written during Torquemada’s lifetime. Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, “Noticias y documentos para la biografía del Cardenal Juan de Torquemada,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, vol. 30, 1960, pp. 54–55. Although it is plausible, none of Torquemada’s letters or other writings indicate Converso descent. Thomas M. Izbicki, “Juan De Torquemada’s *Defense of the Conversos*,” *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 85, n.º 2, April 1999, p. 198, n.º 12. Cf. Rosa Vidal Doval, *Misera Hispania: Jews and Conversos in Alonso de Espina’s Fortalitium Fidei*, Oxford, Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2013, p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Rosenstock, *New Men...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, “Against the Pagans: Alonso de Cartagena, Francisco de Vitoria, and Converso Political Theology”, *Marginal Voices: Studies in Converso Literature of Medieval and Golden Age Spain*. Ed. Amy Aronson-Friedman and Gregory B. Kaplan, Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 117-139.

tide of exclusion and what Luis Suárez Fernández has called the “*maximo religioso*” of the Trastámaran royal line. According to Suárez Fernández, this ideology involved “the identification among king, kingdom, territory, and community” in which “outside of the community there is no sovereign, but outside of Christianity there is no community.”<sup>16</sup> For Suárez Fernández and others, this *maximo religioso* ultimately led to what theologian Jacques Maritain called sixteenth-century Spain’s “vampire-ideas” that “unity in the temporal domain presupposes and requires unity of religious faith” and that “in the service of the spiritual[,] the temporal means of force, of physical constraint, of threat, and of intimidation are normally to be employed and are necessary in themselves.”<sup>17</sup> Rosenstock places Cartagena against such “vampire-ideas” when he writes,

In the face of a rising ‘paganization’ of the Church and the nation and a concomitant demonization of the Jews as the incorrigible politico-theological Enemy, Cartagena offers a theology of unity and caridad. His voice testifies to the dangers confronting Jews and all others who are judged to stand in the way of a nation that seeks to harness human means to the attainment of divine ends. His protest... is an expression of one who recognizes the dangers of a messianic faith in one people as the bearer of redemption.<sup>18</sup>

Rosenstock is right to observe that Cartagena presented a more inclusive model of both church and civic bodies than did his opponents, who argued for the exclusion of all Conversos, “past, present, and future” from all public and private offices in Toledo and its surrounding region.<sup>19</sup> He is also correct that Cartagena opposed “the demonization of Jewish blood” and identified such ideology with the heresy of “paganism” that strove to attack the church by fomenting division within it.<sup>20</sup> However, in his quest for historical voices of resistance to reactionary and fundamentalist movements of the past and present, Rosenstock misreads

<sup>16</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, pp. 117-118. Rosenstock cites Luis Suárez Fernández, *Judíos españoles en la edad media*, Madrid, Ediciones Rialp, S.A., 1980, p. 161.

<sup>17</sup> Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and Her Personnel*, London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1973, cited in Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans”, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>18</sup> Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans...” , *op. cit.*, p. 137.

<sup>19</sup> “Sentencia-Estatuto de Pedro Sarmiento,” *De la Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento a la Instrucción del Relator*. Ed. Tomás González Rolán and Pilar Suárez-Somonte, Madrid, Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2012, p. 358.

<sup>20</sup> Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans...” , *op. cit.*, p. 117. Although Cartagena does refer to “Israelite blood,” he also talks of “Israelite flesh” and “carnal descent.” “Jewish blood” or similar does not appear either in the *Sentencia* or in the *Apelación* of Marcos García de Mora. The ideology of *limpieza de sangre* was taking shape at precisely this moment.

both Cartagena's political theology and his understanding of the place of Jews within it.<sup>21</sup> Through an exploration of the relationship of notions of faith and the will to developing notions of nobility and national identity in Cartagena's works, the remainder of this paper will argue that a full understanding of his contribution to something like a "Judeo-Christian identity" must consider ideas about grace, conversion, and those who resist them, whether they be "pagan" or "Jew."

Catholic doctrine affirms that "the effect of this sacrament [of baptism] is the remission of all original and actual guilt, also of all penalty that is owed for that guilt."<sup>22</sup> Despite such affirmation of baptism's power and efficacy, adversaries doubted the regenerative effects of baptism on converts from Judaism and their descendants. By insisting that valid baptism required that the one baptized properly will to receive the sacrament, Christian tradition could support such doubts by questioning the intentions of Jews and their descendants when undergoing the rite of baptism.<sup>23</sup> In particular, the conversion of Jews raised further questions because of the nature of their *gravissimum peccatum*. In the words of Thomas Aquinas from the thirteenth century, citing the fourth-century preacher John Chrysostom, who was commenting on the first-century Gospel According to Matthew, the scribes and the Pharisees "exceeded the measure of their fathers; for these latter slew men, but they crucified God."<sup>24</sup> Patristic and medieval theologians came to ascribe guilt for Jesus' crucifixion not only to the Jewish leaders but to all Jews from the time of Jesus into the present.<sup>25</sup> To defend the genuine Christianity of the conversos, Cartagena sought to quash suspicions that they had been insincerely baptized. He also addressed the nature of the Jews' great sin to demonstrate that Conversos could be cleansed of even the most grievous sin of crucifying God. For Cartagena, the locus of both questions lay in the will and not, as his opponents contended, in any sort of inherited, carnal generation.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Idem, "Against the Pagans...", *op. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> This decree was promulgated by the Council of Florence in the Decree for the Armenians, Session 8, 22 November 1439; it can be found in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1990, p. 543. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) III, Q. 69.

<sup>23</sup> *ST* III, Q. 68. Cf. Bishop Lope de Barrientos regarding "those on whom baptism could not imprint its effect" who are rightly called "baptized Jews". Lope de Barrientos, "Respuesta a una proposición", *De la Sentencia-Estatuto de Pero Sarmiento a la Instrucción del Relator*. Ed. Tomás González Rolán and Pilar Suárez-Somonte, Madrid, Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2012, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup> *ST* III, Q. 47, Art. 6, s. c. Cf. Chrysostom, Homily LXXIV, commenting on Matt. 23:32. John Chrysostom, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, 2nd ed., vol. 10, The Early Church Fathers 1, Peabody, MA, Hendrickson, 1996.

<sup>25</sup> John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Cartagena's *Oraçional* in which he defines prayer as the raising up of the understanding and the

While Cartagena insists that an honorable “inborn character” inhered in the Jewish people and rendered them noble in the eyes of God, the bishop qualifies this endorsement by appealing to the wrestling match between Jacob and the angel as told in Genesis 32. Cartagena highlights two points: that the angel touched Jacob’s leg and rendered him lame, and that the angel blessed Jacob with the name Israel. Thus “the descendants of Jacob are uniformly reflected but distinguished by faithfulness and faithlessness.” Conversos as well as their unbaptized Jewish relatives and ancestors can be called descendants of Jacob through their fleshly lineage. “Nevertheless, the name of Israel is specially and strictly assumed, because acquired from a divine vision, most appropriately only by the faithful, whether they descend according to the flesh from him or whether from other parents.”<sup>27</sup> For Cartagena the historical moment that marked the division of the two legs of Jacob occurred at the passion and crucifixion of Christ, when the faithless participated in or assented to the suffering and murder of their God and the faithful opposed it.<sup>28</sup> Whenever Cartagena writes positively about the Jewish people, he refers only to faithful Israel. The Old Testament prophecies of ultimate redemption, the contribution to the human flesh of Christ and his mother, leadership in the early Church, and the claims to nobility inherent in contemporary Conversos, all apply to those of Israel who have remained faithful to God, that is, the Conversos who have truly embraced the Christian faith. With respect to fleshly descendants of Israel from the time of Christ on, the “faithful Israelites” are those who have accepted Christ and received baptism and who are, therefore, Christians and not Jews.<sup>29</sup> We cannot know whether Cartagena ever wished, with the Apostle Paul, to be an anathema from Christ on behalf of his

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heart to God with the will of uniting with him. Alonso de Cartagena, *El oracional de Alonso de Cartagena: edición crítica (comparación del manuscrito 160 de Santander y el Incunable de Murcia)*, Valencia, Albatros, 1983, pp. 116, 118, 119.

<sup>27</sup> Alonso de Cartagena, *Defensorium unitatis christianae. Tratado en favor de los judíos conversos*. Ed. P. Manuel Alonso, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1943, pp. 107-108. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Quaestiones in Veterum Testamentum*. Ed. J. P. Migne, 83, Patrologia Latina, Paris, Migne, 1850, ch. 27, p. 266B-C. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of primary sources are my own.

<sup>28</sup> Others have noted the contrast in Cartagena’s treatment of the crucifixion, especially in contrast to the devotional focus on its details among his European contemporaries. However, it is misleading to say that he minimizes the crucifixion’s role in that it undergirds the entire edifice of his thought. See Rosenstock, *New Men...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17; John Edwards, “New Light on the Converso Debate? The Jewish Christianity of Alfonso de Cartagena and Juan de Torquemada”, *Cross, Crescent and Conversion: Studies on Medieval Spain and Christendom in Memory of Richard Fletcher*. Ed. Simon Barton and Peter Linehan, Leiden, Brill, 2008, p. 320.

<sup>29</sup> Fernández Gallardo, “Teología y derecho...”, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

kinsmen according to the flesh.<sup>30</sup> In the written records of his thoughts that are left to us, though, he carefully qualifies his defense of the Jews by dividing them according to the two legs of Jacob. To those clinging to the lame leg of Jacob who historically turned away from God and persecuted the Hebrew prophets, who denied Christ and participated in his execution, or who in Cartagena's day assented to that denial and execution by refusing the baptism offered by the Holy Catholic Church (or by rejecting baptism already received), Cartagena offers no defense, although he upholds the soteriological role of their faithlessness in opening the covenant up to Gentiles and hopes that they will convert at last.<sup>31</sup> He does not defend contemporary Jews *qua* Jews.<sup>32</sup>

Let us turn to Cartagena's view of the nature of the Jews' great sin itself. Certainly, he discusses the act of killing Christ and the guilt involved in shedding his blood. More than the details of the crucifixion itself, though, Cartagena stresses the act of the will that resulted in the killing of Christ; the act of faithlessness or turning away from God.<sup>33</sup> A comparison of Cartagena's treatment of the defeat of the Jews by the Roman emperor Titus with that of his adversary Marcos García de Mora illustrates their different understandings of the Jews' sin. García de Mora characterizes Titus as "the avenger of the blood of Jesus Christ;" he credits the emperor for the sack of Jerusalem in the year 70 CE and the consequent scattering of the Jewish people. In contrast, Cartagena places the agency for the Jews' defeat on the Jews themselves, "because just as in that time when they clung to God, they happily undertook a campaign and went out from temporal captivity in Egypt and conquered strong and powerful armies, so, withdrawing from God in their... last battle,... decisively defeated by

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Rom. 9:3.

<sup>31</sup> Erika Joy Johnson Tritle, *To the Jew First and to the Greek: Alonso de Cartagena's 'Defensorium Unitatis Christianae' and the Problem of Jewish Flesh in Fifteenth-Century Spain*. PhD thesis, Chicago, University of Chicago, 2015, pp. 215-222.

<sup>32</sup> *Contra Rosenstock*, *New Men...*, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Edwards, "New Light...", *op. cit.*, p. 321. However, with Rosenstock I disagree with Helen Nader's characterization of the *Defensorium* as "an attack on the Jews." See Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance, 1350 to 1550*, New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press, 1979, pp. 131-135. For further reflection on this question with regard to the arguments of Cartagena and the Relator Fernán Díaz de Toledo see Nicholas G. Round, "Politics, Style, and Group Attitudes in the Instrucción del Relator", *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, n.º 46, 1969, p. 311.

<sup>33</sup> Alonso departs slightly from Thomas here, for while the latter differentiates the degree of guilt incurred by the Jewish leaders versus the common people among them, in reply to objection 3 of the article cited above he concludes, "The Jews therefore sinned, as crucifiers not only of the Man-Christ, but also as of God." This statement in itself both seems to include all Jews indiscriminately and highlights the Jews' crime of crucifying Christ.

Titus and Vespasian, they irreparably lost their armed militia, as though placed in spiritual captivity in Egypt owing to their own demerits.”<sup>34</sup> For Cartagena, the Jews’ withdrawal from God was their primary sin, caused by their will.<sup>35</sup>

The resultant so-called theological slavery darkened all other forms of nobility the Jews had possessed before their sin; the contemptible status of the Jews henceforth was a direct result of their sinful will. Cartagena describes the effects of theological slavery and the role of the will in bringing it about:

And so the splendors of the talents of all their ancestors were and are eclipsed in them who remained and do remain under faithlessness, and the gold has been obscured in them and the color has altered. For in place of the theological nobility that they used to have from acceptance before God, they have put on the slavery of sin. For they did not want the blessing, and it has withdrawn from them. They wanted the curse, and it came to them and they are clothed in it as though in a cloak or garment.<sup>36</sup>

By emphasizing the culpability of the will in the Jews’ sin, Cartagena disassociates lineage from faithlessness, exegetical error, and the state of theological slavery. Against the Conversos’ Old Christian opponents, he also makes room for the efficacy of grace in the sacrament of baptism. Regarding the moment described in Matthew 27:25 when the leaders of the Jews called for the blood of Christ to be upon them and upon their children, Cartagena stresses that “children” in this context refers not to biological descent but to the imitation of the parents. With respect to the sin of faithlessness that led to the killing of Christ, “those who wanted to be participants in their filiation deserved to be made sharers in the guilt committed in the shedding of [Christ’s blood] and in the punishment that ought to follow that guilt.”<sup>37</sup> As long as the child

<sup>34</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas of Lyra also emphasizes the role of the human will in sin. Cf. his commentary on Ps. 94. *Postilla litteralis super Psalterium*.

<sup>36</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 178. Cartagena follows Thomas’s understanding of the effects of sin and grace on the human being, in contrast to the position of late medieval Nominalists who rejected the idea of grace as a *habitus* and sin as depreciating the powers of the will. See *ST I-II*, Q.110, Art. 1. For a summary of late medieval nominalist views on grace, see Heiko A. Oberman, “Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism: With Attention to Its Relation to the Renaissance,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 53, n.º 1, 1960, pp. 47-76.

<sup>37</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Torquemada echoes this argument: “To descend from impious and condemned ancestors (*dampnatis parentibus*), recently or from antiquity is of no concern; for there is no injury to those descending from them, if they do not imitate the iniquities of impious fathers and their impious conduct, as is clear from the thought of Ezek. 18[14-20].” Juan de Torquemada, “Tractatus contra madianitas et ismaelitas: Edición crítica de Ángel Martínez Casado,” *Tratado contra*

chooses to imitate the parent, the child earns the same guilt and punishment; the decision to turn toward or away from Christ is made and remade in each carnal generation, but the moment that someone serving in this justly deserved theological slavery “desires to be freed with the whole heart, immediately divine mercy grants freedom through the medium of the sacraments.”<sup>38</sup>

Attention to the role of the will informs Cartagena’s political theology as well, and it carried similar implications for those of Jewish descent. Illustrating the notion of “psychological unity” that comprised many fifteenth-century Iberian notions of community,<sup>39</sup> the anonymous fifteenth-century *Tratado de la comunidad* describes “community” as a “union of people by rightful consent and for their benefit” that is well governed “when these people are of one heart and will.”<sup>40</sup> In addition to this kind of psychological unity, fifteenth-century authors pointed to the virtue of charity, which connects humans to one another and to God, while the lack of charity not only tears communities asunder but ultimately compromises prospects for eternal salvation by rendering persons displeasing to God.<sup>41</sup> This kind of charity, however, applied to all members of the human race.<sup>42</sup> To promote affective unity for the political community of Toledo and the Crown of Castile of which it was a part, Cartagena pointed rather to piety (*piEDAD*), which becomes “linked inextricably with *patria*.”<sup>43</sup> Cartagena explains in his *Oracional*, written in 1454:

The virtue called piety (*piEDAD*) taken narrowly consists in giving honor and reasonable help to one’s parents and other ancestors and relatives according to their degree and proportion and to one’s native land and to its citizens [and friends]. And we can even consider this by observing the word that appears to show it. For we say ‘piety’ (*piEDat*) as if we said ‘patrimony’ (*patriedat*) which refers to parents and the fatherland (*patria*), and this does not prevent us from commonly referring to ‘compassion’ as ‘piety’ (*piEDAD*).<sup>44</sup>

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*los madianitas e ismaelitas, de Juan de Torquemada (Contra la discriminación conversa)*. Ed. Carlos del Valle R., Madrid, Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2002, p. 194.

<sup>38</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> Henry Berlin, *Affective Communities in Late-Medieval Iberian Literature*. PhD thesis, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University, 2011, pp. 13-58.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous, *Tratado de la comunidad*. Ed. Frank Anthony Ramírez, London, Tamesis, 1988, p. 87. Quoted in Berlin, *op. cit.*, p. 19. The *Tratado* is largely based on the 14th-century Castilian version of Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* written by Juan García de Castrojeriz. Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 19, n.º 17.

<sup>41</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127 *et passim*. Cf. Torquemada, *Tractatus...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-215.

<sup>42</sup> Alonso de Cartagena, *El oracional de Alonso de Cartagena: edición crítica (comparación del manuscrito 160 de Santander y el Incunable de Murcia)*, Valencia, Albatros, 1983, pp. 59-60, 86. Cf. Berlin, *Affective Communities...*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>43</sup> Berlin, *Affective Communities...*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Cartagena, *El oracional...*, *op. cit.*, p. 86. Berlin cites this passage in *Affective Communities...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45,

Elsewhere Cartagena argues that individual belief does not necessarily correspond to the land of one's origin; one's person does not have to proceed from the soil of a particular place to be called by a certain name such as 'Englishman' or 'Moor'; rather if one shares in the belief of the mind that is associated with that place, one is called by that name. Cartagena argues that the same applies to Jews; whereas the designation 'Jew' originally referred to people from the land and tribe of Judah, the people had been scattered. They are called 'Jews' now not because of their land of origin but through the secondary category of sect.<sup>45</sup> Cartagena's point highlights the fact that neither the Jews nor the Conversos of his day originated from Judea; they came from the lands of Spain. Conversos, by rejecting the error of Judaism, partook in the same belief as Old Christians from Spain; Spain, or one of its kingdoms, was their *patria*. By contrast, the Conversos' observant Jewish contemporaries may have come from the lands of Spain but they rejected its belief; hence they opted out of the *patria*. One's participation in the *patria* becomes a matter of will and intention.

Rather than rejecting the so-called *maximo religioso* as outlined by Rosenstock, Cartagena participates in developing that very ideology in his capacity as bishop and royal counselor. The notion of *patria* was also bound up with the metaphor of the body politic in which the king appeared as heart, head, and soul in a relationship of mutual support with his people. This corporate image appears already in the thirteenth-century legal code the *Siete partidas* of Alfonso X, which in turn drew on classical works.<sup>46</sup> Francisco Castilla Urbano notes the identification among "king, patria-people and land" in Cartagena's diplomatic works written during his participation in the Counsel of Basel in 1434-1439, in which the bishop as the king's representative worked to strengthen the legitimacy and authority of the Castilian king.<sup>47</sup> Contrary to the claim that Cartagena argued that "matters of faith did not concern the civil authorities" and that the Church

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and I have largely followed his translation.

<sup>45</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-238. This argument occurs within the context of Cartagena's exposition of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) and the meaning of the phrase "*ex iudeis*." Likewise, as Cartagena suggests elsewhere, one could be a 'Jew' in mind by reading or acting like a Jew and clinging to Jewish error. See *Ibidem*, p. 238, where he suggests that Marcos García de Mora might be *ex iudeis* because he persecutes Christians.

<sup>46</sup> *Siete Partidas* II, Title I, Law V in Alfonso X, *Las Siete Partidas, Volume 2: Medieval Government: The World of Kings and Warriors (Partida II)*. Ed. Samuel Parsons Scott and Robert I. Burns, S.J., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, pp. 271-272.

<sup>47</sup> Castilla Urbano, "Patriotismo y legitimación...", *op. cit.*

retained sole authority to root out heresy,<sup>48</sup> faith solidified those civil bonds, and the king's divinely-based authority mandated the opposite. The *Defensorium*, written in response to the 1449 Toledo rebellion, insists that while only the pope can identify heresy,<sup>49</sup> “[t]o the secular judges, the first of whom are the kings and below them the other princes, it concerns them to uphold the integrity of the faith and the unity of the Christian people with the temporal sword with the utmost zeal, and to check those attacking it with the force of their severity, and to see to it that they who have been proven or condemned by the church with the crime of schism or heresy be punished with just severity.”<sup>50</sup> Cartagena's primary targets in the *Defensorium* were those he called “paganizers” who attacked Conversos and tried to foment division within the Church.<sup>51</sup> However, his understandings of both *patria* and Church required him to extend his attack to “judaizers” and all others who remained outside the bounds of both bodies. The role of the will in determining one's corresponds to Cartagena's emphasis on the will's role in matters of faith. Just as the bishop locates the Jews' great sin in their willful ignorance or rejection of Christ, Cartagena's emphasis on the will indicts Jews along with pagans and heretics for opting out of the community of Christian Castile. In the *Defensorium* Cartagena also uses the term *patria* to refer to the state of final glory and eternal beatitude that Christians hope to inherit.<sup>52</sup> Jews and “pagans” do not participate as full members of a Christian republic because they lack, or resist, the common intention to seek eternal blessedness through the true God made manifest in Christ.

Even more problematic for those who want to hold Cartagena up as a forerunner of interfaith charity<sup>53</sup> or a prophetic voice against the forced integration of the bounds of civic and religious communities,<sup>54</sup> Cartagena cites Augustine's letters to Donatus, to Boniface, and to Festus to insist that for their own spiritual welfare and despite their resistance, the Jews ought to be bound as “frenetics who run away from spiritual health” or prodded as “lethargics who... dangerously sleep for the hearing of truthful doctrines.” As long as they resist spiritual health, for the good of the larger, Christian, community, Cartagena argues that Jews

<sup>48</sup> Giordano, “The Virus in the Language...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 246.

<sup>49</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 187–88.

<sup>50</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 297.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 270.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, pp. 91, 108, 145.

<sup>53</sup> Edwards, “New Light...”, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

<sup>54</sup> Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

ought to be forbidden from holding “public offices, through which they [could] rule over the faithful and have other familiar fellowship.”<sup>55</sup> The faithful, he writes, will be joined together inseparably by the one and indivisible mountain of the Catholic faith, Elijah’s mountain of God, a fertile mountain that, as foretold in Isaiah, “shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.”<sup>56</sup> Rosenstock points to this image of the mountain of God as an example of Cartagena’s protest against efforts to exclude Jews and others from the emerging Spanish nation, adversaries who would reduce the Catholic faith to a lower, ethnically homogenous peak.<sup>57</sup> He neglects to account, however, for the fact that Cartagena likens Jews as well as pagans, who do not adhere to the conjoining of the mountains under the one mountain of the Catholic faith, to the mountains of Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan died in battle with the Philistines.<sup>58</sup> Those mountains will dry up, wretched, “without dew or hoarfrost.”<sup>59</sup> By excluding those adhering to Jacob’s lame leg (i.e. observant Jews) from full membership in the communities of Toledo, Castile, and Spain, Cartagena makes room in those bodies for those who have chosen to participate in the healthy leg of Jacob – faithful Conversos of Jewish descent and Old Christians of Gentile descent who have been grafted into the Israelites’ covenant through faith.<sup>60</sup> Thus the socio-political integrates into the ecclesiological and soteriological.<sup>61</sup>

Rosenstock argues that Cartagena’s “ideal unity of humankind within the ‘mystical body’ of Christ, [is] an ideal achievement of divine *caritas* that cannot, by its very nature, be accomplished by a ‘holy war’ and that therefore can only be corrupted when temporal power seeks to impose its force by arms.”<sup>62</sup> Yet Cartagena’s other works justify holy war and call king and knights to arms against Granada.<sup>63</sup> There is indeed tension between Cartagena’s juxtaposition of an egalitarian and universalist ecclesiological body on the one hand and a

<sup>55</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, pp. 176-177. Cf. Augustine, *ad Festum*, ep. 89, n. 6; in Gratian 23, Q. 4, ch. 25 (*Quid faciet*), PL. 187, 1188C.

<sup>56</sup> See 1 Kings 19:8; Psalms 68:16; Isaiah 2:2.

<sup>57</sup> Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>58</sup> See 2 Samuel:1.

<sup>59</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, pp. 105-108.

<sup>61</sup> Stuczynski, “Converso Paulinism...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16 [pre-publication]. See also Stuczynski’s claim that Cartagena worked to maintain and promote the sacralized notions of the mystical body in contrast to contemporaneous secularizing tendencies. Idem, “From Polemics...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>62</sup> Rosenstock, “Against the Pagans...”, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>63</sup> Luis Fernandez Gallardo, “Guerra justa y guerra santa en la obra de Alonso de Cartagena”, *eHumanista*, n.º 24, 2013, pp. 341-354; Castilla Urbano, “Patriotismo y legitimación...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

stratified body in which birth, class, and gender retain their differences on the other.<sup>64</sup> A similar tension resides in the bishop's juxtaposition of a "supra-national Church"<sup>65</sup> that promotes *caridad* among all humankind, and the individual Christian republics that demand *piedad* and *patriedad* regarding their particular bodies. Cartagena partially resolves the former discord by drawing on the Pauline mystical body metaphor which explains hierarchical differences as essential for all members' benefit.<sup>66</sup> In a similar way, he justifies the promotion of *piedad* toward his Spanish *patria* by arguing for Spain's unique divinely-ordained mission for the benefit of the supra-national Church militant and, by extension, all of humanity.

The waves of Jewish conversions in the Spanish kingdoms from 1391-1415, during which time the young Alonso himself was baptized along with his father, siblings, and uncles, seemed to Cartagena and others to make considerable, even providential, progress toward the mission to expand and defend the faith.<sup>67</sup> Along with increasing membership in the body of Christ through conversion, Cartagena argued that the king of Castile and his knights were to lead Spain in a concerted effort to conquer the Muslims of the kingdom of Granada, reclaim the territory for the Church, and bring the centuries of *Reconquista* to a close at last. In his final work, the *Anacephaleosis*, Cartagena narrates the skirmishes led by Enrique IV against the Moors and expresses his desire "that God Omnipotent who is Lord and Commander of the Catholic armies triumphally deign to direct [the king's] endeavors and widen the boundaries of the Catholic faith by his hand, forcefully humbling the impudence of the enemies of the holy cross."<sup>68</sup>

The fulfillment of Castile's divinely ordained mission to defend and expand the faith at the head of a unified Spain was jeopardized not only by anti-monarchical and anti-Converso riots such as those that occurred at Toledo in 1449, but also by internecine squabbles among the Castilian nobility and among the Christian kingdoms of the peninsula. Before he took up his pen to address the Converso crisis, Cartagena had already established himself as a key theorist in contemporary debates about the nature and function of nobility and knighthood

<sup>64</sup> Stuczynski, "From Polemics...", *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>65</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 258.

<sup>66</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151; Stuczynski, "From Polemics...", *op. cit.*, p. 261.

<sup>67</sup> For evidence of this view in the historiography of Cartagena's father, Pablo de Santa María, see Ryan Szpiech, "Scrutinizing History: Polemic and Exegesis in Pablo de Santa María's Siete Edades Del Mundo", *Medieval Encounters*, n.º 16, 2010, p. 130.

<sup>68</sup> Cartagena, "Anacephaleosis", *La Anacephaleosis de Alonso de Cartagena: edición, traducción, estudio*. Ed. Yolanda Espinosa Fernández, PhD Thesis, Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1989, pp. 1016-1017.

and their relationship to one another.<sup>69</sup> The corporate image that bound king, patria-people and land also bound knights to the service of king and republic and directed all of them toward the defense of the faith.<sup>70</sup> For Cartagena, nobility and knighthood were nearly synonymous.<sup>71</sup> The king as the head of the civic and religious bodies was also the source of the nobility;<sup>72</sup> the churchman and *letrado* highlighted the “office” of knighthood rather than its “estate” or “order” so as to focus on the virtues that knights must cultivate toward the “common good.”<sup>73</sup> While one could exert the office of defending faith, king, and republic in many ways, Cartagena highlights the military role of knights and identifies two primary and complementary virtues that the knight should cultivate: courage and prudence.<sup>74</sup>

Among the valiant knights pursuing Castile’s mission to defend and expand the faith, Cartagena envisions noble knights of Jewish descent who will not simply be included among the ranks of noble knights but who, through miscegenation and education, will in fact improve the nobility’s ability to perform its civic and ecclesiological function.<sup>75</sup> While subordinating the office of knighthood to the common good aided Cartagena’s efforts to unlink the external privileges of nobility and knighthood from lineage,<sup>76</sup> his discussions of both courage and prudence still assume the relevance of lineage in identifying nobility. The bishop notes the military prowess exhibited by a large percentage of the Converso population, especially as compared to the small numbers who rose to military

<sup>69</sup> *Inter alia*, Alonso de Cartagena, “Discurso sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea”, *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*. Ed. Mario Penna, vol. I, Madrid, Atlas, 1959, pp. 205-233; Fernández Gallardo, p. 111. Idem, “Respuesta del venerable y sabio señor don Alfonso, Obispo de Burgos, a la cuestión fecha por el magnífico señor Marqués de Santillana” in “La Quèstión de Marqués de Santillana a don Alfonso de Cartagena”, ed. Angel Gómez Moreno, *El Crotalón*, n.º 2, 1985, pp. 349-363.

<sup>70</sup> Idem, “Respuesta...” *op. cit.*, pp. 356-357.

<sup>71</sup> Jesús D. Rodríguez Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería en el siglo XV: la tratadística caballeresca castellana en su marco europeo*, Salamanca, Junta de Castilla y León, 1996, pp. 70-71; but that the two terms demarcated each other: Fernández Gallardo, “Alonso de Cartagena...” *op. cit.*, pp. 102-105.

<sup>72</sup> Castilla Urbano, “Patriotismo y legitimación...” *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>73</sup> Fernández Gallardo, “Alonso de Cartagena...” *op. cit.*, pp. 77-118.

<sup>74</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 111. On the venerable place of prudence in chivalric discourse see also Rodríguez Velasco, *El debate sobre la caballería...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>75</sup> Erika Tritle, “A Jewish Solution to the Problem of Excessive Christian Virility in the War against Spanish Islam”, *Crusading and Masculinities*. Ed. Natasha R. Hodgson, Katherine J. Lewis, and Matthew M. Mesley, London, Routledge, 2019, pp. 256-271; Rosenstock, “Alonso de Cartagena...” *op. cit.*

<sup>76</sup> Fernández Gallardo, “Alonso de Cartagena...” *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

heights from “the rustic families of the ignoble common people.”<sup>77</sup> He argues that the disposition toward courage is especially “derived through the propagation of blood in descendants,” and is only manifest in moments of danger such as occur in [just] war.<sup>78</sup> Given that he associates lineage with the disposition toward courage, and in turn aligns courage and the military arts with nobility,<sup>79</sup> Cartagena draws the logical conclusion that many Conversos descend from ancient Israelite nobility:

Nor in any other way, according to the common course of nature, could [someone] so suddenly lose an excess of fear and assume the bravery of waging war and the military art, unless some live coal of nobility, although not shining fully, yet not entirely extinct, had produced something of smoke over the centuries in the guts of some of those [who] descend from the most ancient nobility of [the Israelites].<sup>80</sup>

While Cartagena urges the king to reward and honor Conversos for their services to the Crown without discriminating against them on account of their fleshly descent,<sup>81</sup> at the same time he asserts the nobility of many Converso lineages and the honor and privilege that ought to accompany it.<sup>82</sup>

In proportion to the urgency with which Cartagena views the function of the nobility to fulfill the military estate and successfully pursue Castile’s mission to expand and defend the holy Catholic faith, Cartagena criticizes nobles and knights insofar as they fail to perform their role.<sup>83</sup> The Castilian nobility had lost its way among courtly conflicts and chivalric games, mirrored activities that wasted talent and shirked responsibility to God and *patria*.<sup>84</sup> In addition to

<sup>77</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>78</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*.

<sup>79</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 214.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 217. In his claim for the antiquity of the Conversos’ noble Jewish lineages Cartagena likely also has in mind a legend nurtured among Sephardic Jews of their descent from the noble lineages of Judea. David Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” *The Past and Present Society*, vol. 174, 2002, p. 28.

<sup>81</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>82</sup> Nirenberg observes that most treatises written to defend Conversos show a similar tension between insisting that flesh does not matter and asserting the nobility of the Conversos’ lineage. Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion...”, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>83</sup> Contrary to his contemporary in the court of Juan II, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, who blamed the princes for distributing privileges of nobility to “unworthy persons” of “obscure lineage.” Juan Rodríguez del Padrón, “La cadera de honor”, *Obras completas*. Ed. César Hernández Alonso, Madrid, Editora Nacional, 1982, pp. 5-6; Tritle, *To the Jew First...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-197.

<sup>84</sup> Alonso de Cartagena, *Tratados Militares*. Ed. Noel Fallows, Madrid, Ministerio de Defensa, 2006, pp. 265-267; Noel Fallows, “Just Say No? Alfonso de Cartagena, the Doctrinal de Los Caballeros, and Spain’s Most

urging the “bellicose noblemen” to redirect their fighting spirit away from other Christian knights and against their true enemies, the Muslim Moors,<sup>85</sup> Cartagena highlights the virtue of *prudencia* as the essential compliment to courage, which tends to rashness if unchecked.<sup>86</sup> In addition to cultivating prudence through study and contemplation,<sup>87</sup> following the rebellion at Toledo Cartagena proposes a more systemic solution to the “excessive virility” of Old Christian Castilian nobility: the miscegenation of Conversos within the noble class.<sup>88</sup> In the *Defensorium* Cartagena conjoins an eloquent subversion of gendered notions of knighthood and Old Christian identity, describing Jews as daughters who remain peacefully at home in the land of their parents, while gentiles, as sons, wander afar in their pursuit of arms and lands.<sup>89</sup> To parry attacks on the newness of the Conversos’ Christian faith, the bishop uses this gendered language to undermine Old Christian claims to superiority; gentiles who wander afar (here parallel to non-*Converso* Christians) arrive at the Christian faith as to a completely new law, while Jews who remain at home (parallel to *Converso* Christians) have known and remained with the law from infancy.<sup>90</sup>

Redefining the notions of Jewish femininity and gentile masculinity, Cartagena argues that the ways of (baptized) Jews were superior to those of (baptized) gentiles in the eyes of God, but that even so the two should merge together within the Christian Church. He argues further that this union should serve as a model for unity in the social and political structures of Castile and in the behavior of its knights. While Cartagena accepts the stereotype of Jewish cowardice,<sup>91</sup> he uses it to highlight the effects of baptism on those of Jewish descent, such that the cowardice and timidity that characterized them while bound in theological slavery are washed away in the sacrament, allowing their noble disposition

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Noble Pastime”, *Studies on Medieval Spanish Literature in Honor of Charles F. Fraker*. Ed. Mercedes Vaquero and Alan Deyermond, Madison, Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1995, p. 135.

<sup>85</sup> Cartagena, “Respuesta...”, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>86</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 358.

<sup>87</sup> *Inter alia*, Jeremy N. H. Lawrance (ed.), *Un tratado de Alonso de Cartagena sobre la educación y los estudios literarios*, Barcelona, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 1979.

<sup>88</sup> Tritle, “A Jewish Solution...”, *op. cit.*; Rosenstock, “Alonso de Cartagena...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-202.

<sup>89</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 87. Cf. Isaiah 60:4: “Lift up thy eyes round about, and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side.”

<sup>90</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 78.

<sup>91</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 161. Cartagena also asserts the ancient military prowess of the Jews, citing the “virile” fighting of the Maccabees on behalf of God in order to demonstrate that the Jews had possessed natural or moral nobility before they turned away from God.

to shine anew. Moreover, once timidity and cowardice have been cleansed in baptism, they become the “mildness” that rendered David pleasing to God. Merged with Old Christian nobility, Converso knights will temper excessive Gentile boldness with reasoned prudence; thus “the activity of armed gentility is bound to the courtesy of Israelite mildness”<sup>92</sup> for the improved performance of the noble, chivalric office by the noble class as a whole.

In his *Question* to Cartagena of 1444, the future Marqués de Santillana recalls the words of Christ that, he fears, most of his brother knights have forgotten when he observes that “such vices and sins in this unfortunate hemisphere... have excited, cautioned, and provoked men, and every day they call and invite them to martial arms. And now we have no memory nor does that declaration of our Master and Redeemer [come to mind]: ‘Every kingdom divided in itself will be laid waste and lost.’”<sup>93</sup> In response, Cartagena’s political theology offered a Judeo-Christian program to unify the republic against a common external enemy, the Muslim Moors in the south and more distantly but not necessarily less menacingly from the east, the Turks. By merging Jewish with gentile flesh as many rivers into one sea,<sup>94</sup> the civil nobility of Castile might cultivate the moral virtue demanded by its office and, behind the banner of their king, lead the realms of Spain on a divinely acceptable mission to expand and defend the faith.

However, whereas Cartagena affirms the unifying merging of peoples into the life-giving sea of the Christian republic, he also writes that regeneration occurs when “many peoples” of “diverse nations are restored into one holy church and immediately the dry land appears. For what is dryer than faithlessness, whether it remains under Judaism or under gentility? For when the spirit of the Lord is borne over the waters of the sea of the great Church Militant, it is right and proper that everything remaining outside, lacking the spirit of life, should dry up.”<sup>95</sup> From our twenty-first-century position it is tempting to read the debate between Cartagena and his anti-Converso opponents in the shadows of the Inquisition (est. 1478), the expulsion of the Jews and conquering of Granada (1492), and so on.<sup>96</sup> When Cartagena was writing, however, none of those events was inevitable. He was participating in an urgent and nuanced debate regarding the nature of baptized descendants of Jews and their place within ecclesiological and civic life.

<sup>92</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 141; Tritle, “A Jewish Solution...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>93</sup> Santillana, “Quëstión...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-349. Cf. Mk 3:24, Mt 12:25, Lk 11:17.

<sup>94</sup> Cartagena, *Defensorium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>95</sup> Idem, *Ibidem*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>96</sup> Giordano, “The Virus in the Language...”, *op. cit.*

Whereas he understood that attacks on the Conversos amounted to attacks on Jews,<sup>97</sup> he countered his opponents' racial logic by adding the nuance of the role of the will, not by rejecting racial logic completely. By highlighting the role of the will in the Jews' great sin, in the acceptance of faith, and in the participation in the community, Cartagena aligned all that was "good" regarding the role of the Jews – the reception of the divine covenant, the hosting of Christ's human incarnation, the first spreading of the gospel – with their baptized, Christian, Converso descendants. All that was "bad" regarding connection to Jews – faithlessness, hermeneutical error, deicide, and so on – he aligned with Jews who remained unbaptized and thus outside of the Christian faith and republic on dry, lifeless land.<sup>98</sup> Nuanced argument does not always translate well into policy and polemic; perhaps this is why subsequent generations found it increasingly difficult to counter the racial logic of *limpieza de sangre* ideology.

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<sup>97</sup> Rosenstock, *New Men...*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>98</sup> Though he allowed for a non-racialized understanding of Jewishness when he asserted that those who adopted Jewish error should be considered Jews even if they did not descend from Jews in the flesh. Tritle, "Anti-Judaism..." , *op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.